

# *A Tale of Two Baptisteries: Royal and Ecclesiastical Patronage in Ravenna\**

*Ittai Weinryb*

Department of Art History, Tel Aviv University

**T**he mosaics of Ravenna constitute a critical phase in the understanding of the development of Medieval art and prompt questions such as that of patronage.

It has been commonly observed that the mosaic program in the dome of the Arian Baptistery (Fig. 1) is a modification of the representation similarly located in the Neonian Baptistery (Fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> A comparison between the two



Fig. 1: Ravenna, The Arian Baptistery (first quarter 6<sup>th</sup> century), Dome (after Kitzinger 1995 [1976]: Fig. 104).



Fig. 2: Ravenna, The Orthodox Baptistery (c. 451), Dome (after Kostof 1965: Fig. 42).

representations, in order to characterize the Orthodox conception vis-à-vis the Arian in Ravenna, became part of the canonic teaching of Early Christian art.<sup>2</sup>

I would like to argue that the difference in the mosaic schemes of the two baptisteries reflects two types of patronage. While the Orthodox Baptistery was commissioned by the bishops of Ravenna, the Arian Baptistery was initiated by the Ostrogoth king Theoderic, who reigned over Italy from 493 to 526.<sup>3</sup> Although some modern scholars have noted the different patrons, this aspect was not emphasized in their analyses of the decoration scheme.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the fourth century, Bishop Ursus founded the city's cathedral and dedicated it to the Anasthasis.<sup>5</sup> The new cathedral replaced the old one located in Classe, which had been founded by Bishop Probus II and named after him.<sup>6</sup> To the north side of the cathedral an octagonal shaped baptistery was erected (Fig. 3), with four identical niches in the four sides of the building alternatively.<sup>7</sup> Of the entire compound, only the baptistery survives today in its original form.

Bishop Neon, Ursus' second successor, continued the extensive development of the orthodox compound. He built the compound's refectory,<sup>8</sup> and in 451 he initiated renovation of the baptistery established by Ursus.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 3: Ravenna, The Orthodox Baptistery, exterior from the north (after Wharton 1995: 112).

The main source for dating and description of Ravenna's monuments is the *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, written by the Ravennatian priest Andreas Agnellus between 830 and 846.<sup>10</sup> The book describes the episcopal history of Ravenna in the form of the bishops' biographies from the time of the conversion to Christianity to that of Agnellus's own days. Agnellus took great care in describing the art and architecture of each building and its patrons.<sup>11</sup> In the section dedicated to the life of Bishop Neon, Agnellus cites an inscription that appeared above the door of Neon's renovated baptistery:

Old name begone; antiquity yield to the new.  
The glory of the renovated font now gleams with greater beauty.  
For the noble and highest priest Neon.  
Adorned it, arranging all most splendidly.<sup>12</sup>

The inscription describes an episcopal patronage, but instead of a common Christian inscription, Neon chose to adopt a form of imperial dedication, which lauds the bishop-patron as the sole patron and not merely as a functionary of the Christian order.

