Several fragments of architectural sculptures are preserved in the monastery of Hagia Moni in Areia, Nauplion. Some of them have particularly elaborate relief or champlevé decoration, pertaining to the 12th century. Among them are noted the fragments of three small piers and a cornice, attributed to the marble altarscreen of the church. Based on these, a reconstruction of the templon is attempted. Unfortunately the evidence is not complete, but the surviving fragments give a vivid image of the sculptural work that used to decorate this significant monument.

Keywords
Middle-Byzantine period; 12th century; sculpture; templon; altarscreen; iconostasis; Merbaka; Chonika; Argolis; Agia Moni in Areia, Nauplion.

The katholikon of Hagia Moni in Areia, Nauplion is one of the most striking 12th-century monuments, a large church of the complex cross-in-square type with a narthex and exonarthex, its façades formed by meticulous cloisonné masonry with bricks carved to form thin straight lines, and adorned with elegantly arranged ceramic decorations, carved with precision. The church was erected, according to the marble inscription embedded in its west façade, in 1149 by Leon, Bishop of Argos.

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** The opportunity to study the sculpted fragments came about on the occasion of the recent conservation project, designed with Prof. Y. Kizis and Dr. K. Aslanidis. The works were carried out by the 25th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, under the direction of Dr. D. Athanasoulis and the supervision of K. Boudouris, with the participation of C. Karpanou and E. Malamateniou, and subsequently by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolis directed by Dr. A. Papademetriou. I thank all the aforementioned colleagues and directors for our excellent collaboration and for permission to study the sculptures. I also thank Dr. A. Konstantinidou, Dr. G. Tsekes and Dr. A. Vassileiou for sharing with me their valuable insight on various aspects. Finally, I thank Freya Evenson for editing and correcting the text.

1 The term “Άργείων” fits the dodecasyllable of Leon, and perhaps alludes to ancient texts studied by Constantinopolitan scholars. The fact that only Argos and not Nauplion is mentioned is not paradox, and not just due to poetic license. Nauplion was incorporated in the Bishopric of Argos. Whether Nauplion was ever added to the title officially or unofficially in the Byzantine period, and in what order, or whether it was added by later copiers of Middle-Byzantine sources, is a question addressed by historians. The title including both cities appears in the Hypomnema of Leon (1144) and some Brachea Chronika (Short Chronicles) shortly afterwards (1165, 1189), preserved in later manuscripts, but also...
The inscription is metrical, and its scholarly language and the good carving of letters and relief demonstrate the special education of the founder. In the upper left corner it has a relief cross flanked by pomegranate trees, under a ciborium which rests on scrolls carved in the champlevé technique. The motif is elegant and similar in style, execution and repertoire to the rest in the 1174 donor inscription of the Panagia at the castle of Argos, see Βυζαντινό Μοναστείο Αργολίδας. Κατάλογος Μόνης Ἑγγένετος, eds D. Athanasoulis – A. Vasiakiou, Athens 2016, inv. no. APT 1928/2, cat. no. and fig. 104 p. 103. The matter is however of no implication to the essence of the history of the monastery; whatever the official title, Nauplion was definitely under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop and later the Metropolitan of Argos during the 12th century [V. Konti, “To Ναύπλιο και οι σχέσεις του με την επισκοπή Άργους κατά τη μέση βυζαντινή περίοδο”, Byzantina Symmeikta 15 (2002), 131-148].


2 A. Rhoby, Byzantinische Epigramme in Inschriftlicher Überlieferung. 3. Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein nebst Addenda zu den Bänden 1 und 2 (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 35), Wien 2014, 310-312, cat. no GR 93, fig. XXXVIII.

of the sculpted architectural members preserved in situ in the church, namely three impost of window mullions (Fig. 2). The remaining original marble decoration of the church is not preserved in situ, as in its long history the monument has gone through repairs and alterations. During the 19th- and early 20th-century interventions, the interior decoration acquired a neoclassical character. The iconostasis of this period was masonry-built, with morphological features in gypsum plaster.

