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Redating the Basilica of Dormition, Kalampaka, Thessaly

With 37 illustrations

Abstract: Up to this day, the three-aisled basilica of the Dormition of the Virgin in Kalampaka was regarded by the scholars as a 12th c. construction on the ruins of an early Christian basilica. New evidence during recent restoration work and careful study of the building have revealed that the early Christian building never existed and that the original construction of the building, which was paved with a mosaic floor, dates probably from the 9th – early 10th c. This early-byzantine building has survived to the present day, with minor reconstructions and alterations in the 11–12th c. and again in the 16th c., and with the addition of the exonarthex in the 18th c. The study of the marble furnishings led to the reconstruction of the original 11–12th c. marble templon of the church, as well as to the conclusion that the actual marble furnishing (parts of the templon, ciborium, ambo) belong to a uniform group that dates from the period around 1100.

A. INTRODUCTION

The basilica of the Dormition of the Virgin in Kalampaka is generally considered to be one of the most important monuments of Thessaly, Greece. Built at the upper side of the town of Kalampaka, on the northern part of an artificial terrace that is cut into the famous Meteora rocks, it overlooks a small valley of the Peneios River. Despite its importance, the church of the Dormition remains a relatively unknown building. The difficulty in distinguishing and dating its successive construction phases is depicted in the controversy of the published literature[1].

B. HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

The basilica of Kalampaka was the cathedral of the bishopric of Stagoi, the name of the town that preceded Kalampaka, and was built on the site of the ancient acropolis of Aiginion[2]. The historical evidence regarding the Byzantine city is scarce. As far as we know, the oldest mention of the town by the name of Stagoi dates from the beginning of the 10th c. in the "Diatyposis" of Leo VI[3], where

[1] A description of the building was first published by G. SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως τῆς Θεοτόκου ἐν Καλαμπάκᾳ. *EEBS* 6 (1929) 291–315, along with fairly accurate drawings, considering the era. Reference to the building was later made by N. MOUTSOPOULOS, Ἀνασκαφὴ τῆς βασιλικῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀχιλλείου. *Epistimoneke Epeteris Polytechnikes Scholes Aristoteleiou Panepistemiou Thessalonikes* (1971/1972) 144–436. Dating attempts were also made by A. XYNGOPOULOS, Τά μνημεῖα τῶν Σερβίων. Athens 1957, 48, n. 4; N. NIKONANOS, Βυζαντινοί ναοί της Θεσσαλίας από τον 10ο αιώνα ως την κατάκτηση της περιοχής από τους Τούρκους, 1393. Athens 1979, 15, n. 24 and P. VOKOTOPOULOS,Ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ εἰς την Δυτικὴν Στερεάν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὴν Ἤπειρον ἀπὸ τοῦ τέλους τοῦ 7ου μέχρι τοῦ τέλους τοῦ 10ου αἰώνος. Thessaloniki 1975, 203, n. 2.

[2] C. ASTRUC, Un document inédit de 1163 sur l'évêché Thessalien de Stagoi. *BCH* 83 (1959) 220 and n. 1. A. AVRAMEA, Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ Θεσσαλία μέχρι τοῦ 1204. Συμβολὴν εἰς τὴν ιστορικὴν γεωγραφία. Athens 1974, 159; J. KODER – F. HILD, Hellas und Thessalia (*TIB* 1). Wien 1976, 262–263. Though not commonly accepted, the identification of Aiginion with Kalampaka seems rather secure. The name of the ancient city is mainly known by epigraphic and historical evidence. The acropolis of the city occupied the same rock on which the church of the Panagia was constructed. Nevertheless, no written or epigraphic evidence of the city occurs during the early Christian period.

[3] J. DARROUZÈS, Notitiae episcopatuum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Texte critique, introduction et notes (*Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin* 1). Paris 1981, 284. H. GELZER, Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der Notitiae Episcopatuum, ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Kirchen- und Verwaltungsgeschichte (*Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der königlich-bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 21). München 1901, 557. Scant information on the town of Stagoi was gathered by AVRAMEA, Βυζαντινὴ Θεσσαλία 158–161. An extensive historical

its bishopric belongs to the metropolis of Larissa. However, after the end of the Bulgarian Wars, the emperor Basil II ceded the bishopric of Stagoi to the Bulgarian archbishopric of Ochrid by a sigillion issued after May 1020[4]. This situation did not last long[5], because in the Taktikon no. 10, dated after 1204, the bishopric of Stagoi was again listed under the Metropolis of Larissa[6]. The name Stagoi also occurs in the text of Skylitzes (second half of the 11th c.)[7]. According to the oldest, partly preserved manuscript related to the bishopric of Stagoi, a document of 1163, the town then belonged to the Theme of Servia, in Northern Greece[8].

According to documents from 1163[9], 1336, and 1339, the town of Stagoi repeatedly acquired funds and privileges from the Byzantine emperors; at least two of these documents, a chrysobul issued by the emperor Andronicus III (1336) and a sigillion issued by the Patriarch of Constantinople (1393), were later copied on the northern wall of the narthex in the Church of the Virgin[10].

The name "Kalampaka," which replaced that of Stagoi, is probably of Turkish origin. In an official Ottoman document, the town Stagoi (Istagos) is also mentioned as Kalabaqqaya, meaning "the rock with the monks' hoods"[11]. In their accounts, travelers who visited the city, such as Leake[12] and Heuzey[13] left descriptions of the cathedral with its magnificent ambo. Important information is also provided by the Russian monk V. Barskij[14], who drew sketches of the Meteora Monasteries in 1745.

C. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

1. General description

The church of the Virgin is a three-aisled basilica, with two subsequent narthexes, of overall dimensions 30 × 20 × 13.10 m, not including the three semicircular apses to the east (Figs. 1–3). The aisles are divided with walls pierced by two pairs of double arches supported by columns (Fig. 2). The sanctuary occupies the eastern part of the aisles, clearly distinguished from the rest of the church by a high, wooden, gilded iconostasis. The main apse is of a larger diameter (Figs. 2, 5), while the nave walls form a clerestory pierced by windows on both sides (Figs. 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12).

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account on the Bishopric of Stagoi was published by D. Sofianos, Η επισκοπή Σταγών. Σύντομο ιστορικό διάγραμμα. Kalampaka 2004.

[4] Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453, bearbeitet von F. Dölger, 1. Teil, 2. Halbband: Regesten von 867–1025. Zweite Auflage, neu bearbeitet von A. E. Müller unter verantwortlicher Mitarbeit von A. Beihammer. München 2003, No. 808 (219); H. Gelzer, Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche. *BZ* 2 (1893) 46; Avramea, Βυζαντινὴ Θεσσαλία 53, 160.

[5] It appears that the change took place during the reign of Manuel Comnenos (Astruc, Un document 229; Avramea, Βυζαντινὴ Θεσσαλία 53).

[6] Darrouzès, Notitiae episcopatuum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae 327; G. Parthey, Hieroclis Synecdemus et Notitiae graecae episcopatuum. Berlin 1866, 217, nr. 10.

[7] Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum, ed. I. Thurn (*CFHB* 5). Berlin – New York 1973, 364, 68.

[8] Astruc, Un document 220; E. Vranoussi, Το αρχαιότερο σωζόμενο έγγραφο για τη Θεσσαλική Επισκοπή Σταγών (του έτους 1163). Ανέκδοτα τεμάχια του εγγράφου και μερικές πρώτες παρατηρήσεις. *Symm* 7 (1987) 19–32.

[9] Astruc, Un document 216.

[10] The most recent publication of these already well-known documents comes from D. Sofianos, Acta Stagorum. Τα υπέρ της θεσσαλικής επισκοπής Σταγών παλαιά βυζαντινά έγγραφα (των ετών 1163, 1336 και 1393). Συμβολή στην ιστορία της επισκοπής. *Trikalina* 13 (1993) 7–67 (including the older bibliography).

[11] Sofianos, Η επισκοπή Σταγών 21. This explanation appears to be more plausible than the argument for an Arabic origin, meaning castle, sustained by N. Beldiceanu – P.S. Nasturel, La Théssalie entre 1454/55 et 1506. *Byz* 53 (1983) 143.

[12] W.H. Leake, Travels in Northern Greece, I. London 1835, 420–421.

[13] L. Heuzey, Excursions dans la Théssalie turque en 1858. Paris 1927, 125–128.

[14] V. Grigorovich-Barskij, Stranstvovanijia Vasilija Grigorovica Barskogo po sjiatim mestam Vostoka s 1723 po 1747, II. St. Petersburg 1886.

Narrow arched openings in the longitudinal walls give access from the parabemata to the bema. The inner narthex communicates with the nave through a tribelon (Figs. 2, 19, 20) and with the side aisles through simple arched openings. A rectangular door with a marble frame connects the inner to the outer narthex to the west (Fig. 26).

Timber roofs cover the whole building. The gabled roof of the nave is placed higher than the penthouse roofs of the side aisles as well as of those of the inner and outer narthexes. The roof was reconstructed in the 1980's by the Greek Ministry of Culture, except for the horizontal tie beams of the nave, while the tiles were recently replaced during restoration work.

Continuous reconstructions over the centuries have made the accurate chronological placement of the building difficult. In 1929, Soteriou[15], who provided us with the first thorough study of the monument, could not avoid serious mistakes in distinguishing between the different building phases. He assumed that the church was built on the ruins of a 5th c. basilica on the basis of a partially conserved mosaic floor beneath the actual floor level of the bema, along with the existence of a synthronon (Fig. 15) and marble furnishings (ambo, ciborium), which he considered to be of an early Christian origin (Figs. 28–34). His assumption has since been accepted as fact. He dated the main church and the inner narthex to the 11th or early 12th c., according to the date of the wall paintings on the northern wall of the diakonikon, and argued that the side aisles had been originally roofed with barrel vaults that were replaced by timber roofs during the 16th c. after an earthquake. He also dated the outer narthex to the 16th c. His theory was generally accepted and has been reinforced by additional research done by N. Nikonanos in 1970. He conducted new soundings that again revealed the mosaic floor at a depth of 0.25 m below the floor of the bema and 0.10 m below the floor of the nave[16]. Nikonanos assumed that the early Christian basilica, to which the mosaic floor was assigned, would have had exactly the same general plan as the middle Byzantine church, since the walls and columns that separate the aisles as well as the outer walls of the Byzantine church appeared to coincide exactly with those of the former basilica. With this assumption, he supported the hypothesis of Soteriou. Recent restoration work, carried out under the supervision of the Greek Ministry of Culture, and a subsequent study by the authors, revealed new evidence that allowed us to further clarify the building's long construction history[17].

2. Exterior

The three semicircular apses that protrude from the eastern wall are covered with conical tiled roofs (Fig. 4, 5). These apses are constructed from rubble masonry, consisting of small stones and thin bricks arranged horizontally and vertically, respectively, although not in the form of the regular cloisonné masonry used in southern Greece during the middle Byzantine period. Nevertheless, at the lower part of the central apse, a different kind of rubble masonry with irregular finishing is observed, consisting of larger stones without bricks (Fig. 5). A single dentil course over a double layer of horizontal bricks forms the level cornice under the base of the conical roofs.

The larger central apse is pierced on the outside by three arched windows of equal dimensions. Their arches are constructed with stone voussoirs, not particularly well joined, outlined by a plain brick strip. The intermediate window jambs are pillars built of half-dressed stones alternating with bricks, i.e., in the same manner as the rest of the wall, but more carefully executed. The exterior jambs are simple rectangular stone blocks. The central window is completely walled-up with

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[15] Soteriou, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως. An earlier bibliography will be discussed in detail later.

[16] N. Nikonanos, Βυζαντινά και Μεσαιωνικά Μνημεία Θεσσαλίας. *AD* 25 B (1970) 290–291, pl. 246a–c. The level of the mosaic floor must have been continuous, since the actual floor of the bema is one step higher than that of the nave.

[17] The plaster coating, which covered the exterior of the church when Soteriou studied it, has been removed. We thus had the opportunity to observe many additional details regarding the construction of the building.

bricks, while the side windows are reduced in height by the addition of a more recent threshold. The transformation of the windows dates from a period earlier than the 16th c. painted decoration of the interior, since the wall paintings cover the walled-up sections (Fig. 15).

The northern apse (that of the prothesis) is pierced by a single arched window of approximately the same construction as those of the main apse, except for the jambs, which do not differ from the rest of the masonry. The lower part of the window is also walled-up with bricks. The southern apse (that of the diakonikon) is of equal dimensions to the northern apse and has a similar window that is completely walled-up.

The eastern wall of the clerestory, above the apses, terminates under the gabled roof in a pediment, outlined by a single dentil course. The same dentil course, this time double, is used under the lower penthouse roofs of the side aisles. A large double arched window is opened on the pediment wall (Fig. 6), which belongs to the "arcade-type" window, with equal lobes, and it is constructed with careful brickwork. Both lobes are outlined by a single brick strip. A marble mullion, of which only the impost is still in place, has a beveled font decorated with a cross, while part of the shaft that originally supported the arches is embedded in the right jamb. A horizontal lintel was inserted when the marble shaft was cut. The painted decoration of the interior corresponds to the shape of the window, indicating that it succeeded the construction of the window.

The masonry of the upper part of the pediment and around this window is carefully constructed with articulated cloisonné of dressed stones and double surrounding bricks. This part of the wall, obviously of a different construction, must belong to a later phase than the rest of the eastern wall and the apses.

Building blocks derived from earlier buildings are embedded in the southeastern corner (Fig. 7). Blocks from ancient buildings are used throughout the whole length of the southern wall, from the eastern corner to the western end of the inner narthex. This section of the wall belongs to a homogenous building phase (Fig. 8), which is different to the phase of the outer narthex, and is clearly distinguished by an obvious vertical joint (Fig. 1–3). The southern wall was constructed with the same rather carelessly executed cloisonné masonry as the lower part of the eastern wall, i.e., with small half-dressed stones framed by horizontal and vertical bricks. Spolia from ancient statues, funerary stellae, bases, marble pediments, relief slabs with rosaces, column shafts, inscriptions, and even parts of a Byzantine marble cornice decorated with an undulating vine scroll are embedded throughout the masonry (Fig. 1).

At the eastern part of the external wall of the southern aisle there is a large arched window. Its arch is made of small stone voussoirs exactly like the arches in the apses (Fig. 7). Two stone blocks decorated with Latin crosses, probably spolia from a doorframe, are embedded at the base of the jambs. The arch of the window is outlined by a dentil course that bends at its base to become a straight course running the length of this phase. Further to the west, two doors are opened on the wall. The eastern one has a molded marble doorframe with a corresponding threshold and appears to belong to the original phase of the church, since the threshold stands 0.10 m lower than the actual interior floor level (a section of the floor on the inner side remains 0.10 m lower than the rest). Above the lintel, a relieving arch, forming a recess in the inside, was revealed after the plaster was removed. It has the same construction of small voussoirs as the nearby window arch. The western door, with a simple wooden doorframe, was opened later, cutting off the interior wall decoration. The arches of a blocked-up, large double window are still visible over the doorframe with the same form as those described before (Fig. 1). The single dentil course that runs the length of the southern façade outlines the arches of all of these openings. The walling up of the window preceded the 16th c. wall paintings.

An even larger door opening can be traced on the inner narthex wall, which was also blocked before the 16th c. decorations (Fig. 1). It is constructed in a similar manner to the other arched openings of this wall and is outlined with the aforementioned dentil course, which terminates with

a final bend at the western end of the inner narthex wall. Therefore, we can be certain that the whole wall, up to the western end of the inner narthex, was constructed in a single building phase, together with the aforementioned arched windows and doors (Fig. 8). Above the walled up narthex door, the marble cornice (in the form of a pediment sima with an undulating vine scroll relief decoration) is embedded in the wall. Fragments of painted plaster have sporadically survived on the southern facade. An inscription of the year 1792 was recorded here[18], mentioning the name of the painter Demetrios Kalonitis from Kleinovos (who was also responsible for the painted decoration of the western wall of the outer narthex), but it is not evident today. An open portico, traced only by the sockets for the timber beams, covered the wall paintings of the southern wall[19].

