

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ  
ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΑΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΒΕΝΕΤΙΑΣ  
ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ

Συνέδρια 4

# Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΣΤΗ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΑΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΤΕΧΝΗ

## Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου

πού οργανώθηκε στο πλαίσιο των εορταστικών εκδηλώσεων  
του Πατριαρχείου Βενετίας με την ευκαιρία της συμπλήρωσης  
2.000 χρόνων από τη Γέννηση του Χριστού

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Επιμέλεια: Χρύσα Α. Μαλτέζου και Γιώργος Γαλάβαρης



*N. Ghidde, Eschatological Representations  
of Christ.*

ISTITUTO ELLENICO DI STUDI BIZANTINI  
E POSTBIZANTINI DI VENEZIA  
SOCIETÀ ARCHEOLOGICA CRISTIANA DI GRECIA

Convegni 4

# CRISTO NELL'ARTE BIZANTINA E POSTBIZANTINA

## Atti del Convegno

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A cura di Chryssa A. Maltezou e George Galavaris





des représentations symboliques du Christ en Agneau et en Bon Pasteur aux scènes apocalyptiques de la Théophanie, les figurations du Christ, selon le type dit hellénistique, ne correspondent pas à un contenu spirituel particulier de l'image. Cependant, aux VI<sup>e</sup> et VII<sup>e</sup> siècles, domine déjà une forme plus spiritualisée et hiératique, plus transcendante et philanthrope, comme en témoigne l'icône à l'encaustique du Sinaï. Cette forme sera celle du visage du Christ d'époque byzantine ultérieure (Pl. VII).

N. Ghioles

## ESCHATOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF CHRIST

Eschatology dominates the New Testament and appears already in its earliest texts, the Epistles of St Paul the Apostle. It stems from Hebrew ideology<sup>1</sup> and proclaims the restoration of Christ's Kingdom on the Last Day, on his triumphal return to earth. In art this expected event was represented in the West from the early years of Christianity, mainly on the basis of the eschatological biblical text *par excellence* the Revelation of St John the Theologian (the Divine).<sup>2</sup> In the East, in contrast to the West, eschatological themes in Byzantine art are not inspired by the Revelation. This is due to the fact that there (excepting Egypt) this bold text was not recognized as a canonical book of the New Testament until much later (late 7th c.),<sup>3</sup> without it entering liturgical, ecclesiastical life after this recognition.

1. E. Teichmann, *Die paulinischen Vorstellungen von Auferstehung und Gericht und Beziehungen zur jüdischen Apokalypik*, Freiburg i.Br.-Leipzig 1896. B. Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends. Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes*, Graz-Wien-Köln 1966 (hereafter: *Tradition*), 23-27. Y. Christe, *La vision de Matthieu (Math. XXIV-XXV). Origines et développement d'une image de la Second Parousie*, Paris 1973. M. Kehl, *Eschatologie*, Würzburg 1986.

2. F. van der Meer, *Majestas Domini. Théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien*, Rome 1938. J. Engemann, *Images parousiastiques dans l'art paléochrétien*, in R. Petraglio et alii (ed.), *L'Apocalypse de Jean. Tradition exégetique et iconographique. IIIe-XIIIe siècles*, Geneva 1979, 73-108 (hereafter: *L'Apocalypse*). P. Huber, *Apokalypse. Bilderzyklen zur Johannes-Offenbarung in Trier, auf dem Athos und von Caillaud d'Argers*, Düsseldorf 1989.

3. At the Quini-Sextum Council (Council in Trullo) in 692. However, only in the tenth century did article 27 of the canonical books of the New Testament prevail in Byzantium, and the Revelation was not considered a canonical text until the fourteenth century (A. Wikenhausen – J. Schmid, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1973, 644ff. W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Heidelberg 1978, 440-441. P. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, Berkeley 1985). Exceptions are the regions of Eastern Illyricum (Western Balkans up to and including Thessaloniki) which were ecclesiastically subject to Rome from 395/6 until 732/3 (M.V. Anastas, *The Transfer of Il-*



For rendering the triumphal return of Christ to earth on the Last Day, Byzantine art resorts to the relevant gospel descriptions and prefigurations of the event, to the prophetic and patristic references to the subject, in conjunction with imperial ceremonial, doctrinal and liturgical texts.<sup>4</sup>

How is the figure of Christ portrayed in representations of triumphal eschatological content? Although the authors of the New Testament give a host of information on Christ's life and action on earth, they are mute on his facial features and bodily physique. This is true of the earliest patristic texts too,<sup>5</sup> which is only to be expected in this difficult period of persecutions, when the sole concern of Christians was the moral teaching of Christ, which gave them strength in their obdurate fight on behalf of the faith. Issues such as the outward appearance of the Lord were of secondary significance for the true Christians, who followed the Bible to the letter, since in this period in particular an aniconic spirit prevailed.<sup>6</sup>

