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The Episcopal Palace in Early Byzantium: Historical Development, Architectural Typologies, Domestic Spaces and the Case of Kos

Isabella Baldini

Università di Bologna (Italy)

Throughout Late Antiquity, the most important reference model for the residences of the upper classes was provided by imperial palaces, for their typological variety, for the complexity of their functions and especially for the prestige of their role. It is important to examine *episcopia* keeping in mind this broader context and the concreteness of the archaeological evidence, which shows an increase in the representative spaces. In the fifth and in the sixth century, many *episcopia* have boundary walls and an ornate façade, internal pathways, reception halls, and residential and service areas. All these features correspond to the bishop's role and numerous activities. The case of the *episcopium* of Kos is significant for the urban and monumental transformations of a large ecclesiastical complex between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Tout au long de l'Antiquité tardive, le modèle de référence le plus important pour les résidences des classes supérieures est représenté par les palais impériaux, pour leur variété typologique, pour la complexité des fonctions et, surtout, pour le prestige de leur rôle. Il est important d'examiner les évêchés en se référant à ce modèle impérial et au caractère concret des témoignages archéologiques, qui montrent une augmentation progressive des espaces représentatifs. Aux V^e et VI^e siècles, de nombreux évêchés possèdent des murs d'enceinte et une façade décorée, des parcours intérieurs, des salles de réception, des zones résidentielles et de service. Tous ces éléments correspondent au rôle de l'évêque et aux nombreuses activités qu'il doit gérer. Le cas de l'évêché de Kos est significatif des transformations urbaines et monumentales d'un grand complexe ecclésiastique entre l'Antiquité tardive et le Moyen Âge.

Während der Spätantike stehen imperiale Paläste mit ihrer typologischen Variabilität, ihrer funktionalen Komplexität und insbesondere mit ihrer Prestigerolle für den Sitz der obersten gesellschaftlichen Klassen. Es ist wichtig, „bischöflich“ in einen breiteren Kontext zu stellen und die archäologische Belastbarkeit der Befunde zu überprüfen, die einen Anstieg im Bereich der Repräsentation zeigen. Während des 6. und 7. Jhs. haben viele *episcopia* Begrenzungsmauern und eine kunstvolle Fassade, interne Wegenetze, Empfangshallen und Residenz- bzw. Dienstbereiche. All diese Funktionen korrespondieren mit der Rolle des Bischofs und seinen Aktivitäten. Das *episcopium* von Kos ist bezeichnend für den urbanen und monumentalen Wandel großer bischöflicher Komplexe zwischen der Spätantike und dem frühen Mittelalter.

Per tutta la tarda antichità il modello di riferimento più importante per le residenze delle classi elevate è rappresentato dai palazzi imperiali, per la loro varietà tipologica, per la complessità delle funzioni e soprattutto per il prestigio del loro ruolo. È importante esaminare gli *episcopia* tenendo presente questo quadro di riferimento e la concretezza delle evidenze archeologiche, che mostrano un aumento progressivo degli spazi rappresentativi. Nel V e nel VI secolo molti episcopi hanno mura di cinta e una facciata decorata, percorsi interni, sale di ricevimento, residenziali e di servizio. Tutte questi elementi corrispondono al ruolo del vescovo e alle numerose attività. Il caso dell'episcopio di Kos è significativo delle trasformazioni urbane e monumentali di un grande complesso ecclesiastico tra la tarda antichità e il Medioevo.

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Over the last decade, investigations focusing upon episcopal palaces have greatly expanded the archaeological documentation available on them, enabling scholars to compare new data with earlier methodological reflections.¹ These analyses have mostly served to draw the attention of researchers ‘outside’ of the churches or the baptisteries’ in the strictest sense, emphasising some peculiar aspects of this type of architecture and pointing out its importance in the context of public monumentalisation.

As a matter of fact, the *episcopia* represent a particularly significant research field within studies on Late Antiquity and Byzantium for many reasons: for the political, religious and administrative importance that they assume;² for the function of architectural models within cities; for the development of the conception of the prestigious residence; and for their typological experimentation in connection with the progressive definition of the competences and the role of the bishop and his court, which could at times be very numerous: at least 80 monks, for example, served in the complex of Salamis in Cyprus at the time of Bishop Epiphanius.³

Knowledge of the episcopate as an institution has also expanded in recent decades, thanks to a significant amount of research,⁴ permitting a better description of the periods of formation and development of the architectural structures that can be defined as ‘episcopal palaces’ (fig. 1).⁵ Despite this progress in studies, however, the knowledge of *episcopia* is still partial: to a certain extent, this is due to the heterogeneous nature of the documentation and is the direct consequence of the archaeological practices applied to church architecture in the past. Another difficulty stems from the frequent absence of the movable finds used to identify the functions of rooms when specific typological features are not immediately visible, as in the case of reception halls, *triclinia* and bath buildings. For this reason, one of the prevalent methods in publications on episcopal palaces is the identification of close analogies within contemporary residential architecture (palaces, *praetoria*, *domus*, *villae*).⁶

On the other hand, these analogies sometimes make the identification of some residential structures as episcopal

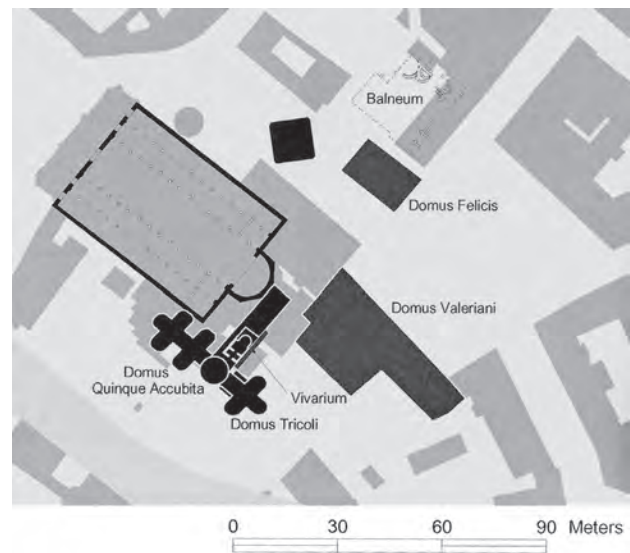


Fig. 1. Ravenna, reconstruction of the Episcopal Palace (Cirelli 2008).

