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'LIVING ICONS' IN BYZANTINE CHURCHES: IMAGE AND PRACTICE IN EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

Representations of icon panel paintings are well known in Byzantine art; they appear in monumental wall paintings, as well as in miniature manuscript illuminations. An overlooked phenomenon, albeit quite rare, is the representation of living human beings within architectural frames — aedicules — resembling icon paintings, but clearly depicting something very different. Representations in this category constitute portraits of holy men, high-ranking monks — ‘future saints’, one might say.

One of the finest such portraits in a manuscript illumination — merely 3.4×4.3 cm in size — appears on fol. 164r of Garrett Ms. 16 in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University¹ (fig. 1). It depicts an elderly monk with white hair and long white beard looking out of a rectangular opening. Only his head and a part of the upper torso visible, a book in hands, the image suggests that he is depicted in prayer. The architecture framing the monk appears to be a structure attached to the outer wall of the fortified monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai; the mountain itself, labeled as such, is depicted rising behind and above the monastery. The miniature, painted in 1081, has attracted some attention, largely on account of the fact that it is ostensibly the oldest visual ‘representation’ of the Monastery of St. Catherine². In her recent analysis of the image, Katherine Marsengill has correctly drawn attention to the fact that the illumination in

¹ Kotzabassi S., N. Patterson Ševčenko. *Greek Manuscripts at Princeton, Sixth to Nineteenth Centuries: A Descriptive Catalogue*. Princeton, 2010, p. 112–125, esp. p. 121, and fig. 161.

² Martin J. R. *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus*. Princeton, 1954, p. 40–41, fig. 9; Rice H. C., Jr. *Mount Sinai Exhibition // The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 21 (1960), p. 238; Teteriatnikov N. *The Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus // Byzantium at Princeton / Eds. S. Ćurčić, A. St. Clair*. Princeton, 1986, p. 149–151, esp. 150, Color Plate H., overemphasizes the issue of the lack of realism in the rendition of the miniature in question.

question includes two monastic figures (the other one being a monk peering out of a cave, close to the top of Mt. Sinai), as an indication of “two different kinds of asceticism that could be found in the Sinai”³. The identity and the implications of the elderly monk within his shrine-like enclosure, however, still remains an enigma. Because the monk is shown in prayer gazing to his right at something invisible to us, the initial impression is that he is depicted within his cell, possibly within a monastic tower. The open wooden shutter could be presumed to reinforce the reading of the opening through which the monk is gazing as a window. Yet, a closer inspection of the architecture of the monk’s enclosure suggests that this must be an interior rather than an exterior feature (fig. 2). What looks like a window frame actually consists of a pair of colonnettes upholding an architrave with a triangular gable above it, all of these features depicted as being made of marble. Below the ‘window’ we see a marble-sheathed panel featuring the central rectangular field whose dark reddish color may be assumed to imply that it was made of porphyry, characteristically surrounded by white marble billet moldings separating the ‘porphyry’ panel from the surrounding field of some blue stone. Such marble revetment panels were commonly used as elements of dado decoration in Byzantine, especially Constantinopolitan churches. Thus, it would appear that the architecture framing the monk is actually a shrine displaying not an icon of a saint, but a portrait of a living holy person⁴. The monk, though not inscribed, and therefore unknown to us, must have enjoyed special status within the monastery and, as a ‘holy man’, would have been occasionally partially visible to the members of the community within his cell through a window-like opening within a marble frame resembling a shrine-like setting. What still remains an open question is where and how such a cell would have actually been situated within a monastery, so that it could facilitate, albeit on a limited bases, communication between the holy man and the monastic community to which he also belonged.

A comparable representation appears on a late 17th or early 18th-century icon from the Kirillo-Belozerski monastery⁵ (fig. 3). The icon depicts Kirill Belozerskii experiencing the vision of the Mother of God at his cell at the Simonov monastery. The holy man is shown twice within his cell. To the

³ Marsengill K. Miniature of Saint Catherine’s Monastery, Mount Sinai // *Architecture as Icon. Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art* / Eds. S. Ćurčić and E. Hadjirhythonos. Princeton, 2010, p. 216–219, esp. 216.

⁴ The relationship between a person considered holy, his/her portrait, and an icon, constitute a subject of enormous importance that has undergone a substantial analysis by Marsengill K. L. Portraits and Icons: Between Reality and Holiness in Byzantium / PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2010, p. 325–357. A revised, up-dated version is scheduled to appear soon in book form to be published by the Pennsylvania State University Press.

⁵ Смирнова Э. С. «Смотря на образ древних живописцев». Тема почитания икон в искусстве Средневековой Руси. Москва, 2007, с. 278, рис. 276.

right, he is depicted standing with a book in his hands praying before an icon of the Mother of God on the wall of his cell. To the left, still within his cell, Kirill is shown partially, gazing at the standing figure of the Mother of God. The two occupy two separate, albeit adjoining spaces. Kirill is depicted looking through an arched window-like opening. Below the window a panel decorated with symmetrical floral motifs, emulates a carved stone dado panel within a shrine-like arrangement, alluding to Kirill's exalted status. Thus, Kirill himself is to be understood as a holy person; hence, his 'enshrined' appearance. Unquestionably, Kirill is shown within his cell, but the location where the Mother of God may be standing is ambiguous. She seems to be in the monastery courtyard, but other possibilities — as I will try to argue — need to be explored. In any case, this icon of Kirill Belozerskii, clarifies the position and meaning of the monk depicted in Garrett Ms. 16 (fig. 1). He, too, was probably having the vision of the Mother of God, hinted at by the depiction of the Burning Bush directly above him, contemplated by the other monk sequestered in his cave just below the peak of Mt. Sinai. The tentative conclusion that may be drawn here is that a holy man is truly capable of having visions. Therefore, he is capable of a higher level of seeing than most of the mortals, including the majority of monks. The images we have analyzed thus far, appear to illustrate that particular distinction of the holy men — their singular capacity of 'spiritual seeing'.

