The Importance of Honoring the Saint Apostles by Emperor Constantine and his Mother, Helen

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All the members of the Church were „built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20), being in communion with Christ, „himself being the corner stone” and through Him, with all saints. Due to the constant communion of the gift and faith since the Saints Apostles and until the end of the centuries, the Church permanently affirms its apostolic succession (lat. successio =following, continuation). On the one side, the members of the sacramental hierarchy are the descendands of the Saints Apostles and the priesthood’s gift receivers, constantly sent from generation to generation, and on the other side, the other believers, receive the gift in the Sacraments done by God’s priests.

Among the christians who were blessed with the savior gift, through faith and good facts, the Saint Emperors Constantin and Helen expressed their devotion towards God’s Saints Apostles by offering to the Church the most beautiful example to honor the ones who brought the Gospel, with the price of their lives, „until the edges of the world”(Act. 1:8). All their activity in service of the Church was a continuation of the Apostles’ recognized and reborned workpiece, as God’s senders.

Especially the Saint Emperors Constantin and Helen honored the Saints Apostles through the finding and affirmation of the the saint facts,
the places where they preached, the endured tortures and their end as martyrs. As a conclusion of all these ways of gloryr, there is the building of churches to honour the Apostles and the most enlightening was the Church Saint Apostles from Constantinople.

**The presence of the Saint Apostles in the life of Saints Constantin and Helen**

The Saint Emperors Constantin and Elena worked on the Church’s field, in the same direction that the Saints Apostles did, but in another historical period. As the authors of the Holy Scripture, living in different periods wrote without contradictions between them the books inspired by the Holy Spirit, in the same way the Saints Constantin and Helen continued after three centuries the workpiece of God’s Saint Apostles, in fully concordance and harmony with these.

The Saint Apostles’ communion is showed in the New Testament. While the heretics were looking to subminiate their authority and misunderstandings between the brothers, the apostles replied with firm gentleness, with the affirmation of all apostles’ authority based not only on the gift of apostleship received from Christ but on the maintenance of the interapostleship communion too. This defence of the apostolic authority was, since then, the defence of the truth of the right faith.

The Saint Apostle Peter names the nation’s apostle „our beloved brother Paul”, who wrote epistles „after his given wiseness”, through which he learnt the Christians to forgive and have endless patience (II Pt. 3:15). The Saint Apostle Paul names three from the oldest apostles as „pillars of the Church”: „and knowing the gift that was given to me, Iacob and Chefa and John, the ones thought to be pillars, they gave to me and to Barnaba the right to unite with them, so we preach to the nations, and they to the cut ones” (Ga. 2:9). This event happens at the Apostolic
Council in Ierusalim (49), when the Apostles decide, under the insufflations of the Spirit, what provisions of the Law must be respected by the Christians come from the non Hebrews (Act. 15:13-21).

The numerous collections brought by the Saint Paul from his missionary journeys, the concern for the saints from Ierusalim where there were some hidden disciples (from the Seventy) and apostles, the prayers of the persecuted ones for the members of the Church and the ones who were free for the incarcerated ones prove this honesty which the apostles gave, constantly, one to another. When the Saint Apostle Paul was ending his third missionary journey, he enjoyed the hospitality, honor and care of Saint James the Less also called „the Just” and of Saint Philip’s also, one of the Seven Deacons, in whose house he hosted (Act. 21:18). Saint James, during his catholic epistles, alludes several times the salvation through faith, without the Law’s facts, (Cf. Rm. 3:28; 4:1), especially in the fragment from 2:14-26 which explains it, without harming the authority and honesty of the immortal Apostle.

When some of the apostles had already died, and these were James the Great, James the Less and Saint Stephen, one of the seven deacons, Saint Paul asked the Christians of the same nation as him, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to remember them as „leaders” and follow their faith: „Remember your leaders, who spoke God’s message to you; reflect on the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith”(Heb. 13:7)¹.

The same spirit of honorying the Saint Apostles was inside the Saints Constantin and Helen too. They remembered God’s apostles and

¹ The martyrs „though for a season they may have experienced painful trials, have borne their afflictions lightly, being supported by the belief of greater rewards in store for them; and their character has acquired a brighter luster in proportion to the severity of their past sufferings”. EUSEBIUS PAMPILHIUS, Life of Constantine, II,26,1 in coll. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 21971, p. 507.
follow their faith, teach the others the same pure faith, by building
churches, helping at the spreading of the Christianity and offering to the
world the possibility to enjoy the Apostle’s Gospel and their mediation
towards God. That is why the Saints Constantin and Helen received an
entire set of visions and revelations, being in a tight communion with
God’s Apostles.