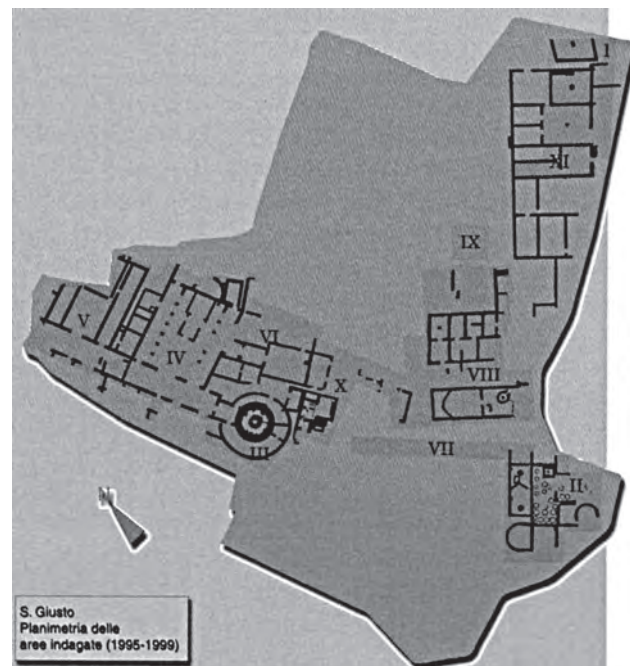


Fig. 2. San Giusto (Apulia), Episcopal complex (Volpe 2009).

palaces difficult. An example is the archaeological recognition of rural *episcopia* (the seats of the country bishops known from sources); the complex of S. Giusto in Apulia, for example, is a candidate for this function (fig. 2).⁷ In the mid-fifth century a basilica with baptistery and annexes was added to a Late Roman villa. Between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century, a cemetery church was built, while the villa was enlarged, and thermal baths were also constructed. The complex could be identified with the seat of *Probus episcopus Carmeianensis*, present at the Roman councils of the early sixth century.

¹ This paper was conceived as an introduction to the Round Table ‘The Episcopal palace in Early Byzantium: Historical development, architectural typologies, domestic spaces’, at the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies. To the Round Table were invited P. Chevalier, P. Niewöhner, N. Poulou, E. Rizos, H. Saradi and A. Taddei. On the general development of eastern *episcopia*, see: Pallas 1971; Malaspina 1975; Müller Wiener 1984; Müller Wiener 1989; Sodini 1989 (Asia Minor); Real 2003; Baldini Lippolis 2005, pp. 102–136; 2007b; Ceylan 2007 (Asia Minor); Seeliger, Krumeich 2007 (Egypt); Marano 2007 (Northern Italy); Uytterhoeven 2007, pp. 39–40 (bibliographical review); Cailliet 2010; Baldini 2014; Ceylan 2014 (Asia Minor); Baldini 2015b.

² Hohlweg 1971; Durliat 1996; Rebillard, Sotinel 1998; Rapp 2000; Brown 2002, pp. 45–73; Rapp 2004; Rapp 2005; Asimakopoulou-Atzaka, Parcharidou-Anagnostou 2009 (bishops’ inscriptions in Greece). Cf. also the contribution of H. Saradi in this volume.

³ John (disciple of Epiphanius), *Vita sancti Epiphani Constantiniensis*, 19.

⁴ Uytterhoeven 2007, p. 40.

⁵ On the increase in the dimensions of these complexes, see: Baldini Lippolis 2005, pp. 102–136.

⁶ Baldini 2015a.

⁷ Volpe 2007; Volpe, Annese, Favia 2007; Volpe 2008, 2009, 2011, pp. 355–365; Volpe, Biffino, Giuliani 2001.



Fig. 3. Aphrodisias, so-called Episcopal palace (I. Baldini).

In many cases, the morphological similarities make the identification of a bishop's palace difficult, particularly when it has been inserted into a pre-existing architectural context; the famous Palace of Aphrodisias (fig. 3), located at the *bouleuterion* and at the northern limit of the agora, certainly belonged to a member of the local elite during the fourth century, possibly with public duties (as demonstrated by the paintings found in the building).⁸ It was used as a bishop's seat after the transformation of the temple of Aphrodite into a church during the reign of Theodosius II. It is unclear, however, whether this endowment of the building to the local Church can really be confirmed; in fact, no significant element of a Christian transformation of the building is recognisable, nor are there traces of a structural link between the cathedral and the residential complex.

One of the achievements of recent research is the reconstruction of the general lines of development of the Late Antique *episcopia*, and their gradual conception as palaces. In reality, the relationship between the architectural features and those of the coeval residential architecture changed over the decades; this process began with the lack of any specific importance within the housing sector, which coincided with the simplest solutions in the *domus ecclesiae* of the third and the fourth centuries, in which the residential rooms were adapted to various ecclesiastical functions: liturgical, productive and charitable, within the centre of the Christian community.

⁸ Cormack 1990; Herbert 2000; Baldini Lippolis 2001, pp. 119–120.

From this point onwards, over the course of two centuries, a new conception of the episcopal residence matured, in the sense that it became a real palace with legal appurtenances (such as the right of asylum, as described in *Codex Theodosianus*);⁹ the acquisition of cells, houses, gardens, baths, open areas and porches), and is defined as an *episkopeion* for the first time in early fifth-century sources.¹⁰ It became a palace not only with regard to its residential characteristics, but also its administrative and economic functions, which were mirrored in all cities in which the local Church played a very central role in the management of public activities.

