

Jesus Christ: Fully Human – Fully Divine

What we can learn from the Iconic Pantocrator of St. Catherine's Monastery. Art, Scripture, and the Revelatory Form of Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ: Pantocrator

Pantocrator or **Pantokrator** (Greek: *Παντοκράτωρ*) is one of many titles ascribed to the Divine. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek as the Septuagint (LXX), *Pantokrator* was used to translate the Hebrew title *El Shaddai*. Early Christians also used this title for Jesus of Nazareth.



The oldest known surviving example of the icon of *Christ Pantocrator* was painted in the sixth or seventh century, surviving destruction during the iconoclastic disputes within the Eastern Church and later by subsequent Muslim invaders in the remote desert of the Sinai at St. Catherine's Monastery. A document bearing the Prophet Mohammed's hand print declared the Monastery to be Holy and respected.

A Little Background History!



Due to the dry conditions, the monastery library has preserved within it the largest collection of early codices and manuscripts second only to the Vatican Library. The Codex Sinaiticus, currently in the British Library, is considered by many to have been 'stolen' from the monastery in the 19th century. (If your interested in more on this story look up: Constantin Tischendorf)

St. Catherine's at the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt

Check out: <http://www.sinaimonastery.com/>

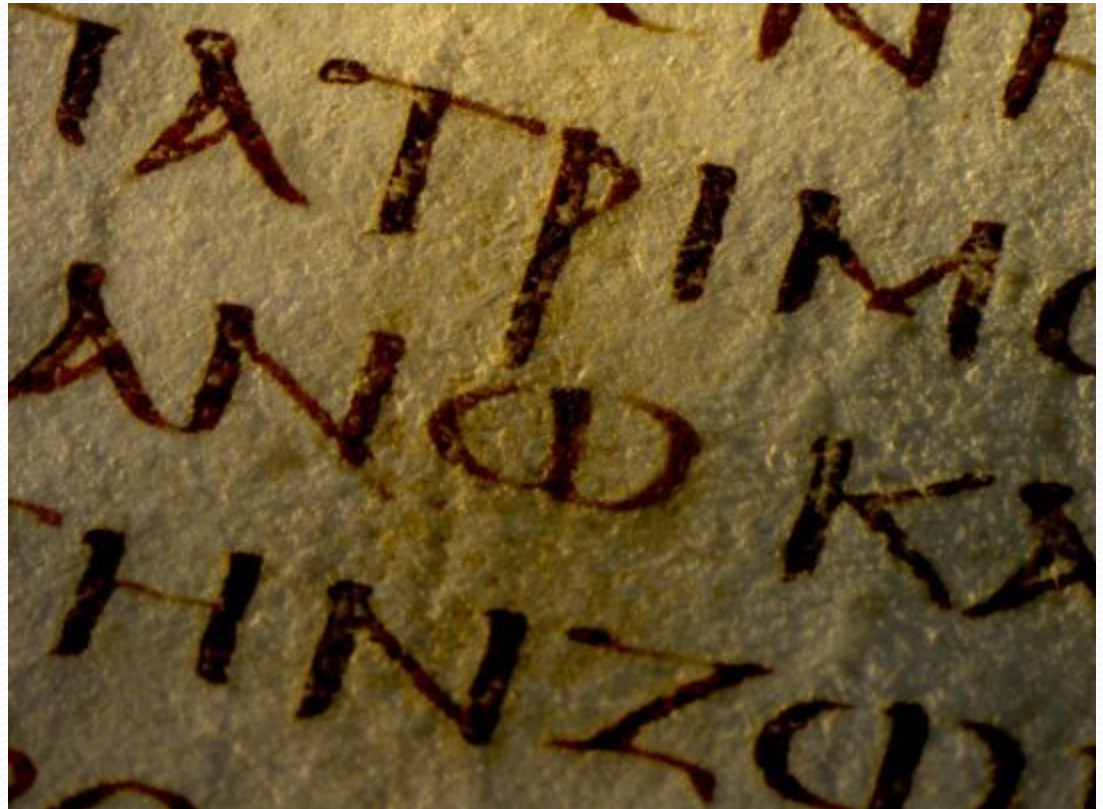


Constantin Tischendorf

A Little Background History!

Codex Sinaiticus, a manuscript of the Christian Bible written in the middle of the fourth century, contains the earliest complete copy of the Christian New Testament. The hand-written text is in the vernacular of the time, koine Greek. The Old Testament is the Greek version, known as the Septuagint (LXX), that was adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians. In the Codex, the text of both the Septuagint and the New Testament has been heavily annotated by a series of early

This close up demonstrates erasure and substitution on Quire 37 folio 6 recto.

