

The Proclamation of the New Covenant: The Pre-Iconoclastic Altar Ciboria in Rome and Constantinople¹

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The altar ciborium is the piece of the liturgical furniture placed in the Christian sanctuary over the holy table (ἁγία τραπέζα) where the bloodless sacrifice of the New Testament and the presence of Jesus Christ within the Divine Liturgy are manifested.² The etymology of the term ciborium (κιβώριον) is not clear especially having in mind that the expression itself has several meanings: cup, cupola, dome, and baldacchino, canopy referring both to the covering seats of royalty and over altar.³ According to St. Germanus, the eighth century patriarch of Constantinople,⁴ the term κιβώριον is derivative of the Greek words κιβ, κιβωτός, meaning box, chest, coffer, hence representing tabernacle or ark,⁵ and the word ὠριον meaning the effulgence, or Light of God. Metaphorical language always holds several meanings simultaneously. In this sense, St. Germanus and other theologians connect the ciborium with the Hebrew term keber for the tomb, since the altar and tomb represent the same things in Christian and Jewish eschatology. Others are of the opinion that ciborium is derivative of the Latin term for the holy gifts, *cibus*, that was held suspended from the tent-like baldacchino.⁶ Generally speaking, a ciborium is an open domed or pyramidal roof resting on the same number of columns as the number of corners of the shelter, at least

four.⁷ The ciborium resembles the tent-like or domed structure, usually connected with both sacred and royal tents,⁸ and as such a visual motif it can be traced back several centuries before the Common Era, in numerous representations in almost every ancient Eastern culture with nomadic heritage. Since the focus of this paper is on the ciborium within the Christian church the discussion is narrowed to the Judeo-Christian and Hellenistic tradition.

The earliest archeological remains of the altar ciboria date from the sixth century and are found in the churches of St. Alexander and St. Andrew in Rome, and in the churches of Hagios Polyektos and Hagia Euphemia in Constantinople.⁹ However, according to the archeological reports and the old representations and descriptions from other sources such as coins or manuscripts, the ciboria were used within the Christian churches at least two centuries prior to that date.¹⁰ Knowledge of the Christian canopy-like architectural structures begins with the Edict of Toleration (313) and development of Christian iconography under Constantine the Great (d. 337). Ciboria commissioned by Constantine and his heirs marked the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome in the basilica martyrium of St. Peter (after 319) and San Paulo fuori le

¹ This paper is derived from a project in the course *Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Architecture*, taught by Prof. Ljubica D. Popovich in the fall of 2000. I would like to thank Prof. Popovich once again for her unreserved assistance at every stage of work, as well as for her suggestion that I participate in the *Art History Graduate Symposium* at Florida State University, which led to the publication of this paper in *Athanos*. I cordially thank Prof. Svetlana Popović, an architectural historian, who has supported my efforts for years. As many times before I benefited from her suggestions while working on this paper. My thanks also go to the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University that financially supported my participation at the Symposium.

² Lazar Mirković, *Pravoslavna liturgika ili nauka o bogoslužju pravoslavne istočne crkve*, Prvi, opći deo (Beograd: Sveti arhijerejski sinod srpske pravoslavne crkve, 1995) 103. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe, D. D. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1964) 1399.

³ Lampe 753.

⁴ *St. Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy*, ed. Paul Meyendorff (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary P, 1984).

⁵ Lampe 753.

⁶ Mirković, 103; *St. Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy* 59. *Leksikon ikonografije, liturgike i simbolike zapadnog kriscanstva*, ed. Andjelko Badurina (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umetnosti, 1979) 180-181.

⁷ Ciborium is the architectural structure, but it is closely related to the baldacchino. The term is of late medieval derivative from the Italian (*baldocco*) or Spanish (*baldaquin*) expression for the elaborately brocaded material imported from Baghdad that was hung as a canopy over an altar or doorway. Later it came to stand for the freestanding canopy over an altar, tomb, or throne, as the ciborium. The terms *tegurium*, *turris*, *umbraculum*, *arca* etc. in Latin, or κιβωτός, κιβώριον, τροβλιον, πύργος etc. in Greek are the synonymies with the ciborium. More in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. I (1999) under *Ciborium*; Mirković 103; *St. Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy* 59. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. I (1991) 462.

⁸ Baldwin E. Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1956) 112.

⁹ About Constantinopolitan ciboria in: Thomas F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1971). More on ciboria in Rome: Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Development of the Altar Canopy in Rome," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 50 (1974) 379-414. The third center, Jerusalem, is as important as Rome and Constantinople, but there are no archeological remains of ciboria, since none survived. That is the reason we shall turn to Jerusalem as the spiritual center, and ideal reconstruction of the ciboria in Jerusalem.

¹⁰ Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

mura in Rome (after 384), as well as the tomb of Christ at Jerusalem (326-35), to name but a few.

Scholars searched for the possible explanation of the canopy structure and its function in the Christian church in the imperial iconography of the time. The repeated tent-like and baldacchino patterns in the visual representations connected with the epiphany and *adventus* had a long-lived tradition in every part of the Roman Empire.¹¹ However, it has been pointed out that altar canopy structures differed from one another according to the particular symbolic function they had. The canopies erected over the martyr tombs physically contrasted significantly from the canopies over imperial thrones in royal *aulae*.¹² Roman tombs for wealthy and influential families were mainly on central plans, sometimes surmounted by a second storey on which was a round canopy-like structure, carried by columns and with a pointed roof.¹³ Their visual appearance is similar to the canopy placed over the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem as represented on the sixth century *Bobbio* and *Monza ampullae*. According to the Eusebius of Caesarea (fourth century), the chief theological adviser of Constantine, and to the *Liber Pontificalis*, St. Peter, a member of a mainly poor and neglected "sect" during his life, received the same honors as the Empress Helena and Emperor Constantine: an altar, *corona*, and four large candlesticks.¹⁴ Constantine was at that time, acclaimed as related to the traditional Roman gods.¹⁵ Having in mind that Constantine the Great viewed himself as God's vicar on earth, and that the Lord was viewed

increasingly as the Emperor of Heaven,¹⁶ it is very plausible to connect the imperial ceremonial rites with the rudimentary rites of the liturgy. However, the influence of Jewish liturgy should not be underestimated in spite of the Roman intolerance towards the Jews.

No other element in Jewish faith has such central and long-lived theological importance as does the Ark of the Covenant, since it symbolizes the presence of God (1 Sam. 4:3) and the connection between God and the nation of Israel. Great significance is accorded to the tent-like structure called the "Tent of Meeting" or Tabernacle¹⁷ where the Ark was placed (2 Sam. 7:6). The Tabernacle represents the portable sanctuary constructed by Moses as a place of worship for the Hebrew tribes during the period of wandering that preceded their arrival in the Promised Land. The earliest sanctuary was a simple tent within which, it was believed, the Lord himself manifested his presence and communicated his will. The Tabernacle was constructed with tapestry curtains decorated with cherubim (Exod. 25:9ff). The interior was divided into two rooms, differing in their sanctity: "the holy place" and "the most holy place" (Holy of Holies, Heb. *Debir*). The room that represented "the holy place" contained the table on which the bread of the Presence (*showbread*), the altar of incense, and the seven-branched candelabrum (*menorah*) were placed. "The Holy of Holies" was thought to be an actual dwelling place of the God of Israel, who invisibly sat enthroned above the solid slab of gold that rested on the Ark of the Covenant and had

¹¹ The tent-like and baldacchino structures as represented in the second and fourth Styles of the Pompeian wall painting present the evidence that a ciborium was an important feature of the palace ceremonies and palace architecture of the Hellenistic East predominantly, later adopted by the other parts of Roman Empire. Nero's ambition to be recognized as a Second Alexander the Great and to be identified with the Sun-god could be found documented in his interest in the *skene* symbolism and the domical banqueting hall he had built for the reception of his guests like a *Kosmokrator* beneath a domical heaven. The original meaning of the canopy structure in this context should be searched in Egypt. The papyrus of the Middle Kingdom, which shows how Senwosret made his public appearance as the living Horus under a *heb-sed* canopy, recalls the later epiphany and *adventus* reception of the Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors. Symbolism of the sacred tent spread the idea of the throne tabernacle when the ruler was identified with heaven and presented to his people as a god. Moreover, during the short period of the New Kingdom Amenhotep IV (reign 1348-1336/5 BCE) proclaimed his faith in a single god, the sun disk Aten and changed his name to Akhenaten ("Effective for the Aten") introducing thus one of the earliest references to monotheism and the idea of the messenger of God among humans. For the reference to Akhenaten I thank once again Dr. Svetlana Popović.

