

Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

Τόμ. 36 (2015)

Δελτίον ΧΑΕ 36 (2015), Περίοδος Δ'



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

Panayotis Stam. KATSAFADOS

doi: [10.12681/dchae.1788](https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.1788)

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Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

KATSAFADOS, P. S. (2016). Νέα στοιχεία για τις αφιερωτικές επιγραφές (13ος αιώνας) του ναού των Αγίων Θεοδώρων Ανω Πούλας, Μέσα Μάνης. *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, 36, 275–288. <https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.1788>

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

Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει τις απεικονίσεις των δωρητών και τις συναφείς αφιερωτικές επιγραφές στην εκκλησία των Αγίων Θεοδώρων στην Άνω Πούλα της Μέσα Μάνης. Περιλαμβάνει ό,τι έχει δημοσιευθεί μέχρι σήμερα για το θέμα αυτό και συνεισφέρει παράλληλα στοιχεία από την επιτόπια έρευνα του συγγραφέα, τα οποία μέχρι σήμερα είχαν διαφύγει της προσοχής. Μεταξύ αυτών είναι το σωζόμενο τμήμα από την κύρια αφιερωτική επιγραφή του ναού (13ος αιώνας) και η απεικόνιση του δωρητή.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Υστεροβυζαντινή περίοδος, 13ος αιώνας, μνημειακή ζωγραφική, αφιερωτικές επιγραφές, προσωπογραφίες δωρητών, δωρητρια Κυριακή μοναχή, δωρητής μοναχός Ευθύμιος Λεκουσάς, Μάνη, Άνω Πούλα, ναός Αγίων Θεοδώρων Άνω Πούλας.

Located in the north part of the Ano Poula (Makryna) ridge in Mesa Mani,¹ Hagioi Theodoroi is a barrel-vaulted single-naive 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.² In 1996, Nikolaos Gkioles published a more comprehensive study of the church's paintings.³

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).⁴ Sophia Kalopissi-Verti also discussed this text in her study of dedicatory inscriptions⁵ and Sharon Gerstel included it in a recent study on nuns in rural Byzantium.⁶

A second inscription (see below Inscription B), seemingly of the same period, is located in the second south blind arch

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.

*Mech.-Electr. Engineer, Naval Architect NTUA, Historian, panskats@yahoo.gr

Notes (following symbols are valid throughout the article):

- () Abbreviated or omitted letters or signs restored.
- [] Most probable rendering of faded out letters or signs.
- { } Ambiguous rendering of letters or signs.
- X [] Number of estimated missing letter-spaces - no rendering.

¹ P. S. Katsafados, *Τά Κάστρα της Μάνης*, Athens 1992.

² N. B. Drandakis, "Έρευνα εις την Μάνην," *Prakt* 1974, 125-128.

³ N. Gkioles, "Ο ναός του Αγ. Θεοδώρου Άνω Πούλας στη Μέσα Μάνη," *ΛακΣπουδ* 13 (1996), 277-305.

⁴ Drandakis, "Έρευνα 1974," op.cit. (n. 2), 127; Gkioles, op.cit. (n. 3), 289.

⁵ S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece*, TIB 5, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 1992, fig. 91.

⁶ Sh. Gerstel - A.-M. Talbot, "Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside," *DChAE* 27 (2006), 486.

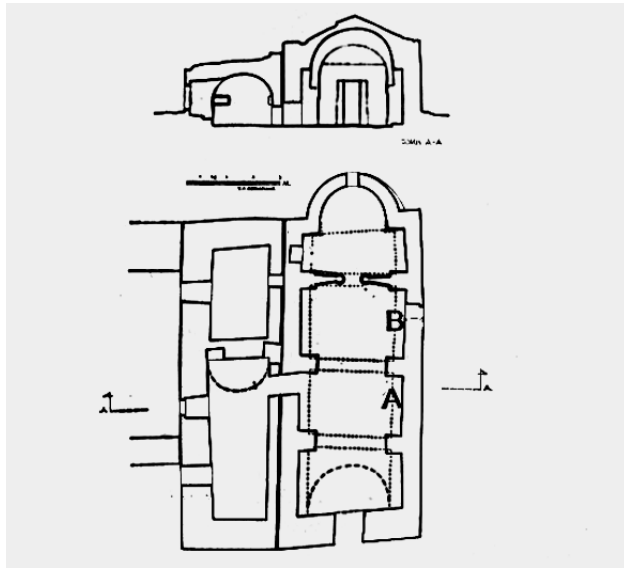


Fig. 1. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Location of Inscriptions. Plan after Drandakis.

below the head of the horse ridden by the equestrian Saint Theodore Stratilatis. Drandakis signaled its existence in 1974.⁷ 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. The

Fig. 2. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Inscription A. The donor nun (left) depicted in small scale compared to the named Saint.



