

*The Officiating Bishops of the Fresco Cycle in the Church of St. Onouphrios, Posada Rybotycka: the Problem of their Identification**

Agnieszka Gronek, Jagiellonian University, Cracow

In this article an attempt is made to identify the bishops represented in the scene *The Officiating Bishops* in the sanctuary of the old orthodox church of St. Onouphrios in Posada Rybotycka near Przemyśl (fig. 1). The paintings in this church were discovered by Wojciech Kurpik in 1966, who published his findings in 'Materials of the Museum of Folk Architecture'¹. Anna Różycka Bryzek gave a preliminary description of the painted decoration in the sanctuary, dating it to the 15th century, and publishing her findings in 1986 and 1994². These findings provide a perfect basis for further, more detailed, study, particularly given that, further fragments of the frescoes have since been discovered.

The walls and the vaulting of the presbytery and nave were covered with artwork arranged in zones. Research carried out during the restoration process has shown considerable technical and stylistic differences in the frescoes in both areas of the church, indicating different painters and different time periods for their creation. The techniques employed, according to Janusz Lehmann's findings, suggest that the painted decoration is

* This article is part of an exhaustive monograph on paintings in the orthodox church in Posada Rybotycka currently being drawn up by its author, although more detailed and substantiated findings require further study.

¹ W. Kurpik, 'Odkrycie malowideł w cerkwi w Posadzce Rybotyckiej pow. Przemyśl', *Materiały Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego*, 4 (1966), p. 72-74; Idem, 'Dalsze prace nad odkryciem malowideł ściennych i napisów w cerkwi w Posadzce Rybotyckiej', *Materiały Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego*, 7 (1968), pp. 53-56.

² A. Różycka Bryzek, 'Program ikonograficzny malowideł w cerkwi w Posadzce Rybotyckiej', in: *Symbolae Historiae Artium. Studia z historii sztuki Lechowi Kalinowskiemu dedykowane*, Warszawa 1986, p. 349-365; Eadem, 'Новооткрытые росписи церкви в Посаде Рыботыцкой и их иконграфическая программа', *Пяятики культуры. Новые открытия*, 1993 [1994], pp. 108-120.



Fig. 1. Posada Rybotycka, St. Onuophrios' church in, the main view (all photos by Piotr Krawiec)

close in date to those used in Moldova in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries³. In addition, these findings are corroborated by an initial iconographic analysis that indicates two independent painting schemes. The earlier of these probably dates from the sixteenth century, and is to be found in the presbytery, while the later one is to be found in the nave.

The Officiating Bishops representation, which has been chosen as the topic of this paper, is situated in the lowest zone of the painted decoration in the sanctuary. As a result, in this introduction I intend simply to describe the sanctuary decoration, leaving other sections for later analysis. In the middle of the sky-blue painted cradle-vaulted ceiling, there was originally a multicoloured sphere, which probably showed a representation of Christ Pantocrator. Despite considerable damage to the painting, this interpretation is supported by the existence of seven circles that have been carved into the mortar using compasses, the centre of which is filled with ochre forming the ground for a number of unclothed body parts (e.g. faces). To the east, on the vaulting axis small fragments of painting are to be found which support the identification of the outline of a front-facing six-winged seraph. This figure has his head turned to the west and his folded side wings inclined towards the

³ J. Lehmann, *Cerkiew w Posadzie Rybotyckiej. Sprawozdania z badań laboratoryjnych, cz. II, Freski, zasolenia* (1984), typescript in Muzeum Narodowym Ziemi Przemyskiej w Przemyślu, p. 47.

east. For the purposes of symmetry, there was most probably, an analogous representation on the opposite side of the sphere, but there are no remaining traces to corroborate this.

Below, from the north and south, angels follow to the east in two rows of six. They are represented as tall three quarter-facing anthropomorphic beings, who have dark haired, haloed heads, and a pair of long wings covering their torsos, but which reveal long, white bare feet. Unfortunately, the loss of a considerable part of the painting makes it impossible to decide whether anything is being carried in their outstretched hands, although these hands do appear to be in a position suggesting adoration or intercession.

Below, on both sides, abutting the narrative representations on the walls, in sky-blue zones, separated with a thick white frame, there are seven, front-facing six-winged angels—probably seraphim. Their whole bodies, with the exception of a small rhomboid of the face, are covered by their wings which are placed with one pair of wings angled upwards, and another downwards. Yet another set of wings, used for flying, is to be found at the sides of each figure.

All the angels are depicted with white wings, with clearly delineated feathers, that are arranged in the same fashion, with the exception of the first angel on the southern wall, whose wings are crossed and slightly longer at the bottom.

