

SERIES BYZANTINA

Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art



VOLUME VII

Warsaw 2009



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THE POLISH SOCIETY OF BYZANTINE ART
CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY

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Virgin Mary; glassware decoration, from catacombs in Rome, 4th c. AD;
N. P. Kondakov, *Ikonografia Bogomateri*, St. Petersburg 1914, p. 77

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THE POLISH SOCIETY OF ORIENTAL ART
CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY

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GENERAL EDITORS:

Waldemar Deluga

Michał Janocha

EDITOR OF THE VOLUME:

Waldemar Deluga

EDITORIAL ADDRESS:

Institut of History of Art

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University

ul. Wóycickiego 1/3

PL 01-938 Warszawa

wdeluga@wp.pl

Revised by Gillian Pyke, London; Natalia Mizerniuk, Warsaw; Joële Volondat, Reims

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Introduction

Nous avons le plaisir de vous présenter le tome suivant de *Series Byzantina* préparé à l'occasion d'un colloque organisé dans le monastère des Capucins à Zakroczym en 2008. La réunion auquel ont participé différents pays nous a permis de prendre connaissance des exposés des chercheurs venus de Biélorussie, République Tchèque, Grèce, Pologne, Roumanie, Serbie, États-Unis, Suede, Hongrie et Grande-Bretagne. Ce colloque de quelques jours qui s'est déroulé dans un milieu serein, loin du paysage urbain, a été une bonne occasion de mener beaucoup d'importants débats. Nous avons décidé dorénavant d'organiser nos prochains colloques dans de petits centres, ce qui permettra aux participants venant des pays lointains de se reposer après un voyage souvent long. Pour la première fois, nous avons joint des communications des étudiants de différents pays, qui sont arrivés à l'Université Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, dans le cadre du programme Erasmus, et ont créé un noyau international de jeunes byzantinistes. Certains textes peuvent susciter des critiques des lecteurs. Toutefois, nous considérons qu'il est absolument nécessaire d'accorder la parole aux jeunes chercheurs qui se trouvent au début de leur carrière scientifique. (de cette manière uniquement nous offrons une plate-forme commune de communication aux personnes des pays de l'Europe Occidentale et de l'Est, à tous ceux qui ne sont qu'au début de leur travail professionnelle).

Pologne a une tradition très riche en ce qui concerne la recherche sur l'art chrétien des pays périphériques d'Asie et d'Afrique. Les voyages des Polonais aux pays d'Orient ont suscité un intérêt très vif pour la culture de toutes ces régions. Des rapports richement documentés des voyageurs ont vu le jour dans des hebdomadaires illustrés, ce qui a contribué au développement de la recherche scientifique. La Palestine, le berceau de la chrétienté orientale et occidentale, a fait l'objet d'un intérêt à part. Les chercheurs polonais avec la participation des clercs, et notamment des Franciscains et des Dominicains, ont élaboré, à la charnière des XIX et XX siècles, les monuments liés à des lieux de pèlerinage importants. Plusieurs articles ont alors paru dans la presse catholique. De même, des missions et des



Fig. 1. Jérusalem, Basilique du Saint Sépulcre

fouilles archéologiques ont été menées. Beaucoup d'articles scientifiques intéressants ont paru également dans une des plus anciennes revues scientifiques, la *Filomata*, éditée à partir de 1929. Les historiens de la littérature et les théologiens s'intéressant aux sources littéraires ont largement contribué à la meilleure et profonde connaissance de la culture palestinienne. Méritent d'être mentionnés, à ce propos, l'archevêque de Lviv, le prêtre Józef Bilczewski et le prêtre Tadeusz Radkowski.

Un autre chercheur illustre de Slovénie s'étant installé avant la guerre à Cracovie, Wojislaw Molè, a mené des recherches sur l'art chrétien primitif et l'art byzantin. Sa monographie sur l'art chrétien primitif, éditée en 1931, est devenue un ouvrage de base pour plusieurs générations d'historiens et d'archéologues. De même, les articles de Celina Osieczkowska, active à Vilnius, publiés le plus souvent à l'étranger, ont été accueillis avec un grand enthousiasme parmi les byzantinologues.

Au temps du régime communiste, les études sur la Chrétienté Orientale ont été menées surtout dans des centres liés à l'Église Catholique, parmi lesquelles les plus importantes à l'Université Catholique de Lublin. Dans le cadre de cette université indépendante, une chaire de recherches sur la tradition de la chrétienté antique fut créé (Międzywydziałowy

Zakład Badań nad tradycją chrześcijaństwa antycznego). La revue scientifique y rédigée intitulée *Vox Patrum* contient plusieurs articles non seulement sur l'histoire d'art et d'archéologie chrétienne, mais aussi sur l'histoire et notamment la littérature chrétienne primitive. Dans ce domaine, la Pologne occupe le grand rang en ce qui concerne les études scientifiques en Europe. En fait, il en existe beaucoup de traductions, ouvrages et dictionnaires. Les collaborateurs de l'Université Catholique de Lublin précité organisent, depuis plusieurs années, des symposiums à Kazimierz Dolny (une ville pittoresque située au bord de la Vistule, à 150 kms au nord-est de Cracovie) et éditent des tomes avec les actes des conférences (*Sympozja kazimierskie*). Par ailleurs, ils ont également publié des manuels universitaires ainsi que les ouvrages de Barbara Filarska sur l'art primitif chrétien renouvelés à maintes reprises.

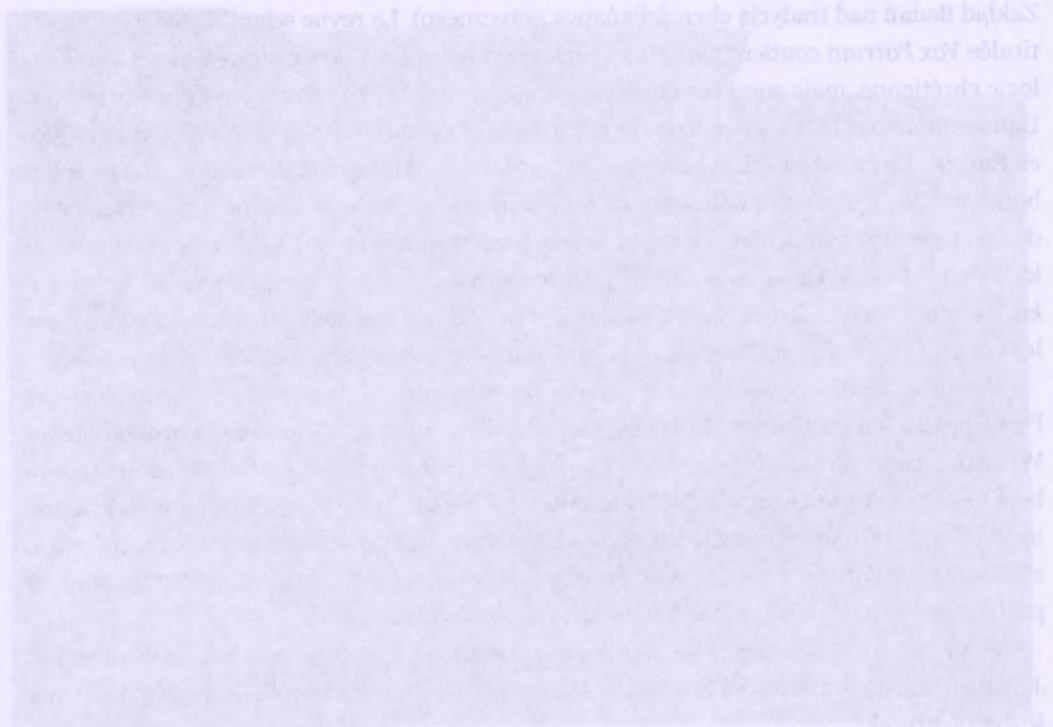
Un autre centre possédant une longue tradition des recherches sur l'archéologie et l'art chrétien, en particulier, du Bassin de la Méditerranée est l'Université Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński ; héritière de l'Académie de Théologie Catholique, l'école est fondée en 1952 sur la base de la Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Varsovie. Dans cette Université, fonctionne un cours d'études unique sur la littérature chrétienne primitive, ainsi que sur l'archéologie et l'histoire de l'art. Dans ce cadre du développement intense des études sur l'art byzantin et postbyzantin s'intègre la publication de la revue *Series Byzantina*.

De même, il est nécessaire de mentionner aussi le centre de recherches de l'Université Jagellone qui continue les recherches entamées par les Professeurs Wojślaw Molè et Anna Różycka-Bryzek.

L'Association Polonaise de l'Art d'Orient (Polskie Stowarzyszenie Sztuki Orientu) s'avère le nouveau forum des discours scientifiques sur l'art chrétien menés dans des pays à domination musulmane ou hindoue tout en ouvrant de nouvelles perspectives pour les chercheurs de Pologne et de la région. Nous espérons que les matériaux préparés nous permettront de poursuivre nos études scientifiques sur la périphérie de la chrétienté d'Asie, d'Afrique et d'Europe.

Le tome suivant sera consacré à l'art byzantin et postbyzantin en Bulgarie et dans les pays voisins. Nous tenterons de démontrer l'interaction des cultures des nations des Balkans à travers les articles sur l'architecture, la peinture, la miniature, l'imprimerie et l'artisanat. Par ailleurs, nous voulons présenter des textes brefs concernant les monuments situés hors les pays des Balkans qui témoignent du volume de l'exportation des œuvres artistiques non seulement dans l'Orient chrétien mais aussi dans les pays latins.

Waldemar Deluga



L'Association Française de l'Air d'Orient (Association Française de l'Air d'Orient) a été créée en 1907 par le général de division Paul Cailletet, qui avait été l'un des fondateurs de l'aviation militaire française. Elle a pour but de promouvoir l'aviation dans les régions orientales de l'Empire français, en particulier en ce qui concerne les missions de reconnaissance et de liaison. L'association a été très active dans les années 1910 et 1920, et a joué un rôle important dans le développement de l'aviation militaire française pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Elle a également été impliquée dans des missions de reconnaissance pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Après la guerre, l'association a continué de promouvoir l'aviation dans les régions orientales de l'Empire français, et a été impliquée dans des missions de reconnaissance pendant la guerre d'Algérie. Elle a également été impliquée dans des missions de reconnaissance pendant la guerre du Vietnam. L'association a été dissoute en 1962, à la suite de l'indépendance de l'Algérie.

The Church and Its Influence on Representative Art Between the Second and Fourth Century AD

Monika Ożóg, Głogów

The nascent Christian Church's attitude towards art, and the opinion that it was the fruit of the pagan tradition, impossible to reconcile with Christianity, was typical for iconoclasm. Such a view was definitely and uncompromisingly against any art production.

As Christianity started to function in the world of ancient culture, it carefully began to take advantage of its heritage. Nevertheless, it had to assimilate at least some of the opinions of ancient aesthetics and art theory.

The attitude of developing Christianity to beauty and art was diverse in its first centuries. We can observe it to some extent by analyzing the writings of early Christian authors, starting with the earliest ones from the second century and ending with those from the period when the new religion became the dominating one, so until the fourth century.

The problem of the influence of the Church and its hierarchy on art in the first centuries of Christianity has been studied by many researchers. In Polish literature it was treated rather cursorily.¹ Foreign literature considering that subject is much richer.²

¹ B. Wronikowska, 'Poglądy Ojców Kościoła na sztukę w ciągu pierwszych dwóch stuleci istnienia Kościoła', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 26 (1978), pp. 5–12; R. Knapieński, 'Ojcowie Kościoła o znaczeniu obrazów w przekazie wiary', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 47 (1999), pp. 5–22; B. Przybyszewski, 'Początki starożytności sztuki obrazowej', *Folia Historiae Atrium*, 15 (1979), pp. 5–25; K. Majewski, 'Bezobrazowość oraz burzenie świątyń, posągów bogów i pomników władców w świecie grecko-rzymskim', *Archeologia*, 16 (1965), pp. 292–297; L. Malunowiczówna, 'Stosunek wczesnego chrześcijaństwa do kultury i filozofii pogańskiej', *Ateneum Kapłańskie*, 71 (1979), pp. 3–15; M. Ożóg, 'Tertulian i jego stosunek do sztuki przedstawieniowej', *Vox Patrum*, 27 (2007), pp. 313–318; M. Ożóg, 'Chrześcijaństwo wobec kultury antycznej w IV w. n.e.', *Studia Humanistica Gedanensia*, 1 (2008), pp. 101–113.

² Th. Klauser, 'Sind der christlichen Oberschicht seit Mark Aurel die höheren postern im Heer und in der Verwaltung zugänglich gemacht worden?', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 16 (1973), pp. 60–66; Th. Klauser, 'Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 1 (1958), pp. 24–27; Th. Klauser, 'Erwägungen zur Entstehung der altchristlichen Kunst', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 76 (1965), pp. 1–11; A. Grabar, *Le premier art chrétien (200–395)*, Paris 1966;

This article presents the opinions of selected Church authorities from that period, who were focusing on the representative art and its role in the early Christian world.

The Church's legal acts rarely considered the problem of images in the Christian world. In the apostolic constitutions, synodal and council documents we can occasionally find some information.

For the first Christians originating from the Judaic tradition, producing any representatives was hard to imagine and accept. They consistently rejected all of them – both statues and pictures.³

It is possible that the Judeo-Christians, who were strict in cultivating their national and religious traditions in the Church, wanted to enforce the Moses' law to the newly converted. In this way new believers could turn away from the pagan culture for good.⁴

The material remains that are the evidence of the artistic activity of early practitioners of the Christ's religion show that after some time they admitted that it is possible to reconcile the properly understood cult of images with directives of faith. However, before it changed, Christianity had to go through the period when the new art was formed by the highest law which was clearly put down in the Decalogue (Ex 20,4 and Ex 20,5).

The Opinion of the first apologist considering partially representative art clearly condemned idolatry and the production of images of gods, as well as their creators. These views had their origin in the fear caused by the tendencies to worshiping idols, which were dangerous for Christians not only because of pagan habits, but also because of the those of neophytes.⁵

One of the first Greek apologists, Iustinus, noticed that the second commandment of the Decalogue (Ex 20,4) is related to the prohibition of the creation of images for the purpose of their worship. He says that the prohibition of creating *any* images does not exist in the Old Testament. If it had existed, God would not have commanded Moses to create the Brazen Serpent, images of the cherubs for the cover of the Ark of The Covenant or the statues of the oxen in the temple (Ex 25,18; 37,7; Num 21,8; 1Kg 7,25). He manifested his strong reluctance

A. Knöpfler, *Der angebliche Kunstthass der ersten Christen*, Festschrift Georg Hertling zum 70 Geburtstag, Kempten – München 1913; H. Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach den literarischen Quellen*, Göttingen 1917; W. Elliger, *Die Stellung der alten Christen zu den Bildern in den ersten 4 Jh.*, Leipzig 1930; V. Buchheit, 'Tertulian und die Anfänge der christlichen Kunst', *Römische Quartalschrift*, 69 (1974), pp. 133–142; G. B. Ladner, 'The concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 7 (1953), pp. 3–34; J. D. Breckenridge, *The Reception of Art into the Early Church*, Roma 1975; E. Kitzinger, 'The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 8 (1954), pp. 83–149; P. Corby Finney, *The Invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art*, Oxford New York 1994; T. F. Matthews, *The clash of Gods: a Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, Princeton 1993.

³ G. W. Dawes, 'The Danger of Idolatry: First Corinthians 8: 7–13', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 58 (1996), pp. 88–89; J. Marcus, 'Idolatry in The New Testament', *Interpretation*, 2006, pp. 152–164.

⁴ Cf. J. Danielou, *Teologia judeochrześcijańska. Historia doktryn chrześcijańskich przed soborem nicejskim*, transl. S. Basista, Kraków 2002.

⁵ A. Nichols, 'Obrazy Izraela (Starotestamentalne prolegomena do chrystologii obrazu)', *Communio*, 10 (1990), pp. 30–47.

not only towards images of gods, but also to those who created them.⁶ He claimed that, first of all, those images were lifeless, and could be the source of evil powers.⁷

Anthenagoras clearly explained why Christians rejected images of gods and any cult worship connected with them. He believed that pagan figures had an enormous power to influence, and that it was caused by demons.⁸ He expressed his reservations about the aesthetic function of the statues in the cities, maintaining that they did not need such decorations. Consequently, Anthenagoras regarded art as something useless.

Irenaeus criticized all abuses connected with the cult of holy images among Christians, which does not mean that he was against using them.⁹ Nevertheless, he reprimanded their use as cult objects.¹⁰ His attitude may provoke doubts. The indignation with which he used to write about carpocratians may be interpreted as the evidence of decisive objection to any worship of images.

Tatianus condemned and ridiculed art and production of statues.¹¹ He said that he did not intend to worship the works created by God for people's good.¹²

Tertullianus then handed over his disdain for art to the people who created it: sculptors and painters. In his opinion those who create such images should be cursed and damned.¹³ The statements and polemics of Tertullianus show him as the typical opponent of any images. It was probably because this was the period of the dynamic development of representative Christian art. On one hand a ban on image production and worship was still valid, on the other hand there was fear of idolatry threatening Christianity from pagans and Gentile Christians.¹⁴

Minucius Felix, who was the first apologist to use Latin, also expressed his disapproval of images. He firmly declared his aversion to the representations of gods, claiming that because of art human awareness was exposed to idolatry.¹⁵ When asked why Christians did not have the altars, temples and cult images, he answered that a man was the image of God.¹⁶

A noticeable disapproval of artists also appeared at the beginning of the third century. That was the time at which the first representations related to Christianity were made. Early

⁶ Iustinus Martyr, *Apologia* I.10.1, CPG 1073.

⁷ Por. T. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425*, Oxford 1975, p. 90.

⁸ Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis* 23, CPG 1070.

⁹ Por. B. Ladner, 'The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 7 (1953), p. 18.

¹⁰ A. Knöpfler, *Der angebliche Kunstthass der ersten Christen*, in: *Festschrift Georg Hertling zum 70 Geburtstag*, Kempten - München 1913, p. 44. Cf. R. M. Grant, 'Carpocratians and Curriculum: Irenaeus' Reply', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 79 (1986), pp. 127-136.

¹¹ Tatianus, *Oratio ad Graecos* 33.8, CPG 1104.

¹² Tatianus, *Oratio ad Graecos* 4.4.

¹³ Tertullianus, *De idololatria* 4.1, CPL 23.

¹⁴ Tertullianus, *De spectaculis* 18, CPL 6; Tertullianus, *Apologeticum* 12.2, CPL 3.

¹⁵ Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 22.1, CPL 37.

¹⁶ Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 10.2.

Christian authors consistently treated those objects as objects of worship, not as works of art. They tried to oppose the production of images by Christians in order to stop their spread in Christian communities. In statements from that period, the intention to fight against pagan cult is emphasized as well as the opinion about the total prohibition of creating images of God and Jesus.¹⁷

It is forbidden to make an image of God, because the representation of the Creator is in fact a representation of the human artist, so the product of his human hands cannot be an image of God. After some time Church hierarchy allowed the possibility of the artistic creation of Christ and saints. However, their previous regulations could have been in use much longer at the lowest levels, in communities (in the context of churches and tombs). On the other hand, we cannot be sure if those regulations were also effective in relation to individual, private activity.¹⁸ Idol-producers and painters, as well as the owners of the brothels, should be excluded from the Church according to the Apostolic Constitutions.¹⁹

Clemens Alexandrinus believed that it was unnecessary to save or protect pagan shrines. Nevertheless, he ignored Pythagoras's instruction²⁰ and despite his own disapproval towards images, he accepted the use by Christians of secret symbols such as the dove, fish, ship, lyre or anchor on signet rings.²¹ The author has also left some reflections on aesthetics, partially expressing an attitude against art, which he regarded as false and deceptive.²²

Origene's negative attitude to images concerned not only the images of Christ but also any representative art.²³ According to Christian scholarship it was not permitted to use pictures and statues, but the believer must instead reach beyond these, entrusting the soul to the Creator.²⁴

Didache (first half of the third century) said that Christian communities should not accept gifts from "painters and sculptors of pagan idols, thievish jewelers, dishonest publicans, clairvoyants [...] idolaters".²⁵

Traditio Apostolica paid attention to the occupations of catechumens. If they dealt with painting or sculpture, they should change their job, because it was not possible to reconcile

¹⁷ Cf. N. Gasbarro, 'Il linguaggio dell'idolatria. Per una storia delle religioni culturalmente soggettiva', *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, 62 (1996), pp. 218–219.

¹⁸ M. Simon, *La civilisation de l'antiquité et le christianisme*, Paris 1972, p. 331.

¹⁹ *Constitutiones Apostolorum* IV.6.5., SCL 2, ŻMT 42, ed. by A. Baron, H. Pietras, Kraków 2007.

²⁰ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* V.28.4, CPG 1377.

²¹ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paidagogós* III. 59.2, CPG 1376.

²² Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protreptikos* II.11.1 and IV.57.5, CPG 1375.

²³ W. Elliger, *Die Stellung der alten Christen zu den Bildern in den ersten 4 Jh*, Leipzig 1930, p. 43.

²⁴ Origenes, *Contra Celsum* V.35, CPG 1476.

²⁵ 'Didaskalia, czyli katolicka nauka dwunastu apostołów i świętych uczonych Zbawiciela naszego XVIII', in: M. Michalski, *Antologia literatury patrystycznej*, vol 1, p. 329. Cf. *Constitutiones Apostolorum I-VI*, SCL 2.

activities connected with cults with Christianity.²⁶ An anonymous author of this study encouraged sculptors and painters to give up production of idols.²⁷

It is very likely that the interdictions relating to representations were no longer in force at the end of the third century, particularly under the pressure of rich and influential private persons.

At the beginning of the fourth century, Church hierarchy was still against the production of images. This is shown by the provisions of the Synod of Elvira in AD 306. An interesting question of the function of pictures in Christian shrines was discussed. The participants came to the conclusion that churches were not the right places in which to display pictures. They also prohibited the display of any objects of worship on the walls.²⁸

The bishops attending the synod would have not made such a decision if there had not been any action taken that would regulate that kind of interdiction. It is very likely that the desire to see cult images was so strong that synod had to take it into consideration.

Other opinions related to the subject of representations, being a result of new art, appeared in the writings of authors active in the fourth century. It was the time when the situation of the Church and in the Church was totally different. Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, thus the function and position of art in Christians' life had to change fundamentally. The undeniable fact of the development of artistic creativity was the result of specific deviation from the rules of the Old Testament. The Church Fathers in the fourth and fifth centuries did not condemn the production of images so strictly, but they also did not promote it.

It is hard to say if their opinions had any sense at a time when Christians surrounded themselves with art as never before (their residences and necropoli were decorated with paintings and sculpture). We might say that art entered the Church through the back door, thanks to so called *artes minores*.²⁹ The individual purpose (use) of those works of art could in some ways release them from ecclesiastical control and censure. Christian art was born because of the private initiative of the believers. The Church, in its own natural way, accepted it with delay.³⁰

The aversion of most early Christian writers towards images was responsible for the fact that there were no pictures in Christian shrines in late Antiquity. What is worth noticing is that first positive opinions, approving placing images in the churches, appeared also in fourth century.

Basilus Magnus wrote that painting might have an important educational function, because it had much more opportunity to influence people than words.³¹ He also accepted

²⁶ Hipolit Rzymiski [?], 'Tradycja Apostolska' II.15, transl. H. Paprocki, *Studia Theologica Varsoviensia*, 14 (1976), p. 156.

²⁷ H. Pietras, 'Pośmiertna kariera św. Hipolita', *Vox Patrum*, 17 (1997), pp. 61–75; M. Guarducci, 'La Statua di Sant' Ippolito e la sua provenienza. Nuove ricerche su Ippolito', *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*, 30 (1989), pp. 61–74.

²⁸ "Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur". Elvira (306), can. 36, *Acta Synodalia* (50–381), SCL 1, ed. by A. Baron, H. Pietras, Kraków 2006.

²⁹ J. Elsner, 'Image and Ritual: Reflections the Religious Appreciation on Classical Art', *The Classical Quarterly*, 46 (1996), p. 529.

³⁰ Simon, *La civilisation...*, p. 331.

³¹ Basilus Magnus, *Homilia XII*, PG 31, 489 A.C.

the placing of wall paintings showing martyrs and Christ as judge in the places of worship. He hoped that the view could give people strength, and images in their essence should be related to the preacher's speech.³²

Gregorus Nyssensus expressed a similar opinion. The wall paintings in Christian sacred buildings were very valuable to him. However, he was not sure if the statues could have the same positive function.³³

Paulinus Nolanus, the great church builder, thought the same. He ordered that the churches he built be decorated with paintings, because of their evangelising function.³⁴ Paulinus's individual attitude to art was shown in his opinions relating to the function of images. He proved that pictures were much more effective than books as far as attracting people's attention was concerned. In connection with this he made efforts to place many holy images in his churches.³⁵

Another supporter of representative art was Nilus Ancyranus and, like other writers, he attributed educational function to images. He believed that the scenes from the Old and New Testament should be presented in churches because the illiterate would be able to know God and be closer to Him.³⁶

Even so zealous opponent of images as Athanasius softened eventually, finally having assumed that looking at a picture was adoring the person presented.³⁷

On the other side of the barricade was Asterius. He tried to persuade people not to make any representations. In his homily *Lazarus and Dives* he wrote about the contemporary wealthy people's habit of wearing clothes with painted biblical scenes and he reprimanded them not to paint Christ on himations.³⁸

In one of his homilies Iohannes Chrysostomus encouraged people to decorate their souls instead of their houses. He believed that decorating walls with valuable marbles was absolutely pointless.³⁹ Man disrespected Christ with that kind of behaviour because the material should not be considered precious as it was nothing compared with martyrdom.⁴⁰

Epiphanius wrote that painting pictures of saints is fraud. Every artist made them according to his own imagination. In his spiritual testament Epiphanius strongly encouraged believ-

³² Simon, *La civilisation...*, p. 331.

³³ Gregorus Nyssensus, *De s. Theodoro*, CPG 3183.

³⁴ Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmen XXVII*, CSEL 30; *Epistula XXXII*, PL 61.

³⁵ Paulinus Nolanus, *De pictura*, PL 61, 339.

³⁶ Nilus Ancyranus, *De oratione*, PG 79, 1166–1200.

³⁷ Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio contra gentes*, CPG 2090.

³⁸ Majewski, 'Bezobrazowość'..., p. 75

³⁹ "Let us too, then, adorn not our houses, but our souls in preference to the house. For is it not disgraceful to clothe our walls with marble, vainly and to no end, and to neglect Christ going about naked?, John Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues" II.16.

⁴⁰ "That golden statue! set with gems! I know not how to express it: for I am unable to find any material so precious as to compare it with that body stained with blood!", John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Statues* V.2.

ers not to paint images in churches and cemeteries, because a remembrance of God should be kept only in the heart, not in any material tabernacle devoted to God.⁴¹

When Church Fathers were fighting against representative art, their purpose was not to equate idolatry and the cult of Jesus. Their postulates did not have to be related to symbolic images and historic, biblical scenes.⁴² The early Christian Church did not forbid the use of sculpture, but at the same time did not include it in decorative standards. What is characteristic is the separation of such kinds of art as painting, mosaic and relief, which were unified with architecture, and statues, which were independent works of art.⁴³

Developed iconographic types, spreading in the Christian world in the fourth century might lead to the misuse some of some of them. Slowly, their representative and commemorative function was fading away. It was replaced by the specific and dangerous perception of the image as the object of worship. The Church hierarchy of that time regarded that change as a real danger to Christianity. We can easily notice the concept that pagan idolatry could be regenerated through these types of behavior.

We can assume that the problem of representative art and, consequently, idolatry was a quite serious issue. If it had been the marginal one, without any doubt it would not have been raised by so many writers. It also would not have been a contentious matter. We can observe different opinions in the statements quoted above - both condemning and praising, depending on the time at which those authorities were working.

After some time, when art became more and more common in Christian reality, the Church Fathers - at first faintly - started to defend it. They believed that art could play an important role in evangelism and attract people more efficiently than books as it could be more accessible and understandable.

Considering the negative statements of the first apologists about pictures, we can conclude that their opinions were neither the reason for the decay nor the development of images. Paintings were still being made - the examples can be found in the catacombs in Rome or the house church in Dura Europos, both from the pre-Constantine period.

Visual representations, which were condemned at first because of the danger of idolatry, later started to be regarded as useful, even advisable. Sacred art became synonymous with the Middle Ages and the following centuries. The Counter-Reformation used it to attract people to churches. Nowadays we cannot even imagine how could religion function without art, not realizing how controversial was its presence in the first centuries of Christianity.

⁴¹ Epiphanius Constantiensis, *Tractatus contra eos qui imagines faciunt*, CPG 3749; *Testamentum ad cives*, CPG 3751.

⁴² G. Florovsky, 'Aux origines problème de l'image', *Istina*, 39, (1994), pp. 337-340.

⁴³ L. Uspenskij, *Teologia ikony*, trans. M. Żurowska, Poznań 1993, p. 7.

When Church Fathers were fighting against heresies, they were not fighting against the Church itself. They were fighting against the errors of men, and the Church was the truth.

We can assume that the problem of representation in art was not a simple one. It was a problem that involved the very nature of the Church and its mission in the world. The Church was not just a building or a set of rituals; it was a living organism that had to be represented in a way that was both true and beautiful.

Church Fathers - at first simple - started to think of the Church as a mystery. It was something that could not be fully understood by human reason. This led to a new way of thinking about art, one that was more symbolic and more spiritual. The Church was no longer just a place; it was a presence.

It is not surprising that the Church Fathers were so concerned with the way the Church was represented in art. They knew that art was a powerful way of communicating the faith to the people.

1. See the Introduction to the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1. 2. See the Introduction to the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1. 3. See the Introduction to the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1. 4. See the Introduction to the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1. 5. See the Introduction to the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1.

Socrates in Late Antique Art and Philosophy: the Mosaic of Apamea

Vlastimil Drbal, Prague

I. Introduction

Apamea, today an archaeological locality in north-west Syria, was in Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods one of the most important cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.¹ The city is especially famous for its mosaics, dating to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.² The so-called *grande mosaïque de chasse*, today in Brussels (*Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*) is well known.³ Belgian archaeologists (especially F. Mayence, J. and J.-Ch. Balty) have been working at Apamea since the 1930s.

In 1937 and 1938 F. Mayence found a vast Roman villa at Apamea under the sixth century cathedral.⁴ In this villa, called *au triclinos*,⁵ a mosaic was found depicting Socrates with six other figures (Fig. 1).⁶ The mosaic inspired G. Hanfmann to write his important study *Soc-*

¹ J.-Chr. Balty, 'Apamea in Syria in the Second and Third Centuries A.D.', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 78 (1988), pp. 91–104. J.-Ch. Balty, 'Apamée et la Syrie du Nord aux époques hellénistique et romaine', in: *Alep et la Syrie du Nord*, Aix-en-Provence 1992, p. 15–26. A. R. Zakzouk, 'Apamée', in: *Syrie. Mémoire et Civilisation*, Paris 1993, p. 281–283. J.-Ch. Balty, 'Apamée: Mutations et permanences de l'espace urbain, de la fondation hellénistique à la ville romano-byzantine', *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 52 (2000), pp. 167–185.

² J. Balty, *Mosaïques d'Apamée. Guide du visiteur*, Bruxelles 1986.

³ J. Balty, 'La grande mosaïque de chasse des Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire e sa datation' in: *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1965-1968*, Bruxelles 1969, p. 131–135. J. Balty, *La grande mosaïque de chasse au triclinos* [=Fouilles d'Apamée de Syrie: Miscellanea 2], Bruxelles 1969.

⁴ F. Mayence, 'La VI^e campagne de fouilles à Apamée (rapport provisoire)', *Antiquité classique*, 8 (1939), pp. 201–203

⁵ J. Balty, J.-Ch. Balty, 'L'édifice dit au «triclinos»', in: *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1965-1968*, Bruxelles 1969, pp. 105–115.

⁶ H. Lacoste, 'La VII^e campagne de fouilles à Apamée', *Antiquité classique*, 10 (1941), pp. 115–121, here p. 121.

rates and Christ in 1951.⁷ The American historian of art of Russian origin⁸ separated his article into two parts: in the theological-philosophical part – with the reference to Harnack's *Sokrates und die alte Kirche* (1900) and Geffcken's *Sokrates und das alte Christentum* (1908) – he pointed out the parallel between Socrates and Christ, a parallel attested by some Early



Fig. 1. Apamea – mosaic of Socrates

Christian authors. Hanfmann also wanted to this parallel document in his art-historical part, where he showed that in Late Antiquity similar iconographic models were created, both pagan (Socrates with his disciples the Seven Sages) and Christian (Christ with disciples). According to Hanfmann, the mosaic of Apamea is therefore “an eloquent expression of late paganism and an artistic parallel to some of the most important compositions of Early Christian art”.⁹

The second wave of interest in the mosaic of Apamea began when at the beginning of the 70's the Belgian archaeologists (directed by J.-Ch. Balty) continued the excavation of the above-mentioned villa and found further mosaics there: Therapenides, the mosaic with Nereids and the mosaic with a crown (Fig. 2). At that moment, it became clear that it was necessary to interpret the mosaics not apart, but as an unit.

In the following years J.-Ch. Balty and J. Balty published several studies in which they emphasised the philosophical, especially neo-Platonic, character of the mosaics.¹⁰ They even

⁷ G. M. A. Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 60 (1951), pp. 205–233.

⁸ Necrologue: D. G. Mitten, 'George Maxim Anossov Hanfmann, 1911–1986', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 91 (1987), pp. 259–266.

⁹ G. M. A. Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ'..., p. 205.

¹⁰ J. Balty, 'Une nouvelle mosaïque du IV^e siècle dans l'édifice dit „au triclinos“ à Apamée', *Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes*, 20 (1970), pp. 81–92 (reprinted in: Idem, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient*, Paris 1995, pp. 183–184). J.-Ch. Balty, 'Nouvelles mosaïques païennes et groupe épiscopal dit „cathédrale de l'est“ à Apamée de Syrie', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1972, pp. 103–127. J. Balty – J.-Ch. Balty, 'Julien et Apamée. Aspects de la restauration de l'hellénisme et de la politique antichrétienne de l'empereur', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 1 (1974), pp. 267–304. J. Balty, 'Un programme philosophique sous la cathédrale d'Apamée: L'ensemble néo-platonicien de l'empereur Julien'. in: *Texte et l'image. Actes du Colloque international de Chantilly (13 au 15 octobre 1982)*, Paris 1984, pp. 167–176 (reprinted in: Idem, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche Orient*, Paris

hought about the possibility that the villa could be – with regard to its vast dimensions and due to the character of the mosaics – the seat of the famous neo-Platonic school at Apamea.¹¹ Belgian archaeologists even think about the possibility of a connection between this mosaic and the anti-Christian policy of the emperor Julian the Apostate (361–363).¹² The mosaics would then represent the reaction of the members of the cultivated pagan society in the third quarter of the fourth century against the growing Christianity.

This contribution is designed to revalue some older opinions and to show in detail the role of Socrates in the works of the Neo-Platonic and Early Christian authors.

II. Description of the mosaic

The mosaic is today placed in the Apamean museum in a caravanserai from the 16th Century. It is unfortunately not preserved without damage: especially the lower part is lost.

In the mosaic seven bearded men are represented, seated in a semicircular exedra. In the middle of the group there is Socrates, a little bit higher than the others. Around his head is inscribed ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. His head is turned a little to the right and downwards, his right hand is raised (this is interpreted as the gesture of teaching). He is dressed in a Greek cloak (*chlamys*). The other figures are without description.

The crucial question is who is depicted with Socrates in the mosaic: the Wise Men (and thus: is it a representation of the Seven Sages) or the disciples of Socrates? Against the first possibility, maintained by Ch. Picard¹³ and J.- Ch. Balty¹⁴, is the fact that in the Latin and

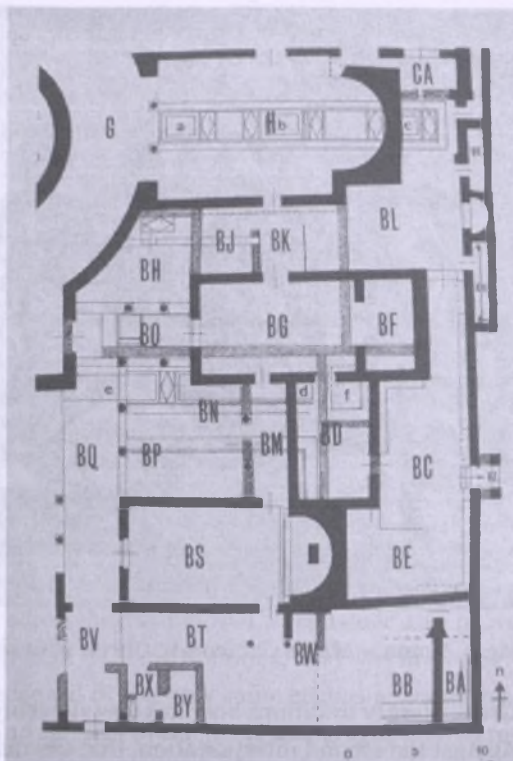


Fig. 2. The great villa under the so-called „cathédrale de l'est“

1995, pp. 265–273). J. Balty, 'Iconographie et réaction païenne', in: *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque*, vol. 1, Besançon-Paris 1988, pp. 17–32 (reprinted in: Idem, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche Orient*, Paris 1995, pp. 275–289).

¹¹ Balty, 'Nouvelles mosaïques païennes' ..., p. 123.

¹² Balty – Balty, 'Julien et Apamée' ..., pp. 267–304.

¹³ Ch. Picard, 'Autour du banquet des Sept Sages', *Revue archéologique*, 28 (1947), pp. 74–75.

¹⁴ Balty, *Nouvelles mosaïques païennes* ..., p. 108.



Fig. 3. Rome – Mausoleum of Galla Placidia: Christ with six apostles

Greek literary traditions Socrates was allegedly never mentioned as one of the Seven Sages. Against the second interpretation, that the disciples of Socrates would be depicted here, – Hanfmann favoured this interpretation¹⁵ – can be said that it is not young, but older and dignified men that are depicted in the mosaic (Fig. 3).

III. Socrates in the works of Early Christian authors

The similarity between this pagan iconographic model with Socrates and the Christian model showing Christ with his disciples led G. Hanfmann (and later J.- Ch. and J. Balty) to look at some Early Christian Greek and Latin authors who compared Socrates and Christ. The aim was to show that the early Christian authors created a parallel between Socrates and Christ, based on the moral doctrines both of Socrates, and of Christ.¹⁶ This suggestion,

¹⁵ Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ'..., p. 213.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 215: „I propose to show that Socrates and his disciples have a better claim to have served for Early Christian artists as a model of the group of Christ with six apostles than the Seven Sages, not only because of the greater resemblance displayed by the mosaic of Apamea and the Early Christian representations, but also because Socrates was an important figure in the discussions of philosophy and Christianity which preceded the triumph of Christianity under Constantine.“

as it will be proven, can be seen in general works about Late Antique and Early Christian art. This comparison needs re-examination.

