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THE PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS IN MANASTIR AND STRUGA REVISITED<sup>1</sup>

**Key words:** *Abbot Akakios, layman Ioannikios, protostrator Alexios, painter and referendarios John, Struga Icon of St. George.*

**Abstracts:** *The article throws a new light on the donor's inscription in the church of St. Nicholas in Manastir, while the new revised translation uncovers subtle details about donor and abbot Akakios. At the same time the article offers a re-evaluation of the theories about the painter and referendarios of the Ochrid Archbishopric John. He was a talented artist „accomplished in variety of colours” and with “hands skilled in paint”. Two very specific and very memorable phrases used in the Manastir donor's inscription and on the Struga Icon of St. George, suggest that John was the artist who executed the artwork in both monuments, a proposition that can be additionally confirmed on stylistic grounds.*

The extensive painted inscription in the central nave of the church of St. Nicholas in the village Manastir, Mariovo has been a subject of numerous studies.<sup>2</sup> The epigraphic evidence from the inscription is

extremely important for the study of the monument as well as the patterns of patronage of Byzantine

Љубинковић, *Средновековното сликарство во Охрид*, Зборник на трудови, Народен Музеј во Охрид, Охрид 1961, 113; R. Ljubinković, *La peinture murale en Serbie et en Macédoine aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina, IX (1962), 430-431; D. Talbot Rice – S. Radojčić, *Fresques médiévales en Yougoslavie*, publ. Unesco 1963, 16; P. Miljković-Peppek, *Contribution aux recherches sur l'évolution de la peinture en Macedoine au XIII siècle, L'art byzantin du XIII siècle*, Beograd 1967, 189-196, esp. 190-191; idem, *Црквата Св. Јован Богослов Канео во Охрид*, Културно Наследство (=КН) III, Скопје 1967, 91-93; Ф. Баришић, *Два грчка натписа из Манастира и Струге*, Зборник радова византолошког института (=ЗРВИ), 8/2, Београд 1968, 13-27; P. Miljković-Peppek, *L'icône de Saint Georges de Struga*, СА 19 (1969), 213-221, fig. 1-5; П. Миљковиќ-Пепек, *Црквата св. Константин од село Свеќани*, Симпозиум 1100-годишнината од смртта на Кирил Солунски, I, Скопје 1970, 146-161; idem, *Живописот и прилепските зографи*, Прилеп и прилепско низ историјата, Прилеп 1971, 97-102, esp. 99; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византиске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 16-17, п. 12; Ц. Грозданов, *Охридско судно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 11-12; S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Painters' Portraits in Byzantine Art*, ΔΧΑΕ, пер. Δ', том. IZ' (1993-1994), Athens 1994, 138-9; idem, *Painters in Late Byzantine Society*, Cahiers Archeologiques (=CA), 42 (1994), 145-146; E. N. Kyriakoudis, *Monumental Painting in Kastoria in the Last Decade of the Thirteenth Century and the Frescoes at Arilje*, Свети Ахилије у Ариљу. Историја, Уметност, Зборник радова научног скупа, Београд 1996, 80-82, 85, 88-89, 90, п. 110; X. Меловски, *За натписот од црквата Св. Никола, с. Манастир, Мариово*, Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет, Vol. 23 (49), Скопје 1996, 205-214, esp. 212-213; Σ. Καλοπίσι-Βέρτη, *Οι ζωγράφοι στην ύστερη βυζαντινή κοινωνία. Η μαρτυρία των επιγραφών, Το πορτραίτο του καλλιτέχνη στο Βυζάντιο*, ed. Μ. Βασιλάκη, Ηράκλειο 1997, 148; С. Коруневски, *Црковната архитектура во*

<sup>1</sup> A shorter version of this article with the same title was presented at the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Sofia, in August 2011. Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia, 22-27 August 2011. Vol. III. Abstracts of Free Communications, 279-280.

