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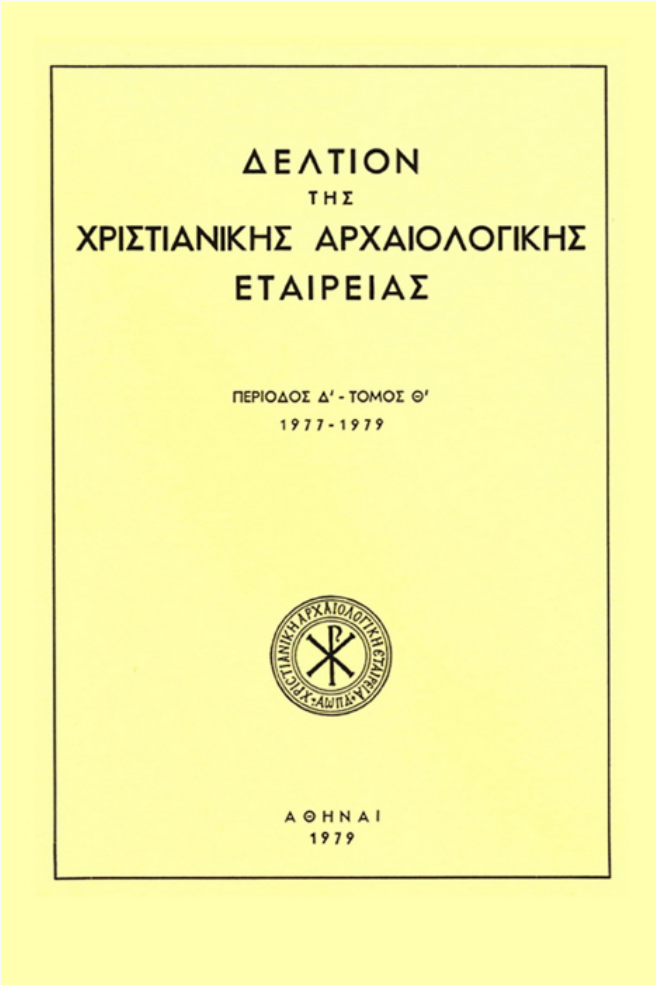

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Architectural Sculptures of the Twelfth and the Early Thirteenth Centuries in Greece (pl. 21-32)

Laskarina BOURAS

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ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURES OF THE TWELFTH AND THE EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURIES IN GREECE*

(PL. 21 - 32)

The twelfth and early thirteenth century architectural sculptures of Greece are different from the contemporary Constantinopolitan ones, as A. Grabar recently pointed out[1]. The Greek school flourished around the three important centers of Athens, Corinth and Thebes; however, remarkable finds have been located as far as Mistra, Arta and some of the islands, such as Andros and Euboea; the district of Mani is also extremely rich in architectural sculptures of a local character.

Some of the most important tendencies of the Greek school may be observed in four different groups of epistyles and cornices, the study of which has been based on some dated or approximately dated examples. In terms of style, the sculptures to be presented are particularly important for the study of the two-level technique[2] and the evolution of the ornamental scrollwork[3], widely applied by Greek craftsmen during the period here examined.

I. The first of the works to be discussed in this survey is an unpublished epistyle of 1103 from Mani (Pl. 21, fig. 1). The three fragments of it have been reemployed in the belfry of the post-byzantine church of Taxiarchai in Dryalos. A long inscription running above the decorated surface of the architrave offers the names of three donors:

* I am grateful to the National Research Institute of Greece for the grant which enabled me to undertake this research under the supervision of prof. D. Mouriki. I would also like to thank D. Hardy for the improvement of the English text.

This paper was presented before the XVth Congress of Byzantine Studies (Athens 1976, 3rd Section, Art and Archaeology).

1. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines du moyen âge, II, Paris 1976, 31.

2. The term was introduced by prof. D. Pallas, Ἀνάγλυφος στήλη τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Μουσείου Ἀθηνῶν, AE 1953, 278. Cf. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., 24.

3. This scrollwork may well be the "greek foliage" mentioned by Theophilus in the mid twelfth century. See Theophilus, De diversis artibus, ed. Dodwell, London 1961, 45 - 47, 80.

ΜΝΗΣΤΗΤΙ ΚΥ(ΡΙ)Ε ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ Σ(Ο)Υ ΗΛΗΑ ΚΕ Ν(ΙΚΗ) ΦΟΡΟ(Υ)------ΚΑΚΑ ΚΕ ΓΕΟΥΡΓΗΟ(Υ) ΤΟΝ ΤΡΟΥΜΑΡΧ(Η) (Α)Μ(ΗΝ) Κ(ΥΡΙ)Ε ΓΕ(ΝΗ)ΤΟ - ΕΙ---- ΗΛ-

An additional brief inscription engraved over the leaves of the *champlevé* scroll at the left end of the epistyle supplies the date:

+ ΙΝΔ(ΙΚΤΙΩΝΟΣ) ΙΑ + --(ΕΤΤΟΥΣ) ϛΧΙΑ'

The decoration of this epistyle consists of six *champlevé* panels alternating with five high relief elements, i.e. three conventionalized acanthus leaves and two bosses. The two outer panels are covered with *champlevé* scrolls, while the rest of them contain pairs of roundels enclosing palmettes.

It is interesting to note that the last donor may be the one mentioned in a commercial act of 1118 in Crete[4], but it is not clear whether the word *ΤΟΥΡΜΑΡΧΗΣ* refers to an official of the Byzantine state[5], or whether it is used as a family name. On the other hand, inscriptions engraved over the surface of *champlevé* scrolls often occur in late eleventh century epistyles, cornices, or ties from Mani, attributed to the workshop of the marble carver Nicetas[6].

The bosses, the roundels enclosing palmettes and the *champlevé* scrolls are familiar in the earlier sculptures of Mani, as e.g. in the marble ties of St. Theodore of Vamvaka (1075)[7]. The detached acanthus leaves on the other hand, which appear for the first time in late eleventh century epistyles in the Peloponnesus[8], and the Asia Minor[9], gradually become a typical element of the two-level architraves, mostly occuring in twelfth century Greek monuments. It is highly possible that the application of such high relief leaves flanked by zodia or ornamental panels should be attributed to the imitation of early Christian cornices decorated with alternating coffers and consoles[10].

4. Miklosich-Müller, Acta et diplomata VI (1890), 96.

5. For the rank see R. Guilland, Recherches sur les institutions byzantines, I, Amsterdam 1967, 158, 160, 161. Cf. H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IXe - XIe siècles, BCH 84 (1960), 3.

6. N. Drandakis, Νικήτας Μαρμαρᾶς, Δωδώνη Α' (1972), pls. XIα, XIVα and XV.

7. Ibid, pl. I.

8. E. Stikas, L'église byzantine de Christianou en Triphylie, Paris 1951, figs. 36, 37, 38.

9. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., pl. XVa, b.

10. As those of Alahan Monastery in Asia Minor. See M. Gough, Alahan Monastery, Anatolian Studies 17 (1967), pl. VIa, b and pl. Xa.

