

M.A. Orlova

ORNAMENT.
LATE 10TH – MID 11TH
CENTURIES

1. Judging by the surviving fragments, the combination of two techniques, however, in a ratio unknown to us, also characterised the interior decor of the Tithe Church (see *Ganzenko, Korenyuk, Mednikova*, 1996, pp. 68-73). The use of frescoes and mosaic is confirmed by the fragments discovered during excavations in all Kievan churches built by Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise – St. George, St. Irene, and the Annunciation – and a nameless church on the metropolitan's estate (see also: *Sarabianov*, 2006, p. 401).

2. Both M.K. Karger (*Karger*, 1952, p. 14) and later scholars (*Arkipova*, 2005, pp. 62-72) referred to this part of the decoration not quite correctly as the "sanctuary frieze". Such a method of decoration, in all probability, was not unique – the lower part of the sanctuary apse of the Montreale cathedral (1180s) is adorned in a similar way.

3. Some of the ancient marble slabs and strips with an original smalti pattern are extant to the left of the metropolitan's throne (see *Arkipova*, 2000, pp. 60-1).

4. It is possible that it was there that the tradition started that spread already in the pre-Mongol era and widely developed in the Russian lands – the depiction of a hanging white cloth, a kind of allusion to the Old Testament tabernacle, in the stereobatic area of the cathedral sanctuary. This kind of association in this part of the decoration was possibly amplified by the correlation with images of the Calvary cross and the candlesticks, which were originally on the back of the metropolitan's throne in the central part of the synthronos (*Arkipova*, 2005, p. 72).

5. For example, palmettes are depicted in the corners of a rectangular panel with a medallion on the south wall lesene in the choir.

6. Such patterns are used, in particular, on the lesenes of the south-west and north-west piers under the dome.

7. The height of the typical St. Sophia stereobatic panel is equal to the lesene width (1.15 m) and is almost square. Such panels exist predominantly in the naos under the choir gallery and in it. In the sanctuary the panels are much lower – 0.4-0.5 m. There are similar panels on the frontal parts of the lesenes in the inner galleries. In the lateral parts of the lesenes, the difference in the height of the panels can be up to 0.7 m; between the lesenes it can be 0.3 m (0.9-1.2 m). I am grateful to Y.A. Korenyuk for providing these data.

8. This assumption came from V.D. Sarabianov.

Ornament in Late 10th–First Half of 11th-Century Painting

This is the most unusual frieze in the ornamental repertoire of the St. Sophia of Kiev (1040s). Its motifs go back to early Christian painting.

A rare example of ornamentation, reproducing samples of marble inlay and its imitation in monuments of the Byzantine circle.

A luxurious ornament of the "floral and petal" type was first used in the mosaics of the St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev.

In many cases Kievan St. Sophia fresco ornament motifs reproduced samples of the cathedral's mosaic ornament.

Unfortunately, only small fragments of ornament have survived in wall painting of the Tithe Church of Kiev and the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Chernigov. So at present our judgments about the typology and style of the ornament of the late 10th–first half of the 11th centuries are based primarily on the mosaics and frescoes of the St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev. What makes St. Sophia's ornament unique is not only that it is so well preserved—it is a big and essential part of the cathedral painting system.

One of the reasons for the active use of ornament in the St. Sophia, despite a developed system of narrative scenes and a multitude of individual images of saints, was the enormous size of the cathedral, unusual for Byzantine buildings, and problems involved in its decoration. In this case, the designers and those who executed the painting faced the herculean task of filling the huge space with images, and they made full use of ornament, and employed methods not only to enrich and interpret, but also to unify ornamental decoration. It was treated as an important component of the artistic image of the cathedral interior and an integral part of the painting concept. The abundance and variety of ornamental motifs and the diverse ways of their arrangement are among the most impressive features of the St. Sophia ensemble. The ornament accounts for about one third of the total area occupied by the painting.

As we know, two different techniques were used in St. Sophia's pictorial decoration: mosaic – mainly in the central apse, the central dome area and on wall arches, and frescoes – elsewhere in the cathedral, covering all the surfaces of the walls and piers in the cathedral interior from top to bottom, including the choir, towers and even compartments under the stairs¹. In many respects such a solution was dictated by the scale of the construction and the lack of marble in Kiev lands, which was generally used for lining the walls of Byzantine churches up to the level of the vaults.

The combination of the two techniques, however, quite in a different proportion, was also used in the decoration of the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas in Focide (1030s-1040s) created almost simultaneously with the Kievan St. Sophia and usually compared with its mosaics and frescoes (see previous chapters). However, in this Byzantine church frescoes occupied a very small surface in half-closed, separate compartments in the south-west and north-west corners of the building, as well as in the choir. In the main part of the Katholikon, one can see mosaic in a traditional combination with marble lining. The St. Sophia of Ohrid (before 1056), a basilica-type building, was decorated totally with frescoes and Nea Moni of Chios (1042-1055), a compact cross-in-square domed church, exclusively with mosaic together with marble lining.

The role and significance of the ornament in St. Sophia's mosaic and frescoes were different. In the mosaics of the sanctuary, drum and central wall arches, ornament has a more or less traditional function of bringing out the architectural design, separating and framing subject compositions, accentuated by numerous repeats/. St. Sophia's mosaics set the tone to provide maximum ornamental decoration and introduced a certain ornamental repertoire. It made use of Two major kinds of ornament – polychrome and monochrome foliate ornament which was predominant (three basic types in several versions), and polychrome geometric ornament (also two basic and a mixed type).

The plant ornament frames the conch edge of the central apse of the cathedral beginning from the cornice. Plant ornament friezes are at the base of the conch above and below the cornice, and a mixed type frieze (geometric with plant elements) is located between the Eucharist and images of saints. Vertical panels with a plant ornament are on the shoulders of the apse, separating it from the bema. Plant ornament adorns the sanctuary window jambs, sides of the wall arches of the piers under the dome beginning from the cornices.

There was a geometric ornament in the frieze on the bema walls (only a small part is extant) that once separated the regis-

ters of the compositions below the cornice. The central dome drum also had a frieze with a geometric ornament in the spaces between the windows at the arch abutment, which transformed into their trim (at present only a fragment of the original pattern is extant).

The ornamental repertoire of St. Sophia's mosaics largely served as the basis for the frescoes, so it will be our major point of consideration further on.

The dimensions of the ornament rapports in the cathedral mosaics subtly and precisely correspond to the scale of the figures in the narrative scenes of the sanctuary. There is a perfect balance between the ornament and narrative images. In the fresco decoration, the numerous images of the saints seem to be immersed in the ornamental decor, plentiful and large-scale. This impression is further enhanced by the size of ornamental rapports in the sanctuary mosaics, which are also used in the cathedral fresco decoration, where the figures are much smaller.

In St. Sophia's frescoes the ornament covers all the surfaces free of narrative scenes, such surfaces being numerous in the complex configuration of the cathedral internal structure with its abundant arch spans and places unsuitable for painting figures.

