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The Cosmic Symbolism of the Church and the Mystical Liturgy of the Logos in Inauguration Anthems of Hagia Sophia and the *Mystagogia* of Maximus the Confessor

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the search of the traces of the Jewish conception of the cosmological and mystical celestial tabernacle and the temple in the architectural symbolism of the Christian church represented in the Syriac *sugitha* and the Greek *kontakion* dedicated to the churches of Hagia Sophia in Edessa and Constantinople. These texts are characterised by the presence of an idea of the "bridal chamber" and by the re-comprehension of the mystical conceptions of an "animate architecture", which leads to the the merging the boundaries between the architecture of the church and the soul, interpreted as a "little church," which will be later developed in detail by Maximus the Confessor in his *Mystagogia*. Therefore, in the concluding part this work of St. Maximus is taken into consideration, where one can find the continuation of the Jewish-Christian mystical and theological conceptions, which in the writings of this author were interlaced with the Neo-Platonic and Neo-Pythagorean theories. By the numerological symbolism inherent in these theories Maximus the Confessor, probably, incorporated his conception of the soul representing the church into the general cosmological symbolism.
Keywords: Christian Architecture; Cosmological Symbolism; Jewish Mysticism; Neoplatonic Psychology; Days of Creation; Mirror.

[es] El simbolismo cósmico de la iglesia y de la liturgia mística del Logos en los himnos de inauguración de Hagia Sophia y la *Mystagogia* de Máximo el Confesor

Resumen. Este artículo es un esfuerzo en la búsqueda de las huellas de la concepción judía del tabernáculo celestial, cosmológico y místico, en el simbolismo arquitectónico de la iglesia cristiana representada en el siríaco *sugitha* y el *kontakion* griego dedicado a las iglesias de Hagia Sophia en Edesa y Constantinopla. Estos textos se caracterizan por la presencia de una idea de la "cámara nupcial" y por la comprensión de las concepciones místicas de una "arquitectura animada". Esto lleva a la fusión de los límites entre la arquitectura de la iglesia y el alma, interpretada como una "pequeña iglesia". Esta idea será más tarde desarrollada en detalle por Máximo el Confesor en su *Mystagogia*. En la parte final de este artículo se toma en consideración esta obra de San Máximo, donde se puede encontrar la continuación de las concepciones místicas y teológicas judeocristianas, que en los escritos de este autor se entrelazaban con las neoplatónicas y pitagóricas. Por el simbolismo numerológico inherente a estas teorías, Máximo el Confesor, probablemente, incorporó su concepción del alma que representa a la iglesia en el simbolismo cosmológico general.
Palabras clave: Arquitectura Cristiana; simbolismo cosmológico; misticismo judío; psicología neoplatónica; días de creación; espejo.

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1. Introduction

In the book *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* Margaret Barker explained that the symbolism of the Jerusalem Temple is analysed in this her study in its three major aspects, namely, as

> a place of creation and renewal… a place of mediation and atonement, themes associated with veil of the temple which symbolized the boundary between the material and spiritual worlds… the place where some could pass beyond the veil and experience the vision of God.[2]

This scholar also adduced numerous "examples how these ideas passed first into Christian thought and then into the imagery of many well-known hymns."[3] To these texts can be added two hymns immediately related to the architecture of the place of a Christian worship, a sixth-century Syriac hymn, composed, probably, for the occasion of the dedication of the church of Hagia Sophia in Edessa, and a Greek *kontakion*,[4] composed for the second inauguration of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. These hymns previously attracted a scholarly attention, and a considerable number of themes and motives were carefully studied and clarified. However, it seems that in previous scholarly works on this subject the problem of the continuation of the ancient Jewish tradition connected with the symbolism of the Temple and the Tabernacle, as well a Christian re-interpretation of this symbolism, although raised and discussed, nevertheless, still contains in itself a considerable number of unnoticed aspects and gaps which are not filled in, and which will be the subject of the present article. In an article "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol"[5] Kathleen McVey made a remark that the Syriac hymn represents "the earliest extant document which associates the central dome (and other architectural features) of a Christian church with cosmology and mystical theology",[6] and the church is portrayed in this text as an image of the universe. The same cosmological motives are present also in a Greek *kontakion*,[7] used and analysed by Andrew Palmer who compared this hymn with the Syriac *sugitha* for the purpose of the reconstruction of the unity and coherence of the latter text.[8] Both scholars adduced contemporaneous Christian sources for the clarification of the context of the anthems. McVey highlighted an importance of the symbolical meaning of the Tabernacle in the Edessan hymn. Reconstructing the meaning of the Tabernacle this scholar analysed various treatments of this subject in the writings of numerous Syriac and Greek authors,[9] while the theme of the Tabernacle played an important role in the symbolical universe of the Greek *kontakion*. This theme can, thus, indicate the direction of the further investigation of the origins of the conception of the church as universe, represented in both inauguration hymns. Concerning the cosmological symbolism of the Tabernacle, Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis made an observation that

> in a ground breaking article P.J. Kearney showed the potential significance of the fact that to the seven days of creation in Genesis 1 there correspond seven speeches by God addressed to Moses giving instructions for the building of the Tabernacle in Exodus 25-31. Each speech begins: 'The Lord spoke to Moses' (Exod. 25:1; 30:11; 16, 22, 34, 31:11, 12) and introduces material which he argued corresponds to the relevant day of creation.[10]

Furthermore, Margaret Barker attracted a scholarly attention to the fact that in the Book of Exodus the desert Tabernacle is described in such a manner that it can be comprehended as a model for the later Jerusalem Temple, suggesting that its construction and symbolism was rooted "in Israel's most ancient past."[11] As it was noted previously, in her book Barker collected numerous pieces of evidence witnessing a Christian reflection and re-comprehension of the temple symbolism in the early Christian representation of the theological conceptions, and also similar motives were analysed in detail by Gregory K. Beale,[12] who observed, among other motives, that in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* Christ is considered as the heavenly end-time Tabernacle itself.[13] This theme was taken and developed by Gregory of Nyssa who in the *Life of Moses*, 174 wrote that

> this tabernacle would be "Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God" (1 *Cor*. 1, 24), who in his own nature was not made with hands, yet capable of being made when it became necessary for this tabernacle to be erected among us. Thus, the same tabernacle is in a way both unfashioned and fashioned, uncreated in preexistence but created in having received this material composition.[14]

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2 Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London: SPCK, 1991), 2.

3 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 2

4 *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, ed. Constantine A. Trypanis, Wiener byzantinistische Studien, 5 (Vienna: *Böhlau* im Kommission, 1968), 141-147.

5 Kathleen E. McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983), 91-121.

6 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 91.

7 *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, ed. Constantine A. Trypanis, Wiener byzantinistische Studien, 5 (Vienna: *Böhlau* im Kommission, 1968), 141-147.

8 Andrew Palmer (with Lyn Rodley), "The Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: a New Edition and Translation with Historical and Architectural Notes and a Comparison with a Contemporary Constantinopolitan Kontakion", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988), 117-167.

9 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 112-117.

10 Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira", in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture. Volume I: Ancient Versions and Traditions*, ed. Craig E. Evans, Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity, 9; Library of Second Temple Studies, 50 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 77. The article under consideration is: Peter. J. Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex. 25-40", *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1997), 375-387.

11 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 11.

12 Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, 17 (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity press, 2004).

13 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 301.

14 Gregory of Nyssa, *The life of Moses*, tr. by Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York – Ramsey – Toronto: Paulist press, 1988), 98.

Besides, this Church Father expanded the symbolism of the tabernacle, providing a symbolical meaning for its details of construction and pieces of furniture:

> (*Life of Moses*, 179) We can gain clarity about the figures pertaining to the tabernacle from the very words of the Apostle. For he says somewhere with reference to Only Begotten, whom we have perceived in place of the tabernacle, that *in him were created all things, everything visible and everything invisible, Thrones, Dominions, Sovereignties, Powers*, or forces. Then the pillars gleaming with silver and gold, the bearing poles and rings, and those cherubim who hide the ark with their wings, and all the other things which are contained in the description of the tabernacle's construction – all of these things, if one should turn his view to things above, are the heavenly powers which are contemplated in the tabernacle and which support the universe in accord with the divine will.[15]

This description evokes a motive called by Fletcher-Louis "animate architecture and furniture,"[16] which can be found in the early Jewish mystical literature, such as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, and which can shed light on the understanding of themes and motives used by the authors of Christian inauguration anthems. In this article an attempt will be made to demonstrate that the Jewish cosmological symbolism of the Tabernacle and the Temple, the symbolism of the mystical celestial Temple, and the liturgy which can be found in the Jewish writings of the Second Temple period were adopted and adapted in the context of the Christian theological conceptions pertaining to the symbolism of the Christian church in the shape as it is contained in the Syriac *sugitha* and the Greek *kontakion* dedicated to the churches of Hagia Sophia in Edessa and Constantinople. Furthermore, McVey considered the suggestion of André Grabar of the dependence of the *sugita* on the text of *Mystagogia* of Maximus the Confessor, noting that "if there is any dependence between Maximus and Edessa Hymn, it is more probable that Maximus is the recipient."[17] Therefore, the concluding part of the present article will be devoted to this work of St. Maximus, where special attention will be paid to the continuation of the indicated previously theological conceptions, which in the writings of this author were interlaced with the Neo-Platonic and Neo-Pythagorean theories, contained in the writings of such authors as Iamblichus and Proclus.[18]

2. The Symbolism of the Universal Temple and the Dome as the Holy of Holies in a Syriac *sugitha*

In the introductory part of the *sugitha* the theme of the Temple and the Tabernacle is explicitly represented in the context of an architectural symbolism of the Christian church:

> (1) Oh Being Itself who dwells in the holy Temple, whose glory naturally [emanates] from it. Grant me the grace of the Holy Spirit to speak about the Temple that is in Urha.
>
> (2) Bezalel constructed the Tabernacle for us with the model he learned from Moses. And Amidonius and Asaph and Addai built a glorious temple for You in Urha.[19]

As McVey observed, "the choice of the Syriac word *hayklâ* (temple, palace, or church) here is provocative… Some connection with early Jewish mysticism is possible,"[20] and, as it was mentioned previously, according to the opinion of Margaret Barker, "the descriptions of the desert tabernacle in Exodus are clearly meant to show that the temple in Jerusalem was modelled on the earlier desert shrine, but it is generally agreed that the desert tabernacle was an idealized retrojection of the later temple."[21] The reference to the desert Tabernacle can be echoed in the 11th verse of the *sugitha*, where the author announces that the outer decoration of the church (two porticoes composed of columns) symbolise the "tribes of Israelites who surrounded the [temporal] Tabernacle."[22] On the other hand, unlike the Jewish tribes surrounding the Tabernacle from outside, in the 16th verse, it is stated that the apostles, Christ, prophets, martyrs and confessors are symbolised by the light of the windows of the nave. Moreover, in the 15th verse, it is announced that the apostles are also symbolised by the columns, supporting the ambo "in the middle of [the church] on the model of the Upper Room at Zion."[23] Besides, angels are symbolised by the nine steps in the sanctuary (verse 19). This symbolism correlates with the early Jewish mystical conception of the "animate architecture," which was in some detail discussed by Joseph L. Angel, who first indicated the distinction between two classes of angels in the first Song of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400), namely, the eternal holy ones and a more privileged class, the "holiest of the holy ones," who have become priests, which is reminiscent of the division of the temple into "holy" and "holy of holies."[24] Later the same scholar remarked that in the text 4Q511 35 3 the eternal temple is "embodied by priests, people, and angels of his glory among others, and offering praises to God," which

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15 Gregory of Nyssa, *The life of Moses*, 99-100.

