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THE FEAST "DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS" IN THE ORTHODOX LITURGICAL TRADITION (THEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE FEAST BASED ON THE HYMNOGRAPHIC AND HOMILETIC TEXTS OF THE CHURCH)

ABSTRACT

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The dissertation "The Feast of Dormition of Theotokos in the Orthodox liturgical tradition (Theological content of the feast based on the hymnographic and homiletic texts of the Church)" was proposed for defense at a meeting of the Department of Theology at the Philosophical and historical Faculty of Plovdiv University "St. Paisius of Hilandar".

The dissertation consists of a preface, introduction, three chapters, conclusion, appendices and lists of manuscripts used, sources and cited literature with a total volume of 361 pages.

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THESIS CONTENT

Introduction

The topic of the dissertation is related to the person of the Most Holy Mother of God and the Church teaching about her as Mother of the God-Man Jesus Christ. On this basis is also the liturgical tribute to the "begotten God", which grows both during the daily worship service and during the annual festive liturgical circle.

The scientific theological literature lacks a complete study of the topic under consideration. The dissertation is the first attempt to study the Feast of Dormition of the Virgin according to the Orthodox liturgical tradition.

The Feast of Dormition is the most important of the feast of the Virgin in its meaning and content of theological ideas. This study is the first large-scale attempt to examine the subject not only on the basis of apocryphal literature or patristic texts, but also (above all) on the basis of hymnographic texts. The placement of the theme of Dormition of the Virgin as a study of Orthodox worship implies a study of the related orders, followings and feasts. They have their historical development, but do not change the meaning of the feast.

The relevance of the topic is also related to the argumentation of the proposed thesis: whether in the Orthodox tradition there is duality, inconsistency or contradiction regarding the Dormition of the Mother of God, after the hymnological and patristic texts also send a message about the resurrection of the Eternal One. So far, there is no clear opinion on this issue, and there is also a lack of overall understanding from the point of view of the Orthodox liturgical tradition.

All of the above about the resurrection of the Ever-Virgin is disputed today, and clarification is imperative. For this purpose,

it is necessary to make a "dissection" of an organic whole and show the different layers. They consist of a rich source material: apocryphal, hymnographic, homyletic texts, which are complemented by the iconography of the feast.

I. General characteristics of the dissertation

Structure of the dissertation. The study has a total volume of 362 standard pages and consists of a preface, an introduction, three main chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography (arranged by Cyrillic, Latin and Greek), as well as two appendices.

The preface to the dissertation clarifies the reasons that necessitated the mentioned research, points out the difficulties in developing the topic, and also the personal motivation of the author.

The introduction to the study outlines its purpose, subject, object, tasks and methodological tools. At the end of the introduction, a detailed historiography of the researched scientific problem is presented, the sources used in arguing the scientific thesis and the boundaries of the scientific research are outlined.

The topic is specific, moreover, there is a lack of a systematic scientific tradition in its development in Orthodox theology. The definition of the boundaries and parameters of *the object of the study* is consistent with the set goals, tasks and thesis of the dissertation.

The *subject* of the composition is the Feast of the Dormition according to the Orthodox liturgical tradition.

The subject of the research is the theotocology of the feast based on its hymnographic and homiletic texts. The study of these texts and the analysis of the iconographic feast scenes clarifies the theological content of the feast, which is also the subject of the essay. It is not limited to the history and sources of the feast, but also examines its development according to the Orthodox liturgical tradition.

The purpose of the present scientific research is focused on clarifying the essence of the feast of the Dormition, based on the liturgical sources, through the study of which to present and analyze the formation and development of the feast with its specific features.

It concentrates on analyzing the hymnographic and homiletic texts, as well as the apocryphal texts about the feast and its iconography, according to the teaching of the Church about the Dormition of the Virgin. At the same time, comparisons and parallels are made in similar places, which are used both by the authors of the Apocrypha and by church tradition.

The specific *tasks of the research* can be grouped into several problematic circles:

♦ to trace the origin, development and history of the feast of the Dormition and to clarify its specificity in its modern form, structure and narratives;

♦ to research, analyze and compare the theotokological ideas and views about the feast in hymnographic and homiletical texts, in the narratives of the feast and in its iconography, which most fully reveal the teaching of the Church on the event of the Dormition and on the person of the Mother of God;

♦ to study the services and feasts in connection with the feast of the Dormition, as well as those that became part of the celebration at a later stage of its development, namely: the funeral service of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which appeared after the 15th century; the "Panagia" service, which contains within itself, although not ancient in origin, a testimony of the Church's faith in the resurrection of the Mother of God; the service of the Great and Small Supplicatory Canon to the Most

Holy Theotokos during the Lent of the Theotokos, the feasts of the Laying of the Garment of the Mother of God in Vlacherna and the Laying of the Girdle of the Mother of God in the temple in Chalcopatria.

Methods of scientific research.

The goals and tasks set for resolution, as well as the nature of the primary material, determine the scientific methods and approaches used in the dissertation. The study of the feast of the Dormition is based on the analysis of hymnographic texts, because only in this way can the meaning of the event celebrated by the Church be understood. Along with the comparative analysis, the hermeneutic scientific method was also used. The interpretation of the sacred hymnographic texts, as well as of the homilies of the Holy Fathers, is imperative to substantiate the thesis of the work.

The comparative and critical analysis used in the work help to make an objective assessment and reach unbiased conclusions. The main methods for examining the primary material are analysis and description. The liturgical, exegetical approach, philological approach and comparative analysis are the most frequently used, with the help of which we try to analyze the main components of the feast of the Dormition - the hymnographic and homiletic texts, as well as the history and development of the feast and its related services.

The thesis of the dissertation research is directly related to the theological content of the feast. It brings to the fore the statement that in the feast, apart from the Dormition of the Mother of God, there is talk of *transference, even of resurrection*. In the ancient rite of the feast, the main message and theme is the Dormition or repose of the Virgin. With the development of the feast, the homiletic and hymnographic texts

also address the message of the resurrection of the Mother of God.

The sources of the feast can be tentatively divided into three groups or three types: apocryphal texts, hymnographic texts and homiletic texts. The study of the hymnographic corpus is difficult due to the great variety of the service for the Dormition. Many manuscripts are known, each of them with its own characteristic features and different readings.

In the dissertation, the most ancient Byzantine and Old Bulgarian manuscripts were selected, which bring us as close as possible to the time of creation of the hymnographic corpus and the service of the feast. These are the Sinaitic manuscript Sin. Gr. 631 from the middle of the 11th century, which reflects the Byzantine tradition, and the Ta manuscript from the 11th - 12th centuries, which represents the Slavic tradition.

Regarding the more accurate insight into the hymnographic text and its true interpretation, different readings are indicated according to other manuscripts not researched here, which are contained in the unpublished work of Assoc. Dr. Roman Krivko "Collected mineon for the month of August".

The edition of the Mineon in Greek, published in Rome, was also used.[1] The canons of St. Cosmas of Mayum and of St. John Damascene are according to the critical edition of W. Christ and R. Paranikas.[2]

The hymnographic texts of the Funeral service of the Blessed Virgin Mary were studied primarily on the basis of the

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1 Mhnai'a tou' o&lou ejniautou'. T. I-VI.'En JRwvmh/,1888–1901.
2 Christ, W., P. Paranikas. Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum. Leipzig, 1871.

edition from 1836 in Venice, and for comparison and a more accurate theological analysis, the other editions were drawn, which are described in the third chapter of the dissertation work.

The apocryphal texts used in the dissertation are according to the critical editions of A. Wenger[3] and K. Tischendorf[4].

The homily texts that were pronounced on the feast of the Dormition are classified not so much according to the importance that their authors have relative to the development of the theology of the Church, but according to their role in the development and shaping of the feast. Regarding patristic texts and those of ecclesiastical writers, the relevant critical editions such as Migne's series, J. Patrologiae Cursus completus Series Graeca are used.

Chronological limits of the study

In the dissertation work, no narrow chronological boundaries of the research are set, since the feast of the Dormition has its own historical development. Chronologically, the homiletic texts are limited, since the emphasis is placed on the works of the holy fathers of the Church, and a classical limitation of the fathers to the XIV century is conditionally accepted.