<sup>2</sup> This is an extensive bibliography on all aspects of research on the monument. D. Koco et P. Miljković-Peppek, *La basilique de St. Nikolas en village Manastir dans la région de Moriovo*, Actes du Xe Congrès internationale d'Études byzantines, Istanbul 1958, 138-140; Д. Косо - П. Миљковиќ-Пепек, *Манастир*, Филозофски факултет, кн. 8, Скопје 1958; V. J. Djurić, *Fresques de monastere de Veljusa*, Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses 1958, München 1960, 119; П. Миљковиќ-Пепек, *Пишувани податоци за зографите Михаил Астрани и Евтихиј и за некои нивни соработници*, Гласник на институтот за национална историја, IV/1-2, Скопје 1960, 140; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Иконе из Југославије*, Београд 1961, 76, no. 3, Т. III; Р. Љубинковић - М. Ђоровић

monastic establishments.<sup>3</sup> To a smaller extent the donor's composition with its short accompanying

Македонија во XIII век, Скопје 2000, unpublished PhD thesis, 21-37, 286 passim; E. N. Τσιγαρίδας, *Φορητές εικόνες στη Μακεδονία και το Άγιον Όρος κατά το 13ο αιώνα*, ΔΧΑΕ, περ. Δ', том. ΚΑ', Αθήνα 2000, 131, εικ. 9; X. Меловски, *Намписот од 1266/67 година на иконата на Св. Горѓи од Струга*, Пелагонитиса 13-15, Битола 2002-2003, 155; P. Kostovska, „*Reaching for Paradise*”. *The Program of the North Aisle of the Church of St. Nicholas in Manastir, Mariovo*, КН, 28-29 (2002-2003), Скопје 2004, 67-89; idem, *Piety and Patronage: Layman Ioannikios or Abbot Akakios and the Foundation of the Monastery of St. Nicholas at Manastir, Church, Society and Monasticism*. The Second International Monastic Symposium at Sant'Anselmo, Rome 31 May - 3 June 2006, *Acts of the International Symposium, Studia Anselmiana, Analecta Monastica* 9, ed. by E. López-Tello Garzia - B. S. Zorzi, Rome 2009, 485-501. idem, *The Concept of Hope for Salvation and Akakios' Monastic Programme in St. Nicholas at Manastir*, in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, London, 21-26 August 2006, Vol. III, Abstracts of communications, 289-290; С. Коруневски - Е. Димитрова, *Византиска Македонија. Историја на уметноста на Македонија од IX до XV век*, Детска радост, Скопје 2006, 86-89; E. Dimitrova, *Seven Streams-The Stylistic Tendencies of Macedonian Fresco Painting in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Niš i Vizantija* VI (2007), 193-203; П. Костовска, *Црквата Свети Никола во Манастир, Мариово*, Скопје 2008, unpublished PhD thesis; H. Melovski, *Намписот од црквата Св. Никола, с. Манастир, Мариово*, *Inscriptions and Notes from Byzantine and Post-byzantine Times*, Prilep 2009, 37-62; P. Kostovska, *The Conspicuous Symbolism of the Church Programme at Manastir*, *Zbornik Matice Srpske za Likovne Umetnosti* (=ZLU), 39, Novi Sad 2011, 41-61; idem, *St. Nicholas at Manastir*, in *Mariovo*, small format publications under the auspice of the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Macedonia, *in print*. Some articles deal with specific iconographic peculiarities: A. Grabar, *Sur les sources des peintures byzantines des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, CA, XII, Paris 1962, 358-359; G. Babić - Ch. Walter, *The Inscriptions upon Liturgical Rolls in Byzantine Apse Decoration*, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* (=REB), 34 (1976), 274; Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите од Македонија од IX-XVIII век*, Скопје 1983, 49, 52-54, ill. 39; N. Petterson-Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art*, Torino 1983, 36, 38, et passim; V. Milanović, *The Tree of Jesse in the Byzantine Mural Painting of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. A Contribution to the Research of the Theme*, *Zograf*, 20 (1989), 48-59, esp. 49, 57-58 and notes 51, 52; M. Марковић, *О иконографији Светих ратника у источно-хришћанској уметности и о претставима ових светитеља у Дечанима*. *Зидно сликарство Манастира Дечана, Грађа и студије*, Београд 1995, 567-626, esp. 593, 594 and n. 208, 212; S. Gerstel, *Apostolic Embraces in Communion Scenes of Byzantine Macedonia*, CA, 44 (1996), 141-148; idem, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Programs of the Byzantine Sanc-*

