



Robert W. Allison, President,  
The Mount Athos Foundation of America, Inc.  
45 N. Saunders Rd., Greene, ME 04236

NEWSLETTER 2 – JULY, 2020

The first half of 2020 has been a time of several major accomplishments for MAFA.

First, we welcomed to the Board of Directors Peter Allen, who brings to us much needed experience with fundraising and development in the U.S.A. for programs in Greece, not to mention much experience serving on other board of directors of charitable organizations. A lifetime member of FoMA since 1995, Peter lists on his resume (to mention only a few) that he

- is a trustee of Anatolia College in Thessaloniki, Greece;
- is a member of the board for the College Year in Athens program, serving as secretary of that board since 1998;
- was four times a senior associate member of the American School of Classical studies in Athens; and
- served many terms on the Executive Committee of the Modern Greek Studies Association.

Our board is enriched by his service and enthusiasm for MAFA's mission on Mount Athos.

### **Fundraising**

Without any major fundraising effort yet, we have received \$48,325 in donations, many of them from FoMA members, but many from people completely new to us who have discovered us via our website and Facebook pages. To all who contributed, we express our sincere appreciation. In the following paragraphs you will see how we put these funds to work to support our mission to support and promote understanding of the Holy Mountain.

### **MAFA Funds Covid-19 Readiness at the Mount Athos Health Center in Karyes**



*Image: the Mount Athos Health Center. Photo courtesy of the Health center.*

With the outbreak of the Coronavirus, it quickly became clear that the Health Center in Karyes needed to acquire diagnostic equipment and supplies. The small clinic had only just moved into its new, permanent quarters a short time before, when the virus struck.

MAFA reached out to Dr. Michael Christakis, the founder of SAMM (Supporters of Athonite and Monastic Medicine), who was about to put out an appeal for funds to purchase the needed equipment and supplies, but knowing that appeals take time that the Health Center might not have.

Thanks to the donations mentioned above, the MAFA Emergency Aid Fund had enough cash on hand to cover Health Center's immediate needs, so we were able to make a grant to the Health Center via SAMM. Now, as Mount Athos is once again beginning to receive pilgrims, the Fathers on the Holy Mountain can be confident of quick diagnosis and treatment at their new Health Center if any of those pilgrims happens to arrive with undiagnosed coronavirus infections. (See accompanying press release)

### **MAFA Continues Support for Grigoriou Monastery Fire Recovery**

We have now made two financial contributions, for a total of \$12,095, to the Holy Monastery of Osiou Grigoriou to support its rebuilding of its electromechanical facility that was destroyed by fire a year ago. To date, the Monastery has been able to install a temporary climate-controlled container to house all the electrical functions. Construction on a permanent building, originally hoped to be fully underway in 2020, has now been somewhat delayed because of the Pandemic and the need for additional funding to do so.....



The rebuilding project is ongoing and contributions will be put to work immediately to help the monastery recover from its loss. Simply go to the MAFA website – <https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/donate/> and select the "Grigoriou Monastery Emergency Appeal"

*Image: Fire damage at the electromechanical facility of Grigoriou (July 2019) Photo provided by the Monastery.*

*continued...*

*Support for Grigoriou Monastery Fire Recovery, continued*



*Images: new temporary container shed to house equipment until the building project can resume; and new 275 kva generator (October 2019). Photos provided by the Monastery.*

**MAFA Funds Simonopetra Monastery's Footpaths Preservation and Rehabilitation Planning Project**

As I write this paragraph, our treasurer has just completed the process of transferring to the Holy Monastery of Simonos Petras a grant of \$10,125 which will fully fund this planning project. The Homeotech Environmental Management Company of Thessaloniki is developing the plan for the Monastery. Highlights of the planning project include:

- documentation and surveying of points along the paths where intervention is needed to improve the inclination where there are now steep slopes to be traversed;
- study in preparation for stone cladding consistent with the more ancient parts of the footpaths;
- mapping water sources for provision of drinking water along the footpaths for hikers; and
- planning for sign posting and grading at intersections with the network of vehicular roads planning for placement of benches and planting of trees to create viewpoints and resting posts along the footpaths.



