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Η παλαιοχριστιανική αρχιτεκτονική ως πηγή έμπνευσης για ναούς του 11ου αιώνα στα νησιά του Αιγαίου

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EARLY CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR ELEVENTH CENTURY CHURCHES ON THE AEGEAN ISLANDS

Σε ορισμένες εκκλησίες στα μικρά νησιά του Αιγαίου εμφανίζεται μια προσπάθεια αναβίωσης της παλαιοχριστιανικής αρχιτεκτονικής. Ο Άγιος Μάμας της Ποταμιάς στη Νάξο και η Επισκοπή της Σαντορίνης εμπνέονται από γνωστούς ναούς του βου αιώνα. Παρόμοια τάση εμφανίζουν και οι Άγιοι Απόστολοι στο Άργος Καλύμνου. Αυτή η προσπάθεια είναι χαρακτηριστική της ιδεολογίας της εποχής της, αλλά περιορίζεται σε λίγα παραδείγματα, χωρίς να κατορθώνει να μεταβάλλει την τοπική έκφραση της αρχιτεκτονικής.

Some churches on small Aegean islands demonstrate an effort to revive Early Christian architecture. Hagios Mamas near Potamia on Naxos and the church of the Episkopi on Santorini are inspired by known sixth-century churches. A similar trend is evident in the church of Hagioi Apostoloi at Argos on Kalymnos. This attempt is characteristic of the ideology of the era, but is limited to few examples, not succeeding in changing the local expression of architecture.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Μεσοβυζαντινή περίοδος, 11ος αιώνας, βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική, νησιά Αιγαίου, Νάξος, Σαντορίνη, Κάλυμνος.

Keywords

Middle Byzantine Period; 11th century; Byzantine architecture; Aegean islands; Naxos; Santorini; Kalymnos.

Byzantine church architecture is characterized by continuous change alongside retrospect. Early Christian architectural features that appear during the Middle Byzantine period may in some cases have survived through the centuries, but often also reveal an intention to revive the past.¹ A return to older archetypes, sometimes referred to as a “Renaissance”², is common in 11th-century churches. On the Aegean islands, this tendency is best illustrated by the katholikon of Nea

Moni on Chios, which clearly demonstrates architectural trends in Constantinople during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty and has been related to Early Christian models³. This paper focuses on such attempts on smaller Aegean islands, where, although architecture is not comparable to this outstanding monument, a similar trend can be detected in certain notable churches.

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¹ Ch. Bouras, “Βυζαντινὲς Ἀναγεννήσεις καὶ ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ τοῦ 11ου καὶ 12ου αἰῶνος”, *DChAE* 5 (1969), 247-274.

² For the use of the term in relation to Middle Byzantine architecture see: R. Krautheimer (revised by R. Krautheimer and S. Ćurčić), *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, New Haven – London 1986, 352-333.

³ Ch. Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios. History and Architecture*, Athens 1982, 139-145. R. Ousterhout has questioned Bouras’s idea that the katholikon is inspired by the mausoleum of Constantine the Great at the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. R. Ousterhout, “Originality in Byzantine Architecture: The case of Nea Moni”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51 (1992), 49-60. R. Ousterhout, “Beyond Hagia Sophia: Originality in Byzantine Architecture”, A. R. Littlewood (ed.), *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music*, Oxford 1995, 178-181. His arguments were later rejected by Bouras, see Ch. Bouras “Originality in Byzantine Architecture”, *Mélanges Jean-Pierre Sodini (TM 15)*, Paris 2005, 104-105.



Fig. 1. Naxos. Hagios Mamas near Potamia. South view.

Naxos, Hagios Mamas

Hagios Mamas near Kato Potamia on Naxos is the most important Middle Byzantine church of the island⁴. The building differs significantly from local architecture, which is generally characterized by the evolution of Early Christian tradition, with a gradual reduction of sizes, decline of construction technology, simplification of forms and gradual disappearance of older architectural features⁵. It is a large cross-in-square church, with a later narthex. It demonstrates an attempt to deviate from local trends and create a monumental building, inspired by an Early Christian prototype. This is evident in the six-meter wide dome, pierced by eight large windows and the large double-light windows on the church's facades, which provide abundant light to the interior (Fig. 1), as well as the wide semi-circular sanctuary apse, originally pierced by a large, triple-

light window. Unlike contemporary churches on Naxos, whose arched or rectangular windows are small and simple, the church's double and triple-light windows have marble mullions, made of reused Early Christian colonettes⁶. The window arches are made of slightly recessed carved voussoirs and are surrounded by a brick band.

