

ALLAN LANGDALE
Historian of Architecture
University of California at Santa Cruz

History and Hybridity in the Trapeza Church near Famagusta, Cyprus¹

I—Introduction

The church at Trapeza has been largely neglected in the art historical literature on medieval and early modern Cyprus, garnering only occasional attention from scholars in the field.² This is surprising because it is one of Cyprus's most intriguing and challenging structures. Moreover, it contains a significant example of medieval Cypriot mural art that has gone largely unstudied: a fragmentary Pantocrator in the earlier of the two domes of the church, possibly dating from the fourteenth century. This extraordinary fresco, even if partially ruined, deserves to take its place among the masterworks of medieval Cypriot art. Perhaps one reason that the church's architectural features have been overlooked is that there has typically been greater consideration accorded those Cypriot churches that contain noteworthy mural art, either in fresco or mosaic.³ If such pictorial remnants have justified ancillary discussions of architecture in earlier scholarship, then the revelation of the Trapeza Pantocrator supplies ample validation for a more comprehensive study of the church's architectural style and history.

The Trapeza church is a fascinating conundrum and its somewhat ungainly hybridity may have dampened the enthusiasm of researchers of previous eras. Camille Enlart was so underwhelmed that he wrote only a cursory description of it.⁴ However, the syncretism that once affronted the aesthetic refinement of earlier

1. I would like to thank Benjamin Arbel and Annemarie Weyl Carr for their generosity and advice on this article.

2. A few Greek and Greek Cypriot scholars have mentioned Trapeza briefly, but I have not been able to find a substantial account of either the church or the Pantocrator. Recently, the church has been used as an example of the destruction suffered by the churches of northern Cyprus. In these cases, the focus is merely on the vandalism and not on the church's architectural history or the Pantocrator's place in Cypriot mural art.

3. For example Papacostas T., Mango, C., & Grünbart, M. (2007) and Megaw, A. H. S. & Hawkins, E. J. W. (1977) among many others.

4. Enlart, 1987, pp. 316-17.

scholars—George Jeffery called the Trapeza church an “irregular piece of construction” and a “curious mixture of Byzantine and Gothic”⁵—has been replaced by a more positive contemporary interest in those very ‘curious mixtures’ that seem to define medieval Cypriot architecture. Indeed, such generative architectural fusions are now seen as eloquent material expressions of Cyprus’s poly-cultural history.

Jeffery was, however, partially correct in his observations. While at first giving a sense of general unity in both interior and exterior aspects, one finds that a pastiche quality dominates in the details, though this has less to do with compromised aesthetic standards—as Jeffery seemed to believe—and more to do with the building’s intricate construction history. The side aisles, to give an example, are illustrative of the church’s architectural variability. The south aisle is about three feet wider than the north, a bit higher, and the vaulting fluctuates in both height and techniques, with both barrel vaults and two slightly variant groin vaults, while only barrel vaults are used in the north. Strainer arches appear in both aisles, though not in any consistent style, springing in all cases (as is common on Cyprus) from hanging corbels. These features, among others, engendered Enlart’s accurate observation that the church bore “evidence of several stages of building...partly rebuilt on successive occasions”.⁶ Yet one only need consider the church of the Hodegetria (aka the ‘Bedestan’ or ‘St Nicholas’) in Nicosia/Lefkoşa, the church of the Theotokos in Trikomo/Iskele, or the Panagia Kanakaria in Lythrangomi/Boltaşli in the lower Karpas peninsula, to name just a few, to see that the Trapeza church is by no means unique among Cypriot churches in its disparate stylistic elements and agglutinative building history. Jeffery’s judgment was based on a desire for symmetry, an expectation regarding the balanced and proportional arrangements of basilicas. On Cyprus, however, asymmetrical conglomerations are common.

This report will give an account of the syncretic elements of the church and attempt to set these characteristics, albeit tentatively, within the framework of Cypriot ecclesiastical architecture. Since it was very likely one of the last churches to be built before the centuries of Ottoman rule, almost finished in 1571, it represents a final expression of Cypriot Orthodox architecture at the terminus of almost four centuries of Latin dominion and cultural hegemony. Although not exactly a summation of Cypriot Orthodox and Lusignan/Venetian hybridity, the church nonetheless coalesces into an amalgam that is quintessentially Cypriot in character, merging Byzantine and Latin forms and details; virtually an expression of an architectural *maniera Cypria*. Its hybridity is also very much a symptom of its historical moment—the brief eighty-two year period of Venetian rule—when Venetian

5. Jeffery, 1918, pp. 200-1.

6. Enlart, 1987, pp. 316-17.

ambitions for a revival of the island's economy proceeded by fits and starts. In some ways, the Trapeza church represents material evidence of these endeavors from 1489 to 1571, with signs that, like the revitalizations, construction campaigns advanced sporadically, leaving disparate traces behind in the building's composition. This chimerical fabric, nevertheless (*pace* Enlart and Jeffery) has a surprising architectural unity. The teams of masons who were involved over various decades adapted their contributions to the pre-existing structure and respected the building's overall architectonic effect.

This study will also offer a preliminary description of the Pantocrator fresco, which, although earlier in date than most of the building, is an important document of late medieval Cypriot mural art. When more thoroughly studied, the painting should engender renewed discussion about pictorial representation and style in Cypriot art; regional versus domestic and imported versus cosmopolitan. Even if it is difficult at this point to come to any conclusions about the attribution, date, or style of the fresco given its advanced state of decay and limitations of access, here, too, comparisons with other surviving and contemporaneous images will help to clarify the Trapeza Pantocrator's place in Cypriot visual culture.

II—The Historical Context of the Trapeza Church

The church at Trapeza lies 7.5 kilometers (4.66 miles) northwest of the Limassol Gate of the walled city of Famagusta, visible in a wide plain just south of the main road to Nicosia/Lefkosia.⁷ Although there is nothing there now except the church, in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period the village of Trapeza may have been one of the first significant habitations encountered when travelling from Famagusta to Nicosia.⁸ The name of the village denotes 'flat land', since 'Trapeza'

7. Florio Bustron fairly accurately describes the *casal* of Trapeza being "*due leghe lontan de Famagosta*". Bustron, (Mas Latrie) 1886, p. 404. It is also 3.6 km north of the village of Acheritou/Güvercinlik. The GPS coordinates for the church are 35° 07' 57.41" North and 33° 51' 28.63" East. Enlart wrote that the church lay between Famagusta and Prastio. This town, called Dörtüol by Turkish Cypriots, is still near the main road from Famagusta to Nicosia. It is 8.85 km (5.50 miles) northwest of Trapeza. This toponym could be related to the term *proasteion*, which referred to a hamlet or an agricultural estate in medieval Cyprus. See Papacostas, 1999, pp. 25-7. The Trapeza church falls outside the purview of Papacostas' otherwise impressively comprehensive study of the churches of Cyprus.

8. The medieval village awaits archaeological excavation. Unfortunately, the Department of Antiquities has left insufficient space around the church and the area of the ancient village has been under constant cultivation for decades, perhaps even centuries. One can find on the surface many shards of medieval and early modern Venetian pottery designs in the farmers' fields, especially those south of the church, where the shattered remains of another small Orthodox church can also be found, labeled "Agia Paraskevi" on some maps. Robbers have been active here and inside the Trapeza church, thus destroying or stealing valuable archaeological evidence.

or ‘Trapesa’ means ‘tableland’.⁹ Though the terrain is indeed quite level, the church occupies a subtle rise in the topography, in springtime making it appear as if it floats on a verdant sea of new wheat (Figs. 1-3).

