

**BORN OF THE PIERCED SIDE.
OBSERVATIONS ON THE ICONOGRAPHIC THEME
OF *CHRIST THE VINE* IN A ROMANIAN ICON
OF THE XIXTH CENTURY***

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RÉSUMÉ : *Né du côté percé. Observations sur le thème iconographique du Christ la Vigne dans une icône roumaine du XIXe siècle.* En prenant comme point de départ la représentation du thème iconographique du *Christ la Vigne* dans une icône roumaine du XIXe siècle provenant de Șercaia (Transylvanie), la présente étude explore les origines de la représentation du motif de la vigne lié à la figure du Christ dans l'iconographie chrétienne primitive, les références bibliques et patristiques les plus significatives, la nouveauté de l'utilisation du motif du *Christ la Vigne* dans l'iconographie médiévale occidentale et dans les périodes ultérieures, pour ensuite se concentrer sur l'analyse de la spécificité de l'icône roumaine considérée ici. Synthèse iconographique et liturgique d'un sujet d'art dévotionnel occidental, accepté dans la sphère roumaine dès la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle par la médiation de l'iconographie baroque ukrainienne, l'icône reflète l'inculturation du thème eucharistique du *Christ la Vigne* dans la spiritualité orientale roumaine.

Mots-clés : Christ vigne, Homme des douleurs, iconographie paléochrétienne, iconographie roumaine du XIXème siècle, inculturation iconographique.

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REZUMAT: *Născuți din coasta străpunsă. Observații asupra temei Cristos Vița de Vie pornind de la o icoană românească pe sticlă de secol XIX.* Având ca punct de plecare reprezentarea iconografică a temei *Cristos Vița de Vie* într-o icoană românească de secol XIX din satul transilvănean Șercaia (Făgăraș), acest studiu cercetează originile reprezentării motivului iconografic al *viței de vie* asociat cu reprezentarea figurii lui Isus Cristos în prima iconografie creștină, apoi cele mai semnificative trimiteri biblice și patristice, precum și inovațiile în reprezentarea motivului iconografic *Cristos Vița de Vie* în iconografia medievală timpurie și în perioada succesivă, pentru a stăruii apoi asupra analizei detaliate a specificității reprezentării iconografice în icoana din Șercaia. Icoana se dovedește a fi o sinteză iconografică și liturgică a unei teme iconografice prezente în arta devoțională occidentală, temă pătrunsă în mediul românesc deja din a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea prin mijlocirea iconografiei baroce ucrainene. Varianta românească nu transpune repetitiv interpretarea iconografică a artei apusene, ci exprimă o adevărată inculturare în mediul cultural românesc a temei euharistice a lui *Cristos Vița de Vie*, filtrată prin specificul spiritualității orientale românești.

Cuvinte-cheie: Cristos Vița de Vie, Om al durerilor, iconografia paleocreștină, iconografia românească de secol XIX, inculturare iconografică.

The glass-icon depicting the theme of *Christ the Vine* (plate 1), which I contemplated since my childhood in the house of my maternal grandparents, made me wonder about the origin and deeper meaning of such a representation widely spread in the iconography of both Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches, especially in the region of Transylvania.

The icon depicts Christ seated on an altar covered by a richly decorated cloth, while a lush vine shoot laden with bunches of grapes emerges from Christ's (right) pierced side and surrounds the large vertical cross in the background; Christ's hands squeeze one of the six large bunches of grapes into a gilded chalice placed on the altar. Two instruments of the Passion, the spear and the reed with the sponge, can be glimpsed among the leaves and bunches in front of the gilded cross. The scroll with the initials of Pilate's inscription surmounts the cross, while yellow and red theophanic clouds frame the upper part of the composition.

The present study will explore the origins of the depiction of the vine motif connected with the figure of Christ in the early Christian iconography, the most significant biblical and patristic references, the novelty of the use of the *Christ the Vine* motif in early medieval iconography and in later periods, and then focus on the analysis of the specificity of the Romanian icon considered here.

Origins and initial iconographic developments

The iconographic motif of the vine, present in all traditional cultures, was used primarily with the meaning of fertility and cyclical rebirth² and, as such, as a vegetal expression of immortality and otherworldly happiness³. Therefore, it is often found in the funerary ambit, both as a simple plant, as well as in harvest scenes with erotes and birds. This symbolism, present in Greek culture and taken up by the Romans (plates 2, 3), was also accepted by Christian culture, which enriched it with Old and New Testament biblical meanings⁴. For example, in the frescoes of the catacombs of Domitilla and Pretestato in Rome⁵, in the mosaics of the mausoleum of Constance in Rome⁶ or in the reliefs on the façade of the so-called “Sarcophagus of the three shepherds” (plate 4) in the Pio-Cristiano Museum of the Vatican Museums⁷, we find scenes of erotes harvesting grapes and pressing them in the wine press. In the Christian interpretation, the pagan Dionysian meaning of such scenes is replaced with that of the happiness of eternal life in the kingdom promised to the faithful by the only Savior, Christ the Lord⁸.

² M. Guj, Vite, in: *Temi di iconografia paleocristiana*, Città del Vaticano 2000, 306.

³ J. Chevalier / A. Gheerbrandt, Vite, in: *Dizionario di simboli*, Milano 2014, 1124.

⁴ Guj, Vite 306. See also M. Lurker, Vite e uva, in: *Dizionario delle immagini e dei simboli biblici*, Milano 1990, 234.

⁵ Guj, Vite 306; A. Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana*, Milano 1967, 94, plate 90.

⁶ Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 187-189, plate 204. Also the sarcophagus of Costanza, daughter of the emperor Costantine, is decorated with scenes of grape harvest with erotes. The original red porphyry sarcophagus is found in the Vatican Museums. See also M. A. Crippa / M. Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana. Visione e Spazio dalle origini a Bisanzio*, Milano 1988, 165-167, plate 47.

⁷ Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 258-259, plates 286-287.

⁸ C. Leonardi, *Ampelos. Il simbolo della vite nell'arte pagana e paleocristiana*, Roma 1947, 101.

Other early Christian monuments, such as the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus in the Vatican Museums, take up the motif of the grape harvest rather as a secondary decorative element for the columns that frame the central New Testament scenes of the two levels⁹, which thus acquire a particular protagonism.

The vine depicted in a more clearly Christian iconographic context is found in the mosaics of the funerary chamber of the Tomb of the Giulii family in the Vatican Necropolis (plate 5), from the end of the IIIrd century - beginning of the IVth century: on the vault, surrounded by a decoration of vine leaves without clusters, the figure of Christ is identified with the attributes of Apollo, the quadriga and horses, with his head illuminated by seven rays, to manifest in the paradisiacal context of the vine the Redeemer as the “true sun”¹⁰, the Risen One victor over the darkness, who communicates eternal life.

It is surprising that Christian artists chose to depict a vine without bunches of grapes, if one thinks of the numerous monuments of Greco-Roman art with luxuriant tendrils laden with fruit. An example with significant similarities is offered by the almost contemporary fresco in the synagogue of Dura Europos in Syria from the beginning of the IIIrd century (plate 6): against a red background, the depiction of a robust vine with thick shoots without grapes dominates the niche of the Thora¹¹.

Although some scholars interpreted it as the tree of life instead of a vine, others, arguing with prophetic passages from *Isaiah* 4, 2 and *Zechariah* 12, 8, saw in the plant represented the messianic vine awaiting the coming of the

⁹ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 94-97. The grape harvest motif also reappears on the left header of the sarcophagus. Another contemporary sarcophagus that uses the vine motif as a decorative element on the columns separating the Old and New Testament scenes is sarcophagus no. 174 in the Lateran Museum in Rome. See also Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 246-249, plates 273, 276.

¹⁰ Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 80, plate 74. The other scenes depicted on the side walls of the burial room are The Good Shepherd, Jonah thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale, and the fisherman with the line.

¹¹ Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 74, plate 66. See also J. Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani primitivi*, Roma 1990, 49-50.

Messiah, which would be accompanied by the sign of divine blessing with abundant fruit on the vineyard of Yahweh¹².

It is worth remembering the importance that the image of the vine has for the Chosen People, as an image-symbol of Israel itself and of Yahweh's attentive care for it, as attested by numerous Old Testament passages such as *Psalms* 79/80, 9ff: "You have removed a vine from Egypt, to plant it you have expelled the peoples" or the well-known "song of the vine" in *Isaiah* 5, 1ff: "I will sing for my beloved my song of love for his vineyard.", to give just a few examples¹³. This emblematic image was represented both on the main portico of Herod's temple in Jerusalem in the form of a large golden vine laden with bunches of grapes, and on Jewish coins. Returning to the example of the Christian mosaics in the Vatican necropolis, the representation of the Risen Christ shining in the midst of the great vine could therefore be interpreted as a revelation of the One who, through His death and resurrection, provides the fruit of the Vine of Israel¹⁴.

Other significant examples in the Christian funerary ambit are the vault with vines on a red background above the lunette with the *Fractio panis*, in the so-called Greek Chapel of the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome (plate 7), from the IIIrd century¹⁵, or the vault of the Chapel of Peace in Bagawat in Egypt (plate 8), from the IVth-Vth century¹⁶. In both examples, the vine motif is given a very prominent and visible position, in Priscilla in connection with the theme of the Eucharistic banquet that culminates the iconographic program of the

¹² K. Weitzmann / H. L. Kessler, *The frescos of the Dura Synagogue and the Christian Art*, Washington DC 1990, 158. K. Kessler also points to the example of the IVth century floor mosaic in the apsidal area of the Synagogue of Sardis, Turkey, which depicts a vine without clusters emerging from a cantharus.

¹³ Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 45. Here are some other Old Testament passages that take up the theme of the vine with regard to the People of Israel: *Isaiah* 27, 2-6; *Jeremiah* 2, 21; *Ezekiel* 17, 5-10.

