

Paths of Devotion, Art, and Liturgy throughout the Palaiologan Era

The Enthroned Virgin with the Child, Holy Patrons, and Archangels, in the Semi-dome of the Main Apse of the Wallachian Church Dedicated to Saint Nicholas in Curtea de Argeș*

Lucian Lechințan**

Abstract: *The present paper has as its focus the decoration of the Princely Church's semi-dome; an iconographic context which offers a display of the enthroned ever-Virgin holding Jesus in her arms. Such a decoration is not normally problematic if it were not for the adjunction of two holy figures on the sides. This original screen captures familiar devotional practices, as well as bringing together both the patronal aspect, linked directly to St. Nicholas to whom the church is dedicated, and the liturgical one, related to St. John Chrysostom, in his quality as the author of a Liturgy. The foundation of the Wallachian Ecclesiastical Metropolis in 1359 was the occasion for this innovative display. It is stated that Constantinopolitan norms were observed in the choice of the iconography yet its affiliation to a precise monument remains unresolved. The painters intended, in this case, to portray not merely an ordinary Virgin and Child, but to portray what is to be considered a local identity pattern. The last part of the article is dedicated to the liturgical inscription under the semi-dome. In author's opinion, its presence reflects a debate aroused at the Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos. An analysis of the historical context suggests the years for the completion of the wall-paintings at an already advanced date, most likely, 1364/5.*

Keywords: *Virgin holding Jesus, Kyriotissa, Holy patrons, Apse decoration, Great Lavra, Palaiologan art, Wallachia, Curtea de Argeș, Kyiv, Pecherskaja*

In Romania, in the historical province of Wallachia, more precisely south of the Carpathians, on the banks of the River Argeș, a church dedicated to St. Nicholas was built between the fourth and sixth decades of the 14th

* Dedicated to scholar Ioana Iancovescu (nun Ignatia), with whom the author first discovered the church. Many thanks on behalf of the reviewer Thomas J. Carroll, S.J..

** Lechințan Lucian, PhD, Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome: ltechintan@orientale.it

century. Lying on a small promontory, the church is oriented west-east and is of a cross-in-square plan of medium size (fig. 1). If we choose to approach our monument through historical sources, the first notable mentions of the Princely Church date back to the mid-17th century. The religious edifice never had the status of a monastery but always that of a Princely Church (Biserica Domnească) linked to the function of being a palatine chapel and a necropolis for the rulers. It must be admitted, however, that for a brief period the Seat of the new Wallachian Ecclesiastical Metropolis, founded in 1359, was probably also located here. Therefore the foundation of the church played a most important role in enshrining in these territories a new order both political and religious. After the Hungarian Kingdom's pacification and the Angevin dynasty's ascension to the throne (1307), simultaneously with the weakening of the Bulgarian state due to the Turkish advancing, the new Basarab lineage established their dominion as lords of the Argeş and Câmpulung lands.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Originally the church was part of a building ensemble that included a mansion house and several attached buildings grouped within a four-sided stone wall to the southwest of the church. Shortly after its construction in the second half of the 14th century, the church was completely covered, top to bottom, inside the sanctuary, the naos, and the narthex, with highly valuable artistic wall paintings. Passing through a narrow narthex and a portal carved out of a thick wall with no trace of sculptural decoration, one arrives in the naos, a unified area that rewards the eye by its opening at the top of a very wide and flooded with warm light. Of the sanctuary's apse, due to a stone iconostasis integrated in the mid-18th century, only the upper half is visible, precisely the monumental composition with the enthroned Virgin holding Jesus in her arms, here a classical *Kyriotissa* or, even better, a Constantinopolitan *Nikopeia* (fig. 2). The child has a folded scroll in his left hand, while he gives the blessing with his right hand, being framed by two bishops and two archangels. The decoration of this main apse features habitual scenes such as *The Communion of the Apostles* and *The Liturgy of the Fathers*, to which is added a spectacular *Ark of Covenant* and a vast *Cycle of Resurrection*, together with *Parables* and other *Evangelical scenes*.

In a good state of conservation, the semi-dome of the apse was painted in only four *giornate*: the first concerned the profile of the Virgin, two others the bishops and the archangels, and the last one the body of the Virgin and the child¹. The original iconography has long aroused the interests of important scholars². The throne on which the Virgin is seated is simple,

¹ The restorer Dan Mohanu states that the original background was painted using a precious lapis lazuli pigment and that, as early as the 18th century, what was left of this colour was covered with an enamelled blue. Finishing touches affected not only the background but also the dress of the Archangel Michael. Between 1827-1837 there was the keying of the semi-dome in preparation for a new layer of frescoes, followed by several other repaintings. In 1914, the painter D. Noroceă "covered with dry retouchings the entire scene." These were removed only during the last restoration of the entire semi-dome starting from 1980. The operation was carried out on a meticulous scientific basis and in various stages, but the restoration of the entire church building was never fully accomplished. Dan Mohanu is of the opinion that this fresco is the work of two major masters, one "static" and the other "dynamic". Dan Mohanu, *Arheologia picturilor murale de la biserica Sf. Nicolae Domnesc din Curtea de Argeș*, Ed. A.R.A. – Arhitectură, Restaurare, Arheologie, Bucharest 2011, 174-182; ID., "O nouă etapă în conservarea picturilor murale din secolul XIV de la Argeș: absida altarului", *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor - Monumente Istorice și de Artă* (1989) 48-62, here pp. 54-57, and p. 49, fig. 3 (for the graphic showing the different stages of achievement).

² Ion Mihail, "Pictura Bisericii Domnești din Curtea de Argeș", *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*, 10-14 (1923) 180, plate IIIa, ill. 196, 202a,b,c; Ioan D. Ștefănescu, *Contribution à l'étude des peintures murales valaques (Transylvanie, district de Vâlcea, Târgoviște et region de București)*, Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1928, 10, 14; Orest Tafrali, *Monuments Byzantins de Curtea de Arges*, Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1931, 52-56, II. *Album, plates XXV/2/bis/, XXVI-XXVII, CXXIV/2*; Ioan D. Ștefănescu, *La peinture religieuse en Valachie et en Transylvanie: depuis les origines jusqu'au XIX^e siècle*, I. *Texte.*, II. *Album*, Orient et Byzance 6, Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1932, 34-36; Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria Artei Feudale în Țările Române. Artă în perioada de*

backless, and decorated with a mask on the right foot, an aspect that reveals the metropolitan character of the decoration³. Two cushions, one red in front, the other blue-green behind, recall the identical choice of colours in the apse mosaic of St. Sophia, Thessaloniki, and in the wall painting in St. Sophia, Ohrid (ca. 1037-1056). The Virgin is framed on the right side by St. Nicholas, the church's patron, while on the left stands St. John Chrysostom, in his role of author of the homonymous liturgy celebrated in this area. The two bishops are depicted in three-quarter profiles, wearing *omophoria* and *phelonia polystauria* as distinctive marks of their episcopal rank, while in their hands they hold closed codices. They are followed by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, taller than the bishops, with their hands veiled and introducing the clergymen to the Virgin and child. The Archangels do not wear liturgical or imperial robes. The one behind St. Nicholas wears a simple tunic over which a long *chiton* is clasped, while the Archangel on the left, behind St. John Chrysostom, wears a blue tunic and a red overcoat fitted with sleeves.

dezvoltare a feudalismului, vol. I, Ed. Academiei, Bucharest, 1959, 341-342, figg. 295-296; Maria Ana Musicescu, "Arta în Țara Românească din secolul al XIV-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea. Pictura", in George Oprescu, ed., *Istoria Artelor Plastice în România*, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1968, 164, fig. 139; Grigore Ionescu – Ana Maria Musicescu, *Biserica Domnească din Curtea de Argeș*, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1976, 22, 28, draw II, ill. IV-VII; Carmen Laura Dumitrescu, "Anciennes et nouvelles hypothèses sur un monument roumain du XIV siècle, l'église Saint-Nicolas-Domnesc de Curtea de Argeș", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, Série beaux-arts* 16 (1979) 26, fig. 8; Corina Popa, *Christian art in Romania, the 14th century*, vol. III, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1983, 50, plate 11; Daniel Barbu, *Pictura murală din Țara Românească în secolul al XIV-lea*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest, 1986, 38-39, 41-42, 52, 97, rep. I, ill. 13-14; Maria Grazia Tolfo, *La chiesa di San Nicola Domnesc a Curtea de Argeș. Problemi storici e restituzione dell'originario progetto narrativo delle pitture trecentesche*, vol. I Testo, vol. II Tavole (typed, unpublished PhD thesis), Università degli Studi di Parma, 1987-1988, 181-182, plates 33-34; EAD., *Arte e spiritualità nella Valacchia del Trecento. Il programma decorativo della chiesa di S. Nicolae Domnesc a Curtea de Argeș*, Milan – Brescia, 1989, 16; Ana Dumitrescu, "Une nouvelle datation des peintures murales de Curtea de Argeș. Origine de leur iconographie", *Cahiers archéologiques* 37 (1989) 152, fig. 25-26; Tania Velmans, "Le décor du sanctuaire de l'église de Calendzhikha. Quelques schémas rares: la Vierge entre Pierre et Paul, la Procession des anges et le Christ de Pitié", in *L'art médiéval de l'Orient chrétien: recueil d'études*, Éditions LIK Distributeur - Éditions Picard, Sofia, 2002, 228; Dan Mohanu, *Arheologia*, cit., 174-182, fig. 60-64, plates 14-20; Constantin Ciobanu, "Pictura murală din Țara Românească în secolele XIV-XV", in Răzvan Theodorescu – Marius Porumb, ed., *Arta din România. Din Preistorie în contemporaneitate*, vol. I., Ed. Mega, Bucharest – Cluj Napoca, 2018, 149, fig. 232.

³ Doula Mouriki considers: "The fact that mask and classical details of this kind are lacking in provincial works assigns to these motifs a special importance in terms of their cultural implications". Doula Mouriki, "The Mask Motif in the Wall Paintings of Mistra. Cultural Implications of a Classical Feature in Late Byzantine Painting", in *Studies in Late Byzantine Painting*, The Pindar Press, London, 1995, 96.

1. Constantinopolitan Stylistic Legacy in Wallachia

From the very beginning it is important to stress the painters' ability of representing multiple figures on a concave surface. This fact makes evident not only the excellent skills of the masters but also the importance accorded to this iconographic screen, given that it required considerable perspectival efforts in relation to a surface not generous in size. A hierarchical perspective is observed, with the Virgin in the foreground, while the other profiles gradually assume different proportions. The painters here do not rely on a logic of linear construction, but attempt to overcome frontality. In fact, an axial display is dictated by the figures disposed on the sides. In the same vein, as a response to the figures depicted in three-quarter view, one might also consider the choice of representing the throne in a lateral diametrical axonometry. Seen from the centre of the church, the perspectival lines affecting the semi-dome are remarkably well executed.



