

**AS THE BYZANTINES SAW IT: SENSORIA, SOURCES,
APSE AND BRICKWORK AT THE END OF 13TH-CENTURY**

In Byzantine art and architecture the Church as spatially determined unity, has an altar with a system alternated with semicircular niches - the apse.¹ As privileged compartment in the church it was mentioned by Prokopios (as semi cylindrical space vaulted with a conch or quarter-sphere) although in the manuscript itself he used rather archaic expressions.²

Forming the constitution of the body of the Church, the apse contributes in the same time to the articulation of church compartments as vision of the body of Christ.³ Prime examples of Early Byzantine Architecture direct us toward conclusion that the exterior of the Church is modeled by tectonic, flat and solid surfaces. One could say that the apse of the church of Hagia Eirine in Constantinople (Fig. 1)⁴

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¹ Ch. Delvoye, *Études d'architecture paléochrétienne et byzantine. II. L'abside, Byzantion XXXII*, 2 (1962), 489 - 547, esp. 530 - 546; B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images*, Reichert Verlag 2010, 27 sq (with bibliography).

² «And the face itself of the church (which would be the part which faces the rising sun, that portion of the building in which they perform the mysteries in worship of God) was constructed in the following manner. A structure of masonry (oikodomia) is built up from the ground, not made in a straight line, but gradually curving inward on its flanks and receding at the middle, so that it forms the shape of half a circle, which those who are skilled in such matters call a half-cylinder (hêmikylintron); and so it rises precipitously to a height.» Prokopios, *Buildings*, T.1, transl.H.B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press 1940, chapter 1, line 32; C. Delvoye, *Études d'architecture paléochrétienne et byzantine. II. L'Abside, Byzantion XXXII*, 1 (1962), 291-310.

³ B. Caseau, *Experiencing the Sacred*, in: *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, eds. C. Nesbitt, M. Johnson, Farnham, Ashgate 2013, 59 – 77; N. Schibille, *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*, Ashgate, Farnham 2014, 153 et sq.

⁴ R. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of Iconoclasm*, in: *Byzantium in the Iconoclast*



Fig.1. The Church of Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, photo: Jasmina S. Ćirić

Сл.1. Црква Св. Ирине у Цариграду, фото: Јасмина С. Ћирић

already notes a tendency towards more emphasis, accentuating of the certain structures of the brick and its forms. During the period of Komnenoi, the apses are built as solid, massive and articulated with horizontally stacked bricks and mortar joints. Generally speaking, on the Middle and especially Late Byzantine architecture, the apse was usually the most popular form of articulation of the external surface.⁵ Horizontals of the apse obtained supremacy of lines and structural forms (fig.2), until the time when brickwork regained primary function in vivid shaping of the apsidal images, especially at the beginning of Palaiologan

rulership whose preoccupations with antiquarianism in its different genres have been fortunate.⁶ Byzantine architecture during the Palaeologoi most of all expressed its artistic possibilities on the surfaces of the apse which exterior turns into a kind of tapestry.⁷ The exterior of the apse as a space for images has never been discussed and this is the focus of this paper. That is the argument why it is necessary to advance understanding of the exterior articulation of the apses witnessed in Palaeologan architecture and its degree of structural integrity at the end of 13th-century.⁸ Precisely said, investigates that examples of brickwork images and changes of meaning attached to certain ornaments do not only depend on transformations in form, content, or iconography but also on changes in the different senses addressed by these images embedded in different *sensoria / sensorial visibility*.

“What did I have in mind? What I saw.” - Nikitas Choniates

Era (ca 680-850): The Sources. An Annotated Survey ;Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 7, ed. L. Brubaker and J. Haldon (Ashgate, 2001), 3-36, esp.

⁵ R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Baltimore, Penguin Books 1965, 423- 424.

⁶ R. Grigg, *Byzantine Credulity as an Impediment to Antiquarianism*, *Gesta* XXVI/1 (1987), 3 -9.

⁷ V. Korać, *Monumentalna arhitektura u Vizantiji i Srbiji u poslednjem veku Vizantije. Osobena obrada fasadnih površina*, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 43 (2006), 209.

