

The Harbour of all this Sea and Realm

Crusader to Venetian Famagusta

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HARMONIZING THE SOURCES: AN INSIGHT INTO THE APPEARANCE OF THE HAGIOS GEORGIOS COMPLEX AT VARIOUS STAGES OF ITS BUILDING HISTORY¹

Thomas Kaffenberger

Legend says that in medieval Famagusta there once were as many churches as days in a year. Even though this statement has to be treated as a *topos* rather than a realistic report, some 30 churches are still preserved or traceable inside the city walls today (Fig.1).² Amongst them, the ruined complex of the Orthodox churches of Hagios Georgios and Hagios Epiphánios figures most prominently (Fig. 2, Fig. 3).

Consisting of a much altered, multi-staged older part, Hagios Epiphánios/Hagios Symeon,³ and the ruin of the monumental new cathedral of the fourteenth century, Hagios Georgios, the complex in its intricacy must be treated with an extremely high degree of scholarship. Even though the investigation of the monument had already started in the late nineteenth century,⁴ no comprehensive monographic study has yet been published. Camille Enlart and George Jeffery, investigating the building in around 1900, were not able to record its details fully, as it was still covered with debris from the collapsed vaults.⁵ Theophilus Mogabgab's excavation work in the 1930s cleared the

¹ This article is a revised and shortened version of chapters 6 and 7 of my unpublished Magister thesis, "Hagios Georgios in Famagusta — Ein Beispiel des Kulturtransfers. Baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen" (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz, 2010).

² On the sacral topography of Famagusta see most comprehensively C. Enlart, *Gothic Art and the Renaissance in Cyprus*, trans. David Hunt, trans. of *L'Art gothique et la Renaissance en Chypre* (Paris, 1899) (London : Trigraph, 1987), 246–303; C. Otten-Froux, "Notes sur quelques monuments de Famagouste a la fin du Moyen-Age", in *Mosaic: Festschrift for A.H.S. Megaw*, ed. J. Herrin, M. Mullett and C. Otten-Froux (London : British School at Athens, 2001), 145–54; J. Andrews, "Gothic and Byzantine in the Monumental Arts of Famagusta: Diversity, Permeability and Power", in *Medieval and Renaissance Famagusta. Studies in Architecture, Art and History*, ed. M. Walsh, P. Edbury and N. Coureas (Farnham: Ashgate 2012), 147–66.

³ The question of the name of the older church will be addressed below.

⁴ E. L'Anson and S. Vacher, "Mediaeval and other Buildings in the Island of Cyprus", *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (May 1883), 13–32.

⁵ C. Enlart, *L'Art gothique et la Renaissance en Chypre* (Paris : E. Leroux, 1899); C. Enlart, "Fouilles dans les églises de Famagouste", *Archaeological Journal* 62 (1905): 195–217; G. Jeffery, "The Orthodox Cathedral of Famagusta, Cyprus", *The Builder* 87 (1904): 31–34; G. Jeffery, "Notes on Cyprus, 1905", *Journal of the Royal*

site, but the short notes which he published subsequently give only a vague idea of the results.⁶ Other than Athanasios Papageorgiou's work,⁷ no further study of the architecture had been carried out until the recent publications of Thierry Soulard, Michalis Olympios and Tassos Papacostas.⁸

This article hopes to contribute to the research on this issue by attempting to answer one of the most basic questions posed by the ruinous churches: How did the churches look at various times in history? A careful re-examination of old as well as new evidence can take us some way to answering this question, mainly by addressing aspects of typology, structure and style.

As with so many areas of research connected with medieval Cyprus, the textual and pictorial legacy seems to be scarce at first glance, whereas the material remains are as overwhelming as they are puzzling. Thus a full study needs to include both an in-

Institute of British Architects 8 (1906), 481–93; G. Jeffery, "The Byzantine Churches of Cyprus", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London* 28 (1916), 111–34; G. Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus* (Cyprus: Archer, 1918).

⁶ On Mogabgab and his work in Famagusta see E. Uluca Tümer, "Twentieth-century Restorations to the Medieval and Renaissance Monuments of Famagusta", in *Medieval and Renaissance Famagusta: Studies in Architecture, Art and History*, ed. M. Walsh, P. Edbury and N. Coureas (Farnham: Ashgate 2012), 217–34. Even though Mogabgab never wrote up the results of his research, the ground plan of the complex, which was drawn by him and published several times, e.g., in G. Soteriou, *Ta Byzantina Mnemeia tes Kyprou* (Athens: Grafeion Demosieumatou Akademias Athenon, 1935), 55, gives a rather precise indication of the chronology developed by Mogabgab after his researches. The six short reports were all published in the Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus [henceforth RDAC]: see J. R. Hilton, "Repairs to ancient monuments", *RDAC* 1935 (1936), 1–5; T. Mogabgab, "Excavations in Famagusta", in *RDAC* 1935 (1936), 20–22; A. H. S. Megaw, "Repairs to ancient monuments", in *RDAC* 1936/II (1939), 97–100; T. Mogabgab, "Excavations and Improvements in Famagusta", in *RDAC* 1936/II (1939), S. 103–105; A. H. S. Megaw, "Repairs to ancient monuments 1937–1939", in *RDAC* 1937/ 1939 (1951), 171–80; T. Mogabgab, "Excavations and researches in Famagusta 1937–1939", in *RDAC* 1937/ 1939 (1951), S. 181–90.

⁷ See especially A. Papageorgiou, "L'Art Byzantin de Chypre et l'Art des Croisées", in *RDAC* (1982), 217–26 and A. Papageorgiou, "Crusader Influence on the Byzantine Art of Cyprus", in *Cyprus and the Crusades*, ed. N. Coureas and J. Riley-Smith (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1995), 275–94.

⁸ P. Plagnieux and T. Soulard, "L'Architecture Religieuse", in *L'Art Gothique En Chypre*, ed. J.-B. De Vaivre and P. Plagnieux (Paris: Bocard, 2006), 121–296; T. Soulard, "L'architecture gothique grecque du royaume des Lusignan: les cathédrales de Famagouste et Nicosie", in *Identités croisées en un milieu méditerranéen: Le cas de Chypre*, ed. S. Fourrier and G. Grivaud (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2006), 356–84; T. Soulard, "La diffusion de l'architecture gothique à Chypre", *Cahier du Centre d'Études Chypriotes* 36 (2006): 73–124; T. Papacostas, "Byzantine rite in a Gothic setting: aspects of cultural appropriation in late medieval Cyprus", in *Towards Rewriting? New Approaches to Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, ed. P. Grotowski and S. Skrzyniarz, Series Byzantina 8 (Warsaw: Sowa 2010), 117–32; M. Olympios, "Saint George of the Greeks and its Legacy: A Facet of Urban Greek Church Architecture in Lusignan Cyprus", in *Medieval Famagusta*, ed. C. Schabel and A. Weyl-Carr (forthcoming); M. Olympios, "The Shifting Mantle of Jerusalem: Ecclesiastical Architecture in Lusignan Famagusta", *ibid.*; T. Papacostas, "Byzantine Famagusta: An Oxymoron?", *ibid.*; T. Papacostas, "A Gothic Basilica in the Renaissance: Saint George of the Greeks at Famagusta", *ibid.* I am thankful to Michalis Olympios and Tassos Papacostas for discussing their results with me and generously sharing the drafts of their articles before publication.

depth analysis of the building itself and the various sources, because only by matching the material evidence to the “secondhand” reality of the sources can the results become reliable and lasting.

The Dedication of the Churches in the Orthodox Episcopal Complex

Before turning to the question of the chronology of the building, we must discuss briefly the dedication of both churches. While the dedication of Hagios Georgios is clearly proved by the sixteenth-century view of Famagusta by Gibellino (No. 2 “S. Giorgio domo dei Greci”, Fig. 4)⁹, there is no source indicating the original patronage of the smaller church. The numerous suggestions made by scholars in the past 120 years include Saint Luke, Archangel Michael, Saint George, Saint Symeon and Saint Epiphanius.¹⁰ The name currently used, Hagios Symeon, probably goes back to the time of Theophilus Mogabgab, as the church is first mentioned under this name in the 1930s reports issued by the Department of Antiquities.¹¹ Thus, to treat this conventional name as proof that the church was dedicated to Hagios Symeon hardly seems warranted. The only known connection of this patronage to the Orthodox cathedral is in a report of 1572, where it is stated that after the Ottoman conquest, the Orthodox community was allowed to keep not only the cathedral but also the small church of Hagios Symeon.¹² It would have been unlikely to be recorded this way if Hagios Symeon had not been a distinct church separated from the cathedral, as opposed to an annexed chapel.¹³ A more likely option is that this church was dedicated to Hagios Epiphanius.

⁹ The etching shows the Ottoman conquest of the city in 1571. Even though Camille Enlart had already identified the church with the help of Gibellino's etching, numerous wrong denominations can be found throughout the first half of the twentieth century, especially on historic plans and postcards. The reason for this may lie in the power of a falsified oral tradition. For a recent discussion of Gibellino's etching see C. Otten-Froux, “La ville de Famagouste”, in *L'Art Gothique En Chypre*, ed. J.-B. De Vaivre and P. Plagnieux (Paris : Boccard, 2006), 109–20.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive discussion of the stage of research see Papacostas, “Byzantine Famagusta”, who leaves the issue unresolved. Olympios, “Greek Church Architecture”, uses the dedication of Saint George.

¹¹ Mogabgab, “Excavations 1935”, 21.

¹² Angelo Calepio, 1572: “They were allowed to live as Christians, provided only that there should be no one of the Latin Church. To these the Turk would grant neither church, house nor any privilege. The Latins in Famagosta were thus compelled to dissemble their faith and rites. The Greeks on their side hoped to keep all their Greek churches, but none was granted them except the Greek Cathedral, and when they offered handsome presents they got as well the little church of S. Simeon.” (trans. C. D. Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge: University Press 1908), 160). A church of Saint Symeon is already attested as a *metochion* of the Sinai monastery in Famagusta in the early fourteenth century. See Papacostas, “Byzantine Famagusta”.

¹³ Admittedly, nothing is said about the physical relationship of the two buildings in the text. Yet it is exactly this lack of a description of their relationship to each other which suggests that the text is talking about two separate buildings.

We know that the remains of this bishop-saint seem to have been kept in Hagios Georgios in the early sixteenth century, as noted by the pilgrim Ludwig Tschudi, who visited Famagusta in 1519.¹⁴ Certainly, a tombstone thought to belong to Epiphanius was venerated here in later times, something we know from the short description of the marble monument by the pilgrim Christoph Fürer von Haimendorf in 1566.¹⁵ The hypothesis of Epiphanius' patronage is not only supported by the material evidence—the relic-like inclusion of parts of the older church in the new building—but also by two notarial deeds from the late fourteenth century.

In 1363 Iohannes de Mothonio wished to be buried in a church of Hagios Symeon, yet the sums of money bequeathed were very small (a mere 100 silver coins) and only sufficed to benefit his relatives and the Latin cathedral.¹⁶ This might attest a subordinate role for the Hagios Symeon church in the sacred topography of Famagusta. On the other hand, the exceedingly wealthy merchant Fetus Semitecolo, who died in the same year, expressed a wish to be buried in a church of Hagios Epiphanius—the first ever mention of a church of this name in Famagusta.¹⁷ Semitecolo not only bequeathed the large sum of 1000 silver coins to the “cathedral of Saint George” but also laid down that ten Orthodox clerics be paid for assuring the salvation of his soul.¹⁸ It seems plausible that the donation to the cathedral was also intended as a payment for a burial place in or close to the attached chapel—which would then be the church of Hagios Epiphanius.¹⁹

Nonetheless, as Papacostas has revealed, the relics of the saint were still venerated in its shrine in Salamis/ Constantia as late as the middle of the fourteenth century,

¹⁴ For a detailed approach to Tschudi's account see Papacostas, “Byzantine Famagusta”.

