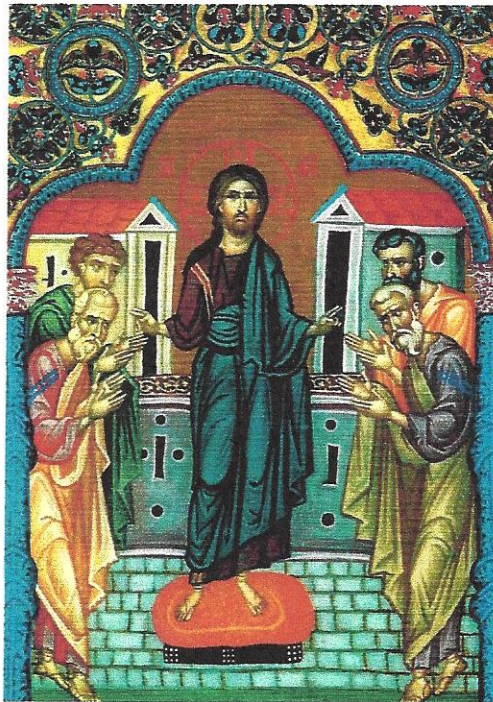


FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Edited by Archbishop Lazar Puhalo & Petros Vassiliadis
CEMES & SYNAXIS PRESS

CEMES
38
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Editors: Archbishop Lazar Puhalo and Dr. Petros Vassiliadis



CEMES PUBLICATIONS
Thessaloniki, Greece
and
SYNAXIS PRESS
Dewdney, Canada

CONTENTS

FOREWORD: for the Visible Unity of the One Church of Christ . 1

CHAPTER 1: Challenges and Perspectives of the Orthodox-Catholic Theological Dialogue. From Schism to Imperfect Communion.

Hyacinthe Destivelle 3

Comment by George M. Kondothra 17

Comment by Ihor Shaban 18

Comment by Dimitrios Keramidas 19

CHAPTER 2: The Common Celebration of Pascha/easter and Eastern-western Christian Relations. *Metropolitan Job Getcha* .. 20

CHAPTER 3: Historical Factors in the Break of Communion Between Rome and Constantinople. *Dimitrios Moschos* 32

Comment by Theodosios Kyriakides 45

CHAPTER 4: Was There A “Canonical” Schism Between Rome and Constantinople? *Grigorious Larentzakis*..... 52

CHAPTER 5: Images in Art of Women Deacons in East and West *Ally Kateusz*..... 70

A Sociological Comment by Niki Papageorgiou..... 80

CHAPTER 6: Historical Factors of the Estrangement Between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church. *Dimitrios Keramidas*..... 87

CHAPTER 7: The Church of Rome in Search Of Rediscovering Conciliarity. *Archbishop Ioannis Spiteris* 97

CHAPTER 8: A New Christian Anthropology: the “Horizontal” and “Vertical” Dimensions of the Human Person.

Georgy Kochetkov 106

CHAPTER 9: Ecumenical Metaphysics and Church Union <i>Antoine Arjakovsky</i>	127
CHAPTER 10: The Prospects of Reunion of the Orthodox Church with the Catholic and Oriental Churches. <i>Georgios Martzelos</i> ..	140
CHAPTER 11: Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue in Ukraine: Challenges, Prospects, and Approaches. <i>Andrii Krawchuk</i>	151
CHAPTER 12: Ecumenical Relations of The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. <i>Ihor Shaban</i>	175
Comment by Petros Vassiliadis:	185
Comment by Archbishop Dimitrios Salachas:	188
CHAPTER 13: Yves Congar's Contribution to the Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue. <i>Stavros Yangazoglou</i>	191
CHAPTER 14: Under the Same Cross Through Jesus Forsaken. <i>Augustinos Bairactaris</i>	213
CHAPTER 15: Identity and Alterity. The Mystery and the Paradox of Self-knowledge in the Theology of Fr. Dumitru Staniloae. <i>Cristian Sonea</i>	233
CHAPTER 16: The Great Joy and the Renewal of the Church of Christ: Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's Contribution to Ecumenical Theology <i>Georgios Basioudis</i>	243
CHAPTER 17: The Encounter of the Orthodox and Catholics with Science in the Past and Present. <i>Petros Panagiotopoulos</i> ..	254
CHAPTER 18: The Ecological Problem As A Point of Ecumenical Consensus of Pope Francis And Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew <i>Maria Sereti-</i>	266
Comment by Christophe Arvanitis:	272

CHAPTER 19: “Will You Remember Me, O Lord?” Commemoration of Non-orthodox Names in the Byzantine Rite of Proskomidia	
<i>Stylianos Muksuris</i>	278

CHAPTER 20: Orthodox and Catholics in Common Bible Translation Projects. <i>Miltiadis Konstantinou</i>	299
1. Comment by Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov: Do Translations of Scripture Unite Or Divide Christians?	303
2. Comment by Pavlos Vasileiadis: the Treasured Legacy of Simon Atumano	305

