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**ВИЗАНТИЙСКО
И ПОСТВИЗАНТИЙСКО ИЗКУСТВО:
ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ**



**BYZANTINE
AND POST-BYZANTINE ART:
CROSSING BORDERS**

ART READINGS

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Between Loyalty, Memory and the Law: Byzantine and Slavic Dedicatory Church Inscriptions Mentioning Foreign Rulers in the 14th and 15th Centuries

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Abstract. The article focuses on the change in dedicatory formulas of foundation inscriptions, which were commissioned by noblemen, members of the clergy, and monks during the second half of the 14th and the 15th century, in which the names of Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian emperors were substituted with the names of local, non-Byzantine rulers. It considers cases from the territories of Macedonia, Epirus, and Thessaly, and tries to discover the reasons behind this shift in dedicatory formulas.

Key words: epigraphy, ecclesiastic foundations, Epirus, Macedonia, nobility, clerics.

The structure of medieval dedicatory inscriptions was quite conservative and tended to accept change slowly². As a consequence, as Byzantine culture spread through the Balkans, Byzantine practices

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2 The content and media of dedicatory inscriptions witnessed only some minor changes from the 11th to the 13th century see: *Kalopissi-Verti*, Sophia. Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece. Vienna, 1992, 23-28.

and patterns of inscribing were borrowed by Serbian and Bulgarian cultures.

The content of prose church dedicatory inscriptions in the Greek and Slavic languages was almost identical. Barring minor differences, the donor inscriptions consisted of three basic narrative elements, such as³:

- 1) Symbolic and verbal invocations⁴, and the indication of the church patron;
- 2) Donors' names, their social status, family relations, and measure of contribution;
- 3) Dating according to the indiction, references to secular/ecclesiastical authorities, lists of donations, and final maledictions⁵.

Each of these elements had its established place in the texts, in a similar way to the structure of Byzantine/Slavic charters⁶. The mentioning of regnal authorities by the church founders served several purposes, such as the expression of political affiliations; an indication of founders' sources of rights and wealth, as well as of power to whose legal jurisdiction the donor belonged; the designation of ethnic origin or religious position, and other political, economic, and personal reasons⁷.

3 *Rhoby*, Andreas. The Structure of Inscriptional Dedicatory Epigrams in Byzantium. In: C. Burini De Lorenzi, M. De Gaetano (eds.). *La poesia tardoantica e medievale*. Alessandria, 2010, 313-314.

4 *Stanojević*, Stanoje. Studije o srpskoj diplomaciji. Invokacija. – Glas Srpske Kraljevske akademije, 1912, No. 90, 68-113.

5 For Greek curses in inscriptions see *Kalopissi-Verti*, Sophia. Church Inscriptions as Documents. Chrysobulls – Ecclesiastical Acts – Inventories – Donations – Wills. – *ΔΧΑΕ*, 2003, No. 24, 87; For curses in Slavic inscriptions: *Stojanović*, Ljubomir. Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi. Vol. 1. Belgrade, 1902, 20; *Šakota*, Mirjana. Natpis s elementima povelje u crkvi Sv. Nikole u manastiru Banji kod Priboja. – *Saopštenja*, 1988/89, Nos. 20-21, 35-42.

6 For comparison of Byzantine and Serbian structure of charters see: *Stanojević*, Stanoje. Studije o srpskoj diplomaciji. – Glas Srpske Kraljevske akademije, 1912-1914, 1920, 1922-1923, 1928, 1933-1934, 1936, Nos. 90, 92, 94, 96, 100, 106, 110, 132, 156, 157, 159, 169; *Mošin*, Vladimir. Sankcija u vizantijskoj i u južnoslavenskoj ćirilskoj diplomaciji. – *Anali Historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku*, 1954, No. 3, 27-52.

7 For reasons of mentioning political authorities in Byzantine inscriptions see: *Kalopissi-verti*, Donor portraits, 24-25, 45-46, 136-137; *Giakoumis*, Konstantinos, *Christidou*, Anna. Image and Power in the Age of Andronikos II & III Palaiologos: Imperial Patronage in the Western Provinces of Via Egnatia. In: *Via Egnatia Revisited: Common Past, Common Future*. Driebergen, 2010, 76-84; *Foskolou*, Vassiliki. In the Reign of the Emperor of Rome... Donor Inscriptions and Political Ideology in the Time of Michael VIII Paleologos. – *ΔΧΑΕ*, 2006, No. 27, 455-462; *Marković*, Miodrag. Иконографски програм најстаријег живописа цркве Богородице Перивлепте у Охридју [Ikonoграфски програм најстаријег živopisa crkve Bogorodice Perivlepte u Ohridu]. –

