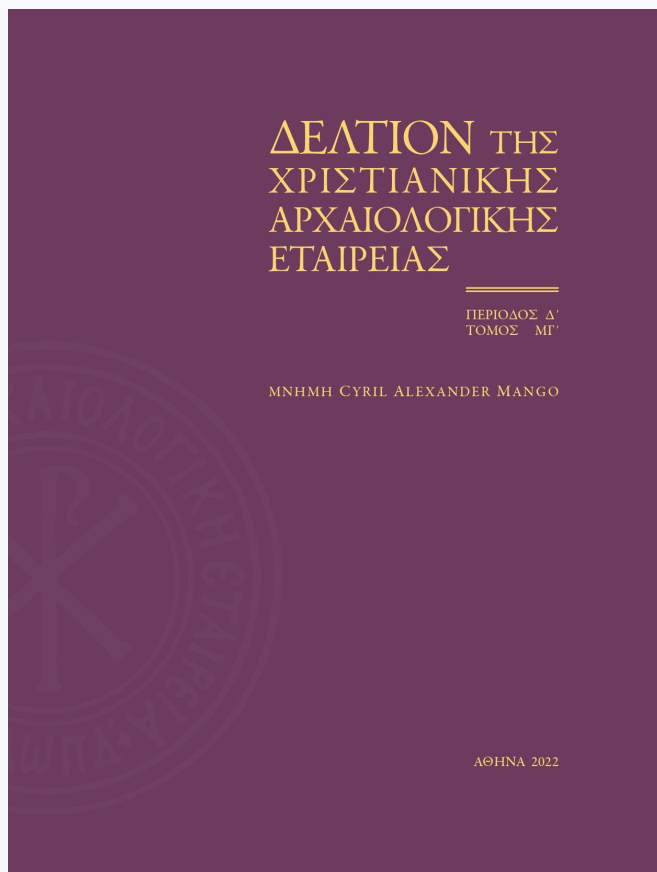


## Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

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### Ξαναδιαβάζοντας τα επιγράμματα στον ναό του Αγίου Πέτρου Καλυβίων Αττικής (1231/32)

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## REVISITING THE EPIGRAMS IN THE CHURCH OF SAINT PETER, KALYVIA, ATTICA (1231/32)

Η παρούσα μελέτη αναθεωρεί σε ορισμένες λεπτομέρειες την ανάγνωση του γνωστού αφιερωτικού επιγράμματος στον Άγιο Πέτρο Καλυβίων και επιχειρεί –όσο επιτρέπει η κατάσταση διατήρησης– την αποκατάσταση της μεγάλης έμμετρης επιγραφής στον βόρειο τοίχο του νάρθηκα, δίνοντας ιδιαίτερη προσοχή στην ποιητική της δομή. Προκαταρκτικά συμπεράσματα συνάγονται όσον αφορά το πρόσωπο που είχε την πρωτοβουλία της συγγραφής των επιγραμμάτων, σε παράλληλο συσχετισμό με γεγονότα και πρόσωπα της εποχής.

The present study reviews in some detail the reading of the well-known dedicatory inscription in the narthex of the church of Saint Peter at Kalyvia, Attica and attempts as far as the state of preservation allows, the reconstruction of the long, lesser known, epigram on the north wall of the church's narthex, by paying close attention to its poetic structure. Preliminary conclusions are drawn regarding the person who had the initiative to commission the epigrams, and the historical context that framed their composition.

### Λέξεις κλειδιά

13ος αιώνας, βυζαντινή επιγραφική, επιγράμματα, λατινοκρατούμενη Αττική.

### Keywords

13th century; Byzantine epigraphy; epigrams; Latin Attica.

The church of Saint Peter at Kalyvia, Attica, contains two bipartite painted inscriptions in verse in the narthex (Fig. 1). While the dedicatory epigrams on the east wall have been extensively studied (see below p. 283-284),

only scattered letters and combinations of letters have been published from the long metrical inscriptions on the north wall (see below, p. 285-289)<sup>1</sup>. The present article briefly reviews certain inconsistencies noticed in

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\*\*\* The re-examination of the epigraphic material was facilitated by the rescue conservation works executed on the frescoes of the narthex by the Ephorate of Antiquities of East Attica in 2018-2019. We owe sincere thanks to the Director of the Ephorate Dr Eleni Andrikou for granting us permission to publish this study.

<sup>1</sup> The monument was first studied by Panselinou: N. Coumbarakis-Panselinou, *Saint-Pierre de Kalyvia-Kouvara et la chapelle de la Vierge de Mérenta. Deux monuments du XIIIe siècle en Attique*, Thessaloniki 1976, 37-120, especially for the dedicatory inscription, see 47-50, fig. 3, pl. 48. Eadem, “Άγιος

Πέτρος Καλυβίων Κουβαρά Αττικής. Επιγραφές – Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία του τοιχογραφικού διακόσμου”, *DChAE* 14 (1987-1988), 173-188; especially for the dedicatory inscription, see 173-178, figs 1, 3 and for the bipartite long inscription, see 178. On the inscriptions, see also: S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-century Churches of Greece* (TIB), Vienna 1992, no. 12 on p. 60-61 A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken* (Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung 1), Vienna 2009, nos 63, 641 on pp. 139-143. D. N. Petrou, “The Composition of the Last Judgement in two Thirteenth-Century Fresco Ensembles at Mesogaia, Attica”, H. Saradi (ed.) in collaboration with A. Dellaporta, *Byzantine Athens. Proceedings of a Conference (Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, October 21-23, 2016)*, Athens 2021, 305-318, especially 314-315. S. Kalopissi-Verti, “Thirteenth-Century Painting in the



Fig. 1. Attica, Kalyvia. Saint Peter. Narthex towards north, 1231/32. On the east wall (right) the dedicatory inscription and in the north wall (center) the long inscription.

the dodecasyllables of the dedicatory epigrams<sup>2</sup> and

attempts to reconstruct the long metrical inscription.

Lordship of Athens: The Cases of Hagios Petros in Kalyvia Kouvara and the Omorphi Ekklesia at Galatsi. Some New Thoughts”, *Arte Medievale*, IV series – anno XI (2021), 59-78, especially 59-63, 70-71, fig. 1. <sup>2</sup> For the Byzantine dodecasyllable, see P. Maas, “Der byzantinische Zwölf-silber”, *BZ* 12 (1903), 278-323. A. Komines, *Tò byzantinòn ieròn épigramma καὶ οἱ épigramματοποιοί*, Athens 1966. For an introduction to Greek prosody, see F. Spitzer, *Elements of Greek Prosody*, London 1831, 10. For scholarly Byzantine poetry, see M. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres. Texts and Contexts*, I, Vienna 2003, and II, Vienna 2019. For a typical commentary on Byzantine poetry, see R. Browning, “An unpublished Corpus of Byzantine Poems”, *Byzantion* 33 (1963), 289-316.

