

# EXCAVATION OF A 13TH-CENTURY CHURCH NEAR VASILITSI, SOUTHERN MESSENIA

## ABSTRACT

A small-scale excavation in the area of Vasilitsi, southern Messenia, revealed the remnants of a previously unrecorded 13th-century triple-aisled cross-vaulted church with a series of burials along its north wall. In addition to ceramics and a marble basin, a small hoard of Venetian *torneselli* was found. The author discusses the church's period of use and details of its architecture and construction, as well as the identity of its builders and the settlement pattern of this largely unknown area. Parallels from published histories, surface surveys, and excavations from other regions of medieval Messenia and Greece are discussed. An osteological report on the burials is presented as an appendix.

In the past few decades, various regions of Messenia—particularly their Byzantine, Frankish, and Ottoman phases—have attracted great interest among archaeologists, thereby providing a useful body of comparanda for current work in the area.<sup>1</sup> This report, which presents the results of excavations in 2000 in southern Messenia, focuses on the remains of a small 13th-century church, probably built by a traveling guild of craftsmen following Late Byzantine examples in southern Greece. Architectural remains, along with skeletal, numismatic, and ceramic finds, allow a glimpse of the daily life of a small late medieval rural community.<sup>2</sup>

1. See, e.g., *Nichoria* III, pp. 353–434; Dimitrokallis 1990; Hodgetts and Lock 1996; Davis et al. 1997; Davis 1998; Bennet, Davis, and Zarinebaf-Shahr 2000; Davies 2004; Zarinebaf, Bennet, and Davis 2005; see also Sigalos 2004, pp. 113–114.

2. Marios Michailidis executed the church's plans and reconstruction, while Ioannis Papamikroulis, architect, and Ioannis Haritos, topographer, produced the original drawings. Alan Stahl and Julian Baker identified the coins of the

*torneselli* hoard, while Stavroula Dou-bogianni, Thanos Katakos, and Giorgos Tsairis were responsible for the conservation of the finds. Marina Georgoutsou produced the profile drawings of the ceramic vessels, and Giorgos Maravelias the photographs. Final changes on all artwork were executed by Irakleitos Antoniadis, architect. Currently the finds are stored in the Archaeological Repository of Pylos (ARP), at the Fortress of Pylos, while the coins remain with the 26th

Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Kalamata.

Lilian Karali examined burials 1–3 in the Laboratory of Environmental Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and History of Art, University of Athens. Her osteological report, which appears as an appendix to this article, was carried out in cooperation with Ismini Kavoura and Daisuke Yamaguchi, both postgraduate students. Nia Giannakopoulos contributed to the palaeopathological study.



**Figure 1. Plan of southern Messenia.**  
Archive of the Archaeological Receipts  
Fund, Athens

The church ruins stand isolated and nearly buried on a hillside between the modern village of Vasilitsi and the area known as Selitza,<sup>3</sup> located at Messenia's southern tip, Cape Akritas (Fig. 1). Although the ruins still form the center of local veneration of the Mother of God (Theotokos), the site has been ignored in the bibliography and until recently remained unexplored by archaeologists.<sup>4</sup> The church is built on a steep mountain decline, with its lengthwise axis (east–west) transverse to the slope. More than half of the structure had collapsed and lay buried. The surviving parts of the building, visible even before excavation (Figs. 2–4), included the south aisle of the main *naos*, covered by a low, longitudinal vault resting on two piers, the intact *diakonikon*, the central apse (*bema*) up to the springing of its arch, and the walls of the rectangular narthex to the springing of the barrel vault.

3. Selitza is a word of Slavic origin that signifies “village.” The same place-name is used for an area northeast of Kalamata.

4. The church is not found, e.g., in Sigalos’s list of 10th- to 19th-century churches in Messenia (Sigalos 2004, appendix D, pp. 234–236). I have been unable to determine from the local inhabitants whether the Virgin’s veneration is a survival from the medieval period or a later attribution to a pre-

existing building (cf. the case of the Panakton churches: Gerstel et al. 2003, p. 174).

In 2000, the residents of Vasilitsi, citing the religious significance of the church ruins, requested permission from the 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (then responsible for the area) to rebuild it. Since the building was previously recorded as a likely “early modern construction” (a “post-Byzantine double apse” church, ac-

ording to the Ministry of Culture’s archive), the Ephorate requested a thorough architectural study and restoration project. The residents submitted a proposal to reconstruct a new cross-in-square church. Fieldwork was undertaken in November–December 2000, both to assess the proposed reconstruction and to record surviving material that would date the building.



**Figure 2.** General view of the site before excavation, from the north-east. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

When the surface vegetation was cleared, it became apparent that the downward-shifting earth had created the unevenness of the site: the surviving parts of the south side of the church remained above ground, while those on the northern and eastern sides were completely buried (Fig. 2). There was a pressing need to address the instability observed in the remaining parts of the masonry; therefore, it was decided that a limited excavation should be conducted in order to uncover the building's north part and complete its plan, and that immediate measures should be taken to consolidate the masonry.

## THE EXCAVATION

Six trenches were dug on the north and east side of the church (Fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> In all trenches, under a thin surface layer of dark brown earth, roots, stones, and tiles, we excavated the building's destruction layer, which contained large quantities of stones that had fallen from the building's upper levels, as well as broken tiles from the roof. Some of the stones still bore traces of the lime mortar that was used in the wall construction. We also collected many fragments of the painted plaster that once coated the building's interior. There was no sign of plaster, however, on the exterior surfaces of the surviving walls. The absence of traces of fire, charred wood, and charcoal suggested that the building had collapsed from natural causes, such as erosion, earthquake, or a landslide, perhaps long after the church had been abandoned.

Underneath the destruction layer, the foundation layer of the church was excavated just above the soft natural bedrock. Signs of the original flooring of the building were noted in two trenches (A and B). The excavation fulfilled its goal of revealing the entire north side of the church. The eastern side was freed from earth and the remains of all three apses of the sanctuary were recovered, together with the lower part of two northern piers (Figs. 5, 6).

5. Both in the field notebooks and for the recording of finds in the Ephorate storerooms, the trenches were numbered following the Greek alphabet (Α, Β, Γ, Δ, Ε, ΣΤ). Here I have adopted the Latin lettering A–F. The upper part of a large ashlar stone that had remained in situ and served as lintel of the passage between the *naos* and the narthex was used as the leveling point for all measurements.

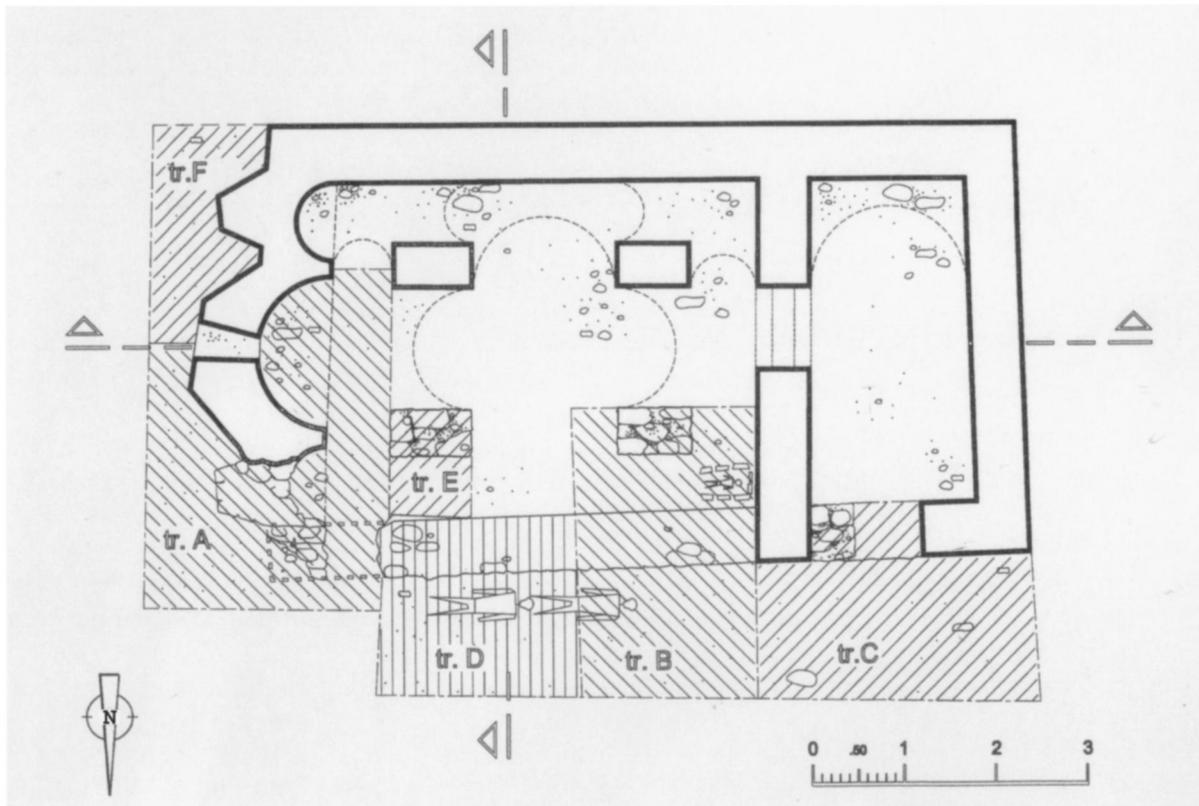
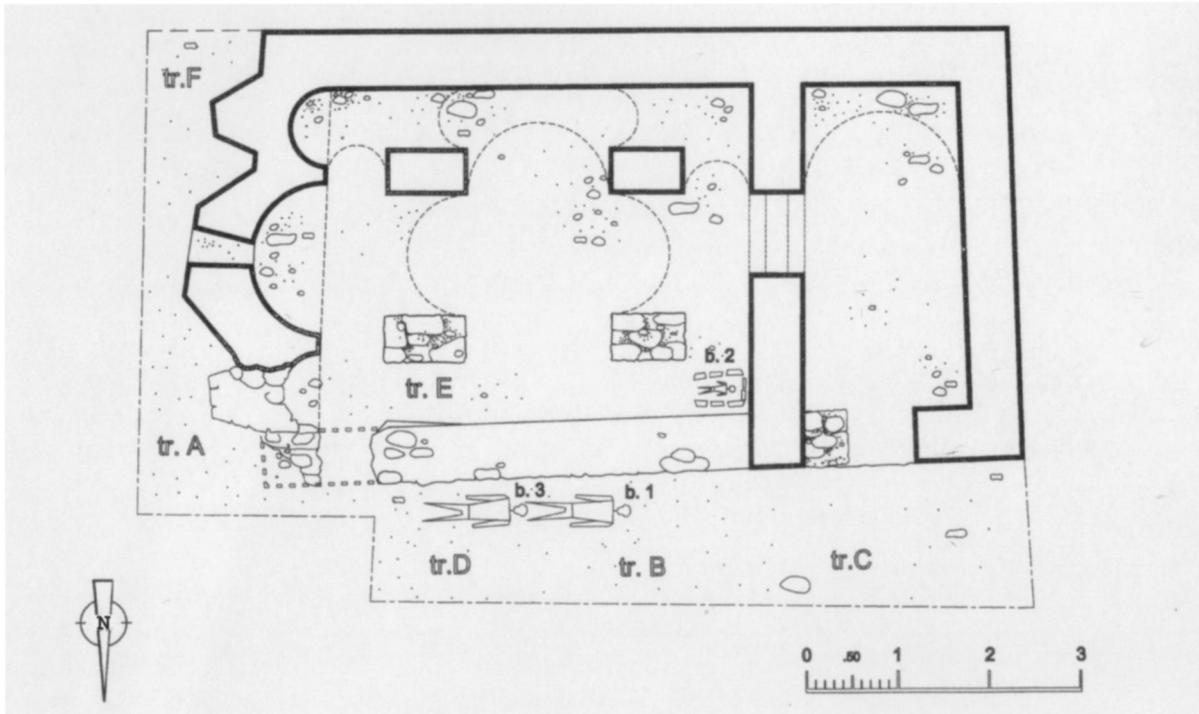


Figure 3. Plans showing the church, trenches, and three intact burials. M. Michailidis

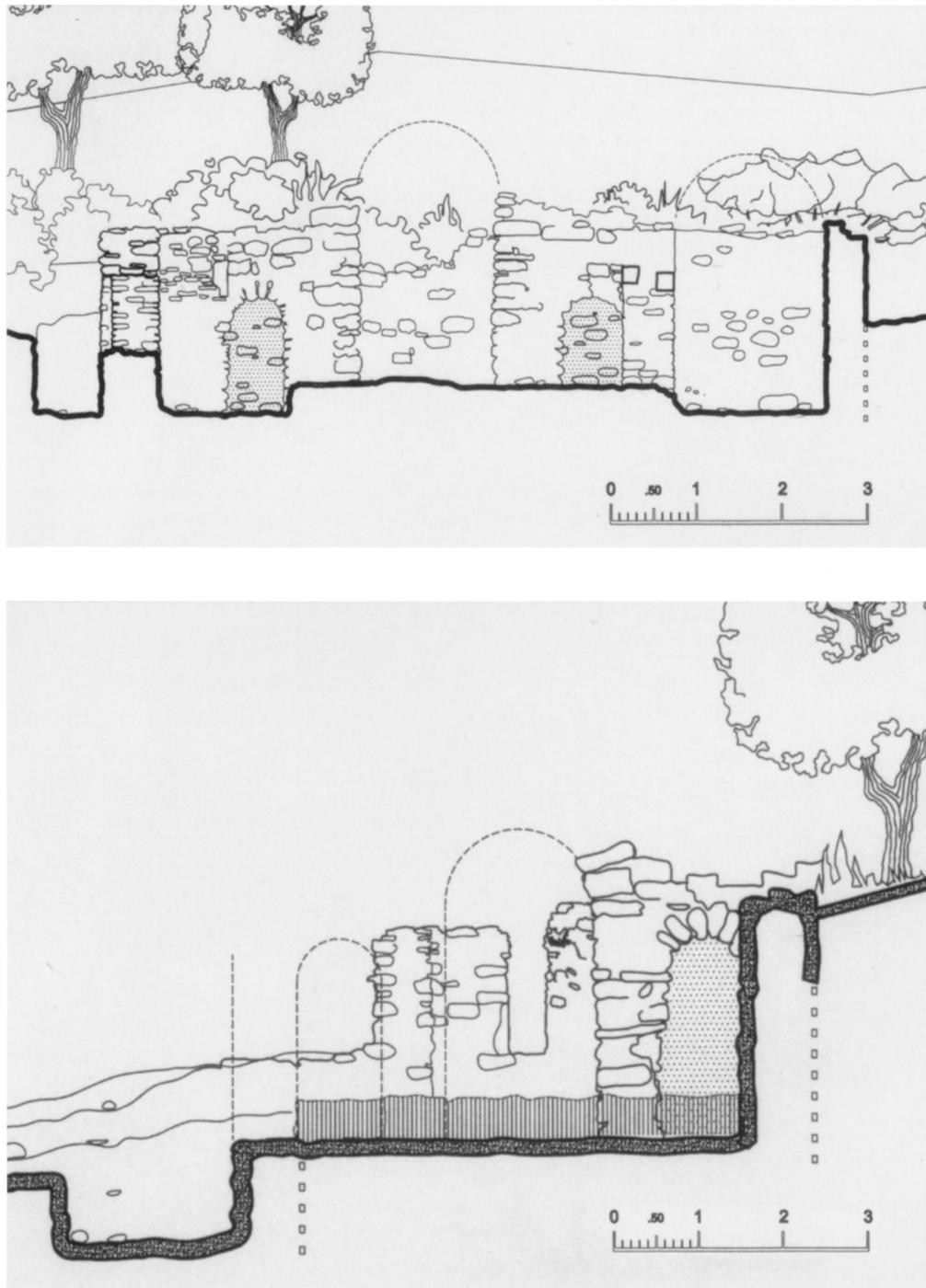


Figure 4. Church remains, in longitudinal (*above*) and transverse section. M. Michailidis

The time period during which the building functioned can be determined by the small finds and pottery. The earliest diagnostic ceramics, coming mainly from burials discovered along the church's north wall, can be attributed to the middle or the second half of the 13th century, while late-18th- to 19th-century pottery was found in and above the destruction layer, pointing to activity in the area at that time, probably after the collapse of the roof.