Fig. 3.

It might be mentioned that, for the expressions, the painters have used an elongated module that draws its origin from the late-Comnenian art, similar to the examples of Studenica, Virgin's Church (ca. 1208-1209), revisited in Palaiologan times for the decoration of King's Church (1313-1314). The only exception is that of the figure of John Chrysostom, which is precisely a citation of a Constantinopolitan pattern, like the one of Kariye Camii (1315-1321) to which it is related, and is significantly different from the one in St. Sophia in Constantinople (last quarter of 10th century, north tympanum of the nave) (fig. 3). The painters are remarkable for their smooth modelling aimed at showing radiant facial values rather than contrasts, a refined style that Doula Mouriki recognizes as the hallmark of the painters of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki (ca. 1313-1314)⁴. In fact, in Argeş the

⁴ Doula Mouriki, "Stylistic trends in Monumental Painting of Greece at the beginning of the XIVth century", in *Studies in Late Byzantine*, cit., 9.

painters have dressed the two Archangels identically to those of Thessaloniki and of Verria, Christ's Church (ca. 1315), the only difference being in chromatic choices and in the fact that in our church the contours of the profiles are more elongated. The figures have not yet undergone that tendency toward deformation that V. Djurić noted in the Hilandar parekklesion dedicated to the Synaxis of the Holy Archangels. There the search for expressiveness seems to be the first concern of the painters, as also in the Macedonian churches of the last forty years of the 14th century (Zaum, St. Nicholas Šiševski, Zrze), to the detriment of the lightness and the lack of all tension that we find in our fresco⁵. For Jesus' figure, the painters were first and foremost interested in showing lifelike appearance, and the hair of the child's small head does not seem to be inspired by Byzantine patterns but rather by thirteenth-century Italian paintings. Attention must be paid also to the sharpness of the folds of the angel's garments, their sculptural character, and the refined interplay of shadows and light for the Virgin's mantle. All these elements indicate that the painters considered anatomical likeness to be important and that modelling was a constant concern on their part.

These considerations point to a style related to a 14th-century painter, Kalliergis, the "best painter in Thessaly", as he presents himself in the dedicatory inscription from Verria (1314-1315), although this connection is not clearly supported by circumstances⁶. To the same family of images,

⁵ Vojislav J. Djurić, "Fresques Médiévales à Hilandar. Contribution au catalogue des fresques du Mont Athos", in *Actes du XIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines: Ochride, 10-16 septembre 1961*, Comité Yougoslave des études byzantines, Beograd, 1964, 89.

⁶ The painter was living in Thessaloniki when the mosaics of the Holy Apostles were finished (ca. 1313-1314) and, as Doula Mouriki mentions, here he became acquainted with the designing of a genuine Constantinopolitan iconographic program. Later, his presumable works on Mount Athos in the katholikon of the Hilandar Monastery (1321-1322, repaintings in 1803-1804) show only the actualization of the principles learned in Thessaloniki, to which the painter added, as a personal mark, the elongated shape of the figures and the manner of modelling without contrasts. A turning point in the studies on Kalliergi's workshop belongs to S. Pelekanidē, who in 1973 came to the conclusion that the Hilandar frescoes belong to a different workshop, in any case not to the Thessalonian one of Kalliergis. This affirmation would have required a more detailed iconographic discussion. The argument of M. Marković orienting the attribution of the Hilandar frescoes to the workshop of Michael and Eutychius is not well-founded. The artistic workshop in Staro Nagorichino shows a different stylistic horizon from the one of Hilandar. Consider here the stylistic arguments advanced by D. Mouriki on the wall-paintings of Hilandar and on the main role of Thessaloniki in relation to Serbia and Macedonia. Cf. Stylianos M. Pelekanidēs, *Kalliergēs: holēs Thettalias aristos zōgraphos*, Ed. Archaiologikē Hetaireia, Athēnais, 1973, 126-127; M. Marković, "Probitni zhivopis glavne manastirske cerkve", in Gojko Subotić, ed., *Manastir Hilandar*, Galerija Srpske Akademije Nauka i Umetnosti, Beograd, 1998, 241-242; Doula Mouriki, "Stylistic trends", cit., 12-13, 27-28; Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, "Painter's Information on Themselves in Late Byzantine Church Inscriptions", in Michele Bacci, ed., *L'artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*, *Giornate di studio*, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 21-22 novembre 2003, Seminari e Convegni 12, Edizioni della Normale, Pisa, 2007, 64-66; Euthymios.

related to a workshop in Constantinople, might be included also the “Madonna of Ciambretta”, a mosaic of the Virgin and Child, dated to the early fourteenth century, now in Messina at the Regional Museum and previously attributed to a regional workshop⁷ (fig. 4). It seems to have become quite fashionable at that time for the painters to look at archaic patterns such as when representing frontality in a lack of a strict symmetry. The vividness of Virgin's expressive figure is achieved by gently emphasizing her left eyebrow, as in the 6th-century Sinai's encaustic icons, including the famous bust of the *Pantokrator*.



Fig. 4.

As for the artists who painted in the semi-dome, one of them is definitely the “red *phelonion*” painter. In the semi-dome he is recognizable via the inward-turned part of St. Nicholas's *phelonion*, and he is the one who painted a bishop in the *Fathers' Liturgy* (St. Gregory the Theologian, in the last register of the hemicycle, the second figure) and, more broadly, almost all the holy bishops depicted in the space of the *prothesis*.

N. Tsigaridas, *Toichografies tēs periodou tōn Palaiologōn se naous tēs Makedonias*, Ed. Pournaras P., Thessalonikē, 1999, 11-29, ill. 1-24; Dimitrije Bogdanović, - Vojislav J. Djurić, - Dejan Medaković, *Chilandar*, Ed. Monastery of Chilandar, The Holy Mountain – Belgrade, 1997, 81-96; Geōrgios G. Gounaris, *The Church of Christ in Verria*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 1991, 47-51; Vojislav J. Djurić, “Fresques Médiévales”, cit., 78-83.

⁷ Cf. Valentino Pace, “Pittura bizantina nell'Italia meridionale (secoli XI – XIV)”, in Guglielmo Cavallo – al., *I bizantini in Italia*, Ed. Libri Scheiwiller, Milan, 1982, 489-490, ill. 445; Maria Pia Di Dario Guida, *Icone di Calabria e altre icone meridionali*, Messina 1992, 205-207; EAD., “Gli effetti delle prescrizioni tridentine. La *Madonna della lettera*”, in Maria Katja Guida, ed., *La Madonna delle Vittorie a Piazza Armerina: dal Gran Conte Ruggero al Settecento*, Electa, Naples, 2009, 174-176.

2. Devotional Grounds and Spread of New Iconographies

From the beginning it must be noted that the painters of Argeş were deeply aware of what an apse decoration would require. To this effect, the iconography was not conceived regardless of the representation of *Christ's genealogy* that precedes it on the barrel vault and on the intrados of the middle arch⁸. These themes of the Old Testament, initially displayed in the narthex, gradually reached the area of the sanctuary, a trend which became more accentuated in the Palaiologan era⁹.

The screen of the *Enthroned Virgin with the Child and Saints* is distinguished by a number of details upon which we will dwell. Before starting, it is necessary to make reference to a notion suggested by Gordana Babić, who, examining various decorative programs of Georgian apses in the 13th century, has noted the existence of a number of discrepancies in the process of elaboration of a program with reference to a so-called "prototype". The scholar considered that subsequent developments of a "pattern" should be considered not direct copies but already transitional approaches¹⁰. Very often the features of the original "pattern" are not precisely duplicated, and attention must be turned to historical and social grounds contributing to this

⁸ At Mistra, in the metropolis of St. Demetrios (late 13th c., ca. 1270-1285), close to the triumphal arch, the prophet David appears on the south wall and Solomon on the north wall. The inscriptions on their scrolls link the sequence to the representation of the main semi-dome featuring the enthroned Virgin: she is the true gateway of salvation, and the texts of the Prophets give evidence to this fact. Cf. Suzy Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques* 4, Editions Klincksieck, Paris, 1970, 7, drawing 4. We could also include here the church of St. Sophia in Trebizond (ca. 1238- 1263), where on the extrados of the triumphal arch there is a representation in medallions of Christ's ancestors. David Talbot Rice, *The Church of Haghia Sophia at Trebizond*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1968, 106-108, 178-179, plates 31, 34, 35, 36; Antony Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, 10, Aldershot - Ashgate, Hampshire - Burlington, 2004, 99-100, fig. 75.

⁹ Suzy Dufrenne, "Problèmes iconographiques dans la peinture monumentale du début du XIV^e siècle", in *L'art byzantin au début du XIV^e siècle, Symposium de Gračanica 1973*, Faculté de Philosophie - Departement de l'histoire de l'art, Beograd, 1978, 36. On the increasing number of Old Testament iconographies in the 13th century: cf. Suzy Dufrenne, "L'enrichissement du programme iconographique dans les églises byzantines du XIII^e siècle", in Vojislav J. Djurić, ed., *L'art byzantin du XIII^e siècle. Symposium de Sopoćani 1965*, Faculté de Philosophie - Departement de l'histoire de l'art, Belgrade, 1967, 43-44.

¹⁰ The term "transitional solutions" translates G. Babić's "types transitoires". Essentially it means the overthrow of the standards in constructing an iconographical program. "Transitional solutions" are rarely encountered in the Balkans, more often in Greece, and especially in regions far away from Byzantium (Georgia, Abkhazia, Russia). The concept should be understood as a preference for archaic iconographic solutions. Gordana Babić, "Les programmes absidaux en Géorgie et dans les Balkans entre le XI^e et le XIII^e siècle", in Maria Stella Caló Mariani, ed., *L'arte georgiana dal IX al XIV secolo: atti del terzo Simposio internazionale sull'arte georgiana, Bari-Lecce 14-18 ottobre 1980*, Congedo Editore, Galatina, 1986, 128.

process¹¹. Quite often the endowment of a patron carries significant weight in shaping an iconography by adding or removing features. Often, this also indicates a patron's connections with various cultural and religious environments.

2.1 Patterns of Patronage

Argeș's representation does not simply have a theological significance but validates the appearance of a new horizon of piety. Analogous iconographic solutions are those found at Sinai, where, in the *katholikon* of St. Catherine's Monastery, in the space of the *prothesis* dedicated to St. James, the bishops who were authors of liturgies are represented in a frontal view framing the *Virgin of the Bush*: John Chrysostom and St. James of Jerusalem (to the left of the Virgin), St. Basil the Great and the Prophet Moses holding with the tablets of the law in his hands, as the main Protector of the site (to the right of the Virgin.) The saints are shown as seen at Argeș, holding codices in their hands¹². Similar iconographic settings might be found in Cyprus¹³, Novgorod¹⁴, and in Trebizond¹⁵.