For a recent thorough overview of Byzantine poetry with extensive bibliography, see W. Hörandner, *Η ποίηση στη βυζαντινή κοινωνία. Μορφή και λειτουργία*, Greek translation by Ioannis Vassis – Marina Loukaki, Athens 2017, 15-17, Chapter 2.1. On dedicatory epigrams with a special emphasis on those found in frescoes and mosaics, see A. Rhoby, “The structure of inscriptional dedicatory epigrams in Byzantium”, C. Burini De Lorenzi – M. De Gaetano (eds), *La poesia tardoantica e medievale, IV Convegno internazionale di studi*, Alexandria 2010, 309-332. On church inscriptions as documents, see S. Kalopissi-Verti, “Church Inscriptions as Documents. Chrysobulls – Ecclesiastical Acts – Inventories – Donations – Wills”, *DChAE* 24 (2003), 79-88.



**The dedicatory inscription on the east wall**



Fig. 2. Attica, Kalyvia. Saint Peter, narthex, east wall, 1231/32. The dedicatory inscription.

The left section (Figs 1, 2)

The most recent normalized transcription of the left and bigger section of the dedicatory inscription on the east wall of the narthex reads (Fig. 2)<sup>3</sup>:

- 1 Τῆς ἀρχιφώτου Τριάδος παραστάται  
θεαυγείς ἀστεράρχαι φωσφόροι  
οὐ ζωδιακοῦ προστατοῦντες τοῦ κύκλου  
τοῦ δωδεκάδος δ' οὖν ἀποστόλων γύ<ρου>,  
5 π(ὸν) χειρότευκτον τουτονὶ θεῖον δόμον  
ὄν ὑμῖν ἀνέστησα καρδίας ζέσει  
καὶ ζωγράφων ἦνθισα χροματουργίαις  
ὡς ἄλλο τερπνὸν παραδείσου χωρίον  
ὡς ἀγίασμα Σαλομῶν ὠκηκότες

- 10 πνευματικῆς χάριτος ἐμπλήσατέ μοι  
καὶ) τοὺς ἐπορθρίζοντας ἐς τοῦτον πόθω  
καταξιούτε ψυχικῆς σωτηρίας  
ὦ Πέτρε, κρηπίς ὀρθοδόξων δογμάτων,  
14 ὦ Παῦ<λε>, κῆρυξ ἐνθέων διδαγμάτων<ν>

The state of preservation is good and the above transcription is sound, except for an exfoliated majuscule N ligating with the preceding A (verse 6) which has to be added (corrected reading ANECTHCAN). The few flaws in the spelling of the original text (“θεῖον”, “χροματουργίαις”, “τερπνὸν”), which cannot be justified as deliberate mistakes dictated by prosodic needs, together with a couple of violations to the prosody (for instance the case of “χροματουργίαις”) do not discredit the literate author.

The right section (Figs 1-4)



Fig. 3. Narthex, east wall, 1231/32. The dedicatory inscription, right section.

The second section, normalized edition, has been read (Figs 2, 3)<sup>4</sup>:

- 1 κάμοι δὲ βραβεύοιτε λύσιν σφαλμάτων<ν>

- ὦν ἐν βίῳ πέπραχα τῷ παναθλίῳ  
λυτρούμενοί με καὶ πυρὸς τ(οῦ) παμφάγου  
ἐπανελεύσει δε<ν>τέρα τ(οῦ) Δεσπότη(ου)  
5 Ἰγνάτιος κέκραγα λιτάζων τάδε  
ἐκ γῆς Ἀθηνῶν ἠγγίμος μονοτρόπος  
7 νησῶ<ν> προεδρεύων δὲ Θε<ε>ρμειῶν Κέω

<sup>3</sup> Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme*, op.cit. (n. 1), 140, with analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



Based on close examination, the revised reading (orthography, accents and breathing marks of the original) is:

- 1 καμοὶ δε βραβεύοιτε λύσιν σφαλιμάτ : ὡν εν βιέω πέ  
 πρᾶχα τῷ παναθλίω : λυτροῦμένοι με κὲ πυρῶς τ(οῦ) πᾶνφάγου : επανελεύσ[ει]  
 δευτέρα, τ(οῦ) Δεσπο<sup>(ο)υ</sup> : Ἰγνάτιος κεκραγα λιτάζων τάδε : ἔκ γῆς Αθηνῶν  
 4 ηγμένος μονοτρο<sub>ο</sub>π<sup>ο</sup>c<sup>5</sup>: νήσω προεδρεύων δε Θε<sup>ε</sup>ρμείων Κέω<sup>6</sup>:

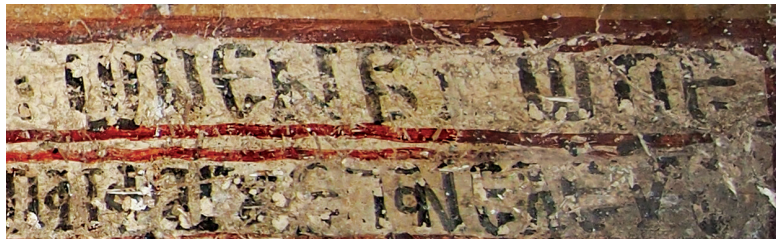


Fig. 4. Narthex, east wall, 1231/32. The dedicatory inscription, right section (detail of the Fig. 3).

Some discrepancies between the old and the revised readings are important. The last eight letters of the first line are clearly visible: *E, N, B, I*, a severely eroded *E, Ω, Π* and *E* (Fig. 4). The corresponding phrase, considering the word-part “πρᾶχα” of the second line, should be reconstructed as “εν βιεω πεπρᾶχα” (“I have been forced to”)⁷, instead of “ἐν βοίω πέ(πρᾶχα)” or “ἐν βίω πέπρᾶχα” (“have done during lifetime”)⁸. The poor orthography of “βιεω” instead of “βιαίω” intentionally serves the prosody of the second foot. The revised reading

“μονοτρο<sub>ο</sub>π<sup>ο</sup>c<sup>5</sup>” (“μονοτρόπως”, as monk) in the sixth verse, despite the poor orthography, or “μονοτρο<sub>ο</sub>π<sup>ο</sup>” (the paint of the last letter is almost completely exfoliated) assists the prosody by re-establishing the accentuation on the penultimate syllable⁹. There is no *N* at the end of the word “νήσω” (dative of “νήσος”, “island”) in the seventh verse, hence the word is in singular form and Ignatios appears as presiding bishop of the island of Kythnos (Θε<sup>ε</sup>ρμεία) of Keos (Κέως), and not of Thermeia and Keos¹⁰. In free translation the revised text reads:

- 1 And to me the all-despicable may you award forgiveness of the sins  
 which against my will I have done,  
 liberating me from the all-consuming fire  
 at the Second Coming of the Lord.  
 5 (I), Ignatios all these have to this moment exclaimed pleading;  
 having come as monk from the land of Athens  
 7 presiding over the island of Thermeia of Keos

<sup>5</sup> “μονότροπος”: see G. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford 1961, 884.

