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THE RELIC OF THE TRUE CROSS
AND JERUSALEM *LOCA SANCTA*:
THE CASE OF THE MAKING OF SACRED SPACES
IN THE ST. NEOPHYTOS' ENCLEISTRA, PAPHOS

Recent studies have drawn considerable attention to the numerous replicas of Jerusalem and its *loca sancta* in art and architecture of medieval Russia¹ and the West² since the time of the Crusaders. These publications illustrate how the concepts of Jerusalem and its holy sites — particularly the Holy Sepulcher — were captured in the minds of Christians both in the East and West and then replicated in the form of architectural buildings or artifacts. For Byzantium, however, studies of the evidence are still scarce. The purpose of this article is to present the evidence for Cyprus. I believe that the Encleistra monastery, founded by St. Neophytos near Paphos, Cyprus in 1159, exhibits the pattern found in Russia and the West: its founder Neophytos went for pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land and used his memories and imagination to recreate in his own hermitage near Paphos (fig. 1) the secret places and *loca sancta* of Jerusalem.

The monastery architecture, wall paintings, and relics of the Holy Cross were identified and published by Cyril Mango³. Robin Cormack further discussed the connection between the church, its wall paintings, and Neophytos' writings⁴.

¹ Ierusalim in Russian Culture / Ed. A. L. Batalov, A. M. Lidov. New York–Athens, 1994; Batalov A. Grob Gospoden' v sacral'nom prostranstve Russkogo chrama XVI–XVII vekov // Eastern Christian Relics / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2003, p. 513–532.

² Ousterhout R. Flexible Geography and Transportable Topography / The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Art // Jewish Art, 23/24, 1998, p. 393–404.

³ Mango C., Hawkins E. J. W. The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall Paintings // DOP 20 (1966), p. 119–206.

⁴ Cormack R. Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons. New York, 1985, p. 215–251.

Still, the peculiarities of the Encleistra plan and its paintings poses the questions, what this puzzling complex all about and what inspired its creation?

In order to understand better the Encleistra architecture and its decoration, I would like to review some aspects of the saint's life that were not fully explored in the study of the Encleistra complex — the saint's visit to Jerusalem and Palestine and his finding a cross in Cyprus.

BIOGRAPHY OF NEOPHYTOS

Neophytos composed his biography in the monastery typikon, which he signed in September 1214⁵. According to the typikon, he was born in Cyprus in 1134 in the village Lefkara⁶. Neophytos became a monk in 1152 in the monastery of John Chrysostom at Koutsovendes, where his brother John was an abbot. The monastery had close ties with Jerusalem and Palestinian monasticism. The typikon of Koutsovendes was based on that of St. Sabas⁷. So, it is not a coincidence that the pro-Palestinian atmosphere at Koutsovendes monastery inspired Neophytos to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Palestine.

In 1158 Neophytos went to Jerusalem, which was then under Crusader rule at that time. He stayed there for six months and returned to Cyprus the same year. In his typikon, Neophytos described the purpose of his trip and the places he visited:

Henceforward then, departing from the monastery, I arrived at the Holy Land of Jerusalem, both for the sake of worship, and in the hope of encountering in those deserts some solitary and eremitic man and follow him. For which purpose, having first searched out the region of Tiberias, even as far as the desert in which Christ blessed the loaves, and the hills of Magdala and Mount Tabor, and then, after venerating the holy and life-possessing tomb, and having searched the desert of Souka, the torrent of Saint Sabas and the regions of Choziba and of the Jordan, searching the caves like a hunter of bees, and having failed in my aim, I was distraught⁸.

⁵ Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments / Ed. J. Thomas, A. C. Hero. Washington, D.C., 2000, p. 1338–1373.

⁶ For biography on St. Neophytos: *Petit L.* Vie et ouvrages de Néophyte le Reclus // EO 2 (1898–99), p. 257–268; *Delehaye H.* Saints de Chypre // AB 26 (1907), p. 274–297; *Tsiknopoulos I.* He thaumaste enkleistou // Byzantion 37 (1967), p. 311–413; *Kazhdan A.* Neophytos Enkleistos // ODB, v. 2, p. 1454–1455; *Galatariotou C.* The making of a Saint. The life, times and sanctification of Neophytos the Recluse. Cambridge, 1991, p. 13–19.

⁷ *Papacostas T. C.* Byzantine Cyprus: The Testimony of Its Churches, 650–1200 / Ph. D. diss., Oxford, University, 1999, 2: 45.

⁸ Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, p. 1350.

From this rather vague description, it appeared that Neophytos had two goals in Palestine. First, he intended to worship at holy places. Second, he was looking for a mentor for his own monastic life. Therefore, he searched all the major Palestinian monastic settlements in Tiberias and Mt. Tabor, Magdala, Souka, St. Saba Great Lavra, Choziba, and Jordan. He also went to Jerusalem, where he venerated “the holy and life-possessing tomb”.

Soon after his return to the monastery of Koutsovendes, Neophytos tried to go to Mt. Latros, Asia Minor, but unspecified circumstances following a false arrest prevented him. Instead, Neophytos found a natural cave on the feast day of the Nativity of John the Baptist, 24 June, 1159⁹. He enlarged it, excavated a tomb, and set up an altar on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September). He called his monastic settlement an Enkleistra (place of seclusion):

Having also fully carved out a tomb deep inside the cave, I told myself: “You shall possess nothing more than this, even if you come to rule the whole world”. I called the cave by the name of the Holy Cross, having fixed an altar for the holy rites, so as not to distance myself from the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ¹⁰.

