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ricostituzione di una unità monastica al Monte
Athos.

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Indice:

pag. 3

Indice

pag. 4 - 12

Inquadramento storico

pag.13

Valutazioni

pag. 14 - 17

Proposte progettuali
Tavole
Schemi
Viste

Inquadramento storico

HOLY HILANDARIAN KELLION "AGIOS DIMITRIOS"

The Holy KELLION* of "Agios Dimitrios" of the Holy Monastery of Hilandari – one of the oldest and most historic KELLIA* of Karyes, Mount Athos – is located at a prominent position NW to the small town, facing Mount Athos to the South, the magnificent settlement of Saint Andrew (Andreas) to the North, and the Thracian Sea with the islands of Thassos, Samothrace, and Lemnos looming up on the horizon to the East.

The establishment of the Kellion goes back to the 10th century, when there is evidence of a Monidrion** (Small Monastery) of Agios Dimitrios .

In the 14th century, ownership of both the Small Monastery and the surrounding area was transferred to Hilandarian Holy Monastery, and it was then placed in the category of Kellia.

* Kellion = Church with living quarters

** Kellia = " "

*** Monidrion = Small Monastery

At the end of the 17th century and in the beginning of the 18th century – an era of prosperity and large restoration and renovation works for the entire area of Mount Athos – it was completely restored at the expense of Monks Moses and Simon, who are considered to be the second founders of the Kellion.

It served as a Residence of the representatives (Konaki) of Hilandarian Holy Monastery, flourishing up to the beginning of the 1950's, when, due to considerable signs of wear, it was abandoned and has since remained vacant, which gradually led to its current condition, i.e., a dilapidated Kellion .

In October 2005, the Sovereign Hilandarian Holy Monastery assigned the Kellion to Monk Martinianos, by virtue of the decision no. 184, giving him their blessing, so that he could proceed to its complete restoration, giving priority to the restoration of the Historic Church of the Kellion named after Agios Dimitrios.

It was with prudence and wisdom that Monk Martinianos undertook to give new life to a religious monument and create a base for preserving and promoting a piece of Christian culture, i.e., of the existence and functioning of the category of Kellia and other "Exartimata"***

As cited above, the building will be erected on the traces of the ruins of the former Kellion.

This is an arduous task, since, apart from a photograph taken from an album of Chrysostomos Dan (Ed. Byrda Druck and Verlag, 1959), there is no other evidence that might facilitate the restoration project.

*** "Exartimata" = Monastery property

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING THE "EXARTIMATA"* OF MOUNT ATHOS

In the peninsula of Athos spreading for over seventy kilometers, within the area of the twenty Holy Monasteries, one can find more than seven hundred "Exartimata ", i.e., Kellia ,* Kalyves *and Isyhastiria.*

The Kellia have a long history of many centuries. In the past, most of them were either Monasteries or Small Monasteries (Monydria), which were either devastated at some time (usually by raids of pirates), or fell into decline and turned into Kellia.

The Kalyves (Huts) are not different from Kellia in architecture or size, but rather belong to the Sketes.* Each Skete is organized as a small village – in a way. Usually, in the centre of the settlement there is a Kyriako,* i.e., a cluster of buildings with a large central Church, where all Fathers gather every Sunday and on the greatest feasts, a table, guest quarters (arhontariki)* and other auxiliary spaces.

The Isyhastiria (Retreats) also resemble Kellia ; they are built, however, in the most inaccessible areas of the peninsula, the so-called Desert of Mount Athos.

Most Kellia are very important monuments of Macedonian architecture, but they have also been influenced by the areas of origin of the Monks and artisans.

In addition, the location, morphology, local climate and other factors have also played a great part in the construction.

The result has always been amazing, often surpassing the expectations of the founders.

In recent years, as a result of generous donations by the Greek State and the European Union and also at the expense of the Holy Monasteries, many remarkable works have been realized in the area of the Holy Mountain. Unfortunately, all such works have been executed in the areas of the large Monasteries – which will continuen for many years – thus, nothing is left for the Kellia and the other “Exartimata ”.

The works in the Kellia are carried out at the expense of the Monks living in the Kellia .

The Kellia have no property of their own, since they belong to the Monasteries. This results in rough-and-ready works and inappropriate materials used, and, in many cases, their architectural style is altered and the Kellia become unrecognizable. This means that there is a cultural disaster due to financial difficulties. The Monks living in the Kellia have the best intentions.

However, the lack of financial resources for making the appropriate interventions is leading to a disaster.

The competent public organization, the Centre for the Preservation of Mt. Athos Heritage (KEDAK) – despite their spirited efforts – is unable to deal with the structural problems of the Kellia , which makes the interventions uncontrollable.

