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**THE CHURCH OF DIVINE WISDOM
OR OF CHRIST – THE INCARNATE *LOGOS*?
DEDICATION OF *HAGIA SOPHIA* IN CONSTANTINOPLE
IN THE LIGHT OF BYZANTINE SOURCES
FROM 5TH TO 14TH CENTURY***

In the area of Byzantine civilization we can find churches dedicated to *Sophia* – the Wisdom of God. This phenomenon has always caused a lot of interpretational difficulties for researchers, resulting for example in the diversity of translations for *Hagia Sophia* temples in the literature (church/cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, God's Wisdom, Divine Wisdom or even – incorrectly – St. Sophia). Nevertheless, the problem to whom, in the mind of the Byzantines themselves, the sanctuaries of that name were dedicated – is worth a closer look. It is even more interesting when we take into consideration the cathedral church in Constantinople, the most important temple of the empire and the whole East Christian civilization¹: built in 360 by the emperor Constantius II and then rebuilt between 532 and 537 by Justinian I the Great, the famous *Hagia Sophia*² was dedicated to *Sophia* – the Holy Wisdom.

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¹ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icongraphie de la Sagesse Divine dans la tradition byzantine*, CAI 10, 1959, p. 259; IDEM, *Teologia bizantyjska. Historia i doktryna*, trans. J. PROKOPIUK, Warszawa 1984, p. 148; IDEM, *Wisdom–Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme*, DOP 41, 1987, p. 391; M. ANGOLD, *Byzantium. The Bridge from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, London 2005, p. 3; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия. Проблемы и перспективы религиозно-философского и искусствоведческого осмысления*, ГРЦР 44/45, 2008, p. 241.

² The literature is dominated by the view, supported by testimonies of many Byzantine chroniclers (e.g. Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen and an anonymous author of the *Paschal Chronicle* and Zonaras), that the first church dedicated to the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople was built during the reign of Constantius II and consecrated on 15th February 360. In older historiography, one will come across an argument, based on the text of *Description of the Church of the Holy Wisdom* and George Cedrenus's reports, attributing the foundation of the original *Hagia Sophia* to Constantine the Great. This attribution, however, should be regarded as legendary. The final form of the cathedral was achieved during the reconstruction after the fire which destroyed the basilica on 15th January 532, during the Nika

The presentation of the historical and architectural foundations of the so-called Great Church in Constantinople falls much beyond the theme frames of this article. It also possesses a fairly extensive literature³. The issue which will be of primary importance for our discussion is to find out how the Byzantines themselves interpreted the name of their cathedral, i.e. to whom, according to their opinion, it was dedicated.

Modern scholars generally agree that the temple of the Holy Wisdom (*Hagia Sophia*) could be understood by the medieval inhabitants of Constantinople, generally well acquainted with the views of the Fathers of the Church, only as a church dedicated to Christ – the Incarnate *Logos*⁴. This thesis is confirmed by many Byzantine sources. Socrates Scholasticus (ca. 380–440), a church historian living in the first half of the 5th century mentions only the fact that in his times the Great Church was called just the Temple of Wisdom (*ἡ μεγάλη ἐκκλησία ὀνομαζομένη Σοφία*)⁵. The experts emphasize that in the era of great Christological

revolt. The solemn re-consecration took place on 27th December 537 with the participation of the emperor Justinian the Great. H. PAPOCKI, *Święta Mądrość*, PrPr 12, 1996, p. 16; M. ANGOLD, *op. cit.*, p. 3, 22–25; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии Премудрости Божией*, ВГУИФ 49, 2008, p. 16; IDEM, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 241; S. BRALEWSKI, *Konstantynopoliński kościoły*, [in:] *Konstantynopol – Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyjskim*, ed. M.J. LESZKA, T. WOLIŃSKA, Warszawa 2011, p. 133, 145–147; IDEM, *Miejsca kultu w Konstantynopolu w relacji historyków kościelnych Sokratesa i Sozomena*, AUL.FH 87, 2011, p. 14, 18–19; IDEM, *Życie religijne mieszkańców Konstantynopola*, [in:] *Konstantynopol...*, p. 405; M.B. LESZKA, M.J. LESZKA, *Zarys dziejów Konstantynopola w latach 337–602*, [in:] *Konstantynopol...*, p. 44–45, 87; M.J. LESZKA, T. WOLIŃSKA, *Cesarz, dwór i poddani*, [in:] *Konstantynopol...*, p. 257.

³ Among the publications devoted to Constantinopolitan *Hagia Sophia* and particularly mentioning are: O.H. STRUB-ROESSLER, *Die Hagia Sophia, die Kirche der Göttlichen Weisheit. Eine generelle Untersuchung ihrer Konstruktion*, BZ 42, 1942, p. 158–177; А.И. КОМЕЧ, *Архитектура*, [in:] *Культура Византии IV – первая половина VII в.*, ed. З.В. УДАЛЬЦОВА, Москва 1984, p. 573–595; E. JASTRZĘBOWSKA, *Sztuka wczesnochrześcijańska*, Warszawa 1988, p. 222–257; R.J. MAINSTONE, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church*, London 1988; *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. R. MARK, A. ÇAKMAK, Cambridge 1992; J.-M. SPIESER, *Sztuka cesarska i sztuka chrześcijańska. Jedność i różnicowanie*, [in:] *Świat Bizancjum*, ed. C. MORRISON, vol. I, *Cesarstwo Wschodniorzymskie 330–641*, trans. A. GRABOŃ, Kraków 2007, p. 336–337.

