Νέα στοιχεία για τις αφιερωτικές επιγραφές (13ος αιώνας) του ναού των Αγίων Θεοδώρων Ανω Πούλας, Μέσα Μάνης

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NEW EVIDENCE ON THE DEDICATORY INSCRIPTIONS (13th century)
IN THE CHURCH OF HAGIOI THEODOROI, ANO POULA, INNER MANI

The present study examines the donor portraits and dedicatory inscriptions in the church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula, inner Mani, summarizing what has been published to date and contributing new information based on the author’s fieldwork. The new material includes the main dedicatory inscription (13th century) and the depiction of the named donor.

Keywords
Late-Byzantine period, 13th century, wall paintings, dedicatory inscriptions, donor portraits, donor monk Kyriake, donor monk Euthymios Lekousas, Mani, Ano Poula, church of Hagioi Theodoroi at Ano Poula.

Located in the north part of the Ano Poula (Makryna) ridge in Mesa Mani, Hagioi Theodoroi is a barrel-vaulted single-nave Byzantine chapel of humble dimensions (Fig. 1). The church was first published in 1974 by the late Prof. N. B. Drandakis, who drew attention to its painted program and fragments of ancient and medieval sculpture that were built into its sanctuary screen and immured in its walls. In 1996, Nikolaos Gkioles published a more comprehensive study of the church’s paintings.

In addition to discussing the church’s decorative program, Drandakis and Gkioles also published several inscriptions found within the church, focusing primarily on the text painted in the south blind arch adjacent to the portrait of the nun Kyriake (see below Inscription A). Sophia Kalopissi-Verti also discussed this text in her study of dedicatory inscriptions and Sharon Gerstel included it in a recent study on nuns in rural Byzantium.

A second inscription (see below Inscription B), seemingly of the same period, is located in the second south blind arch of Hagioi Theodoroi.
below the head of the horse ridden by the equestrian Saint Theodore Stratilatis. Drandakis signaled its existence in 1974. Although this text is apparently the church’s principal dedicatory inscription, it has never been published. Nor has the small figure represented adjacent to it been previously noticed.

Inscriptions A and B, which have received rather cursory treatment in previous publications, merit closer examination. In this paper, I will present the inscriptions, discussing their epigraphy, providing transcriptions, and commenting on the parts of the text that are not readily discernible. I will also reveal, for the first time, the portrait of the church donor. Unfortunately, due to the condition of the paintings and damage to the building, a full reading of the inscriptions is not possible. What can be deciphered, however, is extremely valuable. The reconstruction of the text sheds light on the people who lived in this settlement in the 13th century and later.
writer hopes that this study will stimulate, among other things, further discussion on the condition, customs and practices of Maniot society in the second half of the 13th century.

In order to facilitate discussion of the inscriptions, the church plan is annotated with their locations (Fig. 1).

**Inscription A** is located in the south blind arch of the church above the head of the nun Kyriake and adjacent to the arm of Saint Theodore Teron, one of the church’s patron saints (Fig. 2). It is one of the few of 13th century inscriptions written in minuscule. Entirely preserved, the text consists of nine lines of white letters on dark blue background written in simple, rather naive language. Parts of the inscription have been previously published.\(^8\) The complete text can be rendered as follows (Fig. 4):

\[
.\ Η \ παρομήος \ Κυριακο\(\acute{\nu}\) μο(να)(γή). \ ηθη Γάτιρ. λεοντοσ το του \ ροπούγη. (ει){στ}η(ν)σὴν[β]η [ο]σὴν \ τ[ο]υ ποτε. Κ(ύρι)ε ρὺσ(αι). ευθιμηου 5 \ ο\(μ\)ο(ναρη)(σου). του λεοντο(ς). ο \ κε πο \ λω λεοντοσ αγο[νι]\(τ\)\(υ\) (ανι)ε(θησον) τον πάνοντον \ άγηον \ γνων \ μεγάλον \ μαρ \ τόν \ θεοδωρον
\]

Paleographic notes

*Letters:* minuscule with some majuscule; *Accents:* acute and grave indicated; *Breathings:* no; *Dots:* several in the text, apparently between words but not in a scholastic manner; *Cross:* no cross; *Ligatures:* ην, ου, ευ; *Abbreviations:* μο, Μ, Κε; *Date:* n/a.

