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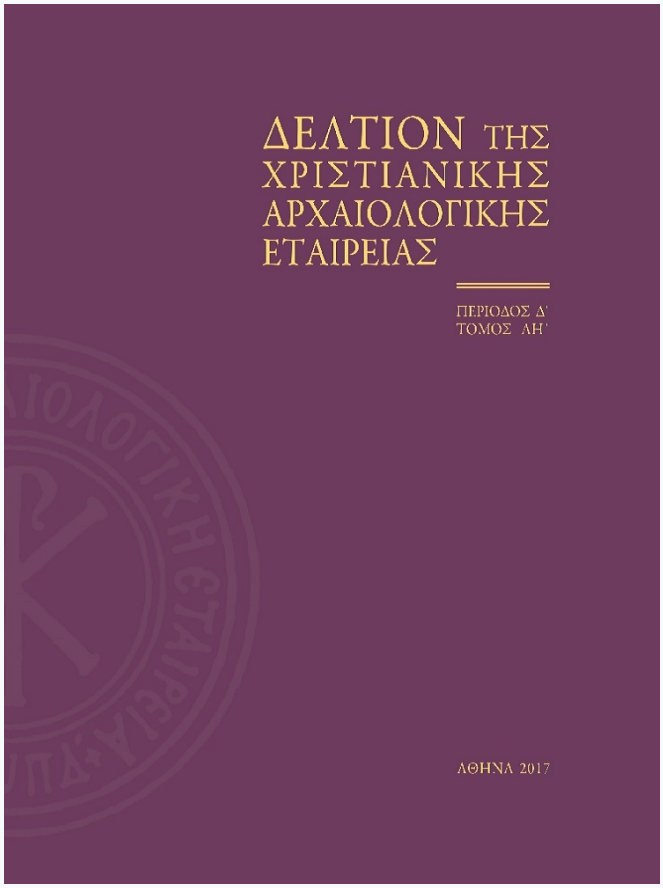

Νέες επιγραφικές μαρτυρίες από τη Μάνη. Τα επιγράμματα της Καφιόνας

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Panayotis St. Katsafados

NEW EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FROM MANI. THE KAPHIONA EPIGRAMS

Στο άρθρο γίνεται αναλυτική παρουσίαση του διασωθέντος κειμένου και προτείνεται προκαταρκτική, κατά το δυνατόν, αποκατάσταση δύο επιγραμμάτων στην εκκλησία των Αγίων Θεοδώρων στην Καφιόνα της Μέσα Μάνης. Πρόκειται για δύο από τα ελάχιστα δείγματα επιτοίχιων έμμετρων επιγραφών στην περιοχή, οι οποίες σήμερα είναι δυσανάγνωστες. Παρ' όλα αυτά, προσεκτική επιγραφική και παλαιογραφική μελέτη αποκαλύπτει ότι πρόκειται για εξαιρετικά δείγματα από αισθητική και λόγια άποψη, τα οποία παράλληλα συνεισφέρουν τόσο στην ιστορική γνώση όσο και στις γνώμες για την εγγραμματοσύνη των κατοίκων της Μάνης, την πρώτη μετά τους Φράγκους περίοδο. Ως χρονολογία γραφής τους εκτιμάται το καλοκαίρι του 1264.

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

Λέξεις κλειδιά

13ος αιώνας, επιγραφές, επίγραμμα, βυζαντινή Μάνη, Άγιοι Θεόδωροι, Καφιόνα.

Keywords

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

The church of Hagioi Theodoroi close to the village of Kaphiona is among the most distinguished Byzantine monuments in Mesa Mani, Laconia. Although the exterior of the church is not extensively adorned, the horseshoe-shaped arch crowning the south door is impressive. The terracotta tiles, forming a band on the outside of the arch, are slightly curved in order to properly match the rounded shape of the opening. The interior of the church is decorated with monumental paintings of exceptional significance and artistic value. Inscriptions associated with the paintings refer to Sevastokrator Konstantinos Palaiologos, the step brother of the emperor Michael VIII, and to high ranking donors, the prelate Georgios of Veligosti and an unnamed synkellos. Among the inscriptions, two epigrams stand out – one above the south entrance and the other on the north wall above the Synaxis of the Archangels. Because of their exceptionally poor condition they have only partially been read in previous publications on the church[1]. The

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[1] N. Drandakis, "Les peintures murales des Saints-Theodores à Kaphiona", *CahArch* 32 (1984), 163-175. Idem, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες της Μέσα Μάνης* (Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, αρ. 141), Athens 1995, 70-100, fig. 12-17. For

Fig. 1. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona, south wall. The six-verse epigram.

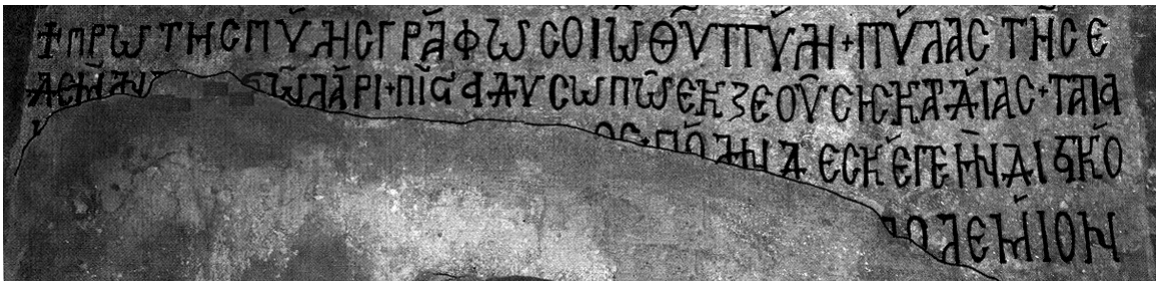

Fig. 2. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona, south wall. The six-verse epigram. Graphic restoration of the preserved part.

areas of the epigrams have been recently cleaned and maintained (Fig. 1).

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

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

The distinguishing monumental decoration of Hagioi Theodoroi in Kaphiona and its epigrams, following Drandakis, should be attributed to a workshop originating in Constantinople. This assertion was based on the quality of the paintings as well as on the contents of the inscription in the main sanctuary, which names the emperor's step-brother, the Sebastokrator Konstantinos Palaiologos[2]. From 1263, Konstantinos was in Mani for a short

the Kaphiona inscriptions see also S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (VeröffTIB 5), Vienna 1992. V. Foskolou, "'In the Reign of the Emperor of Rome...': Donor Inscriptions and Political Ideology in the Time of Michael VIII Palaiologos", *DChAE* 27 (2006), 455-462. The first epigram is also mentioned by A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken*, Vienna 2009, 234, no 137.

[2] N. Drandakis, "Παρατηρήσεις στις τοιχογραφίες του 13ου αιώνα που σώζονται στη Μάνη", *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, New York 1986, 697.

Fig. 3. Hagioi Theodoroi Kaphiona. Sanctuary apse, south inscription (posterior).

period[3]. Drandakis, based on historical data and artistic style, dated the paintings and the epigram to 1263-1270[4].

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

Written in a scholarly style, the epigram consists of six[5] verses in the commonly used Byzantine dodecasyllable ("iambic trimeters" according to Drandakis), incorporated in a four line script above the lintel of the entrance in the south wall[6]. Estimated per line (on average) are about 40 letters; there are no voids between the words. The legible part is graphically restored, as accurately as possible to its original appearance, in Fig. 2.

Based on the existence of the word *ΠΟΛΕΜΊΟΝ* ("πολεμίων," "of enemies")[7] at the terminus, the epigram is plausibly devoted to a saint with military powers, either Theodore Stratilates or Theodore Tyron. The word *ΠΟΛΕΜΊΟΝ*, combined with the words "ΠΥΛΗ, ΠΥΛΑC" (several times in line 1) and the word "ΠΟΛΗΝ" in the third line, supports the idea that the epigram is a text inspired by military concerns. It refers to a town and probably its gates in a hostile environment. The town, whose name is not revealed, seems to be in imminent danger. The text further informs the reader that the people of the town were pleading for assistance against the enemy, most likely invoking the help of St. Theodore Stratilates, the military saint depicted in large scale in the sanctuary apse.

[3] Drandakis, "Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 164.

[4] Ibid., 165.

[5] Drandakis ["Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 171] initially counted four ("une inscription de 4 vers en lettres noires..."). The same later [*Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες*, op.cit. (n. 1), 98] clarified as consisted of four lines. Rhoby [*Byzantinische Epigramme*, op.cit. (n. 1)], assumed that it originally consisted of five verses.

[6] On the Byzantine dodecasyllable, which has its origin in the iambic trimeter, see P. Maas, "Der byzantinische Zwölfsilber", *BZ* 12 (1903), 278-323; see also A. Rhoby, "Vom jambischen Trimeter zum byzantinischen Zwölfsilber. Beobachtung zur Metrik des spätantiken und byzantinischen Epigramms", *Wiener Studien* 124 (2011), 117-142, 124. Idem. "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 70o genetliaco*, Clara Burini De Lorenzi and Miryam De Gaetano (eds), Alessandria 2010, 311.

[7] *ΠΟΛΕΜΊΩΝ* (plural). Although orthographically incorrect, is definitely preferred from *ΠΟΛΈΜΙΟΝ* (singular) due to the existing accent and the metrical rules of the dodecasyllable (accent on the penultimate).

The scribe attempts to give to the letters an elegant epigraphic style, likely of Constantinopolitan influence[8]. The text reflects the extraordinary conditions prevailing during the time when the church's decoration was carried out and underlines the significance and status of the donors mentioned in the (older) principal inscription in the sanctuary apse[9], the bishop Georgios of Veligosti and an unnamed synkellos.

The epigram is written by a literate person who was most probably not a native of Mani. The orthography of the painter is considered quite satisfactory. His literacy level is overall ranked "very good" (*Error Index* = 0,076)[10]. By his consistency in the use of accents (although sometimes erroneous), he facilitates our understanding of the more obscure parts of the text.

The preserved part of the six-verse epigram is rendered below with the verses separated for convenience. The second verse –depending on the possible readings– is quoted in two alternatives[11]:

1 *+ΠΡΩ ΤΗC ΠΥΛΗC ΓΡΑΦΩ COI ¦¦ Ω^ Θ(EO)Y^ ΠΥΛΗ*
2a *+ΠΥΛAC TH^(CE) / ΔÈMANT ¦¦ [...] ~ΩΛΑΡΙ*
2b *+ΠΥΛAC TH(^)^{or}(˜)(CE) / ΔEÌMANT ¦¦ [...]~ΩΛΑΡΙ*
3 *+ΠΙCTEI ΔYCΩΠΩ^ ¦¦ EK ξEOY^CHC KAPΔΙAC*
4 *+TAΠEI/N(O) [...] [...] OC*
5 *+ΠΟΛΗΝ ΔE CKΕΠE ¦¦ H~N ΔI EIKÓ/(NΩN)*
6 *+ [...] [...] ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΝ*

or in minuscule (keeping the orthography):

1 +Πρω της πύλης γράφω σοι ¦¦ ῶ Θ(εο)ῦ πύλη
2a +Πύλας τῆς Ε/δὲμ ¦¦ αντ [...] ~ωλάρι

[8] V.i. note 58.