II. The second dated work to be examined in this survey is an unpublished epistyle from the church of Taxiarchis in Mesaria, Andros. Taxiarchis is undoubtedly the most interesting medieval church of the island, securely dated as it is to 1158, by an inscription engraved around the impost of its northwestern support[11]. The same inscription offers the names of the two proud founders, Κωνσταντῖνος Μοναστηριώτης and Εἰρήνη Πράσηνη. As both names correspond to those of distinguished Constantinopolitan families[12], the two donors may well be considered members of the ruling aristocracy of the island which was densely populated and particularly prosperous during the twelfth century, when it was serving as a leading center of silk textile production in Greece[13].

The Taxiarchis epistyle has remained unnoticed so far, reemployed as an upright of the post-byzantine marble screen of the church which replaced it. Though some parts of it were mutilated and its limited high relief elements were carefully roughened out, the rest of the surface remains in a surprisingly good condition. The surviving part of the Taxiarchis epistyle comprises six panels (Pl. 21, fig. 2). The first from the left is occupied by a summarily modelled representation of a peacock[14] rising on a plain ground (Pl. 22, fig. 3). Next to the peacock, an elongated panel is covered by intersecting bands gradually transformed into acanthizing palmettes used as space-fillers (Pl. 22, fig. 4). This panel was succeeded by a high relief boss[15] now unfortunately chiselled off. The remaining panels were arcaded and separated by double knotted colonettes[16]. The first two of these panels are covered by overlapping grooved bands, the ends of which are also turned into acanthizing palmettes (Pl. 23, fig. 5). The last surviving panel which doubtlessly

11. A. Orlandos, Βυζαντινὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Ἄνδρου, ABME 8 (1955 - 56), fig. 19.

12. Ibid., 29. On the Monasteriotes family see also Miklosich - Müller, Acta et diplomata 4 (1871), 231; P. Lemerle, Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin, Paris 1977, 42. It is interesting to note that according to Michael Choniates Leo Monasteriotes was visiting Athens between 1182 and 1204: Sp. Lambros, Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου, τὰ σωζόμενα II, Athens, 1880,19.

13. Ibid., 6.

14. On the peacock symbolism see P. Underwood, The Fountain of Life, DOP 5 (1950), 88.

15. On the origin of these bosses see A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., 78.

16. On the original apotropaic significance of such knots see Lasc. Bouras, Δύο βυζαντινὰ μανουάλια ἀπὸ τὴ Μονὴ Μεταμορφώσεως τῶν Μετεώρων, Βυζαντινὰ 5 (1973), 140.

marked the centre of the epistyle is occupied by a "templon element", i.e. a foliate cross, covered by an arched, high relief frame, which is now also hacked away[17].

Thus the arrangement of the Taxiarchis architrave partly retains the eleventh century pattern of the arcaded panels, which was current in the western coast of Asia Minor[18] and the nearby islands of the Aegean Sea[19], as well as in mainland Greece and the district of Mani[20]. Zodia representations at the two ends of cornices or epistyles were, on the other hand, widely applied in eleventh century works, though in less balanced compositions[21].

What nevertheless appears to be the original contribution of the Taxiarchis craftsman is the elegant and refined interpretation of the acanthizing scroll. The pronounced linearism of this ornament is achieved by a particularly crisp carving with sharp ridges, which repeat the flowing outlines of the grooved stems or those of the acanthus lobes. Compared to the tenth century floral ornament of the Panaghia screen in Hosios Loukas (Pl. 23, fig. 6), the scrolls of Taxiarchis exhibit a new interpretation of the much thicker stems, while the palmettes acquire an almost classical, acanthizing aspect. An unfinished lintel from the Agora of Corinth (Pl. 24, fig. 7), exhibits the process followed in the execution of such scrollwork. It seems that the craftsman started by opening the drillholes thereafter used as guiding points; he continued by removing the ground, thus creating a *champlevé* surface and finished by opening sharp ridged grooves over the surface of the stems and the leaves. The abstract grace of the Taxiarchis ornament is parallel to that of the icon frame of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi[22], and reveals a certain amount of classical influence, while its expert design and academic precision remind one of the elaborate rinceau patterns of the contemporary painted ornament.

These particular traits of the acanthizing scroll are also observed in two different slabs probably serving as fronts of sarcophagi the one

17. Such elements usually mark the centre of epistyles or doorframe cornices.

18. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., pl. XIII.

19. A. Orlandos, Βυζαντινὰ γλυπτὰ τῆς Ρόδου, ABME 6 (1948), fig. 167; idem, Monuments byzantins de Chios, Athènes 1930, pl. 7.

20. The prothesis epistyle of the catholikon of Hosios Loukas must have served as an important model. See A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., pl. XXVa, b. Cf. N. Drandakis, Νικήτας Μαρμαρᾶς, op. cit., pl. Ια, IVα, β, XII, XV.

21. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., pl. XXIVa, b.

22. Ibid., pl. LXXVIIa.

found in Athens, near the church of the Holy Apostles (Pl. 24, fig. 8)[23], and the other in Arta (Pl. 24, fig. 9)[24]. Both of these slabs, which are closely related to the Taxiarchis epistyle, should most probably be attributed to the third quarter of the twelfth century.

III. A well known fragment of a marble cornice in the Byzantine Museum of Athens, reasonably attributed to the monastery of St. John the Kynegos on Mt. Hymettus (Pl. 25, fig. 10), represents the dated basis of the third group of sculptures here examined. The fragment which most probably served as a doorframe cornice is dated by an inscription engraved over the carved surface to 1205[25].

The Kynegos cornice represents a typical example of the so-called two-level technique. Thus a bird, probably a pheasant[26], bends to peck its chest next to a rounded boss covered by a cross, whose foliated serifs form heart shaped palmettes. The low relief ornament of the background is closely related to that of the Taxiarchis architrave, though its execution is less accurate and crisp. However, it is significant to note the ascending importance of the high relief elements. The representation of the bird fashioned in considerable relief exhibits a certain respect for the natural forms, while its surfaces are rendered in a detailed, decorative manner.

The stylistic traits of the Kynegos cornice are also encountered in some high quality sculptures in the monastery of Sagmata in Boeotia, founded by Clemes, a pupil of Hosios Meletios, active in the early twelfth century[27]. Most of these sculptures were used as building material in a nearby post Byzantine chapel[28]. However, it appears that some of this material belongs to the original marble screen of the catholikon, also furnished with elaborate opus sectile and mosaic pavements which may well be considered contemporary with the architectural sculptures[29].

23. Alison Frantz, The Church of the Holy Apostles, Princeton 1971, 14.

24. A. Orlandos, Ἡ παρὰ τὴν Ἄρταν Μονὴ τῶν Βλαχερνῶν, ABME 2 (1936), figs. 30 - 31. Cf. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., 145.