The most significant date in the site’s history came with Trapeza’s destruction at the hands of Mamluke invaders in 1425, an event from which the habitation may not have immediately recovered.¹⁰ What did remain after the conflagration was the single dome of the principal church, probably dating from the fourteenth century. If the fragmentary remains of its piers are any indication, the dome must have teetered on its remaining, degraded supports (Fig. 4-5). That sole architectural remnant was later used as a locus around which to construct a much larger dome-hall ‘basilica’ in the sixteenth century.¹¹ This more monumental later structure—an impressive 22.0 meters long and 12.5 meters wide—extended the dimensions of the earlier church in all directions, but especially further east where a second dome of greater height than the earlier survivor was built, along with a new apse at the east end. At a diameter of 3.0 meters and a height of 10.66 meters, the newer dome ranks among Cyprus’s loftier renaissance-era domes (Fig. 6). A plan and axonometric projection shows the positions of the remaining piers of the earlier church in relation to the contemporary structure (Fig. 7-8).¹² Excavation or ground penetrating radar would provide a more accurate indication of the outline of the earlier structure, including the position of its apse.

9. The name of the village is spelled ‘Trapesa’ in some texts, as in Jeffery (1918, p. 200), or ‘Trapessa’, see Grivaud, (1998, p. 456). The word is also used to describe an Orthodox refectory, and while there may have been a monastic community attached to the church at some point, and a refectory for it, it does not seem likely that the village would derive its name from this feature. It is also the Modern Greek word for ‘bank’. In early modern maps, such as Pagano (1538) or Camocio (1566), the location is spelled *Trapazat*; see A. Stylianos & J. Stylianos (1980, pp. 22, 195, 210). The Trapeza of this article should not be confused with a village of the same name in the Kyrenia region of Cyprus.

10. The event is recorded in only passing references. George Hill only says that Trapeza and Kalopsida were burned by the invaders. Hill (1972, p. 472). See also Grivaud (1998, p. 305), who gives the date as 1425 for the second of three Mamluke campaigns. Most of the village’s non-ecclesiastical structures were likely made of traditional mud brick and timbers and thus would have been easily demolished. Whatever remained above ground would have long ago eroded away. Fairly extensive conservation work was done on the church by the Department of Antiquities. Work began in 1940, was interrupted by World War II, and then finished after the war in 1947. Photographs of the conservation work are kept in the Mogabgab Archive.

11. Although it is possible that the initial stages of reconstruction took place in the late fifteenth century. Papageorghiou claims that the apse and side aisles of the older church were destroyed in the sixteenth century, but gives no evidence for that assertion (Papageorghiou, 2010, p. 17). I have no additional evidence to refute this, but think that it is just as likely that these parts of the church were destroyed in the Mamluke invasion.

12. I surveyed the church in October of 2011, and I would like to thank Joanna Ostrowska for taking my measurements and creating the plan and elevation diagrams for this article.

The original designation of the church is unknown, though in modern times it was dedicated to the Virgin Panagia. In the early 1970s a British Defense Ministry map labels the church with the epithet *Chrysopolitissa* (an older and more famous church in Paphos has the same name). Despite Enlart's observations ca. 1896 that the church was abandoned, photographs in the archives of the Cyprus Department of Antiquities from before 1974 show an iconostasis in place.¹³ The post holes for it are still visible today, though not a splinter remains. A series of photographs that were taken during conservation work in 1947 show an empty apse, indicating that the iconostasis must have been erected between 1948 and 1973. Completely dismantled after 1974, its icons were likely peddled on the international art market. However, while the church may have been maintained in the later twentieth century with ecclesiastical furniture intact, Goodwin notes that there was no population there in 1974, and it is likely that there hadn't been for well over a century.¹⁴

Goodwin also uses the name *Khrysopolitissa* for the Trapeza church in his *Historical Toponymy of Cyprus* and cites René Mas Latrie as recording that Trapeza was "a ruined hamlet" in 1863.¹⁵ When Enlart visited in the 1880s he described it as a "disused church" and "abandoned".¹⁶ He does not give us any indication that there were signs of use in the recent past. Around the same time, Kitchener's famous 1885 map of Cyprus concurs with Enlart, labeling the site "Trapeza" but putting "ruins" in parentheses after it.¹⁷ Grivaud notes that there were only forty-four people living in the area in 1881.¹⁸ It seems quite certain, then, that the village of Trapeza was essentially abandoned by the latter part of the nineteenth century, and we know that the village and part of the fourteenth-century church were destroyed in 1425. The question that concerns us, then, is: when was the Trapeza church rebuilt on a larger and more ostentatious scale, and did this ambitious architectural project correspond with a revitalization of the village of Trapeza itself?

As early as 1394 Nicholas Martoni had noted that many villages near Famagusta were abandoned:

Outside the city of Famagosta there were formerly large and populous villages—I reckon there were two thousand hearths—and in them many fair churches. But now the said villages are wholly destroyed, so that there is not one sound house, and not one person lives there.¹⁹

13. Papageorghiou, 2010, p. 17.

14. Goodwin, 1985, p. 1600.

15. Goodwin, 1985, p. 1599.

16. Enlart, 1987, p. 316.

17. Kitchener, 1885, no page.

18. Grivaud & Patapiou, 1996, p. 114, n. 189.

19. *Excerpta Cypria*, 1908, p. 24.

As Famagusta's fortunes waxed and waned over the centuries, so too did the fortunes of the countryside.²⁰ Such desertions, it seems, were common in Cyprus over many epochs as chronicles are filled with references to the depletions of rural areas because of earthquakes, drought, locusts, pillaging, or pestilence. Trapeza's destruction came a mere thirty-one years after Martoni's bleak observations, and thus the derelict village may have joined many others in contributing to the general impression of desolation in the countryside. Goodwin claims that the feudal estate (*casal*) of Trapeza was owned by Louis Salvago in 1437, just a decade after the Mamluke attack, but he gives no indication that the village was viable at that time.²¹ The first murmurings in the archival record of attempts to rebuild Trapeza come forty-three years after the Mamluke raid, in 1469 when James II granted four-hundred *besants* to Philippe Singlitico for the restoration of houses in Trapeza.²² Yet it is another generation before evidence of Trapeza's restoration appears in the cartographic record. The settlement is placed in its correct location as 'Trapazat' in Matheo Pagano's map of Cyprus of 1538, and again as 'Trapeza' on Leonida Attar's map of Cyprus from 1542.²³ Given these dates, Trapeza's return to viability may well have been delayed about a century, languishing in ruination after the Mamluke attack, through the last decades of Lusignan rule, and then through the reign of Caterina Cornaro and the early decades of Venetian governance. Whatever the history of Trapeza, we can safely infer that the construction of the new church, incorporating the older ruins, was a project aimed at emphasizing the sacredness of the location and, perhaps, the martyrdom of those killed there by the Muslim invaders, if not paralleling a renaissance of the village itself.