The ornament highlights architectural fragmentation in all the areas of the wall painting, covering window jambs and jamb walls and sides of arch spans. It occupies a significant place in the vaults of the St. George and St. Michael chapels, the surfaces above and between the arcades in the arms of the cross under the dome and separates the narrative scenes above them at the ends of the arms of the cross. In the frescoes of the parabema and the diaconicon, the ornament adorns the side lesenes of the piers and the west lesenes of the triumphal arch piers.

The ornament plays a special role in the decoration of St. Sophia's powerful cruciform piers which seem to be innumerable (indeed, found nowhere else in such a quantity). The great number and size of the lesenes of the piers and their large projection (not to be found anywhere else in Byzantine architecture either) and a special system of narrative scenes resulted in the fact that in the main part of the cathedral most of the side lesenes and sometimes their front sides up to the height of the slate slabs – the level of the lower tier of the painted scenes – are covered with vertical panels with ornamental compositions.

The incredibly well preserved painting ensemble of the St. Sophia gives an insight into the methods of decorating the stereobatic area. In St. Sophia's central apse (and only there) mosaic is traditionally coupled with marble panels reaching the lower tier of the windows and, respectively, the lower edge of the sainted hierarch register (i.e., over 2.7 m high, including the synthronos)², once separated from it by a marble cornice. The lining, however, did not cover everything – wide vertical panels of imported (proconnesian) marble, white with grey streaks alternated with narrower strips of opus signinum mortar inlaid with polychrome smalti in geometric patterns³. Such decoration is seen more as a kind of imitation fabric with large folds (especially taking into account the colour of the marble) than ordinary lining⁴, it could have been used in earlier Byzantine ensembles that have not survived.

There are also frescoes in the St. Sophia sanctuary, not only in the side apses, but also in the passages from the central apse and the west lesenes of the sanctuary piers. In these areas, the same as in the main part of the cathedral, the lower tier with the images of saints is not placed high. It is separated from the floor by decorative panels imitating lining framed with simple border bands or panels – a kind of basis for the rest of the painting, which exists in several versions. It may be reproductions of rectangular panels of monochrome marble (seldom with point strokes); imitation of coloured stone inlays of different geometric shapes or medallions, sometimes combined with ornamental elements⁵, the so-called opus sectile technique⁶; or purely ornamental compositions. This register is not more than 1-1.20 m high and not just in the small spatial units making up the aisles, but also in the central part of the cathedral. The level of decorative panels varies greatly, sometimes even within the same pier⁷. It is possible that in some cases the different height of this register corresponds to the difference in the functions of the spatial zones of the cathedral⁸.

Similar techniques were used in the stereobatic area of the choir and on the pier surfaces facing the naos at the level of the choir.

This kind of a complex, multi-variant system was definitely evolved for the first time, like so much of this monument, though

its components are traced to the decorations of early Christian times and pre-iconoclastic buildings, which were really first-rate⁹.

Occasionally the decorative panels with fresco imitation of opus sectile are above the stereobatic area in the St. Sophia. Thus, a large fragment of a vertically oriented rectangular panel with a large medallion in the centre, highlighted by a wide cherry outline, has survived in the bema to the right from the passage to the parabema. It is framed by freely curved white stems ending in half-palmettes against a polychrome background (ochre, cherry and green). Inside the medallion, too, there are contours of a pattern, possibly made in *neft* (carbon black).

Such decoration which resembles marble inlay in Byzantine circle monuments is a kind of allusion to opus sectile reminiscent, in particular, of those found on the walls of the Chapel of St. Venantius at San Giovanni in Fonte (also known as the Lateran Baptistery) in Rome (7th century).

It is noteworthy that decorative fragments of a similar type done on a somewhat smaller scale have survived in St. Sophia's south outer gallery. This is evidence that the cathedral was painted concurrently, which, however, has not been disputed recently, that its concept was integral and that close attention was paid to works of the pre-iconoclastic and earlier periods. This kind of retrospective approach to decorative motifs does not testify to the provincial nature of the monument but in a way means that the 10th-11th century craftsmen were of metropolitan origin and quite willingly, moreover, deliberately turned to the decoration of the preceding times.

One of the surviving fragments of wall painting of the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernigov, which, in all probability, was created almost simultaneously with the St. Sophia ensemble, was also, apparently, part of a similar panel. Its middle part is reminiscent of a medallion segment framed by a white stem-like ornament with plant shoots against a polychrome background. The use of such a rare motif, as the very nature of the ornament itself, corroborates the hypothesis of a possible involvement of the same craftsmen in the creation of these ensembles¹⁰.

St. Sophia's ornament is a whole world of plant forms, which plays a significant role in the internal architectural design of the cathedral. An extraordinarily well-developed system of ornamental friezes and vertical band compositions with a very large rapport (used in the mosaic and fresco decoration of the sanctuary, and better suited to the scale of the building as a whole and the pictorial cycles of the central apse than the size of the figures of saints in the other parts of the cathedral) sets the overall powerful tone, unifies and brings all its numerous compartments together into a single organism, thus breaking a kind of constructive monotony.

As has already been mentioned, the huge scale of the structure and the complex arrangement of its enormous interior space were just some of the reasons for the active use of ornament in the St. Sophia. It was thanks to the ornament that the cathedral wall painting became a structural system and an ensemble, rather than a collection of individual scenes and images not always united by a common concept. Without acknowledging and understanding the role of the ornament in St. Sophia's painting no analysis of the ensemble as an artistic phenomenon and the assessment of its aesthetic value – qualities that were undoubtedly taken into consideration when the cathedral decoration concept was conceived – can be exhaustive.

In many ways it was the ornament¹¹ (in combination with the original decoration of the floor inlaid with coloured smalti)¹², can hardly be regarded only as a sort of attempt to solve the complicated task of decorating the huge building.

The St. Sophia ensemble is the first or one of the first contemporaneous monuments of Byzantine painting to demonstrate an extraordinary florescence of ornamental art that was characteristic of late 10th-12th-century art life. To some extent it came because of an increased interest in ornamentation in the preceding period of iconoclasm, partly it was due to the influence of Islamic art with its developed ornamental culture, but primarily it had to do with the general trends of Byzantine art life, which had another heyday. In St. Sophia's decoration, however, the focus on ornament was really special.

The amount and variety of ornament in St. Sophia's is, in a way, a unique phenomenon. An analysis of its architectural forms showed¹³ that despite the fact that all the elements of its design were recognisable, the combination used in the cathedral is not to be found anywhere else in the Byzantine world. The same is true about its ornamentation, the bulk of which has specific sources. As has already been mentioned, the original models

of the main ornamental forms and compositional schemes are in the mosaic decoration of the sanctuary, varying in frescoes elsewhere in the cathedral.

The nature of St. Sophia's ornamental repertoire, its themes and techniques reveal the origin of the craftsmen just as vividly as the painting themes. The ornamentation very clearly and accurately reflected the processes going on in the world of ornamental forms at that particular time. However, the ornamental repertoire of the Kievan cathedral has motifs and compositions dating back to the previous stages of artistic development. This feature is not part of the ornamental repertoire of provincial monuments: it is typical of metropolitan works. Turning to the art of previous times was a meaningful expression of the continuity and stability of the world order.