25. Ibid., 111.

26. Two identical birds decorate the restored epistyle of the Kynegos screen.

27. A. Orlandos, Ἡ ἐν Βοιωτίᾳ Μονὴ τοῦ Σαγματᾶ, ABME 7 (1951), 74; idem, ABME 8 (1955 - 56), 206. Cf. J. Koder - F. Hild, Hellas und Thessalia, Wien 1976, 253.

28. P. Lazaridis, Μεσαιωνικὰ Βοιωτίας, ΑΔ 19 (1964) B_2, 205. Idem, Μεσαιωνικὰ Βοιωτίας, ΑΔ 27 (1972) B_2, 339.

29. A. Orlandos, Ἡ Μονὴ τοῦ Σαγματᾶ, op. cit., 108.

Three of these fragments with an elaborate bead and reel moulding running along the base of their carved surface should be attributed to the same epistyle (Pl. 25, figs. 11 - 13). Moreover, it is obvious that the last two fragments, which fit one another, formed the right end of the architrave. The centre of this part was occupied by a high relief acanthus leaf, flanked by two zodia, a hare and a bird fashioned in moderate relief. It is significant to note that the lobes of the acanthus leaf are thick and softly modelled, while the form of the zodia is remarkably expressive and lively. Elongated bosses[30] covered with interlaced patterns, palmette scrollwork or acanthus derivatives succeeded the zodia, eliminating the surface of the ornamented ground.

Thus the Kynegos cornice and the Sagmata epistyle form a group of closely related sculptures which can be dated around the turn of the twelfth century. Compared to the Taxiarchis epistyle, these fragments display a new interpretation of the background which is now conceived as a unique surface covered with low relief ornaments; these contrast the projecting elements, which increase in number and plasticity. The negative effect of the extremely crisp carving with the sharp ridges gives way to a softer interpretation of the scrolls, while elements of an accentuated plasticity, such as the acanthus leaf, are added.

IV. The church of Samarina in Androusa near Kalamata, retaining a considerable part of its elaborate screen "in situ", offers the basis of the fourth group of sculptures to be discussed[31]. However, the monument is only approximately dated to the late twelfth century according to its badly damaged frescoes[32], and on architectural evidence. The bema epistyle and those of the lateral sections survive with only minor damage separated by two lavishly decorated icon frames (Pl. 26, figs. 14 - 15). It seems that the shafts of the screen were removed at an early date to be replaced by an ugly brick construction of the early 20th century.

As usual, the bema epistyle of Samarina is the most heavily decorated one (Pl. 27, fig. 16). Its carved surface is delimited between a frieze covered with inlay decorations and an elaborate bead and reel moulding similar to that employed in the Sagmata screen. Seven high

30. For other elongated bosses see A. Orlandos, Βυζαντινὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Ἄνδρου, op. cit., fig. 10.

31. C. Kalokyris, Βυζαντιναὶ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Μεσσηνίας, Thessaloniki 1973, 64ff.; cf. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., 99.

32. H. Grigoriadou-Cabagnols, Le décor peint de l'église de Samari en Messénie, C.A. 20 (1970), 177 - 196.

relief elements rise at regular intervals from its ornamented ground covered with palmettes, plaited crosses or interlaced patterns accentuated by drill holes. The general arrangement, and most of the elements used, are based on the pattern of the refined screen of the Saviour church in Christianoupolis[33] attributed to the second half of the eleventh century and repeatedly imitated thereafter in several churches of Mani, the richly decorated epistyle of the Taxiarchis church of Charouda[34], for instance.

The centre of the Samarina epistyle is occupied by a high relief templon element resembling the form and the decoration of the icon frames (Pl. 27, fig. 17). At its two sides rise two extremely stylized acanthus leaves (Pl. 27, fig. 18). Two rounded bosses whose curved, openwork surface was hacked off, succeeded the two acanthus leaves. However, it is obvious that the most meticulously rendered elements of the screen are the two powerful zodia, a lion and a griffin, decorating the two ends of the architrave (Pl. 28, figs. 19 - 20). The two zodia, grasping two smaller crumbling animals, are partly sculptured in the round, revealing an unprecedented sense of plasticity. Though their heads are missing, the bodies display a dotted surface also peculiar in metalwork and the minor arts[35], while their mane is fashioned in parallel undulating lines, offering an extremely decorative effect.

The centre of the inlay frieze on top of the carved architrave is occupied by a pannel depicting two addorsed griffins separated by a tiny hare (Pl. 28, fig. 21)[36]. The rest of the frieze is covered with geometric patterns usually employed for the decoration of opus sectile pavements. The ground is only slightly recessed and carefully roughened to accept some coloured inlay. The underside of the epistyle was plain, like that of the Sagmata screen, except for a roundel with inlaid decorations, which marked its centre[37]. The gradual abandonment of the

33. E. Stikas, L'église byzantine de Christianou, op. cit., figs. 36 - 38.

34. R. Traquair, The Churches of Western Mani, B.S.A. 15 (1908 - 9), 190. Cf. N. Drandakis, Ὁ Ταξιάρχης Χαρούδας καὶ ἡ κτιτορικὴ ἐπιγραφή του, Λακωνικαὶ Σπουδαὶ 1 (1972), pl. ΙΕ', ΙΣΤ'.

35. See e.g. the peacocks decorating the crown of Leo VI, A. Grabar, Opere bizantine, in Il Tesoro e il Museo di San Marco, Florence 1971, pl. LXXIV.

36. The same heraldic composition occurs on a twelfth century marble slab reemployed on the eastern facade of the Metropole at Mistra. See G. Millet, Monuments byzantins de Mistra, Paris 1910, pl. 47_7.

37. Only a tiny part of this roundel is visible today. However, it can be clearly discerned in an old picture of the Millet Collection. See A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., pl. LXXIc.

sculptural decoration of the underside is easily explained by the use of icons which according to recent views were introduced by the late eleventh century[38].

The rich inlay decoration of the Samarina epistyle, as well as that of the icon frames which resemble to a certain extent those of Porta Panaghia at Pyle, have led A. Grabar to suggest that the Samarina screen was probably reworked during the Palaeologan period[39]. However, two identical icon frames reemployed in the Metropole of Mistra (Pl. 29, figs. 22 - 23)[40] bear the same inlay decorations. It seems that these two icon frames as well as fragments of a marble epistyle reemployed in the church of St. Sophia of Mistra (Pl. 30, figs. 24 - 25)[41], belong to a marble screen identical to that of Samarina. The close resemblance of the corresponding parts and the similarity of the inlay decoration of the icon frames suggest that both screens were carved at one time, by the same craftsmen, who copied a common model with remarkable ability.

Thus it is ascertained that sculpture in the round, low relief scrollwork, openwork and inlay were employed at the same time for the embellishment of the Samarina screen, which may well be considered the most advanced and sophisticated application of the two-level technique in Greece. In terms of style, a similar interpretation of the acanthus leaf and the particular elements of the ornamented ground are also to be observed in an elaborate cornice of a marble doorframe in the monastery of Hosios Meletios (Pl. 31, figs. 26 - 27)[42], as well as in three fragments of a marble epistyle from the monastery of Hosios Loukas in Boeotia (Pl. 32, figs. 28 - 30)[43]. Thus it seems that the Samarina workshop,

38. M. Chatzidakes, Ikonostas, Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst, III (1973), 341. Cf. G. Babić, La décoration en fresques des clôtures de choeur, Zbornik za Likobne Oumetnosti II (1975), 42.

39. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines II, op. cit., 100.

40. Cf. G. Millet, Monuments byzantins de Mistra, op. cit., pls. 43_2, 44_1. The resemblance of the Samarina icon frames to those of the Metropole of Mistra was earlier pointed out by prof. N. Drandakis, Βυζαντιναὶ τοιχογραφίαι τῆς Μέσα Μάνης, Athens 1964, 73_4.

41. Several fragments of this epistyle have been taken to the Mistra Museum. See G. Millet, Monuments byzantins de Mistra, op. cit., pls. $56_{7, 9, 11, 12, 13}$.

42. Cf. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, II, op. cit., pl. LXXIII. The resemblance of the Samarina screen to the Hosios Meletios cornice was pointed out before by prof. N. Drandakis, Βυζαντιναὶ τοιχογραφίαι, op. cit., 77.

43. E. Stikas, Τὸ οἰκοδομικὸν χρονικὸν τῆς Μονῆς Ὁσίου Λουκᾶ Φωκίδος, Athens 1970, 225.

which was undoubtedly highly thought of, was not only active in the south Peloponnesus, but in two of the most important monastic foundations of the Greek mainland around the critical turn of the twelfth century.

CONCLUSIONS. The Mani epistyle and that of Andros which represent the earliest of the examples discussed are at the same time the only ones to exhibit some traces of the popular eleventh century patterns, namely of the interconnected roundels or of the arcaded panels. However, the increasing number of high relief elements (bosses, acanthus leaves, zodia or templon elements), led to the gradual decomposition and the final abandonment of these traditional patterns in favor of less restricted, though always symmetrical compositions.

In terms of style the rising importance of plasticity as seen in the evolution of the two-level technique leads to elements almost sculptured in the round (Samarina) and is followed by a certain respect for the natural form of the zodia depicted. It is also interesting to note that the most sophisticated of the two-level sculptures are further enriched by openwork and inlay decorations. In relation to the low relief ornament on the other hand, the sharp ridged technique observed on the Andros epistyle gradually gives way to a more fleshy interpretation of the floral ornament. At the same time, low relief scrollwork acquires a homogeneous acanthizing aspect distinct of most twelfth century sculptures in Greece and which is not to be seen in Constantinople.

All of the sculptures mentioned above with the exception of the Mani epistyle, typical of the local, somehow rustic and conservative works, are examples of high quality which reveal the growing technical skill of the marble carvers involved. The fact that several of them belong to monastic churches (Kynegos, Sagmatas, Hosios Meletios, Hosios Loukas), probably indicates a certain prosperity of monastic life. Moreover, it may not be accidental that the growth of a Greek school of sculpture with distinct characteristics during the late twelfth century and soon after it follows the rise of a local aristocracy and coincides with the desintegration of the central government, which preceded the Latin occupation of Greece[44]. This idea is supported by the noble origin of the two founders of Taxiarchis of Andros, most probably responsible

44. On the desintegration of the provincial government of Greece see J. Herrin, Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180 - 1205, DOP 29 (1975), 256.

of the refined sculptural decoration of the church. An increasing number of richly decorated sarcophagus slabs, two of which are mentioned in this paper, may also be related to the same social and economic developments of twelfth century Greece.

LASKARINA BOURAS

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΙΚΑ ΓΛΥΠΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΩΔΕΚΑΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΩΙΜΟΥ ΔΕΚΑΤΟΥ ΤΡΙΤΟΥ ΑΙΩΝΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

(ΠΙΝ. 21 - 32)

Ὁ ἀρχιτεκτονικὸς διάκοσμος τῶν ἑλλαδικῶν μνημείων πιστοποιεῖ κάποιαν ἄνθηση τῆς γλυπτικῆς στὸν 12ο καὶ στὶς ἀρχὲς τοῦ 13ου αἰώνα. Ἡ ἄνθηση αὐτὴ ἐπισημαίνεται γύρω ἀπὸ τὰ σημαντικὰ κέντρα τῶν Ἀθηνῶν, τῆς Κορίνθου καὶ τῶν Θηβῶν· ὡστόσο σημαντικὰ εὑρήματα ἐντοπίζονται καὶ πολὺ μακρύτερα, στὸν Μυστρᾶ καὶ τὴν Ἄρτα, ἢ ἀκόμα σὲ μερικὰ ἀπὸ τὰ νησιά, ὅπως στὴν Ἄνδρο καὶ τὴν Εὔβοια. Ἡ περιοχὴ τῆς Μάνης διατηρεῖ ἕνα ἐντυπωσιακὸ πλῆθος ἀπὸ ἀρχιτεκτονικὰ γλυπτά, ἐπαρχιακοῦ συνήθως χαρακτήρα.

Στὸ ἄρθρο αὐτὸ ἐξετάζονται τέσσαρες ὁμάδες ἀπὸ γεῖσα καὶ ἐπιστύλια τέμπλου, ἡ μελέτη τῶν ὁποίων βασίζεται σὲ ἰσάριθμα ἔργα ποὺ μποροῦν νὰ χρονολογηθοῦν μὲ σχετικὴν ἀκρίβεια. Στὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ μπορεῖ κανεὶς νὰ παρακολουθήσει τὴν ἐξέλιξη τοῦ χαρακτηριστικοῦ γιὰ τὰ μνημεῖα τοῦ 12ου αἰώνα διπλεπίπεδου ἀναγλύφου καθὼς καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους στοιχείων ποὺ τὸ συνθέτουν.

Τὸν πυρήνα τῆς πρώτης ὁμάδας ἀποτελεῖ ἕνα ἐπιστύλιο τέμπλου τὸ ὁποῖο ἐπαναχρησιμοποιεῖται στὸ κωδωνοστάσιο τοῦ μεταβυζαντινοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ Ταξιάρχη στὸ Δρύαλο τῆς Μάνης. Τὸ ἐπιστύλιο φέρει μιὰν ἐπιγραφὴ ποὺ τὸ χρονολογεῖ στὰ 1103 (Πίν. 21, εἰκ. 1). Στὴ διακόσμησή του διακρίνονται θέματα καὶ τεχνικὲς γνωστὰ ἀπὸ παλιότερα γλυπτὰ τῆς Μάνης, ὅπως εἶναι οἱ ἐπιπεδόγλυφες ἀνθεμωτὲς ἕλικες, οἱ σηρικοὶ τροχοὶ καὶ τὰ «κομβία»· διακρίνονται ὅμως καὶ ἔξεργα φύλλα ἄκανθας ποὺ προβάλλουν ἀπὸ τὴν ὑπόλοιπη ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ ἀναγλύφου, ὅπως καὶ τὰ «κομβία», δημιουργώντας ἕνα ὑποτυπῶδες διπλεπίπεδο. Τὰ φύλλα αὐτὰ ποὺ γίνονται ἕνα ἀπὸ τὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ δείγματα τῶν γλυπτῶν τοῦ 12ου αἰώνα ἀποτελοῦν τὰ παλιότερα χρονολογημένα παραδείγματα.