[9] Drandakis, "Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 164. The older script at the north part of the sanctuary apse (i.e. the one that was uncovered after the collapse of the clay, which Drandakis describes occurring in his 1958 visit and which is hardly discerned today, see below Fig. 8), is of different *ductus* compared with the inscription photographed before the collapse [Drandakis, "Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 164, fig. 1]. The latter is rather by the same hand as the one now preserved on the south part of the sanctuary apse (see below Fig. 4) [Drandakis, "Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 165, fig. 2. Idem, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες*, op.cit. (n. 1), 74-76].

[10] For the literacy assessment of the early Palaeologan period Mani painters, an *Error Index* has been introduced by this author (P. Katsafados, *Palaeographic Analysis of the Early Palaeologan Maniote Epigraphy*, forthcoming). The definition of the *Error Index* (a quasi-reverse index of literacy) and its calculation is based on to the method proposed by Maria Panayotidi in her article "Οι γραμματικές γνώσεις των ζωγράφων. Ένα παράδειγμα σχετικού προβληματισμού από τη Μάνη", *DChAE* 24 (2003), 185-194. Proposed *Error Index* ranking: 0-0,09 very good; 0,10-0,19 good; 0,20-0,29 medium; 0,30-0,39 poor; 0,40-0,50 very poor. The ranking of the *Error Index* does not assess errors in the use of accents, breathings and punctuations. Considering the inscriptions so far published the average *Error Index* for the scribes of the late Byzantine period in Mani has been calculated to be in the medium range.

Error Index (*EI*) of the historiographers of Kaphiona:

3-verse epigram (1264)	*EI* = 0,0
6-verse epigram (1264)	*EI* = 0,076
Inscription at sanctuary apse (posterior)	*EI* = 0,146

It should however be stressed that in the cases of inscriptions in verse certain exceptions or limitations in the calculation of the *Error Index* should occasionally be taken into account. For instance in the present calculation of the *EI* the considered as wrongly written "ΠΟΛΗΝ" (instead of "ΠΟΛΙΝ") in the fifth verse is maybe a poetic license knowingly substitution of the short (in this case) iota of the "ΠΟΛΙΝ" by a long eta ("ΠΟΛΗΝ"), in order the prosody of the second syllable (should be long) to be properly reinstated; the same could be valid for the orthographically wrong omega (in the place of an omikron) of the "~ΩΛΑΡΙ" at the end of the second verse; since accent and quantity never stand in opposition to each other, the stressing at the initiating syllable of the first verse could perhaps be the reason for the provokingly erroneous orthography of the preposition "ΠΡΩ" (instead of the correct "Πρὸ", before, in front of).

The discussion of the literacy level of scribes and painters has always been a very delicate topic. Under this prism the fact that the orthography of the epigram in question is herewith considered as "quite satisfactory" is evidential only and does not necessarily constitute a concrete proof of high literacy level from the part of the executive person (i.e. the correct spelling of an inscription is not a necessary and sufficient condition for high literacy of the scribe). Further questions are often posed at such circumstances, as: what was the quality of the template the scribe had at hand? Additionally, what someone today calls "poor orthographic quality" in certain cases may reflect regional peculiarities. On this subject see also: H. Eideneier, "Ορθογραφική αναρχία – έλλειψη παιδείας; Ζητήματα ορθογραφίας σε μεταβυζαντινά χειρόγραφα", *Μελέτες για την ελληνική γλώσσα. Πρακτικά της 25ης ετησίας συνάντησης του Τομέα Γλωσσολογίας του Τμήματος Φιλολογίας της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, 7-9 Μαΐου 2004*, Thessaloniki 2005, 197-205.

[11] The " / " signals change of line and the " ¦¦ " caesura. The symbol " ~ " is in the place of the abbreviation sign. The symbol " ^ " stands for the circumflex.

2b +Πύλας τη(˜)^{or}(^)σε / δεὶμαντ ¦¦ [...] ~ωλάρι
3 +Πίστει δυσωπῶ ¦¦ εκ ζεοῦσης καρδίας
4 +Ταπει/ν(ο) [...] [...] ος
5 +Πόλην δε σκέπε ¦¦ η~ν δι εικό/(νων)
6 + [...] [...] πολεμίον

Notes

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

2. Line 1 (verse 2): the word ΠΎΛΑC is definitely recognized as the first word of the verse. Of the last four line letters the *T* and less the *H* can also be confirmed. Above the *H* a faded horizontal stroke is noticed. This obscure stroke cannot be unambiguously acknowledged as circumflex. It could equally be the sign of abbreviation. The remaining two letters are in very bad condition, retaining only their lower parts. Reservedly the lower curves of *C* and/or *E* can be discerned. If the mark is the circumflex and the first letter is considered as *C*, we are speaking either of the article "TH^ C" or, combined with the following E, the pronoun "TH^C(Δ)E" ("of this here", indicative) where the delta of the particle "ΔE" is either in the first place omitted for some reason or not discernible today. If the mark is the abbreviation sign, the pronoun "TH˜C" ("TAYTHC") ("of this", also indicative) could be a possibility, given that the subsequent *E* rather belongs to the following word in the next line[13]. What is formed by the letters "T, H, C and E" is critically related to the deciphering of the second verse in next line 2.

3. Line 2 (verse 2): six letters (*Δ*, *E*, *M*, *A*, *N* and *T*) at the beginning are confirmed. The nu and the tau are half lost but are considered secured. The *A* and the following *N* are ligating. A cuneiform grave accent is definitely discerned above the *M*[14]. Grave accent normally dictates the ending of a word. Combined with the "article" alternative of the word "TH^C" and the conjectured letters *C* and *E* of the previous line, the apparent reading is: "Πύλας τῆς 'Εδὲμ". It hence seems that the second verse could plausibly refer to "gates of Edem". About five letter-spaces later the ending part of the verse is securely identified as "~ΩΛΆΡΙ". A difficultly discernible wavy horizontal line (~) is seen above the omega and a cuneiform acute accent above the alpha. Immediately after, an obscure sign resembling a small cross signals the end of the second verse and the beginning of the third. Given the uncertainty in deciphering what is before the last word-part "~ΩΛΆΡΙ", a quick rendering of the sentence that makes sense is quite problematic, if not speculative. Without rejecting the aforesaid option, further steps in order to investigate potential alternatives will be: (a) scrutiny of the indistinct spots of the vestiges and (b) improvisation on the lost section.

The so far secured part of the verse is:

[12] A. Orlandos, "Ἡ Μονὴ τῆς Κάτω Παναγιᾶς", *ABME* 2 (Athens 1936), fig. 19, 87. The verse inscription of Kato Panagia is also edited in A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramm*, op.cit. (n. 1), nr. GR8. See also general analysis in G. Velenis, "Σχόλια και παρατηρήσεις σε πολύστιχες πλίνθινες επιγραφές", *Αντίφωνον. Αφιέρωμα στον καθηγητή Ν. Β. Δρανδάκη*, Thessaloniki 1994, 266-268.

[13] Between the *indicative* pronoun solutions, the "TH˜C(ΔE)" option is in a first approach preferable compared to the "TH˜C" (="ταύτης"), since it is conception-wise less vague. However, both options incorporate some hardly encountered *vulgarism* –provided they are considered as parts of an epigram that seems to have an erudite origin–, since they refer to a town which should have been mentioned earlier or right after (the town in question is, instead, mentioned quite later, in the fourth line). In any case the option "TH˜C" is obligatory to be written in abbreviated form and not as full word ("TAYTHC") in order to conform to meter prerequisites of the second verse (twelve syllables and ending accent on the penultimate).

[14] The grave accent over *E* could probably be erroneously put in the place of an acute accent. Provocatively erroneous is the circumflex above the *OY* of the word "*ZEOY˜ΣHΣ*" in the third line.

2a *+ΠῪΛΑC TH(^)or(˘)(C E) / ΔÈMANT [U ‖ _ x]*
~ΩΛÁPI[15]

The "pronoun" (indicative) alternatives can do with both the interpretations of the mark on top of "THC" of the first line. Considering the horizontal stroke above the "THC" ("TH(^)or(˘)C") as abbreviation sign (~) and not as *tonismos* -in this case the circumflex (^)[16], we option ourselves to deal with the "TH˘C" as the –right previously– discussed "pronoun" alternative "TAYTHC". Assigning instead the circumflex above the "THC", we option to the other pronoun alternative "TH^C(Δ)E", where the *Δ* is either omitted or not discernible. In both cases the word formed by the sequence of the six letters "Δ-È-M-A-N-T" needs to be specially examined. It is probably originating from the verb "δέμω" (build, erect), often used in epigrams and dedicatory inscriptions[17]. The correct spelling, in all its credible applications, dictates the presence of an iota after the epsilon. Indeed, carefully observed after magnification, the horizontal stroke of the letter *E* seems to be on purpose extended and tied to the left vertical stroke of the *M*, therefore an escaping notice ligating iota ("I") following the *E* could be a possibility (Fig. 4a, b). The two or three missing letters of the word in question could conceivably be further inferred; a preceding E is expectable, while (a) either a lost end-letter *O* or (b) two lost ending letters *EC* or *AC* are possible. The "pronoun" alternative, although to a certain degree speculative, is no inferior to the "article" alternative mentioned before. Besides its acceptance gives enticing solution and for this reason it will be supplementary commented.

Having the preceding ambiguous –v.s. page 291– ending letter of the first line confirmed as *E* and staying in the "THC" interpretation as pronoun, we are faced with the following three options (pertaining to the amended letters' sequence: "Δ-E-Ì-M-A-N-T"), to decide upon:

1 *"...TH˘C E / ΔEÌMANT(O)..."*
2 *"...TH^C(Δ)E / ΔEÌMANT(EC)..."*
3 *"...TH˘C E / ΔEÌMAN T(?)..."*

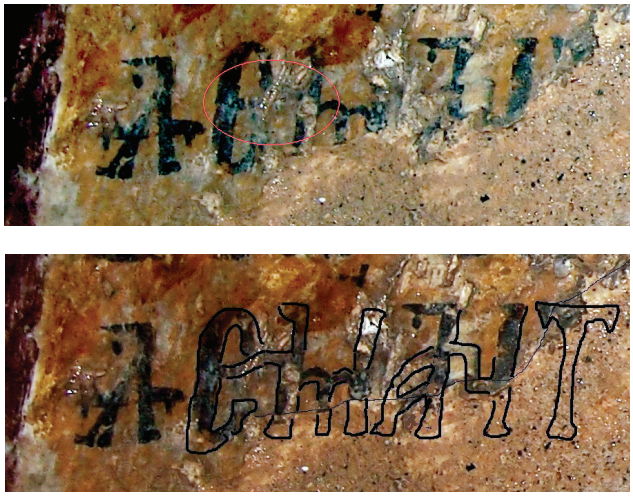

Fig. 4a, b. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The six-verse epigram. Second verse (detail): «ΔEÌMANT».

in minuscule:

4 "...τη˘σ ἐ / δεὶμαντ(ο)..."
5 "...τῆσ(δ)ε / δεὶμαντ(ες)..."
6 "...τη˘σ ἐ / δεὶμαν τ(?)..."