With the development of the residential and representative aspects of the *episcopia*, an architectural specialisation became more defined over time, built upon precise choices. On the one hand, some residential buildings or rooms remained from the previous residential tradition; on the other hand, new forms of organisation of the space were experimented with, resulting in a wide variety of solutions that depended upon the pre-existing structures and on the mode of aggregation of the building units.

Within this range, some constants can be identified in the fifth and the sixth century. For example, a distinguishing feature of these complexes was the connection between the residential area and episcopal structures (the cathedral,

⁹ *Codex Theodosianus* 9.45.3–5.

¹⁰ Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 63.2, in reference to the Constantinople complex.

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the baptistery, other churches and chapels, as well as rooms for charitable or catechismal functions). Sometimes the connection is via passages located on an upper floor, as is seen in imperial palaces.¹¹ An example has recently been investigated in the episcopal palace of Kos, where two symmetrical stairways lead to the first floor, overlooking the main church (fig. 3).¹²

Other common features can be identified by the presence of boundary walls¹³ and by an ornate façade, or in the development of internal pathways, which followed liturgical practices. The dimensions are generally wide, with progressive enlargements (e.g. at Aquileia,¹⁴ Poreč,¹⁵ Ravenna¹⁶ and Salona).¹⁷

Within the *episcopia*, there were also many reception halls and service areas, e.g. housing, kitchens, baths,¹⁸ workshops, warehouses, archives and *katagoghia*, the last known mainly from literary sources.¹⁹ Also, in rare cases, offices for the administration of the episcopal finances are recorded,²⁰ reflecting the functions of the episcopate as a management centre.

These aspects are also linked with some specificity to the production and commercialisation of artefacts. On occasion, bricks and other manufactured articles marked with the name of the bishop show this productive capacity; under Bishop Sabinus, for example, bricks with his monogram were produced in Canosa (fig. 4).²¹

It should also be remembered that sources mention in a positive manner the role of the bishops in the procurement of quality materials for churches, as in the case of the Constantinople marbles supplied by Archbishop Maximian for the churches of Ravenna,²² or by Laurence of Sipontum in the sixth century.²³ By contrast, Antoninus, bishop of Ephesus, was sanctioned for having transferred architectural material from a baptistery and from a church to his residence (for use in the baths and in the *triclinium*).²⁴ It is a reminder of the public law governing such transfers of architectural elements, which entrusted judges with the authorisation to grant permits to eminent applicants.²⁵



Fig. 4. Canosa (Apulia), brick with Sabinus' monogram (Volpe 2007).

In the context of the individual choices and the transmission of models, it is interesting to observe that within episcopal architecture some recessive typological elements were sometimes present, as may be seen for example in the *triclinia* with more than one apse, a style derived from palatial architecture.²⁶ In cases such as the episcopal *triclinium* in Ravenna²⁷ or the Lateran Palace in Rome,²⁸ the presence of this particular type of hall depended upon factors related to prestige and capacity issues; bishops, in fact, could host a great number of dinner guests (even 200 in Ephesus²⁹) and had the social need to exhibit a luxurious *triclinium*, as occasionally described by written sources and shown in archaeological remains.³⁰

The role of the patriarchal sees in the transmission of typological models is a chapter yet to be written; indeed, little is known of these architectural complexes during the early Byzantine phases. One instance is that of the Patriarchate of Constantinople;³¹ despite the paucity of archaeological evidence, we know that it included the bishop's residence, a tribunal, baths, a *triclinium* with three apses, an atrium with arcades in three orders, a library, a *katagoghion* and other buildings.

The problem of the representative characteristics of *episcopia* is related to the perception of the same

¹¹ E.g. in Constantinople, the so-called Palace of Ormisdas: Janin 1964, p. 137; Baldini Lippolis 2001, pp. 181–182.

¹² Giletti 2015, p. 208.

¹³ Baldini 2015b, pp. 158–159 (Nea Anchialos, Side, Constantinople), with bibliography.

¹⁴ Bertacchi 1985; Baldini Lippolis 2005, pp. 114–118.

¹⁵ Bertacchi 1985; Matejčić 1995; Baldini Lippolis 2001, pp. 245 and 129–131.

¹⁶ Rizzardi 1989; Miller 1991–92; Baldini Lippolis 2001, p. 258; 2005, pp. 119–122; Cirelli 2008, pp. 75–76 and 247–248; Mauskopf Deliyannis 2011, pp. 188–196.

¹⁷ Bertacchi 1985; Baldini Lippolis 2005, pp. 123–124.

¹⁸ Baldini 2015b, p. 159 (e.g. Ravenna, Ephesus, Philippi, Salamis of Cyprus, Jerusalem, Constantinople), with bibliography.

¹⁹ Malaspina 1975, pp. 44–45; Baldini 2015b, p. 158.

²⁰ Baldini, in press.

²¹ Volpe 2011, p. 407.

²² Volpe 2007, 2011.

²³ Fabbri 1989, p. 181.

²⁴ Cf. the contribution of H. Saradi in this volume.

²⁵ Baldini Lippolis 2007a.

²⁶ Baldini 2014, pp. 165–166, with references.

²⁷ Cf. n. 16, and Mauskopf Deliyannis 2011, pp. 100–101.

²⁸ Luchterhandt 1999; Baldini Lippolis 2001, pp. 264; Santangeli Valenzani 2011, pp. 27–28.

²⁹ Palladius, *Dialogus de vita sancti Joannis Chrysostomi* 13.

³⁰ Ellis 1997, pp. 41–51; Baldini Lippolis 2001, pp. 79–83; Dumbabin 2003, pp. 193–195; Vroom 2007a, pp. 318–325; Vroom 2007b, p. 194; Baldini 2015b, p. 167, with bibliography.