16 Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 252.

17 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 119.

18 Jaroslav Pelikan made the following observations concerning the literary and educational background of St. Maximus: "From the depth and breadth of his literary acquaintance not only with the Bible and with the fathers and masters of Christian spirituality such as Origen and the fourth-century Cappadicians (Gregory Nazianzus, Basil of Cesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa), but with the major figures of pre-Christian philosophy, including Aristotle and the Neoplatonists Iamblichus and Proclus, scholars have… drawn the implication that he must have received the sort of broad humanistic education…" (Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*, tr. by George C. Berthold (New York: Paulist press, 1985), 3)

19 Tr. by McVey, in: "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.

20 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 96.

21 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 11.

22 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.

23 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.

24 Joseph L. Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 88.

> is paralleled vividly by the description of the animate temple in the seventh song of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*: "That there may be wondrous songs (sung) with eter[nal] joy. With these let all the f[oundations of the hol]y of holies praise, the supporting pillars of the supremely lofty abode, and all the corners of its structure." (…4Q403 1 I, 40-41)[25]

The motive of an "animate architecture" refers to the heavenly realm, and this reference can shed light on the meaning of the words and phrases of the controversial verse 9 in the *sugitha*, which puzzled all the translators. As it was noted by McVey, "since Edessa was the home of one of the most famous ἀχειροποίητοι of the Byzantine period, scholars have assumed that this is an allusion to that icon."[26] This verse in the translation of McVey reads as follows:

> (9) Its marble resembles an image not [made] by hands, and its walls are suitably overlaid [with marble]
> And from its brightness, polished and white, light gathers in it like the sun.[27]

McVey accepted a solution of Dupont-Sommer, who "observed that the earlier translations transposed the subject and object of the preposition."[28] If the verb used in this sentence "were taken in its literal sense, the marble would be "set into" the "image not [made] by hands" rather than vice versa – a translation which is scarcely adequate."[29] McVey observed also that the stem of this verb has the meaning which "is analogous to the meaning of the Greek τύπτω and τύπος, from which the notion of typological exegesis is derived."[30] A noun with the same stem is used in the second verse of the same hymn which McVey has translated as "model" in the phrase "Bezalel constructed the Tabernacle for us with the model he learned from Moses." This scholar added that this Syriac word, "like its Greek cognate, τύπος… means "form," "model," "representation," or "image"."[31] Furthermore, as it was observed by McVey, "like its Greek counterpart, ἀχειροποίητος… the expression *dlâ b'îdhîn* occurs in the New Testament and in other early Christian writings in contexts which have no direct connection with the later cult of images,"[32] and all the Syriac equivalents in the New Testament refer to the heavenly realities,[33] including the *Hebrews Epistle* 9:11 where this "model" is called the Tabernacle "not made with hands:"

> But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come (ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων ἀγαθῶν), by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ'ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως)…

This symbolism, together with the motive of an "animate architecture," was developed by Gregory of Nyssa, which was discussed earlier and which was also noted by McVey,[34] and at this point it seems reasonable to return to the remark of this scholar about "the choice of the Syriac word *hayklâ* (temple, palace, or church)," allowing to admit "some connection with early Jewish mysticism."[35] In verses 4-8 the author of the *sugitha* presents a detailed exposition of the theme of the universal temple:

> (4) For it truly is a wonder that its smallness is like the wide world.
> Not in size but in type; like the sea, waters surround it.
> (5) Behold! Its ceiling is stretched out like the sky and without columns [it is] arched and simple.
> And it is also decorated with golden mosaic, as the firmament [is] with shining stars.
> (6) And its lofty dome – behold, it resembles the highest heaven.
> And like a helmet it is firmly placed on its lower [part].
> (7) The splendor of its broad arches – they portray the four ends of the earth.
> They resemble also by the variety of their colors the glorious rainbow.
> (8) Other arches surround it like crags jutting out from a mountain.[36]

This cosmic symbolism, as it seems, witnesses a continuation of the Jewish tradition of the interpretation of the universe as a temple and the temple as the universe. As it was noted by Gregory Beale, "the Old Testament temple was a microcosm of the entire heaven and earth."[37] Besides, the same scholar observed that the Temple consisted of three main parts, symbolised by the parts of the universe: "(1) the outer court represented the habitable world…; (2) the holy place was emblematic of the visible heavens and its light sources; (3) the holy of holies symbolized the invisible dimension of the cosmos, where God and his heavenly hosts dwelt."[38] This threefold structure can be discerned in the description of the church of Edessa with its cosmic symbolism of various parts of an architectural construction of this building. Concerning the phrase from the *sugitha* "waters surround it" McVey observed that "the church was actually situated between two streams and adjacent to pond… This topographic reality corresponded readily to the popular cosmology of the Near East… The biblical accounts of the creation, especially the Priestly account, share this basic cosmology."[39] To these observations one may add that, as Andrei Orlov discussed it, the bronze

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25 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 131.
26 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 100.
27 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
28 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
29 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
30 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 101.
31 "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 97.
32 "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 101.
33 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 101. McVey indicated on the following cases of correspondence between Greek and Syriac texts: "In most New Testament passages where the Greek uses ἀχειροποίητος, the Peshitta uses a phrase similar to or identical with the phrase used here in the Edessa Hymn: (1) *dlâ 'bîdh b'îdhäyâ* in Mark 14:58, Heb. 9:11 and Heb. 9:24 (with slight modification); (2) *dlâ ba'bâdh 'îdhäyâ* in 2 Cor. 5:1; (3) *dlâ 'bîdhin* in Col. 2:11." (McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 101, n. 58)
34 "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 113-114.
35 "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 96.
36 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
37 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 31.
38 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 32-33.
39 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 98.

tank in the courtyard of the Temple in some text is called the "molten sea," while in other Jewish sources the sea is often represented as the symbol of the the "courtyard of the sanctuary of the world. *Numbers Rabbah* 13.19 states that the court encompasses the sanctuary just as the sea surrounds the world. *B. Sukkah* 51b likewise tells how the white and blue marble of the temple walls were reminiscent of the waves of the sea."[40] Moreover, Gregory Beale indicated on the meaning of the sea and the mountain (notions, mentioned in the *sugitha*) in the context of the cosmological symbolism of the Temple, noting that in the Old Testament "the large molten wash-basin and altar in the temple courtyard are called respectively the 'sea' (1 Kgs. 7:23-26) and the 'bosom of the earth' (Ezek. 43:14; the altar also likely was identified with the 'mountain of God' in Ezek. 43:16)."[41] The phrase from the *sugitha* "and it is also decorated with golden mosaic, as the firmament [is] with shining stars" may contain an echo of another motive, observed by Beale: "there is also reason to view the second section of the temple, the holy place, to be a symbol of the visible sky. The seven lamps on the lampstand may have been associated with the seven light-sources visible to the naked eye (five planets, sun and moon)."[42] Finally, the phrase from the *sugitha* "and its lofty dome – behold, it resembles the highest heaven," probably, implies the symbolical meaning of the Holy of Holies of the Temple. As it was noted by McVey, in the text of this hymn, "the ceiling, which represents the sky, and the dome, which represents the highest heaven, the highest point in the tent-shaped sky, seem, both architecturally and symbolically, to be two different entities."[43] This scholar observed the implications of the traditions of Antiochene school of exegesis in the cosmological symbolism of this hymn in general, and to these observations may be added an influence of the Antiochene exegetical tradition on this very conception of the sky and the "highest heaven" or, as it was translated by Palmer,[44] "roof of heaven," as two different entities. According to the Antiochene authors, the two heavens in the overall construction of the universe were arranged in the way that the lower heaven served as if the ground for the highest heaven, and these two heavens were created in the first two days.[45] On the other hand, the discussion of the nature of the first day of creation can be found in the *Hexaemeron* of Basil the Great, who defined it in the following way:

> Since the Scripture knew this day as without evening and without following or beginning, the Psalmist called it also the eighth [day], because it is beyond this weekly-measured time. So that if you call it a day or an eternity, the meaning will be the same. Therefore, if this construction is called the day, it is one and not many; if it is called the eternity, it is solitary and not multiple. Thus, in order to direct the thought to the future life, the [Scripture] called one [the day which is] the image of the eternity, the firstling of the days, equal with light, the holiday of the Lord, honoured by the Resurrection of the Lord.[46]

In this philosophical discussion of the problem of time and eternity one may discern the traces of the mentioned previously ancient Jewish conception of the correspondence between the creation of the world and the construction of the Tabernacle, especially referring to the first days of creation. As Barker has pointed out, according to a unanimous scholarly opinion, in the Book of Genesis narrative, the first and second days of creation correspond to the first two stages of the building of the Tabernacle. To the creation of the heavens and the earth in the beginning corresponds the erection of the basic structure of the Tabernacle and setting up of the outer covering (Exod. 40.17-19), which God ordered Moses to begin on the first day of the first month (Exod. 40.2). To the making of the firmament and calling it the heaven on the second day corresponds the setting up the veil and screening the Ark (Exod. 40.20-21). In this way, the sanctuary can serve as a representation of the first day of creation. Therefore, those who entered beyond the veil of the sanctuary found themselves within the first day of creation, and this idea can serve as an explanation of the symbolism of the Temple veil as the firmament separating the heaven and earth, "on which history was depicted in the Apocalypse of Abraham: 'Look now beneath your feet at the firmament and understand the creation… and the creatures that are in it and the age prepared after it…' (Ap. Abr. 21.1-2)[47] To this may be added also that, as it was noted by Andrei Orlov, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the position of this patriarch "in the upper heaven, which represents the macrocosmic Holy of Holies, provides an elevated vantage point from which he is able to glimpse into the other chambers of the cosmological temple."[48] In this way, in the context of an architectural symbolism of the Syriac hymn under consideration where the ceiling represents the sky, the heavenly Holy of Holies is supposed to be symbolised by the dome. On the other hand, as it was pointed out by Beale, in the Biblical description of the Holy of Holies it is represented as an invisible heaven. To the angelic cherubim, guarding God's throne in the heavenly temple (e.g., Rev. 4:7-9), correspond the cherubim around the

40 Andrei Orlov, "The Cosmological Temple in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*", in *Divine Scapegoats: Demonic Mimesis in Early Jewish Mysticism* (New York: SUNY Press, 2015), 40.

