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РЕДАКЦИОНИ ОДБОР :

ЂОРЂЕ БУБАЛО, МИРЈАНА ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ, ЉУБОМИР МАКСИМОВИЋ,
БОЈАН МИЉКОВИЋ, СРЂАН ПИРИВАТРИЋ, ЗОРАН РАКИЋ, ВИКТОР
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АЛЕКСАНДАР ФОТИЋ, ДЕЈАН ЦЕЛЕБЦИЋ

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МИРЈАНА ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ

SÉCRETAIRE DE LA RÉDACTION :

ВИКТОР САВИЋ

АМБЛЕМ: РЕЉЕФ НА КАМЕНОЈ ПЛОЧИ
ГЛАВНА ЦРКВА МАНАСТИРА ХИЛАНДАРА
ПРИПРАТА КНЕЗА ЛАЗАРА, XIV ВЕК



THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLICON OF THE ATHONITE MONASTERY OF SIMONOPETRA UNTIL THE 19th CENTURY BASED ON WRITTEN SOURCES*

PHOKION KOTZAGEORGIS – MONK KOSMAS SIMONOPETRITIS

A b s t r a c t . – The paper examines all the extant sources (documents, narrative sources, the archaeological remnants etc), regarding the *catholicon* of Simonopetra monastery on Mount Athos. The research tries to suggest a highly probable hypothesis for the chronological phases of the monument, both for the construction (or reconstruction) and the painting. The changes in the church might have taken place in the late medieval and early modern period, beginning with the construction of the church by the Serbian *despot* Jovan Uglješa in the second half of 14th century. Three disastrous fires in 1580, 1622 and 1891 have heavily affected the history of the building. The recent restoration works reveal some pieces of wall-paintings, which help us to date a crucial phase for the history of the building in the second half of the 16th century.

The present state of the *catholicon* of the Athonite monastery of Simonopetra does not easily reveal its history to the visitor. Before the recent restoration works have been started, architects had suggested that the church dates from the “early *Tourkokratia*” (i.e. ca. 1600), basing their assumption only on the external structure of the building.¹ The attempt to find the date of the construction of a building and its phases in the Ottoman period is a difficult task, because of the fires. Simonopetra’s church has suffered three such fires (in 1580, 1622, 1891) with the latter being the most destructive. Apart from the architectural form of the building, the dating of the preserved church’s frescoes would be also helpful for the dating of the whole building. However, the only wall paintings remaining today from earlier phases are those on the two small domes of *prothesis* and *diakonikon* and a

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1 P. Theocharidis, *I arhitektoniki tis monis*, in: Simonopetra – Aghion Oros, Athens 1991, 79.

fragment on a niche of the northern wall of the nave. Those paintings, according to the art historians, originated from the artistic workshops of the famous painters Theophanes the Crete or Tzortzis and, therefore, they can be dated from the mid-16th century.²

Due to the above-mentioned fires, especially the first two, the written evidences in the monastery (i.e. documents, manuscripts) had been disappeared. Thus, the researcher who wants to work on the building history of the *catholicon*, he has to depend mostly either on the extant sources of the monastery albeit from a later period or on some earlier ones that can be found in other monasteries and archives. The aim of this paper is to examine the already known, but unpublished and little exploited written sources and to set the principal questions on the history of the Simonopetra *catholicon* to be answered by architects and art historians.

THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

Simonopetra presumably had a small church (ναῦσκος) at the period of its foundation, but we know nothing about that building. For the existence of a church in the period of the founder of the monastery St. Simon, his *vita* should have informed us. However, in both of the two known versions of St. Simon's *vita*, it is mentioned that the saint attempted to build first a church and then the other buildings of the Monastery.³ The respective passages are written in the part of the *vita* which is considered by the scholars authentic; therefore, we can suggest that a similar passage existed in the Byzantine *vita* as well, which was compiled by the monk Isaiah in the second half of the 14th century. The construction of the first church of the monastery might be dated at the second half of the 13th century, when Saint Simon founded the monastery.⁴ The late Professor Pavlos Mylonas, who evaluated the

2 N. Toutos – G. Fousteris, *Evretirion tis mni-meiakis zografikis tou Aghiou Orous, 10^o–17^o aionas*, Athens 2010, 365–67.

3 Two passages imply the existence of a church before the other monastic buildings had been erected. a. Ὁ δὲ ὁσιος πρῶτον μὲν δείχνει εἰς αὐτοῦς τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἐβούλετο νὰ θεμελιώσῃ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, ἔπειτα καὶ τὴν ἐπίλοιπον οἰκοδομήν; b. ὁ δὲ πατήρ πηγαίνει, δείχνει τὸν τόπον εἰς αὐτοῦς καὶ τοὺς ἐσυνταχάινει, πρῶτα νὰ κτίσουν τὸν ναόν, πρῶτα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ὕστερα τὴν περιοχὴν κατὰ ἀκολουθίαν. The *Vita* of saint Simon, the founder of Simonopetra, as it is noted in its title in the first publication of it (συγγραφεῖς μὲν ὑπὸ Ἡσαΐου μοναχοῦ, μεταγραφεῖς δὲ ὑπὸ Νικηφόρου Ἱερομονάχου Χίου), was written by monk Isaiah, which is identified with the well-known Serbian Hesychast monk Isaiah, a person who had close relations with the so-called “second founder of Simonopetra”, the Serbian *despot* Jovan Uglješa. The text can be dated between 1368 and 1371. As most of the written sources about the Byzantine history of the monastery were burnt in the three fires, the *Vita* has been preserved only in two later versions. The first one is Isaiah's *Vita* transcribed by Nikephoros from Chios (1725–1813) and pub-

lished in Νέον Λεμωνάριον by Makarios Notaras (Venice 1819). For this version see: I. Tarnanidis, *O vios tou osiou Simona, protou ktitora tis Ieras Monis Simonos Petras*, in: Hieromonk Ioustinos Simonopetrinis (ed.), *Agios Simon o Athoitis, ktitor tis Simonopetras*, Athens 1987, 17–55 (the passage in p. 44). A second version of the *Vita* was compiled by Kaisarios Dapontes in verse form between 1780 and 1784 and published by Efth. Soulogiannis (*Kaisariou Daponte: Vios kai politeia tou en osiois patros imon Simonos*, in: Hieromonk Ioustinos Simonopetrinis (ed.), *op.cit.*, 57–78 [the passage in p. 67, verses 265–69]).

4 This is what I. Tarnanidis concluded after a detailed analysis of the survived saint's *vita* (*O vios tou osiou Simona, op.cit.*, 38–39). This conclusion is confirmed by the mention of Simonopetra monastery in the *Vita* of Saint Gregorios Sinaites („πολλάκις μετέβαινε τῆς ἡσυχίας εἴπερ τις ἐρῶν ποτέ μὲν τῇ τοῦ ἀγίου Σίμωνος, δηλονότι τῆς Πέτρας, σεβασμίᾳ μονῆ παρακαθήμενος...”), which was written by the Patriarch Kallistos 1st between 1355 and 1360 (A. Delikari, *Aghios Gregorios o Sinaites*, Thessalonike 2004, 199 and 337, who publishes the *Vita* according to a manuscript of 15th century ([Lavra I 117])).

information provided by the traveler Ioannis Komninos (in 1698) and compared it with the observation of the topography of the rock of Simonopetra, concludes: *first a chapel had been built on top of the rock by St. Simon and later, around it, developed the buildings of the monastic complex, respecting and exploiting the morphology of the rock.*⁵ Furthermore, a fragment of St. Simon's *vita* under the title „Περικοπή ἐκ τοῦ βίου τοῦ ἁγίου Σίμωνος, ἐκ παλαιοῦ χειρογράφου” (“Fragment from the *vita* of Saint Simon [drawn] from an old manuscript”)⁶ gives the information that there had been built a *catholicon* with dome.⁷ Since the topographical information in the same passage is based on reality, it seems reasonable that the author of this passage had in his mind a realistic view of the monastery, its place and its *catholicon*. Therefore, we suggest that the information on a *catholicon* with a dome lays on real ground. The text of this passage is written in the period after the Ottoman occupation of Mount Athos (i.e. 1423/4), as we surmise from the use of the Turkish loan-word *kubbe* (= dome). Since the fragment is found in an authentic version of the *vita*,⁸ we suppose that it existed in the original (Byzantine) text as well.⁹

Information on the building and the renovation projects which had been undertaken during the Byzantine period is inserted into a patriarchal document (*sigillum*), issued by the Patriarch of Constantinople Cyril I (Loukaris) in 1622/3. The document reiterated and verified the text of a *chrysobullon* issued by the Serbian governor (*despot*) of Serres, Jovan Uglješa (1365–1371) in September 1368, on the occasion of the renovation of Simonopetra. After the Patriarch's preamble, the exact copy of the original Byzantine document was transferred to (ἴσον ἀπαράλλακτον τοῦ πρωτοτύπου ἐκείνου χρυσοβούλλου γράμματος), because the last one was in a lacerated situation due to the passage of time (τῆ τοῦ καιροῦ πολυετία διερρηγμένον καὶ πεπαλαιωμένον). We use the information given for the church in the preamble of the *chrysobullon*. According to the text, Jovan Uglješa wished to have erected various buildings in Simonopetra, as he had done earlier in other Athonite monasteries. Thus, upon application to the *Holy Community* of Mount Athos and acceptance of his proposal by the same administrative body, the monk Eftymios was sent to buy land for the monastery of Simonopetra outside the Athonite peninsula and to oversee the construction of buildings within the monastery at the expense of the Serbian ruler. In this case, Uglješa, the *chrysobullon* underlines, “had built and constructed the whole holy monastery, with tower, cells and all the peripheral buildings, and the church was decorated and painted, and [I]

5 V. G. Barskij, *Ta taxidia tou sto Aghion Oros, 1725–1726, 1744–1745*, Thessaloniki 2009, 201 (n. 187).

6 This fragment was published for the first time by the Abbot of Simonopetra Archimandrite Hieronymos (*Akolouthiai tou osiou kai theoforou patros imon Simonos tou myrovlytou kai tis en Agio Orei tou Atho Ieras Monis Simonos Petras, proseti de kai i akolouthia tis agias endoxou myroforou kai isapostolou Marias tis Magdalinis*, Athens 1924, 113–15) and it was re-published by I. Tarnanidis (*O vios tou osiou Simona*, *op. cit.*, 50–52).

7 „... καὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι καὶ αὐτός ὁ κουμπές τοῦ καθολικοῦ ἔχει νά παρθῆ ἀπό τόν άνεμον, καὶ

νά ριφθῆ εἰς τό βάθος τοῦ λάκκου” („and they thought that even the dome of the catholicon will be cut off by the strong wind and it will be thrown down into the deep flume”; I. Tarnanidis, *op. cit.*, 52).

8 I. Tarnanidis, *op. cit.*, 28–30, 39.

9 Moreover, for the credibility of the text speaks another fact. At the same passage of Saint Simon's *vita* it is mentioned that in the western part of the Monastery and very close to the *catholicon* existed a *doxaton* (καὶ πηγαίνοντας εἰς τό δοξάτον κατὰ τό δυτικόν μέρος; I. Tarnanidis, *op. cit.*, 52).

deposit many relics on it, holy icons and books and veils interwoven with gold, and the whole [church] was covered with lead. [The church] was dedicated to the Jesus Christ's Nativity".¹⁰ Therefore, the only important works clearly specified in the document as carried out by Hieromonk Efthymios concerning the *catholicon* were the painting of the church and the coating of its roof with lead.

THE EARLY OTTOMAN PERIOD BEFORE THE FIRE OF 1580

Little is known about the history of the monastery during the first period after the Ottoman conquest of Mount Athos, since it has survived almost no written sources, because of the destruction caused by the fire of 1580. The turbulent 15th century, during which they were not generally observed any building activity in Athonite peninsula,¹¹ seems not to have favored the implementation of building projects in Simonopetra. This hypothesis is corroborated with information provided by a circular letter of the 16th century (see below).