¹² Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

¹³ Some of the examples of Roman tombs with the canopy-like structures on the top are: at Pompeii, the tomb of the Istacidii (August Mau, *Pompeii. Its Life and Art* [New York: Caratzas Brothers, 1982] 411), at S. Rémy in France, the mausoleum of the Julii, c. 30-20 BCE (Eve D'Ambr, *Roman Art*, [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998] 115-7), and in Capua the tower-tomb named "The Conocchia," end of the first century CE, (Roberto Marta, *Architettura Romana. Tecniche costruttive e forme architettoniche del mondo romano*, [Roma: Kappa, 1985] 176-83).

¹⁴ Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

¹⁵ "Hic est qui nomen acceptum a Deo, principe generis sui, dedit vobis, qui se progeniam esse Herculis, non fabulosos, sed aequatis virtutibus comprobavit." (Incerti Panegyricus Maximiano et Constantino - 307 CE, cap. VIII, 2); "Ut enim ipsos immortales Deos, quamquam universos animo colamus, interdum tamen in suo quemque templo ac sede veneramur..." (Panegyricus VII: Eumeni Constantino Aug., cap. I, 5) according to: Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Lateran Fastigium: A Gift of Constantine the Great," *Rivista archeologia cristiana* 46 (1970) 149-75. Domitian (first century) was the first among the Roman emperors who succeeded in elevating himself to the stature of a *Dominus et Deus*. He became known as a builder of at least two domical halls, in which he as the "Lord of the *Oecumene*" feasted with his guests in the center of the cosmos under the stars, continuing thus the tradition of Alexander's "tent of Heaven" and Nero's banqueting tholos. More in: Baldwin E. Smith 126.

¹⁶ Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, IX, viii.15-ix.11, T.E. Page et al eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP and London: William Heinemann LTD, 1958) 359-65.

¹⁷ The physical appearance of the Ark and Tabernacle is described in 2 Mos. 25:9ff. About the shape of the Ark and Tabernacle there are controversial debates between Christian and Jewish interpretations, more in: Bianca Kühnel, *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of the First Millennium*, (Rome, Freiburg, Wien: Herder, 1987) 19 n. 8. The word tabernacle is of Latin derivation *tabernaculum*, meaning tent. Tabernacle in Hebrew is referred to 'ohel-tent, 'ohel mo'ed-tent of meeting, 'ohel ha-'eduth-tent of testimony, mishkan 'ohel-dwelling, mishkan ha-'eduth-dwelling of testimony, mishkan 'ohel-dwelling of the tent, beth Yahweh-house of Yahweh, godesh-holy, miqdash-sanctuary, hekal-temple. The various expressions in the Hebrew text in reference to the tabernacle enable the formation of a clear idea of its construction, and the description of a "portable tent-like sanctuary" is the most accurate. More in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. I, 1999.

golden cherubim at each side. The Ark was a gold-covered wooden coffer containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments. In the time of the First Temple (before 586 BCE) which was erected by god-appointed King David in Jerusalem, the permanent place of the Ark and the Tabernacle "in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, under the cherubim's wings" (1 Kg. 8:6ff) was established.

During the so-called "Second Temple period" (586 BCE–70 CE) which was partly intertwined with the "New Testament period," Jewish eschatology evolved with the concept of the *Messiah* presented in the prophecy of Isaiah (esp. Isa. 9, 11, 42).¹⁸ Isaiah's prophecy emphasized that the future ruler (*Messiah*) should be: a king, a priest, and a prophet. Jesus appeared as the one who united these three functions in His persona (*hypostasis*). As a King of the universe (Mt. 22; Lk. 1, 32f; 2 Sam. 7, 12), He received from the very beginning the imperial characteristics that "record His righteous acts and His victories over the impious."¹⁹ Jesus is the great High Priest of the universe (Mk. 11, 23ff; Mt. 6, 9; Lk. 11, 2; Mt. 17, 20f; Mk. 16, 15ff; Mt. 28, 19f), appointed as the new Aaron or Melchizedek, "to whom alone it is permitted to search the hidden mysteries of every rational soul."²⁰ Jesus Himself represented His prophecy regarding the fall of earthly Jerusalem (Lk. 21; Mk. 13; Mt. 23) through His death on the cross. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 was preceded by Jesus' coming to the world, His earthly ministry, and more specifically by His entry into Jerusalem immediately followed by the story of His passion, death, and resurrection (Lk. 22f; Mk. 14f; Mt. 26f).²¹ After its destruction the holiness previously reserved for the Temple was transferred to the individual synagogues.²² The principal object of the post-70 Jewish ritual was the written Torah, housed in a Torah shrine. The liturgical shift in Judaism was made from the sacrificial worship in the Jerusalem Temple to the recitation of prayers and Scrip-

ture in numerous synagogues.²³ With homilies and the reading of the Scripture, the earliest Eucharistic rites—those of the Sunday Eucharist and the Eucharist that followed baptism, as described by Justin the Martyr (second century) in the *First Apology*—resemble Jewish synagogue service.²⁴

From the Davidic times on, the Ark and Tabernacle, the Temple, and Jerusalem represent the associative images of the covenant and the heavenly realm in Jewish eschatology.²⁵ With Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, earthly Jerusalem lost its dominant role in the ecclesiastical history of redemption in Christian eschatology.²⁶ However, topology and symbolism of earthly Jerusalem, where the historical events of Jesus' earthly ministry took place, became a "model" for the representation of Heavenly Jerusalem.²⁷ In other words, the heavenly realm was emphasized in the New Testament period as a formative period for the transition from visionary prophecy to eschatology. Having those notions in mind, earthly Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Ark and Tabernacle, represent the counterparts of the associative images for Heavenly Jerusalem, the Church, and the altar and altar ciborium.²⁸

The placement of the fourth and fifth centuries chancel screen in Jerusalem's churches and synagogues records the relocation of liturgical practices from the exterior sacrificial places to the interior of both Jewish and Christian sanctuaries, perhaps due to the same origin of the service and similar practices.²⁹ Moreover, it seems plausible to assume that the first portable altars might have been in the nave of the churches.³⁰ The floor mosaic in front of the apse of the sixth century chapel of Theotokos at Mt. Nebo represents a structural motif recognized as the Jerusalem Temple.³¹ The depicted edifice is an elongated structure, with the apse on one of its shorter sides, and it is visually recognizable as a basilica. The division of the entrance area, the part of the nave with the sacrificial altar, and the apse area reserved for the Holy of

¹⁸ The Roman conquest and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE occurred just as the prophecies of the Old Testament had announced, and wrapped the historical, messianic and eschatological concept of Jewish faith into one. The idea of the rebuilding of the city and the Temple, the return from the Diaspora, and the return of God to Jerusalem were closely connected with the restoration concept of how to achieve this.

¹⁹ Eusebius X. iv. 14-6. 407.

²⁰ Eusebius X. iv. 23-6. 411-3. The words, "[Melchizedek] brought bread and wine" (Gen. 14:18), are interpreted in Christianity as referring to the Eucharist.

²¹ By the eighth century these events became crucial points of the later development of the liturgical symbolism and mysticism.

²² Heinz Schreckenberg and Kurt Schubert, *Jewish Historiography and Iconography in Early and Medieval Christianity* (Assen: Van Gorcum and Minneapolis: Fortres P, 1992) 161, with references.

²³ Joan Branham, "Sacred Space under Erasure in Ancient Synagogues and Early Churches," *Art Bulletin* 3 (1992): 375-94.