It seems that already Neophytos was thinking about the True Cross. Five years later, in 1165, Neophytos miraculously found one of its relics. Scholars suggested that the relic may have come from the monastery of Stavrovouni, the Monastery of the Holy Cross¹¹. His desire to possess a relic of the Holy Cross most likely came from observing the particles of the Holy Wood in the Holy Sepulcher, which the Crusaders had just rebuilt and dedicated on 15 July 1149¹². The new building incorporated Christ’s Calvary, the Golgotha, the Crucifixion, and Christ’s tomb. According to the early twelfth-century Russian traveler Daniel¹³ and the early thirteenth-century traveler St. Saba of

⁹ Ibid., p. 1351.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mango and Hawkins, *The Hermitage of St. Neophytos*, p. 12, 158, n. 126. There were two pieces of the relics of the True Cross in Cyprus in the monastery of Stavrovouni: *Ansilmi cantoris S. Sepulcri Epistola* // PL 162, col. 732A. Later the monastery of Lefkara also obtained the relic of the True Cross: *Makhairas L. Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus* / Ed. R. M. Dawkins. Oxford, 1932, I, p. 38. The cross of Lefkara was stolen from the monastery Stavrovouni: *Mariti G. Travels in the Island of Cyprus* / Trans. C. D. Cobham. Cambridge, 1909, p. 92.

¹² Wilkinson *et al.* *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185*. Oxford, 1988, p. 33. See also: *Cotias-non C. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem*. London, 1974; *Corbo V. C. Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme* // *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, Coll. Major, 29, 3 vols. Jerusalem, 1981–1982.

¹³ Venevitinov M. A. *Zhitie i chozhdenie Daniila Rus’skiiia zemli igumena 1106–1107 gg.* // *Pravoslavni Palestinski Sbornik* 1, 3 (1883–1885); reprint, *Igumen Daniil* (1970); *Garza-*

Serbia¹⁴, the Holy Sepulcher was the first building Christian pilgrims visited in Jerusalem. The holy sites associated with Christ's Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection probably had such a profound impression on Neophytos that he desired to obtain for his homeland a relic of the Holy Cross. Cyprus was known for its possession of a relic of the Holy Cross and its devotion to it. The above-mentioned traveler Daniel, who visited Cyprus during this period, wrote in his diary a legend of the Holy Cross which he probably learned in Cyprus:

There is a very high mountain here and on that mountain St. Helena erected a great cross of cypress to drive away devils and cure all manner of ills and she placed in the cross one of Christ's sacred nails. And in this place by that cross there occur great signs and miracles even to this day. And this cross stands up in the air, not fixed to the ground in any way but held up in the air by the Holy Spirit¹⁵.

Daniel saw this cross and reported the occurrence of miracles near it. The monastery of Stavrovouni, which was built in the eleventh century, possessed two pieces of the relic of the Holy Cross¹⁶. The monastery was rebuilt in the fifteenth century but the relic of the Cross still exists in the naos of the church¹⁷. In his typikon, Neophytos often mentions the bishop Basil Kinnamos, who encouraged him to expand his settlement, ordained him as priest (1170), instructed him in administrative and financial matters, and helped his monastery financially¹⁸. It would not be possible to get the relic without the blessing of the local bishop.

The bishop supported the holy man and probably encouraged him to develop and enlarge his monastic settlement. Neophytos writes in his typikon that the monastery needed a built construction as a protection from the outside world¹⁹. Thus, he enlarged his hermitage and accepted disciples, whose cells were added near the Neophytos hermitage. Gradually the Enkleistra hermitage was transformed into a small *lavra*. The fame of the holy man and the relic of the True Cross attracted visitors to the monastery. In order to avoid visitors, he created a cell "Hesihasterion", where he attended the lit-

niti M. Ierusalim v "Chozhdenii igumena Daniila" // Oh Jerusalem / Ed. W. Moskovich, S. Schwarzband and G., Dell'Agata, S. Garzonio. Pisa-Jerusalem, 1999, p. 9–18, especially 1–3, with bibliography.

¹⁴ Marković M. Prvo putovan'e svetog Save u Palestinu // *Zograph* 29 (2002–2003), p. 47–92, especially 89.

¹⁵ Wilkinson et al. Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185, p. 125–126.

¹⁶ See note 11.

¹⁷ Later, the second piece of relic was stolen and found in the monastery at Lefkara.

¹⁸ Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, p. 1346, 1352.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 1352.

urgy. In 1197, six years after the Latin occupation of Cyprus by the Lusignans of Jerusalem, Neophytos moved into another cell, which he called “New Sion”. After he signed his typikon in 1214, he died sometime before 1220. During his life, Neophytos wrote several books, in addition to the typikon²⁰. Although we do not have detailed records of his trip to Palestine, Neophytos’ works reveal his acquaintance with Palestinian monastic tradition and its holy sites. Similar to Sts. Hilarion, Saba, Alypios and others Neophytos went for pilgrimage to Palestine²¹, suggesting that the hermits’ virtues inspired him. He visited Hilarion and Saba’s monasteries and observed the traditions they established. Although the traditions in these monasteries may have changed since the hermits’ death, Neophytos’ contemporary experience with Palestinian monasticism was important.

Thus, Neophytos’ typikon and other works help to further reconstruct the program of the building and its painted decoration. His trip to Jerusalem and Palestine impacted the saint’s choice of his monastery site, his search for the relic of the True Cross, and his building a cell New Sion. Indeed, Neophytos’ knowledge of the *loca sancta* was consistently implemented in his Enkleistra.

