

PAVING THE ROAD TO SINAI: GEORGIOS AND MARIA SOTERIOU ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

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Georgios Soteriou was born on the island of Spetses, off the eastern shore of the Peloponnese, in 1880. Having completed his studies at the Rizareios Ecclesiastical College in 1899, he then graduated from the Theology Faculty of the University of Athens in 1904. After a five-year stint as a high school teacher in Larissa (1905–09), where he met his future wife, he moved first to Germany and then Austria for post-graduate studies. Maria Soteriou, then only twenty-one years old, followed him. In Leipzig, Berlin, and Vienna they attended lectures and seminars by eminent Byzantinists, such as O. Wulff and J. Strzygowski. Having spent three years abroad, the couple returned to Greece in 1912, just before the outbreak of the First Balkan War. Soteriou was drafted by the army, and after the end of the war he taught for a year at Athenian high schools. In 1915 he joined the Archaeological Service and became General Director of Byzantine Antiquities.¹

Georgios Soteriou was among the first Greek archaeologists who systematically studied Byzantine monuments and conducted excavations under the auspices of the Archaeological Service. His research revealed a number of important Early

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¹ Ἀνδρέου Ἰ. Φυτράκη, Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου, Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν, ΙΔ¹ (1958–60), Τιμητικὸν Ἀφιέρωμα εἰς Γεώργιον Σωτηρίου (1963), 5–62 (pp. 6–7).

Christian basilicas, both inside and outside Greek borders. From December 1916 until May 1917, his excavation by the Ilissos River in Athens revealed the homonymous fifth-century basilica. In the summer of 1921 and 1922 he went to Ephesus in Turkey, where he discovered the basilica of St John the Theologian. In 1923 he began excavating in Nea Anchialos, outside Volos, Greece, where he eventually revealed the hitherto unknown Early Christian city of Christian Thebes.² His contribution to the restoration of the basilica of St Demetrius in Thessalonica was instrumental. The church was almost completely in ruins after the disastrous fire of 1917, and Soteriou was summoned to study and excavate it before its final restoration. His research resulted in the publication of two volumes in 1952. It is worth remembering that in almost all those expeditions his wife, Maria, was an active participant, a role acknowledged in her co-authoring the book on the church of St Demetrius.³

His subsequent appointment as Director of the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens in 1923 came as an acknowledgement of his contribution to Byzantine Archaeology. Although the Museum had existed on paper since 1914, the various artefacts which formed its collection had up to then been temporarily housed in the building of the Athens Academy.⁴ Soteriou's role was pivotal in securing a permanent home for the Museum. Through fervent campaigning, constant petitioning, and vociferous articles in the press, he managed to save a Renaissance-looking mansion in central Athens from demolition. The so-called Villa Ilissia, which belonged to the French-American Duchess of Plaisance, Sophie

² Φυτράκη, Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου', pp. 15–20. For documentary material and photographs, see Ἐφη Μερταμβελιώτακη, Αντώνης Τσάκαλος, and Νικολέττα Δημητρακοπούλου-Σκυλογιάννη, Ὁ εμπλουτισμός των συλλογών: Ευρήματα από τις ανασκαφές του Γ. Σωτηρίου', in *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο (1884–1930): Κατάλογος έκθεσης. Αθήνα, Βυζαντινό και Χριστιανικό Μουσείο, 29 Μαρτίου 2002–7 Ιανουαρίου 2003*, ed. by Ολγα Γκράτζιου and Αναστασία Λαζαρίδου (Αθήνα: Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων και Απαλλοτριώσεων, 2006), pp. 320–39.

³ Γεωργίου και Μαρίας Σωτηρίου, *Ἡ βασιλική τοῦ Ἁγ. Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης*, 2 vols, Βιβλιοθήκη τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας, 34 (Αθήνα: Βιβλιοθήκη τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας, 1952).

⁴ Ἀγγελική Κόκκου, *Ἡ μέριμνα γιὰ τὶς ἀρχαιότητες στὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὰ πρῶτα μουσεῖα* (Αθήνα: Ἐρμῆς, 1977), pp. 289–90. Ολγα Γκράτζιου, 'Από την ιστορία του Βυζαντινού Μουσείου: Τα πρώτα χρόνια', *Μνήμων*, 11 (1987), 54–73 (pp. 69–73). Ευγενία Χαλκιά, 'Βυζαντινόν Μουσείον: ναός της τέχνης και της ιστορίας της μεσαιωνικής Ελλάδος', in *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, pp. 53–63 (pp. 57–63). Αντώνης Τσάκαλος, '1924: Η πρώτη έκθεση στην Ακαδημία Αθηνών', in *ibid.*, p. 297.

de Marbois-Lebrun, was to become the seat of the new museum and still forms the core of it to this day. The date of the inauguration was 17 October 1930, chosen to coincide with the Third International Congress of Byzantine Studies, held in Athens that year. From then onwards Maria and Georgios Soteriou made the museum's premises their permanent home.⁵ In 1924 Soteriou became the first Professor of Christian Archaeology and Palaeography at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Athens. Two years later, in 1926, he was among the first thirty-nine appointed members of the newly founded Academy of Athens.⁶

Influenced by the nationalistic spirit prevalent in Greece at the time and in spite of the disastrous outcome of the military expedition in Asia Minor in 1922, Soteriou actively expanded research outside the borders of the Greek state.⁷ He responded instantly to requests from areas which had once formed part of the Byzantine Empire, such as Constantinople, Egypt, Sinai, and Cyprus. Moreover, having been trained essentially as a theologian, and specializing in what was then considered 'Christian' archaeology, Soteriou maintained good relations with the higher ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁸ He had already been director of the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens for almost a decade when, in 1931, he was invited by the Archbishop of Cyprus to study the Byzantine monuments of the island.⁹ Later that year, a preliminary account of his research appeared in the *Proceedings of the Athens Academy*, while the first volume with the plates followed in 1935.¹⁰ In 1933,

⁵ Δημήτριος Κωνστάντιος, Γεώργιος Σωτηρίου: Υπέρ έθνους, θρησκείας και επιστήμης', in *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, pp. 64–76 (pp. 71, 74–75). Αντώνης Τσάκαλος and Όλγα Μπαδήμα-Φουντουλάκη, '1930: Το Βυζαντινόν και Χριστιανικόν Μουσείον αποκτά μόνιμη στέγη', in *ibid.*, pp. 374–79.

⁶ Φυτράκη, Γεώργιος Άγγ. Σωτηρίου', pp. 7–8.

⁷ Κωνστάντιος, Γεώργιος Σωτηρίου', pp. 64–71.