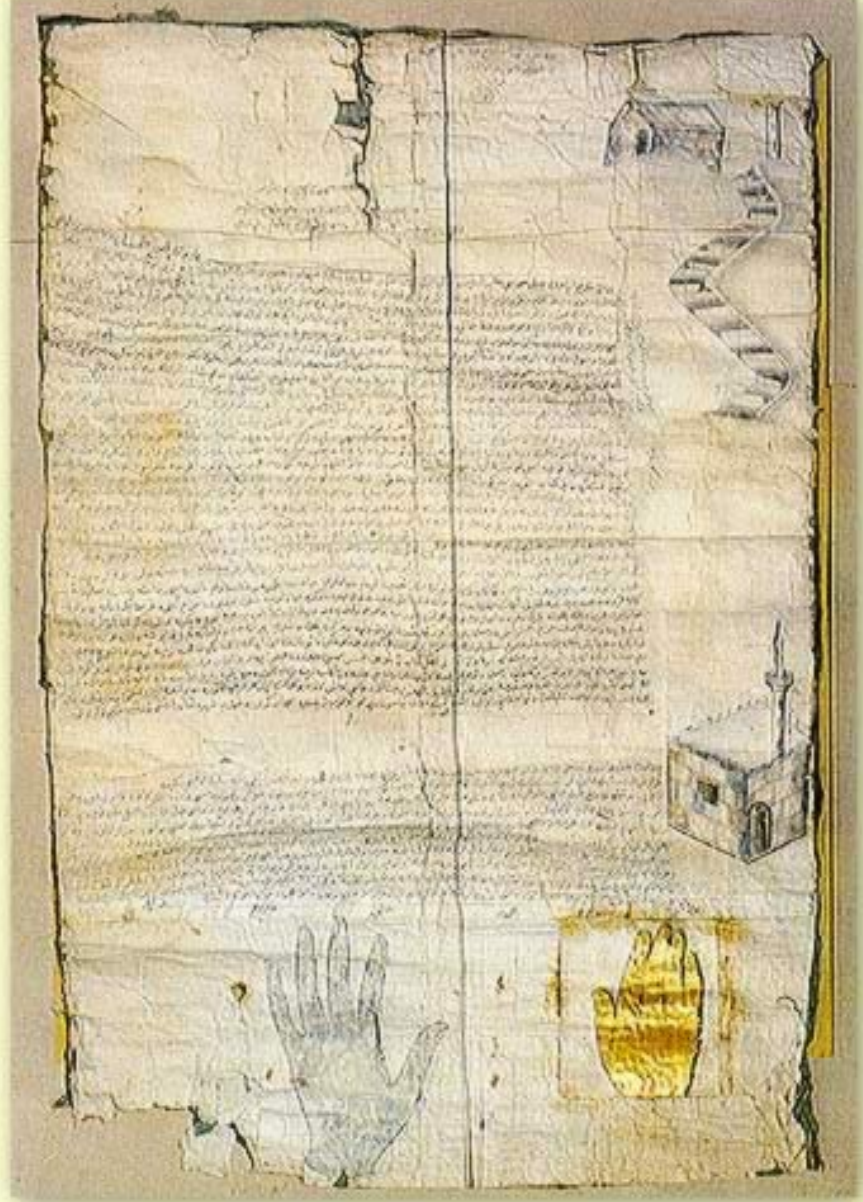


The Codex has been digitally photographed and can be studied online at:

<http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/>

A Little Background History!

Mohammed the Founder of Islam is recorded to have visited the monastery and in keeping with its Holy nature wrote a document exhorting all to respect and honor the Monks of the Sinai Desert and preserve the monastery. A copy of this document, the *ahtiname*, is contained in the library and bears Mohammed's handprint. (For the translation see the last slide).



Jesus Christ: Pantocrator

If you look closely at the iconic image of Christ, you will notice that his right eye seems different from the left. The iconographer appears to have held the dual nature of Jesus as human and Pantocrator in his mind to paint the image.

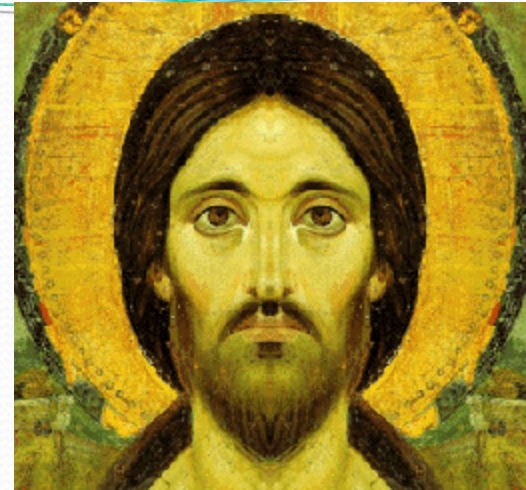
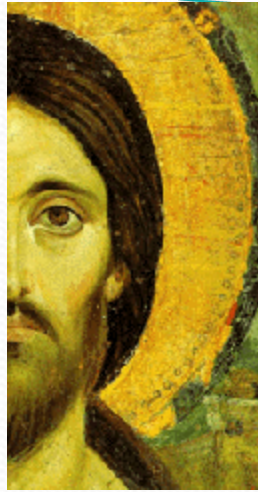
In the next slides use your down arrow or mouse click to advance through the animations to explore this difference!