However, several fragments of architectural sculptures are found in the monastery, dispersed or incorporated into later constructions. The sculptural fragments are known in the bibliography, since photographs of them were published in the monograph by G. Choras. Some are presented again and identified in the more recent study by Ch. and L. Bouras.

Among the fragments are some that undoubtedly belong to the katholikon marble door frames (Fig. 3), bearing decoration of winding scrolls forming heart-shaped palmettes, a typical 12th-century pattern. The style of the carving and the scale of their decoration are similar.
to that of the sculptures preserved in situ, but also to
the slab incorporated into the north porch (see below
Fig. 7). By contrast, the reliefs on some other fragments
employ a completely different scale and their carving
is not reminiscent of the refined technique used in the
members securely attributed to the katholikon\(^6\), or are
preserved too fragmentarily\(^7\). Therefore, their identifi-
cation is problematic and they will not be examined.

Three fragments of templon posts with integrated oc-
tagonal colonnettes attract interest. They present brilli-
ant craftsmanship and belong to the same sculptural
composition. From the point of view of the motifs, the
scale of the decoration and the quality of craftsmanship,
they match the church’s sculpture mentioned above, al-
though they have champlevé decoration, which may be
seemingly different\(^8\) as the relief is necessarily lower

\(^6\) Choras, op.cit. (n. 2), pls. 11β, 12β, 12ε, 13ε.
\(^7\) This is the case for two fragments depicting foliage of a bird
(ibid., pl. 12ε), which could indeed belong to a 12th-century altar-
screen panel, but they are too small to allow for a secure represen-
tation of the panel’s original form and dimensions.
\(^8\) The technique and perhaps quality difference of these members
may indicate the work of a different craftsman, but definitely not
a different date from the church’s architectural sculptures. The
Fig. 4. Nauplion, Areia. Hagia Moni. Katholikon, fragment of a templon post (front and side view).

Fig. 4a. Drawing of the fragment and reconstruction of a templon post.
and the bands of the motifs are flat. However, the mix of techniques, a characteristic of the 12th century is also found on the inscription. Two of these templon posts have equal width, 14 cm. They both have champlevé decoration on their upper part.

The first, which used to have an integral jamb and is hence attributed to the bema door, is decorated with more skilled craftsman in the same workshop or even a different workshop could have been chosen for the altarscreen, but the style and taste of all sculptures is that of an integral group, typical of the mid-12th century.

Fig. 5. Nauplion, Areia. Hagia Moni. Katholikon, fragment of a templon post (front and back view).

Fig. 5a. Drawing of the fragment and reconstruction of a templon post.
a cross formed by an interlacing band (Figs 4, 4a). Discernible right below the cross is the edge of a palmette, just above the lower broken end of the member.

The second post (Figs 5, 5a), which does not have a doorjamb and is therefore attributed to a side support, is decorated on its upper part with a cross, formed by a guilloche, characterized by the correct geometric tracing of the circles of which it is formed. Unfortunately, only the base of the cross is preserved, knotted to the external frame of the motif. On the left of the cross we distinguish the letter N, from the usual abbreviation IC XC N K. Underneath is a champlevé palmette, identical to the one which is barely discernible on the previous member. Below the palmette the templon post is decorated with vertical frames. On the back side, the octagonal section of the overlying colonnette is continued. There is no doubt that both fragments belong to the altarscreen.

The third templon post10 (Figs 6, 6a) has the same

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10 Bouras – Boura, op.cit. (n. 2), fig. 73.
arrangement of forms and motifs, with homologous frames on its front face and a champlevé foliate cross above them, and the same style of carving. The centers of helices of the vegetal decoration are accentuated with a drill, as are the centers of the semicircular ends of the cross arms. The use of the drill has also been used to help the tracing and to accentuate the geometry of the helices of scrolls and the centers of circles on the previous templon posts, as well as the door frames, the cornice and the panel that will be presented below. This characteristic is a sign of the sophisticated yet discreet mannerisms which are distinctive of the 12th century, as are the shallow lines forming an X at the intersection of the cross arms (also present at the marble slab embedded in the north porch, described below). The pier has a door jamb on its side and an integral octagonal colonnette on the upper part, but is narrower than the two previous fragments (11 cm.). It can therefore be attributed to the prothesis or the diakonikon. Two fragments of octagonal colonnettes can also be attributed to the altarscreen supports.

