

Mykhailo Hrushevsky. *History of Ukraine-Rus'. Volume 3. To the Year 1340*. Trans. Bohdan Struminski. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2016.

This excerpt from Chapter 4 is specifically prepared for students in Prof. Maxim Tarnawsky's Slavic Civilization Course at the University of Toronto.

\* \* \*

In those times, art, education, and literature developed in Rus' in close connection with Christianity and the Byzantine influences that were connected with it, and what has survived of them to our times is mostly what was more closely connected with church life.

In the sphere of art, we know quite enough about architecture, but it is almost exclusively church architecture. The same is true of painting, which is further supplemented with mosaic. As for carving (sculpture), we have only a few decorative church items. About music we can say the least.<sup>335</sup>

We have nothing from the architecture, painting, and sculpture of pre-Christian times and can follow the development of those arts only under Byzantine influence. Excluding the insignificant remnants of the Golden Gate in Kyiv and the Volhynian towers at Kholm and Kamianets [Kamenets] in Lithuania, everything else we have from the architecture of those times is only churches. Thanks to their large number, their architectural forms and

Pritsak et al., *The Hypatian Codex*, pt. 2, Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies (Munich, 1973), pp. 82, 144 (n. 131). However, Leonid Makhnovets believes that it refers to the town of Polonyi, present-day Polonne, in the Khmelnytskyi oblast: *Litopys Rus'kyi za Ipats'kym spyskom*, trans. L. Makhnovets' (Kyiv, 1989), p. 424.—Eds.] Nor is the site of the Monastery of the Holy Savior known for certain: see Petrushevykh, 'O sobornoi Bogorodichnoi tserkvi i sviatiteliakh v Galiche,' *Galitskii istoricheskii sbornik*, 3 (1860): 'O galitsko-russkikh mitropolitakh,' and Zubrytsky, *Kritiko-istoricheskaia povest' vremennykh let*, p. 71. [Some details regarding this monastery's location were provided by Zakhariia Kopystensky in 1619–24: see *Lev Krevza's 'A Defense of Church Unity' and Zakhariia Kopystens'kyj's 'Palinodia'*, translated with a foreword by Bohdan Strumiński, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, vol. 3, pt. 1: Texts (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p. 769.—Eds.]

331. Cf. the review in my *History*, vol. 5, chap. 4 (Ukr. 2: 262 ff.)

332. *Akty russkogo na sviatom Afone monastyria*; Uspensky, *Vostok khristianskii. Afon*, p. 6 ff.; Golubinsky, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, 1st ed., 1, bk. 2: 622–25.

333. The *Life of Ieūfrasinia*, in *Pamiatniki starinnoi russkoi literatury*, 4: 178. Danilevich (*Ocherk istorii Polotskoi zemli*, p. 241) rejects this report about Ieūfrasinia's journey to Jerusalem because her relics lie in the Kyiv Caves Monastery; but her journey to Jerusalem and this detail cannot be dismissed so lightly. It is accepted by all historians of the Church, right up to Golubinsky, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, 1st ed., 1, bk. 2: 625.

334. Danyil's *Pilgrimage* in *Kniga Palomnik*, p. 33.

335. See the literature in Note 31, p. 480–84.

techniques are rather well known to us, all the more so since they are characterized by a great uniformity.

The first churches were built by Greek craftsmen, as the Chronicle clearly states.<sup>336</sup> So the type of church plan transferred to Rus' was the contemporary Byzantine type, from the so-called middle period of Byzantine architecture, that is, the cross-in-plan of the domed basilica type. Apart from Rus', this type was transferred from Byzantium to Georgia and Armenia, so that Georgian and Armenian churches of those times closely resemble those of Rus' in their type of plan and manner of construction.

The small churches built in Rus' in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and known to us in rather considerable number, provide us with the basic form of this type. The plan of the church is nearly square, usually a little longer from east to west (from the altar to the main entrance). Its three exterior walls are straight, sometimes with pilasters serving as buttresses, and the fourth—the eastern (altar) wall—projects with three semi-circular apses: the central one is wider and taller, the two side ones smaller. Inside are the four piers of the central crossing,<sup>337</sup> on whose pendentives rest the drum and its dome. For reinforcement, the four piers are buttressed by transversed arcades to all four walls of the church. Thus the church is divided lengthwise into three components: the middle nave is wider, and the two side ones are narrower; the center between the supports has the form of a cross (the so-called Byzantine, inner cross).<sup>338</sup> The Kyiv churches—for example, that of John the Baptist and the Trinity Gate Church in the Monastery of the Caves, those of St. Basil and the Dormition in the Podil (Lower Town), and the anonymous church at Kudriavets—have such a plan: here I give the plan of the last of these as no. 1 [on p. 324], for better orientation.<sup>339</sup> We see the same plan in the Church of Good Friday (St. Parasceve) in Chernihiv, in the Churches of St. Panteleimon, the Savior, and the Nativity in Halych, and in the anonymous church beyond the Lukva River.<sup>340</sup>

To increase space, this basic plan, while remaining fundamentally unchanged, was sometimes given various additions. The most usual was the *narthex* (νάρθηξ, *prytvor*): another pair of piers was attached to the western part, so that instead of two rows of supports there came to be three, and the church became more oblong. Above this narthex and its flanking of the northern and southern aisles was the choir loft, thus rendering that [western] end of the church two-storied. Of this type, for example, are Chernihiv's Holy Savior, the oldest of all the churches that have survived to our times; in Kyiv, the great Caves Dormition Church, St. Michael the Golden-Domed, Vydubychi, St. Cyril; Chernihiv's SS. Borys and Hlib and Dormition (at Ielets); the churches in Kaniv;

336. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 83.

