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Medieval templon with inseparable objects of prostration.
A case of Saints Joachim and Anna church in the Studenica Monastery*

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The architecture of templon (stone sanctuary barrier), did not change significantly during the Middle Ages. Certain changes can be traced in relation to the position of the representations of Christ and the Holy Virgin, which are important for understanding the function of the templon. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, a rather small church, dedicated to Sai0nts Joachim and Anna, was built in the Studenica Monastery. The remains of the marble closure slabs testify to the existence of a stone templon. A reassessment of the available data has led us to propose analysis of the original form of the templon, with the frescoes of Christ and the Holy Virgin being its constituent parts, painted directly to the north and south of the barrier.

Keywords: templon (sanctuary barrier), liturgy, eschaton, Christ the Judge, Mother of God, King Stefan Uroš II Milutin, Sts. Joachim and Anna Church

The study of the internal organization of worship spaces, which safeguard the liturgical order, as its starting point takes into consideration architecture, function and the meanings of templon (sanctuary barrier)[1] which con-

stitute an integral and necessary part of the church building plan. The architectural structure of medieval stone barriers adapted to the internal spatial layout of various forms of churches, built, for the most part, in the spirit of the Eastern Christian tradition.

The function, meaning and evolution of the medieval templon

The most prominent and important characteristic of Orthodox liturgical service is its directedness toward eternity. The organization of the church is meant to direct the faithful toward the invisible world of the Kingdom of Heaven, using visible means of expression.[2] One of the basic characteristics of so-called Eastern spirituality, besides the need for liturgical movement toward the desired aim, is the continuous existence of awe towards the *frightful* secrets of Christ present on the throne – the sacrificial altar.[3] Eastern devotion required the liturgical shrine to be covered by a mysterious veil and thus be protected from absolute availability, even to the believer. In this way, the dignity of the sanctuary was preserved as the holiest sanctity and mystical center of the temple. As for the centuries-old symbolism of the altar, the symbolism of the templon embodies and emphasizes the unity of two worlds: the material (sensory and transient) and the incorporeal (intellectual and eternal) world.[4]

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[1] In this paper, the original term *templon* (Gr. τέμπλον) was used instead of the syntagm *altar screen*, which, when it comes to medieval monuments, found its place in modern scientific terminology due to various circumstances, primarily in order to avoid the use of less appropriate term *iconostasis*. To review the usage of different terms and various names v. V. Lasareff, *Trois fragments d'épistyles peintes et le templon byzantin*, ΔΧΑΕ 4 (1966) 120–121; C. Mango, *On the history of the templon and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople*, 3ограf 10 (1979) 40–43; C. Walter, *The Byzantine sanctuary – a word list*, in: *Liturgy, architecture and art in the Byzantine world*, ed. C. C. Akentiev, Saint Petersburg 1995, 95–106 (= Walter C., *The Byzantine sanctuary – a word list*, in: idem, *Pictures as language: how the Byzantines exploited them*, London 2000, 270–281); T. Rakićević, *Značenje termina „ikonostas“*, Srpska teologija danas 4 (Beograd 2013) 307–314; idem, *Od rimskog templum-a do srpskog tem(p)la*, Crkvene studije 15 (Niš 2018) 887–905.

[2] Cf. T. Rakićević, *Tradicionalni templon (oltarska pregrada) unutar pravolinijskog koncepta (od „Početka“ [Post 1, 1] ka „Dolasku“ Hrista – Mesije [Otk 22, 20])*, Srpska teologija danas 3 (Beograd 2012) 391–392; idem, *Interkolumnija na templu i ikona*, Saopštenja 49 (2017) 50.

[3] T. Rakićević, *Neki teološki razlozi za postojanje dveri i zavese na templu*, Saopštenja 48 (2016) 259.

[4] In the classic texts of Christian mystagogical literature, the altar is seen as the symbol of the intellectual and heavenly world. Γρηγόριος Θεολόγος, Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς τὸν πατέρα, in: PG 35, col. 988C; idem, Βίβλος Β΄. Ἔπη ἱστορικά. Τομὴ Α΄. Περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, in: PG 37, col. 1232A; Μάξιμος ὁ Ὁμολογητής, Μυσταγωγία, in: PG 91, col. 672A;

The symbolically ambiguous templon represented a place of contact between the secular and the sacred, the visible and the invisible, the harmony of form and art, the power of the theological and the aesthetic. Its role in the formation of the spatial-sacral gradation within the temple did not change, and the basic elements of the architectural structure of a traditional sanctuary barrier were determined a long time ago.[5] Some changes in its iconographic program can be traced throughout the medieval period. The tendency to place icons on the architrave beam (the epistyle or kosmitis) or above it, and the need to introduce icons to fill the space between the open colonnades was part of the process of the emergence of icon-filled sanctuary barriers – iconostases.[6]

The architectural design of sanctuary barriers was structured concurrently with the articulation of the sanctuary space in Early Christian basilicas and the increasing complexity and inclusion of the pastophoria along the apse on the eastern side of churches. Reflecting old forms of liturgical worship, there were once low, Π-shaped barriers, above the styloblate, made of a line of stone, essentially rectangular or square pillars, filled with closure slabs. Elaborately decorated with geometric and floral motifs, the closure slabs were marked with carved symbols of the cross in various shapes or a Christogram in the center, while the fronts were usually framed with a simple border band that traced the basic geometric form (Fig. 1).[7]

The entrance to the sanctuary was formed from the naos, along the central axis of the church, emphasizing the distinctive liturgical function of the sanctuary,[8] which would remain one of the unchangeable features of sanctuary barriers – templa in later periods, too. The door to the sanctuary, known as the royal doors or beautiful gates, represents a symbolic point of passage or entry from the earthly world into the heavenly, into the Kingdom of Heaven.[9] It is the bridge between the sanctuary and naos

of the church,[10] the gate of the Kingdom of God that prefigures the doors of the Heaven of Christ.[11]

The transformation of early, low barriers into higher ones, known as templa, with the structure extending vertically, in the form of colonnettes and capitals supporting the architrave beam – the epistyle (epistylion) or kosmitis – is attested by archaeological evidence and written sources starting from the fifth and early sixth centuries, confirmed in the church of the Stoudios Monastery, the Church of Saint Polyeuktos,[12] and one of the most elaborately designed and executed high sanctuary barriers was made for the Constantinopolitan Church of St. Sophia,[13] described in the well-known ekphrasis by Paul the Silentiary.[14] This text reports that the front of the epistyle in this church was embellished with silver and a series of carved, bas-relief medallions with a depiction of Christ surrounded by the Mother of God, prophets and apostles.[15] It is, however, difficult to fully reconstruct the appearance of the sanctuary barrier using just Paul's poem.[16] The text does not preclude the possibility that the parapets between the columns were high, but views that the sanctuary barrier at St. Sophia was completely closed have been discarded.[17] The barrier at St. Sophia might have also been unusual.[18] The icons on the architrave were arranged in one[19] or two lines,[20] carved in marble or perhaps engraved on silver[21] or wrought.[22] The busts of saints on the architrave of the sanctuary barrier were the main and only anthropomorphic images in this celebrated church.[23]

Γερμανός Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Ἱστορία ἐκκλησιαστικὴ καὶ μυστικὴ θεωρία, in: PG 98, col. 384B; Συμεὼν Θεσσαλονίκης, Περὶ τε τοῦ θείου ναοῦ, in: PG 155, col. 720D–721A; idem, Περὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου ναοῦ καὶ τῆς τούτου καθιερώσεως, in: PG 155, col. 305–361.

[5] Mango, *On the history of the templon*, 40.

[6] For the historical evolution of sanctuary barriers, changes and the emergence of icons v. Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 116–143; G. Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu oltarskih pregrada*, ZLUMS 11 (1975) 4–20; M. Chatzidakis, *L'évolution de l'icone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles et la transformation du templon,* in: *Actes du XVᵉ Congrès international d'études byzantines, Athènes – Septembre 1976* I, Athènes 1979, 333–371; A. W. Epstein, *The Middle Byzantine sanctuary barrier: templon or iconostasis?,* Journal of the British Archaeological Association 134 (London 1981) 1–28; Walter, *The Byzantine sanctuary*, 95–106; *Ikonostas. Proiskhozhdenie – razvitie – simvolika*, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moskva 2000; T. Rakićević, *Oltarska pregrada – ikonostas od IV do sredine XVII veka: forma, funkcija i značenje*, Beograd 2013, 85–97 (doctoral dissertation, University of Belgrade).

[7] C. Vanderheyde, *The carved decoration of Middle and Late Byzantine templa*, Mitteilungen zur Spätantiken Archäologie und Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte 5 (Wiesbaden 2007) 77–98; M. Čanak-Medić, *O ranohrišćanskim oltarskim pregradama*, in: *Ikonostas kao duhovni i kulturni pečat pravoslavnih hrišćana*, ed. M. Andrić, V. Vukašinović, Kragujevac 2007, 26.

[8] *Ikonostas*, in: RbK III, ed. K. Wessel, M. Restle, Stuttgart 1978, 327–328 (M. Chatzidakis).

[9] Π. Χ. Παπαδημητρίου, *Η εξέλιξη του τύπου και της εικονογραφίας του βημοθύρου από τον 10ᵒ εώς και τον 18ᵒ αιώνα*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2008, 61.

[10] Rakićević, *Neki teološki razlozi za postojanje dveri i zavese na templu*, 253.

[11] N. Labrecque-Pervouchine, *L'iconostase: une évolution historique en Russie*, Montréal 1982, 22.

[12] T. F. Mathews, *The early churches of Constantinople: architecture and liturgy*, University Park – London 1971, 26–27, 54.

[13] C. Mango, *The art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453. Sources and documents*, New Jersey 1972, 87–88.

[14] Παῦλος ὁ Σιλεντιάριος, Ἔκφρασις τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας, in: PG 86b, col. 2145–2147.

[15] Vanderheyde, *The carved decoration*, 27.

[16] Building on the observations of earlier researchers, Walter comments on the changes to the solea and the sanctuary barrier at St. Sophia between Justinian's reign and the Ottoman conquest of the city. Cf. C. Walter, *Further notes on the Deësis*, REB 28 (1970) 172.

[17] The German scholar K. Holl improved this hypothesis at the beginning of the twentieth century, comparing the sanctuary barrier with the classical proscenium: idem, *Die Entstehung der Bilderwand in der griechischen Kirche*, Archiv für Religionswissenschaft 9 (Leipzig 1906) 365.

[18] Chatzidakis finds it impossible that a templon decorated with the Deisis or some other representations of saints was common in that time [*Ikonostas*, 330 (Chatzidakis)], especially because the architraves of most major churches in Constantinople, including the Church of St. Euphemia (first half of the sixth century), had simple vegetal or geometric ornaments. R. Naumann, H. Belting, *Die Euphemia-Kirche am Hippodrom zu Istanbul und ihre Fresken,* Berlin 1966, 54ff, fig. 21–24, pl. 7–10.

[19] K. Kreidl-Papadopoulos, *Bemerkungen zum justinianischen Templon der Sophienkirche in Konstantinopel*, JÖBG 17 (1968) 279–289.

[20] Hager (H. Hager, *Die Anfänge des italienischen Altarbildes. Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte des toskanischen Hochaltarretabels*, München 1962, 66) believes that, analogous to the templon at the old church of St. Peter, there were two groups of icons. Cf. *Ikonostas*, 330 (Chatzidakis).

[21] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 123.

[22] *Ikonostas*, 330 (Chatzidakis).

[23] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 123.

Fig 1. a) Marble closure slab with relief decoration of interlaced band combined with crosses, Athens, sixth century; b) Marble mullion with scale pattern decoration, Athens, fifth century; c) Marble closure slab with a relief Christogram inscribed in laurel wreath, Athens, fifth century

In his description of the images in the medallions of the sanctuary barrier at the Church of St. Sophia, Paul the Silentiary mentioned Christ, at the center,[24] angels,[25] prophets,[26] apostles and the Mother of God.[27] In the second half of the twentieth century, scholars came to believe that the sanctuary barrier at St. Sophia featured an extended Deisis, but no general consensus has been reached about this idea.[28] Regardless of the arrangement of the medallions with saints on the sanctuary barrier in the Great Church, there is no doubt that this architrave was the starting point for the later emergence of the iconostasis.[29] It was this sanctuary barrier that laid the ground on which their design rested throughout the medieval period.[30]

Changes in the structure of early sanctuary barriers – templa contributed to the development of a more complex spatial and iconographic program. In the functional layout, the position of the prothesis and diakonikon along the sides of the altar apse was reflected in the formation of lateral entrances leading directly into the tripartite sanctuary.[31] The templon was extended to the lateral naves of the church, reflecting the increasingly complex liturgical rites. Depending on the liturgical rite, the curtain revealed or hid the sanctuary interior from the eyes of the faithful during worship services.[32]

Templa made in the period that preceded the Iconoclastic Controversy were also embellished with carved symbolic messages, crosses, Christograms, donors' monograms, combined with abstract motifs.[33] Floral and geometric motifs and interlaces of double or triple bands graced the pillars and architrave beams. The iconoclastic period probably changed the ornamentation of the templon, and representations of Christ and other holy personages were removed, with decorative floral and zoomorphic motifs becoming prevalent (Fig. 2).[34]

The architectural structure of the templon with open colonnades and an architrave endured in the centuries after the Iconoclastic Controversy. Theological trends were also reflected in the artistic and iconographic plane, and the sanctuary, becoming increasingly closed off,

[24] Παῦλος ὁ Σιλεντιάριος, Ἔκφρασις τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας, col. 2146A.

