

Is the so called Άνοθεν οί προφεται, described in Dionysius's Hermeneia the source of the iconography of the Mother of God surrounded by prophets?

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In 1912 Władysław Podlacha recognized and characterised the subject Hodegetria surrounded by prophets as the illustration of the Hymn *Anothen hoi profettai* (Άνοθεν οί προφεται) similar to the Athos paintings in the Moldavian (called then Bucovinian) frescoes¹. He emphasised that it was the old tradition to paint prophets on the walls of a narthex, as e.g. in Humor [fig. 1] and Moldovitsa [fig. 2], and hymnographers in pendentives of a cupola filled with the bust of Mother of God in the Blacherniotissa type. This is why Podlacha called this part of the temple *The Shrine of the Mother of God* (Pol. *Przybytek Bogurodzicy*). He also indicated *The Hymns of Prophets* (gr. Άνοθεν οί προφεται) mentioned in *Hermeneia* traditionally attributed to Dionysius of Fournas as the literary source of the described composition. To the oldest examples of this type belong the icon preserved in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai² [fig. 3] and the other one taken from Mt. Athos by Petr Ivanovich Sevastianov in the 19th c., now in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg³ [fig. 4]. According to Griordana Babić, that subject was very popular in the early 14th c., and its popularity in the Paleologian times resulted from the compilation of symbolic and rhetoric contents with descriptive elements⁴. In the other paragraph the author stated that the type of

¹ W. Podlacha, *Malowidła ścienne w cerkwiach Bukowiny*, Lwów 1912, p. 35; Cf. M. P. Kruk, *Ikona Matki Boskiej Rudeckiej* [in:] *Wizerunki maryjne, archidiecezje krakowska i przemyska, diecezje łódzka, opolska, rzeszowska*, 2. *Materiały z VII Seminarium Oddziału Rzeszowskiego SHS "Sacrum et decorum" w Łańcutu w dniu 21 listopada 1992 r.*, ed. I. Sapetowa, Rzeszów 1995, p. 25-46; Idem, *Zachodnioruskie ikony Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem w XV i XVI wiekach*, Kraków 2000, p. 77-193; Idem, *Hymnograf Stefan czy hymnograf Teofan. Problem identyfikacji pieśniopiewcy w ikonach zachodnioruskich*, [in:] „Series Byzantina” II (= Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art), ed. W. Deluga, M. Janocha, Warszawa 2004, p. 129 – 154, fig. 1 – 4; Idem, *Balkan Connections of Ruthenian Icons of the Former Republic of Poland Exemplified by Iconography and Inscriptions*, [in:] *The Orthodox Church in the Balkans and Poland. Connections and Common Tradition*, ed. A. Mironowicz, U. Pawluczuk, W. Walczak, Białystok 2007, p. 287 – 298; Idem, *Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti w ikonie Hodegetrii w otoczeniu proroków w Czarnej k. Uscia Gorlickiego*, [in:] *Szczelina światła. Ruskie malarstwo ikonowe*, ed. Agnieszka Gronek, Kraków 2009 (= Biblioteka Tradycji nr LXXXVI), p. 215 – 248; Idem, *Православная икона 16 - того века из Терла Богоматерь Одигитрия в окружении пророков в собрании Краковского национального музея. Проблемы иконографии, атрибуции и датировки*, „Arta” 2013 (= Arte vizuale: arte plastice, arhitectură; ed. Academia de Științe a Republicii Moldova. Institutul Studiul Artelor), p. 16-28.

² *The Virgin and Child enthroned surrounded by saints*, icon, 1st half of 12th c., 48,5 x 41,2 cm, Sinai, St. Catherine Monastery – A. W. Carr, *Icon with the Enthroned Virgin Surrounded by Prophets and Saints* [in:] *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Era A.D. 843–1261*, ed. H. C. Evans, W. D. Wixom [catalogue of exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art], New York 1997, cat. and fig. 244 – dated to 1080–1130; M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony ...*, Cat. III.2. Here I recognized incorrectly St. John the Evangelist instead of St. Simeon the Prophet who stands alongside St. Anna.

³ *The Mother of God Eleusa enthroned surrounded by prophets*, icon, late 12th c.– early 13th c., 48,5 x 37,0 x 2,7 cm, from Mt. Athos, St. Petersburg, Hermitage - *Афонские Древности. Каталог выставки и фондов Эрмитажа*, Санкт-Петербург 1992, Fig. III; M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony ...*, cat. III.3.

⁴ G. Babić, *L'image symbolique de la <Porte Fermée> a Saint-Clément d'Ohrid*, [in:] *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age. Recueil d'études par André Grabar et un groupe de ses disciples*, Paris 1968, p. 150.

the Mother of God surrounded by prophets was probably introduced during the Comnenian era and become the most popular in the early 14th c. and then again in the Serbian arts in the 16th and 17th centuries⁵. In fact, the term *Ἀνορθεν οἱ προφეტται* appeared in the works of arts relatively late – it can be observed on a few panagariens dated only to the 17th and the early 18th centuries on which prophets with Marian attributes are represented⁶. The separate phenomenon is an unusual popularity of icons painted according to this scheme in the paintings from the Rus' lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 15th and 16th centuries. A beautiful example is the icon of the *Mother of God* from Rudki [Рудки, Ukraine] that sadly was lost in 1992⁷.

It is worth to notice that the iconographic scheme known from the Middle Byzantine Period in which the prophets surround the Mother of God was not drawn in any particular way from the oldest or newer iconographic compendia. However, e.g. Nikolai Kondakov (1915) noticed Marian comparisons in the early Byzantine ecclesiastic literature in the works of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem (560 – 638; Patriarch of Jerusalem from 634) St. Andrew of Crete (c. 650 – 726 or 740) and St. John of Damascus (c. 675/676 – 749)⁸. As Radojčić remarked, the prophets present already in so-called '*purple codices*' were particularly often introduced into the monumental painting in the 13th and 14th centuries to express the concordance of both *Testaments*. The representations of two prophets in the corners above the scene of the *Assumption of Mary* in one of Serbian Orthodox churches⁹ had to serve that purpose. Sotirios Kissas, who agrees with this author, perceives the source of the presence of prophets with Mary's symbols in the subject of the Dormition of the Mother of God in the homilies of St. John of Damascus, at the same time referring to the remarks regarding the iconography of the above mentioned hymn included in the Konstantinos Kalokyris's elaboration from 1972¹⁰. The term used in *Hermeneia (The Prophets from above)*¹¹ was adapted in the later literature, e. g. in Manuelis Chatzidakis's monograph (1962) devoted to Venetian icons¹² or in Sirarpie der Nersessian's study of frescoes of the Parrecclesion of Monastery of Our Saviour (now Karye Djami) in Constantinople (1975)¹³. The most comprehensive study devoted to this subject was published by Doula Mouriki in 1971 in the context of the late Paleologian paintings in Peribleptos in Mistra¹⁴. In her study she joined – to some degree – the conceptions of the origin of this subject seen in the Dionysius *Manual* and in the homiletic and hymnographic tradition of the Eastern Church¹⁵. She indicated that the *Troparion Anorthen hoi profettai* (*Ἀνορθεν οἱ προφეტται*) was not only the name of the subject

⁵ G. Babić, M. Chatzidakis, *Les icônes de la péninsule balkanique et des îles grecques* [in:] *Les icons*, ed. F. Nathan, Paris 1982, p. 306.

⁶ В. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагостили” у Пећу [in:] *Архиепископ Данило II и њего доба. Међународни научни скуп поводом 650-годино од смрти. Децембар 1987*, Београд 1991, p. 414–415.

⁷ М. Р. Крук, *Ikona Matki Boskiej Rudeckiej ...*, p. 25–46; Idem, *Zachodnioruskie ikony ...*, cat. 14;

⁸ Н. Кондаков *Иконография Богоматери* 2, Санкт-Петербург 1915, p. 385–386.