41 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 33.

42 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 43.

43 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 99.

44 Palmer, "The Inauguration Anthem…", 131-132.

45 The discussion of the interpretation of the heavens in the writings of Antiochene exegetical authors can be found in an article: Jean Pépin, "Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression "caelum caeli" dans les Confessions de saint Augustin", *Archivium Latinitatis Medii Aeui (Bulletin du Cange)*, 23.3 (1953), 185-274, at 235-240.

46 Ἐπεὶ ἀνέσπερον καὶ ἀδιάδοχον καὶ ἀτελεύτητον τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην οἶδεν ὁ λόγος, ἣν καὶ ὀγδόην ὁ ψαλμῳδὸς προσηγόρευε, διὰ τὸ ἔξω κεῖσθαι τοῦ ἑβδοματικοῦ τούτου χρόνου. Ὥστε κἂν ἡμέραν εἴπῃς, κἂν αἰῶνα, τὴν αὐτὴν ἐρεῖς ἔννοιαν. Εἴτε οὖν ἡμέρα ἡ κατάστασις ἐκείνη λέγοιτο, μία ἐστὶ καὶ οὐ πολλαί· εἴτε αἰὼν προσαγορεύοιτο, μοναχὸς ἂν εἴη καὶ οὐ πολλοστός. Ἵνα οὖν πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν ζωὴν τὴν ἔννοιαν ἀπαγάγῃ, μίαν ὠνόμασε τοῦ αἰῶνος τὴν εἰκόνα, τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τῶν ἡμερῶν, τῇν ὁμήλικα τοῦ φωτὸς, τὴν ἁγίαν κυριακὴν, τὴν τῇ ἀναστάσει τοῦ Κυρίου τετιμημένην. (Saint Basil, *Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*, ed. Stanislas Giet, Sources Chrétiennes 26 (Paris: Cerf, 1950), 182-184)

47 Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of the Christian Liturgy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), 194.

48 Orlov, "The Cosmological Temple in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*…", 44.

ark of the covenant in the holy of holies (1 Kgs. 6:23-28), while the cherubim woven into the curtain guarding the Holy of Holies represent the real cherubim in heaven who "presently and in the future will stand guard around God's throne in the heavenly temple (cf. 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kgs. 19:15; 1 Chr. 13:6; Pss. 80:1; 99:1, all of which may have double reference to the earthly and heavenly cherubim)."[49] Concerning the continuation of the theme of the cherubim of the Holy of Holies in the symbolism of the Christian church, including that of Edessa, Barker noted that "the position of the Christian altar in a church building, beyond the boundary between earth and heaven, shows that it derived from the kapporet in the Holy of holies, the place where the Atonement blood was offered."[50] The same scholar also has indicated the fact that

> the Sogitha on the Church of Edessa, composed in the mid-sixth century, mentions 'the cherubim of its altar', a description (late fifth century) of the church at Quartamin mention a cherub over the altar and the account of the Muslim capture of the church of St Jacob in Aleppo alludes to the destruction of the cherubim above the altar, all three indicating that the earliest Christian altars derived from the *kapporet*.[51]

The phrase "the Cherubim of its altar" is used in verse 18, containing the discussed previously motive of an "animate architecture"

> (18) Portrayed by the ten columns that support the Cherubim of its altar
> Are the ten apostles, those who fled at the time that our Savior was crucified.[52]

Furthermore, in verse 21 the author of the *sugitha* continues the same theme of an "animate architecture:"

> (21) The apostles, [the church's] foundations in the Holy Spirit, and prophets and martyrs are symbolized in it.
> By the prayer of the Blessed Mother may their memory abide above in heaven.[53]

The words of this verse correlate with the 7th song of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, discussed previously: "That there may be wondrous songs (sung) with eter[nal] joy. With these let all the f[oundations of the hol]y of holies praise, the supporting pillars of the supremely lofty abode, and all the corners of its structure." (…4Q403 1 I, 40-41)"[54] In this way, the realm above the heaven in the *sugitha* is symbolised by the dome, the celestial Holy of Holies in the heavenly temple, the architectural details of which and the pieces of furniture are represented by the celestial spiritual creatures, including angels, apostles, and all the saints. Besides, the conception of an "animate architecture" found its expression in the symbolism of the doors of the church:

> (17) Five doors open into [the church] like the five virgins,
> And the faithful enter by them, gloriously like the virgins to the bridal couch of light.[55]

McVey provided a broader context for the meaning of this verse in her comment on it: "The correct reading attests one of the more typically Syriac themes of the hymn, the "bridal couch of light," a symbol both of the baptistery and of heaven in Syriac literature from the Acts of Thomas to Ephrem and Narsai."[56] One may add another possible correspondence of the theme of this verse with the texts of the Greek-speaking Syriac author of the fourth century commonly known as Ps.-Macarius.[57] Alexander Golitzin has observed the correspondence between the liturgy in the church and the soul as the "little church" in the Macarian Homilies in the general context of the persistence of this theme in the Syriac authors.[58] Indeed in Ps.-Macarius one can find the theme of the two meanings of the church, as a universal "inner man" of all Christians and as an individual soul-church.

> (37, 8) Church is understood in two ways: the assembly of the faithful, and the soul taken together as a whole. When, therefore, it is understood spiritually of the human person, church means man taken as a whole (ὅλον αὐτοῦ τὸ σύγκριμα).[59]

The members of this individual church are five virtues: prayer, temperance, almsgiving, poverty, long-suffering. These are the words (since the whole passage is an exegesis on "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding" (I Cor. 14:19) spoken by God and heard by the heart; God operates, the Spirit speaks in an intelligible way and the heart, as much as it desires, so much is perfected.[60] These five virtues of the

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49 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 35.
50 Barker, *The Great High Priest*…, 56-57.
51 Barker, *The Great High Priest*…, 70.
52 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
53 McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
54 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 131.
55 Tr. by McVey, in "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 95.
56 Tr. by McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm…", 104.
57 As Kallistos Ware has observed, "his precise identity is a mystery and is likely to remain such, unless fresh evidence comes unexpectedly to light… There is general agreement that the author of the Macarian writings has no connection with the Coptic Desert Father, St. Macarius of Egypt (c. 300-c.190). The milieu presupposed in the Homilies is definitely Syria rather than Egypt. Although the language used by the author is Greek, his highly distinctive vocabulary and imagery are Syrian… the Homilies date basically from 380s and are probably written in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor." Kallistos Ware, "Preface" to Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, tr. George A. Maloney (New York: Paulist press, 1992), x-xi, with reference to Columba Stewart, *"Working the Earth of the Heart." The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Edition of the Homilies is: *Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, ed. Hermann Dörries, Erich Klostermann, Matthias Kroeger, Patristische Texte und Studien 4 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1964).
58 Alexander Golitzin, "Hierarchy Versus Anarchy? Dionysius Areopagita, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, and Their Common Roots in Ascetical Tradition," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994), 131-179.
59 Tr. by Maloney, in Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*…, 208.
60 (37, 8) "Five words" refer to the whole complex of virtues that build up the total person in various ways. For just as he who speaks in the Lord through five words comprehends all wisdom, so he who obeys the Lord builds up all piety by means of the five virtues. For they are five and embrace all the others. First is prayer, then temperance, almsgiving, poverty, long-suffering. When spoken with longing and desire, these are words of the soul which are spoken by the Lord and are heard in the heart. The Lord works and then the Spirit speaks in

soul-church, probably, correspond to the virtuous virgins, symbolised by the five doors of the church in Edessa. In this way, one may note the difference between the spirituality of a Jewish mystical writing *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the expression of the mystical union with God in a Christian Edessa hymn. While Joseph Angel defined the conception of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* as "the celestial temple archetype… located within the framework of the community's imaginal experience of hierohistory,"[61] in the Christian inauguration hymn the mystical experience is expressed by means of the conception of the "bridal chamber." Besides, an idea of an "animate architecture" is re-comprehended as the merging the boundaries between the architecture of the church and the soul, interpreted as a "little church." As it was demonstrated by Alexander Golitzin, the idea of the "little church" of the soul is found also in other Syriac writings, such as the *Liber Graduum* (Book of the Steps) and the Hymns of Paradise of Ephrem Syrus.[62] Moreover, as Golitzin has pointed out, in this context "Ephrem also… refers to Christ's presence as the *Shekinta*, i.e., he deploys the same word (in its Syriac form) as the *Shekinah* of the Rabbis, who in their turn use it to mean the radiant manifestation of God…"[63] This can serve as a corroboration of a supposition about the continuation of the Jewish mystical tradition in the Christian symbolism of the church as a universe, transmitted primary through the Syriac-speaking Christian writers.

3. The Cosmological Symbolism of Hagia Sophia in the Greek *kontakion*

The theme of an "animate architecture" is attested also in the inauguration hymn (the Greek *kontakion*,[64]) of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. As it was noted by Nadine Schibille, the "church of Hagia Sophia was literally brought to life through the agency of (divine) light and the architectural space was transformed into 'living temple' (ἔμψυχος ναός)."[65] Schibille refers to the *oikos* (verse) 3 of this hymn which contains also, as it was mentioned previously, the cosmological symbolism of the church, where the church on the whole with its wonderful construction is called the "heaven on earth" (οὐρανός ἐπίγειος; verse 5), while the firmament (στερέωμα) is connected with the foundation of the whole architectural structure (verse 7), in this way, corresponding to the second section of the Temple, the Holy place. This distinction can correspond to the architectural symbolism of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, where the figures of the cherubim on the pendentives of the dome, as it seems, serve for the symbolical expression of the cherubim of the Holy of Holies. As it was noted by Robert Ousterhout,

> whether cherubim or seraphim, the six-winged creatures in the eastern pendentives date from the late Byzantine period following the reconstruction of ca. 1355; those in the western pendentives had been almost completely destroyed and were repainted in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries; it is unclear when they first appeared in this position and how they should be interpreted.[66]

A tentative solution to the problem of an interpretation of these images may be suggested by the fact that the opinion of Ousterhout is based on the studies of Alfons M. Schneider and Cyril Mango,[67] both of whom, as it was noted by this scholar, "cite Choniates and Sphrantzes, who refer to the dome as "second firmament,""[68] and this may serve as a designation of the celestial Holy of Holies. As in the Syriac *sugitha*, in the *kontakion* the themes of the Tabernacle and the Temple are explicitly stated. In the verses 11-12 the author of the *kontakion* provides a Christological interpretation of the image of the ark:

> (11) As a painter sketches out a picture which has yet to be made, so he made [the] gilded ark out of imperishable wood, and stored away in it the sacred tablets of the Law, and transported it from place to place, [and] wrapped it around with many-coloured veils; but the ostensible object endowed [with these symbols] was not permanent, whereas the manifestation of grace is made known to all as being planted and it has been established for eternity by Christ…[69]

> (12) We have the Saviour as our lawgiver, as all-holy Tabernacle this divinely constructed temple, we propose our believing Basileus for Bezalel's office; and we have obtained from God the assurance of knowledge, the wisdom of faith. As for the most highly honoured ark, that is the bloodless sacrifice, which no rot has ever devoured and over which hangs a veil (καταπέτασμα) [made of grace], because it is in truth Christ…[70]

In the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, as it was noted by Gregory Beale, "the ark itself was understood to be the footstool of God's heavenly throne (1Chr. 28:2; Pss. 99:5; 132:7-8; Is. 66:1; Lam. 2:1)… the ark is part of God's heavenly throne-room, and, appropriately, the space directly above the ark is empty."[71] As if reflecting on this conception, the author of the Greek *kontakion* introduced immediately in these verses, devoted to the

the mind and the heart, in proportion as it desires and also performs concretely. (Tr. by Maloney, in Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*…, 208).

