

Ida Sinkević

FORMATION OF SACRED SPACE IN LATER
BYZANTINE FIVE-DOMED CHURCHES:
A HIEROTOPIC APPROACH

The dome is one of the most prominent features of Byzantine churches. Within the spatial structure of a church, it caps the hierarchically designed space. Conceived as a configuration in real space, its program, as Otto Demus pointed out, completes the monumental icon of the church¹. Although symbolic meaning of the dome still remains enigmatic and a subject of many different interpretations, ranging from comparisons with eastern mandala, to a more recent association with imperial ideology², on the most general level it is agreed that the dome represents, to refer to Demus again, the “celestial sphere of the microcosm of the church, an organic center from which the program of the church could be arranged radially”³.

Although generally valid within the context of single domed churches, this interpretation leaves a considerable void in the instances when the number of domes is multiplied. If the central dome is an organic center and a symbol of the celestial sphere, what is the symbolic meaning of subsidiary domes? Physically distant from one another, do subsidiary domes suggest that celestial sphere is multiplied and/or fragmented in the interior of multi-domed churches? Moreover, were multi-domed churches evoking the same symbolic associations as the single-domed edifices on the mind of the beholders?

¹ See: *Demus O.* Byzantine Mosaic Decoration. New York, 1976, p. 19.

² See: *Mathews T.* The Transformation Symbolism in Byzantine Architecture and the Meaning of the Pantokrator in the Dome // *Church and People in Byzantium* / Ed. by R. Morris. Birmingham, 1990, p. 191–214; *Nordhagen P. J.* The Absent Ruler. Reflections on the Origin of the Byzantine Domed Church and Its Pictorial Decoration // *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* XV (2001), p. 319–335.

³ *Demus.* Byzantine Mosaic Decoration, p. 19.

An interpretation of the symbolic meaning of multi-domed churches has been provided by Alexei Lidov in his studies on Byzantine understanding of Heavenly Jerusalem⁴. By drawing a distinction between western approach to Heavenly Jerusalem materialized in a concrete symbolic image, and its Byzantine counterpart characterized by conceptual and metaphorical representations, Lidov convincingly uses the images of multi-domed churches as important examples that embody the idea of the Holy City. As put concisely by Lidov, "Heavenly Jerusalem is treated as a metaphor, a symbolic image... is conceived of as a church, a place of incessant liturgy... is not identified with any single place of worship. It is the concentration of churches, a sort of city made up of churches"⁵. Indeed, a multi-domed church fits the description, and the Cathedral of St. Basil in Moscow, with its imaginative domes and towers that cap segregated and diverse architectural units, although post-Byzantine, provides, in my view, the most vivid example of Lidov's claim.

Without any attempt to negate the association between multi-domed churches and the concept of Heavenly Jerusalem, this paper aims at exploring additional symbolic connotations of multi-domed churches. More specifically, the paper focuses on a small group of Middle and late Byzantine five-domed churches, characterized by four domed compartments placed around the cruciform core of the church (fig. 1). It is believed that the earliest church of this type is now destroyed Constantinopolitan foundation of the emperor Basil I (867–886), Nea Ekklesia, consecrated in 881 and known today only through written sources and a few summary drawings⁶. Its architectural type remained popular in Byzantium, however, as evidenced through the wide geographic spread of Middle and Late Byzantine five-domed churches⁷. While small in number, largely due to vulnerability and a high cost associated with erection of cupolas, five domed churches can be found throughout Byzantium and its borderlands, such as in Russia, Serbia, Greece, Armenia, and Italy⁸.

⁴ See: *Lidov A.* Heavenly Jerusalem: the Byzantine Approach // *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Art* (Jewish Art 23/24), Jerusalem, 1998, p. 341–353.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 342–343.

⁶ For architectural analysis, see: *Krautheimer R.* Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, p. 356; *Ćurčić S.* Architectural Reconsideration of the Nea Ekklesia // *Byzantine Studies Conference Abstracts* 6 (1980), p. 11–12; *Mango C., Ševčenko I.* Some Churches and Monasteries on the Southern Shore of the Sea of Marmara // *DOP* 27 (1973), p. 235–277. For descriptions and the impact that the church had on visitors, see: *Magdalino P.* Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I // *JÖB* 37 (1987), p. 51–64; *Majeska G.* Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. Washington, 1984, p. 37, 247; *Mango C.* The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453: Sources and Documents. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972, p. 194; Anthony of Novgorod in S. Khitrovo // *Itinéraires russes en Orient*. Geneva, 1899, p. 98–102.

⁷ *Krautheimer.* Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, p. 356.

⁸ For a discussion and bibliography, see: *Sinkević I.* The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture, Programme, Patronage. Wiesbaden, 2000, p. 24–28.

Iconographically, these churches are seen by scholars as symbols of the capital, recalling its imperial spirit at various geographic locations of the empire⁹. Architecturally, the uniformity of size, shape and exterior decoration of subsidiary domes, as well as the strict symmetry of their disposition, indicates that this group of churches received special treatment by Byzantine architects. The uniformity of their architectural features and the disposition of subsidiary domes separates this group of monuments from other multi-domed churches. Placed at the outermost corners of the edifice and almost identical in their shape, size, and exterior decoration, the domes confirm that spatial articulation of these edifices is a consequence of the initial and intentional planning and not an afterthought. Thus, both the nature of their planning and the associations with the capital indicate that later Byzantine five domed churches reveal important principles of the creation of sacred space in Byzantium. It is a purpose of this paper to examine to what extent such carefully articulated architectural symmetry, that formed a spatial icon on the exterior, affected and/or is reflected in the iconographic program of the interior of subsidiary domes.

Traditionally, the program of subsidiary domes has been studied only in relation to images underneath. This vertical connection, while important, fostered the idea of spatial and programmatic segregation. A careful examination of a variety of both literary and visual sources, as well as a consideration of the role of the beholder in the perception of spatial construct of the church, pursued in this paper, aims at examining the relationship between spatial and programmatic solutions and thus expanding our understanding of the impact of domes on the making of sacred space by using a multifaceted approach termed hierotopy by Alexei Lidov¹⁰. A carefully planned, unified architectural features of the exterior of the domes, suggest that a parallel synthesis may have also occurred in their interior decoration, too. It is with the synergy of painted image and its architectural setting that Byzantine church embraces the beholder into its sacred messages. Thus, this paper ventures into looking at the sphere of domes in five domed churches of Middle and later Byzantine periods by examining the multiplicity of their structural, architectural, programmatic, and perceptual connections.