The lacuna existing in canonical tradition on the earthly form of Christ was filled by the apocryphal Christian narratives. These were generated both by Orthodox circles and by heretical Gnostic circles, as well as by the popular imagination, which was influenced by the figural tradition of Graeco-Roman art. Thus the folk apocryphal literature presents as primary sources for the idealized image of Christ on earth, visions of pious persons, to whom the Lord appeared, sometimes *like a nice little child*, or as *a comely child* or as *a youth*, or, under the influence of the Gospel's phrase *I am the Good Shepherd* (John 10:11), as *a good shepherd* (Pl. 13). Under Gnostic influence, beauty was also combined with supernatural size: as *a tall*

*man, whose head is higher than the sky* etc. (Pl. 14a).<sup>7</sup> These popular concepts were rooted in the dominant Graeco-Roman tradition of the *good and virtuous man* and the Apollonian beauty of the divine figure.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, the patristic literature of the early Church, having no authentic testimony on the figure of Christ, resorted to a pessimistic conception of this,<sup>9</sup> based on Isaiah's prophecy about the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 53:2-3): *And when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected by men.* This view was expressed by the martyr Justin († 167)<sup>10</sup> and was followed by Clement of Alexandria († 215), Origen († 254), Tertullian († mid-3rd c.) and St Cyprian († 258).<sup>11</sup> This situation continued even after the Edict of Tolerance in 313. Basil the Great († 379), St Cyril of Alexandria († 444), Theodoretos of Cyrrhus († 458)<sup>12</sup> and others speak in a similar manner. St John Chrysostom († 407), commenting on the 44th Psalm, tries to interpret the ἀμορφία (formlessness) of Christ with *the rejected*, that is the phrase of Isaiah refers to the great compliancy of the Lord, who deigned to become a man and to pass through all the earthly paltry things and habits.<sup>13</sup>

For living from the Revelation in this region see J. Snyder, The Meaning of the 'Maiestas Domini' in Hosios David, *Byzantion* 37 (1967), 142-143. N. Ghioles, Εἰκονογραφικές παρατηρήσεις στο μωσαϊκό της μονῆς Λατόμου στή Θεσσαλονίκη, *Παρουσία* 2 (1984), 83-94. For iconographic elements of the ninth-tenth century in Cappadocia, which at first sight seem to derive from the Revelation, see N. Thierry, L'Apocalypse de Jean et l'iconographie byzantine, in *L'Apocalypse*, 319-339.

4. Cf. Brenk, *Tradition*, 97ff.

5. G. Soteriou, Ὁ Χριστός ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ, Athens 1914, 9. J. Sauer, *Die ältesten Christusbilder* (Wasmuths Kunsthette 7), Berlin 1920, 2. W.J.A. Visser, *Die Entwicklung des Christusbildes in Literatur und Kunst in der frühchristlichen und frühbyzantinischen Zeit*, Bonn 1934, 23-32. G. Bertram, Die Vorstellung von Christus Jesu auf Grund von biblischen Aussagen über seine Äußerer, *Archäologisches Kongreß*, Berlin 1939, Berlin 1940, 619-620. J. Kollwitz, *Das Christusbild des dritten Jahrhunderts*, Münster 1953 (hereafter: *Christusbild*). Idem, *Christusbild*, *RAC* 3, 2.

6. R. Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach der literarischen Quellen*, Göttingen 1917. W. Elliger, *Die Stellung der alten Christen zu den Bildern in der ersten vier Jahrhunderten nach den Angaben der zeitgenössischen kirchlichen Schriftsteller*, Leipzig 1930. H. von Campenhausen, *Die Bilderfrage als theo-*

7. Cf. R.A. Lipsius – M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum apocrypha*, Leipzig 1891-1903, II.1, 115.6, 232.1; I.51.1; II.1, 250.10; II.1, 193.25; I.51.1. E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (TU, NF 3), Leipzig 1899, 293\*\*, 330\*\*. J.E. Weis-Liebersdorf, *Christus- und Apostelbilder. Einfluß der Apokryphen auf die ältesten Kunsttypen*, Freiburg i.Br. 1902, 28-39. Soteriou, op. cit. (n. 5), 9-10. Sauer, op. cit. (n. 5), 2-3. G. Bertram, Die Vorstellung eines schönen Christus in der alten Kirche, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 3, 1938, 555-558. J. Kollwitz, *Christusbild*, 2-3. Visser, op. cit. (n. 5), 40-48, 60, 124ff. F. Gerke, *Christus in der spätantiken Plastik*, Mainz 1948, 20. P. Hinz, *Deus Homo, I: Das erste Jahrtausend*, Berlin 1973, 55ff., 59 (hereafter: *Deus Homo*). K. Wessel, *Christusbild*, *RbK* 1, Stuttgart 1966, 972.

8. A. Grillmeier, *Der Logos am Kreuz. Zur christologischen Symbolik der älteren Kreuzigungsdarstellung*, Munich 1956, 59-61.