Since we do not know the original designation of the church it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions about its status as a site of pilgrimage or devotion. The high quality masonry and complex architectural form indicates that it had a significant sacred charge incited by either a popular Marian icon or the presence of some venerated relics. Since we also do not know the size of Trapeza in the fourteenth century it is difficult to evaluate the church's original importance to its contemporaneous medieval community. Churches from this period need not have been close to a village or town. The original Trapeza church was probably very similar in design to the small thirteenth-century church of Agios Ephimianos (aka Themonianos; see Fig. 9) 2.25 km southwest of Lysi/Akdoğan and merely 18 km west-southwest of the Trapeza church.²⁴ That church stands in the countryside 2.5

20. Grivaud, 1998, p. vii-xiv.

21. Goodwin, 1985, p. 1599.

22. Grivaud, 1998, p. 366.

23. Romanelli & Grivaud, 2006.

24. Other examples of typical small, centrally planned single-domed churches not far from

kilometers outside of town. Such small, single domed cruciform churches are found all over Cyprus in both rural and urban contexts. However, the quality of materials, workmanship, and scale that we currently find at Trapeza would be somewhat surprising for a rural church. In some ways the building itself is the best evidence for a revitalized habitation at Trapeza at some time in the early to mid-sixteenth century.

The dating of both the older and the newer constructions presents us with challenges. Since Trapeza was destroyed in 1425 the newer sections of the church must have been built within the approximately one-hundred and fifty year period between 1426 and 1571. This range can be narrowed in that it seems unlikely that rebuilding would have proceeded immediately. King Janus's reign, during which the Mamluke invasion took place, was to end in 1432. One is tempted to see the considerable funds needed for such a substantial building coming from royal, noble, or state patronage. The alternatives are few: the reigns of John II (1432-58), Charlotte and Louis of Savoy (1458-64), James II (1464-73), and, finally, Queen Catherine Cornaro (1473-89), which began an era of Venetian hegemony, though this was not made official until 1489 when Catherine abdicated her throne to the Venetian Senate. The Venetians ruled overtly from 1489 to 1571. There is a dating stone on the south wall but the year is difficult to read due to substantial erosion of the block. Rupert Gunnis may have been able to see this inscription in better condition in the 1930s, however, as he confidently asserts that "the only date shown [there] being 1563, which must refer to a half-hearted attempt by the Venetians to restore it".²⁵ Gunnis also claims that there had been extensive irrigation work done in the area in 1899, and that "...in the course of these remains of a Venetian dam were discovered".²⁶ This is interesting information because the Venetians were energetic in their hydrological projects when they gained control of the island, both in terms of irrigation for agriculture and water supply for cities such as nearby Famagusta.²⁷ Goodwin also notes that the ruins of a Venetian-era bridge, the *Jestuary de Trapeza*, were close to the church.²⁸ In this light, the rebuilding of the Trapeza church may have played an essential role in a larger revitalization project for the area, which may also have included the rebuilding of the village for immigrant farmers from Greece or Venice's other Aegean holdings. Benjamin Arbel notes that a Cypriot nobleman, Hector Tripoli, "...requested in 1513 to receive in lease uncultivated lands in the Mesaoria in order to build a

Trapeza include the church of Agios Andronikos near Frenaros and the churches of Agias Mamas and Panagia Chordakiotissa in Sotira.

25. Gunnis, 1936, pp. 154-5.

26. Gunnis, 1936, pp. 155.

27. Arbel, 1996.

28. Goodwin, 1985, p. 1600.

small village, to be populated by foreign peasants".²⁹ Tripoli's request indicates confidence about the area's agricultural potential, an optimism that may have also extended to other Mesaorian villages such as Trapeza.³⁰

For the Venetians, augmenting the island's population was a significant challenge and the newly refurbished church surely played some part in the Venetian scheme to rejuvenate the agricultural productivity of Trapeza. This activity would accord with the sixteenth-century painted pottery shards visible in the furrows of farmers' fields nearby, artifacts that indicate some fairly prosperous families. That the building of the new Trapeza church might have paralleled Venetian revitalization projects is supported by both Arbel's work on the Cypriot population under Venetian rule and the cartographic evidence cited above.³¹ Indeed, the richness of the cartographic record, especially Leonida Attar's 'Great Map' of the island of 1542, is an eloquent signifier of Venetian colonial ambitions and organization, recording current locations of the villages and towns of the island and its relevant watercourses, mountains, and anchorages. As both a geographical and a colonial tool the map supplements contemporaneous reports on the population and classes of Cyprus, as well as assessments of the island's natural resources, as antecedents to the maximization of the colony's productivity. The map thus played a role in laying the groundwork for immanent recovery schemes. Attar, himself a Cypriot, was more directly involved in construction projects. He was a professional engineer who specialized in bridge design, receiving a type of patent from the Venetian Senate for his novel method of spanning rivers and canals.³² He was also schooled in designs for military architecture, having assisted Michele Sanmicheli, Venice's premiere military architect, in his renovations of the Venice's own fortifications at the *fortezza* of San Nicolò del Lido.³³ Later, Attar also supported the efforts of Michele's nephew Giangirolamo Sanmicheli with designs for shoring up Cyprus's defensive architecture. An enticing detail in Attar's map is an elegant arched bridge appearing just west of the two towers that indicate the location of Trapeza. One wonders whether the *Jestuary de Trapeza* bridge might have been designed by Attar himself.

The evidence in the Trapeza church's architecture, which points to sporadic construction campaigns, parallels the fitful starts of Venetian recovery projects.

29. Arbel, 1984, p. 188.

30. Although geographically Trapeza is situated in the Mesaoria's eastern end, administratively it was part of the Famagusta district. In medieval times, according to George Hill, Famagusta was included in the Mesaoria. More specifically, Trapeza was in the district of Sigouri or 'Sivouri'. The Lusignan-era Sigouri Castle, now ruined, was just 8.8 km (5.46 miles) west of Trapeza. See George Hill (1948) vol. 2, p. 12 n. 2.

31. Arbel, 1984.

32. Romanelli & Grivaud, 2006, p. 26.

33. Romanelli & Grivaud, 2006, p. 26.

Arbel's studies indicate that the Cypriot countryside, and even its towns, remained severely depopulated well into the 1490s, the first years of Venetian rule.³⁴ One contributing factor, though its total impact may have been minor, was the plague, which continued from the fifteenth century into the sixteenth century. Arbel notes that twenty-five percent of Kyrenia's citizens may have died in the outbreak of 1505.³⁵ Other stresses hampered initial Venetian efforts, such as invasions of locusts, a common occurrence in Cyprus. One such pestilence occurred in 1510, a disaster that was augmented in that same year by an outbreak of a deadly fever in Famagusta, perhaps malaria, that killed seven hundred.³⁶ This lethal pattern was repeated with the plague revisiting the island in 1523 and again in 1533, when the plague in Famagusta "...raged there for about four or five months, carrying away between 2,000 and 3,000 victims".³⁷ Trapeza was specifically named among the habitations affected by the 1533 outbreak, especially in the month of April when the disease was claiming seven to eight victims a day in the casals of Triкомо, Trapeza and Pomo d'Adamo.³⁸ That observers mention Trapeza at all implies that it had, at least by then, become viable again. Arbel's work suggests that the diligence with which the Venetians embarked on schemes to increase population and to improve sanitation, water supply, quarantine, and agricultural productivity, appears to have led to a general enhancement of both the quantity of labourers and the quality of Cypriot life after 1515, even considering frequent setbacks. These decades provide the socio-economic backdrop for the Trapeza church's sequential, frequently interrupted building campaigns, eventually resulting in its unique architectural hybridization.

