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HIEROTOPY. THE CREATION OF SACRED SPACES AS A FORM OF CREATIVITY AND SUBJECT OF CULTURAL HISTORY

As a number of scholars recently realised, the most significant aspect of relics and miraculous icons was the role they played in the creation of particular sacred spaces[1]. In many cases relics and venerated icons were established as a core, a kind of pivot in the forming of a concrete spatial environment. This milieu included permanently visible architectural forms and various pictures as well as changing liturgical clothes and vessels, lighting effects and fragrance, ritual gestures and prayers, which every time created a unique spatial complex. Sometimes the environment could form itself spontaneously, yet there are several examples when we are able to speak of deliberate concepts and elaborated projects, which should be considered among the most important historical documents.

In our view, very few studies in this direction have appeared so far, because an adequate notion covering this field of creativity has been lacking. The widespread term 'sacred space' did not function well because of its too general character, describing almost the entire realm of the religious. Some years ago I proposed a new term 'hierotopy', which became the core of the present project[2].

The term 'hierotopy' (ierotopia) consists of two Greek roots: hieros (sacred) and topos (place, space, notion). In that respect it resembles many other words already established in our vocabulary in the last hundred years — the term 'iconography' is one of them. The meaning of the notion might be formulated as follows: *Hierotopy is creation of sacred spaces regarded as a special form of creativity, and a field of historical research which reveals and analyses the particular examples of that creativity.* The intention of the project is to realize the existence of special and quite large

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[1] *Lidov A.* Relics as a pivot of Eastern Christian culture // Eastern Christian Relics / Ed. Alexei Lidov. Moscow, 2003, p. 11–15.

[2] For the first time it was presented in my lecture 'Byzantine Hierotopy. Miraculous Icons in Sacred Space' at the Bibliotheka Hertziana in Rome (January 14, 2002). I would like to use this opportunity and express my deep and sincere thanks to colleagues and friends who could evaluate and support this idea from the very beginning. I mean, first of all, Leonid Beliaev, Peter Brown, Slobodan Ćurčić, Herbert Kessler, Oleg Grabar, Nicoletta Isar and Gerhard Wolf. The discussions we had around the Hierotopy concept and their moral support were not just stimulating but actually priceless.

phenomenon, for which boundaries of the research field have to be established and specific methods are to be worked out.

The most serious problem of hierotopy is probably the category of the sacred itself, which surmises actual presence of God and cannot be separated from the miraculous, in other words, something that is not created by human will. The outstanding anthropologist Mircea Eliade, who dedicated several works to the phenomenon of the sacred, introduced a special notion of 'hierophany', making a clear statement: 'Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different'[3]. As an example of hierophany Eliade provides the famous biblical story of Jacob's Dream about the Ladder connecting the Earth and the Heaven, about Lord speaking from Heaven and the construction of an altar at the holy spot (Gen. 28: 12–22).

Using the same subject, let us try to separate 'hierophany' and 'hierotopy', articulating the specificity of our approach. In the biblical story the description of the hierotopic project starts with Jacob's awakening. Inspired by his dream-vision, he , begins to create a sacred space, which would convert a particular place into "the house of God and the gate of heaven". He takes the stone that has been his pillow, sets it up as a monument, and pours oil on it. Jacob also renamed the place and took special vows. So, Jacob, and all his successors — creators of churches and shrines, created a particular spatial milieu. That making differs from hierophany as a creation by human hands from God's will. Communion with the miraculous inspired the concept of a spatial image, but itself remained beyond the realm of human creativity. This creativity, nevertheless, was intended to actualize the memory of a hierophany by all possible means, embodying an image of the divine revelation. As it seems, the permanent relation and intensive interaction between hierophany (the mystical appearance) and hierotopy (actually created space) determined the specificity of creation of sacred spaces as a form of creativity. One may note that Eliade's approach, analyzing the structure of the myth and its profound symbolism, has a principally different focus which, however, can be used in some hierotopical reconstructions.

Hierotopy as a type of creativity is deeply rooted in human nature. In the process of self-identification as a spiritual being, the Man, first spontaneously and then deliberately, creates a concrete milieu of his connection with the transcendental world. Creation of sacred spaces can be compared with pictorial creativity, which also belongs to visual culture and appears spontaneously at a very early stage of shaping of personality. However, in contrast with the creation of pictures, where an entire infrastructure is present from

[3] *Eliade M*. The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion. New York, 1959, p. 26.

first drawing lessons to academies, criticism and the art market, creation of sacred spaces simply has not been included in the cultural context of modern European civilization. The positivist ideology of the 19th century, when contemporary disciplines took their shape, did not see in the ephemeral 'sacred space' an independent subject of research. Most disciplines were linked to concrete material objects, either pictures or architectural monuments, folk rituals or written texts. Creation of sacred spaces did not receive its place in the established scheme of humanities, whose structure was determined by the 'object-centered' model of description of the universe. As a logical consequence of this fact the subject was not formulated, a discipline did not appear, and the special terminology was not elaborated.

At the same time it is not possible to say that the problematic of sacred space has not been touched by the humanities. Various aspects of the topic in question have been discussed by archeologists, anthropologists, art historians and historians of religion. However, they, as a rule, tried to solve the problems of their own respective disciplines, emphasizing particular aspects without consideration of the whole. No doubt hierotopical studies will use some traditional approaches of art history, anthropology and liturgics. At the same time one may claim that hierotopy does not coincide with any of them. Hierotopy can not be reduced neither solely to the world of artistic images, nor to the combination of material objects, organizing a sacred milieu, nor to the rituals and social mechanisms that determine them. The ritual plays a great role in hierotopical projects but purely artistic, theological and liturgical aspects usually neglected by anthropology seem no less important. Furthermore, a hierotopical concept could not be interpreted in terms of the so-called *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or synthesis of arts, which acquired enormous significance in the age of Baroque, and later in the *Art Nouveau*. Medieval sacred space cannot be considered as just a combination of artifacts and various ephemeral effects creating a particular artistic milieu. This modern approach seems to be a result of the great transformation that happened in Western European mentality after the Renaissance when aesthetical values began to be perceived as a substitute of the sacred ones[4]. Though sometimes similar, hierotopy deals with a principally different matrix.

