ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

Συγγραφή : *Moutafov Emmanuel*
Μετάφραση : *Πάνου Ειρήνη* , *Λαμπαδά Δέσποινα*
Για παραπομπή : *Moutafov Emmanuel , "Pantokrator Monastery (Molla Zeyrek Camii)", Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Κωνσταντινούπολη*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=11770>

Περίληψη :

The Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople is a complex of three churches that was founded by John II Komnenos (1118-1143) and his spouse Eirene, between 1118 and 1136. The South church is dedicated to Christ Pantokrator and the north to Virgin Mary Eleousa. Between these two, a single-aisled domed church was added, dedicated to the Archangel Michael and used as a burial chapel for the Komnenos lineage at first and the Palaiologos lineage later. In 1453 sultan Mehmed II converted the monastery to a mosque which is today known under the name Molla Zeyrek Camii.

Χρονολόγηση

1118-1136

Γεωγραφικός εντοπισμός

Constantinople, Istanbul

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1. Introduction

The 12th-century religious architecture in Constantinople has some recognisable characteristics, which can also be seen in the regions under the direct artistic influence of the capital, that is in southern Serbia and northern Greece. The prevalent architectural type is that of a complex cross-in-square church, although the cross-domed basilica type with many archaic elements have also survived in many late examples in Constantinople. The churches have lighter proportions, and their façades are articulated with taller openings, niches and covings. Brick masonry prevails, either plain or using the recessed brick technique, but masonry with alternate bands of stones and bricks is also employed.

A characteristic example of late-12th century religious architecture in Constantinople is the complex of the Pantokrator monastery, built between the third and fourth hill of Constantinople, between the Golden Horn and the aqueduct of Valens. It is a complex of three churches, and it also included a hospice, a hospital, a nursing home and a library. The surviving typikon of the monastery of 1136[1] reflects its role in the social and religious life of the capital, but also the importance of the monument in the context of the Komnenian dynastic ideology. The members of Komnenian dynasty made generous donations to the monastery and other monasteries as well, such as in Thrace, Macedonia, the Peloponnese, Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean. Today only the katholikon of the monastery survives (fig. 2, fig. 3).

2. History of the building

The complex of Christ Pantokrator was built between 1118-1136, by John II Komnenos (1118-1143) and his first wife Eirene, and the works had been assigned to architect Nikephoros.[2] From the three buildings of the complex, the south church was erectet first, to serve as *katholikon*, before the death of Eirene in 1124. The north church was added later; it was dedicated to the Virgin Eleousa (of compassion), and the Liturgy offered there was open to laymen. The burial chapel, dedicated to the Archangel Michael, connected the two churches (fig. 1). In this chapel many emperors and members of Komnenian dynasty, as well as emperors of the Palaiologan dynasty, were buried; such as, for example, the founder of the monastery John II Komnenos (1143), Manuel I Komnenos (1180) and Manuel II Palaiologos (1448).[3]

Under Latin rule of the city (1204-1261), the region in which the monastery stood belonged to the Venetians, who transported many of the holy utensils, relics and icons of the monastery to Venice. Niketas Choniates states that the monastic complex was used as the residence of the Latin emperor, but this information appears to be inaccurate. In any case, even though it is uncertain if the monastery remained in the hands of Orthodox monks, it did never ceased to concentrate precious relics and objects of worship, and it seems that it was during the period of the Latin rule that the icon of Virgin Mary Hodegetria was transported there; a miraculus icon traditionally attributed to Luke the Evangelist that had been removed from Hagia Sophia in 1206. In the monastery was also kept a porphyrite slab, on which, according to the tradition, the body of Christ had been laid and rubbed with myrrh before his burial. This relic had been translated from Ephesos by Manuel I himself.[4]

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After the conquest of 1453, sultan Mehmed II converted the monastery of Pantokrator to a medrese. The group was renamed Zeyrek Camii (Molla Zeyrek Camii, Zeyrek Kilise Camii, Zeyrek Camii), after Zeyrek Molla Mehmet Efendi, the first *müderris* (head) of the school.[5] The complex of the three churches was repeatedly repaired, and an extensive restoration took place after a devastating fire in the mid-18th century. The library of the monastery was destroyed again by fire in 1934.