²⁴ More about the earliest Eucharistic rites of the early Church in: Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy: The Development of the Eucharistic Lit-*

urgy in the Byzantine Rite (London: SPCK, 1989), 18.

²⁵ About different aspects of the union among the Ark, the Temple, and Jerusalem, very elaborate in: Kühnel 17-28.

²⁶ Kühnel 49-59.

²⁷ Robert Taft, SJ, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *DOP* 34-5 (1980-1): 45-75. It should be noted that the representations of the Heavenly Jerusalem in the visual arts remained idealistic before the Crusader period. More in: Kühnel *passim*.

²⁸ For the altar and the altar ciborium are the very place where heavenly and earthly realm are mixed but not dissolved.

²⁹ Branham 375-94.

³⁰ The oldest archeological evidence about altars in Constantinopolitan churches from the fourth and fifth centuries locate them in the nave area in front of the apse. See: Mathews *Early Churches* 11-41.

³¹ S.J. Saller according to: Branham 375-94. For photo reproduction of the apse floor see Bianca Kühnel *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem* (Harder, 1987).

Holies is evident. The first portable altars might have been in the nave of the churches. In the Old St. Peter's basilica, the tomb of the Apostle was in the apse in the former place of the Holy of Holies, and the Christian altar was somewhere in the nave since there was not enough space for the altar in the apse. The symbolical union of two distinct segments of the Jerusalem Temple—the altar area with a Torah shrine and the Holy of Holies, within the Christian edifice— might be interpreted both spatially and liturgically. The transfer of the Temple attributes to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre might be schematically presented so that “the Tomb of Christ takes the place of the Holy of Holies,” the place of Divine Presence, “the ever-burning lamp in the Tomb is like *menorah* in the Temple, while the Rock of the Crucifixion,” where the Lord sacrificed His only-begotten son, “assumes the role of the altar on Mt. Moriah,” where Abraham offered the sacrifice of Isaac.³² Holy places and history that marked the topology of earthly Jerusalem appear to be transferred to the other Constantian churches, including the Old St. Peter's basilica.

According to the surviving documents, excavations, and the representation on the early fifth century ivory casket from Pola (Figure 1),³³ St. Peter's grave was sheltered by a canopy. It rested on four spiral vine scroll columns, *columnae vitineae* that Constantine brought *de Grecias*.³⁴ Two more architraved spiral columns linked the backside of the baldacchino to the corners of the apse,³⁵ forming together with the baldacchino the continuous curtained screen. The jeweled “tower,”³⁶ a ciborium that housed the Blessed Sacrament, as it was mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis*, had a pointed roof with diagonal arching ribs surmounted by an orb, as it is represented on the Pola Casket. At the point of the intersection of ribs, a golden lamp was suspended in the form of golden *corona* of lights. Below the canopy a rectangular enclosure was railed off and slightly raised above the floor level. Ciborium stood directly over the Apostle's tomb. The altar was very probably movable, separated from the shrine, positioned somewhere in front of the shrine or near it (Figure 2).³⁷ On the Pola Casket

two figures are turned toward the Apostle's tomb in a gesture of worship, and a pair of female and male frontal *orant* figures are represented on either side of the shrine.

The symbolism of the golden lamp as the ever-burning lamp is familiar: “out from the tomb comes the risen Christ, the light that illuminates, i.e. saves.”³⁸ The lamp was suspended from the intersection of the ribs that formed the ciborium roof. Thus, the sparkling lamplight came not from the outside, but from the inner space of the ciborium. The sensation of the participants in the service in St. Peter's basilica has to be very similar to the pilgrim Egeria's (381-384 CE) description of the congregation in the Holy Sepulchre:

...and the lamps and candles are all lit, which makes it [Anastasis] very bright. The fire is brought not from outside, but from the cave—inside the screen—where a lamp is always burning night and day.³⁹

A golden lamp was suspended from the ciborium in the form of a golden crown, *aurum corona*, above the body of lights.⁴⁰ Besides the similarities to the ever-burning light of Jesus' tomb, prefigured in the ever burning light of the *menorah* lamp, *aurum corona* can be related also to the Roman ceremony of the *aurum coronarium*. The rite was named after the gold diadem that the citizens of the Roman Empire and representatives of the provinces presented to the emperor as a symbolic sign of his imperial supremacy over them. This imperial iconographical motif can be transferred to the religious image of Christ as the Heavenly King, the Source of Light.⁴¹ The Acts of the Apostles that were depicted on four large candlesticks wrought in silver (now lost),⁴² refer to the spiritual identity of the Apostles with the self-giving person, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, defining liturgical mysteries as the mysteries of Christ's life enacted during the cycle of the church year. To express this spiritual identity St. Peter and eleven Apostles state that all who believe in Christ are together and hold everything in common, including the mystery of divine life (Acts. 2:44). Moreover, St. Peter was the first Apostle who

³² Quotations from Robert Ousterhout, “From Temple to Sepulchre: An Ideological Transformation” according to: Branham 375-94. About this specific architectural symbolism: Ousterhout 375-94. About liturgical symbolism in: Taft 45-75.

³³ About donations of Constantine to St. Peter's and the ekphrasis of the interior of the church see: L. Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis I* (Paris: 1955-6). About excavations of St. Peter's see: J.B. Ward-Perkins, “The Shrine of St. Peter and its Twelve Spiral Columns,” in: *Studies in Roman and Early Christian Architecture*, ed. J. B. Ward-Perkins (London: Pindar P, 1994) 469-89. About the representation of the shrine of St. Peter on the Pola Casket as it appeared in the fifth century see: Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1986) 56f; John Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (New Haven/London: Yale UP, 1993) 27f; Ward-Perkins 469-89.

³⁴ Ward-Perkins 469-89.

³⁵ The imprints of the two rear column bases of the canopy show that the screen separated the apse from the transept, from shoulder to shoulder, with the canopy projecting forward into the crossing, thus over the tomb. More in: Ward-Perkins 469-89.

³⁶ In Greek *πύργος*; fn. 7. above.

³⁷ More in: Ward-Perkins 469-89.

³⁸ The Greek word for illumination, *φώτισμα* means baptism. More on the symbolism of light for the Christian liturgy: Taft 45-75.

³⁹ Egeria's Travels translated by J. Wilkinson (London, 1971) 123-4, according to: Taft 45-75.

⁴⁰ “*Coronam auream ante corpus qui est farus cantharus*” *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne) 176, according to: Molly Teasdale Smith, “Development” 379-414.

⁴¹ More on the rite of *aurum coronarium* in: Robert Deshman, “Antiquity and Empire in the Throne of Charles the Bald,” in *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art-historical studies in honour of Kurt Weitzmann*, Doula Mouriki, Slobodan Ćurčić et al eds. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995) 131-7.

⁴² Beckwith 27.

baptized non-Jews, clearly announcing the replacement of the Old Covenant between the God and people of Israel with the New Covenant between the God and people of God, those baptized in Christ (Acts.10:9ff).⁴³