The hypothesis that Trapeza took part in this general recovery is also supported by its continued appearance on maps of the later sixteenth century, being clearly marked on a 1573 map by Giacomo Franco. One cannot be sure of Franco's sources –information was often uncritically plagiarized from earlier maps, such as the ones by Pagano and Attar– but it does encourage us to think there was some contemporary evidence that indicated a significant habitation. Further evidence of Trapeza's sixteenth-century prosperity comes from the area's most illustrious Venetian-era inhabitant, Pietro Valderio, the author of *La Guerra di Cipro* (a famous account of the Ottoman invasion of Cyprus) who writes in 1570 that he had a villa there.³⁹ Thus it would seem that the Mamluke destruction of the first quarter

34. Arbel, 1984, p. 184.

35. Arbel, 1984, p. 185.

36. Arbel, 1984, p. 185.

37. Arbel, 1984, p. 185.

38. Grivaud, 1998, p. 297.

39. Grivaud & Patapiou, 1996, pp. 3, 51, 114. Valderio writes: "...et verso sera vennero alla mia villa di Trapessa loco distante da Famagosta tre miglia." (Grivaud & Patapiou, 1996, p. 51).

of the fifteenth century was more than made up for by the last quarter of the sixteenth, just in time for it all to be inherited by the Ottomans.⁴⁰ While Trapeza continues to be found on many seventeenth-century maps, it is uncertain whether Trapeza continued to be viable in the eighteenth-century. From an unnamed source Goodwin notes that Trapeza had seventy-two taverns in 1707, though he's rightly skeptical.⁴¹ The Western cartographic record, to the extent that it can be regarded as accurate through Ottoman times, suggests that Trapeza persisted through the seventeenth century, appearing on several maps of that era –W. J. Blaeu (1635), O. Dapper (1688), N. Sanson & P. Mariette (1658), J. L. Gotofred (1649), J. Janssonius (1637)– though this could merely be indicative of the faithful copying of earlier sixteenth century maps. In eighteenth-century maps, however, Trapeza appears very rarely, such as on Jauna's 1747 map of the island, perhaps indicating the decline of the village.⁴² Otherwise, Trapeza seems to disappear from the cartographic record in that century, never to return.

Taking Gunnis at his word about the 1563 dedication date, which, owing to the discussion above seems very credible, we might recall the political situation in Cyprus at this time. As in Venice's other colonies such as Crete, the relationship with the indigenous population was not always harmonious. The Cypriot Orthodox Church, at the time of the advent of Venetian rule, had already been dominated by Latin Catholics for almost three centuries. The Venetians continued the pattern of 'foreign' occupation, taking over from the medieval crusader dynasty of the Lusignans. After the middle of the sixteenth century, when an attack by the Ottomans seemed imminent, the Venetians took steps to win over the Greek-speaking and Orthodox populous, attempting to gain their assistance –or, at least, not their hostility– in the event of an Ottoman invasion. Donations to Orthodox institutions such as monasteries increased during this time, right up to the time of the invasion itself.⁴³ There is evidence, too, that by this late period of Venetian rule the relationships between Greeks and Venetians were better than some historians like to claim. Arbel has argued that in the later years of Venetian control Greek Cypriot noble families had reached a degree of rapprochement with the Venetians.⁴⁴ These Cypriot nobles were able to make considerable profits from a close working relationship with Venetians and were, especially after the 1550s, able to reap financial rewards from being the lords of villages that controlled productive agricultural zones.⁴⁵ Cypriot noble-

40. Ottoman census records indicate ninety-two families in Trapeza not long after the invasion. Personal communication, Benjamin Arbel.

41. Goodwin, 1984, p. 1599.

42. Stylianou & Stylianou, 1980, p. 372.

43. Aristidou, 2003, p. 41.

44. Arbel, 1989 & 1998.

45. Arbel, 2000, p. 40.

men could also be made district governors or nominated as Viscounts, attesting to a normalized attitude towards administrative responsibilities and the managing of Cypriot affairs.⁴⁶ These factors seem to form at least part of the social context of the series of additions to the Trapeza church. A revitalization of the village of Trapeza, as a pragmatic attempt to rejuvenate the agricultural productivity of the area, may have been coupled with religious patronage that would have rebuilt the church on a monumental scale, possibly indicating a more co-operative relationship between Venetian overlords and Orthodox subjects. While the hybridity of the Trapeza church may reflect sporadic building campaigns, it may also parallel the hybridized social landscape in Cyprus, which, after a generation of Venetian rule, seems to have stabilized, at least in the upper echelons. As Arbel notes, the loyalty of Cypriot noble families to their Venetian overlords was reflected in numerous matrimonial alliances through mid-century.⁴⁷ Whether the patronage of the Trapeza church originated from Orthodox Cypriots or Catholic Venetians, or a Veneto-Cypriot family, we shall likely never know. However, we can conclude that the revivification of the village of Trapeza and its church was paralleled by a significant increase in Orthodox ecclesiastical patronage in Cyprus in general. Arbel notes the impressive number of examples of the patronage of art and architecture during these years, including not only church construction and enlargements but extensive mural paintings as well.⁴⁸

One tantalizing clue to the new Trapeza church's patronage may lie in the distinctively groin vaulted west bay of the south side aisle. This vault is decorated with a type of capstone usually reserved for a rib vault. It has a relief carved on it, but it is very difficult to see, having been covered with a thick layer of soot. It appears to be a radial floral design, which was a common motif on the capstones of rib vaults through the Lusignan period. It may indicate a funerary chapel in that quadrant of the structure, or perhaps a chapel dedicated to some important saint. Yet here, too, the chapel's presence would not seem to justify the entire new construction at Trapeza unless the patron was especially motivated and generous. Such a scenario is entirely possible, of course, but we lack sufficient information about Cypriot or Veneto-Cypriot families whose patronage would be directed to this locality. One candidate might be from one of Cyprus's most important families of the era, the Singlitico. We might recall that in 1469 Philippe Singlitico received four-hundred *besants* for the restorations of houses in Trapeza.⁴⁹ Perhaps the

46. Arbel, 2000, p. 45.

47. Arbel, 2000, p. 45.

48. Arbel, 2000, p. 42. See note 21. Though Arbel also notes that this moment of co-operation was short lived, and relations began to sour around 1560, on the eve of the Ottoman invasion (Arbel, 2000, 46-48).

49. Grivaud, 1998, p. 366.

Singlitico had close ties to Trapeza and their patronage explains the substantial quality of the new church.

There is circumstantial evidence that the initial stages of rebuilding of the Trapeza church may have begun in late Lusignan times, perhaps even during Caterina Cornaro's reign, rather than the later Venetian period. There are several instances of a motif that one finds in several variant forms in most Lusignan-era buildings, which could be described as a sort of dart and ball element. Figure 10 shows an example of the motif at Trapeza. Other than the wild rose, another ubiquitous Lusignan symbol, these dart and ball designs (they often look wider, appearing like military medals on ribbons) are common signifiers of Lusignan patronage. The designs at Trapeza are the most slender and elongated examples of the design, but one finds similar ones, not quite so tapering, in the west and north portals of the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Famagusta. The closest in style to the Trapeza examples, perhaps not surprisingly, are found on the Venetian-era Orthodox church of the *Stavros Missirikou* ('Church of the Cross Inside the Walls') in Nicosia where, in fact, several variations on the motif can be found on the one building. The presence of this motif, however provocative as it may be, is no guarantee that the church was constructed during Lusignan times, since masons may have continued using it as a standardized decoration well into the Venetian era.

