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**PAINTING OF THE LATE
10TH – MID-11TH CENTURIES**

Wall paintings of the Tithe Church of Kiev (late 10th century), known only from archaeological fragments, were the first major ensemble signalling that Rus' had embraced the tradition of Byzantine church decoration.

The mosaics and frescoes of the Kievan St. Sophia (the 1040s) reflected fundamental changes in the system of Byzantine church painting, which occurred in the first half of the 11th century. It was precisely in St. Sophia's that we got our first view of subjects such as the Eucharist in the sanctuary apse.

The frescoes of the Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration (the 1030s), the second stone church to be built in Kievan Rus', complied with the classical traditions of 10th - 11th-century Byzantine painting. Individual figures of saints preponderated, theme scenes few and far between.

Hundreds of saints on the walls of the Kievan St. Sophia showed to the congregation the majestic image of the Ecumenical Church, in which the newly baptised Rus' was securing a rightful and adequate place for itself.

The appearance and development of painting in Kievan Rus' is entirely a derivative of its baptism and the spread of Christianity. From the outset, it appears to be a phenomenon of the same magnitude as the medieval national cultures of Europe¹.

The vigorous development of Christian art was to some extent promoted by the familiarity of a certain portion of Rus' society with Byzantine culture and above all with that of the northern Black Sea cities, which Rus' merchants and *druzhina* warriors had visited. In the 10th century Kiev had a small Christian community and consequently, beyond doubt, had built churches decorated with icons imported from Byzantium. In the second half of the 10th century Christianity began to penetrate the milieu of the Varangian princes, as is attested, among other things, by Princess Olga's baptism in Constantinople. The adoption of Christianity launched by Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich in 988 changed the entire cultural situation dramatically. Christianity brought along the spiritual notions of the triune God, the mystery of the Divine Incarnation and Christ's redemptive sacrifice, eternal life and salvation, and virtue and vice. Together with the new faith, a new understanding of art came from Byzantium to become an inalienable part of Christian life.

Rus' adopted Christianity in the historical period, which can fully be referred to as the Golden Age of Byzantine artistic culture, reborn after the iconoclastic crisis (726-843) and its aftermath. The chief accomplishment of the iconodules was the affirmation of the understanding of the holy image, which the Fathers of the Church – St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. John of Damascus and St. Theodore Studites – elaborated in polemics with the iconoclasts. The holy fathers turned the main argument of the iconoclasts regarding the impossibility to represent God against their opponents by exposing the heresy of their doctrine. Otto Demus summed up the essence of that polemics as follows, "To deny that He could be represented in the form He took in His Incarnation was to doubt the Incarnation itself and with it the redeeming power of the Passion. The Incarnation could not be considered complete, or Christ's human nature genuine, if He were not capable of being depicted in the form of man. The fact that a picture of Christ can be painted furnishes a proof of the reality and completeness of His Incarnation"². By conveying the features of a saint or by reproducing an event from Holy History, the representation does not replace the prototype, but becomes its likeness by dint of which the veneration of the prototype passes onto it. The holy image created by the artist does not exist by itself, but serves as an intermediary between the celestial world and the beholder. This quality distinguishes a holy representation from a heathen idol, and in this context it becomes obvious how important the artistic aspects of the theory and practice of embodying an image were for Byzantine artists. It was during that period that pictorial art developed a special conventional hieratic language that was to determine the specifics of art of the Byzantine world up to the late Middle Ages.

The holy image theology formulated by the iconodules found its fullest expression in the new system of Byzantine church interior design worked out and applied, after the victory of iconolatry in 843, in a number of Constantinople churches built and decorated on the initiative of Byzantine emperors, patriarchs and their closest associates. The imperial house Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, rebuilt and decorated with mosaics under Michael

III in 864 and described in detail in the 10th homily of Patriarch Photius, was one of the first among them. The mosaic decoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles, which was renovated by Emperor Basil I (867-886) after iconoclastic ruin and which is known from descriptions by Constantine the Rhodian (10th century) and Nicholas Mesarites (12th century), was of tremendous importance to the development of the painting system. The dome and sanctuary of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople saw significant additions after the earthquake of 869, although the church retained its ornamental mosaics of the Justinian period elsewhere. Mosaic decoration of two more churches of the time of Emperor Leo VI (886-912) – a church built by his chief adviser and father-in-law Stylianos Zaoutzes, and another at the Kauleas monastery of Constantinople – is also known from written sources. Although the two churches and their decoration perished entirely in the tempestuous developments of Byzantine history, the general system of their mosaic decoration and the impression they produced on the contemporaries are known from written sources³.

With its laconic architectural composition the Byzantine cross-in-square domed church was an ideal image of cosmos, and in keeping with those ideas its painterly decoration was explicitly divided hierarchically into the heavenly zone, which claimed the upper part of the church, primarily the dome; the middle, referred to by Demus as the zone of paradise, which incorporated the vaults and the upper parts of the walls; and the lower zone, symbolising the earth⁴. In accordance with this hierarchy, the new system of church decoration comprised several mandatory elements. The dome is assigned to the half-length figure of Pantocrator personifying the "creative pathos of the demiurge, creator and lord of the world"⁵. As Head of the Church Triumphant He is surrounded by the angelic host, with the prophets and apostles – the messengers and propagators of the Gospel – slightly below. The apse is dominated by the image of the Mother of God, who personifies the Church Militant, while the lower zone is assigned for the representation of the assembly of the saints who, to quote V.N. Lazarev, "as the representatives, founders and organisers of the Church Militant are consciously distributed along the entire lower tier of the church. The painting of the lower part of the church was thus linked immediately with the domical composition, where Christ as Head of the Church Triumphant via the Mother of God as the Church Militant and the apostles, evangelists and saints is in eternal unity with the church on Earth"⁶.

Special pictorial language that concentrated the age-old experience of Byzantine artistic culture corresponded to that strictly organised painting programme. Renouncing the Hellenistic illusionism of pre-iconoclast art, Byzantine artists worked out a clear-cut system of constructing a composition on the wall plane and placing figures whose outlines were perfectly discernible against their shimmering golden background. By making subtle use of natural lighting effects the mosaicists virtually liven up the golden smalt creating through its glow a mystical space, in which representations looked like new reality. In the classical variant mosaics concentrated in the middle and upper zones, where numerous vaulted and curvilinear surfaces enabled the most spectacular use of mosaic small properties to reflect and refract light, whereas the lower parts of the walls were lined with marble, whose fanciful patterns produced multifarious configurations. The sumptuous interior décor was supplemented with a wealth of precious liturgical utensils, gilt chandeliers and exquisite marble carving that decorated the sanctuary screen structure, column capitals or icon frames. Blended in artistic synthesis, all forms of art available to the Byzantines transform the church interior, which thus gets absolute inherent value and "becomes one vast icon framed by its walls"⁷.

The inner space of the Byzantine church exercised enormous influence on the religious feelings of the more sophisticated Byzantines, as is eloquently corroborated by sermons of Emperor Basil I, homilies of Patriarch Photius or *ekphrases* of Constantine the Rhodian and Nicholas Mesarites. But even a greater impression did the Constantinople churches produce on visitors from

³. Lazarev, 1986, pp. 61-5.

⁴. "The Byzantine church is, first, an image of the Kosmos, symbolizing heaven, paradise (or the Holy Land) and the terrestrial world in an ordered hierarchy, descending from the sphere of the cupolas, which represent heaven, to the earthly zone of the lower parts. The higher the picture is placed in the architectural framework, the more sacred it is held to be." (Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 15).

⁵. Lazarev, 1986, p. 64.

⁶. Ibid.

⁷. Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 55.

¹. V.D. Sarabianov authored the text on pp. 180-262, O.S. Popova that on pp. 263-323.

². Demus, Otto. *Byzantine mosaic decoration: aspect of monumental art in Byzantium*, 1947, p. 6.

other countries. According to Russian chronicles, that was a decisive factor in the adoption of Christianity by Rus'. The beauty of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople literally stunned Vladimir's envoys, who had come to the Byzantine capital to choose a faith for themselves. They used the most high-flown words to describe the Hagia Sophia liturgy, likening it to being in heaven and claiming that it was in the Greek Church that God was among the people: We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth; for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere upon earth, and we know not how to tell of it; we only know that God dwells there among the people, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. We cannot forget that beauty,⁸ Furthermore, Vladimir himself was greatly impressed by the representation of the Last Judgement shown to him by a visiting proselytising Greek monk referred to as philosopher in the chronicles: "(the philosopher. – V.S.) showed to Volodimir a curtain that depicted the Last Judgement and indicated to him the righteous on the right marching joyfully to the paradise and the sinners on the left going to the purgatory. Volodimer sighed and said, 'Good for those on the right and woe to those on the left.' He replied, 'If you want to be on the right with the righteous, get baptised'. Volodimer was quite impressed and said, 'I'll wait a little bit', as he wanted to test all faiths."⁹ The representation of the Last Judgement on the "curtain" of the Greek philosopher proved an effective graphic argument in favour of the adoption of Christianity by Vladimir¹⁰. Thus, the two crucial constituents of the Byzantine artistic tradition – the beauty of art and its instructive content as well as, in part, its didacticity – proved crucial in the choice of a new faith by the Kievan prince.

Christianity, adopted by the will of Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev and with the support of his numerous kin and close retinue, in the early decades spread across Rus' primarily as the faith of the princely *druzhina* milieu. The building of new churches and their precious decoration became for the Rus' princes short of the chief means of expressing their commitment to the new faith, in which Rus' saw its future. Hence a natural desire to hire the best masters available, who whenever possible were brought in from Constantinople itself. For the client high quality artwork became a mark of power and riches, while the church building efforts of the princes, which the chronicles never failed to record, was evidence of their might and authority. The churches built by Vladimir and his sons stood out for their huge size, majestic exterior and sumptuous interior décor. It is noteworthy that Byzantine churches of that period were inferior to them in size. Just as the image of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople sent Vladimir's envoys in raptures, so the churches under construction in the main cities of Early Rus' were called upon to impress the public mind with the grandeur and beauty of the new faith. That obviously led to the appearance of all sorts of Byzantine masters in Rus', many of whom stayed on forever in Kiev and other Rus' cities. Their joint work with Russian disciples gradually formed a domestic artistic environment that in the 7th century laid the groundwork for national culture.

The first monumental ensemble in Rus' was the Church of the Mother of God, better known as the Tithe Church, which was founded by Vladimir in 989 and consecrated circa 996. Mosaics decorated its dome and sanctuary, while frescoes filled the rest of its complex multi-composite interior. This combination of two techniques of monumental painting which was not common in Constantinople but more typical of the Byzantine provinces, was to become traditional for many Kievan landmarks of the 9th – 12th centuries¹¹. It is only possible to reconstruct the Tithe Church decoration system hypothetically, based on indirect evidence. For instance, chronicles cite the prayer Prince Vladimir said at the consecration of the church: "O God of host! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine. The stock which thy right hand planted. These new people Thou has turned their hearts to reason to know you, the true God. And have regard for this church which your unworthy slave has built in the name of the nativity of Thy Mother and the Ever-Virgin

⁸ Library of Old Rus' Literature, 1997, p. 154-5 (*The Tale of Bygone Years*, Hypatian codex).

⁹ Library of Old Rus' Literature, 1997, p. 152-3 (*The Tale of Bygone Years*, Hypatian codex).

¹⁰ Curiously enough, the representation of the Last Judgement as a decisive factor in favour of the adoption of Christianity also features in the account of the baptism of Bulgarian prince Boris in 864 (Continuator of Theophanes, 1992, pp. 72-3). For the historical and symbolical interpretation of the curtain and bibliography see: Petrukhin, 2005, pp. 133-8. It is worth noting that the iconography of the Last Judgement became common precisely in the 9th c.)

¹¹ O. Demus points out that the replacement of mosaics by frescoes was "a natural result of the spread of metropolitan art to the provinces" (Demus, 2001 (1947), pp. 61).

Mary Mother of God"¹². Proceeding from that text V.N. Lazarev suggested that a mosaic figure of Pantocrator occupied the central dome of the Tithe Church, while a mosaic of the Virgin Mary Orans decorated the sanctuary apse, and that therefore the key elements of the decorative system traced back to the Constantinople models¹³. It is logical to conclude that the laudation of the Mother of God and her role in divine administration was assigned a tangible part in the iconographic programme of the decoration of the Tithe Church of the Mother of God. The theme was especially relevant in the wake of the iconoclastic period because it conveyed the idea of the Divine Incarnation and the building of the Church Militant as the Body of Christ.

The iconographic programme of the Tithe Church must have had allusions to different Constantinople church decorations of the 9th – 10th centuries, and the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos might have served as one of the likeliest models. Situated next to the Chrysotriklinos and the imperial chambers, the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos was the main reliquary of the Byzantine Empire and the domestic church of the Byzantine emperors. The Tithe Church was also conceived as a domestic dual church of Vladimir Sviatoslavich and his wife Anna, sister of Byzantine Emperor Basil II. Thus, the emulation of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos by the Tithe Church, which found expression, as A.I. Komech has shown, not only in its dedication to the Virgin, but also in a number of typological features of architecture might have been caused by Vladimir's desire to liken his domestic church to that of the emperor and by direct influence of the porphyrogenita spouse of the Grand Prince¹⁴. The logical conclusion would be that the Kievan church decoration, too, largely echoed the famous Constantinople model.

In 863, shortly after the victory of the iconodules, the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos was rebuilt and richly decorated on the order of Emperor Michael III¹⁵. The 10th homily read by Patriarch Photius at the consecration of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos gives us an idea of the way the church looked, its architecture and mosaics that were short of the first major church decoration to be produced after the victory of the iconodules. The dome had a representation of Pantocrator who, according to Photius, "is regarding the earth and thinking about its organisation and governance". He was surrounded by the heavenly Powers – "a host of angels carrying in their arms the Lord of the world as a precious gift (...V.S)". The text of Photius obviously evokes liturgical associations. And finally, the apse had the image of the Mother of God "stretching out Her Most-Pure arms over us and giving the king salvation and power over enemies", which means that the Virgin was represented in the Orant iconography. The rest of the decoration consisted of individual representations: "And a choir of martyrs and apostle, as well as patriarchs and prophets filled the entire church, adorning it with their representations"¹⁶. The mosaics of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos thus offer an additional argument in favour of the representations of Pantocrator and Virgin Orans in the Tithe Church as reconstructed by V.N. Lazarev.

The established scholarly reconstruction of the Tithe Church as a cross-in-square church with a nave and two aisles crowned by five domes shows it to be akin in plan to the Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration. This leads to a justified supposition about fundamental similarities between the inner structures of the two churches¹⁷. Along with being of the same architectural type, the Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration could also echo the content of the Tithe Church wall decoration. If that was the case, analysis of its interior gives us grounds to surmise the general rules of the first Rus' church decoration. The Chernigov Cathedral interiors, which have survived without major alterations, show clearly, as will be seen below, that the Ca-

¹² Library of Old Rus' Literature, 1997, pp. 168-9 (*The Tale of Bygone Years*, Hypatian codex).

¹³ Lazarev, 1973, p. 21.

¹⁴ According to reconstruction by R. Jenkins and C. Mango (Jenkins, Mango, 1956, p. 173), the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, despite its modest size, had triple arcades on two floors and, consequently, a developed choir, which made its inner structure similar to that of the Tithe Church (Komech, 1987, pp. 175-7).

¹⁵ For basic writings on the history of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, its reconstruction and mosaics see: Ebersolt, 1910, pp. 104-3; Guiland, 1951, pp. 232-4; Janin, 1953, pp. 241-5; Jenkins, Mango, 1956, pp. 130-40; Lidov, 2005, pp. 73-85. The homily of Patriarch Photius (Mango, 1985, pp. 185-6) has been translated into Russian (Photius, 2005, pp. 102-4).

¹⁶ Photius, 2005, pp. 103-4. Apparently, the original mosaic decoration of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos did not have any subject scenes (Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 88). In his description (late 12th c.) Nicholas Mesarites mentions an extensive Feasts cycle in the church (Heisenberg, 1907, pp. 29-32). However, C. Mango has demonstrated that that description referred to the decoration created in the time of the Komnenos dynasty (Mango, 1958, pp. 177-90).

¹⁷ Komech, 1987, pp. 168-76.

thedral's iconographic programme could hardly have had a large number of subject scenes but consisted primarily of individual representations of saints. The above considerations as regards the Tithe Church decoration probably emulating the mosaics of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, coupled with our knowledge of the Chernigov Cathedral wall paintings, make it possible to define the general nature of the Tithe Church decoration. Obviously, it complied with the principles formulated in the earliest metropolitan monuments of the post-iconoclastic period, and in addition to the main mosaic images, individual representations preponderated at different levels of the church. Narrative fresco cycles were most probably relegated to areas of secondary importance of the narthex and side compartments¹⁸.

The special veneration of St. Clement of Rome, who was of paramount importance for the initial period of the history of Russian Christianity, was associated with the Tithe Church. St. Clement, an apostle of the "Seventy", was a disciple of the Apostle Peter and the fourth bishop of Rome. For preaching Christianity he was exiled to Chersonesos, where he was martyred to death in 101-2. The revival of his veneration has to do with the history of the adoption of Christianity by the Slavs. In 861 his relics were found by Cyril and Methodius and interned in the Apostle Peter Cathedral of Chersonesos; a little later some of his relics were sent to Rome and Constantinople. In a way the veneration of St. Clement became a symbol of the unity of the Eastern and Western churches, gaining special currency on the outskirts of the Greco-Roman world, where Cyril and Methodius performed their mission, and his relics gained the importance of a hallowed service of the two Slav enlighteners.

Along with the adoption of Christianity, the veneration of St. Clement became established in Rus' in the late 10th century. *The Tale of Bygone Years* reports that, having seized Chersonesos, Prince Vladimir "took (its) czarina, and Nastas, and (other) Korsun priests, the relics of St. Clement and Phoebus, his disciple, and also took church vessels and icons for his blessing"¹⁹. The relics of St. Clement were deposited at the Tithe Church and immediately acquired the status of one of the chief objects of worship in Rus', with St. Clement himself venerated as an enlightener and heavenly patron of Rus'. He was venerated to such an extent that the German chronicles of Thietmar, Bishop of Merseburg (ca. 1018), refer to the Tithe Church as that of Pope Clement²⁰. It was in that and similar accessory cycles occupying the lateral parts of the Tithe Church that the principles of narrative wall painting could be formulated, the wall painting that was to be used extensively in the decoration of Russian churches of the 11th-12th centuries.

The bulk of the multifarious archaeological evidence amassed in the course of excavations at the ruins of the Tithe Church consists of fragments of frescoes and smalt quadras, of which the most expressive is a fragment of the fresco with the face of a youth²¹. The soft light-and-shadow face modelling, huge slightly squint eyes, arched eyebrows and exquisitely executed fine features bring to mind some pieces of Byzantine (Constantinople related) painting of the late 10th – early 11th centuries. The closest parallel is a small icon with the figure of the young Apostle Philip from Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai²². Such plastically expressive style is comparable with late

10th-century artworks that evidence a transition from classical, plastically strict forms of the Macedonian Renaissance to an emotionally intense art, inwardly more ascetic and tense, outwardly flexible and dynamic. This type of art evolving most likely in the metropolitan environment presaged the emergence of the grand style that was to produce the magnificent ensembles of Hosios Loukas (the 1030s – 1040s), the Kievan St. Sophia (1040s) and Nea Moni (1042-1055). The fragment with the woman's face from the Tithe Church shows similarity with some images of the Church of Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki (1028), in which the above trend is already clearly manifest²³.

The link between the Tithe Church interior decoration and the work of Constantinople masters seems not only logical but also obvious. The creation of the Tithe Church ensemble signified that Rus' had joined the new world of Christian culture, and Prince Vladimir grudged no expense on the decoration of his church. Taking into account his familial bonds with the imperial court, the supposition that the artists decorating his church belonged to that court can hardly be put to doubt. Details of inlaid floors and finely carved marble columns and panels unearthed by the archaeologists testify to the rich interior décor²⁴. The use of marble was apparently restricted to the gallery colonnade, the choir barrier and the sanctuary screen, as well as floor inlays; in all probability the lower parts of the walls had no marble lining. The interior décor of the first church in Rus' on the whole complied with the metropolitan traditions that were developed in the subsequent monuments of Kievan Rus' and are known to us from the wonderfully preserved interiors of the Kievan St. Sophia.

While opening the history of early Rus' painting, the Tithe Church frescoes are nevertheless a case apart in the early period of Russian Christian culture with no immediate follow-up. The same masters most probably produced the mosaic and fresco decoration of the entrance gate and several stone structures in the vicinity of the Tithe Church that were part of the ducal palace and formed the core of Vladimir's city²⁵. Church construction in the reign of Prince Vladimir was evidently confined to the building of wooden churches, so the muralists who worked on the Tithe Church had to go back to Byzantium, and their brief stay in Kiev did not engender the development of a local artistic tradition. Although most of the icons current in Rus' at that time were imported from Byzantium, Kiev undoubtedly had some resident Greek artists, who painted icons, illuminated manuscripts and made iconographic models of church utensils. It was they who took sundry commissions to meet growing demand on the part of the Prince and his retinue. Unfortunately, practically no artefact of that period has survived. It was not until the 1030s that stone construction resumed, causing a new wave of Greek artists to come to work in Kiev²⁶.

Church construction was resumed not in Kiev, but in Chernigov, where Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich, who enjoyed short of a greater clout than his brother Yaroslav, founded the imposing Cathedral of the Transfiguration, which has survived intact to our day. The exact date of its construction is unknown because when Mstislav died in 1036, the cathedral had not been finished yet. However, the completion of the construction project and its interior decoration could hardly have taken long or gone beyond the late 1030s – early 1040s. Unlike the Tithe Church and the Kievan St. Sophia, the Cathedral of the Transfiguration was decorated exclusively with frescoes, fragments of which have been found both in the central part and in the sanctuary. Unfortunately, only small bits of the fresco decoration have survived; they are scattered and do not form an integral picture. Several half-figures of saints in rectangular frames are in the upper

¹⁸ For more on the principles of Tithe Church interior decoration see: Sarabianov, 2006, pp. 380-91.

¹⁹ There are only five subject scenes in the main part of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon: the *Pentecost* in the smaller dome above the sanctuary and four evangelical feasts on the central dome pendentives. The *Passion* scenes were relegated to the narthex (see Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 43).

²⁰ Library of Old Rus Literature, 1997, pp. 160-1 (*The Tale of Bygone Years*, Hypatian codex).

²¹ Thietmar's *Chronicle* says about Prince Vladimir: "Being already well advanced in age, he died after governing the said kingdom for long. He was buried in the large city of Kiev in the church of the Christian martyr and Pope Clement next to his covert spouse; their sarcophagi stand in plain view in the middle of the Church (... in medio templi...)" (Thietmar of Merseburg, 2005, p. 163). For the veneration of St. Clement in Rus' see Begunov, 1974, pp. 28-36; Khaburgaev, 1994, pp. 45-62.

²² For the Byzantine iconography of Pope Clement of Rome see: Weitzmann, 1979, pp. 220-2; Walter, 2000 (1979), pp. 352-65.

²³ The more characteristic early Rus' representations of St. Clement are those in the St. George Church in Old Ladoga (last quarter of the 12th c.), where he was put next to those of St. Basil the Great in *The Service of the Holy Fathers*, and also in the cathedral of the Mirozhsky Monastery (ca. 1140), where scenes from the life of St. Clement are next to illustrations of acts by the apostles, expounding on the idea of the continuity of St. Clement's apostolic service as an enlightener of Rus' (see: Sarabianov, 1997/1, pp. 34-8; Etingof, 1998, pp. 336-8; Tsarevskaya, 1999, pp. 260-71; St. George Church in Old Ladoga, 2002, pp. 187-90).

²⁴ That fragment discovered during the 1908 digs and kept at the Kiev State Historical Museum was published and studied in detail by N.P. Sychev (Sychev, 1928, pp. 91-104). It was lost in WW II. Other fragments from Tithe Church excavations of various periods are stored in different Russian and Ukrainian museums. For comprehensive information about them see *Tserkva Bogoroditsi Desyatima*, 1996, pp. 68-74, 131-45.