Interpreting various episodes in the *Life of Lazaros of Mt Galesion* (966/7–1053), Richard Greenfield describes Lazarus' last monastic abode on a pillar thus: "If, however, the pillar abutted the side of the church and had an opening through which Lazaros *could observe and even participate* (my italics) in the services, this might account for statements suggesting that the pillar was in the church"⁶. There are, however, other passages in the *Life of Lazaros* that challenge the possibility of the pillar having been *inside* the church, but having merely communicated with it through an elevated opening. Greenfield's efforts to understand and interpret the evidence contained in the written text still leaves the question of the exact physical relationship of Lazaros' final pillar and the nearby church ambiguous. Thus, as with the two visual images that we have analyzed above, the precise nature of the link between a holy man and the monastic community with which he was associated needs to be determined with greater precision.

Conclusions drawn from the reading of two mid-thirteenth century Serbian lives — that of Stefan Nemanja and that of his youngest son, the first Serbian Archbishop, Saint Sava — both written by Domentijan — offer additional insights. Referring to the cell built for Nemanja at Vatopedi Monas-

⁶ Greenfield R. P. H. *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: An Eleventh-Century Pillar Saint*. Washington, D.C., 2000, p. 18.

tery on Mt. Athos, where he retired as a monk having left the post of Serbia's *župan* in 1196, the text suggests that a cell was constructed following Nemanja's wishes, so that "he could regularly watch *through a window of his cell* those who are in prayer in the holy church"⁷. Current scholarship has not identified the location of Nemanja's cell at Vatopedi, so that the meaning of this important information provided by Domentijan remains enigmatic⁸. The key architectural question is where and how exactly the cell occupied by Nemanja may have been situated. What is beyond any doubt is that he was able to *see* and *hear* what was happening within the church and possibly within the sanctuary proper. It stands to reason that if he was able to see others in prayer, he too, must have been visible to them.

The incomplete information provided by the visual and textual examples explored above will be significantly enriched by turning to a number of monuments, where physical evidence does survive, making the notion of the occupation by holy men palpable. One of the most telling of the examples is the famous Enkleistra of St. Neophitos in the vicinity of Paphos, on Cyprus⁹. St. Neophitos' Enkleistra constitutes a unique, well-preserved case in the history of Byzantine monasticism and Byzantine art. At the same time, the case is fully illuminated by the two preserved *typica*, written for the Enkleistra by Neophitos. The complex, partially carved into the vertical cliff by Neophitos himself, documents its growth from the beginnings of Neophitos' sequestered life around 1160, until his death, probably in 1215.

The original Enkleistra, carved by Neophitos himself, was undoubtedly the product of direct inspiration during his visit to the Holy Land, and particularly to several monastic sites associated with the early developments in Eastern Christian monasticism (fig. 4). The Enkleistra, in the original form, consisted of two parts — the actual cell for habitation, and an adjacent small chapel. Both the setting, and its formulaic disposition are undoubtedly products of Palestinian monastic inspiration. The two, highly irregular spaces were linked by a single door, providing entrance into the cell through the

⁷ *Domentijan, Život Svetoga Save i Život Svetog Simeona* / Ed. R. Marinković. Belgrade, 1988, p. 83–84, and 277–228 (English translation of the quotation is mine).

⁸ Čurčić S. 'Djakonikon' kao isposnica. Pitanje posebnih prostornih namena u monaškoj crkvenoj arhitekturi Srbije i Vizantije ('Diaconicon' as a Monastic Cell. The question of Special Functional Intentions in Monastic Church Architecture of Serbia and Byzantium) // SYMMEIKTA. Collection of Papers on the 40th Anniversary of the Institute for Art History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (in press).

⁹ The literature on the Enkleistra of St. Neophitos has grown considerably in recent years. *Mango C., Hawkins E. J. W.* The Hermitage of St. Neophitos and Its Wall Paintings // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966), p. 119–206, is still basic; see also: *Cormack R.* Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and Its Icons. London, 1985, ch. 6, and *Galatariotou C.* The Making of a Saint. The Life and Times and Sanctification of Neophitos the Recluse. Cambridge, 1991, esp. ch. 5.

chapel. Despite the irregularity of its plan and interior spatial articulation, the chapel did adhere to several established conventions regarding its orientation and the general disposition of its interior decorative program. Its altar, in keeping with the standard rule, was placed against the outer, eastern wall, while the door leading into Neophitos' cell was situated on the nearby, northern wall. The orans figure of the Theotokos is conventionally situated axially, directly above the small altar table. On account of cramped space she is flanked by SS. Basil and John Chrysostomos belonging to the composition of the Church Fathers, conventionally appearing below her instead of the usual pair of Archangels. On the extension of the irregular surface to the left (north) wall, is the Annunciation (fig. 5). As was customary in monumental painting, Theotokos and Archangel Gabriel are shown separated by physical space. Unlike the commonly employed formula of the two figures occurring on the two sides of an arch framing the conch of the apse, here they are separated by a panel depicting a full standing and blessing figure of Christ Emanuel. The panel itself is placed directly above the door that leads into Neophitos's cell, so that he as the occupant of the special cell, would have been associated with the 'coming Christ', each time he would have entered the bema from his cell. This pairing of the Holy Man with Christ may be understood as the quintessential case of a 'living icon' in the context of this discussion.

The subsequent incorporation of the Enkleistra into a small monastery, sometime around 1197, required the creation of a small monastic church within the same cave-like rock formation of which the original Enkleistra was also part. The original chapel in the new context became the bema of the church, separated from it by an iconostasis screen (fig. 6). It is noteworthy that the developments at Neophitos' Enkleistra were taking place essentially simultaneously with the addition of Nemanja's cell to the flank of the main church at Vatopedi Monastery.