Two fragments of relief slabs were incorporated into the later chapel of Saint Charalampos11 and the north porch of the katholikon12 respectively.

The first, a panel with integral cornice, differs in style and scale from the rest of the sculptures attributed to the katholikon, and is rather narrow for its altar screen, so it belonged to another building (maybe the chapel itself?). The second panel (Figs 7, 7a) was embedded in the north porch of the katholikon during a much later repair, at which time the northeast corner of the porch was completely replaced, as can be ascertained by the masonry of the east façade of the porch. The upper part of its main façade was also rearranged, as is made clear by the interruption of the impeccable thin line of bricks outlining the arch: this line of bricks has been interrupted and roughly patched using thicker bricks under the marble slab in question and the triangular stone on its left. This slab had been attributed by Ch. and L. Bouras to the katholikon screen with a question mark13, which will probably continue to remain unanswered. Its decoration comprises small rectangles formed by tripartite bands, knotted to each other and to an external frame. Each rectangle is decorated by relief patterns; the surviving ones are vegetal scrolls and a cross formed by an interlacing band (similar—although here the band is tripartite—to the cross on the bema post, and even with small palmettes filling the corners on both pieces). The arrangement with knotted rectangles is common in the 12th century, and the style of the carving resembles the sculptures of the church (the foliate cross of the inscription and the mullion impost), as well as the decoration of the marble frames of the Katholikon doors; it therefore appears that it was indeed part of the original decoration of the monument. The interlacing band cross on the bema post is similar, albeit composed of a single band because of its smaller size and champlevé technique, but it can be noted that even the small palmettes filling the corners of the rectangle on the panel, existed with a similar arrangement at the cross of the bema post, unfortunately very damaged at the corners. However, after the removal of the panel from the wall during recent works, the slab appears to be rather thick (13 cm) in relation to the templon posts, and it is carved on a different type of marble. Templon panels of considerable thickness are not rare14 and the ready availability of marble for re-use could justify its divergence from the required thickness and the different material, so its provenance from the altarscreen cannot be excluded, but with reservation. Its backside is roughly carved with the point. On the other hand, the piece does not portray the usual themes and arrangement found on pseudo-sarcophagi plaques, such as the one which would have blocked the front side of the aresosolium of the narthex.

Finally, during the restoration works, a fragment of a particularly elaborate chamfered cornice was detected (Figs 8, 8a). It bears continuous relief decoration of alternating winding scrolls that form palmettes, related in style and carving technique to the rest of the architectural sculptures of the church. Its bottom side is not smooth, but rather seems to have been resting on an underlying member. Its size, profile and decoration also indicate that it could be a cornice placed above

11 Ibid., 39-40.
12 Choras, op.cit. (n. 2), pl. 16α. Bouras – Boura, op.cit. (n. 2), fig. 74ρ.
13 Bouras – Boura, op.cit. (n. 2), 74.
14 I thank M. Kappas for this observation.
Fig. 7. Nauplion, Areia. Hagia Moni. Katholikon, the fragment of a slab incorporated into the north porch.

Fig. 7a. Drawing of the fragment of a slab.
the architrave of the altarscreen. It is also made of the same marble with greyish veins as the templon posts. It is possible, based on the size of the supports, that the architrave and its cornice may have been rather heavy, executed in two-level technique or some other mixed technique, as is the case in other altarscreen of the 12th century (Amfissa\textsuperscript{15}, Samarina\textsuperscript{16}). The cornice could also have initially stood above the west door frame of the church\textsuperscript{17}, but it is made of a different type of marble, similar to that of the templon posts, and particularly elaborate.