In his article, Hanfmann mentions¹⁷ the Early Christian authors – apologetics of the second and third centuries – of the time when Christianity was still in opposition to the Roman Empire: first of all Justin, Mara bar Sarapion and Clement of Alexandria. The first mention can be found in Justin's Apologies.¹⁸ It seems to me that Justin was the author of this parallel and other authors only varied it. In his first Apology Justins says:

"When Socrates endeavoured, by true reason and examination to bring these things to light and deliver men from the demons, (...) then the demons themselves, by means of men who rejoiced in iniquity, (...) compassed his death, as an atheist and a profane person, on the charge that he was introducing new divinities. And in our case they display a similar activity. For not only among the Greeks did Logos prevail to condemn these things through Socrates, but also among the barbarians were they condemned by Logos himself who took shape, and became man, and was called Jesus Christ."¹⁹

In the second Apology Justin continues:

"Our doctrine then, appears to be greater than all human teaching. Those who by human birth were more ancient than Christ, when they attempted to consider and prove things by Logos were brought before the tribunal. (...) And Socrates, who was more zealous in this direction than all of them, was accused of the very same crimes as ourselves. But he cast out from the state both Homer and the rest of the poets and taught men to reject the wicked demons and exhorted them to become acquainted with the God who was unknown to them (...). But these things our Christ did through his own power. For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for his doctrine, but in Christ, who was partially known even by Socrates (...) not only philosophers and scholars believed, but also artisans and people entirely uneducated."²⁰

In these quotations we have most of the information we meet in the work of later Early Christian authors. The similarity between Socrates and Christ lies in the facts that both rejected pagan gods (for Socrates, demons), and that they were condemned to death for that. The aim of Justin is clear: he wants to reject pagan attacks against the Christians showing that it was not them who were godless, but that the pagans were (*asébeis*). Socrates is than following Justin among pagan philosophers and Jewish persons who

¹⁷ Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ'., pp. 215–217.

¹⁸ It is generally spoken about two Apologies of Justin. This is however – following L. Canfora – a mistake created in the literary tradition. Eusebius mentions Two Apologies of Justin in his *Church History* (IV, 18), the second Apology adressed to Marcus Aurelius is however not preserved. The Apology which we call as the second is probably Justins answer to Frontons anti-Christian invective (Cf. L. Canfora, *Storia della letteratura greca*, pp. 629–631).

¹⁹ Justin, *Apology I*, 5, 2–4.

²⁰ Justin, *Apology II*, 10, 4–5.

were also declared for godless (Heraclius, Abraham) he considers as the precursors for the Christian faith.²¹

G. Hanfmann also mentions the comparison of Socrates and Christ in works of the Stoic philosopher Mara bar Sarapion from Samosata,²² Origen,²³ and Clement of Alexandria²⁴. In Hanfmann's work Tertullian, with important observations in his works *Ad nationes*,²⁵ *Apologeticum*²⁶ and *De anima*,²⁷ is mentioned only in a very short reference. G. Hanfmann puts aside the relevant witnesses of Minucius Felix,²⁸ Cyprian,²⁹ Arnobius³⁰ and Lactantius³¹. More important is the fact that he does not mention Christian authors of the fourth century who lived at the time when the Apamean Mosaic was executed – and their opinion on the parallel between Socrates and Christ.

Latin authors

First, it should be emphasized that after Lactantius' work *Divinae institutiones* there is a relatively long lacuna of about 50 years following the Edict of Milan in 313, for which we do not have any literary document mentioning Socrates. The mention of Saint Ambrose in *De Noe et arca* is in a context that is not relevant here.³²

Ambrosius' contemporary Calcidius,³³ translator of the first part of Plato's *Timaeus*, in the chapter of his commentary that he treats as a proof of the Christian faith, deals with the question of the violation of the natural law. Part of these violations were also injustices committed because of hostility or malice. As one example Calcidius mentions Socrates' death. Calcidius also appreciates Socrates' *daimonion* and his dreams but he doesn't compare Socrates and Christ explicitly.³⁴

²¹ Justin, *Apology* I, 46, 2–4. Cf. E. Dassmann, 'Christus und Sokrates', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 36 (1993), p. 36. E. Benz, 'Christus und Sokrates in der alten Kirche', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 43 (1950/51), p. 202.

²² The letter was written in Syriac. Cf. K. Mc Vey, 'A Fresh Look at the Letter of Mara Bar Serapion to his Son', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 238 (1990), pp. 257–272. Cf. I. Ramelli, 'La lettera di Mara bar Serapion', *Stylos*, 13 (2004), pp. 77–104.

²³ Origen, *Against Celsus* VII,108.

²⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* VI,6.

²⁵ Tertullian, *Ad nationes* I, 4,7.

²⁶ Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 11,15.

²⁷ Tertullian, *De anima* 2,1.

²⁸ Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 5,12; 13,1; 38,5.

²⁹ Cyprian, *Quod idola dii non sint* 6.

³⁰ Arnobius, *Against the pagans* 1,40.

³¹ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 15,14,13. Lactantius, *De ira dei* I,6.

³² Ambrosius, *De Noe et Arca* 8,24.

³³ Waszink, Calcidius, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 15 (1972), pp. 236–244.

³⁴ Dassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 41; I. Opelt, 'Das Bild des Sokrates in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 10 (1983), pp. 199–200.

A similar indirect relationship between Socrates and Christ can be attested in the work of Saint Jerome, who, in his sixtieth letter, designates Socrates as an supporter of the immortality of the soul in the pre-Christian era – and with regard to the fact that it is the presumption for the Christian faith also for this:

"The immortality of the soul and its continuance after the dissolution of the body – truths of which Pythagoras dreamed, which Democritus refused to believe, and which Socrates discussed in prison to console himself for the sentence passed upon him – are now the familiar themes of Indian and of Persian, of Goth and of Egyptian."³⁵ Otherwise Saint Jerome mentions Socrates eleven times in anecdotic pronouncements from the Socratic traditions.

Only in his later work *The City of God (De civitate Dei)* Saint Augustine deals with Socrates in the context which interests us here. He stresses the fact that Socrates left natural philosophy because of the ethical problems. He stresses that it was because of Socrates' morality that „arose hostility against him, which ended in his calumniously impeachment, and condemnation to death“³⁶. It should be emphasised again that Augustine doesn't create a parallel between Socrates and Christ. In contrast with Calcidius, Augustine deprecates Socrates' *daimonion*.³⁷

Paulus Orosius mentions in *Historiae adversus paganos* Socrates' unjust death. And again, he does not create a parallel to Christ.³⁸

Eastern Church Fathers

Eusebius of Caesarea, based on Plato's *Crito*, accentuates Socrates' wisdom in *Preparation for the Gospel* (15,61,12), and the fact that he refused to respond to injustice with injustice, that he didn't aspire to human praise and that he complied game to death. Because of this behaviour Eusebius places him alongside other biblical figures – but not with Christ. With regard to the fact that Eusebius was convinced that Greek philosophers had the Old Testament for a model, he didn't have any problem in attributing to Socrates the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the Last Judgment and the true nature of God. Eusebius referred to the identical points between the doctrine of Socrates and the Christian doctrine – thanks to the authority of Socrates among pagans he wanted to attach new adherents to the Christian faith.

For Basil the Great, Socrates was – as his letter addressed to young people³⁹ (*Address to Young Men on the Value of Greek Literature*) attests – an example of non-violent be-

³⁵ Saint Jerome, *Letters* 60,4.

³⁶ Augustin, *The City of God* VIII,3.

³⁷ I. Opelt, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

³⁸ Paulus Orosius 2,17.

³⁹ *Address to Young Men on the Value of Greek Literature* 7,6–8. Cf. Dassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

haviour. Socrates' behaviour, when he allowed a man to slap him until his face swelled up, gives Basil a direct parallel to the Christian doctrine, according to which if someone slaps us in the face, we should present him the other cheek.

Gregory of Nazianzus admired Socrates' approach to death, when he refused to flee and discussed with his disciples until his end.⁴⁰

John Chrysostom does not compare Socrates with Christ but with Paul the Apostle: while Paul was manacled because of his preaching of the Gospel, Socrates had to suffer in prison. The big difference is, however, that Socrates' disciples escaped to Megara but Paul's disciples had the courage to spread the Gospel. I tend to support the opinion of E. Dassmann⁴¹ that John the Chrysostom recognised Socrates as a personality but that he is not very important to him. The opinion of A. de Mendieta⁴² that the one of the last works of John Chrysostom, *Quod nemo laeditur nisi a se ipso* was strongly influenced by the Socratic comprehension of injustice although Socrates is not mentioned here, seems to me too hypothetical.

We can summarize that neither in works of the Latin nor of the Eastern Church Fathers of the fourth century is attested a *direct* parallel between Socrates and Christ, as was the case by the Christian apologists in the second and third centuries. Only an *indirect* example of Socrates with his martyr's death or his non-violent behaviour can be attested.

IV. The mosaic of Apamea and its pagan and Christian parallels

Hanfmann held the opinion that during the third century an unknown Christian artist held the view about the analogy between Socrates and Christ as the Christian apologists (Justin and others) did and adapted the composition depicting Socrates with his disciples.⁴³ He works, therefore, with this hypothesis as will be proven. This artist – says Hanfmann – created the Christian type depicting Christ with six apostles (Fig. 4) – a number that contradicts all canonical tradition. However, similar iconographic antique figurations to which Hanfmann refers – men sitting in a semicircle – don't depict Socrates with his disciples – they show him with the Seven Sages. Hanfmann tries to settle this inconsonance in the way (which seems to me quite problematic) that Christian artists could better claim Socrates and his disciples to be the model for the depiction of Christ with the six apostles rather than the Seven Sages.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Letters* 32,11.

⁴¹ Dassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 42–43.

⁴² A. de Mendieta, 'L'amplification d'un thème socratique et stoïcien', *Byzantion*, 36 (1966), pp. 353–381.

⁴³ Hanfmann, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 215.



Fig. 4. Rome – apse mosaic in Santa Pudenziana

Ch. Picard and J.- Ch. Balty hold a different opinion to Hanfmann: they think that Sages are depicted in the mosaic of Apamea.⁴⁵ The thesis that the mosaic of Apamea depicts Socrates with six Sages motivates Balty (in that tome) with the discoveries of two new mosaics that connect Socrates with the Seven Sages. The first was found in a vast villa in Baalbek-Suwediye. The second was also discovered at Apamea, in the building called "au triclinos", but it is very fragmentary. The reason why in the mosaic of Apamea there are only six Sages with Socrates, according to J.- Ch. Balty, comes only from its symmetrical composition. If Socrates had been depicted with seven Sages the composition would be asymmetrical. Then J.- Ch. Balty tries – with the help of the mosaic from Baalbek-Suwediye where the Sages are designated by name and pronouncement – to identify every person depicted in the mosaic of Apamea.⁴⁶

A Neo-Platonic interpretation of the mosaic with Socrates became clearer after the beginning of the new Belgian excavations from the late 1960s. At the conference in Chantilly in 1982 J. Balty proposed that we encounter a double process in the depiction: first the Christianisation of a pagan motif and second the re-paganisation of the Christian motif.⁴⁷ That the mosaic had a Christian example is shown by the fact that Socrates is depicted as a pagan equivalent of Christ, which is proven by the characteristic gesture of his right hand.

⁴⁵ Ch. Picard, 'Autour du banquet des Sept Sages', *Revue archéologique*, 28 (1947), p. 74–75. Balty, *Nouvelles mosaïques païennes ...*, p. 103–127, here p. 108.

⁴⁶ Balty, 'Nouvelles mosaïques païennes ...', p. 108.

⁴⁷ Balty, 'Un programme philosophique sous la cathédrale d'Apamée ...', pp. 265–273, here p. 266.

According to the Belgian scholar the indication of Socrates by name was not intended to identify him but rather to draw attention to the fact that it was just him, not Christ, whose image was already very frequent in the similar iconographic scheme at that time.

J. Balty refers to Porphyrius' testimony in his *De abstinencia* (I, 15), where Socrates is considered to be one of the cleverest not only among men but among all sage persons. She mentions also Julian the Apostate, who writes in his letter to Themistius (264 d) that "all who today try to save the philosophy are bound to Socrates".⁴⁸ However neither Porphyry's nor Julian's evidence can be interpreted in the sense that Socrates was considered to be one of the Seven Sages but only in that way that the Neo-Platonist counted him among sage persons.

We can however refer to another Porphyry mention in his *History of the philosophers* where Socrates is really considered to be among "the Seven Sages who are in reality nine".⁴⁹ Similarly Libanius, in his work *De Socratis silentio*, adds Socrates as an eighth Sage to the Seven Sages; as Sages he counts also Heraclitus and Pythagoras of Samos.⁵⁰

The mosaic of Socrates with Seven Sages from the villa in Baalbek-Suwediye (Fig. 5), dated in the second half of the fourth century and so contemporary with the mosaic of Apamea⁵¹ can be seen in relationship to the literary evidence of Libanius and the second testimony



Fig. 5. Baalbek-Suwediye: Mosaic of eight Sages

of Porphyry. In the mosaic the Seven Sages and Socrates are depicted in circular medallions around a central picture of the goddess Calliope. All sages – as mentioned above – are designated with name and their pronouncement.

If Porphyry's and Libanius' witness can be put together with the interpretation of the mosaic from Baalbek-Suwediye, it is my opinion that we can only speculate in the

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 267.

⁴⁹ Porphyry, *Opuscula*, ed. Nauck, no. 4.

⁵⁰ Libanius, *De Socratis silentio* 9. The witnesses of Porphyry and Libanius were mentioned already by G. Hanfmann who however deduced no conclusion from them.

⁵¹ Cf. M. H. Chéhab, *Mosaïques du Liban*, Paris 1957–1959.

case of the mosaic of Apamea. I personally oppose the view that there is a close connection between these two mosaics. While the mosaic from Baalbek-Suwediye shows clearly the Sages – in the way they were seen by the Neo-Platonist – in the case of the mosaic of Apamea it is still not clear if they or the Greek philosophers are depicted. The recent opinion of N. Charalabopoulos is interesting, that "Socrates could be seen both presiding over a gathering of the Seven Sages as the wisest of all and teaching his students his own doctrine on the salvation of men's souls", thus explaining why the figures around Socrates have any description.⁵² The sources I mentioned at the beginning of my paper indicate that the parallel between Socrates and Christ cannot be attested in works of Christian writers of the fourth century when the mosaic of Apamea was executed. It is therefore necessary to look at older examples. We can accept Hanfman's hypothesis that the originally pagan motif of Seven Sages was the example of the Christian depiction of Christ with apostles in the third century (when the Christian apologists constructed the parallel between Socrates and Christ), but the relationship between these two facts is very hypothetical. If we do have records that Socrates was one of the Seven Sages, these are from the time of Porphyry and Libanius, one and two centuries later. We must also draw attention to the fact that G. Hanfmann interpreted the figures around Socrates as his disciples, not as the Seven Sages – so he contradicts himself.

I support the opinion of J. Balty that the Socrates mosaic of Apamea is a reaction to the representation of Christ with the disciples (the major argument for which is the gesture of Socrates' right hand). This opinion is also held in the testimony of Celsus, who – in his critique of the Christian claim on the only truth – shows that the Christian ethics are not new but that they already existed in Antique philosophy.

There is also a possible relationship between the mosaic of Apamea and the mosaic from the apse of the church S. Pudenziana (Fig. 4) in Rome (about A.D. 400, reconstructed in the thirteenth Century) with Christ at the throne and apostles around him – a suggestion made by T. Mathews.⁵³ Mathews speculates that the mosaic of Apamea could be an exemplar for the mosaic of S. Pudenziana. If we accept this suggestion (and also the above mentioned suggestion of J. Balty of the re-paganisation) it would be a complicated process of "re-christianisation" of the model of Apamea, which was already "re-paganised".

We cannot determine this exactly at the moment. It is clear that in the fourth century there was a reciprocal influence between Christian and pagan art – but we still cannot understand and interpret some pictures. We can hope that the excavations in Syria and other places in the Mediterranean will offer us further comparative material on this subject. Also necessary is a detailed study of neo-Platonic sources which could better clarify the philosophical background of the time when this mosaic was executed.

⁵² N. Charalabopoulos, 'Two images of Socrates in the art of the Greek east', in: *Socrates, from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. M. Trapp, London 2007, pp. 105–126, here p. 107.

⁵³ T. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*, Princeton 1993, pp. 109–111.

Could Worship make the Place Holy? Landscape, Architecture and Liturgy in the Early Church

Paweł Wróblewski, Cracow

In the first three centuries of Christianity it was obvious that it was not the place of Christian assembly that was important, but the worshippers' inner attitude and the purpose of their assembly. As opposed to Judaism, connected previously with Temple worship, or contrary to the different cults of Greek and Roman gods, which took place in particular temples, in early Christianity the community was important, not the place. That situation was a result of Christ's words, uttered to a Samaritan woman whom he had met near the Jacob's well: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father' [...] God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Christ promised that he would be present wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. Therefore Paul of Tarsus could write to the Church in Corinth "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you"². Similar points of view were expressed by Clemens of Alexandria at the turn of the third century, Origen also in the third century, and even Eusebius of Caesarea at the beginning of the fourth century. Then as Deichmann noted, worship did not make the place holy: "Die Tatsache, daß dem Kult keine Sakralarchitektur entsprach, ist innerhalb der Hochkulturen einzigartig: dieser Zustand bedeute höchste Vergeistigung des Kultes, Höhepunkt einer Entwicklung, die im Judentum begann, aber im Christentum erst wirklich, in der Urkirche schließlich befestigt wurde."³

¹ John 4, 21.

² 1 Cor 6, 13.

³ F. W. Deichmann, *Einführung in die christliche Archäologie*, Darmstadt 1983, pp. 69–70.

It was as late as the fourth century then the situation started changing. The problem of the holiness of places, the question of celebrating the cult in the current space and the problems of the connection between sacred architecture and liturgy arose in the ancient Church at that time. On one hand, after “the age of anxiety”⁴, we can observe that Christians (but not exclusively) are more sensitive to various supernatural occurrences and miracles, and on the other hand, in that time the need arose to make religion more tangible and tactile. Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman were not as significant as before. There was a tendency to look and to touch. Of course this mental change was a long process, and writers such as Eusebius of Caesarea⁵, Gregory of Nyssa⁶ or Athanasius of Alexandria⁷ opposed such thinking. However these objections disappeared as the years went by. In about 320 Eusebius wrote that Christ taught “men not to look for God in a corner of the earth, nor in the mountains, nor in the temples made by hands, but that each should worship and adore him at home”⁸. But thirty years later Cyril of Jerusalem, referring to chapter 20 of the gospel according to John, and commenting on Thomas’ behavior, who thrust his hand into Christ side, and his fingers into the wounds from the nails, noted: “it was for our sakes that he so carefully handled Him; and what you, who were not there present, wouldst have sought, he being present, by God’s Providence, did seek.”⁹ Cyril twisted the sense of Jesus’s words and suggested that those are blessed, who saw and touched. Together with such change in the treatment of Christ’s words, there came an idea of Christian pilgrimage (first of all to Palestine – the Holy Land). Christians went on pilgrimage¹⁰ to precisely specified places, which in that time became “holy places”. In this situation, when we consider the problem of holiness, the question is not only who worshippers were but also where they were.

We are examining the development of the idea of the holy place (especially on the example of holy places in Palestine from the fourth to the seventh century) in its three aspects:

1) the problem of the current sacred space and holy landscape, marked in a special way by God’s presence, on account of the special selection of this place by God.

⁴ This phrase was used by E. R. Dodds in the title of his book *Pagans and Christians in the age of anxiety*, Cambridge 1965.

⁵ P. W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, Oxford 1990, pp. 41–282 (especially 51–130).

⁶ B. Kötting, ‘Gregor von Nyssa’s Wallfahrtskritik’, *Studia Patristica. Papers presented on the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church Oxford*, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1962, v. 5, pp. 360–367; J. Ulrich, ‘Wallfahrt und Wallfahrtskritik bei Gregor von Nyssa’, *Zeitschrift für Antike Christentum*, 3 (1999), pp. 87–96.

⁷ D. Brakke, “Outside the Places, within the Truth”: Athanasius of Alexandria and the localization of the Holy’, in: *Pilgrimage and holy space in the late antique Egypt*, ed. D. Frankfurter, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, pp. 445–481 (with english translation of coptic version of Athanasius’ letters).

⁸ Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelicae*, ed. I. A. Heikel, Leipzig 1913, I, 6, 65.

⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures*, trans. E. H Gifford, Oxford 1894, *Lecture XIII*, 39.

¹⁰ On Early Christian pilgrimages see: E. Wipszycka, ‘Les pèlerinages chrétiens dans l’antiquité tardive: Problèmes de définition et de repères temporels’, *Byzantinoslavica*, 56 (1995), pp. 429–438.

2) Architecture. What kind of relationships between architectural sacred objects and sacred space could be observed in the Early Church? Was architecture a carrier or a complement to the holiness of a place?

3) Cult. Was a cult that sets out to make its worshippers holy, able to change the character of the place in which it was celebrated, causing it to become holy?

The first problem is analyzed on the basis of six descriptions of journeys to the Palestine, from the fourth to the seventh century. This is a small number of people, but the sources concerning pilgrimages in the mentioned period are not voluminous and unfortunately the conclusions based on these skimpy sources must necessarily be generalised.

We begin our analysis by considering the journey of Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Many scholars still claim that she was the first pilgrim to travel to the Holy land. Helena's journey probably took place in the year 327. Today, thanks to Holum and Drijvers¹¹ investigations, we know that this journey was an official visit of the emperor's emissary, who controlled the eastern provinces. However, we cannot reject the testimony of Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote that Helena's journey was also religious in character¹². It was not the main aim of her trip, but for the purpose of our analysis this goal is important. Constantine's mother –according to Eusebius - wanted to visit places where Christ's "feet have stood"¹³, so she went to Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. There were caves in both places, which from the moment of Helena's journey have properly commemorated Christ's Nativity and his teaching. Adonis had previously been worshipped in Bethlehem, and Gnostic rituals had taken place in the cave on the Mount of Olives¹⁴. Helena Christianized these places, by initiating the construction of churches in both places (basilicas: Eleona on the Mount of Olives and Nativity in the Bethlehem)¹⁵. Similarly, in 325, the second-century Aphrodite temple was Christianized in the same way and the Church of Holy Sepulchre was built in this place, at Constantine's order¹⁶. Soon after Helena's journey, a similar situation took place in Mamre, where near Abraham's oaks the basilica was built, in order to Christianize the place where pagans and Jews had celebrated their cults¹⁷. For us the most important

¹¹ K. G. Holum, 'Hadrian and St. Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage' in: *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, pp. 67–81; J. W. Drijvers *Helena Augusta. The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden- New York – Köln 1992, pp. 55–72.

¹² Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Konstantin*, ed. F. Winkelmann, Berlin 1975, III, 41.

¹³ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. A. Cameron and S. G. Hall, Oxford 1999, III, 41.

¹⁴ J. E. Taylor, *Christians nad the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*, Oxford 1993, chapters: Bethlehem, Golghota, Mount of Olives.

¹⁵ On building the churches in Palestine in the fourth century see for example: A. Ovadiah, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*, Bonn 1970; G. Stemberger, *Jews and Chrsitians in the Holy Land*, Edinburgh 2000, pp. 48–85.

¹⁶ Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Konstantin*, III, 25–40.

¹⁷ Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Konstantin*, III, 51–53.

fact is that the churches were built in places where the Christians had not previously celebrated their cult.

The next itinerary is *Itinerarium Burdigalense*¹⁸. A few years after Helena's journey (ca. 333), Palestine was visited by someone who today is known as Bordeaux Pilgrim – because we know almost nothing about him or her¹⁹ except that this pilgrim came from Bordeaux. His itinerary presents the pilgrim's route and places visited. The pilgrim went to places mentioned in the Bible. In the itinerary one can find quotations from the Bible, concerning several places visited by that person. The pilgrim also wanted to go to the places where Christ's feet stood, to places where particular occurrences described in the Bible had taken place. Among the forty places visited by the pilgrim there were four Constantinian churches (Holy Sepulchre, Eleona, Bethlehem and Mamre), places with special landmarks, like a spring, mount, stone, cave, tombs of patriarchs, but he did not go to, for example, either Caparnaum or Nazareth²⁰. He also did not visit the Sea of Galilee and its shores, why? Because landscape as area was not worthy of note. Only specific places, or landmarks, which could be precisely located, were important. The pilgrim from Bordeaux visited twenty-three places connected with the Old Testament and only seventeen connected with the New Testament²¹. On the basis of this account some scholars thought that he (or she) could be a converted Jew, but there is probably a different explanation. The pilgrim may have visited these places, because there was a tradition connected with them which located a particular event described in the Bible in the particular place (under this tree, on that stone). Due to the slow Christianization of Palestine (especially rural Palestine²²) its traditions were especially Jewish, not Christian and this fact caused the disproportion between places connected with the Old and New Testaments, which were described in the itinerary.

Let's analyze the second itinerary (third journey), written by Egeria. At the end of the fourth century²³ Egeria also visited places connected especially with the Old Testament

¹⁸ On this text see: J. Elsner, 'The Itinerarium Burdigalense: Politics and Salvation in the Geography of Constantine's Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 90 (2000), pp. 181–195.

¹⁹ L. Douglass, 'A New Look at the Itinerarium Burdigalense', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 4 (1996), pp. 328–330; S. Weingarten, 'Was the Pilgrim from Bordeaux a Woman? A Replay to Laurie Douglass', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 7 (1999), pp. 291–297.

²⁰ 'Itinerarium Burdigalense', ed. by P. Geyer et O. Cutz, in: *Itineraria et alia Geographica*, ed. P. Geyer et O. Cutz Brepols 1965, pp. 12–21.

²¹ J. Wilkinson, 'Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage', in: *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, p. 44.

²² D. Bar 'The Christianization of Rural Palestine during Late Antiquity', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 54 (2003), pp. 401–421 (especially 419–421); see also: *Idem*, 'Rural Monasticism as a Key Element in the Christianization of Byzantine Palestine', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 98 (2005), pp. 49–65.

²³ E. D. Hunt, 'The Date of the Itinerarium Egeriae', *Studia Patristica. Papers presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1999*, ed. by M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold; with the assistance of P. M. Parvis, Leuven 2001, v. 38, pp. 410–416.

and places where particular landmarks were located, churches already stood or monks had their settlements or hermitages²⁴. Possibilities of celebration of some kind of liturgy were very important to Egeria, so she visited churches, places with altars (for example mounts: Tabor, Hermon) or places like Enon, where liturgy of baptism was celebrated.

If we compare Egeria's itinerary and *Itinerarium Burdigalense* we will notice that neither pilgrim was interested in the landscape. The best example is the case of the Sea of Galilee, with which many events described in the gospel are connected, and which did not attract pilgrims' attention. Let's consider another case: the Mount of Olives. The Pilgrim of Bordeaux did not go to the top of the Mount of Olives, he (or she) only went to Eleona Church and into the cave on the mountain slope, because in the first half of the fourth century only that cave was connected with the life of Christ. But in the following years the tradition connected with the top of the mountain developed, where, as people believed, the Ascension took place. In the second half of the fourth century Poimenia built a church there²⁵ and Egeria, who came to Palestine in the eighties or nineties, visited both the Eleona and Ascension churches²⁶.

Next case: Capernaum and Nazareth. We know that Egeria visited Nazareth and Capernaum and that churches stood in both towns at this time. Churches were built in Nazareth and Capernaum by Joseph of Tiberias in ca. 375²⁷, after a pilgrimage of the pilgrim from Bordeaux, but before that of Egeria. As we noticed, Egeria visited Capernaum, but she did not go to Tabgha, the place where Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes. Tabgha is only a few kilometers from Capernaum. On the ground of Jerome of Stridon's letters we know that there was a tradition that identified the miracle of multiplication with this place at that time²⁸. Soon after Egeria's pilgrimage the church was built in Tabgha²⁹. Is it possible that Egeria did not visit Tabgha because of the lack of the church in this place? In the next itinerary, *De situ terrae sanctae* written by Theodosius, who visited Palestine in the second half of the sixth century, Tabgha (not mentioned by name, but as place where the miracle of multiplication occurred) is mentioned³⁰.

²⁴ Egeria, *Itinerarium – Resiebericht mit auszügen aus Peter Diaconus De locis sanctis – Die Heiligenstätten*, Freiburg 1995.

²⁵ Ovadiah, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches...*, p. 86.

²⁶ *Itinerarium – Resiebericht mit auszügen aus Peter Diaconus De locis sanctis – Die Heiligenstätten*, 31.1.

²⁷ T. C. G. Thornton, 'The Stories of Joseph of Tiberias', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 44 (1990), pp. 54–63.

²⁸ Sanctus Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, ed. by I. Hilberg, Vienna 1910–1912, 46,13; 108,13

²⁹ A. Ovadiah, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches...*, p. s. 56; A. Ovadiah C. Gomez de Silva, 'Supplementum to the Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land. Part II', *Levant*, 14 (1982), p. 131. Although some scholars suppose that the church was built by Joseph of Tiberias, so before Egeria's Travel, see for example B. Pixner, 'The Miracle Church in Tabgha on the Sea of Galilee', *Biblical Archaeologist*, 48 (1985), pp. 197–199.

³⁰ Antonino Placentini, 'Itinerarium', in: *Itineraria et alia geographica*, 2.

And the last case: Kafr Kanna (in other words: Kana of Galilee)³¹ – place of the miracle of transmutating water into wine worked by Christ. This place was visited only in the sixth century. An anonymous pilgrim from Piacenza noted that he was in the tavern where the wedding described in the Gospel occurred and he wrote his name on the table³². In Kana archaeologists discovered the remains of a Byzantine church, which they could not date precisely, but they reject the possibility that it was built in the fourth century. It could account for the absence of Bordeaux Pilgrim and Egeria in this place. So it is possible, that the church already stood there when the pilgrim from Piacenza came to Kana. We cannot prove it, but in the light of the above considerations it is probable. Anyway, in the period between Egeria's pilgrimage and that of the Anonymous pilgrim of Piacenza one building in Capernaum was identified as the tavern described in the Gospel and in that way there was a landmark in Capernaum that attract the pilgrims.

Let's get back to the Sea of Galilee, which the Pilgrim of Piacenza mentioned in his itinerary. The pilgrim came to Tyberiade (at the Sea-shore) and then went to Capernaum. The first known pilgrim, whose "litore circumvenitur" was Arckulfus, who visited Palestine in ca. 680. He is the first person who was probably interested in the landscape, not only in landmarks and churches. But firstly, it is also possible that the "litore circumvenitur"³³ means that Arculfus visited all churches located on different shores of the Sea of Galilee. Secondly, such information found in the itinerary as for example data on the salinity of the Dead Sea could reflect pilgrim's tourist interests and that may be why his attention was attracted by Sea of Galilee.

Summing up this analysis concerning the first aspect of holy places, we can conclude that the landscape did not attract the pilgrims' attention even if important events described in the Bible occurred within it.

Places of worship, especially churches, attracted Pilgrims. This conclusion leads us to the next question: architecture in the holy places. As an introduction to this question I will use the words of Gerardus van der Leeuw, who wrote in his *Phenomenology of religion*: "The place is not holy, because the temple was built there, but the holiness of the place is a reason for building the temple."³⁴

So according to these words, the architecture is only the complement to the sacred space. The building is an answer to the holiness of the place, which makes the celebration of the cult easier or simply enables it. Architectural objects emphasize the holiness of the place and complement it with symbolic significance. An example of this is the architecture

³¹ Some scholars claim that Khiberet Qana is a better candidate for the "Cana of Galilee", E. M. Meyers, J. F. Strange, D. E. Groh, "The Meiron Excavation Project: Archaeological Survey in Galilee and Golan 1976", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 230 (1978), p. 5.

³² Antonino Placentini, 'Itinerarium', 4.

³³ Adamnanus, 'De locis sanctis', in: *Itineraria et alia geographica*, II, XX, 3.

³⁴ G. Van der Leeuw, *Fenomenologia Religii*, trans. J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa 1997, p. 349.

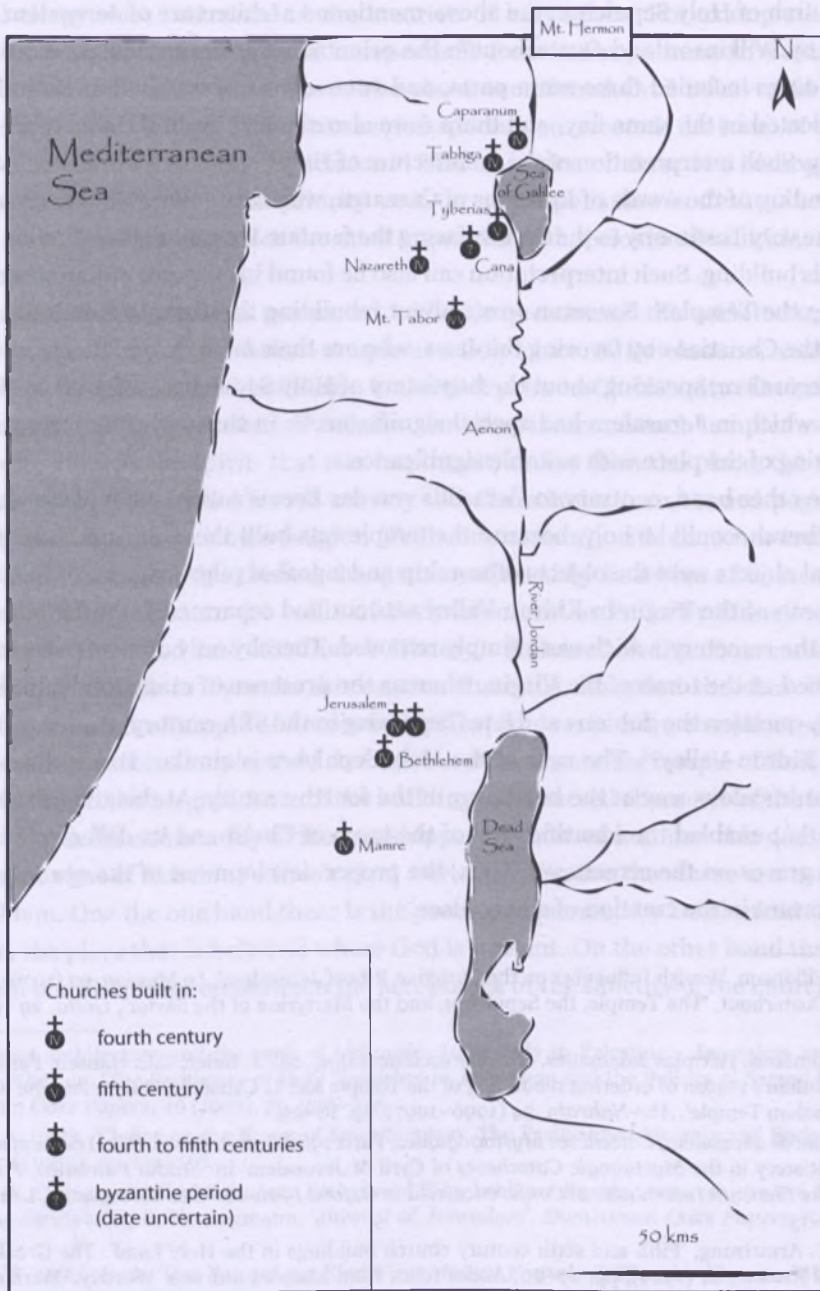


Fig. 1. Holy Land - Places described in the paper (fourth and fifth centuries). Edited by P. Wróblewski; based on the G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, Edinburgh 2000, p. 66 (modified)

of the Church of Holy Sepulchre, the above-mentioned architecture of Jerusalem Temple, as noted by Wilkinson and Ousterhout³⁵: the orientation of the buildings was the same, both buildings included three main parts, and some details were similar. Both buildings were dedicated in the same day, and there were also similarities in the way of celebrating the liturgy. Such interpretation of the architecture of Holy Sepulchre Church enabled better understanding of the words of Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote that "New Jerusalem was built at the very Testimony to the Savior, facing the famous Jerusalem of old" in his description of this building. Such interpretation can also be found in emperor Julian's intention of rebuilding the Temple³⁶. Sozomen wrote about rebuilding the Temple that Julian wanted to grieve the Christians by favoring the Jews, who are their most inveterate enemies. Next, Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking about the baptistery of Holy Sepulchre, referred to "The Holy of Holy", which in Jerusalem had special significance³⁷. In that way architecture enabled the investing of the place with suitable significance.

On the other hand, contrary to Gerardus van der Leeuw's words, the place, also in the ancient Church, could be holy, because the temple was built there. In some situations architectural objects were the objects of worship and a goal of pilgrimages. For instance, the alleged tomb of the Virgin in Kidron Valley was cut and separated from the others stone graves at the cemetery, which were simply removed. Thereby only one grave could be easily identified as the tomb of the Virgin, whereas the presence of many tombs in this place could only question the dubious and late (beginning in the fifth century) tradition of Mary's burial in Kidron Valley³⁸. The case of the Holy Sepulchre is similar. It was discovered in almost a miraculous way at the beginning of the fourth century. At this time there was no tradition that enabled the identification of the tomb of Christ and its differentiation from the other graves on the cemetery³⁹. Thus, the proper development of the spatial area was very important in the creation of a holy place.

³⁵ J. Wilkinson, 'Jewish Influences on the Christian Rite of Jerusalem', *Le Muséon*, 92 (1979), pp. 347–359. R. Ousterhout, 'The Temple, the Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior', *Gesta*, 29 (1990), pp. 44–53.

³⁶ Sozomenus, Hieronimus Salamanes, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, ed. J. Bidez, G.C. Hansen, Paris 2005, V, 22. About Julian's reason of ordering rebuilding of the Temple see: L. Cansdale, 'Julian and the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple', *Abr-Nahrain*, 34 (1996–1997), pp. 18–29.

³⁷ Cyrille de Jérusalem, *Catéchèses Mystagogiques*, Paris 1988, I, 1. A. Duval, 'The Location and Structure of Baptistery in the *Mystagogic Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem' in: *Studia Patristica. Papers presented at the Eleventh International Conference held in Oxford 1991*, ed. E.A. Livingstone, Leuven 1993, v. 26, pp. 1–13.

³⁸ G. T. Armstrong, 'Fifth and sixth century church buildings in the Holy Land'. *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 14 (1969), pp. 19–20. About relics from Mary's tomb see: Wortley, 'Marian relics in Constantinople', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 45 (2005), pp. 181–182. There is also another tradition connecting Mary's death with Ephesus.

³⁹ J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins...*, pp. 139–140. See also *eadem*, 'Golgotha: a Reconsideration of the Evidence for the Sites of Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial', *New Testament Studies*, 44 (1998), pp. 180–203 (especially pp. 200–201), where Taylor admitted that authenticity of the tomb is possible.

Local clergy were interested in the creation of holy space. For example bishops of Jerusalem, who wanted to become independent from metropolitans in Cesarea, used church buildings for their purposes⁴⁰. The above-mentioned Cyril behaved in this way. Next, in the time of bishop Juvenal two sacred spaces were created: the tomb of the Virgin and the place of saint Stephan lapidation⁴¹. The main aim of these two bishops' actions was to promote their See, gain priority over the metropolis See in Cesarea and consequently make Jerusalem equal to the most important bishoprics in Alexandria, Antiochia and Rome⁴².