⁸ Ομιλία του Ακαδημαϊκού Π.Λ. Βοκοτοπούλου κατά την επίσημη υποδοχή του στην Ακαδημία Αθηνών, *Πρακτικά της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών*, 76B' (2001), 241–60 (p. 243).

⁹ Φυτράκη, Γεώργιος Άγγ. Σωτηρίου', pp. 20–21. *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, p. 315, no. 512 (Soteriou's journal from his Cyprus expedition) and no. 513 (invitation letter by the Archbishop of Cyprus).

¹⁰ Γεώργιος Ά. Σωτηρίου, 'Τὰ Παλαιοχριστιανικά καὶ Βυζαντινὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Κύπρου', *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν*, 6 (1931), 477–90; Σωτηρίου, *Τὰ Βυζαντινὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Κύπρου*, Πραγματεῖαι τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν. Φιλολογική-Ἱστορική σειρὰ, 3 vols, A'. Album (Ἐν Ἀθήναις: Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν-Γραφεῖον Δημοσιευμάτων, 1935), 40 pp., with 162 plates and 46 figs. See also *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, pp. 315–16, no. 515.

Photios II, the then Patriarch of Constantinople, invited him to record the relics kept in the sacristy of the Patriarchal church.¹¹ The expedition resulted in a hundred-page publication in 1937, which included detailed descriptions of the icons, manuscripts, and liturgical vestments, accompanied by sixty-four high-quality black-and-white photographs.¹² In 1936 the Patriarch of Alexandria, Nikolaos, asked him to organize the new ecclesiastical museum, housed in the Monastery of St George in Old Cairo.¹³ In the summer of 1938, he travelled to Egypt together with his wife, where he catalogued the Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons kept in the monastery, together with those in the cathedral of St Savvas in Alexandria. The results were published the same year in the Patriarchate's periodical, *Ekklesiastikos Pharos*.¹⁴

During his visit to Cairo in the summer of 1938, Georgios and Maria Soteriou went to Sinai, following an invitation extended by the Archbishop of Sinai, Porphyrios III, earlier that year (see Figure 2 in the Introduction).¹⁵ On the Holy Mountain, the two of them went through the monastery's icon collection and selected the most important of them to be photographed by G. Tsimas, the passionate photographer of the Greek National Archaeological Museum (Figure 3).¹⁶ The Soterious came across both Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons hanging on the walls of the catholicon and its chapels or deposited in monastic cells, the library, and the sacristy.¹⁷ Although icons in public places were visible to any visitor, up to that time nobody had access to material kept in the sacristy.¹⁸

¹¹ Φυτράκη, 'Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου', p. 22. *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, p. 316, no. 518 (letter by Patriarch Photios II to Soteriou).

¹² Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, *Κειμήλια τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου: Πατριαρχικὸς ναὸς καὶ σκευοφυλάκιον* (Ἐν Ἀθήναις: Ἑστία, 1937), 114 pp., with 64 pls and 30 figs.

¹³ Φυτράκη, 'Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου', p. 22. *Από τη Χριστιανική Συλλογή στο Βυζαντινό Μουσείο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, p. 317, no. 525 (letter by Patriarch Alexandros).

¹⁴ Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, 'Ἐκθεσις περὶ τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Μουσείου τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Ἁγ. Γεωργίου ἐν Π. Καίῳ', *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος*, 37 (1938), 385–401.

¹⁵ Appendix, Letter B.

¹⁶ Φυτράκη, 'Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου', p. 22.

¹⁷ Γεωργίου και Μαρίας Σωτηρίου, *Εἰκόνες τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ*, vol. I: *Album*, Collection de l'Institut Français d'Athènes, 100 (Athènes: Institut Français d'Athènes, 1956), pp. 5–6.

¹⁸ According to accounts, it was practically impossible to take out relics from the sacristy, where even the archbishop himself was not allowed(!). Κωνσταντῖνος Ν. Παπαμιχαλόπουλος, *Ἡ Μονὴ τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ* (Κάιρον: Συναϊτικὸν Μετόχιον, 1932), p. 351.



Figure 3. Archbishop Porphyrios III, Georgios and Maria Soteriou, and their team pose in front of the walls of Sinai. Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum, 1938.
 Photograph: Courtesy of the Byzantine and Christian Museum.

Before the end of that year, the first brief report on the treasures of Sinai appeared in Greek scholarly press, to be followed a year later by an article in a foreign journal. In the former publication Soteriou stresses ‘the inestimable artistic and archaeological value of these icons’. He compares Mount Sinai to Mount Athos, which ‘despite its twenty monasteries and many hermitages does not possess even an infinitesimal part of the Sinai Byzantine icons’ and concludes that ‘these precious relics unquestionably form the richest Byzantine gallery in the world’.¹⁹ In another article in *Byzantion*, Soteriou hopes that ‘their [the icons]’ publication will illuminate the history of Byzantine icons, this area of Byzantine art which remains so obscure because of dated monuments’. He presents six ‘of these very precious Byzantine icons’ from various periods, starting with the sixth-century

¹⁹ Γεώργιος Α. Σωτηρίου, ‘Τὰ κειμήλια τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ’, *Νέα Ἑστία*, Christmas issue (1938), 51–53, with 2 figs.

encaustic icon of the Virgin with saints, followed by a twelfth-century specimen, and concluding with a thirteenth-century 'Franco-Byzantine' icon.²⁰

The outbreak of the Second World War brought things to a standstill, but eight years later Soteriou dedicated an article to two of the most famous encaustic icons of the monastery's collection: the sixth-century Virgin with military saints and St Peter.²¹ During the Eighth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, held in Palermo, Italy, in 1951, Soteriou presented a paper on the mosaic of the Transfiguration in the apse of the catholicon.²² Although the apse mosaic had been known for quite some time, this was the first time that it was described and illustrated in detail.²³ The same year he published two more specimens from the Sinai collection, the famous pair of thirteenth-century icons of prophets Elijah and Moses, bearing Greek and Arabic inscriptions.²⁴ In his next article, two years later, he examined some frescoes from two recently discovered chapels in the walls of the monastery.²⁵

Although Soteriou played a decisive role in presenting the Sinai icons to the scholarly community, Porphyrios III was instrumental in opening up the monastery and its collections to scholars, especially Greek ones. Archbishop of Sinai,

²⁰ Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, 'Icônes byzantines du monastère du Sinai', *Byzantion*, 14 (1939), 325–27, with 6 pls.

²¹ Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, 'Εγκαυστική εἰκὼν τῆς Θεοτόκου τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 70 (1947 for 1946), 552–56, with 2 pls; Σωτηρίου, 'Εγκαυστική εἰκὼν τοῦ ἀποστόλου Πέτρου τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ', *ΠΑΓΚΑΡΠΕΙΑ: Mélanges Henri Grégoire, Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, 10 (1950), 607–10, with 2 pls.

²² Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, 'Τὸ μωσαϊκὸν τῆς Μεταμορφώσεως τοῦ καθολικοῦ τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ', in *Atti dello VIII Congresso Internazionale di Studi Bizantini, Palermo, 3–10 Aprile 1951*, special issue, *Studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 8 (1953), 246–52, pls 74–88.

²³ One of the first articles to discuss the mosaic extensively did not include any photographs. See V. Benešević, 'Sur la date de la mosaïque de la Transfiguration au Mont Sinai', *Byzantion*, 1 (1924), 144–72. In contrast, Soteriou's article included fifteen plates.

²⁴ Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, 'Ἑλληνο-αραβικὰ εἰκόνες τοῦ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῦ προφήτου Ἡλίου τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ', in *Tome commemoratif du Millénaire de la Bibliothèque Patriarcale d'Alexandrie*, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Orientales de la Bibliothèque Patriarcale d'Alexandrie, 2 (Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Ἰνστιτούτον Ἀνατολικῶν Σπουδῶν, 1953.), pp. 153–55, with 1 plate. Based on palaeographic evidence, the icons had been dated in the eleventh century (M. H. L. Rubino, *Le Monastère de St Catherine du Monte Sinai* (Cairo: Royal automobile club d'Égypte, 1938), pp. 59–60) but Soteriou argued that stylistically they should be dated in the fifteenth century.

²⁵ Γεώργιος Ἀ. Σωτηρίου, 'Τοιχογραφίαι τῆς σκηπῆς τοῦ Μαρτυρίου εἰς παρεκκλήσια τοῦ τεῖχους τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ', in *Silloge bizantina in onore di Silvio Giuseppe Mercati*, special issue, *Studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 9 (1957), 389–91, with 5 figs and 1 sketch.

Pharan, and Raithou from 1926 until 1968, he was known to be a gentle man who cared deeply for the monastery's relics. The acquaintance of the two men, Archbishop Porphyrios and Professor Soteriou, goes back at least a couple of years before the latter's arrival at the Holy Mountain. In a letter to the Archbishop dated 29 January 1933, Soteriou thanks Porphyrios for a book he had sent him. The book, an extensive history of the monastery from its foundation up until the time of Napoleon, with a catalogue of the Sinaite archbishops, was published by the monastery, care of the Archbishop himself.²⁶ In the letter Soteriou expresses the wish that he were able to visit Sinai so that he 'would acquire first-hand knowledge of the precious treasures of the mind and the art, which are possessively guarded by a handful of Greek monks for the past fourteen centuries'. Replying to his letter in February 1933, Porphyrios agrees with Soteriou's remark that 'it is indeed sad that up to now, except for Professor Amantos and Headmaster Pantelakes, only numerous foreigners visit the Holy Mountain from time to time in order to indulge in its rich spiritual pasture and appropriate the glory that belongs mainly to the Greeks'. The Archbishop adds that 'this treasure remains largely unexploited and awaits those who have the right and call themselves Greeks to present it to the whole scholarly world. The monastery is proud', he continues, 'to have a Professor of your eminence act as a vocal advocate of its significance and it would be even happier if you decided to visit it and appreciate these precious relics of ancestral wisdom and impeccable faith that are kept here'. He concludes the letter with the 'fervent wish that our common desire be fulfilled'.²⁷

Georgios Soteriou was by then an accomplished scholar and perhaps the leading Byzantinist of his time. Since 1924 he had also been teaching young students at the Theology Faculty, who later joined the Church or taught in high schools. One of those students was Gregorios Maniates who, after completing his studies at the university, became an archimandrite on Sinai. Maniates acted as a link between Soteriou and Porphyrios, being in contact both with his former professor and with the Archbishop, and Soteriou duly acknowledged his contribution.²⁸

Another connection between Soteriou and Sinai had been provided by his fellow member of the Academy, the Byzantine historian Konstantinos Amantos. From 1912 to 1914 Amantos was invited by the Archbishop of Sinai, Porphyrios II, to act as Director of the Abeteios School in Cairo, which had been founded by the

²⁶ Appendix, Letter A. Παπαμιχαλόπουλος, *Ἡ Μονὴ τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ*.

²⁷ Appendix, Letter A.

²⁸ Σωτηρίου, *Εἰκόνα τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ*, 1, 6.

Hellenized Syrian brothers Abet in 1860.²⁹ The school, which by that time had one thousand students, was meant to serve the Greek community of Egypt and is still functioning today. It maintained a close connection with the monastery, since the Archbishop of Sinai was the designated president of the school's committee.³⁰ Amantos was the first to alert the scholarly community to the plethora of icons kept on the Holy Mountain. During his two-year sojourn in Cairo, Amantos travelled to Sinai, a visit which resulted in the publication of a slim but important volume with unpublished documentary material from the monastery.³¹ Among the sigils, memoirs, and testaments, Amantos included numerous inscriptions and their facsimiles, mainly from post-Byzantine icons kept in the monastery's collection. Quite a few of these were signed by famous Cretan painters, such as Emmanouel Tzanes, Michail Damaskinos, Georgios Klontzas, Emmanouel Lampardos, Ieremias Palladas, Victor, etc., although some Byzantine works were also included. Some years later Amantos also published a short history of the monastery itself.³²

Soteriou and Amantos led parallel courses: in 1924 Amantos became the first professor of Byzantine History at the University of Athens, the very same year that Soteriou was elected Professor at the Faculty of Theology of the same university. They were both among the first appointed members of the Athens Academy in 1926, the very year of its foundation.³³ In the introduction of his book on the icons of Sinai, Soteriou explicitly thanks Professor Amantos, 'who drew our [Soteriou's] attention to the archaeological value and the existing richness of the Byzantine icons in the monastery'.³⁴

²⁹ Νικόλαος Β. Τωμαδάκης, 'Κωνσταντίνος Ί. Ἀμαντος, 1874–1960: Βιογραφικὸν Σημείωμα', in *Εἰς μνήμην Κ. Ί. Ἀμάντου (1874–1960)*, ed. by Β. Τωμαδάκης (Ἀθήναι: Τυπογραφεῖον Μηνᾶ Μυρτίδη, 1960), α'–ιστ' (θ').

³⁰ Ματούλα Τομαρά-Σιδέρη, 'Ἡ Ἀμπέτειος Σχολή στα τέλη του 19^{ου} αἰώνα', in *Ἑλληνικά ιστορικά εκπαιδευτήρια στη Μεσόγειο ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα μέχρι σήμερα: Πρακτικά συνεδρίου, Χίος, 18–21 Οκτωβρίου 2001*, ed. by Τασούλα Μανδάλα (Χίος: Υπουργεῖο Παιδείας καὶ Θρησκευμάτων καὶ Δήμος Χίου, 2002), pp. 261–66.