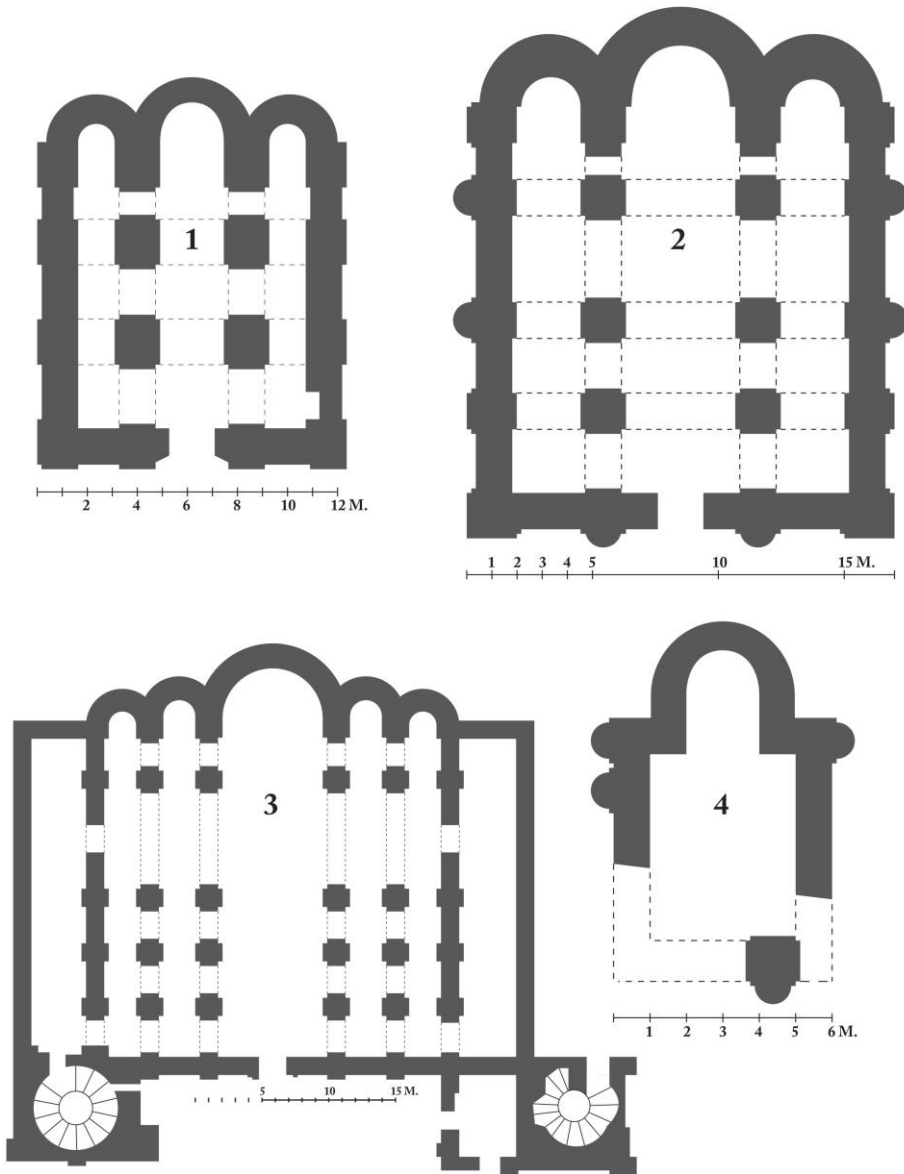
337. On the plans shown here [p. 324] arcades are marked by short dashes.

338. Golubinsky, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, 2d ed., 1, bk. 2: 80, followed by Sokolowski (Mokołowski and Sokolowski, *Do dziejów architektury cerkiewnej*, pp. 10–11), assumes that, along with this type with an inner cross, there were churches with side wings—in the form of a cross on the outside; but the only example in Ukraine that he indicates—the Church of the Savior at Berestove—has later wings, judging by Lashkarev's research (*Tserkovno-arkheologicheskie ocherki*, p. 139).

339. [The four church plans referred to as nos. 1 to 4 appear together on the next page.—Eds.]