CHAPTER 21: From the Embrace of Peter & Paul to the Embrace of Andrew & Peter. Desire for Unity. <i>Panagiotis Andriopoulos</i> . . .	307
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CHAPTER 22: Conciliarity in the Catholic Church and the Endangered Unity of the Orthodox Church. Workshop with Members and Friends of Cemes	
1. Giacomo Puglisi:	322
2. Petros Vassiliadis	326
3. Ivan Zhelev Dmitrov:	330
4. Adalberto Mainardi: Theological Dialogue	332
5. John N. Njoroge:	340
6. Diogenis Karagiannakidis:	351

CHAPTER 23: the Historical and Theological Background of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. <i>Lazar Puhalo</i>	358
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER 24: “Russian World” the Russian Church the Phenomenon of Putin. <i>Archimandrite Bartholomew</i>	366
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER 25: Theology of Leadership in A Religiously Diverse World, and its Application to the Unity of the Church of Christ	
<i>Nikolaos Dimitriadis</i>	380

CHAPTER 26: Catholic Martyrs in Muslim Areas of the Orthodox East	
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

<i>Panagiotis Ar. Yfantis</i>	386
Comment by Luca Bianchi	399
Comment by Theodosios Kyriakidis.	401
 CHAPTER 27. Deaconesses in Eastern and Western Christianity with Special Reference to St, Nonna <i>Sister Theologia</i> (<i>Evanthia Adamitziloglou</i>)	
Comment by Katerina Drosia	404
Comment by Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-kypriou:	420
424	
 Chapter 28. The Papal Apostolic Exortation “ <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> ” and the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church <i>Stylianos Tsompanidis</i>	
427	
 LIST OF EDITORS AND AUTHORS.	446



Chapter 5.

IMAGES IN ART OF WOMEN DEACONS IN EAST AND WEST

Ally Kateusz

The continued restoration of the order of women deacons has popular support among the laity in both Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic church communities. The Patriarchate of Alexandria and Africa and the Orthodox Church of Greece are currently leading the way, which seems to have had a positive effect on the Catholic church, which historically has had more difficulty seeing the value of the female, perhaps in part due to its requirement for celibate priests, who have neither wives nor daughters. In recent years, however, Pope Francis has instituted two commissions to consider the restoration of the office of women deacons. The continued restoration of women deacons in the East quite likely not only will lead the way for the West but also, would help unify East and West in the desire to return to the practices of the unified early Church, practices seen in art in both East and West.

The very oldest identification of a woman titled “deacon,” of course, is in Romans 16:1-2 where, around the year 57 CE, Paul introduced Phoebe to the Roman recipients of his letter as their sister and specified that she was “a deacon of the church” (διακονον της εκκλησιας) in Cenchrea. In taking Paul’s letter from Ancient Greece to the city of Rome, the deacon Phoebe herself linked East and West. She herself thus is an auspicious symbol for unification.

The documentation for women deacons in the early church is particularly strong in the East, which, of course, is where Christianity had its origins. Scholars know of over three hundred names of women deacons in the East, both from mosaic or stone epigraphs that commemorated these women’s lives in the church, as well as women deacons named in writings, such as Olympia who was a deacon and supporter of Chrysostom when he was patriarch in the Hagia Sophia.

The known number of women deacons in the East has recently increased with the discovery of several mosaic inscriptions for women deacons in a previously unknown Roman-era church in Ashdod Yam in Israel. These mosaics were preserved nearly intact for centuries after the church's roof fell in, and one of the most important discoveries is that more women deacons than males are named in these inscriptions, suggesting the strong acceptance of this female office. The oldest certain inscription is dated 410 and it pairs the Gaianos the presbyter with Severa the deacon.¹

The *Didascalia apostolorum*, a popular third-century composition originally written in Greek, both preserves and also redacts older sources representing the apostolic tradition. Suggesting that it was known in the area of Ashdod Yam in Palestine, it survives in Syriac translation. It also was translated into Latin, suggesting its traditions were shared in both East and West. The Syriac and the Latin preserve two passages with relevance to the roles of women deacons during this early era, one related to offerings and the other to baptism.

The first passage relates to the role of women deacons during the offering. The *Didascalia* states that the bishop is the high priest who represents God and makes the offering to God. It goes on to say that the male deacon is the type of Jesus Christ, and the female deacon is the type of the Holy Spirit. It instructs that anyone who wishes to make an offering at the altar must give the offering to the high priest directly—or to these male and female deacons²

This parallelism of the male deacon standing for Jesus Christ at the altar and the female deacon for the Holy Spirit may be even better understood within the recognition that prior to the end of the fourth century, the Holy Spirit was widely understood as female, even Mother.³ The identification of the Holy Spirit as female was present not only in the language of Ancient Israel and Syria, where “spirit,” *ruah*, was grammatically feminine gendered, but also in Greek and Coptic, where it is grammatically neuter gendered, and in Latin, where it is masculine gendered. Perhaps the best-known example of the Holy Spirit as Mother was twice recorded by the theologian Origen (c.

