ORTHODOX THEOLOGY AND SACRED ART IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE IN IX-XIII CENTURIES

Prof. PhD. CRISTIAN GAGU,
Faculty of History, Philosophy and Theology, „Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați
ROMANIA
Email: pr.cristi_gagu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The solemn proclamation of the triumph of the iconoclastic theology over the iconoclastic heresy on the first Sunday of Great Lent, in the year 843, did not represent the final defeat of the iconoclasts and did not bring church peace, much desired after more than a century of iconoclastic persecution. The essential role in the acquisition of this state of affairs fell to the Patriarch Photius, who had the wisdom to obtain from all the Eastern Patriarchs the proclamation of the Second Council of Constantinople as the VIIth Ecumenical Council, which led not only to the defeat definitive end of iconoclasm, but also to the development of Byzantine iconography. The present study aims to shed light on the ecclesiastical and theological activity through which Patriarch Photius contributed to the pacification of the Church by the definitive defeat of iconoclasm and to the establishment of the canon of Orthodox sacred art by crystallization of the iconographic program and the Byzantine style.

Keywords: *patriarch Photius, canon of orthodoxy, Byzantine style, iconoclast, iconodule.*

1. THE ROLE OF THE PATRIARCH PHOTIUS IN THE DEFINITIVE CONDEMNATION OF ICONOCLASM

The condemnation of iconoclasm as heresy at the 7th ecumenical synod, first, and then at the one in 843, obviously did not lead to the disappearance of iconoclastic ideas and their promoters, since not all iconoclasts abjured the heresy in order to re-enter in the communion of the Church. In fact, the iconoclastic party continued to be numerous, powerful and influential enough to determine a moderate attitude towards it on the part of the imperial power, both on the part of the empress regent Theodora (842-856) and the emperor Michael III (842-867), her son, as well as that of Emperor Basil I the Macedonian (867-886). In this sense, Empress Theodora managed to impose the election on the patriarchal throne, instead of the former iconoclast patriarch John the Grammarian (837-843), who refused to abjure the iconoclastic heresy, on Methodius (843-847), a moderate iconodule. He avoided replacing the iconoclastic bishops with some from among the studites monks, the hard core of the iconodules zealots, which caused their discontent and revolt against the patriarch. It got so far with the contestation by the intransigent studites monks of the moderate measures adopted by the patriarch against the iconoclasts that Methodius excommunicated them, preferring rather a schism in the bosom of the orthodox than a new reaction on the part of the iconoclasts[1].

---

[1] Francis DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol.7 (1953), pp.72-74; Leonid USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, prefață pr. Nikolai Ozolin, traducere de Ciprian Vidican și Elena Derevici, Ed. Renașterea / Ed. Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, ²2012, p. 181.

After the death of the patriarch Methodius, who failed to temper the opposition of the studites zealots, the empress Theodora made use of the imperial right to choose the patriarch and made a concession to the studites monks, appointing Ignatius (847-858; 867-877), the son of the former Orthodox emperor Michael I Rangabe (811-813), whom he believed would also be accepted by the moderate party, as he had not been involved in the dispute between the patriarch Methodius and the extremist studites zealots[2].

In a short time, the patriarch Ignatius proved to be the partisan of the studites monks, of the uncompromising zealots, whom he cancelled the excommunication, excommunicating instead, at their insistence, the moderate iconodules. The schism in the heart of the Constantinopolitan Church continued after the abdication of Patriarch Ignatius and the ascension to the patriarchal throne of Photius (858-867; 877-886), another patriarch with a moderate view on the issue of iconoclasts, whose legitimacy was immediately contested by supporters to Ignatius. Moreover, after the attitude of the studites zealots was condemned by the patriarch Photius in two local synods, held in 859 in Constantinople, he convened a synod in the capital in 861 to condemn the iconoclastic heresy again because, as a result of the extremist attitude of the studites zealots against the iconoclasts, a new reaction from the latter was always possible[3].

Although he had a moderate attitude towards the iconoclasts, to whom he publicly addressed, from the pulpit of Saint Sophia, the exhortation to renounce heresy and return to the communion of the Church, the patriarch Photius instead fought with all means against the iconoclastic heresy. In this sense, he undertook all the steps for the recognition of the synod of 787 in Nicaea as the 7th ecumenical synod by all the Eastern Patriarchates. In a letter addressed to the Eastern patriarchs, inviting them to send representatives to the synod of 867, Photius wrote to them:

> "I deemed it necessary to include this in my letter in order that all the Churches under your authority be advised to add to and to enumerate with the six holy and oecumenical councils [this] seventh holy and oecumenical council. For the rumour reached my ears that several Churches, which are under the authority of your apostolic throne, count the oecumenical councils as ar as the sixth, but do not recognize the seventh. But they put into effect, with zeal and reverence, if anything else, its decrees [...] It destroyed a very grave heresy, and had among its voting members meen who came from the four archiepiscopal thrones [...].
> It is therefore necessary, as I said before, to publicly proclaim with the six, which preceded it, also this great, holy and oecumenical council. For not to comply with it and not to act thus would, in the first place, be a wrong done to the Church of Christ [by those] who overlook so important a council and break up and destroy to such an extent the bond of union and the connection [brought on by it]; in the second place, it would mean widening the mouths of the iconoclasts, whose godless doctrine, as I well know, you loath no less than [the teachings] of [all] the other heretics; [in that case], their godlessness would not be condemned by an oecumenical council, but would be punished by the decision of one see [only], and so [these heretics] would have a pretext for going on with their monstrous teaching"[4].

[2] F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", p. 75.

[3] F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", pp. 77-78; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, p. 184.

[4] PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum liber I, Epistola XIII, Encyclica epistola ad arhiepiscopalis thronos per Orientem obtinentes*, 40-44, *PG* 102:739B-742A; F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", pp. 92-93; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, "Scrisoare circulară către scaunele arhiereşti ale Răsăritului, adică al Alexandriei şi celorlate", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic, vol. 2: Definitivând dogmatic ortodoxia (815-1351)*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2020, pp. 356-357; Teodor M. POPESCU, "Enciclica lui Fotios către patriarhii orientali (867)", *Studii teologice*, an I, nr. 2, 1930, pp. 75-76.

Likewise, in the homilies delivered from the pulpit of Saint Sophia during his first pastorate, Patriarch Photius condemned heresy and iconoclastic heretics, against whom he produced new theological and historical arguments.

In one of them Photius likened the former patriarch John the Grammarian, the leader of the iconoclastic heretics at the time, to Arius, the first great heresiarch, showing that both heretics only imitated repentance and renunciation of their heresies, and their conversion was not sincere, which is why it was not accepted by either God or the Church.

The parallel was taken up in another homily, in which he went further and exemplified with much evidence "the similarity between the two heresies". Photius showed that as the Arians, invoking the fact that the term *homoousios* (consubstantial) scandalized some Christians, began their heresy, first replacing it with the term *homoiousios* (of similar being), as more appropriate to express incorporeality of the divine being and to avoid its division, then abandoned for *homoion* (similar), considered unfit for his turn, to finally fall into the most atheistic heresy, affirming that the Son is entirely unlike the Father, likewise the iconoclasts.

They began by invoking the fact that the painting of icons on the lower part of the walls of churches scandalized the unlearned, they went on to say that it is not proper to venerate icons even if they are painted on high, the descriptions related by the holy texts being sufficient, they removed then altogether the reverence before the icons, so that in the end they consider them idols and throw them out of the churches. Continuing the parallel between the Arians and the Iconoclasts, Photius showed that, just as the Arians invoked the fact that the terms *homoousios* and *ousia* do not appear in the writings of Holy Scripture, nor did the Savior entrust anyone with the authority to use them, so the Iconoclasts invoke the fact that nowhere in the writings of the Holy Scriptures, the Savior did not give someone the authority to paint icons[5].

As F. Dvornik concludes, the fact that Photius

> "Makes iconoclasm parallel to Arianism, the first and most abhorred heresy, and that he compared the Second Council of Nicaea, which defined the cult of images, with the First Council of Nicaea which was regarded as the most important and most venerable by the Eastern Church [...] indicates how concerned was with the suppression of the last vestiges of iconoclasm"

the learned patriarch of Constantinople[6].

In another homily, delivered on the occasion of the unveiling, in the year 867, of the new mosaic icon of the Mother of God with the Child, made in the church of Saint Sophia, Photius affirmed the superiority of sight over hearing in the process of understanding and learning, including divine mysteries, in the context in which the iconoclasts affirmed that only the word of Scripture is sufficient for salvation.

> "Does a man hate teaching through pictures? Then how has he not previously rejected and hated the message of the Gospels? Just as speech is transmitted by hearing, so a form by the faculty of sigth is imprinted upon the tablets of the soul, giving to those whose apprehension is not soiled by wicked doctrines, a representation of knowledge concordant with piety. Martyrs have fought for the love of God, and have shown with their blood the dearest of their zeal, and their memory is contained in

---

[5] F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", p. 88; PHOTIUS, "Homilie XVII. The Image of the Virgin in St. Sophia", in: *** *The Homilies of Photius, patriarch of Constantinople*, english translation, introduction and commentary by Cyril Mango, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958, pp. 286-296.
[6] F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", p. 89.

books. These things are seen enacted on pictures, also, which make the martyrdom of these blessed men more vivid to learn than from the written word [...]. These tinghs are conveyed by speech and by pictures, but it is the spectators rather than the bearers who are drawn to imitation [...]. For even if the one introduces the other, yet, rather than the learning which penetrates through the ears, the apprehension through sight is shown in very fact to be far superior. Has a man lent his ear to a story? Has the intelligence visualised it and drawn to itself what has been heard? Then, judged with sober care it is deposited to the memory. No less – yea, much greater, is the power of sight. For surely, it somehow, through the outpourind and effluence of optical ray, touches the object, and encompasses the essence of the thing seen and sends it on to the mind, to be forwarded thence to the memory for the unfailing concentration of knowledge. Has the mind seen? Has it grasped? Has it visualized? Then it has easily transmitted the forms to the memory"[7].

The iconoclastic heresy was also condemned at the synod of 869-870, convened against Photius by Patriarch Ignatius, upon his return to the patriarchal throne, and at the one of 879-880, convened by Photius against Ignatius, at the beginning of his two pastorates as patriarch of Constantinople.

The condemnation by the Ignatian synod of 869-870[8] of the iconoclastic heretics, led by Theodor Crithinas[9], with whom other heads of the iconoclastic heresy are listed, amply proves that, at the time of the meeting of the synod, heresy and iconoclastic heretics were far from have been definitively defeated. Unfortunately, the condemnation did not only target the iconoclastic heretics, but also the moderate orthodox represented by Photius and his supporters, and this condemnation also had repercussions on the sacred art of the time.

Canon VII of this synod stipulated that

"men who are condemned and separated from the Church by an anathema should neither paint holy images in the churches nor should they teach in any place as long as they do not abandon their error. Therefore if anyone, after the publication of this our decree, would admit them to painting of holy images in the churches or would give them any opportunity to teach, if he is a cleric, he should be suspended, and if he is a layman, he should be excluded from the Church and deprived of the use of the holy sacraments"[10].

