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PAINTING OF THE LATE
10TH – MID 11TH CENTURIES

Mosaics and frescoes of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev were created between the 1030s and 1040s when Byzantine art was going through dramatic changes as new, rather stringent ideological and artistic principles were being finalised and established.

There was a world of difference compared with Byzantine art of the preceding period. The changes happened gradually, encompassing several decades from the second half of the 10th century when the Macedonian Renaissance with classicism as the dominant art form came to a close and up to the 1030s. During that time artists were looking for ways to transform the classical tradition in order to be able to infuse their images with a much greater degree of spirituality. As a result, numerous subtle artistic approaches were devised, and new character traits and facial types introduced. Even without drastically changing the tradition but only slightly departing from it, the artists succeeded in sharpening their style and making their images more profound. We can see this trend towards new ways of semantic and artistic expression in all extant artworks of that period, most of which are miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.

There appear faces of a new type, different from those of the first half of the 10th century. They are distinguished not by their classical serene beauty, but their pronounced individuality and inner tension. Their facial expressions are extremely emotional, laden with apprehension², full of drama or even tragedy³. Such images appeared almost simultaneously midway through the 10th century, when the process of change started in the wake of Macedonian classicism. Small changes are seen in all artistic means of expression. The images are presented in S-shaped postures, their instability accentuated by the body balancing on tiptoe and by the opulence of foaming drapery and the free-flowing ends of scrolls⁴. Bodies are sometimes deliberately deformed, arms and hands frail, as if boneless⁵. For modelling small sharp strokes are used⁶ or, to the contrary, an extremely dense network of geometrically orchestrated highlights⁷. Both methods are equally remote from the soft illumination of paintings done in the classical manner. Glances become concentrated, almost hypnotic⁸. Faces are intensely lit up with abrupt white flashes in sharp contrast to the deliberately reserved brown background⁹. A new physiognomic type, corresponding to the image of an ascetic, claims its place in Byzantine art: a severe face with an intense thoughtful look in a palette built exclusively on contrasting shades of dark ochre and white¹⁰.

The above characteristics reflect the artistic atmosphere of that period and a search for an image expressive enough to match its spiritual essence. They all seem to have come into use all of a sudden in diverse combinations, still faithfully in line with the dominant classical Macedonian tradition.

Frescoes of the Church of Panagia ton Chalkeon (1028) in Thessaloniki can be considered the first attempt at the new art

trend¹¹. The images of saints clearly acquired some exaggerated quality: compared with classical proportions, the features are obviously hyperbolic. Everybody has huge eyes surrounded by large, deep shadows, augmenting the eyes even further. This new device of giving greater prominence to the gaze¹² proved so effective as to determine the overall character of the images and their impact on the viewer. Meanwhile, the major system of artistic means remained on the whole traditionally classical. The figures are clad in free-flowing soft garments; the faces, necks and arms have volume, as if sculptured and possessing body mass. The painting is done in vivid, vibrant colours. Face modelling is in no way schematised. The wet-look glow and sensitivity of glances, the slightly open, as if breathing, lips, the awe and inspiration in the eyes are all still close to works of the post-Renaissance period.

As a rule, stages in Byzantine art flowed smoothly one into another, but sometimes, albeit rather rarely, dramatic changes did occur. In particular, that happened in the second half of the 1030s and in the 1040s. Three large ensembles of the period prove the point – mosaics and frescoes of the Katholikon of the Hosios Loukas monastery in Phocis¹³ and the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev¹⁴, as well as frescoes of the Church of St. Sophia in Ohrid¹⁵. The crowning stage of this phenomenon can be observed in the Nea Moni mosaics on Chios¹⁶. Those decades also saw the appearance of frescoes in the Church of St. Leontius in Vodoča¹⁷, the *Annunciation* mosaic at the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos¹⁸, possibly the icon of St. George from the Dormition Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin¹⁹, and the miniatures of the Greek Menologion (Sin. gr. 175) from the State Historical Museum of Moscow²⁰. The *Iberian Icon of the Mother of God*²¹ and the mosaic showing the Mother of God with Child Jesus in the apse of the Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki can also be attributed to this period, although their dating remains arguable.

According to Michael Psellus²², a great deal of architectural landmarks and art ensembles were created in the reigns of Michael IV (1034-1041) and Constantine Monomachus (1042-1055). Many of them are extinct, but those that have survived are a living proof of the big changes in art after the first third of the 11th century. Features never associated with classicism now predominate in imagery and artistic language. Byzantine art of the 1030s and 1040s seems to be a totally new universe. What previously existed as only nuances in image characterisation or incidental stylistic detail becomes programmatic and all-embracing. Classical means of expression obviously proved inadequate. A tendency to asceticism, as a rule, presupposes extreme spiritual austerity, and to translate it into art, recourse is made to a withdrawn, outwardly stationary and inwardly concentrated image rendered with the help of conventional and symbolical artistic means. Any classical model is too

¹ Mosaic portraits of Emperors Constantine and Justinian above the south entrance to the narthex of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (see Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 74-5; 216-7, note 81, bibliography; vol. 2, ills. 135-139).

² The Evangelists, especially St. Luke in Apracos Coislin 31 Evangeliar, National Library in Paris (see Popova, 2003, pp. 11-27).

³ St. Mark the Evangelist. Trebizond Gospel (National Library of Russia, gr. 21, 21a) (see Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 70, 214, note 53; vol. 2, ills. 105-106; Schwarz, 1994).

⁴ d. II, sh. 5; Mokretsova, Naumova, Kireeva, 2003, pp. 103-6).

⁵ The New Testament (The British Library in London. Add. 28815), soon after the mid-10th c. (See: Weitzmann, 1996, Bd. 1, S. 20, Abb. 136-9; Bd. 2, S. 29; Buckton, 1994, pp. 136, 137).

⁶ St. Mark the Evangelist in the Trebizond Gospel. (note 154).

⁷ St. Luke the Evangelist in the New Testament (British Library in London. Add. 28815) (Note 155); St. Mark the Evangelist. Trebizond Gospel. Apracos (note 154)).

⁸ The Gospel (The British Library, London, Arundel 547, early 11th c.) (see: Pinto-Madigan, 1987, pp. 336-39; Buckton, 1994, pp. 140-1, N 50; Weitzmann, 1996, Bd. 1, S. 70-1, Abb. 473-477).

⁹ Prophets of Turin, B. I, 2 (National Library of the University of Turin) – part of so-called Bible of Nikita (shortly after mid-10th c.) (see Belting, Cavallo, 1979; Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, p. 70; vol. 2, ills. 112-114; Lowden, 1988, pp. 9-14; Weitzmann, 1996, Bd. 1, pp. 27-8, Abb. 199, 210, 217-8; Bd. 2, pp. 40-1); the icon *St. Philip the Apostle* (Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai, late 10th c.) (see Weitzmann, 1966, p. XII, ills. 14-15; Weitzmann, 1976, p. 99, pl. CXVI; Galavaris, 1990, pp. 94-3, pl. 14); St. Luke the Evangelist from Arundel 547 (the British Library in London) (see Note 158).

¹⁰ The Gospel, gr. 588 (Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos) (late 10th c.) (Pelekanidis, Christou, Thsioumis, Kadas, 1973, pp. 446-8, pls. 278-289; Weitzmann, 1996, Bd. 2, pp. 85, 86); Book of Prophet Isaiah with commentaries Vat. gr. 755 (second half of 10th c.; Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana) (see Weitzmann, 1996, Bd. 1, S. 12-3, Abb. 62; Bd. 2, S. 25-6; Lowden, 1988, pp. 22-5, 65-60, figs. 32-37, pl. VI).

¹¹ Peter the Monk in a miniature from the Apracos Gospel gr. 204 (Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai) (late 10th-early 11th cc.) (see Weitzmann, Galavaris, 1990, N 18, pp. 42-7, Colorplates III-VIII, pl. 92-108).

¹¹ Papadopoulos, 1966; Tsiouridou, 1985; Mavropoulou-Tsioumi, 1993, pp. 104-10; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou, Tourta, 1997, pp. 177-82; *Byzantine and Postbyzantine Monuments*, 1997, p. 86-91.

¹² This is but one of the many devices of that "trial and error" period of the second half of the 10th and the first quarter of the 11th cc., which was used rarely, for instance, in the icon of Apostle Philip from Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (see Weitzmann, 1966, p. XII, ills. 14-15; Galavaris, 1990, pp. 94-5, pl. 14).

¹³ Mouriki, 1980-1981, pp. 81-6; Chatzidakis-Bacharas, 1982; Oikonomides, 1992, pp. 245-55; Mylonas, 1990, pp. 99-122; Mylonas, 1992, pp. 115-22; Connor, 1991; Chatzidakis N., 1997.

¹⁴ Lazarev, 1960/1; Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 77-9, 217-8. Notes 86, 88, with bibliography; Logvin, 1971.

¹⁵ *Трипих*, 1963; Djuric, 2000, pp. 26-30, 328-30 (bibliography), 452-3, 535-7.

¹⁶ Mouriki, 1985, vols. 1, 2.

¹⁷ Бурлић, 1974, p. 12, ills. 2-3; Djuric, 2000, pp. 30-1, 330-1 (bibliography), ills. on pp. 449, 451, 534.

¹⁸ 1996, pp. 222-4.

¹⁹ The icon is dated from mid-11th to 12th cc.: Lazarev, 1953, pp. 186-222 (12th c.); Demina, 1972, pp. 7-24 (11th-early 12th cc.); Ostashenko, 1985, pp. 141-60 (late 11th-early 12th cc.); Popova, 1998, p. 219 (ca. mid-11th c.); Smirnova, 2000/2, p. 5 (mid-11th c.); Etingof, 2005, pp. 416-20 (1060s-1080s).

²⁰ *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniakh SSSR* (Byzantine Art in Soviet Collections), 1977, No. 503; Likhacheva, 1977, pp. 15-7; *Drevnosti* (Antiques), 2004, No. II, 7.

²¹ P. Vokotopulos assigns the icon to the first half of 11th c. (see 2001, pp. 83-8), and T. Steppan dates it to the early 12th c. (*Stephan*, 1993, S. 23-49). Cormack and Chatzidakis date the Thessaloniki Hagia Sophia apse mosaics the 11th century (Cormack, 1980-1981, pp. 111-35; Chatzidakis N., 1994, p. 234). Other authors date it broadly the 11th through 12th cc. (Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou, Tourta, 1997, S. 208; *Byzantine and Postbyzantine Monuments*, 1997, p. 83). I believe the most probable dating of that mosaic to be the early 12th c.

²² Michael Psellus, 1978, pp. 44-5, 125-6.

beautiful to convey ascetic content and therefore proves unnecessary. Art inevitably is drastically reoriented. For all their individuality, artworks of the second quarter of the 11th century are very much alike as they present a semantically uniform and powerful artistic phenomenon. The images are deep in inner concentration. Their story is not so much of the bliss of spiritual contemplation as of a tortuous path towards it through utter abnegation of all worldly contacts. They do not emanate lucidity; their faces are fixed and stern, occasionally even grim, their glances withdrawn or piercing and nearly always heavy. Many characters are in a special sort of state, showing neither feelings nor any personality traits. The look of their wide-open eyes is not directed at any concrete object, and an eye contact with them is beyond reach. They stare into space unknown to us – into the Eternity. All of them, regardless of their age, trade, or their hierarchical rank, represent a special holy community, living their own, different kind of life.

This imagery is achieved through a specific artistic language, in which scheme and symbol prevail over classical spontaneity. All these art forms, solid, imperishable and radiant, as if born in a world of eternal transcendental essences, are ideally suited for conveying the images of ascetics, who have reached the heights of spirituality.

This program, striking in concept and enormous in content, was realized with great consistency in numerous images and several ensembles created almost simultaneously, possibly as a result of the unique spiritual atmosphere of Byzantine life of the period²³.

The ascetic type of art prevailed for approximately three decades, that is, the lifespan of two generations²⁴. Interest in it was extensive, to judge by its spread over vast territories and commissions coming from different social strata, including Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomachus (Nea Moni), Grand Prince of Kiev Yaroslav the Wise (St. Sophia in Kiev), Leo Archbishop of Ohrid (St. Sophia in Ohrid) and the aristocrats of the town of Thebes (Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis). Constantine Monomachus might have personally patronized that type of art. It was created in different countries under different social circumstances. Like all major phenomena of Byzantine art, it must have originated in the capital and from there spread far and wide. The timespan of its prevalence was rather short. Born in the 1020s, it reached its peak between the 1030s and 1040s, and went into decline in the late 1040s and 1050s. Already in the 1060s Byzantine art was back on the tracks it had followed in the first quarter of the 11th century, with the classical style again forming its backbone²⁵.

Mosaics and frescoes of the Kievan St. Sophia are one of the two major monuments of Byzantine art of the second quarter of the

²³ of fantastic proportions and indescribable splendour...” Michael IV was a very sick person, suffering from a severe case of dropsy, afraid of death and God’s punishment for the crime he had committed (he killed his predecessor Emperor Romanos III and married his wife Zoe), he hoped to win God’s forgiveness by “securing assistance from the holy souls”. The emperor’s mood, constant repentance, the monks around him, his unwavering patronage of monasteries, and the growing role of monasticism – might all have contributed to the birth of an ascetic type of art.

²⁴ Discourses of St. Symeon the New Theologian are close in time to the circle of ascetic art (they are only one generation away). Both were manifestations of some spiritual upsurge (perhaps of its two separate stages), which became possible in Byzantium in those decades. This upsurge, already observed in the first quarter of the century (Symeon the New Theologian died in 1022), transformed into stringent asceticism in the 1030s – 1040s. However, Symeon the New Theologian was not too popular in his lifetime and had no support among the clergy. Furthermore, the style of his writings, sermons, exhortations to God, the very nature of his spiritual code was a far cry from the style of the artistic phenomenon under review. Distinctly individualistic, inspired, endowed with a keen sense of mysticism, pervaded by lucidity, even ecstasy and bliss, he was on the whole distant from the austere world outlook lying at the basis of the mosaics of the Kievan St. Sophia and Hosios Loukas, which glorified commitment and complete self-denial. The psychological divide between Symeon’s writings and the art of the Hosios Loukas milieu was tremendous.

