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Osaka University
Greek Inscriptions in
the Ölüdeniz-Gemiler Ada Bay Area

Since there very few complete inscriptions have so far been discovered
in the Ölüdeniz-Gemiler Ada bay area, the fragmentary inscriptions
collected in the course of our expeditions are presented here in the hope
that, being representative, they may shed more light on the period they
represent.

I  Gemiler Ada
1. Church I  (a) Roman Marble Slab
The Roman inscription is found on a huge marble slab among the debris
in the apse (Ill. 1). The stone had previously been used, probably as the
base of a column.

............... 
ΘΕΑΓΕΝΗΙΑΚΟ... 
ΑΛ-ΓΕΔΕΟ... 
ΤΩΛΜΕΙΩΔ... 
ΟΔΕ--ΑΕΝ... 

Date: Second-third century
Palaeography: 𓇠𓆃𓎁𓆊𓆇
Of all the inscriptions so far found on Gemiler Adasi, the most important is that dedicating Church II, which is painted in the fresco around the northern entrance to the naos (figs. 40, 41).

\textit{OCIOC NIKOLAO(C)}

+ EITYX…

............

TOY OCIOY

NIKOLAO(IT)

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Date: Sixth century}
  \item \textbf{Palaeography:} Ε \ Υ
  \item \textbf{Ligature:} \&
\end{itemize}
The inscription is important because this is the only basilica dedicated to Osios Nikolaos. Further, it has the only Byzantine image of the saint so far discovered. The inscription also mentions that an individual named Eutych—made a donation to the basilica.

With reference to my earlier comments, I propose the following as a reconstruction of the inscription:

+Eùtuchianós lýchustos épiskoPOS époίηsev tôn naivn tòu
'Osiou Nikollou.

The words ἐποίησεν and τὸν ναὸν permit other possibilities. Bishop Eutychianos is historically acknowledged as having donated many silver vessels to the monastery of Sion, that was founded by Saint Nikolaos of Sion, and the silver stamps indicate dates between 550 and 565, a time frame which is consistent with the architectural details.

Also in support of my proposal is the fact that, despite the poor state of preservation of the fresco, the depiction of the individual on the right is not out of character with the appearance of a bishop of the day. Moreover, while it seems unlikely that in Lycia of the sixth century there would have been another rich man called Eutychianos, it is quite possible that the bishop, yielding to the wishes of Saint Nikolaos of Sion who was probably a friend, donated a church to Osios Nikolaos.

While it has not yet been determined why this island was selected as the site for the basilica, two reliefs found in the village of Kaya may afford a partial explanation. The iconography is the same as that which appeared on the cover of codex that is part of the Sion treasure. Myra (Demre), the Sion monastery and the Ölüdeniz area can, thus, only be discussed with reference to Saint Nikolaos of Myra.

(b) Marble Fragment
During the survey of the residential area north of Church II in 1993, a
marble fragment was found that seemed to have originated in a more elevated area, and could well have come from a basilica cornice (Ill. 2).

...HATT...

Date: Sixth century?

---

III. 2. Marble Fragment

3. Church III
According to a late Medieval Portolan, there was a church of Saint Nikolaos "at the summit" of Gemiler Ada. And, since not only is Church II on a lower level, but the Byzantines would hardly have confused Saint Nikolaos of Myra and Osios Nikolaos, the basilica of Saint Nikolaos must be Church III. One can only hope that excavation may reveal a dedicatory inscription on the floor mosaic, since none has been found on any other part of the remaining superstructure.

(a) Marble Fragment
A fragment of an inscribed marble panel was found in Church III in 1990 (fig. 87).

...φ...

...Θ...

Date: Sixth century?
(b) The Chapel
A fresco adorns the northern wall of the basilica’s small chapel, which is thought to be a late Byzantine addition. Its upper section is in a poor state of preservation, but would most likely have depicted narrative images; the middle section has medallions featuring the busts of martyrs; while the lower section depicts standing saints. The remaining inscriptions on this wall accompany the fifth saint from the left in the middle section (Ἀγίος) φαλ... and the fourth saint from the left in the lower section "Α(γίος) Κα(ββ)δς.