61 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 101.

62 Golitzin, "Hierarchy Versus Anarchy?…" 161-162; idem., "Dionysius Areopagita" A Christian Mysticism?", *Pro Ecclesia* 12 (2003), 184-185.

63 Golitzin, "Dionysius Areopagita," 185.

64 Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*…, 141-147.

65 Nadine Schibille, *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience* (Farnharm: Ashgate, 2014), 171-172.

66 Robert Ousterhout, "New Temples and New Solomons: the Rhetoric of Byzantine Architecture," in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, eds. Paul Magdalino, Robert S. Nelson (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oakes Research Library and Collection, 2010), 223-253, at 242.

67 Alfons M. Schneider, "Die Kuppelmosaiken der Hagia Sophia zu Konstantinopel," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, I Philologisch-Historische Klasse* 13 (1949), 345-55, esp. 352-53; Cyril Mango, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul* Dumbarton Oakes Studies 8 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oakes Research Library and Collection, 1962), 85-86.

68 Ousterhout, "New Temples and New Solomons…", 242, n. 70.

69 Tr. by Palmer in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 142.

70 Tr. by Palmer in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 142.

71 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission…,* 36.

interpretation of the symbolism of the ark, the theme of the veil, about which Margaret Barker noted that the

> veil represented the boundary between the visible world and the invisible, between time and eternity. Actions performed within the veil were not of this world but were part of the heavenly liturgy… This passed directly into Christian usage: 'Therefore, brethren,… we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain (διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος), that is, through his flesh' (Heb. 10.19 – 20)…[72]

Besides, Barker traced the presence of the symbolism of the veil in the Liturgy of James:

> We thank thee, O Lord our God, that thou hast given us boldness for the entrance of thy holy places, which thou hast renewed to us as a new and living way through the veil of the flesh of thy Christ. We therefore, being counted worthy to enter into the place of the tabernacle of thy glory, and to be within the veil, and to behold the Holy of Holies, cast ourselves down before thy goodness.[73]

Furthermore, the theme of the Moses's Tabernacle is put in the context of the discussion of the inappropriateness of the words for the expression of the ineffable mysteries of God, and of the fact that the use of images can be more appropriate for this task, which refers, probably, to the architecture of the church as the huge image of the Heavenly Model. The text of the *kontakion* reads as follows:

> (10) The divinely inspired book tells that Moses of old, the man privileged to see God, inaugurated a Tabernacle of Witness (σκηνὴν μαρτυρίου) and that he had examined the design of it mystically on the mountain, but because he was unable to teach through words the likeness of things beyond words, he had it executed by someone endowed with the wisdom [of] God, Bezalel, who used all kinds of skills to construct (κατασκευάσαντα) [what] had been described in symbols, according to the instructions of the god who had spoken.[74]

The motives, employed by the author of this text, as it was mentioned previously, were used by Gregory of Nyssa who in the *Life of Moses*, 174 wrote that

> This tabernacle would be "Christ who is the power and the wisdom (σοφία) of God" (1 *Cor*. 1, 24), who in his own nature was not made with hands (ἀχειροποίητος), yet capable of being made (δέχεται τὸ κατασκευασθῆναι) when it became necessary for this tabernacle (σκηνὴν) to be erected among us. Thus, the same tabernacle is in a way both unfashioned and fashioned, uncreated in preexistence but created in having received this material composition.[75]

At this point it is worth recalling the text of the Syriac *sugitha* where the designation of the divine nature by "Being Itself" and the human nature by the "Temple" (cf. Jn. 1:21 "But the temple he was speaking of was his body") in the first line is reproduced by the juxtaposition of the "Temple" in Urha in the second and fourth lines and the "Tabernacle" in the third line. And this theme is also announced in the introduction of the Greek *kontakion*:

> (1) In celebrating the Word's divine sojourn in the Body may we, the children of his Church, be thatched with luminous virtues [worthy] of his grace, and may we prove, [by] divine illumination, a worthy dwelling-place of knowledge, confessing in wisdom the praises of the Faith; for in truth the Wisdom of the Father built for herself a house of Incarnation and dwelt among us, above intellect (ἡ σοφία γὰρ ἀληθῶς τοῦ πατρὸς ἀνῳκοδόμησεν ἑαυτῇ σαρκώσεως οἶκον, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ νοῦν).[76]

The last line combines by means of syntax and vocabulary two Scriptural quotations, the first of which is an obvious reference to *Proverbs* 9:1 "Wisdom hath builded her house" (ἡ σοφία ᾠκοδόμησεν ἑαυτῇ οἶκον), while the second hints at the theme of the Tabernacle (σκηνή), by the verb "ἐσκήνωσεν" which refers to Jn 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (καὶ ὁ λόγος σάρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας). The same Scriptural reference provides an explanation to the first line of the Syriac *sugitha*, "Oh Being Itself who dwells in the holy Temple, whose glory naturally [emanates] from it". On the other hand, following Gregory of Nyssa, the author of the *kontakion* introduced the theme of Wisdom into the conception of the correspondence between the creation of the universe and the construction of the Tabernacle, which, as it was discussed previously, may have influenced the idea of the cosmic symbolism of the Christian church, found in the Syriac *sugitha*. A similar constellation of themes, as it was demonstrated by Fletcher-Lous, can be found in the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira* 24:1-22, where, in the context of the reflection of the author of this text on the Priestly account of creation, one can find also the "correspondences between the seven-day creation therein and the (P) instructions to Moses for the building of the Tabernacle."[77] In general, Fletcher-Louis summarised his observations about the contents of the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira*, noting that, according to the author of this work, all the human wisdom derives from the Divine person of Wisdom, who is herself both a creator and a created being. She keeps the whole universe as an ordered structure by her inherent power, and at the same time has chosen a residence in the people of Israel and its religious cult. Moreover, she is as if incarnated in the person of the high priest of Israel who is likewise in the process of the Temple service functions as a creature and "imitates the creator in following in all its essential details the order of creation."[78] The author of

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72 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 105.
73 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 105.
74 Tr. by Palmer in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 142.
75 Gregory of Nyssa, *The life of Moses*…, 98.
76 Tr. by Palmer, slightly modified, in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 140.
77 Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P…", 28.
78 Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P…", 49-50.

the *kontakion*, as it seems, reinterpreted these motives in a Christological sense in his presentation of the conception of the creation of the world and the temple service.

> (7) In the beginning the firmament was created in the midst of the waters, as holy scripture teaches, with a moist nature (ὑγρὰ φύσις), [as] it is believed to be, above it; it has [place] among the luminaries and [the] shadows of the clouds have not escaped (from it). But here things are better and manifestly more wonderful: no shifting sea, but the favour [of God] is the foundation on which rests (τεθεμελίωται) this temple of God's Wisdom, which in truth is Christ (ἥτις πέφυκεν ἀληθῶς ὁ Χριστός)…[79]

> (8) A mystic vision (θεωρία) of holy waters (ἱερῶν ὑδάτων) is conjured up by the thoughts of the spirit which are lifted up (ἀνηγμέναις ἐννοίαις τοῦ πνεύματος) in it. For these intellectual armies (νοεραὶ στρατιαί) have flooded together in it from every part, soldiers in the uniform of liturgy guarding the mystery of the new grace; and the [detestable] clouds of human failings cannot hold their ranks, but are scattered by the prayers of fervent repentance, with the tears summoned hither as reinforcements, because all men are purified by Christ…[80]

An image of the cloud seems to represent a subtle Christianized allusion to an important symbol of the Divine Presence in the liturgical context of the ancient Jewish Temple service. As Gregory Beale has demonstrated, "the 'cloud' that filled Israel's temple when it was completed and dedicated by Solomon (1Kgs. 8:10-13; cf. 2 Chr. 5:13b – 6:2) may partly be associated with the clouds in the visible heavens that pointed beyond themselves to God's unseen heavenly dwelling place."[81] Besides, in addition to ancient Jewish mystical allusion, this theme can be also an echo of the Patristic interpretation of this Biblical motive. According to Jean Daniélou, in Gregory of Nyssa one of the meanings of the "θεωρία" is the angelic universe,[82] by which he follows Origen who in his treatments of the waters "above the heavens" (identified by Origen, and after him by Gregory, with the "ὑπερουράνιος τόπος" from Plato's *Phaedrus*) used the word "θεώρημα" (contemplation) in plural as both denoting the intellectual ability also its owner, the intelligible creatures. The motive of the celestial liturgy of the intellectual armies, symbolized by the holy waters above the firmament, is juxtaposed later to the description of the Temple and its service which clearly relates the Justinian's church to the Old Testament tradition.

> (13) Solomon the far-famed, who had an overflowing heart, sings the praises of the temple in Jerusalem which he inaugurated of old and so splendidly adorned that it was his glory; and he summoned together the whole people of Israel to be spectators of his achievements. With sacrifices [and] in hymns [they solemnized] the inauguration and the sound of musical instruments accompanied the odes [with] a many-voiced harmony, for by such means [used they to] praise God…[83]

The theme of the adornment of the Temple is taken into consideration by Gregory Beale who observed that the "word 'beauty' is… associated with description of the heavenly light-sources as metaphors for God's beauteous glory"[84] in the context of the discussion of Israel's restoration in the new creation contained in the 60th chapter of the Book of Isaiah. In this Book it is said about the Divine beauty as about

> replacing the sun and the moon and shining on Israel in a greater way than these former light-sources had ever done:
>
> 19 'No longer will you have the sun for light by day,
> Nor for brightness will the moon give you light;
> But you will have Lord for an everlasting light,
> And your God for your beauty.
> 20 'You sun will set no more,
> Neither will your moon wane;
> For you will have Lord for an everlasting light,
> And the days of your mourning will be finished.'
> (Is. 50:19-20)[85]

The same motive can be found in the *Book of Revelation* 22:5 "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." As if reflecting on these motives, the author of the *kontakion* in the sixth verse announces that the church of Christ even exceeds (ὑπερβάλλει) the firmament, it has no need in the sensible light because its sanctuary (ἄδυτον) bears the "divine illumination of the Sun of Truth" (τὸν ἥλιον τῆς ἀληθείας θεικῶς λάμποντα) and is illuminated in respect to its reason by the rays of the spirit (καὶ τὸν λόγον τοῦ πνεύματος ταῖς ἀκτῖσι περιλάμπεται), through which God who said 'Let there be light' (Γενηθήτω τὸ φῶς) illuminates the thoughtful eyes (τὰ ὄμματα <τῆς> διανοίας). Nadine Schibille interpreted the meaning of this verse as "conveying the concept of divine wisdom by consistently emphasizing the close connection between the physical light and the transcendent divine light that illuminates the human mind."[86] Moreover, the same scholar demonstrated that this theme is present also in an ekphrasis poem of Paul the Silentiary which was supposed to be recited for the celebration of the church's re-construction in 562/563 CE. According to Schibille, in the text of this poem the

> phenomenon of light underlies at once the visual (aesthetic) splendour as well as the spiritual and epistemological significance of the church of Hagia Sophia. This is further exemplified in Paul the Silentiary's use of the term *noein* that implies both sensuous as well as intellectual perception whenever the audience is invited to see.[87]

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79 Tr. by Palmer, slighty modified, in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 141.