⁴ J. MEYENDORFF, *Teologia bizantyjska...*, p. 148; IDEM, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, p. 391; D.M. FIENE, *What is the Appearance of Divine Sophia?*, SRev 48, 1989, p. 450; H. PAPOCKI, *op. cit.*, p. 16; С. ХОРУЖИЙ, *Перепутья русской софиологии*, [in:] *О старом и новом*, Санкт-Петербург 2000, p. 150; О.С. ПОПОВА, *Образ Христа в византийском искусстве*, [in:] *София Премудрость Божия. Выставка русской иконописи XIII–XIX вв. из собрания музеев России*, Москва 2000, p. 18; T. ŠPIDLIK, *Sofiologia*, [in:] IDEM, *Myśl rosyjska. Inna wizja człowieka*, trans. J. DEMBSKA, Warszawa 2000, p. 414; M. OSTERRIEDER, *Das Land der Heiligen Sophia: das Auftauchen des Sophia-motivs in der Kultur der Ostslaven*, WSA 50, 2002, p. 7; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; IDEM, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 241; S. BRALEWSKI, *Konstantynopoliński kościoły...*, p. 133; IDEM, *Miejsca kultu w Konstantynopolu...*, p. 14.

⁵ SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, II, 16; II, 43, ed. G.C. HANSEN, Berlin 1995; G. DOWNEY, *The Name of the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople*, HTR 52, 1959, p. 37–38; G. DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire: études sur le recueil des «Patria»*, Paris 1984, p. 231; M.L. FOPELLI, *Un tempio per Giustiniano. Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli e la Descrizione di Paolo Silenziario*, Roma 2005, p. 167.

disputes the identification of the Son of God with *Sophia* was so common that the question of the dedication of the Constantinopolitan basilica no longer required, according to Socrates, any additional explanation⁶.

The understanding of the *Hagia Sophia* cathedral as a temple dedicated to the Son of God is also characteristic of several writers contemporary to the founder of the reconstruction of the Constantinopolitan basilica – Justinian I the Great. Procopius of Caesarea (ca. 500 – ca. 560) repeatedly mentions in his writings that the main metropolitan church was known as the church of the Holy Wisdom, because it was a name recognized at that time by the Byzantines as *the most suitable for God as a name of his sanctuary*⁷. At the same time, however, he explicitly states that the *Hagia Sophia* is a temple dedicated to Christ: τὸ ἱερὸν Χριστοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ⁸. In a similar tone speaks also Paul the Silentiary, the author of a description of the church of *Hagia Sophia* (Ἐκφρασις τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας) characterized by a panegyric tone, written specially for the occasion of the re-inauguration of the Constantinopolitan cathedral, which took place after the completion of the dome reconstruction, on the Christmas eve of 562, with the participation of emperor Justinian I the Great⁹.

Analyzing the works made on the occasion of consecration of the newly rebuilt *Hagia Sophia* in 562, we must devote at least a few words to another source from the 6th cent. – the anonymous kontakion, often attributed in the literature to Romanus the Melodist or one of his disciples¹⁰. This short hymn-

⁶ Z. LICHAREWA, *Hagia Sophia w Konstantynopolu*, Or 5, 1937, p. 106; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *О почитании Софии, Премудрости Божией, в Византии и на Руси*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Догмат и история*, Москва 1998; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 241. In the older historiography one could find a suggestion that the dedication of the Constantinopolitan cathedral to Divine Wisdom resulted primarily from the tendency to build churches of abstract invocations (see *Hagia Eirene* – Peace of God in the capital of the empire) characteristic of the early Christian culture. Now such interpretations are generally rejected. С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 242.

⁷ PROCOPIUS CAESARIENSIS, *De bellis*, III, 6, 26, ed. H.B. DEWING, London 1916 (cetera: PROCOPIUS, *De bellis*): Σοφίαν καλοῦσιν οἱ Βυζάντιοι τὸν νεῶν, ταύτην δὴ μάλιστα τῷ Θεῷ πρέπειν τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἡγοῦμενοι; PROCOPIUS CAESARIENSIS, *De aedificiis*, I, 1, 21, ed. H.B. DEWING, London 1940 (cetera: PROCOPIUS, *De aedificiis*): Σοφίαν καλοῦσιν οἱ Βυζάντιοι τὸν νεῶν ἐπικαιριώτατα τῷ Θεῷ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἀπεργασάμενοι. А.М. АММАНН, *Darstellung und Deutung der Sophia im Vorpetrinischen Russland*, OCP 4, 1938, p. 123.

⁸ PROCOPIUS, *De bellis*, III, 6, 26; PROCOPIUS, *De aedificiis*, I, 2, 18; G. DOWNEY, *op. cit.*, p. 38; G. DAGRON, *op. cit.*, p. 231; M.L. FOVELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 168; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 243.

