

The Despoina of the Mongols and Her Patronage at the Church of the *Theotokos ton Mougoulion**

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The Byzantine church known as Saint Mary of the Mongols, or *Theotokos ton Mougoulion*, was once the *katholikon* of the Monastery of the *Theotokos tes Panayiotisses* (Figs. 1-3). It is situated in the modern quarter of Istanbul known as Fener,¹ and is unique for being the sole Greek Orthodox sanctuary that has served the same function in Christian Constantinople as well as in Muslim Istanbul. Despite its unique status, the building has not received as much scholarly attention as other Byzantine religious monuments of similar historical importance.

The principal cause for this neglect can be attributed to the major structural changes that have altered the appearance of the church since its foundation. The original building was a narthex-less, domed quatrefoil (*tetraconch*), consisting of four apses whose axes define four right angles, a rare architectural format for Constantinople and its environs.² Approximately 50% of the original building survives, including the dome, the entire eastern and northern conchs, and the upper portion of the western conch.

Unfortunately these architectural elements have been overshadowed by a large addition located on the building's

southern side. This ungainly structure consists of a double vaulted aisle that has disfigured the elegant outline of the church's original ground plan. As a consequence, the building has frequently been dismissed as having 'little [remaining] to recommend it architecturally' and '[of being] of no great distinction architecturally'.³

Such negative opinions may have dissuaded earlier scholars from probing further into the monument's complex history.⁴ Any archaeological scholarly interest in its architecture would nevertheless have been hindered by its status as a functioning house of worship. Technical analysis of the masonry hidden beneath obscuring layers of plaster, or excavations underneath the floor are impeded by this factor to this day. The result has been the church's loss to scholarship owing to its radical structural modifications and the site's inaccessibility for detailed study.

As a consequence, stylistic and literary sources are the only feasible methods for dating the building to this day. Scholars such as S. Bettini and A. Van Millingen have utilized Pachymeres' *Chronikon* and a decree of Patriarch Kallistos, no. 2330 dated October 1351, as a basis for a Palaiologan attribution for the building.⁵ With this historical framework in place, the use of a quatrefoil at both Saint Mary of the Mongols and at the *Kamariotissa* on Heybeliada was interpreted by N. Brunov as being the nostalgic usage of an early Christian architectural form that had been primarily preserved in the "provincial" Byzantine architecture of Armenia and Georgia. A closer reading of this text suggests that Brunov believed that this building-type was being utilized by a society looking for architectural variety, yet too moribund to create fresh architectural forms.⁶

S. Bettini also viewed the use of the tetraconch as being intrinsically related to the personal history of the *ktetorissa* Maria Palaiologina, the eponymous "Lady of the Mongols." Bettini believed that the architectural forms of the build-

ing reflected the princess' travels with the Mongol Court in Central Asia, "*Quel soggiorno della fondatrice può spiegare la forma del tempio, senza veri precedenti a Constantinopoli, ma derivata evidentemente (è chiaro anche nel tipo e nella decorazione della cupola e del suo tamburo) da esempi d'origine armeno-georgiana non rari nel Chersoneso.*"⁷

However, an analysis of the building indicates that a Palaiologan dating is only partially correct: the tetraconch is a Middle Byzantine structure to which additions were made during the Palaiologan Period. This theory is supported by written sources that describe construction taking place under the putative *ktetorship* of Isaac Doukas and soon afterward under Maria Palaiologina. These repairs were necessitated by a number of natural and man-made disasters. Despite alterations to the structure, the sequence of the later campaigns can be perceived through a visual analysis of the present structure. Some evidence is sketchy at best, and can be read variously. Any conclusive interpretation of this building's architectural history would require a methodical archaeological study.

The dearth of any monographic discussion of this building is consequently understandable, and only a handful of commentaries in surveys of Byzantine architecture are available to the interested researcher. Only recently Charalampos Bouras has published an article reversing this trend.⁸ Bouras' article represents the most up-to-date work done on the site, and he has done a commendable job. I consider a slightly variant idea regarding the chronology of the expansion of the church from its original tetraconch form, to its current state with expanded aisles and domed inner narthex.

The current condition of the exterior north wall of the church complex is of particular interest, as here the structure reveals tantalizing glimpses of information regarding its history. This area encompasses the eastern half of the *naos*, and both the inner and outer narthexes. Previously

this wall was covered with a thick layer of obscuring plaster, its removal presents the viewer with a ready-made horizontal sondage. Consequently, new evidence of the building's fabric has emerged from obscurity. The traces of at least two, and probably three Byzantine-era building campaigns are revealed. This new data enables a number of hypotheses to be suggested regarding the building's history, and earlier ground plans. A good way to interpret this data is to summarize the monument's history.

The History of the Foundation

Saint Mary of the Mongols served as the *katholikon* of the convent founded by Maria Palaiologina in the late thirteenth century, although this was only the last in a series of monastic establishments located at the site. A tenth or eleventh century male foundation of 'tes *Hyperagias Theotokou Panagiou*' was established in the immediate locale. The first notice of its presence is noted in the *Typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos (re-edited in 1083) for its monastery of Petritzos. The monastery's origins may be even older as a certain monk named John, a translator of John Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow*, lived there before 1083.⁹ Furthermore, it is known that its Abbot Anthony had links to the Grand Lavra on Mount Athos. According to both *vita A* and *vita B* of Saint Athanasios, whenever Athanasios left Athos for Constantinople, he would stay at *Te tou Panagiou Mone*, because its abbot was his disciple.¹⁰ It is unclear how long this foundation survived; it was still functioning well into the twelfth century, as it figures in the funeral oration of a certain Theodore Tronchos.¹¹ It appears that the monastery was disbanded during the period of Crusader rule in Constantinople (1204-1261).¹² According to the Paris *Codex Graecus* 2625, after the City was recaptured in 1261, the father-in-law of George Akropolites (an unknown member of the Doukas Family, probably Isaak) took over

the duties of *ktetor* of an abandoned foundation located on the Fener Hill. This donor built, or more likely repaired, and added structures between August 15th and December 31, 1261. A second building campaign took place between September 1, 1266 and February 1267 during which the artist Modestos contributed a decorative program to the buildings.¹³

The next *ktetor*, or rather *ktetorissa*, was Maria Palaiologina (later the nun Melania), an illegitimate daughter of Michael VIII. Maria's relationship to the site has been debated in recent literature; some scholars including S. Eyice and R. Janin believe that her role was non-existent. These scholars also believe that decree no. 2330 of the Patriarch Kallistos is a forged document. As evidence they point to the patronage of the Akropolites family and the earlier monastic incarnations at the site as proof that Maria was (at least) not the original patroness.

What these scholars have not taken into consideration is that Byzantine monastic foundations frequently had multiple *ktetors*; the most famous example of this scenario being the Monastery of the Chora whose 'founders' included not only its last and most celebrated one, Theodore Metochites, but also Maria Doukaina, Isaak Komnenos and perhaps even Maria Palaiologina as well.¹⁴ The relationship of the earlier patrons to their establishment was never entirely erased, and most importantly they were entitled to liturgical commemoration or *mnemosynon*. This was considered the most precious and inalienable of their rights, even if a given establishment was sold to a new patron.

