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**ВИЗАНТИЙСКО  
И ПОСТВИЗАНТИЙСКО ИЗКУСТВО:  
ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ**



**BYZANTINE  
AND POST-BYZANTINE ART:  
CROSSING BORDERS**

ART READINGS

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# Between Princes and Labourers: The Legacy of Hosios Christodoulos and his Successors in the Aegean Sea (11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

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**Abstract.** This paper aims to explore the influence gained by the monastery of Patmos in the Aegean Sea in the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries, during which its properties became symbols of imperial patronage and the foci of settlements linked to the local Church and to agrarian communities. This gradual concentration of power offers the opportunity to read into the landscape of other Aegean islands under its influence, and define identities in the region. These issues have been approached through both religious monuments and surviving mural decoration, which constitute a visual vocabulary open to interpretation.

**Key words:** Medieval Patmos, Cos, Leros, Kalymnos, Dodecanese, frescoes.

By the late 10<sup>th</sup> century imperial Byzantine control had been re-established in the Aegean. In this context, the central administration invested in outpost monasteries and churches on several of the islands in order to foster political, economic, ecclesiastical and cultural links with the provinces.

This paper aims to explore the influence gained by the monastery of

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Patmos in the Aegean Sea in the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries, when its properties became symbols of imperial patronage and the foci of settlements linked to the local Church and to agrarian communities. This gradual concentration of power offers the opportunity to look into the landscape of other Aegean islands under the influence of Patmos and define identities in the region. These issues have been approached through both religious monuments and surviving mural decoration, which constitute a visual vocabulary open to interpretation.

In the ‘transitional’ period between the late 7<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Aegean had been seriously affected by the breakdown and fragmentation of the Mediterranean “system”. A dearth of information concerning the region in contemporary histories, and modern scholarly interpretations dominated by the preoccupations of particular authors, have left the available archaeological evidence floating in a vacuum. Generalisation has often led to the establishment of views that may not even be valid for particular regions.

Up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the central government was generally interested in the operational potential of the fleet, but its maintenance was not seen as beneficial to the population of the nautical themes, at least in the short term. The islands were only mentioned in relation with raids, naval battles and rebellions – incidental information that is not particularly useful here.

In 961 the reconquest of Crete, a triumph for the Empire, recovered control of the Aegean, restored the safety of sea-lanes and enabled the repopulation of coastal settlements. The defeat at Mantzikert in 1071 initiated another period of raids, which were nonetheless repulsed without the depopulation of the islands. By 1081 cultural investment, political instability and the multiplication of offices and privileges had led to the reduction of state revenues. Economic and political advantage required access to officials in the capital. By this means *Hosios* Christodoulos established the monastery of St John the Theologian on Patmos, at a period when the central authority could only offer mild palliatives for the pressing needs of the provinces<sup>2</sup>, while constantly rising taxes drove peasants into serfdom<sup>3</sup>,

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2 *Angold*, Michael. *The Byzantine Empire 1025–1204: A Political History*. London and New York, 1984, 73–74.

3 *Hendy*, Michael. *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire (1081–1261)*. Washington D.C.,

as the documents of Patmos amply illustrate.

When absent on campaign, Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) relied on his relatives, most notably his mother Anna Dalassene, for control of the capital<sup>4</sup>. Her role, severely criticized by historians, seems to have been decisive in dealing with domestic instability. She was a patron of Hosios Christodoulos and their interactions were a key factor for administrative developments on the islands.

In 1079, after many wanderings, Christodoulos left the monasteries of Latros under Turkoman pressure and for a while settled in Strovilos, a coastal town of Asia Minor. There, he was warmly received by the monk Arsenios Scenourios, a scion of a noble Coan family, who prompted him to cross the sea and found a monastery on Cos. In 1080 Christodoulos was already established on Cos, in his monastery dedicated to the Virgin on the rocky hill of Pyli. This was, in his own words, “an uninhabited” place, and part of the extensive properties of Arsenios. Christodoulos’ charismatic personality attracted donations by monks, like Nikon Askepēs and Arsenios Scenouris, who offered him land on Mount Dikaios before April 1079, and laymen, like the Kavallouris siblings<sup>5</sup>. However, he soon grew disillusioned. After he delivered in person a petition to Constantinople, he quit his foundation on Cos, and in 1087 he obtained by chrysobull the island of Patmos. In addition to this island, he received Partheni and Temenia on Leros, largely farm lands, and half of the castle of Panteli as well as the island of Leipsoi<sup>6</sup>. In exchange, Christodoulos turned over to the imperial treasury the property he had acquired in Strovilos and Cos.

Around August 1088 the *Hosios* was settled in Patmos, where he began the construction of his monastery of St John (**Fig. 1**), which, after difficult early years, would develop into a major religious centre. Ties between this institution and the imperial capital were always strong, and the visits of its monks to the city were regular. Indeed, from its foundation in 1088, the monastery enjoyed imperial status,

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1969, 54-55.

4 Vranoussi, Era. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα της μονής Πάτμου, Α' Αυτοκρατορικά. Athens, 1980, 49. *Angold*. The Byzantine, 131.

5 See analytically *Oikonomidēs*, Nikolaos, Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IX<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> s.). Athens, 1996. 205.

6 The imperial chrysobull was followed by the *pittakia* of Alexios I and his mother, see Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 40-54, 327-335.



Fig. 1. Patmos, the monastery of St John the Theologian

as shown by the term *σεβασμία μονή*, which was most often used in the imperial chrysobulls.

From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the monastery developed special ties with a number of other islands through the acquisition of property.

## Relation between the monastery and its dependencies in the islands

Documents show that there were often tensions between the monastery and its subjects. The welfare of these subjects was never much of a priority for the monastery as an institution, since imperial foundation, endowments and protection guaranteed its privileges<sup>7</sup>. This advantage pushed its indifference towards the inhabitants to extremes, and mitigation was only sought on the grounds of charity or through interpersonal relations. Christodoulos in his *Rule* had ordained that all candidate monks should be rejected if their sole motive was to avoid extreme poverty<sup>8</sup>. He felt that safeguarding his monks from sexual temptation was much more important than the needs of monastic laymen<sup>9</sup>. Thus, when he founded the monastery (it should probably be considered a *coenobium* with independent anchorites rather than a *lavra*), against the recommendation of the Emperor Alexios, he refused to allow laymen to settle on Patmos in order to preserve his own ideal – traditional poverty and coenobitic monasticism. A shortage of labour<sup>10</sup> forced him to reconsider and, soon, lay families settled on Patmos. However, laymen were restricted to the northern part of the island and permitted to visit their families only at weekends; in cases of violation, severe penalties were to be imposed<sup>11</sup>. These prohibitions were so strict that it is still unclear whether in case of danger women and children could seek refuge within the walls of the monastery. In any case, these prohibitions did not outlive Christodoulos himself.

The “urban noise” that supposedly drove Christodoulos from Cos<sup>12</sup>

7 The privileges derived from imperial grant are well documented. Cf. *Morris*, Rosemary. Divine Diplomacy in the Late Eleventh Century. – *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 1992, No. 16, 147-156.

8 *Miklosich*, Franz, *Müller*, Joseph. *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana*. 6. Vienna, 1890. 78-79, henceforth MM.

9 *Karlin-Hayter*, Patricia (trans.). Christodoulos: Rule, Testament and Codicil of Christodoulos for the Monastery of St John the Theologian on Patmos. In: John Thomas, Angela Constantinides Hero, Giles Constable (eds.). *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, 2, DOS XXXV. Washington D.C., 2000, 576.

10 On the population of the island of Patmos and its status see *Karlin-Hayter*, Patricia. Notes sur les archives de Patmos comme source pour la démographie et l'économie de l'île. – *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 1977, No. 5, 193. See also *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 37\*, 44\*-45\*; *Angold*. Church, 360-361; and most recently *Smyrlis*, Konstantinos. La fortune des grandes monastères byzantins (fin du X<sup>e</sup> – milieu du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle). Paris, 2006, 73-74.