Research by the Byzantine Institute of America in the mid-1950's, revealed during restoration a brilliant piece of Byzantine opus sectile in the floor of the South church. During that period only the central chapel operated as a mosque. After the restoration of the South church, the floor was covered and the structure once again operated as a mosque. The most recent restoration began in 1997 by professors Robert Ousterhout, Zeynep Ahunbay and Metin Ahunbay.[6] Zeyrek mosque was included in 2002 in the list of the 100 most endangered monuments, which is issued every year (Annual list of the World Monuments Watch 100 Most Endangered Sites).[7]

3. Architectural description of churches

3.1. The South church

The South church of the group was the first to have been built, as the *katholikon* (main church) of the monastery of Christ Pantokrator, by the empress Eirene before her death in 1124.[8] It is the largest cross-ni-square church in Constantinople.[9] The columns of the central, domed square were replaced with piers by the Ottomans. The dome is supported by a sixteen-sided drum, each side was pierced by a window (fig. 2). The side aisles had galleries, from which only the southern survived. The narthex, which projects to either side, also had a gallery. It was covered with five groin-vaults, the middle one of which was later altered to a dome. At the same time the exonarthex was added. The prothesis and the diakonikon are simple square rooms, each with a projecting apse.

The roofing of the corner bays is on a lower level than that of the arms of the cross, and so the cross beomes clearly visible in the upper level of the exterior of the church. On the east side, the central apse is larger than the two side ones, which project only slightly. Two zones of tall and oblong niches emphasize the light proportions of the central apse.[10] The monument is one of the most important examples of 12th-c. religious architecture aesthetic trends in Constantinople: the attempt to decrease the volume and produce lighter proportions led to the use of plain niches instead of double- and triple-recessed ones, in order to articulate the outer walls with more plasticity rather than sharp oppositions.[11] (fig. 5).

3.2. The North church (Virgin Mary Eleousa) and the chapel Archangel Michael

The North church was built after the death of Eirene, between 1124-1136, by John II Komnenos. The services offered there could be attended by laymen. It is smaller and copied the older structure to a great extent (fig. 6). The dome and the west arm of the cross have been subjected to later alterations.

The chapel between the two churches is roofed with two elliptical domes. Its dedication to Archangel Michael must be associated with its use as imperial mausoleum.[12] The two domes of the monument have been interpreted as an effort to imitate the roughly contemporary, crusader martyrium of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem that also had two domes. This assumption is also supported by the decoration of chapel, and by the arrangement of the burials in the interior, that was similar to the arrangement of the graves of the Crusader kings in the martyrium of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.[13]

The complex of the three churches was completed with the addition of an outer narthex and and the South enclodure in the last phase of construction.

3.3. Masonry and building materials

In the three churches of the Pantokrator Monastery the recessed brick technique has been used, but its execution appears rather

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sloppy (fig. 4). The monument incorporates bricks of different sizes and and a large quantity of materials in second use. Although we know that sculpture from the -collapsing in the 12th century- church of St. Polyeuktos was used to adorn the monument, bricks in second use do not appear to have come from the same source. It is more likely that such building material came from the house of Ilara, that had been given by Emperor Maurice to his daughter; the Monastery of Pantokrator was built presumably in its vicinity.

The complex of the three churches bears traces of repeated repairs, from both the Palaiologan and the Ottoman era. However, many imperfections on the external face of the original structure would have been hidden under the two layers of plaster that were applied over large surfaces. The masonry of the three churches suggests that they had all been built by the same builders, which was not impossible given the small intervals between the construction of each one of them.[14]