Στὴ δεύτερη ὁμάδα γλυπτῶν περιλαμβάνεται ἕνα ἀδημοσίευτο τμῆμα ἐπιστυλίου ἀπὸ τὸ χρονολογημένο στὰ 1158 ναὸ τοῦ Ταξιάρχη Μεσαριᾶς στὴν Ἄνδρο (Πίν. 21-23, εἰκ. 2 - 5). Στὴν ἴδια ἑνότητα ἀνήκουν δυὸ πλάκες ἀπὸ

σαρκοφάγους ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀγορὰ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν (Πίν. 24, εἰκ. 8) καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἄρτα (Πίν. 24, εἰκ. 9). Στὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ κυριαρχεῖ ἕνα χαρακτηριστικὸ γιὰ τὸν 12ο αἰώνα φυτικὸ κόσμημα ἀπὸ τριταινιωτοὺς βλαστοὺς μὲ ἀνθεμωτὲς ἀπολήξεις σὲ χαμηλὸ ἀνάγλυφο, ἐνῶ τὰ ἔξεργα στοιχεῖα εἶναι πολὺ περιορισμένα. Τὸ κόσμημα αὐτὸ διαφοροποιεῖται οὐσιαστικὰ ἀπὸ τὶς ἀνθεμωτὲς ἕλικες τοῦ 10ου καὶ 11ου αἰώνα χάρη στὴν κλασσικότροπη ἀπόδοση τῶν ἀνθεμίων, ποὺ μὲ τὴν ἐξαιρετικὴ ἀκρίβεια στὴ χάραξη καὶ τὴν κρυσταλλικὴ ὑφή τους ἀποκτοῦν καὶ πάλι κάτι ἀπὸ τὸ χαρακτήρα τοῦ φύλλου τῆς ἄκανθας. Ἡ διακοσμητικὴ ἀξία τοῦ θέματος βασίζεται στὸ γραμμικό του χαρακτήρα καὶ στὴν ἐξαιρετική του ἐκλέπτυνση ποὺ θυμίζουν τὰ γραπτὰ κοσμήματα στὴν τέχνη τῆς ἴδιας περιόδου.

Στὴν τρίτη ὁμάδα περιλαμβάνεται τὸ ἐνεπίγραφο τμῆμα ἑνὸς γείσου θυρώματος ἀπὸ τὸ ναὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννη τοῦ Κυνηγοῦ στὸν Ὑμηττό, τὸ ὁποῖο χρονολογεῖται στὰ 1205 (Πίν. 25, εἰκ. 10). Στὴν ἴδια ὁμάδα ἐντάσσονται ἐπίσης μερικὰ θραύσματα ἐπιστυλίου ἀπὸ τὸ περίτεχνο τέμπλο τῆς Μονῆς Σαγματᾶ (Πίν. 25, εἰκ. 11 - 13). Ἐδῶ, τὸ βάθος διαμορφώνεται σὲ ἐνιαία ἐπιφάνεια σκεπασμένη μὲ φυτικὰ θέματα σὲ χαμηλὸ ἀνάγλυφο, ἀνάλογο μὲ ἐκεῖνο τῆς ὁμάδας τοῦ Ταξιάρχη Μεσαριᾶς. Τὰ ἔξεργα στοιχεῖα ὅμως πυκνώνουν, ἐνῶ αὐξάνεται ἡ πλαστικότητα καὶ ἡ σημασία τους. Τὴν ἴδια στιγμὴ ἐντυπωσιάζει ἡ φυσικότητα στὴ στάση τῶν πουλιῶν καὶ τῶν ζώων, καθὼς καὶ κάποια ἔμφαση στὴ διακοσμητικὴ ἀνάδειξη τῆς μορφῆς τους.

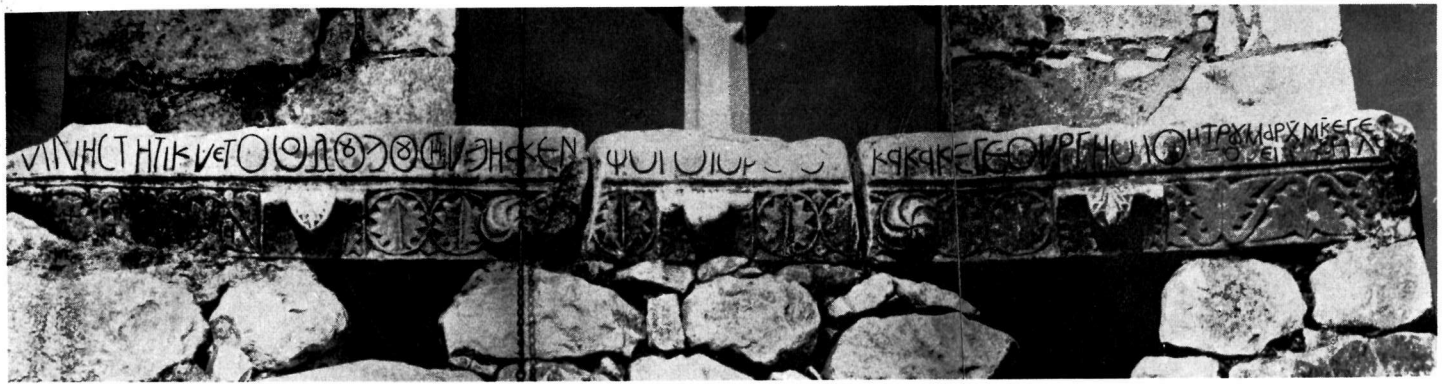
Τὸ πιὸ σημαντικὸ ἔργο στὴν τέταρτη ὁμάδα εἶναι τὸ ἐπιστύλιο τέμπλου στὸ ναὸ τῆς Μεσσηνιακῆς Σαμαρίνας (Πίν. 26-28, εἰκ. 14-21). Τὸ μνημεῖο χρονολογεῖται προσεγγιστικὰ γύρω στὰ 1200, μὲ βάση τὰ ὑπολείμματα τῶν τοιχογραφιῶν του. Στὴν ἴδια ὁμάδα ἐντάσσονται τὰ τμήματα ἀπὸ ἕνα δεύτερο ὅμοιο τέμπλο, ποὺ ἐπισημαίνονται σὲ δυὸ ἐκκλησίες καὶ στὸ Μουσεῖο τοῦ Μυστρᾶ (Πίν. 29-30, εἰκ. 22-25), ἕνα γεῖσο θυρώματος ἀπὸ τὸ καθολικὸ τοῦ Ὁσίου Μελετίου (Πίν. 31, εἰκ. 26) καὶ ἕνα ἐπιστύλιο τέμπλου στὴ συλλογὴ γλυπτῶν τοῦ Ὁσίου Λουκᾶ Φωκίδος (Πίν. 31, εἰκ. 27). Στὰ γλυπτὰ αὐτὰ ἡ ἐξέλιξη τοῦ διπλεπίπεδου ἀναγλύφου ὁδηγεῖ σὲ σχεδὸν ὁλόγλυφες μορφές, ἐνῶ ἡ διακοσμητικὴ ἀνάδειξη τῶν ἐπιφανειῶν τους ἐγγίζει τὰ ὅρια τῆς ἐκζήτησης. Τὰ ζώδια, τὰ ἀνακαμπτόμενα φύλλα ἄκανθας καὶ τὰ «κομβία» προβάλλουν καὶ πάλι σὲ βάθος καλυμμένο μὲ διακοσμητικὰ θέματα σὲ χαμηλὸ ἀνάγλυφο. Μάλιστα στὸ ἐπιστύλιο τῆς Σαμαρίνας τὸ διπλεπίπεδο ἀνάγλυφο πλουτίζεται μὲ τὴ διάτρητη καὶ τὴν ἔνθετη τεχνικὴ τῆς χρωματιστῆς κηρομαστίχης σὲ ἕνα περίτεχνο καὶ ἐκλεπτυσμένο σύνολο.