²⁵ Weitzmann, 1976, p. 99, Pl. CXVI; Sinai, 1990, p. 94, fig. 14. As the closest parallel to the Apostle Philip icon Kurt Weitzmann names patently Constantinople artworks – carved icons of the so-called painterly group, first and foremost the icon of SS. Theodore and George from the Archaeological Museum of Venice, and also miniatures of the Aprakos Gospel gr. 204 from Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, ca. 1000. At the same time, when analysing that fragment, N.P. Sychev was amazed by its "profoundly archaic nature, which transplants the viewer far beyond the bounds of the 10th-c. Byzantine artistic culture and carries him away into the realm of even earlier artistic forms of Hellenism in Byzantium". He related the genesis of that style to the artistic traditions of Thessaloniki (Sychev, 1928, pp. 91-104; Sychev, 1976 (1929), pp. 233-4). V.N. Lazarev, too, pointed to the archaism of that fragment, but deemed its evidence insufficient for associating the Tithe Church frescoes with one school or another (Lazarev, 1973, p. 21).

²⁶ The fragment is in the collection of the National Historical Museum of Ukraine (see: *Tserkva Bogoroditsi Desyatima*, 1996, p. 133, ill. 14). O.S. Popova gives a pithy account of that brief period in the history of Byzantine art (Popova, 2004, pp. 66-9; Popova, 2005, pp. 175-87). For the style of Panagia ton Chalkeon frescoes see: Mouriki, 1980-1981, pp. 79-81.

²⁷ *Tserkva Bogoroditsi Desyatima*, 1996, pp. 55-67. For a comprehensive analysis of Tithe Church sculptural decoration see: Arkhipova, 2005, pp. 23-51.

²⁸ Archaeological exploration of the remnants of those structures has yielded numerous fragments of fresco painting and smalt, which attests to their probable decoration in the spirit of Constantinople's secular structures (see: Rappoport, 1982, pp. 9-10).

arcades of the north wall of the central nave and a fragment of another figure occupies the south slope of the west arch of the north aisle. In addition, there had survived until WWII the only full-scale fragment of a fresco with the figure of St. Thecla in the north aisle below the choir²⁷. These disjointed representations are characterised by a large module and suggest a large-scale painting structure commensurate with the architectural segmentation of the cathedral, which, coupled with the characteristic features of the interior, prompt certain conclusions about the decorative principles in the Cathedral of the Transfiguration.

Its specific painting programme was dictated by the nature of its architecture, which differed fundamentally from that of St. Sophia and followed the lines of the architectural composition of the interior formulated in the Tithe Church. The Cathedral of the Transfiguration is a five-domed cross-in-square church with a clearly discernible basilica layout. The pronounced nave-and-two-aisles structure is emphasised in the interior by high walls separating the nave from the aisles and reaching the side vaults of the cross under the dome. The inner space thus consists of the central nave crowned with the dome and the aisles, which the timber floor of the choir initially divided into two floors. The choir stretched almost throughout the length of the aisles but, as distinct from St. Sophia's, did not go as far as the side apses, incorporating only the space of the side arms of the cross under the dome. The central nave is thus separated from the aisles and turns out to be an independent volume connected with the lateral volumes exclusively through the two-tier arcades of the ground and upper floors. Of fundamental importance is the fact that the side arms of the cross under the dome are cut off from the central volume under the dome and open only onto the choir.

There is a good view of the central space through the arcades, from the western part of the choir, from the narthex and from both floors of the aisles, but the side volumes themselves can be seen from the central nave only through the numerous arcade openings and do not create a holistic picture. In other words, the space of the aisles was separated from the domical space and could not be involved in the central iconographic programme. In the eastern part of the cathedral the bema vault alone offered an extensive surface suitable for a large-scale composition, such as the *Ascension*. With the side compartments crowned by the east domes, the end walls alone have lunette planes under the side domes that are theoretically suitable for two more large compositions. Therefore, there was too little room for themes of the main iconographic programme in the domical space, which was to cover the entire central nave. The shortage of planes for theme compositions was aggravated by the fact that the partitions separating the central nave from the side arms of the domical cross were cut by the three tiers of openwork arches or arcades, leaving room only for individual representations.

The main part of the cathedral iconographic programme had to be seen easily from the domical space. However, in addition to the vast space of the central apse, major large-scale representations could in fact be placed only on the surfaces of the dome, the pendentives, the east and west vaults of the central nave, and also the two lunettes on the end walls of the transept under the small east domes and the west wall below the choir level. The separation walls between the arcades of the ground and the upper floor of the aisles, where St. Sophia has scenes of the evangelical cycle, in the absence of vaults under the choir prove to be too narrow to accommodate compositions – an obvious conclusion in view of the large-scale module presented by the extant representations. The architectural logic of decoration defies any placement of scenes in the lower zone of the walls, which were most probably assigned for imitation marble panels. In general, the aforementioned areas proved inadequate for holding the full cycle of the Twelve Great Feasts or some narrative pieces, which prompts the conclusion that the main iconographic programme of the Transfiguration Cathedral predetermined by its architecture consisted of a small number of theme compositions and was meant to give prominence to individual representations of saints.

While lacking extensive possibilities for narrative scenes, the painting system under reconstruction had to have a considerable measure of architectonic expressiveness that was characteristic of church decoration of the early post-iconoclastic period. This conclusion is corroborated by the nature of the architectural décor, which features prominently in the cathedral interior and

²⁷ In contravention of the traditional point of view of the Tithe Church interior decoration being done soon after the construction project had been completed, I.E. Totskaya has come up with the hypothesis that the Tithe Church wall paintings were done in the late 1030s, that is, simultaneously with work on the Kievan St. Sophia mosaics and frescoes (Totskaya, 2006, pp. 443-8).

restricts the narrative potential of wall painting even further. For instance, the planes of the second-tier arcade supports, which could have been painted, have trim strips that indisputably make the architectural forms more expressive, but rule out the possibility of placing any representations there. The round columns of the lower tier of the arcades make it next to impossible to imagine any scene representations in the lower part of the north and south cathedral walls. In other words, everything here points to the restricted narrative potential of the Transfiguration Cathedral wall painting, which in all likelihood went along the lines of Tithe Church decoration.

Proceeding from general regularities and parallels, we can try and imagine the content of the Transfiguration Cathedral iconographic programme as a whole. In accordance with the 10th-century church decoration principles, a representation of Pantocrator surrounded by the heavenly Powers most likely occupied the dome. The prophets were in the eight wide partitions of the tholobate, while the pendentives could have borne the representations of the cherubim and the seraphim, although one cannot exclude the presence of the evangelists there. The decoration of the sanctuary came second in importance; there are grounds to reconstruct in it not only the representation of the Virgin Orans in imitation of the Tithe Church image but, in view of the huge size of the central apse, also two tiers of compositions, which could have included the *Eucharist* and a sainted hierarch tier as it was in St. Sophia²⁸. The sanctuary piers might have accommodated the *Annunciation* and the east vault the *Ascension* or the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, while the four evangelical scenes expounding the Orthodox dogmas occupied the slopes of the west vault and the lunettes under the small east domes. Some scenes could also have been placed on the west wall of the central nave below the choir level. The smaller domes most probably conveyed the theme of the heavenly host, which supposedly had been started in the Tithe Church decoration and then found the ideal embodiment in the extant paintings of the Kievan St. Sophia. The remaining surfaces of the walls, piers and vaults of the main space were to hold individual representations of saints, which however were not numerous in the domical space either because the architectural décor left room only for ornament, as has been pointed out earlier.

The side compartments of the choir and the narthex were fairly isolated and in all likelihood had their own autonomous painting programmes only indirectly connected with the decoration of the central nave and the domical space. The large wall areas in the western parts of the aisles in the choir topped by the smaller light domes enabled the free placement of several compositions of any narrative cycle. This supposition is corroborated by a large piece of painting that has survived under the southwest tholobate and forms part of a scene shown against mounds with high ground. The sparse composition suggests that it was most probably an Old Testament story rather than one of the evangelical scenes that are always densely populated. Therefore, the most likely parallel to the Transfiguration Cathedral choir programme seems to be the decoration of the same part of the Kievan St. Sophia with its Old Testament scenes. The architectural and functional isolation of the choir, which could be reached only through the outside entrance in the northwest tower and which evidently had primarily ceremonial significance, speaks in favour of an independent iconographic programme of the choir²⁹. The narthex, where fragments of old murals have also survived, might likewise have had a special programme.

The decorative system of the Chernigov cathedral apparently combined the main iconographic programme centred on the domical space with several small programmes relegated to the isolated side spaces. This principle of organising church decoration with the help of the main and ancillary programmes has parallels in some monuments of the first half of the 11th century, such as the decoration of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon, which is practically contemporaneous to the Chernigov cathedral frescoes³⁰. Thus, the supposed decorative system of the Transfigura-

²⁸ In addition to the representation of St. Thecla known from 1923 (see note 34), a score of disjointed fragments were discovered throughout the cathedral in the course of its restoration between 1979 and 1996. Of these a section of the composition in the southwest annex is best preserved and, according to V.V. Filatov's oral supposition, depicts the scene of *Elizabeth Pleasing to the Mountains* from the life cycle of John the Baptist (Dorofienko, 1996, p. 56).

²⁹ A.I. Komech is inclined to see the *Eucharist* in the apse (see section on "Architecture of the Late 10th – Mid-11th Centuries" of the present publication). The Transfiguration Cathedral sanctuary scenes thus might have presaged the iconographic programme of the Kievan St. Sophia, which came into being several years later and might have reproduced in part the Chernigov cathedral model.

³⁰ An important feature of the Transfiguration Cathedral choir composition is that the flooring stopped short before the transept and did not reach the east end of the cathedral, as was the case in the Kievan St. Sophia, where side-chapels were arranged in the

tion Cathedral was fully in line with the major tendencies which defined the church decoration principles of the Byzantine world in the early 11th century³¹.

The only fragment sufficiently preserved to discuss the artistic aspects of Chernigov frescoes was the now lost figure of St. Thecla, Equal-to-the-Apols. Shown frontally, St. Thecla is one of the numerous individual representations, which used to fill the cathedral interior. Despite the damages and changed colouring because of a fire, that image executed with minimum artistic means is an example of austere and reserved painting. The figure was done in a flat manner, without intricate light-and-shadow modelling, while the face was modelled with translucent flowing highlights³². This unexpected parallel makes one wonder about the organisation of work by artists who had come to Kiev at the invitation of Yaroslav the Wise and who decorated churches built in Kievan Rus' from the late 1030s. The practically simultaneous construction of the Kiev and Chernigov cathedrals enables a supposition that their decoration involved artists of the same extended artel, who had come to Rus' for a long-term job programme rather than to work on a single commission, albeit as important as the decoration of the Kievan St. Sophia³³. No doubt, decorating St. Sophia was a priority for Yaroslav, as evidenced by the presence of mosaics in St. Sophia and their absence in the Transfiguration Cathedral. Yet, we can't exclude the possibility of the artists artel invited from Constantinople working practically simultaneously on the two projects, which explains the presence of the hand of one of the Chernigov artists in the sanctuary of St. Sophia's. Furthermore, due to its smaller size and the absence of mosaics, technically complicated in execution, the decoration of the Transfiguration Cathedral might have been completed by the time construction work on St. Sophia's had been finished.

There is no doubt that of all the churches built in the reign of Yaroslav St. Sophia and its decoration was of primary importance. If by finishing the Transfiguration Cathedral Yaroslav brought to fruition the cause of his late brother Mstislav, St. Sophia was his creation; it reflected many personal traits of the Grand Prince of Kiev, who realised during that period that he was the absolute ruler of Kievan Rus'. The Tithe Church and the Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration, which preceded his reign, make it possible to speak about their wall paintings exclusively in terms of supposition, whereas St. Sophia is a miraculously preserved treasury of early Russian fine arts. In the quality of its mosaics and frescoes, the rich iconographic programme and the excellent state of the entire ensemble, it is an outstanding landmark of medieval Russian culture. Both the architecture and wall paintings of St. Sophia marked a qualitatively new stage in the development of the artistic tradition of Kievan Rus'. For centuries on end the core of the wall painting programme was to set an example for new ensembles to be created while the numerous painting subjects, representations of hundreds of saints and the multifarious ornamental motifs were to become a sort of encyclopaedia of samples for the future generations of artists. The original narrative language, exhaustive in detail and brimming with symbols, which was to emerge subsequently as the trademark of Old Russian art, also goes back to the decoration of the Kievan St. Sophia.

east ends of the choir. The Chernigov cathedral choir could have had no such chapels, which would have deprived it of any liturgical function and must have influenced the iconographic content of its decoration.

³¹ The central part of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon has only five evangelical scenes: the *Descent of the Holy Spirit* in the smaller east dome and four scenes on the pendentives. At the same time several smaller volumes with independent iconographic programmes adjoin the main domical space. These include the narthex, in which the *Passion* cycle scenes are concentrated (*The Last Supper*, *Washing the Feet*, *Crucifixion*, *Descent into Hell*), and the west corner chapels, whose programmes were determined by their functions of a baptistery (the southwest chapel) and the Office for the Dead (the northwest chapel) (see Chatzidakis-Bacharas, 1982; Tomekovic, 1988, pp. 140-52; Chatzidakis, N., 1997, pp. 54-69).

³² For more on the reconstruction of the Transfiguration Cathedral decoration see Sarabianov, 2006, pp. 375-96.

³³ The fragment with the figure of St. Thecla was found when the cathedral was explored in 1923, removed from the wall by D.I. Kiplik and transferred for storage to the Chernigov Museum, where it perished, together with other exhibits, in 1941. A copy of this fragment made by E. Evenbakh in 1936 has survived, is kept in the St. Sophia of Kiev and, along with pre-war photographs, is the only authentic source of judgment about the painting (Makarenko, 1927, pp. 7-13; Lazarev, 1973, p. 29, ill. 129; Dorofienko, 1996, p. 56). V.N. Lazarev briefly characterised that fragment: "The face of St. Thecla with noble classically regular features finds a stylistically close parallel in the representation of St. Parasceva in a miniature from the illuminated works of St. Gregory of Nazianzus gr. 510, the National Library, Paris. The greenish shadows are distributed with fine artistic reckoning, which attests to high craftsmanship of the fresco painter" (Lazarev, 1973, Caption to ill. 129).

The dating of St. Sophia mosaics and frescoes is a subject of debate, and there is no consensus among specialists as regards the date of the cathedral construction itself³⁴. If we take the year 1037 as the foundation date of St. Sophia's, as the majority of scholars tend to think, its interior decoration might have taken place in the 1040s, which confines the cathedral wall painting to an even narrower timeframe of the early – mid-1040s. Let it be remarked that this dating in part agrees with the opinion of V.N. Lazarev and other scholars³⁵, and is indirectly confirmed by the artistic and iconographic characteristics of the ensemble.

Although the mosaics and frescoes of the huge St. Sophia cathedral have not survived to our day in their entirety, compared with other contemporaneous monuments of the Byzantine world they are in an exceptionally good state of preservation. Over its centuries-long history the cathedral has lost vault frescoes in the central area, and reconstruction work destroyed frescoes in the western part of the choir and the inner galleries together with the almost entire decoration of the outside galleries. Wall paintings were repeatedly renovated so that by the beginning of the 19th century they were virtually completely overpainted by bunglers. The so-called restoration work carried out at the cathedral under the supervision of Acad. F.G. Solntsev in 1843-1853, in the course of which frescoes were inaptly and barbarously cleared and repainted in "old style" in oil, too, caused much damage to the ensemble³⁶. Nevertheless, there have survived about 2,500 sq. m of old mosaics and frescoes that make this ensemble a unique phenomenon among the monuments of the middle Byzantine period.

St. Sophia's wall paintings show to the viewer the complicated world of a Byzantine church produced by Greek artists along the lines of their own age-old traditions, yet addressed to the newly baptised Rus'. As the spectator progresses through the cathedral space the narrative scenes gradually unfold, forming a coherent picture of the universe, the Christian cosmos in which every human being finds a place of its own. The ability of Byzantine church decoration to combine the infinite universe with a focus on the prayer was enhanced in the Kievan St. Sophia paintings by the enlightening message of the entire ensemble. A number of essential factors determined the content of its decorative programme and accounted for its complicated and multi-composite painting. From the outset, the Kievan St. Sophia became an embodiment of Russian statehood and a symbol of new faith, a sort of new righteous city epitomising the triumph of Christianity. In keeping with the cathedral status the metropolitan service and other ceremonies of state importance were held there, often attended by the Kievan princes. Thus, from the moment of its appearance the Kievan St. Sophia became the heart of Christianity in Kievan Rus', the focus of its hierarchical organisation and church life, and the place of official princely representation while the Tithe Church retained its function of the ducal court church.

The special status of St. Sophia largely determined the organisation of its inner space and the iconographic concept of the entire decoration. In its complexity, dogmatic profuseness and elaboration St. Sophia's painting programme is a supreme testimonial of monumental Byzantine painting that reflected the principal theological ideas of that period as expressed in the new system of Byzantine church decoration resulting from the restoration of iconoduly in 843. The entire Christian cosmos in full sense of the word is represented there, including, in addition to biblical events, the colossal pantheon of Christian saints in number sans pareil among the contemporaneous monuments of monumental Byzantine painting. The baptised Rus', now part of that Christian cosmos, found there its historical, sacral place – hence a special theme of apostolic continuity and the establishment of the young Russian Christianity as an equal constituent of the Ecumenical Church. All those trends merged together and found expression in the Kievan St. Sophia painting programme.

The interior décor of the Tithe Church and the Chernigov cathedral, the two predecessors of St. Sophia, could not but in-

³⁴ A. Poppe believes that the artists who worked in Chernigov also took part in the decoration of the Kievan St. Sophia (see Poppe, 1981, p. 48).

³⁵ A.I. Komech considered the problem of St. Sophia's dating in detail in the article "Architecture of the Late 10th – Mid-11th Centuries" of the present publication.

³⁶ V.N. Lazarev dated the mosaics and frescoes of the central space 1043-1046 and those of the aisles the 1060s (Lazarev, 1956, pp. 161-5; Lazarev, 1973, p. 22). According to G.N. Logvin, it took six years to build St. Sophia's from 1037 to 1042 (Logvin, 1974, p. 160). His conclusion was supported by P.A. Rappoport (Rappoport, 1994, p. 114). This dating is somewhat compromised by the 1043-5 war between Byzantium and Rus, during which Russo-Byzantine contacts must have weakened. However, if we assume that small for the mosaics were produced locally, as is attested by the remnants of a small-making workshop found in the proximity of the cathedral (Shechopova, 1998, p. 74), the war could hardly have affected finishing work on St. Sophia that might have started at the final construction stage, that is, at the turn of the 1040s. V.N. Lazarev cites a number of strong arguments in favour of the initial consecration of the cathedral on 11 May 1046 (Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 35-9). This dating is corroborated by studies of A. Poppe (Poppe, 1981, pp. 41-3) and K.K. Akentiev (Akentiev, 1995, p. 80 and following pages).

fluence the iconographic concept of the Kievan cathedral. Those allusions indisputably arose and some of them can be traced back despite the practically total loss of paintings in the former two. However, the new requirements to the programme, which had to reveal the dogmatic profundity of the new faith and at the same time make those dogmas understandable, left a mark on the composition of St. Sophia's paintings. That was how their overall spirit took shape, giving preference to narration so that the key dogmatic elements of the iconographic programme, probably already known from the Tithe Church and Transfiguration Cathedral paintings, got a detailed narrative interpretation.

The nature of the commission explains the fundamental change in the decorative structure of St. Sophia compared with the Tithe Church and Transfiguration Cathedral paintings. Certain requirements set by the Kievan prince to the functional potential of the cathedral accounted for its specific architectural composition³⁷; the same applied to its iconographic programme and, consequently, its decorative system. This time, however, those requests must have come not only from Prince Yaroslav, but also from the religious authorities, evidently including Metropolitan Hilarion. For the artists working at St. Sophia those terms were new and unusual because such carpet-like principle of painting, known from provincial monuments, could hardly have been practised in Constantinople from where those artists had come. The forced departure from the architectonic system of painting in favour of a narrative and decorative one inevitably made it less structured, but at the same time the boundless world with a host of saints opening up before the beholder created a special mood of entry to a sacral space of the new Christian faith. This idea, which rested on the principles of enlightenment and apostolic sermon and which was highly relevant for the newly baptised Rus' and for those who commissioned St. Sophia, proved more important than complying with the classical architectonics of Byzantine church decoration.

The clients' desire to have a bigger surface for a decorative narrative was one reason for forsaking the custom of decorating the lower part of the walls with marble or imitation panels as was typical of the Byzantine and especially Constantinople church decoration practice, which St. Sophia's artists emulated³⁸.

Mosaic and fresco techniques were used, the combination of which was typical of the interior décor of early Kievan structures starting from the Tithe Church. In accordance with the interior structure the best lit parts of the interior space, which were simultaneously its crucial sacral zones, were filled with mosaics. They were the dome, central apse, pendentives, arch walls and sanctuary piers. Frescoes decorated the rest of the cathedral and included numerous compositions and hundreds of individual representations of saints. No doubt, a decorative project of such a gigantic scale took several years to accomplish. Apparently, the mosaics and frescoes of the central space under the dome came first, while the remaining frescoes could have been done when liturgical service was already conducted at the cathedral. Anyhow, all frescoes are uniform from the technological and artistic point of view³⁹. Beyond doubt, the integral wall painting concept, the integrated iconographic programme of mosaics and frescoes and, last but not least, the artistic integrity of the entire ensemble testify to the concerted efforts of the same team of artists executing their commission to the letter⁴⁰.

The focal dogmatic elements of the St. Sophia iconographic programme executed in mosaics on the whole meet the above principles that became established in Byzantine church decoration after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. However, this general scheme of church decoration was continuously transformed with the addition of all sorts of novelties that the Byzantine church hierarchs worked out and Constantinople artists conveyed. In this context the St. Sophia wall paintings acquire special importance because their iconographic relevance is indisputable and they fully reflect the course of theological thought of their time. The innovations observed in art of the 10th – first half of the 11th centuries consisted in that painterly decoration became increasingly linked with the liturgical act⁴¹. Individual

³⁷ For an account of the 1843-53 restoration and its bibliography see Lazarev, 1978, pp. 65-71; Vzdornov, 1986, pp. 31-5.

³⁸ Komech, 1972, pp. 50-64.

³⁹ Lazarev, 1986, p. 65.

⁴⁰ Technological observations made by Ukrainian scholars have proven that the mosaics and all frescoes of the central space and two rows of galleries were produced simultaneously (see Surlenko, 1973, pp. 195-201; Totka, 1973, pp. 182-94).

⁴¹ Some scholars opined that the mosaics and frescoes of St. Sophia were made at different periods. V.N. Lazarev extended the making of frescoes in the towers and chapels up to the first half of the 12th century (Lazarev, 1973, pp. 26, 29). However, today

elements of painting received concentrated symbolical interpretation, which becomes clear and evident precisely in the context of divine service. There appear new themes, which literally illustrate the Eucharist mystery and take a dominant position in the decorative system. In this respect wall paintings of the Kievan St. Sophia provide invaluable material for the history of Byzantine painting because it was there that certain iconographical novelties made their first appearance, the ones that reflected precisely metropolitan artistic culture and failed to survive most likely due to the destruction of Constantinople's monuments. At the same time there appear signs of the emergent local tradition. Just as the architectural makeup of St. Sophia had no direct parallels in Byzantine architecture and was largely a product of Kievan reality, St. Sophia's iconographic programme had to take into account the experience of the already existing ensembles of the Tithe Church and the Chernigov Cathedral under concurrent construction.