There is another problem connected with the question of the architecture of holy places – the problem of the church-temple as a holy place. F. Deichmann, analyzing the evolution of Christian sacred buildings, found that prior to Christianity (*Urchristentum*) there was aniconic religion such as Judaism, and there were no such temples as in pagan cults because it was the spirit that was important, rather than the place, the temple or god's likeness⁴³. Only in the fourth century did Christianity turn toward pagan way of thinking, and became an iconic religion (*Frühchristentum*), with churches-temples. According to Deichmann this mental change is confirmed by Eusebius of Cesarea ("Eusebius drove the last nail into the coffin of *Urchristentum*" as P. Corby Finney wrote⁴⁴) in his panegyric (included into his *Church History*), delivered at the consecration of the Constantinian church in Tyre. In this oration Eusebius described the church as *naos*, comparing it with the Temple of Zorobabel⁴⁵. The problem is more complicated, because in this oration Eusebius emphasized that the worshippers are the temple of God, although he still described the magnificence of the building. The sacred character of the building is connected with the community of the worshippers. When we examine this question from the point of view of Eusebius's theological works, we can see that there are two sides to this problem. On the one hand there is the problem described by Deichmann: church as a temple, the place that is holy and where God is present. On the other hand there is also a problem of differentiation between the acceptance of the sanctity of the church as place

⁴⁰ About architecture and the rank of bishoprics (especially in Palestine - Jerusalem and Cesarea) see: A. J. Wharton, 'The Baptistry of Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Politics of Sacred Landscape', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46 (1992), pp. 320–325.

⁴¹ E. A. Clark, 'Claims on the Bones of Saint Stephen: The Partisans of Melania and Eudocia' *Church History*, 51 (1982), pp. 141–156.

⁴² J. W. Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*, Leiden – Boston 2004, pp. 153–176 (chapter VI: Promoting Jerusalem); E. Honingmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 5 (1950), pp. 209–279.

⁴³ F. W. Deichmann, 'Von Tempel zur Kirche' in: *Mullus. Festschrift Theodor Klauser*, Münster 1964, pp. 52–59.

⁴⁴ P. Corby Finney, 'Early Christian Architecture: The Beginnings (A Review Article)', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 81 (1988), p. 322.

⁴⁵ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiasticae*, ed. E. Schwartz, Leipzig 1909, X, 4, 3; about this oration see C. Smith, 'Christian Rhetoric in Eusebius' Panegyric at Tyre', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 43 (1989), pp. 226–247.

where God is present in the worshippers' assembly, and admission of the fact, that a place is holy because God is in a special way present in it due to the place's history or location (see above). This second question, which Eusebius accepted with difficulty, meant the separation of the holiness of the place from the community assembled therein.

What can we see in the examples of itineraries is a combination of two elements: the church as sacred space and holy place as an area, landmark (but not landscape, contrary to J. Taylor's opinion⁴⁶) that is holy due to its connection with the story of Salvation. Only both elements together make the place holy in the opinion of pilgrims, and supposedly, also in the opinion of the local clergy. The space as a landscape, or a place of Jesus' or saints' activity was not automatically holy. A holy place should have offered worshippers a possibility of contact (visible or touchable)⁴⁷ with the *sacrum* and also ought to have offered a point, of an area, a specific place, where liturgy could be celebrated. Paradoxically, the more modified particular space was, the more serious it was managed, the more often it became a holy place. A good example of such situation are objects in Jerusalem: the Holy Sepulchre, Mount of Olives, the Tomb of the Virgin. If other communities such as Jews or Samaritans lay claim to particular place, one should Christianize, and isolate it⁴⁸. None should doubt the Christian character of such a place.

The keystone of these two elements was the third one – the worship, which often was so closely connected with the sacred architecture that sometimes it is difficult to say if the construction of the church was a result of celebrating the cult in the particular place, or the worship was a result of construction of the church. Worship accompanied the creation of holy places from the beginning of the idea of those places. Pilgrims visited the places where a cult was celebrated most eagerly. Markus thought that relics meant that it was not only the community assembled in the building that was holy but also the building which housed it⁴⁹. The church was holy due to the presence of relics in it. From the end of the fourth century churches were consecrated by saints' relics. Sometimes relics were indispensable to initiate or develop worship. An example of relics confirming the holiness of a place comes from the reign of Basil I (876–886) when the Menas' relics, whose sanctuary in Abu Mena (Egypt) was destroyed, were discovered in Constantinople in miraculous way (rather re-discovered, because originally the relics were located in Egypt). The mere fact that there had been a church in Constantinople dedicated to Saint Menas since the sixth century was insufficient to worshippers⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*, p. 331.

⁴⁷ And the possibility of bringing home a "part" of holiness – pilgrims ampulae, eulogiae. About term "eulogia" in Early Church see: D. Caner, 'Towards a Miraculous Economy: Christians Gifts and Material "Blessings" in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 14 (2006), pp. 329–377.

⁴⁸ G. T. Armstrong, 'Fifth and sixth century church buildings in the Holy Land...', pp. 21–23.

⁴⁹ R. A. Markus, 'How on the Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 2 (1994), pp. 268–271.

⁵⁰ C. Walter, 'The Origins of the Cult of St. George', *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 53 (1995), pp. 306.

As soon apparently, as relics spread, the holiness of the place from which they came also spread; for instance thanks to the cult of the relics of the True Cross, people from different parts of the world could in some way participate in the Jerusalem worship. In that way relics became a carrier of the holiness of the place, and this element increased in importance as time went by. But location and architecture was still harnessed in the process of creating holy places, although to a lesser extent. Firstly, although in this time the architecture (the form of the building, not its function) was not a carrier of holiness (the first copies of Holy Sepulchre Church were built only in the ninth⁵¹ or tenth⁵² century, rather than in the fifth century as some scholars previously thought⁵³), in those places where no relics were found architecture was of great importance⁵⁴. Thanks to architectural forms (even if they were small architecture objects), like *thalamus* in which Thekla was present⁵⁵ or *cyborium* in Thessaloniki, where Demetrius lived, almost tangible contact with these saints was possible, despite the lack of their relics⁵⁶. Secondly, the holiness of some places was still connected with their location, for example John Chryzostom wrote that after the relics of Babylas were transferred from Antioch to Daphne, people in Antioch could still experience the saint's *dynamis* at the place where the body of Babylas had previously been located⁵⁷. On the other hand Augustine wrote about healing power of the soil brought from Palestine – the Holy Land, demonstrates that the location and the relics as carriers of holiness blended together, and their limits became blurred⁵⁸.

Slowly it turned out that the modification of the concept of “the holy place” was influenced not only by the transformation of forms of piety, but also geopolitical changes. As a result of these changes the particular location became less important than the element which decided about sacral character of the place. It was noticeable already in the

⁵¹ R. Ousterhout, ‘The Architectural Response to Pilgrimage’, in: *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, p. 110.

⁵² C. Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and Medieval West. From the Beginning to 1600*, Oxford 2005, p. 126.

⁵³ R. Krautheimer, ‘Introduction to an “Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture”’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), pp. 4–6.

⁵⁴ The situation later changed. For example in the thirteenth century king Lalibela built in Golghota Church Ethiopia, because Christians from this country could not come to Jerusalem due to geopolitical situation. For this church see for example: M. Grevers, ‘The Rehabilitation of the Zagvè Kings and building of the Däbrä Sina – Golghota Sellasia Complex in Lalibëla’, *African Bulletin*, 51 (2003), pp. 23–49.

⁵⁵ B. Walter, ‘The Origins of the Cult of St. George’..., p. 304; S. J. Davies, ‘Pilgrimage and the cult of Saint Thekla in Late Antique Egypt’, in: *Pilgrimage and holy space in the late antique Egypt*, ed. by D. Frankfurter, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, pp. 303–339.

⁵⁶ J. C. Skedros, *Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki: Civic Patron and Divine Protector 4th-7th Centuries CE*, Harrisburg 1999, pp. 56–60 and 85–94. See contrary opinion of C. Bakirtizis, ‘Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56 (2002), pp. 177–178.

⁵⁷ Jean Chrysostome, *Dicsours sur Babylas*, ed. M. A. Schatkin, C. Blanc, B Grillet, Paris 1990 (Sources Chretiennes 362), pp. 68n.

⁵⁸ Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De civitate Dei*, Turnhout 1955, XII, 8,7.

5th century, when Daniel the Stylite, who lived in Syria, „planned to go to the holy city of Jerusalem” – as one can read in the account of his life. „He heard that in this time the road to Palestine was dangerous”, because of a Samaritan’s revolt against Christians. However he decided to go to Jerusalem, but during his journey he met an old man reassembling Symeon Stylite, who told him „Do not go in this direction, rather go to Byzantium. There you will see the Second Jerusalem namely Constantinople. There you will be able to benefit from the tomb of the martyrs and the places that inspire honor.”⁵⁹

Indeed, being in possession of relics connected with the life of Christ, such as swaddling clothes of infant Jesus, or the Savior’s towel which he used during the Last Supper⁶⁰, and above all, relics connected with the Passion⁶¹, Constantinople became in some way the New Jerusalem, just like previously it had become the New Rome (in the administrative and political sense), especially when Persians, and later, Arabs conquered the Holy land and destroyed many of the Christian holy places. Architecture was also used in the process of establishing Constantinople as a holy place. For example, Hagia Sophia was in some way a new kind of Jerusalem Temple, as Procopius wrote: “whenever one enters the Great Church to pray, he understands at once that it is not by human power or skill, but by influence of God that this work has been finely tuned. And so his mind is lifted up toward God and exalted, feeling that [the Divinity] cannot be far away. But must especially love to dwell in this place, which he has chosen”⁶² – the lack of primary relics in this church could indicate this kind of succession and similarity – as noted by J. Wortley: “For in the Hebrew faith, the human corpse was unclean thing, a defiling thing which had to be decently disposed of as soon as possible, preferably before the next sunrise, a thing least of all to be allowed into the presence of divinity.”⁶³ However as the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulchre Church during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1055)⁶⁴ and the Crusaders’ efforts during next centuries of recovering the Holy Land showed, that holiness was also connected with the location of the place, with a particular area.

⁵⁹ ‘Life of Daniel the Stylite’ in: *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*, trans. E. Dawes, intr. N.H. Baynes, London 1948, 10.

⁶⁰ On these and other relics in Constantinople see G. Majeska, *Russian travellers to Constantinople in the Forteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Washington 1984, p. 1; also *Eadem*, ‘Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), p. 98.

⁶¹ Especially the True Cross brought to the Constantinople by Heraclius in the seventh century – about this event see for example: J. W. Drijvers, ‘Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*. Notes on Symbolism and Ideology, in: *The reign of Heraclius (610–641): crisis and confrontation*, ed. G. J. Rejnink, B. H. Stolte, Leuven 2002, pp. 175–190.

⁶² Procopius, *Buildings*, trans. H.B. Dewing, collaboration G. Downey, Cambridge MA – London 1971, 1.1.61–62.

⁶³ J. Wortley, ‘Relics and the Great Church’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 99 (2006), pp. 646–647.

⁶⁴ R. Ousterhout, ‘Rebuilding the Temple: Constantine Monomachus and the Holy Sepulchre’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48 (1989), pp. 70–71.

In Constantinople, in spite of the attempts to create substitutes, there was a lack of this important element: sacred space, chosen by God, in which He is active in a special way, more than in other places. As history has shown, since the relics were stolen and the churches destroyed, Constantinople stopped being the New Jerusalem.

To sum up the above considerations, we can say that in order to make a place holy, three elements jointly appeared (although we know a few exceptions to this rule):

A particular space located in a way that cause God to be more present and active in this place than other places⁶⁵.

Sacred architecture, proper management of landscape, development of the area, which could on one hand dispel some doubts about the sanctity of the area, on the other hand enable worship; using architecture, bishops could create something, which – I think – we can call - "a place-relic", like the tomb of the Virgin or of saint Stephen in Jerusalem.

Worship, which enabled contact with Divinity, and at the same time brought both the above elements together. One special form of the cult is worth noting: the cult of relics was the presence of something visible, tangible or tactile, which the worshipper could see or touch only in this place, and thus could see and touch the *sacrum*. It was the cult of relics that, among the three elements, was indispensable in the process of the creation of a holy place, but the worship became the most important. And in this context, and in the context of the above considerations, the answer to the title question is positive.

⁶⁵ Some places attracted pilgrim the others did not, also some people attracted pilgrims (during their life time – ascetics, the others only after their death) so we can say not only about 'genius loci' but also about 'genius personae' conected with the holy places.

of the temple. The fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD is not a problem for the theory that the Holy Sepulchre is the site of the temple. The fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD is not a problem for the theory that the Holy Sepulchre is the site of the temple. The fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD is not a problem for the theory that the Holy Sepulchre is the site of the temple.

Indeed, being in possession of a relic connected with the life of Christ was a highly valued possession in the ancient world. The fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD is not a problem for the theory that the Holy Sepulchre is the site of the temple. The fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD is not a problem for the theory that the Holy Sepulchre is the site of the temple. The fact that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD is not a problem for the theory that the Holy Sepulchre is the site of the temple.

²² *Life of David the Apostle*, in: *Three Synoptic Gospels*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911, pp. 1-2.

²³ On this, and other related questions, see: G. S. Gifford, *Excavations at Constantinople in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries*, Washington: D.C., 1911, pp. 1-2.

²⁴ Especially the True Cross brought to the Constantinople by Heraclius in the seventh century - about this, see, for example: J. W. Drayton, *Heraclius and the Holy Sepulchre*, London: Longmans and Co., 1911, pp. 1-2.

²⁵ *Excavations at Constantinople*, 1911, pp. 1-2.

²⁶ *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 1911, pp. 1-2.

A Beautiful Christ: Materiality and Divinity in the Earliest Sinai Icons

Adam Levine, Oxford

The materials used in the production of art are not exclusively technical or functional attributes — they are parts of the object that carry their own important meanings. Materiality, however, had been understudied by art historians until recently. Since Michael Baxandall's publication of the *Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* in 1982, which has a chapter exclusively devoted to materiality, there has been an explosion of interest in materiality within the discipline.¹ Byzantine art history, however, has lagged behind.² This paper, then, is a rethinking of the methodologies that we use to study Byzantine icons.

Before this rethinking, I must confess at the outset that my title is mildly misleading, if only for its syntax. This paper will not approach the issues in the order that they are presented. In fact, the subtitle is probably more representative of the argument than the title. This is not to say, that 'a Beautiful Christ' will feature herein. All that this disclaimer is meant to explain is that Christ's beauty neither dictated the materiality nor the 'divinity' of the earliest Sinai icons.³ Instead, this paper will argue that Christ's beauty is expressed through the interplay of the materiality of the earliest Sinai icons and their underlying theology. If the title is indeed meant to be inverted, then it ought to

¹ M. Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven, 1980. For examples of more recent interest in materiality, see: J. Montagu, *Gold, Silver & Bronze: Metal Sculpture of the Roman Baroque*, New Haven, 1989; N. Penny, *The Materials of Sculpture*, London, 1993; M. Baker, 'The Production and Viewing of Bronze Sculpture in Eighteenth-Century England', *Antilogia di Belle Arte* (1996), pp. 144–154; S. B. Butters, *The Triumph of Vulcan. Sculptors' Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence*, Florence, 1996.

² For exceptions, see: B. Pentcheva, 'The Performative Icon', *Art Bulletin*, 88 (2006), pp. 631–655; E. Ene D-Vasilescu, 'Examples of Application of Some Modern Techniques of Icon and Fresco Restoration and Conservation', *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 4 (2008), pp. 39–48.

³ The degree to which Christ's divinity could be rendered was at the center of the Iconoclastic Controversy. The depiction of Christ's divinity is thus a problem to which this paper will return.

be done full-stop. Consider first then the last word of the title: 'icons.'

For the purposes of this paper, an 'icon' will be defined as a portrait image painted on wood panels. One reason for this choice, apart from a degree of convention,⁴ is that the materiality of mosaics has been expertly treated by Liz James in *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art*.⁵ James argues that light and color were prime factors in how Byzantine viewers 'saw' their art and that Byzantine viewers saw color differently than we do today. James contends that in Byzantium reflectivity and glitter were more important in seeing, describing, and determining color than hue.⁶ Reflectivity of light is given primacy in the Byzantine perception of color.

In the final chapters, James discusses color and its function in icon painting, but she gives very little attention to light and its relationship to icons. She seems to conflate light and color in painting, whereas in her discussions of mosaics light and color are always treated as separate (even if fundamentally interconnected). The glass tesserae of mosaics are, after all, more reflective than a painted icon, but if James' underlying thesis is to be believed, then it stands to reason that color, regardless of medium, would have been perceived by the Byzantine viewer in terms of luster rather of hue.⁷ Put simply, the relationship between light and panel portrait icons is in need of study.

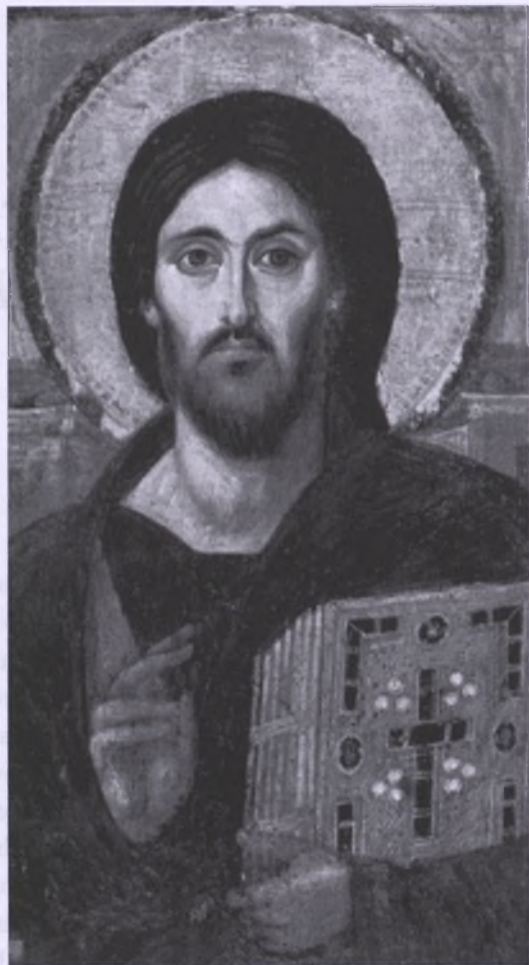


Fig. 1. Icon of Christ ("Canonical" Type), St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, Mid-6th Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College

⁴ Cf. L. Brubaker, 'Introduction: The Sacred Image', in: *The Sacred Image: East and West*, ed. by R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker, Urbana, 1995, p. 3. For more inclusive definitions, see: O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium*, London, 1948, p. 5-10.

⁵ L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art*, Oxford, 1996.

⁶ Ibid. Cf. J. Gage, *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 58-61; John Gage, *Color and Meaning: Art, Science, and Symbolism*, Berkeley, 1999, pp. 66-69.

⁷ Or, perhaps more accurately, in terms of luster over hue.

Continuing backwards through the title, the specific icons on which this paper will focus are, as described in the title, 'the earliest Sinai icons.' 'The earliest Sinai icons' refers to those icons from the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai in Egypt which have been conventionally dated to the centuries before Iconoclasm. The 'earliest Sinai icons' thus refers to nine icons, three of which are now in Kiev. These include: (1) the Canonical Christ Pantokrator icon, (2) the Syro-Palestinian Christ Pantokrator icon, (3) the icon of St. Peter, (4) the icon of the Ascension, (5) the icon of the Virgin and Child with Saints and Angels, (6) The icon of St. John the Baptist, (7) the icon of Sts. Sergios and Bacchos, (8) the icon of the Virgin and Child, and (9) the icon of the 'Ancient of Days.' These icons have all



Fig. 2. Icon of Christ ('Syro-Palestinian' Type), St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, 6th Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College



Fig. 3. Icon of the St. Peter, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, 6th Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College



Fig. 4. Icon of the Ascension,
St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai,
Egypt, 6th Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History
Department, Dartmouth College



Fig. 5. Icon of Virgin and Child,
St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, 6th
Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History Depart-
ment, Dartmouth College

been dated to the 6th or 7th centuries by Kurt Weitzmann,⁸ and they were chosen both for these proposed dates as well as for their media.

Unfortunately, we do not *know* that these icons were produced in the sixth century. The bases for Weitzmann's dating are the style and the medium of the icons. As far as the former is concerned, Weitzmann argues that these icons — which are all more classical and illusionistic — are of an earlier style.⁹ This argument, which is made frequently in Byzantine scholarship, is not beyond critique. Underlying Weitzmann's attributions is a conception that abstraction supersedes classicism, an idea that can be questioned.

⁸ K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons*, Princeton, 1976. A less detailed catalog was produced eight years earlier. Cf. K. Weitzmann, R. E. Wolf, M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatev, and S. Radojic, *Icons from Southeastern Europe and Sinai*, London, 1968; M. Chatzidakis and G. Walters, 'An Encaustic Icon of Christ at Sinai', *The Art Bulletin*, 49 (1967), pp. 202–204. For different dates for some of these icons, see: E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art*, Cambridge, 1977.

⁹ Weitzmann, *The Icon...*, passim. Cf. H. Maguire, 'Review of The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons. 1: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century', *Speculum*, 53 (1978), p. 426.

Weitzmann's stylistic analysis, however, is of less concern to this paper than his method of dating icons on the basis their medium.

Weitzmann identifies all of these icons as having been painted in encaustic, a technique in which the pigment is suspended in hot wax. Weitzmann suggests that the encaustic technique, which he associates with classical antiquity, was replaced by the tempera technique — in which pigment is suspended in an egg mixture — around the onset of Iconoclasm.¹⁰ According to this logic, any icon painted in encaustic must date before Iconoclasm.

There are two huge problems with this line of reasoning. First, much like his stylistic argument, Weitzmann works from the assumption that encaustic predated tempera and was more popular in classical antiquity. Weitzmann is careful to point out the similarities with mummy portraits from the Egyptian Fayum, but he is equally adamant that encaustic painting was not confined to Egypt. Weitzmann notes that encaustic paint has been found on linen and even marble from the Greek world.¹¹ He belabors the connection between classical antiquity and encaustic painting when he writes:

“Thus there exists a precedent from classical antiquity for our two encaustic panels with the sacrifices of Isaac and Jephthah's daughter on marble pilasters...”¹²

Weitzmann's assumptions about encaustic and its relationship to tempera, however, have been seriously problematized by Susan Walker's work on the Fayum mummy portraits.¹³ Walker has shown both that tempera and encaustic co-existed in roughly equal proportion throughout antiquity and that tempera may have actually been used *before* encaustic in certain contexts (including funerary contexts).



Fig. 6. Icon of St. John the Baptist, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, now in Kiev, Museum of Occidental and Oriental Art, 6th Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College

¹⁰ According to Weitzmann the transition to first icon in tempera occurs with the crucifixion icon from Sinai. Weitzmann dates the object to the middle of the eighth century on the basis of stylistic similarities with a fresco (not an icon) executed during the papacy of Pope Zacharias I (741–752) in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome. For Weitzmann encaustic painting thus replaces tempera painting during Iconoclasm.

¹¹ Weitzmann, *The Icons* ..., p. 8.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Cf. S. Walker, 'A Note on the Dating of Mummy Portraits', in: *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt*, eds. S. Walker and M. Bierbrier, London, 1997, pp. 34–36; S. Walker 'Painted Hellenes: Mummy Portraits from Late Roman Egypt', in: *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire*, eds. by S. S. and M. Edwards, Oxford, 2004, pp. 310–326.



Fig. 7. Icon of Sts. Sergios and Bacchus, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, now in Kiev, Museum of Occidental and Oriental Art, 6th Century C.E. (?) Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College



Fig. 8. Icon of Virgin and Child, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, now in Kiev, Museum of Occidental and Oriental Art, 6th Century C.E. (?) Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College



Fig. 9. Icon of Christ as Ancient of Days, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, 7th Century C.E. (?) Image Courtesy of the Art, History Department, Dartmouth College

The second and more damning critique of Weitzmann's dating via medium is that Weitzmann did not and could not definitively know the medium used in the so-called 'earliest' Sinai icons. As he notes though, tempera can only be differentiated with certainty through the use of scientific instruments which he did not have with him when he visited Saint Catherine's.¹⁴ He writes:

"A detailed study of the techniques of early icon painting is the province of technical experts... We shall therefore confine ourselves to a few general remarks. Very important in the early phase of icon painting is the technique of heated wax colors that we call encaustic, and we have already noted that without special equipment it cannot always be determined clearly whether wax colors have been used or not."¹⁵

Although Chatzidakis' restoration does show that the Canonical Christ Pantokrator is painted in encaustic, it does not stand to reason that other similar looking icons are necessarily painted in the same way, particularly if encaustic and tempera are difficult to tell apart.

The similarity between encaustic and tempera in itself ought to destabilize the conventional assumptions surrounding the icons with which this paper is concerned. What are traditionally seen as 6th century encaustic icons may in fact be 6th century tempera icons or, not implausibly, post-iconoclastic encaustic or tempera icons.¹⁶ This is not to say that it is impossible that the icons in question are not from the 6th century and are not painted in encaustic, but it is to say that their date and media cannot be definitively determined.

The implications of this reasoning on conventional Byzantine art history are important. Interpretations of the 'earliest' icons are frequently contingent upon their having been produced before Iconoclasm. Jeffrey Anderson's comparison of the Canonical Christ Pantokrator icon with a 'later' St. Nicholas icon is an exemplar of this trend.¹⁷ In this chapter, Anderson argues that an analysis of icons before and after Iconoclasm will identify different stylistic trends that, he argues, are correlated with changes in symbolic meaning.



Fig. 10. Double-Sided Mummy Portrait, 2nd Century C.E. from Fayum, Egypt, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Image Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

¹⁴ It is, in fact, possible to differentiate the two on the basis of the impasto build-up characteristic of encaustic paint. While the thickness of paint applied to an icon's wood panel differs from encaustic to tempera, the underlying thesis that the lustrous effects of the two are extremely similar is not still holds.

¹⁵ Weitzmann, *The Icons* ..., p. 8.

¹⁶ Cf. A. Levine, *The Problematic of Iconoclasm in Byzantine Art History*, M. St. Dissertation, History of Art and Visual Culture, University of Oxford, June 2009.

¹⁷ J. Anderson, 'The Byzantine Panel Portrait before and after Iconoclasm', in *The Sacred Image...*, pp. 25-44.

Anderson relates these stylistic changes to social and religious changes that occurred between the pre-iconoclastic and the post-iconoclastic periods.

Underlying Anderson's argument is an assumption that what an art history of the icon should be doing is using style to better understand Byzantine social history. This methodological interest in social history through style can be traced back to Robin Cormack's *Writing in Gold* (published in 1985 and not surprisingly subtitled *Byzantine Society and its Icons*).¹⁸ Although strains of this method pre-existed Cormack's book,¹⁹ following its publication (and the prestige of the author is not to be overlooked) scholars were given a template for how to write a social history of Byzantine art. Cormack's approach has done much to advance our understanding of how icons functioned in Byzantine society. Notable examples of the social history of icons since *Writing in Gold* have been undertaken by Hans Belting and Thomas Matthews amongst others.²⁰

However, when it comes to the corpus of supposedly pre-iconoclastic icons, social historical approaches *must* presuppose some very basic facts including date, medium, and provenance. How else can the object be placed in its social or historical context? But, as the foregoing discussion demonstrated for the date and medium of the so-called 'early' icons,²¹ the *facts* of the discourse are really guesses, and guesses that do not stand up to scrutiny. And if these supposedly pre-iconoclastic icons are post-iconoclastic, how does that change our reading of *all* pre-iconoclastic icons? What the discourse on Byzantine icons needs is an approach that is relatively trans-historical; a method that can deal with all icons in the same way (without interpreting them all in the same way).

This paper suggests, following Liz James' example for mosaics (and her book, not coincidentally, is able to cover mosaics produced from the whole range of Byzantine history), that we focus on the materiality of icons. Such a focus can provide important insights into how icons functioned *without* resting upon historical specificity.

A focus of materiality, in spite of the uncertainty surrounding the 'early' icons' media, is not as counterintuitive as it might seem. While we do not know whether the nine icons in question were painted in encaustic, we do know that they were painted in either encaustic or tempera. Indeed, the fact that the two media cannot be differentiated without technical analysis suggests that they have virtually the same visual effect.

The visual effect shared by encaustic and tempera is that both are lustrous. The similar visual effects of encaustic and tempera derive from their chemical compositions. The wax

¹⁸ R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons*, Oxford, 1985.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Cameron, 'Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium', *Past and Present*, 84 (1979), pp. 3–35.

²⁰ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Chicago, 1994; Th. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, 2nd edn, Princeton, 1998, pp. 177–190.

²¹ The same could be said of the so-called Constantinopolitan provenance for these icons; cf. *op. cit.* n. 16.

in the encaustic (which often has oil mixed in as well) and the egg mixture in the tempera both render the media semi-translucent, the result of which is that light can actually enter through the top layer of paint before being reflected back through to the viewer's eye. The result of this phenomenon is that the light reflected back through the semi-transparent top layer of paint is refracted. The refraction breaks any escaping white light into its component parts so that an encaustic or tempera image seems swollen with color. To Byzantine viewers, who would have been particularly attuned to reflectivity and lustre, these icons may have appeared to have been radiating light. Other signifiers within the images such as the gold halos surrounding the figures would have created similar effects. It is probably not trivial that Christ has a halo when he is the major figure in the scene,²² and where he is not he is depicted *en buste* with his image completely encompassed by a gold medallion.

It is also worth noting that other than the final effect of tempera and encaustic paint, the two do not share very much. Tempera is much easier to work in than encaustic: since the wax must be pliable, encaustic pigments must be very hot when they are applied. Tempera paint allows for more layers of paint because it is a thinner medium. These differences, and others like them, suggest that the reason for choosing tempera over encaustic were functionally rather than symbolic. The working techniques are different enough that it seems relatively safe to assume that it was the *final effect* that these icons were after. The final effect of encaustic and tempera, a lustrous one, provides the connection between the 'materiality' discussed above and the next term from the title: 'divinity.'

Luminosity, as Liz James and many others have noted,²³ was particularly important in Byzantium. Light, following an already well-established tradition in Christianity, was associated with divinity. Thus in *Ecclesiasticus* 23:18-19 of the Old Testament we find: 'For he knows not that brighter than ten thousand times the sun are the eyes of the Most High, which looks on the ways of men, and cast their glance into hidden parts.' And as Jesus famously says in the John 8:12 of the New Testament: 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness.'

The association between Christ and light was upheld by the early Church Fathers. Thus Ambrose asks: 'But why should I add that just the Father is light, so, too, the Son is light, and the Holy Spirit is light?'²⁴ And Clement of Alexandria exhorts:

"For just as if the sun were not, the world would have been in perpetual night, for all the other heavenly bodies could do; so, unless we had come to know the Logos, and had been enlightened by His rays, we should have been in no way different from the birds who are being crammed with food, fattening in darkness and reared for death. Let us

²² It is unclear whether this is true of the icon depicting the 'Syro-Palestinian' Christ. See Weitzmann, *The Icons ...*, pp. 26-27 for a discussion of what would have been behind Christ's head.

²³ D. Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, 1998; Gage, *op. cit.*, no. 5.

²⁴ Ambrose of Milan, 'On The Holy Spirit', I, 14, trans. R. J. Deferrari, in: *Saint Ambrose: Theological and Dogmatic Works*, Washington, D.C., 1963, p. 86.

admit the light, that we may admit God. Let us admit the light and become disciples of the Lord... Hail, O God."²⁵

More generally, Irenaeus writes: 'For [God] is rightly called all-embracing Mind, but unlike the human mind; and most justly called Light, but Light in no way resembling the light we know.'²⁶ Origen continues in *The Principles*: "The only-begotten Son, therefore, is the glory of this light, proceeding inseparably from [God] Himself, as brightness does from light, and illuminating the whole of creation."²⁷ Augustine also comments on the indivisible, infinite light of God in his *Soliloquies* when he writes: 'O God, intelligible Light, in whom and by whom and through whom all those things which have intelligible light have their intelligible light.'²⁸

The equivalence between light and God continued in Byzantium where Gregory of Nyssa argued that 'God is light, the highest light, from which any other light though it seem exceedingly bright, is but a slight effluence and a radiance exceeding downwards.'²⁹ Pseudo-Dionysius also wrote: '[God] is the Cause of harmony and splendor in all things, flashing forth upon them all, like light, the beautifying communications of its original ray.'³⁰ From Late Antiquity through Early Byzantium, textual evidence clearly indicates that the divine was meant to be associated with light.

If light was associated with divinity, then how were the icons *not* in violation of the Old Testament's second commandment and concerning idolatry? After all, the theology of icons mandated that the painted image could not claim to circumscribe Christ's divine nature. The icon was a depiction of the divine *made flesh* — i.e., Christ Incarnate — and this image was supposed act as a *conduit* to the divine, not as a representation of the divine itself. So, how can we reconcile the fact that an image, that was incapable of circumscribing divinity appeared to be radiating light, which in Byzantium would have necessarily conjured up associations with the divine?

This question can be answered in two parts. The first part draws again on the term 'materiality.' Although somewhat tautological, the very fact that Christ could be depicted meant that he had a physical form and consequently had a human nature.³¹ The material-

²⁵ Clement of Alexandria, 'Exhortation to the Greeks', XI, in: *The Anti-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325*, eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, vol. 2, New York, 1903, p. 203.

²⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons, 'Against the Heresies', II, 13.4, in: *The Anti-Nicene Fathers ...*, p. 374.

²⁷ Origen, 'De Principiis', trans. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti, in: *Traité des Principes*, vol. 1, Paris, 1978–1984, nr 2, p. 93.

²⁸ Augustine of Hippo, 'Soliloquies', I, 2, trans. G. Watson, in: *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul*, Warminster, 1990, p. 25.

²⁹ See n. 34 below

³⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite, trans. J. D. Jones, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, vol. 4, Milwaukee, 1980, nr 10, p. 142.

³¹ Such an interpretation, while consistent with the Nicene creed, was only fully worked out in the 451 C.E. Council of Chalcedon with the introduction of the concept of the *hypostasis*.

ity of the icon thus reflects the materiality of Christ's body. In this reading, the allusions to light made through the material of the icon would have married Christ's divine nature to his human nature. From a viewer's perspective, the icon would appear to have some source of light radiating from the image of Christ. Thus, Christ's divinity would have appeared to be *behind* his image — i.e., behind his human nature. In this interpretation, Christ Incarnate became the conduit to his own divinity symbolized through the light that appears to come from behind him, such a reading mirrors perfectly the theology of the icon explicated above whereby the image depicted serves a conduit to the divine.

But if divinity cannot be circumscribed, how is it that the icon—even if the light appears to be behind the figure depicted — can appear illuminated? Would that not indicate that the icon is in some way encapsulating (or trying to encapsulate) Christ's divinity? The answer to this question, and thus the second part of the answer to our larger question, is that the light that appears to be radiating from these icons is divine light; however, it is divine light *transmuted* through Christ. Such an argument, which was repeated by early Church Fathers and later iconophiles alike, was profoundly influenced by the Neo-Platonic philosophy of Plotinus.³² Writing in the 3rd century, Plotinus made two distinct contributions to the theology of Christ's dual nature and, as a consequence, to the theology of the icon.

The first has been expertly treated by Jaś Elsner in *Art and the Roman Viewer*. According to Elsner, Plotinus provided the philosophical foundation for 'mystic viewing,' which 'is predicated upon the assumption that in the mystic experience the dualism of subject and object can be transcended into neither subject nor object and yet is simultaneously both.'³³ In the image of Christ, Christ's divinity can be *absent* since the divine cannot be circumscribed but it can also be *present* since Christ is the divine made flesh. In the context of the icons considered here, to depict Christ in his divine nature was heretical since divinity could not be rendered materially, but to depict Christ *without* his divine nature was equally heretical. The materiality of these icons and their luminescent effects would have thus appealed to mystic viewers who would have seen Christ's divinity as present with his human nature without depicting his divine nature.

The true cynic (or iconoclast) may still maintain that depicting any semblance of divine light is depicting the divine in *some* form and is thus heretical. Plotinus' second contribution to Christology, and to Trinitarianism in general, is his theory of Emanation, which provided the basis for dealing with this critique.³⁴ Plotinus argued that there was a supreme,

³² A. Grabar, 'Plotin et les Origines de l'Esthétique Médiévale', *Cahiers Archéologique: Fin de l'Antiquité et Moyen Age I*, Paris, 1947, pp. 15–36; P. A. Michelis, 'Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Byzantine Art', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11 (1952), pp. 21–45.

³³ J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 90. In his discussion, Elsner deals with a mosaic icon — the 6th century Transfiguration Apse from Sinai—which is not unrelated to the icons upon which this paper focuses.

³⁴ Cf. A. H. Armstrong, "Emanation" in Plotinus, *Mind* 46 (1937), pp. 6–66.; L. P. Gerson, *Plotinus* New York, 1994, pp. 15–41.



Fig. 11. Apse Mosaic of the Transfiguration,
St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, 6th Century C.E. (?)
Image Courtesy of the Art History Department, Dartmouth College

transcendent 'One.' The One constantly emanates (parts of) itself, yet it never diminishes just as the Trinity is three separate entities that are all undiminished parts of God. The example that Plotinus used to illustrate the operation of the One was the sun and its rays (i.e., 'light'), which, as primary sources above illustrate, became a leitmotif of early Christian and Byzantine theology.

Following Plotinus, the light that seems to be radiating from Christ in these icons need not necessarily be the light of God. Rather, the emanation of light from God was transmuted by the Logos as well as by the intercessory figures, like those depicted on four of the six icons. The Sts. Sergios and Bacchos icon best exemplifies this point since the halos of the two martyred saints overlap — i.e., share their light — with the central, floating, and higher figure of Christ. The divine presence of the intercessors is granted by Christ who, in turn, derives his "divinity" from God whilst he was made flesh.

The light that these icons would have appeared to have been radiating thus refers to the undiminished ray of the divine as it appeared in its worldly form. By this logic, Christ was not shown as divine; he was depicted as he appeared Incarnate, but his radiance pointed to the 'rays' of divinity emanating from his divine nature *through* his human nature.

Having fully explained the paper's subtitle, the conclusion will turn to my title: 'A Beautiful Christ.' Like color, the Byzantine conception of beauty was far different from our own. As Dominic Janes has documented in his book *God and Gold in Late Antiquity*, light — and in

particular divine light — was associated with beauty.³⁵ By alluding to Christ's divine nature, and by doing so through visual effect related to light, the images of Christ in the icons here discussed — and perhaps in all icons — become images of a beautiful Christ.

A 'beautiful' depiction of Christ, however, has theological implications in its own right. Beauty, or in Greek *kalos*, had associations of both physical beauty and of moral beauty. By depicting divine radiance and beauty, both forms of beauty — physical and moral — would have necessarily been called to mind. What's more, the physical and the moral beauty of the Logos were reflections of the beauty of the divine archetype. It is in part for this reason that the many early Church Fathers wrote of Christ as beautiful.

For example, Clement of Alexandria wrote: '...our Savior is beautiful to be loved by those who desire true beauty.'³⁶ And a century later, St. Basil referred to Christ's image as one of 'inexpressible beauty.'³⁷ These fathers and others like them were drawing upon a biblical tradition that also associated God's beauty with his morality and fairness. Thus the author of Psalm 44:5 wrote: 'With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign. Because of truth and meekness and justice: and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully.'³⁸ The image of a beautiful Christ, in accordance with the theology of the icon, would have thus directed the viewer's recognition of a physically and morally beautiful signifier (i.e., Christ's human nature) to a physically and morally beautiful signified (i.e., Christ's divine nature).

This paper has attempted to extend Liz James' argument from *Light and Color in Byzantine Art* to panel portrait icons. These icons in their very materiality would have communicated a glittering, radiant light to Byzantine viewers which, when coupled with the other signifiers on the picture plane, likely would have conjured up associations of divine light. Through this visual effect, Byzantine artists were able to depict *both* of Christ's natures. Moreover, the depiction of Christ's divine nature through references to divine light would have qualified the images of Christ in these icons as 'beautiful.' And, like the luminescence of the medium itself, the multivalent meaning(s) of 'beauty' in Byzantium would have further tied Christ's human nature to his divine nature.

