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‘DIVINITY’ AND ‘WORLD’.
TWO SPACIAL REALMS
IN THE BYZANTINE CHURCH

Ἀλλὰ πάντα και εν πασιν αὐτός...,
ὥσπερ κέντρον εὐθειῶν τινῶν
ἐξημμένων αὐτοῦ, κατὰ μίαν ἀπλήν
και ἐνιαίαν αἰτίαν καί δύναμιν.

*Maximos the Confesor,
Mystagogia, ch. A', r. 65–68*

THE EXISTENCE AND PERCEPTION OF DIVINITY

The existence of Divinity is an indisputable assumption in thought that guided the creation of great religious works. Divinity is perceived through material and spiritual existence of mankind (and the world) and takes shape through human creation. The religious building and its architecture is one of the most fundamental achievements in efforts to perceive Divinity and to give it visual form.

The way through which Christian church expresses the existence of the Divinity is a matter that has preoccupied scholarship broadly resulting in excellent intellectual works. This paper will refer to the way in which a kind of circumscription or an outline around the main space of Divinity's representation was materialized in the Christian world through architectural planning (fig. 1). We will refer to this kind of outline by the term *perigram*. The *perigram* obtains a particular meaning and an important role in an attempt to delineate Divinity in terms of the “container of the uncontainable” and in the symbolical and real expression of the divine hierarchy. In this sense we could speak of the heterodeinition of Divinity.

THE WHOLE

Christian church is seen as a model of the invisible divine world. An important role in architecture of the Byzantine world is the notion of the Whole “a union without fusion” (τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας ἀσύγχυτον ἔνωσιν) that expresses the universal understanding and perception of the world and life and it constitutes the orthodox tradition. Maximus the Confessor referring to the notion of the Whole and to the parts of Church as an institution — the Ecclesia — and of church as a building considers their interaction or work as an entity, as if they were parts of one another¹. He analyzes this idea in the second chapter of *Mystagogia* and referring to Ezechiel he writes: “and their work is one and the same as if it was a wheel in to the other” and further:

“The holy Church of Good as a figure and image of the entire visible and invisible universe with the same sort of unity and differentiation. For a church; although put up as one building; is partitioned in conformity with a definite plan; with one place set aside for priests and servers; which we call the sanctuary; and another open to all the faithful; which we call the nave — and yet; the Church is essentially one; and not divided in kind by differentiation of its parts. Through the relationship to her own unity which she transmits to them; the Church liberates the parts themselves from the differences in their vocation; and makes their sameness and unity evident to each showing that each is made for the other; the nave having the virtue of a sanctuary... The Church is one and the same in and through out each section. The wise thus glimpse the universe of things brought into existence by God’s creation divided between the spiritual world containing incorporeal intelligent substances and this corporeal world; the object of sense (so marvelously woven together from many natures and kinds of things) as if they were all another Church, not built by hands; but suggested by the ones we build; its sanctuary is the world above; allotted to the powers above its nave the world below assigned to those whose lot is to live in the senses. The holy Church of Good as a figure and image of the entire visible and invisible universe with the same sort of unity and differentiation. The universe too is one ; not split between visible and invisible parts; on the contrary; by the force of their reference to its own unity and invisibility; it circumscribes their difference in character. It shows itself to be the same in the visible and invisible mutuality joined without confusion with each other. Each is wholly fixed in the whole of the other. As parts of the whole, both make up the world and as parts in the whole both are completed and fulfilled in a single form for the whole intelligible world of thought is visible to those who have eyes to see,

¹ See in the following text citation and footnote 2.

spiritually expressed in symbolic form by the whole sensible universe. And the sensible world is mentally present in the whole intelligible universe when it is verbally expressed in the mind. For this visible world is verbally present in the world of thought; the world of thought is present in its visible images. Their end result or work is all one; as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel says Ezechiel... And the Divine Apostle says; the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made.... The contemplation of the objects of thought symbolized through the objects of sight means the spiritual understanding of the seen through the unseen. Things which are significative of each other are bound to contain clear and perfectly true expressions of each other; and a flawless relation to them”².

² Stead D. J., O. S. B. The Church, the Liturgy and the Soul of Man. The Mystagogia of St. Maximus the Confessor. Massachusetts, 1982, p. 68–70 (from now on: Stead, The Church... The Mystagogia); and see the original in Αγίου Μάξιμου του Ομολογητού, *Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δημήτριος Στανιλοάε. Athens, 1989, chapt. B', p. 40, 45–55 (669A) (from now on: *Μάξιμου*, *Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε). The original text is: *Β'. Περὶ τοῦ πῶς καὶ τίνα τρόπον εἰκῶν ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐξ ὁρατῶν καὶ ἀοράτων οὐσιῶν ὑφεστῶτος κόσμου ἢ ἀγία τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησία: Κατὰ δευτέραν δὲ θεωρίας ἐπιβολήν, τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου τοῦ ἐξ ὁρατῶν καὶ ἀοράτων οὐσιῶν ὑφεστῶτος, εἶναι τύπον καὶ εἰκόνα, τὴν ἀγίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίαν, ἔφασκεν ὡς τὴν αὐτὴν αὐτῷ καὶ ἔνωσιν, καὶ διάκρισιν ἐπιδεχομένην.*

Ὡςπερ γὰρ αὕτη κατὰ τὴν οἰκοδομὴν εἷς οἶκος ὑπάρχουσα, τὴν κατὰ τὴν θέσιν τοῦ σχήματος ποιεῖ ιδιότητι, δέξεται διαφοράν, διαιρουμένη εἰς τε τὸν μόνον ἱερεῦσιν τε καὶ λειτουργοῖς ἀπόκληρον τόπον, ὃν καλοῦμεν ἱερατεῖον καὶ τὸν πᾶσι τοῖς πιστοῖς λαοῖς πρὸς ἐπίβασιν ἄνετον, ὃν καλοῦμεν ναόν. Πάλιν μία ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν, οὗ συνδιαιρουμένη τοῖς ἑαυτῆς μέρεσι, διὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν πρὸς ἄλληλα τῶν μερῶν διαφοράν. Ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὰ τῇ πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἑαυτῆς ἀναφορᾷ τὰ μέρη, τῆς ἐν τῇ κλήσει διαφορᾷ ἀπολύουσα, καὶ ταυτὸν ἀλλήλοις ἄμφω δεικνύουσα καὶ θάτερον θατέρῳ κατ' ἐπαλλαγὴν ὑπάρχον, ὅπερ ἐκάτερον ἑαυτῷ καθέστηκεν ὃν ἀποφαίνουσα ἱερατεῖον μὲν τὸν ναὸν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν, τῇ πρὸς τὸ πέρας ἀναφορᾷ τῆς μυσταγωγίας ἱερουργούμενον καὶ ἔμπαλιν ναὸν τὸ ἱερατεῖον, κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς ιδίας αὐτὸν ἔχον μυσταγωγίας ἀρχήν, μία δι' ἄμφοιν καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ διαμένει.

Οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἐκ Θεοῦ κατὰ γενέσιν παρηγμένος σύμπας τῶν ὄντων κόσμος, διαιρούμενος εἰς τε τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον, τὸν ἐκ νοερῶν καὶ ἀσωμάτων οὐσιῶν συμπληρούμενον καὶ τὸν αἰσθητὸν τοῦτον καὶ σωματικόν, καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν μεγαλοφῶς συννυφασμένον εἰδὼν τε καὶ φύσεων ἄλλη πως ὑπάρχων ἀχειροποίητος Ἐκκλησία, διὰ ταύτης τῆς χειροποιήτου σοφῶς ὑποφαίνεται καὶ ἱερατεῖον μὲν ὥσπερ ἔχον τὸν ἄνω κόσμον, καὶ ταῖς ἄνω προσσυνεμημένον δυνάμει ναὸν δέ, τὸν κάτω, καὶ τοῖς δι' αἰσθήσεως ζῆν λαχοῦσι προσκεχωρημένον.

Πάλιν εἷς ἐστὶ κόσμος τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μὴ συνδιαιρούμενος μέρεσι τοῦναντίον δέ, καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν μερῶν τὴν ἐξ ιδιότητος φυσικῆς διαφοράν, τῇ πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἀδιαίρετον ἀναφορᾷ περιγράφων καὶ ταυτὸν ἑαυτῷ τε καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἀσυγχύτως ἐναλλάξ ὄντας καὶ θατέρῳ θάτερον ὅλον ὅλῳ δεικνὺς ἐμβεβηκότα καὶ ἄμφω ὅλον

The aesthetic analysis of the Byzantine church is based on the adoption of certain principles that are connected not only with the idea of the Whole but also with the idea of the Sublime. Those, according to Panayotes Micheles, are expressed by three principles of composition⁴: the eruption (*exarsē*) of depth (far end), the continuity and unity of endless space, and the development of high (fig. 2). These three principles contribute to the pyramidal gradation of spaces and volumes of the church building (fig. 3).

⁴ See: *Παναγιώτης Α. Μιχαηλός*. Η αισθητική θεώρηση της Βυζαντινής τέχνης / Ed. VI, Athens 2001 (from now on: *Μιχαηλός*, *Αισθητική θεώρηση*), about the aesthetic category of the Sublime p. 21, 49 ff, 106 ff, 316.

THE CENTER

The notion of a center in the Byzantine church building, independently of its longitudinal or pericentric articulation, has a particular meaning expressing the space of Divinity. Maximus expresses in a crucial manner this meaning comparing the Divinity with a center that is the point of intersection of straight lines. He is interpreting also the meaning of access to this center as follows: "But He is all and in all. He keeps a firm hold on all things by the sheer infinitely wise force of goodness, like the hub with some sort of spokes fastened to it by one single force"⁵.

At the same time he is defining the symbolic meaning of accessing to and staying in the central space and he gives special importance to knowledge versus ignorance: "The people entering the church with the priest symbolize unbelievers being converted from ignorance and deception to the recognition of God, and believers changing over from evil and ignorance to goodness and knowledge"⁶. Nevertheless just this symbolic limitation leads to such spatial articulations so that a polysemous *perigram* is created.

THE PERIGRAM

The significance of the existence of a *perigram* is often declared and is referring to spaces where the katechoumenoi (uninitiated) stand, who are connected with the earthly world and have not yet passed into the spiritual world neither symbolically nor through their actions. The most important symbolic event in this context is the closing of the doors of the naos, during the Liturgy (after reading the Gospels and before the Eucharist) separating the narthex and the other spaces from the naos even though "the church is

⁵ *Stead*, The Church... The Mystagogia, p. 67, and see the original text in Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. A, 65–68 (668 A) esp. p. 113: «ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πάσιν αὐτός, ὁ πάντα κατὰ μίαν ἀπλὴν τῆς ἀγαθότητος ἀπειρόσοφον δύναμιν ἐαυτῷ περικλείων, ὅσπερ κέντρον εὐθειῶν τινῶν ἐξημμένων αὐτοῦ, κατὰ μίαν ἀπλὴν καὶ ἐνιὰν αἰτίαν καὶ δύναμιν».

⁶ *Stead*, The Church... The Mystagogia, p. 88, 89, and see the original text in Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία, ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. Θ, p. 1–10, (692 C), esp. p. 179. The original text is: Θ'. Τίνας ἔχει δῆλωσιν καὶ ἡ τοῦ λαοῦ εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίαν εἴσοδος: Τὴν δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ σὺν τῷ ἱεράρχῃ γενομένην εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν εἴσοδον, τὴν ἐξ ἀγνοίας καὶ πλάνης εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν Θεοῦ ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ἀπίστων, καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ κακίας καὶ ἀγνωσίας εἰς ἀρετὴν καὶ γνώσιν, μετὰθῃ τῶν πιστῶν σημαίνειν, and also: Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὴν ἐπὶ τὸν ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ἀπίστων ἢ εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν εἴσοδος παραδηλοῖ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκάστου ἡμῶν τῶν πιστευόντων μέν, ἀθετούντων δὲ τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Κυρίου δι' ἀγωγῆς ἀκολάστον καὶ ἀσχίμονος βίου, τὴν διὰ μετανοίας διόρθωσιν.

one and the same in and throughout each section”⁷. That takes a practical character that is “translated” in material measures during the planning of a church. “Doors of senses” is how Maximus names to the basilical doors. He writes that the closing of the doors is the closing of the doors of senses: “through the closing of the doors...as shutting out the visible world cuts off their thoughts from nature...”⁸ and also: “Then the sacred ministers send out the catechumens and everyone else not yet qualified for the heavenly sight of the sacraments”⁹. Further he writes: “The closing of the doors of the holy Church of God after the reverent reading of the holy Gospel and the catechumens’ dismissal, expresses first the passing away of material things; then the future entrance of the worthy into the spiritual world... and lastly the total repudiation of the illusions of the senses”¹⁰ “...the shutting of the doors; standing for the soul’s change of inclination; transferring herself from this perishable world to the intelligent world of the mind; when she shuts her senses like doors and completes their cleansing from the idols of sin”¹¹.

⁷ Stead, *The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 69, original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΙΓ’, p. 5–15 (669 A), esp. p. 117: «Πάλιν μία ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν, οὐ συνδαιουμένη τοῖς ἐαυτῆς μέρεσι, διὰ τὴν ἐαυτῶν πρὸς ἄλληλα τῶν μερῶν διαφοράν».

⁸ Stead, *The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 90–91, original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΙΓ’, p. 8–15 (669A), esp. p. 189 Ὑποσημ. 8: «Τοὺς ἔτι πρὸς γῆν κατανεύοντας λογισμοὺς ἀπωθούμενος, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν νοητῶν ἐποψίαν ἐντεῦθεν διὰ τῆς τῶν θυρῶν κλείσεως, καὶ τῆς εἰσόδου τῶν ἁγίων μυστηρίων, αὐτοὺς ἀγαγὼν, λόγων τε καὶ πραγμάτων, μύσαντας ἤδη τὰς αἰσθήσεις» and Stead, *The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 99, original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΚΓ’, 45C-50 (700A), esp. p. 216: «Κάντεῦθεν πάλιν ἔξω γενομένην τῶν αἰσθητῶν, ὡς ἡ τῶν θυρῶν τῆς ἁγίας τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίας νοεῖν ὑποτίθεται κλείσις».