The third option must be discarded due to the accent. Although the latter is drawn as grave (should be acute accent) the *tonismos* is actually on the diphthong *EI*, not at the preceding *E* and this excludes the third option. Of the two remaining the first "TH˘C EΔEÌMANTO" (passive voice) is interpreted as: "(the gates) of this (town) were built ..." and the second "TH^C(Δ)E ΔEÌMAN-T(EC)" (active voice participle) as: " (the gates) of this one (town) having built ...". In both readings it is evident that the first half of the second verse, incorporating the word *ΠΥΛΑC*, speaks about the erection, upgrading or reinforcing of gates. Which of the two options is more probable has to do with the comprehension, decipherment and grammar of the next part of the epigram. Before proceeding with this examination, we should emphasize that the vocabulary used for describing the act of erecting an edifice of any kind combined with the word *ΠΙCTEI* (faith) in the following verse is common in epigrams[18]. Common also is the use of words having

[15] "U", "_" and "x" denote the missing syllables of the last two meters.

[16] The circumflex is used three times. Its form in all cases is a clear bow.

[17] Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 329.

[18] Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 319.

the same root as "ΖΕΟΥΣΗΣ" (burning), for instance "ζέοντι τῷ πόθῳ", also reported used on the occasion of the erection of a church[19]. It is also important to note that the verb "ΔΥCΩΠΩ^" (beg), in present tense, states that the scribe is referring to current events. The above dilemma of the two options "ΕΔΕÌΜΑΝΤΟ" or "ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ(ΕC)" renders the rest of the second verse both interesting and intriguing. What will be discussed hereafter refers to the "pronoun" alternative of the word "THC", either in the accented edition "THˇC" or the abbreviated "TH^C"; of course the eventual offspring of this improvisation should be equally valid for the previously referred to "article" alternative as well.

The interpretation of "~ΩΛΑΡΙ" is decisive for the overall comprehension of the epigram. Taking into consideration metric prerequisites of the dodecasyllable, three syllables before it are missing. Seeking for a verb, adverb, adjective, common or proper noun etc associated with the ending "~ΩΛΑΡΙ" that would help the verse in question to make sense, due to the extremely limited choices, I initially came to the rather obvious name "CX(K)ΩΛΑΡΙ" (genitive of "CX(K)ΟΛΑΡΙC" coming from "CXΟΛΑΡΙΟC")[20]. Keeping in the same etymology, another possibility is that the "~ΩΛΑΡΙ" is not genitive but the nominative plural *CXΟΛΑΡΙΟΙ* of "CXΟΛΑΡΙΟC" where the ending syllable "–ΟΙ" is omitted for haplography reasons[21]. The haplography interpretation is equally convenient with the genitive "CX(K)ΩΛΑΡΙ", since it avoids the proparoxytone pronunciation of the verse end. If this is so, the designation of the Byzantine military battalions of "Σχολάριοι" (Scholarii) is perhaps for the first time encountered in the Mani[22]. The "Scholarii" assumption, if valid, is quite interesting and coincides with the military spirit of the epigram. However, in looking at the part of the inscription before the Omega ("Ω"), the cases of the letters *C* and *X* (or the *C* and *K*) do not seem probable in so far as dependable visual indications in place to support them do not exist. What can be superficially seen there is the indistinct upper part of a curved letter or symbol, the form of which does not look to be any of the alphabet except, due to roundness (reservedly) the beta. In case the (uncial) beta is adopted for this place, the missing letters of the last word of the verse should be those of a (family) name "(ΕΜ)ΒΩΛΑΡΙ" ("Ἐμβολάρη") (genitive)[23]. This assumption fits grammatically with the "ΕΔΕÌΜΑΝΤΟ" option. The word "ἔμβολοι", "ἔμβολα" survives today in Mani in the word "στενομπόλι" (narrow road, path). Surnames in Byzantium, as is well known, were often given after certain features of the named person[24]. Thus, we are confronted with the possibility of another donor's name in Mani, "(Em)volaris." This name may be linked to an old story concerning the origin of the village Boularioi (Μπουλαριοί) in Mesa Mani, where the name of the village may derive from the (family or clan) name Emvolarioi (Ἐμβολάριοι)[25]. Reservedly, assuming the above relation

[19] The Church of "Nicholas tou Kasnitze" in Kastoria, see Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 316.

[20] See for example, F. Miklosich – J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca*, IV, Vindobona, 1871, 132 (manuscript of 1259): "Εἰρήνη ἡ σύμβιος ἐκείνου τοῦ Σχολάρη καὶ οἱ παῖδες...". Proper nouns ending at "–ΑΛΑΡΙ", instead, are less scarce. The omega of the "~ΩΛΑΡΙ", instead of the orthographically correct omikron, does not constitute a problem since it could be considered used for reasons of prosody.

[21] E. Mioni, *Εισαγωγή στην ελληνική παλαιογραφία*, translated by N. Panayotakis, Athens 1979, 121.

[22] N. Svoronos, *Les Novelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes*, Athens 1994, #4.Δ1, 102; #5.Α4, 120. How soldiers may have participated in the rebuilding or repairing of castle defenses (i.e. gates) is something that needs further investigation. For this issue cf. comments by Foskolou, "Donor Inscriptions", 457 and note 16. See also F. Spingou, "A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011), 137-168, 141.

[23] The slightly wavy horizontally extending stroke above the *Ω* may compensate for the intentionally omitted syllable "EM-". "Εμβολάριοι" was also a term used for the poor people who inhabited the "ἔμβολοι", the arcades of Constantinople. See Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος καὶ πολιτισμός*, 4, Athens 1951, 340. For the "ἔμβολοι" of Constantinople, see A. Vernardakis, "Πόθεν τὰ βυζαντινὰ ἔμβολα", *Μηνιαῖον Παράρτημα τῆς Ἐφημερίδος "Ἀθῆναι"*, Athens 1909.

[24] Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος καὶ πολιτισμός*, 6, Athens 1951, 469.

[25] N. Drandakis, *Βυζαντιναὶ τοιχογραφίαι τῆς Μέσα Μάνης*, Athens 1964, 17. Drandakis (op.cit., 61) conjectures that even the coarse execution of some illustrations in the Ai Stratigos church at Boularioi may be attributed to the *vulgaire* style of local painters originated from the poor "emvolarioi" of Constantinople who happened to have been established at the village of Boularioi. It is important to recall that family names connected with the names of villages are diachronically common in the Mani (e.g. Erimoutes

is correct, a certain person *(Em)volaris*, perhaps a habitant of the village "Μπουλαριοί," may have been in those days an important man in the region of appreciable financial means, who was in some way connected with building activities and was probably fairly literate. For the two missing syllables before "[B]ΩΛΆΡΙ" either of the words "ΚΌΠΟΙC", "ΚΌΠΩ", ΜΌΧΘΩ" etc, often witnessed in epigrams, could be candidates in order the verb "ΕΔΕÌΜΑΝΤΟ" to be connected with the noun "[B]ΩΛΆΡΙ"[26].

However the separation and examination of the components of the script as above cannot satisfy the following observation: the significance of the church's decorative program, the artistically exceptional execution of the paintings and the distinguished named donors in the sanctuary apse inscription negate the possibility an ordinary provincial donor as the commissioner of an epigram placed at a key point like the entrance of the church. A high ranking official of the clergy, secular or military origin is more likely[27]. For these reasons the previous "Scholarii" alternative, being in all respects tempting, deserves further attention. Closer re-examination of the earlier discussed obscure letter or symbol before the "~ΩΛΆΡΙ" (after applying magnification), revealed a right inclined extension at the top of the afore-noticed bow. This extension appears to ligate with the corresponding upper horizontal extension of the following Omega left semi-curvature. Having beforehand examined in detail the end of the third line of the epigram, I noticed there one of the two differing executions of the "EI" (type B) to have its upper right inclined extension ligating with the left upper horizontal extension of the broken-line-style executed Kappa (cf "ΕΙΚΟ"). Given the same seems to be happening in the ambiguous character-space before the Omega of the "~ΩΛΆΡΙ", the obscure "letter" in question can be the typical ligature "EI". This assumption fits with the "ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ(EC)" option. The preceding "E" in the first line, combined with the letter C before it, bears an indicative meaning and is considered attached to the foregoing "THC" as "TH˜CE" (a sort of pronominal form) or "TH^C(Δ)E", both meaning "this one", where in the case of "TH^C(Δ)E" the "Δ", if initially existed, is now faded out or it was poetic license omitted for sounding reasons)[28]. In both cases it serves metric and prosodic requisite (penultimate accent of the verse end).

The remaining couple of the verse syllables before the "~ΩΛΆΡΙ" could be any two-syllable word compatible with the spirit of the epigram ending in "EI" (stressed preferably on the penultimate). The *ΠΊCTEI* could be a matching choice but it is used one word after and therefore should be exempted. The dative *TÁXEI* (*TÁXOC*, rapidity) used as adverb ("in short time"), although of differing concept to *ΠΊCTEI* or similar, can be an option. Same root adverb ("TAXICTA", in very short time) has been noticed in epigram B at the Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula[29]. The *TÁXEI* is here preferred as it remains in the military spirit of the verse, at the same time implying an important accomplishment.

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

2a *+ΠΎΛΑC TH^C E/ΔÈM ¦¦ ANT(EPEI˜Δ)EI(CX)Ω ΛΆΡΙ(OI)*

normalized to:

2a +Πύλας τῆς 'Ε/δέμ ¦¦ ἀντερεί[δειν] δεῖ Σχολάρι[οι]

from Erimos, Patziates from Pagia, Kouloumiates from Kouloumi, Nifiates from Nyfi etc).

[26] Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 324.

[27] The military option is plausibly either related and/or representing the "Σχολάριοι". More likely, he is an officer associated with the defense and administration of the mentioned town.

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

[29] See P. Katsafados, "New Evidence on the Dedicatory Inscriptions (13th c.) in the Church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula, Inner Mani", *DChAE* 36 (2015), 275-288, fig. 13. The epigram in Ano Poula is few years posterior (ca. 1265) to the ones in Kaphiona and of less philological value.

