

Θ ΝΑΘ
ΤΗΣ ΚΟΙΜΗΣΕΩΣ
ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ
ΣΤΟ ΑΣΚΛΗΠΕΙΟ
ΡΟΔΟΥ



SITE - NAME OF LOCATION

Approximately 65 km south of the town of Rhodes and 4 km inland from the eastern shore of the island lies a small village (alt. 150m., pop. 363) called Asklipio, a name that evidently harks back to the ancient god of medicine. The village has existed at least since the days of the Knights of St John (1308-1522)¹ and its people earn their living from farming, livestock-raising, bee-keeping, tourism, and the like.

The village is built on the southwest slope of a height of land that rises to approximately 200 metres, and appears to have occupied the same site for many centuries.

In the centre of the village stands the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, which is the object of this monograph.² The church was originally built in the form of a domed cross, the rectangular extensions at the northwest and southwest corners having been added in the middle of the 19th century. The mural decoration of the original building has been preserved.

The little hamlet of Kiotari, some 4 kilometres south of Asklipio and east of the coastal highway from Rhodes to Gennadi, is the harbour for Asklipio. Kiotari occupies the site of an ancient settlement that flourished during the Graeco-Roman and Early Christian periods but was apparently abandoned in the 7th century, when its inhabitants moved inland and resettled on the site of present-day Asklipio, in a pattern typical of most of the coastal settlements in the Eastern Mediterranean in that dark age.

MONUMENTS

A variety of monuments from earlier ages are preserved in and around Asklipio. Some of these are:

Church of the Archangel Michael (The Miracle at Chonae)

About 200 metres west of Asklipio,

within the confines of the present village cemetery,³ stands the little church of the Archangel Michael (who saved from inundation the church dedicated to him at Chonae).⁴ This simple one-room building measures 9.67x4.94 metres (external dimensions) and is covered by a masonry vault and hollow tiles. The eastern end extends into a semi-circular apse.

Until 1982 the stone serving as the slab of the altar table in this small church was a marble plaque with a scene carved in relief and an inscription.⁵ This tablet, which is discussed in more detail below, had originally surmounted the entrance to the fortress of the Knights of St John in Asklipio and bore the founders' inscription.

Mediaeval Fortress

The ruins of the fortress of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, who occupied Rhodes from 1308 to 1522, stand atop a height of land (alt. 200 m) about 300 northeast of Asklipio. The sturdy wall surrounding the enclosure, of mixed dry stone and lime mortar construction, is preserved to a fair height.

The entrance to the fort is on the eastern side. The plaque bearing the founders' inscription which once surmounted⁶ it was at some point removed to the Church of St Michael, where until 1982 it served as the altar stone. It is a thin slab of white marble (0.75x0.57x0.05 m), decorated on the front with relief carving and engraved with the founders' inscription.

A full-length image of the Virgin, seated, occupies the centre of the tablet. Only part of the head, with halo, and the lower part of the body are preserved. The remainder of the figure was destroyed when, during its removal and adaptation for use as the altar in the Church of St Michael, the underside of the stone was levelled to assure better contact with the altar base.

Flanking the Virgin are, on her right (the viewer's left), three full-length figures depicted kneeling in prayer, and on the other side four similar figures in an

attitude of supplication.

The papal emblem of tiara and crossed keys occupies the upper left area. Above the figure of Our Lady, carved in letters 25 millimetres high, is the following inscription:

“MA(TER) D(OMINI)”.

To the left of the central figure is the inscription (letter height: 25-30 mm): “M(A)T(ER)S XR(I)S(TI)”.

To the right is an engraved inscription (letter height: 20-25 mm) reading:

“HOC. OP. FCM. E. Q
TPR. DNORV. CAN
ONICORV. RODI
IOHIS. DETRANOVA
ODERICI. DACRI.
ANTONII CONSTA
NI. IOHIS. CAFVRI
ET CE TERORV. M
CCCC XXM”.⁷

Beneath the figure of Our Lady and to the left there is a coat of arms, below which are traces of an inscription:

“..... B
O M C”

Kiotari-Eftavimati Early Christian Basilica

About 500 metres northeast of the coastal hamlet of Kiotari and approximately 150 metres to the right of the Rhodes-Gennadi road, east of the junction for Asklipio, is a place known as Eftavimati⁸, where there once stood a three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica of the simple Hellenistic type, probably built in the 5th or 6th century.

Apart from the sections of the masonry that are still standing, the ruins of the basilica include a few marble architectural elements, most notably part of the stylobate of the iconostasis, numerous fragments of the roofing tiles (base and over-tiles), ceramic shards, etc.⁹. The relative paucity of marble elements is explained by the existence, on the southwest side of the monument, of a lime kiln, in which they were evidently burned for lime¹⁰.

This basilica was probably located on the site of an ancient settlement that

flourished during the Early Christian centuries, continuing the life of an earlier settlement, as was commonly the case.

Some 800 metres northeast of Eftavimati is a site known as “Hostopanayia”, where there may have been another old church. A fairly recent survey of the site revealed traces of old buildings, but there is nothing to confirm the existence of a Christian church.

A number of graves and vestiges of old buildings, including the base of an oil press, still discernible on a height of land known as “Schinia”, about 4 kilometres southeast of Asklipio and with a lovely view of the sea and the coast from Kiotari to Gennadi, indicate the site of another ancient and mediaeval settlement.

Kiotari-Church of the Transfiguration

In the centre of the village stands the Church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour (feast day: August 6), a single-roomed structure measuring 10.89x4.85 metres (external dimensions), covered by a semi-cylindrical masonry roof rendered with hydraulic mortar.

The eastern side of the building extends into a semicircular apse (chord: 2.88 m). The entrance (0.86 m wide) is in the middle of the western side, and the floor is paved with small pebbles.

A considerable number of marble architectural members that probably came from the Early Christian basilica of Eftavimati are preserved in the Church of the Transfiguration, both inside and out. These include: Six cylindrical non-fluted column shafts, from the colonnades in the basilica.

Double-column window partition.

Cylindrical Roman altar, decorated with bucrania and garlands.

Column bases.

Two Corinthian capitals with acanthus leaves.

In the churchyard there are several mediaeval masonry cist-graves.

The whole coastline between Kiotari and Gennadi is, in fact, dotted with remains of ancient buildings, from the Graeco-Roman through the Early Christian period. These include, inter alia,

remains of walls of buildings, floors of inlaid marble, courses of masonry of old structures, marble architectural elements, ceramic shards, bricks, and so on.

At the top of a rise a little distance northwest of the building, to the left of the Rhodes-Gennadi road, there are some ruins of old fortifications (fortress).

Arosali-Church of Zoodochos Pighi

At “Arosali”¹¹, about 2 kilometres northeast of the village, stands the small Church of the Virgin Zoodochos Pighi (Our Lady of the “Life-containing Source”).

This is a single-roomed structure, measuring 5.70x3.51 metres (internal dimensions) and covered by a masonry vault. The east side extends into an apse, semicircular inside and five-sided outside. A small window (0.23m wide) pierces the centre of the apse.

The entrance (1.03m wide) is in the middle of the west side. A blind conch (1.00m wide) occupies the middle of the south side.

The interior surfaces of the walls retain traces of two strata of wall-painting, although most of these have been plastered over. These murals include:

Older layer:

Naos

South wall (from East to West):

Unidentified saint

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

North wall (from West to East):

Traces of an unidentified saint

The Archangel Michael

St John the Forerunner

Christ Jesus

The composition was most probably the Little Deesis, in which case the last position would have been occupied by the Virgin, although no trace of the painting has survived.

These earlier murals probably date from the second half of the 14th century. Newer layer:

Of the second layer of wall-painting only traces remain visible. The extensive compositions and scenes of individual saints that must have formed the mural decoration are presumably concealed by the overlying plaster.

THE CHURCH OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

Architecture

In its present state of preservation the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Asklipio, Rhodes, displays at least two construction phases¹². It was initially (14th c.) built - probably on the site of an older church - in the form of the second variant of the free cross plan¹³.

Later, in the middle of the 19th century, rectangular constructions were added to the northwest and southwest corners to create more space inside the building, the better to serve the needs of an apparently fast-growing parish.

Phase I

The original church was a spacious building (external dimensions: 15.33m, not counting the apse of the sanctuary, by 14.20m) in the form of a free cross.¹⁴

The eastern arm of this cross (interior dimensions: 3.80x2.10m) is extended eastward into a large hemispherical apse (chord 3.32, rise 1.55m).¹⁵ The middle of the apse (wall thickness: 0.82m) is pierced by a rectangular window (0.48x0.34m).

A rectangular recess (0.63 m wide x 0.73 m high and 0.50 m deep) in the eastern part of the north side of the interior wall of the bema serves as the prothesis. The bema occupies the entire eastern arm of the cross, which is screened from the rest of the building by a wooden iconostasis.

In the middle of the bema stands the rectangular altar (0.98x0.98x0.90m high).

It rests on a cylindrical, non-fluted Early Christian column of grey marble, on the spine of which is carved in relief a cross whose arms are flattened at the ends (column height: 0.69, diam. 0.34m). Surmounting the altar is a domed wooden ciborium, supported on four wooden columns.¹⁶

The south arm of the cross (interior dimensions: 4.82x3.83m) initially extended 3.90 metres outward from the crossing point of the body of the church. The middle of the south side of the south arm is pierced by a rectangular window (1.30x0.88m). Outside and above this is a blind arch, around which six terra cotta tablets have been set into the wall. This window was created when the arched doorway that originally occupied this position was at some later time walled up.

The north arm of the cross (interior dimensions: 4.82x3.83m) initially extended 3.90 metres outward from the body of the church. The middle of its north side is pierced by a rectangular window (1.08x0.77m). Outside and above this is a blind arch, with five glazed terra cotta tablets set into the wall around the upper part of the arch. Another four similar tablets are set into the wall above these, forming a cross.