11 Cf. comparison of the Patmian rule with other typika, *Karlin-Hayter*. Christodoulos, 570-571.

12 *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, \*17-\*18. Pertinently, *Kollias*, Elias. Οικισμοί, κάστρα και

may not have been the actual reason for his leaving the island. Although the Coans had welcomed him with gifts, which his monastic community accepted gladly, it seems that his building activities caused property disputes with the locals<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, as early as 1089, the monastery came into conflict with the humble peasants of Leros, when the monks demanded exclusive use of the land they were granted, depriving the locals from their communal rights. The same happened with the inhabitants of the fortress of Panteli, forcibly removed to Lepida. In this case, the intervention of the empress-mother herself was sought in order to settle the dispute and persuade inhabitants to resign from their rights. Eventually, the differences between the monks and the laity for the use of land at Partheni and for the relocation to Lepida were reconciled<sup>14</sup>. In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, oppressed farmers often had to confront monastic communities for their rights and the monastery of St John was not an exception<sup>15</sup>.

These conflicts, detailed in the documents, were not the only ones caused by Christodoulos. Differences between the monastic community, landowners and local bishops on Cos also figure in the archives<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, after the *praktikon* for the suburbs of Leros and Leipsoi was drawn by the notary Ioannis Antzas, acting under the order of Eustathios Charsianeites, *strategos* and *pronoites* of Samos, a new *praktikon* was added by the notary Ioannes Theolog-

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μοναστήρια της μεσαιωνικής Κω. In: Georgia Kokkorou-Aleura, Anna Laimou, Eva Simantoni-Bourmia (eds.). *Ιστορία, Τέχνη και Αρχαιολογία της Κω*, Α' Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο, Κως 2 – 4 Μαΐου 1997. Athens, 2001, 294, it is fairly surprising how in eight years the formerly “deserted” region of Pyli had become a noisy and lively spot. It has been assumed that either Pyli was never abandoned (evidently neither was Patmos when Christodoulos arrived), or that a cluster of habitation formed there rather quickly, rousing the ire of the *Hosios*, and explaining his efforts to prevent the settlement of laymen on Patmos.

13 MM. 6, 59 ff; *Malamut*, Elisabeth. *Les Îles de l’empire byzantine, VIII–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris, 1988, 147, 280.

14 *Kollias*, Elias. *Ιστορικές πληροφορίες από το αρχείο της μονής Πάτμου για τη μεσαιωνική Λέρο*. In: *Ιωνίας Άκρον, τόμος αφιερωμένος στη μνήμη του Δ. Οικονομοπούλου*. Athens, 1993, 84-85.

15 *Morris*, Rosemary. *Monks and laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118*. Cambridge University Press, 1995, *passim*.

16 See for instance the letter of 1263, *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*, Maria. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα της μονής Πάτμου. Β', *Δημοσίων Λειτουργιών*. Athens, 1980, 191 ff. In a *sigillium* of 1267 (MM. 6, 221-224) in which the patriarch enumerates the injustices oppressing the monastery of Spondon, though he is actually espousing the views of the monastery. The controversies between the monastery and the bishops of Kos are clearly illustrated in the release of Michael Vatikiotis (1271) and the document of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1290), *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 198 ff. *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 310-312.

ites. The new *praktikon* granted the monastery more estates in the same region for pasture. This increased the monastery's claims and rights although the *Hosios* had repudiated most of them in his will. The confrontational, albeit charismatic, personality of Christodoulos<sup>17</sup>, left people with mixed feelings<sup>18</sup>. The view that "*Christodoulos was not prepared to withdraw from the world himself; the world had to be excluded*"<sup>19</sup> best describes his aspirations.

Charitable obligations were intentionally omitted by Christodoulos himself because, as he stated in his *Rule*<sup>20</sup>, the struggle for the survival of the monastic community was so arduous that it left no room for such work. This was certainly true in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but attitudes did not change in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup>, when the monastery was prospering through highly profitable business ventures, when produce carried to markets by its own ships free of dues and the revenues from dependencies scattered over the Aegean islands, Asia Minor and Crete contributed to its enrichment. The accumulation of wealth is reflected in the building programmes, improvements and embellishment of the initial constructions<sup>21</sup> and in a list of treasures looted around 1220 by Latin pirates<sup>22</sup>.

Usually, the laymen mentioned in the documents are treated as property by the monastery and the State or are related to resettle-

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17 His inflexible character is evident in the disputes with his monks when he left Cos, and a little later in Patmos, or when he left for Euboea. His flight from Latros was probably due to the hostility of the monks, see *Codicil*, MM. 6, 31.8-10, 19-21 and 87. He was also accused of misconduct and embezzlement at Latros, of which he was acquitted by archbishop Nikolaos III Grammatikos in 1087, *Ragia*, Efi. Ένα άγνωστο μοναστικό κέντρο στη Δυτική Μικρά Ασία. Thessaloniki, 2008, 83-88. On the disputes of Christodoulos and his monks, *Vranoussi*, Era. Τα αγιολογικά κείμενα του οσίου Χριστοδούλου. Athens, 1966, 92, 94-96.

18 Cf. the local tradition on Leros that Cristodoulos was actually expelled due to his "monkish greed", see *Oikonomopoulos*, Demetrios. Λερισκά, ήτοι Χωρογραφία της νήσου Λέρου. Athens, 1888 (Leros, 2002), 17, n. 1, 103. If indeed Patmos was ecclesiastically subordinate to Leros in Late Antiquity, something reversed by the monastery, tension between Patmos and Leros might antedate Christodoulos, see *Destephen*, Sylvain. Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire, Prosopographie du diocèse d'Asie (325-641). Paris, 2008, 268, 383.

19 *Morris*, Rosemary. Monasteries and their Patrons in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries. – Byzantinische Forschungen, 1985, No. 10, 201.

20 *Karlin-Hayter*. Christodoulos, [575-576].

21 *Bouras*, Charalambos. Αρχιτεκτονική. In: Οι Θησαυροί της μονής Πάτμου (ed. A. Kominis). Athens, 1988, 27-28.

22 *Saint-Guillain*, Guillaume. L'Apocalypse et le sens des affaires. Les moines de Saint-Jean de Patmos, leurs activités économiques et leurs relations avec les latins (XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles). In: Chemins d'outre-mer. Études d'histoire sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Ballard (eds. Damien Coulon, Catherine Otten-Froux, Paul Pagès, Dominique Valérian), II. Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004, 769-771.

ment or tax exemptions<sup>23</sup>. The monastery intervened on their behalf in the matter of the *strateia*, the obligation to serve in the army, as mentioned in a document of 1089. Christodoulos requested an exemption for his subjects on the island who had joined the army the previous year. In exchange, he proposed an equal number of men to be recruited from his former estates on Cos, although the latter were public property<sup>24</sup>. The only benefit the natives received from the monastery was protection from raiders: from a document of 1307 we learn that the monastery had redeemed from pirates and resettled 39 Patmian *villani* and 39 more people to its *metochion* of St John the Theologian at Stylos in Crete<sup>25</sup>.

### The expansionist drive of the monastery

The main objective of the monastery had always been the increase of its holdings, which undoubtedly greatly affected the inhabitants of the areas involved, from the least serf to the most prominent ecclesiastical leader. This can be traced in the writings of Christodoulos who, although settled on Patmos by 1088, had brought with him various documents of Latros, which he had left in 1079. Not only did he continue as the *protos* of Latros until 1087<sup>26</sup>, but he also extended assistance to them; he kept some of the books he had brought with him by permission of the patriarch Nikolaos III<sup>27</sup>. This caused a series of problems for the monastery of Stylos at Latros, because along with the manuscripts official documents concerning its everyday administration were also removed<sup>28</sup>. Christodoulos hoped that

23 Cf. the 11<sup>th</sup>-century grant by Alexios I regarding four peasants exempt from the tax to each of the three estates of the monastery on Leros, *Vranoussi*, Era. Κεκυρωμένη συλλογή επισήμων εγγράφων της εν Πάτμο μονής εις ειλητόν του ΙΑ' αιώνος. – Σύμμεικτα, 1966, 107-108. This exemption was augmented by the 1145 grant of Manuel I by six more, to a total of 18 peasants, *Vranoussi*. Κεκυρωμένη, 109.

24 *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 76-79.6, n. 54.