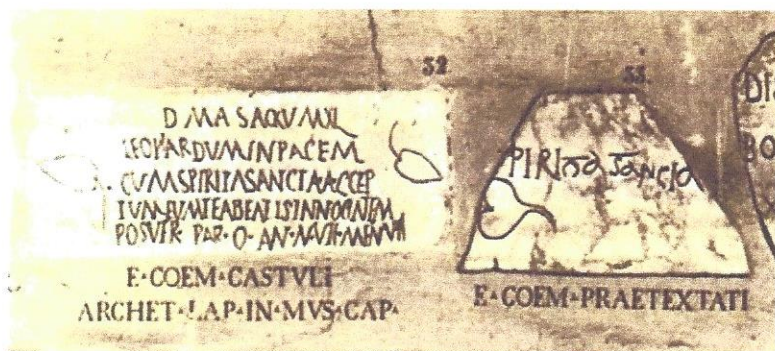
184–253), writing in Greek in Caesaria. Origen wrote that at Jesus's baptism, when the dove of the Holy Spirit descended, the Gospel of the Hebrews read, "The Saviour himself says: 'My Mother, the Holy Spirit.'"⁴ The literary tradition of the Holy Spirit as Mother also survived in a few medieval Greek manuscripts, including of the Acts of Thomas, which specified that after baptizing people, Thomas uttered prayers in which he identified the Holy Spirit as Mother.⁵

Come, compassionate Mother,
Come, fellowship of the male;
Com, thou (fem.) that dost reveal the hidden mysteries;
Come Mother . . .
Come, Holy Spirit, and purify their reins and their heart.⁶

Greek manuscript fragments also preserve chapters of the Acts of Philip, dated variously from the second to the fifth century.⁷ The author of the Acts of Philip named Mariamne, who evangelized with Philip, an "apostle."⁸ According to the Martyrdom of Philip often attached to the end of the Acts of Philip, while preaching to a woman, Mariamne paired her Father in heaven and her spiritual Mother:

You are guilty of having forgotten your origins,
your Father in heaven, and your spiritual Mother.
If you wake up, however, you will receive illumination.⁹

Perhaps most remarkable, the femininity of the Holy Spirit appears to have been so important to some Christians in the Latin world that they corrected the masculine gender of "spirit"—spiritus in Latin—to the feminine gendered spirita. We see this in some plaques from the Christian catacombs of Rome carved with *SPIRITA SANCTA*.¹⁰ Note that the plaque fragment on the below has lost the initial "S" in *SPIRITA SANCTA*.



Pre-Constantinian stone plaques carved with SPIRITA SANCTA. Vatican Museum, Rome. Photo: Marrucci, *Monumenti* (1910), plate 52, nos. 32 and 33.

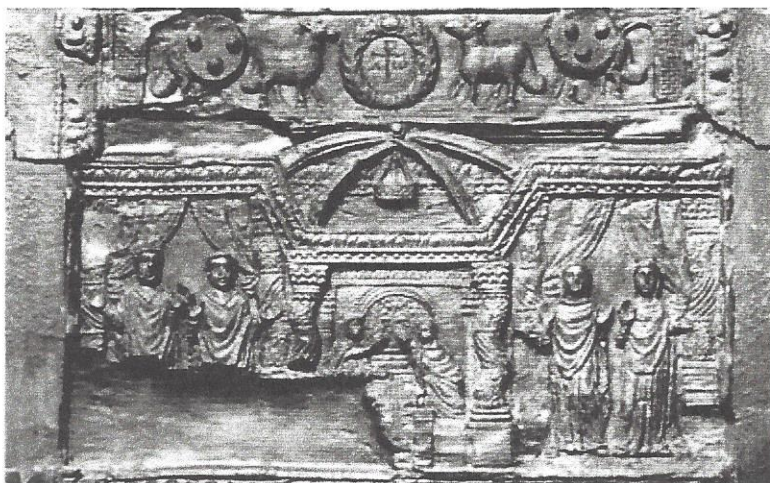
Thus, the early reader, or hearer, of the *Didascalia apostolorum*, whether in Syriac or Greek or Latin, quite possibly understood that at the altar the female deacon represented the Holy Spirit, a female, while the male deacon represented Jesus.

The *Didascalia* also specifies that while the deacon is the type of Christ and the deaconess the type of the Holy Spirit, the presbyters are the type of the apostles.¹¹ This indicates that in the early community of the *Didascalia* the male and female deacons were of higher rank than these elders.