Those targeted by the canon could only be Photius and his followers, the only ones among the excommunicated who worshiped icons and, therefore, painted them, by no means the iconoclasts who fought against the holy icons. According to A. Grabar, the reason behind the adoption of this canon was the initiative of Bishop Gregory Asbestas of Syracuse, a loyal supporter of Patriarch Photius, to illustrate the manuscript of the *Acts of a Photian Synod*

---

[7] PHOTIUS, "Homilie XVII. The Image of the Virgin in St. Sophia", 5, in: *** *The Homilies of Photius…*, pp. 293-294; Cyril MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, Medieval Academy reprints for teaching, 16, published by University of Toronto Press, 1986, p. 189; F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", pp. 91-92; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia la inaugurarea mozaicului absidei Sfintei Sofia (Omilia XVII)", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, p. 256.

[8] The Roman Catholic Chrch considered this Ignatian council to be the eighth oecumenical council, while the Constantinople Church considered the one convened by Patriarch Photius in the year 679-680 to be the eighth oecumenical council; see in this regard Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXIV, c. 495, traduction française par H.Leclercq, Paris, 1911, pp. 542-544.

[9] Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXIV, c. 495, pp. 513-514; Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, pp. 365-371.

[10] MANSI, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XVI, col. 402-403; Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXIV, c. 493, p. 524; F. DVORNIK, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", p. 84; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, pp. 137-138; Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, p. 382.

with miniatures in which Patriarch Ignatius was represented seven times, this being called "the devil", "the beginning of sin", "the son of perdition" or "Antichrist"[11]. This decision did nothing but prevent and delay the development of sacred art in the empire for a whole decade, as the icon painters and painters who supported Photius were struck by this canon.

From a theological point of view, the third canon of this synod is important for sacred art:

"We command the veneration of the holy icon of our Lord Jesus Christ along with the book of the Gospels. Indeed, just as through the syllables that make it we find our salvation, so the learned or ignorant are partakers of the inheritance, through the colours of the icons. If someone does not venerate the icon of Christ the Redeemer, let him not see his face at the Second Coming [...]"[12].

First, the synod affirms the equivalence of the Holy Gospels with the holy icons both in regard to their veneration and their importance for the attainment of salvation. A second important statement of this canon is the one according to which both the ignorant and the learned "learn" through the holy icons, i.e. discover or learn the way of salvation, being surpassed, from an Orthodox point of view, the statement of Pope Gregory the Great, according to whose "icon is the book of those who do not know how to read"[13]. The third assertion highlights the eschatological character of the icon, through which the eternal realities of the Kingdom of Heaven are revealed to the faithful from now on, on the one hand, and, on the other, the face-to-face meeting of the believer with the Risen Christ.

After returning to the patriarchal throne, ending the fight against the iconoclastic heresy by obtaining the recognition by all patriarchal seats of the second synod of Nicaea as the VII-th ecumenical synod[14], within the same synod, held in the years 879-880, Patriarch Photius raised for the first time the question of the Filioque addition, which the Latins had introduced into the Creed[15].

So, from the theological point of view, the patriarch Photius has the great merit of having closed the chapter of the iconoclastic heresy and, with it, the great stage, stretching over no less than four centuries, of the Christological disputes, and of being notified and fought for the first time the danger represented by the addition of the Filioque to the Creed[16]

---

[11] NICETAS DAVID PAPHLAGONIS, *Vita S. Ignatii archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani*, *PG* 105:540D-541A; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 191-192; André GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin. Dosarul arheologic*, traducere, prefață și note de Daniel Barbu, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1991, pp. 376, 456.

[12] MANSI, *Sacrorum conciliorum...*, XVI, col. 399; Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXIV, c. 493, p. 522; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, pp. 135-136.

[13] Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire des conciles*, tome III, deuxième partie, l. XVIII, c. 332, traduction française par H.Leclercq, Paris, 1910, p. 610.

[14] Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXV, c. 498, pp. 599; Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, p. 286.

[15] Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXV, c. 498, pp. 602-603; Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, p. 287; André GRABAR, "L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens", in: *École pratique des hautes etudes*, Section des sciences religieuses. Annuaire 1939-1940, pp. 9, 12.

[16] Patriarch Photius wrote three workd against *Filioque*: PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum liber I, Epistola XIII, Encyclica epistola ad arhiepiscopalis thronos per Orientem obtinentes*, *PG* 102:722A-742C, in year 867; in Romanian: Teodor M. Popescu,"Enciclica lui Fotios către patriarhii oriental (867)", în: *Studii Teologice*, an 1, nr. 2, 1930, pp. 56-76, and Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., "Scrisoarea circulară către patriarhii răsăriteni (867)", în:

for the teaching of faith of the Church, opening the stage of pneumatological disputes, which would ultimately produce the Great Schism of 1054 and the theological disturbances in the Byzantine Empire from the XIII-XV centuries, but which they would also influence sacred art.

From the perspective of sacred art, holy images experienced an important revival during the periods when Photius was patriarch of Constantinople, especially during his second pastorate. On the one hand, the elaboration of the iconography adapted to the cross-type church is due to Patriarch Photius, in the new decorative system the historical principle was replaced by the dogmatic and the liturgical in choosing the subjects of the icons that would adorn the churches.

On the other hand, André Grabar credits the patriarch Photius with the elaboration and promotion of a true "aesthetic" guide of Byzantine sacred art, identified by him in the letter addressed to the Bulgarian Tsar Boris-Michael (852-889), in which he explained to him the teaching of the Christian faith.

According to the French researcher, highlighting the attributes of the true faith unaltered by false teachings, namely greatness, power, beauty, accuracy, purity[17], and likening it to the other "arts and sciences"[18], in which any mistake, any inappropriate intrusion into their content is immediately noticed, the patriarch Photius launched a true aesthetic guide by which the iconographers were guided during the Macedonian Renaissance. This is how the French researcher explains the iconographic hieratism, the precision and simplicity of the drawing, the harmony of the compositions and the homogeneity of the pictorial ensembles from the Macedonian era[19].

Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic, vol. 2, pp. 347-357; PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum liber I, Epistola XXIV, Deo charissimo, sanctissimo, sacratissiomo praesuli fratri et comministro, omni admiration dignissimo famaque clarissimo archiepiscopo et metropolitae Aquileiae*, *PG* 102:794B-822A, in years 883-884; in Romanian: Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., ”Fotios al Constantinopolului către arhiepiscopul Aquileii împotriva lui «Filioque»”, în: *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, pp. 557-568; PHOTIUS, *De Spiritu Sancti mystagogia*, *PG* 102:279A-399A, in years 886-894; in Romanian: FOTIE al Constantinopolului, *Mistagogia Duhului Sfânt; Exegeze la Evanghelii*, ediție bilingvă, traducere de Oana Coman, studiu introductiv și tabel cronologic de Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, note explicative de Oana Coman, Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie și Adrian Muraru, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2013; see in this regard: Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, l. XXIII, c. 479, p. 445; l. XXV, c. 498, p. 604 and Ionuț-Alexandru TUDORIE, ”De la elogii la invective și retur: itinerariul biografic al patriarhului Fotie”, în: FOTIE al Constantinopolului, *Mistagogia Duhului Sfânt*, pp. 73-81.

[17] PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum Liber I. Epistola VIII. Epistola ad Michaelem Bulgariae principem; de officio principis*, 23, *PG* 102:659B; Despina STRATOUDAKI WHITE and Joseph R. BERRIGAN jr., *The Patriarch and the Prince. The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts, 1982, p. 55; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, ”Scrisoare către Mihail, principile Bulgariei”, 32, trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, p. 327.

[18] PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum Liber I. Epistola VIII. Epistola ad Michaelem Bulgariae principem; de officio principis*, 22, *PG* 102:659A; Despina STRATOUDAKI WHITE and Joseph R. BERRIGAN jr., *The Patriarch and the Prince...*, p. 55; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, ”Scrisoare către Mihail, principile Bulgariei”, 31, trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, p. 327.

[19] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, p. 13.

2. FORMATION OF THE BYZANTINE ICONOGRAPHIC CANON

In a reference homily[20] for researchers of Byzantine sacred art[21], delivered at the "reconsecration" of a church dedicated to the Virgin, around the year 864[22], Patriarch Photius described the church, which he calls "another heaven" on earth[23], and the painting that adorned it. According to the description of Patriarch Photius, in the apse of the holy altar was represented the Virgin Mary, "stretching out her pure hands over us" as an intercessor for the emperor before His Son, the rest of the church was embellished with the images of "multitudes of martyrs and apostles, of prophets and patriarchs"[24], while in the dome Christ the Pantocrator watches over, about whom he affirmed: "you would say that he watches over the earth and that he thinks about its good preparation and management"[25].

Like a basileus, Christ Pantocrator is surrounded by holy angels, represented in the image of an imperial guard, the whole image having both a theological meaning, conveying the idea of the omnipotence of Christ and His Providence for the whole creation, as well as a political one, as an ideal image of government of the empire by the emperor, as anointed in the name of Christ, from whom he receives the power and pattern of government.

From a theological perspective, A. Grabar[26] gives credit to the opinion that the appearance of this iconographic program was determined by the generalization and imposition of the teaching about the cosmic meaning of the church, the dome representing the "heaven above the heavens", an opinion also embraced by other authors[27]. This understanding of the church as a symbol of the Universe, to which the patriarch Photius also referred when he called it "another heaven", was by no means new. As early as the 6th

---

[20] PHOTIUS, *Homilia III - In dedicatione novae basilicae*, *PG* 102:563D-574D; in English: PHOTIUS, "Homilie X. The Inauguration of a Curch in a Palace", in: **** The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, pp. 184-190; in Romanian: SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia a X-a", traducere de Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, în *Studii Teologice*, 4 / 2009, pp. 213-228; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia la inaugurarea bisericii Farului din Palat (Omilia X)", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2, pp. 245-249.

[21] L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, pp. 195-196; A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin..*, p. 451; Viktor LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, traducere de Florin Chirițescu, prefață de Vasile Drăguț, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1980, pp. 259-260; Charles DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, traducere de Florica-Eugenia Condurachi, Editura Meridiane, București, 1976, p. 43.

[22] See, regarding the date of delivery of this homily and the church described by Patriatch Photius, the complete fila at Ionuț-Alexandru TUDORIE, "Introducere" la SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia a X-a", pp. 213-222.

[23] PHOTIUS, *Homilia III - In dedicatione novae basilicae*, *PG* 102:574C; PHOTIUS, "Homilie X", 8, p. 190; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia a X-a", p. 228; The image is not a new one, it has been found in a Syrian writing since the 6th century, cf. V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, note 13, p. 332; A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 451.

[24] PHOTIUS, *Homilia III - In dedicatione novae basilicae*, *PG* 102:571B; PHOTIUS, "Homilie X", 6, p. 188; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 186; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia a X-a", p. 226; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 259; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, p. 196; Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, p. 44.