²⁵ Such are the manuscript miniatures of the 1060s: the 1061 Tetraevangelion, gr. 72, in the National Library of Russia (*Putsko*, 1972, pp.33-41; *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniakh SSSR* (Byzantine Art in Soviet Collections, 1977, vol. 2, No. 490; *Spatharakis*, 1981, vol. 1, No. 74, p. 25; vol. 2, figs. 132, 133); the 1063 Apracos Gospel of Empress Catherine of Bulgaria (consort to Emperor Isaac I Komnenos), gr.42512, Cleveland Museum of Art (*Vikan*, 1973, p. 85-6; *Spatharakis*, 1981, No. 77); the 1063 Menologion, Sin, gr. 9, State Historical Museum (*Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniakh SSSR* (Byzantine Art in Soviet Collections), 1977, vol. 2, No. 491; *Spatharakis*, 1981, No. 78; Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 89, 221. Note 15, vol. 2, ill. 206-10; *Dreanosti* (Antiques), 2004, No. II.8). The miniatures in the first of these manuscripts are in classical Komnenos style; in the other two classical style is combined with features characteristic of the art of the first half of the 11th c.

11th century, the other being the Hosios Loukas Katholikon ensemble.

The Greek artists invited to Kiev by the Grand Prince belonged to the same artistic community as the masters who worked at the Hosios Loukas monastery in Phocis, and those were first-rate masters who had been trained most probably in Constantinople.

The walls and vaults of the Kievan St. Sophia are abundantly decorated with images. The overwhelming majority of them are individual “portrait” images given full- or waist-length, occasionally chest-length in medallions or rectangular frames. They are to be seen all over the huge space of the cathedral: in the cruciform space under the dome, in every compartment formed by the side aisles and gallery units, and in the second tier galleries. In general there are more separate representations than compositions in St. Sophia. The cathedral vaults seem to be peopled by an immense community of saints. Hundreds of faces look down from the walls and vaults at every level, and many in the lower rows are virtually face-to-face with the people standing inside or walking through the cathedral.

The cathedral is decorated with both mosaics and frescoes. The mosaics are in excellent condition and look as if made a short while ago. The frescoes are badly damaged: part of their paint layer is gone, colours are no longer bright, and in some instances they look more like shadows of the former images. However, most importantly, the facial types and characters still show distinctly through all of them, even the more affected ones.

Apart from the difference in material, scale and present condition, there is yet another important distinction in this throng of saints, such as their rank in the celestial hierarchy depending on their earthly deeds and the nature of their exploits.

There are representatives of all ranks and abodes of the holy kingdom – prophets, apostles, doctors of the church (sainted hierarchs), heads of the church hierarchy (bishops), the clergy (priests, presters and deacons), warriors, temporal authorities, physicians, monks, and martyrs, both men and women, who have reached the appropriate stages of sainthood.

On a par with this heterogeneous holy community, impressive with its unusually large number of holy wives, there is a multitude of angelic images on the vaults and domes of the cathedral. No other church, be it Byzantine, Russian or any other, can boast such an extraordinary, truly enormous host of angels.

Here one sees faces of all ages – young, middle-aged and old; people of all walks of life – those of high and low birth; kings and hermits; saints and bodiless powers; robust and emaciated faces. Such variety is quite rare in Byzantine church decoration. However, this penchant for individual “portraits” of saints and prevalence of separate figures over scenes are characteristic not only of the Kievan St. Sophia, but of other ensembles of that period, such as the Hosios Loukas Katholikon and St. Sophia in Ohrid. Every one of them clearly gives precedence to a particular theme and, consequently, a certain rank of saints. For example, the Hosios Loukas ensemble has the largest number of venerables, while St. Sophia of Ohrid boasts the greatest number of Christian bishops. The Kievan St. Sophia seems to have an even more ambitious decoration as all grades of the holy hierarchy are represented there. It, too, has its priorities: there are angels galore, myrrh-bearers are unusually numerous, while holy monks are scarce.

The size of the cathedral, which exceeded regular Byzantine proportions, and enormous wall surfaces intended for murals²⁶ apparently caused the need to hire a large number of artists, which might have led to stylistic and imagery variations. That didn’t happen though. Despite its enormous and complex structure and the abundant wall and vault surfaces covered with a multitude of images, and despite the fact that the main axis (the dome – the main sanctuary) is resplendent with precious mosaics while the rest is taken by frescoes – originally comparatively modest and now altogether faded – St. Sophia’s wall paintings and images are distinguished by a remarkable coordination of all the components of that huge ensemble perceived as a grand harmonious concept and realized integrally, resolutely and consistently. There is similitude about all the images – the facial types, even the glances, and yet, faces are frequently individualized in accordance with the biographies of the characters and the iconographic tradition of their representation. Their likeness reflects their inner world, their detachment from mundane matters. They have

²⁶ The latter feature is explained by the specifics of the cathedral’s structure, in which every one of the huge thick cruciform piers has twelve rather than four surfaces for representations, in addition to numerous groined compartments.

in common true grandeur devoid of any pretense or affectation. Although quite near, they are infinitely remote from us: they dwell in Eternity. Their faces express no sensation, no mood nor feeling, their wide open eyes staring into a fathomless expanse beyond our reach.

This theme of striking spiritual maximalism is implemented in the Kievan St. Sophia ensemble on a grand scale and absolutely uncompromisingly, as if all masters working on it had the same world outlook and even the same artistic tastes, because the professional style, with which they created their images is on the whole extraordinarily similar. Naturally, there are many shades within this commonality of principle. Stylistically mosaics somewhat differ from frescoes as they look much more festive, even spectacular, but at the same time their images are more austere. Also, each of the two ensembles – the frescoes and the mosaics – is not homogeneous and has stylistic variations and shades of meaning within them.

The cathedral space is crowned by a large central dome (the circle with the image of Pantocrator has a diameter of 4.1 metres). Yet its dimension is not inordinate, considering the overall scale of the entire structure. The dome (28.6 metres above the floor level) looks raised high up rather than soaring. It calls forth associations with growth and elevation rather than a flying or floating sphere. The dome is massive, its space static. The abundance of light and the golden mosaics impart it with an air of special magnitude compared with other zones. It looks like some luminous immobile sphere and forms a world closed in itself, in which everything – the axes, the supports and the segments – are forever stable.

This impression is produced by simple and powerful means: like two formidable bands, the plastically highlighted horizontals girdle the round space while the verticals are nowhere seen to be part of the visible carcass structure.

The impression of stability is also enhanced by the correlated proportions of the images inside the dome, where the cube is as important as the circle. The figures of angels are almost the same in width and height, as a result of which the four powerful and stable squares of the angelical figure outlines govern the visible structure of the dome. The vacant spaces between the angels are equal to half their size. This commensurability lends clarity and precision to the whole composition; every correlation is simple and easy to perceive. The outlines of Pantocrator also approximate a square – his shoulders are uncommonly broad, and the line tracing them forms an exceptionally sharp angle.

The repetition of basic geometrical shapes – the circle and the square, the absolutely symmetrical placement of everything, the slow rhythm of large similar representations and big even intervals between them – all impart hieratical grandeur; a sort of timeless state and a sense of the eternal to the domical zone.

In harmony with this is the image of Christ Pantocrator in the zenith of the dome reigning supreme over the whole of the cathedral. His shoulders are spread out inordinately. His representation emphatically broadens downwards, producing the impression of the existence of some huge, albeit invisible base. Pantocrator holds a large Gospel in a precious golden binding, which likewise broadens downwards transforming into a kind of support.

The large features of Jesus are absolutely symmetrical; all curves – those of the eyes, brows, nostrils and lips resemble architectural arches; his glance is overpowering, withdrawn and bereft of emotion. His hands and fingers are done in such a generalized way that they barely look anthropomorphic. The neck, too, looks insensitive and too short by any realistic standards. In fact, there is next to no neck, and the head towering above the chest and the shoulders seems to have no volume and is perceived as a face given strictly frontally as if in a huge icon soaring high above the cathedral. Pantocrator's face is surrounded by golden light inundating the whole space and enveloping the visible part of His figure. The gold comes from the background, the hatching on the attire and the codex in Christ's hand. The figures of the archangels and apostles inside the drum, as well as the image of Pantocrator, are placed against a golden background, which makes the whole sphere of the dome immersed in gold. However, it is the top of the dome, its central circle with the image of the Lord that

emanates the brightest and purest luminescence. The artist made a masterful use of the optical effects of a concave sphere.

Only one of the four archangels surrounding Christ – the one in blue garments – has survived in the original 11th-century form²⁷. The other three looked exactly the same, but have not survived. The archangels are completely static and shown frontally. The archangel's young face is impressive with its majesty and aloofness. The wide oval face, massive chin and symmetrical features all seem to be subordinate to one geometrical form, the circle. The angelical countenance is outlined with laconic curving lines. There are no nuances conveying emotional vibrations, no details able to put at risk the main idea of creating a heavenly and timeless image.

The golden conch of the apse – the second in importance place after the dome – is the domain assigned for the image of the Virgin. She is represented full-length, in the posture of Orans, her arms raised in prayer. Her figure is indeed huge (5.45 metres high). It is bigger than any other image in the cathedral and, compared with the neighbouring figures in the apse (the *Eucharist* and the sainted hierarchs tier) it looks downright gigantic.

The figure of the Virgin rises from the very bottom of the conch to the top. The base, on which Her figure rests, borders on the cornice base of the conch, her halo touching the steep edge of the conch. There is some golden space left at the top, spreading not vertically, but horizontally and filling the upper, overhanging part of the conch. The wide folds of her robe and the even wider spread of her arms lend additional magnitude to the figure, which seems to occupy the entire sphere. The radiance of the concave golden walls creates a layer of luminescent space around the image. It forms the central axis of the conch and at the same time fills it to capacity both symbolically and physically.

Such a striking disproportion in the sanctuary representations and such a huge emphasis on the figure of the Virgin in the apse conch is not found in other contemporaneous decorative ensembles, be it the Hosios Loukas Katholikon, the church of St. Sophia in Ohrid or the Nea Moni²⁸. It is only the Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki that has an extraordinarily large mosaic image of the enthroned Mother of God with Child dating possibly from the same or slightly later (early 12th century) period. Such inordinate augmenting of the sanctuary image was rare but not unique. It was used in different times as a special device to enhance the symbolical and stylistic importance of the sanctuary and the image placed within. Such are the 6th-century mosaics of Jesus Christ, Sts. Peter and Paul, *Cosmas* and *Damian*, St. Theodore and Pope Felix IV (the latter figure dates from the 19th century) in the basilica of Santi Cosma e Damiano in Rome²⁹ or the 13th-century fresco with the *Deesis* in the Church of the Holy Apostles of Pec³⁰. That device continued to be quite rare in the later period of Byzantine art.

The figure of the Virgin in the apse conch of the Kievan St. Sophia is not only the largest in size, but also the most majestic and solemn of all the representations on the cathedral vaults and walls. Anyone entering the cathedral from the narthex falls under the spell of Her image because the figure is visible from afar, surpasses all and everything and virtually glows with golden light. At the same time, neither its huge dimensions nor the excess force it emanates make the figure look oppressive because on the whole it is perfectly anthropomorphic. Its proportions are correct, its posture steady, although the feet are placed at the very edge of the base, and even more so – almost at the edge of the apse niche. The correlation of proportions from the human point of view and from the point of view of classical conventions is more regular than those in the representation of Pantocrator in the dome. The face of the Virgin is not round, but elongated to a degree, the length of the neck is more natural, the palms of her hands and the fingers are of ordinary width and length. Compared with the figure of the Virgin Orans, the domical image of Christ was executed in more conventional terms to convey the idea of greater aloofness.

²⁷. The three other figures in dark chitons were painted in oil in the 19th c. by artists Zazulin and Gädukov, under the supervision of M.A. Vruble. Vruble himself painted the legs of "the mosaic archangel" (see letter by M.A. Vruble to A.B. Prakhov, State Tretyakov Gallery Archive, 23/41.) (see Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 81, note 1).

²⁸. The cathedrals of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves and St. Michael's Gold-en-domed Monastery might have had a similarly gigantic figure of the Virgin; most likely they aspired to replicate the St. Sophia mosaics.

²⁹. Matthiae, 1960.

³⁰. Djuric, 2000, p. 108–9, colour insert, p. 551.

The purple maphorion of the Virgin is overflowed with torrents of Divine Light falling on the fabric in a dense network of broad golden rays and splashes. The fabric of the veil seems to disappear, becoming invisible, and only the intense light stays on, which neutralizes all other colours or plastic forms, robbing them of their natural intensity. The Divine Light envelops the upper part of the figure while below the waist it is set off by a wide shining frame, created by the folds of the maphorion, which is dissected by rays of golden light. The Divine energy streaming down onto the world, the power of loving grace is the symbolical message of the image of the Virgin Orans in the Kievan St. Sophia sanctuary.

Such a message called for a decisive turn from everything natural and classical to the conventional and symbolically momentous, for which the old artistic means were being adjusted and new ones invented. Thus, all the folds and lines on the Virgin's blue robe are absolutely symmetrical, the same in size and quantity. Thus, an utterly identical pattern is formed on both sides. Save for a few minor details, the robe could be folded in the middle, and both halves, the left and the right, would coincide almost to a fault. Such technique creates architectonics and lends pronounced monumentality to the figures, akin to archaic arts³¹.

The rows of smalti are laid geometrically, following the round shape of the face. As a result, despite its plastic resolution, the form looks abstract and bereft of the palpitating tremulous breath of life due to its nearly excessive tension and plain evenness.

The aloofness of the form is complemented by uniform colour. The bright red rouge is not used, although it is common in other contemporaneous ensembles, including and especially in the frescoes of Kievan St. Sophia itself. The gentle pink glowing tone – the essence of the palette in many mosaic images of the Hosios Loukas monastery – is not seen here either. The choice falls on a whitish, albescent tone of the surface, with quite a few dull greyish tinges for the shadows. Everything is more modest, a long shot from the blooming, festive palette in which the images on the vaults and walls of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon are done. Contrasting colours, so vital in modelling the facial form, are absent or hardly noticeable or else reduced to the minimum. For instance, the rouge, done in big circles (a regular stylistic device of the times) reaching the eyes (a rarity), is created rather by the circular rhythm of smalti rows than by colour; the colour here is decisively not red, like in the Hosios Loukas or the Nea Moni, but a washed-out rose-pink, merging in tone with the main palette of the face.

True, the colour palette of the Virgin's face has quite a few of light hues: rose-pink, light rose-pink bordering on white, light ochre and grey, which are typical of the realm of classical images extant in Byzantine art of the first quarter of the 11th century. However, the general gamut is distinguished by even homogeneity leading away from classical notions and excluding any illusionism.