25 MM. 6, 390; *Saint-Guillain*. L'Apocalypse, 773-774.

26 As shown by the *sigillum* of Nicholaos Grammatikos (MM. 6, 30-31).

27 He took great care to salvage the manuscripts of Latros after the Turkish occupation of the region, having them carried to Constantinople by boat, MM. 6, 87, 13-31. Christodoulos states in the *Codicil* that some of those books were bought during his abbacy at Stylos. Eventually, the patriarch allowed him to keep those that were not lavishly decorated, but it seems that he actually held onto some of the latter, as the 12<sup>th</sup> century inventory includes illustrated manuscripts, chrysobulls and documents of the monastery of Stylos. If we believe Christodoulos, those should have been handed over the Patriarchate or to the monastery of Stylos after its reconstitution, see *Ragia*. Ένα άγνωστο, 89, 92.

28 *Ragia*. Ένα άγνωστο, 266.

some day he might either return there or annexe the Latrian monasteries to the institution of Patmos and he eventually sent back to Lattros the documents concerning its holdings<sup>29</sup>. Likewise, although he had willingly received the barren island of Patmos, he never ceased to aim for the re-acquisition of the dependencies of Strovilos and Cos. It is no coincidence that several documents from the latter were also taken by Christodoulos to Patmos<sup>30</sup>. In a most telling citation in his *Codicil*, the *Hosios* bids his *charistikarios* Theodosios Kastrios to take care of the monastery of Kastrianon, despite the fact that he no longer owned it<sup>31</sup>. The desire to regain the Coan privileges never left him and he wrote the *Codicil* only to request from emperor Alexios I the recovery of the properties he had ceded to the State<sup>32</sup>. As far as Strovilos is concerned, when Christodoulos was in Cos, he had providently attracted lavish donations, among others that of the vestarch Constantine Cavalloures and his sister Maria, of doubtful value in view of the Turkoman advance in Asia Minor<sup>33</sup>. Christodoulos was equally provident on behalf of the Patmian monastery, although the pursuit of his plans there materialized in a chrysobull by Andronikos Palaiologos in 1329<sup>34</sup>. By this time the island had been conquered by the Hospitalliers, but apparently the monks still hoped that this unfortunate political situation could be overturned.

The Komnenoi had tried to contain and regularize monastic privileges<sup>35</sup>, and here the case of Patmos is fairly instructive. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the prohibition of fresh grants by Alexios I Komnenos was observed by his successors, despite the rising reputation of Patmos. Provisioning and cash rather than new estates alleviated the difficulties, which were undoubtedly encountered. The terms of the 1088 grant were violated in 1196, when Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) granted to Patmos a *metochion* on Crete<sup>36</sup>. The prosperity of

29 Vranoussi, Era. Ανέκδοτος κατάλογος εγγράφων της εν Πάτμω μονής (IB'– II' αι.). – Σύμμεικτα, 1966, No. 1, 151-152.

30 Vranoussi. Τα αγιολογικά, 66.

31 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 7\*-8\*.

32 Vranoussi. Τα αγιολογικά, 147, n. 4; Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 38\*, 114.

33 See analytically in *Oikonomidès*, Nikolaos. Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IX<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> s.). Athens, 1996, 205.

34 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, n. 17.34-40.

35 Smyrlis. La fortune, 175-176.

36 MM 6, 132, n. 36.

the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the economic growth of the monastery began with the chrysobull of 1197, which freed its ships of custom dues. This seems to have had the effect of not only strengthening communications with the monastery's dependencies, but also advancing its commercial interests<sup>37</sup>. In the turbulent 13<sup>th</sup> century, Patmos annexed the monastery of St George Dyssikos at Phygela between 1201 and 1216. The *metochion* of Pyrgos, and probably the monastery of Kechionismeni at Palatia (Miletus) followed in 1216<sup>38</sup>. Successive petitions of abbot Germanos brought Patmos more *metochia* on Cos in 1258<sup>39</sup>.

The concentration of private wealth at the expense of the State, common throughout the period, is clearly described in the release act of Stylos, the Cretan *metochion*, to the monastery<sup>40</sup>: its inalienable status as an imperial estate was lost when it was turned over to the locals and was then granted in perpetuity to a *pronoiaros*. After the latter's death, the estate came into hands of the local governor along with its revenues, both of which were lost forever to the benefit of Patmos.

The lengths to which the monastery would go in order to take over estates and other monasteries are revealed in forged documents like the *sigillium* of the *exisotes* Joseph Pagkalos. According to this text, while Christodoulos was still living, that is before 1093, the monastery was allegedly using the revenues from its *metochion*, the monastery of Spondon in Cos<sup>41</sup>. The Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos used that document to cede Spondon to Patmos between 1254 and 1264. Yet, when Christodoulos was granted the island of Patmos, he had

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37 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, Maria. Τα πλοία της μονής Πάτμου (11<sup>ος</sup>–13<sup>ος</sup> αιώνας). In: Διεθνές συμπόσιο, Πρακτικά, I. Μονή Αγ. Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου 900 χρόνια ιστορικής μαρτυρίας (1088–1988), Patmos, Sept. 1988. Athens, 1989, 452; *Laiou*, Exchange and trade, 741-742.

38 Nystazopoulou, Maria. Ο επί του Κανικλείου και η Εφορεία της εν Πάτμω Μονής. – Σύμμεικτα 1966, No. 1, 81; *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 86\*-87\*, 94\*-95\*.

39 Nystazopoulou, Maria. Γράμμα του ιερέως και νομικού των Παλατίων Νικήτα Καρναντηνού προς τον ηγούμενον της εν Πάτμω μονής. In: Χαριστήριον εις Ορλάνδον, Β'. Athens, 1965, 306. The drastically altered *catholicon* – identified with certainty with the Church of the Virgin in the village of Asphendiou- is evidently older than the mention found in the *sigillium* of Patriarch Arsenios (1254–1260/ 1261–1264).

40 *Oikonomides*, Nikolaos. Η διανομή των βασιλικών “επισκέψεων” της Κρήτης (1170/1) και η δημοσιονομική πολιτική του Μανουήλ Α Κομνηνού. In: Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού συνεδρίου, Γ'. Athens, 1968, 195-201; *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 212-214.

41 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 241.1-4, mainly 244-246. After 1259, Michael IX Palaiologos confirmed forged titles or claims by granting to the monastery several estates which the latter never had possessed, *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 241.

agreed to return to the fisc the Virgin of Kastrianon, a monastery he had founded, along with the rest of his estates on Cos. They did not include a *metochion* at Asphendiou, where the monastery of Spondon is located. Additionally, in another false chrysobull of 1087, forged soon after 1453<sup>42</sup>, the monastery of Kastrianon was mentioned as the property of Patmos, reflecting either wishful thinking or an already established and arbitrary seizure, the latter very attractive as a possibility if we consider how many of its *metochia* actually came into the possession of Patmos<sup>43</sup>.

### The cultural impact of the Patmian monastery

It is useful to investigate Patmos before the time of Christodoulos. Observations will be strictly limited to possible initiatives, concerning the foundation and embellishment of its *metochia*. Christodoulos' writings and *Vitae* imply that the island was completely deserted when the *Hosios* got there. However, cross-checking the sources easily shows this as untrue for Patmos<sup>44</sup>. It is most likely simply a hagiographic *topos*. The 8<sup>th</sup>-century lead seal of a certain Epiphanius, abbot of a monastery on Patmos<sup>45</sup> indicates that other institutions existed long before the foundation of the Theologos. It follows that there were inhabitants on the island. From the limited corpus of architectural members found on Patmos, some marble pieces may be dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>46</sup>, before the three-year sojourn of Christodoulos there. This points to the same conclusion. Their provenance, although unknown, is likely to be the oratory which,

42 *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 157.

43 *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 294. The forged chrysobull could possibly be related to two other suspicious chrysobulls of 1326 and 1331 which maintained that the construction of buildings in the castle of Pyli by the bishop of Cos was irregular, *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 37, 170. From time to time the bishops of Cos were in dispute with the monastery, see *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, n. 70 (1271), 189-205. During that period the relations of Patmos with the Bishops of Leros fluctuated; besides bishop Nikolaos attested in 1082 and 1089, see below, the cultured "pro-Patmian" Bishop of Leros Constantios was among the ratifiers of the will of the Abbot Theoktistos of Patmos (1158); served as intermediary of the monastery according to documents; and also donated books, portable icons and vessels to its library, see *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 202-205.