On the highest part of the western wall, in a field which is delimited by the arch of the cradle roof above, there is a representation of the Madonna and Child, seated upon a throne, attended by four archangels. There has been considerable damage, in particular to the central part of the image, where the original layer of plaster was lost and subsequently replaced. Despite this, the outline of a figure wearing a long sky-blue dress and a dark brown cloak which also covers the haloed head, is visible. The Virgin is seated, front-facing on an oval cushion placed upon a solid bench which takes the form of a large coffer supported by four disproportionately short legs. The dark area in front of the Virgin strongly suggests that originally Christ was depicted there. Unfortunately it is, today, impossible to state with confidence the iconographic type of this image, or whether Christ was directly on the Virgin's lap or was raised above it. The irregular shape of the remaining ground layer rules out only the representation of Emmanuel in a *clypeus*. On either side of the throne there are two three-quarter facing angels who are dressed in white tunics with a decorative trim at the bottom and tied with *loroses*. They are addressing the seated couple with outstretched hands in a gesture of adoration.

Below, in two zones covering the northern, eastern and southern walls of the sanctuary can be found: *The Communion of the Apostles*, *The Last Supper*, *The Washing of Feet*, and below, and of particular interest here, *The Officiating Bishops*, along with *The Unsleeping Eye* and *The Man of Sorrows*. The scheme is completed by a white curtain below it, modelled in ochre and decorated with two strips of an undulating form and circles dependent upon other circles along the three walls of the sanctuary.