Practically concurrently with the 'building' of the church at Neophitos' Enkleistra, yet another important development there took place. In 1197, at the age of 62, Neophitos received a 'divine commandment' instructing him "...to move higher up on the precipice, to ascend, with God's help"¹⁰. These words refer to his undertaking to dig for himself a smaller, new cell, situated directly *above* the ceiling of the nave of the new cave church (fig. 7). The new cell, referred to as "New Sion", was situated above the church, featuring the 'Hagiasterion', an even smaller cavity, directly below it and above the ceiling of the church. Barely large enough for occupancy by a single individual, and barely high enough for that person to be able to stand up in it, the 'Hagiasterion' was linked with the church below by a vertical shaft enabling Neophitos, the occu-

¹⁰ *Galatariotou*, op. cit., p. 99.

pant of the cell, to hear and see the liturgical activities in the church, but also to be seen by the monastic brethren from below. The shaft linking the ‘Hagiasterion’ with the church was positioned in such a way that its opening coincided with the center of the fresco depicting Ascension on the irregular church ceiling. Though badly damaged, the Ascension fresco surrounded the opening at the bottom of the shaft, and clearly contained the image of Ascending Christ within a mandorla carried by flying angels. The image of Christ, in fact was painted in such a way that his torso overlapped the opening of the shaft, so as to give the impression that he was disappearing within it. The importance of this arrangement, obviously lay in the fact that the disappearing image of Christ, and the living image of Neophitos could be perceived simultaneously, sharing the same space, thus implying that Neophitos’ cell and Paradise were identical. Equally significant is the juxtaposition of the living image of Neophitos with that of Christ, underscoring the relationship of the Holy Man and his divine prototype. One should recall that in the original Enkleistra, the image of the standing Christ Emanuel was painted directly above the door through which Neophitos would regularly step from his cell directly into the chapel. Therefore, this equation between the ‘living icon’ of the Holy Man and the painted icon of his ‘divine prototype’ carried a powerful theological message, alluding of course, to the key theological understanding the Christ the man was God incarnate. The creation and occupation of “New Sion” with the ‘Hagiasterion’ by Neophitos who remained sequestered there until his death in 1225, demonstrates his spiritual progress, whose physical aspects involved also rising to a greater height. Neophitos’ symbolic monastic ‘contest’ involved progress from his ground-level original cell, adjacent to his private chapel, toward an elevated, physically even more challenging environment of the “New Sion” that marked the crowning achievement of his earthly journey toward spiritual perfection.

The symbolic rising to a greater height, reflects the quest for spiritual perfection as articulated in the *Heavenly Ladder* of St. John Klimakos, as well as in the Lives of the Stylite Saints — Symeon the Elder, Daniel, and Lazaros of Mt. Galesion, whose achievements were embodied in their progressive moving to columns of increasing heights. An illumination in Khlu-dov Psalter (f. 3v), a mid-ninth century Byzantine manuscript of major importance, illustrates St. Symeon Stylites as a ‘living icon’ highlighting and summarizing the context that we are analyzing¹¹ (fig. 8). The artist has depicted the Saint within a shrine-like setting, a feature that his actual column — as far as we know — did not have. His head, framed within an aedi-

¹¹ Щепкина М. В. Миниатюры Хлудовской Псалтыри. Москва: Искусство, 1977, fol. 3v. See also: Ćurčić S. Representations of Towers in Byzantine Art: The Question of Meaning // Byzantine Art: Recent Studies / Ed. C. Hourihane. Princeton and Tempe, 2009, esp. p. 19–20.

cule, unmistakably alludes to his status of a saint, and his depiction as an icon. His exalted position, between earth and heaven, is underscored by a standing young man at the base of St. Symeon's column, and a disc with an icon of Christ, levitating in heaven, directly above the Saint's head. While this rendition illustrates an idiosyncratic setting and symbolic role typical of stylite saints, other, related formulas, were employed in later Byzantine churches alluding to the sequestered holy men within their walls.

The church of the Theotokos Perivleptos in Mistra, dating from the third quarter of the fourteenth century, is a fine case in point. Unusually situated, the church abuts a steep natural cliff in such a way that its main apse — unconventionally — points toward southwest instead of east. The reason appears to be a natural cave within the cliff to which the church is attached for specific reasons. The cave, accessible externally, was integrated with the building in such a way that its interior communicates with the church through a large double-arched opening¹² (figs. 9 and 10). It appears that the cave, as a probable dwelling place of a holy man, may have inspired the construction of the church in this location, and possibly even of the entire monastery to which the church belongs. The significance of the place and the manner in which the cave relates to the interior of the church is twofold. First, the occupant of the cave could see and hear the liturgical proceedings within the church, as well as be seen, albeit not directly approached. Thus, the holy man was visible in an elevated position, and within an arched framework, much like an image within a shrine. Second, the large composition depicting Koimesis, directly below the arched opening of the cave is related to it in such a way that the gates of Heaven through which the soul of the Mother of God is taken to heaven appears directly in the center, below the window sill. Thus, symbolically, the image of the Mother of God's soul appears to be moving in a manner corresponding closely to what we saw in the arrangement of Neophitos' 'Hagiasterion', where the ascending image of Christ was shown ascending from the ceiling of the church toward the cell occupied by St. Neophitos with the same symbolic implications. The iconography and the physical disposition in the 'Hagiasterion' and the interior of the Theotokos Perivleptos in Mistra, share crucial elements within which, the main missing element in both is the 'living icon' of the holy man. In the case of the 'Hagiasterion' the identity of the holy man is known to us, whereas in the case of the Theotokos Perivleptos his presence is alluded to, however, by the symbolic representation of a stylite saint in a fresco painted on a spandrel between the two arches and directly above the capital of the slender column in the middle of the double-arched opening.

¹² Ćurčić S. Smisao i funkcija katihumena u poznovizantijskoj i srpskoj arhitekturi // Manastir Žiča. Zbornik radova / Eds. D. Drašković and S. Djordjević. Kraljevo, 2000, esp. p. 86–87 (in Serbian, with English summary).