⁹ S. Radojčić, *Die Entstehung der Malerei der Paläologischen Renaissance*, „Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft“ 7 (1958), p. 121.

¹⁰ K. S. Kissas, *A Russian Icon from Tatarna Monastery in Eurytania*, „Cyrillomethodianum” 8–9 (1984–1985), p. 267.

¹¹ *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fourna*, translation from Greek P. Hetherington, London 1974, p. 51.

¹² M. Chatzidakis, *Ikônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs et de la collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise*, Venise 1962, p. 10.

¹³ S. Der Nersessian, *Program and Iconography of the frescoes of the Parecclesion*, [in:] *Studies in the Art of the Karye Djami*, ed. P. Underwood, vol. IV, New Jersey 1975, p. 313.

¹⁴ Δ. Μουρική, *Αἱ βιβλικά προεικονίσσεις τῆς Παναγίας εἰς τὸν τρολλὸν τῆς Περιβλεπτὸν τοῦ Μυστρα*, „Αρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον” 25 (1970), p. 217–251.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 222–223.

in *The Painters' Manual* but it was an old liturgical hymn as well, known from the 12th c. onwards¹⁶.

Conclusions of Babić and Mouriki were repeated and elaborated by Vesna Milanović¹⁷ and mentioned by Ludmila Popović¹⁸ (1991) when she referred to the murals in Peć (14th c.). The similar program appeared in other Serbian Orthodox churches, e.g. in the Our Lady of Ljeviš (serb. Богородица Љевишка) church in Prizren dated to 1307–1308¹⁹. In Serbian this subject was described as *The Prophets have Thee announced* (Serb. Пророци су те наговестили). In the opinion of Milanović the prophets with attributes were depicted already in manuscripts written in the 6th–8th centuries but in this time they were not connected directly with the mission of Mary²⁰. In the meantime other authors expressed other, little different, including e.g. Eugeniusz Iwanoyko (1956) who believed that the source of the depiction was *The Akathist Hymn*, the most venerable hymn of the Eastern Orthodox Church²¹, while Josef Myslivec (1969)²² emphasized the meaning of sermons of the Fathers of the Church in his study on Slovak icons. Vira Svjencic'ka (1983)²³ and Romuald Biskupski (1985)²⁴ shortly argued that the icons in this type should be understood as the apotheosis of the Mother of God. In Russian²⁵ and Ukrainian²⁶ literature this subject was described as *Pohvala Bogomateri* (Похвала Богоматери; Богородиця з дитям і похвалою). A Bulgarian scholar, Stefan Smjadovski (1998) indicated both *Akathist* and the above mentioned hymn as the source of the hymnographic inscription [Num 17,8 (23)] written on Aaron's scroll on the 14th paintings of Zemen²⁷.

Milanović after Mouriki admitted that some of the oldest illustrations of prophets with Marian symbols are known from the miniatures in *The Sermons* of Jacob Kokkinobaphos and *The Christian Topography* of Kosmas Indikopleustes²⁸. Both authors emphasised that the description in *Hermeneia* is much younger than any monuments to which it refers. Very relevant and valuable remarks referring to this subject can be found in the articles of Olga Etingoff (2000)²⁹. She noticed that the troparion *Anothen hoi Profettai* preserved in the 11th century *Triodion* from the Sinai Monastery (*Sinait, gr. 736, fol. 71*) is included in the *Canon*

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 241.

¹⁷ В. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагавестили” ..., p. 412.

¹⁸ Л. Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије у Пећи: идентификација и тумачење текстова*, [in:] *Архиепископ Данило II* ..., p. 448.

¹⁹ В. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагавестили” ..., p. 418.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 419.

²¹ E. Iwanoyko, *Nieznane dzieło malarstwa ikonowego*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. A. Mickiewicza w Poznaniu”, 1956, No 3, Vol. 1: Historia, p. ...

²² J. Myslivec, *Východoslovenské ikony*, „Umění” 17 (1969), No 5, p. 410.

²³ В. Свенцицька, *Українське станкове малярство XIV–XVI ст. і традиції візантійського мистецтва* [in:] *Українське мистецтво у міжнародних зв'язках. Дожовтневий період*, Київ 1983, p. 18.

²⁴ R. Biskupski, *Malarstwo ikonowe od XV do pierwszej połowy XVIII wieku na Łemkowszczyźnie*, „Polska Sztuka Ludowa”, No 3–4, p. 158

²⁵ М. А. Орлова, *Фрески Похвальского придела Успенского Собора московского Кремля*, [in:] *Древнерусское искусство. Монументальная живопись XI – XII вв.*, Москва 1980, p. 307; Е. В. Дувакина, *Проблемы иконографии „О Тебе Радуется” в связи с росписью собора Ферапонтова монастыря* [in:] *Ферапонтовский Сборник*, ed. Г. И. Вздорнов, Москва 1985, p. 194; Э. П. Саликова, *Сложение иконографии „Похвала Богоматери” в русском искусстве XV–XVI веков*, p. 69–80; Н. В. Шмардина, *Галицкая икона „Похвала Богоматери”*, „Материалы и исследования” XI (Русская художественная культура XV–XVI веков, Москва 1998), p. 81–91.

²⁶ М. Гелитович, *Богородиця з дитям і похвалою. Ікони колекції Національного музею у Львові*, Львів 2005, p. 6.

²⁷ С. Смядовски, *Надписите към Земенските стенописи*, София, 1998, item 110.

²⁸ В. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагавестили” ..., p. 420. See also: K. Linardou, *Depicting the Salvation: Typological Images of Mary in the Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts*, [in:] *The Cult of Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images*, ed. L. Brubaker, M. Cunningham, Ashgate 2011, p. 133–152.

²⁹ О. Е. Этингhoff, *Образ Богоматери. Очерки византийской иконографии XI – XIII веков*, Москва 2000.

of *Prophets* read during the first Sunday of the Lent, which is attributed to Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople. Etingoff also indicated its importance and of *Akathist Hymn*; in addition to that, she noticed that the sense of Marian symbols was linked with the arguments of the iconodules and with the heritage of Byzantine poetry focused on the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the icons³⁰. Maria Vassiliaki who characterised the reception of Marian hymns in the 16th to 18th centuries art in one of the recent catalogues of the exhibitions devoted to Byzantine art returned to the concept of linking the composition of the Mother of God surrounded by prophets with *The Prophets Hymns*³¹. Yuri Piatnicky, who analyzed the icon *The Mother of God surrounded by prophets* from the Hermitage collection in the other exhibition catalogue reminded its only analogy, that is the icon kept in the St. Catherine monastery at Mt. Sinai describing both types of Mary's images as *Kykkotissa* indicating that the subject of both icons is tender intimacy connected with the changes in the 11th and 12th centuries liturgy that lead, as Hans Belting notices, among others, to modified experience of the Passion of the Christ³². Etingoff, referring to that icon, emphasized the Biblical and patristic contexts of its type, particularly the texts of St. Andrew of Crete and indicating that in fact the demonstration of a tender relationship between the Mother of God and Jesus constituted a *novum* in the Comneni times; nevertheless the comparison of this depiction with prophets could not be accidental in the period of theological disputes in the 12th c.³³

In my opinion, repeated since my master's thesis in 1992³⁴, published in 1995³⁵ and elaborated in my Ph. D. Dissertation (1999)³⁶ published in 2000³⁷, apart from the justified indication of the great meaning of the *Troparion* attributed to John Papadopoulos Koukouzeles of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos (called also Kukuzelis; Kukuzel, ca. 1280 – ca. 1360) or John Kladas of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (late 14th – early 15th)³⁸, the significance of the patristic texts as the literary source of the discussed subject should not be omitted. To the sphere of the looking for the parallels between the *Old* and the *New Testaments* belong the visions of the Prophets, regarding the magnificent role of the Virgin Mary. They constituted the common element linking the writings of SS. Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296 – 373; Bishop of Alexandria from 328), Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306 – 373), Cyril of Alexandria (375 – 444; Patriarch of Alexandria from 412), Patriarch Germanus I of

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 15, 42.