III—Architecture of the Trapeza Church

The Trapeza church's major architectural features are varied and intriguing, both in plan and elevation. In some ways the church can be paralleled with other churches on Cyprus. As suggested at the beginning of the essay, the hybridity of the structure is matched by a similar hybridity in other Cypriot Byzantine and post-Byzantine edifices. At the same time, the Trapeza church exhibits some unique characteristics. One of the most distinctive elements of the Trapeza church is its single, central apse (Fig. 11). In basilicas in general, and in the Cypriot variant often called the dome-hall church a triple-apse or trichonos formation is typical, where the nave and the flanking side aisles all terminate in similar semi-circular apses, though the central apse is wider and usually higher.⁵⁰ There are also bichonic arrangements in Cyprus, found at churches such as the Panagia Theotokos in Trikomo/Iskele. We find the trichonos configuration in Cyprus's earliest basilicas, such as Agia Trias or the large basilicas of Epiphanius and Campanopetra at Salamis. The early churches at Afendrika also follow this pattern. At the Panagia Kanakaria the smaller flanking apses seem to have functioned as the *prothesis* and

50. See Papagheorgiou, 1982, pp. 472-3.

the *diaconikon* of the church in the north and south apses respectively. However, while at Trapeza the axial and symmetrical basilica plan is fairly emphatic, the aisles culminate in walls that are flat in their interior and exterior aspects, a fairly rare composition on Cyprus. Yet there are analogous arrangements and one is found on one of the island's most important churches a mere 5.8 km (3.16 miles) from the Trapeza church: the basilica of St Barnabas, dedicated to Cyprus's patron saint. The outlines of an earlier, longer structure are still visible there, though in ruin. In the earlier version of St Barnabas' east end the south aisle ended in a semi-circular apse, manifested both internally and externally, while the north aisle ended on a flat wall on the interior and exterior.⁵¹ However, when rebuilt in subsequent centuries –possibly during the Venetian period but likely much earlier– both side aisles were squared off and left flat.⁵² I can think of no better model for this element of Trapeza's plan than St Barnabas, one of the region's most revered ecclesiastical structures. While the overall mono-apsidal organization of the east end at Trapeza is quite uncommon, the lone apse displays a feature quite familiar on Cyprus, being semi-circular in the interior but polygonal on the exterior (Figs. 7 & 11).⁵³

There is a significant interior feature at Trapeza that also involves the east end. The central apse communicates with the ends of the side aisles through arched passageways (Fig. 12). These passageways are found in many Cypriot churches, even ones as old as those at Salamis and the Chrysopolitissa and Asomatos churches at Afendrika. Such inter-apsidal openings also appear in later churches, such as the Panagia Kanakaria. These portals facilitated the priests' movements from the altar/bema to the flanking *diaconikon* or *prothesis* without having to cross the boundary of the bema into the body of the church itself. In a sense, these passages functioned to further demark the sacredness of the apse/bema and physically link the altar with the ancillary spaces of the *diaconikon* and *prothesis*. They were also, one assumes, simply more convenient for the priests, who could move behind the templon/chancel screen or iconostasis, to the different sacral areas of the church's east end.

The dome-hall form at Trapeza is, like many other churches on Cyprus, derived from a cumulative building history. As we have noted, the original church at Trapeza was a simple single-domed church in the typical quincunx formation, similar in design to the nearby Agios Ephimianos (Fig. 9). In the later construction, the new church incorporated the older church into a new configuration. This type

51. Megaw, 1974, pp. 78-9.

52. Jeffery, 1916, pp. 123-25.

53. Papageorhiou, 1985, p. 493.

of supplemental expansion is by no means uncommon on Cyprus. We find similar processes at work in the church of Agios Michael in Frenaros or Agios Georgios in Sotira (Fig. 13), where additional traditional cross-in-square churches are added on to earlier ones of similar design. The effect is not as harmonious as at Trapeza. In these churches it appears as if a new church was simply glued on to the earlier church rather than an addition made to generate a single architectural entity. Still, the impulse to create a nave-like central access leading to the central apse is comparable.

The sixteenth-century construction at Trapeza also utilizes a distinctive type of arch that one finds in other Cypriot ecclesiastical monuments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: a very broad arch with a slight point. These arches are found spanning the pairs of piers north and south of the newer dome (Figs. 8 & 14). Similar arches appear in the enlargements of the Panagia Theotokos in Trikomo/Iskele and many other Cypriot churches renovated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, often supported on squat columnar piers only a few feet high. Architecturally, this form of arch does not appear particularly stable, though many have nonetheless survived for centuries in Cyprus's uncommonly seismic geography. One church in which a project of expansion may have been abandoned because of the instability of such an arch is the church of the Panagia in Kampyli/Hisarköy (Fig. 15). A view of the exterior south flank of the church reveals traces of the profile of just such an arch supported by low piers. But the arch's profile is slightly askew, providing visual evidence suggestive of why the arch was eventually walled up and the expansion abandoned. Another example of this type of arch is found in the small ruined church in the village of Syngrassi/Sınırüstü, where one of the arches has collapsed while the other retains its integrity.

The Trapeza church was not quite completed in 1570 when the Ottomans conquered the island. The south aisle seems to have been left unfinished, leaving a gap that was later filled in with a wooden construction, perhaps a roofed porch; a feature one finds in other forms in several later Orthodox churches in Cyprus. Today, the porch is gone, leaving a gap in the church's southwest corner (Figs. 3 & 7).

Such are the essential characteristics of the Trapeza church's architectural components. A more comprehensive study would no doubt be rewarding. As one of the last churches to be constructed in the final years of Venetian control, the later additions are very much indicators of that era. The earlier building, which I have given only cursory attention herein, also awaits further, more detailed study. Excavation of the church and the surrounding area would enable scholars to generate an even more complete account of the structure's architectural and social history.

IV—The Trapeza Pantocrator

Doula Mouriki, in her landmark study of thirteenth-century Cypriot icons, outlined the myriad complications of Cypriot icon painting, complexities that also find expression in Cypriot mural painting.⁵⁴ These and other contextual issues have also been dealt with in the exemplary writings of Annemarie Weyl Carr, who has examined in both general terms and in detailed case studies the cultural intricacies of medieval and Venetian painting on Cyprus and in the Byzantine world in general.⁵⁵ From the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, stylistic influences from Constantinople were fused with indigenous Cypriot and Latin styles. Latin influences came to Cyprus through Lusignan crusader art and, increasingly through later centuries, from Italy when both Venetian and Genoese patronage became more prevalent. Many paintings executed in Cyprus, especially during the three centuries of Lusignan rule, are thus tantalizing puzzles of attribution and stylistic syncretism. While such sophisticated cross-pollination might provide contemporary art historians with challenging problems, it also made for a fascinating and dynamic corpus of works. When writing about thirteenth-century Cypriot icons, for example, Mouriki concluded that: "...the Island clearly emerges as [one of] the most vigorous artistic centers among the Crusader states of the Eastern Mediterranean".⁵⁶ This vibrant creative ambience endured in subsequent centuries. While the Trapeza Pantocrator (Figs. 16-17) was a product of this rarified artistic environment, art historical hypotheses about its style and date must be considered tentative given its dilapidated condition. However, I have proceeded nonetheless, anticipating that future conservation work will result in more informed interpretations.