inscription is equally valuable as a written source. Few names appear in the inscriptions that can shade a light on the history of the monastic church. The first benefactor of the original church was an important military official who was a close relative of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos. The second donor Akakios has credited himself as the person responsible for the extensive rebuilt program of monastery and the katholikon. John, a deacon and referendarios, who is mentioned in the inscription seems to have had a major role in shaping the painted ensemble. So far, the prevailing scholarly knowledge is inclined to identify the John's role as predominantly that of a advisor and contractor who introduced the donor to the painterly workshop. We think that there is subtle evidence to suggests that John was in fact foremost a painter who lead a workshop largely responsible for executing the decoration of the majority of the sacral monuments of the second half of the thirteenth century in the diocese of Ochrid Archbishopric. The indication from Manastir's inscription is corroborated by the donor's inscription painted on the back of a large St. George's icon, that features the name of John twice, once as a donor and for a second time as a painter.

The importance of dedicatory inscriptions in researching the patterns of patronage does not have to be stressed particularly. In that respect the two inscriptions from Manastir have their contribution for the social history of the periphery regions of the Byzantine Empire in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The extended inscription from the nave of Manastir and the short text that accompanies the donor's composition in the north aisle are well known and have been previously studied by scholars.<sup>4</sup> The

*tuary*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London 1999, 97-99, No. 17, fig. 36-40; Д. Војводић, *Зидно сликарство цркве Светог Ахилија у Ариљу*, Београд 2005, 108, 158; I. M. Djordjević - M. Marković, *On the Dialogue Relationship Between the Virgin and Christ in East Christian Art. Apropos of the discovery of the figures of the Virgin Mediatrix and Christ in the naos of Lesnovo*, *Зорграф*, 28 (2000-2001), 13-47, esp. 22-23; P. Kostovska, *The Image of Saint Romanus as a Soldier and his Role in the Program of the Church of St. Nicholas near Prilep*, *Balkanoslavica*, 28-29 (2001), 163-174, esp. 166, fig. 2, 3; idem, *Маченичките допојасја во Свети Никола во Манастир, Мариово*, *Зборник, Музеј на Македонија, Средновековна уметност, Нова серија*, 6, (2006), 7-47.

<sup>3</sup> S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Tabula Imperii Byzantini, Band 5, Wien 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Ф. Баришић, *op.cit.*, 13-27; P. Miljković-Peppek, *L'icône de Saint Georges*, 214-216, fig. 1-5; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византиске фреске*, 16-17, n. 12; S. Kalopissi-Ver-

long, extensive inscription was executed in decorative manner in Greek letters, along a narrow banner which goes around the length of the south and north wall of the central aisle. The dedicatory inscription mentions two distinctive phases of the history of the monastery. Insofar the prevailing thesis is that two donors contributed to the fortunes of the monastery. Originally the monastery was built by a close relative of Alexios I Komnenos in 1095. More than 150 years later a second benefactor restored the failing monastery.

According to the inscriptions protostator Alexios, the uncle of the Emperor Alexios I Komnenos was the first donor, and having past through the region, erected a church dedicated to the miracle worker St. Nicholas in 1095/6. However this person has not been previously attested in the sources. In this regard, there are three possible explanations. Either his name hasn't survived in the sources; or he wasn't an uncle, but a nephew and a nephew by that name is well known aristocratic character; or his name or title were erroneously inscribed in the inscription. In our opinion, Alexios, the initial Manastir donor can be identified with an individual very well documented in the sources. We are thinking of Alexios Komnenos, the nephew of the Emperor, son of Alexios I Komnenos' brother Isaakios, who was also the brother of the in-subordinate dux of Dyrrhachion John Komnenos. Certainly at the end of the 11th c. there was a member of the Komnenos family that "fits the description" of the first donor. He was active in the region not only in the last decade of the century, but also in the beginning of the 12th c. when in 1106 he was appointed dux of Dyrrachion<sup>5</sup>. Before 1106 the same title was