[25] Because of a reference to the angels as an army with bowed theads (*Ibid.*, 2146A), Konstantynowicz assumes that "they held spears in their hands, which can be seen in later similar monuments." Cf. J. B. Konstantynowicz, *Ikonostasis. Studien und Forschungen* I, Lwów (Lemberg) 1939, 82.

[26] Παῦλος ὁ Σιλεντιάριος, Ἔκφρασις τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας, col. 2146A–B.

[27] *Ibid.*, col. 2146B.

[28] S. G. Xydis, *The chancel barrier, solea and ambo of Hagia Sophia*, ArtB 29/1 (1947) 1; C. Mango, J. Parker, *A twelfth-century description of St. Sophia*, DOP 14 (1960) 241–245; Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 121; Kreidl-Papadopoulos, *Bemerkungen zum justinianischen Templon*, 279–289.

[29] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 123.

[30] Mango, *On the history of the templon*, 40.

[31] The tripartite sanctuary, in which the rooms to the sides of the apse could be used as pastophoria, was functionally and spatially formed by 600 AD (R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine architecture*, New Haven – London 1986, 299). On the evolution of the sanctuary by adding the proskomedia and prothesis v. C. Delvoye, *Études d'architecture paléochrétienne et byzantine (suite)*, Byzantion 32/2 (1962) 493–505. In the Balkans, the function of the prothesis and diakonikon has been confirmed at the Church of St. Sophia built in the mid-eighth century in Thessalonike (Y. D. Varalis, *Prothesis and diakonikon: searching the original concept of the subsidiary spaces of the byzantine sanctuary*, in: *Ierotopiiā. Sozdanie sakral'nykh prostranstv v Vizantii i Drevneĭ Rusi*, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moskva 2006, 291).

[32] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 4.

[33] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 123.

[34] *Ikonostas*, 330 (Chatzidakis).

Fig. 2. Templon architrave with a relief Christogram, Athens, fifth century

influenced the sensory and visual experience of the faithful, making it more mystical.

The absence of a more widespread practice of inserting icons into the templon was a characteristic of ninth-century Byzantium, as iconophobic tendencies must have still been strong in society.[35] In the first stage (ninth-tenth century), figures were carved into the marble architrave,[36] and there were no painted portable icons. Constantinopolitan churches had gilded and silver-plated templa that continued the tradition of the Church of St. Sophia, featuring the Image of the Lord as God-man.[37] These were icons of the Deisis, with relief busts of Christ, the Mother of God and St. John the Forerunner,[38] combined with scenes of the Twelve Great Feasts.[39] Placing their images in medallions allowed the Deisis to be positioned horizontally, a practice probably present in the major churches of the Byzantine capital whose architraves were silver-plated, or perhaps even gold-plated, with the use of enamel.[40] A distinctive feature of the first phase in the iconography of the templon is that the images were made from the same material as the elements of the templon's central part.[41] Evidence supporting this idea can be found in a homily by Patriarch Nikephoros[42] delivered around 823 in Con-

stantinople, whose context suggests that these were most likely figures permanently attached to the templon rather than moveable and portable icons.[43] This excerpt from Patriarch Nikephoros's homily has been widely quoted[44] because it highlights the difference between using profane imagery, which was not an object of religious veneration and worship, and new forms of decorating the templon with sacred imagery, which *was* an object of veneration.[45]

From the tenth century onward, researchers of the Byzantine templon had at their disposal more evidence, which allowed them to trace its later evolution.[46] From the eleventh to the fourteenth century, there are many monuments that offer insight into the development of the templon (Fig. 3).[47]

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[35] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 127.

[36] C. Walter, *Bulletin on Deësis and the Paraclesis*, REB 38 (1980) 263.

[37] Θεοφάνης Συνεχιστής (Κωνσταντίνος Πορφυρογέννητος), *Ἱστορική διήγησις τοῦ βίου καὶ τῶν πράξεων Βασιλεὶου ἀοιδίμου βασιλέως*, in: PG 109, col. 225–369.

[38] Lasareff knew of two fragments of such architraves from the eighth to the tenth centuries: with a semi-faded representation of Jesus Christ and John the Forerunner on the first and the busts of three apostles, the Mother of God and Jesus Christ on the second (Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 126).

[39] Ε. Τσαπαρλής, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν τέμπλον. Ἱστορικὴ ἐπισκόπηση*, Θεολογία 47/4 (Ζωγράφου 1976) 918.

[40] Parts of the text by Theophanes Continuatus confirm this hypothesis. Θεοφάνης Συνεχιστής (Κωνσταντίνος Πορφυρογέννητος), *Ἱστορικὴ διήγησις τοῦ βίου καὶ τῶν πράξεων Βασιλεὶου ἀοιδίμου βασιλέως*, col. 225–369.

[41] The icons were embedded into the very material of the templon: "If the templon is ivory, the images are ivory, too; if the templon is made of marble, they were carved in marble; finally, if the templon is enamel, they are enamel, etc." Cf. Chatzidakis, *Ľévolution de ľicone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles*, 334.

[42] Νικηφόρος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, *Ἀντίρρησις καὶ ἀνατροπή*, in: PG 100, col. 464D–465A–B.

[43] Chatzidakis, *Ľévolution de ľicone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles*, 335.

[44] V. Νικηφόρος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, *Ἀντίρρησις καὶ ἀνατροπή*, 464D–465A–C; E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine art in the period between Justinian and iconoclasm*, in: *Berichte zum XI Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, 42; A. Grabar, *Ľesthétisme ďun théologien humaniste byzantin du IXe siècle*, in: idem, *Ľart de la fin de ľAntiquité et du Moyen Âge* I, Paris 1968, 63–69; Chatzidakis, *Ľévolution de ľicone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles*, 160–161; E. Kitzinger, *The art of Byzantium and the Medieval West: selected studies*, ed. W. E. Kleinbauer, Bloomington–London 1976, 198; J. P. Sodini, *Une iconostase byzantine à Xanthos*, in: *Actes du colloque sur la Lycie antique*, ed. J. Maisonneuve, Paris 1980, 134; C. Walter, *A new look at the Byzantine sanctuary barrier*, in: idem, *Pictures as language: how the Byzantines exploited them*, London 2000, 248.

[45] There is another important historical source that discusses this phenomenon – the work by George Hamartolos from the second half of the ninth century: Γεώργιος μοναχὸς ὁ ἁμαρτολός, *Χρονικὸν σύντομον*, in: PG 110, col. 993A. Hamartolos's *Chronicle* was written ca. 865, during the reign of Michael III (842–867) and is an authentic contemporaneous source for the period 813–842. The work mentions that, because the Christians deeply revere saints in the sacerdotal manner, the "divine columns [...] that separated the holy altar" were decorated (*ibid.*). This shows that icons were placed on the templon for devotional purposes (Walter, *A new look at the Byzantine sanctuary barrier*, 248–249).

[46] In this way, to the preserved tenth-century templa, such as those from the Protaton church in Karyes [A. K. Ορλάνδος, *Τὸ μαρμάρινον τέμπλον τοῦ Πρωτάτου τῶν Καρυῶν*, EEBΣ 23 (1953) 83 ff.], we can add the conserved parts of templa from the same period, mentioned by M. Chatzidakis in his paper on the icons of an architrave from Mount Athos. M. Χατζηδάκης, *Εἰκόνες ἐπιστυλίου ἀπὸ τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος*, ΔΧΑΕ 4 (1964–1965) 1966, 381–382.

[47] Lasareff provides an entire catalog of such monuments in his paper on the Byzantine templon (Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 127–129). As examples, he lists the templa of St. Nicholas, the *parekklesion* of

Its gradual transformation was accompanied by the emergence and, from the tenth century onward,[48] routine appearance of two monumental icons of Christ and the Mother of God, prominently displayed and wall-painted on the eastern pair of masonry columns or pilasters or the northern and southern columns that both constructionally and functionally mark the passage from the naos to the sanctuary. Sometimes, there were departures from the usual program, and specially venerated icons or icons of the saints to whom the church was dedicated could appear in this spot.[49] The placement of the figures of Christ and the Mother of God had to be adapted to the concept of the church, and, in single-nave (aisleless) churches, they could sometimes appear on the eastern ends of the side walls, in the immediate vicinity of the templon. On the proskynetaria beside the templon, Christ and the Mother of God were shown as full-length, standing figures – Christ *en face* with a Gospel book and the Mother of God facing Christ, in prayer, sometimes with an open scroll.[50] Their iconological importance lies in establishing a connection of the faithful with Christ, allowing them a sacramental meeting with Him, while the Mother of God prayerfully mediates for the whole world, she herself being a *holy space* of meeting God.[51]

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Vatopedi, St. Luke in Phocis, St. Luke in Aliveri, St. Sophia in Ohrid, Dafni, the Church of the Heavenly Hosts from Melides on the island of Andros, which date from the tenth century. As for twelfth-century templa, he mentions those from St. Meletios, the Metropolitanate of Serres, Panagia Episkopi (Gonias) on the island of Santorini, St. Nicholas on the island of Andros, St. Panteleimon in Nerezi, the Church of the Good Samaritan from Messiana, Hilandar, Blacherissa from Artis (early thirteenth century), etc. To these we might add the templa mentioned by Bréhier in his paper on early sanctuary barriers of some Athonite monasteries (L. Bréhier, *Anciennes clôtures de chœur antérieures aux iconostases dans les monastères de l'Athos*, in: *Atti del V Congresso internazionale di studi bizantini: Roma 20–26 septembre 1936* II. *Archeologia e storia dell'arte – Liturgia et musica. Cronica del congresso*, Roma 1940, 50–51), and parts of templa from the island of Mani (N. Δρανδάκης, *Βυζαντιναί τοιχογραφίαι τῆς Μέσα Μάνης*, Αθήναι 1964, pl. 11 α, 12 β, 13, 14 α, 14 β, 54 α, 54 β, 55 α, 55 β).

[48] The earliest known examples date from the tenth century – the Protaton church in Karyes on Mount Athos (Ορλάνδος, *Τὸ μαρμάρινον τέμπλον τοῦ Πρωτάτου τῶν Καρυῶν*, 89, fig. 1) and the proskynetaria of the templon from the Virgin's Church of St. Luke's Monastery in Phocis, created after 961 (Λ. Μπούρα, *Ὁ γλυπτὸς διάκοσμος τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Παναγίας στὸ μοναστήρι τοῦ Ὁσίου Λουκᾶ*, Αθήνα 1980, σχέδ. 3). For the emergence of icons of the Mother of God and Christ v. A. Grabar, *Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase d'aprés des monuments de Yugoslavie*, ZRVI 7 (1961) 20–21; Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 130–139; Chatzidakis, *L'évolution de l'icone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles*, 336; Vanderheyde, *The carved decoration*, 79.

[49] The objects of the monumental paintings on these columns are not always the same. Most commonly they show Christ or the Mother of God, but there are famous cases, such as St. Sophia in Ohrid (eleventh century), where two images of the Virgin have survived on two columns – copies of well-known icons of the Virgin (Grabar, *Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase*, 22). This example attests that these are, beyond doubt, large-scale icons intended for special veneration. Similarly, at Nerezi, one of the columns features a representation of St. Panteleimon, the patron of the church, and the other bears an image of Christ. On the other hand, in the church in Bojana, St. Nicholas, the patron, appears on one of the columns. This tendency prominently features in twelfth-century single-nave (aisleless) churches, in Kurbinovo and St. Nicholas tou Kasnitzi in Kastoria, in which the monumental figures of the patron saint and Christ, in special painted frames, are presented as counterparts on the walls of the church but each on a different side of the sanctuary barrier (Chatzidakis, *L'évolution de l'icone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles*, 337).

[50] Chatzidakis, *L'évolution de l'icone aux 11ᵉ–13ᵉ siècles*, 336.

[51] T. Rakićević, *Bogoslovske ideje u oltarskim pregradama u periodu od Nemanjine do Milutinove studeničke Crkve*, in: *Manastir Stude-*

Fig. 3. Katholikon of St. Luke in Phocis – view of the templon

The deeply revered icons of Christ and the Mother of God had a mimetic character associated with the templon.[52] This connection emerged gradually. Icon veneration developed gradually in the centuries before the period in the focus of this research. Representations of saints became inseparable from the liturgical rite in which the faithful sacramentally communicate with saints, cleansing themselves by partaking of the body of Christ, chanting spiritual songs and prayers and prayerfully gazing at the saints on the icons. St. John of Damascus, emphasizing this spiritual experience of the Church, claims that the faithful "see the invisible God through the visible representation, and glorify Him as if present".[53] The icon was understood as a bridge that connects the terrestrial world with the Kingdom of God, and they open to each other and communicate.[54]

The development of an iconography inextricably tied to the templon began with the pre-eminent icon –

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nica – 700 godina Kraljeve crkve, ed. Lj. Maksimović, V. Vukašinović, Beograd 2016, 187.

[52] S. Ćurčić, *Proskynetaria icons, saints' tombs, and the development of the iconostasis*, in: *The Iconostasis. Origins – Evolution – Symbolism*, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moscow 2000, 134–142.

[53] Ιωάννης Δαμασκηνός, *Λόγος τρεῖς ἀπολογητικός πρός τοὺς διαβάλλοντας τὰς ἀγίας εικόνας*, in: PG 94, col. 1412A.

