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**FOUNDERS OR DONORS? IMAGES AND INSCRIPTIONS
OF SUPPLICANTS IN LATER BYZANTIUM
AND MEDIEVAL SERBIA**

In the Later Byzantine, as well as in Medieval Serbian church painting, one can witness, from the late-13th century until the 15th century, the phenomenon of collective church patronage. This was analyzed in detail by Sophia Kalopissi-Verti,¹ who based her conclusions on examples of dedicatory church inscriptions listing the names of numerous donors, who contributed to the erection of a church. However, this practice is paralleled by the occurrence in the church decoration of small-scale donor portraits and inscriptions of minor donors situated near images of saints. Subsequently, the present paper addresses the status of these depicted individuals, and poses the question whether they can be considered church founders (κτήτορες, χορηγοί) or simply sponsors (δωρητές, αφιερώτριες).²

According to Byzantine Law (i.e., the Justinian Code supplemented with later imperial *novella*, legal commentaries, and patriarchal decision),³ church founders acquired a set of practical and honorary duties and rights in relation to the institution they established (rights of burial, residence in case of poverty, occasional approval of clerical appointment or choice of first hegoumenos,

¹ S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Collective Patterns of Patronage in the Late Byzantine Village: the Evidence of Church Inscriptions*, *Donation et donateurs dans le monde byzantine*, ed. J.-M. Spieser and É. Yota, Paris 2012, 125-140; Eadem, *Church foundations by entire villages 13th-16th century: A short note*, *ZRVI* 44 (2007), 333-340.

² For distinguishing between these two groups see: R. Etzeoglou, *Quelques remarques sur les portraits figures dans les églises de Mistra*, *JÖB* 32/5 (1982), 518.

³ J. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in Byzantium*, Washington D.C. 1987, 54-58, 228-238 and 253-263; Matthew Blastares, *Σύνταγμα των θείων και ιερών κανόνων των τε αγίων και πανευφήμων Αποστόλων, και των ιερών και οικουμενικών και τοπικών Συνόδων, και των κατά μέρος αγίων Πατέρων*, ed. G. Rhalles and M. Potles, Athens 1852-1859, 262-265, 267-271 and 276-277 (letter E, chapters 12, 16, 22). For Balsamon's commentaries, see: *PG* 132, col. 1115; For reception of the Syntagma in South Slavic Law: V. Alexandrov, *The Slavic Destiny of the Syntagma of Matthew Blastares: Dissemination and Use of the Code from the 14th to 17th Century*. PhD Thesis, Central European University, Budapest 2002.



Fig. 1. Karan, the Virgin's Church, Portrait of the presbyteros George Medoš, altar space

Сл. 1. Каран, Богородична црква, портрет презвитера Георгија Медоша, алтарски простор

entrance to their foundations for relatives, etc.).⁴ On the other hand, the gifts were considered voluntary donations, whose cost did not exceed a certain monetary limit (initially, 500 *solidi*); they were made by persons with legal capacity and structured as a mutual agreement, based on the model of sales law, which supposed some form of limited reciprocity.⁵ Subsequently, a ktetor's obligations were roughly defined, while the donor's ones were established in a contract concluded between parties and varying from case to case. However, medieval Balkan reality knew many cases of granting a second ktetor's rights⁶ to a monastic sponsor distinguished by many gifts.

For example, in the end of the 11th century, a former grand *droungarios* Stephan became the second ktetor of Xenophon.⁷ As monk Symeon, Stephen renovated the monastery's grounds,⁸ supplied the foundation with new properties and received an imperial document confirming the possessions.

⁴ In more details about *ktetorikon dikaion*, see: J. von Zhisman, *Das Stifterrecht in der morgenländischen Kirche*, Vienna 1888, esp. pp. 47-81, where the author discusses the rights and duties of ktetors during the 14th century; E. Herman, *Chiese private e diritto di fondazione negli ultimi secoli dell'imperio bizantino*, OCP 12 (1946), 302-321; J. Thomas, *In Perpetuum. Social and Political Consequences of Byzantine Patrons' Aspirations for Permanence for their Foundations*, In: *Stiftungen in Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne*, ed. M. Borgolte, Berlin 2005, 123-135. For comparing Byzantine and Serbian law and practice of ktetoria, see: S. Troicki, *Ktitorsko pravo u Vizantiji i u Nemanjičkoj Srbiji*, Glas Srpske kraljevske akademije 86 (1935), 79-133.

⁵ R. Morris, *Reciprocal gifts on Mount Athos*, in: *The language of gift in early middle ages*, eds. W. Davies, P. Fouracre, Cambridge 2010, 171-193; J. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 76-83; T. Matović, *Metà thanaton dōron u svetogorskim aktima*, in: ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΣ, Mélanges offerts à Mirjana Živojinović, eds. B. Miljković, D. Dželebdžić, vol. II, Belgrade 2015, 427-441. For the Law's application: *Κωνσταντίνου Ἀρμενοπούλου Πρόχειρον νόμων ἢ Ἐξάβιβλος*, ed. K. G. Pitsakes, Athens 1971, III.1.1, III.9; For the concept of gift in Serbian Law: S. Šarkić, *Poklon u srednjovekovnom srpskom pravu*, Istraživanja 17 (2006), 7-15; M. Đurđević, and Z. Mirković, *Pravila o poklonu u srpskom srednjovekovnom pravu*, Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu 59 (2011), 68-89.

⁶ Concerning the differences between the rights and treatment of the initial and second ktetors, see; M. Popović, *Les funeraillles du Ktitor: Aspect archeologique*, in: Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, 21-26 August 2006, Vol. 1, London 2006, 99-130.

⁷ R. Morris, *Symeon the Sanctified and the Refoundation of Xenophontos*, in: *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*, ed. M. Mullett, Belfast 2007, 443-464; D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes de Xénophon. Archives de l'Athos XV*, Paris 1986, 13-16, 59-75 (no. 1).

⁸ *Actes de Xénophon*, 71, no. 1.



Fig. 2. Veria (Berroia), the Savior's church, Portrait of the hieromonk Ignatios Kalothetos with the holy monks, the southern wall

Сл. 2. Бер (Верија), Спасова црква, портрет јеромонаха Игњатија Калофета са светима монасима, јужни зид

Consequently, the council of the Holy Mount decided to "entrust" the monastery and the "mastership over its property" to Symeon as to "a second ktetor" (κτήτορα δεύτερον).⁹

Similarly, a relative of the imperial family, *protobestiarios* and *protosebastos* Andronikos Angelos Palaiologos,¹⁰ whom Emperor Andronikos II considered his "nephew" (*anepsios*),¹¹ received the founder's rights concerning the *ephoreia*¹² (κτητορικὸν δίκαιον εἰς τὴν ἐφορεία) over the monastery of Philotheou through his intervention in acquiring several properties, as well as the status of imperial monastery.¹³

⁹ Ibid., 71, no. 1, l. 198-201.

¹⁰ *PLP* no. 21435. He was the governor of Berat fortress in Epirus. On his career, see: R. Guiland, *Le protovestiaire*, *REB* 2 (1944), 202-220 (C. Pavlikianov, *Medieval Aristocracy on Mount Athos*, Sofia 2001, 122-123. According to Demetrios Kyritses, the office of *protobestiarios* was often given to close relatives of the emperor (*The Byzantine Aristocracy in the 13th and Early 14th Centuries*. PhD Dissertation, Harvard University 1997, 37).

¹¹ W. Regel, E. Kurtz and B. Korabiev, *Actes de Philothée. Actes de l'Athos VI*, *VO* 20, Suppl. 1 (1913), 18, no. 6.

¹² Concerning *ephoreia* as administrative office for independent monasteries, see: E. Herman, *Ricerche sulle istituzioni monastiche bizantine. Typika ktetorika, caristicari e monasteri «liberi»*, *OCP* 6 (1940), 335-339; J. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 218-221; E. Papagianni, *Legal Institutions and Practice in Matters of Ecclesiastical Property*, in: *Economic History of Byzantium From the 7th through the 15th Century*, ed. A. Laiou, *Dumbarton Oaks* 2002, 1059-1069 (esp. 1063).

¹³ R. Allison, *Founders and Refounders of Philotheou monastery on Mt. Athos*, in *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*, ed. M. Mullett, Belfast 2007, 465-524 (esp. 485-493).



Fig. 3. Meteora, Yrapanti monastery, Portrait of the hieromonk Neilos, the southern wall

Сл. 3. Метеори, Манастир Сретење, портрет јеромонаха Нила, јужни зид



Fig. 4. Pećka Patrijaršaja, St. Demetrios' Church, Image of St. Ioannikios with the Virgin and the Inscription of Archbishop Joanikije, the western wall

Сл. 4. Пећка патријаршија, црква Светог Димитрија, Свети Јоаникије са Богородицом и натписом архиепископа Јоаникија, западни зид



Fig. 5. Prilep, St. Demetrios' Church, Portrait of Demetrios Mesenopolites with St. Demetrios, the northern wall of the southern aisle

Сл. 5. Прилеп, црква Светог Димитрија, портрет Димитрија Мисинополита са Светим Димитријем, северни зид јужног брода

As for Serbian cases, in 1348, after having visited the Holy Mount,¹⁴ *tsaritsa* of Serbia Jelena, wife of Stefan Dušan, intervened to her husband on behalf of the monastic cell dedicated to St. Sabbas in Karyes for it to receive the village of Kosorići, 100 Venetian hyperpyra, and various donations in kind. These actions brought the royal lady to the position of second ktetor, later confirmed by the hegoumenos of Hilandar Dorotej.¹⁵ As the charters of the Serbian tsar attest, Jelena, in her quality of new founder, received initially also the right to appoint the cell's head.¹⁶

¹⁴ Т. Белякова, *Сербская царица Елена и Карейская келья св. Саввы*, Славянский альманах 2015/1–2 (2015), 13–24; М. Živojinović, *De nouveau sur le séjour de l'empereur Dušan à l'Athos*, ZRVI 21 (1982), 119–126; R. Grujić, *Carica Jelena i ćelija sv. Save u Kareji*, Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva 14 (1935), 43–57.

¹⁵ D. Živojinović, *Skopska hrisovulja cara Dušana za keliju Svetog Save Jerusalimskog u Kareji (Hil. 31)*, Stari Srpski Arhiv 7 (2008), 59–70; Idem, *Velika prilepska hrisovulja cara Stefana Dušana karejskoj keliji Svetog Save (Hil. 149)*, Stari Srpski Arhiv 7 (2008), 71–90. V. Mošin, *Akti bratskog sabora iz Hilandara*, Godišnik Skopskoga filozofskog fakulteta 4 (1940): 193–194.