³¹ Κωνσταντίνος Ί. Ἀμαντος, *Σιναΐτικὰ μνημεῖα ἀνέκδοτα*, Ἑλληνικά, Παράρτημα 1 (Ἐν Ἀθήναις: Σύλλογος πρὸς διάδοσιν ὠφελίμων βιβλίων, 1928).

³² Κωνσταντίνος Ί. Ἀμαντος, *Σύντομος ἱστορία τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς τοῦ Σινᾶ*, Ἑλληνικά, Παράρτημα 3 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ἐταιρεία Μακεδονικῶν Σπουδῶν, 1953).

³³ Φυτράκη, Γεώργιος Ἀγγ. Σωτηρίου', p. 9. Τόνια Κιουσοπούλου, 'Ἡ πρώτη ἔδρα τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Ἱστορίας στο Πανεπιστήμιο Ἀθηνῶν', *Μνήμων*, 15 (1993), 257–76 (pp. 264–65, n. 30).

³⁴ Σωτηρίου, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ*, 1, 6.

During the couple's sojourn on Sinai, a building programme began which would provide the monastery with a library and a guests' room. It was at Soteriou's instigation that a gallery began to be built, in order to house the icon collection. In a letter, dated 12 March 1939, Porphyrios is hopeful that the monastery would soon acquire both a library and a gallery.³⁵ In the same letter he thanks Soteriou for sending him his publication on the treasures of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and wishes that the Sinai icons would soon be 'described' by the Professor's 'pious and eloquent pen'. The Archbishop is 'proud that thanks to God's grace we are guardians of so many precious and holy treasures. 'If', he adds, 'God blesses us to see them placed in a location they deserve and published by the wise Professor G. Soteriou, our joy will be complete'.

Porphyrios's wish came true in 1956, when the first volume with the plates of the Sinai icons appeared, followed by the text in 1958.³⁶ The so-called album comprised 238 black-and-white figures and 8 colour plates, accompanied by twenty-five pages of text. The second volume included 226 pages of text and 7 black-and-white figures, followed by a twenty-one-page summary in French. Both volumes were published by the French Institute in Athens, then under the enlightened directorship of Octave Merlier. Although not complete by any means, this was essentially the first systematic attempt to create a photographic record, as well as describe, date, and classify this unique but otherwise unknown collection of icons, dating from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries. Of a total of around two thousand existing icons, 238 of them were presented here for the first time. This rare material was divided into ten chapters and arranged chronologically and thematically: the first chapter dealt with the famous encaustic icons of the fifth to the seventh centuries; the second comprised icons dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries, which were grouped under the heading 'Eastern monastic art'; the next three chapters covered the period from the ninth century to the 'Comnenian era'. Chapter 6 included icons that came from an epistyle or an iconostasis and dating from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, while chapter 7 detailed the so-called menologion or calendar icons. The next chapter contained icons of the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries with depictions of Sinaite saints, while a separate chapter was dedicated to thirteenth-century icons. The last chapter concluded with icons of the 'Palaeologan era, fourteenth to fifteenth century'.

³⁵ Appendix, Letter C.

³⁶ Σωτηρίου, *Εικόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ*, vol. I: *Album*, and Γεωργίου και Μαρίας Σωτηρίου, *Εικόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ*, vol. II: *Text*, Collection de l'Institut Français d'Athènes, 102 (Αθήνα: Institut Français d'Athènes, 1958).

By the time the volumes went to press, Soteriou's activity had been restricted by poor health and bad eyesight.³⁷ An accident during preparations to reopen the Museum after the Second World War forced him to walk with a cane until the end of his life in 1965.³⁸ Maria Soteriou, his life- and work-companion, was instrumental in seeing the Sinai project completed. In the spring of 1954, Maria Soteriou, together with a photographic crew, travelled to Sinai without her husband in order to study the icons further and complete the photographic archive with detailed black-and-white, as well as colour, images. On Sinai she was assisted by archimandrite Gregorios Maniates, Soteriou's former student. Soteriou had already allocated to Maniates the classification and cataloguing of the monastery's icon collection, which the latter carried out under his professor's constant supervision and guidance.³⁹ Back in Athens, Maria Soteriou collaborated with her husband to produce the accompanying text. In matters both practical and scientific, her contribution proved crucial for the final stages of completion, and it is not surprising that, just as in the book on St Demetrius, she was credited as the coauthor of the Sinai study.⁴⁰

Although Maria Soteriou had no formal training in Byzantine art and archaeology, she was an accomplished Byzantinist in her own right. As a young bride, she had accompanied her husband abroad, where they both attended the same classes on theology, history, archaeology, and art history. Later, she became his steady companion on archaeological expeditions and excavations in Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Sinai.⁴¹ Her very first publication on the enigmatic church of Skripou in 1931 was followed by numerous articles, appearing mainly after the 1950s, on subjects varying from the early Palaeologan Renaissance to the so-called Milutin school, and places stretching from northern Greece to Cyprus.⁴² Doula Mouriki has perceptively observed that Maria Soteriou's 'main restriction was the fact that

³⁷ Φυτράκη, 'Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου', pp. 25–26.

³⁸ I owe this piece of information to the formidable memory of Prof. P. L. Vocotopoulos.

³⁹ Σωτηρίου, *Εἰκόνες τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ*, 1, 6.

⁴⁰ Φυτράκη, 'Γεώργιος Ἄγγ. Σωτηρίου', pp. 22–23.

⁴¹ A number of photographs from the Soteriou archive show the couple in these places. See Αντώνης Τσάκαλος, 'Ὁ Γεώργιος Σωτηρίου καὶ τὸ ἔργο του', in *Ἀπὸ τῆ Χριστιανικῆ Συλλογῆ στο Βυζαντινὸ Μουσεῖο*, ed. by Γκράτζιου and Λαζαρίδου, no. 495 (in J. Strzygowski's seminar in Vienna, 1911), no. 516 (in the Archbishopric of Cyprus), nos 565.1–2 (Nea Anchialos excavations), no. 581.1 (George and Maria Soteriou studying pottery and metal finds from the Ephesus excavation, August 1922).