Hierotopical vision can be practically useful for many humanities. Characteristically, entire forms of creativity could not be properly discussed beyond the hierotopical framework, which is not connected with the positivist classification of objects. For instance, such an enormous phenomenon as the

[4] This topic has been discussed in the paper by Mikhail Sokolov at the Hierotopy conference in Moscow: *Sokolov M.* Ab arte restaurata. On the sacralization of aesthetical values in modern "Hierotopy" // Hierotopy. Studies in the Making of Sacred Spaces / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2004, p. 50–52 and in the forthcoming collection 'Hierotopy. Comparative Studies' / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2006.

dramaturgy of lighting goes beyond the boundaries of the traditional disciplines. At the same time we know for sure from written sources (Byzantine Monastic Typika) how detailed was the practice of lighting, dynamically changing during the services according to a sophisticated scenario[5]. In particular moments light accentuated concrete images or holy objects, organizing a perception of the entire space of the church as well as the logic of reading its most significant elements[6]. Dramaturgy is an appropriate word in this context since the artistic and dramatic element in that field of creativity was no less important than the ritual and symbolic one[7].

The same concerns the realm of fragrance, which presents every time new combinations of incense, smells of wax candles and aromatic oils in lamps. Christian culture inherited the great traditions of the Ancient East through the Roman imperial cult as well as through the sophisticated worship of the Old Testament Temple[8]. Jewish and Ancient Roman sources do not leave doubts that individual dramaturgies of lighting and fragrance were practically always an integral part of a particular concept of the sacred space[9]. Hierotopical approach allows us to create an adequate research framework for such phenomena, in which different cultural artifacts could be studied as interacting elements of a single project.

A project of this kind was a matrix, or structural model, of a particular sacred space, subordinating all visual, audio and tactile effects. It seems important to realize that practically all objects of religious art were originally conceived as elements of a hierotopical project and included in the 'network' of a concrete sacred space. However, with some exceptions, we do not ‘ask’ our artistic monuments about this pivotal peculiarity, which was crucial for their external appearance. In order to solve this apparently simple problem one should get rid of a fundamental stereotype of the consciousness. The

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[5] A characteristic example is the Typikon of the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople: *Congdon E.* Imperial Commemoration and Ritual in the Typikon of the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator // Revue des études byzantines, 54 (1996), p. 169–175, 182–184; on the kindling in Byzantine churches see: *Theis L.* Lampen, Leuchten, Licht // Byzanz — das Licht aus dem Osten: Kult und Alltag im Byzantinischen Reich vom 4. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert. Katalog der Ausstellung im Erzbischöflichen Diözesanmuseum Paderborn / Ed. Chr. Stiegemann. Mainz, 2001, S. 53−64.

[6] On the use of natural light see: *Potamianos I.* Light into Architecture. Evocative Aspects of Natural Light as Related to Liturgy (Ph. D. Diss. University of Michigan, 1996).

[7] On the symbolic and liturgical aspects as reflected in the Byzantine ekphraisis see: *Isar N.* Choros of Light: Vision of the Sacred in Paulus the Silentiary's poem Descriptio S. Sophiae // Byzantinische Forschungen, 28 (2004), p. 215–242.

[8] *Caseau B.* Euodia: The Use and Meaning of Fragrance in the Ancient World and their Christianization (100–900). Ann Arbor, 1994.

[9] *Heger P.* The Development of Incense Cult in Israel. Berlin — New York, 1997; *Barker M.* Fragrance in the making of sacred space: Jewish Temple paradigms of Christian worship // Hierotopy. Comparative Studies / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2006 (forthcoming).

basis of the positivist universe is the object itself, around which the whole process of research is being constructed. However, it becomes more and more clear now that the centre of the universe in medieval religious minds was immaterial but real space around which the world of objects, sounds, smells, lights and other effects came to being. Hierotopical approach allows us to see artistic objects in the context of another model of universe and to read them anew.

Without denying any options of iconographical or stylistic approaches, hierotopy helps to reveal an unknown source of information, existing in our art objects. If our efforts lead just to posing questions about the spatial aspect of a concrete monument and introduce one more dimension in traditional art historical discourse, the initial part of the project would be accomplished. We should repeat, however, that Hierotopy does not coincide with traditional art history, though it might considerably renovate its methodology.

Thinking further on the boundaries of art history, one may ask why the history of medieval art has been reduced to making of objects and the role of artist was limited by more or less high artisantry. May be the time has come to extend the context by introducing a special figure of the creator of sacred space[10]. Some projects of sacred space were of high artistic value though realised on a different level in comparison with the creation of art objects and architectural forms. Such figures are well known though their true role has remained hidden behind the general name of donors or commissioners. However, not all the donors were creators of the sacred space though there are examples when their functions coincided.

A representative figure in the West is the Abbot Suger, who created a concept of the first Gothic space in the cathedral of St Denis[11]. His functions could not be reduced just to the endowment of the project, or to the casting of masters, or to the theological program, or to elaboration of new rituals, artistic modeling, iconographic or stylistic innovations. He was engaged in all these activities. His role can be compared with the role of film-directors, who coordinate efforts of various masters, which we have long agreed to regard in the context of art history.

In the Byzantine tradition emperors quite often played the role of creators of sacred space, following the example of Justinian as the saint 'concepteur' of the Great Church (fig. 1). Justinian himself competed with the King Solomon — a renown builder of the Old Testament Temple[12]. Solomon in his creation of the Temple space was inspired by the Lord himself, who con-

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[10] *Lidov A.* The Creator of Sacred Space as a Phenomenon of Byzantine Culture // The Artist in Byzantium / Ed. M. Bacci. Pisa, 2006.

[11] *Panofsky E.* Abbot Suger and Its Art Treasures on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis. Princeton, 1979.

[12] *Koder J.* Justinians Sieg über Solomon // Thymiama. Athens, 1994, p. 135–142.

veyed to Moses on Mount Choreb the entire project of the Tabernacle from the general structure of the space to details of the sacred vestment production (Ex. 25–40). God has chosen the master Bezalel for the practical realization of his plan, creating for centuries a model relationship between creators of sacred space and creators of objects (Ex. 35–36). Creation of sacred spaces by earthly rulers can be considered as iconic behavior in relation to the Ruler of the universe. That activity went far beyond ordinary commission and should become a subject of intensive research, based on a sequence of historical reconstructions of particular projects of sacred space.