¹⁶ D. Živojinović, *Skopska hrisovulja*, 63; Idem, *Velika prilepska hrisovulja*, 76.

So, as the sources attest, the great donors and benefactors of monastic establishments could acquire rights equal to those of the initial founders, which included, among others, commemorations, burials, and changes to *typika*.

On the other hand, practically all great monasteries received small- or even micro-size land donations.¹⁷ For example, in 1327, John, son of Sisinius, and his wife Kale, “thinking about this terrible day of judgment as being sinful, wanted to put partially in order [the things] concerning the salvation of souls in commemoration (*μνημόσυνον*) of our parents and of ourselves.”¹⁸ Consequently, they give a quarter of a mill near Rebethiana for the salvation of their souls (*ψυχικὴν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν*). However, they actually received a small remuneration (*τίμημα μικρὸν*) of four hyperpyra from the *oikonomos* kyr Maxim. This way, the difference between the market price of the property and the received remuneration was the actual donation of the couple. Similarly, in 1303, in Hierissos, a brother and a sister handed to Vatopedi a field of twelve modioi, which constituted a part of their inheritance reserved by their father for the salvation of his soul.¹⁹

Among the Serbian cases, the *brebion* of the Virgin’s Monastery in Tetovo offers some examples of small land gifts (usually, in size of one field). This list of properties was composed in 1343²⁰ and included 34 fields, field parts, and meadows being sold, and 50 given as a gift.²¹ In the majority of cases, the donors transferred their property for the sake of their soul (за доушоу), but there are a couple of instances when they were more specific. For instance, Nanoja gave a field because of “not having children” (не имаше порода), or Redir gave part of a field to follow the example of Pardo and Teodor.

Moreover, during the Later Palaiologan time, on the periphery of the Empire and the Greek-inhabited islands, the practice of establishing communal foundations appeared.²² The rights and obligations of their minor sponsors can-



Fig. 6. Prilep, St. Demetrius’ Church, Portrait of an Unknown Monk with St. Onouphrios, the southern pillar of the dome

Сл. 6. Прилеп, црква Светог Димитрија, портрет непознатог монаха и Светог Онуфрија, јужни поткуполни лук

¹⁷ V. Kravari, *Les actes privés des Monasteres de l’Athos et l’unité du patrimoine familial*, in: *Eherecht und Familiengut in Antike und Mittelalter*, Munchen 1992, 77-88.

¹⁸ P. Lemerle, *Actes de Kutlumis*. Archives de l’Athos XII, Paris 1988, 66-67, no. 13.

¹⁹ J. Bompaire, J. Lefort, V. Kravari, Ch. Giros, *Actes de Vatopédi*. Vol. I: Des Origines a 1329. Archives de L’Athos, Paris 2001, 216-218 no. 35.

²⁰ Л. Славева, “Попис на имотите на хтетовскиот манастир од 1343 година,” in: *Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија*, vol. III, Skopje 1980, 277-299.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 279-282.

²² For Byzantine periphery, see: Kalopissi-Verti. *Collective Patterns of Patronage*;

not be defined precisely. Probably, they were commemorated and sometimes buried in these foundations or, most likely, on its premises. However, the occurrence of portraits of small-scale donors and commemorative inscriptions next to depictions of saints in 13th to 15th century art may represent also a phenomenon connected with such communal church patronage.

Small-size images of donors or supplicatory inscriptions appeared next to holy figures and pleaded for commemoration and assistance in salvation. These inscriptions were usually shaped in one of two possible wordings. They either pointed out to the act of prayer (“The supplication of the servant of God.../“Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ.../ моление раба божия) or to the commemoration of the supplicant (Remember, Lord (the soul) of your servant... / Μνήσθητι, Κύριε, (τὴν ψυχὴν) τοῦ δούλου σου.../ Помѣни Господи душу раба). The wording of the former type was, probably, a formula of the simplest prayer built on a biblical example (Reg. III (I), 8:52), which could be addressed to the Lord or to a saint.²³ This type of inscription directly described a commissioner’s supplicatory actions, thus reenacting the donor’s performance of a prayer beyond his or her life (ideally, in eternity), every time when such inscription was read. The latter formula, too, was not merely an epigraphic *topos*, but a quotation from an *intercessio*²⁴ of the liturgy’s anaphora; more precisely, this was the way in which a priest, after the prayer on the transformation of bread and wine, commemorated those people written in memorials.

Undoubtedly, the present essay can’t overview all existing examples of supplicatory inscriptions and small-scale portraits preserved in late-medieval Orthodox monuments. Thus, choosing as case studies several examples from different regions of the Later Byzantine Commonwealth, I shall try to clarify the status of these people whose names appear in additional supplicatory inscriptions. Accordingly, one can distinguish three situations when such inscriptions and figures appear:

Eadem, *Church foundations*. For Greek-inhabited islands, see: A. and J. Stylianou, *Donors and Dedicatory Inscriptions, Supplicants and Supplications in the Painted Churches of Cyprus*, JÖB 9 (1960): 107-109, no. 7 (the church of the Holy Cross at Pelendri); S. Kalopissi-Verti, *The Murals of the Narthex: Late 13th and 14th Century*, in: Asinou across time: studies in the architecture and murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, ed. A. Weyl Carr and A. Nicolaïdes, Washington D.C.: 2012, 115-130 and 176-190 (Church of Panagia Phorbiotissa, Asinou).

²³ For example a certain Kontostephanos, who pleaded St. Maximos Kausokalybites for curing his headache, addressed the saint, “do not neglect the prayer of your unworthy servant” (μὴ ἀπόση δέησιν ἀναξίου δούλου σου) - F. Halkin, *Deux Vies de S. Maxime le Kausokalybe, ermite au Mount Athos*, Analecta Bollandiana 54 (1936), 52.

²⁴ R. Taft, *Prayer to or for the Saints? A Note on the Sanctoral Intercessions/Commemorations in the Anaphora*, in: *Ab Oriente et Occidente* (Mt 8, 11): Kirche aus Ost und West, eds. M. Schneider, W. Berschin, St Ottilien 1996, 439-455; G. Winkler, *Die Interzessionen der Chrysostomusanaphora in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, OCP 37 (1971), 333-383 (esp. 363-366); R. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The Diptychs*, Rome 1991. For manuscripts with such liturgical commemoration: A. A. Дмитриевский, *Описание литургических рукописей, хранящихся в библиотеках Православного Востока*, Vol. II, Kiev 1901, 268, 824, 960 etc.; Λ. Πολίτης, *Κατάλογος λειτουργικών ελληταρίων της Ιεράς Μονής Βατοπεδίου*, Μακεδονικά 4 (1960), 403-408, nos. 1, 12, 19, 20; Χρυσόστομος μόν. Λαυριώτης, *Κατάλογος λειτουργικών ελληταρίων της Ιεράς Μονής Μεγίστης Λαύρας*, Μακεδονικά 4 (1960), 391-402, nos. 3, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 26, 30, 31, 32, 47, 49.

- they co-exist with the main votive images or inscriptions of founders;
- they are the only depictions of sponsors;
- there are several small images and epigraphs of supplicants coexisting in one foundation.

Small portraits and personal inscriptions co-existing with the main votive images or dedicatory texts appeared often in those cases when the main sponsors were laics, while the small-scale figures were priests or monks. Probably, one can assume that in such situations the founders passed a part of their administrative and managerial obligations to clerics, which, in turn, provided the latter with certain rights, including the right for a portrait.

The church of the Virgin in Karan (1337-1342 or 1332-1337)²⁵ was a family foundation having the character of mausoleum.²⁶ Its founder, župan Brajan with his wife Struja and four daughters are portrayed addressing the Virgin on the northern wall of the naos, while his role is underlined in the inscription (Lord God... your servant, noble first ktetor Peter, called župan Brajan with his spouse Struja and his children).²⁷

However, there are three additional sponsors portrayed there. In the lower part of the apse wall, a presbyter George Medoš accompanied by a servant kneels toward the altar table. The inscription around him is a Slavic translation of the typical Greek wording “Ἐήσεις τοῦ δούλου” and reads: “The supplication of the servant of God presbyteros George called Medoš.”²⁸ In the niche of the stone altarscreen, the Tricheirousa Virgin is worshipped by a kneeling nun,²⁹ while a third supplicant (currently destroyed) was the hieromonk John. His image once occupied a place on the northern wall, near the image of St. Paul the Apostle. Only the inscription which accompanied once his depiction has survived: “The supplication of the servant of God John hieromonk of the monas...”³⁰

This way, one can definitely distinguish between the main donor, i.e., the župan, and other personages – clerics (a priest, a hieromonk, and a nun) who,

²⁵ The dating depends on the interpretation of a boy's figure near the portrait of King Stefan Dušan. G. Babić (*Portret kraljevića Uroša u Beloj crkvi Karanskoj*, Zograf 2 (1967), 17-19) considered that it was the image of little Uroš, the king's son, and, therefore, dated it to 1340-1342, whereas D. Vojvodić turned the attention to the fact that the boy has no halo or suppendion, and suggested he can be an armor-bearer, which shifts the dating of the ensemble to 1332-1337 (*O živopisu Bele crkve karanske i suvremenom slikarstvu Raške*, Zograf 31 (2006-2007), 135-151).

²⁶ G. Cvetković-Tomašević, *Bela crkva u Karanu – mauzolej župana Brajana*, Saopštenja 22-23 (1990-1991), 159-176.

²⁷ г(оспод)и б(о)же... раба б[лаго]родив[огъ] ктитора првога петра а зовомъ жоупана браіана и съ подроужнемъ сі съ строуумъ и съ чеди своими – see: I. Đorđević, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele u doba Nemanjića*, Belgrade 1994, 140-141.

²⁸ моленє раба бож(и)ја прозвитера геургиа а зовомъ медошь – I. Đorđević, *Zidno slikarstvo*, 141.

²⁹ S. Mandić, *Jedna ktitorica Bele crkve karanske*, Starinar 9-10 (1958-1959), 223-225; I. Đorđević, *Zidno slikarstvo*, 141.