This understanding of the male deacon standing in for Christ and the female deacon for the Holy Spirit according to the *Didascalia* may help to explain depictions of men and women flanking church altars seen in fourth and fifth-century art in both East and West. Notably, these images pre-date any surviving images in art of men and only men at a church altar. Two of these iconographic artifacts that pair men and women at the altar appear to portray the liturgy in the holy of holies in Old Saint Peter's of Rome and the Second Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

The first of these artifacts is an ivory reliquary box carved with a scene of the altar area of Old Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. In 1906 it was found buried beneath the altar area of a Roman-era church near Pola in Croatia, but due to its fine craftsmanship, most scholars assess it as having been carved in Constantinople, Palestine, or Italy. It is

dated from the late fourth to mid-fifth century. Starting around 1950, the scene began to undergo a great deal of historiography, about which I have written extensively, including in a recent issue of *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ*.¹² There has been no debate, however, that the sculptor carved three women on the right and three men on the left. This gender parallelism in the altar area of Old Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome is reminiscent of the description in the *Didascalia apostolorum*, which describes a pair of male and female deacons assisting the bishop at the offering.



Old Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome. Ivory reliquary box, ca. late 4th to mid-5th c. Museo Archeologico, Venice. © Alinari Archives-Alinari Archive, Florence

The second artifact is from the East, another beautiful carving depicting a man and a woman flanking an altar. A small boy next to the woman holds an open book with his hand raised as if speaking. Due to where it was excavated in 1988, as well as the style of the early Christian cross and the man's clothing, it is dated to around 430, when the Second Hagia Sophia was built, and it may have been part of its chancel screen.¹³ The young Augusta Pulcheria and her younger brother may be portrayed on the right, for both reportedly stood in the Holy of Holies during the communion.¹⁴ In addition, and signifying Pulcheria's liturgical agency, according to Sozomon's Ecclesial History 9.1, Pulcheria herself consecrated the Holy Table in the Second Hagia

Sophia.



Liturgical scene on a chancel screen, Second Hagia Sophia.
Constantinople, ca. 430. Archeological Museum of Istanbul.

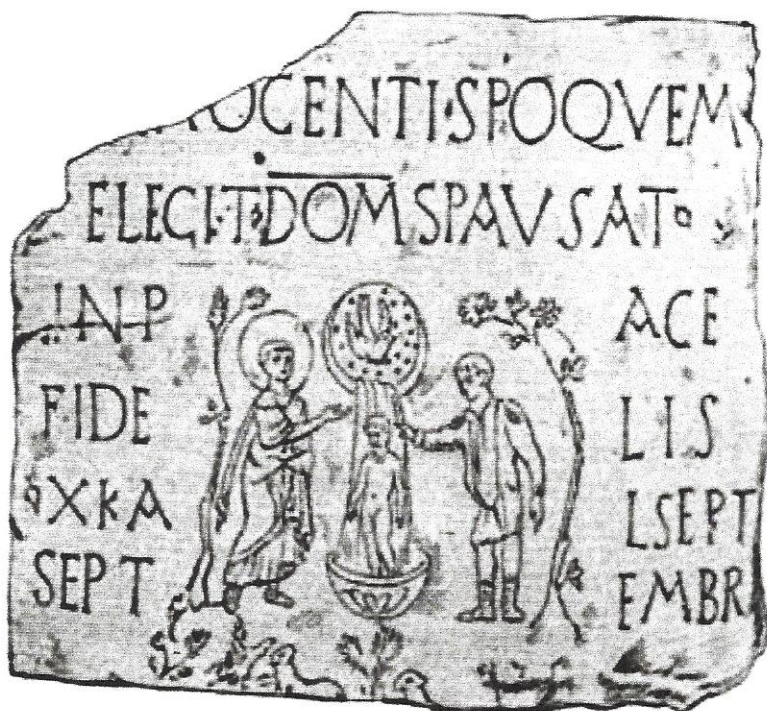
These are the two very oldest iconographic artifacts to portray people at the altar of a church, and both portray men and women flanking the altar. Today in Eastern Orthodox churches, men still remain on the same side of the nave and women on the opposite, the same as in most Catholic churches prior to World War II.

In the second passage, the *Didascalia apostolorum* instructed the bishop to appoint both male and female deacons, and this part of the text addressed the role of women deacons in the conversion, baptism, and education of women:

You are to choose and appoint deacons from all the people who are pleasing to you, a man for the administration of many things which are necessary, a woman however for the ministry of women, since there are houses where you cannot send a deacon to the women because of the pagans but you can send a deaconess. In the first instance, it is required that when women go down into the waters that they should be anointed with the oil of anointing by deaconesses as they enter the waters...If a woman is present, and particularly a deaconess, it is not right that a woman should be seen by a man...When she who has been baptized comes out of the waters a deaconess should receive her and instruct her and educate her so that the mark of baptism may be kept

intact in chastity and holiness. On this account, we declare that the ministry of a woman, a deaconess, is particularly useful and important. Our Lord and Saviour also received ministry at the hands of women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the daughter of James and mother of Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. You too have need of the ministry of a deaconess in many things. . . .¹⁵

