

The church of Kapnikarea in Athens: Remarks on its history, typology and form

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This article offers a detailed presentation of the Athens church of the Mother of God, known by the name of Kapnikarea, which originates from the middle of the Byzantine period. Initially, the Kapnikarea was the katholikon of the monastery but today it is a building complex, consisting of three chronologically different ensembles. They are the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin, erected just after the mid-11th century, the exonarthex, probably dating from the beginning of the 12th century, and the smaller, northern church dedicated to St. Barbara, built during the Ottoman epoch.

In the heart of the central Ermou street in Athens lays an impressive monument dated to the Middle-Byzantine period. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary (specifically to the Presentation of Mary to the Temple) and is generally known as Kapnikarea. In 1834, the building was in danger of being demolished. The newly-established Modern Greek State decided on a town lay-out for the new capital of the Greeks planned by the Bavarian architect, Leon von Klenze. That layout intended for the whole extent of Ermou Street to be straight and of unhampered access, exactly aligned with the Palace's central entrance (contemporary Building of the Parliament, at Syndagma Square). Fortunately, the destruction was avoided thanks to the reaction of the enlightened and philhellene King of Bavaria, Ludwig' (father of Otto, the young King of the Greeks). Later, in 1863, the monument was once again in the same danger, but this time it was the parishioners' reaction that saved it. The aforementioned extravagant decisions of demolition must be considered within the context of contemporary Greeks' misconceived 'classicism' which prevailed throughout the nineteenth century: the roots of the regenerated modern Greek State were sought in the remotest classical Greek past thus ignoring the more direct and still living Byzantine one.¹

¹ D. Gr. Kambouroglou, *Ιστορία των Αθηναίων. Τουρκοκρατία. Περίοδος πρώτη, 1458-1687*, Athens 1889, 226ff; idem, *Αι παλαιαί Αθήναι*, Athens 1929, 241-244; C. Biris, *Αι εκκλησΐαι των παλαιών Αθηνών*, Athens 1940, 18; A. Χυngopoulos, *Τα βυζαντινά και τουρκικά μνημεία των Αθηνών*, Ευρετήριο των Μεσαιωνικών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος 2 (1929) 69ff; G. Soteriou, *Επιστημονική Επετηρίς Θεολογικής Σχολής Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών* 4 (1937-1938), cf. for p. 168; I. Travlos, *Πολεοδομική εξέλιξις των Αθηνών*, Athens 1993², 244; M. Chatzidakis, *Das Byzantinische Athen*, Athens s. a., 9-10; T. Fourtouni, F. Stavroulaki, *Καπνικαρέα. Ένα μνημείο στο κέντρο*

The church of Kapnikarea was given over to the National and Capodistrian University of Athens under a law passed in 1931, preceded by the Professor of Theology, Amilkas Alivizatos, preparatory action. After the completion of necessary restoration works, it has been functioning as a University church since 1935.² A tradition has called it "the Princess' church" (εκκλησία της Βασιλοπούλας), in an attempt to link the monument with one of the two Byzantine empresses originating from Athens. In the course of the 19th century, the church had also been referred to as "The Virgin Mary of Prentzas" (Παναγία του Πρέντζα) the latter being a member of the family of a 1821-Revolution chieftain. Two things associated the name of Prentzas with this church: first, the renovation of the adjacent chapel of St Barbara and, second, the dedication of a precious icon of Virgin Mary to the Kapnikarea church. The name, however, of Kapnikarea³ prevailed after the end of the 1821 - Greek War of Independence, so still standing today.

Several views have been expressed regarding the origin of the name of Kapnikarea. One of them suggests this name originates in an incident which followed the setting of the town of Athens on fire by the Ottomans in 1689: the icon of Virgin Mary was found in one piece but completely sooty ("κατακαπνισμένη"). Contradictory to the former explanation is, among others, the Kamoucharea variant: according to this, the name of the church came from a precious silk textile called kamouchas (καμουχάς). That is, it has been supposed that this kind of textile would either frame the holy icon or it would be produced in workshops in the vicinity. At the moment, the most convincing explanation of the name appears to be a derivation from the donor of the church: his last name

της αγοράς, Athens 2001; St. Mamaloukos, *Οι χαμένες βυζαντινές εκκλησίες*, in: Βυζαντινή Αθήνα, Επτά Ημέρες (journal issued as part of the newspaper Kathimerini, Sunday, the 24th of December, 1995) 11-12; E. Kounoupiotou-Manolessou, *Σωζόμενες βυζαντινές εκκλησίες*, in: *ibid.*, 14; N. Gkioles, *Μνημεία που σώθηκαν, μνημεία που χάθηκαν*, in: Οδός Ερμού, Επτά Ημέρες (Sunday, the 22nd of September 2002) 10-11; N. Panselinou, *Byzantine Athens*, Athens 2004, 54-55.

² A. Alivizatos, *Ο Πανεπιστημιακός ναός της Καπνικαρέας*, Επιστημονική Επετηρίς Θεολογικής Σχολής Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών 4 (1937-1938) 169-188; G. C. Efthymiou, *Ιστορικά ειδήσεις περί του ναού της Καπνικαρέας*, Επιστημονική Επετηρίς Θεολογικής Σχολής Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών 36 (2001) 872.

³ For further variants of the name v. Kambouroglou, *Αι παλαιαί Αθήναι*, 242.

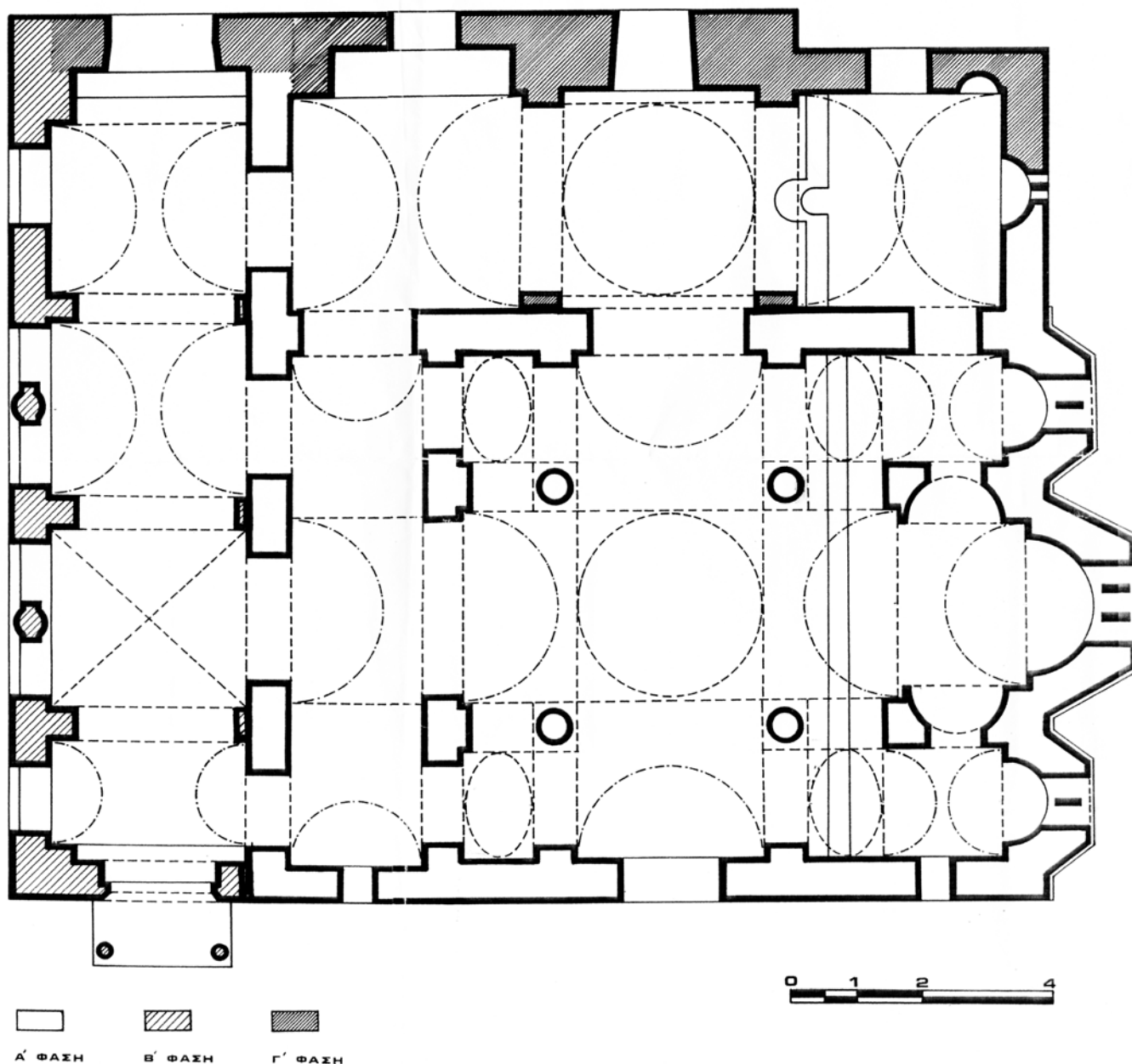


Fig. 1. Kapnikarea. Plan of the church

(which originated from his professional name) was also finally attributed to the church itself, which was a very common thing, anyway. Supposedly, this donor would be called a Καπνικάρης (Καπνικάρης), being a collector of the tax of *kapnikon* (καπνικόν); the *kapnikon* was a sort of capital tax which, for the cases of the *πάροικοι* of both ecclesiastical lands and welfare foundations, was abrogated by the empress Irene Athinaia (797–802) and re-introduced by Nicephorus I Logothetis (802–811). Nicephorus I was an expert in finance and in his attempt to achieve an economic recovery of the Byzantine state he introduced ten new kinds of taxation, known as Nicephorus' vexations (κακώσεις του Νικηφόρου). Among the latter was the *kapnikon* which was aimed at all residential buildings [i.e. to those used as residences having, therefore, necessarily a fire-place producing smoke (καπνόν)].⁴

The Kapnikarea church must have originally been the Katholikon of a Monastery. Today, the building

consists of a complex of three different units joined together; these units were built successively: the most sizeable southern church dedicated to the Presentation of Mary to the Temple, the chapel of St Barbara to the north and the exonarthex with the propylon which are today to the west (Fig. 1).