In the 10th century the ornamental repertoire of Byzantine art underwent significant changes – new motifs and themes appeared, differing greatly from the ornamental vocabulary of the pre-iconoclast period, which drew on the late Antiquity heritage, although the renewal began back in the 9th century. Beginning from the second half of the 10th century the typology of Byzantine ornament became significantly enricher and its artistic language changed. Recreating the lush and abundant flora motifs, close to natural forms or embellished by the artists' imagination, gave way to conventional images of plant motifs and their utmost stylisation. First of all, as far as we can tell, this trend took place in the field of decorating manuscripts and possibly liturgical utensils. Later on, the trend gained ground and developed in the decoration of churches, where, along with traditional models, unusual improvisational combinations of plant and geometric patterns were used and original interpretations of traditional plant motifs appeared.

At first glance a certain part of St. Sophia's mosaic repertoire seems to belong to the beginning of this trend. The mosaic decoration of the sanctuary apse, separating the apse from the bema walls (serving as a kind of support to the image of the Virgin Orans and at the same time emphasising the two lower tiers with the *Eucharist* and the images of saints). This kind of ornament is defined as "petal"¹⁴ and "enamel"; further on we are going to refer to it as "floral and petal". From the second half of the 10th century the largest Byzantine scriptoria, primarily in Constantinople used it in their practice¹⁵. As a rule, this ornament was executed in bright local colours against a gold background. Its main element is a complex *krinon* (lily) with its "petals" curved inwards. At the heart of most of the compositional schemes of this ornament is an orderly alternation of floral forms, devoid of any naturalism. They are enclosed by a stem into medallions, which are almost geometric in shape. Between them, as a kind of binding elements, are different petal motifs, grouped in a certain way or isolated. The active use of this ornament accompanied general processes in Byzantine art; it was a sort of quintessence of style of the mainstream of painting in the late Macedonian era.

This brand new type of ornament gave rise to the concept of the "Byzantine style" in the history of ornamentation, and not only in manuscripts. For several centuries from the second half of the 10th century, it dominated the decoration of Greek manuscripts created both in Constantinople scriptoria and in different regions of the Byzantine world.

In many cases, the ornament in St. Sophia's is similar to it not only in the type of large floral motifs, the way of alternating and connecting *krinons* (enclosed in medallions formed by stems) with palmettes, but also in other typical features. These include the gold background, sparseness, free existence inside a frieze, certain inner space of the composition, the desire to render the plasticity of a stylised plant form both of the *krinon* (with the help of the bent edges of petals) and the stem (the transition from the black stripe of the smalti

to the blue and white), a similar colour palette with rich luminous tones (blue, light blue, red, yellow, light green and white), and a thin, delicate, non-continuous outline of plant forms (in white, black or yellow smalti).

The differences are actually negligible. The medallions on the vertical panel on the north projection separating the wall of the central apse from the bema. Thus, the vertically oriented compositions featured on convex surfaces are perceived in the same way as a horizontal frieze on a flat plane, to some extent reminiscent of a U-shaped manuscript headpiece. Judging by the skill with which St. Sophia's floral and petal ornament shapes have been interpreted, the size of rapports determined, and the width of the friezes chosen precisely in relation

9. In the Hosios Loukas Katholikon the fresco part of the decoration in the north and south compartments also ends in imitation marble lining rising to a significant height (about 1.7 m), but there it is a fairly primitive imitation of marble texture rather than a decorative inlay (see, for example, Chatzidakis, 1997, p. 56).

10. See "Painting of the late 10th—mid 11th centuries" by V.D. Sarabianov in this publication, p. 194.

11. At present, the state of the fresco paint layer and, respectively, of the ornamental compositions is a far cry from the original. When frescoes were cleared of oil overpaintings, the fresco paint layer was half washed away in many places, sometimes down to the plaster. Red lead has degenerated and lapis lazuli is lost almost everywhere.

12. St. Sophia's old floor was originally inlaid with triangular, square and rectangular pieces of smalti of light green, yellow and dark red that made up a carpet pattern, the composition of which we can make out only approximately (see Milev, 1911, pp. 214-5; Karger, 1947, pp. 21-35; *Ornamenty Sofii Kievskoi*, 1949, p.14).

13. Komech, 1987, p. 230.

14. See Weitzmann, 1935, pp. 15-32.

15. See, for example, the manuscript Lectionary (first quarter of the 11th cent.) from the metropolitan scriptorium (Bodl., Barocci 202, sheet 95); the manuscript Homilies of Gregory of Nazienzus (Bodl., Barocci 207, sheet 229), most likely of similar origin; a metropolitan manuscript Lectionary (Rawl. G. 2, sheet 159) (late 11th cent.) (Hutter, 1977, p. 160. N 25. p.163. N 36; Weitzmann, 1935, Pl. LXX-VII.473; Frantz, 1934, Pl. VII. 13, 17; Pl. XI.19, 20; Pl. XII.4).

16. However, despite a certain proximity of floral and petal forms, they are interpreted in a different way – the composition of the frieze is based not on a traditional manuscript ornament with the regularly alternating stylised floral motifs enclosed in medallions formed by their stems, but a discontinuous rhythmic movement of a lush dark green branch with divergent simplified floral and foliate motifs close in colour to natural combinations.

17. Scholars have already noted it (see Mouriki, 1985, vol. 1, p. 198).

18. See Grozdanov, 1988, p. 13.

19. They are divided by unusual corrugated leaves belted in the middle by a kind of rings fastened to the medallion edges. The colour scheme of the outermost composition is in its own way naturalistic: pale-green floral motifs against a terracotta background of the medallions are separated by greenish bunches of corrugated leaf forms. The coloring of another composition with a similar ornament placed parallel to the first one is even more restrained—it is based on the shades of grey, yellow and terracotta.

20. For example, in the Constantinople manuscript of the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom (Bodl., Canon, gr. 101, sheet 1) (the second quarter of the 11th cent.) (See Hutter, 1982, p. 33, N 30). Refined and simplified models are often present in the headpieces of the same manuscript, e.g. in the manuscript *Prophetologium* (Christ Church gr. 14, sheet 151, 50) (first half of the 11th cent.) (Hutter, 1993, p. 73, N 12). However, the ornamental repertoire of the St. Sophia of Ohrid sanctuary included complex designs combining motifs borrowed from different models.

21. This is the second of the three main types of vine found in Byzantine art from the 9th cent. (the first is a vine with curls, the second with a winding stem, and the third is an abstract vine (see Frantz, 1934, p. 34), which have many different variants, known both in stone, manuscript headpieces, enamels and fabrics.