¹⁴ Weitzmann / Kessler, *The frescos of the Dura Synagogue* 149-150. H. Kessler follows the interpretation of Ch. Murray, *Rebirth and Afterlife*, Oxford, International Series 100 (1981), 64 ss.

¹⁵ Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 81.

¹⁶ Crippa / Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana* 230, plate 88.

cubicle, and in Bagawat at the center of the vault, as a unifying element of the Old and New Testament scenes depicted there. Moreover, unlike the representation in the Vatican necropolis, it is a vine garnished with bunches of grapes, as if to indicate the fulfillment of the prophecies about the fruit provided with the coming of the Savior Messiah.

The first representations that explicitly recall the theme of *Christ the Vine* are those that associate the motif of the vine with the monogram of Christ, as for example in the engraving on a small pillar of an altar table from the IVth century and conserved in the Pio-Cristiano Museum of the Vatican Museums (plate 9 a, b)¹⁷: the motif of the vine originates from the christogram and ends with it, emphasizing the Christological meaning of the image. The motif is also found on other contemporary monuments, for example in the decorations on two pillars of the Basilica of Thebes and in other African basilicas, or on the Vth century altar table from the Abbey of Saint Victor in Marseille, France (plate 10)¹⁸. On the main front of the altar in the center stands the christogram in a lemniscate crown, flanked by twelve doves, while on the sides vines laden with grapes emerge from a cantharus. It is significant that some of the doves carry in their beaks a grain of grapes, an iconographic motif taken from Greco-Roman art, and that in early Christianity symbolizes the mystical union of the faithful with Christ the True Vine and the need to bear good fruit, holy works, to be admitted into the kingdom. According to the scholars, this is not, in this first phase of Christian art, a reference to the Eucharistic symbolism of the vine (of which there is no mention until the medieval age)¹⁹, but rather a reference to Christ the Vine who fully realizes the Old Testament prophecy made to the people of Israel.

The motif of the vine spread both in the funerary ambit, as testified to by numerous mosaics in African churches, by sarcophagi, such as that of

¹⁷ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 126. See also Guj, *Vite* 306, and H. Leclercq – F. Cabrol (edd.), *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, Paris 1907-1953, I, Autel, 3183-3184, plate 1141 (from now on *DACL*).

¹⁸ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 127. See also Leclercq / Cabrol, *DACL*, XI, Mobilier liturgique, 1583-1585, plates 8218, 8220, 8221.

¹⁹ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 127-129.

Drausin in the Church of Saint Mary of Soissons, in France, from the end of the VIth century and the so-called sarcophagus of Archbishop Theodore in the Basilica S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Vth-VIth century (plate 11)²⁰; as well as in the liturgical ambit, as exemplified by several Ravenna plutei of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo of the VIth century²¹, or by a contemporary column with a victorious cross with palms and vines, found in Saqqarah and preserved in the Coptic Museum in Old Cairo²².

We notice that often in both funerary art and in the monumental art of ordinary worship churches the motif of the *chrismon* surrounded by a luxuriant vine²³ is substituted by the motif of the triumphal cross of Christ encamped among the branches of a flourishing vine laden with fruit. In addition to the examples already mentioned, let us recall the mosaics of an arcosolium in the catacomb of San Gaudioso in Naples from the Vth century (plate 12)²⁴, or the slightly later ones in the basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna and those in the Mor Gabriel monastery of Deyrulumur Qartmin in Turkey (plate 13), from the VIth century²⁵. The luminous cross, often gilded and adorned with gems, inscribed within a bright clypeus, gathers the movement described by the vine-shoots to open it toward the light of the celestial sphere. It is

²⁰ Crippa / Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana* 236, plate 209. See also Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 258, plate 296.

²¹ Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 275, plate 317.

²² Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 268, plate 309.

²³ See, for example, the mosaics on the vault of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna with *chrysmos* standing out in the midst of a golden vine and saints. A.A., *Ravenna, capitale del mosaico*, Bologna 1988, 11ff. Another significant example, which unites the symbolism of the luminous cross with that of the vine motif, is the depiction on a lantern in the Lavigerie Museum, Tunisia, from the IVth-Vth century: it is a cross within which a small cross placed in the center is surrounded by vines laden with bunches of grapes, while on the semicircular rim of the lantern four small fish surround the cross. See Leclercq / Cabrol, *DACL*, XV, 3117, plate 11245.

²⁴ Crippa / Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana* 220, plate 185.

²⁵ A.A., *Ravenna, capitale del mosaico* 40-41; A. Grabar, *La edad de oro de Justiniano*, Madrid 1966, plate 126, 117ss. Some scholars believe that a triumphal luminous cross was also represented in the center of the vault of Saint Matrona chapel in the church of San Prisco in Capua, of the Vth century. Crippa / Zibawi, *L'Arte Paleocristiana* 228, plate 87.

created the impression of a movement full of vitality that at the same time culminates and is born from this radiant nucleus of the cross. In San Gaudioso, the victory of the cross accompanied by the letters α and ω of the Greek alphabet, is indicated by the divine hand from above which holds out the triumphal crown and is witnessed by the two lambs facing each other which flank the cross as representatives of the group of apostles and the Church, while in the upper part of the medallion stands an eagle with outstretched wings as an allegorical figure of Christ²⁶.

Two other iconographic themes of early Christian iconography also belong to the same semantic field as the theme of *Christ the Vine*: the theme of Christ the Good Shepherd, when depicted in a grapevine setting, and the theme of the Grape of the Promised Land brought back by the two explorers on a horizontal beam²⁷. In addition to the example of the “Sarcophagus of the three shepherds” of the Vatican Museums mentioned above²⁸, we recall above all the sarcophagus of Catervio, Severina and Basso of the IVth century, preserved in the cathedral of Tolentino, and the so-called sarcophagus of San Benvenuto of the cathedral of Osimo, of the Vth century, with the Good Shepherd at the center of the composition²⁹. In the figurative tradition of late Antiquity the figure of the cryophorous shepherd inserted in an idyllic-pastoral environment was the personification of the virtue of *filantropia* and *humanitas*, to symbolize the world of happiness of the afterlife³⁰. When assumed in early Christian iconography, the shepherd with the sheep on his shoulders recalls Christ the Good Shepherd, who saves and guides the faithful to the kingdom of heaven.

The motif of the great cluster carried by the explorers of Canaan, according to the biblical account of *Numbers* 13, 22-25, has been widely used in Jewish iconography to symbolize the people of Israel as bearers of the

²⁶ Crippa / Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana* 220, 229. See also Leonardi, *Ampelos* 133.

²⁷ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 134.

²⁸ See here footnote 7.

²⁹ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 135. The scholar also mentions the *stucco* on the vault of the Catacomb of Aproniano in Rome, which depicts a Good Shepherd in the center of the vault, with eight erotes holding up the volutes of vine shoots.

³⁰ F. Bisconti, Buon Pastore, in *Temî di iconografia paleocristiana* 138.

messianic promise of salvation³¹. In the Patristic interpretation (both in the East and in the West), especially from the IVth century onwards, the Old Testament image has been interpreted as a prefiguration of the mystery of the Passion of Christ: the Savior, hanging on the wood of the Cross, opens the way towards the Promised Land of the heavenly kingdom³².

The artifacts that have been preserved belong above all to the funerary sphere, of which we mention a bottom of a gilded glass cup, from the IVth century (plate 14), in the Oliveri Museum in Pesaro³³; a Roman oil lamp from the IVth century, with the two explorers depicted frontally, holding on their shoulders the large grape hanging on the beam, and with a small *chrysmos* in the upper level of the composition³⁴; on the lid of the sarcophagus of the Abbey of Saint Victor, Marseilles, from the IVth-Vth century (plate 15)³⁵, the monogram of Christ stands out in the center, flanked on the left side (of the viewer) by the composition with the Lamb on the heavenly mountain with two deer quenching their thirst, and by the scene with the miracle of the Wedding of Cana and that with the explorers of Canaan, on the right. The monogrammed cross semantically unites the three scenes with the composition of the lower level with Christ standing on the heavenly mountain handing over the Law to the apostles, indicating how the Old Testament prophecies find their fulfillment in the promised Savior who becomes the source of life with the redemptive sacrifice on the cross.

³¹ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 164-165. See also Guj, *Vite* 306, and Lurker, *Vite e uva* 234. See here footnote 14.

³² Leonardi, *Ampelos* 151-163.

³³ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 168. The Christian origin of the gilded glass cup is testified by the prayer which accompanies the image: "ANIMA DULCIS PIE ZESES IN DEO" (in latinized Greek: „Sweet soul, drink and live in God"). R. Garrucci, *Vetri dorati di figure in oro trovati nei cimiteri dei Cristiani primitivi di Roma*, Roma 1858, plate II, 9, 10-11.

³⁴ Leclercq / Cabrol, *DACL*, II.2, Canaan, 169, plate 2456. See also the monogrammed oil lamp of Narbone Museum, IVth-Vth century. Leonardi, *Ampelos* 177.

³⁵ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 169-173. See also V. Cipollone, Canaan, in *Temi di iconografia paleocristiana* 140.

Outside the funerary ambit, a relevant example is the floor mosaic of the Algerian basilica of Al Asnam, from the IVth century³⁶: in front of the sanctuary area, a large square is decorated with a mystical vine whose shoots converge towards the center, where an enormous bunch of grapes is suspended in front of the architrave resting on two columns. The placement of the mosaic at the meeting between the area of the nave and that of the sanctuary area reinforces the meaning of the representation³⁷: the entry into the sphere of the Kingdom of heaven is opened by the sacrifice of Christ, the “Great Cluster”, on the tree of the Cross.