The six twisted columns, four that formed canopy over St. Peter's grave and two more at the corners of the apse, were made of a single block of fine-grained, translucent, Greek marble.⁴⁴ Each of them was divided into four zones, separated by a cable molding, of which the first and third were spirally fluted, and the second and fourth carved in high relief with vine scrolls and naked, winged putti. The composite capitals and the bases of the columns are also rich in leaves and ornaments (Figure 3).⁴⁵ The columns, as mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis* and depicted on the Pola Casket,⁴⁶ could be connected with the pagan tradition and the cult of Dionysius,⁴⁷ since there are references that canopies made of or with vine scrolls, sometimes inhabited by birds, beasts, and vintaging figures, were used in the cult (Figure 4).⁴⁸ Dionysius, a god of vine, was also known as a funerary god who delivered souls of the dead due to his association with the return of spring and vegetation each year.⁴⁹ The historical events of the Last Supper, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, firmly connected with liturgical mysteries of life in Christ, all happened in the spring-time. Once again, pagan funerary celebrations of emperors and reception of a divine ruler could be connected with worshipping Christ, King of the Universe, and the Apostles and martyrs to whom He delegated His power and authority, just as Roman emperors delegated their power to consuls, magistrates, and other officials. In Jewish eschatology the scrolls of

the Tree of Life are connected with the Torah scrolls. The Tree of Life signified the Torah in its fulfillment, both as the instrument of God's creation and the norm of life of the Jewish people,⁵⁰ and as the representative of the Torah it also depicts the heavenly Paradise.⁵¹ Visual representations of the Tree of Life are rare, but the fresco over the Torah niche in Dura Europos synagogue (before 256) with the "tree of life for all who holds fast to her [Tree of Life]" employs almost the same iconographical vocabulary as the ciborium over the Apostle's tomb in St. Peter's church (Figure 5). On the fresco the Torah shrine is enclosed by the *aedicula* very similar to the ideal reconstruction of St. Peter's tomb. The columns of the Torah *aedicula* are twisted and resemble the twisted columns of the ciborium over St. Peter's grave. The branches of the Tree of Life surmount the niche with the Torah shrine emphasizing the eschatological dimension of the image. The ciborium columns wrapped in vine-scrolls could be seen as the eschatological image of the New Testament. The motif of intertwined scrolls was a very popular decorative motif with the meaning of everlasting life during the whole of the Roman Empire, both in the areas in North Africa⁵² and Syro-Palestine. Therefore it seems reasonable that the motif was adapted to express fundamental Christian themes such as the vintage of the Lord in the Church both in the East and West, which was used at least until the sixth century. It might be that the Jewish iconographical meaning was perhaps modified for the specific visual media,⁵³ and coupled with the adapted imperial imagery that affirmed the triumph of Christ.

The orant figures⁵⁴ from the Pola Casket emerging through

⁴³ God's people, in Greek λαός, has nothing to do with ethnic characteristics of the nation, as it has in Judaism.

⁴⁴ Remember that Constantine brought *columnae vitinae de Grecias* ftm. 34 above.

⁴⁵ No pair of columns was the same, but according to the archeological remains and descriptions they were restored. More in: Ward-Perkins 469-89.

⁴⁶ About the reference in the *Liber Pontificalis* 176 according to: Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

⁴⁷ Although some scholars saw similarities with structural elements of fantastic garden architecture, most of them narrowed their studies on the similarities with structural elements of architecture with Dionysiac attributes. More in: Ward-Perkins 469-89; Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

⁴⁸ Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414. The column in high relief with entwined vine scrolls, Silen mask and other Dionysiac attributes is preserved in Museo Nazionale Romano. In the mausoleum of Galla Placidia (c. 425) in Ravenna the vault mosaics with vine scrolls and vintage scenes with little putti are also very indicative of such a representation in the tomb structure.

⁴⁹ Moreover, in the ceremonies of the New Year Festival at Babylon the god appeared under "the 'golden heaven,' which ... was a baldacchino or canopy of gold or cloth of gold upon which the planets were represented." Quotation of S. H. Hooke, *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion* (London, 1953) 49, after Baldwin E. Smith 116. When the people welcomed the return of the god responsible for the renewed fertility of the land, the customary way in which it was enacted in both the Mesopotamian and Egyptian rituals pertaining to the Spring Festival when the priest king welcomed the "veg-

etation deity" may explain how the heavenly canopy came to be associated with the reception of the divine ruler. Baldwin E. Smith 116.

⁵⁰ "For the Torah is the tree of life for everyone who occupies himself with it. Whoever keeps its commandments in this world lives and endures, like the tree of life, for the world to come. To obey the Torah in this world is to be compared with [eating] the fruits of the tree of life." Quotation from: Schreckenberg and Schubert 166, with further references.

⁵¹ Schreckenberg and Schubert 163-7.

⁵² About the tradition of vine scroll as a decorative motif in the Greek-speaking world and its influence on the Western part of the Roman Empire, as well about the examples of vine scroll columns from the chancel screens of Christian date found in North Africa, see: Ward-Perkins 469-89. It is interesting that the earliest structure of the expression of faith among Latin-speaking Christians was influenced from the mid-third century on predominantly by North-African, and ultimately, Alexandrian theology. More in: Schulz 142.

⁵³ Fresco represents two-dimensional image very similar to three-dimensional tomb surmounted by a ciborium.

⁵⁴ Orant is usually a female figure standing with outstretched arms as if in prayer used in Early Christian art as a symbol of the faithful dead. See: *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster Publishers, 1986). However, perhaps it is worth to remark that the word originates from Greek term οὐράνιος referring to heavenly, divine, spiritual, pertaining to the sky, everything which is opposite to earthly and material and term οὐράνιος with reference to eschatological descent of the heavenly to the earthly, meaning between heaven and earth (Lampe 977). Moreover, it is also very inter-

the curtains can be visually and compositionally compared with the figures from the Old Testament theme represented in the *Ashburnham* or *Tours Pentateuch*, the seventh century *Latin Vulgate* manuscript (Figure 6). On the lower half of the illumination in the center of the composition, the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting is depicted. Priests, Moses and Joshua, from one side, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu,⁵⁵ from the other, enter the Tabernacle, after experiencing the epiphany on the Mount Sinai represented in the upper part of the illumination (Exod. 24). The Tent of Meeting is made of curtains (Exod. 26) with a wooden altar embellished with precious metals and equipped with necessary accessories (Exod. 27). The Ark and Tabernacle symbolize the very moment of *Shekina*, the Divine Presence since they are depicted after the event on Mount Sinai when Moses has been given the tablets of the law by the hand of the Lord. From the fourth century writings of the nun Egeria it is obvious that the tomb of Christ, not the sanctuary of the martyrdom basilica where the Eucharist was celebrated, was the focal point of the vespers and the resurrection vigil.⁵⁶ This practice is concurrent with the period when St. Peter's shrine as depicted on the Pola Casket was also venerated. Since the mouths of the celebrants from the Pola Casket are open, it can be assumed that the evening liturgical service full of symbolism of the Divine Presence connected with the presence of the martyr's relics is represented.

The liturgical service in the early years of Christianity remains obscure. Until the end of the fourth century two ceremonies might have been performed at venerated Christian tombs: first the offerings of food and wine provided by the faithful for funerary banquets, the *refrigerium*, following pagan practices of the *Parentalia*; and the second, the celebration of the Eucharist, symbolizing the sacrifice of Christ for whom the martyr died.⁵⁷ Melchizedek's giving bread and wine to Abraham (Gen. 14:18-20) can be interpreted in Jewish context referring to bread as *showbread*, and wine as the libation offering, and in Christian sense as the prefiguration of the Eucharist.⁵⁸ The two figures below the altar ciborium represented on the Pola Casket, might refer to the ceremony of

offering bread and wine. This idea may be supported by the sixth century representation from the *Vienna Genesis*, where the meeting of Melchizedek and Abraham is depicted behind the domical curtained ciborium. If so, there was no better place in Rome to represent the spiritual unity in Christ than on St. Peter's tomb.⁵⁹

Some pagan altars were also surmounted by canopies to shelter a sacrifice and offerings placed on or below the altar, making the *refrigerium* at a venerated and sheltered martyr's tomb very inconvenient for Christian service. In time the *refrigerium* rite was eliminated from Christian practice according to the late fourth and fifth century writings of the Church Fathers such as St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan and St. John Chrysostom, the patriarch of Constantinople. They also clarified the meaning of the liturgical furnishing, including the altar and altar ciborium. St. Ambrose wrote that souls and symbolic remains of the martyrs, including *brandea*⁶⁰ from the actual martyr's tomb, should be placed beneath the altar, to become the true spiritual sacrifice offered to Christ.⁶¹ He based his writing on the Revelation of John⁶² as the only book of the New Testament in which Heavenly Jerusalem and sanctuaries are "visualized" as the symbol of the New Covenant and in a way as the extension of the Holy of Holies. St. John Chrysostom emphasized the aspect of mystery during the liturgical service, presenting the sacramental reality of the anaphora within the overall symbolic form of the liturgy,⁶³ basing his writing mainly on John 3:16: "You so loved your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son, in order that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost but may have everlasting life." For St. John Chrysostom, bread and wine, body and blood of our Lord, are the sacraments that He gave to "His Apostles" and to "all who have been perfected in faith,"⁶⁴ representing thus the visual images of the symbolism of death and resurrection in the Eucharist.⁶⁵ Therefore, the focus of the service, both in the West and in the East, was shifted from the veneration of the sepulchre to the rite of the Eucharist. This shift was followed by the New Testament interpretation of the death of Jesus in terms of Old Testament

esting to remark that οὐράνσιος, dim. οὐράνιος with meaning "little heaven or sky" at the same time points to the vaulted ceiling, especially top of a tent, canopy, as explained in: *Greek-English Lexicon*, eds. Liddell and Scott, vol 2 (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1948). Those notions are significant especially having in mind that participants in the earliest Christian services spoke the language and had the complete insight in complex meaning of the word, action and object had as a whole.

