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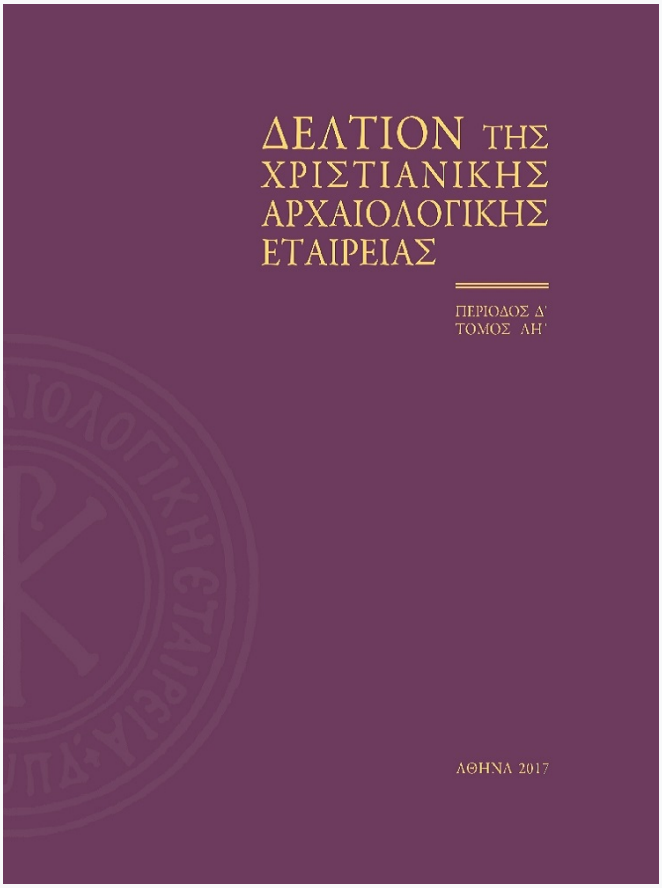

Επανεξέταση του ναού του Αγίου Κωνσταντίνου στη λίμνη της Απολλωνίας στη Βιθυνία

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THE CHURCH OF ST. CONSTANTINE ON LAKE APOLLONIA, BITHYNIA, REVISITED

In memory of Hans Buchwald

Ο ναός του Αγίου Κωνσταντίνου στην ομώνυμη νησίδα της Απολλωνίας λίμνης στη Βιθυνία δημοσιεύτηκε για πρώτη φορά το 1979 από τον C. Mango, ο οποίος χρονολόγησε το μνημείο στον 9ο-10ο αιώνα. Πρόκειται για σταυροειδή εγγεγραμμένο ναό με τρούλο μιας σπάνιας παραλλαγής του τύπου με απομονωμένα γωνιακά διαμερίσματα. Πρόσφατη επιτόπια έρευνα ανέδειξε νέα στοιχεία που πιστοποιούν ότι το μνημείο, εκτός από τις δύο κόγχες στα πέρατα της διαμήκους κεραίας του σταυρού, διέθετε δύο επιπλέον κόγχες στα άκρα των εγκάρσιων σταυρικών σκελών.

The church of St. Constantine, on the islet by the same name of Lake Apollonia, Bithynia, was published in 1979 by C. Mango, who dated the monument to the 9th or 10th century. It's a cross in square church with "isolated corner bays", a very rarely applied variant of this type. Recent survey has revealed new evidence on the building's history according to which the church of Apollonia, apart from two conches along the longitudinal axis of the inscribed cross, also had conches at the ends of its transverse axis.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

9ος αιώνας, αρχιτεκτονική, σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί, τετράκογχοι ναοί, Βιθυνία, λίμνη Απολλωνία, ναός Αγίου Κωνσταντίνου στη λίμνη Απολλωνία της Βιθυνίας.

Keywords

9th century; architecture; cross-in-square churches; tetraconch churches; Bithynia; lake Apollonia; church of St. Constantine on Lake Apollonia.

The church of St. Constantine, on the islet by the same name in Lake Apollonia (Apolyont Gölü), became known to scholars in 1979 through the publication of C. Mango[1], who, based on typological and morphological elements, had suggested a dating to the 9th or 10th century for the building[2]. Since then, only a few fragmentary mentions of this church have appeared while its early dating, most probably to the 9th century, has been widely accepted[3]. The present study aims at presenting some recently-discovered evidence regarding the building's history, which

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[1] C. Mango, "The Monastery of St. Constantine on Lake Apolyont", *DOP* 33 (1979), 329-333, fig. B. This publication also includes the only known survey drawing of the monument, a plan of it in its current state at the time, with indications of the different building phases.

[2] Ibid., 333.

[3] V. Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867): its History and Structural Elements*, Rome 1991, 216-217, figs 15, 16. Y. Ötüken – R. Ousterhout, "The Byzantine Church at Çeltikdere", *Studien zur Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte. Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag*, Amsterdam 1995, 89. R. Ousterhout, "The Architecture of Iconoclasm", L. Brubaker – J. Haldon (eds), *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850): the Sources*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2001, 12. M. Kappas, "Η αρχιτεκτονική του ναού των Αγίων Αποστόλων στο Άργος Καλύμνου", *DChAE* 30 (2009), 60. One more cursory mention of the monument, accompanied by two now invaluable photographs is found in A. Millas, *Προποντίδα. «Μια θάλασσα της Ρωμιοσύνης»*, Athens 1992, 48 and figs in pages 76-77.

dictates a revision of current assumptions with respect to its typology[4]; it is based on primary research material collected over the course of two visits we made to Apollonia in recent years. The first took place during an excursion to Eastern Thrace and Bithynia between July 12th and 16th 2001, while our second visit to the isle of St. Constantine was undertaken in August 2012[5], prompted by a conversation with the late Hans Buchwald in St. Petersburg in November 2009. During the course of this discussion, the renowned Austrian-born American Byzantinist indicated that on one of his visits to the monument he had noticed that, apart from the two conches along the longitudinal axis of the inscribed cross, the church of Apollonia also possessed conches at the ends of the transverse axis as well. As will become evident in this publication, dedicated to his memory, he was correct.

The church of St. Constantine, initially the Katholikon of a small male monastery until the population exchange of 1922, survives today in a derelict state, enveloped by overgrown vegetation, exposed to the elements and to the whims of treasure-hunters (Figs 2-5). After it was deserted, the church appears to have been used for storage. The edifice's several compartments were separated by rudimentary stone-masonry and timber-framed walls that still stand, obstructing all efforts to study the building's history. Recently a large portion of the west façade collapsed, while other parts of the monument are in a state of imminent collapse as well. Only a few of the architectural members mentioned in Mango's publication[6] still remain in the area (see below Fig. 10). No trace of the rest of the monastic buildings can be discerned.