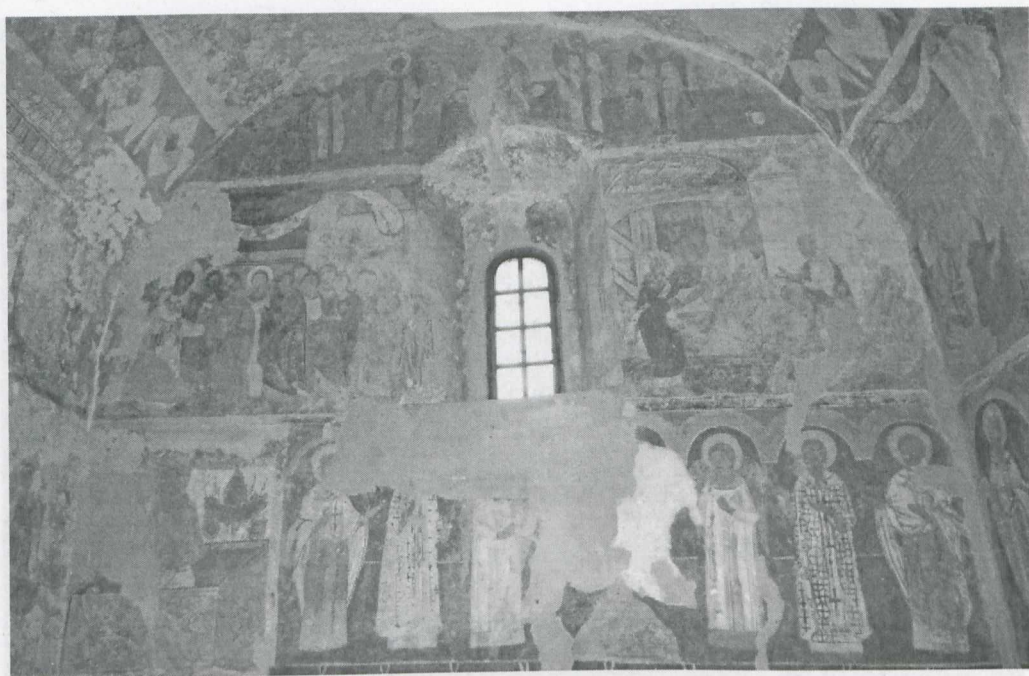


Fig. 2. Posada Rybotycka, fresco of the presbytery, view on the western wall

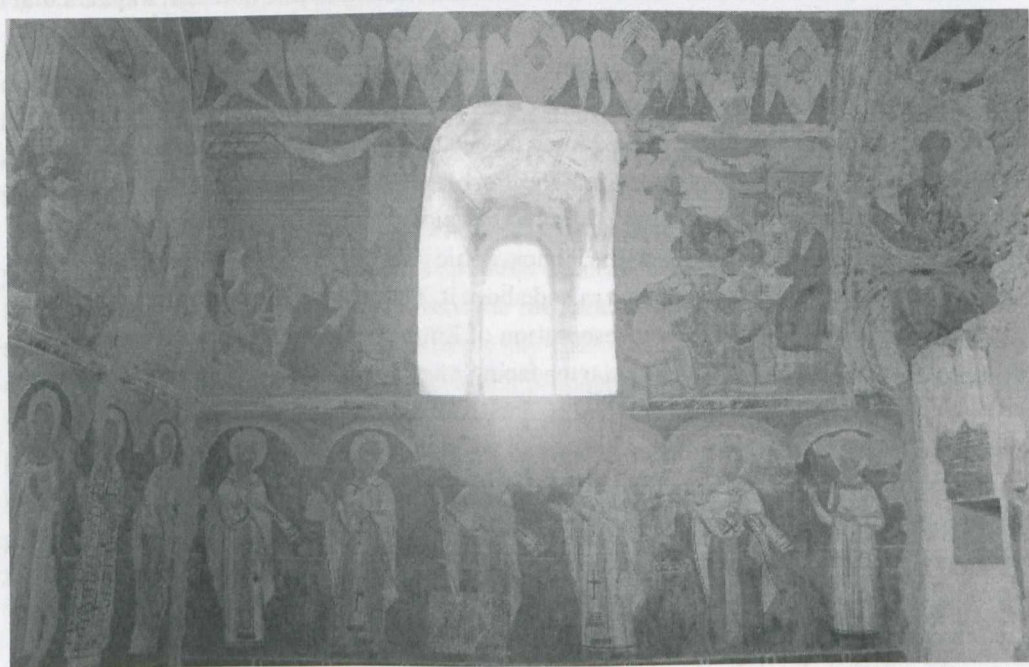


Fig. 3. Posada Rybotycka, fresco of the presbytery, view on the southern wall

In the scene of *The Officiating Bishops*, the participants, who are placed under the arch of the arcade, are presented as complete figures showing a three-quarter profile towards the altar they are approaching, again with arms outstretched in a gesture of adoration. On the southern and eastern walls the procession continues into infinity (fig. 2, 3). The procession is led by an angel in deacon's robes. These robes are a short white *sticharion* which has a brown *podriasnik* showing from beneath, and an *orarion* hangs loosely from the shoulder. Seven hierarchs follow the angel, two on the eastern wall, and five on the southern. The first hierarch has a white *sakkos*, covered in its entirety with black crosses which have dark brown circles upon them, like *polistaurion*. The other hierarchs are dressed in white *phelonions* on *sticharions* of various colours. Their clothes have complementary *epigonations* or *encheirions*, and also alternating yellow and blue *epitrachelions* and *omophorions*. Although there is considerable damage it is possible to discern distinct facial features and various lengths of hair and beard. In close proximity to the last of the saintly dignitaries an inscription *ΔΕΩΝΗΣΙ* – Dionysius (fig. 10, 11) can be seen. The rearmost member of the procession is a deacon dressed similarly to the angel, except that his *podriasnik* is navy blue. From the sketched outline of two geometric figures, a rectangle and a triangle, which emerge from a dark background, he may have held not only the end of the *orarion*, but also an *artophorion* in his right hand (fig. 11). This object, which was used to store the Sacrament for the sick or for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Offerings, was often in the shape of a church – sometimes the local church. However, the suggestion that this one represents a model of the orthodox church in Posada is far too risky a hypothesis if based on this unclear image.

Part of the procession on the opposite side was broken by two representations: *The Unsleeping Eye* and *The Man of Sorrows* (fig. 2, 4). Because of this, the procession here has fewer members, and on both the eastern and northern walls there are three fields enclosed by an arcade from the top, which contain three figures. Once again the procession is led by an angel in deacon's robes, who is followed by two Patriarchs, the first one in a *sakkos* decorated with crosses, the second wearing a *phelonion*. Unfortunately there has been damage to the top sections of the scene which makes it impossible to make out any characterisation of their facial features. On the northern wall a further three church dignitaries in *phelonions* face the altar with their palms raised in supplication. The central figure is sole among them in having an inscription – *ΣΤΙ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙ* – St. Gregory (fig. 8).

The procession of bishops, who were selected over the centuries from the ranks of saints, and whose importance as protectors of the rightful orthodox doctrine gradually increased, first took its place in sanctified buildings in the eleventh century⁴. In the oldest surviving Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki and in the Cathedrals of St Sophia in Kiev and Ohrid, they were shown full-face, but from the next century representations which were

⁴ Ch. Walter, *Sztuka i obrządek Kościoła bizantyńskiego*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 194–203.