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

Despite the eventual correctness of these inferences, the word *CXOΛÁPIOI* still remains incomplete; its first letters seem to have been omitted. This is quite improbable for our learned scribe or at least the author of the text. The very good spelling of the epigram indicates adequate literacy. All signs, accents etc have mostly been used deliberately and must be seriously considered. Such is the aforesaid faded wavy stroke above the omega. Although it resembles a circumflex, it abstains from the bow shaped circumflexes of the epigram therefore its use as such is questionable. It could better serve a sort of abbreviation. A possible explanation is this: maybe the missing initial consonants *CX* of the word *CXOΛÁPIOI* were purposefully replaced by this wavy line. For this replacement poetic license cannot be invoked. The replaced letters are consecutive consonants which affect neither the meter nor the prosody of the verse. Amputations at the beginning of words are hardly encountered[31]. These are arguments against the "Scholarii" alternative[32]. The only reasonable explanation is precipitous estimation of the available writing space[33].

4. Line 2 (verse 3 and beginning of verse 4): The third verse is survived in full. Provocatively erroneous is the circumflex above the *OY* of the word "ZEOY^ΣHΣ" ("ζεοῦσης"). It reads as follows:

3 *+ΠΙ CTEI ΔYCΩΠΩ^ ¦¦ EK ζEOY^CHC KAPΔÍAC*

3 +Πίστει δυσωπῶ ¦¦ ἐκ ζεούσης καρδίας

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

5. Line 3 (verse 4 and partially 5): the fourth verse is almost completely lost. It is interesting to note that the epigram (maybe due to its special content, i.e. pleading for the saint's assistance in military matters), at first glance seems to deviate from the rather common personal supplication for support on the Day of the Last Judgment or for redemption of the supplicant's sins (except for the contents of the third verse and probably the fourth). Restoration of this part of the epigram is quite debatable. The researcher has to speculate and decide which path to follow in order to comprehend the pervading spirit of the text. There are two choices. The military spirit is definitely there but the supplication cannot be ignored. The supplication issue does better with the word "TAΠEINOC" and the sense inherent in the preceding third verse, that

[30] H. G. Liddell - R. Scott, *Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης*, Athens 2007, "ἐρείδω".

[31] Mioni, *Εισαγωγή*, op.cit. (n. 21), 116. The preposition "com-", "con-" at the beginning of a word in latin palaeography is occasionally replaced by certain symbol, but this is scarce (E. Thomson, *Ἐγχειρίδιον ἑλληνικῆς καὶ λατινικῆς παλαιογραφίας*, translated by Sp. Lambros, Athens 1903, 187).

[32] For the opposing element of the not orthographically correct omega (instead of omikron) of the word *CXOΛÁPIOI*, v.s. note 10.

[33] Having the surface where the text would be written prepared, the scribe divided the available length for the script into six roughly equal segments, which he probably marked by the small crosses, the ones we now see separating the verses (I measured the spaces between the small crosses and found them all being about 60-65 cm apart). Then he started writing the epigram. Having ended with the first and proceeded to the second line, close to the completion of the second verse (maybe little earlier, at the word "...ΔEÌMANT...", where, obviously having neglected to apply the usual abbreviation for the diphthong *EI*, he unfamiliarly ligated the epsilon with the mu in order to save the space of the iota). He realized that the remaining available interval for the last word *CXOΛÁPIOI* was not sufficient and he decided to abstract some letters, the *C*, *X* and the *OI*. In the place of the first two he put the horizontal stroke, for the ending diphthong "–OI" he put nothing; he relied on the existing "haplography" with the preceding iota. He considered the remained part "ΩΛÁPI", marked with the abbreviation sign, as adequately representing the initial word. Misjudgment of the available writing space may also be the reason for his erasing of an initially drawn left inclined stroke belonging initially to the *Y* of the syllable *ΠY*– which follows the ΘΥ in the first line (Fig. 2). This stroke is today almost completely faded out and is difficultly seen. To be further underlined that the second verse in full has 32 letters, while the rest have between 26-28 letters each. For this reason the writing of this verse appears denser than the others.

is, the sentences: "Πίστει δυσωπῶ ἐκ ζεούσης καρδίας, ταπειν(ο)...". This expression fits properly with a plea for redemption of sins[34]. Considering the above, for the purpose of the following missing part restoration, certain words commonly used in supplicatory expressions (such as *ΙΚΕΤΗϹ*, *ΛΥΤΡΩ*, *ΑΦΙΗΜΙ*, *ΧΡΕΟϹ*, *ΛΥΩ*, *ΑΙΡΩ*, *ΛΥϹΙϹ* etc) can herewith be levied[35]. On the other hand, the second ("military") choice, if adopted, would be irrelevant with the plea for redemption of sins as above and should refer to matters related to the main subjects of the epigram, i.e. the martial actions and the hostilities-induced uncertainty of the community[36]. In the below attempted transcription, however, I have considered the first solution as more appropriate. Meter and prosody prerequisites are taken into account as far as possible.

6. Line 3 (verse 5): The enclitic *ΔΕ* after the "ΠΌΛΗΝ" is frequently seen in poetic scripts. Among other subjects it allows the scribe to interrelate verses of differing contents, as is here the case with the current fifth and the previous fourth. The verb *ϹΚΕΠΕ* (cover, protect) (also in present tense as earlier the verb *ΔΥϹΩΠΩ^*), is common in epigrams (for instance as "σκέποις με"[37], optative). The following *Η* ligates with the adjacent N while a horizontal line (similar to the one observed previously on top of the *Η* in the first line) is also noticed above, suspecting presence of pronoun ("Η~Ν"). The dodecasyllable fifth verse is lacking its three ending syllables which belonged to the lost initial part of the fourth line. In order to conform to the penultimate accent of the verse (considering exceptionally in this case the rhyme too), in addition to the obvious ending *–ΝΩΝ* of the previous word ("ΕΙΚΌ"), the epithet *ΘΕΙΩΝ* (holy) is chosen for this place[38]. To follow the prosody, the rendering must disregard the orthography and write the word as "θίων" in order to overcome the spondee. Such adjustments are common in Byzantine poetry[39].

7. Line 4 (verse 6): the sixth verse, like the fourth, is also almost completely lost. Speculation is here unavoidable; words compatible with the inspiring idea of the epigram are selected to restore the missing section. These are the "'ΡΩΝΝΎϹ" (ῥωννὺς), "ΒΟΗΘΟΙ^Ϲ" (βοηθοῖς), "ΑΝΤΙϹΤΗ̣^" (ἀντιστῇ), again considering meter and prosody[40]. The participle "'ΡΩΝΝΎϹ" is of the same root as the noun "'ΡΩΜΗ" (strength, power) which most probably is now seen in the contemporary dedicatory epigram (ca. 1265) at the nearby church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula. In Ano Poula St. Theodore Stratilates is similarly begged to offer his support through his "'ΡΩΜΗ" in order to assist the supplicant in accomplishing a goal (in this case the building of a church)[41]. The last word of the verse, "ΠΟΛΕΜΊΟΝ" ("πολεμίον", orthographically corrected "πολεμίων", "of enemies") in the Kaphiona epigram is critical in providing the impetus for the epigram and guiding for the subjective restoration of the last verse.

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

[34] See Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 319.

[35] See Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), Appendix, 328-332. The "ἐκ-λυτρόω" (save, free from the power of sin and evil) in the fourth verse (as "ἐκλύτρωσον") was chosen as equivalent to "ἐκσῴζω-" [Liddell – Scott, *Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης*, op.cit. (n. 30)] for metric reasons and in order the second meter prosody to have its last syllable long (see F. Spitzer, *Elements of Greek Prosody*, translated from German by a member of the University of Oxford, London 1831, 10).

[36] In this case in the place of "χρέος", the word "δέος" could be used.

[37] A. Rhoby, "Epigrams, Epigraphy and Sigillography", *Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium of Byzantine Sigillography*, eds Chr. Stavrakos – B. Papadopoulou, Ioannina 2009, 65-80, 69.

[38] Attempting to comprehend what the poet was trying to impart to the beholder by the expression "δι' εἰκόνων θείων" (by means of the holy icons), employing the portable icons as means of discouragement of the enemy cannot be excluded, cf. S. Lambros, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κῶδιξ 524", *NE* 8 (1911), 146, where St. Theodore Tyron, on the occasion of the transfer of his icon is begged for assistance against enemies; the same in Marcianus 524, ibid., 7, f1b; 51, f37b etc. One could imagine the scene, where clergymen, common people and military stood on the walls singing psalms and holding up holy icons during the offensive. The best-known such example, of course, is the role of the icon of the Virgin in the defense of the city of Constantinople.

[39] e.g. see Lambros, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κῶδιξ", op.cit. (n. 38), 29, f. 22v, verse 10: "Αἰγύπτιον κτείνοντα τῆς εὐανδρίας", instead of "εὐανδρείας".

[40] The "ΒΟΗΘΟΙ^Ϲ" (βοηθοῖς, optative) is preferred from the "ΒΟΉΘΕΙ" (βοήθει, imperative), for keeping the accent on the 5th syllable before the (masculine) caesura.

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

1 *+ΠΡΩ ΤΗC ΠΎΛΗC ΓΡΆΦΩ COI ¦¦ Ω^ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ^ ΠΎΛΗ*
2a *+ΠΎΛΑC ΤΗ^C Ε / ΔÈΜ ¦¦ ΑΝΤΕΡΕΙ[ΔΕΙΝ] ΔΕΙ (CX)ΩΛΆΡΙ[ΟΙ]*
2b1 *+ΠΎΛΑC ΤΗC[Δ]Ε / ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ(ΕC) ¦¦ (ΤΑΧΕΙ) (CX)ΩΛΆΡΙ[ΟΙ]*
2b2 *+ΠΎΛΑC [ΤΑΥ]ΤΗCΕ / ΔΕÌΜΑΝΤ(Ο)¦¦(ΜΌΧΘΩ̣) (Β)ΩΛΆΡΙ*
3 *+ΠΙCΤΕΙ ΔΥCΩΠΩ^ ¦¦ ΕΚ ζΕΟΥ^CΗC ΚΑΡΔΊΑC*
4 *+ΤΑΠΕΙ/Ν(ÒΝ ΕΚ ΛΎΤΡΩCΟΝ ¦¦ ΆΡΑC ΤÒ ΧΡΈ) ΟC*
5 *+ΠΌΛΗΝ ΔΕCΚΈΠΕ¦¦[ΤΑΥΤ]ΗΝ ΔΙ ΕΙΚΌ/(ΝΩΝ) (ΘΙΩΝ)*
6 *+(Ῥ̔ΩΝΝΎC ΒΟΗΘΟΙ^C ¦¦ ΑΝΤΙCΤΗ̣^) ΠΟΛΕΜΊ ΟΝ*

which normalized are:

1 +Πρὸ τῆς πύλης γράφω σοι ¦¦ ὦ Θ(εο)ῦ πύλη
2a +Πύλας τῆς Ἐ/δὲμ ¦¦ ἀντερεί [δειν] δεῖ Σχολάρι[οι]
2b1 +Πύλας τῆσ[δ]ε / δείμαντες ¦¦ τάχει Σχολάρι[οι]
2b2 +Πύλας [ταύ]της ἐ/δείμαντο ¦¦ μόχθῳ Βολάρι
3 +Πίστει δυσωπῶ ¦¦ ἐκ ζεούσης καρδίας
4 +Ταπει/ν(ὸν ἐκλύτρωσον ¦¦ ἄρας τὸ χρέ)ος
5 +Πόλιν δὲ σκέπε ¦¦ [ταύτ] ην δι' εἰκό/(νων θείων)
6 +(Ῥωννὺς βοηθοῖς ¦¦ ἀντιστῇ) πολεμίων

The text can be freely translated as follows:

1 +Before the portal I write to you, oh! gate of the Lord
2a +The gates of Edem to be supportively defended by Scholarii
2b1+The gates of this one town Scholarii erected in short time
2b2 +The gates of this town erected by the endeavor of Volari
3 +Faithful I beg out of my burning heart
4 +Save (your) humble (supplicant) by annulling the moral debt
5 +Protect also this town by means of holy icons
6 +(Being you) fortified (I wish you to) assist (the town) to withstand the enemies

Comments

The structure of the epigram follows the common three-part rule. In the first part the donor addresses his patron saint using a kind of glorifying expression. In the second part he describes his action(s) or donation(s) (or the actions of the "population" he represents), through which he considers himself worthy to beg for assistance. The last part describes the assistance he seeks or the manner of the saint's intervention before the Lord[42], in this instance redemption of sins and the protection of his "πόλις" (κώμη, town), which is under imminent threat. What exactly should be understood by the term "πόλις" is inexplicit. We shall consider as "πόλις" a settlement that measures between 3.0 and 7.0 ha, although slightly smaller areas could conditionally be accepted[43]. In the principal inscription in the church's apse the main donor appears to be Georgios, the bishop of Veligosti[44]. The same highly ranked clergy official, the prelate of Veligosti, was likely involved in the commissioning of some of the fine illustrations in the church. If we assume he was involved also as the donor of the epigram in question, Veligosti would have been the town to which the epigram refers.

In order to opine, however, it is important to recall the historical events that took place in the region during

[42] See similar paradigm in Rhoby, "The Structure", op.cit. (n. 6), 315-316.

[43] See W. Cavanagh – Joost Crouwel – R. W. V. Catling – G. Shipley, *The Laconia Survey*, I, *BSA* (2002), Ch. 7, "The Survey Area in the Byzantine and Ottoman Periods" (P. Armstrong), 347, Table 7.1 and Ch. 9, "The Laconia Survey: An Overview" (W. Cavanagh), 424, Table 9.1; for the magnitude of the Byzantine Mystras, the principal town in Laconia, cf. T. Papamastorakis, "Myzithras of the Byzantines/Mistra to Byzantinists", T. Kiousopoulou (ed.), *Οι βυζαντινές πόλεις (8ος-15ος αιώνας). Προοπτικές της έρευνας και νέες ερμηνευτικές προσεγγίσεις*, Rethymno 2012, 285-286: "... In the census of 1645 the population of Mistra numbered around 1000 and it was ranked last of the nine cities recorded in the Peloponnese. In the 1700 census Mistra had roughly the same population and was ranked twelfth out of the fifteen cities involved. Consequently it is extremely unlikely that the population of Byzantine Mistra would have been significantly larger than that recorded..."; also K. Moustakas, "Μεθοδολογικά ζητήματα στην προσέγγιση των πληθυσμιακών μεγεθών της υστεροβυζαντινής πόλης", *Οι βυζαντινές πόλεις*, op.cit., 228. See also below, note 51.

[44] Drandakis, "Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 163: both in the older and newer edition "...δί ἐ[ξ]ό[δ]ου δὲ καὶ κόπου τοῦ θεωφιλεστά[του] Γεωργίου ἀρχιερέος του Βεληγοστῖ(ς) σὺν τω ευ(γενεστάτω?) συγκέλλω...", which copies the older.

Fig. 5. Background: the Ano Poula ridge as seen from the Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. In the middle the small promontory of Tigani, the site of the Byzantine Maine.

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

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

[45] See H. Wilskman, "Conflict and Cooperation: Campaigns on the Peloponnese in 1264", *Acta Byzantina Fennica* 4 (2015), 112.

[46] *Chronicle of the Morea*, Paris codex, verses 5598-5626, see P. Kalonaros, *Τὸ Χρονικὸν τοῦ Μορέως,* Athens 1940, 232.

[47] For the bishop Georgios of Veligosti see some notes by Drandakis, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες*, op.cit. (n. 1), 77.

[48] P. Katsafados, *Τα κάστρα της Μαΐνης*, Athens 1992, 159.

[49] Kalonaros, "Τὸ Χρονικὸν", op.cit. (n. 46), 189, verse 4501 (Paris codex).

[50] Katsafados, *Τα κάστρα*, op.cit. (n. 48), 161, fig. 5; 448, fig. 85.

[51] The medieval site is comprised in aggregate of more than 65 houses with estimated population at its culmination about 440 people. For the estimation of the population as well as regarding matters related to the magnitude of medieval settlements, see the preliminary study by the same author: "An Arithmetic Method for Evaluating the Magnitude of Medieval Byzantine Settlements", an introductory presentation of which was made at the *34th Symposium ChAE (Athens 2014)* (brief publication in www.academia.edu).

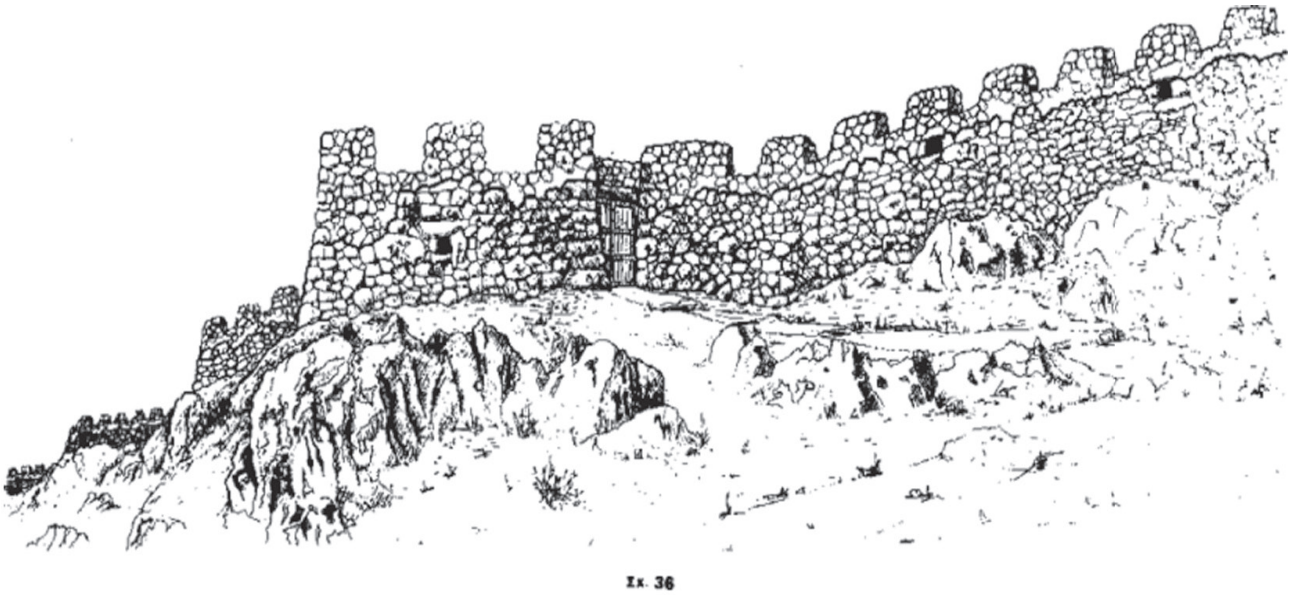

Fig. 6. Ano Poula. Gate π2. Hypothetical restoration. The bold line signifies the preserved wall height.

naturally fortified and has been used as stronghold since antiquity (it is believed to have been the site of ancient Ippola)[52]. The place fits the alternative which considers that Scholarii were involved in the reinforcement of gates. Due to the natural defensive advantage of the location, walling was never elaborately erected[53]. Anyone watching the gates of the enceinte realizes that in the case of an upgrade, these defenses should be the parts of the castle to be taken care of first (Fig. 6, 7).

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

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

[52] See Pausanias' *Laconica*, XXV, 9 in N. Papachatzis, *Παυσανίου Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις*, III, *Λακωνικά*, 25, 9, Athens 1996, 447.

[53] Katsafados, *Τα κάστρα*, op.cit. (n. 48), 397.

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

[55] For "the new border status" of the southern Morea in the 13th century and the depiction of military saints "as an indigenous response to regional danger", see Sh. Gerstel, "Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea", A. Laiou – R. P. Mottahedeh (eds), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, D.C. 2001, 270-273. Prof. Gerstel underlined the significance of equestrian saints in 13th-century painting in the region and introduced the theory in which the appearance of saints on horseback would be connected to the hostilities between

Fig. 7. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. "ΠΡω ΤΗϹ ΠΎΛΗϹ ΓΡΆΦω ϹΟΙ ...".

Fig. 8. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. Older inscription at north side of sanctuary apse (detail). The two phases to be noticed overlapping at the right part of the picture.

The proliferation of military saints has been attributed to patriotic enthusiasm, the expression of thankfulness for liberation from the heretic Latins[56], and the invocation for "personal or familial protection"[57]. Based on the contents of the epigram, another factor has to be combined with the third one above and may be put forward as: *the unrest of the population* in the Mani of 1264. The uncertainty and accompanying fear that made the population seek divine protection and assistance from saints, demonstrated both in portable icons in their possession as well as on their churches' frescoes, is expressed in the epigram of this study. The latter although materialized as a personalized donation it is more than a private supplication; it expresses the communal concern and uncertainty due to hostilities.

Palaeographic observations

The epigram is interesting both from epigraphic and palaeographic points of view. It imitates the so-called "distinctive" majuscule[58]. The putative Constantinopolitan origin of the principal painter is supported by the style of the epigram. This style comes from the heart of the Byzantine Empire and anticipates writing trends in the

Byzantines and Franks before and after the Frankish lordship in the region (1249-1262). Examples before 1262 include Ai Mamas, Karavas (1232) (Gerstel, op.cit., Appendix 281). Posterior to 1262 the cases are abundant (eadem, op.cit., Appendix, 281-284).

[56] N. Drandakis – S. Kalopissi – M. Panayotidi, "Έρευνα στη Μάνη", *ΠΑΕ* (1979), 185 (Panayotidi). Drandakis, "Παρατηρήσεις...", op.cit. (n. 2), 684. K. Diamanti, "Η παράσταση του δωρητή στο ναό του Σωτήρα στη Γαρδενίτσα της Μέσα Μάνης", *Ανταπόδοση. Μελέτες βυζαντινής και μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης προς τιμήν της καθηγήτριας Ελένης Δεληγιάννη-Δωρή*, Athens 2010, 133.