The sporadic accounts of the history of the monastic complex that can be garnered from medieval sources are known to us from Mango's publication. The earliest account dates back to the year 825, when Saint Ioannikkios, a monk in one of the monasteries of Bithynian Olympus, inspired by divine passion, traveled to the monastery of Megas Agros to pay his respects to the relics of St. Theophanis Confessor. On his way back, Ioannikios was traveling on one of the main thoroughfares along the shores of Lake Apollonia, where he met one Daniel, abbot of the monastery of Thasios Island. The second account refers to Arsenios Autoreianos, who before being appointed patriarch in 1255 had been a monk in a monastery on one of the lake isles[7]. Identifying Thasios Island as the island of St. Constantine seems logical, though it is not corroborated by the two brief medieval sources. The earliest account of the dedication of the church to St. Constantine dates back to the 16th century, a time when a total of seven monks resided in the monastery[8]. Upon studying the monument's form it becomes evident that it has undergone extensive subsequent interventions (it has literally been partly rebuilt) (Fig. 1). At least one part of these interventions could be probably dated to the 19th century, possibly after the severe earthquake of 1855, based on its morphological and construction features[9] (Figs 2-5). It is not possible

[4] The drawings included in this study are based on C. Mango's published plan, and some cursory measurements taken on July 13th, 2001 and August 23rd, 2012.

[5] Our first visit to the monument was conducted during a sightseeing trip to Eastern Thrace and Bithynia on July 12-16th, 2001. In addition to the two authors, the other participants were the academician Panayotis L. Vocotopoulos, the late professor Charalambos Bouras, Ploutarchos Theocharidis, architect with the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Giorgos Fousteris, dr theologian-archaeologist, Giannis Fousteris, philologist, and Nikos Toutos, archaeologist. The second visit to the monument was conducted during a sightseeing trip to Constantinople and Bithynia on August 18-25th, 2012, together with Giorgos Fousteris and Dimitris Karakatsanis, archaeologist. We are grateful to all participants for their comments during our in-situ discussions.

[6] Mango, "Apolyont", op.cit. (n. 1), 332, figs 10, 11.

[7] R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins. (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonte, Athènes, Thessalonique)*, Paris 1975, 153-154 and Mango, "Apolyont", op.cit. (n. 1), 332.

[8] Mango, "Apolyont", op.cit. (n. 1), 332.

[9] Ibid., 332. On the church architecture of Constantinople and Asia Minor in the 19th century, see Z. Karaca, *İstanbul'da Tanzimat Öncesi. Rum Ortodoks Kiliseleri*, Istanbul 2008. Idem, "İstanbul'da Rum Ortodoks Kiliseleri ve Mimari Özellikleri", S. Doğan – M. Kadiroğlu (eds), *Bizans ve Çevre Kültürler: Prof. Dr. S. Yıldız Ötüken'e Armağan*, Vehbi Koç Vakfı, Istanbul 2010, 207-227. Th. Mantopoulou-Panagiotopoulou, "Η ναοδομία στην Καππαδοκία την εποχή του Τανζιμάτ (1839-1876). Πρώτη προσέγγιση", I. Stoufi-Poulimenou – St. Mamaloukos (eds), *Β΄ Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο Νεοελληνικής Εκκλησιαστικής Τέχνης (Βυζαντινό και Χριστιανικό Μουσείο, 26-27 Νοεμβρίου 2010), Πρακτικά*, Athens 2009, 19-38. E. Laflı – A. Zah, "Beitrage zur Kenntnis der osmanischen Kirchenarchitektur im Großraum İzmir-Smyrna (19. Jh. – 1922)", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen*

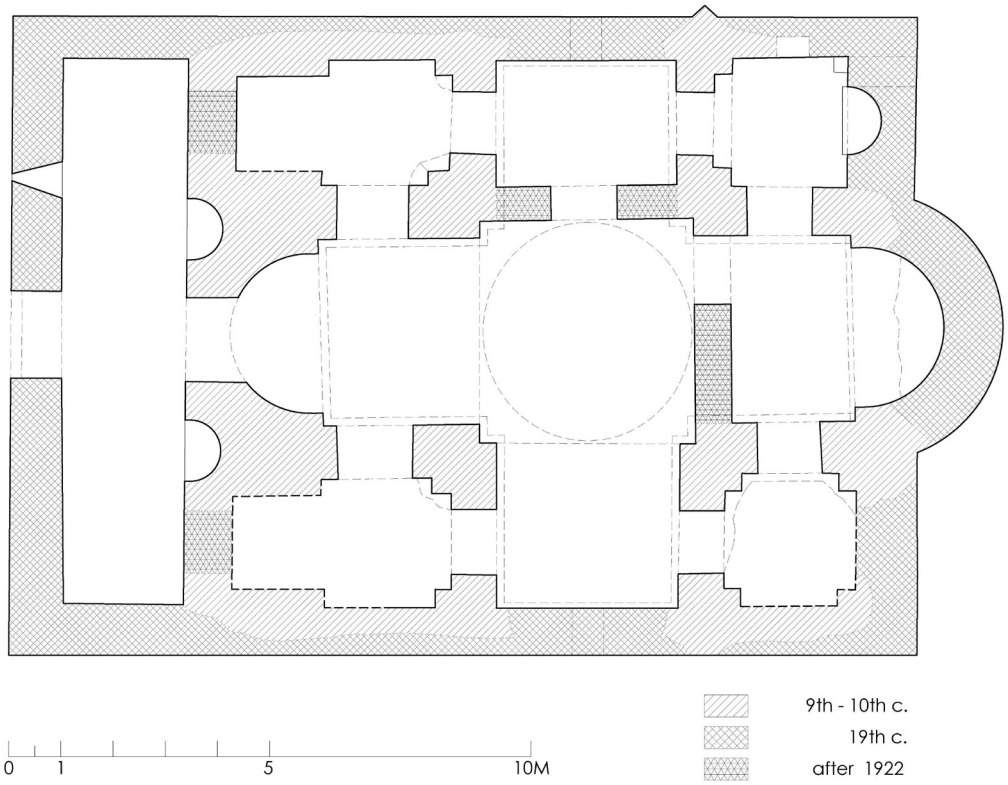

Fig. 1. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Present state. Plan after the drawing of C. Mango and recent evidence.

to fully reconstruct the form of the monument at this later date, mainly due to the ruinous state in which it is preserved today.

Despite the fact that a rigorous study of the monument requires a systematic archaeological survey, a rough reconstruction of its original form can still be attempted based on the currently available data (Fig. 11). The original church must have been a building of medium size, with an overall width of 8.10 m, and length of 11.60 m, not counting the sanctuary apse projecting from the east façade. It belonged to a peculiar variation of the domed, cross-in-square type, which will be more extensively discussed below. The vaulting over the various church compartments did not rest on free-standing supports, but rather on L-shaped walls, pierced by small, arched openings between the central, inscribed cross space and the corner bays. Most of these openings are walled off today.