⁹ Stead, *The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 92, original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΙΔ, 1–12, (693A), esp. p. 192–195: «καὶ ἡ τῶν κατηχουμένων, καὶ ἡ τῶν λοιπῶν τῶν ἀναξίων τῆς θείας τῶν δειχθησομένων μυστηρίων θεωρίας, ἀπόλυσίς τε καὶ ἐκβολὴ διὰ τῶν λειτουργῶν γίνεται».

¹⁰ Stead, *The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 92–93, original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΙΕ’, C 5 (693A) esp. p. 196–197. The original text is: «ΙΕ’ Τίνος σύμβολόν ἐστι ἡ κλεισίς τῶν θυρῶν τῆς ἁγίας Ἐκκλησίας, ἡ μετὰ τὸ ἅγιον Εὐαγγέλιον γιγνομένη; Ἡ δὲ μετὰ τὴν ἱερὰν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου, καὶ τὴν ἐκβολὴν τῶν κατηχουμένων γινομένη κλείσις τῶν θυρῶν τῆς ἁγίας τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίας, τὴν τε τῶν ὑλικῶν δηλοῖ πάροδον, καὶ τὴν γενήσομένην μετὰ τὸν φοβερὸν ἐκείνον ἀφορισμὸν καὶ τὴν φοβερωτέραν ψήφον, εἰς τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον, ἥτοι τὸν νυμφῶνα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τῶν ἁγίων εἰσοδὸν καὶ τὴν ἐν ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀπάτην ἐνεργείας τελείαν ἀποβολήν».

¹¹ Stead, *The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 102–103, original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* // Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΚΔ, 29–33 (704 B, C), esp. p. 227–227: «Κατὰ μὲν πρώτην εἰσοδὸν ἀπιστίας ἀποβολήν, πίστεως αὐξήσιν, κακίας μείωσιν, ἀρετῆς ἐπίδοσιν, ἀγνοίας ἀφανισμόν, γνώσεως προσθήκην. Διὰ δὲ τῆς ἀκροάσεως τῶν θείων λόγιων, τὰς τῶν εἰρημένων τούτων, πίστεώς φημι καὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ γνώσεως, παγίας καὶ ἀμεταθέτους

The spaces on the perimeter — nathex or narthexes and peristoa, sometimes aisles and other similar spaces — belong to the sphere of senses. According to Maximus the peripheral spaces of a church are parts of the body of Ecclesia comparing that with man. He refers to the body and the soul and their links that can be compared to a common existential identity (“hypostastike tautoteta”).

Byzantine church architecture is familiar with symbolical limits that are materially expressed. An analogous paradigm in the case of spaces of the perimeter and the world of senses, is the limitation between the Visible and the Invisible realized by the iconostasis. Speaking of symbolism as art of heavenly elevation and of representation through which the represented subject became a higher reality Paul Florensky called the iconostasis the “limit of the world”¹². This is a limit like a window that allows the real world looking to the world of symbols and through them to the invisible one. Such a limit is also that what stands between the spaces of the World and the spaces of Divinity.

Architecture of a church constitutes a three-dimensional representation of the Divinity and the World. The question is how that is expressed in the function of spaces and in the architectural type of the church. A survey of monuments from the Early Christian period which in one form or another had a perimeter aisle, or a perimeter space (in the form of a peristoon or *peridromos*) on one or two levels, aimed at tracing the very origins of the peristoon concept. It is important to understand that both basilicas and pericentric Early Christian constructions already embodied the concept of movement around a centre, and at the same time of the separation of functions, a fact that was decisive for the arrangement and the structure of the building as a whole¹³.

Three- or five-aisled basilicas already incorporate the concept of spaces surrounding the central nave in the sense of a specific point, but they too could accommodate extra perimeter spaces. Something similar may be observed in pericentric constructions, particularly in double-shelled ones,

ἐξῆς τε καὶ διαθέσεις» and further: «...Διὰ δὲ τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀναγνώσεως τοῦ ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου, τὴν τοῦ χοῦ τοῦ φρονήματος, ὥστε αἰσθητοῦ κόσμου, συντέλειαν. Διὰ δὲ τῆς μετὰ ταῦτα τῶν θυρῶν κλεισίσεως, τὴν κατὰ διάθεσιν ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ φθαρτοῦ κόσμου πρὸς τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον μετάβαινεν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μετάθεσιν δι’ ἧς τὰς αἰσθητικὰς, θυρῶν δίκην, μύσασα, τῶν καθ’ ἁμαρτίαν εἰδώλων καθαρὰς ἀπεργάζεται».

¹² See: Paul Florensky. *La perspective inversée suivi de L’iconostase* / Transl. by Soteris Gounelas, Athens, 2002, p. 128–130 (from now on: *Florensky, L’iconostase*).

¹³ According to Maximus: “It is His nature to work this unity Himself in the substances of beings, without fusing them”; see: *Stead, The Church... The Mystagogia*, p. 68, and original text in *Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία* / Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. A, 75–82 C (668 A), esp. p. 114, 115: «περὶ τὰς οὐσίας τῶν ὄντων ἁ σ υ γ χ υ τ ω σ αὐτὸς ἐνεργεῖν πέφυκεν ὁ Θεός...».

where the peristoon is clearly formed around a centralized core (fig. 4). A similar case exists however in cross-shaped constructions. The gradual phasing out of the atrium and the gradual change of the narthex emerge as important events for the study of peristoa.

During the transition period (7th–8th C), monuments appeared whose aisles and narthex were conceived as a unified peristoon (fig. 5a, b, c). Alongside monuments constructed in the Middle Byzantine period numerous earlier churches continued to exist, serving as models and being adapted to new needs. The fate of perimetric spaces in different architectural types during the Middle Byzantine period confirms the continuity of their concept and symbolism (fig. 6); it also confirms frequent incorporation of perimetric spaces in the overall church concept at a time when the latter was becoming more challenging¹⁴.

Nevertheless, in histories of Byzantine architecture the peristoon has been treated as a specific, relatively low roofed space, surrounding the dominant nave either in a continuous or in a, more or less, autonomous manner (fig. 7). Recent scholarship shows new interpretations in similar cases of perimeter spaces in relation to Early Christian monuments. The importance in surveys of monuments of earlier eras lies in the demonstration of the continuity of a concept, which is re-proposed again and again, and which survives through time by assuming diverse forms. This concept runs like a thread through the history of Byzantine church architecture exactly because it represents in the closest sense the idea of the perigram of the Divine.

My recent detailed examination of more than 35 Late Byzantine monuments selected in relation to the type of their core structure and featuring continuous or separate peristoa or related spaces have yielded several results¹⁵. It should be underlined that there may be many more monuments featuring peristoa than those identified, since they were the first elements of a church that would collapse if they were not built integrally with it. Peristoa or related spaces that serve identical or similar uses, were built according to needs; small-size buildings of the Late Byzantine period permit such constructions, a fact that may well have been perceived as an advantage in terms of economic and spatial flexibility (fig. 8).

The importance of peristoa as a real and as a symbolic frame of the Divinity in Byzantine church architecture is decisive, since peristoa were part and parcel of the church concept (and structure), throughout the history of Byzantine architecture, and passed on in various ways to the later eras.

¹⁴ In the sense of the reduction of dimensions.

¹⁵ Χατζητρύφωνος Ε. Το Περίστωο στην υστεροβυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική. Σχεδιασμός-Λειτουργία. Thessalonike, 2004, p. 199–206 (from now on: Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο).