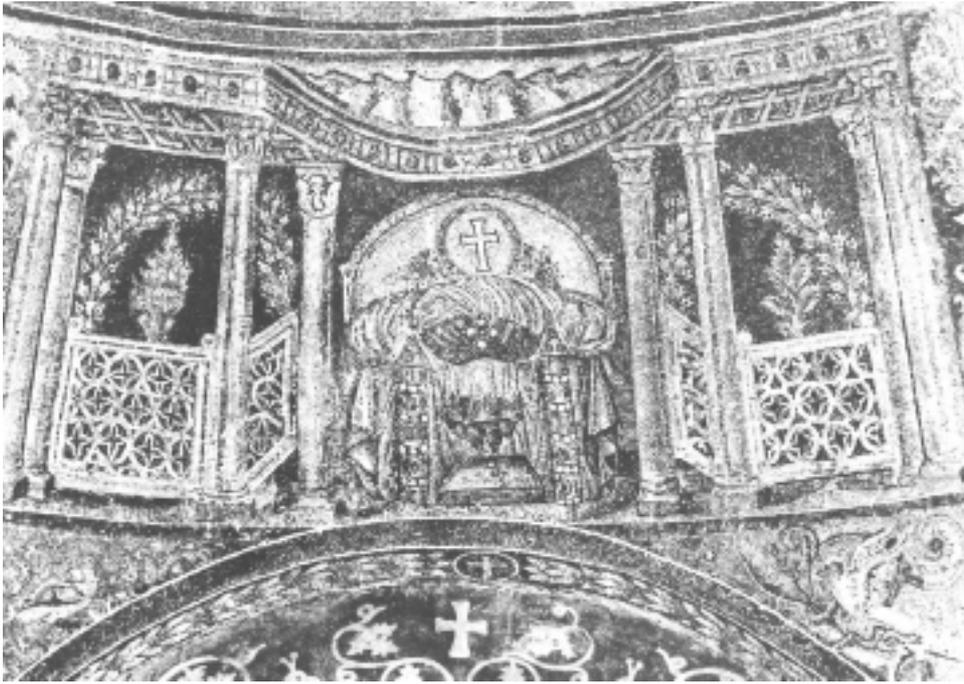


Fig. 4: Ravenna, The Orthodox Baptistery, Dome, The empty throne (after Kostof 1965: Fig. 67).

Neon's decorated dome, which apart from 19th century restorations survived has in its entirety, is made up of a central medallion with a representation of Christ being baptized by John the Baptist and a personification of the river Jordan in the background. A register representing a procession of the Apostles, bearing golden crowns, headed by Peter and Paul, surrounds the medallion.

Closing the dome's decorative scheme is a circular register made up of two types of presentations, each of which appears alternately four times. One represents a cross, placed on the empty throne of Christ and flanked on both sides by a fenced garden (Fig. 4). The second represents an open gospel book with the name of each evangelist inscribed on its empty pages. The book is resting on an altar, flanked by two chairs beneath a conch niche.

The major religious building project<sup>13</sup> of Theoderic in his capital city, Ravenna, was the Arian bishopric compound.<sup>14</sup> There is no certainty that Theoderic was in fact involved in the erection of the complex, but circumstantial evidence leads to this conclusion. There is a record of six Arian churches in the greater Ravenna area,<sup>15</sup> but only the Arian compound was situated in the eastern part of town, where most of Theoderic's construction took place.



Fig. 5: Ravenna, The Arian Baptistery, exterior from the northeast (after Wharton 1995: 115).

In this compound the Arian cathedral (known today as Spirito Sancto) was dedicated to the Anastasis,<sup>16</sup> as was the Orthodox cathedral before it. Over the years, the Arian cathedral received the name *Anastasis Gothorum* in contrast to *Anastasis Catholicorum*, which was also known as the Orthodox cathedral.<sup>17</sup> Thus, there was a close link between Arianism in Ravenna and the Goths.. It is therefore quite reasonable to conclude that Theoderic, the powerful Arian ruler of Ravenna, was the initiator of the Arian compound, if not its direct patron.

Apart from the cathedral dedicated to the Anastasis, the Arian building complex included a baptistery (Fig. 5). Agnellus also records the existence of a small chapel dedicated to St. Apollinaris, which was located on the second floor of one of the compound's buildings.<sup>18</sup> A similar chapel exists in the Orthodox compound intended for the use of the Archbishop.<sup>19</sup>

The Arian Baptistery stands in front of the cathedral south to its main entrance. Its floor is currently about a meter below ground level.<sup>20</sup> It comprises an octagonal-shaped building with four niches. The eastern niche is larger than the others, and it is assumed that it functioned as an apse. The building was originally encircled by an ambulatory, which has not survived and surrounded seven of the building's eight sides. The eastern side of the baptistery was not

enclosed in the ambulatory, and functioned as a narthex. The two square spaces at each entrance were used for the neophytes' preparation before and after the ceremony. A wall separated the core of the building from the ambulatory, which prevented those in the ambulatory from seeing the events happening inside the central part of the baptistery. The entrances from the ambulatory to the baptistery core were located on the western side of the building; today only one entrance is functioning.

From the interior decoration, only that on the dome has survived. It comprises a central medallion, which depicts the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist and a personification of the river Jordan sitting on the bank of the river. Encircling the medallion is a register with a representation of an Apostle's procession. The Apostles hold golden crowns, which they are offering to a golden throne decorated with precious stones. A cushion is placed on the throne, which has a cross on its back, from the throne also hangs a purple *Pallium*-Christ's coat.<sup>21</sup>

The resemblance between the Arian compound with its various edifices and the Orthodox compound has encouraged scholars like Johnson to suggest that the Arian intention to 'imitate' the Orthodox compound was the result of Theoderic's desire to de-emphasize the differences between the two sects.<sup>22</sup> I would like to suggest that Theoderic's motivation was different. The king, or his Arian bishop, intended to establish Arianism as the major church, and on the arrival of an Arian ruler, to appropriate the status of the Orthodox sect in Ravenna. This could be why the Arian chapel was named after Apollinaris, Ravenna's first Orthodox bishop, indicating that by this dedication the Arian bishop had become the successor to the first bishop. The Arian compound was planned to reflect the attitudes and intentions of the new rulers. The patron needed to erect a similar compound to the Orthodox one, which was therefore constructed after the design of the old one, and so not only to supply the same function for the believer, but also to show the new rulership.