[54] T. Rakićević, *Ikona u Liturgiji: smisao i uloga*, Manastir Studenica 2016, 255.

Fig. 4. a) North proskynetarion of the templon, Christ; b) south proskynetarion of the templon, the Virgin with Christ, Porta Panagia, Pyli, near Trikkala, Thessaly

the icon of Christ placed on the proskynetarion next to the sanctuary barrier (or on the wall surface beside it). Standing in front of Christ's image, the faithful express their reverence of those icons, whose true purpose is a devotional meeting with His hypostasis (divine person). His icon testifies to the historical reality of the Incarnation and deification with which the human nature was glorified in Christ.[55] The icon of Christ bears witness to His constant, beneficent, sacramental[56] presence in the Church, especially at the liturgy. An icon of Jesus Christ is placed on the proskynetarion in order to depict Him as the Judge, as Christ the Messiah of His Second Coming in glory. The Church eagerly awaits Christ's return and says: "Come!" (Revelation 22:17). His Parousia (Second Coming) will bring the last realization of God's plan. The economy of salvation (God's rumination on the salvation of man and the world) will arrive at its final fulfillment. This placement of the icon of Christ the Judge suggests that those who created this church design had a developed eschatological consciousness. The icon of Christ is, in fact, a projection

of the real experience of the imminent meeting with Him.[57]

Thus, the proskynetarion shows the glorified and eschatological Christ the Judge. At every liturgy, the faithful participate in the Last Judgment, which He brings with Him.[58] The icon of Christ on the proskynetarion is a direct expression of Christian eschatological consciousness. Beholding an image of Christ is now the pledge and prerequisite for seeing and eternally watching Him in the glory of the Second Coming.

Beside Christ's icon, as the second in importance, appears the icon of the Mother of God on the proskynetarion of the second column. Her significance is suggested by the plethora of vivid and metaphorical texts and

[55] J. Majendorf, *Hristos u istočno-hrišćanskoj misli*, Manastir Hilandar 1994, 183.

[56] Δ. Ι. Τσελεγγίδης, *Ἡ χαρισματικὴ παρουσία τοῦ πρωτοτύπου στὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ κατὰ τὴν εἰκονολογία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, in: *Οἰκοδομή καὶ Μαρτυρία: ἔκφρασις ἀγάπης καὶ τιμῆς εἰς τὸν Σεβασμιώτατον Μητροπολίτην Σερβίων καὶ Κοζάνης Κύριον Διονύσιον* II, Κοζάνη 1992, 405–420.

[57] Rakićević, *Bogoslovske ideje u oltarskim pregradama*, 188.

[58] The *Symbol of Our Faith* in the Divine Liturgies by St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great announces that Christ will "come again with glory to judge the living and dead…" *Služebnik,* Beograd 2013, 126. During the Holy Anaphora canon at Chrysostom's liturgy, the priest says on behalf of the whole community: "Remembering [...] the second and glorious coming again" (*ibid.*, 131); at Basil's Divine Liturgy, he says: "Remembering [...]His glorious and awesome second coming" (*ibid.*, 205). Remembering a future event expresses the reality of the liturgical community experiencing the future Last Judgment at every liturgy. St. Basil's text continues: "He will come to render to each according to His works" (*ibid.*, 204). Before the Anaphora, the priest, again on behalf of all the faithful, says: "Grant that none of us may partake of the holy Body and Blood of Your Christ to judgment or condemnation" (*ibid.*, 149).

Fig. 5. Porta Panagia in Pyli – barrier with proskynetarion icons of Christ and the Holy Virgin

hymns paying homage to the Theotokos and Her role in the Incarnation.[59] Byzantine rhetoric identified the Holy Virgin with a gate (or door). Identifying Her with a gate has its roots in Ezekiel's vision of a shut, east-facing gate of the Jewish temple, though which the Lord himself is to enter (Ezekiel 44: 1–3).[60] In the Annunciation Akathistos to the Virgin, the Mother of God is compared with the *gate of salvation*: "Rejoice, opening of the gates of Paradise," "Rejoice, door of solemn mystery," "Rejoice, Thou through whom Paradise is opened," "Rejoice, gate of salvation."[61] The same sentiment is expressed by St. Andrew of Crete (sixth century) in his Oration on the Nativity of the Virgin[62] and St. John of Damascus (eighth century) in his Homily on the Feast of the Annunciation.[63] In his other works, John of Damascus calls her the "virginal gate," "shut gate," "gate of light" and "gate of God" (Fig. 4).[64]

The importance of the positions of Christ's and the Virgin's icons, facing the naos, and their dignity were emphasized in the overall liturgical function of the templon by a special, sculptural construction of symmetrically positioned frames. The arcade-shaped plate, with a cornice in the upper zone, was supported by carved capitals with slender colonnettes, sometimes doubled, whose feet leaned on the emphasized, prominent, fluted cornice. The elements of the architectural structure and the ornamentation of these frames, proskynetaria,[65] were not uniform, but their ornamental features usually drew on the patterns used in other elements of the templon. Their diversity reached its peak between the second half of the twelfth and the beginning of the fourteenth century.[66] From the twelfth century onward, the double colonnettes of the proskynetaria and the templon colonnettes forming the central entrance into the sanctuary, the royal doors, often had a Hercules knot at the vertical mid-point (Fig. 5).[67]

The appearance and use of pseudo-kufic ornaments in templon decoration can be traced to the tenth century. Besides a decorative purpose, it is believed to have

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[59] It shows the first human being in whom the aim of Incarnation was achieved – the deification of man, the first person to enter into perfect unity with Divinity. T. Rakićević, *Legal basis for symbolism disappearance in sacral art (Abolition of regulations that were not good [Ezek 20, 25])*, Teme 41/4 (Niš 2017) 1061.

[60] Idem, *Neki teološki razlozi za postojanje dveri i zavese na templu*, 254.

[61] Eikoi 4, 8, 8, 10, *Pravoslavni molitvenik*, Beograd 2019, 61, 66–67, 69. The Annunciation Akathistos to the Mother of God is commonly attributed to Patriarch Sergios I of Constantinople (610–638).

[62] Ἀνδρέας Κρήτης, *Λόγος Δ΄*, in: PG 97, col. 861B–881B.

[63] Ἰωάννης Δαμασκηνός, *Ὁμιλία Ε'*, in: PG 96, col. 656B.

[64] Ἰωάννης Δαμασκηνός, *Ὁμιλία Σ΄*, in: PG 96, col. 664C, 665D, 673D, 676C.

[65] For this term v. S. Kalopissi-Verti, *The proskynetaria of the templon and narthex: form, imagery, spatial connections, and reception*, in: *Thresholds of the sacred. Architectural, art historical, liturgical, and theological perspectives on religious screens, East and West*, ed. S. E. J. Gerstel, Washington D. C. 2006, 108.

[66] Vanderheyde, *The carved decoration*, 80.

[67] I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *The Byzantine knotted column*, in: *Byzantine studies in honor of Milton V. Anastos*, ed. S. Vryonis, jr., Malibu 1985, 95–103.

had an apotropaic meaning.[68] The capitals often feature crosses and floral ornaments with palmettes and rosettes. The arcade plate could bear complex ornamental motifs of different carving depths, sometimes symbolically supplemented with birds or peacocks.[69] Although most proskynetaria were marble, some made in the stucco technique have also survived (Fig. 6).[70]

A number of examples from the tenth to the late thirteenth centuries[71] clearly attest that solemn icons with full-length figures were consistently shown eastern columns. In the Komnenian era, these especially prominent icons were seen as a standard part of the templon. At some point, these two monumental paintings, which initially flanked the templon, moved to the two main openings between the templon colonnades to establish the thematic and decorative arrangement that has survived into the modern period.[72]

Scholars have offered different views about the practice of placing icons in the intercolumnia of the templon on both sides of the sanctuary door.[73] Remnants of decorative arcades in the form of sculptures that framed the fresco-icons or mosaics of the Virgin, Christ and the patron saint of the church, discovered on the eastern sides of the columns beside the templon, confirm the absence of icons in the intercolumnia,[74] suggesting that the above-mentioned large-format icons next to the barrier had not yet left their traditional place to be moved to the space between the columns of the templon, which were then vacated.[75] The existence of large-format icons of Christ and the Mother of God on the western sides of the columns beside the templon shows that the first steps in the reform that launched the great transformation had yet to be made.[76] In contrast to this view, some argue that the process of the gradual transformation of the templon barrier into the fully fledged iconostasis began no later than the twelfth century.[77]

The templon, with the space in front of it, became the focus point of popular worship.[78] If the templon had no icons in the lower zone, they could have been positioned on the architrave,[79] and in this way, the iconography would have spilled over onto the barrier. So, if there was some resistance indeed, it could not disrupt the process in which icons conquered the templon[80] and its transformation into the iconostasis.

Sanctuary barriers – templa in Serbian medieval churches

The spatial organization of Serbian medieval churches, based on principles adopted from Byzantium, included an entire program of stone sanctuary barriers – templa. In the main churches of the Serbian medieval endowments of the Nemanjić dynasty, built in the late twelfth and throughout the thirteenth centuries, templa were usually formed between the eastern pair of columns that held the framed fresco-painted representations of Christ and the Mother of God as proskynetaria, and in them, the liturgical space with the altar was visible to the eyes of the faithful. Unfortunately, their original forms have mostly been lost, but theoretical hypotheses and restorations were made based on fragments preserved *in situ* and those that could supplement their forms after being discovered in twentieth-century archaeological excavations.

Such a reconstruction of the marble templon was recently done at the Virgin's Church of Studenica,[81] whose surviving fragments were believed to represent the earliest authentic evidence of marble templa in the internal organization of Serbian medieval liturgical spaces.[82] Its structural form and architecture is close to the templa created from the tenth century onward in areas under the influence of the Byzantine cultural tradition. Its architecture can also be discussed based on marble remnants and restored templa in Serbian churches from the thirteenth century.

The architectural and iconographic program of the Studenica templon, in the twelfth-century cathedral church, included prominent fresco-icons of Christ and the Mother of God in proskynetaria on the eastern pair of columns, as well as representations of Stephen the Protomartyr and St. Nicholas on the pilasters to the north and south, beside the entrances to the diakonikon and the prothesis.[83] On it, especially after the reconstruction of the original form, we see the same features that

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[68] Μπούρα, Ὁ γλυπτὸς διάκοσμος τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Παναγίας, 100–104.

[69] Α. Κ. Ὀρλάνδος, Ἡ Πισκοπή τῆς Σαντορήνης (Παναγία τῆς Γωνιάς), Ἀρχεῖον τῶν Βυζαντινῶν μνημείων τῆς Ἑλλάδος 7 (Ἀθήνα 1951) 178–214, no. 8, 10, 11.

[70] Kalopissi-Verti, *The proskynetaria of the templon*, 110.

[71] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 17–18, sl. 9–10, crt. 1–2.

[72] Grabar, *Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase*, 21.

[73] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 130, πιν. 34, fig. 8; πιν. 35, fig. 10.

[74] I. Nikolajević-Stojković, *Prilog proučavanju vizantiske skulpture od 10 do 12 veka iz Makedonije i Srbije*, ZRVI 4 (1956) 170–173, sl. 9–12; P. Miljković-Pepek, *La fresque de la Vierge avec le Christ du pilier situé au nord de l'iconostase de Sainte Sophie à Ohrid*, in: *Akten des XI. internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses München 1958*, ed. F. Dölger, H.-G. Beck, München 1960, 388–391; K. Petrov, *Dekorativna plastika vo Makedonija vo XI i XII vek*, Godišen zbornik na Filozofskiot fakultet na Univerzitet vo Skopje 14 (1962) 126–127, sl. 3–12.

[75] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 131.

[76] Grabar, *Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase*, 22. To support these views, scholars cite the numerous preserved examples where Christ and the Virgin are positioned on the fronts of four-sided columns of the sanctuary. Grabar lists examples of wall paintings closely associated with the templon. Several Byzantine churches have preserved these two images (or their remnants) positioned on the eastern wall of the naos, facing the congregation, on both sides of the templon door with no icons (*ibid.*, 20–21).

[77] *Ikonostas*, 344 (Chatzidakis).

[78] Walter, *A new look at the Byzantine sanctuary barrier*, 249.

[79] Lasareff, *Trois fragments*, 131.

[80] Lasareff believed that the Byzantines "stubbornly opposed any attempts to transform the templon into a sort of icon holder" (*Ibid.*, 135).

[81] S. Barišić, *Rekonstrukcija prvobitne oltarske pregrade studeničke Bogorodičine crkve*, Saopštenja 44 (2012) 33–42.

[82] O. Kandić, *Oblik kamene oltarske pregrade Bogorodičine crkve u Studenici*, in: *Studenica i vizantijska umetnost oko 1200. godine*, ed. V. Korać, Beograd 1988, 141–152; eadem, *Arhitektura srednjovekovnih oltarskih pregrada u pravoslavnim crkvama Srbije*, in: *Ikonostas kao duhovni i kulturni pečat pravoslavnih hrišćana*, ed. M. Andrić, V. Vukašinović, Kragujevac 2007, 41. It is very likely that the churches built before the Virgin's Church of Studenica – the churches of the Mother of God and St. Nicholas in Toplica, the Virgin of Gradac, St. George in Ras etc. – had stone sanctuary barriers made in the spirit of the Byzantine templon.

[83] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 21–23; Kandić, *Oblik kamene oltarske pregrade Bogorodičine crkve u Studenici*, 145.