This situation occurred because the financial fortunes of many Byzantine institutions was linked to properties that were increasingly found in Turkish territory. New donations of landed properties still under Byzantine rule were required to keep these vulnerable foundations financially afloat.¹⁵ Given this background, it seems that the story of Maria

Palaiologina's role is not only feasible but probable as well. The troubled history delineated by the *chrysobul* rings true with the straightened circumstances of the period, and the history of the patronage of this foundation is thus consistent with the practices of the Late Byzantine Period. This article will therefore treat Maria's patronage as a valid source for the understanding of the architectural history of the site.

Two questions are, nevertheless, particularly salient: why was the property sold to Maria, and why was the male foundation disbanded and its inhabitants scattered so soon after the community had been re-established in 1261? It is clear that the purchase would have taken place after the death of Maria's husband, the Ilkhan Abaqua in around 1282.¹⁶ It is at this point that the decree of patriarch Kallistos is indispensable for some of the background of the foundation. The document is a legal ruling responding to an earlier, lost complaint that the nuns, lodged against one of Maria Palaiologina's heirs, the *panhypersebatos* Isaak Palaiologos Assan. Isaak was the husband of Maria/Melania's daughter (or ward) Theodora Arachantloun; he acquired a debt of 2,000 *hyperpyra* for which the convent became financially liable.

Before it presents the Patriarch's ruling on the case, the document outlines the history of the establishment, and the events occurring after the death of its final *ktetorissa* up until the time of the dispute. The ruling notes that the Princess of the Mongols, the sister of the deceased Emperor Andronikos II, had purchased from Maria Doukaina Akropolitissa and her daughter the wife of Demetrios Kontostephanos, landed properties at the place called *ta Panagiou* in the region known today as the Fener district. This purchase included an already existing church structure, a bath, an orchard, and a vineyard.

The notarized act was drawn up in a normal manner with an agreed price of 4,000 *hyperpyra*. The document outlines Maria's intention of setting up a convent at the site.

The Princess allocated her entire personal fortune to the project, and bequeathed moveable and immoveable properties for its upkeep. Profits from land at Palaios Thoros in Constantinople itself, as well as estates at Mauropotamos, Rhaidestos and Medeia in Thrace were to function as a permanent endowment sustaining the up to thirty-three nuns (church and laboring) who were accepted without the imposition of an entrance donation.¹⁷

The annual income from all these properties was 300 *hyperpera*. Although it is difficult to make exact analogies with today's currency values, it appears that this amount was a fairly substantial sum of money. The amount of rent that the Athonite monastery of the Lavra collected from the entire village of Selada was only 105 *hyperpera*.¹⁸ After Maria's death, the convent was left to Theodora Arachantloun, and after her death without issue it became the property of her husband. Isaak Palaiologos Assan alienated the property of the convent, using building materials from the site to build his own house and eventually bequeathed the convent to his daughter Irene Assaina Philanthropene and the convent's estates to his son the *Grand Primikerios* Andronikos.

What is of particular interest here is that the document notes that Maria Palaiologina re-built, or repaired parts of the foundation. It appears that she may have also refurbished the church with liturgical objects and had cells built for the nuns, although the *chrysobul* may exaggerate her contribution to the site as its newest patron.¹⁹ Perhaps the renovations included some element of redecoration of the *katholikon* as well. This idea is given some validity in light of one of the church's most treasured items, a detached mosaic icon dating from the Palaiologan period, with stylistic affinities to the mosaics at the church of the Chora, undertaken sometime between 1313-1321.²⁰

Although the convent was vindicated in its battle

against Issak Assan's family, it is unclear how much longer it functioned after the matter was litigated in 1351. The final chapter of the convent's history occurred on the day of Constantinople's conquest, May 29, 1453, when a fierce battle between the opposing forces occurred on the slope of the Fener hill. Byzantine troops eventually entrenched themselves in the church and defended themselves bravely, although they finally were overpowered by the superior forces of the enemy. This is the source for the Turkish name of the structure, *Kanlı Kilise*, or church of the blood.²¹

According to Hypselantes, Mehmet II gave the property to the architect Christodoulos as a reward for his work on the Fatih mosque in around the year 1462.²² The document, or *Hati sherif* delineating the parameters of the donation is still preserved in the church. During the Ottoman period the church served as a parish rather than a monastic church. Fires in 1633, 1640 and 1729 severely damaged the structure, and the southern addition was erected in the eighteenth century, perhaps at some point after the fire in 1729.²³

Over the centuries a number of attempts were made to alienate the church from the Greek community, despite Mehmet II's *firman* declaring its inviolability from such attacks.²⁴ No doubt the church's beautiful site, which affords scenic views of the Golden Horn helped fuel this problem. In the nineteenth century a small girls' school was attached to the property and was served by five priests. At that time the church was a dependency of the Monastery of the Great Cave (*Megalon Spelaion*) in the Morea.²⁵ The narrow bell tower was erected in 1892.²⁶ The *naos* was vandalized during the anti-Greek riots in 1955 but was restored the same year.²⁷ The damage incurred during this attack seems to have been limited to portable objects such as icons and candelabra; however there is no inventory of the damage, and a detailed account of its severity cannot be delineated here.

Analysis of the Northern Wall

The church is more difficult to find than one would expect given its prominent position near the summit of the steep Fener hill. Its presence is obscured to the east by the nineteenth-century *Megale Schole*, which towers over the diminutive building, while apartment buildings and other structures surround the church on its other sides. An enceinte surrounds the entire compound, incorporating the eastern and northern walls of the church within its perimeter. The outline that this wall traces produces a trapezoid-shaped temenos surrounding the complex.

The drum of the dome is the only visible indication that this non-descript compound contains a church.

This flat-topped structure is perched on a short platform, and displays a partially preserved cornice, articulated by a blind arcade. The larger arches frame the windows, and these alternate with a series of smaller pairs of arches, some of which are "supported" by quatrefoil decorative elements. The original configuration of the dome would have included a series of double colonnettes flanking the windows in the drum, a configuration seen at the *katholikon* of the Vatopaidi Monastery on Mount Athos (tenth-eleventh centuries).²⁸

The exterior walls are thick and present a fortress-like appearance to the viewer. Projecting from the northeast corner of this compound is the apse of the church encased within a five-sided polygonal wall; this area is painted oxblood and capped by a white cornice. The eastern wall is otherwise devoid of any other features except for two windows and the small door that lies approximately fifteen meters to the south of the apse. This area is thoroughly plastered and painted; no trace of the underlying masonry is visible.

Beside the conch on the north side of the compound is an expanse of exposed masonry. This area reveals the evidence of what appears to be at least two different Byzantine building campaigns. A window surmounted by a brick arch is

found immediately to the right of the conch. This window illuminates the northern aisle of the extended tetraconch *naos*. The arch is flush with the wall and consists of alternating bands of thin bricks that form the voussoirs. This interplay of raised and sunken surfaces is typical of Palaiologan architecture, with a decorative repertoire that features alternating patterns of masonry and stone ashlar, niches and recessed arches, all utilized to enliven static mural surfaces.²⁹

To the right side of a drainage pipe is a vertical masonry joint that marks the point of connection between expanded northern aisle and the inner narthex, which was built during the Palaiologan Period (Figure 1). This is a clear indication that the conch, aisle and narthex were constructed separately. Therefore, one can determine with certitude that the current church was not built in a single campaign (as had once been believed), but rather that it expanded in a series of phases outward from the tetraconch.