According some testimonies, the Saint Constantin had received in
his dream the visit of Saints Apostles Peter and Paul before he converted
to christianism\(^2\). While he was persecuting the Christians from Rome, the
young emperor Constantin got leprosy\(^3\), being advised by the pagan
priests, in order to heal him, to wash his body in the blood of the babies.
Because he loved more the lives of the children and their mothers’,
refusing the advice received from the non Christians, during the night,
the Saint Apostles Peter and Paul showed them to him, sending him to
the bishop Silvestru, hidden in the Soracte Mountain because of the
persecutions, who healed through the Holy Baptism\(^4\). The vision of the
Saint Apostles was part of a long series of divine revelations that Saint
Constantin and his mother Helen enjoyed. The most known is the
showing of the Saint Cross on the sky before the battle against Maxentiu.

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\(^3\) PAOLO LIVERANI, „Saint Peter’s, Leo the Great and Leprosy of Constantine”, in *Paper of the British School at Rome*, vol. 76(2008), p. 166.

The Saint Cross, the power and the glory of the Saint Apostles, was discovered on the sky to Saint Constantin before the battle against Maxentiu on the Eagle Bridge in 312. The Cross of Christ, which overpasses the wisdom of the world (I Co. 1:17) was the only compliment the Saint Apostle Paul has ever made: „But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world!”(Ga. 6:14). Together with this, the Apostle Paul confesses he saw Jesus Christ lighting on the way to Damasc (Act. 9:1-8; 22:6-10; 26:12-18). Comparing the two visions, Saint Paul’s and Saint Constantin’s, we conclude that both „were invited to faith from heaven”5.

The Saint Constantin, after he saw the sign of the Saint Cross on the sky at the Milvius Bridge, during the night Christ showed himself, just like the historian Eusebius of Caesarea recorded: „while he was sleeping, the Christ of God showed himself with the sign seen previously on the sky, demanding him to imagine the sign that was shown up in the sky, so that, in the battles he was going to have with the enemy, to be able to put himself under its protection”6.

The historians recorded the most important divine discoveries that Saint Constantin achieved. There were others too, of a smaller importance for history, but of a great importance for the concret events of that time. So, Saint Constantin knowing the intentions of his companions, was able to action as the situation asked: „through the intercession of

some mysterious signs, God has always showed to his minister, in a wonderful way, the intentions of all people"7.

Just like Saul from Tarsus, Constantin was converted through a divine discovery and chosen to bring to faith new nations. We have enough proof on the fact that the example the Saint Emperor preferred was the Saint Apostle Paul. The resemblance between these two can be seen especially from the election and the direct ordering, from God and his habit of writing epistles8.

The Emperor Constantin was preoccupied in understanding the Holy Scripture, not alone, but having advisers from the most well seen priests9. For the ecclesiastical hierarchy a very new thing was the treat that God’s ministers received from the Emperor Constantin: „whereas Constantine, the friend of God, had granted to His worshipers freedom of access to the imperial palaces”10. Until then, the descendands of the Saint Apostles, the bishops, had had only persecutions, tortures and endings as martyrs from the leaders of the empire. Now they are experiencing the special appreciation from the emperor, being his friends and advisers and writing imperial epistles to them as to some ministers not subjects.

In the epistles addressed to the bishops, Constantin introduced himself as a „united servant” with each bishop11, „the servant of the God