44 *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 37\*.

45 *Cotsonis*, John. The contribution of Byzantine Lead Seals to the Study of the Cult of the Saints (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.). Byzantion, 2005, No. 75, 422-423.

46 *Kefala*, Konstantia. "Inside the Holy Chancelli": Byzantine Architectural Sculptures from Patmos. In: Επιστημονική συνάντηση προς τιμήν των ομ. καθηγητριών Σοφίας Καλοπίση-Βέροτη και της Μαρίας Παναγιωτίδη-Κεσίσογλου, Αθήνα 2014, forthcoming, fig. 1-3.

according to the enumerator Nikolaos Tzantzes, stood on the ruins of the imposing Early Christian basilica of the island<sup>47</sup>. Given the pressing need for residential quarters and fortification, these pieces are unlikely to belong to an embellishment of the *catholicon* church by its founder. More importantly, these decorative elements do not form a coherent group with their few companions dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and thus cannot be assigned to his direct successors either.

Besides, the mention of a sanctuary screen in the *Hypotyposis*<sup>48</sup> for the enthronement ceremony of the abbot may reflect the ritual that was in use rather than a specific marble sanctuary screen set up for this purpose in the *catholicon* of Patmos. If such a screen did indeed exist, it would have been composed of *spolia* from the basilica and the *eukterion*, unless those marbles had been brought to Patmos from its satellite islands. Whatever the case, apart from a screen colonette of exquisite 12<sup>th</sup> century workmanship<sup>49</sup>, the rest are of merely moderate quality, inappropriate at least for the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century; the view that "they were commissioned to workshops from the Capital, as notable works..."<sup>50</sup> must be rejected.

The *catholicon* of Patmos, built by Christodoulos, belongs to the four column variant of the cross-in-square plan. It is a building of humble intentions, frugal, quite small and the work of masons of limited ability. Scholars have noted its spare and rustic air<sup>51</sup>, at a period when other rather ambitious cross-in-square churches were competing in refinement and elaboration. His earlier Cos foundation, the Kastrianon monastery, was similar in construction. Christodoulos, devoted to his books and the holy icons he carried about, although exposed to artefacts of high artistic merit in his visits to Constantinople, remained indifferent to them. On Patmos he was responsible for the *catholicon*, the cistern beneath, the timber-roof refectory, a number of cells in the south wing, and a large part of the walls.

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47 *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 39.

48 *Kyrrillos Voinis*. Ακολουθία Ιερά του Οσίου και Θεοφόρου Πατρός ημών Χριστοδούλου. Athens, 1884, 91-92.

49 This piece is exhibited in St Nikolaos ho Geros, in Chora Patmos, *Kefala*. Inside the Holy Chancelli, forthcoming.

50 *Chatzidakis*, Manolis. Εικόνες της Πάτμου. Ζητήματα βυζαντινής και μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής. Athens, 1977, 20.

51 See mainly *Bouras*, Charalambos. Αρχιτεκτονική. In: A. Kominis (ed.). Οι θησαυροί της μονής Πάτμου. Athens, 1988, 26.

Major building programs were launched by his successors. In the prosperous 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Patmian monastery mostly renovated and embellished existing structures. Examples of such projects include the narthex, perhaps also the exonarthex and the two chapels of Christodoulos and Leontios<sup>52</sup>. To Arsenios (1185–1203 or 1206), the most distinguished of the abbots of Patmos, dedicated to the enhancement of the reputation of the monastery, should be ascribed the building programmes carried out during his time in office and the expansion of estates and privileges. Works of art of unparalleled importance, like the sophisticated murals of the Chapel of the Virgin or those in the Cave of the Apocalypse and perhaps the first phase of the Refectory, graced his abbacy. His frequent visits to Constantinople probably point to the provenance of the artists employed in his projects. However, the available evidence does not support the notion that he was responsible for similar activity in the dependencies on the other islands<sup>53</sup>. It should be remembered that his building activities might have predated his accession to the abbacy, possibly to as early as 1176. According to the *Vita* of his predecessor Hosios Leontios<sup>54</sup>, he was the latter's spiritual son, being appointed *oikonomos* and head of the monastery when Leontios was away.

Was the exceptional quality of the works executed at the monastery accompanied by work of similar ambition at the *metochia*? It has to be admitted that it would be difficult to believe that Christodoulos, or any of his successors, intended to establish monasteries on the other islands for any other reasons than the production of an agricultural surplus. Until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, new construction on behalf of the monastery was rare, with a few exceptions<sup>55</sup> such as the Asomatos monastery on Patmos, founded by abbot Savvas after his resignation in 1127/28<sup>56</sup>.

52 *Bouras*. Αρχιτεκτονική, 27-28.

53 *Mouriki*. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 258. See also the view that buildings were erected or restored by the monastery in Leros, *Michaelidou*, Maria. Παλαιοχριστιανική βασιλική στο Παρθένι της Λέρου. In: Ιωνίας Ακρον, τόμος αφιερωμένος στη μνήμη του Δ. Οικονομοπούλου. Athens, 1993, 12.

54 *Mouriki*. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 248. For the personality of Hosios Leontios, a holy fool with extreme behaviour, see mainly *Tsougarakis*, Dimitrios (Ed.). The life of Leontios, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1993.

55 Cf. the buildings in the *metochion* of Pyrgos in Asia Minor in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, see *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 94\*.

56 *Vranoussi*, Era. Σάββας καθηγούμενος της μονής Πάτμου, Χρονολογικά και προσωπο-



Fig. 2. Leros. The suburb of Partheni

Of the island of Leros, the communities of Temenia and Partheni were granted to Christodoulos in 1087. But are there any buildings, which could be ascribed to Christodoulos and his successors before the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century? We possess detailed accounts for both

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γραφικά ζητήματα. – Hellenika, 1966, No. 19, 224, suggests that these were quite distant from the monastery, presumably where the *kathisma* of Evangelismos is today, where surviving buildings are much later.

Temenia and Partheni, but none of these buildings can be dated to the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. At Partheni, the landscape remained unchanged from antiquity to the present as habitation had always been scarce and located exclusively on the shoreline (Fig. 2); its agricultural character was left unaltered until the 1980s. Recent archaeological excavation of the Early Christian basilica<sup>57</sup> and settlement has identified with reasonable confidence even the *potistikon*, a wide, masonry 'well' recorded in the release *praktikon*, whose opening was supported by four arches<sup>58</sup>. At Temenia, the existing houses, tower and church of the Virgin and a church of Sts Anargyroi, decorated with murals and a marble *templon*, had all been recorded in detail in the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>59</sup>. In the 13<sup>th</sup>-century reports, no additions were made by the *apographeis*, presumably because everything had already been covered by earlier documents<sup>60</sup>.

Besides Leipsoi and part of Leros, the monastery is likely to have



Fig. 3. Leipsoi. The bilateral icon of the Virgin Hodegetria/St. John the Theologian and Hosios Christodoulos, 14<sup>th</sup> century

57 *Michaelidou*. Παλαιοχριστιανική, 9-65, with topographical information.

58 Unpublished.

59 *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 54-55. The location of the tower and church are unknown. The church of Hagioi Anargyroi is heavily restored, see *Kollias*. Ιστορικές πληροφορίες, 18-19.

60 *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 165-166, 185-186.

owned the islets of Pharmakousa, Arkioi and Agathonisi<sup>61</sup>. These were arid for the most part, but nonetheless able to support flocks of sheep on their mountainous slopes. The most prominent monument on Leipsoi is the Middle Byzantine church of the Virgin of *Charos*, of a transitional variant of the cross-in-square plan. Its special features include the low pendantive dome and the sanctuary, cut off from its eastern corner bays that are today used as autonomous chapels. It is highly likely that the church predates the grant to Christodoulos, as specialists have proposed for it a construction date between c. 950 and 1050<sup>62</sup>. However, no attempt has been made to look for fresco decoration, which might confirm this. On the other hand, although the church was omitted from the release report of the pedantic enumerators, where only the Church of St Nicholas is mentioned, it should be noted that there seems to have been a lost separate document – possibly more detailed – for the island of Leipsoi<sup>63</sup>. No other buildings that could be ascribed to an initiative of the monastery exist. The only piece of work that could possibly be regarded as a Patmian gift is the 14<sup>th</sup>-century two-sided icon of the Virgin Hodegetria/St. John the Theologian and Hosios Christodoulos<sup>64</sup> (Fig. 3).