¹¹ Cf. G. BABIĆ, *ibid.*, 128. On the selection criteria of the iconographic features in representing the enthroned Virgin from 9th-century to 11th century: cf. Robin Cormack, "The Apse Mosaic of S. Sophia Thessaloniki" in *The Byzantine Eye: Studies in Art and Patronage*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS 296, Variorum Reprints, London, 1989, [V, 1980-1981] 128-130; Vasiliy Putsko, "Pecherskij ktitorskij portret", *Zograf* 13 (1982) 45-46.

¹² This fresco, initially dated to the second half of the 15th century, seems to belong to an earlier period; some iconographic details, as well as stylistic ones, point in the direction of revising this dating by Manolēs Chatzēdakēs. First of all, we refer here to the frontal position of the bishops and to the fact that their *phelonias* are different from the *polystauria* types, generalized at the beginning of the 14th century. As Parpulov has shown, there is another reason in the fact that the bishops are painted against a star-shaped background, which recalls the 7th-century icon of the enthroned Christ preserved in the Monastery's Treasury, or even the much later Crucifixion of Studenica (Virgin's church, 1208-1209), etc. Based on these details and various stylistic aspects, the fresco can be attributed, as G.R. Parpulov suggests, following V.J. Djurić, to the so-called Master of St. James, who was active on Sinai in the first half of the 13th century. Other icons listed in Parpulov's catalogue are also attributed to him. Cf. Georgi R. Parpulov, "Mural and Icon Painting at Sinai in the Thirteenth Century", in Sharon Gerstel – Robert S. Nelson, ed., *Approaching the Holy Mountain*, *Cursor mundi*, v. 11, Brepols, Turnhout, 2010, 346-347, Catalogue at p. 388: XIII, 37-47; Vojislav J. Djurić, "La peinture murale byzantine: XII^e et XIII^e siècles", in *Actes du XVe Congrès international d'études byzantines*, Athènes, septembre 1976, Association internationale des études byzantines, Athens, 1979, 202-203; Manolēs Chatzēdakēs, *Études sur la peinture postbyzantine*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS52, Variorum Reprints, London, 1976, n. VIII, 206-232; Athanasios Paliouras, "Wall Paintings", in Konstantinos A. Manafis, ed., *Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, Ekdotikē Athēnōn S.A., Athens, 1990, 70-71.

¹³ In the apse of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Perachorio (1160-1180), St. Peter and St. Paul frame the Virgin *Platytera*.

¹⁴ In Nereditsa, Christ's Church (1199, lost) in the semi-dome of the *prothesis* the Virgin *Znamenie (Platytera)* with the child is framed by two Saints. The one on the left side was



Fig. 5.

A specific category of icons has developed the patronal pattern, namely, the group of icons painted in the Sinaitic-Palestinian style and intended for pilgrims to remember the “*loca sancta*”¹⁶. A series of this kind of icons belonging to various periods, with saints framing the standing Virgin, are preserved on Mount Sinai¹⁷. In them, the *Virgin of the Burning Bush* or

identified by the inscription: Al’kosa (Alexius of Rome?). Tat’jana Sergeevna Shcherbatova – Shevjakova, *Nereditsa*, Galart, Moscow, 2004, 231, fig. 232.

¹⁵ In the church of Hagia Sophia (ca. 1238-1263) in Trebizond, in the semi-dome of the *diakonikon*, the enthroned Virgin and child are framed by Saints Joachim and Anne.

¹⁶ Kurt Weitzmann, “*Loca Sancta*, and the representational arts of Palestine”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974) 52-54, fig. 47-51; Cfr. Id., “A group of early twelfth-century Sinai Icons attributed to Cyprus”, in Giles Robertson - George Henderson, ed., *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice*, Collected Studies Series, CS37, Variorum Reprints, Edinburgh, 1975, 245-261. Consider also: Geōrgios Sôtēriou, *Eikones tēs Monēs Sina = Icônes du Mont Sinai*, Institut français, Athens, 1956, vol I, 135-139, 143-144, 164-165, 179-180, vol. II, figg. 155-158, 163-164, 177, 197.

¹⁷ K. Weitzmann groups the icons with standing holy intercessors to the sides of the Virgin, attributing them to the 10th century. For their production he presumes a contact between the Sinai Monastery and Levantine artistic centres. Cf. Kurt Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: the Icons. From the 6th-10th century*, vol. 1, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976, 8, Cat. B53, B54, 85-88, plates XXXIII, CIX. In relation to the 13th-century icons with the *Virgin of the Burning Bush* with holy intercessors, according to K.M. Collins the typology “allows the hypothesis that this imagery responded to the monastery’s increased contact with Latin audiences.” Cf. Kristen M. Collins, “Visual Piety and Institutional Identity in Sinai”, in Robert S. Nelson – Kristen M. Collins, ed., *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2006, 96.

the *Virgin Kyriotissa*, flanked initially by powerful intercessors such as St. Nicholas or thaumaturgic saints, are gradually replaced by local protectors: Moses, the Prophet Elijah, and St. Euthymius, bishop of Jerusalem¹⁸ (fig. 5). The iconographies were able to reach the metropolitan centres of the Byzantine Empire at the time of the Crusades and the Latin Occupation of Constantinople.

The spread of a patronal iconography is self-evident, for instance, in Cyprus, which kept relations with Sinai through the *metochia* located on the island: here an iconographic formula similar to that of Argeş enjoyed a relative prestige in the 13th century. An icon from Panagia Angeloktistês church in Kiti (13th century, repaintings in the 17th and 19th centuries), shows the Theotokos with the child seated on a throne without backrest, like that of Argeş, having on the sides St. Luke and St. Lazarus, the latter being dressed as a Bishop in his role of first protector of Cyprus¹⁹. As we will see, the aspect that proves of real interest is the relevance of this typology in areas far from Constantinople, as in the case of the icon from Lavra Pecherskaja in Kyiv, now in the Collections of Tretjakov Gallery (Moscow), presenting *The Virgin Pecherskaja (Svenskaja) with saints Antonij and Feodosij* (ca. 1288). In a similar vein, a Novgorodian icon of St. Blasius with the Virgin, dating back to the first quarter of the 15th century, presents an iconographic formula similar to the 13th century “*loca sancta*”²⁰. Such contacts with Sinai were constant in the Balkans, and in the 14th century a revival of these relations included Walachia as well²¹.

¹⁸ According to Kurt Weitzmann, the small icons belonging to this category were intended as souvenirs for pilgrims who visited the holy places or as a kind of *ex-voto* for the Monastery. Cf. Kurt Weitzmann, “*Loca Sancta*”, cit., 53. Doula Mouriki suggests instead that they served for liturgical and devotional purposes and could also have been gifts for distinguished guests. Cf. Doula Mouriki, “Icons from the 12th to the 15th century”, in Kōnstantinos A. Manafēs, ed., *Sinai: treasures of the monastery of Saint Catherine*, Athens, 1990, 109; EAD., “Four Thirteenth-Century Sinai Icons by the Painter Peter”, in Vojislav Korać, ed., *Studenica et l’art byzantin*, Acad. Serbe des Sciences et des Arts, Belgrade, 1988, 3. And there are still some who claim that these types of icons served for private devotion, finding their place in monks’ cells. Cf. Kristen M. Collins, “Visual Piety”, cit., 100, 257. While the first two scholars argue that the centre of production was most likely Levantine (Acre or Tripoli), Kristen M. Collins is of the opinion that the workshops were definitely local.

¹⁹ Another similar Cypriot icon is that of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril and the enthroned Virgin, in St. George’s Church, Aradhippou (before the first quarter of the 15th century), and other later examples could be added. David Talbot Rice, *The Icons of Cyprus*, Courtauld Institute Publications of Near Eastern Art, 2, Allen & Unwin, London 1937, 194-195, fig. 5, plate VIII. For Sinai-Cyprus connections: Cf. Annemarie Weyl Carr, “Sinai and Cyprus: Holy Mountain, Holy Isle”, in Sharon Gerstel – Robert S. Nelson, ed., *Approaching the Holy Mountain*, cit., 449-478.

²⁰ The saint’s relics were brought from Constantinople to Novgorod. Engelina Sergeevna Smirnova, *Zhivopis’ velikogo Novgoroda, seredina XIII – nachalo XV veka*, Nauka, Moscow, 1976, 258-261, Cat. 38.

²¹ Sinai’s connections with Wallachian soil arise in relation to the disciples of Gregory of Sinai (1275- ca.1346), a monk who lived for some years on Mount Athos and later founded his own

In the field of monumental painting, an intermediary stage in the spread of Holy Patrons' iconographies is found in the katholikon of the Monastery of the Beheading of John the Baptist, in Serres (ca. 1319). In the inner narthex, two representations of the Virgin and Child enthroned and flanked by holy protectors of the monastery are found. They are believed to be contemporary, as latest researches of Angelikê Stratê have shown, but more examples could be added²². Another example might be that of Volotovo (Novgorod, lost, ca. 1363) where, inside the naos, on the south wall, used to lie a depiction of the enthroned Virgin with the Child, flanked by two Archbishops of Novgorod, Moses and Alexius²³ (fig. 6). These iconographic displays are indicative of the gradual migration of the pattern towards the sanctuary area²⁴. A much later achievement is found in Georgia, in

monastery. During his stay in Paroria (1331-1334), near Bosnia's mountain border with Greece, Gregory gathered around him an international group of monks. As Dan Ioan Mureșan has shown, there are records of an epistolary relationship between the Wallachian prince Nicholas Alexander and Gregory the Sinaite during this period. After his death, his disciples founded a monastery in Bulgaria, at Kelifarevo, near Veliko Tărnovo, where written sources attest that a large group of Wallachian monks resided. These circles must have played a leading role in maintaining and disseminating not only Sinai's ascetic spirituality but also specific cultural and artistic expressions. Cf. Antonio Rigo, "Gregorio il Sinaita", in Carmello Giuseppe Conticello - Vassa Conticello, ed., *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition, II: XIII^e-XIX^e s.*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2002, 77-83; Adrian Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Sf. Ecaterina de la Muntele Sinai și legăturile ei cu Țările Române: perspectivă istorico-patristică*, Sophia, Bucharest, 2009, 147-156, 166-175. Dan Ioan Mureșan, "Philothée I^{er} Kokkinos, la métropole de Hongrovalachie et les empereurs de la terre", in Emilian Popescu – Mihai Ovidiu Cățoi, ed., *Creștinismul românesc și organizarea bisericească în secolele XIII-XIV*, Galați, 2010, 364-368.