FUNCTIONS

In broader sense peristoa are spaces that were used for many functions. These functions included baptism, burial, memorial services, commemorations, veneration of holy relics and other objects, Divine Liturgy assistance, assemblies (synaxeis), processions and many other¹⁶. I will refer here to only two of those that seem to be the most notable for the character of peristoa: baptism and burial.

Baptism

Baptism, one of the most important Christian rituals, is related to the Great Consacration of the waters held during Epiphany and to the consecration of the waters in general¹⁷. Typological affinities between baptisteries and mausolea show that even on a symbolic level, there was a link between baptism and burial and that the two were related¹⁸. It is not quite clear how the space and the infrastructure for baptism evolved in the Middle and Late Byzantine era, when there was no longer need for collective baptisms of adults but only of individual infants.

It seems, however, that the ritual of baptism was gradually moved from the side of the church to its narthex or to a certain place within peristoon. This view is corroborated by the positioning of stone carved baptismal fonts in several churches¹⁹ (fig. 9) This position was usually in the south or north angle of the narthex or of the peristoon. Iconographic programs in the narteces and other perimetric spaces confirm the relation of baptism-enlightening-

¹⁶ Χατζητρήφωνος, Περίστωο, where a chapter is devoted to functions of those spaces; see esp. p. 71–90.

¹⁷ Καλλίνικος Κ. Ο Χριστιανικός ναός και τα τελούμενα εν αὐτῷ. Athens, 1969 (from now on: Καλλίνικος, Χριστιανικός ναός), p. 388–394 (where sources) and 534; Γιάγκου Θ. Κανονικολειτουργικά. Thessalonike, 1999 (from now on: Γιάγκου, Κανονικολειτουργικά), p. 435–454 (where earlier bibliography).

¹⁸ Still during Early Christian period the relation burial/resurrection through baptism and the equivalence mausoleum/baptistery is clear. See Καλλίνικος, Χριστιανικός ναός, p. 391, where: «...Ὁ βαπτισθόμενος χειραγωγεῖται ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγίαν τοῦ θεοῦ βαπτίσματος κολυμβήθραν, ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ Σταυροῦ ἐπὶ τὸ προκείμενον μνῆμα... Ὁ Παῦλος τὸ βάπτισμα παραβάλλει πρὸς τὴν ταφὴν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ Κυρίου, ἐξ οὗ δίδεται ἀφορμὴ εἰς τὸν Κατηχητὴν νὰ εἴπῃ πρὸς τοὺς νεοφωτίστους: ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ ἀπεθνήσκεσθε καὶ ἐγεννᾶσθε καὶ τὸ σωτήριον ἐκεῖνο ὕδωρ καὶ τὰ φ ο ς ἡμῖν ἐγένετο καὶ μ ἦ τ η ρ ». See details in Γιάγκου, Κανονικολειτουργικά, p. 435; Χατζητρήφωνος, Περίστωο, p. 79.

¹⁹ Čurčić S. The Baptismal Font of Gračanica and its Iconographic Settings // Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja IX–X. Beograd, 1979 (from now on: «The Baptismal Font...»), p. 313–328. See also the example of Mone Vlatadon, where the baptismal font is facing the John Fore-runner chapel.

burial²⁰. In several well known monuments, like Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, Mone tes Choras, Mone Vlatadon, this relation is evident.

Burial

The mortuary role of peristoa is related to the interpretation of the service for the dead. Evidence of their eschatological content may be seen in many peristoa wall-paintings, which in itself could constitute a major subject of study. The preparation of the deceased for funeral took place in the narthex, in the nartheces or in the peristoon²¹, but the Trisagion for the Departed was held, according Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonike, “at the very centre of the naos”²². The memorial service was one of the most important rites held in a peristoon; but also burial in a peristoon had a particular significance²³.

Despite the fact that in most cases it is difficult to determine the precise function of the peristoon, research shows that their role as burial grounds endured for a long time despite interdictions imposed by Ecclesiastical canons²⁴. Recent research²⁵ throws ample light on the question of the position of tombs within a church and reveals their position in many different types of churches.

Tombs appear early on around churches, particularly around the consecrated area of the Sanctuary²⁶. Ever since Early Christian times tombs of monumental character in the form of sarcophagi are found in annexes, nartheces, and also underground spaces (crypts)²⁷. In all eras, the burials inside and outside peristoa, nartheces and aisles were, especially after the 6th C., a popular practice, despite the continuous official interdiction against burials

²⁰ Gavrilović Z. Divine Wisdom as Part of Byzantine Imperial Ideology. Research to the Artistic Interpretations of the Theme in Medieval Serbia. *Nartex Programs of Lesnovo I Sopoćani* // *Zograf* 11, 1980, p. 44–62.

²¹ About the topic of burial in Byzantium see: *Εμμανουηλίδης Ν.* Το δίκαιο της ταφής στο Βυζάντιο, *Forschungen zur Byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte, Athener Reihe*. Athens, 1989 (from now on: *Εμμανουηλίδης, Το δίκαιο της ταφής*), and about burial in *peristoa*: *Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο*, p. 80, and fn. 108.

²² *Ibid* fn. 109; *Ćurčić S.* The Baptismal Font...

²³ *Θεσσαλονίκης Συμεών* / Ed. J. P. Migne // PG. V. 155. Athens, 1994, chapt. ΣΤ', p. 344, says that kings are buried around the church, the laics around the doors and monks and laics in the narthex.

²⁴ *Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο*, p. 80, and fn. 111; *Σπυριδάκης Γ.* Τα κατά την τελευταίαν έθιμα των βυζαντινών εκ των αγιολογικών πηγών // *ΕΕΒΣ* 20, 1950, p. 75–171 and *Εμμανουηλίδης, Το δίκαιο της ταφής*, p. 215, 216.

²⁵ *Iverson E.* Mortuary Practices in Byzantium: An Archaeological Contribution (c. 950–1453) / PhD University of Birmingham, Birmingham 1993, p. 136, 157.

²⁶ *Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο*, p. 80, and fn. 113.

²⁷ *Ibid*. fn. 114.

within the church²⁸. This was a matter of great concern for the Ecclesia. Archaeological evidence corroborates the fact that positions closer to the east and the south were preferred for burial places, because they were considered as providing grater honour²⁹. Positions near holy relics were always highly desired. In the interior, almost always in the lateral spaces, we find the founders' tombs in many churches, tombs of bishops or other distinguished church dignitaries in parish churches, tombs of monks around monastery *katholika*³⁰. Social criteria mattered in selecting position and style of tombs³¹. In the case of sovereigns, tombs and their spaces expressed the theological and political concepts of the time, underlining particularly dynastic lineage and devotion of the ruler-founders.

The gradual suppression of annexes after the 6th C. upgrades the significance of narteces, aisles and peristoa for burials³². A broader distribution of perimetric spaces with burials, even by building of exonarteces and additional peristoa, is common in the Late Byzantine period.

The Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople is the monument par excellence for the understanding of Byzantine tombs, especially imperial ones in the context of a church complex. Apart from the mausolea of Constantine and Justinian, containing a greater number of tombs, two stoai and small buildings annexed to the north and south side of the church were used for burials³³.