⁴² See her list of publications, compiled by Doula Mouriki in *ΔΧΑΕ*, Θ' (1977–79), ια'–ιβ'.

she usually worked like a medieval artist: despite her rare dynamism, she often battled without claiming the recognition she rightly deserved'.⁴³

As soon as Porphyrios received the second volume of the publication he wrote to the Soterious. The letter may be brief, but its tone is cordial. Dated 26 July 1958, it is for the first time addressed to both 'Professor Georgios Soteriou and his honorable wife, Mrs Maria'. The Archbishop acknowledges the receipt of the second volume of this 'splendid in appearance and important in content' work. He also expresses his 'sincere congratulations and warmest thanks', wishing that 'the Father of light and donor of wisdom bestows unfaltering health and long life upon you [i.e. Soteriou and his wife], in order to fulfill the holy and wonderful work of describing the history of the venerable icons and the rest of the artefacts, which adorn the most sacred temples of our holy religion and where the name of our Lord Jesus is glorified'. This time he concludes his letter in a much warmer tone, signing 'with deep love and every honour'.⁴⁴

Scholarly reviews were equally acclamatory. Reacting almost instantly to the publication of the first volume, B. Bouvier wrote that this is 'une véritable révélation [...] il [le livre] nous permet de compléter d'importantes lacunes dans l'histoire de la peinture paléo-chrétienne et byzantine' (a true revelation [...] it enables us to complete important gaps in the history of Early Christian and Byzantine painting).⁴⁵ F. Halkin wrote in *Analecta Bollandiana*:

les icônes formeraient une galerie d'une abondance, d'une variété, d'une richesse insoupçonnées. Le directeur du Musée byzantine d'Athènes et Mme Sotiriou sont allées sur place à étudier cette collection unique. Laissant de côté des centaines et des centaines d'exemplaires plus récents ou moins intéressants, ils ont choisi environ 200 pièces parmi les plus anciennes et les plus caractéristiques. Le luxurieux album et le volume de texte [...] constituent une sorte d'histoire illustrée de l'icône byzantine, du V^e au XV^e siècles.⁴⁶

[the icons would have formed a gallery of unfathomable abundance, variety and wealth. The director of the Byzantine Museum in Athens and Madam Soteriou have gone to study this unique collection in situ. Having put aside hundreds and hundreds of more recent or less interesting examples, they have chosen around two hundred pieces among the most ancient and most characteristic. The luxurious album and the volume with the text [...] constitute a sort of illustrated history of the Byzantine icon, from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries.]

⁴³ Ντούλα Μουρίκη, 'Μαρία Γ. Σωτηρίου', ΔΧΑΕ, Θ' (1977-79), ζ-τ' (p. τ').

⁴⁴ Appendix, Letter D.

⁴⁵ *Journal de Genève*, 29-30 September 1956, 223.

⁴⁶ *Analecta Bollandiana*, 76 (1958), 433-35.

When the second volume with the text appeared two years later, Friedrich Deichmann observed:

Das monumentale Werk bedeutet eine aussergewöhnliche Bereicherung unserer Kenntniss der Byzantinischen Malerei. Während Wulff-Alpatov 40 Ikonen veröffentlichte, sind in S.s. Werk 238 publiziert [...] die vielfältige Problemstellung, die sich aus dieser einzigartigen Sammlung ergibt, ist von den Verfassern berührt and sie haben bereits Wesentliches zu ihrer Lösung beigetragen.⁴⁷

[This monumental work represents an unusual enrichment of our knowledge of Byzantine painting. While Wulff-Alpatov⁴⁸ published forty icons, 238 are published in Soteriou's work [...] the multiple problem, which arises from this unique collection, is touched upon by the authors and they have already contributed essentially to the solution.]

André Grabar's review, though critical at points, was equally jubilant:

Depuis la publication par Lichatchev de ses recueils monumentaux des *Matériaux pour l'histoire de la peinture d'icônes russes* (1911), aucun livre n'a enrichi notre documentation sur les icônes byzantines autant que le présent ouvrage de Georges et Marie Sotiriou. Il s'agit d'une véritable révélation que l'auteur de la recension qui suit est particulièrement heureux de pouvoir présenter aux lecteurs des *Cahiers Archéologiques*, après avoir félicité les infatigables auteurs de l'ouvrage et leur éditeurs français de leur contribution essentielle à nos études [...]. On est d'autant plus impressionné par la découverte des Sotiriou; et l'on peut parler d'une vraie découverte, car la richesse exceptionnelle en icônes du Mont Sinai n'avait pas été signalée par aucun voyageur avant eux. Il faut croire que ces voyageurs n'avaient pas eu accès au dépôt d'icônes anciennes que M. et Mme Sotiriou ont eu le privilège d'examiner. Ce qu'ils publient est un choix de photographies qu'ils y firent prendre. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'un album complet des icônes du Sinai [...]. Mais l'album Sotiriou, tel qu'il est, est d'une richesse exceptionnelle, puisqu'il comprend plus de deux cent icônes inédites [...] et parce que plus de la moitié de ses icônes sont antérieures à la basse-époque byzantine et remontent à la longue période antérieure (VI^e–XII^e siècle) qui en dehors du Sinaï n'est pas représentée du tout, ou par quelques pièces exceptionnelles et isolées.⁴⁹

[Since the publication by Likhachev of his monumental anthology, *Materials for a History of Russian Icon Painting*,⁵⁰ no book has enriched our research material on Byzantine icons as much as the present work by Georgios and Maria Soteriou. This is a true revelation that the author of this review is particularly happy to be able to present to the readers of *Cahiers archéologiques*, after having congratulated the indefatigable authors of this work and their

⁴⁷ BZ, 51 (1958), 507.

⁴⁸ Oskar Wulff and Michael Alpatov, *Denkmäler der Ikonmalerei in kunstgeschichtlicher Folge* (Hellerau bei Dresden: Avalun Verlag, 1925).

⁴⁹ *Cahiers archéologiques*, 10 (1959), 313–17 (p. 313).

⁵⁰ N. P. Likhachev, *Materials for a History of Russian Icon Painting* (St Petersburg: [n.pub.], 1906).

French editors for their vital contribution to our [Byzantine] studies [...]. All the more reason to be impressed by the discovery made by the Soterious; and one can talk of a true discovery, since the exceptional richness of Mount Sinai in icons had not been reported by any traveller before them. One is forced to believe that these travellers did not have access to the repository of ancient icons that Mr and Mrs Soteriou had the privilege of examining. The ones which they publish are a choice of photographs they have made. In this sense it is not a complete album of icons from Sinai [...]. But the Soteriou album, such as it is, has an exceptional richness [of material], since it comprises more than two hundred unpublished icons [...] and because more than half of these icons predate the late Byzantine era and come from the previous long period (sixth to twelfth century), which outside Sinai is not represented at all, or only by some exceptional or isolated pieces.]