²² In Serres, the enthroned Virgin and Child is flanked once by John the Baptist and the Archangel Michael, with a kneeling monk underneath (probably Joachim, the second abbot of the monastery, who was responsible for the endowment of the funerary arcosolium), the other with John the Theologian and John the Baptist and again a kneeling monk (Theodotus?). Cf. Angeliki Stratê, "Hoi palaioteres toichografies tês Enatês tou katholikou", in *He zografikê stêne Hiera Monê Timiou Prodromou Serrôn. Meletes kai arthra*, Ekdotikê Paragôge, Thessaloniki, 2007, 25, 27-29, ill. 2, 10-13, dis. 1-2; EAD., "Paratêrêseis stê Zografikê tôn palaiologeion chronôn tês monês", *ibid.*, 53-64; EAD., *The monastery of Timios Prodromos*, Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Receipts Fund, Athens, 1989. Similar in conception is the *Deisis* of Ljuboten (1343-1345). It presents the church's holy protectors and donors flanking the enthroned Virgin with the Child. Milan Radujko, "Zhivopis prochelja i linete juzhnog ulaza Svetog Nikole u Ljuboten", *Zograf* 32 (2008), 101-116. Note also the representation of Peć, church of Bogorodica Odigitrija (ca. 1335-1337), second layer of painting, late 14th century, with St. Nicholas and St. Danilo. Cf. Anđela Gavrilović, *Crkva Bogorodice Odigitrije u Pechkoj Patrijaršiji*, Stavropigijalna Lavra Manastir Pečka Patrijaršiji, Belgrade, 2018, 211-212, ill. 133, dis. V.

²³ Cfr. Gerol'd Ivanovich Vzdrinov, *Volotovo, freski cerkvi Uspenija na Volotovom pole bliz Novgoroda*, Iskustvo, Moscow, 1989, 68-74, Cat. §169.

²⁴ We might also mention here the fresco fragment located in the semi-dome of the *Prothesis* space in the Kariye Camii Katholikon, where the depiction of a bishop wearing a *phelonion polystaurion* is preserved. Paul Underwood is of the opinion that the fragment is indicative of a lost *Fathers' Liturgy*, although that scene is never represented in the semi-dome, a place

Ts'alenžixe's main apse fresco (ca. 1384-1396) which displays Saints Peter and Paul, each followed by an Archangel, framing the Virgin Orans without the Child, a representation somehow related to ours from the perspective of the iconography, even if, from the point of view of the style and in terms of chronology, it partakes of different horizons²⁵.



Fig. 6.

2.2 Piety and Politics

The innovative display of the saints on the sides of the enthroned Virgin might be regarded as an overcoming of the Constantinopolitan norm which, without exception, proposed for the main semi-dome of the apse either the simple image of the Virgin and Child framed by the Archangels, or the Virgin alone. First, it should be noted that the two bishops, St. Nicholas and St. John Chrysostom, appear three-quarter-length in a reclining position, precisely that of the concelebrants of the *Liturgy of the Fathers* (*Melismos*), where the *omophorion*, instead of falling straight, is draped over the arm. This iconography combines the patronal aspect, linked directly to St.

reserved for representations of the Virgin alone or with the Child. Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, New York – Princeton, 1966, vol. I, *Historical Introduction and Description of the Mosaics and Frescoes*, 263-264, vol. III *Plates 335-553: The frescoes*, 524.

²⁵ Arthur Megaw,– Ernest J.W. Hawkins, “The Church of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio, Cyprus, and Its Frescoes”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962) 297-300, fig. 12-20; Tania Velmans, “Le décor du sanctuaire”, cit., 228. For the church of St. Sophia in Trebizond: Cf. David Talbot Rice, *The church of Haghia*, cit., 104, plates 29b; Antony Eastmond, *Art and Identity*, cit., 99, fig. 76. With regard to Georgian wall-paintings: Cf. Inga Lordkipanidze, *Rospis' v Calendzhixa, xudozhnik Kir Manuil Evgenikos i ego mesto v gruzinskoj srednevekovoj monumental'noj zhivopisi*, Mecniereba, Tbilisi, 1992, 36-39. For the relations between Curtea de Argeş and C'alenžixe: Cf. Daniel Barbu, *Pictura murală*, cit., 38-39.

Nicholas, to whom the church is dedicated, with the representation of St. John Chrysostom, the author of the main Eucharistic Liturgy.

Besides, St. Nicholas' presence in the semi-dome should also be comprehended in the perspective of the renewal of devotional practices in Wallachia. In this respect the saint stands for a spiritual commitment between the Basarab family, notably Prince Nicholas Alexander (1351/2-1364) himself as the first donor of the decoration, and the protector saint. In the exchange of the endowments, St. Nicholas is asked to intercede in order to enhance the prestige of the family's princely lineage. As has been shown, the veneration of a patron began to be associated in late Byzantium with a private idea of salvation²⁶.

It remains, also, that the presence of the image of John Chrysostom in Argeş, in addition to that of St. Nicholas, the Patron of the church and protector of Prince Nicholas Alexander, is indicative of the fact that a Constantinopolitan iconographic norm has been observed in the decoration. The representation has to be linked to the revival of the saint's cult in the Palaiologan era. The place for the veneration of his relics in Constantinople was in the church of the Holy Apostles, where his tomb was located at the left of the altar²⁷. However, there are sources reporting their transfer in the late 14th or early 15th century to St. Sophia, where already representations, together with the saint's episcopal staff, pre-existed²⁸. In *Offices and Ceremonies* by Pseudo-Kodinos the celebration of Chrysostom's feast in the presence of the Emperor is recorded, a rare occasion (for a total of three times a year) when he would present himself at St. Sophia²⁹. In regard to the

²⁶ Natalia B. Teteriatnikova, "The New Image of Byzantine Noblemen in Paleologan Art", *Quaderni Utinensi* 15-16 (1996) 309-319.

²⁷ Raymond Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin. Le Siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat œcuménique. Tome III. Les églises et les monastères*, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, Paris, 1969, 45.

²⁸ "The tomb of St. John Chrysostom, however, is at the high altar in the sanctuary of St. Sophia and is covered with a slab worked in gold and precious stones. [His body] was still whole, and reposes there as if [he were] alive. There is nothing dismal about his vestments or hair, but to this day [the body] exudes a strong sweet fragrance. A large concourse gathers on his festival, not only Christians, but Franks and Latins too, and much healing and forgiveness comes". The text is considered a 15th century interpolation into the description of the Anonymous Pilgrim of Novgorod, who mentions that the relics were in the church of the Apostles. George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 19, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., 1984, 134 (note 25), 213, 219-220, 302-303.

²⁹ Ruth Macrides – Joseph A. Munitiz – Dimiter Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court. Offices and Ceremonies*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 15, Surrey - Ashgate, Birmingham - Burlington, 2013, 187 (note 533), 197. In the Palaiologan era the ecclesiastical life took place between the Imperial Palace and the nearby church of Blachernae. Cf. Andrea Paribeni, «Separati in casa: i destini paralleli della chiesa e del palazzo delle Blachernae a Costantinopoli», in Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, ed., *Medioevo: la chiesa e il Palazzo, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Parma, 20-24 settembre 2005*, I convegni di Parma 8, Electa, Milan, 2007, 357-368.

development of an iconography referring to the saint Patriarch, Leslie Brubaker recently discussed an illuminated scroll, with private prayers for communion and with portraits of the saint, dated probably to the second quarter of the 14th century³⁰, and one might also recall the development of his iconography as *Fountain of Life*³¹. In any case, Chrysostom's presence in the sanctuary of Argeş not only demonstrates a revival of the holy patriarch's cult but is also connected with the liturgical renewal of the epoch. This might be seen in the inscription under the semi-dome of the hymn Ἀξίόν ἐστιν (*It is truly meet*), part of Chrysostom's anaphora³². Such a Constantinopolitan imprint in our apse is to be understood in relation to the foundation of the Wallachian Ecclesiastical Metropolis in 1359 in close dependence on the capital of the Empire.

2.3 Changing iconographies

The aim of this part is to delve into the reasons having led to the enrichment of the apse's iconographic setting when a classical display in itself was not expected to be problematic. In our opinion, these aspects can be explained in relation to the Pecherskaja (Svenskaja) icon, which is most likely a second-grade copy of a Constantinopolitan prototype³³ (fig. 7). According to a series of historical accounts, a so-called "namestnaja" icon was transported to Kyiv to adorn the Dormition Cathedral of the Caves Monastery in ca. 1072-1073³⁴. It can be assumed that the copy, which probably disappeared shortly after its arrival in Kiev, followed the

³⁰ The lecture, awaiting publication, was entitled "A Byzantine princess and her private prayer scroll" and was presented at the Romanian Society for Byzantine Studies, on 06/21/2022.

³¹ Cf. Tania Velmans, "L'iconographie de la «Fontaine de vie» dans la tradition byzantine à la fin du Moyen Age", in *Synthronon, Art et Archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 2, Klincksieck, Paris, 1968, 119-134. On the monumental representation of this iconography in the narthex of the Lesnovo Monastery (1349), cf. Smiljka Gabelić, *Manastir Lesnovo, istorija i slikarstvo*, Stubovi kulture, Belgrade, 1998, 162-167, 279.

³² See also the theological interpretation of Daniel Barbu: Cf. Daniel Barbu, *Pictura murală*, cit., 39.

³³ Andrej Krekshin, "Svenskaja ikona Bozhej Materi. K 700-letiju so vremeni proslavenija", *Zhurnal Moskovskoj patriarxii* 5 (1988) 14-16; Jakov V. Bruk, ed., *Gosudarstvennaja Tret'jakovskaja galereja: katalog sobranija. Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo X - nachala XV veka*, Krasnaja ploščad', Moscow, 1995, Cat. 16, 70-72; Aleksej Michajlovich Lidov – Galina V. Sidorenko, ed., *Chudotvornyj obraz ikony Bogomateri v Tret'jakovskoj galeree = The Miraculous Image: the Icons of Our Lady in the Tretjakov Gallery*, Radunitsa, Moscow, 1999, 16, Cat. 6; Engelina Sergeevna Smirnova, "Il XIII secolo: devastazione dei tartari e rinascita della cultura", in EAD., ed., *La pittura in Europa. La pittura russa*, Electa, Milan, 2001, 182, fig. 150-152;

³⁴ Muriel Heppell, transl., *The Patterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature 1, Ukrainian Research Institute - Harvard University, Cambridge, 1989, 6-8.

Constantinopolitan original in all respects³⁵. The devotional pathways led to the circulation of new copies of the “namestnaja”. One of them is the Pecherskaja (Svenskaja) icon, now in the Tretjakov Gallery in Moscow, painted in Kyiv in 1288 in order to heal Prince Mikhail Chernigov afflicted by blindness. In relation to the original, this version adds, on either side of the central representation, Saints Antonij and Feodosij as founders of the Pecherskaja³⁶. We are here concerned with the arising of a new recension, where the original layout, initially limited to the Mother and to the Son, is enhanced to include a wider representation in the screen³⁷.

