

Church-Building in Ottoman Corinthia

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Corinthian church-building during the Ottoman period is not easy to assess. Even today, in the aftermath of the post-modernist and digital era, the vast majority of Christian churches that were erected within the fabric of the settlements or in remote places as monastic retreats remain unpublished. Anastasios Orlandos' pioneer study on byzantine churches of east Corinthia gave the opportunity to present and publish plans of some churches in the districts of Sophiko and Chiliomodi that date to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ After the Second World War archaeologists and architects rarely focused on the ecclesiastical architecture of Corinthia and, when so, their studies were published in journals of secondary importance.² Only in the last four decades the study of the so-called “post-byzantine”³ architecture has developed as a result of various reasons, the analysis of which surpasses the scope of this study.⁴ On the other hand, the present study of Corinthian religious architecture during the Ottoman period has greatly benefited from Tassos Gritsopoulos' monumental book on the ecclesiastical history of Corinthia,⁵ Michael Kordosis' dissertation on the history and the topography of the region during the Middle Ages,⁶ and Metaxoula Chrysafi-Zografou's solid study of vernacular architecture.⁷ In this essay I shall present an overview of the ecclesiastical architecture of the Corinthian territory and argue that it presents significant aspects that enrich our knowledge on the role of the donors and the craftsmanship of the master builders.

But first, some introductory points are in order. The city of Corinth was captured by the Ottomans in 1458 and the rest of the territory was probably conquered a few years later. The Venetian occupation of Peloponnese that lasted twenty-eight years (1687-1715) was more than a simple break of the *Turkokratia* that lasted until the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1821.⁸ The region was rather underpopulated during the Later Middle Ages and the early modern period.⁹ Corinth, which was divided between the plain and the castle of Acrocorinth,¹⁰ was the only urban centre. Apart from Corinth, Muslim population

¹ Orlandos 1935b and 1935c. Cf. Kalogeropoulos 1935.

² See, for instance, Pallas 1959 and Stikas 1964.

³ The term “post-byzantine” is particularly popular and in general use in Greek scholarship, but it has been challenged, sometimes with good reasons. Cf. the thoughts of John Yannias in Yannias 1994, pp. 7-13, and *passim*.

⁴ For an overview of the church architecture in the Balkans, see. Ćurčić 1988 and 2010, pp. 787-798. Bouras 1994. For Greece, see Orlandos 1953 [2000]. Chatzidakis 1974 and 1975, as well as the extremely valuable *Churches in Greece 1453-1850*, vols. 1 (1979) – 7 (2013), edited by Prof. Charalambos Bouras (the last volume was edited with St. Mamaloukos).

⁵ Gritsopoulos 1973.

⁶ Kordosis 1981.

⁷ Chrysafi-Zografou 1995, pp. 9-42.

⁸ Gritsopoulos 1973, pp. 205-209. Phouriotis 1975, pp. 469-499.

⁹ See Panayotopoulos 1985, pp. 170ff., and p. 176 on the population of Corinthia. Lolos 2011, pp. 354-364, on Sikyonia, esp. p. 363.

¹⁰ See Wheler 1682, p. 439: “[Corinth] is not big enough now to deserve the Title of a City; but may very well pass for a good considerable Country Town.”

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was concentrated in the villages of small plains scattered between the inland mountainous masses and along the coastal area. Christian inhabitants populated the villages located on the slopes of steep hills, like Trikala and Sophiko until the middle of the seventeenth century; it is only in the second half of this century that the Christians started to establish settlements in the plateaus and the fertile lands towards the coastline.¹¹

The evolution of church architecture under the Ottomans does not follow a linear course; the authorities did not have a single-faceted conduct towards Christians and their reactions varied from lenience to hostility and restriction.¹² This depended among others on the sort of land which was to build upon, on the role that the construction agents played within the local networks and on the official decisions that the central administration made in favour of the minorities of the empire. It is conceivable that restrictions on religious building activity of the Christians were implemented severely in urban areas and rarely in isolated lands where no Muslim population lived. Moreover, the construction of a church demanded considerable amounts of money and manpower, so that the whole operation depended on collective funding or rich individuals; this is why in many cases we encounter repairs and renovations of older buildings. Under the article no. 4 of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynaça signed on July 21, 1774, which ended the war between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, the Sultan promised constant protection of the Christian religion and its church buildings,¹³ which produced a pinnacle in religious construction.

The early period (1458 – 1687)

There was not any church building activity in Corinthia during the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century in the strict sense of the term: the sources, mainly epigraphical and documentary, attest only restoration works in already existing buildings. The earliest known renovation of a church is probably the one that took place in the single-nave *catholikon* of the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin at Prathi, on the southern foothills of Mount Geraneia, as early as 1463-1464.¹⁴ The restoration works comprised the rebuilding (or the revetment with poros quoins) of the outer walls of an old church which preserves until today a lavish marble inlay floor, dated to the twelfth century.¹⁵ On the other hand, the monks of the old monastery of the Virgin Life-giving Spring ('Zoodochos Pege') on the homonymous island of the cluster of Kalonisia (modern Alkyonides Islands) managed to get permissions from the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent himself on two occasions for the repair of the pavement of the courtyard and the rebuilding of the walls of the church;¹⁶ some additions to the east and to the west of the

¹¹ For a conclusive study of the evolution of the population in the Sikyonia, see Lolos 2011, pp. 354ff.

