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### **President's End-of-Year Report – January 14, 2022**

Despite the pandemic and its ensuing upheaval in our personal lives and around the world, MAFA not only continued in its mission of support for the Holy Mountain in 2021, but also began extending its range of activities and its outreach.

#### **Letter of Blessing from His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros,**

We begin the new year celebrating the blessing of the Archbishop Elpidophoros, with whom members of the MAFA board met at his offices in New York City on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The Archbishop, expressing his enthusiasm for MAFA and its mission, looks forward to supporting those efforts in the future. We invite you to read his letter, on the MAFA website:

<https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/doc/archbishop-elpidophoros-letter-blessing.pdf>

**Welcome to Pasha!** At the end of this year, MAFA welcomed a new board member to its ranks. Mary Allen Johnson is Curator of the Hilandar Research Library, Director of the Resource Center for Medieval Slavic Studies, and Associate Professor of the University Libraries at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA. She joined our board of directors in November, bringing to the board a wealth of experience and energy that greatly enhances our capability as a board and our broadens our outreach.

#### **Financial Report for 2021**

MAFA Treasurer Roger McHaney reports that,

*Considering the unusual year with the pandemic impacting those living on the Holy Mountain, as well people across the globe, MAFA enjoyed a year of record giving. Cash donations totaled \$39,984 and a stock gift valued at \$22,251.20 was provided by a generous donor. \$14,327.88 was provided to grant recipients which included the Axion Estin Appeal, Grigoriou Monastery, and the Prodromos Convent in Anatoli, Agia, Greece.\* Plans for continued support of healthcare on the Holy Mountain are in place with donors providing over \$10,000 for emergency care. The year concluded with a cash balance of \$40,914.19 and stock valued at \$22,251.20 which will form the basis for additional future grants. Among the amounts earmarked from 2021 are: The Mount Athos Emergency Fund - \$10,465, the Grigoriou Appeal - \$400., and the Prodromos Convent - \$575. MAFA's operating expenses for the year were \$4,244.68. Since the organization completely relies on volunteer labor, expenses primarily relate to website maintenance, insurance, banking fees, and advertising. In other developments, the MAFA Board opened a brokerage account which enables gifts of stock and other assets to be accepted.*

That is a great success story for MAFA. The grant total year-end balance of \$63,165.39 more than triples the balance at the end of 2020 (\$19,502.75)! We are thankful to all who have made this happen, especially in a year plagued by a pandemic!

The stock transfer that Roger mentions in his treasurer's report is a kick-off contribution to MAFA's **Architectural and Ecological Conservation Fund** from John Campbell, who has consented to our

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\* Regarding MAFA donations to the Axion Estin Appeal, Grigoriou Monastery and the Prodromos Convent please see Newsletter 4, July 2021, accessible on the MAFA website (<https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/news/>).

sharing his name. Here are some excerpts from his correspondence with us that we hope may inspire all our readers:

John initially sent us a very simple email note:

*I would like to make a donation of \$20,000 to MAFA for the purpose of the "study, preservation and restoration of the historic buildings.*

When we suggested our **Architectural and Ecological Conservation Fund** he wrote back,

*I am a great fan of trusts and endowments. Many years ago I placed a tiny equity into a trust for my childrens' future education. In the end, notwithstanding various diversions and disasters, that sent two girls thru college, gave each a down payment on a house and set a precedent for future generations that continues today.... [after selecting this fund, John added, referring to the fund description –] I would only add to " the study, maintenance and repair of the historic buildings **and paths.**" In my memory of a very different Mount Athos, it was on the paths that some of my most memorable sights and conversations occurred. My gift is but a tiny drop in the bucket compared to the European Community funds that I see have been spent in recent years.*

We look forward to seeing this kickoff gift grow and contribute to many worthy works on the Holy Mountain. And ecological conservation does, indeed, include the footpaths, which we continue to support through the Friends of Mount Athos and most recently through our grant to Simonopetra Monastery for a planning project to create improvements and conservation of its footpaths aimed at enhancing the pilgrimage experience with inspiring rest stops for pilgrims.