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 παρομοιοσ. Κυριακν
μο(να)χ(ή). ηθηγάτιω. λεοντοσ το του
ροπούγγη. (ει)χ(στ)η(ν)σ(ή)ν[β]η[ο]σ(ή)ν
τ[ου] ποτε. Κ(ύρι)ε ρ(ύ)σ(αι). ευθυμηου
5 μο(να)χ(ου). του λεκουσί{α}. ο κε πο
λ(ώ) κοποιάσασ αγο[νι]
(αν)[ε]θεντο τ(ι)ύ(τον) τον πάνσευτον
άγηον ναδ(ν) μεγάλον μαρ
τίρον 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:* μ^χο, Μ^χο, Κε; *Date:* n/a.

Comments

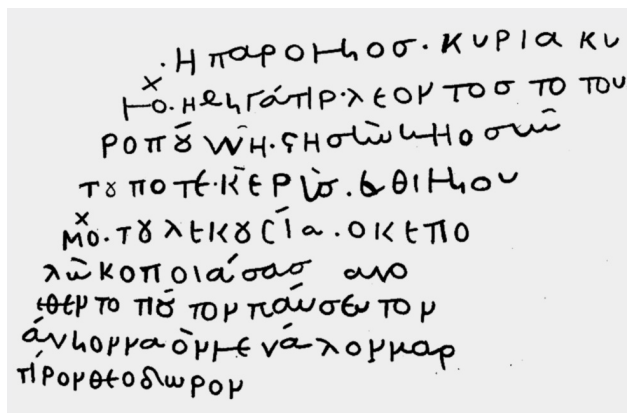
Line 1: according to Kalopissi⁹ “the term παρόμοιος/παρομοιωθείς included in inscriptions accompanying portraits refers to the representation¹⁰ of a real person” acting or having acted as κτίτωρ or δωρητής. The term, in the majority of cases, appears as “παρομ(η)ιος” and is considered generally as a masculine gender adjective. For female donors the term becomes “παρομία”¹¹ as it appears in a few inscriptions (“παρομί(ή)α”).

In Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (“Η παρομοιοσ Κυριακν μοναχη”) the word παρομοιοσ is either recognized as an adverb (“παρομοίως”) or the scribe considered the use of παρομοιοσ as more scholarly and applied it irrespective of the donor's gender.



Fig. 3. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Inscription A.

Fig. 4. Hand drawn transcription of Inscription A.



⁷ Drandakis, “Έρευνα 1974,” op.cit. (n. 2), 127.

⁸ Drandakis, “Έρευνα 1974,” op.cit. (n. 2), 127; Kalopissi-Verti, op.cit. (n. 5), 106, Appendix; Gkioles, op.cit. (n. 3), 289.

⁹ Kalopissi-Verti, op.cit. (n. 5), 101; N. B. Drandakis, “Ο Ταξιάρχης της Χαρούδας και η κτητορική επιγραφή του,” *ΛακΣπουδ* 1 (1972), 287-288; Gerstel – Talbot, op.cit. (n. 6), 486; id., “Δύο επιγραφές ναών της Λακωνίας του Μιχαήλ Άρχαγγέλου (1278) στον Πολεμίτα της Μάνης και της Χρυσοαφίτισσας (1290),” *ΛακΣπουδ* 6 (1982), 59.

¹⁰ Gerstel – Talbot, op.cit. (n. 6), 486. Prof. Gerstel uses the term “likeness”.

¹¹ N. B. Drandakis, «Ο Άι-Γιαννάκης του Μυστρά», *DChAE* 14 (1987-1988), 61-82, 78; Id., “Ο Ταξιάρχης της Χαρούδας,” op.cit. (n. 9), 275-291, 287, 288; A. Philippidis-Braat – D. Feissel, “Inventaires en vue d’un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance: III, Inscriptions du Péloponnèse,” *TM* 9, 273-371, 338.



Fig. 5. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. The nun Kyriake holding a scroll.