Placed under the image of the Virgin is the *Eucharist*, depicting the apostles approaching Christ on both sides for the Holy Communion. The composition includes two representations of the Saviour facing two groups of the apostles on the left and on the right; two figures of angels in deaconal attire serving at the Communion table with rhipidions in their hands; and twelve figures of apostles, six in each group.

The size of this scene is strikingly smaller than the image of the Virgin in the conch. The figures of the *Eucharist* approximate human height, but they seem smallish compared with the gigantic size of the Virgin. Most probably this contrast in size was purposefully devised to emphasize the grandeur of Her image. Besides, such rare, even risky, disparity in proportions created a strong dynamic impetus for the visual perception of the apse mosaic.

In the framework of the entire apse, the *Eucharist* is the upper part of the two-tier composition within the concave walls. Both tiers, the *Eucharist* and the sainted hierarchs below, are perceived as an unbreakable whole, the two parts of which, almost equal in size, merge into one sparkling surface, a kind of a mosaic base with the image of the Virgin over it. Such a two-part segmentation of the sanctuary and the proportionate and semantic design of its surface is visually convincing. However, we can also

³¹. In their search of ways of spiritualizing the artistic image Byzantine masters of the second half of the 10th and early 11th cc. discovered a whole range of similar devices. For example, a similar configuration of folds in the form of triangles going down in two symmetrical ladders is found in *St. Philip the Apostle* icon from Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. The icon is usually dated the late 10th c. (see note 159). However, that icon might have been created a little later, simultaneously with the frescoes of the Panagia ton Chalkeon church in Thessaloniki.

speak of the three-tier segmentation of the sanctuary, which is divided into three registers. The upper tier is represented by the Virgin, the middle by the *Eucharist* and the lower by the sainted hierarchs. In this system of visual and architectonic rhythm the *Eucharist* is the central, and therefore, most significant tier, the compositional and symbolical centre point of the apse wall.

A certain, if little expressed but still present, movement of the figures in conformity with the story noticeably distinguishes this register from the other two, where everything is frontal and static. It draws the beholder's attention as something unusual and remarkable.

The expressive power of the *Eucharist* as a whole and each of its images is of the same nature as of all other mosaics in the cathedral. But there are specific artistic devices, characteristic of this particular scene and determined by its central place on the concave wall of the apse.

The composition is rhythmical and uniform in its structure. Everything is enlarged and generalised, and the artistic means are non-nuanced. The figures of the apostles are not tall, but rather short, their shoulders broad, necks short, and some figures seem to have no necks at all. Several figures, especially the stooping ones, look square. Their heftiness is emphasised by their enormous feet that could have belonged to giants. Nevertheless, some apostles (left side of the composition) are stepping on each other's feet as they were frequently shown in early Byzantine art, specifically in 5th-century mosaics³², a method used subsequently as an expedient means of expression. Their postures make it absolutely impossible to imagine these figures as having any volume and existing in some three-dimensional space; hence, the impression of their otherworldliness.

In contrast to their oversized feet, the hands of the apostles are remarkably small, with extremely short fingers and lacking any concrete anatomical structure, but presented as inflexible abstract forms bearing no resemblance to human nature. These minor abstraction stratagems are combined with other devices that do correspond to the natural way of things. Thus, despite their conventional form, the finger- and toe nails, are distinctly outlined.

The Kievan St. Sophia mosaics display different artistic commitments, some complying with the classical tradition, others far removed from it. The latter artistic devices obviously predominate in *The Eucharist*. They include the nature of gestures and foreshortening, the rhythm of shapes and intervals between them, the geometrical rigidity of all lines, contrast as the main means of expression, types of faces and the purposeful concentration of their eyes.

The apostles in both groups, the left headed by St. Peter and the right by St. Paul, are slowly progressing towards the Communion to be received from the hands of the Lord. Equal spaces between the figures, the same angle at which they are turned towards Christ, the same rhythm of their movement, the alternating postures, the same gestures of the stretched-out hands – all comply with the idea of the perpetual, the majestic and the eternal.

The absolutely identical rhythm employed in reverse order in the two rows of the apostles totally ousts monotony from this monolithic frieze. One of the two aspect angles, namely, that of St. Paul. In other cases like, for example, in the representations of two other apostles in the same left row there is a barely noticeable hint at the presence of knees.

Separate segments (there are always three of them) of drapery over Apostle Paul's outstretched leg are a concentration of nearly sheer light, its spots outlined by special colour contours at the edges and enhanced by colour shadows matching in tone with St. Paul's raiment. This makes light spots look as if "etched" and reminiscent of some architectural blocks. The rhythmic pattern of spots of light constructs the figure architectonically instead of giving it a plastic structure.

Never used in Byzantine art until then and evidently devised specifically in the second quarter of the 11th century, that technique prioritized the schematic over the natural, the conventional over the illusionistic. Nothing of the kind existed in the art of the first quarter of the 11th century.

Lack of interest in rendering the anatomy of the hand and the fingers was mentioned earlier in the description of the image of the Virgin Orans. This refers to other figures as well – practically, to all mosaic and many of the fresco images. More often than not the fingers look unnaturally short but, or maybe because

³². For example, in the basilica of *Sant' Apollinare Nuovo* and the basilica of *San Vitale in Ravenna (Pajova, 1998)*.

of that, extremely strong. But even when the hands and the fingers are of normal proportions (in both representations of Jesus Christ in the *Eucharist*), their shape is highly laconic, with no hint of plastic form, no rounding-off lines, no indentations: the fingers seem to be etched and outlined in simple, identical geometrical lines.

This demonstrative lack of interest in textbook anatomy does not mean total disregard of anatomy per se. On the contrary, it is precisely the anatomy, but the one governed by other laws, that is the key element in the style of the Kievan mosaicists. The shapes did lose their habitual natural appearance and plasticity, but gained extra universality and became tremendously solid and potent. Their aim is to speak about matter existing beyond the terrestrial world.

The same can be said of a number of other devices used by the mosaicists working at the Kievan St. Sophia. Take, for example, the way the shadows are treated on the chins and necks of the Virgin, Jesus Christ of the *Eucharist*, deacons St. Lawrence and St. Stephen and many apostles in the *Eucharist*. The shadows are shaped as massive bands around the necks right in the middle. In total disregard for any natural curves, they repeat the oval of the face, the round outline of the chin and the neck of the dress and look like powerful supporting arches, like weight-bearing structures. Their simplistic geometry creates its own laws, according to which not only the attire, but the faces as well are modelled. The simple geometrical patterns of shadows on the faces bring out the volume and even the inner state of the characters. There is a common expression of fortitude and severity. In contrast to the overall light, flesh-toned colour, the shadows on all the faces are dark and stark. Contrast is the key principle, which serves the purpose of extreme expressiveness.

The same principle governs the representation of raiment. The few simple geometrical shapes form the basic structure. Be they triangular or of any other shape, they are always clear-cut. They may symbolize light falling onto the fabric, or the cloth itself within a linear grid, whose segments join together in an abstract mosaic pattern composed of abstract pieces varied in shape. Geometry reigns supreme, which means a divorce from anything soft and gradual, such as the light-and-shadow effects, picturesque spots or any gradation of light and colour. In this artistic style expressiveness is achieved through methods opposite to the classical ones, that is, through geometrical patterns, harsh contours, all kinds of contrapositions, and the ousting of the natural by the conventional, of the habitual by the intangible.

The centre of the *Eucharist* composition. Behind them, there are two representations of the figure of the Saviour. The Communion table and the four major figures – the semantic and compositional pinnacle of the whole scene – are in the middle part of the apse and can be seen from anywhere, unlike the convex lateral walls with the figures of apostles moving towards the Communion table. The upright figures of Jesus Christ and the angels rise vertically like pillars, becoming the major axes of the composition. The slightly bent apostles seem smaller and are even altogether invisible from some points because of the rounded walls. Situated right over the three large windows of the apse, the centre of the scene becomes especially prominent, it is so aptly positioned, both in terms of composition and rhythm, that the Communion table occupies the whole area over the central window, with the angels standing in the spaces between the central and side windows, and the figure of Christ towering above each of the side windows. He seems to be walking over the window arches, the front leg coinciding with the central vertical axis of each window. Everything bespeaks architectonic clarity that is encountered in any classical type of artistic thinking, and simultaneously extreme pithiness of expression presupposing succinct symbols, which precludes the need for detail.

The same difference in the shades of meaning is seen in the appearance of some seemingly classical forms and in the nature of their combinations, which are essentially not classical. The Communion table, the ciborium over it, and the figures of the two angels look stable and even massive, their shapes geometrically simple; the supporting verticals are deliberately emphasised, the horizontals made obvious; the heavy round columns of the ciborium and the static tower-like figures of the angels all lend clarity to the composition and make it plastically convincing. However, the correlation of its parts is totally irrational. The columns of the ciborium are not at the corners of the Communion table, but behind it, in the same spatial zone, or rather on the same plane. The angels are behind the Communion table, and the massive end parts of the table seem to cut into them. In both

left and right representations, Christ's feet seem to be resting on the feet of the angels at the Communion table; thus, the notion of the weight of the figures is completely nullified. Classical three-dimensionality and the natural correlation of shapes turn out to be unnecessary.

The angels at the Communion table are young and beautiful creatures, their raiment is light-coloured and, together with the ciborium of the same colour, they form a radiant space framing the Communion table; their faces are full of fresh, youthful vigour and please the eye with their somewhat naive, juvenile roundness. This is, however, but one facet of their images. No less important is their might, which is incommensurate with the usual criteria and which is conveyed in stiff schematisation. The major modelling of raiment and faces is done in accordance with geometrical concepts. For the most part, large-scale outlines are used, small ones are rare. Segmentation is predominantly into triangles and balls, with occasional large verticals, all of them given in various combinations and configurations. This formidable and unusual faceting of fabric, deprived of its natural softness and versatility, creates the impression of its otherworldliness. Large-scale modelling makes shapes look even more massive, while their geometry creates the impression of stability and, even more so, of the inviolability of what is being represented.

Light models everything in the cathedral mosaics, be it fabrics or objects. Streams of light give shape to the volume, lending it if not perfect roundness, at least making it look three-dimensional, thus producing the impression of a solid shape under the falling light. For the St. Sophia mosaicists light was the most important structural and semantic element of the array of stylistic devices. Light is shown in the form of rigid geometrical shapes, gathered in big clusters or knots, signifying clumps of concentrated energy. The shapes may be round, like large white, glowing balloons, or vertical luminous carcass pipes, or else triangular, or of any other strictly geometrical form. As a result, the attire of every figure has little in common with the pliant natural form, but transforms into a special structure, with its carcass built of light and held together by light-bearing joints. However, because of the regular proportions, the link with classical and natural shapes is still there, matter does not disappear, but continues to exist in a transformed embodiment.

The same methods of contrast are used in modelling faces. The angel on the right has large features, his face a wide, rounded oval with unusually large eyes, the size and impressive symmetry of which is increased by the identically regular arches of his brows and the outlines of his heavy eyelids and shadows. The nose is large and massive, as if sculpted; the round chin is outlined with the same linear arches as the eyes, the neck and the whole face rounded off in the same way. All this produces a special physiognomic type – wide-boned, powerful, serene and imbued with majesty and aloofness – that was characteristic of the images of late Macedonian art.

The expressiveness of this physiognomic type was appreciated by classical Byzantine art as early as the 6th or even 5th centuries³³. In the second quarter of the 11th century these types became more ascetically austere, purged of everything vibrant and sensual that was still widespread in the 6th century. Other means were used, with geometrical lines and spots as a major trend replacing the artistic elaborateness and plastic form inherited by the 6th-century mosaicists from the masters of Antiquity. Thus, the physiognomic type, found by early Byzantine art, was given a new lease of life in the art of quite a different epoch, that of the 1030-1040s, if outwardly more uniform and inwardly more detached.

However, not all the stylistic devices employed in modelling the face of the right angel are so stringent. There are softer tones as well that somewhat ease the general ascetic nature of the image. This applies to everything that has to do with the use of colour. The pink *smalti* palette is composed so as to allow a gradual change of colour tones. The general palette is light, even tender, with delicate transitions from one tone to another. The general composition of the *smalti* background is well-blended and calm in tone, closer to the classical tradition. Although classical and more schematic methods are used in one and the same image, the latter are responsible for its general expressiveness.

The angel to the left of the Communion table is a different, much softer image. In contrast to the vertical posture of the figure

³³ The Basilica of *San Vitale*, the Basilica of *Sant'Apollinare in Classe*, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, the Arian Baptistery and the Archbishop's Chapel, Ravenna (Popova, 1998). The young faces – Jesus Christ in the apse conch, the arch-angels standing next to him and St. Vitalis (*San Vitale*) and also Moses (Sinai), Abel, and others – look alike, with their enlarged features, rounded oval of the face and heavy sculptured figures (see Lazarev, 1986, ills. 52, 53).

on the right, his body is turned in a more pliant and complex way, presupposing live movement. His head is more noticeably bent, his neck longer compared with the shorter and, therefore, more powerful neck of the angel on the right. His somewhat pensive face is a little more elongated and narrower as against the rounded face-line of the angel on the right. The contour of the angel's figure is outlined by one fine dark layer of smalti while the outline of the angel on the right is made more prominent by a second, and, in parts, third row of smalti, which noticeably thickens and lends mass to the contour, even though the additional lines are of a lighter, grey hue. The palette of lighter shades includes delicate varieties of green and smoky-grey. The right angel's attire is predominantly brown of a darker hue than the colour scheme of the left figure and stands in sharper contrast with the highlights. The colour sequence of smalti rows in the left figure is more subtle, with colour intensity reduced gradually as each row of smalti is lighter in tone than the previous one.

Although the patterns of folds and highlights are similar in both angels' attire, the two figures do not look alike. The highlights on the right figure, particularly those on the shoulder and the elbow, are done in sharp inserts which, in addition to imitating light, bring forth their texture. The left angel's figure is more compact and looks more integral, instead of being made of parts clipped together by luminous joints, as is the case with the right figure.

The two figures of Christ in the *Eucharist* are more classical than the other figures in the frieze. Tall and slender, their proportions more balanced and light-weight and, compared with the overemphasized broad-shouldered and sturdy figures of angels and apostles, they still resemble Antique statues. The master proceeded from the traditions of the Macedonian Renaissance, which were still alive in the late 10th and early 11th centuries.

In the figure of the Saviour addressing St. Paul the Apostle stylistic devices are more conventional, with overall prevalence of the geometrical pattern, which is matched by his impassive countenance and majestic aloofness.

