



ELLINIKI ETAIRIA
Society for the Environment
and Cultural Heritage



EPHORATE
OF ANTIQUITIES
OF THE CYCLADES



ASSOCIATION
HAGIA KYRIAKI - NAXOS

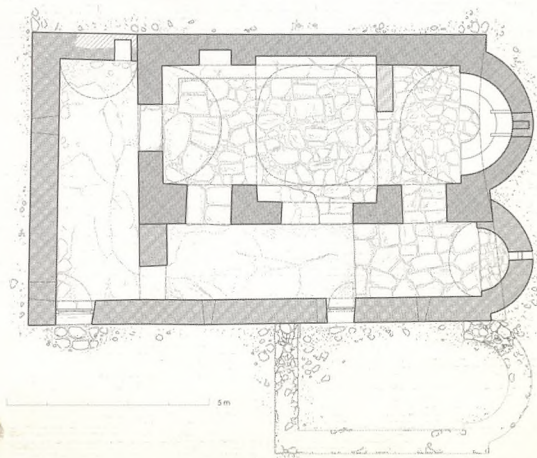
Hagia Kyriaki church in Apiranthos, Naxos and its restoration project



Hagia Kyriaki is a rare example of a Byzantine church with preserved aniconic decoration. It represents a valuable testimony to Iconoclasm, the theological and political dispute regarding the worship of icons, which perturbed the Byzantine Empire in the 8th and 9th c.



Of modest dimensions (11.20 x 7.10 m.), the church dates to the era of Byzantine Iconoclasm (726-843). It is composed of a single-nave domed hall, with a chapel to the south and a narthex on the western side. The nave and the chapel end to semi-cylindrical apses to the East. The monument is built with rubble and is covered with stone slabs.





The aniconic decoration of the nave is particularly interesting. It includes crosses and geometric and floral motifs, which were popular during the Iconoclastic period, as well as unique representations of birds. Based on iconographic criteria, the nave dates back to the Emperor Theophilus' reign (829-842), when on his command "*...venerable images of Christ and the Saints were taken down in every church and in their place were painted wild beasts and birds*" (Theophanes Continuatus III, 10).

A later figurative phase is preserved in the chapel dating to the 13th c, as for example the depiction of Deisis in the chapel. The built iconostasis, belongs to the same period.



The initiative for the restoration of this unique monument started in 1993, when the associations J.-G. Eynard in Geneva and Amitiés gréco-suisse in Lausanne decided the funding of the conservation study. In 1996/99, the architect Y. Kizis conducted the preliminary study for the monument's restoration, while the Swiss art conservator E.-J. Favre-Bulle conducted the survey and the preliminary conservation study for the painted decoration. The final study for the building's restoration was conducted by the architects Y. Kizis, K. Aslanidis and Ch. Piniatsi and the conservation study for the painted decoration by the art conservators N. Vittis (2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities) and R. Kaisar (Directorate of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments).



Since 2005 the effort has been continued by the Suisse Association Hagia Kyriaki, Naxos in close collaboration with the Council for the Architectural Heritage of ELLINIKI ETAIRIA – Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, that had key role in obtaining sponsorships.

The monument's state was deteriorating year by year, due to water penetration during the winter months. In the period 2013-2014, under the supervision of the two organisations mentioned above and the 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, restoration works were carried out.

The works, which dealt with the serious structural problems of the building and the penetration of rain water in its interior, included the consolidation of the vaults in the narthex and the chapel, the consolidation of the bearing walls,

the pointing of the masonry for securing the wall's stability and impermeability, the reconstruction of damaged areas of the dome and the restoration of the roof. The preservation of the authenticity of the monument, as it was moulded over time, was the basic principle followed in this intervention. The works were accomplished by the specialised technicians of Andreou S.A., under the supervision of the architects Y. Kizis, K. Aslanidis and Ch. Pinatsi and the 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities.

In the period 2015-2016 the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades with a conservators team under the direction of N. Vittis and the supervision of the Ephorate's director Dr D. Athanasoulis, consolidated and cleaned the frescoes of the church, with funding by the Ministry of Culture and the financial support of



the Association Hagia Kyriaki, Naxos and ELLINIKI ETAIRIA. The conservation works included the removal of more recent plastering, the delamination and fixing of the painted decoration, and its consolidation, cleaning and restoration. This intervention revealed a unique painting ensemble and contributes to a better understanding of the monument's decoration and, possibly, to a revised interpretation of it.

The restoration of the monument became possible initially with funding from the associations J.-G. Eynard and Amitiés gréco-suissees and the Foundation I. F. Kostopoulos, and later on with the generous support of the A.G. Leventis Foundation, Thanassis and Marina Martinos and the valuable contribution of the Association Hagia Kyriaki, Naxos and other sponsors.

The initiative to secure funds for completing the restoration works of the monument is in progress.



ELLINIKI ETAIRIA – Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, a non profit NGO, has since 1972 been active in the fight for the preservation of the natural environment and the cultural heritage of our country.

ELLINIKI ETAIRIA has fought many battles. Among the major ones which met with complete or partial success have been the establishment of the Marine Park of Alonissos, the listing of the Tatoi estate, the exemplary restoration of byzantine monuments, the saving of Plaka (a struggle that continues to this day), the protection of the Delphic landscape, of the Southern Saronic Gulf, of Marathon, of Pylos, of the Prespa lakes, of the ancient tower of Kea and of historic settlements such as those of Hydra and other Aegean islands.

At the same time monuments outside the country's borders have also been saved from demolition, decay and abandonment, such as the campanile of San Giorgio dei Greci in Venice, the Church of St. Panteleimon or Kizil Kilise in Cappadocia, and the frescoes of the Medieval Refectory in the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai.

Recently, ELLINIKI ETAIRIA fought against a number of draft laws, containing provisions, dangerous for the coastline, sustainable tourism planning and forests.

And all this thanks to the contributions and cooperation of sponsors, scientists, volunteers, members and friends.

The non-profit Association **Hagia Kyriaki, Naxos** was founded in 2005 aiming at the preservation and restoration of the Byzantine church of Hagia Kyriaki in Naxos and its valuable aniconic frescoes. The association focused on securing the necessary funds and coordinating administrative issues, in close cooperation with ELLINIKI ETAIRIA.

The initiative for the restoration of Hagia Kyriaki started from two Swiss Philhellenic organisations:

The **Association Jean-Gabriel Eynard** in Geneva, which was founded in 1919 and refers to the great philhellene J.G. Eynard, who contributed significantly to the Struggle of Independence (1821-1828) and the stabilisation of the newly established Modern Greek State.

The **Association des Amitiés gréco-suisses**, which was founded in 1918, with initiative of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic movement.

Main aim of the two associations is the promotion of the cultural exchanges and the consolidation of friendship between the Swiss and the Greek people. Moreover, they carry out public benefit actions in Greece, as for example the construction of an infirmary in Patmos and, more recently, the fundraising for dealing with the damages caused by the conflagrations of 2007 and the supply of medical material in Greek hospitals.

Support the completion of the project!



ELLINIKI ETAIRIA
Society for the Environment
and Cultural Heritage

28 Tripodon St., GR - 105 58, Athens
T: +30 210 32 25 245
E: elet@ellinikietairia.gr
www.ellet.gr



**ASSOCIATION
HAGIA KYRIAKI - NAXOS**

p/a Me François Payot,
4 Rue Saint-Ours, 1205 Genève
E: hagia.kyriaki@bluewin.ch
www.hagia-kyriaki.org