As far as the islets are concerned, no buildings dating from the period of Christodoulos and his successors are known. The huge granaries preserved on Pharmakousa, Arkioi and Agathonisi<sup>65</sup> (Fig. 4) are linked to the 6<sup>th</sup> century transport of the *annona*. Presumably, the monastery needed these small islands for its active, tax-free fleet that could, in peacetime, use their depots in its regional and insular network. Such an interpretation would underline the dynamism of the monastery through the highly profitable transportation of its goods.

The *catholicon* Christodoulos built at Kastrianoi, **Cos**, his first stop after Strovilos, was dedicated to the Virgin (Fig. 5). Central to Christodoulos' plan was the establishment of a monastery with cells and enclosure. The church was a single aisled squat building built by

61 *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 51-52; *Smyrlis*. La fortune, 73, n. 73.

62 *Kollias*. Σχεδίασμα, 33.

63 *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 63.

64 *Katsiotti*, Angeliki, Παρατηρήσεις στην τοπική λατρεία αγίων στα Δωδεκάνησα. – Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά, 2012, No. 25, 667, fig. 1.

65 *Triantafyllidis*, Pavlos. Agathonisi on the frontier. The Archaeological Investigations at Kastrianoi (2006–2010). Athens, 2010, 16, fig. 9, 10.



Fig. 4. Agathonissi. The granaries

masons of limited ability with cheap materials, incorporating numerous spolia<sup>66</sup>. His description of it as “*ναόν...περικαλλή τε και ωραιότατον...*”, an example of the eulogistic manner frequent in Byzantine literature, may be an attempt to enhance his own work. Archaeological survey of the area has brought to light recycled sculptures, datable to the Middle Byzantine period, suggesting that the Kastrianon is earlier than the advent of Christodoulos at Pyli<sup>67</sup>. Unfortunately, the surviving murals of the church are of no use for dating purposes as the earliest layer, a fresco of the Virgin and Child flanked by two angels, is variously dated either to the 12<sup>th</sup> or the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>68</sup> and may be a commission by an unknown donor

66 MM 6, 85 ff; *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 292-293. For the *catholicon* see also *Androudis*, Paschalis – *Didiomi*, Sofia. Παναγία Καστριανών. Το καθολικό της μονής του Οσίου Χριστόδουλου στο Παλιό Πυλί της Κω. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2009, No. 30, 47-54.

67 *Militsi*, Evangelia. Μεσοβυζαντινά γλυπτά από την ανασκαφή στο καθολικό της μονής της Παναγίας των Καστριανών στο Παλαιό Πυλί της Κω. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2009, No. 30, 126-128.

68 *Katsioti*, Angeliki. Οι παλαιότερες τοιχογραφίες του Αγίου Γεωργίου του Πλακωτού στη



Fig. 5. Cos. Kastrianon monastery. The catholicon

– possibly an abbot of the Kastrianon – executed by an itinerant workshop (Fig. 6). It is impossible to identify it as a sponsorship of Patmos, since the latter did not then own the Kastrianon.

According to the *Codicil*, Christodoulos is thought to have founded a castle at Pyli<sup>69</sup>; this is an exaggeration, since it has been proven<sup>70</sup>, that there was already a fortress there, which he presumably repaired. After these properties were handed over to the state, its officials took measures to improve the defence of the site and a new complex with a gate was added between c. 1100–1130. Scholars believe that the gatehouse was constructed by an important imperial official<sup>71</sup>. Its masonry with the recessed brick technique, often used

Μαλώνα της Ρόδου. Παρατηρήσεις στην τέχνη του 11<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα στα Δωδεκάνησα. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2002, No. 23, 113-114, and n. 55.

69 MM. 6, 88.

70 Kollias. Οικισμοί, 295-296; Tsouris, Konstantinos. Το κάστρο στο Παλαιό Πυλί και ο όσιος Χριστόδουλος ο Λατοηγός. In: Georgia Kokkorou-Aleura, Anna Laimou, Eva Simantoni-Bournia (eds.). Ιστορία, Τέχνη και Αρχαιολογία της Κω, Α΄ Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο, Κως 2–4 Μαΐου 1997. Athens, 2001, 365-378.

71 Tsouris. Το κάστρο, 372-373, expresses his doubts as there are no other building phases that can be identified and thinks he may have been the extremely active general and *pronoites* of Samos Eustathios Charsianeites who belonged to the milieu of Anna Dalassene.

in the Capital, indicates the presence of the central government no matter how problematic and fragmented the latter might have been; in Pyli it acted promptly and efficiently.

The systematic efforts of the monastery to regain rights on Cos, and through them to farmland, only bore fruit in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, under the versatile abbot Germanos (before 1258 to 1280), a close friend of patriarch Arsenios. However, the internal crisis caused by the Arsenite schism (1259–1310)<sup>72</sup> drove a lot of monks out of Patmos and the rest were unable to hold on to the Coan properties, with the exception of the small *metochion* of the Saviour. By 1292, when order was restored, all properties and goods had been seized by the locals who took advantage of the disfavour into which the monastery had fallen<sup>73</sup>.

Concerning the artistic aspect of the Coan possessions, at the mountainous village of Zia in the region of Asphendiou, a church of the four-column variant of the cross-in-square plan has been identified as the *catholicon* of the Spondon monastery. This was granted to Patmos along with its estates in 1258 by a *sigillium* of Patriarch Arsenios. Spondon had a long autonomous existence before its annexation by Patmos<sup>74</sup>. Later repairs and a complete renovation in 1919 prevent further investigation of its development<sup>75</sup>. According to 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars, it was probably painted<sup>76</sup> before the advent of the Patmian monks, in spite of what their documents suggest<sup>77</sup>. Revisiting the

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72 On the schism see mainly *Gounaridis*, Paris. Το κίνημα των Αρσενιατών (1261–1310). Ιδεολογικές διαμάχες στην εποχή των πρώτων Παλαιολόγων. Athens, 1999; *Kontogiannopoulou*, Anastasia. Το σχίσμα των Αρσενιατών (1265–1310). Συμβολή στην μελέτη της πορείας και της φύσης του κινήματος. – Βυζαντιακά, 1998, No. 18, 177-235.

73 See mainly *Gerolymatou*, Maria. `A propos des origines des monastères de la Vierge de l'Al-sos et de la Vierge tón Spondôn sur l'île de Cos. – Travaux et Mémoires, Mélanges Cécile Morrisson. Paris, 2010, No. 16, 397.

74 According to the brief chronicle of the monastery, *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 257-259. See also *Geroly-matou*. `A propos, 392–394, who dates the Spondon monastery to the 12<sup>th</sup> century; but that does not exclude an earlier dating for the *catholicon*.

75 *Kappas*, Michalis. Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο. Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακίονιου/τετράστουλου, ΑΠΘ, unpublished PhDiss. Thessaloniki, 2009, 234-235, n. 72, associates the monument with the intensive building activity of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, which was further boosted under Alexios I. The mention of the Spondon monastery in the Patmos document of 1258 is a *terminus ante quem* for its existence. *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 299.

76 According to *Gerola*, Giuseppe. I monumenti medioevali delle Tredici Sporadi, Parte seconda. – Annuario della regia scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in Oriente, 1914, No. 2, 46.

77 *MM*. 6, 193, n. 72.



Fig. 6. Cos. Kastrionon catholicon: fresco of the Virgin and Child flanked by two Angels

sources has revealed that the pretended contributions to Spondon by the monastery of Patmos were merely ammunition serving their campaign to acquire the *catholicon* officially<sup>78</sup>. The concession, however, was inactive from 1263 to 1292, when Patmos was in disarray.