The image of Pantocrator in the medallion occupying the top of the central dome overlooks the central space of the cathedral. Christ is shown as Demiurge, Creator of the Universe, Lord of the world, the Judge and the merciful Saviour⁴². At the same time this illusory cross sets the tone for the entire decoration programme, echoing the spatial structure of the domical space with its clearly manifest form of the cross, "which is outlined as powerfully and integrally as perhaps in no other domed cross-in-square church of the Byzantine world of the 11th century"⁴³.

Basically, the image of Pantocrator from the Kievan St. Sophia, just as a number of similar images of the 11th – 12th centuries, traced back to the same venerated model which, as many scholars believe, was the domical mosaic of the Constantinople Church of the Holy Apostles built in the 9th century and known from several descriptions⁴⁴. In his detailed description of the church given in the late 12th century Nicolas Mesarites stresses that Pantocrator is shown half-length rather than full-length. This way, according to him, the artist wanted to underscore the incompleteness of our knowledge of God and His ways. Pantocrator's glance, according to Mesarites, expresses joy and goodwill towards all those with pure thoughts and simultaneously is full of wrath for and condemnation of the sinners. In addition, Mesarites dwells at length on the gesture of Christ's right hand, with which He blesses the righteous and at the same time cautions others, setting them on the right path. Mesarites described the arrangement of the fingers of His left hand with the Gospel likewise in detail, saying that the fingers were "apart to the utmost extent"⁴⁵. Pantocrator at the Kievan St. Sophia largely fits that description, in particular, as regards the hand gestures and the face itself, in which the image of the strict Judge combines with that of merciful God. Another important thing is that Pantocrator is depicted half-length whereas in later cases His representation is shoulder-length, which makes it even more dynamically expressive. This similarity between the Kievan Pantocrator and the description of Nicolas Mesarites proves the genetic tie of the Kievan mosaic and the venerated image from the Constantinople Church of the Holy Apostles and at the same time indicates that the image of the Kievan Pantocrator belongs to an older iconographic tradition, which was noticeably transformed in the extant monuments of the late 11th – early 12th centuries⁴⁶.

The four angels surrounding the medallion with Pantocrator are depicted in the iconography of the heavenly host attending the appearance of the King of Heaven⁴⁷. Such tholobate painting scheme was common in Byzantine church decoration. However, while in 11th-century Constantinople monuments Pantocra-

nobody disputes the fact that the entire St. Sophia wall decoration was done simultaneously, the point made already by K.V. Sherotsky (Sherotsky, 1917, pp. 37-8).

⁴² Ch. Walter described the first half of the 11th century as a watershed in Byzantine art. "Not only iconographical types borrowed from Antiquity art..." (Walter, 1982, p. 241). Walter assigns a key role in this process to wall paintings of the Kievan St. Sophia.

⁴³ Bringing together the demiurgical aspect of organising the Universe and the Church on earth and the soteriological one in the image of Pantocrator, which obviously became more pronounced in monuments of the mid – second half of the 11th century, was further evidence of the St. Sophia painting ensemble dating to the 1040s. L.I. Lifshits considered this theme in detail (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 267-77, 383-8).

⁴⁴ The dome crowned the congregation of the Lord, assembled to take part in liturgy. The meaning of the Byzantine dome is thus connected with the meaning of the image of Pantocrator placed in it, which in turn in its meaning goes back to the liturgical mystery which happens under the dome" (Mathews, 1994, p. 11).

⁴⁵ The motif of the cross in the Kievan St. Sophia's dome could be a reminiscence of sorts of church decoration of the iconoclastic period when the representations of crosses were placed in the principal church zone, like for example in the conche of Hagia Irene in Constantinople (740) or on the bema vault of Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki (741-775). Similar iconoclastic crosses decorating the apses of the Church of the Dormition in Nicaea and Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki were later replaced with the figures of the Mother of God (Cormack, 1977/1, pp. 36-41).

⁴⁶ Komech, 2005, p. 9.

⁴⁷ This opinion was shared by O. Demus (Demus, 1984, pp. 238-40), J. Timken-Matthews (Timken-Matthews, 1981, p. 421) and L.I. Lifshits (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, p. 272).

tor was accompanied by a host of angels depicted in accordance with “the Celestial Hierarchy” of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, in the Kievan St. Sophia the liturgical theme came to the fore, and the archangels come across not only as Pantocrator’s retinue, but also as parties to the Divine Liturgy. The archangels are robed in sumptuously adorned dalmatics with orbiculas (roundels) on the shoulders, girded up with wide bands (lorae) studded with gems and pearls. In their left hands they hold transparencies with Golgotha crosses and in their right labara topped with plates bearing the inscription in Greek (Holy, Holy, Holy), which opens the Trisagion and definitely attests to the liturgical context of the image⁴⁸. The tendency to align church decoration with liturgy common for that period is thus seen already in the domical composition of St. Sophia.

In the space of the tholobate cut by 12 windows mosaics have survived only on a single pier right of the east window, where Apostle Paul is represented. He is shown frontally, whereas his face is slightly turned to the centre; in his left hand Apostle Paul has a Gospel, to which he is pointing with his right hand. The iconography and the Apostle’s posture leave no doubts that Apostle Peter was depicted on the neighbouring pier opposite him and that the other piers were occupied by the figures of Christ’s disciples, forming the textbook composition of the twelve apostles. The placement of the apostolic figures in the tholobate specifies a fundamentally important conceptual dominant of St. Sophia’s decoration.

Now if the images of the apostles can be found in monuments of the pre-iconoclastic period⁴⁹, the representation of the prophets as the proclaimers of the Incarnation of God the Word is more characteristic of art of the middle Byzantine period⁵⁰.

The domical decoration programme is carried on in the mosaics of the pendentives, where the representations of the four evangelists began to be placed starting from the 11th century. Only the figure on the northwest pendentive has fully survived at St. Sophia, whereas the figure of St. John (northeast pendentive) is partially preserved and the representations of St. Matthew and St. Luke are almost completely lost. It is noteworthy that the tradition of placing the evangelists on the pendentives, which was to become subsequently a must in church decoration, was first expressed in a clear-cut form precisely at the Kievan St. Sophia⁵¹. At the same time the entire domical decoration, together with the figures of the four evangelists on the tholobate pendentives, acquires a clearly hierarchical structure, demonstrating the descent of God’s grace from Pantocrator through the apostolic service of His disciples and evangelism further onto the entire Church of Christ⁵².

⁴⁸ Mango, 1986, p. 232–3.

⁴⁹ The domical image of Pantocrator appeared in the pre-iconoclastic period (the Church of Panagia Drosiani on Naxos, 6th–7th c. See Naxos, 1989, p. 22) and became common after the victory of iconody. His images existed in Constantinople churches: the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos (864) (Jenkins, Mango, 1956, pp. 130–3); the Church of the Holy Apostles (867–886) (Mango, 1986, pp. 199–201, 232–3); Hagia Sophia of Constantinople (soon after the 869 earthquake) (Lazarev, 1986, p. 63); the Church of Stylianos Zaoutzes (d. 896) (Mango, 1986, pp. 203–5); and the Kaulkas Monastery cathedral (Mango, 1986, pp. 202–3). In the extant monuments of the 10th–early 12th centuries domical representations of Pantocrator exist in the Churches of the Transfiguration at Koropi (Attica, late 10th c.) (Skavran, 1982, p. 134, fig. 43) and the Church of the Mother of God Eleusa at Veljusa (1083–1093) (Мильковик-Пенек, 1981, Сr. 55), in the Dafni Monastery Katholikon (ca. 1100), the Church of Panagia Prothronos at Chalki, Naxos (turn of the 12th c.) (Naxos, 1989, pp. 37–40), and the Church of St. Sophia of Novgorod, 1109 (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 267–77). As a reflection of the metropolitan tradition, the images of Pantocrator also decorate the domes of the 11th–c. Cappadocia churches – Elmali kilise, Charikli kilise and Karanlik kilise (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, pp. 123, 129, 132). Different iconographic details changing the conceptual tonality of the image are the hallmarks of most of the aforementioned domical compositions. One of the brightest features of the iconography of Pantocrator is the arrangement of the fingers of His right blessing hand, which often differs from the two-fingered or stavros blessing and is depicted, rather as closed, with the little, fourth and middle fingers drawn to the thumb and the forefinger held slightly aside. The closed hand, with its motifs of unity and separation, corresponds to the profound meaning of representing Pantocrator as paradoxically combining the images of the stern Lord of the World and the Good Shepherd who, according to Mesarites, blesses the righteous and rejects those deviating from the path of the righteous (Timken–Matthews, 1981, pp. 422–3). This detail is found in the domical images of the Dafni Monastery Katholikon and St. Sophia of Novgorod and also is known from a mosaic of the smaller vaults of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 269–71). As in some other monuments, in the tholobate of the Kievan St. Sophia the right hand of Christ is held in a two-fingered blessing, evidently stressing the liturgical aspect of the image of Pantocrator. The open fingers of the left hand, as pointed out by Mesarites, can be seen in the murals of the Kievan St. Sophia, Hosios Loukas, Dafni, Veljusa and St. Sophia of Novgorod. Not without reason many scholars (O. Demus, L.I. Lifshits, T. Matthews) see this gesture as pointing to the dogma of the threeness of God (Demus, 1984, vol. I, pp. 238–40; Matthews, 1990, p. 207; Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, p. 272). In the symbolic interpretation of the image of Pantocrator a special role is assigned to the arrangement of the right blessing hand wrapped tightly by the himation, the folds of which form a sort of bosom on the Saviour’s chest. By comparing instances of this iconography (the Kievan St. Sophia, Hosios Loukas, Dafni, the church of Panagia Prothronos on Naxos, etc.) with its later replicas, first and foremost with the mosaic image from the Chora monastery of Constantinople (ca. 1320), which describes Jesus Christ as the Land of the Living, L.I. Lifshits came to the convincing conclusion that such image of Pantocrator “stresses ‘spatial’ symbolism showing Him not only as a stern judge alienated from people, but also as the loving Father taking to His bosom ‘the Land of the Living’ – both the righteous and the ‘prodigal sons’ who had returned home”, which conforms to the description left by Mesarites (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, p. 277).

⁵⁰ Only one original figure of an archangel has survived in the northeastern part of the dome, while the remaining three were repainted in the late 19th c. replicating the old image.

⁵¹ For a comprehensive review of the evolution of the representation of the heavenly host accompanying Pantocrator in the post-iconoclastic church decoration system see Pallas, 1978, pp. 37–40; 1990, pp. 139–59; (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 280–1); Benchev, 2005, p. 55.

⁵² For example, in the domes of two Ravenna monuments of the 5th–6th c. – the

The narrow stretches between the pendentives above the crowns of the wall arches have always been among the most significant places in the church decoration system. These perfectly visible parts of the church, symbolically and architectonically connecting the heavenly sphere of the dome with the earthly zone of the space under the dome, usually bore programmatically important representations. At the Kievan St. Sophia this part of the decoration carried on the theme of the unification of the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, which takes place in liturgy. Only two medallions with images of Jesus Christ and the Mother of God have survived above the east and west arches. The Saviour above the east arch is depicted in a rare iconographic type of Priest, young, with a barely grown beard, short slightly wavy hair and a small shaved tonsure attesting to His priestly service. His attire is traditional – a brown chiton and dark blue himation – and a narrow cuff of his inner rason sticking out from under the chiton alone reveals His priesthood. Christ has a scroll in His right hand and with His left, in a gesture of prophetic revelation, He points to the scroll.

Multi-level in content, this image references the apocryphal legend “About the Priesthood of Christ”, according to which the young Christ, even before the beginning of His evangelical service, in keeping with the Jewish custom had been chosen a priest of the Temple of Jerusalem for a term of one year. Images of Christ as priest known from monuments of the pre-iconoclastic period reappeared in Byzantine art precisely in the 11th century, when the liturgical theme began to dominate the iconographic programmes⁵³. This is precisely how the representation of Christ as Priest can be interpreted at the Kievan St. Sophia, where His image, blessing the mystery of liturgy in the church sanctuary with supreme grace, clearly demonstrates the eternal interrelationship between the heavenly and earthly Divine Service, between the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant. Meantime, the representation of Christ as Priest can also be understood as a sign of continuity of Old and New Testament priesthoods. In this context the gesture and scroll of Christ, who is prophesying about Himself as the Great Hierarch taking the “Melchizedek priesthood”, become clear⁵⁴. The image of Christ as Priest and the continuity of the Old and the New Testament taking effect through Him bring up the theme of the verity and sacrosanctity of the entire church hierarchy endorsed by the priesthood of the Saviour Himself, the theme which was of paramount importance to Kievan Rus’ and which was to be expounded in the Kievan St. Sophia sanctuary mosaics⁵⁵.

The priesthood of Christ is inseparable from the theme of the Divine Incarnation, which other representations on the wall arch keys elaborate. Above the west arch is a medallion with a badly damaged image of the Mother of God shown frontally, without the Child and Her arms half raised at chest level, palms out in a gesture of accepting grace – became common in murals from the second quarter of the 11th century precisely in the context of the Divine Incarnation theme. Precisely this image of the Virgin is in a conch of the side chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna at the Kievan St. Sophia, where the proto-evangelical cycle

Arian Baptistery and the Baptistery of Neon (Orthodox Baptistery) (Lazarev, 1986, ills. 21, 47).

⁵³ V.N. Lazarev explained the appearance of the figures of the apostles on the tholobate piers by the mechanical spread of the domical *Ascension* to other parts of the church, when the ascending Jesus transforms into Pantocrator accompanied by the host of angels, the Mother of God is transferred to the apse conch, and the apostles fill in the tholobate with the pendentives (Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 84; Lazarev, 1986, p. 63). D. Mouriki voiced a similar opinion (Mouriki, 1985, pp. 118–9). This explanation seems oversimplified. The tradition of placing the prophets on the tholobate window piers became practically commonplace in the Middle Byzantine period while instances of the apostles placed in this zone were singular. Such are the frescoes at the (10th–c.) church in the Balkan Dere valley in Ortalisar (Walter, 1982, p. 229) or Nea Moni of Chios (1042–1055) (Mouriki, 1985, pp. 116–20). Pointing out the rarity of that solution, D. Mouriki cites frescoes at Hagia Sophia of Trabzon (ca. 1260) and the paracclousion of the Chora Monastery of Constantinople (ca. 1320) (Mouriki, 1985, pp. 118–9) as parallels. In Rus the 12 apostles were depicted in the tholobate of St. Cyril’s Church, Kiev (the last quarter of the 12th c.), whose decoration system largely replicates that of St. Sophia’s.

⁵⁴ N. Giolès spoke of the pertinence of the apostolic representations in the Kievan St. Sophia’s tholobate from the point of view of the general enlightenment message of the decoration programme (see, 1990, pp. 193–6).

⁵⁵ In the post-iconoclastic tradition the pendentives were originally included in the theophanic composition with Pantocrator surrounded by the heavenly host and therefore usually carried the images of the Cherubim and the Seraphim, as evidenced, among other things, by the mosaics of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople made after the 803 earthquake (Lazarev, 1986, p. 63). The idea of placing the figures of the evangelists on the pendentives was formulated concurrently, as is attested by frescoes of Kiliclar kilise (10th c.), where they are shown bust-length in medallions (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, pp. 137–8). The two variants continued to coexist in the 11th c., as borne out by the mosaics of the Nea Moni monastery, where four pendentives were assigned to the evangelists and the other four for the images of the Cherubim and the Seraphim (Mouriki, 1985, pp. 113–8). Eleventh-century monuments show that pendentive decoration was not yet strictly regimented. Thus, four evangelic scenes occupy the pendentives of the Hosios Loukas Katholikon, whereas four personifications of the Rivers of Paradise are depicted there at the Ateni Sioni Church (late 11th c.). On a par with Nea Moni the Kievan St. Sophia’s mosaics fixed for the first time not only their established topography on the pendentives, but also their stable iconography when they are shown seated at the lecterns. Precisely that tradition became widespread from the second half of the 11th c., as exemplified by narthex mosaics at the Church of the Dormition of Nicaea (the 1060s), and absolutely predominated in the 12th c.

narrative gives the story of the Divine Incarnation⁵⁶. Following the logic of the programme the lost medallions above the north and south wall arches had the representations of Sts. Joachim and Anna, the Virgin's parents, which succinctly complemented the theme of the Divine Incarnation conveyed in the paired imaged of Jesus Christ and the Virgin. This reconstruction is corroborated by a number of parallels, the closest of which are the Nea Moni mosaics⁵⁷.

While the domical zone epitomises the image of the Church Triumphant, the sanctuary space symbolises the Church Militant. The majestic figure of the Virgin Orans occupying the conch of the apse is the principal image of this zone of wall painting and second only to the domical image of Pantocrator. Her huge (5.45 m) figure overshadows the entire cathedral interior and, as an epitome of the Church Militant, literally calls all believers into Her embrace. Her image is inscribed immaculately into the curvilinear space of the conch. Owing to the masterfully employed optical effect of light reflection by mosaic smalti, it loses the visible connection with the plane of the wall and produces an illusory space of its own, which fills the sanctuary and becomes, in the full sense of the word, a repository of God⁵⁸.

Although the image of the Virgin Orans is multifaceted in content, one of its conceptual dominants is the symbolical image of the Church as a merciful protector receiving the entire humankind. Such understanding came into being together with the appearance of the Virgin Orans in the sanctuary decoration system, which, according to N.P. Kondakov, "emerged within the central apse as a triumphant symbol of the Christian church through the Queen of Heaven offering up Her prayers to the image of Pantocrator represented in the dome"⁵⁹. This idea is enhanced by an inscription in Greek along the plane of the triumphal arch above the figure of the Virgin quoting Psalm 46 about the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her right early" (Ps 46.5)⁶⁰. The city of God in the text of the Psalm was Jerusalem and its religious centre Zion, where the Temple of Jerusalem was located. However, exegetists started to interpret it in medieval theological writings as the prototype of the Church of Christ, built by the Saviour and affirmed by His disciples. In the post-iconoclastic period that prototype began to be identified with Constantinople that was referred to as the New Jerusalem, while Hagia Sophia of Constantinople was identified with Zion⁶¹. The reproduction of this Psalm on the arch of the Kievan St. Sophia proves that those ideas were also transferred

to Kiev with its St. Sophia cathedral, which the Russian believers now identified with the image of the Church of Christ and Kiev with the city of God⁶².

The St. Sophia mosaic had as its prototype one of the most venerated Constantinople images of the Virgin Orans in the Hagia Soros (chapel) rotunda by the Blachernae church, which stored a reliquary with the robes of the Virgin, the greatest relic of the Byzantine world which saved Constantinople from enemy sieges in 626, 717 and 860⁶³. The vision of the Intercession of the Mother of God that Andrew the Fool-for-Christ had was apparently connected with precisely that image, as a result of which the image of the Virgin Orans was venerated as the protectress of the walls of the Byzantine capital. The hallowed image was revived in church paintings as soon as iconolatriy had been restored, as evidenced by its presence in the apse of the Church of the Virgin of Pharos (864), which Patriarch Photius spoke about in his homily mentioned earlier in connection with the Tithe Church mosaics⁶⁴. City-protecting symbolism becomes an important aspect of the interpretation of the St. Sophia image, which is reiterated by the placement of Psalm 46 on the apse above the image of the Virgin. The text of the Psalm ("God is in the midst of her") also contains an allusion to the incarnation of Everlasting Logos – the Divine Wisdom in the bosom of the Mother of God, whose huge figure appears to anyone entering the church. This synthetic image, which has absorbed the profundity of the theological thought of the Mother of God as the Church of Wisdom, which has miraculously encompassed Unencompassible God, of the Mother of God as the city of God can truly be perceived as the icon of the House of Divine Wisdom⁶⁵.

Formulated by many generations of Byzantine theologians, these ideas and notions were fully conveyed in the representation of the Kievan Virgin Orans, which became the patronal icon of sorts of the Kievan St. Sophia. Expressing these thoughts in his *Sermon on Love and Grace*, Metropolitan Hilarion says, praising Yaroslav the Wise, "And your glorious City of Kiev invested with majesty like with a crown, and committed your people and the holy, most glorious city fast to the Holy Mother of God to help the Christians, and to her also dedicated the church of the Great Entrance Gate in the name of the first feast of the Lord – the Holy Annunciation, and if the archangel gives a message to the Virgin, the city too will get it. To Her it is: 'Rejoice! You through whom joy shall shine forth! God is with you!' to the City: 'Rejoice, Orthodox city! God is with you!'"⁶⁶.

The majestic image of the Mother of God Mediatress epitomizing the Church of Christ, coupled with the idea of the temple of a city, transformed into a multi-faceted image that became the palladium of Kiev and in oral tradition received the epithet "Mother of God Inviolable Wall" borrowed from the text of the Akathist, which says in Oikos 12: "Rejoice, inviolable wall of the kingdom!" The special veneration of this image and its city-defending symbolism explain its countless replication in wall paintings and icons of the pre-Mongol period⁶⁷.

The theme of heavenly intercession articulated distinctly in the main mosaic of the Kievan St. Sophia sanctuary recurs in the small Deesis consisting of three medallions with the images of Pantocrator and the Mother of God with John the Baptist interceding with Him, which are placed on the arch above the text of Psalm 46⁶⁸. A characteristic feature of the Deesis is the absence

⁵⁶ The integrity of that programme was still evident in the late Middle Ages. Paul, Archdeacon of Aleppo, who visited Kiev in 1656, saw the mosaics of the dome and the pendentives still fully preserved. "Its upper part (the dome – V.S.) represents the Lord Jesus with angels and His twelve disciples along the circumference; the four evangelists are at the four corners of the dome – all made of wonderful gilt mosaic with amazing ornaments and inscriptions in Greek" (see Paul of Aleppo, 2005, p. 171).

⁵⁷ D.V. Ainalov was the first to consider the image of Christ as Priest at the Kievan St. Sophia (Ainalov, 1928, pp. 19-23). This iconography is known from pre-iconoclastic artefacts, for example, the Rabbula Gospels (586) (Wright, 1973, pp. 203-4, pl. 2) or coins of Justinian II (692-695) (Grabar, 2000 (1936), p. 40, note 1; Grabar, 1984, pls. 16-19). In the post-iconoclastic period that image appeared in murals of the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid (1050s) (Lidov, 1987, pp. 5-20), Nerezi (ca. 1164) (Sinkevič, 2000, pp. 41-2), the Saviour Church on Nereditsa (1199) (Pivovarova, 2002, pp. 35-9), Bertubani (1213-1222) (Amiranashvili, 1950, p. 246). V.N. Lazarev saw in the Kievan St. Sophia mosaic an antithetical message against teachings repudiating priesthood, however, such point of view seems tendentious (Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 31-2; Lazarev, 1973, pls. 15-16 and comments). A.M. Lidov justly connects the appearance of this image with the liturgicalisation of church programmes (Lidov, 1994/1, pp. 187-92; Lidov, 1994/2, pp. 21-5).

⁵⁸ The prophesy "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110.4) was interpreted by Apostle Paul as the Holy Writ implying that God the Father had appointed the Son of God to perpetual priesthood that is superior to the Old Testament high priesthood (Heb 3-8). The text of Psalm 110 and its apostolic interpretation formed the basis of the iconography of Christ as Priest. The *Eucharist* mosaic in the middle zone of the Kievan St. Sophia sanctuary decoration also expounded the theme of Christ's priesthood pictorially. This is indirectly supported by miniatures of the 9th-century Chludov (MS, gr. D.129, Hist. Mus.) and Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS, gr. 20) *Psalters illustrating this text (Ps 110.4)*, in which the Saviour is administering the Sacrament to the apostles (*Dufrenoy, 1966, pl. 45; Shchepkina, 1977, sh. 115 rev.*).

⁵⁹ N. Gioles points to the special role of the image of Christ as Priest in the Kievan St. Sophia decoration, which is meant to make the idea of sanctity and inviolability of the church hierarchy visual and understandable for the unenlightened Russian congregation (1990, pp. 179-85).