The church of the Dormition of the Mother of God at Gračanica Monastery, in the region of Kosovo, Serbia, provides additional elements in our efforts at clarifying functional and symbolic aspects of the concept of "living icon" in Late Byzantine religious practice. Built in the second decade of the fourteenth century, under the auspices of the Serbian King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321), Gračanica is one of the masterpieces of Byzantine architecture of the period. Among its many sophisticated aspects of design is the incorporation of a special monastic cell — also referred to as the katechoumenion — in an elevated position, directly above its inner narthex (fig. 11). On an earlier occasion, I suggested that the so-called 'katechoumenion' of Gračanica may have actually been planned as a special cell for the sequestering of a high-ranking monk, possibly the donor himself¹³. As the only elevated chamber in the church, ca. 6.5 m above the ground floor level, the cell in question is accessible via a steep, narrow stone stair accommodated within the thickness of the western naos wall. The stair itself begins approximately 1.5 m above the ground floor level, suggesting that it was not intended for frequent use. The cell itself consists of a barrel-vaulted chamber, 3.5×2.8 m in plan, and 4.6 m high to the apex of the vault. At the midpoint of its length, the cell has two small barrel-vaulted compartments 2 m wide by 1.4 m deep, and 1.4 m high. Such dimensions resemble the form and dimensions of arcosolium tombs and may have been used with that symbolic function in mind. One of them could actually have been intended for the accommodation of a mat upon which the occupant could have slept. It is the preserved fresco decoration on the walls and the vaults of this chamber that point toward its monastic use with a particular focus on ascetic monks¹⁴ (fig. 12). Of particular significance is the prominently displayed pair of stylite saints — St. Symeon the Elder and St. Daniel. Both appear within tympana of a pair of two-light windows — St. Symeon in the western tympanum, while St. Daniel directly opposite, on the west side. The figures of the two stylites were depicted in such a way that their columns appear as extensions of the actual mullion columns within the window itself. While the western window is in the exterior wall of the church, the eastern one has no glazing, as it opens from the cell directly into the naos of the church. Four additional monastic saints appear prominently displayed — a pair flanking each of the two windows. The purpose of the interior window, undoubtedly, was to provide a place from where the monk sequestered within this cell could hear and see the services being performed in the church. At the same time, he himself could be seen within this opening, appearing to the members of the community as a 'liv-

¹³ Ćurčić. Smisao i funkcija katihumena, p. 83–93, esp. 86–91.

¹⁴ Živković B. Gračanica. Crteži fresaka. Belgrade, 1989, Section XI.

ing icon' of a holy man (fig. 13). The arrangement, despite tighter proportions of the opening, is essentially identical to what we saw in the church of the Theotokos Perivleptos at Mistra (fig. 10). The relevance of this window as the place for the appearance of the holy, is gleaned even more clearly if one considers the architectural and the fresco program contexts of the church naos. On the west wall of the naos, and directly below the window in question is the monumental composition of the Dormition of the Mother of God, spread across the entire width of the visible wall surface in that area, just as in the Theotokos Perivleptos at Mistra. In a manner, even more sophisticated than at Mistra, the heavenly gate through which the soul of the Mother of God is taken into Heaven is carefully coordinated with the position of the opening of the actual window directly above it. The illusion of continuity between the painted image of the heavenly gate and the window underscore the symbolic message — the identity of the cell and the heavenly realm.

Beyond this, the window on the west wall of the naos is roughly of the same height as the two central external windows, on the north and on the south sides of the naos. The two windows are of the same size and the same type, while on their interior tympana appear frescoes of St. Simeon Stylites on the north, and St. Daniel Stylites, on the south side (fig. 14). Much better preserved than the frescoes of the same stylites in the equivalent locations within the window tympana inside the cell, these two depictions of the stylite saints play the central roll in the reading of the entire ensemble. Depicted, as was the case with their counterparts in the cell, atop painted columns resting atop real columns within the exterior wall of the church, the two stylite saints are not only visually accented; surrounded by natural light coming in through the window, their symbolic role as sources of divine light¹⁵. The occasional appearance of the holy man as a 'living icon', within his window, symmetrically framed by the images of the two great stylite saints, no doubt would have been experienced as 'divine illumination' by those gathered below. Miracles performed by the stylites from their exalted positions were well known. It is, therefore, not by chance that the window where the 'holy man' would have appeared at Gracanica, was within a horizontal fresco zone depicting the miracles of

¹⁵ "...many tens of thousands ...have been illuminated by his standing on the pillar. For this dazzling lamp, as if placed on a lampstand, has sent out rays in all directions, like the sun". According to the Life of Symeon Stylites; cf. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*. A History of the Monks of Syria. Kalamazoo, MI, 1985, p. 166. The idea of depicting the Stylite saints in identical positions appeared also in the fresco program of the west, south, and north walls in the Church of SS. Joachim and Ana (so-called "King's Church"), at Studenica Monastery in Serbia, also commissioned by King Milutin, and built in 1313–1314; see: *Babić G. Kraljeva crkva u Studenici*. Belgrade, 1987, pls. VI–VIII.

Christ. Such an occasion would have imbued the experience of the 'living icon' with additional symbolic meaning. The case of Gračanica, possibly brings us to a full understanding of the position of St. Lazaros on his 'final pillar', as described in his *Life*¹⁶.

The question for whom the elevated monastic cell at Gračanica may have been prepared remains to be addressed. Historical sources are completely silent on this matter. However, the tympanum of the window related to the monastic cell behind it bears three circular monograms that possibly hold the answer to this important question (fig. 15). Long since interpreted, these are monograms refer to the king of Serbia, and the patron of the church, as Stefan Uroš Kral¹⁷. Their physical appearance within the window tympanum in the location corresponding precisely to those of the mentioned stylite saints underscores the identified individual as their equal. The problem with such a conclusion lies in the fact that we have no preserved historical sources referring to King Milutin as having abdicated and withdrawn to a monastery, as his great-grandfather, Stefan Nemanja, had done. Yet, the physical evidence, as presented here, cannot be ignored, and must be considered at least as an indication that such an idea may have been contemplated before the King's death in 1321.

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The foregoing exploration of "living icons" illustrates difficulties in dealing with this highly allusive concept. In the first place, the term "living icon" itself implies the living presence of a person. While such an expectation, literally speaking, would be totally unrealistic, various aspects of surviving evidence — written and physical — clearly suggest that special, holy individuals could, and did have living privileges within specially created spaces in certain churches. Their presence in such instances has to be gleaned from indirect evidence in the respective church buildings, from texts referring to such phenomena, and ultimately from the rare visual representations, as the ones considered in the introductory section of this paper.

¹⁶ See p.194, above, and fn. 6.

¹⁷ Petrović R. Monogrami kralja Stefana Uroša II Milutina u Gračanici // Saopštenja 13, 1981, p. 105–114, with older literature.