A semicircular, both on the interior and the exterior, sanctuary apse projected from the eastern end of the respective cross-arm, which is largely missing today (Figs 1, 11, 4, 12). The form of this apse before its collapse was mostly the result of the partial rebuilding of the monument in later years; the greater part of its semicircular walls had been completely rebuilt, while the new apse had a much lower height than the original. During this phase, a tympanum with an oculus had been constructed over the apse, incorporating the cornice of the

Gesellschaft 165/1 (2015), 125-154. St. Mamaloukos, "Οι επεμβάσεις του 19ου αιώνα στον ναό της Παναγίας Παντοβασίλισσας στην Τρίγλεια της Βιθυνίας", I. Stoufi-Poulimenou – St. Mamaloukos – D. Pavlopoulos – A. Chaldaiakis (eds), *Γ΄ Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο Νεοελληνικής Εκκλησιαστικής Τέχνης (Βυζαντινό και Χριστιανικό Μουσείο, 11-13 Νοεμβρίου 2013), Πρακτικά*, Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Θεολογική Σχολή – Τμήμα Θεολογίας, Athens 2015, 152-153.

Fig. 2. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. View from the southwest.

Fig. 3. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine Katholikon. View from the southeast.

Fig. 4. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. View from the northeast.

Fig. 5. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. View from the north.

Fig. 6. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. View of the northwest corner bay from the west.

original phase. Another apse stood at the western end of the respective cross-arm, which survives almost intact today. Its lower part was inscribed into the western wall of the main church, while the upper part was semicircular on the exterior (Figs 1, 7, 8, 11).

The arrangement of the two symmetrical apses on the ends of the longitudinal cross axis has resulted in the classification of the church of St. Constantine as a *unicum* amongst known cross-in-square type churches. However, a more thorough study of the monument during our recent visit in August 2012 revealed that the original form of the Katholikon of the Bithynian lake was quite different.

The tympana of the transverse cross arms, with their large single-light windows are entirely the result of extensive rebuilding during the aforementioned phase of drastic modification that the monument underwent in the 19th century (Figs 1, 13). Their walls can be easily distinguished, as they are constructed of rubble and brick masonry, reinforced with wooden ties, a characteristic type of masonry in all parts of the church that were rebuilt in the 19th century, such as, for example the west wall of the narthex. In the place of these tympana, large apses stood originally which were similar to the ones now occupying the ends of the longitudinal cross arms, resulting in a layout that would classify the church as a tetraconch (Fig. 11). Additional evidence that confirms such an original tetraconch arrangement can be found on the 19th-century lateral walls of the church: on the tympanum of the south cross-arm, specifically the lower right part, in an area where the later mortar render has broken off one can detect a vertical joint, a surviving trace of the western face of the destroyed south apse (Fig. 13). The cornices that articulate the surfaces of the tympana at the vaults' springing are constructed from reused pieces of an earlier marble cornice. On the north cross-arm, one can clearly see that the cornice is comprised of poorly-rearranged fragments of the original cornice; one of them in particular, a corner piece, may originally have belonged to the north apse (Fig. 14). By far the most illuminating piece of evidence for the reconstruction of the original form of the lateral apses of the church is a peculiar, triangular projection on the north façade (Figs 1, 5, 15), which had previously been thought to be a remnant of the original exterior articulation of its façades[10]. A closer look revealed that this supposed triangular pilaster is but a mere trace of the now collapsed north apse. On its lower part cut stones and bricks from the off-cut masonry of the semicircular apse can be distinguished, while above the height of approximately one meter, part of the east jamb of a large triple-light window is preserved, similar to the one on the original sanctuary apse.

The corner bays of the church were in the form of contracted cross-shaped rooms covered with calottes. The cross-arms took the form of arches 0.30 m. deep, except for the western cross-arms of the west compartments, which were about 1.80 m. deep (Figs 1, 6, 11).

[10] Mango, "Apolyont", op.cit. (n. 1), drawing B.

Fig. 7. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Interior view towards the west.

Fig. 8. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Interior view towards the west.

The corner bays' vaulting was at a much lower height than that of the barrel vaulted cross-arms, so that the volume of the latter would be prominently visible on the exterior (Fig. 11).

Today the eastern wall of the northeast corner bay has a more recent conch inscribed into the thickness of the masonry wall, obviously intended to serve the liturgical function of the prothesis (Fig. 1). A reconstruction of the original form of the building in this area requires further research. Additionally, the ruinous state of preservation of the respective area of the southeast corner bay does not permit any noteworthy observations.

Originally, a dome stood on the spot where the two cross-arms intersect; this dome had apparently already collapsed before the church's desertion in 1922 and subsequent ruination. The circular opening that was left behind after the dome's collapse was most probably covered with some wooden structure, no trace of which survives today (Figs 1, 8, 9). The circular base of the dome was outlined with a marble cornice, with a profile in the shape of a shallow concave moulding (cavetto) terminating with a rectangular recess at its lower end. The cornice was identical to the one that run around the cross-arm portion of the building at the level of the vaults' springing (Figs 7-9, 12-14).

The square space underneath the dome was expanded via recesses on its four corners (Figs 1, 8, 9, 11). This practice of widening the central compartment of cruciform type buildings was widespread in the architecture of Late Antiquity, and survived in Byzantine architecture until the 10th and –on rare occasions– the 11th and 12th centuries or even later[11].

In terms of natural lighting, the cross-arm core was amply lit via the windows of the destroyed dome, as well as the wide three-light windows on the ends of the north and south apses, and the sanctuary apse, only parts of the jambs of which survive today (Fig. 11). It is not clear whether or how the corner compartments received any natural light. Three doorways, one on the central axis of the west conch and two more in the center of the western walls of the west corner bays, allowed access to the main church from the narthex (Fig. 11). Only the first one of those three doors remains open today.

A narthex that as wide as the main church was attached on the west side; a large portion of this narthex had been rebuilt in later years (Figs 1, 2, 11), while its later roofing is completely destroyed. The vaulting of the original narthex must have consisted of a barrel vault placed on the transverse axis of the building. Two small vaulted spaces were formed over the passageways between the narthex and the west corner bays; these spaces were accessible through small arched openings on the semicylindrical wall of the west conch. The exact shape of the roofing over the narthex cannot be safely reconstructed. It may have been a lean-to roof inclined towards the west. The existence of galleries over the narthex, and probably even over the west corner bays cannot be excluded either. In any case, the confirmation or dismissal of this hypothesis will require a more detailed archaeological documentation of the monument.

Small conches were inscribed into the thickness of the east narthex wall, on either side of the central doorway (Figs 1, 11) intended to serve liturgical functions[12]. It appears that the sole entrance door to the church was located on the central axis of the west wall of the narthex. In later years, a new doorway was constructed in its place, with distinct elements of Ottoman architecture such as a pointed brick arch (Fig. 2), which was recently destroyed after the collapse of a large part of the west wall of the church.

The east and side façades of the church (Fig. 11.f) are strongly articulated, a feature that is commonly

[11] D. Athanasoulis – M. Kappas, "Σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί με συνεπτυγμένο δυτικό σκέλος", V. Katsaros – A. Tourta (eds), *Αφιέρωμα στον ακαδημαϊκό Παναγιώτη Λ. Βοκοτόπουλο,* Athens 2015, 88. St. Mamaloukos, "Η αρχιτεκτονική του ναού του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου στο Άνω Κόρθι της Άνδρου", G. Pallis (ed.), *Η βυζαντινή Άνδρος (4ος–12ος αιώνας). Νεότερα από την αρχαιολογική έρευνα και τις αποκαταστάσεις των μνημείων. Πρακτικά Επιστημονικής Συνάντησης (Αθήνα, 20 Μαρτίου 2015)*, [= *Ανδριακά Χρονικά* 43], Καΐρειος Βιβλιοθήκη, Andros 2016, 86-90, with previous bibliography.