Scholarly debate on medieval epigraphy has extensively discussed cases where the commissioners preferred to name an ideal rather than a real political power, like the 14th- and 15th-century Cretan Greek villagers, who although under Venetian domination referred to Byzantine emperors⁸. However, both Byzantine and Slavic founders tended to do the opposite, namely, to substitute the official, but not empowered Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian authorities with the names of more immediate, local lords. This strategy was even more confusing since the language and wording of dedicatory inscriptions followed established Greek/Slavic patterns (including the denomination of the action of ruling such as ἀφθεντεύβοντος, βασιλεύοντος, ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας, въ дѣни), replacing just the name of a sovereign.

These cases of political conformism can only be observed during times of immediate crisis and turmoil. Unstable political circumstances prevailed in the Balkans during the second half of the 14th and the 15th centuries. Three empires, the Byzantine, Serbian, and Bulgarian, clashed, due to a combination of unwise leadership; noble unrest, and the external Turkish threat⁹. The trend of substituting the name of a Byzantine emperor with a foreign ruler first started amongst the Greek population¹⁰ of Macedonia and Thessaly, along the borders of the expanding Serbian state, as a consequence of King Stefan Dušan's conquests of 1334–1345¹¹. The loyal subject of the Serbian emperor, despot Jovan Oliver¹², whose career rocketed from the lowly rank of veliki sluga to that of despot¹³, placed the

Zograf, 2011, No. 35, 133. For Slavic examples, see: *Stojanović*. Zapisi, 45, 59-60, 79-80, 95, 102.

8 *Tsougarakis*, Dimitrios. La tradizione culturale bizantina nel primo periodo della dominazione Veneziana a Creta. Alcune osservazioni in merito alla questione dell'identità culturale. In: Gherardo Ortalli (ed.). Venezia e Creta. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Venice, 1998, 510-522.

9 For the situation in Byzantium see: *Nicol*, David M. Last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453. Cambridge, 1993; For the Serbian history: *Mihaljčić*, Rade. Kraj srpskog carstva. Belgrade, 1989; For Bulgaria see *Tyutyundzhiev*, Ivan and *Pavlov*, Plamen. Българската държава и османската експанзия 1369–1422 [Balgarskata darzhava I osmanskata ekspanziya 1369-1422]. Veliko Tarnovo, 1992.

10 *Solovjev*, Alexander. Греческие архонты в сербском царстве XIV в. [Grecheskie archonty v serbskom tsarstve XIV v.]. – Byzantinoslavica, 1930, 2/2, 275–228; *Ostrogoski*, Georgije. Serska oblast posle Dušanove smrti. Belgrade, 1965, 89-105.

11 *Soulis*, George. The Serbs and Byzantium during the Reign of Tzar Stephen Dušan (1331–1355) and His Successors. Washington, 1984.

12 *Ferjančić*, Božidar. Despoti u Vizantiji i južnoslovenskim zemljama. Belgrade, 1960, 159-166.

13 *Gabelić*, Smiljka. Manastir Lesnovo: Istorija i slikarstvo. Belgrade, 1998, 33-37.

name of his lord in both Slavic and Greek inscriptions, commemorating the completion of St Archangel's monastery in Lesnovo (Cat. 2). Although this bilingual strategy seemed unusual, it could easily be explained by the presence of Greek-speakers in Northern Macedonia. A similar strategy may have been applied by the commissioners of a group of Greek dedicatory inscriptions associated with the renovation of the Eleousa Church in Mesembria (1342) by Symeon Synaden(?), a Greek relative of the Bulgarian Emperor Ivan



Fig. 1. Dedicatory inscription above the entrance on the western wall, Parekklesion of St. Gregory, Peribleptos Church, Ohrid, 1364 (Cat. 5)

Alexander¹⁴ (Cat. 1). In these two cases, the use of Byzantine formulas and language simplified the understanding and recognition of contemporary political realia by the Greek population, as well as exhibiting the linguistic preferences of the commissioners.

Nevertheless, the later Greek subjects of the Serbian Empire followed exactly the same pattern; the names of Dušan's successors, his son Uroš and half-brother Simeon, who ruled over Thessaly¹⁵, became the reference points for ecclesiastic patrons from Ohrid, Kastoria and the monasteries of Meteora (Cat. 3-6)¹⁶. The Serbian

14 For Symeon and his relations with the Asen royal family, see: *Bozhilov*, Ivan. *Фамилията на Асеневици (1186–1460). Генеалогия и просопографија* [Familiyata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460). Genealogiya i prosopografiya]. Sofia, 1994, 438–439.

