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### DIVIDING THE INDIVISIBLE: THE MONASTERY SPACE — SECULAR AND SACRED

The spatial dualism, secular — sacred, reflected deeply on the creation of the Byzantine monastery space. My investigation focused on the dualism of monastic spaces and buildings, especially on their secular aspects in Byzantine cenobitic monasteries.

For Byzantine men and women, space was not homogeneous. There existed a sacred space with its ultimate earthly manifestation — the Christian church — and a secular space that represented all other spatial levels within a designated terrestrial part of its Christian universe.<sup>1</sup> Thus the secular space provides the ambiance in which the sacred becomes possible. This spatial dualism, typical for *homo religiosus*, reflected deeply on the creation of the monastery space too. I have argued elsewhere that the meaning and perception of the physical features of a monastery in Byzantium represented a passage to heaven, an intermediate zone between heaven and earth.<sup>2</sup> A monastery settlement reflects the pronounced spatial hierarchy: its enclosure provides *otherness*, individual cells may become a path to heaven and thus acquire a higher status in the hierarchy of sacredness, while the church represented the ultimate sacred spot — the gate of heaven or even heaven on earth. Thus a monastery represents, at its final stage of development, a symbolic spatial image in which secular and sacred meet.

My further investigation will focus on the dualism of monastic spaces and buildings, especially on their secular aspects. Probably the first question to pose is what is secular and what is sacred in the monastery, and how does one distinguish its dual nature? I have to stress at the outset that spatial ambivalence between the secular and sacred existed, on a much wider scale, in both Christian and non-Christian societies. The symbolic sanctification of the Roman town and its *pomerium* — the sa-

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<sup>1</sup> For the secular and sacred generally see *M. Eliade*, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York 1987.

<sup>2</sup> *S. Popovic*, *The Byzantine Monastery: Its Spatial Iconography and the Question of Sacredness*, ed. *A. Lidov*, *Hierotopy. Studies in the Making of Sacred Space*, Moscow 2006, 150–185.

cred line around the city — that was accompanied by special rites, represents one of the numerous examples that antedated Christianity. The well-known fact that the earliest structural forms of the church are found within Roman houses (*domus aeclesiae*) and later basilicas, only confirms that the appropriation line between secular and sacred has a very long history.

One of the key questions of early monastic archaeology is how to recognize a monastery site and distinguish it from, for example, a rural villa. Or later in the sixth century, how to articulate a great number of revealed *extra muros* basilicas around the late antique cities, only a few of which could be identified as cemetery churches, and some of which possibly represented monastic entities. The answer to this question will remain open, due to the fact that a monastery space, in its early phase, was not yet symbolically articulated. The domestic character of the early cenobitic communities only adds to this uncertainty. Although monks practiced the *bios angelikos* to achieve the ultimate goal — salvation — the major obligation to achieving the path to heaven, in addition to constant prayers and self-denial, was manual work. Thus early monasteries mirrored households with various workshops (oil presses, pottery production, etc.) in addition to the church. The lack of *typika*, for those early communities, makes decisions even more difficult. The choice of the site is not significantly helpful in this formative phase, as it is known that monastic communities reused abandoned villas or even small forts. The monastery of father Isidore in the Thebaid was located in the fort, while the former bride of the Nitrian monk Amoun converted her house into a monastery.<sup>3</sup> A church could easily be identified among other secular buildings if the church plan is basilica. But there are many more examples of single-aisled apsidal churches (chapels), in which no symbolic decoration that could help in their identification survives. These could be easily confused with numerous late antique buildings of identical plan and secular nature. At that time neither orientation (apse facing east), nor location of the church in the monastery precincts were determined. It did not have a central position (later examples), sometimes it was free-standing, although more often the church was integrated within other buildings of the entirety.

Certain physical features, however, may help in defining the character of the community. The oldest monastic rules (Pachomian) prescribe that a cenobitic monastery has to be enclosed with an outer wall and must have a dining hall for communal meals.<sup>4</sup> We therefore embark on an additional problem: how to distinguish a communal refectory? I have recently demonstrated that the monastic refectory was a bifunctional building in which prayers and communal meals were held. Numerous examples confirm that it was located in the immediate vicinity of the church. Its plan was an elongated rectangular hall, often equipped with masonry tables and symbolic images on the walls. Obviously, its function was dual — secular and religious.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The Lives of the Desert Fathers. The *Historia Monachorum* in Aegypto, N. Russel, transl., B. Ward, intro., London, Oxford 1981, 101; 111.

<sup>4</sup> Pachomian Koinonia, II, ed. A. Veilleux, Kalamazoo, Mich. 1980–82, 150.28–34, 151.35–37.

<sup>5</sup> S. Popovic, The *Trapeza* in Cenobitic Monasteries: Architectural and Spiritual Contexts, *DOP* 52 (1998), 281–303.

To summarize, site identification of early cenobitic communities, in which secular and sacred blend, must combine all the aforementioned physical features with other archeological artifacts (decorative symbols, pottery, etc.), and, bearing in mind the prescribed diet, detailed analysis of animal bones.<sup>6</sup>

In later developments, monastic communities followed the doctrinal and theological changing lines of the Byzantine church that impacted deeply on the physical structure of the monastery. By the tenth century the monastery had become a complex spatial structure — a codified symbolic spatial model — unmistakably identifiable.<sup>7</sup> Whether located in a rural or urban environment, it always included an enclosed courtyard with a centrally located, free-standing church — the most sacred spot of the entirety — surrounded by other necessary buildings attached to the enclosure wall. The vast estates that became the crucial economic base of their existence also surrounded rural monasteries. Paradoxically, while the spatial disposition of the entirety emerged into a symbolic interpretation, its secular aspects, manifested through its architectural content, increased. The residential quarters of the *hegoumenos* often represented the most advanced, secular, architectural enterprises (in urban monasteries at Mistra, on Mount Athos, etc.). Numerous examples of bishops' palaces mirrored the architecture of aristocratic residences (for example in ancient Thebes in Thessalia and elsewhere).<sup>8</sup> The monastery infirmaries (located in the monasteries), and hospitals (often located outside the monasteries), became important social institutions.<sup>9</sup> A variety of workshops (producing oil, pottery, metal, glass, etc.), including various types of mills, were located either in the monastery or on its estates.<sup>10</sup> The monastery's infrastructure was highly developed and included water supply systems, drains, sanitation and heating facilities.<sup>11</sup> In sum, the standard of living in late Byzantine monasteries was high.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the monastic enclosure, where necessary, was transformed into a fortification (St. Catherine's on Sinai, Mt. Athos, Resava in Serbia, etc.).<sup>13</sup>

From this brief historical survey of the development of the monastery's built environment, one may conclude that secular and sacred aspects of the entirety coexisted

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<sup>6</sup> E. Ribak, *Everyday Artefacts as Indicators of Religious Belief in Byzantine Palestina*, ed. K. Dark, *Secular Buildings and the Archaeology of Everyday Life in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 2004, 123–32.