**Figure 5.** General view after excavation, from the northeast. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis



**Figure 6.** Exterior of apses after excavation, from the southeast. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

## TRENCH A

Trench A enclosed a large section of the church's east end, including the sanctuary (Fig. 3). It extended from the central apse and the eastern surviving pier northward, covering the part of the church that lay buried in this direction. The trench was rectangular, with overall dimensions of 3.50 (L.)  $\times$  2.60 m (W.). The earth that covered this area slanted northward, resulting in elevation differences in the trench. The highest part lay inside the building, at a depth of ca. 1.73 m from the leveling point, with the lowest (northern) part of the trench outside the building, at a depth of ca. 2.38 m.

Within trench A, the surviving walls of the church's central apse retained parts of the original plaster, with traces of color. Under the rectangular arched window, whose lower part survives at the center of the conch,



Figure 7. Central apse with the remains of the altar. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

a low shelf was revealed (p.H. ca. 0.40 m). The shelf, constructed of stone slabs and little or no mortar, was not structurally bonded to the apse wall (Fig. 7). The discovery of plaster behind it indicated that the shelf was added after the initial construction and decoration of the church. It can be interpreted as the built-in altar of the church, a typical feature in small ecclesiastical structures. A similar feature also survives in the *diakonikon*.

Part of the original floor of the church was uncovered in the area between the eastern pier and the apse, under the arch that separates the *bema* from the *diakonikon*. It lies at a depth of ca. 2 m and consists of a mixture of mortar and earth. The floor is founded on the bedrock with a substructure of small stones and broken tiles.

Moreover, the excavation of trench A revealed the north exterior part of the central apse to its surviving height (ca. 3.50 m). This wall was built with alternating courses of brick and stone; the bricks are set in single courses, with the lowest set directly on bedrock (Fig. 6). The deviation of the wall from the vertical axis, toward the north (Fig. 3), may plausibly be explained by the settling of the structure, but this is uncertain.

Masonry belonging to the *prothesis* was unearthed in the area north of the central apse (Fig. 3). The lower parts of this smaller apse survive on the south and east sides; on the north side, only the foundation remains. The *prothesis* was semicircular on the interior, with the lower stones of the

semicircle still preserved in situ, and three-sided on the exterior. It is thus identical in form to the central apse. The church's builders had consolidated the *prothesis* apse on the underlying bedrock with a foundation of rough stones and broken tiles set in mortar. Because the bedrock banks sharply on this side, the foundation had to be extended beyond the line of the apse, in order to establish a level surface on which to construct the *prothesis* walls.

The discovery of a third projecting apse was important because it helped to clarify the plan of the church (Figs. 3, 4); it also provided useful indications as to the external—still unearthened—side of the southern apse. The excavation of the southern *diakonikon* apse (trench F) was planned in order to observe the formal and structural details that would in turn help us reconstruct the lost upper part of the northern *prothesis* apse. No trace of the church's north wall was found in trench A. The wall's eastern end, which should connect to the *prothesis* conch, must have been completely destroyed. It is possible, however, based on the size of the north conch, to reconstruct its position in the plan (Fig. 3).

Inside the building, the bedrock was unearthened at a depth of 2.41 m, and was quite soft and easy to crush. Outside the church, the bedrock descended sharply, to a depth of 3.18 m.

Datable finds were confined to potsherds. Those from the foundation layer dated to the mid-13th- to mid-14th century (9, Fig. 16, below), while those from the destruction and surface layers were attributed to the 18th–19th centuries (10, 13, 14, 16, Figs. 15, 18, 20, below). Apart from these finds, trench A also produced a handful of plain glazed sherds, which I have not included in the catalogue. Although these sherds cannot be dated with any precision, they are a sign of intense activity during the period of the building's use.

## TRENCH B

Trench B was placed at the northwest part of the main *naos*, at the point of its connection to the narthex (Figs. 2, 3). Our aim was to uncover the north wall of the *naos*, as well as the remains of a third pier, whose traces were visible in the ground. As in trench A, the sloping ground resulted in significant differences in elevation, with the highest point on the south, at a depth of ca. 1.50 m from the leveling point, and the lowest at 2.60 m.

The destruction layer in trench B contained very few sherds, none of which could be dated with precision. One of the stones in the rubble retained part of the original plaster coating of the church, and so must have originated from the facing of the destroyed wall.

The lower portion of the north wall of the building was uncovered lengthwise along the trench (Fig. 3). The highest surviving point of the wall lies close to the transversal wall that divides narthex from *naos*. Parts of the plaster covering the walls survived at the corner between the north and transversal walls. The surface of the plaster is brownish yellow, but originally must have been white. The traces of walls observed in the interior of the building before excavation were the upper surviving parts of the northwestern rectangular pier, identical in shape and size to the two surviving piers of the church.



Figure 8. Trench B, burial 2, from the east. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

Excavation east of the northwestern pier revealed evidence of fire, mostly charcoal, that was of modest dimensions, approximately  $0.45 \times 0.60$  m, from a depth of ca. 2.05 m to 2.18 m. No such evidence of burning was observed in any other part of the building, so this should be viewed as an isolated incident rather than a sign of a fire that could have destroyed the church.

At a depth of ca. 2.23 m, just below the fire layer, a surface of mortar and earth was revealed. Its surviving part has a length of 0.38 m and a width of 0.18 m, but it probably extended beyond the limits of the trench. This is part of the church's original floor, and can be related to the one discovered in trench A. These are the only traces of the floor that were found, however; the rest of the fragile surface seems to have been destroyed.

In the northwestern corner of the *naos*, between the north wall and the transverse wall, the excavation uncovered a child's burial in a stone-lined and slab-covered cist grave (burial 2, Figs. 3, 8).<sup>6</sup> The slabs that covered the burial were found at a depth of ca. 2.28 m, at a level immediately under that of the mortar floor noted in the eastern part of the trench. Under the cover slabs, an oblong formation of stones set vertically to the ground was unearthed. The tomb, with external dimensions of  $0.90 \times 0.43$  m, was parallel to and almost in contact with the north wall. Apart from the skeleton, it included earth, masses of lime mortar, and a few pieces of charcoal.

A horizontal groove, or ridge, with a width of ca. 0.05 m, was observed on the internal side of the north wall. It extended the whole length of the wall, at a depth of ca. 2.46 m. In this part of the trench, the earth was dark brown, but a different zone next to the wall, measuring 0.10 m, contained light gray, softer earth. The courses of stone in the north wall stopped at a depth of ca. 2.78 m. The excavation continued up to ca. 2.87 m, but did not reach the bedrock. The earth was particularly hard and compact, without large stones, and it is obvious that at this point the north wall was founded not on bedrock but on solid ground. It is likely that the groove

6. See Appendix, burial 2.



Figure 9. Trenches B and D, with intact burials 1 (*left*) and 4, from the east. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

at 2.46 m indicates the point below which the foundation of the wall lay (ca. 0.30 m), and that the zone of light-colored earth is the foundation ditch of the building. There were no finds from this area.

The excavation in the area outside the north wall was reduced to a space of 1.15 × 1.05 m. At a depth of ca. 3.07 m, a human skull began to appear, and further excavation within the limits of trench B revealed the upper torso (head and shoulders) of an undisturbed adult burial (burial 1).<sup>7</sup> The skeleton lay buried along the north wall; its head, pointing toward the west, was supported by two slabs that had been set vertically on the ground with a right angle between them (Figs. 9, left; 12). The excavation stopped at a depth of ca. 3.25 m. There were no other finds apart from numerous bones, which did not originate from burial 1 but from other, obviously disturbed, earlier burials.

The finds in trench B led to further study of the area between trenches A and B, at the exterior of the north wall (trench D, see below). When trench B was extended northward by ca. 0.30 m to facilitate the movement of workers within the trench, we discovered, at the same level as burial 1, two more skulls that must have belonged to disturbed burials, along with an undisturbed skeleton (burial 4) that was left in situ (Fig. 9, right). We did not pursue work in this area, however, and conclusions as to the number and positioning of the burials must await future research.

7. See Appendix, burial 1.



Figure 10. Narthex, from the south.  
Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

### TRENCH C

Trench C included the area outside the north wall of the narthex (Figs. 3, 10). The initial aim of the excavation was to recover the part of the church that forms the continuation of the north wall of the *naos* (narthex). This would help us to ascertain the sequence of possible building phases. Furthermore, we expected to locate the church's entrance, indicated by a break in the masonry before excavation.

The trench was trapezoidal, measuring  $3 \times 1.50$  m, and the removal of the surface layer started from a depth of ca. 1.95 m from the leveling point. At a depth of 2.30 m, a small hoard of six Venetian *torneselli* was found (1–6), ca. 2.10 m from the northwest corner of the monument and 0.60 m from the exterior face of the narthex (Fig. 14, below). There was no sign of a pouch or any other container; the hoard was probably hidden in the upper part of the church walls, and dropped to the ground when the church was demolished.

As expected, the excavation revealed the threshold of the narthex portal at the building's north wall. The opening has a width of 0.72 m and a thickness equal to the thickness of the wall at this point, ca. 0.56 m (Fig. 10). The doorstep, formed by a single worked stone, was found at a depth of ca. 2 m. A series of slabs was found outside the doorway, in contact with the north wall of the narthex. These either belonged to a pavement or formed built steps that led to the door. Their precise function, however, could not be determined because of the poor quality of the construction. After clearing and recording, the slabs were partly removed to establish the depth of the foundation of the narthex wall. Bedrock was recovered at a depth of 2.60 m in the western part of the trench.

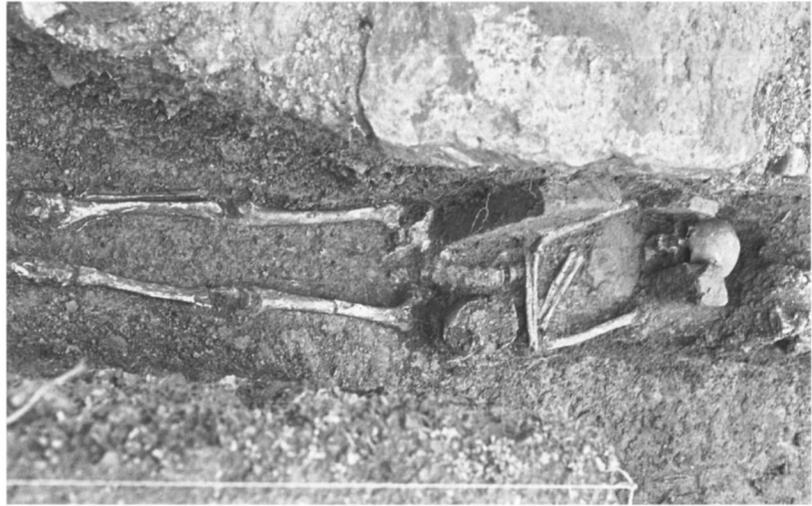
At the point of the north wall where the *naos* meets the narthex, no joint or any other change in the masonry was observed. The masonry is uniform throughout the north wall of the building, indicating that the narthex belongs to the same building phase as the rest of the structure.



**Figure 11.** View of the excavated north wall of the church, from the east. Trenches B–D, with burials 1, 3, and 4. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis



**Figure 12.** Trenches B and D, burial 1. Reburied skull and long bones of an earlier burial over the lower part of the skeleton. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis



**Figure 13. Trench D, burial 3.** Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

### TRENCH D

Trench D was placed outside the north wall, between trenches A and B, in order to reveal the remaining part of the north wall and to complete the excavation of burial 1, part of which was unearthed in trench B (Fig. 3). It was a rectangular trench measuring  $1.90 \times 1.30$  m. The excavation began at a depth of ca. 2.50 m from the leveling point. Immediately after the removal of the surface layer, traces of the north wall were evident throughout the trench.

At a depth of 3 m, excavation revealed a large number of bones that belonged to several burials, of which only two were undisturbed (burials 1 and 3, Figs. 11–13). The burials probably originally occupied a wider area outside the north side of the church, far beyond the limits of the trenches. Our excavation, however, was confined to a small area ( $0.80 \times 3.16$  m) outside the north wall.

The work in trench D completely unearthed burial 1 (Figs. 11, 12). The skeleton was placed in an extended position with the forearms crossed over the chest. The bones appeared at a depth of ca. 3.25 m. The area occupied by the skeleton was 1.60 m long and 0.42 m wide. Around the hands of the individual were sherds from a small, unglazed cooking pot (15, Fig. 19, below). Moreover, a skull and long bones—probably coming from an earlier, disturbed burial—lay over the feet of the skeleton. The placement of these bones was not the accidental result of erosion or earth movements, but a precise and conscious act by the people who performed burial 1. There was also a slab set vertically to the north wall that kept the second skull in its place. This must be a reburial of an earlier skeleton, which occurred at the same time as burial 1.

East of burial 1, at the same axis and virtually in contact with its lower bones, another similar undisturbed burial was found, also parallel to the north wall (burial 3, Figs. 11, 13).<sup>8</sup> The bones appeared a little deeper than those of burial 1, at a depth of ca. 3.35 m, set directly above bedrock. The skeleton occupied an area 1.63 m long and 0.30 m wide. Bedrock was unearthed at a depth of 3.65 m (lowest point).