held by his brother John<sup>6</sup>. It seems that his brother was somewhat a controversial figure, since he is mentioned as a possible identification of the rebel slave who rebelled against the central authority and was attested in contemporary sources who rebelled<sup>7</sup>. However, being a member of the Imperial family, it seems that he was pardoned for his insolence, and stayed as the commander in chief of the important Adriatic port. His brother Alexios, on the other hand, has had a long association with the region having owned a property in the vicinity of Strumica, south-east Macedonia.<sup>8</sup> So, in all probability, the same member of the ruling dynasty, who in 1105/6 was entrusted with governing the strategic port of Dyrrachion, was, at the end of the 11 century, assigned the

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1096?) and finally from 1105/6 John's brother Alexios. *Anna Comnena: The Alexiad*, Book XII, trans. Elizabeth A. Dawes, London 1928; *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter, New York 1969, II, 215, III, 65. The Alexiad mentioned John Komnenos as a dux of Dyrrhachion in 1096 and his brother Alexios in 1105/6. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*, 152. In between the rules of the two siblings dux was Nicephoros Bryennios, the Emperor's son in law. *Nicéphore Bryennios*, Histoire, Introduction, Texte, traduction et notes, par P. Gautier, Bruxelles 1975, 31, note 3; D.R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias, Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae* 40/1, Berlin - New York 2001 (*Anna Komnene*, 369.22-25). Online Database: *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, Second ed. (2006.2). URL: <http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/content/index.html> 116795 (last time accessed on 09.04.2015).

<sup>6</sup> *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, ed. W. Smith, Vol. I, Boston & London 1849, 820-821 citing C. F. Du Cange, *Familiae Byzantinae*, Paris 1680 169-189. Sharon Gerstel briefly identifies the first donor of Manastir with the nephew of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos, who was at the same time mentioned in the Typikon of the Monastery of Mother of God Eleusa in Veljusa near Strumica. She is reluctant to press with the identification due to a lack of association in the sources of the title Protostrator with this person. S. E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 93-104, note 48.

<sup>7</sup> *Theophylacti Epistulae*, Meursii 65, PG 126, 484-485; R. Katičić, *Korespodencija Teofilakta Ohridskog kao izvor za historiju srednjeevokovne Makedonije*, Историја народа Југославије, I, Београд 1953, 186; Баришић, *op. cit.*, 24-25; *Theophylacti Achredensis, Epistulae*, ed. P. Gautier, Thessaloniki 1986, 49.

<sup>8</sup> Ф. Баришић, *op.cit.*, 26, n. 30. Around the 1080s the typikon of the Monastery of the Virgin Eleusa in Veljusa, near Strumica mentions him by the title *sebastos*. L. Petit, *Le monastère de Notre-Dame de Pitié en Macédoine*, Izvestija Russkogo Arheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole 6 (1900), 25-46 (Eleousa, Acts 28.22-27) <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/116795> (last time accessed on 09.04.2015).

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ti, *Painters' Portraits in Byzantine Art*, 138-9; idem, *Painters in Late Byzantine Society*, 145-146; idem, *Οι ζωγράφοι στην ύστερη βυζαντινή κοινωνία*, 148; X. Меловски, *За натписот од црквата Св. Никола*, 212-213; X. Меловски, *Натписот од 1266/67 година*, 155; S.E.J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*. 98-99; P.Kostovska, *Piety and Patronage: Layman Ioannikios or Abbot Akakios*, 491-493, 500-501; П. Костовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, 36-51; H. Melovski, *Натписот од црквата Св. Никола, с. Манастир, Мариово*, 37-62; P. Kostovska, *The Conspicuous Symbolism*, 59-6.