¹⁵ Fürer von Haimendorf states that in “the Greek church of S. George [...] you see the marble monument of Epiphanius, with a Greek inscription so wasted by age that it cannot be read in its entirety” (trans. Cobham, *Excerpta*, 78).

¹⁶ “Il choisit d'être enterré à l'église Saint-Siméon de Famagouste. Il lègue à l'église Saint-Nicolas de Famagouste 10 besants blancs; de même il lègue pour l'éclairage de la loge de la commune des Vénitiens à Famagouste 3 besants blancs. Il lègue à son fils Manulis 100 besants blancs, s'il veut rester dans sa maison [...]” (trans. C. Otten-Froux, “Un notaire vénétien à Famagouste au XIV^e siècle. Les actes de Simeone, prêtre de San Giacomo dell'Orio (1362–1371)”, *Thesaurismata* 33 (2003): 15–159, here 39–40).

¹⁷ Papacostas, “Byzantine Famagusta”.

¹⁸ “Il choisit d'être enterré dans l'église Saint-Epiphanius de Famagouste. Il lègue à son épouse dame Maria 7.000 besants blancs en deniers (in denariis). [...] Il lègue à dame Maria 3.000 besants de ses biens qu'elle devra distribuer aux pauvres chrétiens pour son âme. [...] Il lègue à dame Maria son épouse sa maison où il habite à présent pour qu'elle y reste; et si elle ne veut pas, elle pourra la louer à qui bon lui semblera, étant entendu que, du prix de la location, elle est tenue de payer deux prêtres qui célébreront la messe dans l'église Saint-Epiphanius pour l'âme du testateur. [...] Il lègue 1.000 besants blancs pour le secours de l'église épiscopale de Saint-Georges des Grecs. [...] Il dispose que 10 membres du clergé grec soient achetés sur ses biens et affranchis pour le salut de son âme. [...]” (transl. Otten-Froux, “Simeone”, 45–46).

¹⁹ On the relevance of these testaments see also Plagnieux and Soulard, “Architecture Religieuse”, 286–88; Soulard, “Cathédrales”, 358 and Papacostas, “Byzantine Famagusta”.

long after the erection of the church.²⁰ This leaves us wondering whether the patronage of the chapel perhaps predated a later transfer of the relics, or if a secondary relic had been brought to Famagusta for the creation of a second place of veneration. These purely hypothetical suggestions show that no certainty has yet been reached on the question of the patronage of the older church. Nevertheless, the arguments in favour of a dedication to Hagios Epiphánios seem to outweigh alternative proposals to date.

As there are no further sources that shed light on the first centuries of the church of Hagios Epiphánios, the method of *Bauforschung*, which uses the material evidence as its strongest argument, needs to be applied to identify the building phases and original appearance.

Hagios Epiphánios: A Chronology

Hagios Epiphánios has attracted only scant attention among scholars, even those studying the adjacent fourteenth-century structure.²¹ Nevertheless, as its status as the oldest surviving sacral building in Famagusta is generally accepted, the importance of a better appreciation of the structure becomes clear. The church as we see it today has two naves of four bays each, both terminating in apses (Fig. 3, 5). Adjoining the northern nave are two side rooms and a transept, whose northern wall forms part of the later southern wall of Hagios Georgios. The interior structure is difficult to determine today because the greater part of the vault as well as two of the internal piers are missing, while the remaining walls and piers show several different types of masonry. While the state of decay impedes to some extent a precise investigation of the original appearance, the absence of plaster facilitates the identification of the phases of the surviving masonry.

The Cross-In-Square Church

The plan of the building clearly indicates that the northern aisle of Hagios Epiphánios originally formed a part of a cross-in-square church, which was subsequently enlarged. Yet the different types of masonry visible within this section of the building reveal the asynchrony of its components, which suggest a further differentiation of the various phases of building.²²

²⁰ Papacostas, "Byzantine Famagusta".

²¹ See for example Plagnieux and Soulard, "Architecture Religieuse", 295, where the church is only referred to as "petite église accolée" or "église byzantine voisine". Theophilus Mogabgab was one of the first to grasp the complexity of the subsequent changes to the building. (See Soteriou, *Byzantina Mnemeia*, 55). The only comprehensive study of this important building will be found in Olympios, "Greek Church Architecture", where there is also a review of the older scholarship.

²² To be sure, the troubled history of the building engenders a degree of uncertainty over the distinction between deliberate changes, rebuilding or patching, which cannot be resolved with certitude.

- (1) The oldest parts of masonry can be found in the northern transept wall (Fig. 6). The left side of the lower courses shows layers of large ashlar alternating with layers of small ashlar, which are combined with rubble in the joints. A similar technique can be seen in the lower parts of the eastern piers of the crossing. The right half of the northern transept wall is assembled from uncut ashlar and rubble which have not been laid out in layers.

Even if we assume that this wall formed part of an even older structure than the one associated with the large ashlar, the scant evidence would not allow a precise reconstruction of the typology of this hypothetical first church.²³ The first more tangible church, however, might have already been a cross-in-square church. Yet the other possibility, a basilica of small dimensions, can only be negated by the small archway to the east of the transept which can be attested only for the next phase of construction. It has proved almost impossible to provide a firm dating for this phase, but the large ashlar indicate a relatively early date, around the turn of the first millennium.²⁴

- (2) The next phase includes the upper parts of the northern transept wall and the lower parts of the bay to the west of the transept as well as the aforementioned archway. It is marked by uneven ashlar, which form continuous layers. They are quite regular in size but have broad joints filled with rubble and mortar. These walls no doubt formed part of a cross-in-square building, since the small archway between the transept and the north-eastern side compartment was constructed during this phase at the latest, even if it seems to have been enlarged at a later stage. The large archway between the nave and the northern aisle of the western cross-arm might have had a predecessor in the same place, but its well-cut keystones—forming a pointed arch—and its rather clumsy alignment with the courses of the surrounding wall indicate it to be a later replacement.²⁵

The outer appearance of the church at this stage may have resembled the Church of the Archangelos at Phrenaros, which shows similar proportions and a similar type of masonry, even if it is a dome-hall instead of a cross-in-square building (Fig. 7). It is hard to define the absolute dating of these first two phases: The churches of Hagios Antonios in Kellia and Hagios Prokopios in Syngراس attest that cross-in-square churches were already being built as early as the late tenth century which thus represents

²³ Olympos, "Greek Church Architecture".

²⁴ This theory could be supported by the archaic horseshoe shape of the tiny apse in the northern compartment—if we assume that this apse is part of the initial structure or at least the initial plan.

²⁵ The method of an *en-sous-œuvre* replacement of arches is a common technique in medieval Cyprus—see below.

a *terminus post quem* for the earliest stages of the Epiphánios Church.²⁶ The second phase may be contemporaneous with the church at Phrenaros, which has been dated to approximately 1100.²⁷

- (3) In the current western wall of the northern nave, we find remains of an older wall incorporated into the later structure, carrying a partly filled up barrel vault with the fragmentary remains of a pendentive on its eastern edge (Fig. 8). South of this, the wall-pier facing east and separating the two naves certainly also belonged to the same structure. This is indicated by the springer of an arch on the right side of the wall-pier, now incorporated into later walls. Wall, vault, pendentive and pier can be interpreted as parts of a former narthex consisting of three bays (Fig. 9). The northern and southern bays were barrel-vaulted, while the central bay was surmounted by a dome, whose north-eastern pendentive is still visible. While the middle bay had recesses reaching up to the vaulting, the walls of the side bays were structured by lower blind arches.²⁸

Once again the church in Phrenaros can give us a good impression of how the narthex of Hagios Epiphánios might have once appeared—a distinctly separate building structure in the shape of a dome-hall church rotated by ninety degrees (Fig. 7). Due to the almost complete destruction of the church between the first and second bays of the northern nave, it cannot be proven that the narthex was added later. Yet as that was the case for all known Cypriot examples, we can at least assume this.²⁹ The domed type of narthex with three bays is relatively widespread and the earliest example is perhaps Hagios Nikolaos tis Stegis in Kakopetria, where the paintings inside the narthex go back to the first decades of the twelfth century. Most other examples can be dated approximately to the mid twelfth century (Lambousa, Phrenaros), which is as precise as we can be about the narthex of Hagios Epiphánios.

- (4) It is apparent that the Epiphánios church was partly destroyed at some point and rebuilt afterwards, because the walls of the bema and the apse, as well as the upper parts of the piers and the higher courses of the eastern transept wall,

²⁶ For the dating of Kellia see T. Papacostas, *Byzantine Cyprus. The Testimony of its Churches 650–1200*, 3 vols., Ph.D.Diss. (Oxford 1999), II, 8; for Syngراسί Papacostas, *Byzantine Cyprus*, II, 170–72.

²⁷ Papacostas, *Byzantine Cyprus*, II, 16.

²⁸ It is possible that these lower recesses were added or changed in a later phase, as they cut through the horizontal impost of the barrel vault.

²⁹ On the typology and dating of Cypriot narthices see A. Papageorgiou, “The Narthex of the Churches of the Middle Byzantine Period in Cyprus”, in *Rayonnement Grec. Hommages à Charles Delvoye*, ed. L. Hadermann-Misguich and G. Raepsaet (Bruxelles: Ed. de l’Université de Bruxelles 1982), 437–48. For further references see also Olympios, “Greek Church Architecture”.

consist mainly of regular, well-cut ashlar of a quality very different to the previous types of masonry (Fig. 5). In all likelihood the rebuilding followed the original plan and used all the older foundations, as the lower parts of the surviving walls and piers were also reused at that time. Nevertheless in these sections minor changes—such as the renewal of the arch in the nave—may have taken place. The barrel vaults of the bema and the transept were also re-erected in that phase as certain springers of the arches that once supported the dome show the same technique. Nevertheless both remaining vaults (and, in consequence, also the now destroyed dome) seem to have been patched up or completely rebuilt a second time, although showing inferior technique and using mostly irregular stone material mixed with few well-cut ashlar.³⁰

In that context, reported earthquakes may help to specify the date: the destruction of the upper eastern parts and the vault are typical damage patterns caused by earthquakes.³¹ Olympios suggests the destruction of the church was due to the strong earthquake of 1491, as the masonry is “executed in a far more summary and untidy manner than the carefully assembled ashlar of the church’s last rebuilding.”³²

While this observation, which refers exclusively to the second rebuilding, is certainly correct and the dating seems likely, it says little about the first rebuilding of the cross-in-square church. The structure of this first phase of rebuilding in its increased accuracy regarding construction methods already suggests an influence of “Latin” building techniques and surely postdates 1200. Olympios attributes this phase to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, assuming that it was in this phase that groin vaults in the western and (hypothetically) eastern cross arms were included. This would correspond to the arrival of the first wave of, among others, Orthodox refugees migrating from the lost Latin dominions in the East after 1291—who at that time would have brought new concepts of building hitherto alien to the local traditions.³³ Yet the masonry of the clerestory wall in the western cross arm (certainly part of the groin vault) seems to be better cut than the courses of masonry below the string course,

³⁰ The bema vault in particular was heavily damaged during the Second World War, when a bomb hit the northern apse of Hagios Epiphanius. The damages were repaired subsequently without any attempt being made to relocate the ashlar to their original position.

³¹ The weakest points of a cross-in-square church are always the four piers supporting the dome. A common kind of damage can start with the collapse of one pier, which then takes down the dome and parts of the adjoining cross-arm-vault. An example of a structure damaged in this frequently recurring manner is Hagios Georgios Chortakion in Sotira, as published in Soteriou, *Byzantina Mnemeia*, pl. 27.

³² Olympios, “Greek Church Architecture”. The impact of the earthquake is reported in several sources, one of which is the detailed account of Dietrich von Schachten, who witnessed the destruction of the cathedral of Nicosia: “...hatt das Erdbiedenn ein gutt theil zerbrochen...” (Quote from *Excerpta Cypria Nova. Voyageurs Occidentaux à Chypre au XVème Siècle*, ed. G. Grivaud [Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1990], 134).