In the early 16th century a new age in monastery's history begun. According to the *vita* of the *Neomartyr* Iakovos the New (+1.11.1519), which is contemporary with the saint's era,¹² his disciples headed by the later archbishop of Thessaloniki St. Theonas, during their wanderings after Iakovos' martyrdom in 1519, they had taken refuge in Simonopetra in 1520. There, they found an almost deserted monastery with only three monks living in it (οὐ γὰρ προσέμενόν τινες μοναχοὶ ἐν αὐτῇ, εἰ μὴ που δύο ἢ τρεῖς, διὰ τὸ δύσβατον τοῦ τόπου καὶ τῇ ἐνδείᾳ τῶν σωματικῶν), who had suffered a lot from Muslim assaults (διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀλωμένην ὑπὸ τῶν ἀθέων ἀγαρηνῶν) and they lacked the necessaries for surviving.¹³ Because of this situation, Theonas' twenty seven disciples after a three-year stay left the monastery in 1522.¹⁴ The impoverishment of the monastery can also be observed in the only original Greek document preserved in Simonopetra's archive before 1580. According to this document, in 1516/7 the monks of Kutlumusiou monastery asked the monks of Simonopetra to move their flocks to Simonopetra's *metochion* on the peninsula of *Longos* (today Sithonia in Chalkidiki). Simonopetra's monks (the *hegumen* Daniel named Prochoros from the Chilandar's tower of St. Basil, and the elders [γέροντες] Nikephoros from Siderokaphsia and Timotheos from Ohrid) accepted the offer because, as it was underlined in the document, they fear that otherwise their monastery could lose the winter pasture in Longos due to the urgent economic problems it encountered with.¹⁵

10 „...ἀνήγειρε καὶ ἀνωκοδόμησεν ἅπαν τὸ ἱερὸν μοναστήριον, μετὰ πύργων καὶ κελλίων καὶ διακονημάτων ἀπάντων, καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία κατεκαλύθη, καὶ ἀνιστορήθη, καὶ κειμήλια παμπληθῆ κατεθέμην ἐν αὐτῇ, ἔν τε τοῖς ἁγίοις εἰκόσι καὶ βιβλίοις καὶ πέπλοις χρυσοῦφάντοις, καὶ ἅπαντα κατεστεγάσθη μολιβδίς. Καὶ καθιερώθη ἐπ' ὄνοματι τῶν γεννεθλίων Χριστοῦ...” (D. Lj. Kašić, *Despot Jovan Uglješa kao ktitor svetogorskog manastira Simonopetre*, Bogoslovlje 20 [1976], 40).

11 With the remarkable exception of Hagios Pavlos monastery (Pl. Theocharidis, *Renewal of Building Stock. Construction on Mount Athos in*

the 15th–16th Centuries, Mount Athos in the 15th and 16th Centuries, Thessaloniki 2012, 116).

12 *Vios kai politeia Iakovou tou neou osiomartyros*, ed. Chrysopodaritissa Monastery, Athens 2003, 125–29.

13 *Vios kai politeia*, 271–3, 67–8, 422–3.

14 *Op. cit.*, 67–8, 271–3, 276–7, 422–3.

15 Archive of the monastery of Simonopetra: „...εἴμεσθεν πτωχῶ τὸ μοναστήριον καὶ τὸ Κουτλουμουσι εὐημεροῦσαν καὶ ἐπλουτοῦσαν καὶ ἐφοβήθημεν τὰ ὑστερινὰ μήπως γένῃ σκάνδαλον καὶ ἀποξενωθεῖ ὁ τόπος τοῦ χειμαδίου ἀπὸ μοναστήριον καὶ κολάσωμεν τὰς ψυχὰς

A turning point for the history of the monastery was the arrival in Simonopetra of about forty monks during the third decade of the 16th century, whose place of origin is unknown. Information on this group can be drawn from a number of letters sent from the monastery and which were copied in a codex housed in the Patriarchal Library of Jerusalem.¹⁶ All are undated, but due to internal evidences can be dated in the period 1527–1541. The letters were sent from the monastery to various persons, secular or religious, mostly to ask for money support. Some of them are circular letters (*apantachouses*). Through the analysis of these documents, one can discern that the monks had planned and tried to realize a general project of restoration of their monastery, in which they planned to undertake some major building works.

Thus, in a circular letter (*apantachousa*), signed by the Simonopetra *hegumen* Gregorios, it was described the building works the new brotherhood had implemented and those that they were not able to finish yet.¹⁷ In this document, there is particular reference to the group of newcomer monks, who with the help of various Christians succeeded in implementing some building works. Among these works, they mentioned the painting of the church (ἀνεκαινίσθησαν με τὴν βοήθειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ με τὰς δωρεὰς τῶν ἐλεημόνων χριστιανῶν τὰ σεσαθρωμένα τεῖχη τοῦ κάστρου καὶ τὰ κελλία καὶ ὁ ὠραῖσμος καὶ κόσμος τῆς ἐκκλησίας, λέγω δὴ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας).¹⁸ From the use of the verb ἀνεκαινίσθησαν for the painted decoration, we can conclude that it concerns not of a new painting of the church, but of the restoration of the existed frescoes. If it concerned of a new painting, it would use another verb (e.g. ἀνιστορήθη). Obviously these works were completed a short time before the compilation of the documents. Based on the dating of the letters in 1527–1541, the advent of the new brotherhood after the disciples of St. Iakovos the New had left monastery (1522) and the appearance in other sources as *hegumens* of Simonopetra of Dometios in 1527 and Ioasaph in 1528¹⁹, one can argue that the renovation of the painted decoration had been undertaken between 1529 and 1535. The works that the new brotherhood had not yet been able to accomplish were the erection of a hospital, the repair of the aqueduct and the repair of the church's lead roof, from which water entered and threatened the newly refurbished frescoes (κινδυνεύει ἡ ἱστορία τοῦ ἀπαλειφῆναι ἐκ τῆς πλησμονῆς τῶν ὑδάτων). For those works, the monks asked for the assistance of the Christians.

Equally interesting is the information contained in the circular letter that before the arrival of the newcomers no works had been carried out in the monastery (ἐκ τῶν

ἡμῶν.” Cf. Vamvakas, I. M. Simonos Petra. *Katalogos tou arheiou, Athonika Symmeikta* 1 (1985), 130 (no. 29). It is worth mentioning that the cells of the monastery in 1520 were able to host at least about thirty monks, because this was the number of the Saint Iakovos' disciples (27), to which there was added the few monks who still remained in Simonopetra before the new brotherhood. In the vakifname of 1569 it is mentioned that the monastery had thirty six rooms (oda). Given these evidences in mind, we can conclude that any construction works which had been finished by 1567 did not increase the number of the rooms of the monastery, as these were

at the beginning of the century, or even from the Byzantine period.

¹⁶ It concerns of copies of letters, which have been found in the Codex 370 and dated from the middle of 16th century. See: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameas, *Ierosolymitiki Vivliothiki*, v. I, Athens 1891, 388–93; Ch. Patrinelis, *Istoria. Tourkokratia*, in: Simonopetra-Aghion Oros, Athens 1991, 22; Kr. Chrysochoidis, *Arheio*, 265, where the description of the codex is given.

¹⁷ Codex no. 370, f. 219.

¹⁸ C. Patrinelis, *Op. cit.*

¹⁹ C. Patrinelis, *Op. cit.*

παλαιῶν καιρῶν οὐκ ἀνήγειρεν ἐν αὐτῷ [τῷ μοναστηρίῳ] τις). The monks obviously meant that in the monastery there had not been done restoration works by the time of its foundation or at least from a long time ago. Based on that phrase one can suggest that at least by the time of the Ottoman conquest onwards, the monastery remained in the same form it had during the Byzantine era. More characteristic was the statement of the monks in another letter to an unnamed person that by the time of the old founder [of the church] nobody had built even a small piece of work in the church for its preservation (ἀπὸ γὰρ ἐκείνου τοῦ παλαιοῦ κτήτορος οὐδεὶς ὠκοδόμησεν πλέον ἐν τῷ ναῷ μικρὸν ἔργον εἰς βοήθειαν).²⁰ Obviously as “old founder” they meant Jovan Uglješa, having in mind that he had lived one hundred and sixty years before this letter was compiled. It is therefore certain that the painting of the church that was refurbished in 1529–1535, and the damaged lead roof that had to be repaired were the paintings and lead made under the sponsorship of Jovan Uglješa. So there is sound evidence that between 1527 and 1541 the *catholicon* constructed or repaired by Jovan Uglješa’s sponsorship still existed in Simonopetra.

In another letter of the *hegumen* Gregorios to an anonymous person²¹ the plight of the monastery was described. This situation was even worsened because some monks were captivated by pirates, and for their redemption the *hegumen* borrowed 4,000 *aspers*, but he was not able to pay the sum back. Besides, the *hegumen* asked for economic support on other works, namely the erection of a hospital and the construction works in the *catholicon*. For the latter works the *hegumen* noted that the lead of the roof had been destroyed and the frescoes of the church was in danger due to the raining (καὶ τὸ μολύβδιν τοῦ μοναστηρίου ἀπὸ τὴν πολυετίαν τοῦ καιροῦ ἐφθάρη καὶ ἐκ τοὺς χειμερινοὺς ὄμβρους καὶ ὑετοὺς συνπίνει ἅπας ὁ θόλος καὶ ἡ σκέπη τοῦ μοναστηρίου καὶ κινδυνεύει ἡ ἱστορία τοῦ ἀπαλειφθῆναι).²² This passage indicates that the church of Simonopetra in ca. 1530 was already covered with lead, it was painted and it had passed a long time, since the roof had been covered with a lead; this long time span caused problems for waterproofing.²³ The letter does not allow us to conclude if the word *ἱστορία* refers to the old frescoes of the monastery or the refurbished ones. However, the fact that the content of the letter is almost identical with that in the circular letter and that the letter signed the same *hegumen* leads to the suggestion that it was written at the same time with the circular letter and therefore concerns the renovated frescoes. Moreover, it is reasonable that the *hegumen* was more concerned of protecting the new paintings than the old ones.

Therefore, according to the letters, the situation of the *catholicon* by the 1530’s was as follows: between 1370 and 1530 any work for changing the form of the building or repair of its lead roof, which, due to the passing of more than one hundred and fifty years had started to present waterproofing problems, had not been undertaken. However, the new brotherhood arrived at the monastery not a long

20 Codex no. 370, f. 168.

22 Codex 370, f. 217v.

21 We can suggest that it concerns with the Salonican Doukas Kritopoulos, to whom another letter was sent. In that letter, the Simonopetrites asked him to help them for the erection of a hospital in the monastery (Codex 370, f. 171).

23 It is true that the place of the monastery on the rock and at the exit of a flume, and of its church on the top of the rock are reasons that they are suffered, even today, by intensive weather phenomena (gales, storms, snowstorms, driving snows etc.).

time after 1522, and it implemented the refurbishment of the Byzantine frescoes of the church. Therefore, the *catholicon* of Simonopetra at around 1530 had two layers of frescoes, one of the Paleologan period (1365–1371) and one of the early post-byzantine (around 1530).

Another source, however, sheds new light on the problem. In the second stipules of the codex no. 115 of the Docheiariou monastery some notes are written.²⁴ Among these we read the following:

“In 1556/7 the church [of the monastery] of Kastamonitou was built.

In 1561/2 the church [of the monastery] of Docheiariou was built.

At the same year the church [of the monastery] of Simonopetra [was also built].”

(+ ζξε [=1556/7] ἐκτίσθη ὁ ναός τοῦ κασταμονίτου.

+ ζο [=1561/2] ἐκτίσθη τοῦ δοχειαρίου ὁ ναός.

+ τὸ αὐτῶ δὲ ἔτος καὶ ὁ ναός τοῦ σήμονος πέτρας.)

The codex, which Spyridon Lambros described in the Mount Athos manuscripts' catalogue, dated from the 14th or 15th century. The specific hand of those notes can be dated from the 18th century, but its writer probably copied an older one, as it can be deduced from the use of the chronological system of the creation of the world, instead of the Jesus Christ's era, which was exclusively in use in the 18th century. The above-mentioned note is used by the scholars for the dating of the *catholicon* of Docheiariou monastery,²⁵ but not for the other two. The information about the *catholicon* of Docheiariou is verified by an inscription in the same monastery on the famous wall-painting of Mother of God “Gorgoypekoos”, where except for the date of the painting is given the same date as that of the construction of *catholicon*: “Mother of God /the Gorgoypekoos/...in the year 7071 (1562–63) /indiction 6th, when they built the church/ of Docheiariou”.²⁶

Furthermore, in the *catholicon* of Docheiariou there is an inscription writing that the church was built and painted in 1568 through the financial assistance of the Moldavian *voevoda* Alexander Lapuşneanu.²⁷ For the restoration and/or for the building of Docheiariou's *catholicon* Ottoman permission documents were issued in the years 1544, 1558, 1559–60, and 1562.²⁸ This *catholicon*, which was restored or rebuilt in 1561/2, is the present *catholicon* of the monastery. But according to the recent study, parts of the Byzantine *catholicon* of Docheiariou are embodied in the *catholicon* of 1561/2. After some destructive events, the Byzantine *catholicon*

24 For the codex see: S. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, v. I, Cambridge 1895, 250–51 (no. 2789).

25 See for example: P. Touliatos, *Iera mone Docheiariou Agiou Orou: I architektonike tou katholikon kai tou pyrgou*, Athens 2009, 21; P. Touliatos – N. Charkiolakes, *Eisagogi stin arhitektonike kai oikodomike istoria kai erevna tou ktiriakou sygkrotimatos tis monis*, in: S. Papadopoulos (ed.), *Parousia ieras mones*

Docheiariou, Athens 2001, 169 and 177 (n. 12).