A singular and explicit representation of the theme of *Christ the Vine* can be found on the famous Antioch chalice from 500-550 (plate 16), conserved in the Cloisters Museum in New York³⁸: in the midst of a lush vine laden with bunches that forms twelve medallions, Christ seated on a throne in a frontal position and resting His feet on a *suppedaneum* presides over the apostles arranged in two symmetrical groups and delivers the New Law, while blessing with His right hand. The apostles, also seated on a throne with a high back, hold a scroll rolled up in their left hand, while with their right hand they indicate the Savior with a gesture of acclamation. The bestiary is also widely represented: a dove, an eagle, a lamb, a rabbit, a snail, a cicada and a butterfly³⁹. In the paradisiacal context of the vine, the figure of Christ stands out: He is the giver of the New Law, of which He makes the apostles partakers, binding them to Himself in a vital union, like the vine shoots to the trunk of the vine, and associates them with His saving mission.

The various iconographic formulas coined in early Christian art to refer to Christ the True Vine will be taken up again in medieval iconography and in later periods, enriched with new accents and meanings. In order to better understand later iconographic developments, I would first like to look

³⁶ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 180. The scholar Valeria Cipollone believes that the architectural structure before which is suspended the grape is an altar. See Cipollone, *Canaan* 140.

³⁷ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 183.

³⁸ Crippa / Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana* 422, plate 395. See also Grabar, *La edad de oro de Justiniano* 312, plate 360.

³⁹ Crippa / Zibawi, *L'arte Paleocristiana* 422.

more closely at the Christological interpretation of the Fathers of the Church of various biblical texts relating to the theme of the vine.

Biblical and Patristic references

In the Old Testament passages the theme of the vine is a concretion of the broader theme of the “plantation of the Lord”, used to designate the People of Israel, chosen among all the peoples to receive the great gift of the Covenant with its Creator. Isaiah, in the already mentioned “song of the vineyard”, reveals Yahveh as the divine vine-grower full of zeal and thoughtfulness, who prepares for His vineyard a fertile hillside, clearing it of stones, digging and watering it abundantly. and removing the obstacle of the gentiles.

My beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a vat in it; (...) For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel; and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting.” (*Is 5, 1. 2. 7*)

In another passage the concern of the Vine-grower the solicitude of the Cultivator towards His vine acquires features of a true personal relationship:

In that day: „A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! I, the Lord, am its keeper, every moment I water it; lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day. (*Is 27, 2-6*).

However, Israel’s repeated answer to Yahveh’s thoughtfulness was the “wild grapes” of the oppression of the innocent and the bloodshed, along with the abandonment of the “spring of living water” that is the Lord, choosing instead the idolatrous sources of the gentiles:

He looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. (...) He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry! (*Is 5, 2.7*)

My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. (...) And now what do you gain by going to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria, to drink the

waters of the Euphrates? (...) I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? (*Jer* 2,13. 18. 21)

Faced with Israel's unfaithfulness described with dramatic accents, God's punishment is barrenness and the abandonment to the devastation of the boar and the eagle, which lead to fruitlessness:

Why then hast Thou broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. (*Psalms* 80, 12-13)

Say, Thus says the Lord God: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its branches, so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it from its roots. Behold, when it is transplanted, will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it – wither away on the bed where it grew? (*Ez* 17, 9-10)

Nevertheless, since the word of God is always fruitful and does not return to Him without effect, without having carried out His good pleasure (cf. *Is* 55:11), Yahweh promises “the sprout”, “the faithful remnant” of Israel, who in the figure of the Messiah will gather together those in whom the Lord's Covenant will be fully realized⁴⁰. This promise is always linked to a call to conversion:

Should they beg for My protection, let them make their peace with Me, peace let them make with Me. In days to come, Jacob will tame root, Israel will bud and blossom and the surface of the world be one vast harvest. (*Is* 27, 5-6)⁴¹

But the Lord never goes back on His mercy, never cancels any of His words, will never deny offspring to His elect nor stamp out the line of the man who loved Him. And hence, He granted a remnant to Jacob and to David a root sprung from him. (*Sir* 47, 22)

⁴⁰ Lurker, Germoglio e virgulto, in *Dizionario delle immagini e dei simboli biblici*, 94. See also B. Vawter, Introducción a la literatura profética, in R. Brown / J. Fitzmyer / R. E. Murphy, *Comentario bíblico 'San Jerónimo'*, Madrid 1971, I. Antiguo Testamento I, 12: 19, 628; G. E. Wood, Joel, in Brown / Fitzmyer / Murphy, *Comentario bíblico*, II. Antiguo Testamento II, 25: 27, 287.

⁴¹ See also *Jeremiah* 33, 14s, *Ezekiel* 17, 22s, *Zechariah* 6, 12.

Upon this “shoot” rests the Spirit of God, making possible the fruits of the conversion of the People of Israel to Yahweh, so that “the plantation of the Lord” may be reunited and restored.

A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse, a new shoot will grow from his roots. On him will rest the spirit of Yahweh. (*Is* 11, 1-2)

The spirit of Yahweh is on Me for Yahweh has anointed Me. He has sent Me to bring the news to the afflicted (...) to proclaim a year of favour from Yahweh (...); they will be called terebinths of saving justice, plantation of Yahweh to glorify Him. (*Is* 61, 1-3)

This prophecy of *Is* 61:1 is proclaimed by Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth at the very beginning of His public mission (*Lk* 4:16-21) and accompanied by the specification: “Today this Scripture is being fulfilled, while you are listening”. In Him the promise of salvation and rebirth made to the house of Israel is fulfilled “in the time of mercy” (*Is* 49:8), as a sign of Yahweh’s faithfulness to the Covenant with his People. All the hopes of the jubilee year of divine mercy, which bring together the expectations of Yahweh’s saving action, are fulfilled by the messianic presence of Jesus⁴².

According to the scholars, when Jesus, in John’s Gospel, uses the image of the “vine” referring to Himself: “I am the true vine” (*Jn* 15:1f.), it is possible that He does so to indicate that He is the true Israel⁴³. This is not, however, a counterposition or a substitution of Israel, but rather a continuation through the faithfulness of the Righteous One of Israel. He is the messianic realization of the image of the vineyard of Israel; in Him is fulfilled the promise of Yahweh⁴⁴.

⁴² C. Stuhlmüller, *Evangelio según san Lucas*, in Brown / Fitzmyer / Murphy, *Comentario bíblico*, III. Nuevo Testamento I, 44: 17, 336.

⁴³ Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 36. P. Lamarche, Vigne, Vin, in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, Paris 1994, 16, 755.

⁴⁴ C. M. Marsh, *Jesus as the true vine: a transition of economies announced at John 15*. Presented at the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics, Southern California Seminary, San Diego, September 19-20. 2018, 6.

In the context of the discourse on the promise of the Holy Spirit, Jesus uses the image of the “vine” and “branches” to establish the true people of God. “True” meaning faithful to the Covenant. The identity of the people is given by the Spirit, which the community continually receives from Christ and which, like the sap of the vine, keeps it united to Him, ensuring its fruitfulness. When the branch closes itself off from the flow of the sap, the Father - vine-grower removes it and throws it away, because it does not respond to the life-giving action of the Spirit⁴⁵.

With this image of the vital connection between the branches and the vine, which is a variant of the Pauline theme of the union of the Head with the members of the Mystical Body⁴⁶, Christ repeatedly insists on the importance of “remaining”, “dwelling” in Him, as a necessary condition for the apostles - “vine shoots” of the “vine stock” which is Himself -, to have life in them and bear fruit. This “abiding” in Christ means keeping themselves open to the lifeblood of the divine love, which assimilates them into the death and fullness of life of the Savior⁴⁷.

These timely observations on some of the most representative Old and New Testament passages referring to the theme of the “vine” provide the basis to consider below some of the Patristic interpretations of the theme.

According to Jean Daniélou, the theme of planting, present in Jewish catechesis, was inherited by the Judeo-Christian catechesis and corresponds to baptism, identifying the branches with the baptized, the planting with the Church, while the one who plants is God Himself⁴⁸. In fact, St. Paul in 1 *Tim* 3:6 already speaks of the newly baptized using the word “neophytes,” that is, “newly planted”⁴⁹. With more precise reference to the theme of the vine, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, exhorts the newly baptized to bear good fruit, thanks to the vital union with the vine-stock:

⁴⁵ J. Mateos / J. Barreto, *El Evangelio de Juan. Analisis linguistico y comentario exegetico*, Madrid 1979, 653-654. Marsh, Jesus as the true vine 6.

⁴⁶ Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 36.

⁴⁷ Mateos /Barreto, *El Evangelio de Juan* 657.

⁴⁸ Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 28.

⁴⁹ Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 31.

Until now you were a catechumen, from now on you will be called faithful. (...) You will be part of the *holy vine*. And if you remain in the vine, you will grow as a fruitful shoot; if you do not remain, the fire will consume you. Let us, therefore, bear worthy fruit; lest, God forbid, should happen to us as with the barren fig tree, and, coming one day Jesus, still curse it for the lack of fruit.” (*Catechesis 1:4 Preparation for Baptism*)⁵⁰.

It is relevant the combination of the Johannine image of the “vine” with that of the fig tree, often associated in the Old Testament, both with explicit reference to the fruit that awaits the Lord and with the warning about sterility as a consequence of the lack of a suitable “answer”.

Zeno of Verona takes the same line in a mystical catechesis for the neophytes, commenting on Isaiah’s “Canticle of the Vineyard”, read before the Easter Vigil:

The Lord’s first vineyard was the synagogue, which produced wild grapes instead of choice grapes. Disdainful, the Lord planted another vineyard according to His will, namely the Church our mother. He cultivated it through the care of His priests. He clung it to the blessed forest, teaching it to bear abundant fruit. Therefore, today, through you, the new shoots, warmed by the boiling sap of the vine, they have filled the Lord’s cellar with unanimous joy⁵¹.

The image of the “vineyard” is interpreted with the collective meaning of the Church, planted “according to the divine will” and contrasted with the “vineyard” of the synagogue lacking the “grapes” that the Lord expects. The priests of the New Covenant participate in the care that the divine Vinedresser has for His vineyard and they cultivate it, assure it the necessary support and “teach” it how to produce the expected fruit.