³¹ Guiland 1956; Mango 1959; Janin 1962; Cormack, Hawkins 1977; Müller Wiener 1989, pp. 668–670; Dark, Kostenec 2006; Dark, Kostenec 2014. A bibliography and some preliminary reflections are offered by A. Taddei in Kršmanović, Milanović 2016.

buildings as a dominant reality of urban life; the particular connotations of the religious beneficiary of the structure – the bishop – prompt the reflection of an interesting dialectic between huge architecture, luxurious decoration and the conveniences appropriate to sober habits, in keeping with the religious life. These elements especially emerge, even in this case, from literary sources: sensational episodes are recorded, as seen in the example of John Chrysostom and his abandonment of sumptuous episcopal banquets.³²

The reception of models par excellence often intersects with local architectural traditions, and with the existence of homogeneous cultural areas. As an example of recently completed research, the case of the episcopal palace at Kos (fig. 5) can be considered significant for the area of Greece and Asia Minor.

As one of the most important Mediterranean urban centers of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the city of Kos was characterised in Early Christian times by its sustained use of roads, as well as its highly important monumental areas, harbour storehouses and private buildings.³³ The effects of the destructive earthquakes of AD 469 and 554 (the latter described by the Byzantine writer Agathias, who was an eyewitness to the disaster³⁴), and a plague in 542,³⁵ did not in fact cause any drastic breaks in the settlement's life; rather, they provided the opportunity for renewal, in accordance with updated models and lifestyles. In the process of Christianisation, the ecclesiastical architecture increasingly engaged most of the available resources. The episcopate of Kos was very ancient and prestigious, and a list of bishops is known from the first half of the fourth century,³⁶ despite the fact that no Christian building has been discovered that can be dated to before the middle of the fifth century.

A complex excavated in the 1930s in the area of the Western Baths was recently analysed anew by the University of Bologna.³⁷ The surveys implemented show the process – very common in Late Antiquity – of the transfer of public properties to the ownership of the Church and their reuse for new functions. From the mid-first century AD onward, the block of the Roman Western Baths occupied a former residential area that extended from the eastern stoa of the Hellenistic Gymnasium to the *cardo*, which connected the south-western districts of the town with the harbour.³⁸

A significant restructuring of the bath complex took place towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century AD.³⁹ Given the large amount of reused material



Fig. 5. Kos, Early Byzantine Episcopal complex in the second half of the sixth century (P. Baronio, in Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).

³² Cf. the contribution of H. Saradi in this volume.

³³ For a synthesis, with bibliography, see Baldini 2015a; Bersellini 2015; Casadei 2015; Cosentino 2015a; Livadiotti 2015a; Orlandi 2015b; Patrignani 2015; Pellacchia 2015a.

³⁴ Agathias, *Historia* 2.16.1.

³⁵ Cosentino 2015a, p. 111, with bibliography.

³⁶ Cosentino 2015a, pp. 105–106 and 116.

³⁷ Baldini, Livadiotti 2015.

³⁸ Livadiotti 2015b, pp. 146–150.

³⁹ Livadiotti 2015b, pp. 150–153.

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in the walls, the intervention appears to have been due to some destructive seismic action.

Still in use at the end of the fourth century, the Baths experienced a drastic change in function after the mid-fifth century, when the first Christian building (Basilica A) was built in its northern sector, above the *frigidarium*.⁴⁰ It is possible that this change occurred following the earthquake of 469. After this event, the Western Baths could not be maintained and became the property of the local Church.

Basilica A (fig. 6) was smaller than the other religious buildings established in Kos some decades before (the Basilicas of the Harbour⁴¹ and Epta Vimata⁴²). Its religious role was probably linked to the neighbourhood. Its acquisition of episcopal status seems to correspond to a subsequent reorganisation of the spaces and paths within

the district dating to shortly after the mid-sixth century, most likely after the seismic activity of 554. At that time, the episcopal seat moved from its previous position – unfortunately still unknown – which had probably been irreparably damaged.⁴³

With access from the *decumanus*, the new complex included entrance rooms,⁴⁴ an apsidal room with a monumental nymphaeum,⁴⁵ private baths (fig. 7),⁴⁶ a baptistery (fig. 8–9),⁴⁷ two churches (one of which was built from the restructuring of Basilica A),⁴⁸ a *triclinium*,⁴⁹ and a second entrance accessible from the *cardo*.

The palace, with its impressive mosaic pavements, once again returned to its former role as an urban epicentre of

⁴⁰ Baldini 2015b, pp. 154–155; Marsili 2015.

⁴¹ Pellacchia 2015a, pp. 38–45.

⁴² Orlandi 2015a.

⁴³ Baldini 2015a, pp. 21–22; 2015b, pp. 155–157.

⁴⁴ Baldini 2015b, p. 193–195.

⁴⁵ Baldini 2015b, p. 156; Pellacchia 2015b, p. 191–192.

⁴⁶ Baldini 2015b, p. 156; Baronio 2015; Pellacchia 2015b, pp. 184–191.

⁴⁷ Baldini 2015b, pp. 165–166; Boccardi 2015; Giletti 2015, pp. 201–202.

⁴⁸ Baldini 2015b, pp. 154–155; Marsili 2015.

⁴⁹ Baldini 2015b, pp. 166–167; Marsili 2015, pp. 229–230.