15 On the position of Emperor Uroš, see *Ostrogoski*. *Serska oblast*, 3–19; for Simeon's position – *Mihaljčić*. *Kraj*, 17–20; *Soulis*. *The Serbs and Byzantium*, 115–117, 120–122.

16 An inscription of debated provenance from Trikkala bearing the formula “εις τὴν ἡμέραν

rulers, being Orthodox, provided support for the Greek clergy¹⁷ and introduced bi-ethnic social and legal policies¹⁸ in the conquered territories. These factors simplified, to a great extent, the replacement of Byzantine rule with a foreign one in the official documents and in public media, such as dedicatory inscriptions.

Moreover, for the Greeks who remained in Macedonia after the fall of the Serbian empire and faced the advancing Ottomans¹⁹, continued Serbian rule was a preferred option. This nostalgia caused the appearance of an anachronistic reference²⁰ to King Vukašin²¹ (1365–1371) in the dedication of the Elousa Hermitage (1409) on the Prespa Lake (**Cat. 12**) built by Greek monks.

After the disintegration of the Serbian Empire, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus became a battleground for numerous conflicts between numerous local lords of different ethnic origins (i.e., Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Italian²²), who claimed territories of different size with overlapping borders. In this turbulent political climate and with the absence of a central authority, nobles and church officials chose various different strategies to prove their legitimacy; express their political affiliation, and place themselves under the protection of greater powers. Some of the members of the nobility, such as vevoda Michael Therianos (**Cat. 14**) and kesar Novak²³ (**Cat. 7**), incorporated references to higher ranking aristocrats in their dedications inscriptions, who had vested them with the titles and offices which

τοῦ ἐνσεβειστάτου βασιλέως ἡμῶν Συμεὸν τοῦ Παλαιολόγου” can be added to this category of inscriptions commemorating Serbian rulers, *Avraméa*, Anna and *Fiessel*, Denis. Inventaires en vue d’un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance: IV Inscriptions de Thessalie (à l’exception des Metéores). – Travaux et mémoires, 1987, No. 10, 381-383.

17 *Kalopissi-Verti*, Sophia. Aspects of Patronage in Fourteenth-Century Byzantium Regions under Serbian and Latin Rule. In: Eutychia Papadopoulou, Dora Dialeti (eds.). *Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century*. Athens, 1996, 363-379; *Soulis*, George. Tsar Stephan Dušan and Mount Athos. – *Harvard Slavic Studies*, 1954, No. 2, 125-139.

18 *Soulis*. The Serbs and Byzantium, 60-85.

19 *Vakalopoulos*, Apostolos. *Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας (1354–1833)*. Thessaloniki, 1988, 40-55.

20 *Paissidou*, Melina. The Hermitage of “Panagia Eleousa”. (*Virgin Merciful*) Great Prespa: an Artistic Expression of Time and Space Limit. In: Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the world of the Slavs. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference. Thessaloniki, 2015, Vol.1, 304-305.

21 On Vukašin as a king and co-ruler of Emperor Uroš, see: *Soulis*, The Serbs and Byzantium, 96-97; *Ostrogorski*, Serska oblast, 8-12; *Mihaljčić*. Kraj, 94-147.

22 *Mihaljčić*. Kraj; Šuica, Marko. *Nemirno doba Srpskog Srednjeg Veka*. Belgrade, 2000.

23 *Ferjančić*, Božidar. Sevastokratori i kesari u srpskom carstvu. – *Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta*, 1970, No. 11/1, 268.



Fig. 2. The Donors' composition, upper register of the external western wall, The Virgin's Church, Mali Grad, 1368/9 (Cat. 7). Photo by Rostislav Novikov

had brought with them authority, lands and wealth in exchange for their loyalty. These higher ranking nobles could be Latins, like Carlo Tocco (Cat. 14), or Serbs, such as King Vukašin (Cat. 7).

In churches at Mali Grad and Monodendri, foundations of kesar Novak and voevoda Michael Therianos respectively, the idea of being appointed to power was viewed with the upmost importance by the commissioners, since they preferred to be depicted in their court-dresses, accompanied by inscriptions underlying their titles, surrounded by family members in hierarchical order, and invested with power by the blessing hand of God himself²⁴.