³⁰ мо[ленє] р[а]ба бож(и)ја іѡвана юромонаха мана... - I. Đorđević, *Zidno slikarstvo*, 142.

probably, made some contributions to this foundation – hence their right to be depicted. If priest George can be considered the spiritual guide of the Karan village community, the two others made probably their contributions at the point of becoming monk/ nun, and chose to be depicted in the company of a holy figure. Similarly to George Medoš, some clerics were depicted in the apsidal space of Byzantine mural ensembles and, usually, they took on the proskynesis pose, too like certain Manuel, called “the constructor” of the Church of Panagia Mavriotissa, Kastoria (1259-1264?).³¹

In the dedicatory inscription of the small Koimesis Church in Alikampos, a mountain village in Crete (1315-1316), at least five donors’ families were listed.³² The main sponsors, Michael and his wife hold jointly the model of the church in the votive composition situated on the west wall.³³ However, on the northern wall a kneeling nun is depicted with a commemorative inscription (“Remember, Lord, the servant of God, Martha the nun”)³⁴ addressing the enthroned Virgin. Due to the damaged condition of the main dedicatory text, one cannot be sure whether this nun was listed among the sponsors. However, even if she would not be named there, Martha, similarly to those clerics depicted in the Karan church, could have made some small donation to the foundation for her to be represented this way.

The collaboration between a cleric and laymen can be found also in the town space of Berroia. Here, the Anastasis Church was the *katholikon* of a small urban monastery (*monydrion*). The dedicatory inscription placed above the entrance informs that the church was erected by Xenos Psalidas for the “redemption of his many sins”, and completed by his spouse, Euphrosyne. The frescoes were commissioned to George Kalliergis “the best painter of entire Thessaly” and the church was consecrated in 1315, under the rule of Andronikos II,³⁵ by the Constantinopolitan patriarch.³⁶ The murals, however, do not bear images of the spouses-commissioners, which made some scholars to suggest that they were not responsible for the decoration of the foundation.³⁷ Nevertheless, on the southern wall, next to the depictions of Sts Arsenios and Anthony, one finds

³¹ ιτος ιερο[μόναχος... [ά]γίας μον[ής] ...γίδας, ό άνοικοδομήσ[ας] Μανου[ήλ?] - E. Δρακοπούλου, *Η πόλη της Καστοριάς τη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή εποχή (12ος - 16ος αι.)*, Athens 1997, 80.

³² G. Gerola, *Monumenti Veneti nell'isola di Creta*, Vol. IV, Venice 1932, 430.

³³ I. Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, Leiden 2001, 48-49.

³⁴ μνήσθητι κύριε τήν ψυχ(ήν) τής δούλης σου Μάρθας μον(α)χής - Sh. Gerstel, *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium*, Cambridge 2016, 149, 68.

³⁵ Ξένος Ψαλιδάς ναόν Θεοῦ ἐγείρει // ἄφροσιν ζητῶν τῶν πολλῶ[ν ἐγκλ]ημάτων // τῆς Ἀναστάσεως Χριστοῦ ὄνομα θέμενος // [Εὐ]φροσύνη σύνευνος τοῦτον ἐκπληρεῖ // ἱστοριογράφος ὄνομα [Καλιέργης] // τοὺς καλοὺς καὶ κοσμίους ἀταδέλφους μου // ὅλης Θεο<τ>αλίας ἄριστος ζωγράφος // πατριαρχική χεὶρ καθιστᾷ τὸν ναόν // [ἐπὶ] τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως Ἀνδρονίκου // Κομνηνοῦ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου ἐν ἔ[τει ς]ακγ'. -I. Drić, *Epigram, Art and Devotion in Later Byzantium*, Cambridge University Press 2016, 72-74.

³⁶ Probably, Niphon I, see: K. Πιτσάκης, *Καὶ πάλι γιὰ τὴν κτητορική ἐπιγραφή τοῦ Χριστοῦ Βεροίας*, in: Aureus: Τόμος αφιερώμενος στον καθηγητὴ Εὐάγγελο Κ. Χρυσό, Athens: 2014, 673–681, esp. 676-677.

³⁷ Θ. Παπαζώτος, *Ἡ Βέροια καὶ οἱ ναοὶ τῆς (11ος-18ος αι.)*, Athens 1994, 172.

a kneeling monk accompanied by the following text: “Accept the Supplication of the kneeling ktetor Ignatios, who established the patriarchal *stauropegion* for your words.”³⁸

Indeed, hieromonk Ignatios Kalothetos and his father Andreios are mentioned in a chrysobull of Andronikos II issued in 1314,³⁹ which confirms their ownership. According to its text, the Athonite hieromonk Ignatios Kalothetos had got the monastery of the Anastasis in Berroia on the basis of the patriarchal letter, and he also had already received an imperial *prostagma* allowing him to hold the monastery during his lifetime. However, the chrysobull grants Ignatios the permission to dispose the monastery at his own will, so that Ignatios could stay on the Holy Mount, while the foundation in Berroia will be administered by his father Andreios.

Putting all this information together, one may suggest that the Xenoi couple exercised patronage over the monastery and built the church. In the process of building, the husband died and, before 1314, it was completed by his wife Euphrosyne, who afterwards passed the foundation to the patriarch. By the patriarchal letter, monk Ignatios received the monastery and raised it to the *stauropegion* status. He obtained from the emperor the right of life-long possession, appointed his father as an administrator, and accomplished its painting by 1315. Papazotos identified the kneeling monk’s figure with Ignatios Kalothetos,⁴⁰ and suggested that the choice of St. Arsenios as the monk’s patron was motivated by Ignatios’ position in the Arsenite controversy. Even though Ignatios is depicted as a minor figure, he is called “*ktetor*” and, judging by the written evidence, he played a role of second patron after the Xenoi family, since he got a patriarchal status for the foundation and completed its painting.

The Monastery of the Presentation of Jesus at Meteora is associated with the important personality of a local monastic leader, hieromonk Neilos, “the *protos*” of Stagon and the hegoumenos of Doupiani skete.⁴¹ He is depicted kneeling at the throne of the Theotokos Eleousa on the southern wall of the monastery’s *katholikon* dedicated to the Ascension. The portrait of Neilos is accompanied by an inscription underlining his status and the pious act: “Supplication of the servant of God Neilos, hieromonk, ktetor, and *protos* of the *skete*.”⁴² There are two more texts in the naos. The first, situated on the lintel of the western wall, states that the church “was built and painted by the efforts and expenses of the most revered among the *hieromonks kyr* Neilos and the *protos* of Stagoi *skete* and the hegoumenos of Doupeianos monastery, during the rule

³⁸ Τοῦ προσπε[σόντος] κτήτορος [Ι]γ[νατίου] δέησιν δ[έξαι, ὃς ὑπέρ] τῶν σῶν [λό]γων σταυροπίτην τέθηκεν πατριαρχικόν - Θ. Παπαζώτος, *Ἡ Βέροια καί οἱ ναοί της*, 102.

³⁹ P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes de Lavra*, Vol. II, Paris 1977, 159–161, no. 103.

⁴⁰ Θ. Παπαζώτος, *Ὁ Ἰγνάτιος Καλόθετος ἰδρυτής τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ Ἁγίου Βλάσιου στη Μεγίστη Λαύρα*, Μακεδονικά 19 (1979), 426–429.

⁴¹ Ν. Νικονάνος, *Μετέωρα. Τα μοναστήρια καὶ ἱστορία τους*, Athens 1987, 83.

⁴² Δέησις τοῦ δοῦλου τοῦ θεοῦ Νείλου ἱερομονάχου κτήτορ κ(αὶ) πρότος τῆς σκή-τεος - Ν. Βέης, *Σύνταγμα ἐπιγραφικῶν μνημείων Μετεώρων καὶ τῆς πέριξ χώρας μετὰ σχετικῶν ἀρχαιολογημάτων*, Βυζαντίς 1 (1909), 574; G. Subotić, *Počeci monaškog života i crkva manastira Sretenja u Meteorima*, ZLU 2 (1966), 150.



Fig. 7. Ano Poula, the Church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Portrait of Kyriake the nun with the Military Saints, the southern wall

Сл. 7. Ано Пула (Мани), црква Светих Теодора, портрет монахиње Киријаке са светима ратницима, јужни зид

of our most pious emperor kyr Symeon Palaiologos Uroš and autocrat of the Romans, Serbia, and Romania, and during the episcopacy of our lord Besarion, in the year 1366/7.”⁴³

Judging by this evidence, one may assume that Neilos, though depicted as a small figure with supplicatory inscription, was, in fact, the only *ktetor*. However, the third inscription clarifies the situation: “... the expenses for the painting of the holy church were given by the most noble and glorious kyr Constantine... renamed as Kyprian the monk in the holy and angelic schema ... year 1367/8.”⁴⁴ So the actual sponsor of the murals was a certain Constantine, probably a Serbian aristocrat,⁴⁵ who took monastic vows, while Neilos, being an active manager and administrator of the monastic life of Meteora, commissioned and supervised the execution of the fresco-decoration. This division of labour between the monastic leader and noble sponsors is similar with the case of Savior Monastery of Berroia. The resemblance becomes even more obvious in the arrangement of inscriptions and images. The noblemen sponsoring financially the church are mentioned in the dedications, but are not depicted, whereas the monks, who were the managers of a foundation, and spiritual leaders of the communities are depicted accompanied by the supplicatory inscription in which they are called “*ktetor*.” However, these monks do not appear in typical votive compositions holding church models, but rather kneeling near holy figures.

⁴³ Ἀνηγέρθει ἐκ βάθρ(ων) κ(αι) ἀνηστορίθει ὁ πάνσεπτος κ(αι) θεῖος ναὸς τ(ῆς) Ἀναλείψεως τοῦ Κ(υρίου)υ κ(αι) Θ(εο)ῦ κ(αι) Σ(ωτῆ)ρ(ο)ς ἡμ(ῶν) Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ διὰ σ(υν)δρομ(ῆς) κ(αι) ἐξόδου τοῦ τημειωτάτου ἐν ἱερομονάχοις κῦ(ρ) Νείλου κ(αι) Πρότου τ(ῆς) Σκήτεως Σταγ(ῶν) κ(αι) καθηγουμένου τῆς σεβασμῆας μονῆς Δουπειάνου βασιλέβ(ον)τος δὲ τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου ἡμ(ῶν) βασιλέος κῦ(ρ) Σιμε(ῶν) τοῦ Παλαιολόγον κ(αι) αὐτοκράτορ(ο)ς Ρομαίων, Σερβεί(ας) κ(αι) Ρομανεί(ας) τοῦ Οὔρεσι, ἐπισκοπεύ(ο)ντος δὲ τοῦ παναγιωτάτου δεσπότη τοῦ ἡμ(ῶν) Βησαρίον, ἔτ(ου)ς ,ζωοε’ (=1366/7). – G. Subotić, *Počeci*, 150.

