

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SACRED LANDSCAPE OF THE MADIIEVAL SOLEA

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The small churches are deeply connected with the place and the small communities that lived there of which they express the ideology and religious concept. Almost every one of them is hidden in the mountain folds which they use to hide, to be protected from the intruders, they are closed places, communal places. The churches were born from a necessity of the humans who are hooked on this mountain, who are passionate to fight against hardness changing its vertical dimension to horizontal, in order to create to the stone bench plots that give food, of the human beings that dress their slopes, like the painters dress the walls of the small churches, like the small church feed the souls.

The church is not just a “sacred place” or a symbolic expression of the Christian piety. Depending on their context, the churches as also called to operate with several ways: as monastery temples, parish and/or cemetery churches as private and burial chapels. Byzantine parish churches as spiritual and architecture centers of the communities, chapels as protective sacred obstacles between the external and internal world of the communities. The churches that are closely situated to cultivated lands that belong to small owners, operating as indicators of several geographical units.

The Troodos Archaeological and Environmental Survey Project, have located some medieval settlement in the Solea area, which plays important role, and the thing that separates it from the other areas and for the whole Cyprus, is that it includes the most powerful river on the island, along with the geographical lands and the plentiful water provision.

The preserved churches are mostly located to the central part of the mountainous volume completing an image. These churches are not only consisting of isolated sacred places and monasteries but also villages and smaller settlements. Based on the concentration of the churches to the fertile valley of Solea, a study of their dispersion of the area, the iconography in their internal part and of their relation with contemporary settlements is processed, in order to investigate the dialect relation between the religious monuments as symbolic expression of piety and of the human communities in their periphery with the assistance of the Geographic Information System. This study is based on the examination of the Sacred Topography of the reading of the iconographic programme as mean for the clarification of the character of the religious monuments and to the assessment of the archeological data related to the building activity.