Ἀπὸ τὴν ἀνάλυση ποὺ προηγήθηκε γίνεται φανερὸ ὅτι στὶς δυὸ πρῶτες ὁμάδες διατηροῦνται θέματα καὶ τεχνικὲς ποὺ χρησιμοποιοῦνται στὸν 11ο αἰώνα, ἐνῶ ἡ χρήση τοῦ ἔξεργου ἀναγλύφου εἶναι πολὺ συγκρατημένη. Στὴν τρίτη ὁμάδα ὅμως ἡ πύκνωση τῶν ἔξεργων στοιχείων ὁδηγεῖ στὴ διά-

σπαση τῆς διακοσμημένης ἐπιφάνειας καὶ στὴν ἐγκατάλειψη τῶν παραδοσιακῶν θεμάτων τῶν τοξυλίων καὶ τῶν σηρικῶν τροχῶν, ἐνῶ τὸ ἔκδηλο ἐνδιαφέρον γιὰ τὴν πλαστικότητα ἐπὶ μέρους στοιχείων αὐξάνει γιὰ νὰ φθάσει σὲ σημεῖο αἰχμῆς στὴν τέταρτη ὁμάδα, ὅπου συνδυάζεται μὲ τὴ διάτρητη καὶ τὴν ἔνθετη τεχνική. Τὴν ἴδια στιγμὴ παρατηρεῖται κάποια ἐξέλιξη καὶ στὰ φυτικὰ θέματα ποὺ καλύπτουν σὲ χαμηλὸ ἀνάγλυφο τὸ βάθος τῶν διακοσμημένων ἐπιφανειῶν. Ἔτσι ἡ ψυχρὴ κρυσταλλικὴ ὑφὴ ποὺ παρατηρεῖται στὰ φυτικὰ θέματα τοῦ Ταξιάρχη τῆς Μεσαριᾶς ὑποχωρεῖ σταδιακὰ γιὰ νὰ δώσει τὴ θέση της σὲ μιὰ πιὸ σαρκώδη ἀντίληψη τοῦ φύλλου τῆς ἄκανθας στὴν ἑνότητα τοῦ Κυνηγοῦ καὶ τοῦ Σαγματᾶ.

Τὰ ἔργα ποὺ ἐξετάστηκαν ὡς ἐδῶ προδίδουν τὴ σταθερὴ βελτίωση τῆς τεχνικῆς τῶν ἑλλαδικῶν μαρμαράδων ποὺ διαμορφώνουν μιὰ τοπικὴ σχολὴ στὸ δεύτερο μισὸ τοῦ 12ου καὶ στὶς ἀρχὲς τοῦ 13ου αἰώνα. Ἡ διαφοροποίησή τους ἀπὸ ὅ,τι σώθηκε ἀπὸ τὴν Κωνσταντινοπολίτικη γλυπτικὴ τῆς ἴδιας περιόδου δὲν εἶναι ἴσως ἄσχετη μὲ τὴν ἐξασθένηση τῆς κεντρικῆς ἐξουσίας καὶ μὲ τὴν παράλληλη ἀνάπτυξη μιᾶς τοπικῆς ἀριστοκρατίας. Τὴν ἴδια στιγμὴ ὁ ἐντοπισμὸς ἑνὸς σημαντικοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ἀπὸ τὰ γλυπτὰ ποὺ ἐξετάζονται σὲ μοναστικὰ συγκροτήματα ἀποτελεῖ κάποιαν ἔνδειξη γιὰ τὴν ἄνθηση τοῦ μοναχισμοῦ στὴν ἐποχὴ αὐτή.

ΛΑΣΚΑΡΙΝΑ ΜΠΟΥΡΑ



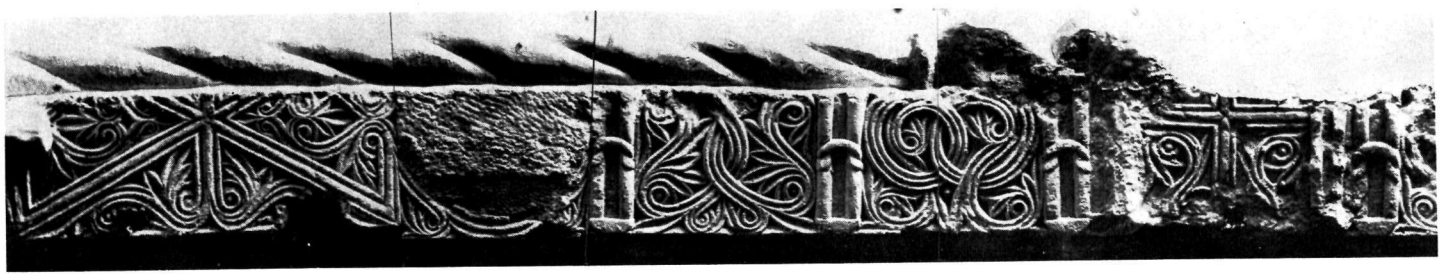
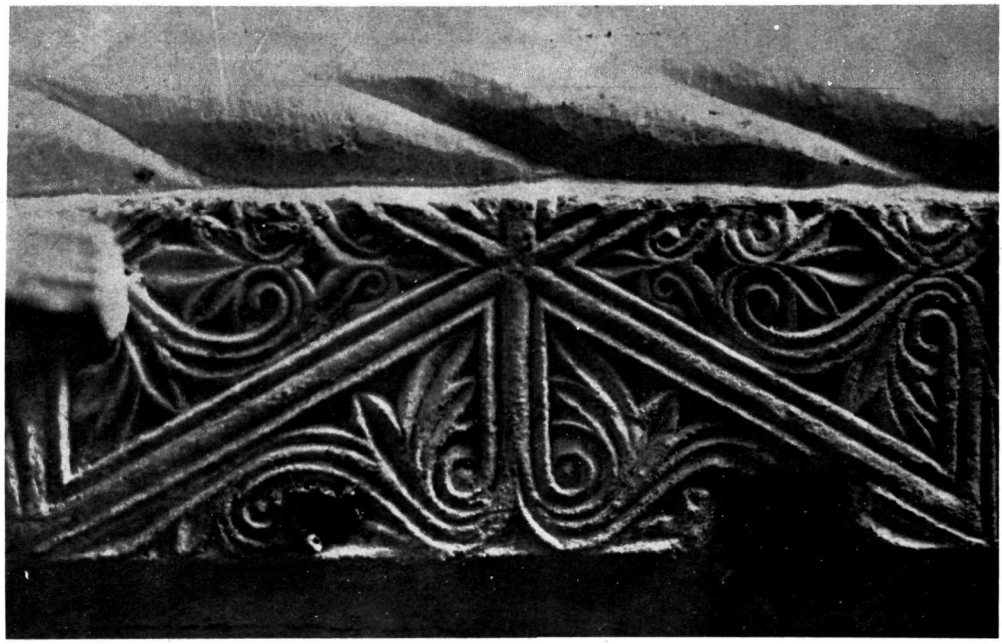