80 Tr. by Palmer, in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 141-142.

81 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 36.

82 Jean Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique: Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), 171-174.

83 Tr. by Palmer in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 143.

84 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 41

85 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*…, 41-43.

86 Nadine Schibille, *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience* (Farnharm: Ashgate, 2014), 190.

87 Schibille, *Hagia Sophia*…, 23-24.

The motive of the transmission of knowledge as giving light inherent in the teacher of a religious doctrine correlates with similar Jewish mystical tradition. As it was noted by Joseph Angel, "commentators have long recognized the centrality of "knowledge" in the theological landscape of the Qumran community and have attempted to identify its various senses within the Scrolls."[88] Furthermore, the same scholar came to a conclusion that by an appropriate "understanding of תעד, which clearly permeated Qumran thought," one may rightly interpret the role of the high priest as an illuminator of the members of the community; "he has become brilliant with knowledge of God's mysteries… the intermediary through whom the community is enlightened, and as a consequence, also the vehicle by which it becomes analogous to the angels."[89] Furthermore, continuing the theme of the illumination of the inhabitants of "animate heaven," presented in the verses 7-8, in the 9th verse of the *kontakion* its author calls the apostles, prophets, and the saints the "intelligible luminaries" (νοητοὶ φωστῆρες) fixed to the "divine firmament of the church of Christ" (τὸ θεῖον στερέωμα τῆς Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησίας) who enlighten in the night all those whose sins were redeemed by the Incarnation of Christ.

> (9) By the gift of the Spirit who has made firm this church of Christ, we see intelligible luminaries fixed to the divine firmament of it: divisions of prophets and apostles and teachers, flashing with the lightning of their doctrines, and neither suffering eclipse nor waning nor [setting], but enlightening in the night of life those drifting about on the ocean of sin, which has been bereft of power by the Incarnation of Christ…[90]

Taking into consideration all these themes and motives, it is again worth recalling a conception of the correlation between the days of the creation of the world and the stages of the construction of the Tabernacle, adduced by Fletcher-Louis. This scholar observed that numerous commentators supported Kearney's hypothesis in spite of the fact the correspondence between the fourth, fifth and sixth days of creation and the respective speeches in Exodus 25-31 are more difficult for explanation. In particular, on the fourth day God created the sun, the moon and the stars and in accordance with the fourth speech Moses was obliged to make the holy oil and to anoint the sanctuary, with all what was in it, as well as the priests. This correspondence was interpreted by Moshe Weinfeld in the sense that various parts of the Temple and priests could represent the heavenly body, and for supporting his views he adduced the text of *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira* 50:5-7, where "the high priest is identified with the sun, the moon and the stars."[91] Besides, one can recognise here the theory of Basil the Great that the saints are the luminaries (φωστῆρες), illuminating the souls, who themselves participate in the true light of the world, which is symbolised by the distinction in the Genesis story of the first created light and the creation of the sun, the body prepared as the chariot for the first-born light, on the third day.

> (VI, 2) For then the nature of the light itself was shown [among other things]; now this solary body was prepared as the chariot of that first-born light. For as one thing is the fire, and the other is the lamp, one having the power to enlighten, the other making those, who are to be enlightened, become manifest; thus also the luminaries now were prepared as the chariot for that most pure, unmixed and immaterial light. For as the Apostle says that there are the luminaries in this world (*Philip*., 2:15), and different is the true light of the world, in which the saints participate, becoming the luminaries of the souls, whom they bring up, rescuing them from the darkness of the ignorance; thus also now the Creator of the whole world preparing this sun for that more clear [light], fastened [it] around the world.[92]

Very similar conceptions and imagery can be found in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, an anonymous author writing five hundred years later than a convert to Christianity mentioned in Acts 17. In *Divine Names* iv, 4 this author wrote that

> Light too is the measure and the enumerator of the hours, of the days, and indeed of all the time we have. It was thus light, then unshaped, which, according to the divine Moses, marked the three days at the beginning of time.[93]

The reference to the *Hexaemeron* of Basil the Great in this text is made evident in the *scholion* to this place of Pseudo-Dionysius, where it is explained that the sun illuminated three days before its own creation, being formless (ἀσχημάτιστος), while the first-born light (τὸ πρωτόκτιστον φῶς) on the fourth day was transformed (μετεσχηματίσθη) into the sun.[94] In the opinion of Nadine Schibille,

> This distinction finds its artistic parallel in the architecture and perception of Hagia Sophia. The true light within its sacred space is the one that is reflected, refracted and transmitted and thereby transformed through the mediation of the Great Church. This divine light is explicitly contrasted

88 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 120.

89 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 122-123.

90 Tr. by Palmer, slighty modified, in "The Inauguration Anthem…", 142.

91 Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P…", 10.

92 Τότε μὲν γὰρ αὐτὴ τοῦ φωτὸς ἡ φύσις παρήχθη· νῦν δὲ τὸ ἡλιακὸν τοῦτο σῶμα ὄχημα εἶναι τῷ πρωτογόνῳ ἐκείνῳ φωτὶ παρεσκεύασται. Ὡς γὰρ ἄλλο τὸ πῦρ, καὶ ἄλλο ὁ λύχνος· τὸ μὲν τὴν τοῦ φωτίζειν δύναμιν ἔχον, τὸ δὲ παραφαίνειν τοῖς δεομένοις πεποιημένον· οὕτω καὶ τῷ καθαρωτάτῳ ἐκείνῳ καὶ εἰλικρινεῖ καὶ ἀύλῳ φωτὶ ὄχημα νῦν οἱ φωστῆρες κατεσκευάσθησαν. Ὡς γὰρ ὁ ἀπόστολος λέγει τινὰς φωστῆρας ἐν κόσμῳ, ἄλλο δέ ἐστι φῶς τοῦ κόσμου τὸ ἀληθινὸν, οὗ κατὰ μέθεξιν οἱ ἅγιοι φωστῆρες ἐγίνοντο τῶν ψυχῶν, ἃς ἐπαίδευον, τοῦ σκότους αὐτὰς τῆς ἀγνοίας ῥυόμενοι· οὕτω καὶ νῦν τὸν ἥλιον τοῦτον τῷ φανοτάτῳ ἐκείνῳ ἐπισκευάσας φωτὶ ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργὸς περὶ τὸν κόσμον ἀνῆψε. (Saint Basil, *Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*, 334)

93 Tr. Colm Luibheid, Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist press, 1987), 73.

94 (248, 51 – 249,2) Ὅτι ὁ ἥλιος καὶ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας τὰς πρὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ ποιήσεως ἐφώτιζεν ἀσχημάτιστος ὤν. καὶ ὅτι τὸ πρωτόκτιστον φῶς τῇ τετάρτῃ ἡμέρᾳ μετεσχηματίσθη εἰς ἥλιον. καὶ ὅτι ἡμερῶν τριάδα φησίν, ὡς καὶ ὁ μέγας Βασίλειος ἐν ᾗ Ἑξαημέρῳ σαφῶς φησιν… John of Scythopolis, in *De Divinis Nominibus* 51 in *Ioannis Scythopolitani Prologus et Scholia in Dionysii Aropagitae Librum* De divinis nominibus *cum additamentis interpretum aliorum*, herausgegeben von Beate Regina Suchla, Patristische Texte und Studien 62 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2011), 224.

> with the light of the sun. Procopius and Paul the Silentiary affirm that the building's luminosity outshines the light of the sun and surpasses even the beauty of heaven.[95]

These thoughts of Nadine Schibille are found in the chapter of her book devoted to the role the aesthetic of light and animation and the understanding of beauty in the Neoplatonic philosophical tradition dominating in the fifth and sixth centuries, the significance of which for the formation of the visual culture of Byzantium have been widely recognised. This scholar also stressed the importance of the mediation of the Christian metaphysics of light in Pseudo-Dionysius in this process, in particular, discussing the above-mentioned Dionysian theme of the distinction between the light and the sun. On the other hand, one may note that Alexander Golitzin placed the discussed previously correspondence between the liturgy in the church and the soul as the "little church" in the Macarian Homilies in the general context of the persistence of this theme in the Syriac authors and Evagrius continuing in the Pseudo-Dionysius, and later Symeon the New Theologian and Nicetas Stephatos, notwithstanding the seeming differences between all these authors.[96] Besides, the same scholar established the correspondence between the texts of the Dionysian corpus, the Syrian patristic though and imagery used for its expression, and the Jewish mystical tradition, transmitted to the Dionysian writings through the mediation of these Syriac Christian milieu.[97] As it was noted by Golitzin, an interpretation of the inward meaning of the Church's liturgy in ascetic (especially Syrian) literature "continued… in the *Mystagogy* of Maximus the Confessor, which takes these same themes and expresses them in a slightly different though clearly related manner."[98] This sixth-century Byzantine author accepted, developed and corrected in his writings, including the *Mystagogia*, numerous themes and conceptions from Pseudo-Dionysius,[99] and also in his works one can find the witnesses of the adopted and re-comprehended ideas and images of the Neoplatonic tradition.[100] In this way, the next chapter of our article will be devoted to the discussion of the correspondences between the architecture of the church, the universe, and the human soul, described and analysed by Maximus the Confessor in his *Mystagogia*.

4. The Cosmic Symbolism of the Church and the Liturgy of the Logos and the Soul in the *Mystagogia* of Maximus the Confessor.