⁸ S. Ćurčić, *Articulation of Church facades during the first half of the fourteenth century: A study in the relationship of Byzantine and Serbian Architecture*, *L'art byzantin au debut du XIV siecle*, Symposium de Gračanica, Beograd 1978, 21.

There would probably be nothing paradoxical about what Nikitas had in mind if he read a manuscript about everyday life in Byzantium. Namely, he continues that he saw: “the everyday life of the Byzantines; their habits, their occupations.” (fig.3)⁹

And what accentuates this paradox is that he actually “saw” those narrative snippets of everyday life, habits, and beliefs. The phenomenon that this instance exemplifies is the manifestation of *a narrative that is missing*, which, in turn, is substantiated, through visual artifacts. Do artifacts, then, tell stories (fig.4)? What I wish to explore and theorize here is how *consumers/ beholders* make sense and experience absent narratives through visible images on the walls of Byzantine church (fig.5)

In discussions of the meanings of the exterior images of the apse it is

possible to bring several conclusions about how these brickwork images offer *paradigmatic stimuli* or how might be viewed through the eyes of Byzantines. That is to say synthesis of viewing the Invisible and explaining the Inexplicable (Christ).

The theoretical foundation in Byzantium for images in/on the apse as means of mystic contemplation of Divine is above all to be found in the works of Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagites. Like Plotinus before him, Pseudo - Dionysius was a firm believer in a mystic union that transcends subject and object. The aim of Dionysian hierarchy whether celestial or ecclesiastical was assimilation (*aphomoiosis*) to God and union (*henosis*) with Him.¹⁰

Hypatius of Ephesus – archbishop from 531 – 538 – was justifying images in the very thought and language of Dionysius:

“We allow even material adornment in the sanctuaries...because we permit each other of the faithful to be guided and led up to the divine being in a manner appropriate to it (the order of images) because we think that some people are guided even by these (material decorations) towards intelligible beauty and from the abundant light in the sanctuaries to the intelligible and immaterial light”.¹¹



Fig.2. The northern Church of the Convent of Lips, Constantinople, photo: Jasmina S. Ćirić

Сл.2. Северна црква манастира Константина Липса у Цариграду, фото: Јасмина С. Ћирић

⁹ Nikitas Choniates, *Historia*, van Dieten, J.L. (ed.), *Historia*, 2 volumes (Berlin 1975), 58.

¹⁰ *Corpus Dionysiacum I (DN)*, ed. B. R. Suchla, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990, sq; *Corpus Dionysiacum II (CH, EH, MT, Letters)*, eds. G. Heil and A. M. Ritter, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991, sq; Y. de Andia, *Henosis: L'union a Dieu chez Denys l'Areopagite*. (*Philosophia Antiqua*, 71) Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1996 (with sources and bibliography), especially 399 – 407, 423 -452.

¹¹ F. Diekamp, *Hypatius von Ephesus*, *Analecta Patristica* (OCA 117), Rome 1938,



Fig.3. *Niketas Choniates, Historia* (Constantinople?, 14th-c.), Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Hist. gr. 53*, fol. 1v

Сл.3. Никита Хонијат, Историја (Цариград?, 14. век), Беч, Аустријска национална библиотека, Cod.Hist. gr.53*, fol.1v.

Reflecting upon Byzantine art many years ago, the eminent scholar Hans Buchwald made some valuable remarks, which are symptomatic for the Byzantine architecture in its totality, and most helpful in assessing the connections between antiquity and Christianity.¹² Buchwald pointed out that: "The existence of rich and extensive examples of the brick meander in prominent positions on important facades in Constantinople no later than the late 11th and early 12th-centuries leads to the conclusion that the application of similar but simpler motifs in the Byzantine provinces in the 11th and 12th-centuries is ultimately dependent upon Constantinopolitan prototypes".¹³

Without questioning which facades exactly and in which sense their "importance" is regarded in Constantinople, especially if have in mind that present studies of art historians are operating with only 30 percents of heavily accessible Byzantine heritage, in the same time it must be clearly understood that doctrine of Byzantine architecture led to the fixing of antiquarianism of images and rhetoric which explained all visual manifests in the sacred space.¹⁴