The exact date of the church is unknown⁷. The dedicatory inscription of the church has preserved the name of the *ktetor*, Bishop Leon⁸. The same name is also mentioned in the inscription on the original templon of the church of Protothronos at Chalki, on the same island, dated to 1052⁹. The similarity of a templon epistyle which certainly belongs to the templon of the diakonikon of

⁴ G. Dimitrokallis, "Ο ναός του Ἁγίου Μάμαντος στὴν Ποταμιά τῆς Νάξου", *Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν μελέτην τῶν βυζαντινῶν μνημεῖων τῆς Νάξου*, Athens 1972, 61-112. A. Ohnesorg, "Byzantinische Vierstutzen-Kirchen auf Naxos", *Koldewey-Gesellschaft, Bericht über die 39. Tagung für Ausgrabungswissenschaft und Bauforschung (15-19 Mai 1996 in Leiden)*, Stuttgart 1998, 61-69. K. Aslanidis, *Βυζαντινὴ ναοδομία στὴ Νάξο. Ἡ μετεξέλιξη ἀπὸ τὴν παλαιοχριστιανικὴ στὴ μεσοβυζαντινὴ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ* (unpublished PhD thesis), University of Patras 2014, 191-200.

⁵ Aslanidis, op.cit. (n. 4), 358-361, 374-393.

⁶ A. Ohnesorg, "Die Antiken Spolien in der Kirche des Hagios Mamas auf Naxos", *Architectura* 24 (1994), 175, fig. 5a.

⁷ Dimitrokallis initially dated the church to the last quarter of the 9th century, Dimitrokallis, op.cit. (n. 4), 111. Much later he revised his view, dating the church after the reconquest of Crete (961), G. Dimitrokallis, *Βυζαντινὴ ναοδομία στὴ Νάξο*, Athens 2000, 30 note 26.

⁸ P. Zerlenti, "Βυζαντιακὴ ἐπιγραφὴ ἐκ Νάξου", *BZ* 16 (1907), 285-286. A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme in Inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, 3. *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein nebst Addenda zu den Bänden 1 und 2* (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 35), Vienna 2014, 315-318 GR96.

⁹ N. Zias, "Πρωτόθρονη στὸ Χαλκί", *Βυζαντινὴ Τέχνη στὴν Ελλάδα. Νάξος*, Athens 1989, 30. Rhoby, op.cit. (n. 8), 313-315 GR 95.



Fig. 2. (a) Naxos. Hagios Mamas near Potamia. South window arch. (b) Paros. Katapoliani. Main church. Apse window arch.



Fig. 3. (a) Naxos. Hagios Mamas near Potamia. Barrel vault. (b) Paros. Katapoliani. Main church. Barrel vault.



Fig. 4. (a) Naxos. Hagios Mamas near Potamia. Dome. (b) Paros. Katapoliani. Dome



Fig. 5. (a) Naxos. Hagios Mamas near Potamia. Interior. (b) Paros. Katapoliani. Dome. Interior.

Hagios Mamas, but is now used as a lintel in a nearby chapel¹⁰, to the dated epistyle of the Protothronos provides additional reasons for dating the church to the mid-eleventh century and leads to the conclusion that the ktetors of the two churches were most probably identical¹¹.

The features mentioned above demonstrate a deliberate effort to accomplish exactly what is described in the metrical dedicatory inscription of the church,

¹⁰ Ch. Pennas, *Μελέτη μεσοβυζαντινής γλυπτικής. Νάξος - Πάρος*, Athens 2000, 21.

¹¹ Aslanidis, op.cit. (n. 4), 197. See also: M. Kappas, *Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο. Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακιδίου / τετράστυλου* (unpublished PhD thesis), 2, 2005, 205. N. Zarras, "Identity and Patronage in Byzantium: Epigraphic Evidence and Donor Portraits of Naxos", Ch. Stavrakos (ed.), *Inscriptions in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine History and History of Art*, Wiesbaden 2016, 55-56.

written in an archaizing style of expression, namely to replace a small, dilapidated building with a larger, graceful, elaborate church: «τὸν πρὶν βραχύν τε καὶ κατητελισμένον...δόμον...κρείττονα, εὐπρεπὴ τε καὶ [κε]καλλωπισμένον»¹². Such intentions justify a return to Early Christian prototypes for inspiration. The large Early Christian basilicas of Naxos, had, however, already been destroyed. By contrast, the imposing Justinianic church of Katapoliani on the nearby island of Paros¹³ had survived. A comparison of certain forms and details of construction, namely the window arches made of carved voussoirs and surrounded by brick bands (Fig. 2), the vaults made of carved voussoirs of volcanic stone (Fig. 3), the dome with eight windows (Fig. 4) and the extensive use of marble blocks from earlier buildings,

¹² Zerlentis, op.cit. (n. 8).

¹³ H. Jewell – F. Hasluck, *The Church of Our Lady of the Hundred Gates in Paros*, London 1920.