Based on all the above, a graphic representation of the church’s altarscreen was attempted (Figs 9, 10),

\textsuperscript{16} Bouras – Boura, op.cit. (n. 2), 295.
\textsuperscript{17} I thank Dr. G. Tsekes and the paper reviewers for this observation.
unfortunately without evidence for the capitals and architraves, or certainty about the panels’ decoration. With the proposed position of the supports, the panels at the bema would be 55-57 cm wide, and the doors approximately 65-70 cm wide, whereas. Traces on the stylobate or the side walls have been destroyed by later interventions.

As is common in Middle Byzantine sculpture the material is in secondary use. The use of recycled marble is also attested by the inscription, whose corners were obviously broken from the start: the upper right corner of the frame around the text is curved and lowered, contrary to the other three, in order to fit within the shape of the damaged marble. Similarly, the width of the frame is reduced skilfully in order to avoid its interruption at the lower left corner, making use of the design of the relief ciborium. The broken corners of the inscription have been used as evidence of its provenance from an older building, in order to uphold a chronology in discord to the one mentioned. However, it is clear that this hypothesis does not withstand scrutiny. It must also be pointed out that there is no discrepancy either.

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18 The displacement of the line of the frame at this point may be due to the slanted base of the ciborium, but it may also be using this feature in order to adjust to the broken shape inconspicuously.


between the date of the inscription (1149) and that of the Hypomnema of Leon (1143), as the latter refers to the foundation of the monastery ("φροντιστήριον")

Rhoby, op.cit. (n. 2), 311.

Louvi-Kizi, op.cit. (n. 18), 352.

Perhaps in order to add more light to the exonarthex, which was separated by walls from the narthex, as has recently been revealed and published by D. Athanassoulis ["Σημείωμα για την αργολική βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική", Βυζαντινό Μουσείο Αργολίδας op.cit. (n. 1), 91].

Sanders, op.cit. (n. 17).


Ibid., 70, fig. 27.
The interlacing band cross, found on the slab (Fig. 7) as well as the post (Fig. 4), slightly different in its execution (giving the impression more of basket-weave), appears on an architrave from the collection of Hosios Loukas, dated to the 12th century. An interlacing band cross in perforated technique is also the central motif at the 12th-century proskeniataria of the Panagia of Hosios Loukas. One more interlacing cross is found on the cabochon of the templon architrave of the neighbouring church of Saint John Elekmon at Ligourio. A parallel is also found on a slab at Saint John the Forerunner at Argos, somewhat more archaic. By contrast, the crosses found in the Andromonastiro sculptures are carved in more vivid relief, have harder outlines, and seem posterior.

The pomegranate tree on the mullion impost (Fig. 2c) is very similar to the one that appears on the donor’s inscription. The heart-shaped palmettes of the door frames (Fig. 3) are similarly arranged to those on the templon post from Hosios Loukas, dated to the 12th century. The same pattern with mood and reproduces Early-Christian forms, a trend typical of the 12th century. The accuracy of the design and the geometrical clarity of the vertical frames conveys a classicizing technique. The interlacing band cross, found on the slab at Saint John the Forerunner at Argos, somewhat more archaic. By contrast, the crosses found in the Andromonastiro sculptures are carved in more vivid relief, have harder outlines, and seem posterior.

The fact that the church matches the quality of Constantinopolitan parallels has been noticed by D. Athanasoulis (“Some Notes on the monuments of Turkish Thrace”, Anatolian Studies 39 (1989), 125-128, pl. 27. I thank Dr. G. Pallis for bringing this article to my attention. This becomes apparent in the architecture of the lower city church at Amorion.”, BCH Suppl. 49), eds C. Pennas - C. Vanderheyde, fig. 16.

C. Bouras, Nea Moni on Chios; History and Architecture, Athens 1982, 124, figs 128, 130.

R. Etzeoglou, “Μεσοβυζαντινό τέμπλο στην Κάτω πόλη της Μονής τοῦ Ὁσίου Λουκᾶ”, La sculpture byzantine. VIIe-XIIe siècles. Actes du colloque international organisé par la 2e Éphorie des antiquités byzantines et l’École française d’Athènes (BCH Suppl. 49), eds C. Pennas - C. Vanderheyde, fig. 16.