Fig. 6. Panagia Episkopi on Santorini – low relief decoration with paste

characterize the architecture and decoration of the Virgin's Church, reflecting the work of builders, sculptors and painters from two milieus that cultivated different artistic traditions. The architectural sculptural elements of the templon seem to have been formed concurrently with the building of the Virgin's Church. Important information about the addition of an epistyle on the inner side of the eastern pair of columns,[84] the simple profiling of the closure slabs, the distinctive architectural form of the arcade slab of the proskynetaria, similar to the early Romanesque gables of architrave beams on sanctuary barriers from the Adriatic coastal areas,[85] the treatment of the profiled cornices, the manner of decorating small capitals, colonnettes and feet on proskynetaria – all of this reveals the stoneworking artistry that characterizes the entire body of architectural sculpture at this church. It is particularly conspicuous on the original capital of the proskynetarion which, on a smaller scale, repeats the form and content of a capital preserved *in situ* on the northern two-light window of the wall between the naos and the narthex. Although the carved ornaments were made by stoneworkers trained in the Romanesque artistic tradition, the overall structure with the painted program confirmed the shape and purpose of the templon found in Eastern Christian liturgical spaces. This amalgamation of artistic influences is particularly apparent on the marble arcades of the proskynetaria whose deco-

rative cornices were painted, with pseudo-kufic lettering added in gold.[86] The painted representations of St. Stephen the Protomartyr and St. Nicholas are framed in the upper zone by trefoil arcades modeled after the painted or carved ornaments of Byzantine proskynetaria,[87] additionally confirming the direction pursued by Sava, the archimandrite of Studenica, when he, with the support of his brothers, took it upon himself to oversee the frescoing, furnishing and completion of the Virgin's Church at Studenica (Fig. 7).[88]

The restoration of the marble templon at the Virgin's Church to its original shape revealed the initial functional and visual organization of the church interior, based on the concept of the Nemanjić dynasty founder and ktetor of the church, Grand *Župan* Stefan Nemanja.

All subsequent founders of churches and monasteries from the Nemanjić dynasty, especially in the thirteenth century, had their endowments emulate the Studenica monastery and the Virgin's Church, as suggested by their inner spatial organization and marble church furnishings. Already Stefan the First-Crowned, with St. Sava's efforts, built the Church of the Ascension at the Žiča Monastery, commissioning *marble-workers and painters* from Constantinople, who worked on the construction of a marble templon with a similar architectural and iconographic

[84] Barišić, *Rekonstrukcija prvobitne oltarske pregrade*, 32, sl. 6.

[85] For numerous examples v. T. Marasović, *Dalmatia praeromanica. Ranosrednjovjekovno graditeljstvo u Dalmaciji* I. Rasprava, Split–Zagreb 2008, 157–162, 322–333, tab. X.

[86] On the widespread use of pseudo-kufic ornaments on the templon v. Kalopissi-Verti, *The proskynetaria of the templon*, 108–110.

[87] Kandić, *Oblik kamene oltarske pregrade Bogorodičine crkve u Studenici*, 145.

[88] S. Pirivatrić, *Hronologija i istorijski kontekst podizanja manastira Studenice. Prilog istraživanju problema*, Zograf 39 (2015) 54.

Fig. 7. Templon of the Church of the Holy Virgin, Studenica Monastery

structure as the one at Studenica, although it is believed that the proskynetaria of the monumental icons of Christ and the Virgin on the eastern pair of columns were spatial and had ciboria where holy objects and saints' relics were occasionally displayed.[89] The naos of the Ascension church must have been ornately decorated. Shortly thereafter, King Vladislav built the church at the Mileševa Monastery, also dedicated to the Ascension of Christ, where the sanctuary barrier model commonly used throughout the thirteenth century was implemented.[90] In the Church of the Holy Trinity at the Sopoćani Monastery, the endowment of King Uroš I, the established structure of the templon displayed some distinctive features in its decorative repertoire, with some architectural elements embellished with stucco, and these were also repeated on the upper parts of the proskynetaria. The epistyle is assumed to have been done in the same technique, although there is no evidence to confirm this.[91] The decorations on the upper parts of the proskynetaria probably consisted of

acanthus and kyma foliage colored in blue, cinnabar and gold,[92] which would confirm the subtle visual harmony between imagery and architecture in the interior of the Holy Trinity at Sopoćani.

Queen Helen (Jelena), wife of King Uroš I, built the Church of the Mother of God at the Gradac Monastery. In its structure, the church largely followed the model of Studenica, and its architectural sculpture, with its Romano-Gothic influences that reflected the queen's family background, was carved by artists from the coastal cities she governed.[93] The templon of the Church of the Mother of God at Gradac is made of white Studenica marble, with proskynetaria that ended in decorative arcades emulating those at Studenica, but these were carved in the same travertine stone used in the construction of the church.[94] The superbly executed marble architectural decorations of the colonnettes, feet and capitals on the proskynetaria and other marble elements of this sanctuary barrier with Romano-Gothic characteristics were intertwined with a liturgical program informed by the centuries-old Byzantine tradition, creating a distinctive stylistic synthesis but not disrupting the structure of the templon with open colonnades and prominent, monumental fresco-icons of Christ and the Mother of God (Fig. 8).

In the last decades of the thirteenth century, Queen Helen's and King Uroš I's son, King Stefan Dragutin, built the monastery with the Church of St. Achil-

[89] M. Čanak-Medić, O. Kandić, *Arhitektura prve polovine XIII veka* I. *Crkve u Raškoj*, Beograd 1995, 15–17, sl. 26–27; M. Čanak-Medić, *Delo mramornika Svetoga Save u Žiči*, in: *Spaljivanje moštiju Svetoga Save 1594–1994. Zbornik radova*, ed. S. Matejić, Beograd 1997, 122–127; M. Čanak-Medić, D. Popović, D. Vojvodić, *Manastir Žiča*, Beograd 2014, 167–171, sl. 113.

[90] Kandić, *Arhitektura srednjovekovnih oltarskih pregrada*, 44.

[91] V. Korać, *Oltarska pregrada u Sopoćanima*, Zograf 5 (1975) 23–29; Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, crt. 6; S. M. Nenadović, *Građevinska tehnika u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Beograd 2003, 138, 459–462; O. Kandić, D. Todorović, *Arhitektonski ukrasi sopoćanske crkve. Prozori i oltarska pregrada*, in: *Na tragovima Vojislava J. Đurića*, ed. D. Medaković, C. Grozdanov, Beograd 2011, 93–97, crt. 3, sl. 4–6; O. Kandić, *Sopoćani: istorija i arhitektura manastira*, Beograd 2016, 74–77.

[92] Kandić, *Sopoćani*, 77.

[93] On the reconstruction v. O. Kandić, *Gradac: istorija i arhitektura manastira*, Beograd 2005, 144–146.

[94] Kandić, *Arhitektura srednjovekovnih oltarskih pregrada*, 46–47.

Fig. 8. Templon of the Church of the Holy Virgin, Gradac Monastery

leos in Arilje.[95] Programmatically, the church followed the example of its predecessors, although the complexity of the structural system of the central space with a dome in the middle reveals the builder's tendency to pull the architectural structure upward and make it taller. To a certain extent, that meant that the diameter of the dome had to be reduced, which as reflected in the internal arrangement, particularly the appearance of the eastern bay, where the naos leads into the sanctuary. Hence, the templon of the Church of St. Achilleos employed a more concise form, without the solemn marble proskynetaria but with full-length frescoes of the Mother of God (northeastern) and Christ (southeastern pilaster), which programmatically met the liturgical purpose of the templon.

Judging by the manner of making and shaping the architectural elements of the templon, both overall and in its details, and the choice of dark-red breccia for the material it was made of, it is believed to have had no parallels.[96] The separate, profiled base, parallel colonnettes and a six-pointed star ornament in a circle on the closure slabs are all characteristics that made this templon different, but they did not alter its role and meaning in the liturgical space, given that, at the very end of the thirteenth century, intercolumnia in Serbian endowments were still

not filled with icons.[97] There were no icons in the intercolumnia at Sopoćani (c. 1270), Gradac (c. 1276) and Arilje (c. 1290), or, judging by the frescoes around the templon, in any other thirteenth-century Serbian church.[98] Even the Dečani templon was designed to allow an open view of the sanctuary, but the plan changed, probably in 1343, and the curtain was replaced by icons.[99]

However, in the fourteenth century, the intercessory role of the saints shown on icons prevailed over the need to make the altar visible, and the central belt of the templon with the intercolumnium started to be gradually filled with icons. Two monumental representations of Christ and the Mother of God, flanking the templon, moved to the two main openings between the columns of the templon, establishing the iconographic arrangement that remains in use to this day.[100]

A templon with closed intercolumnia has survived in the Church of St. George in Staro Nagoričino. The dilapidated Church of St. George in Staro Nagoričino, an endowment of Romanos IV Diogenes (1067–1071), was

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[95] M. Čanak-Medić, *Sveti Ahilije u Arilju. Istorija, arhitektura i prostorni sklop manastira*, Beograd 2002, 85–89.

[96] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 25.

[97] B. Todić, *Ikonostas u Dečanima – prvobitni slikani program i njegove poznije izmene*, Zograf 36 (2012) 116. For a reconstruction of the sanctuary barrier at Arilje v. Čanak-Medić, *Sveti Ahilije u Arilju*, 232–237, crt. 232.

[98] Todić, *Ikonostas u Dečanima*, 116.

[99] *Ibid.*, 116–117.

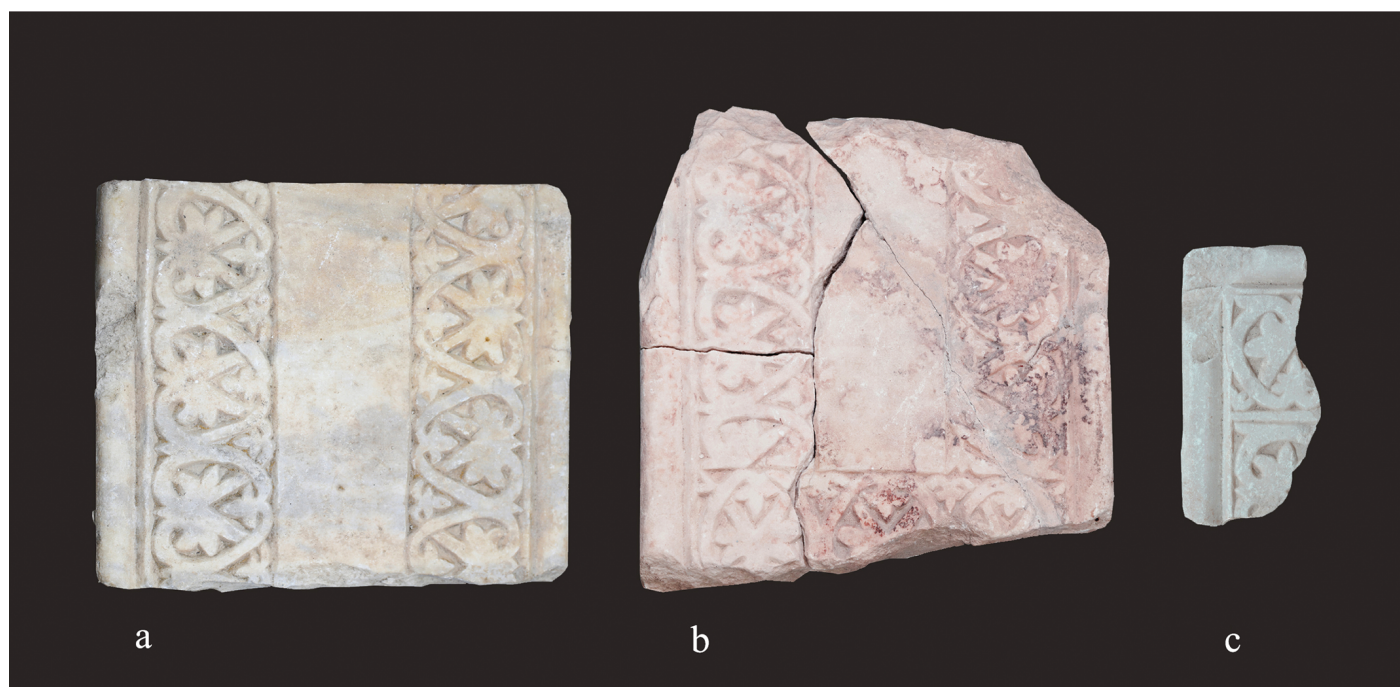[100] Rakićević, *Bogoslovske ideje u oltarskim pregradama*, 191.