340. Lashkarev, *Tserkovno-arkheologicheskie ocherki*, pp. 147, 165; idem, 'Tserkvi Chernigova i Novgoroda-Severskogo.' For the plans of Halych churches, see the publications by Łuszczkiewicz and Sharanevych mentioned in Note 31, p. 481, and in my *History*, vol. 2, Note 9.

Volodymyr (Mstyslav Iziaslavych's church); and so on.<sup>341</sup> I give the plan of the Kaniv church, which is no. 2, as an example.



The Church of the Tithe and the Mother of God in Kyiv, the oldest and at the same time largest church of Old Rus' (known to us only from the remains of its foundations), had side aisles as well, apart from the narthex, so that rather than three lengthwise spaces the

341. Lashkarev, *Tserkovno-arkheologicheskie ocherki*, pp. 147–48, 233, and his 'Tserkvi Chernigova i Novgoroda-Severskogo'; Pavlinov, *Istoriia russkoi arkhitektury*, p. 8; Ainalov and Redin, *Drevnie pamiatniki iskusstva Kieva*, p. 55; Levvitsky, *Istoricheskoe opisanie Vladimir-Volynskogo Uspenskogo khrama*.

church had five; however, these were not real naves, but only galleries. The Cathedral Church of St. Sophia in Kyiv—the crown of Byzantine construction on Rus' soil—has an even more complex plan, as seen in no. 3: instead of three altar apses it has five, and thus five lengthwise spaces, and in addition a low (ground-floor) gallery (*opasan'*, as it was later called in our country) on two sides—the north and the south—that looked like a balcony upstairs. For stairs to the choir loft and the gallery, two towers were fashioned at the corners of the western wall (one of them, the southwest one, was added only later, in the eleventh or twelfth century). We also encounter such towers in some other churches, for example, in Chernihiv's Holy Savior and in Kyiv's Holy Savior at Berestove. But the plan of the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia remains unique. Its size with the galleries and apses measures 39 by 34 meters, without the galleries but with the apses it is 29 by 34 meters, and without the apses it is 29 by 29 meters. The size of the Church of the Tithe with galleries and apses is 34.5 by 45 meters, without the galleries but with the apses would have been 22 by 39 meters, and without the apses it is 22 by 31 meters.<sup>342</sup>

Just as the basic type was supplemented with various additions to widen the structure, so was it simplified and elaborated less to make the structure smaller. The side apses were replaced with short straight shoulders; the piers meant to support the dome disappeared, and the dome rested right on walls that were strengthened with pilasters. The dome was sometimes erected of wood, not stone, to be lighter. Built this way were the Church of St. Michael in Oster, which is partly preserved to this day, and the Church of St. Elias in Chernihiv; the tiny Pereiaslav church is the same—the church's square without the apse is about 6 by 6 meters, as can be seen in no. 4.<sup>343</sup>

The building techniques of the eleventh and twelfth centuries are characterized by a considerable uniformity. Walls were built of rubble masonry and baked brick, with a great deal of mortar. The bricks and mortar have their own characteristic features that very much help to differentiate the buildings of those times from later ones. The bricks have the form of thin (ca. 5 centimeters) and almost square tiles; their size is not quite uniform—45 by 36, 36 by 32, and 33 by 33 cm.; their color is red. The mortar was made of [slaked] lime with an admixture of crushed bricks.<sup>344</sup> As I have just noted, a very large amount of mortar was used, its layers usually thicker than the bricks, and especially in piers and arches—up to twelve centimeters thick, so that bricks are sometimes relegated to a totally secondary role, alongside stones and mortar, and serve rather to level the layers. Cut stone slabs of slate or even marble (as in the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia) were used in the same

342. The plan of the Tithe Church is in Zakrevsky, *Opisanie Kiev: Atlas*, table 6. The plan of the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia Cathedral is in Lebedyntsev, *Opisanie Kievo-Sofiiskogo kafedral'nogo sobora*, pp. 7–10; also Novitsky, *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, 1: 37–39. Noted in the plan of St. Sophia is the great similarity to the Pantocrator Church in Constantinople.

343. Lashkarev, *Tserkovno-arkheologicheskie ocherki*, p. 225, and his 'Tserkvi Chernigova i Novgoroda-Severskogo'; Konstantinovich, 'Razvaliny lur'voi bozhnitsy v s. Starogorodke' [pp. 134–39]. Actual one-apse churches must be distinguished from churches in which the side apses were transformed into niches (internal apses), such as Vitsebsk's Church of the Savior (of medium size) or Halych's Church of St. Elias; see their plans in Novitsky, *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, 1: 47, and Sharanevych, 'Die Franziskaner Kirche.'