THE MONASTERY AND ITS SITE

The monastery is located about six miles northwest from the city of Paphos at the end of the valley on a high cliff (figs. 1–3). It is partially excavated in the rock and partially built. The elevated monastery was reached by some sort of a staircase, now replaced by a modern one. The monastery had a masonry enclosure with a gate and sitting places for pilgrims in front of the monastery on the ground. Visually the site reminds one of the Palestinian hermitages of the Judean desert such as the monastery of St. Saba, near Bethlehem²², or that of St. George of Choziba²³, and other hermitages of Judean desert (fig. 4)²⁴. This type of cliff lavra was first established in the Judean desert; the earliest is the lavra of Pharan (ca. 330)²⁵. Monks occupied natural caves and did minor alterations in order to convert them to dwelling complexes. They built additional walls and structures to be better protected from the outside world. Some hermitages made from these natural caves became elaborate, depending on the number of monks who lived

²⁰ Galatariotou, *The making of a Saint*, p. 13–19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103–104.

²² *Patric J. Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism. A Comprehensive Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries.* Washington, D.C., 1995, esp. p. 6–133, figs. 26–61.

²³ *Hirschfeld Y. The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period.* New Haven and London, 1992, p. 36–37, fig. 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, especially p. 18–68.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 20ff.

in them. This Palestinian type of lavra, partially rock-cut and partially built, was usually placed in mountainous areas, in the high cliffs of valleys. The use of the natural rock cave was desirable for monastic holiness²⁶. Built constructions, on the other hand, protected the monastic settlement from the dangers of the outside world. This model was used by monks for numerous isolated monastic settlements around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in places such as Bulgaria, Serbia, Crimea, and Asia Minor, during the Middle and late Byzantine periods.

In his works, Neophytos reveals his understanding of the caves in the mountains. He describes the Cross as the pride of the cross-bearing life of the monks, and the support of the holy men in “the mountains and in caves in the holes of the earth”²⁷. In his discourse on the dedication of the church of the Resurrection (in Jerusalem) and on all churches, Neophytos writes:

When the house of his rest and the present house together with every sacred house of God are gathered into one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and are based firmly on the unbreakable rock of faith, the gates of hell of the devil and of the tyranny of the unorthodox cannot prevail against it; for since it has its foundations in the holy mountains of the mercies of God²⁸.

Thus deciding upon the mountainous area and the natural cave were the initial steps in his establishing the monastery site. As mentioned above, Neophytos says in his typikon that he went to Palestine to search the caves to find a solitary monk that he could follow²⁹. In his travels, Neophytos probably saw numerous hermitages, built into the rock ledge or against the cliff, as for example the hermitages of the Great Lavra of St. Saba, which is extended along the cliff of the Kidron ravine. Thus, after coming back home, he was very much aware of how Palestinian monastic hermitages looked, and he used them as a model to construct his monastery.

²⁶ Walker P. W. L. *Holy City, Holy Places?: Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*. Oxford, 1990, p. 110, 173, 179, 184–198, 203, 205, 213, 236, 277–278.

²⁷ Εἰς τὸν βίον τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀρκαδίου ἐπισκόπου Ἀρσινόης // *Sants de Chypre* / Ed. H. Delehay, AB (1907): 200. p. 16–201.3. See: *Galatariotou*, *The Making of a Saint*, 25, n. 16.

²⁸ Englezakis B. *St. Neophytos the Recluse and the Beginning of Frankish Rule in Cyprus* // *Studies on the History of the Church of Cyprus, 4th–20th Centuries*. London, 1995, p. 167.

²⁹ *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, p. 1150.

THE MONASTERY CHURCH, ITS PLAN, AND ITS DECORATION

The earliest phase of the monastery complex included the cell with the saint's tomb and the bema with an altar (figs. 3, 5–6). These two areas were excavated and then decorated in 1183 by the artist Theodore Apseudes³⁰. Although examples of monks' tombs in the churches are known, they are located mostly in the naos or narthexes, as in the case of St. Symeon in Zelve³¹. Neophytos most likely re-created his own tomb like Christ's tomb in the Holy Sepulcher. After 1183 the church naos was hewn and dedicated to the Holy Cross. Mango suggested that it was decorated sometime after 1197, when Neophytos moved to his new cell, New Sion³². Other scholars believe that the paintings were done in 1196, as indicated in an inscription of 1503³³, or at the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century³⁴. The layout of its decorative program, however, strongly suggests that the entire program of the naos was planned by Neophytos himself and was most likely accomplished before Neophytos moved to New Sion.

After the enlargement of the naos, the church received a small porch and an oddly shaped single naos. The original bema served as a sanctuary (fig. 6). The nave is separated from the sanctuary by a wooden templon screen (figs. 3, 7). This plan shows that the sanctuary altar is not on the central axis with the sanctuary doors but is attached to the wall on the east side. When the sanctuary doors were opened during the liturgy, the altar was not visible to monks and visitors standing in the naos. To the right (southeast) of the sanctuary, in the northeast corner of the naos there is an alcove of the True Cross (fig. 8). Originally, there was a small rock-cut altar on the east wall of the alcove; the altar is no longer there. It is visible on an archival photograph that was made during the conservation campaign of the 1960^s. The photograph shows that the altar is placed just below the relic of the True Cross, which is still in situ³⁵. I would like to suggest here that by design the alcove was planned to display the relics of the True Cross. The altar below the relic of the True Cross has the same orientation as the altar in the sanctu-

³⁰ Mango and Hawkins, *The Hermitage of St. Neophytes*, p. 193.

³¹ Rodley L. *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*. New York, 1985, p. 189–193.

³² Mango and Hawkins. *The Hermitage of St. Neophytes*, p. 198–206; Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, p. 221.

³³ Stylianiou A. and J. *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art*. London, 1985, p. 354; Papageorgiou A. *The Monastery of Agios Neophytos. History and Art (A Short Guide)*, Nicosia, 1998, p. 19, dates the frescoes to after 1214.

³⁴ Wharton A. J. *Neophytos Enkleistos* // ODB 2: 1455; Wharton Epstein A. J. *Formula for Salvation: A Comparison of Two Byzantine Monasteries and Their Founders* // *Church History* 50 (1981), p. 385–400.