It appears that there was originally a door here, which was later walled up and converted into a window. The maximum interior width of the church, together with the north and south arms, is 12.61 metres.

The west arm is relatively much longer than the others (interior dimensions: 8.85x3.35m). The principal entrance to the building, a rectangular opening (1.78x0.96m) terminating in an arch, is located in the middle of its western end.

Set into the wall above this door, on the outside of the building, is a block of wheat-coloured tufa (0.33x0.25m), with a coat of arms from the period of the Knights carved into it in relief. The date 1060 (in Arabic numerals) has been incised - relatively recently¹⁷ - into the lower part of this stone, purportedly as

the date when the church was built. This date must reflect an ancient tradition relating to the construction of the church that originally occupied this site and was replaced by the existing structure, which, from its architectural form, appears in all likelihood to date from the latter half of the 14th century.

Built into the wall on the west façade of the church, 0.25 metres north of the main door and 0.70 metres above the floor of the courtyard, is an ashlar block (0.52x0.33m) bearing the inscription (letter height: 8-9 cm): "1222".

Although this inscription appears old, it was not written at that time, but was added much later¹⁸. It may also reflect some tradition about the founding of one of the succession of churches that have stood on this site.

Above the entrance to the northwest addition to the building, in its west side, there is a plaque bearing the date: "1856". This is likely to have been the date when the two corner additions were built. Also on the west side of the south arm of the main body of the church there is an arched doorway, which was constructed after the corner extensions were added. To the north of this arch the dates "1866" and "1877" have been incised into the rendering; this was obviously done after the corner extensions had been added.

In the middle of the north interior side of the west arm of the church there is a blind arch (1.90m wide x 1.82 high x 0.62 deep), terminating in a point. In all probability a matching arch must have existed in the corresponding position on the south side of the interior of the church, but was torn out in the middle of the 19th century to create access to the southwest addition. There is also a blind arch (1.85m wide x 1.85 high x 0.61 deep) in the west part of the south side of the interior of the naos.

The four arms of the cross are covered with masonry vaults rendered with hydraulic mortar. They were recently covered on the outside with hollow roofing tiles,¹⁹ to make the building



more weather-resistant and protect the murals from damp.

Rising from the centre of the church is a hemispherical dome, carried on a raised tympanum which is cylindrical on the inside (base diameter approx. 4.00 m) and octagonal on the outside. Four pointed windows are let into the sides of the tympanum at the cardinal points of the compass.

In the second half of the 17th century²⁰ the interior surfaces of the main body of the church were decorated with murals, which are preserved in relatively good condition.²¹

The church also had earlier (15th c.) murals, which have either deteriorated with time or were mortared over. Traces of these have been uncovered in parts of the west arm of the church.

Phase 2

At some point—certainly after 1677, when the decoration of the interior of the church was completed, and probably in the middle of the 19th century—extensions were added to the northwest and southwest corners of the cruciform church, to create more space inside and accommodate the needs of the parish more comfortably.

More specifically, a rectangular structure measuring 7.58x3.34 metres (interior dimensions) was added to the southwest corner of the building and surmounted with a ribbed groin vault in the Late Gothic style. On the outside the roof was rendered with hydraulic mortar.²² In order to unify this space with the rest of the church, two openings were created: a doorway (1.83x0.82m) in the middle of the east side of the addition and an entrance door (1.88x1.85m) in the middle of the north side.

An arched doorway was created in the middle of the west side (1.63x0.93m), and two rectangular windows (1.10x0.71m), finished on the outside with blind pointed arches in the style characteristic of the latter years of Turkish rule, were let into the south side.

A similar extension (interior

dimensions: 7.27x3.77m) was added to the northwest corner of the building, and roofed with a ribbed groin vault inside and hydraulic mortar outside. A passageway (2.08x2.00m) was created in the middle of the east side of this extension, and two doors were let into the south side, the eastern one measuring 1.98x1.85m and the western 1.95x1.82m.

There is an arched doorway (1.70x0.92m) in the middle of the west side, and two rectangular windows (1.08x0.71m) in the north side, finished on the outside with blind pointed arches in the style characteristic of the latter years of Turkish rule. The floor of the church (bema, naos and extensions) is paved throughout with rounded pebbles.

Iconostasis-Icons

The iconostasis of the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Asklipio is carved in wood,²³ worked in low relief. It appears to be old, probably dating from the middle of the 18th century, and is relatively simple in composition. It is divided into five zones, as follows (reading from top to bottom):

Zone A: The Cross bearing the crucified Christ occupies the middle of the topmost zone, with, as is customary, His mother to the right (north) and St John the Divine, the disciple “whom He loved”,²⁴ to the left.

Zone B: This zone initially displayed a vine-shoot and images of Old Testament Prophets. Most of it, however, has been destroyed, there remaining only part of the vine-shoot and three Prophets.

Zone C: Two sets of six Apostles flank a central representation of the Deesis, that is, Christ Jesus with Our Lady on His right and John the Forerunner on His left. All are depicted from the waist up.

North half (from North to South):

1. Unidentified Apostle
2. St Simon Zelotes
3. St James
4. St Matthew
5. St John the Divine
6. St Paul

South half (from North to South):

7. Unidentified Apostle

8. Ditto

9. Ditto

10. Ditto

11. Ditto

Zone D

This section contains three despotic icons, namely:

1. Christ Jesus as the Great High Priest (1.05x0.68m)

This is a portable wooden “coffered” icon, with a wooden dowel projecting from the middle of the bottom of the raised, integral frame.²⁵ In this half-length representation Christ is portrayed facing forward, dressed in priestly garb. His omophorion is grey, with large red crosses. Silver sheathing covers His right hand, which is raised in blessing, and His halo. The Gospel codex held in His left hand is open to the following text, which is displayed in two columns, thus:

«ΟΣΤΙΣ ΘΕΛΕΙ Τ(ΟΝ) ΣΤΑΒΡΟΝ
ΑΥΤΟΥ ΟΠΙΣΘ ΜΟΥ ΑΚ Κ(ΑΙ)
ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΤΩ
ΟΛΟΥΘΙ ΑΠΑΡ ΜΟΙ ΟΣ ΓΑΡ ΑΝ
ΝΗΣΑΘΩ Α ΘΕΛΗ ΤΗΝ ΨΥ
ΙΑΥΤΟΝ Κ(ΑΙ) ΑΡΑΤΟ ΧΗΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ
CΩΣΑΙ...».²⁶

The inscription reproduced below, which is written on either side of the figure of Christ, reads “Jesus Christ / The Great High Priest”:

“Ι(ΗΣΟΥ)C Χ(ΡΙΣΤΟ)C Ο ΜΕΓΑC
ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥC”

2. The Virgin Hodegetria (1.02x0.71m)

This is a “coffered” wooden icon, with a handle at the bottom of the raised integral frame, like that of Christ. In this half-length representation, the Virgin is holding the Child on her left arm, in the type of the Hodegetria.

The Madonna is depicted wearing a blue tunic with a gemmed closing around the neck, and a red mantle and himation. She carries the Infant Jesus on her left arm, and her right hand is raised in a gesture of prayer.

The Virgin’s right hand and halo are sheathed in silver. Graven onto the metal

covering of her right hand is the word:

«ΙΟΑΝΗ»²⁷

The Infant Christ wears a golden himation over a grey tunic. His right hand is raised in blessing and His left holds a compact scroll. His halo is covered with silver sheathing.

The inscription on either side of the Virgin reads “Mother of God”:

«ΜΗ(ΤΗ)Ρ Θ(Ε)ΟΥ»

At the bottom left is the following miniscule inscription:

«Πρέσβεβαι υπέρ του δούλου σου
Γεοργίου και χρισής 1752».²⁸

The following minuscule inscription appears at the bottom right:

«Επεσκευάσθη δαπάνη Παναγιώτου
Βασιλείου,
Μαρτίου 28 τω 1875».²⁹

3. St John the Forerunner (1.06x0.62m)

In this half-length representation the Saint is portrayed as an incarnate angel, turning to the left. His right hand is raised in a gesture of exhortation, and his left holds a cross and an open scroll, upon which is written, in minuscule characters:

«ίδε ο αμνός του Θεού, ο
αίρων την αμαρτίαν του κόσμου.
ούτος εστί περί ου εγώ είπον.
οπίσω μου έρχεται ανήρ ος
εμπροσθέν μου γέγονε».³⁰

At the bottom left are a depiction of the Saint’s head on a platter and the inscription: “ΑΩΞΓ”, that is, 1863, the year is which the icon was made.

4. Royal Door - Madonna

Instead of a curtain or screen, the upper half of the Royal Door is fitted with a portable wooden sliding icon of the Theotokos, portrayed full-length, enthroned, holding the Infant Child on her left arm. On either side of her is an Angel, depicted full-length, in flight, carrying the instruments of the Passion.

5. North door

The upper section of the north door is divided into two zones.

a) Upper zone: Decorated with representations of two Angels.

b) Lower zone: On the north half there is a depiction of St John Chrysostom, holding an open liturgical scroll displaying



the inscription:

“Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C Ο ΘΕΟC
ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΤΩΝ ΟΥΠΑΝΙΟΝ
ΑΡΤ(ΟΝ)”³¹

The saint depicted on the south half is Basil the Great, whose open liturgical scroll bears the inscription:

«ΟΥΔΕΙC ΑΞΙΟC
ΤΩ CΙΝΔΕΔ. ΜΕΝΩΝ...»³²

Zone E: This comprises the sanctuary doors and the closure panels of the iconostasis.