9. G. Bertram, Der Einfluß von Is. 53 auf altkirchliche Vorstellung eines häßlichen Christus, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 3, 1938, 553-555. J. Kollwitz, *Christusbild*, *RAC* 3, 3. Sauer, op. cit. (n. 5), 2. P. Hinz, *Deus Homo*, 32, 59. Grillmeier, op. cit., 42-47.

10. *Since these and words like them had been uttered by the prophets, I said, O Tryphon, these things had been said about the first presence of Christ, during which it had been preached that he would appear dishonoured and ugly and mortal ...*, Διάλογος πρὸς Τρύφωνα, 14 (PG 6, 505; cf. 49, 584; 85, 676; 32, 541-544; 36, 556) and Ἀπολογία, 82 (PG 6, 405). Sauer, op. cit. (n. 5), 2.

11. *Paed.* 3, 1 (PG 8, 558); cf. *Strom.* 3, 17 (PG 8, 1208). *Κατὰ Κέλσον* 6, 75 (PG 11, 1411, 1413). *Adv. Jud.* 14, *Adv. Marcionem* 3, 17 (Kroymann, 404). *De cerne Christi* 9 (Kroymann, 215, 216). Sauer, op. cit. (n. 5), 2.

12. *Εἰς ψαλμὸν μὲν* (PG 29, 396). *Γλαφυρὸς εἰς Ἑξοδον*, Book I, 4 (PG 69, 396). *Εἰς 44 ψαλμὸν*



From the reign of Constantine the Great (324-337) a new conception of what the image of Christ should be was established. Political propaganda cultivated by the court historian Eusebius of Caesaria in Palestine († 339) had a decisive effect on crystallizing the iconographic figure of the Lord. The emperor was considered to be Christ's representative on earth, image of the heavenly God. So people began to imagine the figure of Christ as they were accustomed to seeing the idealized earthly emperor, attributing to the *Theanthropos* (God-Man) expressions and insignia appropriate to the earthly monarch.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the classical ideal of the young unbearded man that prevailed in contemporary Roman society, in conjunction with both the pagan conception of the deity (according to which God has the same form as man but is ideal and perfect in appearance) and the apocryphal tradition of epiphanies of Christ, in which he appears with ideal youthful comeliness, led to the establishment of the unbearded now individualized figure of the *Theanthropos*, which seeks to render the historical personality of Christ. However, this iconographic type is still far removed from the historical figure of Christ on earth. It has a pronounced triumphal content and reflects the triumph of the new religion and the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council (325), which declared Christ's divinity and the consubstantiality (*homoousion*) of Father and Son.<sup>15</sup>

→ In the late Constantinian period (mid-4th c.) the new iconographic type of Christ appeared, with beard and long hair, which is the closest of all to his historical figure.<sup>16</sup> St Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis on Cyprus († 403), well known for his iconoclast views, observes that some, on the pretext of Christ's prosonym as Nazarene, imagined the Lord with long hair, a characteristic of the Nazarenes, who had

hair like a woman (Pan. 80, 6, 5-6).<sup>17</sup> According to St Augustine († 430), the beard was from that time a new masculine ideal, signifying valour, youth, dynamism, action... (*Barba significant fortes, barba significant juvenes, strenuos, impigros, alacres...*, PL 37, 1733). This iconographic type of Christ with long hair and beard, gradually ousted the type of the youthful figure without beard. After a considerable period of coexistence of both types, the former prevailed from the seventh century, becoming traditional for Christ (Pl. 14b).

As is to be expected, in the early centuries of Christian art both iconographic types were used concurrently in subjects of eschatological content, as well as in other Christological representations. This is clearly apparent in representations of the Ascension on sixth-century Palestinian ampullae (*eulogies*)<sup>18</sup> and in the singular compositions in Coptic chapels (5th-7th c.),<sup>19</sup> where the bearded type clearly predominates. In the two monumental mosaics of the Transfiguration of Christ, surviving from the reign of Justinian (527-565), in the monastery of St Catherine on Mt Sinai (548-565)<sup>20</sup> (Pl. IXa) and in the San Apollinare in Classe basilica in Ravenna (549),<sup>21</sup> as well as in the scene of the Ascension combined with the Second Coming, in a miniature in the Syrian Rabbula codex (586),<sup>22</sup> Christ has a beard (Pl. 15). This is also true of earlier representations of the Last Judgement scene, in church of St Pudenziana (c. 400) (Pl. 14b),<sup>23</sup> and of the Second Coming, in church of Sts Cosmas e Damian (c. 530) in Rome (Pl. IXb)<sup>24</sup>, as well as in the miniature of the Wise and the Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1ff.) – of eschatological content – in the Rossano codex (6th c.).<sup>25</sup> The same applies to the apocalyptic

17. PG 41, 43.

18. A. Grabar, *Les ampoules de Terre Sainte, Monza-Bobbio*, Paris 1958, pls III, V, VII, XVII, XIX, XXI, XXVII, XXIX, XXX. N. Ghioles, *Ἡ Ἀνάληψις τοῦ Χριστοῦ βάσει τῶν μνημείων τῆς ἀ' χιλιετηρίδος*, Athens 1981, 281 (hereafter: *Ἀνάληψις*).