The church of the Presentation of Mary at the Temple

The larger of the two churches, the southern one, is a domed complex, cross-in-square,⁵ dated on the basis of morphological criteria to shortly after the middle of the 11th century, as we shall see later in this study (Fig. 2). The dome is held by four unfluted columns crowned

⁴ A. Christophilopoulou, *Βυζαντινή Ιστορία Β'1* (610–867), Athens 1981, 150, 166–171, 325–326; P. E. Niavis, *The reign of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I (A.D. 802–811)*, Athens 1987, 98–99.

⁵ In this particular type of religious building the cross, which is the nucleus of the church, is inscribed in a square. The cross-square, of which consists the naos, is complete; to this an adjacent oblong structure is added, which is roofed at a slightly lower level than the central square and which constitutes, together with the three apses, the tripartite bema. Cf. A. Orlandos, *Η Αγία Τριάς Κριεζώτη*, ABME 5 (1939–1940) 3–16; M. Soteriou, *Το καθολικόν της Μονής Πετράκη Αθηνών*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/2 (1960–1961) 114; N. Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία (600–1204)*, Athens 1992, 117–118.

by early-Christian capitals. Three of these capitals are simple Corinthian ones, whereas one is Corinthian-like with rising reed leaves on the upper zone and acanthus leaves on the lower zone. These capitals can be dated in the early 5th century.⁶ The slightly elongated angle chambers are roofed by ellipsoid-shaped calottes. Round-shaped-calotte roofs have been associated to the architectural tradition of Constantinople:⁷ such roofs already appeared in the Middle-Byzantine Katholikon of Petraki Monastery in Athens as early as ca. A.D. 1000⁸ (that is a Katholikon of a form similar to Kapnikarea's, except for the angle chambers being perfect squares). As far as ellipsoid-shaped calottes are concerned, these were used to cover oblong rectangular spaces principally in monuments of the Greek School, such as the church of St Thomas at Tanagra;⁹ at Kapnikarea we meet some of the earliest examples of this roofing. For the roofing of the tripartite bema, at Kapnikarea, the customary solution of using oblong barrel-vaults was preferred.

In the interior of the church, all along the walls there are pilasters corresponding to the columns of the naos. These pilasters serve structural purposes by reinforcing the exact points where the weight of the vaults is transmitted through the arches. This building system is characteristic of the Constantinopolitan School of architecture and it first appears in Athens at the Katholikon of Petraki Monastery¹⁰ (where, nevertheless, pilasters were also built on the external facades of the church, taking in this case the form of buttresses). In this aspect, the builders of the Katholikon followed those of the church of Panagia at Hosios Loukas Monastery.¹¹ A few years later, at the Kapnikarea church, the external buttresses will be omitted and only the internal ones will remain; the same change may be observed in other 11th

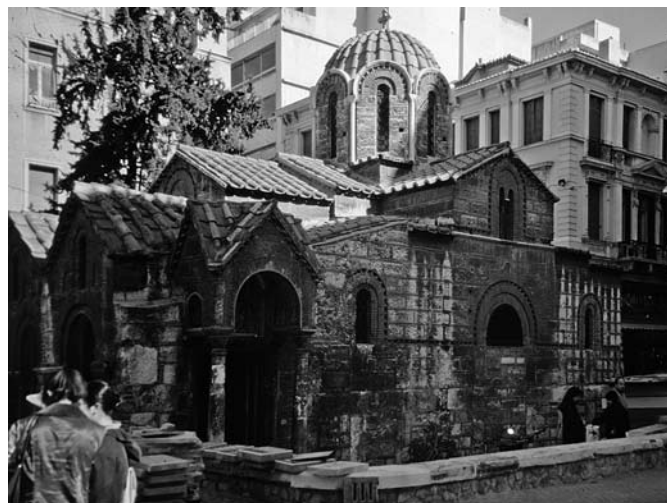


Fig. 2. Kapnikarea. Southwest view of the southern church

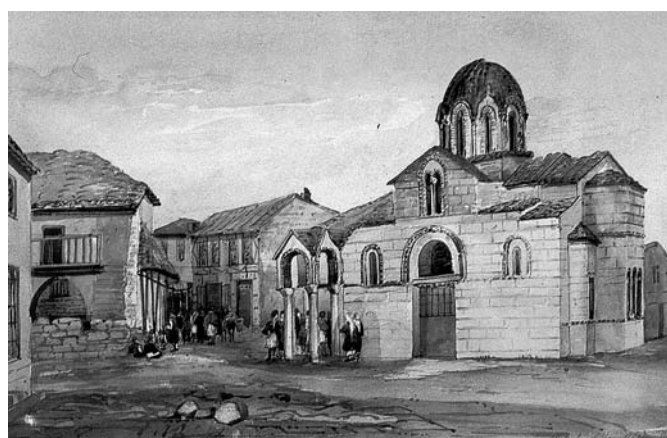


Fig. 3. Representation of the church of Kapnikarea (Aquarelle, 1836, Museum of the City of Athens Collection, № 953)

⁶ The lower band of acanthus leaves of the SE capital has been hewn out. Due to the limitations in size of this study, the very interesting sculptures of the church, most of which have been being re-used, will not be discussed here. They will be considered in a following study. The present study, therefore, refers only to the history, typology and morphology of the monument. It is unfortunate that the plans of the building published by the National and Metsovion Polytechnic University in Athens, Department of Architectural Morphology and Rythmology (*Collection and Archives of Architectural Research. Byzantine Monuments. Churches in Attica*, Athens, June 1970, nos. 12–22) are inaccurate in several aspects, especially when it comes to the plotting of the masonry. The plan of the church presented here is based on that of the pre-mentioned publication; there has, moreover, been made an attempt to correct it under the guidance by my colleague Aphrodite Passali, architect, to whom I seize this opportunity to express my warmest thanks. At the bases of the pendentives which are formed between the barrel-vaults that support the dome there are the holes of the outlets of the built-in “sound” vessels. For literature about the latter v. K. Tsouris, *Η Μονή του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Προδρόμου Καρέα*, Κληρονομία 30, 2 (1999) 275, n. 58.

⁷ St. Mamaloukos, *Παρατηρήσεις στην διαμόρφωση των γωνιακών διαμερισμάτων των δικιόνιων σταυροειδών εγγεγραμμένων ναών της Ελλάδος*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/14 (1987–1988) 194.

⁸ Soteriou, *Το καθολικόν της Μονής Πετράκη*, fig. 1.

⁹ Mamaloukos, *Παρατηρήσεις*, 194, 198, n. 67, fig. 3; Ch. Bouras - L. Boura, *Η ελληνική ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα*, Athens 2002, 514; A. M. Simakou, B. Christodouloupoulou, *Άγιος Θωμάς Τανάγρας*, in: *Λαμπηδών. Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη της Ντούλας Μουρίκη II*, Athens 2003, 746, fig. 2.

¹⁰ Soteriou, *Το καθολικόν της Μονής Πετράκη*, 103, fig. 1.

¹¹ Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, fig. 66.

century monuments in Athens such as the churches of Soteira tou Kotaki and St Catherine.¹²

The arrangement of the middle chamber of the bema is also interesting, since semi-circular conchs are formed on the side walls; openings giving access to the parabemata were placed at the center of the conchs. In this way the bema was given a tripartite form. This facilitated and expanded any movement around the altar. In this aspect, the Kapnikarea architects must have used as model the nearby, slightly older (before A.D. 1031) impressive monument of Soteira Lykodemou (contemporary Russian Church) on Philhellenon Street.¹³ The same arrangement may be found at the early-11th century Katholikon of Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phokis;¹⁴ this building was

¹² Xyngoropoulos, *Τα βυζαντινά και τουρκικά μνημεία των Αθηνών*, figs. 107, 108.

¹³ *Ibid.*, figs. 79–83; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 167–168, fig. 85; Ch. Bouras, *The Soteira Lykodemou at Athens. Architecture*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/25 (2004) 11–23. Evidence for dating are among other features the burial inscriptions the latest of which dates to the year 1031; about these v. Archimandrite Antonin, *O drevnich christianskich nadpisjach u Afinach*, St Petersburg 1884, 1ff; G. Millet, *L'école grecque dans l'architecture byzantine*, Paris 1916, 7, n. 1.

¹⁴ Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, fig. 66. For the relation of this monument in Athens with that at Phokis v. Ch. Bouras, *Η αρχιτεκτονική της Σώτειρας Λυκοδήμου Αθηνών. Διαπιστώσεις και υποθέσεις*, in: *Εικοστό Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης. Περίληψεις Ανακοινώσεων*, Athens 2003, 73–74; idem, *The Soteira Lykodemou*, 21–23.