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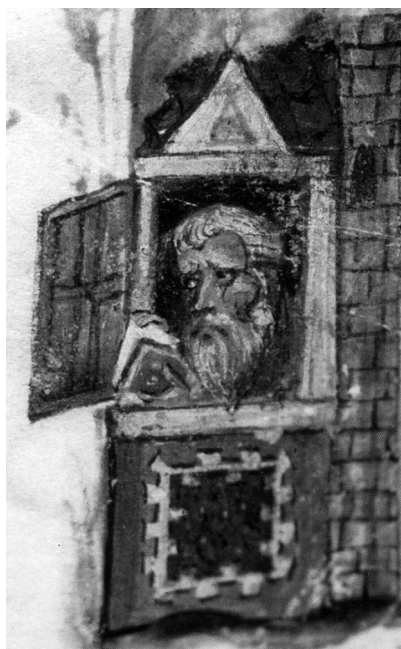
Princeton University

«ЖИВЫЕ ИКОНЫ» В ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ
ВИЗАНТИЙСКИХ ХРАМОВ

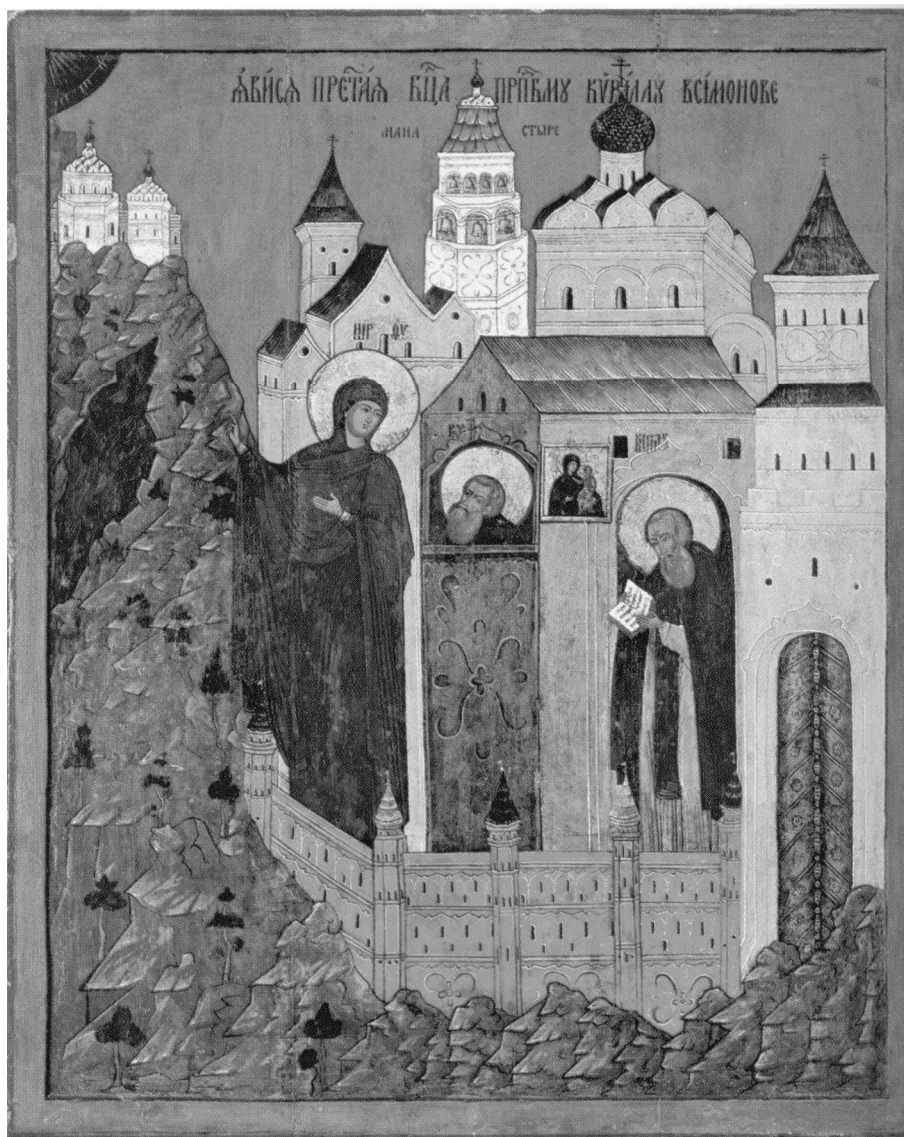
Это исследование посвящено особому феномену византийского искусства, который часто упускают из виду, — представлению живых людей в архитектурном обрамлении пространства храма. Такие образы воспринимались в литургическом контексте как своего рода иконы. В действительности такие «живые» образы являются портретами светских лиц, монахов высокого ранга, в некоторых случаях «будущих святых». Подобные изображения появляются в миниатюрах рукописей и на иконах, иллюстрирующих присутствие живых людей в сакральном пространстве, обычно изображенных в церковном интерьере. Известные хорошо сохранившиеся архитектурные обрамления, предназначенные для живых людей, дают ключ к тому, как такие «живые иконы» могли восприниматься в контексте конкретных сакральных пространств. Целый ряд письменных источников также помогают понять эту практику, которая получает широкое распространение в среднй и поздний византийские периоды.



