Hagia Sophia, Constantinople: Religious Images and their Functional Context after Iconoclasm

Natalia Teteriatnikov

UDC 75.033.2.04(560.118)*08/09:271.5-276.63

This article examines the mosaic images in the apse and tymbana of Hagia Sophia that have been attributed to the reigns of the emperors Basil I (867–886) and Leo VI (886–912). In the past, scholars have discussed these images through the lens of theological and political developments of the period. Several unusual aspects of the program, the choice of images, the body language of the figures, and the specific orientation of the images vis-à-vis liturgical and imperial ceremonies and rites have not been given sufficient attention. An examination of the apse and tymbana programs shows that probably both were planned together to reflect the functional needs of the congregation that worshipped in Hagia Sophia.

In this article I will examine the mosaic images in the apse and tymbana of Hagia Sophia that have been attributed to the reigns of the emperors Basil I (867–886) and Leo VI (886–912). In the past, scholars have discussed these images through the lens of theological and political developments of the period. Yet, the conception and design of the mosaic program in the Great Church, Byzantium’s central cathedral, involved more than just the assertion of political and theological statements. The church’s nave was reserved for the celebration of the liturgy and it was in this location that a series of imperial ceremonies unfolded. Several unusual aspects of the program, the choice of images, the body language of the figures, and the specific orientation of the images vis-à-vis liturgical and imperial ceremonies and rites have not been given sufficient attention. In considering these images, I will first discuss the archaeological evidence for structural changes to the apse and tymbana before turning to peculiarities of the program and questions of the reception.

The Apse

The original design of Justinian’s Hagia Sophia featured numerous windows in the upper registers of the walls and colonnades at ground and gallery levels. The permeability of the wall surface left little room for figural decoration (Figs. 1–2). The conch of the apse, pierced by five large windows, did not provide adequate space for a complex mosaic program. The presence of large windows in this location was rare for a Byzantine church and it would have been a difficult task for a mosaicist to create an image of the Virgin for this brightly lit and curved space.

The new decorative program of the central nave was linked to substantial changes in the building structure. Examining the apse mosaics, Cyril Mango and Ernest Hawkins uncovered evidence of the changes in the form of the windows in the conch (Figs. 3–7). Investigation of the windows revealed that the Justinianic apertures were larger and had horizontal sills at a much lower level. Elevation of the window-sills during structural alterations reduced the openings, and consequently the amount of penetrating light, considerably. The space between the original window-sills and the new level was filled with bricks set at an angle. The entire surface was subsequently plastered. The archaeological evidence allows us to make the following conclusions. First, structural interventions resulted in the reduction of the amount of light that entered the church through the conch of the apse. Second, the window-sills were newly constructed at an angle so that light was directed downward toward the altar and sanctuary. The redirection of light away from the upper conch and down into the sanctuary resulted in an improved view of the round, upper surface of the apse, which could now, thanks to its more appropriate lighting, receive figural decoration.

The first image introduced into the nave following Iconoclasm was the Virgin and Child in the apse (Figs. 1–5). Although the date of the campaign is unknown, most scholars associate the figures with a homily read by the patriarch Photios in Hagia Sophia on Holy Saturday, 29 March 867, i.e., twenty-four years after the Triumph of Orthodoxy. I would like to thank S. Geratel, G. Majeska, and A.-M. Talbot for reading this article and their helpful suggestions. Although there are no records that Photios undertook the restoration of Hagia Sophia, after the earthquake in 869 Hagia Sophia was badly in need of repairs, cf. C. Mango — E. J. W. Hawkins, The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. The Church Fathers in the North Tympanum, DOP 26 (1972) 37–41.


In order to display figures in the north and south tymbana, the windows were narrowed in the ninth century. Cf. R. J. Mainstone, Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian’s Great Church, New York 1988, 98–99, figs. 117, 120.

Fig. 1. Hagia Sophia, view looking east (photo: Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)

Fig. 2. Hagia Sophia, view looking east (photo: Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)

Fig. 3. Hagia Sophia, apse conch and bema vault (photo: Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)
honorably provides a likely *terminus ante quem* for the creation of the powerful images. The image of the Virgin and Child is accompanied by an inscription that is partially preserved at the north and south ends of the triumphal arch: "The images which the impostors had formerly cast down here, pious emperors have again set up." Since the inscription was crafted at the same time as the figure of the Virgin in the apse, both text and image could be viewed as a political statement about the victory of the Iconodules over the Iconoclasts.