Modern scholars have focused on the similarities and dissimilarities of the architectural programs of the domes of the two baptisteries. The fact that both domes have survived almost intact since the days of their creation probably had an influence on this choice.<sup>23</sup> The comparison is usually made between the medallions that depict the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist, the personification of the river Jordan and the procession of the Apostles.

In the Orthodox Baptistery, the procession of the Apostles bearing crowns has raised a major problem: who is the supposed recipient of the crowns? Scholars such as Soper found in the shape of the Arian Baptistery's decorative

scheme a solution to the problem, and saw in the absence of a throne at the apex of the Orthodox procession evidence for the Orthodox artist's inability to create a dome divided into thirteen parts.<sup>24</sup> Grabar, relating to the image of the throne in the Arian procession, saw the crowns held by the Apostles as intended for the throne placed in the register below them.<sup>25</sup> Nordstorm considered that the crowns were being offered to Christ in the medallion, at the moment of his coronation as the Son of God.<sup>26</sup> More recently, Wharton assumed, citing the writings of St. Ambrose (340-397), that the images of the crowns were depicted with the intention of symbolically crowning the newly baptized.<sup>27</sup>

I would like to contend, rather, that the figures of Apostles in the Orthodox Baptistry are carrying their crowns to crown their successor on earth – the bishop. Bishop Neon sitting on his throne in the baptistry chapel served in fact as the main axis both for the baptism ritual and for the decorative scheme. Like the inscription above the door, the decoration too manifests Neon's magnanimity.

According to the Ravennan belief, St. Apollinaris was Ravenna's first bishop and also St. Peter's pupil in Rome.<sup>28</sup> This tradition had a critical significance in the dispute between Ravenna and Rome over the importance and apostolic status of the former.<sup>29</sup> Neon's predecessor, Peter Chrysologus, had dedicated a sermon to St. Apollinaris<sup>30</sup> and erected a church in Classe dedicated to St. Peter,<sup>31</sup> which Agnellus praised by saying that it "was surpassed by no other, either in length or height".<sup>32</sup> So it is safe to assume that the connection between St. Peter as head of the Apostles and St. Apollinaris, as Ravenna's first bishop, was commonly made already at that early stage.

Moreover, it was Bishop Neon, who chose to emphasize the connection between the bishopric and St. Peter. On the walls of the refectory, of which he was the direct patron, he chose to exhibit themes from the liturgy. Agnellus provides the following description:

"He ordered the story of the psalm which we sing every day, that is, 'Praise ye the lord from the heavens', to be depicted on the wall towards the church together with the Deluge. And on another wall... he caused the story of our Lord Jesus Christ to be depicted in colors, when with five loaves and two fishes he fed, as we read, so many thousands of people...and on another wall was depicted the story of the Apostle Peter".<sup>33</sup>

The depiction of St. Peter's life is extremely rare and has not been found elsewhere in Early Christian art. As described by Agnellus, the saint's life was depicted next to the Miracle of Multiplication. This could only mean that Neon, like his predecessors, chose to emphasize the close relationship of the church

of Ravenna with St. Peter in particular, and the Apostles in general, and by doing so to emphasize Ravenna's apostolic status.

In the Orthodox Baptistery, the emphasis on the connection between the Apostles and the bishop is given specific importance for, instead of the martyr Bishop Apollinaris, Neon himself is located there. Thus, Neon becomes installed as a successor to St. Peter and the Apostles, and the recipient of the golden crowns.

The lowest register of the dome represents an alternation of empty thrones and gospel books laid on podiums, flanked by two chairs. Of the various interpretations of this scheme, the most persuasive sees the register as representing the Church and the bishop's authority.<sup>34</sup> The empty throne represents the seat of justice awaiting the arrival of Christ on Judgment Day and the gospel books represent the Church itself flanked by the two chairs, one of which is intended for the bishop and the other for the civil ruler. While this interpretation is most plausible, it does not weaken the intended link drawn between the Apostles and the bishop sitting at the altar. Since the representation is made up of small detailed forms, it is reasonable to believe that the neophyte entering the baptistery would fail to be drawn to these forms and his gaze would be attracted rather to the larger forms represented, such as those in the scene of the Baptism of Christ, the procession of the Apostles and the live figure of the Bishop seated on his throne.



Fig. 6: Coin from the age of Domitian (after Grabar 1971 (1936): XXIX coin no. 2).