³¹ *Mother of God. Reception of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Vassiliaki [catalogue of exhibition: Athens, Benaki Museum 20. October 2000 – 20. January 2001] Athens – Milan 2000, p. 134-137: The Valahian Icons, Moldavian or coming from the Rus territories of former Polish Commonwealth are omitted. See M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ...*, p. 186-194.

³² *Sinai. Byzantium. Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Y. Piatnitsky, O. Baddeley, E. Brunner, M. M. Mango, [catalogue of the exhibition: The State Hermitage Museum St. Petersburg June 2000 – September 2000, Cortauld Gallery Sommers House, London October 2000 – February 2001], St. Petersburg – London 2000, p. 110: *The appearance of icons with the Virgin surrounded by Prophets is also included in the same trend.*

³³ О. Е. Этингоф, *Образ Богоматери. ...*, p. 71.

³⁴ M. P. Kruk, M. A. Dissertation: *Ikona Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem, prorokami i świętymi w „klejmach” z kościoła parafialnego w Rudkach [(Icon of the Mother of God with prophets and saints in the fields from the parochial church in Rudki (Ukraine)]* Catholic University of Lublin 1992, MA supervisor: Prof. dr. hab. T. Chrzanowski.

³⁵ M. P. Kruk, *Ikona Matki Boskiej Rudeckiej ...*, p. 25-46.

³⁶ *Ikony Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem w zachodnioruskim malarstwie wieków XV i XVI (Ruthenian Icons of the Mother of God with the Child in the 15th and 16th centuries)*, Ph. D. Supervisor: Prof. dr. hab. A. Różycka Bryzek.

³⁷ M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony ...*; Idem, *Hymnograf Stefan czy hymnograf Teofan ...*; Idem, *Balkan Connections of Ruthenian Icons ...*; Idem, *Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti ...*.

³⁸ В. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагостили” у Пећу” ..., p. 415; О. Е. Этингоф, *Образ Богоматери. ...*, p. 71. See M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ...*, p. 167.

Constantinople (c. 650 – after 730; Patriarch of Constantinople from 715), Theodore the Studite (759 – 826), and in the late Middle Ages – the homily of St. Daniel II, a Serbian archbishop and a ktitor of the Orthodox church in Peć (ca. 1270 – 1337; Archbishop of Peć from 1324) that kept quoting *Old Testament* prophecies and confronting them with the *New Testament*³⁹. At the same time, the vision was common to the homiletic tradition of both Churches - the Eastern and the Western. In the case of wall paintings, this idea was expressed simultaneously in paintings by associating specific attributes with individual prophets on their representations and in the verbal layer by placing them on the written scrolls fulfilled with their predictions, repeated in sermons of the Fathers of the Church.

St. Ephrem the Syrian in *The Song of the Most Holy Virgin Mary* (CSCO 186, 191-199) compared Mary to the fleece *on which Father came down like rain*⁴⁰. Similarly, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315 – 387; Bishop of Jerusalem from ca. 350) reflected on prophecies in *Lecture XII: On the words Incarnate, and made man* (Isa 7:10-14) (PG 33,725 – 770):

*Afterwards Solomon hearing his father David speak these things [...] said in astonishment, Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? (1 Kings 8:27) Yea, saith David by anticipation in the Psalm inscribed for Solomon, wherein is this, He shall come down like rain into a fleece (Ps 72:6): rain, because of His heavenly nature, and into a fleece, because of His humanity*⁴¹.

St. Cyril indicated that Micah foretold the place of His coming and Habakkuk – the region round Jerusalem He would come from:

God shall come from Teman (now Teman is by interpretation ‘south’) *and the Holy One from Mount Paran shady, woody* (Ha 3:3)⁴².

The anticonoclast activity of the apologists and the defenders of the worship due to venerated icons and the role of the hymnographers exerted great influence on the final shape of this iconography. The latter, soon after their canonization, were placed nearby the Mother of God together with the rows of prophets on the icons and frescoes. The one who can be distinguished among them was St. John of Damascus, who joined the apologetic passion with the Marian homiletics based on the heritage of the Fathers of the Church and *The Holy Scripture*⁴³.

In two centuries – the 8th and 9th, in which the most renowned hymnographers, that is St. John of Damascus and St. Cosmas of Maiuma (Melodus, ca. 675 – ca. 751) were active – plenty of works belonging to the Marian homiletics were created by outstanding theologians. Some of them, like St. Germanus I, similarly to Pope John VII (c. 650 – 707; Pope from 705) of Greek origin described themselves as “the servants” of St. Mary as if they wanted to refer in this way to the epithet “a Servant of Christ” inscribed on the coins struck by Justinian II. At that time St. Germanus, like the other great theologian Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople – Photios I’s uncle (c. 730 – 806; Patriarch: 784 – 806), as well as St. John of Damascus and Photios I (ca. 810 – c. 893; Patriarch of Constantinople 858 – 867; 877 – 886) expressed their support for the idea of the bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary already rooted in the

³⁹ Л. Поповић, *Фигуре пророка ...*, p. 463.

⁴⁰ *Ojcowie Kościoła greccy i syryjscy. Teksty o Matce Bożej 1*, translation and introduction W. Kania, Niepokalanów 1981, p. 34.

⁴¹ *Ojcowie Kościoła ...*, p. 84–85.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 90.

⁴³ M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony ...*, p. 381.

Western theology whereas the Orthodox Church approach was more cautious⁴⁴. St. Germanus was a priest at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, then a bishop in Cyzikus and Patriarch of Constantinople from 715. He actively participated in the Sixth General Council that condemned monothelitism⁴⁵. The example directly confirming a vivid reception of the writings of St. Germanus in the liturgy and arts is the fact of quoting the excerpt from his liturgical writings in the frescoes of St. Sozomenos church in Galata, Cyprus⁴⁶. St. Germanus of Constantinople called in *The First Homily on the Presentation of Mary at the Temple* (PG 98, 291 – 310)⁴⁷:

Today Anna too [...] makes it known to the ends of the earth that she has received the fruit. Today the open gate of the Lord's temple receives the ascending gate of Immanuel, closed and looking towards the east (Ez 44:1-3) [...]. Today we are bid by Mary to pay Her homage although none can bring together all the praise.

Hail, O rich and shady Mountain of God (Ps 68:17) whereon pastured the True Lamb, Who hath taken away our sins and infirmities, mountain, whence hath been cut without hands that Stone (Dan 2:34) which hath smitten the altars of the idols, and become the head-stone of the corner, marvellous in our eyes. (Ps 118:22, 23).

St. Andrew of Crete indicated in the *Fourth Homily on the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God* (PG 97, 862–882) that:

*It is you that Isaiah of the prophetic vision called <prophetess and virgin >, [...] <sealed>! [...] It is you that Ezekiel called <the east side> and <the closed gate>, that the Lord is to pass through and which therefore will be closed [...]. It is you that Daniel saw as a mountain, and that wondrous Habakkuk as <the high shaded hill God desireth to dwell in>, he prophetically sang of. [...]. It is you that Zechariah most discerning in divine matters saw as <a candlestick all of gold with seven lamps thereon>, lighted by seven charismata of the Holy Spirit. [...] Blessed be the fruit that made the barren and bitter waters good for drinking and fruitful by having Elisha cast salt into them. Blessed who in the untouched shoot of a virgin womb flowered as a ripe grape. [...]*⁴⁸.