19. Ghioles, *Ἀνάληψις*, figs 11-16.

20. G.H. Forsyth – K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Church and Fortress of Justinian*, Ann Arbor Univ. 1971, pls CIII-CV.

21. F.W. Deichmann, *Frühchristlichen Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Baden-Baden 1958, pls 387-388.

22. C. Cecchelli – J. Furlan – M. Salmi, *The Rabbula Gospels. Facsimile Edition of the Miniatures of the Syrian Manuscript Plut. I. 56, in the Medicaen-Laurentian Library*, Olton-Lausanne 1959, 71-72, fol. 13v.

23. W. Oakeshott, *Die Mosaiken von Rom*, Munich 1969, 74-76 (hereafter: *Die Mosaiken*). A. Grabar, *Byzantium from the Death of Theodosius to the Rise of Islam*, Paris 1966, fig. 145 (hereafter: *Byzantium*).

24. Oakeshott, *Die Mosaiken*, 101-104, fig. XII. Grabar, *Byzantium*, fig. 146.

about the language, that is a reed beautiful in appearance; but I think that this is said about Christ... Which other prophet says: We saw him and he had neither form nor beauty! Not that he had no form at all, but that he was despicable. Because, since he agreed to become man, he passed through all demeaning (things). Cf. Soteriou, op. cit. (n. 5), 13-14 and n. 3.

14. E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie in Imperium Romanum*, Leipzig 1935. Idem, *Christus als Imperator*, *Catholica* 5 (1936), 64ff. J. Kollwitz, *Christus als Lehrer und Gesetzübergabe an Petrus in konstantinischen Kunst Roms*, *RQ* 44 (1944), 46ff. Idem, *Das Bild von Christus dem König in Kunst und Liturgie der christlichen Frühzeit*, *ThGl* 37/38 (1947/1948), 95ff. A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*, Paris 1936. P. Hinz, *Deus Homo*, Cf. Per Beskov, *Rex gloriae: The Kingship of Christ in the Early Church*, Stockholm 1962. J. Karayannopoulos, *Konstantin der Grosse und Kaiserkult*, *Historia* 5 (1956), 341-357. T.F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, Princeton 1993, 3-22.

15. P. Hinz, *Deus Homo*, 59. Kollwitz, *Christus als Lehrer*, op. cit. (n. 14), 56ff.



... on the front of the east wall in San Michele in Affricisco (545)<sup>26</sup> and San Apollinare in Classe (second half of 7th c.) in Ravenna. On the contrary, Christ is depicted unbearded in the scene of the Second Coming carved on the wooden doors of the Santa Sabina basilica in Rome (431-433),<sup>27</sup> in the eschatological theophany, of liturgical content, in the church of Hosios David in Thessaloniki (c. 500)<sup>28</sup> (Pl. XI), in the illustration of the parable of the Judgement of the Nations (Matthew 25:31-46), in San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (c. 500),<sup>29</sup> and earlier in the so-called Western type of the Ascension in the ivory in Munich (c. 400).<sup>30</sup>

Alongside these, in the Early Christian period there are also allegorical eschatological images of Christ, primarily of the Lamb, either alone or standing on eschatological Mt Zion, in the midst of other lambs, his flock, the Church,<sup>31</sup> or between the Virgin and St John the Baptist, in an earlier representation of the Deesis in the mosaics in the Sinai monastery,<sup>32</sup> or, last, the Shepherd between lambs, that is the righteous in Paradise, as in the mausoleum of Empress Galla Placidia in Ravenna (424-450)<sup>33</sup> (Pl. 14a).

Finally, after Iconoclasm, the traditional long-haired and bearded figure of Christ predominated in eschatological and in other Christological representations. The iconographic subjects referring to the triumphal event of the completion of the work of the Divine Economy, with the return of the Saviour to earth on the Last Day, in order to judge the quick and the dead, can be distinguished into two groups: the historical biblical prefigurations – the Transfiguration and the Ascension – and the depictions referring directly to this expected event – the Second Coming, the Deesis –, visions of the prophets and scenes from the book of Revelation.

The gospel representation of the Transfiguration of Christ,<sup>34</sup> based on the

gospel texts and displaying little iconographic variation, appeared in the mid-sixth century. It draws on the passages in Matthew (17:1-9), Mark (19:2-13) and Luke (9:28-36). The Apostle Peter already considered the event as a proleptic allusion to the triumphal Second Coming (II Peter 1:12-21). The scene takes place on Mt Tabor, where the Transfigured Christ, within an effulgent mandorla manifesting his divinity, is flanked by the prophets Moses and Elijah. Below, three Apostles present at the Theophany, Peter, James and John, are shown in diverse poses, falling to the ground in astonishment (Pl. IXa). From the second half of the eleventh century the episode of the protagonists ascending and descending the mountain appeared (Pl. XII), at first in the narrative programmes of illuminated gospel books, while from the fifteenth century the episode of the angel within a cloud bearing the two prophets was introduced. Of interest too is the exaggerated rendering of the light on Mt Tabor, from the fourteenth century, which is a direct influence of the mystical teaching of Hesychasm.