As it was noted by Joseph Angel, the identification of the high priest Simon with the sun, moon, and the stars in the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira* is used for the purpose of the demonstration of the manifestation of the Divine shining Glory in the temple. According to this scholar,

> Ben Sira seems to imply that the high priest in his service conveys the divine radiance into the temple. As in *Let. Aris*. 96-99, the phenomenon of brilliant light is apparently brought about by the donning of the high priestly garment, which are described in 50:11 as "vestments of glory"… and "vestments of magnificence"… As the bearer of the headdress inscribed with God's name as well as pronouncer of that name, Simon "became magnificent in the name of the Lord"… (50:1, 20).[101]

One may add that in the *Letter of Aristeas* it is announced about the high priest Eleazar that "upon his head he has what is called the "tiara," and upon this the inimitable "mitre," the hallowed diadem having in relief on the front in the middle in holy letters on a golden leaf the name of God, ineffable in glory."[102] An echo of the motive of the crown on the head of a high priest can be discerned, probably, in the description of the process of the mystical union of the head of the soul with God, which can be found in the fifth chapter of the *Mystagogia* of Maximus the Confessor, devoted to the conception of the soul as an image of the church:

> Thus when the soul has become unified in this way and is centered on itself and on God there is no reason (λόγος) to divide it on purpose into numerous things because its head is crowned by the first and only and unique Word and God (πρώτῳ καὶ μόνῳ καὶ ἑνί Λόγῳ τε καὶ Θεῷ).[103]

The phrase "head is crowned by the first and only and unique Word and God (πρώτῳ καὶ μόνῳ καὶ ἑνί Λόγῳ τε καὶ Θεῷ)," probably, correlates with the description of the soul as "truly rational and high priestly (λογικὴ… καὶ ἀρχιερατικὴ)" from the work of Clement of Alexandria *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (Section A, 27,1-6) where one can find also the teaching of the Name of God contained in the Scripture:

> The priest on entering within the second veil (τοῦ καταπετάσματος τοῦ δευτέρου) removed the plate at the altar of incense, and entered himself in silence with the name engraved (ἐγκεχαραγμένον) upon his heart, indicating the laying aside of the body which has become pure like the golden plate and bright through the purification of the soul and on which was stamped (ἐγκεχάρακτο) the lustre of piety, by which he was recognized by the Principalities and Powers as having put on the Name. Now he discards his body, the plate which has become light, within the second veil, that is, in the rational sphere, the second complete veil of the universe, at the altar of incense, that is, near the angels who are the ministers of the prayers carried aloft. Now the soul, stripped (γυμνή) by the power of him who has knowledge, as if it had become a body of the power (σώμα τῆς δυνάμεως), passes into the

95 Schibile, *Hagia Sophia*…, 180.
96 Golitzin, "Hierarchy Versus Anarchy?", 131-179.
97 Golitzin, "Dionysius Areopagita", 184-185.
98 Golitzin, "Hierarchy Versus Anarchy?," 168.
99 Ysabel De Andia, "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, ed. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (Oxford: University Press, 2015), 177-93.
100 Maximos Constas, "Maximus the Confessor, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the Transformation of Christian Neoplatonism," *Analogia* 2 (2017), 1-12.
101 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*, 59-60.
102 Tr. by Robert J.H. Shutt, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985 [1983]), 19.
103 Tr. by Berthold, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*…, 194.

> spiritual realm and becomes now truly rational and high priestly (λογικὴ… καὶ ἀρχιερατικὴ), so that it might now be animated, so to speak, directly by the Logos, just as the archangels become the high-priests of the angels and the first-created the high-priests of the archangels. But how can there be a correction (κατόρθωμα) produced by Scripture and apprehension for the soul which has become pure, when it is granted to see God "face to face"? Thus, having transcended the angelic teaching and the Name taught in Scripture, it comes to the knowledge and comprehension of the facts (πραγμάτων). It is no longer a bride but has become a Logos and rests with the bridegroom together with the first-called and first-created, who are friends by love, sons by instruction and obedience, and brothers by community of origin. So that it belonged to the dispensation (τὸ μὲν τῆς οἰκονομίας) to wear the plate and to continue the pursuit of knowledge, but the work of power (τὸ δὲ δυνάμεως) was that man becomes the bearer of God, being controlled directly by the Lord and becoming, as it were, his body.[104]

As I tried to demonstrate elsewhere,[105] this passage from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* seems to represent rather the views on this subject of Clement himself than a certain Gnostic teaching, and it contain two interrelated themes, that of the ascent of Christ and the idea that the ascent of a Christian soul is the work of His power (δύναμιν), on which the juxtaposition "τὸ μὲν τῆς οἰκονομίας… τὸ δὲ δυνάμεως" at the end of the passage from the *Excerpta* seems to indicate. The theme of Christ as a High Priest entering the heavenly Tabernacle evokes a detailed account of this theme in the *Hebrews Epistle* (*Hebr*. 5; 7; 9), where this heavenly priestly service of Christ, juxtaposed to the earthly service of Old Testament priests is presented as a kind of a typological exegesis of Christ's Ascension. It has been demonstrated by Harald Riesenfeld that several important theological themes implied in the Gospel account of the Transfiguration of Christ have parallels in the *Hebrews Epistle*, and primary the theme of priestly dignity of the Messiah.[106] Moreover, to the comprehension of the Clement's text are also relevant the connections and similarities between Philo and the *Hebrews Epistle*. In the *Hebrews Epistle* Christ is called "high priest after the order of Melchisedec" (5:10; 7:3). Philo calls the *logos* the high priest (e.g. *De Fuga et Inventione*, 108; *De Migratione Abrahami* 102), and Melchisedec is considered as an allegorical representation of the *logos* (e.g. *Legum Allegoriarum*, 3.82).[107] Furthermore, Margaret Barker put this conception of the high priestly Logos into the context of the discussion of the veil of the Temple and the vestment of the high priest. As it was noted by this scholar, "the only person who passed through the veil was the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The texts which describe his vestments show that these were made in exactly the same way as the temple curtain and that they also represented the creation."[108] Moreover, Barker attracted a special attention to the equation of the conception of the Logos and the high priest, noting that "Philo talks of a heavenly high priest who had an earthly counterpart, which is quite consistent with what is known elsewhere of the temple. His heavenly high priest was called the Logos, the Word, of God."[109] At this point, it seems reasonable to observe that the descriptions of the descent of the Logos and the ascent of the soul in the chapter twenty-three from the *Mystagogia*, as it seems, fully corresponds to the ideas expressed in the previously quoted text of Clement of Alexandria:

> And the soul comes fleeing headlong; her spirit enters natural contemplation, peaceful, and free from all tumult, as if going into a church or an inviolate sanctuary of peace, following the Word, and under the guidance of the Word, our great and true God and High Priest; through the figures, as it were, of the sacred readings which occur, she learns the meanings of present things and the great and wonderful mystery of divine providence revealed in the law and prophets.[110]

> The next step is that the God-loving, fearless eyes of the mind can be allowed to see God the Word Himself again, by supernatural perception, coming to the soul from heaven (symbolized by the descent of the priest from his throne) and making an examination of the soul's perfection (the way it is done with catechumens), to judge its thoughts which imagine sensations and their elements.[111]

On the other hand, in *Quaestiones et dubia* 191 Maximus says that the body of the Word is the substance of the virtues (σῶμα οὖν τοῦ λόγου ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν ἀρετῶν οὐσία), while the garments (ἱμάτια) of the Word are the sayings of the Scripture (τὰ τῆς γραφῆς ῥήματα) and the created universe. St. Maximus further explains that this garment looks white by those who have stripped off the letter of the Scripture from the thickness, inherent in it (τὸ μὲν γράμμα τῆς θείας γραφῆς ἀπαξέοντες τῆς ἐπικειμένης παχύτητος), and by the spiritual contemplation (τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος θεωρίᾳ) see (ἐποπτεύοντες) the shining beauty of the concepts (νοημάτων).[112] As it has been demonstrated by Margaret Barker, both the veil of the Temple and the vestments of the high priest represented the created universe,[113] and this cosmic symbolism is explicitly expressed in the writings of a first-century Jewish author Josephus Flavius. In the 5th book of

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104 Tr. by Robert P. Casey, revised by Salvatore Lilla, in Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: University press, 1971), 176.

105 Irina Kolbutova, "The Book of the Body of Christ: Jewish-Christian Mysticism of Letters and the Name of God as an Origin for the Christian Spiritual Exegesis," *Scrinium* 10 (2014), 305-360.

106 Harald Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfuré. L'arrière plan du récit de Notre Seigneur* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1947), 266-274.

107 David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis: Van Gorcum, 1993), 77; Kenneth Schenk, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Westminster, John Knox Press, 2005), 83.

108 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 111.

109 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 115.

110 Tr. by Dom Julian Stead, O.S.B. in *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man: the* Mystagogia *of St. Maximus the Confessor*, tr., with historical note and comm. by Dom Julian Stead, O.S.B. (Still River, Mass: St. Bede's publications, 1982), 97-98.

111 Tr. by Dom Julian Stead, O.S.B. in *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man*…, 98-99.

112 *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones et dubia*, ed. José.H. Declerk; Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 134, 47-63.

113 Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*…, 107-114.

his *Jewish War* can be found a description and an interpretation of the veil:

> Before these [doors] hung a veil of equal length, of Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple, wrought with marvellous skill. Nor was this mixture of materials without its mystic meaning: it typified the universe. For the scarlet seemed emblematical of fire, the fine linen of the earth, the blue of the air and the purple of the sea; the comparison in two cases being suggested by their colour and in that of the fine linen and the purple by their origin as the one is produced by the earth and the other by the sea. On this tapestry was portrayed a panorama of the heavens, the signs of the Zodiac excepted.[114]

On the other hand, in the 3rd book of the *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus explained the symbolical meaning of the high priestly vestments, corresponding to the symbolism of the veil:

> The high Priest's tunic likewise signifies the earth, being of linen, and its blue the arch of heaven, while it recalls the lightnings by the pomegranates, the thunder by the sound of the bells. His upper garment too denotes universal nature, which it pleased God to make of four elements; being further interwoven with gold in token, I imagine, of the all-pervading sunlight.[115]

In this way, in the text of Maximus the Confessor, the cosmological symbolism of the Christian church, probably, correlates with the presentation of the Temple in the ancient Jewish sources. In this context the letter of the Scripture functions as if the veil of the Temple, probably expressed symbolically by means of the architecture of the church, its furniture, the liturgy, as well as the vestments and vessels used by the priest. The technical process of the ascent of the soul from the veil of the Scripture is presented by Maximus the Confessor in the seventh chapter of the *Mystagogia*, where the mirrors of the glory of God seem to be identified with the spiritual inscriptions on the tablets of the heart, as opposed to the material letters of the Scripture:

> And let him through an informed study of holy Scripture wisely get past its letter and rise up to the Holy Spirit in whom are found the fullness of all goodness and the treasures of knowledge and the secrets of wisdom. If anyone is shown to be interiorly worthy he will find God himself engraved (ἐγγεγραμμένον) on the tablets of his heart through the grace of the Spirit and with face unveiled will see as in a mirror (ἐνοπτριζόμενος) the glory of God once he has removed the veil of the letter (γράμμα).[116]

The conception of the Glory of Christ reflected in the mirror of the Christian soul and the motive of the clothes can go back to ancient Christian tradition, witnessed in the Ode 13 of the *Odes of Solomon*:

> Behold! the Lord is our mirror: open the eyes and see them in Him: and learn the manner of your face: and tell forth praises to His spirit: and wipe off the filth from your face: and love His holiness, and clothe yourselves therewith: and be without stain at all times before Him.[117]

The tradition of the use of the metaphor of a mirror for the expression of Christian theological conceptions is found also in a passage of the Ps.-Cyprian's *De Montibus Sina et Sion*, 13:

> In this way, we find the Saviour himself saying through Solomon that He is an immaculate mirror of the Father, so that the Holy Spirit, the Son of God, saw Himself duplicated, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, each of the two saw Himself in Himself, hence [the Son is] an immaculate mirror of the Father. For we who believe in Him, also see Christ in us as in a mirror, for He Himself instructs and reminds us in a letter of his disciple John to the people: "You see me in yourselves as one of you sees himself in water or in a mirror," and He confirmed the words which Solomon said about Him: "He is an immaculate mirror of the Father" (Wisd. 7:26).[118]

J. Edgar Bruns has indicated on a possible connection between the "*epistula Iohannis*" and the *Acts of John*,[119] where Christ says: "I am a mirror to you who knows me" (Ἔσοπτρόν εἰμί σοι τῷ νοοῦντί με; *Acts of John*, 95).[120] One may note also that this text of Ps.-Cyprian contains the reference to the Book of Wisdom 7: 26 where Sophia is called the "effulgence of eternal light and immaculate mirror of the divine energy and an image of his goodness" (ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστιν φωτὸς αἰδίου καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ).