⁶⁰ Singling out this variant of the Virgin's image, N.P. Kondakov justly traces its origin to the iconography of the *Annunciation*, pointing out that, although known from the 9th c., it became widespread in the 11th–12th cc. primarily in small media (e.g., the medallion of Nicephorus *Vitamates* 1078-1081; enamels from the 9th-c. Khakhuli triptych, etc.). In monumental painting this type of the image of the Virgin is known from the sanctuary mosaic of the Murano cathedral (late 12th c.) or two mosaics from the Saint Mark's Basilica (12th-13th cc.) (Kondakov, II, 1915, pp. 357-72; Lazarev, 1986, ill. 394). Among the Russian pre-Mongol monuments a similar image of the Virgin in a medallion is in the soffit of the west wall arch of the Transfiguration Cathedral of the Mirozhsky Monastery (ca. 1140) (Sarabianov, 2002/1, ill. 8).

⁶¹ When St. Sophia was renovated in the 19th c. it was Joachim and Anna that were depicted there, maybe due to some surviving fragments of old mosaics. In addition to Nea Moni, where Joachim and Anna are represented on the pendentives of the narthex dome (Mouriki, 1985, pls. 66, 67), such reconstruction hypothesis is confirmed by the narthex mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea (1065-1067), where they are placed between the pendentives (Lazarev, 1986, pls. 271-2), and also the small dome vault of Karanlık kilise (Dark Church, mid-11th c.), where Pantocrator is surrounded by John the Baptist, Joachim and Anna, and the angels (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, p. 132). In pre-Mongol murals Joachim and Anna are placed similarly in the Mirozhsky Monastery cathedral (ca. 1140) (Sarabianov, 2002/1, ill. 8) and the Saviour Church at Nereditsa (1199) (Pivovarova, 2002, Cat. nos. 34-35). In the Saviour Church of the Euphrusine Convent (ca. 1161) the images of Joachim and Anna on the sanctuary arch slopes are shown praying to the Virgin in the conch of the apse (Sarabianov, 2007, p. 80). For the iconography of Joachim and Anna in the given context see Smirnova, 1995, pp. 300-2.

⁶² However, scholars such as N.P. Kondakov and V.N. Lazarev saw in that mosaic distorted proportions which, according to them, added an element of the archaic to the image of the Virgin (Kondakov, II, 1915 (1998), p. 74; Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 100).

⁶³ Kondakov, 1915 (1998), p. 71.

⁶⁴ In Greek the word "city" is feminine, therefore the Greek text has the pronoun "she" and the verbatim translation is "God is in the midst of her", which helps to correlate the entire text with the image of the Virgin.

⁶⁵ The 9th-c. Hagia Sophia Diegesis says that on the order of Emperor Justinian the above verse of Psalm 46 was inscribed on the bricks used to build the wall arches of the main church of the Byzantine Empire.

⁶⁶ Averintsev, 1972, pp. 40-9.

⁶⁷ According to various scholars, the Virgin Orans of Blachernae existed either as an icon or a mosaic in the sanctuary apse, although possibly not in the conch but in the lower part of the sanctuary. The representation of the Virgin Orans with the description Blachernitissa first appeared on the Byzantine coins of Constantine Monomachus (1042-1055), Theodora (1055-1056) and Michael VI (1056-1057) (Kondakov, II, 1915 (1998), p. 66-7; Grierson, 1973, p. 171, pls. LIX-LXX; Carr, Morocco, 1991, p. 57). The Blachernae Monastery had several venerated images of the Virgin that were replicated in countless copies and spread throughout the Byzantine world, often getting the epithet Blachernitissa, which now makes it exceedingly difficult to reconstruct their original composition and iconography. In addition to the Virgin Orans in the Hagios Soros chapel, the images of the Virgin Episkepsis (of the Sign), Nicopeia (Victorious), Eleusa (Tenderness) and Hagnosoritissa were also located in different parts of the monastery ensemble. The so-called "habitual miracle" (Greek: to synetis thauma) occurred with one of those miracle-working icons, when the veil which half-covered the icon moved up of its own accord, revealing the face of the Virgin for 24 hours from the Friday service to the vespers on Saturday (see: Kondakov, II, 1915 (1998), pp. 55-92; Zervou Iognazzi, 1986, pp. 213-87; Etingof, 2000, pp. 127-58; Shalina, 2005, pp. 355-9; the last two studies have extensive bibliography).

⁶⁸ Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 29; Mango, 1986, p. 186; The Homilies of Photius Patriarch

of haloes while the traditional cross, which always accompanies the figure of Christ, fills the entire space of the medallion. The circle of the medallion and the halo have become a single whole, which, beyond doubt, stresses the theme of the Saviour's sacrifice on the cross. This type of the iconography of Christ, with the arms of the cross going beyond the edges of the halo or altogether replacing it, known from many Byzantine monuments, comes from the celebrated Constantinople image of Christ above the Chalke Gate, the main entrance to the imperial palace. The image of Christ, known as early as the 6th century, proved to be all but the principal symbol of triumph over the iconoclasts: destroyed in 726 on the order of Leo III, which triggered the persecution of the icons, it was the first to be restored in 843 – a key event in the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Obviously, it was this fact that had to do with its special veneration in the 9th – 10th centuries⁶⁹.

Although the image of the Saviour from the Deesis, like that of Pantocrator in the dome or the Virgin Orans in the conch of the apse, is derived from the famous Constantinople image, it would be wrong to assume that the given representation is exclusively of memorial nature and replicates the venerated Byzantine halidome. The very nature of the cross going beyond the traditional pictorial frame obviously stresses the role of Christ not only as the coming Judge, but also as that of the sacrificial Victim, which links this composition with the liturgical theme conveyed to the fullest extent in the image of Christ as Priest and the *Eucharist*. Furthermore, taking into account the city-defending meaning of the image of Christ Chalkites, placed above the gate to the imperial palace, the Kievan St. Sophia image must have also been perceived as a protective symbol, a sort of "shield of faith" guaranteeing victory and safe protection to the Christians. This is borne out by the shape of the medallion with the figure of Christ, which was seen as a symbol of victory and triumph from the early Christian period⁷⁰. Therefore, the Deesis reveals direct semantic parallels with the image of the Virgin Orans and the inscription crowning it and carries on the theme of heavenly protection of the God-protected Church and the Orthodox City.

The lower registers of the mosaic sanctuary decoration were reserved for the *Eucharist* and the sainted hierarchs tier – the themes, which appeared in mosaic decoration of the post-iconoclastic period and determined the liturgical content of sanctuary paintings up to the late Middle Ages. The uppermost is the *Communion of the Apostles* or the *Eucharist* – a liturgical interpretation of the theme of the Last Supper – where Jesus Christ, shown twice, institutes the mystery of the Eucharist by administering the Sacraments of bread and wine to his disciples. At St. Sophia the *Eucharist* is shown in two kinds. The twice depicted Christ stands before the Communion table, on which there is a cup with the Holy Gifts and church utensils. He is accompanied by two angels dressed as deacons and holding ripidia in their hands. The apostles are heading towards Christ, their bent figures with arms held before their chests in prayer copying the postures of those receiving Communion during liturgy. The scene in the central apse is obviously reminiscent of an actual instance of service when a hierarch administers the Sacrament to other members of the clergy taking part in liturgy. The *Communion of the Apostles* is thus a synthetic representation of unity between the Divine and earthly liturgy, in which the key figure is Christ – the Great Hierarch passing on to His disciples, the founders of the Church Militant, the grace of the New Testament. The scene of the *Communion of the Apostles* was well known in Byzantine art of the pre-iconoclast period. In the mid-9th century it started to be replicated in illuminated Psalters, usually accompanying stanza 4 of Psalm 110 "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"⁷¹

of Constantinople. English translation, introduction and commentary by Cyril Mango. Harvard University Press. Cambridge Massachusetts, 1958, p. 186.

⁶⁹ S.S. Averintsev, who had a special paper interpreting the text of Psalm 46 in the context of the Kievan St. Sophia iconographic programme, drew the following conclusion: "The Mother of God is implied in these words, but to the extent that she is the City-holder, furthermore she is the City, the image of spiritual matter, the image of human community embodying world meaning; ecclesia, but to the extent that it aspires to link the heavenly and the earthly; a church building, but as the 'icon' of the cosmic House of Wisdom it is simultaneously addressed to the City, imparting it with semantic buttress and a cheerful hope for victory over the visible and invisible foes; finally, the City, the earthly City of Kiev with all its needs, but to the extent that the extra-terrestrial organising design of Wisdom is effected within its earthly being" (Averintsev, 1972, p. 49).

⁷⁰ *The Sermon on Law and Grace*, 1997, p. 50. Scholars repeatedly quoted this passage precisely in the context of the interpretation of the image of the Virgin Orans in the apse of the Kievan St. Sophia (cf. Shcherotkii, 1917, p. 50; Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 29; Averintsev, 1972, p. 45).

⁷¹ All the known Old Russian sanctuary paintings of the late 11th – early 12th cc., of which one can get an impression, comprised precisely the image of the Virgin Orans from St. Sophia's. It was replicated in the conches of the Dormition Cathedral of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves (1083-1089) (Sarabianov, 2004, pp. 191-3), St. Sophia of Novgorod (1108/1109) (Lishits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 331-7), the cathedral of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery (ca. 1112) (Lazarev, 1966, p. 32), the ruined church of Archangel Michael of Gorodets (turn of the 12th c.) (Makarenko, 1916, pp. 373-404) and also in the southwest narthex of the Dormition Cathedral of the Yelets Monastery (1120s-1130s) and in the northwest tower of St. George's Cath-

edral of the Yuriev Monastery (ca. 1130) (Sarabianov, 2002/2, pp. 382-4). The gigantic fresco of the Mother of God also adorns the conch of Saviour's Church of the Convent of St. Euphrosyne in Polotsk (ca. 1161) (Sarabianov, 2007, pp.55-8).

and from the 10th century also appeared in monumental cycles, relegated to the ancillary zones of the bema and soleas⁷², which indicates that those programmatic and iconographic changes, beyond doubt, originated in the capital and that both date from the second quarter of the 11th century⁷³.

The above ensembles have different variants of the *Communion of the Apostles* that existed in 11th-century Byzantine art. In the Kievan St. Sophia the moment of the communion being administered is represented, while the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid has a less frequent type of iconography – Jesus Christ is by the Communion table saying the prayer over the offerings, which is usually done right after the Great Entrance⁷⁴. However, despite the iconographic differences, in both cases the composition is accorded the programmatically central place and obviously emerges, on a par with Pantocrator in the dome and the Virgin Orans in the conch, as a dominant feature of the Kievan St. Sophia while in the domeless church of St. Sophia of Ohrid the *Communion of the Apostles* is the focal point of the entire iconographic programme. The appearance of the angels with ripidia assisting Christ as Priest is, too, of fundamental importance and stresses the heavenly nature of the happening⁷⁵.

The lower register of the sanctuary decoration is occupied by sainted hierarchs, including St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, St. Clement of Rome and St. Epiphanius of Cyprus⁷⁶. They are accompanied by the Archdeacons, St. Stephen and St. Lawrence, dressed in sacerdotal robes and holding censers and Holy Gifts repositories in their hands. Shown strictly frontally, the figures virtually intercede with the Holy Throne of the real church, mystically taking part in the liturgy and wedding the symbolism of the mosaics to the reality of the Divine Office. The two deacons who were included in the iconographic programme of the sainted hierarchs tier for the first time at St. Sophia of Kiev are shown at a slight angle, as if turning the procession of bishops towards the sanctuary centre, where the Holy Throne is located. Along the sanctuary apse axis at the level of the bishops row there is a triple window, on the piers of which two Moscow metropolitans, Peter and Alexis, were painted in the 17th century instead

dral of the Yuriev Monastery (ca. 1130) (Sarabianov, 2002/2, pp. 382-4). The gigantic fresco of the Mother of God also adorns the conch of Saviour's Church of the Convent of St. Euphrosyne in Polotsk (ca. 1161) (Sarabianov, 2007, pp.55-8).

⁷² The Deesis iconography is traditionally associated with the theme of the Second Coming, about which much has been written (historiography on this problem see: Shchemnikova, 1994, pp. 132-63; Shchemnikova, 2000, pp. 400-4). Writings by Ch. Walter have markedly expanded the boundaries of ideas about the Deesis content (Walter, 1968, pp. 311-36; Walter, 1970/1, pp. 161-87; Walter, 1980, pp. 261-9).

⁷³ The image of Christ at the Chalke Gate was first mentioned in the Chronicle of St. Theophanes the Confessor in connection with the predicted impending death of Emperor Maurice (582-602). In 726, it was destroyed by the iconoclasts and then twice restored in 786 and 843. The second time the artist Lazaros reproduced the image of Pantocrator by superimposing it over the relief representation of the cross, which the iconoclasts had substituted for the figure of Christ, and thus the accentuated cross in the post-iconoclastic reproductions of Christ Chalkites derives from the real look of that venerated image. Like the image of the Virgin Blachernitissa, the iconography of Christ Chalkites has not been identified conclusively. C. Mango, A.M. Lidov and M.N. Butyrsky speak of the full-length representation of Christ while A. Frolov and I.A. Shalina cite convincing arguments in favour of its shoulder- or waist-length iconography. The key iconographic feature of the Chalke image – the cross behind Christ's head replacing His halo – was replicated in the waist- or shoulder-length variant while the epithet Chalkites is known only from the full-length representation with the usual halo decorated with crosses (e.g. the kitor fresco of the Boyana Monastery (1258), the mosaic of the Chora Monastery (ca. 1320) and coins of the Empire of Nicea (13th c.). It can't be excluded that the iconographic diversity was explained by the existence of more than one miracle-working image of Christ associated with the Constantinople toponym Chalke (Mango, 1959, pp. 108-74; Frolov, 1963, pp. 107-20; Grabar, 1984, pp. 150-86; Zervou Tognazzi, 1996, pp. 42-3; Lidov, 1996, pp. 54-9; Butyrsky, 2003, pp. 337-50; Shalina, 2004, pp. 421-5). The closest parallels to the Kievan St. Sophia mosaic are two 10th-c. ivory plaques from the Louvre and Fitzwilliam Museum collections with waist-length representations of Pantocrator, originally middle parts of the Deesis triptychs (Glory of Byzantium, 1997, No. 83 A, B) and also the narthex mosaic at the Church of the Dormition in Nicea (1060s) (Lazarev, 1986, ill. 267). In Rus' that image was to be replicated up to the 16th c. (Shalina, 2004, pp. 5-20).

⁷⁴ Round icons (imagines clipeatae) in the form of a shield (clipeus) were borrowed from the late antiquity tradition and were common in early Christian art. The round shape of icons symbolised triumph, victory and had a protective meaning. For the iconography of *imagines clipeatae* see: Bolten, 1937; Grabar, 1968, pp. 607-13; Lechner, 1973, pp. 353-69; Smirnova, 2003, pp. 321-3.

⁷⁵ Pre-iconoclastic representations of the *Eucharist* are exemplified by: the Rabbula Gospel (586), the Rossano Codex (6th c.), two patens (6th – 7th c.) from Riha (now in the Dumbarton Oaks collection) and Stuma (Archaeological Museum of Istanbul) (Grabar, 1966, ill. 229, 362, 365). In the 9th-c. Chludov (MS, gr. Hist. Mus. D.129) and Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS, gr. 20) Psalters the Communion of the Apostles accompanies the above text of Psalm 110 (Ps 110.4) (Dufrenoy, 1966, p. 45; Shchemnikova, 1977, sh. 115 rev), while in the Psalter from the Monastery of Pantocrator this scene is correlated with stanza 8 of Psalm 34: "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Pelekandis, Christou, Mauroppoulou-Tsioumis, Kadas, 1979, Vol. 3, ill. 188).

⁷⁶ The *Communion of the Apostles* occupies the niche north of the sanctuary of the cave church of the Nativity of Jesus Christ at the Kaloritissa Monastery, Naxos (10th c.) (Skawran, 1982, p. 152) and the parabema of the Kiliclar kilise church in Goreme (10th c.) (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, p. 140, pl. 88, fig. 1). In the church of Panagia ton Chalchon (1028), Thessaloniki, this scene is on the bema walls (Skawran, 1982, pp. 158-9, figs. 86-87; Tsitouridou, 1985, pp. 45-6, pl. 27), while in the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Myra of Lycia it is in the domical vault of the north narthex. The dating of that fresco the 13th c. based on stylistic characteristic (Feld, 1975, pp. 365-7, Taf. III, 2) raises doubts. It seems more probable that, like the rest of extant paintings, it dates from the 1040s, when the basilica was renovated under Constantine Monomachos (Walter, 1970/2, p. 119; Feld, 1975, pp. 360-94). There is also written evidence of Nicholas Mesarites about the *Eucharist* in the sanctuary of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, but as he left his description after the church had been renovated in the 12th c. doubts are raised about that composition being part of the decoration of the time of Basil I (Walter, 1982, pp. 186-7). Furthermore, Grabar has supposed that the *Eucharist* also existed in the sanctuary of the Church of St. Leontius in Vodoca (mid-11th c.) (Grabar, 1965, pp. 264-5), which is refuted by V. Djuric (Djuric, 2000, p. 333, note 7).

of the lost mosaics. Parallels prompt that two processional candles might have been in the centre of the lower register of the sanctuary wall paintings, thus making the aforementioned turning of the two deacons compositionally consummate and likening the sainted hierarchs tier to the procession of the Great Entrance, which gives special emphasis to the liturgical context of St. Sophia's sanctuary decoration⁷⁷.

The idea of the unity of the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant repeatedly comes through in individual scenes of the Kievan St. Sophia mosaic decoration and gets a dogmatically coherent and structurally clear-cut expression in the integral domical and sanctuary murals. The Divine Grace passed by (the domical figure of) Pantocrator on to the apostles (the tholobate) and the evangelists (the pendentives), sanctified by the sacrifice of Christ as Priest and protected by Christ – the “shield of faith”, is epitomised in the bosom of the Mother Church (Virgin Orans) and realises itself in the fusion of the mystery of liturgy represented by the *Communion of the Apostles* and the sainted hierarchs interceding with the main Holy Throne of St. Sophia's.

The clear-cut and purposeful programme of the Kievan St. Sophia mosaic decoration was carried on in the now lost mosaics of the bema. They were arranged on the vault and at the level corresponding to the sanctuary *Eucharist* while below the walls were painted with frescoes. On the sanctuary vault, where but insignificant fragments of the ground with stylised plants have survived, no doubt, there was a representation of the *Ascension*, which not only complies with the stable tradition of Byzantine church decoration of the post-iconoclastic period⁷⁸, but is corroborated by the absence of this scene from the evangelical narrative which has survived on the St. Sophia walls, where the *Descent of the Holy Spirit* directly follows the *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* and *Sending the Apostles to Preach the Gospel*.

The *Ascension* has several major interpretations in the iconographic tradition. For instance, in pre-iconoclastic monuments this composition was usually placed in the dome, less frequently in the conch of the apse, and had an eschatological meaning based on the Gospel's prophesy of the Second Coming: “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1.11)⁷⁹. Those ideas graphically expressed in the correlation of the *Eucharist* and the sainted hierarchs tier found another weighty confirmation in the scene of the *Ascension* which crowned the sanctuary vault.

The figures of Old Testament prophets and kings were most probably placed on the bema walls at the level of the *Eucharist*⁸⁰. This type of reconstruction is corroborated by the small number of the representations of prophets in the extant decoration of the main St. Sophia's space, whereas the principle of parallelism in the interpretation of the events and personages of the Old and New Testament seems quite relevant to the iconographical con-

cept of the decoration. This applies above all to the images of David and Solomon, with whom Metropolitan Hilarion compared Vladimir and Yaroslav in his *Sermon*⁸¹. The figure of another high priest, no doubt, was placed opposite him on the south slope of the sanctuary arch⁸². Positioned by the entrance to the holy of holies, the two high priests find themselves involved in the symbolic space of the sanctuary, interceding with the church Holy Throne on a par with the sainted hierarchs. Thus, the continuity of the Old and the New Testament, outlined in the representation of Christ as Priest above the east wall arch, is also definitively stated in the sanctuary mosaics, where the high priests and the sainted hierarchs witness the true priesthood of Jesus Christ, “a priest... after the order of Melchizedek”, who is shown twice in the *Eucharist* administering the Sacrament to the apostles⁸³.

The programme of the Kievan St. Sophia domical and sanctuary mosaics, which has survived to our day in considerable fullness, demonstrates a distinct stage in the development of Byzantine church decoration. On the one side, the dominant principle is that of strictly hierarchical continuity of scenes that are arranged along the vertical axis, descend from heaven and symbolise the unity of the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant. This general principle formulated as early as the period of the Triumph of Orthodoxy is postulated through the comparison of halidome images that not only incorporated the Christian dogmas in their entirety, but were hallowed by special veneration and emerged in the Byzantine world as guarantors of the inviolability of the Orthodox Empire. Such are the representations of Pantocrator replicating the domical mosaic of the Church of the Holy Apostles, the Saviour from the Deesis reproducing the miracle-working image of Christ on the Chalke Gate and the Mother of God Inviolable Wall, which not only copied, but in the full sense of the word absorbed the entire content of the Virgin Orans of Blachernae and the mosaics of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos. That was how the grace of the Constantinople halidomes was transferred to the “capital city” of Kiev, shedding the light of Christianity onto the newly chosen people. As Metropolitan Hilarion formulated it: “the beneficial faith will spread throughout the earth and reach our Russian language”. This image of renovated Rus' being party to the universal community of “New Israel” – the Orthodox Church – pervades the *Sermon on Law and Grace* through and through.

The theme of affirming the Church of Christ becomes the keynote of the Kievan St. Sophia mosaic decoration and finds expression in the image of Christ Priest, the *Eucharist*, the sainted hierarchs tier and the figures of high priests. It is noteworthy that the ecclesiological scenes concentrated in the middle and lower zones of the apse lose their vertical direction and spread

⁷⁷ A.M. Lidov is inclined to connect the appearance of the *Eucharist* in sanctuary decoration with the schism of 1054 and to date the mosaics the time of Metropolitan Ephraim (1055-1065) who, according to Lidov, was the author of the sanctuary decoration programme and in particular the *Eucharist*, which allegedly reflected the anti-Latin polemic about unleavened bread (Lidov, 1999, p. 164, note 2). He relies on the opinion of I.F. Totskaia who believes that the central apse of the Kievan St. Sophia had a second row of windows that were bricked in soon after the church had been built and that traces of that masonry can now be seen in the outside niches formed in place of the windows (Totskaia, 1996, pp. 26-9). Precisely then, according to Lidov, it became possible to execute the *Eucharist* for which there now was enough room in the apse. Meanwhile, this reasoning about the allegedly bricked-in windows stems from a misunderstanding: the outside niches have never been windows and were evidently intended to be decorated with mosaics. What can now be seen in them is no bricking-in but coarse brickwork without any facing. For outside decoration of the Kievan St. Sophia see: Totskaia, 1973, pp. 50-5.

⁷⁸ In addition to the frescoes of the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid, this rare type of the iconographic canon of the *Communion of the Apostles* is also known from the Psalter from the Monastery of Pantocrator (9th c., gr. 61) (Pelikanidis, Christou, Manoussoulou-Isoum, Kadas, 1979, Vol. 3, ill. 188) and the Bristol Psalter (11th c. add. 40731, the British Library) (Dufrenne, 1966, pl. 50), the Jerusalem scroll (late 12th c.) (Grabar, 1954 (1968), pl. 128) and Studenica frescoes (1209) (Babić, 1981, pp. 32-3; Walter, 1982, p. 195; Lidov, 1994/2, pp. 18-9; Etingof, 2000, p. 219). See also Psalter: 1066 (add. 19352, the British Library), in which Christ is depicted giving bread to one group of apostles while the other are partaking of the wine (Lazarev, 1986, ill. 190). In the fresco of the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid, Jesus is holding a large prosphora, which some scholars see as a hint at the polemic with the Latin Church over unleavened bread (Djurić, 2000 (1974), p. 27; Walter, 1982, p. 196; Lidov, 1994/2, p. 24). Jesus is shown in exactly the same way in the Psalter of the Monastery of Pantocrator and in the Bristol Psalter.