³⁵ Janes, *God and Gold*. See also Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity*, II

³⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies*, II, 5, *The Anti-Nicene Fathers ...*, 351.

³⁷ Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, IX, 22, trans. David G.K. Taylor, *The Syriac Versions of The Du Spiritu Sancto by Basil of Caesarea*, Leuven, 1999, p.37.

³⁸ Some argued for an ugly Christ, also drawing on biblical sources, but they were a minority. Cf. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 50, trans. L.W. Barnard, *The First and Second Apologies*, New York, 1997, p. 57; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies*, III, 19.2, *The Anti-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325, Volume 1*, eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, New York, 1903, 449; Hippolytus, *Answer to the Jews*, trans. G. D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, London, 2004, p. 102; Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, XVIII, trans. J.H. Waszink and J.C.M. van Winden, *De Idololatria: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 1987), p. 61.

This argument, in theory, can be extended to all icons. Icons continued to be painted in either tempera or encaustic throughout Byzantium. The increased use of gold later in Byzantine history could be read as another, perhaps even more successful way, to imbue icons with the presence of divine light. The materiality of panel portrait icons — even if this materiality is in very important ways a complicated matter — can provide a transhistorical method for their study. Much more work needs to be done, especially with the primary Byzantine sources, but this aside, is it all that surprising that the materiality of panel portrait icons, like the theology justifying their production, turns out to be a conduit of its own — a conduit to immaterial light?

Monastic Delta Designs: An Archaeological Assessment of the Late Antique Dwellings and Settlements in Coptic Egypt

Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, Wittenberg University

The oral traditions of the Desert Fathers of Egypt constructed a sacred landscape of isolation and solitary dwellings. The desert, whether real or imagined, was a stage for great battles between the angelic soldiers of Christ and the demons of temptation. Historical interpretation has ascribed these areas as the fringes of society, a place removed from the world. However, the complexity of the monastic built environments and the extensive modifications made to host pilgrims and visitors, demonstrates that the monasteries became new urban centers of the late antique world. The archaeological evidence of the early communities and their subsequent generations demonstrates that monastic settlements in the western Delta had a particularly unique design.

Three famous Christian monastic sites were central for maintaining the monastic memory of the early Desert Fathers: Kellia, Pherme and Scetis. All three sites were occupied until the seventh and eighth centuries; however, Scetis alone was occupied into the later medieval period (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries). The architectural history of the sites in Scetis suggest continued influence from earlier forms of monastic dwellings, thereby reflecting a particularly Delta form of monastic residence. The layouts and execution of the monastic dwellings and their iconographic programs in this famous center differ significantly from monastic communities found elsewhere in Egypt.

Literary Traditions of Delta Settlements

The oral tradition of the Desert Fathers eventually was collected as the alphabetical and thematic collections of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. These accounts relate the importance of creating a world of independent ascetic Christians. In addition, monastic biographies and additional sayings were compiled to commemorate feast days of saints. These texts point to specific modes of historical memory regarding monastic construction and general attitudes toward built monastic forms that help us assess the value of literary sources for describing monastic architectural designs.

For example, a story is told of how Macarius directed some new ascetics to build their residences: "I gave them a pickaxe and a spade and a bag with bread and salt. I showed them the rock of an abandoned quarry and said to them, 'Cut yourselves a place here and bring some wood for yourselves from the *wadi*, make a roof, and thus you can live here.'" The use of quarries and natural caves in the desert were commonly employed for use as domestic space for monastics. Although it is more commonly thought that tombs were converted for monastic use, monastics in the delta were not able to use tombs, since there were no available cliffs delimiting the landscape. Very quickly the quarry community expanded: "So he had them make caves in the rock and cover them with palm branches and trunks and stalks from the wadi, and they lived in them. And some of the brothers he placed beside him as an order of disciples."²

Although Bishop Athanasius gives Antony the credit for making the desert a city, the fathers of the Delta are the ones who deserve recognition for populating the deserts with entirely new cities. Antony's cave and subsequent monastery by the Red Sea covers a small area, whereas the settlement of Wadi Natrun, with its four contemporary monasteries and the remains of the now abandoned settlements, covers an area of 50 km². Likewise, the settlements of Kellia and Pherme, spanning over 60 km² in area, illustrate a greater sense of urban construction than that by the Red Sea. In the *Life of Saint Macarius of Scetis* the demons also recognize the problem of the growing attraction to monastic living when one states: "Shall we allow this man to stay here and allow the desert places on account of him to become a port and harbor for everyone in danger, and especially to become a city like heaven for those who hope for eternal life? If we allow him to remain here, multitudes will gather around him and the desert places will not be under our power."³

Macarius of Egypt, also known as Macarius the Great and a contemporary of Amoun of Nitria, was the first to build his monastic residence in an area later known as Scetis, modern Wadi an-Natrun, now home to four active monasteries: Deir al-Baramous, Deir es-Syriani,

¹ St. Macarius the Spiritbearer, *Coptic Texts Relating to Saint Macarius the Great*, trans. T. Vivian, Crestwood, NY 2004, p. 8.

² *Ibidem*, p. 20.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

Deir Anba Bishoi and Deir Abu Macarius.⁴ The evolution of his quarry and cave community to the much larger communities is not well attested in the textual references. In order to examine the evolution of monasticism after Macarius we can consider the settlement of John the Little, who built a similar community to the north, near Deir Anba Bishoi.

Wadi Natrun-The Monastery of John the Little

John the Little's (339–409) call to relocate to the area of Scetis,⁵ as presented by Zacharias of Sakhâ (c. eighth century), maps out the spiritual nature of the region's geography: "As its name indicates, hearts and thought are weighed by true discernment; the place where spiritual salt seasons souls with perfect peace; the place of the wisdom, knowledge and theological understanding of the orthodox doctrines of the Trinitarian and apostolic faith; the place of full instruction in angelic piety."⁶

The site that John the Little eventually occupied was associated with the site of his devotion to the instructions given by his teacher. Amoi directed John to water a piece of wood every day until it blossomed.⁷ Eventually, John's faithfulness was blessed, as the staff became a tree, later known as the Tree of Obedience. John subsequently moved to this location after the death of his father, building a cave to dwell in beside the tree. Below this space he also had an underground cave that he used for more austere asceticism (not eating, drinking, or leaving the space for a week).⁸ Rumor of his asceticism quickly attracted several other brothers who established their residences around the great ascetic.

The Monastery of John the Little was apparently one of the original four monasteries of Wadi Natrun, however, it was replaced by Deir as-Syriani after John's monastery was abandoned in the fourteenth century. The settlement that first developed was associated directly with the founding father John and those who were drawn to model themselves after his asceticism. The second stage of settlement was initiated after John's abandonment of Scetis during the raids of 408 when he found refuge in the Monastery of St. Antony at Klyisma. Although he did not return to Scetis, other monastics occupied the area originally associated with the monk so that there was a *topos* of John the Little where monks built more substantial structures in the ninth century.

Sub-surface survey provides clear evidence that later structures were built around the central mound identified as the Monastery of John the Little. The Monastery of John Kame was

⁴ For the tradition of Macarius as the founder of the area see *Lausiac History* 17; Sozomen, *EII* 3.14; and Cassian, *Conf.*, 15.3.1.

⁵ H. Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of Wadi an-Natrun*, vol. 2, New York, 1932, p. 107-111.

⁶ Zacharias of Sakhâ, 'An Enconium on the Life of John the Little', trans. M. Mikhail and T. Vivian, *Coptic Church Review*, 18.1 & 2 (1997), p. 21.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

built beside the monastery of John the Little and became part of a larger community that included the Monastery of the Armenians, The Monastery of the Abyssinians, the Monastery of Anoub, and the Monastery of the Virgin of John the Little. All of the clusters are found within the area more widely known as the settlements of John the Little.

Yale University's Egyptian Delta Monastery Archaeology Project began work in Scetis in 2006 with the objective to map the extent of settlements and to carry out systematic excavations at the site to provide a sample of the various examples of monastic architecture on site. An American mission, called the Scriptorium Center for Christian Antiquities, conducted earlier work on site from 1995–1999. Both projects have worked on monastic residences and two examples will illustrate the type of architecture at Scetis. Active agricultural fields surround the site as currently mapped. The surface remains easily convey the presence of architectural evidence of substantial preservation.

The architectural features visible from the surface include a large enclosed area with a small church and an Ayyubid-Mamluk *manshubiya* (or monastic dwelling); several low-lying *manshubiyyat* surrounding this enclosed structure; and three more substantial structures that are perhaps heavily modified *manshubiyyat*. Several finds, including coins and ceramics, from the excavation of the church indicate that this area of the settlement was in use in the later medieval period. The literary tradition points to an abandonment of the monastery in the fourteenth century.

A schematic plan of *Manshubiya* AB 1 from 1996 indicates that the dwelling consisted of a core dwelling from which linear additions radiated to the north, east and south.⁹ The core dwelling has the best state of preservation with walls to a height of 1.8 m. These walls were protected by the later additions that abutted the original walls of the dwelling. The irregularity of the rooms' shapes in the core dwelling is visibly different from the linear plan of the second phase of construction.

A central courtyard opens to the east of the first dwelling. The area included one well, two fire pits, and a large deposit of discarded pottery with one measuring 56 cm in height. The courtyard does not demonstrate any evidence of being roofed, which would allow the occupants to have large fire pits open for cooking. The dwelling also had a second cooking facility complete with three fire pits and an oven.

A prayer area and subsidiary rooms extend to the north from the courtyard as one addition in the second phase of the dwelling. Room 5, with a western bench facing east, was used as a place of prayer and spiritual work. The rooms to the north were also equipped with western benches, or *mastabas*, however the relatively lower state of preservation of the walls has removed any trace of inscriptions or figural wall paintings. Painted fragments from this room, like room 5, include images of monks; Christ flanked by two saints; and an

⁹ Bastiaan Van Elderen, 'Preliminary Report-Wadi Natrun Excavations: 1995 Season', submitted to the Supreme Council of Antiquities, 27 March 1995; April 1996; March 1999. I wish to thank Bastiaan Van Elderen for granting permission and access to these reports.

inscription that identifies one face as that of Poemen (a well known father of Scetis). The recovery of over forty complete amphorae from the late Byzantine and early Islamic periods demonstrates that the *manshubiya* was occupied during the seventh-ninth centuries. The orthography of the few Coptic inscriptions reveals that the inscriptions are in Boharic, which was not in use until the ninth century.

In 2007, the Egyptian Delta Monastic Archaeology Project, began an investigation of an area (340 m²) on the southwest section of a small mound with visible walls. The mound is located directly west of a monastic midden excavated in 2006 and was selected because of its smaller size with the hopes that we could complete excavation of the complex in three years. Due to its relatively smaller size of the mound, in comparison to others at the site, we excavated approximately one-third of the mound in the 2007 season and plan to finish excavating the remaining rooms in 2008 and 2009. With the results of our 2007 we have enough information to begin formulating hypotheses that address key research questions that we have raised about the settlement and history of the settlement.

A preliminary surface mapping of the visible architecture of the *kom* suggests that the structure has at least 25 rooms enclosing an open-air courtyard at its center. The main or central entrance(s) have not yet been identified, however, one entrance to a phase of the building was found along the southern wall of the building along the southeastern section of the building. It was later closed in what may have been the final use of the rooms on the east side as cooking area.

Our excavation examined thirteen rooms and we exposed an original floor of one phase of the structure only in Room 2. The main rooms that were used for meetings and mediation are located in the center of the southern area. Rooms 3 and 4 were covered with all paintings depicting crosses, monks, geometric patterns and inscriptions. The walls show sign of modifications with niches and entrances plastered over and then pierced by later entrances. Based upon our investigation, there are four phases of construction that significantly altered the structure of the building. Currently the earliest phase of occupation of the building was in the ninth or tenth century and the latest use of the building dates to the tenth and eleventh centuries in the area that contained an outdoor oven.¹⁰

A third *manshubiya* has been mapped only by aid of visible walls and not by excavation. This method demonstrates already that there is a pattern of layout and design common between the two recently studied *manshubiyyat*. Neither of the two recently examined buildings demonstrate the evolutionary change from a irregular dwelling, as seen in the 1996 *manshubiya*, to a more rectilinear structure. This might suggest that there are earlier and smaller residences that were later incorporated into a standardized building and modification plan at the monastic community.

¹⁰ G. Pyke, 'Pottery Report, 2007', internal report for EDMAP 2007.

Kellia and Pherme

In contrast to the new excavation work at Wadi Natrun, the excavated monastic community at Kellia and at the smaller satellite site of Pherme is well known to scholars of monasticism. The literature relating to Kellia is extensive and for this purposes of this study, I will highlight the similarities of the story of settlement location and the archaeological parallels.

The foundation story of Kellia is preserved in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* in which Amoun decided to leave Nitria because it had become too crowded. His desire to find a new monastic residence was in response to increased tension among the brothers who wanted to live in peace.¹¹ He set out after eating and walked about 12 miles and reached a spot that was only a day's walk away and this was the beginning of the site of Kellia. The identification of the site was confirmed in the 1960's by excavations, located near the current Nubariyyah Canal in the west Delta, through the combined efforts of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, the Mission Suisse d'Archéologie Copte de l'Université de Genève and the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (now the Supreme Council of Antiquities).¹² The identification of Kellia, and its subsequent excavation, is one of the greatest archaeological discoveries in the history of Late Antique Egypt and monasticism.¹³

A survey of the area identified over 1500 *manshubiyyat*. These structures are clustered into seventeen discernable areas of which five exhibited a higher percentage of occupation than the others. Most structures exhibit several phases of additions and modifications. An overview of the general phases of expansion will clarify the importance for redefining asceticism and the definition of solitude when one considers that at times the monks were living closer than 5 meters from each other's dwellings.

The initial structures at Kellia were designed for one or two monks in the fifth century. Both Quṣûr Hegeila (QH) and Quṣûr Eremia (QE), the two most southern locations in Kellia, contain structures that prove that monastics relocated to the region in the early fifth century. The central dwelling was located within a large courtyard or later joined to another residence with walls to form a single, modified unit. An examination of settlement plan of Pherme evokes a similar layout of dwellings to that found at John the Little in Wadi Natrun. Our survey work at Pherme in 2006 illustrates that the *manshubiyyat* were planned initially as smaller structures, some of which still survive today, and then others were modified as the needs of the community changed.

¹¹ Antony 34. *IIL* 18 identifies the residence of Macarius of Alexandria as the Cells.

¹² A. Guillaumont, 'Le Site des Kellia menacé de destruction', in: *Prospection et sauvegarde des antiquités de l'Égypte*, le Caire 1981, p. 195–198.

¹³ For a bibliography for previous work see the two most recent volumes to be published on the sites of Kellia and Pherme: N. H. Henein and M. Wuttmann, *Kellia: L'ermitage copte QR 195*. 2 vols. Cairo 2000 and *EK 8184, Tome IV. Explorations aux Qouçoûr Hégeila et Éreima lors des campagnes 1987, 1988 et 1989*, ed. P. Bridel, Louvain 2003.

The general plan of a *manshubiya* included a large enclosure with a small house attached to the northwest wall. The dwelling was multi-roomed with a courtyard, a main entrance, and rooms for one or two occupants, one of which was comparatively larger than the others. These rooms were also frequently attached directly to the cooking facilities. The place set aside for prayer was often within the residence of the elder and was designed with ceramic vessels horizontally placed in the wall for acoustics.

Conclusions

This paper demonstrates that there is a relative Delta model of *manshubiyyat* that has, until now, been called the *Kellion* style. However, it may be more appropriate to consider this a regional style of architecture that reflects the borrowed tradition of settlement design consistent between Kellia, Pherme and Scetis. The consistency with which monks traveled between the communities and the commonality of the physical landscape may explain the type of architecture selected and its use within the flat desert areas of the Delta. The Delta design of the monastic *manshubiya* is attested at a small site at the base of the Delta at the Monastery of Nahya and interestingly at the site of Mankaband in Asyut. It is tempting to consider that the Delta monks at Wadi Natrun and Pherme were the inspiration for this architectural style.

The general plan of a monastery which included a habitation included a large central hall. The dwelling was surrounded with a wall. The layout of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region.

The foundation story of Kellis is preserved in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* in which Amoun decided to leave Nitria because a building was too crowded. For it was desirable for monastic residence was in response to their desire to live among the brothers who wanted to live in a more isolated place. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region. The plan of the monastery at Kellis was different from that of other monasteries in the region.

The initial structures at Kellis were designed for one or two monks in the 5th century. Both Qal'at Hegira (QH) and Qal'at Bnasa (QB), the two most prominent locations in Kellis, contain structures that prove that monastic settlement in the region to the early 5th century. The central dwelling was located within a large courtyard or later joined to another residence with walls to form a single enclosure. An examination of settlement plans of Pherme makes a similar layout of dwellings as that found at Joby the Guide in Wadi Marout. Our survey work at Pherme in 2000 illustrates that the main habitats were planned initially as smaller structures, some of which still survive today, and then others were modified as the needs of the community changed.

¹ Anany 24, 11. It is clear that the residence of Amoun at Aboukhita is the Kellis.

² A. Galland, *La fin de l'Égypte antique* (Le Caire 1901), p. 102-103.

³ For a bibliography of previous work on the two great oases, visit the following links: the sites of Kellis and Pherme: H. H. Rowland et al., *Wadi Marout, Kellis and Pherme* (Le Caire 1901), p. 102-103; and the oases: D. Dorris, *The Oases of Egypt* (Le Caire 1998), p. 102-103.

Decoding a Decorative Scheme: the Church in the Tomb of Penehsy at Amarna in Middle Egypt

Gillian Pyke, London

The site of Amarna in Middle Egypt is best known as the capital built by the Eighteenth dynasty king Akhenaten, and occupied between about 1350 and 1330 BC. The city lasted only a generation before it was abandoned and the capital moved elsewhere.

During the lifetime of the city the royal courtiers prepared rock-cut tombs for themselves in the cliffs surrounding the crescent plain of Amarna. One of the most spacious and well appointed of the northern group of tombs is that of a certain Penehsy.¹ His titles indicate that he was a prominent figure of the time and his status is reflected both in the size and decoration of his tomb.

Like many of the tombs, that of Penehsy remains unfinished, abandoned when the court moved northwards upon the death of king Akhenaten. Parts of the Amarna plain were resettled during the Byzantine period,² when the area became the focus of Christian oc-

¹ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Amarna*, vol. 2. London 1905.

² W. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna*, London 1894, p. 6; K. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien. Text*, Leipzig 1897–1913, p. 126; Davies, *Rock Tombs II...*, pp. 1–4; H. Frankfort and J. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten. Part II. The North Suburb and the Desert Altars. The Excavations at Tell el-Amarna During the Seasons 1926–1932*, London 1933, pp. 66–71. J. Pendlebury, 'Preliminary Report on Excavations at Tell el-Amarnah 1930–1', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 17 (1931), p. 239; B. Kemp, 'Preliminary Report on the el-Amarna Survey, 1978', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 65 (1979), p. 6; M. Jones, 'The earliest Christian sites at Tell el-Amarna and Sheikh Said', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 77 (1991), pp. 129–144; B. Kemp, 'Amarna's Other Period', *Egyptian Archaeology*, 3 (1993), pp. 13–14; B. Kemp and S. Garfi, *A Survey of the Ancient City of el-Amarna*, London 1993, p. 45; B. Kemp, 'Work at Amarna', in: Anonymous, 'Editorial Foreword', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 80 (1994), pp. vii–x; B. Kemp, P. T. Nicholson and P. Rose, 'Fieldwork, 1999–2000: Sais, Memphis, Tell el-Amarna, Tell el-Amarna glass project, Qasr Ibrim', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 86 (2000), pp. 12–17; B. Kemp, 'Settlement and Landscape in the Amarna Area in the Late Roman Period', in: J. Faiers, *Late Roman Pottery at Amarna and Related Studies*, London 2005, pp. 41, 47–48; J. Faiers, 'Catalogue of Pottery from Other Late Roman Sites within the Study Area', in: J. Faiers, *Late Roman Pottery at Amarna and Related Studies*, London 2005, pp. 18–27; G. Pyke, 'Church Wall Paintings from Kom el-Nana', *Egyptian Archaeology*, 22 (2003), pp. 16–17.

cupation scattered around the margins of the plain, dated by pottery and other finds to the mid fifth to mid seventh centuries.³ The northernmost of these is the settlement in and around the north tombs and associated with the church inside the tomb of Panehsy.⁴

The conversion of the Eighteenth dynasty tomb into a church involved extensive re-modelling of both the architecture and decoration of the original structure.⁵ This paper will focus on the unusual decorative scheme of the church, tracing its development and considering the interpretation and significance of both its individual elements and the scheme as a whole.

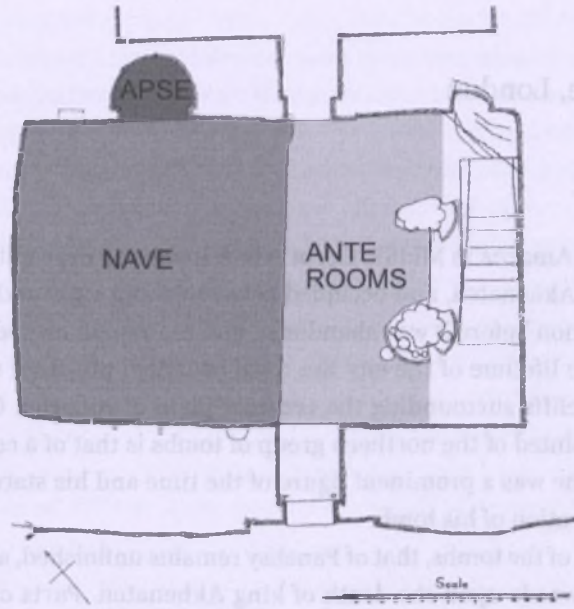


Fig. 1. Plan of church showing layout

The church was confined to the columned hall of the tomb, that is, the first room encountered on entry. A number of significant modifications were made in order to define the church architecturally so that it included the vital elements of an apse and nave, with an antechamber area between the entrance and nave. The area of the nave was enlarged so that the apse was centrally placed in its east wall, and to provide more room for the congre-

³ J. Faiers and B. Kemp, 'Dating the Sites in the Amarna Area', in: J. Faiers, *Late Roman Pottery at Amarna and Related Studies*, London 2005. p. 267.

⁴ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Amarna*, vols. 1-5. London, 1903-1908; Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-44.

⁵ Cf. G. Pyke, 'Survey of the Christian Church and Later Remains in the Tomb of Panehsy (No 6)', in: B. Kemp, 'Tell el-Amarna 2006-7', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 93 (2007), pp. 35-50; G. Pyke, 'A Christian Conversion: The Tomb of Panehsy at Amarna', *Egyptian Archaeology*, 32 (2008), pp. 8-10. G. Pyke, 'A wing and a prayer: the decorative schemes of the church in the rock-cut tomb of Panehsy at Amarna', *Eastern Christian Art* (forthcoming).

gation. The size of the church is such that it can be seen as intended for use by a large group rather than for individual worship.

The layout and architectural scheme of the church are relatively simple and represent a single construction event. The history of the decorative schemes is, however, more complex. It is no surprise that the focus of the decoration was the apse and it is here that it was possible to distinguish a sequence of four distinct decorative schemes and preparations for a fifth scheme that was never completed.

The first decorative scheme of the church is associated with its construction. It seems to have been extremely simple and rendered in bi-chrome: red and white. Elements of this scheme were retained throughout the life of the church, including the crosses on either side of the entrance passage, the arches framing the niches, the border at the base of the west wall and north extension of the nave and the cornice above the apse. It is now not clear whether the red paint in the northern extension to the nave was restricted to a red border, or covered the whole wall.

Traces within the apse suggest that it was predominantly white with simple red edging lines. There is no evidence as to whether there was a motif in the semi dome at this time as this plaster layer is not visible. The only complex decorative elements of this scheme that can still be detected are the large red *chi-rho* and possible *alpha-omega*⁶ on either side of the apse. The *chi-rho* monogram, comprising the first two Greek letters of the title 'Christ' is used as a symbol of Christ. The *alpha-omega* monogram, composed of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, is primarily used to symbolise Christ as the beginning and the end of life, as He appears in the Book of Revelations.⁷

The second decorative scheme represents a significant departure from the austerity of the first thanks to the introduction of relatively complex polychrome motifs on a thin plaster skim in the apse. The fact that the original scheme, including the monograms, was retained throughout the rest of the church suggests that it was still held in high regard by its patrons.

Unfortunately, the exact nature of this new scheme is now difficult to detect as it was almost completely obscured by later changes. The innovations included a new wide red band and blue and red *guilloche* band on the exterior of the arch of the apse, and an acanthus and pomegranate frieze on its underside. The lower interior of the apse remained white, but traces of painted decoration within the semi dome suggest that a large-scale motif was added here, possibly an earlier version of that of the third scheme.

The third decorative scheme is by far the most ambitious, and accounts for the majority of the decoration that is visible today within the church. The red-topped niches and the crosses in the entrance passage from the first decorative scheme were again retained,

⁶ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁷ Revelations 1: 8 and 11, 21:6 and 22: 13; L. de Franchia, 'Symbols in Coptic Art', *Coptic Encyclopedia*, New York 1991, pp. 2160–2163.

but the monograms were plastered over and the frieze repainted. The focus of the third scheme expands for the first time to include part of the east wall of the nave surrounding the apse, incorporating a number of new motifs. The majority of these images are relatively common within Coptic and wider Christian art. The overall effect that is achieved by the combination of these motifs, however, is somewhat unusual.

The decorative scheme is dominated by birds, the most frequently occurring image being the dove, two pairs depicted on the surround and within the apse itself. Doves have many meanings in Christian art but are especially known for representing the Holy Spirit (in Coptic art usually only in scenes of the Annunciation or Baptism), hope (especially when, as here, holding a leaf in reference to the story of Noah) and the human soul.⁸

BA dipinto⁹ at the contemporary monastery at Kom el-Nana a few kilometres to the south shows a pair of doves as the letters of the *alpha-omega* symbol either side of a cross. It is interesting to note that in the number-symbolism devised by Mark, disciple of the *gnostic* philosopher Valentinus, the dove is also equated with the *alpha-omega*, which in turn symbolises Christ.¹⁰ According to *gnostic* belief as recorded by Irenaeus, Theodotus and the gospel of Philip, the dove that descended to Jesus at his Baptism was Christ, the two elements becoming joined throughout the rest of his life.¹¹

A prominent and colourful avian image located on the upper part of the surround is the peacock, associated with immortality and the Resurrection. Its position and general



Fig. 2. Extent of the decoration of the apse and east wall in the third decorative scheme

⁸ S. Sauneron and J. Jacquet, *Les ermitages chrétiens du désert d'Esna*, vol 4, Cairo 1972, p. 74.

⁹ G. Pyke, *Painted Wall Plaster from the Church at the Monastic Site of Kom el-Nana (Tell el-Amarna, Middle Egypt)*, in preparation.

¹⁰ Franchia, *op. cit.*, p. 2161.

¹¹ G. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, London 1900, p. 371.

appearance are comparable to that of the pair of peacocks in a scene in the tomb of Theodosia at nearby Antinoopolis.¹² It would appear, however, that only one of these handsome creatures is depicted here, as there is no trace of a partner. The reason for this is unknown. It is possible to attribute the omission to a lack of comparable space on the south side of the apse, but this would pre-suppose a somewhat unlikely lack of planning or spatial awareness.

The lit pair of tall candles depicted immediately behind the upper pair of doves might be a reference to Christ, the illuminator of Man and the 'light of the world' according to the Gospel of John.¹³ A pair of candles can be used to signify the two natures of Christ: divine and human,¹⁴ a belief that was held by both *gnostics* and the Melkite church at the time that the decoration was painted, but not by the Coptic Orthodox church.

One of the strangest elements of the decorative scheme is the lack of human figures, the only example being located on the east wall to the south of the apse. He is at a relatively small scale and only his head, surrounded by a yellow nimbus, and shoulders now remain. Too little remains of the red-painted inscription to be of any help in identifying this figure, but his slightly peripheral location makes it unlikely that he is either Christ, an apostle or an Evangelist. It is perhaps more likely that he is a local saint, possibly the founder of the Christian community living in this area.

The undisputed focus of the decorative scheme is the large-scale figure within the semi dome, probably the same motif as was used in the second scheme. The remains of this figure indicate that it does not conform to images of Resurrection that might be expected in this location within a Coptic church of this date, that is: Christ enthroned or the empty cross. The unusual (and possibly controversial) nature of the motif is confirmed by the deliberate damage that it has suffered, the intention of which seems to have been to make it subject unidentifiable.

What remains of this creature is three pairs of outstretched wings with long flight feathers, the uppermost pair of which were repositioned, and a fanned tail. The two vertical broken areas to the south of the tail are probably the remains of short narrow legs, traces of the feathered upper parts of which are just about distinguishable. All these details add up to the identification of this image as representing some kind of fantastical bird-like creature, the special nature of which is further highlighted by the wreathed disc (also deliberately damaged) above its head.

The prominent splayed flight feathers, fanned tail, upright stance and brown colour of the creature suggest that it is likely to be based on an eagle. The eagle was an important

¹² D. Bénazeth, 'Les coutumes funéraires', in: *L'art copte en Égypte. 2000 ans de christianisme*, Institut du monde Arabe, Paris 2000, pp. 106–7.

¹³ John 8: 12, 9: 5 and 12: 46.

¹⁴ A. Steffler, *Symbols of Christian Faith*, Grand Rapids 2002, p. 8.

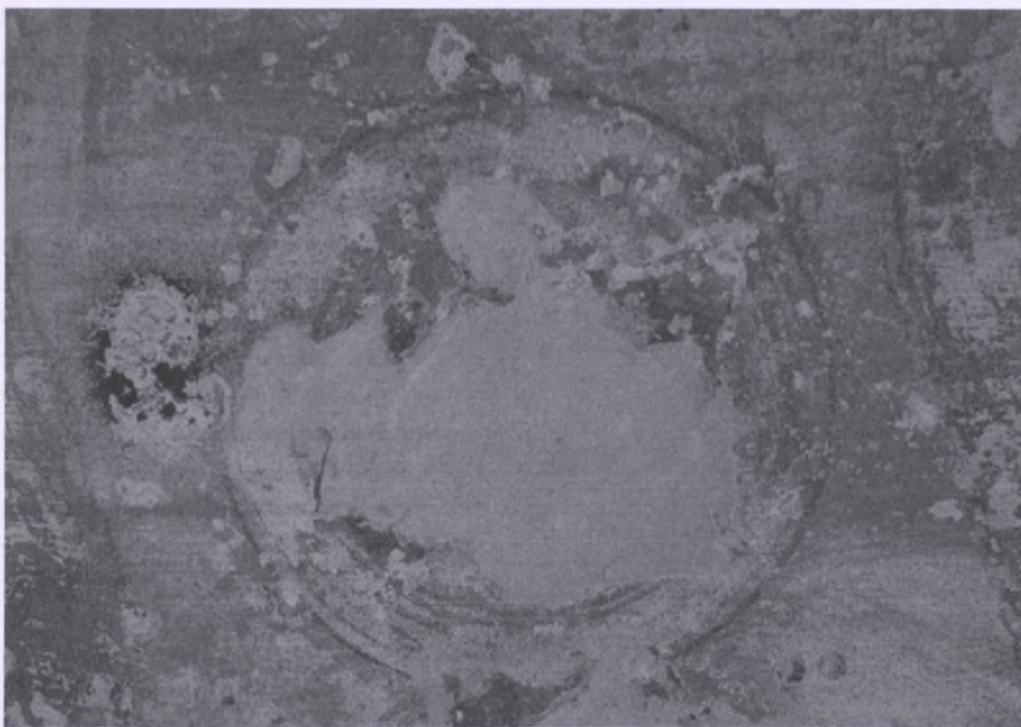


Fig. 3. Laurel wreath above the head of the creature

symbol of triumph (especially imperial triumph) in Roman art,¹⁵ a fine painted example of which was recently revealed by an American Research Center in Egypt conservation team in the Luxor temple, as yet unpublished. This eagle is located in a semi domed niche and is associated with a large triumphal wreath held in its claws.

The Roman eagle motif was later translated into the Christian artistic repertoire to symbolise Christ's triumph over death in the Resurrection.¹⁶ In Coptic art, eagles are usually shown with upright bodies and outspread wings, often in association with a circular wreath containing a cross or rosette, usually at the feet or around then neck of the bird.¹⁷ In the context of church architecture, they appear as a motif on carved friezes and niches, and a painted example is known from a chapel at the monastery of Bawit (chapel 32),¹⁸ they do not seem to have been considered a suitable image for the semi dome of the apse.

¹⁵ G. Gabra and M. Eaton-Krauss, *The Treasures of Coptic Art in the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo*, Cairo 2006, p. 182.

¹⁶ E. Lucchesi-Palli, 'Symbols in Coptic Art: Eagle', *Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, New York 1991, p. 2167.

¹⁷ For example: stela Berlin 4481: *Ägypten, Schätze aus dem Wüstensand, Kunst und Kultur der Christen am Nil*, ed. M. von Falck and F. Lichtwark, Wiesbaden 1996, p. 126; Relief Inv. No. 4619: Gabra and Eaton-Krauss, *Treasures...*, pp. 182–3.

¹⁸ J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouït*, Cairo 1916, pl. ix [lower].

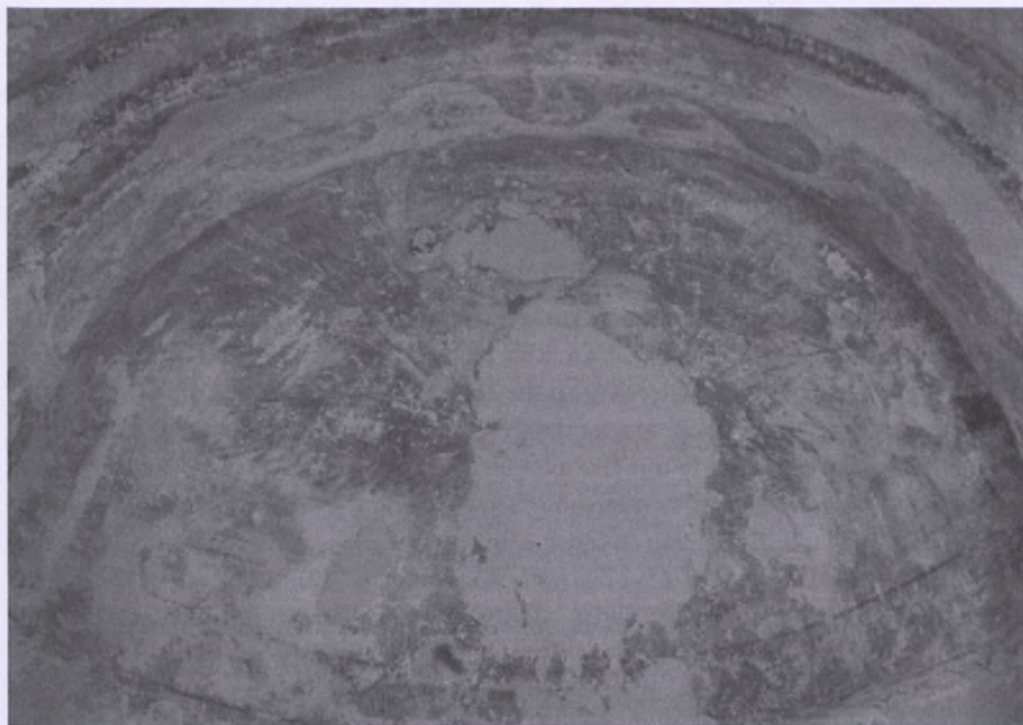


Fig. 4. Six-winged creature in the semi dome of the apse

Clue to the symbolic significance of a fantastic eagle in this context is perhaps to be found in its multiple wings, usually associated with seraphim. Four seraphim, the Tetramorph, are particularly associated with the enthroned Christ, as seen in the visions of Isaiah,¹⁹ Ezekiel²⁰ and John.²¹ These creatures or beasts had six wings that are described by Isaiah (6: 2) thus: "each one had six wings; with twain he covered his feet, and with the twain he did fly". In describing the wings, John (4: 8) adds: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within".

Neither the arrangement, nor the appearance of the wings (or for that matter any other aspect) of the image in the semi dome, match that of seraphim in general (at least as represented in Egyptian Christian art) or those that appeared in visions of the enthroned Christ specifically. The lack of a specific and clear symbolic meaning of the single element of the Tetramorph indicates that it must be rejected as the focus of the decorative scheme.

¹⁹ Ezekiel 1: 4-15.

²⁰ Isaiah 6: 1-3.

²¹ Revelations 4: 1-11.

The idiosyncratically positioned wreath above the head of the eagle bears a striking resemblance to a nimbus. If its destroyed central element was a cross,²² it would indicate that the image should be interpreted as Christ. This proposal invites a wealth of speculation. For example: the six wings might be considered a depiction of their movement at the moment of Resurrection; or as a means of enumerating the process, the number six being of great significance in this context in *gnostic* belief; or simply as a method of making the eagle unique.

The image of the eagle endured through further alterations to the scheme, in which an acanthus and pomegranate frieze and guilloche band were clumsily added below it (and around its feet), above a series of *faux* marble panels. The church was abandoned before the latter element could be plastered over, the keying marks remaining visible.

In conclusion, the development of the decoration of this church can be traced from a simple bi-chrome scheme to one that retained many original elements, but introduced a more complex set of motifs focussing on the apse and its surround. Most of these motifs are well-known in Christian art, but the predominance of birds especially doves, and almost complete absence of human figures is idiosyncratic. The rendering of the various motifs shows both artistic talent and a knowledge of contemporary conventions so any omissions were not due to a lack of ability or understanding. It seems clear that the relatively small number of images, all of which symbolise Christ and the Resurrection, were carefully selected to complement the unique primary motif, which can be seen as articulating their sum.

It can be speculated that the decorative scheme was an attempt to express specific and perhaps not entirely mainstream beliefs, possibly those of the lone human figure in the scheme. This might be the founder of the church and community, who perhaps framed his beliefs in terms of the natural world around him. The theme of Resurrection and special attention to the depiction of this individual could be used to argue for a funerary aspect to the church. While it is possible to find parallels for some elements within the complexities of *gnostic* belief, it is difficult at present to make any conclusions in this direction. It is hoped that further research will illuminate the meaning and significance of the decorative scheme of this church.

²² Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

Restoration of the Empire. A Search for a New Identity. Ethiopian Architecture in the Tenth–Fifteenth Centuries

Tomasz Sowa, Warsaw

The phenomenon of a state using artistic patronage as a political tool is universal. Regardless of the country, continent and culture, authorities use art to propagate certain ideas in society. Amongst all types of art, architecture has an exceptional function, in that in its forms, messages about new ideas and politics might be encoded. This trend may often be observed in European architecture, and the same thing happened in Ethiopia, in the age of cultural revival in the tenth century.

The analysis of the Ethiopian history of arts is exceptionally hindered by the consequences of the Islamic raid of Imam Gran and the thirty-years' war (1529–59), which devastated a large portion of the cultural achievements of Ethiopia. Most of the medieval monuments, as well as objects from the ancient Aksum period, were destroyed. In the face of the insufficient amount of both extant and published written sources, the preserved architectonic objects might be treated as a historical source from which one might try to read ideological content in order to comprehend the role of art in the Ethiopian state. In this discussion, architectonic objects will be treated as texts, except that they are edited with non-verbal means of expression.¹ Division into epochs in the history of Ethiopia can be marked by times of wars and crisis, which destroyed the world of culture and disturbed the continuity of Ethiopian statehood. If we furnish ourselves with the aid of terms drawn from the periodization of European history, we could call the period of existence of the Aksum state antiquity (sixth century BC - seventh century AD), while the moment when the Zagwe dynasty (ca. 940–1270) gained power should be treated as the beginning of the Middle Ages.