I have recently discussed one of these concepts in detail in a special paper concerning Leo the Wise's project in Hagia Sophia and his spatial program of the Imperial Door (fig. 2)[13]. As one may judge from direct and indirect evidence, the emperor Leo combined in one program venerable relics and miraculous icons, mosaic murals and accompanying verse inscriptions, special rites and images of the miracle stories, which appeared in minds in front of the concrete shrines. All together they created a spatial milieu of the Main Entrance to the Great Church of the Empire. An invisible part of this milieu were repeated miracles, as numerous pilgrims inform us. To some extant, the boundaries of the milieu were mystically marked by the zone of specific miracles. The protagonist of this spatial dramaturgy was Jerusalem icon of the Virgin who spoke to St Mary of Egypt and gave her salvation after her deep penitence in front of the icon. Noteworthy is, that this icon, originally situated at the entrance to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, was installed by Leo the Wise at the same place beside the Imperial Door of Saint Sophia of Constantinople. Thereby a mystical link was established between sacred spaces of two great churches. Jerusalem relic with its own aureole of literary associations and symbolic connotations was translated into the Constantinopolitan church, becoming a part of another spatial image.

That spontaneous aspect undoubtedly played a considerable role in the creation of any particular sacred space. Every spatial phenomenon should be perceived as a result of creative efforts of several masters. We do not want to fall back into the rut of an old-fashioned art-historical deification of the individual maestro: Solomon; Justinian; Leo the Wise, or Suger of St-Denis. Creation of an environment conducive to the eruption of the sacred (Eliade's hierophany) is always complex, and not merely reducible to the genius of a single patron. But at the same time we might want to think about a 'concepteur', a particular creator of the sacred space, whose role could be initiative, fundamental, and multifunctional. Like future film directors he was respon-

[13] *Lidov A.* Leo the Wise and the Miraculous Icons in Hagia Sophia // The Heroes of the Orthodox Church. The New Saints, 8th to 16th century / Ed. E. Galaki-Kountoura. Athens, 2004, p. 393–432.

sible not merely for the general spatial imagery but for complex links of various arts subordinated into a single sacred milieu. Without revealing this figure, or better to say, without keeping in mind a possibility of this cultural function, we will not be able to understand properly numerous phenomena of medieval culture.

As we have noticed before, translation of sacred space was key element in the project of Leo the Wise, presenting just one example in a large practice, which consists of a main direction of the medieval hierotopy. A complex problem of the definition of the 'holy place' as distinct from the 'sacred space' emerges in this context[14]. Translation of a spatial image did not mean disappearance of the locus, moreover, topographical material concreteness stimulated the power and miraculous efficacy of a spatial image. Hierotopical creativity established a sophisticated system of interaction between the static place-matrix and the flying space, which at any moment could be materialized at a new place. In this context a set of projects on the recreation of the Holy Land in various countries of the East and the West comes to mind. Among them one might recall the Pharos chapel in Constantinople, which functioned not merely as an imperial storage of main Passion relics, but as the Byzantine Holy Sepulchre — the sacred centre of the Empire[15]. In the West the most striking example is famous Campo Santo in Pisa (fig. 4), for which in the 13th century the crusaders brought the real "Holy Land" by ships from Jerusalem and covered a large field, later surrounded by the gallery-cemetery. Finally, a glorious Russian project should be mentioned. I mean the seventeenth-century New Jerusalem complex near Moscow (fig. 5), which was the largest project for a recreation of the Holy Land in world history. Creators of that enormous sacred space combined in their project an iconic image and a precise replica, presenting both Byzantine and Western hierotopical traditions[16].

It is interesting that in the framework of one 'large space' some projects belonging to different periods could co-exist. Thus, the concept of Leo the Wise at the beginning of the tenth century was inscribed into the space of the Great Church created by Justinian in the sixth century. It was not the only alteration. The whole environment of Hagia Sophia was filled out by concrete projects of sacred spaces. It concerns the space around the altar-table, with its various crosses, votive crowns, liturgical covers and the *catapetas-*

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[14] *Smith Z.* To Take Place. Toward Theory in Ritual. Chicago and London, 1987.

[15] *Lidov A.* The Theotokos of the Pharos. The Imperial Church-Reliquary as Constantinopolitan Holy Sepulchre // Византийский мир. Искусство Константинополя и национальные традиции (Byzantine World: The Art of Constantinople and National Traditions). Moscow, 2005, p. 79–108 (in Russian with English resume).

[16] *Ousterhout R.* Flexible Geography and Transportable Topography // The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art / Ed. B. Kuehnel. Jerusalem, 1998, p. 402–404.

ma, which had to be perceived within a single spatial image-installation, which should not be reduced to any flat picture. Typologically similar spatial images, every time in new forms, appeared in other parts of the building: at the Samaritan's well in the south-east compartment, or around the icon-reliquary with the chains of St Peter in the northern aisle, or near the north-west pillar with relics of St Gregory the Wonderworker inside. The latter was covered by gilded brass plates and adorned by a venerated icon of this saint. In particular days a movable altar-table was installed in front of the pillar and special services took place. Deliberately modeled micro-spaces were activated in particular moments of the daily or annual liturgical services, becoming temporary protagonists in a grandiose spatial performance.

The dynamic characteristic was of principal importance in hierotopical projects. We usually do not consider it in our discussions of Byzantine art since we are mostly operating with archeological remains. However, we should recognize that the material forms were just a part, and not always the most important one, of a spatial whole which was in permanent movement. Performativity, dramatic changes, the lack of strict fixation shaped a vivid, spiritually intensive, and concretely influential environment.