It should be noted that three out of nine homilies attributed to St. German are devoted to the Most Holy Mary, and three are entitled *On Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary* (*De dormitione Beatae Mariae Virginis*), similar to *Three Sermons on the Dormition* by St. Cosmas of Maiuma (PG 96, 699 – 762), *Three Homilies on the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady* by St. Andrew of Crete or *Three Sermons on the Dormition of Our Lady* by St. John of Damascus (PG 96, 699 – 782). The evidence that this subject was hotly discussed are *Four Homilies on the Dormition of Mary* by Cosmas Vestitor (ca. 730 – ca. 850), partly literally borrowed from St. Germanus of Constantinople⁴⁹. St. Theodore the Studite in his *Encomium on the Dormition* (PG 99, 719 – 729) quoted a few terms used in the Greek patristics to describe that event: *Dormition* (κοίμησις), *Exodus* (εξοδος), bearing the similar meaning –

⁴⁴ C. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine society and its icons*, London 1985, p. 170.

⁴⁵ Св. Герман Константинопольский. Сказание о церкви и рассматривание таинств, ed. А. М. Лидов, П. И. Мейендорф, Москва 1995, p. 11.

⁴⁶ A. Stylianou, *Sociological reflections in the painted churches of Cyprus*, „Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft“ 32/5, p. 528.

⁴⁷ Ojcowie Kościola ..., p. 155-164. Sancti Patris nostri Germani archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, in ingressum sanctissimae Deiparae sermo. I.

⁴⁸ Ojcowie Kościola ..., p. 149. S. Andreae Cretensis, Oratio IV. In Sanctam Nativitatem praesanae Dominae nostrae Dei Genitricis, semperque virginis Mariae.

⁴⁹ B. Altaner, A. Stuiber, *Patrologia*, transl. from German P. Paciarek (oryg. 1978), Warszawa 1990, p. 674.

“going into foreign lands”, that is to emigrate (ἐκδεμία), “passing into another kind of existence”, implying “eternal life” (μετάστασις), “passing into other place” (μετάβασις). St. Theodore wrote about it that it is “life giving the Dormition” (ζωήφορος κοίμησις)⁵⁰. Typically of Byzantium, theological disputes lasted long and also emperors used to have some say about the subjects. Andronicus II Paleologus (1259 – 1328; Byzantine emperor from 1282) referred to the feast of the Dormition of St. Mary postulating not to call it “the Dormition of Mary” (κοίμησις), yet “the ascend to Heaven” (μετάστασις), that is in compliance with the term used by St. Joseph the Hymnographer (ca. 810 – 886) in the 5th ode of the 3rd canon (PG 105, 1001A), or rather about her “exit” (ἐκδεμία). According to S. Radojčić, the representations of this subject in two paintings coming from the period of this discussion – in the St. Nicetas Orthodox church and in Stare Nagoričane, constitute the evidence of such controversies as they were executed in such a way so as their interpretation could be compliant with both types of opinion⁵¹. The Dormition of Mary belongs to one of the most favourite subject in the Paleologian period⁵².

In the context of stylistic devices being in use – parallels, allegories, symbols etc. it was not important whether they were introduced into hymns or homilies. Such devices were very commonly used – Photios I of Constantinople (ca. 820 – 891; Patriarch of Constantinople 858 – 867; 877 – 886) who preached a homily in the presence of Michael III (840 – 867; Byzantine emperor from 842) for the consecration of a new church in the imperial palace dedicated to St. Mary compared it to the Moses’s tabernacle and the Solomon’s temple⁵³. Differences between hymns and homilies were very unclear – it was confirmed by the fact that the above mentioned writers were also hymnographers. These differences were even consciously minimized by introducing hymnographic quotes into homilies. For example, St. Andrew of Crete in *Fourth Homily on the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God* (PG 97, 862–882) or St. John of Damascus in his homilies used variety of synonyms calling Mary “the closed Gate”, but also “the Gate of light”, or “the Gate of God”. St. Germanus, John Thekaras the Monk and John Mauropos wrote about “the Gate”. On the Eve of the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the song by Sergius the Hagiopolite entitled *The Gate Facing East* paraphrasing the text from Ezekiel 44:1–2 was sung. Giordana Babić indicated the presence of such references in liturgical songs, such as e.g. *The Theotokion of the Fourth Ode of Matins for the Nativity of the Mother of God*: “prophets called you the tabernacle, gate, spiritual mountain, bush”, present also in the Eighth ode of *The Matins* – “the Mountain”, “the Gate of Heaven”, “the Spiritual Ladder”⁵⁴, or in the Ninth ode for the feast of the Annunciation attributed to Jacob the Monk: “Daniel called you the Holy Mountain, Isaiah – the Mother of God, Gideon saw you as a fleece and David called you the Temple, and the other – the Gate”⁵⁵.

Therefore, Mary’s attributes were constantly repeated in liturgical poetry; the excerpts read during the liturgy also referred to them – e.g. the Ezekiel vision was reminded regularly on the Eve of the most important Marian feasts: of the Nativity, the Presentation in the temple, the Dormition and the Annunciation⁵⁶. In addition to that, entire sermons, such as in the case of Roman Melodos could have the form and character of an ode. The base of all comparisons was the text of the *Holy Scripture*, in particular the *Old Testament* attributes

⁵⁰ Th. Nikolau, *Theodoros Studites* [in:] *Marienlexikon* 1–6, ed. R. Bäuner, L. Scheffczyk, Erzabtei St. Ottiliens 1994, p. 384.

⁵¹ S. Radojčić, *Die Entstehung der Malerei ...*, p. 121.

⁵² H. Stern, *l’art byzantin*, Paris 1966, p. 147.

⁵³ A. Grabar *L’Esthétisme d’un théologien Byzantin du IX^e siècle*, „Revue des Sciences Religieuses” [in:] *L’Art de la fin de l’Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, 1, Paris 1968, p. 68.

⁵⁴ G. Babić, *L’image symbolique ...*, p. 148.

⁵⁵ The same song is attributed to St. John of Damascus (PG 96, 853A).

⁵⁶ G. Babić, *L’image symbolique ...*, p. 148.

associated with the prophets or songs belonging to the *Old Testament* canon, odes read in the meaning of Marian symbols generally referring to the mystery of the Incarnation. It was not an accident that two particularly renowned hymnographers – St. John of Damascus and St. Cosmas of Maiuma accompanied the prophets on the depiction of *The Dormition of St. Mary*, to which – as I have already indicated – exceptionally many outstanding homilies filled with the Marian typology were devoted. Except for the references mentioned before, similar references to prophetic symbols from the *Old Testament* are included in the *Homily on the Dormition* by St. Clement of Ohrid – “The Burning Bush”, “the New Ark”, “the Cloud” that were present – which is worth to be noted in the context of the area of his activity – in the Bulgarian apocryphical prayer *Names of the Mother of God (Imena Bogorodi'ni)*⁵⁷.