¹² See Čurčić 2010, p. 787.

¹³ Papadopoulos 1975. See also Veremis 1977 and Velenis 1982, p. 15.

¹⁴ Athanasoulis and Manolessou 2013, p. 542. The relevant inscription is still unpublished.

¹⁵ Athanasoulis and Manolessou 2013, p. 542, fig. 7. If the revetment of the outer faces of the walls dates to this period, then the porch attached to the west entrance is the earliest known in Greece. This feature demands some special attention. Cf. similar porches in the *catholikon* of the monastery of Saint George at Kerdyllia, Thessalonike, dated to the late sixteenth century (Theocharidou and Tourta 1989, p. 53, figs. 9, 24), the *catholikon* of the Transfiguration monastery in Modion, Phthiotis, where the narthex has been added in 1581 (Pasali 2002, p. 161, figs. 2, 5, 17), the *catholikon* of the monastery of Flamouri, dated to the time span from 1595 to 1602 (Kizis 1982, fig. 7), and the *catholikon* of the Sourvia monastery, near Volos, dated to 1627 (Kizis 1989, figs. 1, 21). The church of Prathi underwent a renovation and a decoration with murals again in 1766; it then became a three-aisled basilica with two sets of constructed cylindrical piers and new roofs.

¹⁶ On the islands and the monastery of the Virgin, see Vagiakakos 1986, p. 336 and Balafoutas 1992, pp. 22-52. On the

catholikon might also belong to this restoration period, although in both the Sultan decrees it is stated that any addition to the existing structure should be prohibited. Both the monastery of the Dormition at Prathi and the monastery of the Virgin on the Zoodochos Pege Island are situated at a considerable distance from the city of Corinth and whoever wanted to pay a visit had to travel by sea, for the latter, or climb to an elevation of about 1,150m above sea level, for the former, possibly on a pack animal.



Fig. 1. Nemea, Saint Nicholas, view from the southwest (Photo: G. Terzis)

The same can be assumed for the *catholikon* of the monastery of Saint Nicholas at Nemea,¹⁷ the date of which is difficult to establish (**Fig. 1**). The small church today is completely whitewashed, restored many times and ‘modernized’ in the interior, but the construction of at least the west and south walls has been made with square lime blocks and small stones in alternating rows. If this kind of construction is not a copy of an older technique that was made on purpose, it might be contemporary to the building of the tower S20 of the Hexamilion wall and, thus, belonging either to the late years of the Byzantine power or to the beginning of the Ottoman rule, thus a date to the fifteenth century may be surmised for this monastery, too.¹⁸ A comparable masonry with alternating rows of large quoins and small stones can also be found in the watchtower of Achinos, Phthiotis, dated with some doubt to the Ottoman

two firmans, dated to 1554 and kept in the archives of the Vlatadon monastery, Thessalonike, see Balafoutas 1992, pp. 30-34, and Pierros 2009, pp. 408-411.

¹⁷ Elias 2014, pp. 575-576 (on the description of the church), figures on pp. 555, 558.

¹⁸ See Gregory 1993, pp. 49-50, pl. 13d. There exist some similarities in the treatment of the lime quoins at Saint Nicholas, Nemea, and of the poros blocks at the Dormition, Prathi, but poros is softer than lime and the final esthetic result is different.

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period.¹⁹ The oldest information on the monastery of Saint Nicholas can be found in the recension of the Venetian *Provveditore* Francesco Grimani dated to 1698-1699,²⁰ which mentions that it had a narthex and a chapel, today unpreserved, as well as twelve monastic cells,²¹ the ruins of which are still visible to the northeast.

After the middle of the sixteenth century, the picture changes; new monastic churches are built but still at places distant from any settlement. Two churches, former *catholika* of small monasteries, are situated on the foothills of Psili Rachi Mount, the first to the south-southwest and the second to the northeast. The first is the *catholikon* of the monastery of Saint Michael (Taxiarches), near the modern village of Stefani; according to the dedicatory inscription it was founded by the hieromonk Symeon with the help of a certain Vretos family and decorated with wall-paintings by Theodosios Kakavas in 1565.²² It is a cross-vaulted church of small dimensions, which belongs to the variation 'A1,' according to the typology that Orlandos proposed in 1935:²³ no blind arches are shaped on the long walls in the interior of the church at either side of the transverse barrel-vault. The plan of the cross-vaulted church has been quite common in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Peloponnese, especially in the neighbouring Argolis, where a total of twenty-eight churches has been registered to date.²⁴ The church of Saint Michael is constructed with rubble masonry and mortar with no openings, save the door in the middle of the south wall and the small single-lobed windows in the apse and the south gable. The absence of big windows, the clumsiness of the brick decoration on the outer face of the apse and the incorporated marble *spolia*, all point to a date after the fall of Constantinople rather than to the Late Byzantine period.²⁵ The existence of an older church underneath, allegedly dated to the fourteenth century,²⁶ may only be verified through excavation and restoration works in the future. In front of the door, a porch covered with a calotte belongs to a different construction phase; it has been suggested that the well-cut voussoirs of its pointed arches suggest a date to the thirteenth or the fourteenth century.²⁷ Although the idea of a church added at a later date to an already existing four-pier porch seems not strange and, thus, it cannot be rejected from the outset,²⁸ the treatment of the ashlar and the careful construction methods of the porch seem quite late, pointing to the period of the second Venetian occupation or immediately after.