I. MIDDLE BYZANTINE FIVE-DOMED CHURCHES

Although considerable losses prevent us from drawing any definitive conclusions about the iconography of domical vaults of five-domed Middle Byzantine churches, some reconstructions can be made on the basis of a

⁹ *Krautheimer*. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, p. 356.

¹⁰ For a discussion on hierotopy, see: *Lidov A.* *Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Space as a Form of Creativity and Subject of Cultural History // Hierotopy. Studies in the Making of Sacred Spaces*. Moscow, 2004, p. 15–33, and in the present volume.

careful examination of the single- and multi-domed churches, that is the churches displaying one central or several, usually asymmetrically positioned domes. According to preserved monuments, Middle Byzantine period introduced a number of different images, such as different portrayals of Christ, Virgin, and angels into domical vaults. Most notably, the image of the Pantokrator, the all ruler, gained in prominence¹¹. In the katholikon of the Monastery dedicated to the Mother of God at Daphni (c. 1100), the central dome is reserved exclusively for the image of the Pantokrator, while the drum renders prophets¹². Surrounded by now damaged, yet once powerful and large area of glittering golden mosaic, the Pantokrator at Daphni, stern and serious in its appearance, displays the sense of immediacy and urgency implied in its direct, uncluttered appeal. Although its imperial patronage cannot be established, the refinement of style and the use of golden mosaics make the association of the images at Daphni with the Byzantine capital very likely. After all, couple of centuries later, a similar iconography of the central dome is repeated in the fourteenth-century mosaic of the church of the Virgin Pammakaristos, or Fethiye Camii in Constantinople¹³.

In the more provincial locations, or in the churches of a more modest patronage, however, the central dome lacks the austerity of Daphni and displays much more crowded ensembles. For example, in the twelfth-century Church of the Panagia at Lysi, the image of the Pantokrator is surrounded by a procession of angels¹⁴. Led by the Virgin and St. John, the angels at Lysi converge towards the prepared throne, Hetoimasia. Hetoimasia, angels, and the Virgin also encircle Christ in the church of St. Hierotheos at Megara¹⁵. At Megara, we see the full figure of Christ who is enthroned and surrounded by angels in the pose of adoration and with medallions displaying the Virgin, the Hetoimasia, and the two archangels. Parallels for iconographic program of the domes displaying the central medallion of Christ surrounded by the host of angels, as well as the Virgin and other celestial beings seen at both Lysi and Megara are found in nu-

¹¹ For bibliography on Pantokrator, see: ODB I, p. 439. See also: *Matthews J. T.* The Pantokrator: Title and Image / Ph. D. dissertation, Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, 1976.

¹² See: *Demus.* Byzantine Mosaic Decoration, fig. 7. For a discussion, see: *Mouriki D.* Stylistic Trends in Monumental Painting in Greece during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries // DOP 34–35 (1980–1981), p. 94–98; *Panagopoulos B. K.* Cistercian and Mendican Monasteries in Medieval Greece. Chicago, 1979, p. 56–62; *Millet G.* Le monastère de Daphni. Paris, 1899.

¹³ See: *Belting H., Mango C., Mouriki D.* The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul. Washington, 1978, pl. I; fig. 27.

¹⁴ *W. Carr A., Morrocco L. J.* A Byzantine Masterpiece Recovered, the Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi, Cyprus. Austin, 1991, p. 20–25, figs. 5–13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51, fig. 17.

merous middle Byzantine churches throughout the empire, such as in Greece, Cyprus, Cappadocia, Sicily, and Russia¹⁶.

The popularity of these images is also witnessed in their appearance in multi-domed churches, too. For example, in a number of Cappadocian churches, such as in Elmalı Kilise (1190/1200), Çarikli Kilise (second half of the 12th century), and Karanlık Kilise (c. 1200/1210), all located in Goreme Valley, central dome displays the image of the Pantokrator¹⁷. The Pantokrator is a sole image in the dome at Elmalı Kilise, while the other two churches display Christ surrounded by angels. Moreover, along with angels, there is a medallion displaying the bust of Christ Emmanuel on the eastern axis of the central dome of Çarikli Kilise. This heavenly ensemble is further enhanced by images of archangels that appear in majority of subsidiary domes in these churches.

The monumental medallion of Christ is also surrounded by archangels in the central dome of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev. The archangels in Kiev are shown as full size standing figures holding a sphere with cross in the right hand and labarum with inscription *Agios, Agios, Agios* presumably referring to the Thrice Holy Hymn in the left. Additional images of archangels, this time in medallions, have been painted in the summit of auxiliary domes of the southern nave and southern part of the gallery¹⁸.

Similar program, especially regarding archangels, is also found in the domes of the eleventh-century church of the Virgin Eleousa at Veljusa located in Strumica region in the Republic of Macedonia¹⁹. The church was commissioned by a Greek bishop Manuel, as his funerary chapel, in 1080. It is a small domed quattrofoil with a narthex and a subsidiary chapel that also features a dome. The central dome at Veljusa displays the Pantokrator surrounded by the Virgin with her hands raised in prayer, and by two archangels dressed in imperial garbs and carrying labarum with inscription Hagios, thus very much reminding of those seen in the Kievan cathedral (fig. 2). In addition, the drum also displays the image of St. John and four prophets. The subsidiary domes at Veljusa exhibit different images of Christ: the Ancient-of-Days in the narthex dome, and Emmanuel in the side chapel²⁰.

The meaning of these new iconographic solutions of middle Byzantine domes has been interpreted differently by scholars. As discussed concisely

¹⁶ For examples and discussion, see: *Gkioles N.* O Byzantinos Troulos kai to eikonografiko tou programma. Athens, 1990, figs. 9, 13, 16–17, 22–33.

¹⁷ See: *Restle M.* Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor, 3 vols. Greenwich, Conn. 1967. Vol. 2, figs. 161, 162, 195, 219, 220.

¹⁸ *Lazarev V.* Old Russian Murals and Mosaics. London, 1966, p. 224–225, fig. 1; p. 236, fig. 24–25.

¹⁹ *Miljkovic-Peppek P.* Veljusa: Manastir Sv. Bogorodica Milostiva vo seloto Veljusa kraj Strumica. Skopje, 1981.

