

This work has a difficult task to try to summarise the difference between the orthodox and Arian iconographic concept of depicting Christ, mainly in late antiquity. The issue is taken from the point of systematic theology, ecclesial history and the history of art. The memory of Arianism, as the most widespread form of heresy, was a real threat for the church in the 3rd century and therefore was almost fully eradicated. Arianism was met with the usual punishment of bad Roman emperors - damnatio memoriae. It was forgotten forever. So, all we know is taken from Arianism's opponents, orthodox Catholic historians and scholars. This concerns theological works as well as visual art works. When we study the theological background of this form of heresy, we see Jesus Christ as the first, the highest and the noblest creation of all, but as nothing more. God the Father, the only one, according to Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria, the founder of Arianism, is completely independent. He can not have any Son. He cannot even be the Father. On principle God the Father is different from Jesus Christ the Son. The next progression in Arianism stated that the Son and the Father are alike. Arius's main opponent Athanasius, later orthodox bishop of Alexandria, insisted on the full godliness of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as an equal, *homousia*, to the God the Father. Athanasius won this dispute at the 1st General Council in Nicaea (325) and in the resulting credo which was accepted there, Jesus Christ, the Son, was confessed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as the Holy Trinity. It took many years for the whole Church to accept this conclusion. Arianism was not defeated; some Roman emperors agreed with Arian bishops, others did not. The persecution was on both fronts, Arians persecuted Catholics and vice versa. The Emperor Theodosius the Great later banned Arianism as well as other forms of heresy. Arianism spread outside of Rome among barbaric tribes, the Vandals, Goths, Franks etc. These tribes accepted the cultural benefits of Christianity and retained their own traditions and independence from Rome and the Catholic Church. After the fall of Western Rome (476) the ruler of Arian Ostro-Goths, King Theodoric, founded his kingdom with Ravenna as the capital. He made an effort to establish a common Roman-Gothic culture and state. He was religiously tolerant for a long time. Unlike North Africa under the Arian Vandals the Catholic Church was free. He reconstructed Ravenna and built the Goth district. There were two cathedrals with two baptisteries for orthodox and Arian believers.

56

There were unique masterpieces in church buildings in Ravenna at the time, when the court of Western Roman emperors was there. These mosaics were meticulously theologially designed by the Ravenna Bishops at the time. The common iconographic types of Jesus Christ and the Saints were used. The major types of depicted Christ as a young beardless Christ and the later type shows Christ as an older wise man with long hair and a beard. The first type came from church catacomb art and was used in depicting miracles in the public life of Jesus. The later kind was used with the intention of stressing the real personality of Jesus. This type was used in scenes with the resurrected glorified Saviour. This type is from the post Constantine period. Both types are represented in unusual modifications in the Churches of Ravenna.

Orthodox mosaics from the Goth period bear signs of anti-Arian and anti-heretic rhetoric. We can find the main example of this tendency in the Ravenna Archiepiscopal chapel of Sant' Andrea. There is a rare iconographic type representing Jesus Christ in military dress stepping on beasts, holding a book with a biblical quotation, wholly representing the equality between Jesus the Son of the God and the God the Father.

What remains from the mosaics of Arian provenance of this period, show similarity to orthodox iconography types of Christos the Pantocrator and Maria the Theotokos from the Theodoric court basilica, now the Church of San Apollinare Nuovo. There are hypotheses about the Arian baptistery. This building is very similar to the orthodox baptistery. Depicting the baptism of Jesus Christ, surrounded by a band with apostles, it is the same like at the orthodox one. But Jesus is completely naked, more than in orthodox version. This sort of courage, if it was the author's plan, may suggest another meaning of Jesus' persona to Arian mosaic designers. Jesus is just like any other creature.

The Catholic mosaic from the period of the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian

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The Catholic mosaic from the period of the rule of the byzantine Emperor Justinian

celebrates the triumphant victory of the orthodox faith and the revival of the empire. The Catholic alteration of the Arian mosaic at San Apollinare nuovo is an important and apparent manifestation of the Arian and Goth defeat celebration. There are two bands with a procession of martyrs and virgins, led by Saint Martin of Tours the fighter against Arianism, and the second is led by the Three Magi maybe a symbol of the Trinity and Saint Euphemia, the symbol of orthodoxy in the Chalcedon ecumenical council. We can see the next important appearance of the Trinity faith's victory at the San Vitale Church. Here at the apse a rare iconographic type of a young beardless Christ with signs of the Pantocrator is used. Its meaning suggests eternal youth.

57

It depicts a globe held by two angels spreading rays of light through colourful spheres from the centre with the Greek letter alpha. This icon came from Saint John's theology of eternal Logos. We can take the apse mosaic of the demolished church of San Michele in Africisco as the most important manifestation of anti-Arian ideas. Here Christ stands holding a book with the Trinitologic source inscriptions with a very homousian highlight in the Gospel: „I and Father are one.“ (John 10,30) and „All things that the Father hath are mine“ (John 16,15).