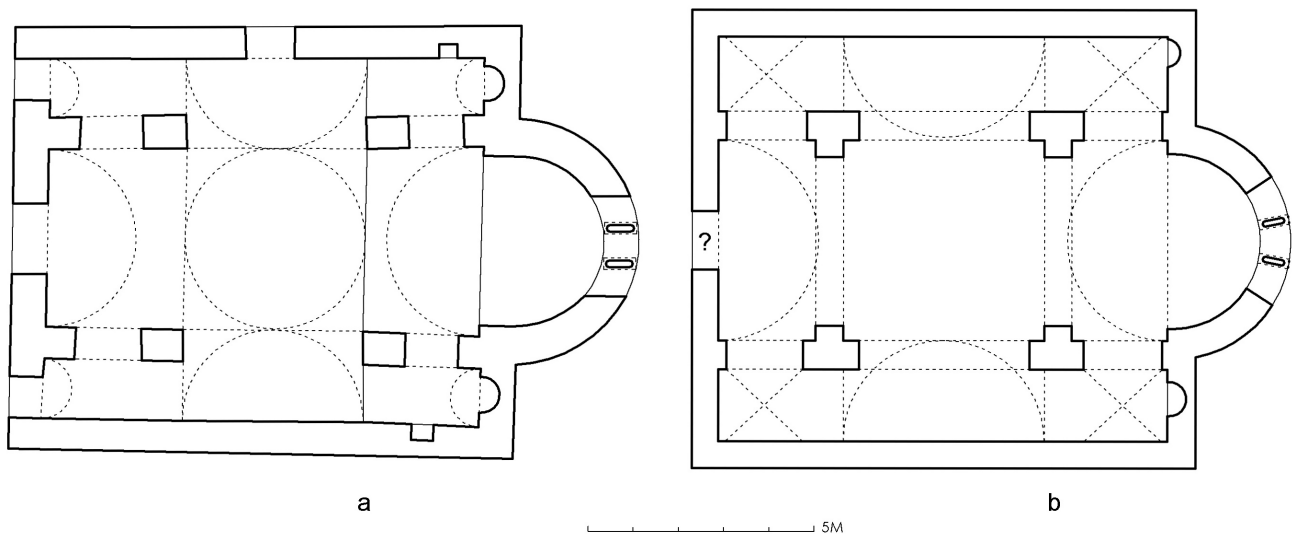


Fig. 6. (a) Naxos. Hagios Mamas near Potamia. Reconstructive plan (b) Kalymnos. Hagioi Apostoloi at Argos. Reconstructive plan.

provides convincing evidence that Katapoliani served as the prototype for Hagios Mamas¹⁴. This impressive building of the Justinianic period, the largest church ever to have been built on the Cycladic islands, was very much admired in the Middle Byzantine period, as is demonstrated in the Life of Saint Theoktiste of Lesbos, written in the early tenth century, where it is described as remarkable and still preserving traces of its ancient beauty: «ἀξιοθέατος καὶ λείψανα σώζων ἔτι τῆς παλαιᾶς ὡραιότητος»¹⁵. In Hagios Mamas, Bishop Leon not only imitated specific features of the Justinianic model, but also succeeded in creating a building characterized by a monumental interior, flooded by light, with impressive marble pieces, in a way similar to the prototype (Fig. 5). However, the limitations of the new era in terms of materials and techniques certainly restricted his ambitious intentions.

Kalymnos, Hagioi Apostoloi

A comparison of the church of Hagioi Apostoloi at Argos on the island of Kalymnos with that of Hagios Mamas reveals many similarities. The plans of the two churches are of almost identical layout and size, differing only in the exact form of the supports of the dome (Fig. 6). In Hagios Mamas, the dome is supported by walls pierced by arched openings¹⁶, whereas in Hagioi Apostoloi the dome rests on four arches, which spring from L-shaped pillars. The wide semi-circular apse with the triple-light window of Hagioi Apostoloi (Fig. 7), as in Hagios Mamas, clearly imitates Early Christian examples. M. Kappas, who published the church dating it to the late tenth or eleventh century¹⁷, has also compared the wide, pendentive dome (Fig. 8) to Early Christian examples¹⁸. The support of the dome by arches is also characteristic of churches built before 1000¹⁹. Although

¹⁴ Aslanidis, op.cit (n. 4), 358-361. D. Athansoulis, "Some Notes on the Impact of Constantinople on the Byzantine Architecture of the Aegean and the Peloponnese", *Proceedings of the Symposium on City Ports from the Aegean to the Black Sea. Medieval – Modern Networks (22nd-29th August 2015)*, eds Fl. Karagianni – U. Kocabaş, Istanbul 2015, 169.

¹⁵ H. Delehay – P. Peeters, *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, IV, Brussels 1925, 226.

¹⁶ The church belongs to the "transitional" variation of the cross-in-square type. However, it resembles churches of the simple tetrastyle variation, due to the solid and void proportions of the walls supporting the dome, Kappas, op.cit (n. 11), vol. 1, 254.

¹⁷ M. Kappas, "Η αρχιτεκτονική του ναού των Αγίων Αποστόλων στο Άργος Καλύμνου", *DChAE* 30 (2009), 65.

¹⁸ Ibid., 62-64.

¹⁹ P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Η ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική εἰς τὴν*



Fig. 7. Kalymnos. Hagioi Apostoloi at Argos. East view.