22. See, for example, Grabar, 1976/1, p. 69-88; Frye, 1972; etc.

23. There are variants of a white pattern on a coloured background, such as a headpiece in the manuscript of Homilies of St. John Chrysostom (the second half of the 11th cent., Bodleian Library) (Bodl., Rawl, G. 160, sheet 366 v.) (see Hutter, 1982, p. 37, N 35) and a dark pattern on a white background, such as a manuscript of the first half of the 11th cent. (Christ Church gr. 10, sheets 41, 57) (see Hutter, 1993, p. 35, N 6).

to the huge space of the central apse and the scale of the figures in the subject compositions, we can say that they had sufficient experience in dealing with monumental structures, most likely, the monuments in the capital (created in abundance during that period, but no longer extant). Nevertheless, it is in the St. Sophia that we first come across this type of ornament in wall painting, and only here is it given such a prominent place. What is more, those ornamental compositions in the fresco decorations, which, the same as the sanctuary mosaics, are influenced by the decoration of illuminated manuscripts, but on some other models, reproduce the compositional schemes of the samples with the same thoroughness. Most often this type of ornament is found in the area of the cross under the dome.

None of the contemporaneous ensembles surviving in the regions of the empire reproduced that ornament with such precision. The ornamental repertoire of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon, a monument stadially close to it, has a completely different character—it involves a lot of complex models, new elements and re-interpreted motifs. In its abundant use (although on other surfaces in accordance with the nature of its architecture) and diversity it is in part comparable to St. Sophia's decoration because its semantic, artistic and aesthetic value is quite significant in the ensemble, but the nature of ornamental compositions and other elements of the ornament is different: it clearly reveals the influence of Islamic ornamental culture. The Hosios Loukas ornamental repertoire is rich in forms that had not been used before nor were to be used afterwards. The Katholikon's ornament strikes one with its amazing luxury and the abundance and variety of forms; it is definitely original, laid out on a large scale, subtly and precisely correlated with the size of the internal space. However, exactly because of the variety of elements, and the combination and juxtaposition of motifs it does not produce an impression of an integral system. The typological diversity of neighbouring ornamental compositions makes its elements looki redundant, motley and isolated from one another. The Hosios Loukas ornament looks too luxurious and colourful compared with the restrained images of the narrative part of the decoration, though it is possible that this kind of contrast was deliberate.

The ornamental repertoire of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon has certain forms (including quatrefoil) and elements used in manuscripts, but in other combinations, proportions, and a different colour scheme, although, as a rule, also set against a gold background. The only ornament, to some extent reminiscent of manuscript models, frames and highlights in a special way the half-figure of the Saviour in the lunette above the entrance to the naos from the narthex¹⁶. Anyway, whatever its manifestations the Hosios Loukas ornament has essentially an interpretative character in relation to manuscript ornament, a feature that greatly distinguishes it from St. Sophia's.

In its own way refined and stylistically homogeneous, the ornamental repertoire of Nea Moni, which is part of the group of Byzantine mosaic ensembles of the second quarter –mid-11th century, makes wide use of manuscript ornamental motifs¹⁷. Unlike St. Sophia's and Hosios Loukas' ornamental systems which represent different, but outstanding artistic phenomena valuable in themselves, the Nea Moni ornament performs largely a secondary function in relation to the painting, which already reflects the next stage in decoration development.

As for the typology of the floral and petal ornament and its usage, the ornamental fresco compositions in the sanctuary of St. Sophia of Ohrid (in the arch borders with the image of Virgin Mary and the narrative scenes in the parabema and diaconicon) are the closest to St. Sophia's. Scholars have already drawn attention to the similarity between the ornaments of the two monuments¹⁸. For the most part (and, above all, in the strategically placed compositions flanking the central apse conch), this ornament fills the field very densely, with little of the yellow ground visible; the *krinon* shapes are just as tightly located in the medallions. Schematised and oversimplified, stripped of a convincing measure of conventionality and the degree of stylisation creating a kind of reality, which generally distinguish this type of ornament, they designate motifs of floral and petal ornament rather than reproduce its samples. Alternation of complex shapes active in their colour combinations turns into a monotonous series of almost monochrome motifs in medallions, the framing of which is no longer associated with the stem¹⁹.

To all appearances, it was of primary importance to the client who commissioned the Ohrid painting and those who executed it to demonstrate their knowledge of the ornamental reper-

toire of metropolitan monuments, a kind of fashion of the time. Their ability to transform and re-interpret source models in this case boiled down to a simplification and a certain primitivisation of the samples, which was unusual and even picturesque in its own way (for example, in the diaconicon) and reflected already a slightly different stage of development. Individual typologically similar models also occur in manuscript ornamentation, even in Constantinople scriptorium practice²⁰.

The vine motif is also present in St. Sophia's mosaics, but it is practically graphic and absolutely symbolic²¹, again influenced by manuscript samples. Its wavy thin dark blue stem with branches depicted in "reverse" and "recurrent" movement, leaves most of the gold background free. The vine frames the east wall arch and highlights the edges of the other wall arches, thus accentuating the central area under the dome, which is in keeping with the semantic meaning of the motif and the logic of the architectural design.

The well-thought out correlation of these designs not only with constructive logic, but with the symbols of architectural and pictorial forms, thoroughness, virtuoso execution, refinement of stem bends and vine branches, the balance between its rapport and the size of the cathedral space, its organic existence on designated planes and at the same time its utmost stylisation bringing it in line with the text of the inscription above the central apse conch—may all be considered an outstanding example of decorative solutions in Byzantine painting.

There is a significant feature that distinguishes this ornament from traditional models—its unusual dynamics, in whatever way it is interpreted. Beginning at the edge of the slate cornice, in some cases an almost straight elongated stem or a stem with a small number of branches, the vine, as if getting momentum, is tightening up as it rises to the arch crown from both sides. It is symmetrically completed, converging in the centre (its rapport almost half that at the base) and forming a bud under the medallion with the half-figure of Christ Hierophant at the bottom of the drum.

No less unusual than the type and techniques of using the vine and the floral and petal ornament in the sanctuary, is the ornament of the horizontal frieze at the base of the apse conch above the cornice, on both sides adjoining the foot of the image of the Virgin Orans. Its finest transparent monochrome pattern, white on a black background, is much less conspicuous than the floral and petal frieze under the cornice. However, the location of this ornament is hardly accidental; the same is true of its "lightness" compared with the dense lower frieze and its saturated colour. A finest web, the composition of the ornament filling the entire field of the frieze is based on the alternation of medallions with four simplest palmettes arranged crossways converging in the centre and forming a sort of blossoming cross, and medallions with a palmette of a more complex shape. It hangs down from the stem, which comes from a bifurcated base to form a second, inner medallion with a bud-shaped protrusion at the top. The medallions are separated by more complex palmettes depicted as mirror images with abutting bases.

This ornament, which does not attract as much attention as the frieze below, is executed a bit more casually. Sharply outlined at the edges of the apse, its elements become more blurred towards the centre, losing absolute repetition; many variants of the composition and motifs of this ornament, placed vertically, were used in St. Sophia's fresco decoration.

The motifs and interpretation of this ornament are rooted in Sasanian art, which continued to influence significantly the ornamental repertoire of the 10th-12th century Byzantine art through Muslim craftsmen. The possibility of this kind of borrowing and the more or less conscious imitation is due to their common source – Hellenistic art, which has already been noted by scholars studying Byzantine as well as Islamic art²².