Comments

**Line 1:** according to Kalopissi\(^9\) “the term παρόμοιος/παρομοιωθείς included in inscriptions accompanying portraits refers to the representation\(^9\) of a real person” acting or having acted as κτήτωρ or δωρητής. The term, in the majority of cases, appears as “παρομήος” and is considered generally as a masculine gender adjective. For female donors the term becomes “παρομία”\(^\text{11}\) as it appears in a few inscriptions (“παρομία”).

In Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (“Η παρομήος Κυριακον μονοχη”) the word παρομήος is either recognized as an adverb (“παρομήος”) or the scribe considered the use of παρομήος as more scholarly and applied it irrespective of the donor’s gender.
The diminutive (roughly half scale in comparison to the military saint) female figure represented below the inscription and depicted with her hands extended toward Saint Theodore Teron is the nun Κυριακή. In her left hand she holds a rolled up scroll (ειλητ άριον), bound by a dark reddish-brown ribbon. A gold stripe or band also marks the scroll (Fig. 5). The scroll signifies Kyriake’s donation to the church. In exchange she asks the Saint to intercede on her behalf.

It is possible that the role of donors has to be distinguished between two kinds of offerings, a) where they act as “κτίτορες,” i.e. they are the initial founders of the church (“ωκοδομήσαντο εκ βάθρων”), or b) they act as “δωρητές,” i.e. they undertake part or whole of the repair (maintenance) and/or decoration (“υποστήριξη” or “υποστοιχία” or “απίφθεινε”) of the church. In the first case the offer of a church model is common 12 while in the second case the donor is depicted either with hands extended in entreaty 13 or holding a scroll, as in Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula. Kyriake’s portrait, which is not funerary but supplicatory, is rather of the second case; she holds a scroll. Her donation is not related to the foundation of the church but only to its sustenance. Another case in Mani where an unrolled scroll, although of different kind, is also carried by a (male) figure considered as donor, is in the sanctuary of the church of Hagios Nikolaos, Skalotsotianika 14 (end 13th century) (Fig. 6).

In Hagioi Theodoroi worth also is noting the nun’s long dark brown habit and especially the white piece of cloth, the “scarf,” wrapped around her head and neck and falling over the shoulders. Her face seems to be almost completely covered by this headdress, which one could say here acts also as a veil. This veil is a Western feature of a woman’s dress 15 and its

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13 N. B. Drandakis et al., “Ἔρευνα στὴ Μάνη,” *Prakt* 1979, 204, pl. 131 a-γ; Id., “Ὁ Άι-Γιαννάκης,” op.cit. (n. 11), 76, fig. 27, note 107.
15 See also the depiction of the “Ὁ Άι-Γιαννάκης” (third quarter of 14th century) female donors in Drandakis, “Ὁ Άι-Γιαννάκης,” op.cit. (n. 11), fig. 27.
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application in 13th century Mani may suggest Latin influence. The portrait indicates that this feature had become an element of the monastic costume of nuns in late 13th-century Mani.16

Line 2: the abbreviation μ χ ο" μοναχή " for the nun Kyriake is the same as in the line 12 of the dedicatory inscription at Archangel Michael at Polemitas17 (1278) for the nun Kallinike. The theta (" θ") in this line is usually drawn this way when in ligature with the next letter, for example as in line 2 (the word " μοχθου" ) at the Polemitas inscription.18 The letter θ appears three more times – in lines 4, 7, 9 – with ordinary script. We shall not consider here the latter writing as uncial.