[12] M. Kappas, "The Church of Hagia Paraskevi at Trikorfo, Messenia. A Few Remarks about the Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Southwestern Peloponnese during the Period of the Macedonian Dynasty", D. Jolshin (ed.), *Architecture of Byzantium and Kievan Rus from the 9th to the 12th Centuries, Materials of the International Seminar November 17-21, 2009* [= *Transactions of the State Hermitage Museum* 53], St. Petersburg 2010, 59, n. 7, 8. Idem, "Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος στο ρέμα του Σωφρόνη Λακωνίας", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011), 264-265.

encountered in churches with lateral apses. The relatively large apses of the sanctuary and the transverse cross-arm that corresponds to the body of the main church are pronounced with respect to the rest of the building. Wide three-light windows were opened on these three apses. The remainder of the façades was rather simple and unadorned.

The original walls of the church of St. Constantine were constructed out of alternating bands of stone and brick masonry[13] (Figs 4, 6, 7, 16). This construction system, also known as "opus mixtum" is the quintessential masonry building system encountered in the architecture of the capital throughout the Byzantine period[14]. The ratio of alternate material bands together with the thickness of bricks that does not exceed 4 cm. set the church of St. Constantine apart from early Constantinopolitan examples, such as the land walls of Theodosius, and rather associate it with later monuments in the capital[15], or the areas within its immediate sphere of influence[16]. The arches and vaults of the surviving earlier parts of the monument are built entirely of bricks (Figs 8, 17), while bricks have also been used, albeit in a more haphazard manner, in the rebuilt later parts (Figs 7, 8, 12). The original building mortar is an off-white color, with coarse aggregates, while the joints are finished with the application of a thin, pressed, hydraulic jointing mortar which includes a large amount of crushed brick (Figs 16, 17).

As has already been mentioned, the church of St. Constantine in its original form had four symmetrically-arranged apses on the ends of the relevant cross-arms, and not just two apses at the ends of the longitudinal axis, as was assumed until today. Based on this peculiar two-conch layout that brought to mind some rare two-conch arrangements of early Christian churches[17], the church of St. Constantine was considered to be a unicum, at least with regard to the church-building tradition of the middle and late Byzantine periods. Such a reconstruction of this Bithynian monument had also been used in an attempt to reconstruct the original plan of the Katholikon of Timios Prodromos Monastery in Bursa[18], which, however, does not appear to be firmly founded in the available data.

This reconstruction of the plan of the church of St. Constantine with four apses dictates the classification of the monument in the wider category of the tetraconch type[19]. Despite the fact that tetraconch or triconch designs are already known from Early Christian church architecture[20], the earliest applications of such novel experimentation with three or four conches in cross-in-square type churches can be traced to the ecclesiastical architecture of distant Armenia, which appears to have gone through a remarkable period of growth, in terms of church architecture, especially during the 7th century[21]. The church of St. Titus in Gortyna, Crete had been

[13] Mango, "Apolyont", op.cit. (n. 1), 329-332.

[14] On the mixed masonry system, see among others E. Rausche, *Polychromes Sichtmauerwerk byzantinischer und von Byzanz beeinflusster Bauten Südosteuropas, Inaugural-Dissertation*, Universität zu Köln, Köln 1971, sporadically, where the chronological and geographical dissemination of the system in question is quite thoroughly portrayed, and G. Velenis, *Ερμηνεία του εξωτερικού διακόσμου στη βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική* (doctoral dissertation), Thessaloniki 1984, 98-101. On its use in Constantinopolitan monuments in particular, see R. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (DOS 25), Washington, D.C. 1987, 127-129.

[15] See for example the church of Hagios Ioannes en to Troullo (Th. Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul. A Photographic Survey*, Pennsylvania 1976, num. 16, 159-172).

[16] Such as, e.g. the masonry of St. Sophia in Bizye. On that monument see, among others, St. Mamaloukos, "Η Καθολική Εκκλησία της Βιζύης", *Περί Θράκης* 3 (2003), 131-150. Fr. A. Bauer – H. A. Klein, "The Church of Hagia Sophia in Bizye (Vize): Results of the Fieldwork Seasons 2003 and 2004", *DOP* 60 (2006), 249-270.

[17] G. Dimitrokallis, *Οι δίκογχοι χριστιανικοί ναοί*, Athens 1976, 8-9.

[18] V. M. Tekinalp, "Remodeling the Monastery of St. Ioannes in Prusa ad Olympum (Modern Bursa, Turkey)", *Architecture of Byzantium and Kievan Rus*, op.cit. (n. 12), 164-179.

[19] Despite the fact that the tetraconch reconstruction of the original plan of the church is validated by the recent evidence, a definitive confirmation will require an excavation of the monument.

[20] R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian Architecture and Byzantine Architecture*, Kingsport [4]1986, 78-81, 138. Sl. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans. From Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, Yale University Press, New Haven – London 2010, 125, 149, 157-160.

[21] See for example Krautheimer, *Architecture*, op.cit. (n. 20), 321-322. P. Cuneo, *Architettura Armena: dal quarto al diciannovesimo secolo*, I, Rome 1988, no 92, 220-223. A. Kazaryan, *Kafedral'nyĭ sobor Surb Ėchmiadzin i vostochnokhristianskoe zodchestvo IV-VII vekov* [*Cathedral of Holy Ejmiacin and the Eastern Christian architecture of the 4th-7th centuries*], Moscow 2007. Idem, *Tserkovnaia arkhitektura stran Zakavkaz'ia VII veka: formirovanie i razvitie traditsii* [*Church Architecture of the 7th century in*

Fig. 9. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Interior view towards the east.

previously dated to the mid-7th century[22]. Recently, however, a strong case was made to defer its dating towards the late 8th or early 9th century[23]. Two of the most impressive Katholika on Mount Athos, the Katholikon of Vatopedi Monastery and that of Iviron Monastery, date to the late 10th century and subsequently served as models for Athonite church architecture; in the original design of these two Katholika, two additional apses, the so-called 'choroi', were placed at the two ends of the transverse cross-arms, along with the sanctuary apse, of course.

The evolutionary process of the creation of this triconch architectural conception inside or outside Mount Athos, as well as its liturgical practices has preoccupied scholars[24]. One of the most recent attempts to

Transcaucasian countries: Formation and Development of the tradition], Moscow 2012; 1, 325-356: cathedral of Ejmiacin (483/4, 620), 1, 325-356: church of St, Theodorev in Vagaran (624-631), 2, 479-491: cathedral of Dvin (640) and 3, 146-183: cathedral of Talin (7th-8th decade of the 7th c.).

