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Socrates in Late Antique Art and Philosophy: the Mosaic of Apamea

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I. Introduction

Apamea, today an archaeological locality in north-west Syria, was in Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods one of the most important cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.¹ The city is especially famous for its mosaics, dating to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.² The so-called *grande mosaïque de chasse*, today in Brussels (*Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*) is well known.³ Belgian archaeologists (especially F. Mayence, J. and J.-Ch. Balty) have been working at Apamea since the 1930s.

In 1937 and 1938 F. Mayence found a vast Roman villa at Apamea under the sixth century cathedral.⁴ In this villa, called *au triclinos*,⁵ a mosaic was found depicting Socrates with six other figures (Fig. 1).⁶ The mosaic inspired G. Hanfmann to write his important study *Soc-*

¹ J.-Chr. Balty, 'Apamea in Syria in the Second and Third Centuries A.D.', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 78 (1988), pp. 91–104. J.-Ch. Balty, 'Apamée et la Syrie du Nord aux époques hellénistique et romaine', in: *Alep et la Syrie du Nord*, Aix-en-Provence 1992, p. 15–26. A. R. Zakzouk, 'Apamée', in: *Syrie. Mémoire et Civilisation*, Paris 1993, p. 281–283. J.-Ch. Balty, 'Apamée: Mutations et permanences de l'espace urbain, de la fondation hellénistique à la ville romano-byzantine', *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 52 (2000), pp. 167–185.

² J. Balty, *Mosaïques d'Apamée. Guide du visiteur*, Bruxelles 1986.

³ J. Balty, 'La grande mosaïque de chasse des Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire e sa datation' in: *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1965-1968*, Bruxelles 1969, p. 131–135. J. Balty, *La grande mosaïque de chasse au triclinos* [=Fouilles d'Apamée de Syrie: Miscellanea 2], Bruxelles 1969.

⁴ F. Mayence, 'La VI^e campagne de fouilles à Apamée (rapport provisoire)', *Antiquité classique*, 8 (1939), pp. 201–203

⁵ J. Balty, J.-Ch. Balty, 'L'édifice dit au «triclinos»', in: *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1965-1968*, Bruxelles 1969, pp. 105–115.

⁶ H. Lacoste, 'La VII^e campagne de fouilles à Apamée', *Antiquité classique*, 10 (1941), pp. 115–121, here p. 121.

rates and Christ in 1951.⁷ The American historian of art of Russian origin⁸ separated his article into two parts: in the theological-philosophical part – with the reference to Harnack's *Socrates und die alte Kirche* (1900) and Geffcken's *Socrates und das alte Christentum* (1908) – he pointed out the parallel between Socrates and Christ, a parallel attested by some Early



Fig. 1. Apamea – mosaic of Socrates

Christian authors. Hanfmann also wanted to this parallel document in his art-historical part, where he showed that in Late Antiquity similar iconographic models were created, both pagan (Socrates with his disciples the Seven Sages) and Christian (Christ with disciples). According to Hanfmann, the mosaic of Apamea is therefore “an eloquent expression of late paganism and an artistic parallel to some of the most important compositions of Early Christian art”.⁹

The second wave of interest in the mosaic of Apamea began when at the beginning of the 70's the Belgian archaeologists (directed by J.-Ch. Balty) continued the excavation of the above-mentioned villa and found further mosaics there: Therapenides, the mosaic with Nereids and the mosaic with a crown (Fig. 2). At that moment, it became clear that it was necessary to interpret the mosaics not apart, but as an unit.

In the following years J.-Ch. Balty and J. Balty published several studies in which they emphasised the philosophical, especially neo-Platonic, character of the mosaics.¹⁰ They even

⁷ G. M. A. Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 60 (1951), pp. 205–233.

⁸ Necrologue: D. G. Mitten, 'George Maxim Anossov Hanfmann, 1911–1986', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 91 (1987), pp. 259–266.

⁹ G. M. A. Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ'..., p. 205.