⁴⁴ ...ἐδόθη ὁ ἔξοδος δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ θεῖου ναοῦ παρὰ τοῦ πανευγενεστάτου κ(αι) ἐνδοξοτάτου κῦ(ρ) κωνσταντίνου.....δστις ἐπονομάστην διὰ τοῦ θεῖου κ(αι) ἀγγελικοῦ σχήματος Κυπριάνος μοναχός ἔτ(ου)ς ΣΩΟΕ - G. Subotić, *Počeci*, 150.

⁴⁵ G. Subotić, *Počeci*, 151.

Indeed, the importance of the administration and management provided by a clergyman was acknowledged even by the Serbian kings. The Life of St. Stefan of Dečani describing the episode of Dečani monastery's foundation introduces a dialogue between the ruler and Archbishop Danilo II, in which King Stefan promises to Danilo to make him the "second founder" if the archbishop provides his support and care for the establishment: "you will be the second ktetor of this place, together with me, if we start to build," says the king.⁴⁶ Moreover, the subsequent *hegoumenoi* of this monastery, Arsenije and Danilo, were distinguished with their portraits and inscriptions in the mural ensemble of Dečani.⁴⁷ Even the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, for establishing his private monastery, appointed a person for its administration (προϊστάμενος), namely, monk Paul. Being depicted in the murals of the naos of the patriarchal foundation of Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki (completed around 1334), this monk is represented in *proskynesis* near the enthroned Virgin. The accompanying inscription calls him "the administrator of this holy monastery and student of the most holy Ecumenical Patriarch and ktetor kyr Niphon and the second ktetor."⁴⁸ Consequently, the position of such administrators might have been similar to that of the main founder and even equal to "the second founder." However, as they acknowledged their roles as successors of the first establishers, these people were not depicted holding church models.

Thus the sponsor or ktetors depicted as a kneeling figure may indicate a less important role of this donor in comparison with his predecessor. The church of St. Demetrios in Peć Patriarchate was built by Serbian Archbishop Nikodim (1317-1324) as his burial place, but the founder did not finish its decoration.⁴⁹ Serbian Archbishop, Joanikije (1338-1346, and 1346-1354 Patriarch) completed the decoration (c. 1345) which is recorded in the inscription placed on the western wall. Here, the sponsor's patron, St. Joannicius, kneels in front of the Virgin Orans replacing the actual sponsor.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the inscription next to the saint concerns the Archbishop: "oh, most Holy Theotokos, accept the prayers of your servant, Archbishop Joanikije."⁵¹ This way, the humbleness of the kneeling position, the replacement of the actual portrait with the patron

⁴⁶ Arhiepiskop Danilo i drugi, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskops srpskih*, ed. Đ. Dančić, Beograd i Zagreb 1866, 202.

⁴⁷ G. Subotić, *Prilog hronologiji dečanskog zidnog slikarstva*, ZRVI 20 (1981), 113-127; B. V. Popović, *Program živopisa u oltarskom prostoru*, in: *Zidno slikarstvo manastira Dečana*, Belgrade 1995, 96; D. Vojvodić, *Portreti vladara, crkvenih dostojanstvenika i plemića u naosu i priprati*, in: *Zidno slikarstvo manastira Dečana*, 276-277, 285; B. Todić, M. Čanak-Medić, *Manastir Dečani*, Belgrade: 2005, 19-20, 443-444.

⁴⁸ Παῦλο(ς) μοναχός [καί] προϊστάμενος τῆς σεβασμίας μονῆς ταύτης κ(αί) μαθητής τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου οἰκουμενικοῦ π(ατ)ριάρχου κ(αί) κτίτορος κῦρ Νίφωνος κ(αί) δεῦτερος κτίτωρ – Ch. Stephan, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble. Die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostelkirche zu Thessaloniki*, Worms 1986, 117.

⁴⁹ G. Subotić, *Crkva Svetog Dimitrija u Pećkoj patrijaršiji*, Belgrade 1964, II-VI, X.

⁵⁰ B. Todić, *Patrijarh Joanikije - ktitor fresaka u crkvi Sv. Apostola u Peći*, ZLU 16 (1980), 89-93.

⁵¹ ὁ πρῆς(ve)τα Β(ογορoди)це прими молби раба своје҃го архієп(иско)па Іоаникіа – Ibid., 92.

saint, the petitioning tone of the text, and the absence of the term “ktetor”, all these facts indicate that Joanikije regarded his role as rather secondary in relation with the first founder of the church, Archbishop Nikodim.

In all these cases, the small-sized portrait depicted clerics. Even though the measure of their endowment and participation in the construction and decoration varied (e.g., donations made on behalf of churches, supervision of works, completion of established foundation, or actual building and full-scale decoration), the iconographic scheme remained quite identical. Probably, one can speak in these cases about the secondary role of such ecclesiastic patrons toward either the first ktetor or an economic sponsor of the establish institution.

In a lesser number of monuments, one main patron was assisted by one or several less important laic donors, who probably made some investments in the construction or, more likely, the monuments’ decoration. The difference in status between the main and the additional patrons was usually underlined either with the help of differently-scaled portraits or through the replacement of minor sponsors’ images with their written prayers. However, even in the latter case, the role of a sponsor was expressed in the choice of an image or saint worshipped by means of a supplicatory inscription.

St. Demetrios Church at Prilep (painted before 1284)⁵² is an example of such collaboration between the main founder and additional donors. Bearing the indication of “ktetor,” one of the heirs of the original founder⁵³ is depicted without a church’s model, but in full scale, praying pose, and addressing his namesake military saint on the northern wall of the southern aisle: “Supplication of the servant of God Demetrios Mesenopoletes and *ktetor* of this church.”⁵⁴ Besides Demetrios, there were other donors taking part in the decoration of the church. The couple of Andronikos and Eirene left their votive inscription on a painted cornice, below the image of the Virgin and above the representation of St. Elijah, on the north-eastern pillar: “Supplication of the servant of God Andronikos and Eirene.”⁵⁵ The unusual choice and placement of both images could be motivated by the sponsors’ pious preferences. Another donor, a small, prostrated monk whose name is not preserved, worships a full-scale image of saint *anachoret* Onouphrios, placed on the eastern facet of the southern-east pillar. Since in both cases the saints are rare and their placement is exceptional, one may suggest that minor patrons imposed their pious choices and sponsored the images of these particular saints.

⁵² In more details on the dating see: *Natpisi istorijske sadržine u zidnom slikarstvu*. Vol. I: XII–XIII vek, ed. G. Subotić, B. Miljković, I. Špadijer, I. Toth, Belgrade 2015, 70-75 (with further bibliography).

⁵³ Concerning Demetrios Mesenopolites being a heir and not original founder, see: G. Babić, *Pokušaj utvrđivanja mesta i granica Panagirišta Prilepa druge četvrtine XIV veka*, *Starinar* 20 (1969), 2; G. Babić, *Tri grčka fresko natpisa nazidinama crkava srednjevekovnog Prilepa iz druge polovine XIII veka*, *ZLU* 5 (1969), 26-28.

⁵⁴ Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θε(ε)οῦ Δημητρίου τοῦ Μησηνοπολήτου καὶ κτήτορ(ος) τοῦ ναοῦ - *Natpisi istorijske sadržine*, 70.

⁵⁵ [Δέησις] τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θε(ε)οῦ [Ἀνδρο]νίκου καὶ Ἡρή[νη]ς – *ibid.*

In the church of Panagia at Sklavopoula (Paliochori, Crete), dated to the late 14th or early-15th century,⁵⁶ the differences in status and measure of participation are expressed through the absence of additional portraits. Only the founder is depicted with the model of the church and marked in the following way: “Supplication of the servant of God, John the *portares*.” Between his figure and the image of St. Demetrios on horseback, another inscription preserves the names of other patrons: “Supplication of the servant of God, Alexios... with his wife and children ... Theodore. Amen.”⁵⁷ Thus, John is represented as a person who bears the construction cost of the foundation, while the names of Alexios and Theodore are related only to the image of St. Demetrios.

The Church of St. John the Baptist at Archangelo (Rhodes) is a good example of collaboration between the main and additional founders expressed by means of difference in scale of portraits. A three-member family (husband, wife, and child) occupies the western wall: the spouses hold the model of the church together, expressing thus their joint investments into the monument.⁵⁸ Another sponsor, Nikolaos Kamanos, is depicted as a small-scaled figure near a large-scale image of Archangel Michael, on the south wall of the naos. The prayer of the sponsor is underlined by the short epigraphic note: “Supplication of the servant of God Nicholaos Kamanos and his wife.”⁵⁹ He extends his hands toward the Archangel’s big image, and points out to the scroll held by the Heavenly commander, which reads: “The mortals seeing the exposed sword, those of you, who are wordly and careless in character, get humble for repentance.”⁶⁰ As it seems, the choice of the image and of its accompanying text was made intentionally and, indeed, this richly-dressed donor turns toward the saint to acquire the benefits of afterlife.

As one can see, there was not a single way of expressing differences between the main founder and the sponsors, but in all the situations when small-scaled images or supplicatory inscriptions are created on behalf of other persons than the actual founder of a church, the visual and textual means underline

⁵⁶ J. Albani, *The Painted Decoration of the Church of the Virgin at Sklavopoula, Crete*, in: *Актуальные проблемы теории и истории искусства*, Vol. 6, eds. A. Zacharova, S. Maltseva, E. Stanyukovich-Denisova, St.Petersburg 2016, 167-176, 873-874.

⁵⁷ 1) [Δέησις] τοῦ δοῦλου τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰω(άννου) τοῦ πορτάρι and 2) [Δέησις] τοῦ δοῦλου τοῦ θεοῦ Ἀλεξίου τοῦ [...] ἀμα καὶ τῆ συμβίου κ(αὶ) τ(οῖς) τέκνοις αὐτοῦ [...] Θεοδώρου. Αἰμὴν - G. Gerola, *Monumenti Veneti*, IV, 433; J. Albani, *The Painted Decoration*, 168.