Irregular cloisonné masonry is found above these openings, similar to that of the eastern pediment façade, implying a homogeneous construction phase: rubble stones, separated by two vertical bricks, alternate with double horizontal courses of bricks (Fig. 1). This masonry extends up to a penthouse roof, which can be clearly traced on the southern and northern walls (Fig. 13). Thus, it appears that the roof of the narthex was originally much lower than at the present time, i.e., a little lower than the roofs of the side aisles.

The roof was raised considerably at a later date, reaching the height of the eaves of the clerestory walls, as it can be seen today (Fig. 1–13). This additional part of the wall was constructed of plain rubble masonry with the sparse use of irregular single or double courses of bricks, with the exception of a single course of bricks running across the length of the wall (probably in order to straighten the masonry above the original wall level). On the upper part of this wall there is an arched window with a double brick arch, which appears to be the result of a modified original circular window[20]. This alteration preceded the 16th c. decoration of the interior, since the wall paintings follow the actual outline of the window. Therefore, the window should be dated after the walls were raised and before the interior was decorated.

Three built-up buttresses with protruding iron beams lie against the wall. Two additional buttresses are built vertical to the eastern side of the wall. The left one originally connected the church to the Episcopal palace, of which only a small part still survives. The iron buttresses were constructed during the 1912–1913 restoration work and were removed during the 21st c. works.

Three skylights are located on the roof of the southern aisle (Fig. 8). Five arched windows pierce the southern clerestory wall whose arches were constructed with the same stone voussoirs and present a similar general form as the wall openings of the southern aisle located below. A single dentil course runs the length of the wall and outlines the window arches. A ceramic quadrangular plaque is embedded in the wall on both sides of each window, and these may have once been decorated with painting or an inscription, but are now completely washed-out. Over these windows, an alteration in the masonry, marked by the increased use of horizontally set bricks, implies a different construction phase. A double dentil brick cornice runs under the roof of the clerestory. Extended remains of the plaster coating, which once covered the outside surfaces of the building, can be traced in that area.

As mentioned earlier, the wall of the outer narthex can be distinguished clearly from the rest of the southern façade (Fig. 1). Its rubble masonry consists of small stones and bricks, usually set horizontally and sometimes in successive courses, but without regularity. The small rectangular window high up on the southern wall, consisting of roughly set bricks on thick layers of mortar, was a modification of an original double-arched window, of which only the arches are still visible. The walls terminate at the same cornice of a double dentil course that we observed on the eastern wall

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[18] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 312.

[19] This portico was still in existence in 1929 when Soteriou published his study.

[20] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 294. The external one belongs to the original circular opening, while the internal one was added later to reduce the width and to form the arch of the window.

of the clerestory. The roof of the outer narthex is inclined and placed slightly lower than the actual roof of the inner narthex.

The western façade consists of large dressed blocks, probably in their second use, up to the middle of its height (Figs. 9–10). The rest of the masonry is poorly constructed, consisting of smaller stones and brick fragments, although it also terminates at the cornice of a double brick dentil course. The wide main entrance to the church has an arch made of local grayish limestone. Above it, a shallow arched recess of the same material bears a painted dedication of the church. A skylight is opened on the tile roof of both the outer and inner narthex.

On the western pediment of the clerestory there is an impressive triple arched window, partly blocked by the elevated roof of the inner narthex (Fig. 10). It belongs to the "grouped-type" window, where three uneven arched brick windows are inscribed within a larger brick arch, of which the middle window is stilted and clumsily pushed between the others. Marble mullions with beveled imposts support the arched openings. The brick border of the outer arch would have once extended down to the sill level. A single brick strip outlines the arches. A dentil course bordered by simple brick strips decorates the tympanum, and perhaps another existed immediately below, where rubble masonry now fills the space between the two remaining simple brick bands[21]. The western pediment terminates under the roof in a dentil course, identical to the eastern pediment. Both pediments project over the roof of the clerestory and are individually covered with tiles.

The northern façade is simpler than the eastern one (Fig 12). The masonry is analogous to that of the other sides, i.e., rubble with an abundance of irregularly set bricks. No openings currently exist on that side of the building; nevertheless, two blocked-up arched windows can be distinguished to the eastern and western ends of the northern wall (Fig. 12). Their arches consist of small stone voussoirs bordered by a single brick strip, similar to those of the southern façade, only simpler. A similar blocked-up door is visible on the western end of the wall corresponding to the inner narthex; this door is symmetrically placed to the one located in the southern wall of the same room (Fig. 13).

In the middle of the northern façade, approximately, a badly preserved wide brick arch can be observed in the masonry. Soteriou[22] assumed that this was another opening; however, its low height indicates that it may have been an arcosolium, an assumption that was proved to be correct during a recent sounding at this spot (Fig. 12)[23].

At the western end of the inner narthex wall, the joint to the wall of the outer narthex is clearly visible (Fig. 13). An alteration in masonry on the wall of the outer narthex again indicates the different building phases of the upper and lower parts. The walls terminate at the cornice of a double dentil course.

The northern wall of the clerestory is also pierced by five arched windows identical to those of the southern wall, except for the outlining dentil course (Fig. 12). There is a horizontal iron beam inserted deeply in the masonry to counterbalance, through steel tie beams, the buttresses that were added during the 1921–1923 restoration work on the opposite (southern) side of the building.

Paved courtyards flank the building on three sides. To the west, the high belfry tower stands that was built, according to an inscription, in 1887.

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[21] The use of rubble masonry is uncommon in this place.

[22] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 306.

[23] A similar arcosolium is found in the church of Dormition at Aeani near Kozani, a neighboring building of approximately the same age (unpublished observation).

3. Interior

*Holy Bema***.** The area of the sanctuary is one step higher than the rest of the church, and is clearly separated from it by three wooden iconostas, which lean on the walls and divide the bema from the parabemata (Fig. 21). The lower part of the iconostas is a recent construction (1996), while its upper part, along with the screen of the diakonikon, probably dates from the 17th c.[24].

The large semicircular apse dominates the bema area (Fig. 14). A beveled cornice, coated with plaster, underlines the springing of the semi-dome, although it is absent in the parabemata. Two arched windows, disposed symmetrically to the east-west axis of the building, although parallel to it and not radiant, pierce the wall of the apse.

Inside the apse there is a four-step synthronon, constructed of bricks and covered with gray stone slabs of various shades (Figs. 15). A row of upright slabs forms the back of the upper step. Four subsequent slabs on the left side are decorated with a Latin cross with enlarged arms in shallow relief. The off-center positioning of the crosses implies that the slabs are probably in their second use. On the main axis and at a higher position of the synthronon, the episcopal cathedra is placed on a podium constructed from the same slabs as the steps. The podium is compiled from separate marble parts, with arched back and oblique compact arms (Fig. 15). The negligence of its construction (the lower part has been repaired) suggests that the slabs used for the synthronon originally belonged to a floor revetment. The floor of the bema is covered with large flagstones similar to those of the synthronon. Two parts of column shafts with simplified impost capitals have been placed in the floor at the ends of the synthronon, in order to be used as side-tables. It is possible that they were put in this position before the actual stone floor was laid.

The altar consists of a marble slab resting on an octagonal column shaft, and is placed in the center, under the magnificent ciborium (Figs. 28–30). The ciborium is built of four slender marble column shafts lying on ionic bases and surmounted by impost capitals. Four arched marble relief slabs hold the pyramidal wooden roof.

Two marble mullions, surmounted by uniform octagonal colonettes and impost capitals, carry the horizontal beam of the wooden chancel barrier (Fig. 16). According to their form, they must have once belonged to a middle Byzantine templon, although they are not in their original position.

As described above, there are arched openings on the walls that separate the bema from the parabemata. The northern opening retains its original dimensions, while the southern opening became narrower at a later date, as can be attested by a semicircular crack in the plaster (Fig. 17). Additional proof of this is provided by the figure of Saint Bessarion, who is depicted on this area of the wall; his figure is compressed in order to fit into the narrow space, unlike the other portraits on the southern wall of the bema.

Prothesis. The lowest part of the semicircular apse of the prothesis forms a podium of 1.10 m in height, while a stone bench of the same height runs the length of the southern wall. The only lighting source of the room is a partially built-up narrow window piercing the apse.

Diakonikon. This room is divided in two by a latitudinal wall, behind which is a crypt with a quadrangular plan (Fig. 2). The western part of the diakonikon is connected to the bema through the aforementioned reduced arched opening. A large arched window on the southern wall lights the room. While the rest of the wall paintings of the church are dated by a 16th c. inscription, those on the northern wall of the diakonikon are from a much earlier date; according to Soteriou[25] they belong to the end of the 11th – beginning of the 12th c., while Xyngopoulos[26] assigned them to the end of the 12th c.

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[24] Soteriou, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 315.
[25] Soteriou, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 305.
[26] A. Xyngopoulos, Théssalonique et la peinture macédonienne. Athènes 1955, 24.

The only entrance to the crypt is a door to the west that is well concealed in a cupboard, obviously to ensure the secrecy of the passage. There is no source of light coming into the room. The eastern wall forms an apse. The room is covered with a cross-groin vault, placed considerably lower than the wooden roof of the southern aisle. Three arches, which terminate in projections of the walls, along with the apse, support the cross-groin vault. Small blind niches are opened on the walls and the apse, although they do not correspond to windows. Wall paintings have been found under the plaster peeled off from the northern wall that are similar to those assigned to the 12th c. in the outer bay of the diakonikon. These paintings are half hidden by the construction of the cross-groin vault (Fig. 17a). Obviously, the crypt was arranged long after the church was originally erected and decorated, by constructing a vaulted room of intermediate-height. The opening connecting the diakonikon to the bema was reduced in order to accommodate the crypt and the window piercing the apse was blocked.

The space between the vault and the timber roof became accessible after the roof was removed for restoration. On its northern wall, the upper part of a 12th c. Saint's medallion, which was cut off by the cross-groin vault, was found (Fig. 18). A barely discernable layer of wall painting was revealed underneath that is older than the 12th c.

Main church. As mentioned above, the nave, separated from the aisles by long walls, only communicates with the aisles through two pairs of arches (Fig. 21) and with the inner narthex through a tribelon (Figs. 19–20). The same rectangular grayish flagstones that we encountered in the sanctuary, only larger and set a step lower, cover the floor of the church (Fig. 2). The two omphalia of "verde antico" (diam. 1.25 m)[27], west of the ciborium and of the ambo, as well as the two oblong porphyry slabs flanking the latter, are probably spolia. Beneath this level, the mosaic floor was traced to a depth of 0.10 m in the nave and 0.25 m in the bema[28]. As we can judge from the published photographs, the badly preserved mosaic floor, decorated with geometric patterns, was covered or patched at a later date by a tiled floor. What was described by Nikonanos as the foundation of a stylobate, consisting of rubble masonry, was discovered in the intercolumniations between the central part of the long walls of the nave and the adjacent western columns, to a depth of 0.25 m beneath the actual floor level[29]. Nevertheless, judging from the photographs, the mosaic floor appears to have extended over the so-called foundation, leaving no room for a proper stylobate[30]. Therefore, it is more plausible that what Nikonanos saw was the original foundation of the longitudinal walls of the nave that continued uninterrupted under the openings, forming a sturdy closed rectangle; a solid technical solution for the unsteady ground on which Koimesis is situated.

Marble bases, column shafts, and capitals support the arches of the nave and tribelon. The six marble bases belong to two distinct groups. The two bases of the tribelon (Fig. 20) and the base of the southeastern column (Fig. 22) rest on uniform marble slabs, which were originally quadrangular, but have been crudely hammered to become circular. The ionic bases of this group have a complex profile: from top to bottom they consist of a volute, a scotia, a concave molding, a thin band, a

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[27] In fact, it is not genuine marble, but a breccia of green matrix with white, black, and serpentine inclusions, see I. PAPAGEORGAKIS, Τὰ εἰς τὴν μαρμαρικὴν τέχνην χρήσιμα πετρώματα τῆς Ἑλλάδος. *Annales Géologiques des Pays Helléniques* 18 (1967) 244. On the "verde antico" see also O. KARAGIORGOU, The Thessalian verde antico in Byzantine Art (paper presented in the International Symposium of "New Approaches to Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece". Corfu 1–3 May 1998). *Newsletter of the Association for the Study of Marble and Other Stones in Antiquity (ASMOSIA)* 12.1 (spring 1999), 3 (Abstract), and recently I. LAZZARINI – S. CANCELLIERE, Marmor Thessalicum (verde antico): Source, Distribution and Characterization, in: ASMOSIA VII. Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of the Association for the Study of Marble and Other Stones in Antiquity, ed. Y. Maniatis (Thasos 2003) (*BCH Supplement* 51). Athens 2009, 495–508.

[28] NIKONANOS, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία 290–291, pl. 246a–c.

[29] NIKONANOS, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία 290.

[30] On the contrary, what seems to be an imprint of a circular base on the fresh mortar can be discerned just below the mosaic level, see NIKONANOS, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία, pl. 246c.

thin scotia, another volute, another scotia, a thin volute, a scotia, a thin beveled band, and finally a wide horizontal band (Fig. 22). The southeastern base has a groove to support a marble slab, indicating that the base is not in its original position, while the base of the column resting on it has a significantly smaller diameter. This fact, together with the classical appearance of the three bases, suggests that they may be spolia. Their composite form, which enriches the basic Roman type, allows for a possible dating in the late Roman period[31].

The second group includes the bases of the southwestern column and the two columns of the northern side (Fig. 21). They all lie on quadrangular uniform slabs, with a semicircular volute on top and a wide flat band underneath. Their form is more evolved and is frequently observed in monuments from the 6th c. onwards, i.e., Katapoliani in Paros, Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki[32], and the Mangana church in Constantinople[33].

The column shafts of the first group form, at their bottom end, the classical concave molding. The two tribelon shafts (Fig. 20) look heavier than the northeast column and their lower diameter fits better to the bases underneath. On the north column shaft of the tribelon, two identical crosses with equal arms of the Maltese type are non-symmetrically carved in the champlevé technique and face the inner narthex. Contrary to Soteriou's assumption[34], their form and execution is typical of the middle Byzantine period[35]. In the space between them is a crudely carved Latin cross stepping on a sphere. Although relief crosses on column shafts are not unusual during the early Christian period[36], in the case of Kalampaka, the form of the cross and the crudeness of its execution suggest a later date. It is noteworthy that a similar cross, dating from the middle Byzantine period, is found on a marble closure slab incorporated in the ambo, as discussed below.

At the lower part of the southern tribelon shaft, facing the nave, there are remnants of an inscription, probably of a public nature[37], that initially consisted of several lines; however, a large part of the inscription has been hacked away. In the last two verses we read *ΤΑΜΙΑΝΙΚΑΣ[...] / [...]ΑΝΔΟΝΕΙΚΟΥ[...]*[38]. The position of the inscription at the lower part of the shaft facing the nave and its partial trimming suggest that the shaft is in its second use.

The column shafts of the second group (Fig. 21) end in a broad flat band similar to the upper band of their bases, implying a homogeneous execution. At their upper part they form a volute suc-

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[31] A systematic study of the typology of early Christian bases is still missing. The brief analysis presented by A. ORLANDOS, Ἡ ξυλόστεγος παλαιοχριστιανικὴ βασιλικὴ τῆς μεσογειακῆς λεκάνης. Athens 1952, 268–273 remains the only collective work. See also J.-P. SODINI, La sculpture architecturale à l' époque paléochretienne en Illyricum, in: Actes du Xe Congrès International d' Archéologie Chretienne, Thessalonique 1980 (*Hell, Supplement* 26). Città del Vaticano – Thessaloniki 1984, 276. For the simplified early Christian type see J. KRAMER, Attische Säulenbasen des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts und ihre Rohform. *Bonner Jahrbücher* 70 (1970) 271–278; D. PALLAS, «Ἰουστινιάνεια» γλυπτὰ αἰσθητικῶς ἀνεπεξέργαστα, in: Mneme A. Michelè. Athens 1971, 420–441.