C. Bouras, Nea Moni on Chios; History and Architecture, Athens 1982, 124, figs 128, 130.
church: its complex cross-in-square type; the conchs in the side walls of the bema, a feature found in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, the monuments imitating its plan and a few other monuments in the Helladic area, whereas it is common in Constantinople; the high quality imported ceramic bowls. These elements must be attributed to choices made by the founder, who is known to have belonged to the aristocratic Constantinopolitan Antzas family, and to have been educated in the intellectual environment of the Capital, a fact reflected in his texts and the inscription itself. It seems that he kept in touch with the Capital even later, as he participated in the local Council of Constantinople in 1157.

A “classicism” of Middle-Byzantine taste has been observed in pictorial arts, in the sense of a turn to ancient models for inspiration. The same can be said for opus sectile floors, which were re-flourishing in Middle Byzantine times throughout the Empire, including Southern Greece, where they had been forgotten during the so-called Dark Ages. A similar trend in sculpture, which can be seen at Hagia Moni, has also been remarked in the reappearance of perforated sculptures in the 12th century, or the two-level technique with protruding elements, such as acanthus leaves, where the artist exhibits his dexterity and alludes to Early Christian forms.

A comparison to the more than a century later neighboring church at Merbaka, also a work of the highest intentions reflecting the personality of its own classicist founder, is particularly revealing of the regression of marble sculpture in the Peloponnese during the 13th century, which has been observed by D. Athanasoulis. Although the church built by the Latin Bishop de Moerbeke is a conscious copy of the churches of Leon, the “facsimile” of a Byzantine church that Sanders suggests was intended for ideological and semantic purposes, the divergence of elements that inevitably express on every building its own time is evident, such as the general style, eclectic and decorative at Merbaka, as opposed to the classical and austere style of Hagia Moni, the interpretation of particular decorative features, and the


Four of which in the Argolis (Hagia Moni, Chonika, Merbaka, Argos cemetery), definitely not by coincidence, but due, for the churches at Chonika and Areia, to their almost contemporaneous erection by the same founder, whereas for the 13th-century church at Merbaka to the imitation of the plan and design of its earlier prototypes (see below n. 53). The church at Argos cemetery has also been dated by Bouras to the 12th century, whereas Athanasoulis discerns a possibly earlier date. Athenasoulis, op.cit. (n. 22), 89.


ΔΧΑΕ ΑΘ (2018), 179-194
methods of construction. Sculptural decoration can be added to these differences. The few parts that have been preserved from the altarscreen of the Merbaka church\(^60\) are of a totally different character: a. one marble capital with extremely unsophisticated vegetal decoration, similarly to the window mullion imposts; b. porous stone icon frames with capitals of Gothic morphology, perhaps similar to those of the dome which are adorned with crockets; c. ribs forming the window frames with decoration of schematized oak leaves, typical of 13th-century Gothic morphology and entirely different from the chamfered cornices surrounding the arches of the windows at Hagia Moni; d. the sole door that does not have a ribbed frame of Gothic style, inherent to the masonry, makes use of a fluted column, instead of a properly shaped marble frame, as those of Areia.

In conclusion, the existing fragments of the Hagia Moni altarscreen demonstrate that this was an outstanding composition, on a par with the first-class architecture of the church it adorned. The study of the altarscreen sculpture confirms the inference already expressed by Ch. Bouras that “we stand in front of one of those rare cases of Byzantine church building, where we can observe in a direct way how the personality of the founder influenced the quality of the architectural work”\(^61\). And of course this coincided with a time of excellence and maturity of the art and craftsmanship in Greece.

\(^{60}\) Studied by S. Mamaloukos, whom I thank for the information and material. I expect that some of these elements may have been presented by Mary Lee Coulson in her doctoral thesis about the monument, but unfortunately I have not been able to find a copy of it in most libraries.

\(^{61}\) Bouras – Boura, op.cit. (n. 2), 84.