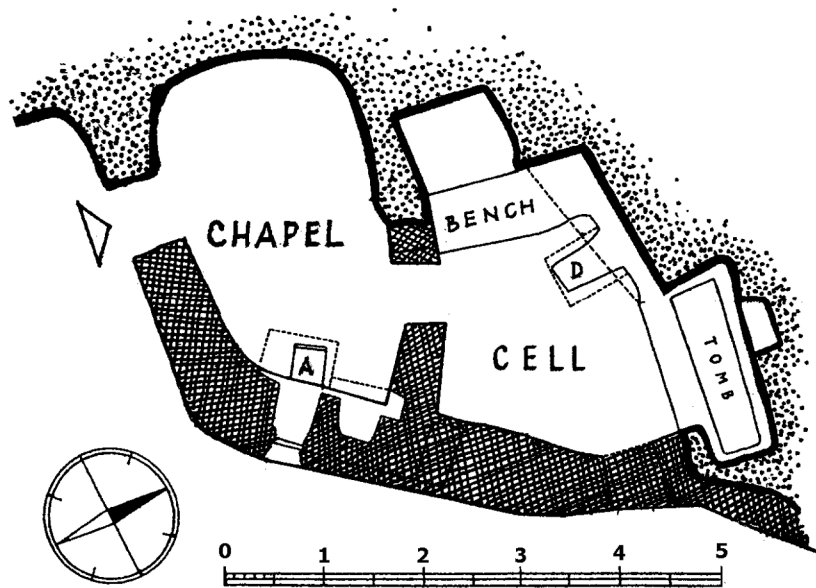
1. Princeton University, Firestone Library, Garrett Ms. 16, fol. 164r;
Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai



2. Princeton University, Firestone Library, Garrett Ms. 16, fol. 164r, detail



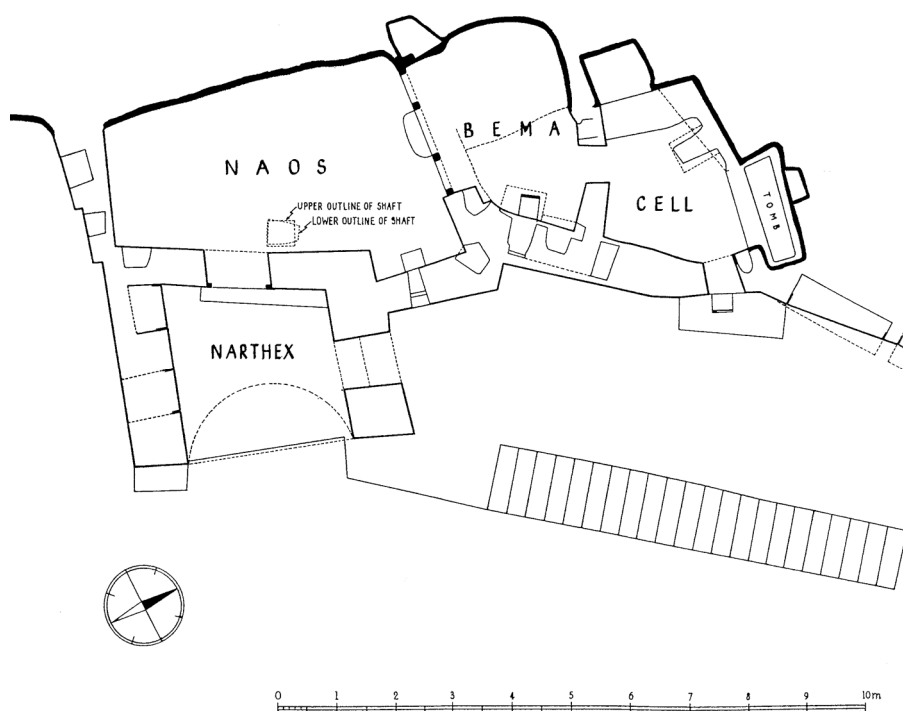
3. Kirill Belozerskii in his cell at Simonov Monastery, icon
(from: E. S. Smirnova)



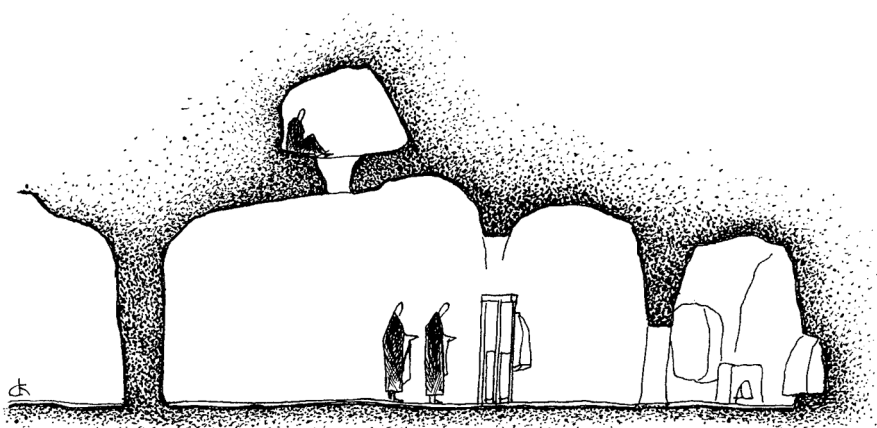
4. Enkleistra of St. Neophitos, original plan (hypothetical reconstruction):
A — altar, D — desk. (Author., based on C. Mango)



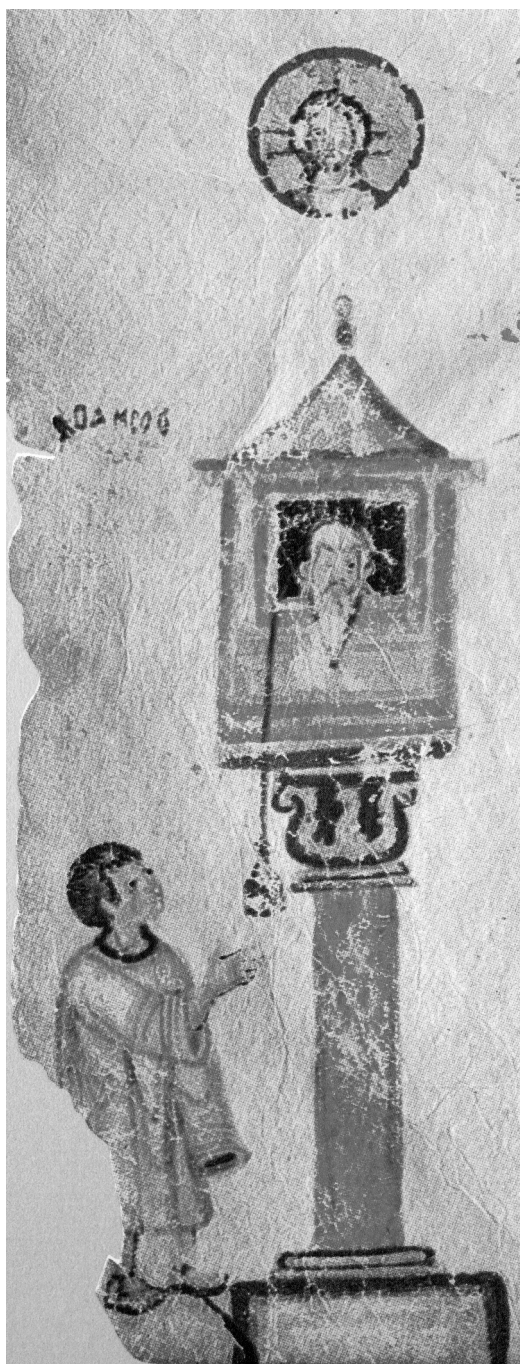
5. Enkleistra of St. Neophitos, Fresco of Annunciation and Christ Emanuel
above the door to Neophitos' cell (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