Line 3: the Latin "w," resembling fifth letter of this line: "ω ," is the double letter γγ and not the ω. Drandakis construing this same letter in line 6 in the inscription in the church of the Archangel Michael Polemitas as ω came to read "μηνηφηνη"20 something that was later corrected by Kalopissi20 and Philippidis-Braat21 to "μηγγένη." Worth noting is the use of the grave accents in "μη[η][ο][η]σην." The identification of the second grave accent is questionable and it is arbitrarily drawn as such in this transcription (see Figs 3, 4). The scribe, although probably not highly educated,26 is consistent in his use of acute 16 G. Galavaris, “Two Icons of St. Theodosia at Sinai,” DChAE 17 (1994), 313-316; see also I. Bitha, “Δέησις Ερεώς Νικολάου Χαραμούντανη. Εικόνα Δέησης από τα Κύθηρα στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο Αθηνών ,” DChAE 22 (2001), 236, 237. 17 Drandakis , “Δύο ἐπιγραφὲς ναῶν,” op .cit . ( n. 9), 46. 18 Ibid., 45, fig. 1. Borrowing from the fettaugenstil. 19 Ibid., 46. 20 Kalopissi-Veriti, op.cit. (n. 5), 71,72. 21 Philippidis-Braat – Feissel, op.cit. (n. 11), pl. XVI, 314. 22 In the Polemitas inscription this letter when not in ligature is always written as Γ. 23 E. M. Thompson , Εγχειρίδιον Ἑλληνικ ῆς κα ὶ Λατινικ ῆς Παλαιογραφίας, trans . Σπ. Λάμπρου, Athens 1903, 281: “Codices vetusti” (950-1250), facsimile 39, p. 282. 24 Drandakis , “Δύο ἐπιγραφὲς ναῶν,” op.cit. (n. 9), 45, fig. 1. 25 Preliminary commentaries on this monument by: r. Etzeoglou - Ch. Konstantinidi, “Ο ναός του Αγίου Γεωργίου στην Κίττα της Μέσα Μάνης (1321),” Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο στη μνήμη Νικολάου Β. Δρανδάκη για τη Βυζαντινή Μάνη, Πρακτικά (ed . Ε. Ελευθερίου – Α. Μέξια ), Sparta 2008-2009, 213-219. 26 For the inscription Α: percentage of errors to letters 12,25%, error coefficient 0,322. For the concept and the calculation of the error coefficient see M. Panayotidi, “Οι γραμματικές γνώσεις των ζωγραφών. Ένα παράδειγμα σχετικού προβληματισμού από τη Μάνη ,” DChAE 24 (2003), 185-194.

Fig. 6. Skaltsotianika, Hagios Nikolaos (13th century). Depiction of donor.
and grave accents (discarding the words where he is omitting them entirely). The grave accent generally signals a word ending. If the transcription “σην[β]η[ο]σην” is correct, the preposition “σην” should be considered separately. Cases where the grave accent indicates the end of word are encountered at “φισ” line 4, “πολὼ” in line 6 and “τοιον” in line 8.

Lines 4, 5 and 6: the name of “ευθιμηος μοναχού του λεκουσι” obviously has to be included among the donors. The monk ευθιμηος appears here in line 6 as having tried hard (“πολὼ κοποιάς αγονι”) for the church. It is important to note that the name of a monk ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟΣ appears also in the seventeenth line of Inscription B (in uncial, see Fig. 13). The slight difference in the spelling of Ευθύμιος in the two inscriptions is tolerable. If we are speaking about the same person, which is hardly in doubt, the two inscriptions must be contemporary (see also comments on the Inscription B), although they were most likely drawn by different hands. From the context, it would appear that Inscription A is slightly later than Inscription B.

Line 7: if the verb “(αν)[ε]θεντο” is transcribed correctly we are speaking of more than one donor which makes us conjecture that this is a co-donation by the monk Euthymios and nun Kyriake,27 with the former been the principal one.

The almost common word in dedicatory inscriptions, “πανσευτον,” is here erroneously written as “πανσεπτον.” Very close examination of the script could not establish any ligating sign between τ and α, in which case one could read “πανσεπτον.”

Freely translated, the text reads: “This is the likeness of nun Kyriake, daughter of Leo Touropounges. Having been wife to him in the past, Lord, save the monk Euthymios Lekousia, he who, striving in a great struggle, dedicated this all-holy sacred church of the great martyrs Theodore.”28

The words in the inscription are all full without mutilations. The only word not completely written (save the abbreviations) is “χύσασ” (“redeem”) although, considering the grave accent, we may assume that the scribe thought of it as one syllable word “χύσ;” here the “αι” is absent. Most probably this can be attributed to a kind of haplography, judging from the first letter “ε” of the following word (ευθιμηος) which is pronounced with “αι.”29 This perhaps occurs also in line 7 with the three letters “τοιον.” Maybe the “τοιον” there does not belong to the “τοιον” as one can speculate at first glance but it is an article connected with the

27 See also Gerstel – Talbot, op. cit. (n. 6), 483. Based on the contents of the inscription Prof. Gerstel suggests that the couple separated when they took monastic vows.