<sup>5</sup> Dyrrhachion was a port town in Albania that was the key in the defence of the Empire's wester frontier against the Norman attacks. At the time of the first siege by Robert Guiscard in 1081, in command of the garrison in Dyrrhachion was the experienced general Georgios Palaeologos John W. Birkenmeier, *The Development of the Komnenian Army: 1081-1180*. Boston, Mass.: Brill 2002, 63; After the re-conquest by the Byzantines in 1085, the Emperor appointed firstly John Doukas (1085-1089 or spring 1092) the brother of the Empress Irene Doukaina, then from his nephew John Komnenos (around 1089 or 1091/2 – August

post of Protostrator. The inscription at Manastir mentions that the Protostrator was passing by in this region which could be in connection with the unsettling events in this part of the Empire in the last decade of 11 century.<sup>9</sup> In the years between 1091 and 1094 Emperor Alexios I lead his army in three campaigns to secure the northern border against the attacks of Grand Prince of Rascia Vukan.<sup>10</sup> As his trusted companion Protostrator Alexios must have accompanied the Emperor on his trips along the Vardar river. In addition he might have been entrusted with the defence of the region against the Norman crusaders that plundered south-west Macedonia along the Via Egnatia in 1096 of which Theophylact the Archbishop of Ochrid at the time, provides us with a vivid account.<sup>11</sup> Consequently Alexios who, at the end of the 11 and the beginning of the 12 century, is found in the sources several times and is unequivocally connected to the region of south-east and south-west Macedonia, is the prime candidate for title of first donor of Manastir. Even though the little information we know about Alexios Komnenos equates him with description of the “uncle” in the inscription, precisely the family cognation prevents us to complete the identification.

The catholicon of St. Nicholas Monastery in Manastir is a large three aisled basilica, originally covered by a barrel-vault above the central aisle and wooden sloped roof in the lateral aisles. The long, extensive inscription was executed in decorative manner in Greek letters, in a narrow banner which fills the length of the south and north wall of the central aisle. The revisited translation is as follows.<sup>12</sup>

“In the year 1095/6 in the time of the reign of the illustrious Emperor and Autokrator our Lord Alexius I Komnenos, his uncle the protostrator Lord Alexius, passing by and liking the place erected a church from foundations dedicated to his holiness the saint and the miracle worker Nicholas. <...cc3> <...cc6> as it is testified by the Brebion, this Chrysobull confirms the land of the estate. Since the church was small, dilapidated, neglected and in ruins, saddened and distressed about the state of decline (of the church), the kathedoumenos of the monastery Kyr Ioanikios, who in his Angelic Habit, was given the name Akakios, offered his own money and moved into the church, settled in and began officiating piously and called

upon his brethrens... <...cc30> and as soon as he tore down the church, he erected from foundation this holy church and he improved<sup>13</sup> it and he invited the humble John deacon and referendarios of the Holiest Archbishopric, who was accomplished in painterly skills<sup>14</sup>, to paint the church in diverse colours. <...cc30>. Erected from foundation in the year 1265/66, indiction 9, and painted in the year 1270/71, indiction 14, in the time of the illustrious Great Emperor and Autokrator of the Romans, Michael Doukas, Angelos, Komnenos, Palaiologos and New Constantine.”

By the time the second ktetor started the repairs, the original church was dilapidated, neglected and in ruins. Enemy incursions<sup>15</sup>, lack of funds and extensive economic exploitation by laymen trustees were the most probable causes for the demise of the monastic institutions in the Middle Byzantine period in the Balkans<sup>16</sup> Ioanikios, better known by his monastic name Akakios was the second donor of the monastery, a fact stressed by previous scholars. He boosted about his achievements in the long written inscription, as well as in the smaller one which accompanies the donor composition, where he is featured as a distinguished older gentleman with long grey beard and bold head. The donor Akakios has demolished the smaller original church building and from foundation<sup>17</sup>, he built a new monastery where himself and the new monastic members settled. What has been omitted by researchers so far and what was acknowledged in the inscription is the fact that he used his own financial means to restore the good fortunes of the monastery. Furthermore the fact that he

<sup>13</sup> The exact match for the Greek translation of the word used in the inscription would be „beautifying it“.

<sup>14</sup> The term is *bafei gnōmonan heiran* which can be translated as “hands skilled in paint”.