26 I. M. Docheiariou (ed.), *I thavmaturge eikona tis Panagias Gorgoypekooy*, Agion Oros 1999, 5, 31; Hieromonk Philotheos, *I thavmaturge eikona tis Panagias Gorgoypekooy*, in: Parousia, 198–99.

27 P. Touliatos, *op. cit.*, 21; V. Gonis, *Historiko diagramma tis Mones Docheiariou*, in: Parousia, 57.

28 P. Touliatos, *op. cit.*, 22; V. Demetriades, *Ta othomanika eggrafa*, in: Parousia, 255.

was reconstructed and repaired to its present state and form at around 1562–1568, through the financial support of Moldavian *voevodas*.²⁹ In any case the note of the Docheiariou manuscript gives us the exact date of the extended restoration or building of the catholicon before the wall painting. Once verified for the monastery of Docheiariou, apparently we should accept that similarly the information on the cases of Kastamonitou and Simonopetra was true as well.

On the *catholicon* of Kastamonitou we know that the present church of the monastery was built between 1867 and 1869 and it is the newest of all the *catholica* on Mount Athos. It is also known that the whole monastery of Kastamonitou was reconstructed around 1433 by the Serbian great *čelnik* Radič, after being devastated and abandoned.³⁰ In 1500, the monks of Kastamonitou obtained by the Ottoman authorities the permission to restore the church of the monastery.³¹ According to Gerasimos Smyrnakis, the present *catholicon* was built on the bases of three other (older) *catholica*, while, according to Kosmas Vlachos, it was erected on the site of two (successively) older ones.³² V. Barskij said that the *catholicon* was painted, covered with lead, had four marble white pillars and five domes. Besides the description, Barskij gives a sketch of the *catholicon*.³³ According to Pavlos Mylonas, Barskij's description reminds us of a *catholicon* of the 14th or 15th century. Mylonas also argues that Barskij's observation on the floor "... of white marble had other colors here and there" supports the hypothesis that the floor was a remnant of a colorful 11th or 12th century marble floor.³⁴ The same information gives the traveler Ioannis Komninos in 1698.³⁵ If the note of Docheiariou Monastery is true about Kastamonitou, its *catholicon* was rebuilt or restored in 1556/7 on the same site as the previous one of 1433, built by Radič, which was restored in 1500, and it had been preserved in the 17th and the 18th centuries, possibly until the rebuilding of 1867.

In the middle of 16th century, a considerable number of constructions and renovations of churches and other buildings in Mount Athos were undertaken.³⁶ In all the cases, the sponsorship for the building works attributed to the rulers of the Danubean principalities. Simonopetra had granted such a granting: the tower of the monastery port (*arsanas*) built in 1567 with money of the officer at the court of the Wallachian *voevoda*, Oxiotis *Aga* from Pogoniani of Epirus.³⁷ He was a trustworthy person of the Wallachian *voevoda* Peter the Young (1559–1568) and he

29 P. Touliatos, *op. cit.*, 125.

30 *Actes de Kastamonitou*, ed. by N. Oikonomidès, Paris 1978, 6. For this personnage see: E. A. Zachariadou, *The Worrisome Wealth of the Čelnik Radič*, in: C. Heywood – C. Imber (eds), *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, Istanbul 1994, 383–397.

31 Unpublished Ottoman document of 18–27 July 1500 as it refers in: *Actes de Kastamonitou*, 9, note 57.

32 See G. Smyrnakis, *To Aghion Oros*, repr. ed., Karyes 1988, 686; K. Vlachos, *I hersonisos tou Aghiou Orous Atho kai ai en afti monai kai oi monachoi palai te kai nyn*, rept. ed., Thessaloniki 2005, 332.

33 V. Barskij, *Ta taxidia*, 459.

34 P. Mylonas, *Atlas of the Twenty Sovereign Monasteries*, fascicule two: *Photographic Documentation of Landscapes and Monasteries*, Pictorial Dictionary of the Holy Mountain Athos, vol. 1, part 1, Wasmuth 2000, 338.

35 I. Komninos, *Proskynitarion tou Aghiou Orous tou Athonos*, repr. of 1st ed. of 1701, Karyes 1984, 104.

36 Except for the particular case of Stavronikita (new monastery), it should be mentioned the cases of Xeropotamou and Dionysiou. See: Pl. Theocharidis, *Renewal of Building Stock*, 119–22.

37 For the inscription on the tower of the port of Simonopetra see: G. Millet – J. Pargoire – L. Petit, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l'Athos*, part 1, Paris 1904, 180 (no. 536).

had financed the restoration of other monastic building complexes in the Ottoman lands.³⁸ The question is if Oxiotis could be the financier for the restoration / rebuilding of the catholicon of Simonopetra in 1561/2. This seems to be doubtful, because Oxiotis was at his post in the years 1567/8³⁹ and it is not sure if he was able to undertake the sponsorship of such an expensive restoration programme at 1561/2.

During the reign of *voevoda* Peter the Young (1558–1568) Simonopetra was donated the metochion of Saint Nicholas close to Bucharest, which was closely related to other two rich and powerful personalities in Wallachia, the great *postelnic* Gheorma (1564–1568) and the Vlach noblewoman Caplea. Gheorma, an Epirote from the village Dipalitsa of Pogoniani, donated to Simonopetra the metochion of Saint Nicholas in Bucharest between 1564 and 1568. From the Rumanian documents of Simonopetra reveals that the metochion of Saint Nicholas in Bucharest was initially a metochion of Bolintin monastery and Gheorma changed its dedication from Bolintin to Simonopetra.

Caplea, according to Simonopetra's Rumanian documents, was the daughter of *parcalamp* Diikul and the wife of *parcalamp* Badea, with whom she had two children, Petrasko and Stanko. Her brother was the great *medelnicear* Radul.⁴⁰ In a letter of 1549 she appears as nun with the name Theodora.⁴¹ She was mentioned as Gheorma's "sister according to the Holy Gospel" ("състро по святой Евангеліе"), i.e. she was his "sworn sister".⁴² Caplea also appeared to be the founder of the metochion of Simonopetra in Bucharest during the ruling of Peter the Young (1558–1568). If this is correct, Caplea would have been a great benefactor of Simonopetra, who could also finance the construction works in the catholicon and in other parts of the monastery.

In fact, Caplea appears in the Simonopetra documents after 1570, as having donated her landed property to Simonopetra during the ruling of Peter the Young (1558–

38 Around 1567–1568 Oxiotis financed the restoration of the catholicon of Geromeriou Monastery in Epirus and became the new ktitor of the monastery. Due to Oxiotis's cure Peter the Young gave his approval for an annual fee of one thousand aspers for Geromeriou Monastery and the Patriarch of Constantinople Metrophanes recognized it as *stavropegium*. For all this activity Oxiotis reasonably was recognized by the Patriarch Metrophanes as a new ktitor of Geromeri. See: P. Evangelou, *Allilographia tou Patriarheiou Konstantinoupoleos me ti Mone Geromeriou Thesprotias kata ti metavyzantini kai neoteri periodo*, unpubl. PhD diss., Athens 2010, 43, 84–95; L. Vranousis, *Geromeriou Mone*, in: *Thriskeftiki kai Ithiki Enkyklopaideia*, vol. 4, University of Athens 1964, 496–502. On the southern part of the *catholicon* of Geromeriou Monastery there is an inscription: "ΕΤΟΥΣ ΖΩΣ ΟΞΗΟΤΗ ΠΟΓΟΝΙΑΝ[Ι]ΤΗ" (1567/8).

39 P. Evangelou, *op. cit.*, 91.

40 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *Roumanika eggrafa*, documents no 22 (of 1545), 23 (1546). The genealogy of Caplea is confirmed by the

documents of the Vlach Rulers which certified the donations of landed property of Caplea to the monastery of Saint Nicholas in Bucharest. According to these documents were enregistered in diptycha of the monastery by *zoupanesa* Caplea twelve names of herself, her parents and other cognates: several of them can be identified: *zoupanesa* Caplea, *Visa*, *Diikul* (in the translation: *Dintzoul*) = Caplea's father, *Stanka* = her mother, *Vaden* = husband, *Petraskos* = son, *Rados* = brother, *Stankos* = son, *Stoika*, *Neksa*, *Draganos* and *Caplea*. From the several copies of these documents with the twelve names I used a Greek translation (19th century) of a *chrysobullon* of *Voevoda* Alexander 2nd with supposed date 5.3.7085 (1577) from the Rumanian archive of Simonopetra.

41 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 27.

42 P. Zahariuc, *Soră după Sfântă Evangile. Note despre neamul jupănesei Caplea și despre mănăstirea Sfântul Nicolae din București, ctitoria lui Ghiorma banul*, *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 25, 83; A. Falangas, *Présences grecques dans les Pays roumains (XIVe–XVIe siècles)*, Bucarest 2009, 227.

1568), for twelve names of herself and her cognates could be commemorated in the *diptycha* of the monastery.⁴³ Her landed property was donated to Simonopetra's *metochion* of Saint Nicholas, where Caplea, according to some documents, was buried.⁴⁴ Judging from the Rumanian documents of Simonopetra, it is not testified that Caplea had direct relationship with Simonopetra. On the contrary, it is documented that she had relationships only with Bolintin monastery. The monastery of Saint Nicholas in Bucharest was initially a *metochion* of Bolintin built by Domna Anka, mother of *voyvoda* Vlad the Drawn (1530–2). Caplea's father, *parcalamp* Diikul, had donated to Bolintin *metochion* the one third of a mill dam in 1532.⁴⁵ Also a part of landed property donated by Caplea to the monastery of Saint Nicholas was in Dragomirești, where the monastery of Bolintin had landed property since 1453.⁴⁶ Therefore, in all likelihood Caplea continued her father's benefactions to Bolintin monastery, by donating her landed property before her death. She was buried in the monastery of Saint Nicholas, which was still *metochion* of Bolintin and her son Petrasco in Bolintin monastery.⁴⁷ When Gheorma changed the dedication of the *metochion* from Bolintin to Simonopetra, all her landed property donated from her to Bolintin passed to Simonopetra and Caplea started to be considered ktitor of Simonopetra's *metochion*. A long trial started between the two monasteries (Bolintin and Simonopetra) about the landed property of the *metochion* of Saint Nicholas donated by Caplea,⁴⁸ which was ended in 1626 by the subordination of Bolintin monastery to Simonopetra as *metochion*.⁴⁹

From the above mentioned analysis we can conclude that it is not proved that Simonopetra had accepted any donation from Wallachia until the dedication of the *metochion* of Saint Nicholas by Gheorma between 1564 and 1568. The first Rumanian documents explicitly mentioned Simonopetra dated from 1572.⁵⁰ Taking into account that during the period of the restoration works in catholicon

43 In later documents Caplea appeared to donate her landed property directly to Simonopetra. This is mentioned, for example, in a *sigillion* of the Patriarch Jeremiah II on March of 1590 (D. Vamvakas, *Iera moni Simonos Petras*, no 3), which confirmed the donation of villages and land by Kaplea: „Τούτων μία καὶ ἐξ εὐγενῶν ἐτύγγανεν οὕσα ἢ τιμωτ(ά)τ(η) κυρία Κάπλια ... δέον ἔκρινε μὴ ἄμοιρον καταλιπεῖν καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Σίμωνος Πέτρας μονὴν ἐκ τῶν αὐτῆς κτημάτων τε καὶ πραγμάτων...“. But in the earliest and more authentic sources, that is a parchment of Peter Junior (8th April of 1564–1568, see D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 763), as ktitor of the monastery of Saint Nicholas, on the river Dămpovița, appears the great *postelnic* Gheorma (see also A. Falangas, *op. cit.*, 227). This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that in the Rumanian documents of Simonopetra the monastery of Saint Nicholas is called “*metochion* / monastery of *postelnic* / banos Gheorma” (D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no. 59 [of 1577], no 68 [1582], 75 [1586], 78, 79 [1587], 104 [1595]) but never “of Caplea”.

44 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 763; P. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains*,

Roma 1986, 228.

45 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 16.

46 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 3. It is interesting that in this letter of 1453 it is mentioned that the landed property of Bolintin monastery in Dragomirești was “close to river Dămpovița”, where also the *metochion* of Saint Nicholas is mentioned to be. It seems possible that the *metochion* of Saint Nicholas was built by Domna Anka in Bolintin's property in Dragomirești close to river Dămpovița.