<sup>7</sup> S. Popovic, *The Architectural Iconography of the Late Byzantine Monastery*, Canadian Institute of Balkan Studies, Toronto 1997; S. Popovic, *The Byzantine Monastery: Its Spatial Iconography and the Question of Sacredness*, 169–76.

<sup>8</sup> O. Karagiorgou, *Demetrias and Thebes: the Fortunes and Misfortunes of two Thessalian Port Cities in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. Lavan, *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*, *JRA* suppl. 42 (2001), 183–215, esp. 191–92; S. Popovic, *The Cross in the Circle. Monastery Architecture in Medieval Serbia*, in *Serbian with English resume*, Belgrade 1994, 120–23 and 313–23.

<sup>9</sup> T. S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, Baltimore and London 1985.

<sup>10</sup> S. Popovic, *The Architectural Iconography of the Late Byzantine Monastery*, 6–7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–20.

<sup>12</sup> S. Popovic, *Secular Buildings in Medieval Serbian Monasteries. About the Medieval Standard of Living*, *Zograf* 16 (1985), 19–25.

<sup>13</sup> S. Popovic, *The Architectural Iconography of the Late Byzantine Monastery*, 7–13.

throughout its long history. However, architectural and planning objectives, being primarily structural in nature, impose another question: how those, rather conceptual, categories manifested within the built environment. The architectural and planning processes, whether related to monasteries or not, imply buildings and their spatial dispositions. Is it possible, *a priori*, to design one structure as sacred, or does its attribution come *a posteriori*? That is the important question. The monastery settlement offers, as a specific spatial structure, limited insights into these questions. My further investigation will focus on the built environment of coenobitic monasteries.

There are three major categories of buildings within monasteries. The first includes buildings exclusively religious in function (main monastery church and various chapels); in the second are bi-functional edifices that include both religious and non-religious functions (refectory, cell, entrance chamber and seclusion tower); while numerous structures fall into the third category of non-religious buildings (kitchen, bakery, storages etc.). As the monastery represents an abode for a religious community, the most important are buildings that include ritual. In the absence of archaeological evidence, it is not possible to discover the exact architectural type of the oldest monastic churches. Surviving examples, mostly from the fifth and later centuries, reveal both non-apsidal and apsidal rectangular halls and three-aisled basilicas.<sup>14</sup> Later Byzantine practices included a variety of types (basilica with dome, inscribed-cross, etc.), all found within various monastic contexts. No matter how the church was designed, it always performed the religious function that gave it a specific status within the entirety. One may argue that the line of appropriation of the architectural design included a variety of actual “secular” forms and structures combined to fulfill its primary function — Christian ritual. However, ritual itself was subject to change in the long history of Byzantine Christianity, reflecting on planning processes and introducing changes in architectural design. There are no *a priori* sacred architectural forms; any architectural design — if suitable for Christian ritual — upon consecration may become sacred. Creation of a functional type — church building — combined a variety of existing architectural elements and planning patterns, most of them found in other categories of contemporary buildings, not necessarily religious in nature (fig. 1). That process does not exclude repetition of archetypal models, once they have been established (for example single-aisled church plan; cruciform, inscribed-cross, etc.). Thus, categories of “secular” and “sacred,” conceptual in nature, have limited input into the design process.

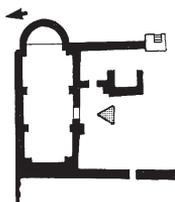
The number of churches in Byzantine cenobitic monasteries varies. In addition to the main monastic church, where the Eucharist was performed, there were numerous chapels different in nature.<sup>15</sup> Some of them were attached to the main church and were used as commemorative chapels, others had a prophylactic purpose and were located within main entrances and infirmaries, while certain were built to

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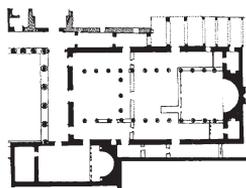
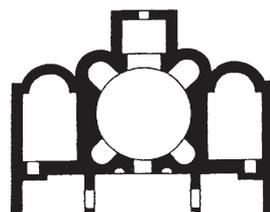
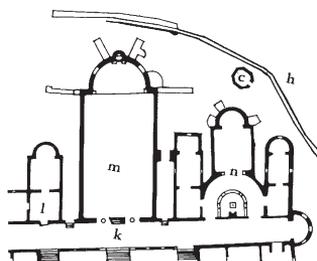
<sup>14</sup> P. Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten*, Leiden 2002; Y. Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, New Haven and London 1992; I. Peña, P. Castellana and R. Fernandez, *Les cénobites syriens*, Jerusalem 1983.

<sup>15</sup> G. Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises Byzantines*, Paris 1969; S. Ćurčić, *Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches*, *JSAH* 36 (1977), 94–110.

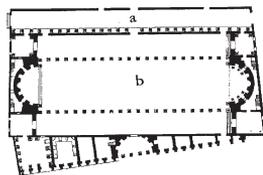
SINGLE-ISLED CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Castellion)



CHRISTIAN BASILICA (Gerasa)

EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(St. George, Sofia)ROMAN SINGLE-AISLED SECULAR BUILDINGS  
(Piazza Armerina)

ROMAN BASILICA (Lepcis Magna)



ROMAN BATH (Aque Neri, France)

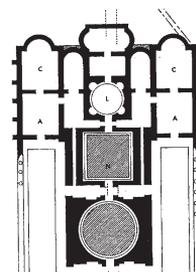


Fig. 1. Plans of the secular Roman structures appropriated in Christian churches  
(redrawn by *S. Popović*)

house venerated relics.<sup>16</sup> All of them, obviously, fall into the category of religious buildings, and thus designate “a sacred” realm of the monastery. However, the cenobitic monastery represents a spatial structure — a settlement in which all the aforementioned categories of buildings coexisted. The procedure of planning a monastery-settlement includes very practical steps: to clean and prepare the location; to designate the size of the settlement; to decide where the main church will be located; to plan the position and number of entrances; to locate the refectory, kitchen, bakery, dormitories (cells); and to decide about the number and types of the workshops, storages and other necessary buildings. In addition to planning procedures, the architectural designs must be prepared for individual buildings, primarily for the church. One may ask what will be the first step, once the location has been chosen — to delineate the settlement’s enclosure or to build a church. We may pose the same question in a more conceptual way: whether the ‘sacred grove’ will be first designated and then the ‘house of the Lord’ erected within its precincts? According to limited archaeological and some written sources most probably, the enclosure will be first

<sup>16</sup> *S. Popovic*, *Disposition of Chapels in Byzantine Monasteries*, in Serbian with English resume, *Saopštenja* 27–28 (Belgrade 1995/96), 23–37.

marked, followed by the building of the church and the necessary edifices (refectory and residential structures). The *typikon* of Athanasios of Athos (963) clearly states that the building process of the Great Lavra Monastery started with clearing and marking the location, building the necessary residential buildings and then proceeded with erecting the church.<sup>17</sup> Regional archaeological practice confirms that in some Judean desert monasteries in the fifth and sixth centuries, as well as later in some twelfth-century Serbian monasteries, the building processes followed the logic of delineating the settlement first and then building a church.<sup>18</sup> It means that erection of a church took place within secured and enclosed space. What is the nature of the monastery enclosure and in which category — secular or sacred — it falls is the next question.