[25] PHOTIUS, *Homilia III - In dedicatione novae basilicae*, *PG* 102:571AB; PHOTIUS, "Homilie X", 6, pp. 187-188; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 186; SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia a X-a", p. 226; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 259; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, pp. 195-196; A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 451; Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, p. 43.

[26] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, pp. 410-412.

[27] L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, p. 197; I. D. ŞTEFĂNESCU, *Iconografia artei bizantine şi a picturii feudale româneşti*, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1973, p. 54; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 265.

century, in a work entitled Sugitha, the church of Saint Sophia in Edessa was considered to symbolize the universe[28].

Starting from the cosmic meaning of the church, the same A. Grabar interprets the appearance of this iconographic program also in the key of the political ideology of the time. Moreover, according to him, the entire religious art from the Macedonian era would reflect the political ideas of the time, attributing to this phenomenon the revaluation or even the appearance of new iconographic themes, such as *Christ the Pantocrator*, which appeared at the end of the 9th century, followed later by the themes *Christ Everget* and *Christ Philanthropist*, in the 11th-12th centuries[29], the attributes "autocrat", "everget", "philanthropist" being the titles with which the emperor was acclaimed in the Constantinopolitan court ceremonies, the *Genealogy of the Savior*, the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, the *Gentiles worship him Christ* and the *Sending of the Holy Apostles to preach*[30]. This opinion is rejected by L. Uspensky, who has a more nuanced view and is closer to the truth, stating that: "The mission of the Church often coincides with the interests of the state, which exploited it as much as possible in its own interest"[31].

In the opinion of V. Lazarev, the birth and crystallization of this program was due to the influence of the Byzantine aulic ceremonial, on the one hand, and, on the other, the appearance and generalization of the architecture of high-domed churches, which required the dismantling and reordering of the composition of the *Ascension* icon, which, in the pre-iconoclastic era, was painted in the generous space offered either by the central apse or by the flattened dome of the Paleo-Christian church, as seen to this day in the *Theotokos church* in Thessaloniki[32]. According to him, the Savior Jesus Christ sitting on the nimbus of light in the form of a rainbow from the composition of the *Ascension* is raised in the dome of the church, in the form of the Pantocrator, in a *imago clipeata*[33], surrounded by the Holy Angels, as in the original composition.

The faces of the Holy Apostles were arranged on the drum of the dome, which, sometimes, when the space was larger, were replaced by those of the sixteen prophets. Also, the place of the four seraphim, who were usually represented on the pendants of the dome, as can be seen to this day in *Saint Sophia* in Constantinople, was taken, during the X-XI centuries, by the four evangelists, represented either with the face them, either with the anthropomorphic one of the symbols associated with them - the angel, for St. Matthew the Evangelist, the lion, for St. Mark the Evangelist, the bull, for St. Luke the Evangelist, and the eagle, for St. John the Evangelist, or with these symbols next to them. The Mother of God, first in the *Orant* pose, then in the one called *Platitera*, sitting on the throne of glory with the Baby Jesus on her knees, also surrounded by Holy Angels or flanked by the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, began to be represented in the apse of the Holy Altar[34]. Lazarev's opinion about the unfolding and reordering of the theme of the *Ascension of the Lord* is called into question by the fact that it continued and continues to be represented, in some churches, on the triumphal arch[35] or even in the dome[36].

---

[28] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 410.

[29] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, nota 1, p. 15.

[30] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, pp. 23-29; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, p. 199.

[31] L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, p. 200.

[32] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 310.

[33] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 411; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 262.

[34] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, pp. 261-263.

[35] Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, pp. 57,75; I. D. ŞTEFĂNESCU, *Iconografia artei bizantine …*, p. 82.

The same Lazarev[37] adds to the causes that contributed to the crystallization of this iconographic program and the influence of the theology of Saint Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, with his teaching about the heavenly and church hierarchies[38]. A. Grabar is of the same opinion, who claims that the iconographic program crystallized in the age of the Macedonians illustrates the hierarchy of the Kingdom of Heaven, which the Byzantines saw, at the time, as the antitype of the Byzantine monarchy[39]. By analogy, the antitype of the Byzantine monarch was the Heavenly Monarch, from Whom the emperor received the power to rule and in whose name he ruled the Empire[40]. As in the bosom of the Holy Trinity the attribute of monarchy belongs to the Father, and God the Father cannot be represented, the French scholar is of the opinion that in order to represent the Father's monarchy iconographically, the Byzantine painters chose to represent the face of the incarnate Son, Whom, by virtue of the dogma of consubstantiality, which and thus visualise, they attributed to him the title of Pantocrator, specific to the Father, as recorded and confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The opinion, shared by other authors[41], is confirmed by the iconological interpretation of the icon of *Christ Pantocrator* in the dome of the church of the *Holy Apostles* in Constantinople by the Byzantine scholar Nicolas Messarites, who stated: "He lives in heaven in the bosom of His Father and wants to associate with the people on earth together with His Father, according to the word: «I and the Father will come to him and make our abode in him» (Jn 14:23)"[42].

As for the iconography of the face of the Savior Jesus Christ Pantocrator, during the 9th-13th centuries it experienced some interesting developments. Thus, if in the post-iconoclastic period he had more serious, severe, even threatening features, with a penetrating look (fig. 1), slightly sad at times (fig. 2), highlighting His attribute of a just and unsparing Judge, starting from the 13th century the features of His face soften, become more serene, full of kindness and love for people (fig. 3)[43]. In some cases, however, from the desire to visualize as clearly as possible the dogma of the consubstantial union of the Son with the Father, some iconographers have aged the features of the face of the Savior Jesus Christ Pantocrator, rendering him in the face of the Ancient of Days from the prophecies of Daniel (Dan 7:13) and from Revelation (Ap 1:13-14). This iconographic formula, which was not new, having been iconographically consecrated since the 7th century, through the icon of

---

[36] Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, p. 45.

[37] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 261.

[38] S. DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *De coelesti hierarchia*, *PG* 3:119A-370A, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, *PG* 3:370C-570A; ST. DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *On the Heavenly Hierarchy; On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, în: *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*, part. II, tanslated into English from the original Greek by the rev. John Parker, London/oxford 1899, pp. 1-161; SFÂNTUL DIONISIE AREOPAGITUL, *Ierarhia cerească; Ierarhia bisericească*, în vol. *Opere complete şi Scoliile Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul*, traducere, introducere şi note de pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Paideia, Bucureşti, pp. 15-134.

[39] A. GRABAR, "L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens", p. 17.

[40] A. GRABAR, "L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens", pp. 19, 22.

[41] A. GRABAR, "L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens", p. 19; Arhim. Sofian BOGHIU, *Chipul Mântuitorului în iconografie*, Editura Bizantină, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 76.

[42] Nikolaos MESSARITES: *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, XIV, Greek Text Edited with Translation, Commentary, and Introduction, by Glanville Downey, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new series, volume 47, part 6, Philadelphia, 1957, p. 870; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 232.

[43] Arhim. S. BOGHIU, *Chipul Mântuitorului în iconografie*, pp. 76-80.

Christ the Ancient of Days (fig. 4) from the *Saint Catherine monastery*[44], in Mount Sinai, but which was still not very widespread, differed significantly from the traditional face of Christ Pantocrator, however, enough to mislead the Spanish ambassador Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, who recorded in his travel journal that he saw in the dome of the churches of *Saint Sophia* and *Saint George* in Constantinople, which he visited in the 14th century, "the image of God the Father"[45]. C. Mango, who also provides the translation of this text, explains in a note that the image identified as "God the Father" represented Christ Pantocrator[46].

If after the 7th century the theme of *Jesus Christ the Ancient of Days* did not make an iconographic career, it is most likely due to iconoclasm, rather than because of the theological ambiguities that it would have entailed, starting from the 11th century this image began to spread, being used to illustrate those Old Testament texts that relate the works of God or His manifestation in some theophanies. In the West, due to an erroneous interpretation of the text from Daniel 7:13, in contradiction with the interpretations given to this text by the great majority of the Fathers of the Church[47], and the departure from the tradition of orthodox iconography, it came to corrupt the original identity of the representation of the Ancient of Days and to the erroneous identification of this representation with the Person of the Father and not with that of the incarnate Son. An example in this sense is the miniature from *Roda's Bible*[48], from the first half of the 11th century, in which the image of the Ancient of Days, depicted in a nimbus, sitting on the throne of glory, like *Christ in glory* or *Christ the Pantocrator*, having cruciform nimbus, is interpreted as the oldest representation of God the Father, although the author of the study still admits that it has "vague Christ features"[49]. Unfortunately, in less than a century, as Boespflug shows, the erroneous identification of the representation of the Ancient of Days as the image of God the Father would already be enshrined in Western art[50], so it is not surprising that Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, seeing the image of Christ Pantocrator with the features of the Ancient of Days, he affirmed that he saw the icon of God the Father.

In the East, it would seem that the Ancient of Days was figured again starting in the 13th century. In a miniature illustrating the days of creation in a manuscript of the Pentateuch, now preserved in Florence, known as the *Laurentianus codices, Plut. V, code 38*, fol. 1, is represented as an old noble, with a nimbus, clothed in a white tunic, framed in a blue mandorla[51]. Interpreting this miniature, Jean Lassus asserts that God the Father is

---

[44] Cathleen CORRIGAN, "Vizualising the Divine: An Early Byzantine Icon of the 'Ancient of Days' at Mt. Sinai", in: Sharon Gerstel and Robert Nelson (eds), *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*, Turnhout:Brepols, 2011, pp. 3-5.

[45] ***Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour, at Samarcand, A.D. 1403-6*, translated, for the first time, with notes, a preface, and an introductory life of Timour Beg by Clements R. Markham, London, 1859, pp. 37, 39; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 219.

[46] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, nota 175, p. 219.

[47] Bogdan BUCUR, "The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days. Observations on the Early Christian Reception of Daniel 7", in: *Phronema*, vol. 32(1), 2017, pp. 9-13; Gretchen KRAEHLING McKAY, "The Eastern Christian Exegetical Tradition of Daniel'sVision of Ancient of Days", in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1999, pp. 151-156.

[48] https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90658394/f134.item.zoom

[49] F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident de l'époque caroligienne au IVᵉ Concile du Latran (1215)", în: *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 37ᵉ année (nr.147), juillet-septembre, 1994, pp. 224-225, 237.

[50] F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...", p. 237.

[51] Jean LASSUS, "La Création du Monde dans Octateuques byzantins du douzième siècle", in: *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, tome 62, 1979, pp. 91, 95-97.

represented in the image, without in any way arguing his claim. Jean Lassus makes the same association between the image of the Ancient of Days and the Person of the Father as Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo in the 14th century, by virtue of the same erroneous identification, which became common in the 12th-century West, although the author of the miniature does not indicate in no way that God the Father is in the image, the context in which the miniature appears - the creation of the world - not being sufficient for such an identification.