47 P. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos*, 228.

48 For example, in a Greek translation of a *chrysobullon* of Voevoda Radu Șerban of 24.1.1604 from the Rumanian archive of Simonopetra is mentioned that the abbot and the monks of Simonopetra had a dispute with the monks of Bolintin monastery, when the last argued to Voevoda Radu that the above mentioned landed property was dedicated by *zoupanesa* Caplea to Bolintin monastery.

49 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 179.

50 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 48.

(1561/2) Gheorma was not yet great *postelnic*, it is difficult to attribute to him the sponsorship of the above mentioned restoration works. It is also certain that the *voevoda* Peter the Young affirmed Gheorma's dedication to Simonopetra between 1564 and 1568 by a *chrysovoullon*.⁵¹ But the first *voevoda* who sponsored directly Simonopetra was Peter the Lame in 1587 who gave to the monastery a sum of 5,400 aspers.⁵² Based on the aforementioned, the hypothesis⁵³ that the constructions works in Simonopetra's catholicon in 1561/2 were implemented with money from Danubian principalities could not be confirmed by the extant documents.

Furthermore, we suppose that an extended rebuilding of Simonopetra's catholicon in 1561/2 with strong financial support from Wallachia would be followed at least by a ktitorial inscription, taking into account that in other monasteries except for inscriptions were painted also the donators with their families.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that several travellers passed from Simonopetra and described the monastery and its catholicon, no one mentioned any ktitorial inscription of 1561/2 or any construction works in it under the sponsorship of Wallachian princes, as they did in most of other Athonite monasteries. Taking into account that Ioannis Komninos has a detailed description of Simonopetra and its catholicon in 1701, it seems very strange that he would fail to mention a ktitorial inscription or painting of 1561/2 in it.⁵⁵ Moreover, in the written sources or the oral tradition of the monastery does not seem to survive any evidence on the restoration of the catholicon and the sponsorship for it. In the ktitorial *diptycha* of Simonopetra are registered about fifty names of benefactors from Wallachia, but no one could be identified with an important sponsor from the period under consideration.⁵⁶

51 In the above mentioned Greek translation of the *chrysovoullon* (5.3.1577) from the Rumanian archive of Simonopetra, *voevoda* Alexander the 2nd mentions that "for the departed Peter *Voievoda* also dedicated to the above mentioned Holy Monastery all the afore-mentioned villages and landed property of *zoupanesa* Caplea". In the letter of the Patriarch Jeremiah II of March of 1590 affirming the donations of Caplea (D. Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, no 3), it is mentioned that she dedicated her property to Simonopetra by a *chrysovoullon* of Ioannis Petros *Voievoda*.

52 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *op. cit.*, no 76.

53 See P. Koufopoulos, *Nea stotheia gia tin oikodomiki drastiriotita in Moni Simonos Petras kata ton 16o aiona*, in the Summaries of the papers for the International Congress *Mount Athos in 15th and 16th century*, Thessaloniki – Agioreitiki Estia, 25–27.11.2011, who speaks about "an extended construction project sponsored by donations coming from Wallachia". Except for this summary, no other text was included in the forthcoming volume of the Proceedings of the Congress.

54 In Dionysiou's and Docheiariou's catholicon for example Peter Rareş and Alexander Lapouşneanu respectively are painted with their families and a ktitorial inscription survives where they are called as "Ktitor of this Holy

Monastery" (ΚΤΗΤΩΡ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΤΑΥΤΗΣ), see: Iera Mone Dionysiou, *Oi toihografies tou katholikon, Agion Oros* 2003, 28–29; Ath. Paliouras, *Oi toihografies tou katholikon*, in: *Parousia*, 304–305.

55 See his references in the description of the monasteries Dionysiou, Xeropotamou, Koutloumousiou, Zographou, Docheiariou, Agiou Pavlou, Xenophontos, Philotheou, where he also mentions that the Moldavian or Wallachian *voevodas* are painted in the churches as ktitors. See also his note: "But I didn't want to miss neither the names of the ktitors of each monastery neither of the other people who partially helped them or made a good work to them" (I. Komninos, *Proskynitarion tou Agiou Orous*, repr. of 1st ed., Agion Oros 1984, 27).

56 It is clear that Michael the Brave (Ban of Wallachia) possesses the first place among the *voevodas* of the Danubian Principalities and the second among all the benefactors of the monastery after the Serbian *despot* Jovan Uglješa. The reason is that he built in Bucharest from the foundations in 1591 a new church of Saint Nicholas as a metochion of Simonopetra, because the previous metochion dedicated by Gheorma was at a very marshy place (because of its neighbourhood to the river Dămpovița). Caplea's name is also registered among the above mentioned

In the case of Docheiariou monastery the note of the manuscript no. 115 gives us the date of the reconstruction of its collapsed Byzantine catholicion, parts of which were embodied in the new one (the present).⁵⁷ In the case of Simonopetra's catholicion the problem is if the above mentioned note gives us the date of the erection of a completely new church or of the reconstruction of the Byzantine one, built by Jovan Uglješa, parts of which were also embodied in the new.

The case of Simonopetra is more complicated. The old wall-paintings survived from the fire of 1891 are dated in the middle of the 16th century and could be identified either with those refurbished between 1527–1541 or with new ones painted after the erection of a completely new catholicion in 1561/2. If we accept the attribution of Simonopetra's wall paintings by Toutos and Fousteris to the famous artistic workshops of the Cretans painters Theophanes and Tzortzis or their students on Mount Athos and given the fact that Tzortzis has painted the catholicion of Docheiariou up to 1568, the today survived frescoes in Simonopetra could be dated from between 1561 and 1568, and attributed specifically to Tzortzis. Theophanes' first known work is the wall-paintings of the church of Saint Nicholas Anapafsas in Meteora (1527), followed by those of the churches in Megiste Lavra (1534/5) and Stavronikita (1545/6).⁵⁸ The first known work of Tzortzis is the catholicion of Dionysiou (1546/7) made under a sponsorship of the Moldavian Voevoda Peter Rareș (1527–1546). This work is undoubtedly attributed to him, because of written evidences in the codex of the monastery.⁵⁹

It is worth-mentioning that there is a strong tradition on Mount Athos that the places regarded as sacred they have to be kept as such by the monks. Thus, the Abbot of Simonopetra Neophytos (1861–1906) wrote that after the fire of 1891 the monks wondered if they had to build the monastery at another more level place, but because of the historical and venerable place (“διά τό ιστορικόν τῆς θέσεως καί σεβάσμιον”) this plan was not accepted.⁶⁰ In the case of Simonopetra Saint Simon's vita gives the information that the saint had built first a church and after the other buildings. Therefore, it is more probable that the monks tried to keep the church in its first place, where Saint Simon founded a small church, at the top of the rock, where it is placed today. The same tradition maybe reflects Ioannis Komninos' statement that St. Simon built the church at the same place it was at Komninos' times.⁶¹

Due to the lack of written sources, it is difficult to find out the reason for the restoration of the catholicion in Simonopetra in 1561/1562 just thirty years after a

ktitorial names of Simonopetra, but only at the end of them and this registration must be attributed to the dedication of her landed property to the initial metochion of Saint Nicholas on the river Dămpovița. We suppose that if a radical rebuilding of the catholicion of Simonopetra had occurred in 1561/2 by a great sponsor, he would be mentioned until now as a new ktitor of the monastery, as the other *voevodas* from Wallachia in other Athonite monasteries. But in Simonopetra's tradition only Jovan Uglješa is mentioned as a ktitor. I used a manuscript of the end of 19th (after 1891)-beginning of 20th century with lists of names which were mentioned in the services of the monastery and most of them are

mentioned until now. The list of the names from Wallachia is registered in fol. 6 under the title „Όνόματα κτιτορικά καί ἄλλων εὐεργετῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς μονῆς ταύτης“.

57 P. Touliatos, *Iera mone Docheiariou Agiou Orous: I architektonike tou katholikou kai tou pyrgou*, Athens 2009.

58 N. Toutos – G. Fousteris, *Evretirion*, 22.

59 S. N. Kadas, *Kodix Ieras Mones Dionysiou Agiou Orous 18th–19th ai.*, Agion Oros 1994, 120.

60 Codex B, p. 106.

61 See below the section: *After the two fires: Travelers' account in the 18th century.*

radical renovation of the church and the frescoes of the monastery. Moreover, it is highly doubtful that the Ottoman authorities would give permission for building a completely new church or even expanding an already existed, taking in account that the Islamic law permitted only the restoration of an already existed church to its former dimensions. Finally, I could not find any mention of earthquake or other physical or non-physical catastrophe that struck the peninsula and might have devastating effects on the church of Simonopetra, which could provide the reason for a permission of a rebuilding. As far as it is known, there was not happened any serious earthquake on Mount Athos and the surrounding area during the 1540's or 1550's.⁶² Should the whole programme be undertaken by the monks themselves? For this hypothesis speak the dynamism of the new brotherhood in 1520's and the supposed economic development of the monastery during the 16th century, without having a specific ktitor.⁶³

THE FIRE OF 1580

A turning point in the architectural history of the monastery during the Ottoman period was the fire on the 11th December, 1580, which burnt the entire monastic complex.⁶⁴ For the damages caused by the fire, we learn from a letter (σινγλιωδες) of the "Assembly" (*Synaxis*) of Mount Athos in 1580/1, issued at the request of the *hegumen* of Simonopetra, Eugenios, in order to verify the boundaries and the possessions of the monastery, since all monastic documents were burnt.⁶⁵ The document underlined that although the walls of the monastery had collapsed, only the church had not (μόνος γὰρ ὁ θεῖος ναὸς ἔμεινεν ἀβλαβῆς ὡς οἱ τρεῖς παῖδες ἐν μέσῳ φλογῶν τῶν βαβυλωνείων). This was confirmed by the letter of Patriarch Ieremias the 2nd (May 1581),⁶⁶ issued for verifying the fact that the monks of Simonopetra undertook the administration of the monastery of Xenophon and they paid back Xenophon's debt amounted to 200,000 aspers. This arrangement favoured both the monasteries: Simonopetra's monks could safely survive until they had their monastery renovated and Xenophon's monks

62 See for example: V. Papazachos – K. Papazachou, *Oi seismoi tis Elladas*, Thessaloniki 2002, 200–201. In 1564 an earthquake happened in Mount Athos, following by another in 1572. There is clear evidence that the church of Docheiariou, which had rebuilt at the same year with that of Simonopetra, was collapsed in 1553/4, but no reason is mentioned for this collapse. See: S. Kadas, *Ta semeiomata ton heirographon tis monis Dionysiou Agiou Orous*, *Agion Oros* 1996, 108 (no. 337): „Ἐτοὺς ‚ζξβ´ [1554] ἔπεσεν ὁ περικαλῆς ναὸς τῶν Ταξιάρχ(ῶν) ἦτει του Δωχυσ<α>ρίου ἐν μηνὶ δεκαμβρίου κε´τα εσπέρια τῶν ἀγίων θεωφανήων ἦγουν τῶν χ(ριστο)υγένων“.

63 We mention that in the 1540's Simonopetra succeeded in re-possessing the *metochion* on Limnos island, as the Ottoman documents show (Archive of the monastery of Simonopetra [hereafter: AMS], no. 176 [22 Ramazan 964/19.7.1557, in which the reference of mas-

sive purchases of pieces of land between 1540 and 1552). Moreover, the Simonopetrites succeeded in paying the debt of the Xenophontos monastery in 1582, and only in 1587, probably because of the great economic problems that happened in the Ottoman Empire from the devaluation of the currency, they went to Wallachia in order to ask for financial assistance.

64 To the known evidences on the date of the fire, we add a marginal note in a *Menaion* of Simonopetra, compiled by the hieromonk Ravoula (S. N. Kadas, *Ta simeiomata ton heirografon tou Agiou Orous. Moni Simonos Petras*, Byzantina 16 [1991], 271 [no. 34]).

65 D. Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, no. 21. The patriarchal document that ratified the decision of the Athonite Community (*Synaxis*) makes no specific reference to the church. (D. Vamvakas, *op.cit.*, no. 1).