It is noteworthy, that in Byzantium, as it becomes clear, this phenomenon had a special system of notions describing such performative paradigms[17]. Sometimes they were reflected in iconographical programs as, for a example, the early fourteenth-century mosaics of the Kariye Camii (the Chora Monastery in Constantinople) suggest (fig. 3). As we know, the concept of the sacred space as well as of the iconographic program belonged to Theodore Metochites, who clearly pointed out the origins of his imagery, symbolically connected with the dedication of the monastery to the '*Chôra*'. Along the axis of the West to the East, over the entrance and to the right of the sanctuary barrier, there are different images of the Virgin with the Child inscribed by the same words "*Chôra tou achôrêtou*" ("container of uncontainable", or "the space of what exists beyond the space")[18]. The inscription indicated the miracle of the Incarnation, when the earthly Virgin contained uncontainable God, and at once established a spatial dimension of the divine being. The images of the Mother of God were co-related with two images of Christ above the entrances to the narthex and to the naos, in both cases inscribed as "*Chôra tôn zôntôn*" ("space of the living").

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[17] It concerns, first of all, notions of *Chôra* and *Chorós.* See Nicoletta Isar's paper 'Chorography (*Chôra*, *Chorós*) — A performative paradigm of creation of sacred space in Byzantium' in the present collection.

[18] *Ousterhout R.* The Virgin of the Chora: the Image and its Contexts // The Sacred Image. East and West / Ed. R. Ousterhout, L. Brubaker. Urbana and Chicago, 1995, p. 91–109; *Isar N.* The Vision and its 'Exceedingly Blessed Beholder': Of Desire and Participation in the Icon // RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics, 38 (2000), p. 56–73.

It seems clear that the '*Chôra'* here does not mean country, land or village, but the most important theological notion and one of the names of God. It went back to Plato's fundamental category[19], which was developed by neo-Platonism and from there came to the Church Fathers. In the theology of icon worshippers (such as the Patriarch Nikephoros in the early ninth century) the notion of *Chôra* became a kind of cornerstone in the argument against iconoclasts, explaining the principal difference between the 'icon' and the 'idol'. According to this view, the ideal icon is always spatial, and at the same time absolutely concrete, like Christ at the same time eternally dwells in Heaven, and offers His flesh in every Eucharist sacrament. The *Chôra* as the spatial being of God is a link connecting these two rationally opposite phenomena. The entire church and all its images are intended to represent this 'divine space'. Highly educated Theodore Metochites emphasized that all-embracing symbolical meaning in his iconographical program, which was an integral part of the special hierotopical project of the Chora monastery. The example proves not merely deep roots of the hierotopical approach in medieval minds, but the existence of quite well articulated system of notions, which we sometimes ignore in our discussions [20]. It concerns, however, the pivotal principle of Byzantine 'theology in images'.

The 'paradigm of the flat picture', still dominating in our minds, does not help to establish an adequate perception of the spatial imagery and of hierotopical projects. It seems, that crucially significant in that respect is to recognize the spatial nature of iconic imagery as a whole: in Byzantine minds the icon was not merely an object and a flat picture on panel or wall, but a spatial vision emanating from the depiction into the environment in front of it and existing between the picture and its beholder. This basic perception determined iconic character of space in which various media were interacting. So, it is important to emphasize that creation of a sacred space is making of concrete spatial imagery that typologically, according to the type of representation and its perception, can be considered as something quite similar to Byzantine icons[21].

This connection became evident in some late medieval projects, such as the Palm Sunday ceremony, or the 'Procession on a donkey' in the sixteenth-seventeenth century Moscovy. The tsar led the patriarch, seated on a donkey

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[19] In the dialogue *Timaeus,* describing the creation of the universe, Plato names *Chôra* as one of three major categories which appeared separately before the birth of the heaven.

[20] In this context one may pay attention to an interesting term '*hieroplastia*', which appears in the texts of Pseudo-Dionisius Arepagite and denotes visual presentation of spiritual phenomena: *Lampe G. W. H.* A Patristic Greek Lexikon. Oxford, 1961, p. 670. From the hierotopical point of view, this term could reflect creation of spatial imagery.

[21] On this phenomenon see: *Lidov A.* Spatial Icons. The Miraculous Performance with the Hodegetria of Constantinople in the present collection.

in remembrance of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, from the Kremlin to St Basil cathedral on the Red Square. The hierotopical concept seems quite obvious and can not be reduced to a well-known phenomenon of urban processions. It concerns reproduction in the centre of Moscow of the space of Jerusalem according to the Gospels. Some scholars have already posed a problem of the iconography of the ritual, which should be interpreted as a 'living picture' and a dynamic (one may add, and spatial) re-enactment of the icon with “The Entrance into Jerusalem” — a very popular subject in Byzantine and Russian Medieval art[22]. All figures of the iconography became real participants of the Moscow rite, creating a kind of performance in space and illustrating the festive icon. This eloquent example clearly demonstrates, how deep the connection was between the spatial imagery and icons, which late medieval Russian masters of hierotopy used to present in more illustrative and narrative way than their Byzantine predecessors.

In Byzantium the relations could be more sophisticated, when a miraculous icon with its own image and iconographical program participated in the creation of a sacred space, as it happened in the miraculous Tuesday performance with the Hodegetria of Constantinople and many others[23]. In these cases the image on the panel was perceived as animated, it became an inseparable part of the iconic spatial milieu, in which the miraculous icon was actively participating and interacting with beholders. One might notice that an artistic phenomenon, that we are trying to reveal, creates a methodological trouble, a contradiction with a basic principle of the history of art — the opposition 'image versus beholder'. The relationship between the image and the beholder could be most complicated, however, their structural opposition presents a kind of pivot of all art-historical discussions. Yet the most characteristic feature of Byzantine hierotopy is the participation of the beholder in the spatial image. The beholder acts inside the image, as its integral element together with various depictions, lights, odours, gestures, and sounds. Furthermore, the beholder, possessing collective and individual memory, spiritual experience and knowledge, in a way participates in the creation of the spatial imagery. At the same time, the image exists in objective reality as a kind of dynamic structure, changing its elements according to an individual perception — some aspects of the spatial entity could be accentuated, or temporally hidden. Creators of sacred spaces kept in minds the factor of prepared perception, connecting all intellectual and emotional threads of the image-concept. Maybe because of this a spectator from outside does not per-

[22] *Flier M.* The Iconology of Royal Ritual in Sixteenth-Century Moscovy // Byzantine Studies. Essays on the Slavic World and the Eleventh Century. New York, 1992, p. 66.