After the publication of the second volume in 1958, the leading Greek Byzantinist Manolis Chatzedakes wrote:

Στὴ σειρὰ τῶν λαμπρῶν ἐκδόσεων τοῦ Γαλλικοῦ Ἰνστιτούτου συμπληρώθηκε ἡ ἔκδοση μιᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πολυτιμότερες δημοσιεύσεις του [...]. Αἱ εἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ' θὰ μείνουν γιὰ πολλὰ χρόνια βασικὸ ὄργανο μελέτης [...]. Ὁ πλοῦτος αὐτὸς τοῦ ὑλικοῦ ἀνοίγει γιὰ τὸν μελετητὴ νέους ἐντελῶς δρόμους γιὰ τὴ γνωριμία τῆς τέχνης τῆς εἰκόνας.⁵¹

[In the series of the illustrious editions by the French Institute one of its most precious publications has come out [...]. The *Icons of Mount Sinai* will remain for years to come a basic study tool [...]. The richness of the material opens up brand new roads for the researcher who wants to get acquainted with the art of the icon.]

In the same article, Chatzedakes acknowledges Maria Soteriou's critical contribution in processing this material and extols the authors' 'knowledge of the art of the era, the astute observation and the scientific method, which make this work stand out'. When he was writing, the American scientific expedition, headed by Professor Kurt Weitzmann, was already on its way to Sinai. Chatzedakes did not conceal his pride that a Greek scholar had been there first: "Ὅμως ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἐπιστῆμη μὲ τὰ λιτὰ τῆς μέσα καὶ μὲ τὸ πάθος τῆς, ἔχει τὸ προβάδισμα" (However, Greek scholarship, with its frugal means and its passion, has precedence).

This first two-volume edition by the Soterious seems humble, both in size and quality, in comparison to subsequent, more colourful and monumental, publications of the Sinai icons.⁵² However, before the Soterious' publication, they were virtually unknown to the outside world. Early descriptions of the monastery barely

⁵¹ *Τὸ Βῆμα*, 8 June 1958, 3. I am indebted to Dimitris Psychoyos for the speedy electronic dispatch of this article.

⁵² It measures 28 x 22 cm and, understandably, the overwhelming majority of the photographs are in black and white.

indicated the wealth of material kept there, while the Russian archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij was mainly interested in manuscripts.⁵³ Uspenskij removed four encaustic icons from Sinai (today in the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Arts in Kiev), and this is all the world knew about icon painting on Sinai. Subsequent publications by Strzygowski, Ainalov, Kondakov, and Petrov mentioned only the early encaustic specimen.⁵⁴ A rather more comprehensive, but still very limited, list was given by Benešević in his *Monumenta sinaitica*, who published nine icons from the monastery, including the two mosaic icons with the Virgin and St Demetrius and the Crusader icon with the Virgin of the Burning Bush with Moses, Elijah, and Gregory Nanzianzenus.⁵⁵ It was with the landmark study by the two indefatigable and dedicated Greek scholars that the significance of this unique collection of Byzantine art was revealed, appreciated, and shared with the rest of the scholarly community.

In June 1956, the very same year that the first volume of the Soteriou book appeared in press, Professor Kurt Weitzmann of Princeton University, together with Professor George Forsyth of the University of Michigan, visited Sinai for the first time. Although Weitzmann had tried to reach Sinai as early as 1931 in order to study illuminated manuscripts kept in the monastery's library, both his first and subsequent two attempts failed. In 1931 he was turned back by an attack of typhus, then in the summer of 1939, by the outbreak of World War II, and in 1951 by the Suez crisis.⁵⁶ When he finally reached Sinai, he spent five days at the monastery, working almost exclusively on the manuscript collection. The library was, of course, housed next to the icon gallery, which had been built on Soteriou's initiative. Weitzmann very eloquently describes the impact that the discovery of the icons had on him:

⁵³ P. Uspenskij, *First Journey to the Monastery of Sinai in the Year 1845* (St Petersburg: [n.pub.], 1856); Uspenskij, *Second Journey to the Monastery of Sinai in the Year 1850* (St Petersburg: [n.pub.], 1856) [both in Russian].

⁵⁴ J. Strzygowski, *Byzantinische Denkmäler*, 3 vols (Vienna: [n.pub.], 1891), I, 116. D. Ainalov, 'Enkaustische Ikonen vom Sinai', *Vizantinski Vremnik*, 10 (1902), 34–41. N. Kondakov, *Die Ikonen vom Sinai und Athos der Sammlung des hochw. Porphyrij Uspenskij* (St Petersburg: [n.pub.], 1902). P. Petrov, *Album of Objects of Interest at the Ecclesiastical Museum of the Religious Academy of Kiev*, vol. I: *The Collection of Icons from Sinai and Athos* (Kiev: [n.pub.], 1912).

⁵⁵ V. Benešević, *Monumenta sinaitica, archaeologica et palaeographica* (St Petersburg: Rossijskaja Gosudarstvennaja Akademicheskaja Tipografija, 1925), fig. 1 and pls 17–24, esp. pls 19–21.

⁵⁶ Kurt Weitzmann, *Sailing with Byzantium from Europe to America: The Memoirs of an Art Historian* (Munich: Editio Maris, 1994), pp. 253, 256–57.

When I saw the collection in the room marked at its entrance 'Picture Gallery' in English, I had one of the greatest surprises of my life. Here were gathered icons from the fifth to the sixth century on, and nowhere in the world is there such a wealth of icons dating before the twelfth century. Here one was faced with a collection that established a continuity from the fifth century without interruption to modern times. From the moment I saw the icons I began to spend a good deal of my time in the 'Picture Gallery' and to take a close look at the icons in the church and the many chapels within the walls of the monastery.⁵⁷

On his way back to the United States, Weitzmann stopped in Cairo to pay a visit to the Archbishop and told him that he would like to come back and work not only on the manuscripts but on the icons as well. At that point, he was presented with a copy of the Soteriou book, which had just appeared, and was told that the couple 'had done it all'. Weitzmann insisted that he had catalogued more than two thousand icons, when the Soterious had published 'only about 150' and thus got permission to work on the icons as well. Two years later, on 23 April 1958, the year that the second volume of the Soteriou publication came out, what was to become the 'Princeton-Michigan-Alexandria expedition to Sinai' sailed from Naples to Alexandria.⁵⁸

When Weitzmann set up his Sinai expedition, he was clearly following Soteriou's steps: he took over where the Soterious had left off. Weitzmann's contribution to the *Festschrift* volume dedicated to Georgios Soteriou, appropriately placed first, is a befitting acknowledgement of their contribution to the discovery of the Sinai icons:

Not since the days of Kondakoff has our knowledge of Byzantine art been so broadened by a single person as it has been by George Soteriou [...]. This publication [on the icons of Sinai] may well be considered their most influential one in the future. They had clearly realized that Sinai has by far the most important icon collection in existence and the increasing awareness of icon art, far beyond the interests of Byzantinists, will have to take the Sinai material into account as the basis for all future studies concerning that which, in Byzantine culture, was the central branch of pictorial art. We can think of no more appropriate way of honoring Professor Soteriou than to add another brick to a building for which he and Mrs. Soteriou have laid a solid foundation.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Weitzmann, *Sailing with Byzantium*, pp. 258–59.