On the contrary, the correlation of the information provided by other illuminated manuscripts of the period, other iconographic evidence from the parietal painting of the time and the Church's teaching of faith leads us rather to the identification of the Ancient of Days with the Son. Thus, in another illuminated manuscript of the Pentateuch, executed in Smyrna, in the twelfth century[52], on page 2r, the same face of an old nobleman appears, enclosed in a nimbus made of three concentric circles, with a cruciform nimbus around his head, in which you can see the inscription "ὼ όν"[53] - "He who is". The cruciform nimbus refers, without doubt, to the Savior Jesus Christ, the One who suffered on the cross. Likewise, the inscription "ὼ όν" refers to the episode related in Exodus 3:14, when God reveals himself to Moses as "He who is", or, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers synthesized by Saint John Damascene, in all the old testament theophanies man contemplated "the image and icon of the One who was to be, because the Son and the invisible Word of God was to become truly man [...]"[54]. At the same time, in two other illustrated manuscripts of the Pentateuch, *Vat. gr. 747*, fol. 91v, from the 11th century, and *Vat. gr. 746*, fol. 198v, from the twelfth century, in two of the miniatures that refer to Old Testament theophanic events, Christ appears in a cloud[55]. In the same period, in Sicily, in Monreale, where we also find the cycle of creation represented in the mosaic on the walls of the church of *Santa Maria Assunta*, God the Creator is represented with the face of Jesus Christ (fig. 5), by virtue of the Christian teaching that God the Father created the world through His Word, the Logos, who after the Incarnation is Christ the Savior. The presence of the mandorla, either in the consecrated form of an oval or in that of a circle, is related to theophanies, and theophanies are the attribute of the Son of God, therefore the mandorla is the prerogative of the Savior Jesus Christ. The mandorla is used to symbolize either the divine presence of God in a certain place, when it is figured as an oval, or the divine glory, as a manifestation of the work of uncreated divine energies, when it is figured by a circle[56]. This precise symbolism of the mandorla in Christian sacred art was well established from the 5th-6th centuries, so we can say with considerable certainty that the miniaturists who made the two miniatures in which the Ancient of Days appears would have had it in mind. Therefore, during the XI-XIII centuries, the Byzantines will not have encountered any difficulty in correctly identifying the Ancient of Days with the Person of the Son.

As for the iconographic program described by the patriarch Photius, it is confirmed by Emperor Leo VI the Philosopher (886-912) in two homilies, one delivered at the

---

[52] J. LASSUS, ”La Création du Monde dans Octateuques byzantins du douzième siècle”, p. 86.

[53] J. LASSUS, ”La Création du Monde dans Octateuques byzantins du douzième siècle”, pp. 96-97.

[54] S. JOANNES DAMASCENUS, *Pro Sacris Imaginibus Orationes tres*, III, 26, *PG* 94:1346C; ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Three Treatises on the divine Images*, III, 26, Translation and Introduction by Andrew Louth, first edition, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, p. 102; IOAN din Damasc, *Cuvânt împotriva iconomahilor; sinoptic*, in: diac. Ioan I. ICĂ jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei. Sinodul VII Ecumenic. vol. 1. Definind dogmatic icoanele (691-810)*, DEISIS, Sibiu, 2020, p. 92; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 364.

[55] J. LASSUS, ”La Création du Monde dans Octateuques byzantins du douzième siècle”, p. 91.

[56] Rostislava TODOROVA, ”The Aureole and the Mandorla: Aspects of the Symbol of the Sacral from Ancient Cultures to Christianity”, in: *Studia Academica Šumenensia*, 3, 2016, pp. 215-216.

consecration of the church of the *Kauleas Monastery*[57] and the other of the church founded by the master Stylianos Zautzas[58], as well as by Constantine of Rhodes (875-944), in the description of the interior painting of the church of the *Holy Apostles*[59], which demonstrates the formation in the era of an iconographic program that follows the dogmatic principle. In accordance with the cosmic meaning of the church, Christ enthrones as Pantocrator in the dome of the church, either surrounded by the heavenly powers[60], or, as in the church of the *Holy Apostles*, by the Virgin Mary and the Holy Apostles[61]. On a step below, in the apse of the altar, the Virgin is represented, either praying or with the Child, as protector and intercessor of the Christians in the world before her Son, and all around, "at the top of the church", the groups of saints.

Charles Delvoye observes, citing the ninth-century Latin translation of *Ecclesiastical History* by Anastasius the Librarian, that the bands of saints evoked the earthly Church, which the biblical patriarchs foreshadowed, the prophets announced, the apostles founded, the martyrs perfected it and the hierarchs adorned it[62].

In his second homily, Emperor Leo VI mentioned that "scenes relating to the life in the flesh (of Christ) are on the sides"[63]. In the churches decorated during the 9th-13th centuries with icons in mosaic or in fresco, the scenes of the *Annunciation*, the *Nativity of the Lord*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Reception of the Lord*, the *Baptism*, the *Transfiguration*, the *Resurrection of the widow's son from Nain*, the *Resurrection of Lazarus*, the *Entry into Jerusalem*, *Washing the disciples' feet*, *Betrayal of Judas*, *Crucifixion*, *Burial*, *Descent into Hell*, *Myrrh-bearing women at the tomb*, *Christ appearing to the myrrh-bearing women*, *Myrrh-bearing women announcing the resurrection to the Apostles*, *Thomas's unbelief*, *Thomas' entrustment*, *Christ appearing to the Apostles at the Sea of Tiberias*, *The Miraculous Fishing*, *The Ascension of the Lord*[64], *The Descent of the Holy Spirit*[65].

The iconographic program mentioned by Patriarch Photius, Emperor Leo VI and Constantine Rhodius was not new, however, its existence being recorded for the first time in the 6th century, in the description made by the rhetorician Choricius of the church of *Saint Stephen* in Gaza[66] and confirmed by the early 8th century *Vita S. Pancratii*[67], written in

---

[57] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 202-203.

[58] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 203-205; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 260; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, pp. 196; Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, p. 46.

[59] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 200-201; Émile LEGRAND, "Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apotres de Constantinople, poème en vers iambiques par Constantin le Rhodien", 735-980, in: *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol 9 , no. 33 (1896), pp. 58-65; Théodore REINACH, "Commentaires archéologique sur le poème de Constantin le Rhodien", in: *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol 9 , no. 33 (1896), pp. 91-103.

[60] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 203-204.

[61] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 200, 232; É. LEGRAND, "Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apotres de Constantinople...", 735-745, p. 58; T. REINACH, "Commentaires archéologique sur le poème de Constantin le Rhodien", p. 99.

[62] Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, p. 44.

[63] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 458.

[64] Nikolaos MESSARITES: *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, XV-XXXVI, pp. 870-809; Cyril MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 200-201, 204-205; Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, pp. 45-46, 58; É. LEGRAND, "Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apotres de Constantinople...", 750-980, pp. 58-65; T. REINACH, "Commentaires archéologique sur le poème de Constantin le Rhodien", p. 100.

[65] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 202.

[66] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 64-68.

Taormina, Sicily. The novelty was represented by the icons of *Jesus Christ the Pantocrator* and the *Platitera Virgin with the Child*, painted in the dome of the church, respectively in the half-cap of the apse of the holy altar.

This program, completed and finalized by the 13th century with themes of liturgical inspiration, became the general rule in the Eastern Church until today, with the only difference that the saints were lowered "on the sides", and the scenes from the Savior's life are represented in the register immediately superior to that of the saints.

Obviously, none of the opinions regarding the crystallization, definition and imposition of this iconographic program can be credited as expressing the absolute truth. Each of the realities to which I refer, the new cross-domed architecture of churches and the teaching of the cosmic meaning of the church, the theology of hierarchies of Saint Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite and the Byzantine concept of the autocracy of the emperor, the victorious iconodule theology, being intrinsically linked to each other and influencing each other, will have contributed, to a greater or lesser extent, to the appearance of this iconographic program.

As for the symbolism of the iconographic program of the dome and the Holy Altar, there are several possible iconological interpretations, which, although they correspond to church realities from different historical periods, are not mutually exclusive, but complement each other.

In addition to the meanings offered by Patriarch Photius and Emperor Leo VI the Philosopher in the homilies cited above, from which the teachings about the Omnipotence and Providence of the Savior Jesus Christ, before whom the Mother of God intercedes for people, are derived, about the order and hierarchy in which God created and ordered the universe, whose symbolic image is the church, but also the analogy between the rule of the world by the Heavenly Emperor and the rule of the Empire by the Byzantine emperor, this iconographic program has other meanings.

Another meaning, which derives from the theology of the victorious iconodule, is that according to which the arrangement of the Pantocrator in the tower, of the four cherubs, "whose appearance resembled the human face", on the pendants of the dome and of the *Virgin and Child - Platitera* in the apse of the holy altar highlights the fact that the Pantocrator contemplated by Ezekiel in his vision (1, 26-27), Whom the four-faced cherubs served, after the Incarnation from the Virgin Mary can be seen by people and, therefore, represented in the icon. In the same key is interpreted by A. Grabar and the presence of angels around the *Virgin Platitera*. According to him, the image emphasizes the teaching that after the Incarnation men can see what the angels contemplate from eternity[68]. The representation of the icon of the *Virgin and Child - Platitera* in the apse of the holy altar, a central place in the church's architecture, towards which the eyes of those who enter the holy place are unmistakably directed, is explained, therefore, by the importance given by the iconodules to the dogma of the Incarnation and the Birth of the Savior Jesus Christ from the Vergin Mary, knowing the weight of the Incarnation argument for iconoclastic theology.

Finally, after the XI-XII centuries, the iconographic program acquired an important liturgical meaning, related to the Eucharistic Sacrifice performed in the Holy Altar. Thus, the theme of the Virgin and Child is interpreted, in accordance with the liturgical-eucharistic

---

[67] Cynthia J. STALLMAN-PACITTI, *The Life of Saint Pankratios of Taormina*, Greek text, English Translation and Commentary, edited by John B. BURKE, *Byzantina Australiensia* 22, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2018, pp. 51-59; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453*, pp. 137-138
[68] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 440.

meaning, as the "holy table" on which "the life-giving bread itself" is located. From this perspective, the holy archangels represented on either side of the *Platitera Virgin* are together with the clerics who bring the Eucharistic Sacrifice to the Holy Altar, in accordance with the prayer[69] during the Little Entrance[70].