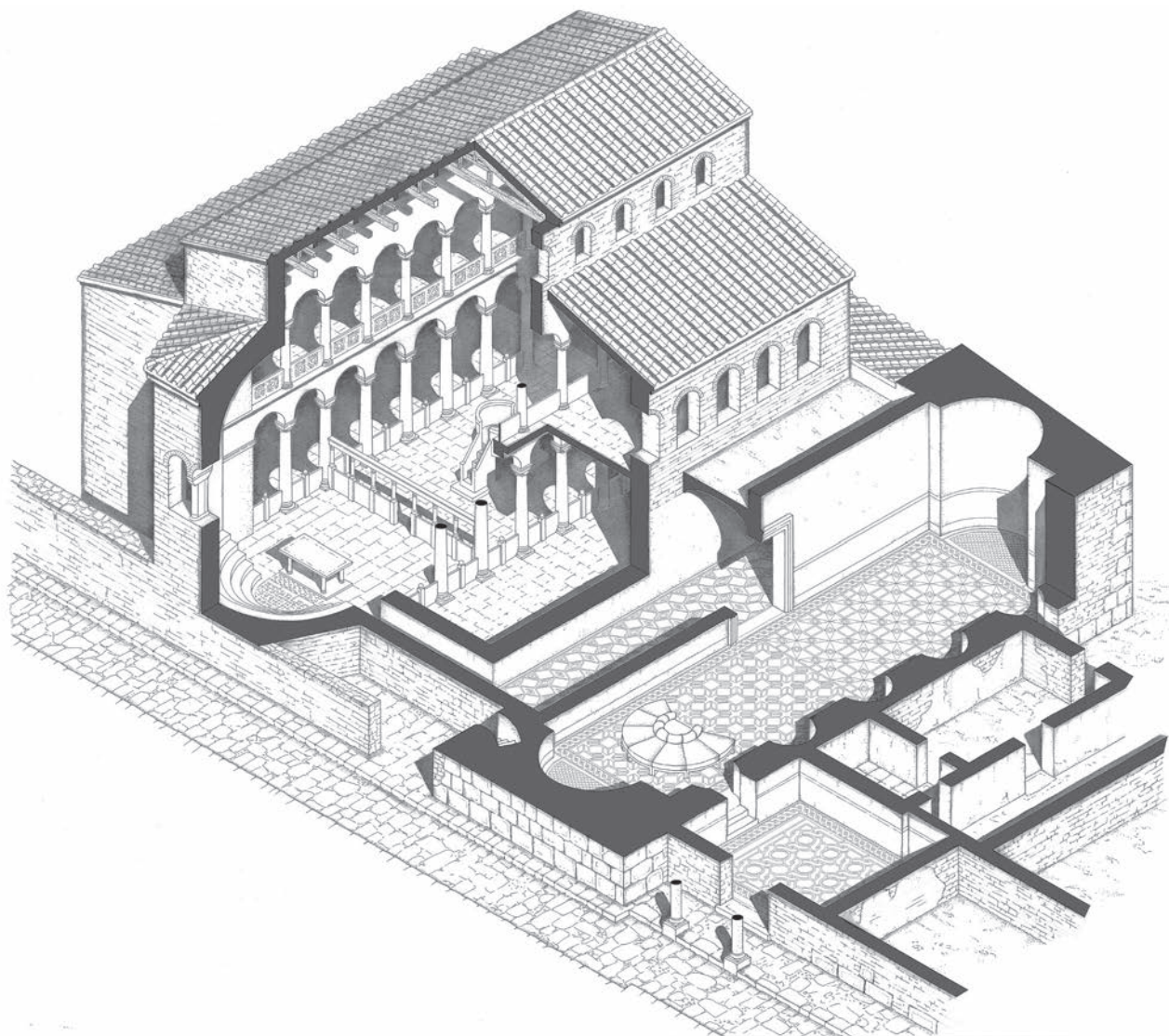


Fig. 6. Kos, reconstruction of Basilica A (P. Baronio, in Baldini, Livadiotti 2017).

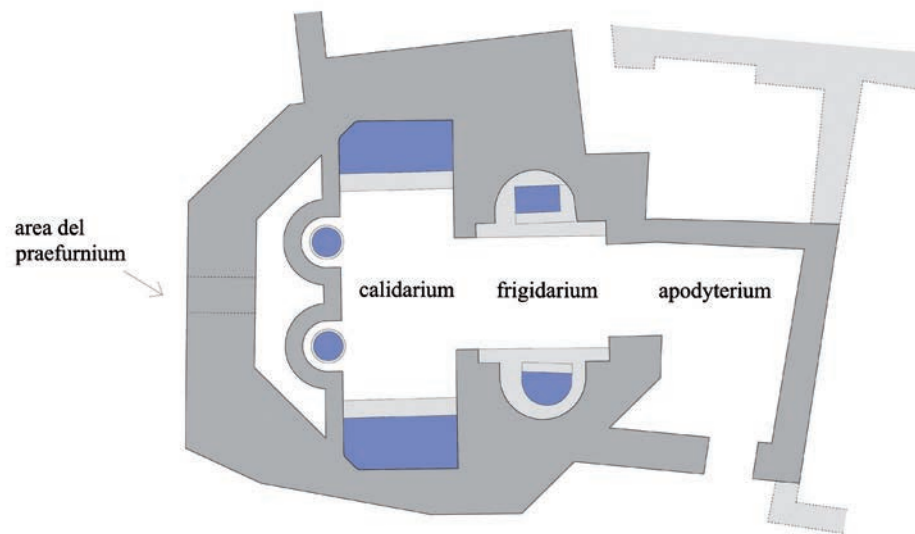


Fig. 7. Kos, Early Byzantine baths of the Episcopal palace, second half of the sixth century (P. Baronio, D. Pellacchia, in Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).