³³ Olympios, “Greek Church Architecture”.

thus opening the possibility of assigning the insertion of the groin vault to a later stage (we will come back to this below). In consequence the first rebuilding may have also repeated the classical type of the original building with barrel vaults. Rebuilding that mimics older shapes is normally a reaction to some type of sudden destruction—such as that caused by an earthquake. One of the strongest recorded earthquakes in the Eastern Mediterranean in the thirteenth century took place in 1222, when it shattered the city of Paphos into ruins.³⁴ We can thus assume that Hagios Epiphánios too may have suffered grave damage during this earthquake, leading to a rebuilding in the 1220s or 1230s, even if the lack of decorative sculpture makes a precise dating almost impossible.

The Dome-Hall addition

The next large alteration to the church was the addition of a second nave, which replaced the southern part of the cross-in-square structure (Fig. 5, 10). This process is easily visible on the southern bema pier, which is separated into two halves by a vertical joint (Fig. 11). This joint starts exactly on a level corresponding to the existing low archway between the north cross-arm and the north-eastern compartment. This proves the former existence of an identical archway in the southern cross-arm that was taken down with the adjoining wall for the erection of the new aisle.

Even if the added aisle is equally as ruined as the rest of the structure we have quite a clear account of the original appearance, as the vaults only collapsed some time before 1916.³⁵ Therefore a handful of historic photographs and sketches show the building in a less derelict state. Among those, the drawings of Edmond Duthoit (1860s, Fig. 12) and Edward L'Anson (1882, Fig. 13) as well as the photograph of John P. Foscolo (Fig. 14) provide the most detailed information, especially concerning the appearance of the domes.³⁶

The addition had the form of a dome-hall-church, consisting of three bays, the central of which was surmounted by a dome. The dome had a drum which appeared polygonal on the outside and was pierced by profiled windows with triangular lintels.³⁷ While this is a rare but not unique form for windows, the interior of the drum seems to

³⁴ J. Antonopoulos, "Data from Investigation on Seismic Sea Waves Events in the Eastern Mediterranean from 1000 to 1500 A.D.," *Annali di Geofisica* 30 (1980), 179–98, here 183–84.

³⁵ Jeffery, "Byzantine Churches", 130.

³⁶ For a more detailed evaluation of Duthoit's somewhat inaccurate drawing see Olympios, "Greek Church Architecture". On Duthoit's journeys to Cyprus and his drawings see R.C. Severis and L. Bonato, *Along the Most Beautiful Path in the World: Edmond Duthoit and Cyprus* (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Group 1999).

³⁷ Enlart's comparison of the dome with the church in Simorre, France can only refer to the unusual triangular shape of the windows, for Hagios Epiphánios was certainly not covered with a ribbed vault. (Enlart, *Gothic Art*, 257)

have been structured by a singular system of thin pilasters.³⁸ The other two bays of the added aisle were covered by groin vaults, which are marked by small gables rising above the cornice on the outside. The use of groin vaults in the southern aisle was not without problems, as they required high, open arches on the side of the older structure. The solution seems to have been to renew the vault of the western cross arm of the cross-in-square church with the aforementioned groin vault (Fig. 5, left). The barrel vault of the bema, located behind the iconostasis, presumably remained unchanged, so that only a low arch connected the old and the new structure. In this instance a certain separation and compartmentalization of the building was to an extent advantageous—or at least not a problem—while the improved linking of the two naves in the west created a wider, more spacious room, in accordance with the aesthetics of the time.

The groin vaults, together with the use of pointed arches and gothic profiles, the exceptionally well cut ashlar masonry and the block like, cubic exterior indicate that this phase was influenced by stylistic features originating from the crusader states of the Levant. Some notably close similarities can be found in the so called Nestorian Church/Hagios Georgios Exorinos in Famagusta (Fig. 15), a single nave hall church which was subsequently enlarged by the addition of two aisles. The building was probably constructed around 1290/1300, thus post-dating the settlement of refugees from the lost Latin territories of the Holy Land in Famagusta, although the date of the additional aisles is undetermined.³⁹

Both churches are quite plain on the outside and share a row of small gables on the horizontal cornice of the façades, covering the ends of the groin vaults. Furthermore, Hagios Epiphánios possesses a southern portal, now weathered and worn, composed of two archivolts with a hood-mould (Fig. 16). The inner archivolt springs from the doorpost and is formed by a simple run-on profile, while the outer archivolt shows a very specific zig-zag profile, resting on pillow-like, rounded corbels which flank the doorway. A thin run-on profile forms the hood-mould, resting on similar yet smaller corbels. A very similar profile is shown by an archway erected together with the later aisles of Hagios Georgios Exorinos (Fig. 17), and while the inner archivolt is destroyed, the zig-zag profile reveals a dependence on the portal of Hagios Epiphánios. Another similar but less delicately carved portal can be found in the Abbey of Bellapais, connecting the cloister with the refectory. These three portals are of central interest for the dating of Hagios Epiphánios as has been put forward by Michalis Olympios.⁴⁰ He sees the

³⁸ The interior of the dome-hall nave is only conveyed by L'Anson's sketch, which might not be totally accurate. Duthoit's cross section does not give any information on the interior design of the southern dome.

³⁹ The most recent and comprehensive study of the Nestorian church has been accomplished by Michele Bacci, who argues convincingly against Camille Enlart's mid-14th century dating of the initial church. (M. Bacci, "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the 'Nestorian' Church of Famagusta", in *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Ηεταρείας* 27 (2006): 207–20).

⁴⁰ Olympios, "Greek Church Architecture".

origins of the shape in the portal in Bellapais, which he dates to the late 1340s or the 1350s. The portals of Hagios Epiphánios and Hagios Georgios Exorinos would then belong to ca. 1350 and the 1360/70s. This date, however, is relatively late when taking into account the fact that the new cathedral of Hagios Georgios—certainly planned after the completion of Hagios Epiphánios—was probably also begun in around the 1360s at the very latest. It seems more likely that the portal of Hagios Epiphánios is indeed the oldest from this group, as it was a model for the later arch at Hagios Georgios Exorinos (which is by no means dated with certitude). A small detail that might support this theory is the hood mould of the arch at Hagios Georgios Exorinos, which is decorated with a sharply cut dog tooth—a very common decorative element for portals around the middle of the fourteenth century in Famagusta and also common in the Latin architecture in the crusader states. The portal in Bellapais shows a dog tooth pattern as well, even if it seems surprisingly crude in appearance compared to the examples in Famagusta. The portal of Hagios Epiphánios, on the other hand, does not make use of this pattern of decoration which was nevertheless almost indispensable for the later buildings.⁴¹ Thus we can imagine that the dome-hall addition was erected some time after the arrival of the refugees from the lost territories in the East—perhaps around 1310 or 1320. It would then be one of the first buildings adapting the style of Latin crusader architecture for an Orthodox church in Cyprus.⁴²

Integrating the parts: a new façade

The very irregular outer appearance created by the previous additions was corrected and covered in the last building phase (Fig. 10). During this phase the southern nave received an additional bay to the west—clearly separated from the dome-hall addition by a vertical joint—and a new façade (Fig. 18). These additions also incorporated the older narthex, leaving only its dome visible on the outside. The design of the new façade imitated the previous phase closely, making use of well cut ashlar and small gables above the cornice. On the inside, the narthex walls, which might have only possessed small doorways before, were opened up towards the northern nave and the new bay, as shown on Duthoit's plan (Fig. 12). The new bay to the south of the narthex also received a dome that was octagonal and generally resembled the dome of the dome-hall addition closely, although it was pierced by more simple, rectangular windows. After this last addition, the building would have been surmounted by four domes in total.

⁴¹ Especially the cathedral of Hagios Georgios makes excessive use of dog tooth mouldings and other elements deriving from a "crusader style". For additional thoughts on this concept see Olympios, "Greek Church Architecture".

⁴² In this context one can also speculate about the unusual pilasters in the drum of the dome, which remotely resemble the blind arches in the drum of the 12th-century dome of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Theophilus Mogabgab considered this phase to be later than Hagios Georgios,⁴³ but the material evidence contradicts that view. Both western entrances, which were constructed in this last phase, had to be walled up subsequently to reach the level of the small square to the west of the church (Fig. 9). This square again connects the newly erected church of Hagios Georgios, which has a much higher floor level, with the older church. Thus the façade of Hagios Epiphánios, which also breaks off rather clumsily where it meets the wall of Hagios Georgios (Fig. 18, left), was certainly finished before work on the new cathedral began. Judging by the overall similarity to the previous phase, this last addition to Hagios Epiphánios was possibly constructed not later than the 1330s.

Hagios Georgios—the New Cathedral

The erection of the adjacent cathedral of Hagios Georgios began not long after the completion of the older church (Fig. 1, 2). The following question arises: what event could have triggered the construction of a church of this immense scale, and where did the necessary funds come from? To answer this it is necessary to examine briefly the historical situation in Famagusta at this time. It is unclear if Hagios Epiphánios already served as the cathedral in earlier times, but the most recent research indicates that no Orthodox bishop resided in Famagusta before the mid-fourteenth century.⁴⁴ After the reorganization of the Orthodox clergy by the Latins in the early to mid-thirteenth century the four remaining Orthodox rural episcopal residences Solia, Arsinoe-Polis, Lefkara and Karpasia were subordinated to the four Latin urban dioceses of Nicosia, Paphos, Limassol and Famagusta, initially established in 1196 under Pope Celestine III. It is widely agreed that the plan to erect a new cathedral in Famagusta most probably coincided with the return of the Greek bishop of Karpasia in the urban centre as opposed to the remote area of the Karpas peninsula.⁴⁵ No sources report when construction work on the new church began, but substantial donations towards the building of the Orthodox cathedral are documented in the year 1363 in the aforementioned notarial deeds, which sets a *terminus ante quem* for the beginning of the work. It is, however, likely that the work indeed began around a decade earlier, as a consequence of the plague of 1349—an event that may have provided a cause for the wealthy merchants of the city to commend their souls to God by contributing a considerable part

⁴³ This is only shown in the plan published by Soteriou. (Soteriou, *Byzantina Mnemeia*), 55.

⁴⁴ For a detailed study of the historical circumstances see Papacostas, "Byzantine Famagusta".

⁴⁵ This return of the Orthodox bishops to the urban centres might have been a consequence of the improvement of the Latin-Orthodox relationship following the "finding of the cross" in Tochni in 1340. See also C. Schabel, "Religion", in *Cyprus. Society and Culture 1191–1374*, eds. A. Nicolaou-Konnari and C. Schabel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 157–218, here 181 f. For the view that Saint George of the Greeks was built specifically as a Greek cathedral see A. Weyl Carr, "Art", 314–316 in the same volume.

of their wealth to the erection of a magnificent church. This assumption is supported by further historical evidence: in the 1360s, the city was already suffering from a commercial decline, which would have slowly decreased the availability of financial resources necessary to start large scale building projects. Furthermore, the Genoese takeover of Famagusta in 1374 surely would have interrupted, if not stopped the building. Thus, if the work was started already in 1349 or 1350, the church must have been finished after a maximum of around 25 years—a short time considering the size of the project.⁴⁶

The integration of Hagios Epiphánios: remarks on the construction process

Hagios Georgios was erected according to a consistent plan which was probably implemented without major interruptions. Nevertheless a certain amount of information on the process can be discovered by investigating the building fabric in the southeastern part of the structure. Here the northern wall of the transept of the old church was made a part of the southern wall of the new church and thus remained visible from both churches (Fig. 19).