The other gospel event that is a more explicit prefiguration of the Second Coming, as the appearing angels declared it to the Apostles, is the Ascension of Christ.<sup>35</sup> Basic source for the Byzantine iconographic type of the subject is the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The scene is known in the iconography of the East from the mid-fifth century and is developed in two zones: in the upper register, Christ in mandorla held by flying angels, ascends to heaven; in the lower, the Apostles stand in amazement on the Mount of Olives, surrounding the Virgin, and the two angels 'clad in white', who appeared with the reassurance that the Lord will return in the same triumphal manner at the Second Coming (Pl. 17).

Precisely because of this eschatological content of the event, the iconography is not confined to the explicit biblical narration. From the outset, Eastern iconography transformed on the one hand the biblical description on the basis of the prophetic visions, and on the other added, under the direct influence of Early Christian Christological disputes, non-historical iconographic elements. The purpose was to underline the doctrine of the Incarnation and its consequences. This was achieved through the passive manner of Christ's Ascension, that is borne up by clouds and angels, and primarily through the introduction of the Virgin, 'symbol' *par excellence* of the human nature of Christ, and of its consequences, that is the founding of the Church on earth which shall continue the work of the Divine Economy of the Lord ascended to heaven, until the end of time. Thus, in order to underline the work of the one and

26. A. Effenberger, *Das Mosaik aus der Kirche San Michele in Affricisco zu Rom*, Berlin 1975, 63-77, figs 15, 22.

27. G. Jeremias, *Die Holztür der Basilika S. Sabina in Rom*, Tübingen 1980, 83-85, pls 68-69. On the contrary, he is bearded in the scene of the Ascension (ibid., 68-72, pls 60-61).

28. Grabar, *Byzantium*, fig. 141. Ghioles, op. cit. (n. 3), 83-94.

29. F.W. Deichmann, *Frühchristlichen Bauten*, fig. 174. Grabar, *Byzantium*, fig. 165.

30. Ghioles, *Ἀνάληψις*, fig. 3.

31. Oakeshott, *Die Mosaiken*, p. 104. R. Wisskirchen, *Der Prototyp des Lämmerfrieses in Alt St. Peter, Tesserae. Festschrift J. Engemann* (= JbAC Ergb. 25), 1991. Idem, *Die Mosaiken der Kirche Santa Prassede in Rom*, Mainz a.R. 1992, 22-24, figs 16-18.

32. G.H. Forsyth - K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine*, pl. CIII.

33. Deichmann, op. cit. (n. 21), pl. 8.

34. G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Evangile aux XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles*, Paris 1916, 216-231. E. Dinkler, *Das Apsismosaik von S. Apollinare in Classe*, Köln-Opladen 1964, 25-50. C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei von vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhun-*

*derts*, Wiesbaden 1960, 69-75. J. Miziolek, *Transfiguration Domini in the Apse at Mount Sinai and the Symbolism of Light*, *JWarb* 53 (1990), 42-60.

35. K. Wessel, *Himmelfahrt Christi*, *RbK* 2, Stuttgart 1971, 1224-1262. Ghioles, *Ἀνάληψις*, op. cit.



indivisible Church, Paul the premier Apostle of the Nations, was added to the conventional list of the Twelve Apostles. Apostle Paul, through the God-inspired texts of his Epistles, his far-sighted and organizing spirit, and his adventurous travels, made a maximum contribution to spreading and consolidating the Christian faith. It goes without saying that this towering figure of the first Church should be present in a representative image of the earthly Church, as this is illustrated in the lower part of the traditional Byzantine representation of the Ascension.

The scene of the Ascension, as rendered in Byzantine art, is not simply a historical scene, but aims to express fundamental dogmatic truths, the doctrine of the two indivisible and inconfusable natures of the *Theanthropos* in one hypostasis. So this iconographic type is the result of the Christological disputes of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The eschatological subject *par excellence* is the epic composition of the Last Judgement.<sup>36</sup> The sources are diverse, such as Old Testament texts (Psalms 7:7-15, 9:5 and 97:2-6; Daniel 12:2-3 and 7:9-14), New Testament texts (Matthew 24:25-36 and 25:31-46; Mark 13:24-37; Luke 17:24-37 and 21:27-36; John 13:17-21; Paul 2; II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 6:2; Revelation 20:11-15), apocryphal (Revelations of Apostle Peter, of Apostle Paul, of the Virgin) and patristic texts, the most important of which are the orations of St Ephraim the Syrian († 377). All these were merged and, in conjunction with the very ancient beliefs on the struggle between Good and Evil, the final judgement and test, together with elements of the triumphal imperial iconography, created the complex composition of the Second Coming and the Last Judgement (Pl. X).