¹ Cf. J. Tromp, 'Aksumite Architecture and Church Building in the Ethiopian Highlands', *Eastern Christian Art in its Late Antique and Islamic Contexts*, 4 (2007), pp. 49–75.



Fig. 1. Lalibela. The new capital city of the Zagwe dynasty. Photo by J. Jeziorski

The history of architecture started in the Abyssinian region around the fifteenth century BC and its development commenced with, as in Europe, the erection of funeral buildings (mounds), sepulchral stelae and megaliths. Around the year 1000 BC Arabic settlers started to arrive from the region of what is today Yemen, and then created a trade colony on the African shore of the Red Sea. The oldest known stone building in Abyssinia was built in the sixth century BC, consisting of an Arab temple of the pre-Muslim cult in Yeha. The Yemeni colonists formed the Aksum state which, through acting as an agent in trade between India, Arabia and Rome, became a significant, local power. This country created the first architectural tradition in this region of Africa, as well as the first repertoire of artistic forms and monumental buildings.² The remains of palaces, grave chambers and sepulchral stelae of the Aksum rulers are still visible in the former ancient capital city.

Aksumite architecture adopted an exceptional artistic style due to technological difficulties caused to the builders by the low quality of mortar. In order to erect a several-story high palace, the builders had to reinforce the walls by putting horizontal strips of wood on their surface. These slats were placed longitudinally on both sides of the wall and joined together using transverse beams. Set at intervals, the wooden strips created horizontal lines on the façades of buildings which protruded beyond the face of the stone wall. The frames of the window- and door-openings were especially reinforced - the use of horizontal

² The tradition of stone architecture in Aksum may come from the region of the present-day Yemen. The excavations carried out in the temple in Mareb in Yemen point to the general similarity of the written and stone relics.



Fig. 2. Lalibela. The Bet Gijorgis church. Photo by T. Sowa

wooden elements, placed transversely to the wall, resulted in the fact that in every corner of the opening there protruded the end of a wooden beam. Monolithic stelae are characteristic of Aksumite buildings, placed near grave chambers of emperors. There are several of them in the city of Aksum and the highest of them is 37m tall. The source of the architecture of these objects is most probably the Egyptian obelisk, although their expression and function seems to be completely different. In contrast to Egyptian obelisks, the Aksumite stelae have designed façades in the form of multi-storey towers with imitations of windows and doors. They were, supposedly, the home for a soul or a tower that a soul used in order to climb into heaven. The fictional architecture of those stelae is the first example of imitating the wood-en-stone architecture of Aksumite palaces in buildings carved in solid rock.

The adoption of Christianity was an important event in the history of Aksum. In 331, the ancient predecessor of the contemporary Ethiopia became the second country in the world to accept Christianity as the state religion. Syrian three-naved churches became the source of the sacred Christian architecture of Aksum. According to local tradition, the first church erected in Ethiopia was the cathedral in Aksum, built between 535–40. It had five naves and an external colonnade. Excavations conducted in the nineteenth century in Jerusalem showed that the church built in 340 by Bishop Maximus on the Zion hill also had five naves and was surrounded with a colonnade. The correspondence between the sizes and architectural forms of these buildings indicates that the cathedral in Aksum could

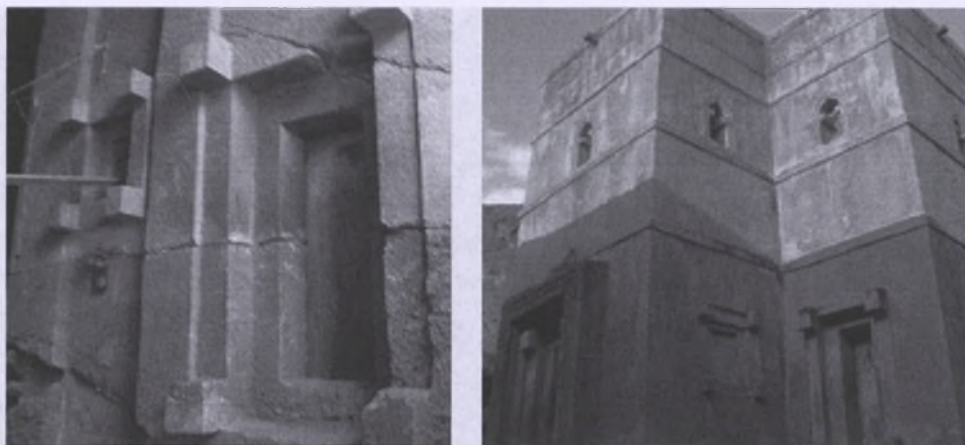


Fig. 3. Lalibela. The imitations of aksumian windows in stone. Photo by T. Sowa

have been an imitation of the church on the Zion hill in Jerusalem³. Unfortunately, neither church exists today. The Aksum cathedral was destroyed during the raid of Imam Gran.⁴

Aside from stone architecture, the building of rock-churches became a specific trend in Ethiopian architecture. In Ethiopia there are currently about 300 churches sculpted in mountain slopes. This tradition might presumably have been born in the time of Aksum. It may be assumed that the Egyptian tombs in the Nile valley are the source for such architecture, because it is certain that the first churches of that type were connected with funeral functions.⁵ The Ethiopian churches, regardless of the technique of building, were usually built on the plan of Early Christian Syrian basilica, in which three naves and an unseparated apse remain inscribed in the rectangular plan. It is stunning that this simple plan, quickly enriched in Europe and Byzantium with a transept and a separate apse, was used in an unchanged form in the sacred architecture of Ethiopia until the seventeenth century.

After the fall of the state of Aksum in the seventh century⁶, medieval Ethiopia inherited from its ancient predecessor a double capital: the Christian religion and the local tradition of stone building. One could suppose that the Zagwe dynasty, while seizing power and under-

³ M. Gervers, 'The Rehabilitation of The Zagwe Kings and the building of the Dabra Sina – Golgotha – Sellasie Complex in Lalibala', *Africana Bulletin*, 51 (2003), pp. 23–50.

⁴ The church standing at present in the place of the first cathedral was built in the seventeenth century.

⁵ C. Lepage, 'L'art du Xe au XVe siècle, des 'siècles obscures' aux 'siècles des lumieres'" in: *Etiopie Millénaire. Préhistoire et art religieux*, Paris 1975, p. 125.

⁶ The current research on liturgical books, the results of which have not yet been published, suggests that the Aksum state existed continuously from the accession to the throne of the Zagwe dynasty, even though its capital city has been depopulated and fallen into ruin. The Aksum state may have been subjected to a significant decentralization and cultural regression, but it still existed and the succession of power was continuous. However, we do not have the complete picture of history between the seventh and ninth century and we do not know any buildings from that period.

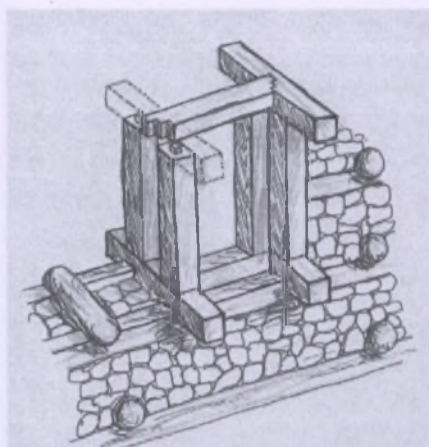


Fig. 4. The technique of building stone-wooden walls and the scheme of a window.

Picture by T. Sowa, based on D. Buxton

taking to consolidate the Ethiopian state, based its rule on the Church⁷. Apart from religion, culture became the element integrating and cementing the Zagwe state. The tenth century became, for Ethiopia, the age of cultural rebirth. The capital city of the Zagwe dynasty moved from Aksum a couple of hundred kilometres to the south, from the Tigray region to the mountainous Lasta region. The country of the Zagwe Dynasty had to face the problem of its identity. In order to maintain its connection with its great predecessor and its capital city in the ideological and visual sphere, medieval Ethiopia created a new cultural formation, still based on the tradition of the ancient country of Aksum. The medieval Ethiopian architects, while undertaking the theme of church architecture had to face the problem of expressing in this theme the idea of re-

capturing the splendor of the ancient state of Aksum. In effect they managed to merge two different languages: they integrated the plan and decorations of an Early Christian Syrian basilica with the architecture of an Aksumite palace. In sacred buildings they made a harmonious synthesis of local and foreign elements.

According to the current state of research, the oldest medieval church that is preserved today, is the monastery Debre Damo from the ninth to the eleventh century. It is the first example of an antique-styled, wooden-stone building constructed using techniques analogous to those in ancient Aksumite palaces. Given the lack of other preserved buildings, it would seem that this church began the process of the rebirth of architecture in the Abyssinian region. In comparison to Aksumite buildings, the only difference is the thickness of the walls of the later buildings, a better mortar allowing the building of thinner walls. A monument of high quality is the Yemrehanna Krestos church from the twelfth century⁸, built inside a cave. It is a representative building with an excellent design of the facades and interior. The wooden strips on the exterior façade are smaller than those in the Aksumite prototypes. The angular risalits are reminiscent of the towers of the Aksumite palaces, but they do not disturb the regular plan of the basilican inside of the church. Another church, Madhane Alam from the thirteenth

⁷ The dynasty has founded a large number of churches, including the extensive complex of churches in Lalibela.

⁸ The dating has been established by Ewa Balicka-Witakowska on the basis of inscriptions placed on the mural paintings. Cf. E. Balicka-Witakowska, M. Gervers, "The Church of Yemrahanna Krestos and its wall-painting. A preliminary Report", *Africana Bulletin*, 49 (2001), pp. 9–48.

century⁹, shows the progressive reduction of the amount of wood used for the construction of the walls. However, in all the churches listed above the typical rich plasticity of the façades is visible, which is the result of using alternate wood and stone strips in the construction of walls and the use of characteristic frames for doors and windows.

The rulers of the Zagwe dynasty initiated the construction of the religious centre in Lalibela. The technique according to which the churches in Lalibela were built differs completely from the examples of medieval sacred architecture commented upon up until now; the churches in Lalibela were hewn out of volcanic tuff. In order to obtain a rock fragment from which the church was to be constructed, firstly the top layer of soil was removed in the desired place. Secondly, ditches were carved out in the ground that cut the cubical block from the surrounding rock. The separated rock fragment

was transformed into a church by preparing its façades and drilling its interior to form a basilica with galleries. The technique used is innovative, there were no buildings constructed in a similar way in the ancient Aksum. But this technique still draws from previous experience: in Aksum there were sculpted grave chambers of the emperors and monolithic sepulchral stelae which had designed façades. The churches in Lalibela are grouped into two sets placed on the opposite banks of the Jordan stream. The church of St. George (Bet Gijorgis) which is beyond the two groups of churches is the only centrally planned building. The interior organisation of the rest of the churches refers to the three-naved Syrian basilica. The interesting element is the design of the church façades. Because the buildings were made from stone, there was no structural justification for creating horizontal rustication lines or windows with the characteristic angles. Those elements were imitated in stone during the building process, giving the churches in Lalibela an appearance similar to the palaces of Aksum.

The Bet Emanuel church has the best designed façade of all the Lalibelan churches. The surface of the whole façade, as well as the pilasters, is “disrupted” by the horizontal rustication lines and prominent cornices; the window and door openings have an offset design with characteristic angles. The inside of the church is arranged on the plan of a pseudo-basilica with galleries. The main nave is surrounded by a two-storey line of Aksumite windows. The fact that the façade of no other church of Lalibela presents such



Fig. 5. Lalibela. The Bet Emanuel church, condition from year 2002.

Photo by T. Sowa

⁹ E. Balicka-Witakowska 'The wall paintings in the church of Madhane Alam near Lalibela', *Africana Bulletin*, 49 (2001), pp. 9–29.



Fig. 6. Lalibela. The Bet Medhane Alem church. Photo by T. Sowa

a rich facture and carefully designed light-and-shadow effects indicates that in the following realizations architects reduced the elements of the Aksumite style, leaving flat designed façades with small cornices. The element that remains unchanged is the characteristic framing of window and door openings.

The building with a special position is the Bet Medahne Alem church (The Church of the Savior of the World). It is the biggest monolithic church in the world, about 33.5 m in length and 23.5 m in width. Outside it is surrounded by a colonnade, which appears to be a distant echo of Greek temple architecture. However, this church has a much closer and direct prototype: it is a replica of the first cathedral Maryam Seyon in Aksum, which is no longer extant. In this symbolic way the most important church of Aksum found itself in the new capital city in Lalibela.¹⁰ The architecture of the neighboring churches of the complex recalling the palaces of Aksum, could therefore create an impression of an ideologically and architectonically stylized copy of the ancient capital city. The second meaning of this complex is also worth mentioning, for the churches of Lalibela are dedicated to places and figures connected with biblical history, they are an ideological “copy” of Jerusalem, functioning until now as a Calvary. The new capital city of Ethiopia became at the same time the “new Aksum” and the “new Jerusalem”, linking the importance of the centre of power with the main centre of religion.

Taking into account the technique used and the antique-styled architectonic costume, the Lalibelan complex of churches is without doubt a precedent in the whole range of Ethiopian architectural history. One could wonder if the use of Aksumite style in the Middle

¹⁰ M. Gervers ‘The Rehabilitation of The Zagwe Kings and the building of the Dabra Sina – Golgotha – Sellasie Complex in Lalibala’, *Africana Bulletin*, 51 (2003), pp. 23–50.

Ages was a symptom of backwardness, or a natural continuation of an uninterrupted process of development¹¹. Although we can not give a certain answer to this question, the use of an antique-styled architectural costume in medieval architecture seems to have a clear goal. Art sometimes goes back to the forms used in the past times, but whenever it does so, it is for a particular reason. In Lalibela we deal with the phenomenon of historicism¹² – in other words, the conscious feeding on history, the realized achievements of the former culture, taking place somewhere else (in the Tigray region) and at other time (several hundred years before). In medieval Ethiopia, during a period lasting a few hundred years, Aksumite antiquity played a similar role to Graeco-Roman antiquity in Europe, it was the only ideal, the only epoch that could be related to and browsed in search of a repertoire of artistic forms. By building the complex in Lalibela medieval Ethiopia created its own architectural tradition, based on its own, local antiquity. The medieval architects did not create a new style, but only followed their great predecessors, their own past “golden age”.

Architecture has an exceptional significance in the world of politics, for it visualizes the political regime and has the power of “making” the nation – renovating, after a period of regression, pride and people’s faith in their own country. There has already occurred a comparable precedent in the cultural history of Africa – the pyramids of the Fourth dynasty in Giza, which were built once the Egyptian nation was founded and nobody repeated this achievement thereafter. In Lalibela a similar building fervor can be seen in the newly integrated Ethiopian state – a great political and religious vision that united the nation. Architecture can serve as a political message, it might be used for expressing ideas, by translating them into a special language of architectural forms. In Lalibela it is the idea of the new, reborn state of Aksum. In this sense the medieval Ethiopian architecture, being a form of performance of the past, shows the nation-building process. The Ethiopian rulers recreated the country of their dreams, in which Lalibela becomes the symbol of the reborn kingdom, a political manifesto, a testimony to the power and faith of the rulers of the Zagwe dynasty. The medieval epoch draws from the ancient myth of Aksum. In the tenth century it gains its own face and finds its own architectural language, following the patterns of the ancient Aksum buildings. Ethiopia gains its own identity, it is the new Aksum, just as many of the European countries found themselves to be the new Rome. We can see that medieval Ethiopia is a self-conscious country, knowing its history and drawing from its experience. This consciousness and integrity which started in the Middle Ages denotes a civilization. That is why we can speak of a continuous civilizing process which takes place in Abyssinia until today, second next to the ancient Egypt such a long-lasting culture in Africa.

Translation: N. Augustynowicz, M. Sowa

¹¹ The results of current research on medieval manuscripts, and dating the extant churches may bring the answer to this question closer.

¹² It is indicated by the deliberate imitation of the characteristics of the Aksumite stone-wooden buildings in the monolithic churches erected in Lalibela and neighboring towns.

Selected Motifs of Ethiopian Iconography

Aneta Pawłowska, Łódź

Ethiopian cultural consciousness and its art is shaped to a large extent by a number of factors. First of all is the African origin of "the people who live on the Horn of Africa, which no matter how different and diverse these people are, they are united by the links felt by them as a community of common interests and tradition and which is described and felt by the explorers from outside world. It is this community of similar appearance of the people – who are beautiful, slender, with almond shaped eyes". The second strong force uniting them is their Christian religion in the eastern, orthodox, Monophysitic mode². Until 1974 the church had a predominant influence on the social, political and cultural life of the whole country. It is also very important to mention the long tradition of the State of Ethiopia as an independent country, as well as the fight in its defense.

The distinction of the Abyssinian Highland culture from that of the other states of the sub-Saharan region is testified by the long existence of writing, and the well-developed art of painting, whereas for the most other parts of Africa, sculpture remained the predominant technique. Although the ancient state of Aksum, today's Ethiopia unlike Egypt and Maghreb states, was never part of the Roman empire, it did receive the strong cultural influence of the Mediterranean region. These cultural contacts soon brought about the acceptance of the Christian faith, which at first resulted in the development of the Aksum state and later Ethiopia emerged from among the surrounding bordering cultures: Arabic and Black African. During the late antique period Ethiopia received not only a set of religious beliefs but also a Christian cultural package, including sacred texts, literary gems, the calendar of the Mediterranean world, and the use of specific visual images to symbolize theological truths.

¹ *Róg Afryki*, ed. J. Mantel-Niećko, M. Ząbek, Warszawa 1999, p. 11.

² K. P. Błażewicz, 'Ethiopian Monasticism', *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne*, 12 (1999), no. 2, pp. 31-44.

In spite of her isolation on the African continent, the state of Ethiopia still kept vivid contacts over the ages with the Byzantium, Armenia, Portugal and India. The African origin of her citizens, as well as those close cultural contacts left a durable and lasting mark on the art of Ethiopia. Though Christianity came to Ethiopia in the early fourth century, there are virtually no existing Ethiopian paintings prior to the thirteenth century. The Ethiopians translated the Bible into the country's classical (and ecclesiastical language) Ge'ez, and copied the illustrations from the religious manuscripts they encountered. Some of this copying was done in Jerusalem, where the Ethiopian community in the early fourteenth century had a scriptorium for the production of manuscripts, but most would have been carried out in the country itself. The development of Christian painting reflects the various forms of contact — pilgrimages to Jerusalem, missionary work, trade—between Ethiopia and the worlds of Christianity, East and West, of Islam and the Far East³.

Ethiopian painters primarily copied the iconography of their models, which included illustrations in Greek, Coptic and Arabic manuscripts, icons, pictures by Western European painters, and prints, but they always reduced the representation to its essence. The Ethiopian artists, when copying foreign models, invariably transformed them. By emphasising the features which they felt were important, and by omitting details that appeared to them irrelevant, they "Ethiopianised" such works almost out of all recognition. Sometimes artists combined elements of different models in one painting or transformed a scriptural subject in terms of the indigenous oral tradition, and they always translated the models into their own local style. Other features of these works are that all saints are depicted in light colours and that the figures and themes are explained by captions.

The earliest Ethiopian paintings, are dated from Medieval Times, unfortunately no paintings have survived from the Aksumite period (c. first to tenth centuries AD)⁴. Among the better-preserved examples of the earliest painting are manuscript illustrations, especially Gospel Books from the late thirteenth and fourteenth century, influenced by the illustrations in Greek Gospels. Another important source of inspiration at that time was contemporary or even earlier Byzantine painting, mediated by the Christian art of Coptic Egypt, Nubia, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Armenia⁵.

The manuscripts of the fourteenth century usually begin with canon tables, which end with the *Fountain of Life*. Each Gospel opens with a portrait of an Evangelist, either seated or standing, and there are illustrations, varying in number, with the scenes of the Life of Jesus Christ. One of the most highly recognisable of fourteenth century Gospel Books from

³ O. A. Jäger, L. 'Deiningen-Englhart, 'Some Notes on Illuminations of Manuscripts in Ethiopia', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 17 (1961), pp. 45–57.

⁴ First known illuminated Ethiopian manuscript *The Gospel* abby Gerimy (10th/11th century with boards of canons very close to Armenian works from end of 10th century). The existence this manuscript signals among others, D. H. Buxton, *The Abyssinians*, London 1970, p. 137.

⁵ E. Balicka-Witakowska, *La Crucifixion sans Crucifixe dans l'art éthiopen*, Warszawa-Wiesbaden 1997, pp. 5–19.

French Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris is limited to three illustrations of symbolic character, apart from the canon tables and portraits of the Evangelists. In the *Crucifixion* depicted in an architectural scenery painting, the bare cross (Golgotha Cross) stands at the centre as a symbol of Christ's victory over death. This depiction is based on the Palestinian predecessors, but the Ethiopian rendering also diverges from the Palestinian models: the Christ medallion at the point of intersection is replaced by the *Sacrificial Lamb* (John 1:29) in the tympanum. The sun and moon as ancient symbols of power, placed above god-like rulers, are a legacy of the Early Christian iconography (Fig. 1).

Typical stylistic features of book and wall painting were: frontal, hieratic representation of figures, which seem flat and without volume and are often reduced to geometrical forms, and a monochrome background. Pictures, were in some instances charmingly geometrical, boldly disregarded the laws of visual proportion. An even more characteristic aspect of Ethiopian stylisation, then and later, was that Biblical personalities, and especially the good ones, had to be depicted in full face, with two eyes visible, while the evil ones were generally depicted in profile, with one eye visible only. This was, it should be emphasised, by no means, however, a hard and fast rule, for there were often many exceptions. Paintings also lacked any shading, let alone perspective.

The basic colours in manuscript illumination are predominantly red, green, blue and yellow ; with gold only exceptionally. Pigments as well as ink were in many cases made from local stone, earth, plants, and especially flowers. The use of imported paints nevertheless in due course became increasingly common in the more important settlements.

From the time of the Muslim Arab invasions and their capture and rule over the Arabian Peninsula and Northern Africa in the seventh century AD, the Christians in Ethiopia began to live in full isolation. In the twelfth century Emperor Lalibela⁶ of the Zagub dynasty withdrew to the Lasta Mountains, where around Lake Tegra he constructed monumental



Fig. 1. Crucifixion, Gospel's Book, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, parchment, fourteenth century

⁶ Lalibela, reigned from 1167 until 1207.

monasteries which were virtually carved out of the rocks⁷. Even today they remain one of the most frequently visited and most popular places in Ethiopia. The fifteenth century, especially during the rule of Zar'a Yā'eqob (reg. 1434–68), and the beginning of the sixteenth century, under the rule of Lebna Dengal (reg. 1508–40), were periods of strong central power and flourishing art. This period is known as “the golden era of Ethiopian Middle Ages”⁸.

Jules Leroy, one of the first scholars to study Ethiopian art from the artistic point of view, was struck by a great improvement in standards of taste and a high level of accomplishment in technique. If the earlier works, according to him, were “lacking in the qualities that made up a genuine work of art”⁹, those of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century showed a refined concept of aesthetics.

Iconography and style in painting were enriched by new influences, which were absorbed and adapted differently by different scriptoria. The changes were a result of increasing contacts between Ethiopia and Western Europe in the fifteenth century¹⁰. There is documentary evidence of the work of three European painters: the Venetians Nicolo Brancalone (Brancalone; in Ethiopia from 1480 to 1520) and Gregorio Bicini, and the Portuguese Lazaro di Andrade Andrade (in Ethiopia from 1520), all of whom had arrived with European artisans at the ruler's court¹¹. Some of Brancalone's works in monasteries and churches in Gojam have been identified through signatures, which is a complete novelty for Ethiopian art.

The influence of West European painters is evident in the replacement of frontal by *en trois quarts* views, in a pronounced corporeality in the figures and in attempts to render light and shade and to give more volume to folds in clothing¹². More significant, however, are iconographic innovations that can be traced back to European painters and foreign models. The subject of the Trinity, popular in Ethiopia in the form of three identical seated men, was probably first depicted there by European painters at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Another type of devotional image was influenced by a Flemish painting of the sixteenth century, *Ecce Homo* (John 19:5), which shows the figure of Christ crowned with thorns and giv-

⁷ Cf. G. Gerster, *Churches in Rock: Early Christian Art*, London 1970.

⁸ A. Bartnicki, J. Mantel-Niecko, *Historia Etiopii*, Wrocław 1987, pp. 103–104.

⁹ J. Leroy, *Ethiopian Painting*, London, 1964, p. 22.

¹⁰ The Portuguese military collaboration with the Christian Ethiopians served their own strategic interests in their regional rivalry with the Ottoman Turks for control of the trade routes in the Red Sea and the north-western sector of the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese rulers, together with the Pope in Rome and the head of the Company of Jesus, had the additional intention of establishing a mission in Ethiopia to encourage the population to switch from their Orthodox faith to Catholicism – an intention that made sense in the light of the Counter-Reformation concerns in Southern Europe. In 1626, the Catholic Patriarch Afonso Mendes imposed a number of changes on the ancestral religious practices of the Ethiopians. Social unrest and civil war followed and Susneyos was forced to resign. His son Fasiladas, who succeeded him, rejected Catholicism upon his accession to the throne and, in 1633, expelled or killed all Jesuit missionaries. Bartnicki, Mantel-Niecko, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–103, 132.

¹¹ M. E. Heldman, ‘Creating Religious Art: The Status of Artisans on Highland Christian Ethiopia’, *Aethiopica*, 1 (1998), p. 131–147.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 138–142.

ing a blessing; it may have been brought into the country or painted in Ethiopia by a European (di Andrade). This painting was called *Kwer'ete re'esu* ("The striking of his head" is a paraphrase of Matthew 27:30 and Mark 15:19) and was much venerated; it was taken on military campaigns and adopted by Gondarine kings as their imperial Palladium¹³. Ethiopian artists used it as a model, and replicas were repeatedly copied with variations, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries¹⁴ (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Christ Crowned with Thorns, „Homiliary in honour of the Archangel Michael”, parchment, after 1730, Gondar (?), Church of the Trinity in Azbi

The iconography of the Virgin, much revered as *Theotokos* (Mother of God), was also enriched by new variants in the fifteenth century. Most representations from the fourteenth century were based on variations of the principal Virgin type, known as *Hodegetria* (The Guiding One), in which the Child may sit on the left or the right arm of the enthroned Virgin¹⁵. Most examples, of all dates, show two flanking angels, whose presence is intended to emphasize the royal dignity of the Mother of God. By the early fourteenth century a Greek influence was detectable in allusions to the type of the Virgin known as *Eleousa* (Merciful). Works based on Italian Renaissance painting include those in which the Virgin is shown crowned or holding a flower in her hand, and the Child is naked or playing with a tame bird. The type of the *Virgin Breast Feeding the Infant Child* seems to have been adopted only in the mid-fifteenth century, as a result of Western influences¹⁶. The main reason for the radical change of the type of Madonna in later centuries was probably the introduction by the Jesuit missionaries of the so-called "Virgin of St. Luc" at the beginning of the seventeenth

¹³ *African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, eds. R. Grierson, M. E. Heldman, New Haven, 1993, p. 284, cat. no. 111.

¹⁴ See further: S. Chojnacki, 'Flemish Painting and its Ethiopian copy', *Äthiopistische Forschungen*, 26 (1988), pp. 51-73 and S. Chojnacki, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting: Indigenous Developments, the Influence of Foreign Models and their Adaptations from the 13th to the 19th Century*, Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 385-398.

¹⁵ S. Chojnacki, 'Notes on a Lesser-known Marian Iconography in 13th and 14th century Ethiopian Painting', *Aethiopica*, 5 (2002), pp. 42-66.

¹⁶ See further: M. E. Heldman, 'Frē Seyon: A Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Painter', *African Arts*, 31, (1998), nr. 4, pp. 48-55, 90, [special issue: *Authorship in African Art*, Part 1].

century¹⁷. This became so popular that it has monopolised practically all representations of the Holy Virgin in Ethiopian art, and possibly contributed to the monotony of her iconography in the last two centuries of its development.

All these influences are particularly noticeable in panel painting, newly established in Ethiopia in the fifteenth century and probably received from the West.

The Virgin was depicted especially often, on single panels, diptychs and triptychs, after the institutionalizing of the Marian cult by Emperor Zar´a Yā´eqob¹⁸. The painted panel is known in all Oriental Churches as an icon, a devotional image, before which prayers are offered to the saints it depicts. The icons are also a subject of the veneration for believers¹⁹. Icons have a liturgical function, during the offices, the Eucharistic liturgy as well as during festival procession. Indeed, in Ethiopia, devotion to Mary had always played a significant role. King Zar´a Yā´eqob insisted on the presence of a portrait of Mary during Mass, and supported a system of courtly art patronage which led to the production of an increasingly large number of Marian icons, some of which were done in tempera on gesso wood panels by the talented monk Frē Seyon. The path to the modern recovery of the identity of this fifteenth century Ethiopian painter and the reconstruction of his oeuvre begins with his signature placed within an inscription painted upon a very large panel painting in the church of Saint Stephen at the monastery of Dāgā Estifānos at Lake Tānā. The note provides a securely dated period for the panel painting²⁰, as well as the identity of the painter, which is exceptional. Ethiopian painters, like artists elsewhere in Christendom in at that time, worked essentially in the service of God, and for the most part would have felt it presumptuous to sign their paintings. Only a few painters, such as Frē Seyon or Nicolo Brancaloneo²¹ did, however, record their identity on their pictures.

The scriptoria around Lake Tānā seem to have assimilated not only Greek and Western but also Armenian and possibly Indian-Islamic and even Japanese influences, but due to the thematic limitation of the conference, I will not investigate this subject here.

Two further stylistic traditions, which can be distinguished in Tigray and Eritrea, were connected with two religious orders active there and which developed during the second half of the fifteenth century. The Gunda Gundé style took its name from the site of the most important find, the monastery of Debre Gerzen in Gunda Gundé (Tigray), a monastery of the Estifānos (Estifanos; Stephanite) community. This rather heterogeneous style, documented

¹⁷ According to U. M. de Villard, 'La Madonna di S. Maria Maggiore e l'illustrazione dei Miracoli di Maria in Abissinia', *Annali Laterabensi*, 11 (1947), pp. 9-90; the Santa Maria Maggiore image, was introduced by the Jesuits in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Cf: <http://pwp.netcabo.pt/patrimonio.sg/ sitebuild/art.htm>.

¹⁸ Heldman, 'Frē Seyon: A Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Painter'..., pp. 52-53.

¹⁹ See further: Ch. Chaillot, 'Veneration of Icons in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church', *Orbis Aethiopicus*, 10 (2007), pp. 254-263.

²⁰ Though the period of the abbacy of Yeshaq of Dāgā is unknown, Zar´a Yā´eqob reigned from 1434 to 1468. Cf. Heldman, 'Frē Seyon: A Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Painter'..., pp. 50-51.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 55.

primarily in manuscript illustrations, developed before the fifteenth century and continued until the middle of sixteenth century. Among its characteristics are round faces with high foreheads and elongated eyes, possibly derived from Islamic or Armenian influences, and a wealth of geometric ornament (triangles, zigzags) covering the garments of the saints. The second style is linked to the Ewostatewos (Ēwostātēwos) Order, of which the most important centre was the monastery of Dabra Māryām in Kohayen in Eritrea, where the Psalter made for the local governor Belin Segged, was probably produced in 1476-7 (today in French Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris as MS d'Abbadie 105). The 33 miniatures show mounted saints and the two biblical kings *David and Solomon*, as well as scenes of the *Passion* and depictions of the *Virgin*, *Apostles* and *Evangelists*. The biblical kings are dressed like the contemporary rulers, and their status symbols (headdress, ear pegs) are shown in elaborate detail. In *David Playing the Harp*, the harp is in the form of an Ethiopian *begena* (*baganā*). The kings are followed by a court official with the sunshade reserved for kings, and a fly-whisk, also a sign of rank. Many religious paintings reflect the hierarchical social structure in iconography and style, the size of the figures depending on their importance and rank, not on the rules of perspective. Some of the models for this Psalter were probably of Byzantine, possibly Syrio-Palestinian origin; others seem to have been popular western European prints. The three-quarter view and indications of movement are characteristic of this time. However, the figures are two-dimensional, and the drapery folds are decorative rather than naturalistic²².

Other important subjects which developed in panel paintings on wood in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century were, the aforementioned *Crucifixion*, the *Twelve Apostles* and the saints. The saints, who are numerous and venerated with fervor in Ethiopia, are form a kind of link between the Christian-Oriental superstructure and the animistic-Cushitic foundation. At the same time, their vitae are full of archetypal elements which are to be found all over the world and have been recounted again and again since time immemorial. General motifs are mixed with typically African ones. Most notably were knight-saints often depicted as mounted saints, such as Tewodros (Theodore) and Merkorewos (Mercury), and St George who is the symbolic representation of Good defeating Evil²³. From the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, the symbolic representation of the *Resurrection* also appeared, specifically the *Descent into Limbo*.

²² M. E. Heldman, 'An Ewostathian Style and the Gunda Gunde Style in Fifteenth-century Ethiopian Manuscript Illumination', *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the History of Ethiopian Art*, London 1986, pp. 5-14, 135-139.

²³ From the seventeenth century onwards, Tekle Haymanot, along with the ascetic saint Gebre Menfes Keddus, enjoyed growing popularity assuming in the eighteenth century a new iconographic form, which continues to endure. Tekle Haymanot is depicted with three pairs of wings and standing on one leg, the other leg, so legend tells, having withered through his rigid stance at prayer, and Gebre Menfes Keddus appears in the desert, surrounded by lions and leopards. Abba Samuel of Waldeba, for example, a hermit from the time of Emperor Dawit (1380-1412) is generally shown riding on a lion. Betre Maryam commands a leopard not to attack anyone and to go away. See: E. Hein, B. Kleidt, *Ethiopia - Christian Africa: Art, Churches and Culture*, Ratingen 1999, pp. 51-54.

The most prominent scholar of Polish origin, Stanislaw Chojnacki, proposed the term First Shoan Period (by analogy with the accepted period, namely the Gondarine) for this era in art²⁴. The cultural flowering of this period came to an end in 1527–1543, when Christian Ethiopia was devastated by the Muslim Imam of Harar, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Gazi (1506–1543), called by the Ethiopians Grāñ (the Left-handed), and many churches, monasteries and manuscripts were destroyed.

Ethiopian painting evolved significantly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the seventeenth century a homogenous style gradually evolved and, during the second half of the century, took the form of First Gondarian Style. These witnessed the foundation and growth of the city of Gondar, which became the capital of the realm in 1636, during the reign of Emperor Fasiladas. The activity of the Gondarian artists would perhaps have remained limited as regards the reproduction of iconographic characteristics according to Eastern Christianity, if not for the external influences which, over time, brought various changes.

At the beginning of eighteenth century a new style determined an evolution in the figurative style of Gondarian painters. Artists attempted to achieve three-dimensionality by light-and-shade effects and by folds of drapery, although they stopped short of striving for an illusion of space, and the saints were dressed exactly like the nobility in brocade and velvet garments. The background was no longer monochrome but painted in tones of yellow, red and green. Second Gondarian art tended moreover to have richer, deeper and more sombre colours with the enrichment of tones, of a more naturalistic quality than were earlier in use, and employed a more extensive variety of shades. Increasingly, schematically drawn churches and buildings, recalling the castles of Gondar, characterized the locality of an event, and elements of a landscape suggested Lake Tānā and its islands. Trees were represented only if they had symbolic meaning or served to articulate space; no true landscape painting emerged. One may also distinguish the Eastern tradition from as far away as the Indian Ocean, Moghul's India—especially in the refined quality of the decoration of clothes and accessories or in the shading of the face which is painted synthetically²⁵.

Personalities depicted on icon, miniatures and murals included not only saints, the Virgin Mary and Christ but also the donors of paintings; who were often shown in a prostrate, and subordinate, position at the foot of the work or standing below the figure of a saint with their arms crossed before the breast. These traditional gestures of submission and modesty echoed those performed in front of rulers. Initially, most donors were themselves rulers such as the fearsome Queen Mentewwāb²⁶ in the church of Nārgā Sellase (eighteenth

²⁴ S. Chojnacki, 'Notes on Art in Ethiopia the fifteenth and Early sixteenth Century', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 8 (1970), pp. 21–22.

²⁵ Cf. S. Chojnacki, 'New Aspects of India's Influence on the Art and culture of Ethiopia', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici. Nuova serie*, 2 (2003), pp. 5–21.

²⁶ Empress Mentewwāb was one of the country's most renowned female rulers, who served as Regent first for her son, and later for her grandson.

century)²⁷ or Emperors Iyasu I. Later they were also nobles and clerics. The most important motifs on the doors are the armed archangels (Michael and Gabriel, or Raphael and Uriel), the sanctuary guardians. The winged heads of angels, a popular motif of the Second Gondarian style, were inspired by Italian Baroque painting.

Paintings in Gondarian times tended to be both “Ethiopianised”, and secularized. We thus see representations of typical Ethiopian clothing, hair-styles, and crowns; horse and mule decorations; spears, shields and other weapons (including seventeenth century muskets anachronistically carried by the Pharaoh’s soldiers seen drowning frantically in the Red Sea!); drinking, cooking and other similar vessels. Agriculture is depicted with typical zebu cattle, and with oxen pulling the typical Ethiopian plough. All this, it should be emphasised, is invaluable for the economic and social historian no less than the art historian, as it gives us invaluable glimpses into Ethiopian life of the past. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries scenes from the lives of saints were common; new themes included the illustration of the martyrdom of St George. Legends and other themes, such as the *Flight into Egypt*, had been given actuality by the inclusion of genre elements as early as the seventeenth century; this tendency grew more pronounced from the eighteenth century, with the result that the paintings acquired a narrative aspect²⁸.

While the First Gondarian style retained the linearity of earlier stylistic traditions, particularly in Tigray, the Second Gondarian style showed features of an ostentatiously ceremonial court style. Although it shows an obvious orientalising of taste — which is underlined by the preciousness of dyed fabric, shown in all its exquisiteness without any consideration for a realistic rendering of the folds — the whole still belongs to the Ethiopian tradition of race depiction, with its typically still, huge eyes, bull-like neck and bushy head of hair, traits of the local population.

From the nineteenth century onwards, religious themes were supplemented by historical details, such as portraits of rulers, battle scenes, hunts and banquets. At the beginning of the twentieth century painters, especially from Gondar and Gojam, were paintings for churches, they started to produce large canvases for sale to foreigners. Many features of these popular paintings are derived from traditional scriptoria techniques. From the 1920s, traditional paintings began to be produced in serial runs in commercial studios and also, from 1931, at the newly founded Empress Menen Handicraft School in Addis Ababa²⁹ (Fig. 3).

²⁷ M. Di Salvo, O. Raineri, S. Chojnacki, *Churches of Ethiopia: The Monastery of Narga Sellase*, Skira 1999.

²⁸ Cf. R. Pankhurst, ‘Secular Themes in Ethiopian Ecclesiastical Manuscripts: A Catalogue of Illustrations of Historical and Ethnographic Interest in the British Library’, *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 22 (1989), pp. 31–64 and *Anthology of African art: the twentieth century*, eds. N. Fall, J. L. Pivin, New York-Paris, pp. 74–75.