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Fig. 9. a) b) c) Fragments of the closure slabs from the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna

restored by the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin, the younger son of King Uroš I and Queen Helen (in 1312–1313). The earliest example of fresco-painted icons between the intercolumnia has survived at Nagoričino, which is why scholars tend to overemphasize it, as G. Babić noted.[101]

The fact is that the two fresco-icons painted on the front of the closed-off templon were venerated as local sacred objects.[102] On the left side is St. George, the patron of the church, and on the right is the Virgin Pelagonitissa with Christ.[103] These icons were painted at the same time when the church was frescoed (1316–1318), suggesting that, at that point, icons were a constituent part of the templon. Its formation in the fourteenth century made use of the primary elements of the stone structure of the existing barrier – two small columns, the crowning cornice of the parapet and the epistyle.[104] The parapet could have been added or the earlier one could have still existed and was just plastered over and painted. The frames of the icons end in shallow arches decorated with painted ornaments, with alternating colored palmettes leaning on the painted capitals and small columns. On the reverse of these images, foliated crosses with letters were painted, supporting the premise that both images were understood as true icons.[105] The painted ornaments on the stone closure slabs, with the motif of unusual crosses in circles on

a white background, should be understood as a pedestal for the icons,[106] and their position in the structure of the barrier has been said to imitate moveable icons.[107] Beside them, on the pillars, Christ and the Mother of God were painted. As fresco-icons on templon proskynetaria had existed for centuries, it seems possible that these two fresco-icons in the templon intercolumnia mimicked the high icons of the proskynetaria, as suggested by ornaments emulating proskynetarion frames above and around the portrait and halo of the holy figures.[108]

The fresco-icons of St. George and the Virgin Pelagonitissa with Christ primarily had a devotional character: the faithful kissed them, prayed and lit candles in front of them. The position closest to the altar and the axis of the church was probably considered more suitable for their display than other places that could have been assigned to them in the church, in the naos or narthex.[109] This practice did not become commonplace that quickly in medieval Serbia despite the prolific building activities of King Milutin and his successors from the Nemanjić dynasty.

Around the time when Nagoričino was restored, in 1313/1314, King Milutin erected a modestly sized church dedicated to St. Joachim and St. Anna at Studenica. The king also built, expanded and restored other structures at the monastery,[110] the most distinguished endowment of the dynasty founder Stefan Nemanja. The last decade of the king's reign was marked by intensive building activities. It was then that the cathedral church at Hilandar was restored or built (1311–1316),[111] as well as King Milutin's

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[101] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 29.

[102] *Ibid.*, 30.

[103] For the Virgin Pelagonitissa v. S. Pajić, R. D'Amico, *La Theotokos Pelagonitissa. Un'iconografia tra l'Oriente, i Balcani e l'Italia nel medioevo*, Bologna 2010; eadem, „Između obala Jadrana" – Bogorodica Pelagonitisa: zajednička ikonografska tema srpskog i italijanskog slikarstva, Niš i Vizantija 9 (2010) 297–319.

[104] B. Todić, *Staro Nagoričino*, Beograd 1993, 38, 123. The matter was discussed in some earlier studies: Đ. Bošković, *Izveštaj i kratke beleške sa putovanja*, Starinar 6 (1931) 173–176; idem, *Arhitektonski izveštaji*, Glasnik SND 11 (1932) 212–223.

[105] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 30; Todić, *Staro Nagoričino*, 203, sl. 83.

[106] Babić, *O živopisanom ukrasu*, 30; Todić, *Staro Nagoričino*, 206, sl. 85.

[107] Grabar, *Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase*, 18.

[108] Todić, *Staro Nagoričino*, 205–206, sl. 84–86.

[109] Grabar, *Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase*, 19.

[110] M. Popović, *Studenička zdanja kralja Milutina*, in: *Manastir Studenica – 700 godina Kraljeve crkve*, 173–184.

[111] M. Marković, V. T. Hosteter, *Prilog hronologiji gradnje i oslikavanja hilandarskog katolikona*, HZ 10 (1998) 209–210.

Fig. 10. Sculptural decoration: a) part of the templon architrave, Porta Panagia, Pyli; b) Fragments of the closure slabs of the templon in the church of St. Stephen, Banjska; c) Part of the marble closure slab in the church of Sts. Joachim and Anna

burial church at Banjska, which emulated the "image of the Holy Mother of God of Studenica."[112]

The frescoing of the abovementioned church at Nagoričino, the Virgin Ljeviška, Gračanica and St. Niketas has been securely associated with the time of the celebrated Thessalonian artist Michael Astrapas and the painters from his workshop. They were hired by King Milutin, and there are scholarly grounds to believe that, among other religious edifices, they frescoed the small church of Sts. Joachim and Anna.[113] While the church was being built, the stoneworkers tasked with making the understated marble architectural sculptures were probably also asked to produce the liturgical furnishings made of white Studenica marble,[114] which marked the passage from the naos into the sanctuary.

The original shape of the templon from the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna at Studenica: an analysis

The Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna at Studenica, the so-called King's Church, with its very compact internal organization, is an unusual monument in Serbian medieval church architecture. Its architecture and some similarities with other churches associated with King Milutin's building activities have been the subject of stand-alone but not fully systematized interpretations.[115] Similarly, the architectural design of the templon has been analyzed only indirectly and without reference to the inseparable objects of worship, not taking into account the iconographic material relevant for a comprehensive understanding of the templon.

To begin our discussion of the questions concerning the marble templon at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, let us first take a look at the studies that have been published so far and proceed with our attempt to assess it as a whole.

The first important findings of the marble liturgical furnishings of the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna were discovered during the extensive conservation-restoration works at the Studenica Monastery complex in 1952–1956.[116] The conservation project involved some archaeological excavations, which led to the identification of some fragments of the templon's closure slabs, which the architect Slobodan Nenadović assumed to belong to the stone sanctuary barrier at the Virgin's Church. A small angular and highly distinctive piece with a bas-relief ornament was in a group of fragments found when the remains of the walls of the Church of St. John the Forerunner were uncovered. Judging by its thickness and the very similar bas-relief floral motif, it seemed to match the ornamentation and treatment of the marble slab built into the floor of the monastery refectory.[117] Already the following year, in 1957, Nenadović published many of these research results, including, among other things, a photograph of both separate marble fragments of the closure slab from the sanctuary barrier.[118] These early findings allowed the art historian Marica Šuput to offer her observations in a treatise entitled *Byzantine sculptural decoration in the building projects of King Milutin* (1976) and establish some analogies between the bas-reliefs on some architectural elements of the churches at Hilandar and Banjska, comparing them with the Studenica fragments of closure slabs of

[112] B. Todić, *Zadužbine kralja Milutina u delu arhiepiskopa Danila Drugog*, in: *Manastir Studenica – 700 godina Kraljeve crkve*, 151.

[113] M. Marković, *Mihailo Astrapa i freske Kraljeve crkve u Studenici*, in: *Manastir Studenica – 700 godina Kraljeve crkve*, 173–184.

[114] N. Debljović-Ristić et al., *Studenica marble: significance, use, conservation*, *Sustainability* 11/14 (Basel 2019) 3916 – https://doi.org/10.3390/su11143916.

[115] S. Ćurčić, *Kraljeva crkva u Studenici: simbolika, arhitektonska koncepcija i realizacija – uloge Danila II*, in: *Manastir Studenica – 700 godina Kraljeve crkve*, 68.

[116] S. M. Nenadović, *Studenički problemi. Ispitivanja i restauratorsko-konzervatorski radovi u periodu od 1952 do 1956 godine*, Saopštenja 3 (1957) 5–98.

[117] *Ibid.*, 67.

[118] *Ibid.*, 52, sl. 56.

the sanctuary barrier.[119] For the first time, the Studenica reliefs on the closure slabs of the sanctuary barrier were officially linked with the *parekklesion* of Sts. Joachim and Anna at Studenica. Comparing the marble-working technique and artistic approach of the architectural sculpture in all three churches, which involved filling-in the bas-reliefs with colored paste, the author concluded that the same stoneworking workshop from some Byzantine artistic center could have been hired to work at all three monuments.[120] On that occasion, without going into a more in-depth dimensional and architectural analysis, she proposed an ideal reconstruction of sanctuary barrier, grouping the available fragments onto the two closure slabs closer to the axis of the church, appending a frontal drawing by the architect Marija Radan Jovin.[121]

In her monograph on the King's Church, published in 1987, the art historian Gordana Babić makes no more than a passing reference to the "discovered fragments," in the context of introducing monograms into the ornamentation of columns and church furnishings, which were not applied on the closure slabs of the King's Church, and appends photographs of three separately photographed fragments[122] but without the already published fragment found in the vicinity of the Church of St. John. An important monolith piece of the central part of a separate closure slab decorated with the same ornament, which was included by Marica Šuput in her ideal reconstruction without a more thorough review of the number of the discovered closure slab fragments, was added to the earlier group, but the exact location of its discovery was not recorded.[123] Babić also published a horizontal cross-section of the church with a proposed ideal reconstruction of the sanctuary barrier, again by Marija Radan Jovin, which only slightly differs from the earlier one.[124]

In 1988, in the catalog for the exhibition *Blago manastira Studenice* (Treasures of the Studenica Monastery) a separate section was dedicated to Studenica's stone architectural sculpture. Here, in three catalog entries, the art historian Srđan Đurić presented and described the visual features, with dimensions and place of discovery, of every fragment from the sanctuary barrier at the King's Church. Importantly, Đurić notes that the fragment marked as the lower right corner of the closer slab could have been a piece from a third slab because its compositional grid uses bands rather than indentations like the other fragments.[125]

Much later, in his monograph *Manastir Studenica. Arheološka otkrića* (The Monastery of Studenica. Archaeological Discoveries, 2015), the archaeologist Marko Popović published the first technical drawings of all four

fragments grouped into two closure slabs,[126] claiming that they belonged to two *matching* closure slabs.[127] Finally, the catalog for the exhibition *Duhovno i kulturno nasleđe manastira Studenice: drevnost, postojanost, savremenost* (Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of the Monastery of Studenica: Past, Perseverance, Contemporaneity, 2019) summarizes earlier knowledge about the preserved fragments of the King's Church templon in three catalog entries by the art historian Olga Špehar.[128]

Taking into account the known fragments of the former templon, the views summarized above and the broader context and meaning of the liturgical purpose of sanctuary barriers, or templa, we will attempt to comprehensively determine its architectural and iconographic program (Fig. 9a, b, c).

Starting from the metric facts and actual traces found *in situ*, by analyzing the compositional elements and proportions of the vertical spatial structure of the King's Church and by considering some analogies with preserved original elements of stone templa from Serbian churches from the time of King Stefan Milutin's prolific ktetorial activity and their schemes, it seems methodologically plausible to supplement the quite scarce original evidence and propose a reconstruction of the marble templon at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna. A special iconological importance[129] is indicated by the figures of Christ and the Mother of God to the north and south of the sanctuary barrier, as well as two pairs of saints in the same, bottommost fresco zone – Christ's holy ancestors Joachim and Anna, and the venerable Sava and St. Simeon opposite them.[130]

Starting from the distance measured from the position of the original templon, securely determined on the northern side by the extant traces of a fresco-painted border and the position of the epistyle, two starting dimensions were determined: the width of the sanctuary barrier and its height, which constructionally stabilized the entire spatial structure of the templon.

In the ratio system, if one line segment is divided so that the ratio of its larger part to its entirety is equal to the ratio of the smaller part to the larger one, we can plausibly claim that, compositionally, this is a creative geometric principle known as the golden ratio (*sectio aurea*). It is well known that the golden ratio lies at the root of the best-proportioned architectural forms, i.e., that the entire law lies in the proportion of the individual parts to the whole and amongst themselves. Hence it is often

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[119] M. Šuput, *Vizantijski plastični ukras u graditeljskim delima kralja Milutina*, ZLUMS 12 (1976) 43–55.

[120] *Ibid*., 47–50.

[121] *Ibid*., 52.

[122] G. Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, Novi Sad – Studenica Monastery 2020, 34, sl. 12.

[123] Šuput, *Vizantijski plastični ukras*, 52, crt. 8.

[124] Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, 33, sl. 11.

[125] S. Đurić, *Parapetna ploča*, in: *Blago manastira Studenice*, ed. V. J. Đurić, Beograd 1986, 113, sl. 107, kat. br. 18 (no inventory number, place or year of publication); *ibid*., 114, kat. br. 19 (out of three reconstructed fragments, only one was inventoried – the one to the left, cat. no. 424); *ibid*., 114, sl. 103, kat. br. 20 (inv. br. 425).

[126] M. Popović, *Manastir Studenica: arheološka otkrića*, Beograd 2015, 80, sl. 33. Popović relies on the reconstruction proposed by Marija Šuput, disregarding Srđan Đurić's important remark about the lower right-side corner of the closure slab.

[127] *Ibid*., 81.

[128] O. Špehar, *Fragments from parapet slabs*, in: *Spiritual and cultural heritage of the Monastery of Studenica: Past, perseverance, contemporaneity*, ed. M. Marković, Belgrade 2019, 91–92, cat. no. 37.

[129] Iconographical depictions of the saints in the frescoes on the walls of the church iconologically participate in the same act as the faithful, just as the exemplars of these saints ontologically participate in the Liturgy. T. Rakićević, *Introductory note*, in: G. Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, 7.

[130] Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, 202–203, 196–197, figs. 173–174, 170.

called the divine proportion (*proportio divina*) or divine section (*sectio divina*) and is mathematically confirmed by the Fibonacci numbers.[131] It should, however, be borne in mind that, throughout the history of architectural practices, different systems of proportion represented practical design means and tools expressed through the metaphysical power of numbers, which contributed to achieving architectural harmony.[132] The aspiration to determine the system of proportion that lay at the root of Serbian medieval churches, including the Virgin's Church of Studenica, gives rise to the academic need to determine the mathematical ratios in the horizontal and vertical projections.[133]

Stopping short of the claim that the builder of the King's Church at Studenica was familiar with Euclidean geometry or had any knowledge of the quadrivium, especially in the first steps of measuring out the floor plan of the church, which show some inaccuracy,[134] the observed modifications and a gradual balancing-out through the dimensions of the walls and the spatial structure suggest that the designer(s) were highly skilled and had a marked feeling for harmony, reflected in the recognizable systems of proportion in the interior of the church.[135] Methodologically, the established system allowed us to use the available facts (the known widths of the two closure slabs and the tripartite structure of the sanctuary) to define the templon elements and hypothetically reconstruct their dimensions (Drw. 1).