66 D. Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, no. 2.

could repay their debts. The letter mentions the death of some monks from the fire (τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀκάματον πῦρ ... καί τινας τῶν ἐνασκουμένων μάρτυρας ἀπεκατέστησεν). The information is similar to the document of the *Synaxis*: while stressing the magnitude of the disaster (κατέφαγε γὰρ τὸ πῦρ τὰ τῆς πέτρας ταύτης θεμέλια); to the extent that those rescued monks were prepared to disperse due to the difficulties of the renovation, it was underlined separately that the *catholicon* was the only building that survived (μόνον τοῦ ἁγίου ναοῦ περιλειφθέντος καὶ μὴ τέλεον συμπνιγέντος καὶ ἀφανισθέντος ὡς τὰ λοιπά, καὶ ἰσταμένου ὡς στήλη ἐλέγχουσα αἰωνίως τὴν κακίαν τοῦ πονηροῦ). Perhaps with the phrase μὴ τέλεον συμπνιγέντος καὶ ἀφανισθέντος it is referred to the small damage the doors and the windows suffered, as it is reported in the Ottoman document issued later (see below).⁶⁷

The monks except for the ecclesiastical authorities, appealed to the state authorities to declare the fact, to ensure property rights, and to obtain a written permission for repair or reconstruction of buildings. It is known that Islamic law does not prohibit non-Muslims in having their own places of worship, but when the issue concerns the repair or construction of such buildings, there should be some preconditions for the Muslim rulers to accept the requests. The Ottoman sultans adopted the general principles applied in Islamic countries. Thus, the repair of churches was allowed if the building pre-existed the Ottoman conquest of the city or region and if the city or region was conquered peacefully and not by war. In the latter case, the Islamic law provided for the demolition of non-Muslim religious buildings or for their conversion into Islamic (e.g. mosques, *mescids*, *medreses* etc). A crucial precondition was the repair or reconstruction of non-Muslim worship building in the same size and shape as before its destruction. Finally, the non-Muslim property should be located away from an area inhabited by Muslims, so that it would not affect the religious feelings of the Muslims.⁶⁸

These general preconditions were obviously not implemented in a systematic way by the Ottoman authorities, as it was proven by the significant number of the *ex nihilo* erected churches of the Ottoman period in the Balkans.⁶⁹ Corruption would be an important factor in licensing repair of churches by the Ottoman authorities. It

67 Abbot Neophytos of Simonopetra, writing after the fire of 1891, gives an explanation of the survival of the church. He argues that the courtyard of the monastery was not yet covered and not continued with the church as it was in 1891, when for this reason the church suffered a lot by the fire (Codex B, p. 106: Τότε δὲν ἦτο ὡς εἰκάζεται τὸ προαύλιον σκεπασμένον καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας συνεχόμενον ὡς ἐσχάτως, καὶ ἐξ οὗ ἔπαθε τόσον πολὺ ὁ ναός).

68 The literature for the renovation or construction of Christian cult buildings during the Ottoman period is scanty, if we consider that the extant archival material and the remnants of the buildings are abundant. See: M. Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period*, Ἀσεν-Μάαστριχτ 1985, 184–205· R. Gradeva, *Ottoman Policy towards Christian Church Buildings*, Etudes Balkaniques 30/4 (1994), 14–36· J.C.

Alexander (Alexandropoulos), *Ta othomanika tourkika eggrafa tis Ieras Monis Dousikou: i moni os ta mesa tou 16ou aiona. Prodromi anakoinosi*, Trikalina 14 (1994), 101–120; E. Kolovos, *Nea stoiheia gia tin istoria tou katholikon tis monis Xiropotamou*, Klironomia 29 (1997), 121–153; R. Gradeva, *On Zimmis and Church Buildings: Four cases from Rumeli*, in: E. Kermeli – O. Özel (eds), *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes'*. Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber, Istanbul 2006, 203–237.

69 At first the Dutch historian M. Kiel observed the fact for the Balkans and provided with many examples (see previous note). Unfortunately, while in the Greek peninsula a considerable number of churches from that period exist, no research project regarding the methodology and the procedure followed for the construction of such buildings has been undertaken yet.

should also be noted that the Ottoman policy of construction or repair of non-Muslim religious buildings were not consistent either in space or in time.

The licensing process of repair was not fixed, and in addition, we do not know it very well in details. It is generally accepted that the local court was responsible for issuing the relevant licenses after *in situ* examination. It is not clear what was preceded in this process. The licensing procedure probably operated as follows: Christians subjects and/or monks who wished to repair or rebuild a church applied to the Porte stating the reason of the request for permission to repair and that the building meets the requirements to be repaired, providing both legal opinion (*fetva*) by the law interpreter (*müfti*) of the region. Then the Porte issued an order (*firman*) to the local judge (*kadi*), which prescribes him to conduct an examination on the spot in order to determine whether the preconditions for the repair are fulfilled, and to give the dimensions of the building, in order not to exceed the dimensions for the renovated building. It followed the examination on the spot by members of the local court and the issuance of the permission, giving the dimensions of the building and its description.⁷⁰

The particularity in the case of Simonopetra was that the monks sought to repair the entire monastic complex and not just a building. The surviving Ottoman documents of the monastery inform us about the process followed by the monks and give precise information than the Greek sources on the status of the monastic buildings after the fire. Thus, as we learn from the Ottoman documents, the Simonopetrites sent their request to the sultan in order to issue an order (*firman*), accompanying with a sacred legal opinion (*fetva*)⁷¹ to conduct examination on the spot by the local court. Then, according to the order, members of the court conducted research on the spot and found the remains of four walls of a house-shaped castle in the middle of which a church was placed and all-around the rooms that housed the monks, the place where they ate and, outside the complex, the stable for animals, the houses of shepherds and workers, tanneries and rooms over the stable, all burnt. The church was left untouched because it was made by stone and only the wooden windows and the door had blown (*keniselerinin ağaçdan olan kapuları ve pençereleri yapub keniseleri kargir bina olmağını ateş kargir olmayub zarar eylememiş bulunub*).⁷² This information is correct as emerges by the masonry of the catholicon today, where stones are the main construction material. The information of the Ottoman document coincides with the text of the letter of the Athonite

70 See for example: E. Kolovos, *Nea stoiheia*, 129–134.

71 The *fetva* that the monks had received, it seems not to be preserved in the Ottoman archive of the monastery.

72 AMS, no. 60 (26 Şaban 989/25.9.1581). The *firman* has been preserved in its original form (no. 4) and bears the date II Rebiyülevvel 989/15–24.4.1581. Under the same date another *firman* with its copy has been preserved (nos. 5 and 6), with which the monks tried to protect themselves from various local pretenders (*ehl-i örf taifesi*), who on the occasion of the fire, question the monastic estates, on the pretension that the property belonged to monks who burnt in the fire. Furthermore, the pretenders demanded

the “blood money” (*dem ü diyet*) for those burnt monks. A similar content bears the *ferman* no. 8 (25 Ramazan 1011/8.3.1603), whereas in the *ferman* no. 15 (end of Receb 1028/4–13.7.1619), which had been issued under the same demands, it does refer that no monks burnt in the fire. This information, thirty eight years after the fire, is not true, since, according to the patriarchal document of May, 1581, some monks were burnt indeed. This information is probably given in order to stop the various troubles to the monks. The interesting point is that these *firman*s have been promulgated on the occasion of the rise to the throne of a new sultan. This is an indirect testimony that the rebuilding of the monastery has been finished during the reign of Murad III (1574–1595).

Community (*Synaxis*). Consequently, we conclude that the church was not given permission to have it repaired, but only to put new windows and door. The text makes no reference to the size of buildings, probably because the autopsy had to do with the whole building complex of the monastery and not just of a building. It is not clear from the text, nor can be derived from other written sources, whether and how much work was carried out in the church except from that which was permitted. The practice of expanding the dimensions of churches after issuing a repair license was a rather widespread phenomenon in the Ottoman period.⁷³ However, it cannot be argued that the church was extended. Instead, what is important for the history of the building is that after the fire of 1580 there was no reason (not even officially licensed) to lead the monks at repair works in the church. In conclusion, in the interval between the two fires neither the church was built, nor can it be argued that it was repaired.

The texts of the imperial order (*firman*) and the relevant judicial document (*hüccet*) have an additional interest because they present the procedure and the justification for authorized repair in Christian religious buildings by the Ottoman authorities. So, according to the sultanic order, necessary preconditions for such permission were: a) the pre-existence of the church; b) the conquest of the area peacefully (*sulhan*); and c) the place of the church in an area inhabited by “infidels” (i.e. Christians). Under these preconditions, the *fetva* could be applied, but even then, it stressed in the *firman*, buildings should not be repaired in different dimensions than those that were before their destruction. The Ottoman judge in response to the conditions put forward by the *firman*, stressed: Mount Athos was a peninsula, where they lived no one but the monks in twenty monasteries; the conqueror of Thessaloniki and of the region, Sultan Murad II, gave some privileges to the peninsula (in 1430); furthermore, in the confiscation of Sultan Selim II (in 1569) the monks re-purchased their properties and received relevant documents (*mülkname* and *vakıfname*). So, a) Muslims were not affected by such permission, b) the area was not occupied by war, c) the monks were taxpayers of the state and legally possessed these properties and d) the monasteries existed before the Ottoman conquest.⁷⁴ After demonstrating the applicability of the conditions, the inspection on the spot was carried out by the court and the damages the monastery suffered were registered.

The importance of the document for the monastery can be deduced from the fact that it has seven validations of judges of the local court of Siderokaphsia (*Sidrekapsi*), a fact showing that the monastery was interested more than once in confirming the content of the document. The identification of the judges who ratified the document with those in other monastic documents gives a time spot on when (and why?) the Simonopetrites ratified the document. Compiler of the document was the *kadı* of Sidrekapsi Abdülkerim son of Ali, who ratified the same year two other Athonite documents as *kadı*.⁷⁵ Of the remaining ratifications of the document of Simonopetra, in which the judges simply ratify the authenticity of the

73 See for example the case of the *catholicon* of Dousiko monastery in Thessaly (J. C. Alexander [Alexandropoulos], *Ta othomanika tourkika eggrafa*, 110–118). See also the case of the *catholicon* of Xeropotamou monastery, built by Kaisarios Dapontes (E. Kolovos, *Nea stoiheia*, 123 and 133).

74 Cf. similar preconditions that were analyzed in a *firman* for Xeropotamou’s case (E. Kolovos, *Nea stoiheia*, 130).

75 E. Kolovos, *Horikoi kai monahoi stin othomaniki Halkidiki, 15os–16os ai.*, v. 3: *Ta othomanika eggrafa tou arheiou tis Ieras Monis*

document, we can identify the following: a) Süleyman son of Pir Ahmed, *kadı* of Sidrekapsi validates another Athonite document in 1588;⁷⁶ b) Abdülkadir son of Abdülislam,⁷⁷ *molla* of Sidrekapsi validates another Athonite document in 1590;⁷⁸ c) Mehmed son of Hüseyin, *kadı* of Sidrekapsi validates other two documents in 1583 and 1584;⁷⁹ d) Ali son of Hacı Hamza, *kadı* of Sidrekapsi validates other five documents, but his own validation with no other is in 1587;⁸⁰ e) Ahmed son of Abdülislam validates another document, but it is difficult to ascertain when he was in the office of *kadı* of Sidrekapsi.⁸¹ Following the above, it becomes clear that Simonopetrites rushed to ratify the repair permission for the buildings of the monastery from all the judges who succeeded the judge who issued it. We assume that this happened, because they wished to be protected from the interference of third parties during the critical first decade after the fire and until the repair of buildings was finished.

In fact, the main work of rebuilding the monastery of the fire had been completed in about two years and the Simonopetrites had returned from the monastery of Xenophon, as it is clear from the note in a manuscript (Μηναῖον), which was copied in Simonopetra at 1583 and reported the fire accident.⁸² This note shows that the church operated normally and the production of liturgical codices for the monastery needs continued. Considerable production of liturgical manuscripts written by the bibliographer Cyril of Simonopetra during the five years 1585–1590 strongly confirms this opinion.⁸³ Also, two Ottoman judicial documents in connection with the debt of Xenophon monastery from a Jew in Thessaloniki show that the Simonopetrites

Xiropotamou. Epitomes 1439–1800, unpubl. PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2000 [hereafter: Xiropotamou], nos 155 and 156 (III Receb 989/21–30.8.1581). In both documents Mehmed son of Mustafa co-ratified as *molla* and locus tenant of Sidrekapsi. The same person appeared in other documents, but always as *molla*.

76 Xiropotamou, no. 175 (I Muharrem 997/10–19.11.1588). The other ratification in the document is of Abdürrahim son of Amr, *molla* of Selanik, Karaferye and Sidrekapsi; this person is identified in other Athonite documents of the 1580's.

77 The patronym is not visible in the document, because it is lacerated. The text is transferred from the official Greek translation in the 1920's.

78 Xiropotamou, no. 177 (I Rebiyülahir 998/28.1–6.2.1590).

79 Xiropotamou, no. 162 (12 Receb 991/22.7.1583), together with other three officials; A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u osmanskom carstvu, XV–XVII vek*, Belgrade 2000, 247 (fig.) (I Şaban 992/29.7–7.8.1584).

80 Xiropotamou, nos. 123, 163, 170–172. In the last document (19 Zilkade 995/11.10.1587) there exists only his ratification, which means that at least in this year he was *kadı* of Sidrekapsi.