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3 Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ διήγησις. – In: Wenger, A., L'Assomption de la T. S. Vierge dans la tradition vyzantin du VI au Xsiècle. Paris, 1955.
4 Ioannes. Liber de Dormitione Mariae. – In: Tischendorf, K. Apocalypses Apocryphae. Leipzig: Herm.Mendelssohn, 1866.

II Brief presentation of the thesis

1. The first chapter of the study is entitled **"History, Structure and Narratives of the Feast".**

The focus of this first section is on the narratives of the Feast of the Dormition, but to get to the heart of the problem under study it is necessary to examine the history of the feast and analyze its structure.

1.1. The first subsection introduces the issue under consideration. It traces the development of **the veneration of the Holy Theotokos and her place in the Orthodox liturgy**.

In the New Testament texts we find evidence of the reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary, precisely because she is the Mother of Christ. This line of development of the veneration of the Virgin continued in the following centuries of the life of the Church. Together with the development of Christian worship, the special reverence for the Mother of the Savior grew, just as together with the formation of the Christological dogma, the truth about the Motherhood of the Virgin, always preserved in the Church, was formulated.

The liturgical veneration of the Early Church to the Mother of God does not differ in its essence from that to the saints, but occupies a more important place throughout the centuries, because it is a conservice of the fact that the Virgin is the mother of the God-man Christ. The Mother of God is mentioned several times at the St. John Chrysostom`s and St. Basil`s liturgies, as a supplicant before God, but the entire Eucharistic rite is

theocentric and Christocentric: the God-man Christ is the One who offers and accepts the sacrifice.

The Blessed Virgin Mary occupies an important place both in the liturgical texts of the Church and in the church calendar because of the reverence of God's people for her as the Mother of God and because of her strong prayerful intercession for believers in Christ.

The Third Ecumenical Council (431) played a decisive role in the development of the veneration of the Virgin, during which the Church formulated its belief regarding the Motherhood of the Virgin and substantiated the Christian veneration that had existed for her until then. After the fifth century, a gradation of the liturgical honor and glorification of the Blessed Virgin Mary began, expressed in the composition of new liturgical hymns to her, establishment of feasts in connection with her life and glorification, consecration of temples in her honor, and depicting icons. This liturgical glorification of the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ is due to the fact that her personality is closely related to that of her Divine Son. That is why the Feasts of the Virgin Mary, which take shape over time in the Christian liturgical calendar, have a direct connection with the Feasts of the Lord. This applies to the Annunciation, where the main message is the glad tidings of the conception and incarnation of God the Word, Nativity of Theotokos - the Mother of the Savior of the world is born, Conception of St. Anne, Entry into the Temple, as well as to some extent the feast of Dormition. In the fifth century in Constantinople, the day after the Nativity of Christ, the memory of the Mother of God was celebrated - precisely as a reflection of this liturgical and dogmatic connection between the feasts of

the Virgin and the Lord: the Incarnation was celebrated at night with a liturgy, and the following day was celebrated the memory of the Mother of God, as this feast was perceived as one - Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ.[5] In the following centuries, with the increasing reverence for the Mother of God, her independent feasts began to be distinguished, which do not have such a direct connection with the person of the Incarnate Word, as the Nativity of Christ or the Annunciation of the Mother of God, but mainly reflect events from her life, such as: Nativity of the Virgin, Entry into the Temple or Dormition. On this basis, the following smaller feasts of the Mother of God appear, such as Life-giving source, Holy Protection, Laying of the garment of the Mother of God, Laying of the girdle of the Mother of God, etc.

The Feast of the Dormition appears as a triumph of the Church in the honor and glorification of the Virgin who gave birth to God.

1.2. Death as Dormition in the Christian tradition

The Christian view of death is key to understanding the essence of the Feast of Dormition.

According to the Orthodox Christian tradition, revealed most fully through the biblical, liturgical and patristic texts of the Church, death entered the world with the sin of the ancestors Adam and Eve in paradise. It is an unnatural phenomenon in man's existence and a conserve of his disobedience, sin and his distance from God.

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5 Βεργώτη Ἡ Θεομητορική λατρεία. – In: Πρακτικά Θεολογικού συνέδριου. Εἰς τιμήν τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου και αειπαρθένου Μαρίας. Θεσσαλονίκη, 1991, σ. 67.

In the Old Testament, the view of human death as a tragedy is reflected - it is a sad event in which the entire human race is involved because of Adam and Eve's transgression in paradise.

The New Testament teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ on the death and resurrection of man is in connection with the Old Testament teaching on life and death, but with His Resurrection Christ makes man the heir of the Kingdom of heaven. That is why death is nullified, it is no longer as scary for man as it was in the Old Testament era. Death takes on significance as the beginning of new life with Christ in eternity.

We find this ancient Christian view revealed in the catacomb inscriptions of Rome, where death is spoken of as falling asleep, in the sense, not of a latent state, but of the cessation of temporal life in its present state and form, and its continuation into eternity.[6] This is the basis of the New Testament teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is why St. Ap. Paul tells the Christians in Philippi: "to me life is Christ, and death is gain".[7] Death is no longer as scary for man as it was in the Old Testament era. Christ's death and Resurrection conquer death and Christians fall asleep to this life here to wake up in eternity with Christ. Death is invalidated, and therefore St. John Chrysostom says that "it is no longer called death, but sleep and slumber"[8]. It is not scary for believers in the resurrected Christ,

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6 Epitaphs are found in the catacombs with a clear message about the Early Church's belief in death as a transition to life after life. Death is sleep, rest and peace in Christ. "Rest in peace", "always live in peace", "your spirit rest in peace, pray for your sister" - these are common inscriptions placed on Christian graves from the catacombs of Rome. See Hertling, L.,E. Kirschbaum. Le catacomb romane e loromartiri. Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana,1996,p. 208 – 210.
7 Phil. 1:21.
8 Ιωάννου του Χρυσοστόμου. Εἰς τό ὄνομα τοῦ κοιμητηρίου 1 ΕΠΕ 35, 638; PG 49, 394.

because it is the beginning of life in the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, of this time, this space, but is in eternity; therefore, Christian death is rather a falling asleep, a slumber, a peaceful passage into eternity.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ invalidates death and makes man an heir and inhabitant of the Kingdom of heaven. Death becomes the beginning of new life with Christ in the kingdom that "will have no end." It is falling asleep, dormition and resting from being in this age and   the beginning of life in the age to come. The feast commemorating the death of the Mother of God is called the Dormition because it embodies the Christian view of the death of the Mother of God as falling asleep and her transition from "death to Life."

1.3. The tomb of the Holy Mother of God

The Orthodox Christian tradition has preserved two traditions regarding the location of the tomb of the Holy Mother of God - the Ephesian one and the Jerusalem one.

There is no direct evidence in the New Testament about the place of death of the Mother of God. On the cross of Calvary, the Savior points to the Virgin as the new mother of His beloved disciple[9]. Related to this New Testament testimony is the tradition of the death and burial of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ephesus. On his way to Ephesus, St. John the Theologian also took the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he was already taking care of. The oldest evidence for this hypothesis is a Syrian manuscript from the end of the 9th century, where it is said that the Virgin Mary accompanied St. John the Theologian on his journey to Ephesus, where she died

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9 "Woman, behold your son..." (Jn. 19:27 - 27).

and was buried.[10] Indirect evidence for this hypothesis is contained in the testimony of St. Cyril of Alexandria about the holding of the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 in Ephesus in a temple dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Greater antiquity and more scientific credibility have the testimonies regarding the Jerusalem tradition, which is reflected in both the hymnographic and the homiletic texts of the feast. Macarius' Eulogy and the 6th-century travel guide of Theodosius testify to the temple at the Valley of Jehoshaphat, while Brevarius de Hierosolyma, which is probably an earlier monument, besides mentioning the temple in Jerusalem, testifies that there is also the tomb of The Mother of God. St. Sophronius of Jerusalem and the ecclesiastical writers who lived after him confirm this hypothesis. The tomb of the Blessed Virgin Mary becomes an important place for Christian worship and veneration because it is associated with her personality. It is a testimony of the church's faith in the repose of the one who gave birth to God, her ascension and passage into eternity.