The image of Christ standing on the left is different from the other one in the same way as the left angel differs from the right one. The shadows around the face are more pliant, the light-and-shadow contrasts less pronounced, and the brows slightly arched, adding the air of pensiveness to the image; the fingers are slim and long in contrast to the big and short ones in the other figure.

The twin images of the angels and the twice-repeated figure of the Saviour in the *Eucharist* exemplify masterful variability within the general type of imagery, similar style and artistic devices.

In the same way there are differences in semantic and artistic nuances in the images of the apostles. The figures of St. Peter and St. John the Evangelist flanking him somewhat differ from the four other apostles in the left row. The correlation between these groups is akin to that between the Saviour and the angels to the left and right of the Communion table. The images of St. Peter and St. John the Evangelist are more picturesque and softer in tone than the apostles following them in the left row, and all of the apostles in the right row.

Apostle Peter has loose garments streaming in folds. They emphasize the spread of his shoulders and surround his figure with an additional widening contour, forming a sphere full of light, in which the figure itself loses its definite outlines. Thanks to those enveloping clothes the image produces a softer impression than the figures of apostles following, John the Evangelist, clad in clothes with laconic as if chopped folds.

Besides, the free-flowing folds of St. Peter's loose garments bear the stamp of the classical tradition, as they are free from conspicuously rigid lines. But the major difference between Apostle Peter and the other figures of the *Eucharist* is in his looks. His type of face is often found in the art of the Macedonian epoch, including miniatures of several manuscripts, such as the Menologion of Basil II³⁴, the "Imperial" Menologia³⁵, etc. His large face broadening even more at the cheekbones is almost square; his rounded chin is cut off along the horizontal line, his nose big and beefy—a commoner's face bearing no traces of intellect or refinement.

All shades of colour used to model St. Peter's face are light, with a multitude of nuances. The skin tone as the major colour here is extremely elaborate, displaying a diversity of hues and

tints—light pinkish, light ochre and light olive. The colour palette is so delicately composed that all of these hues seem to be flowing one into another. It is the colour scheme, light and delicate, that is at the heart of the expressive charge of this image, which is stylistically close to the art of the first quarter of the 11th century, still leaning on classical, albeit slightly modified principles.

The figure of St. John the Evangelist (ill. 230) flanking St. Peter is done in a different manner. His head is thrown back, the shoulders and the neck are bent, the lips tightly pressed, the eyes wide open, their unusual frozen stare bespeaks a person shaken to the core. His head is joined to the neck at a strange unnatural angle. The main tone is also the light flesh colour, but different from that of St. Peter's as it has far less tinges and, therefore, looks like a light, somewhat washed-out homogeneous surface.

The major difference from the appearance of St. Peter is, however, the dark shadows sharply contrasting the main tone and of symmetrically arranged geometrical outlines. Their starkness makes the already strong image even more emphatic while their schematism marks a total departure from the realm of classical notions.

A clear-cut rhythmical regularity governs the other four figures of the apostles in the left row of the *Eucharist*. The two central ones, St. Luke the Evangelist and St. Simon, differ the most from the rest of them. The two figures at the left end—St. James (or St. Thaddaeus?) and St. Thomas (or Philip?)—are on the whole similar to those of St. Peter and St. John, but more rigid. The abundance of sharply drawn folds makes their clothes look like bright surfaces of crystals sparkling in the white light. This impression is even stronger than that produced by the figure of St. John the Evangelist, whose attire, in its turn, looks more schematic compared with the picturesque garments of St. Peter.

The two central figures in the left row are draped in a special way. This is above all true of the third figure on the right—St. Luke the Apostle. He is wearing a golden chiton with greenish shadings and a white mantle with cherry-colored outlines. The greyish green cloak worn by St. Simon, coming after St. Luke, is inundated with such powerful torrents of light that it looks white with some greyish green modelling. Thus, the garments of the two central figures appear as large lapidary surfaces only slightly touched-up with individual colour lines.

The figure of St. Simon is done in huge solid highlights, which have more to do with architectonics than with painting. Some of them go in the direction of the step to underscore the dynamic axis, others are jerky strong vertical strokes ensuring stability of the whole. The cherry-coloured downward vertical bands modelling the figure of St. Luke give this figure in the middle of the row, and the composition as a whole, the impetus of the central moment breaking the monotony of movement in this row. The step, compositionally required there by the story, is inevitably dynamic whereas emphasis on the axial bands renders the image static, which in this case stresses the majestic sacrosanctity of the images.

The creators of these mosaics saw to it that the entire composition of the *Eucharist* unfolding along the huge circumference of the apse looks integral and uniform. In the right row, just like in the left one, the foreshortening alternates, together with the configuration of drapery. St. Paul is like St. Mark, and St. Matthew like St. Andrew. The constantly alternating rhythm makes all figures fundamentally similar.

Looking as if hewn in stone, the harsh clothes of the right group of figures have the quality of an architectonic carcass and form abstract patterns of folds and lines. Everything is made of simple and conventionally geometrical shapes. In modelling they are triangles, straight downward verticals or sometimes slanting, but always sharp lines. Parabolic curves or circles are extremely rare. At the bottom of the figures the clothes end in a zigzag line, as abstract as any other modelling technique and far from attempting to convey the natural beauty of soft free-flowing drapery.

All the figures glow with similar brightness, the white of the highlights being the most powerful in the colour palette. The white surfaces of the figures are done in smalti of different shimmering hues, resembling subdued mother-of-pearl, which creates the impression of light coming from the depth of some hidden source. The overall colour scheme of the figures is light, uniform and devoid of contrasts. Every colour seems to incorporate a tinge of grey, as if to dim the natural brightness and excessive beauty. The main colours are pale violet, blue and pale green (St. Paul); pale violet (St. Matthew and St. Mark); blue with a lavender blue shimmer (St. Andrew).

³⁴ Il Menologio di Basilio II, 1907, vols. 1, 2.

³⁵ Der Neresian, 1973, pp. 94–111; Patterson-Sevcenko, 1993, pp. 43–64; D'Auto, 1997, pp. 715–47; *Dreanosti iz monastyrei Afona X–XVII vekov v Rossii* (Relics from Mt. Athos Monasteries of the 10th–17th cc. in Russia), 2004, No. II.6, pp. 125–30; Zakharova, vol. 2 (in print).

The faces of the apostles in the right row are of the same type as those in the left row – they are massive, wide-boned, their exaggerated large features bearing the stamp of unwavering determination. Individual physiognomic characteristics are inconspicuous, and psychological nuances are practically absent. Perhaps the image of St. Paul alone can be singled out as possessing some degree of expression: his head is bent so abruptly that it seems to be growing directly out of his shoulders, his lips are tightly pressed and the lower part of the face looks somewhat compressed. There also are some differences in the way his face is executed: his huge forehead possesses sculptural roundness and greater plasticity than the other figures in this row. Nevertheless, his face was most likely done by the same master (the ticks for the wrinkles above the bridge of the nose are the same as in other apostles in this row), who employed tinner and more subtle devices, possibly, in imitation of the face of St. Peter.

The numerous large and thick shadows on the faces of all the other apostles following St. Paul stand in contrast to the light flesh colour. The faces of the apostles in the left row are done in the same manner. The face of St. Peter alone is distinguished by greater softness and naturalness; the same is true of his clothes. It could be that the apostles in both rows of the *Eucharist* were created by the same mosaicist, and the figure of St. Peter alone may be the work of a different master.

The lower tier of mosaics in the apse presents the sainted hierarchs – five on each side, to the right and to the left of the centre. These include two archdeacons and eight Fathers of the Church. For all its integrity, this tier of frontal figures, with great inner likeness of all the depicted personages, is distinguished by a variety of individual characteristics and artistic manners of execution. As elsewhere, the ascetic type, majestic and detached, prevails, and one facet or another of this type of image may be emphasised.

The younger characters St. Stephen and St. Lawrence – mighty stalwarts with shield-like chests and broad shoulders – look like veritable titans. Put together, their powerful shoulders and no less powerful arms growing out of these shoulders create an especially formidable, almost square shape, just a little rounded. Their white attire, with massive drapery, devoid of any plasticity, resembles shining armour, or even a wall. The generalizing effect is so big that the figures look like some pillars or towers. Their rounded, wide-chinned youthful faces are very much alike, both full of inner energy and, at the same time, detachment. The images are executed in a similar fashion: the light flesh tone, with a lot of tints and shades, is contrasted against the geometrically delineated shadows, but the differences in detail eventually account for the expressiveness of every image. St. Stephen's face is done in lighter and more coordinated shades while a bit brighter palette is used for St. Lawrence: vibrant pinkish hues instead of the uniform skin tone as in St. Stephen's case. There is more plasticity about the face of St. Lawrence, and his more dynamic, sideways glance adds to this effect. His large, generalised form is the same as that of St. Stephen's, but the abstract geometry of proportions is not as blunt; there is more colour and therefore more life in St. Lawrence. These are but small nuances within an integral whole.

Two images in the sainted hierarchs tier, those of Basil the Great, stand out for their patent individuality. The "portrait" quality, which lends specific characteristics to these images, is explained by adherence to the iconographical tradition in creating them. Although governed by the same idea of ascetic out-of-this-worldliness, both images are endowed with emotional and psychological characteristics. The artistic means are less generalised here than in the case of other personages. There are no geometrically designed shadows in the face of Basil the Great; flowing smoothly on both sides of his face, they are on the light side, lighter than his hair, and seem to be transparent. The rows of smalti of pink shades flow smoothly one into another. A certain degree of commensurability noticeable in every technique employed attests to the classical tradition and/or classical training. In the face of St. John Chrysostom the shadows are somewhat larger and, besides, placed symmetrically, which makes the image sharper and even lends a poignant expression to its countenance. The rest – the nuances of colour, picturesque surface and the classical foundations of craftsmanship – is the same as in the image of Basil the Great. All of the above notwithstanding, the expression and content of the two images are just as stern and tense as in the other characters of the mosaic ensemble of the apse. Only a faint, highly personalised shade of expression in the

faces of Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom gives them their unique individuality.

The most austere image in the sainted hierarchs tier is that of Nicholas the Wonderworker situated on the other side of the centre, symmetrically to Basil the Great. His face has the same striking "portrait" quality as the faces of Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom, but he looks as an especially austere ascetic – the corners of his lips drawn downwards, and there is a stamp of drama on his whole image. Profuse shadows contrast light and carnation pink of many different tints. This reminds of the way the face of St. John Chrysostom is executed, but all shifts in colour are more sharply accentuated, adding rigidity to the image. All those three images are alike in the degree of their spiritual concentration and profound individuality of every one of them.

The image of St. Gregory the Theologian, placed next to St. Nicholas, is much more removed from the common type, despite the same kind of face with symmetrical features, wide open eyes and frozen stare as in others. But the emphasised outlines are absent, the same as the large dark shadow – all shadows are light, laid exclusively around the face, and free of strict geometry; there are next to no shadows around the eyes. The light complexion has a lot of fairly intense shades of pink and even red. Colour is used to create a 3D effect. The lips are brighter and the eyes are greyish blue and lighter than in the other images. This face is modelled by pictorial rather than schematic techniques. This image, not reduced to the ascetic ideal, is closer to the ideas of classical Byzantine art: this is the image of a teacher, theologian and philosopher, an image more elevated than that of the purely classical tradition existing back in the early 11th century³⁶. It is perhaps not by chance that the only image of this kind in the sainted hierarchs tier was placed next to St. Nicholas, the most tense and austere character of them all.

The two outermost figures of saints on each side – St. Gregory of Nyssa on the right and St. Clement and St. Epiphanius on the left – are less individualised than the central ones. St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Gregory Thaumaturgus resemble Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom, next to whom they are placed. The light and richly nuanced mosaic surfaces of their faces correspond more to the live versatility of the material world than to withdrawal from it. However, the shadows are enhanced here to contrast the flesh tone, as a result of which these faces look harsher and the images more uniform than those of Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom; they bear the stamp of a standard all the basic devices of the new style were meant to meet.

St. Clement, following St. Gregory the Theologian, differ from the other images by extremely harsh execution techniques. Here, the correlation of light surfaces and shadows is absolutely different from what it is in the other images. Dark, always geometrically outlined and symmetrically arranged shadows are present in profusion. They are all uniform, without any nuances and laid in contrast to the light and likewise uniform flesh tone. The schematism and conventionality of the form, characteristic of that style, but usually mitigated by various artistic nuances, is realised here with utmost faithfulness to the chosen method. This resembles the way the image of Nicholas the Wonderworker was executed, though by far simpler means.

Of these two images, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus at the very end of the left row is the most poignantly and intensely expressive. By dint of its unadulterated devotion to the ascetic concept this image is closest to Nicholas the Wonderworker, even though the face is done in a far simpler artistic form. The countenance of St. Clement, the Pope of Rome, standing next to him, is less intense; his image, majestic and stationary, looks absolutely neutral like a textbook sample or oft-repeated study on the theme of asceticism.

The apse mosaics were of course executed by more than one master. This is corroborated by the enormous scope of work and, as it has already been mentioned above, by certain differences in the types of characters and the artistic methods employed. On the whole, the range of differences is not big. Given the fundamentally uniform principles and guidelines, some of the masters are still milder and even classical; others, on the contrary, noticeably lean towards abandoning classical memories in favour of creating a more relentless and severe world. It is like a two-pan balance at equilibrium. Those works might have been done by two masters, possessing the equally superb skills and having close points of view on the meaning and types of images, their

³⁶ The images of Christ and the evangelists from the Apracos Gospel gr. 204 at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai (Weitzmann, Galavaris, 1990, pp. 42-7. Colorplate III-VI, pls. 93, 96-99).

physiognomic and stylistic characteristics. They were equal partners and worked together not as a master and an apprentice, but as legitimate colleagues. They evidently differed in their temperaments and, possibly, in some of their guidelines. One was clearly a person of more moderate opinions, and the other was probably more of a maximalist. So, when the scales tipped to one side, there appeared images reflecting a stronger gravitation to one side or another. One such example is the image of St. Gregory the Theologian, the subtle and lush painterly manner which was uncharacteristic of the whole ensemble. Such are the images of St. Clement and St. Epiphanius, whose rigid schematism exceeds the measure typical of even the most exacting mosaics. Whether these two masters or some other artists were experimenting with those images is hard to say. One of them strove to simplify the artistic system while the other, on the contrary, tried to make it more versatile and complex.