⁷⁹ Grabar, 1954 (1968), p. 491; Lidov, 1994/2, pp. 18-9. No angels are shown either in pre-iconoclastic monuments or in early specimens of the post-iconoclastic period, such as the Chludov Psalter, the Pantocrator Monastery Psalter and the 1066 London Psalter, or in the frescoes of the Mother of God Kaloritissa on Naxos, Kiliçlar kilise in Göreme, Panagia ton Chalkeon and the basilica in Myra of Lycia. However, from the mid-11th c. angels frequently accompany Christ as, for example, in Karabas kilise murals (1060/1061) (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, p. 266-9, pls. 148-9). From the 12th c. on the composition with interceding angels gains absolute dominance.

⁸⁰ It was not until the post-iconoclastic period that the iconography of the sainted hierarchs was finalised and they began to be incorporated in the church decoration programmes. The earliest tier of the sainted hierarchs to be created under Basil I (867-886) consisted of 14 figures and has partially survived on the north and south walls of the central nave of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople (Mango, Hawkins, 1972, pp. 3-41). In the 10th c. the representation of the sainted hierarchs started to gravitate towards the sanctuary space as, for example, in the New Church at Tokali kilise (ca. 950), where the sainted hierarchs in medallions are located on the ceiling of the sanctuary hallway (Wharton-Epstein, 1986, fig. 53). The sainted hierarchs tier made its way to the sanctuary only in the first half of the 11th c. and is known from the Church of Panagia ton Chalkeon, St. George of Kiev and the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid. Ch. Waller has done the most comprehensive survey of the iconography of the sainted hierarchs and the evolution of their role in the church decoration system (Walter, 1982, pp. 7-35, 167-78).

⁸¹ The decoration of the back of the Metropolitan's old throne with a cross flanked by two candles indirectly suggests the presence of two processional candles in the sainted hierarchs tier. Originally the throne was at the centre of the apse and, consequently, its back was directly under the reconstructed representations of candles. For the Metropolitan's throne reconstruction and theme bibliography see: Arkhipova, 2005, pp. 65-70. A close parallel is the *Office of the Holy Fathers* at the upper church of the Bachkovo Monastery ossuary, where two candles are on similar triple window piers, and two figures of angels in diaconal attire are depicted in the central window (Bakalova, 1977, pp. 74-5, ill. 39, 47, 148). The inclusion of the representation of processional candles in different scenes as an important sacred element is known, for instance, from the funerary fresco programme of the Hosios Loukas northwest chapel (Chatzidakis-Bacharas, 1982, pp. 111-2; Chatzidakis, N., 1997, pp. 62-3, fig. 59). Processional candles are represented in frescoes of St. Sophia itself, in the smaller tholobates of the choir. The representation of candles in sanctuary decoration was to become extremely widespread from the 12th c. on.

⁸² In the 17th c. the bema still had mosaics, which Paul of Aleppo described in general terms: “The wonderful arches of the sanctuaries and the high dome are all decorated with gilt mosaics and representations of saints” (Paul of Aleppo, 2005, p. 172). However, already in the 18th c. the mosaics were replaced with oil paintings of prophets and Old Testament kings (Evgenii, Metropolitan, 1825 (1995), p. 67; Kryzhanovskiy, 1856, p. 256; Zakrevskiy, 1868, vol. I, p. 796). Based on this fact, V.N. Lazarev reconstructed the eumacia on the bema vault and the figures of prophets and Old Testament kings on the slopes and walls (Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 92-7). Meanwhile, the tradition of placing the *Ascension* on the sanctuary vault goes back to the 9th c. There is an opinion that a mosaic *Ascension* made under Basil I decorated the dome above the sanctuary in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (Heisenberg, 1908, pp. 196-203), although Constantine the Rhodian and Nicholas Mesarites never directly say so in their descriptions (Mango, 1986, pp. 199-201, 252-3). Scenes of the *Ascension* are known to be on the sanctuary vaults of Cappadocia churches – the New Church of Tokali (mid-10th c.) (Wharton-Epstein, 1986, figs. 88-90), the Big Dovecot Church of Cavusin (963-965), Kokar kilise (10th c.), Archangel Michael Church of Kemile (11th c.) (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, pp. 15, 157, 303), and also in the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid (Djurić, 2000, ill. on p. 336), the Church of St. Nicholas of the Roof in Kakopetria (Cyprus, 2nd quarter of the 11th c.) (Stylianiou, 1997, p. 55), the Church of St. Demetrios in Pataleutissa (Bulgaria, late 11th c.) (Bozhkov, 1985, pp. 62-7, ill. 44-46), St. Sophia of Novgorod (1108/1109) (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 340-7), etc.

⁸³ The *Ascension* is the earliest variant of domical decoration and, most likely, was already present in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre of the time of Emperor Constantine (Anailov, 1901, pp. 185-6; Schmidt, 1914, pp. 14-6). The earliest *Ascension* has survived in the dome of Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki (ca. 885) (Cormack, 1977/2) and the Church of Panagia ton Chalkeon (Tsitoridou, 1985, pl. 10). Several specimens from Cappadocia churches – El Nazar, Kiliçlar kilise, the churches of Karlık and Ispidin, Kubbeli kilise 2 – date from the 10th – 11th c. (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, pp. 83, 137, 175, 242, 265). In the 12th – 14th cc. that composition continued to be used in the domical paintings of Italy (San Marco), Rus' (Mirozh, Staraya Ladoga, Nereditsa, Polotsk, Snietogory), Serbia (Mileseva, Zica, Peć) and Georgia (Sapara, Zarema, Chale). For domical scenes of the *Ascension* see: Dufrenne, 1965, pp. 185-99; Demus, 1976, pp. 101-8; Cormack, 1977/2, pp. 162-3; Grabar, 1984, pp. 267-9; Demus, 1984, vol. I, pp. 173-241; (Giotes), 1990; Sarabianov, 1994, pp. 278-81. The placement of the *Ascension* in the conch of the sanctuary apse is just as old but less frequent tradition, as exemplified by the Rotunda of St. George in Thessaloniki (late 9th c.) (Skawran, 1982, pp. 151-2, figs. 9-16) and the Cappadocian churches of the *Ascension* of Elijah in Ilişli (Urup, 8th c.), St. George in Ağık Saray (11th – 12th cc.), Eustathius in Erdemli (late 11th c.), Selime Kalesi (10th – 11th cc.) (Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, pp. 167-9, 226, 273-4, 331-2).

sideways symbolising the dissemination of the Church of Christ the world over. Incorporated into the decoration of the apse and literally embracing the sanctuary space, these scenes create their own liturgical space and become part of the actual liturgy. Such spatial symbolism born of direct visual correlations between the mystery of liturgy and mosaic representations turns out to be a fundamentally new feature of specific Byzantine sanctuary programmes that were formulated in the extinct late 10th – early 11th-century Constantinople churches and have survived in the wall paintings of the Kievan St. Sophia and the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid. To quote Ch. Walter, those ensembles marked a “watershed” in the art of the Byzantine world, after which the reality of the liturgy became a component of the content of the holy image⁸⁴.

The new understanding of the role of sanctuary representations as symbolical parties to the mystery of liturgy inevitably entailed gradual detailing of their content. This is how the above tendency to transform the sainted hierarchs tier into the liturgical procession can be interpreted, together with the resulting essential transformation of the composition⁸⁵. The painting composition is concretised through the prioritisation of saints to be represented in the sainted hierarchs tier, which includes above all the especially revered saints, such as the founders of the liturgy St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom, theologians St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Gregory of Nyssa, and the famous thaumaturgi St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia and St. Gregory the Wonderworker. However, the appearance of St. Clement of Rome and St. Epiphanius of Cyprus in the sainted hierarchs tier was already dictated by the realities of Kiev’s church life. As mentioned above, the connection between St. Clement and the construction of the Tith Church and other events of the baptism of Rus’ has long been noted⁸⁶. The presence of St. Epiphanius of Cyprus among the sainted hierarchs may be explained by the fact that his commemoration day coincides with the festival of the consecration of the Tith Church (12 May), which was entered in the Russian ecclesiastical calendar early on⁸⁷. Thus, the intercession of St. Clement and St. Epiphanius within the sainted hierarchs tier symbolises Russian Christendom entering the Ecumenical Church, as Metropolitan Hilarion stated repeatedly: “So being strangers, we were named the people of God, and while we were enemies, we were called His sons”⁸⁸.

Mosaic decoration spread to the sanctuary piers, where in the upper zone the paired *Annunciation* framed the sanctuary apse. The Virgin is depicted spinning, and Archangel Gabriel, carrying the good tidings, is rushing towards Her. Quotations from the Gospel (Lk 1.28, 38) in Greek accompany the figures. To his words, “Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with Thee!” the Virgin answers, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to Thy word”. This dialogue between the Virgin and Archangel Gabriel seems to be opening up the Gospel page before the beholder and literally taking him into the holy nar-

rative, while stressing the semantic link between the two figures on the sides of the sanctuary apse. Such quotation of dialogue between the holy characters is not used in other compositions of monumental cycles and the bema *Annunciation* proves to be an exception that was to become a stable tradition of post-iconoclastic art. Placed on the sides of the apse, the *Annunciation* expands the symbolical field of the composition by incorporating the sacral space of the sanctuary⁸⁹. Conveyed in the *Annunciation*, the Divine Incarnation and humankind uniting with God, which was the first event of the redeeming mission of Christ on earth, is directly correlated with the sanctuary decoration programme, with its symbolical images showing how the Church of Christ, only within the fold of which can man find salvation, was raised on the Saviour’s sacrifice. Such method of spatial-symbolical correlations is embodied ideally in the placement of the *Annunciation* on the sides of the sanctuary apse, which became one of the most lasting and traditional elements of the Byzantine church decoration system from the 11th century on. Symptomatically, this theologically well-thought out idea of correlating the *Annunciation* with the sanctuary space, which most likely originated in one of the lost Constantinople monuments, first appeared in finished form on the sanctuary piers precisely in the Kievan St. Sophia decoration⁹⁰.

Wall arches had medallions with the *Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*, of which only the mosaics of the north and south arches have survived. The representations of the Forty Martyrs, who froze to death in an ice-bound pond near Sebaste, were extremely popular in Byzantium. According to their life story and iconographic tradition, at the moment of their martyrdom Jesus Christ descended from heaven to give them forty holy wreaths of martyrs. Under a Testament ascribed to them, their remains were never separated, and for that reason they were always portrayed together as an integral image of the “holy host”. That was the source of the ecclesiastical aspect of the cult of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, who embodied the integral whole of the Church and the Body of Christ. Just as in the Revelation St. John the Theologian sees the foundation of the heavenly altar with the souls of the righteous people who had been slain for the word of God (Rev 6.9), the symbolical image of the Throne of God – the dome with the figure of Pantocrator – literally rests on the building of the Church Militant, fortified by the blood of Christian martyrs, the fact stressed by their placement on the wall arches which support the domical structure⁹¹.

The martyrs of Sebaste, placed closest to heaven – the abode of Pantocrator – visually united the heavenly and earthly zones into the single sacral space of the church and open the theme of the “holy people”, which was to become of paramount importance for the iconographic programme of the Kievan St. Sophia. The hosts of saints on the church walls are a visual and emphatic representation of the image of the Divine Body, the Church Militant, which Kievan Rus’ had joined. Interpreted differently in St. Sophia’s murals, this theme is most graphically expressed above all in the representation of a vast number of saints filling the entire interior.

The iconographic programme of the St. Sophia mosaics accumulated the many realia of Byzantine church decoration of the late 10th – early 11th centuries, which failed to survive in Constantinople itself but was preserved in a number of provincial monuments. Of the latter, the St. Sophia mosaics formed an ensemble that gives the fullest and most distinct idea of the reference system of basic symbolical and dogmatic units that in the second half of the 11th century gradually emerged as mandatory elements of practically any decoration of the domed cross-in-square church of the vast Byzantine world. The simultaneous presence of new scenes, such as the *Eucharist* and the sainted hierarchs tier in the apse, the evangelists on the pendentives and the *Annunciation* on the sanctuary piers, that first appeared in such a consummate form precisely in the Kievan St. Sophia is testimony of it belonging to the mainstream of the development of the Byzantine church decoration principles as laid down by Constantinople. At the same time the clearly formulated ecclesiastical programme, which revealed to the beholder the image of the

⁸⁴ In his eulogy to Princes Vladimir and Yaroslav Hilarion speaks about the construction of the St. Sophia Cathedral: “Who will finish what you haven’t finished, like Solomon did to David’s, who will build the Great House of God to His Divine Wisdom to make your city holy and blessed” (Library of Old Rus’ Literature, 1997, p. 50).

⁸⁵ The figure of Moses executed in the 18th c. is now on the opposite face of the sanctuary arch. D.V. Ainalov, O. Wulff and V.N. Lazarev believed Melchizedek to have been represented there (Ainalov, Redin, 1889, pp. 65-6; Wulff, 1914, p. 561; Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 98-9), whereas G. Millet was inclined to see there a representation of Zechariah (Millet, 1899, p. 87). However, a representation of Moses as high priest there cannot be ruled out either, parallels to which are found in illuminated Octateuch manuscripts of the 11th – 13th cc. and also in frescoes of the St. Anthony (Antoniev) Monastery cathedral of Novgorod (1125) (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 600-6).

⁸⁶ The idea of the continuity of the Old and the New Testament priesthood conveyed clearly in the sanctuary mosaics of the Kievan St. Sophia (Lidov, 1994/2, pp. 20-1), was naturally not new in Byzantine exegesis, as is borne out, among other things, by a Chludov Psalter (9th c.) miniature, in which the figures of David and Melchizedek flank the *Communion of the Apostles* (Shcherpkina, 1977, sh. 115). The *Eucharist* is interpreted similarly in the 1066 Psalter from the British Library (add. 19352) (Lazarev, 1986, ill. 190). However, in Byzantine monumental painting figures were included in the sanctuary compositions of high priests depicted in accordance with emphatically liturgical iconography on singular occasions. Parallels are only found in a number of early 13th-c. Serbian monuments – in Mileševa (ca. 1234), Sopoćani (ca. 1265), Zica (1309-1316), the Church of Saints Joachim and Anna in Studenica (1314), Staro Našoricino (1316-1319), etc. Meanwhile, in Russian art this tradition of the Kievan St. Sophia was to become extremely common. High priests are present in the bema zone or on the sanctuary piers in the frescoes of St. Michael’s Golden-domed cathedral (ca. 1112), most likely in St. Sophia of Novgorod (1108/1109) and also in the decoration of the cathedrals of the Antoniev (1125), Yuriev (ca. 1130), Mirozhskiy (ca. 1140) and Saviour and St. Euphrosyne (last quarter of the 12th c.) monasteries; the Church of St. Nicholas on the Lipna (1290s), the cathedral of the Snetogorsky Monastery (1313), and many monuments of the 14th and 15th cc. That tradition lived on up to the early 16th c. (frescoes of the Ferapontov Monastery cathedral, 1502). For details see: Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 742-4).

⁸⁷ Library of Old Rus’ Literature, 1997, p. 38.

⁸⁸ Walter, 1982, pp. 239-49. Some provincial monuments of metropolitan origin, e.g., the sanctuary frescoes of the New Church of Tokali (Ikeise, ca. 950), where the *Crucifixion* and four scenes of the Passion cycle are shown in the apse as a direct pictorial parallel to the Eucharistic sacrifice, attest that programmes of that type were relevant to Constantinople of the 10th and early 11th centuries (Wharton-Epstein, 1986, fig. 83). In the sanctuary of the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid the *Eucharist* and the sainted hierarchs tier are complemented with several “symbolical” compositions prototyping the *Eucharist* (Djuric, 2000) (1974, p. 26). Ch. Walter justly believes that the existence of fundamentally similar sanctuary programmes in the St. Sophias of Kiev and Ohrid is evidence of the existence of the now lost Constantinople model (Walter, 1982, p. 193).

⁸⁹ The inclusion of the figures of deacons in the sainted hierarchs tier became the first step towards the gradual concretisation of the liturgical aspect of the composition and paved the way to the iconography of the *Office of the Holy Fathers*, the first examples of which date from the late 11th c. (see: Babić, 1968, pp. 368-86; Walter, 1974, pp. 81-9; Walter, 1977, 321-31; Walter, 1982, pp. 198-214).

⁹⁰ V.N. Lazarev was the first to voice the idea of the link between the representation of St. Clement at Kievan St. Sophia and the specifics of his worship in Rus’ (Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 34-5). See note 20 for details.

⁹¹ N.N. Nikitenko was the first to point to that link (Nikitenko, 1988, pp. 174-5; Nikitenko, 1999, p. 125).

Church of Christ, firmly links the Kievan mosaics to the frescoes of the Church of St. Sophia of Ohrid⁹² and makes it impossible to antedate them to the beginning of the 11th century.

The *Annunciation* opens a cycle of scenes of evangelical narrative that holds a significant place in the decoration of the bulk of the space under the dome executed already in fresco technique. One of the dominants in the Kievan St. Sophia decoration system, the evangelical cycle originally occupied all the large planes of the interior, which were rather limited in the central space under the dome due to the specifics of architecture and its segmentation by numerous arches. The narrative compositions occupied the vaults and lunettes of the cross under the dome and spread to the vaults and lunettes of the choir, as well as the wall surfaces between the first and second tier arcades. Within that space they formed three strictly chronological narrative circles, placed at three levels. Regrettably, a sizable portion of those scenes perished when the church vaults were torn down and the interior rebuilt at various times; as a result, only scenes on vertical surfaces have survived to our day. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the vaults of the central part of the cross under the dome could hold only the Twelve Great Feasts, which had already been strictly defined by the early 11th century. Following the logic of the narrative and historical chronology (an indispensable condition of every narrative cycle of the Kievan St. Sophia, and also bearing in mind the set of the extant compositions, we can guess with a great degree of certainty the missing evangelical scenes on the vaults and their sequence.

The first round of evangelical scenes must have opened with the *Nativity of Jesus Christ* along the western slope of the north vault, with the *Meeting of the Lord* (Hypapante) occupying the opposite, eastern slope. The south vault had the *Epiphany* on the eastern slope and the *Transfiguration* on the western slope; the west vault accommodated the *Raising of Lazarus* on the southern slope and the *Entry into Jerusalem* on the northern⁹³. The decoration of the lunettes did not form part of the narrative row of the "great" feasts of the first round, but a narrative entity of its own that started in the northern part of the choir. The *Entry into Jerusalem*, which closed the evangelical narrative on the northern slope of the west vault, inaugurated the Passion section of the Christological themes, which included the events of the last three days of the life of Jesus on earth, His crucifixion, death and also what happened after His resurrection. These scenes begin not in the main part of the cross under the dome, but in the central compartment of the northern part of the choir, where the *Last Supper* has survived in the lunette, with the *Betrayal of Judas* and the *Taking of Christ* below⁹⁴. The upper part of the Passion cycle closed with a composition on the west wall lunette, which was pulled apart in the 18th century. According to the logic of the narrative, it must have been the *Descent from the Cross* or the *Entombment of Christ*⁹⁵.

The third, closing section of the evangelical cycle, which comprises both Passion scenes and those of ecclesiastical con-

tent, occupies the wall planes of the north and south branches of the central cross under the dome between the first and second tier arcades. The narrative unfolds there in the same chronological order clockwise from north to south. Although the first composition on the west wall of the north branch is in the worst state, the outlines of the figure of an angel seated on a stone from the scene of the *Three Marys at the Tomb* are discernible there⁹⁶.

The rest of the compositions of that level have survived in good condition. These include the *Descent into Hell* on the west wall nearby closing the evangelical narrative. The west branch of the cross under the dome was not included in the evangelical cycle as it held the kitor portrait (discussed below).

In addition to the above evangelical scenes arranged in the chronological order, there have survived in the choir several Old Testament themes that, as we will see, relate symbolically to the evangelical narrative. Let it be recalled that from the outset the choir was divided into two functionally distinctive parts. The western part, apparently intended for ceremonial purposes, was separated from the liturgical space of the choir, which opened directly onto the branches of the cross under the dome and was oriented eastwards, where it ended with the apses of the two side chapels. Their decoration programme had a corresponding structure, with the scenes, on a par with those of the *Passion* cycle considered above, serving as prototypes of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Opposite the *Passion* scenes is a large composition of the *Marriage at Cana* in the southern part of the choir, which, according to the iconographic tradition of the 10th – 11th centuries, has a complicated two-tier structure⁹⁷ and *Three Holy Youths in the Fiery Furnace*.

The Christological compositions of the Kievan St. Sophia form a strictly chronological narrative from the *Nativity of Jesus Christ* to the *Pentacost*, with the obvious emphasis on Christ's Passion. A fundamentally distinguishing feature of this cycle is the utterly abridged narrative blocks connected with Christ's childhood, miracles and sermons usual for the narrative programmes – just five scenes of the Great Feasts (the *Nativity*, the *Meeting of the Lord*, *Epiphany*, the *Transfiguration* and the *Raising of Lazarus*). Meanwhile, the *Passion* scenes absolutely predominated and, starting from the *Entry into Jerusalem* numbered at least 14 scenes⁹⁸. An important characteristic of the evangelical cycle is that the *Passion* scenes on the lunettes were withdrawn from the narrative sequence of the vaults and produced their own chronology, which proved paramount and subordinated the whole of the subsequent evangelical narrative. The evangelical cycle closes with two ecclesiastical scenes (*Twelve Apostles Sent to Preach* and the *Pentacost*), which are in exactly their chronological place, going beyond the framework of the *Passion* theme. They introduce a new theme in the cycle by showing events that laid the foundations of the Church of Christ. The logic of the evangelical events is thus revealed with inexorable certainty: the initial scenes of the evangelical narrative on the vaults formed the prototype of the Saviour's sacrificial mission, leading us to the events of Christ's *Passion*, while the sacrifice of Christ, His suffering, death and resurrection shown in detail in the *Passion* part of the narrative offer a promise of salvation, the road to which is in the fold of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. These accents in the evangelical cycle of the Kievan St. Sophia, despite the strict observance of chronology in the narrative, make it possible to speak of the growing role of the symbolical correlation of subjects in the feasts cycle.

When assessing the evangelical cycle of the Kievan St. Sophia, many scholars spoke of the emphatically narrative nature of that programme, which they saw as synonymous to being provincial⁹⁹. Meanwhile, analysis of monuments and sources shows that the narrative principle of the evangelical cycle was formulated precisely in the capital as early as the second half of the 9th century¹⁰⁰. In the second half of the 10th century the purely narrative

⁹². Library of Old Rus' Literature, 1997, p. 40.

⁹³. Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 45.

⁹⁴. The very idea of correlating the *Annunciation* with the sanctuary space goes back to the pre-iconoclastic period. For instance, in the mosaics of the Euphrasian basilica in Poreč (Croatia, mid-6th c.) the *Annunciation*, together with *Mary's Meeting of Elizabeth*, is located in the apse itself (Lazarev, 1986, p. 48); while in the Roman Church of Nereus and Achilleus (turn of the 9th c.) the two scenes of the *Annunciation* are on the triumphal arch above the altar (Pittura in Italia, 1994, p. 216; Andaloro, Romano, 2002, p. 86, ill. 66). The *Annunciation* was included in the evangelical cycle of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (867-886) and in the Church of Stylianos Zaoutzes (late 9th c.), however, in both cases the location of the composition is not clear from descriptions (Mango 1986, p. 200, 204). In the crypt of Saint Cristina and Marina (Maria) in Carpiignano Salentino (959) the figures of the angel and the Virgin flank the sanctuary niche, in which the enthroned Saviour (Pittura in Italia, 1994, ill. 378) is depicted, which is indirect evidence that there existed such an interpretation of the given scene already in the 10th c. However, O. Demus is inclined to date the appearance of the bema *Annunciation* the early 11th c. (Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 45). The closest parallels to the Kievan St. Sophia bema *Annunciation* are of a later period: Karabas kilise in Cappadocia (1060/1061) [Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, p. 270, pl. 148, fig. 1], the Katholikon of the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos (mid-11th c.) (Steppan, 1994, pp. 87-122), Elmali kilise in Göreme (mid-11th c.) [Jolivet-Lévy, 1991, p. 123]. In the 12th c. such examples became numerous.