[23] *Lidov A.* The Flying Hodegetria. The Miraculous Icon as Bearer of Sacred Space // The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance / Ed. E. Thunoe and G. Wolf. Rome, 2004, p. 291–321.

ceive that Byzantine spatial imagery, while sometimes adoring the decorative beauty of "flat icons".

It is noteworthy, that Byzantine 'spatial icons', most unusual in modern European context, have a typological parallel in the contemporary art of performances and multi-media installations, which have nothing to do with the Byzantine tradition historically or symbolically. What they share is the basic principle of absence of a single source of images, the imagery is created in space by numerous dynamically changing forms. The most significant is the role of the beholder, who actively participates in the re-creation of the spatial imagery. All the differences of the contents, technologies and aesthetics notwithstanding, one may speak about one and the same type of the perception of images. The aspect, just touched upon here, shows how far we can go in our analysis of the hierotopical approach.

As we have tried to demonstrate, in many cases discussion of visual culture can not be reduced to a positivist description of artifacts, or to the analysis of theological notions. It requires change of vision and of the language of description. Some phenomena can be properly interpreted only on the level of images-ideas: I prefer to term them 'image-paradigms', which do not coincide with the illustrative pictures or ideological conceptions[24]. This special notion seems a useful *instrumentum studiorum,* which helps to explain a certain layer of historical sources. That image-paradigm was not connected with illustration of any specific text, though it included a lot of literary and symbolic meanings and associations. It is hard to see in this paradigm just an embodiment of a theological concept, although the depth and complexity of its structure is quite obvious. The image-paradigm belonged to the visual culture, it was visible and recognizable, but at the same time it was not formalized in any stable state, either in a pictorial scheme or in a mental structure. In this respect the image-paradigm looks similar to the metaphor that loses its sense in re-telling, or in its division into parts. For the Byzantines, such an irrational and at once 'hiero-

[24] Heavenly Jerusalem was perceived as such an image-paradigm changing its external forms every time but surviving as a recognizable matrix, see: *Lidov A.* Heavenly Jerusalem. The Byzantine Approach // The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art / Ed. B. Kuehnel (Jerusalem, 1998), p.341–353, esp. 353. Some other examples have been recently revealed: *Lidov A.* The Miracle of Reproduction. The Mandylion and Keramion as a paradigm of sacred space // L'Immagine di Cristo dall' Acheropiita dalla mano d'artista / Ed. C. Frommel, G. Morello, G. Wolf. Citta del Vaticano, Rome, 2006; *Lidov A.* Holy Face — Holy Script — Holy Gate: Revealing the Edessa Paradigm in Christian Imagery // Mandylion. Intorno al Sacro Volto / Ed. G. Wolf. Firenza, 2006. The latest article offers a striking example and reveals that the Mandylion, Christ's Letter to Abgar and the Sacred Gate of Edessa, where these two relics were displayed, were perceived as a single whole — an established image-paradigm which existed in minds of medieval artists and their beholders.

plastic'[25] perception of the world could be the most adequate reflection of its divine essence. It does not involve any mystic but a special type of consciousness, in which our categories of the artistic, the ritual, the intellectual were interwoven in the inseparable form of vision.

The absence of the image-paradigm as a notion in contemporary scholarship does not allow us to reveal a number of phenomena which determined both symbolic structures and concrete pictorial motifs. One point seems clear — this phenomenon is quite distinct from what one may call an iconographic device. It seems significant in this respect that in references to most glorious model-shrines, like the Holy Sepulchre, Hagia Sophia or the Cathedral of the Kiev-Cave monastery, medieval 'concepteurs', as a rule, reproduced not planning, architectural forms or decoration, but the image-idea of the particularly venerated sacred space, recognized by contemporaries and included into the new context. We still do not have a proper language to operate with image-paradigms that challenge our fundamental methodological approach to the image as illustration and flat picture. In my view, beyond the image-paradigms our discussion will remain foreign to the medieval way of thinking and any analysis of style, iconography or hierotopy would be limited to a simple external fixation of artifacts of the visual culture. However, the recognition is important in and of itself, and further studies in this direction may reveal some practical approaches and renew our vision of medieval phenomena.

It is quite obvious that the hierotopical problematic cannot be limited to the Byzantine tradition only. Ancient and medieval, and in general, the entire history of religious cultures in various countries consists of numerous hierotopical projects, which might become a subject of comparative studies. In this connection it seems correct to pose a question of different layers or levels existing in each sacred space. This concerns archetypical background shared by all traditions. For instance, the archetype of the Holy Mountain exists in absolutely different cultures, historically unrelated to each other.

One may pose the question of hierotopical groups, as it was done many years ago for language families. Elucidation of the Indo-European tradition in creation of sacred spaces looks as a quite fruitful direction of studies. At least, the existence of such a tradition makes it possible to explain very similar structure of the inner space in Hindu temples and Christian churches, that could not be understood in terms of historical influences.

No less important is the issue of religious and national models of hierotopy. The Islamic approach is quite distinct from the Christian one, though both religions, having roots in Judaism, are much closer to each other than to Buddhism.

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[25] See note 20.

The first thing, that comes to my mind, is the striking problem of the "temple consciousness", recently exposed by some scholars. It presupposes discussion of different models of the temple space in the framework of the so called 'Abraham's tradition'[26].

Some striking typological differences might be noticed through comparative analysis of Christian hierotopy in the West and in the East. As has been already mentioned, in Byzantium we see iconic vision of the spatial imagery, destroying the barrier between the stable church (its material body) and the dynamic external milieu outside any physical borders. The inner space of the church could be displayed and re-created in squares and streets, in fields and mountains, which should, at least temporarily, be transformed into an icon of the sacred universe, created by God himself. This re-creation of the spatial proto-image contains one of the most essential meanings of all rites and processions happening outside the church. It is noteworthy that the church itself is considered as a transparent structure and moving spiritual substance: one may recall about the relics inlaid in walls, pillars and cupolas of Byzantine churches[27]. A kind of manifestation of that vision we can see in post-Byzantine churches in Romania, where the altar iconography is reproduced on the facades and the most sacred liturgical program is open to the external world which is conceived in this way as a church-cosmos.