344. An old story about the construction of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople describes the way in which this mortar was made as follows: 'in new cauldrons barley was cooked instead of water [alone], and lime and clay (*skudel'*, crushed bricks in our land—M.H.) were mixed with that liquid; pieces of the wood called willow were cut and thrown into this gluey hot liquid in the cauldrons together with barley...this was not warmed up and cooled again but was kept warm so that it would be sticky, and it could be seen to hold even iron'\* (Kavelin, ed., *Skazanie o sviatoi Sofii Tsaregradskoi*, pp. 8–9; I have corrected the obviously garbled text somewhat). Traces of cereals in the mortar were in fact noticed in constructions in Vladimir-Suzdal; Golubinsky (*Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, 2d ed. 1, bk. 2: 89) therefore had no cause at all to see in it the influence of the techniques of the Volga Bulgars.

role—their edges protruded to the exterior face as cornices. Such stone cornices and pilasters were usually the only ornamentation on the exterior walls of a church. Apparently this architectural style did not allow for sculpted ornaments, which later appeared in the churches of Suzdal and in Halych in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Only rarely do we see something more—as, for example, in Chernihiv's Church of the Dormition we see a small gallery of little arches of the Romanesque style above the line of the choir loft. The exterior walls apparently remained unplastered.

The walls of the Church of the Tithe are over one meter thick at the base. The walls of the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia are up to one and a half meters thick, with foundations up to two or two and a half meters deep, and with a vaulted crypt for burials. Walls were reinforced with wooden and iron tie-beams. Finally, to complete the description of wall construction, one more feature must be mentioned: the use of empty clay pots in the upper parts of the walls as well as in the pendentives under the dome. These have usually been called *holosnyky* ['loud-speakers'], from the notion that they were used for resonance. Yet they could also have been used to lighten the load of the structure, replacing the 'spongy' (porous) bricks of older Byzantine construction. The idea has been expressed that the pots placed on their sides, for resonance, should be distinguished from those placed upright in order to lighten the construction, but for the time being this is only a hypothesis.<sup>345</sup>

The most usual type was the church with a single dome, but there were also churches with five and even nine domes, as was the case with the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia. The drum of the dome had tall and narrow window apertures. Roofing was original, inasmuch as the roof did not rest on separate timber rafters, as it does today, but the vaults and the domes were covered with sheet metal directly over the exterior surface of the vaults, so that they had a curved and wavy surface. The roofs were usually covered with lead sheeting, which was sometimes gilded—as on St. Michael the Golden-Domed or on the Golden Gate. The window openings also had their own original form—of receding niches, with a pointed profile, as we can see on St. Sophia. Apart from drums of domes, windows were placed in the apses and aisles and in the walls. Churches were generally intended to be bright—this is indicated by the coloring of the mosaics. It was the later annexes that rendered church interiors dark.

A church would be ornamented on the interior with fresco paintings, and in the richest ones (the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia, St. Michael the Golden-Domed Church, also the Church of the Tithe and the Caves Great [Dormition] Church) the apse and the main dome were decorated with mosaics. The fresco and mosaic programs that had covered the walls of the church were later replaced with the wall icons and with the iconostasis itself. The altar in Old Rus' churches, as in Byzantine ones, was separated from the nave only by a low partition, probably made of low marble columns, with a curtain that was drawn shut at prescribed moments. Thus the whole middle and upper part of the altar apse would have been completely visible from the church. Entire old iconostases have not been preserved anywhere, but it is probable that the small columns of white marble, with capitals, and the cornices, also in marble, still found in the Golden-Domed and Caves monasteries remain from these.<sup>346</sup> The larger marble columns of St. Sophia, standing without capitals, probably

345. See Novitsky, *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, pp. 84–86; Lashkarev, *Tserkovno-arkheologicheskie ocherki*, p. 215, and his 'Tserkvi Chernigova i Novgoroda-Severskogo,' p. 150.

346. [Both the St. Michael the Golden-Domed Monastery and Church were destroyed by the Soviet regime in the 1930s. They were fully reconstructed in 1997–99. Work on ornamentation, mosaics, and the iconostasis was completed in 2002.—Eds.]

survive from the so-called ciborium—a baldachin (*komara*) erected over the altar. Such a ciborium is described in the cathedral of Kholm<sup>347</sup>—four<sup>348</sup> columns of monolithic stone, and on them a baldachin. Also, the St. Sophia and St. Michael mosaics acquaint us with their appearance. The two lateral apses were designated—the north one for the prothesis (*zhertvennyk*), and the south one was called the diaconicon (*dysiakonnyk*). The entire sanctuary part was separated from the body of the church by steps.

Judging by remnants in the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia, the Church of the Tithe, and other churches, the floors were laid in patterns of stone (marble, granite, jasper, etc.). In richer churches or in smaller ones, floors were further enhanced with glazed brick or tile patterns of various shapes.<sup>349</sup> Remnants of such glazed brick tiles remain in the Church of the Annunciation in Halych. They give an idea of how such a floor would have looked: a tile mosaic of various colors in a geometric pattern.<sup>350</sup> The walls might also have had larger marble revetment.<sup>351</sup> To this day the enclosure (railing) of the choir loft at St. Sophia is covered on the church side with bas-relief slate tiles. Carved slate tiles were also found in other churches (St. Michael the Golden-Domed, St. Irene).