8. See Appendix, burial 3.

Burials 1 and 3 presented many similarities. Both skeletons were in an extended position, with the head propped up by stones and pointing toward the west. The upper arms had been placed parallel to the body, while the forearms were crossed over the chest. Two stones set vertically to the ground (parallel in burial 3; with a right angle between them in burial 1) supported the head in an upright position. The fact that burial 1 was not set directly on bedrock, but slightly above it, may indicate that it slightly postdates burial 3. The two burials must belong to the same time period, however, since the one did not disturb the other. It is also worth observing that a skull from another unidentified and disturbed burial was placed over the feet of burial 3, again apparently a conscious act (a reburial), rather than the result of incidental earth movement.

After the burials were recorded and removed, the bedrock was exposed across the entire length of the trench outside the north wall. The soil was stony, gray, and moist, containing many chips of natural rock. Ceramic finds linked with the disturbed burials included the sherds of a proto-majolica glazed vessel (8, Fig. 15, below) and a nearly intact Late Byzantine sgraffito glazed bowl decorated with concentric circles (11, Fig. 17, below), found at a depth of 3.25 m, 1.05 m from the north wall and 1.20 m from the eastern side of the trench.

## TRENCH E

The discovery of the northwestern pier in trench B led to the opening of a small trench (1.30 × 0.90 m) to uncover the remains of the fourth and final northeastern pier (Fig. 3). The digging began at a depth of ca. 1.76 m, which, due to the sloping earth, was significantly higher than the lowest point (2.26 m) of the trench near the north wall.

The upper remaining parts of the pier were unearthed at a depth of 1.90 m, immediately after the removal of the surface layer. We removed large stones that proved to have no connection to the walls but probably came from the destruction of the roof. Trench E yielded a few sherds and numerous pieces of plaster. At a depth of ca. 2.35 m, the soil contained many pieces of lime mortar, either from the plastering of the walls or from the floor of the church, which was not preserved in this part of the building. The bedrock was uncovered at a depth of ca. 2.85 m. No ceramic finds were recorded in the lower layers above bedrock.

## TRENCH F

Trench F (2.40 × 1.30 m) was placed outside the sanctuary, in the area outside the central and south apses of the church (Figs. 3, 6). This area was expected to provide critical information about the form of the lost upper parts of the north apse found in trench A.

Excavation began at a depth of ca. 0.83 m (1.20 m at the lowest point of the sloping surface). One of the roof tiles was preserved almost intact within the fill of the trench (17, Fig. 21, below). The triple-sided apse of the *diakonikon* was uncovered perfectly preserved, its window blocked by vertical slabs. From a depth of 1.90 m, work in the northern part of the trench (i.e., the exterior of the central apse) was hindered by the large

amounts of earth that had covered the monument from this side and presented a constant danger of subsiding. Trench F yielded only a handful of finds, including a part of a marble basin (18, Fig. 22, below), possibly a holy water font or a mortar. In the northern part of the trench, bedrock was unearthed at a depth of ca. 2.37 m, while the excavation stopped at ca. 2.10 m.

## CATALOGUE OF FINDS

The excavation produced a number of ceramic items, connected either with the building itself (as the cover tile, 17) and its use (7, 9, 10, 12–14, 16) or with the burials (8, 11, 15). These are catalogued below, along with the hoard of *torneselli* (1–6)<sup>9</sup> and the marble basin (18).

### COIN HOARD

- 1 Venetian billon *tornesello* Fig. 14  
 Archaeological Repository of Pylos (ARP) no. M1. Trench C (layer 1, group 1).  
 Dim. 0.016 × 0.015 m.  
 Obverse: cross paté.  
 [+·ANTO'·]VENE[RIO·DVX·]  
 Reverse: winged lion on its knees with the Gospel between its front paws.  
 [+·]VEXI[LIFER·VENET]IA[·]4  
 Cf. Schlumberger 1878, pl. XVIII:9; Stahl 1985, pp. 74–75, pls. 1, 2, nos. 14–17; Papadopoli-Aldobrandini [1893–1919] 1997, vol. 1, p. 231, no. 7, pl. XIII:11.  
 Doge Antonio Venier (1382–1400).
- 2 Venetian billon *tornesello* Fig. 14  
 ARP no. M2. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). Dim. 0.016 × 0.015 m.  
 Obverse: same as 1.  
 [+·MICH]AEL·S[TEN'·]DV[X·]  
 Reverse: same as 1.  
 +[VEXILIFER·VENETIA]4·  
 Cf. Stahl 1985, p. 75, pl. 2, nos. 18, 19; Papadopoli-Aldobrandini [1893–1919] 1997, vol. 1, p. 240, no. 7, pl. XIV:4.  
 Doge Michele Steno (1400–1414).
- 3 Venetian billon *tornesello* Fig. 14  
 ARP no. M3. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). Dim. 0.016 × 0.016 m.  
 Obverse: same as 1.  
 +·ANTO'·V[ENERI]O·DVX·  
 Reverse: same as 1.  
 +VEXI[LIFER·VEN[ETIA]4·  
 For bibliography, see 1.  
 Doge Antonio Venier (1382–1400).
- 4 Venetian billon *tornesello* Fig. 14  
 ARP no. M4. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). Dim. 0.015 × 0.015 m.  
 Obverse: same as 1.  
 +·[ANDR']QTAR'DVX·  
 Reverse: same as 1.  
 [VE]XI[LIFER·V]ENETI[A4]

9. The *tornesello* is probably the most abundant medieval coinage found in the Peloponnese (for finds of *torneselli*, see Stahl 1985, pp. 21–29; Davis et al. 1997, p. 481; Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 227–228). It was a petty currency designed to facilitate everyday transactions (Stahl 1985, pp. 7–10). Minted in Venice in huge quantities, it was then shipped to the Peloponnese, Euboia, and Crete to be used in the Venetian colonies. *Torneselli* filled the gap left after the local Frankish mints ceased to produce *deniers tournois* in the first half of the 14th century. Production was initiated in 1353 and the coins circulated in the Peloponnese until the fall of Venetian rule in 1500.

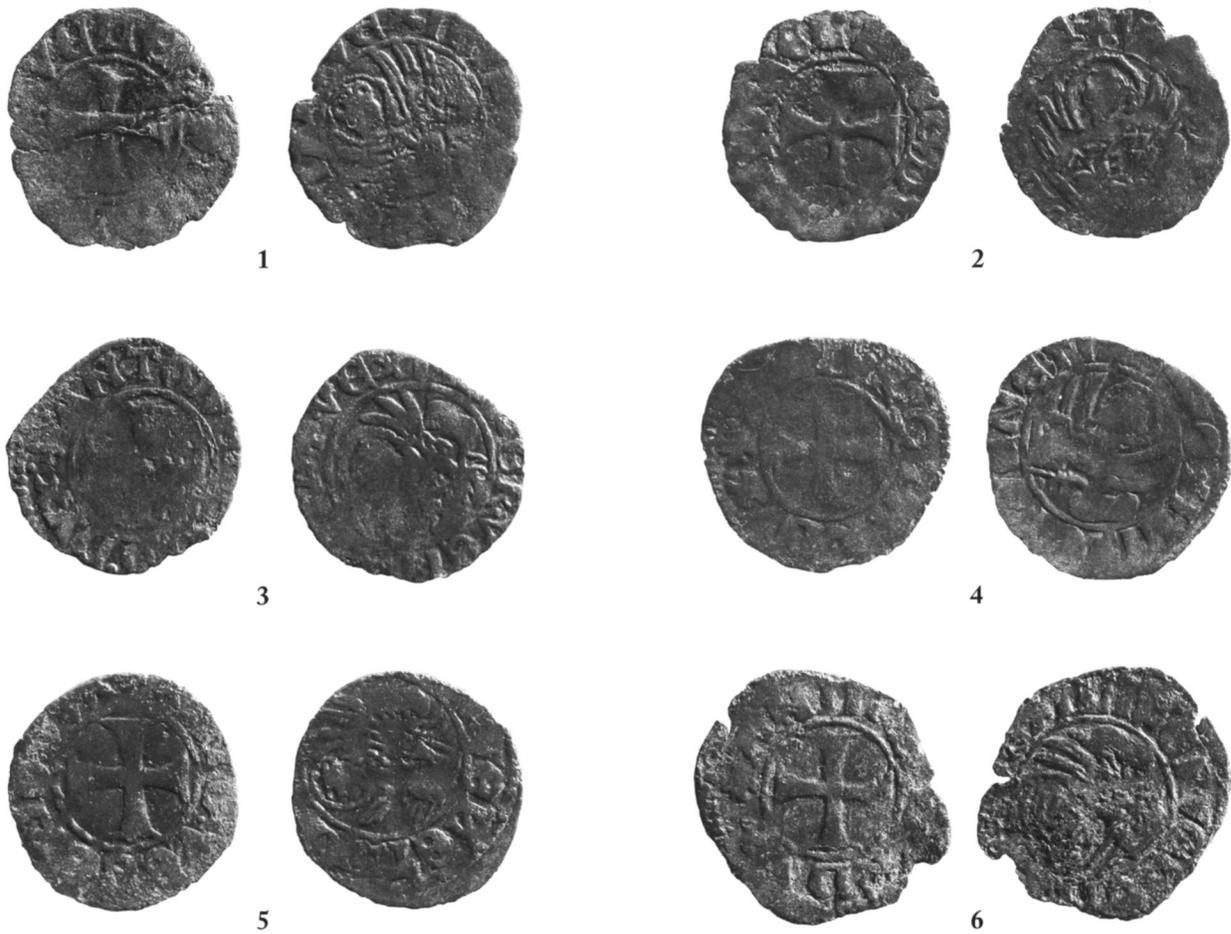


Figure 14. Venetian *torneselli* (1–6) found in trench C. Obverse to left for each pair. Scale 2:1. Photos G. Tsairis

Cf. Stahl 1985, p. 74, pl. 1, nos. 8–11; Papadopoli-Aldobrandini [1893–1919] 1997, vol. 1, p. 217, no. 8, pl. XII:14.

Doge Andrea Contarini (1368–1382); from the second part of his reign, since it reads *Venetia* and not *Venecia* on the reverse.

5 Venetian billon *tornesello*

Fig. 14

ARP no. M5. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). Dim. 0.016 × 0.015 m.

Obverse: same as 1.

[+·ANTO']VENERIO[·D]VX·

Reverse: same as 1.

[+VEXILIFER·]VENETIA[·]

For bibliography, see 1.

Doge Antonio Venier (1382–1400).

6 Imitation of Venetian billon *tornesello*

Fig. 14

ARP no. M6. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). Dim. 0.018 × 0.016 m.

Obverse: same as 1.

+ANT . . . . . DVX

Reverse: same as 1.

. . . X . . . . . E . . . . .

Cf. Stahl 1985, p. 76, pl. 2, nos. 26–28.

Imitation *tornesello* in the name of Antonio Venier (1382–1400).

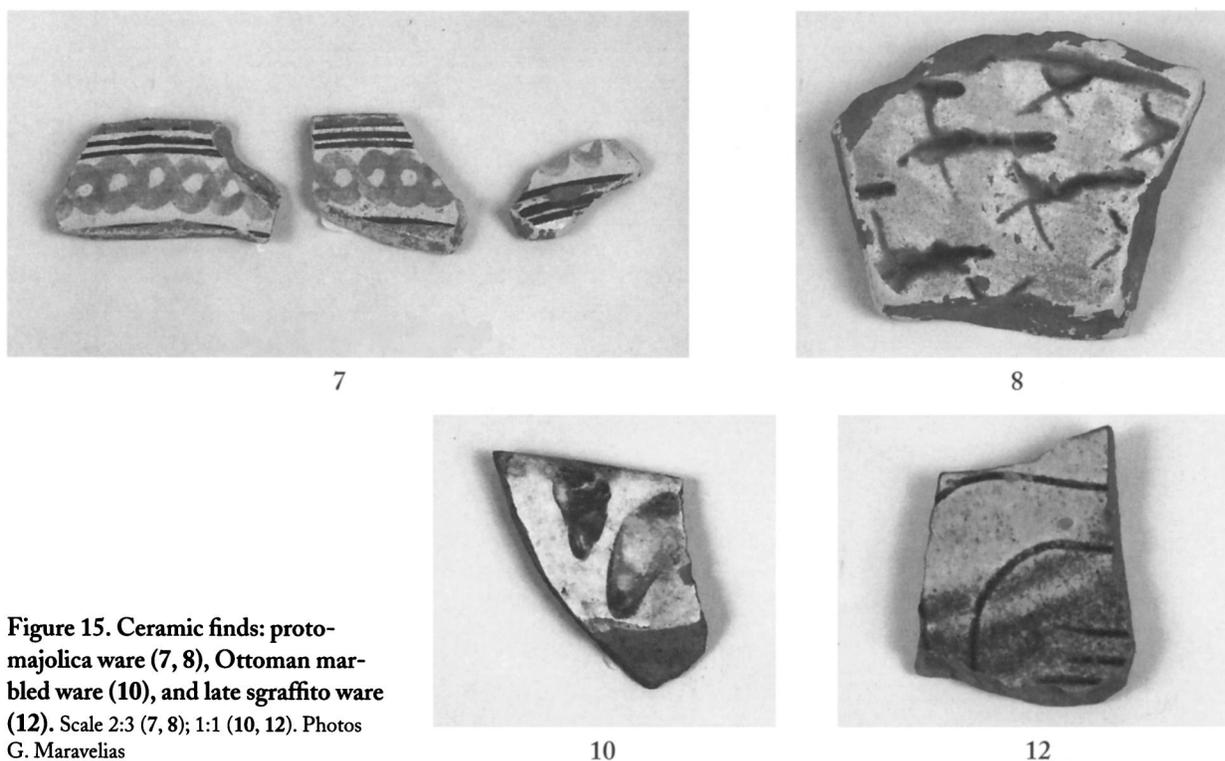


Figure 15. Ceramic finds: proto-majolica ware (7, 8), Ottoman marbled ware (10), and late sgraffito ware (12). Scale 2:3 (7, 8); 1:1 (10, 12). Photos G. Maravelias

## CERAMICS

### PAINTED DECORATION

#### 7 Proto-majolica vessel

Fig. 15

ARP no. KAΣ.38/A.13. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). (a) L. 0.046, W. 0.026, (b) L. 0.040, W. 0.026, (c) L. 0.029, W. 0.018 m.

Open shape, three fragments from rim and body (a–c). White clay (Munsell 10YR 8/2). On the interior, painted decoration on opaque tin glaze running across the rim: a band of blue consecutive circles (plait pattern) between groups of three manganese lines. Exterior is undecorated.

An example of South Italian proto-majolica pottery. Similar 13th-century ceramics have been excavated at Corinth: *Corinth XI*, pp. 105–107, 251, nos. 802, 805, fig. 84, pl. XXXIV:b.

13th century.