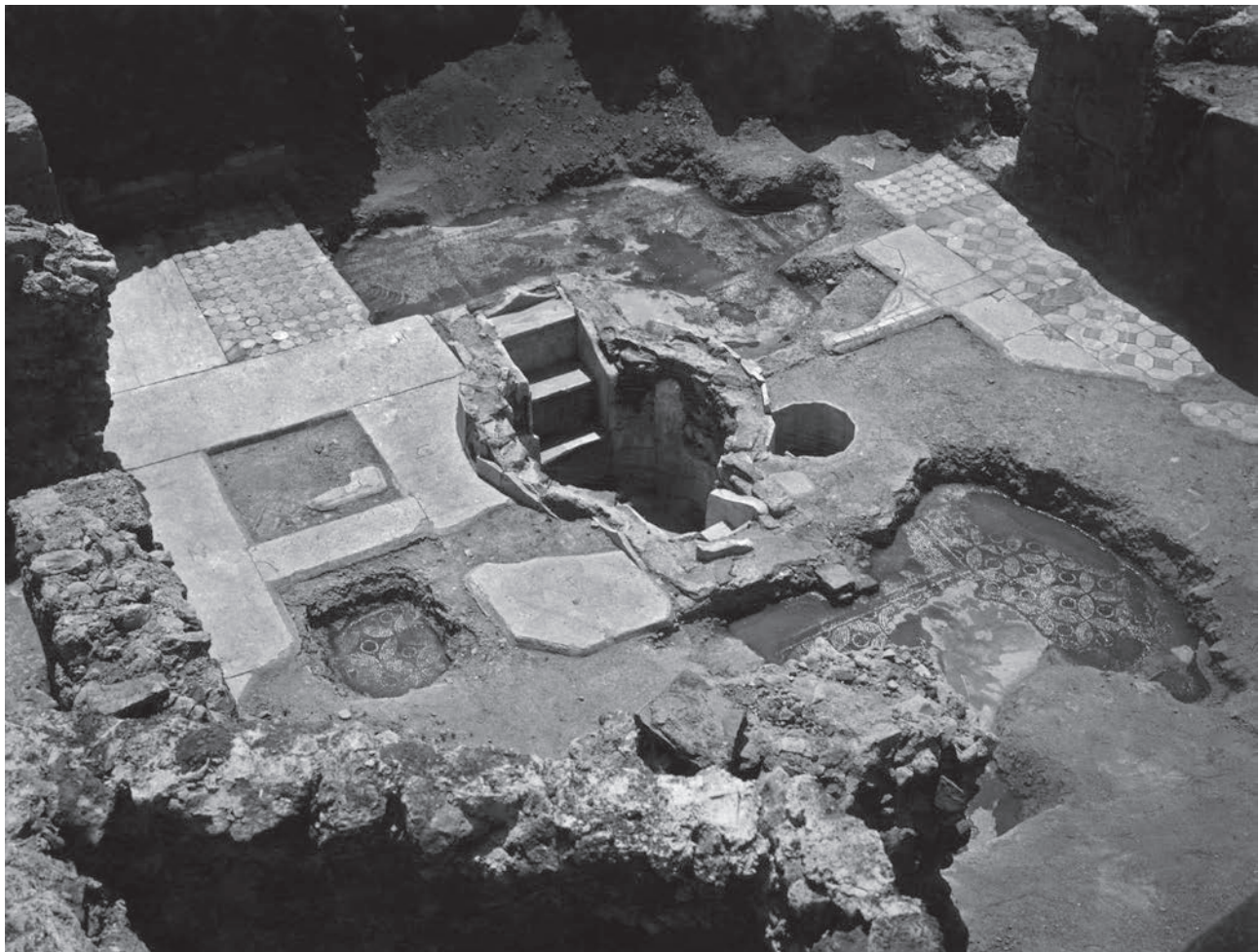


Fig. 8. Kos, Episcopal palace, baptistery (room 28) (Archive SAIA).

primary importance, and was destined to maintain this importance until at least the end of the seventh or the eighth century, at which point new building activities can

be observed in Basilica B. The new episcopal complex was conceived according to a monumentality that corresponded to the importance of the city and its bishopric.

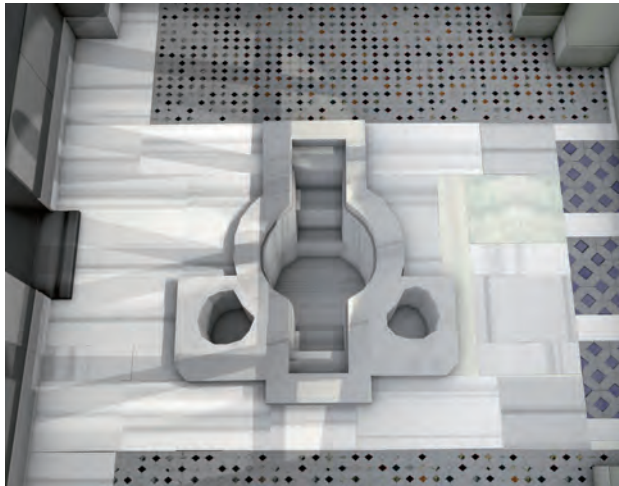


Fig. 9. Kos, Episcopal palace, baptistery (room 28), reconstruction (F. Frasca).

The compactness of the building system can be compared to other eastern and western *episcopia* in both its planimetric and formal aspects;⁵⁰ it was a multifunctional ensemble conceived to perform liturgical, representative and residential functions. Spaces were enlarged for religious actions, and new decorations, flooring (mosaic⁵¹ and *opus sectile*⁵²), and architectural components (e.g. through the almost exclusive use of Ionic capitals for the colonnades⁵³) were added. It was a huge financial commitment, which also included the import of pre-worked or partially worked Proconnesian elements. An ambo with an octagonal platform (fig. 10), as was documented by the discovery of some white marble elements, can be attributed to Basilica A.⁵⁴ It is probable that most of the marble elements came instead from the southern church (Basilica B). The importance of this church is demonstrated by its central location and the connection of the monumental entrance rooms to the baptistery by special pathways paved with mosaic and marble floors. The importance of the building is also evinced by its architectural elements and liturgical furniture. In particular, it is important to note the discovery of a huge ambo in Proconnesian marble (fig. 11–12); its monolithic platform is distinguished by its elegant decor, typical of Constantinople, which also includes a cross and the inscription ‘Light – Life’.⁵⁵ In the southern sector of the complex, a cover belonging to a black marble reliquary was found (fig. 13),⁵⁶ perhaps originating from a room adjacent to the baptistery and Basilica B.

Unfortunately, the central sector of the quarter is lost, and a simple analysis of the different parts does not easily permit one to appreciate completely the combination of



Fig. 10. Kos, Castle of Nerantzia, marble slab of the ambo pertaining to Basilica A (Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).