First divide the image
Into Right and Left panels

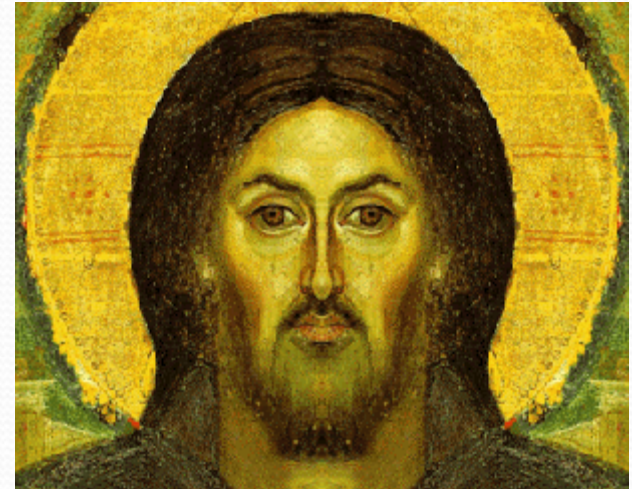


Left Side Only



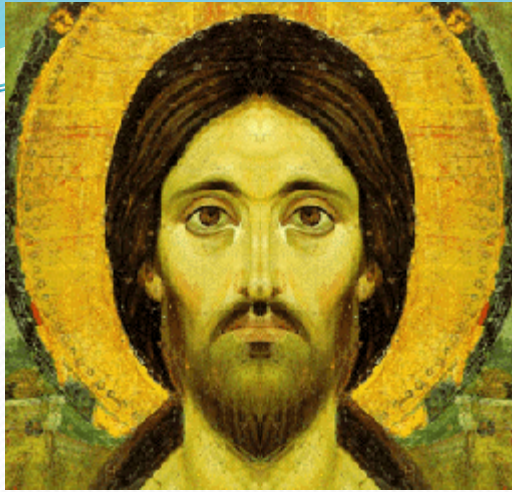
Jesus Christ: Fully Human

Right Side Only

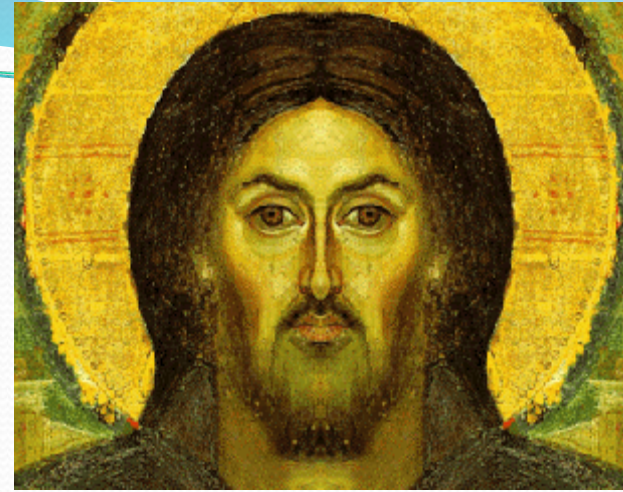


Jesus Christ: Fully Divine

Hypostasis



Jesus Christ: Fully Human



Jesus Christ: Fully Divine

This is something that scholars call 'hypostasis' or the hypostatic union. Hypostasis comes from the Greek meaning literally 'that which stands beneath.' Philosophers such as Aristotle used it to mean the objective reality or inner form of something as opposed to its outer or illusory form.

Hebrews 1: 3 indicates how early Christianity came to view this 'hypostasis.'

"He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being"

As Christians we understand that Jesus Christ is the revelation of God. In Christ we see the Form of God. Scripture and Tradition must point beyond themselves to the revelation contained in Christ. What an amazing way to demonstrate this

Phillipians 2:5 – 11



5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality
with God as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in
human likeness. And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that
is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven
and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the
glory of God the Father.

Franciscan Reflection:

During the Lent of 1224 Francis withdrew with Brother Leo into prayer on Mt. Alverna. He agonized as he contemplated the pain that Jesus had experienced on our behalf, but also recognized the Divine nature that during Crucifixion could still forgive.

On 14 September 1224, in prayer, Francis beheld the crucified Christ borne and received the marks of his Lord's crucifixion—the *stigmata*—on his hands, feet, and side.

Reflection:

In what other ways did Francis recognize God in the Form of Christ?



Epilogue: The *ahtiname*: Christians and Muslims

In 628 C.E. Prophet Muhammad granted a Charter of Privileges to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai. It consisted of several clauses covering all aspects of human rights including such topics as the protection of Christians, freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war. An English translation of that document is presented below.

This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them.

Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

No compulsion is to be on them.

Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries.

No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses.

Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate.

No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight.

The Muslims are to fight for them.

If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray.

Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants.

No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).

Franciscan Reflection: Francis and Malik al-Kamil



In 1219 during the Fifth Crusade, St. Francis crossed the battle lines at Damietta in order to speak with Malik al-Kamil, the Ayubid Sultan of Egypt. There are several versions of what transpired, but something about the Poverello impressed the Sultan. Francis' life was spared and both men parted with mutual respect.

Reflection:

What special qualities do you think Francis demonstrated that allowed two men of different faith to gain mutual respect during a time of direct confrontation and battle between Christians and Muslims?