¹⁰ J. Balty, 'Une nouvelle mosaïque du IV^e siècle dans l'édifice dit „au triclinos“ à Apamée', *Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes*, 20 (1970), pp. 81–92 (reprinted in: Idem, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient*, Paris 1995, pp. 183–184). J.-Ch. Balty, 'Nouvelles mosaïques païennes et groupe épiscopal dit „cathédrale de l'est“ à Apamée de Syrie', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1972, pp. 103–127. J. Balty – J.-Ch. Balty, 'Julien et Apamée. Aspects de la restauration de l'hellénisme et de la politique antichrétienne de l'empereur', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 1 (1974), pp. 267–304. J. Balty, 'Un programme philosophique sous la cathédrale d'Apamée: L'ensemble néo-platonicien de l'empereur Julien'. in: *Texte et l'image. Actes du Colloque international de Chantilly (13 au 15 octobre 1982)*, Paris 1984, pp. 167–176 (reprinted in: Idem, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche Orient*, Paris

hought about the possibility that the villa could be – with regard to its vast dimensions and due to the character of the mosaics – the seat of the famous neo-Platonic school at Apamea.¹¹ Belgian archaeologists even think about the possibility of a connection between this mosaic and the anti-Christian policy of the emperor Julian the Apostate (361–363).¹² The mosaics would then represent the reaction of the members of the cultivated pagan society in the third quarter of the fourth century against the growing Christianity.

This contribution is designed to revalue some older opinions and to show in detail the role of Socrates in the works of the Neo-Platonic and Early Christian authors.

II. Description of the mosaic

The mosaic is today placed in the Apamean museum in a caravanserai from the 16th Century. It is unfortunately not preserved without damage: especially the lower part is lost.

In the mosaic seven bearded men are represented, seated in a semicircular exedra. In the middle of the group there is Socrates, a little bit higher than the others. Around his head is inscribed ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. His head is turned a little to the right and downwards, his right hand is raised (this is interpreted as the gesture of teaching). He is dressed in a Greek cloak (*chlamys*). The other figures are without description.

The crucial question is who is depicted with Socrates in the mosaic: the Wise Men (and thus: is it a representation of the Seven Sages) or the disciples of Socrates? Against the first possibility, maintained by Ch. Picard¹³ and J.- Ch. Balty¹⁴, is the fact that in the Latin and

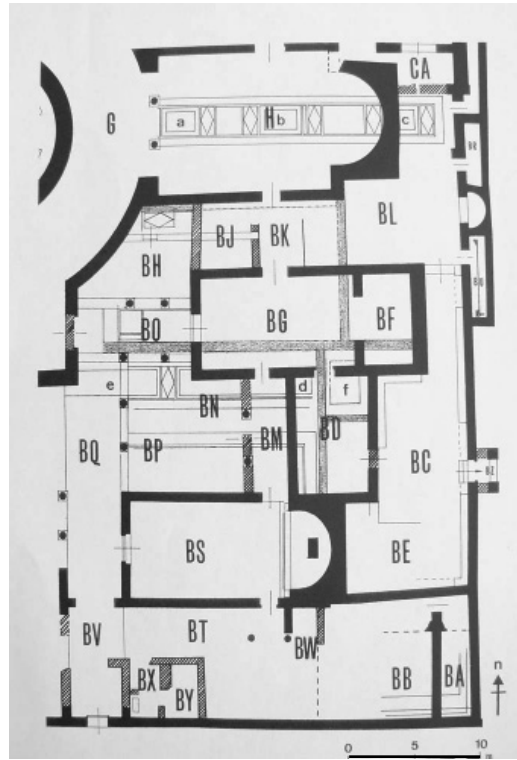


Fig. 2. The great villa under the so-called „cathédrale de l'est“

1995, pp. 265–273). J. Balty, 'Iconographie et réaction païenne', in: *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque*, vol. 1, Besançon-Paris 1988, pp. 17–32 (reprinted in: Idem, *Mosaïques antiques du Proche Orient*, Paris 1995, pp. 275–289).

¹¹ Balty, 'Nouvelles mosaïques païennes' ..., p. 123.

¹² Balty – Balty, 'Julien et Apamée' ..., pp. 267–304.

¹³ Ch. Picard, 'Autour du banquet des Sept Sages', *Revue archéologique*, 28 (1947), pp. 74–75.

¹⁴ Balty, *Nouvelles mosaïques païennes* ..., p. 108.



Fig. 3. Rome – Mausoleum of Galla Placidia: Christ with six apostles

Greek literary traditions Socrates was allegedly never mentioned as one of the Seven Sages. Against the second interpretation, that the disciples of Socrates would be depicted here, – Hanfmann favoured this interpretation¹⁵ – can be said that it is not young, but older and dignified men that are depicted in the mosaic (Fig. 3).