The undertaking of this technically challenging process and the relic-like treatment of the wall in the context of the new church demand an explanation. Was it behind this wall, in the transept of the old church, that Christoph Fürer von Haimendorf saw the tombstone of Epiphánios, of which he gives the aforementioned account in his travel report written in 1564? The fabric of the old church was clearly treated as material testimony for the long tradition of the bishopric, if not specifically for the saint's veneration place, which might have already been established here before the erection of Hagios Georgios.⁴⁷ For now this question will have to remain open, as it needs to be studied in a wider context.⁴⁸

In any case, the complicated process of integrating the old wall is visible in several places along the new wall: As a first step, the northern wall of Hagios Epiphánios was pulled down, leaving the transept wall and the adjoining pilasters, and replaced by the southern wall of Hagios Georgios. The vaults and domes of the older church were intended to be preserved as far as possible, but the vaults of the secondary side rooms of the northern nave seem to have been replaced. An additional interference was cre-

⁴⁶ Even if the exact construction times for the Latin cathedrals of Famagusta and Nicosia are unknown, their completion surely took more than 50 years (regarding Famagusta, see A. Franke, "St Nicholas in Famagusta: A New Approach to the Dating, Chronology and Sources of Architectural Language", in *Medieval and Renaissance Famagusta. Studies in Architecture, Art and History*, eds. M. Walsh, P. Edbury, N. Coureas (Farnham: Ashgate 2012), 75–92) and possibly 100 years (for Nicosia, see Plagnieux and Soulard, "Architecture Religieuse", 159).

⁴⁷ As Tassos Papacostas shows, the main relics stayed in all probability in Salamis/ Constantia until after the mid fourteenth century. Papacostas, "Byzantine Famagusta".

⁴⁸ The question of the relic-like treatment of masonry or buildings will be approached in my forthcoming PhD thesis titled "Tradition and Identity - Hagios Georgios in Famagusta and the Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture under Lusignan, Genoese and Venetian rule in Cyprus (14th–16th Century)".

ated by the position of the access arch between the two churches, which was placed in the central bay of Hagios Georgios, colliding directly with the arch between the old church's narthex and the next bay to the east. This arch was carrying not only the groin vault over the nave to the east but also the dome over the old narthex, which were both intended to be maintained. In consequence, the sophisticated technique of an *en-sous-oeuvre* replacement had to be applied.⁴⁹ The top of the new arch that connects the two churches was aligned exactly with the old arch and thus supported the vaults on both sides. To align the walls of narthex and nave, and perhaps also to strengthen the whole structure, the walls and piers received an additional layer of ashlar, which probably ascended only as far as the string course below the vault.⁵⁰ In line with the same procedure the northern barrel vault of the old narthex and the western half of the side room to the north of the nave were filled up with rubble and closed off with a shell of ashlar.

The concern which was devoted to the integration of Hagios Epiphanius with the new cathedral is shown by a vertical joint a few centimeters to the east of the façade of the old church, dividing the new wall into a western and an eastern half (Fig. 20). The joint runs up only to the level of the vault of the old church, where a horizontal joint as well as a levelling course of ashlar is visible. This shows that in the beginning only the section of the new wall that had direct contact with the older church was erected up to the vault level. To appreciate the full set of problems caused by the proximity of the new wall to the existing masonry, it is necessary to examine the masonry of the new church: The walls have the enormous width of 1,4 meters and are made of two shells of ashlar, filled with an inner layer of rubble. The ashlar were cut in a slightly trapezoidal shape, so that they could have minimal joints on the visible exterior and the necessary binding mortar towards the inside of the wall. While this sophisticated technique contributes much to the high quality of the new building, it was a disadvantage for the connecting wall. Here the ashlar of the outer shell, facing the older structure, could not be seen from their visible, perfectly cut side but instead only from the "inner" side. Thus the masons were not able to check on the proper alignment of the ashlar until the vault level of Hagios Epiphanius was reached. Even if the deflection of the wall seems to have been minimal, small corrections—shown by the aforementioned joints—were necessary for the further building process.

Only after the successful integration of Hagios Epiphanius into the southern wall was the rest of the building erected—most probably from the east to the west. As

⁴⁹ This technique was used surprisingly often in Cyprus during the later middle ages. See for example the church dedicated to Our Lady (Panagia) in Trikomo, where the north wall of the old dome-hall nave rests on a wide, profiled arch inserted to connect it with the nave added later. See also the church of Hagios Sergios in the homonymous town, where the process was executed in almost identical fashion, but the inserted arch is supported by a reused marble column.

⁵⁰ See this reinforcement also marked in the drawing of Duthoit (Fig. 12).

there are neither joints nor changes of sculptural details throughout the new building, it is likely that the process was not interrupted until the completion of the building.

Hagios Georgios before its destruction

As with Hagios Epiphánios, the ruinous state of Hagios Georgios demands an investigation into the probable original appearance. The three-aisled basilica with three apses was erected in a regular and well-cut ashlar masonry, and decorated with many elements derived from the Latin-style churches of the town. The choir and the southern wall are almost completely preserved and give us a precise idea of what the destroyed parts of the nave looked like from the outside.

The side walls were almost completely plain and only pierced by richly profiled, pointed windows with tracery (Fig. 21). The clerestory windows, parts of which are still in place, showed a slightly more simple framing profile and were obscured by a row of flying buttresses, springing from the top of the aisle walls. The tracery of one window was reconstructed by Theophilus Mogabgab (Fig. 19), who in 1936 not only cleared the site but also investigated the cut stones among the debris in the collapsed church.⁵¹ As he never published his results, we cannot be sure what other observations he made and how much of the stone material has been lost since his excavation. This lack of information is partly compensated by the existence of a set of photographs taken by Mogabgab, which are preserved in different archives today. One of the pictures taken during the cleaning of the church shows that Mogabgab had attempted to reassemble the stones—in this case a row of stones belonging to an arch with a zig-zag profile (Fig. 22). Presumably, this arch formed a part of the completely destroyed northern portal, to which a large marble beam with notches on two sides and a marble capital can also be assigned. Even if most of the keystones of the arch have vanished by now, the old picture offers enough evidence for its original appearance. The portal must have generally resembled the northern portal of SS Peter and Paul in Famagusta, but the arch with its zig-zag pattern was an allusion to the southern portal of Hagios Epiphánios, thus underlining the importance of the tradition of the place where the new church was erected.

The western façade was as plain as the side walls but pierced by at least two windows and three portals, which are partly preserved (Fig. 23, 24). While the side portals were constructed as three-fold stepped columned doorways with dog-tooth archivolt and hood moulds, the main entrance was framed by a high Gothic stepped profile and a floral hood-mould. The recent re-examination of the cut stones still left in the church has proven that the tracery of the upper window of the façade differed from the nave windows: following a number of earlier models in the town, it consisted of

⁵¹ Mogabgab, "Excavations, 1936", 98.

three lancets and three crowning circles.⁵² The tracery of the rose window below cannot be reconstructed with certainty but the scarce remains of the tracery might indicate a design somewhat similar to the eastern window of the refectory in the abbey of Bel-lapais, or the rose window in the Augustinian Church in Nicosia. Inferring from these examples, the tracery would have been composed of a small circle in the center, surrounded by an uncertain number of curved triangles containing trefoils.

The complete destruction of the upper part of the façade makes any further assessment through the material evidence impossible, yet two pictorial sources may indicate a rather unusual design. Camille Enlart already wondered, while looking at Gibellino's etching of the siege of Famagusta (Fig. 4), if the gable drawn above the church is to be treated as *topos* or provides a record of the real design.⁵³ As Gibellino's map lacks any realistic details, this idea has been for the most part rejected. Nonetheless, the famous engraving of Cornelis de Bruyn from 1688 (Fig. 25), which will be discussed in detail below, seems to add another clue. To the right of the staircase tower another unidentifiable part rises above the roof level—perhaps indeed indicating the remains of a gable. None of the façades of other large churches in Famagusta can provide a model of how Hagios Georgios might have looked as the differences are too great in many respects. Only the small church called today the "Tanners Mosque" may shed some light on a possible initial design (Fig. 1, left). Even though this idea must be treated as speculation and thus with considerable caution, the raised middle part with a triangular gable (restored by Theophilus Mogabgab) above the façade of this church—which was erected some decades after Hagios Georgios—could be a reflection of the design of Hagios Georgios.

Another church in Famagusta referred to often when considering possible models for the reconstruction of the missing parts of Hagios Georgios is SS Peter and Paul. While the façade of this church is comparable only in certain details, such as the tracery and the moulding of the central window, the interior elevation is almost identical to Hagios Georgios (Fig. 26). Plain round piers with flat capitals separate the aisles; on top of the capitals of the piers lengthy, round triple supports begin and carry the diagonal and the transversal arches of the rib-vaults. This coincides with the remnants of the vaulting in Hagios Georgios (fig. 27) where only the central bay differs, which has caused a long and heated debate over the question of whether it was covered by a cross-vault or a dome.

⁵² The same type appears in SS Peter and Paul, the Carmelite church and, according to Olympios, had its local origin in the western window of the Franciscan church. (M. Olympios, "Networks of Contact in the Architecture of the Latin East: The Carmelite Church in Famagusta, Cyprus and the Cathedral of Rhodes", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 162 (2009): 29–66, here 43.

⁵³ Enlart, *Gothic Art*, 256.

Vaulting system: a dome over the Central Bay

This question, whether or not the church possessed a dome, was already of interest to the first scholars dealing with the church. While Edward L'Anson was sure that the square bay "probably had a dome over it"⁵⁴, Camille Enlart did not specifically discuss the problem, as he was sure that each bay was covered by a rib vault.⁵⁵ In George Jeffery, Theophilus Mogabgab and much later Athanasios Papageorgiou, the theory of a dome found prominent supporters, while more recent scholarship in particular, and above all Thierry Soulard, argued against the existence of a dome.⁵⁶ The most recent approach by Tassos Papacostas, however, tries to reconcile both sides of the question by arguing for a later insertion of the dome.⁵⁷

In short, the arguments brought up by the supporters of a rib vault were that a dome would typologically require a transept underneath (which is certainly not the case in Hagios Georgios), that placing a dome on a structure that high would be statically impossible, or that a dome would not be in harmony with the overall Gothic style. Yet the arguments in favour of a dome have always seemed to outweigh these objections at the very least. Not only is the central bay decisively larger than the other bays of the nave, thus forming the square plan required for the construction of a dome, but we also have sources and newly discovered material evidence proving the existence of a dome, something hitherto only assumed.

Surely, the most important source is once again the seventeenth-century etching of Cornelis de Bruyn (Fig. 25), which clearly shows the church domed.⁵⁸ Thierry Soulard's recent assumption that the etching is not reliable⁵⁹ can be rejected for two reasons: Firstly, the text written by De Bruyn, in addition to the etching, refers specifically to the dome:

"De andere Kerk staat daar benevens, aan de slinker zyde, en pronkt op het midden met een Koepel, die boven rond is. Hier ziet men noch verscheide gaaten van

⁵⁴ L'Anson and Vacher, "Medieval Buildings", 24. Surprisingly the dome is not shown in the enclosed plan.

⁵⁵ Enlart, *Gothic Art*, 256. Enlart also overlooks the fact that the central bay is wider than the others and square instead of rectangular.

⁵⁶ Jeffery, "Orthodox Cathedral", 32; Jeffery, "Byzantine Churches", 130 (as in L'Anson's case the enclosed plan does not show the dome); Soteriou, *Byzantina Mnemeia*, 55 (Mogabgab's plan, which is published here, shows the dome); Papageorgiou, "Art Byzantin", 221; Papageorgiou, "Crusader Influence", 277–78; Plagnieux and Soulard, "Architecture Religieuse", 292.

⁵⁷ Papacostas, "Gothic Basilica".

⁵⁸ For a detailed discussion of the etching see: M. Walsh, " 'Othello', 'Turning Turk' and Cornelis de Bruyn's Copperplate of the Ottoman Port of Famagusta in the Seventeenth Century", in *Mariners Mirror* 98 (2012), 448–466.