<sup>15</sup> The chaos and problems that have arisen by the IV Crusade must have had an impact on the abandonment of the original monastery. P. Charanis, *The Monk as an Element in Byzantine Society*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971), 68.

<sup>16</sup> In these unsettling times, lots of monasteries were abandoned and most of them lost their assets. P. Charanis, *On the Social Structure and Economic Organization of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century and Later*, *Byzantinoslavica* 12 (1951), 109-110; P. Kostovska, *Piety and Patronage: Layman Ioannikios or Abbot Akakios*, 497-498.

<sup>17</sup> On the problem of abandoning humility and boasting about once achievement in refounding a monastery see M. Mullett, *Refounding monasteries in Constantinople under the Komnenoi*, *Founders and refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*, ed. by M. Mullett, *Papers of the fifth Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium*, 17-20 September 1998, Portaferry, Co. Down, Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations. 6.3, Belfast 2007, 366-378.

<sup>9</sup> Ф. Баришић, *op.cit.*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Историја народа Југославије*, I, Београд 1953; Г. Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, Београд 1970, 340.

<sup>11</sup> *Theophylacti Epistulae*, Finetti 11, PG 126, col. 324; Ф. Баришић, *op.cit.*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Ф. Баришић, *op.cit.*, 13-27; esp. 16-17; X. Меловски, *За натписот од црквата Св. Никола*, 205-214, esp. 211-212; idem, *Натписот од црквата Св. Никола*, 37-62.

sought and implored the brethren to join him in their new venture together<sup>18</sup> wasn't at all stressed by previous scholars. It was always assumed that, since he mentioned his lay name in the inscription, Akakios had held an important position in the lay administration or was figure of some importance among the landowning gentry. However this particular moment throws new light to the fact that he might have been previously a member of a different monastic community before embarking on the adventure of setting up his own monastery to which he was appointed an abbot.

Among the names of the two donors and two emperors, a third individual appears in the inscription whose name is associated closely with the history of the monastery. Even though he was only an artisan, most probably because of his position in the hierarchy of the Ochrid Archbishopric he was held in high regard. He was mentioned in the second part of the inscription by the title and name of deacon and referendarius John.<sup>19</sup> Numerous studies have been written about this person. Different hypothesis have been offered on behalf of his identity and mission, of which the most commonly accepted was that he belonged to the administrative personnel of the Ochrid Archbishopric. Moreover, it was stressed by previous scholars that he was invited at Manastir to advice the donor and oversee the execution of the fresco painting ensemble of the monastic church. In the opinion of the scholars his role as a "contractor" of the group of painters working in Manastir excluded his actual participation in the painting of the church.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, sometimes, his involvement was interpreted as that of a painter, but was not sufficiently explained or elaborated.<sup>21</sup> In the Manastir inscription John's name

features in relation to the syntactic construction *en chrōmatourgíasi poikilotrópois*. The meaning of the verb, *chrōmaturgeō* is to colour, to paint, and according to this, *en chrōmatourgíasi* can be translated as painted or depicted in colour.<sup>22</sup> In conjunction with this particular verb, the semantic value of the compound term *poikilotrópois*; adjective *poikilos* (colourful, with diverse colours/varied colours) and noun *trópos* (way), can be added.<sup>23</sup> Hence the phrase used in the inscription tells us that John "painted or depicted in diverse colours or a variety of colours" as well as testifying of the fact that he had *bafei gnōmonan heiran* "hands skilled in paint".<sup>24</sup>

To discover the true nature of John's involvement with Manastir we need to revert to another well known inscription executed few years earlier. The first time we come across the name of deacon and referendarius John is on the back (reverse) of the St. George icon from Struga, which mentions him twice as the donor of the icon. The most notable phrase from this inscription *en chrōmatourgíasi poikilotrópois* has been translated as "to paint or depict in diverse/varied colours" The equivalence of the term of this expression in both monuments is indicative of the fact that the same person painted the Struga icon of the Holy Warrior and the church at Manastir. The icon inscription has not only a syntax similarity with the Manastir inscription, but more importantly factual information that is crucial in discovering the

Οι ζωγράφοι στην ύστερη βυζαντινή κοινωνία, 148; S.E.J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*. 98.