4. The decoration of monastery of Pantokrator

The South church of the Pantokrator monastery was richly decorated. We already referred to the brilliant floor decoration, which included scenes of hunting, bucolic scenes, mythological creatures, but also a disk with the zodiac cycle and scenes from the story of Samson.[15] The iconography of this composition, which apparently imitate an early Christian model, is telling for the Komnenian ideology, as it is expressed in the Pantokrator monastery. Robert Ousterhout sees in this a wider effort to connect the Komnenian dynasty with the imperial past and in particular with the Constantinian dynasty and its imperial mausoleum of the Holy Apostles. This becomes more explicit by the use of ancient term “heroon” for the burial chapel of Archangel Michael in the *typikon* of 1136.[16]

The walls of the bema preserve parts of the marble revetment, which must have adorned the biggest part of the interior wall surfaces of the church. The emperors of the Komnenian dynasty and their spouses donated important amounts of money for the decoration of the monastery. There have been accounts of the wide use of gold in the mosaics of monastery, as well as of liturgical books binded with precious metals and embellished with semi-precious stones. The floor of the North church also appears to have been adorned with *opus sectile* pavement, imitating the older church: fragments of mythological scenes, of hunting scenes and animal representations have been found.

The most important discovery, however, is the great number of pieces of stained glass held together by strips of lead, forming geometric patterns and figures. These testify to the existence of stained-glass windows (vitraux) in the church;[17] apparently stained glass must have been also used in the monastery of Chora, and also in the church of Virgin Mary in the monastery of Studenica,[18] even though this technique is not particularly attested in Byzantine churches and is usually associated with western monuments, where later it became very popular.

As it was the case with most Byzantine churches that were converted to mosques, the decoration of the bema, the iconostasis and the portable icons have been lost. The wall-painting, however, was covered until the 18th century, when the frescoes and mosaics were removed leaving only a few fragments. In certain areas of the arches of the colonnade in both the South and North church, fragments like these survive until today.

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Γλωσσάριο :

aisle
The part of the naos of a church set off by the internal rows of piers or columns, namely by the structures supporting the roof.

apse
An arched srtucture or a semi-circular end of a wall. In byzantine architecture it means the semicircular, usually barrel-vaulted, niche at the east end of a basilica. The side aisles of a basilica may also end in an apse, but it is always in the central apse where the altar is placed. It was separated from the main church by a barrier, the templon, or the iconostasis. Its ground plan on the external side could be semicircular, rectangular or polygonal.

bema
The area at east end of the naos in Byzantine churches, containing the altar, also referred to as the presbetery or hierateion (sanctuary). In these area take place the Holy Eucharist.

corner bays
In a cross-in-square church, they are the four compartements between the arms of the cross, that make inscribe the central cross into a square. They were usually covered with cross-or domical vaults.

cross- (groin-) vault
A vault formed over square or rectangular spaces by the interpenetration of two barrel-vaults of equal hight and diameter. The lines of the intersection form a diagonal cross.

cross-domed basilica
Type of domed basilica. A church plan, whose core, enveloped on three sides by aisles and galleries with a transept, forms a cross. The core is surmounted by a dome in the centre.

cross-in-square church
Type of church in which four barrel-vaulted bays form a greek cross; the central square of their intersection is domed. The cross is inscribed into the square ground plan by means of four corner bays.

diakonikon
An auxiliary chamber of the church, also known in early years as *skeuophylakion*, which could be a separate building attached to the church. There were kept the sacred vessels but sometimes also the offerings of the faithful, the archive or library. In Byzantine churches the diakonikon becomes the sacristy to the south of the Bema, corresponding to the prothesis to the north, and forming along with them the triple sanctuary. It usually has an apse projecting to the east.

dome
A characteristic element of Byzantine architecture. The dome is a hemispherical vault on a circular wall (drum) usually pierced by windows. The domed

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church emerges in the Early Byzantine years and its various types gradually prevail, while they are expanded in the Balkans and in Russia.

drum of dome

Part of the church, semicircular or polygonal, on which rises an hemispheric dome

exonarthex (outer narthex)

The transverse vestibule or portico preceding the narthex of the church.

gallery

The upper level of a house where the women resided. In ecclesiastical architecture it is the corridor above the aisles and narthex of a church, from where women attended the Liturgy. Originally (in the Byzantine period) the gallery, having a special entrance, was used exclusively by the emperor and the members of the royal family.