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of completeness, we would also add the last verse with the date: “διδασκαλικοῖς οἰακοστρόφοις λόγοις”, which is written separately further south.

<sup>7</sup> Katsafados’ reading was shared with Petrou [“The Composition of the Last Judgement”, op.cit. (n. 1), 314].

<sup>8</sup> Panselinou, “Ἅγιος Πέτρος”, op.cit. (n. 1), 173: “Καμοὶ δε βραβεύοιτε λύσιν σφαλιμάτ(ων) : ὄν ἐν βοίω πέπρᾶχα”. The same reading is repeated in Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions*, op.cit. (n. 1), no. 12b on p. 60-61. Rhoby, in *Byzantinische Epigramme*,

op.cit. (n. 1), no. 63 on p. 140, reads “ὄν ἐν βίω πέπρᾶχα”.

<sup>9</sup> The less probable reading “μονοτρόπου” makes the verse: “who has come from the singular land of Athens”. See also Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme*, op.cit. (n. 1), 142 notes 347, 348, where the possibility of the writing μονοτρόπος is discussed.

<sup>10</sup> For the island of Kea, see C. Stephas, *Κέα (Βυζάντιον, Φραγκοκρατία, Τουρκοκρατία)*, Kea 1999; J. Cherry – J. Davis – E. Mantzourani (eds), *Landscape Archaeology as Long-Term History: Northern Keos in the Cycladic Islands from Earliest Settlement until Modern Times*. (Monumenta Archaeologica 16), Los Angeles 1991.

**The long inscription on the north wall**

The text of the long inscription on the north wall is deployed in two similarly sized rectangular sections placed side by side, a *quasi* “epigraphic diptych” consisting of about 1.500 characters in total (Fig. 1).

The left section (Figs 1, 5-8)  
An epigram in political verse

What can be read of the very damaged left section is limited to the beginning of the first and the second lines, and the ending of the third (Figs 6, 7). The transcription of the discernible letters reads:

1 [.] οὐρανὲ νῦν βρόντησον ὕ[ca. 3] ὄ[ca. 7] γα :  
 2 ἐπέπερ εἰς γῆν πηγνυτα[ι] [ca. 8] ισοσ :  
 3 [...] νδόμος :

Although one would expect a Byzantine dodecasyllable when initially approaching the epigram, the syllables between two successive colons are fifteen and the structure of the poem does not conform to a dodecasyllable. All colons are placed at the end of the lines. Logical implications regarding the original script, scrutiny of minute

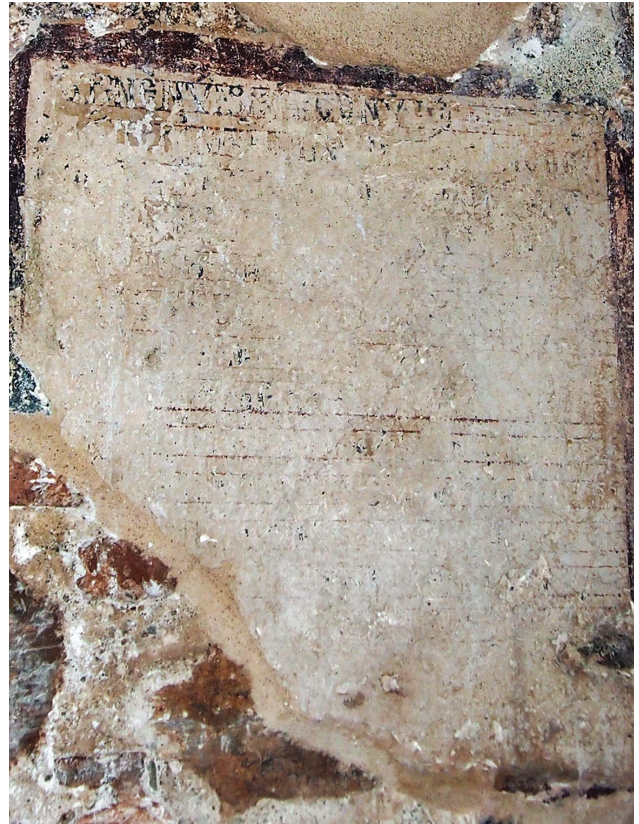


Fig. 5. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription. left section.



Fig. 6. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription, left section, the three first lines of the left part (detail of the Fig. 5).



Fig. 7. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription, left section, the three first lines of the right part (detail of the Fig. 5).

1	ὄϋρανὲ νῦν βρόντησον ὕ[ca. 3] ὄ[ca. 7] γα :
2	ἐπέπερ εἰς γῆν πηγνυτα[ι] [ca. 8] ισοσ :
3	[...] νδόμος :
4	
5	[c.4] φόροστή [c.18]

Fig. 8. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription, left section, proposed restoration.



traces (Figs 6, 7), confidence about the learnedness of the writer who appears capable of using rare forms<sup>11</sup>, and his poetic capabilities (stressing of the second and particularly the fourteenth syllable, strong *caesura* after the eighth etc.), as well as the assessment of the inherent meaning of

1 εἰ οὐρανὲ νῦν βρόντησον, ὕσον, ὄθειε[ν] ἔργα :  
 ἐπέπερ εἰς γῆν πηγγυτα[ι] [ca. 8] ιος :  
 [...] ν δόμος :

.....  
 5 [ca. 4] φόρος τῆ[...]

... and in free translation:

1 Heaven, it would be better had you thundered and poured with rain, take care now of the works :  
 since indeed [...] is founded [...] :  
 3 [...] church :

The right section (Figs 1, 9-13)

An epigram in dodecasyllable

The right section of the long inscription (Fig. 1) is an epigram in Byzantine dodecasyllable. Only a few scattered letters and syllables have been published to date<sup>14</sup>. The grammar and orthography are almost impeccable, although when accents and breathing marks come together, the former are frequently omitted. The visible traces of the letters left behind after the extensive exfoliation of the paint are crucial for deciphering the text (Figs 9-11). The reconstruction of several partially preserved verses required the usual parameters explained above, as well as the occasional adoption of words frequently used in epigrams. For the places difficult to discern, the anticipated absence of orthographic errors, the correct application of breathing marks identifying the beginnings of words, the grave accents signaling the end of words, and

the poem, all point to the use of political verse (Fig. 8)<sup>12</sup>. This is an important observation, as the employment of the political verse in painted inscriptions of the period is extremely rare and is usually limited to a few lines<sup>13</sup>. The normalized text (with missing breathing marks added) is:

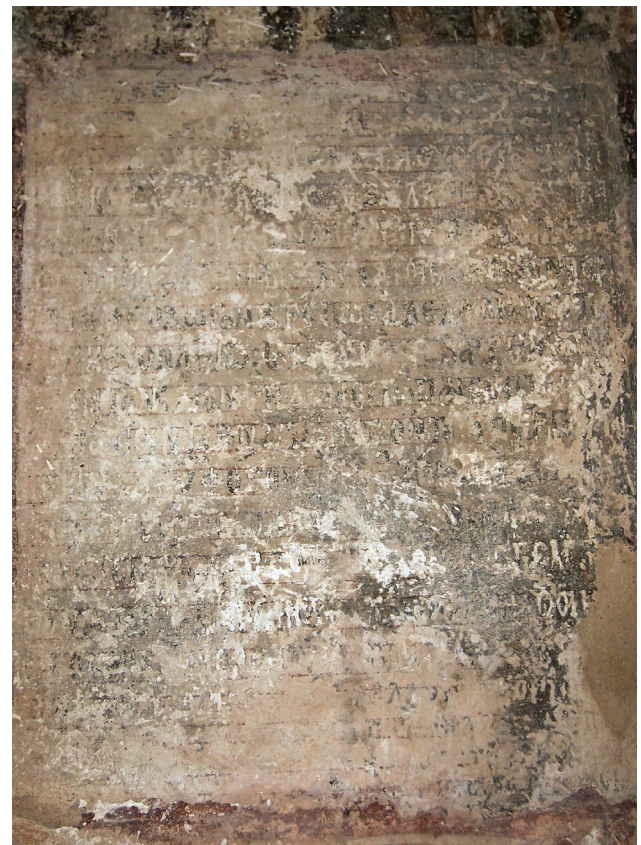


Fig. 9. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription. right section.

<sup>11</sup> For example, “ὄθειε[ν]” in the rare form “ὄθειώ” (Hesychius): cf. H. G. Liddell – R. Scott – H. S. Jones, *Greek-English Lexikon*, Oxford 1996: “ὄθομαι”, take heed.

<sup>12</sup> On the political verse, see M. Jeffreys, “The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse”, *DOP* 28 (1974), 141-195.

<sup>13</sup> See Hörandner, “Ποίηση”, op.cit. (n. 2), 79.

<sup>14</sup> Panselinou, “Ἅγιος Πέτρος”, op.cit. (n. 1), 178; republished in Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions*, op.cit. (n. 1), no. 12c on p. 63; and Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme*, op.cit. (n. 1), 143.





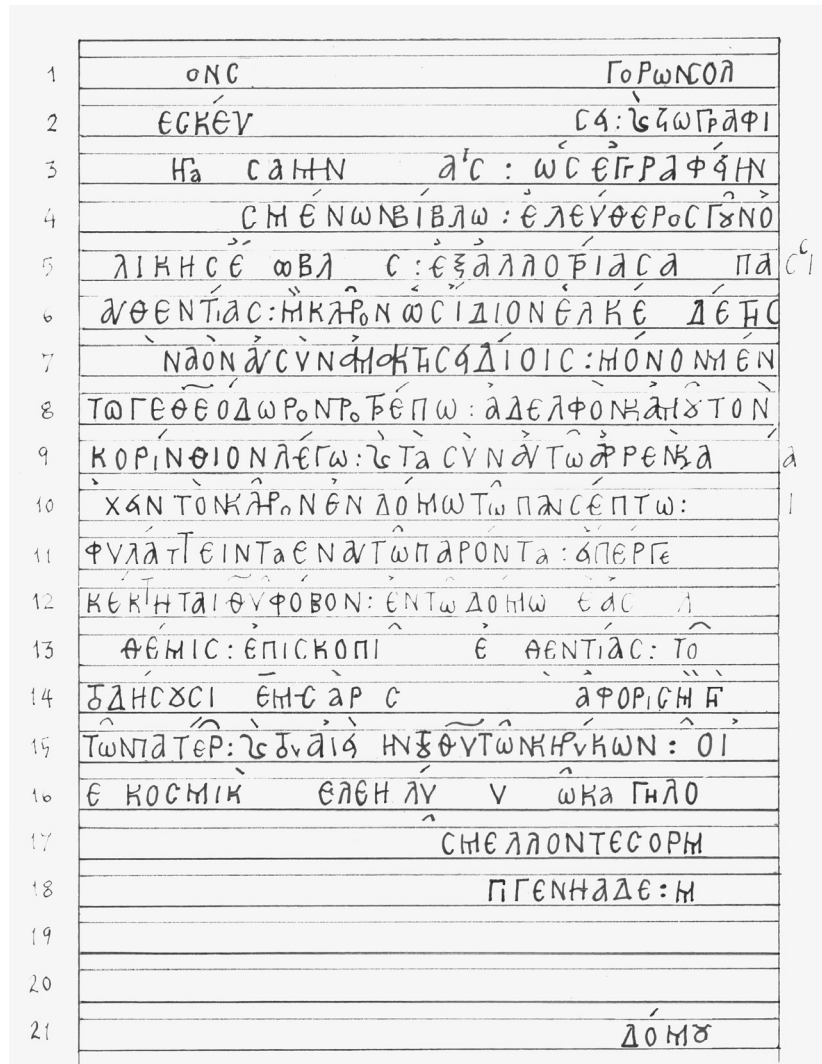


Fig. 12. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription, initial attentive reading.

Freely translated, the text reads:

- 1 I erected courageously and with great enthusiasm  
and have been content with the holy images  
so that I may be inscribed in the book of those whose names are chanted.  
Being myself definitely freed from any harm coming from people
- 5 of (the) alienated authority, (about which) in response you have advised me accordingly  
(5a of any opposing foreign authority whatsoever)  
my share, as being my own, let it be again tied up and drawn,  
evidently to this one church together with my few possessions.  
I only urge Theodore to this,  
my brother from Corinth I mean,
- 10 together with whomever is with him, the male and the assembly,  
to keep the share inside the all-venerated church