Fig. 4. Kapnikarea. East view of the southern church

most probably the source of influence for the makers of the church of Soteira Lykodemou which was built on the same architectural type as the Katholikon shortly later. This same arrangement of the bema may be seen at the abandoned church of Taxiarchis near the Monastery of Kaessariani (ca. A.D. 1000),¹⁵ at the Monastery of Daphni (end of the 11th century),¹⁶ at the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Khonikas, Argolid (early 12th century),¹⁷ at the Hagia Moni Arias near Nafplion (A.D. 1149),¹⁸ at the church of St Sophie, Monemvasia (A.D. 1150)¹⁹ etc. It is considered to be an architectural element that survived from the Early-Christian times²⁰ and which reappears in southern Greek church-building from the end of the 10th century onwards. It can probably also be considered to be a Constantinopolitan influence, since many of the above-mentioned monuments seem to relate to the Constantinopolitan architectural tradition where the tripartite arrangement of the bema (either at the middle chamber or at the parabemata) is common.²¹

The thin, oblique-cut stone cornices on the facades are limited to the offing height of the semi-dome of the apse, the dome drum and the edges of the pilasters on which the arches stand. Considered to have continued an

¹⁵ A. K. Orlandos, *Ευρετήριο των Μεσαιωνικών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος III*, Athens 1933, 164, fig. 219.

¹⁶ E. Stikas, *Ο κτίτωρ του Καθολικού της Μονής Οσίου Λουκά*, Athens 1974–1975, fig. 12; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, fig. 86.

¹⁷ Bouras-Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 325–327, fig. 381.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 81–85, fig. 70; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, fig. 70.

¹⁹ Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, fig. 88. For the theme v. Bouras-Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 358–359 (with several examples).

²⁰ N. Cambi, *Triconch churches on Eastern Adriatic*, in: *Πρακτικά του 10ου Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογίας I*, Thessaloniki 1984, 52; A. H. S. Megaw, *A cemetery church with trefoil sanctuary in Crete*, in: *ibid.*, II, 321–329; I. Stollmayer, *Spätantike Trikonchoskirchen, ein Baukonzept?*, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 42 (1999) 116–157; I. D. Varalis, *Deux églises à choeur triflé de l'Illyricum oriental. Observations sur leur type architectural*, *BCH* 123, 1 (1999) 195–225.

²¹ A. van Millingen, *Byzantine churches in Constantinople*, London 1912, 242, fig. 77, p. 119, fig. 37, p. 136, fig. 44; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, figs. 50–54, 57, also correlate fig. 63; J. Morganstern, *The Byzantine church at Dereagzi and its decoration*, Tübingen 1983, 89, 272.

Early-Byzantine tradition, the stone cornices are quite broad, several bearing relief decoration, and often skirt the internal walls of Middle-Byzantine churches dated before A.D. 1000, at the offing-height of the domes.²² In the area of Athens, this may be noticed in the Katholikon of the Petraki Monastery (ca. A.D. 1000).²³ In its more or less contemporary church of The Holy Apostles Solaki, inside the Ancient Forum, the cornice is quite broad, but still does not skirt all building facades.²⁴ At Kapnikarea, this cornice-element is confined to the buildings' most important points which would call for support: the semi-dome of the apse, the base of the cupola, as well as the arch-supporting pilasters (in this latter case, the cornices take the place of degenerated pilaster-capitals). Not considering reasons of morphology for their use, these cornices would also have a structural role being to support key points of the building constitution.²⁵

The narthex has a cross-vaulted roof. Here, the sense of elongation is partly inhibited by the middle barrel-vault, elevated on the axis of the western entrance gate, whose roof stands on a lower level than the one of the western barrel-vault of the church. The middle part is covered by a saddle roof, whereas the lateral parts by sloping roofs leaning to the west. This roofing of the narthex appears to have become the usual one by the middle of the 10th century, in monuments which nowadays meet exclusively in Greece.²⁶ The type of narthex that has its own lower roof which is clearly distinct from the western barrel-vault of the church, is the most wide-spread as well as constant in time.

Apart from the original western entrance gate, the church also had at least one more entrance in the center of the southern facade, which was walled up after 1836. This may be deduced from the fact that this southern entrance is depicted still open in an unsigned aquarelle of the same year (nowadays, part of the Museum of the City of Athens Collection, № 953) (Fig. 3).²⁷ What

²² P. L. Vokotopoulos, *Η εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική εις την Δυτικήν Στερεάν Ελλάδα και την Ήπειρον*, Thessaloniki 1992, 168–169.

²³ Soteriou, *Το καθολικόν της Μονής Πετράκη*, 108–109, pls. 481–483.

²⁴ Cf. A. Frantz, *The church of the Holy Apostles*, Princeton 1971, pls. 23b, 26, 27.

²⁵ Bouras-Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 441; Chr. von Scheven-Christians, *Die Kirche der Zoodochos Pégé bei Samari in Messenien*, Bonn 1980, 62.

²⁶ G. Dimitrokallis, *Η καταγωγή των σταυρεπίστεγων ναών*, in: *Χαριστήριο εις Αναστάσιον Κ. Ορλάνδον II*, Athens 1966, 187–211; P. L. Vokotopoulos, *Περί της χρονολογήσεως του εν Κερκύρα ναού των Αγίων Ιάσωνος και Σωσιπάτρου*, *ΔΧΑΕ* 4/5 (1966–1969) 151; *idem*, *Εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική*, 137–139; Bouras-Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 360. Examples where the middle transverse barrel-vault of the narthex consists of a prolongation of the western barrel-vault of the church are relatively limited; cf. D. Hayer, *Saint-Georges près de Skala (Laconie)*, *ΔΧΑΕ* 4/12 (1984) 279ff.

²⁷ The aquarelle was published in the special issue *Οδός Ερμού. Η εμπορική καρδιά της Αθήνας* of the journal *Epta Imeres* (a weekly, Sunday edition by the newspaper *Kathimerini*) on Sunday, the 22nd of September, 2002 (p. 11). It was also published in: *Byzantine Athens*, a Calendar of the Year 2004 issued by the *Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens* (fig. 33); N. Panselinou, *Byzantine Athens*, pl. 17. In all of these publications the church depicted is incorrectly identified with the St Asomatoi at Thissio. A simple, moreover, juxtaposition of the figures 33 and 32 of the above-mentioned Calendar is enough to allow one to argue that the same monument is depicted in both of them, namely the church of Kapnikarea, and that it has no relation to the SE view of the Asomatoi church (cf. also E. Stikas, *Ο ναός των*



Fig. 5. Kapnikarea. The dome of the southern church

may still be seen in situ today, is the lower parts of the broken, oblique-cut marble gate holding simple wavy decoration; these stand on the stone threshold. This gate is crowned with a horseshoe arch, a very common feature of the Middle-Byzantine monuments.²⁸ The external facades of the three apses of the bema are three-sided, according to the preponderant way of doing in the area of contemporary Greece from the end of the 10th century onwards i.e. after the predominance of the cloisonné masonry (Fig. 4).²⁹

The middle apse has a three-light window, while the side apses have one double-light window each, whose lights are separated by marble mullions holding dossierets in relief. A brick-work arch encircles the free, equally-heighted openings as low as to the offing-point of the lights' arches. This arcade-type of window, which followed the early-Christian tradition, predominated during the second half of the 10th and the early 11th centuries;³⁰ when it comes to this particular element, the architecture of Kapnikarea appears to be "archaizing". On the contrary, the double-light windows of the cross arms are encircled by a wider brick blind-arch which goes down as low as the height of the window sill (Fig. 2). At this last group of windows, the internal brick arch of the lights also retreats from the level of the external surface of the wall for aesthetic reasons in an attempt to break the monotony of that flat surface and gain some plasticity and motion. This second type of window emerges in the architecture of the Greek School with this

Αγίων Ασωμάτων "Θησείου", ΔΧΑΕ 4/1 (1960), fig. 2, pl. 40 (drawing by A. Couchaud, *Choix d'églises byzantines en Grèce*, Paris 1842, pls. 41, 42); Panselinou, *Byzantine Athens*, pls. 16–17).

²⁸ A. K. Orlandos, *Το πεταλόμορφον τόξον εν τη βυζαντινή Ελλάδα*, ΕΕΒΣ 11 (1935) 411ff; G. Miles, *Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area*, DOP 18 (1964) 28ff; Bouras-Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 466.

²⁹ P. L. Vokotopoulos, *Η βυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική στη Χερσόνησο του Αίμου τον 10ο αιώνα*, in: *Κωνσταντίνος Ζ' Πορφυρογέννητος και η εποχή του*, Athens 1989, 213; idem, *Εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική*, 151.

³⁰ Hayer, *Saint-Georges*, 284–285; Vokotopoulos, *Ναός Αγίων Ιάσωνος και Σωσιπάτρου*, 163.