1.4.1 In the fourth subsection of the first chapter, the history of the feast "Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary" is studied, and the first subsection of the study of the history of the feast is entitled **"The first feast in "memory of the Mother of God" as the basis of the Virgin feasts of the Church".** In it, the hypothesis of the feast in memory of Mary is argued, as the basis of the feasts of the Virgin Mary of the Church.

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10 Van Esbroeck, M. Deux listes d'apôtres conserves en syriaque'. – In Lavenant, R. Third Simposium Syriacum 1980, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 221. Roma 1983, p. 22 – 23; Shoemaker, St., Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption (Oxford Early Christian Studies). Oxford, New York, 2002, p. 75.

The feasts of the Virgin, as well as the feasts of the saints in general, do not appear at the same moment in the Christian liturgical life. The feasts were initially local, related to the local honor and cult of a certain saint or in this case the Mother of God, and then they spread throughout the Christian world. In the early Christian era, the first feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary was known in the East as the "Memorial of the Mother of God". At its core is the reverence for the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressed above all through the Jerusalem tradition, which also preserves the legend of the death of the Virgin. It is difficult to determine when the Early Church began celebrating the most ancient Feast of the Virgin, known as the "Memorial of the Mother of God". Certainly there was no common date for the Church in the East and in the West. The famous French patrologist and researcher of the feasts of the Virgin Martin Jugie defends the thesis of December 26 as the date of commemoration of the Mother of God in the East and thinks that this celebration took shape after the end of the IV century.[11]

The Armenian lectionary of the 5th century indicates the celebration of the feast of Kathisma on August 15. This feast is not identified with the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, but is its basis, and therefore later the date August 15 was adopted, on which the general Feast of the Virgin was originally celebrated at the "Kathisma" temple.

After the Armenian Lectionary, there is no other evidence of the feast at the "Kathisma" temple for about a hundred years. The travel guide of the pilgrim Theodosius[12] dates from the beginning of the 5th century . In it, he mentions the "Kathisma"

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11 Jugie, M., La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge : etude historico-doctrinale. Citta del Vaticano, 1944, p. 175.
12 Shoemaker, S., op. cit., p. 83.

temple, which in the 5th century was already a well-known place of worship related to the person of the Mother of God and the birth of the Savior. This testimony is important in confirming the location of the temple.

Important historical evidence for the existence of the "Kathisma" temple is contained in the life of St. Theodosius Kinoviarch († 529) compiled by Cyril of Scythopol († 557) and Theodore, bishop of Petra († 536). The two biographers describe the activities of the noble aristocrat Ikelia, who later became a deaconess and with her generous help built the "Kathisma" temple during the reign of the Jerusalem Patriarch Juvenalius (417-457).[13]

1.4.2. History of the Feast of the Dormition.

In this subsection, apart from the fact that the history of the feast is studied, the reasons for the appearance of the Dormition feast are also analyzed, and it is established that they are primarily liturgical - the development of the Christian cult and the respect for the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God.

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13 According to Shalev-Hurvitz, Ikelia "financed" the construction of the "Kathism" temple in 450, but it was completed around 456. Shalev-Hurvitz, V. Holy Sites Encircled. The Early Byzantine Concentric Churches of Jerusalem. NewYork, 2015, p. 127. When speaking of the temple at the ancient Catism, Shoemaker hypothesizes that it is about two temples (old and new) in close proximity to each other. But it is probably the same temple that was rebuilt after nearly a hundred years. Rina Avner thinks that the "Cathism" temple, which was an object of worship by Christians after a hundred years, has been restored, but now as an active monastery. See Shoemaker, S., op.cit., p. 84-85; Shalev-Hurvitz, V.,op. cit.,p. 126-127; Avner, R. The Initial Tradition of the Theotokos at the Kathisma: Earliest Celebrations and the Calendar.–In: Brubaker, L.,M. Cunningham. The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2011, p. 14 – 17.

The Jerusalem canon from the 7th century contains information about the Feast of Kathisma and Dormition, indicating the change of the celebration of the general feast of the Virgin from August 15 to August 13 and its replacement with the Dormition on August 15. The Byzantine chroniclers St. Theophanes the Confessor (+818) and Nicephorus Callistus (+1328) specify the year of establishment of the feast of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This happened in 588 during the reign of Emperor Mauritius. The feast was formalized in the 6th century, but its adoption in the East and in the West took place at different times. The Syrian tradition of the feast differs from the Jerusalem one only in the date - December 26, which was subsequently changed. The Egyptian and Ethiopian tradition preserved two dates related to the death of the Blessed Virgin and the feast of the Dormition - on January 16 (6) the feast of the Dormition was celebrated, and on August 9 - her bodily ascension to heaven. The Church in the West preserves the teaching about the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and after the 8th century it also began to teach about the bodily ascension of the Holy Virgin. In the Gregorian Sacramentary of Pope Hadrian I (772 – 795), the feast for the first time in the tradition of the Church in Rome is found under the name Ascension (Assumptio) of Saint Mary. Subsequently, the Roman Catholic Church adopted the dogma of the Ascension into Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary with body and soul in heavenly glory.

1.5. Structure of the feast

This part of the dissertation, in two separate subsections, traces **the structure of the feast according to the Byzantine-Slavic manuscript tradition in the VII-XII centuries** and according to the more significant known **liturgical statutes** of the church. The most ancient sources that have reached us are

analyzed: the Jerusalem canon from the 7th century,   published by Prot. Korn Kekelidze, and the most ancient manuscripts according to the Byzantine-Slavic tradition, which have not been published: Sin. Gr. 631 (XI century) and Ta (XI century). The indicated manuscripts, which contain the service of the Dormition and its pre-celebration, have been studied, and at the end of the sub-point an abridged version of the read Greek manuscript with the hymnographic texts is attached. They give an idea of   the Greek tradition during this period. In Appendix No. 2 to the dissertation, the service of the feast is presented, comparing the two traditions - the Byzantine and the Slavic, according to the two most ancient manuscripts from the 11th century - Sin. Gr. 631 and Ta. The service of the Feast of the Dormition is studied according to the typica published by A. Dmitrievsky, with emphasis being placed mainly on the Typica of the Great Church of Constantinople according to the 10th century Patmos copy, the Typica of the Studi Monastery in a 13th century copy, the Typica of the Evergit Monastery in Constantinople according to a copy from 11th century, the Jerusalem typicus according to manuscript 1096 from the Jerusalem library (12th century). From the presented data and the comparisons made of the different editions of the statutes, it can be concluded that the type of the Evergite Monastery in Constantinople in the XI century is very close to the modern state of the feast of the Dormition according to the Byzantine and Slavic tradition.

1.6. The narratives of the feast are apocryphal texts. They are of essential importance as they greatly influenced the development of both hymnographic texts and iconographic subjects.

1.6.1. The apocryphal texts of the Feast of the Dormition are classified in the dissertation according to the two most

significant traditions: the Jerusalem and the Bethlehem. The apocryphal texts of both traditions known to the scientific community are described, emphasizing the most ancient apocryphal text in Greek according to the Jerusalem tradition and known as R and published by Fr. A. Wenger. It influenced the Latin, Georgian, and Syriac apocryphal texts of the same tradition. "Homily on Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary" by St. John the Theologian (G2) is the most famous apocrypha in the Greek language according to the Bethlehem tradition. It was published by K. Tischendorf. It had an influence on the patristic homilies for Dormition of the Virgin of St. Modest of Jerusalem, St. Andrew of Crete, St. John of Damascus, as well as on the hymnographic corpus of the feast. These two apocryphal texts are mainly used in the analysis of the theological content of the feast done in the dissertation work.

1.6.2. Patriarchal homilies and sermons of church writers for the feast of the Dormition. The homiletic texts are classified according to the apocryphal traditions and according to the language in which the works were written. The feast homilies according to the Greek, Slavic, Syrian, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, Latin tradition are examined. The dissertation uses the homiletic texts, primarily of the Greek and Slavic tradition, which are similar in their content to the hymnographic texts.

2. **The second chapter** of the dissertation is entitled **Theotocology of the feast of the Dormition based on its hymnography and patristic homilies**. This chapter analyzes the theological content of the researched feast based on the two main hymnographic and homiletic traditions: Greek and Slavic.