⁵⁵ All the figures are inscribed in Latin as such.

⁵⁶ More in: Taft 45-75, with further references.

⁵⁷ Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414, with references.

⁵⁸ Schreckenberg and Schubert 215-7.

⁵⁹ Moreover, St. Peter is in a way prefigured in Abraham, since he also was the one to leave the country to spread the Word of God (compare Gen. 14 and Acts. 10).

⁶⁰ *Brandea* refers to the pieces of martyrs' cloths.

⁶¹ St. Ambrose, *Apologia Prophetiae David* (VI, 9) according to Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

⁶² Especially Rev. 6:9 inspired St. Ambrose to make allusion to the altar of the eschaton proclaiming that the altar should be with the souls of the martyrs placed beneath it. Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414, with references.

⁶³ It is important to note that by the sixth century Byzantine theologians were not interested in the Eucharist as an autonomous celebration, but as an integral part of liturgy. More in: Christopher Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London: Variorum Publications LTD, 1982) 180.

⁶⁴ Schulz 154.

⁶⁵ Schulz 14-20, 150-9.

⁶⁶ The Eucharist is prefigured in the sacrificial ritual performed by the "Priest of God Most High," Melchizedek, and later Abraham whom he gave the laws of the High Priesthood (Gen. 14:18-20).

sacrifices⁶⁶ to develop later into the image of the Last Supper as the paschal sacrifice of the unblemished Lamb of God.⁶⁷ The celebration of Eucharist is indivisibly connected with the altar so the placement of a permanent altar over the tomb of the martyr for memorial services for the dead introduced a new element, important for the later development of the Christian church and its architecture.⁶⁸ By the early fifth century the altars were introduced at the venerated tombs that were sheltered by canopies as they had been from the time of Constantine.⁶⁹ A canopy remained an architectural furnishing that might shelter both the tomb and the altar, or only one of them.⁷⁰ Two canopies at S. Alessandro on the Via Nomentana in Rome are examples of the early fifth century canopies—one above the grave of the martyr Teodolus, and the other above the graves of martyrs Alexander and Eventius, with the altar slab directly over the tomb of the two martyrs.⁷¹

By the sixth century *translatio* of the relics became a practice,⁷² so that the relics of the martyrs could be placed beneath the altar and ciborium far away from the actual site of the martyr's tomb. The custom was initiated at Constantinople where the bodies of some of the Apostles were moved to the Church of the Holy Apostles.⁷³ *Translatio* of the relics might be also initiated by further development of the liturgical practice. In the period between the sixth and ninth centuries, the liturgy underwent radical changes, evolving the symbolism of the funeral procession.⁷⁴ The setting of the Eucharist in Constantinople at the time of St. John Chrysostom was arranged as a symbolic funeral procession prefigured in Christ's earthly life.⁷⁵ After the preparatory rites and *enarxis*,⁷⁶ the bishop should enter the church with his attending clergy through the central, royal doors leading through the narthex into the nave reaching the sanctuary that occupied the semi-circular apse on the east. When the procession, led by candle-

light, incense, and a deacon carrying the Gospel Book reached the sanctuary, the Holy Scripture was placed on the altar as the Word of God. After readings and sermons as the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Faithful might begin. The entry of bread of wine to the altar as the Great Entry or Entrance of the Mysteries in the procession represented symbols of Christ's going to His death. Their preparation on the altar symbolized His dead body in the burial place, while the Holy Communion symbolized His resurrection. The sacrament as a sign of reality greater than itself made the liturgy God's plan for salvation through a mystery when the participants "see one thing and believe another."⁷⁷

The creation of a sanctuary also underwent changes from the sixth century on. After the Council in Trullo (692 CE) it was

...not permitted to anyone among the laity to enter the sacred altar, with the exception that the imperial power and authority is in no way or manner excluded therefrom whenever it wishes to offer gifts to the creator, in accordance with a certain most ancient tradition.⁷⁸

The low, transparent chancel barriers divided the space of the Holy of Holies⁷⁹ accessible only to the priests from the area reserved for the prayer of laity.⁸⁰ The entrances were in the middle of the chancel barrier and if the sanctuary extended before the apse two more entrances were on the north and south. The liturgy in the sanctuary could be seen by the laity, while being physically inaccessible to them. The altar was recognized as the symbol of the holy tomb of Christ and place of His resurrection, a place where earthly and heavenly realms meet, where the Holy Spirit consecrates the bread and the wine.⁸¹ The bejeweled holy table symbolized the place in the

⁶⁷ Wybrew 17. The image of the Last Supper within anaphora in Byzantine Liturgy was especially emphasized during the eleventh century under influence of Byzantine theologian Nicholas of Andida. It was also a period when crucial shifts in liturgical interpretation evolved different visual representations connected with liturgical service, that could be seen predominantly in Slavic Orthodox churches due to the preservation of the large painted cycles in them. See: Wybrew 129-44, Walter *passim*.

⁶⁸ Krautheimer 35.

⁶⁹ Krautheimer 35.

⁷⁰ The canopy at St. Peter's shrine might have been the model for the hexagonal canopy erected by order of Constantine the Great over the Tomb of Christ at the Holy Sepulchre complex in Jerusalem. According to the pilgrim Etheria, in the 380s, the liturgy was celebrated on many occasions in front of the Holy Sepulchre, where the altar and Christ's tomb were. Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414, with references.

⁷¹ Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

⁷² Martyr's relics were not allowed to be removed from their final resting place at the very beginning of Christianity. It is the practice of the sixth century, perhaps slightly earlier. St. John Chrysostom spoke of the high prophylactic value of the relics of saints, so the practice of their translation might be connected also with "pragmatic" reasons. See: Walter 181-2, with references.

⁷³ The earliest recorded translations of relics to Constantinople were those of Timothy in 356 and of Andrew and Luke in 357, and deposited in the church of the Holy Apostles. Unfortunately, relics from the Holy Apostles were destroyed under Crusaders in 1204. About the veneration of relics: Walter 156, with references.

⁷⁴ About the liturgical evolutionary sequences of the procession, since the development is not quite clear, the most accurate: Taft 45-75, with further references.

⁷⁵ Wybrew 47-66.

⁷⁶ Wybrew 47-66, *St. Germanus* 16-23, Schulz 142-158.

⁷⁷ Quotation of St. John Chrysostom's words according to: Wybrew 47-66.

⁷⁸ Quotation after Sharon E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary* (Seattle and London: U of Washington P, 1999) 6.

⁷⁹ The chancel barrier in the Hagia Sophia was about waist-high. *St. Germanus* 17.

⁸⁰ Wybrew 47-66.

⁸¹ *St. Germanus* 61.

tomb of Christ where He was placed.