⁵⁸ Weitzmann, *Sailing with Byzantium*, pp. 259–61.

⁵⁹ Kurt Weitzmann, 'Fragments of an Early St Nicholas Triptych on Mount Sinai', *ΔΧΑΕ, Δ'* (1964–65), 1–23 (p. 1).

Appendix

Letters Exchanged between Georgios Soteriou and Archbishop Porphyrios

Letter A

Ἐν Σινᾷ τῇ 13 Φεβρουαρίου 1933
 Τῷ ἐλλογιμώτατῳ Καθηγητῇ τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου
 καὶ Διευθυντῇ τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Μουσείου
 Κυρίῳ κ. Γ. Σωτηρίου
 Εἰς Ἀθήνας

Ἐλλογιμώτατε Κύριε Καθηγητά,

Ἐλάβομεν τὸ ἀπὸ 29 π[αρελθόντος] μηνὸς τίμιον ὑμῶν γράμμα δι' οὗ ἀγγέλετε ἡμῖν τὴν λήψιν τοῦ κατ' ἐντολὴν ἡμῶν δοθέντος ὑμῖν ὠραίου περὶ Σινᾶ ἔργου, ὃπερ ἔγραψε μὲν ὁ ἀοίδιμος Κων. Παπαμιχαλόπουλος, ἐξέδωκε δὲ τύποις ἡ Ἱερά ἡμῶν Μονὴ καὶ μετὰ τῶν εὐσεβῶν καὶ εὐγενῶν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς αἰσθημάτων ἅτινα ἐκφράζετε ἐπὶ τῇ εὐκαιρίᾳ ταύτῃ, εὐχεσθε ν' ἀξιωθῆτε νὰ ἐπισκεφθῆτε αὐτὴν ἵνα ἐκ τοῦ σύνεγγυς ἴδητε τοὺς πολυτίμους θησαυροὺς τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ τῆς τέχνης οἵτινες ζηλοτύπως φυλάσσονται ὑπὸ ὀλίγων ἐκάστοτε ἑλλήνων μοναχῶν ἐπὶ δεκατέσσερας ὀλοκλήρους αἰῶνας. Εἶναι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ λυπηρὸν, ὡς καὶ ἡ ὑμετέρα ἐλλογιμότης παρατηρεῖ, ὅτι ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν, ἐκτὸς τοῦ Καθηγητοῦ κ. Ἀμάντου καὶ τοῦ Γυμνασιάρχου κ. Παντελάκη, μόνον ξένοι πολλοὶ κατὰ καιροὺς ἐπισκέπτονται τὸ Σινᾶ καὶ ἐντροφῶσιν ἐν τῷ πλουσιωτάτῳ αὐτοῦ πνευματικῷ λιμῶνι καὶ λαμβάνουσι τὴν δόξαν, ἥτις ἀνήκει κυρίως εἰς τοὺς Ἑλληνας. Ἄλλ' ὁ θησαυρὸς οὗτος ἐλλογιμώτατε, εἶναι κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον ἔτι ἀνεκμετάλλευτος καὶ ἀναμένει τοὺς δικαιομένους καὶ ἀποκαλουμένους Ἑλληνας νὰ ἐμφανίσωσιν αὐτὸν τῷ ἀπανταχοῦ ἐπιστημονικῷ κόσμῳ.

Εἶναι ὑπερήφανος, Ἐλλογιμώτατε Κύριε Καθηγητά, ἡ Ἱερά ἡμῶν Μονὴ τοῦ Σινᾶ ἔχουσα μεταξὺ ἄλλων κήρυκα μεγαλόφωνον τῆς σημασίας αὐτῆς ὑφ' ὅλας τὰς ἐπόψεις καὶ Καθηγητὴν τῆς ὑμετέρας περιοπῆς, θὰ εἶναι δὲ εὐτυχῆς λίαν ἐὰν τύχῃ τῆς ἐπισκέψεως τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐλλογιμότητος, ἥτις εἶναι ἰδιαιτέρως ἀρμοδίᾳ νὰ ἐκτιμήσῃ τὰ φυλασσόμενα ἐν αὐτῇ πολυτιμώτατα κειμήλια τῆς ἀμωμήτου ἡμῶν πίστεως καὶ τῆς προγονικῆς σοφίας.

Μὲ τὴν διάπυρον εὐχὴν ὅπως ἐκπληρωθῆ ὁ πόθος ἡμῶν καὶ ὑμῶν δέξασθε,
Κύριε Καθηγητά, τὴν διαβεβαίωσιν τῆς ἐξαιρέτου πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὑπολήψεως
μεθ' ἧς διατελοῦμεν,

Ὁ Σιναίου Πορφύριος

Letter B

Τῷ ἐλλογιμοτάτῳ Κυρίῳ Γεωργίῳ Σωτηρίου
Ἀκαδημαϊκῷ Καθηγητῇ του Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν
κλπ. κλπ. κλπ.

Εἰς Κύπρον

Ἐλλογιμώτατε Κύριε Καθηγητᾶ,

Ἀσμένως [...] τὸ ἀπὸ 14. τρ[έχοντος] τίμιον Ὑμῶν γράμμα, δι' οὗ μὲ
πληροφορεῖτε ὅτι ἀνετέθη ὑμῶν ὑπὸ τῆς Αὐτῆς ἐ[ξοχότητος] τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς
Παιδείας Ὑπουργοῦ κ. Γεωργακοπούλου νὰ ἐπισκεφθῆτε τὴν Ἱερὰν ἡμῶν
Μοῦσικὴν τοῦ Σινᾶ πρὸς μελέτην καὶ ὑπόδειξιν ἡμῖν μεθοδικῆς ταξινομήσεως
τῶν φυλαττομένων ἐν αὐτῇ πολυτίμων ὄντως κειμηλίων τῆς τέχνης,
σπεύδω διὰ τῆς παρούσης νὰ [...] διαδηλώσω ἐν πρώτοις τὴν εὐκρινῆ
χαρὰν μου ἐπὶ τῇ χαρμοσύνῳ ταύτῃ πληροφορίᾳ, εἶτα δὲ νὰ φέρω ἐν
γνώσει ὑμῶν ὅτι προτιθέμενος καὶ γὰρ νὰ ἐπιστρέψω ἐν Σινᾷ κατὰ τὰς ἀρχὰς
Ἰουλίου, θὰ αἰσθανθῶ ἰδιαιτέραν εὐχαρίστησιν ἂν μοὶ δοθῆ ἡ εὐκαιρία
νὰ συνταξιδεύσω μεθ' ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς ἐριτίμου Κυρίας Σωτηρίου ὡς καὶ τοῦ
φωτογράφου κ. Τσίμα.