In Hagia Sophia, the challenge for the mosaicists was to create an image of the Virgin that could be observed from as far away as the western doors but also throughout the broad nave. The icon was well observed from the ambo, where the officiating priest read the Gospel during the liturgy and where the patriarch stood during some liturgical ceremonies and for other occasions. Photos, for example, could have easily addressed and gestured toward the Virgin when she held the patriarchal office from 858 to 867 and 877 to 886. V., for example, Cormack, *Interpreting the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, 135–138.

That the figure of the Virgin is not aligned with the central axis of the apse presents an unusual aspect of this program. Visually, the center of the apse is marked by a central window, which is flanked by two other openings. It would not have been difficult for a mosaicist to line up the figure of the Virgin on the same axis as the central window. But the Virgin’s figure is notably off center. Moreover, her left foot is turned to the south. This odd posture is further accentuated by a fact that the cushions are shifted to the north side of the throne, leaving the south end somewhat empty. The unusual rendering of the throne and footstool reinforce the southeast orientation of the image. Even the lower part of the Christ Child, especially his legs, is turned to the south. At the same time, both the head of the Virgin and of the Christ Child look frontally at the beholder while their eyes turn north. In his homily, Patriarch Photios explains why the Virgin turns her eyes sideways:

A virgin mother, with a virgin’s and a mother’s gaze, dividing in invisible form her temperament between both capacities, yet belittling neither by its incompleteness. With such exactitude has the art of painting, which is a reflection of inspiration from above, set up a lifelike imitation. For, as it were, she fondly turns her eyes on her begotten Child in the affection of her heart, yet assumes the expression of a detached and unperturbable mood at the passionless and wondrous nature of her offspring, and composes her gaze accordingly.

When the viewer is standing in the nave near the south­east exedra, he notices that both figures, the Virgin and Christ, turn in his direction. The mosaicists created an illusion that the curve of the apse transmits her figure from north to south. It seems that the designers of the image intentionally distorted the composition in order to create a customized view toward

---

*Mosaic of St. Sophia*, DOP 39 (1985) 111–115. V. also G. Galavaris, *The Representations of the Virgin and Child on a "Thekos" on Seals of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchs*, Archív XAE 4/2 (1960/1961) 153–181. Cf. idem, *Observations on the Date of the Apse Mosaic of the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople*, in: *Actes de XII Congrès international d'études byzantines III*, Belgrade 1964, 107–110. Galavaris’ opinion was accepted by V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin VII*, Paris 1963, No 43. It is difficult to accept this hypothesis for two reasons. First, Photos is very vague about the exact posture of the Virgin in his homily. Second, the mosaicists would have difficulty in including a standing image of the Virgin in the overall design of the apse conch because the apse conch is so small. The mosaicists even made the Enthroned Virgin wider in order to make her more visible in the nave. The use of the standing image of the Virgin on seals of Patriarch Photios, as above-mentioned scholars have suggested, may imply that there was another image of the Virgin, either in Hagia Sophia or in the Patriarchate.

---

Most scholars attribute this program to the patriarch Photios who held the patriarchal office from 858 to 867 and 877 to 886. V., for example, Cormack, *Interpreting the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, 135–138.

---


the southeast area, the location of the emperor’s throne and the place where members of the imperial court stood during services. In addition, there was an imperial metatorion in the southeast bay of the south gallery. The intentionally distorted orientation and the odd composition of the Virgin in Hagia Sophia can be explained by the location of the emperor’s throne in the southeast bay close to the southeast exedra.