The image of the Pantocrator ('Ruler of the Universe') is a well-known subject appearing often in the domes of Byzantine/Orthodox churches.⁵⁷ The image typically shows a frontally posed, bearded Christ from the chest up with a large cross nimbus. He holds a book—sometimes open, sometimes closed—in his left hand while his right is held in a blessing gesture that varies slightly from image to image. Consistent with this general ubiquity there are many depictions of the Pantocrator in the domes of the medieval churches of Cyprus. One finds instances, for example, in the churches at Lagoudera, Trikomo/Iskele, Asinou (in the narthex), Antiphonitis, Pera Chorio, Pelendri, Kakopetria (St Nicholas of the Roof / Nicolaos tis Stegis), and the frescoes formerly in the church of Agios Ephimianos

54. Mouriki, 1986.

55. Weyl Carr, 2005.

56. Mouriki, 1986, 61.

57. However, see the discussion in J. T. Matthews, (1973).

(Themonianos) near Lysi/Akdoğan.⁵⁸ A consistent feature of each of these Cypriot Pantocrators is that they show Christ holding a closed book. The Trapeza Pantocrator, however, holds an open book, perhaps demarking it as a specific subcategory of the Pantocrator sometimes called ‘Christ the Teacher’. As far as I know the only other Cypriot Pantocrator in a dome that holds an open book was in the medieval church at Avgasida, only 10 km (6.2 miles) north of Trapeza, but this was destroyed in 1974 (Fig. 18). The lettering on the Trapeza book is illegible, but it was common for Gospel passages to appear, such as the one from Matthew: ‘Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28).⁵⁹ These words appear, for example, in the Pantocrator mural (not in a dome) in the Cypriot church of St Neophytus near Paphos.⁶⁰ One easily imagines devotees who had spent long days working in the fields to be especially welcomed by such a passage. However, other quotations from the Gospels were also common, such as from John 8:12, ‘I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life’.⁶¹ A closed book in the left hand of the Pantocrator is sometimes interpreted as signifying the Last Judgment, or Christ as judge holding the closed book of the elect who will go to heaven. The open book, by contrast, emphasizes that salvation is still attainable.

Thomas F. Mathews has stressed the mystical function of the Pantocrator as a hovering presence of God over the laity, engendering the transformational experience of the Eucharistic rites.⁶² One can easily imagine the effect on the congregation of the panoptical presence of such an image, its eyes ever open, suspended in the curving space of the dome and eerily illuminated by the drum’s lancets. The Pantocrator in the dome has also been understood as having Trinitarian references, as the Pantocrator signifies both Christ and God the Father. In the Orthodox liturgy the priest incants the anaphora with the words: ‘O Being, Master, Lord, God, Father, Pantocrator, Adored...’, indicating Christ’s oneness with God the Father.⁶³ Other scholars, such as H el ene Grigoriadou, have seen in the Pantocrator a reference to the Ascension of Christ, especially when angels and Mary are also present in the drum or dome.⁶⁴

58. Which, after decades housed at the Menil Foundation in Houston, were recently repatriated to the Makarios Cultural Centre in Nicosia in 2012. See Weyl Carr (1991). See Velmans (1984) for a general discussion of Cypriot domes and Pantocrators and scenes of the *hettomasia*.

59. See the entry on the icon of the image of Christ from the church of St Marina, Kouskiou, in Talbot-Rice p. 250 and plate 38, image 103.

60. Mango & Hawkins, 1966, p. 169.

61. Mathews, 1986, p. 210.

62. Mathews, 1986, pp. 205-8. See a counter argument in Barber (1983).

63. Barber, 1993, p. 13.

64. Weyl Carr, 1991, p. 50.

Christ's hand gesture also helps us understand the possible nuances of the image's meaning. As Weyl Carr notes of the Lysi Pantocrator, Christ's thumb and ring finger are held together, instead of the more usual arrangement of the thumb meeting both the ring finger and small finger. At Lysi, the fingers are arranged in a complex gesture to indicate the significant letters of Christ's name (IC XC; letters that are reiterated at Lysi on either side of Christ's head). According to Weyl Carr this gesture can also indicate a variant of the Pantocrator, the Christ Antiphonites, the 'One Who Responds' (i.e. to one's prayers for salvation).⁶⁵ Since the *antiphon* or 'call and response' is such a central part of Orthodox rites (the priest recites or sings and the congregation responds), the Christ Antiphonites also alludes to the rituals that unfold under his omniscient gaze. While one can just make out indistinct parts of upraised fingers in the Trapeza Pantocrator, it is not possible to clearly see the gesture, but given the open book one does not expect Christ the stern judge, but, perhaps, a variant signifying Christ Antiphonites or Christ the Teacher, with Christ offering redemption through the Word of God with the open book and the gesture of blessing. Thus Christ's role as savior is stressed over his role as divine judge. However, having said this, there seems to have been little consistency between the open or closed book or the nuances of gesture. The panel icon of Christ from Lagoudera, for example, has the gesture of the Antiphonites but holds a closed book, as does the Lysi Pantocrator. Weyl Carr also notes that such Pantocrator images are sometimes "associated with contexts of personal devotion or intercession," and one wonders if the original Trapeza church had a single patron for whom the church served, at least in part, as a private chapel.⁶⁶

One could attempt to further taxonomize the Trapeza Pantocrator by comparing it to related Cypriot panel icons. There is, for example, the late twelfth-century double-sided icon of Christ with saints from the Church of the Panagia Araka in Lagoudera (which also has a frescoed Pantocrator in its dome),⁶⁷ or, from the same period, the icon of Christ from the monastery of Agios Neophytus, this one with an open Gospel.⁶⁸ These images probably predate the Trapeza fresco, while there are others that probably postdate it, such as the sixteenth-century icon, also from Agios Neophytus, and the icon dated 1554 by the painter George at Ktima. These

65. Weyl Carr 1991, pp. 54-55.

66. Weyl Carr, 1991, pp. 54-55.

67. For the 12th century Lagoudera icon see Papageorgiou, 1970 [frontispiece]. See also Mouriki (1986, p. 17-18 and Fig. 1). The icon, originally from the iconostasis at Lagoudera, is currently in the Makarios Cultural Center Museum in Nicosia, Cyprus.

68. Papageorgiou, 1970, p. 23 and 96.

also hold open Gospels.⁶⁹ On Cyprus, earlier depictions on domes tend to show Pantocrators with closed books, while later instances tend to show open books, perhaps indicating a change in style or some doctrinal shift in the Cypriot Church.