³⁵ Teteriatnikov N. *Relics in the Walls, Pillars, and Columns of Byzantine Churches* // *Eastern Christian Relics* / Ed. A. M. Lidov, Moscow, 2003, p. 78–79, fig. 4.

ary. The naos and the templon screen are oriented to the north whereas both altars are oriented to the east. This suggests that both altars served for the celebration of the liturgy. The alcove is a key architectural and functional component of the naos design. If we compare the location of the alcove of the True Cross in the church of Neophytos with the reconstructed plan of the twelfth-century Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (the time when Neophytos visited it), we notice an interesting feature (fig. 9)³⁶. In the Holy Sepulcher the place of Calvary (the Golgotha) is to the right (south) of the Crusader Choir. Similarly, Neophytos designed an alcove of the True Cross in his church to the right of the templon, echoing the location of the Calvary in the Holy Sepulcher. He could see the layout of the Holy Sepulcher only during his visit to Jerusalem.

DECORATIVE PROGRAM OF THE NAOS

Before discussing the program in the naos it is important to note that the sanctuary and the templon are not on the east but on the north, and the entrance to the church is from the south. The ceiling of the naos is decorated with the scene of the Ascension. Walls are of uneven height because the ceiling is higher on the east side. The south wall of the naos begins with the Hospitality of Abraham (repainted in the fifteenth century). The lower zone is devoted to the monastic figures. The upper zone of the walls displays the scenes of Christ's Passion (figs. 7–8, 10–11). The cycle starts with the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet (all repainted in the fifteenth century) followed by the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Betrayal. The north wall above the wooden templon exhibits the Judgment of Pilate and the Road to Calvary, and the east wall of the alcove depicts the Crucifixion. Following the alcove, the east wall of the naos shows the Deposition from the Cross, the Lamentation, the Anastasis, and *Noli me tangere*. The lower zone on this wall following the alcove displays Constantine and Helena holding a Cross.

The layout of the Passion scenes in the church is peculiar. The body language of the figures and the orientation of the scenes reinforce the alcove as the main architectural and functional unit in the naos.

When entering the naos through a small porch one notices that behind the sanctuary door there is no apse, often decorated with images of Christ or

³⁶ Ousterhout R. *An Apologia for Byzantine Architecture* // *Gesta* 35.1 (1996), p. 24, fig. 4. Annabel Wharton noticed an unusual composition of the Annunciation above the door between the cell and the bema in the Enkleistra. Significantly, the image of Christ Emmanuel between the figures of the Virgin and Gabriel was depicted in a similar way in the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem above the sanctuary door. Wharton Epstein A. *Formulas for Salvation: A Comparison of Two Byzantine Monasteries and their Founders* // *Church History* 50/4 (1981), p. 397–98.

the Virgin and designed to provide a directional orientation toward the sanctuary. On the contrary, the eastern wall above the templon is decorated with a continuous strip of the Passion cycle.

The subject that occupies a prominent position just above the Royal Doors is the Judgment of Pilate (fig. 12). It stands out from other scenes in the cycle because it is placed in a slightly arched niche with a painted frame. Its location on the wall above the sanctuary door is unusual for Byzantine churches. Nevertheless, this subject is found on the wall above the water basin in the Kokar Kilise, Ihlara valley, in Cappadocia³⁷. The subject is based on Matthew 27:24. Pilate washes his hands to prove his innocence, and therefore the image symbolizes purification. This could perhaps explain the appearance of the subject above the Royal Doors, to alert the viewer to undergo purification before the Eucharist. But the scene is also significant because it directs the viewer to the right through the visual language of figures and composition. Christ stands before Pilate and stretches out his right hand over a basin, into which an attendant is pouring water from a ewer. The following scene, Christ carrying the Cross, again guides the viewer to the right, to the alcove of the Holy Cross, with the painted image of the Crucifixion. The Passion scenes on the church's walls and especially above the sanctuary templon are the prelude to the Crucifixion, and they direct the viewer to the relic of the Cross in the alcove.

The alcove is a separate space that unites the decoration of the walls; it is the focal point of the Passion cycle (fig. 8). Here the painted program incorporates the relic of the True Cross, which is still in situ. The relic is raised 0.46 m above the floor level and positioned over the rock-cut altar. The altar suggests that this recess may have functioned as some sort of added sanctuary for veneration of the relic. Fortunately, in the St. Neophytos church the relic is preserved, with some alterations. The particles of the True Cross are inserted into the center of the wooden cross that is in the cross-shaped cavity in the wall. The decorative program of the east wall of the alcove adds further importance to the relic of the Holy Cross. The cross is situated at the center of the lower zone of the wall. Its upper arm is flanked by two images of angels. Above the relic of the Holy Cross there are two scenes: the Road to Calvary and the Crucifixion. The Crucifixion is lined up just above the relic of the Holy Cross. The next wall, adjacent to the right side of the recess of the Holy Cross, has a related iconographic program: the first image at the end of this wall, beneath the scene of the Deposition from the Cross and closest to the relic, is Constantine and Helena holding a cross. This concludes the story of the Cross by depicting its

³⁷ Teteriatnikov N. B. *The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia*. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 252, Rome, 1996, p. 106.

discovery by the empress Helena. The subject was popular during the Middle Byzantine period³⁸. Hymns to Constantine and Helena were included in the troparion dedicated to the Holy Cross and sung on 14 September, the feast day of the discovery of the Cross, and the very day the hermitage was dedicated. Therefore this subject was visible to the monks standing near the alcove of the True Cross during the celebration of the feast of the dedication of the Neophytos church.