(c) Fresco Fragment
A fresco fragment that had flaked off the wall was found in the eastern chapel in 1993 (Ill. 3). Judging from its palaeography, the fragment seems likely to have originated in Church III. With a dark blue background, an unidentified red-and-white motif, and a white inscription, it appears to be part of a dedicatory inscription.

...ΓΙΟ...
...ΦΡΟΥ...
...ΝΟΥ...
...Ω

Date: Sixth century?

Ill. 3. Fresco Fragment
4. The Corridor

Since few examples of a vaulted corridor such as that connecting Churches III and IV have been found in Byzantine architecture, it is likely that the structure had an important function, although it is not known what this might have been.

Evidence of at least three inscriptions has been found in the corridor, but they have been rendered illegible by a thick layer of lime. But most tantalizing of all is the parallel that can be drawn between Church III and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.10 Thus, both the area behind the apse, and the domed structure between the chapel and the basilica of Church III have their counterparts in the Jerusalem church, the latter area being the equivalent of the Chapel of the Holy Cross. Were the hypothesis that there was a conscious imitation of the Jerusalem basilica to prove correct, it would follow that the corridor was connected to worship of the Holy Cross. This would, in turn, explain the many frescoes of crosses decorating the corridor.

(a) Fresco Inscriptions

Not far from the Church III entrance to the corridor is a westward-facing semidome which is decorated with three nimbed figures surrounded by a pattern of miniature plants. A little way down the corridor is a second dome and, ten arches further along, is a third that is now collapsing. This last domed area seems to be important in terms of the corridor’s overall design. Each corner under the dome is decorated with frescoed crosses, while the structure, over an intersection of two passageways, is surrounded by tombs.

On the northern and southern walls of the corridor a little to the west of this dome are symmetrically placed frescoed inscriptions. Were the inscriptions legible, they would surely help explain the purpose and function of the corridor. Unfortunately, however, the inscription on the northern wall is almost totally covered by a thick layer of lime, so only
that found exposed on the southern wall can be presented here. This inscription (Ill. 4), on a tabula ansata, is accompanied by a cross with a tang, that would have been a faithful representation of the metal processional cross worshiped in the area.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fresco_inscription.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Ill. 4. Fresco Inscription}

(b) Tomb Inscription
On the southern wall of the corridor, still further on toward Church IV where the corridor crosses over part of an early tomb, is an inscription in red that probably has some bearing on that tomb. Although covered by a thick layer of lime, the inscription is fairly well preserved and one can only hope that a key to deciphering it will soon be found.

5. City
The site is a good example of an early Byzantine city. Of particular interest are the lunette inscriptions, above the entranceways of houses, some of which follow.

(a) House of the Lord
Above the eastern entrance to the house of the Lord, north of Church IV, are the fragmentary remains of a red fresco inscription (Ill. 5).
K(ύριο)ς
λαξετ... ιορ
υσο...

Date: Fifth-seventh century?
Palaeography: Α, Ζ
Abbreviation: ΚΤ

Ill. 5. Fresco Inscription

(b) House of Light and Life
A cross motif with the inscription ΦΩC-ΖΩH is incised in the mortar above the northern entrance of the House of Light and Life, north of Church IV (Ill. 6). The same decoration has been found in the southern apse of the monastery church at Karabel, near Myra, identifiable with the monastery of Sion.12

Traces of red decoration remain in the lunette on the southern face of the northern entrance (Ill. 7).

Crosses have been found incised using compasses in the southern lunette of the window located west of the northern entrance, but little remains of the white polka dots on the red background (Ill. 8).
Ill. 6. Incised Decoration

Ill. 7. Fresco Decoration

Ill. 8. Fresco Decoration
(c) House of "Good Day, Girl"

An interesting decoration has been found on the lunette above the western entrance of the house of "good day, girl", north of Church IV (Ill. 9). It comprises an incised cross painted black and an inscription. Suspended from the arms of the cross are the letters A and Ω, typical of liturgical crosses of the period.

\[ ... \text{AH} \]
\[ \text{XAIPIAI\(\phi\)AI\(\lambda\)H} \]

---

Date: Fifth-sixth century?