The major functions of the monastery circuit wall were to delineate the space, to provide security and to fulfill the requirements of the monastic rules: control of communication with the outer world. The structural nature of the enclosure wall, in numerous examples, confirms its non-military character. It is usually built as a massive stone wall without any crenellations or other defensive amenities along its perimeter.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it acted as a fence which provided security. Exceptionally, as previously mentioned, when circumstances necessitated, the enclosures were transformed or even built as fortifications. The act of fencing the area, in order to mark the monastery boundaries, was not limited to cenobitic communities. Numerous examples indicate that another type of monastic community — *lavra* — in the Holy Land, Syria and elsewhere in Byzantium was demarcated by a wall.<sup>20</sup> Hence, the enclosure wall was the primary necessity of the *coenobium*, and its important structural and functional features were also confirmed in monastic *typika*.<sup>21</sup> The monastery gates, situated within the enclosure, were locked during the night and controlled daily by the appointed monk — the gatekeeper.<sup>22</sup> However, there are rare exemptions to this rule, as in one of the eleventh-century monastic foundations of Lazarus on Mount Galesios. According to his *Life*, one of the monastery horses was stolen during the night from the monastery stable, and monks “went to the father and pestered him to have a wall built around the monastery and control going out and

<sup>17</sup> *Typikon of Athanasios the Athonite for the Lavra Monastery*, eds. *J. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero*, Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1, Washington DC 2000, 251. (5), (6); 251.(7), (8).

<sup>18</sup> *Y. Hirschfeld*, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, 59–68; *S. Popovic*, *The Cross in the Circle. Monastery Architecture in Medieval Serbia*, in Serbian with English resume, Belgrade, 1994, 136–48.

<sup>19</sup> *H. Torp*, *Murs d’enceinte des monastères Coptes primitifs et couvents-fortresses*, *Mémoires 76* (1964), 173–200; *S. Mojsilovic (Popovic)*, *Elements of Fortification of the Monasteries in Medieval Serbia*, *Balcanoslavica 7* (1978), 69–196; *S. Popovic*, *The Cross in the Circle*, 127–240.

<sup>20</sup> *Y. Hirschfeld*, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, 161–65 and 171–76; *J. Patrich*, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism*, *Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection*, Washington, D.C. 1995, 62–66.

<sup>21</sup> See numerous examples of walls erected around monasteries ed. *J. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero*, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, 5 vols., *Dumbarton Oaks Studies XXXV*, Washington, D.C., 2000 — hereafter BMFD.

<sup>22</sup> As in the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos, see BMFD vol. 1, 206 (13).

coming in with lock and key.”<sup>23</sup> The father rejected their request with the statement: “if our hope and trust are firm in Christ (we will not) depend on walls and enclosure for safety.”<sup>24</sup> However, this hagiographical note does not establish whether or not Lazarus’ monasteries were walled because no physical remains have yet been revealed of the monasteries on Galesion.<sup>25</sup> Be that as it may, the enclosure represented one of the major planning objectives of cenobitic monasteries, confirmed in both written sources and numerous surviving sites.<sup>26</sup>

The structural characteristics of these walls vary and were dependent on regional building methods and techniques applied in different parts of the Byzantine Empire. In general the most frequently used material was stone. Some monastery enclosures in the Holy Land were built of hewn stones, as in the monastery of Martyrius, or constructed with an outer face of ashlar and an inner face of field stones and rubble, as in the monastery Khirbet ed-Deir.<sup>27</sup> The circuit walls of Egyptian monastic compounds were often built of uncoursed rubble set in mortar, occasionally combined with gravel, small stones, and mud-brick (St. Anthony, St. Paul, Abu Makar, Anba Hadra etc.).<sup>28</sup> In the Middle Byzantine period, numerous monastic complexes at Mount Athos were enclosed by stone walls, or built in a combined technique of alternating brick and stone — testified by the existing monastic compounds there (for example the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Chilandari, etc.).

An interesting aspect of these walls was the lack of decorative and symbolic designation. To the best of my knowledge, Byzantine archaeology has revealed, thus far, one monastery enclosure — St. Catherine on Mount Sinai — with sculptural crosses (fig. 7).<sup>29</sup> Most of these compounds did not survive intact, and the upper parts of these walls are either missing or were rebuilt in later periods. This means that even if they once had decoration, on the upper parts, it did not survive into modern times. On the other hand, a great number of old drawings and engravings of various Byzantine monasteries do not testify to any symbolic imagery on their outer walls.<sup>30</sup> One rare example of fresco-painting, representing a donor’s portrait with the image of the monastery settlement, survives on Mount Athos in the monastery of

<sup>23</sup> BMFD, vol. 1, 157 (144).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 157 (144).

<sup>25</sup> *R. P. H. Greenfield*, *The Life of Lazarus of Mt. Galesion: An Eleventh-century Pillar Saint*, Washington, D.C. 2000, 31. Few examples of non-walled monasteries were discussed in *V. Ruggieri*, *Byzantine Religious Architecture (582–867): Its History and Structural Elements*, Rome 1991, 168–69.

<sup>26</sup> An interesting, rarely cited study, by *O. R. Sowers*, *Medieval Monastic Planning: Its Origins in the Christian East and Later Development in the Western Europe*, Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University 1951, New York 1952, gives numerous examples of walled monastic planning patterns related to the Christian East.

<sup>27</sup> For Martyrius monastery see *Y. Hirschfeld*, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, 161–65; for Khirbet ed-Deir see *Idem.*, *The Early Byzantine Monastery at Khirbet ed-Deir in the Judean Desert: The Excavations in 1981–1987*, *Qedem* 38 (Jerusalem 1999) 11.

<sup>28</sup> *C.C. Walters*, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt*, Warminster 1974, 79–81.

<sup>29</sup> I am indebted to Marina Mihaljević who brought this information to my attention.

<sup>30</sup> For example collection of drawings by *V.G. Barskij*, *Stranstvovanija Vasilija Grigorovica Barskogo po svjatim mestam Vostoka*, vol. 1–2, St. Petersburg 1885/6.