St. Sophia's ornament under consideration, as represented in mosaic, has no parallels in Byzantine monumental painting, although similar forms are found in manuscript headpieces²³, embroideries and stone carving. In this case, it seems that stone carving (most likely the carved marble of metropolitan structures) served as a model not only for the ornament in the St. Sophia's sanctuary we are talking about, but also influenced the emergence of similar decoration in manuscripts, where this kind of pattern was usually reproduced as monochrome. However, it is difficult to say anything with certainty, since common typology was one of the features of the ornamental repertoire of 10th—12th century Byzantine art wherever it was used.

The same assumption seems to be true in respect to the

24. Only some of the ornament has survived, mainly in the window soffits, but the extant parts give a sufficiently full idea of its composition.

25. Bouras, 1980, p. 89-91, Figs. 6.3, 6.

26. Weitzmann, 1935. Pl. XLIV.255, XLV.264, etc.; Frantz, 1934. Pl. II, 18; Manuscript Homilies of St. John Chrysostom (Bodl., Rawl, G. 160, sheet 273; Bodl., Rawl, G. 159, sheet 43) (see Hutter, 1982, pp. 38-9, N 35, 37).

27. See, for example, Dimand, 1937, Fig. 28.

28. Similar motifs are also found in the manuscript Homilies of John Chrysostom from the Bodleian Library (Bodl., Rawl, G. 160, sheet 351) (see Hutter, 1982, p. 37, N 35); in Menologion of St. Simeon Metaphrastes (third quarter of the 11th cent.) (Holkham gr. 19, sheet 141) (see Hutter, 1982, p. 55, N 55); in the Lectionary (late 11th cent.) (E.D. Clarke 45, sheet 237) (see Hutter, 1982, p. 56, N 56, etc.).

29. The choice of ornament for headpieces, especially in elite codices, depended on their location in the manuscript, and its type influenced the execution technique. For the first big headpiece, a multi-coloured floral and petal ornament on a gold background could be used; to decorate other, usually small headpieces, "fret saw" (openwork) palmettes were used, bicoloured or monochrome, and made in ink (see Hutter, 1996, pp. 4-22).

30. Similarly, the corners of three square motifs with a christcross inside are done in golden smalti. In the middle of the sides of the squares there are large lily-shaped elements, as a sort of extensions of the arms of the cross, which thus turns into something like a blossoming cross. The corners of three rhombi with gold smalti swastikas end in graceful small white lily-shaped motifs with an elongated and pointed middle petal. Their sides are complemented by white ledged triangular elements, as if made of small cubes.

31. This symbol of well-being, light and generosity is one of the most ancient solar signs (see Wilson, 1896).

32. This symbol is also found in floor mosaics of the Roman period inscribed in a square and in combination with rhombi and cross-shaped forms (see Cremonesi, 1984. Sl. 72).

33. Logvin, 1971/1, pp. 45-6. Karger, 1947, p. 25.

35. Only a small part of the frieze has survived on the north wall of the bema from the triumphal arch lesene to the opening leading to the parabema. The lost parts, as in many other cases, have been covered in oil paint. The colour range is based on a combination of light pink and dark green tones.

ornament on the sanctuary window jambs²⁴. The techniques used are similar to the frieze we have just analysed. It is a white pattern on a black background, which in itself shows that it has prototypes in stone carving. The lines of the drawing in this case are much thicker than in the frieze above the apse conch cornice. Its execution is also marked by a certain carelessness: in the soffit and the right window jambs the ornament elements are more vague and asymmetrical and the bands larger, but on the whole this ornament can be traced to the same samples as the upper frieze. In this case, these are also variants of the interpretation of the so-called Sasanian palmette transformed in Byzantine art. The ornament under consideration has parallels both in stone carving²⁵ and in manuscripts²⁶.

The two side windows have similar ornament patterns. The skeleton of the pattern is formed by zigzag stripes dividing the composition field into triangles, inside which are complex palmette-shaped motifs of two similar variants.

The middle window of the apse has an ornamental composition of a different type. Its field is divided into squares, with palmettes inside. One part of the squares is divided by cruciform lines and has a small circle in the centre, which is the basis for the palmette motifs, their vertices facing outwards. The other, divided by diagonal lines into four triangular planes, is covered by palmettes, their upper parts facing the centre of the square. This monochrome clearly discernible expressive ornament has the same roots as the motifs discussed above²⁷ and is, in its turn, found in Byzantine art, both in stone carving and in manuscript headpieces²⁸. Its motifs are also used in the ornamental repertoire of St. Sophia's fresco decoration.

This pattern to some extent is a transition to another type of ornament in the cathedral mosaics in the lowest frieze encircling the sanctuary apse between the *Eucharist* and the tier with the images of the Church Fathers. It is based on the alternation of the simplest and at the same time basic ornamental shapes – squares and rhombi.

There are three friezes in St. Sophia's sanctuary: the top one with a thin transparent white floral ornament (going back to stone carving in its metropolitan variants) against a black background; the middle one with luxurious polychrome floral and petal motifs (modelled on elite samples from manuscripts made in the capital's scriptoria) against a gold background and the bottom one with laconic geometric forms (whose combination and alternation was of a semantic nature rather than formed something that could loosely be defined as ornament) against a blue background. Their relationship was in keeping with the architectural logic, and at the same time the decoration principles used in Byzantine codices of the time, which had a certain consistency, a kind of decoration hierarchy²⁹.

As far as typology is concerned, the lower frieze is the most unusual in St. Sophia's ornamental repertoire. Its motifs are not reproduced elsewhere in the cathedral and are not found either separately or in the given combination in any of the contemporaneous churches of the Byzantine world.

This frieze is monumental and active in colour, although it has only four basic tones. One of them is a deep rich blue shade of smalti used as a background. Gold and white smalti are used in various combinations in the geometric forms making up the frieze, as well as green smalti as the background for all the motifs. Cherry smalti are also used in small amounts in the thin lines of frames emphasising the outlines of the main figures.

Crosses and swastikas are alternately inscribed in the squares and rhombi. While step-like triangular projections are added to the rhombi on all the four sides to form squares, the corners of the squares are softened, as if slightly levelled out by the simplest petal elements placed under them.

The nature and techniques of the representation the ornamental forms of this frieze are different in its northern and southern parts. The southern part is executed with much more care, thought and artistry. One has the impression that it served as a model for the opposite side of the frieze, though the pattern was not always properly interpreted and reproduced. To begin with, the southern part of the frieze has eight ornamental motifs, while the northern has nine, so in the former case there is more room and they do not touch each other; what is more, they are slightly smaller in size. At the same time the set of shapes in the southern part is more diverse and includes motifs that are absent in the northern part. They consist of squares with lily-shaped motifs arranged crosswise, coming from a round highlighted core and done in golden smalti. The green field of the square has a cherry frame round it and the petals in the corners are white in one case and gold in the other³⁰.

What was important for the creators of this part of the

frieze was the relationship with the *Eucharist* above, a relationship both semantic and compositional. Lily-shaped ornamental motifs are present both in the frieze and the representation of the fabric covering the throne. Moreover, a similar cruciform motif is present in a simplified form in the fabric covering the hand of Archdeacon Lawrence in the sainted hierarch tier under the reviewed ornamental frieze.

