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The *Historia Ekklesiastike kai Mystike Theoria*: a symbolic understanding of the Byzantine church building

Abstract: This paper offers a close reading of the passages in the *Historia Ekklesiastike kai Mystike Theoria*, a liturgical commentary attributed to Germanos I, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 730), that pertain to the church building. The *Historia's* interpretation is highly symbolic, steeped in scripture and dependent on earlier and contemporary theological thought. On occasion, the text sheds light on actual architectural developments, as in the case of the skeuophylakion. On the whole, however, the discussion of architecture is rather vague. I argue that the *Historia* is part of a long exegetical tradition on the liturgy that disregards the functional aspects of church buildings, a disconnect enabled by the adaptability of Byzantine liturgical rites.

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For Alice-Mary Talbot

The *Historia Ekklesiastike kai Mystike Theoria*, a liturgical commentary attributed to Germanos I, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 730), interprets the Divine Liturgy and its material context, the church building, at the beginning of the eighth century.¹ However, the *Historia's* interpretation proved popular throughout the By-

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¹ The most important studies on this text remain by R. BORNERT, *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle*. *Archives de l'orient chrétien*, 9. Paris 1966, 125–180, and R. F. TAFT, *The liturgy of the Great Church: an initial synthesis of structure and interpretation on the eve of Iconoclasm*. *DOP* 34–35 (1980–1981) 45–75. For an exhaustive overview of the issue of authorship see BORNERT, *Les commentaires* 142–160 (where Bornert concludes with some caution that Germanos I wrote the *Historia*). For a summary of the commentary see H. WYBREW, *The Orthodox liturgy: the development of the eucharistic liturgy in the Byzantine rite*.

zantine period and beyond. Over sixty manuscripts preserve the text, more than any other in this genre.² It was the only commentary included in Ducas's *editio princeps* of the three Byzantine liturgies.³ Thus, the *Historia* represents the most prevalent and widespread understanding of a church building in Byzantium. Despite this importance, it has received little scholarly attention.

In this paper I provide a close reading of the passages in the *Historia* that pertain to the church. The *Historia's* interpretation of the building is highly symbolic, steeped in scripture and dependent on earlier and contemporary theological thought. On occasion, the text sheds light on actual architectural developments, as in the case of the skeuophylakion. On the whole, however, the discussion of architecture is rather vague. I argue that the *Historia* is part of a long exegetical tradition on the liturgy that disregards any functional aspects of a church building, a disconnect enabled by the adaptability of Byzantine liturgical rites.

The *Historia* begins with a discussion of the building and some of its parts – a discussion that is at the heart of this paper – then proceeds with an examination of the Divine Liturgy: the preparatory rites, the *enarxis* and introit, the Great Entrance, the *Anaphora* or Eucharistic prayers, the Lord's Prayer and communion. This account follows the patriarchal liturgy in Hagia Sophia, the cathedral of Constantinople, at the beginning of the eighth century, as Robert TAFT has argued. But the author's chronological and geographical reference points are of little or no consequence, as indicated by the wide dissemination of the text.⁴ Similarly, the discussion of architectural features is general enough to apply to most, if not all churches. The first chapter of the commentary treats the symbolism of the church building. Although parts of this have been repeatedly used in modern scholarship as one of the few examples of a Byzantine understanding of a church, there has never been an attempt to analyze it systematically. Therefore,

Crestwood, NY 1990, 108–128. See also P. MEYENDORFF, *St Germanus of Constantinople on the divine liturgy*. Crestwood, NY 1984, for a somewhat uninspired English translation. Most of the parts discussed here are also translated in C. MANGO, *The art of the Byzantine empire*, 312–1453: sources and documents. Toronto 1986, 141–143.

² Despite the complicated manuscript tradition and the many interpolated versions, the original text of the *Historia* can be established with a high degree of certainty. For the text I follow N. BORGIA (ed.), *Il commentario liturgico di S. Germano Patriarca Costantinopolitano e la versione latina di Anastasio Bibliotecario*. Grottaferrata 1912, which is based on Vat. gr. 790 and Neap. gr. LXIII; and N. F. KRASNOSEL'TSEV, *Сведения о некоторых литургических рукописях Ватиканской библиотеки*. Kazan 1885, 323–375, which is based on Moscow cod. 327.

³ Demetrius DUCAS (ed.), *Αἱ θεῖαι λειτουργίαι*. Rome 1526.

⁴ Even in the interpolated versions, the arrangement of the Divine Liturgy remains essentially unchanged.

most of the text's complex system of quotations, allusions, and imagery has gone unremarked.

1a. The church is the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:10–17; 2 Cor. 6:16), a holy precinct, a house of prayer (Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46, all quoting Is. 56:7), a gathering of people, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10–17, 12:27; Col. 1:24; Eph. 2:19–22).⁵

1b. Its name is bride of Christ.

1c. It has been cleansed through the water of his baptism, it has been sprinkled with his blood, it is adorned like a bride (Rev. 21:2, 9), and it has been sealed with perfumed oil of the Holy Spirit according to the prophetic saying:

1d. *your name is perfume poured out* (Sg. 1:3) and *we shall run after you into the fragrance of your anointing oil* (Sg. 1:4)

1e. because it is *like the perfumed oil on the head, which descends on the beard of Aarōn* (Ps. 132:2).

1f. The church is earthly heaven, where the heavenly God dwells and walks about (2 Cor. 6:16; Lev. 16:12; Deut. 23:5)

1g. It represents symbolically the crucifixion and the burial and the resurrection of Christ.

1h. It is glorified more than Moses's tent of witness, in which were the mercy seat and the Holy of Holies.

1i. It has been prefigured by patriarchs, proclaimed by prophets, founded by apostles (Eph. 2:19), adorned by hierarchs, and perfected by martyrs.⁶

The text here communicates on two levels, one being a straightforward characterization of the building (e. g., “a church is the temple of God,” 1a), the other a more allusive description aimed at readers sensitive to the subtle contextual references (e. g., the image of the church as an anointed bride alludes to the rites of consecration, 1b–1e).

The series of characterizations in the first sentence (1a) conflate the physical building with the assembly of God's people, that is, the *ekklesia*. This is evident in the progressive movement from the material to the symbolic that culminates with the quotation from 1 Corinthians 12:27, that the church is the body of Christ.⁷

⁵ See also Romans 12:4–5, Ephesians 4:1–16, Colossians 3:14–15.