Palaeography: \( \times \text{\(\lambda\)} \)

Ill. 9. Incised Inscription

The meaning of "\( \text{XAIPIAI\(\phi\)AI\(\lambda\)H} \)" is not known, and one can only guess that the building may have been a shop dealing with items for women, or a lodging place for women. The design of the building gives no hint of its purpose.

(d) Cistern

Port facilities dot the island's northern shore which, subsequently, has many cisterns which were used to supply ships with water. One of the
cisterns, located between our survey points P12 and P13, has the following incised graffiti (Ill. 10):

1749 γεναρίου 20
ρπτ σιμειακως
αγαπητα-
κι

Date: 20 January, 1749

Ill. 10. Incised Graffiti

Although the meaning of ρπτ is not clear, the graffiti reveals that the cistern was no longer in use in the eighteenth century and the island was visited only by sightseeing neighboring Greeks.

6. Tombs

It appears that none of the island’s numerous tombs bears an epitaph. There are comparatively few decorated tombs, one of which is of interest (Ill. 11). Located on an eminence southwest of Church IV, it still retains its red fresco decoration, though the vault has collapsed. The crosses have rounded serifs, a feature found on crosses in other parts of the island, as are A and Ω. However, so far no other examples of the arabesque pattern below the cross have been found on Gemiler Ada.\footnote{13}
Several tombs in the cemetery in the eastern part of the island are decorated with either frescoed or incised Christograms, and it is of interest to the paleographer that each example of the P has a tail-like appendage at the base of its curved line (Ill. 12).

Ill. 12. Frescoed Tomb

II Karacaören Ada
No inscriptions have yet been found at the Karacaören Ada basilica, despite its good state of preservation. This may be because its building was financed by public funds or a donation from a rich individual, rather than by small, personal donations as was the case with Syrian basilicas. Hopefully the reason for building the basilica on this particular island will be revealed by excavation.

1. Roads
While no port facilities remain, due to the island having subsided about one meter since Byzantine times, the existence of more than five steps carved into the bedrock in several locations along the shore indicates that such facilities did, indeed, exist there. At the top of the stairs there are, invariably, roads leading to the church in the center of the island.

(a) Inscription I
The following inscription is carved into the rock on the right-hand side of the road leading from the port on the eastern side of the island to the eastern side of the church (fig. 72, 88).
+Στέφανος μ--θουλα ἐποίησεν τὴν
[---- εἰς ἀπάπα(ω)σιν Τατιάνη(ς) τῆς μακαρίας+

Date: Fifth-sixth century
Palaeography: Α Α Φ
Ligature: ΗΝ ΗΕ 15

The object of the inscription could be ἐκκλησίαν, θήκην, or ὀόδων, but, bearing in mind Inscription III in (c), ὀόδων seems most probable.

(b) Inscription II
This is located on the wall by the steps east of the basilica (figs. 73, 89).

Ἐποίησεν τὸ
ἐργον τούτο Νη-
λο[ς] Ζοῖλου

Date: Fifth-sixth century
Paleography: Ξ Υ

While it seems likely that Nilos, son of Zoilos,16 was the donor of the road, there is a slight possibility that he was either the architect of the basilica, or the painter of the frescoes, since even in early Byzantine times, the word ἐποίησεν was used to refer to either a patron or an artist.17

(c) Inscription III
Almost totally defaced, this inscription is carved into the rock by the road running between the northern shore and the façade of the basilica (fig. 90).
(The first two lines are illegible.)

```
ἐποίησεν τὴν ὅδὸν
ν τῆς Ἁγίας Εὐ--
ειας ...π-ντο...
τὸν τέκνον αὐτοῦ
Παῦλου καὶ Θεοδόρου
```

Date: Fifth-sixth century
Palaeography: ξ Α

Inscription III states that the Karacaören Ada basilica was dedicated to a female saint by the name of Eu—eia (or Eu—cia). The candidates are many, and include Eusebia, Euphemia, Eutychia, Eudoxia, Eudokia, Eugenia, Euanthia, Euthalia, Euphrosyne, Euphrosyne, Euphrosynia, Eustolia, Eutropia, and Euphrasia. Eutychia is interesting in connection with Bishop Eutychianos who, it has been tentatively suggested, was the patron of Church II on Gemiler Ada.