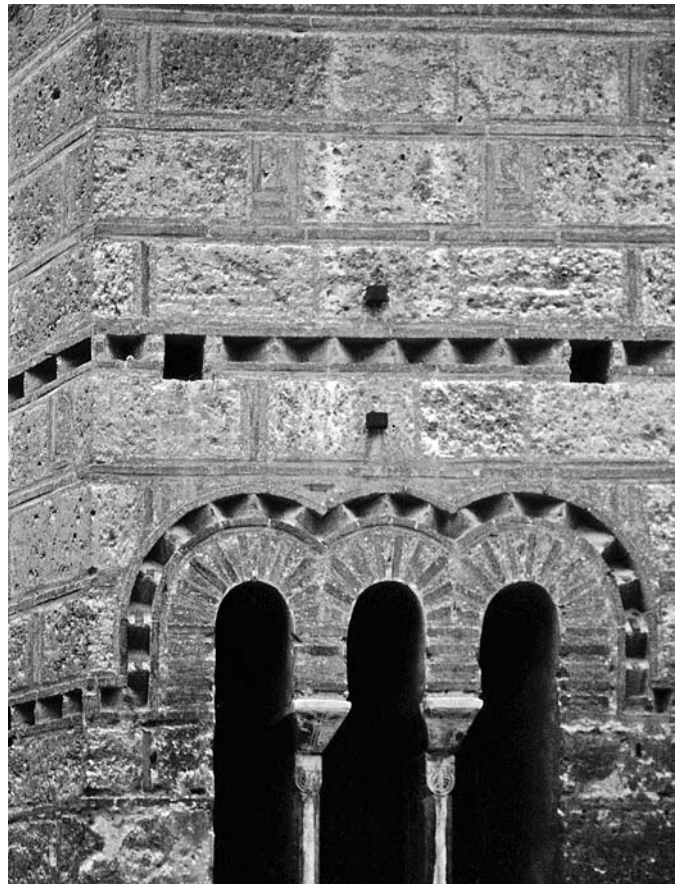


Fig. 6. Kapnikarea. Southern church, upper part of the middle apse. Detail of masonry

feature of partial retreat of the window lights' brick-arch, during the first half of the 11th century, as we can see at the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas Monastery, Phokis and at the church of Soteira Lykodemou in Athens.³¹ It would prevail in architecture after the middle of the 11th century, as it happened in several double-light windows of the church of St Theodoros at Klafthmonos Square (ca. A.D. 1065) in Athens.³² The windows of the "Athenian type"-cupola are single-light ones where the brick step frame is confined to the lights' arches (Figs. 4, 5), something common in the 11th century. Whilst at the casing of the two single-light windows at the southern angle chambers, the brick step frame goes down to the sill, as we may see at two churches in Athens: St Nicolas Ragavas at Plaka³³ (second half of the 11th century) and St Theodoros at Klafthmonos Square³⁴ (ca. A.D. 1065). If we considered the monument from the point of view of window-form-evolution, we could date it in the first years of the second half of the 11th century.

The monument is built of Middle-Byzantine masonry technique which emerges in the area of contemporary Greece from the second half of the 10th

³¹ H. Megaw, *The chronology of some middle-Byzantine churches*, ABSA 32 (1931–1932) 121–122; G. Velenis, *Ερμηνεία του εξωτερικού διακόσμου στη βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική*, Thessaloniki 1984, 113.

³² Megaw, *Chronology*, 120–122; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 128; P. L. Vokotopoulos, *Άγιος Δημήτριος Ηλιδος*, ΑΔ 24 (1969) 208, n. 17; E. Kounoupiotou-Manolessou, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ραγκαβάς. Συμβολή στην ιστορία του μνημείου*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/24 (2003) 57. For more examples in Attica v. Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 113, n. 2.

³³ Kounoupiotou-Manolessou, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ραγκαβάς*, fig. 5.

³⁴ Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, fig. 24; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, fig. 47β.



Fig. 7. Kapnikarea. Drawings of the pseudo-kufic patterns in the southern church

century onwards and is known as *cloisonné*:³⁵ the external surfaces of the walls are covered by hewn-in-squares blocks – mostly poros (Fig. 6). Specifically in Athens, the poros stone is usually conglomerate. These blocks are framed by bricks. In the monuments of the late 10th – early 11th centuries, complex brick (pseudo-kufic) patterns usually appear in the vertical joints and dentil courses appear in the horizontal ones; in the Kapnikarea case, only a single brick was used in every joint, what was more usual in monuments of the mid-11th century (towards the last decades of the century, this brick would be progressively omitted).³⁶

The *cloisonné* masonry starts from the windowsills' level and continues upwards; in the lower part of the walls, large roughly-worked blocks, coming from older buildings, were used in a way to form the shapes of crosses (Fig. 2). This last feature is characteristic of masonry dated in the first half of the 11th century; it could be interpreted simply as a type of masonry meant to have no decorative intentions, which becomes otherwise quite clear in masonry dating from the end of the century onwards.³⁷ At Kapnikarea, an attempt has been discerned to simply line up crosses, made by large and more or less symmetrical blocks, on the walls in a more regular way.³⁸

In this monument there has been very restricted use of pseudo-kufic³⁹ brick patterns that is purely decorative brick patterns imitating the first arabic script that sprang up at Kufa, Mesopotamia, in the 7th century. In the context of the Greek School of architecture, these decorative patterns appear in impressive abundance and multiformity during the second half of the 10th century,

falling thereafter gradually into decline. At Kapnikarea this sort of brickwork meets at only five points, where simple patterns are visible nowadays in vertical joints of the walls: three of those are at the middle apse (Figs. 6, 7) while two at the south cross-arm.⁴⁰ As an architectural element used for dating, the advanced decrease of pseudo-kufic patterns in the vertical joints of the walls dates the monument, on the one hand, after the Athenian monuments of Holy Apostles Solaki in the Ancient Forum (ca. A.D. 1000) (where pseudo-kufic patterns are dominant),⁴¹ of Soteira Lykodemou at Philhellenon street (ca. A.D. 1015–1031) and of the destroyed church of Prophet Elias at Staropazaro⁴² (where the use of pseudo-kufic patterns has become limited),⁴³ and on the other hand, before the church of St Theodoros at Klafthmonos Square (ca. A.D. 1065)⁴⁴ (where pseudo-kufic patterns no longer meet at the joints since they are confined to the lunettes of the three-light windows). At this same place (i.e. at the lunettes of the three-light windows of the south and west cross-arms) pseudo-kufic patterns also meet at Kapnikarea. That is, if we follow the declining course of this brickwork decorative pattern, we should place the construction of Kapnikarea somewhat earlier than that of the St Theodoros church at Klafthmonos. Certainly, this type of decoration of both the joints and the window-lunettes is what we meet – quite simplified, it is true – at the churches of St Catherine and St Nicolas Ragavas at Plaka (last quarter of the 11th century). Still, in these last cases, these decorative elements appear in parallel to new, simpler, kufic-like ones, consisting of single bricks and placed under the cornices of the gables, as we shall see later in this study. The latter does not occur at the original church at Kapnikarea.

The use of dentil courses are also limited. In the context of the southernmost examples of the Greek School of architecture, these also followed a parallel course

³⁵ Megaw, *Chronology*, 90ff; Vokotopoulos, *Ναός Αγίων Ιάσωνος και Σωσιπάρου*, 160ff; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 119ff.

³⁶ Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 125.

³⁷ G. Hadji-Minaglou, *Le grand appareil dans les églises des XI-XIIe siècles de la Grèce du sud*, BCH 118 (1994) 161–197; E. Stikas, *L'Eglise byzantine de Christianou*, Paris 1951, 50, fig. 88; Bouras, Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 462–463.

³⁸ Hadji-Minaglou, *Le grand appareil*, 176, pl. 2, 2; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 121.

³⁹ A. H. S. Megaw, *Byzantine reticulate revetments*, in: *Χαριστήριον εις Αναστάσιον Κ. Ορλάνδον III*, Athens 1966, 72ff; N. Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις στα μνημεία της περιοχής των Αθηνών*, in: *Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη Στυλιανού Πελεκανίδη*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1988, 330–351; G. Miles, *Classification of islamic elements in Byzantine architectural ornaments in Greece*, in: *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines III*, Belgrade 1963, 281ff; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, 20ff; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 123–125.

⁴⁰ Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 137.

⁴¹ Frantz, *The church of Holy Apostles*; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 156–158.

⁴² St. Sinos, *Die sogenannte Kirche des Hagios Elias zu Athen*, BZ 64 (1971) 351ff, pl. VI; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 344.

⁴³ Χυngopoulos, *Τα βυζαντινά και τουρκικά μνημεία*, 80–82; Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, figs. 17–20; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 167–168.

⁴⁴ Χυngopoulos, *Τα βυζαντινά και τουρκικά μνημεία*, 73ff, figs. 61–66; Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, figs. 22–25; H. Megaw, *The date of H. Theodoroi at Athens*, ABSA 33 (1932–1933) 163ff; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 153–154.