The wall to the left of the joint is constructed of large stone courses alternating with narrower brick ones. A thin vertical area immediately to the right of the northern conch that spans from the building's cornice to approximately one yard above the ground, reveals an area constructed in recessed-brick, a construction method typical of the Middle Byzantine period although used later as well³⁰ (Figure 2). The technique employs alternating layers of both visible and invisible courses of brick, the latter hidden behind a thick mortar joint. Although much of the northern aisle's wall appears to be repaired and probably is Post-Byzantine in date, it nevertheless replaces an earlier Byzantine wall whose presence is preserved in this small area of masonry near the conch.

It is likely that the area between the north conch and the masonry joint may have been built when Isaak Doukas became the first *ktetor* of the establishment in 1261, or was added onto the tetraconch by Maria Palaiologina in the 1280s. The area to the right of the masonry joint cor-

responds with the inner narthex and also presents a problematic issue of attribution. This area displays the same pastiche of masonry techniques found to the left of the masonry joint. Here, however, there are larger contiguous sections created in recessed-brick, identical with the narrow area near the conch. This indicates that the same mural technique was initially used for both of these additions to the tetraconch structure. Nevertheless, one is still confronted with a bewildering patchwork of repairs, proving that this area experienced a number of interventions. The presence of a blocked door below what consequently must be a later window is a further indication of this confusing situation.

The wall corresponding to the inner narthex is missing parts of its outer surface. In these spaces, areas of the wall's cores are revealed. These initially appear to be formed in a variation of recessed-brick that appears in thirteenth and fourteenth century buildings and that Ousterhout calls "brick-filled mortar joints." This technique seems to have been employed to take maximum advantage of reused materials, a factor that would have been useful during periods when *spolia* were more plentiful than new materials³¹ (Figure 3). However, because ragged bits of broken bricks and other materials are absent, and these would indicate the presence of this type of construction, it is apparent that the earlier mural technique was employed. Nevertheless, a Palaiologan dating is still proposed for this portion of the building. This attribution can only be understood when we consider the typology of the church's inner narthex.

The northern wall is the only area that allows us to get some insight into the building's history through an analysis of its masonry. The tetraconch is Middle Byzantine, and the area to the right of the masonry joint, corresponding to the northern aisle is probably later, perhaps dating to the Palaiologan period, as is some of the area forming the wall

of the inner narthex. The variations in mural construction and the mortar's color, which ranges in tonalities from rose to light pink, would indicate that several campaigns were involved in the construction of these areas of the building.

The information gleaned from this "sondage" is not sufficient to make substantial new claims for the site. One is again forced to use the same subjective methods that earlier scholars had to utilize, ergo stylistic and literary sources. Stylistic arguments, however, is open to different interpretations and at times seem to contradict each other. The most significant revelation that can be offered here is that the structure corroborates the literary sources regarding multiple Palaiologan building campaigns taking place. Which *ktetor* constructed the narthex or opened up the north aisle are still unclear.

At this point C. Bouras' analysis of the site must be addressed. Bouras suggests that the Palaiologan, tripartite narthex had no physical or visual access into the *naos* from either its northern nor southern wings. Bouras notes that this alignment is also found at the triconch and tetraconch churches of Saint Dimitrios at Barasovas, the church of the Holy Apostles in Athens and Saint Nicholas in Aulis.³² T.F. Mathews had suggested that the expanded side aisles of the similar tetraconch church of the Dormition at Heybeliada were built at the same time as the narthex.³³ The presence of preserved areas in the recessed brick technique, both in the inner narthex wall and the north aisle at Saint Mary of the Mongols, would indicate that these two sections were built in close chronological proximity to one another.

The Patriarchal decree no. 2330 notes that the convent could support up to thirty-three nuns. The rather small size of the church's tetraconch core seems unlikely to have been able to comfortably fit this large a monastic community within it. It seems logical to consider that the opening up the aisles in the western sections of the tetraconch would

have been undertaken when the monastic community was expanding, that is, at a time when the foundation was being newly endowed. Furthermore, the amount of building that took place under both Isaak Doukas and Maria Palaiologina indicates a series of complicated structural reconfiguration being undertaken at the site. These may allude to the *de novo* building of the current inner narthex and the expansion of the northern aisle.

The Inner Narthex and the Naos

After proceeding through a single entrance from the Post-Byzantine outer narthex, one enters the Palaiologan inner narthex. This area consists of three bays separated from one another by arches. The central bay is surmounted by a barrel vault; the bay to the north is crowned by a drumless dome on pendentives. The third bay to the south contains a groin vault, although this area was once also capped by another drumless dome on pendentives, mirroring the example two bays to the north of it and thereby creating a twin-domed narthex.

Although the evidence presented by the outer wall of this area can be read in more than one way, a fact that is not contested is that *pastophoria* as well as multiple nartheces were frequently added onto older churches during the Palaiologan period.³⁴ S. Ćurčić sees twin-domed narthexes as being a particularly Palaiologan manifestation, especially in the variant found here at Saint Mary of the Mongols. The earlier type comprised of distinctly independent domed chapels on gallery levels, in its Palaiologan development the domes open directly onto the narthex itself; this was accomplished by the elimination of the intervening gallery floor.

The earlier manifestation of this format can be seen at north church of Constantinople's *Theotokos tou Libos* and in Thessaloniki's *Panagia Chalkeon*. The later style of narthex can be seen at the Chora and in a triple domed outer-

narthex at the *Vefa Kilise Camii*, and in a number of Balkan and Athonite incarnations. The evolution of this form is seen as the gradual incorporation of previously independent chapel spaces into the body of the church. The resulting space was used primarily for funerary and commemorative purposes.³⁵ This factor strongly indicates a Palaiologan date for the church's inner narthex.

The Naos

Entrance from the inner narthex into the *naos* is gained via the church's central axis, gained through a barrel-vaulted tunnel-like arch between these piers. One experiences a palpable sense of the architecture's transformation when one proceeds from the relative gloom of the narthex into the brightness of the *naos*. The scale of the architecture lightens and the massive proportions of the inner narthex, become harmonious and relatively airy in the nave. The ratio between the walls' thickness to its height seems to be in better balance here. The space within the *naos* is vertically divided by a cornice at the springing point of the vaulting. Although the interior is small, it is nevertheless elegantly divided and spatially defined by mouldings.³⁶

The *naos* displays a sophisticated interplay of geometrical forms, divided and sub-divided into smaller units. This is evident in the massive conchs, which are given a lighter more graceful appearance by the insertion of three niches within their interiors. Now only the eastern and northern ones are articulated in this fashion. The transitional area above the conchs carry four pendentives that carry a drumless melon dome, a dome that is not simply a smooth concave void, but which is further scored by scalloped compartments, eight in number in this instance. The complex interaction of light and shadow within all these excavated areas is part of the subtle charm of the building. One can interpret them as being the internal counterpart for the exterior

mural articulation of the apses, which is both decorative and partially founded on the playful use of geometrical forms.

