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Cruciform Fonts in the Aegean Area

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CRUCIFORM FONTS IN THE AEGEAN AREA.

THE Melian font described in the preceding paper by Mr. Casson is paralleled by several other examples from various parts of the Aegean area ; all have in common a more or less cruciform plan, one or more of the arms of the cross being provided with steps. Some of these fonts are now published for the first time : of the majority, descriptions have already appeared, but for the most part in publications not generally accessible. It therefore seems worth while to publish the series of measured drawings and notes given below, which have been made at various times in the last ten years. The series of fonts described is intentionally confined to the Aegean area and Constantinople ; the references at the end of the paper will enable the comparisons to be extended to the whole group.

1. Paros, church of Hekatontapyliani ; overall measurement (east to west) 2.95 m. (Plan and section in Fig. 1).

This is the closest parallel to the Melian font, and is built up in the same way of marble slabs set on edge. The steps are confined to the eastern and western arms. One has disappeared from the former and two from the latter flight ; their existence and dimensions can, however, be recovered from the marks left on the inner faces of the side-slabs. The outer faces of these are decorated with carved panels with Greek crosses in low relief. In the centre of the font is a stone post, with a small socket in the top : the post was evidently used, like the porphyry column of the Lateran Baptistery, to support a vessel containing incense.¹

¹ *Liber Pontificalis* (Silvester, ch. 13) quoted by C. F. Rogers (*Baptism and Christian Archaeology*, p. 270) : *in medio fontis columna porfyretica qui portat fiala aurea ubi candela est . . . ubi ardet in diebus Paschae balsamum*, etc.

FIG. 1.—PLAN AND SECTION OF FONT IN THE CHURCH OF HEKATONTAPYLIANI, PAROS.

This font will be fully published in the book on the church shortly to be issued by the Byzantine Fund.¹

FIG. 2.—FONT (2) AT CONSTANTINOPLE: *a*, LONGITUDINAL SECTION; *b*, PLAN. (Scale 1:25.)

¹ A plan of the font and baptistery has been published by Lambakes, *Δελτίον Χρ. Ἀρχαιολ. Ἑταιρείας*, i. p. 111 (and in *Monuments Chr. de la Grèce*, p. 8), a photograph in the same periodical, vii. p. 39.

2. Constantinople, in front of Imperial Museum ; length 2·57 m., height 1·22 m. (Fig. 2).

This is a large monolithic font of greyish Proconnesian marble. The steps, four in number, are confined to one arm of the cross, the form of

FIG. 3.—*e*, FONT (3) AT CONSTANTINOPLE (SECTION); *f*, FONT AT SCALA NUOVA.
(Scale 1 : 25.)

which is not very clearly brought out. The bottom is pierced and the top surface shews a number of holes drilled to receive the attachments of some

superstructure, possibly a canopy or frame to support curtains.¹ I interpret the holes in this way as some of them still contain remains of lead. Many are in the centre or arms of more or less well-preserved incised crosses. Six such crosses are indicated on the rim of the font by Lethaby and Swainson² and Rogers.³ I incline to think that they were not decorative but designed to take the cross-shaped feet of vertical stanchions. Another cross is clearly incised on the inner wall of the font. The outer surface of the end away from the steps has been flattened and on the surface thus obtained has been carved a shallow niche with mouldings; in the middle of the niche are marks of a tap. The mouldings are Turkish, and it is clear that the font has been adapted by the Turks as a cistern with a tap. It was formerly in the precincts of the Zeinab Sultana Mosque, to the west of S. Sophia.

It is therefore probable that it served for the ablutions made by Moslems before prayer. Paspates thought it was the font of the Baptistery at S. Sophia⁴: if this could be substantiated it would give a useful fixed point for the dating of the whole series of fonts.

3. Constantinople, outside the church of SS. Peter and Mark (Hoja Atik Mustapha Jamissi) in the Aivan Serai quarter; length 1·85 (Fig. 3).

This font, a monolith of grey marble, now lies half-buried in rubbish. The photograph in Fig. 4 is from van Millingen's account of the church,⁵ and the section in Fig. 3, *e* is based on the measurements given by him. It will be noticed that the cruciform plan is here modified to a trefoil with a stem, in which latter the single flight of steps is placed.

4. Constantinople, in front of Imperial Museum (Inventory No. 2459); length, 1·60 m., height, 1·58 m. (Fig. 5, *c*, *d*).

From the plan and section it will be seen that the resemblance to No. 3 above is very close, the main difference being that there are no steps.

¹ For this feature in early baptisteries see Kraus, *Realencyclopädie der christl. Alterthümer*, s.v. *Taufkirche*, p. 842; Rogers, *Baptism*, pp. 352 ff.

² Lethaby and Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople*, p. 82.

³ Rogers, *Baptism*, p. 329.

⁴ Lethaby and Swainson, *op. cit.* p. 81: but the dimensions given by the Russian monk (fifteenth-century) for the font at S. Sophia are much larger ('Αντωνιάδης, 'Αγία Σοφία, i. 121).

⁵ *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*, pp. 192-194; drawings of this font are given in Pulgher's *Églises de Constantinople*, Pl. XIV. 7, 8 and in Δελτίον Χρ. 'Αρχαιολ. 'Εταιρείας, x. p. 34.

The horizontal groove in the stem of the trefoil, which appears in the section, is possibly for the insertion of a wooden step. As in the case of the big monolith (3), and for the same purpose, a section of the curved circumference has been cut flat and a niche sunk in it; the flat face has been decorated with a rosette ornament in the Turkish style and provided with holes for taps. This font was found in 1911 near Top Kapu.