[32] Ar. MENTZOS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος της Αγίας Σοφίας στη Θεσσαλονίκη, in: Aphieroma ste mneme tou Sotere Kissa. Thessaloniki 2001, 320–321.

[33] ORLANDOS, Βασιλική 269–272; R. DEMANGEL – E. MAMBOURY, Le quartier des Manganes et la première région de Constantinople (*Recherches françaises en Turquie* 10). Paris 1939, 134, fig. 178.

[34] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302.

[35] E.g. Th. PAZARAS, Ανάγλυφες σαρκοφάγοι και επιτάφιες πλάκες της μέσης και ύστερης Βυζαντινής περιόδου στην Ελλάδα. Athens 1988, 116, fig. 5b (10th–11th c.), 44b (12th c.), 46b (10th–11th c.). See also the capitals from Hagios Donatos at Glyky Epiros: C. VANDERHEYDE, Les reliefs de l' église Saint Donat à Glyki (Epire). *BCH* 121/2 (1997) 710, fig. 1b, 711–712, fig. 2c. EADEM, La sculpture architecturale Byzantine dans le théme de Nicopolis (*BCH Supplement* 45). Athènes 2005, 24–25, pl. V, fig. 13d (No. 14) and 25, Pl. VI, fig. 14c (No. 15), and a closure slab from Hagios Georgios at Dramesi (11th c.), *ibidem* 20, pl. IV, fig. 12 (No. 13).

[36] E.g. the basilica of Mesanagros in Rhodes, see A. ORLANDOS, Βυζαντινὰ καὶ μεταβυζαντινὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Ῥόδου (α. ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ, β. αἱ τοιχογραφίαι). *ABME* 6 (1948) 38, the atrium of the basilica A in Nea Anchialos, see G. SOTERIOU, Αἱ Χριστιανικαὶ Θῆβαι τῆς Θεσσαλίας. *AE* 1929, fig. 41.

[37] The words "τῇ πόλει" are repeated at least twice.

[38] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302 (he only read *ΑΝΔΡΟΝΕΙΚΟΥ*).

ceeded by a band, which today is plastered. We should note that the slab of the northeastern base, which belongs to this group, is half covered by the flagstone floor. The slabs at the column bases of the tribelon (Fig. 20) and the southern side (Fig. 22) are also half covered by the actual floor. This implies that the actual flagstone floor was laid over the original floor of the church at a later date. The northwestern column, whose base belongs to the second group, was probably reset during restoration work, since it lies directly on the flagstone floor. A truncated cone element was inserted between the shaft of the northeastern column and the capital to bridge the difference in height (Fig. 21). Some of the bases (i.e., those of the first group) and shafts (i.e., those of the tribelon and southeastern column) were probably spolia taken from late antique buildings in the area. The crosses carved on the tribelon southern shaft could be explained as an act of purification of a piece coming from an ethnic building.

The column capitals belong to the well-known early Christian type of ionic impost block capital (Fig. 23). We are unable to say if the imposts were uniform to the ionic part or freestanding, since all the capitals have been plastered and covered with painting. Soteriou's argument that the original capitals were replaced by built-up fakes during repairs in the 16th c.[39] is not convincing, since, on the one hand, building-up a capital of such a form is almost impossible, and on the other, such a construction in this position would be structurally inadequate[40]. Moreover, formal alterations between the capitals argue against the use of built copies, which should be more homogeneous.

Four variations of the same basic form can be distinguished among the six capitals; however, they share imposts with beveled faces and vertical sides. The capitals of the tribelon (Figs. 20, 23) have high imposts and strongly protruding volutes with bolsters constricted in the middle, perhaps with a balteus. The northeastern capital of the nave (Fig. 21) alters this form somewhat, having almost cylindrical bolsters and slightly smaller volutes. The pair of capitals at the southern side of the nave has an apparently lower impost, along with smaller volutes and cylindrical bolsters that lightly protrude from the base. Finally, the northwestern capital of the nave has an impost of the same height as the previous two, but its ionic part is inscribed into the overall outline of the capital in a uniform shape, in which the bolsters are no longer discernible.

All of these capitals present well-known variations of the ionic impost capital. The two examples from the tribelon follow the archaic form that is mostly encountered in Greece in a group of capitals generally considered to be of an early date (late 4th or early 5th c.)[41]. The most famous examples are two capitals from Skripou in Boeotia[42], to which the Kalampaka items find close parallels. None of the capitals in this group can be dated on external evidence, and their early dating was mainly based on the form of the ionic capitals with free-standing impost blocks found by Orlandos at the basilica of Daphnousia in Lokris[43]. These were considered to be of a contemporaneous execution and were thus dated according to the building's foundation at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 15th c.[44]. More recently, however, it has been established that the impost blocks from Daphnousia were a later addition to the original simple ionic capitals of the church during constructive alterations in the middle of the 6th c[45]. Moreover, a decorative pattern found only in Constan-

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[39] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 300.

[40] These capitals were intended to bear an enormous weight, since they ought to transmit the load of the arch springing, and subsequently of the clerestory walls, to the narrow circular upper surface of the column.

[41] V. VEMI, Les chapitaux ioniques à imposte de Grèce à l' époque paléochrétienne (*BCH Supplement* 17). Athènes 1989, 10–13.

[42] VEMI, chapitaux ioniques 89–90, No. 17 and 18, pl. 6 and 7.

[43] A. ORLANDOS, Une basilique paléochrétienne en Locride. *Byz* 5 (1929) 219, figs. 5, 7.

[44] This assumption also led many scholars to propose a Greek origin for the invention of the ionic impost capital, see SODINI, La sculpture architecturale 254; VEMI, chapitaux ioniques 215.

[45] This clarification took place during restoration work in 1998. The existence of rebuilding around the middle of the 6th c. was ascertained during the excavation campaign of the years 1995–1996; see V. SYTHIAKAKIS-KRITSIMALLIS, Ανασκαφική

tinopolitan capitals of a later date (second half of the 6th c. onwards) is encountered on one of the Skripou capitals. Therefore, it is possible that the "classical" character of these capitals is due to an archaistic tendency, which made its first appearance in Greece after the end of the reign of Justinian I (527–565 AD)[46]. Supposing this last argument is correct, we propose that the two Skripou capitals come from the same context as the rest of the 9th c. sculpture of the church, since they are obviously related in style (low relief, thin linear outlines, and *horror vacui*). A similar dating for the capitals of Kalampaka could not be excluded, on the contrary, it appears to be supported by constructional evidence, as we shall discuss below.

Contrary to the capitals of the tribelon, the northwestern capital of the nave demonstrates the final evolutionary stage of this type. Indeed, a complete retreat of the ionic part under the impost block, seriously diminishing its importance, seems to have appeared in Constantinople no earlier than the end of the 5th c.[47]. Moreover, the variation by which the sides of the impost block extend down to the bolsters appears to have adopted a tectonic impost form, which facilitated its mass production and the survival of this form into the middle Byzantine period[48].

The existence of four variations of the ionic impost type inside the building is not unusual even in early Christian times and does not necessarily imply the use of spolia. The important element in the six capitals, despite the differences in height[49], is the identical form of their imposts, which represents a specific stage of their evolution. The plain beveled faces and the lateral sides present a more advanced stage of simplification compared to the early Christian profiled examples and prove that all six capitals, despite the differences in the shape of their volutes or bolsters and in the proportions between the impost and ionic parts, were in fact executed for the same building. Moreover, the accurate fitting of the upper surface of the imposts to the springing of the arches reinforces the possibility that the six capitals were executed for this specific monument.

These findings enable us to arrive at the conclusion that, although some of the supporting elements of the church, i.e., half of the bases and column shafts, were probably late roman spolia, the rest is probably in its first use. All six ionic impost capitals were executed especially for the church and must therefore be added to the known middle Byzantine examples of the type.

Beveled cornices, coated by plaster and wall paintings, run along the longitudinal walls of the nave, underlining the springing of the arches, and along the western wall, at a slightly higher level. There are no cornices in the aisles.

έρευνα στον περιβάλλοντα χώρο της βασιλικής των Δαφνουσίων Λοκρών Φθιώτιδας. in: Α΄ epistemonike synantese: To ergo ton Ephoreion Archaeoteton kai Neoteron Mnemeion tou YPPO ste Thessalia kai ten eurytere perioche (1990–1998). Volos 2000, 235–244.

[46] V. SYTHIAKAKIS-KRITSIMALLIS, Κιονόκρανα από τη βασιλική των Δαφνουσίων Λοκρίδας: επανεξέταση της άποψης για την ελλαδική καταγωγή του ιωνικού κιονόκρανου με επίθημα, in: Praktika epistemonikes synanteses: Archaeologiko ergo Thessalias kai Stereas Helladas 1 (Volos 2003). Volos 2006, 1113–1148 (= A Re-examination of the Theory concerning the Greek Origin of the Ionic Impost Capital, based on the Examples from Daphnoussia in Lokris [engl. summ.], *ibidem* 1142).

[47] Th. ZOLLT, Kapitellplastik Konstantinopels von 4. bis 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr. Mit einem Beitrag zur Untersuchung des ionischen Kämpferkapitells (*Asia Minor Studien* 14). Bonn 1994, 276–287, 301–322.

[48] The production of ionic impost capitals, though limited, continued at least until the end of the middle Byzantine period, as we can judge from a capital in the church of Hagios Georgios in Thebes (876/877), the capitals of the double windows at the floor level of the Katholikon in the Monastery of Hagios Loukas in Boeotia (1011 or 1022), four capitals in second use at the church of Hagios Nikolaos in Mesopotamia (possibly 11th c.), eight capitals in the narthex and fourteen in the interior of the church of San Marco in Venice (end of the 11th c.). On the subject, see M. DENNERT, Mittelbyzantinische Kapitelle. Studien zu Typologie und Chronologie (*Asia Minor Studien* 25). Bonn 1997, 28–32, No. 44–51. Corpus der Kapitelle der Kirche von San Marco zu Venedig, herausgegeben von F. W. DEICHMANN. Wiesbaden 1981, No. 25–29 (Taf. 4), No. 33–36 (Taf. 5), No. 40–44 (Taf. 6).

[49] Due to practical construction reasons. See F. W. DEICHMANN, Studien zur Architektur Konstantinopels im 5. und 6. Jh. nach Christus (*Deutsche Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft* 4). Baden-Baden 1956, 42, 45. ZOLLT, Kapitellplastik 272.

A tall marble ambo stands on the axis of the main aisle (Figs. 31–34) that is mostly comprised of spolia mended in 1641, according to an inscription painted on its wooden canopy[50] (see below). It stands on the stone floor, which was obviously laid before the ambo.

The five single windows on each side of the clerestory are practically the only sources of light in the nave. The rectangular window, opened at the pediment on the upper eastern wall over the apse, and the triple window of the western pediment are partially hidden by the wooden ceiling that was added later under the horizontal tie beams of the roof. The ceiling is constructed of plain wooden boards with joints forming rectangles painted in different colors. This decoration is organized in four panels that bear a central painted icon in slight recession (the icon of the eastern panel has recently been replaced). The wooden ceiling was obviously added much later than the erection of the church, since, not only is it placed lower than the pediment windows but it has also cut off the upper part of the 16th c. wall paintings; actually, its form is typical for 17th c. Thessaly. The wall paintings continue up to the rim of the side walls of the nave, implying that the walls of the clerestory were originally higher than today (Fig. 25). Plain wooden ceilings currently cover the roof beams of the aisles. Due to the absence of windows, three skylights are opened on each aisle roof.

To the west, the aisles communicate to the inner narthex through arched openings. As mentioned above, two door openings exist on the external wall of the southern aisle. The eastern one is arched and presumably older than the 16th c. wall paintings, while the western opening is rectangular and later in date than the paintings of the wall, since it has destroyed them. Both have their thresholds 0.10m lower than the actual floor level, i.e., at the same level as the mosaic floor that was assigned to the presumed early Christian basilica. This observation, along with the fact that some of the ionic bases lie deep inside the actual floor level indicates that the original level of the Byzantine church coincided with the level of the mosaic floor. This evidence places doubt on the hypothesis of the preceding early Christian basilica.

Inner narthex. The inner narthex is contemporaneous to the main church and of the same width. An elaborated doorframe is the only entrance from the outer to the inner narthex (Fig. 26). The inner narthex has a plain penthouse timber roof. The small arched window high up on the southern wall and a small skylight on the roof illuminate the room. Painted inscriptions copying the chrysobul of the Emperor Andronicus III from 1336 and the relevant sigillion of the Patriarch Antonius IV from 1393, both defining the boundaries of the diocese of Stagoi[51], cover the northern wall. These are documents of great importance since the manuscripts they depict are either missing or seriously damaged. Their place on the inner narthex wall of the church of the Virgin implies the importance of the cathedral for the diocese of Stagoi.

Outer narthex. The room has the same width as the rest of the building and is also covered with a penthouse timber roof, slightly lower than the roof of the inner narthex (Figs. 9–10). The plain wooden door in its western wall now serves as the church's main entrance. The room has a small arched window high up on the southern wall and a skylight in the roof, looking west.

Wall paintings. The church interior was covered with wall paintings that were executed in different periods. As mentioned before, some of the wall paintings in the diakonikon can be attributed to the 12th c.[52], while parts of an even earlier decorative phase were recently revealed above the ceiling of the crypt (Fig. 18). According to an inscription over the western door of the narthex, the painted decorations of the main church and the inner narthex were completed on August 15, 1573[53]

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[50] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 305.
[51] SOFIANOS, Acta Stagorum 7–67.
[52] SOTERÍOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 305.
[53] SOTERÍOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 312.

by Neophytos, son of the famous 16th c. Cretan painter Theophanes Bathas[54], at the expense of the bishop of Stagoi Pachomios. According to another inscription over the western entrance of the outer narthex, Demetrios Kalonitis from Kleinovos was responsible for this part of the decoration, which was completed on January 25, 1782[55], under the bishopric of Paisios. He was, apparently, the same painter who executed the wall paintings on the southern façade in 1792, according to the aforementioned, now lost, inscription[56].

Marble decoration. (1) The marble templon. The original templon of the Byzantine church is not preserved *in situ*, since it was replaced by the wooden iconostas, probably during the 17th c. The two marble mullions with uniform octagonal colonettes crowned by small impost capitals (Fig. 16), which lie against the bema sidewalls and support the horizontal beam of the iconostas, must belong to the original marble templon, although they are probably not in their original placing. Their impost capitals are similar to those of the ciborium (see below), only smaller in dimension. The mullions are set into the flagstone floor where, in all probability, we must seek the original marble stylobate[57]. Actually, these two marble mullions are not the only surviving supporting elements of the original marble templon, as we will discuss later during the description of the ambo.

Two marble wall revetment slabs with beveled crowning (Fig. 27), which have not drawn the attention of scholars, are discernible under the painted coating on the lower western face of the bema sidewalls. They probably once supported marble frames, an extension of the marble templon, enclosing the painted or mosaic icons of Christ and the Virgin Mary, as we can observe in many Byzantine churches[58]. Additional evidence for the existence of these icon frames are provided by the small relief fragments incrusted on the back side of the southeastern ambo staircase parapet, as well as by a small twin capital, which obviously once crowned a twin colonette[59]. The three fragments, which Soteriou considered as early Christian spolia[60], present a beveled surface that is decorated with a lotus-and-palmette frieze. Two of them have a rectilinear outline and could be attributed either to a frame or a cornice, while the middle is curved and should therefore be attributed to an arch or a canopy. From a stylistic point of view, they present a close similarity to the floral decoration of the eastern arched panel of the ciborium and probably date from the same period[61]. The twin capital consists of two contiguous impost capitals, which are decorated with upright acanthus leaves, under a uniform abacus decorated with a lotus-and-palmette frieze. Compared to the deco-

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[54] For an extensive publication of this most important 16th c. painter see M. CHATZIDAKIS, Rechérches sur le peintre Théophane le Crétois. *DOP* 23/24 (1969–1970) 311–352.

[55] SOTERÍOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 312.

[56] SOTERÍOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 312.