109 - 153, посебно 127 - 129; N. H. Baynes, *The Icons before iconoclasm*, HTR 44 (1951), 93 - 106; P. J. Alexander, *Hypatius of Ephesus: A Note on Image Worship in the Sixth Century*, HTR 45 (1952), 177 - 184; E. Kitzinger, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm*, DOP 8 (1954), 83 - 150; J. Gouillard, *Hypatius d'Éphèse ou de Pseudo-Denys à Théodore Studite*, REB 19 (1961), 63 - 75; G. Lange, *Bild und Wort. Die katechetischen Funktionen des Bildes in der griechischen Theologie des sechsten bis neunten Jahrhunderts*, Würzburg 1969, 44 - 60; S. Gero, *Hypatius of Ephesus on the Cult of Images*, Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty, ed. J. Neusner, pt.2, *Early Christianity* (Leiden 1975), 208 - 216; J. S. Ćirić, *Hypatius von Ephesus*, Lexicon Byzantinische Autoren, t. H, ed. M. Grünbart, A. Riehle, Akademie Verlag, Wien [forthcoming].

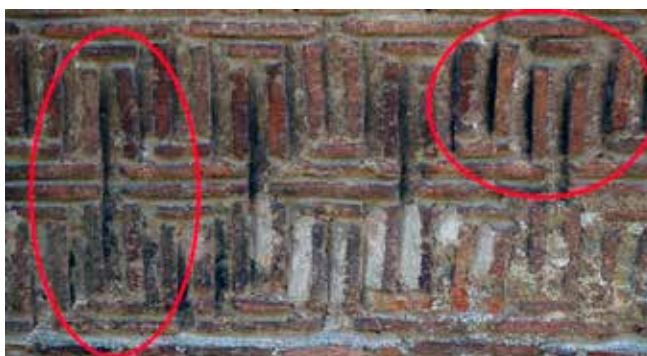
¹² About phenomena of Antiquity in the society, identity and art of Byzantium: A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007 (with bibliography); T. F. Mathews, *Byzantium: From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Yale University Press, New York 2010; I. Jevtić, *The Return to 'Antique' in Palaeologan Art: Conservatism or Sign of a Revival?*, in *Faces of Byzantium. Sharing and Cultural Filters in the Arts of the Palaeologan period*, eds. I. Jevtic, A. Vasilakeris, Istanbul, Koç University Press [forthcoming]. Cf. Also the articles about concept of perception of the past in: D. Bloch, *Theodoros Metochites on Aristotle's De memoria*, Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin 76 (2005), 3 -30; M. J. Featherstone, *Theodore Metochites's Semeioseis Gnomikai: Personal Encyclopedism, Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium?*, ed. P. van Deun—C. Macé [Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 212], Leuven 2011, 333-344.

¹³ H. H. Buchwald, *Form, Style and Meaning in Byzantine Architecture*, Ashgate 1999, 285.

¹⁴ P. Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale. Études sur l'évolution des structures urbaines*, Travaux et Mémoires, Monographies 9, Paris 1996, 9.

Fig.4. Brickwork ornaments on the apse of the Virgin Mary Peribleptos Church, south side of the apse, upper register, Ohrid, photo: Jasmina S. Ćirić

Сл.4. Орнаменти изведени опеком на апсиди цркве Богородице Перивлепте, јужна страна апсиде, горњи регистар, фото: Јасмина С. Ћирић



That was the result of specific *ontological mode* of antiquity existence for the Byzantine subject in rapport with past, with creation of the Empire and state orders (fig.6).¹⁵ Without understanding that antiquity is actual *mover* and initiating force of the visibility, it is not possible to understand competently imagery storage in Late Byzantine art and architecture.¹⁶

In pursuance to demonstrate such ideas, the analysis of monumental architecture in this period helps to assemble a cohesive group of churches with brick engaged as primary building material.