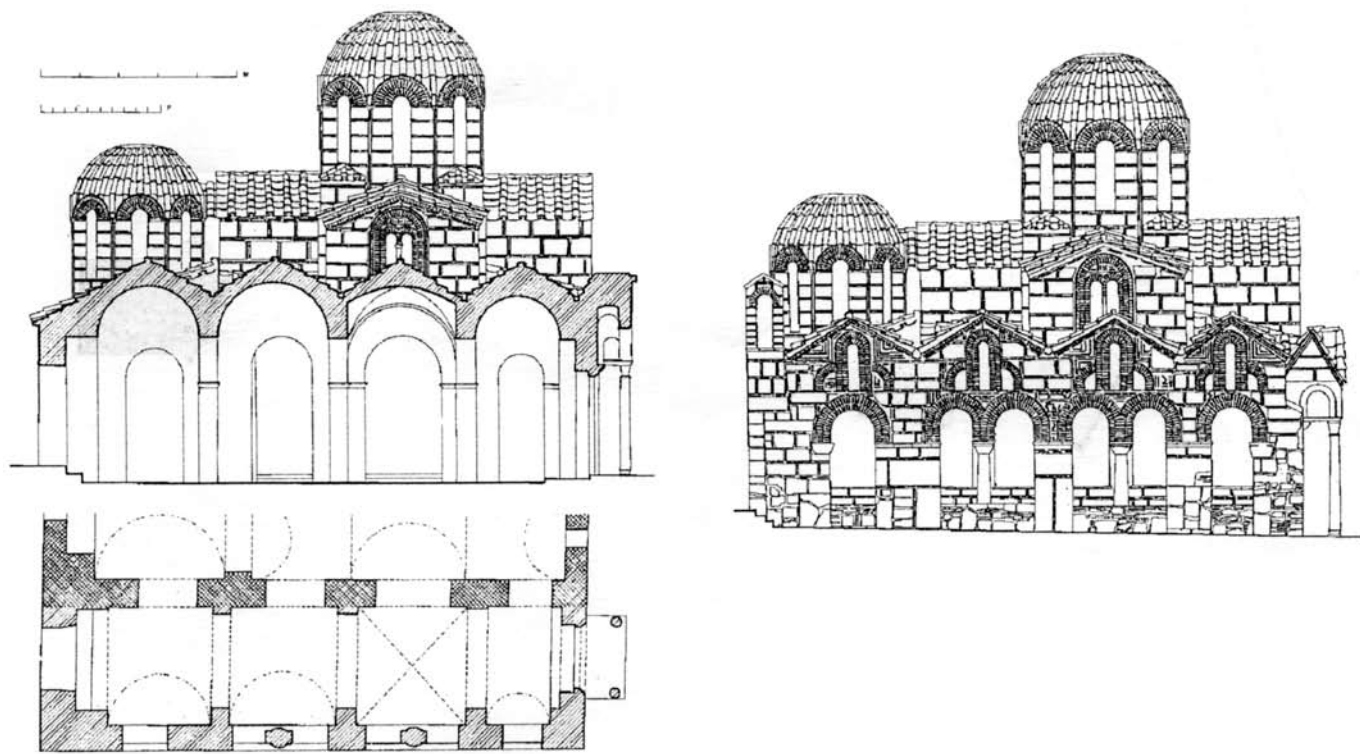


Fig. 8. Restoration drawing of the western open portico at Kapnikarea. Plan, longitudinal section and west view

into decline similar to the pseudo-kufic decoration.⁴⁵ When compared with the Athenian monuments of the early 11th century, where the presence of dentil courses is marked, at Kapnikarea, a single dentil course skirts the walls at the height of the lower openings' sills in a way to surround the sills (Fig. 2). A second such course goes round the apses at the offing-height of the windows' arches and encircles the lights. There is a third dentil course at the middle apse over the windows (Fig. 4) as well as over the oblique-cut stone cornice which defines the base of the southern cross-arm, surrounding the double-lobed opening (Fig. 2).⁴⁶ The dome window lights arches are also encircled by dentil courses (Fig. 5). The same may be seen at the church of St Catherine at Plaka (last quarter of the 11th century) and, later on, at Omorfi Eklissia at Galatsi, Athens (third quarter of the 12th century).⁴⁷

The dentil brick cornice, known from the Early-Byzantine architectural traditions, predominates under the roof ends. It meets in all early Middle-Byzantine churches of the Greek School; it disappeared towards the end of the 11th century only to be replaced by an oblique-cut, poros one in the next century.⁴⁸

The stone cornice,⁴⁹ oblique-cut in cross-section, which runs the whole east external facade at the height of the window sills (Fig. 4) appears in Athens already in the earlier church of Soteira Lykodemou.⁵⁰ The architecture of the latter has been influenced (also when considering the plan) by that of the Katholikon of Hosios

Loukas Monastery at Phokis,⁵¹ which holds strong Constantinopolitan elements among which we may include the distinction of external surfaces by the use of stone cornices. The stone-cornice element described above seems, therefore, to have been introduced to the religious architecture in Athens by the makers of the church of Soteira Lykodemou and to have furthermore been imitated by the makers of Kapnikarea as well as by those of posterior Athenian monuments such as St Theodores,⁵² Dafni,⁵³ Gorgoepikoos⁵⁴ and Omorfi Eklissia at Galatsi.⁵⁵

A similar stone cornice defines the base of the southern cross-arm.⁵⁶ This element is also related to the Constantinopolitan architectural tradition. The Greek School made limited use of it mainly from the 12th century onwards.⁵⁷ In Athens, this element meets at the churches of Kaessariani Monastery and Gorgoepikoos by the Athens Metropolitan Church.⁵⁸

⁴⁵ L. Bouras, *Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του ναού της Παναγίας στο Μοναστήρι του Οσίου Λουκά*, Athens 1980, figs. 1, 2. For the relation between the two monuments v. Bouras, *Η αρχιτεκτονική της Σώτειρας Λυκοδήμου*, 73–74; idem, *The Soteira Lykodemou*, 21–23. At the church of Panagia the cornice lays at the offing-height of the windows arches; this one is chronologically the first example ever in Greece (v. Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 49).

⁴⁶ Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, fig. 23; Ch. Bouras, *Middle-Byzantine Athens: planning and architecture*, in: *Athens from the Classical period to the present day (5th century B.C. – A.D. 2000)*, Athens 2000, fig. 8.

⁴⁷ Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, fig. 69.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, figs. 40, 51.

⁴⁹ Bouras, *Middle-Byzantine Athens*, fig. 10. For more examples v. P. L. Vokotopoulos, *Ο ναός του Αγίου Γεωργίου στην Σταμνά*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/21 (2000) 22; Bouras, Bouras, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 388, figs. 5, 40, 63, 71, 88, 104, 127, 140, 186, 189, 230, 231, 257, 411.

⁵⁰ Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 53.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 53; Bouras, Bouras, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, figs. 23, 40, 71, 187, 410.

⁵² Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, figs. 109, 111, 46.

⁴⁵ Vokotopoulos, *Ναός Αγίων Ιάσωνος και Σωσιπάτρου*, 164.

⁴⁶ Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 126–127.

⁴⁷ Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, figs. 58, 130; A. Vassilaki-Karakatsani, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της Όμορφης Εκκλησίας στην Αθήνα*, Athens 1971, pl. 1.

⁴⁸ Vokotopoulos, *Ναός Αγίων Ιάσωνος και Σωσιπάτρου*, 165.

⁴⁹ Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 46ff.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fig. 20; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, pl. 52.

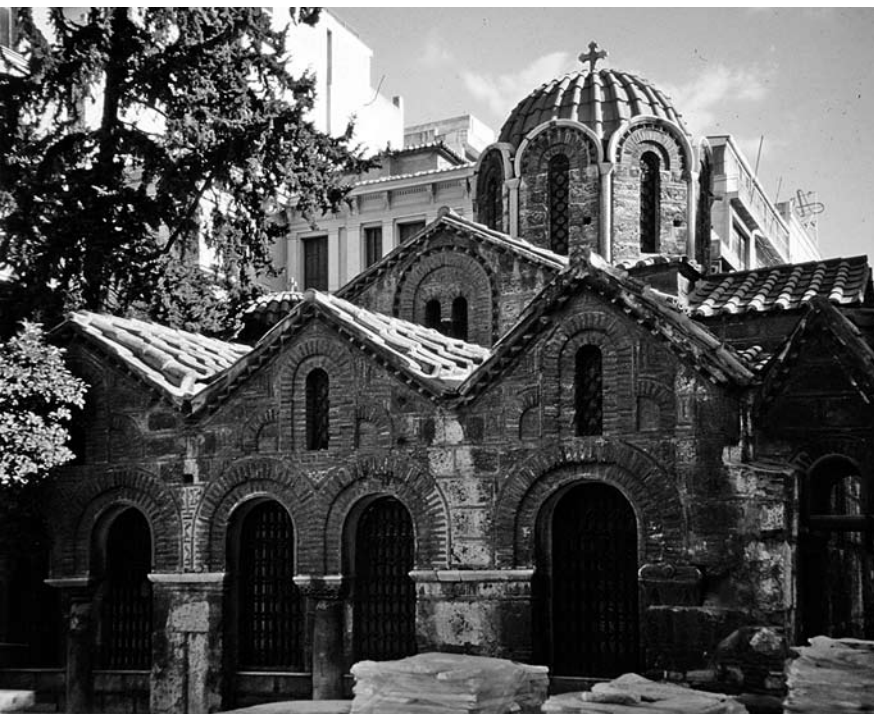


Fig. 9. Kapnikarea. West view

A new sort of brickwork, originating from Greek decorative themes, also appears for the first time at Kapnikarea. We may attribute this to the phenomenon of a general spirit of classicism prevailing in the Greek School of architecture at this time. The new brickwork theme consists of a gradual decorative pattern,⁵⁹ a sort of simple meander. We may see this pattern repeatedly at the window lunette of the middle apse of the bema at Soteira Lykodemou church.⁶⁰ At Kapnikarea, the theme ends in a short band crowning the horseshoe arch of the south entrance gate (Fig. 2) as well as the arch of the double-light window of the prothesis apse.⁶¹ This theme, used in either a simple or a more complex way, became quite popular in later years and ended up used with intensively eccentric intentions during the 12th century.⁶² At Kapnikarea, a similar pattern was used extensively to decorate the posterior exonarthex walls.