⁶ Ἐκκλησία ἐστὶ ναὸς Θεοῦ, τέμενος ἅγιον, οἶκος προσευχῆς, συνάθροισις λαοῦ, σῶμα Χριστοῦ· ὄνομα αὐτῆς νύμφη Χριστοῦ· τῷ ὕδατι τοῦ βαπτίσματος αὐτοῦ καθαρθείσα, καὶ τῷ αἵματι βαντισθεῖσα τῷ αὐτοῦ καὶ νυμφικῶς ἐστολισμένη, καὶ τῷ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος μύρῳ σφραγισμένη κατὰ τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον· μύρον ἔκκενωθὲν ὄνομά σοι καὶ εἰς ὄσμην μύρου σου δραμοῦμεν, ὅτι ὡς μύρον ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τὸ καταβαῖνον ἐπὶ πώγωνα τοῦ Ἀαρῶν.

Ἐκκλησία ἐστὶν ἐπίγειος οὐρανός, ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἐπουράνιος Θεὸς ἐνοικεῖ καὶ ἐμπεριπατεῖ, ἀντιτυπούσα τὴν σταύρωσιν καὶ τὴν ταφὴν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν Χριστοῦ· δεδοξασμένη ὑπὲρ τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου Μωσέως, ἐν ἧ τὸ ἱλαστήριον καὶ τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων· ἐν πατριάρχεις προτυπωθεῖσα, ἐν προφήταις προκηρυχθεῖσα, ἐν ἀποστόλοις θεμελιωθεῖσα, ἱεράρχαις κατακοσμηθεῖσα καὶ ἐν μάρτυσι τελειωθεῖσα.

⁷ Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους.

This conflation of building and assembly, which appeared in Christian discourse only around the beginning of the fourth century, marks a break from the earliest distaste for localized sanctity. New Testament authors, as well as early Christian theologians, consider the community of believers, not the space where they meet, to be the body of Christ. In fact, they completely deny the sacrality of man-made temples. In Acts 12:24 Paul says: “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands.” Even when the Church is described in architectural terms, as in Ephesians 2:19–22, no material building is implied.⁸ In a similar vein Clement of Alexandria (d. before 215) asserts: “Now I call church not the place, but the gathering of chosen.”⁹ However, the term ἐκκλησία had come to designate both the building and the gathering of the people by the time of Eusebios of Caesarea (d. 339 or 340).¹⁰ Eusebios, to whom the Byzantines owe much of the symbolic language used in description of churches, brilliantly adapts Ephesians 2:19–22 to both assembly and building in a speech he delivered on the occasion of the dedication of the church at Tyre in 315:¹¹

8 Ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι, ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῇ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐν ᾧ πάσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὐξεῖ εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι (my emphasis).

9 Οὐ γὰρ νῦν τὸν τόπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκκλησίαν καλῶ, *Stromata* 7.5.29 (ed. A. LE BOULLUEC, Clément d'Alexandrie, Les Stromates, 7. SC, 428. Paris 1997, 110).

10 CH. MOHRMANN, Les dénominations de l'église en tant qu'édifice en grec et en latin au cours des premiers siècles chrétiens. *Revue des sciences religieuses* 36 (1962) 155–174, here 158–159. For an excellent overview of earlier attitudes toward the church building, see A. M. YASIN, Saints and church spaces in the late antique Mediterranean: architecture, cult, and community. Cambridge 2009, 15–22. See also see K. E. McVEY, Spirit embodied: the emergence of symbolic interpretations of early Christian and Byzantine architecture, in S. Ćurčić / E. Hadjityrphonos (eds.), Architecture as icon: perception and representation of architecture in Byzantine art. Princeton 2010, 39–71, here 43.

11 Eusebios, *Ekklesiastike Historia* 10.4.2–72 (ed. E. SCHWARTZ, Eusebius Kirchengeschichte. GCS, 9. Leipzig 1922, 862–883). On this text and building see G. J. M. BARTELINK, 'Maison de prière' comme dénomination de l'église en tant qu'édifice, en particulier chez Eusèbe de Césarée. *REG* 84 (1971) 101–118; J. WILKINSON, Paulinus' temple at Tyre. *JÖB* 32 (1982) 553–561; K. E. McVEY, The Sogitha on the church of Edessa in the context of other early Greek and Syriac hymns for the consecration of church buildings. *Aram* 5 (1993) 329–370, here 347–351; McVEY, Spirit embodied (as footnote 10 above) 45–48; J. M. SCHOTT, Eusebius' panegyric on the building of churches (HE 10.4.2–72). Aesthetics and the politics of Christian architecture, in S. Inowlocki / C. Zamagni (eds.), Reconsidering Eusebius: collected papers on literary, historical, and theological issues. *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, 107. Leiden/Boston 2011, 177–198.

But less importance attaches to the efforts of those who have laboured, in the eyes of Him whom we name God, when He looks at the live temple consisting of us all, and views the house of the living and immovable stones, well and securely based on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.¹²

In the *Historia* the conflation and its resulting ambiguity is of great importance as a rhetorical device because it allows the author to apply quotations about the assembly of believers to the building, even though his focus is really the building, not the assembly. The conflation is limiting for both Church and building because it implies a codependency, but it is especially restrictive for the building, which, the *Historia* seems to imply, has no meaning outside the *ekklesia*. In other words, the building does not have any inherent holiness, but is made holy through the presence of God's people and rituals, just as there can be no bride-chamber without a bride and matrimonial ritual.

Bridal imagery of this sort is central to the *Historia's* ideal of a church evident in 1b (“Its name is bride of Christ”) and from its use of Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon, 1d). The Song has been understood, since Origen, as a symbolic exchange between Christ and the Church.¹³ In the *Historia*, through the conflation of Church (assembly) with church (building), the latter appropriates the imagery of the former, which had, in turn, been given the imagery of the bride in the Song of Songs. However, the preceding references to the bride who is cleansed through Christ's baptism, or sprinkled with his blood (1c), are at first difficult to understand in the context of a building. The *Historia* is alluding to ritual acts performed during the consecration (καθιέρωσις) of a church and its altar.¹⁴ The text makes this idea explicit with references to the rite of consecra-

12 Οὐ μὴν ὅσα καὶ ὅσα τὰ τῆς τῶν πεπονηκότων προθυμίας κέρκρται παρ' αὐτῷ τῷ θεολογούμενῳ τὸν ἔμφυχον πάντων ὑμῶν καθορώντι ναὸν καὶ τὸν ἐκ ζώντων λίθων καὶ βεβηκότων οἶκον ἐποπτεύοντι εὖ καὶ ἀσφαλῶς ἰδρυμένον ἐπὶ τῇ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου λίθου αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *Ekklesiastike Historia* 10.4.21 (translation: G. A. WILLIAMSON, Eusebius: The history of the church from Christ to Constantine. London / New York 1989, 310). Such a conflation is also implied in an earlier liturgical commentary, the *Mystagogia* of Maximos the Confessor (d. 662). Compare, for example, chapters one and two of the *Mystagogia*. In the former Maximos refers mostly to the church, while in the latter he focuses primarily on the building. In both case he uses the word ἐκκλησία. See, CH. BOUTIGNON (ed.), Maximi Confessoris Mystagogia. *CC Series Graeca*, 69. Turnhout 2011, 3–17.