The position of the two identical closure slabs, whose widths are known to us, was determined using the equal dimensions of the angular pilasters on the eastern side, with the space intended for the prothesis and diakonikon to the left and right of them. Continuing our examination of the fragments, especially the smallest angular one, which Đurić assumed to belong to a third closure slab,[136] besides the horizontal rim with a band framing the floral motifs, provides insight into two more details. The breadth of the torus on the rim framing the closure slabs exceeds that of the torus on the fragments of the two other slabs, perhaps suggesting that the two central closure slabs were comparatively larger, or more specifi-

cally, broader than the ones positioned laterally next to the northern and southern walls. The averse of the closure slabs of known dimensions was compositionally split into three equal surfaces along the vertical axis, thereby determining the breadth of the border with floral ornaments that framed the slab. The ornamental composition on the front was decorated with a vine made up of heart-shaped palmettes, with the interlaces embellished with alternating stylized fleur-de-lis motifs in two sizes. The multiple meanings of this symbolic representation, associated with many places in the Old and New Testament texts, the cult of the Mother of God, the dignity of royal power "bestowed" by God, and its ubiquity in the Christian world[137] were particularly worthy of attention in the graphic reconstruction of the missing parts of carved ornaments.

This symbolic motif also appears on the coinage issued by King Milutin. A coin of the king's dinar *de cruce et de lilio* features, on one side, the ruler with a lily-shaped crown seated on a throne, holding a cross in one hand and a scepter adorned with a fleur-de-lis motif in the other; on the reverse, it shows Jesus Christ with two heraldically linked fleur-de-lis motifs.[138] These coins were minted and issued while the King's Church was in construction and in the process of being furnished.[139] Hence this carved floral ornament, also present on the fragments of the closure slabs of the sanctuary barrier at the King's Church, as well as on the fragments from the sanctuary barrier in the Church of St. Stephen in Banjska, seems to be an important symbolic motif and could have had both theological and ideological meanings.[140]

However, despite some geometric similarity in the formation of the carved ornament stylized with heart-shaped vines with fleur-de-lis motifs on the interlaces, the stoneworking style, i.e., technique of the bas-relief, shows that they were made using different carving methods. The Banjska fragments betray the use of a masonry bit, a special kind of drill bit that releases a mass of material during carving.[141] This tool was extensively used in the production of marble architectural sculptures at the Virgin's Church of Studenica and is associated with stoneworkers from the Adriatic coastlands. The stoneworking artistry and technique, chisel use and the finishing touches on the Banjska bas-reliefs can hardly be attributed to the

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[131] F. Corbalán, *Le nombre d'or: le langage mathématique de la beauté*, Paris 2013, 26–41.

[132] M. A. Cohen, *Introduction: two kinds of proportion*, Architectural Histories 2/1 (London 2014) 1–25 https://journal.eahn.org/articles/10.5334/ah.bv/.

[133] M. Čanak-Medić, Đ. Bošković, *Arhitektura Nemanjinog doba* I. *Crkve u Toplici i dolinama Ibra i Morave*, Beograd 1986; M. Čanak-Medić, *Arhitektura Nemanjinog doba* II. *Crkve u Polimlju i na Primorju*, Beograd 1989. In the subsequent editions, for every medieval monument, through the proportional system by squaring, the dimensions of some elements are extracted from the starting picture of their proportions. More recent research is based on triangulation, using the √3 system, where an equilateral triangle emerges as the main proportional figure: M. Dragović et al., *Geometric proportional schemas of Serbian Medieval Raška churches based on Štambuk's proportional canon*, Nexus Network Journal 21/1 (Turin 2019) 33–58 – https://doi.org/10.1007/s00004-018-00426-z.

[134] Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, 35.

[135] The design of the church with a cross-in-square floor plan and a square-shaped naos points to the symbolism of the number four and also allows the construction of the golden ratio by lowering the diagonal inscribed in one half of the square to one of its sides, yielding the mathematical constant of 1 : 1,618.

[136] Đurić, *Parapetna ploča,*, 114, sl. 103, kat. br. 20.

[137] *Leksikon ikonografije, liturgike i simbolike zapadnog kršćanstva*, ed. A. Badurina, Zagreb 1990, 387–388; H. Cornwell, J. Cornwell, *Saints, signs, and symbols: the symbolic language of Christian art*, Harrisburg PA 2009, 11.

[138] M. Jovanović, *Srpski srednjovekovni novac*, Beograd 2001, 30–34; V. Ivanišević, *Obim kovanja srpskog srednjovekovnog novca kraljevskog perioda*, in: *Kraljevstvo i arhiepiskopija u srpskim i pomorskim zemljama Nemanjića*, ed. Lj. Maksimović, S. Pirivatrić, Beograd 2019, 503, 508, 515, sl. 1.

[139] Ivanišević, *Obim kovanja srpskog srednjovekovnog novca*, 503, 507, 516.

[140] At the Virgin's Church of Studenica, the northern vestibule features the carved motif of a cross with budded fleur-de-lis motifs on its beams (the Studenica cross), which is also commonly found on sarcophagi, e.g. the coffin of St. Joanikije at Sopoćani or the sarcophagus of an unknown saint at the Patriarchate of Peć, which was interpreted as a symbol of the Resurrection of Christ. For this v. J. Maglovski, *Skulptura Pećke patrijaršije. Motivi, značenja*, in: *Arhiepiskop Danilo II i njegovo doba*, ed. V. J. Đurić, Beograd 1987, 318–319, sl. 40–41.

[141] P. Rockwell, *The art of stoneworking: a reference guide*, New York 1993, 64, drw. 10.
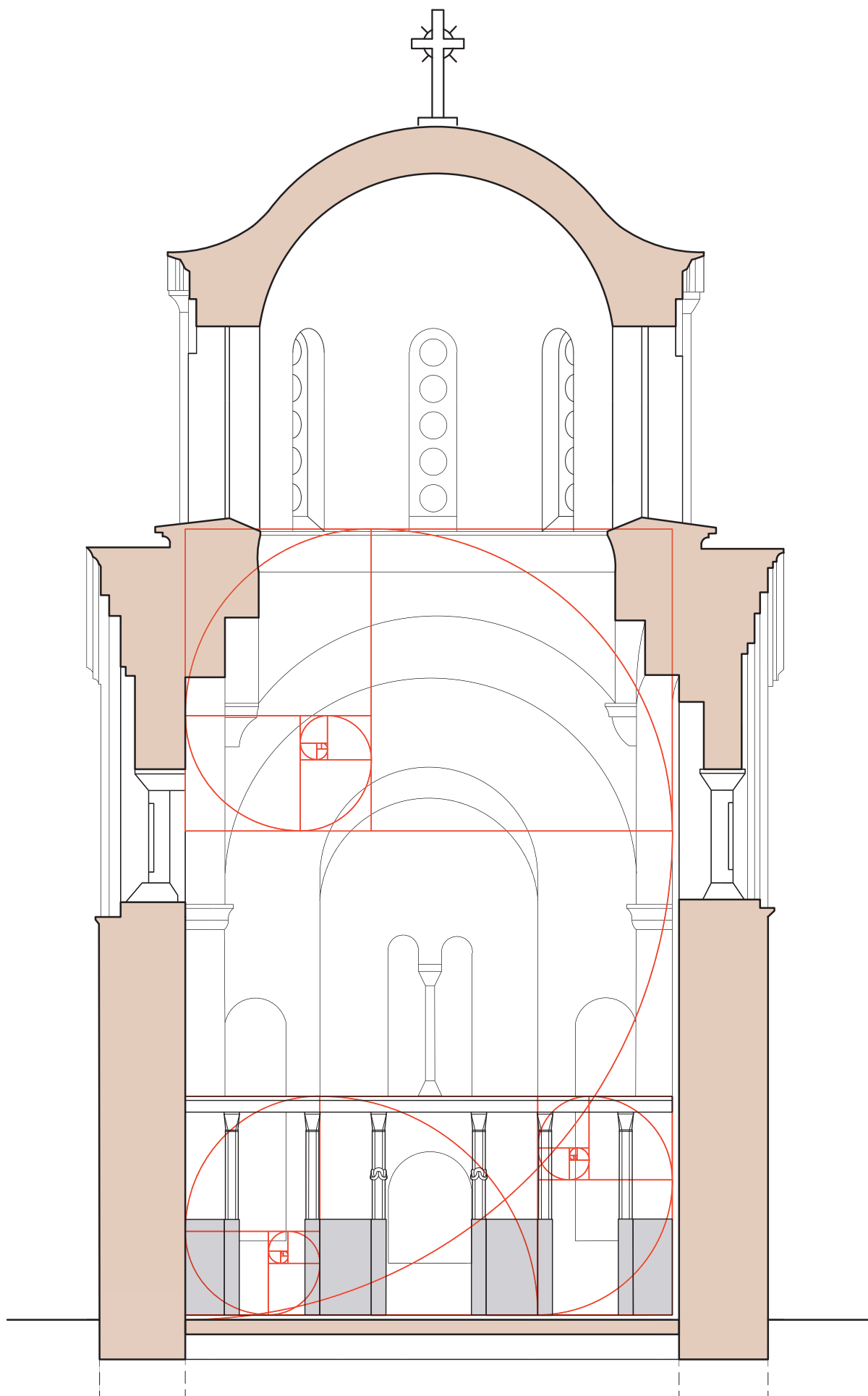
Drw. 1. Proportional analysis of the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, Studenica Monastery
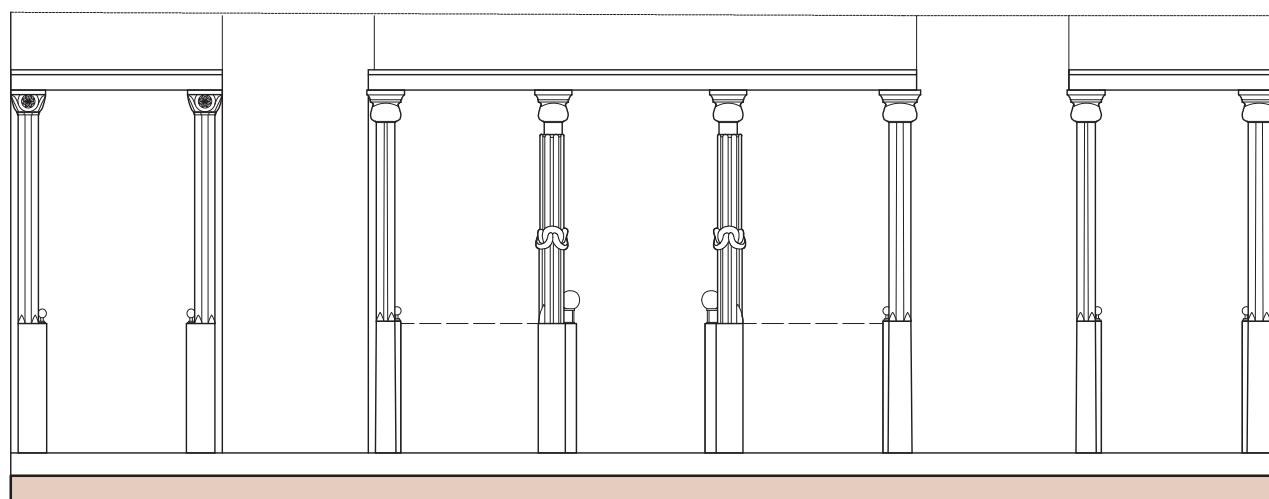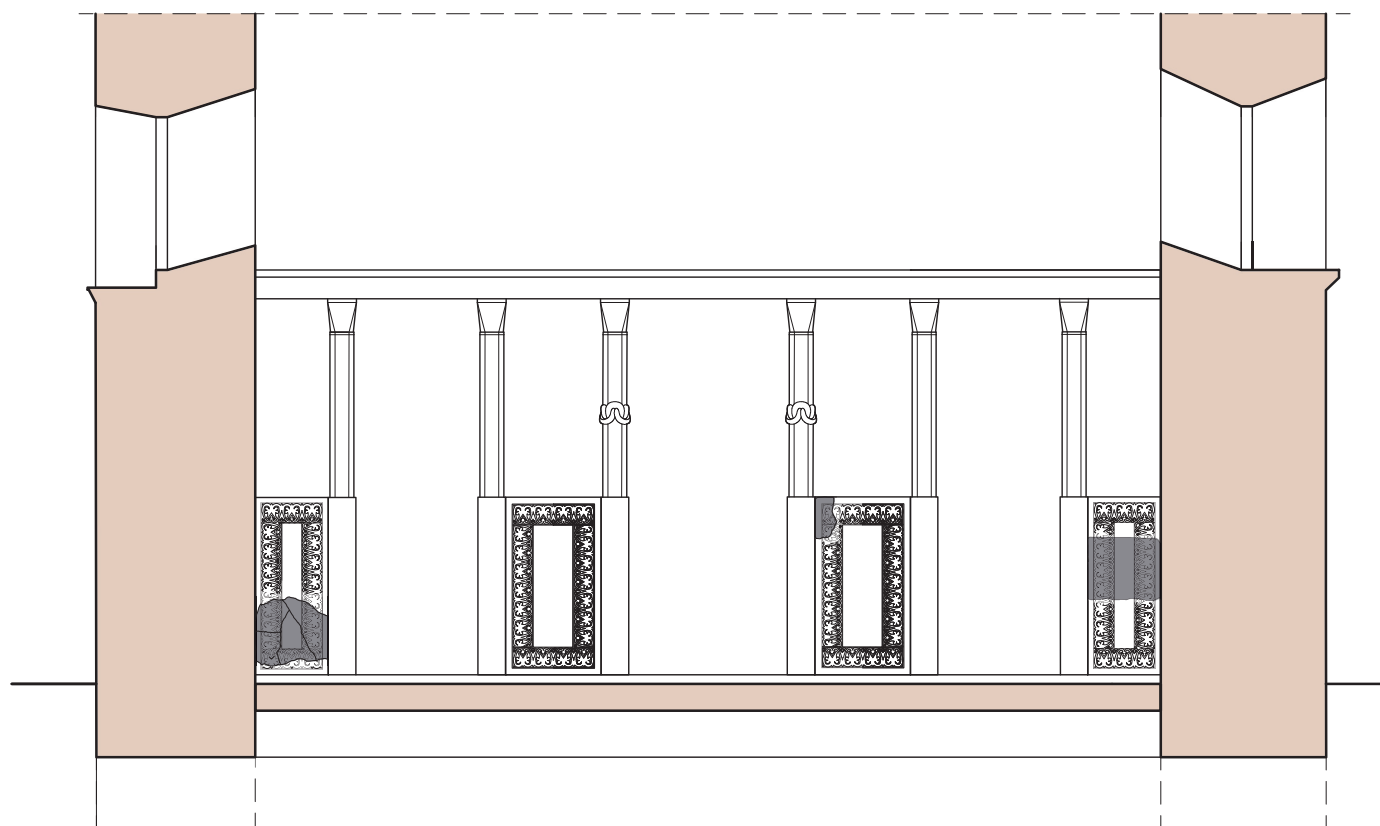
Drw. 2. a) Ideal reconstruction of the templon of the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, Studenica Monastery;
b) Templon of the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin, Hilandar Monastery