28 Inscriptions A and B are also discussed in the forthcoming book by Sh. Gerstel, Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology and Ethnography, Cambridge University Press, 2015. I have collaborated with Prof. Gerstel in investigating a number of churches in Mani.

29 El. Mioni, Εἰσαγωγή στὴν Ελληνικὴ Παλαιογραφία, trans. N. Πετρεντιτσά, Athens 1979, 121. A simple example of haplography can be borrowed from the Polemius inscription, line 19: “…ο Πολεμιος μετοικος…” where the “ο” of the “μετοικος” is omitted in the script (Kalopissi-Verii, op. cit. (n. 5), 72); similar examples are quoted by N. B. Drandakis, «Οι τοιχογραφίες τῶν Ἁγίων Αναργύρων Κηπούλας (1265)», AEphem 1980, 118 n. 2.
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A first attempt rendering of the Inscription B is as follows:

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+ ΗΑΙ
ΟΘΝΗΤ/   ΚΑ  7]  
. ΟΠΗΣΤΟΣ  8]
. ΟΘΗΚΗΕ  {Ο}[ΚΟΔΟ]  5]  
5 . ΟΙΣΙΕΡ ΚΑΦΕΤ (Η)  2]  
. ΚΕΝ 1 ΚΕ 1ΟΥ  |||  ΘΟ  1]  
( )  ]  ΡΗ  6]  ΣΤΟ  2]  
. Ι  Ιό.]  aM  2]  
. ΠΑΝΣΕΠΤΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ M(M?)  
10 . ΑΡΤΙΩΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡ  
. ΚΑΘΟ ΤΟ ΔΩΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΤΟ  
. ΚΑΛΩΝ ΦΕΡΝΕ ΜΟ(β)  
. ΔΕΣΕΤΟ ΔΙΤΩΝ ΔΝ  
. ΤΙΧΩΣ Ρ [ΠΖ] Ε ΡΤΩΓΑ  
15 . ΤΙ ΟΠΟ - ΜΗ (||?)  ΤΑΧΗ  
. ΣΤΑ ΟΥΤΟΝΙ (Κ) Ε ΠΟΗ  
. ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟΝ ΜΟΝΑΧΟ  
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Paleographic notes

**Letters:** Uncial (few times the “α” and maybe the “ο” in minuscule); **Accents:** acute and grave indicated but not pedantically; **Breathings:** no; **Dots:** one dot at the beginning of all odd lines. Probably one dot at the end of all even lines; **Cross:** cross potent at the beginning; **Ligatures:** AN, TH, MM(M?); **Abbreviations:** TO, OY, ρ, oN, ol (?); **Date:** n/a.

Comments

As already stated, the inscription is badly preserved and the parts saved are only those where the reddish-brown ground

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30 Drandakis, “Ἐγερών 1974,” op. cit. (n. 2), 127. I was not able to find evidence showing that the paintings of the church have been cleaned in the years between 1974 and especially after 1996; but this is quite likely.

31 One could see similarities with epigraphic style uncials. To the writer the Inscription B excels other contemporary Maniot inscriptions. It is probably the most accomplished uncials of 13th century Byzantine Maniot epigraphy.

32 Gkioles, op. cit. (n. 3), 279, 283, 292 concludes that there are three phases of painting in this church: 11th century, third quarter of the 13th century (note: Inscriptions A and B), and Post-Byzantine, likely 18th century.

33 Gkioles, op. cit. (n. 3), 291.

34 The writing, for example, of the letters IMH in both the words ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟΣ (Inscription B) (Fig. 11) and ΔΙΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ (depiction of Saint) (Fig. 12) is identical.

35 Gkioles, op. cit. (n. 3), 291.
The inscription starts with a cross potent before the word ΗΔΙ which stands alone almost at the middle of line 1. The same cross style has been inscribed twice by a hand on the front side of the big slab, in second use, forming the lintel of the west main entrance of the Hagios Georgios, Kitta church.