Fig. 8. Kalymnos. Hagioi Apostoloi at Argos. Southwest view.

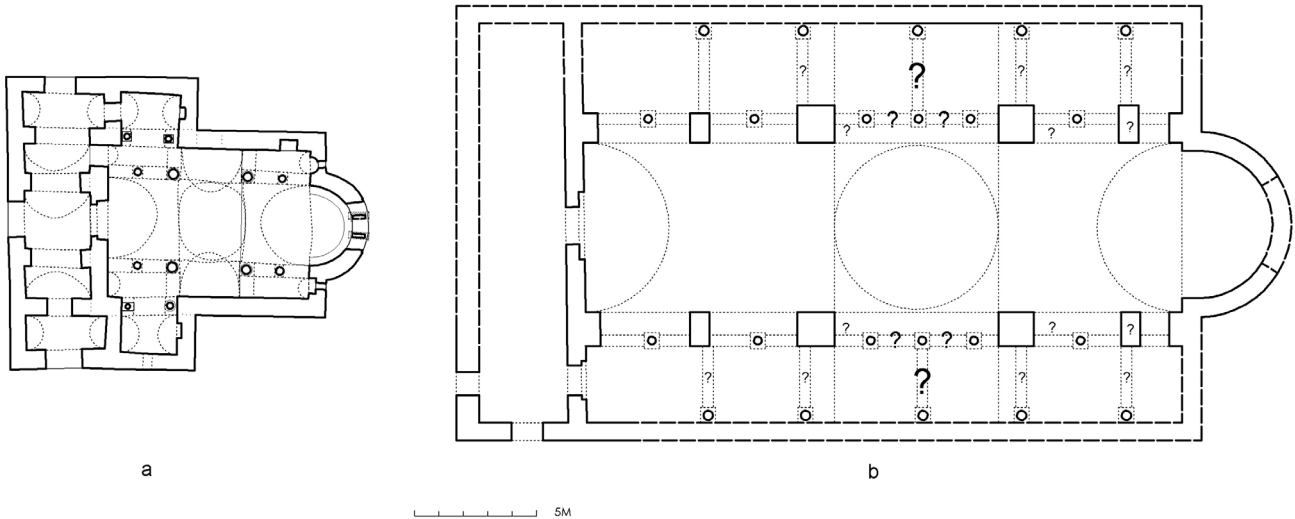


Fig. 9. (a). Santorini. Episkopi in Mesa Gonia. Reconstructive plan. (b) Santorini. Hagia Eirini at Perissa. Reconstructive plan of the second construction phase.

the church upon which Hagioi Apostoloi was modelled cannot be specifically identified, the survival of Early Christian baptisteries on the Dodecanese islands in the Middle Byzantine period has been proposed by M. Kappas as a possible source of inspiration for the founders of the church on Kalymnos²⁰. Unfortunately, modern plaster covers all surfaces of the building; therefore, it is impossible to draw further conclusions and some reservations regarding the date of the church²¹ are not unjustifiable.

Santorini, Episkopi

A third example, perhaps even more characteristic of the same trend, is that of the Episkopi in Mesa Gonia

on the island of Santorini. The church has provoked a debate regarding its date and whether or not it is the result of the transformation of an Early Christian basilica. A. Orlandos, who first published the church in 1951, thought that the original plan of the building is due to a pre-existing basilica, whose middle columns were removed in Middle Byzantine times in order to construct a dome²². However, several observations, most importantly the larger diameter of the columns supporting the drum²³, lead to the conclusion that the church was originally built as an octastyle inscribed cross, namely with additional columns between the dome and the east and west walls (Fig. 9)²⁴. Orlandos, based on a lost inscription erroneously read in 1701²⁵ dated the church to 1081²⁶. Later, it was proven that he had miscalculated

Δυτικήν Στερεάν Ελλάδα και την Ήπειρον από τοῦ τέλους τοῦ 7ου μέχρι τοῦ τέλους τοῦ 10ου αἰῶνος, Thessaloniki 1975, ²1992, 148. Aslanidis, op.cit. (n. 4), 282 note 753.

²⁰ Kappas, op.cit. (n. 17), 64.

²¹ S. Mamaloukos has expressed the view that the church is much earlier, dating it to the Early Christian period, see S. Mamaloukos, “Ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονική του ναοῦ του Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου του Θεολόγου στο Ἄνω Κόρθι τῆς Ἄνδρου”, G. Pallis (ed.), *Ἡ βυζαντινὴ Ἄνδρος (4ος-12ος αἰῶνας). Νεώτερα ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαιολογικὴ ἔρευνα καὶ τὶς ἀποκαταστάσεις τῶν μνημείων* [Ἀνδριακά Χρονικά 43 (2016)], Ἄνδρος 2016, 91.

²² A. Orlandos, “Ἡ Ἱερωσύνη τῆς Σαντορίνης”, *ABME* 7 (1951), 186-90.