Thank you, John, for that thoughtful and generous start for our Architectural and Ecological Conservation Fund. Our goal for MAFA is to enable Americans to match the generosity of our European counterparts in support of the Holy Mountain!

### English Translation of the Mount Athos Panagion

ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΑΘΩ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΟΧΛΟΥ

Ἀθανάσιος ὁ Ἀθωνίτης, κτίτωρ μονῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας († 1001/4)

Ἡ γέννησι τοῦ ἱερῆ τοῦ ἀθανάτου κοινοβιακοῦ μοναχισμοῦ ὡς Ἀθανάσιος τοῦ Ἀθωνίτη τοποθετεῖται τὴν περίοδον μεταξύ τῶν ἐτῶν 925 καὶ 930. Τόπος καταγωγῆς τοῦ ἱερέως ἡ Τραπεζούντα τοῦ Πόντου καὶ τὸ βαπτιστικὸ τοῦ ὀνόματι Ἰβαν Ἀβραάμ. Ὁ πατήρ του, μετ' οἰκονομικῆς καταγωγῆς ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀντιόχεια τῆς Συρίας, πῆθαν προτῶν ὁ γιὸς τοῦ ἔλθει εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ μητέρα του, μετ' οἰκονομικῆς καταγωγῆς ἀπὸ τὴν Κολχίδα τοῦ Πόντου, δὲν ἔχισεν παρὰ λίγο μόνον μετὰ ἀφ' οὗτου ἀποκλήρῳσε τὸν θάλαμον τοῦ γιὸς τῆς. Τὴν ἀνατροφήν τοῦ ὁρανοῦ παιδιοῦ ἀνέλαβεν ἡ γυναῖκα κάποιου συγγενικοῦ καὶ συντοπιῆ τοῦ μητρός του, ὁ ὁποῖος λεγόταν Κανίτης καὶ συγκολληχόταν μετὰ τῶν ἱεροῶν μελῶν τῆς κοινωτικῆς τῆς Τραπεζούντης. Σίγουρα μετ' τὴν δειπνῶσι τοῦ ἱερέως τοῦ Ὁσίου, ἡ γυναῖκα αὐτῆ ἵταν μοναχὴ ἢ ὁποῖα νεοεπίθετο τὸ παιδί νὰ ζῆ μετ' οὐρανοσὶν καὶ γυμνασίου.

Ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ Ἀβραάμου ἵταν φανερὰ εἶδη ἀπὸ τὰ παιδικὰ τὸν χρόνον, τὸ ἴδιον καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πρὸς τὰ γράμματα. Ἀφοῦ μαθήτευσε σὲ κάποιον τοπικὸν γραμματικόν, μετέβη εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν γὰρ ἀνώτερος σπουδῆς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ αυτοκράτορος Ρωμανοῦ Α' Λακαπηννοῦ (920-944). Ἀφορμὴ εἰστάθηκε κάποιος κομμερκαρίου, διὰ τὴν εἰσπράξεως φόρων, ποῦ ὅταν πέρασε ἀπὸ τὴν Τραπεζούνταν, προσέειπεν τὸν ἴδιον τοῦ νεαροῦ Ἀβραάμου καὶ τοῦ ἔστησε νὰ τὸν ἀκολουθήσῃ εἰς τὴν βυζαντινὴν πρωτεύουσαν. Συνδεδεχόντος τὸν ἀσκητικὸν τρόπο ζωῆς μετ' τῆς δόξης γὰρ τῆς γνώσεως, εἶβεν ἐν πρώτοις συμπαροστώτας εἰς τὸν πνευματικὸν τοῦ δρόμου τὸν ἱεροῦτον στρατηγὸν Ζεφυρόν καὶ τὴν οἰκονομικὴν τοῦ ποῦ εἰς συμβάλων εἰς τὴν ἀσκαστικὴν ἐτήρησιν τῶν σπουδῶν του. Καθολογητικῆς τοῦ ἐπὶ γνώσεως καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀρετὴν ἔβη γὰρ ὁ Ἀθανάσιος, ὁ τότε «προκαθήμενος τῶν παιδευτηρίων» τῆς Κωνσταντινούπολης. Σὲ μικρὸ χρονικὸν διάστημα βύτηρα ἀπὸ ὁμῶρων ἀπέστη τῶν διακόλων