Lines 2-8: At first glance few combinations of words can be securely transcribed (i.e. Ο ΘΝΗΤ, ΤΗΚ, ΚΟΔΟ, ΠΕΡ, ΚΑΤΕΚΤ, ΤΗΚ).
Lines 13 and 14: The donor begs the Saint to accept the donation (ΔΞΕΔΟΤΟΔΟΡΟΝ) and grant in return (ΑΝ – ΤΙΔΟ) his assistance. The plaster at the middle of the line 14 is missing therefore the rendering of the last word as ΠΙΠΡΩΤΕΓΑΤΑ although questionable is probable.

Lines 15 and 16: Herewith the letters ΤΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΧΗΣΤΟΥΤΟΝΙΚΕΠΟΙΗ can be positively read.

It is evident that the donor considers himself involved in a noble mission (assumingly the building, more precisely the repair and/or painting of the church), where the powerful assistance of the Saint is invoked in order for the work to be accomplished in very short time. In line 15 the space between ΠΟ and ΤΑ can accommodate up to three letters in the grid. Questionable is which is the right word incorporating the ΠΟ and the three (or two) unreadable letters thereafter. There is strongly attached deposit on the surface at this spot. The ΠΟ is definitely ΠΟ not ΒΟ, so the solution ΒΟΘΕΙΑ, even abbreviated, is declined. The substitute word ΡΟΜΗ(Ν) (ΡΩΜΗ(Ν), strength, power) is probable. If we assume that the Μ is written in a manner that consumes almost two character-spaces, the ambiguous letters after ΠΟ are two, not three. If we, at this part of line 15, make use of some more or less securely defined traces of straight vertical letter-lines, the script could be ΤΙΧΗΡΟΜΗΘΕΙΑ, although equally misspelt, is grammatically more correct (Fig. 14).

If the obscure letter after ΤΟΥΤΟΝΙ (“this one here”) is [Κ] Ε, equivalent to the conjunction ΚΑΙ (“and”, “as well”), maybe the monk Euthymios in the recent past had been occupied in a similar activity (another donation or maintenance or painting of a church) elsewhere in the area.

Line 17: The clearly visible name of the monk ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟ is the same with the co-donor of the Inscription Α.

At this stage the more or less readable lines 9 to 17, in a first attempt free translation, can be read as follows:

Fig. 14. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Inscription B, probable rendering of line 15.
“… all-holy church of the (great) martyrs Theodore. Having offered this donation to be given blessings, kindly accept the offering and give in return, you respected leader of the endeavours, by use of your powers, monk Euthymios to finish the work in this one church here as well, in very short time.”

Separation sign (hyphen) of words at the end of the line cannot be discerned from the remainder of the inscription. Most probably such never existed.

As said a dot is noticed at the end of lines 12, 16. No dot is noticed signaling the end of any odd line; the present condition of the inscription right side, readability-wise, is acceptable. This observation is significant in so far as dots or double dots (colons) have been noticed nearly always at the end of verses in manuscripts since the 11th century. If the dots at the end of even lines are combined with those noticed at the beginning of odd lines, one can consider the text between consecutive dots as belonging to the same phrase, i.e. this observation provokes reading the lines in pairs.

Combining the pairs of lines 11-12, 13-14 and 15-16,
three verses of an epigram in Byzantine dodecasyllable appear (orthography adjusted):

11-12 Σὰς τὸ δοτήριον τ( ὸ) καλ ὸν φερνέ μοι
13-14 Δέξαι τὸ ὸ δόρον ἀντιδ ὸς Πρωτεργάτα
15-16 Τῇ σῇ ῥώμῃ τάχιστα τούτον ἱκανοί

The rendering of the inscription as a Byzantine dodecasyllable epigram guides the observer to reconsider the former given transcription, taking into account metrical "pre-requisites." First, the ambiguous (but common) transcription (ΜΕΓΑΛΩΝ) in the 9th line must be discarded and this line to be read instead as follows:

9 ΠΑΝΣΕΠΤΟ ἡ ΜΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΝ

which combined with line 10 gives the twelve-syllable verse #5: ΠΑΝΣΕΠΤΟ ΝΑΟΣ ΜΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΝ.