3. ICONOGRAPHIC THEMES REVALUED AFTER THE 9TH CENTURY

Following the growth of the influence of the liturgical ritual in sacred art, the decoration of the apse of the Holy Altar was completed until the 11th century with the *Communion of the Apostles* and the *Holy Hierarchs of the Church serving*, both themes being inspired by the Holy Liturgy[71]. These themes were imposed as a result of the disputes surrounding the Holy Eucharist both in the iconoclastic period and in the XI-XII centuries. Thus, due to the inability to understand the teaching of the Fathers of Chalcedon (451) about the distinction between nature and hypostasis relative to the union of the two natures in the Person of the Incarnate Son of God, Emperor Constantine V (741-775) concluded, at the iconoclastic synod from Hieria, in the year 754[72], that "the only authorized representation of the humanity of Christ is the bread and wine of the Holy Supper"[73], but understood as a "type", and not as a pretence and real presence of the body and blood of the Savior Jesus Christ, on the one hand. On the other hand, the era of the Comnenians recorded heated polemics between Byzantine theologians and hierarchs regarding the addressee of the liturgical sacrifice, in synods held in 1156-1157 in Constantinople showing that it is brought to the Holy Trinity[74]. It was natural, therefore, that the teaching about the Holy Eucharist should benefit from a privileged place in the new Byzantine iconographic program. Therefore, starting from the 11th century, the source of inspiration for Byzantine iconography ceased to be the universe of the Byzantine Court, its place being taken by the liturgical ritual of the Church. A first step in this direction was taken as early as the 9th century, when, for liturgical reasons, the faces of the founders of the churches moved from the naos to the pronaos, giving way to scenes inspired by the Holy Liturgy[75].

The Communion of the Apostles, a theme whose roots go back to the 6th century[76], was first taken up in the miniatures of the Psalters from the 9th century, so that later, starting from the 11th century, it was represented in the upper part of the apse of the holy altar, from

---

[69] "Lord God, our God, the One who placed in the heavens the bands and hosts of angels and archangels for the service of Your glory, let us enter together with the holy angels, who together with us serve and together glorify Your goodness" - the prayer of the Little Entrance with the Holy Gospel within the Holy Liturgy.

[70] Vlad A.-S. BEDROS, *Modele bizantine, filtre balcanice și interpretări locale în iconografia medievală românească. Cazul absidei altarului în bisericile din Moldova (cca. 1490-1550)*, Ed. Muzeul Literaturii Române, s.a., pp. 67-68.

[71] V. A.-S. BEDROS, *Modele bizantine...*, p. 44.

[72] The date of February 10, 754, accepted by Hefele and most historians as the date of the convocation of the synod at Hieria by Emperor Constantine V Copronimus, is corrected by Leclercq to February 10, 753, since, according to him, the Chronicle of Theophanes presents for the period 726-774 a gap of one year in advance - LECLERCQ, nota 4, în Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire des conciles…*, tome III, deuxième partie, l. XVIII, c. 336, p. 695.

[73] Ch. J. HEFELE, *Histoire des conciles…*, tome III, deuxième partie, l. XVIII, c. 336, p. 700.

[74] V. A.-S. BEDROS, *Modele bizantine...*, pp. 39-41.

[75] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 264.

[76] Kurt WEIZMANN, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, George Braziller, New York, 1977, p. 21.

the following century becoming mandatory and remaining definitively fixed in this place[77]. In this scene, Christ is represented twice, to the right and to the left of the holy table, as High Hierarch, surrounded by holy deacon angels, on the right sharing with the Holy Apostles, at the head of which is the Holy Apostle Peter, with his Holy Body, and those on the left, led by the Holy Apostle Paul, with his Holy Blood. According to L. Uspenski, the scene transposes the teaching that Christ does not show himself in the Holy Gifts, but offers himself in them, and shows himself in his holy icon[78].

Like the *Communion of the Apostles*, the theme of the *Holy Hierarchs of the Church serving*, fixed in the lower register of the apse of the holy altar, has a considerable history. In fact, it represents the taking over of the Paleo-Christian tradition of the frontal representation in the main apse of the church of a representative hierarch for the respective place of worship, in the capacity of founder, donor or hierarchical authority. In the second half of the 9th century, in order to strengthen the authority of the 7th ecumenical synod and affirm the orthodoxy of its iconoclastic teaching, the images of the patriarchs of Constantinople, Germanus, Tarasius, Nicephorus and Methodius, who fought against iconoclasm, alongside those of the Holy Apostles[79]. In the same period, seven Holy Hierarchs were represented in the niches of the northern tympanum of Saint Sophia, frontally and standing, in liturgical vestments and with the Holy Gospel in their hands, of which only the icons of Saints Ignatius Theophorus, John Chrysostom and Ignatius are still preserved of Constantinople[80]. Starting from the twelfth century, the representation of hierarchs is linked to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. They are painted in two volleys, in liturgical vestments, carrying in their hands books or parchments with liturgical texts, on one side and on the other and facing the axis of the apse of the Holy Altar, in profile, slightly inclined, as in a liturgical procession. The figures in the axis are those of the authors of the Holy Liturgies, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom and Gregory the Great-Dialogue, followed by the holy hierarchs defenders of the true faith.

Since the theme of the service and contemplation of God by the holy angels was an extremely important one in the theological argumentation of the iconodule, in the 9th-10th centuries the iconophiles revalued the iconographic theme of the *Council of the Archangels*, which appeared in the 6th century, replacing the image of the Holy Cross on the clypeus with the face of the Savior Jesus Christ. From an iconological point of view, the image reveals the teaching according to which the Holy Archangels, who served and contemplated the divine Logos and who mediated His contemplation to the prophets in visions before the Incarnation, after the Incarnation honour his image in the icon[81].

The desire of the iconodules to highlight the dogma of the Incarnation and the human nature of the Savior Jesus Christ led to the revaluation of the passion cycle, with no less than thirty scenes[82], and of the resurrection, with fifteen scenes[83], in the form of miniatures that

---

[77] Nikolaos MESSARITES: *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, XV, p. 870; V. A.-S. BEDROS, *Modele bizantine...*, pp. 68-70; I. D. ŞTEFĂNESCU, *Iconografia artei bizantine...*, p. 70.

[78] Leonid USPENSKI, "The Problem of the Iconostasis", *St. Vladimir`s Seminary Quarterly*, 8 (1963), nr. 4, p. 215.

[79] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin...*, p. 373; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 288.

[80] Ali KILIÇKAYA, *Hagia Sophia and Chora*, Silk Road Publications, Istanbul, s. a., p. 42; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 288.

[81] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin...*, p. 442.

[82] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin...*, p. 403.

[83] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, pp. 258-259; A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin...*, pp. 400-405.

adorned the psalters illustrated in that epoch. The 9th century is credited as the period in which the theme of the *Christ dead on the Cross*[84], in which Christ is represented with his eyes closed, first appeared. In some representations of this type, the moon and the sun appear covering their "faces", and at the foot of Golgotha a group of "Hellenes", a scene which, according to N. Malicky[85], would be inspired by the epistle of Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite to St. Polycarp of Smyrna[86], while in others, below the cross is the skull of Adam. The presence of Adam's skull at the foot of the cross refers to the salvation of Adam and his descendants, the *Resurrection-Descent into Hell*[87], in which Christ frees Adam and Eve, is related to this theme. However, specific to the 9th century and to the psalters illustrated in this period is the scene of the resurrection which shows Christ rising from the grave, thus presenting the very moment of the resurrection, in contrast to the iconography of the resurrection prior to the iconoclastic disputes, which presents the resurrected Christ or in the appearances after the resurrection[88].

Among the themes revalued in this period is that of the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*. Although some scholars believe that this theme appeared in the Macedonian period[89], it most likely appeared in the East in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the Iconoclastic heresy. This statement is supported by the fact that, on the one hand, the theme is not listed in the *Vita St. Pancratii*, writing composed in Taormina, in Sicily, and which belongs to the beginning of the 8th century, probably to the years 732-733[90], but, on the other hand, in the *Vita St. Stephani iunioris* is related to the fact that the emperor Constantine V Copronimus (741-775) destroyed the parietal icons in the church of the Virgin in Blacherne, among them being the one with the theme of the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*[91].

During the 9th-10th centuries, we find the theme repeated both in some illuminated manuscripts, such as *Paris gr. 510*, *Paris gr. 74* or *Laurent. VI. 23*[92], as well as in the parietal iconography, either in mosaic, as in the church of the *Holy Apostles*, in Constantinople[93], or in fresco, as in the cave churches *Tokali I* and *Tokali II* in Cappadocia[94].

In the original formula, the composition of the *Descent of the Holy Spirit* theme differed from that consecrated late in Eastern art, the one in which, in the lower part of the

---

[84] John R. MARTIN, ”The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art”, in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend jr.*, Princeton, 1955, pp.189-196; Christopher WALTER, ”Three Notes on the Iconography of Dionysius the Areopagite”, in: *Revue des études byzantines*, 48, 1990, pp. 256-259; A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 400.

[85] Nicolas MALICKIJ, ”Remarques sur la date de mosaïques de l'église des Saints-Apôtres à Constantinople décrites par Mésaritès”, *Byzantion*, III, 1926, pp. 146-147; A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 401.

[86] S. DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *Epistola VII, Policarpo antistiti*, II-III, *PG* 3, 1082BC; PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *Letter Seven, To Polycarp, a hierarch*, II-III, in: *Pseudo Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translation by Colm Luibheid, foreword, notes, and translation collaboration by Paul Rorem, preface by Rene Roques, introductions by Jaroslav Pelikan, Jean Leclerqc, and Karlfried Froenlich, Paulist Press, New York, 1987, pp. 268-269; SF. DIONISIE AREOPAGITUL, *Epistola VII, Către ierarhul Policarp*, 2-3, in: *Opere complete și Scoliile Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul*, p. 260.

[87] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 405; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 205.

[88] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, pp. 404-405.

[89] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, p. 23.

[90] C. J. STALLMAN-PACITTI, *The Life of Saint Pankratios of Taormina*, pp. 11-18.

[91] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 152-153.

[92] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, p. 23.

[93] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 202.

[94] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, p. 23; Diac. Vasile M. DEMCIUC, *Cappadocia. Istorie, credință, artă și civilizație bizantină*, Basilica, București, 2020, pp. 169, 186.

scene, between the Holy Apostles arranged in a semicircle and seated on a dais, there is a character dressed like a Byzantine basileus, called Kosmos, which symbolizes the world. In the original composition, in front of the Holy Apostles, arranged in a semicircle and sitting on the dais, there were crowds of people of different ethnicities, dressed specifically for the peoples of which they were a part (fig. 6). In the subsequent period of the 9th century, the Byzantine emperor was represented at the head of the peoples in front of the Holy Apostles. In this formula, the scene reflected both the missionary realities of the Church and the political ones of the Empire, these being intrinsically linked to each other. The presence of the emperor at the head of the various peoples symbolizes the fact that the Byzantine emperor undertakes the work of the Holy Apostles to evangelize the non-Christian peoples - Arabs, Khazars, Slavs, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, that the right of the Byzantine emperor to claim the governance of all these newly converted peoples was based on the fact that he was anointed by God, therefore consecrated by the Holy Spirit as the emperor of a universal Christian Empire[95].

4. NEW ICONOGRAPHIC THEMES AFTER THE 9TH CENTURY

The era of Patriarch Photius recorded not only the crystallization of the iconographic program and the Byzantine style, but also the appearance of new iconographic themes, the revaluation of some older ones or even the taking over and "Christianization" of some of pre-Christian origin, which were relevant to the iconoclastic theology.