13 J. R. WRIGHT (ed.) Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. Ancient Christian commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL 2005, 286–290. See also Ephesians 5:21–33, 1 Corinthians 11:3, John 3:29, and Apocalypse 21:9–22:17. Predictably, Eusebios offers the same interpretation in his Tyre speech; see Eusebios, *Ekklesiastike Historia* 10.4.54 (WILLIAMSON 383).

14 First noticed by CH. KONSTANTINIDIS, Dédicace des Églises selon le rite byzantin vers la moitié du VIII^e siècle. *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Θ' Διεθνoῦς Βυζαντινολογικοῦ συνεδρίου*. Athens 1955, 2:

tion (1c). The sequence in the *Historia* aligns well with the pertinent rubrics in the Barberini Euchologion (late eighth century), the earliest surviving manuscript of its kind.¹⁵ The patriarch first washes the altar with white soap and lukewarm water from the baptismal pail (σίτλα τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος), using a new, clean sponge. One of the prayers recited during this ritual makes reference to Christ's baptism.¹⁶ Subsequently, the patriarch pours perfumed wine over the altar, while reciting Psalm 50 (LXX, "You will sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed"), then wipes it using a linen cloth (σάβανον). After pouring perfumed oil (μύρον) on the altar, he covers it completely with the appropriate textiles. Finally, while the patriarch censes, one of the attending bishops anoints the whole building with perfumed oil, making crosses on each column and pier. The *Historia's* quotations from the Song of Songs allude to the intense desirability of being in the "temple of God," one that has been officially consecrated by perfumed oil, repeatedly invoked in 1d–e. In this context, the final quotation in the paragraph about the perfumed oil that descends on the beard of Aaron (1e, Psalm 132:2), can be understood only if we include the previous verse, "Look now, what is good or what is more pleasant than for kindred to live together." The verse and its context connect the *myron* used in the consecration of the building with the delight of being among "kindred," a return to the idea of the Church as the assembly of people inside God's temple.

Another gathering of God's people and another consecration with oil is alluded to with the phrase "Aaron's beard," recounted in Leviticus 8:1–13. Moses assembles the people at the door of the tent of witness. He summons Aaron, washes him with water, and dresses him in the high priest's garments. Moses then sprinkles and anoints the altar, utensils, and tent with the anointing oil (τὸ ἔλαιον τῆς χρίσεως), and pours some of it over Aaron's head, after which Moses vests Aaron's sons. The parallels between these verses and the Byzantine rite of consecration are clear, even if not precise. It is also clear that the author of the *Historia* was conscious of these parallels because, in the following paragraph, he compares the church building with Moses's tent of witness, the Tabernacle, rather than with Solomon's Temple, which as a built rather than a portable structure would have been more appropriate.

206–215. Konstantinides, however, used the much interpolated text of the *Historia* in the *Patrologia Graeca*, something that confused his interpretation.

15 S. PARENTI / E. VELKOVSKA (eds.), *Ευχολογίη Βαρβερίνι* гр. 336. 3rd ed. Omsk 2011, 367–376, here 371–372 (§ 151–152).

16 Κύριε ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἀγίασας τὰ ρείθρα τοῦ Ἰορδάνου διὰ τῆς σωτηριώδους σου ἐπιφανείας, PARENTI/VELKOVSKA, *ibid.* 371.

The allusion to the Tabernacle, a dwelling place of God, connects the end of the first paragraph and the beginning of the second (1f). As God's abode, the church – like the Tabernacle – is also an "earthly heaven" (1f, ἐπίγειος οὐρανός). The attribution of cosmological symbolism to a worship space is common to many religions and it has Jewish precedents. In the first century CE Josephus claims that Moses's Tabernacle imitated the cosmos: one third of the Tabernacle was dedicated to God, like the heavens, and two thirds to priests, like the earth.¹⁷ The church is also an earthly heaven where "God dwells and walks about." The quote is from 2 Corinthians 6:16,¹⁸ itself a conflation of Leviticus 26:12¹⁹ and Ezekiel 37:27.²⁰ In both Old Testament passages God promises to dwell physically among the people of Israel (Ezekiel uses the word κατασκήνωσις, encampment), an allusion to the Tabernacle and the Temple. Paul, on the other hand, spiritualizes the idea by claiming that the believers constitute the temple of God, where he resides.²¹ The *Historia*, mining the conflation of assembly and building, returns to the older, Old Testament meaning of the quotation: God dwells physically in this building.²²

The reference to the Tabernacle and Temple necessitates a comparison between those structures and the church, one that is unfavorable to the former.

17 *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 3.180–182. The idea was eventually taken up by Christian writers. The church as a heaven on earth is found in Syriac literature in the fifth century as in a hymn for the dedication of a newly built church in the city of Qenneshrin, see McVey, *Sogitha* (as footnote 11 above) 336–351. Another Syriac text, the famous *sogitha* for the consecration of the church of Edessa (built 543–554), interprets the dome as a symbol of heaven, as does a slightly later but much more sophisticated Greek kontakion, composed in 562 for the second inauguration of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople; together they indicate that such ideas circulated widely in the sixth century and would have been literary topoi by the time of the *Historia's* composition, see K. E. McVey, *The domed church as microcosm. Literary roots of an architectural symbol*. *DOP* 37 (1983) 91–121; A. PALMER, *The inauguration anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: a new edition and translation with historical and architectural notes and a comparison with a contemporary Constantinopolitan kontakion*. *BMGS* 12 (1988) 117–168. For the text of this kontakion see C. A. TRYPANIS (ed.), *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*. Vienna 1968, 141–147.

18 Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός.

19 Καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῶν θεός καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μου λαός.

20 Καὶ ἔσται ἡ κατασκήνωσις μου ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς θεός, καὶ αὐτοὶ μου ἔσονται λαός.