Already in Ignatius of Antioch the image of the “planting of God” is connected with the theme of the Passion of Christ: the Cross is the Tree of Life which spreads its “branches”, identified with the members of the Mystical

⁵⁰ *Cirilo de Jerusalèn*, Madrid 2006, 52 (ed. J. S. Bielsa). Our emphasis.

⁵¹ Zenone di Verona, *Trattati*, II, 28 (Patrologia Latina 11, 471-472); Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 37.

Body of the Lord, and which bear incorruptible fruit thanks to union with the “trunk of the Tree”:

These are not planted by the Father. For if they were, they would manifest themselves as branches of the cross and their fruit would be incorruptible. Through it (the cross) He calls you, in His Passion, to be His members: for the head cannot be generated without the members, for God promised the union that is Himself⁵².

Cyril of Jerusalem speaks more explicitly of Christ the Vine in relation to the mystery of the Passion, calling Jesus a “vine planted in the garden of burial.” This “garden” recalls the Garden of Eden, because Christ the new Adam is “the vine” planted in the ground so that the curse of the sin of the first Adam might be eradicated.

The place of burial was a garden, and the vine planted said, ‘I am the vine’ (*Jn* 15:1). It was planted in the earth so that the curse caused by Adam would be uprooted. The earth was cursed to produce thorns and thistles; from the earth sprouted the true vine so that the sentence would be fulfilled: ‘Truth shall spring from the earth and righteousness shall come forth from heaven’ (*Ps* 84:12)⁵³.

In a mystagogical catechesis, Asterios the Sophist, a contemporary of Cyril of Jerusalem, relates the mystery of the Passion to the theme of the grape harvest:

The pre-existing divine vineyard grew out of the tomb and fruited the newly enlightened ones like bunches of grapes on the altar. The vine was harvested and the altar, like a winepress, was filled with grapes. Vintners, grape pickers, fruit pickers, singing crickets, made us see in all its splendor the Paradise of the Church. And who are the pickers? The neophytes and the

⁵² Ignazio di Antiochia, *Carta ai Tralliani*, XI, 1, 2. *Padres Apostólicos*, Madrid 2000, 259 (ed. J. J. Ayán); Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 36.

⁵³ Cirilo de Jerusalèn, *Catequesis 14, 11: Resurrección de Cristo y Ascensión al cielo, donde está sentado a la derecha del Padre*, Madrid 2006, 310-311 (ed. J. S. Bielsa).

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apostles. And who are the crickets? The newly baptized, covered with dew as they rise from the water and resting on the cross as in a tree and warming themselves under the sun of righteousness, glowing with the Spirit and chirping spiritual songs⁵⁴.

The author's poetic images dynamically combine multiple themes, such as the grape harvest, the altar-press (the Eucharist), and the gatherers (apostles and neophytes); then, the register changes and this time the neophytes are like crickets covered with the water of the matutinal dew (baptism), and resting on the branches of the cross - the tree of life -, while raising spiritual songs moved by the Holy Spirit.

For his part, Saint Augustine links the passage from *Isaiah* 63:3 with *Numbers* 13:23, in order to interpret *Psalms* 55:3-4 in the light of Christ's Passion:

'I am always trampled by my enemies, many are those who fight me. In the hour of fear, I trust in you': For His body is kept in the press, that is, His Church. What does "in the press" mean? In distress. But this being squeezed in the press is very fruitful. As long as it is on the vine, the grape is not subjected to pressure: it appears whole, but nothing springs from it. When it is put into the wine-press, it is trampled and crushed; it seems to be damaged, but this damage makes it fruitful, whereas, on the contrary, if one were to spare it any damage, it would remain sterile. So let all the saints who suffer persecution from those who have turned away from the saints, pay attention to this psalm and recognize themselves in it. (...) You were made grapes to be crushed⁵⁵.

The fruitfulness of the vine, and in particular of the bunch of grapes, is manifested when it is crushed and squeezed in the press. This is the press of the "anguish" suffered by the saints in communion with Christ, who is identified with the Great Cluster of Canaan mentioned in the book of *Numbers* 13, 23.

⁵⁴ *Homelieae in Psalmos*, XIV; Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani* 38.

⁵⁵ *Psalms* 55. *Sermo*, 3-4, in *Obras de San Agustín, Enarraciones sobre los Salmos*, Madrid 1958, XX, 368 (ed. B. Martín Pérez).

The first cluster of grapes crushed in the winepress is Christ. When this cluster was squeezed in the passion, it resulted in the wine whose inebriating cup is so excellent! (...) If, however, you do not suffer any persecution for Christ, it means that you have not yet begun to live piously in Christ. When you began to live piously in Christ, you entered the wine-press, prepared for the pressing; lest you find yourself without juice and the wine-press does not press any wine out of you⁵⁶.

The connection of the image of the Great Cluster of Canaan with the figure of Christ crucified was already indicated by Hippolytus of Rome and continued by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Zeno of Verona, Ambrose, Maximus of Turin, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, and so on⁵⁷. In Saint Augustine's commentary, the interpretation is enriched by the reference to the passage in *Isaiah* 63:3: "In the vat I pressed alone, and of My people none was with Me", which uses the image of the grape presser to prophesy the victory of the Messiah over His enemies. But this victory is achieved through the "pressing in the press" of the Messiah, "the Great Cluster", who takes upon Himself the punishment due to the Vineyard of Israel. The sermon becomes an exhortation for the faithful, "branches" and "clusters" of Christ the Vine, to share the Master's life and prepare themselves for the "pressing" of the persecution, to unite the "juice" of their love with the "inebriating and excellent wine" of the Savior's Blood. This means following in the steps of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, of whom *Isaiah* 53 speaks:

'He has grown like *a sapling before Him and like a root in barren ground*. He has no appearance or beauty to attract our gaze, no splendor to feel delight in Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows who knows well the suffering, like one before whom one covers one's face; He was despised and they held Him in no esteem. Yet He bore our sufferings, He took upon Himself our sorrows, and we judged Him chastened, beaten by God and

⁵⁶ *Psalmus* 55. *Sermo*, 3-4, in *Obras de San Agustín, Enarraciones sobre los Salmos*, Madrid 1958, XX, 370 (ed. B. Martín Pérez). See also (20.04.2020), www.cassiciaco.it/navigazione/iconografia/tematiche/apologia/05_torchio.html

⁵⁷ Leonardi, *Ampelos* 151ss.

humiliated. He was pierced for our crimes, crushed for our iniquities. The chastisement that gives us salvation came upon Him; by His wounds we were healed. (*Is 53:2-5*)⁵⁸

These considerations about the most significant biblical and Patristic references related to the theme of the “vine” provide the necessary context for a continued analysis of the iconographic developments of the representation of the *Christ the Vine* motif in medieval iconography and subsequent eras.

Iconographic Developments

According to scholars, the iconographic theme of *Christ the Vine* was significantly enriched especially in the Western iconography of the Late Middle Ages, when piety, strongly inspired by mystical contemplation of the mystery of Christ’s Passion, developed a very rich devotional iconography⁵⁹. Especially within the Franciscan Order and the confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, have been promoted devotional representations centered around the theme of the wounds of Christ and His Precious Blood⁶⁰: the *Arma Christi*, that is, the instruments of the Passion depicted as symbols of Christ’s triumph; the Man of Sorrows (*Vir dolorum, Imago pietatis*), Christ suffering at once dead and alive, with His eyes open, with all the wounds of the Passion, with the crown of thorns on His head, and often with the instruments of the Passion accompanying Him; the Fountain of Life (*Fons vitae, Fons pietatis*), the Crucified Savior whose blood flowing from His five wounds is collected in a fountain,

⁵⁸ Our emphasis.

⁵⁹ G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, New York 1971, II, 228.

⁶⁰ A. Loda, Il torchio mistico: Cristo e la vite. Fra Passione ed Eucaristia, in *Il Sangue della Redenzione*, III.2.2005, 34, citing M. L. Gatti Perer, Cultura e spiritualità dell’Osservanza agostiniana: l’Incoronata di Milano, *Arte Lombarda*, n. 127, 1999/3, 24-44. See also A. Contreras - Guerrero, El Lagar Místico. Sobre las derivaciones americanas de un tema medieval, *Cuadernos de Arte de la Universidad de Granada*, 48. 2017, 32; J. Nicolae, Imago pietatis: ‘Adună pe robii săi cu mare predicare la potir’. Reprezentarea miniaturală *Hristos Vița-de-vie* din Slujebnicul Mitropolitului Ștefan al Ungrovlahiei (1652) și semnificațiile sale euharistice, *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 14 / I, 2010, 34.

from which the faithful drink or in which they bathe; the Mystical Press (*Torculus Christi*), Christ as the crusher of grapes in the press, in which the juice of the vine is mixed with the blood flowing from the Savior's wounds⁶¹, and other related themes, each with numerous variations.

The theme of the Mystical Press, which, as we have seen, in the Augustinian reading interprets the redemptive sacrifice of Christ on the cross in the light of *Isaiah* 63:3, was depicted in a XIIth century miniature of the Stammheim Missal (1160-1180), in which the crusher at the foot of the cross holds in his left hand a scroll with the text of Isaiah's prophecy (plate 17)⁶². Flanking the figure of the crusher are two prophets, who in turn hold up unfolded scrolls with one hand, while with the other they point upwards towards the cross. The text of the scrolls takes up a fragment of *Genesis* 49, 11 ("wash in wine the garment and in the blood of the grape the mantle") and the passage from *Numbers* 13, 18-28 ("they brought in two on a rod"); the two prophecies are fulfilled on the Cross, according to the wide scroll that takes up the text of *Hosea* 13, 14: "O mors ero mors tua morsus tuus ero, inferne" ("I would redeem them from the power of the sojourn of the dead, I would save them from death; I would be your plague, O death; I would be your destruction, O sojourn of the dead"): the Savior's garments are washed in the blood of the grapes pressed in the press of the tree of the Cross, He being that "bunch" on the staff, as a sign of the abundance of the Promised Land.