Stavronikita. The Patriarch Jeremiah, who was responsible for the reconstruction of the entire monastery, including the perimeter wall after 1540, and was thus considered its second founder, left his portrait with the model of the monastery settlement on the wall painting in the *katholikon*.<sup>31</sup> On this model, the monastery enclosure is represented without any decorative or symbolic imagery. Probably, most of the enclosures were never equipped with Christian semiotics. The only architectural elements, functionally related to the encircling wall that bear witness to Christian symbolism, are monastery entrances and occasionally monastic towers. No matter how it was designed, every monastery entrance had a dedicatory image on the wall above the door. Very often the walls of the entrance chambers were decorated with crosses that obviously had a prophylactic meaning.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, according to the archaeological evidence, the monastery circuit had a purely functional purpose and the lack of holy images and signs justify their secular nature. On the other hand, the monastery itself represented a 'sacred grove,' a specific settlement for the specific people who dedicated their lives to the Lord and thus manifested its dual — secular and sacred — nature.

The encircling wall designated the settlement and divided the inner (*other*) from the outer space. The enclosure therefore represented practically the outline of the monastery. An important physical feature of the monastery was its planning pattern: the shape of the settlement, the spatial disposition of the buildings and the internal communications. In historical context the process of planning a monastery, included certain ambiguities. As mentioned before, the early monastic compounds did not have strict planning objectives. Their founders often used abandoned fortresses or private houses and villas that provided suitable ambiances and had buildings that could be reused by the monks.<sup>33</sup> Therefore the design of the early monastic settlements was appropriated and not authentic. Eventually, by the sixth century, the plan emerged as the symbiosis of the existing and newly designed structures, resulting in a rectangular enclosed settlement: the cenobitic monastery. It is important to emphasize that the adopted way of life had a great impact in shaping a monastery. According to the rules, a communal life necessitated, in addition to the church, a variety of buildings (refectory, dormitories, etc.) that became obligatory features of the building program. Above all, the enclosure wall became the ultimate necessity. The entire Christian East adopted, in general lines, the established spatial and structural model of a cenobitic monastery. However, regional practices introduced a significant variety of individual building designs and architectural styles. One of the interesting aspects in the process of planning a monastery settlement is the widely accepted rectangular design of the settlement. In the sixth century, from Egypt, Palestine and Syria to Asia Minor, the walled, prevailingly regular rectangular enclosure, design-

<sup>31</sup> Mount Athos, eds. *P. Theocharides, P. Foundas, S. Stefanou*, Athens 1992, 18 fig. 3.

<sup>32</sup> *S. Mojsilovic-Popovic*, *Monastery Entrances Around the Year 1200*, ed. *V. J. Djurić*, Studenica et l'art byzantin autour de l'annee 1200, Belgrade 1988, 153–170.

<sup>33</sup> For example in the Judean desert, the entire group of monasteries is designated as "fortress monasteries" because the monks settled down in abandoned forts: *Y. Hirschfeld*, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, 47–55.

nated a cenobitic monastery. One may ask if it is possible to trace back the origins of the model. It seems that there are at least two sources that could provide further insights for the adoption of the plan. The first is the late antique rural estate (*villa*), found all over the Empire. The second has a much longer history and is more conceptual in nature: the designation of the sacred spot.

Suffice it to say that demarcation of the sacred space has a very long history in pre-Christian societies of the Ancient East. Every Egyptian temple complex, or the monumental funerary complexes of the pharaohs were surrounded by a wall — *temenos* — and considered a sacred enclosure.<sup>34</sup> The celebrated Jewish temple built by King Solomon, on the sacred Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and its later successors — the last one from the time of King Herod the Great — were also encircled by a wall.<sup>35</sup> The Sumerian temple was not only walled but elevated on a ziggurat, while the Greek sacred city — *acropolis* — bears witness to both elevation (located on a natural mount), and enclosure by an outer wall resembling a sacred fort. In early Christian society the venerated shrines of the martyrs, as specific sacred spots, were encircled with walls, while in some cases the church was even centrally located as a free-standing entity in an open court surrounded by a wall.<sup>36</sup> All the above-mentioned compounds were orthogonally planned and rectangular in shape. Thus, one may conclude, in historical context enclosing a monastery settlement represented a continuing line of designation of the sacred space. On the other hand, in its formative phase, a monastery did not exhibit any building or spatial symbolism. Some early Egyptian monasteries did not have a church within a compound. Even the first Pachomian community, founded about 323 in Tabennesi, did not include a church from the very beginning; it was added later.<sup>37</sup> At that time the official status of anchorites, monks and monasteries was not yet regulated by the church administration. Certain questions relating to asceticism were posed at the church Council of Gangra (341), but monasteries did not enter ecclesiastical legislation before the fourth church Council at Chalcedon (451).<sup>38</sup> In this light, planning objectives and the spatial disposition of the entirety possibly originated from other established models. One may envisage certain planning similarities that could be drawn between rural enclosed estates (farmhouses and villas) of late antiquity and monasteries. The Roman Empire is known to have made a great impact on building methods and planning on its vast territory that included most of the Mediterranean world and beyond.

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<sup>34</sup> *W. S. Smith* (revised by *W.K. Simpson*), *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, Yale University Press 1998.

<sup>35</sup> *W. Dynes*, *The Medieval Cloister as Portico of Solomon*, *Gesta* 12 (1973), 61–69.

<sup>36</sup> *S. Čurčić*, *From the Temple of the Sun to the Temple of the Lord: Monotheistic Contribution to Architectural Iconography in Late Antiquity*, ed. *C. L. Striker* *Architectural Studies in Memory of Richard Krautheimer*, Mainz 1996, 55–63.

<sup>37</sup> *Hj. Torp*, *L'introduction de l'église-édifice dans les monastères*, *Atti del IX Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana*, vol. 2 (Rome 1978), 555–59.

<sup>38</sup> *O. Larry Yarbrough*, *Canons from the Council of Gangra, Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity. A Sourcebook*, Minneapolis 1990, 448–55; *Les conciles oecuméniques. Les décrets*, eds. *G. Albergio, J. A. Dossetti, P.-P. Joánu, C. Leonardi et P. Prodi* avec collaboration de *H. Jedin*, Paris 1994, II/1, 204.