Fig. 7: Rome, Sta. Pudenziana (c. 390), apse (after Elsner 1998: 232).

The impact of the patron can also be traced in the presentation of the Apostles' procession in the Arian Baptistery. The procession, lead by St. Peter and St. Paul, is advancing towards the empty throne with the cross. The dove hovering (upside-down) above the scene of the Baptism seems to be standing above the throne, dignifying it with its symbolic divinity.

The presentation of the empty throne, also known as *etimasia*, originated in Christianity from the depiction of ruling sovereignty in the Western Roman Empire,<sup>35</sup> whose main purpose was to symbolize sovereignty and justice. Caesar was the first Roman emperor to be presented by the Senate with a *sella curulis* (curule chair) a throne made of ivory that together with a golden wreath was positioned at official games as a substitute for the absent ruler.<sup>36</sup> From the time of Emperor Domitian (51-96) the depiction of the empty throne can be found on the reverse of coins (Fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> One side of such coins showed a portrait of the emperor while the other side depicted the empty throne as a symbol of the imperial reign. Although lacking a seated figure, the 'empty' throne was never depicted as empty. Instead of a portrait of the ruler, attributes of his sovereignty (like the golden wreath) were placed on the throne. The motif of the empty throne developed alongside the representation of the ruler seated on his throne, as can be seen on a frieze in the Arch of Constantine.<sup>38</sup>

Christian art adopted the symbol of the throne, which later became a symbol of the Last Judgment. Both Christ seated on the throne, and the cross (as the

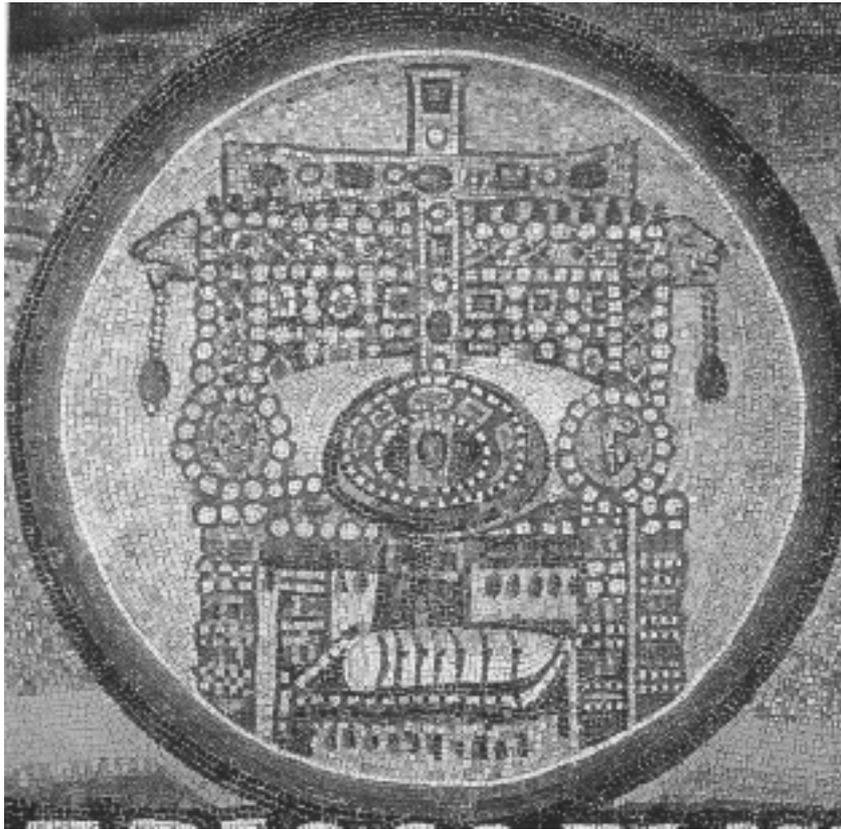


Fig. 8: Rome, Sta. Maria Maggiore (432 – 440), Triumphal arch, the empty throne (after Schiller 1971: 532).

symbol of Christ) situated on the empty throne became popular.<sup>39</sup> In monumental art, a representation of the imperial throne in this new religious context can be found in the apse of Sta. Pudenziana in Rome (390) (Fig. 7).<sup>40</sup> On the triumphal arch at the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome,<sup>41</sup> erected during the pontificate of Sixtus III (432-440), representations of the throne can be found in two locations: one in the center of the arch, where it appears in the form of the *etimasia* with a cross and a wreath placed on it (Fig. 8), and the other on the left side of the arch in the representation of a scene of the Adoration of the Magi. Although Christian art eagerly adopted these presentations, it was still an appropriate attribute for artistic depiction of a civil ruler, as can be seen in the *Lampadiorum* panel<sup>42</sup> and in the *Missorium* of Theodosius.<sup>43</sup>

Since Ravenna offers a range of similar forms,<sup>44</sup> it can be determined that the empty throne was not to be found in Ravenna before its appearance in the Orthodox Baptistery, and a few years later in the Arian one.