**Illustration credits**
Photos and drawings by Christina Pinatsi.
Χριστίνα Πινάτση

ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΟΝ ΓΛΥΠΤΟ ΔΙΑΚΟΣΜΟ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΤΕΜΠΛΟ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΑΡΕΙΑΣ ΝΑΥΠΛΙΟΥ

Το καθολικό της Αγίας Μονής στην Άρεια, χωρίς στη Ναύπλιο, είναι κτισμένο, σύμφωνα με μαρμάρινη κτητορική επιγραφή στη δυτική όψη του όρθιο, το έτος 1149 από τον επίσκοπο Άργους Λέοντα. Η έμετρη με λόγιο ύφος επιγραφή υποδεικνύει την ιδιαίτερη μόρφωση του ιερού (Εικ. 1). Στην άνω αριστερή γωνία της φέρει ανάγλυφο σταυρό, περιστοιχισμένο από ροδές, μέσα σε κυβόλιθο λαξευμένο με κομψότητα. Η αμφιβολία της αρχικής τοποθέτησης της επιγραφής στη θέση αυτή από τον G. Sanders δεν επιβεβαιώνεται, καθώς το πλαίσιο της προσκυμίζεται στην άνω δεξιά γωνία στο σχήμα του βασιλικού μαρμάρου σε δεύτερη χρήση, γεγονός που επιβεβαιώνει τη λάξευση της επιγραφής στο ήδη βασιλικό μάρμαρο. Επίσης, διαφάνεια των εξί περίπου χρόνων από την ημερομηνία του Υπομνήματος με αυτή της επιγραφής δεν αποτελεί ασυνέπεια, καθώς το Υπομνήμα αναφέρεται στην ίδια χρονική περίοδο της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι ιδιαίτερα στη δυτική του όψη, το έτος δεύτερη χρήση, γεγονός που επιβεβαιώνει τη λάξευση της επιγραφής στο ήδη βασιλικό μάρμαρο. Επίσης, διαφάνεια των εξί περίπου χρόνων από την ημερομηνία του Υπομνήματος με αυτή της επιγραφής δεν αποτελεί ασυνέπεια, καθώς το Υπομνήμα αναφέρεται στην ίδια χρονική περίοδο της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη. Το ανάγλυφο της επιγραφής είναι παρόμοιο σε τεχνοτροπία και θεματολογία στην ίδρυση της Μονής («φροντιστήριο»), και είναι λογική η ολοκλήρωση της ανέγερσης του καθολικού να έπεσε κατά κάποια έτη.
ΧΡΙΣΤΙΝΑ ΠΙΝΑΤΣΗ