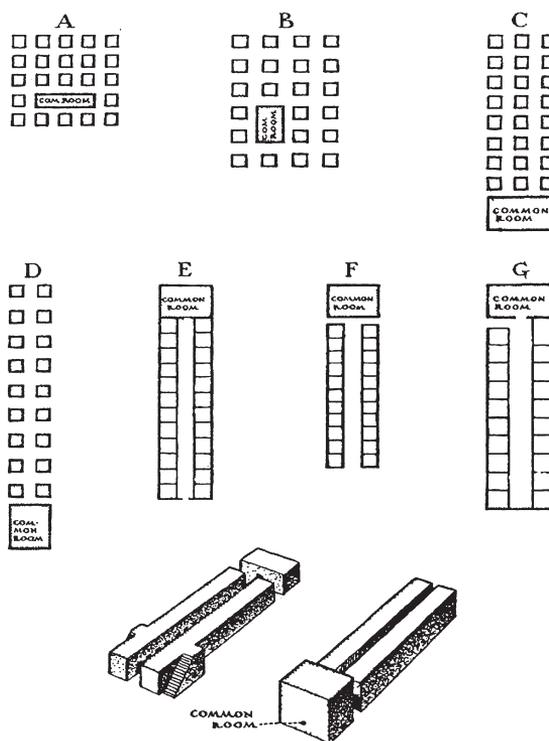


Fig. 2. Diagram showing a disposition of the Cells in Pachomian Houses in Egypt (after O. R. Sowers, *Medieval Monastic Planning: Its Origins in the Christian East*, fig. 5)

The type of Roman dwellings in towns (*villa urbana*) and in the countryside (*villa rustica*), was distributed, with insignificant regional differences in planning, from the British Isles to Africa.<sup>39</sup> Thus at the time of the formation of the first monastic enterprises in the Christian East, Roman and local building practices coexisted. It is also known that monasticism was a lay movement and that the first monasteries emerged in the countryside. Thus the spacious rural walled estates, rectangular in plan, equipped with dwellings, workshops, dining and reception halls, water supplies and sometimes with a tower, offered a suitable functional and design prototype for the monastery compound. Regional practice in ancient Egypt reveals that enclosed estates had a much longer history there. From pharaonic times and later, dwellings of landowners in Egyptian villages were rectangular enclosed one-story structures organized around courts, containing a reception hall, common room, private quarters and other necessary farming amenities.<sup>40</sup> It is interesting to note that in the first Pachomian cenobitic community, established in an abandoned village called

<sup>39</sup> A.G. McKay, *Houses, Villas and Palaces in the Roman World*, Ithaca 1975; E. B. Thomas, *Villa Settlements*, eds. A. Lengyel and G. T. B. Radan, *The Archaeology of Roman Pannonia*, The University press of Kentucky and Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1980, 275–321.

<sup>40</sup> E.B. Smith, *Egyptian Architecture as Cultural Expression*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York 1968, 197–210.



Fig. 3. Plans of the Egyptian Monasteries: Deir es Suryani; Deir Anba Bishoi; Deir el Baramus (after Evelyn-White, *Monasteries*, pls. XXVII; L and LXXX)

Tabennesi, monastic dormitories were probably designed as a row of rooms located on either side of a narrow alley, orthogonally planned and very similar to the ancient Egyptian, so called, corridor house (fig. 2).<sup>41</sup> The same architectural design was applied in other Egyptian monasteries. Two rows of orthogonally designed cells, resembling a corridor, encircled the church complex in Anba Bishoi monastery. Similar arrangements are found in Deir el Baramus as well as in St. Symeon monastery, and elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> All Egyptian cenobitic monasteries were rectangular entities surrounded by walls, characterized by orthogonal planning, and resembling rural farmhouses and villas (fig. 3).

The phenomenon of appropriation of rural enclosed estates and villas for monastic entities is not limited to Egypt. In Palestine a similar practice existed. A great number of farmsteads, some of them even divided into two or more walled domestic complexes, often rectangular in plan, with various buildings arranged around courtyards and with gatehouses (Sumaqa), unequivocally resemble monastery compounds. In some cases it is not easy to distinguish the nature of the compound: thus

<sup>41</sup> O. R. Sowers, *Medieval Monastic Planning: Its Origins in the Christian East and Later Development in the Western Europe*, fig. 6 (Pachomian house) and fig. 8 (corridor house); W. Horn, *On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister*, *Gesta* 12 (1973), 13–52, and esp. 15–17.

<sup>42</sup> H. G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādi ‘N Natrun*, III, New York 1933, pls. XXXVII; L and LXXX; U. Monneret de Villard, *Il monastero di S. Simeone presso Aswān*, I, Milan 1927, fig. 114.

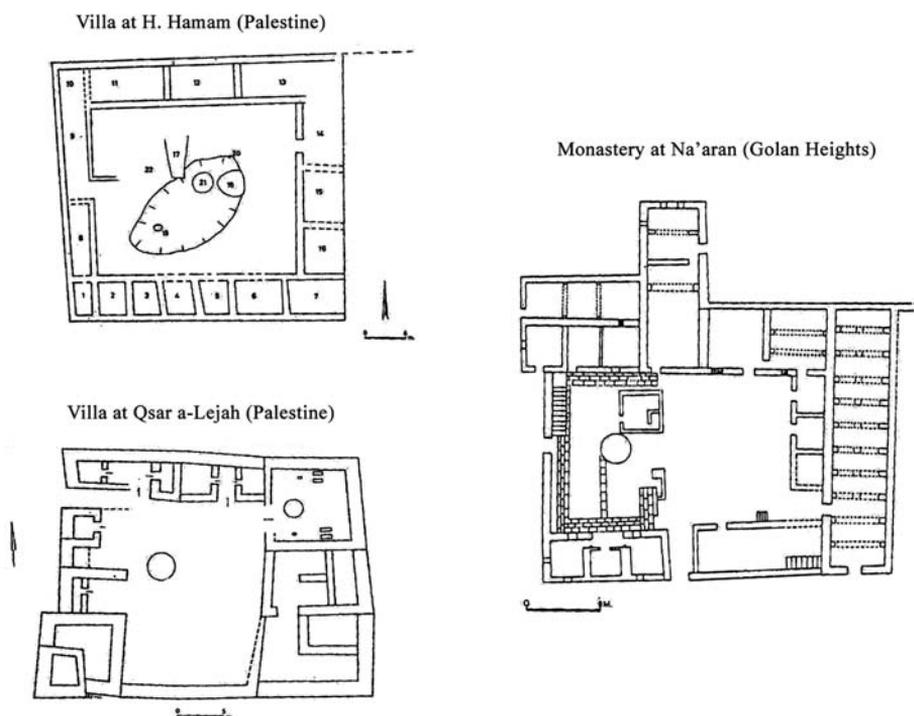


Fig. 4. Villas at H. Hamam and Qsar a-Lejah in Palestine and the Monastery at Na'aran, Golan Heights (after *Ze'ev Safrai* (H. Hamam and Qsar a-Lejah) and after *C. M. Dauphin and J. J. Schonfield* (Na'aran))

some of the domestic estates were interpreted as monasteries (Dir Qal'a').<sup>43</sup> Indeed, if one compares the cenobitic monasteries (for example, Martyrius, Khirbet el-Quneitra, Khirbet ed-Deir, etc.), with domestic walled farmhouses, one finds remarkable planning similarities (fig. 4). However, one specific planning feature may in some cases be helpful in distinguishing a monastery compound from a domestic walled estate: the tendency of grouping the buildings that serve religious functions as a specific entity within a monastery settlement. The main monastery church, the tomb of the founder as a separate structure, chapels, burial cave and refectory (which served both religious and secular functions), were spatially grouped, often to face an interior court, and located in the immediate vicinity of each other, forming the religious zone of the complex. All three above mentioned monasteries, and many others, applied this planning pattern that became a prominent characteristic even beyond Byzantine Palestine.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> For Dir Qal'a' see *Z. Safrai*, *The Economy of Roman Palestine*, London and New York, 1994, 87–90; for Sumaqa see *E. Ribak*, *Everyday Artefacts as Indicators of Religious Belief in Byzantine Palestine*, 125 and fig. 5.1. See also *J. Shereshevski*, *Byzantine Urban Settlements in the Negev Desert, Negev 1991*; *Y. Hirschfeld*, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period*, Jerusalem 1995.