21 Eusebios uses the same quote to refer to the spiritual Church; see Eusebios, *Ekklesiastike Historia* 10.4.56 (WILLIAMSON 383–384).

22 This echoes one of the consecration prayers that beseeches God to "adopt this house as your dwelling place, and make it where your glory abides (αἰρέτῃσαι αὐτὸν εἰς κατοικίαν σὴν, ποιήσον αὐτὸν τόπον σκηνώματος δόξης σου [cf. Ps. 25:8]), PARENTI/VELKOVSKA, *Ευχολογίη* (as footnote 15 above) 370.

This continues a long tradition in Christian and Byzantine rhetoric, beginning in Hebrews 8, in which the church building had a peculiar relationship, admiring and at the same time antagonistic, to the Jewish man-made worship setting, be it the Tabernacle, or the later Temple, especially Solomon's.²³ The *Historia* makes this comparison explicit in 1h with the reference to the Tabernacle, but mostly employs a set of complex analogies to make this point. For example, the expression "earthly heaven" is not merely a cosmological paradox; it is also a topos for the Theotokos, recurrent in homiletic literature. A sermon by Pseudo-Chrysostom about the Theotokos, likely dating to the fifth century, says "I behold another, earthly heaven, larger than the heaven that lies close to creation."²⁴ John I, archbishop of Thessalonike (d. ca. 630 or 649), writes in his sermon on the Koimesis (Dormition): "Because he [Christ] showed her as his throne on earth and as an earthly heaven."²⁵ The author of the *Historia* likely used this expression intentionally, in order to trigger to the audience both associations. The parallel between the Theotokos and the church is not improbable. They both carry inside them the body of incarnate Christ, which in the case of the building is the assembly of the faithful, as already mentioned in the opening line of the *Historia*. And other architectural analogies connect the Mother of God to the church building, such as her epithet ἔμψυχος ναός – "living temple"²⁶ – and the dome itself, which was a norm in churches by the eighth century. The author of the *Historia*, in using "earthly heaven," could be invoking the domed building that, filled with the body of Christ, becomes a symbol of the pregnant Theotokos. This suggestion is not as unlikely as it may sound. A twelfth-century ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia by Michael the Deacon uses the language of pregnancy to describe its naos and

23 Eusebios, *Ekklesiastike Historia* 10.4.3 (WILLIAMSON 371), also compares the church in Tyre to the tabernacle and Temple. The same author compares the Holy Sepulcher with the Temple in *Vita Constantini* III 33 (ed. F. WINKELMANN, Eusebius Werke, 1/1: Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin. GCS, 7/1. Berlin 1975, 33). See also *Anthologia Palatina* I 10 (ed. J. HENDERSON, The Greek Anthology. Cambridge, MA 1916, 8, 10), for the church of Hagios Polyuktos in Constantinople; and TRYPANIS, *Cantica* (as footnote 17 above) 146, for Hagia Sophia. The mercy seat, an object which rested on the Ark of the Covenant, is also mentioned in the consecration rite, where God is asked to glorify the new church "more than the mercy seat of the [old] law" (δόξασον αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τὸ κατὰ νόμον ἱλαστήριον), PARENTI/VELKOVSKA, *Εὐχολογίη* (as footnote 15 above) 370.

24 Πλείω τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς κοσμοποιίας ὑποκειμένου οὐρανοῦ, ἄλλον ἐπίγειον οὐρανὸν θεωρῶ, F.J. LEROY, Une nouvelle homélie acrostiche sur la Nativité. *Le Muséon* 77 (1964) 155–173.

25 Ὅτι αὐτὴν ἔδειξεν θρόνον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ οὐρανὸν ἐπίγειον, PO 19, 402.

26 As in the aforementioned kontakion, see TRYPANIS, *Cantica* (as footnote 17 above) 142.

dome.²⁷ Furthermore, the word "to dwell," ἐνοικέω, although part of a quote, is often used to describe Christ dwelling in the womb of the Theotokos.²⁸

Because the church is a metonymy of the incarnation, as well as the place where God dwells and walks about, it is also the place that symbolizes the life, but especially the passion of the incarnate Christ, by representing his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection (1g).²⁹ The *Historia* elucidates this point in later paragraphs, where both rituals and spaces inside the church – primarily in the sanctuary – recreate the topography of the Holy Land. Thus the ciborium, a domed or pyramidal structure over the altar, represents the Crucifixion, and the main apse represents the place of burial. Although not explicitly mentioned, the text here implies that the church is all this that the Tabernacle or the Temple were not.

The adverse juxtaposition of Temple and church continues in 1i, which states that the church was proclaimed by prophets, adorned by hierarchs, and so on, in contrast to the Temple, which had none of this. The enumeration of these categories of saints would have an additional meaning for the Byzantines because the interior decoration of a church would have included such images.³⁰ Prophets, apostles, and "teachers," i.e., bishops, are mentioned in the kontakion for the enkainia of Hagia Sophia. But the statement in 1i is also symbolic language. For example, the Edessa hymn interprets the numerous windows as standing for the apostles, martyrs, and confessors. All this is also a distant echo of 1 Corinthians 12:28³¹ in combination with Galatians 2:9,³² which Gregory of Nyssa among others interprets as the "pillars of the Church."³³ Again the *Historia* transfers the symbolism from the Church to the building, and once again there is a reference to the consecration rite. The church is perfected by martyrs, because a *sine qua non* of the consecration rite was the presence of the relics of martyrs, which were sealed in the altar.³⁴

27 Ὡς πολλάς ἂν σωματίων μυριάδας ἐγκυμονεῖν, see C. MANGO / J. PARKER, A twelfth-century description of St. Sophia. *DOP* 14 (1960) 233–245, here 237.

28 See, for example, B. KOTTER (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 2. Berlin 1973: sec. 46, ... ἐνοικήσας (ὁ λόγος) τῇ γαστρὶ τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου.

29 The connection between 1f and 1g is clear in the Greek, where the two sentences are separated with a comma.

30 See, for example, MANGO, *Art* (as footnote 1 above) 41–42.

31 Καὶ οὐς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους.

32 Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι.

33 See, for example, PG 44, 1077 and 1264; J. DANIÉLOU (ed.), *Gregoire de Nyssa, La vie de Moïse*. SC, 1. Paris 1968, 228–230.

34 PARENTI/VELKOVSKA, *Εὐχολογίη* (as footnote 15 above) 374–376.

The first chapter of the *Historia* offers a complicated and highly symbolic understanding of a church building. It conflates it with the assembly of people and stresses its importance as a consecrated space, the bride of Christ sealed with perfumed oil. It asserts that it is an earthly heaven and a place where God dwells, like the Tabernacle and Temple, but infinitely more elevated, because, through the rituals that take place in it, it represents Christ's passion.