Byzantium created basic models of the arrangement of sacred spaces, which in different countries were adopted and transformed according to their national characteristics and even climatic conditions. It is quite clear, that the ice architecture, which framed Russian hierotopical projects for the Epiphany and other winter festivals, simply could not exist in Constantinople or in the Balkans[28]. This also demonstrates how sublime Constantinopolitan patterns were being re-worked in the folk milieu: the well established, 'academic' hierotopy was naturally combined with spontaneous sacralization of the human environment.

As a living being, a hierotopical project could change in time: the original concept-matrix was subject to developments and additions, the concept itself was sometimes transformed according to new ideologems. Cathedrals of the Moscow Kremlin provide a good example: their spatial imagery con-

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[26] I mean, first of all, some works by Henry Corbin and his conception of 'themenology'. See also a fundamental monograph by Sharif Shukurov: *Шукуров Ш. М.* Образ Храма / Imago Templi. M., 2002. The author suggests an approach, different from the hierotopical one, to the discussion of the temple space: his attention is focused on the phenomenology and poetics of the temple, developing Corbin's ideas.

[27] *Teteriatnikova N.* Relics in Walls, Pillars and Columns of Byzantine Churches // Восточнохристианские реликвии / Ред.-сост. А. М. Лидов. М., 2003, с. 74–92.

[28] См.: *Beliaev L.* The Hierotopy of the Orthodox festival. On the national traditions in the making of sacred spaces // Hierotopy.., p. 39–47, and in Hierotopy. Comparative Studies / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2006 (forthcoming).

siderably changed in different periods. As recent studies of some late medieval inventories have shown, by the late seventeenth century the most liturgical textiles, which used to covericons and great parts of walls, were removed from the cathedrals. This created a principally different image of sacred space, that we sometimes wrongly consider as an ancient one[29]. Careful research of different historical layers of sacred space may be compared with the restoration of an icon. As in such case, quite often just small remains of original hierotopical projects are available to us, yet they should be recognized as a unique source of historical information, which is capable to give a clue to understanding of the surviving elements of the ancient complex — architectural forms, frescoes, icons, liturgical vessels or particular rites.

The hierotopical approach relates not merely to the sacred spaces of churches, cities or landscapes but to the research of spatial imagery in minor art forms and in written texts. In the present introductory article we can but touch upon some aspects of this large topic. The problematic of sacred space in Byzantine manuscripts looks nearly unexplored. On the one hand, the spatial concept is quite evident: in several manuscripts frontpieces are conceived as a solemn gate to the sacred space of the book, sometimes they represent an icon of the heavenly city made up of churches (e.g., the twelfth-century Homilies of James of Kokkinobaphos from Vatican and Paris, and the Sermons of St Gregory of Nazianzus from Sinai, of the same century, fig. 6)[30]. On the other hand, a method to describe this phenomenon has not been elaborated. The creator of a manuscript did not represent just a flat ornamentation and the so called iconographical program, but tried to establish a certain system of interrelations between the miniatures on double-pages of a manuscript, making the image of sacred space which recalled the sacred milieu of the church (it is not accidental that the image of the church appeared on Byzantine covers). In many cases we probably may speak about a particular concept that generated individual spatial imagery and connected the manuscript with its liturgical function and its concrete environment — specific rituals, lightings, sounding words and various liturgical vessels.

A comparison with liturgical vestments can be adduced here I mean primarily the well-known fourteenth and early fifteenth-century embroidered Byzantine sakkos of the Metropolitan Photios of Moscow (fig. 7)[31]. Bearing

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[29] *Стерлигова И. А.* Драгоценный убор икон Царского храма // Царский храм. Святыни Благовещенского собора в Кремле (The Royal Church. Holy Relics of the Annunciation Cathedral in the Kremlin). Moscow, 2003, p. 63–78.

[30] Vatican, gr. 1162, f. 2r and Sinai, gr. 339, f. 4v. See: *Lidov A.* Heavenly Jerusalem. The Byzantine Approach.., p. 351–353.

[31] *Piltz E.* Trois sakkoi byzantins. Analyse iconographique. Stockholm, 1976; Medieval Pictorial Embroidery. Byzantium, Balkans, Rus'. A catalogue of the exhibition. Moscow, 1991, № 9–10, p. 38–51.

a sophisticated system of images, these liturgical robes created a microcosmos of the church space, which was included into the sacred milieu of the real huge church (the Moscow cathedral) and revealed their true meaning in the liturgical movement. Gold-embroidered icons were permanently changing on the moving clothes, becoming a kind of living beings in the atmosphere of unstable lighting of natural sources, various fires, reflections of gold and silver vessels, in the multi-layered environment of smoking incenses. In general, it concerns a dynamic, performative, spatial imagery, including officiating person as well as the entire liturgical context. It should be made clear, that the traditional approach, limited just to studies of technology, style or iconography, without consideration of the spatial background of this imagery, which was connected with a particular hierotopical project, will keep us far away from proper understanding of original concepts of the so called museum objects.

The same is true for liturgical vessels and numerous reliquaries. In the tenth-century Constantinopolitan stone chalice from the treasury of San Marco in Venice (the 'Chalice of Patriarchs') there is a gold medallion with an enamel Pantocrator, which appears on the bottom of the semi-transparent bowl made of sardonyx (fig. 8)[32]. At the moment of communion the image had to appear in the fluctuating liquid as a visible testimony of the Eucharistic miracle of the transubstantiation of wine into the blood of Christ. However, a more striking indication to the spatial context of the image one might find in the eloquent juxtaposition of the liturgical chalice and the cupola of the Byzantine church, that also bore Pantocrator image (fig. 9). In the space of a particular church these two images of the Pantocrator had to be perceived as interrelated parts of one and the same hierotopical concept.