²³ K. Aslanidis, “Ἐπανεξέταση τῆς ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς του ναοῦ τῆς Ἐπισκοπῆς Σαντορίνης”, V. Katsaros – A. Tourta (eds), *Ἀφιέρωμα στον ἀκαδημαϊκὸ Παναγιώτη Λ. Βοκοτόπουλο*, Athens 2015, 109-110.

²⁴ The term was introduced by Vocotopoulos, op.cit. (n. 19), 112-116.

²⁵ According to this reading of the inscription, the founder of the church was Alexios Comnenos and the date 685 AD. G. Hofmann, “Vescovadi cattolici della Grecia V. Thera (Santorino)”, *OrChrAn* 130 (1941), 94.

²⁶ Orlandos, op.cit. (n. 22), 181 note 2.



Fig. 10. Santorini. Episkopi in Mesa Gonia. Northeast view.

the date and a date of 1181 was proposed²⁷. However, trying to date the church based on an erroneous reading is very risky and it is wiser to employ a stylistic approach, which leads to a possible date in the late 11th century, during the reign of Alexios I Comnenos, who was the founder of the church according to the lost inscription²⁸ and tradition²⁹. Many features demonstrate

²⁷ A. Tsitouridou, “Επισκοπή Σαντορίνης. Ίδρυμα του Αλεξίου Α΄ Κομνηνού ή του Β΄;”, *Αμητός. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Μανόλη Ανδρόνικο*, Β΄, Thessaloniki 1987, 917-921.

²⁸ Hofmann, *op.cit.* (n. 25), 94.

²⁹ F. Richard, *Relation de ce qui est passé le plus remarquable à Sant-Erini isle de l’archipel*, Paris 1657, 31.

its attempt to imitate architecture of the past. These are the emphatic re-use of marble architectural members, the elongated plan, indeed reminiscent of a basilica and the wide semi-circular apse with the triple-light window (Fig. 10). The model for the church of the Episkopi must have been the massive basilica of Hagia Eirini at Perissa on the same island, the second largest Early Christian basilica in the Cyclades, after Katapoliani. The Perissa basilica was transformed into a domed cruciform structure, possibly in the second half of the 6th century³⁰. The dome was supported by four massive piers. Two pairs of

³⁰ E. Gerousi, “Η παλαιοχριστιανική βασιλική της Αγίας Ειρήνης



Fig. 11. (a) Santorini. Episkopi in Mesa Gonia. South chapel. (b) Santorini. Hagia Eirini at Perissa. Arch supported on column.

smaller piers were also added to the east and the west of the dome in order to support the barrel-vault that covered the nave. It is not known whether there were galleries. Thus, the plan of the Justinianic church is very similar to churches of the octastyle variation of the cross-in-square type (Fig. 9)³¹. In the Middle Byzantine period Hagia Eirini was only partially preserved, but there is evidence that parts of it were still in use³². Admiration for this church in the Middle Ages was such that the name of the church, Saint Irini, became synonymous

with the island itself³³. Two specific characteristics demonstrate deliberate reference of the Episkopi to the great Justinianic church: the peculiar common plan arrangement (Fig. 10) and the unusual support of arches by columns attached to walls³⁴ in both churches (Fig. 11). Influence from older models has also been observed in the decorative repertoire of the marble templon of the Episkopi³⁵.

στην Περίσσα Θήρας. Μία πρώτη προσέγγιση”, *DChAE* 31 (2010), 25-27.

³¹ See n. 23.

³² Gerousi, *op.cit.* (n. 30), 30-31.

³³ Gerousi, *op.cit.* (n. 30), 31.

³⁴ In the case of the Episkopi, this arrangement may belong to a somewhat later construction phase, Aslanidis, *op.cit.* (n. 22), 110.

³⁵ C. Barsanti – S. Pedone, “Una nota sulla scultura ad incrostazione e il templon della Panaghia Episkopi di Santorini”, *Mélanges Jean-Pierre Sodini* (TM 15), Paris 2005, 416-425.

General remarks

These three monuments offer valuable evidence for the impact of eleventh-century ideology in the Aegean islands. The effort to revive architecture of past times is undoubtedly associated with the return of prosperity to the region in the late 10th century, after the definite elimination of the Arab threat, which had provoked an enormous economic decline, especially after the installation of Andalus Arabs in Crete³⁶. What is particularly interesting is that in the small and somewhat isolated islands of the Aegean, the churches that served as models for this revival were also from the Aegean islands. Some imposing churches of the Justinianic period had not only escaped total destruction, but continued to be admired as creations of a glorious past that was being reborn. Reference to local models demonstrates a certain isolation of the islands³⁷ but also perhaps a certain localism³⁸ at least until the mid 11th century³⁹.