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 (ειλητάριον), 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 βάρων”), or b) they act as “δωρητές,” i.e. they undertake part or whole of the repair (maintenance) and/or decoration (“ιστορήθη” or “ωκοδομήθη” or “ανέθεντο”) of the church. In the first case the offer of a church model is common¹² while in the second case the donor is depicted either with hands extended in entreaty¹³ 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, Skaltsotianika¹⁴ (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 dress¹⁵ and its

¹² R. Etzeoglou, “Quelques remarques sur les portraits figures dans les églises de Mistra,” *XVI Internationaler Byzantinisten Kongress, Akten 11/5, JÖB 32* (1982), 518; the case of the Charouda church “κτίτορες” is studied by Drandakis in “Ο Ταξιάρχης της Χαρούδας,” *op.cit.* (n. 9), 287-290.

¹³ N. B. Drandakis *et al.*, “Έρευνα στη Μάνη,” *Prakt* 1979, 204, pl. 131 α-γ; Id., «Ο Άι-Γιαννάκης», *op.cit.* (n. 11), 76, fig. 27, note 107.

¹⁴ N. B. Drandakis – E. Dori – S. Kalopissi – M. Panayotidi, “Έρευνα στη Μάνη,” *Prakt* 1978, 149.

¹⁵ See also the depiction of the “Ο Άι-Γιαννάκης” (third quarter of 14th century) female donors in Drandakis, “Ο Άι-Γιαννάκης,” *op.cit.* (n. 11), fig. 27.



Fig. 6. Skaltsotianika, Hagios Nikolaos (13th century). Depiction of donor.

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 $\mu\lambda\omicron$ “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 “λαριωνα”¹⁹ something that was later corrected by Kalopissi²⁰ and Philippidis-Braat²¹ to “λαριγγα.” Worth noting is that in our inscription the letter γ appears in form similar to the Latin “v” (half “w”) in line 6 once and in line 8 twice.²² The syllables “πουγγη” of the first word in line 3 can be, acoustically only, related with the toponym of the

small area “(Κατω)Πάγγι” at location “Πάγγια” or “Παγγιά,” a few kilometers north of the village Kounos.

The remaining transcription of line 3 is challenging since three letters are uncertain. In order of uncertainty they are: the στίγμα after the first dot drawn with a cursory script, the βήτα after the first “σην” and the όμικρον following the next two letters. These three letters all belong to the last (ambiguous) word of the line. As far as the βήτα is concerned, looking carefully with a magnifying glass reveals that the two ligating letters after the first “σην” are likely “βη” where β (beta) is written in the older²³ manner: “ ω ,” we occasionally see in the dedicatory inscription in the church of the Archangel Michael Polemitas²⁴ (1278) line 7, fourth word, “βλαχερνίτης,” line 12, nineteenth word, “βασ(ιλέως) and line 25, first word, “πειρόβλια,” as well as at the second line of the Hagios Georgios, Kitta (1321 or 1322)²⁵ inscription “της βασιλ...” and eighth line “μ(ην)η φαιβρουαριου,” while the η (which has almost disappeared) is present and is written as customary. The reconstructed word is provisionally read as “σην[β]η[ο]σην.” Worth noticing is the use of the grave accents in “σην[β]η[ο]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 Ιερῶς Νικολάου Χαρομουντάνη. Εικόνα Δέησης από τα Κύθηρα στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο Αθηνών,” *DChAE* 22 (2001), 236, 237.

¹⁷ Drandakis, “Δύο ἐπιγραφεὺς ναῶν,” *op.cit.* (n. 9), 46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 45, fig. 1. Borrowing from the fettaugenstil.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

²⁰ Kalopissi-Verti, *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, *Ἐγχειρίδιον Ἑλληνικῆς καὶ Λατινικῆς Παλαιογραφίας*, trans. Σπ. Λάμπρου, Athens 1903, 281: “Codices vetusti” (950-1250), facsimile 39, p. 282.

²⁴ Drandakis, “Δύο ἐπιγραφεὺς 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. E. Ελευθερίου – Α. Μέξια), Sparta 2008-2009, 213-219.

²⁶ For the inscription A: 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 ζωγράφων. Ένα παράδειγμα σχετικού προβληματισμού από τη Μάνη,” *DChAE* 24 (2003), 185-194.



Fig. 7. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. The Inscription B is under the window of the middle south wall apse.

and grave accents (discarding the words where he is omitting them entirely). The grave accent generally signals a word ending. If the transcription “σῆν[β]η[ο]σῆν” is correct, the preposition “σῆν” should be considered separately. Cases where the grave accent indicates the end of word are encountered at “ρὺσ” line 4, “πολῶ” in line 6 and “ναδὸν” in line 8.