<sup>44</sup> The examples of grouping the religious buildings and refectory in Byzantine monasteries see *S. Popović*, *The Trapeza in Cenobitic Monasteries: Architectural and Spiritual Contexts*, figs. 1 to 17.

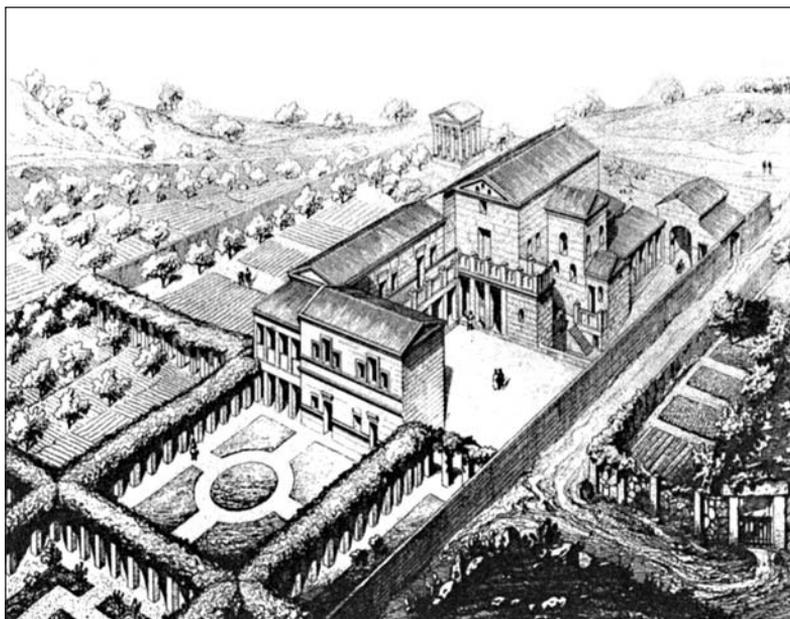


Fig. 5. Rural estate at el-Barah, Syria (reconstruction after *De Vogüé*)

Common elements in the planning features of farmsteads and villas and the early cenobitic monasteries are also grounded in their domestic character. Manual work was significant for all Pachomian communities, as was agricultural work for monasteries in Syria and Asia Minor. The father of cenobitic monasticism in Asia Minor — Basil the Great (329–379), explicitly fostered physical labor and agricultural work.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the physical features of these monasteries resemble domestic walled compounds and villas. Especially in Syria, villas and rural walled estates have certain planning similarities with monasteries: orthogonal planning, successive courtyards, and edifices with porches (fig. 5).<sup>46</sup> The internal division of the monastery space in Syrian complexes grouped the religious structures and separated them from the domestic edifices of the monastery.<sup>47</sup> Although monastic archaeology is underdeveloped in Asia Minor, certain monastic complexes reveal orthogonal planning patterns and a tendency to divide the religious group from other structures (examples from the Bin Bir Kilisse region).<sup>48</sup> In Cappadocia also, monastic complexes and domestic compounds bear witness to similarities in design.<sup>49</sup> The specifics of

<sup>45</sup> *W. K. L. Clarke*, *Basil the Great: the Ascetic Works of Saint Basil*, London 1925; *M.G. Murphy*, *St. Basil and Monasticism*, Washington D. C., 1930; *M. M. Wagner*, *Saint Basil: Ascetical Works*, New York 1950; *G. Gould*, *Basil of Caesarea and the Problem of the Wealth of Monasteries*, ed. *W. J. Sheils* and *D. Wood*, *The Church and Wealth*, Oxford 1987, 15–24.

<sup>46</sup> See numerous examples in *G. Tchalenko*, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du nord*, 3 vols. Paris 1953–58.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, II, pl. XLIX

<sup>48</sup> *C. W. Ramsay* and *G. L. Bell*, *The Thousand and One Churches*, London 1909, figs. 164, 180 and 181.

<sup>49</sup> *L. Rodley*, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*, Cambridge 1985.

the region are rock-cut monasteries as well as rock-cut residences, often with pronounced planning similarities that make it difficult to distinguish their domestic or monastic function.<sup>50</sup>

This brief survey of early monastic planning on the vast territory of the Byzantine Empire, indicates that a planning pattern emerged from contemporary secular complexes — villas and farmsteads. Naturally certain specifics, in the disposition and functional zoning of religious buildings, formed unique characteristics of the monastery compound. It is also interesting to notice that by the end of the sixth century, huge rural estates and walled villas and farmsteads disappeared from the changing environment of the Byzantine world. However, monasteries remained as architectural witnesses and successors of planning models that no longer existed in the secular world.<sup>51</sup>

As we have seen, by the sixth century a rectangular enclosure had become the standard of a cenobitic monastery. A new input occurred, most probably after Iconoclasm, in the ninth century.<sup>52</sup> The church emerged as a central planning feature of the walled, prevailingly rectangular, complex and was located, as a free-standing structure, in the middle of the monastery settlement. As mentioned earlier, the monastery became a codified spatial model with functionally designated zones for (1) religious worship, (2) dwelling purposes and (3) economic activity. Thus, spatial iconography was finally set. Numerous examples on Mount Athos and elsewhere in Byzantium confirm the established spatial model that continued to dominate in the Late Byzantine period and beyond. Consistent with its character, the entirety continued to perform its dual — secular and sacred — functions. Therefore architectural analysis of individual monastic buildings may provide substantial evidence of the mutual relationship of those two extremes. Without attempting to present a systematic study, I will point out a few exemplary solutions.

The monastery refectory is a paradigmatic example of functional duality: it served both religious commemorations and daily meals.<sup>53</sup> Two, chronologically distant, written sources shed light on this subject. According to Cyril of Scythopolis, the laura of Euthymius the Great (377–473) in Palestine, was transformed after his death, into a cenobium by Fidus who engaged an engineer and “a quantity of skilled workmen, and many assistants... and built the cenobium, which he surrounded with walls and made secure. The old church he made into a refectory, and built the new church above it.”<sup>54</sup> Another written source from the beginning of the fifteenth cen-

<sup>50</sup> R. Ousterhout, *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia*, Washington D.C. 2005.