Another depiction that connects the mystery of the Cross with the figure of the crusher of grapes is the ceiling-fresco of the church of St. Aegidius in Kleincomburg from 1108⁶³, which indicates a development of the iconographic composition: this time the crusher at the foot of the cross has the features of the face of Christ Himself (plate 18); surprisingly, He is at the same time between the beams of the press and crushing grapes, as if to indicate that He is the

⁶¹ Schiller, *Iconography* 184, 198, 228. Contreras - Guerrero, *El Lagar Místico* 28, 32.

⁶² Schiller, *Iconography* 228, plate 433.

⁶³ Schiller, *Iconography* 129, plate 432. See also the engraving in the *Hortus deliciarum* of the abbess Herrad of Landsberg (1167-1185), Mont s. Odile Convent, France, which is a commentary on the Parable of the Murderous Vineyarders, with Christ crushing the grapes in the Mystical Press. Loda, *Il torchio mistico: Cristo e la vite* 37.

crusher and the grapes crushed in the press. Beginning in the XIVth century, the figure of the crusher, which is included here in the scene of the Crucifixion, would become an independent devotional image to represent the Eucharistic allegory of the Passion, with the Man of Sorrows crushed under the weight of the cross-crusher, often with the figure of God the Father operating the wine press (plate 19)⁶⁴. At times, it is Christ Himself who presses the beam of the press upon Himself, as an allusion to His obedience and voluntary suffering⁶⁵.

Closely connected to the theme of the Mystical wine-press is that of Christ squeezing grapes, with the Savior directly acting as the agent of His own destiny, symbolized by the squeezed grapes⁶⁶. Sometimes we can find the Child Jesus squeezing the grapes, as in the case of various devotional tapestries of Flemish manufacture from the beginning of the XVIth century (plate 20)⁶⁷. In these, Christ, alone or in the company of Mary and Joseph, is depicted in the act of squeezing a bunch of grapes into a chalice, while in the background one can sometimes glimpse the Mystical Press. In the exemplar conserved at the Chicago Art Institute, the Virgin and Saint Joseph also hold a raceme of grapes, as if to suggest their anticipated participation in the mystery of the Passion of Jesus, renewed in the celebration of the Eucharist.

At other times, it is Christ who is depicted as the Man of Sorrows who is squeezing the grapes: seated on the tombstone, the Savior is squeezing a bunch of grapes directly connected to a vine branch that comes from His pierced side and hangs from the horizontal beam of the cross behind Him. This is how it is depicted in various works from countries with a Hispanic culture, such as in a painting from 1668 signed by the Ecuadorean Francisco Quispe and conserved in the Franciscan convent of Quito (plate 21): a fluttering angel collects the

⁶⁴ Schiller, *Iconography* 228.

⁶⁵ Schiller, *Iconography* 229.

⁶⁶ Loda, *Il torchio mistico: Cristo e la vite* 56.

⁶⁷ See also the Flemish tapestry with Christ the Child Squeezing a Bunch of Grapes into the Chalice, 1500, Anonymous, Minneapolis Art Institute, USA; the "Mystic Clusters" tapestry from Bruges, early XVIth century, Cleveland Museum of Art, USA. The same theme can also be found in a miniature of a manuscript of Luisa of Savoia and in a small tabernacle-door of the XVIIIth century of the Cremonese school in the church of SS. Bernardino and Francesco in Casalpusterlengo. Loda, *Il torchio mistico: Cristo e la vite* 57-58.

juice of the grapes in a chalice placed on the altar, while on the right side one can see few symbols of the Passion, such as the column of the flagellation, the rope with which Christ's hands were tied and the cock of Saint Peter. In other later examples, such as the eighteenth century relieve in the Pedro de Osma Museum in Lima, there are various angels holding up the *Arma Christi*. An interesting variant is found in a canvas from the second half of the XVIIth century, signed by the Mexican Juan Correa and kept in a private collection in Denver (plate 22)⁶⁸: Christ squeezing a bunch of grapes directly connected to the vine sticking out of His side is kneeling on the globe of the world, placed in the middle of a basin filled with the must that is mixed with the Precious Blood; a pontiff holds a paten to collect the must of the grapes, while some sheep stand around Christ. A scroll with the Gospel passage "Pater ignosce illis" ("Father, forgive them", *Lk* 23, 34) crowns the composition⁶⁹.

The theme of the Mystical Press was spread in the Jesuit missions of Latin America to a great extent through printed models, such as those created in the atelier of Hieronymus Wierix (plate 19)⁷⁰. It is very likely that the model of the composition with the Christ Man of Sorrows "squeezing grapes" was also transmitted thanks to the engravings and miniature illustrations of the manuscripts.

⁶⁸ (26.02.2022) denverartmuseum.org/en/object/2015.570.

⁶⁹ Loda, *Il torchio mistico: Cristo e la vite* 57. Other examples: the tabernacle door in carved wood and polychrome of the XVIIth century in a church in the Jesuit mission of Moxos in Bolivia; the canvas with Christ of the grapes of the XVIIIth century made by Juan de Villegas, Museo Amparo de Puebla, Mexico; the three plates of the XIXth century, New Mexico State University Art Gallery Collection. The scholar Angelo Loda also mentions an example of a depiction that combines the traditional scheme of the Mystical Press with that of the vine shoot emerging from the open side of Christ: this is the XVIIth century painting found in the parish church of Calcinante del Pesce in Varesotto, Italy; Christ is indicated as the True Vine in the scroll placed behind the Lord's legs. See A. Loda, *Un torchio mistico nel Varesotto*, *Tracce*, 1997. 13, 15-19. Similarly, on the Swiss Lucerne tapestry of 1603 (Cantonal Historical Collection, Gottfried Keller Foundation) the depiction of Christ in the Mystical Press shows vine shoots and corn stalks emerging from His wounds. A. Thomas, *Christus in der Kelter*, in: *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, III, 1953, Col. 685, plate 7.

(26.02.2022) <https://www.rdklabor.de/w/?oldid=105049>

⁷⁰ Contreras - Guerrero, *El Lagar Místico* 47. Loda, *Il torchio mistico: Cristo e la vite* 44.

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In addition to the models of Flemish tapestries mentioned above, we also find works that interpret the Eucharistic theme by depicting either the crucified Christ or the Man of Sorrows with vine shoots emerging from His wounds. See, for example, the miniature with the Eucharistic Christ from the XVth century in the Prayer Book of Nikolas Trauner von Waging preserved in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (plate 23)⁷¹: standing on a mountain, Christ the Man of Sorrows turns His head towards the chalice with the Host, placed on the ground to His right hand; an ear of wheat springs from the wound of His left foot and passes through the wound of His right hand, while a vine-shoot with bunches of grapes springs from the wound of His right foot and passes through the wound of His left hand. Iconographically there is a clear apology for the dogma on the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The motif of the vine-shoots that spring from the wounds of the Lord is also inserted in the depiction of Christ Crucified, as can be seen in a Flemish engraving of 1490-1500 preserved in the National Museum of Art in Washington DC (plate 24)⁷², or in a 1619 print by Hieronymus Wierix in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam⁷³. In the first example, vines laden with large clusters emerge from the five wounds of the Crucified One, while a devout woman kneeling at the foot of the cross holds a raceme connected to the sarment that springs from the Lord's pierced side. In the engraving by Wierix, four Jesuit saints kneel and

⁷¹ (26.02.2022)

bildsuche.digitalesammlungen.de/index.html?c=viewer&bandnummer=bsb00093725&pimage=00048&lv=1&l=de. Another example is the painting of Herlin Friedrich of 1469, preserved in the National Museum of Nördlingen, Germany. Schiller, *Iconography* 206, plate 712. Nicolae, *Imago pietatis*, plate 7.

⁷² (26.02.2022) nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.4018.html. Another example with the depiction of the crucified Christ and the sarments springing from His wounds is the engraving in Nitzschewitz's *Psalterium Beatae Virginis Mariae* from the late XVth century, accompanied by the inscription: „Ego quasi vitis fructificari suavitatem odoris flores mei quasi fructus honoris et honestatis”. See also D. Alibert, *Aux origines du Pressoir Mystique. Images d'arbres et vignes dans l'art médiéval (IXe-Xve siècle)*, in D. Alexandre - Bidon, *Le pressoir mystique*, Actes du Colloque de Recloses, Paris 1990, 38, plate 15.

⁷³ (26.02.2022)

rijksmuseum.nl/nl/zoeken/objekten?q=Wierix+Hieronymus&p=30&ps=12&st=Objects=i&i=5#/RP-P-OB-66.979,353.

adore the Eucharistic presence of Christ, represented by the vine that emerges from a chalice placed on the ground and on which vine the Redeemer is crucified: two bunches of grapes grow from the wounds of the hands, while all around runs the inscription: “Ego sum vitis vera, vos palmites” (“I am the true vine, you are the branches”; *Jn* 15, 5). This indicates that the union between Christ and the apostles promised at the Last Supper is continued in the disciples of every age and strengthened in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

We also mention two other categories of depictions in which the mystery of the Passion is contemplated in relation to the theme of *Christ the Vine*: these are the theme of Christ crucified on the trunk of the vine, with the figure of God the Father as vine-dresser and the Virgin Mary watering the earth, as depicted on a devotional medallion of 1430-1440 from Rhineland, Germany (plate 25)⁷⁴ and preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the theme of the Crucified Christ as the *Botrus magnus* of Canaan, contemplated as the type and fulfillment of the Law, of the Covenant between Yahweh and His people, as illustrated in one of the engravings by Hieronymus Wierix (plate 26)⁷⁵.