⁵⁸ T. Kambourova, *Le don de l’église – une affaire de couple?*, in: *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. L. Theis, M. Mullett, M. Grünbart, Vienna 2012, 213-230.

⁵⁹ + Δ(έησις) τοῦ δοῦλου τοῦ θεοῦ Νικόλαο Καμάνου κ(αὶ) [τῆς] συμ[βίου] αὐ[τοῦ] ἔτους [Σ]θλς (=6936 = 1428). – Η. Κόλλιας, *Τοιχογραφία της ιπποτοκρατίας (1309-1522) εις Ρόδον*, Αρχαιολογικά ἀνάλεκτα ἐξ Αθηνῶν 6/2 (1973), 274-275, figs. 7-8; I. Μπίθα, *Ενδυματολογικὲς μαρτυρίες στις τοιχογραφίες της μεσαιωνικῆς Ρόδου (14ος αἰ.-1523) Μια πρώτη προσέγγιση*, in: *Ρόδος, 2.400 χρόνια. Η πόλη της Ρόδου ἀπὸ τὴν ἰδρυση τῆς μέχρι τὴν κατάληψη ἀπὸ τοὺς Τούρκους (1523)*, ed. E.Kypraiou, Athens 2000, 435.

⁶⁰ Βροτοὶ βλέποντες τὸ ξίφος τεταμέν(ον), ὅσοι βέβηλοι κ(αὶ) ῥάθου[μοι] τ(ὸν) τρό[πον], [ἡ] συσ[ταλεῖ]τ[ε] πρὸς [μετάνοιαν]- The damaged text on the Arganchel’s scroll can be reconstructed with the help of the Hermeneia of Dionysios of Phourna (Διονύσιος ο εκ Φουρνά, Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης, St. Petersburg 1909, 231).

somehow the inferior position of the supplementary donors vis-à-vis the main ktetor. Moreover, these laic minor donors are usually related only with some selected images which, probably, were commissioned by them.

Small-scale figures as unique donors, unsupplemented by the mentioning of other sponsors, neither in the dedicatory inscription, nor in the short supplications next to saints' images, are quite rare. More precisely, they appear primarily when the mural decoration is not completely preserved, this always leaving the possibility for other portraits or depictions to have been originally present.

For example, in the narthex of the Virgin's Church at Lipljan, a hollow arch is placed in the southern wall.⁶¹ A small, kneeling nobleman addresses the massive figure of a saint, probably Nicholas. Other murals of the church are either in bad condition or replaced by later paintings, and no dedicatory inscription or another votive portrait is preserved.

The chrysobull issued by King Stefan Dušan on behalf of the pyrgos Chrusia on the Holy Mount (1336-1343),⁶² which passes the church in the ownership of the Athonite institution, gives an approximate date for the church's construction. However, the exact date and the commissioner of the murals are unknown, and the text of the document doesn't mention the founders of the church, but rather represents the transfer of the property as a deed accomplished personally by the ruler. One may suggest that the foundation could be painted under Hilandar's supervision or intended to be a donation to the Athonite pyrgos. In this case, the layman was either an ephoros or the sponsor of precisely the image of St. Nicholas, whom he addresses. Nevertheless, the western façade⁶³ bears the portraits of the king and his wife pointing to the imperial power exercised over the ownership or transfer of the foundation.

Slightly more common than small-sized, single ktetors are those cases when two small-scaled donors are depicted in one church, usually being connected by ties of spiritual brotherhood or by family relations. In a chapel situated at Malagari, on the periphery of Corinth, built in the 11th century, one can encounter the images of two monks bearing the same surname. In the standing deesis situated in the northern arcosolium, the Virgin also introduces to Christ *Photodotes* a monk called Sophronios Kalozoes (παρομηοθη(ς) Σοφρονιος μοναχος ο καλοζοης). He has a long, white beard and holds a scroll in his left hand, suggesting his primary role in the endowment of the foundation.⁶⁴

The southern arcosolium of the same church is occupied by the Dormition scene including Archbishop Dionysios Areopagite serving at the bed of the

⁶¹ R. Ljubinković, D. Đokić, S. Vučenović, A. Tomašević, *Istraživački i konzervatorski radovi u crkvi Vavedenja u Lipljanu*, Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture 10 (1959), 83; I. Đorđević, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele*, 55-56, 152-153.

⁶² M. Ivanović, *Hrisovulja kralja Stefana Dušana kojom hilendarskom pirgu u Hrusiji poklanja Crkvu Sv. Bogorodice u Lipljanu*, Stari srpski arhiv 13 (2014), 33-64.

⁶³ D. Vojvodić, *Newly discovered portraits of rulers and the dating of the oldest frescoes in Lipljan*, Zograf 50 (2013), 143.

⁶⁴ E. Ghini-Tsofopoulou, *6η Εφορεία Βυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων. Χρονικά*, Αρχαιολογικό Δελτίο 36/B1 (1981), 173-174; D. Athanasoulis, *Corinth*, in: *Heaven and Earth. Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece*, eds. E. Albani, E. Chalkia, Athens 2013, 206; Sh. Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 30-31, 143, fig. 20.

Virgin. There are two saints Theodores on the introdos and, at the feet of Theodore Teron, one can see another, younger monk Dionysios (ο παρομηοθης Δηονισιος μοναχος καλοζοης). Probably, the iconographic choice of the two Theodores was motivated by the fact that the palladium icon of the Corinth region was that of Saints Theodores,⁶⁵ while emphasis of St. Dionysios figure in the Dormition scene (he is the only personage whose name is inscribed) can be directed by the namesake commissioner.

These two monks having the same surname were possibly father and son, as suggested by E. Ghini-Tsofopoulou. However, the beard's absence, the beads on Dionysios' neck, and his clothes (dark-brown robe, black cap, and white cloak) might suggest his belonging to a Catholic order (probably Carmelites), who were present at that time in the principality of Achaia.⁶⁶ Accordingly, family relations between sponsors might have facilitated a bi-confessional use of the church.

Two donors bound by family ties are represented as small-scale figures in the arcosolia of Hagioi Theodoroi in Ano Poula, Mani (1265-1270).⁶⁷ Both arcosolia, situated on the southern wall, contain depictions of military saints and donors. The male sponsor named Euthymios Lousousas the monk ("Supplication of Euthymios the monk")⁶⁸ holds an unfolded scroll with prayer addressing the saint and referring to a gift offered to the celestial powers (Δέξαι το δώρον), namely, the foundation itself which was built by the efforts of the ktetor. This inscription in verse suggests that the patron as a relatively learned person. As Katsafados suggested, this individual can be a landowner from the Karavas, who was also responsible for decorating other foundations. The lady depicted in another niche offers to the saints a rolled-up scroll, which was considered to be the sign of her donation. The inscription accompanying her, written as well in verse, describes the image as "παρομ(η)ιος"⁶⁹ of Kyriake the nun, daughter of Leo Touropounges and wife of Euthymios Lousousas. In her text, she refers to the "many toils" which her spouse invested in erecting this foundation. Consequently, the small-scaled depictions of family members point out to the ktetorial rights of both spouses and the funerary character of the foundation. However, the superiority of the husband's investments is underlined in both texts, as he was, probably, the main commissioner.

Thus, in those cases when small-scale images of donors appear to be the only votive portraits preserved, the explanation of their statuses and measures of endowment remains unclear due to the bad preservation state of the monuments. More commonly, two small-scale depictions of donors appear in foun-

⁶⁵ J. Nesbitt, N. Oikonomides. *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, Vol. 2, Dumbarton Oaks 1994, 78-79.

⁶⁶ L. F. Ranner, *Mendicant orders in the Principality of Achaia and the. Latin communal identity, 1204-1453*, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 31/2 (2007), 157-169.

⁶⁷ P. Katsafados, *New Evidence on the Dedicatory Inscriptions (13th century) in the Church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Ano Poula, Inner Mani*, *DChAE* 36 (2015), 275-287.

⁶⁸ ΔΕΗCIC ΕΥΘΙΜΗΟΥ ΜΟ(NΑΧΟΥ) ΔΕΚΟΥΣΑ – Ibid., 287 and 281.

⁶⁹ The word can be translated as an image, likeness, see: Ibid., 277; S. Kalopissi-Veri, *Dedicatory inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece*, Vienna 1992, 101; Sh. Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 140-142.



Fig. 8. Asinou (Cyprus), the Panagia Phorbiotissa Church, narthex, the southern wall

Сл. 8. Асину (Кипр), црква Богородице Форбиотисе, нартекс, јужни зид

datations established as a result of collaboration between monks, who could be connected by family ties, too. In these cases, the foundations are rather small and have, besides being hermitages, a burial function. However, the differences in age, status, and role between the monks-contributors are underlined by visual and textual means.

Churches built or painted by several patrons having the same social background and providing equal or similar measures of endowments are especially common on the periphery of the Byzantine Commonwealth, on the Greek islands (Crete, Naxos, Kos, Cyprus), as well as on Mani and Laconia. Usually, these churches are quite modest in size and are erected with the participation of several families or entire villages. Many of the examples belonging to this group were recently studied⁷⁰ and, therefore, I am going to point out to the main features of this pattern of collective patronage, illustrating them with several examples instead of providing an in-depth analysis of all known cases.

As it was once shown,⁷¹ the construction costs of such churches could be as low as 14.5 nomismata, whereas the average contribution from one peasant-donor could be a half-modios field, a half or quarter of hyperpyron, parts of crops, and products of olive trees. Usually, among such donors, some had slightly higher social status and wealth, and made greater investments in the foundations. I assume that such sponsors could select certain saints or images to be painted and paid for their execution, marking them by supplicatory inscriptions. Some church donors could even expect to be buried in these churches and possessed painted arcosolia with elaborated selections of saints.

In his recent book, P. Katsaphados collected evidence of portraits and supplicatory inscriptions from seven churches of Mani region, dated from mid-

⁷⁰ S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Church Foundations by Entire Villages*; Eadem, *Collective Patterns of Patronage*; Sh.E. Gerstel, S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Female Church Founders: The Agency of the Village Widow in Late Byzantium*, in: *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. L. Theiss, M. Mullett and M. Grünbart, Vienna 2014, 195-211; A. Laiou, *The Peasant as Donor (13th–14th Centuries)*, in: *Donation et donateurs dans le monde byzantin: Actes du colloque international de l'Université de Fribourg*, eds. J.-M. Spieser and E. Yota, Paris 2012, 107-124; and especially Sh. E. Gerstel, *Rural Lives*.