If the first churches in Rus' were built by Greek masters, then already beginning with the mid-eleventh century construction work was carried out by local Rus' masters, as is shown by the history of the construction of the Church of St. George. Greek architects were probably used only for general supervision on larger projects. Thus, for example, legend has it that the architects of the great church at the Monastery of the Caves came from Constantinople. Ineptness on the part of the first domestic builders was pointed to as explanation for mishaps with those constructions: for example, in the Church of St. Andrew in Kyiv 'the dome collapsed'\* after twenty years.<sup>352</sup> The same happened to the Pereiaslav cathedral when 'there was a minor earthquake'\* in 1124.<sup>353</sup> In the more ordinary church buildings of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, we undoubtedly see the work of Rus' builders. In the twelfth century, however, they were still totally following Greek models. We do not know the names of those architects. The only name from the twelfth century is that of the court architect and 'friend' of Prince Riuryk Rostyslavych, Petro Mylonih. We know that he built a wall in the Vydubychi Monastery to protect it from floods, but it is probable that he also participated in other constructions commissioned by Riuryk, who had 'an insatiable love of buildings.'\*<sup>354</sup> Of Riuryk's churches we can indicate with near certainty St. Basil's in Ovruch, which represents for us the last monument of that period—the dominance of the purely Byzantine plan type.

---

347. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 558.

348. [An erroneous 'two' in the original.—Eds.]

349. Lashkarev, *Tserkovno-arkheologicheskie ocherki*, pp. 167–68, 227; cf. the tiles from Zvenyhorod in my 'Zvenyhorod halys'kyi,' and from Halych in Zacharjewicz and Sharanevych, 'Wycieczka do Załukwi, Halicza i na Kryłos.'

350. The floor of the Church of the Annunciation, discovered by the Reverend Liavretsky, has been recovered with earth to protect it. I had the opportunity to see his drawing of its remnants.

351. Cf. the paper by Ainalov, 'Mramory i inkrustatsiia,' p. 135.

352. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 185.

353. [*Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 207.]

354. [*Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 476.]

Concerning sculpture, as I have already said, in Kyiv we have only decorative carving, in the form of stone (slate) ornamented tiles that served as interior decorations of churches and several princely marble sarcophagi (*korsty*).

The most interesting tomb, which is called that of Iaroslav the Wise, now stands in a side bay of the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia. This is a broad, rectangular tomb of white marble, about two meters long and more than one meter wide. Judging by its width, presumably it was made not for one but for two people. It has a gable lid with curbstones at the four ends. The tomb is ornamented on its sides and lid with bas-relief figures based on motifs of early Christian art: crosses, a grapevine, fish, palms, and so on. The workmanship is not particularly inspired, but it is quite neat and probably not local.

---

371. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 616.

372. For drawings of the Kholm and Kamianets towers, see *Pamiatniki russkoi stariny v zapadnykh guberniakh*, vol. 7, and Petrov's *Volyn'*. For a plan of the Halych tower, see Sharanevych, *Trzy opisy historyczne staroksiężęcego grodu Halicza*.

373. Khoinovskiy, *Raskopki velikokniazheskogo dvortsa*; Antonovych and Armashevskiy, *Publichnye lektsii po geologii i istorii Kieva*, p. 56. New research into the grand-princely manor house has just been announced.

374. [*Slovo o polku Ihorevim*, ed. Partytsky, chap. 9, p. 21.—Eds.]

375. [The epithet *zlatoverkhii* is found in reliably dated Kyivan Rus' sources in reference to churches. Other than in the *Ihor Tale*, it occurs in reference to a palace (*terem*) only in Muscovy (the *Tale of the Battle with Mamay* and later sources).—Eds.]

376. See the study by Professor Pavlutsky (who has recently been dealing with the wooden churches of Ukraine), 'Drevnee derevianoe tserkovnoe zodchestvo'; cf. the summary of his paper, 'Izobrazheniia khrama.'

In the same St. Sophia Cathedral there is another tomb, without a lid and badly damaged, that is also made of white marble. It is a single one and more simply ornamented, also with bas-relief carving.<sup>377</sup>

According to accounts of princely burials,<sup>378</sup> such marble sacrophagi were utilized quite often. They were probably produced in Rus' as early as the second half of the eleventh century, judging by the *Patericon* story about the stone altar slab at the Caves Great [Dormition] Church, for which the monks sent 3 hryvnias of silver to the workshop 'where such things are made.'<sup>379</sup>

The slate slabs of the St. Sophia Cathedral are also carved with purely decorative motifs. They usually have one vine scroll covering the entire surface of a tile, well rendered in bas-relief. A different type occurs on the tiles of the St. Michael and Caves Monasteries and a fragment found beneath the Church of St. Irene. Certain scenes in high relief are executed on them, rather crudely. For instance, on a tile from St. Michael's Monastery we see two saints on horseback, and on tiles from the Caves Monastery, Samson with the lion as well as chariots with harnessed animals (on the subject of the vision of Daniel, it is thought), and so on.<sup>380</sup>

Let us move on to painting.