With the exception of Chios, where the illustrious katholikon of the Nea Moni reveals direct introduction of models from Constantinople, the high aspirations of ktetors on the smaller Aegean islands were realized with limited technical means and local craftsmen. For instance, although Hagios Mamas and Episkopi make extensive use of marble, the works of new marble seem to be limited to the templon and floor; all other architectural members such as columns, capitals, colonettes, string courses etc. are made of ancient or Early Christian

marble pieces⁴⁰. Although this does reveal an antiquarian taste, which may be connected to a tendency to return to the past, it appears that marble carvers were only called upon after the buildings were completed, demonstrating the absence of local marble workshops and hence enormous limitations placed on the design and execution of the church decoration⁴¹. Thus, it is possible to conclude that despite the ambitious intentions of the ktetors, the churches were executed by local masons, who interpreted models according to their capacity and available means. Therefore, the cases analyzed above are not comparable to the known examples of –more or less– exact copies in Byzantine architecture⁴² as imitation was confined to certain elements only⁴³ and the final result resembled the model only faintly⁴⁴. A closer imitation of an Early Christian model appears again on the island of Naxos probably at a much later date⁴⁵.

In some other cases, churches built on the site of Early Christian basilicas also reflect a revivalist trend. For instance, the cross-in-square church of Hagia Eirini at Kampos on the island of Ikaria⁴⁶, although apparently

³⁶ K. Setton, “On the raids of the Moslems in the Aegean in the ninth and tenth centuries and their alleged occupation of Athens”, *AJA* 58 (1954), 311-314. G. Miles, “Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area”, *DOP* 18 (1964), 3-14. V. Christides, “The Raids of the Moslems of Crete in the Aegean Sea, Piracy and Conquest”, *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 76-111.

³⁷ For the isolation of islands during the Middle-Ages see: E. Malamut, “Les îles de la mer Egée de la fin du XIe siècle à 1204”, *Byzantion* 52 (1982), 316-318.

³⁸ On the antagonism between the capital and the provinces, with reference to mainland Greece, and its possible relation to the development of Middle Byzantine architecture there, see: Ch. Bouras, *Ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονική τῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Ὁσίου Λουκά*, Athens 2015, 8-9.

³⁹ In most cases, architectural features of Constantinopolitan origin appear in the islands after the mid 11th century, Aslanidis, op.cit. (n. 4), 384-390.

⁴⁰ Ohnesorg, op.cit. (n. 6). Orlandos, op.cit. (n. 21), 190-194.

⁴¹ Also see: K. Aslanidis, “Ἡ μεσοβυζαντινὴ ναοδομία στὴν Ἄνδρο καὶ οἱ σχέσεις τῆς μετὰ τὴν ηπειρωτικὴ Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὰ νησιά”, *Ἡ βυζαντινὴ Ἄνδρος (4ος-12ος αἰῶνας)*, op.cit. (n. 15), 136.

⁴² S. Mamaloukos, “Ζητήματα σχεδιασμοῦ στὴ βυζαντινὴ ἀρχιτεκτονική”, *DChAE* 24 (2003), 119-130. Bouras, op.cit. (n. 3), 107-108.

⁴³ In a similar way to the depiction of buildings in Byzantine art, where the representation was confined to certain features of the building. E. Chatzityrphos, “Παραστάσεις καὶ ἀναπαραστάσεις τῆς ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς στὸ Βυζάντιο. Ἡ σκέψη πίσω ἀπὸ τὴν εἰκόνα”, *Ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ ὡς εἰκόνα. Πρόσληψη καὶ ἀναπαραστάση τῆς ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς στὴ βυζαντινὴ τέχνη* (exhibition catalog), eds E. Chatzityrphos – Sl. Ćurčić, Thessaloniki 2009, 147-148.

⁴⁴ It is, however, worth noting that in both churches of the Episkopi and Hagia Eirini the ratio of width to length (including the narthex) is 1:1,69.

⁴⁵ The chapels attached to the 7th-century church of Panagia Drosiani near Moni copy the church’s triconch plan arrangement as well as its square dome and two-light bema apse window. In this case the copies were right next to the model and the imitation could be much more faithful; however, they are significantly inferior to the model. Mamaloukos, op.cit. (n. 42), 127-128. Aslanidis, op.cit. (n. 4), 39-40.

⁴⁶ Ch. Bouras, “Middle Byzantine domed cruciform churches on the Greek islands”, *Zograf* 27 (1988-1989), 11, fig. 7.

not following an Early Christian model, is built on the ruins of the basilica in the ancient settlement of Oinoe⁴⁷, making use of spolia and demonstrating ambitious intentions. A quite similar case is that of the basilica of Hagios Stefanos at Aggidia on the island of Naxos, rebuilt as an cross-in-square church in the Middle Byzantine period⁴⁸.

The trend analyzed above is not generalized. The eleventh-century tendency in the Aegean islands to revert to Early Christian models did not succeed in changing the provincial expression of local architecture. There are small churches on Naxos and Kalymnos that most probably copy Hagios Mamas⁴⁹ and Hagioi Apostoloi⁵⁰ respectively, as was also the case for more important buildings,

⁴⁷ For Oinoe, see: M. Viglaki-Sophianou, "Ikaria", A. Vlachopoulos (ed.), *Archaeology: Aegean Islands*, Athens 2006, 150-152.