The second church is the tiny *catholikon* of the monastery of Saint Nicholas at Klenia (it measures only 5.15 by 3.15m), which today is dedicated – unknown when and why – to Saint Panteleimon.²⁹ It

¹⁹ Kizis 1994, p. 326 and figs. 517-518.

²⁰ Dokos 1971-1974, p. 118.

²¹ Elias 2014, fig. on p. 561.

²² Lambakis 1892-1894, pp. 20-21. Papachristos 1982. Küpper 1990, I, fig. 32, II, pp. 244-245. Gritsopoulos 1996, p. 47. Proestaki 2010, esp. pp. 393-395, figs. 1-2. Athanasoulis and Manolessou 2013, p. 546, fig. 9.

²³ Orlandos 1935a, pp. 42-44. For amendments to this typology, cf. Vocotopoulos 1979, pp. 116-118 and Küpper 1990, pp. 23-25. Cf. also Vocotopoulos 2012, pp. 41-43. A whole new typology has been proposed by Doris 1991, but to my knowledge it has not yet been accepted.

²⁴ Küpper 1990, I, pp. 136-142, esp. p. 139.

²⁵ For an overview of the morphology of the sacred buildings in Greece under the Ottoman rule, cf. Orlandos 1953 [2000], pp. 16-25. Bouras 1969. Bouras 2001, pp. 242-245. Bouras 1994, pp. 156-159.

²⁶ Papachristos 1982, p. 23.

²⁷ Athanasoulis and Manolessou 2013, p. 546.

²⁸ See, for instance, the case of the church of Saint Paul at Agios Ioannis, Pyrgiotissa Messaras, Crete (Gallas, Wessel and Borboudakis 1983, pp. 325-328, figs. 285-287).

²⁹ Gritsopoulos 2001-2002.

is a barrel-vaulted single-nave church, decorated with murals in 1593 in the memory of the parents of the original four members of the monastic community, two hieromonks and two monks, according to the dedicatory inscription.³⁰ The walls, as well as the barrel vault, are constructed with rubble masonry. The architectural type of the aisleless church suited for the purposes of private religious foundations and served small congregations from the Early Byzantine period onwards.³¹ On the west façade of the church a niche above the entrance contained a wall-painting or an icon of Saint Nicholas, the patron of the monastery. The stone frame of this niche forms a pointed arch, the only remarkable element of this otherwise unornamented building, which could have been built by the monks themselves mentioned in the dedicatory inscription.



Fig. 2. Sophiko, Dormition of the Virgin, view from the west (Photo: Y. Varalis)

The narthex of the small monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin near Sophiko seems not a sixteenth-century addition, as Orlandos believed,³² but a construction of the Late Byzantine period (**Fig. 2**): the rubble masonry of the walls and the trapezoidal voussoirs of the two semi-circular arches, which were set upon pilasters at the corners and a column in the middle of the west façade, are indicative. The original dibelon was closed with masonry at a later date save a window and a door; both openings have stone frames which form pointed arches, dating possibly from the second half of the sixteenth century, when the narthex was decorated with wall-paintings.³³

³⁰ Gritsopoulos 2001-2002, p. 372.

³¹ Vocotopoulos 1992, pp. 105-106.

³² Orlandos 1935b, pp. 64, 66.

³³ A dedicatory inscription, embedded on the pilaster to the left of the gate of the monastery, bears the name of the donor Neophytos Kontochynis, former metropolite of Didymoteichon, and the year 1576; this inscription is thought to offer the date of the mural decoration of the church. See. Orlandos 1935b, p. 67 and Dilé 2012, p. 40.



Fig. 3. Vasiliko, Saint Nicholas, view from the northeast (Photo: Y. Varalis)

The church of Saint Nicholas situated to the southeast of Vasiliko, below the plateau, is one of the rare cross-in-square churches in Corinthia dating from Ottoman times (**Fig. 3**).³⁴ According to the dedicatory inscription engraved on a tenth-century marble iconostasis beam, which serves as lintel for the south entrance, the church was founded by Mavroidis Kaniklis in 1578.³⁵ The donor is unattested from other sources, but his family name indicates some sort of link with the *epi tou kanikleiou*, an officer of the chancellery who was responsible for keeping the cinnabar ink used by the byzantine emperor to sign the official documents;³⁶ although any connection of this Kaniklis with Ottoman Constantinople seems highly improbable, it cannot be discarded from the outset. The donor must have had a considerable income to provide for such a monumental church. The walls are constructed with mortar and hewn limestones set carefully in rows, while the interior supports are ancient or early Christian columns and capitals; some other ancient architectural members of various kinds and dates are still kept in the south courtyard, perhaps gathered there at the time of the construction of the church. The masonry does not have any openings other than the south entrance, a small bi-lobed window in the central apse and four light slits in the drum of the cupola.³⁷ There is no a separating wall between the narthex and the naos and therefore the interior space is unified. The church, the dome and the transverse arm of the cross project from the saddle roof.³⁸ Similar construction materials and technique and comparable interior space arrangement can also be noted in the church of the Holy Trinity (Agia Trias) in the centre of

³⁴ On the cross-in-square churches in the Peloponnese during the Ottoman period, cf, Messis 2014.