Squares and rhombi in the southern part of the frieze have geometrically regular shapes, located strictly along vertical and horizontal lines. The arms of the swastika inside the rhombi in this part of the frieze are facing counterclockwise, in keeping with the direction of the procession of the Apostles in the *Eucharist* above the frieze.

On the north side the alternating squares and rhombi are not as geometrically regular, some of them inclined at different angles. Small lily-shaped motifs at the corners of the four rhombi and three out of five squares (an almost standard feature) are extremely small in most cases and at times barely discernible. The arms of only two out of four swastikas inside the rhombi correspond to the direction of movement in the *Eucharist*, the rest are facing the opposite direction.

The swastika motif (a cross with arms, curved at a right angle or of a less rigid shape) is an extreme rarity in Byzantine culture³¹. It is encountered in early Christian art (the so-called gammadion cross) alongside other solar symbols inscribed in simple geometrical shapes – circles, squares, rhombi, for example, in floor mosaics of the Basilica of Beth Mary (6th century)³².

Gradually this motif must have lost its original meaning, although its location in the frieze alternating with the cross seems to demonstrate the opposite. What is interesting is the way this motif is depicted in the rhombus, which is located between the south and central windows and is an extension of the frieze under consideration – its location puts it in a state of certain equilibrium. The way it was achieved (all parts of the swastika face different directions, as if breaking the movement) may attest to the loss of the original meaning of the motif and its perception mostly as a decorative element.

The importance of purely artistic considerations is corroborated by the correlation of the motifs and colour range of the lower frieze with the pattern of the fragmentarily surviving floor mosaics of St. Sophia's and the ornamental friezes on the bema walls. "The bema floor was made of a combination of large rhombi, diagonal crosses between them and interlocking small circles, which, together with the rhombi, form a rhomboid grid pattern"³³. The combination of smalti colours found in St. Peter's side-chapel – yellow, green, purple and blue³⁴ – could also have been used in the sanctuary floor.

Crenate stepped triangular motifs, "supplementing" the rhombi to make rectangles in the lower frieze of the central apse corresponded to the stepped pattern of the frieze which was once situated on the bema walls below the cornice³⁵. The latter, made in St. Sophia's on a very large scale, is one of the oldest geometric patterns used extensively both in mosaic and in manuscript decoration. It was part of the ornamental repertoire of Hagia Sophia's mosaics, framing the lunette above the cathedral entrance with the images of Christ and the interceding Emperor Leo VI (886-912). There are different variants of this ornament, but on a completely different scale, in Hosios Loukas mosaics; it is also used in the narthex arch mosaics of the Church of the Dormition in Nicaea (1065-1067). Unlike other types of ornament in the St. Sophia mosaics, the stepped ornament was not reproduced in the fresco decoration of the ensemble.

Going back to the lower frieze in the central apse of the cathedral, we can note that the nature and interpretation of its component forms, their combination and location (in the sanctuary under the *Eucharist*) are signs of the special meaning attached to them. The motif prototypes and the location of the frieze itself are traced back to early Christian art and, undoubtedly, have a special meaning connected with the assertion and glorification of the main Christian symbols. The symbolism of the cross acquired great importance in the era of iconoclasm, but the motifs and their combinations we are interested in appeared earlier and continued to exist before and after the restoration of iconolatry.

Similar (in nature) ornamental friezes are also usually located in the sanctuaries and frame apse conches. For instance, a composition of crosses inside circles and rhombi, which alternate with chrismon and lily-shaped motifs arranged according to their pattern (the motifs reminiscent of the St. Sophia of Kiev, but not enclosed in a square frame), against a gold background frames the apse conch of the already mentioned Chapel of St.

Venantius at the San Giovanni in Fonte Baptistery of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. Such examples are not at all rare³⁶.

Very interesting in this respect are original geometric shapes in the mosaics of Hagia Sophia's north tympanum, placed instead of the ground on the sides of the images of St. John Chrysostom, Ignatius of Antioch and four other saints (late 9th century). They are rhombi on all sides complemented with semi-circles with crenate ornament elements inside (slightly simpler in form than in the Kievan St. Sophia) and a medallion in the centre with a foliate motif³⁷.

There is a part of a frieze of rhomboid figures under the portrait of Emperor Alexander I on the north-west pier of the Hagia Sophia north gallery (912)³⁸. It has a pattern of rhombus-shaped motifs with medallions inside them. This part of decoration has survived so poorly that it is difficult to tell with certainty what is painted inside. There is a cross or something resembling a swastika in the rightmost medallion. The decoration on the arches contiguous with the north-west pier is a grid of circles alternating with rhombi crossed by diagonal lines with small lily-shaped motifs at the ends.

This digression into the history of the motifs under consideration gives an insight into how they appeared in the cathedral's ornamentation. They are mainly connected with Constantinople art, possibly of an earlier time or the late 10th—first half of the 11th century, which accumulated motifs of different periods and styles in its ornamental repertoire.

There could be special reasons for the appearance of such a distinctly accentuated ornamental frieze in St. Sophia's mosaics. The emphasis on the form and, accordingly, the symbolism of the cross could be due to circumstances connected with the initial stage of the adoption of Christianity in Rus. That is why chrismons were abundantly used in St. Sophia's fresco decoration – they are in almost all arch crowns, in staircase tower paintings, etc. At the same time, ties with solar motifs apparently remained strong. Solar signs were widely used in the decoration of old slate plates fencing off the cathedral choir, including the first and second from the sanctuary on the north side. On the fourth plate from the sanctuary they are combined with christcrosses³⁹. Early Byzantine art is known to have plenty of prototypes of such plates. An almost exact reproduction of ancient plate motifs in St. Sophia's decoration also indicates a conscious connection, a deliberate continuity of Paleo-Christian art and the artistic culture of the 7th-10th centuries as manifested by the painterly ornament and the interpretation of a certain range of images.

There is an eight-pointed cross in St. Sophia's frieze under consideration, given actually a central position, in isolation, between the sanctuary windows. There were also crosses on the façades of the cathedral. An image of the blossoming cross has survived on the back wall of the niche of the west façade.

It is not fortuitous that crosses in the sanctuary flank separate passages and are quite profusely used, as isolated forms, in the decoration of St. Sophia's piers and sometimes also in the passages from the central area to the cathedral's side compartments. There are so many crosses that to regard them only as markers of possible locations of relics of saints would be wrong. Their total number makes one question the assumption about a possible connection with the burial cult, although in some cases cypresses are depicted on the sides of the cross – a symbol of eternity, immortality, which, coupled with a cross, is characteristic of sarcophagi decoration.

Ornamental compositions framing archways in the aisles and on the edges of the pier lesenes often have crosses in medallions incorporated into the pattern structure – for example, in arch crowns, the lower parts of the compositions. Just as chrismons, they were part and parcel of the ornament.

I would like to state once again that motifs and compositions of the lower frieze of St. Sophia's sanctuary are not found anywhere else – either in the ensemble's frescoes or in other monuments closest to it in time (Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni, St. Sophia of Ohrid). Only Hosios Loukas has another type of the geometric ornament from the ornamental repertoire of St. Sophia's mosaic – a "corrugated band", the so-called bricks "on edge".