²⁹ For more about Modern Ethiopian Art: S. Chojnacki, ‘A Survey of Modern Ethiopian Art’, *Kulturaustausch*, (1973), pp. 84–94 [special edition devoted to Ethiopia]; E. Biasio, *The Hidden Reality: Three Contemporary Ethiopian Artists, Zerihitn Yetmgeta, Girmay Plhvet, W'orku Goshu*, Zurich 1989; T. Tadesse, *Short Biographies of Some Ethiopian Artists, 1869–1957*, Addis Ababa 1991.



Fig. 3. Priests' School, Araya Dawit (1893–1972), 103 x 72 cm, Fine Arts School, Addis Ababa

The themes and forms of religious paintings in Ethiopia have been handed down from one generation of clerical painters to another; the masters passing over to their students the themes and forms in strict accordance to local tradition. This accounts for the remarkable continuity that has been maintained for many centuries, yet not without an element of flexibility. The timeless practice of copying, coupled with the simultaneous process of adaptation is integral to past artistic endeavor in Ethiopia. As a result, a strong stylistic transformation of external models, has become a characteristic feature of the creative expression of Ethiopia's artists throughout its history.

Toros Roslin – – between the East and the West

Joanna Rydzkowska, Toruń

Cilicia is a historical region in the south-central part of Asia Minor, which today is the south-east part of Turkey. The Armenian dynasty of Rupenids gained part of Cilicia as early as the ninth century, but the status of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was granted only at the end of the twelfth century, when after the conquest of Armenia by Seljuq Turks, a great number of Armenians settled there. Owing to its location at the intersection of the main trading routes, Cilicia soon gained a significant position in international trade. Natural topographic features, such as the mountain range and the sea coast surrounding the region, guaranteed relative peace. It lay on the route of the Crusades. While the crusaders imposed their presence on other countries, their Armenian hosts maintained good relations with the European knights on account of their common faith, common enemy and diplomatic, open nature.¹ Under the influence of the crusaders, Cilician Armenia formed a union with the Roman Catholic Church, which was not accepted by other Armenians. All these circumstances and kings' farsighted policy contributed to the fact that the Kingdom of Cilicia was developing very well for 200 years, its prosperity increased and the arts flourished. However, in the mid- fourteenth century the Mamluk invasion put an end to the existence of the Kingdom of Cilicia.

Many artists moved to Cilicia from Armenia, helping to develop centres of the art of illumination and therefore continue Armenian tradition. In the beginning, books brought from Great Armenia were being copied. Due to the fact that the artists came from various regions, their works were diverse. Over time, painters of miniature developed their individual style, which was outstanding because of its sophisticated drawing and very decorative character. The manuscripts from Cilicia are usually of smaller size than the ones made in Great Armenia, which may be explained in two ways: either they

¹ D. M. Lang, *Armenia kolebka cywilizacji*, Warszawa 1975, p. 192.

were earmarked for individual reading, or the majority of liturgical books have not survived. A significant change introduced by Cilician painters was that the illustrations coincided with the text exactly, whereas the illustrations in Great Armenia preceded the text of Gospel.²

The style of Cilician miniature painting was virtually homogenous, but still a few centres stood out, each of them exhibiting characteristic features. Monasteries were the most significant art centres: Hromkla, where catholicos resided, Drazark, Akner and Grner near Sis, and Skevra. In the thirteenth and at the beginning of fourteenth century Cilician art had a very prominent influence on the art of Great Armenia and Armenian colonies in other countries.³ The crowning period of the art of Cilician illumination falls between 1250 and 1290, the time of the work of Toros Roslin.

Toros Roslin is the most famous and eminent Armenian illuminator of the medieval period. He was born between 1210 and 1216. At the age of 13 or 14 he began his education in one of the Cilician scriptoria. Then, he studied and travelled for 18 years. After this preparation he became an assistant to a master of miniature painting and for seven or eight years he worked in a scriptorium. Between the age of 30 and 40 he became a miniature painter in his own right and he could run his own workshop.⁴ He worked mainly in the scriptorium at Hromkla monastery, which next to the capital of Cilicia, Sis, was one of the most important centres of culture and science in Cilician Armenia. The last known work of Roslin is a Gospel made on the order of Prince Vasak after his return from Egypt in 1268 year. Therefore the artist must have still been alive in 1269.

The fact that is very interesting is that Toros had a surname. In medieval times the privilege of having a surname was entitled only to the nobility, and it is virtually impossible that a craftsman, a miniature painter, was at the same time a nobleman. The puzzle was solved by Professor L. Chookashian who discovered that in Scotland, close to Edinburgh, there is a small town – Roslin – and a chapel bearing the same name. The former owner, Henry Sinclair (other: St. Clair), baron of Roslin, participated in the crusade in 1096. It was evidently love that stopped him in Cilicia, because he got married and settled there for good. Toros was probably a descendant of this Scottish knight. It appears from a colophon in the manuscript from 1260, which was written by Roslin, that he was a priest and had children.⁵

² E. Korchmazian, I. Drampian, G. Hakopian, *Armenian Miniatures of the 13th and 14th centuries from the Matanadaran Collection Yerevan*, Leningrad 1984, pp. 20–21.

³ W. Molè, *Z zagadnień iluminatorstwa bizantyńskiego i ormiańskiego*. Lwów 1939, p. 21. Cf. T. M. Mathews, 'L'art de la Cilicie: l'Arménie des croisades', in: *Armenia Sacra. Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (IV–XVIIIe siècle)*, (ex. cat. Musée du Louvre), ed. J. Durand, I. Rapti, D. Giovannoni, Paris 2007, pp. 255–263.

⁴ L. Chookashian, *Toros Roslin*. <http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/ArmeniaDigitalProject> (12.01.2008r.).

⁵ *Ibidem*.

The Roslin works that survive are seven signed manuscripts, dated between 1256 and 1268. the artist probably both copied and illuminated them in Hromkla.⁶ Sirarpie der Nersessian proved that three additional manuscripts which have survived fragmentarily, sometimes added to other books, were also made by Roslin.⁷

In early thirteenth century Cilicia the illustrations of manuscripts were confined to ornaments on title pages, margins, canon tables and evangelists' portraits. However, in as early as the middle of the century Roslin used a wide range of figural scenes with a developed iconographic meaning.⁸ What primarily links Roslin's manuscripts is plenty of illustrations and a variety of forms, subjects and colors. Figures on his miniatures have proportions almost accordant with natural ones, and the drapery of their clothes draw a body shape. The artist aspired to breaking medieval canons by presenting spatial depth and perspective, thanks to which he is called "Giotto of the East".

Toros Roslin travelled a lot during his educational period; undoubtedly, he observed and attentively studied European art. He also had the opportunity to familiarize himself with European manuscripts brought to Hromkla by French missionaries.⁹ We can find traces of his observations and inspirations, mainly of Italian art, in all his works. Two Crucifixion scenes painted by Roslin in 1262 and 1268 could be a good example of these inspirations.

The first one comes from Sebastia Gospel (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery no 539). The figure of Christ, which dominates the composition, is close to Byzantine representations, but Maria and the apostle John are much richer in emotions than their equivalents in canonical Byzantine scenes. In both miniatures an old man appears on the right side, who, frightened or surprised by the dramatic scene, keeps his hand on his beard. This figure does not appear in Eastern art, but we can find it in Crucifixion scenes painted by Nicola Pisano, Guido da Siena and Cimabue, that is, in North Italy.

In the second miniature, which comes from so-called Malatian Gospel (Erevan, Matenadaran, no 10675), there is an element taken from Italian art, namely the representations of Ecclesia and Synagogue. The former holds a reliquary in the shape of a model of a chapel. Synagogue, blindfolded and turned back from the Cross, holds a broken reed in her right hand, and an angel is knocking a crown from her head. These details were unknown till that time in Eastern art. Ecclesia with the reliquary appears in a low relief made by Nicola Pisano in Pisa, and a angel knocking off the crown can be

⁶ The manuscripts are follows: Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Yerevan, ms. 10450, 1075; Armenian Patriarchate of St. James in Jerusalem: ms. 251, 2660, 1956, 2027; Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore: ms. 539.

⁷ S. der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to Fourteenth Century*, Washington 1993, pp. 51–54.

⁸ T. F. Mathews, A. K. Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography. The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*. Washington 1991, p. 58.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 60.

seen in *Descent from the Cross* by Benedetto Antelami in the cathedral in Parma. Thus we have evidence that Roslin knew current trends in Italian art very well, though he did not copy passively, but he adopted some elements and in a deliberate way combined them with Byzantine and Armenian art.

Roslin is probably the author of the oldest preserved Cilician royal portrait – an image of prince Levon, the son of Hatum I.¹⁰ According to some sources, the portrait was painted in about 1250 on the occasion of the prince's fifteenth birthday. There are five preserved portraits of the prince, later king Levon III, painted during his lifetime. Roslin was the author of two of them; the others were made by unknown artists.

Prince Levon was a very well educated and enlightened person, considered a bibliophile by his contemporaries.¹¹ The period of his reign (1270–1289) was quite turbulent, due to the attacks of Mamluks and revolts of some Cilician barons. Both Levon's portraits were painted by Roslin before the coronation, when an alliance with Mongols guaranteed a relative peace.

The first portrait of Levon represents him as a young boy. The portrait continues the tradition of representing members of the royal family, well known in Armenia from the tenth century.¹² The prince is standing face-on, dressed in a richly ornamented tunic and a purple mantle. All other details are evidence of him being represented as a saintly person. The prince's head is surrounded by a nimbus; he is accompanied by two angels with liturgical vessels, and in the right hand he is holding a green sprig. This latter attribute was common between twelfth and fourteenth century in French seals with the representations of various saints holding a flower or an olive spring.¹³ Undoubtedly, this attribute also underlines the holiness of the heir to the throne.

Taking into consideration the close dependence of Armenian art on Byzantine art, it is clear that Roslin took the liberty of departing quite far from Byzantine canon and common schemes. For example, in Byzantium emperors and heirs to the throne were usually represented with a beard and a diadem. However, in this case we can see a young boy with long hair, without a beard or headgear. Actually, a hypothesis was put forward that this is a representation of the prince as Christ in an apollonian type.¹⁴ The prince's clothes are a rare example of the representation of Armenian heraldic attire. What draws particular attention is the tunic ornamented with clearly visible medallions, in which lions with a red disc are represented. The use of a lion motif in a prince's attire is not surprising, because his name – Levon – is an equivalent of European name Leon, that is, 'Lion'. Levon's ancestors, prince Levon II (1187–1198)

¹⁰ Sirarpie der Nersessian proved that the miniature which represents Prince Levon, attached secondary to manuscript, found in Matenadaran, no. 8321, was painted by Toros Roslin. Cf. Nersessian, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 156.

¹¹ L. Chookaszian, 'Remarks on the Portrait of Prince Levon (MS Erevan 8321)', *Revue des Etudes Armeniennes*, 25 (1994-1995), pp. 299-335

¹² M. Darbinian, E. Korchmazian, *Miniature armenienne. Portrait*. Erevan 1982, p. 32

¹³ Chookashian, *op.cit.*

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

and king Levon I the Great (1199–1219), were famous for using this symbolic connection. The lion appears on almost all coins made in the period of their reign.¹⁵ Lions' heads decorated the royal throne. A cross was frequently placed between two lions on the reverse of coins or there was one lion with a long cross in the background. The lion was the most frequently represented figure on medieval emblems. Apart from French monarchs every dynasty of western Christianity used a lion or leopard in emblems (in the heraldry leopard appears as a type of a lion), at least for a short time.¹⁶ However, before the lion motif found its way to European emblems, it was imported to Europe by means of textiles, mainly from the Near East. Roslin probably treated the lion as a common motif, well known in every nation surrounding Armenia, but he used it in an innovatory way. Even though the lion motif was very popular in Cilicia, we do not have any other representation of the lion in a medallion as a pattern on a textile from this time. What is more, the unknown authors of the other portraits of Levon did not use that symbol either.

The lion is not only a symbol of power, bravery and courage, but also of the resurrected Christ (on the basis of Physiologus – a lion, the father, roaring, wakes up the new-born lion after 3 days from his birth).¹⁷ However, in this case there is no cross next to the lion, as we would see it on coins. Above the lion there is a red disc. On the disc is a gold half-moon, represented in a delicate tone. Close to the medallion's inside contour there are gold points, which in this context - next to the Sun and Moon - may be regarded as stars.

As Chookaszian writes, the lion accompanied by heavenly bodies may allude to god Mithra, a protector of warriors, well known and adored in pagan Armenia.¹⁸ And it is possibly a development of Christ's symbolism, which draws from old patterns and traditions, transforming and conferring them with new Christian meanings.

The composition of the emblem does not repeat any known heraldic composition, so perhaps Roslin, who was an expert in Armenian Christianity as well as in western culture, created the emblem for the future monarch by himself. The emblem makes reference to the symbol on coins of the greatest king from his family – Levon I the Great. He may have wanted to show that like Christ-Lion over all the Heaven and Earth, Prince Levon-Lion will reign legitimately over all Cilicia.

Another miniature shows the portrait of Prince Levon and his wife, Princess Keran. The illustration comes from a Gospel of 1262 (Armenian Patriarchy in Jerusalem, no 2660), ordered by prince Levon himself on the occasion of his wedding, which took place that year. The scene depicts the presentation of Christ in half-figure in the centre. His hands are stretched over the heads of a young couple whom he is blessing. Above are busts (head

¹⁵ Lang, *op.cit.*, p. 195.

¹⁶ M. Pastoureau: *Średniowieczna gra symboli*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 56–65.

¹⁷ D. Forstner, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, Warszawa 2001, p. 278.

¹⁸ A. L. Romaskevich, *Izvajanija i izobrazhenija lvov v Irane (Sculptures and Representations of Lions in Iran)*, in: *III International Congress on Iranian Art and Archeology, Reports*, (Leningrad, September, 1935), Moscow-Leningrad, 1939, p. 212.

to waist) of two angels. The composition is evidently influenced by the art of the Byzantine Empire; emphasizing the divine origin of the authority.

So-called wedding crowns on newlyweds' heads are often represented in Byzantine monuments. Medallions with figures decorate Levon's clothes. Although it is not clearly visible what figures are represented, if one takes fragments into consideration, it might be an emblem with a lion and the sun. Similar ornamentation became a part of the international character of textile decoration, and the fashion of that time. On the other hand, the textile of Keran's dress has a typical eastern pattern – sirens are a widely used motif in Persia and popular in Armenia.¹⁹ It appears that the author of the miniature deliberately combined not only the newlyweds



Fig. 1. Portrait of Prince Levon and his wife Keran, A.D. 1262, Armenian Patriarchate of St. James in Jerusalem, ms. 2660, fol. 228r

but also the East and the West. It is possible that the author or the sponsor wanted to emphasize the harmonious combination of the two cultures in Cilicia.

After this short analysis of the few Roslin's works, it seems that he was not only a great artist but also an eminent intellectual. Although we are able to decipher everything, it is clear that each of his works contains a complicated iconographic program, drawing on the old Armenian traditions, Byzantine influences and western art. Thanks to his talent, creativity and openness to foreign art, Roslin was perfectly able to combine these elements in his works and to form new iconographic types.

Traces of the special role of Cilicia in the history of contacts between the East and the West in the twelfth and thirteenth century can be found in the master's works. Thanks to contacts with crusaders and trade relations, Armenian artists were open to the beauty of European Gothic art, which, starting with Toros Roslin, began to appear in the Cilician art of illumination. Thanks to the combination of Armenian art, deeply rooted in Byzantine

¹⁹ Chookashian, *op. cit.*

art, and Gothic art, Armenian painting reached its crowning phase of development, and also gained its own distinct identity.

The Intensification of Mamelukes' attacks created an atmosphere of threat in Cilicia. It may have influenced the modification of models created by Toros Roslin, which were widely imitated by Cilician artists. In 1280–1300 the slender model of a figure developed by Roslin underwent a clear elongation. The faces gained a sterner and sterner look and the figure's emotions became more and more overdrawn.

Klimentina Vasileva, Oxford

1. Description and dating of the icon of the Heavenly Ladder

"Jacob dreamed, and behold a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angel of God ascending and descending on it." (Genesis 28: 12).

This is what is happening in this icon of *The Heavenly or Oriental Ladder*, the last 'wonderful thing' which a visitor to the 'Byzantium' exhibition at the Royal Academy saw before leaving the place. Except that on the Jinn ladder there are not only angels depicted, but also their 'counterparts' – the devil figures (fig. 1).

In the icon from Sinai a ladder with 25 steps reaches the composition diagonally and unites earth with heaven. On a golden and luminous background the dark characters of the monks caught in their struggle, helped by the chains of two angels, capture the viewer's eye. The mouth of Hell is at the bottom of the ladder and one of the devils already will reach it. Other monks at the bottom right are attending the same devil, scratching their heads in prayer. Some angels at the upper left are also part of the narrative, as they seem to participate in play to people's attraction to heaven.

As shown by Robin Dornich and Maria Vasileva in the catalogue of the exhibition, "Their haloes resemble spinning wheels", as they are polished to reflect light. This technique of burnishing is a characteristic of several icons produced at Sinai.¹ The authors conclude,

¹ *Byzantium, 1000-1500*, ed. R. Dornich and M. Vasileva, The catalogue of the exhibition Byzantium, 1000-1500, 25 October 1991-12 March 1992, Royal Academy of Arts with the collaboration of the British Museum of Natural History, London, 1991, p. 462.

his work, the artist's hands have been influenced by the Byzantine miniature. The author of the work is evidently influenced by the Byzantine miniature, which is evident from the use of the golden background and the use of the golden background. The artist's hands have been influenced by the Byzantine miniature, which is evident from the use of the golden background and the use of the golden background. The artist's hands have been influenced by the Byzantine miniature, which is evident from the use of the golden background and the use of the golden background.



Fig. 1. Portals of Prince Levon and Princess Keren, A.D. 1002, Armenian Manuscript of St. James in Brno, no. 2060, fol. 200r.

but also the East and the West. It is possible that the author of the work wanted to emphasize the harmonious combination of the two cultures in Cilicia.

After this short analysis of the few Rodin's works, it seems that he was not only a great artist but also an eminent intellectual. Although we are able to decipher everything, it is clear that each of his works contains a complex and scientific program, drawing on the old Armenian traditions, Byzantine influences and western art. Thanks to his talent, creativity and openness to foreign art, Rodin was perfectly able to combine these elements in his works and to form new iconographic types.

Traces of the special role of Cilicia in the history of contacts between the East and the West in the twelfth and thirteenth century can be found in the master's works. Thanks to contacts with crusaders and trade relations, Armenian artists were open to the beauty of European Gothic art, which, starting with Toros Roslin, began to appear in the Cilician art of illumination. Thanks to the combination of Armenian art, deeply rooted in Byzantine

* Chelobian, op. cit.

Spiritual Ascent in a Sianite Monastery: The Icon of the Ladder

Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, Oxford

I. Description and dating of the icon of the Heavenly Ladder

“Jacob ‘dreamed, and beheld a ladder set up
on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:
and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”
(Genesis 28: 12).

This is what is happening in this icon of *The Heavenly or Celestial Ladder*, the last ‘wonderful thing’ which a visitor to the ‘Byzantium’ exhibition at the Royal Academy saw before leaving the place. Except that on the Sinai ladder there are not only angels depicted, but also their ‘counters’ – the devil figures (Fig. 1).

In the icon from Sinai a ladder with 30 rungs crosses the composition diagonally and unites earth with heaven. On a golden and luminous background the dark silhouettes of the monks caught in their struggle, helped by the chants of two choirs, capture the viewer’s eye. The mouth of Hell is at the bottom of the ladder and one of the monks is already half inside it. Other monks at the bottom right are attending the scene and are raising their arms in prayer. Some angels at the upper left are also part of the narrative, as they have a vital role to play in people’s ascension to Heaven.

As shown by Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki in the catalogue of the exhibition, “Their haloes resemble spinning wheels, as they are polished to reflect light. This technique of burnishing is a characteristic of several icons produced at Sinai”¹ The authors continue,

¹ *Byzantium. 330–1453*, ed. R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki, The catalogue of the exhibition *Byzantium. 330–1453*, 25 October 2008–22 March 2009, Royal Academy of Arts with the collaboration of the Benaki Museum in Athens, London, 2008, p. 462.

emphasizing further the similarity between the icon under discussion and another particular icon, also from St Catherine: "The back of the icon [of Heavenly Ladder; Fig. 3] shows crosses within medallions, a decoration found in other twelfth-century icons from Sinai, with which this icon has been connected in style, such as the icon of the Annunciation"² (Fig. 4). In addition to this example, the icon of the Crucifixion (Fig. 5) and the icon with the Miracle at Chonai (Fig. 6), both from the Monastery of St Catherine, can be used to illustrate the similarity of the technique of burnishing, and of the icons themselves. In this latter case, however, the cross on the back is not identical to those of the back of the previous two icons, and the medallions are absent (The back of the icon of the Crucifixion has not been published).

This similarity, especially with the icon of the Annunciation, is the major factor in the latest dating of the Ladder icon. Other attempts placed it to a somewhat earlier period. Thus, Weitzmann says: "One cannot avoid the impression that the icon of the Scala Paradisi, the Ladder to Heaven, must have been copied directly from the title-page miniature in one of the many manuscripts of the treatise on that subject by John Climacus. The monks clamber zealously up the thirty rungs of the ladder, corresponding to the thirty virtues treated by John in an equal number of chapters. Their ascent is impeded by the temptations of vices, personified by tiny devils who try to cause the stumbling monks to fall. Only one has virtually succeeded in reaching the goal of Heaven; this is John Climacus himself,

the author of the treatise and the abbot of the monastery on Mount Sinai. Directly behind him follows a certain Archbishop Anthony, who most likely was another abbot of Sinai, presumably at the period when the icon was made, which means sometime during the eleventh to twelfth centuries."³

Weitzmann goes further, and in the process of describing the icon, he brings also elements to justify why



Fig. 1. Icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Climacus Constantinople or Sinai, late twelfth century, Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 41.1 x 29.1 cm.

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai; ed. Cormack and Vassilaki, *Byzantium. 330-1453*. Cat. 323, p. 375, description p. 462 in the catalogue of the exhibition *Byzantium*

² *Byzantium 330-1453...*, p. 462.

³ K. Weitzmann, „I. Sinai Peninsula. Icon Painting from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century”, in: K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatev, S. Radojčić, *Icons from South Eastern Europe and Sinai*, Thames and Huston, London, 1968; p. Xlll. In describing this icon the authors use J. R. Martin's study *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1954, which we will also use further in the paper.

he attributed to it such a date: "The quality of this icon as a work of art is revealed in the animated rhythm of the climbing monks, in the mixture of typified and individual characterization in the heads, and, not least, in the subtle colour range of the monks' garments. This range is rich in nuances and at the same time subdued, in contrast to the gay light colours of the angels' robes. The broad expanse of gold background, against which the devils stand out sharply in silhouette, is itself a daring feat."⁴

It seems a natural psychological tendency for people to try to posit chronologically everything around them, "[a]lthough the value of finding a chronology for icons ought to be a subject of controversy and debate", as Cormack shows⁵. As he states, "While it was clearly an intention to make icons look 'timeless' and while this was indeed achieved, this very success may make the context of production necessary to find." It is important to know, says Cormack, "How was timelessness achieved at different times?"⁶

As regarding the place where the icon of the Heavenly Ladder might have been painted, Weitzmann thinks that: "The subject matter of the icon suggests that it may have been made, not at, but for Mount Sinai; the icons that we can be fairly certain were executed there are rougher in style. Thus it seems likely that the icon was made as a gift for the Sinai monastery, and we must again assume that Constantinople was the most likely place of origin."⁷

Other specialists dated this icon by associating it with other icons of the period. This is what Doula Mouriki does. She also considers that the icon which is the topic of this paper was painted at the same time with the icon of Annunciation, and



Fig. 2. St Catherine Monastery, Sinai, Photo by Mirela Şova



Fig. 3. The back of the icon of Heavenly Ladder from Sinai. Thelma K. Thomas, "Christianity in the Islamic East", in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Arts and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A. D. 843–1261*, Exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, March 11–July 6, 1997, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1997, Fig. 247, p. 376 in the catalogue of the exhibition *The Glory of Byzantium*

⁴ Weitzmann, "I. Sinai Peninsula. Icon Painting from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century"..., pp. XIII–XIV.

⁵ R. Cormack, *Painting the Soul. Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds*, Reaktion Books, London, 1997, p. 21.

⁶ Cormack, *Painting the Soul*, p. 21.

⁷ Weitzmann, "Icon Painting from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century", p. XIV.



Fig. 4. Annunciation icon. Front and Back. St Catherine Monastery, Late 12th century. 61 x 42.2 cm, Tempera on wood,

Thelma K. Thomas, "Christianity in the Islamic East", in Evans and Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium*. Fig. 246, p. 375 in the catalogue; description on pp. 375–376.

In the book by Konstantinos A. Manafis (ed.), *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, Ekdotike Athenon, Athens, 1990, Fig. 29, p. 160, description on p. 107

with other two icons from St Catherine on Sinai peninsula. She also opts for a Constantinopolitan hand in the painting of the Celestial Ladder. This is what Mouriki states: "The Sinai icon of the Annunciation has been generally acknowledged as a masterpiece of Late Comnenian art, despite the alteration in colour caused by excessive use of varnish in a much later period, which resulted in the loss of the brilliance of colours and the delicate gradation of tones. A rare iconographic element is the Child, rendered in grisaille within a transparent mandorla at the breast of the Virgin, according to the scheme of prolepsis, since the Annunciation prepared the way for the Incarnation. The waterscape with its impressive variety of animal life remains a striking peculiarity of the iconography of the scene. Nevertheless, the hint of water appears from the 12th century onwards in a few examples which depict a fountain. The inclusion of the stream in the Sinai icon has been attributed mainly to the influence of hymnography, which addresses the Virgin as the 'Source of Life', but also to rhetorical texts that praise the coming of Spring, which coincides with the date of the feast of the Annunciation (March 25). The icon must have been painted by a Constantinopolitan artist at the Monastery, as is suggested by the technical handling of the gold and by the intricate painted design on the reverse, also found on the icon of the Heavenly Ladder, a tetrptych with the Dodekaorton (Fig. 7 below), and another tetrptych including



Fig. 5. The Icon of the Crucifixion. Tempera and gold on wood, 28.2 x 21.6 cm, Late Comnenian art, Constantinople, today in Sinai. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. E. Jephcott, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, p. 274, Fig. 164 in the respective book; a description and interpretation of it is given on pp. 276–277.



Fig. 6. Icon with the Miracle at Chonai, front and back. Tempera and gold on wood, 37.5 x 30.7 cm, Byzantine (Constantinople); today in Sinai; second half of the 12th century, Anemarie Weyl Carr, "Popular Imagery", in Evans and Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium*: Fig. 66, p. 119, caption on p. 118, description on pp. 118–119 in the catalogue



Fig. 7. Tetraptych with Dodekaorton, 57 x 41.8 cm., each one of the panels 49.6 x 38 cm., each of the wings. Tempera on wood, late 12th century, Manafis (ed.), *Sinai: Treasures...*, pp. 158–159, description p. 108, fig. 28 in the respective book. Four half-length images of hierarch (Sts John Christostom, Gregory the Theologian, Nicholas and Basil) are in the spandrels formed by the relief arches of the two central panels

the Last Judgement, the Dodekaorton, two scenes from the Life of the Virgin, and saints; all works must have been painted at Sinai.⁸

Regarding the Tetraptych, Mouriki enlists other stylistic characteristics to help her in dating it to the twelfth century. They consist in the “dynamic quality that pervades the figures in their poses, gestures, facial expressions, and in the drapery.”⁹ Further iconographical elements which are common to other icons of that century are the ‘hanging’ garden behind the Virgin (this is common with that in the icon of Annunciation), the ladder which leads to it (it seems that the ladder was a topic of the time), etc.

Moreover, she not only dates the Heavenly Ladder icon to the twelfth century in general but, bringing more evidence to support her opinion, she is more precise and concludes that it was painted in the late part of this century: “The icon of the Heavenly Ladder belongs to the group of didactic works that derived elements from the monastic literature which blossomed in the Monastery of Sinai from an early period. A major author was John Climacus, the seventh-century Abbot whose name is derived from his well-known treatise for the moral perfection of monks, the *Heavenly Ladder*. In order to reach the goal of heaven, the monks must acquire thirty virtues which are presented in metaphorical form as the equivalent number of rungs of a ladder. The composition on this panel is the earliest extant pictorial example of this metaphor for the code of perfection of monastic life on a portable icon. The struggle of the monks for moral perfection and the resulting heavenly salvation is demonstrated to be

⁸ Doula Mouriki “Icons from the 12th to the 15th century”, in Konstantinos A. Manafis (ed.), *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, Ekdotike Athenon, Athens, 1990, pp. 107–108; the fig. numbers there refers to the numbering in the book *Sinai. Treasures...*

⁹ Mouriki “Icons from the 12th to the 15th century”, in, *Sinai: Treasures...*, p. 108.

difficult and often unattainable. The only certain victors are John Climacus himself at the top of the ladder and the Archbishop Antonios of Sinai behind him. The dematerialization of the figures in the broad expanse of the gold background, which interacts with the brown, olive, and ochre of the monks' garments, is the main stylistic characteristic of the icon. The psychological intensity on the faces and the agitated drapery with the wavering highlights on the robes argue for the dating of the icon to the late 12th century. Moreover, the decoration on the reverse side of the panel is of the same type as that found on the icon of the Annunciation, which can be dated to the late 12th century on more definite stylistic criteria."¹⁰

It seems plausible that indeed the icon of the Heavenly Ladder was painted in late twelfth century: the dynamism and the movement within it are specific to a later period of Byzantine iconpainting than the eleventh century, initially thought as the date of the icon by Weitzmann; especially the icons with which it is associated, as for example the Tetrptych in Fig. 6, have almost the characteristics of Giotto's paintings as it is visible, for instance, in the movement of Angel Gabriel while delivering the 'good news' to the Virgin, the gestures of Christ in front of Lazarus' tomb, and of the figures around him in the baptism scene. All those elements point to a date of late twelfth century.

II. Connection of the Heavenly Ladder icon with the written text of *Scala Paradisi*

The theme of the ladder as a metaphor for the spiritual progress of a person, especially one who has chosen the monastic life, came up from time to time in iconography after St John Climacus (c. 579–650), Figs. 8-9, wrote his *Scala Paradisi* treatise in the 7th century¹¹. John was a monk at Sinai, who later became the abbot of the monastery of St Catherine. There is no evidence that he was ever ordained as a priest.¹² His feast is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

I have to admit with Martin that the theme of the ladder in iconography is not as frequent as others. It was first developed in illuminated manuscripts with this popular text from the eleventh century onwards, as Weitzmann quoted above, also testifies. Its spread after the eleventh century took place especially in connection with the attempt of St Symeon the Theologian (c. 965-c. 1040) to revive mysticism in Constantinople about 1000. Both Martin, in his works mentioned here, and Hans Belting draw attention to this fact, and they based their statements on Symeon's writing in, for example, his *Homily on Confession*¹³, and on the 'Vie

¹⁰ *Sinai: Treasures...*, p. 107.

¹¹ Joannis Climaci, *Scala Paradisi*, PG88, 632-666.

¹² *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. C. Luibheid and N. Russel, Introd. K. Ware, SPCK, London, 1982, p. 6.

¹³ Symeon the New Theologian, "Homily on Confession", in: *Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt beim griechischen Mönchtum; eine Studie zu Symeon dem Neuen Theologen*, ed. K. Hall Leipzig, 1898, pp. 110–127.

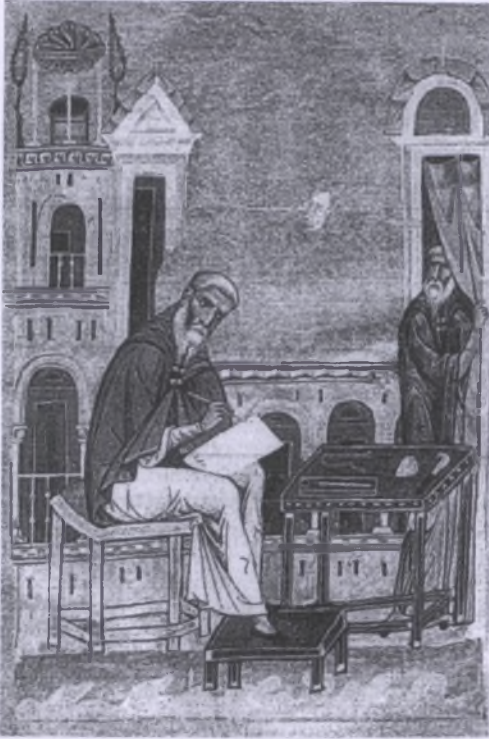


Fig. 8. [The Heavenly Ladder] Cod. Gr. 394. Fol. F 6v. The author's portrait. Vatican, John Rupert Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954, p. XVII, Fig. 69 in the respective book



Fig. 9. The icon of St. John Climacus with St. George and St. Blaise. Tempera on wood, thirteenth century. Novgorod School

de Syméon”, written by his disciple and biographer, Nicetas Stethatus (c. 1000 - ?). Nicetas was a monk at the Studios Monastery – from which St Symeon was effectively expelled.¹⁴

Among the manuscripts which contain the motif of the ladder within them there is one in Sinai itself: cod. 423 (Fig. 10), one on Mount Athos in Vatopedi Monastery, Cod. 376 (Fig. 11), one at the Vatican, Gr. 394 (Fig. 12), one in Washington (Freer Gallery of Art. De Ricci 10. Fol. 2: The Heavenly Ladder), one in Moscow (Hist. Mus. Cod. Gr. 146. Fol. 278v: The

¹⁴ I. Hausherr and G. Horn (eds.), “Un grand mystique byzantine. Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien par Nicéas Stéthatos”, *Orientalia Christiana* 12 (1928), no. 45 (usually known as ‘Vie de Syméon’). Hausherr, in his Introduction to this book, on p. XXIII, gives this date for the birth of Nicetas. For St Symeon see also V. Laurent, ‘Un nouveau monument hagiographique; la vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien’, *Echos d’orient*, 27 (1929), pp. 431-443. Martin speaks at length about St Symeon in his *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, pp. 156-160, and Belting in his *Likeness and Presence...*, p. 272.

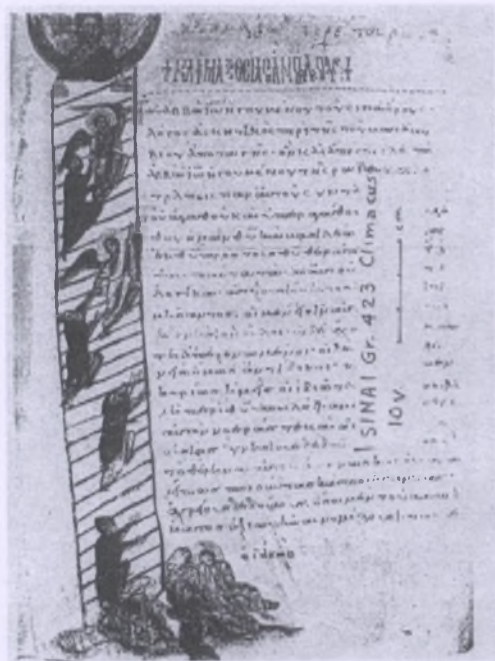


Fig. 10. The Heavenly Ladder. Sinai. Cod. 423, Fol. 10v, Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, p. VII, fig. 23 in the respective book



Fig. 11. The Heavenly Ladder. Athos. Vatopedi. Cod. 376. Fol. 421 v. Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, p. V, fig. 17 in the respective book

Heavenly Ladder), one in Milan. (Bibl. Ambros. Cod. G 20 sup. Fol. 212v: Table of Contents), one in Paris (Bibli. Nat. Cod. Coislin 88. Fol. 12v; Fig. 13 below), etc.

The icon here discussed was painted not long after the moment when the ladder motif entered the iconography as a sign of the inventiveness which the monastic Byzantine iconography began displaying around the beginning of the 11th century. (According to Martin, another contemporary sign of this creativity was the romance of Barlaam and Joasaph which glorify the monastic life¹⁵). Manuscripts might have been illustrated as early as the 9th century, as for example the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Egyptian desert fathers' writings)¹⁶, but the topic of the ladder came with the new spirit in iconography.¹⁷

Beyond the fullness of the message the Sinai icon of the Heavenly Ladder conveys, it is a beautiful piece originally meant to add to the beauty of the Liturgy. Belting sees a rhetorical structure in this icon, expressed "both in the ordered advance of the rising monks and in the wild disorder of the falling monks. The double movement, couched in a dramatic con-

¹⁵ J. R. Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954, p. 151.

¹⁶ Migne, PG, 65.

¹⁷ Martin, *The illustration...*, p. 161.



Fig. 12. The Heavenly Ladder. Vatican. Cod. Gr. 394. Fol. F v; Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, p. XVI, fig. 67 there



Fig. 13. Heavenly Ladder. Paris. Bibli. Nat. Cod. Coislin 88. Fol. 12v: Table of Contents, Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, p. VI, Fig. 19 in the respective book

trast, fills the space between heaven and earth, which is inhabited, on both ends, by angels and monks – or, to use a metaphor of the time, by heavenly and earthly angels [...] The underlying rhetorical structure, based on antithesis and hyperbole, here is transferred into a convincing visual form.¹⁸ However, in general he sees the capacity of icons to play such a role in a manner which is disputable. He affirms that: “As soon as the icon had become an object of rhetorical *ekphrasis*, it revealed how much it was at a disadvantage to church poetry and sermons as a narrative medium.”¹⁹ His statement is not true because the icon has not replaced anything in the Church; it has added to the richness of its Liturgy, which has kept the sermons and the hymns as its core.

John Climacus’ treatise *Scala Paradisi* - The Ladder of Divine Ascent or of the Virtues, as it is also known- is divided into 30 chapters, as was the age of Christ before baptism. The text speaks of the vices that a monk has to avoid and of the virtues that he has to acquire in order to reach God. The thirty steps of the ladder which a monk has to climb are as fol-

¹⁸ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, p. 273.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 272.