The apse programme offers several narrative scenes – Theophanies from a hierarchy of images. Visual concealment of the mystery which happens in the altar and its exterioriation is but one dimension of a complex phenomenon in Byzantine architecture.¹⁷ The hymns associated with the feasts of the Virgin are depicted on the interior surfaces of the walls and all depictions emphasized the theme of Mary

¹⁵ S. Papaioannou, *The aesthetics of history: From Theophanes to Eustathios, History as Literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007*, ed. R. Macrides (et al.), Ashgate Publishing, Farnham 2010, 3 – 24; I. Jevtić, *The Antiquarianism and Revivalism in Late Byzantine Court Culture and Visual arts*, in A. Odekan, N. Necipoglu and E. Akyurek (eds.) *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul 2013*, 209-217; E. N. Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2015.

¹⁶ I. Jevtić, *The Return to 'Antique' in Palaeologan Art: Conservatism or Sign of a Revival?*, in *Faces of Byzantium. Sharing and Cultural Filters in the Arts of the Palaeologan period*, eds. I. Jevtic, A. Vasilakeris, Istanbul, Koç University Press [forthcoming]. Cf. the articles about concept of perception of the past in: D. Bloch, *Theodoros Metochites on Aristotle's De memoria*, *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin* 76 (2005), 3 -30; Michael J. Featherstone, *Theodore Metochites's Semeioseis Gnomikai: Personal Encyclopedism, Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium?*, ed. P. van Deun—C. Macé [Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 212], Leuven 2011, 333-344.

¹⁷ R. F. Taft, *The Byzantine rite: A Short History*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minnesota, 1991, 33, 34, 61, 74; S. E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, Seattle – London, University of Washington Press 1999; Eadem, *An alternative view of the late Byzantine sanctuary screen*, in: *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens*, East and West, ed. S.E.J.Gerstel, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington 2006, 134 - 161.



Fig.5. Collage of brickwork images on the apse of the southern Church of the Convent of Lips, Constantinople, author of the photographs and the collage: Jasmina S. Ćirić

Сл.5. Колаж орнамената изведених опеком на апсиди јужне цркве манастира Константина Липса, Цариград, аутор фотографија и колажа: Јасмина С. Ћирић

as the true temple.¹⁸ Equivalent liturgical messages are expressed with the brickwork ornaments, often schematized and on the low level of preservice, but still possible to be understood (fig.7). The brickwork executed on the apse set up at the very end of 13th – century and in the first half of 14th-century with many executive variables, belong to a period which witnessed a tremendous rise of ornamentation of the facades. The ornaments are placed with meticulous attention. Particularity is that these ornaments are contemporary to those used in Constantinople „trending facades“: chess fields, *opus reticulatum* as sort of antiquarianism in the architecture, meander which in the same time could be seen as image of multiplicative crosses made of brick, heraldry insignias of tetor, *opus spicatum*, reduced version of Tree of Life¹⁹ which appeared also in known Cosmas Indicopleustes descriptions of Heavenly Jerusalem.²⁰

The question of interest is what is visual discourse of the east façade and how to interpret exteriorized images of the apse at the very end of 13th-century? At this point, one should recall the notion of engaging the visual framing of the facade. Having in mind that images are examined as visual sensations or *stimuli* that activate the nerve cells in the eyes to convey information to the brain,²¹ frames are iden-

¹⁸ J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en occident*, vol.1, Brussels 1964, 136–67.

¹⁹ J. S. Ćirić, *Décryptage du mur : l'Arbre de Vie dans l'architecture byzantine tardive*, Collection of Works „Spaces of Memory: Art, Architecture and Heritage“, ed. A. Kadijević, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade 2012, 19 – 31(with bibliography).

²⁰ *Tent of the Covenant: Cosmas Indicopleustes, Topographie Chrétienne, t. II*, ed. W. Wolska - Paris 1970, 54–57, 71, 89.

