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Σχετικά με τις λογοτεχνικές πηγές ενός επιγράμματος σε εικόνες από την Πάτμο

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A NOTE ON THE LITERARY SOURCES OF A PAINTED EPIGRAM FROM PATMOS

Στο σύντομο αυτό άρθρο επιχειρείται η ταύτιση των λογοτεχνικών πηγών ενός ανώνυμου επιγράμματος που παραδίδεται σε εικόνες του ύστερου 16ου – πρώιμου 17ου αιώνα από την Πάτιμο, οι οποίες απεικονίζουν τον όσιο Χριστόδουλο, ιδρυτή της μονής Πάτιμου. Αποδεικνύεται ότι το επίγραμμα αντλεί όχι μόνο από λόγους του Γρηγορίου του Θεολόγου αλλά και από τον Βίο του οσίου, που συνέθεσε ο Ιωάννης, μητροπολίτης Ρόδου. Η ταύτιση αυτή των πηγών αφενός ρίχνει φως στην παιδεία του στιχουργού (πιθανώς του Νικηφόρου Χαρτοφύλακος), αφετέρου αναδεικνύει το πατμιακό περιβάλλον παραγωγής του επιγράμματος και της εικονογραφίας που αυτό συνόδευε.

This short article deals with the identification of the literary sources of an anonymous epigram found on some Patmian icons from the late sixteenth-early seventeenth century, which depict Saint Christodoulos, founder of the Monastery of Patmos. It shows that the epigram draws not only on certain orations by Gregory of Nazianzus, but also on the Life of the saint by John, Metropolitan of Rhodes. Thus, the article sheds light on the education of the versifier (probably Nikephoros Chartophylax), while stressing the Patmian production environment of both the text and the icon imagery that the epigram was destined to accompany.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Μεταβυζαντινή περίοδος, εικονογραφία, εικόνες, επιγράμματα σε εικόνες, όσιος Χριστόδουλος, Νικηφόρος Χαρτοφύλαξ, μονή Αγίου Ιωάννου Θεολόγου, Πάτιμος.

Keywords

Post-Byzantine period; iconography; icons; icon epigrams; St Christodoulos; Nikephoros Chartophylax; monastery of St John the Theologian; Patmos.

On some Patmian icons from the late sixteenth-early seventeenth century, Christodoulos, the founder of the Monastery of St John the Theologian (AD 1088; died 1093), is depicted offering his church to St John with his right hand and holding a scroll in his left hand (Fig. 1). On the scroll is written a dedicatory epigram, which

consists of five dodecasyllables and contains an address to St John as well as a prayer. The icons in question include one on the sanctuary doors of the chapel of Saint Christodoulos in the Monastery and four housed in the same Monastery or in other churches on the island.¹

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¹ On four of the icons as well as for their reproductions, see M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos. Questions of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Painting*, Athens 1985 (Greek edition: *Εικόνες της Πάτιμου. Ζητήματα βυζαντινής και μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής*, Athens 1977), cat. no. 19, pls 86-87 (sanctuary doors of the chapel of the saint); cat. no. 64, pl. 119; cat. no. 111, pl. 161; and cat. no. 112, pl. 159. For another icon on sanctuary doors, see

K. Fatourou, *Πατμιακή Αρχιτεκτονική. Ἡ ἐκκλησία τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων ὡς δείγμα χαρακτηριστικῆς πατμιακῆς τεχνοτροπίας* (Υπηρεσία Αρχαιοτήτων και Αναστηλώσεως. Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου 2), Athens 1962, pl. 12: the epigram there is not legible, but it was identified by Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, op. cit., 31-32. Due to its late date, the epigram is not included in A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst (Byzantinische Epigramme in schriftlicher Überlieferung 2 / Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 23)*, Vienna



Fig. 1. Patmos, Apocalypsis cave, chapel of Saint John the Theologian. Templon icon, Saint Christodoulos, attributed to Thomas Vathas (late 16th century, 1554-†1599) (detail).

The epigram, transcriptions of which have previously been published,² runs as follows:

Ἐγὼ μὲν ἀπόστολε, τόνδε τὸν θεῖον,
ὄνπερ ἔδειμάμην σοι, σηκὸν προσάγω
ἅμα μονοτρόποις τε πᾶσι τε ἄλλοις
ἄνωθεν δ' αὐτὸς μὴ λίποις ἐποπτεύων,³
αὐτοῦς διεξάγειν τε πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

It has been plausibly suggested by Manolis Chatzidakis that the person who composed this high-brow “epigram-deesis” was a learned monk of the monastery, most probably the Cretan Nikephoros Chartophylax, the Monastery’s well-known monk and abbot, and later Metropolitan of Laodicea, who was active at the Monastery from at least 1579 until his death in 1628 and also composed other epigrams.⁴ Be that as it may, the *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the epigram is obviously the production of the icons. Actually, the sanctuary doors have been dated to around 1600, while if one of the icons were indeed painted by Thomas Bathas,⁵ then the *terminus a.q.* would be 1599, the year of his death.