The orientation of the Virgin’s figure toward the southeast section of the nave also responded to the position of the patriarch in the south gallery during church services. The archbishop Anthony of Novgorod, who visited Constantinople ca. 1200, left an important account of the location of the patriarch in the south gallery. Because the liturgy of Hagia Sophia did not change substantially between the time of the mosaic’s installation and the composition of Anthony’s account, this source provides important information about where various constituencies were situated within the church. According to Anthony, the patriarch blessed the psaltai (the singers) from the gallery of Hagia Sophia at matins (the morning office that preceded the Eucharistic liturgy) and at the liturgy during weekdays and the great feasts. He also blessed the congregation. According to church custom, the whole congregation of the church, including the psaltai, bowed down in response in the direction of the patriarch, i.e., toward the south. The patriarch stood behind the marble balustrade, probably at the center of the south gallery. This was also the area of the gallery where the patriarch was occasionally located during church services. From his vantage point, the Virgin and Christ Child appeared to be turning in his direction. Thus, the customized view of the image of the Virgin played an important role during the liturgy when the patriarch and the emperor were participating and were able to communicate directly with the holy images.

Fig. 6. Hagia Sophia, apse conch, diagram showing changes of the original windows (after Mango, Hawkins, The Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul, Pl. B)


9 Ibid.


11 Anthony of Novgorod, Kniga Palomnik, 17.

In most Byzantine churches, however, the image of the Virgin in the apse appears to be more hierarchical and is oriented toward the central nave as in the case of the mosaic of St. Sophia. In the case of Hagia Sophia, the distorted view of the Virgin can be explained by the primary locations of the emperor and patriarch in the church.

The Tympana

Like the new imagery in the apse, the creation of a decorative program for the north and south tympana required the creation of more wall surface and sufficient lighting. Richard Mainstone showed that structural alterations were made to the tympana mostly after the earthquake of 869 (Figs. 1–2, 8). The inscription, which originally formed part of the tympana decoration, alludes to structural interventions: Fossati recorded a fragment of the original inscription that formed part of the decoration of both tympana. It is known from S. G. Mercati:

Most beautiful epigram on the very big arches of the Holy Great Church of God, that is St. Sophia.

1. O eternal Son of eternal Father, unto this Thy house — the beautiful eye of the universe — time has brought misfortune. Its cure will provide spiritual salvation.

2. To Thee who rulest everything by the power of Thy nod, I have offered my zeal to save this house. This is Thy gift: grant me steadfastness.

In the north part of the church, under the dome, are written these hexameters.

3. Time has threatened to destroy this inimitable work; it has been hindered by our solicitude. Do Thou open [unto me] Thy house, O most-high Lord, which time toucheth not.

Other verses below these.

4. Thou sittest as on a throne on the vault [wrought] by Thy hands; yet this is Thy house. It has been suffering from age, so I preferred to it a mighty hand. Do Thou repay me.

Mainstone suggested that the tympana alterations were probably made for the structural consolidation of the tympana and the gallery arches and vaults. The reconstruction probably resulted in the narrowing of the tympana windows, providing enough wall space between the windows to display images and reducing the amount of light that entered the building through the lateral walls. Mainstone suggested the central window on the upper register was a triple window divided by two millons as reconstructed by Salzenberg, and similar to the one that was constructed at the time of Justinian. But the model of Hagia Sophia in the hands of the emperor Justinian in the tenth-century mosaic panel in the south vestibule shows the view of the south tympanum with three separate elongated windows (Fig. 9). The model also has two white lines between the windows, which probably depict white marble mullions. These are filled with masonry in between the windows. Although the model is conventional, it shows the specific shape of the windows of the south façade after reconstruction of the tympana. These windows are similar to the ones we now see.

The recessed niches at the base of the tympana were not a part of the Justinianic building. Their introduction was not part of the consolidation project, but was made to visually balance the windows. The niches were introduced because the planned program included a register of Church Fathers (Figs. 10–11).

Following the structural changes to the church, images of major theological and political significance were introduced: the Virgin Mary and Christ Child in the apse, Church Fathers and Prophets in the north and south tympana. The image of the Mother of God holding the Child Christ emphasized the incarnation of Christ, as fulfillment of the Old Testament. The representation of the Prophets appeared as a visual testimony of the Old Testament. The presence of the Church Fathers also had political overtones because of the inclusion of the recent Constantinopolitan patriarchs, Methodios and Ignatios, who had been exiled during Iconoclasm. Thus the choice of images in the program of the nave was an immediate reaction to the destruction of images, especially those of the Virgin Mary and saints, as well as to the persecution of iconodule clerics.