⁷¹ S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory inscriptions*, 35-37.



Fig. 9. Kastoria, St. Stephan's Church, Portrait of George Babylas with the Virgin Gorgoepikoos, the northern wall of the northern aisle

Сл. 9. Костур, црква Светог Стефана, портрет Георгија Вавиле са Богородицом Горгоепикоос, северни зид северног брода



Fig. 10. Kastoria, the Taxiarchis Church, Portraits of Michael Asanes with his wife (?) and the Archangel, the western external wall

Сл. 10. Костур, црква Арханђела Михаила, портрет Михаила Асена са женом и Арханђелом, западни спољни зид

13th to mid-14th century.⁷² In all cases, these monuments contain, except for the main dedicatory inscriptions, additional small representations of donors or petitioning texts near images of selected saints. In this sense, St. Nicholas Church in Exo Nyphi

(Mani)⁷³ is a typical example. Here, besides the main dedicatory text, six various inscriptions mention different donors between 1285 and 1326. The image of St. Prokopios bears a prayer of Nicholaos Therianos,⁷⁴ St. Nichetas became the patron of Theodore Niphates and his son Niketas,⁷⁵ the scene of the Baptism was selected by the local nomikos,⁷⁶ whereas a big-scale figure of Archangel Michael was chosen by George Konstantinianos and his family.⁷⁷ The latter family also ordered their kneeling depictions next to the saint. This way, the

⁷² Π. Κατσαφάδος, *Βυζαντινές επιγραφικές μαρτυρίες Στη Μέσα Μάνη (13ος-14ος αι)*, Athens 2015.

⁷³ Ibid., 102-124; Μ. Αγρέβη, *Άγιος Νικόλαος στο Έξω Νύφι της Κάτω Μάνης Εικονογραφικές παρατηρήσεις σε ένα άγνωστο σύνολο τοιχογραφιών του 1284/85*, in: *Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο στη μνήμη Νικολάου Β. Δρανδάκη για τη Βυζαντινή Μάνη*, Sparta 2009, 171-196.

⁷⁴ Δέ(ησις) του δούλου του Θε(ο)υ Νικολαίηος Θεριανου του Νιφιότι άμα συνβίου αυτου άμην – Ibid., 104.

⁷⁵ Δέ(ησις) Θεοδώρου του Νιφάτη κ(αι) του ήου αυτου Νικήτα άμα σημβίου κ(αι) τέκν(ων) αυτου άμην – Ibid., 105.

⁷⁶ Δέ(ησις) του ιστοριωγράφου άμα σημβήου και ταίκων αυτου άμην έτους , ω λ Δ – Ibid., 114.

⁷⁷ Δέ(ησις) του δουλου(ου) Γεωργίου Κονσταντηνιά(νου) άμα συμβίου κ(αι) τέκνης αυτου άμην - Ibid., 117.



Fig. 11. Veria (Berroia), St. John the Theologos' Church, the Deesis with Nikephoros Sgouros' Inscription, the Northern external wall

Сл. 11. Бер (Верѝја), црква светог Јована Богослова, Деисус са натписом Никифора Стура, северни спољни зид

donors seemed to make their investments under the condition of being depicted or mentioned near certain saints, who can be either a namesake patron, like in case of Niketas Niphates, or a figure associated with the soul's afterlife, as Archangel Michael.

On Cyprus, the narthex of Panagia Phorbiotissa at Asinou,⁷⁸ gradually repainted between 1332 and 1375, contains more than ten individual portraits of donors, as well as a dedicatory inscription which mentions the participation of "common people" (κοινὸς λαός) in the decoration of the church. Among these donors named through the formula "Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ," the majority are monks; however, there are also some laymen and local and Latin women.

A great number of communally-founded churches is preserved in the villages of Crete, especially in the province of Selino. The Church of the Annunciation at Kakkodiki on Crete (1331-1332)⁷⁹ is an example of simultaneous communal foundation made by the efforts of more than thirty sponsors, who are listed in the dedicatory inscription, including some unnamed members of *Etaireia* (household or cooperative).⁸⁰ However, only five sponsors received small-scale portraits. Among the depicted persons, two are priests and three are women. Nikephoros the protopapas,⁸¹ who is mentioned in the first place in the inscription, worships the enthroned Virgin on the north wall. On the left of the throne of the Mother of God, there is a female founder bearing the name Stamatini,⁸² who is usually considered to be the protopapas' wife. In the Deesis-like scene on the south wall, John, the priest and *nomikos*,⁸³ named second in the dedicatory inscription, is placed in the foreground. He preferred probably to be depicted under the patronage and auspices of his name-sake saint John the Baptist. Two other kneeling female donors are unnamed, they are placed next to Archangel Michael and St. Marina, but their

female founder bearing the name Stamatini,⁸² who is usually considered to be the protopapas' wife. In the Deesis-like scene on the south wall, John, the priest and *nomikos*,⁸³ named second in the dedicatory inscription, is placed in the foreground. He preferred probably to be depicted under the patronage and auspices of his name-sake saint John the Baptist. Two other kneeling female donors are unnamed, they are placed next to Archangel Michael and St. Marina, but their

⁷⁸ S.Kalopissi-Verti, *The Murals of the Narthex*, 176-192.

⁷⁹ Θ. Ξανθάκη, Ο ναῖσκος του Ευαγγελισμού στο Κακοδίκι Σελίνου. Οι τοιχογραφίες και η κτητορική επιγραφή, *DCHAE* 32 (2011), 65-84. G. Gerola, *Monumenti Veneti*, IV, 462; V. Tsamakda, *Die Panagia-Kirche und die Erzenkelkirche in Kakodiki. Kunst- und kulturgeschichtliche Analyse byzantinischer Malerei Kretas im 14. Jh.*, Vienna 2012, 37-44.

⁸⁰ Θ. Ξανθάκη, Ο ναῖσκος, 79-80; V. Tsamakda, *Die Panagia-Kirche*, 37-38.

⁸¹ Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Νικηφόρου ἡερέος τοῦ προτοπαπᾶ - V. Tsamakda, *Die Panagia-Kirche*, 94.

⁸² Μνήστητι Κύριε τνή ψηχνή τῆς δούλης Σταματηνῆς - *Ibid.*

⁸³ Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἰωάννου εἰερέως τοῦ νουμι(κοῦ) - *Ibid.*, 95.

votive inscriptions (Μνήστητη Κύριε τὴν ψυχὴν τῆς δούλης) does not preserve more details. These anonymous ladies could belong to the main founders' families.

These small-scale depictions do not follow typically compositions of donors, since the founders do not hold church models and have significantly smaller scale. These images are better named supplicatory, since they address with prayers the chosen holy figures. Usually, such figures were namesake saints or the sponsors' holy patrons.

The proposed hypothesis about appearance of inscriptions/small portraits next to images of saints as indication of a commissioner can be confirmed by a case found in the church of the Virgin's Entry to the Temple at Dolac (nowadays destroyed). Dated to the late-14th century,⁸⁴ the painting contains several images of saints bearing short inscriptions that directly indicate sponsors' names in terms of commissioning certain images. The scene of the Raising of Lazaros, as well as the images of St. Lazaros of Jerusalem and St. Demetrios were ordered by Basil the ecclesiarch ("Basil ecclesiarch and ... painted these images of Lazaros' resurrection and of St. Lazaros and St. Demetrios. Let his memory be eternal").⁸⁵ The image of St. Paraskeue was paid for by Bogdan Magol ("Bogdan Magol painted this image of St. Paraskeue. Let God pardon him"),⁸⁶ whereas Rada with her son John commissioned the figures of St. Peter and St. Paul ("Rada with her son John painted these images of holy apostles Peter and Paul").⁸⁷

Sometimes the appearance of private portraits, even in the type of a suppliant and not a founder, could be an indication of a deeper involvement of an individual in the administration or establishment of a communal foundation. In the church of St. George at Komitades (Sfakia, Crete), the dedicatory inscription preserves the names of two heads of family, three widows with children, one single man and one woman, and two monks, as well as other donors "whose names only God knows."⁸⁸ However, only two patrons received their depictions on the southern wall of the church. As in many other cases, they are represented as kneeling supplicants accompanied by inscriptions of the "Δέησις τοῦ δουλοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ" type. Accordingly, Manuel Skordiles and monk Gerasimos Phorogiorges are placed under the Orans half-figure of St. Sophia, who was usually perceived as a saint associated with wisdom and foresight, especially in the field of construction.⁸⁹ The sponsors turn to the standing images of the Virgin (Manuel) and Christ (Gerasimos). One cannot be certain, however, why

⁸⁴ G. Subotić, *Dolac i Čabići*, Belgrade 2012, 29-31.

⁸⁵ Слѣ въбразѣ Лаз[а]рев[о] въскрешениѣ и с(ве)таго Лазар(а) и с(ве)таго Димитрія попиѣса Васили(ѣ) еклисиархъ и ра.. васп .іакъ в[ѣч]н[а м]оу [па]м[е]тъ – *ibid.*, 24.

⁸⁶ Слѣ въбразѣ с(ве)тиѣ Петке попиѣса Богданъ Маголь. Богъ да га прости. – *ibid.*, 25.

⁸⁷ Слѣ въбразѣ с(ве)тихъ апостољ Петра ꙗ Павла попиѣса Рада са синонь с(и) Иваномъ. Богъ да хї прости – *ibid.*

⁸⁸ G. Gerola, *Monumenti*, IV, 472-473; K. E. Λασσιθιωτάκης, *Εκκλησίες της Δυτικής Κρήτης. Εισαγωγή Δ. Επαρχία Σελίνου, αριθ. 57– 100, Κρητικά Χρονικά* 22 (1971), 111-114, no. 134; I. Spatharakis, *Dated Paintings*, 33-35.

⁸⁹ N. Schibille, *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*, Ashgate Publishing 2014, 67-68.



Fig. 12. Gračanica monastery, the Virgin's Church, Portrait of Todor Branković, the Arch of the Diakonikon

Сл. 12. Манастир Грачаница, Богородична црква, портрет Тодора Бранковића, лук дјаконикона

precisely these donors and not others received their portraits, but judging on St. Sophia's gesture of open hands, they could be the people responsible for the building and decoration works.