Although the two thrones, that of the Orthodox and that of the Arian encompass the same general meaning, their style and structure diverge entirely.

The Orthodox throne is of small dimensions; its supports are embellished with precious stones, its back is made of gold framed by a set of precious stones, drapes hang from its sides, and the large cushion placed on it is topped by the cross placed inside a floral wreath. The Arian throne, on the other hand, is of complex structure, comprising the chair itself combined with the broad footstool in front of it and a back made up of three sections ornamented with precious stones and azure drapes. An adorned cross is placed on a firm cushion from whose base a white drape is hung. The grand size of the Arian throne (at the height of the Apostles and double their width) suggests that its meaning, like its form, is much more complex than that of the Orthodox throne.

The size of the Orthodox throne, the fact that it appears four times in the register and the insubstantiality of the cross in the floral wreath all point to its allegorical, as well as of its decorative, nature. The rigidity of the Arian throne, on the other hand, gives a more symbolic and less realistic meaning and indicates a more complex signification. The Arian throne is situated at the front of the Apostles procession, on the same level as the Apostles, and above the baptistery's altar. The centrality of the throne in the scheme is only second to the representation of Christ being baptized, and in a sense acts as a link between the seat and altar of the present Bishop and the scene of the baptized Christ.

Although the Arian throne was created after the Orthodox ones, the throne of the Arian Baptistery resembles much more the Roman form of throne, in the sense of its central role and position in the decorative scheme, like the *etimasia* in the center of the arch in Sta. Maria Maggiore. In Ravenna, the representation of the Arian throne resembles a later depiction in which Christ is seated on the throne in the nave of Theoderic's palatine chapel - St. Apollinaris Nuovo (Fig. 9).<sup>45</sup>

The connection between Roman forms and Arian forms in Ravenna under the rule of Theoderic has an even more profound linkage. Upon the arrival of Theoderic to Italy, and while in the process of stabilizing his sovereignty, he adopted the Roman emperors as a major model.<sup>46</sup> In Theoderic's letters, collected by Cassiodorus and assembled in his *Variae*,<sup>47</sup> we find a quotation made by the king, which aptly describes his adoration of Rome: "Rome, we may grasp your outstanding greatness. For what city can dare to rival your towers, when even your foundations have no parallel"?<sup>48</sup>

Theoderic's admiration of Rome and its past are expressed in his massive building enterprise.<sup>49</sup> In one place Theoderic explains the reasons for his building venture: "I wish my age to match preceding ones in the beauty of its buildings, as it does in the happiness of the lives of my subjects".<sup>50</sup> Theoderic's



Fig. 9: Ravenna, St. Apollinaris Nuovo (c. 500 – c. 561), south nave wall, Christ as Ruler (after Kitzinger 1995: Fig. 106).

connection with the ancients resulted not only in the erection of new edifices, but also in his dedication to the restoration of old ones.<sup>51</sup> In his opinion even the new buildings should imitate those of the Roman past and thus revive the grand days of the Roman Empire, as he himself writes: “Nothing but the newness of the buildings must distinguish them from the constructions of the ancients”,<sup>52</sup> and elsewhere “Let us not lag behind the ancients’ desire for adornment”.<sup>53</sup>

Theoderic, however, avoided establishing his capital in Rome, where he had set foot only once in his entire life for the celebration of his *tricennalia*.<sup>54</sup> Instead, he chose to found his capital in Ravenna.<sup>55</sup> The establishment of a new capital in Ravenna initiated the building of royal monuments, and in order to glorify the new capital Theoderic requested that mosaic artists<sup>56</sup> and spolia should be sent to him from the old glorious capital – Rome.<sup>57</sup>

Theoderic’s view of Rome as a source of inspiration and his use of Roman spolia both point to a translation process that had a clear ideology behind it.<sup>58</sup> This process known from the time of Charlemagne as *translatio imperii*,<sup>59</sup> but as can be seen, the roots of this phenomenon were already to be found in the time of Theoderic. The form of the throne as a (earthly or heavenly) symbol of sovereignty was one phase in this process and encompassed the double meaning already attributed to it in Rome.