81 A. Fotić, *Dispute between Chilandar and Vatopedi over the Boundaries in Komitissa*

(1500), in: Iera Moni Vatopediou. Istoría kai tehni, Athens 1999, 104 and 106. The document issued in 1500, but from its nine ratifications it is difficult to discern when they were dated and who was the compiler of the document. Nevertheless, the said judge, as it can be discerned from the ratification of Chilandar's document, was the same with that of the Simonopetra document.

82 S. Lambros, *Catalogue*, 124, no. 1372/104; S. N. Kadas, *Simeiomata*, 271: Ἐτελειώθη το παρὸν μηνάιον διὰ χειρὸς Ῥαβουλά ἱερομονάχου τοῦ ἐκ Τρικιάλλου. Ἐτους ᾠϚϞα^ο (=1583). Ὁ δὲ ἐμπρησμός τῆς μονῆς τῆς τοῦ Σίμονος Πέτρας γέγονεν ᾠϚϞ^ο Δεκεμβρίῳ ἰα' ὥρα ζ' τῆς νυκτὸς (1580). Ἐγράφη δὲ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ μονῇ ὅπερ καὶ κτῆμα αὐτῆς ὑπάρχει. The manuscript had been destroyed in the fire of 1891.

83 Cyril, in 1586, he copied a voluminous manuscript with Homilies. In 1587 he decorated a two-volume *Parakletike* and in 1588–90 three *Menaia* (see S. Lambros, *Catalogue*, nos. 46, 129, 130, 105, 110, 114; S.N. Kadas, *op.cit.*, 267, 271–2; Kr. Chrysochoidis, *Heirografa*, 297, where he generally refers to the scriptorium that operated in the monastery during the 16th c. In the manuscript of 1586 a note exist that it was compiled in Simonopetra, while in that of 1589, Cyril noted that he had entered the monastery as a normal coenobitic monk and that he writes without getting money.

had returned in their repaired monastery by November 1582.⁸⁴ If we consider that the *catholicon* of Xeropotamou monastery was restored within three years, but with the financial help of the governor of Moldavia, *voevoda* Alexander Lapouşneanu,⁸⁵ it is highly surprising the rapid restoration of buildings of the Simonopetra monastery. As a matter of fact, the patriarchal document referring on the debt of Xenophon (on May 1581) indicates that it would be very difficult for the Simonopetrines to rebuild their monastery due to the enormous expenses needed for it (δύσκολον ἢ ἀνάκτησις καὶ ἄπορος ἢ καὶ πολυδάπανος, ὃ οὐ τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ τόσῃν εὐρεῖν δαπάνην, χειρὸς δεομένην βασιλικῆς καὶ μεγίστης). In bibliography there is the opinion that to cover the costs of the rebuild project the *hegumen* Eugenios fled to the Danube area and in particular, in Wallachia, between 1587–1592, when he received among others the major *metochion* there.⁸⁶ By the above mentioned Ottoman documents emerges that the monastery was already repaired in 1582. The reason for this rapid rebuild was that, as the two Ottoman documents explicitly state, some Simonopetrines gave the money for the renovation of the monastery and the monks returned to the monastery. It seems that during the period of this fire the monastery had financial sufficiency to pay the restoration works and the debt of Xenophon. Maybe the reason for this was also income coming already from the rich *metochion* of Saint Nicholas in Wallachia. It cannot be excluded that *hegumen* Eugenios went to Wallachia in order to strengthen the finances of the monastery after these enormous expenses. During this travel the *voevoda* Peter the Lamé sponsored Simonopetra in 1587 with the sum of 5,400 aspers.⁸⁷ In the same period the *metochion* dedicated by Gheorma in Bucharest was at a very favourable financial condition as the Patriarch Jeremiah II in 1591 characteristically notes: ὑπάρχει εὐθινοῦμένον τε καὶ βρίθον παντοίοις ἀγαθοῖς κινητοῖς τε καὶ ἀκινήτοις, [...], πλήθει τε ἀφιερωμένων ἀμπελίων, χωραφίων, ὕδρομύλων, χωρίων ἰκανῶν μετὰ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς παροίκων Αἰγυπτίων (= Gypsies) καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν ἀμιλλωμένων τοῖς πλείστοις ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα παραθέσει. Eugenios achieved a dramatic improvement of this richness after the donation by Michael the Brave of the new better *metochion*, keeping also the previous at the possession of Simonopetra.

In conclusion, the clear wording of the documents by the Athonite Community and the Patriarchate in 1580–1581, in which there was no reason to hide the truth, and which documents were confirmed by the Ottoman repair license documents, leads to the conclusion that the church was not destroyed in the fire of 1580 and only windows and the door had been repaired. The question is whether with the repair processes of other buildings, the monks proceeded ‘implicitly’ in extensive restoring works in the church itself. This was a practice of the monks during the Ottoman period. However, based only on written sources we cannot suggest anything more.

THE FIRE OF 1622

Less documented is the situation in the second major fire of the monastery, on June 8, 1622. The Codex of Simonopetra noted this incident as follows: ζῆρλ' ἐν μινὶ ἰουνῶν στες 8 ἑκάμ το μοναστήρη ξεμερονοντας το σάβατο. δι ὄρες ὅστε να ζημερόσι καὶ

84 AMS, no. 59 (II Ramazan 989/9–19.10.1581) 23–24. See the relevant Greek documents in: D. and no. 61 (III Şevval 990/17–26.11.1582) Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, nos 3–5.

85 E. Kolovos, *Nea stoiheia*, 128–9 and 135.

87 D. Nastase – Fl. Marineskou, *Roumanika*

86 For these see: C. Patrinelis, *Tourkokratia*, *eggrafa*, no. 76.

ἀπάβρηο τὴν κυριακὴν πετηκοστὴ.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the above-mentioned scriptor Cyril records it, in 1626, “as a second arson” (ἐγγραφή δὲ μετὰ τὸν δεῦτερον ἐμπρησμόν τῆς μονῆς ἔτος δεύτερον, οἷον ἐν ἔτει ,ζρλδ’ [1626]. Ὁ δὲ ἐμπρησμός γέγονεν ἐν ἔτει ,ζρ’, and another hand has added later: λ’ Ἰουνίου ἡ’ ἡμέρα Σαββάτω). The reason for this fire was, according to the Ottoman repair license, lightning, a logical cause given the fact that the monastery is placed on the top of a rock. This fire burned again the entire monastic complex. Immediately after the incident, the Simonopetrites ran to the Patriarchate to ratify the *chrysobullon* of Jovan Uglješa through a document (*sigillium*) of Cyril Loukaris.⁸⁹ This was issued to preserve the monastery by abuses of land, and it had the same value with that taken by the Patriarchate in the fire of 1580. This was monks’ action to the ecclesiastical authorities. In between the two fires, the monastery had managed to find a copy of the Uglješa’s *chrysobullon* and had surrendered it to the patriarchal secretariat for ratification.⁹⁰

As in the previous fire, the Simonopetrites should hasten to secular authority in order to obtain a license to repair the buildings. From surviving Ottoman documents, we learn that six monks (priest Simeon, Arsenios, Sergios, Joachim, Procopios, Zosimas) have requested the local court in Sidrekapsi to make an inspection on the spot, in order to authorize the repair of the buildings destroyed by fire. From a Greek document of 20.7.1625 we know that Simeon was abbot of Simonopetra on this year.⁹¹ Arsenios also could be identified with the homonymous hegumen of Simonopetra between 1629 and 1631 (see below). In a document of 1627 Simeon is mentioned as former hegumen (προηγούμενος),⁹² as he is also mentioned in a letter of 1.9.1631, where Arsenios signs as hegumen.⁹³ The last document is signed by other sixteen monks. Among them is another Arsenios “monk and treasurer” and the *elders* Sergios, Joachim, Zosimas, and “another Joachim”, who can be identified with the three monks of the Ottoman document. Also Zosimas could be identified with a certain Zosimas appeared as a treasurer in 1632.⁹⁴ From the above mentioned data we conclude that the priest Simeon of the Ottoman document was probably the abbot of Simonopetra and Arsenios the second in the hierarchy.

From the autopsy conducted immediately after the fire it was proved that in this fire, again, the church did not suffer serious damage, except for doors and windows (*kadimi kenisemizin kapıları ve pencereleri*), as in the previous fire.⁹⁵ The document describes in details the buildings destroyed by fire and needed repair: the rooms of the monks, the refectory, the kitchen, the tannery and the rooms above this, warehouses, and guest houses (*misafir haneleri*). We note that in connection with the authorization of 1581 is not listed among buildings the stable and the dwellings of the workers and shepherds, while they listed further the kitchen, warehouses and guest houses.

88 Codex A, p. 14.

89 D. Vamvakas, *op. cit.*, no. 6.

90 As one can deduct from two patriarchal documents, housed in the Xeropotamou monastery archive, the *chrysobullon* appeared in around 1615 and Simonopetra succeeded in getting validation document from the Athonite Community; this document the Patriarch accepted as authentic (cf. P. Gounaridis, *Arheio I. M. Xiropotamou. Epitomes metavyzantinon eggrafon*, Athens 1993,

35–37 [nos 21–22]). Therefore, the appearance of the document may not be connected with the fire of 1622.

91 Codex A, pp. 286–287; D Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, no. 37.

92 D. Vamvakas, *op. cit.*, no. 7.

93 Codex A, pp. 16–17.

94 Codex A, p. 19.

95 AMS, no. 95 (III Şevval 1031/28.8–6.9.1622).

Of the authentication signatures of the document the first one, Mehmed son of Mustafa, deputy judge of Sidrekapsi, issued a letter in 1614,⁹⁶ while the second – Mehmed, *kadı* of Thessaloniki – ratifies documents in 1616, 1626 and 1627.⁹⁷ Finally, the third, *seyh* Mehmed, *kadı* of Thessaloniki, ratifies a document in 1647.⁹⁸ Although the prosopographical sample is poorer than in the case of the document for the fire of 1580, it seems that again the Simonopetrites rushed immediately after the license of the court to ratify the document from the judge of Thessaloniki.

Interesting is that the procedure followed by the monks was different from that of 1580. According to the Ottoman documents of the monastic archive only one *firman* survives for 1626 on the issue of the repair permission for the burnt buildings.⁹⁹ The order is less formal than that of 1581 and confirms the permission document of the court issued four years before, namely just after the fire (i.e. in 1622). The sultanic order stresses only the prohibition in widening the buildings during the reconstruction works, and included the text of the application of the monks to the Porte, which was registered in the judicial document written four years earlier. The monks rushed to seek money for the restoration works and the result of these initiatives was the promulgation of a circular letter (*άπανταχοῦσα*) of the patriarch Cyril I (Loukaris) in 1627, which recommends to the Greek-Orthodox community of the pro-*hegumen* Simeon and monk Arsenios, who had gone to collect alms for the rebuild of their monastery.¹⁰⁰ According to the letter, the fire was catastrophic (*τὰ πλείονα τούτου [του μοναστηρίου] καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὸ κελλία ἠγάλωσε καὶ κατετέφρωσεν*), suggesting that the magnitude of the disaster did not differ much from that of 1580. The monks at this time did not find refuge to another monastery, but they find refuge in the tower of the harbor or in other small houses outside monastery (*οἱ μὲν ἐν τοῖς πρὸ τῆς πύλης μικροτάτοις οἰκίμασι, οἱ δὲ τῷ νεωρίῳ*).

The very poor sample of Ottoman documents for this fire in the archive may be accidental. However, the strange fact is the issuance of the *firman* four years after the *in situ* inspection and the permission given by the court. Probably it should have issued a *firman* before, which was not survived. However, the judicial document issued immediately after the fire than in the previous case. Taking into account of this observation, should we see a change in the procedure? It seems probable that the monks are now appealed directly to the local court, which conducted the examination on the spot and immediately followed by the issuance of the imperial decree in order to the judicial document be enforced. If the idea is correct, then we are dealing with a decentralized policy of the Ottoman state on this issue, relating to the general picture of decentralization, observable in the Ottoman Empire during the 17th century.