In Wierix’s print, the biblical references annotated around the two New Testament scenes, the Baptism of Christ and Pentecost, interpret Christ’s sacrifice on the cross as the source of new life through the action of the Holy Spirit: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (*Jn* 3:5), and “The love of God has been poured into our hearts through

⁷⁴ (26.02.2022) collections.vam.ac.uk/item/070833/plaque-unknown. On the scroll behind the figure of God the Father is the inscription “PATER UMIFICAT”, while on the scroll behind the figure of the Virgin Mary is the text “MARIA FECUNDAT”. See also the very similar depiction of *Christ the Vine* in the Sankt Castor Church in Karden, Germany, from the XVIIth century. A variant of the depiction of Christ crucified on the trunk of the vine is found in the Chapel of the Most Holy Crucifix in Monreale Cathedral, dating from the XVth century. The composition combines the theme of the Crucifixion with that of the Tree of Jesse. (26.02.2022) <http://www.monrealeuomo.it/page.php?6>

⁷⁵ (26.02.2022) britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1858-0417-1356. The other two scenes framing the central scene depict the Circumcision (with biblical reference to *Gen* 17) and Moses receiving the Law on Sinai (with biblical reference to *Ex* 20:19). Another variant of this composition printed by Hieronymus Wierix retains only the nucleus of the composition with Christ crucified depicted as the Great Cluster of Canaan carried by the two explorers.

the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (*Rom* 5:5). In fact, the Dove of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father, spreads its wings over the cross-vine of Christ, symbolizing the life-giving action in the vine and the vine-shoots joined to the vine⁷⁶. In the Rhineland’s depiction, too, the composition is crowned by the presence of the Dove of the Spirit, which here hovers above the figures of the apostles enclosed within the medallions formed by the vine-shoots of the cross-vine. The inscription on the unfolded scroll: “Ego sum vitis vera. Ego sum vitis, vos palmites” (*Jn* 15:1, 3), reinforces the theme of the vital connection with Christ the Vine assured by the Paraclete. In both compositions, the presence of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity involved in the redemptive work recalls the moment of Genesis and indicates that on the cross the New Creation is realized.

The observations concerning the iconographic developments in the medieval and later periods allow us to consider the representation of the theme of *Christ the Vine* in Romanian iconography, the particularities of the icon of Șercaia and the spread of this iconographic type in the Romanian ecclesial sphere.

Christ the Vine in Romanian Iconography and the Specificity of the Icon of Șercaia

In the East, especially in the areas connected to the Greek ecclesial sphere, it can be observed that for the depiction of the theme of *Christ the Vine* was followed an iconographic model that recalls, on the one hand, the scheme used in the decoration of the Chalice of Antioch of 500-550 (plate 16) mentioned above, with the figure of the Lord blessing at the center of the vine and with the disciples arranged symmetrically around Him (plate 27)⁷⁷, and on the other hand the compositional scheme of the theme of the Tree of Jesse, with which

⁷⁶ In the legend of the print for the figure of the Father the biblical reference indicated is the passage from *Joel* 3, 1: “I will pour out my Spirit on every man”, and for the Dove of the Spirit the passage from *Deuteronomy* 6, 5: “You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul”.

⁷⁷ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 38-39.

it is often combined (plate 29)⁷⁸. We note that in these depictions the vine-shoots grow directly from the trunk of the vine and do not emerge from the Savior's opened side, as in several of the compositions considered so far. This emphasizes the vital bond between the Savior and the apostles, their participation in His mission of Redemption. This iconographic synthesis was carried out in Cretan iconographic centers in the first half of the XVth century, and among the earliest illustrations are the icons executed by the iconographer Angelos Akotantos of Candia and his atelier for the monasteries Hodigitria of Kenourgio, Varsamonero of Voriza and Hierapetra of Malles⁷⁹.

In the Romanian Wallachian, Moldavian and Transylvanian principalities, this model was not widely used⁸⁰; we could mention the XVIth century fresco in the Sucevița monastery in Moldova (plate 28)⁸¹. On the other hand, one can observe the acceptance and wide diffusion of the iconographic type of Christ as the Man of Sorrows squeezing grapes, according to a model used also in the various works of the Hispanic culture countries previously analyzed: seated on an altar placed in front of the cross, Christ squeezes in a chalice a raceme

⁷⁸ A. Mantas, The Iconographical Subject "Christ the Vine" in Byzantine and Post-byzantine Art, in *ΔΕΙΞΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ*, Athens 2003, 348-352. See also K. Giakoumis, *Catalogo Mostra Flora in Arts and artifacts of the Korca region (Twelfts Century B.C. to Twentieth Century A.D)*, Tirana 2018, plate A. 9, 136 ss.; A. Chiroșca, Hristos euharistic în colecția de icoane a Muzeului Național de Istorie a Moldovei, *Tyragetia*, X. 2 (2016), 301-316. Other examples of the combination of the two iconographic themes are a XVIth century diaconal sakos preserved in the Byzantine Museum of Athens; the cover of the Gospel of Edirne, 1676, in the Benaki Museum, Athens ("Tree of Jesse" and "Christ vine" form a single composition around the central scene with the Crucifixion); or an encolpy medallion from the Monastery of St. Pantelimon on Mount Athos, from the XVIIIth century, and kept in the Pio Cristiano Museum of the Vatican Museums.

⁷⁹ Mantas, Christ the Vine 348 ss. Later examples are the 1535-1541 frescoes by Theophanus Strelitzas Bathas in the refectory of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos; the 1568 frescoes in the exonarthex of the katholikon of the Dochiarou monastery on Mount Athos; and the 1599 frescoes by Dimitrios Kakavas on the apse of the katholikon of the Virgin Melinitzi of the Malesina monastery, Locris.

⁸⁰ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 39. (26.02.2022) <http://www.formula-as.ro/2014/1125/spiritualitate-39/pr-prof-jan-nicolae-iisus-cu-vita-este-cea-mai-iubita-icoana-a-lui-hristos-in-ardeal-17977>

⁸¹ Chiroșca, Hristos euharistic 303.

connected to the vine shoot that comes from His pierced side; often, two instruments of the Passion, the spear and the cane with the sponge, can be glimpsed among leaves and bunches in front of the cross. According to scholars, among whom we particularly mention Fr. Jan Nicolae, who dedicated several studies to the theme of *Christ the Vine*, the way of transmission of this model of the Western art was through printed models, such as those realized in the Wierix brothers' atelier, widely diffused in the Ukrainian area and later on also in the area of the Romanian principalities⁸².

In fact, according to Fr. Jan Nicolae, the influences of Ukrainian baroque iconography were manifested in the iconography of the Wallachian principality already from the first half of the XVIIth century, when Ukrainian and Polish printers were sent to establish the printing house in Câmpulung⁸³. In the Ukrainian and Polish areas among the earliest depictions of the theme of Christ squeezing grapes, one could mention the fresco in the refectory of the Monastery of the Baptism of the Lord in Kiev, which dates back to 1653⁸⁴; then, the engravings in the Acatist of the Savior Book, as in that printed in 1674 in the Lavra Pecerska printing-house in Kiev (plate 30) and in that of Lviv of 1699, and then numerous icons on wood, such as the one from the XVIIth century now preserved in the Museum of History of Sanok in Poland (plate 32)⁸⁵.

Among the earliest examples of depictions of the theme in the Romanian territories is the illustration in the *Liturgikon* of Metropolitan Ștefan of Wallachia

⁸² Nicolae, *Imago pietatis*, 44, 47, citing N. Komashko, Ukrainian Icon Painting, in L. Evseyeva / N. Komashko / M. Krasilin, *A History of Icon Painting. Sources. Traditions. Present day*, Moscova 2005, 194-195. R. Kosiv, *Christ the Vine*, icons from the collection of National Museum of Lviv named after Andrey Sheptytsky, iconographical and artistic features, *Apologet*, Lviv 2010, 75-83.

⁸³ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 49. The Ukrainian and Polish impressors were sent by Metropolitan Peter Movila of Kiev, at the petition of Wallachian Prince Matei Basarab.

⁸⁴ Chiroșca, *Hristos euharistic* 306.

⁸⁵ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 48. Chiroșca, *Hristos euharistic* 306. One of the Ukrainian printers who did the printing of the Kiev and Lviv Akathist Book is the deacon-monk Nikodim Zubritzky of the St. Nicholas Monastery in Krekhiv.

from 1652-1658 (plate 31)⁸⁶, made by hand with pen and black and red ink. Later, the scene was introduced into monumental iconography in the decoration of the sanctuary area, at the table of the offertory of the Eucharistic gifts⁸⁷, as evidenced by the frescoes in the chapel of the Holy Apostles of the Hurezi Monastery (1700), in the monasteries of Cozia (1704-1705), Arnota (1706), Vădeni Târgu-Jiu (1732; plate 33), Polovragi (1737), all in Wallachia⁸⁸.

Later we find the theme depicted in wooden Transylvanian churches in the Maramureș area⁸⁹, such as in the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Călinești Căieni (1754); in St. Nicholas in Bogdan Vodă (1754; plate 34); St. Nicholas in Budești Josani (1754) and Budești Susani (1755); Nativity of the Virgin in Ieud Deal (1782; plate 35), all painted by the iconographer Alexandru Ponehalschi of Berbești⁹⁰; in the church of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel of Mănăstirea, Giulești (Iconographer Gheorghe; 1783); Dormition of the Mother of God of Dragomirești (1797); Entrance into the Temple of the Mother of God of Bârsana (Toader Hodor, 1806); St. Nicholas of Glod (Tivadar Vasile; 1862); Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel of Vălenii Șomcuței (XIXth century).

Towards the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century, the illustration of the theme became increasingly popular in rural areas by means of icons on glass executed in the iconographic centers of Nicula (plate 36), Șcheii Brașovului, Făgăraș, Lancrăm, Maierii Bălgradului and others⁹¹.

⁸⁶ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 32.

⁸⁷ S. Boghiu, *Chipul Mântuitorului în iconografie*, București 2001, 92. Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 34.

⁸⁸ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 48.

⁸⁹ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 45-46.