Patmos' Coan possessions were again augmented when the Empress Theodora, spouse of Michael VIII Palaiologos, transferred to them the monastery of Christ the Saviour at Mount Dikaïos. This has been identified with a small monastery founded and owned by Arsenios Scenouris<sup>79</sup>, a companion and benefactor of Christodoulos.

<sup>78</sup> According to *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 301, in a handwritten catalogue of the monastery dated 1200 and in a library loan note of 1229 or 1244 it is mentioned that: "εδόθησαν εις την Κω εις το μετόχιον βιβλία δέκα". Thus a *metochion* was already in existence before the year 1229 or 1244, but which one was meant is uncertain.

<sup>79</sup> *Mastoropoulos*, Georgios. Ταύτιση (;) του επί του Όρους Δικαίου της Κω μονυδρίου Αρσενίου του Σκηνούρη (11<sup>ος</sup> αι.). In: *Ιστορία, Τέχνη και Αρχαιολογία της Κω, Α' Διεθνές Επιστη-*

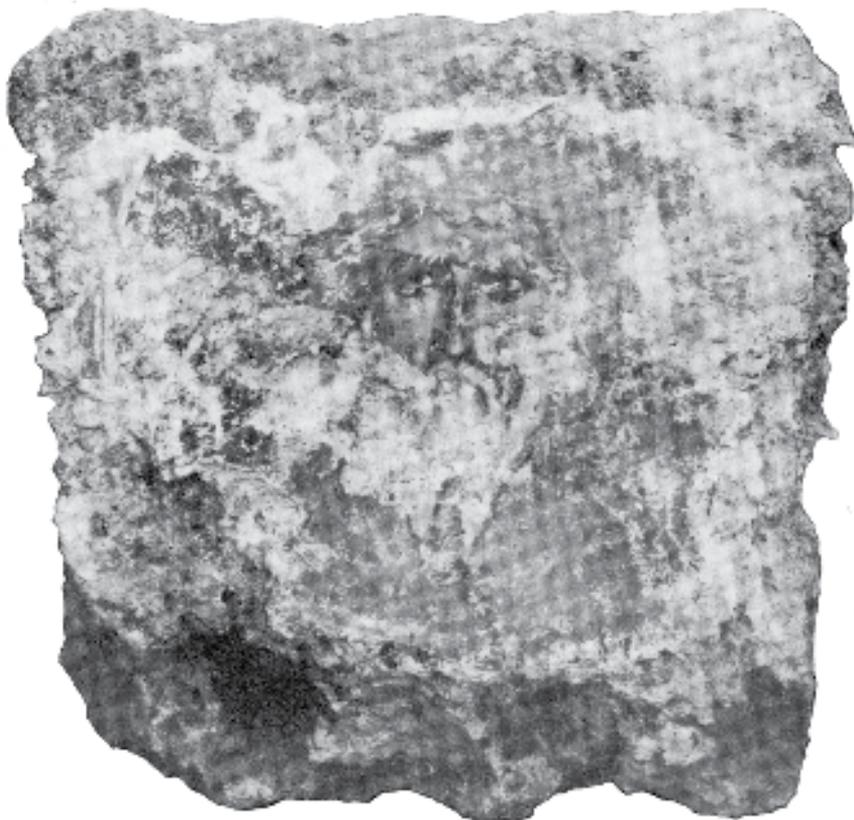


Fig. 7. Cos. Alsos catholicon. A fresco fragment of a Bishop

The earlier cruciform church was abandoned and the cistern converted into a chapel, to which the surviving sculptural decoration of the 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century (spolia?) was incorporated. Even though the decoration and the building of the cruciform church cannot be attributed to Patmos, the same cannot be said of the fresco decoration of the conch<sup>80</sup> where the painting of a Deesis survives.

Another monastery associated with Patmos<sup>81</sup> before 1292 is the Dormition of the Virgin at Alsos. The Alsos monastery was situated in

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μονικό Συνέδριο, Κως 2 – 4 Μαΐου 1997 (eds. Georgia Kokkorou-Aleura, Anna Laimou, Eva Simantoni-Bournia), Athens, 2001, 333-356.

80 *Mastoropoulos*. Ταύτιση, fig. 20-24, 26, 28.

81 Probably after 1263 as *Gerolymatou*. `A propos, 397, suggests. However, *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 2, 232, thinks that the evidence is inconclusive for such a postulation before 1292, when the act of Patriarch Athanasius citing the Alsos as property of the monastery was issued.



Fig. 8. Leros. Lakki. Church of St John the Theologian. A fresco fragment of a Saint

the grove of the Asklepieion and its remnants were swept away during the excavations at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>82</sup>. The argument for this association is that the Alsos monastery was first granted to Spondon and then, through it, to Patmos<sup>83</sup>. However, the records of its abbots put this into question. A remarkable reconstruction of its history<sup>84</sup> has shown that the monastery was of great importance before being ceded to Patmos as, before 1271, some of its abbots became bishops of Attaleia and a certain Gerasimos from

82 Herzog, Rudolf – Schazmann, Paul. Asklepieion. Baubeschreibung und Baugeschichte, Kos, I. Berlin, 1932, 28, fig. 2, 5-9.

83 Gerolymatou. `A propos, 389.

84 Gerolymatou. `A propos, 387-399.



Fig. 9. Leros. Lakki. Church of St John the Theologian

Also was Bishop of Leros in 1282<sup>85</sup>.

The *catholicon* of Alsos was built before 1241<sup>86</sup>. Arguments placing the foundation of the church between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, based on the architectural elements<sup>87</sup> are ill-supported, since many of them may have been *spolia*<sup>88</sup>. Besides, in the document, named

85 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. *Βυζαντινά έγγραφα*, 234.

86 According to the monastery chronicle attached to the *Deesis* document of the peasants of Cos (1288) which cites the empress Irene (†1241), spouse of the emperor John III Vatatzes. On the monastery, *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 299-301; *Gerolymatou*. `A propos, 389.

87 *Kollias*. Οικισμοί, 300-301; *Militsi*, Evangelia, Τμήματα μεσοβυζαντινών τέμπλων από την Κω. In: Charalambos Pennas, Catherine Vanderheyde (eds.). *La sculpture byzantine VII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Actes du colloque international organisé par la 2nd Éphorie des antiquités byzantines et l'École française d'Athènes (6 – 8 septembre 2000)*. Athens, 2008, 422-429; *Gerolymatou*. `A propos, 398.

88 Besides, according to *Militsi*, Τμήματα, 423, fig. 1, the cubical capital found there was meant to support a dome while the *catholicon* is single-aisled and barrel-vaulted. Even though these sculpted members have been dated to the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they do not constitute an *ensemble*.

*Deesis ton epoikon tes Co*, the Spondon monastery (c. 1050–1100) is acknowledged as older than that of Alsos. A fresco fragment of a bishop from Alsos (**Fig. 7**) which bears stylistic affinities to the remains of the fresco of the Holy Fathers in the church of St John the Theologian at Lakki on Leros (**Fig. 8**), probably executed by the same hand, assists our understanding of its history and the possible intervention of Patmos<sup>89</sup>.

A parenthesis is needed at this point to disentangle the relations of the fresco decoration of Alsos with that of the imposing three-aisled domed basilica at Lakki on Leros (**Fig. 9**). Recent restoration has revealed an inscription on a marble lintel, stating that it was built as an Episcopal church by one Bishop Nikolaos, in 1082<sup>90</sup>. In its earliest phase it had no murals: its walls and openings were decorated by tile courses on both faces. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the church, perhaps after an earthquake, was drastically remodelled, acquiring vaulted roofing and a dome. Judging from the fragments of the fresco decoration, which survive mostly in the north aisle dedicated to Hsios Christodoulos, the painted program was of a special character, some of its features traceable to the iconographic program of the Patmos Refectory<sup>91</sup>. The same features are also present in the fragment with the bishop from the now lost decoration of Alsos.

