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## The Rhetoric and Performativity of Light in the Sacred Space: A Case Study of The Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria\*

Light is most pervasive in the sacred space because, in addition to its natural qualities, it can be associated with spiritual and miraculous light, and it is often understood as an attribute of the holy.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the role of light in the creation of sacred space, art and architectural historians often link relevant visual and textual references. This approach, however, usually results in a split between the representational and the performative, despite the fact that within the religious context ritual is closely intertwined with its visual or architectural frameworks, which emphasize the centrality and meaning of the sacred.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the rhetorical capacity of religious images and architecture, which persuasively frames the reality beyond the visual and the spatial, is particularly significant in the creation of the sacred.<sup>3</sup>

For example, within the Christian context the authoritative and performative New Testament verse “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12) identifies Christ with light and unequivocally promises salvation to Christ’s followers. The true followers of Christ-light are, therefore, not only informed (“enlightened”) as the recipients of divine knowledge (“illumination”) but also as the recipients of life (“light”). Furthermore, the performative capacity of the words is not just that God is saying that he is light, but the words also reveal action — he is revealing himself as light and the followers are walking the life of light (God) in order to receive light-life (eternal life).<sup>4</sup> The concept of divine light, therefore, acquired a prominent role in the church, closely intertwined with spirituality and the religious life of believers. Within such a religious context, not only rhetorical and conceptual light, but also various forms of physical light are used to frame the mystical, divine essence of the uncreated, uncontainable, and impalpable. Paradoxically, light, though it enables visibility and is highly perceptible, cannot be physically framed. Nevertheless, within the Christian tradition, there is an apparent effort to give physical form and meaning to light and its potency in a tangible way. Various representational visual and architectural conventions are used in churches to denote the physical and conceptual centrality of Christ-light in a sacred space.<sup>5</sup>

This paper examines the theme of the vision of St. Peter Archbishop of Alexandria (300-311) in order to exemplify the importance and interdependence of both the spiritual and the material aspects of light in the creation of spatial icons in a Byzantine church.<sup>6</sup> A brief overview of the hagiography of St. Peter of Alexandria provides the major references to his vision and the notion of light among various Christian communities associated with the Byzantine tradition.<sup>7</sup> Highly revered in Coptic, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, St. Peter of Alexandria gained his almost universal acclaim among Christians both as the last great martyr of Egypt during the harsh fourth-century persecutions and as a gentle but profound theologian who clearly understood the dual nature of Christ (both divine and human) in times of severe theological confusions and growing heresies in the Christian East.<sup>8</sup> His theological writings influenced the dogmatic decisions of the fifth-century councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, but it seems that his life and religious experience are nonetheless equally important. Namely, the theme of divine light is prominent in two scenes from the surviving hagiographies of St. Peter of Alexandria recorded in numerous languages (Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Old Church Slavonic, Latin). Once, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the image of a twelve-year-old boy in torn white linen garments and with “a face shining like light, as he were lightning the entire building,”<sup>9</sup> appeared to Peter while he was praying in his cell during night. On Peter’s question of who had torn his tunic, the Child answered that it was Arius (ca. 250-336), a future proponent of the eponymous dualist heretical teachings and practices which denied the co-equal nature of the God-Father and God-Son as well as the divine nature of Jesus Christ. After announcing Peter’s unavoidable martyrdom and explaining that Peter should prevent Arius from becoming a member of the fellowship (communion) because Arius denied that “[He] became like child and died, although [He] lives always,”<sup>10</sup> the boy-light and vision disappeared. Divine light and its potency framed yet another recorded visionary experience of St. Peter. He could not use his Episcopal throne as prescribed by church services because he saw a “radiant and inexpressive luminosity”<sup>11</sup> residing in his throne, which invoked both fear and joy in him simultaneously. Therefore, Peter would sit only at the footstool of the throne during his tenure as an archbishop. The pious masses and followers of Peter eventually “enthroned” him only after his victorious martyrdom, which granted him eternal life.

In addition to their historical value as they are related to the theological controversies of the formative periods of Christian doctrines and practices,<sup>12</sup> St. Peter’s visions as divine revelations strongly recall the Gospels’ messages of Christ’s First Coming in the flesh and his sacrifice for the redemption of humankind and the perspectival expectation of the Second Coming (an ever-ready throne that frames the divine presence even in its tangible absence). In both

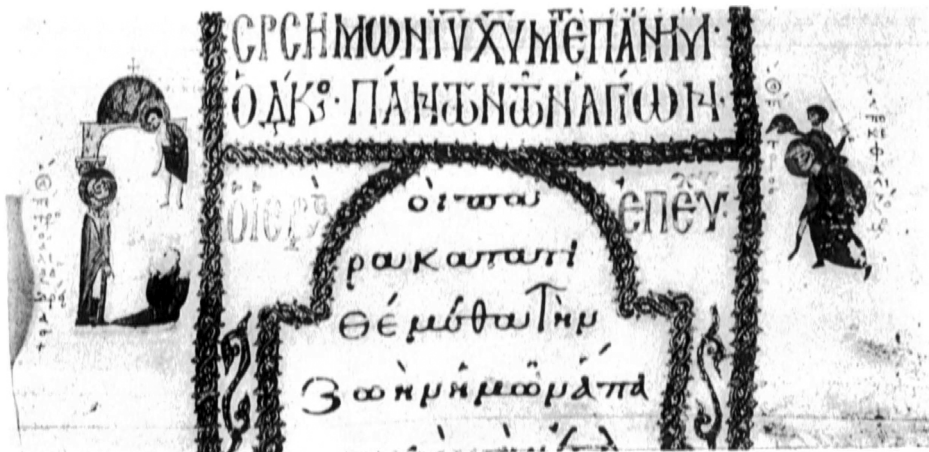


1. Vision and  
Martyrdom of St. Peter  
of Alexandria.  
*Vaticanus graecus*  
1613 *Menologion Vasil*  
II f. 204. ca. 1000

2. Vision and  
Martyrdom of St. Peter  
of Alexandria. Detail  
from the liturgical  
scroll from the  
monastery of the Holy  
Cross in Jerusalem  
no. 109, l. 11th – early  
12th c.

instances, divine light is accorded a supernatural, religious experience — a vision, which is not so much about seeing as much it is revealing a mirror-image of a spiritual life in light and revealing a preparatory way to live the eternal life of light. Both of these luminous visions are highly performative and emotionally ambivalent, being simultaneously disturbing and reassuring: the omnipotent Lord Jesus Christ appears as a riven but glowing boy and his true follower St. Peter (who was beheaded during the Christian persecutions) dies a terrible death eventually to occupy his empty throne of glory in the hereafter.

Of these two, St. Peter's vision of Christ as a glowing semi-naked boy in a torn tunic, over time became a more prominent theme in visual arts. The *menologion* of Emperor Basil II from around 1000 already contains a visual representation of this vision (*Vaticanus graecus* 1613 *Menologion Vasil* II f. 204) (fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> This lavishly decorated Byzantine *menologion* on the same page provides a text of the life of St. Peter of Alexandria and visually captures its essence in the horrendous image that against a golden background simultaneously shows St. Peter's vision of the Christ-child in rent white cloth and St. Peter's beheading. The document confirms the Byzantine cultural construction of the events that establishes St. Peter as a human who exemplifies the strength of faith. It effectively communicates the holy message of his vision and martyrdom to the religious beholders. A liturgical scroll (some 8.5 meters long) from the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (no. 109) dated to the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century also contains a reference to St. Peter of



Alexandria, clearly confirming that by that time the hagiographical references to the Vision and the Beheading of St. Peter were intertwined with liturgical services (fig. 2).<sup>14</sup> Here, the text of a prayer from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which refers to Holy Communion, is framed by pictorial representations of St. Peter's Vision and Beheading.<sup>15</sup> As has already been observed, the association of the text of the liturgical prayer and the images from the life of St. Peter of Alexandria provides a metaleptic, performative meaning to the actual ritual that would accompany them in a church.<sup>16</sup> The scene of the Vision of St. Peter was also occasionally depicted in the monumental programs of Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches (13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries).



3. Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria.  
Diakonikon of the Church of the Virgin, Gracanica. ca. 1321

Experienced by all bodily senses, this theatrical “scene horroir” as aptly termed by Gabriel Millet,<sup>17</sup> a pioneer of Byzantine studies, provides the central focus for the examination of the rhetoric and the performativity of light in the Christian sacred space in this paper. The rhetorical value is most directly supported by a dialogue between Christ and St. Peter of Alexandria as recorded in the narrative of the Vision of St. Peter. This text (essentially capturing the question “Who rent your tunic?” and answer “Arius did it.”) had occasionally literally been inscribed in the representations of the Vision as in the Church of the Virgin, Gracanica (1321) and several other churches in Zrze, Kastoria, Thessaly, and Cyprus (pic. 3). By drawing on the concepts of framing the sacred — physical, but also rhetorical and psychological (both cognitive and emotional) — most closely intertwined with the concept of performativity (as body- and practice-oriented),<sup>18</sup> the dialogue can be expanded by its related theological notions about orthodoxy and heresy (Arianism) and its Eucharistic meaning.<sup>19</sup> Here, this textual dialogue is juxtaposed by its visual and spatial parallels as recorded in monumental church programs, on one side, and the liturgical rituals performed in the church, on the other side, in order to examine further the rhetorical and performative capacity of the Vision and the role of communication between humans and Christ-light and God-man (Theanthropos) in the creation of holiness within the church space.

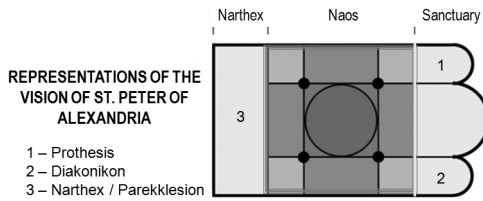
More than 55 various representations of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria in churches in the territories of former Byzantine Empire and modern day Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Romania, Russia, and Serbia (table) have been examined for the sake of bringing forward statistically relevant conclusions rather than for the sake of searching for their origins or of explaining the various iconographic types, a variety that again confirms individuality rather than exact likeness as a Christian value.<sup>20</sup> It is prominent that the location of these images is usually in the “liminal” spaces (nartheces and pastophoria) of the churches, even if the monumental program as a whole is never exactly the same in any of the churches studied (fig. 4).<sup>21</sup> It is also evident that the location of the Vision within these transitional spa-

1000	Menologion Vasil II f. 204	Illuminated manuscript
I. 11th e. 12th c	Liturgical scroll in the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (no. 109)	Illuminated manuscript/ liturgical scroll
1198/9	Church of the Savior, Nereditsa, Novgorod, Russia	north wall of prothesis
ca. 1200	St. Nicholas, Melnik, Bulgaria	diakonikon
ca. 1245	St. John Kalyvites, Euboea, Greece	prothesis
1291/2	Metropolis, Mystra, Greece	narthex
1294/95	St. Clement/Virgin Peribleptos, Ohrid	prothesis
1295/96	Virgin Olympiotissa, Thessaly, Greece	diakonikon
1311	Virgin Hodegetria in the Caves, Euboea, Greece	
1321	Church of the Virgin, Gracanica, Serbia	diakonikon
ca. 1321	Hilandar, Mount Athos	diakonikon
After 1321	St. Niketas near Skopje, FYROM	
ca. 1320-30	St. Panteleimon, Ohrid, FYROM	prothesis
ca. 1320	St. Demetrios, Pecka Patrijarsija, Serbia	prothesis
ca. 1330-35	Hodegetria, Pecka Patrijarsija, Serbia	prothesis of the parekklesion
ca. 1331	Church of the Virgin, Kuceviste, FYROM	
ca. 1331-71	rock-cut church Ivanovo near Ruse, Bulgaria	north side
ca. 1335/36	St. Nicholas Bolnicki, Ohrid, FYROM	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
ca. 1350	St. Sophia, Ohrid, FYROM	South wall of the narthex in the gallery
ca. 1350	Matejic, FYROM	diakonikon
ca. 1350	Koimisis, Zrze, FYROM	prothesis
ca. 1350	St. Nicholas, Zrze, FYROM	prothesis
ca. 1360	St. Nicholas of Tzotza, Kastoria, Greece	north wall of the prothesis
ca. 1361	Church of the Virgin, Monastery Zaum near Ohrid, FYROM	north wall of the prothesis
1366/7	Hypapante Monastery Meteori, Thessaly, Greece	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
1368-85	Saint George tou Vounou, Kastoria, Greece	
1383/4	Saint Athanasios tou Mouzakis, Kastoria, Greece	
12th-13th c (?) 14th ; repainted in the 18th c	St. Germanus, Prespa Lake, Greece	prothesis
14th c	Saint Savvas of the Kyriotissa, Veroia, Greece	
late 14th c	Church of the Virgin, Leskovik, Albania	
e. 15th c	Koronas, Thessaly, Greece	
e. 15th c	Saint John the Theologian, Poganovo near Pirot, Serbia	
e. 15th c	Saint George at Melissourgaki, Mylopotamos, Crete, Greece	
e. 15th c	Church of the Virgin, Amari, Crete, Greece	
e. 15th c	Church of the Holy Apostles, Kavoussi, Crete, Greece	
1407-18	Holy Trinity, Manasija, Serbia	prothesis
1409/10	Church of the Virgin Eleoussa, Prespa Lake, Greece	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
ca. 1428	Saint John the Baptist, Archangelos, Rhodes, Greece	
1434/5	Saint Anthony, Malevyzi, Crete, Greece	
1444	Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Velestovo near Ohrid, FYROM	south wall of the altar
1454/55	Prophet Elijah, Dolgaets, FYROM	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
1460	Saint Nicholas, Vevi (Banitsa), Greece	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
1461	Church of the Assumption, Leskoets, near Ohrid, FYROM	
1485	Saint Nicholas of the Nun Eupraxia, Kastoria, Greece	
1487/8	Saint Demetrios, Boboshevo, Bulgaria	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
1494	Church of the Holy Cross, Cyprus	north wall of the prothesis
1496/7	Church of the Virgin, Matka near Skopje, FYROM	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
15th c	Saint Nicholas, Kosel near Ohrid, FYROM	north wall of the altar (prothesis)
15th c	Saint Spyridon, Kastoria, Greece	
15th c	Saint Nicholas, Rhodes, Greece	
15th c	Saint George of Choreutara, Megara, Greece	
1535	Great Lavra, Mount Athos	north wall of the prothesis
16th c	Dionysiou, Mount Athos	north wall of the prothesis
1382, pts. 1550s	Megali Meteoron, Thessaly, Greece	
1545	Rusanou, Meteori, Thessaly, Greece	
15th — 16th c	Trikalon, Larissa, Thessaly, Greece	
15th — 16th c	The tower-church of the Colti monastery, Suseg near Hateg, Transylvania, Romania	In the sanctuary — altar space
1540s 1640s painting	katholikon Siaiika, Larissa, Thessaly, Greece	prothesis
1540s 1640s paintings	katholikon Siaiika, Larissa, Thessaly, Greece	prothesis of the parekklesion
Post-Byzantine	Mani, Agios Nikolaos Kato Doli, Greece	