In addition to the images of the Virgin *Theotokos* and *Hodighitria*, revalued in the period immediately following the victory of the iconoclastic theology, the *Virgin of Blacherne* type appeared in the era, in which the praying Virgin Mary is represented with a clypeus with the face of the Christ Child on her chest. According to Grabar, this iconographic type represents the dogma of the Incarnation in a more explicit way than the other representations of the Virgin, since the *clipeatae* images, "placed on an object or a figure, signify the invisible presence of the character that appears on the clipeus"[96]. The source of inspiration for this type of representation of the Savior Jesus Christ in the *clipeus* is the gold medallion with the bust of the basileus that the Byzantine ambassadors presented to foreign princes to show who they represent[97]. Also, in the 11th century, against the background of the taste for narrative painting, the cycle of themes about the Virgin's childhood developed. The most numerous images in this cycle illustrate the manuscript that includes the six homilies that the monk Jacob Kokkinobaphos[98] dedicated to the Virgin's conception, birth, entry into the Temple, her entrustment to the righteous and old Joseph, the Annunciation and her choice to weave purple for the Temple, manuscript made in the twelfth century. Also inspired by the apocryphal writings, the scene of the *Assumption of the Virgin*[99] appeared during this period. The latter was originally painted on the west wall of the nave, where it remains to this day.

---

[95] A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, pp. 24-27.

[96] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, pp. 441-446.

[97] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, pp. 384-385.

[98] https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1162; https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10723812k/f4.item; Kalirroe LINARDU, ”Mary and her Books in the Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts: Female Literacy or Visual Stragies of Narration?”, in: *Δελτίον*, τόμ. 29 (2008), pp. 35-48; Kalirroe LINARDU, ”The Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts Revisited: The Internal Evidence of the Books”, in: *Scriptorium*, tome 61, no 2, 2007, pp. 384-407.

[99] Ch. DELVOYE, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, p. 63; I. D. ŞTEFĂNESCU, *Iconografia artei bizantine...*, p. 139.

In the same period, the theme of the emperor prostrated before Christ the Redeemer, the Virgin Mary or a saint appeared. From a theological point of view, this reflected the fact that the basileus must prove and confess his true faith and piety before the Church, to which he is subject because he is subject to its Head, Christ. It was another way to mark, iconographically and iconologically, the triumph of the iconodule theology over iconoclasm, in the context in which the iconoclastic emperors imposed heresy in the Church by persecuting the faithful[100], on the one hand. On the other hand, when the emperor is prostrated before the Pantocrator, the theme reflects the idea of the homage which the earthly sovereign pays to the heavenly Sovereign, as one who receives the authority to reign from the *Rex regnatium*. Last but not least, when the emperor is represented prostrate before the Virgin, an archangel or a saint, the theme reflects the quality of intercessor and protector of the holy person for the prostrate[101].

The attribute of *Rex regnatium* recognized to the Savior Jesus Christ by the iconophile theology in the context of the accusation of "christomachy" brought to the iconoclasts, although "the revolt against the kingship of Christ was probably never in the intention of the emperors and the iconoclast clergy"[102], led to the appearance of the theme *Gentiles worship Christ*. Appearing first in the miniatures of psalters executed in the 9th century, from where it was then taken over in the mural painting of churches, the theme depicts leaders of various nations prostrating themselves before the Savior Jesus Christ. The theme evokes, on the one hand, a historical reality of the time, due to the patriarch Photius, who encouraged the Byzantine evangelization missions of the pagan peoples around the Empire; on the other hand, the theme captures the teaching about the universality of the Church as the Kingdom of God and about the kingship of Christ as the sovereign of the universal Church. The theme therefore evokes Christ the Lord both as *Rex regnatium* and as Pantocrator[103].

Another theme newly entered in the Byzantine iconographic register in the XI-XII centuries is the *Tree of Jesse*. The earliest representation of this theme in Eastern sacred art is thought to be a sketch from the *Book of Kings*, a manuscript preserved in the Vatican Library, cod. gr. 333, dated by some researchers as belonging to the 12th century[104], while others place it as early as the third quarter of the 11th century[105]. Given that this representation is only a sketch, that it is on the verso of the last leaf of the manuscript, the only one so placed, and that it has no connection with the biblical text of the *IV Book of Kings*, as all the other miniatures have, the image is most likely not original, but was added later by a copyist[106]. Through the prism of these arguments, the origin of the theme does not seem to be Eastern, but Western, in a first and earliest form the theme illustrating the

---

[100] L. USPENSKY, *Teologia Icoanei*, p. 194.
[101] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 413; V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, pp. 290-291.
[102] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, p. 389.
[103] A. GRABAR, *Iconoclasmul bizantin…*, pp. 390-395; A. GRABAR, ”L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens”, pp. 29-37.
[104] André GRABAR, ”Une pixyde en ivoire à Dumbarton Oaks. Quelques notes sur l`art profane pendant les derniers siècle de l`art byzantine”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 14, 1960, p. 132.
[105] John H. LOWDEN, ”Kings, Book of”, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. By Kazhdan; Jean LASSUS, ”Les miniatures byzantines du Livre des Rois, d`après un manuscript de la bibliothèque Vaticane”, *Mélanges de l`école française de Rome*, 45, 1928, p. 38.
[106] Pippa SALONIUS, ”Arbor Jesse – Lignum Vitae: The Tree of Jesse, the Tree of life, and the Mendicants in Late Medieval Orvieto”, in *Medieval Art and Thought*, Pipa SALONIUS and Andrea WARM (eds), IMR 20, Brepols, 2014, nota 35, pp. 221-222; J. LASSUS, ”Les miniatures byzantines du Livre des Rois…, pp. 40, 74.

beginning of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew the Evangelist, from an Gospel Book from the year 1086 preserved in *Codex Vyšegrad*[107] (fig. 7).

In the Prague Gospel the composition illustrates the prophecy of Isaiah (11:1), being called the *Root of Jesse*. The emergence of the developed iconographic formula of this theme is attributed to Abbot Suger (1081-1151) of the Saint Denis monastery. In a stained-glass window that beautified one of the windows of the monastery's church, at its rededication in 1144, abbot Suger added the figures of the kings from the Saviour's genealogy[108] to the original composition of the theme. In the second half of the twelfth century, more precisely in 1169, the *Tree of Jesse* theme was represented on the walls of the *Church of the Nativity* in Bethlehem by order of Emperor Manuil I Comnenus[109] (1143-1180). Brought, it seems, by the Latin Crusaders to the East, the *Tree of Jesse* theme did not gain great popularity until the age of the Paleologists, the second representation of the theme being executed only in 1260 in the Constantinopolitan monastery of *Saint Mary Peribleptos*, about which he gives testimony in his diary Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo[110]. From here the theme then spread throughout the entire Orthodox area[111].

From the account of Ruy Gonzales, who recorded that he saw the Tree of Jesse, "from whose line the Virgin Mary descends", we could conclude that the image would have reflected the Western conception of this theme, according to which Isaiah's prophecy would have referred to Virgin Mary. According to this conception, in the middle of the genealogical tree was the Virgin Mary, the theme being used by the Westerners as an argument for the dogma of the Immaculate Conception[112]. In the East the prophecy of Isaiah was interpreted as referring to the Son of God incarnate, so that in the Eastern composition in the middle of the genealogical tree is the Nativity scene[113].

Another theme born in that era is that of the "offering" church, which the founder dedicated to the Savior Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary or the saint who protected that church. Although of pagan origin, this theme was taken up in the period by Byzantine painters[114], then spreading and becoming mainstream.

5. THE FIRST HERMENEIA OF BYZANTINE PAINTING

[107] Margot FASSLER, ”Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres and the Stirps Jesse: Liturgical Innovation circa 1000 and Its Afterlife”, *Speculum*, vol. 75, no.2, 2000, The University of Chicago Press, p. 391; Séverine LEPAPE, ”L`arbre de Jessé: une image de l`immaculée conception?”, *Médiévales* 57, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, automne 2009, p. 114; I. D. ȘTEFĂNESCU, *Iconografia artei bizantine…*, p. 176.

[108] Françoise BARON, ”L`iconographie de l`Immaculée Conception dans la sculpture medieval et modern en Normandie”, dans: Thelamon FRANÇOISE (ed.), *Marie et la «Fête aux normands»: Dévotion, images, poésie*, Mont-Saint-Aignan, Presses Universitaires de Rouen et Havre, 2011, pp. 170-172; M. FASSLER, ”Mary`s Nativity…, p. 391; S. LEPAPE, ”L`arbre de Jessé: une image de l`immaculée conception?”, p. 115.

[109] P. SALONIUS, ”Arbor Jesse – Lignum Vitae: The Tree of Jesse…, pp. 224-225; Tania VELMANS, ”L`Arbre de Jessé en Orient chrétien”, *ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ*, τόμος ΚΣΤ` (2005), ΑΘΗΝΑ, p. 125.

[110] ***Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour, at Samarcand, A.D. 1403-6, p. 33; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, p. 218.

[111] Cyril MANGO, ”The Monastery of St. Mary of Periblepto (Sulu Manastir) at Constantinople Revisited”, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 23 (1992), p. 484.

[112] Mirella LEVI D`ANCONA, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, coll. *Monographs on archaeology and fine arts*, VII, pubished by The College Art Asssociation of America and The Art Bulletin, New York, 1957, pp. 18, 47; S. LEPAPE, ”L`arbre de Jessé: une image de l`immaculée conception?”, p. 122; I. D. ȘTEFĂNESCU, *Iconografia artei bizantine…*, p. 176.

[113] DIONISIE DIN FURNA, *Erminia picturii bizantine*, Ed. Sophia, București, 2000, p. 99.

[114] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 294.

After the iconoclastic era, the development of sacred art in the East led not only to the formation of the orthodox iconographic canon, but also to the appearance of the first hermeneia of Byzantine painting. The text of this first hermeneia of Byzantine painting, as Chatzidakis[115] considers it, is preserved in the *coisl 290* codices, in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, and is attributed to a certain Ulpius/Elpius/Elpion the Romanus[116], who would have compiled it in the twelfth century on Holy Mount Athos[117].

The author presents the somatic features of Adam, the sixteen prophets, the Savior Jesus Christ, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and the holy hierarchs Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius the Great, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Eustace of Antioch, Tarasius and Nicephorus of Constantinople[118]. Even though the author in no way claims that this text was made for the use of painters, the detailed descriptions of the physical features of the saints, the stature of the body, the colour of the face, hair and eyes, the shape of the mouth, nose, eyes and eyebrows, the facial expressions, prove that, if not the text itself attributed to Ulpius the Roman, then at least the older texts, from which he drew inspiration and which he compiled, had such addressability to painters.