⁹ συνδημιουργεῖν τὸν νεῶν τὸν τοῦ λόγου. PAOLO SILENZIARIO, *Descrizione della Santa Sofia*, [in:] M.L. FOVELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 98; K. KREIDL-PAPADOPOULOS, *Bemerkungen zum Justinianischen Tempel der Sophienkirche in Konstantinopel*, JÖB 17, 1968, p. 279; С. С. АВЕРИНЦЕВ, *Литература*, [in:] *Культура Византии, IV – первая половина VII в.*, ed. З.В. УДАЛЬЦОВА, Москва 1984, p. 315; E. WELLESZ, *Historia muzyki i hymnografii bizantyńskiej*, trans. М. КАЗИŃSKI, Kraków 2006, p. 187; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 243; J. KOSTENEC, K. DARK, *Paul the Silentiary's description of Hagia Sophia in the light of new archaeological evidence*, Bsl 69, 2011, p. 88.

¹⁰ A. PALMER, *The inauguration anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: a new edition and translation with historical and architectural notes and a comparison with a contemporary Constantinopolitan kontakion*, BMGS 12,

nographic piece of writing was created at the same time as Paul the Silentiary's panegyric, and was publicly delivered a few days earlier than the Ἐκφρασις τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας. Probably the first performance of the kontakion took place on the 24th December of 562, during the inaugural ceremony of the temple. On the other hand, Paul the Silentiary presented his work on the day of Epiphany, the 6th of January¹¹. In the text of the work we can find parts containing a fairly comprehensive explanation of the Constantinopolitan cathedral dedication. First of all, the author of the kontakion expressly states that *Hagia Sophia* is a church dedicated to Christ¹². What's more, by intertwining in his poetic discourse some references to the *Book of Proverbs*, he does not hesitate to emphasize that the Wisdom personified in the *Old Testament* is nothing else but the Son of God. It is particularly noteworthy in the part referring to the famous passage from the *Book of Proverbs* 9, telling how the personified *Sophia* builds a house for herself. In this case Pseudo-Melodist has no doubt that the "House of Wisdom", mentioned in the *Old Testament*, should be interpreted primarily as a symbol of the Incarnation of *Logos* in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth¹³.

An interesting composition, containing a detailed description concerning the construction of the temple of *Hagia Sophia*, was written probably during the reign of emperor Basil I (867–886) and entered the corpus of sources as Διήγησις περὶ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐπονομαζομένης Ἁγίας Σοφίας¹⁴. In this work we can discover a number of essential components of East Christian sophiology. First of all, just like in the case of Byzantine writers of the 5th–6th cent., the anonymous author of Διήγησις says that the Constantinopolitan basilica was (in the eyes of the inhabitants of the empire) a church dedicated to the Only Begotten Son and Word of God¹⁵. Moreover, in the same source we also find an element quoted on the pages of many works of Byzantine historiography, including John Malalas's *Chronographia* and *Theophanes Continuatus*: we can read that Justinian, moved by the magnificence of the Great Church, would exclaim: *Solomon, now I have surpassed you!*, corresponding to

1988, p. 118, 137–138, 149; M.L. FOBELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 24, 31.

¹¹ A. PALMER, *op. cit.*, p. 138; M.L. FOBELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹² *this temple of God's Wisdom, which in truth is Christ – On the Inauguration of St. Sophia*, 7, [in:] A. PALMER, *op. cit.* (cetera: *On the Inauguration of St. Sophia*), p. 141.

¹³ *the Wisdom of the Father built for herself a house of Incarnation and dwelt among us – On the Inauguration of St. Sophia*, 1; A. PALMER, *op. cit.*, p. 139–140, 145; M.L. FOBELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 24–25.

¹⁴ *Opowieść o budowie Wielkiego Kościoła Bożego zwanego kościołem Mądrości Bożej w Konstantynopolu (Narratio de structura templi S. Sophiae)*, ed. R. SAWA, VP 11/12, 1991/1992 (cetera: *Narratio de structura*), p. 409; M.L. FOBELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 2; L. BRUBAKER, *Talking about the Great Church: ekphrasis and the Narration on Hagia Sophia*, Bsl 69, 2011, p. 80.

¹⁵ *In that way it took its name: the Church of Divine Wisdom (Hagia Sophia), expressed [in the matter] the Word of God – Narratio de structura*, 10, p. 418; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 244.

the *Old Testament* eulogist of Divine Wisdom and the builder of the temple in Jerusalem¹⁶.

Particularly noteworthy, however, is another aspect of that work. It should be noted that *Διήγησις* is one of the few Byzantine sources containing a detailed description of the epiphany of personified Divine Wisdom. According to it *Sophia* was to be revealed as a vision to a fourteen-year-old son of the chief architect in the form of an angel with a flaming face, which resembled a palace eunuch¹⁷. This theme is worth remembering: it was exposed in a particular way in Old Church Slavonic copies of the story, thus contributing to the emergence of particular ideas about the Wisdom in the territory of *Slavia Orthodoxa*¹⁸.

The belief that *Hagia Sophia* is a church dedicated to Christ – the Incarnate *Logos*, can be found on the pages of many other works as well. For example in *Theophanes Continuatus* we can read about the Constantinopolitan basilica: τῷ μεγάλῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου τεμένει; ἀγία Σοφία; ἀγία Σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησία; τῇ μεγάλῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησία; ἀγία τοῦ Θεοῦ Σοφία¹⁹.