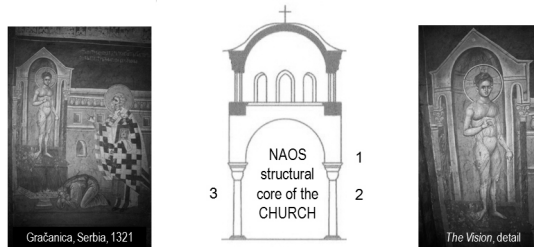
TABLE 1. Catalogue of the identified objects with the representation of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria

### **Vision of Peter and his martyrdom**

Both Peter and Christ related to a canopy; below Christ Arius (identified in text);  
on the opposite section of the scroll beheading of Peter of Alexandria; inscription of liturgical payer  
Only Peter, no vision is seen, yet the image is related to sacrificial / funerary context  
Christ on the altar table; image poorly preserved  
Christ standing  
Christ under altar ciborium (canopy); inscription  
Christ next to the altar table; Peter of Alexandria with a book in one hand and showing a gesture of dialogue with Christ with the other hand  
Christ on the altar table  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ on the altar table framed by a columnar niche (canopy); inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ on the altar table  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Image partially preserved but suggests the image of Christ standing on the altar table  
Christ under the altar ciborium (canopy); inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter on a scroll that Peter holds  
Christ standing  
Christ on the altar table  
Christ under the altar ciborium (canopy)  
Christ in the mandorla of light standing on the altar table  
Christ on the altar table, Peter of Alexandria with a book; the image divided by a double window  
Christ on the altar table, Peter of Alexandria in a prayer position; Angel as a deacon; Arius squatted below; inscription  
Christ on the altar table; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ on the altar table; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ in the mandorla of light; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ in the mandorla of light; inscription of dialogue between Christ and Peter  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ on the altar table  
Christ in the mandorla of light on the altar table; inscription  
  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ on the altar table  
Christ under the altar ciborium (canopy); inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ on the altar table; Peter of Alexandria in a prayer position  
Christ in the mandorla of light on the altar table  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ on the top of the Mouth of Hell devouring Arius, St. Peter of Alexandria with an open scroll  
Christ on the altar table  
Christ standing (image partially preserved)  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ in the mandorla of light  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ next to the altar ciborium (canopy); inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ above the Mouth of Hell, St. Peter of Alexandria with an open scroll  
Image of Christ not preserved, but the image of St. Peter of Alexandria and a niche suggest the image of Christ standing on the altar table  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
\* reference from Koukiaris. The depiction of the Vision → p. 63-71  
Christ on the altar table  
Christ on the altar table; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ under the altar ciborium (canopy); inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ on the altar table; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ on the altar table; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ under the altar ciborium (canopy)  
Christ in the mandorla of light  
Christ on the altar table; inscription of a dialogue between Christ and Peter  
Christ under the altar ciborium (canopy)



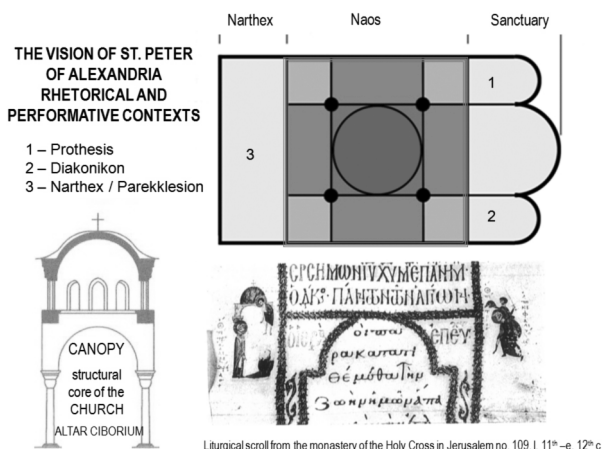
4. The locations of the representations of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria within the church, superimposed with the image of the Vision from the diakonikon of the Church of the Virgin, Gračanica (1321)



ces of nartheces and parekklesia adjacent to the naos (the structural and functional core of the church) or diakonika and protheses that frame the sanctuary (the liturgical and performative core of the church) coincides with the programmatic formulation of the Middle and Late Byzantine church and the time when these images are historically attested.<sup>22</sup> In my opinion, the proper understanding of sacred space in the light of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria requires shifting back from the purely representational in order to include the performative idiom. The juxtaposition of the typical floor plan and structure of a Byzantine church with the position of the depicted image of the Vision and its performative counterparts within the church space suggest multiple ways in which the Vision facilitated a better understanding of the holy.

By being essentially a preparatory guide to a life in the Christ-light, the images of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria are placed at the threshold of the church spaces that would be occupied by Holy Communion.<sup>23</sup> When represented in nartheces and parekklesia, the image would be at the threshold of the naos, which is the space that holds Holy Communion in its living sense of the church congregation. More often, when in pastophoria, it would be at the threshold of the sanctuary where the clergy would perform the Eucharistic service of Holy Communion. These two crucial parts of the church for the performance of the Divine Liturgy, and in particular the Liturgy of the Faithful, where Holy Communion is offered, consecrated, and received — the naos and the sanctuary — were respectively most often architecturally framed by a canopy of the domical church core of the typical Byzantine church, and by the altar ciborium. Starting with the liturgical roll from Jerusalem and confirmed by the numerous depictions of the Vision of St. Peter in monumental programs, it is apparent that the visual and architectural frameworks of the liturgical ritual were related to the representation and meaning of the Vision. The segment from the Jerusalem roll is especially revea-

5. The performative spaces of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria, superimposed with the image from the liturgical scroll from the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem no. 109 (l. 11<sup>th</sup> – early 12<sup>th</sup> c.)



ling because this image although tiny in size captures the essence of the Vision through the creation of sacred space on different physical scales (fig. 5). The text of the liturgy, which is continually reenacted by the clergy and congregation thereby exemplifying the concept of the living church, is in the scroll framed by a generic geometric border that outlines the canopied structure reminiscent of the church building. Thus, the spiritual space of prayer is roughly associated with the memorable image of the church building, where the sacred ritual actually takes place. Additionally, the image of the Vision, depicted to the left of the text of the prayer, shows the three figures of the Christ-boy, St. Peter bishop of Alexandria, and Arius against the architectural backdrop that stands for the church and altar ciborium. The canopied structure topped by a cross has St. Peter simultaneously as its living column and by metaphorical extension as a church support. Arius, who broke from the Trinity, the church, and the communion, is represented squatted in emptiness where the other column of the canopy would have been expected to be seen. Above Arius and in direct interaction with St. Peter is the floating Christ-light. Shown in the image of the riven but glowing boy, his head circumscribed by a halo overlaps with the domical structure of the church-canopy, while his body partially replaces the missing column, thereby confirming his omnipotence that goes beyond the visual, experiential, and physical. The image of St. Peter's beheading and martyrdom, depicted to the right of the centrally positioned text of the prayer, is highly suggestive of the *melismos* (the act of cutting the Eucharistic bread with the liturgical lance; the act that is often depicted as an iconographic motif in the sanctuary by showing baby Jesus in a paten, where the consecrated bread within the Eucharistic mystery would be)<sup>24</sup> and *metausia* (the change of substance within the Eucharistic mystery when the Eucharistic gifts become Christ's body and blood). These Eucharistic rites, accompanied by prayers and the theophany, are performed in the sanctuary,





6. *Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria. Prothesis of the church of the Virgin Peribleptos, Ohrid, 1294/5*



7. *Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria. Prothesis of the church of the Koimisis, Zrze, ca. 1350*

which is often canopied by a semi-dome and its altar canopied by the altar ciborium.