Even if the description of the physiognomic characteristics of the saints was not a novelty for the 12th century, and the faces of some saints, such as the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, were enshrined in sacred art since the 3rd-4th centuries, however, after the iconoclastic era in Byzantine society great emphasis was placed on the similarity between the prototype and its likeness in the icon, as a confirmation of the identity between the represented and its representation. The numerous reports from the post-iconoclastic period in which the faces of some saints that appeared in the vision of some painters, faces that they had never seen before and which they executed according to the vision they had, were then confirmed to be identical to those in other icons of those saints, or, in some cases, with the saint's face from when he was alive. There are such examples in the *Life of Saint Theodora of Thessaloniki*[119] (812-892), the *Life of Saint Mary the Younger*[120] († 903), the *Life of Saint Nikon the Metanoeite*[121] (930-998), the *Life of Saint Athanasius the Athonite*[122] (920-1000).

---

[115] Μανολης ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ, (ed), *Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου ἀρχαιολογουμένων ἐκκλησιαστικς ἱστορίας περὶ καρακτήρων σωματικῶν*, in: Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινων Σπουδων, 14 (1938), p. 408.

[116] Μ. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ, (ed), *Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου ἀρχαιολογουμένων ἐκκλησιαστικς ἱστορίας περὶ καρακτήρων σωματικῶν*, p. 405.

[117] Μ. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ, (ed), *Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου ἀρχαιολογουμένων ἐκκλησιαστικς ἱστορίας περὶ καρακτήρων σωματικῶν*, p. 408.

[118]Μ. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ, (ed), *Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου ἀρχαιολογουμένων ἐκκλησιαστικς ἱστορίας περὶ καρακτήρων σωματικῶν*, pp. 409-414; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 214-215.

[119] Alice-Mary TALBOT, *Life of St. Theodora of Thessalonike*, 52, in: Alice-Mary Talbot (ed), *Holy Women of Byzantim. Ten Saints'lives in English translation*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 209; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 210-211.

[120] Angeliki E. LAIOU, *Life of St. Mary the Younger*, 18, in: *Holy Women of Byzantim. Ten Saints'lives in English translation*, pp. 272-273; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 211-212.

[121] C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 212-213.

[122] Alice-Mary TALBOT, *Life of Athanasios of Athos*, version B, 78, in: Richard P.H. Greenfield and Alice-Mary Talbot (eds), *Holy Men of Mount Athos*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 40, Harvard University Press, Cambridge / London, 2016, pp. 361-365; C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, pp. 213-214.

These descriptions of the physiognomy of the saints, which Ulpius the Roman compiled in this first Byzantine iconographic hermeneia, are added to the existence of those models printed either on tracing paper, called ʽανθίβολα, or on more rigid materials, used since the 5th-6th centuries, which Byzantine painters used in particular in the execution of monumental parietal iconographic programs, models with the help of which they reproduced the shapes of saints or objects on the wall[123]. So, combining the use of models preserved on parchment, papyrus, tracing paper or other materials, with respect for the physiognomic and clothing characteristics of the outfit, according to the descriptions in the *hermeneia*, by adding the attributes specific to the life or martyrdom of the painted saint and by inscribing his name in icon[124] Byzantine painters ensured that they respected the two essential conditions that an image must fulfil in order to be an icon and which were followed with great care in the post-iconoclastic period, namely the similarity between the prototype and its representation and homonymy.

CONCLUSION

The era of the patriarch Photius recorded, therefore, not only the crystallization of the Eastern iconographic program, but also the beginning of the elaboration of the classical Byzantine style, with its monumental art, which reached fullness in the 10th century, which would prevail until the 13th century, when it underwent a radical transformation[125]. If in the 9th century the faces of the saints were "robust, with pronounced features", "heavy and full", and "the fleshy faces still retain the sensuality of the 7th century images"[126], in the 11th century Byzantine sacred art it becomes spiritualized, "the figure becomes immaterial, the faces take on a severe and ascetic expression, the conception of space is simplified and schematized, the pictorial is replaced by the linear [...]"[127]. In the twelfth century, under the growing influence of the ideal of monastic life, the faces thin and elongate, become austere and dry, reflecting monastic asceticism, and the surface of the vestments is fragmented by lines[128]. On this theological foundation elaborated by the patriarch Photius, Eastern sacred art developed during the Macedonian renaissance, which would form the basis of the flourishing of Byzantine iconography in the 13th-15th centuries, during the artistic renaissance of the Palaeologian era.

---

[123] Manuel CASTIÑEIRAS, ”Oxford, Magdalen College, MS. Gr. 3: Artistic Practice, Byzantine Drawings and Mobility in Mediterranean Painting around 1200”, in: *Arte Medievale*, Periodico Annuale, IV serie-anno 5, 2015, pp. 87-100.

[124] Piotr Ł. GROTOWSKI, ”Defining the Byzantine Saints – Creating a Message in Orthodox Art”, in: Piotr Ł. Grotowski and Sławomir Skrzniarz (eds), *Towards Rewriting? New Approaches to Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, Proceedings of the Symposium on Byzantine Art and Archaeology, Cracow, 2008, *Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art, Series Byzantina*, vol. VIII, 2008, p. 134.

[125] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, pp. 255-259, 294.

[126] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, pp. 288-291.

[127] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, p. 257.

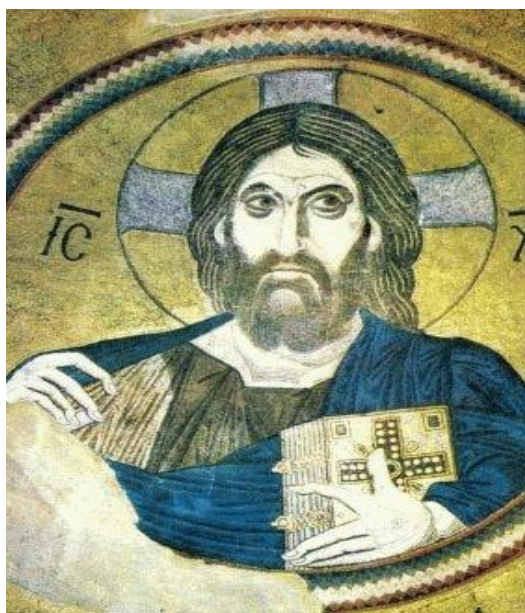[128] V. LAZAREV, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, pp. 291, 300.

Fig. 1 Christ Pantocrator,
Daphne, XI century

Fig. 2 Christ Pantocrator, Monreale,
Sicily, XII century

Fig. 3 Christ Pantocrator,
Boyana church, Bulgaria, XIII century

Fig. 4 Ancient of Days,
St. Catherini monastery, VI century

Fig . 5 God resting after creation,
Monreale, Sicily, XII century

Fig. 6 Pentecost, cod. gr. 510, f. 615,
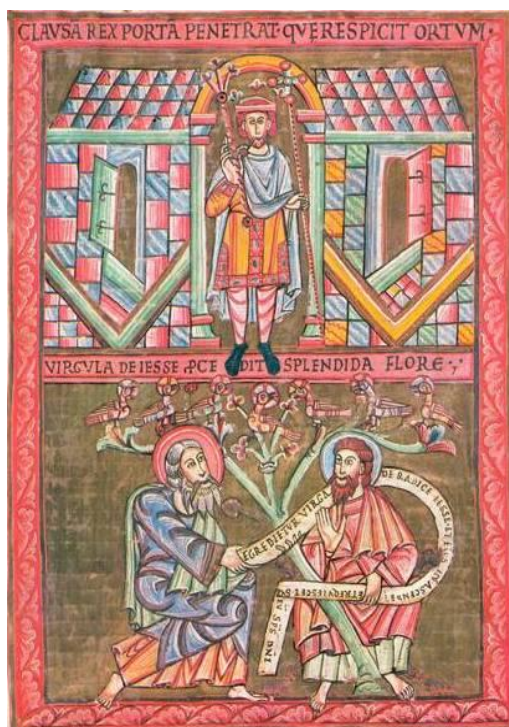Homilies of Gregory the Theologian,

Fig. 7 Tree of Jesse, Codex Vyssegradensis, Prague, XI century

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

[1] S. DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *De coelesti hierarchia*, *PG* 3:119-370, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, *PG* 3:370-570.

[2] S. DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *Epistola VII, Policarpo antistiti*, *PG* 3.

[3] S. JOANNES DAMASCENUS, *Pro Sacris Imaginibus Orationes tres*, *PG* 94.

[4] NICETAS DAVID PAPHLAGONIS, *Vita S. Ignatii archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani*, *PG* 105.

[5] PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum liber I. Epistola VIII. Epistola ad Michaelem Bulgariae principem; de officio principis*, *PG* 102.

[6] PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum liber I, Epistola XIII, Encyclica epistola ad arhiepiscopalis thronos per Orientem obtinentes*, *PG* 102.

[7] PHOTIUS, *Epistolarum liber I, Epistola XXIV, Deo charissimo, sanctissimo, sacratissiomo praesuli fratri et comministro, omni admiration dignissimo famaque clarissimo archiepiscopo et metropolitae Aquileiae*, *PG* 102.

[8] PHOTIUS, *De Spiritu Sancti mystagogia*, *PG* 102.

[9] PHOTIUS, *Homilia III - In dedicatione novae basilicae*, *PG* 102.

[10] MANSI, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XVI, col. 402-403.

Translated sources
In English

[11] ST. DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *On the Heavenly Hierarchy; On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, în: *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*, part. II, tanslated into English from the original Greek by the rev. John Parker, London/oxford 1899.

[12] PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *Letter Seven, To Polycarp, a hierarch*, in: *Pseudo Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translation by Colm Luibheid, foreword, notes, and translation collaboration by Paul Rorem, preface by Rene Roques, introductions by Jaroslav Pelikan, Jean Leclerqc, and Karlfried Froenlich, Paulist Press, New York, 1987.

[13] ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Three Treatises on the divine Images*, III, 26, Translation and Introduction by Andrew Louth, first edition, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003.

[14] Nikolaos MESSARITES: *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, XIV, Greek Text Edited with Translation, Commentary, and Introduction, by Glanville Downey, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new series, volume 47, part 6, Philadelphia, 1957.

[15] PHOTIUS, "Homilie XVII. The Image of the Virgin in St. Sophia", 5, in: *** *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, English translation, Introduction and Commentary by Cyril Mango, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958.

[16] PHOTIUS, "Homilie X. The Inauguration of a Curch in a the Palace", in: *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, English translation, Introduction and Commentary by Cyril Mango, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958.

In Romanian

[17] IOAN din Damasc, *Cuvânt împotriva iconomahilor; sinoptic*, in: diac. Ioan I. ICĂ jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei. Sinodul VII Ecumenic. vol. 1. Definind dogmatic icoanele (691-810)*, DEISIS, Sibiu, 2020.

[18] DIONISIE DIN FURNA, *Erminia picturii bizantine*, Ed. Sophia, București, 2000.

[19] SFÂNTUL DIONISIE AREOPAGITUL, *Ierarhia cerească; Ierarhia bisericească*, în: *Opere complete și Scoliile Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul*, traducere, introducere și note de pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Paideia, București, 1996.