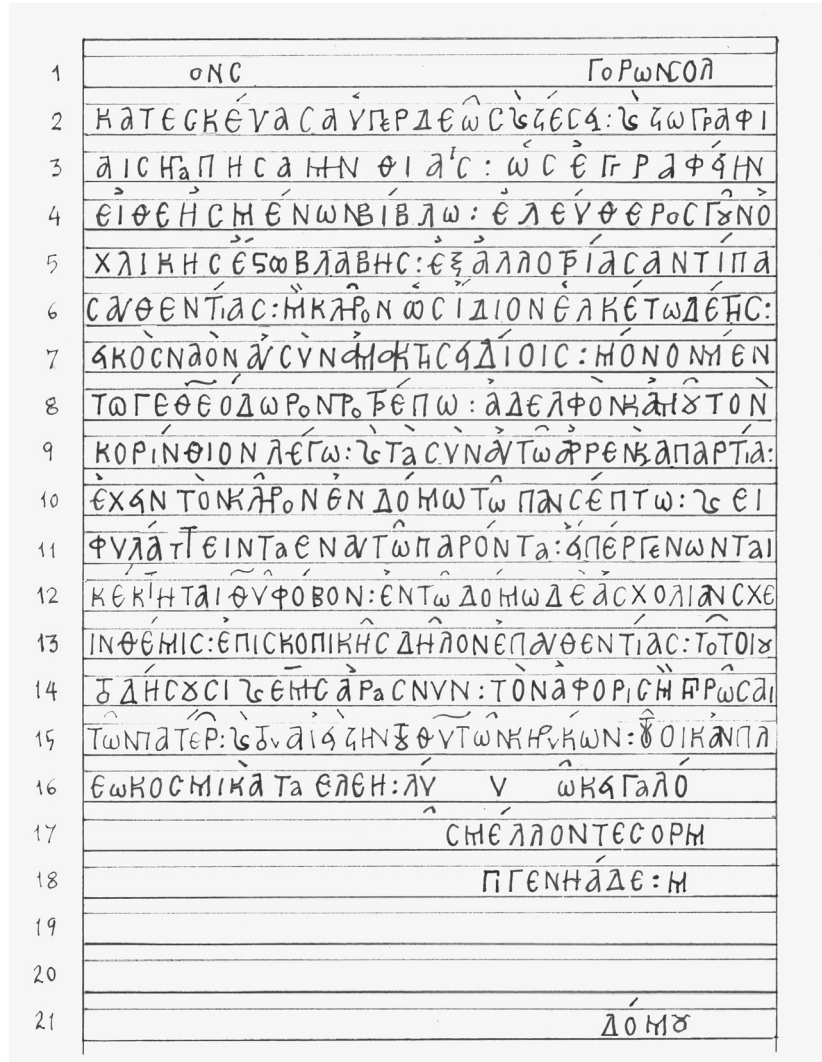


Fig. 13. Narthex, north wall. The long inscription, proposed restoration.

and may they all protect whatever is in it.  
 If he acts accordingly he proves has God's fear.  
 In the church, the matter of my possessions will as customary be administered  
 15 by the superintending episcopal authority.  
 This is what they need now; for the aphorism because of my malediction  
 and that of the fathers to be negated;  
 and to be blessed by the Lord's apostles for eternal life.  
 The same people may many earthly benefits,  
 (non-translated scattered syllables follow)  
 20 λυ [...] [...]  
 [...] μέλλοντες ορη [...]  
 [.....]  
 Ending verse: [...] δμου [...]



## General Remarks

The bipartite dedicatory inscription on the east wall appears to have been painted very shortly after the main iconographic program was completed in 1231/32<sup>17</sup>, while the long bipartite inscription on the north wall was added later -the left section may have been written over pre-existing text.

The hymnographic / praising (left) section (Fig. 2, see above p. 283) of the dedicatory inscription distinguishes between the erection of the church and its decoration, which are actions separated in time. The patron of the decoration, who speaks in the present tense, mentions (unnamed) ktetors and requests the mediation of the two leading apostles. In the right section (Figs 2-4, see above p. 283-284) he reveals his name (Ignatios), his office (presiding bishop of “Θεομεῖα” [Kythnos] of “Κέως” [Kea]), and expressively declares his repentance, asking for forgiveness. Of crucial importance is the new rendering of the first line of the text (*καμοὶ δε βραβεύοιτε λύσιν σφαλμάτων: ὡν εν βιέω πέπραχα τῷ παναθλίω*), which provides crucial information about the motivations for Ignatios’ repentance. He confesses that he has made mistakes in the conduct of his duties by having yielded to coercion. Scholars, using the old reading, have suggested that the request for forgiveness refers to sins committed during Ignatios’ lifetime and support this interpretation with evidence from the painted program, events described in Choniates’ letters, and the overall context in Attica and the surrounding region following the Frankish conquest<sup>18</sup>. Ignatios has been seen as a cleric enjoying an exalted position under the Latin regime. He has been described as one of those “devoted and loyal Greek bishops who were ‘willing to receive humbly and devoutly consecration’ from the Latin patriarch of Constantinople and who consequently embraced subjugation to Rome”<sup>19</sup>. The revised reading of the inscription, at least for the period in which it was written, offers a new perspective. The deeds of Ignatios may have been indeed pro-Latin in the first decades of

Frankish rule when Roman Catholic dominance in the archdiocese of Athens and the suffragan sees appears strong, but it was not so when the events implied in the text took place. Ignatios declares that his will has been forced. His position in the inscription is contradictory to the attitude of an ecclesiastic who aspires to defend his papal allegiances. Regardless of the fact that one cannot opine whether the alleged coercion is confined to one person (Ignatios) or extends to the Orthodox population in general, the revised interpretation suggests the diminishing acceptance of the Catholic ecclesiastical arm in the Lordship of Athens and particularly in the surrounding territories. The sense of oppression exerted by the Latins on the Orthodox clergy following the Frankish conquest, as well as the essence of the intimidating environment in which the latter were officiating, as narrated in the letters of Choniates, is well reflected<sup>20</sup>. The case of Ignatios pleading for absolution for his yielding to pressures from the Latin Church is hence a particular case of repentance<sup>21</sup>.

The contents of the long inscription on the north wall (Figs 5, 9), although probably combining earlier facts associated with the erection of the church or some other construction, are in fact about supplementary actions of the narrator (apparently Ignatios himself, speaking again in the present tense and probably addressed to an unidentified entity) and form the second chapter of his bitter story. Like the dedicatory inscription the long inscription is written on a later layer of plaster. A crucial element for understanding this sequence is an old border detected under this later layer (Fig. 5). It is part of a frame that most likely accommodated a text, not an illustration. The presence of the old border indicates that the long inscription was not a new text, but was likely

<sup>17</sup> Panselinou, “Άγιος Πέτρος”, op.cit. (n. 1), 178.

<sup>18</sup> T. Shawcross, “The Lost Generation (c. 1204-1222): Political Allegiance and Local Interests under the Impact of the Fourth Crusade”, J. Herrin - G. Saint-Guillain (eds), *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, New York 2016, 9-46, with collected bibliography.

<sup>19</sup> A. Potthast (ed.) *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum inde ab a. post Christum natum MCXCVIII ad a. MCCCIV*, I., Berlin 1874, 2867.