Research in structures annexed to churches provides interesting insights, such as the existence of chapels that are sometimes two storied. Babić argues that free-standing chapels had the same liturgical function as some of the chapels laterally annexed to churches. This is corroborated by the iconographic programs found in nartheces, peristoa and other attached constructions especially after the 10th–11th C. It also appears that the use of a dome surmounting the space where there was an *arcosolium* or another type of a tomb, was a common practice invested with symbolic meaning³⁴ (fig. 10). Also specific rooms in the perimeter were used by monks or church founders for their voluntary retirement from the world and their seclusion within the

²⁸ Ibid fn. 116, about the prohibitions see Πάλλας Δ. «Σαλαμινιακά», part C. The tombs // Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς, 1950–1951 (from now on: Πάλλας, «Σαλαμινιακά»), p. 163–181, esp. p. 176 and Φαίδων Κουκουλές. Βυζαντινών βίος και πολιτισμός. V. Δ', p. 186–188.

²⁹ Ivison, Mortuary Practices, p. 272.

³⁰ Cutler A. Leo Allatios. The Newer Temples of the Greeks. London, 1969, 1st Letter, V[a], XIV[16].

³¹ Ivison, Mortuary Practices, p. 171–172.

³² Πάλλας, «Σαλαμινιακά», p. 179, Εμμανουηλίδης, Το δίκαιο της ταφής, p. 216.

³³ Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο, p. 82, and fn. 122, 12; Εμμανουηλίδης, Το δίκαιο της ταφής, p. 212, 213, fn 36.

³⁴ Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο, p. 83, and fn. 132.

church itself. Those were next to or above the space that was planned for their eventual tomb as Slobodan Ćurčić has suggested³⁵.

Tombs have been identified in perimeter spaces of Transition and Middle Byzantine monuments, in churches of different types mainly after 6th C.³⁶ and even more so after the 12th C. especially in Paleologan monuments³⁷ (fig. 11). One can finally conclude that as funerary services were held in the narthex and in the lateral aisles, and that the peristoon essentially united all these parts into a unified whole responding to a perigram of human desire for eternity.

LIGHT AND TIME

In the hierarchy of spaces in a church the role of light is extremely important (fig. 12). Much has been written about light in the central space of the Divinity. According Maximus the Confessor, Goodness is identified with clarity, and light is the form through which clarity is made manifest: “In that world, gazing upon the light of the invisible glory, utterly beyond description, with the high angelic powers they too become capable of blessed purity”³⁸.

The role of light in intentional asymmetries in churches has provoked the interest of architectural analysts, but the topic has not been covered extensively³⁹. The pyramidal planning conception of church architecture (fig. 3)

³⁵ Ćurčić S. Smisao i funkcija katihumena u posnovizantijskoj i srpskoj arhitekturi // Manastir Žiža. Zbornik radova. Kraljevo, 2000, p. 83–93; *Idem*. The Twin-Domed Narthex in Paleologan Architecture // Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog instituta. Srpska Akademija Nauka XIII. Beograd, 1971, p. 333–344; *Idem*. Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches // Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XXXVI. 1977, p. 94–110.

³⁶ Such as Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike and St Achilleios at Prespa, Hagia Sophia at Monemvasia. See Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο, p. 80 ff., 91 ff., and esp. Εμμανουηλίδης, Το δίκαιο της ταφής, p. 207, 210–223.

³⁷ Such as Lips Monastery with a domed chapel and a *peristoon* the katholikon of Vlatadon Monastery, the Church of St Nicholas Orphanos in Thessalonike, and many others, see Χατζητρύφωνος, Περίστωο, p. 81 (table), 139 ff., 196–197 (table) and esp. Εμμανουηλίδης, Το δίκαιο της ταφής, p. 207, 219, 210–223.

³⁸ Stead, The Church... The Mystagogia, p. 96 and see for the original Μάξιμου, Μυσταγωγία // Ed. Δ. Στανιλοάε, chapt. ΚΑ', p. 5–10 (697A), esp. p. 208–209: «καθ' ὃν τῆς ἀφανοῦς καὶ ὑπεράρρῳτου δόξης τὸ φῶς ἐνοπτεῦνόντες, τῆς μακαρίας, μετὰ τῶν ἄνω δυνάμεων, καὶ αὐτοὶ δεκτικοὶ γίνονται καθαρότητος...» and ΚΔ, 29–33 (704 B, C), esp. p. 227: «Διὰ δὲ τῆς μετὰ ταῦτα τῶν θυρῶν κλείσεως, τὴν κατὰ διὰθρῶν ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ φθαρτοῦ κόσμου πρὸς τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον μετέβασιν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μετέβασιν δι' ἧς τὰς ἀϊσθησεις, θυρῶν δίκην, μύσασα, τῶν καθ' ἁμαρτίαν εἰδῶλων καθαρὰς ἀπεργάζεται».

³⁹ Μιχελής, Αισθητική θεώρηση, p. 98–99, 112, 121–126, see the first study on this matter Τριανταφυλλίδης Γ. Στοιχεία φυσικού φωτισμού των Βυζαντινών Εκκλησιών. Athens, 1964; Ποταμιάνος Ι. Το φως στη βυζαντινή εκκλησία. Thessalonike, 2000 (from now on:

manifests not only the need for a solution of spatial problems but also it functions as a three-dimensional Icon, an intended symbolic imprinting, joined with the “heavenly hierarchy”. Architecturally speaking it expresses hierarchy of volumes involving hierarchy of spaces.

The contradiction light-darkness symbolizing knowledge-ignorance and Divinity — “World” is of particular importance in aesthetics of the church building⁴⁰. Light and Time assume an important role in the church building and became a content. With the church building an existential problem of feeling of solitude had to be solved. It seems that managing light was a way to satisfy the need of the faithful not to feel alone in the world⁴¹.

Thus, in the Byzantine church an effort to introduce light deliberately is apparent. From the dimness of narthexes and peristoa the faithful enter into the moderate light of the naos and finally stand below the light of the domed centre. The perimetric spaces have usually a lower level of light in contrast to the main space of the Divine. Although the latter is not lit directly in all its parts it is much more so than narthexes and peristoa. Heavenly and spatial hierarchy is also in this way underlined and the space of Divinity and its perimeter are distinguished.

Time is also a crucial matter for the comprehension of space in Byzantine church⁴². The difference between the experiencing of time in the place of Divinity and in the areas of the “World” appears not only in connection with real time and the day-night phenomenon, but also in conjunction with expansion and contraction of time through feeling and spiritual experience⁴³. Peristoa and narthexes, as a perigram of the Divine, have an important role for the experiencing of time depending of their architectural features.

The perigram as a zone of the “World” embracing the Divine in the church building can explain many aspects of the Christian church and its conception through history. Further research of this matter will undoubtedly shed more light on several features of spatial organization and spatial comprehension of Byzantine Church architecture.

Ποταμιάνος, Το φώς), with older bibliography, a study that examines extensively the problem of light in Byzantine church.

⁴⁰ For those contradictions and their meaning see fn. 36, 37.

⁴¹ *Μιχελής*, Αισθητική θεώρηση, p. 121.

⁴² About the meaning of time in church see: *Kalokyris K.* Byzantine Iconography and Liturgical Time // *Eastern Churches Review* 1, 1967–1968, p. 359–363; Mladen Pejaković in: *Gatin N., Pejaković M.* Starohrvatska sakralna arhitektura. Zagreb, 1988, p. 267–296 about theories on space and time, and also *Ποταμιάνος*, Το φώς, p. 130, esp. p. 239–257.