2. Tombs (a) Frescoed Tomb
Northeast of the basilica is a vaulted tomb with fresco decorations. Almost all of the inscription has flaked off, with only two portions legible, namely, ΦΩΚ- under the eastern lunette of Christ Emmanuel, and ΑΓΕ [ΔΟC] on the southern wall above an angel (see Asano's article in the present volume).

(b) Tomb with Crosses
On the western façade of a tomb adjacent to that mentioned above is a marble keystone. It is inscribed with a Christogram, while remaining traces indicate that at least two red crosses originally adorned the façade (III. 13).
III Kaya

The mainland village of Kaya, known in ancient times as Karmylessos and in medieval times as Levisi, played a major role in connection with Gemiler Ada. A comparison of the ruins shows that, in the sixth century, the fortunes of the island paralleled those of Levisi, on which it most likely depended for supplies of food. And, judging from their location, it would seem likely that the main purpose of the small chimneys discovered on Karacaören Ada was to send smoke signals to Levisi.

Even in the wake of regional turmoil drew people away from Gemiler Ada in the early Byzantine times, Levisi continued to flourish as a Greek city, having been abandoned only as recently as 1922 by the habitant exchange between Greece and Turkey.

While there are few traces in Kaya dating back to the days when Karmylessos flourished, Byzantine ruins remain here and there. Although we conducted several expeditions to Kaya in 1993, the research conducted by Greek scholars still needs to be closely studied.

Kaya is also important in that it has many Greek dwellings built in the nineteenth and early twentieth century which, by coincidence, bear a striking resemblance to the sixth-century houses on Gemiler Ada. This may be because both sites are built on a steep incline rising up from the bedrock, making it only logical for the respective towns’ planners to have similar ideas regarding water storage facilities, drainage methods, as well as house and storehouse design. For this reason, the careful study of Kaya should help supply many of the pieces missing in the
puzzle that is sixth-century Gemiler Ada.

(a) Lower Basilica
There are many chapels in the village and two major basilicas which we have called the upper basilica and lower basilica.

In the precinct beside the lower basilica, a marble fragment was found that appears to have been a templon, and that is decorated with relief that bears a striking resemblance to that found in the Karacaören Ada basilica. Following is the modern dedicatory inscription above the southern entrance of the basilica.

ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ Ο ΦΥΛΑΣ ΠΑΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗΣ
ΕΝ ΓΗ 1840 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ 5
+ΕΚ ΒΑΡΑΘΡΩΝ, ΑΝΑ-
ΚΕΝΕΙΣΘ Ο ΥΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΙΟΣ
ΝΑΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΥΠΕΡΕΥΔΟΓΗΜΕ-
ΝΗΣ ἩΜΩΝ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΚΑ-
ΔΟΥΜΕΝΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΠΕΡΙΒΟΗΤΟΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΡΑΤΕΥΟΝΙΟΣ ΑΠΟΥ ΤΗΣ
ΣΙΔΙΑΣ ΙΕΡΑΣΙΜΟΥ ΔΙΑΧΕΙ-
ΡΟΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΗΤΟΥ
(The last two lines are invisible from the ground)

Date: June 5, 1840

(b) Frescoed Chapel
Many Byzantine fragments have been incorporated in the outer walls of a chapel near the lower basilica. They include a capital, spandrels decorated with cross motifs, and templons. The fresco paintings on the southwestern part of the ceiling has been cleaned to reveal frescoes. Depicted are the Crucifixion and the Anastasis in the upper section of
the wall, medallions of martyrs in the middle section, and a standing archangel and saints in the lower section. Some of the inscriptions in the lower section are given below.