In the 11th century an attempt to explain the invocation of the Constantinopolitan cathedral – an amazing construction to foreigners – was undertaken by a West European author. An anonymous traveler from Tarragona in his description of the capital of Byzantium emphasized that its main temple is dedicated to the Son of God, and the name *Hagia Sophia* points to one of the attributes of the Creator, the Wisdom of God (Latin *Sancta Sapientia*), and not – as it was claimed in the West in his times – a saint named *Sophia*²⁰:

Edificata est ergo ecclesia mirifice Deo cooperante a Iustiniano imperatore et consecrata est in honore sancte Sophie que latine dicitur Sancta Sapientia, que est Dei filius (...) Est autem nomen filii Dei non, ut quidam putant, nomen sancte mulieris.²¹

The mentioned *itinerary* would constitute one of the earliest chronological pieces of evidence of the incorrect identification (in the Western civilization) of *Sophia* with a female saint, worshiped both in Constantinople and in Rome, a half-legendary mother of three martyrs: Faith, Hope and Love²².

¹⁶ *Narratio de structura*, 27, p. 427; E. WELLESZ, *op. cit.*, p. 187; L. BRUBAKER, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 87.

¹⁷ *Narratio de structura*, 10, p. 417.

¹⁸ Z. LIČHAREWA, *op. cit.*, p. 109; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 243.

¹⁹ THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonnae 1838, p. 154, 354, 384, 399, 402; G. DOWNEY, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

²⁰ K.N. SIGGAAR, *Une Description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis* 55, REB 53, 1995, p. 129–130; ТАРРАГОНСКИЙ АНОНИМ, *О граде Константинополе. Латинское описание реликвий Константинополя XI в.*, ed. Л.К.М. САНЧЕС, [in:] *Реликвии в искусстве и культуре восточно-христианского мира*, Москва 2000, p. 165; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 244.

²¹ *De Constantinopoli civitate*, 321–325, [in:] K.N. SIGGAAR, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

²² V. TSAKAKDA, *Darstellungen der Hagia Sophia bzw. der Weisheit Gottes in der kretischen Wandmalerei*, BZ 101, 2008, p. 216–220.

A clear statement that *Hagia Sophia* is a temple dedicated to the Son of God can also be found in a medieval Byzantine normative source. A *Chrysobull* by Emperor Manuel Comnenus, dated 1153, states that the Constantinopolitan cathedral was built in honour of the Saviour²³.

The Christological interpretation of the dedication of the most important temple of the Byzantine capital is also given on the pages of the chronicle by John Zonaras (d. about 1160), who repetitively calls the Great Church a temple of God or God's Word (τὸ Θεῖον τέμενος τοῦ μεγάλου ναοῦ; τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου Σοφίας)²⁴. Similar terms in relation to the Constantinopolitan *Hagia Sophia* were used also by later historiographers, such as George Pachymeres (1242 – ca. 1310): *μεγάλου τεμένους τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου Σοφίας*²⁵.

Interestingly, the theme also appears on the pages of a 13th-cent. source of Slavic provenance (Old Russian), known as the *Pilgrim's Books* (*Книги Паломник*), written by Dobryna Jadrejkovič from Novgorod the Great, also known in the literature under the monastic name (Anthony of Novgorod), who traveled to Constantinople between 1200 and 1204²⁶. In the *itinerary* written after the return, he described many Byzantine objects of the capital, including the *Hagia Sophia* basilica, whose name according to him should be understood as the Temple of Wisdom and Word of God²⁷ (святѣя Гофїи, иже глаголется Премѣдрость, Приносѣщное Слово)²⁸.

Late medieval authors, more or less involved in the hesychastic controversy, also speak similarly about the Great Church. Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus says in a letter to bishop John that he ordered to convene a synod in the Basilica of "Wisdom of God's Word"²⁹. Constantinopolitan Patriarch Callistus I in the *Life of St. Gregory of Sinai* mentions the cathedral as the church of "God's Word and Wisdom"³⁰, while in the work dedicated to Theodosius of Tărnovo the author calls the Constantinopolitan *Hagia Sophia* – a temple of the "Wisdom of God's Word"³¹.

²³ G. DAGRON, *op. cit.*, p. 231, 299–300; M.L. FOBELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

²⁴ IOANNES ZONARAS, *Epitome historiarum*, XIV, 6; XVI, 10; XVII, 9; XVII, 19, ed. L. DINDORF, Lipsiae 1870; G. DOWNEY, *op. cit.*, p. 38–39.

²⁵ GEORGIUS PACHYMERES, *De Michaelē et Andronico Palaeologis*, IV, 29, ed. A. FAILLER, V. LAURENT, Paris 1984; G. DOWNEY, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²⁶ A.M. AMMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 131; R. MARICHAL, *La construction de Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople dans l'anonyme grec (X^e siècle?) et les versions vieux-russes*, Bsl 21, 1960, p. 238–239; G.P. MAJESKA, *The Image of the Chalke Savior in Saint Sophia*, Bsl 32, 1971, p. 284; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 244; U. WÓJCISKA, *Literatura staroruska z elementami historii i kultury dawnej Rusi*, Wydgoszcz 2010, p. 106–107

²⁷ A.M. AMMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 131; G. DAGRON, *op. cit.*, p. 300; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *Иконография Иисуса Христа как образа воплощенной Софии Премудрости Божией*, [in:] *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 244

²⁸ *Книга Паломникъ. Сказание мѣсть Святыхъ во Цареграде Антонїя Архїепископа Новгородскаго в 1204 году*, ed. Хр. М. ЛОПАРЕВ, Санкт-Петербург 1899, p. 1, 41, 71.

²⁹ С. ХОРУЖИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

³⁰ С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 244.