1. Sanctuary door

The lower part of the Royal Door closes with a wooden double door, decorated in three zones. Above is a half-length depiction of Christ Jesus as the Great High Priest, facing forward. Beneath this is the Annunciation, and below that the Apostles Peter and Paul.

2. Closure panels

The carved wooden closure panels in the lower section of the iconostasis are decorated in low relief with a pattern of stylised intertwining tendrils.

Bishop's Throne

The bishop's throne stands the southwest corner of the naos, where it is visible from almost everywhere in the church. The carved wooden throne stands on a wooden platform, with three wooden steps leading up to it. It has a back rest, arm rests and a canopy, and is carved in the same style as the iconostasis; it is likely, since it also dates from the same period, to have been the work of the same sculptor or workshop.

The decoration includes a variety of motifs, including lozenges, rosettes, knots and stylised shoots with leaves and flowers, worked in low relief.

The wood is unpainted, and there is no icon on the back of the throne, in the place usually occupied by a representation of Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest.

The arm rests are ornamented with lion's heads, carved in relief. The lion is, of course, a symbol of power; but it is also a symbol of the enemies of the church and of evil in general.³³

MURALS

General Remarks

The interior walls of the original cruciform church are decorated with murals³⁴ executed - according to the extant inscriptions - in 1676 and 1677, which are preserved in generally good condition. In the west arm of the cross there are murals pre-dating the rest.

The murals were partially repainted in 1930, according to an inscription on the inner south side of the west arm of the cross. The tympanum of the arch is decorated with a representation of St Demetrios, mounted, slaying Kalojan³⁵. At the bottom right an inscription (letter height: 15-20 mm, white on deep brown, reproduced below) reads “Repaired on 20/12/1930. Basilios S. Papadopoulos (of Vourourion, Pisidias)”:

«Επιδιώρθ(ωσις) τη 20/ΧΙΙ/1930
Β(ασίλειος) Σ. Παπαδόπουλος
(Εκ Βουρουρίου Πισιδίας)».

THE BEMA

Conch

1. The Virgin Platytera³⁶

The conch of the apse is decorated with the customary full-length Madonna and Child, flanked by two full-length adoring Angels. The Virgin is represented seated on a costly wooden throne, backed but without arm rests. She is wearing a sleeved blue tunic and a purple mantle, and is seated on a red cushion.

The inscription by her head reads “Mother of God”, thus: «ΜΗ(ΤΗ)Ρ Θ(Ε)ΟΥ»

The Infant Jesus is depicted full-length, facing forward, dressed in sleeved tunic and himation. His right hand makes a gesture of blessing and His left holds a compact scroll. The inscription around His head reads “Jesus Christ”, thus:

«Ι(Η)CΟΥC Χ(ΡΙCΤΟ)C»

2. Communion of the Apostles

Depicted directly beneath the Platytera, as customary, is the Communion of the Apostles.³⁷ The centre

of the composition is occupied by the Holy Table, surmounted by a ciborium, and Christ as the Great High Priest on either side of it, offering His body³⁸ and His blood³⁹ to the Apostles.

The distribution of the bread is portrayed in north half of the composition, and that of the cup in the other. The scene has been overpainted, probably in 1930. The work is very clumsily executed: for example, the garments of the Apostles in the north half were repainted to freshen the colours, but so carelessly that a trail of paint runs right down into the icon of St Euthymios, one of the co-officiating hierarchs in the sanctuary apse.

Apse

Co-officiating Hierarchs

The composition decorating the apse depicts six co-officiating Hierarchs.⁴⁰ They are portrayed full-length, dressed as bishops in sticharion (alb) phelonion (chasuble) decorated with multiple crosses and omophorion (stole), again ornamented with crosses, and holding open liturgical scrolls, inscribed with prayers from the Divine Liturgy.

More specifically, these Hierarchs are (from North to South):

1. St Euthymios

He is depicted turned towards the right, towards the centre of the apse, and is identified by the inscription “Saint Euthymios” on either side of his head, thus:

«Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΕΥΘΥΜΙΟΣ»

He is holding an open liturgical scroll displaying the following inscription:

«+ Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ Ο ΕΝ ΑΓΙΟΙC ΑΝΑΠΑΒΟΜΕΝΟΣ Ο ΤΡΙCΑΓΙΑ ΦΩΝΗ ΥΠΩ ΤΩΝ CΕΡΑΦ(ΕΙΜ)».⁴¹

2. St Gregory of Nazianzos

He is depicted full-length, turned towards the right and looking at the centre of the apse, and is identified by the inscription “Saint Gregory the Theologian”, on either side of his head, thus:

«Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΡΙΓΟΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΣ»

He is holding an open liturgical scroll displaying the following inscription:

«+Κ(ΥΡΙ)Ε Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C ΗΜΩΝ COCΩΝ ΤΩΝ Λ ΑΩΝ COΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΛΟΓΗCΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΙΑΝ COΥ».⁴²

3. St John Chrysostom

The third figure from the left is St John Chrysostom.⁴³ He is also turned towards the centre of the apse, and is identified by the inscription “Saint John Chrysostom”, thus:

«Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗC) Ο ΧΡ(ΥCΟCΤΟΜΟ)C».

His scroll displays the following text:

«+Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΤΩΝ ΟΥ(ΡΑ)Ν(Ι)ΟΝ ΑΡΤΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΤΡΟΦΗΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΤΟC ΚΟCΜΟΥ ΤΟΝ...».⁴⁴

4. The Breaking of the Bread

The scene portrayed the middle of the apse is, as customary,⁴⁵ that of the Breaking of the Bread: upon a rectangular Table are the “Holy Gifts”, that is, on the left, the plate with the Bread, and, on the right, the Cup containing the blood of Christ. Farther right is a closed book, evidently the Gospel.

5. St Basil the Great

St Basil, who is represented turned towards the left, looking towards the centre of the apse and the scene of the Breaking of the Bread, is identified by the inscription “Saint Basil”, thus:

«Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΒΑCΙΛΕΙΟΣ».

He holds a liturgical scroll displaying the text:

«+ΟΥΔΕΙC ΑΞΙΟC ΤΩΝ CΥΝΔΕΔΕΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΕC CΑΡΚΗΚΑΙC ΕΠΥΘΗΜΙΑΙC ΚΑΙ ΗΔΟΝΕC ΠΡΟCΕΡΧΕC(ΘΑΙ)».⁴⁶

6. St Hypatios

St Hypatios,⁴⁷ also shown turning towards the left, is depicted with long hair and a curly beard. Two layers of painting are visible here.⁴⁸ The inscription next to the saint’s head reads “Saint Hypatios”, thus:

«Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΥΠΑΤΙΟΣ».

He, too, is holding an open scroll; but the 10-line inscription on it has deteriorated to the point where all that may be deciphered is:

«+ ΟΕ. ΗC ΘC ... Α
Μ ... ΑΝ ΕΙΑ ΕΥ.
ΑC CV ΥΟ.....ΤΟΛΜ
ΥΡC. C».⁴⁹

7. St Hermolaos

The final figure is St Hermolaos.⁵⁰ He is depicted with long hair and a long bushy beard, turning to his left. He is identified by the inscription “Saint Hermolaos” around his head, thus:

«Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΕΡΜΟΛΑΟΣ».

The scroll he carries displays the inscription:

«+ ΠΡΟCΧΕ<C>
Κ(ΥΡ)ΙΕ Ι(ΗC)ΟΥ Χ(Ρ)Ι C(ΤΕ)
[Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C ΗΜΩΝ]
ΕΞ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΚΑΤΗΚΗΤΗΡΙΟΥ
CΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΘΡΟΝΟΥ
ΔΟΞΗC...».⁵¹

East façade

I. The Mandyllion

The upper section of the east face is decorated, as is customary, with a representation of the Mandyllion,⁵² an oblong cloth upon which is portrayed, in the centre, the head of Christ, facing forward, framed by a halo.

2. The Annunciation

Depicted beneath the Mandyllion, and extending across both sides of the bema, is the scene of the Annunciation.⁵³

Arch

The Ascension

The decoration on the surface of the arch of the bema above the altar depicts the scene of the Ascension.⁵⁴ Christ is portrayed within a glory held aloft by six Angels. In the southern half of this space, between two groups of three enraptured Apostles, stands an Archangel, pointing with his left hand to the ascending Lord.

On the south side is Our Lady, with an Archangel on her left, flanked by two triads of Apostles, expressing rapture and wonder at the event.

South side

This area is divided into two zones:

Upper zone (from East to West):

I. The Hospitality of Abraham

(Philoxenia),⁵⁵ which is the Byzantine type of the representation of the Holy Trinity.

2. St Lawrence.⁵⁶

Lower zone (from East to West)

1. St Athanasios

The saint is depicted carrying an open scroll, inscribed with the text:

«+ Κ(ΥΡ)ΙΕ Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C ΤΟΥ
ΟΥ(ΡΑ)ΝΟΥ ΕΠΑΚΟΥΥCΟΝ ΜΟΥ
ΚΑΙ CΟCΩΝ ΜΕ».⁵⁷

2. St Cyril

The inscription on his scroll reads:

«+ ΕΞΑΙΡΕΤΩC ΤΗC
ΠΑΝΥΠΕΡ ΕΥΛΟΓΗΜΕΝΗC
ΕΝΔ[ΟΞΟΥ ΔΕCΠΟΙΝΗC...]».⁵⁸

3. St John the Merciful

The Saint is depicted holding an open scroll inscribed with the words:

«+ ΔΕCΠΟΤΑ Κ(ΥΡ)ΙΕ Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C
ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΚΑΤΑ[CΤΗCΑC]
ΕΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΙC».⁵⁹

North side

This surface is also divided into two zones:
Upper zone (from West to East):

1. St Stephen⁶⁰.

2. The Sacrifice of Abraham⁶¹.

Lower zone (from West to East):

1. St Spyridon (?)⁶².

2. The Man of Sorrows⁶³. This, as customary, decorates the conch of the prothesis.

THE NAOS

Dome

Christ Pantokrator

The summit of the dome is decorated, as is customary, with the representation of Christ in the type of the Pantokrator.⁶⁴ The half-length figure is depicted facing forward, wearing a dark blue, sleeved himation and a red tunic with a clavus, right hand raised in blessing and left hand holding a closed Gospel codex. His halo is inscribed with a cross and the words: «Ο ΩΝ» [“That I am”].⁶⁵

Below the Pantokrator there are two zones, the upper decorated with Angels and the lower with Old Testament Prophets:

Upper zone: The Angels are represented as intermediaries between God and man and as “messengers of the intentions of God” towards men.