So, it is apparent that the founder of this monastery church, St. Neophytos, carefully planned the location of the relics of the Holy Cross on the east wall to relate to the decoration of the nearest walls. He vividly advertised the importance of this relic and its location in the church naos. Similar instances of inserting original relics in the decorative program of a church's wall are found in the West, as for example in the apse mosaic in the church of San Clemente in Rome³⁹. The mosaic was completed in 1118 or 1119. According to the inscription below the apse conch, the particle of the True Cross was inserted in the body of Christ. The apse mosaic depicts the Crucifixion, an image that appears to have functioned in some way similar as that in the church of Neophytos. In both cases the images were authenticated by the presence of the particles of the True Cross. In both cases the presence of the relics attracted pilgrims. The distinguishing feature of St. Neophytos is that the True Cross was incorporated within the Passion cycle and became a part of it. As discussed above the relic is a part of Christ's Crucifixion. The idea of making the relic a part of the program probably came from the location of Golgotha in the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem which Neophytos visited.

The ceiling of the church, the final part of this survey of the decorative program of the naos, is decorated with a scene of Christ's Ascension (fig. 13). At the center and slightly toward the east there is a square opening outlined in red, indicating that it was painted after the shaft it outlines was created. The opening is located next to the place where the head of Christ should be depicted. Unfortunately, this section of the painting is lost. But the reconstruction published by Cyril Mango allows us to visualize the original location of the figure of Christ in the composition of the Ascension (fig. 14)⁴⁰. The head of Christ was placed just below the rectangular shaft, which leads to the upper cell called the Hagiasterion.

³⁸ Teteriatnikov N. The True Cross Flanked by Constantine and Helena: A Study in the Light of the Post-Iconoclastic Re-evaluation of the Cross // *DChAE* 18 (1995), p. 169–188.

³⁹ Kessler H., L. Zacharias J. *Rome 1300: On the Path of the Pilgrim*. New Haven, London, 2000, p. 81–83.

⁴⁰ Mango and Hawkins, *The Hermitage of St. Neophytes*, p. 141–142, fig. 19.

HAGIASTERION

This cell is 2 × 2.10 m (figs. 3, 15). According to the typikon, Neophytos used this cell during the liturgy; he also had communion there. The cell has a small prayer niche, which was also used for storing bread. The niche is decorated with the cross, the crown of thorns at the cross's center, the lance, and the sponge — all instruments of the Passion. The use of the prayer niche with a cross for a private cell may have been inspired by prayer niches in private monastic cells in the early monasteries in Palestine, as for example the Hesychasterion of St. Saba⁴¹ or the hanging cell of St. Chariton in the Judean desert⁴². A parallel tradition existed in the monasteries in early Egypt, such as in the monastic cells at Kellia, the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit, and the monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara⁴³. What distinguishes Neophytos' niche decoration is the depiction of the cross with the crown of thorns at its center and the sponge and lance on both sides of the cross. This image appeared in the Middle Byzantine period under the influence of the relics of the crown of thorns, the lance, and the sponge, all of which were in the Pharos imperial chapel in Constantinople⁴⁴.

An interesting factor might explain the presence of this cell and its connection with the decorative program of the naos. Among several *loca sancta* venerated on Mount Sion in Jerusalem was the upper room where the apostles retreated after the Resurrection and where they awaited Christ's Ascension⁴⁵. Therefore, the creation of a cell connected to the naos below by a rectangular shaft, through which Christ is ascending, seems no coincidence. The choice of the Ascension was appropriate. Like the apostles, Neophytos waited for Christ's Ascension and his communion. The depiction of the cross with the instruments of the Passion in the niche of this cell seems also to echo the Passion scenes on the walls of the naos. The creation of the Hagiasterion was probably based on Neophytos' memory of his visit to Mount Sion. During the same trip Neophytos visited the monastery of St.

⁴¹ *Patrich*, Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism, p. 90–96, figs. 27–28.

⁴² *Hirschfeld*, The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period, p. 228–229, fig. 130.

⁴³ In monastic cells in early Egypt Latine painted cross or cross in a wreath is often found. *Bolman E. S.* Depicting the Kingdom of Heaven: Paintings and Monastic Practice in Early Byzantine Egypt // *Egypt in the Byzantine World*. Forthcoming. *Rassart-Debergh M.* Choix de peintures // *Explorations aux Qouçoûr el-Izeila lors des campagnes 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1989 et 1990* / Ed. P. Bridel, N. Bosson, and D. Sierro. Mission Suisse d'Archéologie Copte de l'Université de Genève sous la direction de R. Kasser, EK 8184, Tome III. Louvain, 1999, chap. 6.3, dépliant 11, fig. 135.

⁴⁴ *Kalavrezou I.* Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court // *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* / Ed. H. Maguire. Washington, D.C., 1997, p. 56–57.

⁴⁵ *Wilkinson et al.* Jerusalem Pilgrimage, p. 46–47.

Saba, where he probably was able to see the hesychasterion of St. Saba (fig. 16)⁴⁶. This is located in the cave above the monastery in a high cliff, and has a very simple arrangement, including a painted prayer niche. Neophytos' Hagiasterion is very similar to, and is probably modeled on, the one in St. Saba's monastery. Such private cells were used in the Judean desert by various monks, as for instance John the Hesychast, John of Choziba, and others⁴⁷. The purpose of the cell was to escape from the disturbance of daily life and for hesychia, private prayer. Neophytos explains:

Since a good stretch of my life has been granted to me in this Hermitage and I have lived here without anxieties for nearly forty years, and a constant stream of visitors, both welcome and unwelcome, has disturbed me, it seemed good, I think, first to God and then to me, that I should ascend to the upper rooms of the Hermitage and the higher parts of the cliff, with God's help, and there dig out for myself another small hole difficult of access for the multitudes so that I can have privacy there whenever I wish and can escape the disturbance of large numbers of frequent and importunate visitors and not fall away in the least from my beloved *anachoresis* and *hesychia* known only to God⁴⁸.