The spatial setting of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria in the monumental program of churches further confirms this consistency in the creation of sacred space. Quite often Christ-light in the image of a riven boy is set as a bright sparkle in narteces, parek-

klesia, pastophoria, which are essentially the relatively dark thresholds of the Church that is revealed, fulfilled, and marked by the often bright spaces of naos and sanctuary. Additionally, the representation of Christ-child is occasionally set against the architectural backdrop of the canopied structure that can equally stand for the altar ciborium or church itself. The martyrdom of St. Peter and his beheading as depicted in the liturgical roll from Jerusalem,

however, is often missing from these monumental depictions, which, I would suggest, was appropriately replaced by the prayers and metaleptic actual performance of the Eucharistic mystery in sanctuaries and the Holy Communion performed by clergy and witnessed and received by the congregation in the church naos. The proposed analysis of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria further emphasizes the role of “body image,” memory, and the dynamic, ontological construct of space on multiple levels.

First, it is not the natural or artificial light but the luminous body of Christ-light — occasionally creatively enhanced by a mandorla of light or by a centrally planned architectural frame in visual representations — that defines the haptic dimension of sacred space. The humble tiny body of a twelve-year-old which is simultaneously that of the omnipotent Theanthropos that fulfils the church, as represented in the depiction of the Vision in the diakonikon of the Church of the Virgin, Gračanica (1321), is highly suggestive of the omnipotent role of Christ-light and the human scale used in the

definition of sacred space and its material glory from an altar space to the entire church (figs. 3, 4). The torn seamless garment of Christ reflects not only the importance of the non-rent and precious materials used in the creation of church space but also the seamless unity of the divine and human natures of Christ, which was contested by Arius. In the Virgin Peribleptos, Ohrid (1294/5) Arius — whom the inscription identifies as the “mindless” and who essentially lived in

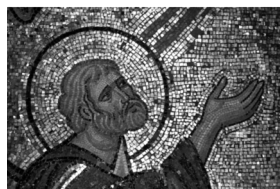


8. Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria.  
Diakonikon of the church of the Virgin Olympiotissa, Thessaly, ca. 1295/96

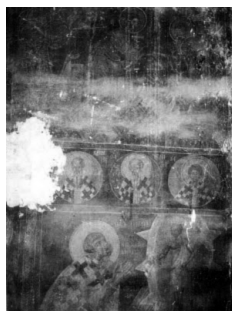
the codified response Moses was given when he asked God about his name — Ο ΩΝ (“I am who is”) in order to strengthen the unity of Father and Son and the knowledge of God by contemplation about what God is not and what God is (figs. 6, 7, 8).

Second, the visual and performative thinking and living in the church is strengthened through the images of famous practitioners who provided the role models for both the clergy and churchgoers.

In accordance with the Orthodox tradition that allows for the *imitatio Christi*, the image of St. Peter Archbishop of Alexandria often mirrors the image of St. Peter, his namesake, the first Archbishop, and the first among the Apostles to recognize the true identity of Christ.<sup>26</sup> When randomly selected images of the two Ss. Peters are set next to each other, there are strong parallels between their facial features, body language and gestures, and they evoke similar hagiographical references to their lives and martyrdoms in Christ (fig. 9). By extension, the officiating church leaders would similarly mimic St. Peter the bishop and strive towards vestment in “radiant and inexpressible” power and luminosity.<sup>27</sup> However, within the orthopraxy,<sup>28</sup> that emphasizes individuality, these references would, of course, remain within the domain of representational. In other words, the two saints, the two Ss. Peters, as represented could be similar in person but not in substance. This notion about humans’ abilities and limitations to approach God and holiness could once again be strengthened by



9. Apostle Peter, detail of the Transfiguration scene, monastery Daphni, Greece, katholikon, naos, northwest squinch, c. 1080 -1100 (left) and St. Peter of Alexandria from the scene of the Vision, monastery Manasija, Serbia, katholikon Holy Trinity, prothesis, 1407-1418 (right)



11. *Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria. Prothesis of the Church of St. Nicholas of Tzotza, Kastoria, 14th c.*

the essence of the Vision in which Christ appeared in the image of a humble boy.

Third, the body gestures of the Christ-child and St. Peter of Alexandria recall the messages stemming from various recurring biblical, historical and liturgical accounts. Their gestures are reflecting the rhetoric of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria and are also in direct multifocal visual and spatial “dialogue” with related imagery often depicted in the proximity of the Vision. In the Vision, Christ, who was humiliated by Arius appears to St. Peter in the most humble human form as a small child in rent clothes; similarly within the Eucharistic celebration Christ assumes equally humble presence in the Eucharistic bread and wine and brings forward humans’ own fallen condition and weaknesses.<sup>29</sup> The depiction of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria along with the portrayals of Stephen the Protomartyr, Melismos, Akra Tapenoisis, Be as Children (cf. Matthew



10. *Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria accompanied with the image of St. Stephan the Protomartyr. Prothesis of the Church of St. Demetrios, Pechka Patrijarsija, Serbia, ca. 1321*

12. Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria.  
Prothesis of the  
Matejić, FYROM, ca  
1350



18:3-5), or Anastasis, would intertwine on multiple levels with the Christian notions of martyrdom as an eternal life in Christ, of the death of Christ as a sacrificial lamb as a prerequisite for afterlife, of Christ as an example of utmost human humiliation and abasement of pride, and of the promise for eternal salvation (fig. 10).

Fourth, the Christ-child is frequently depicted on the altar table or is otherwise associated with the sanctuary. Christ's glowing figure, whether that of a boy in rent clothes, occasionally wrapped by the radiant rays of the *mandorla* of light (fig. 11), or its symbolic counterpart in a form of a canopy that architecturally frames the body of Christ (fig. 10) and in its domical form suggestive of the shape of "light" as perceived by human eye, would be suggestive of the uncreated divine light received by the faithful when aided by divine grace as within the Eucharistic mystery when the change of substance happens with the aid of the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the body language of the Christ-child and St. Peter of Alexandria reflect the ritual actions and gestures that occur during the Eucharist (the sacramental mystical presence of self-sacrificed Christ), which is regularly performed in the sanctuary, often in an adjacent chamber to the one where the Vision is represented.