In addition to the dome and the apse, mosaics are found in the upper vaults and on sanctuary piers. All of the mosaics are of either of the two basic types. The cathedral was decorated from top to bottom; the masters gradually went down the scaffolding to the lower zones and in all likelihood always worked together. The representations of Christ as Priest in the dome drum and the austere images in the apse—they are spiritually withdrawn, as if dwelling in another dimension. As they are placed so high above, their artistic means are extremely formalised.

The figure of St. Mark, the only original image of the four Evangelists to have survived, is distinguished by his classical style posture, proportions and drapery. The degree of likeness between this image and the mosaic of St. Mark the Evangelist under the dome of the Nea Moni cathedral on Chios³⁷ belong to the group of works of the type which adhered to the classical traditions to the greatest extent.

The *Annunciation* composition with the figures of the Virgin on the sanctuary piers also belong to the same group. Positioned in front of the altar and flanking it, they are seen from afar, just as the figure of the Virgin Orans, and are the most important, key images in the cathedral space. Almost equal in size to the figures of the *Eucharist*, they take the pride of place due to their favourable position and the magnificence of the white (in case of the Archangel) and blue (the Virgin) mosaic surfaces of their attire. The white colour of Archangel Gabriel's raiment is modelled with lines and patches of different shades of grey that impart an opalescent silvery sheen to the figure. The blue colour of the Virgin's robes comes across as a homogeneous colour patch because her dress, mantle and maphorion are all blue, and the figure seems to be swathed in one blue piece of drapery. As a result, the two strong colour accents at either side of the entrance to the sacral space literally draw one's eyes to the altar.

Archangel Gabriel is very much like the angels, especially the right one, at the Communion table of the *Eucharist*: the same handsome, rounded young face full of life's vigour and freshness and at the same time as if spellbound by the enormity of the miracle he is witnessing. We see the same motifs in the image of Virgin Mary, beautiful and full of vigour as life itself, and, at the same time, detached from reality just like Gabriel.

These two figures are also akin stylistically. They are not rigid, especially the figure of Virgin Mary; the ascetic accent is not dominating the message these two figures are conveying. Perfect proportions, flexible postures, the free-flowing robes enveloping the figure of the Virgin, the way the two faces are modelled by diverse subtly harmonised shades of colour with the plastic feeling for the rounded form are all close to the classical notions of the commensurate. However, all this is combined with quite different expressive means, similar to those used in all of St. Sophia's mosaics, that is, schematic and conventional.

Only fifteen out of the forty medallions with the images of the forty martyrs of Sebaste³⁸ on the four arches support-

³⁷. Mouriki, 1985, vol. 2, pl. 12.

³⁸. V.N. Lazarev considered the representations of the forty martyrs of Sebaste the least valuable of all Kievan St. Sophia's mosaics (Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 32). He thought that nine of the surviving fifteen medallions were made by a mediocre artist and ascribed the remaining six to three more experienced masters involved in work on other mosaics. The quality criterion was the extent to which works complied with the system of classical artistic means (including 3D effect, colour harmony and delicacy of tonal transitions). Conversely, features, such as lack of individuality among the martyrs, flat surface representation, harsh lines, schematic drawing and oversimplified form, were viewed as drawbacks. Meanwhile, those were characteristics of a special type of style suitable to produce images fundamentally different from the classical ones. Such features were characteristic not only of the portraits of the forty martyrs of Sebaste, but of the bulk of mosaics of that ensemble and were only used to a greater or lesser extent. All the mosaicists involved in the decoration of the cathedral had a perfect command of the trade they had learned in Constantinople. A certain difference in the images of these mosaics is on the whole not big, with the exceptions of a

ing the dome (ten medallions on each arch) have survived: ten in the south arch and five in the north one. They are all alike and executed in accordance with the fairly strict canon, which regulated the entire St. Sophia ensemble. Despite their likeness, all of them have the qualities of individual portraits. Those portrayed belong to different age groups – young, middle-aged and old, and this fact determines, to a certain degree, the way those types are grouped. Within every age group there are gradations as regards physiognomy, characterisation and artistic techniques employed. Images similar in one of the above characteristics are found in absolutely different places on the intrados of two arches. It is impossible to identify works of different masters on the basis of the above distinctions. It is hardly realistic that one master would be doing medallions scattered in different places on the arches; it would have been more expedient to make medallions one after another moving downwards from the top. It is also logical to assume that one and the same master worked in different styles and techniques. The arches were decorated by the same mosaicists who worked in the area of the dome, in the apse and on the sanctuary piers. It is impossible to say how many masters took part in decorating the arches supporting the dome, as mosaics have survived on only three out of eight arch intrados.

There are more similarities than differences in the extant medallions. The predominant type on these three intrados is characteristic of nearly all middle-aged persons, such as Nicholas Νικηλός? and Lysimachus). Such nuances create variability of physiognomic types without altering the overall idea.

The only image of an old person is that of St. John on the east intrados of the south arch. On the whole, it is done in the same, if less rigid mode as the “middle-aged”: the shadows on his face are lighter—they are grey and matching the tone of his head hair and beard, and thus mitigating the contrast.

The images of young people on the arches look different. No matter what type of face it is, whether expressly rounded, wide-boned, closer to the “Roman” (St. Acacius, Ganos), the shadows are always minimal on them, there is more colour in the faces and the cheeks are never without colour; expressiveness is built not on contrast, but on softer combinations of colours and on more natural roundness of the plastic form. All these nuances serve to convey youthfulness. However, the main meaning of images was to correspond to the integral concept of the ensemble. It is probably for that reason that some of these faces, so young and lively, have an emphatically detached look in their inordinately wide open, even bulging eyes with frozen pupils (Onapherius/Onuphrius; Severian).

Some of these young men are noticeably “offbeat”. Such is St. Acacius with his bright complexion, colourful painterly surface, his full, sensual, well-defined lips, the form of which brings to mind classical Byzantine images (for instance, Archangel Gabriel from the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople). The fixed stare of his inordinately large eyes alone makes this otherwise perfectly classical image look ascetic. Most of all he resembles the apostles in the *Ascension* frescoes in the dome of Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki (1028)³⁹. Every one of these faces likewise combines purely classical beauty with non-classical spirituality, attained by the only, yet highly effective method – inordinately large deep-set eyes.

Evidently, the image of St. Acacius was created after some old model. Its creator was clearly familiar with the art forms existing in Byzantium earlier, ten or fifteen years before. It is possible that he was raised on it or was even active in art life of the preceding period and later, in his mature years, worked in Kiev. The image of St. Acacius differs from the other Sebaste martyrs in the same degree as the image of St. Gregory the Theologian differs from the rest of the images in the sanctuary.

No matter how different the characteristics, styles and devices in all the other images of the mosaic ensemble – whether leaning towards one side or the other – to a higher level of severity and austerity or towards certain softness and harmony, the differences between the other images of the mosaic ensemble did not amount to altering the main spiritual concept. The general tone of the mosaic ensemble corresponds to the spiritual principles of rejecting mundane diversity that distracts from the resolute aspiration to be closer to God.

All of the mosaic and fresco ensembles of that period differed drastically from works of the classical Byzantine style, which best corresponded to the ideas of the world of angels and

few distinguished from the general ascetic programme by their greater classical picturesqueness.

³⁹. See note 171.

saints, and of heavenly bliss. Ascetic art seemed to be saying that drawing closer to that world does not always come as a miracle, as God's blessing showering down upon all and everyone, but is achieved by the hard work of the soul a person had to commit himself to. It is a tortuous road of asceticism, self-deprivation and rejection of the habitual and the ordinary. This is a difficult choice, requiring enormous concentration of all of the person's inner resources.

Still, this art, despite the unquestionable integrity of its conceptual basis, has produced quite a variety of images and stylistic versions. The two simultaneously built mosaic ensembles, the Hosios Loukas Katholikon in Phocis and the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev, confirm this point. It appears that the more forcefully and uncompromisingly the spiritual programme of such art is conveyed, the more uniform the images created, and the more schematic the style. This is what distinguishes the naos mosaics of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon from its narthex mosaics. In the same way, mosaics of the Kievan St. Sophia correlate with the Hosios Loukas mosaic ensemble as a whole: everything looks even stricter in the Kievan St. Sophia than in Hosios Loukas. Thus, the theme of Transfiguration in Hosios Loukas as a light-bearing event of triumph and peace is treated by the St. Sophia Cathedral masters from the positions gravitating more towards asceticism. Here, the general palette is more reserved, the colours are far less intense and radiant than in the Greek ensemble. The Hosios Loukas mosaics have so much brightness and cheer that it seems to correspond better to a festive atmosphere than the arduousness of ascetic life.

The art of mosaicists who worked on the Kievan St. Sophia ensemble reflects a somewhat different world outlook. They arrived at a more schematic, abstract form structure, as it were, not governed by the laws of earthly life. Such are the images of ascetics, stern, severe and awe-inspiring, some with signs of torment on their faces, or else totally oblivious to the world or released from everything concrete and personal. This art imperatively pointed to a certain spiritual path and urged one to embark upon it. The Hosios Loukas mosaics served the same purpose, however, their solemn and festive radiance aimed to give an idea of the resplendent God's Kingdom, which those who take the arduous but safe path of monastic self-abnegation might be honoured to attain.

Save for the spaces occupied by mosaics, the St. Sophia cathedral interiors – its walls, vaults and piers – are covered with frescoes from top to bottom. Compositions account for a smaller part while separate figures form the majority. Some surfaces bear representations of crosses and ornaments.

St. Sophia's decorative system is an enormous ensemble whose parameters surpass all other church ensembles. Frescoes occupy a far greater part of the ensemble than mosaics. Nearly all frescoes have failed to survive in good condition, and only a few individual images have to a certain degree retained their original expressiveness. In most cases, the frescoes have lost their former density and freshness of colours: the paint layer is now worn out and faded; the upper paint layers responsible for colour or light modelling are frequently gone; the cinnabar has, with the passage of time, degenerated and darkened. However, even in this state, St. Sophia's frescoes continue to impress with the grandiose design, the scale of work performed, the incredible number of faces (they numbered about 800) looking at you from everywhere, and the spiritual power of every one of them. Such a strong impression is now produced primarily by the energy of the drawing, the contours of the figures, the outlines of drapery and the general lines of faces. The finer gradations are all gone. Originally, the clothes were brighter, shining with intense highlights; the faces were not as dark as nowadays, but had light modelling and festive red rouge. The world of the saints embodied on the walls used to look more colourful and diverse.

Mosaic and fresco images are similar in nature as they were meant to reflect spiritual concentration bordering on detachment from the outside world. That was the general idea of the entire ensemble, however; its frescoes and mosaics still differ in many respects. More than that, the frescoes were not uniform as they were done by several masters.

Indeed, individual figures and compositions look differently in the fresco ensemble. Given the huge space of the cathedral and the area of its wall surfaces covered with frescoes, the impression

is that there are less compositions than separate figures. Some scenes are almost hidden from view due to their unfavourable location. Only those in the north and south arms of the cross are well visible. Regrettably, some of them are fully lost or have survived in fragments only. However, the architectonics and rhythm of these compositions continue to impress one with their monumental grandeur to this day. The scenes, in which movement had to be conveyed in accordance with the story, are nevertheless distinguished by remarkable stability, well-balanced parts and composure of all rhythms.

The best preserved composition of the *Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles* in the south arm of the cross under the dome can give an idea of the style of those fresco scenes. Despite the generally traditional nature of the composition, it boasts singular aptly placed accents. The apostles seated in a semi-circle are elevated, as if risen up high. All the figures are brimming with light, and together they form a sort of glowing arc that echoes the real architectural arch below, right under this scene. The general architectonics of the composition is flawless. Light is rendered here with the help of numerous dense highlights creating a myriad of flare-ups, imparting the glowing arc formed by apostles' attire with phosphorescence. This immerses the figures into an aura of light, symbolically conveying the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Compositions look differently in different compartments of the cathedral – not all of them produce the same strong impression as those placed in the arms of the cross, on vast wall surfaces in an enormous vacant space. The effect of the composition largely depends on its placement. Those in the side-chapels of Sts. Peter and Paul (the prothesis) and of Joachim and Anna (vestry) are painted on significantly rounded walls of a narrow and very tall apse and therefore cannot be seen easily. Besides, they look somewhat flattened. The ones in the upper section of the north and south walls of the naos are too high up to be seen clearly because of their modest size and also because their viewing is obstructed by the huge choir.

Apparently, St. Sophia's space – enormous, intricately segmented and absolutely uncharacteristic of the then Byzantine architecture – proved too novel for the visiting Greek artists. Individual figures constituting the core of the fresco ensemble turned out to be more expressive. And although the faces in the compositions are of the same nature as the faces of separate figures (the same type with exaggerated physiognomic features and intense glances), still, their images, being just one element of a complex, elaborately composed scene, do not have just as concentrated inner energy as the "portraits".

Nevertheless, all frescoes, both the separate figures and the compositions, possess common features distinguishing them from mosaics. The fresco figures are always elongated, there are no shortened ones among them; they are always slender, even graceful, classically proportionate or elongated but a little so that the figure would look lighter while remaining true to nature.

Correlations between all body parts in frescoes are not the same as in mosaics: the heads are not too large to be commensurate with the height; the shoulders are rarely especially wide, their outlines usually flexible and "flowing"; the necks are not as short as in mosaics; the feet are of natural sizes, or frequently even smaller.

The general appearance of the fresco figures is likewise different from that of the mosaic images. There is no dissonance, exaggeration or artificiality about the former. Compared with the mosaic images, they represent another facet of the overall concept of the ensemble, as if focussing on the spiritual world, which requires complete devotion, does not necessarily have to alter the usual forms of the physical world.

The clothes are modelled by multitudinous vertical highlights and multi-colour lines, forming veritable cascades, and it is them that determine the form structure. As a result, the tall figures look even narrower and slimmer; they are sharply streaked and therefore look fleshless, permeated with light and therefore seem lightweight as distinct from the squat and mighty figures in the mosaics.

Furthermore, in addition to verticals, sundry smaller shapes, forming knots and all sorts of thick clusters of short white lines model clothes in frescoes. They differ from large, massive spots of light in mosaics, which are, as a rule, geometrically lapidary, as if stamped. In frescoes the structure of light is much finer and more elaborate.