Like St. Saba and his monastery, Neophytos intended to make a new cell higher in a cliff. Furthermore, he wanted to ascend into the cell. Therefore, the scene of Christ's Ascension on the ceiling of the naos and the layout of the figure of Christ just below the shaft suggest that Neophytos visualized his ascension to the cell similar to Christ's Ascension.

THE NEW SION

In 1197 Neophytos excavated another cell above the naos of the church and higher than the Hagiasterion. He called it "New Sion". As in the Hagiasterion, this cell has a niche decorated with the cross, the crown of thorns, and the instruments of the Passion (fig. 17). As discussed above, the cross was a typical decoration for private chapels in Palestine. So Neophytos consistently used a cross as a prayer image in all his private cells. It seems that the idea for the creation of this cell also came from memories of Jerusalem's holy places. It is

⁴⁶ Patric, Sabas, *Leader of Palestinian Monasticism*, p. 90, figs. 27–29. These were created for single monk and they served as a place of worship. They were also used for a monk's commemoration after his death. Such hesychasteria were usually a part of the monastic complex.

⁴⁷ Patric, Sabas, *Leader of Palestinian Monasticism*, p. 98, nn. 15–16.

⁴⁸ Englezakis, *Studies on the History of the Church of Cyprus, 4th–20th Centuries*, p. 200.

not a coincidence, therefore, that the cell was named after Mount Sion — an important hill site in Jerusalem that was one of the first sites visited by pilgrims in the holy city. This site bears a lot of holy places including the upper room where the apostles stayed after the Resurrection and where the Pentecost occurred. It is possible that Neophytos associated his cell with the apostles' room on Mount Sion. It is difficult to confirm, but the importance of his cell's namesake, Mount Sion, indicates that Neophytos was inspired by the holiness of this site in Jerusalem. In his typikon Neophytos wrote: "For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched but you have come to Mount Sion and the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem"⁴⁹.

His memory of the Holy Land resulted in the re-creation of the sacred spaces in Encleistra and their decoration. But how did Neophytos get the idea of creating such replicas of Palestinian holy places? Historically, Cyprus and Palestine were close. It is known that monasteries at Cyprus, such as Asinou and Koutsoventes, had direct contact with Jerusalem. Since Neophytos was a monk of Koutsoventes, it was natural for him to desire to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Palestine was well established during the Crusader period⁵⁰. We have detailed records from Daniel of Russia and St. Saba of Serbia, cited above, who traveled to Jerusalem and Palestine at approximately the same time as Neophytos. These distinguished Orthodox monks had common stopping points in their itinerary. The Holy Sepulcher was the first building they visited in Jerusalem⁵¹. Among other places, they visited the monastery of St. Saba, which continued to be the center of Palestinian monasticism during the Crusader period.

CONCLUSION

Examination of the Encleistra architectural design, the cell, bema, and the naos reveal that its elements are memoirs of Palestinian and, especially, Jerusalem holy places. The saint's pilgrimage to the Holy Land provided an important model for the construction of his own site, which incorporates glimpses of Jerusalem's important pilgrimage points, such as the Holy Sepulcher and Holy Sion, as well as other significant Palestinian monastic settlements. Neophytos' most significant creation was the alcove of the True Cross in the naos of his church. The relic was incorporated into a decorative cycle, the painted story of Christ's Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, and the discovery of the True Cross by St. Helena. The location of the alcove recreates that of Christ's Calvary in the church of the Holy Sepulcher. By establishing the relics of the cross permanently in the church naos, Neophytos showed his

⁴⁹ Englezakis, *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Wilkinson *et al.* Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099–1185, p. 33–38.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

willingness to continue the flourishing the cult of the Cross in Cyprus. The depiction of the Ascension in the naos ceiling is most likely associated with the location of the Hagiasterion as the place of Neophytos' Eucharist, and alludes to the apostles' cell on Mount Sion. The apostles' cell may have been a model for monastic private cells, such as the one of St. Saba discussed above. Thus, the monastery of Encleistra alluded to the holy sites that Neophytos saw in Jerusalem and passionately discussed in his own works.

During the process of the creation of Encleistra Neophytos expanded his private sacred space into a pilgrimage center where the relic of the True Cross was venerated by numerous pilgrims. After Neophytos' death, his own corpse became a relic and, as such was incorporated into the collection of Jerusalem memorabilia in Cyprus.

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РЕЛИКВИЯ ЧЕСТНОГО КРЕСТА
И ИЕРУСАЛИМСКАЯ *LOCA SANCTA*:
СОЗДАНИЕ САКРАЛЬНЫХ ПРОСТРАНСТВ
В ЭНКЛИСТРЕ СВ. НЕОФИТА В ПАФОСЕ НА КИПРЕ

Скит-Энклистра был основан св. Неофитом в районе Пафоса на Кипре в 1159 г. Церковь была устроена позднее и посвящена Честному Кресту. Храм и его фрески часто публиковались, и о присутствии в церкви реликвий хорошо известно. До сих пор в тени оставалась лишь роль Честного Креста в создании сакрального пространства церкви. Эта статья посвящена архитектурным особенностям церкви, ее убранству и ее функции. Итоговый анализ показывает, что реликвия Честного Креста всегда была ключевым элементом, определявшим облик церкви, ее план и уникальную схему декора.