In contrast to this general treatment of the building as a whole, in subsequent chapters the *Historia* focuses on specific parts of the church and assigns one or multiple symbolic associations to each. These associations fall into three categories: a memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ; the fulfilment of Old Testament prefigurations; and anticipation of the heavenly liturgy and the times to come. Unlike the allusive symbolism in chapter one, these interpretations are straightforward, even if not entirely systematized. Furthermore, the comparisons with the Temple or the Tabernacle are neutral.

The interpretation concentrates primarily on the area of the bema, where most of the liturgical action took place. The main apse (or the concave part of the apse, κόγχη) is both the cave in Bethlehem and the cave where Jesus was buried (§ 3). The altar (ἅγια τράπεζα) is the place in the tomb where Christ was placed. It is also the throne of God, on which he rested in the flesh, and it also symbolizes the table of the Last Supper, which was prefigured in the table that held the manna descended from heaven (§ 4). The ciborium (κιβώριον) stands for the place where Christ was crucified, which was near the tomb but on a higher level.³⁵ It also symbolizes the Ark of the Covenant (§ 5). The sanctuary (θυσιαστήριον) is the tomb of Christ but also named after the heavenly and spiritual sanctuary (§ 6). The bema (βῆμα) is an elevated space and the throne on which Christ sits with his apostles; it also points to the Second Coming (§ 7).³⁶ The entablature (κοσμήτης) symbolizes the curtain of the Temple³⁷ and displays the seal of Christ in its cruciform decoration (§ 8). The chancel barrier indicates the place of prayer (the naos) and separates it from the "Holy of Holies," accessible only to clergy. It also imitates the bronze barriers in the actual sepulcher of

35 I follow here KRASNOSEL'TSEV rather than BORGIA, and read ἐτάθη rather than ἐτάφη, which makes logical sense in this context. For translations of this passage see MANGO, *Art* (as footnote 1 above) 142; MEYENDORFF, *St Germanus* (as footnote 1 above) 59.

36 Germanos is likely referring to the synthronon and retains the original meaning of bema as a tribunal.

37 The text here is obscure but the explanation is given in the later commentary of pseudo-Sophronios, which quotes Germanos and adds εἰς τύπον ὁ κοσμήτης τοῦ καταπετάσματος; *PG* 87, 3984. For differing translations see MANGO, *Art* (as footnote 1 above) 143; MEYENDORFF, *St Germanus* (as footnote 1 above) 63.

Christ in Jerusalem (§ 9). The ambo (ἄμβων) indicates the stone that closed the tomb. It also accords with the prophet Isaiah exhortation (40:9) "Climb, herald good news, and lift up your voice with strength," because the ambo is a mountain situated on a flat surface (§ 10).³⁸

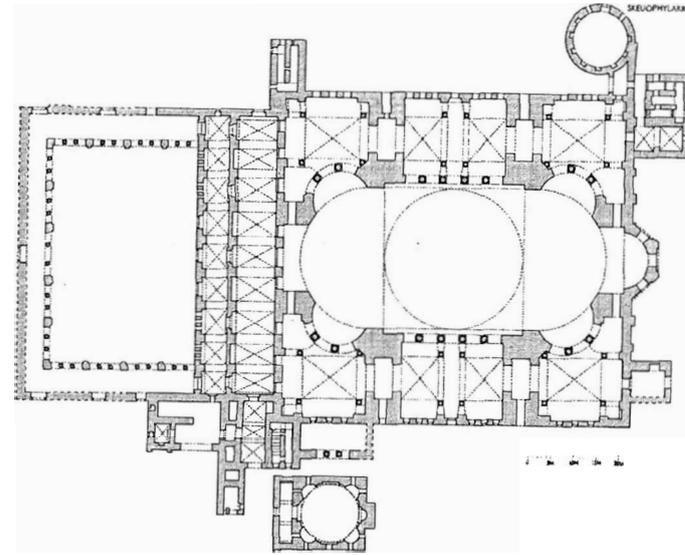


Figure 1: Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532–537 with later additions and modifications; plan

The bulk of the *Historia*'s general, amorphous descriptions of individual liturgical spaces tell us little about specific churches or their development, with a single important exception, that concerning the development of the tripartite bema. Chapter 36 elaborates on the proskomide, the readying of the gifts for the Great Entrance.³⁹ In reality, however, this paragraph discusses the symbolism of the

38 The rest of the *Historia* is concerned primarily with the structure and symbolism of the Divine Liturgy; only occasionally are parts of the church mentioned. For example, chapter 26 refers to the synthronon, from which the archbishop blesses the people. Chapter 37, which describes the Great Entrance, essentially repeats what has been described in chapters 3 and 4: "The presbytery is the image of the tomb, and the holy altar, the repository, the place where the undefiled and all-holy body was placed" (Ἔστι δὲ ἀντίτυπον τοῦ ἁγίου μνήματος τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τὸ καταθέσιον, δηλαδὴ ἐν ᾧ ἐτέθη τὸ ἄχραντον καὶ πανάγιον σῶμα, ἡ θεία τράπεζα).

39 R. F. TAFT, *The Great Entrance. A history of the transfer of gifts and other pre-anaphoral rites*. *OCA*, 200. Rome 1978, 260.

space where this took place, the skeuophylakion, which translates literally as “the place where the vessels are guarded” – a sacristy. Here is the first sentence:

36. The proskomide, which takes place in the skeuophylakion, signifies the place of the skull, where Christ was crucified. It is said that the skull of our forefather Adam lies there, and it shows that the tomb was close to where he was crucified (cf. Jn. 19:41–42).⁴⁰

This passage is of great import for it indicates that as a matter of course the skeuophylakion, which signifies the Calvary, was in close proximity to the central apse, which represents the tomb. This arrangement, however, goes against the current understanding formulated by Thomas F. MATHEWS, who places the skeuophylakion most often outside the building in the early churches of Constantinople.