The text goes on to add: A woman should be devoted to ministry among women, and a male deacon to ministry among men.¹⁶ Of particular interest in these instructions is that women deacons were necessary for the baptism of women. Indicating that practice of women with women during the baptism was well-known in the early centuries of the Christian era, this description is similar to the practice preserved in the Acts of Philip, which records that "Philip was baptizing the men and Mariamne the women."¹⁷ The Didascalia's description of women involved in the baptism of women is also consistent with a scene of two clothed women flanking a nude woman portrayed on a fourth-century lead basin embossed with a large chi-rho symbol, all of which is on a basin known as the Walesby Tank. A large fragment of this basin was plowed up in a field in Lincolnshire, England in 1959 and it is one of many similar basins with Christian symbols believed to have been used in Britain for affusion baptism, that is, baptism by water poured over the head instead of immersion.¹⁸ Seventy years ago, in an analysis that soon gained acceptance, Jocelyn Toynbee proposed that at 18 inches wide and 13 inches deep, the basin was large enough to stand in for baptism by affusion and that it was similar to a basin depicted in a scene of a baptism carved on a fourth-century stone plaque from Aquileia, Italy, which portrays a nude child standing in a basin, or tank while being baptized by a stream of water coming from above. Two fully dressed people stand on either side.¹⁹



.Stone plaque depicting affusion baptism in a basin, or tank.

Aquileia Archeological Museum, 4th c.

Image: Cabrol, Dictionnaire 1.2 col. 2672, fig. 871

On the left side of the scene at the top left of the Walesby Tank fragment, three women are portrayed standing between two columns, with two of the women fully dressed. Between them, the third woman stands naked. A long mantle almost falls off her shoulders, as if she is disrobing. On the right side, three men dressed in tunics also stand between two columns. The columns that frame the two groups evoke the columns around the pools of water in the atriums of Roman era homes as well as around some early baptismal fonts, and therefore Toynbee proposed that the two groups portrayed two stages of an early Christian baptism. She suggested that the two clothed women flanking the nude woman were to be seen as the sponsors of a female neophyte,

who was disrobing, about to step into the water. Of the three clothed men, Toynbee asked, "Could the central one be a male neophyte with his sponsors, waiting his turn to enter the disrobing chamber"?²⁰ Of course, these sponsors very well also could be the women deacons and men deacons charged with assisting male and female initiates during their baptism and educating them afterwards.



Walesby Tank fragment, fourth century.

© The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire



Closeup: Two women flank a nude woman (left). Three men (right).

The gender parallelism in the Didascalia apostolorum's description of male and female deacons, thus, may be present in the baptismal scene on the Walesby Tank as well as in the two carvings of liturgical scenes that portray men and women flanking at the altars of two of the most important churches in East and West, the Second Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and Old Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. In the baptismal scene, both men and women appear to be practicing in accordance with the Didascalia's instruction that women deacons were necessary for the proper baptism of women. The Didascalia further suggests that in the liturgical scenes the men stood as the type of Christ and the women as the type of the (female) Holy Spirit at the altar.

As seen in the artifacts above, thus, early Christian art in both East and West indicates that the Didascalia instruction, "A woman should be devoted to ministry among women, and a male deacon to ministry among men,"²¹ appears to have applied both to women deacons helping women at the baptism and also to women deacons at the Holy Table, where men and women stood in parallel. Furthermore, the Didascalia appears to preserve an ancient theological justification for the ministry of women, a theology that should be clear to bishops in both East and West:

*Our Lord and Saviour also received ministry at the hands of women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the daughter of James and mother of Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. You too have need of the ministry of a deaconess in many things.*²²

This theology is reflected in the carving of an ivory pyx dated to the 500s. This artifact is the very oldest to portray only one sex at a Christian altar, and it portrays only women. Its sculptor bore witness to what appears to be an early tradition of women liturgical leaders at the Tomb in the Anastasis in Jerusalem, a tradition that strong evidence indicates persisted for centuries, even though in later centuries the women's leadership roles appear to have been diminished from what is

seen on the pyx.²³ The sculptor carved five women, two with censors and three with their arms raised, all processing to what appears to be the altar associated with the famous shrine over the Tomb of Christ beneath the rotunda of the Anastasis. This scene is often identified as the Women at the Tomb due to the way it seems to reference other artifacts that portray the two Marys approaching the exterior of the shrine over Christ's Tomb.²⁴ Here, however, the sculptor carved not the exterior of the Shrine, nor the Tomb. Instead, we see a tripod stone table with a gospel book upon it, a lamp hanging above it, four spiral columns holding up the canopy over the Holy Table, and women ministers of Christ.