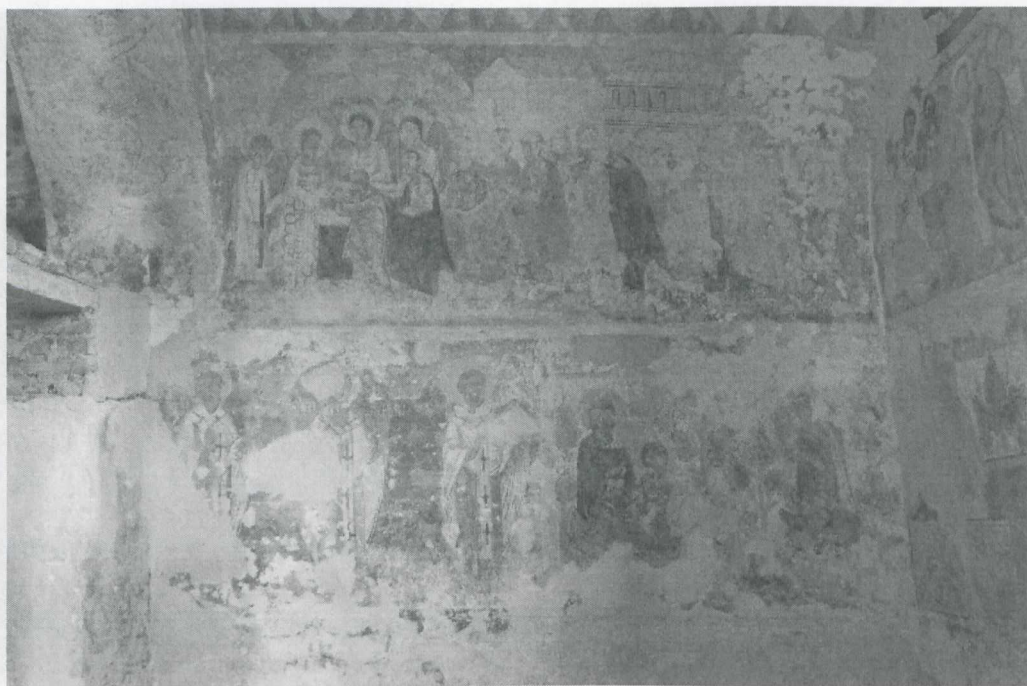


Fig. 4. Posada Rybotycka, fresco of the presbytery, view on the northern wall

less static and stylised became more prevalent, showing hierarchs, slightly bowed and in three-quarter profile, moving to the east in two equal processions. In most cases an altar is shown in the middle of the apse wall, on which, from the end of the twelfth century a representation of the Holy Child was placed on the paten (Kurbino, 1192), and from the fourteenth century a representation of the deceased Christ⁵. The selection of bishops who were represented was not prescribed, but was dependent upon local custom. However, in most cases the procession was opened by two great patriarchs who were also creators of the liturgy, John Chrysostom on one side, and Basil the Great on the other⁶. Generally directly behind them, or on occasion further back in the procession were Gregory of Nazianzos, Athanasios, Cyril of Alexandria and Nicholas of Myra.

There is no reason to doubt that the procession of bishops in Posada Rybotycka is headed by the afore-mentioned liturgists. As a traditional pattern was generally strictly followed for their facial features, instant recognition is often possible when examining images of these hierarchs of the orthodox church as well as others. John Chrysostom has a characteristically ascetic face with hollow cheeks and a high forehead. And, although the

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ S. E. J. Gerstler, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, Seattle & London 1999, p. 22.

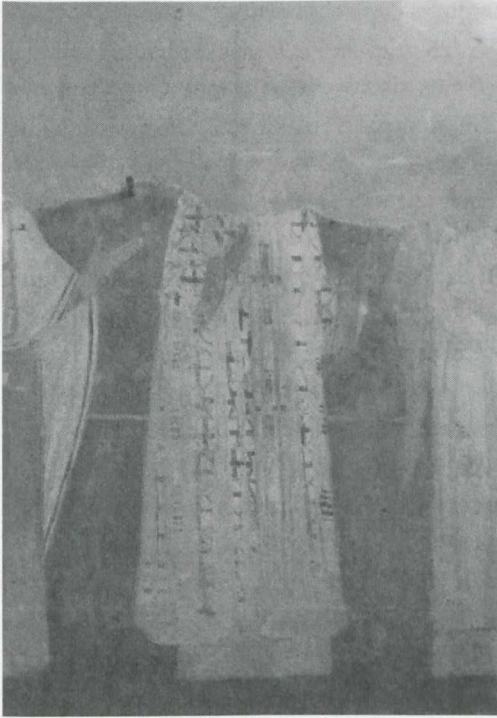


Fig. 5. *John Chrysostom*, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

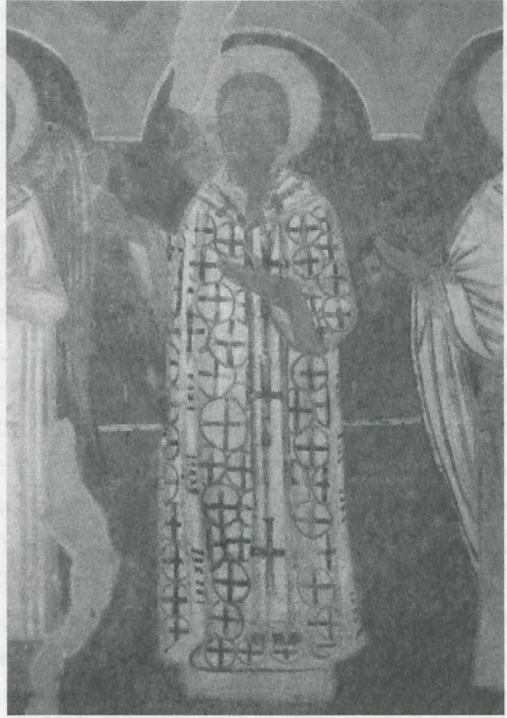


Fig. 6. *Basil the Great*, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

Hermeneia recommends his presentation as a “young man with a short beard”⁷, and in *The Stroganov Patternbook* he is represented as a young man with curly hair and a thick short beard⁸, in earlier works he is also represented as a balding emaciated man with a short, white, pointed beard⁹. Basil the Great, who died at the age of fifty, is not represented as an old man, and his face, which is elongated but not thin, is fringed with black hair and a long, pointed beard¹⁰. So even though in the presbytery of the orthodox church in Posada the face of one of the hierarchs has been obliterated, it is very probable that he is John Chrysostom (fig. 5), as the other one, on the opposite side, with a rounded face, thick, dark hair and a long, pointed beard is undoubtedly Basil of Caesarea (fig. 6).