Are there links other than stylistic associating the remaining prelate of Alsos with those of St John the Theologian at Lakki? A Gerasimos, Bishop of Leros, had previously in 1222 been abbot of the then independent Alsos. He was a cultured man with an impressive network of contacts including churchmen, nobles of the exiled empire and even the Empress Irene (1222–1241). He may also have been responsible for the decoration of the *catholicon*<sup>92</sup>. Conversely Neilos, the ambitious Bishop of Leros (c. 1258) who, having accumulated considerable power, sought to abolish the self-government of Patmos, may also have been among the sponsors<sup>93</sup>. The fragment

89 Citation in *Katsioti*. Επισκόπηση, 295.

90 *Katsioti*, Angeliki, *Kiourtzian*, Georges. L'église de Saint Jean le Theologien de Leros (Dodécane) et la dédicace de l'évêque Nikolaos JOB 2018, forthcoming.

91 The style of those frescoes recalls some Rhodian monuments: the first layer of St Phanourios (1210–1220), the 13<sup>th</sup> century layer (1240–1250) of the *catholicon* of the Archangel Michael at Thari, Laerma, see *Kefala*, Konstantia. Οι τοιχογραφίες του 13<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα στις εκκλησίες της Ρόδου, Christian Archaeological Society e-press/1. Athens 2015, passim.

92 As cited in Δέησιν των εποίκων της Κω, *Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 234.

93 *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 94\*, 68; *Vranoussi*, Era. Πατριαρχικά έγγραφα της Πάτμου

from Alsos and the frescoes of Lakki share common features with the second layer of the Patmos Refectory, which probably reflects the assimilation of artistic developments in the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea by independent workshops. Albeit imbued by spiritual and doctrinal subtleties also encountered in the murals of the monastery, these paintings express, in all likelihood, the aspirations of abbots and local bishops collaborating with local landowners. Thus, even though the paintings of Alsos and Lakki are related to those of Patmos, this is the result of an indirect process, and not evidence of Patmian initiatives.

The oral tradition concerning churches connected to Patmos, even unsupported by the written sources, should not be neglected, as it may contain historical clues or reveal artistic links. As evidence is lacking, it is likely that monastery acquired them through the usual method of forged documents. Some of the oldest churches of the region belong to this group, such as St John the Theologian at Lakki<sup>94</sup>, mentioned above, or the Holy Apostles on Kalymnos.

Only a couple of indications show that the monastery was active in Kalymnos: a book donation to an anchorite on Kalymnos might possibly signify he was a *protégé* of the monastery<sup>95</sup>; also, the *sigillium* of 1263 of Leo Eskammatismenos, enumerator of Rhodes and the Cycladic islands, mentions property of the monastery on Kalymnos<sup>96</sup>.

Local tradition relates the foundation of the Holy Apostles, the most important monument of Kalymnos<sup>97</sup>, a tetrastyle variant of the cross-in-square plan, dated c. 950–1000, to Christodoulos himself. Assumptions<sup>98</sup> that a series of additions belong to the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, are not supported by the surviving architectural evidence or the study of the painted decoration; the late 12<sup>th</sup>-century painting of the apostle Peter<sup>99</sup> or that of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century with

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αχρονολόγητα, αταύτιστα ή λανθάνοντα. Γύρω από την αυτονομία της μονής. – Σύμμεικτα, 1983, No. 5, 29-47.

94 Vranoussi. Τα αγιολογικά, 107, n. 1, where popular traditions for the foundation of church by Christodoulos are cited.

95 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 88\*-89\*.

96 Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 191-197, no. 69.

97 Kollias, Σχεδιάγραμμα, 23-50; Kappas, Michalis, Η αρχιτεκτονική του ναού των Αγίων Αποστόλων στο Άργος Καλύμνου. – ΔΧΑΕ, 2009, No. 30, 55-66.

98 Kappas. Η αρχιτεκτονική, 65.

99 Katsioti, Angeliki, Archontopoulos, Theodoros. Το παρεκκλήσιο της οικογένειας των Αρμε-

the Virgin Hodegetria<sup>100</sup> have no affinities with contemporary layers at Patmos. The annexation of Leros and Kalymnos by the Nicene Empire in 1249 under Vatatzes, and their administrative reorganisation in 1254, for which purpose was sent an *apographeus* and *exisotes* named Constantine Diogenes<sup>101</sup>, make it plausible that the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century murals may have had state sponsorship.

Finally, we turn to the possessions of the monastery in the region of Stylos at Apocoronas on Crete, beyond the Dodecanese. There are references in the documents to gifts of produce and later to a *metochion*, both of which were crucial for the survival of the monastery. These should be identified with the Stylos possessions granted to Patmos by Alexios I<sup>102</sup>. The importance of the Cretan *metochion* endured thanks to the warm relations the monastery maintained with the Venetian masters of Crete as well as with the Nicene emperors<sup>103</sup>. The structural remnants of the *metochion* consist of the twin-nave church of St John the Theologian and St Nicholas, a complex of granaries, and four successive buildings, heavily altered and therefore of uncertain date. The church<sup>104</sup>, located at the northwest end of the settlement, could in all probability be identified with the one mentioned in a list of book loans from Patmos of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>105</sup>, where it is noted that the monastery had sent three books '*eiston Psychron'*, obviously meaning the *metochion* of Stylos<sup>106</sup>.

The site now occupied by the north nave of the church was once occupied by a single-aisled church. Excavation has brought to light the foundations of at least two successive churches. The surviving

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νόπουλων στη Ρόδο του 12<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα. In: Πρακτικά συνεδρίου, Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια. Η πόλη της Ρόδου από την ίδρυσή της μέχρι την κατάληψή της από τους Τούρκους (1523), Β'. Athens, 2000, 380-381, pl. 155α.

100 Kollias. Σχεδιάγραμμα, 37, fig. 5; Katsioti. Επισκόπηση, 280-281, fig. 69b.

101 Angold, Michael. A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarides of Nikaia, 1204-1261. Oxford, 1975, 211.

102 For details on the *metochia* in Crete, Kallivretakis, Leonidas. Το μετόχι της Πάτμου στο Στύλο Αποκορώνου και η αυτοκρατορική λύσις του 1196. In: Vasilis Panagiotopoulos, Leonidas Kallivretakis, Demetrios Dimitropoulos, Michalis Kokolakis, Evdokia Olympitou (eds.). Πληθισμοί και οικισμοί του ελληνικού χώρου: ιστορικά μελετήματα. Institute for Neohellenic Research/ National Hellenic Research Foundation. Athens, 2003, 93-132.

103 Saint-Guillain. L Apocalypse, 771-773.

104 Briefly mentioned in Andrianakis, Michalis, Giapitsoglou, Konstantinos. Χριστιανικά μνημεία της Κρήτης. Heraklion, 2012, 360-361.

105 Vranoussi. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 216.

106 As Kallivretakis. Το μετόχι, 100, concludes.



Fig. 10. Crete. Stylos metochion, Theologos nave. The Baptism of Christ

building has an older part, the south wall of the north church (the Theologos nave) with paintings of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1271 and 1280, according to the now lost dedicatory inscription, a narthex was added and decorated. Part of the church was remodelled in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century; according to the dedication, the monk Nikodemos added the south St Nicholas nave then.

It is hard to trace any affinities between the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century layer of the north nave and the contemporary murals of Patmos due to their bad state of preservation<sup>107</sup>. However, the head of St Peter

<sup>107</sup> *Andrianakis, Giapitsoglou. Χριστιανικά μνημεία, 360-361. Nothing relevant is mentioned for the painted decoration (1271–1280) of the narthex. Suggestions for the mural painting are confused as in Gallas, Klaus, Wessel, Klaus, Borboudakis Manolis. Byzantinisches Kreta. Munich,*

from the scene of the Baptism of Christ (**Fig. 10**) recalls the same figure from the Communion of the Apostles, Patmos (1230–1240)<sup>108</sup>. An initiative from Patmos for the decoration of the Cretan *metochion* church using a local workshop is very likely, but taking into account the nearby church of St Nicholas at Kyriakosellia (1230–1236)<sup>109</sup>, it would be better justified to connect such high quality work with the presence of the expeditionary forces of John III Doukas Vatatzes<sup>110</sup> in the Aegean and Crete: it is no coincidence that John III was a keen supporter of the monastery.