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

[58] Cf. "Epigraphische Auszeichnungsmajuskel" and "Versuchte Epigraphische Auszeichnungsmajuskel"; for synoptic description of these terms introduced by German speaking scholars (Hunger), see A. Rhoby, "Inscriptions and Manuscripts in Byzantium: A Fruitful Symbiosis?", M. Maniaci – P. Orsini (eds), *Scrittura epigrafica e scrittura libraria: fra Oriente e Occidente*, Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia, Cassino 2015, 15-44, 22-25.

capital[59]. The epigram is most likely contemporary with the older "north" inscription in the church[60], which is also written in "distinctive" majuscule, of which only a few letters can now be discerned with difficulty (Fig. 8). Commenting on the style of these letters we notice the *K*, the *A*, the *N*, the *T*, the *V*, the ligature of *A* and N of the older north inscription are written in a manner characterized by broken lines' contours and "rectangular appearance" of certain letters (especially *K*, *N*, *H*, *A*) which is similar to those of the epigram. The script is trying to be more "distinctive" in the sense that surpasses in the embellishment of the letter edges, which are adorned by extensions and quasi crutches[61]. On the other hand, less attention has been given to the ruling compared with that of the inscription. It seems that the epigram and the north inscription could have been drawn by different, contemporary hands, maybe reflecting the work of a teacher and an apprentice influencing each other's script[62].

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

1. Cross potent at the beginning. The cross potent evidently was a preference of the painter. The painted crosses on the *omophoria* and *polystavria* of the hierarchs in the church have potent edges[63].

2. The ζ is written in minuscule. In the period where our epigram is written (1264) minuscule letters were already noticed in inscriptions written in majuscule[64].

3. The form of the ligature "ει" is generally considered as minuscule. The remarks in the paragraph 2 right before about the introduction of minuscule letters and/or ligatures into inscriptions in majuscule are valid also in the case of "ει." In Kaphiona the "ει" is written in two different ways. One of the two forms (type A) is written as in line 2 "ΠΙCΤΕΙ;"[65] it resembles a vertical stroke having a quasi "omicron" attached at its left side mid height ( ); the other way, the ordinary formal style (type B), is noticed in line 3, the word "ΕΙΚΟ" ( ) (which is the same as in the Archangels painting frame inscription addressed in Part 2, below)[66].

4. Accents, breathings and punctuation. There are no breathings. The acute accent is distinctly drawn as a quasi-tick sign. This execution, certainly of Constantinopolitan influence[67], has been better described as "cuneiform"[68] and clearly imitates similar accents in monumental stone inscriptions. The obvious consistency in the use of accents helps in reconstructing the missing words and letters. The dots (used in Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula[69]) or double dots between verses seen elsewhere, have here been replaced by small crosses[70].

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[59] Rhoby, "Inscriptions", op.cit. (n. 58), 24.

[60] Drandakis, "Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 164.

[61] The only inscription in the Mani challenging the Kaphiona epigrams in appearance and accomplishment is the inscription (epigram) B in the church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (ca. 1265, Katsafados, "New Evidence", op.cit. (n. 29), fig. 13. The latter is more close to the anterior (11th c.) lapidary-style inscriptions for which the term "Epigraphische Auszeichnungsmajuskel" was initially introduced.

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

[63] Crosses potent to *omophoria*, more or less accented, can be seen in various cases in 13th-century painting in Mani. Crosses potent like those at Kaphiona are depicted on the epitrachelion of the beautiful painting (13th c.) of St. Nicholas in the ruined church under his name near the church of Hagios Georgios, Kitta, see Drandakis – Kalopissi – Panayotidi, "Έρευνα", op.cit. (n. 56), 186. On the painting of the name saint the skillfully executed letters of the inscription are in majuscule –"Ω ΤΩΝ ΚΥΝΔΙΝΩΝ ΡΗCΤΕΙC"–, (although of terrible orthography, to such a degree one could consider it done on purpose), reflecting also possible high level patronage in the church.

[64] Rhoby, "Inscriptions", op.cit. (n. 58), 29-30. See also F. Karagianne, "Παρατηρήσεις στη χρήση της μικρογράμματης γραφής στις βυζαντινές επιγραφές (10ος-14ος αι.)", *Πρακτικά του ΣΤ΄ Διεθνούς Συμποσίου Ελληνικής Παλαιογραφίας*, eds B. Atsalos – N. Tsirone, Athens 2008, II, 681-688, tabl. III 1270-1281, 686.

[65] Cf. paradigms in Roe 22 (1286); cod. Par. gr. 708 (1296). See also A. Tselikas, "Παρατηρήσεις σε πελοποννησιακά χειρόγραφα του 11ου, 12ου και 13ου αιώνος", *Πρακτικά του Γ΄ Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακών Σπουδών, Καλαμάτα 8-15 Σεπτεμβρίου 1985*, Athens 1987-1988, 486-499.

[66] Examples in MSS: BL Harley Ms 5786 (<1153), f. 5r, line 5; f. 6r, line 18 etc. BL MS 21 (1291-2), f. 119v, line 6. BL Burney MS 21 (1291-92), f. 10r, line 8 etc. The execution of "ΕΙ" in the Archangel Michael church, Polemitas, inscription (line 24) is cursive. The second edition (type B) being diachronic appears twice in the later inscription (1323) in the Faneromeni monastery katholikon (for these monuments see P. Katsafados, *Βυζαντινές επιγραφικές μαρτυρίες στη Μέσα Μάνη (13ος-14ος αι.)*, Athens 2015, fig. 4, 50).

[67] Rhoby, "Inscriptions", op.cit. (n. 58), 26.

[68] Ibid., 25.

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

[70] Small crosses following double dots signaling ends of paragraphs

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

The inscription[71], composed of approximately 90 letters in one line, written in majuscule, is located on the north wall of the church in the wide red upper border above the Synaxis of the Archangels (Fig. 9)[72]. The demonstrative and imposing, today clearly discernible, initial expression "ΦΩΤΌC ΘΕΑΥΓΟΥ^C", stressed on the fifth syllable, as well as the terminus poetic word "KÓCMON", accented on the penultimate, preoccupy the beholder to search in the obscure writing for verses in Byzantine dodecasyllable. The writing –arranged within the 220 centimeters of the border length– presumably constitute the remains of a three verse epigram[73], which appears written in the same scholarly style as the one above the door of the chapel commented in Part 1 and probably executed by the same hand. The script likewise imitates the "distinctive" style, but in a slightly less elaborate manner. The condition of the inscription is today in a very poor state. Little more than one third of the letters can be discerned. Following a superficial reading only the first verse can be proposed (nevertheless with some reservation), while of the third only the last three syllables have survived. The second verse is in the worst condition and preserves only few scattered letters and combinations of letters. The indistinct part is difficult to restore. Due to the ambiguity in transcribing letters and hence the multiple-optioned comprehension of its contents, the text deserves particular attention. The epigram is the second in the same church and the third found so far in the territory of the Byzantine Mani[74].

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

A preliminary transcription of what the concerned observer can see today is as follows (arranged for convenience in three lines)[75]:

+ ΦΩΤΌC ΘΕΑΥΓΟΥ^C HCΠ˜AC ÁΠΤΟΥ (HY)X
+ T(E) M Π(?T)E (P)OY (EI)
+ T (X)EI KOCMON

in minuscule (corrected orthography);

+ Φωτὸς θεαυγοῦς ἠσπασ [...] ἅπτου ηὖχ [...]
+ [...] [...]
+ [...] [...]χει κόσμον

At the beginning the supplicant probably addresses to one of the Archangels. The abbreviated word *HCΠ˜AC* (the *HC* in ligature)[76] with the wavy horizontal stroke above, at first glance does not make sense. It could be assumed as exceptionally being used, poetic license, for metrical reasons in the place of the suspended *HCΠAC-ΘHN* (-AMHN) (worshiped by touching the lips on the icon), most probably the second option. The wavy horizontal line has been added as abbreviation sign for the amputated ending part[77]. The acutely accented word "ÁΠΤΟΥ" is the present tense imperative of the verb "ἅπτομαι" which has the meaning of "attack

can be seen, for example, in BL Harley Ms 5786 (<1153), f. 2r.

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

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

[73] A verse in dodecasyllable consumes about 25 letter spaces, consisting on average of about (+ –) 30 letters.

[74] See the epigram in Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula (ca. 1265-1270) in Katsafados, "New Evidence", op.cit. (n. 29), 281.

[75] The symbols used in note 11 are valid here as well.

[76] Same ligature is noticed in the epigram commented in Part 1 (see above Fig. 2).

[77] Such an extensive elision is not common. Suspensions in verbs are rare; these are mainly limited to names, titles, also grammatical cases, adverbs etc. Cf. the conjectured contraction of the initial consonants *CX* of the word *CXOΛÁPIOI* (v.s. abobe page 295) and the assumed amputation of the verb "ἀντερείδω" (v.s. above page 295) in the 6-verse epigram.

Fig. 9. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona, north wall. The three-verse epigram. at the upper red border above the Synaxis of the Archangels.

to (someone)," as well as "oppose to", "being involved in hostilities," etc[78]. The missing letters after the words "ΆΠΤΟΥ (ΗΥ) Χ" can be very difficultly recognized as "ΌΜΗΝ." What therefore can be understood of the verse is the following:

+ Φωτός θεαυγοῦς ἡσπασ[άμην] ⁞⁞ ἅπτου ηὐχ(όμην)

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

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

The first two letters of the second verse are lost. The second pair is a "ΤΕ"[79] followed, after a letter space, by an indistinct letter formed by two vertical strokes and, one more letter space further, by a mu and adjacently plausibly an epsilon; the next syllable incorporates the "ΕΙ" in the form B (see epigram of Part 1, page 301); the syllable's consonant appears to be the "C". Next, difficultly seen, is the faded ligature of the nu with the "Η", in the syllable "ΝΗ". A pair of letters resembling at

[78] Liddell – Scott, *Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης*, op.cit. (n. 3), "ἅπτομαι".

[79] A small right curve stroke resembling apostrophe in between does not belong to the script and must be discarded.

first glance "TÈ" (grave accented), is observed short next (Fig. 11). That could quite possibly be the ending syllable of a word, for instance an epithet of the Archangel. The "TÈ" provokes the "ΠΤΕΡΩΤÈ" to be suggested[80] but the traces before it are not supportive. Further very careful observation of the "TÈ" reveals that no right horizontal semi-extension of the tau exists. The letter rather is the Pi ("Π") with a prevailing adornment crutch at its horizontal stroke. The so formed ΠÈ facilitates the identification of its fore and aft letters, those being the ypsilon and the rho, respectively; hence the preposition *ΥΠÈΡ*, correctly stressed, is fairly securely formed. The Y–(Π...) is rather the seventh syllable of the verse. Caesura at this point is not possible; the caesura should therefore be a penthemimeris before the ligation NH; this means that the *NH* must equally be a complete word, apparently the negation (abstractive) particle NH, which combined with the *ΥΠÈΡ* is interpreted as "not for, against".