In the same way folds of clothes are represented in greater detail and with greater versatility in frescoes. In mosaics, fabrics are designated as some conventional matter supporting a carcass of light. In frescoes, the form of fabric itself is much more tangi-

ble. True, these methods are not used evenly throughout the frescoes. In some figures the light scheme is as geometrically obvious as in mosaics. Occasionally, geometrical abstraction of light takes rare and even extraordinary forms that are never used in St. Sophia's mosaics. Thus, in St. Theopiste the highlights (on the left) come as a homogeneous shaft of light without any inner design or gradations. Its wide straight form creates a solid luminous carcass of the figure. More powerful than the material structure of clothes, it serves also as a light beacon in the surrounding space. The right side of this figure's attire is done in a different mode – the large highlights are segmented into geometrical shapes. Structurally, they are akin to those used in mosaics and more characteristic of the artistic language of the Kievan St. Sophia, while the shaft of light on the left is a quite novel, experimental device matching such artistic imagery, in which concentrated symbolism verges on the loss of natural form.

At the same time everything looks less sharp in other figures – the vertical lines of the folds and highlights stream down grandly and monotonously; the towering figure, with the folds of its clothes looking like cannelures, has the monumental calmness of a statue and stirs classical rather than symbolical associations.

Occasionally, vertical modelling done in white or in the colour of the clothes looks like thin parallel threads covering the entire form. They are especially remote from the large geometrical configurations of light in mosaics (the Myrrh-bearers on the southwest pier at the choir). The closest parallel is the linear treatment of clothes in miniatures of the 1050-1060s, where they are either white, like rays of light⁴⁰ or dark in order to flatten the form⁴¹ or golden (gold hatching), to imbue it with divine light⁴². In every case they are thin vertical lines falling downwards on all surfaces. This device was widely used in miniatures in the 1050s⁴³, but it might have appeared earlier, as fresco painters of the Kievan St. Sophia used it liberally when working on its murals already in the 1040s.

Apostle Paul's attire exemplifies another modelling device (on the southwest pier under the dome). His is an emphatically tall figure clad in loose light green clothes flowing down in a multitude of various medium-sized folds and traced with a great number of now sharp, now wavy lines, producing an astonishingly natural impression of rustling silk fabric. Actually, all drapery without exception is totally conventional, and the outlines of every one of them are schematic. However, their diversity, the exquisite beauty of colour combinations, the subtle and fragile graphics of every drapery create a rare, for this on the whole highly conventional type of style, impression of artistic material – beautiful, natural and spiritually charged – all in the same degree of excellence. This combination of the classical and the spiritual was to be the key feature in Byzantine art of the following period, that is, the second half of the 11th century.

All modelling methods used in St. Sophia's murals are alike in principle and differ in nuances. There was a certain arsenal of devices at the common disposal of all members of the artel. Every master could mix them depending on circumstances, such as the iconography and type of image he was to produce, its place in the cathedral, lighting, the methods the master next to him was using, and, possibly, even his own nature, temperament and personal taste. That is why different elements of style common for St. Sophia's entire decoration can be seen throughout the ensemble. No select or limited set of methods has concentrated in any particular part of the cathedral space.

The master's choice of certain devices and their combinations predetermined the ensuing stylistic agenda, as well as the character of the image. With the vertical lines becoming sharper and larger in number, geometrical shapes multiplying in the folds and growing ever more abstract, light-filled surfaces widening and the correlation of light and plastic form becoming increasingly independent, the style and images gained in spirituality. Conversely, as the plastic roundness of form rose, lines grew more

flexible and parabolic, their flow reduced, light coming in the form of smaller highlights or rather blinking white spots, their large and rigid pattern giving way to a more flexible scheme with assorted details, the style veered towards a classical variety and the images became less intense. The decorative ensemble of St. Sophia abounds in versions of both those styles.

Methods used in the St. Sophia frescoes were hardly the product of that particular period. They had appeared earlier, many of them as far back as the second half of the 10th century, when Byzantine art moved away from the classicism of the Macedonian Renaissance in search of different means of expression that would match the spirituality of Christian images. Those methods were also used later, that is, in the second half of the 11th century when Byzantine art, though steeped in fine spirituality, managed to strike an ideal balance between the classical and the spiritual. Between the mid-10th and the late 11th century those methods became widespread. Scarce until the second half of the 10th century, they proliferated after the 11th century.

During those 150 years, the final stylistic and semantic result both in Byzantine art as a whole and in the decorative ensemble of the Kievan St. Sophia in particular, depended on the combination of those methods.

Some images, forms and artistic means of the St. Sophia frescoes (especially those of the Sts. Peter and Paul chapel), while markedly differing from mosaics by greater variety and harmony, look like works of the second half and end of the 11th century. Physiognomic types in frescoes are in the main close to those in the mosaics, but they are more diverse. Possibly, it was precisely at that time that a shift occurred to an art form of a somewhat different kind than the extremely severe, ascetic type dominating the art scene of the 1030s and 1040s. The muralists might have already been aware of the new trends that would become characteristic of the art of the 1050s with its softer tones and a falling interest in ascetic maximalism.

Those features of the emergent new era echoed the main aspirations of the art of the first quarter of the 11th century. It was not a question of traditions being passed on directly: the span between those two periods was approximately a quarter of a century. The reason for this affinity lies, most likely, in the general focus of Byzantine art on spiritualising the inherited classical forms by all means possible. Departure from them was a rare occurrence, and it did take place precisely in the second quarter of the 11th century and specifically during the 1030s-1040s when the Kievan St. Sophia artistic ensemble was being created.

However, that "softened" variant of imagery characteristics applies not to the entire fresco ensemble of the Kievan St. Sophia but only to some of the images. On the whole, the frescoes there abide by the general conceptual and stylistic programme, which found its fullest expression in the cathedral mosaics.

There exists an opinion that the St. Sophia cathedral and its entire decoration date from the early 11th century⁴⁴. Some of the features which distance the frescoes from the mosaics and lend them a greater classical flair might have served as a confirmation of this opinion. They seem, on the face of it, to resemble the style of Byzantine painting of the beginning (the first quarter) of the 11th century when the classical backbone was still of decisive importance, although patently non-classical details took shape next to it. This process can be traced in the miniatures of numerous Greek manuscripts⁴⁵. However, the correlation between the old and the new in the art of that period differs drastically from that in the St. Sophia frescoes. While in early 11th-century painting they merely attempted to modify the classical system, the Kievan St. Sophia cathedral decoration is evidence of an altogether different, non-classical artistic system built of a combination of different conventional devices.

Despite the immense number of mural images, several major types and means of their execution can be singled out. They do not exhaust the diverse variants, but give a fairly full account of the main semantic and artistic principles of this ensemble. Meanwhile, similar types are not grouped together in some specific places, but are found in different compartments.

⁴⁰. For example, menologion (Sin. gr. 9, State Historical Museum (1063) et al.) (see *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniyakh SSSR*, 1977, vol. 2, No. 491; Spatarakis, 1981, p. 78).

⁴¹. For example, Apracos Gospel from Megale Panagia I (Library of Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1060/61) et al.) (see Vocotopoulos, 2002, No. 1, pp. 24-7).

⁴². For example, Gospel gr. 74 (National Library of France, Paris) (1058/1059); Theodore Psalter. Add. 19352 (British Library, London) (1066) and others.

⁴³. This device was in particular used actively in manuscripts associated with the Monastery of Stoudios (like the two manuscripts mentioned above; Liturgical scroll RAIK 1 (Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg) (see Hutter, 1997) and many others. See also Anderson, 1978, pp. 178-80).

⁴⁴. Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 199-241 (the book has a comprehensive bibliography on this issue).

⁴⁵. For instance, late 10th-early 11th c. miniatures in the Apracos Gospel manuscript Coislin 20 (National Library, Paris) (*Omnit.*, 1929, Pl. LXXX), in the Gospel gr. 588 (Dionysiou Monastery, Mt Athos) (note 160), in the Apracos Gospel gr. 204 (Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai) (note 161), in the Arundel 547 apracos Gospel (British Library, London) (note 158). In the second quarter of the 11th c. That line was carried on in miniatures of three manuscripts of the "Imperial" Menologion (1034-1041); Sin. gr. 183 (State Historical Museum); W 521 (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore); 71 (Benaki Museum, Athens) (note 188).

Two major types of faces are clearly distinguishable among the multitude of St. Sophia fresco characters. One type is much closer to mosaics than the other. Faces of this type are characterised by a frozen countenance, fixed stare, monolithic frame and strictly definite design. The other type of faces is associated with higher vitality, individuality, emotionality and eyes no longer looking into a void, but in a concrete direction. It is as if the masters working on all those faces had two different directives, one leaning more to the schematic, and the other to the natural. There are different variants within every one of those types. Let's consider them without aspiring to account for every nuance, and trying not to atomize the concepts excessively.

All faces of the first type, the one closer to the mosaics, have strictly symmetrical features and eyes gazing fixedly into a vague distance. The impression is that they are all in a state of trance, soaring in some unfathomable dimensions.

And still, the images of this type are not homogenous. One group has full, round faces on a little nuanced surface usually of whitish shade, which is easily discernible, despite being partially gone. The faces in the other group are done in a strict, exacting manner, with the colour surfaces much less nuanced, the form made significantly lighter, as if the volume has shed its heaviness.

The full heavy faces of the first group, in part comply with the traditions of plastic composite painting of the 10th century, but everything is substantially different: the colour palette is limited, modelling is not variegated, and nuances are totally absent. Plastic form, so perfect in 10th-century art is still appreciated, but the volume is now different – inert and static, as if plastered over. As a result, there is no breath of life or any emotional expression in the faces. Occasionally, the motif of ascetic aloofness does show through, but most often the faces show no emotion whatsoever. The images of this type and the artistic devices used betray the desire to impart a new meaning to the old classical form by foregoing all colourful, plastic or emotional nuances, by decolourising and “de-fleshing” it.

Rupture with classical traditions is much more obvious in the second group of the same, ascetic-type images. Minimum means are used to create faces of this group, which in extreme cases boil down to drawing and colouring. This goes well with the essence of the stern, intense and detached images depicted. These images are more original as the usual classical models are not followed in their execution, they are therefore more generalised, and their style is at times extremely laconic (St. Domnius) almost like in the Christian East, in Cappadocia⁴⁶. Characterised by extreme ascetic exactingness, images of this type are always severe.

However, an image of this type can also be conveyed with quite different, “full-blooded” means. Such, for example, are the images of the Virgin Orans on the sanctuary pier, Archangel Michael, numerous Myrrh-bearers and angels in the vaults and domes, the three youths, the Magi, and so on. Their main features are close to those in the images of ascetic type – exact symmetry, laconism, clear-cut design, the fixed position of the pupil right in the middle of the eye, and vague stare as if detached from worldly interests. However, the shape of these faces invariably tends to plastic fullness and roundness; the colours used were originally bright and radiant (now surviving in only a few images), the colour surface dense and as if glowing. What is more, all these faces are very beautiful and far from self-abnegating, although they do keep a good distance between themselves and the world. They reflect knowledge of an extraordinarily full life in the spiritual world, of the ideal structure of perfect form, surpassing all earthly notions; of the reflected radiance of eternal, perfect matter, smooth and solid to the touch like a gem.

The magnetic beauty of that form evokes associations with classicism, with which that style in fact had nothing to do. The ideal form inherent in this style has no nuances that would correspond to any type of live vibration, live emotion and, therefore, could compare with the real ordinary world. Beautiful and detached, such faces were meant to give an idea of the perfection of supreme spiritual being. Such images abound in the St. Sophia frescoes. Some of them are now hard to identify due to loss of colours. It is quite possible that precisely that type of images predominated in the ensemble. In any case, they were assigned

⁴⁶ For instance, the Direkli kilise church in the Belisirma valley (976-1025) (Jolivet-Levy, 1991, pp. 323-7); Restle, 1967, vol. 2, pp. 45-6, 178-9), the Church of St. Barbara in the Soganli valley (1006/1021) (Jerphanion, 1925-1942, vol. 2, pp. 307-22; Restle, 1967, vol. 2, pp. 42-5, 160-1; Jolivet-Levy, 1991, pp. 258-262; Thierry, 2002, Fiche 37), the Yusuf Koc church in Goreme apparently of the second quarter of the 11th c. (Restle, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 350-1; Jolivet-Levy, 1991, p. 75; Thierry, 1974, pp. 193-206; Thierry, 2002, p. 196. Fiche 43; Goncharova, 2006, pp. 231-420 and others.

a no lesser role than the ascetic images in the cathedral interiors. A similar interpretation of images is found in the contemporaneous mosaics of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon in Phocis, especially those in its narthex. They, too, epitomize both strict self-denial and the triumphant magnificence as the culmination of an arduous life path. Both themes are present in each of the ensembles, albeit in different degrees, and in both they sound as the key ones.

The other type of image, rare in those times but with rather good prospects for the future, stands out for a greater degree of physiognomic and psychological concreteness. Psychological details are altogether absent in other types of images in the Kievan St. Sophia by dint of the ascetic programme of this ensemble. Such faces are endowed with emotional expressiveness, often tense and even poignant at times (Lazarus). Lazarus' eye pupils are not raised, as usual, but placed in the middle of the apple of the eye making his gaze especially tense and adding a motif of suffering to the image. Some faces are so full of individuality that they look almost like portraits (Moses). This is an altogether different approach to the image⁴⁷ compared with what was typical of most of the representations in the St. Sophia frescoes, where the saints seem to dwell in some timeless and emotionless space, that is, in eternity.

In some images of this type their pronounced expressiveness is attained by intense light splashes crisscrossing the form and conflicting with the main whitish tone. Such intensity of light in the faces to make them more expressive is not characteristic of the entire ensemble, but is employed as an important device in some of the images of the Sts. Peter and Paul side-chapel. Such are the faces of Sts. Peter and Lazarus. The faces of St. Paul and Moses were probably done in a similar manner as well, but the inadequate (St. Paul) and poor state of preservation (Moses) prevent us from being definitive. Such interpretation of the image and means of expression were to gain in importance in 12th-century art, but they took shape already in the first half of the 11th century. Images similar in meaning and the means of expression used are found both in the frescoes of the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid and in the mosaics of the Nea Moni on Chios. There are no such images among the Kievan St. Sophia mosaics.

Two major variants stand out from among the images of this “concrete” type. One of them, and it is the most common, is the image of huge energy and spiritual power; an imperative image, as lofty as any other St. Sophia image and also very humane, surpassing the world of humans only in intensity. The other variant is a tense image full of expressiveness (Lazarus, St. Peter). Both were to feature prominently in 12th-century art: the large generalised image⁴⁸ would be used frequently in the beginning of the century while in the second half of the century expressiveness, often rendered in rather intense and extreme forms, would come to the fore⁴⁹.