Lines 4, 5 and 6: the name of “εὐθιμηοῦ μοναχοῦ του λεκουσι{α}” obviously has to be included among the donors. The monk εὐθιμηος appears here in line 6 as having tried hard (“πολῶ κοποιάσας ἀγο[νι]”) for the church. It is important to note that the name of a monk ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟC appears also in the seventeenth line of Inscription B (in uncial, see Fig. 13). The slight difference in the spelling of Εὐθύμιος 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 “(αυ)[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, “πανσεπτον,” is here erroneously written as “πανσευτον.” Very close examination of the script could not establish any ligating sign between εὐ and τ, in which case one could read “πανσεπτον.”

Freely translated, the text reads: “This is the likeness of nun Kyriake, daughter of Leo Touroupongēs. Having been wife to him in the past, Lord, save the monk Euthymio 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 “ρὺσαι” (“redeem”) although, considering the grave accent, we may assume that the scribe thought of it as one syllable word “ρὺς;” 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 (εὐθιμηος) which is pronounced the same with “αι.”²⁹ This perhaps occurs also in line 7 with the three letters “τον.” Maybe the “τον” there does not belong to the “τιού” 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 Ἑλληνικὴ Παλαιογραφία*, trans. N. Παναγιωτάκη, Athens 1979, 121. A simple example of haplography can be borrowed from the Polemitas inscription, line 19: “...ο Ρουμάνησ μετου(σ) συγγκενουσ...” where the “σ” of the “μετου(σ)” before the “σ” of the “συγγκενουσ” is omitted in the script [Kalopisi-Verti, op.cit. (n. 5), 72]; similar examples are quoted by N. B. Drandakis, «Οἱ τοιχογραφίαι τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀναργύρων Κηπουλάς (1265)», *AEphem* 1980, 118 n. 2.

“πανσευτον;” thus the last syllable “τον” of the word “τούτον” is on purpose omitted for acoustical reasons.

Inscription B is located at the center of the second south blind arch below the only window on this wall (Fig. 7). Because the opening of the window is not protected the paint of the decorated surface above the inscription, as well as the upper section of the inscription itself, has been largely destroyed by moisture and rain. Drandakis in 1974 characterized the inscription as faded-out (“εξίτηλος”) and largely illegible.³⁰ Upon careful observation, however, one notices white uncial letters about 2-2,5 cm in height on a dark reddish-brown vertical band, that is about 60 cm in preserved height and 25 cm in width. It is evident that the scribe has paid close attention to the writing and the use of thick whitish paint gives the letters a quasi “low relief” appearance (see Figs 8-11). The inscription is orderly and in calligraphic script.³¹ It is partially saved. Numerous letters have already faded; where the reddish-brown ground is destroyed the inscription has disappeared. Several letters are obscured by surface dirt. Meticulous cleaning of the script could possibly reveal more of the letters. An indeterminate part of the lower section at a height of *ca.* 70 cm above the ground and part of the two lines at the middle (lines 7 and 8) of the inscription are lost due to local destruction. Seventeen lines are preserved with thirteen to fifteen letters per line. The date of the inscription, if such initially existed, was most probably written at the lowest part and is now lost. Superficially observing the inscription, it looks as it was intended to form part of the overall painted composition, unlike Inscription A, which was conveniently accommodated under the sword of Saint Theodore Teron.

The script compared to that of Inscription A is definitely more sophisticated and gives the impression that this is the main dedicatory inscription of the second layer of painting in the church.³² We can thus date the inscription to *ca.* 1270,³³ and more closely to 1265. Stylistic comparison of Inscription B³⁴ to the inscribed names of the adjacent Saints supports the assumption that the same adept hand³⁵ was responsible for both, although there is strong evidence that more than one painter was involved in the second phase of the church’s decoration.

The inscription is provisionally transcribed below in an attempt to determine the real picture of the script (Fig. 13). A virtual grid of 15×17 cells has been used. The blank places (marked []) are those totally illegible.

A first attempt rendering of the Inscription B is as follows:

		+ ΗΔΙ	
		ΟΘΝΗΤ/ ΚΑ	7[] (.)
		· ΟΠΗCΤΟC	8[]
		· CΟΘΗΚΕ {Ο}[ΚΟΔΟ]	5[] (.)
5		· ὈCΠΕΡ ΚΑΤΕCΤ {Η}	2[]
		· CΕΝ ΙΚΕΙ ΟΥ [][] ΘΟ	[] (.)
(.)	2[] ΠΗ	6[] CΤΟ	2[]
		Π 10x [] αΜ	2[] (.)
		· ΠΑΝCΕΠΤΟC ΝΑὸC Μ(Μ?)	
10		· ΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡ (\\)	.
		· CΑC ΤΟ ΔΟΤΗΡΙ(Ο)Ν ΤΟ	
		· ΚΑΛὸΝ ΦΕΡΝΕ Μ(Ο)ι	.
		· ΔΕΞΕΤΟ ΔΩΡΟΝ ΑΝ	
		· ΤΙΔΟC Π [ΡΩΤ] Ε ΡΓΑΤΑ	(.)
15		· ΤΙ CΗ ΡΟ Μ Η ([]?) ΤΑΧΗ	
		· CΤΑ ΤΟΥΤΟΝΙ [Κ] Ε ΠΟΙΗ	.
		· ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟC ΜΟΝΑΧΟ	

Paleographic notes

Letters: Uncial (few times the “a” and maybe the “o” 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, MH MM(?); *Abbreviations:* TO, OY, / (OC), \\ (oN), ω! (?); *Date:* n/a.

Comments

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

³⁰ Drandakis, “Ἐρευναί 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 *ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟC* (Inscription B) (Fig. 11) and *ΔΙΜΗΤΡΙΟC* (depiction of Saint) (Fig. 12) is identical.

³⁵ Gkioles, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 291.



Fig. 8. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. The upper part of Inscription B (lines 1-6).



Fig. 9. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Upper middle part of Inscription B (lines 4-10).



Fig. 10. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Lower middle part of Inscription B (lines 11-15).



Fig. 11. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. The lower part of Inscription B (lines 14-17).



Fig. 12. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. The name ΔΙΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ at the third south blind apse of the church, by the Saints' nimbus.

is still in place. Some few notes on the script can thus be reservedly made, mainly from the line 9 onwards. What is significant is, even at this poor condition, based on the words securely transcribed, we can come to useful conclusions:

Line 1: 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, COΘHK, {O}KOAΔO], ὈCΠEP KATECT{H}, ...CENI KEIOY).

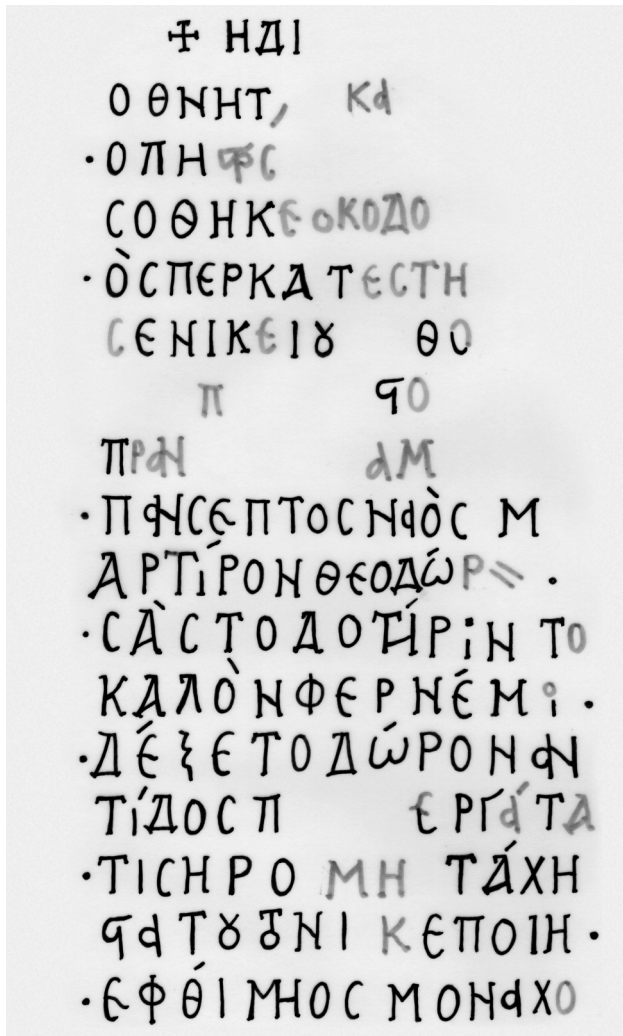


Fig. 13. Transcription of Inscription B.

Lines 9-10: The left upper edge of the third letter T in line 10 is worn out, that is why it resembles to Γ; the correct rendering is thus ΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ and not ΑΡΓΙΡΟΝ. Combining the ΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡ(Ν) of the 10th line with the ΠΑΝΣΕΙΠΤΟΣ ΝΑΔΟΣ ΜΜ (although the existence of the second M is questionable) of the 9th line we have the name of the church ΠΑΝΣΕΙΠΤΟΣ ΝΑΔΟΣ (ΜΕΓΑΛΩΝ) ΜΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡ(Ν), where the ΔΟΤΗΡΙΟΝ and ΔΩΡΟΝ of the next lines refer to.