A possible compromise between loyalty to both local and central

24 *Bogevska, Saška. Les églises rupestres de la région des lacs d'Ohrid et de Prespa, milieu du XIII^e – milieu du XVI^e siècle. Brepols, 2015, 357-462 with previous bibliography; for Michael Pherianos, see Acheimastou-Potamianou, Myrtali. Η κτητορική παράσταση της μονής Αγίας Παρασκευής στο Μονοδέντρι της Ηπείρου (1414). – ΔΧΑΕ, 2003, No. 24, 231-242.*



Fig. 3. Dedicatory inscription above the entrance on the western wall, Christ Zoodotos Church, Borje, 1389/90 (Cat. 11)

authorities are examples where both are mentioned. An example of this strategy was made by Demetrios Xenos who, in the external inscription of his Chrysopege Church (Cat. 15), mentioned Sir Palamede Gattilusio²⁵ as the governor of the city of Ainos, while in the interior dedicatory inscription recorded “the rule of our most devout and friends of Christ, emperors, Manuel and Helen” and the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Joseph²⁶. However, such a compromise could work only in places where the local authorities recognized, even nominally, the supremacy of the Byzantine Emperor, and tried to establish personal ties with him, as it was the case of sir Palamede, who insisted on his Palaiologan ancestry²⁷.

25 Basso, Enrico. Gattilusio, Palamede. In: Alberto Ghisalberti (ed.). *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 52. Rome, 1960, 623-626 (with further bibliography).

26 Asdracha, Catherine. *Inscriptions protobyzantines et byzantines de la Thrace Orientale et de l'île d'Imbros (III^e–XV^e siècles)*. Présentation et commentaire. Athens, 2003, 267-68.

27 Wright, Christopher. *The Gattilusio Lordships and the Aegean World 1355–1462*. Leiden,



Fig. 4. Dedicatory inscription above the entrance on the western wall, St Demetrius' Church, Boboshevo, 1488 (Cat. 17)

Church officials also relied on the financial support and military protection provided by regional lords. Therefore, the dedicatory inscriptions of foundations, erected or restored by priests or bishops (Cat. 8-11), bore names of secular local authorities, regardless of their ethnic origins (Albanian – Cat. 8-10; Cat. 11 – unknown) and obscure titles. The four foundations in Ohrid, Elbasan, Kastoria, and Borje that have been considered in this paper were built after the battle of Maritza (1371)²⁸, which drastically changed the political and ethnic landscape of Macedonia and Epirus. The provinces were divided into small landholdings held by minor lords which faced constant raids from Albanian tribes²⁹. Exploiting the power vacuum, a few Albanian leaders established an informal power over important cities, such as the great župan Andrea Gropa in Ohrid (Cat. 8)³⁰, Charles Thopia in Kroja³¹ or the Mouzaki family in Kastoria (Cat. 10)³². These newcomers were not distinguished by titles and, therefore, simply called themselves “πανευγενεστάτους” (Cat. 10), “πρώτος” (Cat. 9), or “αὐτάδελφος πανευτυχέστατος σεβαστωκράτορος” (Cat. 11). Despite this, they provided sufficient

2014, 114-128.

28 About consequence of the Maritza battle, see: *Mihaljčić. Kraj*, 183-192.

29 *Soulis. The Serbs and Byzantium*, 123-133.

30 *Mihaljčić. Kraj*, 197-198.

31 *Soulis. The Serbs and Byzantium*, 143-145.

32 *Drakopoulou, Eugenia. Η πόλη της Καστοριάς τη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή εποχή (12^{ος}-16^{ος} αι.)*. Athens, 1997, 64-66.

funds for churches and created a semblance of order and stability. They were the ones who most resembled, even if it was only approximately, the notions of what authority looked like and should be and were therefore honoured in the inscriptions.

Finally, in the 15th century, in the territories conquered by the Ottomans, some members of Orthodox nobility became Turkish mounted troops *сипахи* (*sipahi*³³) or community leaders *кметове* (*kmetove*³⁴), and through such a strategy preserved their status, possessions, and religion. Probably, some of them could have afforded to restore ruined ecclesiastic foundations, as it was in the case of Dragalevtsi Monastery (**Cat.** 17), while others built family churches after becoming monks (**Cat.** 13 and 18). In any case, after a change in political and social circumstances, these Orthodox people recognized the Ottoman rulers and officials as the legal supreme power that could invest its subjects with their offices and wealth. Consequently, the names of sultans (**Cat.** 13, 17-18) took the place once occupied by the Christian emperors in the conservative formula of dedicatory inscriptions³⁵.