The fragmentary nature of the Trapeza Pantocrator obliges us to tend even more closely than usual to the surviving details. The general arrangement of Christ's hair in Pantocrator images is quite standardized, yet there are subtle variations in artists' styles. Generally, the bearded Christ has long hair, parted down the middle, almost always falling on either side of his head and neck in an undulating cascade. Usually these locks fall quite symmetrically along the neck, though in some Pantocrators the hair bulges somewhat on one side, such as on the Pantocrators at the Pangia Theotokos at Trikomo/Iskele (Fig. 19) and the Avgasida Pantocrator (Fig. 18). This variation is also quite obvious in the icon of Christ with saints from Lagoudera in the Makarios Cultural Centre Museum in Nicosia. In the Trapeza image, however, one can discern the more balanced and symmetrical curves of Christ's hair along the neck.

Christ's beard and mouth, unhappily, are totally lost. Since shepherds have used the church as a shelter and built fires (much of the south vaulting, like the dome, is covered in black soot), they may have knocked out a stone in the dome to create a chimney. Equally disturbing is the loss of Christ's eyes, both of them shot out in a thoughtless act of iconoclasm. Indeed, the face is pocked with bullet holes. However, Christ's left eye was not completely destroyed. About a third of it survives, giving the general shape and showing part of the white and a small crescent of the pupil. Parts of the arched eyebrows are also visible. These details are invaluable traces that may assist future restorers.

In most Pantocrator images the right hand is held off to the side, away from the body, as at Lagoudera or Lysi, while at Trapeza Christ's elbow is bent and the hand is held somewhat awkwardly in front of the body. This is exceptional among Cypriot Pantocrator images. One can clearly see the variation of this pose indicated in the drapery lines of Christ's himation on the far left side of the image, where the shoulder curves down the upper arm and then clearly indicates the turn of the elbow to the forearm (Figs. 16 & 17). These light lines, which indicate the complex folds of Christ's clothing, resemble the 'chrysography' one finds in other Cypriot Pantocrators such as those at Lysi or Kakopetria.⁷⁰

One of the most important compositional and stylistic passages in the fresco

69. Other comparable icons include several published by David Talbot-Rice, such as the images of Christ from the Church of St Marina in Souskiou, the Church of Agios Giorgios in Kalopanagiotis, and the Christ with donor figures in the Church of the Chrysaliniotissa in Nicosia. Talbot-Rice, (1937, pp. 250-51 and plates 37-38).

70. Weyl Carr, 1991, p. 67.

of the Trapeza Pantocrator, from a connoisseurial point of view, is the complex set of undulating drapery folds on the right hand side of Christ's himation just above the open book (Figs. 16-17). These highly individualistic details are crucial indications of the artist's style. The angular drapery folds convey a sense of the fabric flaring out, and the painter of the Trapeza Pantocrator had a distinct way of composing the edges of the folds with dramatic U-shaped 'cut backs'. Such a signature stylistic trait might one day help us identify who executed the work or at least his school. The lively angularity of this hem resembles the so-called 'dynamic style', a designation coined by Ernst Kitzinger to describe a style prominent in some late twelfth-century Byzantine frescoes such as those found in the Anargyroi church in Kastoria.⁷¹

A typical decoration that surrounded Cypriot Pantocrators, in a circular band below, was the heavenly procession of the *hetiomasia*. The *hetiomasia* (meaning 'preparation') is an empty throne upon which often sits the dove of the Holy Spirit and the book of Revelation. The throne has been 'prepared' for the Second Coming of Christ. It is often adorned with the instruments of the Crucifixion. A procession of angels bows before it, with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist flanking the throne. There was a *hetiomasia* below the Trapeza Pantocrator as well, but only a fragment of it survives, just enough to let us know it existed: the left part of a circular frame or roundel with three, spike-like rays emanating from its upper and lower parts. Other Cypriot representations of the *hetiomasia* throne are also encapsulated in round frames, such as at Kakopetria and Lagoudera.⁷² One can also make out the partial curves of halos to the left of the roundel, which corresponds to the angels who incline their heads in reverence towards it. The motif of radiating beams emanating from a roundel is rare, but there are other parallels, such as the twelfth-century Pentecost dome of the church of San Marco in Venice where the rays emanating from the *hetiomasia* symbolize the Holy Spirit descending upon the Apostles. An early instance of a *hetiomasia* in a roundel that also radiated beams was found in a late ninth-century mosaic, destroyed in the 1920s, in Nicaea (Iznik), Turkey, in the Church of the *Koimesis*. This image is discussed by Charles Barber who analyzes the Trinitarian symbolism of the radiating lines, which emanate not from the roundel itself, as at Trapeza, but from the dove of the Holy Spirit seated on the throne of heaven inside it.⁷³ This aspect may shed some light on the Trapeza *hetiomasia* as well, since the radiating spikes are gathered in sets of three above and below. There was also a dove on the throne at Trapeza. One can just make out the top curve of its halo in the roundel. In addition, a small part

71. Mouriki, 1980-81, pp. 108-115.

72. Velmans, 1984.

73. Barber, 2005, p. 51.

of the golden fringe of the throne, the lower left corner, seems to have survived. These are the modest remnants of the *hetiomasia* at Trapeza, and it is unlikely conservators will be able to discover any more of it, though enough may survive to warrant a degree of restorative addition.

It is at the level where we see the traces of the *hetiomasia* that we also find indications that the fresco may have been left unfinished. There is a section with a series of circles inscribed in the plaster, as if with a compass. These almost certainly were the halos of angels. Yet no faces are discernible, even though the plaster seems to be in reasonable condition. It is possible that parts of the mural were not done in true fresco (*buon fresco*), but painted *al secco*, on dried plaster. Such *al secco* wall painting does not adhere or bind well with the wall itself, and the paint can flake off over time. If this is the case, then there are parts of the Trapeza paintings that are forever lost. Recent conservation work on another important mural in northern Cyprus, the fragmentary remains of *The Forty Martyrs of Sebastaste* in the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Famagusta, demonstrated that most of the work was done *al secco*.⁷⁴ Because of this virtually nothing remains of the painting done atop the preparatory *sinopia*, which survives because it was done in *buon fresco*.

Another feature of the Trapeza Pantocrator is Christ's slim, elegant nose. It is not a unique feature, strongly resembling the elongated noses of other Pantocrators in Cyprus and in other locales. Yet it is a crucial element because it is the only clear indication of the style of modeling used by the painter, and one can still clearly see the highlights used along the bridge to give this facial feature its dimensionality. In fact, it is the only undamaged feature of the Pantocrator's face. Even the nostril seems to be visible, albeit barely. Along the top half of Christ's cross-nimbus halo one finds an arc of holes in the plaster, perhaps for some type of revetment to augment the splendour of the halo. However, as with so many of this painting's attributes, only closer inspection and a campaign of conservation will lend more certainty.

There are remnants of other fresco paintings on the piers and in the arches that support the fourteenth-century dome. In the north section of the ensemble there is a double arch, one above and slightly offset from the other. This has created a lunette of mural space in which appears a fragmentary scene that might be the miracle of *Christ Healing the Blind Man*.⁷⁵ Christ stands just to the left of center and is followed by saints whose halos one can still discern. Above, on the left and

74. The conservation of the work was recorded in a documentary film by Dan Frodsham, *The Forty: Saving the Forgotten Frescoes of Famagusta* (2012, 20 min.). See also M. J. K. Walsh (2007).