⁵⁹ Plagnieux and Soulard, "Architecture Religieuse", 292. This opinion is supported by Jean Bernard de Vaivre in the same volume (J.-B. De Vaivre, "Sur les Pas de Camille Enlart en Chypre", in *L'Art Gothique En Chypre*, ed. J.-B. De Vaivre, and P. Plagnieux (Paris : Bocard, 2006), 15–58, here 25) and repeated in his most recent publication : J.-B. De Vaivre, *Monuments Médiévaux de Chypre. Photographies de la Mission de Camille Enlart en 1896* (Paris : Achcbyz, 2012), 122–123.

de Kogels, die 'er in geschooten zyn, en de Kerk wel ten halven overhoop hebben gesmeeten".⁶⁰

Secondly, the details of both churches, such as the wide buttress of Hagios Georgios or the gables of the Latin cathedral, as well as the position of its minaret, match the real buildings very closely. Furthermore, the shadows display the original late-afternoon scenery described by De Bruyn earlier in his text, even if he states that he did the etching "with haste" and not "as carefully as possible", as is claimed in the English translation.⁶¹

Another pictorial source that has remained widely unremarked is Vasyl Barskyj's sketch of the city made in 1730 (fig. 28).⁶² The drawing, from a bird's eye perspective, shows a cubic, domed building with buttresses behind the Latin cathedral. Barskyj's drawing skills were limited to be sure, but his recording of prominent elements like domes seems to have been executed with thoroughness in all his drawings.⁶³ Furthermore, the almost illegible inscription next to the building reads "αγ Γεωργ[ιος]", which confirms that Barskyj indeed refers to the Hagios Georgios cathedral.

However, while this proves the existence of a dome in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, it says nothing about this dome being part of the initial building. Papacostas' recent approach takes account of the sources, which he deems reliable, but denies the presence of a dome in the beginning.⁶⁴ He instead argues that the dome was added, together with the still visible strengthening of the nave piers, after the aforementioned major earthquake of 1491 that must have left the church severely damaged. The dome would then have been the work of Venetian architects and masons, who were indeed experienced in the construction of domes on high naves (as shown, e.g., by the most conspicuous example, the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice). While this argument might seem convincing in the light of the technological knowledge of the time and the

⁶⁰ C. de Bruin [sic], *Reizen van Cornelis de Bruyn, door de vermaardste deelen van Klein Asia, de eylanden Scio, Rhodus, Cyprus, Metelino, Stanchio, &c. mitsgaders de voornaamste steden van Ägypten, Syrien en Palestina*. (Delft: Krooneveld, 1698), 366. It is important to go back to the Dutch text in this case, as the English translation differs slightly: "The mosque called S. Sophia seems very fine: it must indeed be as grand as its reputation. The pointed tower which crowns the building is highly ornamental. On the left of it is another mosque whose dome makes it very conspicuous. One can see the holes left by the cannon balls: half the church was destroyed in the siege." (Quoted from Cobham, *Excerpta*, 236). The French version even omits the description of the dome, which might have misled Soulard and de Vaivre. For a further discussion see Papacostas, "Gothic Basilica".

⁶¹ "Na den middag vervoegte ik my [...] na de Staat [...], alwaar ik op een kleynen Heuvel ging nederzitten, om de Stad metter haast af te teekenen". (De Bruin, *Reizen*, 365). The English translation quoted is from Cobham, *Excerpta*, 236.

⁶² For a detailed study of Barskyj's account of eighteenth century Cyprus see A. D. Grishin, *A Pilgrim's Account of Cyprus: Barskyj's Travels in Cyprus* (Nicosia: Greece and Cyprus Research Center, 1996). See also Papacostas, "Gothic Basilica".

⁶³ See for example his drawing of Hagios Lazaros in Larnaca, which he shows with three drums but without domes—as it is the case in reality. (Grishin, *Travels*, pl 2)

⁶⁴ Papacostas, "Gothic Basilica".

comparability of the typology—there is no other domed basilica from the fourteenth century in Cyprus—the material evidence of Hagios Georgios indicates otherwise.

As the central part of the church is almost completely destroyed, we have to look at the cut stones, which can be found all over the site (Fig. 22, 29). Among them, one finds a wide variety of profiled stones, which can be assigned to a small number of groups like vault ribs, portal arches, capitals and nave/aisle supports. For our problem, stones that belonged to the supports and the vault ribs are especially interesting. It is easy to trace a multitude of stones that belonged to the standard supports, as they are preserved on the aisle walls: a triplet of half circle profiles (C), each one corresponding to one rib (two diagonal and one transversal). Also the stones that belonged to the ribs and the transversal arches, most likely of identical pear-shape (A), are easily identifiable through the rests of the vault in the eastern aisle bays, and there is no reason to believe that the standard system in the nave was different from the aisles. Yet there are two types of profiles among the stones on the ground that are not identifiable in the parts of the building that are still standing. One is composed of a smaller half-circle profile which is attached to the side of a much bigger half circle (D). The other resembles an expanded version of the rib profile: a large half circle with two smaller half circles attached at both sides (B). The only possible explanation for these profiles is to assign them to the central bay, where the stones certainly formed part of the supports and transverse arches. The smaller circular profile of D matches the diameter of the half circles in profile C, which confirms its use in the support system. This in turn means that there was only a support for the diagonal rib of the adjoining bays but no support for another diagonal rib in the central bay. Instead, the reinforced support carried the—also reinforced—transverse arches of the central bay that belong to profile B. The use of two reinforced transverse arches with a simultaneous absence of diagonal ribs clearly proves a heavy, centralized superstructure, which can only have been a dome.

The assignment of the two “new” profiles is further supported by two singular stones (I and II), both showing intersection points between profiles. Stone I shows the transverse arch profile B and, at a 45° angle, the rib profile A, so the stone can be located in the first or second course above the clerestory capitals. Stone II is composed of the nave arch profile E and the support profile D, at a right angle to each other; thus it originates from the lower courses of the central bay supports. Through these stones, not only can the location of Profiles B and D be determined but also in general it can be demonstrated that the stones belonged to the church of Hagios Georgios.

The consistency of the support system strongly indicates that the dome was no afterthought, and the still visible parts of the church show no sign of a later change in the vaults or the arcades. In addition, the vault ribs and nave arches interlocked with the support system for the dome, which thus had to be part of the initial plan. The dome, which reached a height of nearly thirty meters, made the finished church the highest sacral building in Cyprus in the Middle Ages (Fig 30).

Changes and decay: between 1400 and 1735

Apparently, the lack of experience of constructing a church with the combination of a basilica clerestory and a dome led to static problems—thus confirming to some extent the doubts of the technical viability of the project cast by the opponents of the dome theory. The piers originally having a diameter of 1.4 metres were therefore encased with an additional layer of ashlars, increasing the diameter to over two metres (Fig. 31). The new shell was secured with iron clamps—so the reinforcement was certainly part of an attempt at static improvement, probably in reaction to signs of a weakening of the piers. The most probable date for this large-scale repair of the church is in the aftermath of the big earthquake of 1491, which, as Papacostas states, certainly damaged the church.⁶⁵ This in turn also confirms the presence of the dome from the beginning, disproving the idea of it being a later addition: would the builders have dared to add a heavy dome to an already weakened structure, which had to be secured with considerable effort after an earthquake?

The other changes made during the Genoese and Venetian periods are of a rather decorative and functional character: an enormous *templon*, made of stone, was added between the fourth and the fifth bay, and a wooden gallery, which was accessed through the first aisle window, was inserted in the southern aisle. The corbels, decorated with a Renaissance ornament, on the outside, under the window—which was transformed into a doorway—supported a small balcony that connected the gallery with the stair tower (Fig. 21). None of these changes is dated securely, but a link with the restoration of the church after 1491 seems likely.⁶⁶

The last point requiring clarification is the date of the destruction of Hagios Georgios. We know from the aforementioned report of Angelo Calepio that the Greeks were allowed to keep their cathedral after the Ottoman conquest of 1571.⁶⁷ Still, in what state was the cathedral after numerous cannonballs had hit it during the cannonade of the city? De Bruyn draws the church with an intact dome over a century later, in 1683, but describes the building as “half destroyed”.⁶⁸ The cannonballs that struck the complex are still visible today, stuck in the masonry of the southern and eastern walls of Hagios Georgios. While this has occasionally led to the belief that the church was destroyed already in 1571, it rather indicates the opposite: the wall’s thickness was strong enough to allow the cannonballs to penetrate the outer shell only. The vaults

⁶⁵ See Papacostas, “Gothic Basilica,” for a comprehensive list of accounts of the earthquake. Papacostas refers especially to a contemporary Italian note, which lists a church of “san zorro [=giorgio, T.K.] ala greca” among the ruined buildings.

⁶⁶ Jeffery, “Byzantine Churches”, 131; Papacostas, “Gothic Basilica”.

⁶⁷ See footnote 12.

⁶⁸ De Bruyn, *Reizen*, 366.

alone, which were much thinner, may have suffered more extensive damage.⁶⁹ Yet, since the dome continued to survive, the structural integrity of the vaults, which were necessary for the dome's stability, seems not to have been disturbed. Probably the Orthodox community continued using the church as long as possible but inevitably did not have the funds required for the constant upkeep or for repair of the damages. This probably led to a partial collapse, as described by De Bruyn, after which the church was abandoned. The fact that no stones from the pavement of the church were found during the removal of the debris in the 1930s might suggest that the church was abandoned already before the dome and the clerestory caved in. After the large church became unusable at an unknown date, the smaller church of Hagios Epiphánios probably took over its function as the main Greek Church, which could explain its somewhat better condition at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It was, finally, the severe earthquake of 1735 that removed the dome off the skyline of Famagusta, which it had dominated for almost 400 years. The definite collapse of the building has been described only in a few prosaic words by the pilgrim Richard Pococke in 1738: "St George's, one of the most magnificent [churches], was thrown down by the earthquake".⁷⁰ Presumably, it was one of the northern piers of the central bay which first gave in, as the northern aisle was almost completely destroyed and the debris scattered to the north. The fate of Hagios Epiphánios at the time of this earthquake is unknown but it probably did not suffer any grave damage, since the southern aisle wall of Hagios Georgios also remained intact. Nevertheless, with the collapse of the northern domes of Hagios Epiphánios—again at an uncertain date—the complex became simply the most impressive ruin in the centre of a deserted city, waiting for its rediscovery.

Concluding Overview

During the 700 years of its existence, the complex underwent numerous smaller and larger changes and renovations, transforming the initial, modest chapel of unknown shape into one of the largest Orthodox church complexes in the Eastern Mediterranean. In summary, the study of the building as well as of the textual and pictorial sources has uncovered the following key stages of the building. While the relative chronology is mostly certain, the absolute dating of the phases represents hypothetical results based on the argumentation presented above.

⁶⁹ Ata Atun, however, argues that the vault's strength would have been sufficient to resist the impact of a cannon-ball. See A. Atun, "Structural Analysis of the Main Apse Vault of Saint George of the Greeks Cathedral Built c. 1390 at Famagusta, Cyprus", in *Structural Studies, Repairs and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture VIII*, ed. C. A. Brebbia (Southampton: WIT, 2003), 359–67.

⁷⁰ Richard Pococke, 1738, quoted from Cobham, *Excerpta*, 236. See also Walsh, "Copperplate", 454.

- c.* 1000 First chapel of uncertain shape, perhaps including even older structures.
- c.* 1100 Erection of a cross-in-square church, using parts of the previous foundations and walls.
- 12th cent. Addition of a domed narthex to the west.
- p.* 1222 Reconstruction of the upper walls and vaults of the central bay following an earthquake in 1222.
- c.* 1310/20 Addition of a second nave in dome-hall shape, insertion of groin vaults in the western cross arm of the older structure.
- c.* 1330 Addition of a domed bay to the west of the southern nave, erection of a new façade.
- c.* 1350–
1374 Erection of the new cathedral to the north of the older church according to a consistent plan: a three-aisled basilica with rounded apses and a dome over the central bay.
- p.* 1491 Reconstruction of some vaults of the older church following an earthquake in 1491. Simultaneous reinforcement of the piers in the new church.
- 1571 Damages to the complex by Ottoman cannonade, subsequently progressive decay.
- 1735 Collapse of the dome of Hagios Georgios.
- a.* 1860 Collapse of the northern domes of Hagios Epiphánios.
- c.* 1910 Collapse of the southern domes of Hagios Epiphánios.
- 1941 East end of Hagios Epiphánios destroyed by war bombing, subsequently reconstructed.