The royal and ecclesiastical patronage is also reflected in the different approach to the visual images of the Jordan river in the dome’s medallions.<sup>60</sup> The presentation of the Jordan images in the Orthodox Baptistry is directly linked to Neon’s inscription over the door: “Old name begone; antiquity yield to the new”.<sup>61</sup> In the medallion, the personification of Jordan is placed to the left of Christ, in the background of the Baptism scene. The Jordan seems to be



Fig. 10: Ravenna, St. Apollinaris Nouvo (c. 500 – c. 561), north nave wall, Christ on Mary’s lap (after Simson 1948: fig. 31).

turning away to leave the occurrence. A few years later, on the Orthodox Bishop Maximian’s throne (Fig. 10), the personified image of the Jordan would be trod beneath the feet of the baptized Christ.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast to the state of the Orthodox image of the Jordan, the Arian image of the Jordan is conceived as a figure seated calmly on the riverbank, to the right of Christ. The attitude towards Antiquity in Theoderic’s letters might explain the special position of the Jordan image in the composition, especially in contrast to the treatment it received by Neon in the Orthodox Baptistery. In one of his letters Theoderic wrote “in our times antiquity appears decently renewed”,<sup>63</sup> and in another he stated “we wish to build new edifices without despoiling the old”.<sup>64</sup> Like ancient monuments that attain a respected place next to the new ones, like the old emperors who gained honor in the time of Theoderic, so too did the Jordan image earn a position full of dignity next to the image of the newborn God-king. The Arian Jordan figure as a representative of Antiquity received the same respectful treatment as the ancient edifices and emperors themselves did.

The figure of the Jordan is acknowledging the newborn god. This gesture of recognition is portrayed in the elevation of the left hand as if waving to the baptized Christ. Such a gesture as an act of acknowledgment can also be found in Theoderic’s palatine chapel – St. Apollinaris Nouvo. There the infant Christ, seated on his mother’s lap, receives the three Magi who are leading a procession of virgins (Fig. 10).

The procession of the Virgins is not an original representation from the time of Theoderic. It is a later adaptation made by Archbishop Agnellus (in office, 557 – 570), after the rededication of the church to the Orthodox sect following the fall of Ravenna to the Byzantines in 540. Before the time of Agnellus, instead

of the Virgin procession, there was a depiction of King Theoderic and his court advancing toward the infant Christ, seated on his mother's lap.<sup>65</sup> Just as the Jordan figure is acknowledging Christ at the moment of baptism, so too does the image of the infant Christ recognize the arrival of a new king – King Theoderic.

To conclude, the different types of patronage constitute the true generator of the decorative schemes in the two baptisteries. In the Orthodox Baptistery the bishop is perceived as the absolute authority, the successor of Apollinaris, the first bishop, thus a true heir to St. Peter and Christ himself. The bishop is the center of the entire adornment depicted on the walls of the baptistery. On the other side of town, in the Arian Baptistery, Theoderic, the patron, or at least a most influential ruler at the time of the baptistery's construction, chooses to place the image of the throne at the head of the Apostles' procession. The throne is not only a symbol of Christ's sovereignty but also a sign of the presence of the earthly king. The dove hovering over the throne, symbolizes royal power by the grace of God.

The Arian throne with its double meaning, that of Christ and that of the civil ruler effectively demonstrates one of the first phases in the struggle of a Christian ruler to gain a position within the divinely dictated hierarchy.<sup>66</sup> This struggle is expressed by the depicted throne as well as by Theoderic's court poet, Ennodius of Pavia: "Who can doubt that he be holy whom the apex of so great dignity is enhanced".<sup>67</sup>

## Notes

- \* This article was first initiated by Nurith Kenaan-Kedar, and I am grateful for her guidance, patience and support.
1. Almost every study dealing with Early Christian art devotes space to this comparison. For a thorough discussion of the modification see Kostof 1965: 86- 89; Deichmann 1958: 210-211.
  2. See Lowden 1997: 124- 125, more recently Jensen 2000: 117- 120.
  3. Moorhead 1981: 106.
  4. Both Deichmann and Kostof note this difference, but do not fuse this notion into their analyses, Deichmann 1958: 207 – 208; Kostof 1965: 6, 9-12.
  5. Kostof 1965: 2- 3.
  6. Kostof 1965: 2.
  7. Detailed description of the baptistery's architecture is found in Kostof 1958: 31-43.
  8. Kostof 1965: 2.
  9. Kostof 1965: 11-18.