7 IBIDEM, p. 113.
8 HAROLD ALLEN DRAKE, Constantine ant the Bishops, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 2000, p. 337.
9 „Moreover, he made the priests of God his counselors, and deemed it incumbent on him to honor the God who had appeared to him with all devotion”. EUSEBIUS PAMPHILIUS, Life of Constantine,1,32,3 in coll. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,p. 491.
10 IBIDEM, 1,52,1, p. 497.
11 Every bishop „receive from me the right impulse as a fellow servant with him, I will give”. In the letter to Arie, bishops are called „people of God” and „together” with His servants. EUSEBIU DE CEZAREEA, Viața Fericitului Constantin, II,49,2-72,1, p. 159-160.
Powerful”¹², “brothers and his servants”, “to me, the one who alike you, I try to serve God”¹³, “we confess we are God’s servants and we are proud of it”¹⁴. The great emperor can not be blamed for being lacked of humility, and much less for any diminuation of the value that he used to give to the Secret Ordination. If he remained unbaptised until close to his dead, as a catechumen he sustained especially the imperial dignity of the hierarchical stage. If, however, we put ourselves in the position of approving the baptism of Constantin by the pope Silvestru during his alliance with Maxentiu, Saint Constantin was entitled to name himself „united servant” with the bishops. Also, the Christian emperor has had throughout history some privileges during the Liturgy, which were comparable with the bishops’: the pass through the imperial doors and unprecious sharing from the Saint Table. Maybe that to this privilege has thought Saint Gregory of Nazians too, when he named the emperor Constantin „royal priesthood”¹⁵.

The fight over heresies- a way of honoring the Apostles

About the born of herethics and the danger they represented for the Christians, the Apostles were forewarned by their Master: „Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves”(Mt. 7:15). The interest that the Apostles had in combating the heresies is obvious in every written piece of The New Testament, a very large part of them being written in an apolegetic manner. Those who were Jews, Gnostics or Docheis were setted to compromise the Apostles’s activities, always acusing them unfairly: either that they were searching for the win, or that they are not the

¹² IBIDEM, II,71,4, p. 159.
¹³ IBIDEM, III,12,5, p. 172.
¹⁴ IBIDEM, II,31,2 p. 141.
Apostles, or that they are not Jews and they are against The Moses Rules and the Truth!

The Apologies that were written or lectured by the Apostles were the powerful weapon of the Church itself against the heretics from all times. The way of confessing the true belief was also following the apostolic way. After the Apostles’s Council in Jerusalem in year 49 to decide the importance or non-importance of the Rules of Moses for the non-jews, Catholic bishops will fight against the heresies in the same way and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and any decision taken under appreciation of missionary work of the Holy Apostles is a form of worshipping them.

Saint Constantine, the one who summoned the Council of Nicea, gives them praise and appreciation for the belief they preach. The main condition of the Council, as a way of a truly appreciation for the Saints, it is the unity of the bishops, a thing that was taken care of by the Saint Constantine himself during the First Council. Telling and teaching the people who participated at the first Ecumenic Council how to live always in union, he says: „Because there is no other thing such as harmony and well-being”. Only this way the decision of the Saint Parents could have been taken under the supervision of the Spirit, as to the Apostolic Council: „has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Act. 15:28).

The gather of the 318 Saint Apostles at the First Ecumenical Council from Nicea represents the image of a apostolic assembly, as the apostles and the nations of everywhere gathered at the Pentecost.

Constantin, „like some general bishop constituted by God, convened council of his ministers”18. He did not pretend under any word

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17 IBIDEM, III,7,1 p. 171.
18 IBIDEM, I, 44,1 p. 111.
his superiority towards the bishops furthermore he assumed, with piety, his role as peace-maker. The peace from the bishops, disturbed by the arian heresy, was instantly asked by the Emperor of the bishops through an epistle, appealing to the Christian qualities they preached: „it is fair that each of you gives to the other forgiveness, following, at the same time, that through this each receives from me too the just impulse that, as an united servant with him, I will give it to him”\textsuperscript{19}.

The aim of the Christian preaches, established by the Savior before His Elevation to the sky was „to the end of the earth” (Act. 1:8), translated as „the whole creation” (Mt. 28:18-20; Mc. 16:15) and „all nations” (Lc. 24:47), involving, for sure, the political capital from the apostolic century. For the Saint Apostles, the end of the earth were the Roman Empire’s borders or instead, the capital of this empire, called in the Antiquity as „caput mundi”. For Saint Constantin these borders were the ones that he had rescued from the bondage of the persecutions, starting with the borders of the empire in which, with the power of the Saint Cross, he becomes the only emperor. This way, Eusebius of Caesarea, the biographer of Saint Constantin, affirmed the achievement of „the end of the earth”: „getting to the edges of the entire world-namely to the long-run inds until the nations that live around the whole live carrier earth which shone giving light with the rays of faith and subdued everything in his way”, preaching God in full sincerity\textsuperscript{20}.