Scholars have suggested that the tympana program was created a decade later than the apse mosaic, i.e., in the last years of the reign of Basil I (867–886) or the early years of the reign of Leo VI (886–912) (Figs. 1–2, 10–12). The shape of the semicircular tympana with two rows of windows and a row of blind niches dictated the layout of the mosaic program. Unfortunately, only a few figures and some fragments of the mosaics in the first and second registers have survived. These were cleaned by the conservators from the Byzantine Institute in the 1930s and 1940s. The entire program was reconstructed by Cyril Mango on the basis of the


uncovered images and the drawings and watercolors made by the Fossatis in 1848. Fossati recorded a fragment of the original inscription that formed part of the decoration of both tympana. This inscription which is cited above is known from S. G. Mercati.

Mango reasonably suggested that the epigram refers to the emperor Basil I, who restored the damaged tympana, arches and vaults after the earthquake of 869. He suggested that the creation of the tympana mosaics was probably made immediately after the reconstruction of the tympana. The date of the death of Patriarch Ignatios (ca. 877), who was included in the program, provides a terminus ante quem for the completion of the program.

The program consisted of bishops (lower register), prophets (middle register), and archangels (?) (upper register). The figures were placed in the narrow portions of the wall in the top two registers between the windows. Scholars have generally assumed that the two rows of windows and lower row of blind niches of the tympana allowed sufficient space for three registers. The repertory of this program is known from Middle Byzantine church decoration, which typically displays images of prophets and archangels in the drum of the dome; the bishops were depicted on the apse wall or, in some cases, on the eastern wall or triumphal arch. In Hagia Sophia, the program is divided into two parts and displayed on the flat surface of the walls of the north and south tympana. Because the tympana had two rows of windows with recessed niches below, the images were placed on the wall in the narrow space between the windows in the top two registers and in the niches as a third register. Placed on the side walls of the nave, the images in Hagia Sophia were given a specific orientation according to the requirements of the viewers. The overall characteristic of images in the program is that they are depicted frontally on the north and south tympana facing directly toward the nave.

The tympana images represented a coherent program in which traditional elements of Byzantine church decoration were combined with new elements. The upper register, as Mango has proposed, most likely represented angels. Unfortunately, none of them has survived. The second register below the angels or apostles represented prophets; some fragments of the figures remain in situ. There were originally eight prophets placed between the windows on each tympanum. Five prophets in the north tympanum are known from the Fossati drawings. Only one was recorded by the Fossatis in the south tympanum. According to Mango’s reconstruction, four prophets were depicted in the corners. The four prophets are larger than the other figures in the tympana. Two were oriented toward the east where the apse was located; two turned toward the west in the direction of the church entrance. Jeremiah and Isaiah at the eastern ends of the tympana hold inscribed scrolls whose texts have been identified. Another pair of prophets stood at the western ends of both tympana. Ezekiel, in the north tympanum, is

Fig. 8. Hagia Sophia, south tympanum (reconstruction after Mainstone, Hagia Sophia, Fig. 120)

20 Ibid., 39–41.
21 Ibid., 6.
22 Mango, Materials, 58–60.
His hand is oriented toward the east. As Mango has pointed text
and
the text of God. The prophet's
tion of the east in the direction of the Virgin
the south tympanum is Isaiah, who is depicted at the east end
tympana. The text on Isaiah's scroll is a prophecy of the com­
miah holds a scroll in his left hand and blesses with his right.
His hand is oriented toward the east. As Mango has pointed out, the text on the scroll of Jeremiah is from Baruch: "This is
our God, and there shall be no other accounted of in compari­
son of him" (Baruch, 3:35, 3, 6). The right hand of the prophet points up to the vaults of Heaven and the text on his scroll praises God. There is a visual connection between the text and the figure's body language.
The only surviving prophet recorded by the Fossatis in the
south tympanum is Isaiah, who is depicted at the east end of the tympanum close to the apse. He holds the scroll in his left hand while his right hand points toward the Virgin. His scroll reads: "Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isa. 7:14). This text is read in Hagia Sophia during the eve of the feast of the Nativity. The text is a prophecy about the Virgin and the coming of Christ to the world.
With their specific messages, the prophets provide a link between the image in the apse and the program of the tympana. The text on Isaiah's scroll is a prophecy of the coming of Christ into the world. Isaiah's right hand points toward the east in the direction of the Virgin and Christ Child in the apse. The text on the scroll of Jeremiah is about the glorification of God. The prophet's right hand is raised up in the di­
rection of the dome. The appearance of Isaiah and Jeremiah is not a coincidence. Their placement near the apse reflected the liturgical use of their texts in Hagia Sophia. According to