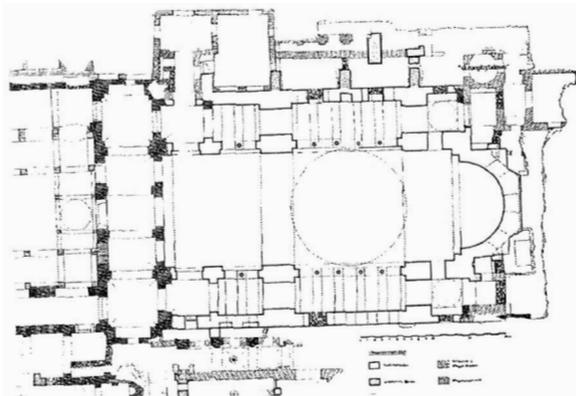


Figure 2: Hagia Eirene, Istanbul, Turkey, 6th century with later modifications; plan

The skeuophylakion in Hagia Sophia was certainly an outbuilding, still surviving today outside the northeast side of the church [Fig. 1].⁴¹ Mathews and Taft

⁴⁰ I follow here KRASNOSEL'TSEV. Ἡ προσκομιδὴ ἡ γενομένη ἐν τῷ σκευοφυλακίῳ, ἐμφαίνει τοῦ κρανίου τὸν τόπον ἐν ᾧ ἐσταυρώθη ὁ Χριστός: ἐν ᾧ λόγος (ἐστὶ) κεῖσθαι τὸ κρανίον τοῦ προπάτορος ἡμῶν Ἀδάμ, δείκνυσι δὲ ὅτι “ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ μνημεῖον οὗ ἐσταυρώθη.” BORZIA offers a variant reading found only in one manuscript: Ἡ προσκομιδὴ ἡ γενομένη ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ, ἥτοι ἐν τῷ σκευοφυλακίῳ.

⁴¹ Th. F. MATHEWS, *The early churches of Constantinople: architecture and liturgy*. University Park 1971, 158–162. See also F. DIRIMTEKIN, *Le skeuophylakion de Sainte-Sophie*. *REB* 19 (1961) 390–400; TAFT, *Great Entrance* (as footnote 39 above) 178–203; N. K. MORAN, *The skeuophylakion of Hagia Sophia*. *Cahiers Archéologiques* 34 (1986) 29–32; S. TÜRKÖĞLU, *Aya-*

offered evidence for the existence of outside skeuophylakia in three other churches – Hagia Eirene, the Theotokos at Blachernae, and Hagios Theodoros of Sphorakios – but this evidence is not without problems. In Hagia Eirene Feridun DIRIMTEKIN uncovered the remains of a structure that abutted the north exterior wall of the church [Fig. 2]. It dates to the eighth century and was square in the exterior with a circular interior. Dirimtekin calls it a skeuophylakion, simply because he considers it too small to be a baptistery.⁴² Urs PESCHLOW does not assign a function to this structure.⁴³ His meticulous study of the building has shown it to be part of a variety of additions made in the eighth-century reconstruction of Hagia Eirene.⁴⁴ The church of the Theotokos at Blachernae has long disappeared. Its skeuophylakion is mentioned in the tenth-century *De ceremoniis*, but the pertinent passage does not exclude the possibility that its sacristy was inside the church. Indeed, Cyril MANGO reconstructed it that way.⁴⁵ We should entertain the possibility that, whereas some churches had an outside skeuophylakion, in others during this early period it was located inside the church and in close proximity to the main altar. In fact, there is secure evidence for such an arrangement in the church of Hagios Ioannes Prodromos in Oxeia. This church was probably built in the early sixth century⁴⁶ and was famous for housing in an underground crypt the coffin with the relics of Artemios, a saint specializing in the cure of testicular diseases and hernias. The building has not survived, but based on extensive information in the seventh-century *miracula of Artemios* we can reconstruct it as a three-aisled basilica, with the main apse flanked by a skeuophylakion to the north and a chapel dedicated to Saint Febronia to the south [Fig. 3].⁴⁷ The specifics of this arrangement are unknown,

sofya Skeuophilakionu kazısı. *Ayasofya Müzesi Yıllığı* 9 (1983) 25–35; R. F. TAFT, *Quaestiones disputatae: the skeuophylakion of Hagia Sophia and the entrances of the liturgy revisited*, I: *Oriens Christianus* 81 (1997) 1–35; II: *Oriens Christianus* 82 (1998) 53–87; G. MAJESKA, *Notes on the skeuophylakion of St. Sophia*. *VV* 55 (1998) 212–215.

⁴² F. DIRIMTEKIN, *Le fouilles faites en 1946–47 et en 1958–60 entre Sainte-Sophie et Sainte-Irène à Istanbul*. *Cahiers Archéologiques* 13 (1962) 161–185, here 162, and fig. 2.

⁴³ U. PESCHLOW, *Die Irenenkirche in Istanbul: Untersuchungen zur Architektur*. *Istanbuler Mitteilungen, Beiheft* 18. Tübingen 1977, 61–62.

⁴⁴ MATHEWS, *Early churches* (as footnote 41 above) 161, has suggested that before the eighth century Hagia Eirene used the skeuophylakion of Hagia Sophia.

⁴⁵ C. Mango, *The origins of the Blachernae shrine at Constantinople*, in N. Cambi / E. Marin (eds.), *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae*. Split 1998, 2.61–76, here 63, and fig. 1.

⁴⁶ A. Berger (ed.), *Accounts of medieval Constantinople: the Patria*. *DOML*, 24. Washington, DC 2013, 3.51 (p. 168).

⁴⁷ See the reconstruction in C. MANGO, *On the history of the templon and the martyrium of St. Artemios at Constantinople*. *Zograf* 10 (1979) 40–43. For the *miracula* see V. S. CRISAFULLI / J. W.

but given the absence of any evidence for a triple-apse sanctuary in Constantinople before the ninth century, it is unlikely that the side spaces were apsed. Non-apsed subsidiary rooms flanking the main apse can be seen in Hagia Eirene. In this respect, MANGO's reconstruction of the Oxeia church with a single projecting main apse in the middle of two auxiliary rooms with flat east walls cannot be far off the mark.

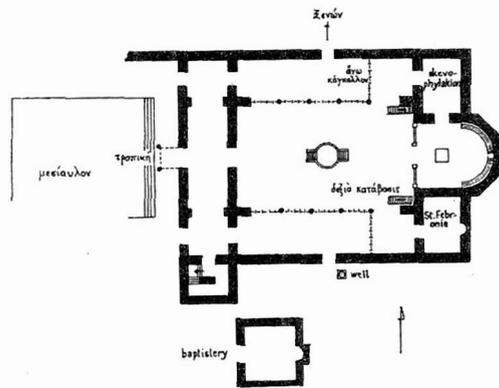


Figure 3: Hagios Ioannes in Oxeia, 6th century; hypothetical plan

Because the *Historia* reflects common practice at the time of its composition, we need to reevaluate our understanding of the development of the sanctuary in the churches of Constantinople.⁴⁸ The traditional scheme holds that pre-iconoclastic churches had a single apse with no side rooms but with an outside skeuophylakion, where bread and wine were prepared for the Eucharist. The triple-apse bema appeared only in the ninth century, rather abruptly. Clearly, the *His-*

NESBITT (eds.), *The Miracles of St. Artemios*. A collection of miracle stories by an anonymous author of seventh-century Byzantium. *The medieval Mediterranean*, 13. Leiden / New York 1997, esp. 9–19, a detailed discussion of the architecture.