III. Socrates in the works of Early Christian authors

The similarity between this pagan iconographic model with Socrates and the Christian model showing Christ with his disciples led G. Hanfmann (and later J.- Ch. and J. Balty) to look at some Early Christian Greek and Latin authors who compared Socrates and Christ. The aim was to show that the early Christian authors created a parallel between Socrates and Christ, based on the moral doctrines both of Socrates, and of Christ.¹⁶ This suggestion,

¹⁵ Hanfmann, 'Socrates and Christ'..., p. 213.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 215: „I propose to show that Socrates and his disciples have a better claim to have served for Early Christian artists as a model of the group of Christ with six apostles than the Seven Sages, not only because of the greater resemblance displayed by the mosaic of Apamea and the Early Christian representations, but also because Socrates was an important figure in the discussions of philosophy and Christianity which preceded the triumph of Christianity under Constantine.“

as it will be proven, can be seen in general works about Late Antique and Early Christian art. This comparison needs re-examination.

In his article, Hanfmann mentions¹⁷ the Early Christian authors – apologetics of the second and third centuries – of the time when Christianity was still in opposition to the Roman Empire: first of all Justin, Mara bar Sarapion and Clement of Alexandria. The first mention can be found in Justin’s Apologies.¹⁸ It seems to me that Justin was the author of this parallel and other authors only varied it. In his first Apology Justins says:

”When Socrates endeavoured, by true reason and examination to bring these things to light and deliver men from the demons, (...) then the demons themselves, by means of men who rejoiced in iniquity, (...) compassed his death, as an atheist and a profane person, on the charge that he was introducing new divinities. And in our case they display a similar activity. For not only among the Greeks did Logos prevail to condemn these things through Socrates, but also among the barbarians were they condemned by Logos himself who took shape, and became man, and was called Jesus Christ.”¹⁹

In the second Apology Justin continues:

”Our doctrine then, appears to be greater than all human teaching. Those who by human birth were more ancient than Christ, when they attempted to consider and prove things by Logos were brought before the tribunal. (...) And Socrates, who was more zealous in this direction than all of them, was accused of the very same crimes as ourselves. But he cast out from the state both Homer and the rest of the poets and taught men to reject the wicked demons and exhorted them to become acquainted with the God who was unknown to them (...). But these things our Christ did through his own power. For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for his doctrine, but in Christ, who was partially known even by Socrates (...) not only philosophers and scholars believed, but also artisans and people entirely uneducated.”²⁰

In these quotations we have most of the information we meet in the work of later Early Christian authors. The similarity between Socrates and Christ lies in the facts that both rejected pagan gods (for Socrates, demons), and that they were condemned to death for that. The aim of Justin is clear: he wants to reject pagan attacks against the Christians showing that it was not them who were godless, but that the pagans were (*asébeis*). Socrates is than following Justin among pagan philosophers and Jewish persons who

¹⁷ Hanfmann, ‘Socrates and Christ’ .., pp. 215–217.

¹⁸ It is generally spoken about two Apologies of Justin. This is however – following L. Canfora – a mistake created in the literary tradition. Eusebius mentions Two Apologies of Justin in his *Church History* (IV, 18), the second Apology addressed to Marcus Aurelius is however not preserved. The Apology which we call as the second is probably Justins answer to Frontons anti-Christian invective (Cf. L. Canfora, *Storia della letteratura greca*, pp. 629–631).

¹⁹ Justin, *Apology* I, 5, 2–4.

²⁰ Justin, *Apology* II, 10, 4–5.

were also declared for godless (Heraclius, Abraham) he considers as the precursors for the Christian faith.²¹

G. Hanfmann also mentions the comparison of Socrates and Christ in works of the Stoic philosopher Mara bar Sarapion from Samosata,²² Origen,²³ and Clement of Alexandria²⁴. In Hanfmann's work Tertullian, with important observations in his works *Ad nationes*,²⁵ *Apologeticum*²⁶ and *De anima*,²⁷ is mentioned only in a very short reference. G. Hanfmann puts aside the relevant witnesses of Minucius Felix,²⁸ Cyprian,²⁹ Arnobius³⁰ and Lactantius³¹. More important is the fact that he does not mention Christian authors of the fourth century who lived at the time when the Apamean Mosaic was executed – and their opinion on the parallel between Socrates and Christ.