Lower zone: Sixteen full-length figures of Old Testament Prophets carry open scrolls inscribed with their characteristic prophetic texts, for the most part relating to the Birth of Christ and the salvation of mankind.⁶⁶

Evangelists: Below the Prophets, decorating the pendentives at the base of the dome, are the four Evangelists with their symbols (Angel, Lion, Ox and Eagle), St Matthew on the northeast pendentive, St Mark on the southwest, St Luke on the northwest and St John on the southeast.

South Arm

The interior surfaces of the south arm of the naos are decorated with scenes from the Apocalypse of St John⁶⁷.

More specifically:

ARCH

The Ancient of Days and the 24 Elders
The Ancient of Days occupies the centre of the arch, depicted full-length, enthroned, surrounded by seraphim, and round about the throne 24 Elders, depicted full-length, seated on thrones.⁶⁸

EAST HALF OF ARCH

This surface is divided into three zones, thus (reading from top to bottom):

Zone A (from North to South):

This zone is decorated with the following scenes:

1. The North Wind blowing.
2. A horseman,⁶⁹ wearing a crown⁷⁰.
3. A second horseman.⁷¹
4. A third horseman, holding a pair of balances.⁷²
5. The sun.
6. A fourth horseman,⁷³ Death.
7. A multitude of the just, with palms in their hands, as symbols of victory.⁷⁴
8. Two full-length Saints.
9. The wind and an Angel.

Zone B (from North to South):

1. An Angel, sounding a trumpet.
2. The legion of demons.

3. An Angel and St John the Divine.

4. Enoch and Elijah.

5. Above, an Angel sounding a trumpet; below, the dragon.⁷⁵

6. Heaven and the stars falling.⁷⁶

7. The Virgin standing on the half-moon and holding the sun on her knees.⁷⁷

Zone C (from North to South):

1. St John the Divine.

2. An Angel standing, turned towards St John the Divine.

3. Another Angel, pouring out his vial upon the sea.

4. A third Angel, pouring out his vial upon the earth.

5. The sun.

6. Six sleepers.

7. The devil.

8. A fallen tower.

WEST HALF OF ARCH

This surface is also divided into three zones, thus (reading from top to bottom):
Zone A: Five Angels sounding trumpets and one Angel carrying a trumpet.

Zone B: The Lamb⁷⁸ and the beast.⁷⁹

Zone C: Saints and an Angel.

INCISED INSCRIPTIONS

In the west half of the south arm, below the representations of the scenes from the Apocalypse, there are a variety of inscriptions incised into the wall, for the most part petitions for deceased relatives of those named, with their date of death.

This suggests that the area of the church, both outside the building and in some cases within it,⁸¹ had been used for burials. In the Early Christian period, it should be noted, it was common practice to bury the faithful inside the church building or just outside.⁸² The custom prevailed into modern times, until- after the liberation of the country-the Synod of the Church of Greece repeatedly issued encyclicals prohibiting burials within church buildings.

Some of these incised inscriptions are reproduced below:

1. “Ι70Ι ΑΝΤΩΝΗΣ ΣΤΕ(ΦΑΝΟΥ;)”



[1701 Antonis Ste(phanou?).]

2. "1715 MINI, EKHMIOI O ΔΟΥΛΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΜΑΝΟΛΙΣ" [1715 in the month of, the servant of the Lord Manolis was laid to rest].

3. "ΕΤΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ 173" [Year of Christ 173].

4. "ΕΚΗΜΙΟΙ ΕΝ ΕΤΕΙ ΑΠΟ Χ(ΡΙΣΤ)ΟΥ 1769" [Passed away in the year of Christ 1769].

5. "1866 με τα έξοδά του, Ι.Χ.Α. Γρηγόρης Παγκάς" [1866, paid for by I.Ch.A., Grigoris Pangas].

6. "1877 Ι.Μ.Α." [1877 I.M.A].⁸³

South tympanum

The surface of the south tympanum of the south arm is divided into two zones:

Upper zone: The decoration represents the Koimesis (Dormition of the Theotokos),⁸⁴ in the usual type, including the incident of Jephonias.

Lower zone (from East to West):

1. Three Hierarchs: The Saints depicted are the Three Hierarchs⁸⁵:

- a) St Gregory of Nazianzos,
- b) St Basil the Great, and
- c) St John Chrysostom.

2. The Forty Martyrs: The scene represented is the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia.⁸⁶

North Arm

ARCH

The crown of the arch is decorated with ornamental motifs.

EAST HALF OF ARCH

This surface is divided into four zones, thus (reading from top to bottom):

Zone A: Twelve Saints in medallions.

Zone B (North to South): Scenes from events that took place after the Ascension:

1. The Myrrhbearers in front of the empty tomb. The scene shows the empty sepulchre, an Angel, and the women who came bringing "sweet spices".⁸⁷

2. Christ at Emmaus, breaking the bread.⁸⁸

3. The Open Tomb: that is, the empty sepulchre and two Apostles.⁸⁹

4. Christ appearing to the apostles on the

Sea of Tiberius.⁹⁰ The composition includes St Peter, swimming towards him.

Zone C (from North to South):

Scenes from the Miracles of Christ:

1. The healing of the paralytic man.⁹¹ The scene shows the pool of Bethesda, with its five porches, and the paralytic man.

2. Christ talking to the Samaritan woman.⁹²

3. The pool of Siloam, where the man born blind was restored to sight.⁹³

4. Christ healing the man with the withered hand.⁹⁴

Zone D

Five Hierarchs and the Archangel Michael, all full-length and facing forward. They are (from North to South):

1. Unidentified Hierarchy, giving a blessing with his right hand and holding a closed codex of Gospels in his left.

2. St Michael of Synnada.⁹⁵

3. St James the Lord's Brother.

4. St Spyridon (?), depicted wearing an unusual hat.

5. St Nicholas. Painted full-length, facing forward, wearing the hieratical vestments: sticharion, jewelled epigonation, jewelled epitrichyion, phelonion and omophorion ornamented with crosses. His right hand is raised in blessing; in his left he holds a bound, bejewelled Gospel codex. To the right of his head is the inscription: «Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ». [Saint Nicholas].

6. The Archangel Michael.⁹⁶ He is portrayed as of colossal size, standing erect, facing forward, holding in his right hand a drawn sword, blade pointing up, and in his left the soul of a dead man, depicted as a swaddled infant, while he treads under foot the lifeless body of the deceased. This is a representation of St Michael as the Angel of Death.⁹⁷

In the middle and to the right of the Archangel is an inscription (0.19x0.19 m), painted in white minuscules (letter height: 2-3 cm) on a black ground. It reads:

«ΔΕΗCIC ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ
Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ ΜΩΝΑΧΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ)
ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΕΩC
ΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΟC ΑΥΤΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ)

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗΣ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΑΣ:
ΕΤΟC, ΑΧΟΖ'».⁹⁸

That is: "Orison of Makarios the monk, the servant of God, and of the priest Georgios, his father, and of the presbytera Kyriake, in the year 1677".

This commemorates a monk named Makarios, who apparently paid for the painting of the icon, and his parents: George, a priest, and his wife Kyriake. The date given is 1677, which is presumably the year when the decoration of the interior or the repainting of the murals was completed.

In the bottom right there is another inscription (letter height: 25-30 mm):

«ΦΡΗΕΟΝ ΨΥΧΗ ΜΟΥ
ΤΑ ΟΡΩΜΕΝΑ».

That is: "Tremble, my soul, at the sight".

WEST HALF OF ARCH

This surface is divided into four zones, thus (from top to bottom):

Zone A: Busts of twelve Saints.

Zone B: Scenes from the Twelve Great Feasts, thus (from South to North):

1. The Crucifixion.⁹⁹
2. The Lamentation.¹⁰⁰
3. The Anastasis (The Descent into Hell).¹⁰¹

4. The Incredulity of Thomas.¹⁰²

Zone C: Four scenes from the Parable of the Good Samaritan.¹⁰³

1. The traveller set upon by thieves.
2. The Good Samaritan anoints the man's wounds with oil.
3. The Good Samaritan sets the wounded man upon his own donkey.
4. The Good Samaritan leaves the wounded man at the inn.

Zone D

Eight monastic Saints (from South to North):

1. St Athanasios the Athonite,¹⁰⁴ who is depicted holding an open scroll inscribed: «ΜΕΓΑ ΚΑΚΟΝ ΥΠΑΡΧΗ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ Η ΠΟΛΥΦΑΓΙΑ. ΔΥΝΑΤΕ ΓΑΡ ΤΟΝ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΕCΑΙ».

That is: "Voracity, brother, is a great evil. For it can be the monk's undoing".

2. St Ephrem the Syrian.¹⁰⁵

Saint Ephrem the Syrian is represented holding an open scroll displaying the text:

«ΕΝ ΛΟΓ...Α ΙC ΘΥCΙ...C

ΤΡΥΦΗCΩΜ

ΕΝ ΔΙ.....ΤΕ
ΡΧ.....

COME

ΛΑΠ.....Ν.....».