The performative capacity of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria is especially revealing in respect to what is termed in performative theory the "breaking of frame" — when participants become part of the ritual as both the actions and meanings depicted and performed converge in real and sacred space, which may be understood as higher-dimensional, or "space" beyond space.<sup>31</sup> This feature of spatial icons could be subtly suggested in several ways. The Vision from the prothesis of the church of Matejić, FYROM (ca. 1350) provides a fitting example (fig. 12). Set around the altar table upon which is the standing figure of Christ-child in torn tunic, are depicted the officiating celebrants — both heavenly (an angel-deacon who holds a liturgical fan that invokes the Holy Spirit) and earthly (St. Peter of

Alexandria-high priest with his hands lifted in prayer). Yet, their different realms are “framed” and divided by a tall figure of Christ-child standing in his torn tunic on the top of the altar and by a vertical axis of the narrow mullion that provides a strip of natural light. At the same time, these vertical axes visually separate the angel from the officiating priests — both the depicted St. Peter bishop of Alexandria and the actual priest who would celebrate the liturgy performatively following St. Peter of Alexandria — who in this scene pray within the Divine Liturgy for the epiclesis (the sanctification of the Eucharistic bread and wine). Needless to say, in some cases like in Matejić, the separating wall between the prothesis and the sanctuary where the Holy Eucharist is performed becomes yet another visual and structural barrier in the actual church space, a barrier which can be transcended by the liturgical rituals that reveal the true light characteristic of the divine (figs. 5, 12). The hierarchical but multi-focal Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria conforms with the notion of guided movement through the sacred space of contemplative images towards the tranquility of the uncreated light — God Himself,<sup>32</sup> which is the opposite of, though not mutually exclusive to, double-sided icons that are images that move in space.<sup>33</sup> In this sacred journey the seemingly paradoxical co-equal co-existence of the divine and the human, the kataphatic and the apophatic knowledge of God achieved via human intellect and divine grace, is reconciled.<sup>34</sup>

The clergy, the audience who were most often privy to these images, become an active part of these complex spatial icons ritually (performatively). Thus, they symbolically and literally “break the frame” between various levels of sacred space, which Alexei Lidov aptly titled “hieroplastic” — a reference to space which is at the same time earthly, heavenly and beyond.<sup>35</sup> On the larger scheme, in this highly sophisticated creative and philosophical construct, the signifier becomes the signified, strengthening the essence of Christian Orthodoxy that individuals seek to attain the uncreated light not as a sign of Christ but as Christ. This last remark conversely once again warns against the split between representational and performative, which is characteristic of the positivistic, and especially of the structuralistic and to some extent post-structuralistic theoretical approaches that prevailed in Byzantine studies in the last century.

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## Риторика и перформативность света в сакральном пространстве: Видение св. Петра Александрийского

Авторитетный «перформативный» текст из Нового Завета «Я свет миру, кто последует за Мною, тот не будет ходить во тьме, но будет иметь свет жизни» (Ин 8:12) отождествляет Христа со светом и недвусмысленно обещает спасение его последователям. В этом контексте истинные последователи Христа-света не только извещены («просвещены»), но как реципиенты божественного знания («просветления») наследуют божественную жизнь. Концепция божественного света, таким образом, приобрела заметную роль в церкви, став духовной составляющей и тесно вплетаясь в религиозную жизнь верующих. Религиозный контекст задействует не только риторический и концептуальный аспекты, но использует различные виды световых эффектов для обрамления мистической, божественной сути нетварного, неместимого бытия, которое невозможно чувственно осязать. Световые эффекты внутри сакрального пространства или связанные с ними художественные репрезентации ставят своей целью передать опыт божественного присутствия доступными зрителю способами, а именно: визуально, интеллектуально, эмоционально, перформативно и концептуально.

Наиболее известными и повторяющимися художественными сюжетами византийского искусства являются изображения Христа как источника божественного света. Эффект исходящего от Христа божественного света достигается посредством сияющих фонов и лучащихся одеяний, которые иногда украшены сверкающими драгоценными камнями. В архитектуре таким условным приемом служит размещение окон в алтарной апсиде, являющихся единственным источником естественного света и непосредственно связанных с пресуществлением евхаристических даров, свершаемых в святая святых. Этот изысканный прием использования естественного света в сакральном пространстве, как бы напоминающий, что Христос — это свет, периодически находит подтверждение в канонических литургических источниках. Ярким примером тому может служить надпись ФХФП — Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίνει πᾶσι («Свет Христов просвещает всех») — на капители, делящей пополам окно в алтаре храма Богоматери Перивлетьы в Охриде (1295).

Как ни парадоксально, но свет, будучи осязаемым, не имеет формы. Тем не менее, в рамках христианской традиции неоднократно предпринимались попытки придать свету и излучаемой им мощи некие ощутимые физические очертания и наделить их богословскими смыслами. Пожалуй, наиболее очевидным и устоявшимся веками приемом является применяемый в изобразительном искусстве способ обрамления лика Христа золотым кресчатым нимбом или же заключение фигуры Христа в мандорлы различных геометрических форм. Архитектурное убранство, как представленное в изобразительном искусстве, так и реальное храмовое, состоящее из арочных окон, проходов, ниш или сеней ( микро-архитектурные сооружения с колоннами) может в равной степени указывать на концептуальное и физическое присутствие Христа-света в сакральном пространстве.

В этой статье мы рассмотрим сравнительно неизученную тему: видение св. Петра, архиепископа Александрийского (300-311). Таким образом мы надеемся продемонстрировать важность и взаимосвязь духовных и материальных аспектов света, задействованных в создании пространственных икон в византийской церкви. Глубоко почитаемый в традиции коптской, православной и римско-католической церквей, Св. Петр Александрийский получил почти всеобщее признание среди христиан и как «последний великомученик Египта», прославившийся в эпоху суровых гонений в 4-м веке н.э. Его также характеризуют как сострадательного и глубокого богослова, ясно осознававшего единство двойной природы Христа (божественной и человеческой) в периоды острой богословской полемики, смятения и возрастающего количества ересей на христианском Востоке. Его богословские труды в значительной мере повлияли на характер догматического вероучения, утвержденного известными церковными соборами пятого века, в первую очередь, -- Эфесским и Халкидонским. Помимо этого, его житие и описанный им духовный опыт оставили не менее заметный след. В частности, тема божественного света играет ключевую роль в двух эпизодах из его житий, переведенных на греческий, коптский, сирийский, армянский, старославянский и латинский языки. Однажды святому Петру Александрийскому, молившемуся ночью в своей келье, было видение Господа Иисуса Христа, представшего в образе двенадцатилетнего мальчика в порванных одеждах из белого льна. «Лик его был осиян светом, будто вспышки молний, исходящем по всему зданию». На вопрос Петра о том, кто порвал его тунуку, Отрок ответил, что это был Арий (ок. 250-336), сторонник одноименного еретического учения, отрицавшего соприродность Бога-Отца и Бога — Сына, а также божественную природу Иисуса Христа. Также он известил Петра о неизбежности предстоящего последнему мученичества и настоял на том, что Петр должен воспрепятствовать восставлению Ария в евхаристическом общении с Церковью,

поскольку Арий отрицал, что «[Он] стал как дитя и умер, хотя [он] живет вечно». После этого отрок-свет и видение исчезли. Божественный свет и его мощь позднее еще раз сыграли ключевую роль в духовном опыте св. Петра, как свидетельствуют письменные источники. Петр отказывался восседать на своем епископском троне, как это предписано литургическим церковным канонам, поскольку «лучезарное, неизглаголанное сияние» заполняло собой трон, одновременно вызывая у Петра чувства благоговейного страха и радости, поэтому Петр всегда сидел только у подножия трона во время своего архиепископского служения. Благодетельные верующие и последователи Петра «восстановили его на троне» только после того как святой прославился, претерпев мученичество, уготовавшее ему вечную жизнь.