⁴⁸ G. Gruben, "Wandernde Säulen auf Naxos", *Φως Κυκλαδικόν. Μνήμη Νικολάου Ζαφειροπούλου*, Athens 1999, 296-299.

⁴⁹ The most characteristic case is that of Hagios Georgios Diasoritis. Aslanidis, op.cit. (n. 4), 378-379. For the church in general see: M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Άγιος Γεώργιος ο Διασορίτης της Νάξου. Οι τοιχογραφίες του 11ου αιώνα*, Athens 2016.

⁵⁰ Hagios Theodoros in Voukolia. Kappas, op.cit. (n. 17), 64, fig. 9.

such as the katholikon of the Nea Moni in Chios⁵¹. In the case of Santorini, a similar conclusion cannot be drawn, as the Episkopi is the only surviving Middle Byzantine church of the island, which suffers from earthquake activity and has undergone major changes over the subsequent centuries⁵². Although the existence of copies affirms the impact of these important churches on local architecture, the copies themselves do not reflect a similar intention to revive architecture of the past. It appears that this remained the desire of a local elite with constrained resources, which did not find followers.

⁵¹ Hagios Georgios Sykousis, Panagia Krena and Hagioi Apostoloi in Pyrgi. Ch. Bouras, "Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Variations of the Single Domed Octagon Plan", *DChAE* 9 (1977-1979), 26.

⁵² A significant number of Post-Byzantine churches are preserved in Santorini. I. Koumanoudis, *Η λαϊκή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική της νήσου Θήρας*, Athens 1960.

Illustration credits

Figs 1-5, 6a, 9a, 10, 11a: photos by Kl. Aslanidis. Fig. 6b: Kappas, op.cit. (n. 11), fig. 1. Figs 7, 8: photos by M. Kappas. Fig. 9b: Gerousi, op.cit. (n. 30), fig. 3. Fig. 11b: photo by S. Mamaloukos.

Κλήμης Ασλανίδης

Η ΠΑΛΑΙΟΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΙΚΗ ΩΣ ΠΗΓΗ ΕΜΠΝΕΥΣΗΣ ΓΙΑ ΝΑΟΥΣ ΤΟΥ 11ΟΥ ΑΙΩΝΑ ΣΤΑ ΝΗΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ

Σε πολλές εκκλησίες του 11ου αιώνα έχει παρατηρηθεί η τάση αναβίωσης της παλαιοχριστιανικής αρχιτεκτονικής, η οποία, μάλιστα, ορισμένες φορές αναφέρεται ως «αναγέννηση». Το αντιπροσωπευτικότερο παράδειγμα της τάσης αυτής για τα νησιά του Αιγαίου είναι το καθολικό της Νέας Μονής της Χίου, το οποίο υποτίθεται ότι ακολουθεί το πρότυπο του μανσωλείου του Κωνσταντίνου στον ναό των Αγίων Αποστόλων της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Αν και στα μικρότερα νησιά

δεν υπάρχουν ναοί που μπορούν να συγκριθούν με το εξέχον αυτό μνημείο της μεσοβυζαντινής αρχιτεκτονικής, σε ορισμένα αξιόλογα παραδείγματα εντοπίζονται ανάλογες τάσεις.

Στη Νάξο η τάση αυτή χαρακτηρίζει τον σπουδαιότερο μεσοβυζαντινό ναό, που είναι ο Άγιος Μάμας κοντά στην Κάτω Ποταμιά (Εικ. 1). Ο Άγιος Μάμας μπορεί να χρονολογηθεί στα μέσα του 11ου αιώνα, με βάση την κτητορική του επιγραφή, όπου αναφέρεται

ως κτήτωρ ο επίσκοπος Ναξίας Λέων, ο οποίος μπορεί να ταυτιστεί με τον αναφερόμενο στην επιγραφή του επιστυλίου του τέμπλου της Παναγίας Πρωτοθρόνου, στο ίδιο νησί το 1052. Στον Άγιο Μάμαντα είναι εμφανής η προσπάθεια κατασκευής ενός μνημειώδους κτηρίου, εμπνευσμένου από ένα παλαιοχριστιανικό πρότυπο. Η πρόθεση του κτήτορος εκφράζεται με σαφήνεια στην έμμετρη κτητορική επιγραφή του ναού, η οποία είναι γραμμένη σε αρχαίζον ύφος. Ορισμένες μορφολογικές και κατασκευαστικές λεπτομέρειες φανερώνουν ότι ως πρότυπο για την ανέγερση του ναού πρέπει να λειτούργησε η ιουστινιάνεια βασιλική της Καταπολιανής της Πάρου (Εικ. 2-5). Ο σπουδαίος ναός, ο μεγαλύτερος που κτίστηκε στις Κυκλάδες, εξακολουθούσε να εντυπωσιάζει στη μέση βυζαντινή περίοδο, όπως αποκαλύπτει και ο βίος της οσίας Θεοκτίστης της Λεσβίας. Ο κτήτορας του Αγίου Μάμαντος, εμπνευσμένος από το σπουδαίο αυτό κτήριο του παρελθόντος, δημιούργησε έναν ναό, που, αν και ασφαλώς απέχει πολύ από το πρότυπο, εμφανώς διαφοροποιείται από την αρχιτεκτονική της περιόδου στο νησί.