τοῦ καὶ μετ' αὐτοκρατορικῆς συνείσεως ὁ Ἀβραάμος εἶ ἀναλάβει διευθυντικὸν ρόλον σὲ ἄλλο παιδευτήριον. Χάρη εἰς τὴν πολὺλεπτον κοσμητικὴν τοῦ παιδία συνέβαλε εἰς τὴν προσέλευσιν πληθῶν μαθητῶν πράγμα ποῦ τὸν ἔκανε εὐρύτερα γνωστὸν καὶ κίνησε τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον καὶ τοῦ τότε αυτοκράτορος, τοῦ φιλομαθοῦς Κωνσταντίνου Ζ' Πορφυρογέννητου (944-959).

Ὡστόσο ὁ Ἀβραάμος, θεωρῶντας πὸς ἐμπέκεται ὁλοκρῖνα καὶ περισσότερο εἰς κοσμητικὰς τέχνας καὶ φροντίδας, ἀποφάσισε νὰ ἀποχωρηθῆται εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν. Καταρχῆς συνόδεισε τὸν τότε στρατηγὸν τοῦ Αἰγαίου Πελάγους, Ζεφυρόν, σὲ ταξιδεῖν τοῦ εἰς τὸν Ἄθω. Κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστροφήν του, ἀντίκρισε γὰρ πρώτην φορὰ τὸν Ἄθω, γρηγορῶς ποῦ γὰρ τὸν ἠσπάρει τοῦ, ἵταν καθαρῶς γὰρ τὴν μετέπειτα ἐγκαταστάσιν τοῦ σὲ αὐτόν. Μετ' τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν τοῦ εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν ἀγγελοῦ μὲν τοῦ ἴδιου στρατηγῶν τὸν Μιχαὴλ Μαλέων, ἠρῶμενον εἰς τὴν μονὴν τοῦ Κιρμὰ εἰς τὴν Βιθυνίαν. Ἐκεῖ εἶβεν γυμναστικῆς μετ' τὸν ἀνεπὶ τοῦ τελευταίου, Νικηφόρου Φωκά, ποῦ τότε ἵταν ἀκόμα στρατηγὸς τοῦ θύματος τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν. Στὴν μονὴν τοῦ Μιχαὴλ ὁ Ἀβραάμος εἶβεν καρεὶ μοναχὸς μετ' τὸ ὄνομα Ἀθανάσιος. Ἀφοῦ ἔχισεν ἐκεῖ γὰρ τέσσαρα χρόνια, αἰσθάνεται τὴν ἀνάγκην εἰς περαιτέρω ἰουγκίας καὶ γ' αὐτὸ ἀποστρέφεται εἰς τὴν περὶ τὴν μετ' τὸ ὄνομα Κικελίτης.