Liturgical scene of women processing to the Holy Table at the tomb of Christ. Anastasis, Jerusalem, ca. 500s. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Niki Papageorgiou **A (SOCIOLOGICAL) COMMENT**

The issue of women's ministry, the institutional liturgical ministry, has been the subject of a wide debate in recent years. The centre for Ecumenical, Missiological and Environmental Studies "Metropolitan Panteleimon Papageorgiou" (CEMES), thanks in particular to the tireless efforts of its Honourary President, Petros Vassiliadis, participated in a dynamic way in this discussion. Both the first Conference organized by the Centre on "Deaconesses, Ordination of Women and Orthodox Theology" (January 22-24, 2015), and the second one on "Deaconesses: Past - Present - Future" (January 31 - February 2, 2020), brought together a wide range of scholars and

researchers, who investigated the subject from many scientific perspectives (theological, historical, canonical, patristic, sociological, etc.) and highlighted its various aspects. From theology to practice, from the Orthodox Church to the Roman Catholic and the Ancient Oriental Churches, and from liturgical life to pastoral and social practice, they underlined the theological positions and presented the research data on this issue that are constantly being discovered in the area of biblical, patristic, historical, philological and archaeological studies.

More specifically, the first conference examined the reinstitution of the order of deaconesses (including their liturgical act) through the latest theological or other research, critically approached the contemporary practice of the Church in the light of the authentic, though latent, tradition.²⁵ The second conference highlighted specific cases, in which the institutional role of women deacons in the life of the Orthodox Church, but also of other Churches, in the real/historical field through the evidence of the biblical and apocryphal sources, the liturgical texts, the early, proto-Byzantine and mid-Byzantine liturgical practice of the Church, as well as the early Christian art.²⁶

In the interval between the two conferences, some consoling efforts appeared, which attempted to reactivate the diaconal - male and female - ministry of the Church. The decision of Pope Francis to open the debate on women deacons in the Roman Catholic Church,²⁷ and the synodal decision of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, in 2017, to proceed with the ordination of deaconesses in order to respond to the missionary needs of the African continent,²⁸ but also the positive attitude of some Metropolitans of the Church of Greece towards this issue, raised hopes for the actual revival of this traditional Christian institution.

From the proceedings of the two conferences, it is established that the institutional ministry of women is not an alien affair for the Christian Church, and much more so for the Orthodox Church. It belongs to its authentic, though latent, tradition, which lies hidden beneath its historical tradition²⁹ and must be brought to light and

reactivated.

The role of research proves to be of paramount importance here. Painstaking theological, canonical, historical, philological and archaeological research functions as a kind of archeology of knowledge: they "dig" under the "embankments", i.e. the later social additions, which cover women's faces, hide their activities, silence their role and make them invisible. The role of the research is to "dig" in order to reveal the active and dynamic presence of women and to give shape and form to their activities, almost forgotten under the weight of the historical conditions that unfairly reduced their importance.

Under the burden of a historical condition, unjust and demeaning to women, these latter are often treated as quasi-absent, silent and invisible. Of course, they are present, but society's gaze and hearing are not focused on them; no one sees them, and no one hears them. Research can give voice to women and make them visible, present, and influential again in the process of running the church community.

This is what Ally Kateusz's research does, with the topic she suggested: "Images of Female Deacons in art in East and West". With Kateusz's contribution, the testimony of art comes to strengthen the results of the biblical and historical research in recent years, reminding us of the forgotten institutional and liturgical role of women, when the Church functioned as a body of Christ around the altar, and not as a hierarchical and patriarchal institution, as it was subsequently evolved, under the influence of the social and cultural environment of late antiquity. The depictions of women around the Holy Altar, according to Kateusz's analysis, testify to the fact that women had a leading liturgical role in the Christian communities during the first centuries. It is even remarkable that the women are not simply present, together with men, around the altar; they are also present in a symmetrical way, demonstrating the equally participatory and eucharistic character of the primary community, compared to the later hierarchical and patriarchal one.

Art illuminates in its own revelatory way the unseen aspects of a forgotten, but clearly existing tradition, concerning the role of women

in the early Church. The deaconesses actively participated in the process of the Church's operation, i.e., in its liturgical, pastoral, and social work. However, over the centuries their participation faded away and fell into oblivion. Societies had to change, the debate on the role of women to be re-opened and the perspective of research renewed, to ascertain and recognize the "invisible" figures of women hidden and invisible under the weight of social conditions. The interesting thing is that the more the subject is researched the more we discover examples of women ministers, who are there waiting silently and invisibly for the help of research in order for women to gain a voice and a face, appreciation, and recognition.