**Figs. 9. South vestibule, Emperor Justinian with a model of Hagia Sophia (photo: Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)**

identified by an inscription. The fourth prophet is missing. Their unusually large size and their placement high in the middle register, where they could be better seen from the nave, indicate their significance in the program.
The eastern pair of prophets, Jeremiah and Isaiah, seems to be of primary importance because they hold inscribed scrolls and are closest to the apse. The prophet Jer­
emiah holds a scroll in his left hand and blesses with his right.
Hand of the Virgin is dedicated, and it was also the important feast of Hagia Sophia. The oversized figures of the prophets were easily visible to the faithful. The visual orientation of the figures toward the apse held further significance in the imperial processions during which these images represented the realization of the prophecies.

There is a reason that the prophets are not included in the liturgy on December the 25th, the day of the Nativity of Christ. Before Iconoclasm prophetic texts were read during the liturgy. During Iconoclasm there was a reform that resulted in moving the reading of the prophets' texts from the liturgy to vespers. Only the Gospels were read during the lit­
urgy. This tradition continued in the liturgical performance after Iconoclasm. Thus we believe that the above-mentioned texts played a major liturgical role for the feast of the Nativity in the nave of Hagia Sophia on the vespers of the 24th of De­

cember. The choice of the location of the prophets relates to the feast of the Nativity of Christ, and also to the anniversary of the inauguration day of Hagia Sophia (December 27th), when these texts were read during vespers. The latter was the day on which the inauguration of the church was commemo­
rated, and it was also the important feast of Hagia Sophia. The visual orientation of the figures toward the apse held further significance in the imperial processions during which these images represented the realization of the prophecies.

The lowest register of the tympana program depicts bishops, whose representation was meant to emphasize the power of the Church and the patriarch. Scholars have identi­

dified the bishop's images in the nave of Hagia Sophia and have emphasized their political importance. The tradition of depicting bishops goes back to Early Christian church dec­
oration, in which bishops were primarily placed near the apse or on a triumphal arch. In the post-iconoclastic period, bishops took on particular importance in church decoration pri­

carily in the lower part of the apse wall below the conch. In Hagia Sophia, however, the bishops were placed high on the tympana, flanking liturgical action in the central nave. This was the place where the Gospel was read from the ambo and where the patriarch would stand during particular liturgical ceremonies. Although small in scale, the figures of the bishops are visible from the nave pavement and from the church's galleries. Originally, lamps would have been lit in front of each figure; the tiny walkway with a barrier in front of the mosaic panels would have been used for this purpose. Since the bishops were each placed in a semicircular niche, they were given a prominent position in the program of the tympana.

---

23 Mango also pointed out that according to The Painter’s Manual of Dionysios of Forina, the text of Baruch is frequently used for the scroll of Jeremiah (Mango, op. cit., 60).


25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.


One notices specific peculiarities in the representations of the bishops. In the north tympanum all the bishops are depicted frontally, holding gospel books in their left hands while their right hands form a gesture of blessing toward the Gospels or toward the apse. Their right hands are uniformly oriented toward the east (Figs. 10, 12). The gospel book in the bishops’ left hand inclines in the direction of the apse. This positioning of the gospel book also reinforces the orientation of bishops’ right hands in the east direction. The position of the bishops’ hands in the north tympanum stands in contrast to that of the bishops in the south tympanum (Fig. 11). Unfortunately, most of these figures have not survived. They are known, however, from the Fossati drawings as reconstructed by C. Mango. In the south tympanum, the first two bishops from the east, Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, bless each other with their right hands. The third and
fourth bishops are missing. The fifth and sixth bishops from the east, Sts. Dionysios the Areopagite and Nicholas, hold their right hands in a gesture of blessing toward the west. The last bishop, St. Gregory the Great of Armenia, gestures in blessing with his right hand toward the east. Why do the bishops in the south tympanum have a different orientation and different hand gestures from their counterparts in the north? The answer to this question can be found in the context of the location of the patriarch and the liturgical processions of the patriarch and the clergy through the nave of Hagia Sophia toward the sanctuary.