2.1. In the first subsection of the second chapter, hymnography as a theology is examined, comparing it with the

charismatic theology of the homilies of the Holy Fathers. The hymnographic and patristic texts on the occasion of the feast of the Dormition are the prayer experience of the church, conveyed in poetic or homiletic form.

2.2. In the next subsection of the second chapter, **the hymnography of the feast** according to the Greek tradition is described. The authors of the main hymnographic texts, stichira, troparia and canons are examined.

2.3. The Slavic tradition is studied on the basis of the famous hymnographic works written by the old Bulgarian authors - Canon of the feast of Dormition by St. Clement of Ochrid and Triode of the pre-feast by Konstantin Preslavski.

2.4. The dogma of the Mother of God is the basis of the church's teaching about the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God. We find the content of this important dogma in the hymnographic and homiletical texts, as well as in the iconographic feast scenes. In the most ancient hymnographic texts of the feast: the indulging troparion "In Thy birth Thee preserved Thy virginity" and in the ipakoi "We praise you of all generations, Virgin Mary", the emphasis is on the Motherhood of the Virgin. The same applies to other remarkable hymnographic texts, as well as to the patristic testimonies that profess the church's faith in the Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin. Precisely because she is the Virgin, her ascension is glorious and she is a Champion for the Christian race. Hymnographic and patristic texts for the feast focus primarily on the event of the Dormition, but at its core is the Theotokion dogma. St. Germanus of Constantinople places the emphasis not on the person of the Mother of God, but on the work for which she became Mother of God - the incarnation of the Word and the salvation of man and the world by Lord Jesus Christ. This is her

own praise, in which we participate even today, professing in Orthodox manner her Motherhood (standing at the basis of her ecclesiastical veneration), her virginity and her ascension, her transition from "death to life".[14]

2.5. The virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the second dogma that is contained in the hymnographic and homiletic texts of the feast of the Dormition. It is a conservice of the Virgin Mary's Motherhood and is therefore sung in the hymnographic texts as well as in the works of the Holy Fathers as part of the glorification of Mother of God. She is ever-virgin, because she conceived the Christ child without knowing a man (inexplicably). Conception is seedless in the womb of the Mother of God, therefore the Word Incarnate seedless in her preserves her incorruptible, and she remains always a virgin.[15]

The hymnographic and patristic texts use images and symbols of the virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which are also biblical subjects: the unburning bush of Zion, the ladder from the dream of the biblical patriarch Jacob, the doors through which the Lord passes and which remain impassable after Him from the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, the three children in the burning fiery furnace. The Christological theotocology of the feast is expressed through the two dogmas of virginity and virginity, with the emphasis being placed on the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin as a glorification due to her maternity to God and virginity.

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14 S. Germanus Constantinopolitanus.In Dormitionem II 1PG98, 357D; Testi mariani dell primo millenio. Padri e altri autori vizantini (VI – XI sec.)A cura di Gharib, G., Toniolo, E., Gambero, L., Di Nola, G.,Citta Nuova Edetrice, Roma, 1989, vol. 2, p. 360.
15 Canon for the Dormition of St. Clement of Ohrid, ode five, troparion two. - In: Свети Климент Охридски. Слова и служби. С., 2008, с. 466.

2.6. "Dormition and glorification of the Mother of God" is the most important point of the second chapter, and therefore it is divided into several sub-points. In them, the content of the feast was researched and analyzed based on the hymnographic and homiletic texts according to the Greek and Slavic tradition of the Church.

2.6.1. The angelic announcement of the repose of Mother of God is examined in this part of the work in the context of patristic texts specific to the Christian tradition, influenced by the apocryphal pseudo-John. Parallels are drawn between the patristic and apocryphal texts, noting the differences with the hymnography of the feast in this regard. The Greek and Slavic hymnographic tradition does not speak of the Virgin's forewarning of her death, but of her being welcomed by the archangel after her death. The hypothesis of Β. Ψευτουγκάς on this issue was analyzed, trying to ignore its errors.

2.6.2. The death of the Mother of God and the gathering of all the fullness of the Church at her funeral are three important moments of the event celebrated by the Church. The hymnographic and homiletic texts of the feast emphasize the significance of the Virgin's death. The burial of the Blessed Virgin serves as proof of her death, but it is also the beginning of the celebration and joy of the prayerful intercession of the Blessed Mother of God. The gathering of the righteous of the Old Testament, the angelic forces and the apostles   in the escorting of the body of the Mother of God, is an act of the unity of the Church that has gathered at this important moment. With the help of the hermeneutics of the hymnography and the homilies of the holy fathers, some features in connection with the presence of the apostles at the funeral of the Most Holy Theotokos - their coming on clouds, the presence of deceased apostles were analyzed.

2.6.3. The burial and the transfer to heaven of the Most Holy Theotokos are an important part of the content of the feast and the teaching of the Church about Dormition of the Virgin. The transfer of the body of the Most Holy to heaven is represented in the hymnographic and homiletic texts as the majesty of the Mother of God. This specificity is transmitted in the Slavic tradition through the chants of the feast and above all in one of the matins verses found in manuscripts Ta and C 168, as well as in late Greek manuscripts. An indirect analogy is made between the transfer of the body of the Most Holy Mother of God and the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Parallels have been drawn between the hymnographic and homiletic church traditions regarding the overturning of the ark episode by Jephunius the Jew, tracing the influence of apocryphal texts.

2.6.4. Her resurrection and glorification are also connected with **the transference of the Most Holy Mother of God to heaven**. According to the Byzantine and Slavic homiletic and partly hymnographic tradition, the glorification of the Mother of God after her death is connected with her resurrection and prayerful intercession. The testimonies of the Byzantine Fathers: St. John Damascene, St. Gregory Palamas, St. Philoteus Kokinos, St. Nicholas Kavasila, as well as St. Clement of Ohrid have been researched and cited. The Byzantine hymnography speaks indirectly about the resurrection of the Mother of God, while the Slavic hymnography, according to the Dormition canon of St. Clement of Ohrid, expresses this idea much more directly.

2.7. The last subsection of chapter two examines **the iconography of the Dormition based on the hymnographic and homiletic texts of the feast**. The ancient iconographic subjects were researched and analyzed, as well as less common,

but containing evidence in support of the thesis defended in the dissertation.

One of the most ancient testimonies that represents Dormition of the Mother of God is the miniature from Gospel No. 1 in the library of the Greek monastery "Iviron" on Mount Athos. It dates from the end of the 10th to the beginning of the 11th century and is from the gospel that probably belonged to the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus II Phocas.[16] In the center of the icon is the Mother of God on a large bier, which in later versions of the icon is clothed with purple cloth, which symbolizes the royal dignity of the Virgin according to the hymnographic and patristic feast texts of the Church, in which she is called queen. The most commonly used color of the Mother of God's clothes is red or blue to express her regal dignity. In some icons, the Mother of God wears purple sandals, like the Byzantine emperors. Christ is always depicted in a red robe.

The holy apostles are arranged around the bed as witnesses of the sacrament of the Virgin's death. Three of them stand out in the composition: the holy apostles Peter, Paul and John. St. apostle Paul is at the feet of the Mother of God and stands out from the group of apostles who are on his side. He bowed his head to his body to pay his respects to the Mother of God and to say goodbye to her. St. apostle Peter is at the head of the Mother of God and heads the second group of apostles who are on the right side of the icon. He holds a censer in his hand to show his leading liturgical role, which St. German Patriarch of Constantinople also spoke about in his third speech on the Dormition. St. Germanus of Constantinople says that it was St. Apostle Peter who began the prayer to God for the sending of the Mother of God. St. Apostle John the Theologian leaned on the breast of the Mother of God to say goodbye to her. The Lord

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16 See fig. 2 of Appendix No. 1 of the dissertation.

Jesus Christ stood over the figure of St. John the Theologian and holds her soul in His hands in the form of a newborn child. On the upper left side of the Savior is the figure of the archangel who comes to meet the soul of the Mother of God and usher her into the Kingdom of glory.