²⁰ *Miljkovic-Peppek.* Veljusa, p. 192–196, 204–206.

by Annemarie Weyl Carr, some scholars tend to associate the appearance of the Virgin and angels with the theme of Ascension (Staraya Ladoga and Nereditsi), linked, through the image of the prepared throne to the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment²¹. This eschatological interpretation has been challenged by scholars who felt that the proliferation of angels, as well as the image of the throne are in fact liturgical in their content, representing an incipient stage of the theme of the Divine liturgy that will appear in the domes of many Palaeologan churches as will be discussed later²².

It appears, however, that the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive, for it would be very difficult, looking at the processional organization of angels at Lysi, or the inscription from the thrice-holy hymn at Kiev and Veljusa (fig. 2), to completely exclude liturgical overtones — after all, eschatological themes also find their echo in the liturgy. A precise moment of the liturgy, however, can not be determined.

This summary treatment of the programs in the middle Byzantine single-domed and multi-domed churches may help us gain more insight into possible iconographic patterns used in the decoration of domes in five-domed churches. The iconographic programs of five-domed Middle Byzantine churches require certain reconstructive efforts because there are only a few that preserve their original decoration. The most notable examples are the church of the Virgin Kosmosoteira at Pherrai in western Thrace, founded before 1152 by Isaak Komnenos, a son of Alexios I Komnenos, and the Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi in Macedonia, founded in 1164 by Alexios Angelos Komnenos, a grandson of Alexios I Komnenos. Both churches are of Constantinopolitan patronage, both are dated in the middle of the twelfth century, and both have preserved programs only in the subsidiary domes. However, although the decoration of their central domes has been lost, hypothetical reconstructions can be proposed by comparative analysis.

At Nerezi, subsidiary domes display four images of Christ located in the summit of subsidiary domes: Emmanuel, Ancient of Days, Christ Priest and an image of a mature Christ that resembles the Pantokrator, thus recalling the iconography of the church of the Virgin of Eleousa at Veljusa (fig. 3)²³. The images of Christ are surrounded by angels in the drum. The church of the Virgin Kosmosoteira at Pherrai displays the images of two archangels, Gabriel (north-east) and Michael (south-east) at the summit of the eastern subsidiary domes, the image of the Virgin orans in the north-west dome and a mature

²¹ Carr. *The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi*, p. 47–53. See also: *Velmans T. Quelques programmes iconographiques de coupoles chypriotes du XII^e au XV^e siècle // Cahiers archéologiques 32 (1984), p. 137–162.*

²² For bibliography and discussion, see: Carr. *The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi*, p. 47–53.

²³ See: *Sinkevič I. The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi*, figs. XXI–XXVI; XXIX; pls. 12, 14, 26, 27.

Christ in the south-west dome²⁴. Suited to their architectural space, at the summit of the dome, all images are displayed in medallions. Moreover, the selection of images displayed in subsidiary domes of Pherrai and Nerezi closely parallels the iconography of the central domes in single and multi-domed churches discussed earlier. Close parallels between the iconography of central domes of the eleventh- and twelfth-century churches and those of subsidiary domes at Nerezi and Pherrai suggest a significant possibility that subsidiary domes in these two five-domed churches were programmatically connected with the central dome. It is quite possible to assume that subsidiary domes in five-domed churches provided additional domical space used to expand the program of the central dome. That is at least a case in many contemporary multi-domed churches, such as at earlier discussed Veljusa, St. Sophia in Kiev and at Cappadocian churches, where the number of archangels encircling the image of Christ Pantokrator in the central dome is expanded by their appearance in the summit of subsidiary domes.

Considering their Constantinopolitan patronage, it is possible that central domes at Pherrai and at Nerezi followed the classical program of Daphni, reserving the central dome exclusively for the image of the Pantokrator, and using subsidiary domes to expand the meaning and significance of the All-Ruler. It is also possible that side domes repeated some of the imagery of the central dome, thus re-enforcing its dogmatic and/or liturgical content. For example, the appearance of archangels and the Virgin in prayer in the side domes of Pherrai, may suggest eschatological nature of the programs of the domical vaults, since both archangels and the Virgin are powerful figures in the events and scenes related to the Last Judgment and the theme of intercession. While inconclusive, both programmatic solutions would follow the main currents of dome decorations established in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

Programmatic connection between the central and subsidiary domes is also seen at Nerezi. Each drum at Nerezi displays four angels in procession, connected to the central dome by virtue of their composition. While the angels in east cupolas split in pairs of two on the east side and meet on the west, the angels in the western domes split on the west side and meet on the east²⁵. Thus, the procession of angels in all four domes is oriented towards the central dome. The proliferation of angels, seen in subsidiary domes of Nerezi is, according to many scholars, one of the major characteristics of the twelfth-century central domes²⁶. It would thus not be surprising that the an-

²⁴ Sinos S. *Die Klosterkirche der Kosmosoteira in Bera (Vira)*. Munich, 1985, pl. 13, figs. 141–145.

²⁵ Sinkević. *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi*, pls. 12, 14, 26, 27.

²⁶ Carr. *The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi*, p. 47–53.

gels in subsidiary domes extend the procession of angels once represented in its central dome. The angels at Nerezi's domes are also distinguished because of their liturgical connotations. They are dressed in white sticharia, the deacons' vestments, and they carry liturgical implements: the censers and pyxis with liturgical host.

The four images of Christ represented in medallions also relate to liturgy. As discussed by a number of scholars including myself, the triad of Emmanuel, Ancient of Days, and mature Christ represents three stages in the life of Christ and is associated with concepts of Incarnation and Salvation, emphasizing theophanic character, dual nature, and the eternity of God²⁷. The image of Christ Priest, seldom seen in monumental art, evokes the notion that Christ is the one who offers and who is offered, who established the sacrament of the Eucharist, who officiates as heavenly priest, and whose action are mimicked in the terrestrial rite performed by terrestrial priests (fig. 3)²⁸. The main stages of Christ's life as well as his function as a priest in the economy of human salvation is recounted numerous times during the liturgy. While the specific moment of the liturgical celebration can not be pinpointed in the iconographic program of Nerezi domes, their liturgical content, evident both in the representations of angels and in the images of Christ is apparent. It is also apparent that the images of Christ in subsidiary domes expanded upon the meaning and significance of the Pantokrator who most likely occupied the medallion of the central dome. The connection between the central and subsidiary domes is further strengthened by the choir of angels.