Ταῦτα ἀνακοινούμενος ὑμῖν καὶ τὰ κράτιστα ἐπευχόμενος,

Ἐν Καίρῳ 1938
Μαΐου 22

Διατελῶ,
Μέτ' ἀγάπης καὶ τιμῆς
Ὁ Σιναίου Πορφύριος

Letter C

Ἐλλογιμώτατον Κύριον Κ^{ον} Γ. Σωτηρίου
Καθηγητὴν τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου
κ.λ.π. κ.λ.π. κ.λ.π.

Εἰς Ἀθήνας

Ἐλλογιώτατε Κύριε Καθηγητὰ,

Ἀπό 24 Ἰανουαρίου χρονολογείται ἡ πρὸς ἐμὲ τιμία ἐπιστολή σας, εἰς ἣν μόλις σήμερον ἀπαντῶ. Ἀντὶ πάσης δικαιολογίας σὰς ζητῶ συγγνώμην διὰ τὴν βραδύτητά μου ταύτην. Ὁ κ. Φραγκούλης εἰς τὸν ὁποῖον ἀνεκοίνωσα τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν σας ὅσον ἀφορᾷ τὸ ζήτημα τῶν τειχῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς ἡμῶν Μονῆς, μοὶ ἀπήντησεν ὅτι τὸ πάχος αὐτῶν δὲν εἶναι τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ εἰς τὰς τέσσαρας πλευράς, οὐδ' ἔχει δυστυχῶς σημειώση τὰς διαστάσεις. Ἐὰν δοθῇ εὐκαιρία νὰ μεταβῇ καὶ πάλιν εἰς τὸ Σινᾶ, ὡς ἐλπίζομεν τὸν προσεχῆ Ἰούνιον, θὰ φροντίσῃ λίαν εὐχαρίστως νὰ ἐκπληρώσῃ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν Σας.

Ἡ ἐργασία προὐχώρησεν ἀρκετά, πλὴν ὑπολείπεται ἀρκετὰ ἀκόμη ἄλλ' ἔχωμεν δι' ἐλπίδος ὅτι θὰ δυνηθῶμεν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι νὰ στεγάσωμεν ὁλόκληρον τὴν οἰκοδομήν καὶ νὰ ἐτοιμάσωμεν τὴν Βιβλιοθήκην καὶ τὴν Πινακοθήκην.

Τὸ θαυμάσιον βιβλίον ὑμῶν περὶ τῶν κειμηλίων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου ἔλαβον καὶ εὐχαριστῶν θερμῶς ἐπὶ τῇ ἀποστολῇ τούτου εἰς ἐμὲ συγχαίρω ὑμῖν ἐπὶ τῇ σοβαρᾷ ταύτῃ ἐργασίᾳ καὶ εὐχομαι ὀλοψύχως ὅπως καὶ τὰ κειμήλια τοῦ Σινᾶ περιγράψῃ ὁ εὐσεβῆς καὶ γλαφυρὸς κάλαμος ὑμῶν. Τὸ ἐγκώμιον ὑμῶν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ 'Νέᾳ Ἐστίᾳ' ἀνέγνων μετ' εὐνοήτου ἐνδιαφέροντος ἀλλὰ καὶ μεθ' ὑπερηφανείας ἀφοῦ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἠδύοκῆσε νὰ τάξῃ καὶ ἡμᾶς φρουροὺς τοιούτων καὶ τοσούτων πολυτίμων ἱερῶν θησαυρῶν. Ἐὰν δὲ μᾶς ἀξιῶσῃ νὰ ἴδωμεν αὐτοὺς τοποθετημένους εἰς τὴν ἐμπρέπουσαν θέσιν καὶ δημοσιευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ σοφοῦ καθηγητοῦ κυρίου Γ. Σωτηρίου ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ἔσται πλήρης.

Τὰς ἀναμνηστικὰς φωτογραφίας ἔλαβον ἐν καιρῷ ἀλλὰ δὲν ἐνθυμοῦμαι ἐὰν ἐσημείωσα τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν εὐχαριστιῶν μου ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ μου πρὸς τὴν ἐρίτιμον Κυρίαν Σωτηρίου. Ἐὰν ἐλησμόνησα ἄς μοι ἐπιτραπῇ νὰ εὐχαριστήσω ὑμᾶς θερμότατα ἐπὶ ταύταις, αἵτινες διενεμήθησαν εἰς τοὺς πατέρας ἐν καιρῷ.

Προσφέρων τὰ σέβη μου εἰς τὴν εὐγενεστάτην Κυρίαν Σωτηρίου, διατελῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔλλογιμότατε Κύριε Καθηγητὰ,

μετὰ βαθείας ὑπολήψεως καὶ τιμῆς,
ὁ Σιναίου Πορφύριος

Ἐν Καῖρῳ 1939

12 Μαρτίου

Letter D

Ἐν Καΐρω τῆ 26/7/1958

Τῷ ἀξιοτίμῳ κυρίῳ Γεωργίῳ Σωτηρίου,
Ἀκαδημαϊκῷ, Καθηγητῆ τῷ Πανεπιστημίου,
σὺν τῇ ἐριτίμῳ συζύγῳ αὐτοῦ Κυρίᾳ Μαρίᾳ

Ἐν Ἀθήναις

Ἐλήφθη ἀσφαλῶς τὸ λαμπρὸν εἰς ἐμφάνισιν καὶ σπουδαῖον εἰς περιεχόμενον ἔργον ὑμῶν Ἐἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ, τόμος Β^{ος}, καὶ ἐκφράζομεν ὑμῖν τὰ εἰλικρινῆ συγχαρητήρια ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς ὀλοθέρμους ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίας εὐχόμενοι ὅπως ὁ Πατήρ τῶν φώτων καὶ τῆς σοφίας χορηγὸς ἐπιδαψιλεύῃ ὑμῖν ὑγείαν ἀκλόνητον καὶ βίον μακρότατον μετὰ παντὸς ἐφετοῦ, ἵνα ἐπιτελήτε ἀνέτως τὸ ἱερὸν ὑμῶν καὶ θαυμάσιον ἔργον τῆς περιγραφῆς καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν σεπτῶν εἰκόνων καὶ λοιπῶν καλλιτεχνικῶν ἀντικειμένων δι' ὧν κοσμοῦνται τὰ θεϊότατα τῆς ἀγιωτάτης ἡμῶν θρησκείας τεμένη καὶ δοξάζεται τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Μετὰ βαθείας ἀγάπης καὶ πάσης τιμῆς
Ὁ Σιναίου Πορφύριος