Another example is the famous Limburg *staurothek* (968–985 гг., fig. 10)[33]: the central part with a piece of the True Cross is framed by fragments of ten other relics, most of which were kept in the church of the Virgin of the Pharos — the major reliquary, belonging to the Byzantine emperors. The complex of relics created a kind of icon of the Passions[34]. As known from the 'Book of Ceremonies' by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, reliquaries of the True Cross used to be carried on battle fields during special imperial rituals[35]. A *staurothek* was carried in front of the emperor on the breast of an

[32] Il Tesoro di San Marco. Milano, 1986, cat. no 16, p. 167–173.

[33] *Ševčenko N.* The Limburg Staurothek and its Relics // Thymiama. Athens, 1994, pls. 166–167, p. 289–294.

[34] On an iconic representation of the transportable “Pharos Chapel”, see: *Wolf G* The Holy Face and the Holy Feet. Some considerations in front of the Novgorod Mandylion // Eastern Christian Relics / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow 2003, p. 285–286.

[35] De Ceremoniis, I, 484.24–485.6; *Haldon J.* Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions. Vienna, 1990, p. 124.

imperial chamber person. The link of a reliquary with the emperor personally was stressed by all means. It was not merely a demonstration of imperial omnipotence and the direct connection with the Ruler of universe, but a reference to the sacred space of the Pharos chapel, from where the relics were borrowed[36]. In such a ritual the whole army before the battle shared the most sacred space of the empire that was embodied in the icon-reliquary.

If the hierotopical concept of the Limburg *staurothek* needs some additional evidence for its proper understanding, in some cases we should just look carefully at objects themselves. Thus, Byzantine reliquaries of St Demetrios (fig. 11) reproduced not merely the iconography of the saint[37], but the arrangement of his shrine in Thessaloniki, which is represented by sequence of flat and volume images, gradually appearing in the process of the opening of a reliquary. It aimed at the creation of an image of venerated sacred space, widely known because of the miracles that regularly happened there. A pendant reliquary invisibly connected its owner with the St Demetrios' basilica in Thessaloniki (fig. 12). This sort of objects is not possible to interpret as just a relic decorated with images. They should be considered as spatial icons, which achieved their miraculous power through combination of the relic, the imagery, and its holy milieu.

The number of examples can be easily extended, and the brief analysis considerably developed. However, seems much more important to us here to evaluate a possibility of hierotopical approach to objects of minor arts, not to monumental spaces only. Intention to re-create in small forms iconic concept of a particular sacred space reflects, in my opinion, a fundamental principle of the Eastern Christian visual culture.

It seems correct in this context to pose a question of sacred spaces in literary texts[38]. In medieval writings, and particularly in hagiographic texts, there is quite often a description of a sacred milieu — a dwelling place of the saint, partly created by himself. In some cases there is a chance to compare these descriptions with archaeological remains and characteristics of the natural environment[39]. All common positive features, i.e. distances, become

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[36] A more detailed discussion of this aspect, see: *Лидов А. М.* Церковь Богоматери Фаросской. Императорский храм-реликварий как константинопольский Гроб Господень (The Theotokos of the Pharos. The Imperial church-reliquary as Constantinipolitan Holy Sepulchre) // Византийский мир: искусство Константинополя и национальные традиции. М., 2005, с. 87.

[37] *Grabar A.* Quelques reliquaires de Saint Démétrios et le Martirium du saint à Salonique // DOP, 5 (1950), p. 3–28.

[38] Spatial aspects of Russian literature became a subject of several important studies by an outstanding philologist Vladimir Toporov: *Топоров В.* О мифопоэтическом пространстве (Lo spazio mitopoetico). Избранные статьи. Pisa, 1994.

[39] A good example has been provided by: *Bakirtzis N.* The Creation of an *Hierotopos* in Byzantium: Ascetic Practice and its Sacred Topography on Mt. Menoikeion (in the present collection).

invalid. A medieval author presents recognizable but iconic image of the space, which exists beyond our system of values. Such a hierotopical approach to the modelling of space by words-images was recently named 'chorotope' by Peter Brown, who had in mind the classical notion of the 'chronotope' proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin[40]. It is not merely about any direct description of sacred spaces (the Paradise, a monastery or a church), but about an attempt to present by literary means an image of specific sacred milieu, which, looking from outside, could not have common 'sacred' characteristics[41]. In large spaces of the church and the city, in minor arts, and in literary texts there is one and the same type of creativity, determined by the idea of spatial imagery and iconic perception of the world.

In this brief introductory article I have just attempted to pose a problem. Naturally, not all the aspects have even been touched upon, a lot of them should be exposed and analysed properly. I did not deliberately make a strict distinction between 'hierotopy as a form of creativity' and 'hierotopy as subject of cultural history'. It seemed more important to me to reveal the phenomenon in general, leaving for the future certain structural and terminological corrections of the subject and the method. As a conclusion, one might notice, that hierotopy is not a philosophical concept, which needs a sophisticated theory. It can be considered, in my view, as a form of vision that helps to recognize the presence of a special stratum of cultural phenomena, which should be historically reconstructed in detail.

[40] *Brown P.* Chorotope: Theodore of Sykeon and His Sacred Landscape in the present collection.
[41] A hierotopical approach has been applied to modern literature. See: *Blank K.* Hierotopy in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy // Hierotopy. Comparative Studies (forthcoming).

1. София Константинопольская. Вид внутреннего пространства / Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. A view to the inner space

2. София Константинопольская. Пространство императорских врат / Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. A view to the Imperial Door

3. Богоматерь «*Chôra tou achôrêtou*» над входом в храм монастыря Хора (Кахрие Джами). Мозаика, начало XIV в. Константинополь / The Virgin "*Chôra tou achôrêtou*" over the entrance to the cathedral of the Chora monastery (Kariye Camii). Mosaic, early 14th cent. Constantinople