While in the earliest of the sanctuary representations of the Patriarchs in the Cathedrals of St Sophia in Kiev and Ohrid both these saints appear dressed in simple *phelo-*

⁷ *The ‘Painter’s Manual’ of Dionisius of Fournas*, transl. P. Hetherington, London 1996, s. 54; pol. transl. Dionizjusz z Furny, *Hermeneia czyli objaśnienie sztuki malarskiej*, Kraków 2003, s. 195.

⁸ Ch. F. Kelley, *An Iconographer’s Patternbook: The Stroganov Tradition*, Torrance 1999, p. 205.

⁹ O. Demus, ‘Two Palaeologan Mosaic Icons in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 14 (1960), p. 84–119.

¹⁰ A. Chatziniolaou, ‘Basil’, in: *Reallexicon Byzantinische Kunst*, vol. 2, ed. H. Maguire, Stuttgart 1996, p. 25.

nions, from the following century John Chrysostom is depicted wearing a particular type of *phelonion*, completely covered with crosses, which is known as a *polistaurion*. In depictions of this early date this type of robe is sometimes also worn by Epiphanius of Cyprus, Gregory of Nazianzos and of Nyssa, Basil the Great and Athanasios of Alexandria, as in the case of St. Panteleimon's orthodox church in Nerezi¹¹. However, in Posada Rybotycka the two hierarchs are dressed not in *polistaurions*, but in a *sakkos* adorned with crosses, similar to that of Christ in *Communion of the Apostles*, placed above. From the fourteenth century John Chrysostom was associated with this type of garment, although at times other bishops were also shown wearing it¹². The earliest Ruthenian representations of this great hierarch dressed in a *sakkos* adorned with crosses within circles come from the fifteenth century, in, for example, icons from the *Deesis* zone in the Elevation of the Holy Cross orthodox church in Drohobych¹³, and from Strilka near Old Sambor, from Javor near Turka and from Ilnik¹⁴. Both of the liturgists can sometimes be seen thus adorned in paintings from the first half of the fourteenth century on the walls in orthodox churches in Bucovina, for example in the *Last Judgment* in Voroneţ or in the cloisters in Proboata¹⁵.

The identity of the bishops immediately following the creators of the liturgy is unclear. According to frequently used practice in painting one of them could be Gregory the Theologian, as seen in St. Panteleimon's orthodox church in Nerezi¹⁶, in the orthodox church-morgue of Bachkovo monastery¹⁷, and often in Kastoria (Hagios Anargyros, Panagia Koubelidiki, Taxiarches, Hagios Athanasios)¹⁸, in St. Nikita's church in Čucher¹⁹, in Sopočany, Studenica, and St. Saviour in Chora (Kariye Müzesi) in Constantinople. Gregory the Theologian, one of the major hierarchs of the Church, and a great Cappadocian Father, has been memorialised since the eleventh century on January 30th, together with John Chrysostom and Basil the Great. This resulted in an increase in their representation together, where he is seen as an old, balding man with a thick, widely bifurcated, slightly rectangular beard. This is the way

¹¹ I. Sinkevič, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi; Architecture, Programme, Patronage*, Wiesbaden 2000; Ch. Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹² Ch. Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹³ Touring Museum, Drohobych, no i-191; L. Miliaeva, *The Ukrainian Icon 11th – 18th centuries. From Byzantine sources to the Baroque*, Bournemouth – Saint Petersburg 1996, no 92; Патріарх Дмитрій (Ярема), *Іконопис західної України XII-XV ст.*, Львів 2005, fig. 526.

¹⁴ All from second half of fifteenth century, National Museum, Lviv; Патріарх Дмитрій (Ярема), *op. cit.*, figs. 513, 558, 564.

¹⁵ A. Ogden, *Revelations of Byzantium. The Monasteries and Painted Churches of Northern Moldavia*, Iași, Oxford, Portland 2001, pp. 87, 193.

¹⁶ I. Sinkevič, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁷ Е. Бакалова, 'Фрески церкви-гробницы Бачковского монастыря и византийская живопись XII века', in: *Византия. Южные Славяне и древняя Русь. Западная Европа. Искусство и культура, Сборник статей в честь В. Н. Лазрева*, Москва 1973, p. 217.

¹⁸ M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria. Byzantine Art in Greece*, Athens 1985, pp. 25, 30, 86, 95, 108; S. E. J. Gresler, *op. cit.*, fig. 21.

¹⁹ Ch. Walter, *op. cit.*, fig. 60.

that *Hermeneia* suggests he should be represented²⁰, and in *The Stroganov Patternbook* his beard is longer and rounded²¹.