Στὸν τόπον αὐτὸν εἶβεν ἐπίσκεψιν τοῦ Νικηφόρου Φωκά, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐπέδωκε τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν νὰ γίνῃ πνευματικὸν παιδί τοῦ Ὁσίου. Τὸ ἴδιον συνέβη μετ' τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ μάγιστρο καὶ κωνροπαλάτη Λέοντα Φωκά. Οἱ πνευματικὸς τοῦ ἀρετῆς συνέβαλλον ὡστε ὁ Μιχαὴλ Μαλέων καὶ τὸν ἀποκαλοῦσι διδασκῶν του, πράγμα ποῦ ὁ ἱεροῦτος ποῦ ἱεροῦτον ὄχι ὡς διδασκῶν εἰς τὸν τόπον, διὰ τὴν εἰς τὴν μονὴν τοῦ Κιρμὰ, ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸν τόπον. Ἐπειδὴ ἴδιον ἔχισεν πρὸς τὸν ἄθω νὰ ἀναλάβῃ τὴν πνευματικὴν αὐτῆ ἐπίθεσιν ἢ γὰρ λόγους ἄλλους ἀδευκρινιστοῦς, ὁ ἴδιος Ἀθανάσιος εἶβεν ἀπονομήσει τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῆ καὶ εἶβεν



Ἄγιος Ἀθανάσιος ὁ Ἀθωνίτης, κτίτωρ τῆς μονῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας († 1001/4), σελ. 1300.

As announced in *Newsletter 4*, MAFA has joined with the Mount Athos Center (Agioreitiki Estia) to publish

an English translation of the Mount Athos Center's spectacular 415-page volume, *Hagiorite Panagion. The Chorus of the Saints on Athos*, under the editorship of the respected and internationally recognized scholar, Symeon A. Paschalidis (<https://www.agioritikiestia.gr/en/hagioreitikon-panagion-ton-en-atho-ho-choros>). The above image (from the original Greek version, pages 52-53) shows the beginning of the life of Athanasios the Athonite, founder of the Great Lavra Monastery († 1001/4), illustrated by the icon of Athanasios from the wall of the Protaton church attributed to the painter, Manuel Panselinos. The translation is proceeding beautifully; we have had a chance to read some of the first translations of the lives of the Athonite saints by Andrew Philip Hendry, and they are beautifully written. This is a 3-year project, and we look forward enthusiastically to its completion in 2023/24.

### MAFA SCHOLARSHIP Program

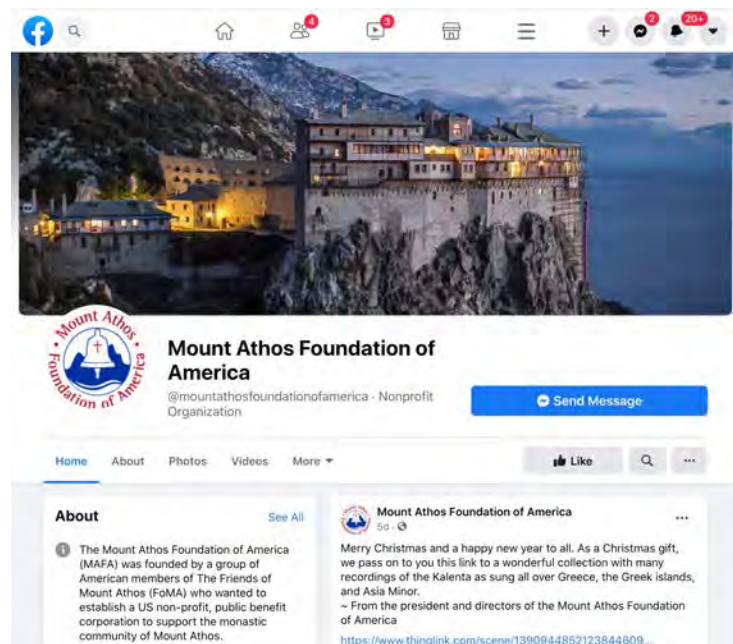
MAFA issued its 2021 scholarship to Professor Kostis Smyrlis (Ph.D., the Sorbonne), a researcher for the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens (<http://www.eie.gr/>) and the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris (<http://www.cnrs.fr/>). We are especially appreciative of our partnership with **The Mount Athos Center in Thessaloniki**, which provides invaluable support for our scholarship winners, assuring the best chance for success of their projects.