same group of craftsmen that worked at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna and obviously had inferior stoneworking and artistic abilities.[142]

Besides their themes, stylistic characteristics and sculptural treatment, the fact that these closure slabs were filled in with paste is confirmed by traces of red paste on

[142] M. Šuput's hypothesis that the carvings at Banjska, Studenica and Hilandar were made by stoneworkers from the same workshop that came from one of the Byzantine centers seems improbable, although their themes and pseudo-kufic stylistic features show that they were undoubtedly derived from the stone ornaments used in Byzantine churches in the Greek territories (Šuput, *Vizantijski plastični ukras*, 51–53).

Fig. 11. Templon of the Church of St. Demetrios, Patriarchate of Peć

the fragments of the Banjska sanctuary barrier, as well as their similarity with the architectural sculpture of King Milutin's katholikon of the Hilandar Monastery. It repeats the practice of using reliefs with paste as a special form of stone ornamentation, for which analogies have been found at the Church of Porta Panagia in Thessaly (Fig. 10a, b, c).[143]

However, when analyzed and compared with the floral ornament of a wide band on the closure slabs, the small corner fragment revealed, among other details, a more elaborate vine motif. The vine is made up of interconnected ornaments which, on two closure slabs, have a central flower with three petals, but on the fragment of the third, the floral ornament has five symmetrically arranged petals. The five-petal figure confirms that this fragment belonged to a separate closure slab. We can assume that, due to its position in the overall composition of the templon, right next to the royal doors, it could have been slightly more important than the narrow closure slabs located next to the side walls of the church. The width and height of the slab were obtained by geometric

progression, according to a division based on the golden ratio, with the overall height of the lower belt coming close to the dimension range of templa in Serbian medieval churches (Drw. 1).[144]

Because there are no findings of the columns, colonnades, capitals and epistyles to supplement the corpus of the marble templon, we used analogies with the preserved original elements of sanctuary barriers chronologically close to the creation of the templon at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna.

The elements of a stone temple hidden behind the massive wooden Baroque iconostasis at the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin at Hilandar are noteworthy although they display some diversity, suggesting that changes, particularly apparent on the capitals, were made over time.[145] The distinctive characteristic of the Hilandar templon compared to other known examples in the Serbian milieu is the use of colonnades beside the royal doors with the motif of the so-called Hercules knot,[146] which emphasizes the central passageway to the sanctuary. The same motif is present on the mullion of the two-light win-

[143] А. К. Ορλάνδος, *Η Πόρτα-Παναγιά της Θεσσαλίας*, Αρχείον των Βυζαντινών μνημείων της Ελλάδος 1 (Αθήνα 1935) 28, εικ. 18; M. Šuput, *Vizantijski reljefi sa pastom iz XIII i XIV veka*, Zograf 7 (1976) 6–44. The only extant templon made in this technique is located at the Panagia Episkopi on the island of Santorini and dates from 1181 (Vanderheyde, *The carved decoration*, 85, fig. 13).

[144] M. Čanak-Medić, *Prvobitna oltarska pregrada crkve Uspenja Bogorodice u Morači*, Saopštenja 39 (2007) 77.
[145] S. Nenadović, *Arhitektura Hilandara: crkve i paraklisi*, HZ 3 (1974) 137–138, sl. 48.
[146] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *The Byzantine knotted column*, 95–103.

dow on the western façade of Staro Nagoričino.[147] We cannot rule out the possibility that the sanctuary three-light window at the Virgin Ljeviška also had a Hercules knot on its mullions, which were removed when the church was converted into a mosque.[148] We can assume that they were also present on the templon, like in other churches from King Milutin's time whose decoration has not survived in full (Drw. 2).

Earlier scholars have associated the stone bas-relief decoration on the western portal of the Hilandar katholikon with the Porta Panagia church in the town of Pyli (1283) and compared it with the technique of decorating the epistyle of the sanctuary barrier.[149] Similarities with this sanctuary barrier include the use of interconnected columns and mullions with the same motif on the sanctuary three-light window at this church. Entirely hypothetically, we might ask whether the main door of the sanctuary at the King's Church could have had interconnected columns, which have carried strong symbolic meanings ever since the classical times and appeared in the Byzantine world already in the tenth century and, shortly thereafter, on Mount Athos, too (Drw. 3).[150]

As for the capitals, only two have survived, on the northern side near the passage to the proskomedia, which, judging by their carved ornaments, seem to belong to the time when Milutin's templon was created. Given their shape and size, they could not have been the direct model.

Marica Šuput has pointed out the structural similarity of the templon elements at the King's Church with the sanctuary barrier of the Church of St. Demetrios at Peć.[151] Indeed, comparing the underlying division of the sanctuary barrier and the shapes and dimensions of the original columns, colonnetes and capitals,[152] we could, by analogy, hypothetically propose the approximate dimensions and forms, and, to an extent, the carved ornaments, of the missing elements of the templon at the Studenica chapel. Although the placement of the three original closure slabs during the reconstruction of St. Demetrios[153] remains open to a reexamination, this sanctuary barrier is an important testimony to the artistic ideas associated with the time close to the king's building activities (Fig. 11).

When considering this templon, a relevant body of evidence is the templa at the Church of the Ascension at Dečani.[154] Those have a more complex spatial structure

and a sculpturally richer treatment of some elements, particularly capitals, and they also have a more elaborately fluted pedestal. The proportions of their closure slabs might indicate the proportional ratio between the breadth and height of the closure slabs at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, given their known width and the proportion system. The Dečani templa had no indentations or grooves on their colonnades to suggest that the insertion of icons of Christ and the Virgin in the intercolumnia was planned in advance.[155] On the eastern pair of piers supporting the dome, the commonly shown figures of Christ and the Mother of God were not painted; instead, they appear on the western pair of piers in the front, which delineate an anteroom for the space below the dome, i.e., the central part of the naos. The appearance of icons on the intercolumnia is associated with the translation of the relics of King Stefan Uroš III, the founder of Dečani, to the space in front of the sanctuary.[156] The structural program of the Dečani templa allowed us to draw some conclusions about the shaping of the architectural structure of the templon at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna.

We still do not know anything about the decoration of the architrave beam – epistyle at this church. The ornaments on the closure slabs, as well as the floral richness of the border highlighting the fresco-painted scenes, could be an indication that the entire architectural structure of the templon was decorated in bas-relief ornaments emphasized with colored paste, as suggested by many examples of templa, especially those created in the so-called Middle Byzantine period. However, the architecture alone is not enough to allow a comprehensive assessment of the templon's role in the internal organization and furnishing of the space.

The function of the fresco-icons flanking the templon

Beside the templon of the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, on both sides, there are characteristic fresco-icons of Christ and the Mother of God. Christ holds an open Gospel book with the words: "I am the light of the world..." (John 8:12).[157] The way in which the figures of Christ and the Virgin are shown is tied to the described tradition of painting these icons on the pillars beside the templon as proskynetaria. The presence of these representations, Christ opposite the Mother of God, right next to the templon, was enough to satisfy the tradition of icon veneration associated with it.

The placement of the most revered frescoes one opposite another, in the easternmost part of the naos, was adopted in single-nave (aisleless) churches, such as St. George at Kurbinovo, St. Stephen in Kastoria[158] or St.

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[147] J. Ćirić, *The symbolism of the knotted in the architecture of King Milutin*, The Legends Journal of European History Studies 1 (Tokat 2020) 86–90, sl. 5, 8, 9 – http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/legends.41923.

[148] M. Čanak Medić, B. Todić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, Novi Sad 2015, 12.

[149] Šuput, *Vizantijski reljefi sa pastom iz XIII i XIV veka*, crt. 4.

[150] N. Melvani, *The middle Byzantine sanctuary barriers of Mount Athos: templon and iconostasis*, in: Δασκάλα. Απόδοση τιμής στην ομότιμη καθηγήτρια Μαίρη Παναγιωτίδη-Κεσίσογλου, ed. Π. Πετρίδης, Β. Φωσκόλου, Αθήνα 2014, 305–335.

[151] Šuput, *Vizantijski plastični ukras*, 48.

[152] M. Čanak-Medić, *Arhitektura prve polovine XIII veka* II. *Crkve u Raškoj*, Beograd 1995, 65–66, sl. 105–105a, kapitel sl. 124d–282.

[153] The sanctuary barrier was restored in 1932 by Dj. Bošković. V. idem, *Osiguravanje i restoracija crkve manastira sv. Patrijaršije u Peći*, Starinar 8–9 (1933–1934) 119–122, sl. 28, 29.

[154] Todić, *Ikonostas u Dečanima*, 115–129; idem, M. Čanak-Medić, *Manastir Dečani*, Beograd 2005, 225–227, crt. XLII–XLIII.

[155] Todić, *Ikonostas u Dečanima*, 116.

[156] *Ibid.*, 116–117.

[157] Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, 200, n. 499. The full quote reads: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

[158] The Church of St. Stephen in Kastoria is a three-nave basilica with a narthex. It was frescoed several times: in the second half of the ninth, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The representations of Christ and the church patron, facing one another

Fig. 12. Holy Virgin with Christ, with St. Simeon, St. Sava and warrior saints behind them, Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, Studenica Monastery

Nicholas tou Kasnitzi in Kastoria.[159] This arrangement points to a link between the templon's architectural structure and the devotional images.[160] Taking into account other aisleless churches, we observe a pattern in the selection of wall paintings facing one another. There are two variants of the fresco arrangement: the first is placing the Deisis opposite the figure of the church patron; the other involves a similar arrangement of the murals – the figure of Christ and the Mother of God or the church patron.[161] In Cretan churches dedicated to the Holy Virgin, the Mother of God is shown as a frontal figure on the wall opposite the Deisis, on the northern side, beside the altar.[162] In any case, the lower zone of the walls, where these frescoes are, was used as a rudimentary form of the templon, in front of which the faithful worshipped. The representation of these wall paintings suggests that they were used as despotic icons instead of the non-existent templon (Fig. 12a, b and 13a, b).[163]

In the single-nave Church of St. George at Kurbinovo, a unique iconographic scheme is found in the eastern corner of the southern wall, in front of the altar. The Mother of God faces left, prayerfully addressing Christ shown in a proskynetarion on the southern wall.[164] In the first zone on the northern wall, St. George, the patron of the church, is shown, again in a painted proskynetarion.[165] Thus, the scheme of the frescoes used for devotional purposes (worship of the faithful) on the eastern pair of pillars in domed churches was moved to the surface of the lateral wall of single-nave edifices. Along with the transfer of this theme to the southern wall, the function of the templon was moved to the side wall of aisleless churches, which now seems to have become part of the sanctuary.[166] The arrangement of the representations of the church patron and the Deisis on the edges of the lateral walls in front of the altar developed in Cretan churches in the thirteenth century and lasted until the fifteenth century.[167] The arrangement of these compositions has several variants.[168]

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[159] in the naos, belong to the earliest fresco layer (S. Pelekanidis, M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, Athens 1985, 9). For the construction of the Church of St. Stephen in Kastoria in the ninth century, the stages of wall painting and the fresco program v. Pelekanidis, Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, 6–21; I. Sisiou, *The painting throughout the 13th century in Saint Stefanos of Kastoria*, Niš i Vizantija 5 (2007) 393–410 (including earlier literature).