[20] SF. DIONISIE AREOPAGITUL, *Epistola VII, Către ierarhul Policarp*, in: *Opere complete și Scoliile Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul*, traducere, introducere și note de pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Paideia, București, 1996.

[21] SFÂNTUL FOTIE, "Scrisoare circulară către scaunele arhierești ale Răsăritului, adică al Alexandriei și celorlate", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic, vol. 2: Defînitivând dogmatic ortodoxia (815-1351)*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2020.

[22] SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia la inaugurarea mozaicului absidei Sfintei Sofia (Omilia XVII)", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic, vol. 2: Defînitivând dogmatic ortodoxia (815-1351)*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2020.

[23] SFÂNTUL FOTIE, "Fotios al Constantinopolului către arhiepiscopul Aquileii împotriva lui «Filioque»", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., în: *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic, vol. 2: Definitivând dogmatic ortodoxia (815-1351)*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2020.

[24] SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Scrisoare către Mihail, principile Bulgariei", 32, trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, *vol. 2: Definitivând dogmatic ortodoxia (815-1351)*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2020.

[25] SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia la inaugurarea bisericii Farului din Palat (Omilia X)", trad. de Diac. Ioan ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei, Sinodul VII Ecumenic*, vol. 2*: Definitivând dogmatic ortodoxia (815-1351)*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2020..

[26] SFÂNTUL FOTIE, Patriarhul Constantinopolului, "Omilia a X-a", traducere de Ionuţ-Alexandru Tudorie, în *Studii Teologice*, 4 / 2009.

[27] FOTIE al Constantinopolului, *Mistagogia Duhului Sfânt; Exegeze la Evanghelii*, ediţie bilingvă, traducere de Oana Coman, studiu introductiv şi tabel cronologic de Ionuţ-Alexandru Tudorie, note explicative de Oana Coman, Ionuţ-Alexandru Tudorie şi Adrian Muraru, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 2013

Volumes, studies and articles

[28] ***Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour, at Samarcand, A.D. 1403-6*, translated, for the first time, with notes, a preface, and an introductory life of Timour Beg by Clements R. Markham, London, 1859.

[29] BARON, Françoise, "L`iconographie de l`Immaculée Conception dans la sculpture medieval et modern en Normandie", dans: Thelamon FRANÇOISE (ed.), *Marie et la «Fête aux normands»: Dévotion, images, poésie*, Mont-Saint-Aignan, Presses Universitaires de Rouen et Havre, 2011.

[30] BEDROS, Vlad A.-S., *Modele bizantine, filtre balcanice şi interpretări locale în iconografia medievală românească. Cazul absidei altarului în bisericile din Moldova (cca. 1490-1550)*, Ed. Muzeul Literaturii Române, s.a.

[31] BOESPFLUG, François, ZAŁUSKA, Yolanta, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident de l'époque caroligienne au IVe Concile du Latran (1215)", în: *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 37e année (nr.147), juillet-septembre, 1994.

[32] BOGHIU, Arhim. Sofian, *Chipul Mântuitorului în iconografie*, Editura Bizantină, Bucureşti, 2001.

[33] BUCUR, Bogdan, "The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days. Observations on the Early Christian Reception of Daniel 7", in: *Phronema*, vol. 32(1), 2017.

[34] CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel, "Oxford, Magdalen College, MS. Gr. 3: Artistic Practice, Byzantine Drawings and Mobility in Mediterranean Painting around 1200", in: *Arte Medievale*, Periodico Annuale, IV serie-anno 5, 2015.

[35] CORRIGAN, Cathleen, "Vizualising the Divine: An Early Byzantine Icon of the 'Ancient of Days' at Mt. Sinai", in: Sharon Gerstel and Robert Nelson (eds), *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*, Turnhout:Brepols, 2011.

[36] DEMCIUC, Diac. Vasile M., *Cappadocia. Istorie, credinţă, artă şi civilizaţie bizantină*, Basilica, Bucureşti, 2020.

[37] DELVOYE, Charles, *Arta bizantină*, vol. 2, traducere de Florica-Eugenia Condurachi, Editura Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1976.

[38] DVORNIK, Francis, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", în *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol.7 (1953).

[39] FASSLER, Margot, "Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres and the Stirps Jesse: Liturgical Innovation circa 1000 and Its Afterlife", *Speculum*, vol. 75, no.2, 2000, The University of Chicago Press.

[40] GRABAR, André, *Iconoclasmul bizantin. Dosarul arheologic*, traducere, prefaţă şi note de Daniel Barbu, Ed. Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1991.

[41] GRABAR, André, "Une pixyde en ivoire à Dumbarton Oaks. Quelques notes sur l`art profane pendant les derniers siècle de l`art byzantine", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 14, 1960.

[42] GRABAR, André, "L'art religieux et l'empire Byzantin à l'époque des Macédoniens", in: *École pratique des hautes etudes*, Section des sciences religieuses. Annuaire 1939-1940.

[43] GROTOWSKI, Piotr Ł., "Defining the Byzantine Saints – Creating a Message in Orthodox Art", in: Piotr Ł. Grotowski and Sławomir Skrzniarz (eds), *Towards Rewriting? New Approaches to Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, Proceedings of the Symposium on Byzantine Art and Archaeology, Cracow, 2008, *Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art, Series Byzantina*, vol. VIII, 2008.

[44] HEFELE, Ch. J., *Histoire de Conciles*, tome IV, première partie, traduction française par H.Leclercq, Paris, 1911.

[45] HEFELE, Ch. J., *Histoire des conciles*, tome III, deuxième partie, traduction française par H.Leclercq, Paris, 1910.

[46] KILIÇKAYA, Ali, *Hagia Sophia and Chora*, Silk Road Publications, Istanbul, s. a.

[47] KRAEHLING McKAY, Gretchen, ”The Eastern Christian Exegetical Tradition of Daniel'sVision of Ancient of Days”, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1999.

[48] LAIOU, Angeliki E., *Life of St. Mary the Younger*, 18, in: *Holy Women of Byzantim. Ten Saints'lives in English translation*, *Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection*, Washington, D.C., 1996.

[49] LASSUS, Jean, ”La Création du Monde dans Octateuques byzantins du douzième siècle”, in: *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, tome 62, 1979.

[50] LASSUS, Jean, ”Les miniatures byzantines du Livre des Rois, d`après un manuscript de la bibliothèque Vaticane”, *Mélanges de l`école française de Rome*, 45, 1928.

[51] LAZAREV, Viktor, *Istoria picturii bizantine*, vol. I, traducere de Florin Chirițescu, prefață de Vasile Drăguț, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1980.

[52] LEGRAND, Émile, ”Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apotres de Constantinople, poème en vers iambiques par Constantin le Rhodien”, 735-980, in: *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol 9 , no. 33 (1896).

[53] LEPAPE, Séverine, ”L`arbre de Jessé: une image de l`immaculée conception?”, *Médiévales* 57, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, automne 2009.

[54] LEVI D`ANCONA, Mirella, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, coll. *Monographs on archaeology and fine arts*, VII, pubished by The College Art Asssociation of America and The Art Bulletin, New York, 1957.

[55] LINARDU, Kalirroe, ”Mary and her Books in the Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts: Female Literacy or Visual Stragies of Narration?”, in: *Δελτίον*, τόμ. 29 (2008).

[56] LINARDU, Kalirroe, ”The Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts Revisited: The Internal Evidence of the Books”, in: *Scriptorium*, tome 61, no 2, 2007.

[57] MALICKIJ, Nicolas, ”Remarques sur la date de mosaïques de l'église des Saints-Apôtres à Constantinople décrites par Mésaritès”, *Byzantion*, III, 1926.

[58] MANGO, Cyril, ”The Monastery of St. Mary of Peribleptos (Sulu Manastir) at Constantinople Revisited”, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 23 (1992).

[59] MANGO, Cyril, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, Medieval Academy reprints for teaching, 16, published by University of Toronto Press, 1986.

[60] MARTIN, John R., ”The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art”, in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend jr.*, Princeton, 1955.

[61] POPESCU, Teodor M., ”Enciclica lui Fotios către patriarhii orientali (867)”, *Studii teologice*, an I, nr. 2, 1930.

[62] REINACH, Théodore, ”Commentaires archéologique sur le poème de Constantin le Rhodien”, in: *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol 9 , no. 33 (1896).

[63] SALONIUS, Pippa, ”Arbor Jesse – Lignum Vitae: The Tree of Jesse, the Tree of life, and the Mendicants in Late Medieval Orvieto”, in *Medieval Art and Thought*, Pipa SALONIUS and Andrea WARM (eds), IMR 20, Brepols, 2014.

[64] STALLMAN-PACITTI, Cynthia J., *The Life of Saint Pankratios of Taormina*, Greek text, English Translation and Commentary, edited by John B. BURKE, *Byzantina Australiensia* 22, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2018.

[65] STRATOUDAKI WHITE, Despina, and BERRIGAN jr., Joseph R., *The Patriarch and the Prince. The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts, 1982

[66] ȘTEFĂNESCU, I. D., *Iconografia artei bizantine şi a picturii feudale româneşti*, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1973.

[67] TODOROVA, Rostislava, ”The Aureole and the Mandorla: Aspects of the Symbol of the Sacral from Ancient Cultures to Christianity”, in: *Studia Academica Šumenensia*, 3, 2016.

[68] USPENSKY, Leonid, *Teologia Icoanei*, prefață pr. Nikolai Ozolin, traducere de Ciprian Vidican și Elena Derevici, Ed. Renaşterea / Ed. Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, [2]2012.

[69] USPENSKI, Leonid, ”The Problem of the Iconostasis”, *St. Vladimir`s Seminary Quarterly*, 8 (1963), nr. 4.

[70] TALBOT, Alice-Mary, *Life of Athanasios of Athos*, version B, 78, in: Richard P.H. Greenfield and Alice-Mary Talbot (eds), *Holy Men of Mount Athos*, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* 40, Harvard University Press, Cambridge / London, 2016.

[71] TALBOT, Alice-Mary, *Life of St. Theodora of Thessalonike*, 52, in: Alice-Mary Talbot (ed), *Holy Women of Byzantim. Ten Saints'lives in English translation*, *Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection*, Washington, D.C., 1996.

[72] VELMANS, Tania, ”L`Arbre de Jessé en Orient chrétien”, *ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ*, τόμος ΚΣΤ` (2005), ΑΘΗΝΑ.

[73] WALTER, Christopher, ”Three Notes on the Iconography of Dionysius the Areopagite”, in: *Revue des études byzantines*, 48, 1990.

[74] WEIZMANN, Kurt, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, George Braziller, New York, 1977.

[75] ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ, Μανολης, (ed), *Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου ἀρχαιολογουμένων ἐκκλησιαστικς ἱστορίας περὶ καρακτήρων σωματικῶν*, in: Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινων Σπουδων, 14 (1938).

Webgraphy

[1] https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90658394/f134.item.zoom
[2] https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1162;
[3] https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10723812k/f4.item