Figure 1. Churches of Famagusta, c. 1940 – Postcard, Collection of the Author



Figure 2. Hagios Georgios (right) and Hagios Epiphianos (left) – Thomas Kaffenberger

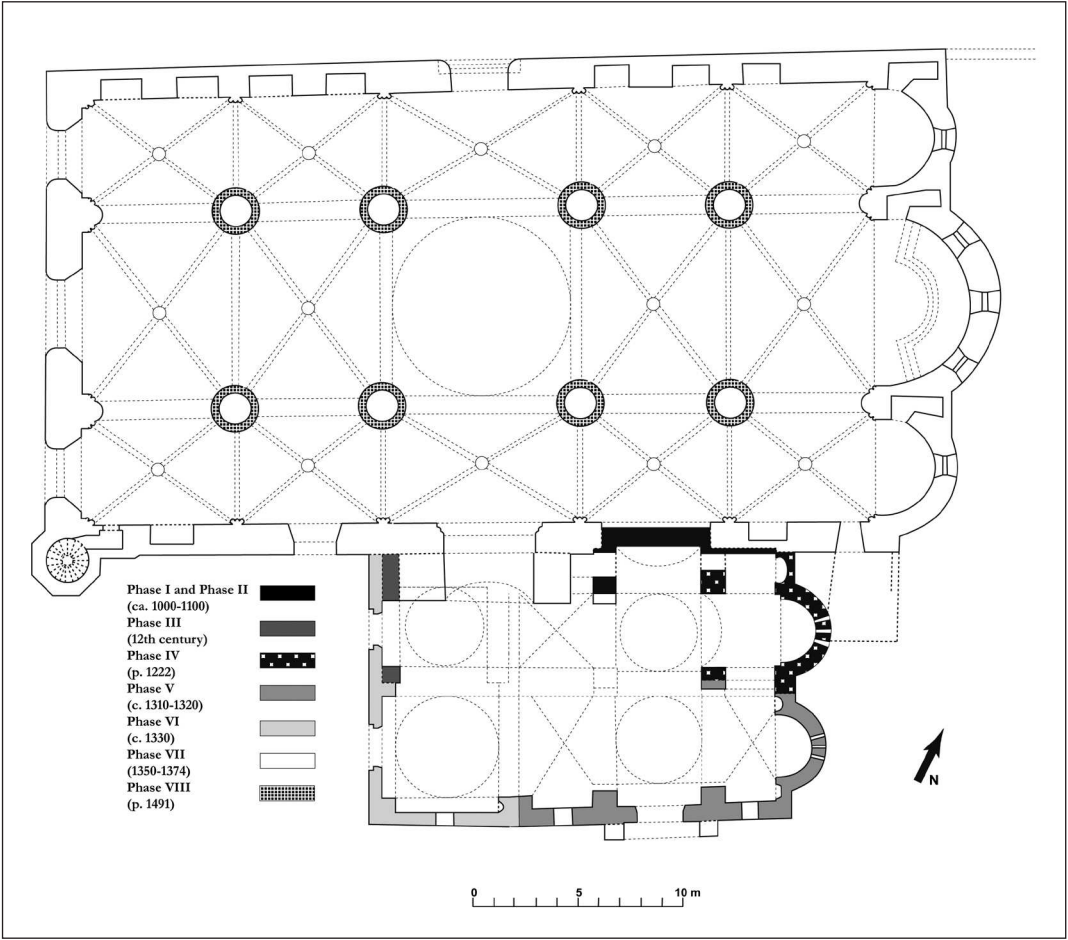


Figure 3. Hagios Georgios and Hagios Epiphaios, Plan – Thomas Kaffenberger, 2011

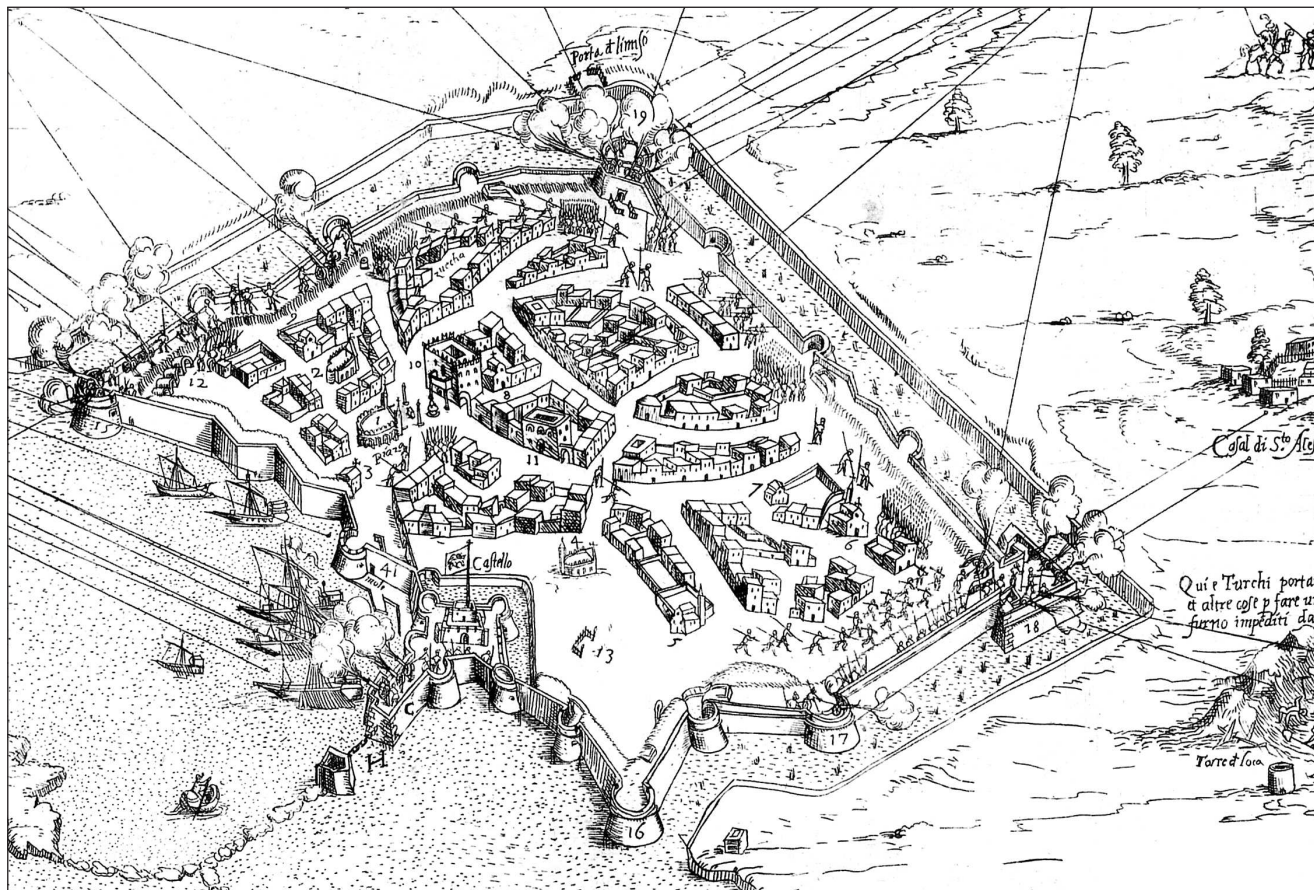


Figure 4. The Siege of Famagusta, Engraving, Detail, 1571 – Stefano Gibellino



Figure 5.
Hagios Epiphаний,
Interior to East –
Thomas Kaffenberger



Figure 6. Hagios Epiphаний,
Northern Transept Wall –
Thomas Kaffenberger

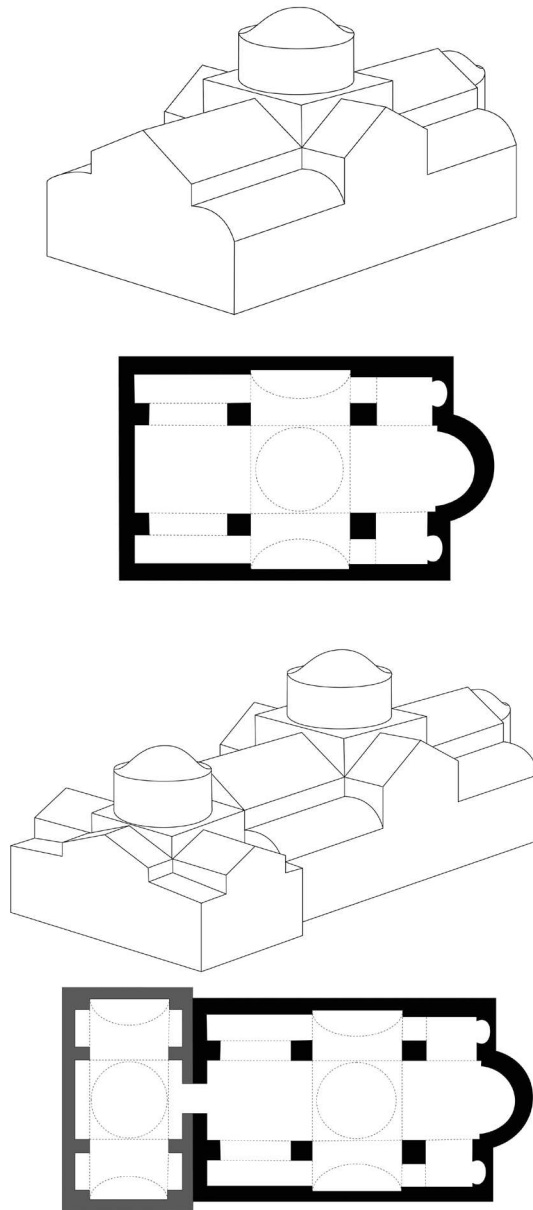


Figure 7. Hagios Epiphanius, First and Second Stage – Thomas Kaffenberger, 2011



Figure 8. Hagios Epiphаний, West End of Northern Nave – Thomas Kaffenberger

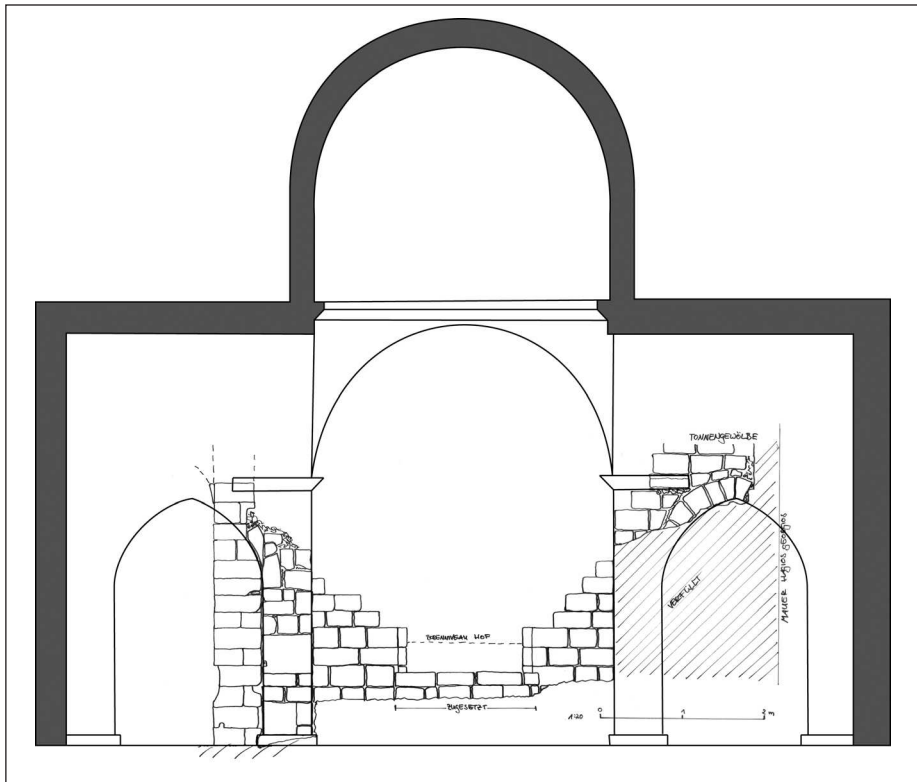


Figure 9. Hagios Epiphaios, Plan of Western Wall and Reconstruction of Narthex – Thomas Kaffenberger, 2011