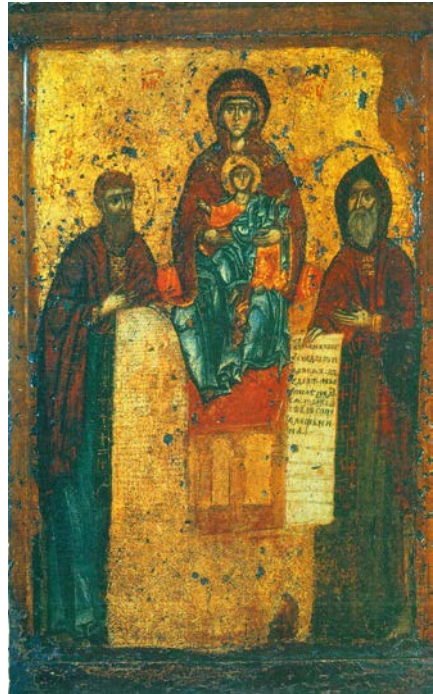


Fig. 7.

³⁵ Putsko relates the episode to the Polovtsy invasion of 1096. Cf. Vasiliy Putsko, “Pecherskij ktitorskij”, cit., 44. The current icon venerated as Pecherskaja in Caves Monastery is improperly named. Cf. Ivan Karabinov, “«Namestnaja ikona» drevnego Kiev-Pecherskogo monastyra” *Izvestija Gosudarstvennoj Akademii Istorii Material’noj Kultury*, 5 (1927) 110-111.

³⁶ The uplifted rendering of the Virgin’s throne draws inspiration from the “namestnaja” icon placement in the church. According to historical sources, this was “towards the centre and at a certain height”. Cf. A PUTSKO, “Pecherskij ktitorskij”, cit., 44.

³⁷ The success of this new recension can be measured in relation to other icons, such as those from Vologda: Levon V. Nersesjan, ed. *Ikony Vologdy kontsa XVI - XVII veka = Vologda Icons, late 16th - 17th centuries*, Drevnosti Severa - Moskva Severnyj palomnik, Moscow, 2007, 124- 129, 702-707, Cat. 2 (E.S. Smirnova) and Cat. 113 (A.S. Preobrazhenskij).

In the icon of 1288, copied at the Lavra Pecherskaja and later also in the representation of the Argeş semi-dome, the performative aspect becomes central. The intercessors flanking the Virgin are three-quarter turned, as in most of the “loca sancta” of Sinai, in an overcoming of the frontal usage of rendering (fig. 5)³⁸. In both cases, that of the Argeş’ fresco and that of the Svenskaja icon, in the central section representing the enthroned Virgin with Child a reference to a Constantinopolitan artwork figures out³⁹. The topographical reference meant to support their recognition is lost⁴⁰. If a striking analogy with the miniature from Gertruda's Codex (Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, codex CXXXVI, fol. 41r, *Book of Prayers*) (fig. 8) has been proposed for the identification of “namestnaja” prototype⁴¹, for Argeş, reference must be made to a generic iconography identifiable as early as late antiquity⁴². This “classicizing” version, with the

³⁸ Cf. Anna Zakharova, “The Choir of Saints in the Middle Byzantine Monumental Decoration. The Evidence of the 9th-11th Century Wall-Paintings in Cappadocia” in Basilēs Katsaros - Anastasia Turtu, ed., *Aphierōma ston akadēmaiko Panagiōtē L. Vokotopoulou*, Ekdóseis Kapón, Athens, 2015, 341-346.

³⁹ The one that a pilgrim from Novgorod who arrived in Constantinople at the beginning of 15th century could identify in the north aisle of the cathedral of Hagia Sophia: “дале поидя мало по лѣвомъ сторонѣ есть теремецъ, а в теремеци икона святаа Богородица; таа икона посылаа мастера на Киев ставити церкви Печерьскыа во имя святаа Богородица” (As you go a little farther, on the left side is a canopy, and under this canopy is an icon of the Holy Mother of God. It was this icon which sent the architects to Kiev [var. add.: to SS Anthony and Theodosius] to build the Caves [Monastery] churches in honor of the Holy Mother of God [var.: a church in the Cave] tr. G.P. Majeska). If, according to the Paterik of the Cave’s Monastery, the prototype of the icon sent to Kiev must be related to the Blacherne church, the finding of an analogous typology in St. Sophia must be an indication of the generic nature of that specific representation. George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, cit., 119-120, 133, 212-213; Nikodim P. Kondakov, *Ikonografija Bogomateri*, vol. I - II, Otdelenie russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, Sankt Petersburg, 1914, vol. I, 326; A PUTSKO, “Pecherskij ktitorskij”, cit., 44.

⁴⁰ According to Gordana Babić these references, even if rare, are of great importance for specifying the patron's desire to have a precise copy of a particular icon instead of another. Unusually, at Argeş church any indication referring to the Virgin or to the Child is missing, while for other figures the inscriptions are carefully designed. Cf. Gordana Babić, “Les images byzantines et leurs degrés de signification : l'exemple de l'Hodigitria”, in André Guillou - Jannic Durand, *Byzance et les images. Cycle de conférences organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992*, La Documentation française, Paris, 1994, 203.

⁴¹ Engelina Sergeevna Smirnova, «Le miniature del Libro di preghiere della principessa Gertrude», in Claudia Barberi, ed., *Psalterium Egberti. Facsimile del ms. CXXXVI del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale del Friuli*, Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Trieste, 2000, vol. Text, 101-102; Małgorzata Smorąg Różyca, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie miniatury Kodeksu Gertrudy*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Cracow, 2003, 183-184. The miniatures can be consulted here: <https://www.librideipatriarchi.it/libri/salterio-di-egberto-codex-gertrudianus/>

⁴² We refer here to representations dating back to the 6th century: the encaustic icon of the *Virgin Mary between Saints Theodore and George* from Sinai and the wall painting showing the widow Turtura together with *Virgin Mary enthroned with the child Jesus and saints Felix*

seated Child in a “reclining position”, differs from the later post-iconoclastic iconographies presenting the Child in the process of adopting an upright position, prosaically called, for this reason, “flaterring” or “levitating”⁴³. However, one can observe that the dialogue shares a pattern with the model, rather than being a direct copy of it. Some details, such as the Child’s gestures, his hands slightly outstretched and not receding back as in the older examples, speak in favour of an affiliation with a post-iconoclastic pattern. In addition, it will be observed that, as in Serres’s frescoes, the Child stretches out only one hand and addresses exclusively the holy protector of the church⁴⁴, an outstanding difference compared to the Svenskaja icon⁴⁵. These adjustments lead back toward a Constantinopolitan-style Madonna copied in the Argeş’ semi-dome, similar to the one in the apse of St. Sophia in Constantinople, redesigned into a local iconographical variant by painters who were familiar with the pattern. Through placing at the sides of the intercessors what lies beneath a generic typology, the iconography of the Virgin and Child is brought towards concreteness and particular efficiency⁴⁶.

and *Adauctus* in the catacomb of Commodilla, Rome, ca. 527-528. For the Sinai icon: cf. Kurt Weitzmann, *The Monastery*, cit., 8, Cat. B3, 18-21, plates IV-VI; Geōrgios Sôtēriou, *Eikones tēs Monēs*, vol. I, 21-22, vol. II, plate IV, fig. 5-7. For the fresco in Rome: cf. Eugenio Russo, “L’affresco di Turtura nel cimitero di Commodilla, l’icona di S. Maria in Trastevere e le più antiche feste della Madonna a Roma”, in *Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, 88-89 (1979, 1980-1981) 1-85, 71-150; N. KONDAKOV, *Ikonografija Bogomateri*, cit., vol. I, 181-184, 914. More generally on the iconography of the *Virgin Kyriotissa* and on the so-called *Virgin of Cyprus*: cf. *ibid.*, vol. II, 124-151, 316-356.

⁴³ R. CORMACK, “The Apse Mosaic”, cit., 129-130.

⁴⁴ Consider in this regard the following monumental Constantinopolitan representations: in the Monastery of Christ Akataleptos (Kalendarhane Camii, Istanbul), where, in the apse of the earlier building (the Bema Church), there is a *Kyriotissa* with donor dated to the early 12th century; and also the mosaic of St. Sophia (south gallery, last bay) from 1118 representing *The Virgin and Child, the Emperor John II Komnenos and Empress Irene*. To these examples could also be added the mosaic in the apse of S. Sophia, Thessaloniki (second quarter of the 11th century), the fresco in the main apse of S. Sophia, Ohrid (ca. 1037-1056), the apse fresco in the church of Veljusa (ca. 1080), the miniature in Vienna: Vindob. cod. theol. gr. 336, fol. 17v, *Psalter*, 1077; the mosaic featuring Messina’s Madonna of Ciambretta (beginning of 14th century), etc. A discussion on some of these examples is found here: cf. Robin Cormack, “The apse mosaic”, cit., 127-134; Małgorzata Smoraż Różyca, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie*, cit., 168-169.

⁴⁵ As in the case of the Svenskaja icon, in the icon from Kiti (Cyprus), and in the fresco from Volotovo previously mentioned. Unlike V. Putsko, in regard to the Pecherskaja (Svenskaja) icon, it seems to us improper to designate this iconography as embodying specifically a “donor” (*ktetor*). In the present paper we have brought forward enough arguments for the discussion of the typology in terms of devotion and patronage. Moreover, a donor’s representation cannot be separated from concrete references to the gifts in terms of iconography or epigraphy.

⁴⁶ In this regard, note Sixten Ringbom’s remarks on the bynome constituted on the one hand by the “vision” and on the other hand by the “conversation”: “la tendance à l’hypostase du contenu des rêves, des apparitions, des visions et autres” where “hypostase” must be understood as subjective transformation of a concept or a term into something real and concrete. Cf. Sixten Ringbom, “Vision et conversation chez les primitifs flamands: la sainte

It remains a question without an easy answer whether the central image in the semi-dome may refer to a Constantinopolitan image venerated in the early church of Argeș I, the very building that was replaced by the present church. What supports this direction of research is the artists' choice of flanking the image of the enthroned Virgin with those of holy intercessors. The painters intended, in this case, to portray not a common representation of the Virgin and Child but a precise image being venerated by the saints, a kind of "namestnaja" referring to the Wallachian soil. The screen of our semi-dome, given its iconography, suggests the assignation of a geographic extension to the pattern. Along Curtea de Argeș, these coordinates would include Constantinople, Thessaloniki, and Ohrid.



Fig. 8.