What actually constitutes the subject of a painting—the representation of various scenes and objects on a surface using various colors—was in those times in Byzantium and in Rus' the object of painting, mosaic, and enamel techniques. They are closely interrelated: a certain style dominates in them equally, and the techniques even influence one another.

Of painting in the strict sense we have only remnants of frescoes and a few miniature images.

The Cathedral Church of St. Sophia contains the richest collection of frescoes, datable from the first half of the eleventh century, with not only sacred themes but also purely secular ones. Unfortunately, the restoration of those frescoes, carried out in the first half of the nineteenth century without adequate care and caution, destroyed and mutilated a great deal of the detail. Only a small part of the frescoes has remained unrestored and can provide information about their authentic appearance. Remaining are the frescoes of the

---

377. Drawings of the St. Sophia Cathedral tombs are in Zakrevsky, *Opisanie Kieva: Atlas*; Tolstoi and Kondakov, eds., *Russkie drevnosti*, vyp. 4 [p. 161].

378. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., pp. 90, 114, 141.

379. *Paterik Kievskogo Pecherskogo monastyrja*, p. 125.

380. See the pictures in Zakrevsky's *Opisanie Kieva: Atlas*, table 9. Also see Antonovych's *Arkheologicheskaja karta Kievskoi gubernii*, p. 37; tiles of the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia in *Drevnosti Rossiiskogo gosudarstva*, and in Tolstoi and Kondakov, eds., *Russkie drevnosti*, vyp. 4; Ainalov's paper 'Mramory i inkrustatsiia,' as indicated above.



side altar of St. Michael's and the frescoes on the piers of the main sanctuary. These had been covered during the early restoration work by the iconostasis of that time and thus were left untouched. Some of the restored ones survived unchanged, as is shown by a comparison with tracings made before the restoration. Thus, all told, through this comparison one can still have an idea of the original fresco painting program and its style in the St. Sophia Cathedral.

Frescoes covered all the walls of the St. Sophia Cathedral, with the exception of the main apse and the central dome, which were decorated with mosaics. We see a certain system carried out in this painting. The four lateral apses are painted with scenes taken from the life of the personage to whom the apse is dedicated. One is dedicated to the Mother of God: this program is particularly interesting because it is taken from the apocryphal gospels. The second is dedicated to the archangel Michael, the third to the apostle Peter, and the last to St. George. The upper walls of the presbytery and the walls of the choir loft are likewise painted with scenes from the story of Christ, and with Old Testament episodes that are interpreted symbolically as being about Christ. In addition, the walls and piers of the church are painted with figures of saints, some at full scale and others as busts in medallions. Images of holy women cover the walls of the two westernmost bays, where the women's section must have been placed, while the walls of the other bays carry images of holy men. The walls of the stairs in the corner towers leading to the choir loft are painted with secular subjects, because the towers were considered to be structures already outside the church. The guess is that in the main nave where now, after the restoration, we see a family of female martyrs—[the legendary] St. Sophia and her daughters [Faith, Hope, and Charity]—originally there were portraits of the founding prince and his family, but the inept restoration destroyed this precious picture for us. The frescoes are painted with water-based pigments mixed with glue or egg white; serving as the ground was freshly applied plaster in which outlines were drawn with a stylus in dark colors;<sup>381</sup> the fresco was covered with a varnish.<sup>382</sup>

These frescoes cover such a large area that they obviously must have been created by a larger number of painters.<sup>383</sup> Unfortunately, as mentioned previously, a superficial restoration effaced the finer details of the painting that would have made it possible to discern individual hands. All in all, however, the painting stands at the threshold of the decline of Byzantine painting. The power of the ancient tradition had not yet been completely lost, but on the other hand there were already clear harbingers of an imminent decline. A strong stereotype now dominates: faces are made in more or less the same manner—round, with large, wide-open eyes, a straight nose, and full lips. Body position and the arrangement of clothing are already highly schematic. The stereotype makes itself felt particularly strongly in the single figures of the saints: there is no use in looking for individuality and realism here. We see a few types that are repeated, differing only in the color of clothing and in inscriptions. The inscriptions on single figures are Greek. One can

---

381. [The pigments then applied were black and red.—*Eds.*]

382. [In fact, varnish was applied at a later time.—*Eds.*]

383. Discovered and restored in the church in 1843–53 were 25 scenes and 220 single figures (full and medallion). But these are by far not all the old paintings. A total of 30 scenes, 555 (!) single figures, 346 medallions, and 907 ornaments were made (allegedly according to the old outlines) during the restoration. Inscriptions survived with only 20 saints; the rest were written and restored more or less from fantasy, on the basis of the *hermeneiai*—Byzantine manuals of church painting.

assume quite certainly that the frescoes of St. Sophia, as well as the mosaics, were in fact made by Greek masters.