²¹ D. Freedberg, *Movement, Embodiment, Emotion*, in: Th. Dufrenne and A.-C. Taylor, eds., *Cannibalismes Disciplinares, Quand l'histoire de l'art et l'anthropologie se rencontrent*, Paris: INHA/Musée du quai Branly, 37-61.

tified by enumerating the objects and discrete elements actually shown in the visual; frames result from recognizing design features and by *organizing or combining visual sensations* into *sensory* “themes” following some principles of organization.²²

What is of importance for all examples with developed ornamental language is the symbol of the Virgin Mary. Shape of the apse is analogous to the

representation of the Virgin Mary as the Seat of Wisdom in the apse. Apse is in the same time visual equivalent of the cave where Christ was born.²³ At the very end of 13th-century the apse *epidermis* consists of extensive repertoire of ornaments as part of the phenomenology of the mystery performed at the altar, behind/ in front of the viewer’s standpoint. East facade as exterior shape of the interior altar became not only the spot with developed brickwork vocabulary, but visual screening of the mystery that happens inside the church, starts from the lower parts visible from the remote vantage. Approaching to the apse provides closer observation of the brickwork “table of contents”: on the top of the apse is not the beginning of the believer’s journey, but its end with ornaments which flares and spiralling around the mysteries of the God. The Eucharist was one of these mysteries. In countless written sources the Eucharist remained the most sacred event in the life of the Church. The recognition of the Eucharistic presence of Christ on the altar during the liturgy and the directing of adoration toward that presence is strikingly attested in the writings of St. John Chrysostom (347-407): «For thou dost see Him not in a manger but on an altar, not with a woman holding Him but with a priest standing before Him, and the Spirit descending upon the offerings with great bounty».²⁴ Likewise, in another Homily he states: „Not in vain do we at the holy mysteries make mention of the departed, and draw near on their behalf, beseeching the Lamb who is lying on the altar, who took away the sin of the world.”²⁵ A similar vigilance regarding the smallest fragments of the Eucharist is enjoined in the instructions of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) for the newly baptized: . . . partake of it [the Eucharist], giving heed lest thou lose any part of it; for whatever thou shouldst lose would be evidently a loss to thee as from one of thine own members. For tell me, if any one gave thee grains of gold, wouldest thou not hold them with all care, taking heed lest thou shouldst lose any of them and suffer loss?”²⁶ he identification of the altar as a symbol of Christ and, more importantly, the awareness that it was upon the altar that Christ became truly present during the Eucharistic liturgy, would have made the altar the focus of attention for those who came for silent prayer, especially in the quiet of the night. An early example of this is provided by St. Gregory Nazianzus (329-390), who relates how on one occasion, when gravely ill, his sister Gorgonia during the night „betook herself to the Physician of all“ and „fell before the altar with faith . . . calling on

²² J. Elkins, *Images as Arguments in Visual Studies*, Images: Journal for Visual Studies 1, Center for visual studies, Zagreb; available at: <http://www.visual-studies.com/images/no1/elkins.html#4> (accessed 8th August 2015)

²³ K. Wessel, *Apsider, Bildprogramm, Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, vol. I. Stuttgart, 1966, 268–293.

²⁴ In *I Corinthians*, Homily 24, No. 5, in D. Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, 1909, Vol. I, p. 107.

²⁵ In *I Corinthians*, Homily 41, No. 4, quoted in D. Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, 1909, Vol. I, p. 107..

²⁶ *Catechetical Lectures*, XXIII, Nos. 21-22, Stone, *A History of the Doctrine*, vol.I, 106.



Fig.6. Collage: brickwork meanders, several examples, photo: Rémi Terryn; author of the collage: Jasmina S. Ćirić

Сл.6. Колаж: меандер изведен опеком, неколико примера, аутор фотографија: Реми Теран; аутор колажа: Јасмина С. Ћирић

Him who is honored thereon with a great cry and with every kind of entreaty, and pleading with Him. . . . Placing her head *on the altar* with another great cry and with a wealth of tears, like one who of old bedewed the feet of Christ, and declaring that she would not let go until she was made well, she then applied to her whole body this medicine which she had, even such a portion of the antitypes of the honorable body and blood as she treasured in her hand, and mingled with this act her tears.²⁷

The mystery of the holy altar in Christianity was founded on the notion of Divine presence – the fearful reality that the altar itself is the body of Christ: “The body of Christ is upon the altar.”²⁸ Liturgical texts consistently describe the Eucharist as fire. The altar is called “heavenly and spiritual altar,” says the Patriarch Germanus because the serving hierarchy of the immaterial and celestial powers must also be “as a burning fire.”²⁹ This is important especially because of the way how brick was made: with usage of fire.³⁰

This is the case of the iconographical visualisation of Divine said by brickwork. The association between the hidden vision of the sacred and the mystery

²⁷ St. Gregory Nazianzus, *Orations*, VIII, No. 18, in Stone, *A History of the Doctrine*, Vol. I., 106-107.