MIXAHA ...PENOC
O ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΗΤΑΣ
O ΑΓΙΟΣ ΕΥΣΤΑΘΙΟΣ
O (Α)ΓΙΟΣ ΠΑΝΤΕΛΕΗΜΩΝ

Date: Thirteenth-fifteenth century
Palaeography: Ӕ, Ӕ, ΤΑ Α, Α, Μ, Χ, Ӕ, (c) Lower Chapel

A short distance from the frescoed chapel is yet another chapel, in which have been found several marble items dating back to early Byzantine times. Two are of particular note. One, under a shell-shaped niche, is decorated with a cross in relief that has the same iconography as is on the book cover of the Sion treasure.²¹ The other is a stone slab inscribed ...AMEN..., and decorated with a cross-and-arabesque pattern the same as is found at Church IV on Gemiler Ada. Although the latter decoration was, by comparison, roughly executed, it seems that both examples were produced by an atelier or a group of artisans.

4. Modern Inscriptions

Of the many modern inscriptions found in the village, a few are cited below.
(a) Inscription of the Fountain House

O ΔΗΜΟΣ ΛΟΙΒΗΣΙΟΥ ΤΩ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΗ
ΓΕΩΡΓΙΩ Π. ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ
ΤΟ ΥΔΗΡ ΤΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΡΑΠΕΙΟΥ ΥΔΡΑΓΩΓΕΙΟΥ
ΜΕΤΟΧΕΤΕΥΣΑΝΤΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΔΕΞΑΜΕΝΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΔΕ
ΑΝΕΓΕΙΡΑΝΤΙ/
ΕΥΓΝΩΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ ΕΝΕΚΕΝ
ΕΝ ΛΟΙΒΗΣΙΩ ΤΗ 1Η ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ 1912

Date: 1 June, 1912

(b) Dedicatory Inscription of the Chapel of St. George

On the façade is the same marble relief as has been found in the lower chapel (c). Thus, we suggest, our finds should be interpreted in the context of Lycian iconography together with the Sion treasure.

O ΝΑΙΣΚΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΓΕ-
ΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΑΝΗΓΕΡΘΗ ΕΚ ΒΑ-
ΘΡΟΝ ΔΑΠΑΝΗ ΚΑΛΛΙΟΠΗΣ
ΣΥΖΙΤΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ
ΛΟΥΙΖΙΔΟΥ

ΕΠΙΜΕΛΕΙΑ ΜΟΥΣΑΙΟΥ
ΕΡΓΩΝ ΠΑΝΑΓΟΥ Χ. ΤΑΛΛΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ
ΥΙΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ
1886

Date: 1886
The wealth of the Louizides family was such that it was instrumental in setting up the Louizideion Scholeion which had been constructed the year before. Two more inscriptions in which the family is mentioned are held by Fethiye Museum and whoever may, in the future, write a history of Levisi would do well to research this family.

4. The Monastery of Saint Nikolaos
Northwest of Kaya is a narrow path that heads north before coming to a dead end. A thirty-minute walk from that point brings one to the site of a monastery which is known locally as Akoula. While it can be seen from out at sea, it can only be reached by land due to its location on a steep cliff.

The central part of the monastery, built on comparatively flat ground halfway up the cliff face, comprises a katholikon and other structures. The katholikon is built in the northern part of the site oblong in shape. Rooms for the monks are in the western part of the site, their west-facing windows providing a good view of the sea, while in the eastern part of the site rooms with chapels have been cut into the cliff. Although the frescoes in the katholikon are post-Byzantine, the marble fragments found at the site suggest its early Byzantine origins. The monastery only fell into disuse in the early part of this century.

Heading south from the monastery, one comes to an overhanging cliff with stalactites that drip water into a cistern built immediately under it. Next to this cistern is a small chapel with traces of fresco in the apse. Though only very fragmentary, the decoration appears to have been carried out in the late Byzantine period, around the thirteenth century.