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

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

The third verse is more straightforwardly "approachable" –either in positive or in negative sense–, in so far as it has parts either rather easily discernible or severely erased[81]. For the latter, no attempt can be made for decipherment or transcription. More specific, save for the initial T of the verse, the indistinct letters "PΩTE" in the middle, the terminus clearly seen word "KOCMON" and the letters "XEI"[82] before it, nothing else has left even traces (Fig. 13). However it is significant, after adoption of the "PΩTE", to have rather positively defined one of the epithets *ΠΤΕΡΩΤΕ* or *ΑΓΓΕΛΟΠΡΩΤΕ*[83] (or *ΑΓΓΕΛΩΝ ΠΡΩ^ΤΕ*) referring to the addressed saint, who reasonably can be identified as the Archangel Michael.

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

Paleographic notes

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

[80] The epithet is attributed to the Archangel Michael, cf. Lambros, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κῶδιξ", op.cit. (n. 38), 143.

[81] Practically a "tabula rasa".

[82] The letter is the *X*, not the *Y* for the same reason as in the word "ΕΧΘΡΟΥ" in the second verse. The clearly seen "EI" is written in the formal type B (v.s. page 301).

[83] Lambros, "Ὁ Μαρκιανὸς Κῶδιξ", op.cit. (n. 38), 143.

Fig. 10. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The three-verse epigram. Initiation.

Fig. 11. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The three-verse epigram. Middle left part detail. Schematized contours.

Fig. 12. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The three-verse epigram. Middle right part detail. Schematized contours.

Fig. 13. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The three-verse epigram. Terminus.

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

[84] Same was noticed in the six-verse epigram examined in the Part 1 above (v.s. page 301). The transcriptions are identical. In the three-verse epigram the type A is at the middle of the word, while the type B at the end.

combined with the structure of the epigram and the erudite style are indicative of literacy pointing to Constantinopolitan provenance.

Transcription

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

Based on the assumptions above and particularly considering the concern of the supplicant due to the hostilities taking place at the time when the epigram was written, availing ourselves with the options the versatile Byzantine poetic language offers, the following is an improvised rendering[85]:

+ ΦΩΤΟC ΘΕΑΥΓΟΥ^C Η(CΠ)Α˜C ¦¦ ΑΠΤΟΥ(ΗΥ) Χ(ΟΜΗΝ)
+ (IC)Τ (Ε)(Ν ΝΕ)Μ(ΕCΕΙ) ¦¦ ΝΗ ΥΠΕ(Ρ ΕΧΘ) (Ρ)ΟΥ^ (ΕΙ)^(ΕΝ)
+ Τ(ΥΧΑΙ Ο^Υ ΤΕ ΠΤΕ)(ΡΩ ΤΕ) ¦¦ (ΑΝΤΕ)ΧΕΙ ΚΟCΜΟΝ

in minuscule (orthography corrected), implicitly:

+ Φωτὸς θεαυγοῦς ἠσπασ[άμην] ¦¦ ἅπτου ηὐχόμην
+ ἵστ' ἐν νεμέσει ¦¦ νὴ ὑπὲρ ἐχθροῦ εἶεν[86]
+ τύχαι οὗ τε Πτερωτὲ ¦¦ ἀντέχει κόσμον

The epigram freely translated is:

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

Notes on the proposed transcription

The letters and the letter traces of the first five syllables of the second verse will be complemented by matching letters to form words integrating the "(?) T E?" and "(?) MECEI". The word *NEMECIC* ("cause for unavoidable punishment") following attentive observation is secure and is quite in the spirit of the epigram. The present tense imperative *ICT[H] EN* ("ἵστ[η] ἐν", stand in, stand for) is conjectured; the "H" for metric reasons is omitted (ecthlipsis), it is not part of the verse[87].

[85] Of the published contemporary texts, the Marcianus gr. 524 (late 13th c.), being adequately extensive, has been a good example for linguistic comparisons and a source of words frequently encountered in epigrams. See Lambros, "Ο Μαρκιανὸς Κῶδιξ", op.cit. (n. 38); also F. Spingou, *Words and Artworks in the Twelfth Century and Beyond: The Thirteenth century Manuscript Marcianus gr. 524 and the Twelfth-century Dedicatory Epigrams on Works of Art* (PhD Thesis), Oxford University, Oxford 2012. However, as regards to the proposed transcription, it is not the intension of this article to produce poetically impeccable alternatives of the missing parts. It rather aims to suggest more or less acceptable substitutes, which remain in the concept of the epigram and –consenting simultaneously to reasonable deductions in the metric and prosodic requirements–, incorporate *without exception* the identified letters and letter traces of the obscure parts of the script. This restriction is the cause of the proposed restoration weaknesses, namely the enjambment of the word "ΤΥΧΑΙ" in the third verse (it belongs implicitly to the second), the stressed fourth instead of the fifth syllable of the second verse (paroxytone "NEMÉCEI"), the oxytone "ΠΤΕΡΩΤÈ" (instead of a prosodically better proparoxytone alternative), the circumflex on the "εἶεν" etc. See also A. Komines, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερὸν ἐπίγραμμα καὶ οἱ ἐπιγραμματοποιοί,* "Ἀθηνᾶ", Σύγγραμμα Περιοδικὸν τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἐπιστημονικῆς Ἑταιρείας 3, Athens 1966.

[86] Circumflex on the penultimate is rare, see Komines, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερὸν,* op.cit. (n. 85), 66, note 3.

[87] Liddell – Scott, *Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης,* op.

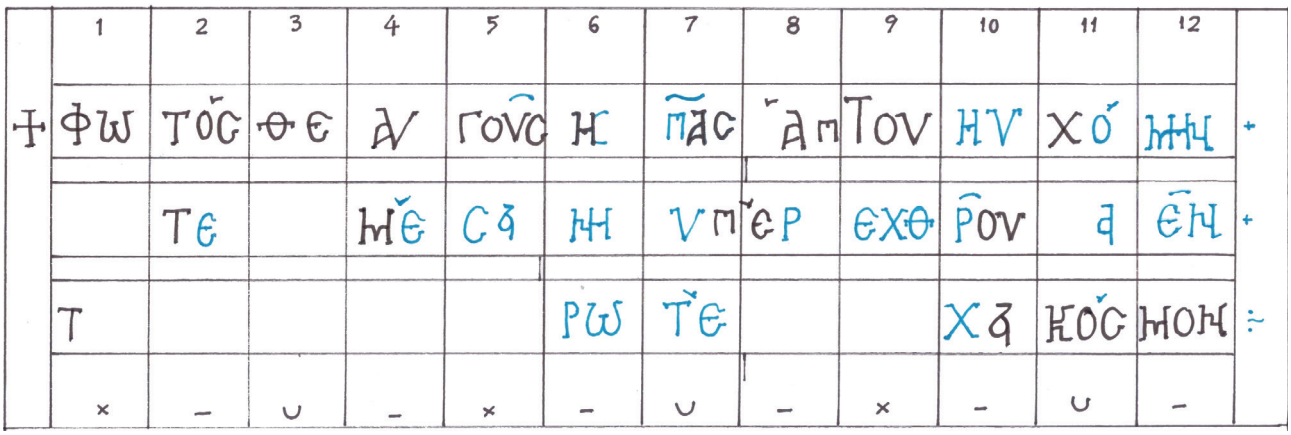

Fig. 14. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The three-verse epigram (ca. 1264). Partial restoration. Light tinted letters correspond to readings of varying ambiguity.

Fig. 15. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona.The three-verse epigram (ca. 1264). Proposed restoration.

Conjectural also are the words, *TYXAI* (fortuitousness), *O^Y* ("οὗ" genitive of the relative pronoun "ὅς", who), *TE* (conjunctive particle) and the *(ANTE)XEI* combination. The "EXEI" (present tense second person of "EXOMAI") with accusative means "keep away from, repel"[88]. The added "ANT" enhances the meaning and keeps the dodecasyllable. The *ΠΤΕΡΩΤÈ* compared with the *ΑΓΓΕΛΌΠΡΩΤΕ* and *ΑΓΓÉΛΩΝ ΠΡΩ^ΤΕ* is preferable for the same reason, although it does not keep the accent on the fifth syllable of the verse. One of the word *KOCMOC* meanings is "adornment". The verb "κοσμῶ" (adorn) and its derivatives are frequently used in the contemporary Byzantine poetry (cf. the Marcianus 524, passim), where they bear almost exclusively the rendering "adorn". Other valid renderings are the common (modern Greek) "people" and "universe". The latter will be here discarded. Either of the other meanings of the word *KOCMOC*, i.e. "ornament" (associated with worship) or "people", could be applied (though "people" makes more sense) and dictate the improvised restoration of the third verse. The language of the epigram, as said, has strong similarities with the poetic language encountered in the Byzantine literature. The draft in Fig. 15 is the finally proposed edition.

cit. (n. 3), "ἵστημι".

[88] Liddell – Scott, *Λεξικὸ τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης*, op. cit. (n. 3), "ἔχομαι".

Fig. 16. Hagioi Theodoroi, Kaphiona. The disc.

In the wording of the epigram the surpassing manifestation of the Divine Illuminating Light in connection with the powerful substance of the Archangel is prevalent. Its significance is closely tracked by the exceptional beauty and high artistic value of the accommodating illustration, the *Synaxis* of the guardian angels Michael and Gabriel. In the church, the same interest in Light is also manifested in the unusual depiction of the round *rhipidia* associated with the further two Archangels, Uriel and Raphael, in the sanctuary (Fig. 16)[89]. This correlation, although not uncommon elsewhere, is unique in the Mani[90]. These golden rotating discs held by the angels, painted as three concentric circles spinning in opposite directions, to my knowledge, are not manifested in any other Maniate monument. They look as vibrating in their own circular motion and as hovering in the air symbols of the God. Their intrinsic symbolic meaning is linked with the Heavenly Uncreated Light and Divine Power. According to Radojčić, in an interesting albeit not adequately documented hypothesis, they were believed to be miraculous signs that had the power to physically fortify, since they represented the Logos, the Word of God upon which everything was based[91]. Weitzmann deduced from the placement and function of similar discs in the Sinai icons that they were associated with Divine Light and the Holy Spirit[92]. E. Schwartz, who assigns an all-encompassing sense of holiness to the painted discs, records examples that give the impression of "polished metal" in Serbia, Kastoria and Bosnia[93]. An interesting approach on the "whirling disc" issue was also made after investigations in monuments located in Cappadocia, Sinai, Thessalonica and Serbia: "Discs were often represented in the most important places of temple space and as a part of significant iconographic plots; discs had various art execution and color scheme; the form of disc and idea of whirling were common for all examples. When the disc consists of three segments,

[89] Drandakis ["Les peintures", op.cit. (n. 1), 168, note 41] commented on the rhipidia: "Les rhipidia rapellent les médaillons décoratifs de la Descente de Croix de Mileševa (sv. Radojčić S., *Mileševa*, Belgrade 1963, pl. XX)".