The church in the judicial document was described as ‘old church’ and ‘big church’ (*kenise-i kadim, kenise-i kebir*). This of course does not mean that there was also another new catholicon, because in this case the old would be smaller and would not be described as “big”. In addition, the site of the monastery, which is extremely limited due to the small surface of the rock, does not favour the hypothesis of the existence of two catholica. Obviously, it seems that by the use of the designation ‘old’ the judges stated that the monastery was fulfilling the precondition of the

96 Xiropotamou, no. 233.

98 Agiou Pavlou’s Archive, P/6.

97 Xiropotamou, no. 239 and 277; Agiou Pavlou’s Archive, K/64 and K/71.

99 AMS, no. 20 (14 Şaban 1035/11.5.1626).

100 D. Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, no. 7.

pre-existence of the church in order to issue the authorization for its repair according to the Islamic law. This of course does not exclude that the church was too old. The designation “great” distinguishes clearly the church from other churches, some of which appeared as small churches in the eyes of Muslim employees.¹⁰¹ It is also known that the Russian monk and traveller Vasilij Barskij saw in the 18th century four chapels within the monastery, of which St. Nicholas was cast in the *catholicon* and had a dome on top, while St. George can be located beneath the *catholicon* and both of them they could easily be considered small churches.¹⁰²

The almost identical picture of the church after two fires can be interpreted in two ways: a) that things were exactly as they said the two Ottoman documents; b) that the sentences reflect the general picture, but conceal cases of extensions or implied works. We should not forget also that the painting works was not of interest to the Ottoman authorities, and therefore one cannot find any reference in such documents. The general reference to buildings in the judicial document obeys the same logic as the respective of 1581: they were many buildings and it was an overall license for everything, without a detailed description of the buildings. Reasonably there should be work in church over the windows and doors, but will not be strange to the researcher if it would be discovered any additional works or extension to the existing church. Nevertheless, we should remember that the list of buildings burnt in two documents is not identical. This allow us to conclude, in conjunction with the reference of the circular letter of 1627, that the monks stayed in the small houses before the monastery gate and that the fire of 1622 did not had the same devastating effects in the outbuildings as that of 1580.

Some information about the fire in 1622 and the restoration projects after that we can draw from two letters of the monks of Simonopetra to the Tsar of Russia – and first Tsar of the Romanov dynasty – Mihail Feodorovič and his father, patriarch of Moscow Philaretos (1619–1633), in 1630.¹⁰³ In the first of these letters, the monks asked for financial support of Tsar for tidying the church. After the monks declared that their monastery was destroyed by fire which broke out night, with the assistance of various Christians, rich or ordinary people were able to restore the monastery. The only thing that they could not manage to do was to buy the necessary sacred vessels and vestments for the commission of the liturgies. They asked, finally, the Tsar to assist them. For the same purpose they sent to Moscow Archimandrite Arsenios with the *cellar* Iakovos and the *protoekklesiarch* Gabriel. An interesting detail of the document is that the monks until 1630, year of issuance of the document, had managed to reconstruct the monastery and to restore the church (καὶ τὸ μοναστήριον κατεσκευάσθη καὶ ὁ ναὸς ἀνεκαινίσθη). There is a clear differentiation of the works they have done in the church with those done for other buildings of the monastery. The same element exists in the letter from the monks to the patriarch of Moscow (τὸ καθ’ ἡμᾶς μοναστήριον) κατεσκευάσθη, ἢ τε ἐκκλησία ἀνεκαινίσθη), from whom they also asked its assistance in the tidying of the church with sacred vessels and vestments. It seems that in most buildings

101 Cf. the reference to three churches inside monastery in the census of 1764/5 (see below): one big and two small.

102 V. G. Barskij, *Ta taxidia*, 526.

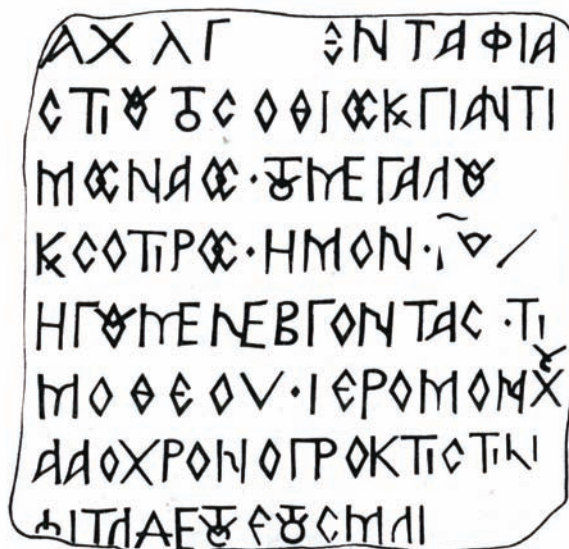
103 Patriarchal Library of Jerusalem, ms. no.

474, copied in the 17th c. Cf. Chrysochoidis, *Arheio. Ellinika eggrafa*, 265. I use a type-written copy of the letter kept in the Archive of Technical Works, fol. “Restoration of *catholicon*” in Simonopetra.

had radical or extensive remodeling and renovation works than in the church, the extent of which we are not able to know. It is not impossible that the renovating works concerned the doors and windows that provided the Ottoman judicial document. It seems possible that the twelve icons from Moscow, containing the celebrating saints of each month (*menologion*), which saw Ioannis Komninos in the right choir of the church in 1701,¹⁰⁴ were the results of Tzar’s or Patriarch’s correspondence to the applications of the monks of Simonopetra. Unfortunately these icons burnt in the fire of 1891.

The next evidence related to the *catholicon* is an inscription survived on a marble slab, now kept in the treasury of the monastery (σκευοφυλάκειον) and refers to the inauguration of a church of the Saviour Jesus Christ in 1633, when *hegumen* was Timotheos.¹⁰⁵ The text is as follows:¹⁰⁶

“1633 – this divine and very holy church of our great and saviour Jesus Christ inaugurated, when hieromonk Timotheos was hegumen...”



(ΑΧΑΓ ΕΝΤΑΦΙΑ / ΣΤΙ ΟΥΤΟC Ο ΘΙΟC ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΤΙ / ΜΟC ΝΑΟC ΤΟΥ
ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ / ΚΑΙ ΣΟΤΙΡΟC ΗΜΟΝ [ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙCΤΟΥ] /
ΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΕΒΓΟΝΤΑC ΤΙ / ΜΟΘΕΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝ[Α]ΧΟΥ /
ΑΑΟΧΡΟΝΟΠΡΟΚΤΙCΤΙΚΙ/ ΦΙΤΛ(ή Α)ΔΕ ΤΟΥ ΕΤΟΥC ΜΑΚ)

104 I. Komninos, *Proskynitarion*, 83.

105 Pl. Theocharidis, *I arhitektoniki*, 79 and n. 18 in p. 350, where the text of the inscription is written and it is argued that it comes from the *catholicon*. Patrinelis, footnoted Smyrnakis and noted that the church had been painted in 1633, when hegumen was Joasaph (*Tourkokratia*, 22). A sketch of the inscription is reproduced in the

volume *Simonopetra – Agion Oros*, p. 383, fig. 46. Cf. G. Millet – J. Pargoire – L. Petit, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos*, 1ème partie, Paris 1904, repr. ed. Thessaloniki 2004, 178 (no. 523).

106 See the description and the transcription of the inscription from Pl. Theocharidis, *I arhitektoniki*, 350 no. 18 and illus. 46.

The architect Pl. Theocharidis argued that this “rather puzzling inscription probably originally from the catholicon appears to refer to the dedication of the church in 1633, and states that the building had been erected some time before”. This inscription, along of course with the architectural elements were decisive in dating the church by this scholar in the early Tourkokratia.¹⁰⁷

The first mention of the inscription was made by G. Smyrnakis in 1902, who states: “On a foundation and cast-off plate we read that the catholicon was founded in 1613, when hegumen was hieromonk Timotheos”. His contemporary monk, Kosmas Vlachos (in 1903) notes that the inscription had just removed from the church: “this church, small, simple, with a middle size dome, was erected in 1633, when hegumen was Timotheos, as indicating the recently taken away marble inscription”. There is no doubt that the two authors referred to the same inscription, but Smyrnakis had a typographical error in editing (16)13 instead of (16)31. It is clear that both believed that the inscription was removed from the floor of the church after the fire of 1891. This must be correct, because the dimensions of the plaque of the inscription (43.5×43.5 cm) are exactly the same with another marble plaque from the catholicon, which bears a vase with a flower in low relief and can be identified with one of the five marbles described by Komnenos (τό δέ ὄπισθεν αὐτοῦ ἔχει ὡσπερ φιάλην τινά μέ γαρύφαλα) and Barskij and supposed to be in the middle of the floor of the church. For this reason is possible that the two plaques come from the same phase of the building.¹⁰⁸ Today the marble plaque with the vase and the flower is kept in the entrance of the old eastern part of the monastery.

The main problem for the deciphering of the inscription is the phrase ηγουμενέβγοντας Τιμοθέου. From a today lost inscription (see below), it is known that in the same year (1633), the *hegumen* Ioasaph had painted the refectory burnt in 1622. He had been *hegumen* certainly before August 6, 1633, when signed to an entry in Codex A. The next known *hegumens* of the monastery is Joseph in 1640 with the treasurer (σκευοφύλαξ) Meletios and in 1644 again a monk Joasaph.¹⁰⁹ A document of the monks dated 1.9.1631, which is copied to the Codex A,¹¹⁰ is signed by the hegumen, monk Arsenios, the former hegumen Simeon and another fifteen monks, but among them there is no Timotheos. Archimandrite Arsenios referred to as head of the brethren (προεστώς) in the two letters of 1630 to the Tsar and the patriarch of Russia, and as hegumen in a dedicatory document of 1629.¹¹¹ In 1632 a certain Zosimas appears as a treasurer.¹¹² Therefore, the only period during which a Timotheos could be at the head was from 2.9.1631 to 5.8.1633 and the above inscription could be attributed to the *catholicon* if he had built it in the first half of 1633. It is also worth mentioning that in the first half of the 17th century there was no monk named Timotheos in the Codex of the monastery, despite the great number of registered names.

It should also be noted that questions arise for a formal inscription on the serious conceptual problems found in the puzzling last two lines and the popular language style (e.g. the use of the dialectal type ηγουμενεβγοντας instead of ηγουμενεύοντος, ενταφιαστι instead of ενταφιάσθη), in addition to the relatively great number of mistakes in orthography, which, however, it was not a rare phenomenon in that period.

107 Pl. Theocharidis, *I arhitektoniki*, 79.

108 Pl. Theocharidis, *I arhitektoniki*, 79 and no. 18.

109 Codex A, pp. 20, 26, 30.

110 D. Vamvakas, *Iera Moni Simonos Petras*, no. 41; Codex A, pp. 16–17.

111 D. Vamvakas, *op. cit.*, no. 40.

112 Codex A, p. 19.

The omission of the name of the feast of Christ, which was dedicated to the church of the inscription, further complicates the situation, because the name Church of Christ the Saviour was common for churches of the “Transfiguration”, although it was also used for the churches of the Nativity, which the *catholicon* of Simonopetra was dedicated. The origin of the inscription from a chapel in the monastery should probably be excluded, since neither within the four churches burnt in 1891 was any of Jesus Christ the Saviour,¹¹³ nor to those reported by Barskij in 1744.¹¹⁴ Even if we accept that the inscription refers to the church, this does not prove that there was a rebuilding in 1633, since the verb *επιταφιάστω* can be simply referred to the “interment” of the inauguration of the altar. The inauguration of a temple does not necessarily follow a thorough rebuild, but it can happen after works of renovation.

Important information about projects that were carried out in the monastery during the period 1622–1633 gives a Russian traveller of the 19th century, Archimandrite Porphyrij Uspensky, who visited the monastery in 1845. In his descriptions, he states for the *catholicon*: “This church was neither dark nor light, it was all painted in the year 1633, when the hegumen Ioasaph had the refectory painted, with his own expenses (inscription). This painting has been blackened due to the passage of 212 years, so that it is difficult to say something about its value. The Simonopetrines wish to renovate it”.¹¹⁵

Uspensky’s information on the painting of the refectory is accurate. It is confirmed by the Codex of the monastery, since, in fact, the *hegumen* Ioasaph, appeared in the inscription as a sponsor of the frescoes, signed on August 6th, 1633 in an above mentioned registration on Codex A.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Ottoman license document in 1622 states that the refectory and the kitchen had burnt, and, supposedly, the old painting of the refectory, if they ever existed, destroyed. Therefore, it was logical that the *hegumen* Ioasaph undertook and completed this program in 1632–33. Similarly accurate is Uspenskij’s information that the monks intended to renovate the darkened frescoes; this work had been undertaken in 1858–1861 by painters from the village Galatista, in Chalkidike (see below).

We cannot easily suggest that Uspenskij’s information on the decoration of the church was accurate. Church’s painting, according to the Ottoman permission document of 1622, would have survived, since the church was not burnt. Moreover, Uspenskij does not mention for the church any inscription, as does for the refectory. Following the above, we consider it more likely that the Russian Archimandrite, whose information was not always accurate, saw the inscription of the refectory and influencing by this he argued that the frescoes of the church were also of 1633. My point was further strengthened by the following data:

a. The time interval of 212 years is relatively short to justify the high browning of the frescoes of the church, which, if they had been painted after the fire of 1622, would not have been so damaged by the 1845. Certainly it is known that after the revolution of 1821 the Ottoman troops settled in Simonopetra, had removed the leaden roof of the church and the refectory.¹¹⁷ However, Uspenskij’s passage does not indicate damage to

113 The hegumen Neophytos (1861–1906) notes the chapels of St. George, St. Magdalini, St. Charalambos and the Archangels (Codex B, pp. 111–112).