³⁵ Lolos 2011, pp. 290-291, fig. 5.11, pp. 601-602.

³⁶ Oikonomides 1972, 311, 364. Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium 2 (1991), p. 1101 s.v. 'Kanikleios' (A. Kazhdan).

³⁷ The west entrance and the two large windows on the north wall date from a later period.

³⁸ A separate study of this church is under preparation.



Fig. 4. Vasiliko, Holy Trinity, view from the northeast (Photo: Y. Varalis)

Vasiliko (**Fig. 4**),³⁹ both churches might have been built by the same group of builders in the '70s of the sixteenth century.

The time span between 1600 and 1687 was a period of minor building activity for Corinthia. Cross-vaulted churches like Saint Marina at Chiliomodi (1607)⁴⁰ and Saint Demetrios at Athikia (1611),⁴¹ and single-nave barrel vaulted churches, like Saint Paraskeve at Sophiko (1617)⁴² and Saint Athanasios at Stefani (late seventeenth century),⁴³ are examples of humble and unambitious dedications, when compared to the two churches of Vasiliko.

The church of Saint Demetrios presents an interesting feature on which some ink has been shed (**Figs. 5-6**):⁴⁴ the nave of the church has two transverse vaults, one in front of the sanctuary and the second in the narthex. This unusual feature has instigated discussions and two theories on successive construction phases have been proposed: the first opts for an extension of unordinary cross-vaulted church to the east while the second argues for an extension to the west. The church suffered radical

³⁹ Lolos 2011, p. 288, fig. 5.10. The church seems to have had an original construction phase in the late byzantine period (see Athanasoulis and Manolessou 2013, p. 540); it was plausibly remodeled in the sixteenth century and its outer narthex is an even later addition.

⁴⁰ Orlandos 1935b, pp. 85-88. Gritsopoulos 1996, pp. 97-122. The church is situated to the northwest of the old monastery of the Virgin Phaneromeni. Originally a cross-vaulted church, it was later transformed into a single nave church after the collapse of the transverse vault; the wall-paintings have been made by Demetrios Kakavas.

⁴¹ Küpper 1990, II, pp. 22-24. Gritsopoulos 1999. Charkiolakis 1999. Pierros 2014.

⁴² Agrevi 2014.

⁴³ Lambakis (1892-1894, pp. 18-19) lists the graffiti on the wall-paintings, the oldest of which bears the date August 16, 1686. See also Gritsopoulos 1996, p. 46 and Proestaki 2014.

⁴⁴ Cf. above, note 41.

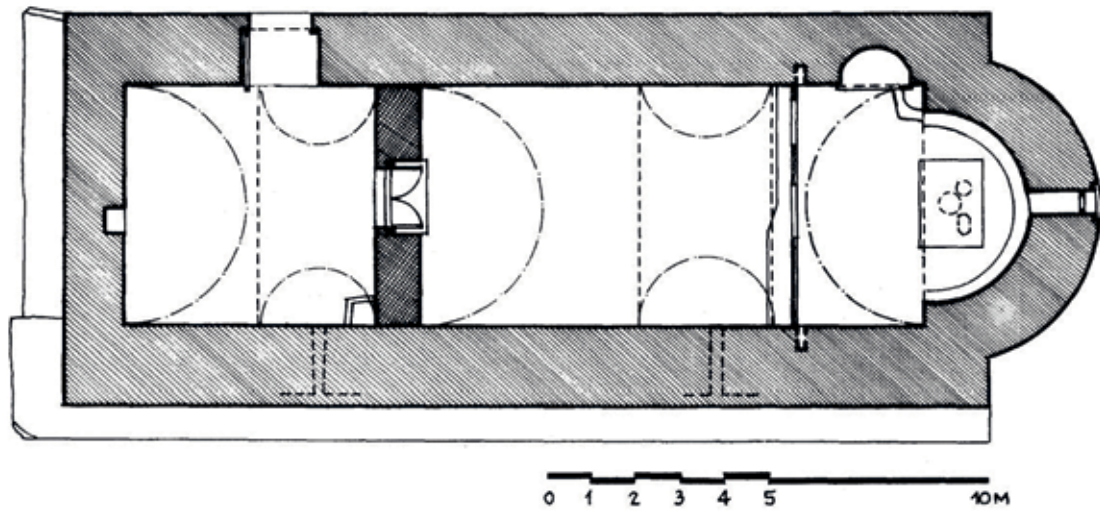


Fig. 5. Athikia, Saint Demetrios, plan and section (source: Charkiolakis 1999, 79, fig. 17)



renovation works during the '60s so that the outer face of the walls is fully plastered and the roofs are covered with concrete panels under modern brick tiles; Nicholas Charkiolakis is right in noting that the only wall that seems to be an addition is the dividing wall between the naos and the narthex.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Charkiolakis 1999, pp. 59-64.