⁹⁵. S. Radojčić pointed to the existence of a "building legend" that ascribed to the Forty Martyrs the ability to seal the church structures together; when restoring the fallen dome of the Church of the Resurrection, Patriarch Thomas of Jerusalem dreamed he saw the Forty Martyrs supporting the dome and laid forty beams at the base of the new dome. Such interpretation matches ideally the placement of representations of the Forty Martyrs on wall arches (Radojčić, 1969, p. 5). Similar "structural" placement of the Forty Martyrs in the church decoration system is known from 10th – 11th-c. monuments. In the New Church at Tokali kilise (mid-10th c.) they are depicted in shallow niches of the arcade in the middle of the north and south walls (Wharton-Epstein, 1986, figs. 2, 49, 50, 110, 111), while in the Hosios Loukas upper floor gallery frescoes they are painted on the arches supporting the vaults (Gerashimko, 2002, pp. 94-6). In Rus' the tradition started by the Kievan St. Sophia mosaics was to be continued in the frescoes of St. Sophia of Novgorod (1108/1109) [Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 326-30], the Saviour Church on Nereditsa (1199) [Pivovarova, 2002, pp. 46-7], and St. Cyril's Church (last quarter of the 12th c.). V.N. Tolstaya pointed out the ecclesiastical meaning of the veneration of the Forty Martyrs (Tolstaya, 1998, pp. 122-43). Analysing the liturgy in commemoration of the martyrs of Sebaste (9 March), which always coincides with the Great Fast, Archpriest Alexander Saltykov underscored the agreement between many liturgical texts and the principle of their placement in the Kievan St. Sophia decoration system (Saltykov, 2001, pp. 20-4). Relying on the Eulogies for the Forty Martyrs of Basil the Great and Ephrem Sirin, L.I. Lifshits drew attention to the parallels between the Forty Martyrs and the image of the new chosen people (Lifshits, Sarabianov, Tsarevskaya, 2004, pp. 326-30).

⁹⁶. It was precisely the developed ecclesiastical programme of St. Sophia of Kiev and Ohrid that enabled Ch. Walter to identify the place of the two monuments as "the watershed" in the history of Byzantine art (Walter, 1982, pp. 193-8).

⁹⁷. Of the traditional Twelve Great Feasts we should exclude the *Annunciation*, which was placed on the sanctuary piers, the *Crucifixion* in the south lunette, the *Ascension* in the sanctuary vault, and also the *Descent into Hell* with the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, which formed the narrative row of the middle zone of the arms of the cross. As for the *Dormition*, its inclusion in the range of the Twelve Great Feasts can hardly be deemed mandatory for the 11th c. (Kitzinger, 1988, pp. 52-3). This leaves us with the six aforementioned feasts, the sequence of which was determined chronologically, with the narration starting, as in the other two rounds of the evangelical scenes, in the north arm. Therefore, this reconstruction, suggested and substantiated already by V.N. Lazarev (Lazarev, 1986, pp. 165-72; Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 28-49; Lazarev, 1978, pp. 71-94), seems the most acceptable.

⁹⁸. In his papers V.N. Lazarev assessed the choir decoration inaccurately because only the *Last Supper* was known at that time while the two lower scenes were yet to be cleared.

⁹⁹. Of the two scenes, V.N. Lazarev gave preference to the *Descent from the Cross* (Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 43). *La Pietà* could hardly have been there because it was not until the 12th c. that that subject got separated from the *Entombment* composition (Spatharakis, 1995, pp. 435-41).

¹⁰⁰. V.N. Lazarev has mistakenly identified fragments of this composition as remnants of the *Dormition* (Lazarev, 1978, pp. 87-8).

principle of expounding the evangelical events started to give way to other programmes, in which select scenes created a symbolical/liturgical semantic layer¹⁰¹. The extant ensembles of the metropolitan circle dating already from the 11th century show us programmes that had long gone beyond the purely narrative principle of the evangelical cycle. This primarily applies to the mosaics of Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni, which demonstrate a certain similarity with the evangelical programme of the Kievan St. Sophia as manifested, among other things, in the singling out of the *Passion* cycle as a separate block¹⁰². The above ensembles no longer have a cross-cutting narrative, and their scenes are arranged in keeping with the symbolical/liturgical interpretation of the decoration programme, which in the Hosios Loukas Katholikon mosaics retains chronological sequence while in the Nea Moni version sheds it in favour of the heightened symbolical expressivity of painting. The evangelical cycle of Kievan St. Sophia belongs precisely to this media, giving priority to liturgical symbolism, which results in emphasis on the *Passion* cycle and the inclusion of evangelical and Old Testament parallels in the narrative¹⁰³.

As distinct from the Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni mosaics, the *Passion* cycle of the Kievan St. Sophia, while staying within the chronological structure of the evangelical narrative, dominates it quantitatively, and its impact is enhanced by the symbolical compositions of the choir. For instance, early on the *Marriage at Cana* was seen as a prototype of the transformation of the bread and wine of the Eucharist, which indirectly portend the future *Passion* of Christ. The vault was most probably decorated with scenes connected with the *Marriage at Cana* by symbolical implications, such as the *Miracle of the Loaves, Supper at Bethany* or *Road to Emmaus Appearance*¹⁰⁴. In exactly the same way the Old Testament compositions of the western part of the choir (the *Appearance of the Holy Trinity to Abraham, Abraham's Hospitality, Abraham's Sacrifice and Three Holy Youths in the Fiery Furnace*) are the textbook prototypes of the sacrifice of the Eucharist. Emphasising the Eucharist programme with the help of prototype stories turns out to be a distinguishing feature of the iconographic programmes of that period as exemplified by the frescoes of Hosios Loukas and St. Sophia of Ohrid contemporaneous to the Kievan St. Sophia¹⁰⁵. The fundamental distinguishing feature of the Kievan ensemble is that the symbolism of the Eucharist is shown not in individual scenes, but through the narrative cycles of the *Passion* and prototype Old Testament scenes showing the "household plan of God" – the dispensation of Providence. The active narrative element is largely explained by the general enlightenment thrust of the Kievan St.

¹⁰¹ Nineteenth and early 20th-century scholars saw *Supper in Emmaus* (Ainalov, Redin, 1889, p. 94; Kondakov, Tolstoy, 1891, p. 141; Shcherotzky, 1917, p. 70) or *Supper in Bethany* (Sointsev, 1871, opening/section 48, 1; Pokrovsky, 1910, p. 238) in the upper picture of the feast, however, Lazarev convincingly attributed this composition as *Marriage at Cana*, based on parallels in 10th – 11th c. miniatures (Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 46-7) that can be supplemented with examples from contemporaneous Cappadocia monuments, e.g., the Old Church of 912-920 (Wharton-Epstein, 1986, figs. 27, 28) or the New Tokali (mid-10th c.) (Wharton-Epstein, 1986, figs. 73, 74).

¹⁰² They were the *Entry into Jerusalem* itself, then the *Last Supper*, the reconstructed *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* and *Washing the Feet of the Disciples*, the *Betrayal of Judas* and the *Taking of Christ, Christ before Caiaphas* and the *Denial of St. Peter*, the *Crucifixion*, the reconstructed *Entombment* or the *Descent from the Cross*, the *Three Marys at the Tomb*, the *Descent into Hell*, the *Appearance of Christ to the Holy Wives*, the *Incredulity of Saint Thomas*.

¹⁰³ O. Demus described the narrative nature of St. Sophia's evangelical cycle as a sign of the provincialisation of the metropolitan models (Demus, 2001 [1947], pp. 101-2). V.N. Lazarev subjected St. Sophia's evangelical cycle to a finer analysis, but prioritized the category of narrativeness while relegating intricate symbolical correlations to the background (Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 44).

¹⁰⁴ In the brief period of the first restoration of iconolatriy (787-814) Patriarch Tharasius (784-806) allocated spoke of the need to decorate churches with representation of evangelical scenes to provide parallels to the evangelical sermon (Sevcenko, 1984, p. 7; Wharton-Epstein, 1986, p. 46). Now while theme compositions were reduced to the minimum in the decoration of the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, already the mosaics of the Church of the Holy Apostles made under Basil I (867-886) or the Church of Stylianos Zaoutzes (between 886 and 893) feature a big number of evangelical subjects presented to the beholder in a consistent account. The partially surviving description of the Church of the Holy Apostles by Constantine the Rhodian lists the *Annunciation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi, Meeting of the Lord, Epiphany, Transfiguration, Raising the Son of a Widow in Nain, Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Betrayal of Judas and Crucifixion* (Mango, 1986, pp. 199-201). In the Church of Stylianos Zaoutzes the same scenes are supplemented with the *Entombment, Descent into Hell* and probably also the *Appearance of Christ to the Holy Wives*. The cycle closes with the *Ascension* (Mango, 1986, pp. 203-5). The narrative principle becomes noticeably stronger in the 10th-c. monuments. Although the Constantinople wall paintings of that period are not known, many monuments of Cappadocia have indicative material, in which a detailed narrative equally encompasses all the evangelical events. The evangelical cycle of the Old Church at Tokali kilise (912-920) consisting of 29 scenes is inside primitive single-naved architecture of that rock-cut church and can justly be considered a provincial replica of "metropolitan" trends. However, the evangelical narrative of Kiliclar kilise (10th c.), which consists already of 32 scenes, is easily adjusted to the intricate interior of that five-domed cross-in-square church on four piers reproducing metropolitan architectural standards. Many scholars believe that the Kiliclar kilise frescoes, stylistically and iconographically similar to the ensemble of the Old Church at Tokali kilise, reflect metropolitan trends in the development of the Byzantine church decoration system, in which the evangelical narrative occupied a significant place (see: Weitzmann, 1935, pp. 51-3; Restle, 1967, vol. I, pp. 130-3; Cormack, 1967, pp. 33-4; Wharton-Epstein, 1986, pp. 47-8). In the frescoes of the New Church at Tokali kilise (mid-10th c.) done along the lines of metropolitan art the detailed narrative programme of 42 scenes was further interpreted from the point of view of symbolism and liturgy and, as in the Kievan St. Sophia, closed with ecclesiological subjects symbolizing the affirmation of the Church of Christ. These include the *Descent of the Holy Spirit, Twelve Apostles Sent to Preach* and *St. Peter Consecrating the First Deacons*. Yet, of fundamental importance is another distinguishing feature of this monument – the placement of five *Passion* scenes in the sanctuary, with the *Crucifixion* in the centre, thanks to which the bloodless sacrifice of the liturgy gets an obvious evangelical parallel.

¹⁰⁵ A similar programme might have been used to decorate the basilica of San Pietro at Otranto, where two scenes – the *Last Supper* and *Washing the Feet of the Disciples* – of the original decoration (ca. 1000) have survived in the altar vault (Pittura in Italia, 1994, pp. 292-3).

Sophia decoration because that method of exposition better suited the Russian believers, a mere three generations of whom had been in the fold of the Christian Church by the time of work on that ensemble. Meanwhile, the narrative message in no way detracted from the dogmatic content of that decoration, but only expanded the perception of those ideas, placing them within the reach of both the neophytes and the enlightened.

The logic of the development of the evangelical narrative enriched with the prototypes of the choir inevitably led the beholder to the Eucharist as the semantic and compositional centre of the middle zone of the St. Sophia's decoration. The main idea of the symbolical-dogmatic part of the decoration, which might be summed up in the triad "Salvation-Church-Eucharist", found its concentrated expression precisely in the *Communion of the Apostles*. The semantic unity of the compositions of the main space and the *Eucharist* is also stressed by the fact that the latter is at the same level as the lower tier of the evangelical scenes and, together with them, forms an integral circular sequence encompassing the entire space of the central cross under the dome. The ktitor composition in the west arm directly opposite the Eucharist was also part of that sequence, adding key semantic accents to the overall decoration programme of St. Sophia's.

The ktitor portrait is perhaps the most debated representation of the Kievan St. Sophia. The composition took up all the three planes of the arm of the cross and showed a procession of ktitors – members of the Grand Prince's family, headed by Yaroslav the Wise, a model of the St. Sophia cathedral in his hand, and his wife Irene. The procession extended to the centre of the west wall, where there was an image of Christ. The fresco has survived to our day with great losses: only one-third of the composition is intact in the south, where four children of Yaroslav are portrayed, while only two outermost figures can be discerned on the north wall. The central western part of the group portrait with the main characters was entirely destroyed when the western part of the cathedral was renovated in the late 17th – early 18th centuries. Only the contours of the backs of the two outermost figures can be discerned on the remnants of the west wall, which were given the shape of pillars in the course of the renovation. A drawing by the Dutch artist Abraham van Westerveld (Westerveld), who visited Kiev in 1651 and made a series of drawings with views of old Kievan landmarks, including the ktitor fresco, provides invaluable information about the ktitor portrait composition¹⁰⁶. The drawing shows a procession of four princesses headed by Irine in the right part of the composition and four young princes headed by Yaroslav, who holds a model of the St. Sophia cathedral in his hands, in the left part. However, in the centre the drawing has not Jesus Christ as might have been expected proceeding from the tradition of ktitor portraits, but the figure of a Prince shown frontally with a sceptre, a cross and a sword in his hands and a halo above his head, which all scholars see as Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich. We should bear in mind that Westerveld did his drawing already after the frescoes had been renovated in the 1630s by Metropolitan Peter (secular name Petro Mohyla) of Kiev, as a result of which his ktitor portrait recorded the alterations introduced by Mohyla's artists. Scholars list among those alterations the appearance of the figure of St. Vladimir, whose veneration peaked precisely in the time of Metropolitan Peter, in the centre of the composition, the earlier part of which had been lost by the 17th century. What is more, the west wall is wider than the lateral walls with the ktitor composition and must have carried more than the three characters depicted in Westerveld's drawing, as is attested to by the remains of the two outermost figures surviving on the pillars. The precise assessment of the ktitor portrait is complicated by the fact that in the course of the mid-19th century renovation the four figures surviving on the south wall were taken for the representation of St. Sophia and her three daughters, Vera, Nadezhda and Lyubov, and accordingly were shown as young maidens and preserved as such through the 1935-6 restoration to our day. All these circumstances and discrepancies have led to numerous interpretations and hypotheses as regards the original content of the ktitor portrait,

¹⁰⁶ In the Hosios Loukas Katholikon, whose programme is distinguished by certain archaism, only the *Descent of the Holy Spirit* in the bema and four feasts on the pendentives represent the evangelical narrative while the *Passion* forms a separate programme of the narthex, where we find *Washing the Feet*, the *Crucifixion, Descent into Hell* and *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (Chatzidakis, N., 1997, p. 25, figs. 19-24). This scheme was largely expanded in Nea Moni: eight Great Feasts occupy the space under the dome, and the *Descent from the Cross* alone complements the traditional range of scenes; conversely, the *Passion* scenes are concentrated in the narthex and culminate in the *Ascension* and *Descent of the Holy Spirit*. D. Mouriki saw that placement of the *Passion* cycle in the narthex as a manifestation of the tradition typical of church decoration principles of the 11th c. (Mouriki, 1985, pp. 52-63, 80-91, 204-7).

which by dint of concrete historical content has a direct bearing on the problem of dating the cathedral and its decoration¹⁰⁷.

When analysing the various reconstructions of the kitor portrait, one has to admit that the currently available data is inadequate for the exact reconstruction of its original appearance and the identification of the members of the procession with concrete children of Yaroslav the Wise, and therefore under the circumstances any precise dating of the fresco seems premature. Meantime, in conformity with the iconographic tradition of kitor portraits its general content lends itself to interpretation. Most probably the west wall had a representation of Christ enthroned, with Yaroslav and Irine with their two elder children approaching Him, while the other children, four on each side, occupied the north and south walls. In the practice of Byzantine kitor portrait such multi-figured processions were a truly unique phenomenon; the very placement of Yaroslav's family opposite the central apse was likewise without precedent¹⁰⁸. Such a full representation of the clan of Yaroslav the Wise – young and old – implies the entire neophyte Russian people who join ecumenical Christendom in common prayer to the Saviour. The emphasised placement of Yaroslav's family opposite the sanctuary *Eucharist*, coupled with the unique iconography of the kitor portrait in the form of an ecclesiastical procession, takes it beyond the framework of the traditional image of a Prince praying for his clan and imparts a special programmatic meaning to the composition, bringing us back again and again to the relevant theme of Kievan Rus' embracing the Ecumenical Church – the Body of Christ¹⁰⁹.

The kitor portrait turned out to be an important link in creating an integral liturgical space of St. Sophia, in which the idea of building the Church of Christ expressed in the dogmatic images of mosaic decoration and scenes of the Gospel and the Old Testament narrative is carried on in the theme of Kievan Rus' joining the Christian community of the New Israel. That moment of joining is stressed by the processional nature of the kitor portrait. In it, Yaroslav's family, offering its gifts to Jesus, joins other Christian peoples personified by the throng of saints on the cathedral walls and vaults. The rows of those saints are likened to expressive architectonic elements – pillars supporting the structure of the Church of Christ. Hundreds of saints literally inhabit the house of Divine Wisdom and simultaneously serve as guarantors of its durability and stability, and it is there that Yaroslav brings the entire newly converted Russian people, together with his family. The procession of the characters of the kitor portrait continues in the opposite scene of *The Communion of the Apostles*, in which Christ is giving out the Eucharist gifts of redemption. Bringing the two notions together, Metropolitan Hilarion wrote in his *Sermon on Law and Grace*: "And now we, too, together with all the Christians, are glorifying the Holy Trinity and now we are called Christians, no longer idolaters; no longer the hopeless, but longing with hope for eternal life. No longer do we build pagan shrines, for now we construct Christ's churches. No longer do we slay one another as offerings for demons, for now Christ is ever slain and segmented for us as an offering to God and the Father. And no longer do we die while partaking sacrificial blood, but redeem ourselves by partaking the most pure blood of Christ"¹¹⁰.

Murals of the smaller domes, which open onto the east annexes or the choir and for this reason remain underexposed, are directly correlated with the global programme of the space under the dome. All of them, replicating the central drum programme in an abridged version, have similar decoration in the form of four medallions with half-figures of archangels around the central medallion with a chrisim (two interlocking crosses) – an

old symbol of the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity to be replaced with the image of Pantocrator. The images of angels of the smaller domes aligned with the central dome mosaics form the countless angelical host interceding with the throne of the Lord of Heaven. In all probability the programme of the smaller domes of St. Sophia imitated the decoration of the Tith Church, which had 25 domes. Yet, at the same time that part of the iconographic concept might have had an additional interpretation. From time immemorial the archangels were viewed in Rus' as the heavenly protectors of the princely clan¹¹¹, so the multitude of angelical images can be understood as emphasizing the theme of the supreme protection of the Grand Prince's family, which is carried on and specified in the dedication of the annexes of the smaller apses.

While the murals of the domical space convey a set of complex theological ideas, the outside iconographic programme is less dogmatic. The decoration acquires a measured narrative character and complicated correlations give way to a narration of events merely punctuated by different semantic accents highlighting one theme or another. This is primarily true of the four annexes located in the smaller sanctuary apses and partially spreading into the space of the naos, whose dedication reflects both the pan-Byzantine tradition and local reality.

The south apse accommodates the chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna, whose murals are the best preserved among the smaller sanctuaries and tell the story of Mary's parents and Her childhood. The last scene, too, has a symbolical meaning – it represents the first act of the as yet unborn Saviour Incarnate, who is worshipped by John the Forerunner in Elizabeth's womb (Lk 1.41-44). The murals of the chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna thus demonstrate the method of the selective grouping of subjects of the narrative row, which form their own mini-programme¹¹². This method manifests itself just as distinctly in the decoration of other chapels.

In accordance with its dedication the chapel of Sts. Peter and Paul in the north apse is painted with scenes of Acts of the Apostles. The paintings are poorly preserved and all the surviving scenes deal with the acts of Apostle Peter. The scenes surviving in the upper register most likely show St. Peter preaching in the house of centurion Cornelius, with the *Baptism in the House of Centurion Cornelius* above and probably the composition of *Apostle Peter at the House of Centurion Cornelius* below; the partially preserved scene of *St. Peter Being Let out of Prison* is also there¹¹³. The Apostles chapel narrative focusses on the apostolic preaching among

¹⁰⁷. O. Demus viewed the complication of the narrative as exemplified by the Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni and Dafni ensembles as a sign of the degradation of the classical church decoration system evolved in the second half of the 9th c. (Demus, 2001 (1947), pp. 90-1).

¹⁰⁸. The 5th-c. carved wooden doors of the Santa Sabina Church in Rome are an early example of the symbolical interpretation of the *Miracle at Cana* (Grabar, 1980, pp. 142-4). V.N. Lazarev, justly pointing to the symbolical link between the subjects of the choir and the Eucharist theme, reconstructed the composition of the *Miracle of the Multiplication of Loaves* there (Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 49), citing as a parallel frescoes of the Georgian Bertubani (1212-1213) and Kolagiri (second half of the 13th c.) monastery refectories (Volskaya, 1974, pp. 113-24, 152-5).

¹⁰⁹. Two scenes – *Daniel in the Lions' Den* and *Three Holy Youths in the Fiery Furnace* – have survived in the diaconicon of the Hosios Loukas Katholicon. In the parabema, which has lost its mosaics, Demus reconstructed two more prototype scenes connected with Abraham and Melchizedek (Demus, 2001 (1947), p. 23). The principle of prototype liturgical parallels was to manifest itself to the utmost in the sanctuary decoration of St. Sophia of Ohrid, where the *Eucharist* is surrounded by several stories that accumulate the same ideas and notions and are either the Old Testament prototypes of the sacrifice of the Eucharist (*Abraham's Sacrifice*, *Abraham Meeting the Angels*, *Abraham's Hospitality*, the *Three Holy Youths in the Fiery Furnace*, *Jacob's Dream*) or the prototype of the mystery of the liturgy (the *Ministry of St. Basil the Great*, *Apostle Paul Putting the Liturgy Scroll into the Mouth of Sleeping St. John Chrysostom*) (Djuric, 2000 (1974), p. 26 and extensive bibliography).

¹¹⁰. A. van Westerveld's drawings have reached us not in the original but as 18th-c. engraved copies discovered by Ia.I. Smirnov at the library of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts (Smirnov, Ia., 1908, pp. 239-40) so, when analysed, they can hardly qualify as being absolutely precise from the archaeological point of view.