⁴³ See: *Florensky*, L'iconostase, p. 117.

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«БОЖЕСТВЕННОЕ» И «МИР».
О ДВУХ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕННЫХ ЗОНАХ
ВИЗАНТИЙСКОГО ХРАМА

Настоящая статья посвящена разным формам воплощения божественного посредством создания образа мира в византийской церковной архитектуре. Хорошо известно, что божественное как сущность внутреннего пространства храма проявляется в его разных частях не одинаково. «Мирские» пространства, предназначенные для людей и их нужд, более низкие и темные по сравнению с высокой, хорошо освещенной и расположенной в центре зоной «Божественного». Само существо «Божественного», определенного как центр света, является пересечением линий, или даже соединением путей (см. Максима Исповедника). «Мир» представляет, напротив, область многообразия форм и функций. «Мир» делает «Божественное» доступным для восприятия именно за счет своей «материально-духовной» природы, вне «Мира» вечно существующее «Божественное» не может обрести форму.

Если говорить в терминах геометрии, то основной знак «Божественного» в церкви — место воображаемого или реального пересечения (как две оси креста пересекают друг друга), или центр воображаемой, но вместе с тем реальной сферы — купола. Это ощущение трехмерности (объема) сохраняется и в вытянутых пространствах, которые отражают место пребывания «Божественного» другим способом.

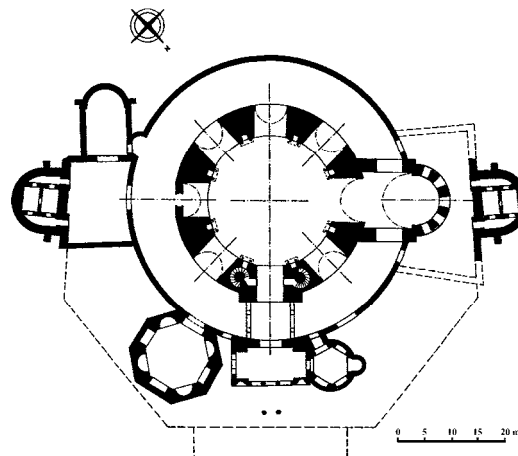
«Мир» включает в себя боковые нефы, приделы, обходные галереи, нартексы, перистили (иначе говоря, то, что византийцы называли *peristoon*), которые окружают и определяют существование пространства «Божественного». «Места мира» принимают на себя множество функций, но они всегда связаны с нуждами верующих, находящихся вокруг святого центра: подготовки к похоронам, крещению, молитве и т. п. В этом смысле противопоставление светлых и затемненных зон, символизирующее разницу между знанием и безразличием, «Божественным» и «Миром», особенно важно. Светлый центр «Божественного» постоянно воздействовал на зоны «Мира» в непрерывном процессе его освещения-одухотворения.

Снаружи церковь, воплощающая концепцию пирамидального здания — буквально образцовое выражение этой идеи. Такой тип строения не только позволяет решить статические проблемы, но и создает, как трехмерная икона, нужный символический образ-отпечаток, связанный с «небесной иерархией».

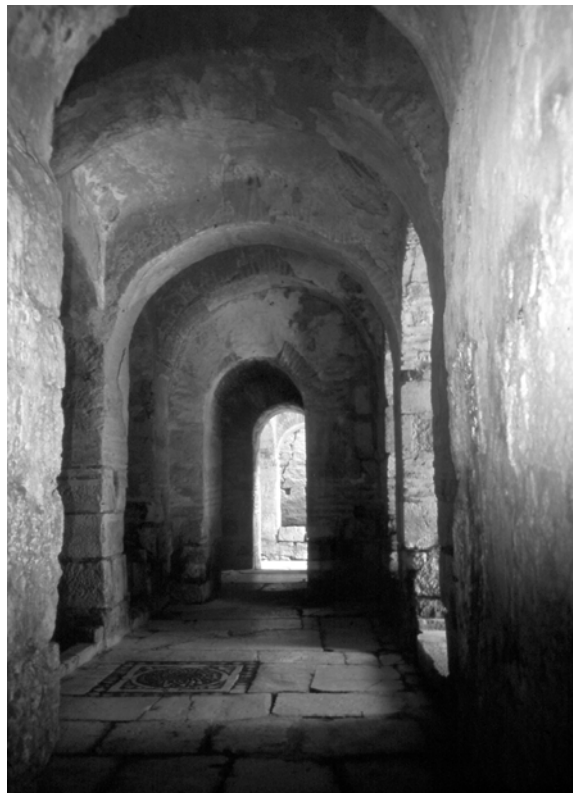
Реальный размер здания церкви может рассматриваться и с другой точки зрения, трактующей как первостепенное отношение между «Божественным» и «Миром», которое может быть реализовано даже в миниатюре.

Для понимания пространства также важно время. Разница в ощущении времени в сфере «Божественного» и сфере «Мира» связана не только с земным временем и сменой дня и ночи, но также с замедлением и ускорением времени в чувствах и опыте.

Значение пространств и всех мест, окружающих наос, особенно купольный, меняется и требует другого подхода, рассмотрения в несколько иной системе понятий. Отношение к исследованию типов, функций, форм и художественных решений таких пространств в церковной архитектуре должно быть пересмотрено. Для областей «Мира» очень важны некоторые архитектурные и функциональные термины, например *klitos*, *narthex*, *peristoon*. Отношения между этими частями здания, вопросы о функциях внутренних пространств и их художественных решений стоят в центре нашего внимания. Термины, которые используются в византийской литературе при их описании, заслуживают более точной и цельной интерпретации, так как за ними скрывается собственно теория византийской архитектуры, гораздо более сложная, чем та, которую дает современная история архитектуры. Новое прочтение источников может послужить обоснованием такого видения многих явлений.



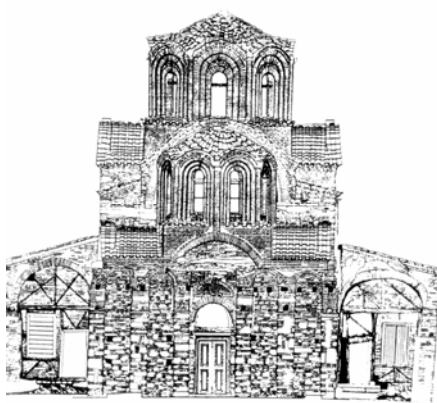
1. Rotonda, Thessalonike, plan of the Early Christian phase



