SERIES BYZANTINA

Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art

VOLUME XIV

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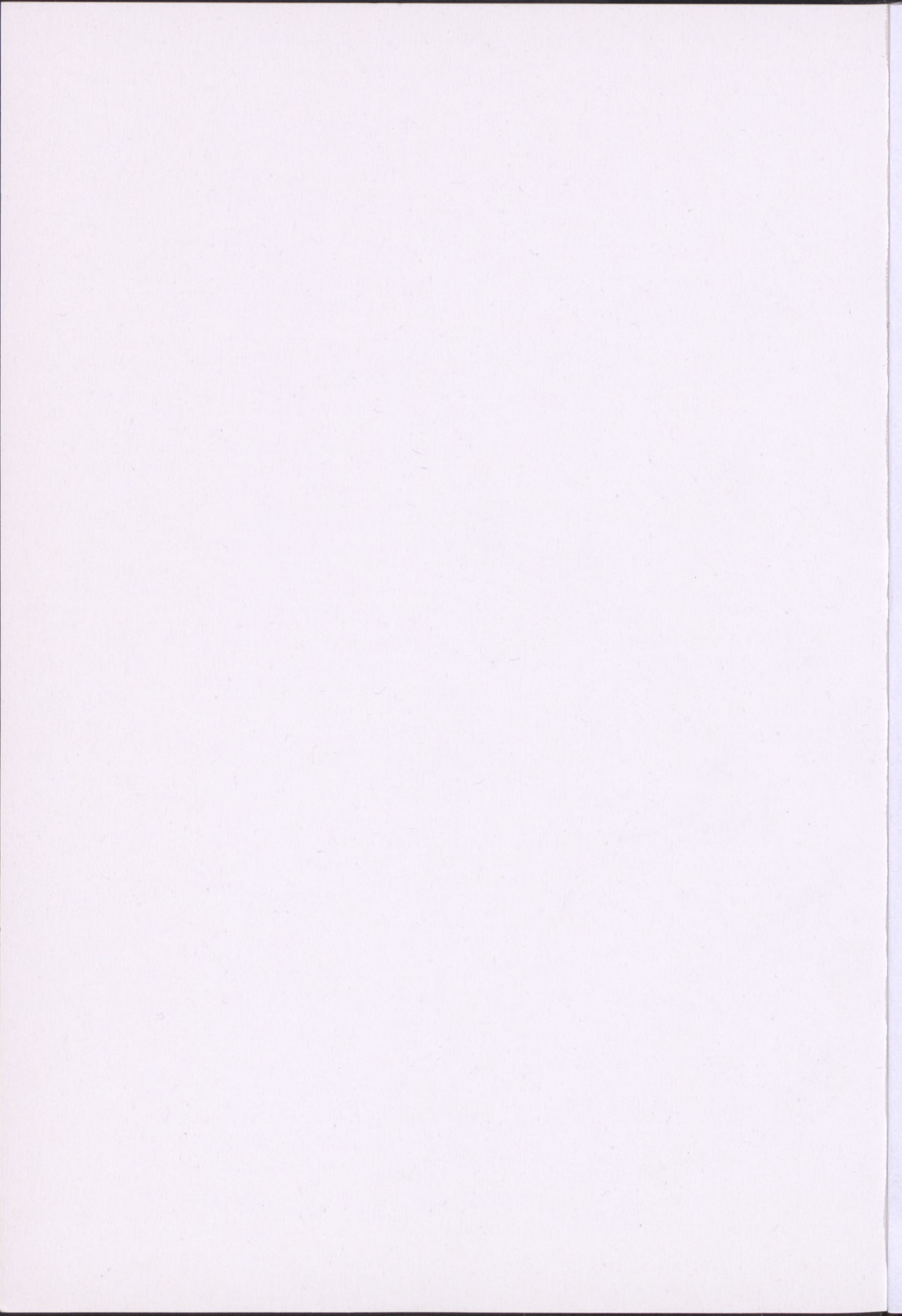
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Virgin Mary; glassware decoration, from catacombs in Rome, 4th c. AD;
N. P. Kondakov, *Ikonografia Bogomateri*, St. Petersburg 1914, p. 77

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VOLUME XIV

POLISH INSTITUTE OF WORLD ART STUDIES
CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY

Warsaw 2016

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the fourteenth volume of *Series Byzantina*, which contains articles submitted by researchers from our country and abroad. The first part deals with the travels of relics in the Christian world. Three articles are the result of a conference organized by Magdalena Łaptaś from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in 2014. In the second part of the journal texts are related to the changes in the art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We are trying to introduce new issues concerning the history of Byzantine and post-Byzantine monuments of the past.