<sup>51</sup> An interesting example of possible confusion between a monastery and ninth-century palace of Bryas in Constantinople further emphasizes ambiguities related to architectural typology; A. Ricci, *The road from Baghdad to Byzantium and the case of the Bryas palace in Istanbul*, ed. L. Brubaker, *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive*, Aldershot 1998, 131–49.

<sup>52</sup> Lacuna in Byzantine monastic archaeology for the eighth and early ninth centuries does not allow secure dating.

<sup>53</sup> I have elaborated, in greater detail, elsewhere on its architectural and spiritual contexts; see note 5 above.

<sup>54</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis: *The Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, translated by R. M. Price, annotated by J. Binns, Kalamazoo 1991, 64,15.

tury, describes the building of the fourteenth-century Monastery of Dečani in Serbia by Grigorija Camblak, at that time father superior of the monastery.<sup>55</sup> He especially emphasizes that the refectory was a vast and spacious building, nicely decorated — the largest building after the church, and adjacent to the refectory was the kitchen.<sup>56</sup> One may learn from the first example that conversion of the church into a refectory justifies its religious function — it had sacred images on the walls and provided space for the daily commemorations of saints, accompanied by continual prayers during the meals. The second example provides evidence for a more practical matter — the location of the kitchen next to the refectory — demonstrating its secular function. Indeed, the location of cenobitic refectories, seen in numerous examples, was in the immediate vicinity of the church and their architectural design and interior setting bear witness to their preparedness to fulfill ritual functions. On the other hand the cooking and distribution of meals necessitated the physical linkage of refectory and kitchen.

Monastic residences for *hegoumenos* and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries and buildings for monastic administration, as well as kitchens, bakeries, granaries, storages and workshops represented important secular architectural objects within a monastery. Their design, building techniques and decoration, often represented the epitome of the actual architectural trends.<sup>57</sup> Thus monastery settlement paradoxically represents an important source for the study of secular architecture. The architecture of Byzantine houses, residences, and other secular buildings is understudied in comparison to ecclesiastical complexes.<sup>58</sup> In that light, secular monastic edifices may provide additional architectural evidence. In pursuing this matter, we will turn our attention to Byzantine monasteries in Serbia, where archaeology has recently revealed entire settlements.

An interesting example of Late Byzantine architectural design is the fourteenth-century Episcopal palace in the Patriarchate of Peć.<sup>59</sup> Most probably built around 1330 for Archbishop Danilo II (1324–38), the palace was located on the south-western side of the church complex. It was planned as a spacious two-story, rectangular free-standing building with the porch along its northern façade. Built in a combination of ashlar and bricks, using the well-known Byzantine *cloisonné* technique, its fa-

<sup>55</sup> Grigorije Camblak: *Život kralja Stefana Dečanskog*, (Life of King Stefan Dečanski), ed. L. Mirković, Stare srpske biografije XV i XVII veka, Belgrade 1936, 1–40.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>57</sup> Two regional surveys of Byzantine monasteries provide ample evidence related to monastic secular architecture. One is Y. Hirschfeld's study, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (as in note 14 above); the second is my study of the Late Byzantine monasteries in Serbia, *The Cross in the Circle. Monastery Architecture in Medieval Serbia* (as in note 18 above).

<sup>58</sup> On Byzantine house see (*Mojsilovic*) Popovic, Houses, ODB, 953–54 (with older literature); and more recently: K. Rheidt, *Byzantinische Wohnhäuser des 11. bis 14. Jahrhunderts in Pergamon*, DOP 44 (1990), 195–204; *Secular Medieval Architecture in the Balkans 1300–1500 and its Preservation*, eds., S. Ćurčić and E. Hadjitryphonos, Thessaloniki 1997; S. Ćurčić, *Houses in the Byzantine World*, ed. D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, Athens 2002, 228–38; L. Sigalos, *Middle and Late Byzantine Houses in Greece (tenth to fifteenth centuries)*, ed. K. Dark, *Secular Buildings and the Archaeology of Everyday Life in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 2004, 53–81.

<sup>59</sup> S. Popovic, *The Cross in the Circle. Monastery Architecture in Medieval Serbia*, 317–320.

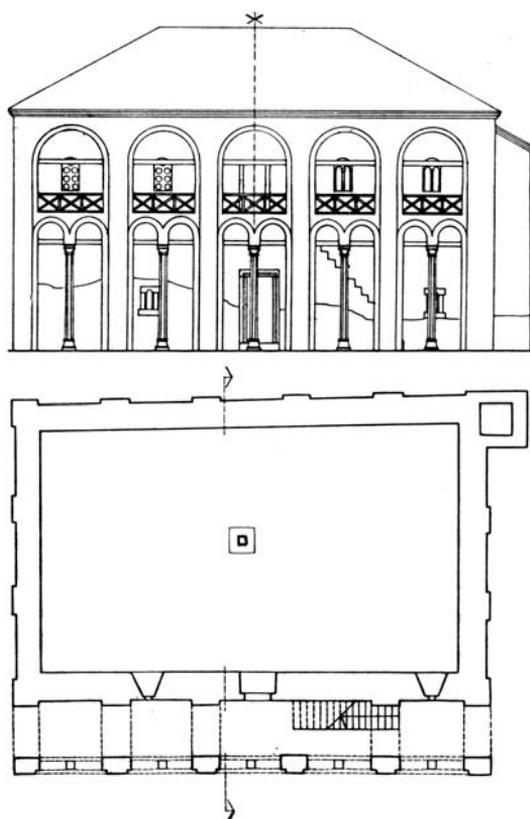


Fig. 6. Episcopal Palace, Patriarchate of Peć (reconstruction *S. Popović*)

acades were divided into rhythmical planes by shallow pilasters. Although the upper story has not survived, archaeology revealed fragments of bases, columns, arches, and window-transennas with glass oculi that made possible its tentative reconstruction (fig. 6).<sup>60</sup> The interior walls of this palace were decorated with frescoes, as testified by fragments found in debris. The building represents a rare surviving example of a Late Byzantine monastic palace, and its stylistic features may have their roots in the much more elaborate, Constantinopolitan palace of Tekfyr Saray (fig. 8).