75. Michele Bacci has proposed, in a personal communication, that the scene may be a representation of the Anastasis.

right, are rocky landscapes. Such landscapes were common in depictions of the *Healing of the Blind Man*, though the scene is also frequently shown taking place in a town with buildings around. Enough of Christ's arm survives that one can make out the gesture of reaching down to touch the eyes of the man who kneels before him. Parts of this fresco are very sketch-like, such as the hands of the saints behind Christ. It may be that the fresco was never completed, or, as with the dome, painting done *al secco* may have fallen off over time. Frescoes of two saints persevere in the intrados of the north arch, perhaps the *anargyroi*, the unmercenary saints Cyrus and John the Holy Physician. Since these saints are associated with medicine, their presence may support the identification of the lunette they flank as the *Healing of the Blind Man*. If confirmed, it could point to a cult of medical saints at Trapeza.⁷⁶ The four evangelists seem to have occupied the pendentives, a typical configuration. In just one of the pendentives a sleeve and throne of an evangelist persist. In the others there is nothing left of the plaster and the holes of acoustic vases have been exposed. Such are the modest remnants of the once resplendent mural paintings of the fourteenth-century Trapeza church.

Since 1974 there has been catastrophic damage to innumerable works of art and scores of important ecclesiastical monuments have been vandalized or neglected in the northern region of Cyprus. This tragic loss of the island's artistic and architectural heritage is one of Cyprus' many tragedies, and the few works that remain must soon be attended to. While many paintings in northern Cyprus are in urgent need of conservation, none is in such critical condition, and none is so artistically important, as the Trapeza Pantocrator. Its conservation would save a rare monument of Cypriot mural art from almost certain annihilation. The site at Trapeza is also in need of archaeological excavation, both in the interior of the church and its perimeter, so that any remaining historical materials might be saved and the evidence of the earlier church's plan revealed. Any artifacts from such excavations might also expand our knowledge not only about Trapeza and its church, but would also help us understand how this monument interacted with the people of the village it served, thus giving a snapshot of the devotional lives of people in Cyprus's countryside during the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period.

76. Michele Bacci has provisionally identified these saints as Cyrus and John. He notes the letters identifying John in the easternmost of the frescoes and identifies the object he carries as a medical box, which the unmercenary medical saints sometimes carry.

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*Fig. 1: The Trapeza church near Famagusta, Cyprus, from the East
(All article photographs by the author)*



Fig. 2: The Trapeza church from the southeast



Fig. 3: The Trapeza church from the south



*Fig. 4: The 14th century dome of the Trapeza church
(the dark area contains the remnants of the Pantocrator)*



Fig. 5: Piers of the 14th century dome, showing seam between the original masonry and masonry added in the 16th century



Fig. 6: The 16th century dome of the Trapeza church

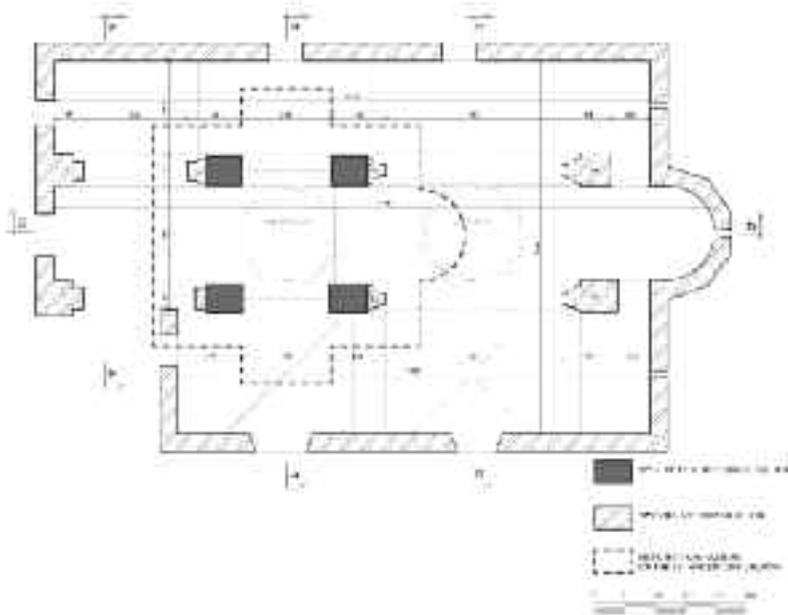


Fig. 7: Plan of the Trapeza church with 14th and 16th century churches showing hypothetical outline of the earlier church (plan by Joanna Ostrowska)



Fig. 8: Trapeza church, axonometric projection from the southwest showing 14th century dome (left) and 16th century dome (right) (projection by Joanna Ostrowska)



Fig. 9: Church of Agios Ephimianos (Themonianos), from the northwest, near Lysi/Akdoğan, Cyprus



Fig. 10: Lusignan 'dart and ball' motifs in the Trapeza church



Fig. 11: Trapeza church central apse from the east



Fig. 12: Trapeza church passageway from central apse



Fig. 13: Agios Georgios, Sotira, Cyprus



Fig. 14: Trapeza church interior, large arch north side of 16th century dome



Fig. 15: Profile of early arch in the south side of the church of the Panagia in Kampyli/Hisarköy, Cyprus

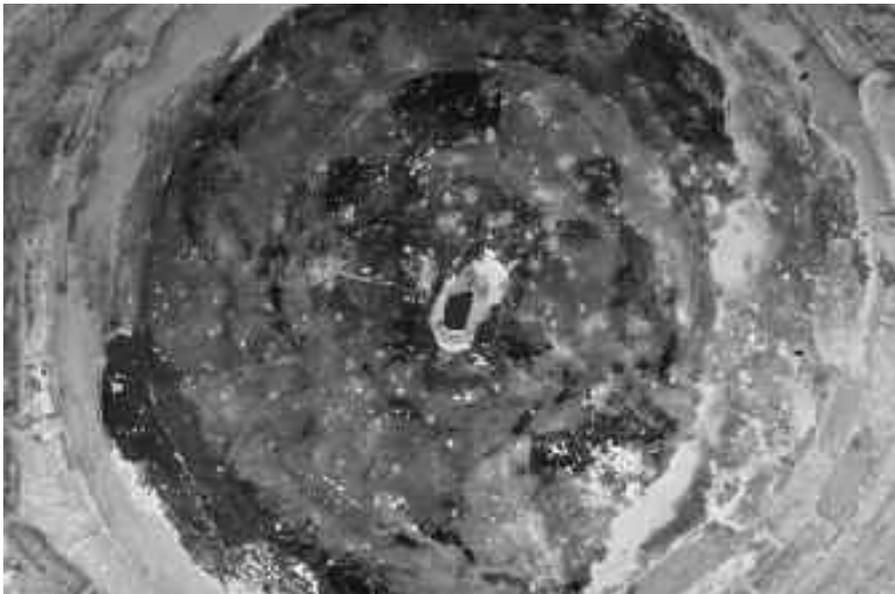


Fig. 16: The remnants of the Pantocrator in the 14th century dome of the Trapeza church.



Fig. 17: Line drawing of the visible elements of the Pantocrator mural in the 14th century dome of the Trapeza church. Tracing based on image in Fig. 16



Fig. 18: Lost Pantocrator from the dome of the Avgasida monastery church, 13th to 14th century (Department of Antiquities, Cyprus)



Fig. 19: Pantocrator in the dome of the church of the Panagia Theotokos, Trikomo/Iskele, 13th century (Department of Antiquities, Cyprus)