Polish archaeologists are making further discoveries of Christian art in Africa; no wonder that the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University has organized another conference on the subject. The international meeting in 2016 concerned the history of Nubian paintings in the context of artistic connections with Byzantium, Coptic Egypt and Ethiopia.

Research by archaeologists of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University was conducted in the Białowieża National Park using state-of-the-art technology bringing to life fascinating discoveries that prove the existence of a civili-

Fig. 1. The Armenian cathedral in Lviv

Fig. 2. St. John the Evangelist and St. Prochorus,
a mural painting from the Armenian cathedral in Lviv
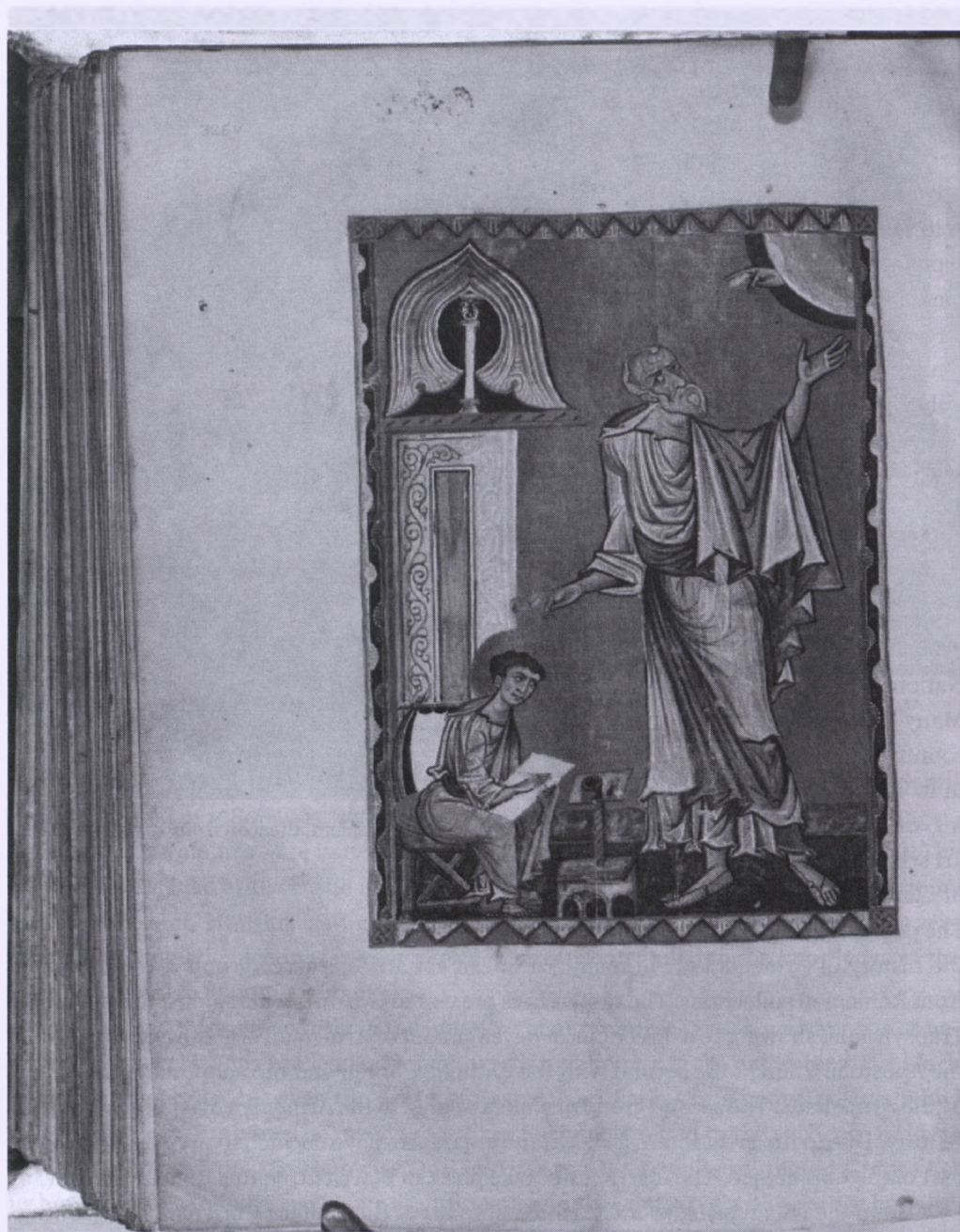
Fig. 3. The Gospel from Skevra, National Library in Warsaw (on loan from Warsaw Archdiocesy)