[22] A. Orlandos, "Νεώτεραι ἔρευναι ἐν Ἁγίῳ Τίτῳ τῆς Γορτύνης", *ΕΕΒΣ* 3 (1926), 301-328. P. L. Vocotopoulos, "Παρατηρήσεις στὴ λεγομένη βασιλικὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Νίκωνος," *Πρακτικὰ τοῦ Α΄ Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακῶν Σπουδῶν, Σπάρτη 7-14 Σεπτεμβρίου 1975*, II, Athens 1976-1978, 273-285. Dating the monument to the 7th century is also accepted by Ioannis Varalis, "Παρατηρήσεις στην παλαιοχριστιανική ναοδομία της Κρήτης", *Creta romana e protobizantina. Atti del congresso internazionale (Iraklion, 23-30 Settembre 2000)*, III.1, Padua 2004, 816-817.

[23] St. Mamaloukos, "Ζητήματα αναπαράστασης της αρχικής μορφής του ναού του Αγίου Τίτου στη Γόρτυνα", *DChAE* 34 (2013), 11-24. V. Sythiakaki-Kritsimali, "Τα αρχιτεκτονικά γλυπτά του Αγίου Τίτου της Γόρτυνας και η συμβολή τους στη χρονολόγηση του μνημείου", *Πρακτικά 11ου Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου* (forthcoming). M. Kappas, "Experimenting in Domed Constructions: Ecclesiastical Architecture in Greece during the Transitional Period", S. Feist (ed.), *Transforming Sacred Spaces: New Approaches to Byzantine Ecclesiastical Architecture from the Transitional Period* (forthcoming).

[24] A doctoral dissertation was recently presented in the School of Philosophy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki that deals

Fig. 10 (a, b, c). Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Architectural members.

interpret this layout, the crystallization of the so-called Athonite triconch church type, was linked to an overall trend towards the addition of three or four apses to cross-in-square cores that led to a number of typological variations, with churches such as St. Titus[25] at the starting point. In rarer cases, lateral apses are added to transitional type cross-in-square cores, such as, for example, the case of the Katholikon of Megiste Lavra[26], though they still served the same liturgical needs, while in the same period similar experimentations are encountered in certain large cross-in-square churches in distant Georgia[27]. The extensive dissemination of similar designs is indicated by a number of distinctly individual cases of domed, cross-in-square type churches in the Balkan Peninsula which possess lateral apses, either projecting, as for example in St. Nicholas in Larymna[28], the Katholikon of St. John Prodromos (the Forerunner) Monastery in Rodopi[29] and a church near the village of Vinica in Bulgaria[30], or inscribed within the thickness of the side walls, as in the case of the church of St. Nicholas in Avlis, Boeotia[31].

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with the subject of the inception and the dissemination of the "Athonite" type, see V. Messis, *Ναοί αθωνικού τύπου* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), Thessaloniki 2010. See also A. Tantsis, "The so-called 'Athonite' type of church and two shrines of the Theotokos in Constantinople", *Zograf* 34 (2010), 3-11, where the addition of lateral apses is attributed to an indirect influence from the architecture of Constantinople.

[25] St. Mamaloukos, "A contribution to the study of the 'Athonite' church type of Byzantine architecture", *Zograf* 35 (2011), 39-50.

[26] P. Mylonas, "Ἡ ἀρχικὴ μορφὴ τοῦ καθολικοῦ τῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας", *Αρχαιολογία* 1 (November 1981), 52-63. P. Mylonas, "Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse de type du catholicon athonite", *CahArch* 32 (1984), 89-112.

[27] V. Ponomarew, "Georgien", *RbK* II (1975), drawings 14, 16, 2. W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjetï and Šavšetï*, Stuttgart 1992, 92-127.

[28] Ch. Bouras – L. Boura, *Η ελλαδική ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα*, Athens 2002, 203, with previous bibliography on the monument.

[29] N. Ovčarov, "Das byzantinische Kloster H. Johannes Prodromos in den östlichen Rhodopen (Achridos)", *JÖB* 43 (1993), 329-348.

[30] According to the reconstruction proposed in a special study by St. Bojadžiev, "L'église du village Vinica à la lumière de nouvelles données", *Byzantino Bulgarica* II (1966), 241-265.

[31] Ch. Bouras, "Συμπληρωματικὰ στοιχεῖα για ἕναν κατεστραμμένο ναὸ τῆς Βοιωτίας", *DChAE* 4 (1966), 227-244. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, op.cit. (n. 21), 335, fig. 364. The case of a