<sup>20</sup> Ph. Kolovou, *Μιχαήλ Χωνιάτης. Συμβολή στη μελέτη του βίου και του έργου του. Το Corpus των επιστολών*, Athens 1999, 16-21. Iconographic details that testify to the undiminished devotion of the donor to the Eastern Orthodox tradition have been included in the frescoes of the church particularly in the narthex, see Petrou, “The Composition of the Last Judgement”, op.cit. (n. 1), 313-316.

<sup>21</sup> The doctrinal confrontation between the ecclesiastical arms of the Latin and Orthodox churches which here appears exaggerated is obvious. However, it is not comparable to the modest way common people or even archons of the two sides behaved. Evidence shows that tensions among the artists and craftsmen were in many cases absent. An example of painters of both origins working side by side in the Omorphi Ekklesia at Galatsi, Attica, is telling. The clergy used to hold the purity of their respective dogmas and practices in high priority and kept the conflict vivid.

written over, at least partially, an older one, a frequently encountered practice where the newer script is occasionally related to the initial text, or repeats it in part or in full<sup>22</sup>. The presumably covered script may belong to the same phase as the decoration of the narthex or may even be older.

We are inclined to assume that the long inscription followed the writing of the dedicatory inscription, and to attribute it to the same donor (the bishop Ignatios)<sup>23</sup>. Based on the Ignatios' words in the dedicatory inscription, what is certain is that he was not the *ktetor*. The *ktetors* were earlier and more than one (see above p. 283, corrected verse 6: τ(ὸν) χειρότενκτον τουτονὶ θεῖον δόμον ὃν ὑμῖν ἀνέστησαν καρδίας ζέσει). The left section of the long inscription is not explicit about the erection of the church either; the preserved vague contents refer to an unidentified construction. No mention of *ktetors* is found in the right section. The narrator speaks in the first person only about himself and again about some unidentified structure, which is not clearly connected with the erection of the church.

The writing style of the dedicatory inscription is similar to the style of the various inscriptions in the church, indicating a very close dating. The long inscription is written by a different, more dexterous hand. It is more proficient poetically and more accomplished grammatically. The dedicatory inscription deals certainly with the decoration undertaken by Ignatios. The narrator of the right section of the long inscription does not speak about decoration, but rather about existing paintings at the time when it was written, an indication of its later composition and date. Furthermore, in the first verses, whatever mention is made of the paintings and works executed is brief, indicating that this was not the primary intention of the composer. The latter appears more concerned with the narration of the events that he describes in the next verses.

Tangible signs in the script give the impression that the long inscription was written in two phases. The horizontal

level of the dark border on the left side appears to follow the outline of the older border. The layer on which the letters of the right side are painted exceeds this level in its upper and lower parts. Comparison of the guiding lines, which form the zones separating letters and accents/breathing marks between the left and right sides, indicates that although the guiding lines are of the same geometry, they do not coincide horizontally. Given that these lines belong to the preparatory work which is usually executed before the writing of the text, the latter was probably done under different circumstances.

Considering all the above, we propose the following sequence for the writing of the texts with respect to the decoration phases. Several years before 1231/32 the building of the church was carried out by unidentified *ktetors*. The erection year followed the establishment of Latin authority in the Metropolis of Athens, probably within the second decade of the 13th century. The *ktetors* may have exercised their will under the wardship of the Latin archbishop of Athens whom they wanted to please by dedicating the church to the Apostles Peter and Paul, marking, in this way, their acknowledgement of Papal authority<sup>24</sup>. For the liturgy to be elementarily served, the sanctuary was preliminarily decorated. A fragment of an unidentified hierarch below the principal-phase representation of St Nicholas in the semi-cylinder of the apse belongs to an earlier layer<sup>25</sup>. The image is painted on a thin *poros* slab attached to the stonework of the semi-cylinder of the apse. It has been argued that the fragment was transferred from another monument<sup>26</sup>. However, its left side, which ends in a curved worked surface including a dark red border, does not resemble a detached part of a fresco. Although in fragmentary condition, the slab better fits a painting executed elsewhere and carried *in situ* to cover specific needs. We would consider it as a small-scale preliminary work in the lower register of the sanctuary's apse that was

<sup>22</sup> Examples of overwritten inscriptions can be seen in churches in Laconia: N. Drandakis, "Les peintures murales des Saints-Théodores à Kaphiona", *CahArch* 32 (1984), 163-175, 164. Sh. E. J. Gerstel, *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 110 (Lagia); Eadem, "Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea", A. Laiou - R. Mottahedeh (eds), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, D. C. 2001, 275 (Vrontamas).

<sup>23</sup> Panselinou, "Άγιος Πέτρος", op.cit. (n. 1), 178.

<sup>24</sup> See S. Kalopissi-Verti, "Monumental Art in the Lordship of Athens and Thebes under Frankish and Catalan Rule (1212-1388): Latin and Greek Patronage", N. Tsougarakis and P. Lock (eds), *A Companion to Latin Greece*, Leiden 2014, 383.

<sup>25</sup> Panselinou, "Άγιος Πέτρος", op.cit. (n. 1), 180, fig 4 on p. 176. Although the style and size of both paintings is comparable, the halo of the partially preserved saint (which might be the same figure), is simple compared to the ornamented halo of St Nicholas. The latter indicates western influence, placing the date of the fragment to the first decades of the 13th century.

<sup>26</sup> Panselinou, "Άγιος Πέτρος", op.cit. (n. 1), 180 note 27, fig. 4 on p. 176.



inserted before the main decoration phase for short-term use to serve elementary liturgical needs.

In 1231/32 the church was decorated under the sponsorship of Ignatios<sup>27</sup>. The initial dedicatory inscription in the narthex was highlighted by its red frame. Shortly after the decoration of the narthex –or even during the last phase of its decoration– the dedicatory epigram was written above the north arch of the *tribelon* on newly applied plaster. The reason why the epigram was not written contemporaneously with the decoration was perhaps because of the current situation faced by Ignatios. Although he was still officially high-ranked, it appears that it was rather urgent for him to place the details of his donation on the wall, perhaps in fear that his position as presiding bishop was threatened. His repentance for yielding to pressure evidently had to do with hardships sustained after he possibly fell into disfavor with the officials of the Latin Church in Athens. However, the fact that in the church of Saint Peter at Kalyvia he could still display his name and title in a formally styled, poetically elevated dedicatory epigram is a sign that partial tolerance existed, at least in the territories where Ignatios was active. This could be attributed either to the weak or declining public acceptance of the Latin metropolis of Athens, or it could be a sign that the wrath of the post-1205 clashes had subsided, that things had started to change for the better, and that the Latins did not wish to alienate the Greeks anymore.