It was also Greek masters who, using purely Byzantine themes, painted the stairs of both towers of St. Sophia. Although by their architectural features these towers do not belong to quite the same period as the church itself, their painting has the same character. Judging by its remnants, by far incomplete (the frescoes of the northwest tower, in particular, suffered badly), its content represents the cycle of Constantinopolitan holiday plays and ceremonies that took place at the turn of the old and new year—Brumalia, Saturnalia, Vota, and Calends (from 24 November to 6 January). Here we see circus scenes: beasts fighting among themselves and with *bestiarii*—masked gladiators; chariot races; diverse performances by actors, musicians, acrobats, and clowns; audiences at imperial holidays and excursions; the offering of gifts at the beginning of a new year. The details of those scenes (despite sometimes inept restoration) convey very faithfully, for all that the drawing is schematic, the real minutiae of Byzantine life. We see, for example, charioteers dressed in the traditional colors of circus parties, we see the imperial lodge with the emperor's bodyguards and court,<sup>384</sup> we see various court officials with the insignia appropriate to their ranks, and so on. Apart from that we see many ornamental depictions of plants and fantastic animals. Of anything native, of Rus'—there is nothing here.<sup>385</sup>

Along with fresco painting, icon painting proper was widespread. Already Volodymyr the Great carried away icons from Chersonese to Kyiv. Later they were continually brought from Byzantium and painted locally by domestic masters.<sup>386</sup> Mentioned among monks of the Caves Monastery in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries is the painter [St.] Alimprii. As a boy Alimprii was sent to study with the Greek masters who were painting the

---

384. The inept restoration that had turned the drawing of the ceiling of the imperial lodge into bars on a window was the reason that until recently this scene was interpreted as a scene of the princely judgment of an arrested person who looks out through the bars. See the late P. Pavlov's paper, 'O znachenii nekotorykh fresok Kievo-Sofiiskogo sobora.'

385. However, Potapov was still trying to defend the opposite view very recently: see his 'Ocherk drevnei russkoi grazhdanskoi arkhitektury,' p. 19.

386. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., pp. 49, 83.

Caves church, and then he won a reputation as a great icon painter ('he was highly skilled in painting icons'\*). He painted icons for the Caves brethren and for outside commissions. Icon painting technique and the use of icons in those times (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) are represented in the depiction of his *Life* in the *Patericon*. Icons were painted on boards, which apparently were usually wooden ones; the 'dyestuffs' (*sharovnyia vapy*) were ground on a stone and collected on a 'palette' (*vapnitsa*). In icon painting, gold played a considerable role, together with the pigments: 'for he sometimes put gold on the icon and sometimes he made dyestuffs on a stone and painted with all of them.'\* One Kyivan commissioned an icon of the Mother of God from Alimprii because he wanted to donate it to a church on the Feast of the Dormition; another wanted to build a church for himself and, as an adornment for it, to commission five large icons—a deesis and two *namisni* (this is what the icons in the main row of an iconostasis are now called).<sup>387</sup>

---

387. [A deesis contains images of Jesus, the Virgin, and John the Baptist, so together with another two images there would be five.—Eds.] *Paterik Kievskogo Pecherskogo monastyria*, pp. 174–80.

388. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 107.

389. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., p. 373; *Lavr.*, 2d and 3d eds., p. 392.

390. *Hyp.*, 2d ed., pp. 608–10, cf. 559.

Mosaic replaced frescoes for monumental church images in the most luxurious constructions. This branch of refined Byzantine culture was technically so difficult and costly that it was used in our country to decorate only the showiest parts of churches, and only of the richest churches at that. We know mosaic—*musiia*, as it was then called—only in the richest center of Rus' culture, in Kyiv, and in its good times at that, from the late tenth to the early twelfth century: in the Church of the Tithe, in the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia, in the Caves Great [Dormition] Church, and in the Cathedral of St. Michael the Golden-Domed Monastery.<sup>392</sup> It has survived only in St. Sophia and in St. Michael's Monastery, and in the latter very little at that: one whole picture and a few fragments.

Mosaic was set into a prepared mortar bed: tesserae of varicolored glass were inserted into the freshly applied mortar base, and as they were arranged by color, they formed an image. The background was made of golden glass tesserae. Where a certain opaque color zone was needed, appropriate colors were laid in stone or opaque glass tesserae; and where shine and sparkle were needed, transparent glass tesserae were utilized. The face and the body overall were laid with small-sized tesserae, and the dress and background with larger ones. After the image was completed, its entire surface would be polished. As we can see, the work was quite complex and required mastery of the craft. From the point of view of technique, our Kyiv mosaics are indeed a rarified creation (particularly the St. Sophia mosaics), but at the same time in their contours there is actually more artisanal technique than artistic invention.