The references to authority in the dedicatory inscriptions considered in this essay illustrate the diverse reasons for the substitution of the names of Byzantine or Slavic emperors for references to foreign rulers, local lords, and Ottoman authorities. These reasons varied from political and economic opportunism to expressions of loyalty. However, as a conclusion, I would like to answer a question concerning the narrative pattern employed by the commissioners, namely, why were these inscriptions written in Greek and why did they use precise formulas for indicating the imperial power?

During the period under scrutiny, the northern Greek regions became a place of cohabitation of the Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Italians, and of the Turks, who raided the Balkans³⁶, increasing the ethnic diversity of the region. It seems that Greek became a lingua

33 Kiel, Machiel. Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period. Assen, 1985, 66-86.

34 Such as kmet Konstantin who renewed Zrze Monastery, see: *Stojanović*. Zapisi, 63.

35 Though, all the examples examined here are Slavic, similar changes occurred amongst the Greek nobility of Asia Minor, see: *Hasluck*, F. W. Christianity and Islam under the Sultans. Oxford, 1929, 381; *Laurent*, Vitalien. Note additionnelle: L'inscription de l'église Saint-Georges de Bélisérana. – *Revue des études byzantines*, 1968, No. 26, 367-371.

36 Byzantines often used the help of Turkish armies (Cantacuzenus, John. *Historiarum libri IV* (ed. L. Schopen). Vol. 3. Bonn, 1832, 246-249, 322-328). See also *Novaković*, Stojan. Srbi i Turci XIV i XV veka. Belgrade, 1960.

franca, a link language, for all these peoples, at least as long as they kept Greek as the main administrative language³⁷, used it in court and for such public media as dedicatory inscriptions.

The Byzantine formulas denoting authority were easily recognized by readers and, therefore, brought a rapidly understood clarity to a person's status. At the same time, the memory of the once-great Empire of Romans drove some new rulers to contest the imperial title, while others tried to imitate it. Therefore, the noble and ecclesiastic founders could use comparisons with Byzantine emperors for the purpose of flattering new authorities and paying homage to their policies. However, for the commissioners, the presence of a superior power guaranteed their own legitimacy and status. Moreover, for the church authorities, a ruler was important not only as a provider of economic benefits, but also as proof of God's benevolence, and the name of a sovereign was an integral part of any orthodox liturgy, which always included prayers on behalf of the ruler³⁸. Thus, substituting the names of Byzantine, Serbian, or Bulgarian emperors with the names of local, non-Byzantine, rulers was the best way of legitimizing the new political and social order within the conservative vocabulary and structure of medieval Balkan epigraphy.

37 *Solovjev*, Alexander and *Mošin*, Vladimir. *Grčke povele srpskih vladara*. Belgrade, 1936.; *Lampros*, Spyridon. Η ελληνική ως επίσημος γλώσσα των σουλτάνων. – *Νέος Ελληνομνήμων*, 1908, No. 5, 40-78.

38 *Skaballanovich*, Michail. *Толковый Типикон [Tolkovyi tipikon]*. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1910, 98-105.

Catalogue of the Inscriptions

1. Eleousa Monastery, Mesembria (1342)

...βασιλεύοντος τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου μεγάλου βασιλέ(ω)
ς Ἰω(άννου) τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου κ(αί) τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ
εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέ(ω)ς Μ(ι)χ(αήλ) τοῦ Ἀσσάνη...

κἀγὼ ὁ περιπόθητος κ(αί) γνήσιος θεῖος τοῦ
πανυψηλοτάτου τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰω(άννου) Ἀλεξάνδρου
ἀνεκαίνισα τ(ὸν) πάνσεπτον κ(αί) θεῖον ναόν....

[ἐπὶ τῆς] βασιλ(είας) Ἰω(άννου) Ἀλεξάνδρου κ(αί) Μ(ι)
χ(α)ήλ τοῦ Ἀσάν(η) ὁ π(ε)ρ(ι)πό(θη)τος θεῖος α[ὐτῶν Σα]
μοήλ....

Beševliev, Veselin. Spätgriechische und spätlateinische
Inschriften aus Bulgarien. Berlin 1964, 160.

2. Archangel Michael's Church, Lesnovo (1349)

...δι' ἐξόδου τοῦ πανευτυχεστάτου δεσπότης Ἰωάννου τοῦ
Λύβερί. κ(αί) τῆς πανευτυχεστάτης βασιλείσης Μαρίας
τῆς Λυβερίσης καὶ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῶν, Κράικου κ(αί)
Δαμιανοῦ. ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλεί Στεφάνου κ(αί) Ἐλένης, κ(αί)
τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῶν κρᾶλη τοῦ Ὀυροσι...