48 For an overview of the bibliography on the tripartite bema see Y. D. VARALIS, *Prothesis and diakonikon: searching the original concept of the subsidiary spaces of the Byzantine sanctuary*, in A. Lidov (ed.), *Hierotopy: the creation of sacred spaces in Byzantium and medieval Russia*. Moscow 2006, 282–298. See also G. DESCŒUDRES, *Die Pastophorien im syro-byzantinischen Osten*. Eine Untersuchung zu architektur- und liturgiegeschichtlichen Problemen. *Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europa*, 16. Wiesbaden 1983, 127–159; N. ASUTAY-FLEISSIG, *Byzantinische Apsisnebenräume: Untersuchung zur Funktion der Apsisnebenräume in den Höhlenkirchen Kappadokiens und in den mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Konstantinopels*. Weimar 1998; D. J. STRIČEVIĆ, *Djkonikon i protezis u ranohrišćanskim crkvama*. *Starinar* 9–10 (1958–1959) 59–66.

toria and such churches as Hagios Ioannes in Oxeia complicate this picture. The latter indicates that an alternative configuration existed – an inside skeuophylakion near the altar – at least in the early sixth century, and the former reveals that this arrangement was the norm in the early eighth century. If this is true, then the appearance of the triple-apse bema in the ninth century makes sense as a step in a larger and gradual process. This bema configuration, likely imported from Bithynia, offered a solution that met both practical and symbolic needs: it provided a separate space that accommodated the prothesis rite with its growing ritual complexity, while maintaining the proximity to the altar that was important for the sacred topography enacted in the liturgy. At the same time, the newly introduced south side room maintained the symmetry of the building, a major concern as many middle Byzantine churches in the capital attest.⁴⁹

Although there is no archaeological record of this transition, liturgical texts make it evident. Pseudo-Sophronios, a twelfth-century liturgical commentary that is strongly influenced by the *Historia*, and often elucidates its meaning, repeats the symbolic topography simply by updating the vocabulary: “The holy altar manifests the holy tomb, where he was buried; the holy prothesis is the place of the skull, where he was crucified.”⁵⁰ Another pertinent passage comes from Symeon, the early fifteenth-century archbishop of Thessalonike, who writes: “The place of the skeuophylakion, which is also called prothesis, to the side of the sanctuary signifies Bethlehem and the cave. That way it is secluded and not far from the sanctuary, although it used to be farther out in the large churches for the safekeeping of the vessels.”⁵¹ It is difficult to assess the truth of Symeon’s comment that only “large churches” had an outside skeuophylakion, but it is an appealing hypothesis. After all, the only such structure securely identified belongs to Hagia Sophia, where it was used at least until the tenth century.

49 It is, I believe, of significance that we have almost no information about the south side room, now commonly called the diakonikon. I suspect this is the case because its original purpose was to architecturally balance the symmetry of the bema. See also F. KARAYIANNI / S. MAMALOUKOS, *Παρατηρήσεις στη διαμόρφωση του διακονικού κατά τη μέση και ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο*. *DChAE* 30 (2009) 95–101.

50 Ἁγία τράπεζα δηλοῖ τὸ ἅγιον μνημεῖον, ἐν ᾧ ἐτάφη· ἡ δὲ ἅγια πρόθεσις ὁ τοῦ Κρανίου τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἐσταυρώθη: PG 87, 3984.

51 Ὁ ἐκ πλαγίου δὲ τοῦ βήματος τοῦ σκευοφυλακίου τόπος, ὃς καὶ λέγεται πρόθεσις, τὴν Βηθλεὲμ καὶ τὸ σπήλαιον διαγράφει. Ὅθεν καὶ ὡς ἐν γωνία ἐστὶ, καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου οὐ πόρρω, εἰ καὶ πορρωτέρω ποτὲ ἐν τοῖς μεγάλοις ἦσαν ναοὶς διὰ τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν σκευῶν: PG 155, 348.

How much does the *Historia* help us understand specific architectural developments? Admittedly little, with the notable exception of the indoor skeuophylakion. We learn that at the beginning of the eighth century a “typical” church needed to be consecrated, and that it had an altar, ciborium, synthronon, templon, ambo, and a separate place for the preparation of the eucharistic gifts. It most likely had a dome that enhanced its cosmological symbolism, and its interior was decorated with Gospel scenes and images of saints. In short, for a contemporary architectural historian the discussion of the architecture in such a source leaves many unanswered questions. There is no explication of causal relationships; no discourse on connections between architecture and ritual; no mention of size, height, or how wall decoration, ritual action, and architecture work together during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.⁵²

The *Historia* is not alone in its disregard for practicalities pertaining to the performance of ritual acts inside a built space. The eleventh-century *Protheoria* mentions, but in utter generalities, the altar (ἁγία τράπεζα, § 4), the prothesis (§ 7), the marble floors of Hagia Sophia (§ 14), the “upper throne” (ἡ ἄνω καθέδρα, § 15), the ciborium (§ 18) and the doors (§ 21).⁵³ Of the 110 paragraphs in Symeon of Thessalonike’s *Interpretation of the Divine Temple*, only eleven discuss elements of architecture, and even then quite blandly.⁵⁴ In the fourteenth-century liturgical commentary of Nikolaos Kabasilas the building is virtually absent.⁵⁵

Thus the *Historia* is part of a long exegetical tradition that disregards the functional aspects of a church building. But why is this the case? I contend that this phenomenon is due to the adaptability of the Byzantine liturgical rites. The same Divine Liturgy could be celebrated both in a small chapel and in an enormous cathedral, with just a few necessary adjustments, such as the length of processions. The form of the building, and indeed the building itself, is almost immaterial to the efficacy of the Eucharist; it is not even necessary. Nei-

52 We lack, for example, descriptions such as those in TH. F. MATHEWS, *The sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine church decoration*. *Perkins Journal* 41 (1988) 11–21; V. MARINIS, *Architecture and ritual in the churches of Constantinople: ninth to fifteenth centuries*. Cambridge / New York 2014, 55–57.