The dome is one of the so-called Athenian type (Figs. 4, 5):⁶³ it has an octagonal drum at the tips of which there are marble colonettes of semi-octagonal profile; these colonettes are crowned by plain, dossier-like capitals which meet oblique-cut, slightly horseshoe-shaped, marble cornices. At these eight points, where the rain water is gathering, there are animal-figured, slender waterspouts⁶⁴ of which only four survive at the

eastern part (Fig. 5). Their shape is of a roughly formed lion-head where the eyes are specifically emphasized and have inlaid pupils. The sides of each spout are covered by concentric rectangles. This last decorative element distinguishes them significantly from the naturalistically decorated waterspouts of the church of Panagia at Hosios Loukas Monastery.⁶⁵ At each side of the dome there is one single-light window where the only brick element is the stepped frame of the light arch. This dome seems to be similar, in its basic features, to those of the rest of the 11th century monuments in Athens. Exceptions are the domes of the churches of The Holy Apostles Solaki, inside the Ancient Forum (ca. A.D. 1000) and St Theodores at Klafthmonos (ca. A.D. 1065); these two examples have double-light openings⁶⁶ and seem to bear the influences of the elaborate dome of Panagia church at Hosios Loukas Monastery (second half of the 10th century), by which this new architectural form seems to have been introduced in Greece.⁶⁷

The Kapnikarea dome is clearly more simple than that of St Theodores at Klafthmonos Square. In fact, at Kapnikarea, an effort is revealed to adapt the Athenian type of dome to the limited potential of the masons at the Theme of Hellas. Double-light windows have become single-light and waterspouts become especially slender, having now lost the organic connection with the arches among which they come in. They have also lost the naturalism of the Panagia church lion-heads and they are sustained by undecorated dossier-like capitals. Such capitals, at the church of St Theodores at Klafthmonos Square, still maintain one champlévé schematized palmette. Still, the latter monument was the work of a superior military officer (a spatharocandidatos)⁶⁸ who could probably afford the large expense, unlike the donor of Kapnikarea whose possibly limited finances dictated the limitation of carved ornaments to the most conspicuous marble architectural parts laying at the lower zones of the church. The light and elegant dome of Kapnikarea would serve as model for the posterior examples of the same type.

All the above arguments concerning the Kapnikarea architecture, compared to that of the other Byzantine monuments in Athens, contribute to the dating of the church shortly after the A.D. 1050. We should, in fact, date its construction to some time between the erection of the Soteira Lykodemou church (ca. A.D. 1015–1031) and the destroyed church of Prophet Elias at Staropazaro (first half of the 11th century),⁶⁹ on the one hand (two monuments where pseudo-kufic brickwork and dentil courses are abundantly used), and that of the St Theodores church at Klafthmonos (ca. A.D. 1065), on the other hand, where pseudo-kufic decoration in the joints is non-existent. We should definitely date the Kapnikarea church much earlier than those of St Nicolas Ragavas and St Catherine at Plaka (last quarter of

⁵⁹ Megaw, *Chronology*, 118–120, fig. 5A; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 348, pl. 9.

⁶⁰ Megaw, *Chronology*, 118, pl. 31, 4; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 348.

⁶¹ Megaw, *Chronology*, 118, figs. 5B–5H; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 348. At the prothesis, it is in most part spoiled; it survives best at its southern starting point.

⁶² Megaw, *Chronology*, 118, fig. 5A; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 348, pl. 9.

⁶³ Megaw, *Chronology*, 131–132; L. Philipidou, *Η χρονολόγηση της Μεταμορφώσεως Σωτήρος Αθηνών*, Επιστημονική Επιτηρίς της Πολυτεχνικής Σχολής Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης 5 (1970) 84–85; Boura, *Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος*, 22–25.

⁶⁴ Boura, *Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος*, 39–40, figs. 56, 61, 62.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, figs. 36–42.

⁶⁶ Frantz, *The church of the Holy Apostles*, pls. 8, 24, 25; Boura, *Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος*, fig. 55; Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 131–132, pls. 47β, 49.

⁶⁷ Boura, *Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος*, 22ff.

⁶⁸ Χυγγοπούλος, *Τα βυζαντινά και τουρκικά μνημεία*, 73.

⁶⁹ Sinos, *Die sogenannte Kirche des Hagios Elias*, 351ff; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 344.

the 11th century);⁷⁰ in the latter, pseudo-kufic decoration does exist in the joints but it is more degenerated than that of the monuments dating in the first half of the century, in Athens. Furthermore, in the latter monuments, new simple kufic-like decorative patterns have already appeared. These consist of single bricks lined up under the gable roofs in the place of triangular ashlar blocks. These standing bricks solved structural problems deriving from the close vicinity of the window arches to the inclined cornices of the gable roofs. These kufic-like standing bricks, so carefully and somewhat effectively arranged, will not be found in the original church of the Kapnikarea complex. What has been mentioned above regarding the two monuments in Plaka also can be said of monuments dated from the end of the 11th century until the beginning of the 12th, in Athens, such as the Metamorphosis on the northern slope of the Acropolis (ca. A.D. 1100), the St John Theologos at Plaka (ca. A.D. 1100) and the Asomatoi at Thiseio (third quarter of the 11th century).⁷¹

The church has been planed and constructed with care and interest for a use of new distinct architectural elements introduced in Attica by the Soteira Lykodemou. However it was, successfully adjusted to the local architectural traditions which were being molded in Central Greece at that time. The latter monument, which is closely related to the definitely imperial foundation of the Hosios Loukas Monastery at Phokis, seems to have been also closely related to the government. It could be related to the interest which was demonstrated again by the imperial family on the, at that time, politically and economically unimportant medieval town of Athens.⁷² Moreover, the town of Athens seems to have always been carrying the baggage of its brilliant spiritual past which distinguished it from other Greek settlements and which the educated Byzantines never ceased to be conscious. As C. Mango noted, the Byzantines never acknowledged an interruption in continuity with the antique civilization.⁷³ The interest now shown on Athens by Constantinople came, on the one hand, from political expediency related to the fact that the Balkans and especially the area of contemporary Greece was becoming strategically important at that time in a way to serve as barrier for the continuously increasing economic power of the West; which was soon to turn out to be the biggest menace to Byzantium, with the Norman raids and the Crusades. On the other hand, that interest was not devoid of

⁷⁰ Kounoupiotou-Manolessou, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ραγκαβάς*, 57–58, fig. 6; Megaw, *Chronology*, fig. 27, 1; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, fig. 10.

⁷¹ Kounoupiotou-Manolessou, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ραγκαβάς*, 57–58; Philipidou, *Η χρονολόγησις*, 87–89; Bouras, Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 52, 35–36; Stikas, *Ο ναός των Αγίων Ασωμάτων "Θησείου"*, 122; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφικές διακοσμήσεις*, 346–348; Gkioulos, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*, 126. For the function of these new elements v. Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 254–255; C. Tsouris, *Ο κεραμοπλαστικός διάκοσμος των υστεροβυζαντινών μνημείων της Βορειοδυτικής Ελλάδος*, Kavala 1988, 138–139.

⁷² For a similar phenomenon of the 5th century v. J. Burman, *The Athenian Empress Eudocia*, in: *Post-Herulian Athens. Aspects of life and culture in Athens (A.D. 267–529)*, ed. P. Castrèn, Helsinki 1994, 80ff; A. Karivieri, *The so-called Library of Hadrian and the Tetraconch church in Athens*, in: *Post-Herulian Athens*, 11–112.

⁷³ C. Mango, *Antique statuary and the byzantine beholder*, DOP 17 (1963) 69. Cf. H. G. Beck, *Η βυζαντινή χιλιετία*, transl. D. Kourtovik, Athens 1992, 15ff.

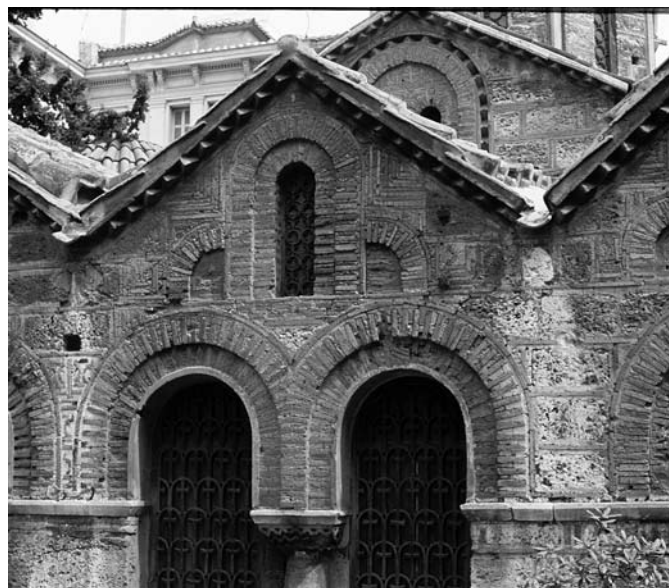


Fig. 10. Kapnikarea. Upper part of the exonarthex



Fig. 11. Kapnikarea. Exonarthex, detail of masonry

sentimental factors related to the forceful emperor Basil II Bulgaroktonos (A.D. 976–1025). The emperor came to Athens in 1018, after his victory against the Bulgarians, to worship the Virgin at the church of Panagia Athinotissa, inside the Parthenon on the Acropolis. One might assume that, with this kind of symbolic worship, the emperor intended to advertise the unity between the ancient Greek spirit and the Christian faith as well as its keeping the cultural traditions of the multiethnic empire, to quote A. Christophilopoulou's apt remark.⁷⁴ This classical Greek spirit is indeed ascertained to have been emphasized in medieval Athens' artistic creation which particularly flourished at this time, but which also demonstrated classicistic retrospective attempts at all times.⁷⁵

This classic Greek spirit of moderation (metron) and harmony and also of adjustment of the building to the humans whom it serves and aims to raise spiritually marked the church of Kapnikarea, too. The latter, together with its adjacent structures, gives today inside

⁷⁴ A. Christophilopoulou, *Βυζαντινή Ιστορία Β' 2 (867–1081)*, Athens 1989, 172–173.