That is: "Let us indulge in reasonable sacrifices".

3. Unidentified Saint

4. St Antony¹⁰⁶

5. St Euthymios¹⁰⁷

6. St Onouphrios¹⁰⁸

7. Unidentified Saint

8. St Merkourios.¹⁰⁹ The full-length depiction shows a warrior, standing erect, striking Julian the Apostate with his spear.

North tympanum

The surface of the north tympanum of the north arm of the naos is divided into two zones, thus:

Upper zone: The Slaughter of the Innocents.¹¹⁰

Lower zone: (from North to South):

1. SS Constantine and Helen
2. St Gerasimos of Jordan, accompanied by a lion.¹¹¹

West Arm

ARCH

The crown of the arch is decorated with ornamental motifs.

SOUTH HALF OF ARCH

This surface is divided into four horizontal zones, thus (from top to bottom):

Zone A

The decoration depicts in eleven compositions God's creation of the world and of man,¹¹² thus (from East to West):

1. The world created out of nothing.¹¹³
2. The creation of light and darkness.¹¹⁴
3. The creation of dry land.¹¹⁵
4. The creation of the sun and the moon.¹¹⁶
5. The creation of Adam.¹¹⁷
6. Adam naming the animals.¹¹⁸
7. The creation of Eve.¹¹⁹
8. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.¹²⁰
9. The Fall of Adam and Eve:¹²¹ the serpent beguiles Eve.

10. The Fall of Adam and Eve: Eve urges Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit.¹²²
11. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve.¹²³

Zone B

Scenes from the Twelve Great Feasts, thus (from East to West):

1. The Birth of Christ.
2. The Presentation of Christ in the Temple.
3. The Baptism of Christ.
4. The Transfiguration.
5. The Raising of Lazarus.
6. The Entry into Jerusalem.
7. The Last Supper.¹²⁴
8. The Washing of the Disciples' Feet.¹²⁵
9. The Prophet Daniel, who is depicted full-length, holding an open scroll displaying the text:
«KPITHPION EKAΘICE K(AI)
BIBAOI HNEΩXΘHCAN».
That is: "And the books were opened and they were judged".¹²⁶

Zone C

The decoration comprises scenes from the childhood of the Virgin, plus two other compositions, thus (from East to West):

1. The Forefathers Joachim and Anna¹²⁷
2. The Annunciation to Joachim and Anna¹²⁸
3. The Annunciation to Joachim
4. The Conception of the Mother of God
5. The Nativity of the Mother of God¹²⁹
6. The Mother of God Blessed by the Priests¹³⁰
7. The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple¹³¹
8. The Death of the Just Man¹³²
9. The Bosoms of Abraham, as a detail of monumental composition of the Second Coming of Christ on the west side of the west arm of the naos.

Zone D

The Saints of Poverty (Anargyroi),¹³³ the first six painted as busts and the others full-length, thus (from East to West):

1. Unidentified Saint.
2. St Kyros¹³⁴
3. St John¹³⁵

4. St Diomedes¹³⁶

5. St Hermolaos¹³⁷

6. St Tryphon¹³⁸

7. Unidentified Saint, holding an open scroll inscribed with the words:

«ΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΟΥΝΤΟC ΜΟΥ
ΕΝ ΤΗ ΕΡΗΜΩ ΗΔΩΝ
ΠΑCΑC ΤΑC Π[ΑΓΙΔΑC] ΤΟΥ
ΔΙΑ[ΒΟΛΟΥ ΗΠΛ]ΩΜΑΝΑC.....».

That is: "Walking in the desert I saw all the snares of the devil laid out upon the ground....".¹³⁹

8. Unidentified Saint¹⁴⁰

9. St Photios¹⁴¹

10. St Anicetus¹⁴²

11. St Marina¹⁴³

12. "The sea gave up her dead". Detail of the adjacent monumental composition of the Second Coming.

In the south section of the west arm there are two arches with murals, thus

EAST ARCH

1. Unidentified (female) Saint

2. Unidentified (female) Saint

WEST ARCH

1. St John Kalybites¹⁴⁴

2. St Demetrios¹⁴⁵

3. Unidentified Saint

NORTH HALF OF ARCH

This surface is also divided into four horizontal zones, thus (from top to bottom)

Zone A

The decoration illustrates scenes from Genesis, and more specifically the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise¹⁴⁶ thus (from West to East)

1. The Fall of Adam and Eve¹⁴⁷

2. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve¹⁴⁸

3. Adam and Eve outside the Garden of Eden¹⁴⁹

4. Adam and Eve make garments and clothe themselves¹⁵⁰

5. Eve bears her children¹⁵¹

6. Cain tilling the earth¹⁵²

7. Abel grazing his sheep¹⁵³

8. The sacrifice of Cain and Abel¹⁵⁴

9. Cain slays his brother Abel¹⁵⁵

10. God asks for Abel¹⁵⁶

11. God cursing Cain, because he killed his brother¹⁵⁷

Zone B

The decoration begins with a single Old Testament Prophet, followed by scenes from the New Testament, and specifically from the Passion of Christ, thus (from West to East)

1. The Prophet Malachi. The Prophet is depicted full-length, standing, turned towards the West, and holding an open scroll displaying the words:

«ΙΔΟΥ ΗΜΕΡΑ ΕΡΧΕΤΕ
ΩΣ ΚΑΙΒΑΝΟΣ Κ(ΑΙ) Φ[ΛΕ]ΞΗ
ΑΥΤΟ [ΥC] [Κ(ΑΙ) ΕCΟΝΤΑΙ]».

That is: “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; ... and the day that cometh shall burn them up”.¹⁵

2. The Betrayal by Judas¹⁵⁹
3. Christ judged by Annas and Caiaphas
4. The Triple Denial of Peter¹⁶⁰
5. Christ judged by Pilate-Pilate washes his hands¹⁶¹
6. The Mocking¹⁶²
7. The Flagellation. Christ is bound to a column and scourged
8. The repentance of Judas
9. Simon the Cyrenian carries the cross of Christ¹⁶³

Zone C

The compositions here are (from West to East)

1. The death of the sinner¹⁶⁴
2. The Virgin in the Holy of Holies¹⁶⁵
3. The betrothal of Our Lady¹⁶⁶
4. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar: the four kingdoms¹⁶⁷
5. The Prophet Daniel¹⁶⁸
6. Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream¹⁶⁹
7. Daniel in the lion's den¹⁷⁰
8. “The Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace”¹⁷¹

Zone D

Depictions of seven Saints follow the illustration of a scene from the Second Coming, thus (from West to East):

1. The punishment of sinners. This scene is part of the adjacent monumental composition of the Second Coming.
2. Unidentified (female) Saint
3. St Metrodora¹⁷³

4. St Kyriake,¹⁷⁴ who is painted full-length

5. St Nymphodora,¹⁷⁵ who is painted half-length

6. St Vincent¹⁷⁶

7. St Menas¹⁷⁷

8. St Victor¹⁷⁸

The three arches in the north section of the west arm are all decorated with murals, thus (from West to East):

FIRST ARCH

1. St Theodore Stratelates¹⁷⁹

2. St Theodore of Tyre¹⁸⁰

West tympanum

The Second Coming

A monumental representation of the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgement covers the entire surface of the west tympanum of the west arm of the naos.¹⁸¹ The space is divided into three zones, thus (from top to bottom):

Zone A

Dominating the centre of the composition is the full-length figure of Christ in glory, enthroned, as He shall “come again in glory to judge both the quick and the dead”,¹⁸² surrounded by Angels. Our Lady on His right and St John the Forerunner on His left pray for the human race

Zone B

The Twelve Apostles sit in judgement over the twelve tribes of Israel.¹⁸³ They are depicted full-length, enthroned, arranged in a single row, wearing long tunics and himatia that fall in rich folds. Some of them hold closed codices: these are evidently the authors of the Gospels and Epistles.

Zone C

The scene occupying the centre of this space is the Weighing of Souls: men's good and bad actions are placed in the scales of a balance and weighed, and they are justified or condemned accordingly.¹⁸⁴ Portrayed on the left (to the viewer) is the resurrection of the dead and on the right the “dragon of the deep” that swallows up sinners.



Zone D

The place of the just is represented on the south section, while the north shows the deeds of men being passed in review.

STYLE AND QUALITY OF THE MURALS –CHRONOLOGY

Both the church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Asklipio, Rhodes, and the murals still preserved within it date, as we have seen, from more than one era.

The existing domed cruciform church was erected, probably in the latter half of the 14th century (1350-1400), on the site of an earlier church. Some time in the 15th century the interior surfaces of this church were decorated with murals, according to an iconographic programme largely similar to what is there today.

Of these original murals the following fragments have been preserved:

a) Traces of the older layer of painting remain at the south end of the apse of the bema and below the figure of St Hypatios, last but one (from north to south) of the six co-officiating Hierarchs portrayed.

b) Certain scenes from the original decoration of the church have been discovered on the west section of the west arm of the naos, beneath subsequent overpainting.

As far as one can tell, the 15th-century murals were of good quality, and in general executed in keeping with Byzantine tradition. A certain degree of Western influence is nonetheless apparent, both with regard to the decorative programme (e.g. depiction of scenes from the creation of the world and of man, compositions drawn from the life of Christ, etc.) and with regard to technique, although the artist has absorbed these elements and integrated them into the spirit of Byzantine artistic tradition.

Nothing further is known at present about the original murals of this church, or the artist, or the exact date of decoration. Perhaps future research will

yield further information about them and the problems they present.

During the period when the Knights of St John ruled in Rhodes (1308-1522), the island was in close contact with Western Europe; and the considerable civilisation that developed in those two centuries reflects that influence.