On close examination of the epigram, it transpires that its composer actually incorporated in his text (vv. 4-5) and metrically adapted a passage from the peroration of the *Life* of Christodoulos by John, Metropolitan of Rhodes (BHG 303). This is the main and canonical *Life* of the saint, which was composed during the reign of

2010; see, however, *ibid.*, 32-34 and 36-42 for an introduction to the epigrams inscribed on icons.

² See Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, *op. cit.*, on icons cat. nos 19 and 64.

³ The reading ἐποπτεύειν is found on icons cat. nos 19 and 111, whereas the epigram on cat. no. 112 stops at ἄλλοις. The preferred reading ἐποπτεύων could be original rather than a correction of an erroneous original, since it is transmitted by icon cat. no. 64, which may well be the oldest depiction of the text; on the latter point, see immediately below with note 5.

⁴ On Nikephoros, see Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 31, 39, where also previous bibliography is found. For another, signed epigram of his, see *ibid.*, icon cat. no. 140, pl. 65; cf. also icon cat. no. 141, pl. 184. Yet another signed epigram is found in the church of the Holy Apostles; see Fatourou, *Πατριμακὴ Ἀρχιτεκτονική*, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 5, 7, pl. 1.

⁵ As suggested also by Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, *op. cit.* (n. 1), with regard to icon cat. no. 64.

John II Komnenos (1118-1143), probably in its later part. It was based on Christodoulos' autobiography, which was contained in his *Hypotyposis* or Monastic Rules.

In turn, the passage by John of Rhodes drew on Gregory of Nazianzus, in particular on the famous *Oration 43*, the funeral oration on his friend Basil of Caesarea. Gregory had used similar perorations in a couple of other of his orations, especially *Oration 21* and *24*. All three works must have been known to both John and the later versifier, since they were part of the collection of Gregory's sixteen sermons that were read out in liturgical services (the so-called ἀναγινωσκόμενοι λόγοι or "read homilies").⁶

The relevant passages from Gregory are as follows (phrases which are identical with the epigram are printed in italics):⁷

Or. 43, 82, ll. 6-7 and 10-11, p. 304: Σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύεις ἄνωθεν, ὧ θεία καὶ ἱερὰ κεφαλῇ, ... καὶ τὸν πάντα βίον ἡμῶν διεξάγεις πρὸς τὸ λυσιτελέστατον; cf. also, *Or. 21*, 37, ll. 16-17: αὐτὸς δὲ ἄνωθεν ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύεις ἴλεως, καὶ τὸν λαὸν τόνδε διεξάγεις τέλειον τελείας τῆς Τριάδος προσκυνητήν; and *Or. 24*, 19, ll. 27-28: Σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύεις ἄνωθεν ἴλεως, καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον διεξάγεις λόγον καὶ βίον.

As for the passage by John of Rhodes, it clearly depends on Gregory's *Oration 43* (as revealed by the phrasing in italics), though with a slight modification at the

⁶ On these, see A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche*, I-III, Leipzig 1937-1952, esp. II, 211; and, more recently, V. Somers, "Les collections byzantines de XVI Discours de Grégoire de Nazianze", *BZ* 95 (2002), 102-135. On their illustrated manuscripts, see G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus* (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 6), Princeton 1969; cf. L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology 6), Cambridge 1999, esp. 13-14.

⁷ References are to the following editions: *Or. 43*, ed. by J. Bernardi, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 43-43* (SC 384), Paris 1992, 116-306; *Or. 21*, ed. by J. Mossay with the collaboration of G. Lafontaine, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 20-23* (SC 270), Paris 1980, 110-192; *Or. 24*, ed. by J. Mossay with the collaboration of G. Lafontaine, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 24-26* (SC 284), Paris 1981, 40-84.

end (συμφέρων), which brings it closer to the epigram:⁸
p. 133, ll. 15-17 (par. 23, 1-3): Ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς μὲν ὧ μάκαρ, τὸν κατὰ δύναμιν προσηνέγκαμεν ἔπαινον, σὺ δ' ἐποπτεύεις ἡμᾶς ἄνωθεν, καὶ διεξάγεις κατὰ τὸ συμφέρον.