Ivanov, Jordan. Български старини из Македония [Balgarski
starini iz Makedoniya]. Sofia, 1970, 158.

3. Taxiarches' metropolis, Kastoria (1359/60)

...δι[ὰ] ἐξόδου τοῦ τάτου Δανιήλ ἱερομόναχου, βασιλεύοντος
Συμεῶν τοῦ Π[α]λαιολόγου ἄμα] τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ [Ἰωάννου
τοῦ Δ]ούκα...

Drakopoulou. Η πόλη, 95-96.

4. The Virgin's Church, Zaum (1361)

...δι' ἐξόδου τοῦ πανευτυχεστάτου καίσαρος Γούργουρα
κ(αί) κτήτωρος ἀνιστορίθη δὲ παρὰ τοῦ πανιερωτάτου
ἐπισκόπου Δεαβόλαιως κ(αί) πρωτοθρόνου κὺρ Γρηγορίου
κ(αί) κτήτωρος ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Στεφάνου τοῦ Ὀυροσοι...

Grozdanov, Cvetan. Ohridsko zidno slikarstvo XIV veka. Belgrade, 1996, 103.

5. Parekklesion of St Gregory, Peribleptos Church, Ohrid (1364)

...διὰ συνδρομῆς καὶ ἐξόδου τοῦ πανιερωτάτου ἐπισκόπου Δαβώλεως Γρηγορίου ἤτοι Σελασφόρου. ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Στεφάνου τοῦ Οὐρέσι Αρχιερατεύοντος δὲ τῆς Πρώτης Ἰουστινιανῆς τοῦ Πανιερωτάτου Αρχιεπισκόπου Γρηγορίου...

Grozdanov. Ohridsko zidno, 122.

6. The Virgin's Church, Doupiane, Meteora (1367/8)

...διὰ σ(υν)δρομ(ῆς) κ(αί) ἐξόδου τοῦ τημειοτάτου ἐν Ἱερομονάχῳ κῦ(ρ) Νείλου κ(αί) πρώτου τ(ῆς) σκήτεως Σταγ(ῶν) κ(αί) καθηγουμένου τῆς σεβασμῆς μονῆς Δουπειάνου. Βασιλεύβ(ον)τος δὲ του εὐσεβεστατου ἡμ(ῶν) βασιλέος κῦ(ρ) Σιμεῶν του Παλαιολόγου κ(αί) αὐτοκράτορος(ος) Ρωμαίων Σερβεί(ας) κ(αί) Ρομανεί(ας) του Οὐρεσι ἐπεισκοπέβ(ο)ντος δὲ τοῦ πανάγιωτάτου δεσπότη ἡμ(ῶν) Βησαρίου...

Subotić, Gojko. Počeci monaškog života i crkvi manastira Sretenja u Meteorima. – Zbornik za likovne umetnosti, 1960, No. 2, 145-146.

7. The Virgin's Church, Mali Grad (1368/9)

...παρὰ του ἀφθέντου αὐτοῦ πάνευτυχεστάτου κέσαρος Νοβάκου ἡγουμενέβωντος δὲ Ἰωνά (μον)αχ(οῦ). Ἀφθεντεύβ(ον)τος πανυ(ψ)ηλοτάτου κραλήου τοῦ Βεληκασίνου...

Đurić, Vojislav. Mali Grad – Sv. Atanasije u Kosturu – Borje. – Zograf, 1975, No. 6, 31-32.

8. Small St Klimentos Church, Ohrid (1378)

...διὰ συνδρομῆς ἐξόδου τὲ κ(αί) κόπου οἰκείου τοῦ θεοσεβαστάτου ἱερέως Στεφάνου τοῦ Προφήτου' ἐπικρατούσης τῆς λαμπρᾶς πόλεως ταύτης Ἀχρίδας θεοσώστου τοῦ πανέυγενεστάτου ἀφθεντου ἡμῶν μεγάλου ζουπάνου κύρ Ἀνδρέα τοῦ Γρώπα...

Grozdanov. Ohridsko zidno, 151-152.

9. St John Vladimir's Church, Elbasan (1381)

✠ Χρη̄ γινώσκειν ὅτι ὁ ναός οὕτως ἐκατελύθη ἀπό σεισμοῦ παντελῶς ἕως θεμελίου εἰς τήν διακράτησιν καί ἐν ἡμέραις αὐθεντεύοντος πασῆς χώρας Ἀλβάνου πανυψιλότατος πρῶτος Κάρλας ὁ Θεώπιας ἀνεψιός δε καί αἵματος ρήγας τῆς Φραγγίας. ...