Fig. 1. Mani, Dryalos, Taxiarchis belfry. Immured epistyle of 1103.

Fig. 2. Andros, Mesaria, Taxiarchis (1158). Fragment of epistyle.



Figs. 3 - 4. Andros, Mesaria, Taxiarchis (1158). Fragment of epistyle, details.

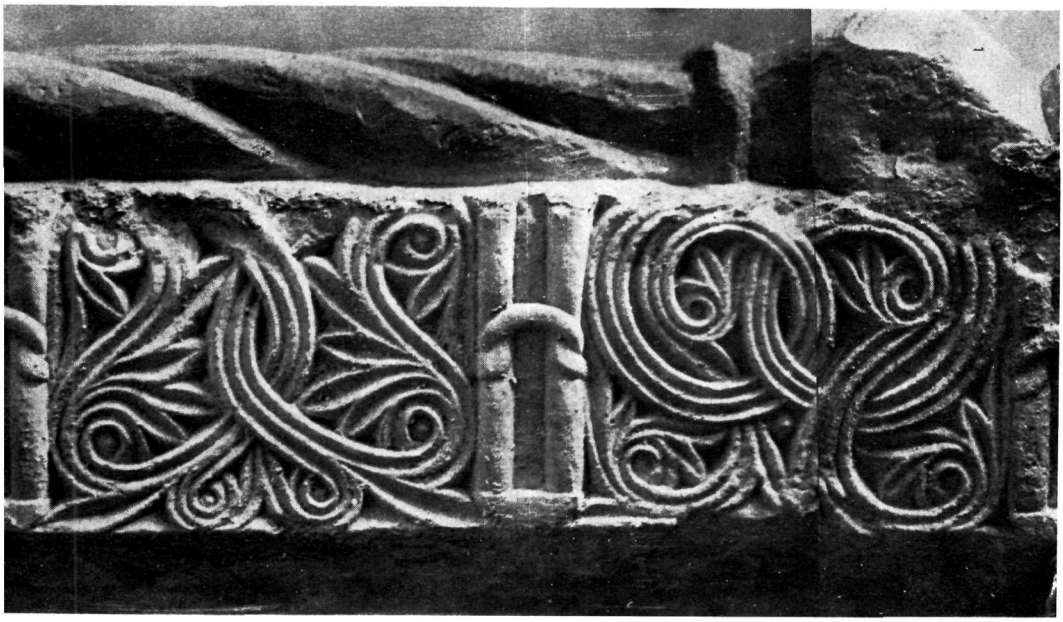
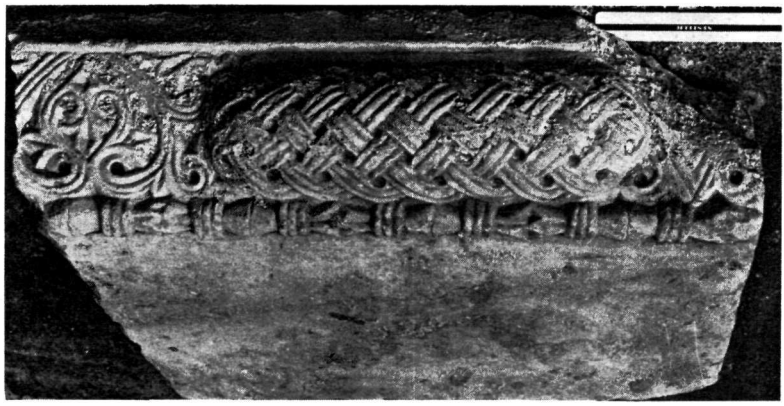


Fig. 5. Andros, Mesaria, Taxiarchis (1158). Fragment of epistyle, detail.
Fig. 6. Hosios Loukas, Panaghia. Diaconikon epistyle, detail.

Fig. 7. Corinth, Agora. Fragment of door lintel. Fig. 8. Athens, Agora, Holy Apostles. Sarcophagus slab. Fig. 9. Arta, Metropolis. Sarcophagus slab.



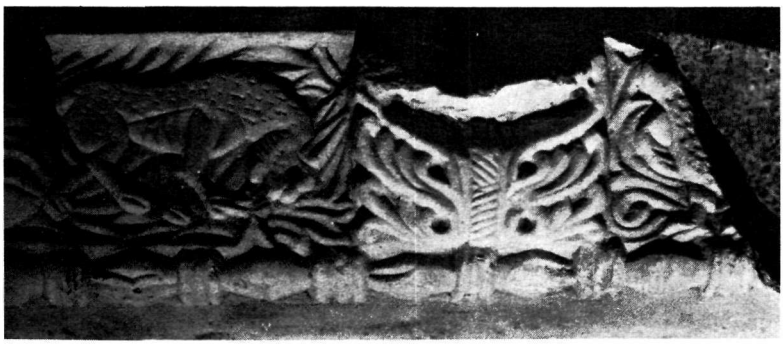
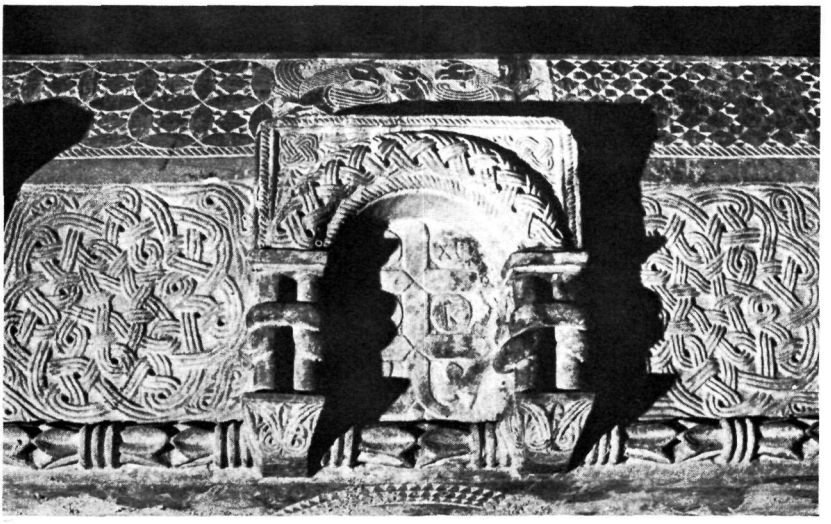
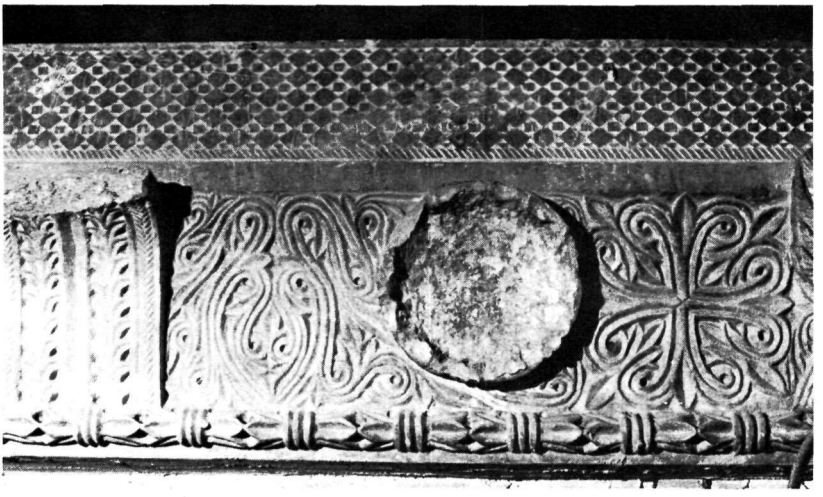