When the Kellia lack the resources and designs required, even for such inelegant interventions, then, they are led to devastation and, gradually, to collapse.

In this case, the cost of restoration is even higher, that is why one seldom undertakes such a project.

Monastic Life in the Kellia has produced and continues to produce a culture that is equal to that of the Monasteries – or, we would dare to say, even richer than it nowadays.

The greater capability of expression, the pluralism and multiculturalism seen in the area of the Cells, all contribute to the advancement of the Ecumenical Spirit of the Orthodox Church and to cultural development.

From everything cited above superficially, one can understand the importance and the difficulties of undertaking the task of restoring the Kellion of “Agios Dimitrios” of Hilandarian Holy Monastery in Karyes, Mount Athos.

The restoration of the Ancient and Historic Kellion alone – an exemplary restoration, as shown by the design study – is of great importance.

Besides, - once it is completed – it may operate as a pilot project and become a model for other restoration works, given that that it is located in the “Capital”, the Administrative Centre of the Monastic State, in the area of Karyes, which were once surrounded with a wall and were flourishing and are now semi-devastated and surrounded by heaps and ruins.

In this case, the Restoration of the Kellion of "Agios Dimitrios " and the presence of an active Monk will contribute to its revival. The benefit and importance are multiplied due to the fact that, in this Kellion , Monk Martinianos will accommodate a Centre for recording, digitizing and documenting the architectural elements and plethora of relics of the Kellia .

In addition, it will also serve as a base for preserving, promoting, and publicizing this barely-known piece of Christian and European Culture, such an important heritage of international culture that is vegetating in the shadow of the Twenty Monasteries, which have been identified with Mount Athos and monopolize Publicity and Recognition by the International Community.

The Research Centre also wishes to provide any help to researchers and students (including hospitality, archives, research on the spot etc.), regardless of nationality and religion, for the elaboration of postgraduate or doctoral theses or other papers regarding our rich and independent subject, and many other things to be presented in the future.

- * Exartimata= Monastery property
- * Kellia =Church with living quarters
- * Kalyves = Hovel
- * Isyhastiria.= Hermitage
- * Sketes.= Small Village with Kalyves
- * Kyriako=The Church of the Village (Sketes)
- * Arhontariki = Guest House

Valutazioni

Qui di seguito esponiamo alcune valutazioni che saranno di guida nel percorso progettuale:

- Questa unità monastica si trova a Karyes, centro amministrativo di Monte Athos.
- Si recuperano i resti che diventano la memoria della rappresentanza esistita.
- L'elemento dominante è la chiesa.
- A questo scopo si propone come intervento interessante la creazione di una nuova chiesa .
- Si necessitano corpi per soddisfare le funzioni della unità monastica. Nasce così la necessità di ridisegnare nuovi spazi con nuove forme.

Proposte progettuali

Per formulare la proposta progettuale si sono esaminati interventi simili, come quello a Salemi realizzato da Siza.

Concludendo, la proposta è stata sviluppata con la divisione ideale in 3 principali aree:

1. area resti esistenti, è l'area che si trovano i ruderi rimasti.
2. area sacra, composta dallo spazio che domina la nuova chiesa della unità monastica.
3. area funzioni, composta da tre corpi indipendenti tra di loro per soddisfare le esigenze della unità.
 - a. Corpo destinato alle celle monastiche
 - b. Corpo con due funzioni: sala lettura e refettorio
 - c. Corpo con due funzioni: uffici(amministrazione), celle per ospiti

La divisione dello spazio in aree diverse è stato un significativo passaggio per lo studio del nuovo progetto perchè definisce caratteristiche e forme nuove . Individuando ogni area isolata ma sempre integrata con le altre , il progetto si è articolato con le seguenti proposte:

1. area resti esistenti

- si recuperano e si mettono in evidenza. Così si mantiene la memoria nel tempo.

2. area sacra

- Si inserisce una nuova chiesa con una cupola incassata che libera la luce naturale di entrare da i lati in alto, creando uno spazio sacro illuminato

3. area funzioni

- Corpo A destinato alle celle monastiche che sporge dal muro sud-est alto sei metri, creando una forma leggera rispetto alla struttura pesante del muro sottostante.
- Corpo B con la sala lettura e refettorio, e Corpo C con uffici e celle ospiti, si incastrano nel terreno creando un'area che viene "abbracciata" dai bordi verso ovest (corpo B) e verso nord (corpo C) e allo stesso tempo enfatizzano la massa della topografia sul costruito.

Si tenta di mettere in primo piano il contrasto della luce e della leggerezza con l'ombra e la pesantezza.