The character of the narration of *Sermon I: on the Dormition of St. Mary* (SC 80, 80-121) by John of Damascus could even serve as an instruction regarding the creation of a composition of the described icons:

*Joachim and Anne were the parents of Mary. [...] Anne [...] gave birth to a child, whose equal had never been created and never can be. The end of barrenness proved clearly that the world's sterility would cease. [...] In the fullness of time [...], the angel Gabriel was sent to this true child of God, and saluted her in the words, [...] Thou art the royal throne which angels surround, seeing upon it their very King and Lord. [...] The ark foreshadowed thee who hast kept the seed of the new world. [...] The burning bush was a figure of thee, and the tablets of the law, and the ark of the testament. The golden urn and candelabra, the table and the flowering rod of Aaron were significant types of thee. From thee arose the splendour of the Godhead, the eternal Word of the Father, the most sweet and heavenly Manna [...], the Light which was from the beginning. The heavenly Bread of Life, the Fruit without seed, took flesh of thee. Did not that flame foreshadow thee with its burning fire an image of the divine fire within thee? (Dan 3:49-50) [...] I had nearly forgotten Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:12). Is it not evident to everyone that it prefigured thee, and is not the type easily recognised? Just as Jacob saw the ladder bringing together heaven and earth [...] so art thou placed between us, and art become the ladder of God's intercourse with us, of Him who took upon Himself our weakness, uniting us to Himself, and enabling man to see God (Gen 32:31) [...] How shall I understand the prediction of prophets? Shall I not refer them to thee, as we can prove them to be true? What is the fleece of David which receives the Son of the Almighty God, co-eternal and co-equal with His Father, as rain falls upon the soil? [...] Who is the virgin foretold by Isaiah [...] What is Daniel's mountain from which arose Christ, the Corner-Stone [...] Let the inspired Ezekiel come forth and show us the closed gate, sealed by the Lord, and not yielding. [...] Let him point to its fulfilment in thee [...] The prophets, then, foretell thee. Angels and apostles minister to thee, O Mother of God, ever Virgin, and John the virgin apostle*⁵⁸.

Some representations of prophets on Ruthenian icons, mainly Jeremiah's, are remarkable as their poses are unusual – their trunks and arms are twisted in the direction opposite to their feet [Fig. 5]. Such “twisted” figures correspond exactly to the pose of Miriam depicted during the performance of the mystic dance in front of the Ark of the Lord. That analogy has its explanation e.g. in his *First Homily on the Presentation of the Holy Mother of God* (PG 98, 291–310)⁵⁹ written by St. Germanus I Patriarch of Constantinople:

⁵⁷ Д. Петканова, *Богородица*, [in:] *Старо-Българска Литература. Енциклопедичен Речник*, ed. Д. Петканова, София 1992, p. 64.

⁵⁸ *Ojcowie Kościoła ...*, p. 231–240; St. John Damascene. *On holy images, followed by three sermons on the Assumption*, transl. by Mary H. Allies. London 1898: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/johndamascus-komesis.asp>.

⁵⁹ *Ojcowie Kościoła ...*, p. 155-164: *Sancti Patris nostri Germani, archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, in ingressum sanctissimae Deiparae sermo. I.*

And the heretofore barren Anna [...] exclaimed: <come rejoice with me even more [...]. For now the fruit and the gift of my womb, shining with God's brilliance and sanctified, I give to God [...]. Come, the first choirs, and rejoicing with a host of maidens singing and playing the timbrels, not before Mary, sister of Moses, but before the daughter born of me, playing, sing a new song! [...]. And you David [...] with inspired lips utter a sound more pleasing than the lute [...]. Come the high spoken Ezekiel, holding the Spirit enlivening scroll given of God, sing praise of this eastward-looking gate which, while sealed, gives passage to the Lord. Let others from among the first in the holy procession or other hosts of onlookers raise their voices in joy looking at the approaching end of your prophecies. What then? Will you not, the first parents, freed from damnation, about to regain your place of delight of old, from which you had been banished, extol her that brings us salvation? Is it not you before all others who should raise your voices and, with me and with all creation, joyously sing Her praise?>.

The last verses constitute a kind of plea, call to rejoice, thus:

From the purple mantle of the Virgin the altar has become purple of hue. Zechariah exults, honoured by the welcome of the Mother of God, Joachim rejoices [...]. Happy is Anna [...] happy the first parents fleeing the condemnation passed against them, the prophets rejoice and with them the hosts.

This joy is expressed in the similar way in the *Hymn on the Nativity of the Mother of God* attributed to Romanus the Melode, the first verse of which was written at the bottom of the icon from Mt. Sinai⁶⁰:

IGDAKEIM K'[AI] ANNA ETEKNOΓONHCAN
KAI ADAM K'[AI] EVA HAEVΘEPΓOΘHCAN

[Joachim and Anna conceived
and Adam and Eve were saved]

St. Joseph who stands below points at the scroll held by him bearing the text of the same hymn expressing the faith in the purity of St. Mary, and Joachim with Anna and Adam with Eve stand on his both sides. A paraphrase of that hymn written in the Old Slavonic Church language can be found in lower frames of the Ruthenian icons, e.g. in the icon of the *Mother of God Hodegetria* from Terło [Терло н. Хіріїв, Ukraine, Fig. 6] on the scroll held by Joachim and Anna who in this way represent the figures of Adam and Eve. The text says that the human nation rejoices in St. Mary, thus referring to the text of the Eucharistic liturgy according to St. Basil and constituting in its entirety a verse of the above mentioned *Hymn*⁶¹:

⁶⁰ A. W. Carr, *Icon with the Enthroned Virgin ...*, cat. and fig. 244, p. 372.

⁶¹ *Nauka o nabożeństwach prawosławnych*, Warszawa 1938, p. 64; J. Kłosińska, *Ikony*, Kraków 1973, p. 169; B. Gumińska, *Galeria „Sztuka cerkiewna dawnej Rzeczypospolitej”*. Przewodnik, Kraków 2008, p. 36; M. P. Kruk, *Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti w ikonie Hodegetrii w otoczeniu proroków w Czarnej k. Uścia Gorlickiego // Szczelina światła. Ruskie malarstwo ikonowe*, ed. A. Gronek, Kraków 2009, p. 235; M. П. Крук, *Православная икона 16 - того века из Терла Богоматерь Одижитрия в окружении пророков в собрании Краковского национального музея. Проблемы иконографии, атрибуции и датировки*, „Arta” 2013 (= Arte vizuale: arte plastice, arhitectură), p. 16-28. *Nauka o nabożeństwach ...*, p. 64; Kłosińska 1973, p. 169; Gumińska 2008, 36; Kruk 2009, p. 235

*Joachim and Anna, from the shame of sterility,
Adam and Eve, from the darkness of death
were freed by your birth, oh the Immaculate.
Today it is celebrated by Your people, freed from damnation
for their sins exclaiming: she who was Barren
has borne the Mother of God
and the Nurturer of our life.*

A call to express the joy through dancing was also included by St. John of Damascus in his *Second Homily on the Dormition of Virgin Mary* (SC 80,122 – 176)⁶². Mary was described as *the living Ark of the Lord*:

With Mary, the prophetess, O youthful souls, let us sound our musical instruments (Ex 15:20) mortifying our members on earth (Col 3:5), for this is spiritual music. Let our souls rejoice in the Ark of God, and the walls of Jericho will yield. [...] Let us dance in spirit with David – today the Ark of God is at rest.

St. John of Damascus used Marian figures also in his *Third Homily on the Dormition of Virgin Mary* (SC 80,178 – 196)⁶³ in which he called Her “the spiritual and living ladder” *through whom the Most High descended and was seen on earth [...] and was assumed into heaven by death, as the heavenly table, who contained the bread of life, the fire of the Godhead, without knowing man, as a hollowed out cavern, the mountain from which the stone without hands filled the whole earth.*

In addition to various stylistic elements, there were also adjectives referring to virtues of St. Mary. In the *Encomium on the Dormition of Our Holy Lady* (PG 99, 719 – 729) St. Theodore the Studite (759 – 826), a famous theologian and monastic reformer, wrote about Her: “the queen and mistress of the world”, “Gracious” (*φιλάγαθος*), “the Mother of the Lord” (*κυριοτοκος*), “the Most Holy” (*παναγια*), *the root of Jesse who bore the flower Christ, the rod of Aaron with its sacred bud [...], exalted cherubim-throne of the universal king [...]*⁶⁴. It revokes the analogy to plentiness of such terms allowed in the painter’s manual from Mt Athos. In *Hermeneia* by Dionysius of Fournia the iconographic guidelines were included that – in addition to the instructive character designed for the readers of the manual – sanctioned, as it can be assumed, a multi-centuries painting tradition. With reference to the Holy Mother of God, *Hermeneia* allowed many epithets accompanying Her representation. The most recommended included: “Showing Mercy” (*Ἐλεούσα*); “She who shows the Way” (*Ὁδηγήτρια*); “more spacious than heaven” (*Πλατυτέρα των Ουρανών*); „Life-giving Fountain” (*Ζωοδόχος Πηγή*); “Loving-kindness” (*Ἡ Γλυκοφιλούσα*); “Narrow Gate” (*Ἡ Στενή Πύλη*), but the most important epithet was included in a hierogram permanently connected with Her images – “the Mother of God” (*Θεοτόκος*)⁶⁵.