Programmatic interconnectedness of the domes, seen in Middle Byzantine churches, is further developed in Palaeologan monuments. Moreover, the images displayed in subsidiary domes of Pherrai and Nerezi provided basis for and are repeated numerous times in five-domed churches of later periods.

II. PALAEOLOGAN FIVE-DOMED CHURCHES

Very similar iconographic arrangement to that at Nerezi is seen, for example, in the early fourteenth-century church of the Virgin of Ljeviška (architecture of 1306/1307)²⁹. The church of the Virgin of Ljeviška is a transitional monument that both iconographically and architecturally provides a link between middle Byzantine and Palaeologan periods (fig. 4). It is also one of the earliest five-domed churches in which the program has been preserved in both

²⁷ For a discussion and bibliography, see: *Sinkević*. The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi, p. 40–43.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41–42; *Lidov A.* Khristos-sviashennik v ikonograficheskikh programmakh XI–XII vekov // *VizVrem* 52 (1994), p. 187–193.

²⁹ *Panić D.* and *Babić G.* *Bogorodica Ljeviška*. Belgrade, 1975.

central and subsidiary domes. The decoration of the central dome at Ljeviška displays the image of the Pantokrator surrounded by angels; prophets are displayed in the drum and evangelists in pendentives. In the summit of subsidiary domes one finds four medallions of Christ: Emmanuel, Ancient of Days, Christ Priest, and an image of mature Christ that resembles the Pantokrator, thus recalling the iconography of subsidiary domes seen in the middle Byzantine period at Nerezi. As discussed earlier, the images of Christ in subsidiary domes connect to the central dome in that they expand upon the meaning and the significance of the centrally located image of Christ. The connection between the central and subsidiary domes at the church of the Virgin of Ljeviška is further strengthened by the portrayal of prophets that extends the procession of those represented in the drum of the central dome.

Architecturally, the church of the Virgin at Ljeviška displays subsidiary domes squeezed between the arms of the cross of the naos, as seen in Middle Byzantine churches (fig. 4)³⁰. Departing from earlier tradition, at Ljeviška one observes the development of additional spaces that envelop the cruciform core of the church. Known as narthexes, ambulatory wings, and peristōns, these additional spaces became an integral component of five-domed churches in Palaeologan times (figs. 4–6)³¹. However, in the Palaeologan period, the subsidiary domes in five-domed churches migrated to the outermost compartments of the edifice, as seen in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki (1310–1314) and in Gračanica (1318–1321) (fig. 5)³². During the Palaeologan period, the auxiliary domes displayed at the outermost compartment of the edifice are associated with three types of church plans. They are seen in churches with additional components enveloping the naos, such as at Gračanica (fig. 5); in churches of tri-conchal plan mostly located on Mount Athos and in Serbia, such as Resava (fig. 6); and in several churches at Mistra that display basilican plan in the lower part of the building and cross-in-square on the upper story, as seen in Apendiko (c. 1310) and Pantanassa (consecrated in 1428)³³.

³⁰ For a discussion, see: Čurčić S. Gračanica. King Milutin's Church and Its Place in Late Byzantine Architecture, p. 70–90. See also: Nenadović S. Bogorodica Ljeviška: njen postanak i mesto u arhitekturi Milutinovog vremena. Belgrade, 1963.

³¹ For a discussion on the genesis of late Byzantine architecture, see Čurčić, Gračanica, p. 70–90. For a discussion on terminology, see: Hadjistryphonos E. Peristōn or Ambulatory in Byzantine Church Architecture // Saopštenja 34 (2002), p. 131–145.

³² For Holy Apostles, see: Rautman M. The Church of Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki: a study in early Palaeologan architecture / Ph. D., Indiana University, 1984, p. 20–27; see also: Čurčić. Gračanica, p. 85–90, figs. 9–11, 101.

³³ For Gračanica, see: *ibid.*, p. 31–70; for the five-domed churches of tri-conchal plan, see: Korać V. and Suput M. Arhitektura vizantijskog sveta. Belgrade, 1998, p. 357–399; for Mistra, see: Hallensleben H. Untersuchungen zur Genesis und Typologie des 'Mistratipus' // Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft 18 (1969), p. 105–118.

In all three types of churches, the subsidiary domes are placed far away from the central dome and pulled to the extreme corners of the building, quite unlike their middle Byzantine predecessors that exhibit a close structural relationship between side domes and the central dome. Indeed, in five-domed churches that resemble the plan of Gračanica or Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki, the domes are completely disassociated from the naos, since they cover the chapels on the east side and the narthex on the west (fig. 5)³⁴.

However, the twelfth-century repertory of images, with the Pantokrator almost invariably represented in the central dome and images of the Virgin, Christ, and angels in subsidiary domes, has been commonly retained in these later monuments. For example, the images of Christ, seen in western subsidiary domes of the Holy Apostles, and the appearance of archangels, Ancient of Days, Emmanuel and the Virgin in Ravanica recalls similar selection of images at Nerezi, Bogorodica Ljeviška, and Pherrai³⁵. Thus, despite their physical distance, the programmatic unity of a select repertory of images encircled in medallions and reserved exclusively for domes was retained in the Palaeologan period.

During the Palaeologan period, a new theme was introduced in the central dome: the Divine Liturgy. The introduction of this subject in the central dome made the liturgical tendencies evident in many twelfth-century domes, fully realized. Following the concept that terrestrial rite is but a mirror image of the rite performed in the celestial sphere, the Divine Liturgy is the celestial equivalent of the liturgical procession of the Great Entry³⁶. Christ is shown as heavenly priest celebrating the liturgy with a host of his heavenly associates, the angels, who approach him processionally, like the deacons approach the minister in the terrestrial rite. They are commonly shown as wearing the robes of deacons, and carrying a large variety of liturgical vessels and implements, such as candles, fans, eucharistic bread and wine as seen, for example, at King's Church in Studenica, at Ravanica, and at Gra-

³⁴ For a discussion, see: Ćurčić. Gračanica, p. 70–80; see also: Ćurčić S. The Twin-Domed Narthex in Paleologan Architecture // *Zbornik radova vizantoloskog instituta*, 13 (1971), p. 333–344.