zation before the growth of the natural forest, dated by the researchers back to over 700 years ago. During the Jagiellonian period, Polish kings hunted in the forest then referred to as the "old woods". This area, located mostly in the territory of Poland and in Belarus, is Europe's largest national park and is also a natural forest. Polish scholars published the initial results of the research and showed that future scientific exploration will surely give amazing scientific results.

The *Art of Armenian Diaspora* conference was a big event; it was held in June 2016 at the National Museum in Gdańsk. Many researchers from the country and abroad participated in it. This was the second meeting of the Armenian diaspora art scholars. The first took place in Zamość Museum in 2010. The papers were connected with

Fig. 4. Entrance to Jerusalem, the icon from 17 century, Łańcut Castle Museum

the history of Armenian art in many European countries, a large group related to relics from Romanian collections. The researchers presented two different regions: Moldavia and Transylvania, showing two directions of development of Armenian art, one associated with the Apostolic Church, the second with the Catholic Church and the adoption of the Union by the Armenians. The second group of papers related to the Armenian diaspora in the 20th century. Due to the great interest shown the organizers have decided to prepare the second part of the Conference. The meeting will take place in March 2017, this time in Warsaw.

Also in the neighboring countries interest in art of the Eastern Christianity is growing. The international conference in: *Medieval Art in Central Europe*, organized at the initiative of the University of Ostrava, where lively research of the team of the *Vivarium* scientific circle contribute to increased international cooperation. The conference, which was

Fig. 5. Ghelinţa, Roman Catholic church, Transylvania

held in the "Galician Town" in Nowy Sącz, referred to the Polish initiative of Niedzica Seminars, organized in 1980–1991, with the participation of Polish, Czech-Slovak and Hungarian scholars. 7 volumes were issued, in which rich comparative material was collected. The seminars were held at the castle in Niedzica in the Spiš region, the site of historic importance for Poland, Hungary as well as Slovakia. Despite many political constraints, very interesting thematic meetings were organized, which contributed to the knowledge of the scientific research of our neighbors.

After many years, we go back to the initiative of our predecessors, reactivating international meetings. Among the leading topics, worth mentioning is the entire thematic block on art on the border between the world of Eastern and Latin Christianity, postulated by our predecessors in 1980. The meeting in Nowy Sącz contributed to the exchange of ideas between scholars from the countries clustered around the so-called Visegrad Group. Let us hope that this initiative will have a continuation in the context of the exchange between the East and the West as well as the South and the North and they will bring interesting scientific discoveries.

Waldemar Deluga

Fig. 6. Mural paintings from the church in Ghelinţa, Transylvania

Fig. 7. Anunciation, mural painting from the church in Dravce near Levoča, Slovakia

The Beginning of the Cult of Relics in Martyrium Polycarpi 17–18

Leszek Misiarczyk
Cardinal Wyszynski University in Warsaw

Robert Wisniewski, in his introduction to the early Christian literary testimonies about the cult of relics in late antiquity in the West, points out that the beginning of the cult of relics is from the middle of the fourth century. In his opinion, the Old Testament witness the respect given to the remains of a human body in 1 Kings 13:30-32 and 2 Kings 13:21 and the New Testament mention of the healing touch of Jesus' garment (Mark 5:23-24) or the release from the dominion of demons' power by *loin cloth and scarvers* of St. Paul (Acts 19:11-12) were biblical justification for the cult of relics, but it does not give its start. In this context, he interprets the testimony of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18 which, in his opinion, is proof of the respect and concern for the bodily remains of the dead, especially the martyrs, and concludes: "Nothing, however, indicates that the remembering witness of faith and otherwise quite natural Greek attitude to the body of the deceased was accompanied by the belief that in this body or in what's left of it remains the miraculous strength that God gives his servant. And such a belief becomes the most important feature in the cult of relics [...] in the fourth century. A saint – by both martyrdom and asceticism - without ceasing to be a role model, becomes the depository of power that heals the sick, casts out demons from the possessed, punishes the wicked, and for the faithful obtains forgiveness of sins".[1] Of course, Wisniewski is right that the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18 has nothing to do with the cult of relics so understood, but it raises the methodological question of whether the definition of the cult of relics as a belief in the miraculous power of the remains of the martyr or saint from the middle of the fourth century can be used for the period of the second and third centuries. Was it not rather the case that the attitude of Christians to the remains of the dead martyrs and saints had evolved and changed over time? I think so. And if we accept this assumption it is methodologically highly questionable to impose the later definition of the cult of relics to

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[1] *Początki kultu relikwii na Zachodzie*, ed. R. Wiśniewski, Warszawa 2011, p. 13.