The holy table is also the throne of God, on which, borne by the Cherubim, He rested His body. At that table, at His mystical supper, Christ sat among His disciples and, taking bread and wine, said to His disciples and apostles: "Take, eat, and drink of it: this is my body and my blood" (Mt. 26:26-28).⁸²

According to St. Germanus the domical ciborium remained in the eighth century the representation of the *memoria* and place where Christ was crucified, "for the two places of burial and crucifixion in Jerusalem were near by."⁸³ Having all these evolution sequences in mind, it seems that by the eighth century, the liturgical furnishing, the rite, and the participants united to reveal both Christ's earthly ministry and eschaton. Meeting of the earthly and heavenly in their dynamic tension made the liturgy more than the mere ceremonial procession, but a prayer (since a prayer in a theological sense is a passage of human souls to eternal life). In this context, the altar ciboria evolved in time into the liturgical furnishing, distinct from the ciboria over the venerated tombs or reliquaries, with a complex meaning: the Golgotha, the Crucifixion, the Burial, and the Resurrection of Christ.

The sixth century archeological records from Constantinople and Rome confirm the development of the altar ciboria. Constantinopolitan churches under Justinian such as Hagios Polyeuktos (524-7) and Hagia Euphemia⁸⁴ are the two with archeological remains of the altar ciboria. There are abundant written references to the altar ciborium that once existed in Hagia Sophia (532-7). The original sanctuary furnishings, according to Procopios, Justinian's court historian, were embellished with 40,000 lbs. of silver.⁸⁵ The altar itself was composed of gold *trapeza*, gold columns, and a gold base, ornamented with precious stones, and covered by a cloth with rich silk and gold embroidery. On the altar cloth, Christ was represented standing between Ss. Peter and Paul, along with a number of representations of divine miracles. Over the altar rose a silver ciborium. According to the images found in chronologically later miniatures, the four columns of the ciborium were spanned by the arches supporting an eight-sided pyramidal roof with a silver orb surmounted by a cross.⁸⁶ One can

only imagine the light sparkling and reflecting from the gold mosaics and silver-decked furnishing, giving an impression that it originated from the inner light within the church edifice itself. The majestic space and decoration of the Hagia Sophia, consistently adapted to the liturgy, created an impression of "heaven on earth, the heavenly sanctuary...image of the cosmos, throne of the very glory of God."⁸⁷ Later structures of the post-iconoclastic age revealed this atmosphere in mosaic and fresco decoration, in accord with the more literal spirit. However, physical remains of the smaller Justinian's foundations extend the picture of richness and form of liturgical furnishing. The glass-inlaid marble columns of the altar ciborium of Hagios Polyeuktos, and of Hagia Euphemia are very instructive examples (Figure 7). The ciborium in the church of Hagia Euphemia was massive, monolithic, with a shallow dome, and there is record that the relics of St. Euphemia were placed within a box-type altar with a *confessio*, directly beneath the altar table, into which one could put one's hand to touch the relics (Figure 8). This is an example of a new variation in the relationship of the relics deposited under the altar since they were not buried in the crypt, as was common for the period.⁸⁸

In the West, from the sixth century on the development of the altar canopy can be followed through an example of ciborium in the church of St. Andrew the Apostle built under Pope Symmachus (598-614). It is indicative that the ciborium (*tiburium*) of pure silver and a *confessio*⁸⁹ weighing 120 lbs. were jointly constructed and there is a legend that the body of the Apostle Andrew at the time was in Constantinople, and that no relic of his was brought to Rome until the time of Gregory the Great.⁹⁰ This kind of a ciborium represents the new trend in the use of altar canopy structures, since it introduced a "symbolic confession" which held no actual relic of the Apostle but which might have contained *brandea* from his tomb, representing his spiritual presence and potency. In some cases, such as in the example of St. Martin of Tours in the early sixth century, instead of *brandea*, *ampoullae* containing oil, which were available at the martyr's tomb represented a symbolic confession, sheltered jointly with the altar by silver ciborium.⁹¹

In the case of the St. Peter's church, the raising platform

⁸² St. Germanus 59.

⁸³ St. Germanus 59.

⁸⁴ Hagia Euphemia was the fifth century secular triclinium converted into the church in the sixth century. Relics of St. Euphemia were translated from Chalcedon in the early seventh century and deposited in the church. More in: Mathews *Early Churches* 61-7.

⁸⁵ "And as for the treasure of this church—the [vessels of] gold and silver and precious stones which the Emperor Justinian has dedicated here—it is impossible to give an exact account of all of them. I shall allow my readers to form an estimate by means of a single example. That part of the church which is especially sacred and accessible to priests only—it is called sanctuary—exhibits forty thousand pounds of silver." Procopios, *Buildings I*, 1, 65, 28-9.

⁸⁶ Rowland J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia. Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988) 222.

⁸⁷ Taft 45-75, with further references.

⁸⁸ The burying of the relics in the crypt in the churches of the period and in the area of Constantinopolitan influence is recorded in cases of the churches of St. John in the Studios monastery (mid-fifth century), Chalkoprateia, and the Hebdon, to name but a few. More in: Mathews *Early Churches* 67.

⁸⁹ *Confessio* is the term for the resting place of martyrs as confessors of the Faith.

⁹⁰ Gregory the Great probably brought the arm of St. Andrew. Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414, with references.

of the apse and the area in front of it, which incorporated the Apostle's tomb, were radically re-arranged at the end of the sixth century to fit both liturgical practice and the purpose of veneration of the relics (Figures 2, 9).⁹² The altar with its ciborium on four porphyry columns was placed over the tomb,⁹³ while the six vine-scroll columns from previous ciborium were moved to form an iconostasis-like screen across the front of the chancel,⁹⁴ following the Byzantine sanctuary furnishing employed earlier in Constantinople. The Eucharist rite was done according to clerical and laity rank. The Pope received communion himself in his *cathedra* in the apse (*presbyterium*), and then the bishops and priests according to their dignity, approached the Pope from sanctuary to receive from him the Eucharistic bread, while the archdeacon was distributing the Wine. The Communion for the laity was performed in the areas adjacent to the sanctuary (*senatorium* and *matroneum*).⁹⁵ In front of those spaces was the *solea-schola* which principally figured as processional area. The whole liturgical rite as it was rendered in Constantinople was a visual representation of the idea that the Saviour comes to save us. The veneration of relics was also very important and it was "reachable" to everyone, clergy or laity alike.⁹⁶

The veneration of the relics and objects intimately associated with them before a shrine, a reliquary, or a tomb, remain intense; very often they were placed for display on the ciborium-like structures, located somewhere in the church independently of the altar space. The custom was especially in-

tense in the Byzantine sphere.⁹⁷ Before the eighth century the perception of the Eucharist was predominantly anagogically focused on the contemplation of the realities behind the visible realm. With the advent of Iconoclasm denying the possibility of any pictorial rendering of Christ, and understanding the cult of icons and relics as idolatry, the Eucharist was proclaimed as the only true "icon" of Christ.⁹⁸ The commentaries of St. Germanus re-evaluated and equilibrated the outer forms of the liturgy with the spiritual dimensions of the rite. Moreover, the liturgy remained the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, including the accomplishment of the old Law, the anticipation of the celestial liturgy.⁹⁹ After the Iconoclastic controversy and the triumph of Iconofiles, the realistic images and representations of sacred mysteries were very often employed, replacing the idealized, symbolical images from the pre-Iconoclastic period. By the ninth and tenth centuries, the post-Iconoclastic shift marked the entry of the liturgical themes in the painting program of the apse and subsidiary chapels usually dedicated to the saints. Besides the actual altar ciborium as the liturgical furnishing, painted representations of the altar ciborium within Eucharistic themes became very common by the eleventh century. Therefore, the visual symbols of the Old Covenant remained the essential elements in the proclamation of the New Covenant during the Middle Ages.

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⁹¹ Molly Teasdale Smith, "Development" 379-414.

⁹² Ward-Perkins 469-89.

⁹³ Ward-Perkins 469-89.

⁹⁴ Ward-Perkins 469-89.

⁹⁵ About the surviving low chancel arrangement in the ninth century churches see: Thomas F. Mathews, "An early Roman chancel arrangement and its liturgical uses," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 38 (1962): 73-95.