Further by collecting whatever can be traced from the lines 2 to 6 of the script, we can speculate on the formation of few other verses of the epigram, i.e.:

a. 1/2 1 + ἩΛΙ / ΘΕΟΝΗΤΙ / ΚΑ

Two syllables after KA are missing

b. 3/4 2 ὈΠΙΣΤΟΣ Ε / ΣΟΘΙΚΗ [ΟΙΚΟΙΟΙ][ΜΗΣΕ]

The reservedly restoring of the word [ΟΙΚΟΙΟΙ][ΜΗΣΕ], is based on the few script traces found in place and the generally prescribed metrical and prosodical rules of the dodecasyllable.

c. 5/6 3 ὈΣΠΕΡ ΚΑΤΕΤΕΙΧΙ / [Ω] / ΚΕΙ ΚΕΙ ΟΥ ΠΟΘΟΣ

An unidentified script which resembles abbreviation is noticed at the end of 5th line. The letter omega is reservedly recognized, therefore at this place, for reasons of comprehension and metre, the interjection “ω!” is adopted. The erection of a church with desire (“πόθος”) or because of desire (“εκ πόθου”) is a commonplace in (metrical) inscriptions, therefore the “building up” of the word “πόθος” around the positively identified letters ΘΟ (line 6) is a justified assumption. Let us be reminded that the phrase “εκ πόθου” appears in the church of Hagios Georgios Geraki (15th century?). Simultaneous presence of the words πόθος and πίστις (πιστός) in metrical inscriptions has also been noticed.

a. Last but not least is the herebelow hypothetical reconstruction of the missing line 18. Considering it as comprised of the monk Euthymios’ surname found in Inscription A, the (possibly) ending verse of the epigram becomes this:

17/18 9 ΕΥΘΙΜΗΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΧΟ / ΚΟ ΛΕΚΟΥ ΣΙΑ}


37 Philippidis-Braat – Feissel, op.cit. (n. 11), 345, 383.

Hence the epigram, orthographically adjusted, can be reservedly restored as follows (the slash "/" corresponds to the division point of the two-line verse). The upper section is partially arbitrarily conceived, while the transcription of the lower half is much more close to the original text:

We are dealing with a metrical dedicatory inscription written in a rather scholarly style. Among the usages of the epigrams are expressions of prayers, supplications, exhortations, in verse. The inscription discussed, like epigrams in books, is written in a majuscule of the epigraphic style, maybe imitating letters used for “real” stone inscriptions. This is what gives to the script that calligraphically distinctive appearance which, as said, excels others in Maniote Byzantine epigraphy.41

Commenting on the metre of the epigram, one notes that whatever the regular Byzantine dodecasyllable prescribes is present: for instance, enjamments are avoided; hiatus is also avoided; caesurae, as expected, are noticed after the 5th or 7th syllable [randomly masculine (m) or feminine (f)]. In this case they are succeeding one another as follows (in the first verse the caesura is noticed after the 5th syllable, thereafter (1-5m), 2-7l, 3-5f, 4-n/a, 5-5m, 6-7l, 7-5f, 8-7l, 9-7m): Prosody oppositely to metre is loosely kept.

Grammatical errors are noticed: parecheses, ( interchange of ο and ου and vise versa), iotacisms, inappropriate use of verb (ΦΕΡΝΕ) and possibly of personal pronoun (CE) (line 6). The pattern of the dodecasyllable, requiring a stress on the penultimate syllable of the verse, is followed. This is obvious especially in verse 6 (lines 11-12) where the word ΦΕΡΝΕ ΜΟΙ in the script has the accent on the ultimate, although grammatically the accent should rather belong to the penultimate. The word ΠΟΙΗ (line 16) is pronounced as one syllable, non-stressed. A poetic inversion of words order in line 16 occurs: the subject (the donor monk ΕΥΘΥΜΙΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ Ο ΛΕΚΟΥΣΙΑ) is placed after the verb ([Κ] E ΠΟΙΗ). It is evident that rhythmical punctuality has priority over grammatical.

The mise en page, especially from line 4 downwards, attempts to decently reflect that verses are self-contained and equal units, both visually and acoustically, imitating in a sense a structure based on the ancient principle of isokola.42 They appear to be of equal length and equal duration in acoustic performance. The attempt to have the beginning and the end of the verses at about equal distance from the borders gives the impression of visual equilibrium and emphasizes the rhythmical equality of the verses. To achieve this, certain abbreviations have been used (see Fig. 13).