114 The four chapels inside the monastery were: of the Virgin Mary’s Dormition, of St. John the Forerunner, of St. George and of St. Nicholas. See, Barskij, *Ta taxidia*, 526.

115 P. Uspenskij, *Первое путешествие в Афонские Монастыри и Скинны в 1845 году*, v. I, part II, Kiev 1877, 142–3. See also: G. Millet – J. Pargoire – L. Petit, *Recueil*, 179 (no. 526).

116 Codex A, p. 20.

117 Codex B, pp. 88–89.

the frescoes of the refectory. The information for blackened paintings would fit more with those of 1561, which might have been darkened from both fires of 1580 and 1622.

b. The surviving old frescoes in the niches of the church are dated from the middle of 16th century.¹¹⁸

c. The performance of the painting of both the church and the refectory in 1632–33 would have caused more difficulties, economical – even after the large renovated projects that preceded it, and practical (to find at the same time two teams for working in church and refectory).

In summary we argue that the sources at our disposal for the building projects after the fire of 1622 did not allow us to suggest widespread destruction or reconstruction of the existing church. The sources inform us about a renovation, the degree of which we do not know. Definitely the note in the Docheiariou manuscript no 115 and the frescoes of the altar dated in the middle of the 16th century testify that the church and its frescoes are older than 1622 and they survived from the fire.

Here the primary sources concerning the construction of the church stop. The travellers' accounts which describe the church are from a later period, when, admittedly, they had not done works in the building.

AFTER THE TWO FIRES: TRAVELLERS' ACCOUNT IN THE 18th CENTURY.

The doctor (ιατροφιλόσοφος) Ioannis Komninos visited Mount Athos in 1698 and left a brief description of the Simonopetra church.¹¹⁹ He describes in detail the five marble that were cross-shaped on the floor of the church at a higher level, he underlined the spacious choirs (χοροί), the twelve Russian icons in the right choir, while he impressed by the brightness of the church. Komninos counted twenty two windows on the north and south side of the church (eleven in each side?), while the splint was based on two pillars. Ioannis Komnenos also states that St. Simon built the church at the same place as it was in ca. 1700 and today (ἔκτισεν ἐπάνω εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ὑψηλὴν πέτραν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ὁποῦ φαίνεται ἕως τῆς σήμερον). Although the testimony has no historical value, however, it seems to reflect his view or an oral tradition of the monastery that the church of the monastery was not a new one and that it was always placed on the top of the rock.

In his two voyages to Mount Athos the Russian monk Vasilij Grigorovič Barskij gives interesting information on the church. In his first visit, in 1725–26, Barskij observes that the church had a leaden roof, and it was richly decorated with frescoes. The catholicon connected to the cells, but was higher than those.¹²⁰ In his comments in the text of Barskij, Pavlos Mylonas noted that the church sits atop the rock of Simonopetra and he assumes that St. Simon first built a chapel and then built the other buildings around it.¹²¹ In the second voyage, in 1744–45, Barskij gives the most detailed description of the church.¹²² The Russian monk describes the church to be crowned by three leaden domes – one of the nave and the other two for the cast – made by stone, full of frescoes and in the interior stand *iconostasis* in both choirs, as did Komninos half century ago, the chandelier, the flooring and other utensils. He also gives, for the first time, the dimensions of the church:

118 N. Toutos – G. Fousteris, *Evretirion*, 365.

121 V. G. Barskij, *op.cit.*, 200–201 (note 187).

119 I. Komnenos, *Proskynitarion*, 82–83.

122 V. G. Barskij, *op.cit.*, 526.

120 V. G. Barskij, *Ta taxidia*, 146.

24 *steps* in length and 20 *steps* in width at the part of both choirs. Assuming that the measurement was made by the external walls and 1 *step* equals 0.781 m (= Byzantine *step*), then the dimensions of the church was 19 m (18.74) in length and 15.5 m (15.62) in width. It is unclear whether Barskij included the apse of the sanctuary in the length dimension. Barskij also noted that the church had 12 windows on each side, except those who are at the uppermost, six gates and he gives the dimensions of the inner narthex (λητή): 8 *steps* in length and 20 in width (6.25 × 15.5 m), which was relied on two pillars. The outer narthex is covered by a flat wooden roof and bears no pillars. In conclusion the church without the narthex was 25 m long and 15.5 m wide. The lack of relevant data from other sources prevents the comparison of the numbers in order to see if in the period of Barskij the form of the church had altered from that in the 16th century or earlier.

If we compare Barskij's description, especially from the second visit, with that of Komninos, we conclude that: even though the two descriptions came from a period that no works took place in the church, the *exonarthex* probably did not exist in 1698, as well as a pair of windows in the church. Other differences are not mentioned. With the detailed description of Barskij we have a basis for the form of the *catholicon* in the 18th century and perhaps in the past and we can compare it with today's form. We have to consider as certain that the church the two travellers saw was that it had developed at least after the fire of 1622.

In a last source, in the detailed census carried out by the Ottoman state inside Mount Athos in 1764/5, Simonopetra was registered with three churches, two small and one large, all lead covered.¹²³ It should be accepted as certain that the Ottomans registrars recorded the church as the big one and two other chapels, unknown which, as the two little ones. As we have already mentioned after the Greek revolution (1821) about sixty Ottoman soldiers stationed at the monastery after the departing of the few monks, and they did various casualties, among them they removed the leaden roof of the church and of the refectory. It is known that between 1858 and 1861 a group of painters from Galatista (Chalkidike) over painted the church frescoes,¹²⁴ and by the third fire in 1891, which destroyed the church, there were no other construction works therein.

In the fire of 1891 was burnt the whole interior of the church with the frescoes and remained only bare walls (στασίδια, ἀρχιερατικός θρόνος, ἀγιογραφία, πάντα ἀπώλοντο, ἔμειναν γυμνά τὰ τεῖχη / [διελύθη] ὄλων τῶν τοιχῶν ἢ ἀγιογραφία),¹²⁵ except for the frescoes of the *typikaria* in the altar and Saint Avivos on a niche of the northern wall beside the altar, which was used as armoir. All the objects, valuable or not valuable, inside the church were burnt except for the reliquaries with the holy relics which were saved by the monks. Together with *catholicon* was burnt the library of the monastery, placed on the upper floor of the *liti*. There is a description of the old narthex of the church as it was before the fire by Abbot Neophytos. According to it "the narthex of the church was previously low domed (τέως χαμηλός θολωτός) and dark from above (σκοτεινός ἄνωθεν)", the *catechumena*, among them and the library, with two domes *phanaria* (μέ δύο ἐξέχοντας θόλους φανάρια)". After the fire the *liti* of the *catholicon* was rebuilt in the form and style it has today, with a central dome (ἤδη μετερρυθμίσθη ὀλοτελῶς εἰς ἓνα ὑψηλὸν θόλον φανάρι ὡς ὁρᾶται).¹²⁶

123 ASM, no. 166 (*suret-i defter*).

124 A. Karambatakis, *Galatista. Selides apo tin istoria tis*, Thessaloniki n.d., 72–83, where the contract between the *hegumen* of the monastery,

Archimandrite Serapheim and the painter, hieromonk Makarios, is published.

125 Codex B, pp. 121, 107.

126 Codex B, p. 106. In the archive of the mon-

CONCLUSIONS

Following the above analysis, the following phases of works in the church can be pointed out schematically.

TIME	ARCHITECTURE	PAINTING
Late 13 th century	Construction of the first small church by Saint Simon	
1365–1371	Construction of the catholicon by Jovan Uglješa	General painting under the aegis of Jovan Uglješa
ca. 1529–1535	Possible leaden culmination	Refurbishment of Uglješa's frescoes
1561/2–ca. 1565	Restoration or rebuilding of the catholicon	New painting by Tzortzis (Cretan School)
1581–1583	Repair windows and doors	
1622–1633	Repair windows and doors	
1698–1744	Addition narthex and two opening windows	
1858–1861		“Renovation” of frescoes by painters from Galatista with the care of Abbot Serapheim
1891	Great demolition of the catholicon by fire	Disaster of the frescoes by the fire

The limitations of the written sources, which can only archaeological and architectural research verify or disprove, are: It is not possible to know if (and when) the works of refurbished or new paintings took place, if there were stages in the painting, and if there were stages (extensions length, width or height) to the original architectural plan of the church. However, it is quite safe to draw the following conclusions:

- a. In the period 1529–1535 survived the church of Uglješa's era with its frescoes.
 - b. In the decade of 1550–1560, for an unknown reason the monks proceed to an extended restoration or reconstruction of the church, ended up to 1561/1562 and followed by a completely new painting, realized by the famous Cretan painter Tzortzis, Theophanes' student.
 - c. Information from written sources of the 16th century is sufficiently clear that the church was not destroyed in the fires of 1580 and 1622.
 - d. Consequently, the final form of the church was given in 1561, but it is not clear if any parts of the Byzantine catholicon were survived in this form.
 - e. The original paintings must have been on Uglješa's era, the second in the form of renovation in the period 1529–1535, a third around 1561/1562 and the last in 1858–1861.
- The definitive answer to the arisen questions would give a systematic study of paintings and architectural elements, with the help of laboratory methods to combine the historical sources.

astery there is plenty of information about the damages of the fire in the church, lists of the burnt utensils, priest vestments, treasures etc.,

which could be the subject of a separate study as it is beyond of the purpose of the present study.

Историја католикона атонског манастира Симонопетре поново је претресена у светлости старих објављених, и нових писаних извора насталих до почетка XIX века. Католикон је у потпуности уништен у пожару који је избио 1891. године. Његов садашњи изглед не одговара оном из претходних фаза изградњи и обнова. Мноштво историјске грађе (документи, писма, записи на рукописима, натписи и путописне белешке), већином познате науци, поново су прегледани како би се понудила нова, другачија интерпретација података. Закључци који следе после детаљне анализе, јесу следећи:

- а) У раздобљу од 1529. до 1535. године још је постојала црква из доба деспота Јована Угљеше, са свим фрескама.
- б) Средином XVI века, у деценији између 1550. и 1560. године, из непознатог разлога, монаси су се подухватили обимне рестаурације и обнове цркве, завршене негде 1561/62, после које је уследила комплетна обнова – ново осликавање живописа, руком познатог критског уметника Дзордзиса, Теофановог ученика.
- в) Подаци из писаних извора из XVI века јасно указују да црква није уништена у пожарима из 1580. и 1622. године.
- г) Следствено томе, завршни изглед цркве датира се у 1561. године, мада није сасвим сигурно да ли су одређени делови Угљешине цркве преживели ту обнову.
- д) Почетни живопис је свакако био из доба деспота Јована Угљеше. Потом је осликан други, из периода обнове 1529–1535, па трећи, око 1561/62, и на концу последњи из 1858–1861. године.

Α β β ε ε ν δ ι σ θ η ἑ ν α ς β ρ α χ μ ο ν ἰ ο ς .
+ β ο ε ν δ ι σ θ η β ρ α χ μ ο ν ἑ ν α ς .
+ β ὀ μ ο ῦ δ ἔ ἑ ἰ ο ς χ ρ ἰ ὶ ο ς β ρ ἰ ἡ μ ο ς β ἔ ἑ ο ς .
.. σ υ ν ε σ τ ἰ ῶ ν τ ε ἡ μ ῶ ν δ ο σ μ ἰ ῶ ν τ ε ἡ γ κ ε ν ὀ μ ο ν τ ἰ ο ς
· ἡ π α θ η γ ῶ ν τ ε τ ἡ ς ἰ ε ρ ῶ ς ἡ β ε β α σ μ ῶ ς μ ο ν ἡ ς
· τ ἡ ς ἑ σ ο ν ο μ α β ο ρ ἰ ῶ ς τ ο ῦ ἰ ὰ , κ ῶ ς κ ῶ ς ἰ ὰ
σ η ῖ σ υ ν ε σ τ ἰ ῶ ν τ ε ς .

NOTE IN THE DOCHEIARIU MANUSCRIPT NO. 115



SIGILLIUM – LETTER OF PATRIARCH JEREMIAS II, MAJ 1581



μοναστηριον της σιμωνοπετρας
εξουθενει αρα το δευτερον
υ η προσοψησιν ο κρησ οδω
1744.
μοναστηρια ενωσ ηεβλικη ηαλερ



SKETCH OF SIMONOPETRA (V. BARSKIJ, 1744-5)

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