¹¹¹. A sketch made by F.G. Solntsev after the frescoes were cleared in the 1840s shows four figures of princesses on the south wall (Vysotsky, 1989, fig. 28); however, during restoration work of the same period they transformed into Sts. Sophia, Vera, Nadezhda and Lyubov. Ms. (Lebedintsev, 1874, pp. 32-3). I.I. Sreznevsky was the first to identify them correctly with the kitor portrait and to place the entire group portrait on the south wall of the central nave in his reconstruction (Sreznevsky, 1871, pp. 108-10). Proceeding from the analysis of the attire, V.A. Prokhorov identified the surviving figures as male (Prokhorov, 1881, p. 60) while D.V. Ainalov and E.K. Redin justifiably stressed the ceremonial nature of the representation (Ainalov, Redin, 1989, pp. 133-4; Ia.I. Smirnov, who expanded analysis to include the 18th-c. copy of Westerveld's drawing, followed Sreznevsky in placing the kitor portrait on the south wall of the central nave and extended the female part of the portrait onto the north wall. Smirnov was the first to identify the central figure in the drawing as Prince Vladimir by associating it with the time of Metropolitan Peter and also made an attempt to identify the portrayed characters as Yaroslav's children, discovering a discrepancy between Yaroslav's eight offspring portrayed and the nine children of the Great Prince, mentioned in historical sources (Smirnov, 1907, pp. 444-62). In 1936, P.I. Yukin partially cleared the surviving figures of the kitor portrait of overpainting, but in conformity with the results of earlier studies gave the south wall figures a female aspect and, respectively, a male aspect to those on the north wall (Skulenko, 1936, pp. 58-9). In 1939, M.K. Karger discovered the foundations of the pulled down west wall and correctly associated the three-part composition of the kitor portrait with the original architecture of the cathedral. However, unaware of the errors in the 1840s renovation and the 1935-6 restoration work, he decided that Westerveld had transposed the positions of the male and female parts of the procession (Karger, 1954, pp. 143-80). After fragments of the outermost figures on the west wall were cleared in 1955, V.N. Lazarev proposed a new reconstruction, including five figures in the central part of the composition: the Saviour, Yaroslav and Irine and their eldest son and daughter. Replicating Karger's mistake, Lazarev reiterated his thesis about Westerveld's drawing being inaccurate (Lazarev, 1959, pp. 148-63). S.A. Vysotsky, guided by Westerveld's drawing and V.A. Prokhorov's idea about the ceremonial nature of the kitor portrait, placed the males of Yaroslav's family on the south wall and the females on the north wall, adding to them the figures of Vladimir and Olga, who, according to him, were portrayed on both sides of Christ as intermediaries between God and the Prince's family (Vysotsky, 1989, pp. 63-112). P.P. Tolochko supported that reconstruction (Tolochko, 1996, p. 169) while A. Poppe criticised it, pointing to the impossibility of Vladimir and Olga's being there as they had not been canonised yet by the time the frescoes were painted. In his reconstruction Poppe largely shared Lazarev's opinion and had Yaroslav and Irine followed by their eldest son and daughter, who had not been in Westerveld's drawing, three sons and a daughter (the penultimate figure) on the south wall, and two daughters and two younger sons on the north wall. Poppe dated the fresco 1042-6 (Poppe, 1981, pp. 15-66). Technological studies by I.P. Dorofienko showed that the way Yaroslav's children look today does not correspond to the original and, consequently, the attempts to identify the characters in the kitor portrait are far too hypothetical (Dorofienko, 1988, pp. 136-42). G.N. Logvin proposed an utterly arbitrary reconstruction, in which there are up to 16 characters, with the *Exaltation of the Cross*, Constantine and Helene, Vladimir and Olga, and Boris and Gleb in the centre (Logvin, 1988, pp. 20-1). N.N. Nikitenko believes that the kitor portrait was a representation of St. Sophia's consecration ritual, headed by Vladimir and Anna, with the Prince holding a model of not St. Sophia's but the Tith Church as a tabernacle with relics, the presence of which is a must in church consecration. Consequently, the children on the sides are not those of Yaroslav but of Vladimir. This arbitrary interpretation of the kitor portrait is the key argument in dating the cathedral and its wall paintings the 1020s (Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 14-64).

¹¹².) of the Great Palace, which was mentioned in *Vita Basilii* (Mango, 1986, pp. 197-8). However, it was part of palatine rather than church decoration.

¹¹³. A. Poppe, who pinpointed the special sacral importance of the kitor portrait's placement opposite the *Eucharist*, took it as stressing the apostolic mission of the princely clan in the baptism of Rus' (Poppe, 1981, pp. 20-40). Following D.V. Ainalov and Ye.K. Redin, N.N. Nikitenko underscored the unique processional nature of the representation and remarked that it was precisely the theme of the triumph of Christianity in Rus' that determined the place of the kitor portrait in the St. Sophia decoration system (Nikitenko, 1999, p. 39).

the pagans as manifested by scenes with Cornelius, in which the pillar apostle converts the Roman centurion and his family to Christian faith. This event underscoring the equality of the Jews and the Gentiles in Christ indirectly re-opens the theme of apostolic service that has reached Rus' – small wonder that the Hypatian Codex compared Rus' being baptized by Vladimir with the adoption of Christianity by Cornelius, the centurion¹¹⁴. The narrative based on the Acts of the Apostles is carried on in the choice of the individual figures of saints, which occupy the lower zone of the chapel where the apostles “of the Seventy” predominate, including some of the pillar apostles. Unfortunately, of these only the young Apostle Timon can be identified in the north arch and Apostle Luke shown on the wall and, apparently, singled out from among the rest of the saints as the author of the Acts.

The ktitor aspect was obviously instrumental in the choice of the dedication for the two outermost chapels. The south chapel of Archangels Michael and Gabriel has preserved its decoration on the theme of their acts, which adorns not only the apse, but also the eastern part of the nave, which the liturgical space of the chapel encompassed. The nave vault has the poorly preserved scenes of the archangels appearing to Joshua, the son of Nun, Balaam, Hagar and Zechariah, scenes which also deal with the key moments in the history of Divine Administration. At the same time the dedication of the chapel to the heavenly host was predetermined by the special veneration of the archangels in the milieu of the Russian princes¹¹⁵, are on the vaults of the bema and the eastern part of the north nave. Characteristically, emphasis is laid precisely on the profession of faith by St. George, whereas the oft-replicated scenes of his martyrdom or the popular favourite, *St. George and the Dragon*, are absent from the St. Sophia cycle¹¹⁶.

The choice of the dedication of the four east chapels neither was purely traditional nor only reflected the client's will, but conformed to the general content of the cathedral's iconographic programme¹¹⁷. Indeed, one can see a parallel with St. Sophia's overall dogmatic-liturgical programme in the chapel decoration accents. For instance, the exegetists interpreted the story of the miraculous birth of the Virgin and the events preceding the Divine Incarnation as preparation for salvation and the building of the House of Divine Administration, where the Logos settled after acquiring human flesh through the Mother of God. The dedication of the north chapel to the pillar apostles SS. Peter and Paul is seen as the syncretised image of the affirmation of the Church of Divine Wisdom through the dissemination of the Christian doctrine while the presence of scenes of apostolic preaching looks quite natural, taking into account the general missionary thrust of St. Sophia's decoration. Of special interest in this context are the side chapels, in which the ktitor theme blends harmoniously with the dogmatic underpinnings of the scenes. For instance, the acts of the archangels illustrate the most important events in the history of the chosen people, in which God's grace shows its unquestioned superiority over the old law, with convincing parallels in the texts of Hilarion¹¹⁸. Significantly, the story is not confined to the Old Testament narrative, but extends into New Testament history (the *Appearance of the Angel to Zechariah*), indicating that the chosen people of the Old Testament had given way to New Israel. The neophyte Rus' personified by the clan of the Grand Prince, who enjoy the protection of the heavenly host, to which the chapel is dedicated, considers itself a part of this New Israel. The meaning of Rus' belonging to the chosen people is clearly expressed in the St. George chapel decoration, which presents the heavenly patron of Yaroslav the Wise not only as a martyr, but above all as a religious teacher affirming the foundations of Christian faith, and the honour of worshipping this saint is transferred, as it were, to Yaroslav himself, who comes across as the enlightener of the people and successor to the cause of Vladimir, the baptizer of Rus'. Thus, through the correlation of different events of the Old and the New Testament history a convincing parallel is drawn in imagery and narrative with the main space decoration, in which the same

¹¹⁴. *Library of Old Rus' Literature*, 1997, p. 38.

¹¹⁵. Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 52-4.

¹¹⁶. V.N. Lazarev saw the underlying ktitor-related motive in the dedication of the diaconicon, namely, Yaroslav's desire to remember his stepmother Anna and also his wife Irine, Anna after taking the veil (Lazarev, 1960/1, p. 51). N.N. Nikitenko links the dedication of the diaconicon with its ecclesiastical purpose as a place reserved for the Grand Prince and his spouse and, consequently, believes that “the Protevangelical cycle of the diaconicon served as a prototype of the baptism of Rus' as seen through the life story of Vladimir and Anna (Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 147-9).

¹¹⁷. The second of the aforementioned scenes can be interpreted differently, as has been pointed out by scholars (Ainalov, Redin, 1889, p. 316; Babic, 1969, p. 107).

¹¹⁸. N.N. Nikitenko was the first to point out that parallel (Nikitenko, 1999, p. 150).

theme is most graphically expressed in the correlation of the sanctuary *Eucharist* and the ktitor portrait.

Although the dogmatic framework of the St. Sophia iconographic programme relies on the narrative, the individual representations of saints prove to be the most plentiful and sizable part of the decoration. Spreading from the central space to the numerous peripheral volumes, the figures of saints, shown full- or waist-length, in medallions or rectangular frames, fill in virtually every plane imaginable. To say the least, St. Sophia could have had 700 to 800 representations of individual saints, to which not a single monument of the middle Byzantine period had the slightest parallel¹¹⁹. It is obvious that all representations of saints were subordinated to a common programme that determined the basic principles of placing saints throughout the cathedral. That programme matched the task of depicting the entire Christian cosmos, the whole of the Church of Christ, full of the righteous men, saints and the new chosen people, among whom the neophyte Rus' was carving out a place of her own.

In keeping with this global precept, the saints were grouped primarily in accordance with the laws of a general order that prioritised the liturgical aspect. For instance, when assessing the decoration of the inner and outer galleries, it is necessary to take into account the fact that in the days of yore they opened onto city space. While surrounding the bulk of the cathedral, they did not form part of its interior as we perceive it now when, as a result of renovations, they have transformed into closed premises¹²⁰. Therefore, the galleries led to the liturgical space, which could not but impact the content of their decoration. This is the way to judge the decoration of the central part of the inner south gallery, from which the entrance to the main cathedral space was framed by two figures of guardian archangels and a representation of the officiating archdeacon Stephen, who is opening the door to the liturgical zone. In very much the same way the entrances to the inner galleries from the east side, now turned into apses of the chapel sanctuaries, were framed with the representations of unmercenary physicians meeting those entering the church with a promise of spiritual healing¹²¹. In keeping with their liturgical function the space of the chapel sanctuaries is utterly dominated by the figures of bishops and deacons, who complement the mosaic tier of the sainted hierarchs of the central apse and, together with them, form the image of the Ecumenical Church¹²². And, finally, female images predominate in the western part of the galleries and space under the choir, forming a separate programme of their own¹²³.

Liturgical and symbolical regularities closely intertwine, the latter being just as important to the distribution of the saints throughout the cathedral. The central space under the dome is dominated by the representations of martyrs – the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste on the wall arches and men and women martyrs on the facets and lesenes of the numerous piers. Symptomatically, young characters, whose spiritual firmness and physical prowess personify the sacrosanctity of the building of the Church of Christ, are in the absolute majority. A rare exception is a few representations of saints in the lower zone, whose presence is evidently explained by their patronage. For instance, warrior-saints – George, patron

¹¹⁹. Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 52-4. N.N. Nikitenko believes that the subjects coincide with the events of the baptism of Vladimir. Thus, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* is likened to Vladimir's initial paganism (sic) while the *Fall of Satan* to his resolute conversion to Christianity; the *Appearance of the Archangel to Zechariah*, which entailed his temporary inability to speak is compared to Vladimir's temporary blindness in Korsun (Chersonesos), and so on (Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 134-6).

¹²⁰. The scenes *St. George Professing Faith before Diocletian* and *St. George and Empress Alexandra* are in the chapel bema, *St. George Professing Faith before Governor Magnentius*, *St. George Preaching before the Soldiers* and two scenes of martyrdom are on the nave vault. Two more martyrdom scenes are in the lower register of the north wall of the nave. G. Babic saw the preponderance of martyrdom over military triumph in the interpretation of the life of St. George as a reflection of archaic features in his cult (Babic, 1969, p. 107). N.N. Nikitenko justly pointed out the focus on the profession of faith in the scenes from the life of St. George, but explained it as an allegory of the baptism of Vladimir (Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 139-41).

¹²¹. In accordance with the general concept of her research N.N. Nikitenko linked the dedication of all the east chapels and their decoration programme directly to the activity of Prince Vladimir (Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 133-52).

¹²². For instance, the story of Hagar and Ismail illustrated by the corresponding scene of the acts of archangels featured prominently at the very beginning of Hilarion's *Sermon* (*Library of Old Rus' Literature*, 1997, pp. 28-30).

¹²³. F.G. Solntsev made the first attempt to identify the saints in the course of the 1843-53 restoration work as reflected in the decoration schemes published by him (Solntsev, 1871, 1887). Archpriest Pyotr Lebedintsev gave only 20 names that he had been able to figure out prior to the 1843-53 renovation (Lebedintsev, 1879, p. 70). Many students raised saint attribution questions as regards St. Sophia frescoes (Grabar, 1879, pp. 98-106; Myasoyedov, 1918, pp. 1-7; Lazarev, 1956, pp. 161-77; Lazarev, 1960/1, pp. 94-111; Lazarev, 1973, pp. 24-6; Logvin, 1971). V.N. Lazarev was rather categorical about the saint distribution principles, claiming that “they were quite accidental and arbitrary” (Lazarev, 1973, p. 108). S.A. Vysotsky paid significant attention to that problem in his studies (Vysotsky, 1966; Vysotsky, 1970; Vysotsky, 1985, p. 25). N.N. Nikitenko considered the question of saint attribution in the context of her general concept of the St. Sophia murals, the keynote of which, according to her, was to glorify Prince Vladimir as the baptizer of Rus' (Nikitenko, 1987, pp. 101-7; Nikitenko, 1988, pp. 173-80; Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 161-84; Nikitenko, 2000, pp. 66-82). The problem has come under systematic study of late based on the comprehensive analysis of the iconography, attendant inscriptions and graffiti, which has enabled the identification of more than 100 figures of saints by now (see Gerasimenko, Zakharova, Sarabianov, 2007 - in press).

of Yaroslav, apparently the patron of Ilya, the firstborn son of Yaroslav who, A.V. Nazarenko supposed, was in 1019 enthroned in Novgorod, where he soon died¹²⁴.

On the face of it there is no logic in the choice of saints in the smaller compartments of the ground floor, where diverse categories of saintliness find themselves side by side – women martyrs and monks, men martyrs and sainted hierarchs, prophets and apostles, presters and healers. Nevertheless, this multifarious throng of saints put together produces a universal image of the totality of saintliness, conveyed in every saint individually and filling the House of Wisdom to the brim. At the same time every particular unit has its own programme shaped by its own inner logic and considerations of special nature. It seems that one of the decisive factors was focus on certain spots in the cathedral with holy relics immured there. According to the time-honoured custom, relics were sealed into the foundations or walls of churches under construction and often became objects of worship while their deposition places were usually marked with crosses painted, inlaid or carved in the structure¹²⁵. In Rus' that tradition was registered in the Kievan Cave Patericon, which tells of relics brought by Greek builders and sealed into the base of the walls of the Dormition Cathedral: "...and relics of holy martyrs were laid under every wall, where they themselves were painted on the walls over the relics"¹²⁶. Thus, in the Dormition Cathedral of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves the location of the immured relics was marked by representations of the saints themselves. Large four- and six-pointed crosses are drawn above small "mounds" on some facets of the piers under the choir of the St. Sophia Cathedral. Apparently, they marked the location of relic deposits, and it is logical to conclude that, just as it was in the Dormition Cathedral of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves, the saints themselves were depicted next to them and that mini-programmes of individual compartments might have been unfolded around those sacral centres¹²⁷. Precisely the existence of numerous mini-programmes can explain the fact that the representations of some saints recurred in different zones of the cathedral. Thus, nearly all the bishops of the sainted hierarchs tier of the sanctuary were copied in frescoes, with St. Ignatius the Theophoros, St. Andrew Stratelates, Sts. Adrian and Natalia, St. Menas and St. Nicholas the Miracle-Maker depicted twice¹²⁸.

The "sainted hierarchs porch" occupying a compartment in the western part of the inner south gallery exemplifies a well-preserved intelligible mini-programme. It centres on the image of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Maker whose presence extends the universal veneration of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Maker, bringing it closer to the borders of Rus'¹²⁹. Evidently, another programme of similar structure glorified warrior-martyrs in the western part of the inner north gallery, where one can recognize St. Artemius, St. Nicetas (?), St. Theodore Stratelates and St. Menas. Regrettably, the bad condition of paintings complicates the exact identification of saints in this part of the decoration.

Under the choir this programmatic insularity of every compartment is even more pronounced and emphasised by the big projections of the lesenes of the cruciform piers and also by the domical vaults above every compartment, structurally reminis-

cent of the smaller domes. These small spaces might have served as chapels, which is indirectly evidenced by the vault decoration symbolically replicating in miniature the domical programme of a medallion with a chrisim surrounded by the representations of archangels, cherubim or tetramorphs, and in one instance even the four evangelists. In that variant the memorial crosses also designated the sacral centre of every small chapel space¹³⁰ ventilated on a par with Constantine, whose figure complements hers in the neighbouring compartment. The sainted women grouped there were glorified for their apostolic service, the fact emphasised by the placement of the four evangelists on the pendentives of the domical vault.

A different programme is developed in the two east compartments of the southwest space: the theme of true priesthood is conveyed allegorically in the continuity of the Old and the New Testament, from the apostles to latter-day sainted hierarchs. The programme consists of several paired representations. Moses and Aaron and St. Germanus – venerated as heroes of the iconoclast period of the recent past (8th-11th centuries)¹³¹.

Passing on to the peripheral zones of the St. Sophia Cathedral, we should bear in mind that their decoration is almost utterly lost. The outer galleries of the cathedral stood semi-ruined for quite a while, as a result of which we have no data whatsoever to reconstruct, albeit approximately, the themes of murals in those spacious premises¹³², on the sides of which several saints are depicted, whereas the small apse built into the eastern part of that space has paintings of the 12th century. The subject of the martyrdom of the forty soldiers freezing in the icy-cold waters of the Lake of Sebaste and thus attaining eternal life was sometimes interpreted as an image of baptism, which explains its frequent placement in baptisteries. The composition, however, can hardly serve as an unconditional argument in favour of a baptistery having been located there; it cannot be ruled out that the compartment had a funerary function¹³³. Apart from this scene, few individual figures have survived on the vaults of the open arcade of the outer gallery, which was walled up in the days of yore. As a result the frescoes there were not renovated and are in a good condition. Those figures expand the throng of saints of the cathedral, connecting its sacral space with the city.

The unique architectural concept of St. Sophia determined the special ceremonial functions of the choir and the two staircases leading to it, which was reflected in the nature of the decoration of that part of the monument. Now if the western part of the choir was rebuilt considerably and its murals were lost, the two staircase towers conceived as the ceremonial stairs for the family of the Grand Prince and its retinue have retained some of their fresco decoration made simultaneously with wall paintings in the rest of the cathedral¹³⁴. The staircase tower compositions showing the Byzantine emperor and empress and scenes of triumphal festivities at the Constantinople hippodrome, including horse races, musicians, acrobats, actors and mummets, as well as hunting scenes, by dint of their unusual themes have been studied extensively ever since they were cleared in the mid-19th century. Two major trends of their interpretation have remained relevant to this day. One can be called historical: its advocates believe that the representations reflect real events in the history of Russian Christendom and statehood. The representatives of the other, "symbolical" approach see the St. Sophia tower decoration as reflecting the tradition of Constantinople palatine paintings, which showed the triumph of the emperor in an allegorical form. According to the latter version, Russian reality, if represented, was relegated to the background and had no bearing on the content of those cycles¹³⁵.

¹³⁰ Kievan Cave Patericon, 1999, pp. 12-4, 115-6.

¹³¹ N.B. Teteriatnikova points out the obvious interdependence between the immured relics and the decoration programme (Teteriatnikova, 2003, p. 30). V.G. Putsko views the representations of crosses in Kievan St. Sophia murals as marking places for liturgical processions, which fully conforms to the way we see them – indeed, memorial services (lities) could have been held before them (Putsko, 2003, pp. 183-91).

¹³² Saints similarly appear in double representations in the Hosios Loukas Katholikon decoration, which likewise consists of several mini-programmes (Gerasimenko, 2000).

¹³³ Gerasimenko, Zakharova, Sarabianov, 2007 – in press, N.N. Nikitenko, who aptly called that space the "sainted hierarchs porch", identifies the saints differently, in spite of iconographic and graffiti evidence, in her tendentious advocacy of the idea that the Kievan St. Sophia murals glorify Prince Vladimir as the baptizer of Rus' (Nikitenko, 2003, pp. 158-61).

¹³⁴ The many chapels of the St. Sophia Cathedral were conceived in its primordial plan and noted by Paul of Aleppo, who discoursed on its former grandeur: "It is said to have contained seventy tabernacles, or chapels, in its lower and upper compartments." (Paul of Aleppo, *Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch*, 1836, p. 225).

¹³⁵ According to legend, after being raised from the dead by the Saviour, Lazarus of the Four Days was installed as bishop of Cyprus. Apparently, his veneration as a sainted hierarch was prompted by the translation of his relics from Cyprus to Constantinople under Emperor Leo VI, who founded a monastery dedicated to St. Lazarus in Constantinople and populated it with eunuchs (Walter, 1969, pp. 197-206). A fragment of his relics might have been translated from Constantinople to Kiev and interred in the foundation of the St. Sophia Cathedral. Representations of Constantinople Patriarchs St. Ignatius and St. Germanus, who won glory for themselves with their advocacy of ico-

¹²⁴ The isolation of the galleries from the main space was stressed by the fact that all the arch openings between them were windowed with wooden fillings, of which traces of fastening remained, and in one instance – in the Archangels chapel sanctuary opening – there are remnants of the wooden frame itself. The door openings were most probably framed in marble.

¹²⁵ This entrance composition is paralleled by frescoes of St. Sophia of Ohrid (1037-56) (Hamann-MacLean, Hallensleben, 1963, Abb. 26). Archdeacon Stephen placed nearby with a censer in his hands is recognized from graffiti (Vysotsky, 1966, p. 104). There is no doubt that a mirror composition framed the north entrance; however, the old murals are fully gone there. A paired representation of the Holy Physicians Cyrus and John has survived in the east compartment of the inner south gallery (Gerasimenko, Zakharova, Sarabianov, 2007 – in press), and to complement it, there is a representation of another healer in the north gallery, sometimes referred to as Pantaleon (Logvin, 1971, ill. 220).

¹²⁶ St. Blasius of Sebaste, St. Leo the Great, possibly St. Melitius of Iconium, and also St. Pappylus, a deacon, have been identified among the 16 figures of the sainted hierarchs in the chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna. The apses of the outermost chapels have six sainted hierarchs each, of whom St. Eudocimus, Theodulus and St. Anthimus have been recognized in the Archangels Chapel (Vysotsky, 1985, p. 25) and St. Epiphanius, Bp. of Cyprus, Paul (of Constantinople?), St. Procopius (or Proclus), St. Metrophanes, Patriarch of Constantinople and St. Blasius of Sebaste in the Chapel of St. George. The figures of apostles of the "Seventy" figure instead of the sainted hierarchs in the chapel of the Apostles, which only expands the sainted hierarchs programme as all of them were either protodeacons or bishops of the churches they had founded.

¹²⁷ A direct parallel exists in the frescoes of the St. Sophia of Ohrid narthex, which was fully assigned to women martyrs.

¹²⁸ For more about Ilya Yaroslavich see: Litvina, Uspensky, 2006, p. 16; Nazarenko, 2001, pp. 484-6, 488-99.

¹²⁹ That tradition was fixed at Hagia Sophia of Constantinople and reflected in *Skazaniya o postoenii khrama svyatoi Sofii* (Archimandrite Leonid, 1889, pp. 17, 22). It was well-known in Rus' (Majeska, 1984, p. 214/ Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries) as is attested to by the texts of pilgrimage to Constantinople of Anthony of Novgorod of 1200 (Kniga Palomnik, 1895, p. 29) or Stephen of Novgorod of 1345 (Library of Old Rus' Literature, 1909, pp. 32-3). Such relics of the saints are known to have been immured in several churches of the Byzantine world (Teteriatnikova, 2003, pp. 77-92).

Originally, the lower parts of the two towers were not connected with the cathedral interiors, but had entrance apertures opening directly onto the square in front of the cathedral. Sundry allegorical and narrative representations completely covered all the walls and vaults. The latter were decorated with medallions with representations of different, including imaginary, animals in a lush foliate ornament. Narrative compositions in the form of frieze scenes or medallions in one or two registers covered the tower walls from their foundations to the vaults, virtually accompanying whoever ascended the stairs to the choir. Hunting scenes (*Bear Hunt* showing preparations for a horserace, the horserace itself, the building of the hippodrome and the palace with the seated emperor together with his retinue and guests¹³⁶).