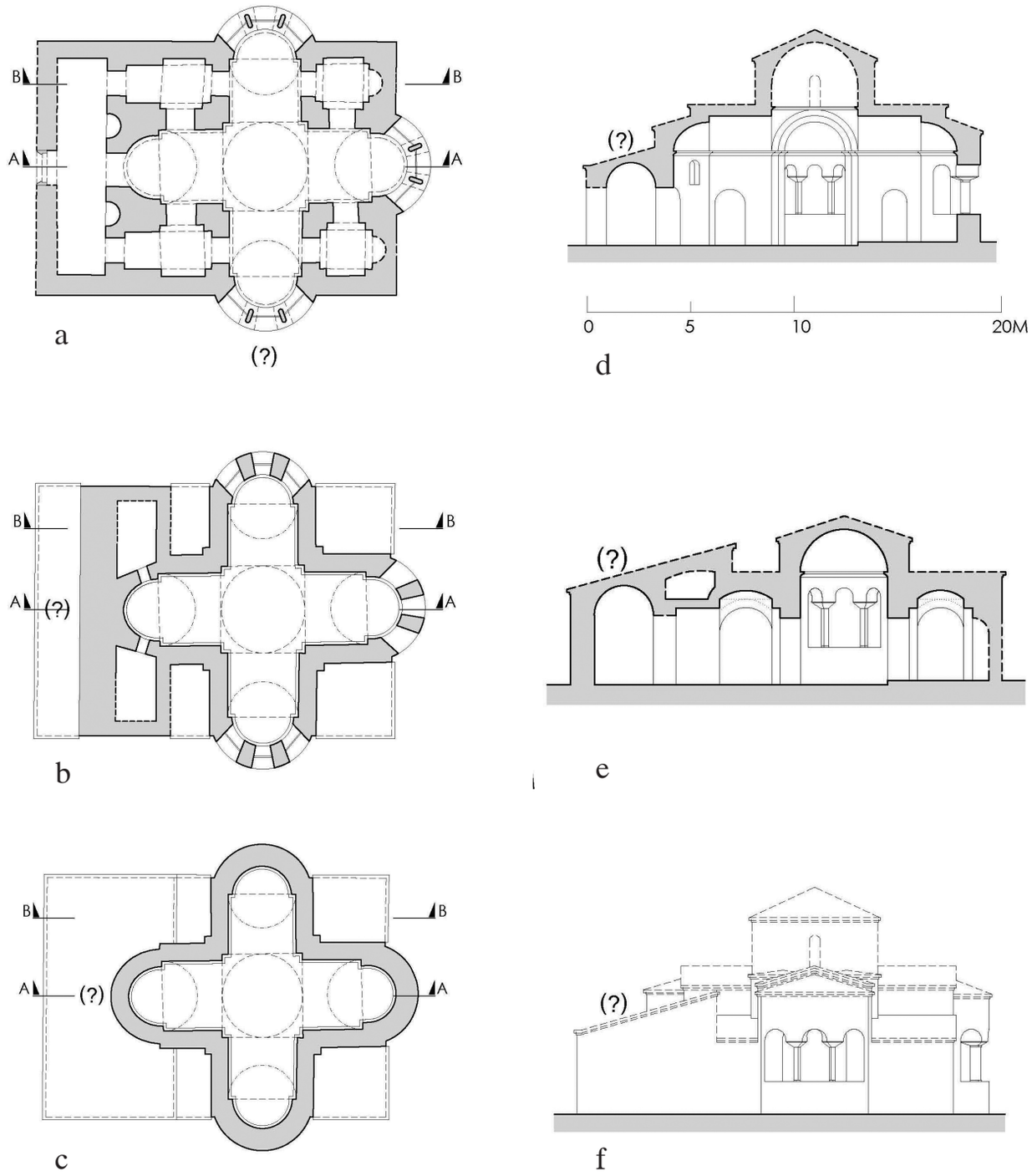

Fig. 11. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Reconstruction. (α) Plan A, (b) Plan B, (c) Plan C, (d) Section AA, (e) Section BB, (f) South elevation.

Fig. 12. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Interior view of the sanctuary towards the east.

The church of Karaač-Teke near Varna, dated to the late 9th or early 10th century[32], bears a closer typological resemblance to the Bithynian Lake church, as four apses are placed at the ends of the cross-arms of a transitional cross-in-square type church. A similar, though typologically more advanced, case is provided by the church of Holy Apostles in the Ancient Agora of Athens[33], where four projecting apses articulate the corresponding arms of a four-column, cross-in-square core, resulting in an innovative and particularly inspired composition. A comparable design appears to have been employed in the church of St. Satyrus in distant Milan[34], though the dating of the building itself is quite problematic; in this case, the exact relationship with the primary Byzantine architectural tradition has not yet been clarified. The aforementioned monuments, despite their differences in typology, constitute manifestations of an, apparently, common trend in ecclesiastical architecture during the middle Byzantine period.

With respect to the issue of the typological classification of the Bithynian church in question[35], there are

half-inscribed tetraconch church on the Acropolis of Iasos in Asia Minor is also of interest, see U. Serin, *Early Christian and Byzantine Churches at Iasos in Caria: An Architectural Survey* (Monumenti di Antichità Cristiana, Serie II/XVII*)*, Vatican City 2004, 147-159.

[32] N. Čaneva-Dečevska, "Srednovekovniiāt manastir v mestnostta 'Karaachteke' kraĭ Varna [The medieval monastery in the locality of Karaačteke near Varna]", *Izvestija na sektsijata po teorija i istorija na arhitekturata* 25 (Sofia 1973), 195-212.

[33] A. Frantz, *The Church of the Holy Apostles* (The Athenian Agora XX), Princeton, N.J. 1971. Ch. Bouras, "Originality in Byzantine Architecture", *Mélanges Jean-Pierre Sodini* (*TM* 15), Paris 2005, 103. M. Kappas, *Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο. Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακιόνιου / τετράστυλου* (doctoral dissertation), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 2009, II, cat. no 100, 347-351. Ch. Bouras, *Βυζαντινή Αθήνα, 10ος-12ος αι.*, Athens 2010, 122-126.

[34] G. Dimitrokallis, "Osservazioni sull'architettura de San Satiro a Milano e sull'origine delle chiese tetraconche altomedioevali", *Contribution à l'étude des monuments byzantins et médiévaux d'Italie*, Athens 1971, 43-72. Kappas, *Απλοί τετράστυλοι / τετρακιόνιοι*, op.cit. (n. 33), II, cat. no 155, 541-543.

[35] The inclusion of the monument among the four-column type group [Ötüken – Ousterhout, "Çeltikdere", op.cit. (n. 3), 89] highlights the problems in the adoption of a common terminology among members of the international scholarly community.

Fig. 13. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Interior view towards the south.

Fig. 14. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Cornice detail on the tympanum of the north cross-arm.

two principal characteristic features that define its correlation with specific monument groups: the use of walls to articulate the cross-in-square core, and the intention of further isolating the corner bays, not just from the longitudinal cross-arm, but also from the transverse one as well. The first element indicates a connection between St. Constantine and the broader group of transitional cross-in-square type churches[36], while the second is a primary feature of a certain sub-group of domed churches, on which very little has been written. Charalambos Bouras was the first to propose the term "*cross-in-square with isolated corner bays*", on the occasion of the publication of the destroyed church of St. Nicholas in Avlis[37]. This was followed by Georgios Velenis and Athanasios Semoglou, who proceeded to delve deeper into the subject, starting from the problems posed by the typological classification of the Katholikon of Latomou Monastery in Thessaloniki, where the list of relevant specimens was enriched further[38]. The Katholikon of Latomou Monastery is placed at the beginning of this sub-group of transitional monuments, followed by Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii in Constantinople[39], while Kalenderhane

[36] P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Η εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική εις την Δυτικήν Στερεάν Ελλάδα και την Ήπειρον από του τέλους του 7ου μέχρι του 10ου αιώνος*, Thessaloniki ²1992, 116-126.

[37] Bouras, "Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία", op.cit. (n. 33), 227-244.

[38] G. Velenis – A. Semoglou, "Νέα προσέγγιση στην αρχιτεκτονική και τον ψηφιδωτό διάκοσμο του Οσίου Δαβίδ Θεσσαλονίκης", *25ο Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ (Αθήνα 2005)*, 24-25. On the same subject cf. also Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, op.cit. (n. 21), 335. See also, Kappas, "Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος", op.cit. (n. 12), 277 n. 52.

[39] Th. F. Mathews – E. J. W. Hawkins, "Notes on the Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii in Istanbul and its Frescoes", *DOP* 39 (1985), 125-134. R. Ousterhout, "Reconstructing Ninth-Century Constantinople", L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*, Ashgate, Alderhot 1998, 115-130, sporadically. Idem, "Architecture of Iconoclasm", op.cit. (n. 3), 11-12. L. Theis, *Die Flankeräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau. Zur Befund-*

Fig. 15. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. North elevation detail.

Fig. 16. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Masonry detail.

Fig. 17. Apollonia Lake. Monastery of St. Constantine. Katholikon. Interior view towards the northwest.

Camii[40] confirms the anachronistic reappearance of similar designs in the capital during the 12th century[41]. Comparable experimentations were employed in monuments far removed from each other during early middle Byzantine times, such as the church of Epta Vemata

sicherung, Rekonstruktion und Bedeutung einer verschwundenen architektonischen Form in Konstantinopel, Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden 2005, 40-55, fig. 4-46.

[40] C. L. Striker – Y. Doğan Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul, The Buildings, their History, and Decoration*, Mainz 1997.

[41] It has already been noted that in Comnenian Constantinople, church types whose use had been abandoned for over two centuries reappear, see R. Ousterhout, "The Byzantine Church at Enez: Problems in Twelfth-century Architecture", *JÖB* 35 (1985), 261-280, 267-270.