⁹⁶ It is possible that members of the ruling class and clergy might be able to enter the shrine with the saint's relics while the public might only come into the "presence" of the saint in front of the shrine as was a custom in Constantinople and Thessaloniki. However, in common everyone could take the shrine as a proof of the regular supernatural presence of the Saint

in the city. More about the different levels of being in "touch" with the saint's relics see: Robin Cormack, "The Making of a Patron Saint: The Powers of Art and Ritual in Byzantine Thessaloniki," *Themes of Unity in Diversity. Acts of the XXVth International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. Irvin Lavin (1986): 547-55.

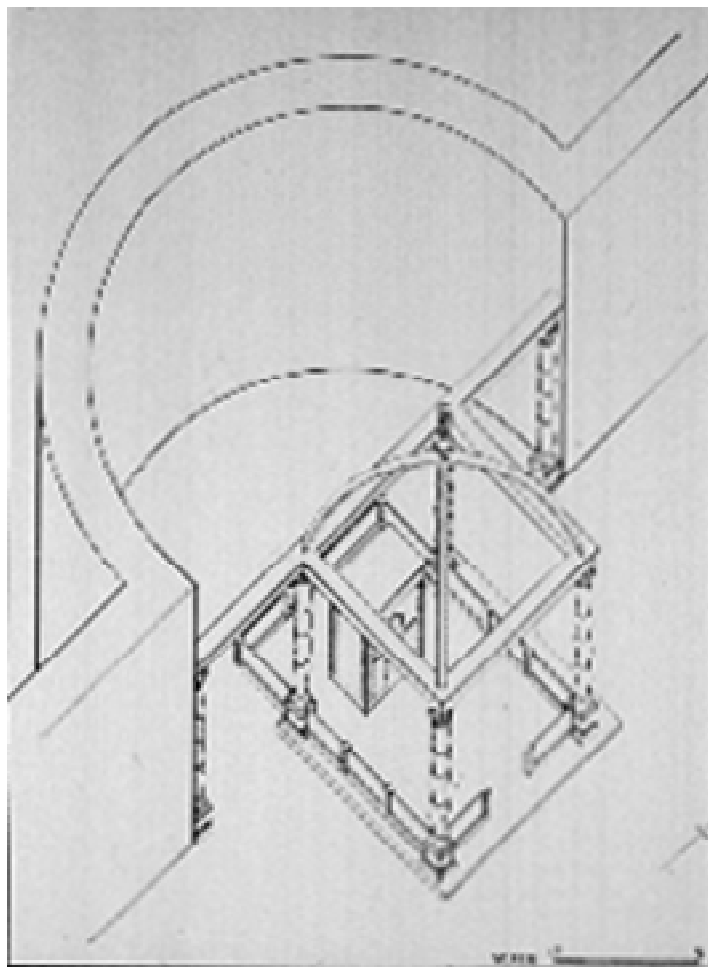
⁹⁷ With the exception of the relics of Demetrios which were deposited in the shrine under the ciborium in the St. Demetrios church in Thessaloniki, and of Nicholas which remained in Myra until they were taken to Bari and deposited in the church ciborium of St. Nicholas in Bari, all important relics of the Eastern saints were translated to Constantinople. Walter 145, with references. About the silver ciborium for St. Demetrios cult see: Cormack 547-55.

⁹⁸ *St. Germanus* 48-52.

⁹⁹ *St. Germanus* 48-52.



[above] Figure 1. Pola casket, front panel, ivory, 5th century, Gabineto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome. Reprinted with the permission of Yale University Press.



[right] Figure 2. St. Peter's Shrine, Reconstruction drawing of the 5th century shrine, reproduced from J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Studies in Roman and Early Christian Architecture* (Pindar Press, 1994).

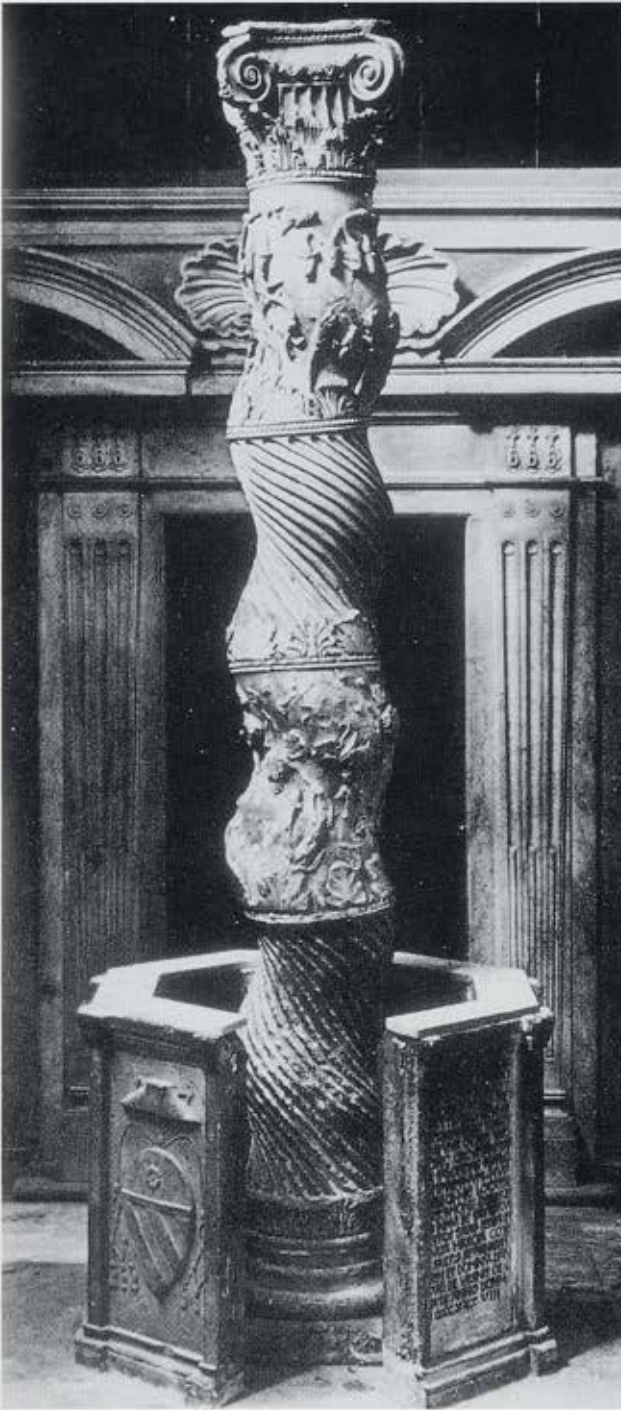


Figure 3. Twisted Column, St. Peter's Shrine, c. 6th century. Reproduced from J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Studies in Roman and Early Christian Architecture* (Pindar Press, 1994). Photo: Sansiani.



Figure 4. Vase from the tomb of Blue Glass Vase, glass, c. 79, Pompeii. Reproduced from August Mau, *Pompeii—Its Life and Art*, trans. Francis W. Kelsey (MacMillan Company, 1902).



Figure 5. Drawing of the fresco over Torah niche, c. 256, Dura Europos synagogue. Reproduced with permission of Dumbarton Oaks from Weitzmann and Kessler, *The Frescoes of Dura Synagogue and Christian Art* (Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., 1990).