#### 8 Proto-majolica vessel

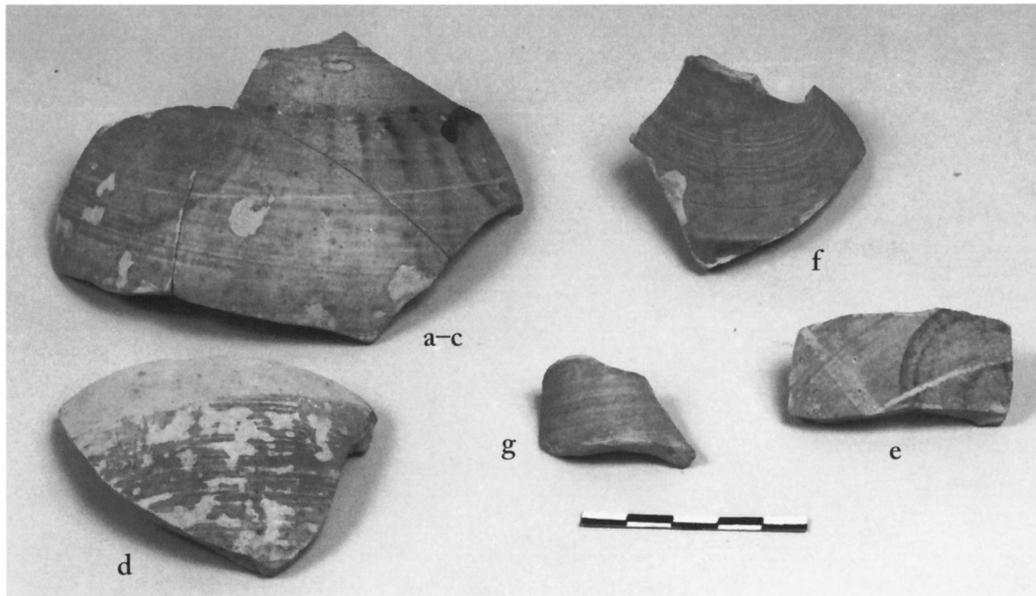
Fig. 15

ARP no. KAΣ.39/A.17. Trench D (layer 3, group 2), D. 3.09, distance 0.95 from the north wall and 1.05 m from the eastern side of the trench. L. 0.068, W. 0.058 m.

Open shape, body fragment. White clay (Munsell 2.5YR 8/2). On the inside, painted decoration above opaque tin glaze: a gridiron pattern with bluish gray color, with brown X-shaped motifs in the spaces. The brown color strokes are covering part of the grid. Transparent, rather worn glaze covers the surface. Exterior undecorated.

The fragment belongs to the group of gridiron proto-majolica. This ware was produced in several workshops of South Italy, and its presence is well attested at many sites in Greece: cf. Vroom 2003, pp. 167–169.

Mid-13th to mid-14th century.



#### 9 Proto-majolica vessel

Fig. 16

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.37/Α.5. Trench A (layer 3, group 3). (a) L. 0.070, W. 0.045, (b) L. 0.060, W. 0.045, (c) L. 0.050, W. 0.042, (d) L. 0.075, W. 0.060, (e) L. 0.050, W. 0.025, (f) L. 0.060, W. 0.050, (g) L. 0.040, W. 0.025 m.

Closed shape, seven fragments from neck and body. Fragments f and g, from the neck of the vessel, join (not shown mended in Fig. 16). Fragments a–c, also joining, belong to the body, as do the remaining two nonjoining fragments, d and e. Pinkish white clay (Munsell 7.5YR 8/4). Painted decoration on the exterior, over white slip. Around the upper part of the body, vertical green lines alternate with brown spirals. Yellowish glaze covers the exterior surface. As is clear from sherd d, the glaze did not cover the whole surface of the vessel; it was not applied to the lower part or the base, where only white slip is visible (sherd d is illustrated upside down).

Although fragmentary, the vessel can be attributed to the proto-majolica ware from South Italy; see 7 above.

Mid-13th to mid-14th century.

#### 10 Ottoman marbled ware

Fig. 15

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.36/Α.2. Trench A (layer 1, group 1). L. 0.040, W. 0.026 m.

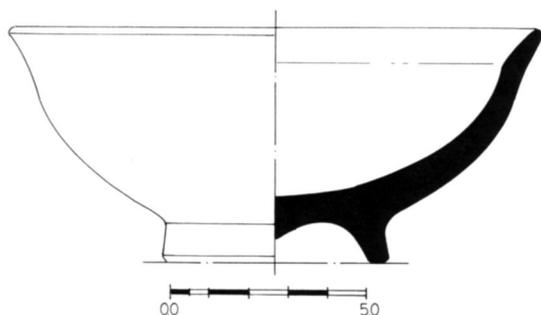
Open shape, rim fragment. Reddish yellow clay (Munsell 7.5YR 7/8). White slip covers both sides of the sherd. Decoration with spots of red color above slip. Transparent shiny glaze.

The fragment belongs to a variant of marbled ware, a distinctive pottery that imitated the veins of marble and was quite popular from the 16th–17th century onward. Its production was originally associated with the workshops of Pisa in Italy, but it was also widely imitated in the Ottoman empire. Vessels decorated with random spots of different colors on white slip seem to belong to the later production of the ware.

For 18th-century examples from Athens, see Waagé 1933, p. 327, fig. 20:g; Frantz 1942, p. 27, group 9, nos. 15, 16, figs. 30, 31; Vavylopoulou–Charitonidou 1982, p. 64, no. 19. From Kos: Kontogiannis 2002, pp. 219–220, nos. 27, 29, 30.

18th century.

Figure 16. Fragments of proto-majolica vessel (9) found in trench A. Photo G. Maravelias



**Figure 17. Restored and completed late sgraffito bowl (11) found in trench D.** Photos G. Maravelias; drawing M. Georgoutsou

#### SGRAFFITO DECORATION

##### 11 Late sgraffito bowl with concentric circles

Fig. 17

ARP no. KAΣ.39/A.18. Trench D (layer 4, group 3). Diam. of rim 0.135, Diam. of base 0.060, H. 0.060 m.

Three fragments from base and body. The vessel has been restored and completed. It is a small globular bowl with a low ring base with a knot underneath. Clay reddish yellow (Munsell 5YR 7/6). White slip covers both sides of the vessel, including the exterior of the base. Incised decoration on the inside: a pair of concentric lines runs around the rim and the body, while a spiral occupies the center of the base. Green-yellow glaze covers the whole vessel. Both the glaze and the slip are worn on the inside but well preserved on the exterior.

The bowl belongs to the category of late sgraffito pottery with concentric circles. Similar vessels have been found around the Aegean, and were originally identified as derivatives of Zeuxippus ware: see Armstrong 1992; 1993, pp. 304, 307–309, 313–314, 328–329, 332; François 1995, pp. 91–96. They are usually dated to the middle or the second half of the 13th century, although their production continued well into the 15th century.

For similar specimens from Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Cyprus, and Italy, see *Ni-choria* III, pp. 381–382, nos. P1708, P1710, figs. 10-32, 10-34, pls. 10-12, 10-14;

François 1995, pp. 91–96, série Ih, pl. 13:c; Spieser 1996, p. 51; François 1999, pp. 110–132; Augusti and Saccardo 2002, p. 147; Kontogiannis 2002, pp. 226–227, no. 48; Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 151, 158, no. 3, fig. 8, pp. 170, 181–183, nos. 44, 46, 47, fig. 34; Vroom 2003, pp. 164–165; 2005, pp. 110–111; Dori, Velissariou, and Michaelidis 2003, pp. 111–116, nos. 1–15, pls. I, II; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004, pp. 128–129.

Middle or second half of the 13th century.

12 Late sgraffito ware Fig. 15

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.38/A.12. Trench C (layer 1, group 1). L. 0.038, W. 0.030 m.

Open shape, body fragment. Reddish yellow clay (Munsell 5YR 6/8). On the inside, coating of white slip and incised decoration with curved lines, part of an unknown motif. Yellow-green glaze. Exterior side undecorated.

For relevant Late Byzantine examples, see Makropoulou 1995, p. 18, nos. 48, 49, pl. 26; François 1995, pp. 90–91, série Ig, pl. 13:a, b; Dori, Velissariou, and Michaelidis 2003, pp. 122–123, no. 31, pl. III:a.

14th–15th century.

**PLAIN GLAZED**

13 Open(?) vessel Fig. 18

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.36/A.1.2. Trench A (layer 1, group 1). Diam. of base 0.100, p.H. 0.068 m. Fragments: (a) L. 0.100, W. 0.050, (b) L. 0.055, W. 0.025, (c) L. 0.105, W. 0.087 m.

Three joining fragments from the bottom and the body of an open shape. Light reddish brown clay (Munsell 5YR 6/4). On the inside, white slip and green glaze. Two traces of a tripod stilt. On the exterior, traces of glaze set directly on the clay.

Probably a later production of the 18th–19th century, a period not yet thoroughly studied.

14 Closed(?) vessel Fig. 18

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.36/A.1.1. Trench A (layer 1, group 1). Overall dim. (a–d): Diam. of base 0.098, p.H. 0.075 m. Fragments: (a) L. 0.110, W. 0.070, (b) L. 0.100, W. 0.055, (c) L. 0.100, W. 0.035, (d) L. 0.070, W. 0.040, (e) L. 0.070, W. 0.035, (f) L. 0.075, W. 0.035, (g) L. 0.050, W. 0.040 m.

Seven fragments from bottom and body. Four of the surviving fragments (a–d) join and come from the bottom and the body of the vessel. Two (e, f) also join and come from the body. Light reddish body (Munsell 5YR 7/4). Plain glaze covers both sides. The exterior, apart from the bottom, is covered with light greenish glaze that crackles. The interior is covered with shiny brown crackled glaze.

Belongs to the same category as 13.

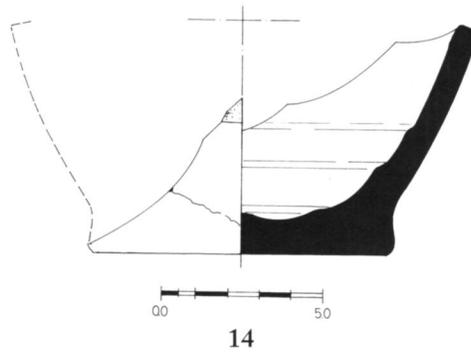
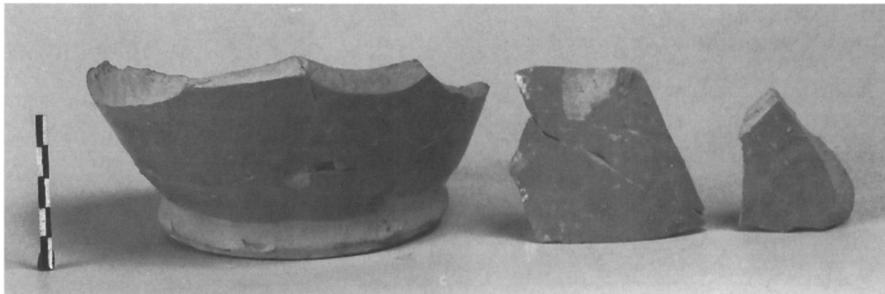
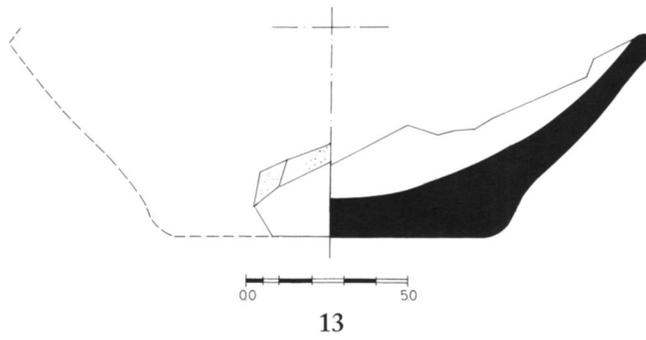
18th–19th century.

**UNDECORATED**

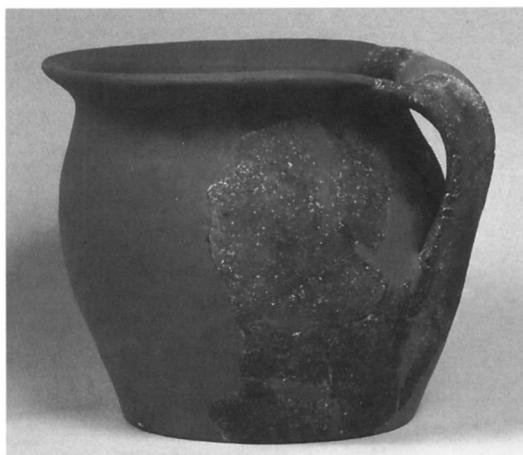
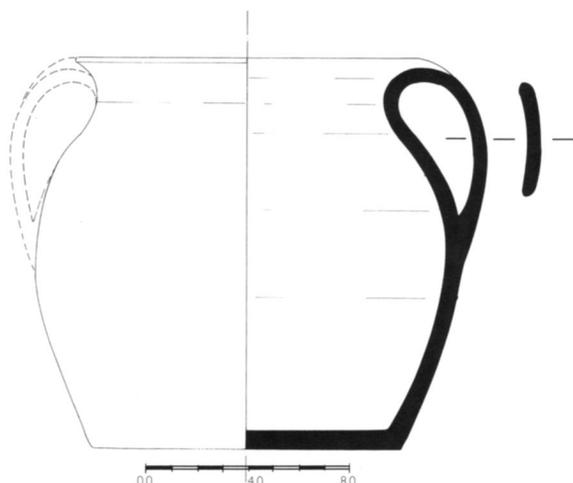
15 Cooking pot Fig. 19

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.39/A.19. Trench D (layer 4, group 4). H. of vessel 0.155, W. of handle 0.045, Diam. of base 0.130, Diam. of rim 0.160 m.

Based on the surviving 21 fragments, the pot was restored and completed as a cooking pot with a flat base, slightly globular body, vertical strap handle from rim to body, and curved rim. It was decided to restore the vessel with only one handle, rather than two, since no evidence of a second handle was preserved. A two-handled shape cannot be excluded, however, and remains a strong possibility.



**Figure 18. Plain glazed ware: open(?) vessel (13) and closed(?) vessel (14) found in trench A. Photos G. Maravelias; drawings M. Georgoutsou**



**Figure 19.** Restored and completed cooking pot (15) found in trench D. Photo G. Maravelias; drawing M. Georgoutsou

Reddish brown clay (Munsell 2.5YR 5/4) with many inclusions and mica. Signs of burning on the outside, probably from use in a hearth. No evidence of decoration or glaze.

If the one-handle restoration is correct, the vessel could belong to Bakirtzis's group A2, "pots with flat base and one handle" (1989, pp. 36–39, no. 6, pl. 3:6).

For the two-handled shape, cf. 13th- to 14th-century material: Sanders 1993, pp. 278–279, no. 63, fig. 13 (Sparta); Vroom 2003, p. 169 (Boiotia); Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 161, 171, 184, nos. 9, 31, 32, 53, figs. 9, 22, 37 (Panakton). For the forms of cooking pots in relation to the change of diets, see Williams 2003, p. 432.