I believe that occasional presence of the patriarch in the south gallery had an important effect on the creation of the special program of Church Fathers in the south tympanum. This program related to the cathedral rite of Hagia Sophia in which the patriarch took an important part. As already mentioned, the patriarch attended services in Hagia Sophia at matins and at the liturgy on weekdays and the great feasts. On these days he blessed the psaltai and the congregation from the south gallery. The display of the Church Fathers suggests the place where the patriarch stood in the gallery, just below the fourth Church Father, Gregory the Great, who is represented in the central lunette of the south tympanum; he is blessing in the direction of the apse. The patriarch stood beneath his image in the gallery and behind the low marble balustrade. According to custom, the congregation of the church bowed down in the direction of the patriarch. The program of the south tympanum was made in response to this important ritual.

Four horizontal bands of green marble on the marble floor pavement are also relevant to the peculiar depiction of the Church Fathers' hand gestures (Fig. 13). These bands were called the Four Rivers of Paradise in later sources. In his study, G. Majeska identified them as stopping points during liturgical processions into the church. Unfortunately, no literary source describes their function in Hagia Sophia. However, Symeon, archbishop of Thessalonike (1416/1417—1429) explained the function of similar bands in Hagia Sophia, Thessalonike. According to Symeon, after entering the church with the clergy, the bishop stopped at the third river for a prayer, and then proceeded to the sanctuary. It is likely that the cathedral rite in Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike followed the rite of the Great Church of Constantinople. If so, a similar practice can be assumed for Hagia Sophia. In this case, the different positioning of the bishops' hands may relate to the procession of the First Entrance, during which, according to the custom of Hagia Sophia, the patriarch, the emperor, and the clergy proceeded through the nave only when the emperor attended the Church service. When the procession entered the church, its participants saw first from the west the two bishops, who were blessing each other. This pair of bishops corresponded to the second green marble band on the pavement (Second River). The fourth and fifth bishops bless each other. Their placement corresponds to the location of the third marble band on the pavement (the Third River), almost at the center of the nave where the patriarch and the emperor stopped to pray. It is difficult to know about the eastern pair of bishops (only one survived when the Fossatis recorded them). As a whole, the gestures of the bishops were arranged in such a way that they can be observed from the north to south direction. Additionally, the south side was important because the southeast area of church, as mentioned above, held the imperial throne and imperial metatormion, as well as the seats of the senators. The south gallery also had an imperial metatormion in its southeast bay. Its central bay was reserved for the patriarchate, and it is there the Patriarch was located during church services. Thus, the participants in the imperial and ecclesiastical processions would glance first toward the south wall of the central nave. The program seems created to reflect the imperial and ecclesiastical ceremonies of the Great Church.

**Audience**

The new program was created for the congregation of Hagia Sophia, which included the clergy, emperor, and lay people. Since the emperor was a major benefactor of Hagia Sophia, his participation in liturgical ceremonies and other rites of Hagia Sophia was important. The epigram cited above indicates that the emperor who gave money for the restoration of Hagia Sophia and creation of this program (probably Basil I) addresses his verses to God whose image was represented in the dome. The epigram implies that the emperor already communicated through his verses with the image there. In verse number 4, the emperor asks God to repay him for his benefaction. The prophet Jeremiah is depicted in the northeast corner of the north tympanum, where the verse is located. He points upward with his right hand toward the dome under which the emperor's verses were located. The emperor's epigram also communicates to the audience the imperial metatormion in its south gallery.
Although everyone in the church observed the images, their vivid expression addressed the needs of participants in the liturgical processions, the patriarch and clergy of Hagia Sophia, the emperor and imperial court, who were the primary participants of these ceremonies and rituals.

