

Harmonizing the sources: textual, pictorial and material evidence contributing to a new insight into the construction history and original appearance of the orthodox Episcopal churches of Hagios Georgios and Hagios Epiphanius

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Legend says that in medieval Famagusta there were as many churches as days in the year. Even if that has to be treated as a *topos* rather than a realistic account, around thirty churches are preserved or traceable inside the city walls today. Amongst them the ruinous complex of the orthodox churches of Hagios Georgios and Hagios Epiphanius figures most prominently. Consisting of a much-altered older part (Hagios Epiphanius/Hagios Symeon) and the monumental new cathedral of the 14th century (Hagios Georgios), the complex demands sophisticated scholarly treatment. Even though the investigation of the monument started in the late 19th century, no comprehensive study has been accomplished yet. The proposed paper will try to find the answer to one of the most basic questions arising of the ruinous churches: How did the churches look at different stages throughout the centuries?

As indicated in the title, a careful re-examination of all available evidence, partly neglected in previous studies, can now help answer this question. The consulted textual sources include Genoese notes of the 14th century as well as pilgrims' accounts of the 17th century and early scholarly literature. The pictorial evidence comprises etchings and drawings of the early modern period and early photography. While some of these sources have been published and discussed already, others have gone unnoticed. Additionally, an examination of the material evidence was undertaken, comprising the standing building as well as the debris still lying scattered in the church and leading to new observations, which will also be presented in the paper. By harmonizing the occasionally contradictory antipodes of textual/pictorial sources and material evidence, a clearer and more substantiated answer can be given to the question posed above. Furthermore, newly drawn plans and reconstructions of the churches in their different stages of development can be presented, thus creating a new layer of pictorial "evidence" to work with in future.