A free translation of the complete epigram follows. The donor monk Euthymios is addressed to Saints Theodore Stratilates (words in parentheses are to facilitate comprehension):

“Delightful is the mortal [to ...], the saved faithful erected (a church), which has been established, oh! (you holy one), out of desire for you being victorious… (missing letters)… all-sacred church of the martyrs Theodore. (Having offered) to you this donation in order to be given blessings, accept the offering and give in return, you Leader of the endeavours, by use of your powers, monk Euthymios Lekousias to finish the work in this one church here as well, in very short time.”

Inscription in verses has also been noticed by Drandakis in the church of Chrysafitissa43 (1290). One and a half out of four verses have been left of an epigram in dodecasyllable in the church of Hagioi Theodore, Kaphiona.44 The Inscription B is definitely by different hand from the one of Inscription A due to obvious stylistic handwriting discrepancies between the two, use of uncials instead of minuscule and educ-
RATION OF THE Scribe. Pertaining to the latter we notice that his percentage of errors-to-letters in the Inscription B is 6% compared to 12.25% of the Inscription A writer and the error coefficient at B is a mere 0.175 compared with the 0.322 of Inscription A.45

The mention of Euthymios in both inscriptions is apparently, as in the case of Kyriake, supplementary, so, taking in consideration that Euthymios was ΠΟΛΛῷ ΚΟΠΙΑΣΣΑΣ ΑΓΩΝΙ and ΤΑΧΙΣΤΑ ΤΟΥΤΟΝ (τὸν νοῦν) ΚΕΠΟΙΗ we are justified to search for “the likeness of a man invested in church construction,” i.e. an effigy near the inscriptions.

Inspired by a conversation with Professor Sharon Gerstel, I revisited the church in September 2013.47 After very carefully brushing the surface dust and loose dirt from the area to the left of Inscription B, the faded figure of a man appeared (Fig. 15). The portrait is in small scale (proportionately the same as that of the portrait of Kyriake in the adjacent blind arch), its remaining height today is about 1 m. The figure, a lean, rather old, bearded man, is depicted on a dark sap green ground. He is represented in nearly three-quarter pose, dressed in a brown monastic robe – showing some cloth ornaments at its lower part – and is looking towards the inscription with one hand extended. It appears that he grasps the unrolled scroll (resembling reddish-brown fabric rather than parchment) on which the inscription is written. It is impossible to determine whether his head was covered or not. Fig. 16 is a reconstruction of the composition.

Preliminary cleaning also revealed a few inscribed words over his head, a suppuratory prayer (δέησις) that reads as follows:

+ ΔΕΗϹΙϹ ΕΥΘΗΜΗΟΥ ΜΟ(ΝΑΧΟΥ) ΑΕΚΟΥϹΑ .

Note: Five dots form a cross at the beginning. Two or three dots are positioned vertically at the end. The prayer is drawn by the same hand and is contemporary with Inscription B.

In the church of Hagioi Theodoroi the prayer with the dedicatory Inscription and the portrait of the donor are both located on the south wall of the church.49 This ΔΕΗϹΙϹ confirms the attribution of the third word of line 5 in Inscription A (λεκονιείς), to the family name of the monk Euthymios, i.e. ΕΥΘΗΜΗΟΥ ΛΕΚΟΥϹΑΣ or ΛΕΚΟΥϹΑΣ or ΛΕΚΟΥϹΑΣ, with the latter being most probable. The family name ΛΕΚΟΥϹΑΣ survives today in the nearby village of Karavas of Kounos, villages in the valley immediately below Ano Poula ridge.

The solemnness of the illustration, the attitude of the donor monk extending the scroll,50 the meticulousness and artistic skill in drawing the inscription, as well as the details of the donation (as already written: ΠΟΛΛῷ ΚΟΠΙΑΣΣΑΣ ΑΓΩΝΙ – Inscription A – and ΤΑΧΙΣΤΑ ΤΟΥΤΟΝ (τὸν νοῦν) ΚΕΠΟΙΗ – Inscription B), indirectly indicates significant expenditure, which makes us conjecture that Euthymios was not a modest donor monk but a person of financial means in the local society and one who was fairly literate. Assuming that he was related to Kyriake, all the above would be valid for the nun as well.