The later period (1687-1821)

The period of the second Venetian occupation of the Peloponnese (1687-1715) was like a cool breeze; although Venetians were rather hostile to the Orthodox Church,⁴⁶ they offered to the local population



Fig. 7. Acrocorinth, Saint Demetrios, view from the south (Photo: Y. Varalis)

the freedom to reconstruct old churches and build new ones, in order to increase their popularity. One of the mosques in Corinth has been transformed into a Christian church and was dedicated to Saint Paul; consecrated as the seat of the Latin archbishop of Corinth, it was given to Augustinian monks in 1705.⁴⁷ On the Acrocorinth itself, two single-nave barrel-vaulted churches, one uncovered during recent works of restoration,⁴⁸ and the other dedicated to Saint Demetrios (**Fig. 7**), published in the mid-'80s,⁴⁹ belong to the period *ca.* 1690. They were probably used by the Latin Church for the congregation who lived in the third enceinte of the castle. Both churches have similar dimensions, 12m by 5m and 9.50m by 5m respectively; pairs of pilasters attached to the walls project in the interior and form blind arches; limestones and poros quoins are used in the construction of the walls. Similar poros stones are used in the restoration of the walls of Acrocorinth and the construction of major public buildings.⁵⁰ The poros frame of the niche above the door lintel on the south wall can be paralleled to the rich architectural setting of the niche over the central entrance to the *catholikon* of the Virgin

⁴⁶ Gritsopoulos 1973, pp. 255-269, on the Latin Church at Corinth and the archbishop Gregory IV Notaras. Michalaga 2009, esp. pp. 300-313. Panitsas 2009, esp. 353-355.

⁴⁷ Michalaga 2009, pp. 304-305. Chrysafi-Zografou 2013, p. 284.

⁴⁸ Chrysafi-Zografou 2013.

⁴⁹ Bon 1936, p. 261, thinks that the church can be dated to the late seventeenth century. Volanakis 1984 dates the church to the middle of the eighteenth century, which seems quite late.

⁵⁰ Chrysafi-Zografou 2013, p. 282, 283.

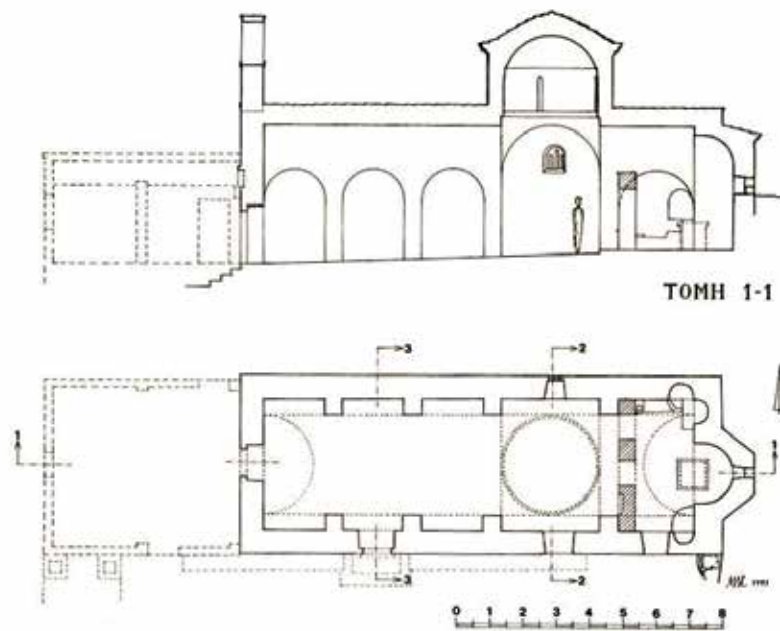


Fig. 8. Agionori, Dormition of the Virgin, plan and section (source: Kourouniotis 1993, fig. 5)

Phaneromeni monastery on Salamis, which evokes Italian prototypes (built before 1735).⁵¹ Blind arches in the interior of both churches can also be found in Attica,⁵² but these seem to reproduce the church of Saint John at Corinth which was an old (possibly byzantine) three-aisled basilica, remodelled as a single-nave church in 1639.⁵³ Thus, even if they were used by the Latins, these churches were built by local groups of builders and were shaped after prototypes adopted in orthodox churches.

The plan of an oblong church with attached pilasters along its long walls has sometimes been enriched with a transverse arm of a cross and a cupola, an inspiration offered by the single-nave domed cross-in-square type, which was popular in the Peloponnese and on the islands of the Aegean in byzantine times.⁵⁴ In Corinthia the transverse bay with the dome has been sometimes put asymmetrically just before the area of the sanctuary, like in the Dormition of the Virgin at Agionori (before 1714)⁵⁵ or in the middle bay of the church, like in Saint George at Nemea (shortly after 1700).⁵⁶ Both churches adopt the plan of the single-nave domed cross-in-square type, which has had a certain popularity in other parts of the Peloponnese, as well, during the Ottoman period.⁵⁷ The Agionori church has an elongated west cross arm (**Fig. 8**). The narthex does not seem to be the result of a later addition, because the masonry is regular and consistent in all façades. Two thin horizontal seams, which today are hardly visible because

⁵¹ Cf. Volanakis 1984, pl. B' fig. 4 and Biris 1989, p. 184, figs. 6, 12-13.