Типикон скита Св. Неофита содержит важную информацию о происхождении названия церкви. Согласно этому тексту, Неофит совершил путешествие в Палестину, где предавался монашеской жизни. По возвращении на Кипр он нашел в скале пещеру, расширил ее и стал владельцем реликвии Честного Креста, вероятно, получив ее в местном монастыре Ставровуни. Неофит был рукоположен в священники и под покровительством епископа Кипрского расширил свою обитель. Путешествие в Палестину, а конкретно — в центр паломничества Иерусалим, привело Неофита к идее получить реликвию Честного Креста. Затем Неофит построил церковь и посвятил ее Честному Кресту.

По устройству церкви можно предположить, что Неофит предназначил наос для хранения реликвий. В маленький одностолпный храм необычной формы можно попасть через небольшой портик. Наос отделен от алтаря преградой. Престол имеет форму подковы и не находится на одной оси со святыми вратами и наосом, а примыкает к стене в правом углу алтаря; он ориентирован на восток. Из-за такой планировки престол не был виден стоящим в нефе верующим во время богослужения, когда святые врата были открыты. Наос имеет прямоугольную пристройку, так называемый «Альков Честного Креста», примыкающий справа к алтарю. Изначально этот альков имел небольшой вырезанный в скале престол, убранный вскоре после консервации фресок в 1960-е гг. На сделанных во время консервации фотографиях оригинальный престол виден рядом с восточной стеной. На стене над алтарем находится крестообразная ниша, хранящая реликвию Честного Креста, часть которой еще сохранилась. Таким образом, Альков был изначально задуман для демонстрации реликвии Честного Креста, и более того, ориентация престола под реликвией совпадала с ориентацией на восток престола в алтаре. Наос и темплон ориентированы на север, а не на восток, такая планировка позволяет предположить, что храм не был обычной монастырской или приходской церковью, в которых, как известно, наос и престол расположены на одной линии. Расположение престола рядом с восточной стеной, т. е. справа от главного алтаря, показывает, что службы в церкви, возможно, проводились рядом с реликвией Честного Креста.

Анализ убранства церкви подкрепляет эту гипотезу. Вошедшему в церковь открывается темплон, над которым — стена, украшенная изображениями сцен жизни Христа. В византийских церквях того периода Христос и Богородица изображались обычно в конхе апсиды, которая была видна над темплом. Здесь же стена над ним выступает как замена апсиды. В центре стены и над темплом находится изображение суда Пилата. Христос показан идущим направо, фигура Пилата, протягивающего руку в чашу с водой, также повернута в эту сторону. Вместо симметричной композиции художник построил ее с намеренным движением вправо. За следующей сценой Несения Креста идет большая композиция на восточной стене Алькова с реликвией Честного Креста. На правой стене наоса рядом с Альковым — изображение сцены Снятия с Креста сверху и Константина и Елены с Честным Крестом снизу. На левой стене наоса внизу — преподобные святые, а на сводах и потолке — большая сцена Вознесения. Основными сюжетами на фресках церкви выступают Страсти Христовы, Распятие в Алькове, Константин и Елена с Честным Крестом.

Это позволяет предположить, что Неофит старался передать зрителям историю святого Креста и его обретения Константином и Еленой, а посредством этого — историю своего собственного открытия Честного Креста. Более того, он создал пространство, напоминающее храм Святого Гроба в Иерусалиме. Кроме этого, он вырыл небольшую келью над потолком церкви, которую назвал «Сион». Через прямоугольное окно в потолке Неофит мог слушать церковные службы. Так, вдохновленный *loca sancta* Святой Земли и особенно Иерусалимом, он создал собственное сакральное пространство, приобщавшее его к сакральному пространству Гроба Господня.

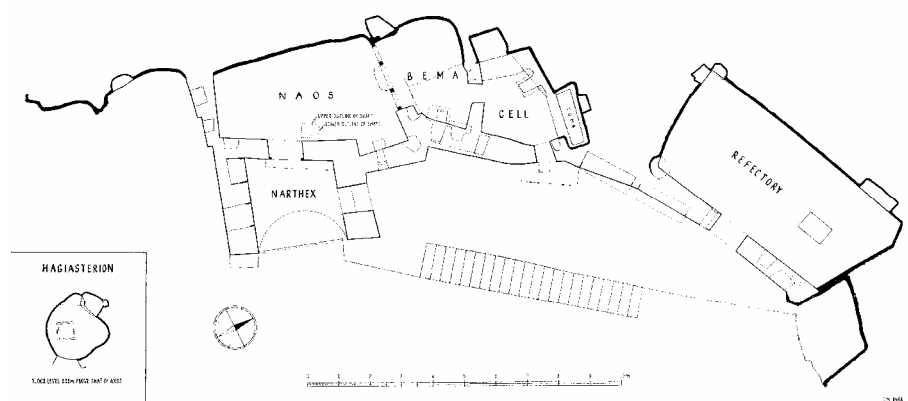
Это сакральное пространство несомненно задумывалось как центр паломничества. Из типикона известно, что пустынь получала пожертвования деньгами, вероятно, от паломников. Существует более позднее свидетельство паломника XV в. Феликса Фабри, описавшего свое посещение святого монастыря и поклонение реликвиям. Так Неофит создал свое уникальное сакральное пространство, в свою очередь ставшее святым местом.