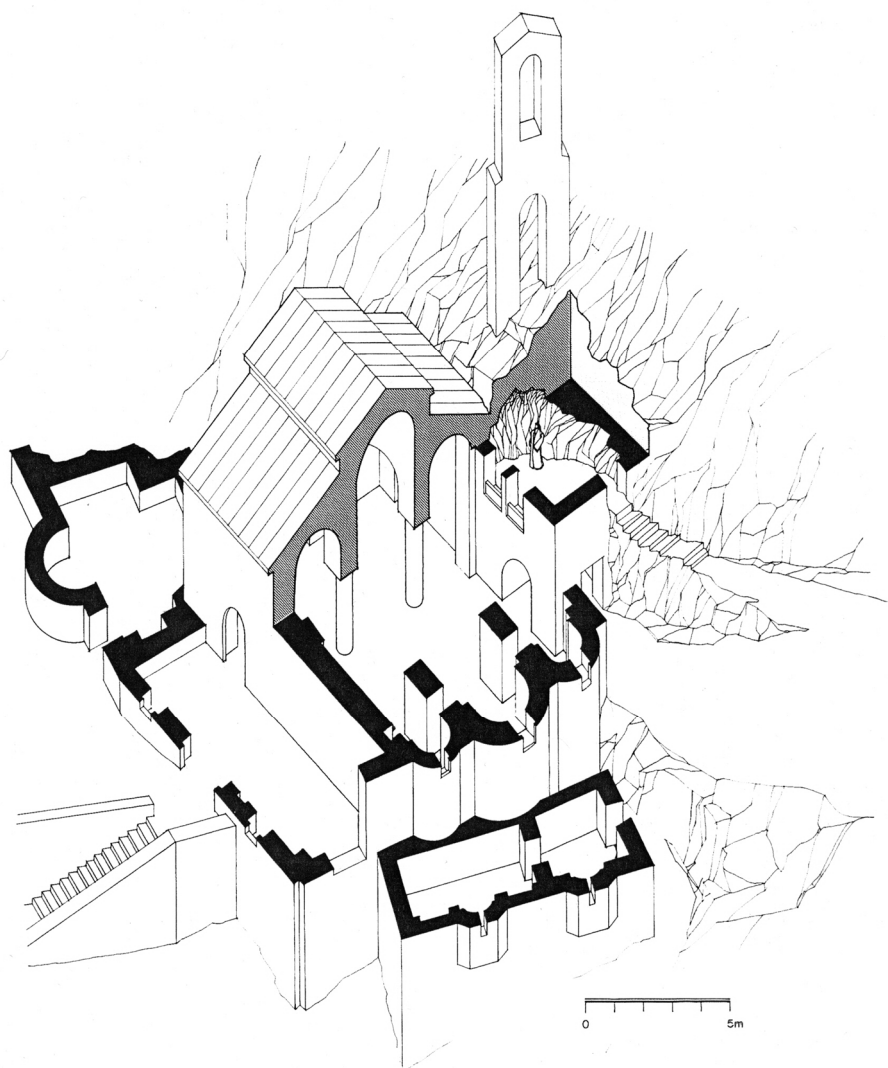
6. Enkleistra of St. Neophitos, as expanded ca. 1197, plan (from C. Mango)



7. Enkleistra of St. Neophitos, longitudinal section
(Author, approx. reconstruction)



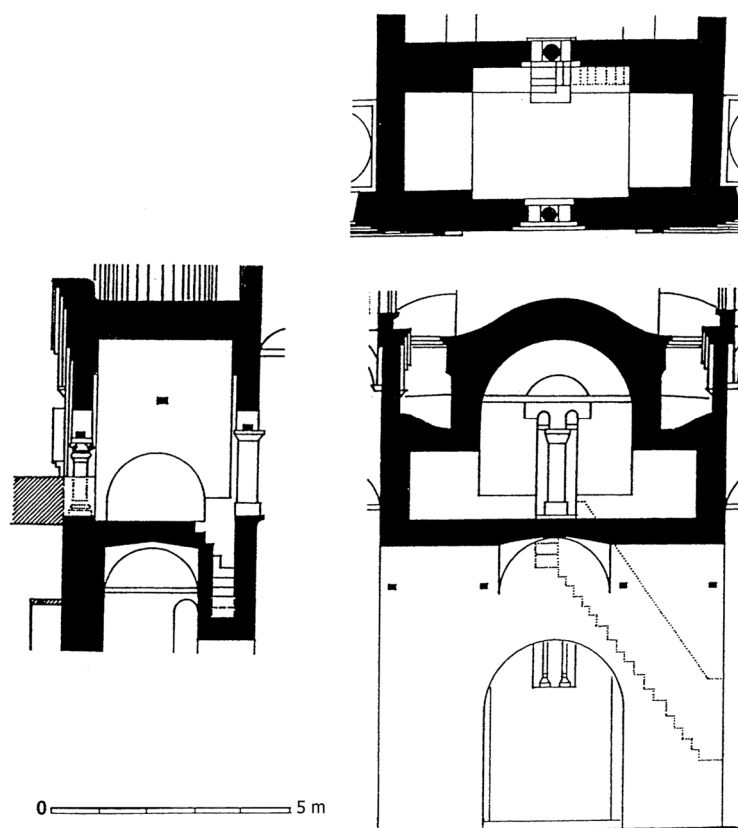
8. Khludov Psalter, f. 3v., St. Symeon Stylites (from M. V. Shchepkina)