Mid-13th to mid-14th century.

#### 16 Coarse vessel

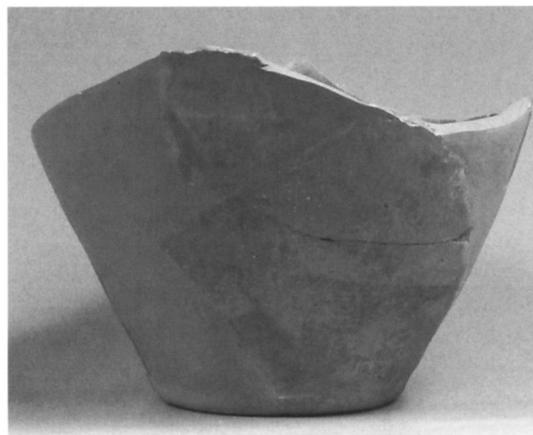
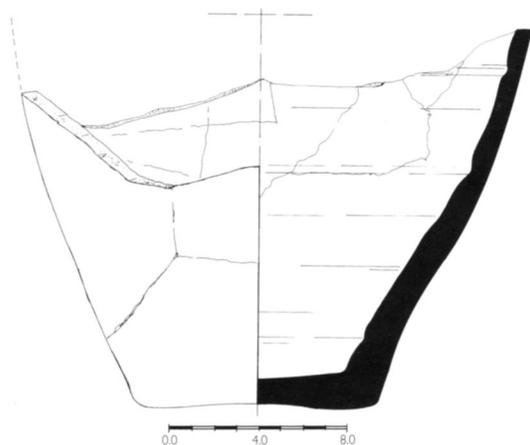
Fig. 20

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.36/A.3.1. Trench A (layer 2, group 2). Diam. of base 0.110, p.H. 0.160 m.

Closed shape, eight fragments, conserved and joined to form the bottom and part of the body of a closed coarse vessel. White clay (Munsell 10YR 8/2). Undecorated.

This vessel must belong to the same group as 13 and 14, since it also came from the destruction layer of the church.

18th–19th century.



**Figure 20.** Coarse vessel (16) found in trench A. Photo G. Maravelias; drawing M. Georgoutsou



Figure 21. Cover tile (17) found in trench F, exterior (*above*) and interior views. Photos N. D. Kontogiannis

## OTHER FINDS

### 17 Cover tile

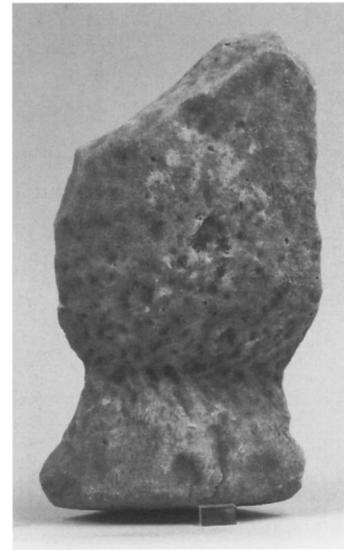
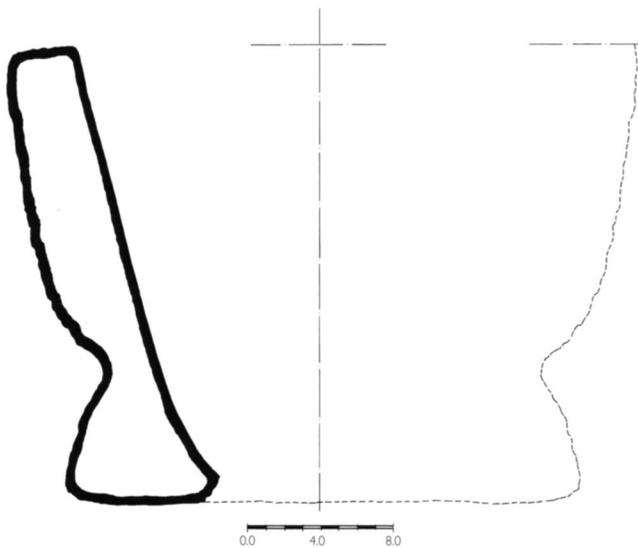
Fig. 21

ARP no. KAΣ.39/A.21. Trench F (layer 2, group 1), D. 1.75, 0.20 m from the eastern wall of the church. P.L. 0.310, W. 0.225, Th. 0.020–0.030 m.

Large part of a roof cover tile. Clay light red–pinkish (Munsell 2.5YR 8/3). Coarse fabric, with many holes from organic inclusions. The tile is curvilinear, and its long sides spread outward. On its exterior side, circular finger marks. On the interior, traces of white mortar used for positioning on the roof, on top of the pan tiles.

For cover tiles with almost identical dimensions, see *Nichoria III*, p. 385, no. P1761-2, figs. 10-81, 10-83, chapel phase 4 (Nichoria); Gerstel et al. 2003, p. 163, no. 22, fig. 11 (Panakton).

13th century.



### 18 Marble basin

ARP no. ΚΑΣ.39/L.1. Trench F (layer 5, group 4). P.H. 0.250, p.W. 0.155, H. of base 0.090, Th. of body 0.055 m.

Open shape, part of base and body. The base is slightly conical, the body externally globular and internally concave. The exterior surface is roughly worked with many small cavities, probably from the carving tools. The interior, however, which obviously served whatever use this vessel had, is very smooth and carefully worked.

The basin could have been either a holy water font or a mortar. Since it was found just above bedrock at the lower layer of the trench, near the foundations of the church, it must be linked to its period of construction and use (13th–14th century).

Stone holy water fonts of various sizes dating from the Byzantine era are noted in a number of churches and monasteries within Greece; see Bouras and Boura 2002, p. 532. Most specimens remain unpublished, however, and it is difficult to distinguish between holy water fonts and baptismal fonts. In the few available photographs, the fonts appear in most cases to have no base; they are usually circular, globular, or octagonal, and they bear decoration with crosses, inscriptions, or floral patterns. For comparanda, see Millet 1906, pp. 459–462, fig. 3 (Mistra); Xygopoulos 1929, pp. 77–79, fig. 74 (Ayioi Apostoloi, Athens); Sotiriou 1935, pl. 138 (Cyprus); Orlandos 1939–1940, p. 103, fig. 51 (Osios Meletios, Boiotia); and Loverdou-Tsigarida 1994, pp. 355–366, figs. 13–15 (castle of Platamona, Thessaly).

Marble mortars of the Late Byzantine or post-Byzantine period have been recorded in Thessaloniki, but their shape differs from that of 18. They have no base, and the body has four semicircular handles around the rim: see Papanikola-Bakirtzis 2002, pp. 358–359, nos. 420, 421. A possible ceramic mortar has been published from Panakton: Gerstel et al. 2003, p. 167, no. 28, fig. 17 (14th–early 15th century). A mortar cannot be directly related to the religious function or the foundation of the church; however, it might have served the agricultural or everyday activities of the rural community that built and maintained the church.

13th–14th century.

### Fig. 22

**Figure 22. Marble basin (18) found in trench F.** Photo G. Maravelias; drawing M. Georgoutsou

## DATING OF THE CHURCH

The chronology of the church at Vasilitsi is determined primarily by the excavation finds. The earliest diagnostic ceramics, coming mainly from the burials, are dated by close parallels from other sites in Greece, such as Corinth,<sup>10</sup> and can be attributed to the middle or the second half of the 13th century. Since the burials were clearly placed next to a standing building, it is logical to date the erection of the church to the first half or middle of the 13th century. All the pottery beneath the destruction layer is dated to the 13th–14th century.

The small hoard of coins from the end of the 14th century found in trench C, a sign of insecurity or imminent danger, indicates that the building was still standing and functioning at that time. The presence of a hearth in the central part of the church may suggest that after a certain point the church went out of use or was sporadically used, and thus served the cooking or heating needs of a passerby. In any case, the period of the church's primary use can be securely set between the mid-13th and the end of the 14th century.

The existence of later 18th- to 19th-century pottery in and above the destruction layer points to activity in the area, probably after the collapse of the roof. We cannot determine with certainty when the roof collapsed, but it may not have occurred until sometime around the 18th century.

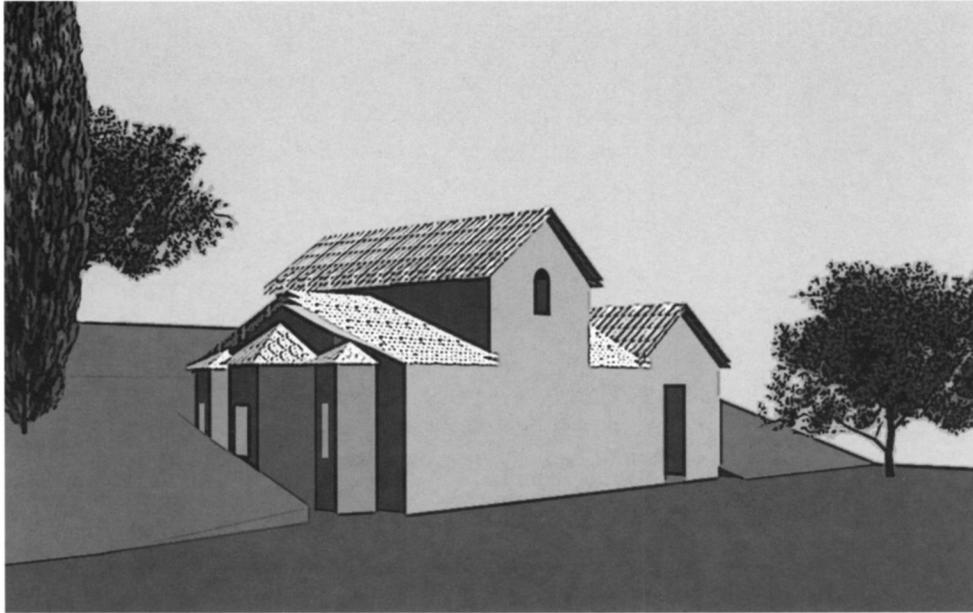
## ARCHITECTURAL OBSERVATIONS

Taking into account the results of the excavation and the standing parts of the church, we can deduce that the building consisted of the sanctuary, the *naos*, and the narthex. The three aisles of the *naos* were separated by two rows of two piers each (Figs. 3, 4). The side aisles were covered with low barrel vaults with an original height of ca. 2.25 m above the floor.

The central aisle had a similar vault, only higher, with an approximate interior height of 3.5 m. The central space of the *naos* was covered by a higher, transverse barrel vault (Figs. 4, 23). This is clear from the surviving piers: one can observe the springing of vaults in all directions except the central transept. The vertical sides of the piers on this side can only lead to the conclusion that there was a higher vault bridging this area of the *naos*. The springing of this vault would have been located just above the key of the lower lengthwise vaults and therefore has not survived.

At the east, the three aisles terminate in the sanctuary apses that would have served as *prothesis* (north conch), *bema* (central conch), and *diakonikon* (south conch). From the outside, the apses appeared triple-sided, and from the interior, semicylindrical (Figs. 3, 6). Both the central and the south conch bear a simple rectangular window, more of a light slit, at the midpoint of their height. It is all but certain that a similar slit existed in the now-destroyed *prothesis*.

10. In Corinth, for example, proto-majolica wares comparable to 7–9 were imported only after the middle of the 13th century (Williams 2003, pp. 429–430), thus providing a terminus post quem for Vasilitsi.



There are no other extant openings in the *naos*, apart from the door that leads to the narthex. It is possible that the walls of the higher transverse vault contained windows or simple light slits that did not survive (as reconstructed in Fig. 23).

Both the *bema* and the *diakonikon* niches had their lower courses covered by a shelf built up to table height. This horizontal surface served liturgical functions; in the central conch, it was the altar (Fig. 7). A similar construction almost certainly existed in the interior of the *prothesis*. Such built altars are found in many small-scale churches of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period in Greece.<sup>11</sup>

The *naos* was covered with a floor surface of beaten earth and mortar, two small sections of which were uncovered in trenches A and B.<sup>12</sup> The fact that the floor found in the *bema* area (trench A) was at a higher level than that in the *naos* (trench B) strongly indicates that the entire sanctuary was ca. 0.20 m higher than the rest of the building. This discovery made it possible to estimate the original interior height of the side aisles at 2.25 m, as mentioned above.

The only entrance to the *naos* was the one located at the west, through the narthex, shown above in Figures 2 (right side), 3, and 5 (right side). The opening that connects these two spaces is 0.80 m wide, and its original height would have been ca. 2 m. Two long ashlar stones of local provenance form the lintel.

The entrance into the single-roomed narthex, on the other hand, was made through a narrow door (W. 0.72 m) on its north side (Figs. 3, 10, 23). This design feature was apparently dictated by the landscape, as this is the only side not covered by the sloping earth. The springing of the single barrel vault that covered the narthex is still visible in the upper surviving stones of the room's western side (Figs. 4, 10, left). Since there are no windows in the narthex, the lighting of this space was provided solely by the door.

Bearing in mind Hanns Michael Küpper's assertion that cross-vaulted churches only rarely had a narthex, and if they did, it was usually a later

**Figure 23. Proposed architectural reconstruction of the church at Vasilitsi.** M. Michailidis

11. In Messenia, e.g., see the Middle Byzantine chapel at Nichoria (*Nichoria III*, pp. 370–371, figs. 9, 10), Ayios Georgios at Vlachopoulo (11th century, Dimitrokallis 1990, p. 46), Taxiarchis at Polichni (10th century, Dimitrokallis 1990, p. 78, fig. 68), Panayia Grivitsiani (12th–13th century, Dimitrokallis 1990, p. 101), and Metamorfofi Mesochoriou (13th century, Dimitrokallis 1990, p. 241).

12. Similar earth floors were found in the excavation of the Nichoria chapel, phase 4, ca. 1300 (*Nichoria III*, p. 372), as well as the Panakton village houses and central church narthex (Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 154–155, 167, 169, 178).

addition,<sup>13</sup> the crucial question for us is whether the narthex at Vasilitsi was built along with or later than the rest of the church. When we examined both sides of the building, the foundation level on the north side and the upper surviving part on the south side, we saw no joint or any other differentiation in the masonry of the *naos* and the narthex. The masonry appears continuous and unbroken throughout the walls. Furthermore, the transverse wall separating these rooms is thin and uniform, which does not leave much room to postulate the existence of two separate construction periods. We can therefore assert that the narthex was part of the original plan and was constructed at the same time as the *naos*.

The church is built exclusively with roughly hewn stone slabs set in courses with lime mortar as bonding material (Fig. 5). Structurally important features, such as the arches and lintels, are constructed with finely hewn stones. The alternating courses of brick and stone appearing on the surviving part of the east wall with the apses of the *bema* and *diakonikon* constitute an exception (Figs. 5, 6). The different construction may well have been an attempt to distinguish the most important part of the church. No other form of decoration has been observed on the exterior. The interior surfaces of the church were covered with a plaster coating made of white mortar. The traces of colored plaster preserved on numerous stones indicate that this plaster surface bore some form of painted decoration; no sign of murals was seen, however, and it is possible that the church never had them.