Ο ναός των Αγίων Αποστόλων στο Άργος της Καλύμνου (Εικ. 7, 8) έχει παρόμοια κάτοψη και διαστάσεις με τον ναξιακό ναό (Εικ. 6) και, κατά τον Μιχάλη Κάππα, χρονολογείται στο τέλος του 10ου ή τον 11ο αιώνα. Αν και δεν μπορεί να προσδιοριστεί κάποιος συγκεκριμένος παλαιοχριστιανικός ναός που λειτούργησε ως πρότυπο για τους Αγίους Αποστόλους, όπως και στην περίπτωση του Αγίου Μάμαντος, επί μέρους στοιχεία φανερώνουν την προσπάθεια αναβίωσης μορφών της ιουστινιάνειας αρχιτεκτονικής.

Η Επισκοπή στη Μέσα Γωνιά της Σαντορίνης (Εικ. 9α, 10) έχει προκαλέσει μακρά συζήτηση ως προς τη χρονολόγησή της, καθώς και για το αν πρόκειται για μετασκευή παλαιοχριστιανικής βασιλικής σε σταυροειδή εγγεγραμμένο ναό. Η Επισκοπή, σύμφωνα με τις τελευταίες έρευνες, πιθανότατα κτίστηκε τον 11ο αιώνα και δεν φαίνεται να έχει ενσωματώσει κάποιο παλαιότερο κτήριο στην κατασκευή της. Ωστόσο, πολλά χαρακτηριστικά του ναού δείχνουν ότι ακολουθεί παλαιοχριστιανικά πρότυπα. Το κτήριο που πρέπει να

λειτούργησε ως πρότυπο για την Επισκοπή είναι η Αγία Ειρήνη στην Περίσσα, η οποία, κατά την Ευγενία Γερούση, κτίστηκε ως ξυλόστεγη βασιλική και μετατράπηκε σε τρουλλαία με σταυροειδή διάταξη των καμαρών κατά τον 6ο αιώνα. Τόσο η πρωτότυπη διάταξη της κάτοψης της Επισκοπής, που ανήκει στον τύπο του οκτάστυλου σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου ναού, όσο και συγκεκριμένες λεπτομέρειες της κατασκευής της φανερώνουν πως υπήρξε συνειδητή προσπάθεια μίμησης του σπουδαίου ναού (Εικ. 9, 11), ο οποίος είχε διατηρηθεί εν μέρει μέχρι τους μέσους βυζαντινούς χρόνους. Ο θαυμασμός για το μνημείο στον μεσαίωνα αποδεικνύεται, άλλωστε, από το ότι τελικά έδωσε το όνομά του στο νησί της Θήρας.

Παρόμοια τάση αναβίωσης του παρελθόντος φανερώνει ενδεχομένως και η ανέγερση μεσοβυζαντινών ναών στα ερείπια παλαιοχριστιανικών βασιλικών, με εκτεταμένη και προβεβλημένη χρήση μαρμάρου από τα παλαιότερα κτήρια. Ως χαρακτηριστικά παραδείγματα μπορούν να αναφερθούν οι ναοί του Αγίου Στεφάνου στα Αγγίδια της Νάξου και της Αγίας Ειρήνης στον Κάμπο της Ικαρίας.

Τα παραπάνω μνημεία φανερώνουν την τάση αναβίωσης του ενδόξου παρελθόντος στα νησιά του Αιγαίου, η οποία ασφαλώς θα πρέπει να συνδεθεί με την ανάκαμψη του νησιωτικού χώρου μετά την οριστική εκδίωξη των Αράβων από την Κρήτη. Ωστόσο, σε αντίθεση με το καθολικό της Νέας Μονής Χίου, όπου η τάση αυτή συνδυάστηκε με την εισαγωγή προτύπων από την Κωνσταντινούπολη, στους ναούς που εξετάζονται χρησιμοποιήθηκαν πρότυπα από τα ίδια ή γειτονικά νησιά και τοπικά συνεργεία μαστόρων με περιορισμένες τεχνικές και οικονομικές δυνατότητες. Αν και ορισμένοι μικροί ναοί της Νάξου και της Καλύμνου φαίνεται πως αντέγραψαν τόσο τον Άγιο Μάμαντα όσο και τους Αγίους Αποστόλους, η πρόθεση αναβίωσης του παρελθόντος δεν είχε γενικότερη διάδοση και δεν επηρέασε την εξέλιξη του τοπικού νησιωτικού αρχιτεκτονικού ιδιώματος.

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