Hodegetria

Iconographic type of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin is depicted standing, slightly turning to the right of the viewer, holding in her arms the infant Jesus. The type was named so after an allegedly thaumaturgic icon of the Virgin Mary kept in the monastery of Hodegoi in Constantinople.

katholikon

The main church in a monastic complex, heart of the monastic activity.

marble revetment

The facing of a wall with slabs of marble

Medrese

The institution of medrese was the highest grade of the islamic education. The main courses which were taught to the young muslims were: reading, memorizing and interpreting the Koran, religious law, theology, philosophy etc.

narthex

A portico or a rectangular entrance-hall, parallel with the west end of an early Christian basilica or church.

opus sectile, the

Technique of floor or wall decoration. Thin pieces of polychrome marble are carved or joined so that a decorative motif could be depicted.

prothesis

In ecclesiastical architecture, the sacristy to the north of the sanctuary. Usually it has an apse projecting to the east. It is the chamber where the eucharistic elements were prepared (*Proskomide*) before the Communion.

recessed brick technique

A masonry technique in which bands of wider and smaller bricks are alternated. The smaller bricks rows are slightly recessed and covered with mortar, thus creating an alternation of red (brick) and light-colored (mortar) surfaces.

templon or iconostasis

A structure separating the sanctuary from the main church. At first, it simply divided the nave from the presbytery, but later it became higher, with small columns and an epistyle. From the 11th century onwards, icons were placed between the templon columns and, somewhat later, icons were also placed above the epistyle, thus forming the iconostasis. The templon were originally from marble. Wooden iconostases appeared from the 13th century.

typikon

Foundation document of a monastery compiling the rules regarding its administrative organization and liturgic rituals, as well as the comportment inside a cenobitic monastery.
The monastic typika could also include the biography (vita) of the monastery founder along with a catalogue of the movable or immovable property of the monastery. They constitute an important source for the study of the monastic life, while at the same time they shed light on many aspects of the Byzantine society.
The liturgical typika were calendars with instructions for each day's services, liturgical books with rules arranging the celebration rituals.

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Για παραπομπή : *Moutafov Emmanuel , "Pantokrator Monastery (Molla Zeyrek Camii)", Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Κωνσταντινούπολη*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=11770>

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Παραθέματα

Aspects of the monastery's operation, according to John II's *Typikon*:

[36. Establishment of a Hospital (pp. 757)]

Since my majesty also prescribed a hospital which should shelter fifty bedridden sick people, I wish and decree that there should be that number of beds for the comfort of these sick people. Of these fifty beds, ten will be for those suffering from wounds or those with fractures, eight others for those afflicted with ophthalmia and those with sickness of the stomach and any other very acute and painful illnesses; twelve beds will be set aside for sick women and the remainder will be left for those who are moderately ill.

[52. Salaries of the Hospital Staff (pp. 762-3)]

We prescribe that all staff in the hospital who have been appointed to look after the sick are to receive the following: [...] The two chief doctors, those whom we have decreed should be called protomenitai, should receive seven similar nomismata each, for their food half a nomisma each, and for their grain allowance thirty-eight modioi of grain each.
The two chief surgeons should receive precisely the same.

[69. Independent Status of the Monastery (p. 773)]

The monastery will be completely free and under no subjection, being subject to no authority, with no one having control over it, independent and self-governing, master and controller of itself, placed under no ecclesiastical control, or princely authority or any other governmental power, with sole claim on its own possessions and enjoying all of them with complete power and authority and with the regulation of inalienability observed in respect of all the things dedicated to it, whether properties or monasteries or any rights both secular and spiritual.
I wish this monastery to be respected, defended and supported first by my very dear son the basileus Lord Alexios and then in turn by the leading member of our family...

R. Jordan (transl.), «28. Pantokrator: Typikon of Emperor John II Komnenos for the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator in Constantinople», J. Thomas - A. Constantinides Hero (ed.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Washington D.C. 2000), pp. 757; 762-3; 773.