Fig. 11. Kos, Castle of Nerantzia, marble platform of the ambo pertaining to Basilica B (Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).

external architectural influences and local traditions. One example is the baptistery, which includes not just a main pool accessible from two opposing stairs for the ritual

⁵⁰ Baldini 2015b, pp. 159–164 (e.g. Iustiniana Prima, Loloudies, Heraklea Lyncestis, Philippi, Nea Anchialos, Ephesus, Jerash), with bibliography. For the episcopal palace of Miletus, cf. Niewöhner’s contribution in this volume.

⁵¹ Baldini 2015b, p. 164; Frasca 2015.

⁵² Baldini 2015b, p. 164; Lo Ioco 2015.

⁵³ Mazzilli 2015, pp. 284–291.

⁵⁴ Baldini 2015b, p. 168; Mazzilli 2015, pp. 312–313.

⁵⁵ Baldini 2015b, pp. 168–169; Mazzilli 2015, pp. 307–312 and 363–370.

⁵⁶ Baldini 2015b, pp. 170–171; Giletti 2015, pp. 206–207.

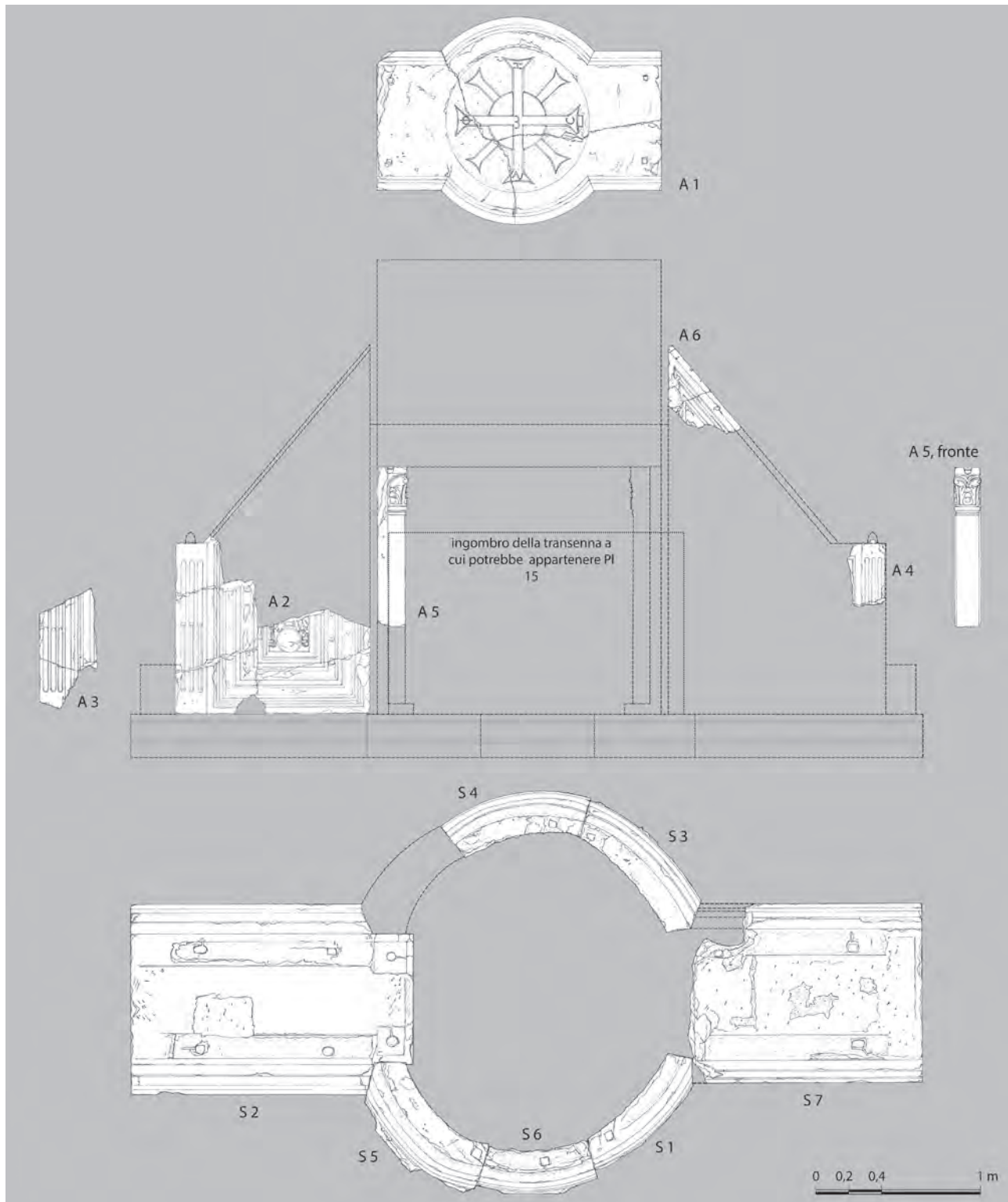


Fig. 12. Kos, Reconstruction of the ambo pertaining to Basilica B (G. Mazzilli, in Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).

immersion, but also two smaller secondary pools, utilised in relation to baptismal practices undertaken before accessing the sacrament.⁵⁷

One of the indicators of the ‘international’ models adopted by the Koan community is also evinced by the form of the *Basilica Thermanum*’s banquet hall; it was built according

to the models of hierarchical and representative behaviour acquired by Late Antique clergy through the example set by the high aristocracy. A semicircular table with *stibadium* left traces of ashes (fig. 14), which are still visible in old photographs taken of the room.⁵⁸ The northern basilica (or Basilica A) probably had a complementary role, as

⁵⁷ Baldini 2015b, pp. 165–166.

⁵⁸ Baldini 2015b, pp. 166–167; Marsili 2015, pp. 229–230.