Lines 11 and 12: Donation to the church is herewith confirmed from the words ΔΟΤΗΡΙΟΝ [made in anticipation to ΦΕΡΕΙΝ ΚΑΛΟΝ (line 12)]. To be noticed the grave accent at ΚΑΛΟΝ signaling end of word.



Fig. 14. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Inscription B, probable rendering of line 15.

Lines 13 and 14: The donor begs the Saint to accept the donation (ΔΕΞΕ ΤΟ ΔΩΡΟΝ) and grant in return (ΑΝ – ΤΙΔΟΣ) his assistance. The plaster at the middle of the line 14 is missing therefore the rendering of the last word as Π[ΡΩΤ]ΕΡΓΑΤΑ although questionable is probable.

Lines 15 and 16: Herewith the letters ΤΙ Χ Ρ Ο Μ Η ([I]?) ΤΑ Χ Η Σ Τ Α Τ Ο Υ Τ Ο Ν Ι [Κ] Ε Π Ο Ι Η, can be positively read. It is evident that the donor considers himself involved in a noble mission (assumably 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 ΡΟ and ΤΑ can accommodate up to three letters in the grid. Questionable is which is the right word incorporating the ΡΟ and the three (or two) unreadable letters thereafter. There is strongly attached deposit on the surface at this spot. The ΡΟ is definitely ΡΟ not ΒΟ, so the solution ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ, 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 ΡΟ 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 ΤΙ Χ Ρ Ο Μ Η, which compared to ΤΙ Χ Ρ Ο Μ Η Ν, 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 ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟΣ is the same with the co-donor of the Inscription A.

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



Fig. 15. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. The monk Euthymios.

“... 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,

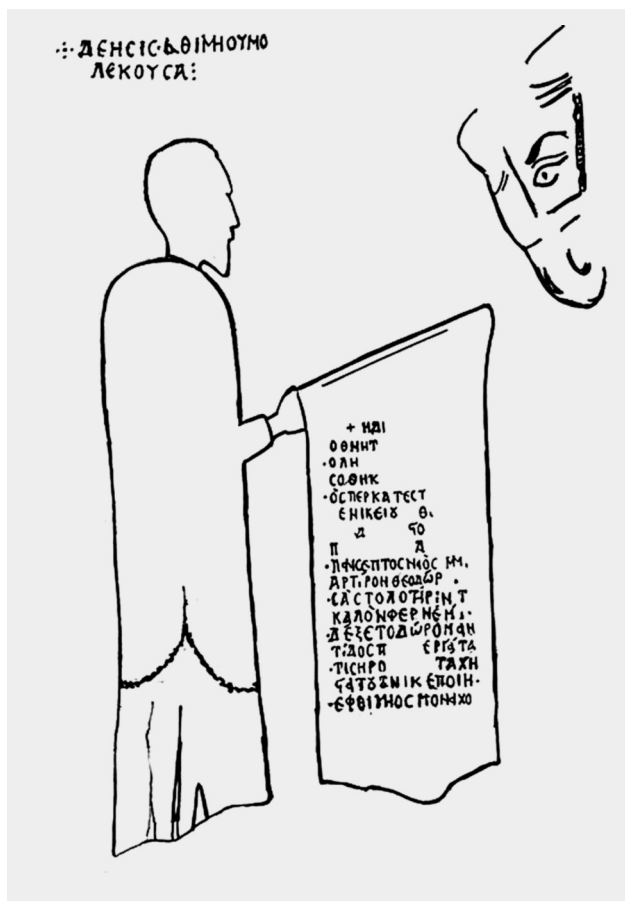


Fig. 16. Ano Poula, Hagioi Theodoroi. Sketch showing the place of Inscription B and the supplication of the monastic donor Euthymios in relation to the depiction of Saint Theodore Stratilatis.

three verses of an epigram in byzantine dodecasyllable appear (orthography adjusted):

11-12 Σὰς τὸ δοτήριον τ(ὸ) καλὸν φερονέ μοι
 13-14 Δέξαι τὸ δῶρον ἀντιδὸς Πρωτεργάτα
 15-16 Τῆ σῆ ῥώμη τάχιστα τουτονὶ καὶ ποιῆ

The rendering of the inscription as a byzantine dodecasyllable epigram guides the observer to reconsider the formerly given transcription, taking into account metrical “prerequisites.” First, the ambiguous (but common) transcription (ΜΕΓΑΛΩΝ) in the 9th line must be discarded and this line to be read instead as follows:

9 . ΠΑΝΣΕΠΤΟΣ ΝΑΘΣ [M]

which combined with line 10

10 ΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡ(Λ) .

gives the twelve syllable verse #5: ΠΑΝΣΕΠΤΟΣ ΝΑΘΣ ΜΑΡΤΙΡΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡ(Λ).