Conjectured from the ΑΝΤΙΛΟϹ of the principal Inscription B and the θυσίας (αυς) of the (later) Inscription A, we may assume that at the time when the inscription was written both the nun Kyriake and the monk Euthymios were probably alive.

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45 See Panayotidi, op.cit. (n. 26), 186, where worked examples are cited. The above figures and percentages for Inscription B are calculated for words and letters in lines 9 to 17.

46 Gerstel – Talbot, op.cit. (n. 6), 486.

47 Prof. Gerstel was the first to suggest in correspondence with me that there might be traces of a small human figure near the inscription.

48 Judging from the form of the curvature of his back, as it is drawn this curvature.


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Provenance of the Figures

Fig. 1: Drandakis, “‘Ερευναί 1974,” op.cit. (n. 2), 126. Figs 2-16: Panayotis Stam. Katsafados.
Παναγιώτης Σταμ. Κατσαφάδος

ΝΕΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΙΣ ΑΦΙΕΡΩΤΙΚΕΣ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΕΣ (13ος αιώνας) ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΩΝ ΑΝΩ ΠΟΥΛΑΣ, ΜΕΣΑ ΜΑΝΗΣ

Στην παρούσα μελέτη επανεξετάζονται οι απεικονισμένες των δωρητών και οι συναφείς αφιερωτικές επιγραφές που βρίσκονται στη μικρή εκκλησία των Αγίων Θεοδώρων στο οροπέδιο της Άνω Πούλας στη Μέσα Μάνη. Παρατίθενται πέραν των μέχρι τους δημοσιεύμενων, τα οποία και περιλαμβάνονται, και καινούργια στοιχεία από την επιστοπή ήξενα του συγγραφέα.

Οι προηγηθείσες δημοσιεύσεις, πλην των αρχιτεκτονικών στοιχείων και του εικονογραφικού προγράμματος, αναφέρθηκαν και σε επιγραφές του 13ου αιώνα που βρίσκονται στην εκκλησία, επιφανείς σχεδόν αποκλειστικά στην μία εξ αυτών, το κείμενο της οποίας βρίσκεται στο νότιο, τρίτο από ανατολικά, τυφλό αψίδωμα δίπλα στην απεικόνιση της δωρητρίας μοναχής.

Μια δεύτερη επιγραφή, της ίδιας περιόδου, βρίσκεται, επίσης, στο νότιο τοίχο, στο δεύτερο από ανατολικά τυφλό αψίδωμα κάτω από την κεφαλή του αλόγου του έφιππου αγίου Θεοδώρου του Στρατηλάτη. Της επιγραφής αυτής ήδη από το 1974 είχε σημειωθεί η ύπαρξη. Αν και το συγκεκριμένο κείμενο εμφανίζεται να είναι η κέρια αφιερωτική επιγραφή του ναού, εν τούτω δεν έχει συζητηθεί στα παρελθόν. Ούτε η απεικόνιση ανδρός ενδεδεμένου μοναστικού ένδυμα δίπλα στην επιγραφή είχε γίνει αντιληπτή.

Οι επιγραφές αυτές αξίζουν προσεκτικότερης μελέτης. Στο παρόν κείμενο παρουσιάζονται αναλυτικά και γίνεται η μεταγραφή και ο σχεδιασμός των τμημάτων τους τα οποία είναι αναγνώσιμα. Παρουσιάζεται, επίσης, και το πορτραίτο δωρητή, του οποίου η παρουσία στο παρελθόν δεν έχει γίνει αντιληπτή. Δυστυχώς, λόγω της γενικής κατάστασης των επιγραφών και του κτηρίου στο σύνολό του, η μεταγραφή, ιδιαίτερα της κυρίας των επιγραφών, δεν είναι δυνατή. Παρ’ όλα αυτά, ο γράφων ελπίζει ότι η παρούσα μελέτη θα αναζωπυρώσει τη συζήτηση για τα έθιμα, τις συνήθειες και τις καθημερινές πρακτικές της κοινωνίας της Μάνης στα τέλη του 13ου αιώνα, μετά την επαναφορά της βυζαντινής κυριαρχίας στην περιοχή.

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