The building was roofed with slightly concave terracotta pan and cover tiles of trapezoidal shape, probably made locally. A considerable number of them were found broken in the destruction layer within the church or just outside. One cover tile (17) was found almost intact (Fig. 21).

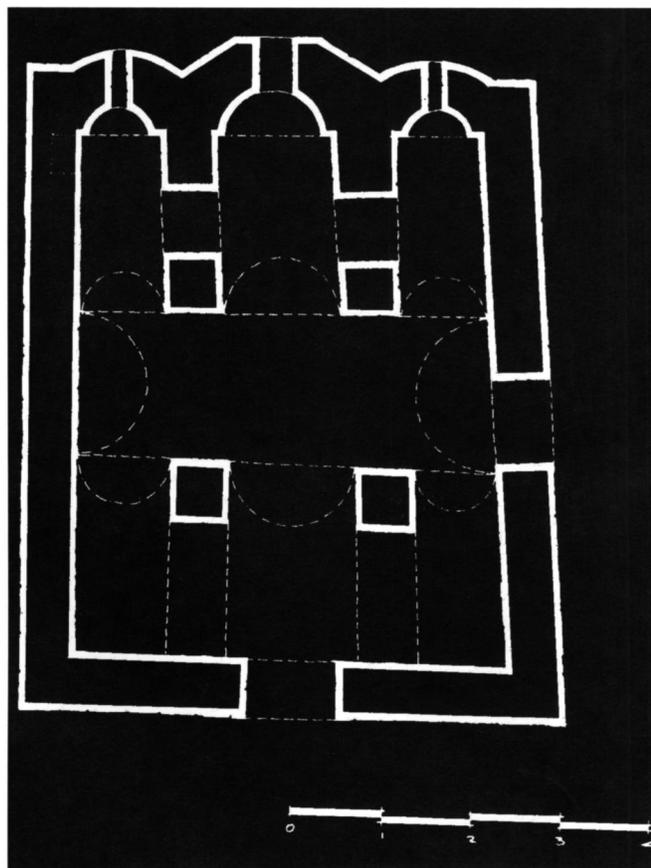
The church at Vasilitsi shares all of the above-mentioned structural features (masonry, roofing, decorated apse) with many other Late Byzantine religious foundations in Messenia,<sup>14</sup> and is therefore fully integrated in the local building tradition. The location chosen for the building of the church explains not only its design and construction, but also the deterioration and damage it ultimately underwent. Having been erected on a hillside, the building was partly founded on bedrock (on the east side). A section of the north side of the building, however, was constructed on earth with a shallow foundation set in a footing trench.<sup>15</sup> Landslides and physical pressure exerted on the masonry from the hill created the gradual bank on the north and east side. The demolition of the roof and the destruction of the north part of the church gradually resulted from these factors or from other natural disasters, such as earthquakes.

The excavation led us to conclude that the church was not destroyed by some violent event such as a fire, but instead was subject to gradual abandonment and to decay accelerated by tectonic activity. In all trenches, the layer that was immediately above the church's floor level and contained the material accumulated from the destruction of the upper parts of the building showed no sign of violence or human intervention. The indications of fire observed in a small part of trench B did not appear in any other trench. Their isolated occurrence can be interpreted only as a localized phenomenon; for example, they could be the remains of a temporary hearth left by squatters or local shepherds who found shelter in the already long-abandoned building.

13. Küpper 1990, p. 57.

14. E.g., *Ayios Stefanos* at Ramovouni (Dimitrokallis 1990, pp. 57–69), *Panayia Grivitsiani* (late 12th–13th century, Dimitrokallis 1990, p. 115), *Ayios Vasileios*, Petalidi (14th century, Dimitrokallis 1990, p. 203).

15. The same situation (foundation partly on bedrock and partly on soil) was observed in house 1 at Panakton (Gerstel et al. 2003, p. 157).



**Figure 24. View and plan of Ayios Vasileios at Paniperi.** Photo G. Dimitrakallis, courtesy Photographic Archive, Benaki Museum, Athens; drawing Dimitrakallis 1990, p. 178, fig. 173

As shown in the proposed reconstruction of the vaulting of the *naos* with the three longitudinal barrel vaults and a higher transept (Fig. 23), the building is an example of a cross-vaulted church, and, more precisely, belonging to the quite uncommon triple-aisled group.<sup>16</sup> According to the catalogue compiled by Küpper,<sup>17</sup> there are eight other known examples of this type in Greece, of which only four are dated to the 13th century.<sup>18</sup> Of these four churches, two are found in Epiros (Ayios Dimitrios Tourkopaloukou at Kupseli<sup>19</sup> and Ayios Ioannis at Kostaniani<sup>20</sup>). A third example is located in Attica (Ayios Nikolaos at Kalamos,<sup>21</sup> mid-13th century), while the last is less than 30 km from the church at Vasilitsi (Ayios Vasileios at Paniperi),<sup>22</sup> and dates to the beginning of the 13th century (Figs. 1, 24).

Comparison between the churches at Vasilitsi and at Ayios Vasileios at Paniperi reveals numerous similarities both in plan and in morphological and constructional features. Both were built with rubble masonry, using local materials, and the dimensions are almost identical. In both cases, the division of the aisles is realized by means of a double row of twin free-standing piers, with all spaces covered with barrel vaults. Both churches have three protruding apses. In the Vasilitsi church all three apses are three-sided, while the central apse of Ayios Vasileios is triple-sided and the lateral apses semicircular; all apses have a single rectangular slit. These striking similarities suggest the existence of a common workshop, to which both buildings may be attributed. I would therefore suggest that the church near Vasilitsi was built not by the members of the local community,<sup>23</sup> but rather by a traveling guild of craftsmen that followed the norms and trends of Late Byzantine church architecture in central and southern Greece.

## VASILITSI: HISTORY AND TOPOGRAPHY

In order to answer questions about the builders of the church at Vasilitsi or the identity of those buried in it, we must consider the topography and habitation pattern of the area, which have changed very little since medieval times. Unfortunately, the historic record for the 13th–15th centuries is of little or no help, since there are no written sources or references to the area in any published archival record that I have been able to consult.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, archaeological or architectural data for the habitation of the wider area of Vasilitsi during the same period, which derive mainly from surface

16. According to the standard typology of cross-vaulted churches established by Orlandos, it belongs to the Γ2 category (Orlandos 1935, pp. 49–50; see also Bouras 2001, pp. 415–418). It belongs to the C2 category in Küpper's classification (1990, p. 24, pl. 3).

17. Küpper 1990, vol. 2.

18. The date of these churches derives from dedicatory inscriptions, excavation data, or stylistic comparisons.

19. Soustal and Koder 1981, p. 140; Doris 1983; Küpper 1990, vol. 2, p. 160.

20. Evangelidis 1931, pp. 258–274; Soustal and Koder 1981, p. 186; Küpper 1990, vol. 2, p. 150.

21. Bouras, Kaloyeropoulou, and Andreadi 1970, pp. 360–362; Ginis-Tsofopoulou 1982–1983, pp. 227–246; Küpper 1990, vol. 2, p. 126.

22. Dimitrokallis 1984; 1990, pp. 179–199.

23. As seems to have been the case

for the Nichoria chapel (*Nichoria III*, p. 376).

24. Such as the deliberations of the Venetian Senate and Assemblies (Thiriet 1958–1961, 1966–1971), the documents relating to the Acciaiuoli estates in Messenia (Longnon and Topping 1969, pp. 19–130, docs. I–VI), the accounts of travelers, the *Chronica byzantina breviora* (Schreiner 1975–1979), or the notary documents from Methoni and Koroni (Nanetti 1999).



**Figure 25. Remains of a rural house northeast of the area of excavation.**  
Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

surveys, are almost nonexistent.<sup>25</sup> Because I have been unable to determine the name of the church's location under Byzantine, Frankish, or Venetian domination (until 1500), I continue to use that of the closest modern settlement, Vasilitsi, for the church, and the local place-name Selitza for the wider geographic location of the monument. The earliest mention of the village of Vasilitsi is in the Grimani inventory of 1700, where it is recorded as inhabited by seven families, with 14 men and 10 women.<sup>26</sup>

In Byzantine and medieval times the area remained in the shadow of nearby Koroni and is considered to have followed the fate of its more illustrious neighbor (Fig. 1). Yet, even for Koroni, the record for the period from the 7th to the end of the 12th century is extremely poor.<sup>27</sup> The only surviving monument is a ruined basilica presently located within the castle and probably dating from the 7th–8th century.<sup>28</sup> Historic information for the period before 1204 is limited to the mention of a weak Byzantine castle at Koroni that was later encountered and easily occupied by the Franks in 1205.<sup>29</sup>

In the Late Middle Ages (13th–15th centuries), Koroni became a large and well-known Venetian colony (Coron/Corone). However, the boundaries of the Venetian-controlled area, and along with them the fate of the area of Vasilitsi, are ill defined.<sup>30</sup> Historians believe that in the two centuries after the Venetian occupation (1206/7), the Venetians possessed nothing more than the city itself and its immediate surroundings.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the landholding situation between the Venetians and the Franks is far from clear.<sup>32</sup> The only certainty is that in the beginning of the 15th century, Venetians occupied the whole area between Koroni and Methoni (including, of course, Vasilitsi), on guard against the growing Ottoman menace.<sup>33</sup>

The excavated church presently stands isolated in a semiabandoned agricultural area mainly planted with olive trees. The nearest modern settlement, the village of Vasilitsi, lies at a distance of more than 10 km (Fig. 1). Nevertheless, while traveling the modern roads that lead from Vasilitsi to Selitza, one occasionally encounters isolated, abandoned houses, lying in ruins amid the olive trees, such as the remains of two small houses ca. 200 m northeast of the excavation (Fig. 25). Both are single-roomed and

25. The area has not been recorded in any of the surveys that were conducted in Messenia, e.g., McDonald and Rapp 1972, pp. 264–321; *Nichoria* I, pp. 108–112; *Nichoria* III, pp. 354–356; Davis et al. 1997, pp. 477–481.

26. Panagiotopoulos 1985, pp. 263, 300.

27. Sigalos 2004, p. 114.

28. Staboltzis 1976–1978, pp. 268–270.

29. *Χρονικόν του Μορέως*, lines 1695–1710, trans. J. Schmitt, London 1904, pp. 116–117; Bon 1969, p. 61.

30. The Venetians are said to possess “the castle of Koroni with its villages and the land around it” (Gerstel 1998, p. 220).

31. See, e.g., Bon 1969, pp. 66–67.

32. Hodgetts and Lock 1996, pp. 77–78.

33. Bon 1969, pp. 263–264, 274–275, 286–289, 291, 293; Panagiotopoulos 1985, p. 20, plan 2; Thiriet 1959, pp. 369–370; Gerstel 1998, p. 225.



**Figure 26.** Ayios Ioannis, from the northeast. Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

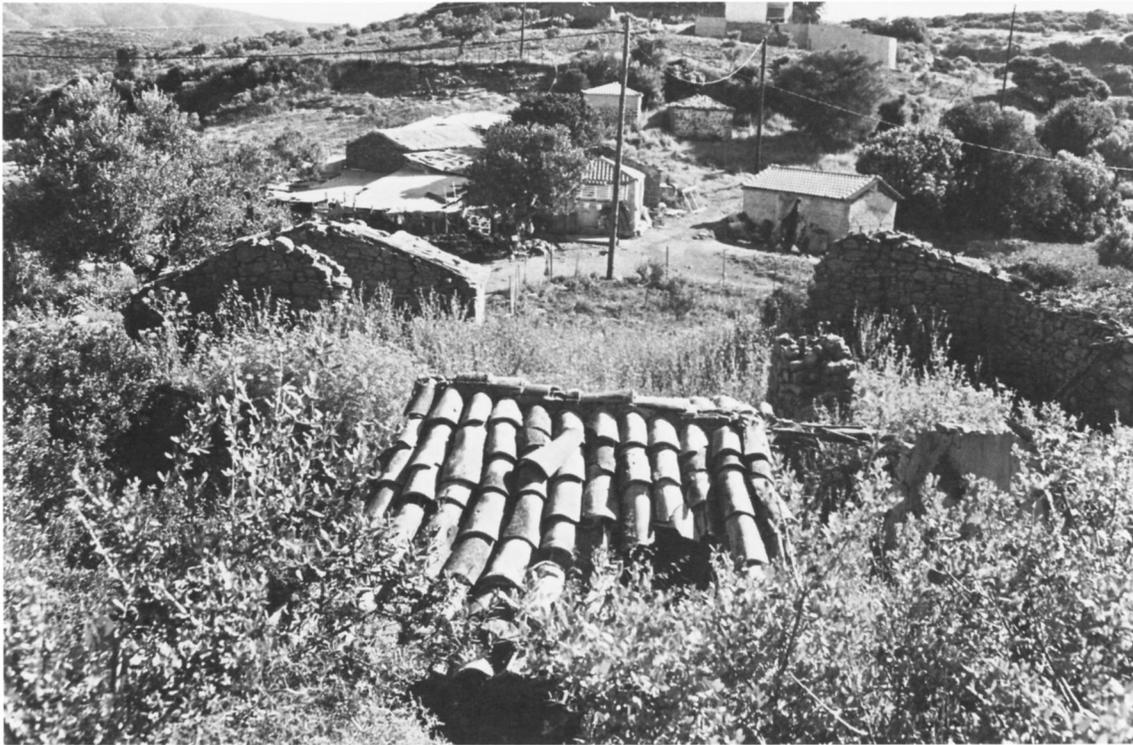
single-storied, stone-built, timber-roofed constructions that, unfortunately, offer no hint as to their chronology. They belong to the common type of Greek rural longhouse known as *monospito*,<sup>34</sup> and were probably used by the families of the farmers or shepherds who worked in the surrounding lands. The use of stone rather than mudbrick may indicate that these were permanent installations, not temporary constructions for the harvest period. Farmers no longer need to live in the area; modern transportation enables them to reach their lands easily from the village of Vasilitsi.

Close to these houses lies another small church, dedicated to Ayios Ioannis (Fig. 26). The church has a single aisle, a wooden roof, and an entrance on the north side. It is the only building of the three that is currently in use; in fact, it seems to have undergone recent repairs and improvements (new roof tiles and wall plaster). Yet, certain elements—such as the form of the three semicircular protruding eastern apses—indicate that this may not be a modern construction, but rather an older building (perhaps of the early modern period?) that still sporadically serves local religious needs. It is also interesting to note that the interior arrangement of Ayios Ioannis's apses, with their semicircular arches and built-in shelves, closely resembles the structure in the excavated church. One could even suggest that Ayios Ioannis is the early modern successor of the 13th-century church, which landslides had made irreparably unstable.