Latin authors

First, it should be emphasized that after Lactantius' work *Divinae institutiones* there is a relatively long lacuna of about 50 years following the Edict of Milan in 313, for which we do not have any literary document mentioning Socrates. The mention of Saint Ambrose in *De Noe et arca* is in a context that is not relevant here.³²

Ambrosius' contemporary Calcidius,³³ translator of the first part of Plato's *Timaeus*, in the chapter of his commentary that he treats as a proof of the Christian faith, deals with the question of the violation of the natural law. Part of these violations were also injustices committed because of hostility or malice. As one example Calcidius mentions Socrates' death. Calcidius also appreciates Socrates' *daimonion* and his dreams but he doesn't compare Socrates and Christ explicitly.³⁴

²¹ Justin, *Apology* I, 46, 2–4. Cf. E. Dassmann, 'Christus und Sokrates', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 36 (1993), p. 36. E. Benz, 'Christus und Sokrates in der alten Kirche', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 43 (1950/51), p. 202.

²² The letter was written in Syriac. Cf. K. Mc Vey, 'A Fresh Look at the Letter of Mara Bar Serapion to his Son', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 238 (1990), pp. 257–272. Cf. I. Ramelli, 'La lettera di Mara bar Serapion', *Stylos*, 13 (2004), pp. 77–104.

²³ Origen, *Against Celsus* VII,108.

²⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* VI,6.

²⁵ Tertullian, *Ad nationes* I, 4,7.

²⁶ Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 11,15.

²⁷ Tertullian, *De anima* 2,1.

²⁸ Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 5,12; 13,1; 38,5.

²⁹ Cyprian, *Quod idola dii non sint* 6.

³⁰ Arnobius, *Against the pagans* 1,40.

³¹ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 15,14,13. Lactantius, *De ira dei* I,6.

³² Ambrosius, *De Noe et Arca* 8,24.

³³ Waszink, Calcidius, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 15 (1972), pp. 236–244.

³⁴ Dassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 41; I. Opelt, 'Das Bild des Sokrates in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 10 (1983), pp. 199–200.

A similar indirect relationship between Socrates and Christ can be attested in the work of Saint Jerome, who, in his sixtieth letter, designates Socrates as an supporter of the immortality of the soul in the pre-Christian era – and with regard to the fact that it is the presumption for the Christian faith also for this:

”The immortality of the soul and its continuance after the dissolution of the body – truths of which Pythagoras dreamed, which Democritus refused to believe, and which Socrates discussed in prison to console himself for the sentence passed upon him – are now the familiar themes of Indian and of Persian, of Goth and of Egyptian.“³⁵ Otherwise Saint Jerome mentions Socrates eleven times in anecdotic pronouncements from the Socratic traditions.

Only in his later work *The City of God (De civitate Dei)* Saint Augustine deals with Socrates in the context which interests us here. He stresses the fact that Socrates left natural philosophy because of the ethical problems. He stresses that it was because of Socrates’ morality that „arose hostility against him, which ended in his calumniously impeachment, and condemnation to death“³⁶. It should be emphasised again that Augustine doesn’t create a parallel between Socrates and Christ. In contrast with Calcidius, Augustine deprecates Socrates’ *daimonion*.³⁷

Paulus Orosius mentions in *Historiae adversus paganos* Socrates’ unjust death. And again, he does not create a parallel to Christ.³⁸

Eastern Church Fathers

Eusebius of Caesarea, based on Plato’s *Crito*, accentuates Socrates’ wisdom in *Preparation for the Gospel* (15,61,12), and the fact that he refused to respond to injustice with injustice, that he didn’t aspire to human praise and that he complied game to death. Because of this behaviour Eusebius places him alongside other biblical figures – but not with Christ. With regard to the fact that Eusebius was convinced that Greek philosophers had the Old Testament for a model, he didn’t have any problem in attributing to Socrates the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the Last Judgment and the true nature of God. Eusebius referred to the identical points between the doctrine of Socrates and the Christian doctrine – thanks to the authority of Socrates among pagans he wanted to attach new adherents to the Christian faith.

For Basil the Great, Socrates was – as his letter addressed to young people³⁹ (*Address to Young Men on the Value of Greek Literature*) attests – an example of non-violent be-

³⁵ Saint Jerome, *Letters* 60,4.

³⁶ Augustin, *The City of God* VIII,3.

³⁷ I. Opelt, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

³⁸ Paulus Orosius 2,17.

³⁹ *Address to Young Men on the Value of Greek Literature* 7,6–8. Cf. Dassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

haviour. Socrates' behaviour, when he allowed a man to slap him until his face swelled up, gives Basil a direct parallel to the Christian doctrine, according to which if someone slaps us in the face, we should present him the other cheek.