Fig. 13. Kos, Castle of Nerantzia, marble cover of a reliquary found in room 26 (Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).

suggested by its location and relationship with the bishop's dining hall.

Basilica B shows evidence of prolonged use; a series of marble slabs found in the area dating from the end of the seventh to the eighth century were decorated with the monograms of important dignitaries (fig. 15–16). The monograms were part of a series of eight marble slabs that were probably placed in the narthex of the church. They have been interpreted as being relevant to members of the laity, not to the clergy: a *hypatos* (or *patrikios*) *kai chartoularios*, and a *komēs*. As for their chronology, it has been suggested that they date from the second half of the seventh century or, more likely, the first half of the eighth century.⁵⁹

The possibility of extending the use of the episcopal basilica up to this epoch has greatly contributed to the scholarly reconstruction of the development of the local Church and the entire Koan community, in correspondence with a series of pieces of archaeological evidence proving the continuity of life in the city beyond Late Antiquity. After this period, it becomes difficult to reconstruct the development of the episcopal district over the centuries

⁵⁹ Baldini 2015b, p. 171–172; Cosentino 2015b (interpretation and chronology); Mazzilli 2015, pp. 303–305 and 376–379.



Fig. 14. Kos, Episcopal palace, dining hall (room 6), with traces of burning of the dining table on the mosaic floor (Archive SAIA).



Fig. 15. Kos, marble slabs from Basilica A, now at the Castle of Nerantzia (Archive SAIA).

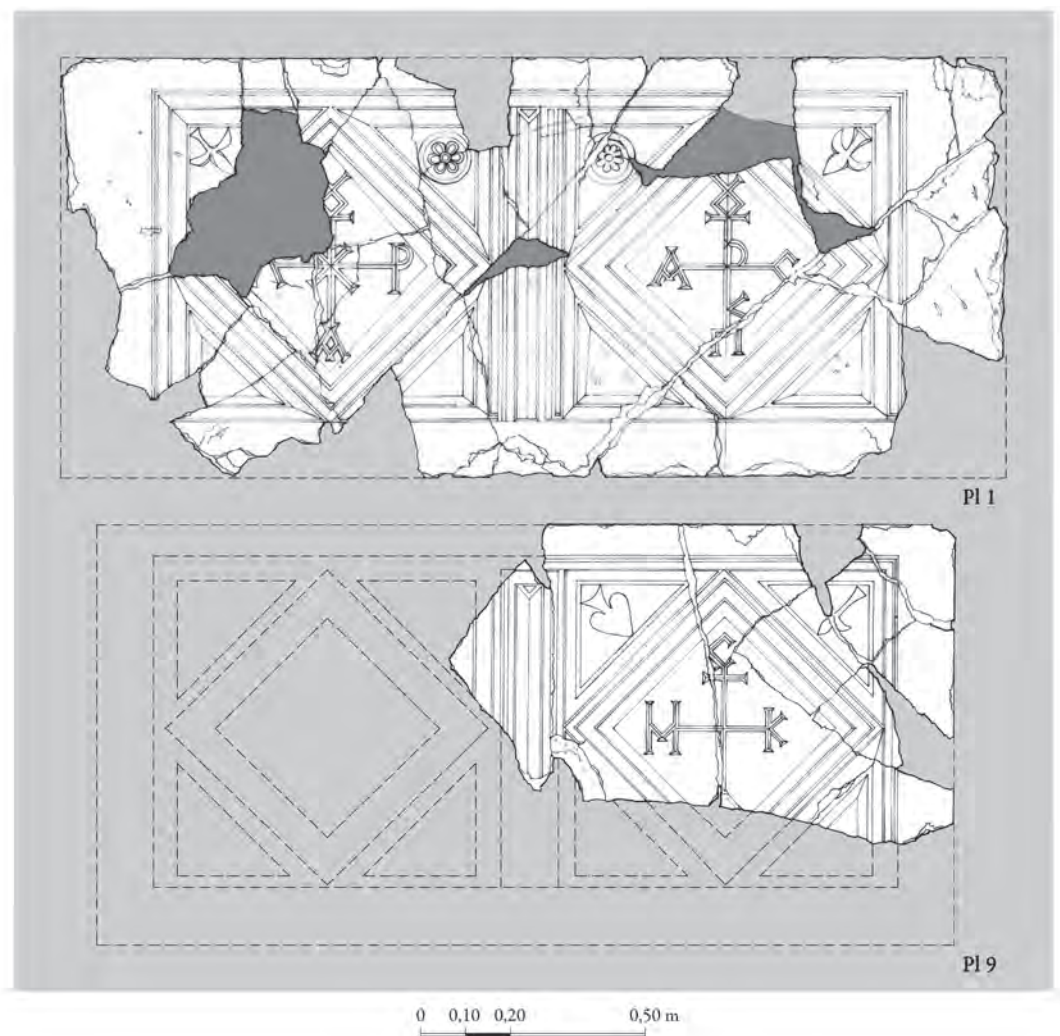


Fig. 16. Kos, reconstruction of marble slabs from Basilica A: carved monograms of high rank imperial officials, dated between the end of the seventh and the eighth centuries (S. Cosentino, G. Mazzilli, in Baldini, Livadiotti 2015).

that followed. It is evident from the ruins that are still visible and the written sources⁶⁰ that stone material was later removed in order to build the medieval fortifications of the city.

This example makes it possible to highlight the problem of the development of *episcopia* during the 'Dark Ages', when episcopal palaces evolved towards different residential and representative forms that were often conservative in nature. At the same time, they adapted to architectural models that definitively abandoned the Late Antique peristyle type, while storage and production facilities increased. In the absence of epigraphic and stratigraphic documentation, *spolia*, repair works and floor patching have mostly indicated the prolonged use of these spaces, continuing beyond Late Antiquity.

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Abbreviations:

FelRav = *Felix Ravenna*.

JÖB = *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*.

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⁶⁰ Baldini 2015a, p. 27, with bibliography.

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