**The continuation of the construction of the Church from Rome.** Three churches from Rome are usually assigned to Saint Constantin: Saint John from Lateran, Saint Peter from Vatican and Saint Paul near the walls\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{19} IBIDEM, II,49,2, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{20} IBIDEM, I,8,4, p. 90.
The Saint Constantin, at the demanding of the bishop Silvestru, built the Saint Apostle Peter church, the Apostle from Rome. The construction of this church proves the piety of the Saint Constantin for Saint Peter and enters in a long line of acts brought by the Christians to the Apostle, since his death as a martyr in 29th of June 67, during the persecutor emperor Nero (54-68). The Saint Peter was martirized in the arena near the Tibru River, towards the west wall of Rome. The Christians burried Saint Peter in the garden of this circus, on the Vatican Mountain. On the same place, the bishops of Rome had risen two columns, which will be named „The Trophee of Saint Peter” also called „The Trophee of Gaius”, after the name of the one who recorded it for the first time.

In the fourth century, though well known and valued by the Christians, the Saint Apostle’s tomb was sourounded by numerous pagan tombs. Saint Constantin moved the tombs from the pagan cementery and over a few years, the imperial arhitects leveled the ground and created a flat surface that served as a foundation for the martirical church of the Saint Peter. The debut of the construction is between 313 and 319, and its finalisation and consecration are established in 329.

About this church, during the constantinian period, we know that it had narthex and transept that was built over the tomb of the Saint Peter and it’s sheltered an enormous cross made of pure gold over the Apostle’s tomb. Around 1537 the cardinal Giacobacci described the

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22 With this occasion, Saint Constantine turned the „Trophy” into a famous altar and built the church called then „Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo”. IBIDEM, p.135.
23 HANS A. POHLANDER, op.cit., p. 34.
24 The existence of this cross on Saint Peter’s grave is confirmed by the sculpture on the backside of an ivory coffin from century V found by Samagher, near Pola in Istria.
mosaic from the triumphal arcade of this church. With golden characters, Constantin was offering this church to the Saint Apostle Peter: „Quod duce te mundus surrexit in astra triumphans/Hanc Constantinus Victor tibi condidit aulam”\textsuperscript{25}.

Another church built by the Saint Constantin to honor the Saint Apostles from Rome is Basilica Apostolorum. On Via Apia, above Saint Sebastian’s catacomb, the emperor Constantin built this church with an apostolic name, because during the persecutions, the relics of the Saints Peter and Paul were hidden here for their safety\textsuperscript{26}.

The Quintessence of the honor of the Saint Apostles: The Great Church from Constantinople

From the numerous churches built with the carefulness and the support of the Emperor Constantin in many parts of the world, the most important is the Church Saint Apostles from Constantinople. It was built on the highest place in the capital of the empire, being noticed even from the Bosfor’s banks, deserving its name of „the great”\textsuperscript{27}.

Summarizing the history of the Church Saint Apostles from Constantinople, rebuilt over few decades with the name of Saint Sophia, we observe that it was built by Constantin or by Constans and sanctified on 15\textsuperscript{th} of February 360, burnt until the 10\textsuperscript{th} of July 404, rebuilt and resanctified at 10\textsuperscript{th} October 415, burnt again on 15\textsuperscript{th} of January 532 and completely restored by Justinian\textsuperscript{28}.

\textsuperscript{25} The first codex who keep this text belongs to Poggio Bracciolini, «L’Itinéraire d’Einsiedeln», Corpus inscriptionum latinorum, vol. VI. Pl. I, p. 29, citat de ARTHUR L. FROTHINGHAM, „Une Mosaïque Constantinienne inconnue a Saint-Pierre de Rome”, in Revue Archéologique, s. 3, nr. 1(Janvier-Juin) 1883, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{26} HANS A. POHLANDER, op.cit., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{27} IBIDEM, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{28} Chronicon Paschale, 293D-294D in coll. Patrologia Graeca, vol. 92, 730-734; PHILOSTARGIUS, Church History, translated with Introduction and Notes by Philip
The construction of the Church Saint Apostles from Constantinople unites two directions of apostolic honor: on the one side, of the Twelve Apostles of God, and on the other side the honor given by the Church to the Saints Constantin and Helen later "as apostles" or "exactly with the apostles".29

If the consecration of the church is clearly historical delimited, the beginning of the construction and the history of the church up to that date are controversial. If the sheltered relics of the saints soon become its spiritual landmark, the moment of their deposition should become the landmarks of the history of this church. An entire set of questions rise around the data of the death and burial of the members of Constantin’s family, if their bodies were brought here right after their dead or they were only moved here, under what circumstances the relics of some saint apostles were moved here etc.