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 + ΗΔΙ / ΟΘΗΗΤ, ΚΑ

Two syllables after ΚΑ are missing

b. 3/4 2 ΟΠΗΣΤΟΣ Ε / ΣΟΘΗΚΕ {Ο}{ΚΟΔΟ}{ΜΗΣΕ}

The reservedly restoring of the word {Ο}{ΚΟΔΟ}{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 ὍΣΠΕΡ ΚΑΤΕΤ{Η} {Ω!} / ΣΕΝΙΚΕΙΟΥ 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 (“ἐκ πόθου”) is a commonplace in (metrical) inscriptions,³⁶ 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 “ἐκ πόθου” appears in the church of Hagios Georgios Geraki (15th century?).³⁷ Simultaneous presence of the words πόθος and πίστις (πιστός) in metrical inscriptions has also been noticed.³⁸

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 ΕΦΘΙΜΗΟΣ ΜΟΝΑΧΟ / ΣΟ ΛΕΚΟΥΣΙΑΣ

³⁶ A. Rhoby, “The Structure of Inscriptional Dedicatory Epigrams in Byzantium,” *La poesia tardoantica e medievale IV Convegno internazionale di studi Perugia* (15-17/11/ 2007), Atti in onore di Antonino Isola per il suo 70° genetliaco (ed. C. Burini De Lorenzi – M. De Gaetano), 318.

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

³⁸ Rhoby, “The Structure of Epigrams,” op.cit. (n. 36), 319.

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:

1/2 + Ἡδὺ / ὁ θνητὸς // κα³⁹ ὤ⁴⁰
 3/4 Ὁ πιστὸς ἐσώθη καὶ // ὠκοδόμησε
 5/6 Ὅσπερ κατέστη // {ὦ!} / σὲ νικεῖον πόθος
 7/8 x πη ὤ στο_πραν // x_αμ_
 9/10 5 Πάνσεπτος Ναὸς // Μαρτύρων Θεοδώρων
 11/12 Σὰς τὸ δοτήριον τ(ὸ) // καλὸν φερνέ μοι
 13/14 Δέξαι τὸ δῶρον // ἀντιδὸς Πρωτεργάτα
 15/16 Τῆ σῆ ρώμη τάχιστα // τουτονὶ καὶ ποιῆ
 17/18 Εὐθύμιος Μοναχὸς // ὁ Λεκουσίας

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, enjambments 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), 2-7f, 3-5f, 4-n/a, 5-5m, 6-7f, 7-5f, 8-7f, 9-7m) :

Prosody opposedly to metre is loosely kept.

Grammatical errors are noticed: parentheses, (interchange of ο and ω and vice versa), iotacisms, inappropriate use of verb (ΦΕΡΝÉ) 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 ΦΕΡΝÉ Μ(Ο)Ι 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 ΕΦΘΪΜΗΟC ΜΟΝΑΧΟ[C Ο ΛΕΚΟΥCΙΑC]) is placed after the verb ([K] 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 Theodoroi, 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 edu-

³⁹ This verse should not be considered as a mutilated dodecasyllable but an intentionally placed octasyllable, although the mixture of different metres is not very common [see also Rhoby, “The Structure of Epigrams,” op.cit. (n. 36), 317].

⁴⁰ Iambic metre: x_ὤ_.

⁴¹ Calligrapher copyists of codices had extensively used epigrams to beg for the divine assistance in order their task to be ended successfully.

⁴² M. Lauxtermann, “The Velocity of Pure Lambs. Byzantine Observations on the Metre and Rhythm of the Dodecasyllable,” *JÖB* 48 (1998), 9-33.

⁴³ Drandakis, “Δύο ἐπιγραφεὺς ναῶν,” op.cit. (n. 9), 56-59.