The motif of a corrugated band was known in ancient and early Christian art, floor mosaics⁴⁰ and in 10th-11th-century Greek manuscripts; later it was also quite often used in wall painting. In St. Sophia's mosaics this ornament used to frame window arches in the central dome drum, an extension, as it were, of the frieze in the spaces between arch abutments⁴¹.

Somewhat close to the motifs from the ornamental repertoire of Hosios Loukas is yet another version of plant ornament,

in a way unusual for St. Sophia's mosaics, where all the themes have distinct parallels in works, so to speak, of the central circle of monuments and the dominant style of Byzantine art, primarily in manuscript decoration. It frames the central apse conch, covering the inner part more than the visible side. This is a variant of a band composition consisting of a chain of medallions, connected by pairs of small palmettes given as mirror images of each other. Alternating medallions are filled with palmettes with a pronounced round golden core, and floral and petal shapes with the same core. Four petals of the latter arranged crosswise are elongated and pointed, and the ones between them are shorter and rounder. These motifs have parallels in manuscript ornamentation. The colour palette has more light blue and white than blue. Red and different shades of green smalti – from cold to warm tones – are also used. This is the only variant of the ornament, the interpretation of which has a kind of transitional character, somewhere in-between the Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni ornaments.

In general, the ornaments of St. Sophia's mosaics – purely Byzantine in nature – do not exist in such a clearly expressed form in any of the ensembles it is usually compared to. Strictly speaking, as far as imagery is concerned, there is no close proximity between the St. Sophia, Hosios Loukas and St. Sophia of Ohrid ensembles. Every one of them represents a special version of a particular trend of the Byzantine style, its interpretation in varying degrees conditioned by local circumstances. But the differences in the ornamental repertoire are of cardinal nature. St. Sophia's mosaic ornament apparently reflected the major trend of development of Byzantine art, represented by the remnants of Constantinople mosaics and manuscripts made in large Byzantine scriptoria. It gives an insight into the ornamental repertoire of extinct ensembles of the metropolis and, to some extent, probably, of the lost decoration of the Tithe Church, which is believed to be a replica of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos in the imperial palace. Part of St. Sophia's ornamental repertoire might have been modelled on its ornaments.

The influence of the Tithe Church decoration, of which only small pieces of plaster have remained, including those with fragments of plant motifs, can be seen in St. Sophia's fresco decoration. As well as in the cathedral's mosaics, it is mostly a stylised plant ornament (the geometric pattern is represented only by the brick-edge ornamental band), which consists of many variations of two basic types, characteristic of the time of its creation: the polychrome floral and petal design (dating back to manuscript ornamentation) and the stem-shaped mostly white ribbon ornament on polychrome ground (with prototypes in carved stone and interpretations in manuscripts). The latter is the most widely used ornament in St. Sophia's wall painting.

Elements of this ornament – fragments of a stem-shaped ribbon pattern with loop-like curves, belong to the decoration of the Tithe Church. They are ample proof of the use of the ornament in the cathedral's painting already in the late 10th century. Archaeological digs yielded another fragment of plaster, quite large and expressive compared with the previous finds, with elements of floral and petal ornament.

In St. Sophia's frescoes, ornamental band compositions, individual motifs and sophisticated combinations of ornamental forms filling numerous surfaces free from narrative scenes, were indeed mostly variations of the mosaic repertoire. The only difference was that the finest white lines of the pattern in the frieze adjacent to the foot of the figure of the Virgin Orans, ornamental motifs on window jambs of the central apse and the vine stem framing its conch had become thicker and turned into ribbon patterns on polychrome background unfolding vertically or archwise.

The main ornamental forms and individual motifs were the same, sometimes supplemented by half-palmettes or stylised plant offshoots. The same motifs could be included in different structural grids of rhomboid, triangular, round and heart-shaped form, creating new compositions. The colour range of the ornament had changed. The ribbon elements, as a rule, remained white, though occasionally ochre, saturnine red (now gone black).

In addition to developing and interpreting the ornamental compositions of the sanctuary mosaics in frescoes, the ornament in some cases included rhomboid grids.

In many cases, especially in the central part of the cathedral, the ribbon ornament was in the same places as its carved prototypes, including where the columns curves into arches, and in the area of the central cross under the dome.

It is noteworthy that the fresco decoration has some places where patterns, outlined in black on clean plaster, definitely

36. For example, there is a mosaic frieze in the Church of Panagia Angeloktisti in Cyprus (first half of the 7th cent.) under the image of the Virgin and Child with the Archangels at the base of the sanctuary apse conch. It features rhombi inside medallions and quatrefoils with lily-shaped motifs represented crosswise in the intervals between them (Lazarev, 1948, Table 24). In the lost mosaics of the apse of the Church of the Dormition in Nicaea, executed shortly after 787, the sanctuary apse conch is framed by a frieze of the alternating rhombi, motifs resembling the Solomon's knot or an interpretation of the swastika (which is difficult to discern from a photo), stylised elements arranged crosswise – the simplest petals, between which the familiar lily-shaped motifs are shown along two diagonals intersecting in the centre (variation of the chrison?) and reinterpreted solar symbols consisting of small rhombi on both sides of the diagonal lines with cruciform endings. The ornamental frieze at the base of the apse conch of Hagia Irene in Constantinople (after 740) is a geometrised composition of contiguous rhombi with cruciform motifs inside them. The 8th cent. (?) mosaics in the Hagia Sophia (the room above the lobby?) has an image of a four-armed cross in a medallion, which is framed by alternating rhombi and the already familiar lily-shaped elements with a marked core (Lowden, 1997, Fig. 88). The frieze depicting crosses inside rhombi alternating with stylised plant forms decorated the 9th cent. wooden ties in the Hagia Sophia (Sheppard, 1965, pp. 237-40).

37. Mango, Hawkins, 1972, p. 33.

38. Mango, Hawkins, 1961, p.187, Figs. 15, 17.

39. Arkhipova, 2005, Tables 55.1, 56.1, 57.1

40. For example, the mosaic floor of the first half of the 5th century (?) in Thessaloniki.

41. Only one section of the frieze has survived in the eastern part of the drum over a fragment of the image of Apostle Paul. The sides of the brick-on-edge ornamental band, divided by three horizontal stripes, are rendered three-dimensional with the help of chiaroscuro. The stripes on the sides go from top to bottom: light grey - dark grey, white - red and green - dark green. The lost parts of the ornament are covered with oil paint.

go back to stone carving, if not exactly imitate it. Thus a narrow frieze (0.15m) under the slate cornice of one of the piers of the north outside gallery reproduced an ornament which shows there was a search of other pictorial techniques⁴².

The relationship of ornament typology/types in frescoes and mosaics of the same ensemble is a separate issue. It should just be mentioned that in Hosios Loukas the ornamental repertoire of frescoes and mosaics did not have so much in common, as in the St. Sophia of Kiev. The St. Sophia of Ohrid had fundamentally different ornamental repertoire in the sanctuary, the naos and the narthex. But it is the painting of this monument (in different compartments and different ways) that is typologically closest to the St. Sophia of Kiev. The narthex ornament of the St. Sophia of Ohrid is, perhaps, the closest parallel to the ribbon motifs of the Kievan St. Sophia fresco ornament, although the dark contours of its edges are a feature of a later period.