<sup>22</sup> B. V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon, Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium*, PEN University Press, 2010, 65, 68-69.

<sup>23</sup> This term has a long semantic trajectory that can be followed from antiquity; eg. *he poikile stoá*, colourful or painted porch as well as an aesthetic category in the world of Ancient music. P. A. LeVan, *The Color of Sound: Poikilia and Its Aesthetic Context*, Greek and Roman Musical Studies, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2013, 229-242. What we want to emphasize is that the term *poikilos* is a special aesthetic category in Byzantine art, which is used to describe a certain visual phenomena, derived from the use of different techniques (intaglio, repoussé, cloisonné, filigree) and materials (gold, pearl, glass, semiprecious and precious stones, different metal surfaces, enamel and even embroidery). Apropos, *poikilia* a word that means diversity, encompasses the synesthetic vision of changing colours, textures and smells and the visual sensations of varied and shifting sensual impressions in experiencing the creation and perception of beauty. B. Pentcheva, *The Performative icon*, Art Bulletin 88, (2006), 631-653, esp. 644-648; id, *Moving Eyes: Surface and Shadow in the Byzantine Mixed-Media Relief Icon*, Res. Anthropology and Aesthetics 53 (2009), 223-34; id, *The Sensual Icon*, 139-149.

<sup>24</sup> П. Костовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, unpublished PhD thesis.

<sup>18</sup> There are some instances noted in twelve century monastic typica that allude to the fact that when monasteries were established from foundation or restored the abbot had to recruit monks from elsewhere in order to start a functioning monastic community. D. Krausmüller, *Lay founders and first abbots: The cases of John II Komnenos and Basil the Macedonian*, Founders and refounders of Byzantine Monasteries, 346, 348.

<sup>19</sup> П. Костовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, unpublished PhD.

<sup>20</sup> П. Миљковић-Пепек, *Пишувани податоци за зографите Михаил Астрада и Евтихиј*, 140; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Иконе из Југославије*, 76; Ф. Баришић, *op. cit.*, 13-27; P. Miljković-Pepck, *L'icône de Saint Georges*, 214-216, fig. 1-5; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византиске фреске*, 16-17, n. 12; Ц. Грозданов, *Охридско судно сликарство*, 11-12.

<sup>21</sup> Р. Љубинковић - М. Ђоровић-Љубинковић, *Средновековното сликарство во Охрид*, 113; S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Painters' Portraits in Byzantine Art*, 138-9; idem, *Painters in Late Byzantine Society*, 145-146; idem,

individual behind the personality of deacon and referendarios John. Previously it was accepted by scholars that the donor inscription on the icon mentions two separate individuals both named John. The last verses of the icon inscription include the word historiographer (*historiográfos*). This term together with word *zographos* was used to identify the painters of religious art, which were usually accompanied by the idioms *dià heiròs* or *ipo heiròs* which can be translate as “by the hand of”. The assumption was that since John the donor had an administrative role in the Ochrid Archbishopric, he and the painter John from the last verses of the icon inscription could not be the same person.<sup>25</sup> However, we think that both inscriptions testify on the existence of a person named John with the same title of deacon and referendarios of the named Ochrid Archbishopric in the case of Manastir and in the case of the icon, the unnamed, but the same assumed See.<sup>26</sup> Moreover the two inscriptions corroborate the presumption that this member of the ecclesiastical administration was a highly skilful artist who boasted about his particular skills using the same phrase. The identically formulated *en chrōmatourgímasi poikilotrópōis* in both inscriptions

confirm the fact that he was adept “in depicting in diverse colours”. as well as having “hands skilled in paint”, which should remove any doubts in John’s direct involvement in the painting of the church and of the icon. In our opinion a conceited and talented person like John is unlikely to employ an artist to paint the icon of such a personal importance. This means that the donor, who was at the same time author of the icon of the Holy Warrior for the Struga Church and who according to the inscription painted the face of the saint many times before, was one and the same with deacon and referendarios John who painted the church at Manastir. In all regards our proposition of the unique authorship of the icon confirms that the role of John at Manastir was not just advisory, but executionary as well.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, this is corroborated on stylistic grounds by similarities between the face types of Saint George and the warrior saints at Manastir.<sup>28</sup> In all probability in the third quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the donor and abbot Akakios invited and employed a painterly workshop of four distinctive artistic hands.<sup>29</sup> We believe that their leader identified by us as the “third” painter can hence be safely named John.