1. Cliff of Encleistra, distant view (photo: C. Mango, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



2. Encleistra, view from east (photo: E. Hawkins, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



3. Enkleistra, plan (after *Mango and Hawkins*, *The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall Paintings*, pl. D)



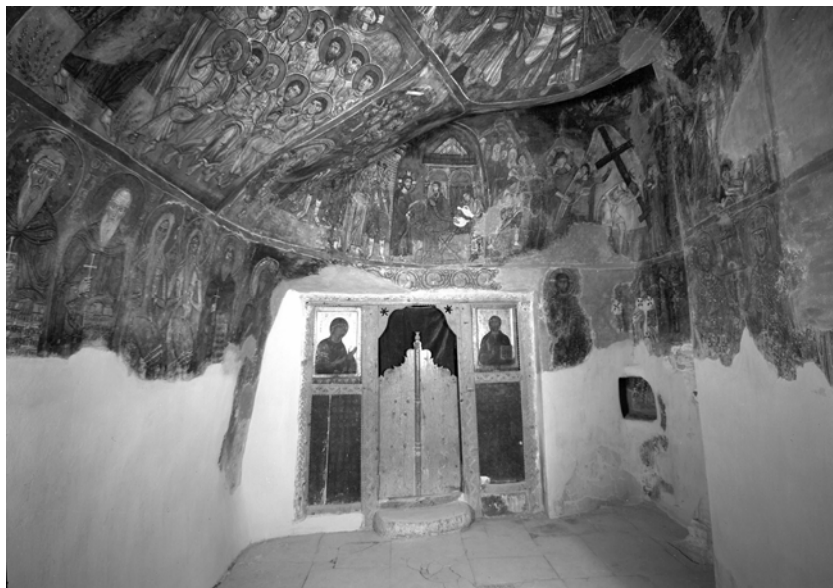
4. Monastery of St. George of Choziba (after *Hirschfield*, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, fig. 15)



5. Cell, north wall, tomb chamber (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



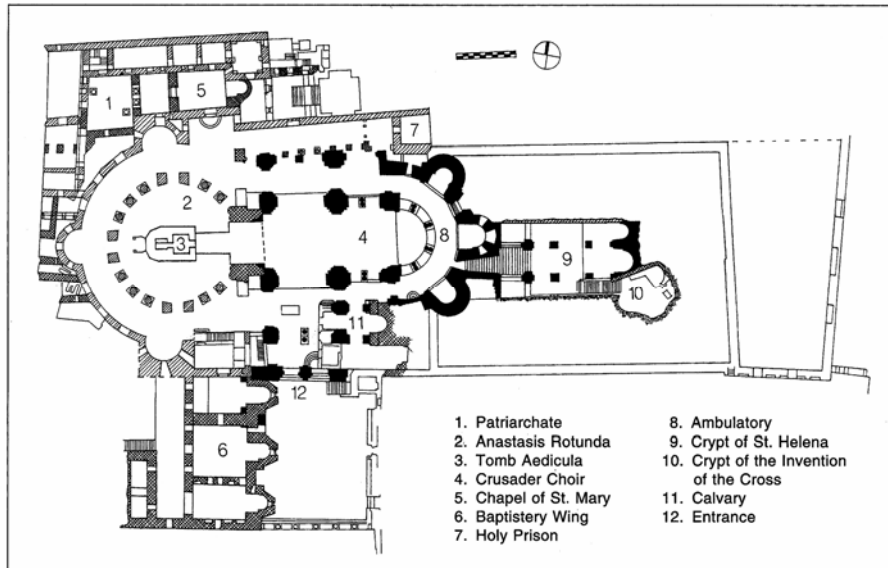
6. Bema, looking east (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



7. Naos, looking north, alcove of the Holy Cross (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



8. Naos, east wall (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



9. Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, plan (after *Ousterhout, An Apologia for Byzantine Architecture*, fig. 4)



10. Naos, looking southwest (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



11. Naos, looking southeast (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



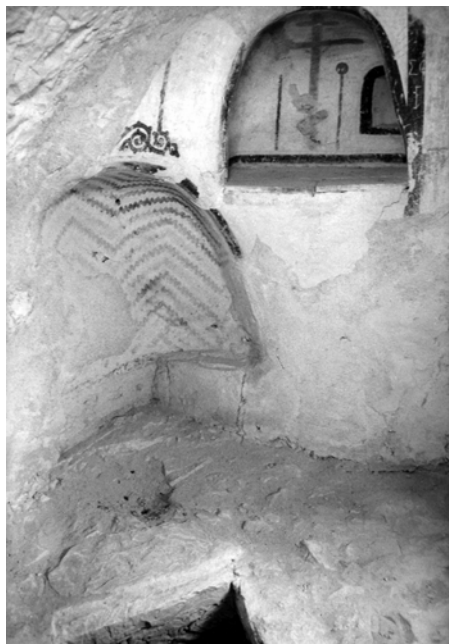
12. Bema, north wall, Christ before Pilate (photo: Ann Wharton, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



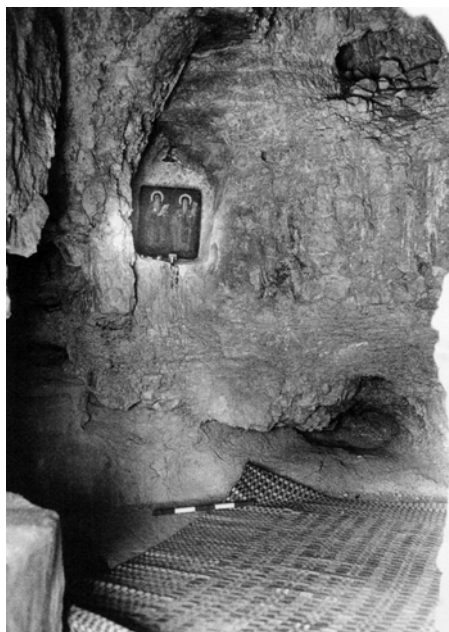
13. Naos, bema, ceiling, Ascension (E. Hawkins, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



14. Ceiling with reconstructed scene of the Ascension (after *Mango* and *Hawkins*, *The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall Paintings*, pl. D)



15. Hagiasterion (E. Hawkins, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)



16. The Great Lavra, St. Sabas's Hesychasterion (after *Patrich*, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism*, fig. 28)



17. New Sion (C. Mango, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)