



CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

The church took its name after the addition of the second roof in the 13th century as a protection against snow and rain. This additional roof covers the disposition of the dome and vaults. It is the sole remnant of the old monastery dating from the 11th century for which there is no other information.

It appears that it was developed and functioned during the post Byzantine period and during the Frankish rule. It seems that it was dissolved at the end of the 17th century.

The Church belongs to the cross-in-square type with a dome over the centre and was originally built without the narthex. The western entrance of the narthex was built and painted with the mounted Saint George after the donation of Ioannis Trifilles. Today the entrance of the church is on the north side.

In the beginning of the 12th century the narthex was added to the west wall with three blind arches in the east and west, supported by pilasters. The narthex is covered with a calotte and two traverse arches.

The Church was originally painted in the 11th century. Of these wall paintings only few survive these days. Their style is characterised by the clear-cut features of the figures, the accentuated formal lines and the limited range of colours.

The painting of the church continued in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, that is to say there are frescoes of four different periods. Several of the later wall paintings were detached and transported to the Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation in Nicosia and an older set of frescoes was discovered underneath.

We start with the wall paintings of the 11th century, samples of the Comnenian art. We enter the church through the north entrance. We are in the narthex and we proceed to the left (eastwards) to the nave.

In the semi dome of the apse we see the Virgin standing in the position of Deesis (Supplication) between the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, who are represented frontally and wear an imperial dress .

Opposite, in the eastern vault above the bema are the Ascension of Christ and the Pentecost. In the western vault is the double picture of the Transfiguration and the Raising of Lazarus, followed by the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem. On the representation of the Transfiguration, Peter on the left is pictured kneeling looking up the Christ. John is leaving in fear. James is raising himself in ecstasy from between the two mountains.

Until the Transfiguration, Christ could cure the ill; after the Transfiguration, He could raise the dead.

In the Raising of Lazarus, Jerusalem is depicted in the background of the composition.

In the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, Christ enters triumphally into Jerusalem seating on a small donkey.

On the north wall (to the left of the entrance), is pictured the Deposition of Christ from the Cross and His Burial.

The wall paintings in the soffits of arches connecting the piers with the western and eastern wall also date to the 11th century. Some of them are:

- Saint Ignatius (of Antioch) in the soffit of the arch (eastern half) connecting the north-eastern pier with the eastern wall, and
- In the western half, Saint Ignatius (of Constantinople).
- In the soffit of the arch connecting the south-eastern pier with the south wall Saint Polycarpus and Saint Germanus are pictured.
- Saints Florus and Laurus are depicted in the soffit of the arch connecting the south-western pier with the west wall.

Of course, there are more frescoes of Saints in the nave dating to the 11th century.

When the narthex was added it was decorated with the Last Judgement and only the Deesis (Supplication) survived on the eastern wall above the entrance (that is to say above the entrance to the left), as well as five out of the six enthroned Apostles to the right of Christ on the eastern half of the northern arch. Of the six Apostles to the left of Christ, only the lower parts survive. Above the Supplication, the Angels are depicted unfolding Heaven.

On the western half of the northern arch, the scenes from Hades have survived such as the Angel of fire casting the sinners into Hell.

Within the northern blind arc are the scales of Justice and further up the personification of the sea.

On the eastern wall is pictured the rich from the Parable of the Rich man and the Poor Lazarus.

Some of the frescoes of the 12th century are worth mentioning below:

- Lower section of the narthex:
  1. Saint John from Damascus (underneath the parable of the rich man).
  2. Saint Joasaph (eastern wall, northern blind arc).
  3. Three young men in the furnace of blazing fire (western wall, drum of the southern blind arc).
  4. The wall painting of Saints Tryphon and Cyrus on the western side of the two central pilasters, and of Saint Artemius.

The south western section of the church was also painted in the 12th century.

In the small arch are the Presentation of the Virgin Mary to the temple, and the Forty Martyrs on the western wall.

Underneath the window of the south wall are the Saints Alexius and John Kalyvitis. In the south-eastern compartment, near the iconostasis, below the blind arch is the wall painting of Saint Nicholas with the donor monk.

We now pass to the wall paintings of the 13th century. During this period, some sections of the nave and the narthex were repainted, such as the northern arch depicting the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, and the north wall on both sides of the window representing the Myrrh Bearers in front of the Empty Tomb. The Crucifixion shows Christ on the Cross in the middle of the composition with His head reclining on His right shoulder. To the Right and left of the Cross are depicted the sun and the moon.

On the Cross above the head of Jesus is inscribed "The King of Glory". On his left, the Virgin with two of her friends look at him with grief, and on the right stands John.

On the eastern wall (drum of the northern arc) there is Archangel Michael and in the northern arc itself Saint Ambrosius. You will also see on the eastern wall to the right of the iconostasis, in the upper part the depiction of the Birth of Christ, with the unique scene of the Virgin Mary feeding at her breast the Divine Infant.

In the drum of the southern blind arc we have the Archangel Gabriel, and underneath the portraits of the donors.

During the 14th century, the pendentives were painted with the four Evangelists, the dome with Christ Pantocrator surrounded by 12 Angels and the drum of the dome with the 12 prophets.

The frescoes of Saints John the Baptist and John the Almoner in the northern side of the southwestern pier and those of Saints George and Theodore in the southern side of the northwestern pier were made by another painter of the same century.

The murals in the narthex depicting the Christ, the Virgin Hodegetria, the Apostles Peter and Paul, Saints Epiphanius and Basil were made during the same period, and shortly after followed the representations of Saints John Lampadistis, Stephan, Dionysios, Theodore, Hilarion and Onouphrios.

The apse was repainted as well as the eastern and southern arch. In the semi dome of the apse, the Virgin is depicted in the position of Supplication between the Archangels; Cypriot Saints are pictured lower and further below are the Prelates.

The eastern arch was decorated with the Ascension and the Pentecost.

The southern arch is painted with the Birth of Christ and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and further up on the southern wall is the Annunciation. Below the Annunciation there is the depiction of Saints John the Baptist, Anthony, S abbas and Sozomenos.

On the western side of the south-western pier are depicted Saint Joachim and opposite Saint Anna. On the two eastern piers inside the bema are Saints Gregory of Nissa, Laurentius, Allipius, Demetrianus and Symeon Stylites.

On the eastern side of the southwestern pier is represented Saint Demetrius.

The last set of frescoes date from 1633, the time when Saints Peter and Paul were painted on the western side of the eastern piers; these are the only exactly dated paintings.

The iconostasis was also done in the 17th century. The Hagiographer Pavlos Ierografos painted the icon of Saint Nicholas, the royal doors and the icon of Christ and Virgin on the iconostasis.