The Apocrypha of Pseudo-John on Dormition also mentions that St. Paul the Apostle embraced the feet of the Mother of God, but it says the same about St. John the Theologian and St. Thomas the Apostle[17], who do not find such a place in the iconographic scene of Dormition. The third homily of St. Germanus of Constantinople describes the prostration of St. Paul the Apostle at the feet of Virgin Mary and her death. The Patriarch of Constantinople described the events, probably also using apocryphal texts, but with some differences from them. One can talk about some points in common between the apocryphal texts and certain patristic texts, but not about their dependence. The iconographic scene of the Dormition largely repeats what was said by St. Germanus of Constantinople and the other Church Fathers who wrote on this subject. The Lord Jesus Christ holds in His hands the soul of the Mother of God in the form of a infant, which has a nimbus on the head.

On some festive icons from the Balkan countries, such as the frescoes from the Church of the Ascension in the Zhech Monastery (15th century),   the Church of St. Demetrius in Markov Monastery in Macedonia[18] and those in the church of the Stavronikita Monastery on Mount Athos (authored by Theophanes of Crete[19]), the soul of the Mother of God in

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17 Ioannes. Liber de Dormitione Mariae 45. – In: Tischendorf, K., op. cit., p. 110.
18 See fig. 3 of Annex No. 1.
19 See fig. 4 of Annex No. 1.

swaddling bands is depicted with wings. By this it is symbolically represented that she flies into the Kingdom of glory as with wings, overcoming the perishable, temporary and transitory, earthly space and dimension and dwells in another state, in another place, where there is no time - in the Kingdom of glory.

St. Andrew of Crete refers to St. Dionysius the Areopagite for the presence, in addition to apostles, of hierarchs such as Hierotheus.

One of the most famous and most ancient iconographic scenes of the Dormition is preserved on an ivory plaque and is kept in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.[20] The monument dates back to the 10th century and on it, besides the apostles, the myrrh-bearing women were added to the iconographic scene, according to the homily by St. Germanus of Constantinople about their presence at the death of the Mother of God.[21]

From the 11th century, the composition began to expand, including other elements that the ancient icon of the feast of the Dormition did not know. These are the depiction of the coming of the apostles on clouds to the Mother of God, the episode with the cutting off of the hands of the Jewish priest Jephonius and the ascension of the Mother of God to heaven. With the depiction of the apostles on clouds, the new composition began to be called the "cloud type", which became its characteristic feature, since the apostles were not depicted on clouds on the first known icons. Famous images of the "cloud type" icon are: from the church "St. Sofia" in Ohrid (XI century);   the Dormition icon from Novgorod (1200), which is kept in the

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20 See fig. 18 of Appendix No. 1.
21 S. Germanus Constantinopolitanus. In Dormitionem III PG 98, 372A.

Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow; from the church in Decani monastery - Serbia (XIV century). The researchers linked the images from the so-called "cloud type" with the Apocrypha of Pseudo John, where it is written that the Mother of God asked to see the apostles before her death and they arrived on clouds.

From the 15th century, the upper part of the icon of the feast began to depict the taking of the Mother of God to heaven by angels. This plot is found in the Church of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin (1479)[22], in the icon from the Church of the Dormition in Dmitrov (15th century), now kept in the Andrei Rublev Museum, in the icon of St. Theophanes of Crete from the "Stavronikita" monastery on Mount Athos (15th century).[23]

The iconographic plot continues to develop with the theme of the resurrection of the Virgin and her presence in paradise. An icon from the Sinai Monastery from the 11th century depicts the Mother of God in Paradise; on the 16th-century Novgorod icon (stored in the Russian State Museum in St. Petersburg) in the upper part of the icon, the Mother of God is enthroned before the open doors of heaven, and behind her several trees of paradise are visible.[24]

Based on the analysis made in the dissertation work of the iconographic, hymnographic and homiletic feast works, the conclusion was made about the dependence of the iconography, first of all, on the hymnography and the words of the holy fathers, and then on the apocryphal texts.

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22 See fig. 19 of Appendix No. 1.
23 Lipatova, S., Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary: iconography of the holiday in the art of Vasantium and ancient Russia. [Electronic resource, km 12/18/2023] http://www.pravoslavie.ru/jurnal/060826144424.htm
24 Ibid.

3. The third chapter of the dissertation is devoted to liturgical services and feasts in connection with Dormition. Christian worship is not static, but changes depending on the conditions of the age in which it was formed. Therefore, liturgy, as a science of worship, "necessarily" reflects these changes in the life of the Church.

3.1. The modern state of the feast includes services and feasts, the study of which supports the thesis defended in the dissertation. These are the services "Elevation of the Panagia", "Funeral of the Most Holy Theotokos" and the feasts "Laying of the Girdle of the Most Holy Theotokos" and "Laying of the Garment of the Most Holy Theotokos".

3.2. The second subsection of the third chapter deals with **the "Elevation of the Panagia"** order**.**

The order of raising the Panagia is of very early origin. It is related to the feast of Dormition only in so far as the service is connected with the resurrection of the Mother of God and her appearance to the apostles, as described in some apocryphal texts, which give rise to similar iconographic scenes. In essence, the order "Elevation of the Panagia" is a liturgical service that has a completely independent origin.

It is called the "raising of the Panagia"[25] based on the raising of the triangular particle taken from the prosphora from which the lamb for the liturgy is cut.[26] It is done in honor of the Mother of God, and since there is an elevation of the particle of the prosphora, the service is associated with the resurrection of the Most Holy.

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25 Exaltation of the Most Holy (Παναγία).
26 Авксентий, архим. Ibid. p. 340.

According to M. Skabalanovich, the "Elevation of the Panagia" can be connected with the tradition of the Church, because it is described in the Cheti-Mineons according to St. Demetrius of Rostov.[27] This tradition draws a parallel between the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the death and resurrection of the Mother of God. According to it, after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the apostles used to separate a part from the bread they ate, leaving it in honor of the Lord Jesus Christ; after eating, they raised the piece of bread saying: "Glory to You, our God, glory to You!" Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Great is the name of the Holy Trinity; Lord Jesus Christ, help us!" On the third day after the death and burial of the Mother of God, while performing this rite, the apostles saw the Mother of God and instead of saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, help us!", they said: "Holy Mother of God, help us!", after which they went to the tomb and saw that it was empty.[28]

The claims that the "Elevation of the Panagia" order was established on the basis of the appearance of the Mother of God after her ascension to the apostles are rather a hypothesis that does not rest on substantial evidence. Elevation of the Panagia is an independent liturgical act, which is certainly ancient, although the first written evidence for it is not distinguished by antiquity.[29] Some researchers associate it with the so-called "Agapi" from the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd

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27 Скабалланович, М., Толковый типикон. М.: Сретенский монастырь, 2004, p. 779.

28 Ibid.

29 The first written monument that contains the developed ancient rite of the successive elevation of the Panagia is the Synaxar of the Iver Monastery on Mount Athos, which is contained in a Georgian manuscript of the twelfth century. See Скабалланович, М., Толковый типикон. М.: Сретенский монастырь, 2004, p. 779.

century.[30] It is then integrated into the worship service. St. Simeon of Thessalonica in the 15ᵗʰ century says that he established the rite to be performed in the churches of his diocese during the Matins after the ninth ode of the canon.[31] He testifies that this is an ancient order handed down by the apostles.[32] After the IV century, with the appearance of monasticism,this order probably spread mainly in monasteries.[33] The saint writes that the service is mainly performed in the monasteries - at the end of the fraternal meal.[34] It consists of three main parts: blessing the food, raising the Virgin particle and giving thanks for the meal.[35] The prayer "Great is the name of the Holy Trinity..." was integrated into Byzantine liturgies, as a prayer for blessing the bread.[36] Today, the "Elevation of the Panagia" is preserved mainly in some monastic communities, but in the 15ᵗʰ century St. Simeon of Thessaloniki wrote that it was performed during the liturgy[37], and allowed its use at any "other time, to whom when also necessary for our help".[38]

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30 Авксентий, архим., Литургика, p. 340. Скабалланович, М., Толковый типикон. М.: Сретенский монастырь, 2004, p. 780.
31 Simeonis Thessalonicensis. De Sacra Precatione PG 155, 668B.
32 PG 155, 664 C – D
33 George Codin (Γεώργιος Κωδινός) in the 15ᵗʰ century described the act of performing the Panagia as one of the famous ceremonial celebrations performed in the court of the Byzantine emperor after taking a meal at noon. See Вениамин, архиеп. Новая скрижаль или объяснение о церкви, о литургии, о всех службах и утварях церковных. М., 1999, p. 284.
34 Simeonis Thessalonicensis. De Sacra Precatione PG 155, 664 B – C.
35 See Авксентий, архим., Литургика, с. 340. Simeonis Thessalonicensis De Sacra Precatione PG 155, 665B
36 This shows the connection of the elevation of the Panagia with the liturgy. St. Simeon of Thessalonica explicitly says that the bread does not need to be blessed because it is already blessed and sanctified when the proscomidia is performed.
37 Simeonis Thessalonicensis De Sacra PrecationePG 155, 664A.
38 Simeonis Thessalonicensis De Sacra PrecationePG 155, 661D.