The years in particular just before this period came to a close, that is, the late 15th and early 16th centuries, were ones of exceptionally lively economic growth and artistic and intellectual achievement. Large scale works such as the decoration of the cruciform Church of the Holy Trinity (Dolapli) in the mediaeval town of Rhodes and that of the single-cella barrel-vaulted Church of St Nicholas in Trianta display painting of the highest quality, with evident Western influences, both in iconography (scenes of purely Western origin) and in technique, as well as in the general conception of the space and its organisation.

The 15th-century murals of the Church of the Dormition in Asklipio, either because they had deteriorated under the effects of time, damp and smoke (from candles and incense) or because they were considered old-fashioned and not in keeping with the artistic trends of the times, or for both reasons or others besides, were repaired, added to and repainted in the latter half of the 17th century.

More specifically, in 1676 and 1677 (as we learn from the surviving inscriptions, that of the founders and that of the Archangel Michael), the painter Michael, a priest from Neochorion on the island of Chios, commissioned by the local parish priest, George, his wife, Kyriake, their children and their stewards, must have worked on almost all the interior decoration, so as to justify the wording of the founders' inscription commemorating him as the painter of the murals: "The work [of this present decoration] is mine, the priest Michael, of Neochorion, Chios".

It seems that the murals, or at least those in the apse of the bema, which were

the most severely deteriorated, were at that time wholly repainted on a fresh layer of mortar. Those in the rest of the church were repaired, either by repainting the areas where the murals had been destroyed or by touching up certain damaged parts.

The murals of the latter half of the 17th century, which are post-Byzantine in style and execution, display the following characteristics: both the representations of individual Saints and the more extensive compositions are as a rule of limited dimensions, and the compositions crowded with figures; these elements are illustrative of the influence of portable icons on murals (cf. the murals of the Church of the Dormition in the village of Hagia Paraskevi (Amario) in Crete, dating from 1516). The compositions are formal, conventional, dry, reproducing standard patterns; there is nothing indicative of originality of expression or vitality of inspiration. The artist, although working within the framework of Byzantine artistic tradition, is nonetheless clearly influenced by the art of the West.

In about the middle of the 19th century, two new spaces, the rectangular extensions thrown out at the northwest and southwest corners of the naos, were added to the building; their inner walls were not decorated.

During the period of the Italian occupation of the island (1912-1945), and more specifically in the year 1930, as we know from the inscription painted on the west end of the south inner side of the west arm of the naos and confirmed by surviving inhabitants of the villages, the murals were once again "repaired", this time by Basilios S. Papadopoulos of Vourourion, in Asia Minor. This intervention involved the overpainting of much of the mural decoration; some of it, indeed, seems to have been entirely redone: for example, the painting in and below the dome, which had been almost wholly destroyed. This intervention was executed with no artistic sense, and caused great damage to the murals.

One last, and equally unimpressive,

intervention seems to have been made after World War II, this time to the murals in the bema, where the colours had deteriorated.

Despite these repeated interventions, deterioration and alterations to the mural decoration of the church, it is still possible to affirm with certainty that the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Asklipio, Rhodes, preserves an integral composite decoration that ranks it among the most important post-Byzantine churches not only on the island but in the Dodecanese in general and indeed in the whole of Greece. Cleaning these murals of their burden of lime scale and overpainting will reveal their initial form and help resolve the many problems connected with them and with the history of the monument.



Founders' inscription

The founders' inscription is located at the east end of the inner north side of the west arm of the naos, in a position where it can be seen from almost anywhere in the church. It is written in majuscule characters (letter height: 25 mm), black on a white ground, within a rectangular frame (0.42x 0.37m). Of the eleven lines of this inscription, the last four are in very poor condition (the letters all or partly worn away) and there is some damage to the upper left.

The inscription reads as follows:
 «ΕΓ[ΕΝΕΤΟ Η ΠΑΡΟΥΣ] ΖΩΓΡΑΦΙΑ
 ΤΟΥ ΑΡΘΙ
 ΚΟ[Σ ΕΝ ΕΤΕΙ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΩ ,Α] ΧΟ ΣΤ'.
 ΕΠΙΤΡΟ
 Π[ΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ: Ο ΕΥΣΕΒ] ΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ ΕΝ
 ΙΕΡΕΥΣΙ
 Κ[ΥΡ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ Κ(ΑΙ)] Η ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΑ
 ΑΥ
 Τ[ΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ Κ(ΑΙ) ΤΑ ΤΕΚΝΑ]
 ΑΥΤΟΝ Κ(ΑΙ) ΗΚΟΝΟΜΗ ΑΥΤ(ΩΝ)
 [ΕΞ]ΟΔ[ΟΙΣ Τ]ΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΟΙΗΜΑ
 ΕΜΟΥ ΑΝΑΞΙ
 ΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ) ΑΜΑΡΤΟΛΟΥ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ
 ΙΕΡΕΟΣ Ο ΕΚ ΝΕ
 [ΟΧΩ]ΡΙΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΧΙΟΥ ... ΑΝΗΘ.
 ΤΟΥ ΑΝΕ
 Η ΖΩΓΡΑΦΙΑ

.....

 [EN]
 [ΜΗΝΙ] ΔΙΚΕΜΒΡΙΩ
»
 In transcription this reads:
 «Εγ[ένετο η παρούσα] ζωγραφία του
 [ν]άρθι-
 κο[ς εν έτει σωτηρίω ,Α] ΧΟ ΣΤ'. Επιτρο-
 π[εύοντες: ο ευσεβ]έςτατος εν ιερέυσι
 κ[ύρ Γεώργιος κ(αί)] η πρεσβυτέρα αυ-
 τ[του Κυριακή κ(αί) τα τέκνα] αυτόν κ(αί)
 οι ηκονόμη αυτ(ών)
 [εξ]όδ[οις τ]ου ναού. Ποίημα εμού αναξι-
 ου κ(αί) αμαρτολού Μιχαήλ ιερέος, ο εκ
 Νε-
 [οχω]ρίου της Χίου Ανηθ.... του ανε-
 η ζωγραφία

 [ε ν] [μ η ν ί]
 Δικεμβρίω.....»
 172

That is: "The present decoration of the narthex was done in the year of the Saviour 1676. Superintendents: the reverend priest Georgios and his wife Kyriake and his children and their stewards, from the funds of the church. The work is mine, the unworthy and sinful priest Michael, of Neochorion, Chios ... the painting ... in the month of December..."
 This inscription contains much that is of interest.

a) It gives a date (1676) for the decoration of the church, although without mentioning when it was built. The problem here is whether the date recorded refers to the complete decoration of the church or to a partial repainting of, or additions to, the earlier, 15th-century, murals.

It seems most likely that the church was built in the 14th century and decorated in the 15th, and that the work done in 1676 was a partial repair job, filling in and touching up murals that had deteriorated or become damaged by the ravages of time, damp and soot.

b) The use of the word "narthex" for the church is interesting. In Early Christian basilicas, that is, those built in the 5th and

6th centuries, the narthex was the rectangular portico at the west end of the naos, which served as a sort of antechamber for penitents and the unbaptised, who were not admitted into the interior of the building. The word narthex originally designated a casket made from the stalks of the plant of the same name (Greek name: νόρθηξ; Latin name: *Ferula communis*; common name: giant fennel) and intended to serve as a jewel box, usually for women's ornaments.

c) It cites as commissioners of the church a priest, his wife, their children and their stewards. These were in all probability the same priest Georgios and his wife Kyriake who were the parents of the monk Makarios and who are commemorated in the inscription, dated 1677, in the north arm of the church.

d) The inscription names the painter, and the information has been preserved. For reasons of Christian humility an icon painter's name was rarely recorded; and even when it was, the information was often lost as the inscription deteriorated. In this case the painter was a priest whose name was Michael, from Neochorion on the island of Chios. He must have been well-known at the time, for him to have been invited to Asklipio on the island of Rhodes to decorate or repaint or repair the murals of this church.

1. The village is mentioned in a decree issued by Gionanni Battista degli Orsini (1467-1476) in 1474: "The villages of Kalathos, Pylona, Lardos, Asklepion and Gennadi are to remove into the fortress of Lindos". Ch. . I. Papachristodoulou, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου* [History of Rhodes], Athens 1972, 286.

2. I am most grateful to the Head of the 4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (Dodecanese), Mr Elias Kollias, for his gracious permission to study and publish this monument. I also wish to thank Maria Sarikou, Georgia Thomadaki and Michael Sandalos of that Ephorate, who made the drawings for me. The photographs come from the Photographic Archives of the Archaeological Service, with certain of my own.

3. Until quite recently the cemetery was in the churchyard of the Church of the Dormition, only later being moved to its present location.

4. Dionysius, *Manual*, 175.

5. This slab was removed, by agreement with the Archaeological Service of the Cathedral of Rhodes and the Church Committee of the Parish of Asklepion, from the Church of St Michael to its present position in the Church of the Dormition, for greater safety.

6. This inscription is of considerable importance, both for the information it furnishes and for the fact that very few such inscriptions from mediaeval castles in the Dodecanese have been preserved, the exception being the fortifications of the Old Town of Rhodes, whose walls at several points still display similar inscriptions, Ch. Karouzos, *Ρόδος* [Rhodes], Athens 1973, 77.

7. G. Gerola, *I monumenti medioevali delle Tredici Sporadi*, ANNUARIO, Vol. I (Bergamo 1914), σ. 352.

8. The place-name "Eftavimati" also occurs in the region of Sianna-Hagios Isidoros (Rhodes), where there are ruins of a large three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica of the simple Hellenistic type.

9. I. Volanakis, Συμβολή στην έρευνα των παλαιο-χριστιανικών μνημείων της Δωδεκανήσου [Contribution to the study of the Early Christian monuments of the Dodecanese], *rp.* from the "Dodecanesiaca Chronica", vol. XII (Athens 1987), 83.