⁴⁴ N. Drandakis, “Les peintures murales des Saints-Theodores à Kaphiona,” *CahArch* 32 (1984), 171.

cation 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, supplicatory, so, taking in consideration that Euthymios was *πολλῶ κοπιάσας ἀγώνι* and *TAXIΣΤΑ ΤΟΥΤΟΝΙ* (τὸν ναὸν) *ΚΕΠΟΙΗ* we are justified to search for “the likeness of a man invested in church construction,”⁴⁶ 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,⁴⁸ 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 supplicatory prayer (*δέησις*) that reads as follows:

+ ΔΕΗCIC ΕΥΘΙΜΗΟΥ ΜΟ(ΝΑΧΟΥ)
ΛΕΚΟΥΣΑ :

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 ΔΕΗCIC confirms the attribution of the third word of line 5 in Inscription A (*λεκουσί(α)*), to the family name of the monk Euthymios, i.e. *Ευθύμιος Λεκουσίας* or *Λεκουσής* or *Λεκουσάς*, with the latter being the most probable. The family name Λικουσάς 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: *πολλῶ κοπιάσας ἀγώνι* – Inscription A – and *TAXIΣΤΑ ΤΟΥΤΟΝΙ* (τὸν ναὸν) *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 *ΑΝΤΙΔΟC* of the principal Inscription B and the *ρῦσ(αι)* 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.

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 to the inscription.

⁴⁸ Judging from the form of the curvature of his back, as it is drawn by the artful painter, as well as the relative position of the head to this curvature.

⁴⁹ S. Papadaki-Oekland, “Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τῆς Ἁγίας Ἄννας στό Ἄμάρι. Παρατηρήσεις σέ μιὰ παραλλαγή τῆς Δεήσεως,” *DChAE* 7 (1973-1974), 48 n. 19, 35.

⁵⁰ See the depiction of the Virgin Paraklesis (1315) at Saint Nicetas near Scopje in V. Djurić, “L’art des Paléologues et L’Etat Serbe,” *Actes du Colloque organisé par l’Association Internationale des Études Byzantines*, Venise 1968, pl. LXXX, fig. 7, ΔΕΞΕ ΔΕΗCYN ...; see also T. Velmans, “Le portrait dans l’art des Paléologues,” *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues, Actes du Colloque organisé par l’Association Internationale des Études Byzantines*, Venise 1968, 126.

Provenance of the Figures

Fig. 1: Drandakis, “Ἐρευνᾶ 1974,” op.cit. (n. 2), 126. Figs 2-16: Panayotis Stam. Katsafados.

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

Στην παρούσα μελέτη επανεξετάζονται οι απεικονίσεις 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 τούδε δημοσιευμένων, τα οποία και περιλαμβάνονται, και καινούργια στοιχεία από την επιτόπια έρευνα του συγγραφέα.

Οι προηγούμενες δημοσιεύσεις, πλην των αρχιτεκτονικών στοιχείων και του εικονογραφικού προγράμματος, αναφέρθηκαν και σε επιγραφές του 13ου αιώνα που βρίσκονται στην εκκλησία, εστιάζοντας σχεδόν αποκλειστικά στην μία εξ αυτών, το κείμενο της οποίας βρίσκεται στο νότιο, τρίτο από ανατολικά, τυφλό αψίδωμα δίπλα στην απεικόνιση της δωρητριας 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 κύρια αφιερωτική επιγραφή του ναού, εν τούτοις δεν έχει συζητηθεί στο παρελθόν. Ούτε η απεικόνιση ανδρός

ενδεδυμένου μοναστικό ένδυμα δίπλα στην επιγραφή είχε γίνει αντιληπτή.

Οι επιγραφές αυτές αξίζουν προσεκτικότερης μελέτης. Στο παρόν κείμενο παρουσιάζονται αναλυτικά και γίνεται η μεταγραφή και ο σχολιασμός των τμημάτων τους τα οποία είναι αναγνώσιμα. Παρουσιάζεται, επίσης, και το πορτραίτο δωρητή, του οποίου η παρουσία στο παρελθόν δεν είχε γίνει αντιληπτή. Δυστυχώς, λόγω της γενικής κακής κατάστασης των τοιχογραφιών (και του κτηρίου στο σύνολό του) πλήρης μεταγραφή, ιδιαίτερος της κυρίας των επιγραφών, δεν είναι δυνατή. Παρ' όλα αυτά, οτιδήποτε σήμερα μπορεί να μεταγραφεί είναι εξαιρετικά σημαντικό και η επαναδόμηση του κειμένου ρίχνει φως στο κοινωνικό περιβάλλον στην περιοχή εκείνη περί τα τέλη του 13ου αιώνα και αργότερα. 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.

*Μηχανολόγος ηλεκτρολόγος μηχανικός -
ναυπηγός ΕΜΠ, Ιστορικός,
panskats@yahoo.gr*