⁶² *Ojcowie Kościoła ...*, p. 243-258; St. John Damascene. *On holy images*, ...: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/johndamascus-komesis.asp>.

⁶³ *Ojcowie Kościoła ...*, p. 259-264; St. John Damascene. *On holy images*, ...: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/johndamascus-komesis.asp>.

⁶⁴ Th. Nikolau, *Theodoros Studites ...*, p. 384. S. Theodori Studitae, *Laudatio in dormitionem sanctae Dominae nostrae Deiparae*.

⁶⁵ *The 'Painters' Manual ...*, p. 487. The Mother of God should be depicted as a middle-aged woman, with a bit lowered noble head, properly formed eyebrows, beautiful eyes and a nose, auburn hair, curled on a forehead, and long fingers – *The 'Painters' Manual ...*, p. 483. *Hermeneia* also paid special attention to the arrangement of fingers of a blessing hand of Christ, which – according to its recommendations – should cross in the way making the outline of His hierogram. The straighten index corresponds to the letter **I**, and the bent middle finger – to the

Thus, figures painted around Mary constitute an assemble of saints who were known as the witnesses of the Good News praising the role played by the daughter of Joachim and Anne in their prophecies, homilies and hymns. They were grouped together to emphasise the timeless glory of the Mother of God and Jesus born of Her. The ideological grounds of the composition of Mary with Jesus surrounded by prophets are summarised in two homilies written at the same time as the hymns quoted above – at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. In the *Homily on the Presentation of Mary in the Temple* (PG 98, 1491 – 1494) written by St. Tarasius⁶⁶ prophet Zacharias praised the Mother of God with the following words:

Thou art the ladder that Jacob saw going up to heaven and the most noble of all his children throughout the twelve tribes of Israel. [...]; Thou art the book of Moses the Lawgiver whereon the new covenant is written [...]; Thou art Aaron's rod that budded. Thou art David's daughter; Thou art the gold bed of Solomon [...]; Thou art the safety of Jonas in the belly of the great fish, the conversion of the people of Nineveh,

Thou art the vision of the Prophets and the fulfilment of those things which they foretold; Thou art the gate whereof Ezekiel spake when he prophesied and said, This gate shall be shut and no man shall enter in by it, because the Lord [...] hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut (Ezek 44:1–2). Thou art the Rod of Jesse, whereof Isaiah spake, even that Rod whose Flower is Christ [...]; Thou art the Covenant foretold by Jeremiah when he said, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah not according to the covenant made with their fathers (Jer 43:31–32) [...]; Thou art the great mountain spoken of by Daniel, the man greatly beloved (Dan 10:11) wherefrom is cut without man's hands the cornerstone, that is Christ, which hath smitten in pieces the parti-coloured image of the old serpent (Dan 2:34–35). Thanks to thou the Three Young Men of Babylon awaiting Your Son passed unscathed through the fiery furnace and danced joyously amidst the fire as in a chamber.

St. Theodore the Studite in his *Encomium on the Dormition of Our Holy Lady* (PG 99, 719-729)⁶⁷ wrote after St. Cyril of Alexandria:

But this is what the blessed Apostles answered to her, either speaking on their own or quoting the words of the prophets:

<"Hail", one said, "ladder set up from earth to heaven, on which the Lord came down to us and returned to heaven again, as in the vision of the great patriarch Jacob.

Hail, miraculous bush where the angel of the Lord appeared in flames of fire, where the flame burned without consuming as Moses realized, who alone saw God face to face.

Hail, fleece moistened by God, from which a basinful of heavenly dew flowed forth, according to Gideon, than worker of wonder.

Hail, city of the great king, which all the admiring sovereigns praised according to David the psalmist.

letter C. The crossed thumb and the ring finger correspond to the letters XC. The sigla „HWN” written within the nimbus means the pre-existing Logos.

⁶⁶ Tarasii Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, *Oratio in SS. Dei Matrem in Templum Deductam* (PG 98, 1491 – 1494); *Ojcowie wspólnej wiary. Teksty o Matce Bożej, 3 (8th-11th c.)*, transl. and introduction W. Kania, Niepokalanów 1986, p. 32-42 (here ref. to: PG 98, 460–465).

⁶⁷ *Ojcowie wspólnej wiary ...*, p. 51-56. S. Theodori Studitae, *Laudatio in dormitionem sanctae Dominae nostrae Deiparae*.

Hail, spiritual Bethlehem, house of Ephrata, from whom the glorious king came forth who was to become ruler of Israel and whose goings-forth were from the beginning, from eternal days, according to the divine Micah.

Hail, shady mountain of virgins, from which the holy one of Israel appeared, according to Habakkuk, whose proclamation was divine.

Hail, shining golden lamp radiating light, from which the inaccessible light of God has shone out on those in darkness and the shadow of death, according to the inspired Zechariah.

Hail, altar of purification for all mortal creatures, through which 'the Lord's name is glorified among the pagans from the rising of the sun to its setting', and where 'a sacrifice is offered to his name in every place', according to the holy Malachi.

Hail, 'light cloud where the Lord dwells,' according to Isaiah, who spoke the most sacred things.

Hail, holy book of the Lord's commands, newly-written law of love, through which we can know what pleases God, according to the mournful Jeremiah.

Hail, locked gate, through which the Lord God of Israel comes in and out, according to Ezekiel, who gazed on God.

Hail, unquarried mountain-peak [...] from which that rock was cut which became the corner-stone, according to Daniel, the great teacher about God>.

Although, as St. Theodore the Studite wrote: *Mary has flown to her home above yet she does not cease to protect those below; departing from her body, she is with us in spirit; gathered up to heaven, she banishes demons by her intercession with the Lord.*

The connection of Ruthenian icons, including the icon *Hodegetria* from Rudki [fig. 5] with the 9th century homiletics is strongly emphasised in the homily of St. Tarasius in which he listed the attributes commonly held by prophets depicted in these icons; he also exactly quoted the verse customarily inscribed on the scroll of Jeremiah since this prophet has no attribute assigned to him. This homily could be even regarded to be an "ekphrasis", a literary genre quite often present in the Byzantine literature, being the description of the work of art seen with one's eyes in such a way that you cannot be sure to what extent its author's description is based on his direct view and to what extent – on his recollections, and also to what extent on his imagination. The other question is the context in which the row of hymnographers surrounding Joachim and Anna appeared on the lower frames of the Ruthenian icons painted within the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth⁶⁸.

Finally, I suppose that this subject could be treated as the result of growing popularity of hymnography which added some poetry to the inscriptions written on the Sinai icon and became one of the most popular in the Paleologian era among the illustrations of different liturgical hymns⁶⁹. The role of hymnography was special during the Paleologian period and some hymns, above all *The Akathist Hymn*, became richly illustrated in large cycles. It was also the time of the last heyday of the Byzantine music in which *rich coloraturas breaking the previous balance between music and words*⁷⁰ became very popular. The representatives of that time were three Johns: Glykus, Lampadarios and Papadopoulos Koukouzeles. It turns out that the hymnography of the last period of its development is poorly recognized. The example of this is John Papadopoulos, an extremely popular hymnographer whose songs are found in almost all Greek manuscripts dated to the period from the early 14th c. to the early 19th c. and coming from the libraries of the monasteries at Mt. Sinai, on Mt. Athos and in Bulgaria, yet

⁶⁸ M. P. Kruk, *Hymnograf Stefan czy hymnograf Teofan ...* ; Idem, *Balkan Connections of Ruthenian Icons ...* .