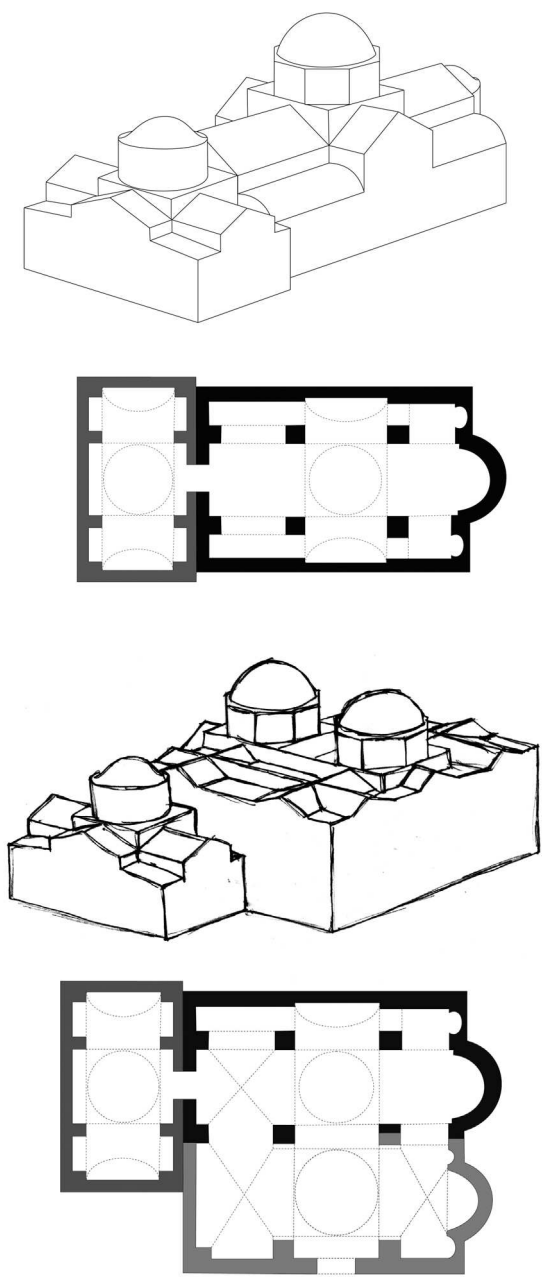


Figure 10a. Hagios Epiphаний, Fourth and Fifth Stage – Thomas Kaffenberger, 2011

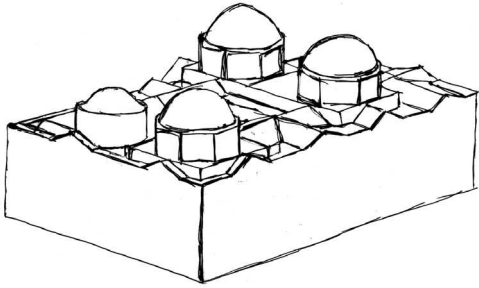


Figure 10b.
Hagios Epiphаний,
Sixth Stage – Thomas
Kaffenberger, 2011

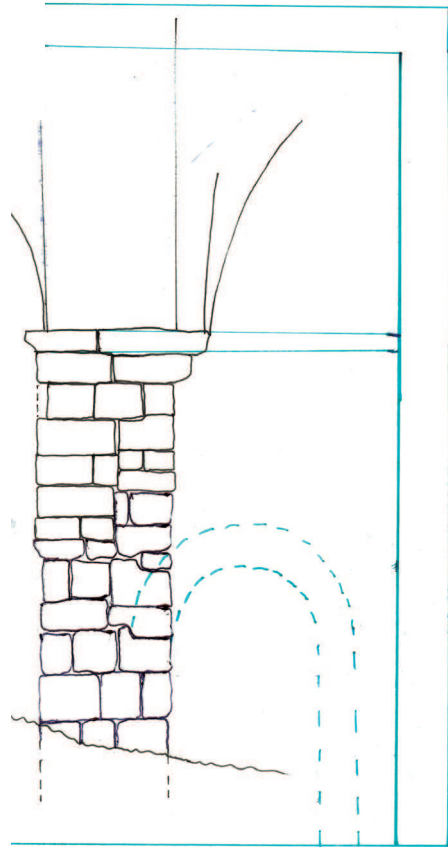
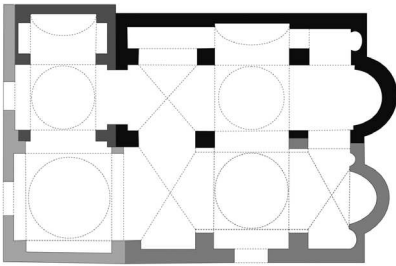


Figure 11.
Hagios Epiphаний, Central
Bema Pier from West, Recon-
struction of Original Structure –
Thomas Kaffenberger, 2011

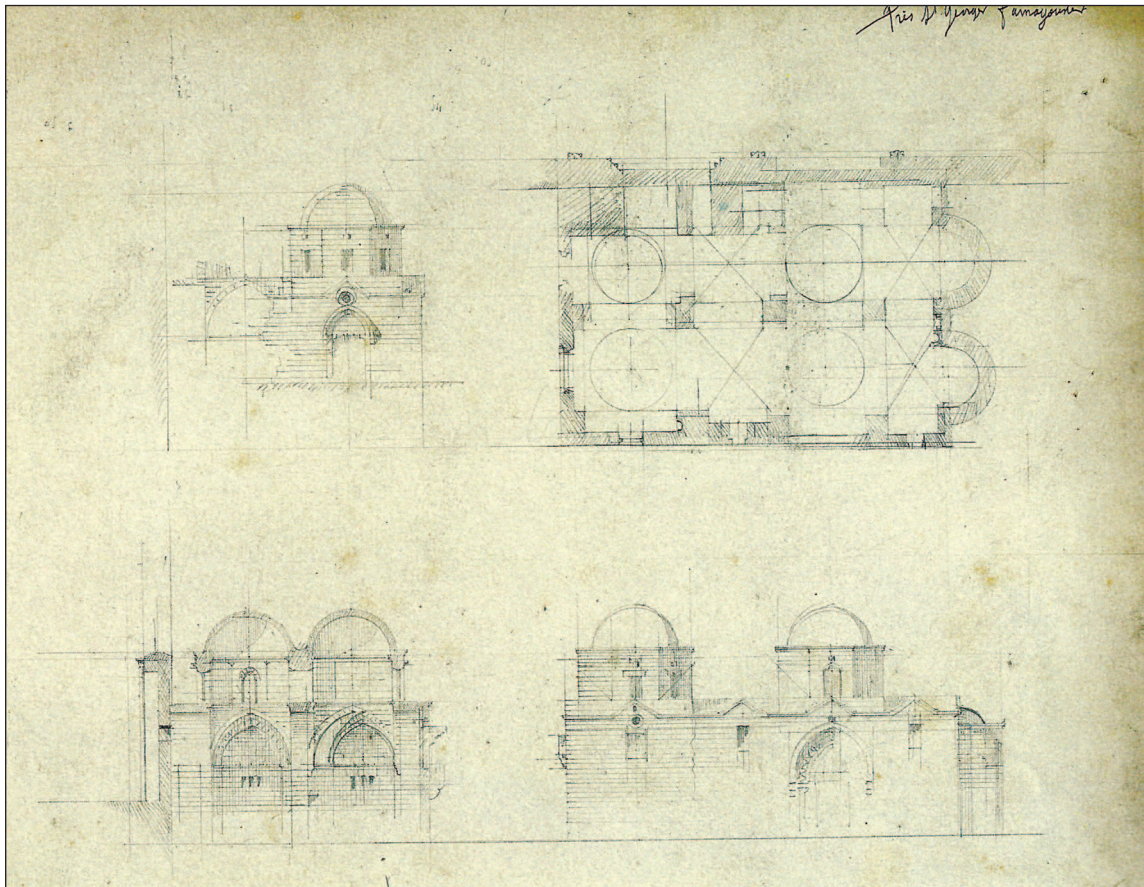


Figure 12. Hagios Epiphаний, Elevations, Section and Plan, c. 1860 – Edmond Duthoit