The partially preserved remnants of the rest of the quatrefoil are visible to the west and the south of the *naos*. These include the semi-circular upper section of the western conch, which is pierced by a window, as well as the walled up arch that once framed the upper portion of the southern conch. The transition between the *naos* and the eighteenth century addition is carried out here and this was achieved by first amputating the southern conch and replacing the missing feature with a broader ogival arch. The width of the opening was increased by making the western end of the new arch come to rest on a pier had once formed the extreme western rim of the original quatrefoil. In doing so it was possible to extend the arched opening by approximately three meters. The technique used is reminiscent of the remodeling that occurred at the *Fenari Isa Camii*, which occurred after a fire that severely damaged the building in 1633. The columns that had once defined the corners of the cross-in-square Church of the Lips, and in its *parekklesion* of Saint John were removed and replaced with similarly pointed arches.³⁷

It appears that the center of the church's *naos* was to have been delineated by a square defined by a single column at each corner; two of these now survive behind the iconostasis.³⁸ Arches sprang from the columns at this point, and four exedrae protruded outward from behind them, creating the outline of a flower-like cross-shaped structure. It is in this area one can see the relationship between the tetraconch and the most important ecclesiastical ground plan that emerges in the Middle Byzantine period, the cross-in-square church. This central square can be used to project the square arms of a cross, which in turn support a series of barrel vaults above them, or they can terminate in apses, as at Saint Mary of the Mongols. The space encompassed by this central area is quite small, comparable in size to the *parekklesion* at the

Pammakaristos and the church of *Hagios Ioannes en Troulo*, the former example being a private chapel with very restricted access. It is likely one or another of the new founders likely would have deemed it necessary to increase the space inside of the building.³⁹

The decision to build this church in this elegant, yet simple geometrical plan is a clue that hints to the period of its creation. A decisive factor in this matter must have been transformations occurring in liturgical matters during this epoch. The Middle Byzantine liturgy is characterized by the limitation of laity participation in the liturgy, as well as the removal of the clergy behind the *templon* barrier for the majority of the service. The clergy appear infrequently, most critically at the First and Great Entrances. Formerly these processions would start outside the church building and process into the church. During the Middle Byzantine period, the liturgy is characterized by a smaller congregation and an abridged version of the processions, which would later progress through the north door of the iconostasis and eventually re-enter the sanctuary through the Royal Door. This is the first factor that suggests that the Middle Byzantine period is a *terminus-post-quem* for the construction of the central section of the church.⁴⁰

The second factor that supports such a conclusion is the lack of evidence for tetraconch church plans during the Palaiologan period. Tetraconch structures appear for the final time in Constantinople and its immediate environs during the Middle Byzantine period, contravening the earlier attributions of Orlandos and Brunov. Closer inspection of the masonry at the Kamariotissa indicates a Middle Byzantine foundation, because of the use of the recessed-brick technique.⁴¹ The use of the recessed-brick technique, however, is not universally accepted as irrefutable proof for a Middle Byzantine date for the structure, and M. Restle, basing his opinion on the research of P.C. Vokotopoulos, still concludes

that the Kamariotissa and Saint Mary of the Mongols are both Palaiologan constructions.⁴² The presence of the areas of recessed brick technique are attributable to the repairs undertaken at the start of the Palaiologan period in 1261 and between 1266-1267.

A third element that supports a Middle Byzantine date for the tetraconch is the sub-division of the apses by niches. This architectural feature appears only in ecclesiastical structures of the Komnenian period both within and outside of the empire, and is totally unobserved in Palaiologan churches. This appears to have been a widespread architectural feature, for example they are present in the main and side-altar apses at San Marco in Venice, ca. 1063.⁴³ Within Constantinople itself one can see the same feature at the still unidentified Byzantine basilica structure, now known as the *Kefeli Mescidi*, which contains two sets of diagonally placed apsidioles in its main apse, surrounding a central window.⁴⁴ The prothesis chapel at Saint John of Troullo, which is generally dated to the twelfth century, contains one partially articulated apsidiole, and more importantly shares a similarly shaped dome with the monument under discussion.⁴⁵

Although S. Bettini may have made his observation regarding the Armeno-Georgian feel of the building for the wrong reason, he might have nevertheless been making a valid point. It is known that beginning in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Byzantium experienced a period of renewed artistic and political interaction with Armenia. In fact, three Middle Byzantine Emperors, Romanos Lekapanos, John Tzimiskes and Nikephoros Phokas were of Armenian origin. A permanent Armenian bishopric was set up in Constantinople during this period, and the exchange of intellectual and artistic ideas flourished.⁴⁶ It is in Armenia itself that a number tetraconch churches survive to this day. The liturgical requirements of the Armenian rite preclude the need for any form of narthex, which is quite fascinating in

light of the fact that none were originally attached to either Saint Mary of the Mongols and at the *Kamariotissa*.⁴⁷ The *Kamariotissa* differs, however, in that the latter was originally a pure quatrefoil structure, whereas, the former had elongated chapels flanking the central altar area, in a manner that mirrors the inclusion of two independent eastern chapels at a number of Armenian sites, for example Saint Hripsime and Saint Gayane (both seventh century) at Vagharshapat. Perhaps the renewal of contacts between the two lands made the tetraconch form a stylish and exotic choice for a Byzantine church.

Another interesting similarity that has been pointed out between the *Kamariotissa* church and Armenian structures is the inclusion of squinches within the corners between the exedrae. C. Bouras considers this structure to be a link between the tetraconch and the later octagon type as exemplified at *Nea Moni* on Chios.⁴⁸ This factor is mentioned because it is a strong indication of the presence of Armenian aesthetic sensibilities concretely effecting Byzantine architecture hundreds of miles away from the physical presence of these monuments. How did this occur?

Perhaps influencing these events to some degree was the presence of at least one Armenian architect in the capital. Trdat from Ani is known to have been in Constantinople after the partial collapse of the dome of Hagia Sophia in October of 989. Repairs under Trdat's supervision took place between 989 and 994 when the church was reopened.⁴⁹ The presence of this figure is particularly fascinating, as he was the architect who was commissioned by King Gagik I (989-1020) to build the last aisled tetraconch constructed in Armenia, that of Saint Gregory at Ani. This building was a copy of the destroyed church of Saint Gregory that had been built by Patriarch Narses III at Zvart'nots.⁵⁰ Both buildings were tetraconchs, although dissimilar to the examples in Constantinople due to the presence of a surrounding aisle.

The elevation of the building above the ambulatory in the visual reconstruction of the building by Mnatzakanyan bears a resemblance to the Saint Mary of the Mongols.⁵¹ The construction of the church at Ani took place between the years 989-1001, and whether Trdat traveled between the ongoing projects in Constantinople and Armenia is unclear. Although a causal link between Trdat's presence and the renewal of use of the tetraconch ground plan in the Byzantine Empire is too tenuous to make, I agree with the following assessment that Mathews makes regarding Armenian influence during this period, "It is hardly surprising if elements of Armenian architecture should appear in Byzantine church designs at this time."⁵²

The Southern Extension and the *Agiasma*

The area to the south of the *naos* was constructed in the eighteenth century, and presents no particularly interesting architectural features.⁵³ Its nine bays are supported by central two piers, and each bay is surmounted by a groin vault. Two windows are located on both its eastern and southern walls, and a wooden balcony is suspended above. Perhaps this need to increase the space in the church was linked to the rise of the Fener quarter as a focus of the Greek community or by the requirements of the church's school. This area does contain one rather intriguing component that links it to its pre-conquest history. Located to the right of the pier displaying the church's patronal icon is a trap door leading directly into the ground. This area was probably originally within the southern portion of the Palaiologan inner narthex.