Based on the program of the frescoes in the katholikon, it has been suggested that the monastery was probably dedicated to Saint Nikolaos of Myra. However, the connection between this monastery and the islands of Gemiler Ada and Karacaören Ada during the Byzantine era is not clear, and one can only wonder what the purpose might have been.
for setting up what appears to have been a network of structures
dedicated to Saint Nikolaos.

(a) Inscriptions in Southern Apse
The small apse has a fresco painting of Saint Nikolaos, on which can be
seen the title and the fragmentary remains of an inscription (fig. 91).

[Ὁ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ]

NIK[ΟΛ]ΑΟC
...ENE-TΩ-T
...HN-AI-ΓΝ
HME-----BH
AMAP-----TON

Date: Sixteenth-eighteenth century?
Palaeography: A

(b) Dedicatory Inscription in the Main Apse
The Virgin, perhaps with Christ, is depicted flanked by archangels in
the apse. Due to its poor state of preservation, only the right-hand third
of the inscription is legible (fig. 92).

...ΥΠΕΡ
...ΑΚΑΟΝΤΙΟΝΝ
...ΙΚΑΜΑΠΤΙΑC-
...ΤΙΠΙΜΕΝΩΝ-
...ΝΑΡΚΑΙΓΑΡΑ-

Date: Sixteenth-eighteenth century?
Palaeography: A
Ligatures: A, O, Μ, Ρ
Notes

1. For the fresco see the chapter of Church II.
2. Cf. Θρησκευτική και ιστορική έγκυκλοπαιδεία, col. 515.
3. A basilica in Constantinople was dedicated to Osios Nikolaos and St. Priscus during the rule of Justinian. See Procopius, De Aedificiis, I, 3-9; H. Delehaye, Les origines du culte des martyrs, Bruxelles 1933, p. 240; Janin, 1969, p. 408.
4. The word ἐπίσημον can be ἐπιτείμα (e.g., SEG 36(1986), n. 831). ἐκτίσεων (e.g., IGLS, vol. 2, no. 366), ἐθήμωσις (e.g., S. Pelikanides and P. Atzaka, Σύνταγμα τῶν παλαιοχριστιανικῶν ψηφιδωτῶν δαπέδων τῆς Ελλάδος, I. Νεοπολιτική Ελλάς, Thessaloniki 1974, p. 128, pl. 101) or ἱστοδόμησιν (e.g., Feissel, 1983, p. 230 ff., no. 274). The word ναός can be ἐκκλησία (e.g., SEG 38(1988), no. 1659), ἐκτήσιον (e.g., IGLS, vol. 1, no. 252 a), or βασιλική (see T. Masuda, “A Byzantine Inscription in the Okayama Orient Museum and the Syrian Architect Markianos Kyris,” Bulletin of the Okayama Orient Museum, Okayama, Japan, 12(1993), p. 1 ff.
7. Reference is made to some of the capitals and marble fragments by Sodini, 1992.
13. For a tomb in Philippi that bears the fresco decoration of the cross with Α and Ω, see G. Gounaris, “L’archéologie chrétienne en Grèce de 1974 à 1985,” Actes du Xle congrès international d’archéologie chrétienne, vol. 3, Vatican 1989, p. 2702, fig. 16. For a cross with a tang and the letters Α and Ω in relief found on an early Christian


15. The ligature HN can be found in Dagron-Feissel, 1987, no. 51 (sixth century), no. 105 (536); and Feissel, 1983, no. 133 (532). For the ligature HC, see Feissel, 1983, nos. 30, 31, 32, 258 (fifth-sixth century).

16. Ζωής is the same as Ζωής and Δωβίς. For the name, which is frequently found in Asia Minor, see L. Robert, Noms indigènes dans l’Asie-Mineure gréco-romaine, Paris 1963, p. 196; G. Hirschfeld, Tituli statuariorum sculpturumque Graecorum cum prolegomenis, Berlin 1871, p. 77; J. Macardé, Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs, vol. 2, Paris 1957, nos. 127, 135-138.


(Tomoyuki Masuda)