To these questions we desire to answer shortly being interested especially in the honor given by the Saint Emperors Constantin and Helen to the Saint Apostles of Christ and the importance of this honor for the actual practice of the Christian Church.

The Saint Constantin wanted his tomb to be in the capital of the empire. So, before the construction of Constantinople, on the old *Via Labicana*30, three miles away from *Porta Magiore*, Constantin built a church to honour the martyrs Marcelinus and Peter. Close to it, he built a circular monument with archs that was supposed to become his and his family’s mausoleum31.

29 The Saint Constantine remains in Church’s conscience like *isapostolos* and because he was buried between The Twelve. HAROLD ALLEN DRAKE, *op.cit.*, p. 11.
30 Today, *Via Casilina*.
The natural successor to the statute of his and his family’s mausoleum from the new capital of the empire was the church Saint Apostles from Constantinople. The church had the roof made of bronze, the inside and outside being decorated with gold and rare marble. The founder of the church was the Saint Constantin the Great (306-337) or his son, Constans (337-361). The specialists reached to the conclusion that the work of construction were begun by Constantin, but the church, being unfinished at the time of his death, was finished by his son Constans.

The Saint Constantin designed this church firstly to honor the Twelve Apostles of the Savior. To each of them he elaborated a crypt where, probably, he wished to bring their relics in order to honor them. Secondly, the church was a necropolis for the Saint Constantin, his and his mother’s tomb, decorated with gold and light being surrounded by the coffins of the apostles. Knowing that his end was close, Constantin built the Church Saint Apostles to serve to him as a mausoleum and as a sanctuary. Constantin’s place for peace could have been built secretly by a constructor or by a planner, but a later construction of a crypt to shelter the body of the Saint Constantin was more likely, just like it happened and for other members of the family buried here.

If the Emperor designed or built his tomb in the middle of The Twelve we do not know for sure. The ulterior settlement of his remains and Saint Helen’s in this place of honor with the Apostles would prove

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on the one hand the great humility of the Emperor, and on the other hand, the recognition of the merit „with the apostles” for the Saint Emperors Constantin and Helen by the immediate descendands.

The place of death of the queen Helen represents a landmark for the logical determination of the place where she was burried by her son. Saint Helen died in the western part of the Empire, maybe in the locality Trier, beloved by the queen. That is why the probability that her body was burried in Constantinople is less likely. The tomb of the Saint Helen was, at least soon after her death from the last month of the year 328 in one of the localities Trier, Rome\textsuperscript{36}, Venice\textsuperscript{37} or Constantinople\textsuperscript{38}. Anyway, we have the certainly that in 360 the bodies of the two saints were in a singular sarcophagus in the Great Church from Constantinople, sourrounded by the imaginary tombs of the Twele Apostles\textsuperscript{39}.

The Saint Constantin died on Whitsuntide, in Constantinople, at 22nd of may 337. His body was put, as Eusebius of Caesarea confessed, in the Church from Constantinople\textsuperscript{40}, where he had prepared his tomb. Against this information there were valued the testimonies of Constantin of Rhodos and Mesarites who attributes the construction of the church only to Constanţiu\textsuperscript{41}, but especially the conclusion of Du Cange who

\textsuperscript{36} The tradition about putting Saint Elena’s body in Rome was perpetuated because of a inadequate reading of expression „Novum Romane” wich define Socrate’s opera, Constantinople. SOCRATE, Sacratis Historia Ecclesiastica, 1,17,in coll. Patrologia Graeca, vol. 67, 122.
\textsuperscript{37} JAN WILLEM DRIJVERS, op.cit., p. 73.
\textsuperscript{38} HANS A. Pohlander, op.cit., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{39} IBIDEM, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{40} „When they arrived at the Apostolic Church of the Saviour they put the Sarcophagus, allowing the new King Constantinus, to read his father both by his presence and all those who were present, and to do all that district solemnity of the moment”. EUSEBIU DE CEZAREA, Viața Fericitului Constantin, IV,70,2, p. 247.
sustained that the Saint Constantin had begun the construction of the church and his son Constantiu had ended it\textsuperscript{42}.