Prof. Smyrlis is the head of a four-person team of scholars working on the edition of the archival documents of the Holy Monastery of Zographou as part of the *Archives de l'Athos* series. Each volume in this series includes an extensive introduction dealing with the history of a monastery and the topography of its territorial holdings during the medieval period. The team directed by Prof. Smyrlis is conducting a survey of the areas where the Zographou Monastery held landed property, namely the Athonite peninsula, various locations in Halkidiki, and the Strymon River Valley, comparing today's topographical and archeological data to the information found in the archival documents, and identifying the location of the estates, where possible. Our MAFA scholarship is funding travel and related expenses for this survey.

The publication of the medieval archival documents of the monasteries of Mount Athos in the *Archives de l'Athos* series, that began in the 1930s in Paris and continues to this day, has contributed enormously to the study of the social, economic, and religious history of the Byzantine Empire. More particularly, the accompanying studies on the landed holdings of the monasteries have been of particular importance for understanding the historical geography of the Holy Mountain and its broader area, and for studying the history of the landscape and the environment, as well as human settlement, demography and toponyms. The holdings of the monastery of Zographou, the subject of this project, are of particular importance, since they extend in areas not too well covered by previous volumes on other monasteries, for example the estuary of the Strymon river.

We wish Prof. Smyrlis every success and are honored to be able to support him in this important project.

### MAFA on Facebook



**Dionne Katinas**, our website designer (designsbydionne.com) and her colleague, Rich Frongillo, have performed superb service for us maintaining our ever-changing website and developing our new **MAFA Facebook Page**. Our postings to Facebook will help MAFA achieve wider awareness in 2022 of the Holy Mountain – also part of our mission. Thank you, Dionne and Rich, for your continuing service to MAFA!

### **Planning for the Future....**

Much of our work at MAFA this year has been devoted to laying foundations for the future. The following brief list of these initiatives points ahead to our activity for the coming year.

**Traveling exhibition.** MAFA is working in collaboration with the Mount Athos Center in Thessaloniki to bring to the U.S. an exhibition which we hope will open in September at the Maliotis Center with celebratory opening events, a conference devoted to raising public awareness and understanding of the Holy Mountain. We hope it will be possible to make the exhibition available for subsequent showings at various venues across the United States.

**St Paisios Society.** With great honor and pleasure we announce the establishment The St. Paisios Society. We have established this Society as an Honor Society for those persons who have made outstanding contributions to MAFA to support its mission on behalf of the Holy Community of Mount Athos. It is our way of honoring this special group of persons who will bear the venerable title of Saint Paisios' name.

**MAFA Annual Book Prize.** In 2021 MAFA inaugurated an *Annual Mount Athos Book Prize*. This prize, to be judged by a distinguished panel of independent scholars, is meant to honor the best scholarly work on Mt. Athos on a topic related to the Holy Mountain and its rich historical, literary, theological, architectural and iconographic traditions. The winning author or authors will receive an award of \$500, and the Foundation will publicize the award and the winning book on the MAFA website, in its newsletter, and in press releases. We offer our special thanks to board member Chris Deliso for initiating and planning this new program and look forward developing a growing book list on our MAFA website.

### **Summary of MAFA Accomplishments to Date**

During the first half of 2021 MAFA passed the \$50,000 mark in its cumulative contributions for the benefit of the Holy Mountain and Athos-related projects. MAFA grants and donations to date have supported the following:

1. 7 Scholarships for Athos-related research
2. Axion Estin Cell Restoration
3. Grigoriou Monastery Fire Recovery
4. Simonopetra Footpaths and Roads Rehabilitation Planning Project
5. Sisters of the Prodromos Convent on Mt. Kissavos in Anatoli, Agia in central Greece
6. English Translation of the Athonite Panagion in collaboration with the Mount Athos Center in Thessaloniki
7. The Athos Health Center (via Supporters of Athonite & Monastic Medicine (SAMM))

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I thank you all for your generous contributions that have made possible those accomplishments and such a successful first half of 2021 despite the current pandemic!

Robert W. Allison, President,  
The Mount Athos Foundation of America