There is still another, likewise comparatively rare type of image among the St. Sophia frescoes that can conventionally be dubbed “classical”. Some of them (all of them unidentified) are listed below: a martyr in the southwest corner arch; a deacon in Archangel Michael's side-chapel; a martyr in the arch of the south nave above the image of Emperor Constantine; a martyr in the arch of the north nave above the image of Aaron; a woman martyr in the northwest corner above the image of St. Zepha-

⁴⁷ Similar images are known in a trend of early 12th-c. art, which replicated the ascetic type of the first half of the 11th c., albeit gravitating towards greater concreteness and humaneness. It was a whole range of art that existed in parallel with another, classical trend as exemplified by the mosaics of the St. Michael's Monastery, Kiev (Lazarev, 1966; Popova, 2002, pp. 344-64), Old Metropolis, Serres, Macedonia (Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 94, 225 (note 53, bibliography); vol. 2, table 289), miniatures from some manuscripts, such as the Gospel (Sin. gr. 41, State Historical Museum) (*Ishusstvo Vizantii v soborniyakh SSSR*, 1977, No. 509, pp. 54-5; Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 92, 223 (note 46, bibliography); vol. 2, ill. 259) and others. Art of that type had already become archaic and was practiced primarily far away from Constantinople – on Cyprus (e.g., early 12th-c. frescoes at the Church of Panagia Phorbiotissa of Asinou; see Saccopoulou, 1966; Stylianou, 1985, p. 114-40; on Mt. Athos (e.g., mosaic Deesis in ; see, 1996, pp. 224-40, 184-7); in Novgorod (frescoes in the St. Sophia cathedral tholobate, St. Nicholas Cathedral on Yaroslav's Court, St. Anthony's Monastery; see Lifshits, Sarabianov; Tsarevskaya, 2004); in Ravenna Basilica Ursiana; see Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 118, 235, note 232, bibliography; vol. 2, ill. 387), in Trieste (Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 119, 235, note 233, bibliography; vol. 2, ill. 388). Nevertheless, similar images were also created in Constantinople (mosaic icon of Hodegetria from the Virgin Pammakaristos Monastery, now at the Greek Patriarchate, Istanbul; see Demus, 1991, No. 2). This is explained by loyalty to the old traditions, which evidently continued to attract in the 12th c. as well. They were, however, slightly modified to satisfy new tastes of an entirely different epoch. Meanwhile, the image and the style originated in the art of the period when the Kievan St. Sophia frescoes were made.

⁴⁸ See note 202.

⁴⁹ The frescoes of the Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi (1164) and several other ensembles carried on that tradition (the so-called expressive or “dynamic” style) up to the late 12th c.

nia; a number of images in the galleries – angels in the northeast dome, a saint in the northeast corner, and many others.

They are placed separately in different locations of the ensemble as rare guests in a community of strict holy men and women epitomizing ascetic self-denial or heroic might. They are always very beautiful, their features gentle, countenance calm and open, showing no tension whatsoever. They look absolutely lifelike and seem to differ from ordinary human faces only in their somewhat elated and cloudless state of mind.

One of the most picture-perfect and also best preserved among them is the image of a martyr in the transverse arch of the southwest compartment under the choir. It is full of classical beauty of Antique or early Christian type, which never disappeared from Byzantine art but merely was at times relegated to the background. The soft rounded oval of the young martyr's face is devoid of any geometrical exaggeration, all features have regular proportions, the eyes are not overly large; everything is commensurate, his glance slightly askance to make him lively and natural, his attitude serene without anything imperious about him. The paint is but slightly faded, and the colour has retained its brightness. The flesh tone of light ochre shades goes well with the rounded shape of his face and gains in intensity as it blends with the soft and natural-looking rouge without any geometrical outlines. The overall colour tone is cheerful, and the face seems to emit subdued light.

This type of faces and images is close to Byzantine miniatures of the second half of the 10th and the early 11th century⁵⁰. Their creators appreciated classical art of the first half of the 10th century and strove to spiritualise its images and style.

All that did not disappear, but only became of secondary importance and was no longer used in monumental art when the ensembles of the Kievan St. Sophia and the Hosios Loukas Katholikon in Phocis were being created. However, they practiced precisely this type of art in court scriptoria, as is evidenced by miniatures from the "imperial" menologia produced during the same period for Emperor Michael IV⁵¹. Some of the Greek masters who had come to Kiev to work on the St. Sophia cathedral obviously shared that type of taste which had already become old-fashioned. Apparently, it was not accidental that those images were not given pride of place in the cathedral, but were usually placed in arches and vaults more often than not as waist-length representations, that is, on a less effective scale compared with full-length figures on piers and walls.

There are parallels to images of this type among the St. Sophia mosaics as well. Such is, for instance, the image of St. Gregory the Theologian in the apse. His face, with symmetrical features and immobile countenance, is on the whole similar to those of all of his neighbours, however, the stylistic devices used are different – less schematic and more vibrant and liberated. There are no emphasized or geometrical outlines, no rigid lines. Its coloring is variegated, with a lot of bright red combined with the light shades of the basic flesh tone and light shadows over the oval of the face. Large shadows around the eyes are absent, as well as light-and-dark contrasts so persistent in other faces. Instead there is a harmony of different colours attained with the help of smalti shades of such great diversity that the surface looks like a glorious painting. This image is of the same type as "classical" images among the frescoes. However, it does not look all that Hellenistic, as similar fresco representations do, because its face, with its enlarged immobile features, is similar to the type of face all mosaics have.

Among vault mosaics there also are images distinguished by greater picturesqueness compared with the major corpus. These include three Deesis figures (Jesus Christ, the Mother of God and John the Precursor) on the triumphal arch and some of the forty martyrs of Sebaste on the wall arches (SS. Acacius, Severian, Ekaikii, Onapherius/Onuphrius). With less rigid methods used in their execution, their images look less categorical in their inner directives. And even though they cannot boast the unrestrained lush painterly manner of St. Gregory the Theologian, they still constitute a certain uniform group different from the main type of mosaic images and similar to the classical fresco images.

There is a special group of representations in St. Sophia wall paintings, in which images are similar from the point of view of physiognomy but different in their inner content. The most characteristic of them include St. Abibas on a south

nave wall, a holy martyr (name unknown) in the south nave arch above the image of Emperor Constantine with the figures of St. George and St. Irene, and a holy martyr (name unknown) in the transverse arch of the south nave spanning the space from the southwest pier to the south wall. Inordinately large bulging eyes make these images especially expressive. The face of an unknown martyr (above Emperor Constantine) is very lively, there is a "velvety" softness about his glance, and it seems that faded colours alone prevent us from seeing the moist glitter of his eyes; full, as if laden, form is perfect plastically, and one can discern erstwhile brightness and freshness of colour. St. Abibas' face, immobile and with a frozen "hypnotic" stare, is expressive in an entirely different way, attuned to the basic nature of images of the St. Sophia ensemble. The main thing about the image of a martyr in the transverse arch of the southwest compartment under the choir is the magnetism of his glance – his inordinately big eyes looking askance and the whites of his eyes sparkling. Large shadows are to the left of his face and on his neck, his broad shoulders look square. His head has a heavy shape, the outline of his face simple, rounded and devoid of any elegance, its colour uniform and somewhat albescent. The face is of the same physiognomic type of ox-eyed images with large bulging eyes as if drowning in the shadows surrounding them. However, it has none of the "velvety" softness: the main emphasis is altogether different, imperative and slightly dramatised.

To one extent or another, all those faces are akin to fresco images from the Church of Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki created (ca. 1028) shortly before the Kievan St. Sophia ensemble and on the whole as yet lacking pronounced asceticism as is seen in the latter cathedral, but full of emotional fervour and occasionally even excited inspiration. The unknown martyr in the arch of the south nave (above Emperor Constantine) is nearly virtually like such images; despite the similar physiognomic features, the face of St. Abibas nevertheless bears the stamp of another, the following stage in that art (it is comparable to the images of holy physicians in the Hosios Loukas narthex); the face of the martyr in the transverse west arch of the south nave is in meaning close to the range of St. Sophia images that are most "concrete", mighty and of truly power authority.

To sum up, all images of the enormous St. Sophia wall painting ensemble are attuned to a single concept, on the whole the same as is embodied in the cathedral mosaics. However, there also are numerous variants, nuances of a general style that can be observed in diverse places of the huge cathedral space. They are more profuse in frescoes than in mosaics. It may well be that every artist worked now here and now there. It is just as possible that one master could produce different artistic types dictated by concrete space, as well as by the particulars of the life of the saint, whose image he was to paint.

The images frequently form either small groups or pairs on the basis of either opposite qualities or, on the contrary, their common principles; in any case their expressiveness is only enhanced by this fact. For example, an image full of harmony can be juxtaposed in the same arch with an image of inner expressiveness. Such are the two martyrs with crosses in their hands occupying the transverse arch in the southwest compartment under the choir. One of them, in a cherry-red chiton and green mantle, is an epitome of flourishing youthful beauty and Hellenistic reminiscences, human charm and Antiquity perfection. His face is characterised by proportionate features, gentle outlines and lack of dissonance. The line design is refined, precise and modest without any accents. The colour palette is likewise rich in shades, light and delicate, and the image as if meant to give an idea of the found harmony and the beauty of Paradise.

The other image pairing it and with his dress of the same colours in reverse – a green chiton and a cherry-red cloak – is the complete opposite. He is characterised by inordinate inner strength, domineering glance, heavy head of a generalised form and enlarged features – everything conveying might and spiritual profundity.

The two martyrs placed opposite each other in the arch of the south nave above Emperor Constantine are in a similar, "dialogue-like" juxtaposition. One of them, the younger one in a green chiton and light cherry-red cloak, is of the same "classical" type as the martyr in the transverse south arch, but utterly different from it. Its origin is not in Hellenism, Antiquity or Palaeochristian art, but in art, though rooted in classicism, yet already fully matching Byzantine artistic ideas, the art that developed

⁵⁰. See notes 153-61.

⁵¹. See note 188.

from the late 5th – 6th centuries⁵² and attained image spirituality not through stylisation but exclusively through the expressive faces and eyes, that is, exclusively through the characterisation of the inner state. Precisely such images identify the Panagia ton Chalkeon fresco ensemble. And the young martyr above Emperor Constantine in the arch of the south nave of the Kievan St. Sophia belongs to the same “community”. Such “ox-eyed” images are few and far between in the St. Sophia ensemble, their presence explained rather by recollections of the recent past.

Next to this inspired young holy martyr is another slightly older, yet also beardless and in the identical green chiton and cherry-red cloak, however, possessing expressiveness of an altogether different type. He has sharp eyes, looking askance, large and heavy shadows, all outlines emphasized and harsh lines. His huge monobrow, low forehead hidden under a fringe, monotone surface of the face, dark outlines around every feature, rounded oval of the massive face and the rigidly even curve of the chin with a geometrical shadow below all produce the impression of a strong and somewhat grim image. Nothing has been softened in it, there is no recollections of the classics of the Macedonian Renaissance – the image is born of the ascetic notions of culture of the second quarter of the 11th century, albeit not of the most detached variant, but a more emotional one, marked above all by spiritual might and authoritativeness. Now if the young saint on the opposite side of the arch is in a state of blissful contemplation and bearing a stamp of silent spiritual joy, the other martyr has the emphatic severity of a spiritual zealot about him. He is in a state of a fiery fervour and has something dramatic about him.

Holy presters St. Domnius and St. Philippol placed opposite each other in the arch before the window of the outer south gallery constitute another prominent “dialogue-like” juxtaposition. St. Domnius is in a state of utter detachment, as if in reverie, and out of reach. Conversely, St. Philippol is quite communicative with the human world, only surpassing its potential in the intensity of emotions and their manifestations.

The face of St. Domnius has fully symmetrical features, every one of them strictly outlined. He is gazing into the unfathomable space, his immobile pupils strictly centred, all lines as if drawn with a pair of compasses and a ruler; his lips, the contours of which resemble some geometrical pattern, are tightly pressed. Sparing painting boils down to a coloured drawing with predominantly neutral ochres and minimum rouge, there is no breath of life anywhere. Such laconic, pithy form produces an image of strict inner discipline and utmost aloofness from anything lively.

Conversely, St. Philippol's face is emotional, even passionate. His lively eyes, slightly askance, are obviously looking at something concrete; with half open lips, his mouth seems to be breathing, which is extremely rare for all the faces of the St. Sophia ensemble. The design of his features is distinguished by great flexibility and even elegance, with lines thickening and tapering so that no uniformly rigid contour is formed. Modelling is copious, and the palette is more nuanced.

The generalised and schematic methods used in the image of St. Domnius are identical with the key artistic precepts of St. Sophia frescoes, however, their abbreviation is extreme for this type of style and reminiscent of the style of Cappadocia frescoes. The expressiveness of the image of St. Philippol is entirely of a different kind and coincides with a variant of the St. Sophia ensemble that includes the representations of Aaron and St. Paul. Their images have individuality and concreteness, their inner concentration combined with imperious willpower. Precisely such images were to live on in the art of the late 11th and especially early 12th centuries (frescoes of the Church of the Virgin Eleousa in Veljusa⁵³, mosaics of St. Mark's basilica in Venice⁵⁴). I think, however, that all wall paintings at the St. Sophia cathedral, including the galleries, were made concurrently in the mid-11th century; they have different modifications of commonly accepted imagery of the period, but they are fundamentally similar in the maximalism of their spiritual guidelines.

Another method of placing fresco images in the Kievan cathedral is based on the juxtaposition of the more similar images

rather than the correlation of contrasting types. This is especially characteristic of images on the walls. Such are St. Gurius. St. Gurius is advanced in age while St. Abibas is young, which may be the reason for the use of slightly different painterly methods in the execution of their faces. A homogeneous brown tone predominates in the face of St. Gurius, only slightly shifting now to a lighter, now to a darker shade depending on the structure of form, however, little helping to convey its roundness. His face, framed with grey hair, looks even more bone-dry and anemic compared with the face of St. Abibas, which has a more varied palette and includes shades of olive and grey with a dash of red added to make them fresh, and colours are laid, as it were, skirting the rounded volume. The young face of St. Abibas looks more voluminous compared with that of St. Gurius. These are, of course, but fine nuances attesting to the master's professional and human sensitivity. Irrespective of all these gradations, the two images have similar immobile countenance and frozen pupils of the wide open eyes to convey the state of absolute detachment.

Comparison of young and old age is a primordial theme in art that was interpreted poetically and philosophically already in Ancient Greece through the correlation of the two states of human life and soul. The main thing in the interpretation of this theme at the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev is the unity of all stages of life and the inseparability of the beginning and the end, which depend on God's will.