³¹ *Пространно житие на Теодосий Търновски от патриарх Калист*, [in:] *Стара българска литература в седем тома*, vol. IV, *Житиеписни творби*, ed. К. ИВАНОВА, София 1986, p. 464.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned reviews of Byzantine sources from 5th to 14th cent. it is apparent that the temple of *Sophia* was for centuries conceived primarily as a church dedicated to Christ – the Incarnate *Logos*³². Another piece of evidence supporting this thesis can be provided by the analysis of iconographic representations adorning the interior of the Constantinopolitan cathedral.

The literature usually mentions one iconographic source, dated to the turn of the 9th and 10th cent., a mosaic located above the main entrance from the narthex to the nave of *Hagia Sophia*, showing a Byzantine emperor (probably Leo VI) in a *proskynesis* in front of the Saviour³³. The centerpiece of the image is – of course – the figure of an impressive size depicting the Son of God visualized in an enthroned position, in the type of *Christ the Pantocrator*, prevalent in the Christian iconographic art, between the portraits of Mother of God and archangel Gabriel, placed in the medallions³⁴. On the pages of an open book, held by the Saviour in his left hand, there is a quote from John 8, 12, pointing to the Son of God as the source of spiritual enlightenment to mankind³⁵. It is of no surprise then that experts propose interpreting the image of Christ as one of the chronologically earliest representations of God's Wisdom in Byzantine art³⁶.

A fundamental question should be raised at this point: if indeed the Constantinopolitan *Hagia Sophia* was a church dedicated to the Son of God, why do we not find His image in some more exposed place inside, other than the narthex? Many researchers, relying *inter alia* on an excerpt from the homily of Patriarch Photius of 29th March 867³⁷, hold that such representations did exist but they have not survived until our times. Most probably, beginning in the 9th cent., the face of

³² It should be noted, however, that not all Byzantine authors preferred this interpretation. For example, Nicetas of Paphlagonia (9th cent.), Leo the Deacon (10th cent.) and John Zonaras (12th cent.) wrote about the church of the Holy Wisdom of God (ἡ Ἁγία Σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ). George Cedrenus (11th/12th cent.) seemed to prefer the term already mentioned by many previous historiographers, “the Great Church of God” (ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγάλη ἐκκλησία), as Michael of Thessalonica, the author of the little-known 12th-cent. description of Constantinopolitan *Hagia Sophia*. G. DOWNEY, *op. cit.*, p. 38–39; C. MANGO, J. PARKER, *A Twelfth-Century Description of St. Sophia*, DOP 14, 1960, p. 233–245.

³³ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icongraphie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 264; В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *Искусство Византии IV–XV вв.*, Ленинград 1986, p. 106; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; N.B. ТЕТЕРΙΑТНИКОВ, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul: the Fossati Restoration and the Work of the Byzantine Institute*, Washington 1998, p. 60; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; О.С. ПОПОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 22; M. CUNNINGHAM, *Wiara w świecie bizantyńskim*, trans. T. SZAFRAŃSKI, Warszawa 2006, p. 4; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 246. It should be pointed out that emperor Leo VI depicted at the feet of the Saviour was described in the Byzantine historiography – because of his intellectual passion and love of knowledge – as “the Philosopher”/ “Wise” – M.J. LESZKA, *The Monk versus the Philosopher: From the History of the Bulgarian-Byzantine War 894–896*, SCer 1, 2011, p. 55, 57.

³⁴ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icongraphie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 264; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

³⁵ D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

³⁶ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icongraphie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 264; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59–60; M. CUNNINGHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 4; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 246.

³⁷ C.A. MANGO, *Documentary Evidence on the Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia*, BZ 47, 1954, p. 398; L. USPIENSKI, *Teologia ikony*, trans. B. ДАВ-КАЛИНОВСКА, Poznań 1993, p. 171; M. ANGOLD, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

Christ the Pantocrator looked at the faithful gathered inside the cathedral – like in many later East Christian temples – from the very top of the dome³⁸. Moreover, Leonid Uspensky tends to assume that during the pre-iconoclastic period the image of Christ was located in the apse of the Constantinopolitan basilica (similar images have survived also inside several other 5th–6th cent. buildings, such as in the church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome, *San Vitale* in Ravenna, the temple dedicated to St. David of Thessalonica or in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai)³⁹. And its replacement in the iconography of the altar by the figure of Mother of God took place after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843⁴⁰, and was due to a significant displacement of accents in the Byzantine ideas about *Sophia*, characterized by the growing importance of Virgin Mary, perceived as the incarnate “house of Wisdom”⁴¹.

Another element to support the thesis of the Christological dedication of *Hagia Sophia*, generally accepted in the literature, is the fact that over the centuries the holiday of the Constantinopolitan cathedral was celebrated in the proximity of Christmas: 22nd–24th December⁴². However, one should approach this idea with some caution, as probably until the 14th cent. the Byzantine ecclesiastical tradition did not know the rite of patronal holiday (celebrated on day of liturgical commemoration of the person to whom a church was dedicated). The ceremony dedicated to the temple was therefore celebrated either on the anniversary of its consecration, or on the date of its re-ordination (gr. ἐγκαίνια)⁴³. In the case of the *Hagia Sophia* in Constantinople, completed originally on 27th December 537, and then re-consecrated – after the reconstruction of the earthquake-damaged dome – on 24th December 562⁴⁴, setting the date of the church

³⁸ O.H. STRUB-ROESSLER, *op. cit.*, p. 176; C.A. MANGO, *The Lost Mosaics of St. Sophia, Constantinople*, [in:] *Actes du XI^e Congrès International d'Études Byzantines. Ochride, 10–16 septembre 1961*, vol. III, Beograd 1964, p. 231–232; L. USPIENSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 171; P. HUNT, *The Wisdom Iconography of Light. The Genesis, Meaning and Iconographic Realization of a Symbol*, Bsl 67, 2009, p. 77; S. BRALEWSKI, *Konstantynopolińskie kościoły...*, p. 148.