The reason for participation of numerous donors in the decoration of a church can be two-folded: on the one hand, they can simultaneously participate with micro-donations. On the other hand, new portraits of donors could be added with the passage of time, when patronage over a foundation was exercised on different occasions. The perfect example of the long-lasting patronage is St. Stephen's Church in Kastoria. Here, one can detect five secondary sponsors responsible for the renovation of different parts of murals.⁹⁰ According to the dating proposed by Ioannis Sissiou, the following stages can be distinguished:

1) Around mid-11th century, the couple of Demetrios and Kale added initially the depiction of Sts Constantine and Helena: "Supplication of the servant of God Demetrios and his spouse Kale. Amen. God, save them."⁹¹

2) Later on, during the 12th century, Theodore Lemniotes, who simultaneously was the main patron of the Agioi Anargyroi church, attempted to renovate the fresco cycle of Christ's feasts in St. Stephen's church, but he died in the meantime, as attested by his funeral composition with the model of the church and his commemorative inscription: "The servant of god priest Theodore Limneotes died on January..."⁹²

3) The activity of the nun Marina is dated back to 1230-1250. She ordered the scene of Baptism, breast-feeding St. Anna's image on the upper gallery and the

fresco of the enthroned Virgin with Marina's figure bowing in proskynesis. All images bear her "signature" in form of petition: "Supplication of the servant of God Marina the nun."⁹³

4) In 1337-1338, George Babylas ordered the image of the Virgin Gorgoepikoos: "I offer you a supplication, oh, the pure Virgin, with all my soul

⁹⁰ I. Σίσιου, *Η μερική ανανέωση της ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Στεφάνου στην Καστοριά*, *Niš i Vizantija* 7 (2009), 273-290.

⁹¹ Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Δημητρίου καὶ τῆς συμβίου αὐτοῦ Καλῆς. Ἀμὴν. Θεός σόσι αὐτούς – *Ibid.*, 273.

⁹² Ἐκοιμήθη ὁ δούλος τοῦ Θεοῦ Θεόδωρος ἱερεὺς ὁ Λυμνεώτης μη(νί) «Ἰανουαρίω – *Ibid.*, 273.

⁹³ Δέησις τῆς δούλης τοῦ Θεοῦ Μαρίας (μον)αχ(ῆς) – *Ibid.*, 276-277.

binding my knees in front of you, I, George, the most insignificant petitioner of yours with my toils [bring] this deed, a son of Athanasios Babylas, the priest, in the year 6846”.⁹⁴

5) Around mid-14th century, the couple of Constantine and Anna commissioned the full-length figure of Christ Eleemon and Euplachnos: “The supplication of the servant of God Constantine and his wife Anna.”⁹⁵

Thus, on every occasion when a sponsor wished to add a new image to the existing ensemble, he or she marked their pious additions by means of portraits or votive inscriptions.

In a similar way, several donors who sponsored the decoration of the Virgin’s church at Mali Grad left their portraits or inscriptions near the images they paid for. Around mid-14th century, a pair of noble donors decorated the apsidal space and commemorated their joint efforts in a short text surrounded by a red decorative band separating the conch from the wall of the apse: “Supplication of the servant of God, Bojko, and the noblest Eudokia and her child. The sanctuary was decorated by them in 6853 (1344-45).”⁹⁶ The second stage of decoration is marked by the dedicatory inscription situated on the western wall and the family portrait of *kesar* Novak placed on the western external façade of the church.⁹⁷ The inscription, except for underlining the untrue fact that the foundation was built by the new ktetor “from the grounds,” also refers to the ruler (King Vukašin), the bishopric, and the hegoumenos of the monastery Jonas.

Belonging to the same painting layer, St. Paraskeue is worshipped by a monk represented in small-scale, but his name is lost.⁹⁸ This composition is placed on the eastern part of the southern wall and is supplemented by an inscription framed by a painted border and situated above the saint’s image: “The Father built this house, the Son consolidated this house, the Holy Spirit renovated this house, the one who illuminates, supports and sanctifies our souls.”⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Δέησιν προσάγω σοι ἀγνή Παρθένε ἐξ ὄλης μου τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς σέ τὸ γόνυ κλίνας Γεώργ(ιος) ὁ ἐλάχιστος κ(αί) σὸς ἱκέτης πόν(οις) ἰδί(οις) παιδὸς τοῦ Βαριβίλυ ἔργ(ον) Ἀθανασίου ἱερέως ἔτος ΣΩΜΣ - Ibid., 276-277; A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken*, Vienna: 2009, 179-181.

⁹⁵ Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θε(ο)ῦ Κωνσταντίνου καὶ τῆς συμβίου αὐτοῦ Ἄννας - Ibid., 286.

⁹⁶ Δέησις του δουλου του Θε(ο)ῦ Μπώεϊκου καὶ Εὐδῶκειας τῆς εὐγενεστάτης καὶ τὸν τέκνοναύτης. Ἀνήστωριθὲν τὸ βίμα παρ αὐτ(ῶν). Ἐτ(ου)ς ΣΩΝΓ - S. Bogevska-Capuano, *Les églises rupestres de la région des lacs d’Ohrid et de Prespa: milieu du XIIIe-milieu du XVIe siècle*, Turnhout: 2015, 358-365 (here 359).

⁹⁷ In more details about the portrait the entire stage of painting of 1368/9 see: S. Bogevska-Capuano, *Les églises rupestres*, 372-446.

⁹⁸ S. Bogevska-Capuano, *Les églises rupestres*, 420-422; S. Cvetkovski, *Beleške iz Bogorodišine crkve na Malom gradu*, Zograf 34 (2010), 112-118 – the author of the article considers that it is not enough evidences to recognize the hegoumenos of the monastery Jonas in the figure of the depicted monk.

⁹⁹ Τοῦτον τὸν οἶκον ὁ π(α)τὴρ οἰκοδόμησεν τοῦτον τὸν οἶκον ὁ υἱὸς ἐστερέωσεν τοῦτον τ(ὸν) οἶκον τὸ πν(εῦμα) τὸ ἄγιον ἀνεκένη(σεν) τὸ φωτίζων κ(αί) ἱστηρίζων κ(αί) ἀγιάζων τ(ὰς) (ψ)υχ(ὰς) ἡμῶν - S. Bogevska-Capuano, *Les églises rupestres*, 422.

The combination of these factors, namely, the mentioning of the hegoumenos in the dedicatory inscription, the small-scale portrait, and the presence of a quasi-dedicatory inscription, the content of which alludes to activities connected with the renovation, may suggest that the depicted monk was, most probably, the hegoumenos of the foundation or, at least, he supervised its renovation.

Finally, some of the donors commissioned special images to selected foundations which had no contemporary painting or on-going renovation campaigns. Probably, in these cases, the choice of image-sponsors was motivated by the foundation's special role in the rural or urban environment, as well as by their personal connections with the members of local clergy.

Short, individual commemorative inscriptions were usually added to icon-like images of saints inserted into the older sacral space. That is, for example, the case of nun Euphrosyne Glyka¹⁰⁰ who, in the end of the 13th century, sponsored the image of St. Basil in the cave church of Ai-Giannaki located near the town of Hagioi Anargyroi (Zoupena) and dated to the late-11th century. The commissioner left her demand for commemoration near the image: "Remember, Lord, the soul of your servant Euphrosyne Glyka the nun and forgive her on the day of the Judgment."¹⁰¹

On the external western wall of the church of the Taxiarchis of the Metropolis at Kastoria, two small figures stay on the sides of a large-scale depiction of the Archangel represented with a sword and armors. The church itself was built c. 900 and obtained then some mural decoration.¹⁰² However, the Archangel's image was commissioned later by donors of Bulgarian origin. The small figures of a middle-aged man and woman received several identifications made on the basis of various readings of the inscription. Initially, they were considered Michael II Asen (1246-1256) with his mother Eirene Angelina,¹⁰³ but a recent study brought a new way of reading the greatly damaged text: "Supplication of the servant of God Michael Asanes, the son of the great emperor Asanes and of his wife Anna,"¹⁰⁴ and consequently a new identification of the couple was made – Michael II Asanes and his wife Anna, daughter of Rostislav Michailovich. Finally, Ian Mladjov¹⁰⁵ turned attention to the fact that

¹⁰⁰ P.L.P., 93351.

¹⁰¹ +Μνήστη(τι) [Κ](ύρι)ε την ψυχή της δουλην σου Εφροσινης μονα χής την Γλήκα (καί) σιχορισον αυτή εν ήμερα κρισεος – Ν. Δρανδάκης, *Ο σπηλαιώδης ναός του Άι-Γιαννάκη στη Ζούπενα*, DCHAE 13 (1985-1986), 81; Sh. E. Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 148.

¹⁰² Ε. Δρακοπούλου, *Η πόλη της Καστοριάς*, 78.

¹⁰³ Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θε(ο)ῦ Μιχαήλ [Α]σάνι υἱοῦ τοῦ μεγ[άλου] βασιλέ[ως] τοῦ Ἀ]σάνη καὶ τῆς μητρός [αὐτοῦ] Εἰρήνης Θε[εοδώρου Κομνηνοῦ]. - Α. Васи́лиев, *Ктиторски портрети*, Sofia 1960, 13-15; И. Дүйчев, *Стара българска книжнина*, Vol. 2, Sofia 1944, 277, no. 82; Ε. Δρακοπούλου, *Η πόλη της Καστοριάς*, 77-78.; И. Божилов, *Фамилията на Асеневици (1186-1460). Генеалогия и просопоγραφия*, Sofia 1985, 108 -110, nos. 39 and 42.

¹⁰⁴ Δέησις του δού[λ]ου του θε(ε)ῦ Μιχ[αήλ...] υιου [τ]ου μεγ[α]λου βασιλεος [τ]ου Ασани, κε της σιμβιου αυτου Ανις ...ω... – G. Subotić, *Portret nepoznate bugarske carice*, Zograf 27 (1998–1999), 93–102 (esp. 97–98).

¹⁰⁵ I. Mladjov, *The Children of Ivan Asen II and Eirēnē Komnēnē: Contribution to the Prosopography of Mediaeval Bulgaria*, *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 3/2012, 490-500.

the image is rather modest and that the depicted man doesn't bear a title. He dated the image broadly with 1304-1320s and identified the couple as the son of Ivan Asen III (1279-1280), Michael Asanes, a Byzantine subject, and his wife.