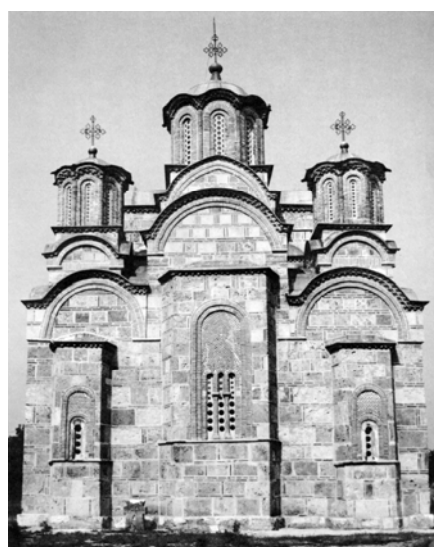
2. The peristoon of S. Nicolas in Myra, Asia Minor, as an example for the notion of far end and endless space



a

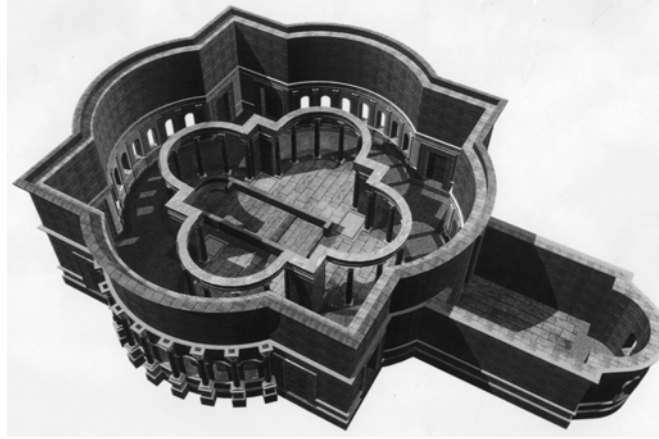


b

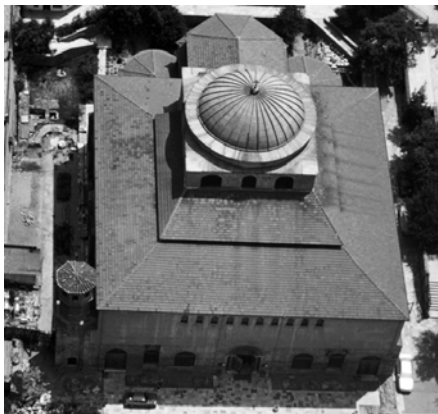
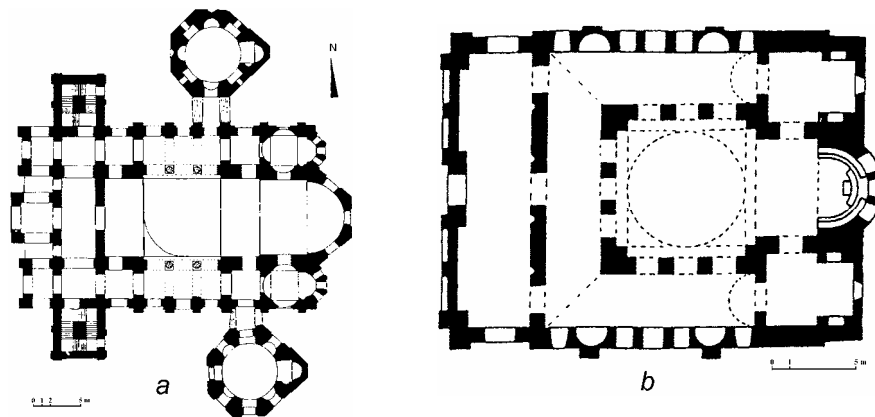


c

3. Pyramidal composition of volumes as it appears in S. Taxiarches in island Andros (*a*), S. Pantelejmon in Thessalonike (*b*), Gračanica in Kosovo and Metochia (*c*)

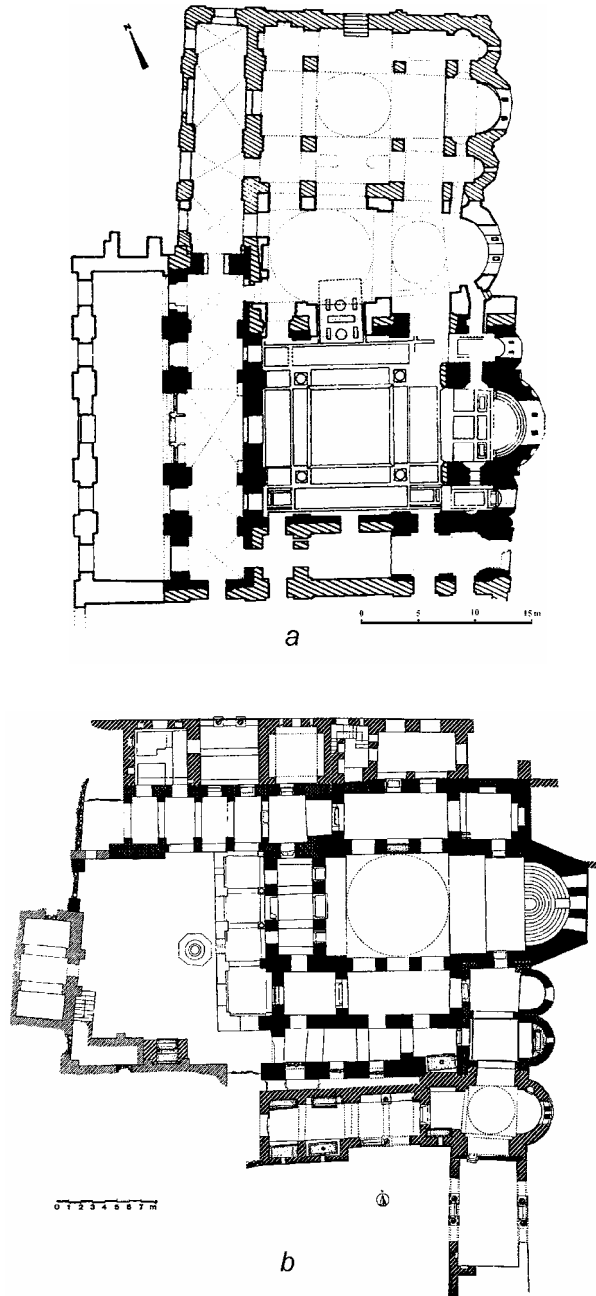


4. Church in Seleukia-Pieria as an example between more of so-called double shell churches with peristoon around the core