<sup>25</sup> cf supra, note 18.

<sup>26</sup> It is not unknown, in Byzantium, of painters of religious art to have other secular professions. Ν. Οικονομίδης, *Καλλιτέχνης και ερασιτέχνης καλλιτέχνης στο Βυζάντιο, Το πορτραίτο του καλλιτέχνη στο Βυζάντιο*, ed. Μ. Βασιλάκη, Ηράκλειο 1997, 108-109; Π. Κостовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, 466-467, 474-475.

<sup>27</sup> Π. Κостовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, 467-468.

<sup>28</sup> В. Ј. Ђурић, *Иконе из Југославије*, Београд 1961, 76, no. 3, Т. III; Р. Милковић-Пебек, *L'icône de Saint Georges de Struga*, СА 19 (1969), 213-221, fig. 1-5; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византиске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 16-17, п. 12; Π. Κостовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, 419-492.

<sup>29</sup> Π. Κостовска, *Црквата Свети Никола*, 419-492.

Петрула КОСТОВСКА и Наталија ПОПОВСКА

## УШТЕ ЕДНАШ ЗА СЛИКАНИТЕ НАТПИСИ ОД МАНАСТИР И СТРУГА

### *Резиме*

При преводот на овој натпис произлезе прашањето за институционалната платформа на кти-торите на манастирот, но и за идентитетот на оној кој го живописал. Особено внимание привлече синтагмата *en hrōmatourgímasi poikilotrópois*. Глаголот *chrōmaturgeō* значи бои, обојува, па от-таму истата ја преведовме како “да слика и /или создава со повеќе бои”, имајќи ја во предвид и семантичката вредност на *poikilos* од сложенка-та *poikilotrópois* (придавката *poikilos* (шарен, со повеќе бои) и именката *trópos* (начин). Овој поим има долга семантичка траекторија која може да се следи од антиката (на пр. стоа поикиле, шарен/насликан трем). Но, она што сакаме да истакне-ме е дека поимот *poikilos* претставува и посебна естетска категорија во византиската уметност, која се користи да опише и определени визуелни феномени. Оттаму, може да се каже дека *poikilos* претставува свет на визуелни, естетски сензации, искуство на создавање и восприемање на убави-ната. Истоветноста на овој израз во ктигорските натписи и во Манастир и на иконата на Св. Ѓорѓи од Струга, укажува не само на фактот дека соз-давачот на обата натписа е иста личност, но и на неговата образованост и длабока ерудиција, во

согласност со неговата висока световна титула во хиерархијата на Охридската архиепископија. Остатокот од ктигорскиот натпис во Манастир безрезервно ја решава дилемата за улогата на референдариј Јован во живописувањето на мана-стирската црква. Со читањето на *bafēi gnōmonan heiran* како “раце вични/вешти со боја,, теоријата застапувана во научните кругови повеќе од поло-вина век за неговата исклучиво советодавна улога во Манастир паѓа во вода. Терминот, чие значење е неотповикливо поврзано со зографската дејност и е јасна алузија на неговата сликарска професија, ја разоткрива неговата егзекутивна улога во осли-кување на манастирскиот ансамбл. Дополнител-но, стилската блискост меѓу минуциозно изведе-ниот лик на Св. Ѓорѓи на иконата и претставите на светите војници од средишниот брод во Ма-настир открива истоветен сликарски ракопис. Со голема веројатност во третата четвртина на XIII век, игуменот Акакиј ја повикал и најмил рабо-тилницата во која работеле четворица талентира-ни уметници. Предводник на таа зографска тајфа бил зограф и референдариј Јован, којшто ние го идентификувавме како „третиот,, сликар од Ма-настир.