[90] Being also contemplated as linked with the emanation of Divine Light is the "three dimensional" triple "folded" decorative band, so called "radiant freeze", see S. Ćurčić, "Divine Light: Constructing the immaterial in Byzantine Art and Architecture", B. Wescoat – R. Ousterhout (eds), *Architecture of the Sacred. Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 307-338, 321. This motif has been seen in frescoes in Mani in various occasions (Ai Mamas, Karavas Kounos, – Hagios Philippos, Ano Poula, – Hagios Ioannes Theologos, Gardenitsa, – Hagios Nikolaos, Glezou, – Hagios Nikolaos, Nyphi, – Phaneromeni Katholikon, Dryalos etc).

[91] S. Radojčić, *Mileševa*, Belgrade 1971, 16.

[92] K. Weitzmann – S. Radojčić – M. Chatzidakis, *The Icons*, New York 1980, 16, pl. 54. Cf. the 12th-century famous Annunciation icon from Mt. Sinai, which shows a ray of light coming from the sky carrying the Holy Spirit. The disc framing the dove of the Holy Spirit is executed in the same technique, as is the part of the luminous sphere representing the Divine. The alignment of the heavenly sphere and the disc on the axis underlines the connection between them. The composition confirms that the discs are the manifestations of the Divine (see also: D. Mouriki, "Εικόνες από τον 12ο ώς τον 14ο αιώνα", *Σινά. Οι θησαυροί της Μονής*, Athens 1990, 101-124, 158-160, pls 28, 29). For this topic see also: K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: the Icons from the Sixth to the Tenth Century*, I, Princeton 1976, 188. Idem., *Byzantium and the West around the Year 1200: a Symposium*, published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1975, 53-94, 60, pls 17, 20, 22, 24.

[93] E. Schwartz, "The Whirling Disc: A Possible Connection between Medieval Balkan Frescoes and Byzantine Icon", *Zograf* 8 (1977), 24-29. Schwartz (ibid., 27-28, note 22) quotes also an opinion by Stričević who believed them to be the wheels in the Vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel I: 16-18 and X: 9-13).

it makes sense to assume this trinity as a symbol of the Holy Trinity. The form of a rotating or shining disc, especially on the Sinai monuments, where gold color is the main and form-building element of a luminescence, suggests symbolical parallels with a solar disc especially as both in the Scripts, and in theological works where the sun is the image of God, or sanctity, and good fortune granted by Him. The following assumption of symbolism of rotating or shining discs is consolidated to understanding them as Divine energy. Considering all possible options, the most convincing assumption, from our point of view, is that understanding of rotating discs as Divine energy has serious theological justification in the developed orthodox doctrine about Divine light and energies"[94]. Understanding of the discs as emitters of Divine energy is quite inviting and congruent with the context perception of both the epigrams in Kaphiona[95].

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

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

[94] Y. I. Leshcheva, *The "whirling disc" in the Byzantine Iconography. Search for meaning*" (in Russian), text and abstract in DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15688/jvolsu4.2014.3.4.

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

Provenance of the figures

Figs 1, 2, 4, 6-16: P. St. Katsafados. Figs 3, 5: Sh. E. J. Gerstel.

Παναγιώτης Στ. Κατσαφάδος

ΝΕΕΣ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΙΚΕΣ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΜΑΝΗ. ΤΑ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΦΙΟΝΑΣ

Ο ναός των Αγίων Θεοδώρων, δυτικά από το χωριό Καφιόνα της Μέσα Μάνης, περιλαμβάνεται μεταξύ των διακεκριμένων βυζαντινών μνημείων της Λακωνικής. Η εκκλησία έχει εσωτερικά διακοσμηθεί με τοιχογραφίες μνημειακής ζωγραφικής εξαιρετικής καλλιτεχνικής αξίας. Επιγραφές που συνοδεύουν τις τοιχογραφίες,

μνημονεύουν τον αδελφό του αυτοκράτορα Μιχαήλ Η΄, σεβαστοκράτορα Κωνσταντίνο Παλαιολόγο, και υψηλά ιστάμενους δωρητές, τον επίσκοπο της Βελιγοστής και έναν ανώνυμο σύγκελλο. Δύο από τις επιγραφές αυτές αναγνωρίζονται ως επιγράμματα. Το ένα βρίσκεται πάνω από το ανώφλι της νότιας θύρας, εσωτερικά, και το άλλο στον βόρειο τοίχο, ακριβώς απέναντι από τον εισερχόμενο στον ναό, γραμμένο μέσα στο βαθυκόκκινο επάνω πλαίσιο της παράστασης της Σύναξης των Αρχαγγέλων. Λόγω της εξαιρετικά κακής κατάστασης στην οποία βρίσκονται, και των κολοβομένων τμημάτων τους, τα δύο επιγράμματα έχουν μέχρι σήμερα αποσπασματικά μελετηθεί και μόνο εν μέρει αποκατασταθεί. Είναι και τα δύο γραμμένα σε βυζαντινό δωδεκασύλλαβο. Το πρώτο, και μεγαλύτερο, αποτελείται από έξι στίχους και το δεύτερο από τρεις. Η αρχική ανάγνωση των λίγων λέξεων που σώζονται πλήρεις, καθώς και κάποιες σκόρπιες συλλαβές, διεγείρουν την προσοχή του φιλίστορα επισκέπτη. Οι μιμούμενοι μνημειακή γραφή μεγαλογράμματοι χαρακτήρες, ορισμένα επιγραφικά και παλαιογραφικά ευρήματα και, κατόπιν προσεκτικότερης παρατήρησης, η σχετικά καλή ορθογραφία, τα στοιχεία ποιητικής δεξιότητας του συγγραφέα και η λόγια γλώσσα του κειμένου αποτελούν σημαίνοντα και αξιόλογα χαρακτηριστικά των δύο επιγραμμάτων. Τα χαρακτηριστικά αυτά, συνδυαζόμενα με την καλλιτεχνική αρτιότητα της ζωγραφικής, συνηγορούν στην άποψη ότι τα επιγράμματα αλλά και το εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα της εκκλησίας και η τεχνοτροπία που ακολουθήθηκε, σχεδιάστηκαν και εκτελέστηκαν από ζωγράφους και λογίους που είτε προέρχονταν από την πρωτεύουσα ή μετέφεραν επιρροές από την τέχνη της Κωνσταντινούπολης.

Στην παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζονται οι επιγραφικές λεπτομέρειες και τα παλαιογραφικά χαρακτηριστικά των επιγραμμάτων, και παρουσιάζεται μια πρώτη συστηματική ανάλυσή τους. Αποσκοπώντας, περαιτέρω, στη συμπλήρωση των κενών και την κατά το δυνατόν αποκατάσταση του κειμένου όσο πλησιέστερα γίνεται στην αρχική του μορφή, εξετάζονται σχολαστικά, πέραν των αξιόπιστα ταυτιζόμενων λέξεων και συλλαβών, όλα τα υπάρχοντα υπολείμματα και ίχνη γραφής. Αναγκαστικά, λόγω των ελλειπόντων τμημάτων, προτείνονται λύσεις για την αποκατάσταση, οι οποίες σε κάθε περίπτωση είναι προκαταρκτικές. Στη διαδικασία αυτή προσπάθησα να παραμείνω κατά το δυνατόν συνεπής προς το ύφος και την κεντρική ιδέα του συγγραφέα. Προς συμπλήρωση των κενών επιστρατεύτηκαν λέξεις και εκφράσεις συμβατές με τη βυζαντινή γραμματεία. Από τις σκόρπιες συλλαβές, όσες διασώζουν έστω λίγα, εξίτηλα, αλλά μετά από προσεκτική παρατήρηση, ταυτοποιήσιμα γράμματα αξιοποιούνται και συμπληρώνονται με τρόπο ώστε να σχηματισθούν λέξεις συχνά απαντώμενες σε επιγράμματα. Οι κανόνες της μετρικής και η προσωδία του βυζαντινού δωδεκασύλλαβου ακολουθούνται στο μέτρο του δυνατού.

Εξαιρετικής σπουδαιότητας αποδεικνύεται η σύλληψη και το κεντρικό νόημα των επιγραμμάτων, τα οποία με βεβαιότητα καταδεικνύεται ότι σχετίζονται με στρατιωτικά θέματα. Λέξεις-κλειδιά όπως «πύλη», «εικόνες», «ταπεινός», «πόλις», «πολέμιοι», «εχθροί», «νέμεσις» κ.λπ. δίνουν το στίγμα του συντάκτη των κειμένων. Ανατρέχοντας στις ιστορικές πηγές της εποχής, όπου μνημονεύονται συμπλοκές μεταξύ του στρατού του σεβαστοκράτορα Κωνσταντίνου και των Φράγκων στη Νότια Πελοπόννησο κατά το 1264, διατυπώνω την υπόθεση ότι το κάστρο της φράγκικης Μαΐνης, μερικά χιλιόμετρα νότια από τον ναό των Αγίων Θεοδώρων, το οποίο είχε πριν δύο χρόνια περιέλθει στα χέρια των Βυζαντινών, δεχόταν απειλές και βρισκόταν σε κίνδυνο. Το γεγονός αυτό και η εξ αυτού επίκληση της θείας αρωγής ίσως υπήρξαν οι λόγοι για την παραγγελία των επιγραμμάτων. Φαίνεται ότι ένα μέρος των στρατιωτικών δραστηριοτήτων του βυζαντινού στρατού έλαβε χώρα στη γειτονία του ναού των Αγίων Θεοδώρων.

Τα επιγράμματα της Καφιόνας, μαζί με το περίπου σύγχρονό τους αφιερωματικό επίγραμμα στους γειτονικούς Αγίους Θεοδώρους της Ανω Πούλας, αποτελούν τα μοναδικά μέχρι σήμερα δείγματα έμμετρων επιγραφών στη βυζαντινή Μαΐνη και εξ αυτού αξίζουν ειδικής προσοχής. Πέραν της όποιας φιλολογικής τους αξίας, αναδεικνύονται σημαντικοί μάρτυρες της κωνσταντινουπολίτικης τέχνης και γραμματείας που φιλοξενήθηκαν στη μεταφραγκική Μάνη του 13ου αιώνα και συνιστούν, παρ' όλη την περιορισμένη τους έκταση, σημαντικές πηγές, συνεισφέροντας στη γενική ιστορική μας γνώση για την εποχή και την περιοχή.

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