A.N. Grabar repeatedly addressed the theme of the Kievan St. Sophia staircase frescoes and provided their most balanced and substantiated review based primarily on an analysis of the traditions of the imperial iconography, which existed in Byzantine art throughout its history. His point of view, in my opinion, merits special attention in the interpretation of the tower scenes. Grabar showed convincingly that practically all the scenes surviving in the staircase decoration are in one way or another related to the theme of the emperor's triumph. The tradition of such triumphal representations is traced to the early Byzantine period and is evidently rooted in similar scenes glorifying Roman emperors. There have survived very few such scenes, to say nothing of monumental cycles, in Byzantine art, which is easily explained by their placement in secondary zones of churches or palaces that were the first to be plundered and destroyed by invaders. Nevertheless, artefacts, such as bas-reliefs at the base of the obelisk of Theodosius II at the Hippodrome of Constantinople (ca. 390), the base of the column of Arcadius (403) known from drawings, and a whole range of fragmentarily preserved representations, as well as some written sources give an idea of the iconographic content and stable tradition of showing the triumph of the emperor, which for the most part remained unchanged throughout the existence of the Byzantine empire. Meanwhile, the decorative part of tower vault paintings, as Grabar showed convincingly, goes back to the tradition of imperial palace interior design and has close parallels in the mosaics of the Palace of the Normans (1140s) in Palermo, which constitute the only extant cycle of Byzantine palatine wall decoration¹³⁷. It can't be ruled out that murals of the gone palace of Vladimir Sviatoslavich, which had stood next to the Tithe Church and had mosaic decoration, served as a direct iconographic source for the St. Sophia cathedral tower decoration¹³⁸.

The scenes directly involving the emperor or empress present certain stages in the triumphal ceremony prescribed stage-by-stage, with each stage having its own symbolical interpretation. Additional scenes of circus performances, contests, hunting or offerings likewise corresponded to the theatricals which, in keeping with the age-old tradition, accompanied the emperor's triumphal procession. Way back ago N.P. Kondakov paid attention to the fact that many characters of secondary importance – musicians, athletes and mummers – were dressed like barbarians, and therefore their acting can be seen as a stage performance showing the conquered peoples making offerings to the Byzantine emperor. Admittedly, of all the extant parallels that have survived fragmentarily or are known from descriptions, the triumphal cycles of the St. Sophia towers are unique and most detailed. Furthermore, one should bear in mind that the St. Sophia cycle has not survived in full and had at least twice as many scenes, so the range of the depicted events was much wider. Taking into consideration the presence of the ktitor portrait in the domical space, one can surmise that the tower cycles, too, had representations directly related to the clan of the Kievan princes. But even if that was the case, such representations must have been of secondary importance with their hierarchically defined position in the context

noduly, were typical precisely of the 9th - 12th-cc. programmes. Representations of St. Ignatius are known from mosaics of the north tympanum of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople, created under Basil I (867-886) (Mango, Hawkins, 1972, pp. 9-11, 20-30, figs. 12-16), a miniature from the Menologion of Basil II (Mango, Hawkins, 1972, fig. 45) or a fresco in the church of St. Nicholas of the Roof in Kakopetria, Cyprus, 9th c. (Mango, Hawkins, 1972, fig. 46). The figure of St. Germanus with the obliterated face is present in the mosaic decoration of the southwest chambers of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (ca. 870) (Cormack, Hawkins, 1977, pp. 223-4, fig. 41); he is depicted beardless at the Studenica Monastery (1208/1209) (*Baduli-, Kopali-, Timpasuli-*), 1986, Sl. 53).

¹³⁶ It is quite probable that the outer west gallery was assigned for a detailed narrative of the Last Judgement in conformity with the post-iconoclastic tradition of placing that type of composition in the narthex or the western part of the church, early examples of which are frescoes at the churches of Agios Stephanos, Kastoria (late 10th c.) (Chatzidakis, Pelekanidis, 1985, pp. 6-15); Panagia ton Chalkeon (1028) (Tsitouridou, 1985, pp. 47-54).

¹³⁷ Totskaya, 2002, pp. 115-23; Lifshits, 2006, pp. 249-74.

¹³⁸ Proceeding from an erroneous premise of the different dating of the construction of the cathedral itself and its galleries with the towers, V.N. Lazarev dated the gallery paintings the time of Vladimir Monomakh (Lazarev, 1973, pp. 26-9). Currently, all scholars agree that the towers and the rest of the cathedral were painted simultaneously.

of the general programme of the emperor's triumph. Anyhow, we have no firm grounds to see images of representatives of the house of the Kievan prince in one tower scene or another.

The transverse western part, onto which the staircase towers open, was insulated from the rest of the choir, and the arches connecting these parts have traces of filled-in doors. The thus separated western part of the choir was most likely conceived as a place for carrying on the ceremonial procession taking place on the staircases, and the iconographic design of that completely lost part of the decoration must have matched that purpose. The idea of the God hallowed power of the Kievan princes underpinning the staircase tower decoration might have been developed precisely in the frescoes of the western part of the choir, and in that case their programme was expounded in the composition of the ktitor portrait.

The idea of God sent and God hallowed power merited a paramount hierarchical position already in the iconographic programme of the main space of St. Sophia, a programme reflecting the structure of Christian cosmos. This idea is expressed in the placement of the ktitor portrait, which shows members of the Grand Prince's family as intermediaries between God and the people who had found a new faith. The same theme determines and specifies the content of the tower paintings, which show the different hypostases of the Byzantine emperor's absolute power, hallowed from above, in the multi-part illustration of his triumph. The triumphant ascent of the Grand Prince to the choir, accompanied by pictures of imperial triumph, must have signified that the Kievan ruler was party to the sacral power of the omnipotent basileus, that the prince's authority was hallowed by God and that he was thus symbolically ascending to that authority, which was comparable to that of the emperor from the hierarchical point of view. It was a graphic realisation of the idea of continuity of the God hallowed power of the Byzantine emperor, the grace of which hierarchically passed on to the Kievan princes, and their intercession at the St. Sophia choir was already the apotheosis of that idea. Summing up the views of N.P. Kondakov and A.N. Grabar, we can say that the triumphal frescoes of the St. Sophia towers and, with a large measure of probability, the western part of the choir offered a generalized image of the sacral power structure within which the Grand Prince of Kiev got a hierarchical place of his own.

The ceremonial nature of the choir also found reflection in that part of the surviving murals where individual figures of saints predominate. As the northern part of the choir accommodated the womenfolk of the Grand Prince's family, images of holy wives preponderated there, which was also reflected in the structure of the ktitor composition; meanwhile the southern part of the choir is filled exclusively with male images. The figure of King Hezekiah stands out as an ideal image of a righteous ruler figuratively correlated with the interceding Kievan princes. Symptomatically, there is an extensive penitential graffiti, not without reason ascribed to Vladimir Monomakh, on the ground next to the figure of Hezekiah¹³⁹. It can be surmised that the western part of the choir might have had an entire range of saints of the type of King Hezekiah, who conveyed, in various models of saintliness known from the historical context, the idea of righteous power, hallowed and guarded by God, the idea relevant to Kievan Rus'¹⁴⁰.

It will not be an exaggeration to state that the St. Sophia cathedral decoration programme largely influenced Russian medieval art as a whole. The Kievan St. Sophia murals were a mature result of a significant stage in the development of the Byzantine

¹³⁹ N.M. Sementovskiy, who was the first to mention the frescoes of the staircase towers, saw in those scenes the hunting exploits of Russian princes (Sementovskiy, 1857, pp. 77-100), while N.P. Smirnov associated all scenes exclusively with the life of the Byzantine emperors (Smirnov, 1871, pp. 552-91). N.P. Kondakov, who was the first to unite all scenes into a single cycle, showed that they formed part of court performances partially connected with Christmas celebrations (Kondakov, 1888, pp. 287-306). That "allegorical" concept was carried on by D.V. Ainalov and E.K. Redin (Ainalov, Redin, 1889, pp. 102-35), but later on Ainalov shifted to the historical "camp" and suggested that one of the scenes showed Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus receiving Russian Princess Olga (Ainalov, 1920, pp. 201-2). The historical context totally prevailed under the Soviet regime, and the tower frescoes were interpreted from a "secular" point of view as a representation by St. Sophia's clients of the deeds of their closest ancestors. S.A. Vysotsky linked the tower cycles with Princess Olga's visit to Constantinople in 957 (Vysotsky, 1989, pp. 112-231), whereas R. Orlov saw in them a symbolical representation of different events of Russian history, for example, the struggle of Yaroslav the Wise against Boleslav Chrobry (Boleslav the Brave) or the 1019 battle at the Alta River (Orlov, 1990, pp. 111-4). According to N.N. Nikitenko, the tower cycles showed the history of Prince Vladimir's marriage to Byzantine princess Anna (Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 77-122). For detailed historiography of this issue see: Vysotsky, 1989, pp. 114-25; Nikitenko, 1999, pp. 65-76.

¹⁴⁰ Restoration research largely helps with the interpretation of several scenes. A.D. Radchenko suggested a convincing reconstruction of the missing elements in the representation of the hippodrome in the southwest tower (Radchenko, 1973, pp. 35-7) while I.E. Totskaya and L.M. Zayarnuzny demonstrated that the *Musicians* composition shows an ensemble of eight instruments, including a pump organ that could be related exclusively to the imperial ceremony (Totskaya, Zayarnuzny, 1988, pp. 143-55).

church decoration system, a quintessence of multiple tendencies that determined the course of theological and iconographic thinking in the post-iconoclastic period. Of all the surviving monuments of the Middle Byzantine period, it was the Kievan St. Sophia that first formulated and presented as an integral concept the pivotal iconographic blocks, such as the Evangelists on the pendentives, the *Annunciation* flanking the altar, and the *Eucharist* with the sainted hierarchs in the central apse. It cannot be ruled out that such integrative and complex programme formulated in the monuments of Constantinople art of the late 10th – early 11th centuries was for the first time fully manifested precisely in the Kiev cathedral. Typical Constantinople structures of that period were never huge, so the remarkable physical magnitude of St. Sophia offered extraordinary opportunities to the muralists. New programmatic principles might have been formulated in the second quarter of the 11th century in Constantinople monuments, such as the now lost Church of St. Mary Peribleptos or the St. George of Mangana, known from descriptions and archaeological evidence¹⁴¹. These two churches were the most grandiose constructions of their period, which enabled an extensive iconographic programme across their walls. However, it is important to note that St. Sophia of Kiev significantly exceeded the Church of St. George of Mangana in size, and, possibly, the church of St. Mary Peribleptos as well. Taking into account the substitution of frescos for the marble facing common for the metropolitan churches, it becomes obvious that, compared with the other churches in Constantinople, St. Sophia of Kiev had additional huge surfaces available for painting, and therefore the iconographic concept might have been expanded considerably.

The narrative nature of St. Sophia's frescos was also manifest in the mosaic part of the decoration, whose profound dogmatic programme expressed in the core images of the dome and the sanctuary was expanded through parallel representations of a lesser scale. Thus, the medallion with Pantocrator in the dome is framed unusually in an illusory cross emphasizing the sacrificial character of Jesus. The theme of evangelism is shown twice: in the figures of the twelve apostles on the tholobate and in the four evangelists on the pendentives. The *Annunciation* conveys the theme of the Incarnation, however, the same theme is developed in the medallions in the vault heads that show Christ as Priest, the Mother of God and the now lost figures of Sts. Joachim and Anna. At the same time, the image of Christ as Priest corresponds with the Eucharist as the liturgical centrepiece of the entire cathedral. The saintly hierarchs tier was enlarged with the figures of Old Testament high priests mysteriously participating in the liturgy along with the bishops. Finally, Christ of the Deesis, depicted as "the Shield of Faith", is consonant with the image of the Virgin Orans whose protective symbolism is expressed in the metaphor "Inviolable Wall".

The iconographic concept of the St. Sophia decoration, and above all its mosaic part, was a sort of ideal formula of church decoration worked out by contemporaneous Byzantine art, and precisely that decoration structure was to become of decisive importance throughout the subsequent history of Byzantine art. That formula, however, was not unique, as is eloquently attested to by the comparison of the Kievan St. Sophia with the mosaics of the katholikons of Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni, two contemporaneous textbook ensembles reflecting the metropolitan mood in organizing church decoration. For Rus', however, the formula of the Kievan St. Sophia proved the one and only. Its sacral space, possessing to a certain extent the typical appearance of a Constantinople church and serving as a model of metropolitan splendour, was for the Russian flock also an ideal model of the Christian cosmos, which was revealed not only in the global impulse of the universe shown there, but also in the concrete elements of the symbolical concept. Precisely those particulars of the Kievan St. Sophia iconographic programme served as a model for imitation and interpretation for numerous Russian churches and largely decided the choice of subjects and their combination, the choice of iconographic types and, last but not least, the very principle of a profound narrative full of symbolical allusions. Thus, the character of St. Sophia's decoration was largely responsible for the programmatic features of monumental Russian painting over subsequent centuries¹⁴².

Due to the unique state of preservation of its murals the Kievan St. Sophia is a case apart not only among the early Russian

¹⁴¹ A.N. Grabar dealt with the tower frescoes in a separate study (Grabar, 1935, pp. 253-63), which was soon incorporated in his fundamental monograph on the iconography of the Byzantine emperors (Grabar, 2000 (1936), pp. 50-101). Later on he included his conclusions in another article (Grabar, 1962, pp. 258-48).

¹⁴² Rappoport, 1982, p. 9.

structures, but also among the Byzantine monuments of that period. It is to be believed that, after finishing work on the Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration and the Kievan St. Sophia, the same team of artists got down to decorating other Kievan structures: the Church of the Annunciation above the Golden Gate, the cathedrals of the monasteries of St. George and St. Irene, which were mentioned in the eulogy to Yaroslav the Wise entered into the *Tale of Bygone Years* by 1037, and the church of the Metropolitan estate known from archaeological excavations. Mixed techniques were used in the decoration of those churches, including fresco and mosaic, which indirectly confirms their typological and genetic affinity with the Kievan St. Sophia's decoration¹⁴³.

Although art flourished in the reign of Yaroslav the Wise, the monumental painting tradition remained contained within southern Rus'. This is forcefully evidenced by the history of the construction and decoration of two more St. Sophias built in Novgorod and Polotsk after the Kievan project. For instance, the huge St. Sophia cathedral of Novgorod, built in 1045 – the 1050s stood without any interior design for more than half a century, its only decoration being a few icons and rare icon-like representations in wall painting technique that might have been added in the second half of the 11th century, as well as symbolical cross pictures. It was not until 1109 that the bulk of the cathedral received full-fledged fresco decoration, whereas the porches remained unadorned. St. Sophia of Polotsk has retained insignificant fragments of fresco decoration of the sanctuary, but their poor condition makes it impossible to date them or determine their contents. Quite possibly, as was the case with the Novgorod cathedral, they were made decades after the construction project had been completed.

When assessing the vigorous artistic activity in Rus' of the late 10th – first half of the 11th century, we should take into account the fact that only individual churches were made of stone while the overwhelming majority of them were built of wood. The wooden St. Sophia cathedral mentioned in 1017 in the *Chronicle* of Thietmar of Merseburg was full of "relics of saints and other decorations"¹⁴⁴, from which it follows that the interior design of other churches and chapels was likewise confined to a few icons and utensils used in liturgical celebrations. It is now difficult to imagine the real scale of church construction under the first two generations of Christian princes as there is always the risk of exaggeration in chronicles revised by copyists of the following centuries. Nonetheless, Thietmar's account of Kiev of 1018 is noteworthy: "That big city, which is the capital of that kingdom, has 400 churches, 8 fairs and an unfathomable number of people"¹⁴⁵. Even with certain reservations this description gives a fairly trustworthy picture of the life of Kiev, capital of a young Christian state, which, having embraced a new faith, subscribed to the great tradition of Byzantine culture.

¹⁴³ The inscription reads: "LORD HELP YOUR SLAVE VOLODIMIR FOR MANY YEARS AND FORGIVE SINS ON JUDGEMENT" (Vysotsky, 1976, p. 49; Nikitenko, 1999, p. 180).

¹⁴⁴ Historical referencing of ceremonial premises has parallels in the decoration of the secretum of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, where the patriarchs had repasts attended by the emperor. Its mosaics made soon after the victory of the iconodules (869-870) show patriarchs famous for their efforts to restore iconoduly, including St. Tharasius, St. Methodius, St. Germanus and St. Nicephorus (Cormack, 1977/2, pp. 149-51; Cormack, Hawkins, 1977, pp. 223-228).

¹⁴⁵ For general information about them see: Komech, 1987, pp. 83-8). In his 1403 description of the Church of St. George Clavijo mentions the mosaic representations of Pantocrator in the dome and also the *Ascension* and the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, which suggests a cautious guess about ecclesiological accents in the iconographic programme of decoration (Clavijo, 1990, p. 4).

Подписи к иллюстрациям

119

Face of a saint. Fresco. Excavations of the Tithe Church, Kiev, late 10th c. Whereabouts unknown

120

St. Philip the Apostle. Icon, late 10th c. Saint Catherine monastery on Sinai

121

Face (of the Virgin). Fragment of a fresco. Excavations of the Tithe Church, Kiev, 10th c. NMIU

122

Miracle of St. Clement and Youth. Miniature. Menologion of Basil II. Early 11th c. Vatican Library. Vat. gr. 1613, p. 204

123

Translation of St. Clement's relics to Rome. Fresco. Basilica of San Clemente crypt, Rome, 1089-1118

124

Figure of an unknown saint. Fresco. Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration. 1030s. Copy. Chernigov Museum. Fragment

125

Unknown composition. Fresco. Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration. Copy. Chernigov Museum. Fragment

126

Katholikon of the Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis. 1030s-1040s. Interior. View of south-east

127

St. Thecla. Fresco. Chernigov Cathedral of the Transfiguration. Copy

128

Unknown martyr. Fresco on the west facet of the north pier of the triumphal arch. 1040s. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

129

View of domical space. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

130

Pantocrator with archangels. Central dome mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

131

Pantocrator. Central dome mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

132

Pantocrator. Dome mosaic. Dafni Monastery katholikon. Circa 1100

133

Archangel. Central dome mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

134

Apostle Paul. Central dome mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

135

St. Luke the Evangelist. Pendentive fresco, Kiliçkar kilise. 10th c.

136

Cherub. Pendentive mosaic. Nea Moni (Monastery) katholikon on Chios. 1042-1055

137

Christ Priest. Mosaic on the front part of the east wall arch. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

138

Patriarch Joachim. Narthex mosaic. Nea Moni (Monastery) katholikon on Chios

139

Cameo of Nikephoros Botaneiates. 1078-1081. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

140

Anna the prophetess. Narthex mosaic. Nea Moni (Monastery) katholikon on Chios

141

The Virgin in a medallion. Mosaic. Front part of the west wall arch. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

142

Central apse mosaics. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

143

Virgin Orans. Central apse. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

144

Deesis. Triumphal arch mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

145

Pantocrator. Carved ivory, 10th c. Louvre

146

Pantocrator. Narthex mosaic, 1065-1067. Church of the Dormition in Nicaea

147

Eucharist. Central apse mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

148

Eucharist. Fresco. Church of St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycea, 1040s

149

Eucharist. Fresco. Church of St. Sophia, Ohrid, before 1056

150

Eucharist. Mosaic. Central apse, left side. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

151

Sainted hierarchs tier. Mosaic Central apse, left side. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

152

Eucharist. Mosaic. Central apse, right side. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

153

Sainted hierarchs tier. Mosaic. Central apse, right side. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

154

Ascension. Bema fresco. Church of St. Sophia, Ohrid

155

High priest Aaron. Sanctuary arch mosaic. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

156

Moses and Aaron before the Ark of the Covenant. Octateuch miniature, 11th c. Vatican library. Cod. 747 fol. 106r

157

Angel from the Annunciation composition. Mosaic on north sanctuary pier. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

158

Annunciation. Fresco. Crypt of Santa Marina and Cristina in Carpignano Salentino, South Italy, 959

- 159**
Annunciation. Mosaic. Katholikon, Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, mid-11th c.
- 160**
Virgin from the Annunciation composition. Mosaic on south sanctuary pier. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 161**
Forty martyrs of Sebaste. Mosaic on north wall arch. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 162**
Forty martyrs of Sebaste. Mosaic on south wall arch. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev. Detail
- 163**
Murals of the south arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 164**
Murals of the north arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 165**
Descent from the Cross. Fresco. Katholikon crypt, Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis
- 166**
Entombment of Christ; Holy Myrrh-bearers at the Tomb. Fresco. Katholikon crypt, Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis
- 167**
Descent into Hell. Fresco of the north arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 168**
Appearance of Christ to Holy Myrrh-bearers. Fresco of the north arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 169**
Incredulity of Saint Thomas. Fresco of the south arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 170**
Sending the Apostles to Preach the Gospel. Fresco of the south arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 171**
Descent of the Holy Spirit. Fresco of the south arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 172**
Marriage at Cana. Fresco of the south arm of the cross under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 173**
Miracle at Cana. Miniature from the Trapezund Gospel. National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, gr. 21, sh. 2
- 174**
Hospitality of Abraham. Fresco, northwestern part of the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 175**
Abraham's Sacrifice. Fresco, southwestern part of the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 176**
Three Holy Youths in the Fiery Furnace. Mosaic, diaconicon of the katholikon, Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis
- 177**
Three Holy Youths in the Fiery Furnace. Fresco. Church of St. Sophia, Ohrid
- 178**
Ktitor portrait. Fresco. West arm of the cross under the dome. South wall. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 179**
Ktitor portrait. Engraving of A. van Westerveld
- 180**
Ktitor portrait. Fresco. West arm of the cross under the dome. South wall. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 181**
Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth. Fresco. Chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 182**
Annunciation. Fresco. Chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 183**
Murals of the chapel of Sts. Joachim and Anna. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 184**
Murals of the Apostles chapel. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 185**
Apse of the Archangels chapel. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 186**
Fall of Satan. Fresco at the Archangels chapel. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 187**
Jacob Wrestling with the Angel. Fresco at the Archangels chapel. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 188**
St. George. Fresco in the conch of the apse of the St. George chapel. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 189**
St. George before Diocletian. Fresco at the St. George chapel. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 190**
St. John. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 191**
Prophet Elijah. Fresco on the southwest pier under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 192**
St. John the Almsgiver. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 193**
St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki. Fresco on the southwest pier under the dome. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 194**
St. Gregory the Theologian. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 195**
St. Phocas of Sinope. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 196**
St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 197**
St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev
- 198**

St. Gregory of Nyssa. Fresco in the inner south gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

199

General view of the vault. Fresco in the southwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

200

St. Thecla. Fresco in the southwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

201

Empress Helene (?). St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

202

Prophet Moses. Fresco in the northwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

203

High priest Aaron. Fresco in the northwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

204

Apostle Paul. Fresco in the northwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

205

Apostle Peter. Fresco in the northwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

206

Prophet Elijah. Fresco in the northwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

207

Representation of the cross. St. Lazarus of the Four Days. Fresco on cruciform pier facets in the northwestern part. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

208

St. Lazarus of the Four Days. Fresco in the northwestern part. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

209

St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Fresco in the northwestern part under the choir. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

210

Forty martyrs of Sebaste. Fresco in the outer west gallery. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

211

Bear Hunt. Fresco in the northwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

212

Mummers in Combat. Fresco in the northwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

213

Emperor on a White Horse. Fresco in the northwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

214

Emperor in a Hippodrome Box. Fresco in the northwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

215

Musicians. Fresco in the southwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

216

Hippodrome. Fresco in the southwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

217

King Hezekiah. Fresco in the southwest tower. St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

For details see Sarabianov, 2007.

Rappoport, 1982, pp. 14-16.

Thietmar of Merseburg, 2005, p. 177.

Thietmar of Merseburg, 2005, p. 178.