Popa, Theofan. Të dhana mbi princët mesjetarë shqiptarë në mbishkrimet e kishave tona. – Buletin i Universitetit shtetërot të Tiranës, 1957, No. 11/2, 186-188.

10. St Athanasios Mouzaki's Church, Kastoria (1383/4)

... παρὰ τοὺς κτιτόρους ἡγου(ν) τοὺς παν[ευγ]ενεστάτους κυ(ρ) Στώϊα κ(αί) Θεοδώρου τοῦ Μουζάκη . κ(αί) τοῦ ἐν Ἰερο(μον)άχ(οις) Διονυσίου . αὐφθεντευόντ(ων) δὲ τ(ῶν) αὐτ(ῶν) αὐταδέλφ(ων) πα[ν]ευγενεστάτους κυ(ρ) Στώϊα. καί κυ(ρ) Θεοδώρου τοῦ Μουζάκη. ἀρχιερατ[εύ]οντος δὲ τοῦ πανιεριοτάτου ἐπισκό[που] κυ(ρ) Γαβριήλ κ(αί) πρωτ[οθρόνου]...

Drakopoulou. Η πόλη, 95-96.

11. Christ Zoodotos Church, Borje (1389/90)

...παρὰ τοῦ κτίτορος τοῦ πανιεροτάτου ἐπισκόπου [κῦρ] Νίμφωνος αὐθεντεύοντος δὲ τὸν Ἀμ[ηρ]αλάδαν. αὐτάδελφος πανευτυχέστατος σεβαστωκράτορος Ἰωάννης καί πανυψιλότατος δεσπότης κῦρ Θεοδώρου...

Đurić. Mali Grad, 42.

12. The Eleousa Hermitage, Megale Prespa (1409/10)

...διὰ σῆνδρομῆς κόπου τε κ(αί) ἐξόδου τοῦ τιμιοτάτου ἐν ἱερομονάχ(οις) κῦρ Σάβα κ(αί) κῦρ Ἰακόβου κ(αί) Βαρολαὰμ τ(ὸν) κτητόρον. Αὐθῆ<v>της ὁ Βλουκασῆνος.

Subotić, Gojko. Ohridska slikarska škola XV veka. Belgrade, 1980, 34-37.

13. The dedicatory inscription of Stylian, the Monk from Šumen (1412)

... азъ с[т]и[а]нъ мно[го] грѣшни писах си слова надъ врати прѣв[ъ] (и) стонъ полилоуи мѣ г(оспо)ди в(о)же мои егда придиши въ ц(а)рс(т)виѣ писахъ въ л(ѣ)то... тисоуцино и Ѡ сътъно и К и въ д(ь)ни ц(а)ра соултан(а)...

Tomović, Gordana. Morfologija ćirilčkih natpisa. Belgrade, 1974, 101.

14. The Church of Hagia Paraskeve, Monodendri (1414)

... δι' ἐξόδου (τε) κ(αί) παληρόσεως, τοῦ εὐγ(ε)νεστ(ά)του κύρι(ου) Μηχ[α]ῆλ Βωηβώνδα τοῦ Θεοῤιανοῦ. ἦν δέδωκεν ἐν τῶ νῶ [...]κ(αί) τῆς γενεᾶς κ(αί) ἀδελφότη(η)τ(ος) αὐτοῦ κ(αί) πάντων ὄλων τῶν Βεζητηζηνῶν κληρονόμων κτητόρων μικρῶν τ(ε) κ(αί) μηζώνων ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ πανυψιλοτ(ά)του δεσπότη τοῦ ἡμ(ῶν) Κάρολα τοῦ Δουκός...

Acheimastou-Potamianou. Η κτητορική παράσταση, 233.

15. The church of Theotokos Chrysopege at Ainos (1422/3)

...ἀνηγέρθη ἐκ βάθρων παρ' ἐμοῦ Δημητρίου τοῦ Ξένου, τηνικαῦτα κρατοῦντος τῆς θεοσώστου πόλεως Αἴνου τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου ἡμῶν αὐθέντου σὺρ Παλάμιδες Φραντζέσκου Γατελιούζου τοῦ Παλαιολόγου...

Asdracha. Inscriptions, 264-267.

16. The church of the Virgin, Dragalevtsi (1476)

...пописа съ потъшанъиенъ кврѣ радославъ маверь и съ подрожкиенъ и съ съинове иго въ вѣчнѣноу иеноу память аминь. Въ лѣто СЦНД ендиктѣионъ Я ц(а)р(ст)воуицаго изманла мѣхмедъ челепѣ

Balashev, Georgi. Словенски надписи в Югозападна България [Slovenski nadpisi v Yugozapadna Balmariaya]. – Минало [Minalo], 1912, no. 7-8, 206.