Помимо исторической ценности в эпоху богословских споров и формирования ключевых положений христианского вероучения и практики духовного делания, данные видения, служившие в качестве божественного откровения, отсылают нас к евангельским повествованиям о первом пришествии Христа во плоти и жертве, принесенной Им ради искупления человечества, а также к эсхатологическим ожиданиям Второго Пришествия (престол уготованный, служащий указанием присутствия Божия даже во время его видимого отсутствия). В обоих случаях, божественному свету приписывается характер сверхъестественного религиозного опыта (видения), который может быть понят как зеркальное отображение не только светочности духовной жизни, но также и как способ приуготовления к жизни, наполненной сиянием вечности. Оба этих светочных видения в высшей степени перформативны по характеру и эмоционально амбивалентны, одновременно являясь тревожными и успокаивающими: всемогущий Господь Иисус Христос появляется как излучающий сияние мальчик в разорванных одеждах, а его верный последователь Петр умирает страшной смертью, чтобы в итоге стяжать уготованный ему пустующий престол славы в жизни будущей. Из этих двух видений явление Петру полураздетого лучезарного отрока в рваной тунике со временем возобладало над другой темой, периодически появляясь в монументальных программах росписи византийских и пост-византийских церквей (с 13-го по 17-й века). Данная театрализованная «*scene horroir*», как ее метко обозначил Габриэль Милле, один из основоположников современной византистики, и является основной темой данной статьи.

Опираясь на традицию создания образов сакрального, как в физическом пространстве, так и с помощью психологических и риторических приемов (эмоциональные и когнитивные аспекты), диалог в рассказе о Видении св. Петра Александрийского наиболее наглядно воплощает принцип перформативности. Он



также кратко вводит богословские представления об истинной вере и ереси (арианстве), о евхаристическом значении канонизированного церковью учения, а также проводит визуальные и пространственные параллели, как об этом свидетельствуют иконографические программы византийских фресок. Особое внимание уделяется полностью сохранившимся изображениям Видения св. Петра и их нахождению в «лиминальных» пространствах (нартексе и диаконнике) в церкви в Мистре (1291/2), а также в храме Богоматери Перивлепты в Охриде (1295), Панагии Олимпиотиссы в Эласоне в Фессалии (1295/6), церкви Успения в Грачанице (ок. 1321), храмах Св. Дмитрия (ок. 1320) и Богоматери Одигитрии в Печке Патриаршей (ок. 1330), в храме Успения в Матеиче (ок. 1350), в церквях Успения Пресвятой Богородицы (ок. 1350) и Святого Николая в Зрзе (ок. 1350), Святого Николая в Кастории (ок. 1350-85), Святого Германа на озере Преспа (точная датировка отсутствует, предположительно, 14 в<sup>2</sup>, реставрирована в 18-м веке), Святой Троицы в Манасии (1407-18), в монастыре Коронас в Фессалии (15-й век), а также в церкви Святого Креста на Кипре (15-й век). Сюда же следует отнести церковь в честь Рождества Иоанна Предтечи в монастыре Агиу Дионисиу на горе Афон (16-й век), церковь Преображения Господня в монастыре Великий Метеор в Метеоре (перестроен около 1380 г., фрески датируются около 1550 г.), церковь Преображения Господня в монастыре Русану, Метеора (ок. 1545), монастырь Дусику в Трикале, Фессалия (15-16-й век), кафоликон и парэклесион церкви монастырского комплекса в Лариссе, Фессалия (ок. 1540-х годов, фрески ок. 1640-х годов).

Анализ этих изображений прежде всего концентрируется вокруг «образа тела», памяти и динамичной, онтологической многоуровневой модели пространства. Прежде всего, это светоносное тело Христа, что иногда творчески подчеркивается овалом мандорлы или же центрально выстроенным архитектурным обрамлением. Оно же задает тон осязательному восприятию сакрального пространства. Разорванная цельная туника Христа напоминает о цельном единстве божественной и человеческой природ Христа, которое было поставлено под сомнение «несмысленным» Арием, которого обычно изображают сидящим на корточках с лицом, скрытым во мраке (*damnatio memoriae*).

Для усиления догмата о единстве природ Отца и Сына, а также для того, чтобы побудить зрителя к размышлениям о том, чем Бог является и не является, золотой нимб Христа-отрока на некоторых фресках содержит надпись, отсылающую к явленному в ответ на просьбу Моисея имени Бога —  $\text{Ο ΩΝ}$  («Я есмь сущий»). Во-вторых, образ Петра Александрийского служит зеркальным отражением образа его тезки, апостола Петра, который первым среди учеников признал божественную сущность

Христа. В-третьих, жесты, характерные для изображений отрока Христа и Петра Александрийского, служат аллюзиями на ряд повторяющихся библейских, исторических и литургических источников, и вступают в непосредственный визуальный и пространственный «диалог» со связанными по смыслу соседними сценами (как, например, Мученичество св. Стефана, Мелисмос, Христос во гробе, Воскресение, Будьте как дети). В-четвертых, очень часто Христа изображают на алтарном престоле, иногда — под сенью. Одновременно набор жестов Христа-отрока и Петра Александрийского соответствует ритуальным действиям и жестам, каждый раз совершаемым в алтаре во время Евхаристии (мистического присутствия принесшего себя в жертву Христа). Нередко таинство совершается в примыкающем к алтарю пространстве, в котором находится фреска с изображением Видения Петра Александрийского.

Перформативные возможности «Видения св. Петра Александрийского» предстают особенно наглядно в контексте теории перформативного. Один из аспектов этой теории условно обозначен как «нарушение кадра (breaking of frame)», когда участники действия становятся частью изображенного ритуала, в котором действия и заложенные в них смыслы сходятся воедино в физическом и сакральном пространствах (многомерные планы или «пространство» вне пространства). Иерархически организованное, но в то же время многофокусное, Видение св. Петра Александрийского соответствует понятию управляемого движения сквозь сакральное пространство моленных образов к безмятежности нетварного света (в отличие, от, например, двусторонних икон, перемещаемых в физическом пространстве).

В этом сакральном путешествии происходит примирение кажущихся парадоксальными противоречий, равнозначных и сосуществующих друг с другом категорий божественного и человеческого, апофатического (положительного) и катафатического (отрицательного) богопознания. Духовенство, по преимуществу и являющееся аудиторией, посвященной в смысл этих образов, становится ритуально (перформативно) активной частью данного рода сложных пространственных икон, тем самым символически и буквально провоцируя «нарушение кадра». Обобщая еще шире, можно сказать, что внутри этого изощренного творческого и философского конструкта сигнификат становится денотатом, тем самым усиливая суть христианского учения, согласно которому стяжание нетварного света есть не знак Христа, а обретение самого Христа и обожение.