3. A Liturgical Hymn and its Resonances

The presence of a liturgical inscription under the main semi-dome of the sanctuary, on the border dividing the upper part from the rest of the hemicycle, requires closer examination (fig. 9). First, it should be noted that its content is related to the representation depicted in the semi-dome. Another inscription, probably related to the patronage, was presented on the

famille du maître de Delft”, in *Les images de dévotion, XIIe – XVe siècle*, Gérard Monfort, Paris, 1995, 109-110.

arcosolium in the apse, but it remains indecipherable. The first inscription bears a *troparion* we have transcribed in the *Appendix*, the Ἀξιόν ἐστιν (*It is truly meet*), in honour of the Virgin Mary⁴⁷. This hymn is a feature not only pertaining to the Liturgy of the Hours in the Byzantine rite, but is also part of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. Gabriel Millet has found the same *troparion* in Trebizond, in the semi-dome of the rock church of *Panagia Theoskepastos* Monastery [Kizlar Monastiri] (ca. 14th century). Here the *Virgin Platytera with the Child* had a fragmentary inscription of Ἀξιόν ἐστιν around the medallion on her breast⁴⁸.



Fig. 9.

The inscription, therefore, is rarely recorded, and its presence should be interpreted in relation to the integration of the hymn as a fixed part of Chrysostom's liturgy in the *diataxis* of Demetrius Gemistos (1386)⁴⁹. This was preceded by liturgical discussions in the mid-14th century, when the *troparion* was subject to intense debate at the Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos. The controversy involved two figures of the Patriarchs of Constantinople: Philotheos Kokkinos (1353-1354, 1364-1376) and his predecessor Kallistos I (1350-1353, 1355-1363). Multiple sources, the most complete being the one of John Nathanael (1574), indicate that, during the first *hygumenate* of James Trikanas at the Lavra, most probably around 1352-1353, a controversy regarded the *troparion* which ought to be chanted after the Epiclesis, mainly for Lenten Functions, when the Divine Liturgy of St.

⁴⁷ In the category of liturgical inscriptions found in churches, one of uncertain date, to be found in the church of the Gelati monastery (Georgia), might be mentioned. Here the *Cherubic Hymn* has been copied under the mosaic of the apse semi-dome (1125-1130), certainly in reference to the Celestial Liturgy depicted immediately below, while in the *arcosolium* there is an inscription in the Georgian language of patronal meaning, disposed as is the one in Argeş.

⁴⁸ The inscription is preserved only fragmentarily: Τὴν τιμιωτέραν τῶν Χερουβειμ καὶ ἐνδοξοτέραν / ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφίμ· τὴν ἀδιαφθόρως / [Θεὸν Λόγον τεκοῦσαν, τὴν ὄντως Θεοτόκον, σὲ μεγαλύνομεν]. Gabriel Millet, - David Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1936, 40.

⁴⁹ I thank Professor Stefano Parenti for the precious updating I benefited on this point, owing his latest researches. Cf. Stefano Parenti, *L'anafora di Crisostomo. Testo e contesti*, Aschendorff, Jerusalem Theologisches Forum (JThF), 36, Münster, 2020, 359-366, 370.

Basil was to be celebrated⁵⁰. Patriarch Philotheos stipulated that the monks of Lavra should perform after the Epiclesis, for all liturgical occurrences, a single troparion: Ἀξιόν ἐστιν. This decision, dictated by convenience, went against the instructions of Kallistos I, who asked that, for St. Basil's Divine Liturgy, a much longer hymn Ἐπί σοι χαίρει (*In you rejoices*) be employed. The monks of Lavra did not unanimously welcome the provisions of Philoteos, and, during the stay of the Patriarch Gregory III of Alexandria (1354-1366) at the monastery, a fraction of them seized the opportunity to show their allegiance to the old line⁵¹. The *domestikos* inquired Patriarch Gregory III which hymn should be chanted during the Eucharistic celebration, that is, whether to adhere to the new provisions or to remain faithful to the old ones. Patriarch Gregory III asked the monks to perform Ἐπί σοι χαίρει. Confirmation was not long to come, and, at the end of the Vigilia, the head of the choir received it in a dream: the *Theotokos* herself appeared to the Choir Master granting him a golden coin, an appreciation for remaining faithful to the line of Kallistos I.

In the Argeș church, the presence of the inscription with the hymn Ἀξιόν ἐστιν is therefore not an accident. Most likely this is an imprint given to the iconographic program by the discussions we have reported, transmitted directly or indirectly through the circle that followed on Mount Athos a line such as the one of Philotheos Kokkinos. Before the integration of the *troparion* in the *diataxis* of Demetrios Gemistos, a practice of the Great Church to perform Ἀξιόν ἐστιν within the Eucharistic Liturgy is reflected⁵². More precisely, the inscription reflects the phase when this *troparion*

⁵⁰ ANTONIO RIGO, "Il monte Athos e la controversia palamitica dal concilio del 1351 al tomo sinodale del 1368: Giacomo Trikanas, Procoro Cidone e Filoteo Kokkinos", in ID., ed., *Gregorio Palamas e oltre: studi e documenti sulle controversie teologiche del XIV secolo bizantino*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze, 2004, 6-18, and 10-11 for this history; Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, "Deux Patriarches Palamites en rivalité Kallistos et Philothée", in *Le Patriarcat œcuménique de Constantinople aux XIVe-XVI siècles: rupture et continuité. Actes du colloque international, Rome, 5-7 décembre 2005*, Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes - École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, 2007, 48-49; Stefano Parenti mentions the controversy, although he dated the debate to the 15th century. The sources on which he relies for his arguments are N. Boulgaris' Catecheses of 1681. Rigo, however, has shown sources even further back in time, the main one by Giovanni Nathanel from 1574, along with other important evidences that make it plausible that this problem existed at Lavra in the mid-14th century (Cf. A. RIGO, *ibid.*, 11-14). Cf. Stefano Parenti, *L'anafora di Crisostomo*, cit., 365-366.

⁵¹ Cf. Antonio Rigo, *ibid.*, 11-14.

⁵² As Stefano Parenti observes, according to *Grottaferrata Γ.β. 3* (post 1357), after the Epiclesis, when the censuring of the sanctuary took place, on behalf of a *kastrisios*, the troparion Ἀξιόν ἐστιν was recited in low voice by the cleric, while the singers performed it aloud. At least in the Great Church, more than thirty years before the *diataxis* of Gemistos the hymn had already entered the Eucharistic Liturgy. Very important are also the commentaries of Nicholas Kabasilas on the hymn at mid-14th century. Stefano Parenti, *L'anafora di Crisostomo*, cit., 534, 363-364.

gradually shifted from the Ordinary of the Hours to the Divine Liturgy⁵³. The absence of the hymn in the Athonite *diataxis* of Philotheos Kokkinos (ca. 1334-1341) does not mean that the *troparion* had no place in the Constantinopolitan Eucharistic liturgy. The mid-14th century Athonite dispute itself proves precisely the difficulty of acculturating in some traditional byzantine “foyers” the Constantinopolitan *taxis*⁵⁴.

The presence of this liturgical hymn in a wider iconographic context related to the Eucharistic themes specific to of the Sanctuary shows valuable evidence regarding the evolution of the Liturgy. Its presence offers also an indication for the dating of the frescoes to the second half of the 14th century, most likely to the date advanced by Daniel Barbu, at about 1364/5, in coincidence with the beginning of the second Patriarchate of Philotheos Kokkinos (1364-1376)⁵⁵. In this case, the first patron would have been the prince Nicholas Alexander (1351/2-1364), even if the church’s decoration had been accomplished, as is commonly asserted, by Vladislav Vlaicu (1364 - 1376/7) before 1369⁵⁶. The inscription shows evidence of the ancientness of the Wallachian connections with the monastic communities on Mount Athos. In particular, the relations with the Monastery of Lavra are witnessed a few years later by an Icon of St. Athanasius of Mount Athos offered to the monastic community. On it, precisely on the silver edges of the framework, is found the portrait of the Wallachian rulers Vladislaus and his wife Anna⁵⁷.

Appendix

All figures are indicated with well-preserved inscriptions in Greek. The border below the representation bears the words of the *troparion* Ἀξίόν ἐστιν (*It is truly meet*), in honour of the Virgin Mary. The text is a part of Chrysostom's Anaphora: it follows the Epiclesis and is found in the section of Intercessions referring to various categories of Saints. We also transcribe it with various corrections made to the previous readings of P.P. Panaitescu and O. Tafrali⁵⁸:

⁵³ Stefano Parenti, *ibid.*, 359-364, qui 360-361.

⁵⁴ Consider in this regard also the history of the icon of the Virgin *Axion Estin* in Mount Athos, Protaton Monastery. Cf. Euthymios N. Tsigaridas, “L’icône de la Vierge Axion Estin du Protaton et ses copies”, in *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkoga instituta* 44 (2007) 341-352.

⁵⁵ D. BARBU, *Pictura murală*, cit., 37-38.

⁵⁶ Pavel Chihaia, “Despre Biserica Domnească din Curtea de Argeș și confesiunea primilor voievozi ai Țării Românești”, in *Tradiții răsăritene și influențe occidentale în Țara Românească*, Editura Sfintei Arhiepiscopii a Bucureștilor, Bucharest, 1993, 28.

⁵⁷ Petre Ș. Năsturel, *Le mont Athos et les roumains, recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIVe siècle à 1654*, Orientalia Christiana analecta, 227, Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Roma, 1986, 73-74.

⁵⁸ Petre P. Panaitescu, “Inscripțiunile religioase grecești dela Biserica Domnească”, *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice* 10-14 (1917-1923) 161-162; Orest Tafrali, *Monuments Byzantins*, cit., vol. I, 56.

ΑΞΗΟΝ ΕCΤΗΝ ΟC ΑΛΗΘΟC ΜΑΚΑΡΙΪΝ CΕ ΤΗΝ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΝ
 ΤΙΝ ΑΗΜΑΚΑΡΙCΤΟΝ ΚΕ ΠΑΝΑΜΟΜΗΤΟΝ ΚΕ ΜΙΤΕΡΑΝ [Τ]ΟΥ
 Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΗΜΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΤΗΜΙΟΤΕΡΑΝ [Τ]ΟΝ ΧΕΡΟΥΒΙΜ ΚΕ
 ΕΝΔΟΞΟΤΕΡΑΝ ΑCΙΝΚΡΙΤΟC [ΤΓΩΝ CΕΡΑΦ]ΗΜ, [ΤΗΝ
 ΑΔΙΑΦΘΟΡΓΩ]C Θ(ΕΟ)Ν ΛΟΓ[Ο]Ν ΤΕΚΟΥ[CAN Τ]ΗΝ ΟΝΤΟC
 [Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)]ΚΟΝ CΕ Μ[ΕΓΑΛΥΝΟΜΕΝ]

Ἄξιόν ἐστιν ὡς ἀληθῶς μακαρίζειν σε τὴν Θεοτόκον, τὴν ἀειμακάριστον καὶ παναμώμητον καὶ μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Τὴν τιμιωτέραν τῶν Χερουβείμ καὶ ἐνδοξοτέραν ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφεῖμ· τὴν ἀδιαφθόρως Θεὸν Λόγον τεκοῦσαν, τὴν ὄντως Θεοτόκον, σὲ μεγαλύνομεν.