[57] The actual stylobate of the wooden iconostas is constructed of dressed stones, while the original Byzantine stylobate is expected to have been made of marble, bearing sockets for the mullions on its upper surface.

[58] For example, see the church of Theotokos in the Monastery of Hosios Lukas in Boeotia in L. BOURAS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του ναού της Παναγίας στο μοναστήρι του Οσίου Λουκά. Athens 1980, 105–109, fig. 174–177, the Katholikon of Daphni, in A. ORLANDOS, Νεώτερα εὑρήματα εἰς τὴν Μονὴν Δαφνίου. *ABME* 8 (1955–56) 81, fig. 15, the Katholikon of the Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople, in H. MEGAW, Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul, Zeyrek Camii. *DOP* 17 (1963) 346, the Katholikon of Chora Monastery, in Ø. HJORT, The Sculpture of Kariye Camii. *DOP* 33 (1979) 225–236, fig. 25–35, the church of Samarina in Androusa near Kalamata (in second use), see A. GRABAR, Sculptures Byzantines du moyen âge, I. Paris 1976, pl. LXXI a,b. L. BOURAS, Architectural Sculptures of the Twelfth and the Early Thirteenth Centuries in Greece. *DChAE* 9 (1977–1979) 68–71, Pl. 16, figs. 14–15, the church of Hagia Sophia in Mistras, in: G. MILLET, Monuments byzantins de Mistra. Paris 1910, pl. 56, figs. 7, 9, 11, 12, 13; BOURAS, Architectural Sculptures, pl. 30, figs. 24–25 and the church of Porta Panagia near Trikala in A. ORLANDOS, Ἡ Πόρτα Παναγιὰ τῆς Θεσσαλίας. *ABME* 1 (1935) 25, fig. 14.

[59] BOURAS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος 108, fig. 178, detected it among other marble fragments accumulated in the church, yet nowadays it cannot be observed.

[60] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302.

[61] C. VANDERHEYDE, Le ciborium de l' église de la Dormition de la Vierge à Kalambaka (Thessalie), in: Mélanges J.-P. Sodini (= *TM* 15). Paris 2005, 438.

ration of the three fragments, this frieze appears to have been executed in a less careful manner and in a shallower relief. The capital as a whole presents a close resemblance to the twin capitals supporting the marble icon frames of the Theotokos church in the Monastery of Hosios Lukas that were dated by L. Bouras towards the end of the 12th or the early 13th c.[62].

Marble decoration. (2) The door-frames. Two elaborate door-frames still exist in the church: one frames the opening leading from the outer to the inner narthex, which served as the main entrance to the church before the addition of the outer narthex; the other frames the eastern side entrance of the southern wall.

The large entrance to the inner narthex (Fig. 26) has two wooden shutting stiles. The marble frame is decorated on its inner surface with recessed bands surrounded by a thick molding. The front surface presents a concave molding bordered with a wider flat band. Over the door there is a beveled lintel that is covered with plaster. Although generally considered as an early Christian spolium[63], this door frame is similar to Byzantine examples surviving in their original locations, such as the marble frames of the west door and the door of the liti in the church of Thetokos at the Monastery of Hosios Lukas[64], the frames of the Katholikon in Vatopedi Monastery[65], Lips Monastery[66], Pantokrator Monastery[67], Chora Monastery[68], and the church of Hagios Nikolaos at Myra[69]. Therefore, there is no solid ground for a date in the early Christian period; on the contrary, it should probably be assigned to the original middle Byzantine phase of the church (as we shall discuss later). Its original threshold probably lies beneath the actual flagstone floor, perhaps at a depth of 0.10 m, as is the case for the threshold of the southern doors.

The southern marble door frame is narrower and more simplified. There are two bands on its inner surface with intermediate concave moldings, while the front surface remains flat. There is no lintel over the door, but the marble threshold is still visible in its original place.

We cannot be certain if the two door frames belong to the same period; however, the southern door dates earlier than the raising of the floor to its present level during the 17th c. since the doorstep is at the -0.10 m level, probably at the same level as the western entrance.

Marble decoration. (3) Byzantine marble spolia. Among the numerous spolia carefully incrusted on the exterior southern wall, there are only three marble fragments that belong to the Christian era. These are the fragments of a cornice that are set to form a sima over the built-up door of the inner narthex (Fig. 1). Although they give the impression that they are parts of a uniform architectural member, the rectilinear sidepieces are smaller in height than the curved piece in the middle. Nevertheless, they all bear the same undulating decoration of vine scrolls. The left section bears a Latin cross between the scrolls, which means that it was originally placed in the center of a cornice or a lintel. The middle piece is seriously worn. The scroll is executed as a simple strip with a curved surface (it is separated in two only at the right end of the right piece) terminating in large volutes. The execution is unstable, the scrolls are freely disposed without the symmetry of the middle Byzantine examples, and the treatment of the leaves is crisp. From a stylistic viewpoint the three pieces find close parallels in early Byzantine sculptures, such as an epistyle from Skripou in Boeotia[70] and

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[62] BOURAS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος 105, 108–109, 132, figs. 174, 175, 178.
[63] VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 429.
[64] BOURAS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος 109–110, figs. 180–181.
[65] Th. PAZARAS, Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά του Καθολικού της Μονής Βατοπεδίου. Thessaloniki 2001, 47–58.
[66] Th. MACRIDY, The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi. *DOP* 18 (1964) 259, fig. 14.
[67] A. VAN MILLINGEN, Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: Their History and Architecture. London 1912, fig. 74.
[68] VAN MILLINGEN, Byzantine Churches, fig. 75.
[69] U. PESCHLOW, Die Architektur der Nikolaoskirche in Myra, in: J. BORCHHARDT (Hrsg.), Myra, eine lykische Metropole in antiker und byzantinischer Zeit (*Istanbuler Forschungen* 30). Berlin 1975, 337, fig. 46.
[70] A. GRABAR, Sculptures Byzantines de Constantinople (IVe–Xe siècle). Paris 1963, pl. XLI, 4.

a slab from the Katholikon of the Lavra in Mount Athos[71]; therefore, they must probably be dated to the 9th or 10th c. The thick mortar that surrounds them and a certain irregularity in the masonry supports their later addition.

Marble furnishing. The two most important pieces of liturgical furniture of the building, the ciborium and the ambo, have survived in a more or less complete form and have often been the subject of academic discussion.

The marble ciborium consists of four plain columns resting on marble bases bearing impost capitals (Figs. 28–30). Four arched marble panels lie on this substructure that hold a pyramidal wooden canopy ending up in a sphere. Soteriou suggested that the ciborium is older than the 11th c. and possibly belonged to the pre-existing early Christian basilica[72]. His argument was based on the decoration of the four small impost capitals with vine leaves, a type that, according to him, was in use from the 7th c. onwards. As for the decoration of the arched panels, he only focused on the inscribed crosses. C. Vanderheyde recently presented an extant study on the subject[73]. She suggested that the bases and columns are early Christian spolia in their second use: the capitals date from the middle Byzantine period and the arched panels, which are jointed together or mended at their lower parts, are possibly early Christian, and were re-carved in the middle Byzantine period. No direct reference has been made to the time of their last assembly, which was when the wooden canopy was constructed, although one can deduce that this happened when the ambo was also re-arranged, i.e., the 17th c. Furthermore, no reference is made to the form of the original canopy, which was either similar to the actual one or vaulted and made of marble.

Of the four marble bases, three lie on a circular plinth that ends in a concave molding and present a large volute followed by a large band, which repeats the band from the lower part of the shaft. The diameter of the shaft is slightly reduced from the bottom to the top, ending up in a thin chip-carved volute, followed by a slightly concave wider band (Fig. 30).

Contrary to Vanderheyde's suggestion, the form of these bases diverges from the typical form of early Christian bases, which normally have a rectangular or, rarely, a polygonal plinth[74]. Moreover, although they present a great variety of profiles, early Christian bases generally follow either the late Roman prototypes or belong to the simplified type with a beveled molding, once thought of as semi-finished[75]. In our case, the circular plinth has a flat profile, which ends up in a thin, almost chip-carved, molding. The convex part (volute) of the main base has a powerfully curved, almost semi-circular, molding, and the flat band that follows is comparatively large, acting like an extension of the lower band of the shaft. The general form is similar to the column bases in the northern aisle of the church, while the circular plinth is a simplified version of the early Christian polygonal examples. The column shafts, with the particularly large bands at their bottom, diverge from the typical late antique shafts and are closer in quality and execution to the bases, to which they successfully fit. Their form is also similar to the shafts of the main church. It appears that the shafts and bases form an entity, which cannot be attributed easily to the early Christian period. Indeed, if we consider their close fit with the middle Byzantine capitals above them, there is no reason to

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[71] GRABAR, Sculptures, pl. XLV, 3.

[72] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 300, fig. 6.

[73] VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 427–442.

[74] Such as the bases of the Katapoliani ciborium, see A. MITSANI, Το παλαιοχριστιανικό κιβώριο της Καταπολιανής Πάρου. *DChAE* 19 (1996–97) 324, fig. 5 and 326.

[75] ORLANDOS, Βασιλική 269. A column base with a circular plinth separated from the main body with a thin scotia and a volute with a quadrant profile was discovered during the excavations of the basilica C at Nea Anchialos near the base of the ambo (PALLAS, «Ἰουστινιάνεια» 427, pl. XXXV, 2). It is crudely sculpted, possibly at the first stage of execution. Its dating cannot be defined with certainty, since the basilica was a Justinianic building that underwent several repairs during the Dark Ages, a fact that prohibits us to safely attribute this base to the early Christian era. See G. SOTERIOU, Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ γλυπτικὴ τῆς Ἑλλάδος κατὰ τὸν 7ον καὶ 8ον αἰῶνα. *AE* 1937, 172–176, 179–180.

consider them as early Christian spolia. The northeastern base is the only one with a quadrangular plinth; however, its crude, neglectful execution indicates that it was a later replacement, probably during the reconstruction of the ciborium.

The four small impost capitals have convex sides and a solid abacus (Fig. 29, 30). Each side is decorated with a large vine leaf whose stem is divided into two outgoing tendrils ending up over the acmes in a pine cone. The relief is shallow, the surface around the central decorative theme remains plain, and the execution is simplified, rough, and somewhat unstable. The carved elements have been covered at a later date with paint, but there is some evidence that they may have originally been gilded. Vanderheyde suggested, on stylistic criteria, a date towards the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th c for the four small impost capitals[76]. Indeed, although the impost capital with vine leaves is thought to be of a much earlier origin[77], the simplified variation of Kalampaka finds close parallels in the middle Byzantine period, and particularly in the period from the end of the 11th to the 12th c.[78]. The capitals of the ciborium present the same sparse disposal of decorative motifs that can be seen on the less richly decorated arched panels of the subsidiary faces, an attitude that appears to characterize a large group of 11th c. sculptures of a clearly Constantinopolitan influence that was widespread from the middle of the 11th c. onwards[79].

The four arched panels resting on these capitals bear sculptured decoration that is also covered with painting. The prominent panel of the western face (Fig. 30) presents the most elaborate decoration. The arch is outlined by a large decorative band of entwined acanthus runners springing from a central medallion enclosing a floral Latin cross. Each of the upper corners is occupied by a *crux florida*[80] inscribed in a circle and surrounded by entwined vine runners ending in fruits, probably pomegranates. Despite the successful combination of the decorative motifs, an asymmetry occurs in the border band, the treatment is somehow crude, the relief is shallow, the absence of the undercut is absolute, and the design is somewhat unstable. The subsidiary panels (Fig. 29) have a much simpler decoration where crosses in medallions occupy the upper corners and the center of each panel. Those of the corners have equal branches ending in small discs. The central Latin cross belongs to the well-known floral type, with acanthus leaves springing upright from its leg; only on the eastern panel it presents two horizontal branches. The relief in these panels is even shallower, the impression of empty space predominates, the treatment is flat, and the design is careful, though not skillful.

A thorough stylistic analysis on the use of entwined acanthus runners and the *crux florida* led Vanderheyde to suggest a date around the first quarter of the 12th c., establishing a close artistic relationship with the Byzantine capital[81]. Her argument was mainly based on the decoration of the more elaborate western panel; nevertheless, the decoration on the three subsidiary faces presents a close similarity to the fragments of the arched panels from the crypt of Hagios Demetrios in Thes-

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[76] VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 435.

[77] G. SOTERIOU, Παλαιοχριστιανικὰ καὶ βυζαντινὰ κιονόκρανα μετὰ φύλλων ἀμπέλου. *EEBS* 11 (1935) 451–453. K. KRUMREICH, Spätantike Kämpferkapitelle mit Weinblatt- und Pinienzapfen-Dekor. *IstMitt* 47 (1997) 277–314. VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 433. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the early dating of the type is not really based on solid evidence, since all the early-dated examples are considered to be spolia, dated only on stylistic criteria.

[78] This specific type has been dated to the end of the 11th and during the 12th c. by DENNERT, Mittelbyzantinische Kapitelle 93–99, Taf. 36–38, No. 200–211. See also, VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 433.

[79] Ar. MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής στη Θεσσαλονίκη στον 11ον αιώνα, in: La Sculpture Byzantine, VIIe–XIIe siècles. Actes du colloque international, 6–10 Septembre 2000, éd. Ch. Pennas – C. Vanderheyde (*BCH Supplement* 49). Athènes 2008, 217–230. V. SYTHIAKAKIS-KRITSIMALLIS, Τα γλυπτά του καθολικού της Μονής Αγίου Δημητρίου στο Στόμιο (Τσάγεζι), in: ST. GOULOULIS – ST. SDROLIA (edd.), Άγιος Δημήτριος Στομίου, ιστορία – τέχνη – ιστορική γεωγραφία του μοναστηριού και της περιοχής των εκβολών του Πηνειού. Larissa 2010, 137–138.

[80] For a full description of this ornament see HJORT, Kariye Camii 230 and n. 99.

[81] VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 441–442.

saloniki[82]. It appears that these sculptures, although executed in Thessaloniki on marble from Alyki, represent an artistic trend of Constantinopolitan origin, which, as discussed earlier, characterizes the 11th c., especially the second half, and which gave way to a more decorative style by the beginning of the 12th c. Its main characteristics are the shallow relief, the sparse use of decorative elements, and the restricted use of geometric and floral motifs with an emphasis on those with special symbolism, such as the cross[83]. Thus, the ciborium in Kalampaka appears suspended between the more conservative trend of the 11th c., expressed by the decoration of the four impost capitals and the three panels of the subsidiary faces, and the more elaborate decorative style of the western panel, which was in vogue from the beginning of the 12th c.[84].

Vanderheyde's assumption that the four marble arched frames are reused early Christian spolia, on the basis of the existence of iron cramps at their springing (Fig. 29, 30), cannot be accepted easily. First of all, the jointed parts could not have been a later addition, since without them the arches of the panels would have been too low in height and less than a half circle in shape, which is abnormal for ciboria. Second, in the case of reused spolia, we must accept that the original carved decoration on each slab was hacked away and the slab was then re-carved, which is unlikely due to their thinness. Finally, taking the slabs as spolia, we should *a priori* accept that the four thin panels managed to survive the disaster that demolished, almost without a trace, the supposed early Christian basilica.

A more plausible explanation for the existence of the additional parts at the bottom of the arches could be the lack of precut monolithic slabs in the appropriate dimensions, since the use of marble ciboria during the middle Byzantine period was not in vogue and the production of such ready-to-use members from the quarries was obviously interrupted. The elaborate templon epistyle from the church of Taxiarches in Agnanti (Lokris), dating from the middle of the 12th c.[85], consists of two marble blocks joined with an iron cramp to achieve the desired length. This practice is also attested in the ambo of the very same church of Kalampaka, as we shall discuss later.

It thus appears that the ciborium of Kalampaka is a coherent construction that dates from the middle Byzantine period, possibly from the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th c. On the basis of the reduced thickness of the arched panels, we can imagine a wooden canopy in the form of a pyramid as the most plausible original roofing. Later modifications, such as the replacement of the wooden canopy, the coloring of the relief decoration, and possibly the replacement of the southeastern column base can be attributed, due to the color resemblance, to when the ambo was also reset, i.e., the 17th c.