(Seven Sanctuaries) in Iskăr Gorge in Bulgaria[42], Karaač-Teke near Varna[43], one of the churches excavated by Jacobson in distant Krimea[44], and a ruined church published by Eyice in Büyükada of Amasra (ancient Amastris) in Asia Minor[45]. The Katholikon of St. Panteleimon Monastery in Nerezi is a mid-12th century building that also displays a strong affiliation with the architecture of Constantinople; the cross-in-square type variation under discussion is adopted in the core of the church, where the corner bays are covered with small domes[46].

In the Helladic region, monuments with a similar plan are hard to come by. One might mention the peculiar plan of the Katholikon of Megiste Lavra[47], where the lateral apses were added only a few years after the completion of the church. The aforementioned church of St. Nicholas in Avlis can be ascribed to the same subgroup, as well as the church of Panagia of Charos on Leipsoi Island[48]. The church of the Taxiarches in Kaisariani[49], where the intersection of the cross-arms is not crowned with a dome, but rather by a raised central bay in a transverse barrel vault following the prototype of St. Nicholas near Taxiarches Monastery in Aigialeia[50], bears some resemblance in plan to the variation under discussion.

In some of the aforementioned cases, the west corner bays were completely separated and functioned as small funerary chapels, as in the case of St. Nicholas in Avlis and St. Panteleimon at Nerezi. In the latter, this function of the corner compartments is also corroborated by the surviving wall painting decoration. In the remaining specimens where corner bays were partly isolated, it is still unclear whether such a layout was dictated by specialized liturgical needs or was solely the result of the manner of construction.

Lastly, it is worth noting that in this sub-group of transitional churches, which appears to have been known to Constantinople and other areas within its sphere of influence, no distinct space is dedicated to the sanctuary, which simply occupies the eastern part of the cross-in-square cores. This arrangement had, for many years, been considered to be a feature of the church architecture of the Byzantine periphery; lately, however, this view has tended to be dismissed[51]. In fact, the case of the recently reexamined church of Kaynarca (formerly Genna) in Eastern Thace which, though only some tens of kilometers away from Constantinople, is ascribed to an evolved variation of the co-called "Helladic" transitional type[52], must make us extremely cautious every time we exclude architectural types and plans from the ecclesiastical architecture of the capital.

In the present study we attempted to reconstruct the original form of an important early middle Byzantine

[42] N. Čaneva-Dečevska, *Church Architecture in Bulgaria in the 11th-14th Century* (in Bulgarian with a summary in English and German), Sofia 1988, fig. 48. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, op.cit. (n. 21), 334.

[43] Čaneva-Dečevska, "Karaachteke", op.cit. (n. 34).

[44] A. L. Jakobson, "Krim", *RbK* 5 (Stuttgart 1995), drawing 9a, b, where the next caption has been placed by mistake.

[45] S. Eyice, "Amasra 'Büyükada', sında bir Bizans kilisesi [L'église byzantine de 'Büyükada' à Amasra]", *Türk Tarih Kurumu. Belleten* C XV / S. 60 (Ankara 1951), 469-496.

[46] P. Miljković-Pepek, "Prilozi proučanan ju crkve manastira Neraza", *ZLU* 10 (1974), 311-321. I. Sinkević, *The Church of St Panteleimon at Nerezi, Architecture, Programme, Patronage*, Wiesbaden 2000, mainly 11-15, pls 1, 2.

[47] Mylonas, "Καθολικό Μεγίστης Λαύρας", op.cit. (n. 28), 52-63. Mamaloukos, "'Athonite' church type", op.cit. (n. 25).

[48] I. Kollias, "Τρεις μεσοβυζαντινές εκκλησίες της Αστυπάλαιας", *Θωράκιον. Τόμος στη μνήμη του Παύλου Λαζαρίδη*, Athens 2004, 144, 146, fig. 4.

[49] A. Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικὰ μνημεῖα τῆς πεδιάδος τῶν Ἀθηνῶν καὶ τῶν κλιτύων Ὑμηττοῦ, Πεντελικοῦ, Πάρνηθας καὶ Αἰγάλεω*, K. Kourouniotis – G. Sotiriou (eds), *Εὑρετήριον τῶν Μεσαιωνικῶν Μνημείων τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, 3, Athens 1933, 163-164, fig. 219. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, op.cit. (n. 21) 333, fig. 361d.

[50] A. Lambropoulou – A. Moutzali, "Ο μεσοβυζαντινός ναός του Αγίου Νικολάου Αιγιαλείας. Συμβολή στην ιστορία της μονής Ταξιαρχών", *Symmeikta* 11 (1997), 323-350. Kappas, "Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος", op.cit. (n. 12), 277 n. 52.

[51] St. Sinos, *Die Klosterkirche der Kosmosoteira in Bera (Vira)* (Byzantinisches Archiv 16), Munich 1985, 210-231, where mostly two-column church cases are examined. Chr. von Scheven-Christians, *Die Kirche der Zōodochos Pēgē bei Samari in Messenien*, Bonn 1980, 78-85. Sl. Ćurčić, "Architecture", E. Kitzinger (ed.), *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo* (DOS 27), Washington, D.C. 1992, 27-67. Ch. Bouras, "Middle Byzantine Domed Cruciform Churches on the Greek Islands", *Zograf* 27 (1998-1999), 15. Kappas, *Ο απλός τετράστυλος / τετρακιόνιος*, op.cit. (n. 33), I, 71-73.

[52] St. Mamaloukos, "Ο ναός της Παναγίας στη Γέννα της Ανατολικής Θράκης", *Περί Θράκης* 4 (2004), 69-92. Kappas, *Ο απλός τετράστυλος / τετρακιόνιος*, op.cit. (n. 33), II, cat. no 4, 18-19.

monument, which is ascribed to the architectural tradition of the capital; its study contributes to our meager knowledge about the trends of Constantinopolitan church architecture during the period in question. The church of St. Constantine in the Bithynian Lake ceases to be a unicum of middle Byzantine church architecture, and is now ascribed to the group of tetraconch churches, namely a rather more conventional design within the Byzantine church building tradition in general. Despite the remarkable geographic dissemination of this plan in Byzantine territory, and the case-by-case typological variations, the addition of three or four symmetric apses to cross-in-square type churches does not appear to have been prevalent in middle Byzantine church architecture, as illustrated by the relatively limited applications of such experimentations, while the best known examples seem to be associated with monastic foundations.

Provenance of the figures

Fig. 1: Mango, "Apolyont", op.cit. (n. 1), fig. B. Figs 2, 3: Millas, *Προποντίδα*, op.cit. (n. 3), fig. p. 76.2, 76.1. Figs 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 17: St. Mamaloukos. Figs 8, 12, 14, 16: M. Kappas. Fig. 9: D. Karakatsanis. Fig. 10: M. Kappas, St. Mamaloukos.