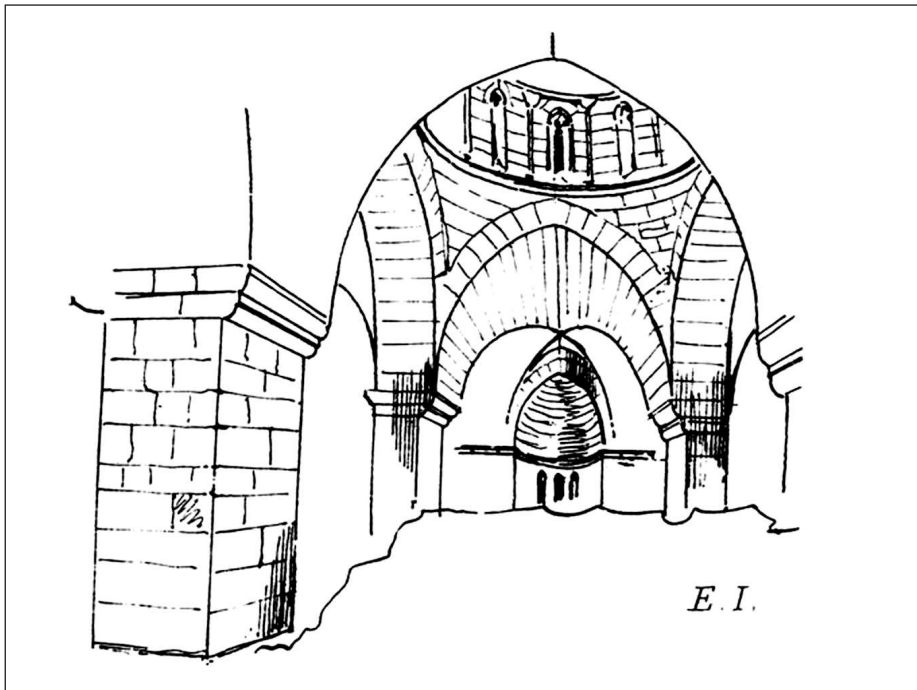


Figure 13. Hagios Epiphаний, Southern Nave in the 1880s – Edward L'Anson

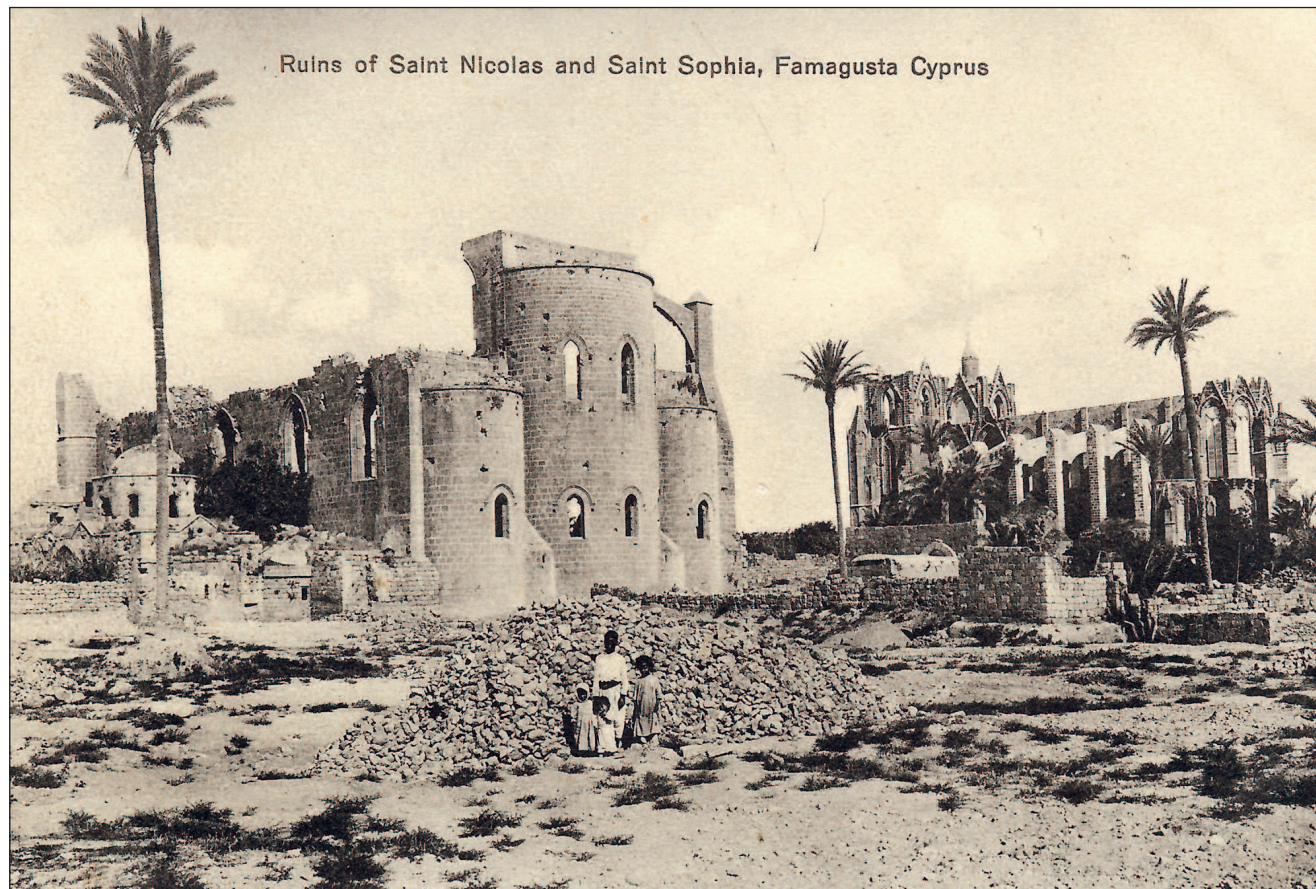


Figure 14. Hagios Epiphaios, Hagios Georgios, Saint Nicholas, c. 1900. Postcard by J.P. Foscolo – Collection of the Author



Figure 15. Hagios Georgios Exorinos – Thomas Kaffenberger

Figure 16.
Hagios Epiphnaios,
Southern Portal –
Thomas Kaffenberger



Figure 17. Hagios Georgios
Exorinos, Rest of Arch on
the South-West-Corner –
Thomas Kaffenberger

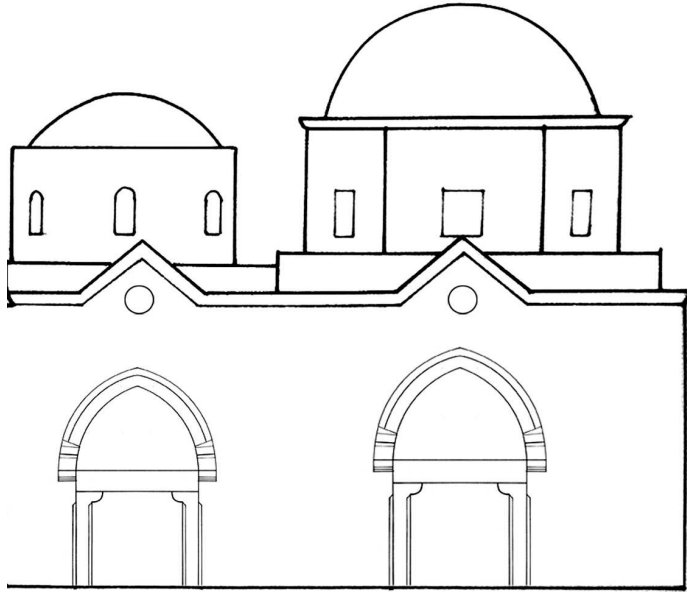


Figure 18. Hagios Epiphаний, Façade – Thomas Kaffenberger



Figure 19.
Hagios Georgios,
Southern Wall with
Northern Transept Wall
of Hagios Epiphaneios –
Thomas Kaffenberger



Figure 20.
Hagios Georgios,
Southern Wall, Vertical
Joint at the West End
of Hagios Epiphaneios –
Thomas Kaffenberger



Figure 21. Hagios Georgios and Hagios Epiphantos from South-West



Figure 22. Hagios Georgios, Excavation and Sorting of the Debris c. 1935 – Theophilus Mogabgab (?)



Figure 23. Hagios Georgios from West – Thomas Kaffenberger

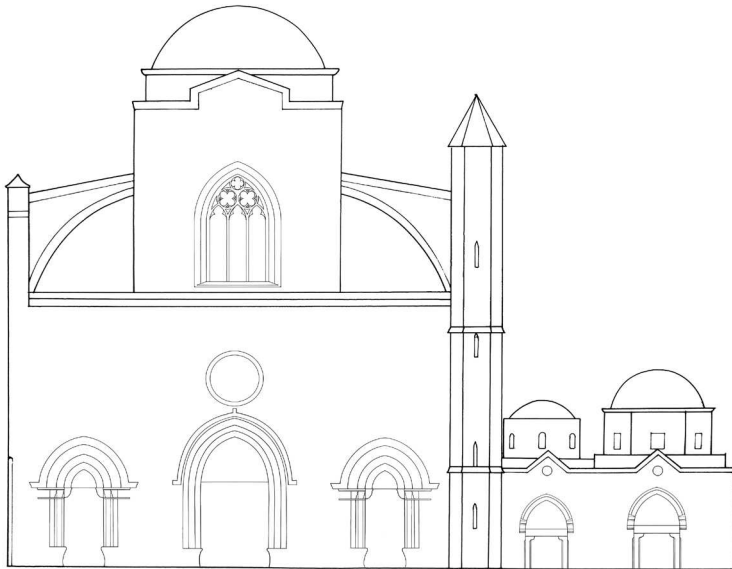


Figure 24. Hagios Georgios, Façade – Thomas Kaffenberger, 2012



Figure 25. *View of Famagusta*, Engraving, 1698 - Cornelis de Bruyn



Figure 26. Ss Peter and Paul, Nave Elevation – Thomas Kaffenberger



Figure 27. Hagios Georgios, Interior to East – Thomas Kaffenberger

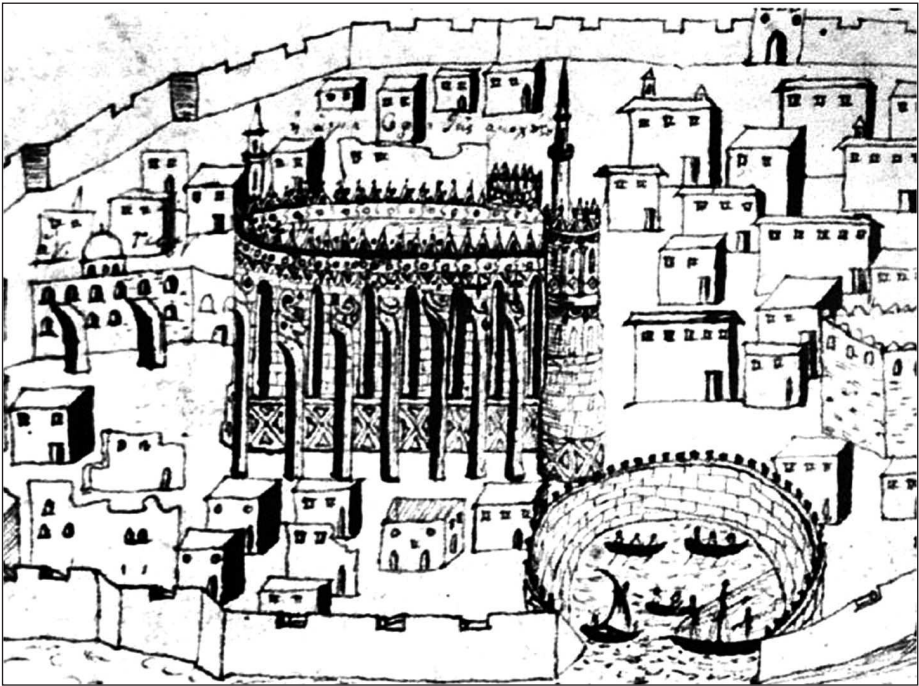


Figure 28. Birds-eye View of Famagusta, Detail, c. 1735 – Vasyl Barskyj

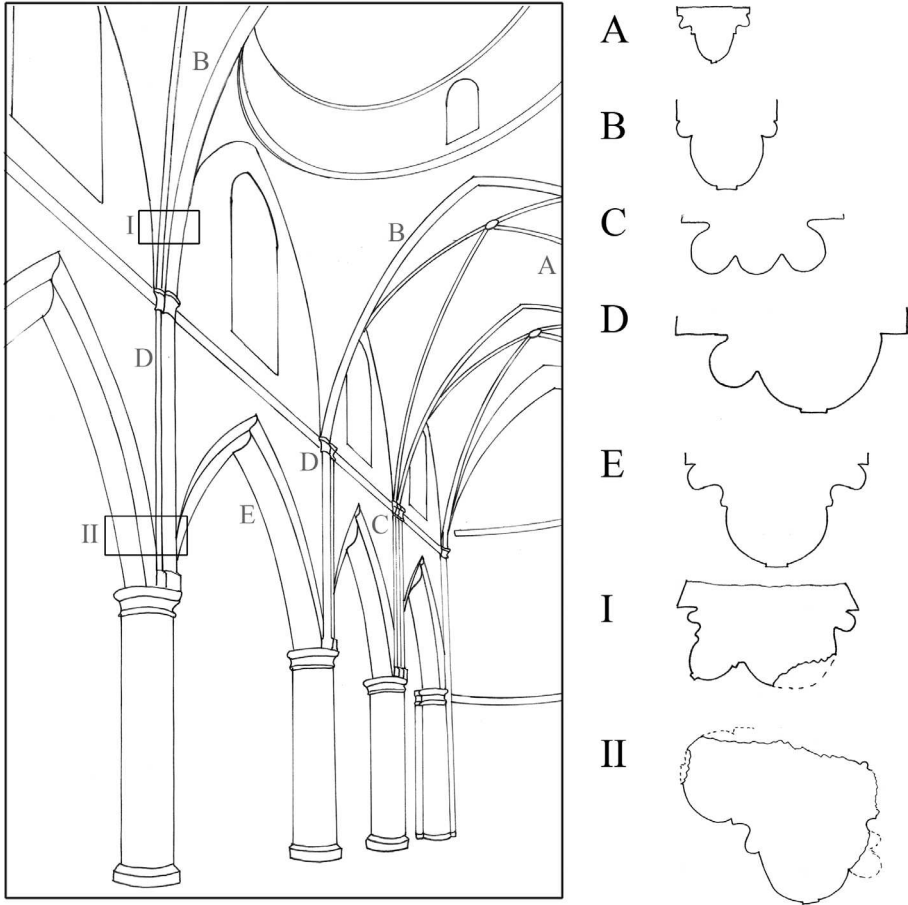


Figure 29. Hagios Georgios, Reconstruction of the Nave with Corresponding Profiles
– Thomas Kaffenberger, 2013



Figure 30. 3d-model of Hagios Georgios and Hagios Epiphаний – Sven J. Norris, 2013



Figure 31. Hagios Georgios, Enforced Pier – Thomas Kaffenberger