⁵² Mamaloukos 1982, pp. 228-229 and fig. 18. Chrysafi-Zografou 2013, p. 283.

⁵³ Chrysafi-Zografou 2013, p. 284 and notes 19-20. The church was demolished in 1937.

⁵⁴ The single-nave domed cross-in-square church and the single-nave domed basilica are often confused. A distinction between the two has to be made when we consider the roofs: in the first case the church has different roofs for the arms of the cross and for the angular compartments, while in the second the barrel-vault is interrupted by the cupola and its rectangular base. See Bouras 1967-1968, pp. 47-53. Bouras 1992, *passim*; Demetrokallis 2000, pp. 36-40, on single-nave domed cross-in-square churches, and pp. 42-47, on the single-nave domed basilicas on the island of Naxos.

⁵⁵ Kourouniotis 1993.

⁵⁶ Theocharidou and Chrysafi-Zografou 2013.

⁵⁷ Papathanasopoulos 1979, pp. 222-223. Kakouris 1985-1986, pp. 315-321.

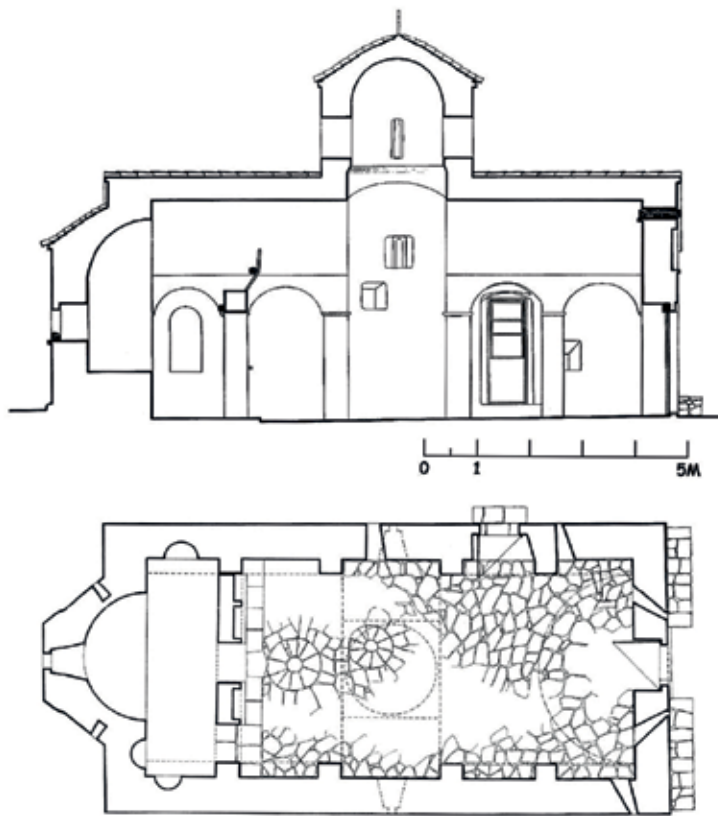


Fig. 9. Nemea, Saint George, plan and section (source: Theocharidou and Chrysafi-Zografou 2013, fig. 2)

and west entrances; this highlighting of select parts of the building with dog-tooth friezes is already attested in Byzantium and becomes in vogue in some Peloponnesian churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as for instance the *catholika* of the Loukou (early seventeenth century) and the Zerbitsa (1639) monasteries.⁵⁹ To this group the Dormition of the Virgin at Stefani, founded with the contribution of all the inhabitants of the village and decorated with murals by the priest Ioannis Ritzis (1694)⁶⁰ and the church of Saint George at Sophiko (1700)⁶¹ should be added.

But which specific church has given inspiration to the master builders of these churches for the elaboration of this architectural type? The byzantine examples seem quite distant in space and time,⁶² and one should search for models in the neighbouring area. Two churches in the surroundings of Sophiko, the Hypapanti (Presentation of Christ-child to the Temple) to the east and Saint Anthony at Tourla, to the southeast of the settlement, have recently been dated to the thirteenth century by Michael Kappas and George Fousteris,⁶³ who rightly noted that the basic peculiarity of this architectural type is that the

of the ugly modern outer jointing with a pinkish-purple plaster, indicate that the wooden batten boards running inside the walls are hidden behind the plaster. This feature along with the poros frames of the openings and the lack of any other decoration, all point to a date around the end of the seventeenth century or at least before 1714, the year which was engraved in two graffiti on the wall-painting of Saint Makarios on the south entrance.⁵⁸ Saint George at Nemea is a very symmetrical church in its proportions and general plan (Fig. 9); the walls are constructed with rubble set in roughly horizontal rows and fragments of broken roof tiles, while in the corners ancient quoins have been reused. Bricks exist only in dog-tooth friezes that surround the arches above the south

⁵⁸ Kourouniotis 1993, pp. 148-149.