As many readers will know, the footpath from the sea up to Simonopetra is extremely steep and arduous, so this project will greatly enhance the experience of pilgrims visiting the Monastery while at the same time addressing ecological issues created in recent years by the network of vehicular roads.

*Photograph by Graham Speake, The Friends of Mount Athos. All rights reserved.*

**MAFA's 2020 Scholarship Winner**



MAFA is pleased to announce that this year's Scholarship winner is **Xavier Agati of Grenoble, France**. Mr. Agati is in the final stages of a Ph.D. project, for which he is completing a thesis in the field of Greek Historiography of the Byzantine and Ottoman Epochs (14th - 18th centuries). The subject of his dissertation is the *Book of Kings* by Kaisarios Dapontes (1713/14 - 1784). Kaisarios Dapontes was one of the most significant Greek lyricists and chroniclers of the 18th century, a polymath in the full sense of the term. Mr. Agati plans to expand his project with post-doctoral research to include the whole corpus of the writings of this brilliant Greek intellectual.

*Image: The piece of the true cross at Xeropotamou Monastery, Mount Athos.*

*Image source: <http://orthochristian.com/82465.html>*

*Continued...*



### ***2020 Scholarship Winner, continued***

The original manuscripts of the writings of Kaisarios Dapontes' works, most of which have never been edited, are located in several Athonite monasteries, but mostly at the Holy Monastery of Xeropotamou where he eventually was tonsured a monk. Dapontes, a great traveler, developed a method for raising funds for his monastery that other monasteries later adopted. During his travels, he would lead a procession of sacred relics and displaying pieces of the monastery's famous piece of the true cross. The frescoes of the Monastery's catholicon, constructed 1761-1763, were funded in large part by Dapontes' fund-raising efforts.

Versant in ancient and medieval Greek and Latin as well as modern Greek, Turkish, English, Spanish and French, and with some experience in Romanian as well, Mr. Agati is exceptionally qualified for the study both of this writer and of his critics who wrote in many of these languages.

### **MAFA Supports Restoration of the Axion Estin Cell by The Friends of Mount Athos**

Graham Speake of the Friends of Mount Athos writes to report that this year's annual feast of the miracle of Axion Estin "was special because of the tonsures that took place - of the elder to the Great Schema ... and two novices tonsured as monks. They are now ten fathers at the cell."

It was also special because of the completed restoration of the workers' building adjacent to the gardens (below). MAFA was pleased to be able to make a contribution, even though a modest one in light of our limited resources, toward the restoration project. Restoration of the cell is ongoing, and donations are most welcome.



The restoration of the Axion Estin Cell is ongoing. To contribute to this project go here: <https://athosfriends.org/appeals/axion-estin/> and click on the donate button....

*Image:*

*The Axion Estin Cell, a dependency of Pantokrator Monastery, is located not far from Karyes.*

*Photograph courtesy of Graham Speake, The Friends of Mount Athos. All rights reserved.*

### **MAFA To Conduct Its First Fundraising Campaign**

Last year, as reported in Newsletter 1, MAFA's Board of Directors voted to adopt as the Foundation's name day **November 21st**, the Feast Day of the **Presentation of the Theotokos** in the Orthodox Church. We envision this date as an occasion for celebration of MAFA's work dedicated to the service of the Holy Mountain, and this year we have much to celebrate. We look forward to celebrating the results of our first fundraising campaign, as we turn now to an effort to build an endowment that will enable us to continue our mission of support for the Holy Mountain.

You will be hearing from MAFA about this initiative around the beginning of September, when we plan to kick off our campaign. But if you would like to help us in this project, don't feel you must wait until then. Contact us at [info@mountathosfoundation.org](mailto:info@mountathosfoundation.org) or visit us via Facebook or our website to let us know how you can help.

Do you have a favorite icon of the Presentation of the Theotokos? MAFA has not yet selected one for our own celebration, so please share yours with us at [info@mountathosfoundation.org](mailto:info@mountathosfoundation.org).