[159] The Church of St. Nicholas (Agios Nikolaos) tou Kasnitzi in Kastoria was built as an aisleless basilica with a narthex, and it was probably painted in the last quarter of the twelfth century. The frescoes of Christ Pantokrator and St. Nicholas, the church patron, shown as a full-length figure on the southern wall with the busts of Christ and the Mother of God handing him a Gospel book and an omophorion, are in the immediate proximity of the templon (Pelekanidis, Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, 57, 59, fig. 11). For a dating of the frescoes of St. Nicholas tou Kasnitzi, commissioned by Nikephoros Kasnitzes, to the last decade of the twelfth century v. T. Malmquist, *Byzantine 12th century frescoes in Kastoria. Agioi Anargyroi and Agios Nikolaos tou Kasnitzi*, Uppsala 1979, 106–109 (for the fresco program v. 24–28, 30–32, 123–124). Pelekanidis and Chatzidakis date the wall paintings of St. Nicholas tou Kasnitzi to 1164–1191 (Pelekanidis, Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, 50–65). Cf. K. Skawran, *Stylistic cross currents in twelfth-century painting in Greece*, De arte 15 (Pretoria 1980) 8, 10, 13–14; E. Drakopoulou, *Kastoria. Art, patronage, and society*, in: *Heaven & earth. Cities and countryside in Greece*, ed. J. Albani, E. Chalkia, Athens 2013, 118–119.

[160] A. Mailis, *Obscured by walls. The bēma display of the Cretan churches from visibility to concealment*, Mainz 2020, 53. Athanassios Mailis has written a study on a group of frescoes mostly painted on the side walls of Cretan aisleless churches built from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. His research included 425 chuches on the island, with around 80 characteristic examples. An analysis of these examples makes it easier to assess the program of the lower zone in the naos of the King's Church, where the frescoes of Christ and the Mother of God are positioned, facing each other, closest to the sanctuary, followed by the representations of Joachim and Anna opposite St. Sava and St. Simeon.

[161] *Ibid.*, 53.

[162] *Ibid.*, 59.

[163] *Ibid.*, 63.

[164] C. Grozdanov, *Kurbinovo i drugi studii za freskoživopisot vo Prespa*, Skopje 2015, 160–164, 260; E. Dimitrova, *The church of Saint George at Kurbinovo*, Skopje 2016, 13, 25.

[165] Grozdanov, *Kurbinovo*, 180–181, 217, 265.

[166] *Ibid.*, 57–58.

[167] *Ibid.*, 55, 57–58, 79.

[168] *Ibid.*, 57–58, 63–76.

Fig. 13. Christ the Judge with the patrons and ktetors behind him, Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna, Studenica Monastery

From the second half of the fourteenth century, the practice of showing the saint on the northern wall next to the altar, in continuity with other figures and without separating it with borders, became standard.[169] The images of the Deisis and the church patron provide important evidence about the now lost cultic practices established in simple (aisleless) churches of this period.[170] The earliest Cretan example of Christ and the Mother of God opposite each other on the side walls in the space leading up to the altar is found in the Church of the Mother of God in Alikampos, Apokoronas (1315/1316).[171]

The manner of representation, themes, proximity to the altar and integration into the iconographic program suggest that these images were venerated as icons of the templon and used for devotional purposes although they had been moved to the side walls.[172] The frescoes of Christ and the Mother of God on the lateral walls later served as the model for the despotic icons of masonry templa.[173]

In the case of the King's Church, Sts. Joachim and Anna are its patrons, but in a way, so are St. Simeon and St. Sava, the most deserving personages for the founding and prosperity of the Studenica Monastery,[174] and therefore their placement opposite the patrons, Joachim and Anna, seems very natural. In the lower zone of the naos at the King's Church, an elaborate, symmetrical Deisis is split into two parts, divided and doubled at the same time,

reflecting the concept of the patrons' presence opposite Christ and the Mother God. Christ faces the Virgin and St. Simeon and St. Sava. His blessing gesture includes both the representations facing Him and the patrons next to Him – Sts. Joachim and Anna, to whom he is slightly turned. The Mother of God is opposite the full-length figure of Christ, and the Christ Child in her arms blesses St. Simeon and St. Sava. The composition of Christ, Joachim and Anna also includes King Milutin, the founder of the church, with his wife, opposite the warrior saints (Fig. 13, 14).

This elaborate, symmetrical composition of images intended for prayerful veneration, headed by Christ and the Mother of God (through their proskynetarion icons moved to the side walls) with the figures that, in the spirit of the Deisis theology, gravitate towards them, makes their repetition on the templon redundant, particularly given that they had just been moved from it.

The templon, as a *permeable structure*,[175] has a symbolic meaning and practical purpose associated with the functionality and character of the sanctuary.[176] The very fact that this space was sectioned off highlighted its special importance. The low walls (parapets) let one know that one can go no further,[177] but the line of pillars above the parapets, the colonnade, is an expression of the idea of opening

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[169] *Ibid*., 76, sl. 111.

[170] Mailis, *Obscured by walls*, 82.

[171] *Ibid*., 94, sl. 148–150. Many of those churches were frescoed by Ioannis Pagomenos, who usually included representations of Christ opposite others in the program.

[172] *Ibid*., 101.

[173] Fresco-icons on side walls, intended for veneration and worship, existed before masonry templa in Crete. *Ibid*., 103.

[174] King Milutin did not envision the chapel dedicated to the Virgin's parents as an independent church but wanted it to continue and add to the idea of Studenica's cathedral (Virgin's Church) and highlight the century-long existence of the holy lineage from which he had sprung (Babić, *The King's Church of Studenica*, 24).

[175] I. A. Shalina, *Vkhod «Sviataia Sviatykh» i vizantiĭskaia altarnaia pregrada*, in: *Ikonostas. Proiskhozhdenie – razvitie – simvolika*, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moskva 2000, 55.

[176] Rakićević, *Neki teološki razlozi za postojanje dveri i zavese na templu*, 249.

[177] In the fourth century, there were still cases of laypeople being given the Holy Communion in the sanctuary. Canons 19 and 44 of the Council of Laodicea officially banned the faithful from entering the sanctuary to receive Holy Communion. Summarizing the order of the Holy Liturgy, Canon 19 of the Council of Laodicea states: "And it is lawful to the priesthood alone to go to the Altar and [there] communicate." Canon 44 reads: "Women may not go to the altar." Also, the Quinisext Council, known as the Council in Trullo, stated: "It is not permitted to a layman to enter the sanctuary (Holy Altar), though, in accordance with a certain ancient tradition, the imperial power and authority is by no means prohibited from this when he wishes to offer his gifts to the Creator." So, the laity was banned from entering, with

Fig. 14. Templon of the Church Sts. Joachim and Anna

this space, an invitation to partake in it, first by watching and then through the liturgical ritual[178] (Fig. 15).

We could conclude that the compact architectural forms of the King's Church also entailed condensing the ideational design of the templon. The question of whether the templon at the King's Church fully followed the previous tradition, in which there were no icons in the intercolumnia, with the doors and curtain, or had icons in its intercolumnia or on the architrave (or both) must, for now, remain open.[179]

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the exception of the emperor. V. *Svešteni kanoni Crkve*, transl. episkop Atanasije umirovljeni hercegovački, Beograd 2005, 293, 297, 179.

[178] Rakićević, *Bogoslovske ideje u oltarskim pregradama*, 190. The laity must watch and listen to the officiating priest to be able to respond with chants and prayers to the actions and sounds coming from the sanctuary.

[179] These hypotheses are irrelevant for the proposed reconstruction.

Based on all of the above, it seems most likely that the sanctuary barrier at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna repeated the tradition that informed the templon of the Virgin's Church at Studenica and that, in building this modestly sized church, King Milutin in many ways expressed his attitude to his holy ancestors and left a legacy worthy of the saint-bearing Nemanjić lineage.

Порекло илустрација / Illustration credits

After Konstántios, Byzantino kai Christianikó Mouseío: Fig.1a, b, c, 2
Studenica Monastery: Fig. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 a, b, c, 10c, 12, 13
L. Fundić: Fig. 4, 10a
N. Debljović Ristić: Fig. 10b, 11, Drw. 1, 3
S. Ristić: Fig. 14
S. Stražmešterov: Drw. 2

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Средњовековни темплон са нераздвојним објектима поклоњења. Темплон цркве Светих Јоакима и Ане

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Проучавања унутрашње организације богослужбених простора, саображаваних литургијском поретку, за незаобилазно полазиште имају разматрање архитектуре, функције и значења олтарских преграда–темпла, који чине саставни и неопходни део плана црквене грађевине. Архитектонска структура средњовековних камених темпла прилагођавала се унутрашњем просторном распореду различитих облика цркава грађених у духу, углавном, источнохришћанске традиције.

Једна од основних карактеристика тзв. источне духовности је непрекидно постојање одређеног страхопоштовања према *страшним* тајнама Христовим присутним на престолу–жртвенику. Источна побожност је захтевала да литургијска светиња буде обавијена тајанственим велом и на тај начин буде заштићена од потпуне доступности, чак и погледу верних. На тај начин чувано је достојанство олтарског простора као највеће светиње и мистичког средишта храма.

Симболички вишезначано темпло је представљало место додира световног и светог, видљивог и невидљивог, склад обликовног и уметничког, снагу теолошког и естетичког. Његова улога у формирању просторно-сакралне градације унутар храма није се мењала. Развитак темпла пратио је преображај раних, ниских преграда у више, са екстензијом структуре по вертикали, у виду појаве колонета и капитела који носе архитравну греду – епистилион или космитис. Упоредо са артикулацијом олтарског простора усложњавањем и прикључењем пастофорија уз апсиду на источној страни црквених грађевина, устројаван је и архитектонски склоп темпла. Његов постепени преображај са отвореним колонадама и архитравом пратила је појава, а од X века надаље, и редовно приказивање две монументалне иконе Христа и Богородице, истакнуте и живописане на источном пару зиданих стубаца или пиластара, односно на северном и јужном ступцу који у конструктивном, али и функционалном погледу означавају прелаз из наоса у олтарски простор.

Дубокопоштоване иконе Христа и Богородице имале су миметички карактер повезан са темплом. Представе светих постале су неодвојиве од литургијског поретка у коме верни са светитељима ѻпште светотајински, кроз причешћивање Телом Христовим, певањем духовних песама и молитава, али и кроз молитвено посматрање светитеља присутних на иконама. Темпло, као и простор испред њега, постало је тачка на коју ће се фокусирати народна побожност. Ако темпло није имало иконе у доњој зони, оне су могле бити на архитраву. На тај начин иконографија је продирала на олтарску преграду, која се постепено преображавала у иконостас.

Просторна организација српских средњовековних цркава, заснована на начелима преузетим из Византије, укључивала је и целокупан програм камених олтарских преграда. У главним црквама српских средњовековних задужбина династије Немањића, грађених крајем XII и током читавог XIII века, темпла су најчешће образована између пара источних стубаца на којима су се налазиле уоквирене фреско-сликане представе Христа и Богородице у виду проскинитара и њих је карактерисала видљивост богослужбеног простора са олтаром. Нажалост, њихови изворни облици углавном нису сачувани, али су теоријске претпоставке и рестаурације изведене на основу података сачуваних *in situ* и оних фрагмената који су доприносили употпуњавању њихових облика, а проналажени су током археолошких истраживања у XX веку. Једна од таквих реконструкција мермерног темпла спроведена је недавно у Богородичиној цркви у Студеници. Његова структурална форма и архитектоника блиска је темплима насталим од X века надаље на подручјима под утицајем византијске културне традиције.

Почетком XIV века, у време богате ктиторске делатности краља Стефана Уроша II Милутина, у манастиру Студеници подигнута је невелика црква посвећена Богородичиним родитељима св. Јоакиму и Ани. У њеној сажетој унутрашњости простор између олтара и наоса цркве био је одељен каменом олтарском преградом – темплом, чију композицију су употпуњавале фреске Христа и Богородице живописане северно и јужно непосредно уз темпло. О постојању каменог темпла сведоче остаци мермерних парапетних плоча који се чувају у лапидаријуму манастира Студенице. Преиспитивањем свих расположивих података, а посебно сачуваних фрагмента парапетних плоча и њиховог клесаног украса, предложена је просторно-геометријска анализа првобитних облика темпла. Аналогије са очуваним елементима камених олтарских преграда српских средњовековних цркава – црква Светог Стефана у Бањској, црква Ваведења у Хиландару које припадају ктиторским делима краља Милутина, али и црква Светог Димитрија у Пећкој патријаршији или црква Вазнесења Христовог у Дечанима – омогућиле су доношењу појединих закључака о обликовању архитектонског склопа темпла цркве Светих Јоакима и Ане.

За разумевање темпла цркве Светих Јоакима и Ане важне су фреске у најнижој зони наоса, северно и јужно уз темпло, где се развија богат и симетричан Деизис који је подељен на два дела, истовремено је раздвојен и удвојен, одражавајући идеју присуства патрона наспрам Христа и Богородице. Христос је наспрам Богородице и светих Симеона и Саве, а уз Христа су Богородичини родитељи св. Јоаким и Ана. Овакав начин изображавања, теме, близина олтара и интегрисаност у иконографски програм указују на то да су ове представе поштоване као иконе темпла пред којима се вршило поклоњење, иако су биле измештене на бочне зидове. Сажимање архитектонских форми Краљеве цркве подразумевало је и сажимање идејног решења темпла.

Олтарска преграда цркве Светих Јоакима и Ане поновила је традицију на којој почива и темпло Богородичине цркве у Студеници, а краљ Милутин је градећи ову невелику цркву, на много начина, исказивао однос према светим прецима, остављајући достојно трагове који сведоче о припадности светородној лози Немањића.