It is truly meet to call thee blest, the Theotokos, the ever-blessed and all-immaculate and Mother of our God. More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, thee who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do magnify [Translated from the Greek by the Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, Massachusetts].

Different figures are referred by their name in Greek:

Ο ΑΡΧ(ΑΓΓΕΛΟC) ΜΗΧΑ(Η)Λ

Ὁ Ἀρχάγγελος Μιχαήλ; The Archangel Michael;

Ο ΑΓΙΟC ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟC

Ὁ ἅγιος Νικόλαος; St. Nicholas;

Ο ΑΓΙΟC ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗC) Ο ΧΡ(ΥCΟCΤΟ)ΜΟC

Ὁ Ἰωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος; John Chrysostom;

Ο ΑΡΧ(ΑΓΓΕΛΟC) Γ[-----]

Ὁ Ἀρχάγγελος Γαβριήλ, The Archangel Gabriel.

A second large inscription, in the arcosolium of the apse, perhaps an epigram of dedication, has not yet been discussed because of its state of conservation.

List of figures:

Fig. 1. Princely Church of Saint Nicholas in Curtea de Argeș, Romania, east side view

Fig. 2. *Enthroned Virgin with the Child, Holy Patrons, and Archangels*, semi-dome of the main apse, Princely Church in Curtea de Argeș

Fig. 3. *St. John Chrysostom*: a) St. Sophia, Istanbul, mosaic, last quarter of 10th century, north tympanum of the nave; b) *parekklesion* of Kariye Camii, Istanbul, fresco, 1315-1321, apse; c) Princely Church, Curtea de Argeș, detail (upturned from the original), semi-dome

Fig. 4. a) *Enthroned Virgin with the Child and Patron*, also called *Madonna of "Ciambretta"*, mosaic, early fourteenth century, Messina, Regional Museum; b) Princely Church in Curtea de Argeș, fresco detail of the *Enthroned Virgin*, semi-dome

Fig. 5. *Virgin with Moses and St. Euthymios of Jerusalem*, painter Peter, icon, ca. 1223, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt

Fig. 6. *Enthroned Virgin with the Child, St. Moses and St Alexius*, lost fresco, ca. 1363, Novgorod, church of Volotovo, main nave

Fig. 7. *Vergin Pecherskaja (Svenskaja) with Sts. Anthony and Theodosius*, icon, ca. 1288, Tretyakov

Fig. 8. *Enthroned Virgin with the Child*, Gertruda's Codex: Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, codex CXXXVI, fol. 41r, *Book of Prayers*

Fig. 9. Excerpt with the inscription of the liturgical hymn Ἀζιὸν ἐστὶν (*It is truly meet*), at the base of the semi-dome, main apse, Princely Church in Curtea de Argeș

Bibliography:

Babić, Gordana, "Les programmes absidaux en Géorgie et dans les Balkans entre le XI^e et le XIII^e siècle", in Maria Stella Caló Mariani, ed., *L'arte georgiana dal IX al XIV secolo: atti del terzo Simposio internazionale sull'arte georgiana*, Bari-Lecce 14-18 ottobre 1980, Congedo Editore, Galatina, 1986, 117-136.

Babić, Gordana, "Les images byzantines et leurs degrés de signification : l'exemple de l'Hodigitria", in André Guillou - Jannic Durand, *Byzance et les images. Cycle de conférences organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel du 5 octobre au 7 décembre 1992*, La Documentation française, Paris, 1994, 189-222.

Barbu, Daniel, *Pictura murală din Țara Românească în secolul al XIV-lea*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest, 1986.

Bogdanović, Dimitrije, - Vojislav J. Djurić, - Dejan Medaković, *Chilandar*, Ed. Monastery of Chilandar, The Holy Mountain – Belgrade, 1997.

Bruck, Jakov V., ed., *Gosudarstvennaja Tret'jakovskaja galereja: katalog sobranija. Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo X - nachala XV veka*, Krasnaja ploshchad', Moscow, 1995.

Carr, Annemarie Weyl, "Sinai and Cyprus: Holy Mountain, Holy Isle", in Sharon Gerstel – Robert S. Nelson, ed., *Approaching the Holy Mountain*, cit., 449-478.

Chatzêdakês, Manolês, *Études sur la peinture postbyzantine*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS52, Variorum Reprints, London, 1976, [VIII, 1972], 206-232.

Chihaiia, Pavel, "Despre Biserica Domnească din Curtea de Argeș și confesiunea primilor voievozi ai Țării Românești", in *Tradiții răsăritene și influențe occidentale*

în Țara Românească”, Editura Sfintei Arhiepiscopii a Bucureștilor, Bucharest, 1993, 18-41.

Ciobanu, Constantin, “Pictura murală din Țara Românească în secolele XIV-XV”, in Răzvan Theodorescu – Marius Porumb, ed., *Arta din România. Din Preistorie în contemporaneitate.*, vol I., Ed. Mega, Bucharest – Cluj Napoca, 2018, 146-156.

Collins, Kristen M., “Visual Piety and Institutional Identity in Sinai”, in Robert S. Nelson, – Kristen M. Collins, ed., *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2006, 95-119.

Congourdeau, Marie-Hélène, “Deux Patriarches Palamites en rivalité Kallistos et Philothée”, in *Le Patriarcat œcuménique de Constantinople aux XIVe-XVI siècles: rupture et continuité. Actes du colloque international, Rome, 5-7 décembre 2005*, Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes - École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, 2007, 37-50.

Cormack, Robin, “The Apse Mosaic of S. Sophia Thessaloniki” in *The Byzantine Eye: Studies in Art and Patronage*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS 296, Variorum Reprints, London, 1989, [V, 1980-1981], 111-135.

Di Dario Guida, Maria Pia, *Icone di Calabria e altre icone meridionali*, Messina 1992.

Di Dario Guida, Maria Pia, “Gli effetti delle prescrizioni tridentine. La Madonna della lettera”, in Maria Katja Guida, ed., *La Madonna delle Vittorie a Piazza Armerina: dal Gran Conte Ruggero al Settecento*, Electa, Naples, 2009, 174-176.

Djurić, Vojislav J., “Fresques Médiévales à Chilandar. Contribution au catalogue des fresques du Mont Athos”, in *Actes du XIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines: Ochride, 10-16 septembre 1961*, Comité Yougoslave des études byzantines, Beograd, 1964, 59-98.

Djurić, Vojislav J., “La peinture murale byzantine: XII^e et XIII^e siècles”, in *Actes du XVe Congrès international d'études byzantines, Athènes, septembre 1976*, Association internationale des études byzantines, Athens, 1979, 159-252.

Dufrenne, Suzy, *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 4, Editions Klincksieck, Paris, 1970.

Dufrenne, Suzy, “Problèmes iconographiques dans la peinture monumentale du début du XIV siècle”, in *L'art byzantin au début du XIV siècle, Symposium de Gračanica 1973*, Faculté de Philosophie - Département de l'histoire de l'art), Belgrade, 1978, 29-38.

Dufrenne, Suzy, “L'enrichissement du programme iconographique dans les églises byzantines du XIII^{ème} siècle”, in V.J. Djurić, ed., *L'art byzantin du XIII^e siècle. Symposium de Sopoćani 1965*, Faculté de Philosophie - Département de l'histoire de l'art, Belgrade, 1967, 35-46.

Dumitrescu, Ana, “Une nouvelle datation des peintures murales de Curtea de Argeș. Origine de leur iconographie”, *Cahiers archéologiques* 37 (1989) 135-162.

Dumitrescu, Carmen Laura, “Anciennes et nouvelles hypothèses sur un monument roumain du XIV siècle, l'église Saint-Nicolae-Domnesc de Curtea de Argeș”, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, Série beaux-arts* 16 (1979) 3-63.

Eastmond, Antony, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, 10, Aldershot – Ashgate, Hampshire – Burlington, 2004.

Gabelić, Smiljka, *Manastir Lesnovo, istorija i slikarstvo*, Stubovi kulture, Belgrade, 1998.

- Gavrilović, Andela**, *Crkva Bogorodice Odigitrije u Pechkoj Patrijaršiji*, Stavropigijalna Lavra Manastir Pečka Patrijaršiji, Belgrade, 2018.
- Gounaris, Geōrgios G.**, *The Church of Christ in Verria*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 1991.
- Heppell, Muriel**, transl., *The Patterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature 1, Ukrainian Research Institute - Harvard University, Cambridge, 1989.
- Ionescu, Grigore**, – Ana Maria Musicescu, *Biserica Domnească din Curtea de Argeș*, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1976.
- Janin, Raymond**, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin. Le Siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat œcuménique. Tome III. Les églises et les monastères*, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, Paris, 1969.
- Kalopissi-Verti, Sophia**, "Painter's Information on Themselves in Late Byzantine Church Inscriptions", in Michele Bacci, ed., *L'artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*, *Giornate di studio*, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 21-22 novembre 2003, Seminari e Convegni 12, Edizioni della Normale, Pisa, 2007, 64-66.
- Karabinov, Ivan**, "«Namestnaja ikona» drevnego Kiev-Pecherskogo monastyrja" *Izvestija Gosudarstvennoj Akademii Istorii Material'noj Kultury*, 5 (1927) 102-113.
- Kondakov, Nikodim P.**, *Ikonografija Bogomateri*, vol. I - II, Otdelenie russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, Sankt Petersburg, 1914.
- Krekshin, Andrej**, "Svenskaja ikona Bozhej Materi. K 700-letiju so vremeni proslavenija", *Zhurnal Moskovskoj patriarxii* 5 (1988) 14-16.
- Lidov, Aleksej Michajlovich** – Galina V. Sidorenko, ed., *Chudotvornyj obraz ikony Bogomateri v Tret'jakovskoj galeree = The Miraculous Image: the Icons of Our Lady in the Tretjakov Gallery*, Radunitsa, Moscow, 1999.
- Lordkipanidze, Inga, Rospis'** v *Calendzhix*, *xudozhnik Kir Manuil Evgenikos i ego mesto v gruzinskoj srednevekovoj monumental'noj zhivopisi*, Mecniereba, Tbilisi, 1992.
- Macrides, Ruth** – Joseph A. Munitiz – Dimiter Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court. Offices and Ceremonies*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 15, Surrey - Ashgate, Birmingham - Burlington, 2013.
- Majeska, George P.**, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 19, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., 1984.
- Marinescu, Adrian**, *Mănăstirea Sf. Ecaterina de la Muntele Sinai și legăturile ei cu Țările Române: perspectivă istorico-patristică*, Sophia, Bucharest, 2009.
- Marković, Miodrag**, "Probitni zhivopis glavne manastirske cerkve", in Gojko Subotić, ed., *Manastir Hilandar*, Galerija Srpske Akademije Nauka i Umetnosti, Beograd, 1998, 221-242.
- Megaw, Arthur** – Ernest J.W. Hawkins, "The Church of the Holy Apostles at Perachorio, Cyprus, and Its Frescoes", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962) 277-348.
- Mihail, Ion**, "Pictura Bisericii Domnești din Curtea de Argeș", *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*, 10-14 (1923) 172-189.
- Millet, Gabriel**, - David Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1936.
- Mohanu, Dan**, *Arheologia picturilor murale de la biserica Sf. Nicolae Domnesc din Curtea de Argeș*, Ed. A.R.A. – Arhitectură, Restaurare, Arheologie, Bucharest, 2011.