⁶⁹ See B. Милановић, „Пророци су те навестили” у Пећу” ..., p. 420.

⁷⁰ *Encyklopedia muzyki*, ed. A. Chodkowski, Warszawa 1995, p. 106.

hardly studied⁷¹. The other popular poet and a music theoretician active in the 2nd half of the 14th c. and in early 15th c. was John Klades (called Lampadarios)⁷². He was the first choir singer and performed a function of “a lamp bearer” in Hagia Sophia in the capital of the Empire. His compositions, Cherubikon songs, kontakia, and tropes were greatly popular in the 15th century. The other author of many hymns in the 14th century was Philoteos Kokkinos⁷³.

The troparion *Ἀνορθεν οἱ προφეტται* indicated by some authors, which was supposed to be an example for the icons described herein was sung directly before the liturgy and was attributed to Paleologian hymnographers – John Koukouzeles Papadopoulos from the Great Lavra monastery on Mt. Athos or to John Kladas from Hagia Sophia in Constantinople⁷⁴. Their names are placed on the *troparion* preserved in the manuscript dated to 1425 (*MS. Ivion 985*) from the Georgian monastery on Mt. Athos. However, it cannot be excluded that the text of the *troparion*, in particular the attributes of The Virgin Mary included in it should be linked with the much older canon of St. Germanus of Constantinople⁷⁵. As John Guillard believed, John Koukouzeles could use one of the prophetic canons of St. Germanus sung during the liturgy on the first Sunday of Lent (preserved in *Triodion* from 1028 – *Sinait, gr. 736*, fol. 71) and only created the music to a ready text – that is why the *troparion* has been believed to be his work since that time⁷⁶. In fact, for example in the *Hymn to the Mother of God* written by St. Germanus (*PG 98*, 454) such epithets regarding St. Mary as: “the golden candlestick, the shining cloud higher than Cherubs, living Ark, the great throne of the Lord, the vessel full of manna”⁷⁷ were used, but they belonged to typical Marian prefigurations to which many other writers living before and after St. German referred to. Therefore it is hard to find out who are the authors of the songs referring to these epithets, only slightly paraphrasing the *Old Testament* phrases. They constituted in a way a common reference used in different times by different hymnographers introducing to liturgy only a new order of their scheme. Thus e.g. in the Orthodox Church, on 21st Nov, during Matins, after the third song of a canon, a hymn was sung in which St. Mary was described as an incense burner (*λυχνία χρίσε*) – „You were foretold by the prophets [...] as a golden incense burner and a candlestick”⁷⁸.

Perhaps it was the reason why Manolis Chatzidakis (1962)⁷⁹ or earlier Ioan Ștefănescu (1929)⁸⁰ would also like to see in this subject a kind of illustration of the Hymn *All the creation rejoices in Thee / Tu fais la joie* for the aspect of Triumph – the Triumph of Orthodoxy is clearly visible in the depictions: *Vierge en Gloire / Glory of Virgin / Похвала Богоматери*. The conclusion of A. W. Carr referring to the Sinai icon deserves to be quoted in this context:

⁷¹ Koukouzeles, John [in:] A. Kazhdan, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford 1991, p. 1155; K. Morawska, Jan Papadopoulos [in:] *Encyklopedia muzyczna. HJ*, ed. Dziębowska, Kraków 1993, p. 407. He was probably of a Bulgarian origin, born in c. 1280 in Dyrrhachion (Durazzo, Albania), died ca. 1380 on Mt. Athos. In the early 14th c. was a singer at the imperial court in Constantinople. One of the recent characteristics of his works – E. B. Герцман, *Documenta Koukouzeliana „Византийский Временник”*, (58) 1999, p. 104–116.

⁷² K. Morawska Jan Klades [in:] *Encyklopedia muzyczna ...* 1993, s. 407.

⁷³ С. Кожухаров, Канон, [in:] *Старо-Българска Литература* ..., p. 215.

⁷⁴ В. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагостили” у Пећу” ..., p. 415.

⁷⁵ About „Kanon”: S. Harris, *The ‘Kanon’ and the Heirmologion*, “Music and Letters” 85, nr 2 (May 2004), p. 175-197.

⁷⁶ J. Guillard, *Le Synodicon del l’Ortodoxie*, Travaux et Mémoires 2, Paris 1967, p. 134, 175 – after B. Милановић, „Пророци су те нагостили” ..., p. 415.

⁷⁷ *Ojcowie wspólnej wiary* ..., s. 17.

⁷⁸ Σ. Ευστρατιάδης, *Η Θεοτόκος εν τη υμνογραφία*, Paris, 1930, p. 43–44.

⁷⁹ M. Chatzidakis, *Icons de Saint-Georges des Grecs* ...p. 10.

⁸⁰ I. D. Ștefănescu *L’évolution de la peinture religieuse en Bucovine et en Moldavie depuis les origines jusqu’au XIXe siècle. Nouvelles Recherches étude iconographique*, Paris 1929, p. 18.

*The image is striking for the learning and diversity of its biblical, poetic and liturgical inscriptions. It links the Old Testament vision to the New Testament revelation and the Incarnation to the Second Coming; it moves from Child to Mother and back again, from Mary's son to her husband, to her father, to her father in heaven who is her son and from feast of the Marian year. The viewer is drawn even deeper into the endless layers of Marian meaning. Many scholars have taken on the challenge of explicating this image, but none has begun to exhaust the associative meanings that the image evokes. This is what icons are for: they open up the meaning of their subjects; they don't tie it down.*⁸¹

⁸¹ A. W. Carr, *Icon with the Enthroned Virgin ...*, cat. and fig . 244, p. 372.

Figures



1. *Mother of God Nikopoia surrounded by Archangels, Prophets and Hymnographers, wall painting, Humor, cupola of the narthex, 1535*



2. Mother of God Nikopoia surrounded by Archangels, Prophets and Hymnographers, wall painting, Moldovitsa, cupola of the narthex, 1537



3. *Enthroned Mother of God surrounded by Prophets and Saints*,
icon, 11th-12th c., Mt. Sinai



4. *Enthroned Mother of God Eleusa surrounded by Prophets*, icon, 12th-13th c., Mt. Athos, St. Petersburg, Hermitage



5. *Mother of God surrounded by Prophets, Joachim and Anna and Hymnographers, 1st half of the 16th c., from the Roman-Catholic Church in Rudki (Ukraine), stolen in 1992 from the Roman-Catholic Church in Jasień nearby Ustrzyki Dolne*



6. *Mother of God surrounded by Prophets, Joachim and Anna*, 1st half of the 16th c., from the Greco-Catholic church in Terlo (Ukraine), National Museum in Krakow

List of Figures:

Mother of God Nikopoia surrounded by Archangels, Prophets and Hymnographers, wall painting, Humor, cupola of the narthex, 1535

Mother of God Nikopoia surrounded by Archangels, Prophets and Hymnographers, wall painting, Moldovitsa, cupola of the narthex, 1537

Enthroned Mother of God surrounded by Prophets and Saints, icon, 11th-12th c., Mt. Sinai

Enthroned Mother of God Eleusa surrounded by Prophets, icon, 12th-13th c., Mt. Athos, St. Petersburg, Hermitage

Mother of God surrounded by Prophets, Joachim and Anna and Hymnographers, 1st half of the 16th c., from the Roman-Catholic Church in Rudki (Ukraine), stolen in 1992 from the Roman-Catholic Church in Jasień nearby Ustrzyki Dolne

Mother of God surrounded by Prophets, Joachim and Anna, 1st half of the 16th c., from the Greco-Catholic church in Terło (Ukraine), National Museum in Krakow

SUMMARY

In 1912 Władysław Podlacha recognized and characterised the subject Hodegetria surrounded by prophets as the illustration of the Hymn *Anothen hoi profettai* similar to the Athos paintings in the Moldavian (called then Bucovinian) frescoes. He emphasised that it was the old tradition to paint prophets on the walls of a narthex, as e.g. in Humor and Moldavitsa, and hymnographers in the pendentives of the cupola filled with the bust of the Mother of God in the Blacherniotissa type⁸². This is why Podlachacalled this part of the temple *The Shrine of the Mother of God* (pol. *Przybytek Bogurodzicy*), and he indicated *The Hymns of Prophets* (gr. *Ἀνοθενοὶ προφῆται*) described in *Hermeneia* traditionally linked with Dionysius of Fournas as the literary source of the described composition.