⁹⁰ M. Porumb, *Dicționar de pictură veche românească din Transilvania sec. XIII-XVIII*, București 1998, 294-299. In the painting of Budești Susani and in that of Ieud Deal, the inscription on the unfolded scroll held by the angel by *Christ the Vine* is inspired by the liturgy of the preparation of the Eucharistic gifts: "Răsumpăratu-ne-ai pre noi din blestemul legei cu scump sângele Tău. Pe Cruce fiind răstignit și cu sulița împuns, nemurire ai izvorât oamenilor, Mântuitorul nostru, mărire Ție." (= "With your most precious Blood you have redeemed us from the curse of the Law"). Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 45.

⁹¹ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 34.

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The glass icon of Șercaia, Făgăraș, which we have considered, also dates to this period. Below we will analyze some specific features of this Transylvanian icon:

- the altar and the chalice

We have seen that in some of the Hispanic variants of the depiction of Christ as Grape Squeezer the Lord is kneeling on the globe placed in the center of a basin filled with the juice of grapes mixed with Precious Blood (plate 22), recalling the related iconographic themes of the Mystical Press and the Fountain of Life. In other Hispanic depictions, however, Christ is seated on the rock of the tomb, while squeezing the bunch of grapes into a chalice placed on an altar (plate 21). References to two other Eucharistic themes are brought together in the same composition, that of the Man of Sorrows who is seated or comes out of the empty tomb and that of the Man of Sorrows in the so-called Mass of Pope Saint Gregory. A similar interpretation to the variant of Francisco Quiespe's Ecuadorean painting is found in the Bogdan Vodă Church of Saint Nicholas of Cuhea, in which the tomb and the altar are practically juxtaposed on the same level (plate 34). With regard to Romanian icons on glass, in which one observes the tendency of a strong simplification of the iconographic language, in some iconographic centers such as Nicula the variant of the figure of Christ seated on the tombstone is adopted (plate 36), while in others such as those of Șcheii Brașovului and Făgăraș, the Lord stands on an altar - ark covered with a richly decorated altar-cloth⁹².

In the icon of Șercaia, the altar with a stylized geometric form is covered with a light blue-blue altar-cloth with golden edging and rosy flowers, which descends to the lower limit of the composition. A large, richly ornamented golden chalice collects the juice of the large red cluster squeezed by Christ's hands, reinforcing the Eucharistic significance of the composition. In fact, as

⁹² Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 43. See also Chiroșca, *Hristos euharistic* 308, citing O. Coman Sipeanu, *Tematica hristologică a icoanelor pe sticlă*, *Studia Universitatis Cibiensis. Series Historica*, 5, 2008, 236-237. The scholar Olivia Coman Sipeanu argues that the shape and decoration of this altar table recalls the ark for the wedding trousseau that every married woman preserved in her home.

we have seen, beginning in the XVth century in the Catholic sphere, compositions with the Man of Sorrows included the chalice motif (plates 19, 21, 23), with the apologetic intention of emphasizing the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist, which was contested in the Protestant sphere⁹³.

Altar, tomb and chalice belong to the same semantic field of the Eucharistic sacrifice⁹⁴: the altar and the chalice recall and indicate how in the Holy Eucharist is made present at the same time the New Covenant sealed in Christ's Last Supper with His disciples before the Passion and its culmination in the sacrifice on the altar of the cross; the altar is also the tomb which for three days received the incorrupt Body of the Saviour and which opened in order to allow the Lord, the victor over death, to rise with great power; in the Eucharistic Sacrifice on the altar, in the transubstantiation of the Eucharistic species of bread and wine, the Risen Christ makes Himself present and communicates His life to the faithful who receive Him worthily in Holy Communion.

- *the instruments of the Passion (the Arma Christi)*

The cross and the two signs of the Passion, the reed with the sponge that can be glimpsed between leaves and clusters are gilded, reflecting the light of the Risen Christ. With His Passion, Resurrection and glorious Ascension into heaven He transformed the instruments of His torment into weapons of triumph against the devil, sin and death. As early as the IVth century in Christian iconography, the Risen Christ bears in His hand the scepter of the cross, the *crux invicta*, the sign of His victory and authority⁹⁵. Later, in the representation of the Descent of the Risen One to the underworld to free the righteous from the slavery of the devil, Christ often carries the cross in His hand and tramples the chained enemy underfoot. Subsequently, in the medieval art of the West, from the IXth century onwards, the emphasis was increasingly placed on Christ's suffering (plates 19, 21-26), on the depiction of the bleeding

⁹³ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 43.

⁹⁴ Nicolae, *Imago pietatis* 43.

⁹⁵ Schiller, *Iconography* 184. See, for example, the sarcophagus of Probo of 395, found in the Vatican Caves. Grabar, *L'arte paleocristiana* 257, plate 285.

wounds and the instruments of the Passion (without omitting the triumphal dimension)⁹⁶, while in the iconography of the East the emphasis is primarily on the victorious dimension of Christ's Passion (without omitting, however, the dimension of suffering).

- *Christ Squeezing the Grapes*

In line with what has been said about the manner of depicting the instruments of the Passion, even for the depiction of the Redeemer in the Șercaia icon the emphasis is placed on the victory of the Resurrection: the wounds of the hands, feet and pierced side radiate the golden light of glory; in the posture of the body and the expression of the face there is no manifestation of suffering and pain, as in Western representations of the Man of Sorrows, but rather vitality and a serenity of features.

Then, in the development of the representation of the theme of the Mystical Press, we noticed that the bleeding sacrifice was emphasized, with Jesus' body pressed under the beams of the press, sometimes with God the Father operating the press, and sometimes it is Christ Himself who presses the beam of the press upon Himself, as a reference to His voluntary sacrifice, a sign of His obedience to the Father (plate 19)⁹⁷. In the icon of Șercaia this immolation of Christ's self is clearly expressed through the resolute gesture of pressing the cluster between the fingers so that the juice would be collected in the chalice. We recall here the words of Christ the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John, which were taken up in the liturgical prayer that the priest, in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, prays in secret during the Cherubic Hymn:

I offer My life, only to take it back again. No one takes it from Me, but I offer it of Myself, for I have the power to offer it and the power to take it up again. This command I have received from My Father. (*Jn* 10:17-18).

For You, O Christ our God, are the offerer and the offered, You are the One who receives the gifts and in gift You give Yourself. (*Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom*).

⁹⁶ Schiller, *Iconography* 184-185.

⁹⁷ See here footnotes 66, 67.

- *the vine and the theophanic context*

The vine that springs from Christ's pierced side and hangs from the trunk of the cross is laden with six large racemes of red grapes, which almost entirely occupy the central register of the composition. The lushness of the vine recalls the superabundance of the Promised Land thanks to the divine blessing, the sign of which was the Great Cluster of Canaan brought back by the two explorers (*Num* 13:22-25). In Jesus Christ, hung on the tree of the Cross as the divine Cluster, the promise of salvation made to Israel is fully realized. He is the "faithful remnant" of Israel through whom the New and Eternal Covenant of the Lord with His people is sealed, to regenerate the vineyard planted by God the Father.

When the vine girds the Cross and is supported by it, it also visually indicates that the blessing of the fruit is granted through the Passion and death of the Lord. Since the grafting of the branches into the stump of Christ the Vine is accomplished with the opening of the side following the total self-sacrifice of the Lord, on the altar of the Cross, into the hands of God the Father. Christ's disciples are born from this pierced side, from the water and blood that flow from it: it is in the Sacraments that disciples are generated and "grafted" into Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit, and become members of His Mystical Body.

Sometimes, in the representation of the theme of *Christ the Vine*, the depiction of the cross is omitted, opting for a simplified composition (plates 33, 36). The vine, which acquires strength, is well connected to the "stump" of the body of Christ and seems to follow with docility the arch imposed by the hands of the Savior. From a compositional point of view, the encounter between two geometric forms is noted: the circle described by the vine and the square/rectangle of the altar, which symbolically indicates the divine-heavenly sphere, respectively the creaturely-human-earthly zone⁹⁸. The connection is

⁹⁸ For this observation and reflexion I would like to thank the Art History Scholar Victoria Campan, who has taught at the Greek-Catholic Faculty of Theology in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. See also G. Champeaux / S. Stercks, *I simboli del Medioevo*, Milano 1988, 308; I. Gotia, Quale è la nostra origine? *L'Albero di Iesse* e l'Iconostasi della Cattedrale della Santissima Trinità di Blaj, Romania, *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano*, 22, 1, 2018, 1ss.

made in the figure of Christ: He, in the mystery of the Incarnation, unites heaven and earth, divinity with humanity; moreover, through the redemptive sacrifice on the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension-glorification to heaven, He opens again man's access to the Holy of Holies of the temple of heaven. It is in this glorified life that Christ makes His disciples participate, and they can bear the fruits He expects to the extent that they docilely submit to the action of the divine "Vineyard Master".

It is significant that in the celebration of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, during the prayer of the *Trisagion*, the bishop blesses the assamblea with the sign of the cross with the *dicherion* and the *tricherion*, referring to the words of *Psalms 79/80*:

God of hosts, turn, look down from heaven and see and visit this vineyard, protect the stump that Your right hand has planted, the bud that You have cultivated. Those who plowed it with fire and cut it down shall perish at the threat of Thy face. Let Thy hand be on the man of Thy right hand, on the Son of man whom Thou hast made strong for Thee. From Thee we shall no longer turn away, Thou wilt make us live, and we shall call upon Thy Name. Raise us up, O Lord, God of hosts, let Your face shine, and we shall be saved. (*Ps 80:15-20*)

The bishop, acting in the Person of Christ the True Vine, invokes the action of God the Father, the "Vine-dresser", to protect and restore the Vine He planted, pouring His blessing on the branches thanks to the fidelity of Christ, the divine Sprout⁹⁹.