After Iconoclasm, the subject in Byzantine iconography was centred on the Last Judgement. It consists of the following basic elements, which are organized symmetrically about a central axis. Above, Christ enthroned within a mandorla; the Great Judge is flanked as a rule – already from the tenth century – by the Virgin and St John the Baptist, who intercede for the salvation of mankind (*Deesis*). After them come the enthroned Apostles. Hovering behind is the heavenly host of the *myriad angels*. From Christ's feet flows the *river of fire*, terminating left in Hell, and

later in the mouth of the *dragon of the deep*, personification of Hell. Below Christ is the Preparation of the Throne (*Hetoimasia*), towards which the Protoplasts (Adam and Eve) usually advance. Below this is depicted the Weighing of Souls (*Psychostasia*). On the right are groups of the Righteous, proceeding towards Paradise, which is usually shown at the bottom of the representation. Behind the gates of Paradise, which are guarded by cherubim, are Abraham, the enthroned Virgin, the Just Laron and others. On the left, the angel of darkness casts sinners into the *undying fire*. Further down is Hell, in which are depicted in groups the eternal torments of the damned. The angel wrapping heaven and those who sound on trumpets the resurrection of the dead, together with the resurrected dead and the personifications of the sea and the earth, which deliver up the dead, as well as the marine and terrestrial beasts that vomit them forth, are usually placed right and left above Paradise and Hell.

The earliest extant representations of the Second Coming date from the tenth century (Kastoria, Cappadocia). However, the subject must have been created considerably earlier, perhaps in the years immediately after the Restoration of the Icons, although individual elements exist from the period before Iconoclasm. It appears fully developed from the eleventh century (Pl. 18). From the thirteenth century it was enriched with additional elements of catechetical content, particularly concerning representations of the damned and the definition of their sins.

In the Post-Byzantine period, several dramatic events, usually of Western provenance, were added to the representation (Pl. 19). The composition is now combined with the triumphal first phase of Christ's descent from heaven, in the company of the heavenly hosts and saints, the Heavenly Ladder, Heavenly Jerusalem, the Vision of Prophet Daniel (7:17) about the four kings who will be lost (four beasts), All Saints, the Holy Trinity of Western type, the angel with the flaming glaive, Charos, a host of torments of sinners, monsters and devils, etc.

From the Palaeologan period, part of the Second Coming constituted a subject in its own right. This is the composition of All Saints in Paradise.<sup>37</sup> It refers to the *Second Coming because beyond this there is no punishment*,<sup>38</sup> that is the Just after the Judgement. From the sixteenth century, its usual form was as follows. In the upper part is a disc, at the centre of which is Christ in a mandorla, held by the four symbols of the Evangelists. The Great Judge sits on a rainbow and normally holds

36. B. Brenk, *Tradition*, op. cit. (n. 1). K. Papadopoulos, *Die Wandmalerei des XI. Jahrhunderts in der Kirche Παναγία τῶν Χαλκῶν in Thessaloniki*, Graz-Köln 1966, 57-76. D. Mouriki, An Unusual Representation of the Last Judgement in a Thirteenth Century Fresco at St George Near Kouvaras in Attica, *ΔΧΑΕ Η'* (1975-1976), 145-171. J.K. Rigopoulos, *Ὁ ἀγιογράφος Θεόδωρος Πουλάρχης καὶ ἡ φλαμανδική χαλκογραφία*, Athens 1979, 77-88. M. Garidis, *Études sur le Jugement Dernier post-byzantin du XVe à la fin du XIXe siècle. Iconographie-esthétique*, Thessaloniki 1985. V. Kepetzi, Quelques remarques sur le motif de l'enroulement du ciel dans l'iconographie byzantine du Jugement Dernier, *ΔΧΑΕ ΙΖ'* (1993-1994), 99-112.

37. G. Millet, *La Dalmatique du Vatican. Les élus: images et croyances*, Paris 1945, 84ff. A. Xynopoulos, *Σχεδιάσμα ιστορίας τῆς θρησκευτικῆς ζωγραφικῆς μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν*, Athens 1957, 306ff. G. Gounaris, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Λεμῶνος Λέσβου*, Thessaloniki 1999, 102-104.

38. F. Millet, *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, Paris 1855-1857, 278.



an open book inscribed with the passage from Matthew's Gospel (25:34): *Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you...* He is flanked by the Virgin and St John the Baptist. Above his head, angels project the symbol of salvation, the Cross, and two others hold open the gates of Paradise. Below Christ's feet is the Throne of the *Hetoimasia*, towards which the Protoplasts venerate. Arranged all around are the ranks of the Righteous. In the bottom part Paradise is depicted, with Abraham and Jacob, the souls of the Righteous and the Just Laron.