The impressive marble ambo (Figs. 31–34) is placed on the longitudinal axis of the nave (Fig. 2). In its present form it belongs to the type with two opposite staircases flanking the platform, which is generally presumed to be a Justinianic invention, first attested in the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople[86]. The ambo of Kalampaka in its present form was assembled of many het-

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[82] MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 217–218, fig. 2. It is interesting to note that the 17th c. painted decoration on the Kalampaka panels imitates the cypress trees on the springing of the arches of Thessaloniki.

[83] MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 226.

[84] This style occurs on slabs of the same workshop from the original Katholikon of Hagios Demetrios (Panagia) in Stomion, which can be accurately attributed (on both historical and stylistic criteria) to the period between 1083–1088, see V. SYTHIAKAKIS – KRITSIMALLIS, Στόμιο 137–138, 143.

[85] V. SYTHIAKAKIS-KRITSIMALLIS, Νεότερες παρατηρήσεις για το μαρμάρινο τέμπλο του Ταξιάρχη Λοκρίδας. *DChAE* 27 (2006) 125–134 (= Recent Observations on the Marble Templon in the Church of the Taxiarches, Lokris [engl. summ.], *ibidem* 135–136).

[86] P.H.F. JAKOBS, Die frühchristlichen Ambone Griechenlands. Bonn 1987, 44–50. Nevertheless G. GOUNARIS, Le problème de l'existence de deux ambons dans l' Octogone de Philippes, in: Actes du Xe Congrès International d' Archéologie Chretienne, Thessalonique 1980 (*Hell, Supplement* 26). Città del Vaticano – Thessaloniki 1984, 137, n. 4, on stratigraphic evidence, suggested that the first ambo of the Octagon in Philippi dates from a much earlier period, that is the last quarter of the 4th c.

erogeneous architectural members, acquired a wooden canopy, and was partially mended with masonry during the 17th c. During the following century, the masonry was covered with a painted decoration and the marble members were covered with varnish, which, due to its decomposition, prevents us from fully appreciating the original quality of the marble. Similar to the ciborium, the ambo was considered a remnant of the "pre-existing" early Christian basilica[87]. This dating was mostly based on the use of stair and platform parapets decorated with crosses. Indeed, the reused middle Byzantine members gained little or no attention[88]; on a closer examination of the entire construction we observed the following.

The two staircases of the ambo frame an almost circular platform (Figs. 31–34); they are not monolithic, but are made of dressed stones used as steps[89]; and they lie on low pedestals consisting of joint monolithic slabs, perhaps parts of the original construction, spolia (such as a part of a fluted ionic column shaft under the northeastern parapet), and dressed stones.

The platform is supported by two non-fluted short shafts (Fig. 34), which rest, not on a uniform base, but in the middle of two low, elliptic stylobates, made of dressed stones (half of the northern side is missing); it is obvious from the way they are assembled that they originally formed semicircles (Fig. 31). The colonettes are similar in form, but of a different material: the southern colonette is made of green Thessalian conglomerate (verde antico) while the northern one appears to be of white marble covered with a grayish hue caused by the polish and tarnish (this is the case for most of the white marbles in the church).

The precious verde antico, originating from the quarries of the Thessalian village Omorphochori or Chasambali at the foot of the Kissavos mountain, was extensively used during the early Christian period mostly for architectural members that did not require extensive carving, such as imperial sarcophagi or parts of ambos, but it was mainly used for column shafts in some of the most important monuments of the empire, and above all in the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Despite what it is generally thought, there is nonetheless enough documentation to indicate that it remained in use until after the end of the early Christian period, for example in the churches of Hagia Sophia and Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki[90], in the palaces of Theophilos[91] and Basileios I[92], as well as in the Great Palace in Constantinople and in the Katholikon of Hosios Lukas in Boeotia[93].

From the original trapezoid staircase parapets, only three have survived (Figs. 31–32), two of them on the northern side and one on the southern side. Their decoration is identical. The slabs are not uniform: the southwestern parapet consists of three joined lateral slabs and a smaller slab in the upper left corner (Fig. 33); the northwestern parapet consists of two lateral slabs and a horizontal

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[87] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302, 304. He assumes it was assembled from early Christian architectural members. Jakobs suggests an early Christian date for the trapezoid staircase parapets, a date from the 8th c. onwards for the platform parapets and a middle Byzantine date for the southeastern staircase slabs (JAKOBS, Ambone 139–142, 251–254, Taf. 9–10a, pl. 37–38). Later dates have also been proposed by other scholars: in the 8th–9th c. (J.-P. SODINI, Les ambons médievaux à Byzance: vestiges et problèmes, in: Thymiama ste mneme tes Laskarinas Boura, I. Athens 1994, 303) and lately in the 11th–12th c. (MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 220–221).

[88] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302 (he refers to them without proposing a date). JAKOBS, Ambone 141–142, 252–253, Taf. 10a (he refers only to the slabs of the southeastern staircase parapet as reused members and proposes a middle Byzantine date without suggesting an origin).

[89] A real marble step probably from the original staircase only survives at the top of the eastern staircase.

[90] MENTZOS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος 315–333 has recently demonstrated that on one hand Saint Sophia's marble decoration is contemporary to the original construction and can be dated between 741–751, and on the other, that the original three-aisled basilica of Hagios Demetrios was much altered and expanded after its destruction by fire in the early 8th c. (A. MENTZOS, Ο ναός του Αγίου Δημητρίου προ και μετά την πυρκαγιά του 7ου αιώνα, in: Christianike Thessalonike. Praktika IB΄ diethnous epistemonikou symposiou. Thessaloniki 2001, 217–245).

[91] Theophanes Continuatus 143. 2, 144. 2–3, 144. 22–23 (BEKKER).

[92] Theophanes Continuatus 332.6 (BEKKER).

[93] E. STIKAS, Τὸ Οἰκοδομικὸν Χρονικὸν τοῦ Ὁσίου Λουκᾶ Φωκίδος. Athens 1970, 204.

slab; and the northeastern parapet consists of three lateral and two horizontal slabs. It is worth noting that the slabs appear to be of different material. On the front side of northeastern parapet, the marble of the slabs appears to be dark gray, except for the left slab, where the marble is off-white with dense pink veins. The three marble closure slabs encrusted on the southeastern parapet are made of the same pinkish marble (see below). Two of the slabs in the southwestern parapet are made of gray to grayish-white marble, while the left one is made of white or off-white marble that is quite worn. The slabs of the northwestern parapet are made from the same off-white marble[94].

Despite the fact that the parapets consist of slabs that vary in material and dimensions, their carving is uniform and their fitting so successful that the moldings coincide perfectly from one slab to the next. Soteriou assumed that the gray slabs were later additions[95]. Nevertheless, on the reverse of the slabs we can attest the following: the triangular upper piece of the southwestern parapet and the two small triangular pieces of the northeastern parapet are in fact additions, as we can ascertain from the mortar covering their back[96]. The rest of the slabs have the same thickness and present the same rough execution with a chisel on their back surface. The back of the three joined slabs of the northeastern parapet has the same color as the front; therefore, it possible that the darkened hue of their face should be attributed to the tarnish of their varnish. However, it should be noted that the difference of colour of the slabs of the southwestern parapet is also attested on their back side. The use of joined slabs for the ambo parapets supports the argument that the marble panels of the ciborium were also joined due to the lack of marble slabs of adequate dimensions[97].

The southeastern parapet is built of masonry that incorporates three marble closure slabs at its lower part of the same height, but of different width and decoration (Fig. 34). The built-up part has its face plastered and painted with frescoes dating from the 18th c., though the rest of the ambo must be attributed to the 17th c., according to a washed-out painted inscription on the wooden canopy[98]. Its construction remains visible on the reverse side, and consists of semi-dressed greenish stones set in thick mortar. The three small marble fragments, probably coming from an icon frame, are also embedded in this side.

The circular base of the platform consists of two almost semicircular marble pieces joined together with three iron cramps (Fig. 31). One half is slightly larger, made of greenish conglomerate, probably verde antico, while the other half is gray granite. The construction of a platform from two joined marble blocks was a well-known practice during the early Christian period. The blocks were of the same material and, in the case of an ambo with a double staircase, were also extended to form the upper step. These blocks had moldings on their faces and a concave underside. In the case of Kalampaka, the surfaces are not carved. It should be noted that an omphalion of analogous di-

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[94] Soteriou describes these marbles as pink-white; a fact that cannot be verified due to tarnishing.

[95] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302.

[96] They were obviously thinner than the rest.

[97] From the surviving examples of the early Christian era, it cannot be supported that parapet slabs were constructed of joined slabs, except for the addition of an oblong slab as a railing over the stair parapets, probably for aesthetic reasons. On the contrary, in most cases the slabs came from the quarry ready to use, as was the case for the marble parts of the ambo found in the shipwreck off Marzamemi, dating from the years of Justinian I. See G. KAPITÄN, Schiffsfrachten antiker Baugesteine und Architekturteile von den Küsten Ostsiziliens. *Klio* 39 (1961) 276–318; IDEM, Elementi architettonici per una basilica dal relitto navale del VI secolo di Marzamemi (Siracusa), in: XXVII Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina. Ravenna 1980*,* 71–136.

[98] The representation of the Holy Women at the Sepulchre can be compared to the 18th c. frescoes in the same church (SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302). However, the dedicatory inscription for the construction and painted decoration of the ambo, which once existed on the canopy, mentions the date *ZPMΘ,* according to Soteriou's transcription. If the transcription is correct, then the ambo was reset in the year 1641 and not in 1669 according to Soteriou's erroneous conversion. (On this subject, see S. SDROLIA, Ο ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος του άμβωνα στην Κοίμηση της Καλαμπάκας. [unpubl. MA thesis] Thessaloniki 1988, 2).

mensions has been embedded in the actual flagstone floor of the nave; therefore, it is possible that the two blocks of the platform are in their second use.

The posts of the parapet slabs and the posts holding the wooden canopy are parts of mullions ±1.00 m in height and ±0.18 m wide, with uniform octagonal colonettes of 1.20 m in height, probably coming from the marble templon of the church (Figs. 33–34). They have been cut at different heights in order to fit. Their initial height can thus be estimated to be 2.20 m, which corresponds to the height of the two marble mullions behind the wooden iconostasis of the church[99]. Five supportive elements were employed on each side of the ambo (not counting the posts of the western staircase); thus, we estimate that the ambo consists of 10–12 marble mullions from the templon[100].

The posts of the eastern staircase (Fig. 33) were probably added when the ambo was reassembled, since the marble is less worn and of a different kind[101]. The handgrips over the western posts (Fig. 34) seem to have been added during the 17th c. construction, while those over the eastern posts are a modern addition. The staircase railings are made of parts joined together with iron cramps that are set on the upper surface, indicating that they were assembled *in situ*.

The closure slabs of the platform were executed together with the interval mullions (Fig. 33, 34). On the contrary, the octagonal colonettes holding the canopy were added above the interval mullions at a later date. The "impost capitals" crowning the octagonal colonettes under the canopy have the form of a truncated pyramid. They appear to be plaster imitations dating from the 17th c. assemblage, since the upper ends of the marble colonettes are still discernible beneath the plaster at some points.

Thus, it becomes clear that the ambo of Kalampaka is a compilation of heterogeneous parts, of which some originally belonged to an ambo (staircase parapets, platform closure slabs, railings, and possibly a small part of the staircase), while others came from the marble templon (closure slabs on the southeastern side, mullions, and octagonal colonettes), from marble decorations of the church (relief fragments of an icon-frame in the southeastern parapet), some were perhaps spolia from an earlier date (platform and its supporting column shafts), and, finally, some date from the 17th c. construction (the built-up southeastern parapet, wooden canopy, steps, western staircase posts, and eastern staircase handgrips). The question is how many of these members can really be attributed to a pre-existing early Christian basilica, suggested by Soteriou[102].

First of all, the reused templon mullions (Figs. 33–34) cannot be attributed to the early Christian period since uniform octagonal colonettes were in use from the middle Byzantine period[103]. The three closure slabs of the southeastern parapet do not come from an ambo (Fig. 34). They all have the same height, which corresponds to the mullions, and are of the same material (off-white marble with dense pink veins); therefore, they must be attributed to the templon, but they vary in width: the slab to the left is 0.70 m wide, while the one to the right is 0.60 m, and the slab in the middle is only 0.46 m. The slabs on the sides are richly decorated with interlocking geometric patterns. The slab to the left forms a large lozenge with interlaced smaller circles on the corners, enclosing in the middle another circle with a cross of the Maltese type. The slab to the right has four interlaced rectangular frames, and despite the rich design of the interlaced bands, the decoration is restricted to necessary decorative means, e.g., the interiors of the interlaced circles and rectangular frames are plain.

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[99] Their actual height is 2.10 m but their lower part is embedded into the stone floor. They are 0.17 m wide.

[100] The southern post of the western staircase, which still preserves the springing of an octagonal colonette at its upper ending, may have a common origin with one of the colonettes, which supported the canopy. The north post ends up in a rectangular recession, but it is too worn to be a later addition. It could belong to a mullion lying against the sidewall.

[101] At their upper front side they bear carved medallions with Greek crosses of a much later date. Nevertheless SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302 took them for early Christian spolia.

[102] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302–304.

[103] Ch. BOURAS – L. BOURAS, Η ελλαδική ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα. Athens 2002, 527.

The quality of the execution, the form of the bands, and the depth of the relief in both slabs are identical, suggesting that they belong to the same context. Marble slabs decorated with lozenges and circles made their first appearance in the 10th c., yet they became very popular during the 11th c.[104] and remained in use during the 12th c., as we see in some richly decorated surviving examples[105]. These two slabs present a close resemblance to a closure slab in the Byzantine Museum of Athens, dated to the 11th c.[106]. A Maltese-type cross is seen on a fragment of a similar slab, of approximately the same date, from the church of Hagios Gregorios in Dramesi[107]. The interlaced rectangular frame decoration followed a similar development[108]. The closure slab set in the middle of the parapet is narrower. Its decoration is simple: a Latin cross with enlarged arms lying, somehow clumsily, on a disk set over a stalk. It is a stock-in-trade motif, probably having its origins in early Christian art, but it was in broad use during the Byzantine period[109].

In the case of Kalampaka, the endings of the arms, which remind us of apices, the flat, champlevé treatment, but mostly the identical execution of the border and the use of the same material, testify that all three slabs are parts of the same coherent whole. Thus, this group of architectural sculptures, closure slabs, and mullions, originate from the church's middle Byzantine marble templon, which was probably arranged during the 11th or at the beginning of the 12th c.

Judging from the number of surviving supporting elements (12–14 along with the two mullions behind the Bema iconostas) and the dimensions of the three closure slabs, we could attempt a reconstruction of the marble templon (Fig. 35). The templon of the bema would have been 5.10 m wide, according to the distance between the separating walls. Taking into account an intercolumniation distance of 0.70 m, equal to the width of the larger and more richly decorated closure slab encrusted on the left side of the ambo parapet, the templon of the bema would have had a pair of mullions lying against the side walls and two more on each side of the main entrance, which was then 1.20 m wide (not including the posts). The templon was extended on the western face of the walls separating the bema from the parabemata with icon frames, of which only the marble revetment slabs of the podea, three fragments embedded on the southeastern parapet of the ambo and the double impost capital, depicted by L. Bouras[110], have survived. The templon of each of the parabemata would have had four mullions, two lying against the walls[111] and two flanking the entrance. Since the diakonikon is 2.70 m wide and the prothesis is only 2.50 m, we can imagine that the closure slab at the right of the ambo parapet, with a width of 0.60 m, could give us the intercolumniations for the templon of the diakonikon, while the narrower slab in the middle, having a width of 0.46 m, should give us the intercolumniations for the templon of the prothesis. With this visual trick, the difference in width between the two parabemata would be overwhelmed, since the openings of the templon side entrances should be equal (0.80 m). Unfortunately, nothing seems to have survived from the templon epistyles.