The ruins of a small abandoned settlement are located ca. 1.5 km east of this area (Fig. 27). This settlement must be identified with Selitza, a name currently used to designate the surrounding area. It consists of about 20 small houses of the *monospito* type mentioned above. Most of them have collapsed roofs, with the surrounding walls still standing.<sup>35</sup> Some are currently used and maintained by a local shepherd. Several seem to have been recently rebuilt, perhaps to be used as summer residences. In any case, this

34. For the presence of the *monospito* type in Messenia, see Sigalos 2004, pp. 118–131.

35. When M. Natan Valmin visited the area in the first half of the 20th century, he noticed “les ruines d’un village appelé Sélitza, qui était assez grand et qui possédait beaucoup d’églises, dont on voit encore les restes. Le lieu sert aujourd’hui de refuge d’été aux bergers des villages de l’intérieur” (Valmin 1930, p. 164).



village seems to have been the center of the wider area in former periods, but there is no evidence for precise dating.

The settlement pattern for this area, then, includes large concentrations of houses (such as Vasilitzi or Selitza) along with groups of isolated residences in the countryside. These residences served the agricultural activities of their tenants and could have been occupied on a seasonal basis, but were more probably used year-round. The excavated church, as well as the later religious building in the same area (Ayios Ioannis), was built to serve the needs of the occupants of such an isolated group of houses—perhaps even a single extended family. This type of regional habitation pattern has been identified elsewhere in Messenia, in the area of Nichoria. The Middle Byzantine installation at Nichoria is thought to have been inhabited by members of a single extended family who were residents of the village (the term refers to the larger geographic entity) of Petalidhi, Kastania, or Karpofora/Karacasili.<sup>36</sup>

We are fortunate to possess a catalogue of all the inhabitants of several settlements in 14th-century Messenia (1354)—such as Kremmydi, Grisi, Cosmina, Voulkano, and Petoni—known through the inventory of Nicolas Acciaiuoli's holdings.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note, in light of the settlement pattern described above, that all the inhabitants of these villages were Orthodox, belonged to a handful of extended families, and practiced agriculture as their basic occupation. This settlement pattern (villages and isolated agricultural installations) persisted in Messenia until the early modern period, as shown in the recent analysis of the Ottoman cadastral survey of the area of Anavarin (Navarino), dated to 1716.<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 27. Abandoned settlement of Selitza, from the south.** Photo N. D. Kontogiannis

36. *Nichoria* III, pp. 377, 423.

37. Longnon and Topping 1969, pp. 67–115; Gerstel 1998, pp. 228–233.

38. See Zarinebaf, Bennet, and Davis 2005, pp. 151–209, esp. pp. 174–178. The cadastral survey (TT880) contains an astonishing amount of information that enables one to reconstruct a fairly accurate image of the area in question. The agricultural production consisted of vines, olive trees, cloth, and wheat, as well as livestock (sheep, goats, pigs), and bees; see Zarinebaf, Bennet, and Davis 2005, pp. 179–197.

## CONCLUSIONS

The settlement pattern that is described above may not have differed greatly from the one that existed in the wider area of Vasilitsi during the 13th–14th centuries, when the excavated church was erected. This was farmland with cultivators and shepherds dwelling either in larger settlements (like Vasilitsi or Selitza) or in smaller groups with a handful of houses, which probably served the needs of an extended family or a clan.

Such a small community seems to have existed in the location of the church, and must be credited with its erection. There is nothing to suggest that it was the church of a monastery (i.e., a standing precinct, surviving documents or archival sources, remains of other buildings, etc.), and the discovery of a child burial, as well as male and female adults, virtually excludes that possibility. The choice of an intriguing architectural plan known in regions such as Attica and Epiros in the same period (first half of the 13th century) shows that the community had the means to commission a workshop, one that was in close contact with the ideas and trends evolving in remote areas (by medieval standards) and was competent enough to undertake their realization.

This study does not treat the question of the provenance of the cross-vaulted type<sup>39</sup> or its triple-aisled version, but it is sufficient to note that nothing in the Vasilitsi church suggests apprenticeship or uncertainty in the execution of the plan. The workshop repeated a familiar church type, one the builders had already executed or were about to execute at Paniperi, with no apparent differences or significant alterations.

The use of the church as a burial place for members of the community was a common practice in the Late Byzantine period throughout the former Byzantine empire.<sup>40</sup> The types observed—simple interments and schist-lined graves—are familiar from other excavated sites.<sup>41</sup> The details of the burials, such as the positioning of the body extended on its back and facing east, the stones set to prop up the head, the reuse of the graves, the placement of reburied skulls and long bones over the legs and feet of the primary burials, the placement of ceramics (bowls or cooking pots) next to the dead, and so on, are standard elements of the funerary practices of the day.<sup>42</sup> All of these factors integrate the people of Vasilitsi within the broad cultural context of medieval Greece.

The examination of the skeletal material (see Appendix), though limited to the undisturbed primary burials, provides valuable information for the identification of the deceased. Observations concerning their physical condition, such as the presence of dental caries and tooth loss only in the male burial, find interesting parallels elsewhere.<sup>43</sup> The signs of intense physical activity noted on both adult skeletons can be interpreted as reflecting the hardships of a farmer's life.<sup>44</sup>

The finds from the church help to fill out our picture of daily life in this area of medieval Messenia. The small hoard of Venetian *torneselli* from the end of the 14th century (1–6, Fig. 14) confirms that by this time Venetian coinage had supplanted all previous local issues in everyday transactions.<sup>45</sup> The presence of sherds of South Italian origin among the ceramic finds

39. Küpper 1990, vol. 1, pp. 90–120.

40. For the process that led from the *extra muros* Early Christian cemeteries to burials inside and around churches from the 7th century onward, see Tritsaroli 2006, pp. 25–28, 285–289; Voltiraki 2006, p. 1150.

41. Tritsaroli 2006, p. 40; similar stone-lined graves and simple interments were recorded in the Nichoria chapel (*Nichoria* III, pp. 372, 398–399) and at Corinth (*Corinth* XVI, pp. 29–31, 126–128), Panakton (Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 176, 196–214), Xironomi (Voltiraki 2006, p. 1151), and Thebes and Spata (Tritsaroli 2006, pp. 49, 176–177, 179).

42. See Tritsaroli 2006, p. 28; Voltiraki 2006, pp. 1149–1150, 1152. Examples from the 13th–15th centuries come from the Frankish cemeteries at Corinth (Barnes 2003, pp. 436–437), from Panakton (Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 197–198, 200–201, 206, 208, 210, 217–218), and from Thebes and Spata (Tritsaroli 2006, pp. 52–56, 60, 62–65, 162–163, 234–238).

43. E.g., at Corinth: Barnes 2003, p. 441.

44. See also Barnes 2003, p. 441; Gerstel et al. 2003, pp. 149, 215.

45. Stahl 1985, p. 29.

(7–9, Figs. 15, 16) indicates close contact with Italy, perhaps through the port of Koroni. Finally, the marble basin found just outside the east part of the church (18, Fig. 22) could be interpreted either as a holy water font or as a mortar, serving everyday religious or rural activities.

The work at the church of Vasilitsi provided an opportunity to use a variety of data—architectural details, pottery, coins, skeletal material, and other finds—to reconstruct the life of a small rural community. In the intriguing period of the 13th–14th centuries, when the social and political structure of the Byzantine empire gave way to fragmentation and then to the new order of the Frankish states, this small church, located in an area that was kept in the shadow of urban centers and central policies, embodies the mentality of the people who constructed it and were ultimately buried inside and around it.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the following individuals for their support in the course of fieldwork: Nikos Zias, president of the Committee for the Promotion, Restoration, and Preservation of the Pylia Castles; Aimilia Bakourou, former director of the 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, then responsible for the area of Messenia; and Virginia Albani, head archaeologist at the time of the Kalamata division of the 5th Ephorate (now the 26th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities).

Kostas Marantos and Ioannis Botsis, who had planned to reconstruct the church and create a new religious center for the local population, were responsible for initiating the excavation. They also helped with the daily transport and often the feeding of the excavation team. The results of the fieldwork, though scientifically important, prevented any reconstruction on the site.

Invaluable help and support in the course of this research were provided by Niobi Bouza and Marios Michailidis. I also thank Sharon Gerstel, Tracey Cullen, and an anonymous *Hesperia* reviewer for their useful comments and editorial assistance, as well as Jan Hanos and Anna Christidou for improving the language.

The excavation at Vasilitsi was the work of Dimitris Angelopoulos, Tasos Georgakilas, Kostas Giannakopoulos, Kostas Mitsonis, and Nikos Softis, skilled workmen of the Greek Ministry of Culture. They conducted the excavation with rare professionalism, a spirit of cooperation, and a genuine passion for the preservation of the archaeological record. It was their dedication and strength that inspired me to bring this material to publication. I would like to dedicate this article to these pure-hearted people of Messenia, as a small token of friendship and appreciation.

# APPENDIX

## OSTEOLOGICAL REPORT

As discussed above, excavation at Vasiliti uncovered a series of disturbed and undisturbed burials that can be dated to the 13th–14th centuries on the basis of the accompanying pottery. Disturbed burials were found in both trenches B and D, located in the area outside the church's north wall (Fig. 3). Because this area was not fully excavated, apart from the narrow zone where burials 1 and 3 were discovered, observations regarding the disturbed burials, which were probably scattered around a wider space, are considered too preliminary to be included in this report. Further study will have to await future excavation of the site. The following osteological report is limited, then, to skeletal remains from the three undisturbed burials.

### BURIAL 1

The skeleton in burial 1 (Figs. 9, 11, 12) was found in a very fragmentary condition, and the preservation of the bones is rather poor. It was consequently impossible to study the material in depth, though some conclusions were reached regarding its pathology.

#### *Age and Sex*

Based on the morphological characteristics of the pelvis,<sup>46</sup> which was better preserved than the cranium, one can surmise that the deceased was female. According to the pubic symphyseal degeneration<sup>47</sup> and the dental eruption and attrition,<sup>48</sup> the individual is estimated to have been 25–30 years old at death.

#### *Condition*

The cranium is preserved in a very fragmentary state, with many parts missing. In contrast, the maxilla and mandible are well preserved, with a considerable number of teeth present. In the maxilla, the canines and the first and second premolars of the left and right side are preserved, while on the left side there is also a second incisor. The second molar on the right side is absent. In the mandible, the first and second molars of both sides are present, while the first and second premolars are observed only on the left side.

46. Phenice 1967.

47. Brooks and Suchey 1990.

48. Bass 1971, pp. 212–213; Brothwell 1981, pp. 64–67.

From the remaining bones, only fragments of the left and right clavicles and scapulas survive, along with 32 fragments of ribs and 43 fragments of vertebrae. The upper limbs preserve an adequate percentage of the right humerus, while the left one is completely destroyed. Only a small percentage of the left and right radius and ulna is preserved, hindering further study.

The pelvis is poorly preserved, but we were able to salvage the basic parts necessary for assessment of the sex of the individual. The lower limbs, though preserved in better condition than the upper ones, are also in a fragmentary state. Finally, the right and left bone of the calcaneus and talus are present, while the metatarsals and metacarpal bones, along with their phalanges, are almost completely missing.

### *Observations*

Despite the poor preservation of the skeletal remains, tentative observations could be made about the individual's pathological condition. We were unable, however, to discover evidence concerning the cause of death.

The study of the cranium fragments was of particular interest, since the left and right parietal bone, as well as the occipital bone, presented indications of thickening. According to clinical and palaeopathological research, this feature strongly indicates the presence of some sort of metabolic disease, mainly anemia.<sup>49</sup> The poor condition of the skeleton and the absence of other cranial bones prevented the diagnosis of the exact nature of this disease.

Further data were provided by the study of the teeth. The canines and premolars bore indications of enamel hypoplasia in the form of lines. This disorder in the development of teeth is still of unknown origin, yet it is usually connected to periods of stress, starvation, or certain infectious diseases.<sup>50</sup>

The examination of the vertebral column revealed that the last thoracic and lumbar vertebrae presented concavities on the body of the vertebra. These concavities, referred to as Schmorl's nodes, occur when the intervertebral disc decays, causing the nucleus pulposus to be imprinted on the body of the vertebra. The cause of this process remains undetermined, but Schmorl's nodes are usually connected with serious injury or intense physical activity.<sup>51</sup>

## **BURIAL 2**

### *Age and Sex*

The skeleton in burial 2 belongs to a child of young age (Fig. 8), which explains the poor preservation of the material. Based on the methods used for the assessment of adult age, the child's age was fixed between four and eight years. In this case we relied on the fusion of epiphyses and the growth of the teeth; measurements of the long bones were not taken into account for the age assessment, since the bones were in a fragmentary condition. Finally, because the skeleton belongs to a minor, the determination of sex is impossible.

49. Ortner 2003, pp. 363–370.

50. Aufderheide and Rodrigues-Martin 1998, pp. 400–415.

51. See, e.g., Aufderheide and Rodrigues-Martin 1998, pp. 96–110.

*Condition*

In contrast to the other bones, the cranium is preserved almost complete. The maxilla and mandible are, unfortunately, fragmented, and only a deciduous molar, a deciduous incisor, and a deciduous canine were found. There were 37 fragments of ribs, yet there were no traces of the vertebral column, the clavicles, the scapula, the tibia, or the fibula. The humeri are preserved in a fair, though fragmentary, state, while the radii were almost completely destroyed. The left and right ulnae are in the same condition as the radii.

Two small fragments were recovered from the pelvis, while the femurs were modestly preserved. Finally, one fragment of metatarsal was identified. Eighty small fragments were unrecognizable.

*Observations*

The study of this skeleton proved difficult. A large number of the bones were missing, while the existing ones had suffered multiple damage due to the burial conditions. It was impossible to determine the cause of death of this child.

**BURIAL 3**

The skeleton in burial 3 (Figs. 11, 13) was found in a poor state of preservation, comparable to that of burial 1. The skeleton in burial 3 is substantially more complete, but here as well the bones were recovered in a fragmentary condition, while postmortem factors seem to have affected their structure and preservation. Thus, the anthropological study could not recover significant information, apart from the age and sex of the individual.

*Age and Sex*

Based on the morphological characteristics of its pelvis,<sup>52</sup> the skeleton is that of a male individual of more than 25 years of age. The pubic symphyseal degeneration<sup>53</sup> and the dental eruption and attrition<sup>54</sup> were taken into consideration for the age assessment. As in the case of the skeleton in burial 1, the poor condition of this cranium made it impossible to determine the age more precisely, while the ribs added no further information.

*Condition*

The cranium is preserved in a fragmentary state, with a fair percentage of completeness. The maxilla and mandible also survive fragmentarily, preserving most teeth. From the maxilla the first and second molar survive on both sides. On the right side there is also the first incisor along with two premolars. On the mandible, two incisors are present, as well as the first and second premolars on both sides, and the first and second molars on the left side.