10. A lime kiln also stands beside the Early Christian basilica at Orviaki (Haraki, Malona, Rhodes), where again very few marble fragments remain. This was an all too common phenomenon, since marble is of course the best material for producing lime.

11. This name is probably a corruption of the word "Jerusalem". The ruins of a large Early Christian basilica with a mosaic floor in Hora Kalymnos (Limniotissa) known as "Christ Ierousalim" is traditionally associated with Jerusalem.

12. I. Volanakis, *ΑΔ 33* (1978), Part II-2 *Chronica* (1985), 412, plates 216 γ-δ.

13. A. Orlandos, *ABME*, vol. 6 (1948), 87 and 94, fig. 79 (ground plan-section).

14. This architectural type (free cross plan) is very common in mediaeval churches in Rhodes.

15. This apse is unusually large for churches of this period in the Dodecanese. It most likely belonged to an earlier church, and was incorporated into the existing structure. The apse is almost always more carefully constructed than the rest of the church, and with thicker walls, and thus generally survives the ravages of time and natural disaster better than the remainder of the building.

16. The existence of a ciborium above the altar in this church constitutes a survival of an Early Christian tradition. The function of the ciborium was to exalt the

altar; it represents the heavens, and it is thought that the new architectural type of the domed basilica was a development that grew out of the placing of the ciborium above the altar inside the church.

17. Early in the 20th century, and certainly before World War II.

18. Until the end of the 18th century the dates in founders' inscriptions on churches in the Dodecanese were customarily written with Greek characters and not in Arabic numerals.

19. The tiling was done in the summer of 1985 by the 4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, using its own specialised work crew.

20. In 1676 and 1677, according to the preserved founders' inscriptions.

21. They have been damaged by time, damp and the soot from burning incense and candles.

22. The roofing of the NW and SW additions was not tiled in 1985, like the original building, but was left as it was, covered with hydraulic mortar. It appears that the mediaeval churches of the Dodecanese originally had tiled roofs. When damaged these tiles were sometimes replaced by similar new tiles or were covered with a wash of hydraulic mortar made from pulverised tiles or other terra cotta shards mixed with lime, sand and water, which produced a very strong, waterproof mortar.

23. Ch. Koutelakis, *Ξυλόγλυπτα τέμπλα της Δωδεκανήσου μέχρι το 1700* [Carved wooden iconostases of the Dodecanese up to 1700], Athens 1986..

24. John 19: 25-27.

25. Evidently to allow the icon to be placed on a stand and borne in processions. It would seem that, before the iconostasis was raised, these icons stood on stands placed in front of the screen

26. Matt. 16: 24-25: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it...". This text differs at certain points from the Nestle-Aland version, and presents relatively few errors of spelling. One noteworthy feature is the alternation of Σ and C.

27. Ioannis" (John). This is probably the name of the donor of the silver covering.

28. Ioannis" (John). This is probably the name of the donor of the silver covering.

29. The icon was evidently repaired in 1875, paid for by Panagiotis Vasileiou.

30. John 1: 29-30, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me...".

31. Lord our God, the Bread of Heaven...". From the oblation prayer in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, *Hieratikon*, 70.

32. No one bound by [worldly desires and pleasures] is worthy...". These are the first words of the prayer said during the Cherubic Hymn in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, *Hieratikon*, 86-87. Cf. I. Volanakis, *St George Apodoulou*, 45

33. Heb. 11: 33, "... stopped the mouths of lions...". I Peter 5: 8, "... the devil, as a roaring lion ...". Cf Psalm 91: 13, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot". Cf also F.W. Deichmann, *Ravenna. Geschichte und Monumente*, Band I (Wiesbaden 1963), 203-204.

34. K. Gallas, *Rhodos*, 242-245

35. A. Xyngopoulos, *Outline*, 230, n. 3: "The warrior

slain by St Demetrios is Kalojan, Tsar of Bulgaria, who was murdered by one of his generals while preparing to besiege Thessalonica in 1207. The people of the city ascribed his death to a miracle performed by their patron saint”.

36. A. Tsitouridou, St Nicholas Orphanos, plates 1-2.

37. Dionysios, Manual, 218.

38. Matt. 26: 26-27; Luke 22: 19.

39. Matt. 26, 27-28; Luke 22, 20.

40. I. Volanakis, St George Apodoulou, 44 ff. I. Volanakis, St George Vatheiakou, 17. I. Volanakis, Saint Theodores, 20 ff.

41. “The Holy God, dwelling amongst His saints, praised by the Seraphim with the thrice-holy hymn...”. Prayer of the Thrice-holy Hymn, from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 79.

42. “Lord our God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance, ...”. Prayer from the Second Antiphon in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 76.

43. I. Volanakis, St George Apodoulou, 45. I. Volanakis, Saint Theodores, 21.

44. “Lord our God, the Bread of Heaven, the food of the whole world, the...”. From the oblation prayer in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 70.

45. I. Volanakis, St George Apodoulou, 46-47, plates 33-34.

46. “No one of those is worth who is bound by carnal desire...”. From the prayer said during the Cherubic Hymn in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 86-87.

47. Dionysios, Manual, 156: “Hypatios, an old man with a pointed beard. Sept. 16”.

48. This shows that the church was decorated before the 17th century and that traces of the early painting must still exist beneath the later work.

49. The inscription is badly faded.

50. Dionysios, Manual, 269: In the list of bishops, “Hermolaos, an old man with a pointed beard”.

51. “Lord Jesus Christ, our God, hear us from Your holy dwelling place and from the glorious throne of Your kingdom...” Prayer from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 101.

52. A. Grabar, La Sainte Face de Laon, le Mandylion dans l’art orthodoxe, Saminarium Kondakovianum, Prague 1931, 24-31. I. Volanakis, St George Vatheiakou, 17. Dionysios, Manual, 215: “... between the Evangelists, on the summits of the facades of the arches, on the east side paint the Mandylion and on the west the Holy Tile ...”.

A. Xyngopoulos, Outline, 67, 258.

53. Luke 1: 26-38. I. Volanakis, St George Apodoulou, 29. I. Volanakis, St George Vatheiakou, 24-25. I. Volanakis, Saint Theodores, 25. Dionysios, Manual, 85.

54. N. Ghioles, Η Ανάληψις του Χριστού βάσει των μνημείων της Α’ χιλιετηρίδος [The Ascension of Christ based on the monuments of the first millennium], Athens 1981, 17 ff. M. Acheimastou, Philanthropenon, 39, 41, 159, 177, 189.

55. Gen. 18: 1-15.

56. Dionysios, Manual, 157, 207, 267. M. Acheimastou, Philanthropenon, 47.

57. “Lord God of the heavens, hear me and save me...”.

58. “Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed and glorious Lady...”. Acclamation after the blessing of the holy gifts, from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 96.

59. “Master, Lord our God, You have established in heaven...”. From the prayer of the Little Entrance, from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Hieratikon, 121.

60. Acts 6: 8-7, 60. I. Volanakis, St George Apodoulou, 56-

57.

61. Gen. 22: 1-14.

62. Dionysios, Manual, 154, 171.

63. The half-length figure of Christ is depicted naked, the head fallen to one side, “without comeliness or beauty”. Cf E. Kollias, Knights, 107.

64. There is a mosaic representation of Christ Pantokrator (11th c.) in the dome of the katholikon of the Dafniou Monastery in Attica. The

domes of those mediaeval churches that have domes are as a rule decorated with this image.

65. Cf. Exod. 3:14, “I am that I am”.

66. This is the so-called concordance of the two Testaments, that is, that the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New.

67. Scenes from the Book of Revelation were used to decorate post-Byzantine churches. There may have been a topical element to this choice of subject matter, since after Rhodes had fallen to the Turks in 1522 many Christians believed that the end of the world was nigh.

68. Rev. 4: 2-4, “And behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold”.

69. This is the illustration of the opening of the four seals, in Rev. 6: 1-8.

70. Rev. 6: 2, “And behold a white horse: and he that sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer”.

71. Rev. 6: 4, “And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword”.

72. Rev. 6: 5, “And lo a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand”.

73. Rev. 6: 8, “And behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death; and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death and with the beasts of the earth”.

74. Rev. 7: 9, “And, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues ... and palms in their hands”.

75. Rev. 12: 3, “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great [red] dragon”.

76. Rev. 6: 13, “And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind”.

77. Rev. 12: 1, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars”.

78. Rev. 14: 1-2, “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”

79. Rev. 13.

80. In earlier times it was very common for the village churchyard to serve as the village cemetery. I. Volanakis, Το χωριό Αποδούλου Αμαρίου Ρεθύμνης και η ιστορία του [The village of Apodoulou, near Amario, Rethymno, and its history], Athens 1982, 80.

81. Excavations in almost all the small mediaeval churches in the Old Town of Rhodes that were built before the

capitulation of the island to the Turks in 1522 have revealed countless burials, vaulted tombs and masonry pit-graves.

82. Excavation of an Early Christian basilica (Basilica E, Koimeteriake) at Mese, Ancient Corinth, showed it to have been used, inside and out, as a cemetery for the Christians of the city. Similarly, many burial vaults were found in the SW sector of Basilica B (Kraneiou) in Corinth. D. Pallas, *Ανασκαφή της βασιλικής του Κρανείου εν Κορίνθω* [Excavation of the Basilica of Kraneiou at Corinth], PAE 1976, vol. I (Athens 1978), 163 ff.

83. There are other inscriptions on the inner walls of the church as well:

a. On the south side of the west arm:

“1917 πῆνα μεγάλη [1917 great hunger]

1941 πῆνα μεγάλη” [1941 great hunger].

b. On the north side of the west arm:

“Πείνα μεγάλη το 1944 [Great hunger in 1944]

Ι(ωάννης) Σ(τέργιου) Γιαννάς” [I(oannis) S(tergiou) Yannas]”.