Thereby Constantin is honored as Emperor and «with the Apostles» even by his descendants and the honor given to the Apostles of the Savior is materialized in this construction of reference for the eastern art, architecture and spirituality.

**The List of the Twelve Apostles honored in the Great Church from Constantinople**

The founders of the church the Saint Apostles from Constantinople did not consider the scripturistical lists of the Twelve disciples and Apostles of God. The inscription put above the entrance door in the Church Saint Apostles, registered by a corpus of the Great Lavra\textsuperscript{43}, enumerated the Twelve in the following manner: „Mark is given to death by the people from Alexandria; Matthew is sleeping the great rest of life; Rome sees Paul dying by sword; Philip bears just like Peter; did; Bartolomeu dies on the cross; Simon on the Cross gives his life; in Rome the pagan Nero crucifies Peter; in life and dead John lives; Luke dies in peace, in the end; the men from Patras brutally crucify Andrew; a knife ends James’s life; the spears penetrate Toma’s body, in India”\textsuperscript{44}. A particularisation of the personality of The Twelve can be found in the description of the Church Saint Apostles from Constantinople, made by Mesarites in the 12th century\textsuperscript{45}.

\textsuperscript{42} DU CANGE, *Constantinopolis Christiana seu descriptio urbis Constantinopolitanae, qualis extitit sub Imperatoribus Christianis, ex variis Scriptoribus contexta*, libri quatuor, Paris, 1680, p. 105-108.

\textsuperscript{43} Cod. Lavra K 34.

\textsuperscript{44} FRANCCELL SCHRADER, *Helena: Mother of Constantine*, Universe, Lincoln, 2005, 114.

\textsuperscript{45} GLANVILLE DOWNEY, „Nikolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople”, p. 867-868.
It can be seen easily that the evangelical names of The Twelve haven’t been noticed, but another list of Apostles. But the most important is the commun way of honoring them, these names being unchanged on all the temples of eastern churches until nowadays.

From the evangelical list of the apostles, Thadeus, Matheus and James of Alfeu were replaced with Paul, Luke and Mark. If about Matia and James of Alfeu the data of the Tradition were poor, fully justifying the wish of „filling the number” as in the case of the choice of Matia in the place of Judah, the renegade (cf. Act 1:17), Thadeus is reminded by Eudebiu as being part of the List of the Seventy. The Sirian tradition reminded by the Christian historian uses two names of apostles for Toma, who is named also Thadeus, without affirming the retrogradation of Thadeus from The Twelve among The Seventy. Still, the list of the apostles honoured through the ecclesiastical painting, confirms this permutation of the names from the two lists⁴⁶.

The list of the Apostles from Constantinople was kept untouched, until nowadays, especially in the books of eastern ecclesiastical painting. From The Twelve prophets and the twelve royal feasts, the orthodox churches will always have painted the same apostles for whom was built the Great Church from Constantinople, but using another order. Certainly not the superiority of the apostles is discussed in the arrangement of the names, but the principle of the geographical approach to the place of the construction⁴⁷. In the order of the icons registered in Hermenia of

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⁴⁶ DIONISIE DIN FURNA, Erminia picturii bizantine, text întreptat, completat și cu indice de C. Sândulescu-Verna, Editura Sophia,2000, p. 149.
⁴⁷ The same principle could percived also in the list of Dionisie de Furna, where Toma and Filip are painted extremely.
Dionisie from Funa, in the center are painted Peter and Paul, and at the bottom Bartolomeu and Toma, the ones who were the farthest 48.

The intention of the founders of this church was not the changing of the evangelical list with the apostles that represent the maximum of authority until the end of the centuries. The devotion towards the Saint Apostles demanded their lives knowledge, of the way they died and especially of the place where their relics could be found.

The Emperor Constantin „honors the saints and the devoted ones”. The martyrs „do not suffer in vain, confident that only this way will enjoy a bigger appreciation. And their fame the bigger shines, the harder they suffer” 49. The relics of the Saint Apostles Andrew, Luke and Thimoty were brought, as a sign of honor given by the emperor Constantin or, much more likely by his son, the emperor Constanțiu 50, who followed his faith showed so much through facts and words. The year when the relics of the Saint Apostles Andrew and Luke can be considered 336, during Saint Constantin’s life or 357 51, under the direct control of his son Constanțiu 52.