At this point, it is worth recalling that the churches in Edessa and Constantinople, to which inauguration anthems discussed in this article are devoted, are dedicated to the Hagia Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, identified with Christ. On the other hand, in chapter twenty-three of the *Mystagogia*, Maximus the Confessor described the process of the mystical union of the soul, representing the

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114 Josephus, *The Jewish War*, *Volume III: Books 5-7*, tr. by Henry S. J. Thackeray and Ralph Markus, Loeb Classical Library, 210 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 265.

115 Josephus, *The Jewish Antiquities, Volume IV: Books 1-4*, tr. by Henry S. J. Thackeray and Ralph Markus, Loeb Classical Library, 242 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 405

116 Tr. by Berthold, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*…, 197.

117 James Rendel Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: University press, 1909), 106.

118 Ita inuenimus ipsum saluatorem per Salomonem speculum immaculatum patris esse dictum, eo quod sanctus spiritus Dei filius geminatum se uideat, pater in filio et filius in patre utrosque se in se uident: ideo speculus inmaculatus. nam et nos qui illi creadimus Christum in nobis tamquam in speculo uidemus ipso nos instruente et monente in epistula Iohannis discipuli sui ad populum: ita me in uobis uidete, quomodo quis uestrum se uidet in aquam aut in speculum, et confirmauit Salomonicum dictum de se dicentem: quis est speculus immaculatus patris. (*S. Thasci Caecili Cypriani Opera Omnia*, ed. Wilhelm von Hartel, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 3/3 (Vienna: Geroldi, 1871), 116,22 – 117,7).

119 J. Edgar Bruns, "Biblical Citations and the Agraphon in Pseudo-Cyprian's *Liber de Montibus Sina et Sion*", *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), 112-116.

120 *Acta Johannis*, 95, 12 (*Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. by Max Bonnet, Richard Adalbert Lipsius, vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1959), 198).

church, in the words, in which one can discern the echoes from the Book of Wisdom:

> …the soul will be brought to His mysterious and secret union in a separation of mind from all things; and, rather than just know about the things of God she will experience them, enough to wish not to belong to herself, not to be able to be known for herself – by herself or by anyone else, except only by God who has been so good as to accept her completely with His whole Self, divinely and calmly injecting Himself entirely into all of her, to completely deify her; so that she has become, as says the all-holy Denys the Areopagite, an image and manifestation of the invisible light (εἰκόνα καὶ φανέρωσιν τοῦ ἀφανοῦς φωτός): a pure mirror (ἔσοπτρον), intensely transparent, flawless, immaculate, spotless (ἀκηλίδωτον), receiving – if it is seemly to say so – all the beauty of the exemplar of goodness, and reflecting in itself like God without diminution, as far as is possible, the goodness (ἀγαθότητα) of the silence enshrined within it.[121]

Besides, the images of the engraved character on the tablet of the heart and the symbol of the mirror, besides Biblical allusions, can have Neoplatonic connotations. Probably, using the image of the tablet in the gnoseological context, Maximus could have in mind the Aristotelian simile of the soul and the writing tablet, employed by Alexander of Aphrodisias in *De Anima*, 84, 24 – 85, 5:

> We must say, then, that the material intellect is only a kind of propensity suitable for the reception of intelligible forms; it is like a tablet on which nothing has been written, or (to express this better) more like the blank condition of the tablet than the tablet itself, since the writing surface is an existent. Hence the soul, or the subject to which it belongs, might more properly be compared to the writing surface, and the intellect called material likened to the unmarked condition of the page or its suitability for being written on.[122]

This text of Alexander was used and analysed by Frederic M. Schroeder in his article of the doctrine of the intellect in Alexander, at the end of which this scholar came to the conclusion about a subtle distinction between activity and passivity, related to the lower phase of an intellectual process in the thought of Alexander. Schroeder has formulated his views as follows:

> It is not, then, the case that the potential intellect, as something which is utterly passive, may yet act in order that it may be informed. It is rather the case that, while the potential intellect remains itself unaffected, the abstraction, conservation and knowledge of form find their origin in the potential intellect and are the completion of it as a first entelechy. This is accomplished through a natural development from sensation, to imagination, to memory, to intellection (83,2 ff.).[123]

A similar subtle distinction between activity and passivity, concerning the notion of the "passive intellect" in Proclus, was observed by Dmitri Niculin:

> At first glance, the very term, 'passive intellect', seems to be an oxymoron for Proclus (*In Eucl*. 52.4-6): intellect cannot be passive because it is pure activity, and act (not a discursive process) of thinking that thinks itself. However, qua νοῦς παθητικός, imagination embraces its opposites without violating the principle of non-contradiction: imagination is both active and passive, but in different respects."[124]

The same scholar noted that

> Proclus… speaks about imagination as a plane *mirror* (οἷον ἐπιπέδῳ κατόπτρῳ) into which discursive reason 'looks' and recognizes itself as that 'to which the λόγοι of the discursive reason send down reflections (ἐμφάσεις) of itself' (*In Eucl*. 121. 4-7, trans. mod.). That imagination is a plane mirror means that it is a kind of 'smooth surface' that, unlike the mirror of bodily matter, does not distort the projections of discursive reason that appear as geometrical figures. Hence, 'the soul, exercising her capacity to know, projects (προβάλλει) onto the imagination, as on a mirror (ὥσπερ εἰς κάτοπτρον), the λόγοι of the figures (τοὺς τῶν σχημάτων λόγους); and the imagination, receiving in images and as reflections those entities that the soul has within itself, by their means affords the soul an opportunity to turn inward (εἰς τὸ εἴσω) from the images and attend to herself. It is as if a man looking at himself in a mirror (ἐν κατόπτρῳ) and marvelling at the power of nature and at his own appearance (μορφήν) should wish to look upon himself directly and possess such a power that would enable him to become at the same time the seer and the sees (ὁρῶν καὶ ὁρατόν)' (*In Eucl*. 141.4-13, trans. mod.).[125]

This thought closely correlates with the words of St. Maximus that "if anyone is shown to be interiorly worthy he will find God himself engraved (ἐγγεγραμμένον) on the tablets of his heart through the grace of the Spirit and with face unveiled will see as in a mirror (ἐνοπτριζόμενος) the glory of God once he has removed the veil of the letter (γράμμα)." A late Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle's Passive Intellect as *phantasia*[126] was explicitly incorporated into the system of psychology constructed by the seventh-century Christian Byzantine author Maximus the Confessor who wrote in the *Ambigua* 10, 3:

> For having received from God a soul having intellect (νοῦν) and *logos* and sense (αἴσθησιν), so that [the sense] can range from the sensible to the intelligible (τῇ νοητῇ), just as *logos* from an inward (πρὸς τῷ ἐνδιαθέτῳ) to an expressed (κατὰ προφορὰν), and an intellect from an intelligible to a passive (νοῦν πρὸς τῷ νοητῷ τὸν παθητικὸν), it is necessary that they should think about the activities of these, so as to apply them not to their own purposes, but to

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121 Tr. by Dom Julian Stead, O.S.B. in *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man*…, 101.

122 Athanasios P. Fotinis, *The* De Anima *of Alexander of Aphrodisias. A Translation and Commentary*, PhD dissertation (Washington, DC: University press of America, 1979), 110-111.

123 Fotinis, *The* De Anima…., p. 123.

124 Dmitri Niculin, "Imagination and Mathematics in Proclus," *Ancient Philsosophy* 28 (2008), 164.

125 Niculin, "Imagination and Mathematics…",166-167.

126 Henry J. Blumenthal, "Neoplatonic Interpretation of Aristotle on *Phantasia*", *The Review of Metaphysics* 31 (1977), 242-253.

> God. (A passive intellect is what they call the imagination (φαντασίαν) of the living being. For living things know themselves and us and places where they dwell, and the men wise in these matters say that a sense (αἴσθησις) is set together with an imagination (φαντασία), which is its organ by which it can be receptacle (ἀντιληπτικόν) of what it imagines.)[127]

On the other hand, as it was discussed by Dmitri Niculin, in the same commentary on *Euclid I*, where *phantasia* is associated with *nous pathētikos*, it is connected also with the image of the mirror. Niculin observed that, according to Proclus

> …a geometer must look at the images of the mathematical form that discursive reason unfolds by painting or projecting it onto the geometrical matter or 'passive intellect' of imagination, make all the necessary divisions and constructions in such an image, discover its properties, and then enfold and bring it back into its mathematical form as being already undivided and only thinkable.[128]

Besides, as it has been demonstrated by Philip Merlan,[129] Iamblichus argued sometimes pro, sometimes contra the identification of the soul with the three branched of mathematics (i.e. arithmetic, geometry, and harmonics) while Proclus finally identified the soul with the four branches (with astronomy included). The philosophical tradition presented by Merlan was summarized by Arthur H. Armstrong in the following way:

> Here I am very much indebted to the careful discussion of the evidence by Merlan in the first two chapters of his From Platonism to Neoplatonism. He does seem to me to have shown, if not beyond all doubt at any rate as clearly as can reasonably be expected in this particularly fog-ridden area of the history of ancient philosophy, that we can rely on the ancient attributions to Speusippus and Xenocrates respectively of the definitions of soul as "the idea of the all-extended" (ἰδέα τοῦ πάντῃ διαστατοῦ…) and "a self-moving (or self-changing) number" (ἀριθμὸς κινῶν ἑαυτόν, or αὐτοκίνητος); that these mean that Speusippus identified the soul with the objects of geometry and Xenocrates with the objects of arithmetic; that at least in Xenocrates this way of looking at the soul was closely connected with an interpretation of Plato's description of the making of the world-soul in *Timaeus* 35 A; that Posidonius in commenting on the *Timaeus* followed the same line of thought but found the identification of soul with the objects of only one branch of mathematics objectionable and identified it with the whole range of mathematical objects; that he accepted and regarded as Platonic the tripartite division, sense-objects, mathematical objects, intelligibles (whether he got it from Aristotle or elsewhere) and combined it with the tripartition of the *Timaeus* so as to arrive at a doctrine of the mathematical soul or animate mathematicals as intermediate between intelligible and sensible beings; and that the doctrine as we find it in Iamblichus and Proclus derives ultimately from Posidonius.[130]

It is noteworthy that Armstrong used the term "animate mathematicals" for the characterisation of the Neoplatonic identification of the soul with the branches of mathematics and the numerical and geometrical nature of this intermediate Platonic entity. One may recall that previously in our study we discussed the conception of an "animate architecture," expressed in the Jewish mystical literature, such as the 7th song of the the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, discussed previously: "That there may be wondrous songs (sung) with eter[nal] joy. With these let all the f[oundations of the hol]y of holies praise, the supporting pillars of the supremely lofty abode, and all the corners of its structure." (…4Q403 1 I, 40-41)"[131] Probably, the correlation of these two traditions in the theological and exegetical thought of Maximus the Confessor can serve as an explanation to the fact that, according to St. Maximus, the church, which is at the same time an architectural construction, the man, and the soul, is presented as singing the praises to God and at the same time completing some mathematical operations:

> The pair which reveals God is truth and goodness. When the soul is moved by them to make progress (κατὰ πρόοδον) it becomes united to the God of all (τῷ Θεῷ τῶν ὅλων) in imitating what is immutable and beneficent in his essence and activity by means of its steadfastness in the good and its unalterable habit of choice. And if I might add a brief but useful consideration (θεώρημα), this is perhaps the ten divine strings of the spiritual lyre of the soul (ἡ θεία δεκὰς τῶν χορδῶν τοῦ κατὰ ψυχὴν ψαλτερίου) which includes the reason (λόγον) resounding in harmony with the spirit through another blessed series of ten, the commandments, which spiritually renders perfect, harmonious, and melodious sounds on praise of God.[132]

Furthermore, the soul, after accomplishing some mathematical operations, by the grace of the Holy Spirit and by its love to work can connect the first members of the five conjunctions to the others five.

> To summarize: It means to reduce the ten to one, when it will be united to God who is true, good, one, and unique (ἑνὶ μόνῳ). It (soul) will be beautiful and splendid, having become similar to him as much as it can by the perfecting of the four basic virtues (τῶν τεσσάρων γενικῶν ἀρετῶν) which reveal the divine ten in the soul and include the other blessed ten of the commandments. In fact, the tetrad is the decade in potency, joined together in a progressive series (κατὰ πρόοδον συντιθεμένη) from the one. And moreover it is itself a monad which singly embraces the good as a unity (κατὰ σύνοδον) and which by being itself shared without division (ἀμερές) reflects the simplicity and indivisibility (ἀτμήτως μεμερισμένον) of the divine activity. It is through them (virtues) that the soul vigorously keeps

127 Tr. by Andrew Louth, modified, in Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 98.

128 Niculin, "Imagination and Mathematics…", 166.

129 Philip Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1960), 11-33.

130 Arthur H. Armstrong, "The Background of the Doctrine 'That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect'", in *Sources de Plotin* (=*Entretiens Hardt* V) (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 396-397.

131 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 131.

132 Tr. by Berthold, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*…, 191-192.

> its own good free from attack and bravely repels what is foreign to it as evil, because it has a rational mind (νοῦν εὔλογον), a prudent wisdom (σοφίαν ἔμφρονα), an active contemplation (θεωρίαν ἔμπρακτον), a virtuous knowledge, and along with them an enduring knowledge which is both very faithful and unchangeable. And it conveys to God the effects wisely joined to their causes and the acts to their potencies, and in exchange for these it receives a deification which creates simplicity.[133]

The numerical symbolism and the meaning of operation with the numbers can be clarified by the texts attributed to Iamblichus (*Theologumena Arithmeticae*[134]), probably, not as a direct source, but as a representative of the tradition of the Greek Neo-Platonic arithmetical theology. The meaning of the phrase of St. Maximus "the tetrad is potentially the decad, resulted according to the procession (κατὰ πρόοδον συντιθεμένη) in the series from the monad," probably, can be explained, if to take into consideration the following explanation from the *Theologumena Arithmeticae*:

> In the fourth place, as regards 1, 2, 3, 4, the decad, although even less successive, has acquired perfection in a different way from those other ways: for it is a measure and a complete boundary of every number, and there is no longer any natural number after it, but all subsequent numbers are produced by participation in the decad, when the cycle is started a second time, and then again and again on to infinity.[135]

Concerning the conception of the "decad" the author of the *Theologumena Arithmeticae* formulated the following cosmological ideas:

> We have often said before that the creative mind (τεχνικὸς νοῦς) wrought the construction and composition (κατασκευήν τε καὶ σύστασιν) of the universe and everything in the universe by reference to the likeness and similarity of number, as if to a perfect paradigm (παράδειγμα). But since the whole was an indefinite multitude (ἀόριστον τὸ ὅλον πλῆθος) and the whole substance of number was inexhaustible, it was not reasonable or scientific to employ an incomprehensible paradigm, and there was a need of commensurability, so that the Creator God (ὁ τεχνίτης θεός), in his craftsmanship (ἐν τῇ δημιουργίᾳ), might prevail over and overcome the terms and measures which were set before him, and might neither contract in an inferior fashion nor expand in a discordant fashion to a lesser or greater result than what was appropriate. However, a natural equilibration and commensurability and wholeness (ὅλωσις) existed above all in the decad.[136]

In this way, by the implications of the Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic numerological symbolism Maximus the Confessor, probably, incorporated his conception of the soul representing the church, into the general cosmological symbolism, since it is stated in the *Mystagogia* that the holy church is the "figure and image of the entire world composed of visible and invisible essences"[137] and "a symbol of the sensible world as such, since it possesses the divine sanctuary as heaven and the beauty of the nave as earth"[138] and, vice versa, the "the world is a church since it possesses heaven corresponding to a sanctuary, and for a nave it has the adornment of the earth."[139]

5. Conclusions

In his book, quoted in the present article, Joseph Angel made an attempt to search for an answer to the problem of the spiritual role for the Qumran community of the *Song of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, in which a conception of an "animate architecture" can be found.[140] This scholar came to a conclusion that the most appropriate explanation is contained in the book of Henry Corbin *Temple and Contemplation*, from which he adduced the following quotation:

> The opposition between the vision of the material temple "localized" on earth, and the vision of the ideal spiritual temple, is somewhat artificial, since in fact the *imago templi* as such is always perceived on the level of the in between, of the imaginal, "the meeting place of the two seas" … [This] implies a situation which is above all *speculative*, in the etymological sense of the word: two mirrors (*specula*) facing each other and reflecting, one within the other, the Image that they hold. The Image does not derive from empirical sources. It precedes and dominates such sources, and is thus the criterion by which they are verified and their meaning is put to the test.[141]

On the other hand, one may note that in the *Mystagogia* of Maximus the Confessor, which inherited the cosmological symbolism on the Christian church, found in inauguration hymns and going back to the Jewish tradition of the symbolism of the temple as universe and the mystical conception of the heavenly temple and angelic heavenly liturgy, the image of the mirror is used for the expression of similar ideas. St. Maximus employed the implicit reference to the Book of Wisdom 7: 26 where Sophia is called the "effulgence of eternal light and immaculate mirror of the divine energy and an image of his goodness" referring to the soul, representing the church. Besides, in the thought of this author one can discern the presence of the conception of Proclus about the "geometrical matter," consisting in the idea that 'the soul, exercising her capacity to know, projects (προβάλλει) onto the imagi-

133 Tr. by Berthold, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*…, 193.

134 *Iamblichi Theologoumena arithmeticae*, ed. Vittorio de Falco; add. et corr. Ulrich Klein (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1975).

135 Tr. by Robin Waterfield, in *The Theology of Arithmetic: On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers, Attributed to Iamblichus* (Grand Rapid: Phanes presss, 1988), 61.

136 Tr. by Waterfield, in Ibid., 109.

137 Tr. by Berthold, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*…, 188.

138 Tr. by Berthold, in Ibid., 189.

139 Tr. by Berthold, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*…, 189.

140 Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood*…, 97-105.

141 Henry Corbin, *Temple and Contemplation*, tr. by Philip Sherrard (London and New York: KPI in association with Islamic Publications, 1986), 303 and 267.

nation, as on a mirror (ὥσπερ εἰς κάτοπτρον), the λόγοι of the figures (τοὺς τῶν σχημάτων λόγους); and the imagination, receiving in images and as reflections those entities that the soul has within itself, by their means affords the soul an opportunity to turn inward (εἰς τὸ ἔἴσω) from the images and attend to herself…' (*In Eucl*. 141.4-13, trans. mod.)."[142] This conception of Proclus, probably, correlates with the ideas of Pseudo-Dionysius, expressed by his in *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* iii, 3:

> They (the souls) must themselves virtually match the purity of the rites they perform and in this way they will be illuminated by ever more divine visions, for those transcendent rays prefer to give off the fullness of their splendor more purely and more luminously in mirrors made in their image.[143]

Concerning this text Nadine Schibille observed that the concept contained in it "identifies Hagia Sophia's interior saturated with radiance as the perfect image or mirror of the divine light."[144] On the other hand, Bissera V. Pentcheva considered the trope of mirroring (*esoptron*) in Byzantine poetics as one of the most appropriate terms for describing Hagia Sophia, the architectural symbolism of which helps the viewer to "recognize the performance of… 'material flux,' such as glitter, shadow, reverberation, and scent – phenomena produced in and through matter but remaining ungraspable and ineffable."[145] In this way, it seems reasonable to assume that the architecture of the churches, dedicated to the Holy Wisdom, with all its mathematical proportions and geometrical figures, as well as the liturgy celebrated in it, constitute the mirror-reflection of the heavenly realities, embodied by Christ-Sophia as the mirror of the divine light. Besides, these mathematical proportions, geometrical figures, and liturgical rites are reflected in the individual soul, which, according to St. Maximus, who followed Ps.-Macarius and other Syriac Christian writers, who inherited various trends in the Jewish mystical tradition, represents the "little church."

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142 Niculin, "Imagination and Mathematics…", 167.

143 Tr. Colm Luibheid, Pseudo-Dionysius…, 218.

144 Schibille, *Hagia Sophia*…, 180.

145 Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), 10.

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