84. Dionysios, Manual, 144: “Houses; in the midst is the Virgin lying dead upon bed, with her hands crossed upon her breast. By the bed on either side stand candelabra with lighted candles, and a Hebrew is before the bed with his hands cut off ...”.

85. A. Xyngopoulos, Outline, 318.

86. A. Xyngopoulos, Outline, 207. F. Drossoyanni, *Σχόλια στις τοιχογραφίες της εκκλησίας του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Προδρόμου στη Μεγάλη Καστάνια Μάνης* [Commentary on the murals of the Church of St John the Forerunner at Megali Kastania, Mani], Athens 1982, 178.

87. Matt. 28: 1-8.

88. Luke 24: 13-32.

89. John 20: 1-10.

90. John 21: 1-14.

91. John 5: 1-16: “After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered... And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years...”.

92. John 4: 1-42.

93. John 9: 1-7.

94. Matt. 12: 9-13.

95. Dionysios, Manual, 156.

96. The veneration of St Michael is very widespread throughout the Dodecanese, and many churches and monasteries are dedicated to him. In almost all of them the Archangel is depicted full-length, and of colossal size. I. Volanakis, *Saint Theodores*, 46. Cf. J. P. Rohland, *Der Erzengel Michael, Arzt und Feldherr. Zwei Aspekte des vor – und frühbyzantinischen Michael - kultes*, Leiden 1977

97. In Ancient Greek mythology the souls of the dead descended into the underworld, conducted by Charon, who ferried them across the rivers Acheron and Styx, for which service they had pay him a coin. His place was assumed, in the minds of the common people, after Christianity became established, by the Archangel Michael

98. G. Gerola, *Annuario*, I (1914), 351. I. Volanakis, AD 33 (1978), Part II, 2-Chronica, 412.

99. G. Gerola, *Annuario*, I (1914), 351. I. Volanakis, AD 33 (1978), Part II, 2 -Chronica, 412.

100. Matt. 27: 33-37. E. Kollias, Knights, 110.

101. Matt. 27: 57-61.

102. I. Volanakis, *St George Apodoulou*, 36. E. Kollias, Knights, 90.

103. John 20: 19-29. E. Kollias, Knights, 124.

104. Dionysios, Manual, 163: “St Athanasios the Athonite,

an old man, bald, with a pointed beard”. See also idem, 295.

105. St Ephrem, theologian and hymnographer, was born in about 306 in Nisibis, which he left in 363 for Edessa, where he died (373). Cf. B. Altaner - A. Stuiber, *Petrologie*, Freiburg -Basel -Wien 1966, 343-346.

106. Dionysios, Manual, 128, 147.

107. Dionysios, Manual, 162, 219.

108. Dionysios, Manual, 165: “St Onouphrios, an old man, naked, with long hair and a beard down to his feet ...”.

109. Dionysios, Manual, 157: “Merkourios, a young man with an incipient beard. November 25”.

110. I. I. Volanakis, *St George Vatheiakou*, 26-27. A. Xyngopoulos, Outline, 101 ff.

111. A. Tsitouridou, *St Nicholas Orphanos*, 52, plates 70 - 71.

112. It is worth noting that the depiction of scenes from the creation is rarely found in mediaeval churches in the Dodecanese. It does occur in relatively late monuments, dating from the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Cf. E. Kollias, *Knights*, 128 ff, Rhodes – Holy Trinity (Dolapli). The depiction of scenes from the creation in the arch of the western arm and the monumental composition of the Second Coming on the west side of the same arm has symbolic significance; it declares the beginning and the end of the world, the fulfilment of time and history. It is certainly connected with the eschatological tendencies of the period: the advance of the Turks was thought to portend the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world.

113. Gen. 1: 1-2. E. Kollias, Knights, 128.

114. Gen. 1: 3-5.

115. Gen. 1: 9-10.

116. Gen. 1: 14-19.

117. Gen. 1: 26-27.

118. Gen. 1: 19-20. E. Kollias, Knights, 133.

119. Gen. 2: 21-24.

120. Gen. 2: 8-14 and 2, 25.

121. Gen. 3: 1-5.

122. Gen. 3: 6.

123. Gen. 2: 23-25. E. Kollias, Knights, 135.

124. E. Kollias, Knights, 59.

125. E. Kollias, Knights, 59.

126. M. Acheimastou, *Philanthropenon*, 47 ff.

127. M. Acheimastou, *Philanthropenon*, 49.

128. M. Acheimastou, *Philanthropenon*, 49.

129. M. Acheimastou, *Philanthropenon*, 50-51.

130. This is the scene known as the “Blessing of the Priests”. M. Acheimastou, *Philanthropenon*, 52-53.

131. M. Acheimastou, *Philanthropenon*, 53.

132. The Death of the Just Man is also depicted on the south side of the north addition to the Church of Our Lady in Lindos. A. Orlandos, *ABME*, vol. 6 (1948), 203-204, plate 154.

133. The same number cited by Dionysios of Phourna. Dionysios, Manual, 162.

134. Dionysios, Manual, 162: “Saint Kyros, an old man, bald, with a long beard divided into two points”. His feast day is January 31. I. Volanakis, *St George Vatheiakou*, 22.

135. Dionysios, Manual, 270: “John, grey-haired, with a pointed beard”. His feast day is January 31. I. Volanakis, *St George Vatheiakou*, 22. Sophronios of Jerusalem, *Βίος και πολιτεία και μαρτύριον και μερική των θαυμάτων διήγησις των Αγίων ενδόξων Αναργύρων Κύρου και Ιωάννου* [Life and conduct and martyrdom and partial account of the miracles of the glorious healing saints Cyrus and John], PG 87, I, lines 3577-3696. It is interesting to note that there is a place called “Kyronniates” in the commune of Maritsa (Rhodes) where at least two later churches have been built over the ruins of an Early Christian three-aisled basilica, which



were in all likelihood dedicated to the Healing Saints Kyros and John. To this day a popular cult connected with healing is practised on the site.

136. Dionysios, Manual, 162: "Diomedes, a young man with a pointed beard".

137. Dionysios, Manual, 162: "Saint Hermolaos, an old priest with a pointed beard. July 26". I. Volanakis, St George Vatheiakou, 21.

138. Dionysios, Manual, 162: "Tryphon, a young man, beardless, with curly hair".

139. Dionysios, Manual, 162.

140. The three unidentified Saints of Poverty are: a) Panteleemon, b) Sampson and c) Thallelaios.

141. Dionysios, Manual, 162: "Photios and Anicetus, young men, beardless. August 12".

142. Dionysios, Manual, 162: "Photios and Anicetus, young men, beardless. August 12".

143. Dionysios, Manual, 169, 206: "July 17. St Marina dies by the sword".

144. Dionysios, Manual, 166: "St John Kalybites, a young man, beardless, holding a closed book of the Gospels. January 15".

145. Anonymous C, PG, 116, 1380. I. Volanakis, St George Apodoulou, 52.

146. Gen.3: 23-24.

147. Gen.3: 1-7.

148. Gen.3: 23.

149. Gen.3: 24.

150. Gen.3: 21: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them".

151. Gen.4: 1-2.

152. Gen. 4: 2.

153. Gen. 4: 2.

154. Gen. 4: 3-5. E. Kollias, Knights, 136.

155. Gen. 4: 8. E. Kollias, Knights, 136.

156. Gen. 4: 9-10.

157. Gen. 4: 11-12.

158. Mal. 4: 1.

159. Luke: 22, 47-48. Dionysios, Manual, 104, 275.

160. Luke: 22, 54-61. E. Kollias, Knights, 62.

161. Luke: 23, 1-25. E. Kollias, Knights, 67.

162. Dionysios, Manual, 81, 106.

163. Luke: 23, 26.

164. This image counterbalances that of the death of the just man.

165. C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, Lipsiae 1853, Protoevangelion of James, ch. VII. Dionysios, Manual, 114. I. Volanakis, St George Vatheiakou, 18-19.

166. Protoevangelion of James, ch. IX.

167. Daniel 2: 28-36.

168. Daniel 1: 1 ff. I. Volanakis, St George Vatheiakou, 59.

169. Daniel 2: 37-45.

170. Daniel 6: 16 ff: "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions ...".

171. Daniel 3: 21 ff: "Then these men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace..."

172. A. Orlandos, ABME, vol. 6 (1948), 213

173. Dionysios, Manual, 170.

174. Dionysios, Manual, 169. I. Volanakis, Saint Theodores, 62.

175. Dionysios, Manual, 170.

176. Dionysios, Manual, 157: "Victor and Vicentios, young men, beardless"

177. Dionysios, Manual, 157: "Menas the Egyptian, an old man with a rounded beard. November 11".

178. Dionysios, Manual, 157. M. Acheimastou, Philanthropenon, 168.

179. I. Volanakis, Saint Theodores, 58-59. M. Acheimastou, Philanthropenon, 105-106.

180. I. Volanakis, Saint Theodores, 59. M. Acheimastou, Philanthropenon, 102, 104. A. Xyngopoulos, Outline, 321.

181. M. Garidis, *Etudes sur le Jugement Dernier post-byzantin du XVe a la fin du XIXe siècle. Iconographie – Esthétique*, Thessalonique 1985.

182. From the Nicene Creed. Cf I Thess. 4: 13-18.

183. Matt. 19: 28: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel".

184. The belief that after death the soul is weighed and that the fate of the deceased depends on whether, his good and evil acts having been placed in the balance, he is "found wanting", is a very ancient one. Balances were found among the grave offerings in the pit-graves in burial area "A" at Mycenae, suggesting this very concept. Similarly, there are representations of the weighing of souls in ancient Egyptian tombs.

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