The architectural sculptures that can be securely assigned to the middle Byzantine ambo and bear decoration that provide a chronological clue are the trapezoidal staircase parapets (Fig. 33)

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[104] C.D. SHEPPARD, Byzantine Marble Slabs. *Art Bulletin* 51 (1969) 69; BOURAS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος 99; PAZARAS, Γλυπτά Βατοπεδίου 31.

[105] BOURAS-BOURAS, Ναοδομία 558.

[106] M. SKLAVOU-MAYROEIDI, Κατάλογος γλυπτών Βυζαντινού Μουσείου Αθηνών. Athens 1999, 133, no. 179.

[107] VANDERHEYDE, sculpture architecturale 20, no. 13, pl. IV, fig. 12.

[108] BOURAS-BOURAS, Ναοδομία 556. Also a piece of a slab in the basilica of St Donatos at Glyky, VANDERHEYDE, Saint Donat 713, fig. 5; EADEM, La sculpture architecturale 27–28, pl. IX, fig. 19 (No. 20) and one at Kato Panaghia Arta, *ibidem* 52, no. 70, pl. XXX, fig. 60.

[109] See for example the fragment of an arched frame coming from the crypt of the church of Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki, which was recently re-dated to the second half of the 11th c. (MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 217–230, fig. 1).

[110] BOURAS, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος 108, fig. 178.

[111] Since there are more than 10 mullions, we assume the existence of side mullions against the walls.

and the closure slabs of the platform (Fig. 34). The slabs forming the staircase parapets bear a fairly common decoration: successive frames surround a trapezoidal panel with a cross. There is no doubt that the decoration has its origins in the art of the early Christian period; however, the surviving examples of early Christian ambo parapets normally present a much more pronounced modeling, with alternating cyma recta and cavetto moldings, and a variation of the relief planes[112]. On the contrary, the execution of the Kalampakan trapezoidal slabs is flat, the three successive external frames have the same plane of relief, and the wide shallow grooves between them are roughly carved with a rasp; at the same time, the thin inner frames are slightly canted, giving the illusion of successive planes of relief. This kind of execution can be observed in ambo parapet slabs dating from the middle Byzantine period[113]. As we suggested earlier, the construction of the parapets from joined slabs provides additional evidence for their period of execution, i.e., after the quarries ceased the mass production of pre-manufactured ambo parts, thus making the provision of ready-to-use parapet slabs of the appropriate dimensions impossible. We noticed exactly the same practice on the ciborium arched frames, which must be dated to approximately 1100 A.D. Moreover, the material of the parapet slabs is the same off-white marble with pink veining we encountered on the templon closure slabs, also dating from that period.

The overall impression is slightly different on the curved closure slabs of the platform (Fig. 33, 34). The execution of the crosses is extremely simplified, the frame is flat, the relief is very shallow, and the carving is unstable. However, the element that gives us a *terminus post quem* for the closure slabs, defeating the argument of early Christian spolia, is the type of cross used. The so-called "Patriarchic" or "Resurrection Cross," i.e., the Latin cross with double horizontal arms, usually stepping on a podium, made its first appearance during the early 9th c.[114] and remained virtually unaltered throughout the Byzantine period. Mentzos compared the form of the crosses on the Kalampaka slabs to that on a closure slab from the Crypt of Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki, suggesting a dating for both in the second half of the 11th c.[115] It is true that, in the case of Kalampaka, the simplicity of the design (the arms of the crosses have rectilinear instead of the usual rounded edges), the extremely shallow relief along with the wide flat background and frame, could allow an even earlier dating. However, a pseudo-sarcophagus slab from the monastery of Olympiotissa in Elasson, Thessaly, which has been dated to the 11th c., shows an execution similar to the crosses on the Kalampaka closure slabs[116].

Due to these observations the architectural decoration of the Dormition church in Kalampaka presents a relative unity. Column shafts and bases belong to two distinct groups, of which one represents a classic trend and could therefore be considered as material in its second use, while the other appears to be contemporaneous to the church. It remains to be determined if the older material was incorporated in the construction from the beginning, along with the material made for the building, or in the course of later restoration work. It is even more uncertain if this material dates to the early Christian period. All the spolia embedded in the external façade of the southern wall date

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[112] For example, see the ambo from the church A of Beyazit, nowadays in the gardens of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople; N. FIRATLI, Découverte de trois églises byzantines á Istanbul. *CahArch* 5 (1951) 164, pl. VI a and E. MAMBOURY, Les fouilles byzantines a Istanbul et ses environs. *Byz* 21 (1951) 436–437. D. PALLAS, Παλαιοχριστιανικά θωράκια μετά ρόμβου. *BCH* 74 (1950) 233–249, studied at length – though not without mistakes – the molding profiles of the closure slabs.

[113] U. PESCHLOW, Der mittelbyzantinische Ambo aus archäologischer Sicht, in: Thymiama ste mneme tes Laskarinas Boura, I. Athens 1994, Taf. 148, fig. 6, Taf. 149, fig. 12, Taf. 150, fig. 17.

[114] SHEPPARD, Marble Slabs 66, n. 11, with the previous bibliography. PAZARAS, Σαρκοφάγοι 117. See also the examples from Hagios Donatos at Glyky, Epirus (VANDERHEYDE, Saint Donat 710–711, fig. 1d, 711–712, fig. 2c and EADEM, La sculpture architecturale 24–25, No. 14, Pl. V, fig. 13a, 25, No. 15, Pl. VI, fig. 14b), some sarcophagus slabs from Veroia (PAZARAS, Σαρκοφάγοι, pl. 6b and 10a), the pseudo-sarcophagus slab from Lavra (*op. cit*., pl. 13b), and the one from Chortiatis (*op. cit*., pl. 26b).

[115] MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 217–230.

[116] PAZARAS, Σαρκοφάγοι, pl. 29.

before the Christian era, with the exception of the fragments over the inner narthex door. In all probability, they come from the ruined buildings of ancient Aiginion in the immediate vicinity of the monument[117]. There are no pieces of early Christian sculpture included among these spolia.

The group of ionic impost capitals (Figs. 20, 21, 23), despite their minor differences, appears to be homogeneous, according to the type of impost block. Although the possibility of their being spolia cannot be excluded[118], they appear to be middle Byzantine works, since they fit perfectly to the springing of the arches they hold. The two marble door-frames (Fig. 26) should also be attributed to the original phase of the construction.

The slabs of the ambo platform (Fig. 34) can be dated by taking as a *terminus post quem* the appearance of the "Patriarchic" cross in the beginning of the 9th c. and a *terminus post quem non* the construction of the ciborium and the chancel barrier[119]. Their decoration does not contradict an 11th c. dating, when this type of cross became popular. The marble templon, which partially served for the reconstruction of the ambo in the 17th c., as well as the parts of the icon frames, the marble ciborium as a whole, and the surviving parts of the ambo (staircase parapets and probably the closure slabs of the platform) are parts of a coherent marble decoration of the church that can be dated to the middle Byzantine period. They can possibly be related to a reconstruction phase that occurred after the collapse of the roof, which can be linked to the construction of the two pediment windows.

This period can be defined by taking into account, on the one hand, Vaderheyde's stylistic analysis, which points to an early 12th c. dating[120], and on the other hand, the restricted use of decorative motifs and their sparse arrangement on the marble surface (templon closure slabs, capitals and subsidiary arched panels of the ciborium, and the parapet slabs of the ambo), which are observed in late 11th c. sculptures[121] and especially in the Katholikon of Stomion, that can be securely dated in the period 1083–1088[122]. The fact that a richer decorative style had already appeared on the predominant western face of the ciborium implies that the sculpture work was executed at the turn of the 11th to the 12th c., i.e., around the year 1100. The use of decorative motifs that are abundant in Macedonia, Eastern Thessaly, and Epirus (such as the "patriarchic" cross, the cross on a sphere, and the Maltese cross) and their sparse use on the plain background, provide evidence for the close artistic relations of Kalampaka to these cultural centers, and through them to the Capital of the Empire from which these influences originated[123].

In the 17th c. (possibly in the year 1641), after the partial destruction of the middle Byzantine church, the ciborium was reassembled from its original middle Byzantine members (Fig. 28) to the new higher level of the floor, since it was probably not damaged given its location under the stronger construction of the apse, except for its canopy. The marble templon, however, was demolished and replaced by a wooden iconostas. The surviving parts were reused in the reconstruction of the ambo, together with some of its older members, with the necessary mending and with the addition of a wooden canopy (Fig. 32).

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[117] It is interesting to note that all the spolia have been embedded with care, facing the right way.

[118] Nevertheless we consider it rather impossible for them to have survived intact a supposed collapse of the early Christian basilica, since the usual place for this type of capitals is the galleries.

[119] The survival of the ambo as liturgical furniture in the middle Byzantine period, and sometimes till the end of the Byzantine era, is today beyond doubt, since it is documented not only by written sources but also from the surviving examples. See A. KAZHDAN, A Note on the "Middle-Byzantine" Ambo. *Byz* 57 (1987) 422–426. PESCHLOW, Der mittelbyzantinische Ambo 255–260, Taf. 148–151; SODINI, Les ambons médievaux 303–307, Pl. 172–173; Th. PAZARAS, Πρόταση αναπαράστασης του Άμβωνα της Παλαιάς Μητρόπολης στη Βέροια, in: Thymiama ste mneme tes Laskarinas Boura, I. Athens 1994, 251–254, Pl. 136–147.

[120] VANDERHEYDE, ciborium 441–442.

[121] MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 217–230.

[122] SYTHIAKAKIS – KRITSIMALLIS, Στόμιο 137–138.

[123] VANDERHEYDE, Sculpture architecturale 24, 148; MENTZOS, Εργαστήριο γλυπτικής 226.

In conclusion, we come to understand that the theory of the famous preexisting early Christian basilica had such an impact on earlier scholars that anything which was not clearly middle Byzantine or looked rearranged was attributed to the early Christian period, without taking into account that the middle Byzantine building had, in its long history, an own share of destruction, interventions, and reconstructions. No pieces of the ciborium and the ambo, that Soteriou and many others after him considered as early Christian[124], can be attributed to this period; while the use of spolia in the original phase of construction is not self-evident.

From the close examination of the sculptural decoration, as well as of the architectural features of the building, no satisfactory evidence was found to suggest the existence of an early Christian basilica under the present monument. The ionic bases and column shafts, which may be in their second use, could have been incorporated at a later date. The column shaft and slabs of verde antico of the ambo and the floor, which could be spolia, may have been added during the 17th c. reconstruction, as it is possibly true for the two column shafts serving as side tables in the bema. Even the mosaic floor, which was regarded as the sole *in situ* relic of this basilica, is found at the same level as the thresholds of the original middle Byzantine doors.

D. COMMENTS

The successive building phases of the monument, which were not completely distinguishable until recently, have made the accurate dating of the building problematic; these difficulties can be observed in the earlier studies of the church. Soteriou proposed an 11–12th c. dating for the building, which according to him took the place of an early Christian basilica[125]. Nikonanos supported this hypothesis in the light of additional findings and also made two important observations: first, that the ground plan of the two, presumed, building phases coincide exactly, and second, that no decorative layer was found under the 16th c. wall paintings, which is indicative of major destruction[126]. Xyngopoulos suggested that the building was erected in the 12th c., just before the execution of the bema frescoes[127]. Vokotopoulos listed the church of Kalampaka among the 9–11th c. buildings, due to the presence of a circular window on the south wall of the narthex[128], which Soteriou had assigned to the 11th c. building phase. Careful observation of the construction and decorative details, as well as new evidence that came to light during recent restoration, led us in a series of conclusions and new suggestions on the monument's building history.

First of all, there is no concrete evidence for the existence of an early Christian basilica that preceded the middle-Byzantine building. This argument could be supported only by the existence of a mosaic floor beneath the flagstone pavement and a certain alteration of the masonry at a slight projection from the base of the main apse (Fig. 5). However, neither of these elements can be considered as evidence due to the following reasons: the mosaic floor is only 0.10 m beneath the actual floor of the main church (0.25 m beneath the raised floor level of the bema), too shallow to belong to a previous building on which the present basilica could be founded[129].

The threshold of the northern door of the south façade, which appears to belong to the original phase of the Byzantine basilica, is at the same level as the mosaic floor. This must also be the case

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[124] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 302–304.
[125] SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 293.
[126] NIKONANOS, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία 290–291; IDEM, Βυζαντινοί ναοί 15, n. 24.
[127] XYNGOPOULOS, Τά μνημεῖα τῶν Σερβίων 48, n. 4.
[128] VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 203, n. 2.
[129] The mosaic floor was poorly documented in the first place (in fact it appears that no additional pictures exist than those already published) and its geometric patterns remain extremely common for a long period of time, even until the early middle-Byzantine period (e.g., the basilica of Mastron, VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 20, pl. 6α–7β).

for the original main entrance to the church (the present entrance from the outer to the inner narthex), whose threshold lies beneath the actual flagstone floor (Fig. 26).

The use of mosaic floors in middle Byzantine buildings has been already documented, not only in early or transitional buildings such as the church of Episkopi in Mastron (end of 7th or 8th c.)[130], the second building phase of the basilica of Hagios Achillios in Larissa (around the middle of the 9th c.)[131], the church of Panagia in Trimetos (10th or beginning of 11th c.)[132], and the middle byzantine basilica of Hagios Georgios in Domenikon near Elasson[133] but also in the even later church of Taxiarches in Lokris[134] (first quarter of the 12th c.)[135], the Katholikon of Sagmatas[136], the Katholikon of Vlacherna[137], etc.[138].

The marble decoration of the building as a whole, perhaps with the exception of some bases and column shafts, cannot be dated earlier than the middle Byzantine period. We should be very careful in considering the difference in masonry at the base of the apse (Fig. 5) as "an earlier building phase," since this cannot be observed anywhere else on the walls. This part could simply belong to the foundations of the apse that were dug off the ground during one of the successive repairs.

If the middle Byzantine church had indeed succeeded an early Christian basilica, to which the mosaic floor belonged, we should have to admit that the later building was not actually founded on it, as Nikonanos supposed, but incorporated it, using the original mosaic floor[139]. In that case, the middle Byzantine columns should be lying on the preexisting early Christian stylobates, which were not traced. On the contrary, all the existing evidence points to the fact that the floor of the middle Byzantine church was covered with a mosaic[140]. Tiles probably covered or patched this floor at a later date, as indicated in the photographs published by Nikonanos[141].

This leads us to the question, when the Byzantine church was constructed. The northern and southern façades of the main church along with the clerestory and the lower part of the inner narthex belong to a coherent original building phase (Fig. 36), since they present the same building method in the masonry and the construction of the openings, i.e., windows and walled-up doors that are constructed with stone voussoirs outlined by a brick strip. The use of dentil courses on the southern side can only mean that this side was of a greater importance than the hidden northern

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130 Vokotopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 20, 180–181, Pl. 6β, 7α–β.

131 V. Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, Λείψανα γλυπτού αρχιτεκτονικού διακόσμου από τη βασιλική του "Αγίου Αχιλλίου" Λάρισας. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της οικοδομικής ιστορίας του μνημείου, in: Praktika epistemonikes synanteses: Archaiologiko ergo Thessalias kai Stereas Helladas 2/I (Volos 2006). Volos 2009, 455–471, esp. 461–462, n. 47, Fig. 15 (= Fragments of Architectural Decoration from the so-called "Basilica of Saint Achillios" in Larissa: A Contribution to the Study of its Building History [engl. summ.], *ibidem* 464).

132 Vokotopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 31–32, 189, Pl. 17.

133 V. Sythiakakis, *AD* 52 (1997), 542, pl. 201α. The pre-existing building on which the basilica was founded proved by the findings to be roman. An extant publication of the monument is prepared by the authors. The initial building phase is probably contemporaneous to the erection of the basilica in Kalampaka.