³⁵ For Holy Apostles: Stephen C. Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble: Die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostolkirche zu Thessaloniki. Worms, 1986; Xyngopoulos A. Les fresques de l'église des Sts. Apôtres à Thessalonique // *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues*. Venice, 1971. For Ravanica, see: Djurić V. J. Ravanicki zivopis i liturgija // *Manastir Ravanica — spomenica o sestoju stogodisnjici*. Belgrade, 1981, p. 60–75.

³⁶ On the Divine Liturgy, see: Townsley A. L. Eucharistic Doctrine and the Liturgy in Late Byzantine Painting // *Oriens christianus* 58 (1974), p. 58–61; Stefanescu J. D. L'illustration des liturgies dans l'art de Byzance et de l'Orient. Brussels, 1932. See also: Starodubcev T. Contribution à l'étude de la représentation de la liturgie céleste dans la coupole // *Papers of the Third Yugoslav Byzantine Studies Conference*. Belgrade, Krusevac, 2002, p. 381–416.

čanica³⁷. The presence of altar signifies Christ's ministry as well as his sacrifice. Sacrificial aspects are particularly emphasized at Gračanica by a presence of two altars, one of which displays Christ as Eucharistic host. Like the deacons in terrestrial rite, the angels are approaching the altar in a ceremonial motion. While specific iconographic features vary from one church to another, the parallelism between terrestrial and celestial liturgies remains a standard feature.

A presence of the Divine Liturgy in the dome alludes to Christ's incarnation and sacrifice and explains the secrets of mystical re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice in the liturgy. Thus, the concepts of incarnation, salvation, divine and human nature and the priesthood of Christ, implied in the images displayed traditionally in subsidiary domes, is encompassed in the new scene surrounding the image of the Pantokrator in the central dome. As a consequence, the space of subsidiary domes was opened for iconographic innovations.

For example, the domes at Apendiko (c. 1310) and Pantanassa (late 14th century) at Mistra display images of prophets, and at Gračanica (begun 1311) and Staro Nagoričino (later phase of 1312/1313), both associated with Serbian King Milutin, we see the images of the prophets in the drums and evangelists in the summit of subsidiary domes.³⁸ The evangelists, like the other images seen in cupolas, testify to Christ's incarnation as they are witnesses of his epiphany, his life, and his salvific mission. Iconographically, they were no strangers to the decoration of domical vaults. We see them, in their symbolic guise, already in early Byzantine monuments, such as in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (c. 430–450) and in Capella Arcivescovile (494–519) in Ravenna. Did this early and highly symbolic decoration of the dome present incipient stages of messages later developed in five-domed ceilings?

Textual evidence, although later in date, is nonetheless revealing. For example, in the Preface of Iraneus we read about symbols of evangelists and their associations with images of Christ: "On the Four Gospels and the four symbols. One must know that there are four Gospels, no more no less. Since there are four universal winds, there are also four Gospels, blowing immortality from all of them and regenerating men. From these Gospels it is evident that he, who was shown to men sitting on the cherubim, gave us the four-part Gospel, just as David, praying for his advent said, 'You who sit in the cherubim show yourself'. For the Cherubim have four faces, and their faces are the images of the dispensation of the Son of God. The one like lion

³⁷See: *Babić G.* Kraljeva crkva u Studenici. Belgrade, 1987, fig. I; *Djuric V. J.* Ravanicki zivopis i liturgija, p. 60–75; *Todić B.* Gračanica. Pristina, 1999, p. 138–140, figs. 6–25.

³⁸For Apendiko and Pantanassa, see: *Dufrenne S.* Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra. Paris, 1970, pls. 10–30, figs. 17–23; 28, 30, 31, 48–55, 58, 59. For Gračanica, see: *Todić B.* Gračanica, figs. 22–25; for a discussion on the meaning and significance of iconography in Staro Nagoričino, see: *Todić B.* Staro Nagoričino, p. 96–98.

indicates the efficacious, royal, and authoritative nature”³⁹, a description recalling the properties of the Pantokrator. “The one like the calf presents the sacerdotal and priestly nature. The manlike form depicts the incarnation”⁴⁰, perhaps relating to the image of the Emmanuel, “and the one like the eagle represents the visitation of the Holy spirit”⁴¹. It is within the realm of these early Christian concepts about the images of the dispensation of the son of God that we may find the incipient stages of the developments of iconography of the domes in multi-domed churches.

In later Byzantine monuments, the images of evangelists are allocated to pendentives, supporting the heavenly realm of the church, that is its central dome, both physically and symbolically. However, in single-domed churches, they appear sporadically in the central dome, as seen, for example, in their symbolic guise in the late 10th/early 11th century church of the Metamorphosis near Koropi, Attika (fig. 8)⁴². Thus, the presence of evangelists in subsidiary domes is by no means surprising, since they harmonize thematically with the concepts presented in the central dome. The medallions of evangelists spread at four corners of the church very much remind of iconography of many preface miniatures, such as in the E. D. Clarke 10, f. 2v (Oxford, Bodl. Lib.) that illustrates Christ in mandorla, a sign of heavenly realm, surrounded by four symbols of evangelists that bespeak of the dispensation of the Son of God, as recorded by four synoptical gospels written by evangelists displayed in four corners (fig. 9)⁴³.

A connection between the images rendered in the subsidiary domes and the program of the church as a whole, has been explored to a very limited degree. A general tendency has been to study the iconography of these domes only in relation to the program represented underneath, and that is applied in isolated, case studies of individual monuments. The role and interconnectedness of images in the horizontal register of the uppermost section of the domes is yet to be fully explored as it goes beyond individual units of the church and impacts our understanding of the five-domed church organism as a whole. As seen in five-domed churches discussed in this paper, the close association between images in subsidiary domes creates an additional vertical zone dedicated solely to images concerned with dispensation of the son of God and his

³⁹ For the discussion, bibliography, and text both in Greek and in English, see: *Nelson R.* The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book. New York, 1980, p. 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² For a discussion, see: *Panayotidi M.* La représentation de l’Ascension dans la coupole de Sainte-Sophie de Thessalonique // Problèmes iconographiques. Thessaloniki, 1974, p. 88–89. See also: *Skawran M.* The Development of Middle Byzantine Fresco Painting in Greece. Pretoria, 1982, p. 154–155.

⁴³ *Nelson*, The Iconography of Preface and Miniature, p. 55–75, fig. 34.

various functions. These images hover not only over the central area of the church, as is a case in single-domed churches, but spread over the outermost compartments of the church as well.