A greater variety (and quantitative growth) of ornamental forms, as well as narrative scenes does not mean that a unified decorative system has been evolved. In the Kievan St. Sophia, the ornament is a well thought-out and meaningful system of forms. The ornament in no way upsets the stability of the architectural design, while breaking a certain monotony in the area of small units and giving integrity to the entire ensemble, which is undoubtedly unique despite the fact that its constituent elements are easily recognizable.

I'd like to reiterate that the Kievan St. Sophia ornament as a system is an absolutely independent phenomenon not to be found in any other extant wall painting ensemble. Special artistic and ideological tasks, and the particulars of the architectural design of the huge cathedral, which was created as a kind of demonstration of the power of the Kievan state, evidence of the triumph of the new faith, and a place uniting large numbers of people for collective prayer, brought to life an absolutely unusual decorative programme, also embodied in the painting of open galleries facing the city. Can a phenomenon of this type be regarded as a manifestation of the emerging national cultural tradition? In any case, it is indisputably an important part of it.

When choosing a faith, the people of Rus attached great importance to the spectacular nature of the service itself and the beauty of church decoration, which was vividly embodied in St. Sophia's rich and varied ornamentation. *The Sermon* of Metropolitan Hilarion contains an important indication of the nature of its perception by contemporaries and, respectively, its specific design – "such a wondrous and glorious church among all neighbouring peoples that they shall find no other like that on earth from east to west"⁴³. Of course, as in any panegyric, the element of uniqueness can be (mis)taken for the traditional figure of speech, but the architecture and decoration of the Kievan St. Sophia as an ensemble have no parallels.

We have no documentary evidence to claim that the idea of the cathedral as a colossal and complex architectural structure and its painting had an integral programme and were created concurrently. The cathedral was not built to accommodate painting, although it was definitely meant to; conversely, painting was adapted to the huge cathedral – hence its many features unusual for Byzantine painting.

The St. Sophia of Kiev is a kind of phenomenon among the magnificent ensembles of the second quarter – mid-11th century, which appeared almost simultaneously in different parts of the Eastern Christian world. The relationship between the general and the individual in the Kievan St. Sophia can hardly be accurately determined.

The techniques of using ornament and its abundance in the St. Sophia are largely explained by the nature of its architecture, commission requirements and the interior decor concept. However, all of the above was definitely original, which makes it possible to speak about the local specifics/ of the decorative system.

Proof of this is the decoration of the oldest Russian manuscripts. Most likely, it was St. Sophia's ornamental system that influenced the filling of the architectural frontispieces in *Izbornik of Sviatoslav* (1073), which will be considered in detail in a section below. They differ greatly from the architectural models in frontispieces, known nowadays from Byzantine codices proper—to render the interiors, marble lining or inlays adorning the cathedral walls were generally used. In *Izbornik of Sviatoslav* all the four representations of cathedrals are densely covered with ornament, many of the motifs reproducing those of St. Sophia's. Certain ornamental compositions of the Kievan St. Sophia were reflected in the decoration of Gertrude's Prayer Book, which will also be discussed further on.

On the whole the ornamental repertoire of St. Sophia's mosaics basically remained a unique phenomenon in the history of Russian art – its motifs, with rare exceptions (individual compositions in St. Michael's mosaics), were not used later on. It came back on manuscript pages, reminding of its existence in *Izbornik of Sviatoslav's* frontispieces and the headpieces of the Ostromir Gospels (1056-1057). But many variations of the fresco ornament were used in Novgorod wall painting, primarily in the St. Sophia of Novgorod (1109) and the St. Nicholas Cathedral (ca 1118).

42. Courtesy Y.A. Korenyuk.

43. *The Sermon on Law and Grace*, 1997, p.50.

Подписи к иллюстрациям

281

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, 1030-1040s, interior, ornamental composition, fresco

282

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, interior, ornamental compositions on lesene sides, fresco

283

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, marble panels above the syntronon

284

Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta in Torcello, second half of the 11th century, central apse, marble panels above the syntronon

285

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, decoration of the basement area, fresco

286

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, fragment, ornamental composition, fresco

287

Chapel of St. Venantius, San Giovanni Baptistery in Fonte, Lateran Basilica, Rome, 7th century, ornamental composition, marble inlay

288

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, extreme (outer?) south gallery, ornamental composition, fresco

289

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamental panel, fresco

290

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamented medallion, fresco

291

Transfiguration Cathedral of Chernigov, ornamented medallion, fresco, sketch

292

Transfiguration Cathedral of Chernigov, 1030s, ornamental composition on the staircase tower window jamb, fresco, detail

293

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, slope under the step of the stairs leading to the choir, ornament, mosaic, fragment

294

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, side wall of the room under the stairs leading to the choir, ornamental composition, fresco

295

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental friezes, mosaic

296

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental frieze, mosaic, fragment

297, 298

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental compositions, mosaic

299, 301, 303

St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, transept area, ornamental compositions, fresco, fragments

300, 302, 304

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, side gallery, ornamental compositions, fresco, fragments

305

Katholikon of Hosios Loukas in Focide, 1030-1040s, naos, ornamental compositions, mosaic, details

306, 307

Nea Moni of Chios, 1042-1055, ornamental compositions, mosaic, details

308

Katholikon of Hosios Loukas in Focide, narthex, ornamental compositions, mosaic, detail

309, 310

St. Sophia of Ohrid, pre-1056, ornamental compositions, fresco, details

311

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental composition, mosaic

312, 314

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental compositions, mosaics

313

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, naos, ornamental composition, fresco, detail

315

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental frieze, mosaic, detail

316, 318, 320

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, window soffits (?), ornamental compositions, mosaic, details

317, 319 311

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamental compositions, fresco, fragment

321

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, north side (?), ornamental frieze, mosaic

322

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, ornamental frieze, mosaic, detail

323

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse, south side (?), ornamental frieze, mosaic

324

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, bema, ornamental frieze, mosaic, detail

325

St. Venantius Chapel, Baptistery of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, 7th century, ornamental composition, mosaic, detail

326

Hagia Sophia of Constantinople, north tympanum, ornamental composition, mosaic, detail

327.

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, composition with a cross, fresco

328

Tithe Church of Kiev, slate sarcophagus, composition with a cross, detail

329

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamental composition, fresco

330

St Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamental composition, fresco,
detail

331

Image of a tree. Sarcophagus of Yaroslav the Wise, 11th century,
detail

332

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamental composition, fresco

333

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central dome drum, ornamental
composition, mosaic

334

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, naos, ornamental composition,
fresco

335

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, central apse conch, ornamental
composition, mosaic

336-338

Tithe Church of Kiev, 10th century, ornament fragments, fresco

339

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, naos, ornamental composition,
fresco

340, 341

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, naos, ornamental compositions,
fresco

342- 345

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, naos, ornamental compositions,
fresco, details

346-348

St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev, ornamental compositions, fresco,
details