It is worth to notice that the iconographic scheme known from the Middle Byzantine period in which the prophets surround the Mother of God, was not drawn in any particular way from the oldest or newer iconographic compendia, although the term used in *Hermeneia* (*The Prophets from above*) was adapted in the literature, e. g. in Manuelis Chatzidaki's monograph (1962) devoted to Venetian icons or in Sirarpie der Nersessian's study of frescoes of the Parreclision of Monastery of Our Saviour, that is Karye Djami in Constantinople (1975). The most comprehensive study devoted to this subject was published by Doula Mouriki in 1971 in the context of the late Paleologian paintings in Peribleptos in Mistra. In her study she joined – to some degree – the concepts of the origin of this subject seen in the Dionysius's *Manual* and in the homiletic and hymnographic tradition of the Eastern Church. She indicated that the *Troparion Anothen hoi profettai* (*Ἀνοθενοὶ προφῆται*) was not only the name of the subject in *The Painters' Manual* but it was an old liturgical Hymn as well, known since the 12th century. Conclusions of Babić and Mouriki were repeated and elaborated by Vesna Milanović (1991) and mentioned by Ludmila Popović (1991) regarding the case of murals in Peć. In Serbian this subject was described as *The Prophets have Thee announced* (serb. *Пророци су те наговестили*).

Milanović after Mouriki admitted that one of the oldest illustrations of prophets with Mariological symbols are known from the miniatures of *The Sermons* of Jacob Kokkinobaphos and *The Christian Topography* of Kosmas Indikopleustes. Both Authors also emphasised that the description in *Hermeneia* is much younger than any monuments to which it refers. The articles of Olga Etingoff (2000) brought more valuable remarks of this subject. She noticed that the troparion *Anothen hoi Profettai* preserved in the *Triodion* of the Sinai Monastery of the 11th c. (*Sinait*, gr. 736, fol. 71) is included in the *Canon of Prophets* read during the first Sunday of the Lent attributed to Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople. Etingoff indicated that the sense of Mariological symbols was linked with the arguments of the iconodules and the heritage of the Byzantine poetry focused on the veneration of Virgin Mary and the icons.

⁸²W. Podlacha, *Malowidła ścienne w cerkwiach Bukowiny*, Lwów 1912, s. 35; Cf. M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem w XV i XVI wiekach*, Kraków 2000, p. 77-193; Idem, *Hymnograf Stefan czy hymnograf Teofan. Problem identyfikacji pieśniopiewcy w ikonach zachodnioruskich* [*Hymnograph Stephen or Teophan. Problem of the Identification of the Byzantine Melodist in the Ruthenian Icons*], [in:] „Series Byzantina” II (= Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art), ed. W. Deluga, M. Janocha, Warszawa 2004, p. 129 – 154, fig. 1 – 4; Idem, *Balkan Connections of Ruthenian Icons of the Former Republic of Poland Exemplified by Iconography and Inscriptions*, [in:] *The Orthodox Church in the Balkans and Poland. Connections and Common Tradition*, ed. A. Mironowicz, U. Pawluczuk, W. Walczak, Białystok 2007, p. 287 – 298; Idem, *Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti w ikonie Hodegetrii w otoczeniu proroków w Czarnej k. Uscia Gorlickiego* [*Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti in the Icon of Hodegetria surrounded by Prophets in Czarna by Uscie Gorlickie*], [in:] *Szczelina światła. Ruskie malarstwo ikonowe*, ed. Agnieszka Gronek, Kraków 2009 (= Biblioteka Tradycji nr LXXXVI), p. 215 – 248; M. П. Крук, *Православная икона 16 – того века из Тера Богоматерь Одигитрия во кружении пророков в собрании Краковского национального музея. Проблемы иконографии, атрибуции и датировки*, „Arta” 2013 (= Artevizuale: arteplastică, arhitectură), p. 16-28.

In the meantime other authors expressed a little different opinions, including e.g. Eugeniusz Iwanoyko (1956) who believed that the source of the depiction was *The Akathist Hymn*, the most venerable hymn of the Eastern Church, while Josef Myslivec (1969) emphasized the meaning of the sermons of the Fathers of the Church in his study of the Slovak icons. Vira Sviencička (1983) and Romuald Biskupski (1985) shortly argued that the icons in this type should be understood as the apotheosis of the Mother of God.

In my opinion, apart from the correct indication of the great meaning of the *Troparion* attributed to Jakob Koukozeles of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos or John Kladas of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Милановић 1991; Etingoff 2000) or other liturgical hymns, the significance of the patristic texts as the literary source of the discussed subject should not be omitted. To the sphere of the looking for the parallels between the *Old* and the *New Testaments* belongs the vision of the Prophets regarding the magnificent role of the Virgin Mary. This was the common link regarding the writings of SS. Athanasius of Alexandria (+373), Ephrem the Syrian (+373), Cyril of Alexandria (+c.444), Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople (+740) and Theodore Studites (+826). The vision was common in the same time to the homiletic tradition of both Churches of the East and the West. In the wall paintings this idea was expressed simultaneously in the painting by associating specific attributes with the individual prophets and in the verbal layer by adding to them the written scrolls fulfilled with their predictions, repeated in the sermons of the Fathers of the Church.

It is the anti-iconoclasy activity of the apologists and the defenders of the worship due to venerated icons and the role of the hymnographers which exerted great influence on the final shape of this iconography. The latter, soon after their canonization, were placed nearby the Mother of God together with the rows of prophets on the icons and frescoes. The one who can be distinguished among them was John of Damascus, who joined the apologetic passion with the Mariological homiletic based on the heritage of the Fathers of the Church and *The Holy Script*. The heroes depicted around the Mother of God form the Holy assembly, as the witnesses of *The Good Revelance*, adoring the role played by the Daughter of Joachim and Anna. They announce together the Act of Incarnation and the Glory of Mother of God and Jesus. One of the accurate description of the Glory of Mary which seemed to be just a kind of ekphrasis of the composition of the described type is the text of St. Tarrasios (+ 806) *Sermon on the Offering of the Holy Mary to the Temple* (PG, 98, 1491 – 1494)⁸³.

Finally, one can observe that the popularity of this subject in 14th -15th c. was linked with the general growth of the popularity of hymnography in the Paleologan era, plenty of illustrations of different liturgical hymns. Some Hymns, and above all *The Akathist Hymn* became richly illustrated in large cycles. Perhaps it was the reason why M. Chatzidakis (1962) or earlier I. D. Ștefănescu (1929) would also like to see in this subject the kind of the illustration of the Hymn *All the creation rejoices in Thee / Tufais la joie* for the aspect of Triumph – the Triumph of Orthodoxy in the depictions: *Vierge en Gloire / Glory of Virgin / Похвала Богоматери* is clearly visible.

⁸³ Tarasii Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, *Oratio in SS. Dei Matrem in Templum Deductam* (PG, 98, 1491 – 1494).