48 Rufin (+410) said that after Thomas, Bartelemy he became to preach in India.
49 EUSEBIU DE CEZAREEA, Viața Fericitului Constantin, II, 26, 1 in coll. Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești, serie nouă, p. 139.
50 „Constantin brought in the church called Relics of Saint disciple Andrew, from Achaia, of Saint Evangelist Luke from Achaia, in the same enclosure. Thimoty, also, was taken from Efes, in Ionia and brought in this renewed house”. PHILOSTARGIUS, Church History, p. 39.
51 The documents attesting the year 357 are various and plausible: Chronic of Ieronim, wrote in Constantinople in 379-380, Hydatius descriptio Consuluim from year 468, Consularia Constantinopolitanus and Chronicor Paschale from year 630. While Chronic of Yeronim mention only the year bringing relies of Saint Andrew and Luke, the others mention S the day: 3 march. Unlike to these sources, Teodor Lectorul mentions the Mont hand the day, but not the year. DAVID WOODS, „The Date of the Translation of the Relics of S.S. Luke and Andrew to Constantinople, in Vigiliae Christianae, vol. 45, no. 3 (sep. 1991), p. 286.
52 In favor of this facets arepronounced specialists like: O. Seeck, Delehage, Downey, A.H.M. Jones, J. Dummer, Krautheimer, M. Withitby and David Woods. IBIDEM, p. 286.
So the campaign from the Danube of Constantius from 359 brought the occasion of moving the relics. The order was in Sirmium: of Artemius’, declared king of Egypt, in Adrianopol and of Andrew and of Luke of Achaia’ to Constantinople. The resettlement was certainly made during the four months: October 359- February 360 but they were settled in the Church Saint Apostles only at the beginning of the Council from Constantinople when the heretical bishop of the capital, Macedoniu, was replaced and to the Church of the Saint Apostles was given again the purpose of keeping the just faith preached by the Saint Apostles. So the moving of the relics of the Saints Andrew, Luke and Thimoty, renews the importance of the Church Saint Apostles, meanwhile became the mausoleum for the family of the Emperor, between 356-357.

When Justinian repaired the Church Saint Apostles from Constantinople, the workers found three wooden coffers, having inscriptions that inside there were the bodies of the saints Luke, Andrew and Timotei. All these relics were taken out, even the ones that were from the family of Constantin the Great by Mahomed the 2nd and the church was transformed into a mosque. But this church still remains an endless source of knowing the honor that was given to the Saint Apostles by the Church of Christ, the one free of persecutions and the one that has as main exponents the Saint Emperors Constantin and Helen.

53 IBIDEM, p. 287.
54 Like Ieronim said, relics of Saint Andrew and Luke were placed in Saints disciples church in 3 March 360, at the beginig of Council of Constantinople, relics of Saint Timotei, were brought from Efes and placed in Saints disciples’ church in 1 July 360. IBIDEM, p. 287.
55 PHILOSTARGIUS, Church History, p. 39, nota 4.
Conclusion

Savior asked His disciples to honor each other through service, „who wants to be great among you must be your servant“(Mk. 10:43). They respected the command as long as they lived and after they died, when God called to apostolic ministry case someone else, the one who was awarded by prayers, intercession and appreciation of Christ’s Apostles. Among the Apostles, called by Jesus Christ, a place of great honor have Saints Constantine and Helen.

Veneration of the Holy Apostles is given by these is rich and current. No one else ever tried to find out how they lived, how they died and where they are relics of the Apostles. Honoring them, they have followed their exemple and have continued the work, treading in their footsteps and calling the whole Christian church to follow suit.

Saints Constantine and Helen have built many churches in remembrance of the Apostles, of which the most important is the great church of Constantinople. Here were built cenotaphs of the Twelve Apostles of the Church not only from popular pages of the New Testament. Name of the Twelve Apostles honored in this church are the same that the Church honors today in iconography and hagiography: Mark, Matthew, Paul, Philip, Bartholomew, Simon, Peter, John, Luke, Andrew, James and Thomas.

Although difficult to identify with precision when the Constantine and Helen’ relics were settle in the midst of this church, it is described by historians, using the documents of the time. This act can be considered as the first evidence of appreciation of Saints Constantine and Helen as „Apostles” by faithful Christians of the fourth century, thus confirming the communion that Saints had with the Holy Apostles during their life.