Gregory of Nazianzus admired Socrates' approach to death, when he refused to flee and discussed with his disciples until his end.⁴⁰

John Chrysostom does not compare Socrates with Christ but with Paul the Apostle: while Paul was manacled because of his preaching of the Gospel, Socrates had to suffer in prison. The big difference is, however, that Socrates' disciples escaped to Megara but Paul's disciples had the courage to spread the Gospel. I tend to support the opinion of E. Dassmann⁴¹ that John the Chrysostom recognised Socrates as a personality but that he is not very important to him. The opinion of A. de Mendieta⁴² that the one of the last works of John Chrysostom, *Quod nemo laeditur nisi a se ipso* was strongly influenced by the Socratic comprehension of injustice although Socrates is not mentioned here, seems to me too hypothetical.

We can summarize that neither in works of the Latin nor of the Eastern Church Fathers of the fourth century is attested a *direct* parallel between Socrates and Christ, as was the case by the Christian apologists in the second and third centuries. Only an *indirect* example of Socrates with his martyr's death or his non-violent behaviour can be attested.

IV. The mosaic of Apamea and its pagan and Christian parallels

Hanfmann held the opinion that during the third century an unknown Christian artist held the view about the analogy between Socrates and Christ as the Christian apologists (Justin and others) did and adapted the composition depicting Socrates with his disciples.⁴³ He works, therefore, with this hypothesis as will be proven. This artist – says Hanfmann – created the Christian type depicting Christ with six apostles (Fig. 4) - a number that contradicts all canonical tradition. However, similar iconographic antique figurations to which Hanfmann refers – men sitting in a semicircle – don't depict Socrates with his disciples – they show him with the Seven Sages. Hanfmann tries to settle this inconsonance in the way (which seems to me quite problematic) that Christian artists could better claim Socrates and his disciples to be the model for the depiction of Christ with the six apostles rather than the Seven Sages.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Letters* 32,11.

⁴¹ Dassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 42–43.

⁴² A. de Mendieta, 'L'amplification d'un thème socratique et stoïcien', *Byzantion*, 36 (1966), pp. 353–381.

⁴³ Hanfmann, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 215.



Fig. 4. Rome – apse mosaic in Santa Pudenziana

Ch. Picard and J.- Ch. Balty hold a different opinion to Hanfmann: they think that Sages are depicted in the mosaic of Apamea.⁴⁵ The thesis that the mosaic of Apamea depicts Socrates with six Sages motivates Balty (in that tome) with the discoveries of two new mosaics that connect Socrates with the Seven Sages. The first was found in a vast villa in Baalbek-Suweidiye. The second was also discovered at Apamea, in the building called "au triclinos", but it is very fragmentary. The reason why in the mosaic of Apamea there are only six Sages with Socrates, according to J.- Ch. Balty, comes only from its symmetrical composition. If Socrates had been depicted with seven Sages the composition would be asymmetrical. Then J.- Ch. Balty tries – with the help of the mosaic from Baalbek-Suweidiye where the Sages are designated by name and pronouncement – to identify every person depicted in the mosaic of Apamea.⁴⁶

A Neo-Platonic interpretation of the mosaic with Socrates became clearer after the beginning of the new Belgian excavations from the late 1960s. At the conference in Chantilly in 1982 J. Balty proposed that we encounter a double process in the depiction: first the Christianisation of a pagan motif and second the re-paganisation of the Christian motif.⁴⁷ That the mosaic had a Christian example is shown by the fact that Socrates is depicted as a pagan equivalent of Christ, which is proven by the characteristic gesture of his right hand.

⁴⁵ Ch. Picard, 'Autour du banquet des Sept Sages', *Revue archéologique*, 28 (1947), p. 74–75. Balty, *Nouvelles mosaïques païennes ...*, p. 103–127, here p. 108.

⁴⁶ Balty, 'Nouvelles mosaïques païennes ...', p. 108.

⁴⁷ Balty, 'Un programme philosophique sous la cathédrale d'Apamée ...', pp. 265–273, here p. 266.

According to the Belgian scholar the indication of Socrates by name was not intended to identify him but rather to draw attention to the fact that it was just him, not Christ, whose image was already very frequent in the similar iconographic scheme at that time.

J. Balty refers to Porphyrius' testimony in his *De abstinentia* (I, 15), where Socrates is considered to be one of the cleverest not only among men but among all sage persons. She mentions also Julian the Apostate, who writes in his letter to Themistius (264 d) that "all who today try to save the philosophy are bound to Socrates".⁴⁸ However neither Porphyry's nor Julian's evidence can be interpreted in the sense that Socrates was considered to be one of the Seven Sages but only in that way that the Neo-Platonist counted him among sage persons.