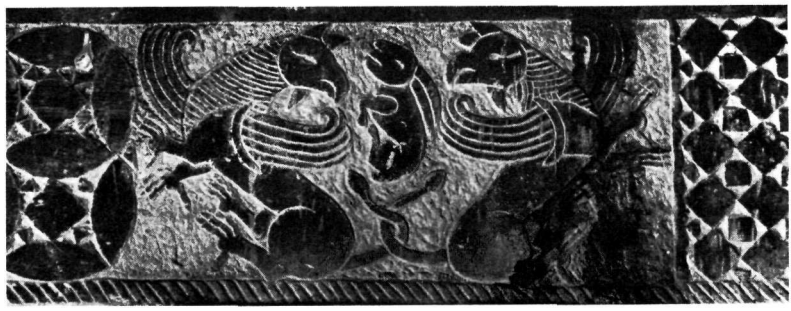
Fig. 10. Athens, Byzantine Museum. Doorframe cornice of 1205 (from Kynegos monastery). Figs. 11 - 13. Sagmata monastery, collection of sculptures. Fragments of epistyle.

Figs. 14 - 15. Androusa, Samarina. Icon Frames.

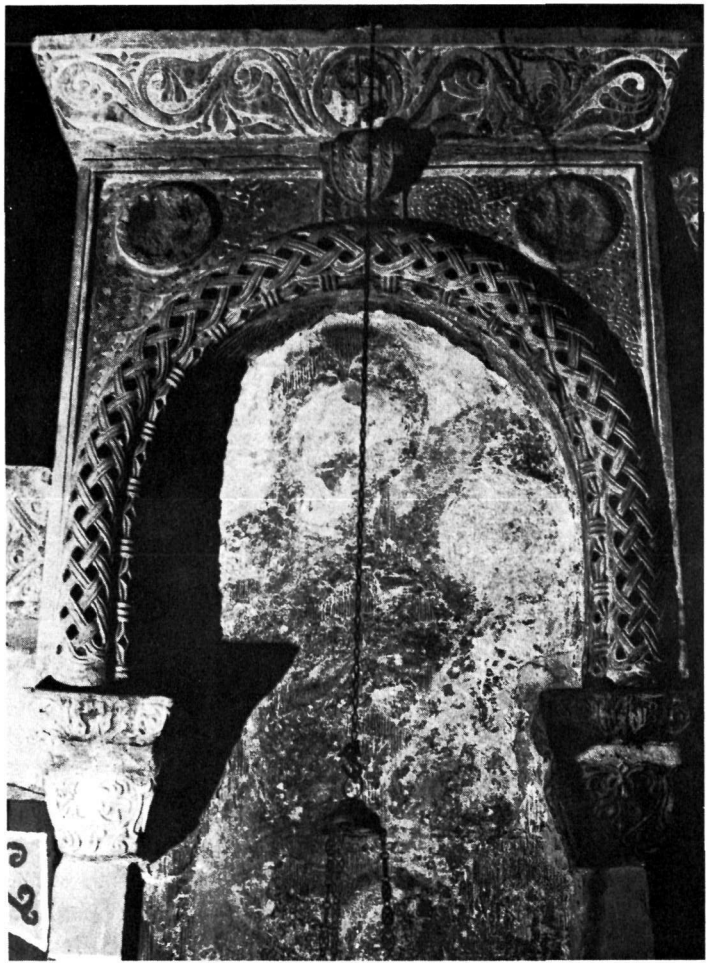




Figs. 16 - 18. Androusa, Samarina. Bema epistyle and details.



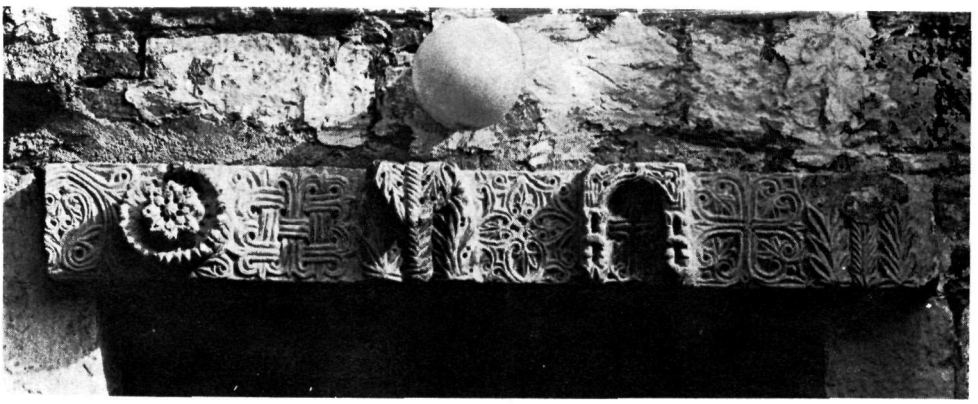
Figs. 19 - 21. Androusa, Samarina. Bema epistyle, details.



Figs. 22 - 23. Mistra, Metropolis. Reemployed icon Frames.

Fig. 24. Mistra, St. Sophia. Fragment of reemployed epistyle.
Fig. 25. Mistra, Museum. Fragment of epistyle from St. Sophia.

Figs. 26 - 27. Hosios Meletios. Marble doorframe, details.



Figs. 28 - 30. Hosios Loukas. Collection of sculptures. Fragments of epistyle.