Therefore, the epigram may be considered a *testimonium* not just to Gregory of Nazianzus but to the *Life* by John of Rhodes. The latter, which survives only in Patmian manuscripts, had previously served as a source for the two other Patmian *Lives* of the saint, those by Athanasios, Patriarch of Antioch (BHG 304) and Theodosios Goudeles of Byzantium (BHG 305), composed in the periods 1143 –ca 1157 and 1195-1203/4 respectively.⁹ The new testimony reveals that John's *Life* continued to be read on the island and serve as a source of inspiration in the centuries that followed.

At the same time, the identification of the Byzantine sources of the epigram not only sheds light on the education of its post-Byzantine versifier, but it also stresses the local, Patmian production environment of both the text and the icon imagery that the epigram was destined to accompany.

⁸ See the edition of K. Voinis (Boines), *Ἀκολουθία ἱερὰ τοῦ ὁσίου καὶ θεοφόρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Χριστοδοῦλου τοῦ θαυματουργοῦ, τοῦ καὶ κτήτορος τῆς ἐν τῇ νήσῳ Πάτμῳ περιωνύμου βασιλικῆς καὶ αὐτοκρατορικῆς μονῆς τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου, ἐν ἧ καὶ τὸ τίμιον αὐτοῦ τεθησαύρισται λείψανον. Ἔκδοσις τρίτη, ἧ προσετέθησαν ἡ Ὑποτύπωσις αὐτοῦ, ὁ ἐν πλάτει Βίος, δύο Ἐγκώμια καὶ Διήγησις θαύματος αὐτοῦ, νῦν πρῶτον ἐκδιδόμενα*, Athens 1884, 109-133.

⁹ On various issues posed by the *Lives* of Christodoulos, including their manuscript tradition, see the classic work by E. Vranoussi, *Τὰ ἀγιολογικὰ κείμενα τοῦ ὁσίου Χριστοδοῦλου, ἰδρυτοῦ τῆς ἐν Πάτμῳ μονῆς. Φιλολογικὴ παράδοσις καὶ ἱστορικὰ μαρτυρεῖται* (διατριβὴ ἐπὶ διδακτορία ὑποβληθεῖσα εἰς τὴν Φιλοσοφικὴν Σχολὴν τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν, Athens 1966, as well as the detailed Introduction to the new, critical edition of the *Lives* by T. Antonopoulou and I. Polemis (forthcoming in the CFHB). Cf. also, briefly, S. A. Paschalidis, "The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries", S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, I: *Periods and Places*, Farnham – Burlington 2011, 143-171, esp. 151.

Illustration credits

M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos. Questions of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Painting*, Athens 1985, pl. 119.

Θεοδώρα Αντωνοπούλου

ΣΧΕΤΙΚΑ ΜΕ ΤΙΣ ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΗΓΕΣ ΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ ΣΕ ΕΙΚΟΝΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΠΑΤΜΟ

Στο σύντομο αυτό άρθρο επιχειρείται η ταύτιση των λογοτεχνικών πηγών ενός ανώνυμου επιγράμματος, που παραδίδεται σε μεταβυζαντινές εικόνες του ύστερου 16ου – πρώιμου 17ου αιώνα από την Πάτμο, στις οποίες παριστάνεται ο όσιος Χριστόδουλος, ιδρυτής της μονής Πάτμου. Αποδεικνύεται ότι το επίγραμμα, που αποτελείται από πέντε δωδεκασύλλαβους στίχους, αντλεί τόσο από τους «αναγιγνωσκομένους λόγους» του αγίου Γρηγορίου του Θεολόγου όσο και από τον Βίο του οσίου Χριστοδούλου, τον οποίο συνέθεσε ο Ιωάννης, Μητροπολίτης Ρόδου, τον 12ο αιώνα και ο οποίος σώζεται μόνο σε πατμιακά χειρόγραφα.

Η ταύτιση αυτή των πηγών αφενός ρίχνει φως στην

παιδεία του μεταβυζαντινού στιχουργού, που έχει εύλογα ταυτιστεί με τον λόγιο Νικηφόρο Χαρτοφύλακα, ο οποίος έδρασε στη μονή στο διάστημα από το 1579 περίπου ως τον θάνατό του, το 1628, και για τον οποίο μπορούμε να συναγάγουμε επί τη βάσει της χρονολόγησης των εικόνων ότι συνέθεσε το επίγραμμα προς το τέλος του 16ου αιώνα: αφετέρου, αναδεικνύει περαιτέρω το πατμιακό περιβάλλον παραγωγής του επιγράμματος και της εικονογραφίας που αυτό συνόδευε.

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