One proceeds south down a short flight of steps that leads directly into a corridor approximately six feet tall and surmounted by a barrel vault. At a right angle immediately to the left of the visitor after one reaches the bottom step is a small barrel vaulted chamber lying on an east-west axis, it is approximately six feet long and terminates in an apse. The area

immediately in front of the staircase leads to a shallow barrel vaulted room of about the same dimensions, also terminating in an apse. It was in this location that Sergio Bettini described seeing remnants of what he believed to be frescoes dating from the epoch of Maria Palaiologina. He does not specify in which of the two chambers he saw them.⁵⁴ These images are now no longer visible as the masonry is totally denuded of plaster.

There are only two references to the presence of this *agiasma* at the site: the first comes from Hammer-Purgstall who writes that nobody at the church knew where to direct him to it.⁵⁵ The other reference states, "It [the *agiasma*] is found in the underground level, in the midst of the *naos* of the *Panagia Mouchliotissa*, but its water had dried up in the beginning of the century. It is only mentioned in the *Hemerologion* of the National Philanthropic offices of 1906."⁵⁶ The construction here is highly reminiscent of tomb vaults, and the placement of a family vault in this section of the church would not be out of the ordinary.⁵⁷ Although this side of the *naos* has been substantially altered, it appears that it would have been part of the inner narthex, which during Palaiologan times came to be used for burial purposes and memorial services for the dead.

Conclusion

The complex history of Saint Mary of the Mongols has been misunderstood for a number of reasons. Physical evidence has been difficult to gather, and a lack of interest has also hindered research. The stripping of the north wall's plaster has revealed the heretofore hidden process of accretion that took place at the site. The exponential growth of the church seems to reflect the structure's history as delineated by the primary sources. One must nevertheless rely primarily on stylistic analysis to date the quatrefoil, although powerful evidence is apparent that the tetraconch core is an earlier construction, as witnessed by the modifications that it en-

dured to connect it with the narthex. The evidence indicates that the church initially had neither side aisles or a narthex.

The first written evidence for a major campaign to change the building occurred under the patronage of Isaak Doukas, the father-in-law of George Akropolites. This campaign may have simply involved expanding the northern and southern aisles, thereby opening up the space of the *naos*, or it may have been the creation of the narthex itself. It seems likely that the side aisles were opened up in preparation for the presence of a narthex, although it is also possible that the narthex was built first, and that with the enlargement of the monastic community under Maria/Melania, required that the side aisles be summarily built to enlarge the *naos* to accommodate them.

It is clear that the inner narthex, with its twin-domed design dates from the Palaiologan Period. The conundrum is whether it was built first, then the aisles expanded, or vice-versa. The presence of passages using the recessed brick technique indicates that the aisle and inner narthex were built at approximately the same time. The written records recount three programs of expansion at the site, each completed in quick succession. Although it is still impossible to answer many questions definitively, the Church of the Saint Mary of the Mongols is a fascinating site; its interesting history combined with its unusual architecture merit a fuller treatment than it has previously received.

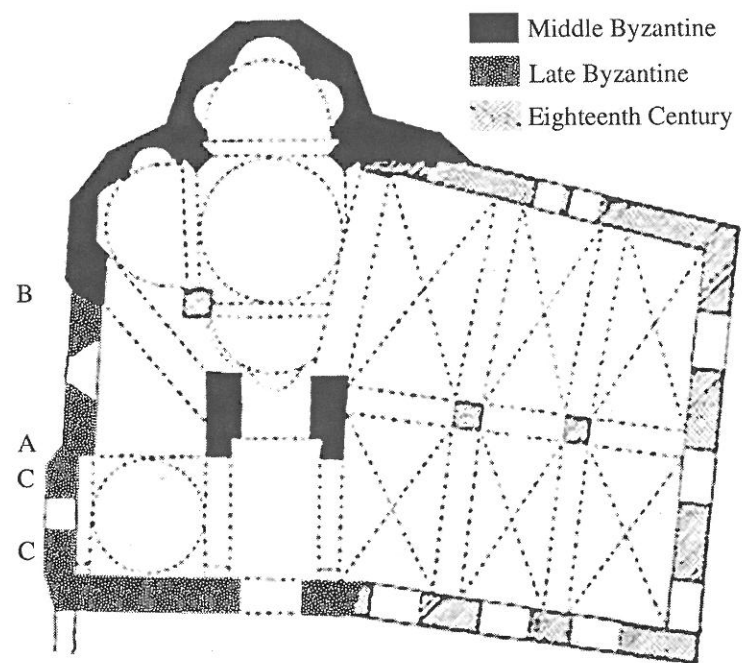


Fig. 1

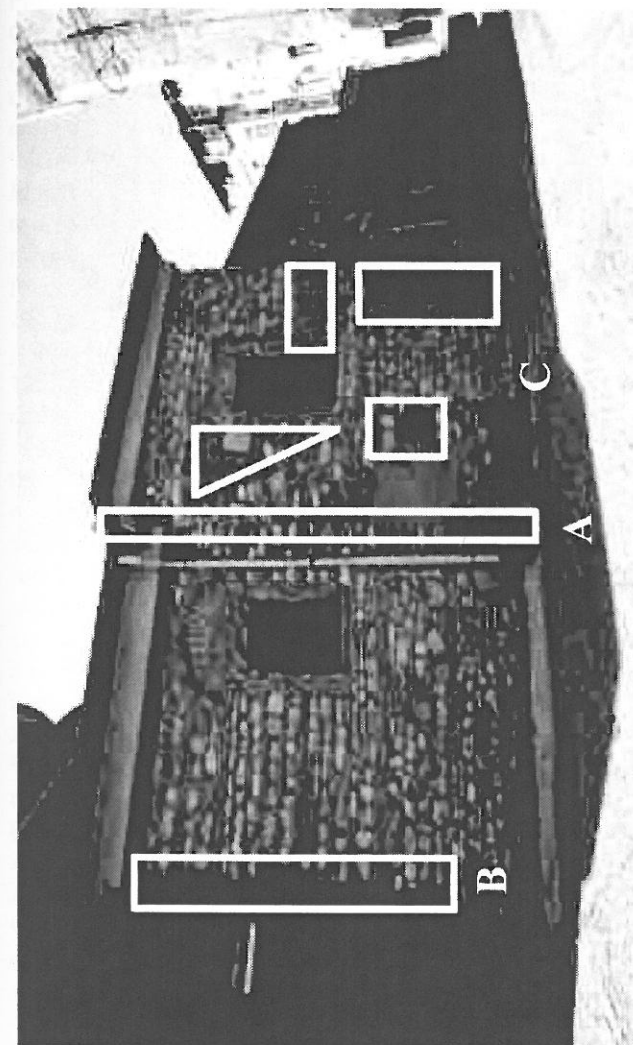


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Notes

* This article originally served as a qualifying paper for the Masters' Degree I received from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts in January 2001. I now wish to dedicate this work to Professor Angela Hero, Professor Emerita of Byzantine History, Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Queens College, CUNY. Professor Hero's contribution to the field of Byzantine studies, and her generosity to younger scholars is much appreciated. I hope that this effort will serve as a worthy tribute, despite any errors that may flaw the offering.