In the dissertation, a conclusion was made about the antiquity of the studied liturgical order Panagia. Its connection with Dormition and with the bodily Dormition of the Mother of God into heaven is indirect. The evidence for this is late.

3.3. The Funeral service of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been studied in detail. Although it is not used by all Orthodox communities, it contains specific features that are subject to careful analysis. A comparative analysis of the service according to the Jerusalem tradition and the Slavic tradition was made. The focus of the study is placed on the three funerary canticles known as the "Tomb Cry" or εγώμια.

There are three known editions of the hymnographic texts concerning the Funeral service of Theotokos, but there are probably more. The first is the Jerusalem service, which is most common in the Greek-speaking churches. It was published in the Jerusalem and Greek local churches. The redaction of the praises of Dormition, as they were probably used in Palestine and Greece, was first published at the end of the eighteenth century. Patriarch Abraham of Jerusalem (1775–1785) suggested to Procopius of Peloponnesus to correct the text that was in use. There was a new edition of the text under Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem (1845–1872), who got acquainted with the corrected version by Samuel of Peloponnese. The text was published in 1862.[39] The new edition is from 1962.[40] In Greece,

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39 Ακολουθία ιερά 1862; Дмитриевский, Д. Праздненства Гефсимании в честь Успения Богоматери, СпБ, 1905; Дмитриевский, Д., О чине литании и празднике Успения Матери Божией во Святой Земле» // ЖМП, 1979, №3.
40 Εγκώμια τής Υπέραγιας Δεσποίνης Ημών Θεοτόκου καὶ Αειπαρθένου Μαρίας: Ὕμνοι τελετῶν καὶ λιτανείων τής ἐκκλησίας τῶν Ἱεροσολύμω, Ἱερου Κοινοῦ τοῦ Παναγίου Ταφοῦ, 1986.

the Jerusalem service is mostly used, as evidenced by a modern edition of the Jerusalem variant in Janica in 2009.[41]

The second edition of the service is with the hymnographic texts of Metropolitan Dionysius of Patras and is distinguished by its antiquity. It is likely that the metropolitan of Patras composed the hymnographic texts under the influence of the Jerusalem tradition as soon as he became acquainted with them. According to a manuscript by Metropolitan Dionysius, which is kept in the library of Patras, the service in Greek was known with three canticles and eulogitaries as early as the 16th century (1547).[42] In 1997, Patras published the "Tombstone Hymn", composed by Metropolitan Dionysius of Patras for its use in the liturgy on the eve of the feast.[43] This edition has only local liturgical use - mainly in the Diocese of Patras.

The third edition of the hymnographic texts of the "Funeral service of Theotokos" is based on the articles of the monk Kesarios Depontes, which were written in the 18th - 19th centuries. The style of the chants is characterized by the fact that, apart from the church tradition regarding the creation of the chant, there is a reminder and influence from some folkloric motifs.[44] In the second place, as in the other two editions of the hymnographic texts, the similarity with the three canticles from the matins of Holy Saturday, which are sung around the shroud

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41 Εγκώμια στήν Κοίμηση τής Υπέραγιας Δεσποίνης Ημών Θεοτόκου καὶ Αειπαρθένου Μαρίας υπο Παντελεήμονος Λαμπαδάριου Μητροπολίτου Αντινόης , Γιάννιτσα, 2009.
42 http://panagiotisandriopoulos.blogspot.bg/2008/08/blog-post_09.html
43 Επιτάφιος ύμνος της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου ητοι Εγκώμια της Κοιμήσεως αυτής. Έκδοσις Ι. Μονῆς Γηροκομείου, Πάτραι 1997.
44 Gharib,G.,Toniolo,E.,Testi Mariani del secondo millennio. Autori orienali secoli XI – XX.Citta Nuova Editrice, Roma, 2008. p. 664. Further on in the author's abstract, this work will be cited with the abbreviation TM.

of the Lord Jesus Christ, symbolizing His death and His laying in the grave, is obvious.

Three manuscripts of the third redaction are known. They are in Greek (18th century) from the "Xiropotam" monastery on Mount Athos, where the author of the canticles in the service temporarily resided. The monk Kesarios Dapontes (Καισάριος Δαπόντες) was one of the most prominent and famous Byzantine poets and writers not only in the 18th century, when he lived, but in general during the era of Ottoman rule. The praises he created were used for a while in Greece in the 19th century, after which their use in the Church in Greece was limited. The first publication of the texts of the monk Kesarios Dapontes took place in Venice in 1770 in an anthology containing Hymns of the Virgin. The second edition was made in Venice in 1836. It was an independent edition of the liturgical service already formed for the transfer of the Mother of God.[45] Today, their use in Greece is not particularly popular. In the Slavic-speaking world, the texts are widely distributed. They were translated from Greek and are used the most in Russia. They were originally issued in the "Service of Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary" in Moscow in 1872. The attitude of Moscow Metropolitan Philaret[46] is known, who wanted, following the example of Jerusalem, to carry out a similar service in the Gethsemane Skete and the Trinity-Sergius Lavra. For this purpose, an independent edition is made "Praises or holy service of the holy presentation of the Most Holy Mother of God and the Virgin Mary", in which it is noted when it is performed: on the seventeenth day of the month of August in the Gethsemane

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45 Ακολουθία ιερά εις τήν Μετάστασιν τής Υπέραγιας Δεσποίνης Ημών Θεοτόκου καὶ Αειπαρθένου Μαρίας. Βενετία, 1836.

46 St. Philaret of Moscow established a local feast of the Resurrection of the Mother of God, which was celebrated on August 17 in the Gethsemane hermitage.

skete and on the fifteenth day of August in the Trinity-Sergius Lavra. The translation was made by Prof. M. Kholmgorov and edited by Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow.[47] In 1950, the articles, together with the other parts of the service, were published independently as "Church Service of Dormition of the Mother of God".[48] It was printed for the first time in the Festive mineon in 1970[49], and then in 1989 in the mineon for the month of August.[50] The liturgical order is present in its same form in the new editions of Mineia in the Church Slavonic language of the Moscow Patriarchate from 1996[51] , 2014.[52] The typewritten translation made by Nikodim, Metropolitan of Sliven is distributed in Bulgaria.[53] The standard by which the Church in Bulgaria is governed is nowadays also under the editorship of Metropolitan Nikodim of Sliven, and there is an instruction for the execution of the funeral procession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is according to the Church Slavonic service and the Greek service in Venice.[54] The Church Slavonic redaction is based on the Palestinian and Greek redactions of the praise text

The first independent edition of this edition in Venice from 1770 was used in the dissertation.

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47 The text is a self-published praise from Служба Успению Пресвятыя Богородицы, М., 1872.

48 Церковная служба на Успение Божией Матери, М., 1950.

49 Праздничная минея. Издание Московской Патриархии. М., 1970.

50 Минея Август, II Издание Московской Патриархии. М. , 1989, с.52–76

51 Минея Август, Издательство Правило вери . М. , 1996.

52 Минея Август, Издательство Правило вери, М. , 2014 (reprinted edition of the mineia from 1893 issued in Kievo - Pechora Lavra).

53 Надгробен плач. Похвални песни за Успение Богородично (превел от църковно славянски език Сливенски митрополит Никодим). б. м. 1970.