The invisibility of women emerges as a focal point in social science research. It is considered a form of abuse of their identity and underestimation of their value to the detriment of course, not only of the women themselves but also of the healthy functioning of the community and society in general. Behind the invisibility of women, the patriarchal and male-dominated structures of traditional societies are hidden, which are supported by the dominant members of the group (men) who "construct" this situation.³⁰ Practices used in order for one group of individuals to dominate others are obscurity, ridicule, withholding information, inducing feelings of shame and guilt, as well as devaluing them.³¹ In this context, the impression is created that those who belong to the dominant social group speak more, so their contribution and value is recognized.³² On the contrary, the social contribution of women, as in general of individuals or groups coming from non-dominant social categories, is underestimated. The dominant group usually sets the rules and norms, with the result that marginalized group members are put at a disadvantage: once they become invisible, they are deprived of recognition, appreciation, power and voice.³³

On the contrary, women's visibility allows recognition,³⁴ authenticity, and self-determination.³⁵ Visibility implies that a person is accepted for their skills and abilities, rather than being categorized by others in a stereotypical way.³⁶ Both visibility and invisibility are embedded in power relations because those in power also have the

ability to make others visible or invisible. These two situations reflect social hierarchies and social boundaries and are then used to reinforce these arbitrary boundaries, ensuring the maintenance of social hierarchy between groups.³⁷ Because they are socially constructed,³⁸ when social conditions change, so does the nature and function of conditions of visibility.

Let us hope that this continuous and persistent revelation of the institutional role of women in the Church of the first centuries, will be able to reveal also the dynamic presence of modern women in the Church and open ways for the institutional recognition that suits them. To this end, testimonies such as those brought by Dr. Kateusz, brought to the surface through early Christian and early Byzantine art are of enormous importance.

ENDNOTES:

1. https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/MAGAZINE-byzantine-basilica-with-female-ministers-and-baffling-burials-found-in-Israel-1.10387014?fbclid=IwAR3UftlCgIkVadU4Ys-4Ca8yYiInUu3CdI-ozjG0zMssP8RXUo1k3MwC3_w Note that Alexander Fantalkin, director of the excavations, gave me permission to use the photos in my PowerPoint, but as of now the results of this discovery have not yet been published in a scholarly journal, so at this point permission is not provided for any publication of my essay itself.
2. Syriac *Didascalia apostolorum* 9.2-3.3 (Alistair Stewart-Sykes, trans., *The Didascalia apostolorum: An English Version with Introduction and Annotation* Turnhout: Brepols, 2009, 150–51); Latin *Didascalia apostolorum* 25-27 (Edmundus Hauler, trans., *Didascalie apostolorum: fragmenta Veronensia Latina* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1899, 36–38).
3. Sebastian Brock, *Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition* (Pune, India: Anita, 1998); and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Feminine Imagery for the Divine: The Holy Spirit, the Odes of Solomon, and Early Syriac Tradition" (St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Vol. 37, nos. 2 and 3), 111–39.
4. Origen, *Commentary on John 2.87* (Ronald E. Heine, trans., *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel according to John Books 1–10* Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989, 116); and Origen, *Homily 15 on Jeremiah 4.2* (John Clark Smith, trans., *Origen: Homilies on Jeremiah and 1 Kings 28* Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998, 161).
5. Greek Acts of Thomas 2.27 and 5.50 (Han J. W. Drijvers, trans., "The Acts of Thomas" in *New Testament Apocrypha*, Volumes 1 and 2, edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher, translated by Translated by R. McL. Wilson revised edition; Cambridge: James Clark, 1991, 1992, 2:322–411, two prayers at 349–50 and 359–60, with discussion about Holy Spirit as Mother in these Acts on pp. 333–34).
6. Greek Acts of Thomas 2.27 (Drijvers, trans., "Acts of Thomas," 349–50). Capitalization of Mother mine.
7. François Bovon and Christopher R. Matthews, trans., *The Acts of Philip: A New Translation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 8–9.
8. Acts of Phil. 8:21 and 9:1 (Bovon and Matthews, trans., *Acts of Philip*, 74).
9. Acts Phil. Mart. 10 (François Bovon, trans., "Mary Magdalene in the Acts of Philip," in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 19,