A connection between the central and subsidiary domes is also sustained in the five-domed churches in Mistra, but the exclusivity of dome-specific iconography in these churches becomes ambiguous. For example in both Aphenliko and Pantanassa, the subsidiary domes that cover four corner compartments of the gallery display images of prophets. In doing so, they harmonize with the Old Testament figures displayed in the drum of the central dome, since prophets, like evangelists in Gračanica are witnesses of Christ's divinity, his incarnation, and his life⁴⁴. However, unlike previously discussed five-domed churches that confined specific images to the domes, at both Aphenliko and Pantanassa, the Old Testament prophets also occupy other areas of the church. In Aphenliko, we see the images of Old Testament prophets distributed throughout the ceiling of the gallery, and at Pantanassa they are present in both the upper and lower areas of the church. Thus, while the theme of the central dome — that of the genealogy and ancestry of Christ — has been developed in side cupolas, it is no longer exclusive of domical vaults. On the contrary, it spreads throughout the uppermost section of the church. While the dome retained its symbolic value on the exterior, it nonetheless appears to have lost its exclusivity and its dominant role in formulating the sacred space of the interior, its program indicating that it is just another segment of the ceiling. However, it is important to note that in both monuments, the ceiling of the side aisles contains a series of blind domes which, although not apparent from the exterior, likely preserved a function of the dome in the interior.

Whether Mistra's programmatic solution is to be explained as a local and provincial or as specific to programs of the side domes that cover only upper chapels is difficult to say. It is also quite possible that the programmatic diffusion seen in the five-domed churches of Mistra introduced the iconography of later, post Byzantine multi-domed churches, such as many in Russia, where any correspondence between interior articulation and the exterior appearance of domes is lost. Multiplied in number, the domes spread throughout the entire edifice.

In sum, throughout Middle Byzantine period and Palaeologan times, five-domed churches displayed carefully articulated and programmatically unified programs of domical vaults. In doing so, they in a way created an additional level, hovering over the ceiling, and using additional space to spread a complex set of messages about function and nature of Christ

⁴⁴ For a discussion on the iconographic significance of prophets in these domes, see: *Todić*, *Staro Nagoričino*, p. 96–98.

throughout the church. While their relative position within the interior of the church changes, their dominant architectural form and their programmatic unity function as active and distinguished elements of sacred space in Byzantine churches.

In single-domed churches, dome is, in general sense, understood as a symbol of Heavenly sphere. Its spread is, however, limited to the functional area of the naos, that is the space of the congregation. The content and interconnectedness of the programs of domes in five-domed churches, indicates that the cosmic sphere in these churches has been extended. The emphasis upon placing the side domes at the outermost corners of the buildings, seen in both Middle Byzantine and Palaeologan five-domed churches, may be seen as a purely formal, architectural concern. After all, they appear small and remote, as if suspended from Heaven, their images obscured by light and commonly accessible only through faith. However, very few, if any compositional elements, architectural or decorative, express purely formal and aesthetic concerns in Byzantine churches. Rather, the placement of subsidiary domes at the outermost corners of the building, along with a clearly expressed programmatic unity of the domes, suggest that five domes are not to be viewed as five isolated segments, but rather as one unified heavenly sphere that encompasses the entire church.

Be it the Judge or All Ruler, liturgical or dogmatic, or both, the program of domes in surviving five-domed churches is always about Christ, his incarnation and his salvific mission. One is thus left to wonder was the scheme of five domes there to emphasize Christ's omni-presence in the entire space of the church, and thus mirror his omni-presence in life? Was programmatic unification of five domes and their spatial spread over the entire area of the edifices in fact intended to conceptually break architectural barriers and extend the umbrella-like symbol of cosmos over the entire church? Would the five-domed church, if built with today's technology, look like a huge domed interior, with a huge image of Christ in the center, his various functions in concentric circles, and evangelists at the corners, as seen at Gračanica and Staro Navoričino and revealed in a diagram-like manner in the Preface miniature discussed above (fig. 9)? A hypothetical, but a possible thought.

In his definition of hierotopy, Alexei Lidov articulated a need for a new, multidisciplinary methodology that would enable us to re-read the formation of sacred space by integrating its multifaceted components. This paper attempted to re-read the domes by considering them as dynamic elements with multi-dimensional impact on the structure and perception of the sacred space of Byzantine church.

Ида Синкевич
Lafayette College, USA

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ САКРАЛЬНОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА
В ВИЗАНТИЙСКИХ ПЯТИКУПОЛЬНЫХ ХРАМАХ:
ИЕРОТОПИЧЕСКИЙ ПОДХОД

Наличие купола — одна из самых заметных особенностей византийских церквей. В пространственной структуре храма он венчает иерархически выстроенный объем. Его облик, структурирующий реальное пространство, как заметил Отто Демус, завершает монументальную икону церкви. Несмотря на то, что символическое значение купола все еще остается туманным и является предметом различных интерпретаций, начиная со сравнений с мандалами Востока до более современной ассоциации с имперской идеологией, на самом базовом уровне признается, что купол представляет собой (снова согласно Демусу) «божественную сферу церковного микрокосма, органический центр, от которого радиально простирается структура храма».

Такое понимание, в целом подходящее для однокупольных храмов, оказывается неполным в случае, когда куполов несколько. Если центральный купол является органическим центром и божественной сферой, каково символическое значение прочих куполов? Означает ли их физическая разделенность, что божественная сфера умножается и/или дробится во внутреннем пространстве многокупольных храмов?

Целью настоящей работы является исследование расположения и живописного декора куполов с разных точек зрения с целью оценить степень их влияния на формирование сакрального пространства византийских храмов. Мы сконцентрируем внимание на средне- и поздневизантийских пятикупольных церквях — небольшой группе памятников, для которых характерно наличие четырех покрытых куполами пространств, расположенных вокруг крестообразного в плане центра. Считается, что такой тип появился в столице, первым его примером было ныне разрушенное здание, возведенное императором Василием I (867–886), называвшееся Новая церковь (Неа) и освященное в 881 г., теперь оно известно лишь по письменным свидетельствам и немногочисленным общим рисункам. Сохранившиеся пятикупольные храмы расположены на территории бывшей Византии и граничивших с ней областей: России, Сербии, Греции, Армении и Италии. Иконографически все эти церкви являются символами столицы, воскрешая ее имперский дух в различных местностях страны. Наблюдаемое в конструкции этих памятников расположение куполов на самых дальних от центра углах здания подчиняется строгой симметрии и показывает, что пространст-

венное деление является результатом изначального и намеренного планирования, а не позднейшим добавлением. Таким образом, как смысл их планировки, так и ассоциации со столицей свидетельствуют, что византийские пятикупольные храмы раскрывают важные принципы создания сакральных пространств в Византии.