The yellow and red clouds reflecting the light of sunset indicate the Eucharistic theophany: Christ, true God and true man, is truly present in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on the altar, manifesting in the work of Redemption the fulfillment of the promise of salvation "in the time of mercy" (*Is 49:8*). The chromatic range of the field in the lower register of the composition, sketched with ease by means of horizontal brushstrokes of green and red with a variety of shades, contributes to the atmosphere of great vitality and lushness

⁹⁹ In the Byzantine tradition the Gospel passage *Matth 21:33-34* with the parable of the murderous workers is read on the Sunday XIII after Pentecost.

of the scene. In some icons on glass the background is studded with flowers and stars (plate 36), signalling the new creation as the fruit of the Lord's saving work.

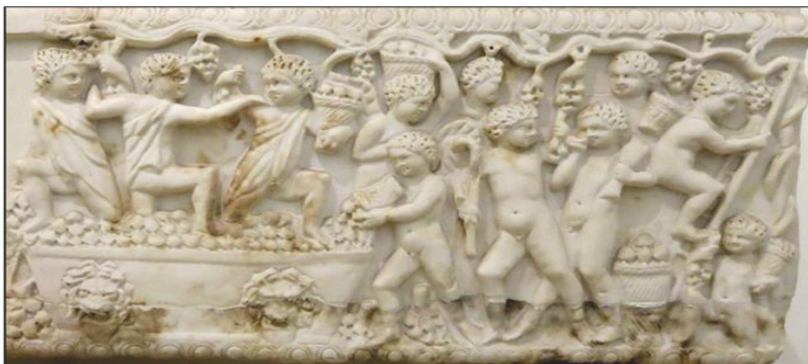
Conclusion

The exploration of the origins of the iconographic theme of *Christ the Vine* in early Christian art, the identification of the main innovations and developments in early medieval iconography and in later periods, all illuminated by Patristic reflection on Old and New Testament scriptural passages relating to the theme of the messianic vine, has allowed us to approach the interpretation of the Romanian glass icon Christ the Vine of Șercaia. An iconographic and liturgical synthesis of a subject of Western devotional art, accepted in the Romanian sphere as early as the second half of the XVIIth century through the mediation of Ukrainian baroque iconography, the icon reflects the inculturation of the Eucharistic theme of Christ the Grape Squeezer into Romanian Eastern spirituality. The Risen Savior, depicted as the Man of Sorrows with the wounds of the Passion and with the vine shoot emerging from the pierced side, while with His hands he squeezes a cluster of grapes into the chalice placed on the altar, is the Eucharistic Christ who is truly present, with His glorified humanity, in the Eucharistic Celebration. He is the faithful Sprout of the irrevocable Covenant between God and His People, which ensures the fulfillment of the promise of salvation. At the same time, He is the Cluster of Canaan, the sign of the divine blessing on the Promised Land of Heaven which He reopens to us through His Passion and Resurrection. He is the stump of the True Vine, which allows men "grafted" into His pierced side through the action of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments to be regenerated to full life.

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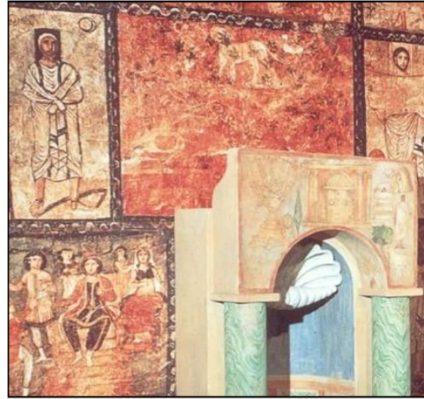


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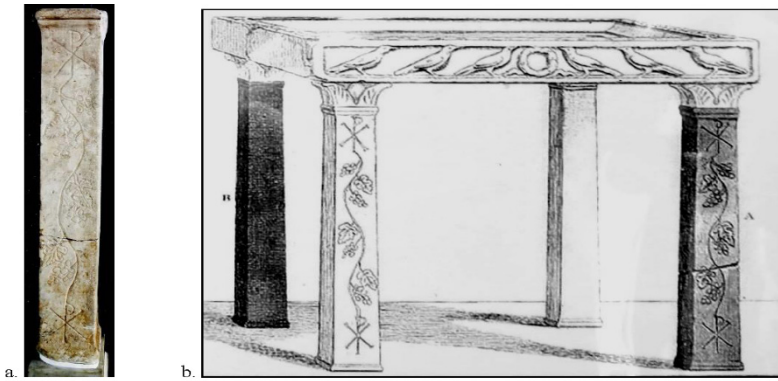
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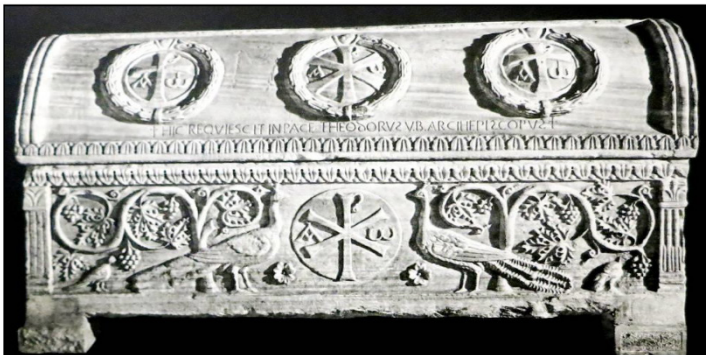
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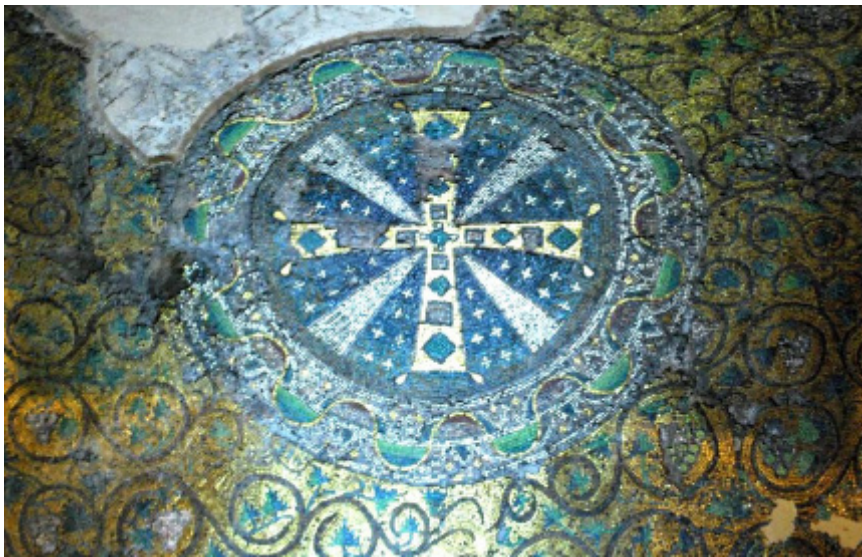


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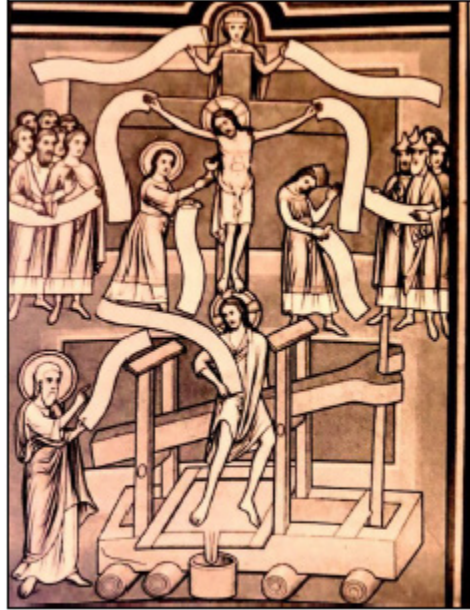


16. Antioch chalice. 500-550. Cloisters Museum New York (A. Grabar).

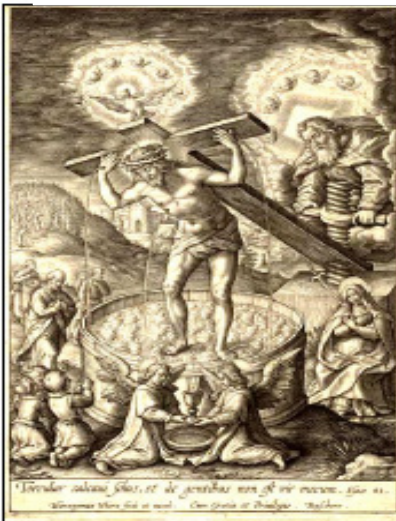
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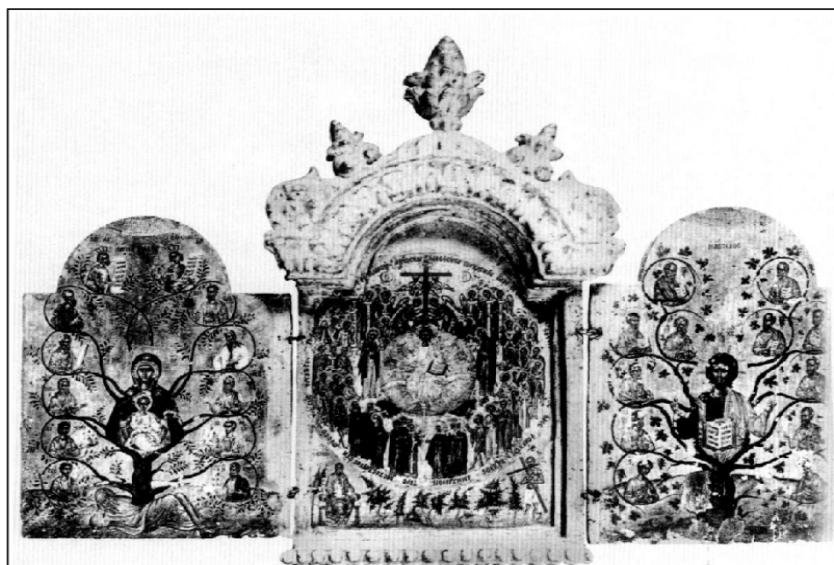
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