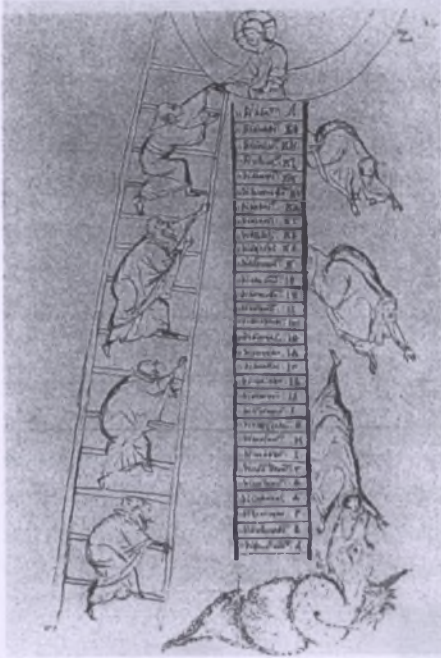


Fig. 14. The Heavily Ladder. Vienna, Nationalbibl., Cod. Theolog. Gr. 207. Fol. 2r, Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, p. VII, fig. 22 in the respective book



Fig. 15. The Heavily Ladder. Paris. Bibli. Nat., Cod. Coislin 262. Fol. 1r: Title Page, Martin, *The illustration of the Heavenly Ladder...*, p. VI, fig. 20 in the respective book

lows: [I. (The Break with the World): with three steps] 1. Renunciation (of the World)], 2. Detachment, 3. Exile; [II .The practice of the Virtues ('Active Life')] (i) Fundamental virtues: 4. Obedience 5. Penitence 6. Remembrance of Death 7. Sorrow [(ii) The struggle against the passions (Passions that Are Predominantly Non-physical): 8. Anger 9. Malice 10. Slander 11. Talkativeness 12. Falsehood 13. Despondency (b) Physical and Material Passions 14. Gluttony 15. Lust 16 – 17. Avarice (c) Non-Physical Passions (cont.): 18-20 Insensitivity 21. Fear 22. Vainglory 23. Pride (also Blasphemy) (iii) Higher Virtues of the "Active Life": 24. Simplicity 25. Humility 26. Discernment; [III. Union with God (Transition to the "Contemplative Life") 27. Stillness 28. Prayer 29 and Dispassion :30. Love.²⁰ In some of the manuscripts the name of the vices and virtues were written on the corresponding rung, as for example in the Vienna Manuscript of the Ladder (Fig. 14), but also in Cod. Coislin

²⁰ I have summarised some of the text of Joannis Climaci, *Scala Paradisi*, PG88, 632-666; John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. C. Luibheid and N. Russel, Introd. K. Ware, SPCK, London, 1982; I. Scărarul, *Scara Raiului precedată de Viața pe scurt a lui Ioan Scolasticul și urmată de Cuvîntul către Păstor*, trans., introduction and notes by N. Corneanu, Amacord Publishing House, Timișoara, 1994.



Fig. 16. The Heavenly Ladder. Athos. Vatopedi. Cod. 368. Fol. 178v, Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder*, p. VI, fig. 21 in the respective book

262. Fol. 1r: Title Page. Paris (Fig. 15 below), and Cod. 368. Fol. 178v: The Heavenly Ladder (Vatopedi. Athos) [Fig. 21 in Martin's book].

On the top of the ladder is St John, followed by the abbot of the monastery Antonios, who may have commissioned this icon. Their names are written in red majuscule letters on the golden background; this is how we identify them. Christ, half-length, appears from a quadrant, which represents heaven, and is blessing John, as he reaches. St John and the Abbot are the only ones who have their names written above their heads in the icon. Also in a manuscript from Athos (Athos. Vatopedi. Cod. 368. Fol. 178v), the name of the monk who arrives at the upper end of the ladder is indicated as being that of St John Climacus (Fig. 16).



Fig. 17. Sucevița Monastery, fresco painting (1692-1702) by Constantinos, Ioan and their (Brâncovan) School



Fig. 18. Sucevița Monastery, detail with the Heavenly Ladder (Scara Virtuților – The Ladder of Virtues, as it is known there)



Fig. 19. The Heavenly Ladder. Râșca



Fig. 20. The Heavenly Ladder, Docheiariou Monastery, Monastery, Stylianos G. Papadopoulos (ed.), *Parousia: I.M. Docheiariou*, Aghios Oros, IMD, 2001, Fig. 13, p. 304 in the respective book. (Thanks to Veronica Della Dora from Bristol University, UK, for indicating this source to me)

Do these works state that the word (the written word in this case) by naming people, saves their souls? Are they speaking about the saving power of the word?

From manuscripts the ladder topic passed to portable icons, and from there in printed works, and also, in the 16th and 17th centuries, in the frescoes which decorate the churches' walls, as seen in the examples of Sucevița (Figs. 17–18) and Râșca Monasteries (Fig. 19)

in Moldova, Romania, still visible today, and also in Docheiarious Monastery (Fig. 20) and Hilandar Monastery (Fig. 21), both on Mounth Athos. It is also to be found at Dobrovăț, Cetățuia (in Iași), St. Elias (in Suceava), both in Moldova, but also in Wallachia, for example on the walls of the church in Hurezu Monastery, where the frescoes were painted between 1692 and 1702 by Constantinos, Ioan and their (Brâncovan) school. That happened in parallel with the text of the „Ladder” being copied in the scriptoria of these and other monasteries; at Hurezu, for example, a copy was made in 1773. Today the text of the Heavenly Ladder is still read in many Orthodox monasteries during Lent²¹, as for example, on Mount Athos, where some fragments of the Triologion contain some of the text of the *Heavenly Ladder*.²²

Climacus' ladder model has entered the folklore, and in some countries it has concretised in various customs which take place especially when a person dies (when money are put in the coffin for the departed to pay each step of the ladder to the other world, in the fact that the bread people share at the funerary meal is shaped in the form of a ladder, etc.).²³

This model was influential not only, as shown above, within a strictly religious context – on “the spiritual imagination of the Christian East”²⁴ and on St Symeon's mysticism mentioned earlier, but also on literary works in general, as for example, on Dante's *Divina Commedia*.²⁵

The passing of the author/the main character, accompanied by Vergilius, from the Inferno to the Purgatory, and then to the Paradise in searching for peace symbolises the idea of a continual progress of the soul, and looks like a climbing of a mountain or of a ladder, as a progress towards perfection, i.e. towards God.

²¹ *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Introd. Kallistos Ware, p. 1.

²² Ioan Scărarul, *Scara Raiului*, p. 66.

²³ Ioan Scărarul, *Scara Raiului*, p. 64.

²⁴ John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent...*, p. 11.

²⁵ Ioan Scărarul, *Scara Raiului...*, pp. 62–64.

Монашеские темы в стенописи полоцкой Спасской церкви

Наталья Я. Трифонова, Минск

С конца X века одним из центров христианской культуры становится Полоцк, о чем свидетельствует создание епископства, устройство первого женского монастыря княжной Рогнедой в Заславле, входившем в состав Полоцкого княжества. В 1044–1046 гг. князем Всеславом Брячиславичем (ум. 1101) строится каменный Софийский собор. В кругу его наследников отмечается почитание идей монашеского подвижничества, сопровождавшееся пожертвованиями в монастыри. Примером может быть вклад Глеба Всеславича в Киево-Печерскую лавру. Согласно житию Евфросиньи, дочери полоцкого князя Георгия, при ее пострижении как образцы твердости в вере иереем назывались святые жены Феврония и Евпраксия. Позднее Евфросинья Полоцкая вложила в основанный ей монастырь святого Спаса крест, включавший частицы мощей соименной святой Евфросиньи Александрийской.

Изображения отдельных святых, в том числе монашенок, занимают значительное место в общей системе стенописи построенного в 1150-е гг. Спасского храма, отразившей ориентацию полоцкого епископа Козьмы и самой настоятельницы Евфросиньи.¹ Они составляют нижний ряд записанных в XVIII–XIX вв. росписей центральной части небольшой (14,4 x 9,8 м) шестистолпной одноапсидной церкви, вертикализм которой в интерьере подчеркивают высокие подпружные арки, переходящие в вытянутый цилиндр барабана. Наряду с раскрытыми на северной стене и гранях восточных столбов

¹ В декоре алтаря Спасо-Преображенской церкви в Полоцке традиционный евхаристический цикл дополнен рядом, возможно, представляющим «Поклонение жертве». В связи с ним, очевидно, находится размещающаяся в куполе композиция «Вознесение», известная по росписям греческих церквей, более поздней стенописи Пскова и Новгорода. Ее распространение, очевидно, было связано с положениями константинопольских соборов 1156–57 гг., проводников которых новгородского архиепископа Нифонта и поставленного на Русь в 1157 г. митрополита Константина поддерживал полоцкий епископ Козьма; см.: В. Пуцко, *Стилистические проблемы фресок собора Спасо-Евфросиниевского монастыря в Полоцке - Гісторыя і археалогія Полацка і Полацкай зямлі*, [в:] *Матэрыялы III Міжнароднай навуковай канферэнцыі*, Полацк, 1998, с. 237.

фигурами монахов в полный рост хорошо просматриваются четыре женские изображения на южной стене и одно на северо-западном столпе.

Подобно фрескам XI–XII вв. монастырских храмов Византии, среди которых наиболее близкими по времени являются росписи церкви св. Пантелеймона в Незе (1164), они акцентируют монастырское назначение полоцкой церкви, зримо воплощая идею постоянного духовного совершенствования и подвижничества.

Среди представленных могут быть названные выше святые жены Феврония и Евпраксия, а также Евдокия, соименная принявшей постриг младшей сестре Евфросиньи Полоцкой². Более определенно прочитываются мужские образы, представляющие страницы истории монашества.

Особенностью лика одного из монахов на северной стене является короткая раздвоенная борода без волос под нижней губой до подбородка. Она характерна для происходящих с Синая изображений Саввы Освященного XI–XII вв. (одно из них находилось в Музее Киевской Духовной академии).³ Его почитание Евфросиньей Полоцкой, определявшей состав росписей Спасского храма, подтверждается свидетельством «Жития» святой о ее желании быть похороненной в монастыре, который основал Савва Освященный. Изображенный рядом преподобный с длинной заостряющейся книзу бородой и высоким лбом, очевидно, является Евфимием Великим, о чем может свидетельствовать как иконографические особенности (именно так он представлен в Минологии на декабрь, январь и февраль конца XI в., (в XIX в. икона была привезена с Синая, хранилась в Музее Киевской Духовной академии), так и прослеживаемая по житиям связь этих двух святых.⁴ Преподобный на северо-западном столпе с развернутым свитком в левой руке близок по типуажу находящемуся в том же Минологии изображению святого Феодосия. Очевидно, он также мог входить в круг почитаемых Евфросиньей Полоцкой святых. Косвенно об этом может свидетельствовать то, что его обитель стала местом погребения подвижницы из Полоцка. Два других изображенных на столбах монаха по иконографическим особенностям могут идентифицироваться как Павел Фивейский и Макарий Египетский (Онуфрий?).

По наблюдениям российского исследователя В. Д. Сарабьянова свойственный росписям верхней зоны пафос монументализма в монашеских изображениях снижается, что вызвано их приближенностью к молящимся⁵. Присущая этим образам

² Евпраксия стала ипическим именем двоюродной сестры Евфросиньи Полоцкой Звениславы, принявшей постриг около 1128 г.

³ О. Е. Этингоф, *Византийские иконы VI - первой половины XIII века в России*, Москва 2005, с. 663–664.

⁴ Этингоф, *Византийские иконы...*, с. 635–639.

⁵ В. Д. Сарабьянов, *Спасо-Преображенская церковь Евфросиньева монастыря и ее фрески*, Москва 2007, с. 146. Если высота фигуры Оранты в центральной апсиде превышает три метра (Ibid., с. 55), то размеры описываемых изображений около 110–125 см. Cf. А. Селицкий, *Живопись Полоцкой земли XI–XII вв.*, Минск 1992, с. 121, 126.

статичность и обобщенная манера письма при сравнительно небольших размерах, как отмечают российские исследователи, сближают их с портативными византийскими иконами избранных святых в монастыре св. Екатерины на Синае (XII в.), а также хранящимися там же иконами-минологиями того же времени.

При некотором различии индивидуальных живописных манер лики святых выполнены с использованием общего для всей стенописи санкирного метода. В группе изображений святых монашенок на южной стене, близкой изображениям святителей в алтарной части, несколько отличным кажется слегка вытянутое лицо одной из монашенок, написанное охрой, положенной несколькими слоями поверх коричнево-зеленого санкиря, который встречается также в стенописи Староладожской Георгиевской церкви (около 1167 г.). Овал лица, широко раскрытые, асимметрично расположенные глаза с большими темными зрачками, высоко поднятые брови, нос очерчены различной по интенсивности коричневой линией. Нижнее веко правого глаза, верхняя губа притемнены. Сочетая линейную проработку с тонкой тональной моделировкой, художник создал исполненный одухотворенности ярко индивиду-

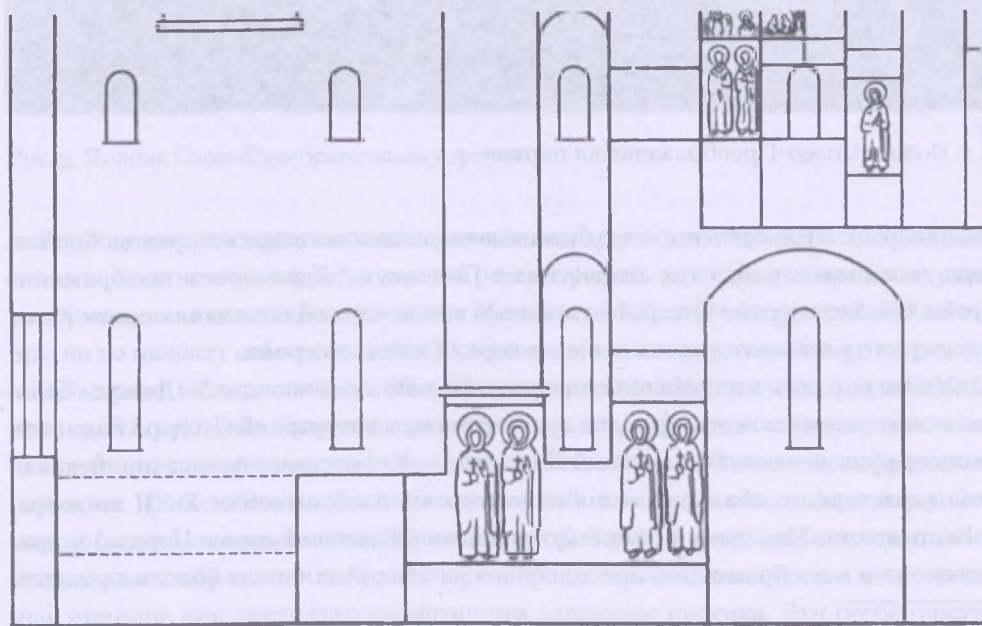


Рис. 1. Полоцк Спасо-Преображенская церковь, южная стена, реконструкция



Рис. 2. Полоцк Спасо-Преображенская церковь

альный образ⁶. Этой особенностью была вызвана попытка видеть в преподобной на северо-западном столбе саму Евфросинью Полоцкую.⁷ Донаторское изображение святой в трехчетвертном повороте с моделью храма перед благославляющим Христом раскрыто реставраторами в келье на хорах Спасского храма.

Здесь же наряду с занимающей центральное место композицией «Деисус» находятся евангельские сюжеты, фигуры преподобных, в которых «благодаря надписям и иконографии узнаются ... Арсений Великий, ... Евфросиния Александрийская».⁸ Черты характерного облика святого, известные по изображениям X-XII вв. в храмах Каппадокии, Македонии (упомянутая церковь Пантелеймона в Нерези) и присутствующие в изображениях преподобного на западных стенах боковых рукавов,

⁶ По своей выразительности рассматриваемые изображения близки более поздним по времени образам святых жен в алтарной части церкви Спаса на Нередице в Новгороде, среди которых упоминавшиеся Евдокия, Феврония. Сф. Н. В., Пивоварова, *К истолкованию программы росписи диаконика церкви Спаса на Нередице в Новгороде*, [в:] *Древнерусское искусство Византия и Древняя Русь К 100-летию Андрея Николаевича Грабара (1896–1990)*, Санкт-Петербург 1999, с. 214–215.

⁷ М. С. Кацер, *Изобразительное искусство Белоруссии дооктябрьского периода*, Минск 1969, с. 25–26.

⁸ В. Д. Сарабьянов, *op. cit.*, с. 152.



Рис. 3. Полоцк Спасо-Преображенская церковь

позволяют сделать предположение, что они представляют эпизоды из жизни этого святого. Если одну из фресок можно рассматривать как сцену погребения святого четырьмя учениками (представлена в *Минологии* XII в. (Paris, gr. 1528. Fol. 21 r.), то другие не находят себе аналогий в известных миниатюрах с сюжетами жития Арсения Великого (*Минологий* нач. XI в. (Государственный Исторический музей. Москва, Греч. 9. Fol. 1 r).⁹ В изображенных на торцевых стенах рукавов сюжетах, где главным действующим лицом выступает монахиня, облик которой близок упомянутому изображению преподобной, идентифицированной как Евфросинья Александрийская, можно видеть эпизоды из жизни этой святой. Крайне интересные в тематическом отношении изображения небольших размеров отмечены лаконизмом композиционных приемов при несколько схематичном характере рисунка. Эти особенности, на наш взгляд, находят себе аналогии в росписях смоленского храма на Протоке XII–XIII вв.¹⁰ Среди исследователей нет единого мнения о том, были ли росписи кельи

⁹ В. И. Лазарев, *История византийской живописи*, Москва 1986, с. 89, ил. 37.

¹⁰ Н. Н. Воронин, *Смоленская живопись 12-13 веков*, Москва 1977, с. 67, ил. 37.

созданы одновременно с фресками основного объема. Нам кажется более вероятной предложенная В.Д. Сарабьяновым датировка их концом XII-началом XIII в.¹¹

Рассмотренные изображения составляют значительную часть фрескового декора полоцкой церкви, отражая важное место монашеских тем в сформировавшейся в росписях византийских храмов системе декорирования. О глубоких традициях свидетельствует прослеживающееся в росписях умение находить степень обобщения пластической формы и связывать ее с архитектурой сооружения. Точки соприкосновения с памятниками византийского круга наряду с отдельными образами в алтаре находит своеобразная манера написания исполненных одухотворенности ярко индивидуальных ликов святых монашенок. Однако состав однофигурных монашеских изображений, как и житийные циклы в келье Евфросиньи Полоцкой и ее донаторское изображение, выполненные в эскизной манере, определяют уникальность этого памятника монументальной живописи.



Рис. 1. Фреска «Святая Евфросинья» в Полоцкой церкви. Фото: В. Д. Сарабьянов, 1970 г.

В. Д. Сарабьянов, *op. cit.*, с. 170.

¹¹ В. Д. Сарабьянов, *op. cit.*, с. 170.

The Encounter between East and West. Some Remarks on Marvellous Images

Maria Ołdakowska, Lublin

"With the help of God they defeated the emperor Murzuflos and he himself was nearly taken captive; he lost his imperial banner and one icon that they carried before him, he believed in it greatly and so did other Greeks: on this icon was depicted Our Lady [...]"¹

Commencing our considerations with a quotation from the Champagne chronicler we have moved to the Constantinople of 1204, the year of its capture by Franks. Not only did the Byzantine military forces fail but the faith in the miraculous power of the Maria Hodegetria icon turned out to be futile and did not protect the city from the nightmare of destruction by Frankish and Flemish armies. The count of Flanders, Baldwin II became the ruler of the New Latin Empire.² Both the events described by Villehardouin and their later effect on the contacts between the East and the West, to which we will return later in the text, were not without consequences for the issue that is the focus of our interest, that is, an encounter of Byzantine art and Northern European medieval painting. The aim of our text is to present several Byzantine icons that were brought to the area that is situated now on the border of contemporary Belgium and France, and significantly influenced fifteenth- and sixteenth-century painting. These works are located in the parish of St Peter and St Paul in Chimay (Fig. 1), the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Laon (Fig. 2), St Paul's cathedral in Liège (Fig. 3), and the Notre-Dame cathedral in Cambrai (Fig. 4). Due to the character of this text, which is not intended as an elaboration containing exhaustive monographs of all these works, we propose a succinct presentation of each icon with the exception of the Mary with

¹ G. de Villehardouin, *Zdobycie Konstantynopola*, ed. Z. Pentek, Poznań 2003, pp. 87–88.

² On the events of the year 1204 see, among others: M. Angold, *The Fourth Crusade. Event and Context*, London 2003; D. Nicol, *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with Western World*, especially chapter: *The Fourth Crusade and the Greek and Latin Empires 1204-1261*, pp. 275-330; Z. Pentek, 'Z historii IV krucjaty (1198–1204) – zagadnienia polityczne wyprawy i punkty zwrotne w czasie jej trwania', in: *IV Krucjata. Historia, reperkusje, konsekwencje*, ed. Z. Kijas, M. Salamon, Kraków 2005, pp. 55–106.



Fig. 1. Christ Pantocrator, 1330-1350, Parish of St Peter and St Paul in Chimay



Fig. 2. Holy Face of Christ, early thirteenth century, Cathedral in Laon

the Infant from Cambrai, which—in view of its history and numerous later imitations—will be discussed in more detail.

It is worth mentioning here that the problem of migration of certain motifs typical of Byzantine art into medieval Italian art has been considered self-evident, and for long been the subject of penetrating studies by art historians from various parts of Europe³. The issue of the influence of Eastern painting on the art of Northern Europe, however, has been hardly ever considered.⁴ This state of affairs has been precipitated by the huge number of Byzantine works of art that have been preserved in the territory of Italy, whereas the situation in Northern Europe is radically different because there are very few examples of Byzantine art preserved there. Their destruction or removal can be blamed on iconoclastic riots in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century.⁵

The exhibition *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* put up in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2004 can therefore be considered a breakthrough of sorts. Various objects were on display, such as icons, coins, plaques, liturgical vestments,

³ Cf. O. Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West*, New York 1970, pp. 205–240; E. Kitzinger, *The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West*, London 1976, pp. 337–378; J. Stubblebine, 'Byzantine Influence in Thirteenth-Century Italian Panel Painting', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 20 (1966), pp. 85–102; K. Weitzmann, 'Crusader Icons and Maniera Greca', in: *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*, ed. I. Hutter, H. Hunger, Wien 1984, pp. 143–170.

⁴ The scholar who has paid attention to this question in his works is Hans Belting. A doctoral thesis—at the moment not accessible to us—has been published in the US: S. Thomas, *Forging the Missing Links: Robert Campin and the Bizantine Icons*, Case Western Reserve University 1998.

⁵ D. Freedberg, *Iconoclasm and painting in the revolt of the Netherlands. 1566–1609*, New York 1988; Idem, 'The Hidden God. Image and Interdiction in the Netherlands in the Sixteen Century', *Art History*, 5 (1982), no. 2, pp. 137–154.



Fig. 3. Mary with the Infant, first half of fourteenth century, St Pauls Cathedral in Liège



Fig. 4. Notre Dame de Grâce, c. 1340, Cathedral in Cambrai

examples of miniature painting, board painting, drawings, and graphic art. For our considerations, the question of the juxtaposition of objects at the exhibition is of paramount importance. Objects imported directly from Byzantium or made in the territory of Italy in the style of *maniera greca* were placed side by side with objects that corresponded to them in style or iconography, but were made by artists active in the territories of Flanders and Holland from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. Such a juxtaposition facilitated the comparison of earlier works with later artifacts and enabled the viewer to perceive to what degree Northern European artists imitated works that came from the East by copying them and subsequently transforming these models to suit artistic tendencies influential in a given place and at a given time.

When writing about the New York exhibition, one must not overlook a very valuable collection of essays that was published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in its aftermath. Maryan Ainsworth's article from this collection seems particularly important for our consideration.⁶ The author points to inventories as a source of information on by now lost objects from art collections that belonged to Burgundy princes, French kings, and aristocrats from those territories. Illuminated manuscripts from the fifteenth century also provide rich material for this area of study.⁷

The presence of Byzantine icons in the territories of Belgium and France does not come as a surprise when we realize what international contacts — in particular exchanges be-

⁶ M. Ainsworth, "À la façon grèce": The Encounter of Northern Renaissance Artists with Byzantine Icons, in: *Byzantium. Faith and Power*, ed. H. C. Evans, New York 2004, pp. 545–555. All information given below concerning dimensions, techniques of execution, inscriptions and dating of objects are from this catalogue.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 547–548, il. 17.3, 17.4.

tween the West and the East — looked like in medieval Europe. The year 1261, which opens the period addressed by the New York exhibition, also marks the end of the weak Latin Empire. A talented ruler of Nice, Michael Paleologue (1261–1282) ascended to the emperor's throne after re-conquering Constantinople against practically no resistance from the Latin emperor Baldwin II.⁸ Michael Paleologue was a true diplomat, consistently striving to maintain the capital and re-conquer the territories that belonged to Byzantium before their occupation by the Latin crusaders at the turn of the thirteenth century. That is why he very deftly carried out negotiations with the Holy See. When the negotiations with the papacy did not bring the desired results, Michael Paleologue turned to the king of France, Louis IX, for help in the mediations.⁹

Michael Paleologue's successors, such as John V Paleologue (1341–1391), who converted to Catholicism during his notorious journey to Italy, Manuel VII (1391–1425), John VIII (1425–1448), and Constantine XI (1448–1453), also tried their hand at negotiations with the Western Church. This resulted in the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1445)¹⁰ whose decisions unfortunately remained only on paper. The atmosphere of adversity towards the Western Church, and a complete lack of awareness concerning a tragic situation of the empire threatened by a Turkish invasion, is best conveyed by a pronouncement, most frequently quoted in historical texts about this period, made by one high-ranking official of the empire, Loukas Notaras, who said "I would rather see a Muslim turban in the midst of the City (i.e. Constantinople) than the Latin mitre".¹¹

Deposing the Flemish dynasty princes from the imperial throne did not in the least lead to stopping contacts between the rulers of the East and the West. On the contrary, the situation compelled successive emperors to continue diplomatic efforts which prolonged the existence of the empire — remaining in internal chaos and constantly threatened by both Europe and Asia — for nearly two hundred years. Therefore it is no surprise that in the period under discussion Byzantine rulers sought to marry western princesses.¹²

The selected historical facts — out of necessity discussed very succinctly — presenting the situation of Byzantium after re-conquering the empire by Michael Paleologue show

⁸ Ch. Diehl, 'Historia Cesarstwa Bizantyńskiego w zarysie od 1204 do 1453', in: *Bizancjum. Wstęp do cywilizacji wschodniorzymskiej*, ed. N. Baynes, H. Moss, transl. E. Zwolski, Warszawa 1964, pp. 43–56.

⁹ This was an exceptionally clever move because Louis IX was a brother of Charles Andegaven, whose growing power seemed, to the Byzantine, the greatest threat to the empire. For detailed information on the contacts of Michael Paleologue with the papacy and Louis IX: M. Dąbrowska, *Bizancjum, Francja i Stolica Apostolska w drugiej połowie XIII w.*, Łódź 1986.

¹⁰ Cf. *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 3: *Konstancja, Bazylea, Ferrara, Florencja, Rzym*, ed. A. Baron, H. Pietras, Kraków 2004.

¹¹ M. Dąbrowska, 'Dekadencja Bizancjum i losy spadku po drugim Rzymie', *Znak*, 46 (1994), p. 27.

¹² Eadem, *Łacinniczki nad Bosforem. Małżeństwa bizantyńsko-łacińskie w cesarskiej rodzinie Paleologów*, Łódź 1996; S. Origone, 'Marriage Connections between Byzantium and the West in the Age of the Palaiologoi', in: *Intercultural Contacts in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. B. Arbel, London 1996, pp. 226–241.

convincingly that in the period under discussion contacts between the West and the East flourished. It thus comes as no surprise that many Byzantine icons found their way to the West. Besides being captured as loot, especially after the events of 1204, Byzantine icons also travelled to the West as a result of the Paleologue dynasty's efforts to maintain "political balance". Like relics,¹³ they often served as gifts to rulers, aristocrats, and clergy. In particular icons were taken to the West during an intensive campaign for the unification of the Churches, and as a result of various diplomatic strategies—advantageous marriages with Latin princesses can be counted among these—aimed at forestalling any attempts to re-gain Constantinople lost by the Latin world in 1261.

In this context it seems interesting to dwell for a while on the facts concerning the first of the icons mentioned earlier, a mosaic icon of Chimay.¹⁴ It was made, in mixed technique of mosaic and encaustic painting, in Constantinople and can be dated at the years 1300–1350. This rather small image (the dimensions of the icon 12 x 10.6 cm) depicts the half-figure of Christ Pantocrator, represented against a golden background. The figure of Christ has been presented in a dark robe and purple-red cloak. The effect of breaking folds is well conveyed by alternating rows of small golden pieces that remain in contrast with the darker background on which they have been placed. In the Savior's left hand, we can see a closed Book of Gospels, while the right one is raised in the gesture of blessing. Over Christ's head there is a cross-nimbus formed by rhomboidal jewels. Above, in the right- and left-hand upper corners are inscribed Greek letters which stand for the "Jesus Christ" full name. The whole is placed in a frame filled with precious stones situated opposite one another in the shape of triangles. What seems to catch the viewer's eye right away is a novelty in the depiction of Jesus Christ whose figure appears very small in relation to the empty space of its golden background.

The icon is known to be directly connected to the count of Chimay, Philippe de Croy, knight of the Golden Fleece. Serving as an envoy of Charles the Bold, the Prince of Burgundy, to the court of Ferdinand of Aragon, the king of Naples, he was presented with the icon of Christ Pantocrator by Sixtus IV during his visit to Rome. Some scholars point out that the icon of Chimay might be one of the seven icons presented to St Peter Basilica by Bessarion (1403–1472), the archbishop of Nice, later a Roman cardinal, a humanist who was concerned with the unification of the Churches. He left Byzantium in 1443. The information about Bessarion's gift is confirmed by the inventories of 1462 and 1489. It is diffi-

¹³ Cf. M. Mergiali-Sahas, 'An Ultimate Wealth for Inauspicious Times: Holly Relics in Rescue of Manuel II Palaeologus' Reign', *Byzantion*, 76 (2006), pp. 264–275.

¹⁴ J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'L'art byzantin en Belgique en relation avec les Croisades', *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, 56 (1987), p. 43. On the icon of Chimay there is a text in manuscript to be found in the Section of Medieval Art in Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It is inaccessible to us at the moment: J. Buchin, *La mosaïque Byzantine de Chimay et son coffert, approche descriptive et historique, étant actuel des connaissances locales*, 2003.

cult, however, to determine unambiguously that the icon of Christ Pantocrator was indeed among the works of art presented to the Roman basilica.¹⁵

Another icon brought from Rome is an image of the Holy Face of Christ, a South Slavic work of the early thirteenth century, kept at present in the treasure vault of Laon cathedral.¹⁶ The work (44 x 40 cm) was executed in tempera on cedar wood. It depicts the Face of Christ against a golden background. Christ's face, with dark eyes and symmetrically falling half-long curls of undulating hair on either side and a centre-parted beard, is surrounded by a cross nimbus. In either upper corner we can perceive an inscription, as in the case of the icon of Chimay, while at the bottom there is an inscription in Slavonic: "The face of the Lord on the Cloth".¹⁷ The whole is presented on the stretched cloth with rhombic decoration.

The history of the image is as follows: in 1249 Sybilla, the abbess of the Cistercian convent of Montreuil-en-Thiérache asked her brother Jacques Pantaleon de Troyes, the papal chaplain and treasurer, later the pope Urban IV (1261–1264) for a miraculous image of the Holy Face of Christ impressed on the veil of Veronica from St Peter's Basilica in Rome.¹⁸ As Hans Belting remarks, this put Jacques de Troyes in an awkward situation because he could not remove the relic from Rome. He thus presented his sister with an icon representing the Face of Christ and emphasized that he sent it "in place of the Veronica".¹⁹ The work remained in France until around the mid-seventeenth century. It was then moved to the convent of Montreuil-les-Dames La Neuville, not far from Laon, where it was placed in a silver reliquary. In 1792 it was sent to the parish church and since 1795 it has been kept in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Laon.

The subject of pictures considered marvelous due to their genesis — that is, "not-made-by-human-hand", such as the image of Christ's Face impressed on a veil — is a complex problem with a huge amount of literature.²⁰ The significance of these pictures

¹⁵ A. Effenberger, 'Images of Personal Devotion: Miniature Mosaic and Steatite Icons', in: *Byzantium. Faith and Power...*, p. 211.

¹⁶ A. Grabar, *La sainte face de Laon. Le Mandylion dans l'art orthodoxe*, Prague 1931.

¹⁷ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A history of the Image before an Era of Art*, transl. E. Jephcott, Chicago 1994, p. 218.

¹⁸ Cf.: H. Wojtyska, 'Kult Świętego Oblicza Chrystusa', in: *Kult Męki Pańskiej. Historia i terażniejszość. Materiały z sesji naukowej w Olsztynie 3–4 marca 2001*, ed. H. Wojtyska, Olsztyn 2001, pp. 205–217.

¹⁹ H. Belting, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

²⁰ As we mentioned at the beginning of this text, we limit ourselves to drawing attention to certain interesting phenomena. To further study the question related to representing the Holy Face and how widespread this iconographic motif was in the Middle Ages on the territories under discussion see: G. Wolf, 'From Mandylion to Veronica: Picturing the «Disembodied» Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West', in: *The Holy Face and Paradox of Representation. Papers from a Colloquium Held at the Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome, and the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1996*, ed. by H. L. Kessler and G. Wolf, Bologna 1998, pp. 153–179; M. Smeyers, 'An Eyckian Vera Icon in a Brugges Book of Hours, ca. 1450 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 421)', in: *Serta devota. In memoriam Guillelmi Lourdaux*, ed. W. Verbeke, Louvain 1995, pp. 195–224; E. Balicka-Witakowska, 'The Holy Face of Edessa on the Frame of the *Volto Santo* of Genoa: the Literary and Pictorial Sources', in: *Interaction and Isolation in Late Byzan-*

rose considerably in periods of intensifying iconoclastic tendencies. The defenders of icons employed the marvelous pictures as a weighty argument: if Christ, so to speak, "painted" his Face himself, there is no satisfactory counter-argument to prove that depicting His image is inappropriate.²¹

The case of marvelous images painted by St Luke and depicting Virgin Mary with the Holy Infant is similar. We refer here to a belief that Virgin Mary had, presumably, been portrayed during her lifetime. In the Middle Ages the portrait was kept in Constantinople and was copied many times.²² It was believed that several such pictures could also be found in the medieval Rome. At some point it was supposed that St Luke painted portraits of Mary in different poses which corresponded to particular iconographic types.²³ In many cases we encounter legends according to which the supernatural intervention of God led to the finishing of a work. When St Luke falls asleep when painting the picture, angels sent from heaven finish working on the painting for him. Not only did the pointing to the marvelous genesis of the painting serve as an argument for visual representations in general, but it invested a concrete depiction with an aura of eeriness that contributed to the picture's fuller reception in popular consciousness. The story about St Luke's painting of Virgin Mary became a topos which we can encounter when studying histories of various Marian images. This was a result of a great need for direct contact with sacrum, which led to the acquisition of the status of relics by those pictures.

It must be noted that during the negotiations concerning the unification of the Eastern and Western Churches the need for depictions of Mary rose sharply. The awareness of the deepest respect owed to Virgin Mary as the Mother of God was the meeting-point of the two Churches.

One icon that has the status of a picture painted by St Luke is a Hodegetria-type image of Mary with the Infant from the treasure vault of St Pauls Cathedral in Liège. Although the work was executed in tempera on wood in Byzantium in the first half of the fourteenth century, we deal here, no doubt, with western fifteenth-century additions. The whole picture (34 x 29 cm) is covered by a silver-gilt revetment from under which only the half-length figures of God's Mother and the Infant are visible. Mary is presented frontally, as a young girl with a delicate face, with fair curly hair falling from under a maphorion, her eyes directed towards the Infant. Her left hand supports the Son, while her right hand is presented in a gesture in which her three fingers point to Him. Mary is clad in a violet robe, she has

tine Culture. Papers Read at Colloquium Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul 1–5 December, 1999, ed. J. Rosenqvist, Istanbul 2004, pp. 100–132.

²¹ Cf. D. Freedberg, *Potęga wizerunków. Studia z historii i teorii oddziaływania*, transl. E. Klekot, Kraków 2005, pp. 384–434.

²² Cf. M. Skrudlik, 'Legenda o świętym Łukaszu malarzu Najświętszej Panny', *Ateneum Kapłańskie*, 21 (1928), pp. 436–455.

²³ R. Cormack, *Malowanie duszy. Ikony, maski pośmiertne i całuny*, transl. K. Kwaśniewicz, Kraków 1999, pp. 50–51.

a maphorion on her head, underneath which she wears something in the manner of a veil. Over the robe and the veil are scattered golden stars—remnants of the original, Eastern depiction. The infant is presented in three-quarter length, with blond curls, in a purple-red garb, on which a geometrical design is fairly visible. With his right hand he is making the gesture of blessing, while in his left hand he has an unrolled scroll. Over the heads of the figures are silver-gilt halos. On either side, in small cartouches, are Greek letters, two (one round and one rectangular) on the left and four (three round and one rectangular) on the right. They stand for “Hodegetria” and “Jesus Christ”. The background around the figure of Mary with the Infant is covered in filigree. The frame of the picture consists of twenty small plaques (twenty rectangular and twenty square) decorated with a plaited motif. As we learn from accessible literature, the corner plaques, in which originally might have been placed representations of Four Evangelists or Church Fathers, were changed and replaced by rosette motifs with half-length depictions of St Lambert in the fifteenth century.²⁴

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the history of this picture is very limited. It is certain, however, that the picture was first recorded at the exhibition of relics in St Lambert’s Cathedral in 1489. The oldest mention of the icon reads as follows: “Primo imago Beatae Mariae depicta a Beato Luca Evangelista.” Due to the lack of source information, it is difficult to determine unequivocally how the icon found its way to Liège, and therefore we have different hypotheses concerning this problem. Tradition has it that it was presented to the cathedral by Frederick II (1212–1250). This version, however, is inconsistent with the style of the revetment dated at the first half of the fourteenth century.²⁵ It seems possible that the icon travelled to Liège during the negotiations concerning the unification of the Churches. Some scholars think that, like other Hodegetria-type eastern images of Mary with the Infant, the icon could have served as “palladium of the city”, which sheltered particular places from enemy invasions and other disasters. This might be supported by the fact of changing the plaques for the likenesses of St Lambert, an emblematic figure of the church in Liège.²⁶

The best known icon of Mary with the Infant, according to tradition painted by St Luke, but in reality a work by an artist from Ambroggio Lorenzetti’s circle and brought to France from Rome in the Middle Ages, is a depiction of Notre Dame de Grâce in the cathedral of Cambrai.²⁷ The work (35.5 x 26.5 cm) is dated to around 1340 and was executed in tempera

²⁴ J. Puraye, ‘L’icône Byzantine de la Cathédrale St. Paul à Liège’, *Revue Belge d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Art*, 9 (1939), nr 3, pp. 193–200. The author mentions also the gifts which the count of Flanders – the emperor Baldwin II – gave to the St. Lambert’s Cathedral.

²⁵ Lafontaine-Dosogne, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²⁶ *Byzantium. Faith and Power ...*, pp. 252–253, il. 150.

²⁷ Substantial body of literature exists on the icon of Cambrai. References to this peculiar depiction appear in connection with discussions on other subjects. Cf.: G. Bauman, ‘Early Flemish Portraits 1425–1525’, *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 43 (1986), nr 4, pp. 5–6; A. Chastel, ‘Medicats imaginis: Le prestige durable de l’icône en Occident’, *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 36 (1988), pp. 107–109; R. Frinta, ‘Searching for an Adriatic Painting Workshop with Byzantine Connections’, *Zograf*, 18 (1987), pp. 17–18; L. Silver, ‘Fountain and Source. A rediscovered Eycian Icon’, *Pantheon*, 1983, nr 3, p. 102.

on cedar wood. It shows the figure of Eleusa-type God's Mother with the Infant in three-quarter length against a golden background. Mary is clad in a dark blue robe with red and golden trim with pseudo-Arabic signs. On the maphorion over Mary's forehead and on her right shoulder we can see golden stars. God's Mother holds up the Infant wrapped in a purple-red garb. The Infant's face is turned towards the viewer, while his little hands stretch out towards His mother, the right one embraces her chin, while the left one touches the rim of her maphorion. Above the figures' heads we can see the elaborate punchwork of the halos, on whose either side there are Greek letters which refer to an inscription: "Mother of God, Jesus Christ".

