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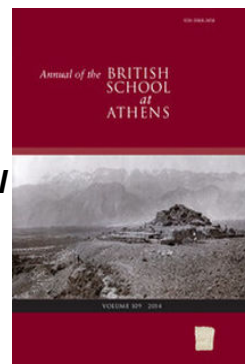
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## The Monastery of Daou

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## THE MONASTERY OF DAOU.

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IN the last volume of the *Annual* Mr. Heaton Comyn published a description and drawings of this ruined monastery, which lies hidden away among the woods on one of the south-eastern spurs of Mount Pentelicus. It seems worth while to add what little is known of its history, and also some notes on its construction. For the latter I have to thank Mr. Pieter Rodeck, whose extensive knowledge of Byzantine churches enables him to speak with authority.

From a *σινγίλλιον* of Timotheus, Patriarch of Constantinople, dated 1614, it appears that the monastery was entitled ἡ Σταυροπηγιακὴ Μονὴ τοῦ Παντοφάτορος Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ τῆς Ταῶ, and that it had been rebuilt some years before in the time of Jeremias II, whose Patriarchate began in 1572.<sup>1</sup> Presumably the tower at the south end of the church was added at this time. But the expression used, ἀνήγειραν ἐκ βάρων, implies something more, perhaps the rebuilding of the body of the church. In any case there is reason to think that the domes of the existing church are not contemporary with the main structure. On this point Mr. Rodeck writes: 'The cylindrical portion intervening between the hemisphere of the main dome and the circular string-course, and the angle-domes protruding through the roof, are characteristics of late Byzantine work, and may perhaps date from a more or less extensive reconstruction.' On the other hand the ground-plan, as Dr. Lampakes long ago pointed out,<sup>2</sup> seems to date from the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

'The main distinguishing feature of the church,' Mr. Rodeck continues, 'is the hexagonal instead of octagonal system of arches leading up to the dome, which preclude the possibility of having north and south arches

<sup>1</sup> The documents relating to Daou are published by Mr. D. G. Kambouroglou in his *Μνημεῖα τῆς Ἱστορίας τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, i. 186 and ii. 49, and in his *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, i. 380.

<sup>2</sup> *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας*, ii. (1892-4), 23-27. Compare his *Mémoires sur les Antiquités chrétiennes de la Grèce* (Athens, 1902), pp. 37, 38.

corresponding to the east and west arches or vaults of the Naos, thus destroying the cruciform system found in the other churches of the Commenian group. This, doubtless, was considered by the Byzantine builders an objection to the hexagonal system, and is sufficient to account for this form of construction not being repeated elsewhere. This objection would not be felt by the Turkish builders of the mosque at Cairo.'

The mosque in question (Fig. 1 in Mr. Comyn's paper) is the Gâmi'a el-Melekeh Sofiya. According to Baedeker's *Egypt*, p. 49, it was built in 1611.

The white marble columns and panels, and the variegated red marble capitals of the screen (Fig. 2 in Mr. Comyn's paper) must have formed part of a still older church, but it is possible that they were brought from elsewhere. The oldest elements in the church are some sculptured marble stele-heads built into the face of the tower, derived perhaps from an ancient site a little to the south-east of the monastery.<sup>1</sup> The finial over the central dome is a marble table-support of familiar classical type.

The destruction of the monastery by pirates is placed by tradition in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The story is most fully related by Kambouroglou.<sup>2</sup>

Daou may be reached in a day's excursion from Athens. It lies far along the Marathon road, within three miles of the eastern shore of Attica, and about the same distance north of the hamlet of Pikermi. Thence it is approached by a footpath, which brings one in forty minutes to the little church of 'Αγία Παρασκευή, and a quarter of an hour later to a group of old plane-trees which mark the confines of the monastery. It is seldom visited now except by shepherds; but traces of an overgrown carriage-road recall the period when Queen Amalia sometimes had her tent pitched here, and spent a long summer day in this cool retreat.<sup>3</sup>

This note must not end without a word of gratitude to Mr. Alexander Skouses, lately Minister of Foreign Affairs at Athens, who was so kind as to put the farmhouse on his Pikermi estate at Mr. Comyn's disposal, and thus provided him with a convenient base of operations.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Milchhöfer, *Karten von Attika*, Text, vi. p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, i. p. 382.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Thomas Wyse, *Impressions of Greece* (London, 1871), pp. 46-48.