134 A. Orlandos, Ὁ Ταξιάρχης τῆς Λοκρίδος. *EEBS* 6 (1929) 357–358.

135 V. Sythiakakis – Kritsimallis, Τέμπλο Ταξιάρχη 125–136.

136 A. Orlandos, Ἡ ἐν Βοιωτίᾳ Μονή τοῦ Σαγματᾶ. *ABME* 7 (1951) 98–105. On the date see S. Voyadjis, Παρατηρήσεις στην οικοδομική ιστορία της Μονής Σαγματά στην Βοιωτία. *DChAE* 18 (1995) 49–70 and Bouras-Bouras, Ναοδομία 281–285.

137 A. Orlandos, Ἡ παρά τήν Ἄρταν μονή τῶν Βλαχερνῶν. *ABME* 2 (1936) 29–30. On the date of the building phases see Bouras-Bouras, Ναοδομία 88–90.

138 Vokotopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 150, n. 1–2.

139 Nikonanos, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία 290–291. It is difficult to believe that this delicate material survived the destruction of the basilica in such a good condition, bearing in mind that the original mosaic floors of the early Christian basilicas discovered so far rarely survived in good condition. They were often covered by marble slabs or patched with tiles even before the end of that period (for example, see basilica A of Nea Anchialos, Soteriou, *AE* 1929, 32–33).

140 Extensive research under the actual floor is necessary, even though it is almost impossible, in order to finally clarify this matter.

141 Nikonanos, Βυζαντινά Μνημεία, Pl. 246b–c.

one. No repairs of any kind are visible. In almost every window jamb there are similar stone members; thus, there were no alterations. This building phase extends to the western end of the narthex (Fig. 36), which is easily distinguished from the outer narthex by a vertical joint, equally attested on the northern and southern walls (Figs. 1, 13). The trace of a much lower penthouse roof also indicates the original arrangement of the inner narthex (Figs. 8, 13, 36). To this phase we must assign the wall above the tribelon as well as the longitudinal walls separating the nave from the aisles. The only secure *terminus ante quem* for the dating of this phase is the existence of the 11–12th c. frescoes in the diakonikon; nevertheless, the existence of an even earlier painted layer underneath these indicates that the terminus must be set even earlier. Further evidence points to the same conclusion.

A second building phase can be traced on the eastern and western pediment walls (Figs. 5, 6, 36). Despite the absence of a visible joint, the masonry around the windows is more regular, with brick surrounding the stones, almost like the cloisonné building system. This arrangement should probably be attributed to a phase of repairs on the upper part of the pediments. A tentative dating of this phase can be based on the form of the arched windows (double to the east and triple to the west). They are built exclusively with bricks and their arches are supported by stone mullions. The precision and refinement of their construction, which is in contradiction to the crude execution of the openings elsewhere, suggest a date in the 11th c. Among the innumerable parallels available, we can mention the Katholikon of Hosios Meletios in Attica[142], the churches of Kapnikarea and Hagioi Theodoroi in Athens[143], the church of the Savior in Amphissa[144], and the Katholikon of the Kaisariani Monastery[145]. The fact that the middle arch of the triple western window is set higher than the other two indicates that its construction should be placed in the late 11th or early 12th c. According to the date of the marble decoration, the rearrangement of the pediments should be assigned to the period around the year 1100 and obviously followed a collapse of the original roof of the clerestory that demolished the marble furniture of the nave. If the second building phase of the church dates from the late 11th c., then the original construction of the building should be much earlier.

An important feature that should be noted on the Kalampaka ground plan is the partial replacement of the traditional early Christian arcades by walls, a feature first introduced in the 8th c. during the reconstruction of the church of Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki[146] where part of the columns were replaced by built-up piers. The alteration of columns and wall parts is generally considered to be a characteristic of the transitional period between the early Christian and Byzantine eras, which used to be called the "Dark Ages" and was in all probability due to the changes of the liturgical ceremony. For a supposed 11th c. church, it should be considered as a definitely archaistic trait.

The heavy masonry with sparse use of bricks and the arrangement of the window jambs of the apse parallel to the building axis are also archaistic elements[147]. The form of the triple window in

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142 A. ORLANDOS, Ἡ Μονὴ τοῦ Ὁσίου Μελετίου καὶ τὰ παραλαύρια αὐτῆς. *ABME* 5 (1939–1940) 34–118.

143 A. XYNGOPOULOS, Μνημεῖα τῶν Βυζαντινῶν Ἀθηνῶν καὶ τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας, in: Eureterion ton Mesaionikon Mnemeion tes Hellados 2. Athens 1929, 59–122.

144 A. ORLANDOS, Ὁ παρὰ τὴν Ἄμφισσαν ναὸς τοῦ Σωτῆρος. *ABME* 1 (1935) 181–196.

145 A. ORLANDOS Μεσαιωνικὰ μνημεῖα τῆς πεδιάδος τῶν Ἀθηνῶν καί τῶν κλιτύων Ὑμηττοῦ – Πεντελικοῦ – Πάρνηθος καὶ Αἰγάλεω, in: Eureterion ton Mesaionikon Mnemeion tes Hellados 3. Athens 1933, 123–230.

146 MENTZOS, Ο ναός του Αγίου Δημητρίου 229 and n. 43.

147 This feature is in use earlier than the 11th c., i.e., the basilica of Mentzena in Achaia, the church of the Panaxiotissa in Gavrolimni, see VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 37, the basilica of Saint Achillios in Prespa, dating from 983 or 985, see N. K. MOUTSOPOULOS, Η Βασιλική του Αγίου Αχιλλείου στην Πρέσπα. Thessaloniki 1999, fig. 118, the Episkopi in Skyros, dating from 895, see Ch. BOURAS, Ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἐπισκοπῆς Σκύρου. *DChAE 2* (1961) 60. On the contrary, the arrangement of these windows in slightly later buildings is radial: for example, the Katholikon of Lavra in Athos, dating from 963, see P. MYLONAS, Le plan initiale du Katholikon de la Grande Lavra au Mont Athos et la génèse du type du Katholikon Athonite. *CahArch* 32 (1984) 95 and a forthcoming publication by S. Voyadjis.

the main apse, separated by pillars, is generally assigned to the first millennium[148], and the semicircular plan of the apses also points to the same period[149].

Moreover, the construction of the arched openings with stone voussoirs does not support a 12th c. dating. Even though the use of stone voussoirs is generally considered a 12th c. feature, which is very rarely observed at earlier dates[150], the arched openings of the original phase in Kalampaka find exact parallels to those of the church of the Panagia in Skripou, Boeotia, which is dated by an inscription to the year 873/874[151]. In fact, the two monuments share a lot of common features:

the arrangement of the large arched windows (single, double, or sometimes triple) that are opened low on the walls, letting abundant light inside the church, their construction with stone voussoirs surrounded by a single strip of bricks[152];

the existence of multiple doors on the side façades, especially those of the narthex. This feature is rare in later middle Byzantine buildings in Greece, in which doors are usually restricted to the western façade;

the use of the single dentil course, which runs along the walls, outlining the arches of the openings;

the formal resemblance between the ionic impost capitals of Kalampaka, which were in all probability executed especially for the building, and those found among the sculptural context of Skripou; the latter, even though erroneously assigned to an earlier date, bear advanced features and a treatment analogous to the rest of the sculptural decoration assigned to the church.

This evidence points to a date towards the end of the 9th or at least the beginning of the 10th c (around 900 A.D.). Unfortunately, this dating lacks further comparative material to be conclusively proven; comparisons with 9th c. monuments are difficult as there are only a few buildings in Greece that have been accurately dated with external evidence, e.g., Skripou, Hagios Georgios Theologos in Thebes[153], and Episkopi in Skyros[154], of which only Skripou is still standing, while in Constantinople there are none. The church of Myrelaion, a church of exceptional design[155], is a fortuitous survivor that may or may not be a typical example of 9–10th c. Constantinopolitan church architecture, which was certainly the center of inspiration for the whole Empire, while most building types emanated from its cultural melting pot[156]. The theory about a Bulgarian court that surpassed the ingenuity and resources of the architects of the Byzantine Empire, amidst continuous wars[157], was based on more or less politically orientated publications[158] and should therefore be dismissed[159]. On

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148 VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 163.

149 This cannot be taken for granted, since the semicircular apse was common even later, but mostly for buildings of a low intent; the church of Kalampaka did not belong to this category.

150 BOURAS-BOURAS, Ναοδομία 407.

151 This very important monument was first described by J. STRZYGOWSKI, Inedita der Architectur und Plastik aus der Zeit Basilios I. (867–886). *BZ* 3 (1894) 1–17 and later discussed by M. SOTERIOU, Ὁ ναὸς τῆς Σκριπούς στὴ Βοιωτία. *AE* 1931, 119–157; D. PALLAS, Ἡ Παναγία τῆς Σκριπούς ὡς μετάπλαση τῆς παλαιοχριστιανικῆς ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς σὲ μεσαιωνικὴ βυζαντινὴ. *Epeteris Etaireias Stereoelladikon Meleton* 6 (1976–1977) 14, while lately S. VOYADJIS, Παρατηρήσεις στην οικοδομική ιστορία της Παναγίας Σκριπούς στη Βοιωτία. *DChAE* 20 (1998–1999) 111–128 published a series of detailed drawings.

152 Stone arches of a different form are present in Episkopi in Skyros (BOURAS, Ἐπισκοπή Σκύρου, table 27).

153 G. SOTERIOU, Ὁ ἐν Θήβαις ναὸς τοῦ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου. *AE* 1924, 1–21.

154 BOURAS, Ἐπισκοπή Σκύρου 66.

155 R. OUSTERHOUT, Master Builders of Byzantium. Princeton 1999, 23.

156 The gap in our knowledge of early-middle Byzantine architecture of the Capital became more evident by the disclosure of the substructure of St Mary Peribleptos, a church built by Romanos III Argyros around 1030. A recent paper suggested that the superstructure belonged to the type of the domed-octagon, which was never again registered in Constantinople (Ö. DALGIÇ – T. MATHEWS, A new interpretation of the church of Peribleptos and its place in Middle Byzantine Architecture, in: 1st International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium. Istanbul 2007, 424–431).

157 R. KRAUTHEIMER, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture. Harmondsworth 1965, 315.

158 B. FILOV, Die altbulgarische Kunst. Bern 1919, 48.

the contrary, we should pay attention to the church of Hagia Sophia in Bizye (Vize), a controversial building in the vicinity of Constantinople that was unfortunately severely damaged by recent interventions[160]. This important building was dated to the 9th c.[161], although a 10th c. dating for the lower part, which follows the basilical plan, and a 13–14th c. date for the upper part were recently suggested[162]. The two large windows at the ground level of the west façade, constructed with stone voussoirs very similar to those of Skripou and Kalampaka, appear to support the arguments described above.

Soteriou's argument, that the building was originally covered with barrel vaults, is not plausible according to the evidence derived from recent restoration work[163]. First, the walls are too thin (no more than 0.70 m) to resist the outwards-exerted pressure of a vaulted roof. Second, even if the ground plan of the main aisle could justify a vaulted roof, this could not be applied to the aisles; in that case, the springing of the side vaults would coincide with the windows of the lower part of the walls or they would hide the windows of the clerestory and they would project over the original roof of the narthex, which was originally placed much lower than it is today. Furthermore, the cross-groin vault over the crypt of the diakonikon, on which Soteriou mainly based his theory[164], was proven to be added later than the 11–12th c. painted decoration of the wall, which continues uninterrupted above it.

It is uncertain if the synthronon belonged to the original building phase. This feature is normally related to early Christian basilicas. In the widespread cross-in square type of the Byzantine period, the narrow apse made its use obsolete; however it was not totally abandoned, especially in basilicas. In fact it appears that during this period it was constantly connected with cathedrals, where the clergy needed more space to sit: the surviving examples include the church of Episkopi in Mastron[165], the Episkopi in Eurytania[166], the Episkopi in Skyros[167], the church of Hagioi Stephanos and Georgios in Kastoria[168], the basilica of Hagios Achillios in Prespa[169], the Episkopi in Santorini[170], the church of Hagios Nikolaos in Melnik[171], and others[172]. It seems therefore that the use of the synthronon survived at least until the middle of the 13th c.[173].

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159 Krautheimer's suggestion that Skripou, a monument of a certain date and patronage, could be related to the Bulgarian court should be revised (A.H.S. MEGAW, The Scripou Screen. *Annual of the British School at Athens* 61 [1966] 1ff.), as well as the argument for distant relations between Persia and Greece, due to unregistered migrations. On the contrary, a decorative element can be easily copied by a merchant, a soldier, or an observant traveler, while the construction of a building requires the evolvement of local craftsmen and workshops. Cf. S. VOYADJIS, The Katholikon of Nea Moni in Chios unveiled. *JÖB* 59 (2009) 239.

160 The most important publications are: F. DIRIMTEKIN, Church of Hagia Sophia (Süleyman Paşa) at Vize. *Ayasofya Müzesi Yilliği* 3 (1961) 18–20 and 47–49; C. MANGO, The Byzantine Church at Vize (Bizye) in Thrace and St. Mary the Younger. *ZRVI* 11 (1968) 9–13; St. MAMALOUKOS, Η καθολική εκκλησία της Βιζύης. *Peri Thrakes* 3 (2003) 131–150. A. KÜLZER, Ostthrakien (Europe) (*TIB* 12). Wien 2008, 292.

161 Y. ÖTÜKEN – R. OUSTERHOUT, Notes on the Monuments of Turkish Thrace. *Anatolian Studies* 39 (1989) 121–149, esp. 138–142.

162 F.A. BAUER – H.A. KLEIN, The Church of Hagia Sophia in Bizye (Vize): Results of the Fieldwork Seasons 2003 and 2004. *DOP* 60 (2006) 249–270.

163 O. KARAGIORGOU, Ανασκαφικά δεδομένα παρατηρήσεις και desiderata της οικοδομικής ιστορίας της βασιλικής της Κοιμήσεως Θεοτόκου στην Καλαμπάκα. in: 25th Annual Symposium of the Christian Archaeological Society, Athens 2005 (Abstracts) 53–54, is right in criticizing the suggestion of Soteriou, that the basilica was originally vaulted. However, she supports the idea that the building was originally built in the 11th c.

164 SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 296.

165 VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 135.

166 VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 69.

167 BOURAS, Ἐπισκοπή Σκύρου 60.

168 N. MOUTSOPOULOS, Εκκλησίες της Καστοριάς (9ος–11ος αιώνας). Thessaloniki 1992, 203.

169 MOUTSOPOULOS, Η βασιλική του Αγίου Αχιλλείου 42.

170 VOKOTOPOULOS, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική 115–116.

171 N. MAVRODINOV, Églises et monastéres à Melnik et Rozen. *Godisnika na Narodnija Muzej* 5 (1926) 300.

In the case of Kalampaka, it appears more probable that at least the stone revetment of the synthronon belongs to a latter addition, and the material was in its second use, as implied by the off-center position of the carved crosses. Moreover, the cathedra looks somehow improvised, judging from its awkward placement; a further hint for its later addition is the walling-up of the middle apse window. Perhaps only the marble throne of the cathedra and the inner brick core of the synthronon belong to the initial construction. In that case, taking into account that the initial floor level was 0.25 m lower in Byzantine times, the synthronon should have an additional lower step. In this initial structure, the marble throne was probably set in a lower place.

If the reconstruction of the pediment walls and windows dates from the 11–12th c., the raising of the walls of the inner narthex belongs to an even later building phase, as does the circular window that misled earlier scholars. It obviously predates the 1573 frescoes, but the masonry does not permit us to date this phase much earlier than the paintings. This arrangement was probably dictated by the need for more extended wall surfaces that were raised to acquire the painted copies of the important official documents for the bishopric of Stagoi. The setting of the flagstone floor should be assigned to the same 16th c. construction phase, since the paintings are smoothly finished on its edges. Along with the revetment of the floor with flagstones, the synthronon also underwent modifications: the steps were covered with the same flagstones as the pavement and the marble throne was reset on a podium, having its back higher than the middle-window sill level. This last feature led to the walling-up of the middle apse window and to the subsequent addition of the wall decoration.