¹ The epithet of the church derives from *Kyra*, or *Despoina ton Mougoulion*, Lady or Queen/Mistress of the Mongols, which was applied to a number of Palaiologan aristocratic women who were married to members of the Mongol court; S. Runciman notes that there were at least four or five examples. See, S. Runciman, "The Lady of The Mongols," in *Εἰς μνήμην Κ. Ἀμάντου* (Athens: Typographeion M. Myrtide, 1960), p. 46. In this case we are dealing with Maria Palaiologina, born ca. 1253. The etymology for the church's epithet is disputed by H. Gregoire and M. Lascaris who interpret the term *Magoulion* as a Hellenization of the Slav word *Mogyla* and they dismiss any relationship between the site and Mary Palaiologina. See H. Gregoire and M. Lascaris' review of M. S.B. Kougeas' "Ὁ Γεώργιος Ἀκροπολίτης κτήτωρ τοῦ Παρισινοῦ κώδικος τοῦ Σουΐδα," *Byzantina Metabyzantina*, footnote (1), *Byzantion*, XXI (1951): p. 259. Other names for the church are the toponymic *Theotokos Mouchliotissa*. S. Kougeas notes that this etymology emerged from the fact that the Fener quarter once housed a number of inhabitants from Mouchlion, an area in Arcadia. See S.B. Kougeas, "Ὁ Γεώργιος Ἀκροπολίτης κτήτωρ τοῦ Παρισινοῦ κώδικος τοῦ Σουΐδα," *Byzantina Metabyzantina* (1949), 61-74.

² The only other examples of churches utilizing this format in the capital and its environs are the church of the *Kamariotissa* on Heybeliada (Chalki) and the now destroyed *Sinaitikon* at Edirne (Adrianople). Another Constantinopolitan tetraconch church was dedicated to the Apostle Paul; this monument is only known from literary sources, which note that Constantine Porphyrogenitus restored it in the tenth century. *Theophanes Continuatus*, VI, 21 (Ed. Bonn), 450; J. Ebersolt, *Monuments d'Architecture Byzantine* (Paris: Les Éditions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1934), 41.

³ J. Freely, *Blue Guide: Istanbul* (London: A & C Black, 1997), 194, and J. Freely & A. Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 256.

⁴ D. Pulgher comments "les innovations lui ont fait perdre le cachet de l'église primitive." *Les Anciennes Églises de Constantinople* (Vienne:

Lehmann & Wentzell, 1878), 40; and S. Eyice states "*en sa forme actuelle l'édifice est extrêmement défiguré par les adjonctions tardives. Particulièrement une aile voûtée qu'on a ajoutée au sud, a complètement changé l'aspect de ce bâtiment dont le noyau originale est une tétraconque.*" S. Eyice, *Les Églises à plan central d'Istanbul* (*Corsi di Cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 26 (1979), 129. These are nevertheless brief descriptions of the church found in C. Gurlitt, *Die Baukunst Konstantinopels* (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1907-1912), pp. 36-7; A. Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912), 272-79; and T.F. Mathews, *Byzantine Churches in Istanbul* (University Park & London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 366-75.

⁵ Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*, 275. Pachymeres' *Chronikon*, describes the reign of Michael VIII and gives details of the marriage, trousseau and matrilineal background of Maria Palaiologina. *Georges Pachymeres Relations Historiques* I. Livres I-III (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1984), 234. Kougeas' 1949 article analyzes the Codex Greacus Parisinus 2625 and furnishes further background information that previous to its publication had not been connected with the patriarchal *chrysobul*. This document indicates that Akropolites' father-in-law, perhaps Isaac Doukas, uncle of Michael VIII, had repaired an older, abandoned foundation. The monastery functioned before the period of crusader rule in Constantinople, but closed at some point after 1204, see Kougeas, "Ο Γεώργιος Ακροπολίτης," 61-74. This was not an uncommon event; for example the Kyriotissa monastery (*Kalenderhane Camii*) became either a Dominican or Franciscan establishment after the Greek monks fled the city. A monastery bearing the name *Kyriotissa* appears at Nicea, as the location of the tomb of Patriarch Germanos II in 1239. Perhaps the monks regrouped and re-established their community in exile; or perhaps this is merely an interesting coincidence. For more information see C. L. Striker Y. D. Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture and Decoration*. (Mainz: Philipp Von Zabern, 1997,) p 17, and also R. Janin, *Les Églises et les Monastères des Grands Centres Byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galesios, Trebizonde, Athènes* (Paris: Institut Français d'études Byzantines 1975), 113. The patriarchal *chrysobul* outlines the history of the convent from 1261 until 1351. This document will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

⁶ Brunov, "Die Panagia-Kirche auf der Insel Chalki in der Umgebung von Konstantinopel," *Byz- Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 6 (1927-28), 515-16

⁷ Bettini, 'Un inedito mosaico del periodo paleologo a Constantinopoli,' *Atti del V Congresso Internazionale di Studi Bizantini* (1939-1940), 31. See Brunov also supported the theory of an Armeno-Georgian link, Brunov, "Die Panagia Kirche," 509.

⁸ "Η ἀρχιτεκτονική τῆς Παναγίας τοῦ Μουχλίου στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη," *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Ἡταιρείας* 26 (2005), 35-50. Bouras' article compliments the work done by C. Gurlitt's *Die Baukunst Konstantinopels*, Van Millingen's *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*, and Mathews' *Byzantine Churches in Istanbul*. Brunov discusses Saint Mary of the Mongols in relation to the church of the *Kamariotissa*, as well as the use of the quatrefoil plan in both Armenian and Renaissance architecture. T. Steppan's *Die Athos-Lavra und der Trikonchale Kuppelnaos in der Byzantinischen Architektur* (Munich: Editio Maris, 1995) analyzes the possibility of a relationship between the *katholikon* of the Great Lavra and the church, utilizing the church of Saint Andrew in Peristerai as a possible link between the two. R. Janin's *La Géographie Ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin*, (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1975-1981) W. Müller-Wiener's *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1977) and V. Kidonopoulos' *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204-1328* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1994) are all fundamental reading for searching out primary and secondary sources discussing this building. These sources will be combined with first-hand observations in an attempt to delineate the sequential stages of the building's development.

⁹ V. Laurent, *Les Corps des Sceaux de l'Empire Byzantin* Tome V, 2 : 'Église (Paris: Éditions de Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, 1965), p 95. The Spiritual Meadow was written in Greek and therefore what language the translator was working in is unclear.