54 Типик или църковен устав (съставител Сливенски митрополит Никодим, Георги Попйонков) С. 1980, с. 62 (Последование на Опелото на пресвета Богородица).

3.3.1. In this part of the dissertation, the structure and theological ideas of the Funeral service of Most Holy Virgin are investigated. A comparative analysis of the structure of the service was made according to the known editions in their use in Greek and Church Slavonic. On the basis of the structural and theological-content analysis, the conclusion is forced that the service resembles too much that of the "Christ`s funeral" and pushes the dangerous trend towards the deification of the Most Holy Mother of God and the falling of believers into Mariolatry.

3.4.1. In this part of the dissertation, the history and structure of **the Little Supplicatory Canon to the Holy Mother of God** is studied.

The information that has reached us about the author of the Little Supplicatory Canon is scanty. The thesis of the authorship of St. Theoctorist the Confessor is accepted. He lived in the 9th century and was monk in the brotherhood of the monastery of St. Theodore the Studite.[55] Insufficient biographical data has been preserved for him. It is known that he was born at the beginning of the 8th century in Triglia (now the Turkish settlement of *Tirilye*, *Zeytinbağı*) in Bithynia (Asia Minor). He became monk in his youth and went to the monastery of St. John the Theologian, called Πελεκητη, where he was later elected abbot. During the persecutions by the iconoclasts by order of Emperor Constantine Kopronimus (741–775) he suffered for the faith together with the rest of the brotherhood of the monastery. He died in 807 as a martyr for the faith.

It is unlikely that the author of the small Supplicatory canon was St. Theophanes the Confessor or St. John Damascene.[56]

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55 TM 2, 807.
56 TM 2, 807.

Some researchers assume that Theophanes was the name of the monk Theostrichtus before the monastic tonsure.[57] St. John Damascene was the author of the irmos of the canon, but not of the tropars, which were composed by the monk Theostiricht.[58]

It is entirely possible that St. Theostrichtus composed the small canon on the basis of similar hymnographic texts, adding a gospel reading. St. Theophanes compiled a canon of St. Theotokos, which was read as the first canon of the feasts of the great saints. The canon of St. Theophanes the Confessor, like that of St. Theostrichtus, also borrows its irmos from those of the canon of St. John Damascene for the feast of the raising of Lazarus. This gives reason to think that the author of the Supplicatory canon revised similar hymnographic texts, but not that it is the same text or that the author of the two similar texts is the same.

3.4.2. In the next subsection, the history and structure of the Great Supplicatory Canon to the Holy Mother of God is explored, together with its specific features.

The author of the Great Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos - Theodore Duka Laskaris, composed the canon before becoming emperor of the Nicaean Empire, as evidenced by the term "duke" in front of his name. He is the son of Emperor John the Third Vataci. He received a very good theological and philosophical education, based on his own experience of life in Christ. This is evidenced by his hymnographic texts, among which stand out the great Supplicatory canon to the Blessed Virgin Mary, another canon

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57 TM 2, 807; Авксентий, архим., Еортология, с. 310.
58 TM 2, 807.

of the Blessed Virgin Mary,[59] as well as his systematic theological writings, such as his treatise dedicated to the current controversy with the Roman Catholic teaching on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, against the Latins.[60] At the age of 33, he took over the rule of the Nicaean Empire, but only reigned for four years, after which he became a monk and died shortly after. His death occurred on the days following the Feast of Dormition, probably on August 18, 1258.

Although they are called "Small Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Mother of God" and "Large Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Mother of God", respectively, both hymnographic compositions have the same structure, contain an equal number of tropars - 32 for each of them, or four tropars per ode. But the tropars and irmos of the great canon of the Most Holy Theotokos are a little more spacious, longer. The main reason it was called Great is that it was chanted most solemnly during the preparation for the great feast of Dormition of the Mother of God.[61] When composed it, the pious emperor hardly had in mind that it would be performed primarily during Lent, but gradually the great canon remained only during Lent as a memorial to the life and work of the emperor Theodore Lascaris.

3.4.3. Theological ideas and content of the two Supplicatory canons to the Most Holy Mother of God performed during the Lent of the Mother of God is the title of the subsection examined in this part of the dissertation. A comparative analysis of the texts of the two canons was made.

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59 Two hymnographic texts are known under another canon of the Blessed Virgin by Theodore Laskaris, which were published in the editions of St. Nicodemus and Eustratiiadis. See TM2, p. 307.

60 ibid

61 According to archim. Auxentius it originates due to its solemn performance on "certain days in the first half of the month of August". Auxentius, archim., Eorthology, p. 310.

Prayer canons are above all euchological works. They are a prayerful cry for help to the Mother of God, a prayer of thanksgiving and a prayer of praise. At the heart of the petitions in the canons addressed to the Blessed Virgin is the confession of her Motherhood, virginity and holiness. It is concluded that the two canons express the main ideas of the Feast of Dormition without emphasizing the theme of the death of the Blessed Virgin. Therefore, with the development of the feast, they are incorporated into the preparatory period for it - during the Dormition fast, as a preparation of the faithful for the great feast of the Virgin Mary.

3.5. Feasts related to Dormition

In the fifth subparagraph of the third chapter of the dissertation, the two feasts that have a direct relationship and connection with Dormition of the Virgin Mary are examined: Laying the Garment of the Holy Virgin and Laying the Girdle of the Holy Virgin.

3.5.1 . Placing the garment of the Holy Virgin in Blacherna

In this part of the dissertation, the history of the Feast of the Laying of the garment of the Holy Virgin in Blacherna is explored, emphasizing its connection with Dormition. According to the Synaxare of the Great Church of Constantinople, the garment of the Mother of God was moved to the Byzantine capital during the reign of Emperor Leo I the Thracian (c. 460). It is difficult to determine whether it is the garment that the Mother of God wore before her death, or it means the so-called burial clothes, which remained in the tomb even after its opening, at the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle, and which testify that the body is not there, i.e. that the Virgin

has risen with a body. The early sources for the feast, such as the word of Theodore Sinkel from 617 and Theophylact the Simocata (580-636), became the basis for what was transmitted in Synaxara from the 10th century.

The Second homily of Dormition by St. John Damascene mentions the garment of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a burial garment and connects it with her Dormition and Resurrection. In the XIV century the same idea is presented by the Byzantine chronicler Nicephorus Callistus.

The Slavic hymnographic tradition, represented by the canon of the feast, composed by St. Clement of Ohrid, contains a unique testimony to the connection of the two feasts - Placing the Garment and Girdle of the Most Holy Virgin and Dormition. The Miracle Worker of Ohrid compiles a canon for the Feast of the Placing of the Garment and Girdle of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but makes numerous references to the Feast of Dormition, speaking of the Ascension of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

3.5.2. The Feast of the Placing of the Belt of Honor on the Blessed Virgin Mary (in Chalcopatria) is the other feast of the Virgin Mary associated with Dormition. In ancient times, it was celebrated together with the Laying of the garment of the Mother of God in Blacherna. The specified feast has an indirect connection with the apocryphal text by Pseudo-Joseph of Arimathea (L6). This text points to the thought that the giving of the girdle by the Mother of God to St. Thomas the Apostle is a testimony of her resurrection.

The Mineology of the Emperor Basil II the Red-Beared (959 –1025) confirms the account of the Euthymius story of the acquisition of the robe and girdle for Constantinople through the eunuchs Candidus and Galvius.

The Synaxar of the Great Church of Constantinople from the 10th century contains information that reflects two traditions regarding the transfer of the holy relic. First of all, it talks about the fact that the transfer from Jerusalem to Constantinople took place during the time of Emperor Arcadius, and secondly - that it took place during the time of Emperor Leo I the Thracian. The synaxar actually reflects two different traditions regarding the placement of the girdle of the Mother of God in the temple at Chalcopatria.

The hymnography of the feast, according to the Byzantine tradition, reflects the veneration of the holy girdle as a symbol not of the resurrection of the Mother of God, but of her holiness, mercy, incorruptibility and miraculous help.