⁵⁹ Bouras 2001, p. 256, fig. 311. Androulidaki 1982-1984, p. 165, figs. 4-5, 12-13.

⁶⁰ Lambakis 1892-1894, pp. 17-18. Gritsopoulos 1996, p. 46.

⁶¹ Orlandos 1935b, pp. 56-59, figs. 4-6.

⁶² For byzantine examples, cf. Kappas and Fousteris 2006, pp. 62-65, and esp. notes 8-13.

⁶³ Kappas and Fousteris 2006.

horizontal arm of the cross is narrower than the vertical one.⁶⁴ Both churches have been restored at a later period: the cylindrical drum of the cupola of Hypanti has one light slit and three blind arches that correspond to the four cardinal points.⁶⁵ The cylindrical drum and the blind arches are features that can hardly be dated to the thirteenth century: cylindrical are the cupola drums of the churches of Saint Nicholas of Andreas Likinios and of the Virgin Myrtydiotissa at Monemvasia, possibly built by the same group of workmen and dated to the second Venetian occupation,⁶⁶ as well as in many churches of the Aegean Islands.⁶⁷ Blind arches are used along with light slits in the octagonal drums of the church of Saint Nicholas at Prasteion, Mani (sixteenth century),⁶⁸ of the *catholikon* of the monastery of the Virgin Phaneromeni in Chiliomodi (early seventeenth century), and of the Dormition of Agionori (before 1714).⁶⁹ The octagonal cupola drum of the church of Saint Anthony has been clumsily repaired, as well as other parts of the superstructure.⁷⁰ My intuition is that these churches which underwent restoration works either during the seventeenth century or even later, have constituted the archetypes for the elaboration of this architectural type in Corinthia. Unfortunately, there is no evidence yet to conform such a hypothesis, since we do need more detailed studies on the byzantine churches of the region of Sophiko.

Two peculiar Corinthian churches can be dated to the end of the period of the second Venetian occupation. The first is a three-aisled basilica on the Acrocorinth, attributed long ago by Dimitrios Pallas to an architect who could have been educated in the methods and building techniques of western architecture, possibly Italian;⁷¹ Pallas also recognized the same methods and techniques in the odd façade of the *catholikon* of the Virgin Phaneromeni monastery on Salamis, which was built before 1735, the year of the completion of the wall-paintings by Georgios Markou according to the dedicatory inscription.⁷² The second is a *unicum*: the church of Saint George at Zacholi, the modern Evrostine, is a massive three-aisled basilica which, in a renovation phase, has been given a new roof with no more than seventeen cupolas (**Fig. 10**).⁷³ In this church the culminating element of the roofs, the dome, becomes small and without real cohesion with the architecture of the church; thus, it converts to a mere symbol which loses all its content with this meaningless repetition, as Bouras rightly states.⁷⁴

In the period immediately after the 1715, as we can easily understand, there was a general recession in building activity. After the middle and during the second half of the eighteenth century some single-nave barrel-vaulted churches continued to be erected and decorated, like the small church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Reito in the region of Athikia, decorated with wall-paintings by Assimakis Kapetanopoulos

⁶⁴ Kappas and Fousteris 2006, p. 65.

⁶⁵ Kappas and Fousteris 2006, pp. 61-62, figs. 1-2.

⁶⁶ Kalliga 1979, p. 246, figs. 2-3. Kalliga 2010, p. 167, figs. 9-1, 9-2 and p. 267, fig. 12-22. Kalliga 2013, p. 60, figs. 4, 7-8.

⁶⁷ Cf. Demetrokallis 1993, figs. 1, 27, 31, 37, 45, 48-49.

⁶⁸ Palantzas 1982, p. 315, figs. 2-4.

⁶⁹ Kourouniotis 1993, pp. 145-146, figs. 1-2.

⁷⁰ Kappas and Fousteris 2006, pp. 65-66, figs. 6-8.

⁷¹ Pallas 1959.

⁷² Biris 1989, pp. 180-184, figs. 6, 12-15, who curiously enough seems to believe that these western characteristics date back to the thirteenth century. Cf. also Biris 1982, pp. 198-199, figs. 14-15.

⁷³ Petronotis 1982.

⁷⁴ Bouras 2013, p. 140.

from Kalavryta,⁷⁵ the *catholikon* of the monastery of Saint George at Pheneos or Phonias (1754),⁷⁶ the well-proportioned Dormition of the Virgin at the middle settlement of Trikala (with murals dating from 1784),⁷⁷ the church of Saint John at Chiliomodi, to the east of the monastery of the Virgin Phaneromeni (probably last decades of the eighteenth century),⁷⁸ and the church of the Mouskoufítsa at Klenia (built in 1800).