---

391. The Ostromir Gospel—facsimile edition, *Ostromirovo Evangelie: 1056–1057*, ed. Savinkov (1883; 2d ed., 1889); Sviatoslav's *Miscellany* of 1073—*Izbornik velikogo kniazia Sviatoslava Iaroslavicha* (1880); Trier Psalter—*Der Psalter Erzbischofs Egberts von Trier* (1901); concerning its miniatures, see my article, "Kil'ka zamitok do "Chuda sv. Klymenta"" (the literature about it is also indicated there). The third manuscript of interest for its miniatures, that of the *Lives* of Borys and Hlib, published by Sreznevsky in his edition of *Skazaniia o sviatykh Borise i Glebe*, belongs to a later time—the fourteenth century. The miniatures of the Radziwiłł Manuscript of the Chronicle are even later (concerning them, see Sizov's article, "Miniatiury Kenigsbergskoi letopisi").

392. The mosaics in the Caves church are mentioned in the *Paterik Kievskogo Pecherskogo monastiria*, p. 175; the existence of mosaic in the Tithe Church is attested by tesserae found in the foundations. It is apparent from the narrative by Paul of Aleppo that the sanctuary of St. Michael's Monastery had such mosaics, as did that of St. Sophia: Paul of Aleppo, *Puteshestvie Antiokhiiskogo patriarkha Makarii*, 2: 73.

In the Cathedral Church of St. Sophia, as mentioned, mosaics and paintings adorn the walls of the main dome and the central apse. Placed at the apex of the main dome is a monumental image of Christ the Pantocrator, to whom, under the name of Sophia—that is, Holy Wisdom—the church must have been dedicated. The image is majestic but rather heavily executed, with a strongly outlined Oriental (Armenian) type. It was discovered not so long ago (only in 1885). Around it were four archangels, only one of whom is preserved—perhaps the best composition in St. Sophia. It has still retained aspects of antique drawing traditions. Farther down, between the windows of the drum, stand the twelve apostles, with only the image of the apostle Paul preserved, and that only to his waist. Placed below in the four pendentives were images of the evangelists—of those, only one, that of St. Mark, remains.

The semi-dome of the central apse is taken up by a monumental figure of the Mother of God presented in a Orans pose, with her hands raised up. From an artistic point of view, there is nothing special about the image—the figure is too short, the poise is schematic, and the face is dry and expressionless—and the spherical surface of the apse on which the image was placed was detrimental here. The artist failed to calculate how much the contour would be foreshortened on that spherical surface. Below this Orans Mother of God is a symbolic depiction of the Last Supper, presented symbolically: Christ, standing next to an altar, distributes communion on one side in bread to six apostles who approach him in a file, and on the other side in wine to the other six. Above the image is a Eucharistic inscription in Greek. The contours of the depiction, while interesting from the point of view of Christian symbolism, are characterized by a lack of perspective, schematism in the apostles' movements, and mannerism in their poses, although the execution itself is very capable. These images, the Mother of God and the Last Supper, are completely preserved and serve as the main ornament of St. Sophia, and, at the same time, as one of the most outstanding monuments of Byzantine art of their time. Below the Last Supper there were images of the Holy Fathers, in episcopal vestments, flanked by archdeacons. Only the upper parts are preserved, however.

In the center of the sanctuary arcade we have an image of the first priest Aaron (corresponding to it was probably Melchizedek, but that picture is missing). Near the center of the arcade is a deesis—an image of Christ flanked by the Mother of God and John the Baptist, in medallions; apart from this, in the center of the sanctuary and the opposite, western, arch are remnants of mosaic pictures, supposedly of the Mother of God and Christ-Emmanuel (at a young age). Located on the front (westward) sides of the piers of the sanctuary arcade is the famous picture of the Annunciation. On one pier is the messenger archangel [Gabriel], and on the other, the Mother of God (spinning). This depiction of her came out much more successfully than that on the sanctuary apse: the facial expression, the bearing of the body, and the arrangement of clothing are pleasant, without the stern dryness present in the images of the Orans and Christ the Pantocrator. The figure of the archangel was rendered more weakly—more schematically and more heavily. Both figures have Greek Gospel inscriptions next to them.

Finally, inside the southern and northern arch (I am still speaking about the arches on which the central cupola rests), we have small pictures of forty martyrs in medallions, with Greek inscriptions, similarly placed as in the depictions of the Holy Fathers in the sanctuary (only those are whole figures, whereas these are medallions). These two series of mosaics in the center of the church correspond, as we can see, to the full figure and medallion frescoes covering the walls of other parts of the church.

In comparing these mosaic images, one can notice a certain difference between them in the manner of the outlining and color selection. The mosaics of the dome and the upper part of the apse are executed in lighter colors and are more mannered in their composition. It is presumed that this was the modern, so to speak, and fashionable metropolitan manner of those times. But the pictures of the Holy Fathers and martyrs are distinguished by darker colors, and a greater simplicity of outlines, which thanks to this have preserved in some places more of the good old tradition, although the execution of these series is generally weaker. They may have been done by provincial masters, or second-class metropolitan ones.

Like the frescoes, the St. Sophia mosaics are on the threshold of the complete decline of the artistic tradition in Byzantine art. They are marked by schematism or mannerism in the elaboration of dogmatically established forms. However, the execution was at a very high level, and there was still considerable artistry in the coloration.