

THIRTEENTH-CENTURY BYZANTINE PAINTING IN CAPPADOCIA: NEW EVIDENCE

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The subject of my doctoral thesis is "Byzantine Painting of the 13th Century in Cappadocia" a region then under Seljuk domination. My research began with fieldwork authorized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Antiquities Service (Ankara). During the years 2003–2007, I carried out several surveys in Cappadocia and compiled a corpus of twenty-three monuments. This work enabled me not only to correct and augment the descriptions of decorations already known, but also to call attention to rock churches which had never been published at all. My thesis, then, contains much new material some of which I shall discuss in this paper. I shall deal with the interpretation of iconographic elements and stylistic tendencies of the thirteenth century in connection with two new inscriptions.

First, I would like to present some new elements from the main church of the Archangelos Monastery located 15 km south of Ürgüp,² near the village Cemil³ (Fig. 1). The paintings in this double church (Fig. 2), known from the publication of G. de Jerphanion at the beginning of the twentieth century have been dated by different scholars between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries.⁴ It has also been

suggested that certain scenes in the southern church were repainted in the nineteenth century. However examination of the style and epigraphy of these scenes shows that the paintings in the apse and nave of the southern church constitute a coherent ensemble. Moreover in the course of my survey of this part of the church I discovered several original paintings and a long dedicatory inscription covered under a thick layer of soot.

The inscription runs from one end to the other of the band separating the vault from the wall of the apse and reads (Fig. 3): Ἐκαλιεργίθου μετὰ πολλοῦ κόπου κὲ πόθου διὰ σηνδρομῶς τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Βαρθολωμένου ἡερομονάχου κὲ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Λέοντος δηακόνου ἡοὶ δὲ Μιχαῖλ τοῦ Σαμψό, διὰ χιρὸς ἐμοῦ Ἀρχιγέτα ζογράφου ἐν ἔτῳ ς[ψ]κς ἐν δικτιῶνος ς ἐπὶ βασιλείας Θεοδώρου Λάσκαρη, '(The church) was decorated with great pain and desire through the effort of the servant of god the monk-priest Bartholomew and his brother the deacon Leo, the sons of Michael of Sampso, by my hand, the painter Archegetas in the year 6726, indiction 6, under the emperor Theodore Laskaris'⁵

Now let us look at several scenes of the decorative programme of the southern church to which this dedication of 1217–1218 refers. At the top of the arch of the apse we find a representation of the *mandylion* which has hitherto escaped notice (Fig. 4). To this composition also belong two figures of angels on both sides of the arch. The bust of Christ is represented on the Holy Towel.⁶ Usually in the iconography of the *mandylion*, according to the textual evidence,⁷ only the face of the Christ is represented. The head of Christ sometimes appears with the neck,⁸ but the representation of a bust in our church would seem to be a hapax.

The only parallel really close to the original composition of the *mandylion* at Cemil whose meaning is enhanced by the addition of two flying angels with

1 Thesis in progress at the University of Paris 1–Panthéon Sorbonne.

2 Recently: B. Tolga Uyar, "L'église de l'Archangélos à Cemil: le décor de la nef sud et le renouveau de la peinture byzantine en Cappadoce au début du XIII^e siècle" *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 29 (2008) (119–130). See also C. Jolivet-Lévy and N. L. Demesnil, «Recherches récentes sur le monastère rupestre de l'Archangélos, près de Cemil (Cappadoce)», in *Desert Monasticism: Gareja and the Christian East. Papers from the International Symposium, Tbilisi University, September 2000*, ed. Z. Skhirtladze (Tbilisi, 2001), 167–89, with previous bibliography.

3 Though the medieval toponym of the present-day village of Cemil is not known, in a Greek work on the geography of Asia Minor at the beginning of the 20th century, this name figures among the biggest settlements of the Vilayet of Konya (P. M. Kontogiannis, *Γεωγραφία τῆς Μικρᾶς Ασίας* (Athens, 1921), 154. See also: A. M. Lebedes, *Αἱ ἐν μονολίθῳις μοναὶ τῆς Καππαδοκίας καὶ Λυκαονίας* (Istanbul, 1899), 123, 135. A large church constructed in the 19th century, which still exists in the centre of the village, attests to a considerable Christian population at this period. In an annexe of this church, I discovered several medieval paintings in a very bad state of preservation and completely blackened by smoke. Nearby, there is another little church, which is now part of a house. This was also decorated with paintings but they have been completely effaced.

4 G. de Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1925–1942) 2:128; H. Wiemer-Enis, *Spätbyzantinische Wandmalerei in den Höhlenkirchen Kappadokiens in der Türkei* (Petersburg, 2000), 13–28, 47–66; idem,

"Die Archangeloskirche bei Cemil—eine bisher kaum beachtete spätbyzantinische Wandmalerei in Kappadokien" in *Byzantinische Malerei. Bildprogramme, Ikonographie, Stil. Symposium in Marburg vom 25.–29. 6. 1997*, ed. G. Koch (Wiesbaden, 2000), 421–30.

5 G. Kiourtzian read this inscription on the photos I provided him. For his epigraphical analysis see idem, "Une nouvelle inscription de Cappadoce du règne de Théodore I^{er} Laskaris" *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 29 (2008) (131–138).

6 The face, within a pistachio-green nimbus, is set apart from the light background of the rectangular cloth. This latter is decorated with short parallel strokes and crosses made up of 4 red points, delineated on both sides by vertical grooves which form a frame for pseudo-Kufic patterns.

7 A. Cameron, "The History of the Image of Edessa: 'The Telling of a Story'" in *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko*, eds. C. Mango and O. Pritsak, (Cambridge-Massachusetts, 1983), 80–94.

8 S. Papadaki-Oekland, "Τὸ Ἅγιο Μανδύλιο ὡς τὸ νέο σύμβολο σε ἓνα ἀρχαῖο εἰκονογραφικὸ σχῆμα" *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 14 (1987–1988): 284; N. Thierry, "Deux notes à propos du mandylion" *Zograf* 11 (1980): 16 and note 5.