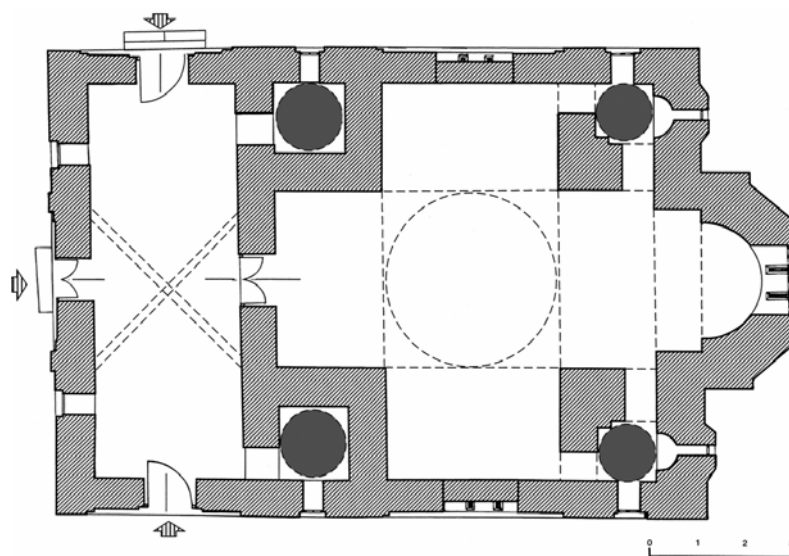
В статье исследуются расположение и декор куполов в ряде поздневизантийских пятикупольных храмов: Грачаница, Старо Нагоричино, Раваница, Пантанасса и церковь Святых Апостолов в Фессалониках. Несмотря на все их архитектурные различия, эти церкви являются примерами тщательно составленных и программно единых купольных сводов. Программное содержание и взаимосвязь планов в пятикупольных церквях показывает, что «небесная зона» в этих сооружениях была сознательно расширена. Поэтому в статье ставится вопрос о природе архитектурного деления самой верхней части церквей и ее восприятия верующими.

На протяжении средневизантийского периода и эпохи Палеологов пятикупольные церкви в известном смысле создавали дополнительный уровень, находящийся над «потолком», и использовали это дополнительное пространство для распространения по всей церкви сложного комплекса идей, касающихся роли и природы Христа. В то время, как расположение куполов внутри церкви менялось, их основная архитектурная форма и программное единство служили активным и четко определенным фактором формирования сакрального пространства византийского храма.

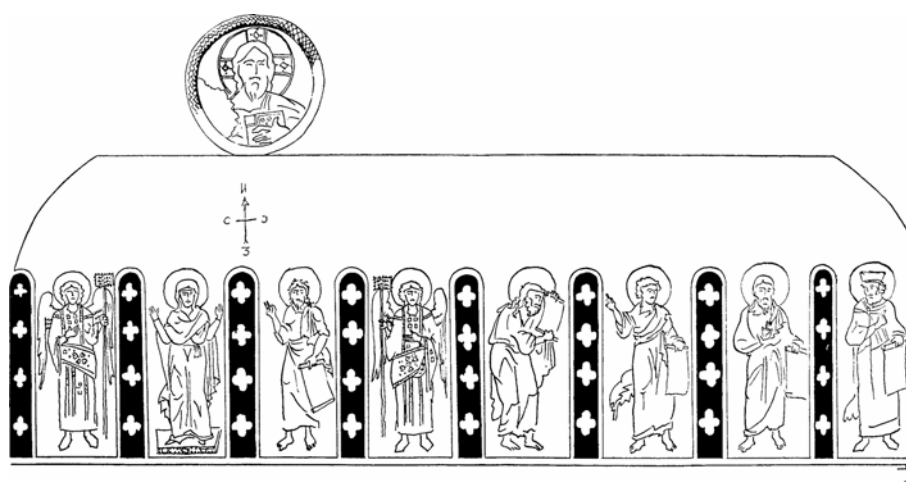
В однокупольных церквях купол в целом понимается как символ небесной сферы. Его распространение, однако, ограничено функциональным пространством наоса, т. е. сферой прихожан. Взаимосвязанные планы куполов в пятикупольных церквях показывают, что небесная сфера в этих храмах расширена. Особое расположение куполов на дальних углах здания, присутствующее и в средневизантийских, и в палеологовских пятикупольных церквях, может рассматриваться как часть архитектурного решения. Но в византийских храмах очень немногие, если вообще хоть какие-то элементы композиционного, архитектурного или декоративного устройства являются чисто формальными. Поэтому помещение второстепенных куполов на крайние углы здания, наряду с четко выраженным единством планов купольных сводов, позволяет предположить, что пять куполов не рассматривались как пять образов неба, но скорее отражали наличие одной объединенной небесной сферы, заключающей в себя всю церковь.

Купола в сохранившихся пятикупольных храмах всегда несут образ Христа, будь то Судия или Вседержитель, образ литургический или догматический, они всегда связаны с его воплощением и его спаси-

тельной миссией. Можно задуматься, была ли пятикупольная схема призвана подчеркнуть присутствие Христа во всей церкви и тем самым отразить его присутствие во всей жизни. Было ли единство планов пяти куполов, простирающихся над всем пространством здания, призвано сломать архитектурные барьеры и распространить похожий на зонтик символ небес на всю церковь? Будет ли пятикупольная церковь, построенная по современным технологиям, выглядеть огромным покрытым куполами пространством с изображением Христа в центре, его различных образов в концентрических кругах и евангелистов по углам, как в Грачанице и Старо Нагоричине? Это гипотеза, заслуживающая, на наш взгляд, серьезного внимания.