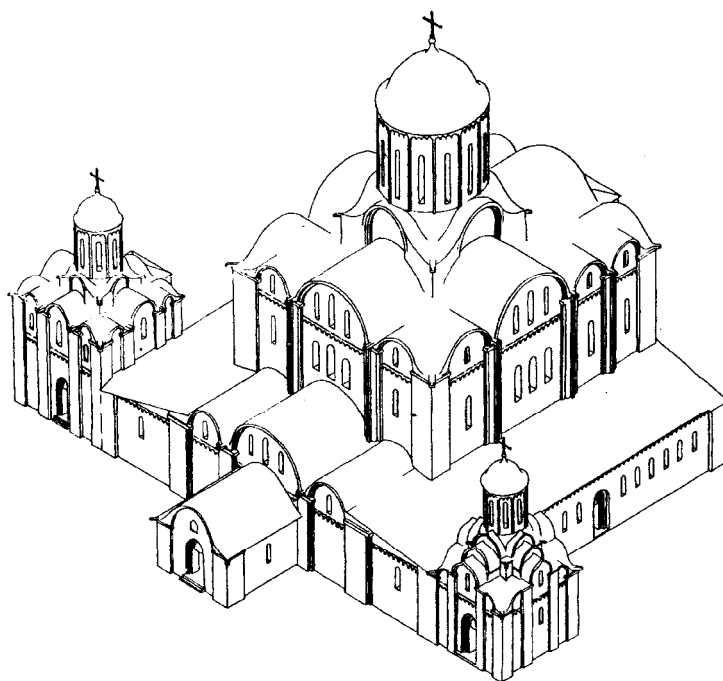


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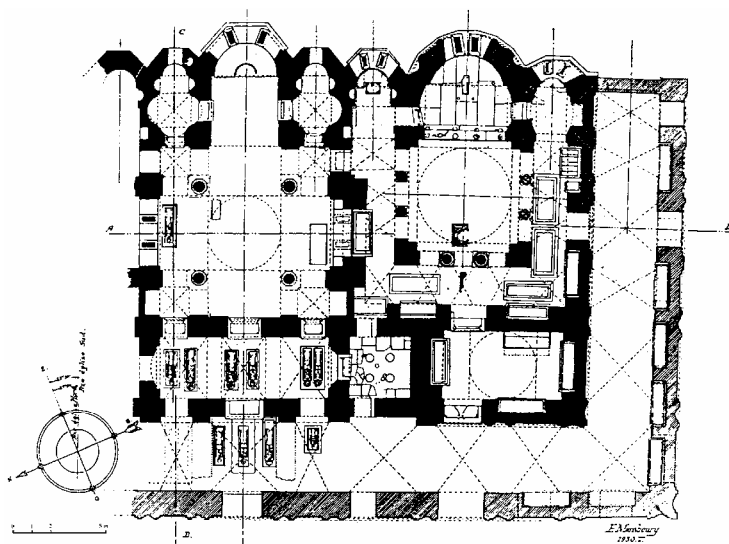
5. Churches unifying their aisles and narhex in a whole as peristoon around the core: a) Dere Agzi, b) Dag Pazari, c) S. Sophia in Thessalonike



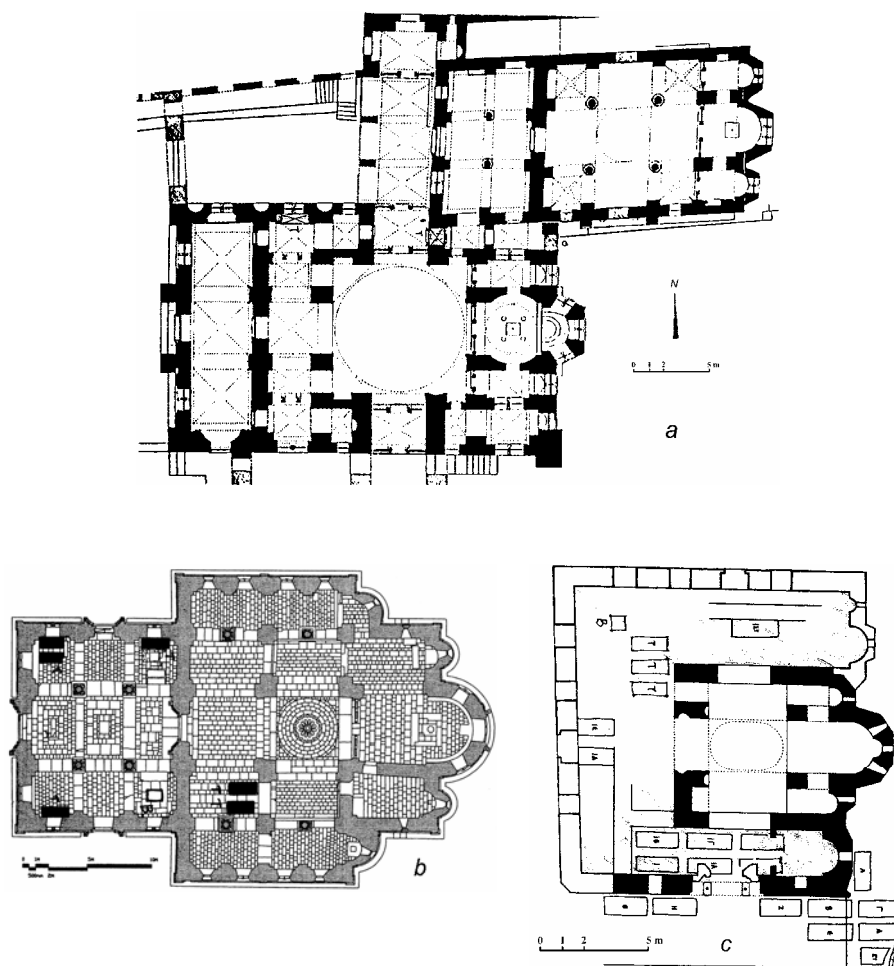
6. Perimetric spaces in middle Byzantine churches such as Pantokrator in Constantinople (*a*) and S. Nicolas in Myra (*b*)



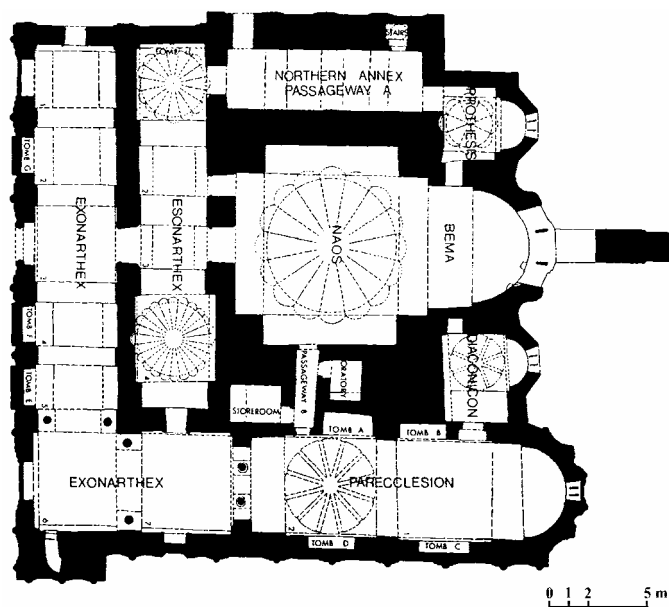
7. A typical composition of a lower peristoon surrounding the higher main core at Sobor na Protoke, Smolensk



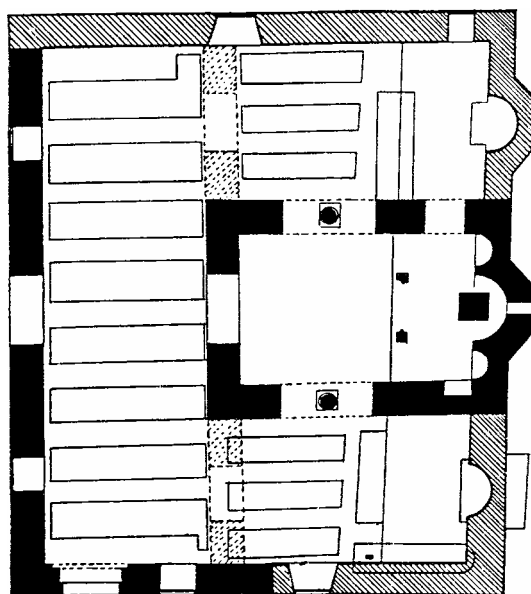
8. The case of Lips Monastery, Constantinople, after the model of Pantocrator Monastery in the same city



9. Position of Baptismal fonts in the perimetric space as in: *a)* Dečani, *b)* Osios Loucas and *c)* Mone Vlatadon



10. The Katholikon of Chora Monastery, Constantinople, a case where the dome of parecclesion is related to the funerary arcosolia



11. S. Nicolas Orphanos, Thessalonike, an example of tombs in the peristoa.



a



b



c



d

12. The importance of light in different aspects: *a), b)* domes; *c), d)* bema, main nave