It seems, however, that in Posada Rybotycka Gregory the Theologian is not standing behind either John Chrysostom or Basil of Caesarea. The bishop on the right has luxuriant dark hair and a small beard, a representation which is far from Gregory's established iconography. The top parts of the bishop on the left are damaged, but in the area currently obscured with plaster immediately under the face there isn't enough space for a beard as wide as those in the representation of the bishop in the Saviour's monastery church in Chora (Kahriye Camii)²² and in Myriokephala in Crete²³, or as long as the beard on the wall of the orthodox church of the Holy Mother Periblettos in Mistra²⁴, on the *Three Hierarchs* icon dating from the first half of the fourteenth century in Tretyakov Gallery²⁵ or in *The Stroganov Patternbook*²⁶. In view

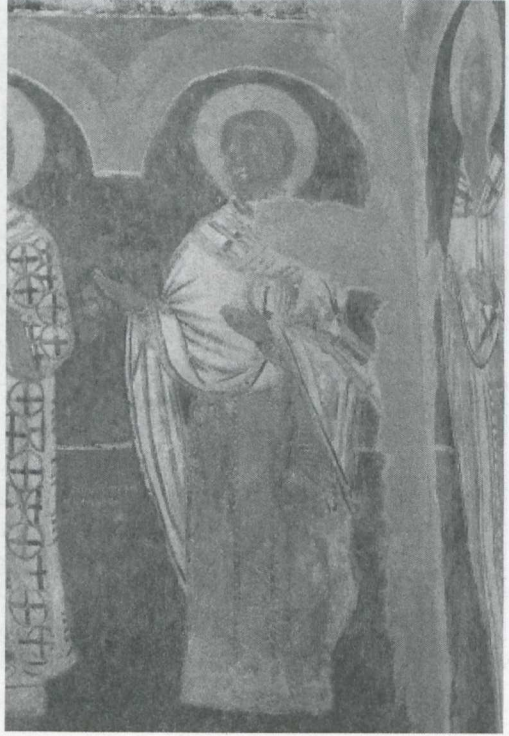


Fig. 7. *Gregory the Great?*, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

of this information, the figure of the bishop in the middle on the southern wall, marked out with the inscription - *СТИ ГРИГОРИ*, should be Gregory of Nazianzos (fig. 8). While he is often depicted as a balding old man, here, in the remaining fragment of the painting, the hair on his head is clearly visible. None of the other Gregories can boast such a luxuriant and broad beard²⁷. He has a beard of a similar length in an icon by Andriey Rublov with Danila Cherny in the *Deesis* zone in the orthodox church in the icon by the creator of

²⁰ *The Painter's Manual* ..., p. 54.

²¹ Ch. F. Kelley, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

²² В. Н. Лазарев, *История византийской живописи*, Москва 1986, fig. 479.

²³ I. Spartharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, London 1999, pl. 16a, fig. 176.

²⁴ В. Н. Лазарев, *op. cit.*, fig. 566.

²⁵ Е. Трубецкой, *Миниатюры Хлудоввской Псалтыри. Греческий иллюстрированный кодекс IX века*, Москва 2006, fig. 752.

²⁶ Ch. F. Kelley, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

²⁷ Except Gregory Palamas, but his imagines are very rare; В. Н. Лазарев, *op. cit.*, fig. 546.



Fig.8. *Gregory the Theologian with inscription, detail from The Officiating Bishops*

Descent into Limbo with Selected Saints Vladimir Volynski²⁸ in Ostrov near Pskov²⁹; and a beard which is only slightly shorter in the noted representation of St. Paraskeva with the three hierarchs in the Tretyakov Gallery³⁰.

Nicholas of Myra (fig. 9) stands directly before Gregory at the head of the part of the procession on the northern wall. Although the inscription has not survived, as the saint's facial features are consistent with traditional iconography, this facilitates recognition. He is a middle aged man, whose balding forehead is fringed by short, white hair, and whose face with regular features is complemented with a short, rounded beard.

This legendary saint has been venerated in the East from the sixth century, and in the West from the eleventh century, when his remains were moved from Myra to Bari³¹, and a depiction of him was included in the gallery of bishops placed on sanctuary walls from

²⁸ И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *Каталог древнерусской живописи XI–начала XVIII в.в.*, Москва 1963, no 223, fig. 179; Е. Трубецкой, *op. cit.*, fig 262.

²⁹ В. Н. Лазарев, *op. cit.*, fig. 82; Е. Smirnova, 'Mediaeval Russian Icons. 11th–17th century', in: *A History of Icon Painting. Sources. Traditions. Present Day*, Moscow 2005, fig. 75; Е. Трубецкой, *op. cit.*, fig. 502.

³⁰ И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *op. cit.*, no 144, fig. 97; В. Н. Лазарев, *op. cit.*, fig. 77; Е. Smirnova, *op. cit.*, fig. 74.

³¹ About St. Nicholas see: N.P. Ševčenko, *The Life of St. Nicholas in Byzantine Art*, Turin 1981; М. Гелитович, *Святой Миколай з житієм. Ікони XV–XVIII ст. Національного музею у Львові імені Андрея Шептицького*, Львів 2008.



Fig. 9. *Nicolas of Mira*, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

the very beginning. The latter fact can be corroborated by the mosaic in the Cathedral of St Sophia in Kiev³². He was frequently depicted in the procession, but his place within it varied. In orthodox churches in Crete, for example, he was usually placed directly behind one of the liturgists³³. Nicholas of Myra is to be found in this position in both the Theotokos orthodox church in Lagoudera, Cyprus³⁴ and Hagioi Anargyroi in Kastoria³⁵. However, he was sometimes depicted further back in the procession.