Mohanu, Dan, “O nouă etapă în conservarea picturilor murale din secolul XIV de la Argeș: absida altarului”, *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor - Monumente Istorice și de Artă* (1989) 48-62.

Mouriki, Doula, “Four Thirteenth-Century Sinai Icons by the Painter Peter”, in Vojislav Korać, ed., *Studenica et l'art byzantin*, Acad. Serbe des Sciences et des Arts, Belgrade, 1988, 329-347.

Mouriki, Doula, “Icons from the 12th to the 15th century”, in Kōnstantinos A. Manafēs, ed., *Sinai: treasures of the monastery of Saint Catherine*, Athens, 1990, 102-124.

Mouriki, Doula, *Studies in Late Byzantine Painting*, The Pindar Press, London, 1995: = “Stylistic trends in Monumental Painting of Greece at the beginning of the XIVth century”, 1-80; = “The Mask Motif in the Wall Paintings of Mistra. Cultural Implications of a Classical Feature in Late Byzantine Painting”, 81-124.

Mureșan, Dan Ioan, “Philothée I^{er} Kokkinos, la métropole de Hongrovalachie et les empereurs de la terre”, in Emilian Popescu – Mihai Ovidiu Cătoi, ed., *Creștinismul românesc și organizarea bisericească în secolele XIII-XIV*, Galați, 2010, 335-406.

Musicescu, Maria Ana, “Arta în Țara Românească din secolul al XIV-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea. Pictura”, in George Oprescu, ed., *Istoria Artelor Plastice în România*, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1968.

Năsturel, Petre Ș., *Le mont Athos et les roumains, recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIV^e siècle à 1654*, Orientalia Christiana analecta, 227, Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Roma, 1986.

Nersesjan, Levon V., ed. *Ikony Vologdy kontsa XVI - XVII veka = Vologda Icons, late 16th - 17th centuries*, Drevnosti Severa - Moskva Severnyj palomnik, Moscow, 2007.

Pace, Valentino, “Pittura bizantina nell'Italia meridionale (secoli XI – XIV)”, in Guglielmo Cavallo – al., *I bizantini in Italia*, Ed. Libri Scheiwiller, Milan, 1982, 427-494.

Paliouras, Athanasios, “Wall Paintings”, in Konstantinos A. Manafis, ed., *Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, Ekdotikē Athēnōn S.A., Athens, 1990, 68-87.

Panaiteșcu, Petre P., “Inscripțiunile religioase grecești dela Biserica Domnească”, *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice* 10-14 (1917-1923) 161-170;

Parenti, Stefano, *L'anafora di Crisostomo. Testo e contesti*, Jerusalem Theologisches Forum (JThF), 36, Aschendorff, Münster, 2020.

Paribeni, Andrea «Separati in casa: i destini paralleli della chiesa e del palazzo delle Blacherne a Costantinopoli», in Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, ed., *Medioevo: la chiesa e il Palazzo, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Parma, 20-24 settembre 2005*, I convegni di Parma 8, Electa, Milan, 2007, 357-368.

Parpulov, Georgi R., “Mural and Icon Painting at Sinai in the Thirteenth Century”, in Sharon Gerstel – Robert S. Nelson, ed., *Approaching the Holy Mountain*, Cursor mundi, v. 11, Brepols, Turnhout, 2010, 345-414.

Pelekanidēs, Stylianos M., *Kalliergēs: holēs Thettalias aristos zōgraphos*, Ed. Archaiologikē Hetaireia, Athēnais, 1973.

Popa, Corina, *Christian art in Romania, the 14th century*, vol. III, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1983.

Putsko, Vasiliy, “Pecherskij ktitorskij portret”, *Zograf* 13 (1982) 42-48.

- Radujko, Milan**, “Zhivopis prochelja i linete juzhnog ulaza Svetog Nikole u Ljuboten”, *Zograf* 32 (2008) 101-116.
- Rice, David Talbot**, *The Icons of Cyprus*, Courtauld Institute Publications of Near Eastern Art, 2, Allen & Unwin, London 1937.
- Rice, David Talbot**, *The Church of Haghia Sophia at Trebizond*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1968.
- Rigo, Antonio**, “Gregorio il Sinaita”, in Carmello Giuseppe Conticello - Vassa Conticello, ed., *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition, II: XIII^e-XIX^e s.*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2002, 35-122.
- Rigo, Antonio**, “Il monte Athos e la controversia palamitica dal concilio del 1351 al tomo sinodale del 1368: Giacomo Trikanas, Procoro Cidone e Filoteo Kokkinos”, in Id., ed., *Gregorio Palamas e oltre: studi e documenti sulle controversie teologiche del XIV secolo bizantino*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze, 2004, 1-51.
- Ringbom, Sixten**, “Vision et conversation chez les primitifs flamands: la sainte famille du maître de Delft”, in *Les images de dévotion, XII^e – XV^e siècle*, Gérard Monfort, Paris, 1995, 87-116.
- Russo, Eugenio**, “L’affresco di Turtura nel cimitero di Commodilla, l’icona di S. Maria in Trastevere e le più antiche feste della Madonna a Roma”, in *Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, 88-89 (1979, 1980-1981) 1-85, 71-150.
- Shcherbatova – Shevjakova, Tat’jana Sergeevna**, *Nereditsa*, Galart, Moscow, 2004.
- Smirnova, Engelina Sergeevna**, *Zhivopis’ velikogo Novgoroda, seredina XIII – nachalo XV veka*, Nauka, Moscow, 1976.
- Smirnova, Engelina Sergeevna**, “Il XIII secolo: devastazione dei tartari e rinascita della cultura”, in Ead., ed., *La pittura in Europa. La pittura russa*, Electa, Milan, 2001, 157-213.
- Smirnova, Engelina Sergeevna**, «Le miniature del Libro di preghiere della principessa Gertrude», in Claudia Barberi, ed., *Psalterium Egberti. Facsimile del ms. CXXXVI del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale del Friuli*, Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Trieste, 2000, vol. Text, 91-103.
- Smorağ Różyca, Małgorzata**, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie miniatury Kodeksu Gertrudy*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Cracow, 2003.
- Sôtêriou, Geôrgios**, *Eikones tês Monês Sina = Icônes du Mont Sinaï*, Institut français, Athens, 1956, 2 vol..
- Ștefănescu, Ioan D.**, *Contribution à l’étude des peintures murales valaques (Transylvanie, district de Vâlcea, Târgoviște et region de București)*, Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1928.
- Ștefănescu, Ioan D.**, *La peinture religieuse en Valachie et en Transylvanie: depuis les origines jusqu’au XIX^e siècle*, I. Texte., II. Album, Orient et Byzance 6, Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1932, 34-36;
- Stratê, Angeliki**, *He zografikê stêne Hiera Monê Timiou Prodromou Serrôn. Meletes kai arthra*, Ekdotikê Paragôge, Thessaloniki, 2007; = “Hoi palaioteres toichografies tês Enatês tou katholikou”, 15-31 ; = “Paratêrêseis stê Zografikê tôn palaiologeion chronôn tês monês”, 53-64.
- Stratê, Angeliki**, *The monastery of Timios Prodromos*, Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Receipts Fund, Athens, 1989.
- Tafrali, Orest**, *Monuments Byzantins de Curtea de Arges*, I. Texte, 52-56, II. Album. Librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1931.

Teteriatnikova, Natalia B., “The New Image of Byzantine Noblemen in Paleologan Art”, *Quaderni Utinensi* 15-16 (1996) 309-328.

Tsigaridas, Euthymios N., *Toichografies tēs periodou tōn Palaiologōn se naous tēs Makedonias*, Ed. Pournaras P., Thessalonikē, 1999.

Tsigaridas, Euthymios N., “L’icône de la Vierge Axion Estin du Protaton et ses copies”, in *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkogo instituta* 44 (2007) 341-352.

Tolfo, Maria Grazia, *La chiesa di San Nicola Domnesc a Curtea de Argeș. Problemi storici e restituzione dell’originario progetto narrativo delle pitture trecentesche*, vol. I Testo, vol. II Tavole (typed, unpublished PhD thesis), Università degli Studi di Parma, 1987-1988.

Tolfo, Maria Grazia, *Arte e spiritualità nella Valacchia del Trecento. Il programma decorativo della chiesa di S. Nicolae Domnesc a Curtea de Argeș*, Milan – Brescia, 1989.

Underwood, Paul A., *The Kariye Djami*, vol. I, *Historical Introduction and Description of the Mosaics and Frescoes*; vol. III *Plates 335-553: The frescoes*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, New York – Princeton, 1966.

Vătășianu, Virgil, *Istoria Artei Feudale în Țările Române. Artă în perioada de dezvoltare a feudalismului*, vol. I, Ed. Academiei, Bucharest, 1959.

Velmans, Tania, “L’iconographie de la «Fontaine de vie» dans la tradition byzantine à la fin du Moyen Âge”, in *Synthronon, Art et Archéologie de la fin de l’Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 2, Klincksieck, Paris, 1968, 119-134.

Velmans, Tania, “Le décor du sanctuaire de l’église de Calendzhikha. Quelques schémas rares: la Vierge entre Pierre et Paul, la Procession des anges et le Christ de Pitié”, in *L’art médiéval de l’Orient chrétien: recueil d’études*, Éditions LIK Distributeur - Éditions Picard, Sofia, 2002, 223-240.

Vzdronov, Gerol'd Ivanovich, *Volotovo, freski cerkvi Uspenija na Volotovom pole bliz Novgoroda*, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1989.

Weitzmann, Kurt, “Loca Sancta, and the representational arts of Palestine”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974) 31-55.

Weitzmann, Kurt, “A group of early twelfth-century Sinai Icons attributed to Cyprus”, in Giles Robertson - George Henderson, ed., *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice*, Collected Studies Series, CS37, Variorum Reprints, Edinburgh, 1975, 245-261.

Weitzmann, Kurt, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: the Icons. From the 6th-10th century*, vol. 1, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976.

Zakharova, Anna, “The Choir of Saints in the Middle Byzantine Monumental Decoration. The Evidence of the 9th-11th Century Wall-Paintings in Cappadocia” in Basilēs Katsaros - Anastasia Turta, ed., *Aphierōma ston akadēmaiko Panagiōtē L. Vokotopoulo*, Ekdóseis Kapón, Athens, 2015, 341-346.