The same principle of image arrangement is observed in the figures of the Myrrh-bearers on the west wall of the south nave, in the southwest compartment under the choir. The two surviving waist-length figures there, both in medallions, are on the sides of some now lost central figure (in a rectangular frame), in whose place an arch opening has been cut into the inner ambulatory. The two Myrrh-bearers are martyrs whose names are not known (the inscriptions have not survived), the left one possibly St. Nino. Both representations are fairly well preserved. They have green robes, the right one with a matching green maphorion and the left with a light lilac maphorion.

Their robes are executed differently. In the right figure the green robe and maphorion merge to form a single enveloping fabric pierced by a multitude of light modelling in the form of white lines, mostly long and strong, occasionally small, as if conveying the nuances of the play of light, but in any case absolutely unlike the large and harsh highlights of geometrical shapes as in St. Sophia mosaics and some of its frescoes. In their pattern these numerous white lines standing for rays of light look more like gold hatching in manuscripts⁵⁵ than architectonic highlights as they were usually presented.

There are next to no such white lines in the attire of the left figure (St. Nino?). In part they have faded, but then they were less numerous than in the right figure where they form the bulk of the painterly surface. In the left figure that surface was obviously conceived as less segmented, more monolithic and therefore has only basic dark green lines outlining the folds. The main thing is the mass of the figure and its outline.

The right figure has clothes distinguished by a lot of colour and light, which corresponds to ideas of some sparkling world and in no way brings to mind thoughts of ascetic modesty. In comparison the figure of St. Nino (?) on the left looks stricter, her face more austere and everything in it harshly marked, lines hard (especially in the outlines of eyes and shadows); the rouge, the red colour of which has, regrettably, darkened, used to be large and geometrical, the countenance simple and strong, with severity and might as the dominant characteristics.

The image of the Myrrh-bearer on the right has individuality and from the point of view of physiognomy and psychology is full of the same strength as the image of St. Nino (?), which is combined here with genuine grandeur. The large features are rendered plastically, as if it were the face of a statue. There are next to no shadows around the eyes; here and there a darker shade of the colour looks like actual shadow from a 3D shape; the Greek nose is perfectly sculpted; everything in this face simultaneously looks like a natural face and a classical model. Meanwhile, the “classicism” of this type of face and its plastic form is of a different nature than in the art of the so-called Macedonian Classicism of the first half of the 10th century. There is none of its painterliness, gentleness and refinement, nor any savouring of the classical form – everything bespeaks gravity and sculptural generalisation. Overall this image is akin to characters from the

⁵² For instance, mosaics of the Orthodox Baptistery and the Archbishop's Chapel of Ravenna, the Rotunda of St. George in Thessaloniki and others.

⁵³ Djuric, 2000, pp. 31-3, 331-3, 450 (after 1080); Milkovic-Peppek, 1981 (between 1085 and 1093); Mouriki, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 263-4 (1081); offers a brief, but highly original assessment of the place of Veljusa frescoes in the art of the second half of the 11th c.).

⁵⁴ Demus, 1988, pp. 15-23.

⁵⁵ Andreescu, 1972/1, pp. 184-94, figs. 1-14; Andreescu, 1972/2, pp. 195-223, figs. 15-39; Andreescu, 1976, pp. 247-341, figs. 1-52; Popova, 2000, pp. 152-65 (with bibliography).

Hosios Loukas Katholikon mosaics, especially those of the narthex. Although strict, they nevertheless come across not so much detached as triumphant, even resplendent, their main theme being the triumph of spirit rather than severe asceticism. There is something majestic and flourishing in this art, and all that despite little mobility of outward physiognomic features and rigid stylistic devices.

Similar principles of placing figures on the walls and vaults can be observed in different parts of the cathedral – contrasting juxtaposition resulting in a “dialogue” of images, which is especially characteristic of the representations in the arches, and the repetition of identical or very similar types making them more expressive, which is especially characteristic of the representations on the walls.

All types of images are encountered in diverse places and numerous compartments of this enormous two-tier cathedral and on its piers. Nevertheless, it is possible to point out certain regularities in the correlation of the types of images and the different parts of the cathedral. For instance, young warriors, petazarny martyrs and adolescents forming some sort of community are depicted on the piers of the central space, on the facets of the piers under the dome facing the sanctuary where St. George are represented and on the facets overlooking the naos. Their faces epitomize confident willpower. All of them are painted in a similar way – with a plastic volume, rounded outlines, no colour nuances, uniform faces, multiple and somewhat monotonous repetition of images of serene strength and spiritual loyalty, that is, the image to be recognized as that of protector and guard. The painterly surface of all of them is worn out, very badly in some cases – the red is gone from the cheeks, with traces of it discernible in one of the adolescents. Lip colour, just as red in its time, is likewise faded. If the colouring of that type of painting was more intensive, the nature of the image was somewhat different from the way it is seen now, that is to say, it was lighter and more triumphant.

The St. Sophia cathedral has a lot of colourful and light images that are sometimes seen clearly and sometimes just discerned, however, even in their present state their magnificent beauty and radiance continue to impress. Spiritual concentration and detachment required for it are wedded in them to a joyful tone. Such images are to be found in the side-chapels of Archangel Michael and St. George. They include two major representations in the apse conches on the north wall of the same compartment³⁶ a deacon and prophet Zechariah in the Archangel Michael side-chapel. Many of the gone frescoes in those areas may well have been of the same type in the past.

The numerous representations of the angels on the vaults of both side aisles, well preserved in the south aisle and less so in the north aisle, also belong to the same type. This is also true of the images of angels in the gallery domes (especially in the northeast dome above the north gallery). The throngs of angels are in the vaults all along the side aisles – the main lateral zones of the cathedral space. Inhabited by angels, they became the symbols of the heavenly world spread over the cathedral throughout its extension from west to east. The angelical creatures appear in the flourishing beauty of young faces. The chains of angelical choirs seem to come out of the side-chapels of Archangel Michael and St. George. Rows of such images extending from the south and the north adjoin the central cathedral space providing it, as it were, with a resplendent frame.

Some types of images form small groups both in the south and the north side-chapels. The figures of two old grey-haired presters are next to each other on the south side facets of the pier under the dome, executed identically in scanty simplest painting. Although their faces differ, both are equally expressive strict images of a man totally engrossed in prayer and detached from anything mundane. Images of the same type are also found in the north chapel (the prophet opposite Aaron) and on the south sanctuary pier (St. Theodore the Studite and an unknown monk).

Saints of the same severe type with just as immobile faces and frozen glances, but unlike the preceding group with massive faces, their ovals heavy and almost monochrome albescent, are placed in a similar way: several figures grouped together. Such are three figures. Some of the Myrrh-bearers in the western part of the cathedral also belong to the same group, including St. Thecla, St. Anastasia and an unknown martyr, all placed on the projections of the southwest pier.

There are two more types of images placed symmetrically in the northern and southern parts of the cathedral, as if

in opposition to each other. On each side from the centre, approximately in the middle of the lateral spaces, there are images forming some small groups. In the northern part of the cathedral the faces are the most poignantly expressive and imbued with emotionality that was not characteristic of that type of art. These include St. Peter and an unknown sainted hierarch opposite her. They stand out both for their features and for the stylistic devices used. All of them are characterised by individualised physiognomy, grimly tense or extremely harsh glances, shapes based on contrasts instead of evenly rounded plastics, expressive light and the general impression of dissimilarity from the other images of the ensemble. Opposite them, in the southern part of the cathedral are images with what seems to be contrary

expressiveness – St. Panteleimon, St. Andrew and St. Theodore Stratelates. Their images are likewise individualised, but devoid of any tension, their faces light, and all the painterly methods and elements of style precise and unadulterated. The shapes are plastically magnificent and at the same time looking very light, and colour is multifarious, refined and modest. It may well be that this obvious contrast between the north and south sides of the central space was an accidental result of the artistic manners of different masters working there. But it is also quite possible that the effect was specially conceived as a contrast between the heavy and the light, the energetic and the contemplative, the expressive and the harmonious, the harsh and the serene, and eventually, the passionately human and the heavenly tranquil.

The eastern and western parts of the cathedral accommodate sundry types of images. The sanctuary representations seem to reflect specifically diverse aspects of spiritual life, although mighty and severe images, as devotionally ascetic, as domineering, are still in the majority. Such are nearly all the sainted hierarchs and deacons on the walls and in the arch openings of the sanctuary space. The manner of their execution is different; clearly more than one artist worked on them. Both in scenes and separate figures painting is for the most part dense, shapes have volume, brightly light colours used both in faces and attire (at present fully surviving in small areas) and generous highlights, as it were shining on all coloured surfaces, that is, the artistic language employed is absolutely conventional and extremely intensive.

Another variant of this art is also there: the images are exceedingly generalised and pithy, painting characterised by dark laconic design, geometrical lines, brown coloured faces and insignificant modelling. Such are the deacons and martyrs in the archway leading to the sanctuary from the south – St. Nicophorus, M.; St. Papyrus, deacon; St. Lawrence, M. (?) and an unknown martyr.

There is also an image of a Myrrh-bearer (in cherry-red attire) in the same sanctuary space, her face not only severe, but even grim, shape little differentiated and heavy, and colour uniformly albescent. We have seen that sort of painting in small groups of images in the south and north side aisles. The image is not typical of sanctuary paintings, but is rather characteristic of representations in the opposite part of the cathedral on the west piers and in the southwest and northwest areas where the figures of Myrrh-bearers predominate. Their imagery range is extremely varied and includes nearly all the basic physiognomic types characteristic of the St. Sophia fresco ensemble. The impression is that the human world, with its peculiarities and characters, was captured right there at the entrance, in the western parts of the interiors, in diverse physiognomic types and with the help of different artistic devices, and everything in it was pervaded with the idea of an all-consuming religious feeling, complete abandon in prayer and strict spiritual discipline.

The world of sanctuary images is just as varied. Apparently, a similar concept existed for this area: numerous variants of human nature sublimated in the sanctuary space and liturgy were united by a single powerful spiritual uplift.

The sanctuary piers bear full-length representations of the Virgin Orans on the south side and St. John the Baptist on the north. Placed so prominently in the gateway, before the vast space of the cathedral, these figures reflect the crucial conceptual aspects of the symbolical programme of wall paintings. St. John the Baptist; Her image of striking beauty and radiance forms a contrast to St. John the Baptist. Compared to many other faces in this ensemble, Her face is excellently preserved. It is painted plastically in bright colours that have lost none of their freshness and wealth of shades. The saturated red of the rouge, lips and rounded modelling goes well with the light golden yellow flesh tone and very light shadows. Here and there golden white strokes

³⁶. See note 200.

imitating light enrich this magnificently coloured surface. The full, as if laden shape seems three-dimensional. There is no geometry: all lines, curves and rounding-offs are supple and precise, even the nuances were taken into account in the construction of the shape. Although there is great affinity with classical ideas, the frozen face and vacant stare create a distance between the image and the human world standing before it. However, the ascetic motif recedes to the background in favour of triumphant majesty and festive beauty of Her face.

The two images on the sides of the altar, St. John the Baptist and the Virgin, are important symbols of St. Sophia's entire painting ensemble, encapsulating its main ideas about the ascetic path and its triumphant result. Such a graphic juxtaposition of the two sides of spiritual life is rarely found in art. Similar notions are even more forcefully expressed in the mosaics of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon in Phocis, especially in its narthex. This accent is absent in St. Sophia's mosaics, which offer the most powerful imagery of the ascetic programme in the whole of the cathedral. It is, however, present in the frescoes, whose world is more versatile and complicated than that of the mosaics. The fresco images speak of the aim, which calls for the path of ascetic self-abnegation, and of the glorious culmination of that path as conveyed in the beautiful face of the Virgin and in some other just as colourful, potent and radiant, if worse preserved, images in the cathedral interiors.

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St. Mark the Evangelist. Miniature. Trebizond Gospel. Third quarter of 10th c. National Library of Russia, gr. 21. sh. 506.

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St. Luke the Evangelist. Miniature. New Testament. Third quarter of 10th c. The British Library in London, Add. 28815, sh. 162 rev.

220.

Angel from the *Ascension* composition. Fresco, 1028. Panagia ton Chalkeon, Thessaloniki

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Holy hierarch. Fresco. Church of St. Sophia in Ohrid

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Basil the Great. Mosaic. Katholikon of the Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis

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St. Anne. Mosaic. Nea Moni Katholikon on Chios

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St. Anthony. Mosaic. Katholikon of the Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis

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Pantocrator. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Dome top

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Apostles Paul and Matthew from the *Eucharist* composition. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral, central apse

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Angels from the *Eucharist* composition. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral, central apse

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Apostles Mark and Andrew from the *Eucharist* composition. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral, central apse

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St. Lawrence, Archdeacon. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Sainted hierarchs tier. Central apse

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St. Mark the Evangelist. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest pendentive
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St. Lysimachus

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St. Acacius

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St. Severian. Mosaic. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Wall arches

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Apostle from the *Ascension* composition. Fresco. Panagia ton Chalkeon church, Thessaloniki

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Archangel Michael. Mosaic. Hosios Loukas Katholikon, Phocis

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St. Mary Magdalene. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Northwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. Polychronia. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Prophet Zephoniah. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Northwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. Theopistia. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Inner west gallery

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Myrrh-bearer. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral

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Myrrh-bearers. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Choir

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Emperor Constantine. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Unknown prester. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. Sampson. Fresco. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Unknown sainted hierarch. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Northwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Holy deacon. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Archangel Michael's side-chapel

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Martyr. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Martyr. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. Domnius. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Outer south gallery

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St. Philippol. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Outer south gallery

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St. Gurias. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Myrrh-bearer (Nino?). Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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Myrrh-bearer. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. George. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Northwest pier under the dome

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Martyr Nicephorus. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. South sanctuary arch

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Angels. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Smaller domes at the choir

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Martyr. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Northwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. John Chrysostom. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. Panteleimon. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. Southwest corner of the naos under the choir

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St. John the Baptist. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. North sanctuary pier

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Virgin Orans. Fresco. Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral. South sanctuary pier

Lazarev, 1978, p. 65; Lazarev, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 119, 218, note 88; Lazarev, 2000, p. 28.

The figure of Samon, which was waist-length like all of them and formerly located between them, is now lost as an arch opening was cut in its place in the wall.

See p. 38 and notes 193-6.

A well preserved fragment of painting that had survived under a later overpainting and was cleared in the 1990s during the latest restoration efforts.