The last hierarch in the procession on the southern wall, standing just in front of the deacon is Dionysius the Areopagite (fig 10). His identification is indicated by the extant inscription *ΔΕΩΝΗΣΙ* (fig. 11). Converted by St. Paul, he became the first bishop of Athens, and in later western tradition he became associated with the apostle to the Gauls and the first bishop of Paris. However it was his posited authorship of theological and mystical works, which were considered orthodox, which had enormous influence on mediaeval religious writers in both the West and the East³⁶. The art of these cultures did not, however, develop a con-

³² Г. Н. Логвин, *Софія Київська. Державний архітектурно історичний заповідник*, Київ 1971, fig. 73; Г. Логвин, *Собор Святої Софії в Києві*, Київ 2001, p. 214, fig. 156.

³³ I. Spartharakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 49, 77, 88, 103, 162, 181, 238; S. E. J. Gersler, *op. cit.*, fig 22.

³⁴ A. Stylianou, J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus. Treasures of Byzantine Art*, London 1985.

³⁵ M. Chatzidakis, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁶ T. Stępień, 'Przedmowa', in: Pseudo-Dionizy Areopagita, *Pisma teologiczne. Imiona boskie, Teologia mistyczna. Listy*, Kraków 1997, pp. 9–13; *Encyklopedia Kościoła*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 519–520.

sistent iconographic formula for this Saint. In the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* his description runs as follows: a man of “moderate height, emaciated, with white and sallow skin, flat-nosed, with puckered eyebrows, sunken eyes, always deep in thought, with large ears, abundant grey hair, a slightly cleft upper lip, a straggly beard, a slight paunch and long slender fingers”³⁷ Further, a black and white drawing in *The Stroganov Patternbook* provides a short description which informs us that the thick hair and the beard, unkempt at the bottom, are white³⁸. Dionysius of Fourna puts forward a representation of him as ‘an old man, with long curly hair and a parted beard’³⁹, and *The Bolshakov Patternbook* describes the way in which his white, curly hair was arranged: ‘like that of St. Clement whose hair is described as ‘arranged at the bottom below the ears, like St. George’s’⁴⁰. In Posada Rybotycka he is depicted as a young man with dark hair and a short beard, similar to that in Old Metropolis of Veroia⁴¹ or in a miniature in Chludov’s Psalter⁴².

The identification of the other bishops is more problematic and must remain in the realm of the hypothetical. A young man with a small beard, following Basil the Great is of considerable interest (fig. 7). Among the hierarchs placed in the scene of *The Officiating Bishops*, according to the *Hermeneia*’s instructions, it is Gregory the Great who is represented as ‘a young man with a small beard’⁴³. But why would this saint be honoured with such a position? On the one hand, his role as a great propagator of monasticism should be stressed. Self-funded, he established seven monasteries and later joined one of them, deciding upon an austere life. In an orthodox monastery he may have deserved recognition



Fig. 10. Dionysius the Areopagite, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

³⁷ *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, New York 1991, p. 629.

³⁸ Ch. F. Kelley, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36.

³⁹ *The Painter’s Manual ...*, p. 54.

⁴⁰ G. Melnick, *An Icon Painters Notebook: The Bolshakov Edition*, Torrance 1995, pp. 62, 86.

⁴¹ S. E. J. Gerstler, *op. cit.*, 170, fig. 30.

⁴² В. Щепкина, *Миниатюры Хлудовской Псалтыри. Греческий иллюстрированный кодекс IX века*, Москва 1977, p. 45.

⁴³ *The Painter’s Manual ...*, p. 54.



Fig. 11. *Inscription of Dionysius and artophorion?*, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

for this attitude. But on the other hand, since the sixteenth century, as a result of a faulty translation of the *Synaxarion* into the Slavonic language, Gregory Dvojeslovov (Dialogos) was ascribed with the authorship of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts⁴⁴. In this way, as the third liturgist, his presence in the close vicinity of Basil the Great would be justified. However, this hypothesis, although tempting, needs to be very cautious, as, up till now, the frescoes have been dated to the fifteenth century.

Another frequent participant of the procession is Athanasius the Great. The bishop of Alexandria, Patriarch and Doctor of the Church became a symbol of the battle against Arianism, and his rank is stressed by his frequently being placed at the head of the procession. Thus, in orthodox churches on Crete he is often placed just behind Basil the Great⁴⁵. He was also placed behind one or other of the liturgists on the walls of the orthodox church of Cyril of Alexandria in Kiev⁴⁶, The Mother of God in Studenica, St.

⁴⁴ H. Paprocki, 'Boska Liturgia uprzednio uświęconych darów', in: *Liturgie Kościoła prawosławnego*, Kraków 2003, p. 221.

⁴⁵ I. Spartharakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 77, 88, 162, 181, 238.

⁴⁶ I. Марголіна, В. Ульяновський, *Київська обитель святого Кирила*, Київ 2005, pp. 100–101.

Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki⁴⁷, in Moldovița⁴⁸ and in Kastoria (Panagia Mavriotissa, Taxiarches)⁴⁹. He is usually represented as a balding old man with a broad beard⁵⁰, sometimes slightly shorter, as in the above mentioned orthodox church in Kiev⁵¹, or longer, as in Hagios Athanasios in Kastoria⁵², often consisting of thick curls. Dionysius of Fournas also mentions a bald head and a broad beard as part of this saint's description⁵³, and in *The Stroganov Patternbook* there is sparse hair over a high forehead, and the lower parts of the face are lost in a luxuriant beard which is rounded at the bottom⁵⁴. In the orthodox church in Posada only the second bishop on the southern wall of the sanctuary fits this description (fig. 12). What is noteworthy is primarily the shape of his mid-length beard, which is thick and rounded, where thick, fair curls are clearly visible against the dark background provided by the backdrop.

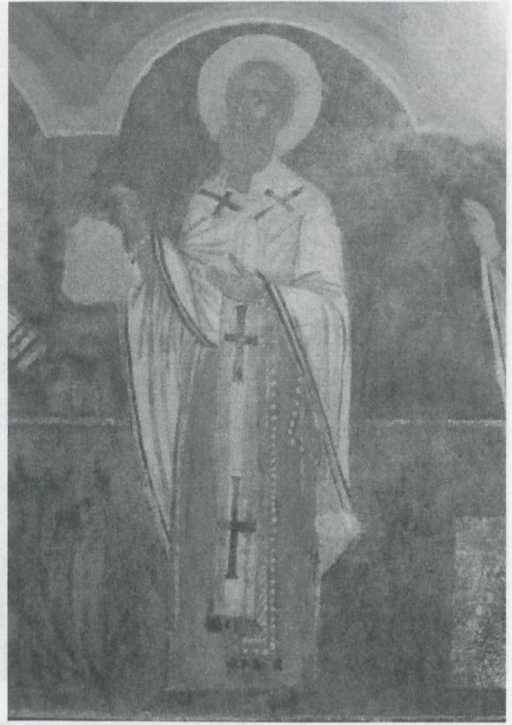


Fig. 12. *Athanasios of Alexandria ?*, detail from *The Officiating Bishops*

Athanasios is usually accompanied by Cyril of Alexandria, Patriarch and Doctor of the Church. Despite having lived at different times, they had the patriarchal rank in common, as well as the protection of orthodoxy against the heretics, or in Cyril's case – more particularly against Nestorius. As a result, they were honoured in the church tradition with a joint holiday – 18th January. In St. Cyril's orthodox church in Kiev, among scenes from his life, he is depicted alongside his predecessor as bishop of Alexandria several times⁵⁵. There are also icons with representations of both dignitaries, which are similar to those

⁴⁷ S. E. J. Gerstler, *op. cit.*, fig 56.

⁴⁸ P. Henry, *Monumentale din Moldova de Nord*, București 1984, fig. XXI.

⁴⁹ M. Chatzidakis, *op. cit.*, 68, 95.

⁵⁰ *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, New York 1991, pp. 217–218.

⁵¹ I. Марголіна, В. Ульяновський, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

⁵² M. Chatzidakis, *op. cit.*, 109.

⁵³ *The Painter's Manual ...*, 54.

⁵⁴ Ch. F. Kelley, *op. cit.*, 192–193.

⁵⁵ I. Марголіна, В. *op. cit.*, 128–130.

in the Hermitage from the late fourteenth century⁵⁶ and in the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg at the turn of the sixteenth century⁵⁷. Both bishops also appear with other saints, such as Leontine Rostovski⁵⁸ or Ignatius of Antioch⁵⁹, both dating to the end of the fifteenth century. In the bishops' procession inside the sanctuary they often appear close to each other or even juxtaposed, as in Moldovița or Voroneț⁶⁰. In all cases Cyril is represented as a middle-aged man, with a long, dark beard which is pointed at the end and wearing a rounded or conical hat covered in crosses. Dionysius of Fournas also recommends this form of depiction, but according to his prescription the beard should be grizzled⁶¹. In the *Bolshakov Patternbook* he resembles Basil of Caesarea⁶². Given that an ever-present feature, and therefore a distinctive garment of this saint is headgear, and that none of the bishops in the orthodox church in Posada is presented thus attired, it can be assumed that this item was present in the parts of the paintings that have not survived. Cyril of Alexandria may be the bishop directly behind Athanasius on the southern wall, with his head obliterated entirely, or the next bishop in line, whose long pointed beard, without a parting survived the damage (fig. 3).

In conclusion, among the twelve bishops in *The Officiating Bishops* only four are definitely recognisable: John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzos and Dionysius the Areopagite. The identification of another four as Gregory the Great, Nicholas of Myra, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, while justifiable, must remain in the sphere of the hypothetical, and the identification of the remaining four appears impossible.

⁵⁶ No I-327.

⁵⁷ No 2068; D. Likhachov, V. Laurina, V. Pushkariov, *Novogrodian Icons 12th–17th Century*, Leningrad 1983, no 134.

⁵⁸ No 10922, Novgorod Museum; Ibidem, no 112; E. Трубецкой, *op. cit.*, fig. 733.

⁵⁹ A. Tradigo, *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, Los Angeles 2006, p. 302.

⁶⁰ P. Henry, *op. cit.*, tables X, XXI.

⁶¹ *The Painter's Manual ...*, p. 54.

⁶² G. Melnick, *op. cit.*, p. 107.