²⁸ St Ambrosie, « De sacramentis », *Sources chrétiennes*, Les Éditions du Cerf : Paris, 1949: 80. Similar thoughts are expressed later in Kabasilas’ time (c. 1322-1391): “This is the final mystery. Beyond this, it is not possible to go, nor can anything be added to it.” Nicholas Kabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, PG, 150, col. 548B, English translation by C. J. de Catanzaro (St Vladimir’s Seminary Press Crestwood, 1974): 114.

²⁹ St Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy*, *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*, 60.

³⁰ P. F. Bradshaw-M. E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Liturgical Press, Minesotta 2012, 186. Cf. J. S. Ćirić, *Brick substance at Zaum Church in Ohrid*, *PATRIMONIUM.MK* Year 6, N°11 (2013), 99 – 109; Eadem, “Ev τούτω βικά”: brickwork narrative in Constantinopolitan Architecture during the period of Palaiologoi, *Ниш и Византија* 12 (2014), 231 - 244.

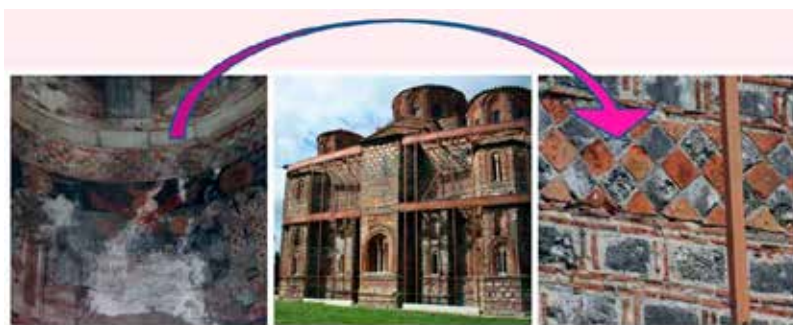


Fig. 7. Left: painted chess fields in the apse of the Church of the Virgin Mary Paregoritissa in Arta, right: brickwork chess fields (*opus reticulatum*) on the apse of the Virgin Mary Paregoritissa church in Arta; photo: Rémi Terryn; author of the collage: Jasmina S. Ćirić

Сл.7. Лево: осликана шаховска поља у апсиди цркве Богородице Паригоритисе у Арти; десно: орнамент шаховских поља (опус ретицулатум) на апсиди цркве Богородице Паригоритисе у Арти; пхото: Реми Теран; аутор колажа: Јасмина С. Ћирић

behind the wall is expressed in the Dionysian line and visual discourse of the apse: “the dazzling obscurity of the secret Silence”.³¹ Bearing in mind the association of the apse – interior and exterior – with the Virgin’s womb in the same time these images imply codified meaning of incarnated Logos and illumination through Him, vision of the senses :«the Truth will shine, illuminating the eyes of the soul with its own rays».³²

Sensory vision of the sacred place is not permitted to “profane” eyes; it is the privilege of those initiated into the mysteries. As the veil of the iconostasis inside the church, exterior surface of the apse acts as a transparent medium;³³ *a membrane* made by secondary Holy relic Keramion, the sacred image of the altar behind the walls where the Eucharistic mystery is performed.³⁴ In a paradigmatic way, from the standpoint of sensory modality, these exteriorized images illustrate the nature of the mystery-concealing device in the architecture at the very end of 13th-century. In that sense one of the key thoughts and valuable mental frame for *sensorial* understanding of brickwork patchworks (on the apse and its contemporary visual comparanda) is contained in Theodore Metochites *Seimeioseis Gnomikai* on the study of History where he declared that: “Even as plant requires water, only the ancients can provide the examples and guidance, to be inscribed on the image producing tablets of memory.”³⁵ This attempt shows that sensual addressings of images may strongly

³¹ Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Mystica Theologia*, I. 1.

³² Gregorii Nysseni De Vita Moysis (Gregorii Nysseni Opera, Vol 7, Pars 1), ed. E. H. Musurillo, Brill 1991, 19; I, 20.