απαντούν στη σφαίρα επιρροής της πρωτεύουσας, στους σταθμούς της πρωτεύουσας στους σταθμούς του μαρμάρινου τέμπλου του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου καθώς και στη Νέα Μονή Χίου. Στον ελλαδικό χώρο μπορούν να αναφερθούν ευάριστα παραδείγματα, πολύ απλοϊκώς εκτελέσμενα. Στην Αγία Μονή, ωστόσο, δεν πρόκειται για ένα μεμονωμένο στοιχείο του δια κόσμου που ακολουθεί μια τάση της εποχής ή τα πρότυπα που εισήγαγε ο Όσιος Λουκάς. Όπως και στον ίδιο τον Όσιο Λουκά, εντάσσεται στο σύνολο του σχεδιασμού του μνημείου, που παρουσιάζει κλασικό ύφος, κομψότητα, αυστηρότητα, ποιότητα στην κατασκευή και πιθανότατα άμεσες επιρροές από την πρωτεύουσα, καθώς στο καθολικό της Αγίας Μονής τίποτα δεν μαρτυρεί επαρχιακό γούστο. Αυτό καθίσταται εμφανές και στην αρχιτεκτονική του ναού, και κυρίως στον τύπο, στη διαμόρφωση αβαθών κογχών στους πλευρικούς τοίχους του ιερού βήματος, κάτι που εμφανίζεται και στον Όσιο Λουκά, στα μνημεία που τον αντιγράφουν και σε ευάριστα άλλα μνημεία του ελλαδικού χώρου, ενώ συνηθίζεται στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, στα ανώτερα ποιότητα εισηγμένα πινάκια κ.ο.κ. Τα στοιχεία αυτά δεν μπορούν παρά να αποδοθούν σε επιλογές του κτήτορα, ο οποίος γνωρίζουμε ότι προερχόταν από την αριστοκρατική οικογένεια Αντζά της Κωνσταντινούπολης, στο πνευματικό περιβάλλον της οποίας είχε λάβει τη μόρφωσή του, γεγονός που αντικατοπτρίζεται στα σωζόμενα κείμενά του και στην επιγραφή, όπως είδαμε προηγουμένως. Σχέσεις με την πρωτεύουσα, αλλάζονται, φαίνεται ότι διατηρούσε και μετέπειτα, αφού συμμετείχε στην ενδημική Σύνοδο του 1157. Το θραύσμα θωρακίου που εντοιχίσθηκε κατά τη διάρκεια μεταγενέστερης επισκευής στο βόρειο πρόπυλο, έχει αποδοθεί με επιφύλαξη στο αρχικό τέμπλο του ναού (Εικ. 7). Ο διάκοσμος θυμίζει τα επιθήματα αμφικιονίσκων και τα θυρώματα, και φαίνεται ότι ανήκε στο ίδιο σύνολο. Ωστόσο, πρέπει να τηρηθούν επιφυλάξεις για την ταύτισή του.

Σχέσεις με την πρωτεύουσα, αλλάζονται, φαίνεται ότι διατηρούσε και μετέπειτα, αφού συμμετείχε στην ενδημική Σύνοδο του 1157. Το θραύσμα θωρακίου που εντοιχίσθηκε κατά τη διάρκεια μεταγενεστερής επισκευής στο βόρειο πρόπυλο, έχει αποδοθεί με επιφύλαξη στο αρχικό τέμπλο του ναού (Εικ. 7). Ο διάκοσμος θυμίζει τα επιθήματα αμφικιονίσκων και τα θυρώματα, και φαίνεται ότι ανήκε στο ίδιο σύνολο. Ωστόσο, πρέπει να τηρηθούν επιφυλάξεις για την ταύτισή του.

Τέλος, κατά τις αποξηλώσεις, εντοπίστηκαν δύο επίμηκες θραύσματα λοξότμητου κοσμήματος, η μια που εντοιχίσθηκε στο ναό της Νέας Μονής Χίου το έτος 1157 και η άλλη που παρουσιάζεται στον Χώνικα ναό της Αγίας Μονής. Οι διάφορες περιπτώσεις εντοπίζονται και σε ευάριστα άλλα μνημεία του ελλαδικού χώρου, ενώ ορισμένες εμφανίζονται και σε πρωτοελληνικά επόμενα τοιχογραφήματα, όπως στα ανώτερα ποιότητα εισηγμένα μνημεία της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Η μελέτη των θωρακίων του τέμπλου της Αγίας Μονής επιβεβαιώνει το συμπέρασμα που έχει ήδη εκφραστεί από τον Χαράλαμπο Μπούρα, ότι η προσωπικότητα του κτήτορα επηρέασε την ποιότητα του αρχιτεκτονικού έργου, όπως είναι ενδεδειγμένη στην ενδημική Σύνοδο του 1157. Το θραύσμα θωρακίου που εντοιχίσθηκε κατά τη διάρκεια μεταγενεστερής επισκευής στο βόρειο πρόπυλο, έχει αποδοθεί με επιφύλαξη στο αρχικό τέμπλο του ναού (Εικ. 7). Ο διάκοσμος θυμίζει τα επιθήματα αμφικιονίσκων και τα θυρώματα, και φαίνεται ότι ανήκε στο ίδιο σύνολο. Ωστόσο, πρέπει να τηρηθούν επιφυλάξεις για την ταύτισή του.

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