- This essay results from the paper *Light as Frame and Framing Light: Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria* presented at the International Symposium *Fire and Light in the Sacred Space* organized by Dr. Alexei Lidov and the Research Institute for World Culture at the Moscow State University in Moscow, Russia, in September 2011 and published in the Proceedings *Огонь и Свет в Сакральном Пространстве: Материалы международного симпозиума* / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2011, p. 118-122. Almost concurrently an acribic article by *Archimandrite Silas Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision of saint Peter of Alexandria in the sanctuary of Byzantine churches // *ЗОГРАФ* 35 (2011), p. 63-71 offered a very convincing iconographical analysis of this peculiar Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria, which supported a thesis about its Eucharistic meaning and didactic role in the context of theological debates on heresy and orthodoxy. Koukiaris' work is in accordance with some of my preliminary conclusions which I presented in Moscow. Therefore, in this revised version of my paper, I only touch upon the topics of Eucharist and theological debates in passing by making references to Koukiaris' work. At the same time, I focus mainly on the role of the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria within the creation of spatial icons and methodological questions as to how we may further study the material. I have also joined examples from Koukiaris' paper to examples in the catalogue of the analyzed objects I assembled, which resulted in more than 55 attested representations of the Vision in the churches in the territories associated with Byzantine culture. In preparing the paper for publication I also benefited from the subtle and collegiate comments of numerous individuals. Once again, Alexei Lidov provided unreserved support in various stages of the work on this paper. I am especially grateful to Ljubomir Milanović from the Institute for Byzantine Studies of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, who helped me locate numerous examples of the images of the Vision in monumental church programs. Vsevolod Rozhniatovsky, Ivan Drpić, Maria Cristina Carile, Eleni Dimitriadou, Maria Parani, and Kevin Kalish offered unselfishly additional references and critical suggestions, which I included in this work. As many times before, my husband, Dušan Danilović, was my first reader and critic outside of the academic field of art and architectural history. I am particularly grateful to editorial help by Joyce Newman and Erin Kalish, who revised the text first for the published proceedings and then for this volume.
- 1 Within the Judeo-Christian realm, there are numerous Biblical references to various types of light such as the natural light of the day (e.g. Genesis 1:5), the artificial light of lamps (e.g. Exodus 35:14), the miraculous light of the Transfiguration (e.g. Matthew 17:2), the spiritual light and life force of people (e.g. John 1:4), or light as an attribute of divine glory (e.g. Hebrews 1:3). Needless to say that within the religious context all types of light, including natural light are considered a divine creation (Genesis 1:3-4), and ultimately that God is light (e.g. 1 John 1:5).
- 2 Alexei Lidov in his books *Hierotopy. Comparative Studies of Sacred Spaces* / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2009; *Лидов А. Иеротопия: пространственные иконы и образы-парадигмы в византийской культуре*. Москва, 2009; *Spatial Icons. Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2011 challenges this modernist approach by suggesting the incorporation of new approaches of performativity, spatial icons, icon-paradigms within the hierotopical studies. Several other art historians also provide sensitive studies on art and ritual and emphasize the need for the inclusion of the performative along with rhetorical and representational approaches to studies of visual arts. See, for example: *Walter C.* Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church. London, 1982; *Elsner J.* Image and Ritual: Reflections on the Religious Appreciation of Classical Art // *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series 46/2 (1996), p. 515-531; *Gerstel S.* The Creation of Sacred Space // *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, Seattle, London, 1999, p. 5-14; *Walker J. A.* Why Performance? Why Now?

Textuality and the Rearticulation of Human Presence // *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16/1 (2003), p. 149-175, with references.

- 3 Rhetoric, "the formulaic art of persuasive public speaking," was central in Byzantine cultural landscape. *Kazhdan A., Jeffreys E. M., and Cutler A.* *Rhetoric* // *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* / Eds. A. Kazhdan et al. Vol. 3 New York, Oxford, 1991, p. 1788-90, with references. On the rhetoric of visual arts as a "series of conventions that encapsulated a particular set of meanings and ultimately made any other visual pattern difficult to imagine," *Brubaker L.* Text and picture in manuscripts: what's rhetoric got to do with it? // *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* / Ed. E. Jeffreys. Aldershot, 2003, p. 257. See also: *Jeffreys E.* Introduction // *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* / Ed. E. Jeffreys. Aldershot, 2003, p. 1-5; *Maguire H.* Art and Eloquence in Byzantium. Princeton, 1994; *Maguire H.* Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), p. 113-140; *Roland B.* The Rhetoric of the Image // *Image, Music, Text.* / Ed. and trans. S. Heath. New York, 1977, p. 32-51; *Kress G. and van Leeuwen T.* Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design. New York, 1996; *Defining Visual Rhetorics* / Eds. Hill C. and Helmers M. Mahwah, 2004; *van Bühren R.* Die Werke der Barmherzigkeit in der Kunst des 12.-18. Jahrhunderts. Zum Wandel eines Bildmotivs vor dem Hintergrund neuzeitlicher Rhetorikrezeption (Studien zur Kunstgeschichte, vol. 115). Hildesheim, Zurich, New York, 1998.
- 4 Seemingly paradoxically, however, the followers are not receiving sacred light directly and rarely through visual perception but rather as a miraculous divine intervention. As if to suggest various ways humans can be spiritually transformed, the biblical references record the conversion of Saul to Paul marked by his temporary blindness (Acts 9:3-9), the apostles turn their eyes away while receiving the vision of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36), while Moses was unaware that his face was shining and reflecting the glory of God when he descended from Mount Sinai after communicating with God (Exodus 34:29-35). In each case, recorded visions as the encounters with the divine reflect the restoration of sight and spiritual illumination.
- 5 The treatment of physical light in sacred space or its related artistic representations aim to communicate and channel holiness. Some of the most widely known Byzantine artistic representational conventions include iconic images of Christ as a source of divine light through glowing reflections from his flesh and brilliant vestments. The long-lived representational convention for framing light in the visual arts is achieved by creating the circular nimbus around the head, which is uniquely cruciform for Christ, by depicting other centralized geometric forms of the mandorlas of light around Christ's body, and by using glittering materials such as gold or precious stones around holy figures that suggest the reflective and emanative qualities of light. *Podskalsky G. and Cutler A.* *Light* // *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* / Eds. A. Kazhdan et al. Vol. 2 New York, Oxford, 1991, p. 1226-27, with references. Architectural frames, both depicted and real — such as arched windows, passageways, niches or canopies (basic columnar micro-architectural structures) also may denote the physical and conceptual centrality of Christ-light in the sacred space. Perhaps the most obvious architectural convention is the opening of windows in the church dome and in the axis of the sanctuary apse as a sole source of natural light, directly linked with the Eucharistic mystery performed within the sanctuary. Identified with Christ-light, this sophisticated use of natural light in a sacred space is occasionally even strengthened by the codified liturgical references. A striking example is the inscription ΦΧΦΠ — Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίνει πάνι ("The light of Christ illuminates all") from the capital of the window mullion in the sanctuary of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1295). See nice discussion in:

- Gerstel S.* Beholding ..., p. 37, fig. 42. The exclamation Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίνει πᾶσι refers to the Resurrection light and derives from the lucernarium rite as attested as early as the 4th c. and is also part of the Nicene Creed. On the topic with further references: *Alexopoulos S.* The Presanctified Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite: A Comparative Analysis of Its Origins, Evolution, and Structural Components. Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA, 2009, p. 167-183.
- 6 On the concept of spatial icons as "iconic imagery presented as spatial visions": *Лудоѡ А.* Иеротопия ..., definition on p. 7, English summary p. 304.
  - 7 *Vivian T.* St. Peter of Alexandria Bishop and Martyr. Philadelphia, 1988 provides comprehensive overview and critical analysis of hagiographical references to St. Peter as well as letters and works attributed to St. Peter of Alexandria. See also: *Haile G.* The Martyrdom of St. Peter Archbishop of Alexandria // *Analecta Bolandiana* 98 (1980), p. 85-92.
  - 8 *Vivian T.* St. Peter ..., p. 1-8, 67-68, 75.
  - 9 *Vivian T.* St. Peter ..., p. 72.
  - 10 *Vivian T.* St. Peter ..., p. 72.
  - 11 *Vivian T.* St. Peter ..., p. 78.
  - 12 See, for example, the convincing essay by *Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision ..., p. 63-71, with references.
  - 13 On the Menologion of Basil II see, for example, *Paschalidis S.A.* The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries // *Ashgate research companion to Byzantine hagiography. Volume I: periods and places* / Ed. S. Efthymiadis. Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT, 2011, p. 143-172, esp. p. 144-145, with references.
  - 14 *Grabar A.* Un rouleau liturgique Constantinopolitain et ses peintures // *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 8 (1954), p. 161-199, esp. p. 176 and fig. 18.
  - 15 *Grabar A.*, Un rouleau liturgique ..., p. 161-199; *Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision ..., p. 63-71.
  - 16 *Grabar A.*, Un rouleau liturgique ..., p. 161-199; *Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision ..., p. 63-71.
  - 17 *Millet G.* La Vision de Pierre d'Alexandrie // *Melanges Ch. Diehl*. Paris, 1930, p. 99-115.
  - 18 I roughly touch upon the topic of body- and practice-oriented elements of performativity in Byzantine sacred space with references to scholarship on performativity in *Bogdanović, J.* The Performativity of Shrines in a Byzantine Church: The Shrines of St. Demetrios // *Spatial Icons. Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2011, p. 275-316, esp. n. 7. The entire volume *Spatial Icons. Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* / Ed. A. Lidov. Moscow, 2011 provides an invaluable compendium that shifts the predominant interest in representational to performative and combines the two within the larger scope of hierotopical studies.
  - 19 *Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision ..., p. 63-71 also examines the iconography of the painted scene of the Vision and rightly points to its didactic role. See also: *Dufrenne S.* Images du decor de la prothese // *Revue des etudes byzantines* 26 (1968), p. 297-310; *Walter C.* Sirarpie Der Nersessian, L'illustration des psautiers grecs du Moyen Age. II. Londres, Add. 19,352 // *Revue des études byzantines* 30/1 (1972), p. 368-370, who point to the prominence of the Vision within the decorative program of the prothesis and within council themes in monumental paintings.
  - 20 *Millet G.* La Vision ..., p. 99-115; *Grozdanov C.* Ohridsko zidno slikarstvo XIV veka. Beograd. 1980; *Grozdanov C.* Vizijata na Petar Aleksandriski vo živopisot na Bogorodica Perivlepta (Sv. Kliment) vo Ohrid // *Studii za ohridskiot žvopis*. Skopje, 1990, p. 102-107; *Subotić G.* Počeci monaškog života i crkva manastira Sretenja u Meteorima // *Zbornik Likovnih Umetnosti Matice Srpske* 2 (1966), p. 125-177; *Subotić G.* Ohridska slikarska škola XV veka. Beograd, 1980; *Constantinides E. C.* The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly. Athens, 1992, p. 183-185;

*Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision ..., p. 63-71, with additional references. I have also visited some of the churches in the Balkans and recorded information about the images. This list is certainly not comprehensive as examples from Russia are also missing. I thank Vsevolod Rozhniatovsky who further informed me that several 15th-century churches in Russia have the Vision depicted in their protheses.

- 21 Exceptions do exist. For example, the 15th-16th century very small and for many reasons unique tower-church of the Coloi monastery in the village of Suseg near Hăioeg, in Transylvania, Romania, actually contains the depiction of the Vision of St. Peter within its one-partite sanctuary. *Rusu A. A. and Burnichioiu I. Medieval Monuments from Hăteș District. Cluj-Napoca, 2008*, np.
- 22 There are numerous works on the monumental programs of the Middle and then Late Byzantine churches. *Demus O. Byzantine Mosaic Decoration. Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium. New Rochelle, 1976* remains the seminal work on the topic.
- 23 Here and in the rest of the paper, following the writings and life of St. Peter of Alexandria, Holy Communion is understood broadly in its two-fold meaning as a fellowship (communion) of believers — the living church, and as the Eucharist.
- 24 As expected, the image of the theme of *Melismos* that depicts the body of Christ-child in a liturgical paten ready for the sacrifice would be usually represented in the protheses and sanctuaries of Byzantine churches. See, for example: *Babic G. Les discussions christologiques et le decor des églises byzantines au XIIe siècle. Les eveches officiant devant l'hetimasia et devant l'Amnos // Frühmittelalterliche Studien 2 (1968)*, p. 368-386; *Walter C. Art and Ritual ...*, p. 203-219; *Gerstel S. Beholding ...*, p. 86-87.
- 25 See also discussion in *Koukiaris*. The depiction of the Vision ..., p. 63-71 and analysis of the iconographic features of Arius as a representation of theological and historical debates about orthodoxy and heresy.
- 26 The hagiographical references to St. Peter of Alexandria confirm that “He imitated his Lord who had said that the good shepherd gives his life for his flock.” Moreover, Peter of Alexandria is directly compared with Apostle Peter: “Peter (was) the first of the apostles, Peter (shall be) the last of martyrs.” *Vivian T. St. Peter ...*, citations on p. 74, 75.
- 27 *Vivian T. St. Peter ...*, p. 78.
- 28 Here, I refer to orthopraxy as defined by *Carruthers M. The Craft of Thought. Mediation, Rhetoric, and Making of Images 400-1200. Cambridge, 2000*, p. 1-3 as a set of experiences and techniques, which can never be completely articulated in texts but are based on practicing orthodoxy as a way of life.
- 29 *Millet G. La Vision ...*, p. 99-115, esp. p. 109.
- 30 Interestingly, the Hesychastic movement concerned with the meditative search to receive experiential knowledge of God, most often through visions of God and uncreated divine light was especially strong in the period after the 13th century. *Meyendorff J. Introduction a l'étude de Grégoire Palamas. Paris, 1959; Meyendorff J. Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological and Social Problems. London, 1974; Krausmuller D. The Rise of Hesychasm // Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. V: Eastern Christianity / Ed. M. Angold. Cambridge, 2006*, 101-126, with extensive references. Recent text on hesychasm and Byzantine visual culture with numerous references to light: *Drpić I. Art, Hesychasim, and Visual Exegesis. Parisinus Greacus 1242 Revisited // Dumbarton Oak Papers 62 (2008)*, p. 217-247.
- 31 On the concept of “breaking the frame” in the performative constructs: *Dennis K. and Jones A. Performance Art // Encyclopedia of Aesthetics / Ed. M. Kelly. Oxford Art Online. 17 Jun. 2012. <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0397>>. On the role of light in transforming architectural into perfor-*

- mative and fluid space see also: *Fischer-Lichte E.* Performative Spaces and Imagined Spaces. How Bodily Movement Sets the Imagination in Motion // Dynamics and Performativity of Imagination: The Image between the Visible and the Invisible / Eds. B. Huppau, C. Wulf. New York, 2009, p. 178-187, esp. 180.
- 32 There are numerous references to the uncreated light that could be achieved within contemplative practices, known from within hesychasm. See note 30 above.
- 33 On the ritual use of double-sided icons in Byzantine tradition, see for example: *Weyl Carr A.* Double-Sided Icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows // The Glory of Byzantium: art and culture of the Middle Byzantine era, A.D. 843-1261 / Eds. H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom. New York, 1997, pp. 125-126, cat. no. 72.
- 34 While the *kataphatic* deals with affirmative thinking about what God is, the *apophatic* is concerned with questions of what God is not in order to reach the inexpressible knowledge of God beyond being. On the apophatic and kataphatic practices within the Byzantine cultural construct, there are numerous works. *Perl E. D.* Theophany. The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite. Albany, NY, 2007, p. 5-16 provides an excellent discussion about the philosophical *apophaticism* that reasons about God beyond being and intelligibility. *Ivanović F.* Symbol and Icon: Dionysius the Areopagite and the Iconoclastic Crisis. Eugene, 2010, p. 22 and note 32 explains how *apophatic* theology is often mistakenly equated with negative theology, which denies any possibility of knowing God. *Meyendorf J.* Byzantine Theology, Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes. New York, 1974, p. 15ff also shows how the Greek philosophical notion of the apophysis differs from the Christian notion which allows for positive meeting with the Unknown through the Holy Spirit.
- 35 *Лудов А.* Иеротопия..., p. 338.