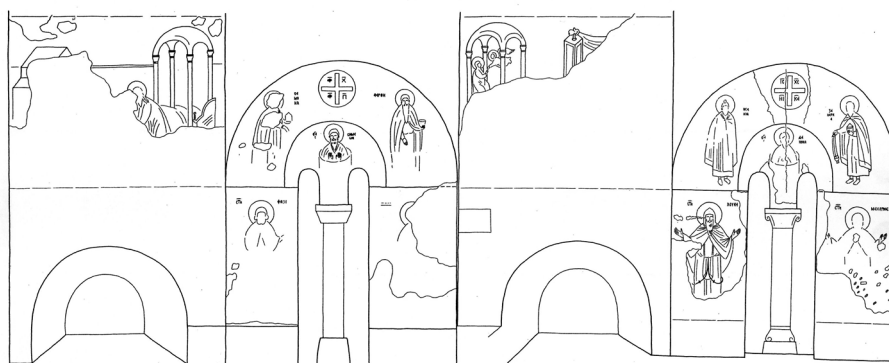
9. Mistra, Theotokos Perivleptos, axonometric section
(Author; delin. J. Kelly)



10. Mistra, Theotokos Perivleptos, interior looking NE toward the natural cave
(photo: Author)



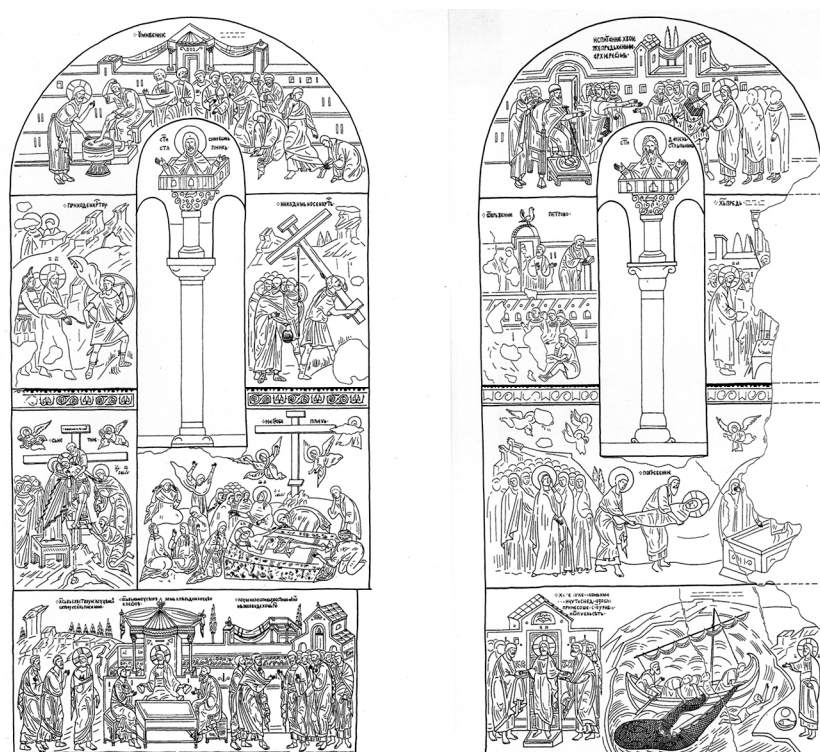
11. Gračanica, Church of the Dormition, *katechoumenion*; plan and sections
(drawing: Author)



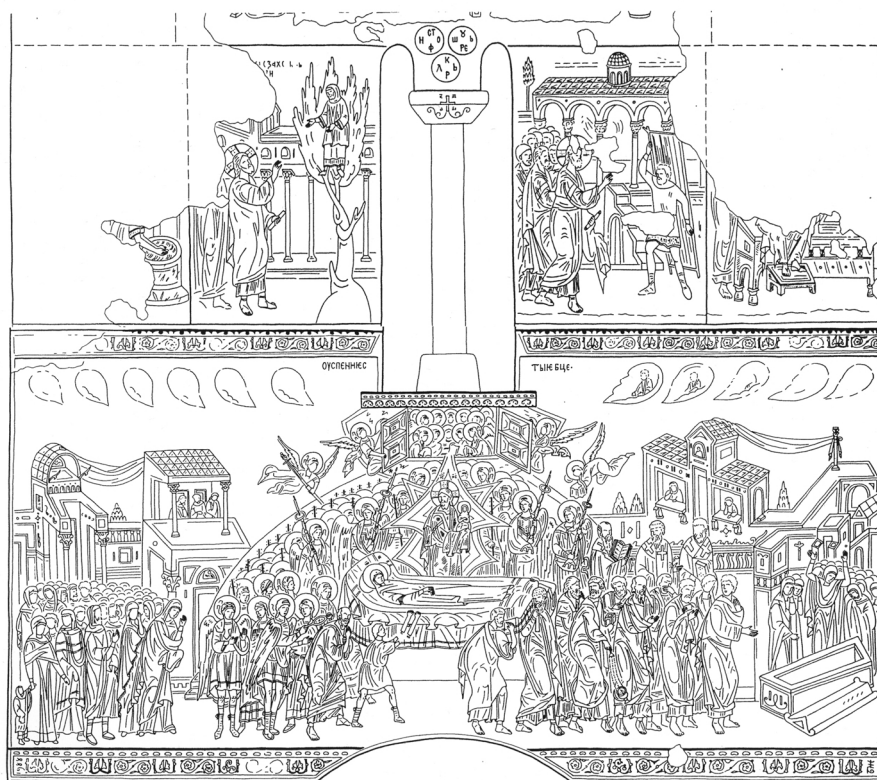
12. Gračanica, *katechoumenion*, remains of the fresco program
(drawing: B. Živković)



13. Gračanica, interior, east wall with *katechumenion* window toward the naos
(photo: Author)



14. Gračanica, interior, north and south cross arms of the naos
(drawing: B. Živković)



15. Gračanica, interior, west naos wall, detail of fresco program with the *katechumenion* window (drawing: B. Živković)