A fair percentage of both clavicles is preserved, though the bones are fragmentary. The condition of the scapula and the sternum is rather poor, while the ribs survive mostly in fragments. In all, there were 121 fragments of ribs and 57 fragments of vertebrae.

52. See n. 46, above.

53. See n. 47, above.

54. Bass 1971, pp. 218–219; Brothwell 1981, pp. 51–54.

From the upper limbs, the humeri are preserved to a fair degree of completeness, as are the right ulna and radius. The left ulna and radius had been completely destroyed. The pelvis is well enough preserved to help define the sex and age of the skeleton.

Among the lower limbs, the femurs and the left tibia are wholly preserved, though in a fragmentary state. The right tibia and both fibulae, on the contrary, survive poorly. Finally, the left and right bones of the calcaneus were recovered, along with the taluses, two carpal bones, 13 metacarpals and metatarsals, and four phalanges. A total of 270 fragments were unidentifiable.

### *Observations*

Unfortunately, only a small percentage of the bones was preserved, and their deterioration over time due to various postmortem factors did not allow their extended study. Therefore, it was impossible to determine the cause of death.

Based on the observation of the fairly well preserved mandible, it was determined that a considerable number of teeth—all the right molars—were lost while the person was still alive. As a result, the alveolar bone of the mandible became atrophied. Furthermore, all teeth revealed serious decay, as well as caries in the form of a cavity at the contact point between the left first molar and the second premolar. All these elements are evidence of poor oral hygiene and could imply that nourishment with incompletely processed food was responsible for the dental condition. The decay could also be related to an unknown repeated activity.

Furthermore, it is important to note another pathological find, one probably connected to intense physical activity. Despite the fragmentary condition of the vertebral column, signs of a concavity were observed on the body of a thoracic vertebra. Schmorl's nodes (see above) appear on the body of the vertebra, at the joint with the intervertebral disc. As noted earlier, the interpretation of this pathological condition is still being investigated, although many scholars relate it to a serious injury or intense physical activity.

In conclusion, our current evidence concerning the state of health, nutrition, and life factors in the 13th–14th centuries is very limited. The results of the examination of the three skeletons from Vasilitsi, therefore, despite the fragmentary condition of the bones, may be useful for future research efforts and serve as a basis for comparison with similar material from other sites.

### *Lilian Karali*

UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS  
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY  
157 84 ZOGRAFOU, ATHENS  
GREECE

ikarali@arch.uoa.gr

## REFERENCES

- Armstrong, P. 1992. "Zeuxippus Derivative Bowls from Sparta," in *Φιλολόγων: Lakonian Studies in Honour of Hector Catling*, ed. J. M. Sanders, London, pp. 1–9.
- . 1993. "Byzantine Thebes: Excavations on the Kadmeia, 1980," *BSA* 88, pp. 295–335.
- Aufferheide, A. C., and C. Rodrigues-Martin. 1998. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Paleopathology*, Cambridge.
- Augusti, A., and F. Saccardo. 2002. *Ca' d'Oro: La Galleria Giorgio Franchetti*, Milan.
- Bakirtzis, C. 1989. *Βυζαντινά τσουκαλολόγηνα*, Athens.
- Barnes, E. 2003. "The Dead Do Tell Tales," in *Corinth* XX, pp. 435–443.
- Bass, W. M. 1971. *Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual of the Human Skeleton*, Columbia.
- Bennet, J., J. L. Davis, and F. Zarinbaf-Shahr. 2000. "Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, Part III: Sir William Gell's Itinerary in the Pylos and Regional Landscapes in the Morea in the Second Ottoman Period," *Hesperia* 69, pp. 343–380.
- Böhendorf-Arslan, B. 2004. *Glasierte byzantinische Keramik aus der Türkei*, Istanbul.
- Bon, A. 1969. *La Morée franque: Recherches historiques, topographiques et archéologiques sur la principauté d'Achaïe (1205–1430)*, Paris.
- Bouras, C. 2001. *Ιστορία της αρχιτεκτονικής, δεύτερος τόμος: Αρχιτεκτονική στο Βυζάντιο, το Ισλάμ και την δυτική Ευρώπη κατά τον Μεσαίωνα*, Athens.
- Bouras, C., and L. Boura. 2002. *Η ελληνική ναοδομία κατά τον 12° αιώνα*, Athens.
- Bouras, C., A. Kaloyeropoulou, and R. Andreadi. 1970. *Churches of Attica*, Athens.
- Brooks, S., and J. M. Suchey. 1990. "Skeletal Age Determination Based on the Os Pubis: Comparison of the Ascadi-Nemeskeri and Suchey-Brooks Methods," *Human Evolution* 5, pp. 227–238.
- Brothwell, D. R. 1981. *Digging up Bones: The Excavation, Treatment, and Study of Human Skeletal Remains*, 3rd ed., London.
- Corinth = Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*  
 XI = C. H. Morgan, *The Byzantine Pottery*, Cambridge, Mass., 1942.  
 XVI = R. L. Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture in the Central Area of Corinth*, Princeton 1957.  
 XX = C. K. Williams II and N. Bookidis, eds., *Corinth, the Centenary: 1896–1996*, Princeton 2003.
- Davies, S. 2004. "Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, Part VI: Administration and Settlement in Venetian Navarino," *Hesperia* 73, pp. 59–120.
- Davis, J. L., ed. 1998. *Sandy Pylos: An Archaeological History from Nestor to Navarino*, Austin.
- Davis, J. L., S. E. Alcock, J. Bennet, Y. G. Lolos, and C. W. Shelmerdine. 1997. "The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, Part I: Overview and the Archaeological Survey," *Hesperia* 66, pp. 391–494.
- Dimitrokallis, G. 1984. "Ο Άγιος Βασίλειος στο Πανιπέρι Μεσσηνίας," in 4° Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης: Πρόγραμμα και Περιλήψεις (Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία), Athens, pp. 17–18.
- . 1990. *Άγνωστοί βυζαντινοί ναοί Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Μεσσηνίας*, Athens.
- Dori, E., P. Velissariou, and M. Michaelides. 2003. *Κάτω Κάστρο: Η πρώτη φάση των ανασκαφών στο βενετικό φρούριο της Χώρας Άνδρου (Ανδριακά Χρονικά 34)*, Andros.
- Doris, M. 1983. "Το καθολικό της μονής Αγίου Δημητρίου Κυψέλης (Τουρκοκάλουκου) Νικοπόλεως," in 3° Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης: Πρόγραμμα και Περιλήψεις (Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία), Athens, pp. 25–26.
- Evangeliadis, D. 1931. "Βυζαντινά μνημεία της Ηπείρου," *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά* 6, pp. 258–276.

- François, V. 1995. *La céramique byzantine à Thasos (Études thasiennes 16)*, Athens.
- . 1999. *Céramiques médiévales à Alexandrie: Contribution à l'histoire économique de la ville (Études alexandrines 2)*, Cairo.
- Frantz, A. 1942. "Turkish Pottery from the Agora," *Hesperia* 11, pp. 1–28.
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 1998. "Medieval Messenia," in Davis 1998, pp. 211–242.
- Gerstel, S. E. J., M. Munn, H. E. Grossman, E. Barnes, A. H. Rohn, and M. Kiel. 2003. "A Late Medieval Settlement at Panakton," *Hesperia* 72, pp. 147–234.
- Ginis-Tsoforopoulou, E. 1982–1983. "Άγιος Νικόλαος στο νεκροταφείο Καλάμου Αττικής: Νέα στοιχεία," *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 11, pp. 227–248.
- Hodgetts, C., and P. Lock. 1996. "Some Village Fortifications in the Venetian Peloponnese," in *The Archaeology of Medieval Greece* (Oxbow Monograph 59), ed. P. Lock and G. D. R. Sanders, London, pp. 77–90.
- Kontogiannis, N. D. 2002. *Μεσαιωνικά κάστρα και οχυρώσεις της Κω*, Athens.
- Küpper, H. M. 1990. *Der Bautypus der griechischen Dachtranseptkirche*, 2 vols., Amsterdam.
- Longnon, J., and P. Topping. 1969. *Documents sur le régime des terres dans la principauté de Morée au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (École pratique des hautes études: Documents et recherches sur l'économie des pays byzantins, islamiques, et slaves et leurs relations commerciales au Moyen Âge 9), Paris.
- Loverdou-Tsigarida, K. 1994. "Μεσοβυζαντινά γλυπτά από το κάστρο του Πλαταμώνα," in *Μνήμη Δ. Α. Ζακυθινού 1* (Σύμμεικτα 9), ed. N. G. Moshonas, Athens, pp. 331–368.
- Makropoulou, D. 1995. "Κεραμική," in *Συλλογή Δημητρίου Οικονομόπουλου*, Athens, pp. 7–19.
- McDonald, W. A., and G. R. Rapp Jr., eds. 1972. *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition: Reconstructing a Bronze Age Regional Environment*, Minneapolis.
- Millet, G. 1906. "Inscription inédites de Mistra," *BCH* 30, pp. 453–466.
- Nanetti, A. 1999. *Documenta veneta Coroni et Methoni rogata: Euristica e critica documentaria per gli oculi capitalis communis veneciarum (secoli XIV–XV) 1: Documenta a presbiteris et notariis castellanorum capellanis rogata* (Pêges 3), Athens.
- Nichoria I = G. Rapp Jr., and S. E. Aschenbrenner, eds., *Excavations at Nichoria in Southwest Greece I: Site, Environs, and Techniques*, Minneapolis 1978.
- Nichoria III = W. A. McDonald, W. D. E. Coulson, and J. Rosser, eds., *Excavations at Nichoria in Southwest Greece III: Dark Age and Byzantine Occupation*, Minneapolis 1983.
- Orlandos, A. K. 1935. "Οι σταυρεπίστεγοι ναοί της Ελλάδος," *Αρχαίον των Βυζαντινών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος* 1, pp. 41–52.
- . 1939–1940. "Η μονή του Οσίου Μελετίου και τα παραλάρια αυτής," *Αρχαίον των Βυζαντινών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος* 5, pp. 34–118.
- Ortner, D. 2003. *Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains*, 2nd ed., London.
- Panagiotopoulos, B. 1985. *Πληθυσμός και οικισμοί της Πελοποννήσου, 13<sup>ος</sup>–18<sup>ος</sup> αιώνας*, Athens.
- Papadopoli-Aldobrandini, N. [1893–1919] 1997. *Le monete di Venezia descritte ed illustrate coi disegni di C. Kunz*, 4 vols., repr. Bologna.
- Papanikola-Bakirtzis, D. 2002. *Ωρες Βυζαντίου: Καθημερινή ζωή στο Βυζάντιο* (Exhibition catalogue, Λευκός Πύργος 2001–2002), Thessaloniki.
- Phenice, T. W. 1967. "Newly Developed Visual Method of Sexing the Os Pubis," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 30, pp. 279–302.
- Sanders, G. D. R. 1993. "Excavations at Sparta: The Roman Stoa, 1988–91, Preliminary Report, Part 1 (c) Medieval Pottery," *BSA* 88, pp. 251–286.
- Schlumberger, G. 1878. *Numismatique de l'Orient Latin*, Paris.

- Schreiner, P. 1975–1979. *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* (Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae 12), 3 vols., Vienna.
- Sigalos, E. 2004. *Housing in Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece* (BAR-IS 1291), Oxford.
- Sotiriou, G. A. 1935. *Τα βυζαντινά μνημεία της Κύπρου 1: Λεύκωμα* (Πραγματεία Ακαδημίας Αθηνών 3), Athens.
- Soustal, P., and J. Koder. 1981. *Nikopolis und Kephallenia* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 3), Vienna.
- Spieser, J.-M. 1996. *Die byzantinische Keramik aus der Stadtgrabung von Pergamon* (Pergamenische Forschungen 9), Berlin.
- Staboltziz, J. 1976–1978. “Παρατηρήσεις επί τριών χριστιανικών ναών της Μεσσηνίας,” in *Πρακτικά Α΄ Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακών Σπουδών, τόμος Β΄: Αρχαιότης και Βυζάντιον* (Πελοποννησιακά, Παράρτημα 6), Athens, pp. 266–272.
- Stahl, A. M. 1985. *The Venetian Torneseello: A Medieval Colonial Coinage* (NNM 163), New York.
- Thiriet, F. 1958–1961. *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie* (École pratique des hautes études: Documents et recherches sur l'économie des pays byzantins, islamiques, et slaves et leurs relations commerciales au Moyen Age 1, 2, 4), Paris.
- . 1959. *La Romanie vénitienne au Moyen Age: Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (BÉFAR 193), Paris.
- . 1966–1971. *Délibérations des assemblées vénitiennes concernant la Romanie* (École pratique des hautes études: Documents et recherches sur l'économie des pays byzantins, islamiques, et slaves et leurs relations commerciales au Moyen Age 8, 11), Paris.
- Tritsaroli, P. 2006. “Pratiques funéraires en Grèce centrale à la période byzantine: Analyse à partir des données archéologiques et biologiques” (diss. Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris).
- Valmin, M. N. 1930. *Études topographiques sur la Messénie ancienne*, Lund.
- Vavylopoulou-Charitonidou, A. 1982. “Μορφές μεταβυζαντινής κεραμικής: Αθηναϊκά εργαστήρια,” *Αρχαιολογία* 4, pp. 60–64.
- Voltiraki, E. 2006. “Παρατηρήσεις στις ταφικές συνήθειες μικρών κοιμητηριακών συνόλων της Βοιωτίας κατά τη βυζαντινή περίοδο,” in *Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Θεσσαλίας και Στερεάς Ελλάδας: Πρακτικά Επιστημονικής Συνάντησης, Βόλος, 27.2.–2.3.2003*, ed. A. Mazarakis Ainian, Volos, pp. 1149–1163.
- Vroom, J. 2003. *After Antiquity: Ceramics and Society in the Aegean from the 7th to the 20th Century A.C.: A Case Study from Boeotia, Central Greece* (Archaeological Studies, Leiden University 10), Leiden.
- . 2005. *Byzantine to Modern Pottery in the Aegean: 7th to 20th Century. An Introduction and Field Guide*, Utrecht.
- Waagé, F. 1933. “The Roman and Byzantine Pottery,” *Hesperia* 2, pp. 279–328.
- Williams, C. K., II. 2003. “Frankish Corinth: An Overview,” in *Corinth* XX, pp. 423–434.
- Xygoroulos, A. 1929. *Ευρετήριο των μνημείων της Ελλάδος 1: Ευρετήριο των μεσαιωνικών μνημείων 1: Αθηνών 2*, Athens.
- Zarinebaf, F., J. Bennet, and J. L. Davis. 2005. *A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century* (*Hesperia* Suppl. 34), Princeton.

### Nikos D. Kontogiannis

23RD EPHORATE OF BYZANTINE ANTIQUITIES

LEOFOROS ATHINON 24B

34 100 CHALKIS

GREECE

zeuxi04@yahoo.gr