¹⁰ Laurent, *Le corps des Sceaux* 95; Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls*, 204. This historical connection is rather fascinating as it is unknown what influenced the appearance of the numerous tetraconch *katholika* that made their appearance on the Holy Mountain during the Middle-Byzantine period. Thomas Steppan treads lightly regarding a link between the Saint Mary of the Mongols and the *katholikon* at the Lavra. Nikephoros Phocas' and John Tsimiskes' ordered the church of Saint Andreas of Peristerai be placed under the spiritual care of the Grand Lavra, and the building's complex ground plan, consisting of a central square surrounded to the north, south and west by partially formed tetraconchs, and a triple-apsed western sanctuary is discussed as a possible connection linking the two sites, although Steppan states "*Die fragen nach der Herkunft von Bauformen erweisen sich meistens als nicht sehr fruchtbar, und wenn auch in seltenen fällen historische Zusammenhänge geographisch weit voneinander entfernter denkmäler eruieren werden können, muss festgehalten werden, dass es sich auch in unserem Fall um nichts mehr als um eine vage Vermutung handelt.*" He is insistent, however, that the division of the conchs by three apsidioles at Saint Mary of the Mongols is highly

significant and points indisputably to a Middle-Byzantine dating for the structure. See, Stepan, *Die Athos-Laura*, 80-84.

¹¹ Laurent, *Le Corps De Sceaux*, 95.

¹² Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon Zur Topographie Istanbul*, 204; V. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantipel*, 89.

¹³ Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantipel*, 89-90. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon Zur Topographie Istanbul*, 204. The amount of building required at the site is curious, but, it makes perfect sense in light of the fact that many of the buildings in Constantinople were in a dilapidated state after the city was recaptured. Furthermore, earthquakes occurred at Constantinople in 1296, 1303 and 1323 and fires broke out in 1291, 1305 and 1320. Perhaps these events necessitated repairs to the church and the nun's cells. A.-M. Talbot, "Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries," in N. Necipoğlu, ed. *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 334-36.

¹⁴ See N. Teteriatnikov, "The Place of the Nun Melania (The Lady of the Mongols) in the Deësis Program of the Inner Narthex of Chora, Constantinople," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 43 (1995), 163-180.

¹⁵ Further reading on the conditions affecting the patronage and fortunes of Palaiologan monastic establishments can be found in J. P. Thomas *Private religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, (1987), 244-69.

¹⁶ Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon Zur Topographie Istanbul*, 204. The year 1282 coincides with the commencement of the rule of Andronikos II. During the years of Michael VIII's reign other more pressing matters may have relegated non-essential building to a minimum. It is significant that the tempo of construction and restoration increases during the reign of his successor. According to Talbot, "Even taking into account that Andronikos's reign was more than twice as long as his fathers', the proportion of construction of religious institutions between 1282 and 1328 was far greater than between 1261 and 1282." Talbot, "Building Activity in Constantinople," 329-336.

¹⁷ *Les registres des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*. Vol. 1, 1350-1376, edited and translated by J. Darrouzès. (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1977), 274-275. The entire document is published by J. Koder, et. al., *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel*, 3 Teil (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001), 62-77.

¹⁸ A. E. Laiou, 'Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women,' *Byzantinischen Forschungen*, 9. (1985), 99.

¹⁹ Maria is known to have contributed a book of the Gospels and a deco-

rative fabric to the church of the Chora. See Teteriatnikov, *The Place of the Nun Melania*, 177.

²⁰ The only publication about this icon is Bettini's 'Un inedito mosaico del periodo paleologo a Constantinopoli,' *Atti del V Congresso di Studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 6 (1940), 31-36. Bettini is prophetic in one of his insights: a stylistic relationship between this mosaic and the program at the Chora. This publication predates the discovery of the Deësis mosaic in the inner narthex of the Chora that depicts a Lady of the Mongols. Runciman points out that there is controversy over the identification of the figure; it could be the sister or the daughter of Andronikos II. Consult Runciman, "The Lady of the Mongols," 52. In documents of this period, the Maria/Melania repeatedly styled herself as "the sister of the Emperor" and "*i ipsilotitati despina ton mougoulion*." The missing part of the inscription may have therefore read "*i autadelphi tou ipsitatos vasileos Adronikou*...etc." Runciman and Teteriatnikov after weighing the odds conclude that it is probable that the portrait depicts the woman connected with the church of Mary of the Mongols. More important than this fact is the stylistic affinity that the mosaic icon has with the Chora cycles. This is an interesting link between the two foundations underscoring the relationship between the workshops that created them. Teteriatnikov believes that it is likely that Melania was still alive and a powerful force during the period of the Chora's restoration and redecoration; see Teteriatnikov, "The Place of the Nun Melania."

²¹ D. Pulgher, *Les Anciennes Eglises de Constantinople*, 40.

²² The Fatih mosque has been seen as the perfect recreation of the tetraconch form seen at Saint Mary of the Mongols. Müller-Wiener *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbul*, 204; Gurlitt, *Die Baukunst Konstantinopels*, 37; Eyice, "Les Églises à Plan Central d'Istanbul," 33.

²³ Gurlitt, *Die Baukunst Konstantinopel*, 37, Freely & Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul*, 257.

²⁴ The final attempt occurred during the reign of Ahmet III. This plot was thwarted by Demetrius Cantemir who displayed the firman of Mehmet II to the Grand Vizier, Chorlulu Ali Pasha, who finally and definitively ordered that the church be left in peace; See Runciman, *The Lady of the Mongols*, 52.

²⁵ J. Von Hammer, *Constantinopolis und der Bosphoros* (Osnabruck: Biblio Verlag 1967), Vol. 1, 451.

²⁶ Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon Zur Topographie Istanbul*, 205.

²⁷ Photographs of the devastated church and courtyard can be found in Demetrios Kaloumenos' *Ἡ Σταύρωση τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ: Ἡ ιστορική ἀλήθεια τῶν γεγονότων τῆς 6-7 Σεπτεμβρίου 1955 στήν*

Κωνσταντινούπολη (Athens: Panteion Panepistemion, 1991), 27, 63, 65; plates 50-50-54; Müller-Wiener, *op. cit.* 205.

²⁸ See, I. Papaggelos, ed., *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi* (Mount Athos, 1998), 166-175.

²⁹ This lively interplay between light and shadow can be better seen in a definitive example at the *parekklesion* dedicated to Christos ho Logos at the Theotokos he Pammakaristos ca. 1310. Alternating bands of masonry and ashlar, blind arcades and niches, as well as dogtooth patterns enliven the entire surface of the structure, creating an intriguing interplay of light and shadow.

³⁰ The recessed-brick technique first appears during the Middle Byzantine period, toward the end of the tenth century in Constantinople. Although typically a Middle Byzantine phenomenon, it does appear in Late Byzantine structures.

³¹ R. Ousterhout, "Observations on the Recessed Brick Technique during the Palaiologan Period," *Archailogikon Deltion* 59 (1990): 163-70

³² Bouras, "Η ἀρχιτεκτονική της Παναγίας τοῦ Μουχλίου," 46.

³³ T. F. Mathews, "Observations on the Church of Panagia Kamariotissa on Heybeliada (Chalke), Istanbul," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1973), 115-32.

³⁴ The following churches received new *pastophoria* or *parekklesia* during this period: the Church of the Chora, *Pammakaristos*, the Lips, *Kyriotissa/Christos Pantepoptes*, and perhaps the *Vefa Kilise Camii*. These are only examples from Constantinople; if one took Greece and the Balkans into consideration the list would increase substantially.