Of primary importance for the present study is the fact that the depicted or inscribed persons were not the main or even the second ktetors of the foundation. However, they marked the contribution commissioned by them to the church decoration with the help of the portraits and inscriptions. This way, the appearance of these small-scale images was a means of indicating the commissioning of a particular image. Moreover, the choice of the fresco subject, i.e., the namesake of the commissioner Archangel Michael, and its placement on the external church wall were obvious means of display and association. It seems that by petitioning to the heavenly commander dressed in military attire, Michael Asanes wanted to demonstrate the importance of his military career to the urban inhabitants. The same can be said about his royal origin stressed in the accompanying text.

Another image placed on the external wall in the urban milieu had more modest implications. In the church of St. John the Theologos at Berroia, the northern external wall bears a pseudo-arcosolium decorated with a Deesis. St. John the Baptist is replaced by St. John the Theologian, and the inscription reads: "Supplication of the servant of God Nikephoros Sgouros."¹⁰⁶ The entire program of the church murals was made in the first half of the 13th century,¹⁰⁷ and only this scene, framed by a carved arch, belonged to the beginning of the 14th century. The supplicatory content of the scene,¹⁰⁸ its uniqueness in the church's decoration, its emphasis by means of a carved frame, and the praying inscription suggest that the image was executed by the special order of the commissioner, who had some affiliation with the church or its patron, St. John the Theologian, and desired to be commemorated by the visitors of the parish. Nevertheless, the Deesis has no additional portrait to recognize its sponsor, who had other intentions. The text of the petitioning was placed in the very bottom of the composition, at the eye level, so that the prayer on behalf of Nikephoros could be reenacted easily by reading it at any time.

Addition of images to already-existing foundations, especially to the most popular and venerated ones, was a way of expressing piety, gratitude, and pleads to divinity. The latter was the case of the Đurđe Branković and Eirene Kantakouzene, whose son Todor Branković is depicted on the intrados of the diakonikon entrance at the katholikon of Gračanica monastery (before 1429).¹⁰⁹ Todor is depicted in royal dress with loros, but without a crown or title, and

¹⁰⁶ + Δεί[[σις] τοῦ | δούλου τοῦ | Θ(εο)ῦ Νικηφόρου τοῦ Σγούρου - Παπαζώτος, *H Béroia*, 95.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 171-172, 257.

¹⁰⁸ A. Cutler, *Under the Sign of the Deesis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature*, DOP 41 (1987), 145-155. See also C. Walter, *Two Notes on the Deesis*, REB 26 (1968), 311-336; *idem*, *Further Notes on the Deesis*, REB 28 (1970), 161-187.

¹⁰⁹ B. Todić, *Gračanica – slikarstvo*, Priština and Belgrade 1989, 239-241; B. Cvetković, *Portret Todora Brankovića u đakonikonu manastira Gračanice*, ZLU 29-30 (1993-1994), 75-88; T. Starodubcev, *Srpsko zidno slikarstvo u zemljama Lazarevića i Brankovića*, Vol. II, Belgrade 2016, 179-182.

has an inscription which once referred to his royal origin and parents' titles: "Supplication of the servant of God Todor, the son of ... and Christ-loving ... Đurđe and ... Eirine."¹¹⁰ The youthman is bowing and has his hands extend in prayer gesture, addressing the image of the Virgin Platytera standing in the apse of the diakonikon. It was suggested that the image appeared as a consequence of a gift donated to the monastery for the health of Todor.

As one can see, by placing images or petitioning texts on the walls of pre-existing foundations, the sponsor aimed at recognition by a certain number of visitors, as the foundations were already known and well-established. They also strived to represent themselves in the most adequate way, knowing the expectations and moods of visitors to the places they chose. So, in the case of the hermitic monastery of Zoupena and of old and famous Gračanica, Euphrosyne Glyka and Todor Branković might have expected to be commemorated by the austere and pious monastic community. At the same time, Michael Asanes would become a well-recognized nobleman among the inhabitants of Kastoria, while Nikephoros could count on the reenactment of his prayer by a passerby.

Concluding this analysis, I will try to answer the question about the status and measure of participation of the persons depicted as small-scale figures or commemorated in additional inscription. First thing to note is that they were not represented as founders, i.e. they didn't hold the model of a foundation, even though sometimes they were named "ktetors" in the accompanying inscriptions (e.g., churches of the Savior in Berroia, the Presentation of Jesus at Meteora or Holy Apostles at Thessaloniki, etc.). However, in all these cases, the minor ktetors do not address the patron saints of the foundation. The combination of inscriptions, images, and historical circumstances led in these cases to the conclusion that the individuals depicted as petitioning figures were successors of the initial ktetors or associates of other economic sponsors. Usually, it was only the leaders and managers of monastic communities that appeared in such positions of ktetors-suplicants.

In those cases when one main patron was assisted by one or several less important donors, such donors left marks of their participation in form of small images or texts placed next to the saints venerated by them. The distinctions in visual and epigraphic expressions of piety employed by the main and subsidiary donors underlined the difference in status; the main donors appeared to viewers in official, full-scale votive compositions, interacting with the foundations' patron saints (e.g. with St. Demetrios in the church of Prilep or with the Virgin in the compositions of Mali Grad and Karan), whereas the minor donors addressed their own chosen saints (e.g. St. Elijah, St. Onuphrios, St. Paraskeue, St. Paul etc.). However, the choice of venerating saint through his or her depiction could also be the minor donors' expression of pious preferences.

Small-scale figures almost never appear as unique founders, except those cases when they did not consider themselves responsible for the entire foundation (e.g. Archbishop Joanikije at St. Demetrios' church of Peć). In other situ-

¹¹⁰ моление ра<ба б(о)жи> тодора с(ы)на [...] и х(ри)с(т)ол(оу)бива<го>[...] гюрга и [...] Јурин<е> - Т. Starodubcev, *Srpsko zidno slikarstvo* II, 180.

ations (e.g. the church of Lipljan), the monuments' preservation state does not allow one to make solid conclusions about the status of the sole small-scale supplicant.

In the case of collective foundations, especially on the periphery of the Byzantine Commonwealth, the small-scale images and inscriptions became the tools of personalizing the devotional investments made by the most important sponsors. In other words, in the difference with dozens of people listed in dedicatory inscriptions, those receiving additionally their small portraits or personalizing a saint's image with a prayer were, in fact, the people making the biggest contribution among the other founders. Nevertheless, none of these "great investors" can be considered the proper ktetor, since these foundations were communal enterprises; so it is rather more accurate to call "important sponsors" the persons depicted or mentioned in this way.

As it seems, some people could contribute to the endowment of a foundation through the commissioning of an image, i.e. paying a cost of making one or more images. In these cases, the contributors, probably, selected a saint or a scene which afterwards was marked with an inscription mentioning the sponsor's name, like it was in the churches of Dolac and Exo Nyphi.

Finally, there were situations when the small-scaled figures or inscriptions marked images added to already decorated foundations (e.g. in Kastoria, Ai-Giannaki). I consider that these sponsors wanted their pious contributions to appear in certain contexts and, consequently, to be seen and venerated in a desired way. They also might imply that their own representations performed continuous prayers in certain places of worship, which were important for the donors (like in case of Gračanica or St. John Theologos in Berroia).

Answering the question posed in the beginning of this study, one should consider the persons depicted and mentioned in these ways to be rather contributors than founders, even though, depending on individual circumstances, the measure of their contribution and participation in the construction and decoration could greatly vary.

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ОСНИВАЧИ ИЛИ ДОНАТОРИ? ПОРТРЕТИ И НАТПИСИ КТИТОРА-САРАДНИКА
У КАСНОЈ ВИЗАНТИЈИ И СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНОЈ СРБИЈИ

Овај чланак посвећен је проблему статуса лица, која су била приказани као мале фигуре или споменута у натписима смештеним поред светитеља или сцена у црквама, саграђеним у средњовековној Србији и земљама Византијске заједнице. Аутор поставља питање, да ли ове људе треба сматрати оснивачима или донаторима цркава у којима су постављене њихове слике и натписи. У ту сврху чланак прво разматра разлике између правног статуса донатора и оснивача у византијском праву, а и након тога прелази на преглед историјских примера, који показују да су најдарежљивији прилагачи могли добити статус сличан или једнак оснивачком.

Могу се уочити три врсте примера у којима су могли настати мали портрети донатора и њихове побожни натписи код фигура светаца:

- заједно са основном ктиторском композицијом и /или оснивачком натписом;
- као јединствени ктиторски портрет;
- Када је неколико малих портрета и натписа било истовремено присутно у једној цркви

Након анализе примера који се односе на сваку од описаних група, аутор долази до закључка да такве слике треба посматрати пре као приказе дараодаваца него оснивача иако се мера њиховог доприноса и учешћа у изградњи и украшавању цркава могла значајно разликовати у зависности од индивидуалних околности. Поједини од њих, особито лидери монашких заједница, имали су статус близак позицији другог ктитора, али због тога што нису себе сматрали оснивачима већ настављачима или сарадницима, они нису добили портрете са моделом цркава.

У случајевима када се неколико мањих донатора придруживало главном оснивачу, главни ктитори су на званичним ктиторским композицијама комуницирали са светим покровитељима храма. Са друге старне портрети и натписи донатора су се појављали поред слика одређених светаца, јер сам избор светаца био је мотивисан њиховим побожним преференцијама.

У случајевима колективног ктиторства, мале слике и натписи постали су инструменти персонализације побожних дарова најзначајнијих донатора. Другим речима, они који су добили своје мале портрете или персонализирали слике светитеља молитвом, заправо су били људи који су највише допринели међу осталим оснивачима. Ипак, ниједан од ових “великих инвестора” не може се сматрати правим ктитором, пошто су те цркве били заједнички подухвати.

Постојале су ситуације када су мали портрети или натписи, означавали нови слике додате старим већ украшеним црквама, тако су ови спонзори желели да се њихови побожни доприноси појављују у одређеним контекстима и, стога, да се виде и поштују на жељен начин.

Превод Милоша Ивановића

The List of Abbreviations

DCHAE – *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias*

DOP – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*

JÖB – *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*

OCP – *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*

PG – *J.-P. Migne, Patrologia Græca Cursus Completus*

PLP – *Das Prosopographische Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*

REB – *Revue des études byzantines*

VV – *Vizantijskij Vremennik*

ZLU – *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti*

ZRVI – *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*