³⁹ L. USPIENSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 171; P. HUNT, *op. cit.*, p. 79–80.

⁴⁰ The famous mosaic, depicting the Mother of God with Child, adorning the apse of the capital *Hagia Sophia* was made probably in the second half of the 9th cent., the period in which Photius held the office of Patriarch of Constantinople – C.A. MANGO, *Documentary Evidence...*, p. 400; L. USPIENSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 168, 171.

⁴¹ It is worth mentioning that G.P. Majeska, based on the descriptions of the interior of *Hagia Sophia* by Russian travelers from the 13th–14th cent., is willing to assume that the mosaics presenting the image of Christ were at least in two places in the Constantinopolitan cathedral: in the north-eastern part of the church and above the so called “Imperial Gate” in the west end of the main nave. Both images would be destroyed when *Hagia Sophia* was converted into a mosque under the Ottoman Turkish rule – G.P. MAJESKA, *op. cit.*, p. 285, 294.

⁴² Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; Т. ШПИДЛИК, *op. cit.*, p. 414; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 245.

⁴³ С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 245.

⁴⁴ J. KOSTENEC, K. DARK, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

holiday at Christmas was thus somehow natural⁴⁵. We can only speculate that setting the official dedication ceremony of the most important church of Constantinople to coincide with the great Christian holiday was not coincidental (either in 537 or in 562).

In the conclusion, another question is worth emphasizing: the Constantinopolitan *Hagia Sophia* was not the only East Christian church dedicated to Divine Wisdom. On the contrary, it became a kind of a model for many churches (mostly cathedrals) erected in later centuries both in the empire and in other countries under the influence of the Byzantine civilization⁴⁶. And so, as early as at the turn of the 4th and 5th cent., a basilica of *Sophia* was built in Ephesus⁴⁷, and in the mid-5th cent. – in Jerusalem⁴⁸. The time of edification of the famous church of *Hagia Sophia* in Thessalonica is not precisely given (it is usually dated from mid-7th cent. to the 30s of the 8th cent.)⁴⁹. In the mid-Byzantine era, many Christian centers could pride themselves of temples dedicated to the Divine Wisdom, including that in Nicaea⁵⁰, Edessa (built between 543–554, and completely destroyed in 1031)⁵¹, Trebizond (13th cent.)⁵²,

⁴⁵ С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, р. 245.

⁴⁶ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, р. 259; ИДЕМ, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, р. 391; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, р. 451; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, р. 16; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, р. 59; М. OSTERRIEDER, *op. cit.*, р. 5; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, р. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, р. 246–247; Н. ДЮЛГЕРОВА, *София – бдеще през миналото*, [in:] *София – 130 години българска столица*, София 2009, р. 9.

⁴⁷ С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, р. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, р. 247.

⁴⁸ D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, р. 451; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, р. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, р. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, р. 247.

⁴⁹ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, р. 259; В. ТЯЖЕЛОВ, О. СОПОЦИНСКИЙ, *Малая история искусств. Искусство средних веков. Византия. Армения и Грузия. Болгария и Сербия. Древняя Русь. Украина и Белоруссия*, Москва 1975, р. 70; В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *op. cit.*, р. 96; J. MEYENDORFF, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, р. 391; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости» в восточноевропейской средневековой культуре и ее наследие*, [in:] *Литература и искусство в системе культуры*, ed. Б.Б. ПИОТРОВСКИЙ, Москва 1988, р. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, р. 451; А.Л. ЯКОВСОН, *Архитектура*, [in:] *Культура Византии. Вторая половина VII–XII в.*, ed. З.Б. УДАЛЬЦОВА, Г.Г. ЛИТАВРИН, Москва 1989, р. 497, 502; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, р. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, р. 59; М. OSTERRIEDER, *op. cit.*, р. 5; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, р. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, р. 247.

⁵⁰ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, р. 259; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, р. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, р. 451; П.И. ЖАВОРОНКОВ, *Культура Никейской империи*, [in:] *Культура Византии, XIII – первая половина XV в.*, Москва 1991, р. 46; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, р. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, р. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, р. 247.

⁵¹ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, р. 259; К.Е. МС VEX, *The domed church as microcosm: literary roots of an architectural symbol*, DOP 37, 1983, р. 91, 106; А. PALMER, *op. cit.*, р. 118, 125, 129; N. OZOLINE, *La symbolique cosmique du temple Chrétien selon la mystagogie de saint Maxime le Confesseur*, [in:] *Литургия, архитектура и искусство византийского мира*, ed. К.К. АКЕНТЬЕВ, Санкт-Петербург 1995, р. 36–37; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, р. 59; M.L. FOVELLI, *op. cit.*, р. 31.