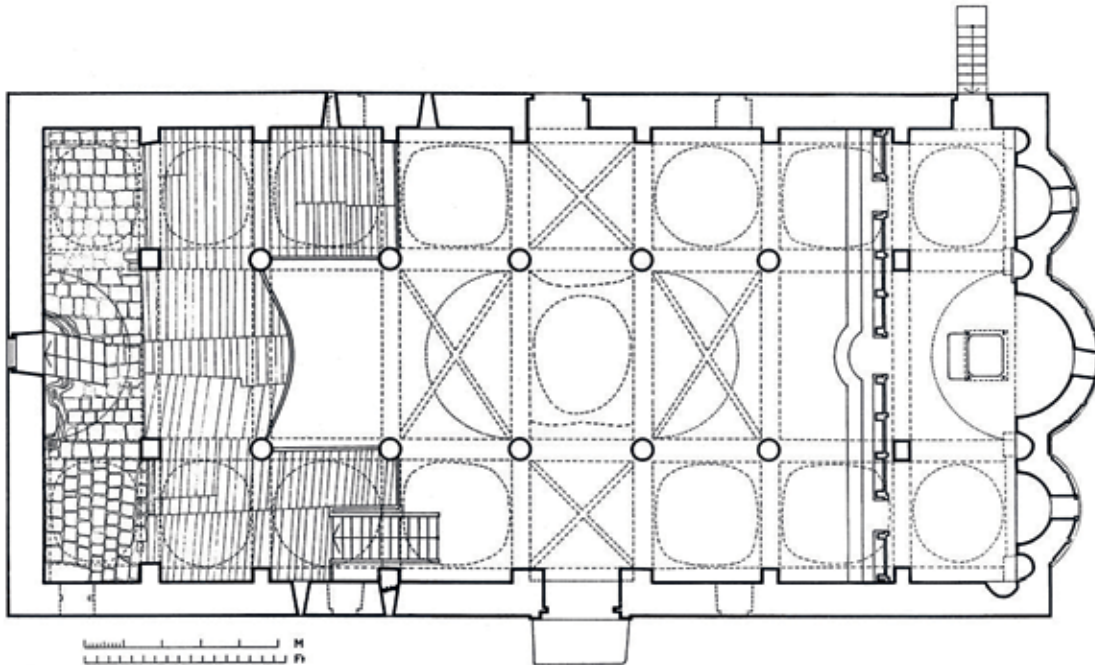


Fig. 10. Zacholi (Evrostine), Saint George, plan (source: Petronotis, 1982, 262, fig. 8)

The dedicatory inscriptions often highlight the zeal and ambitions of the pious donors for salvation after death; in some cases they also function as signs showing the expenses list for the construction and the furnishing of the church. The most enlightening example is the dedicatory inscription of the *catholikon* of the monastery of Saint George at Pheneos:

1754 | Ανακενοίσθη ἐκ θεμελίον ὁ θῦος οὗτος καὶ πάνσεπτος να[ός] | τοῦ ἁγίου ἐνδόξου
μεγαλομάρτυρος Γεωργίου διὰ συνδρομοῖς, | τῶν τότε εὐρισκομένων προεστῶν κῆρ
Παγκρατίου, Ανθύμου, | Παρθενίου καὶ Αν[α]λίου ἰγουμενεύοντος τοῦ πανοσιοτάτου
κῆρ | Δοσιθέου. ἔγινεν ἔξοδος εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ ναοῦ τῶν ἀριθμῶν γρόσια 1000
| σκαλισθὲν δὲ καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τέμπλεον κατὰ τὸ 1762 ἔγινεν καὶ | εἰς τὸ σκάλισμα
ἔξοδος γρόσια 552. ἱστορίσθη ὁ αὐτὸς ναὸς χρυσοθὲν ὁμοῦ | καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τέμπλεον
ἰγουμενεύοντος τοῦ πανοσιοτάτου κῆρ | Μητροφάνους. ἐτελιόθισαν κατὰ τοὺς 1768
ὀκτοβρίου 6 | διὰ χυρὸς κάμοῦ Παναγιώτου τοῦ ἐξ Ἰωαννίνων | ἔγινεν ἔξοδος εἰς τὴν
ἱστορίαν καὶ χρύσομα τοῦ τέμπλεου γρόσια 1334.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Gritsopoulos 1999, pp. 37-41.

⁷⁶ Stikas 1964.

⁷⁷ Chrysafi 1982.

⁷⁸ Gritsopoulos 1996, pp. 93-96, figs. 23-24, with a date to the end of the sixteenth century, which is a very early dating, inconsistent with the stone door frames on the south and west facades as well as with the orthogonal window in the south wall.

⁷⁹ Stikas 1964, p. 114. Koutivas 1974, p. 74.

Church-Building in Ottoman Corinthia

Rich donors of the period have employed architects and workmen from the neighbouring region of Kalavryta⁸⁰ to build ambitious churches alike with mansions and other buildings, as for example the large three-aisled basilica of the Transfiguration at Trikala, which has been covered by a single saddle roof and furnished with extensive woodwork in the interior.

After the War of Independence and the disastrous earthquake of 1858,⁸¹ church-building in the district of Corinth has adopted the architectural trends of the new Greek state: some of its churches were built with a new industrial style (cf. Dormition at Drosopighi, Saint Athanasios at Titani, Saint Paraskeve at Gonousa etc.) or adopted a more neoclassic one (Saint Spyridon at Pheneos, Taxiarches at Goura etc.).

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⁸⁰ Chrysafi-Zografou 1995, p. 17.

⁸¹ Papafotiou 2002, pp. 242-256.

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