³³ B. V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium*, Pennsylvania University Press 2010, 20, 141, 154, 184.

³⁴ N. Isar, *Le mur aboli: Le sacrement de la Parole dans les absides des églises moldaves*, Byzantinoslavica LX, 1999, 2, 611-632 ; eadem, *Veilded Words: Sacred silence. Screening the mystery in the Byzantine altar*, Image and Altar 800 – 1300, Papers from an International Conference in Copenhagen 24 October – 27 October 2007, ed. Poul Grindner-Hansen, Copenhagen 2014, 27 – 43.

³⁵ M. J. Featherstone, *Theodore Metochites’s Semeioseis Gnomikai: Personal En-*

influence the interpretation of brickwork images executed on the apse. The deconstruction of *sensual addressings* contributes to understand Byzantine sensorial and overall communication processes. In order to understand the implications of the *sensoria* it will be necessary to develop semiotic methods of brickwork analysis. Therefore, especially in sensory experience of the brickwork forms compared on the figures in this article show how certain images and stories from Antiquity are transformed into Byzantine context, from the perspective of sign systems as well as of sensual addressing. This field of studies opens a potent dialogue by which we can start to deconstruct our own preconceptions to make more sense of the Byzantine society at the end of 13th-century.

Jasmina S. Ćirić
KAKO SU VIDELI ROMEJI: ČULNI APARAT(US), IZVORI, APSIDA I OPEKA
U VIZANTIJSKOJ ARHITEKTURI KRAJEM XIII VEKA

U tekstu se izučavaju načini razumevanja artikulacije fasadnog platna apsida vizantijskih crkava nastalih uglavnom krajem XIII veka. Iako su neki od primera nastali ne samo u različitim vremenskim i prostornim okvirima, sličnost u razumevanju se ipak iskazuje u načinu fasadnog oblikovanja. Program ornamenata izvedenih opekom (od *opus reticulatum*, *opus spicatum* do motiva potkovice, dijamanta, Drveta Života, meandra, svastike i dr.) poseduje složeno značenje koje pre svega ukazuje na svojevršno jedinstvo posmatrača i Boga putem „hijerarhije vizija“ tj. *vizuelne pretrage* i *molitve očima*. Imajući u vidu da je oblik apsida direktna asocijacija na Bogorodicu i pećinu u kojoj je rođen Hristos, moguće je interpretaciju usmeriti na teotokološki smisao apsida u svim njenim detaljima. Gotovo svi izvedeni ornamenti izvedeni na apsidi predstavljaju paradigmu za mističnu kontemplaciju vernika budući da fasada kao koža, omotač crkve (Tela Hristovog) pokazuje put kojim se vernik kreće u Ikonomiji spasenja «obavijen nevidljivim (...) sjedinjen nepoznatim Sveznanjem izvan uma» - *De Mystica Theologica*, I, 3). Struktura apsida podeljene na nekoliko registara i nekoliko kombinacija multiplikovanih ornamenata predstavlja simulacrum duhovnog putovanja vernika kod kojih se aktivira čulni aparat(us).

U zaključnim razmatranjima pažnja je usmerena na mentalne okvire čulnog aparata i veštine „čitanja“, pokreta očiju vernika. Pre svega reč je o *kračim fiksacijama* i *fokusiranjima ornamenta* kako bi se došlo do razumevanja uočene slike. Naveden je primer iz izvora prvog reda (*Seimeioseis Gnomikai*) iz kojeg se nedvosmisleno može uočiti opis uticaja vizuelnog iskustva. Dekonstruisanje i uokviravanje ornamenta svakako je pogodan instrument za razumevanje *čulnog aparata* i *vizuelnog iskustva* koje predstavlja samo jedan segment *multisenzornog razumevanja slike*. Kako bi se razumele implikacije čulnog, neophodno je adekvatno razumeti semiotički sistem *označitelja* tj. izvedenih motiva. Priloženi ilustrativni dodaci prikazuju kako su izvesni narativi usvojeni iz antike razumevani u kontekstu kognitivnog i okulomotornog krajem XIII stoleća.