⁷⁵ Cf. Bouras, *Middle-Byzantine Athens*, 223ff.

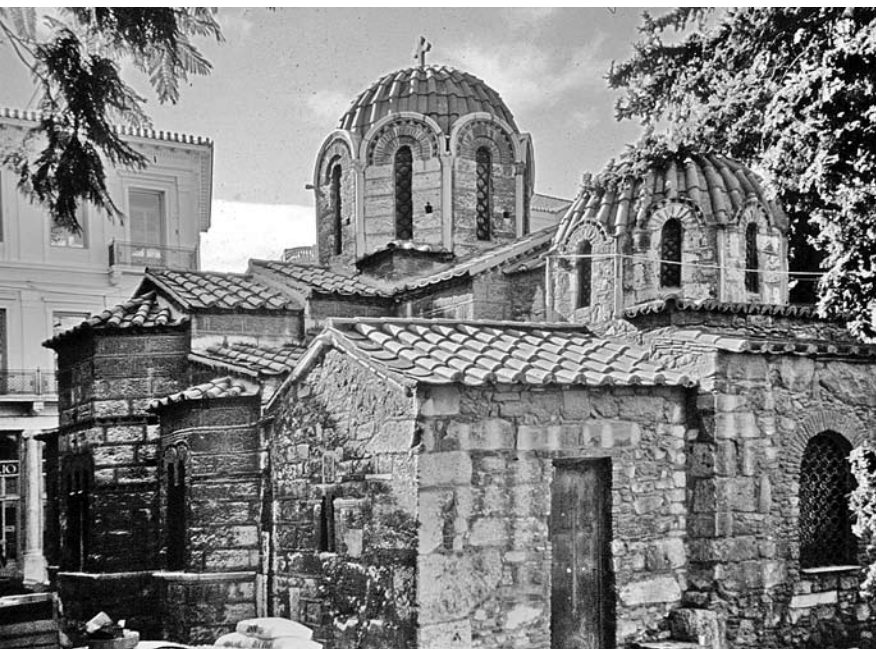


Fig. 12. Kapnikarea. Northwest view of the chapel

the impression of calm spaciousness and employs the predominance of curves to embrace the faithful with intimacy in its bosom, to calm their souls and bring them to discreetly approach God who is always their supporter and never awe-inspiring. The exterior of the monument exudes grace and harmony and light uplift, with the help of the small successive roofs and the alternation of straight and dominating curved lines.

The exonarthex and the propylon

Most probably in the early 12th century, an oblong open portico with double- or single-light openings was added all along the west side of the south church and the adjacent chapel of St Barbara. The openings were defined by wall-piers at the ends and by piers and unfluted columns at the center (Figs. 8, 9).⁷⁶ The portico was roofed by four saddle-roofs covering an equal number of vaults of which three were transverse barrel-vaults while the second from the south was a cross-vault.

The vaults are supported by five arches. These arches advance, on the west side, towards the built up parts of the portico. On the east side, the two terminal arches are based on two marble corbels, whereas the three intermediate ones on three pilasters attached to the original western facade of the church. This last observation certifies that the addition of the portico was posterior to the construction of the church. These fine pilasters are crowned by pilaster-capitals; being parts of possibly Early-Byzantine (5th century) pier-capitals which bore decoration consisting of acanthus and darts leaves framing a medal with a cross. It remains unknown when this portico was walled in its lower part and blocked

up with a glass partition in the upper part, thus being transformed in an exonarthex.

The addition of an open portico to the older church may be included in the broader “renaissance” spirit of the times of emperors of the Macedonian and Comnenian Dynasties. This spirit became more intensive in architecture from the second half of the 11th century onwards and, at the same time, it was lent a mannerist nuance. In this specific case, this appeared with the architectural composition parts presenting a tendency for “self-existence”; this is also characteristic of antique art. The use of columns and old carved architectural members in the exterior of the church which is quite emphasized at the Kapnikarea portico and will reach a peak a bit later, at the church of Gorgoepikoos;⁷⁷ the underlined straight lines, the emphasized use of pointed gables, the symmetrical and harmonic arrangement of the openings; last but not least, the interest for a very well-looked-after external brickwork decoration the themes of which were inspired by the Greek decorative arts. The complete degeneration of the eastern pseudo-kufic brickwork decorative patterns which were predominant from the second half of the 10th century;⁷⁸ all the above reveal intensive extroversion, which appertains to the antique art, a pursuing of perfection and an abandonment, to some degree, of the Byzantine graphic irregularity.

According to the remarks of Ch. Bouras,⁷⁹ the open porticoes principally on the Greek Byzantine churches’ western facades constitute a new typological feature of the 12th century. Two more examples with similar arrangement, dating in the 12th century, survive in Attica: at the Monasteries of Daphni and Hosios Meletios.⁸⁰ Among these monuments, the most impressive, beautiful and light, as well as distinguished for its intense decorative strain aiming to set off the church’s facade is that of Kapnikarea. The other two have simpler facades, due to a lack of windows, while the addition of an upper floor makes them somewhat heavier and gives them more of a functional character.

Large ashlar-blocks coming from ancient building material have been used for the construction of the lower parts of the portico’s wall-piers and piers – a common practice during the Middle-Byzantine period (Fig. 9). A particularly well-done cloisonné masonry has been employed for the upper part of the portico, starting at the offing-point of the openings’ lights and going as far up as the roof. Brickwork covers the surfaces which lay under the arches in a skillful and carefully symmetrical way where ashlars would be difficult to use. It also decorates the lateral semi-arches which frame the lobed windows of the gables at their base (Fig. 10).

The slightly raised lateral semi-arches⁸¹ which frame the lobed windows at the exonarthex of Kapnikarea with purely decorative intentions assist the incorporation of the openings into the gables’ acute angles in harmony

⁷⁷ Bouras, *Middle-Byzantine Athens*, fig. 11.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ch. Bouras, *Βυζαντινές “αναγεννήσεις” και η αρχιτεκτονική του 11ου και του 12ου αιώνα*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/5 (1966–1969) 262ff.

⁷⁹ Bouras, *Boura, Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 363.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 114–117, fig. 110, pp. 232–235, fig. 262, pp. 363–398.

⁸¹ Millet, *L’école grecque*, 207ff; Megaw, *Chronology*, 126–128; Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 262ff.

⁷⁶ Χυγγοπούλου, *Τα βυζαντινά και τουρκικά μνημεία*, 69ff, figs. 55–57; Megaw, *Chronology*, 107–108, 112, 118, 120, 129; Nikonanos, *Κεραμοπλαστικές κουφιές διακοσμήσεις*, 339–340, figs. 4, 5, drawing 5; Bouras, *Boura, Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 49–50, 363–364, 396, 468, figs. 28, 29, 398, 400.

and artistry. Semi-circular lateral arches at both sides of openings first appeared in Athens at the west gable of Soteira Lykodemou;⁸² there, they lay at a level higher than the sill of the opening. Likewise, at the south and west cross-arms of St Theodoros at Klafthmonos Square where they are, moreover, placed higher, touching the sloping cornice of the roof and covering the triangular void spaces at both sides of the window. Their quadrant tympanum is filled in with single bricks which either form angles or are arranged in successive horizontal bands⁸³ accordingly.

At the exonarthex of Kapnikarea the lateral semi-arches are arranged on the same line as the window-sills⁸⁴ and lay in perfect harmony with the accommodating triangular spaces. Still, here one might observe stronger intentions for a decorative role of the lateral semi-arches, since, laying at a certain distance from the sloping roof, they do not serve any structural purpose for completing the triangular void spaces at both sides of the windows. Instead, the void spaces have been completed to a large extent by bricks arranged horizontally or vertically in a way to form successive angles. In a more recherché way here they fill in their quadrant tympana either with successive bands of simple bricks or with degenerated kufic-like patterns.

Certain of these pseudo-kufic patterns recall those of the south church (Fig. 7). Here, moreover, one may notice a rather more advanced tendency for sophistication, refinement and degeneration of older traditional themes. More visible triangular or quadrangular ends are added to the five patterns that look more like those of the church thus making appear new elaborate S-shaped patterns.⁸⁵ The step pattern, similar to that of the church, occupies more space here, over the double-light openings. At the top of gables there also appear bricks cut in a decorative way, a common practice from the end of the 11th century. All the above, in conjunction with the rest of the classicizing mannerist features that we have already discussed here, allow a dating of the exonarthex much later than the completion of the south church, most probably in the early-12th century.

An elegant two-column propylon is attached to the south side of the portico (Figs. 2, 9).⁸⁶ Two-column barrel-vaulted propyla built in front of small entrance gates in order to set them off are characteristic of the 12th century architecture in Greece.⁸⁷ The propylon rests, at the north side, on the south arch of the portico; the arch lays slightly further inside in relation to the front of the church's south wall, so part of its lateral arches is covered by the walls that blocked up the openings of the portico at both sides of the

door. The west part of the portico's south wall, which ends at about a half-meter distance from the portico's ceiling thus forming a step, is contemporary to the west wall-pier of the portico. There also was a similar step at the north edge of the portico wall, on which the more recent lobed belfry rests today. There, too, alike the south edge, the roof of the contemporary exonarthex stops slightly further inside in relation to the edge of the chapel wall.

At the SW corner of the building, one may indeed notice a problem when it comes to the effort for a harmonious joining of three different buildings; this resulted to the creation of an inelegant step at the SW edge and to the concealment of parts of the lateral arches of the propylon (Figs. 8, 9). It remains uncertain if there was an according propylon also at the north wall of the portico, which was later ruined together with the north chapel. The similarity in masonry between the propylon and the portico, as well as the way their walls interlace, both provide good grounds for assuming their contemporary construction.