FIG. 4.—FONT (3) AT CONSTANTINOPLE, after van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*. Pl. LI below (p. 192).

(By courteous permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co.)

5. Scala Nuova ; 'length 1·95 m., breadth 1·59 m., depth inside, 98 m.' (Fig. 3, *f*).

This monolithic font, seen and measured by Prof. Lambakes at a place called Boyalikia, an hour from Scala Nuova,¹ is of the same type but with two flights of steps. Fig. 3, *f* is copied from his sketch. Prof. Lambakes dates the font (but without giving any reasons) to the fifth or sixth century.

¹ Λαμπάκης, *Οἱ ἐπὶ Ἀστέρες τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως*, p. 126, and Fig. 86, p. 128. A photograph was taken by Prof. Lambakes and deposited in the collection of the Christian Archaeological Society (No. 6415).

FIG. 5.—FONT (4) AT CONSTANTINOPLE: *c*, LONGITUDINAL SECTION; *a*, PLAN.
(Scale 1 : 25.)

6. Karpathos; 'height 1'20 m., inner circumference 2'10 m., outer 4'10 m.' (Fig. 6, *g*).

I saw this monolithic font in 1903 lying in a field near the houses at the harbour of Pegadia. The sketch-plan was drawn shortly after my visit to the island from my recollections and the measurements given by Manolakakes¹; it can therefore only claim approximate accuracy, but gives, I believe, all the essential features. It has a hole to carry off the water.

8. Marmaris (Anc. Physkos), Lycia; 'length 5 ft., breadth 4 ft., height 2 ft.' (Fig. 6, *h*).

This monolithic font was published with two illustrations in an Athenian periodical of 1885.² The drawing has been constructed from these illustrations and the measurements given with them (see above). The (anonymous) writer of the article says that the font was discovered near a wall and the remains of a domed building (probably the remains of the baptistery in which it originally stood) in March 1885, and that the Duke of Edinburgh had bought it intending to take it to England. It is said to be now at Sandringham. There is an inscription on part of the band which surrounds the cruciform hollow, transcribed as follows by the author of the article: ΕΠΙ ΤΗ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΥ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΤΟ ΕΡΓΟΝ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΚΑΙ Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΦΥΛΑΞΟΙ ΤΟΥΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΕΡΓΟΥΝΤΑΣ ΑΜΗΝ +

From a poor facsimile given it is plain that in this transcription the spelling has been considerably corrected.

9. Boseuyuk, Galatia (Fig. 6, *i*).

I owe to Mr. Hasluck a reference to a monolithic cruciform font seen here in 1553 by Dernschwam, whose journal contains the following

¹ Μανωλακάκης, *Καρπαθιακά*, Athens, 1896, p. 41.

² 'Αστήρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς, May 4, 1885. The name of the place is here given as *Μαρμωρικῆ*, a false form derived from the *Marmorice* of the earlier British charts; the later charts have *Marmarice*, both being attempts to render phonetically the official Turkish *Marmaris*. The vulgar Turkish *Marmaris* is derived locally (Cuinet, *Asie Mineure*, iii. p. 672) from *Mimar* as ('hang the architect'). All these forms come eventually from the (late) Greek *Μαρμαρᾶς*; the town is called *Fisco* down to the middle ages (Tomaschek in *Sitzb. Wien. Ak. (P. H. Cl.)* cxxiv (viii), 1891, p. 41). *Marmarous* occurs in the contemporary (?) Turkish account of the siege of Rhodes (1522) from which extracts are given in *Mem. Acad. Inscr.* xxvi. 744; the contemporary Christian chronicler of the same event has *Fisco*.

notice of it :—*Vor der Metzit hat es ein rohr prunnen und trankstellen an*

FIG. 6.—FONTS FROM KARPATOS (*g*), MARMARIS (*h*), AND BOSEUYUK (*i*).

der strassen darunter ein weisser marmelsteinen trog, viereckt 8 spannet breit

*und hoch und inwendig auf allen vier Seiten zwei staffel hinabwärts ausgehauen, also breit das ein mensch darauf sitzen mag.*¹ Dernschwam's sketch is given in the figure. The font appears to have resembled the Melian example found during the excavations of the British School on the 'Three Churches' site.²

10. At **Maito** (Madytos), on the European side of the Dardanelles, Papadopoulos records that the French at the time of the Crimean war made an excavation in the hope of finding the tomb of Hecuba and discovered a cruciform font (*σταυροειδῆς κολυμβήθρα*).³ As this is not mentioned by Lambakes who knew of the work of Papadopoulos, in his recent account of the Christian antiquities of Madytos,⁴ this font seems to be lost.

For cruciform and analogous types of fonts and baptisteries in other parts of the Christian world Rogers gives numerous references.⁵ A monolithic font with steps inside seen by Texier at Synnada in Phrygia (Eski Kara Hissar)⁶ seems to belong to the same class though it is not definitely described as cruciform.

R. M. DAWKINS.

¹ Ed. Kiepert in *Globus*, lii. p. 217.

² *J.H.S.* xvii. 130 (plan on Pl. V). This font has now been destroyed by the islanders.

³ *Μάδυτος, Πατριδογραφία Χρυσοστόμου Α. Παπαδοπούλου*, Athens, 1890, p. 24: the font was found *ἐν τῷ Σκαλίῳ*, where was formerly a celebrated church of S. Euthymios (p. 38).

⁴ *Δελτίον τῆς Χρ. Ἀρχαιολ. Ἑταιρείας*, x, pp. 51 f.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, throughout.

⁶ *Description de l'Asie Mineure*, i. p. 146.