Μιχάλης Κάππας – Σταύρος Μαμαλούκος

ΕΠΑΝΕΞΕΤΑΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΣΤΗ ΛΙΜΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΑΣ ΣΤΗ ΒΙΘΥΝΙΑ

Καθολικό μικρής ανδρώας μονής μέχρι το 1922 και σε ερειπωμένη κατάσταση σήμερα, ο ναός του Αγίου Κωνσταντίνου στην ομώνυμη νησίδα της λίμνης Απολλωνίας στη Βιθυνία έγινε γνωστός στην επιστημονική κοινότητα το 1979 από μια μελέτη του C. Mango, ο οποίος βάσει τυπολογικών και μορφολογικών στοιχείων χρονολόγησε τον ναό στον 9ο-10ο αιώνα. Στην εν λόγω μελέτη σχολιάστηκαν ιδιαίτερα οι δύο κόγχες που διαρθρώνουν τον διαμήκη άξονα του τρουλαίου σταυροειδούς πυρήνα του μνημείου, το οποίο θεωρήθηκε *unicum* στη βυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική. Ωστόσο, από μια προσεκτικότερη εξέταση του ναού, η οποία έγινε από τους γράφοντες με αφορμή σχετική συζήτηση με τον αείμνηστο Hans Buchwald, διαπιστώθηκε ότι τα τύμπανα της εγκάρσιας κεραίας του σταυρού οφείλονται σε ευρεία ανακατασκευή που έλαβε χώρα πιθανώς κατά τον 19ο αιώνα. Στο σημείο αυτό φαίνεται ότι αρχικά προεξείχαν μεγάλες κόγχες, ανάλογες με αυτές στα πέρατα της διαμήκους σταυρικής κεραίας. Στο τύμπανο του νότιου σταυρικού σκέλους διακρίνεται κατακόρυφος αρμός, απομεινάρι του δυτικού μετώπου της καθηρημένης νότιας αψίδας. Επιπλέον, οι κοσμήτες που διαρθρώνουν τις επιφάνειες των τυμπάνων στη στάθμη γένεσης της θολοδομίας, είναι κατασκευασμένοι από επαναχρησιμοποιημένα τεμάχια παλαιότερου μαρμάρινου κοσμήτη. Στο βόρειο σταυρικό σκέλος, ειδικότερα, διακρίνεται σαφώς η κατασκευή του κοσμήτη από κακότεχνα προσαρμοσμένα τεμάχια του αρχικού, ένα μάλιστα από τα οποία είναι γωνιακό και προέρχεται πιθανώς από τη βόρεια κόγχη.

Το πλέον αποκαλυπτικό στοιχείο για την αποκατάσταση της αρχικής μορφής των πλάγιων κογχών του ναού παρέχει η ιδιότυπη, τριγωνικής κάτοψης, προεξοχή της βόρειας όψης του, η οποία είχε θεωρηθεί κατάλοιπο της αρχικής εξωτερικής πλαστικής του διάρθρωσης. Προσεκτικότερη παρατήρηση κατέδειξε ότι η υποτιθέμενη αυτή τριγωνική παραστάδα δεν είναι παρά ένα ελάχιστο λείψανο της καθηρημένης βόρειας αψίδας. Στο κατώτερο τμήμα της διακρίνονται σφυροκοπημένες πέτρες και πλίνθοι της απολαξευμένης τοιχοποιίας του ημικύλινδρου, ενώ από το ύψος

περίπου του ενός μέτρου και πάνω σώζεται τμήμα του ανατολικού σταθμού ενός μεγάλου τρίλοβου παραθύρου, ανάλογου με αυτό που ανοιγόταν στην αψίδα του ιερού βήματος.

Αν και για μια ενδελεχή μελέτη του μνημείου αναμφίβολα απαιτείται η διεξαγωγή συστηματικής αρχαιολογικής έρευνας, μια προσπάθεια αναπαράστασης της αρχικής του μορφής είναι δυνατή με βάση τα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία. Πρόκειται για κτήριο μετρίων διαστάσεων, στο οποίο εφαρμοζόταν η ιδιότυπη παραλλαγή των σταυροειδών εγγεγραμμένων *με απομονωμένα* γωνιακά διαμερίσματα. Οι διάφορες παραλλαγές της διάταξης αυτής είχαν θεωρηθεί για πολλά χρόνια αποκλειστικό γνώρισμα της εκκλησιαστικής αρχιτεκτονικής της βυζαντινής περιφέρειας, άποψη που τα τελευταία χρόνια τείνει να εγκαταλειφθεί. Τα γωνιακά διαμερίσματα του βιθυνικού μνημείου είχαν τη μορφή συνεπτυγμένων σταυροειδών χώρων που καλύπτονταν με φουρνικά. Η κάλυψή τους γινόταν σε αρκετά χαμηλότερο ύψος από τα σκέλη του σταυρού, έτσι ώστε να αναδεικνύεται εξωτερικά ο όγκος των τελευταίων. Ο τετράγωνος χώρος, πάνω από τον οποίο υψωνόταν ο τρούλος, διευρυνόταν με τη δημιουργία εσοχών στις γωνίες του, λύση γνωστή ήδη από τη ναοδομία της παλαιοχριστιανικής περιόδου, που επιβίωσε στη μεσοβυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική.

Καθώς στα άκρα των κεραιών του σταυρικού του πυρήνα υπήρχαν τέσσερις συμμετρικά διατεταγμένες κόγχες, το μνημείο προσγράφεται πλέον στην ομάδα των βυζαντινών ναών με τρεις ή τέσσερις κόγχες. Η προσθήκη τριών ή τεσσάρων κογχών σε σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένους ναούς απαντά σε διάφορες περιπτώσεις στη ναοδομία του Βυζαντίου και της ευρύτερης ζώνης επιρροής του, όπως λ.χ. στην Αρμενία. Στενότερη τυπολογική συγγένεια με την εκκλησία της βιθυνικής λίμνης φαίνεται να παρουσιάζει η εκκλησία του Karaač-Teke κοντά στη Βάρνα, του τέλους του 9ου ή των αρχών του 10ου αιώνα, όπου τέσσερις κόγχες διαμορφώνονται στα πέρατα των σταυρικών κεραιών ενός μεταβατικού σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου ναού. Σε μία ανάλογη, αν και πιο εξελιγμένη τυπολογικά περίπτωση, στους Αγίους Αποστόλους της Αρχαίας Αγοράς των Αθηνών, τέσσερις ελεύθερες κόγχες διαρθρώνουν τα ισάριθμα σκέλη ενός τετρακιόνιου σταυροειδούς πυρήνα, σε μια πρωτότυπη και ιδιαιτέρως εμπνευσμένη σύνθεση. Τα μνημεία που προαναφέρθηκαν, παρά τις επιμέρους διαφορές τους, αποτελούν εκφάνσεις μιας κοινής καθώς φαίνεται τάσης στην εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική της μέσης βυζαντινής περιόδου. Παρά την αξιοσημείωτη, ωστόσο, γεωγραφική διασπορά τετράκογχων ή τρίκογχων λύσεων, ο συγκεκριμένος πειραματισμός δεν φαίνεται να γνώρισε ευρεία διάδοση στη ναοδομία της μεσοβυζαντινής περιόδου, όπως υποδεικνύει ο αναλογικά περιορισμένος αριθμός των σχετικών εφαρμογών, ενώ τα περισσότερα γνωστά μέχρι σήμερα ανάλογα παραδείγματα φαίνεται να συνδέονται με μοναστικά καθιδρύματα.

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