The unfluted thin columns and the small cubic (6th century) capitals which crown them and whose dentelated decoration is cut off at their upper parts, as well as the ones that were used as bases, are all spolia. They probably come from early-Christian ciboria. On the capitals rest two marble corbels, each side of which is built in the south wall of the portico.

The propylon has three small brick arches the southernmost of which is wider and slightly horseshoe-shaped so as to harmonize with the one at the southern gate, walled in today, of the church. On the contrary, a similar propylon that meets at the Hagia Moni Areias, outside Nafplion (A.D. 1149),⁸⁸ has a double poros arch according to a general tendency of the 12th century to substitute stone arches and cornices for brick ones. This in conjunction with the rest of structural and morphological features of the portico indicating that the propylon of Kapnikarea was somewhat anterior to the one of Hagia Moni Areias, during the early-12th century. We may notice the existence of a brick dentil cornice under the building's intensely sloping five-part-roof that forms gables in three of its four facades. In the inside, the ceiling is a pendentive dome.

It remains strange why the propylon was placed at one of the narrow sides of the portico, framing a new and especially arranged imposing entrance gate, instead of framing the nearby older gate at the south side of the church. It's possible that the portico was originally closed-up serving as an exonarthex since the latter was functionally necessary in Monasteries' Katholika.

The St Barbara chapel

The northern chapel, which is dedicated to St Barbara, is an aisleless domed church. The especially careless masonry and the vulgar dome – the results of an awkward attempt to imitate the Middle-Byzantine dome of the southern church – point to the church in its present form (Figs. 1, 12) being considerably later: it should be dated

⁸² Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 265–266, pl. 87a.

⁸³ Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, fig. 24; Megaw, *Chronology*, 127, pl. 31, 3; G. Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 266.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 266, pl. 87β; Megaw, *Chronology*, 127–128, pls. 31.1–2; Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, fig. 27; Bouras, Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, fig. 29.

⁸⁵ Cf. Tsouris, *Ο κεραμοπλαστικός διάκοσμος*, 138.

⁸⁶ Velenis, *Ερμηνεία*, 268, n. 1; Bouras, Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 49–50, 365–366, 411, figs. 28, 29, 439; Bouras, *Βυζαντινές “αναγεννήσεις”*, 264, n. 98.

⁸⁷ Bouras, Boura, *Ελλαδική ναοδομία*, 365–366. For large and more complex propyla v. *ibid.*, 366–367; N. Gkioles, *Συμβολή στην ερμηνεία των μικρασιατικών στοιχείων της τέχνης του δεκάτου αιώνα στη Μάνη*, *Δελτίον Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 5 (1984–1985) 71ff.

⁸⁸ Bouras-Boura, *Ελληνική Ναοδομία*, 81–85, figs. 70a, 70ε, 71a, 396, 440.

if not in the late Ottoman period then – even more probably – shortly after the Liberation of Greece – definitely before the 1836-aquarelle, mentioned above, was painted (since in that, the chapel is clearly seen). The tradition suggesting that the 1821-Revolution chieftain, P. Prendzas⁸⁹ was the donor of the chapel could be based on a fact. It possibly is not unreasonable to suppose that the destruction of the original chapel was caused by a bomb which fell from the Acropolis during its siege by the Turks in the years 1826–1827 during the Greek War of Independence, as was the case with the church of Soteira Lykodemou.

A chapel, moreover, existed from the 11th century. It was probably built shortly after the erection of the southern church had begun. This assumption is supported by evidence of cloisonné masonry surviving in the east (Figs. 1, 4, 12) and the west facades. In the south part of the east facade, a piece of masonry similar to – and partly adjoining – that of the cruciform church may be noticed. At the lowest point, a vertical 2,35 meters-high joint clearly distinguishes the two buildings. From that point upwards the courses sink into the south church's eastern wall. The cross shaped by big ashlar blocks, at a low level, is different, smaller and more well-done than the ones of the south church; the chapel shares this feature with monuments of the advanced second half of the 11th century, e.g. the church of Asomatoi at Thiseio.⁹⁰

The above observations allow the assumption that the erection of the north chapel was contemporary with the completion of the south church. The construction of the south church appears to have been interrupted at the offing-height of the apses windows' lights and of the lowest dentil course at the south side. Shortly after, when the construction works were resumed, the addition of the north chapel must have been decided. Considerable evidence to support this assumption is conveyed by the difference in the two mortars' composition: this of the lower parts of the north church consists of lime, crushed brick and sand and is thick-grained, while that of the upper parts of the south church and of the surviving original wall of the north chapel is of a similar consistence but fine-grained.

After the coating of the western wall of the chapel had been removed to the offing-point of the western opening's arch, this wall proved to have been built – probably in its whole extent – in a Middle-Byzantine cloisonné masonry, similar to that of the surviving piece of masonry at the east side.

The addition of the aisleless chapel probably served dormitory purposes, what occurred often in Byzantium.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Kambouroglou, *Αι παλαιαί Αθήναι*, 244.

⁹⁰ Stikas, *Ο ναός των Αγίων Ασωμάτων "Θησειού"*, 117, fig. 2; Hadji-Minaglou, *Le grand appareil*, 176, pl. 2.1.

⁹¹ Cf. G. Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines. Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques*, Paris 1969, 40ff; S. Ćurčić, *Architectural significance of subsidiary chapels in Middle-Byzantine churches*, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 36 (1977) 94ff; R. G. Ousterhout, *The architecture of Kariye Camii in Istanbul*, Washington D.C. 1987, 110ff.

The marble screen

The contemporary marble screen was built in 1961/1962, as an imitation of the Middle-Byzantine one (of which one panel was found),⁹² in order to replace the former high wooden screen dating in 1937/1938.⁹³ The marble shrines in relief on the sanctuary piers, which frame the two despotic icons of Christ and the Virgin, must belong to the same period of 1961/1962.

The frescoes and the mosaic

No existence of Byzantine frescoes in the monument has ever been pointed out. The contemporary "Neo-Byzantine" paintings of the church date back to the 1940s. A large part of it was made by Photis Kontoglou who began with the fresco of the apse in 1942; this was his first work in Attica. The painting of the church was completed by his students,⁹⁴ a fact that changed the style, the color range and, therefore, the whole aesthetic result that Kontoglou intended to produce. What derives from the frescoes of the bema, the dome and the south wall is that Kontoglou tried to lend to the monument the austere and serious, calm, classicizing Byzantine style of the early Post-Byzantine period.⁹⁵ One may, moreover, notice several derivations from the traditional Late-Byzantine iconographical program which it intends to imitate; one may also notice misunderstandings of iconographic details, such as the one at the Preparation of the Throne, painted at the bema barrel-vault, where the basic element of the theme's doctrinaire meaning (i.e. the throne as symbol of the Father-God) is, in fact, missing. A few frescoes of Western-influence style, dating to the late-19th century, survive at the narthex and the exonarthex. The mosaic at the south propylon, representing the Virgin in the type of the Hodegetria holding Christ in her right arm, was made by Elli Voila (1908–1989) in 1936 on a sketch by Aginoras Asteriadis (1898–1977); they were here copying an early-11th century mosaic in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas Monastery at Phokis.⁹⁶

⁹² Lazarides, *ΑΔ (1961–1962), Χρονικά*, 50, pl. 52a.

⁹³ Chatzidakis, *Byzantinische Athen*, fig. 30; Alivizatos, *Καπνικαρέα*, 177–178, figs. 12, 13.

⁹⁴ Those were N. Papanikolaou and G. Karpodinis, whose inscriptions survive in the diakonikon.

⁹⁵ N. Zias, *Φώτης Κόντογλου*, Athens 1991, 110–111, 128–129, figs. 290, 291, 293, 382–385.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110, n. 3; Alivizatos, *Καπνικαρέα*, 177–178 (here, it is incorrectly stated that the sketch was made by the artist Stergiadis (?); *Λεξικόν Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών – Ζωγράφοι – γλύπτες – χαράκτες, 16ος–20ος αιώνας*, Athens 1997 (entry "Voila-Laskari, Elli"); for the mosaic at Hosios Loukas cf. M. Chatzidakis, *Όσιος Λουκάς*, Athens 1996, fig. 32.

Црква Капникареја у Атини: храм Универзитета у Атини

Белешке о њеној историји, типологији и форми

Николаос Јолес

У чланку је детаљно представљена Богородичина црква у Атини, позната под именом Капникареја, која потиче из средњовизантијског раздобља. Црква се налази у центру града и преживела је неколико покушаја уништења током XIX века. Након обнове 1935. године постала је црква Универзитета у Атини. Назив јој највероватније потиче од презимена ктитора (Капникарис) који је био сакупљач пореза званог капникон. Првобитно је црква Капникареја била католикон манастира, а данас је то комплекс грађевина који чине три целине из различитих раздобља.

Црква Ваведења Богородице је куполна грађе-

вина, са основом у облику уписаног крста, која је на основу морфолошких критеријума датована у време непосредно после средине XI века. Њена архитектонска пластика у секундарној улози није разматрана у раду. Спољна припрата вероватно потиче с почетка XII столећа. Мања, северна црква комплекса посвећена је светој Варвари. Реч је о једнокуполном храму подигнутом током отоманске епохе на месту капеле из XI века. Мермерни иконостас саграђен је 1961. године, а фреске и мозаици у цркви потичу из друге половине XX столећа.