As far as the history of the icon is concerned, it is certain that in 1440 Canon Fursy de Bruille brought it from Rome. It is also known that he received it as a present from Jean Allarmet, the cardinal of Brogny and the pope's legate to the Council of Constance (1414–1418). The second half of the fifteenth century witnessed the development of the cult of Notre Dame de Grâce. In 1451, on the eve of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the icon was moved with pomp to the chapel of the Holy Trinity, while in 1453 a brotherhood was founded whose aim was to take care of and worship the marvelous image that was first carried in a procession in 1455, during the holiday of Assumption.²⁸ The fame of the marvellous icon attracted contemporary celebrities such as Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, and King Louis XI to Cambrai. The most interesting episode in the history of the icon are two mysterious commissions for copies of the marvellous image of Cambrai. In 1454 Jean de Bourgogne the count of Estampes ordered three copies from Petrus Christus for the sum of twenty pounds. A year later the chapter of the cathedral commissioned twelve copies from Hayne of Brussels for the sum of twelve pounds.²⁹

The copies of the icon of Notre Dame de Grâce became the focus of attention of many scholars on account of the riddle of Jean de Bourgogne's commission, which has not been solved so far. Historians of art have attempted to give an answer to the question of what so many copies of the marvelous image were needed for. Why was Petrus Christus paid twenty pounds for three copies, whereas Hayne of Brussels received only one pound for each copy? Another question with which the scholars are preoccupied is the problem of attribution of the 15th-century copies.

In the accessible literature we encounter a fairly interesting hypothesis concerning the commission by Jean de Bourgogne. As it is well known, the year 1454 is a time just after the fall of Constantinople, when the rulers of Western Europe were discussing a possibility of organizing an expedition in order to re-conquer Constantinople from Turkish hands.³⁰ Doubtlessly, preparations for such an expeditions called for broadest possible engagement

²⁸ Belting, *op. cit.*, pp. 438–439.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 440.

³⁰ A. Grunzweig, 'Philippe le Bon et Constantinople', *Byzantion*, 24 (1954), pp. 47–61; R. Walsh, 'Charles the Bold and the Crusade: Politics and Propaganda', *Journal of Medieval History*, 3 (1977), pp. 53–86.

of members of nobility in order to amass sufficient financial means. The count of Estampes is known to have been engaged in the issues concerning the preparations for the crusade planned. In order to persuade the greatest possible number of members of Burgundy nobility to support the idea of the crusade a fund-raising events such as the Feast of Pheasant in Lille on 17 February were organized. During various celebrations spectacles were staged that were intended to show through the means of image the woes of the Church in the East, crying for help in the Turkish captivity.³¹ Jean Wilson suggests in this context that the commission for the copies of the icon of Cambrai could be directly connected to the count of Estampes' seeking for political and financial support of the crusade. The image of Mary with the Infant of Cambrai might have been "the nearest and most precious piece of the East that he had at his disposal for his efforts to raise funds for the crusade".³² Therefore the copies of the marvelous image were perhaps intended as presents for those participants of the 1454 events who had decided to join the supporters of the expedition or for those to be yet persuaded.

Several works that have survived until now can without doubt be regarded as copies of the icon of Cambrai. The painting considered the most faithful imitation of the original prototype is kept in the *Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts* in Brussels.³³ The picture from St Martin's Church in Frasnés-lez-Buissenal (Hainault) is also executed in keeping with the Byzantine convention.³⁴ The most "free" copy that conveys the style characteristic of the artist who painted the picture and artistic tendencies that reigned in Northern Europe in the fifteenth century is the work from Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City (Fig. 5).³⁵ It replicates the composition of the Cambrai icon, but the presentation of figures in the picture differs considerably from that in the Cambrai



Fig. 5. Virgin and Child, fifteenth century, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City

³¹ J. Wilson, 'Reflections on St. Luke's Hand: Icons and the nature of Aura in the Burgundian Low Countries during the Fifteenth Century', in: *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. R. Ousterhout, L. Brubaker, Urbana 1994, pp. 137.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 142.

³³ C. Périer D'Ieteren, 'Une copie de Notre Dame de Grâce de Cambrai aux Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique à Bruxelles', *Bulletin Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 17 (1968), nr 3-4, pp. 111-114.

³⁴ P. Rolland, 'La Madone Italo-Byzantine de Frasnés-le-Buissenal', *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, 17 (1947/1948), nr. 3-4, pp. 97-106.

³⁵ J. Dupont, 'Documents Hayne de Bruxelles et la copie de Notre-Dame de Grâces de Cambrai', *L'Amor de l'Art*, 6 (1935), nr 10, pp. 363-366.

painting. The artist breathed life into the image in showing Mary and the Infant embracing, with glances full of tenderness, the gentleness of their gestures (the Infant delicately supports Mary's chin with His little hand). The softly falling folds leave no room for doubt that we are dealing here with a kind of realism. Despite the golden background, the stiffness and hieratic character of the depiction has disappeared. There is also the issue of, so to speak, the "added" lower part of the representation—below the half-length figure of Mary, in the golden background we can see a coat of arms side by side with the inscription "Maria mater gracie/mater misericordiae/Tu nos ab hoste protégé/et ora mortis suscipe/O mater dei memento mei."

Due to the lack of source information that would enable us to determine unambiguously which of the previously mentioned artists could be the author of the copy in question, various scholars have come up with conflicting hypotheses that attribute the copy to Hayne of Brussels or Petrus Christus.³⁶ In our discussion we intend to avoid relating and evaluating their arguments because the aim of the present article is not adjudicating the problems concerning the attribution of the work but only to use it to draw attention to an interesting process of adapting and transforming certain motifs from Eastern painting to suit the quickly changing religious needs of fifteenth-century society in Western Europe.

Graphic art played not-so-small role in the process of disseminating the images showing Christ Pantocrator, His Holy Face, and Hodegetria- or Eleusa-type images of Mary with the Infant. Both in miniature painting and board painting of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we encounter a great deal of images whose prototypes were icons. The best example of this phenomenon are paintings executed in the years 1455–1460 by Dieric Bouts (Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York) and Rogier van der Weyden (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) that show a half-length figure of Mary with the Infant (Figs. 6–7).³⁷

In both pictures God's Mother is shown as a young girl with beautiful and subtle features with her eyes, full of love, directed at the Infant she embraces. The composition of these works could be described as a distant echo of Eleusa-type icons of Mary, but we face completely different representations. In both cases the half-figures fill the whole space of the work and, as it were, do not fit its frame and seem to step outside, beyond it, which, so to speak, makes them closer to the viewer. We can observe tremendous changes in the way the figures into which the artist breathed life are shown. Evidence can be found in delicate wrinkles in the necks of Mary and the Infant, and their blushing cheeks. Mary's headgear, the narrow headband of which in the case of Rogier's painting is studded with flower-shaped jewels, is pushed back so that her long, brown hair waving down her shoulders is visible. Figures in the pictures are presented in such a way that, especially in Dieric Bouts's

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 363. Cf. Rolland, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104.

³⁷ Out of necessity we limit ourselves to presenting only two pictures even as we are aware how huge is the illustration material on the basis of which the phenomenon in question could be analyzed. Cf. Belting, *op. cit.*, pp. 409–457.



Fig. 6. Dieric Bouts, *Mary with the Infant*, second half of fifteen century, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York



Fig. 7. Rogier van der Weyden, *Mary with the Infant*, second half of fifteen century, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

works, they can be mistaken for portraits of women with children; the signs of sanctity are impossible to find — above the heads of the Mother and her Son there are no halos and the golden backgrounds have disappeared.

Sixten Ringbom makes a very pertinent comment on the function of this type of representation. Therefore, it seems justified to quote his words: “The intimate quality of the half-length icon made it particularly well suited for the private devotion and profound empathy of the individual. Its character of a «close up» gave to meditation the immediacy of a quiet conversation; it had the «nearness» so dear to the Good-seeking devout”.³⁸ It is general knowledge that a need for this type of depiction was growing along with the *devotio moderna* that, in the period in question, was spreading all over Western Europe, especially in the Netherlands. It was of a more practical, Christocentric character that emphasized imitating Christ through a deep internal relationship to God.³⁹ Contact with the Creator, coming nearer to Him, were facilitated by meditation in front of pictures in which both Christ and His Mother were shown not in a symbolic manner but rather as creatures very much like people living on the earth. As a result, sanctity did not seem an unattainable

³⁸ S. Ringbom, *Icon to narrative. The rise of the dramatic close-up in fifteen century devotional painting*, Abo 1965, pp. 48; Cf. Idem, ‘Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions. Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety’, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 73 (1969), pp. 159–170.

³⁹ For detailed information on the founders and characteristic features of *devotio moderna* See: W. Bielak, *Devotio moderna w polskich traktatach duszpasterskich powstałych do połowy XV wieku*, Lublin 2002.

sphere, solely a domain of monks and hermits, but as a road for which everybody is called. It became accessible to every pious person who did good deeds.

As we mentioned above, in order to understand causes of the penetration of pictures made in the East into Western Europe in the Middle Ages, and then copying and transformation of particular motifs to suit the new religious needs of the West, we must take into account the complex situation in Europe at that time as a whole. Contacts between the East and the West, negotiations concerning the unification of the Churches, marriages of the Byzantine emperors with daughters of Latin rulers, all this facilitated the penetration of Northern Europe by the images of Byzantine or Italo-Byzantine origin. Out of necessity we made a very succinct and brief presentation of several icons that in the Middle Ages found their way to the area that is now situated on the border of contemporary Belgium and France. Unfortunately, we do not have at our disposal a complete knowledge of the historical facts concerning these icons. Therefore we often attempt to reconstruct those facts on the basis of scarce information derived from mentions in sources and we are also compelled to provide connections as is the case with the presumable relation between the image of St Lambert in the icon of Liège and the role the picture might have played at moments difficult for the city.

While our considerations begin with a quotation from Villehardouin's chronicle that testified to the palladium function of the famous God's Mother Hodegetria image from Constantinople, it is worth pointing to an interesting issue at the end. A history of the representation of God's Mother of Cambrai and its copies discussed above shows that precisely two hundred and fifty years later (1454) the work of eastern provenance might have been used in raising funds for an expedition to re-conquer Constantinople. An analogy can be observed. Although we deal here with another icon of Mary with the Infant, it was also playing the role of palladium. The graphic art of seventeenth century and later epochs could be adduced here. The marvelous image might have also been functioning in the popular consciousness as crucial for saving Byzantium.

perhaps solely a domain of monks and hermits, but as a road for which everybody is asked.

It became a road for everybody who followed it. As we have seen, the road was made in the first place by the monks and hermits, but it was not only they who followed it. The road was made in the first place by the monks and hermits, but it was not only they who followed it. The road was made in the first place by the monks and hermits, but it was not only they who followed it.

While our consideration begins with a quotation from Villanueva's classic that led to the alleged canon of the future (and, indeed, the past) of the Christian religion, it is worth pointing to an important consequence of the canonization of God's Mother of Comfort and its consequences for the way in which the canon of the future (and, indeed, the past) of the Christian religion was determined. The canonization of God's Mother of Comfort and its consequences for the way in which the canon of the future (and, indeed, the past) of the Christian religion was determined.

²⁶ B. Villanueva, *San Juan de los Rios*. The title of the dramatic work is *San Juan de los Rios*, 1907, pp. 48, 53, 100. The official language was Spanish. The title of the play in Latin is *San Juan de los Rios*, *Guatemala de los Rios*, 75 (1907), pp. 100-101.

²⁷ The detailed information on the canonization and the canonization of the canon of the future (and, indeed, the past) of the Christian religion is given in W. J. B. *San Juan de los Rios*, *Guatemala de los Rios*, 75 (1907), pp. 100-101.

The Pedagogic Function of the Icon in the Modern World

Adriana Adamska, Cracow

The icon is usually associated with the religious imagery and practice of the Orthodox Church. In fact, however, the icon is part of the legacy of the entire Church as the period when the first icons were made pre-dates the Great Schism (1054); not only was the early church not divided, but it actually focused its whole energy on calling the first councils and consolidating doctrine¹. This shared legacy gives the icon its ecumenical potential.

At present we are witnessing the renaissance of the icon and great interest in its significance. The icon is much more than a mere illustration of the Holy story. It is a kind of medium, a launching pad that projects us towards the trans-empirical, and makes it possible for us to explore and derive happiness from it.

Everyone pursues happiness. Through its transcendent beauty, the icon makes it possible for us to approach perfect happiness and in this way it realizes its preventive potential, which is so central to pedagogy. In this paper the author tries to focus on the pedagogical potential of the icon, which by means of its sheer artistic merit becomes an important tool for propagation of universal values.

The word *icon* derives from the Greek word *eikon*, which means "picture", "image", "portrait" in the broadest sense of the word. In the Byzantine Empire, the term icon was applied to every figurative description of Mary, Jesus, the disciples, saints and angels as well as events from the Holy story. Today, the term is used with reference to easel painting, sculpture, mosaics and other works of art which are not necessarily closely bound up with architecture. This is how today the icon is perceived by the fields of archaeology and art history².

¹ O. Popowa, E. Smirnova, P. Cortesi, *Ikony*, Warszawa 1998, p. 7.

² T. Jank, *Krótką historią niejednej ikony*, Gdańsk 1998, p. 11; L. Uspiński, *Teologia ikony*, Poznań 1993, p. 7; T. D. Łukaszuk, *Obraz święty – ikona w życiu, w wierze i w teologii Kościoła. Zarys teologii świętego obrazu*, Częstochowa 1993, p. 5.

Within the classification of the Orthodox Church the criteria specifying what can be regarded as an icon are more rigid: the icon must be painted on a wooden board and made using a specific technique in keeping with a codified and time-honoured rules which constitute the iconographic canon³.

An icon is like a window into supernatural reality. There are many things in theology which cannot be put in words and icons make it possible to transcend the boundaries of the visible and move towards a mystical experience. The icon can be seen as a fragment of metaphysical reality, which fills the vision of the world with beauty. One of the functions of the icon is to show the secrets of faith and it brings forward the image of eternal life, which is the Kingdom of Beauty⁴. There is no place for falsehood, violence or using other people in this world. If, in the future, man wants to live in this reality, he has to learn all its rules now. The Scriptures instruct us about these rules and prepare people for life in a better world, in a process that starts during our lifetime.

The icon helps to make the message of the Holy Bible more realistic and in it, the invisible becomes visible⁵. It also gives people a real experience of beauty, which has a stronger power of argument than persuasions and verbal instructions. God and man come together in the icon to remind us that there is a world, where there is no unpleasantness, old age, or diseases and nobody is in danger because of enemy, the icon is a card and the label of this world.

The artistic legacy of the monk-painter Andrej Rublov, who lived at turn of fifteenth century is an example of supreme achievement in the thousand-year old iconographic tradition. What had preceded Rublov's work, and what followed it finds its ideal in the few works by Rublov which have survived. The above-mentioned examples are an attempt at addressing the needs of our contemporaries, who, though benefiting from all the material goods the today's world with its technically advanced civilization can offer, realize that they cannot quench the thirst that they feel, whether or not they are aware of it.

The Icon of the Holy Trinity executed by Andrej Rublov has aroused keen interest of Christians, adherents of other religious traditions, and non-believers, all of whom perceive the beauty and power that radiate from it. This icon is so wonderful that even those who are hostile (to religion) are reduced to deferential silence and adoration when gazing at it. No other icon has invited so much commentary. It remains a highly original work of art, even though it is thoroughly traditional, since at its deepest level, it remains absolutely inimitable⁶.

³ Uspienski, *Teologia ikony*, p. 7.

⁴ P. Florenski, *Ikonostas i inne szkice*, Warszawa 1981, p. 126.

⁵ P. Evdokimov, *Prawosławie*, Warszawa 1964, p. 245.

⁶ G. Bunge, *Inny Paraklet. Ikona Trójcy Świętej mnicha-malarza Andreja Rublowa*, Kraków 2001, p. 9; *Katechizm Kościoła Prawosławnego*, Kraków 2001, p. 92; cf. G. V. Popov, *Adrei Rublov*, Moscow 2007.

The favourite motif which has come to be used to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity was the motif of God's three messengers visiting Abraham and Sarah under the oaks in Mare (Genesis 18, 1–3). One of these angels, who is three angels at the same time symbolizing the Holy Trinity, comes to man to remind him of what is most fundamentally true about him, i. e. that he is a religious creature. God becomes a guest in order to be recognized by man. By visiting man, he makes it possible for him to break free from his confinement and draws him into a love relationship described in *Song of Solomon*; thanks to this relationship it becomes possible for man to transmute his infirmity⁷.

God is revealed to everybody who is gazing at this icon. God enters his house like a guest, but in a fairly surprising way, like in the story, he becomes the host. In this way, the relationship is reversed; the one who receives is himself received and assumed, in this case into the communion of the three persons (of the Holy Trinity), as if he himself were a guest⁸.

The oblong shapes of the bodies may imply the persons are men, but their faces might just as well be those of twin sisters. The heads of the Angels bow down to one another in humility. None of them assume a domineering pose. The faces of the angels are full of freshness and eternal youth⁹. There is not even a trace of exhaustion (on their faces). The shape of their shoulders suggests complete relaxation. Their concentrated faces radiate with tenderness and thoughtfulness¹⁰. The three persons making up the Holy Trinity have come down not just to communicate to Abraham the good news of the birth of his son, but also to serve as an example of unity, harmony and generosity. In Rublov's Holy Trinity man and God, instead of being opposed to each other, are in fact related¹¹.

The Angels sitting at the table create a picture of love, freedom, a timeless and most intimate relationship. It is a picture of beauty, which contemporary man misses so much. Abraham's house is a place where God lives with man. The oak of Mamre is the three of life, but the mountain appears as a symbol of spiritual elevation and contemplation¹².

The icon shows the beauty of God which man cannot resist or take away. Man always wants to have greater share of this beauty – the beauty, which is the symbol of God. God invites man to experience the happiness of His presence. In fact, the table where the Angels are sitting can have continuity in time and space. There is a place for everyone who wants to share this community of love. Just as when metal is put into fire, it assumes its features; when man comes into contact with God, his heart is purified and develops a higher taste for perfection.

⁷ T. Špidlik, M. I. Rupnik, *Mowa obrazów*, Warszawa 2001, p. 23, 24, 25, 27, 28.

⁸ B. Standaert, *Ikona Trójcy Świętej Andreja Rublowa*, Bydgoszcz 1995, p. 14.

⁹ J. Forest, *Modlitwa z ikonami*, Bydgoszcz 1999, p. 149.

¹⁰ B. Standaert, *op. cit.*, p. 24–25.

¹¹ M. W. Alpatow, *Rublow*, Warszawa 1975, p. 48.

¹² Forest, *op. cit.*, p. 149; H. J. M. Noumen, *Ujrzyć piękno Pana modląc się z ikonami*, Warszawa 1998, p. 19.

The Saviour of Zvienigorod written by Andrej Rublov is another dazzling masterpiece of Russian medieval art. despite the fact that only some fragments of this unusual picture have survived up till now, the perfection of its form, its inner clarity and force are amazing¹³.

When looking at the icon for the first time, one can find Christ's face manifesting amidst great chaos. The face which "is looking at the ruins of this world is sad yet beautiful"¹⁴. It seems that Christ wants to attract the gaze of the one who is looking at His face; He wants to get in touch with us. The face of *The Saviour* is looking at us with attention and discernment, but this look does not arouse fear or guilt. It gives the experience of a kind of perfection and tells us about a tender care of Somebody, who always and everywhere looks after a man.

The Saviour's eyes of Adrej Rublow are not sentimental, reproachful, they are mild instead. These eyes belong to God, who is the all-seeing and all-understanding Father. When standing before Him, it is impossible to hide the truth. He knows the most secret hiding-places of man's heart, but in spite of this, He does not stop loving man with His Divine mercy. There is no severity in His eyes¹⁵.

The power of this picture lies in its radiation of love, warmth and harmony. All these things arouse in the viewer the feelings of the highest love, as well as never-ending human goodness. Because of their severity, most Greek and Russian icons arouse fear. They emphasize the glory of God's majesty so much, that man feels humiliated and he realizes how unworthy of God he is. Rublov's icon gives an impression that Christ is coming down from His throne, touching man's shoulder's and inviting man to stand up and follow Him and become as beautiful as God¹⁶. Christ's face awakens in our heart not only love and confidence, but also regret, because not everybody is able to love as much as God can.

This picture shows the deepest desires of human's heart and it encourages man to go towards Absolute beauty through goodness, truth and love in his every day life. Rublov's Christ is a sophisticated combination of intelligence, firmness, thoughtfulness, power and beauty – features, which are unparalleled anywhere in the material world. All these features are very attractive to every one. Man can see the shining face of God through the ruins of our material world, when hatred, envy and enmity hold sway. God's face cannot be destroyed by violence, anger or war.

According to H. J. M. Nouwen, looking at *The Saviour* is an event occurring where contemplation and compassion have become unified with each other. This experience directs man to what is most human, but at the same time most divine, and helps him to achieve and develop desirable values¹⁷.

¹³ W. Pługin, *Wielcy malarze świata. Andrej Rublow*, Leningrad-Warszawa 1987, p. 6.

¹⁴ Noumen, *op. cit.*, p. 44-45.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52; Gry, Neményi, *op. cit.*, Warszawa 1979, p. 10.

¹⁶ Noumen, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49, 50, 55.

Rublov regarded the world with love, tenderness and understanding. The colours in the icons he painted are delightful, delicate and noble and through their spiritual elevation they communicate powerfully what the person gazing at the icon could never discern themselves. The lyricism of their imagery shows great sensitivity to what is the most intimate in man. These works are artistically perfect, but at the same time they do not allow one to forget that the source of their perfection is a tenderness of the heart.

The icon manifests the transcendent world, a world that lies beyond religious rifts as regardless of differences in the doctrine we are all children of one God. The artistic and spiritual beauty of the icon, which draws people towards it by transcending denominational differences, create unity and communion; that is why it is important to disseminate its presence and message in the reality of everyday life.

Not only does the icon develop this interest in a beauty which is eternal, but also makes it possible for man to experience it and in this way arouse his higher needs. Considering various pedagogical techniques, one cannot ignore the educational potential of the icon in this context.

Изображения святых в современной иконописи Венгрии с точки зрения иконографии и иконологии

Марта Надь (Marta Nagy), Debrecen

Венгрия в основном католическая страна, но в ней живут и христиане восточного обряда – православные и греко-католики. Иконопись, созданная в Венгрии связана с их религиозной практикой. Православные живут в Венгрии как этническое меньшинство. Это сербы, греки, македвлахи (влахи)¹, румыны и болгары. Они начали селиться на территории Венгрии еще в XIV веке, последними, в 50-х гг. XX века, появились греки. Греко-католики первоначально тоже были православными, по национальности русины и румыны. Но с течением времени они ассимилировались с венграми и присоединились к римско-католической церкви. К греко-католической церкви в наши дни принадлежат только венгры. Надо заметить, что и в среде православных имеются венгры, они называют себя «венгерскими православными». Расцвет церковного искусства всех этих групп приходится на XVIII век и характеризуется сильным барочным влиянием.

«Восточно-христианское» искусство в Венгрии оживилось в 80-е гг. XX века, а особенно после политического переворота в 1989 году. Было построено несколько новых церквей, а интерьеры старых были обновлены. Были построены также новые иконостасы и написаны новые иконы. Уровень этих работ весьма разный, но этот вопрос не будет затрагиваться в рамках данной статьи.

Национальность мастеров новых икон самая разная. Характерно то, что для православных греков, румын и др. работают иконописцы той же национальности, т. е. мастера греческого и румынского происхождения, приглашенные из материнской страны. Бывает, правда, редко, что и для греко-католиков-венгров работают православные мастера не венгерского происхождения. Более характерно, однако, что

¹ Македвлахи являются потомками народа, который происходит из совмещения местных жителей (траков и иллирей) Балкана и романских завоевателей.

иконописцы-венгры пишут для них иконы. Стиль новых икон – неовизантийский, общепринятый во всем православном мире в XX–XXI веках.

В иконах греко-католиков–венгров и венгерских православных особенно популярны изображения святых венгерского происхождения, причисленных к лику святых православной церковью. Изображения этих святых появились уже в наше время, раньше их не было в иконописи Венгрии. Сюда можно отнести икону, изображающую Моисея Угрин (1. илл.). Он жил в XI веке при великокняжеском дворе Владимира Святого в Киеве и вместе со своими братьями Ефремом и Георгием стал святым русской церкви. В русском искусстве мало изображений св. Моисея, если есть, то это не иконы, а гравюры XVI–XVII вв.² Его новое изображение – в опоре на его житие – обогащает иконографию этого святого новым мотивом – жестом благословения соединенным одновременно с жестом покровительства (жест вытянутой руки). Этот мотив – жест покровительства венгерского святого православной церкви – исключительно важен и ценен для венгерских православных, заказавших эту икону.

К числу святых православной церкви венгерского происхождения относится и Пирошка (Piroska), дочь венгерского короля св. Ласло, которая стала женой византийского императора Иоанна Комнина II (XII в.), причисленная византийской церковью к лику святых как св. Ирина³. В византийском искусстве немного ее изображений, одно из самых известных это мозаика собора св. Софии в Константинополе XII века (2. илл.). Современные иконописные изображения св. Ирины (3. илл.) являются ее первыми представлениями на деревянной доске. Они наследуют ее мозаичное изображение и представляют святую с молодым лицом, в пыш-



Илл 1. Моисей Угрин, (Magyar Mózes), 2007, Nagyboldogaszony-székesegyház, Budapest

² M. Nagy, 'Magyar Mózes, az ortodox egyház szentje', *Magyar Sion Új Folyam*, 1 (2007), nr 2, с. 189–195.

³ G. Nagymihályi, *Árpádházi Szent Piroska, az idegen szent*, Budapest, 2007.



Илл 2. Св. Ирина, XII в., деталь мозаики, собор св. Софии, Стамбул



Илл 3. Св. Ирина (Piroska), нач. XX в. Деталь иконы, греко-католическая церковь, Ózd

ной императорской одежде, с короной на голове и со свитком в руке, как это было принято для изображений императриц в византийском искусстве. В современных образах, как и в старых, св. Ирина изображается с характерной рыжей косой, ее главной отличительной чертой. В других современных представлениях (4. илл.) святая держит в руках модель церкви монастыря Пантократора, которые были основаны ей и ее мужем. Это также является новым мотивом в иконографии св. Ирины.

В образах святых венгерского происхождения, появляющихся в наши дни в иконописи Венгрии, подчеркивается чувство венгерской национальности, с одной стороны, а с другой, принадлежность к православной церкви как венгров греко-католиков, так и православных.

В частности, эта последняя мысль выражается и в образах Хиеротеоса (Hierotheosz) (5. илл.), первого епископа Венгрии, хотя и невенгерского происхождения⁴, возведенного в этот сан византийским патриархом в X веке, ведь венгры первоначально познакомились с христианством в его византийской форме. Хиеротеос был причислен к лику святых византийским патриархом в 2000 году в связи с тысячелетием Венгерского государства. После этого появились его первые изображения. Его изображают не только епископом в пышном архиерейском облачении, но и в образе

⁴ F. Berki, 'Magyar ortodoxok', [в:] *Keleti kereszténység Magyarországon*, ред. T. Doncsev, Budapest, 2007, с. 51–52.

монаха (6. илл.). В связи с этим можно говорить о создании в наши дни разных иконографических типов этого святого.

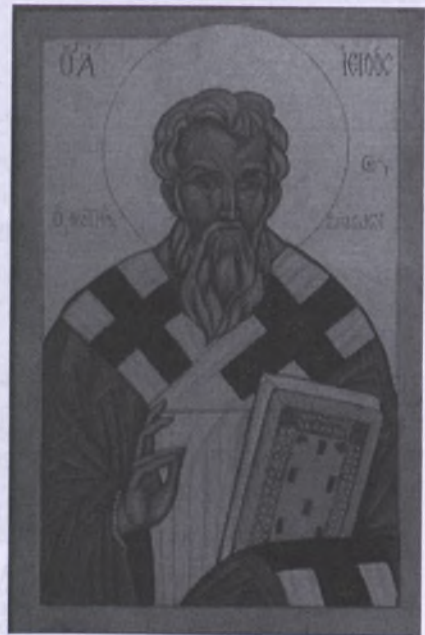
В связи с тысячелетием государственности в Венгрии в иконописи венгерских греко-католиков и православных появились образы св. Иштвана, первого короля Венгрии в X-XI веках, принявшего христианство по римскому обряду. Причина того, что именно по поводу венгерского Миллениума появлялись его иконные образы, заключается в том, что именно в это время – после Рима – и константинопольский патриарх канонизировал его.

Св. Иштван представлен в двух иконографических типах⁵. Написанная на Афоне в связи с канонизацией св. Иштвана икона (7. илл.) стала прототипом для последующих икон. Она представляет святого в пышной королевской одежде, с двойным «апостольским» крестом, свидетельствующим о нем, как о распространителе христианской веры, с мечом в руках как защитника христианской веры, и короной на голове, свидетельствующей о его королевском достоинстве и одновременно о его принадлежности к горнему миру.

Другой иконографический тип представляет Иштвана в первую очередь не как короля, а как человека (8. илл), который, оставаясь без наследника (его сын умер в молодом возрасте), предлагал свою корону, символизирующую самое великое достижение его жизни – Венгрию как христианскую страну, под покровительство Богородицы. Поэтому он изображен снявшим корону с головы и держащим ее в руке. Его жест угоден небесному миру, что выражается в исходящих от Богородицы сияющих лучах, озаряющих корону в руках Иштвана.



Илл. 4. Св. Ириша (Piroska), нач. XX в., частное собрание



Илл. 5. Св. Хиеротеос (Hierotheosz), нач. XX в., частное собрание

⁵ M. Nagy, 'Szent István ereklyetartó ikonja a budapesti Nagyboldogasszony-székesegyházban', *Theológiai Szemle*, 3 (2006), с. 172–175.

В изображениях св. Иштвана, канонизированного и западной и восточной церквями выражена мысль о принадлежности в одинаковой мере и западному и восточному христианству.

Апофеозом этой мысли является композиция традиционного византийского типа (9. илл.) с изображением посередине сидящей на троне Богородицы с Младенцем и стоящими справа и слева от нее св. Иштваном с короной в руке (символ западно-христианской Венгрии) и св. Hierotheosz-ем с моделью храма, к сожалению уже не существующего, в руках (символ восточно-христианских корней венгерского христианства).

В иконах венгерских греко-католиков часто изображаются святые, причисленные к лику святых католической церковью, но не канонизированные православной. Иконы этих святых не имеют иконографического прототипа в византийском искусстве, святые изображаются с теми же атрибутами, что и в католической живописи. Иконы этих святых являются первыми их представлениями в иконописи Венгрии.

Эти иконы разделяются на две группы. К первой относятся иконы венгерских святых. Иконописцы стараются создавать их образы при помощи разных мотивов,



Илл. 6. Св. Хиеротеос (Hierotheosz), нач. XX в., деталь иконы, греко-католическая церковь, Ózd

заимствуемых из византийской иконописи. Так, например, в иконе св. Ласло⁶, отца св. Ирины, святой представлен в хитоне и гиматии, типичном одеянии византийских святых, в руке же держит жезл – атрибут, заимствованный из его католической иконографии. А на иконе святой Маргит, жившей в XIII веке⁷, святая представлена в типичной одежде византийских святых, в мафории, и с цветами в руке, атрибутом, взятом из ее католической иконографии. Святая Маргит изображается и в другом иконографическом типе (10. илл.), более прибли-

⁶ J. Török, *A magyar föld szentjei*, Budapest, 1991.

⁷ *Ibid.*



Илл. 7. Св. Иштван (István), 2000, Szent István bazilika, Esztergom



Илл. 8. Св. Иштван (István), 2005, Nagyboldogasszony-székesegyház, Budapest

женном к католической иконографии. На этой иконе она одета в монашеское облачение западного образца, а в руке держит латинский крест. Святая стоит на маленьком островке в окружении воды, символизирующем осторов на Дунае, где она жила. На заднем плане композиции вырисовывается панорама города Эстергома, центра венгерского католицизма.

К другой группе относятся иконы святых, популярных в римской церкви, но не венгерского происхождения. Сюда можно отнести изображение св. Иосифа, представленного с характерными для католической иконографии атрибутами, Младенцем и лилией, но в одежде восточного образца, хитоне и гиматии. В связи с появлением образа Иосифа появляются и иконные образы Святого семейства. Бывает и так, что иконописцы выбирают не восточную, а западную иконографию конкретного святого. Так например св. Христофор изображается не с собачьей головой, как в византийском искусстве, но стоящим в реке, с Младенцем на плечах, как в католической иконографии.

Эти иконы с образами святых западной церкви ясно отражают двойное положение – и не только с точки зрения искусства – греко-католиков венгров между восточными и западными христианскими церквями.



Илл. 9. Восседающая на троне Богоматерь с Младенцем, св. Иштваном и св. Хиеротеосом, нач. XX в., шелк, греко-католическая гимназия, Hajdúdorog

Наряду с этими изображениями имеются иконы, к сожалению немногочисленные, восходящие к образцам собственно венгерской греко-католической традиции. Таких икон немного и современные иконописцы используют в качестве прототипов только самые известные образцы. Так, часто обращаются к чудотворному образу Богоматери из церкви Mágiarócs 1676 г.⁸ (11, 12. илл.).

Суммируя сказанное, стоит еще раз подчеркнуть, что современные иконописцы Венгрии свободно и смело выбирают образцы для своих икон из всей христианской иконографии. Этот выбор является сознательным но более несознательным.

Изображением своих национальных святых православные этнические меньшинства пытаются подчеркнуть свою национальную идентичность (греки, к примеру – представлением св. Нектариоса святого новой Греции). То же стремление объясняет приглашение этническими православными меньшинствами иконописцев со своей исторической родины.

В современной иконописи венгерских православных и венгров– греко-католиков появляются изображения православных святых венгерского происхождения. В этом явлении можно усмотреть поиски не только национальной, но и религи-

⁸ M. Nagy, *Icon Painting in Hungary*, Debrecen, 2000, с. 108–111.

озной идентификации с подчеркиванием его восточно-христианских корней, то есть, эти группы хотят жить восточно-христианами как венгры.

С другой стороны, изображение католических святых в иконах венгров-греко-католиков можно объяснить желанием найти свое место между западными и восточными христианскими церквями, т.е найти свою религиозную идентичность.

Еще следует обратить внимание на следующее: изображения вышеупомянутых святых являются новыми в иконописи Венгрии, раньше образов их не было. Это указывает на то, что идеи выраженные при помощи этих фигур возникли именно в нашу эпоху.



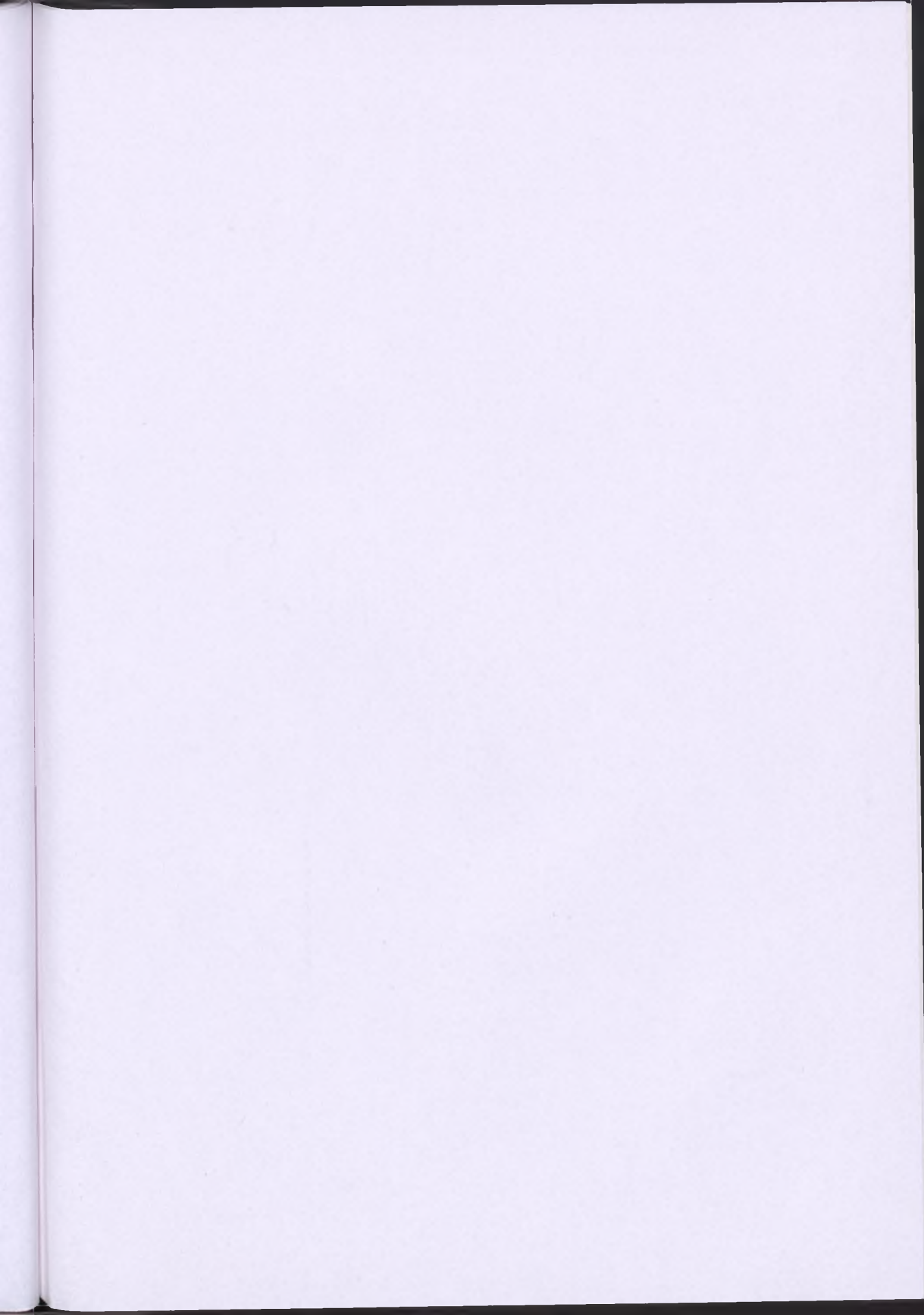
Илл. 10. Св. Маргит (Margit), нач. XX в., частная собрание



Илл. 11. Богоматерь с Младенцем из церкви Máriarócs, 1676, Szent István dóm, Bécs



Илл. 12. Pócsi Mária, нач. XX в., частное собрание



один изобьет ритмички с квадратными или с другими криволинейными линиями, то есть, структура хитов была предельно криволинейна по центру.

С другой стороны, квадратные или другие формы сходят в изгибах венгров-сербов-болгаров, которые пытались соединить набухшие формы между квадратными и криволинейными при помощи изгибных, т.е. набухших форм, чтобы сделать их более гибкими.

Важно отметить, что на рис. 10 и 11, которые являются примерами изобразительных форм, которые кажутся, являются в изобилии фигурок, рисуют образцы на рис. 10 и 11, что указывает на то, что эти образы являются при помощи рис. 10. Фигур кажутся изобразительными рисунками.



Рис. 10. Мирисе Покс (Mirisje Poks), рис. XX в. (ссылка на рис. 10)



Рис. 11. Мирисе Покс (Mirisje Poks), рис. XX в. (ссылка на рис. 11)



Рис. 12. Мирисе Покс (Mirisje Poks), рис. XX в. (ссылка на рис. 12)



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