53 For the text of the *Protheoria* see PG 140, 417–468. See also the excellent analysis in BORNERT, *Commentaires* (as footnote 1 above) 181–213.

54 S. HAWKES-TEEPLES (ed.), *St. Symeon of Thessalonika, The liturgical commentaries*. *Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and texts*, 168. Toronto 2010, 80–163.

55 S. SALAVILLE (ed.), *Nicolas Cabasilas: Explication de la Divine Liturgie*. SC, 4. 2nd ed., Paris 1967.

los Kerameus, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 1388), succinctly encapsulates this in one of his canonical regulations:

Our benevolent master and lord Jesus Christ, who is God on earth, gave us many ways [to sanctification]. The first and highest is the sacrifice of his precious blood and body... The servants and preachers of the Divine Word, his saintly apostles and disciples, and along with them our holy and God-inspired Fathers and teachers of the ecumene prescribed this holy tradition not simply to be carried on and fulfilled by us, but [to carry it on] in the world or often outside it [i. e., in monasteries] in a certain holy place, dedicated specifically to God... However, because generals and even emperors themselves leave on trips, and in foreign lands, where there is no holy church; or because some pious clergy withdraw from their own cities or monastery and settle in a desert place out of love for quietness and asceticism; and because often impious people come to the lands of Christians and destroy the churches and the Christians cannot rebuild them, or they are often afraid that, if they build others, they [the impious] will destroy them again; for all these reasons, and because they have the need to be sanctified and commune, we find announced by the saintly Fathers and the holy and saintly synods that [these Christians] were given a holy table consecrated through a wooden tablet or a textile. And having received it, they place it in a private space, separated and clearly defined either with a wall, if it is inside a house, or with a curtain, and they perform the Eucharist privately... And this object, because it is evidently a holy table, has a prothesis on the left side, a bit smaller than the holy table. All Christians ought to love, and watch over it, and consider it holy, and honor and venerate it, as they do to it in the holy churches.⁵⁶

It is true that Neilos speaks of exceptions rather than the rule. Yet his text states that, even though a “holy place, consecrated to God” is the most appropriate context, the only *sine qua non* for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy is a (somehow) consecrated altar.⁵⁷ Indeed, the tenth-century *vita* of Saint Blasios of Amorion (d. ca. 912) recounts how the saint celebrated his last Divine Liturgy on an altar set up near his deathbed.⁵⁸ And Saint Paul of Latros (d. 955) had the liturgy

56 G. A. RALLES / M. POTLES (eds.), *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, 5. Athens 1856, 141–142. Neilos refers to a category of objects conventionally called *antimensia*, portable altars made of wood or cloth, for which see J. M. IZZO, *The antimensia in the liturgical and canonical tradition of the Byzantine and Latin churches*. Rome 1975, 23–144. They appear as early as the eighth century and were used when a consecrated altar was unavailable, as in the cases outlined in the text. See, for example, the *vita* of Markianos of Syracuse, AASS June 3:281C–282D, and epistle 40 by Theodore of Stoudios (G. FATOUROS [ed.], *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*. CFHB, 31. Berlin 1992, 1.104–5).

57 See also, the comments by Balsamon in RALLES/POTLES, *Σύνταγμα*, 2. Athens 1852, 580–581, and by Matthew Blastares, in *ibid.*, 6.80–81.

58 Τῆ μυστικῆ θυσίᾳ τελευταίαν ἀποδοῦναι βουλόμενος, αἰτήσας προσφορὰν, καὶ σύνεγγυς τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ παρετοιμασάμενοι τράπεζαν, ἀναστὰς κἀντεύθεν τῆ προθυμίας ῥωννύμενος καὶ τὰ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἀμφισοθεῖς περιβόλαια, μετὰ πολλῶν τῶν δακρύων τὴν φοβερὰν καὶ ἀνάμακτον

celebrated in the cave that he inhabited, which presented problems of access for the clergy.⁵⁹ In neither case did the authors consider the absence of an actual building as restrictive or even peculiar.

In this light, the vagueness about the building in liturgical commentaries makes sense. In these texts the building's identity as a liturgical space is of secondary importance: the absolute requirements for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy are minimal and the ritual could be adapted easily. Consequently, formal aspects of the building, like its size and type, and even its decoration, often had a tenuous link to its liturgical function. They could enhance the symbolism of the ritual, or they could be influenced by it, but neither was necessary, and there is no causal relationship between them. The chancel barrier symbolizes the separation of the "house of prayer" from the Holy of Holies, regardless of whether it is small or large, decorated or plain, made of marble or wood.⁶⁰

The *Historia* establishes the symbolic framework in which a church building was understood from the eighth century onward, and even up to today. In October 2013 the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America confirmed that the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava would design the new Saint Nicholas church at Ground Zero in New York City. In the published renderings the building is centrally planned, with a dome and a spacious narthex. The press coverage, which mostly quotes the spokesperson for the archdiocese, highlights the prominence of the dome, the church's prototypes (Hagia Sophia and the church of the Chora in Istanbul), and the fact that it will have a bereavement center and be a house of prayer for all people. Calatrava's proposal to the selection committee outlines his creative process in very specific terms, but it makes no mention of the practicalities of the building as a liturgical space. The same is true for the deliberations of the selection committee, which consisted of academics, laypeople, and clergy. All of them assumed, as did the *Historia* and its readers over many centuries, that the Liturgy would somehow fit.

τῆς μυστικῆς θυσίας ἀναπέμψας προσκύνησιν τῇ παναγίᾳ Τριάδι, ἣ καθαρῶς καὶ λελάτρευκεν, ἥ καὶ ποθήσας τῇ νεκρώσει τοῦ σώματος, ταύτης ταμεῖον καθαρὸν τε καὶ ἄσπλον ἐχρημάτισε: AASS Nov. IV: 669.

⁵⁹ H. DELEHAYE, Vita S. Pauli Iunioris in Monte Latro. *Analecta Bollandiana* 11 (1892) 5–74, 136–182, here 114.

⁶⁰ Recent scholarship has proved that the form of a church is the result of a variety of factors, including budget, availability of materials, the patron's agenda, and so on. See, selectively, R.G. OUSTERHOUT, *Master builders of Byzantium*. Princeton 1999, 86–156; V. MARINIS, Structure, agency, ritual, and the Byzantine church, in B.D. Wescoat / R.G. Ousterhout (eds.), *Architecture of the sacred: space, ritual, and experience from classical Greece to Byzantium*. New York 2012, 338–364; idem, *Architecture and ritual* (as footnote 52 above) *passim*.