10. Introduction to the comprehensive analyses of Angellus's writing, see Pizarro 1995: 1-9.
11. On Angellus on art in the age of iconoclasm, see Deliyannis 1996: 559-576.
12. The translation is from Kostof 1965: 11.
13. Theoderic's building program is best described in Johnson 1988: 78 – 96.
14. Johnson 1988: 79.
15. Moorhead 1992: 143.
16. Deichmann 1958: 207 –208, Johnson 1988: 79.
17. Kostof 1965: 6.
18. Agnellus writes: "Infra urbem vero Ravennam ecclesiam sancti Theodori non longe a domo Drodonis, qua domus una cum balneo et sancti Apolenaris monasterio, quod in superiora domus structum, episcopium ipsius ecclesiae fuit." from Johnson 1988: 79.
19. For a conclusive discussion of the chapel, see Deichmann 1958: 201-206.
20. For a detailed description of the baptistery's architecture, see Deichmann 1958: 209-210.
21. Deichmann 1958: 211.
22. Johnson 1988: 79.
23. From the enormous amount of comparisons worth noting, Kostof 1965: 86 - 89; Wharton 1995: 114-139; and the stylistic comparison in Kitzinger 1976: 58 – 61.
24. Soper 1938: 57.
25. Grabar 1971 (1936): 232.
26. Nordstorm 1953: 41-43.
27. Wharton 1987: 369-374, a slightly different version in Wharton 1995: 122-131.
28. For a comprehensive discussion on St. Apollinaris and the formation of his cult, see, Simson 1948: 51-58.
29. On the struggle of Ravenna to achieve apostolic status, see Humphries 1994: 190-191. The dispute between Rome and Ravenna became a serious ecclesiastical conflict in the second half of the sixth century, see Markus 1981: 566-578.
30. Olivar 1982: 789 - 791; Sermo 128.
31. Kostof 1965: 3.
32. Translation from Kostof 1965:3.
33. Translation from Kostof 1965: 2-3.
34. For a comprehensive discussion of the different approaches, see: Kostof 1965: 76-82, and more recently, Wharton 1987: 373-374.
35. See Nordstorm 1953: 46-47.
36. See Schiller 1971: 194.
37. See Grabar 1971 (1936): 199-200.
38. According to Grabar, the frieze in the Arch of Constantine is, along with contemporary coinage, are the source of the representation of the throne in the apse of Sta. Pudenziana and in the scene of the Adoration of the Magi in the triumphal arch of Sta. Maria Maggiore, see Grabar 1971: 196 - 197; 207-208.
39. The theory regarding the linkage between imperial and Christian iconography was first introduced by Grabar in 1936 (Grabar 1971 (1936)). In a more recent study,

- Mathews 1993 attempted to crack Grabar's well-accepted theory. Mathews' study has not been totally accepted, see Spieser 1998: 65 - 66.
40. For a recent discussion, see Spieser 1998: bibliography therein.
  41. For a discussion of the iconography of the throne in the representation of the Adoration of the Magi, see Spain 1979: 526 - 527.
  42. On the panel, see Kiilerich 1993: 143 - 144.
  43. On the Missorium of Theodosius, see Kiilerich 1993: 19 -26.
  44. A quick survey of Ravennatian forms such as the conch, doves and forms of specific presentation like Christ in armor treading on the lion and the serpent, shows that the forms migrate from one monument to the other, over the different eras and reigns. Each time the form receives new significance.
  45. There is no agreement whether the depiction of Christ, Mary and their ushering angels is from the era of Theoderic or from a later period. Although von Simson agrees that the mosaics are of different style from those of the procession, he attributes them to the time of Archbishop Agnellus. He does so due to the mere fact that Andreas Agnellus, writer of the *Liber Pontificalis*, attributes the mosaics to Agnellus, and since Agnellus' authority is accepted for the dating of the mosaics elsewhere, Simson accepts his ruling in this case. Simson: 1948: 82, bibliography therein.
  46. See Moorhead 1992: 39 -51.
  47. For a thorough discussion of Cassiodorus's *Variae*, see O'Donnell 1979: 55-130.
  48. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, III.30, in Barnish 1992: 60-61.
  49. See Johnson 1988: 73-78.
  50. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, I.6, in Davis-Weyer 1986: 50.
  51. On Theoderic's works of restoration, see Johnson 1988: 77-78.
  52. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, VII.5, in Mommsen 1894: 205.
  53. *Ibid*, I.6. in Mommsen 1894: 16.
  54. On Theoderic's only visit to Rome, see Moorhead 1992: 60-65.
  55. See Moorhead 1992: 140-144.
  56. See Theoderic letter to Agapetus, where he requests mosaic and marble workers to be sent from Rome to Ravenna to aid in the erection of the Basilica Hercules. Cassiodorus, *Variae* I.6, in Mommsen 1894:16.
  57. On the ideology behind Theoderic's use of spolia, see Brenk 1987: 107-108.
  58. Von Simson sees the Theoderic palatine chapel (St. Apollinaris Nouvo), and especially the liturgical scenes of the top tier of the nave, as ones made by direct influence of Rome, according to the patron admiration of Roman churches, and despite the "unbridgeable" gap between Catholicism and Arianism. Simson 1948: 71-72.
  59. I do not know of any discussion regarding Theoderic's *translatio imperii*. Brenk mentions the idea but does not discuss it for he sees the purpose of the process as different to the one of Charlemagne - the famous importer. Brenk 1987: 109.
  60. On the two representations of the river Jordan, see Deichmann 1958: 143-145, 210.
  61. As in n. 11.
  62. Kostof 1965: 122.
  63. Cassiodorus, *Variae* IV.51, in Barnish 1992: 82.
  64. *Ibid*, III.9, in Mommsen 1894: 84.
  65. See Simson 1948: 81.