Ally Kateusz: IMAGES IN ART OF WOMEN DEACONS IN EAST AND WEST

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- 10 For examples, see Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2018), 222; Fernand Cabrol and Henri LeClerq, eds., *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1907-1953), vol. 3 part 1, 1335 (for this one, see no. 32 in Fig. 1), and vol. 7, part 1, 1006; de Rossi, "Insigni," 54–56; and Orazio Marucci, *I Monumenti del Museo Cristiano Pio-Lateranense riprodotti in atlante di XCVI. tavole con testo illustrativo di Orazio Marucchi ... Contributo allo studio degli antichi Cimiteri cristiani di Roma* (Rome: Cathedral Church of St. John Lateran, 1910), plate 52, nos. 32 and 33.
- 11 Syriac *Didascalia apostolorum* 9.2.5-7 (Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Didascalia apostolorum*, 151); Latin *Didascalia apostolorum* 25 (Hauler, trans., *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 37).
- 12 Ally Kateusz and Luca Badini Confalonieri, "Women Church Leaders in and around Fifth-Century Rome," in *Patterns of Women's Leadership in Early Christianity*, edited by Joan Taylor and Iaria Ramelli (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 228–60, esp. 233–41, figs. 12.4–12.6; Ally Kateusz, "Χριστιανές γυναίκες στην Αγία Τράπεζα: Αρχαίες μαρτυρίες για την ανασύσταση του θεσμού των Διακονισσών / Christian Women at the Holy Table: Ancient Evidence Supporting the Reconstitution of the Institution of Deaconesses," *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* 91.4 (2020): 237–257, esp. 245–53 and 255–56, figs. 8–11 and 14; Ally Kateusz, "Dormition Urtext? Earliest Dormition Wall Painting Combines the Great Angel and Women with Censers," in *Maria, Mariamne, Miriam: Rediscovering the Marys*, edited by Mary Ann Beavis and Ally Kateusz, *Library of New Testament Studies* 620 (New York: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2020), 185–202, esp. 199–201, fig. 14.6; Ally Kateusz, *Mary and Early Christian Women: Hidden Leadership* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 164–74, figs. 7.3–7.6; and Ally Kateusz, "'She sacrificed herself as the priest': Early Christian Female and Male Co-Priests," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 33. 1 (Spring 2017): 45–67, esp. 56–63.
- 13 Svetla Petrova, "The Chancel Screens of the Episcopal Basilica (No 4) in Parthicopolis / Bulgaria (Preliminary Observations)," in *Niš and Byzantium, Eighteen International Symposium, Niš, 3-5 June 2019, The Collection of Scientific Works XVIII*, edited by Miša Rakocija (Niš: NKC, 2020), 189–222, esp. 216–20.
- 14 Kateusz, "Women Church Leaders," 241–43, fig. 12.7; Kateusz, "Χριστιανές γυναίκες στην Αγία Τράπεζα / Christian Women at the Holy Table," 243–45, fig. 7; Kateusz, "Dormition Urtext," 199–201, fig. 14.7; Kateusz, *Mary and Early Christian Women*, 161–64, figs. 7.2; and Kateusz, "'She sacrificed herself as the priest'," 54–56.
- 15 Syr. Did. apost. 16 (Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Didascalia apostolorum*, 192–94); and Latin *Didascalia apostolorum* 5 (Hauler, trans., *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 49–51, unfortunately the Latin is in part truncated, but the gaps can be determined from the Syriac).
- 16 Syr. Did. apost. 16 (Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Didascalia apostolorum*, 194).
- 17 Acts Phil. 14.9 (Bovon and Matthews, trans., *Acts of Philip*, 91).
- 18 Descriptions of these fourth-century tanks, many with Christian symbols such as the Chi-Rho or orantes, is in Christopher J. Guy, "Roman Circular Lead Tanks in Britain," *Britannia* 12 (1981), 271–76; and Belinda Crerar, "Contextualising Romano-British Lead Tanks: A Study in the Design, Destruction and Deposition," *Britannia* 43 (2012), 135–66.
- 19 Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1964), 353–54, 353n6.
- 20 Toynbee, *Art in Britain*, 354.
- 21 Syr. Did. apost. 16 (Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Didascalia apostolorum*, 194).
- 22 Syr. Did. apost. 16 (Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Didascalia apostolorum*, 193–94).
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24. Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Thrupp, UK: Sutton, 1999), 22–23, figs. 17–19; and André

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25. See Vassiliadis, P., Amoridou, Ev. and Gutzioudis, M. (eds.). *Deaconesses, ordination of women and Orthodox Theology. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*. Thessaloniki: CEMES 12, 2016.
26. See Athanasopoulou-Kypriou, Sp., Drosia, Aik. and Kyriatzi Ant., *Christian Women at the Holy Altar. Studies on the Revival of the Institution of Deaconesses*. Athens: Armos, 2022.
27. See Zagano, Ph., "Women Ministers in the Roman Catholic Church," *ibid* (previous note), pp. 295-306.
28. See <https://www.cnn.gr/kosmos/story/54964/to-patriarxeio-alexandreias-enisxyei-to-rolo-ton-gynaikon-stin-ekklesia>
29. The distinction between latent and historical tradition has emerged in recent years in theological scholarship and replaces another distinction: that of Tradition (with a capital T) and individual traditions (with small t) See Vassiliadis, P. "The Institution of Deaconesses. Past–Present– Future," in note 2 above, pp. 39-55.
30. An interesting case on the issue of Orthodox Deaconesses in recent times is described by Ath. Papathanasiou in [https:// publicorthodoxy.org/ 2022/06/24/maria-spyropoulou-the-semi-transparent-deaconess/](https://publicorthodoxy.org/2022/06/24/maria-spyropoulou-the-semi-transparent-deaconess/).
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