The troparion of the Feast of the Laying on of the Girdle of the Most Holy Theotokos is the same as that of the Laying on of the Shroud of the Most Holy Theotokos. The liturgical tradition reflects the Church's belief that the two shrines are jointly preserved and venerated. The Feast of the Placing of the Girdle on the Mother of God was officially fixed in the church calendar on August 31 under the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus (1143–1180), together with the Feast of the Placing of the Shroud on the Mother of God in Blacherna on the 2nd of July, which is further evidence that in the twelfth century the Church preserved both shrines and that the believing people venerated them as relics belonging to the Most Holy Mother of God before her glorious Dormition.

3.6. The Theotokos fast is an important part of the preparation for the feast of Dormition. The testimonies regarding its appearance and establishment in the Church as one of the four fasts have been traced.

The connection between the Fast of the Virgin and the feast of Dormition with the Fast of the Transfiguration and the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord has been studied. A hypothesis has been proposed for the dominance of the Virgin's fast over the Transfiguration, and in this sense the feast of the Virgin over the Lord's, which is unusual for the Orthodox church tradition.

The conclusion summarizes the results achieved and the conclusions drawn. The two handwritten hymnographic traditions for the feast have an importance for solving the tasks set regarding the thesis of the composition: the Byzantine and the Old Bulgarian.

Manuscripts examined: Byzantine Sin. Gr. 631 and Slavic Ta. They show a different, compared to their modern use, arrangement of hymnographic texts and speak of the completion of the main hymnographic corpus for the feast in the 12th-13th centuries. Based on the research done on the structure, liturgical statutes (types), hymnographic and homiletic texts of the feast, it can be concluded that its initial form and structure was in view of the message of the death of the Virgin, but with the development of the feast, its hymnographic and homiletic texts began to offer the idea of   the resurrection of the Mother of God to the minds of the believing people. The iconography of the feast bears witness, in its characteristic way, to what was said by the hymnographers and church preachers of the faith. Although parallels have been drawn   with apocryphal texts and with the words of ecclesiastical authors who were not holy fathers of the Church, the emphasis is placed above all on the hymnographic and patristic texts for the feast. The study of the mentioned manuscripts, in addition to pointing out the different readings, proves the thesis of the dissertation that in the hymnography of the feast, the resurrection of the Mother of God is sung, although

very rarely. The Feast of Dormition is a commemoration of a sacred event that, although it happened in the past, is part of the history of God's people. Although it actually took place in the past, it becomes for us the present through the liturgical texts and actions that express the essence of the celebration. The sacred authors are not just writers and preachers, but participants in the event that we all witness.[62] The whole fullness of the Church participated in the Dormition of the Mother of God. This festive element is emphasized in hymnography and sermons, but most of all in the iconography of the feast.

The holy authors of the hymnographic and homiletic texts, as well as the icon painters, convey to the faithful the secret of Dormition of the Mother of God.

In the early festive hymnographic and homiletic texts, supported by the ancient icons of Dormition, the emphasis is not on the resurrection, but on Dormition of the Virgin; however, with the development of the feast, hymnographers, preachers and icon painters seem to want to express the opinion of God's people that the secret of the resurrection of the Mother of God is kept in the bowels of the Church. The hymnographic and patristic texts that speak of her help us to understand this sacred moment related to the person of the Virgin - it is a mystery that we cannot fully penetrate through the path of reason and research alone. The hymnography, the words of the fathers and the iconographic scenes of the Feast of Dormition offer us participation in the mystery of the death and resurrection of the Mother of God through the path of faith, expressed through the liturgical service of the celebrated event.

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62 Ἰωαννίδη, Ν.Ἡ Ἑορτή τῶν Χριστουγεννων – Θεοφανείων. – In: Το Χριστιανικόν Εορτολόγιον. Αθήνα, 2007, σ. 169.

The services of the chanting of the Most Holy Mother of God, the supplicatory canons, the elevation of the Panagia, illustrate the development of the feast. Each of the researched successions, as well as the feasts of Laying the Shroud of the Mother of God in Blacherna and Laying the Girdle of the Mother of God in Chalcopatria, have their specific features, but are united by their connection with the feast of Dormition. They are extremely important for the development of the feast and for the state of the modern liturgical rite of Dormition.

Any comparison of the resurrection of the Mother of God with that of the Lord Jesus Christ is deeply wrong. The death of the Mother of God and her resurrection are a path to eternity, a foretaste of the Kingdom, coming to life before us on the example of the first creature deified in Christ. This is the meaning and message of the Feast of Dormition.

The ancient structure of the feast reflects this message of joy, merriment and celebration of the death of the Virgin. The development of the feast and its related services and feasts, especially according to the Slavic tradition, expand the message of Dormition of the Mother of God with her resurrection. It remains a mystery "into which it is difficult to penetrate even with angelic eyes".[63]

St. Philoteus Kokinos in the 14th century says that the god-bearing fathers penetrated this mystery of the resurrection of the

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63 Akathist of the Most Holy Theotokos, Ikos 1. In the Akathist of the Most Holy Theotokos, the greatness of the Mother of God is emphasized, as its apogee is the resurrection of the Virgin. "Rejoice, you who brightly depict the resurrection". Trypanis, A. Fourteen Early Byzantine Canticas. The Akathistos Hymn. Vienna, 1968, p. 36.

Mother of God. "They saw it," he says, "and lived," announcing it to the whole creation, to the whole world.[64]

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64 Φιλοθέου Αγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Ηγουμένου της Μέγιστης Λαύρας. Η Θεοτόκος Ομιλία εις τήν Κοίμησιν της Υπεραγίας Δεσποίνης Ημῶν Θεοτόκου, Αθήναι, 2007, σ. 76.

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7. Наративи за празника „Успение Богородично".// В: Мисъл, слово, текст. Изд. ИМН, Пловдив, 2016, с. 119 – 137. ISBN: 978 – 945317 – 185 – 9.

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SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is the first large-scale scientific study on Dormition of the Mother of God according to the Orthodox liturgical tradition (based on the hymnography and the words of the fathers).

It outlines a new research field that has so far been beyond the scope of the interest of Bulgarian and foreign scientific research on the topic. For the first time, the hymnography of the feast was examined, which proves the thesis of the composition about Dormition and the taking of the Mother of God into heaven.

The theological content of the feast has been studied by analyzing the two oldest manuscripts according to the Byzantine and Slavic traditions: 631 and ta. Other Greek and old Bulgarian manuscripts and the contemporary liturgical text used for the purpose of comparative analysis and insight into the essence of the content of the Feast are indicated.

An analysis of the main hymnographic, homyletic and apocryphal texts has been made, which together with the icons of the feast prove that while in its original form it contains the idea only of the Dormition of the Theotokos, in its development there is a message about taking her bodily to heaven and her resurrection before the general resurrection from the dead. The development of the iconographic plot for the feast is proven on the basis of the hymnographic and homiletic texts dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, and not on the basis of the apocryphal texts, which undoubtedly also have an influence on the iconographic plot. The common moments between the hymnographic and homiletic texts with the narratives of the feast are shown.

In connection with the topic under consideration are studied services and feasts, which contain theological arguments to justify the thesis of the work. These are the following: Elevation of Panagia, funeral service of the Most Holy Mother of God, Supplicatory canon to the Most Holy Mother of God, as well as the feasts Laying the belt of the Most Holy Mother of God and Laying the garment of the Most Holy Mother of God. They also open up new research fields.

A meaningful analysis of the Funeral service of the Most Holy Mother of God has been made, which shows that over time and with the development of the feast the idea of taking with a body to heaven and resurrection of God's Mother has been established. The danger of falling into Mariolatry is indicated by analyzing the identical places of the service of the Funeral of Theotokos and Christ`s Funeral, on the model and imitation of which the studied follow-up is composed. The creation of a new version of the funeral service of the Most Holy Mother of God with the purpose of its further liturgical use by the Church.

The argument of the thesis of the work is related to analysis and research of the hymnographic texts for the feast. This necessitates the use of a new methodological model based on hermeneutics of hymnographic texts.

Part one of Chapter One contains contributing moments from the field of "enrichment of existing knowledge" rather than "novelty of science". More specifically, these are: research on the history of the feast, the reasons for its establishment, the classification of apocrypha and homyletic texts.

Content of the thesis statement

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