Figure 6. Ashburnham Pentateuch, M.S.nouv.acq.lat. 2334 fol 76 recto, late 6th or 7th century, probably Italy. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale. Reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

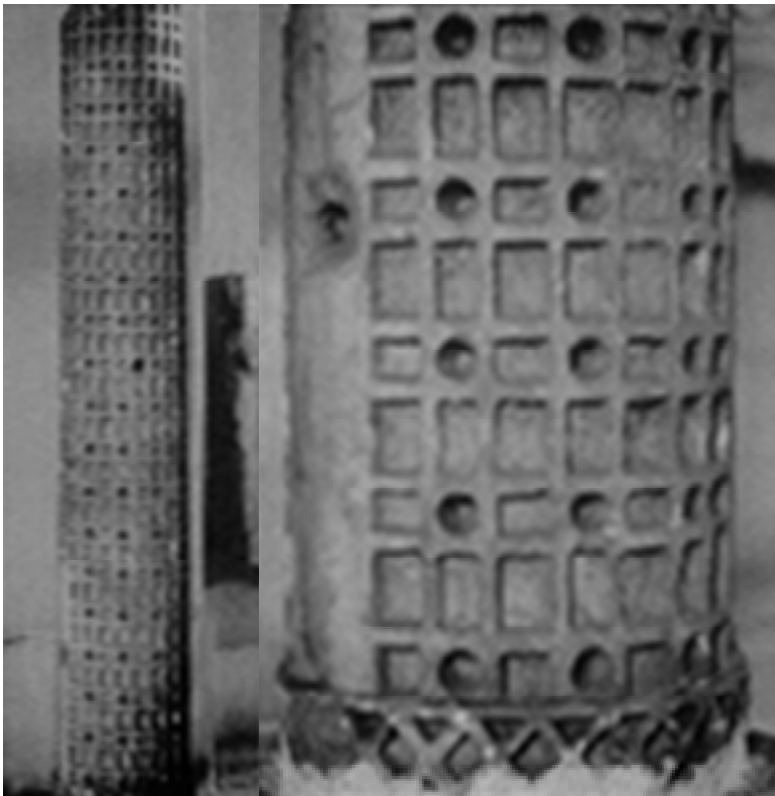
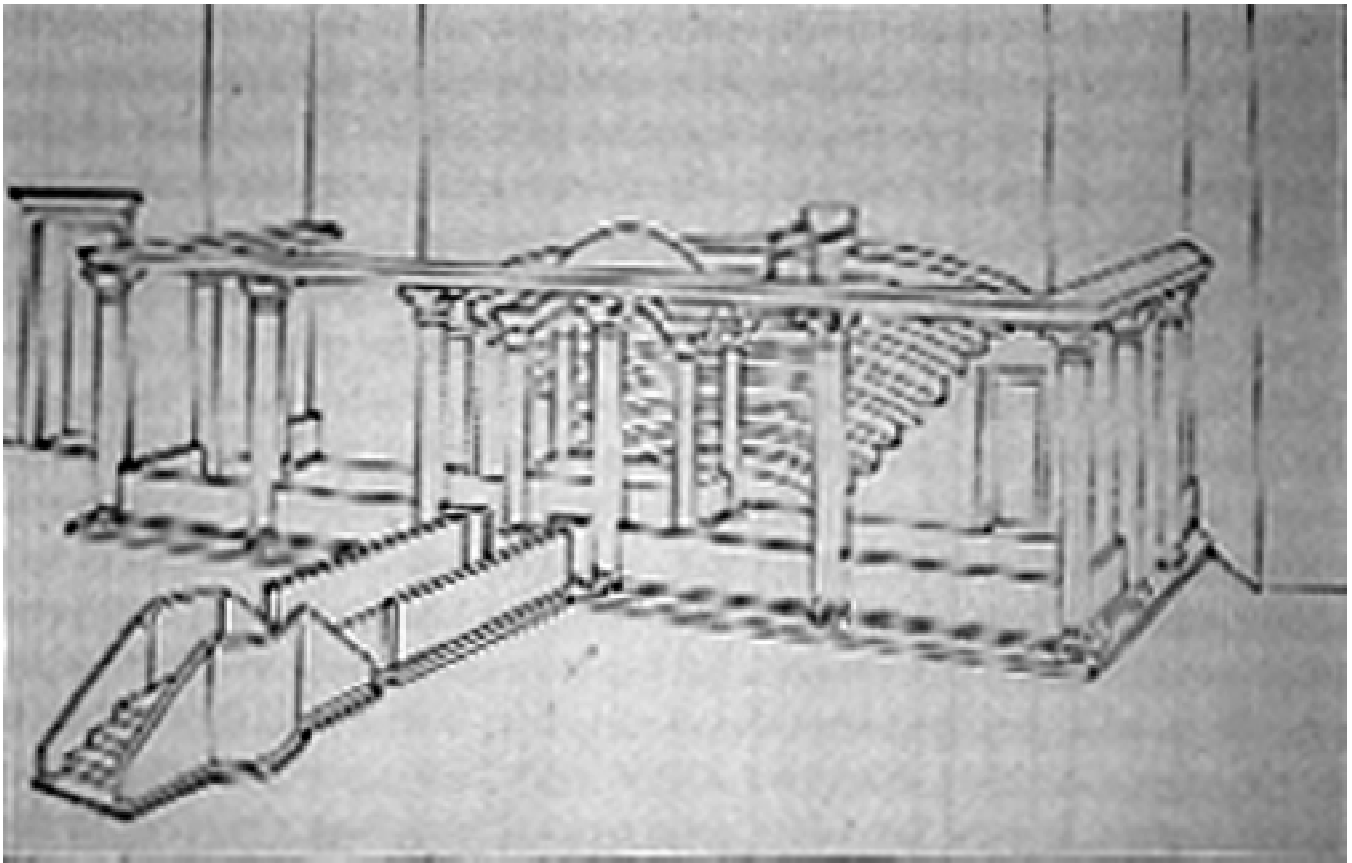
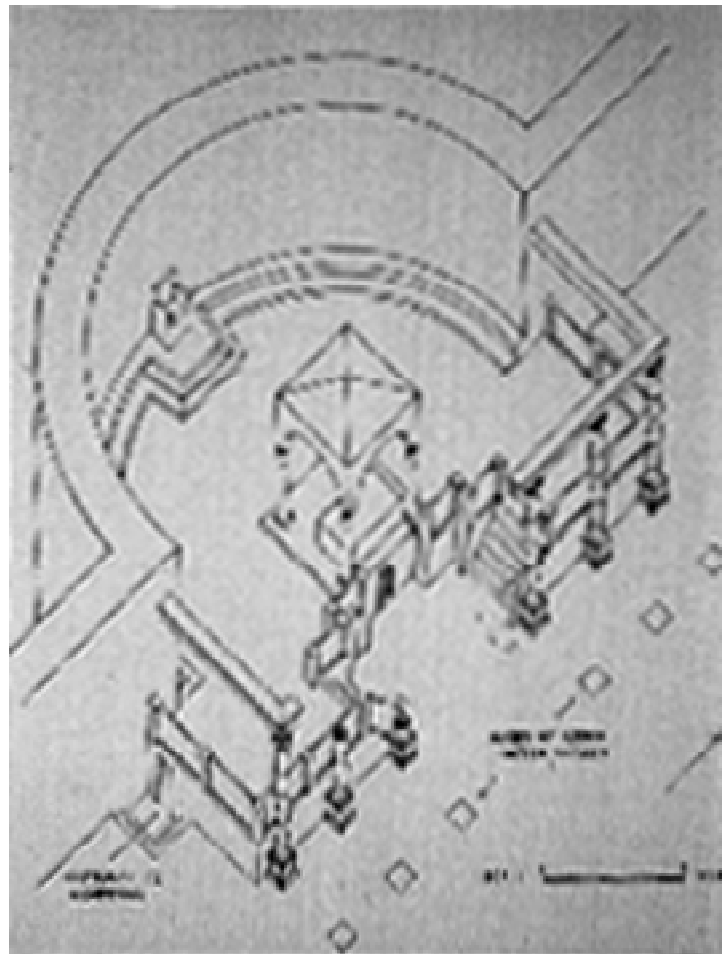


Figure 7. Inlaid column, 6th century, Hagia Euphemia, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, no. 5078. Reproduced with the kind permission of Professor Thomas Mathews.



[above] Figure 8. Hagia Euphemia, Reconstruction of sanctuary furnishings. Nauman & Belting, *Die Euphemia-Kirche*. Reproduced with permission from Thomas F. Mathews, *Early Churches of Constantinople* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1971).



[right] Figure 9. St. Peter's Shrine, Reconstruction drawing of the 7th century shrine. Reproduced from J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Studies in Roman and Early Christian Architecture* (Pindar Press, 1994).