The upper part of the longitudinal walls of the clerestory was demolished at a later date and a new timber roof was built at a slightly lower level (0.20–0.30 m). A double dentil course was added as a cornice, consisting of bricks protruding off the wall outline, unlike those of the pediments. This new roof acquired a wooden ceiling that can be tentatively dated to the late 17th – early 18th c. The construction of the wooden iconostas, which eventually took the place of the Byzantine marble templon, should be dated to the same period.

At this point we should recall that the rearrangement of the ambo and the addition of its wooden canopy are dated by an inscription to the year 1641 or 1669, which is also a probable date for the rearrangement of the ciborium. We earlier assumed that the destruction of the original Byzantine ambo and marble templon was probably due to the collapse of the upper part of the church, which imposed several internal rearrangements. We could thus summarize the above statements to suggest that a collapse of the heavy timber roof swept along the upper part of the long clerestory walls, where the beams were fixed, and partially destroyed the inner marble decoration, i.e., the original marble templon and the ambo. Only the ciborium, protected by the solid semi-dome of the apse, managed to survive. In fact it appears that the sanctuary remained fairly intact, since it is the only area where wall paintings from the first two building phases (original construction and renovation of the period around 1100 A.D.) have survived. This destruction was followed by a demolition of the ruined upper parts of the walls and a subsequent reconstruction of the timber roof at a slightly lower level. At the same time, the original marble templon was replaced by a wooden one and its surviving parts were reused in the reconstruction of the ambo, along with some surviving parts of the latter.

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[172] Contrary to P. MYLONAS, Les étapes succéssives de construction du Protaton au Mont Athos. *CahArch* 28 (1979) 146 P. Fountas, in his unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Athens 2010) on the building history of the Protaton, Mount Athos, sustains that the building was never designed as a basilica, but as a cross-domed church with a wooden dome.

[173] To the buildings listed above should be added another Thessalian monument, the basilica of Hagios Georgios in Domenikon near Elasson, which will be commended by the authors in a forthcoming publication.

An outer narthex was added at a later date to the west of the original building. Since the drawing of the Meteora Rocks by the monk Barskij depicts the church without an outer narthex[174], the date of the expansion must be placed between the year 1745 and the date of the inner painted decoration (1792).

E. CONCLUSIONS

According to the observations and suggestions made above, the building history of the church of the Virgin at Kalampaka could be described as follows (Fig. 36):

9–10th century. The church of the Dormition was founded around the end of the 9th or early in the 10th c. as a typical three aisled, timber roofed basilica, with a clerestory and a narthex. This date is well supported by the written sources, since the bishopric is mentioned as early as the 10th c. in the Diatyposis of Leo VI. An alteration of wall parts and double arched openings supported by columns with ionic impost capitals was used to divide the side aisles from the nave. There were no stylobates. The archaistic feature of a tribelon helped the communication of the nave to the narthex. There were three entrances to the narthex, one at each external wall and another on the southern façade of the main church. The floors of this early building were probably covered with mosaics of a simple geometric design. Abundant light entered from large arched windows: a single and a double window on the southern wall, two single windows on the northern wall, and ten windows on the clerestory walls. The choice of an older architectural type, instead of the cross-in square, which was already coming in vogue, was based either on the available narrow space or, in all probability, on the specific character of the monument, since a large aisled building could offer the space needed for the crowd and clergy hosted in a cathedral[175]. The church acquired wall paintings, at least in the area of the sanctuary; only a small part of this survives today beneath the layer of the 12th c. wall paintings on the northern wall of the diakonikon. Nothing survives from the original marble decoration of the church, except for the ionic impost capitals that support the arches, the western and southern door-frames, and probably the three fragments of a cornice or lintel decorated with a vine scroll, which were later incrusted in the masonry over the southern door in the façade of the inner narthex.

The erection of the church of the Dormition by the end of the 9th or beginning of the 10th c. coincides with a relatively flourishing period of construction and reconstruction of Christian buildings in the Greek mainland (e.g., Skripou, Mastron, Hagios Achillios in Larissa, and Hagios Georgios in Domenikon) that does not appear to be accidental. In fact, in that same period, an amount of new bishoprics where founded in the Themes of Hellas and Thessalia[176], including the very town of Stagoi. Perhaps it is not irrelevant that this "revival" arose just after the end of the controversy of Iconoclasm and the end of the threat from the Slavs, Bulgarians, and Arabs. It is in the same period that the worship of miraculous relics was revitalized and many Vitae of saints were compiled[177].

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[174] C. CHRYSOCHOIDES, Τόπος και εικόνα. Χαρακτικά ξένων περιηγητών για την Ελλάδα. Athens 1979, fig. 27.

[175] Recent evidence permits us to suggest that the basilica plan was never abandoned; on the contrary it appears that it became connected especially to the Episcopal buildings. Although the exact purposes for this archaism remain uncertain, one can imagine that it was due to multiple reasons: the conservatism well attested in ecclesiastical cycles, the need for space, since an Episcopal building was intended to host a large amount of people, the special symbolism of an architectural type that was initially connected to the imperial power, and finally the innovation or rebuilding of ruined early-Christian monuments on the same ground-plan (see for example the basilica of Hagios Achillios in Larissa, SYTHIAKAKIS – KRITSIMALLIS, Λείψανα).

[176] AVRAMEA, Βυζαντινὴ Θεσσαλία 48–54; KODER – HILD, Hellas und Thessalia 82–83.

[177] A. MENTZOS, Το προσκύνημα του Αγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης στα βυζαντινά χρόνια. Athens 1994, 124. SYTHIAKAKIS-KRITSIMALLIS, Λείψανα 462.

11–12th century. The upper part of the clerestory pediments as well as parts of the upper ends of the sidewalls were demolished or replaced, probably after some kind of destruction, e.g., a collapse of the roof, which appears to have almost completely destroyed the original marble decoration and furniture. The original mosaic floor was also severely damaged and therefore covered with tiles. New windows were constructed with the use of thin bricks for the arches. After the rearrangement, around the end of the 11th to the beginning of the 12th c., the church was supplied with new marble decorations and furnishings, which were probably executed by craftsmen connected with the workshops of Thessaloniki, who were strongly influenced by the stylistic trends of the Byzantine capital. Its new marble templon extended from the bema to the parabemata over the west face of the separating walls with the intervention of icon frames, while a marble ambo with a double staircase and a ciborium were executed in order to imitate the liturgical furniture of the early-Christian cathedrals. It is uncertain if this furniture replaced a similar pre-existing marble equipment. At the same time the church was decorated with a new layer of wall paintings, at least in the area of the sanctuary. This ambitious decorative program points to an upgrade of the role of the church as a bishopric seat; therefore, it appears possible that the bishopric flourished under the reign of Alexius I. In this same period, after his expedition against the Normans in Larissa[178], Alexius paid serious attention to the organization of the monastic community of the Mount of Kellia (eastern Kissavos) and funded the erection of the monastery of Panagia in Stomion (Tsagezi); the Katholikon received an elaborate marble decoration of the same style as the one in Kalampaka that was imported from imperial workshops[179].

16th century. During this period the church underwent radical changes. The roof collapsed and was replaced, possibly after a devastating earthquake[180]. The walls of the narthex were raised, the openings of the side façades were blocked, and the church was decorated with frescoes by Neophytos, son of Theophanes the Cretan, in 1573. The fact that no earlier wall paintings have survived in the main church proves that the damage was extensive and the church remained roofless for several years[181]. In all probability, it was then that the Byzantine marble templon and the ambo were first destroyed. Restoration work may have started soon before the 1573 wall decoration. An important clue on the argument of destruction succeeded by repairs, is the fact that the 1573 frescoes follow the serious leaning out of the southern wall, which was not repaired. Just before the wall decoration was finished, a new flagstone pavement was set over the Byzantine tiled floor, while the synthronon was rearranged. The construction of the crypt in the diakonikon probably took place during this restoration, since the expanse of the building ameliorations points to a certain degree of wealth, which could explain the need for an undisclosed storage room.

17th century. New restoration work was probably carried out around the middle of this century. The roof appeared to have collapsed once again, sweeping away the upper part of the clerestory walls[182]. The liturgical furniture of the church was probably damaged once again. In 1641 or 1669 (a *terminus ante quem* for the collapse) the ambo was reconstructed; the ciborium was probably rearranged at the same time and the actual wooden gilded iconostasis was constructed.

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[178] E. KISLINGER, Vertauschte Notizen. Anna Komnene und die Chronologie der byzantinisch-normannischen Auseinandersetzung 1081–1085. *JÖB* 59 (2009) 127–145.

[179] SYTHIAKAKIS-KRITSIMALLIS, Στόμιο 123–154.

[180] It has been confirmed that an earthquake hit Thessaly in 1544 (see I. ALEXANDROPOULOS, Τα οθωμανικά τουρκικά έγγραφα της Ιεράς Μονής Σωτήρος Δούσικου: η μονή ως τα μέσα του 16ου αιώνα. Πρόδρομη ανακοίνωση. *Trikalina* 14 [1994] 113). It is not unlikely that the reconstruction of the Dormition followed it. In the same year, according to an inscription, the Katholikon of the nearby Doussikon monastery was rebuilt, see S. VOYADJIS, Συμβολή στην ιστορία της εκκλησιαστικής αρχιτεκτονικής της Κεντρικής Ελλάδος κατά τον 16ο αιώνα. Athens 2000, 144.

[181] This type of building, especially if roofless, is vulnerable to earthquakes of a north-south direction.

[182] It is possible, however, that the upper part of the walls has been demolished for an unknown purpose.

18th century. The outer narthex was added after 1745, probably just before the execution of the wall paintings in 1782. In the same building period, the roof of the nave acquired a painted ceiling, which still survives. The side portico was probably constructed at approximately the same time, since it was covered with frescoes by the same artist in 1792.

19th century. The belfry was completed on March 29, 1887, according to an inscription[183]. The yard was probably also paved.

20th century. The Episcopal palace was demolished. Restoration work took place once again, including the addition of the buttresses and iron beams[184].

2000–2002. Further repair works: grouting and repointing of the walls, repairs of the roof, removal of the rusty iron buttresses and installation of stainless steel rods. Finally, in the years 2000–2005, extensive repairs, on the basis of a project by S. Voyadjis, were undertaken once more by the Ministry of Culture.

If the dating of the construction of the Kalampaka basilica around the end of the 9th or beginning of the 10th c. is correct, its addition to the restricted group of 9th c. basilicas leads us to some interesting comparisons[185]: Although it has been proven that the use of columns, piers, or walls pierced by arched openings in the aisles of late basilicas mostly depended on the possibility of acquiring ready to use material in an era when most of the quarries were closed[186], we cannot help but observe that the alternative use of marble columns and wall parts is a common feature in 9th c. buildings, such as the Dormition of Kalampaka or the church of Episkopi in Mentzena. Moreover, it seems possible that the aesthetic changes we first observe in the basilica of Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki as early as the 8th c., i.e., where piers took the place of columns in a rhythmical alteration, were extended into the next century by the use of larger wall parts. It is also possible that the use of a more "solid" separation between the aisles was due to a change of ethics in the process of the liturgy, by the establishment of the "Great Entrance," since it appears that by the end of the early Christian era the stylobatae of the basilicas were remarkably raised, while in some of the early-middle Byzantine buildings with simple colonnades, closure slabs were used to block the communication between the nave and the side aisles[187]. Later buildings[188] tend to have a single kind of support[189]. Therefore, the basilica "Ton Katechoumenon" in Servia[190] seems correctly dated to the turn of the 11th c., despite its reported similarities with the church of the Dormition[191].

The use of a single dentil course that runs the length of the building, the use of voussoirs for the arched openings, and the masonry consisting of stones and bricks placed without a specific system,

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183 SOTERIOU, Ἡ Βασιλικὴ τῆς Κοιμήσεως 300.

184 Repairs were first conducted in 1921–1923 by the Ministry of Ecclesiastics. According to the reports, in 1871, the church was threatened by the fire that destroyed the adjoining Episcopal palace, since the two buildings shared the same wooden roof. In 1921 the foundations were reinforced and the buttresses were constructed. During World War II the building suffered from fires and neglect. New repairs were undertaken in 1945, the roof was replaced, and the yard was repaved. Repairs were also undertaken by the Ministry of Culture in 1970: NIKONANOS, *AD* 25B (1970) 290.

185 There is no meaning in reopening long ended discussions about the eastern origin or Helladic-type basilicas.

186 Ch. BOURAS, Zourtsa. Une basilique byzantine au Peloponnèse. *CahArch* 21 (1971) 148.

187 This is the case of the basilica of Hagios Georgios in Domenikon near Elasson, where the ionic bases of the colonnades are cut to receive a closure slab. A same cut can be observed on the base of the SE column in the basilica in Kalampaka. The cut today is turned towards the South, but the colonnades have been rearranged at least once, as it was mentioned above.

188 Such as Hagios Achillios in Prespa.

189 Aboba Pliska dates probably from the 7th c. (P. VOKOTOPOULOS, Παρατηρήσεις στην λεγόμενη βασιλική του Αγίου Νίκωνος, in: Praktika A' diethnous synedriou Peloponesiakon spoudon, II. Athens 1976, 278ff., n. 6). FILOV, altbulgarische Kunst 48, had political reasons to date it in the 9th c.

190 XYNGOPOULOS, Τά μνημεῖα τῶν Σερβίων 61.

191 An alternation of columns and piers is present in the basilica of the Dormition in Apidia; however, the church is an early Christian building with colonnades that were built-up in order to acquire a vaulted roof, A. ORLANDOS, Ἀνατολίζουσαι βασιλικαὶ Λακωνίας. *EEBS* 4 (1927) 347.

are common features in 9th c. buildings. Multiple entrances, not restricted only to the western side, and large single or double windows extending down almost to the ground are common features of the buildings of this era, and these are registered as Constantinopolitan influences.

Another insecurely dated building should probably be added to the group mentioned above: the Old Metropolis in Veroia has been dated to the 11th c. according to a very vague inscription[192]. However, the scattered use of bricks in its masonry, the existence of a transept similar to Skripou, the inexplicable use of walls in alternation with columns to support the clerestory, and the probable similarity in the form of the original windows to the monuments mentioned above[193] are elements that point to a tentative 9th c. dating.

The church of the Dormition in Kalampaka can thus be added to the group of monuments that fill the space between the end of the early Christian and the beginning of the middle Byzantine period in Greece. The re-dating of such an important monument to an earlier period close to the so-called "Dark Ages" reinforces the recent argument that the obscurity of that intermediate period was not caused by the absence of monuments, but mostly by their erroneous dating. A series of monuments dated or re-dated to that period proves that the lack of monuments in the period before the official beginning of the middle Byzantine period is perhaps accidental and could be explained by the abundance of 6th c. monuments that remained in use over the following centuries, the economic decline from the second half of the 6th c. onwards, the insecurity caused by invasions, and the severe perturbations caused by Iconoclasm. In the dawn of the new era, the basilica of Kalampaka successfully managed to bridge an architectural plan inherited from the past with up-to-the-date building methods[194]. Perhaps in the future, careful research of other controversial monuments would reveal, under the coating and later repairs, earlier building phases that would shed more light on the yet unknown architecture of that very early Byzantine period[195].

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[192] Th. PAPAZOTOS, Η Βέροια και οι ναοί της (11ος–18ος αι). Athens 1994, 165.

[193] The triple arched eastern window of the apse is a later modification. The original window had piers as jambs and voussoirs in the arches (a very small part of the arch can be distinguished).

[194] The connection of these monuments with Bulgarian art seems obsolete. Unfortunately no 9th c. buildings have survived in Constantinople for comparisons. 9th century buildings are only known from written sources (see R. OUSTERHOUT, Reconstructing Ninth-Century Constantinople, in: L. BRUBAKER [ed.], Byzantium in the Ninth Century. Dead or Alive [*Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publications* 5]. Aldershot – Hampshire 1998, 115–130).

[195] As it was implied by G. DIMITROKALLIS, La genèse de l'église en croix grecque inscrite. *Byzantina* 23 (2002–2003) 219–231.