So far, some economic, social but mostly artistic phenomena until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, possibly connected to the monastery of Patmos and its possessions, have been explored. Works initiated by Christodoulos himself were modest, but in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries Patmos expanded in every possible way thanks to competent abbots who profited from the goodwill of emperors and patriarchs. However, their estate management was profit-oriented.

The same tendency is detected in the relations of the monastery with the local bishops. Its efforts to gain *metochia* and churches were often successful, thanks to the acumen of its leaders. Clearly, the monastic ideal was not a priority when the chance arose to augment its properties to the detriment of local communities.

If the 13<sup>th</sup>-century murals detailed above were not sponsored by the monastery, the Nicene Empire would be the most likely source of patronage<sup>111</sup>. Taking into account the political network developed by the Laskarids, we should consider the likelihood of state investment in the islands. The artists of Nicaea could be employed either

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1983, 244-245, who claim without proof that Patmos is associated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century high quality frescoes of the south nave.

108 See for instance, *Kollias*. Πάτμος, fig. 34. On the dating *Vocotopoulos*, Panagiotis. Παρατηρήσεις στις βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες της Μονής του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου στην Πάτμο. In: Διεθνές συμπόσιο, Πρακτικά, I. Μονή Αγ. Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου 900 χρόνια ιστορικής μαρτυρίας (1088–1988), Πάτμος, Σεπτ. 1988, Athens, 1989, 193; *Djurić*, Vojislav. La peinture murale byzantine. XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. In: Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, I, Αθήνα 1976. Athens, 1979, 202.

109 On the fresco decoration, see mainly *Borboudakis*, Manolis. Ο ναός του Αγίου Νικολάου στα Κυριακασέλλια Αποκορώνου. In: Πεπραγμένα I' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου, Χανιά 1-8 Οκτωβρίου 2006, B2. Chania, 2011, 273-316; *Kefala*. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 54 ff.

110 *Katsioti*, Επισκόπηση, 277-278; *Acheimastou-Potamianou*, Myrtili. Στο Θάρι της Ρόδου. Athens, 2006, 111-112; *Kefala*. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 59-90.

111 Artistic relations with the Empire of Nicaea have not yet been fully explored. See mainly *Kefala*. Οι τοιχογραφίες, 273-300.

by the Laskarid and Vatatzes clan or from the nobility, who courted the goodwill of the powerful monastic communities, which in turn served as as outposts of the Empire. It seems that much of the artistic production of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, possibly in a higher proportion than in the preceding 12<sup>th</sup>, should be attributed to an external initiative, which, nonetheless, had interests in common with the monastery.

Cases such as the decoration of Lakki and Alsos may reflect rivalries between monastic communities and the local ecclesiastical leadership. This rivalry was exacerbated<sup>112</sup> by the voracious appetite of the monastery for the acquisition of churches or lesser monastic foundations, provoking the distrust and hostility of local officials. From the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the monks, who had succeeded in becoming spiritual guides of the emperors, were a real threat to the reputation and role of local bishops. Nevertheless, this did not prohibit easier interactions between the venerable monastery of Patmos and churchmen or state officials, because the artistic inspiration of Patmos served as the point of reference *par excellence* both ideologically and spiritually.

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112 It is well known that the bishops of the neighbouring islands tried to subjugate the monastery, *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 64\*-67\*, 94\*.

## Appendix

### Abbots of the monastery of Patmos until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>113</sup>

Hosios Christodoulos	April 1088 – 16 March 1093
Joseph Iasitis	after 1094 – before 1118
[Neophytos	before 1127]
Savvas	before 1118–1127 (?)
Theoktistos	c. 1127–1157/8
Hosios Leontios	1157/8–1176 (or 1183) <sup>114</sup>
[Epiphanius	1176–1183] <sup>115</sup>
Arsenius	1183–1203 or before 1206 <sup>116</sup>
Euthymios	1206
(?) Neophytos from Cappadocia	1214
Nikodemos	1229 (?) 1244 (?)
Germanos	1256 (?), before 1258–1280
Gregorios	1307

113 According to *Vranoussi*. Βυζαντινά έγγραφα, 59\*-60\*, 82\*, 91\*, 98\*, 113\*.

114 According to *Tsougarakis*. The life, 196, n. 67,1.

115 According to *Tsougarakis*. The life, 196, n. 67.1, no abbot Epiphanius existed.

116 *Tsougarakis*. The life, 208, dates the abbacy of Arsenius to 1186 – before 1206.

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## Между статута на господари и слуги: влиянието на св. Христодул и неговите последователи върху егейските острови (XI–XIII век)

Ангелики Кациоти



Манастирът „Св. Йоан Богослов“ за своето съществуване през повече от девет столетия запазва водещата си роля в историята на Егейско море и по-специално на Додеканезите. Богатият архив на обителта позволява да се черпят данни за историята и обществото, за икономиката и изкуството през епохата, когато в столицата всеки се е стремил да си осигури дял в благополучието или да влияе върху политическите събития.

След дълго странстване Христодул напуска през 1079 г. манастирите на Латрос, където служи като монах до нахлуването на турците, и се установява за малко в Стровилос, *πόλις παραθαλασσίαν* (крайморски град) на малоазийския бряг. Там бива приет от своя познат, монаха Арсений Скинурис, произхождащ от знатно семейство от о. Кос, който го мотивира да построи манастир върху негов имот. Действително, през м. март 1080 г. Христодул основава монашеската обител Кастриани върху скалистия хълм Пилион на незаселен, както го определя, терен от имота на Арсений. Светецът бързо обаче се разочаровал, отишъл в Константинопол и поискал с императорски хрисовул през 1087 г. да му се даде о. Патмос заедно с Липсу и *προάστια* (предградията) Партени и Темения, както и половината от крепостта Пандели на о. Лерос. Получавайки тези владения, светецът връща на империята имотите си на о. Кос.

В тази статия се прави опит за изследване на отношенията на манастира с егейските острови, на които обителта притежава имоти през XI–XIII в. Впоследствие се описва състоянието на островите преди и след появата на светеца, както и през периода, в който се изявяват неговите наследници. Изследват се и въпроси, свързани с художественото влияние на манастира, и се предлагат наблюдения върху последиците от това влияние върху неговите метоси.

Харизматичната, но и конфликтна личност на светеца предизвиква смесени чувства у жителите на районите, които владее. Подобно е поведението и на неговите следовници. Връзките на манастира с метосите протичат в спорове със селяните и местната църква, в насилствени изселвания и конфискации посредством намесата на държавата. Основна грижа за манастира става събирането на състояние и привилегии чрез непривични способности и в

повечето случаи в ущърб на империята, което се превръща в явление, белязало съществено всички обитатели на островите – от феодалния селянин до водачите на местния клир.

Обект на изследване впоследствие става и влиянието на инициативата, осъществявана от патмоския манастир, върху основаването и украсата на църквите по островите, където обителта притежава метоси.

Скромните строителни инициативи, предприети на първо време от светеца в манастира Кастриани на о. Кос, а след това и в католикона на Патмос, са огледало на номадския, неспокоен характер на Христовул, който по всяка вероятност е уважавал иконите и свещените книги, които събирал по време на странстванията си, заради което, пристигайки на Кос и Патмос, полага известни усилия за тяхното непретенциозно приютяване. Очевидно, че при честите си посещения в Константинопол Христовул не обръща внимание на високите естетически тенденции в столицата. За разлика от тези първи произведения на изкуството, лишени от особено качество, които просто задоволяват практическите нужди на манастира в Патмос, действията на следващия игумен Арсений (1185–1203 или 1206) са далеч по-блестящи, без обаче да са съпоставими с друга по-сериозна художествена активност в метосите. През XII и XIII в. имотите и влиянието на Патмос се разрастват неимоверно заради просветените игумени на манастира, които намират подкрепата на императори и патриарси за увеличаване на своята власт.

Според авторката художествената активност от XIII в., доста повече в сравнение с тази от XII в., се дължи на фактори, чужди на манастира, въпреки засвидетелстваните амбиции на братството. Това обаче не означава, че патмоският манастир престава да диктува тенденции в развитието на държавния и църковния живот, тъй като тази обител никога не спира да играе водеща роля в идеологията и духовността на Византия

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