³⁵ S. Ćurčić, "Twin-domed Narthex in Paleologan Architecture" *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloshkog Instituta*, 13 (1971), 333-352.

³⁶ Van Millingen states, "From the interior face of the apse and on its northern wall projects a capital, adorned with acanthus leaves, which, as it could never have stood free in this position, probably formed part of an eikonostais in stone." Van Milligan, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*, 277. It seems more likely that this element was in fact one of the pillars that stood at the cardinal points of the structure. I do not recall this detail and am not certain whether it is still extant.

³⁷ Mathews, *Byzantine Churches in Istanbul*, 322. It is interesting to note that the prothesis and diaconicon chapels at the northern church dating from 907 are both quatrefoil-shaped areas.

³⁸ Mathews, *Byzantine Churches in Istanbul*, 366. Brunov states that the four pillars have been immured and transformed into piers, with a single marble capital being the only visible reference to the original ground plan; Brunov, "Die Panagia-Kirche," 514-25, illustration 7, also see footnote 39; also see Bouras, "Η ἀρχιτεκτονική της Παναγίας τοῦ

Μουχλίου," 42.

³⁹ Eyice makes an interesting supposition that the tetraconch was originally a mausoleum, later transformed into a church by the addition of the narthex. Although Eyice admits that there were tetraconch structures that initially served as churches, he makes this speculation because the Fener quarter was outside of the Constantinian walls, and because Saint Mary of the Mongols was located at a Late Classical cemetery. Furthermore the structure appears to be similar to tomb structures drawn by Piranesi in *Le Antichità romane*, and finally because of the discovery of a quadralobe funerary monument at Pamphilia of the third century, with a similar division of the lobes into three niches and also surmounted by a drumless cupola. This theory seems a little far-fetched although it is a fascinating idea. See "Les églises Byzantines à plan central d'Istanbul," 129-30.

⁴⁰ Brunov, *Die Panagia Kirche*, 517; T. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 111-12.

⁴¹ Mathews, "Observations," 118. Apart from the previously mentioned examples of tetraconchs, I would like to include another one here: The Church of the Mother of God at Veljusa in the Struma valley in Macedonia. This structure was built in 1080 by a Greek bishop named Manuel, and was intended to serve as his funeral chapel. The *naos* is a quatrefoil that is provided with a single bay narthex. Two of the conchs on the east and the north project clearly beyond the wall and instead of apsidioles as seen at Saint Mary of the Mongols, they are opened up by three windows, in a fashion similar to the *Kamariotissa*. See Krautheimer and Ćurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1986), 375-376 and P. Miljković-Peppek "Les Monuments Nouvellement Découverts dans l'architecture et dans la Peinture en Macédonie du XIe au XIVe Siècle," *Patrimoine Culturel V* (1973-1974), p 15 and plate 2. To the south of the building is a barn-like *parekklesion* containing a number of graves. When the ground plan is consulted there are a number of similarities with Saint Mary of the Mongols, particularly this odd dis-axial addition. I feel that the eighteenth century addition at Saint Mary of the Mongols probably replaced an earlier *parekklesion*, but this is impossible to say, although the fenestration pattern of the drum is blind in the direction to the south west. At the Church of the Chora dome's windows in the northern esonarthex that would have been blocked by *pastophoria* structures were left blank, perhaps this is the vestigial evidence of a remnant of a taller building's existence at Saint Mary of the Mongols. See Ousterhout, "Observation of the 'Recessed Brick', Technique during the Palaeologan Period", 1987, 50.

⁴² M. Restle "Konstantinopel," *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst*,

Stuttgart IV, 601.

⁴³ See, Steppan, *Die Atos Laura*, 80-81; 84.

⁴⁴ The date of this structure is unclear, and dates range from the ninth century. P. Grossmann "Beobachtungen an der Kefeli-Mescid in Istanbul," *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 16 (1966), 241-249, a dating with which Thomas Steppan concurs, Steppan, *Die Athos Laura*, 82. Thomas F. Mathews' assessment is that the building dates to the twelfth century or later. Mathews 1976, *Byzantine Churches in Istanbul*, 190.

⁴⁵ Steppan, *Die athos Laura*, 82; Mathews 1976, *Byzantine Churches in Istanbul*, 159.

⁴⁶ Mathews, "Observations," 127.

⁴⁷ Mathews, *Observations on the Church of Panagia Kamariotissa*, 127.

⁴⁸ Bouras, "Η ἀρχιτεκτονική τῆς Παναγίας τοῦ Μουχλίου," 25-26.

⁴⁹ Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon Zur Topographie Istanbul*, 88; J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 91-2; Robert Mark & Ahmet Ş. Çakmak, *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 54.

⁵⁰ The only literary source that states that Trdat was the architect of the structure is found in a 1567 copy of Stephen Asolik's *Universal History*, which states "On the construction of by King Gagik of the church called Saint Gregory in the town of Ani. The master of the church is Trdat." Text translated in E. Dulaurier, *Recherches sur la chronologie arménienne technique et historique*, Paris 1859, vol. I, 280. See W. Eugene Kleinbauer, "Zvart'nots and the Origins of Christian Architecture in Armenia," *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972), 246.

⁵¹ M. Hasratyan, "La Tétraconque a niches d'angles de Moxrenis," in *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, Tome 21 (1988-89), 365-384.

⁵² Mathews 1973, *Observations on the Church of thr Panagia Kamariotissa*, 127.

⁵³ Gurlitt, *Die Baukunst Konstantinople*, 36.

⁵⁴ Bettini 1940, *Un Inedito Mosaico del Periodo Paleologo a Costantinopoli*, 33.

⁵⁵ Hammer-Purgstall, *Constantinopolis und der Bosporos*, 451.

⁵⁶ Nikos Atzemoglou, *Τ' ἀγιάσματα τῆς Πόλης* (Athens: Resos, 1990), 30-31.

⁵⁷ Eric Addis Ivison, *Mortuary Practices in Byzantium* (c. 950-1453) (Doctoral Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1993.), vol I, 118-29.

Early Byzantine Amulets: Unorthodox, yes; Incorrect, no¹

Jacquelyn Tuerk Stonberg

Currently, scholars regularly label texts as illiterate mistakes when they are ungrammatical, but grammar that is alternative to our expectations need not always warrant that label. Hundreds of early Byzantine medical amuletic texts survive that were used for generations to address disease, and these display alternative grammar. Calling amuletic inscriptions "mistakes" undercuts their authority to function therapeutically, and yet that is the purpose for which hundreds were made across centuries. The burden of proof is on the interpretation that limits meaning, and calling an amuletic inscription a "mistake" limits its meaning. And yet the practice of interpreting ungrammatical texts as "mistakes" is long-standing and even institutional. This is for good reasons, because mistakes do happen, especially in multiple copying as was the case with amuletic texts. Furthermore but, it is impossible to know what was in the minds of the people who made such texts or who wore them. Exploring alternative grammar in near-orthodox and unorthodox examples helps us to track alternative authorities, including any perceived authority to heal.

At the core of this argument is a simple proposition: some of the psychological power of amuletic texts resides in