We can however refer to another Porphyry mention in his *History of the philosophers* where Socrates is really considered to be among "the Seven Sages who are in reality nine".⁴⁹ Similarly Libanius, in his work *De Socratis silentio*, adds Socrates as an eighth Sage to the Seven Sages; as Sages he counts also Heraclitus and Pythagoras of Samos.⁵⁰

The mosaic of Socrates with Seven Sages from the villa in Baalbek-Suwediye (Fig. 5), dated in the second half of the fourth century and so contemporary with the mosaic of Apamea⁵¹ can be seen in relationship to the literary evidence of Libanius and the second testimony



Fig. 5. Baalbek-Suwediye: Mosaic of eight Sages

of Porphyry. In the mosaic the Seven Sages and Socrates are depicted in circular medallions around a central picture of the goddess Calliope. All sages – as mentioned above – are designated with name and their pronouncement.

If Porphyry's and Libanius' witness can be put together with the interpretation of the mosaic from Baalbek-Suwediye, it is my opinion that we can only speculate in the

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 267.

⁴⁹ Porphyry, *Opuscula*, ed. Nauck, no. 4.

⁵⁰ Libanius, *De Socratis silentio* 9. The witnesses of Porphyry and Libanius were mentioned already by G. Hanfmann who however deduced no conclusion from them.

⁵¹ Cf. M. H. Chéhab, *Mosaïques du Liban*, Paris 1957–1959.

case of the mosaic of Apamea. I personally oppose the view that there is a close connection between these two mosaics. While the mosaic from Baalbek-Suwediye shows clearly the Sages – in the way they were seen by the Neo-Platonist – in the case of the mosaic of Apamea it is still not clear if they or the Greek philosophers are depicted. The recent opinion of N. Charalabopoulos is interesting, that "Socrates could be seen both presiding over a gathering of the Seven Sages as the wisest of all and teaching his students his own doctrine on the salvation of men's souls", thus explaining why the figures around Socrates have any description.⁵² The sources I mentioned at the beginning of my paper indicate that the parallel between Socrates and Christ cannot be attested in works of Christian writers of the fourth century when the mosaic of Apamea was executed. It is therefore necessary to look at older examples. We can accept Hanfman's hypothesis that the originally pagan motif of Seven Sages was the example of the Christian depiction of Christ with apostles in the third century (when the Christian apologists constructed the parallel between Socrates and Christ), but the relationship between these two facts is very hypothetical. If we do have records that Socrates was one of the Seven Sages, these are from the time of Porphyry and Libanius, one and two centuries later. We must also draw attention to the fact that G. Hanfmann interpreted the figures around Socrates as his disciples, not as the Seven Sages – so he contradicts himself.

I support the opinion of J. Balty that the Socrates mosaic of Apamea is a reaction to the representation of Christ with the disciples (the major argument for which is the gesture of Socrates' right hand). This opinion is also held in the testimony of Celsus, who – in his critique of the Christian claim on the only truth – shows that the Christian ethics are not new but that they already existed in Antique philosophy.

There is also a possible relationship between the mosaic of Apamea and the mosaic from the apse of the church S. Pudenziana (Fig. 4) in Rome (about A.D. 400, reconstructed in the thirteenth Century) with Christ at the throne and apostles around him – a suggestion made by T. Mathews.⁵³ Mathews speculates that the mosaic of Apamea could be an exemplar for the mosaic of S. Pudenziana. If we accept this suggestion (and also the above mentioned suggestion of J. Balty of the re-paganisation) it would be a complicated process of "re-christianisation" of the model of Apamea, which was already "re-paganised".

We cannot determine this exactly at the moment. It is clear that in the fourth century there was a reciprocal influence between Christian and pagan art – but we still cannot understand and interpret some pictures. We can hope that the excavations in Syria and other places in the Mediterranean will offer us further comparative material on this subject. Also necessary is a detailed study of neo-Platonic sources which could better clarify the philosophical background of the time when this mosaic was executed.

⁵² N. Charalabopoulos, 'Two images of Socrates in the art of the Greek east', in: *Socrates, from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. M. Trapp, London 2007, pp. 105–126, here p. 107.

⁵³ T. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*, Princeton 1993, pp. 109–111