However, shortly afterwards, the unfortunate situation continued. Sincere adverse developments obliged Ignatios to return to his favored practice and disclose his painful ventures in an expressive epigram on the north wall. The contents of the old inscription were copied on a new layer of plaster, while, shortly after, another layer destined to accommodate the new poetic text in dodecasyllable covered the old inscription, exceeding the old frame. The absence of a border below the presently detached newer border in the lower left part of long inscription (Figs 1, 5), combined with traces of the same (dark blue-green) background of the adjacent image, indicates that the old inscription did not extend that far left, but was roughly in the place where the right side of Figs 1, 9 is found.

The contents do not exactly conform to the usual literature of epigrams. It is more about a brief account in verse

of events that had happened since the time when the dedicatory inscription was written. The diction is not that of the dedicatory inscription, but closer to the narration of a personal drama as if the initiator wished to unburden himself regarding delicate private matters in writing on the wall. There is hardly any epigram or inscription of comparatively similar personalized contents in the epigraphic corpus, at least to our knowledge. In the right section, presumably the same Ignatios appears recently distanced from the hardships he had encountered in the past after having fallen in disfavor vis-à-vis the Roman Catholics and seeking “refuge” in the church. He has lost his former power and because of this, he asks for assistance regarding his possessions from his fellow disciple of Choniates Theodore, who based on our reasoning may be identified with the bishop Theodore of Euripos. The latter was still a cleric of influence at that time who was ostensibly in tolerable relations with the Latins<sup>28</sup>. Theodore, the only bishop of this name in the letters of Michael Choniates, was likely assigned the bishopric of Euripos until 1233<sup>29</sup>. This year serves as a probable *terminus ante quem* for the long inscription. Ignatios’ close affiliation with the church is apparent in his exhortation to Theodore (who in person or via surrogate seems to exercise superintendence on the church) to protect any property existing in it. In any case, Ignatios speaks for his own establishment<sup>30</sup>. The inherent idea of verses 6-7 (see above, p. 287, [ἐ]μ(ὸν) κληρον ὡς ἴδιον ἐλκέτω δέτης :/ εἰκὸς ναὸν αὐτὸν ἅμα κτησειδίους) suggests the practice of ceding one’s personal belongings to the church when monastic vows were taken. The incident

<sup>28</sup> Theodore had accepted the supremacy of the Pope. It is uncertain how provocative were Choniates’ references to the hardships sustained by Theodore due the occasionally tyrannical authority of the Latins. See S. Lampros (ed.), *Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα*, Athens 1879, Letters ρε’, ρμς’, and ρνδ’; Kolovou, *Μιχαὴλ Χωνιάτης*, op.cit. (n. 20), 19 note 53, 98-99.

<sup>29</sup> A cleric Theodorus (in ca. 1205 marked as *redit a schismate*, “reverted from the schism”) was appointed (*conferendus*) as bishop to the diocese of Euripos (“*Nigropontis*”) on December 8, 1208. He held his seat until 1233, when he was succeeded by a certain Ioannes, see K. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi, sive Summorum pontificum, S.R.E. cardinalium, ecclesiarum antistitum series e documentis tabularii praesertim Vaticani collecta, digesta*, Monasterii 1913, 367. See also J. Longnon, “L’organisation de l’église d’Athènes par Innocent III”, *Mémorial Louis Petit: mélanges d’histoire et d’archéologie byzantines* (*Archives de l’Orient chrétienne* I), Bucarest 1948, 342.

<sup>30</sup> See Kalopissi, “Thirteenth-Century painting”, op.cit. (n. 1), 60-63.

<sup>27</sup> For the identity of the painters involved in the church’s decoration, see Panselinou, *Saint-Pierre*, op.cit. (n. 1), 70; Eadem, “Ἅγιος Πέτρος”, op.cit. (n. 1), 178.

seems personal to Ignatios who recalls the time when he first took vows as a monk in the past and most likely rendered his possessions to Saint Peter<sup>31</sup>. The current circumstances, because of the ominous situation into which he has fallen, defines his decision to bring his possessions into “his own church” reasonable (“εἰκδός”), and for a second time (the adverb “αὖ”, again, is positively recognized in the seventh verse). This is a strong possibility which places the writing of the long inscription close to the last years of Ignatios’ life. As regards the composer(s) of the epigrams, the verses of the long inscription compared to these of the dedicatory inscription point to the poet of the right section being more accomplished. Assuming that all the verses were commissioned by the same person, the differences are a clear sign that the author was not the donor himself. The latter had rather paid two different poets to compose epigrams for him. The inclusion of the specialized term “ἀφορισμὸς” in the sixteenth verse of the long inscription [see above, p. 287: τὸν ἀφορισμὸν πηρῶσαι / τῶν πατέρων)] suggests that the second poet, beyond being a literate man, was perhaps also a scribe who was aware of the use of such terms in manuscript colophons.

The epigrams in the church of Saint Peter, especially the long inscription written in refined majuscule, exploit the communicative power of an official-looking text and the strong impact it has on the beholder viewing the paintings in a church. There was no way of advertising the contents more securely than by painting them on the wall of a church, as if the wall was a manuscript. In this way, the epigram attained the force of a notarial act<sup>32</sup>. The placement of the narrator’s petition in common sight, particularly in the case of epigram (long inscription), in addition to describing acts and facts, served another practical purpose: it was there to be recalled in case of need, as well as to stimulate the morals of the people who would see it.

The second section of the dedicatory inscription hints at a possible close personal relationship between Ignatios and Choniates (see above, p. 283: verse 7). Ignatios was the

presiding bishop of the island of Kythnos. Kythnos is near the principal island of Kea, for many years the refuge of the archbishop Michael Choniates following his exile from Athens in 1205. Although when exactly Ignatios started exercising his office is unknown, regular personal contacts between the two men can reasonably be assumed. The personal contact is perhaps the reason why Ignatios is not among those addressed in the correspondence of Choniates. Their relationship, however, is exceptionally proclaimed in the decoration of Saint Peter, where Choniates’ portrait is included among the co-officiating bishops represented in the sanctuary. Such a placement is by far more significant than his representation in the south parekklesion of the Penteli cave chapels<sup>33</sup>. A further indication of the close relationship between the disciple and the teacher is literally implied by the representation of St Ignatios Theophoros behind that of Choniates, clearly a personal choice of the donor<sup>34</sup>. The role of Ignatios in the church of Saint Peter was all the time decisive. His name is found in the dedicatory inscription and also on a marble colonnette<sup>35</sup>. Despite his important role, an official portrait of him as donor never graced the church walls. At the beginning of the 13th century, of course, this was not a frequent custom. The representation of Choniates, on the other hand, is considered a true portrait of the famous prelate<sup>36</sup>. Like Ignatios’ confessional inscription in the narthex, the placement of his patron saint, who may have represented his physical likeness, reintroduced him into the company of bishops whose orthodoxy was beyond reproach.