⁵² D. TALBOT RICE, *St. Sophia, Trebizond and the Work of the Walker Trust*, [in:] *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, München 1958*, ed. F. DÖLGER, H.-G. BECK, München 1960, р. 508–510; В. ТЯЖЕЛОВ, О. СОПОЦИНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, р. 82; В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *op. cit.*, р. 203; J. MEYENDORFF, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, р. 391; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, р. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, р. 451; С.П. КАРПОВ, *Культура Трапезундской им-*

Mistra⁵³, Arta⁵⁴, Vize⁵⁵ and even Benevento (late 8th cent.)⁵⁶ or Nicosia, Cyprus (13th–15th cent.)⁵⁷.

Needless to say *Sophia* cathedrals used to be built also in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. A basilica dedicated to the Wisdom of God in Serdica (Sofia) comes probably from the era of the first Bulgarian state, although a number of researchers believe that it should be dated much earlier – to the 4th cent.⁵⁸ At the turn of the 10th and 11th cent., a temple under the same invocation was built in Ohrid⁵⁹ and some time later in Sliven⁶⁰. The most spectacular temples of Pre-Mongol Rus' were also dedicated to the Divine Wisdom⁶¹. The construction of the *Sophia* cathedral in the capital of Rus' – Kiev, began probably in 1037⁶². The temple of the Holy Wisdom in Novgorod the Great was built

перши, [in:] *Культура Византии, XIII – первая половина XV в. ...*, p. 89; А.Л. ЯКОБСОН, *Византийское зодчество эпохи Палеологов*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 491; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁵³ В. ЛИХАЧЕВА, *op. cit.*, p. 242; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁵⁴ Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁵⁵ Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; F.A. BAUER, H.A. KLEIN, *Die Hagia Sophia in Vize. Forschungsgeschichte – Restaurierungen – neue Ergebnisse*, *Mitl* 1, 2004, p. 416–417; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁵⁶ А.М. АММАНН, *op. cit.*, p. 126; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; М. ОСТЕРРИЕДЕР, *op. cit.*, p. 5; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁵⁷ D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; С.П. КАРПОВ, *Культура Латинской Романии*, [in:] *Культура Византии. XIII – первая половина XV в. ...*, p. 146; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁵⁸ D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247; Н. ДЮЛГЕРОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 12. There is another very important fact associated with the temple, i.e. the transfer of the name of the church of *Sophia* – Divine Wisdom to the surrounding city. Most likely, this happened in the late Middle Ages. The oldest source in which Serdica was described as Sofia seems to be a document written by tsar John Šišman (1371–1395) before 1385 and issued to Dragalevtsi Monastery – G. PODSKALSKY, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien 865–1459*, München 2000, p. 19; Н. ДЮЛГЕРОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 9, 13.

⁵⁹ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 259; С. ВАКЛИНОВ, *Формиране на старобългарската култура. VI–XI в.*, София 1977, p. 232–237; J. MEYENDORFF, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, p. 391; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, p. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; G. PODSKALSKY, *op. cit.*, p. 23; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁶⁰ Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Старобългарското изкуство XI–XIII в.*, София 1966, p. 31; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁶¹ Г.М. ШТЕНДЕР, С.И. СИВАК, *Архитектура интерьера новгородского Софийского собора и некоторые вопросы богослужения*, *Вро* 1, 1995, p. 288–297; Г.М. ШТЕНДЕР, *Композиционные особенности трех древнерусских Софийских соборов в их связи с литургией*, *Вро* 1, 1995, p. 298–302.

⁶² J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 259; ИДЕМ, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, p. 391; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, p. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ,

between 1045 and 1050 (probably in the place of an earlier wooden church under the same invocation, which had been erected as early as in 989)⁶³. Moreover, in the 1060s foundations for a third Old Russian cathedral of *Sophia* at Polotsk were being prepared⁶⁴.

Unfortunately the amount of source material is not sufficient to clearly answer the question to whom exactly the churches mentioned above were dedicated. Some researchers, on the basis of the belief that those temples were built on the model of the Constantinopolitan cathedral, are inclined to conclude that – similarly to Justinian's *Hagia Sophia* – they must have been dedicated to Christ – the Incarnate Logos⁶⁵. This issue, especially regarding the *Sophia* cathedrals known to us from the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area, is a much more complex problem, which deserves a separate study.

The question about *Hagia Sophia* in Constantinople looks different. The preserved source material justifies the thesis that in Byzantium, regardless of the era, the cathedral basilica was conceived primarily as a temple dedicated to Christ – the Incarnate Word of God. The belief that the church was dedicated to St. Sophia must be rejected as unquestionably wrong. No Byzantine source interprets the invocation of *Hagia Sophia* in this way. The anonymous Western European author from Tarragona leaves no doubts that the belief, that the cathedral was dedicated to St. Sophia, was born in the circle of the Latin culture and was certainly the result of a simple misunderstanding. In the Byzantine historiography one can solely find interpretations more or less explicitly linking the Divine Wisdom with the Son of God. Additional evidence to support this thesis is provided by the preserved iconography and liturgical practice of the Great Church in Constantinople. What is more, when attempting to explain the question of the dedication of the church of