Conclusion

An examination of the apse and tympana programs shows that probably both were planned together to reflect the functional needs of the congregation that worshipped in Hagia Sophia. The program is tightly bound with the image of the Virgin holding the Christ Child in the apse, the first image established in the church after Iconoclasm, thereby manifesting the ideological and political bond of Church and State. The body language of the tympana figures, including the prophets and bishops, allowed the viewer to recognize the messages prophesied in the Old Testament and the bishops who implemented these messages. By pointing toward their gospel books the bishops emphasized their role of teaching the Gospel. At the same time, pointing in the direction of the apse, they emphasized the significance of the image of the Virgin with Christ Child as advocated by the Church Fathers. This visual statement was of particular significance during the period following Iconoclasm, when by reestablishing images, the Church Fathers appeared as their guardians. Peculiar gestures of Church Fathers’ hands in the south tympanum indicated their visual importance for the stopping points of liturgical processions in the central nave. The program was probably planned by the Patriarch Photios, as has been suggested. It addresses a complex of the political, theological and functional aspects of the church in which the Patriarch Photios was concerned and which he propagated in his homilies.33

Addressing contemporary issues after Iconoclasm, the decoration of Hagia Sophia appears as a unique program because it was specially designed for multi-faceted functions of the unique cathedral of the Byzantine Empire. Since the Emperor (benefactor) and the Patriarch (designer of the program?) and the clergy were the most important viewers, the images in the program were designed to be a part of their ceremonies, ritual, and devotion.

32 Mango, The Art, 186.
34 As scholars have suggested the program was probably orchestrated by the Patriarch Photios. The above examination seems to provide further evidence in support of this scenario. The homily of Photios (ibid., 286–287) speaks about the image of the Virgin which was just unveiled in the apse. Photios praises “the godly zeal of the Emperors (and before the tribunal of Truth, time gone by has none more pious for its adornment), through whom the wise teachings of theology blossom...”). Also in another passage he talks about the impious ones, implying the Iconoclasts: “Indeed, the three greatest things that have happened under the witnessing sun (except what directly appertains to the divine working of the Logos) shine out in this festival: the invincible power of piety which towers above the vault of heaven, the senseless insolence of impiety which is dragged down to ultimate ruin and the depths of hell, yea, and the monument of folly and ineffaceable disgrace of those who have ended their life in impiety.” In fact, the theme of the pious is juxtaposed with that of the impious in the inscription above the apse conch: “The images which the impostors [i.e., the Iconoclasts] had formerly cast down here, pious emperors have again set up.” The author of such an inscription could have been Photios himself.
Света Софија у Цариграду: свете слике и њихов функционални контекст после иконоклазма

Наталија Тетерјатњићкова

У члану се разматрају мозаичке представе у ансиде и тимпанонима Свете Софије, настале у доба царева Василеја I (867–886) и Ламе VI (886–912). Истраживање програма у ансиде и тимпанонима показује да су две пелине вероватно осмислењене заједно како би одговориле потребама заједнице која се окупљала на богослужењима у Светој Софији. Програм је повезан с фигуром Богородице са Христом дететом у ансиде, првом представом насликаном у цркви после епохи иконоклазма. Тако је изказан идеолошка и политичка повезаност Цркве и првака. Гестови и ставови фигуре пророка и епископа у тимпанонима омогућују посматрачу да препозна стваравања пророчанства и епископе као она који обављају свете тајне наговештене у тим пророчанствима. Књигом које епископи држе у рукама наглашена је њихова улога у поучавању јеванђељу. У исто време, усмереност фигуре ка ансиде истакнута је важност слике Богородице са Христом дететом као олог за шта су се залагали првовени оци. Такав визуелни израз имао је народни значај након иконоклазма, када се првовени оци појављују као чувари слика. Посебни гестови првовених отаца у јужном тимпанону, то јест положај руку тих фигур, показују да су они били важни за литургијске процесије у централном броду. Раније изнето гласио да је програм замислио патријарх Фотије вероватно је тачно. Програм је изказан целоза политичких, теологијских и функционалних аспекта Цркве за које се залагао патријарх Фотије и образована их у беседама. Настала непосредно после иконоклазма, декорација ансиде и тимпанона Свете Софије показује се као једноставан програм који одговара многобројним функцијама јединствене катедрале Византијског царства. Пошто је цар (најизнаженији дародавац), патријарх (вероватно творац програма) и клир били најкачествени посматрачи представа у програму Свете Софије, они су замислењене тако да буду део церемонија, обреда и молитава у којима су они учествовали.