4. Campo Santo в Пизе, XIII–XV в. / Campo Santo in Pisa, 13th–15th cent.

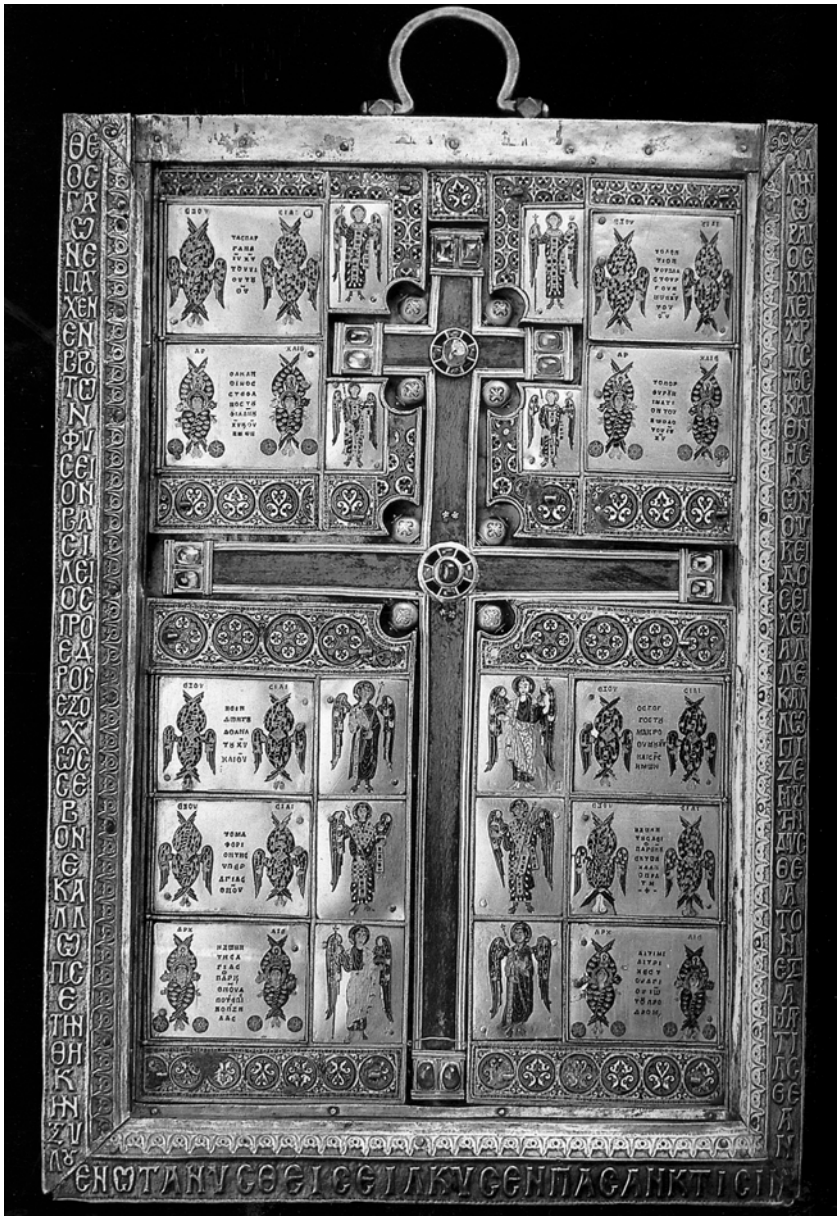
5. «Новый Иерусалим» под Москвой. Вид внутреннего пространства собора / The “New Jerusalem” near Moscow. A view of the cathedral's inner space, 17th–18th cent.

6. Миниатюра-фронтиспис рукописи Слов Григория Назианзина, ок. 1150 г. Монастырь Св. Екатерины, Синай / Miniature-frontispiece of the manuscript of the Liturgical Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, ca. 1150. St Catherine's monastery, Sinai (gr. 339, fol. 4v)

7. Большой саккос митрополита Фотия. Золотое шитье. Византия, 1414–1417 гг. Музеи Московского Кремля / Major Sakkos of the Metropolitan Photios. Gold embroidery. Byzantium, 1414–1417. Museums of the Moscow Kremlin.

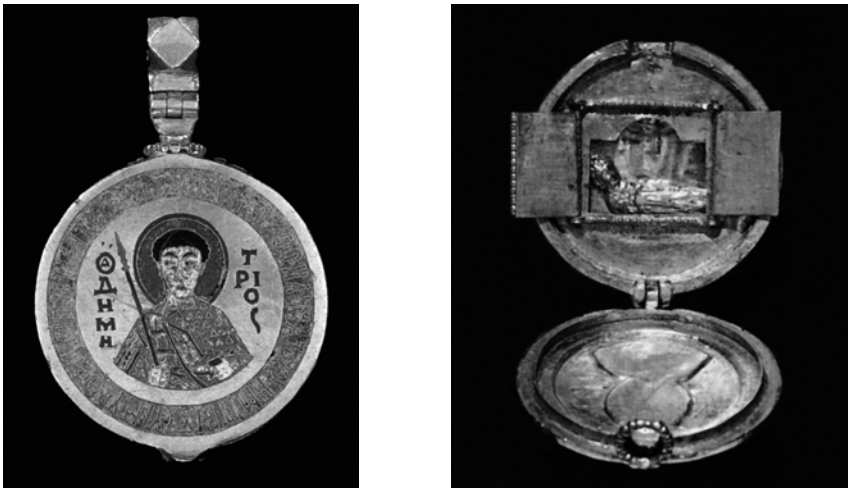
8. «Потир патриархов». Сардоникс, перегородчатая эмаль. Константинополь, X в. Сокровищница Сан Марко, Венеция / “Patriarchs' Chalice”. Sardonix, cloisonné enamel. Constantinople, 10th cent. Treasury of San Marco, Venice

9. Пантократор в куполе Софии Киевской. XI в. / The Pantocrator in the dome of St. Sophia in Kiev. 11th cent.



10. Лимбургская ставротека. Позолоченное серебро, перегородчатая эмаль. Константинополь, X в. Собор Лимбурга / The Limburg staurothek. Silver gild, cloisonné enamel. Constantinople, 10th cent. Treasury of the Limburg cathedral

11. Реликварий-киворий св. Дмитрия. Позолоченное серебро. Византия. 1059–1067 гг. Музеи Московского Кремля / Reliquary-ciborium of St. Demetrios. Silver gilt. Byzantium, 1059–1067. Museums of the Moscow Kremlin



12. Нагрудный реликварий св. Дмитрия. Византия. XIII–XIV вв. Коллекция Дамбартон Оакс, Вашингтон / The pendant reliquary of St. Demetrios. Gold, cloisonné enamel. Byzantium. 13th–14th cent. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.