66. The ever classical study by Kantorowicz portrays a lucid picture of the struggle and the problem it posed, Kantorowicz 1997.  
 67. Quoted from Kantorowicz 1997: 81.

### List of References

- Barnish 1992: S. J. B. Barnish, *The Variiae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator*, Liverpool 1992.  
 Brenk 1987: B. Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics Versus Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 41 (1987), 103-109.  
 Davis-Weyer 1986: C. Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art 300-1150*, Toronto 1986.  
 Deichmann 1958: F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna - Hauptstadt des Spätantiken Abendlandes*, 4 vols. Weisbaden 1958.  
 Deliyannis 1996: D. M. Deliyannis, "Agnellus of Ravenna and Iconoclasm: Theology and Politics in a Ninth-Century Historical Text," *Speculum*, 71(1996), 559-576.  
 Elsner 1998: J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, Oxford 1998.  
 Grabar 1971: A. Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin*, London 1971 (1936).  
 Humphries 1994: M. Humphries, "Inventing Apostles: North Italian Churches and Their Past in the Early Middle Ages, 500 – 1100," *Medieval History*, 4(1994), 187-198.  
 Jensen 2000: R. M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, London 2000.  
 Johnson 1988: M. J. Johnson, "Toward a History of Theoderic's Building Program," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 42(1988), 73 – 96.  
 Kantorowicz 1997: E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, Princeton 1997 (1957).  
 Kiilerich 1993: B. Kiilerich, *Late Fourth Century Classicism in the Plastic Arts: A Systematic Study of Sculpture, Ivories and Silver Plate*, Odense 1993.  
 Kitzinger 1995: E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, Cambridge 1995 (1976).  
 Kostof 1965: S. K. Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna*, New Haven 1965.  
 Lowden 1997: J. Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, London 1997.  
 Markus 1981: R. A. Markus, "Ravenna and Rome, 554 – 604," *Byzantion*, 51:2(1981), 566-678.  
 Mathews 1993: T. F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*, Princeton 1993.  
 Mommsen 1894: T. Mommsen (ed.) *Cassiodori Senatoris – Variiae*, Berlin 1894.  
 Moorhead 1981: J. Moorhead, "The Last Years of Theoderic," *Historia*, 32(1981), 106-120.  
 Moorhead 1992: J. Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, Oxford 1992.  
 Nordstorm 1953: C. O. Nordstrom, *Ravennastudien: ideengeschichtliche und ikonographische Untersuchungen über die Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Uppsala 1953.  
 O'Donnell 1979: J. O'Donnell, *Cassiodorus*, Berkeley 1979.  
 Olivar 1982: A. Olivar (ed.), *Sancti Petri Chrysologi*, Turnhout 1982.  
 Pizarro 1995: J. M. Pizarro, *Writing Ravenna*, Michigan 1995.  
 Schiller 1971: G. Schiller *Ikonographie der Christliche Kunst*, 5 vols. Gutersloh 1971.  
 Simson 1948: O. G. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, Princeton 1948.

- Soper 1938: A. C. Soper, "The Italo-Gallic School of Early Christian Art," *Art Bulletin*, 20(1938), 145 – 192.
- Spain 1979: S. Spain, "The Promised Blessing: The Iconography of the Mosaics of Sta. Maria Maggiore," *Art Bulletin*, 61(1979), 518 – 540.
- Spieser 1998: J. M. Spieser, "The Representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches," *Gesta*, 37:1(1998), 63 – 73.
- Wharton 1987: A. J. Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning: The Neonian Baptistery in Ravenna," *Art Bulletin*, 69:3 (1987), 358 – 375.
- Wharton 1995: A. J. Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City*, Cambridge 1995.