In discussing overall aspects of monastic spatial disposition, especially in rural monasteries of the Late Byzantine period, one cannot omit the significance and meaning of the wider monastic built environment, including the landscape. The monastery enclosure designated the monastic settlement — the core of the entirety. However, beyond the enclosure numerous buildings necessary to the economic life of the monastery were located on the vast estates that surrounded the core. There were also other edifices with religious connotations, for example, isolated cells, cha-

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 118.

pels, and miraculous springs (*hagiasma*), including natural or even artificial platforms that provided spectacular vistas of the God-created surroundings. In this light, one may ask whether the *inner world* was expanded beyond the enclosure, and acted as a prophylactic zone for the community. It seems that we are experiencing, again, the duality of the monastic world where secular and sacred blend. Therefore the natural environment that surrounded a monastery, and the monastic location as chosen and determined by God, became *topos* in hagiographic literature.<sup>61</sup> Water resources were essential to the community, though often attributed to divine providence. So were the gardens, orchards, and vineyards that provided both essential sustenance and spiritual fulfillment in anticipation of paradise.<sup>62</sup>

In conclusion, secular aspects made a significant impact on the formation of the monastery. However, that did not change its original meaning and concept: a terrestrial station on the route to heaven. The dualism, secular-sacred, of the monastic space and architecture reflects on the much wider question of conceptualizing space and architecture in Byzantium. Any space and building may become sacred if they experience hierophany or theophany. Examples are numerous: a natural cave, dramatic landscape, healing spring and its environment, desert; or buildings: a tower in a fortress, abandoned bath-house, private house, etc. In Byzantine society, secular and sacred coexisted and the boundaries between these two worlds were rather loose. That is why certain architectural structures and spaces may easily, when consecrated, become sacred. Interestingly enough, the process was not reversible. A church was never intentionally turned into a secular dwelling even if it was abandoned or fell into ruin. Numerous examples confirm that ruined holy sites may continue to emanate and gather believers, especially if the notion of their sacredness remains alive in public memory.

Thus the concept of the holiness of the ‘spot,’ whether immanent, provoked by a sign, or achieved by sanctification, reveals one important aspect of theocratic society to achieve significant levels of mimesis, and other precautionary measures, that will lead to salvation.

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<sup>61</sup> A-M. Talbot, *Founder’s Choices: Monastery Site Selection in Byzantium* (forthcoming); S. Popovic, *The Byzantine Monastery: Its Spatial Iconography and the Question of Sacredness*, 170.

<sup>62</sup> A-M. Talbot, *Byzantine Monastic Horticulture: The Textual Evidence*, eds. A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Byzantine Garden Culture*, Washington, D.C. 2002, 37–67.

*Светлана Поповић*

### ДЕОБА НЕДЕЉИВОГ: СВЕТОВНО И СВЕТО У МАНАСТИРСКОМ ПРОСТОРУ

За византијски свет простор није био истородан. Он се испољавао у два вида: као свети и световни. Највиши степен светости на земљи уживало је црквено здање и стога је оно имало посебан статус у пространом световном окружењу. Истовремено је тај широки световни простор омогућио стварање и обележавање светог места. Просторни дуализам, карактеристичан за *homo religiosus*, снажно се одразио и на стварање манастирског простора. У недавно објављеним истраживањима, разматрајући симболично значење манастира у византијском свету, закључила сам да је за духовни свет манастир обезбеђивао пут ка спасењу, симболично представљајући зону која спаја небеско и земаљско. Овом приликом ћу посветити пажњу дељивости недељивог — физичког — простора, који се у свести византијског света ипак делио на световни и свети.

Једно од кључних питања у оквиру археолошког истраживања рановизантијског манастира односи се на проблем идентификације насеља: како разликовати манастирско насеље од, на пример, руралне виле или сеоског газдинства. Одговор није једноставан, будући да је рановизантијско манастирско насеље, у формативном периоду, било лишено било каквог просторног и архитектонског симболизма. Зато су ранокиновијске заједнице монаха личиле на ограђена секуларна газдинства, будући да је мануални рад испуњавао време између молитава. Поједини египатски манастири у раном периоду нису ни имали цркве, већ се богослужење обављало у оближњим сеоским црквама. Упоредна анализа просторног склопа секуларних газдинстава и раних киновија, на целокупном простору рановизантијског света, указује да прототип киновијске зједнице није био аутентичан већ се развио из постојећих сеоских и приватних газдинстава. Парадоксално, секуларни простор је обезбедио окриље за стварање светог. Релативно правилан четвороугаони план, карактеристичан за ране монашке насеобине, има бројне паралеле у световним ограђеним имањима од Египта и Палестине преко Сирије, Мале Азије до Балкана. У рановизантијском периоду бројни су примери претварања приватних вила у манастире, или организовање киновија у напуштеним сеоским насељима. Свакако треба имати у виду да су постојале регионалне разлике у обликовању простора и архитектуре, што се неминовно одразило и на манастире. На пример, следећи регионалну прехришћанску традицију, киновије у Палестини су често укључивале у комплексе постојеће природне пећине, које су служиле понекад као цркве или много чешће као фунерарни простори. Та локална пракса је временом извршила огроман утицај на развој монашких насеобина широм Империје и постала окосница анахоретског монаштва. С друге стране, у Сирији је изолована кула, као посебна прехришћанска регионална форма, нашла пут до манастирских насеља и постала прототип монашке аскетске куле, готово обавезног елемента у градитељском програму византијских манастира.

Процес стварања просторног и концептуалног модела киновије одвијао се у дужем временском периоду. Највероватније крајем деветог и током десетог века просторни модел византијске киновије коначно је кодификован: специјално насеље са главном манастирском црквом у средишту и трпезаријом у непосредној близини, окружено челијским и другим неопходним грађевинама административне, резиденцијалне или економске намене, било је омеђено и одвојено зидом.

Примарно обележје киновијске заједнице испољило се у раздвајању специјалног од општег простора зидом. Стога је обзиђе имало двојну функцију — да обележи и да обезбеди свети простор. У том специјалном окружењу највиши статус просторне и свете хијерархије — неприкосновени свети простор — имала је црква. Међутим, архитектонска бифункционалност, на релацији секуларно–сакрално, једна је од карактеристика сваке киновије. Примери су бројни: манастирска трпезарија је обезбеђивала простор за дневне, али и за комеморативне обеде у славу и сећање на хришћанске светитеље; манастирска кула (пирг) са испосничком ћелијом и капелом на врху, служила је за анахоретску изолацију, али и за одбрану, ако је то било неопходно, а монашка ћелија је била место подвизавања али и боравишта.

Из свега произлази да обе категорије — световно и свето — коегзистирају у манастирској просторној и архитектонској иконографији. Градитељски и просторни дуализам на релацији секуларно–сакрално може се шире повезати и са питањем концептуализације простора и архитектуре у византијском свету: сваки простор и грађевина могу попримити обележје светог, ако су искусиле божанско провиђење. Примери су бројни: природне пећине, драматични пејсажи, чудотворна изворишта, индивидуалне куће, куле, па чак и тврђаве. Стога концепт 'посвећености места' открива значајану тежњу теократског друштва да постигне одређен степен мимикрије и других профилактичних мера које ће му обезбедити пут до спасења.



Fig. 7. Sculptural Crosses on the enclosure of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai  
(photo: *Yumna Masawra*)



Fig. 8. Tekfyr Saray Palace, Istanbul (photo: S. Popović)