Already from the tenth century, the central part of the scene of the Second Coming is the Deesis, in which the Virgin and St John the Baptist turn with gestures of supplication towards Christ<sup>39</sup> (Pl. 20a). No biblical text refers to this. The subject was created under the direct influence of the related epicleses in the Divine Liturgy (Deesis), combined with imperial ceremonial.<sup>40</sup> It is the essence of the belief that the mediation of the saints to the Great Judge, on behalf of men, is particularly effective. Certainly even more effective is the mediation to the most forbearing and most merciful Lord of his most familiar persons, his Mother and the Forerunner, the first of all men to acknowledge his divinity, which is why they were placed at the top of the hierarchy of saints. The Deesis was to become a fundamental element for Byzantine veneration, which attests the unshakable faith in the mediatory role of the Theotokos and the Precursor on the Last Day.

The Deesis appears in art as an independent subject in the sixth century and was incorporated in the epic compositions of the Last Judgement in the tenth. Already from the sixth century, angels and apostles are added to the three central figures of the subject (Trimorph). Thus was created the Great Deesis, which is attested in monuments from the ninth century. Indeed, on account of the liturgical sources combined with its eschatological content, it became a dominant feature of

the decoration of the iconostasis in churches. From the Palaeologan period, Deesis representations on the iconostasis were called, on account of the presence of many apostles, also as *Apostolica*, which on Post-Byzantine iconostases, when the Crucifixion with rood figures (*lypera*) was placed on the top of the iconostasis, constituted an independent section, without the traditional Trimorph, which was replaced by the historic scene of the Crucifixion.

From the late fourteenth century Christ in the Deesis was also depicted wearing prelatric vestments.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes, mainly in icons for private devotions, the figure of St John the Baptist is replaced by another saint, preferred by the icon's owner, while the Virgin and Child may also be substituted for Christ.<sup>42</sup>

Some prophetic Theophanies (*Majestas Domini*)<sup>43</sup> are also of eschatological content. The subject is inspired by eschatological references in the Divine Liturgy, which describes the heavenly majesty of Christ with elements taken from traditional prophetic visions. However, elements derived from the Revelation of St John the Theologian were also added to the iconography, that is the four apocalyptic beasts (4:6-8) which, in accordance with the interpretations of the Fathers of the Church, became the symbols of the Evangelists. As a rule, the compositions include Christ, sometimes young and unbearded, sometimes bearded, and rarely as the Ancient of Days, seated on a rainbow or a throne within a mandorla and surrounded by the tetramorphs.<sup>44</sup> In a series of representations in the semi-dome of the apse, in early Middle Byzantine monuments in Cappadocia (Pl. 20b), the central subject is framed by other heavenly powers in strict hierarchy – thrones-*rotae*, cherubim and archangels, as well as by figures of prophets in veneration. The symbols of the Evangelists are inscribed *singing, beseeching, calling and speaking*. These words from the text of divine Liturgy belie the source of inspiration for the entire composition, which is essentially a visual commentary on the mystical, eschatological content of the liturgical texts.<sup>45</sup>

39. T. von Bogyay, *Deesis*, *RbK I*, Stuttgart 1966, 1178-1186. Idem, *Deesis und Eschatologie*, *Polychordia, Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, Amsterdam 1967, II, 59-72. C. Walter, Two Notes on the Deësis, *REB* 26 (1998), 311-336. Idem, Further Notes on the Deësis, *REB* 28 (1970), 161-187. Idem, Bulletin on the Deësis and the Paraclesis, *REB* 38 (1980), 261-269. N. Thierry, A propos des peintures d'Ayvali Köy. Les programmes absidaux à trois registres avec Déisis en Cappadoce et en Géorgie, *Zograf* 5 (1974), 5-22. T. Velmans, L'image de la Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans celles d'autres régions du monde byzantin. Ier partie: La Déisis dans l'abside, *CahArch* 29 (1981), 48-102. Eadem, L'image de Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans le reste du monde byzantin, 2e partie: La Déisis dans la coupole, sur le façade et dans les images du Jugement Dernier, *CahArch* 31 (1983), 129-173. R. Mazurkiewicz, *Deesis*, Cracow 1994. T. Stepan, Die Mosaiken des Athosklosters Vatopedi. Stilkritische und ikonographische Überlegungen, *CahArch* 42 (1994), 107ff.

40. Cf. A. Cutler, Under the Sign of Deesis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature, *DOP* 41 (1978), 145-154.

41. L. Grigoriadou, L'image de la Deësis Royale dans une fresque du XIVe siècle à Castoria, *Actes du XIVe CIEB*, Bucharest 1974, II, 46-52. T. Papamastorakis, Η μορφή του Χριστού-Μεγάλου Αρχιερέα, *ΔΧΑΕ ΙΖ'* (1993-1994), 74-76.