op. cit.; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; М. OSTERRIEDER, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *Искусство Древней Руси. Домонгольский период*, Санкт-Петербург 2007, p. 38; В.Д. САРАБЬЯНОВ, Э.С. СМИРНОВА, *История древнерусской живописи*, Москва 2007, p. 23, 26; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁶³ J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icônographie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 259; В. ТЯЖЕЛОВ, О. СОПОЦИНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 196–197; D. LIKNAŠOV, *Novgorod: Art Treasures and Architectural Monuments 11th–18th centuries. Architecture – Frescoes – Archaeological Artefacts – Minor Arts – Icons – Illuminated MSS*, Leningrad 1984, p. 7; J. MEYENDORFF, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, p. 391; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, p. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; М. OSTERRIEDER, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 59; В.Д. САРАБЬЯНОВ, Э.С. СМИРНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 58, 86; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁶⁴ J. MEYENDORFF, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, p. 391; ИДЕМ, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, p. 245; D.F. FIENE, *op. cit.*, p. 451; Н. РАПРОСКИ, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *op. cit.*; О. ЭТИНГОФ, *op. cit.*, p. 59; М. OSTERRIEDER, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 84; В.Д. САРАБЬЯНОВ, Э.С. СМИРНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 58; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *О храмах во имя Софии...*, p. 16; ИДЕМ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 247.

⁶⁵ С. РАДОЧИЋ, *Фреске Марковог Манастира и живот св. Василија Новог*, ЗРВИ 4, 1956, p. 223; ИДЕМ, *Прилози за историју најстаријег охридског сликарства*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Одабрани чланци и студије 1933–1978*, Београд–Нови Сад 1982, p. 110; А. РАЛМЕР, *op. cit.*, p. 126, 151; Л. ЛИФШИЦ, *София Премудрость Божия в русской иконописи*, [in:] *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 9; G. PODSKALSKY, *Chrześcijaństwo i literatura teologiczna na Rusi Kijowskiej (988–1237)*, trans. J. ŻYCHOWICZ, Kraków 2000, p. 59, 297.

Hagia Sophia one ought to take into consideration a wider cultural context, i.e. the fact that most of the Eastern Church Fathers and later Byzantine writers (Justin the Martyr, Athenagoras of Athens, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Methodius of Olympus, Eusebius of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, Athanasius the Sinaite, patriarch of Constantinople Germanus, Theodore the Studite, Symeon the Metaphrast, Symeon the New Theologian and Philotheus Coccinus)⁶⁶ leave no doubt to the readers that the personified Wisdom of God they meet in the *Old Testament*, is a symbolic representation of Christ – the *Logos* before Incarnation.

Abstract. The article attempts to answer the question of how the name of the most important Byzantine church of Constantinople, the basilica of *Hagia Sophia*, built in the mid-4th cent., and then rebuilt during the reign of Justinian the Great was understood and interpreted. The problem has been presented on the basis of the views of Byzantine writers from the 5th to the 14th cent. (Socrates Scholasticus, Procopius of Caesarea, Paul the Silentary, John Zonaras, George Pachymeres, Patriarch Callistus I). The analysis of the above sources allows an assumption that according to the Byzantines themselves the Constantinopolitan cathedral was dedicated to the Divine Wisdom, commonly identified with Christ, the Incarnate Word. The evidence supporting this thesis has been provided by both iconography (e.g. the mosaic from the turn of the 9th and 10th cent. from the tympanum over the main entrance from the narthex to nave of *Hagia Sophia*, depicting Christ the Pantocrator) and the liturgical practice of the basilica, which can now be reconstructed on the basis of the temple *typicons*, preserved until today. The final part of the article names some other churches dedicated to the Divine Wisdom, built in the area of the Byzantine *ecumene* (Ephesus, Jerusalem, Thessalonica, Nicaea, Edessa, Trebizond, Mistra, Arta, Benevento, Nicosia on Cyprus, Serdica (Sofia), Ohrid, Sliven, Kiev, Novgorod the Great and Polotsk).

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⁶⁶ A.M. AMMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 120; J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icongraphie de la Sagesse Divine...*, p. 260–262; IDEM, *Wisdom–Sophia...*, p. 391–392; IDEM, *Тема «Премудрости»...*, p. 248–250; С.Н. ГРУБЕЦКОЙ, *О святой Софии, Премудрости Божией*, ВФ 9, 1995, p. 123; M. SZRAM, *Chrystus – Mądrość Boża według Orygenesy*, Lublin 1997; L. MIŚIARCZYK, *Midraszyczne korzenie chrystologicznej interpretacji Prz 8, 22 w „Dialogu” Justyna Męczennika*, СТ 70, 2000, p. 93–107; S. STRĘKOWSKI, *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy. Elementy teologii trynitarniej i antropologii w „Homiliach” do „Pieśni nad Pieśniami”*, Kraków 2006; Н.Н. БАХАРЕВА, *Образ Премудрости из Притч Соломоновых в восточно-христианской экзегетике*, ВНУ 1/6, 2007, p. 123–128; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *Византийские Отцы V-VIII вв.*, Москва 2007; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия...*, p. 232–240; Е.Б. ГРОВОВА, *„Премудрость созда себе дом...” в богословской и изобразительной традиции XIV в.*, [in:] *Сербско-русские литературные и культурные связи XIV–XX вв.*, ed. Л.К. ГАВРЮШИНА, Санкт-Петербург 2009, p. 9–12; Z. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sofia Mądrość Boża – przymiot, energia czy odrębna osoba Boska w teologii Kościoła wschodniego (do XV w.)*, [in:] *Bóg Filozofów – Bóg Mistyków*, ed. M. GWARNY, I.M. PERKOWSKA, Łódź 2013 (in press).