<sup>33</sup> D. Mouriki, “Οἱ βυζαντινὲς τοιχογραφίαι τῶν παρεκκλησιῶν τῆς Σπηλιᾶς τῆς Πεντέλης”, *DChAE* 7 (1973-1974), 97.

<sup>34</sup> Such paradigms are frequent. An analogous choice regarding the selection of concelebrating hierarchs in the sanctuary of the Daphni monastery by the donor, a literate high-ranked Byzantine official named Gregorios Kamateros, can be seen in the representation of Gregorios Thaumaturgos and Gregorios Akragantinos. For the convincing theory of Kamateros’ involvement in the erection of the Daphni *katholikon*, see M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, “Ἀναζητώντας τον ἰδρυτὴ τῆς μονῆς Δαφνίου”, *DChAE* 40 (2019), 193-222.

<sup>35</sup> Panselinou, “Ἅγιος Πέτρος”, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 173-174, fig. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Panselinou, “Saint-Pierre”, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 70, pls 11, 12.

#### Illustration credits

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<sup>31</sup> Piles of rubble in the vicinity of Saint Peter point to the existence of built structures close to the church. Sharon Gerstel refers to fragments of medieval domestic ceramics in the surrounding fields, see Gerstel, “Rural Lives”, *op.cit.* (n. 22), 28.

<sup>32</sup> Kalopissi-Verti, “Church Inscriptions”, *op.cit.* (n. 2), 80, 86. See also M. Patedakis, “Ο κρητικὸς κώδικας Grey ms. gr. 4 C6: ένα ευαγγελιστάριο του 13ου αἰ. ἀπὸ τὸν Ἅγιο Γεώργιο στὸν Καμαριώτη”, *KretChron* 33 (2013), 78.

## ΞΑΝΑΔΙΑΒΑΖΟΝΤΑΣ ΤΑ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΝΑΟ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΕΤΡΟΥ ΚΑΛΥΒΙΩΝ ΑΤΤΙΚΗΣ (1231/32)

**Η** παρούσα μελέτη έχει αντικείμενο την εκ νέου θεώρηση των δημοσιευμένων επιγραμμάτων στον ναό του Αγίου Πέτρου στα Καλύβια Αττικής (Εικ. 1). Αφορμή για την έρευνα αρχικά υπήρξε η διαπίστωση ότι, μολοντί το ύφος τους καταδεικνύει τη φιλολογική και ποιητική επάρκεια του επιγραμματοποιού, η μεταγραφή τους παρουσίαζε ουσιώδεις εκτροπές από τους κανόνες του βυζαντινού δωδεκασύλλαβου. Πολύ προσεκτική παρατήρηση απέδειξε ότι οι λίγες παραφωνίες ήσαν πλασματικές και τα κείμενα στην πραγματικότητα είναι ποιητικά άρτια. Σημαντικό είναι επίσης το γεγονός ότι μία εκ των αποκαταστάσεων που προτείνεται εδώ, ανασκευάζει την κεντρική ιδέα του αφιερωτικού επιγράμματος, αποκαλύπτοντας τον πραγματικό λόγο που υπαγόρευσε τη σύνθεσή του, ο οποίος είναι η μετάνοια του συντάκτη για πεπραγμένα που υποχρεώθηκε στο παρελθόν να πράξει παρά τη θέλησή του.

Η έρευνα επικεντρώθηκε κυρίως στην εκτεταμένη επιγραφή του βόρειου τοίχου του ναού, που σώζεται με μεγάλες φθορές (Εικ. 1, 5-13), από την οποία πολύ λίγα σκόρπια γράμματα και συλλαβές έχουν δημοσιευθεί. Στην αποκατάσταση χρησιμοποιήθηκαν όλα τα πρόσφορα μέσα για την αναγνώριση και καταγραφή και του παραμικρού εναπομείναντος ίχνους γραφής, κυρίως όμως η *in situ* εξέταση. Για τα αμφισβητούμενα μέρη του κειμένου αυτού πολλά προσέφερε η εμπιστοσύνη στη φιλολογική και ποιητική αρτιότητα του συνθέτη· για παράδειγμα, στην αναζήτηση λέξεων που χάθηκαν εν μέρει ή ολοκληρωτικά, επιστρατεύθηκαν συχνά λέξεις και εκφράσεις που απαντώνται στα επιγράμματα, καθώς και λέξεις από τη γραμματεία του Μιχαήλ Χωνιάτη. Αξιόπιστος οδηγός στην αποκατάσταση των σκοτεινών σημείων υπήρξε το γεγονός ότι τα ορθογραφικά λάθη είναι σχεδόν ανύπαρκτα, τα πνεύματα αποδίδονται σωστά και υποδεικνύουν την

αρχή των λέξεων, οι βαρείες το πέρας των λέξεων, η περισπωμένη, όπου υπάρχει, τονίζει μακρά συλλαβή κ.ο.κ. Η πεποίθηση για την αυστηρή προσκόλληση του συντάκτη στους μετρικούς και προσωδικούς κανόνες του δωδεκασύλλαβου έδωσε, με ευχάριστη έκπληξη αρκετές φορές, λύσεις σε σχεδόν αδιέξοδες καταστάσεις, κατά την προσπάθεια ανασύνταξης του κειμένου. Εν τέλει ως αποτέλεσμα έχουμε μια αρκετά ικανοποιητική αποκατάσταση σημαντικού μέρους του επιγράμματος του βόρειου τοίχου (Εικ. 13). Πρόκειται για ένα μεγάλο επίγραμμα αφηγηματικού χαρακτήρα, σε δύο μέρη, το πρώτο σε στίχο πολιτικό και το δεύτερο σε δωδεκασύλλαβο, χρονολογικά λίγο μεταγενέστερο του αφιερωτικού. Παρατηρήσεις στα δομικά ίχνη της γραφής δείχνουν ότι στην περίπτωση που τα δύο μέρη δεν γράφτηκαν την ίδια εποχή, το χρονικό διάστημα που τις χωρίζει είναι πολύ μικρό. Πρόκειται πιθανότατα για πρωτοβουλία του ίδιου προσώπου, του παραγγελιοδότη του αφιερωτικού επιγράμματος του ναού επισκόπου Ιγνατίου, του προεδρεύοντος της νήσου Κύθνου, μαθητή του Μιχαήλ Χωνιάτη, από την οποία αναδύονται γεγονότα τής κατά τα φαινόμενα ταραχώδους διαδρομής του. Πλέον του επιγραφικού μέρους και πέραν της προσωπικής πορείας του επισκόπου Ιγνατίου, η συνδυασμένη ανάλυση των δύο κειμένων προσφέρει έδαφος και για ενδιαφέροντες συλλογισμούς όσον αφορά το περιβάλλον της λατινοκρατούμενης Αττικής, και όχι μόνο, κατά τις πρώτες δεκαετίες του 13ου αιώνα.

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