17. St Demetrius' Church, Boboshevo (1488)

...пописа ѡт свода иеремонах Невфѣтъ съ синови си попа Дмитроль и Богданомъ прост(и) ихъ в(ог)ъ аминь. Я въ лѣ(то) СЧ и С и С въ дни ц(а)ра Баазитъ Бега ѡбла(да)юще сѣе хоръы. Ѡвѣщени епископъ кн(р) Яковъ

Balashev. Slovenski nadpisi, 208.

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Между лоялността, паметта и закона: византийски и славянски посветителни надписи от църкви, упоменаващи чуждоземни владетели от XIV и XV век

Анна Адашинская



Като всички византийски и славянски обществени/публични текстове, структурата на посветителните надписи се характеризира с консерватизъм, оставяйки малка възможност за нововъведения или промени, като запазва стриктно описателните правила, отнасящи се до инвокации, ктитори, датирани и упоменаване на владетели. Последният елемент, а именно отнасянето към светската власт, е бил свързан с политическата принадлежност на ктиторите и тяхното желание официално да получат покровителство и да бъдат „облечени“ с титли и положение. Въпреки това, в контекста на отслабващата централна власт, византийските и славянските ктитори в своите надписи се стремят да подменят имената на официалните византийски, сръбски и български владетели с имената на по-преки, местни господари. Независимо от това, езикът и думите на посветителните надписи продължават да следват установената гръцка/славянска традиция, замествайки само името на суверена. Това са случаи на политически конформизъм, които могат да бъдат наблюдавани само във времена на кризи, когато се сблъскват три владения (византийско, сръбско и българско). Тенденцията за подмяна на имената на византийските императори с тези на местни властници може да бъде проследена в Сръбското кралство и Българското царство по времето на Стефан Душан и Иван Александър. Там аристократи са използвали посветителните надписи, за да популяризират своите владетели сред гръцкоговорещите общности.

По-късно същата схема е била използвана от наследниците на Душан, от неговия син Урош, от неговия полубрат Симеон и крал Вукашин, управляващи различни части на Сръбското кралство и Византийската империя. Техните имена стават отправна точка в посветителните надписи на местните гръцки ктитори, подменящи упоменаванията на византийските власти. Това приемане на сръбските крале може да се е случило благодарение на двуетническите и правни политики, насочени към интегрирането на гръцкото население под сръбско управление.

След разпадането на Сръбското кралство, Македония, Тесалия и Епир стават бойно поле на много от местните владетели с различен етнически произход. Благородниците, като ктиторите на Мали град и на църквите в Монодендри, се обръщат към по-висшестоящите от тях, за да легитимират своите титли и

благосъстояние.

Възможен компромис в лоялността към представителите на местната и централната власт е упоменаването на двама суверени, т.е. на местния и византийския, в различните надписи към един и същи паметник. Тази стратегия избира Димитриос Ксенос, намиращ се под властта на Паламеде Гатилузио, който също така искал да укрепи своите културни и политически връзки с Палеолозите.

Църковните власти, които разчитат на финансова подкрепа и военна защита от местните владетели, пренебрегват низшия произход на албанските предводители на кланове, които идват на власт в градските центрове след загубата на Сърбия в битката при Марица (1371 г.). Имената на тези нови господари се появяват в надписите, изписани по време на тяхната власт и озаглавяващи единственото възможно управление.

През XV в. на завладените от турците територии някои представители на православната аристокрация стават турски спахии и кметове, запазвайки по този начин своя статус, имущество и религия. В тази си позиция те имат възможност да възстановяват църква или да строят параклиси, но тяхното добруване зависи от благосклонността на султана. Следователно тези представители на дребната аристокрация приемат османското управление и имената на султаните заемат мястото на някогашните християнски царе в консервативната формула на посветителните надписи.

В заключение подчертавам важността на гръцкия език, бидейки балканската *lingua Franca* в среда с етническо разнообразие. Също така посочвам как може да бъде разпознат статутът на управника, ако името му е вплетено в познатите за четящия формули, като подчертавам важността на царските имена при отслужването на литургии. Въпреки това смятам, че припознаването на местните владетели с византийските императори би могло да бъде следствие от политически и икономически опортюнизъм, както и истинска преданост и признание към властта и достойнствата на новите управници.

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ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ**

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POST-BYZANTINE ART:
CROSSING BORDERS**

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