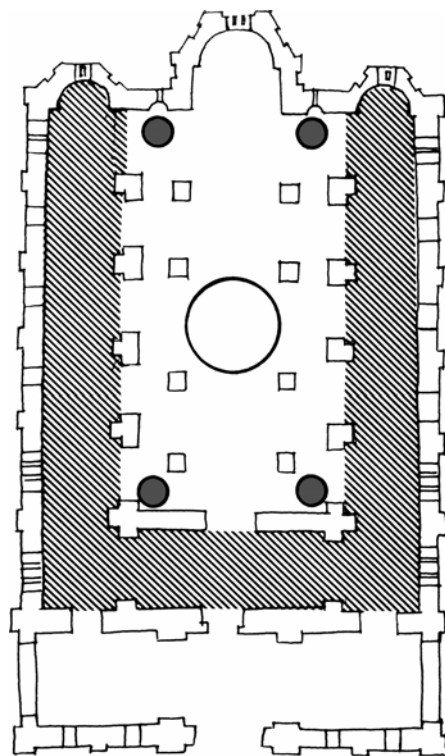
1. Nerezi, plan (author)



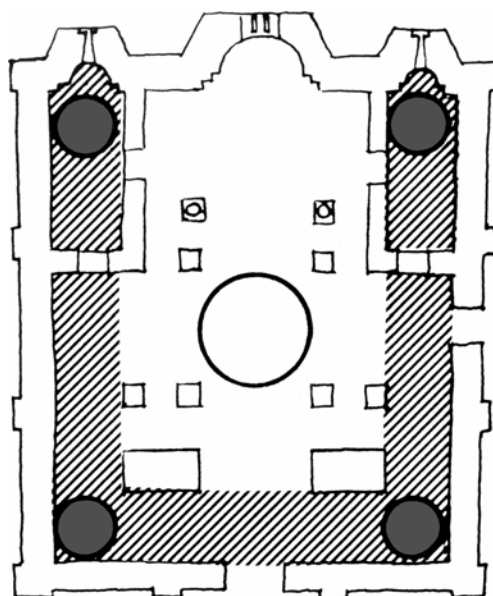
2. Veljusa, central dome (after *Miljkovic-Pepel P. Veljusa*, p. 184–185)



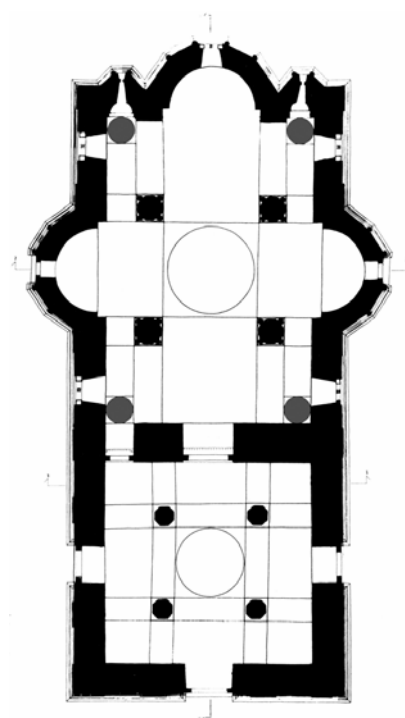
3. Nerezi, Christ-Priest (south-west dome) (photo: author)



4. Bogorodica Ljeviška, plan (after Ćurčić S. Gračanica, fig. 101 D)



5. Gračanica, plan (after Čurčić S. Gračanica, fig. 101 F)



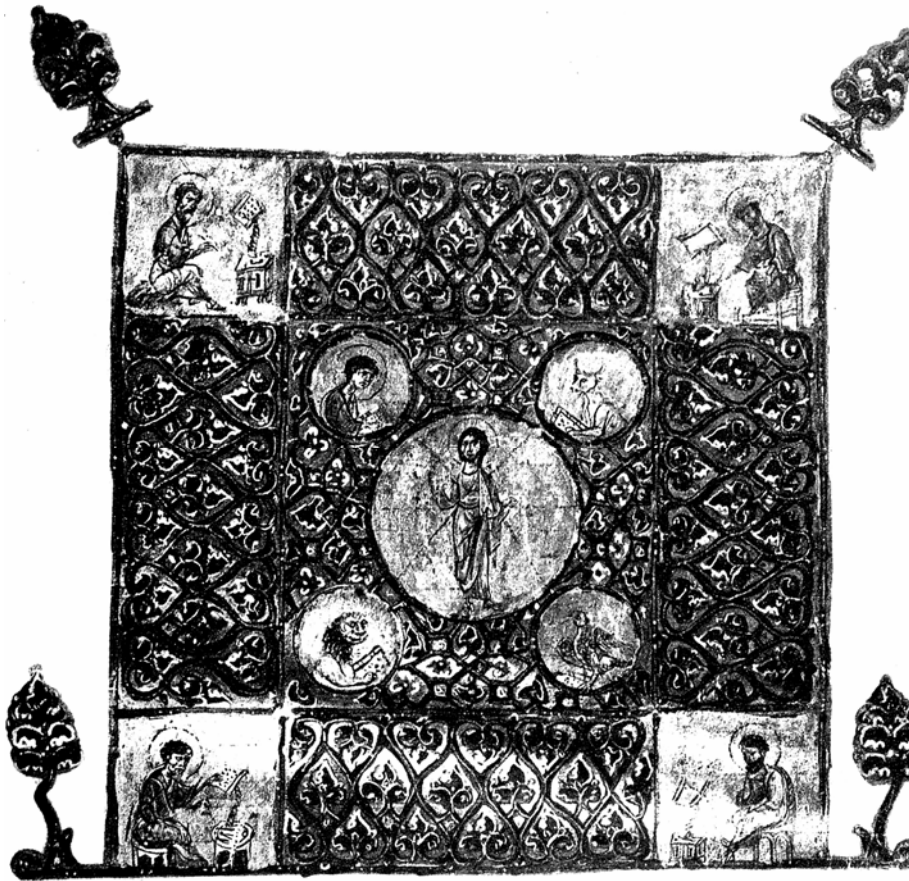
6. Resava, plan (after Todić B. Resava, fig. 20)



7. Gračanica, Evangelists John (south-east dome) and Luke (north-east dome) (after *Todić B.* Gračanica, figs. 24, 25)



8. The Church of Metamorphosis, Koropi, Attika (photo: author).



9. E. D. Clarke 10, f. 2v (Oxford, Bodl. Lib.) (after *Robert Nelson*, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book*, fig. 34)