42. Cf. Ch. Pennas, An Unusual 'Deesis' in the Narthex of the Panagia Krena, Chios, *ΔΧΑΕ ΙΖ'* (1993-1994), 193-198.

43. van der Meer, op. cit. (n. 2). J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, Théophanies - visions auxquelles participent les prophètes dans l'art byzantin après la restauration des images, *Synthronon*, Paris 1968, 135-143. G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels*, Vienna 1979, 73ff. C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords*, Paris 1991.

44. N. Panselinou, Τα σύμβολα των Ευαγγελιστών στη βυζαντινή μνημειακή τέχνη. Μορφή και περιεχόμενο, *ΔΧΑΕ ΙΖ'* (1993-1994), 79-86.

45. G. de Jerphanion, Les noms des quatre animaux et le commentaire liturgique du Pseudo-



As has been said, the Revelation,<sup>46</sup> the last book of the New Testament, was incorporated late in the evangelical canon of the Byzantine Church. Consequently, there are very few essential influences in Byzantine iconography. Only in the mid-sixteenth century, under the direct influence of Western engravings of the Counter-Reformation (L. Cranach, H. Holbein, W. Vorstermann, M. Lempereur, A. Dürer, J. Sadeler et alii), was the narrative cycle of the Revelation introduced in the Post-Byzantine art of Mt Athos, the first important monuments being in the Dionysiou (1547) (Pl. 16) and Docheiariou (1568) monasteries.

In these first representations of the Apocalypse in the Orthodox world, the painters did not slavishly copy the Western models. Of course they followed faithfully the general structure of the compositions in Western prints, but the individual iconographic elements, such as the natural environment, the buildings, facial features and garments, as well as the style, are consistent with current Orthodox artistic tradition. The dramatic impact and hardness, characteristic of Western woodcuts, is not observed. Most important of all is the fact that in those episodes alluding to Christ (Revelation 1:14, 8:1-3, 9:13-21, 14:14), he is depicted in the serene and dulcet type of the Pantocrator of the period, with long black hair and short beard, and not as the Revelation describes him with *his hair... white like wool* (1:14), and as rendered by the Western engravers with the particularly austere characteristics of God the Father. This confirms the Christocentric character of Orthodox art, which portrays the Lord as helpmeet and protector of mankind rather than as a terrible and merciless judge, even in the iconography of this the harshest of biblical texts. Something similar occurred in the East in some works from the seventeenth century onwards, in which there are pronounced Western influences.

Thus eschatological representations in Byzantine art constitute primarily a doxology of the divine majesty of the Incarnate Word. At the same time, they are inundated with the undying hope and prayer to the All-Merciful and Philanthropic Judge, which are concentrated in the following lines: *When thou comest in glory, Christ, with holy angels, to judge the universe, when everyone shall come before thee, naked, to give account for their deeds, then, O Word, place me with thy sheep, granting me absolution from those transgressions I committed while in life.*<sup>47</sup>

Germain, *La voix des monuments*, I, Paris 1930, 250-158. Galavaris, op. cit. (n. 43), 17ff., 36ff., 84ff., 162ff. N. Ghioles, 'Ο βυζαντινός τροῦλλος καί τό εἰκονογραφικό του πρόγραμμα (μέσα βου αἰ.-1204), Athens 1990, 145-146.

46. J. Renaud, *Le cycle de l'Apocalypse de Dionysiou, interpretation byzantine de gravures occidentals*, Paris 1943. P. Huber, *Apokalypse*, 98ff.

47. Παράκλητική ἡτοι Ὁκτώηχος ἡ Μεγάλη (Publication of the Apostolic Deaconate of the Church of Greece), Athens 1994, 233.

Nikos Zias

## THE HOUSE OF GOD IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AS AN EXPRESSION OF CHRIST AND OF LITURGICAL LIFE

The Incarnation of the Word, the birth of Jesus Christ in the little town of Bethlehem in Galilee, on the eastern fringe of the Roman Empire, is the major watershed in history, which brought about radical changes in every aspect of human expression, ranging from the new cosmology and the new anthropology to a variety of practical activities.

In religious architecture, with the building of churches, there was a marked change from the temples and sanctuaries of the ancient world and Graeco-Roman tradition. At first sight, the few hints to be gleaned from the New Testament with regard to architecture and its role in the worship of God, seem to be rather negative. In the well-known exchange between Christ and the woman of Samaria,<sup>1</sup> Christ proclaims that communication with God can be achieved in any place and in any land. One might perhaps extend and interpret this speech to imply that special rooms and buildings are not necessary in order to worship God, for *they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth* (John 4: 24). This seems, if not to preclude special rooms and buildings, at least to attach little value to them. St Paul is even more categorical in his famous sermon delivered on the Areopagus, where, standing beneath the masterpieces of Classical Athenian architecture on the Acropolis, he candidly stated that *God, who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands* (Acts 17:24).

On the other hand, Christ and his Disciples used to visit the Temple of Solomon, thus accepting the role of a specific building as a place in which to pray and inter-

1. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said unto her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father is seeking such to worship him. God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth'* (John 4:20-24).