Leszek Misiarczyk

earlier texts because they simply will not fit it. I think the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18 shows the beginning of the cult of relics, however not yet understood as a belief in their miraculous power, but rather as care for the mortal remains of Polycarp's body and as a kind of spiritual communion with them. Moreover Wisniewski himself admits that the first witness regarding the mortal remains of the saints in the fourth century are not the descriptions about their miraculous power, but the transference (Latin: *translatio*) from their graves to churches. And so, according to the testimony of Sozomenos (HE 5,4,19), the emperor Gallus between 351 and 354 had to move to a new *martyrium* in Daphne on the outskirts of Antioch, the body of Babylas, bishop and martyr, previously buried in one of the local cemeteries; and according to the chronicles of Jerome a few years later there were moved to Constantinople the remains of the Apostle Timothy, Andrew the Apostle and Evangelist Luke. Between the fourth and fifth centuries we have many literary sources confirming that many of the remains of the martyrs and saints were transferred from their place of burial to new places of worship, but they say nothing about the fact that the main motive of this action was the belief in their miraculous power. If we, however, would interpret these sources as defined by Wisniewski, they do not describe a real cult of the relics. Desecrated by the pagans, the transference of the relics of John the Baptist from Sebaste in 362 CE was dictated by the respect and the desire to preserve them before the next pagan desecration and not because someone has believed in their miraculous power. This belief appears clearly only in the text of Theodoret of Cyrus in his *Treating diseases of Hellenism* 8,10–11 written c. 530 CE. Although this belief was important and in the future will probably become the foundation of the cult of relics, in the middle of the fourth century it was neither the sole or decisive purpose. In some cases, also important was the desire to protect the relics before profanation and the desire by various churches to increase their own prestige by having the relics of the famous martyr or the saint. So it seems that in the second half of the fourth century, the belief in the miraculous power of the relics was not yet a decisive factor in their worship and in general does not appear in the second and third centuries. The belief in the miraculous power of relics cannot be seen as the foundation of their cult before Constantine. So what was this foundation? Let us be led by the text without a preliminary definition, because it can be misleading and lead our research astray. We know that after a great growth of Christianity in the 4th century new churches were built in new regions, e. g. Constantinople, so the bishops and patriarchs searched to bring the relics of some famous martyrs from Rome or other places to their local communities. There is no doubt that historically the Christian cult of relics developed strongly in the 4th century but–has its roots in the 2nd and 3rd century cult of martyrs and saints.[2] I will try to show in this study that the very first traces of the cult of relics can be found in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18.

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[2] Cfr. H. Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, Bruxelles 1933, p. 50–60; J. M. McCulloh, 'The Cult of Relics in the Letters and «Dialogues» of Pope Gregory the Great', *Traditio*, 32 (1976), pp. 145–184; M. Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliqienkultes*, Turnhout 1979,

Martyrdom of Polycarp

The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (MPol), known also as the *Letter from the church of Smyrna to the church of Philomelium* is the oldest written account of a Christian martyrdom outside the New Testament. The text gives us many details regarding the arrest, trial, and execution of Polycarp and the burial of his body and was certainly written to show the steadfastness of Polycarp's faith in Christ and fearlessness when he faced death, so he could be a model for many Christian believers in the time of persecution.[3] In MPol 21 we find the following words: "Now, the blessed Polycarp was martyred on the second day of the first part of the month Xanticus, seven days before the kalends of March, on the great Sabbath, about two o'clock p. m.".[4] This indication has been seen as a proof that the martyrdom took place on 22 or 23 February. Nothing exact is found in the text itself about the year of the martyrdom, only Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical history* IV,15,1-46 suggests that it was in 167 C. E. In MPol 21, however, it is mentioned that Polycarp "was arrested by Herod, when Phillip of Tralles was high priest during the proconsulship of Statius Quadratus".[5] The mentioning of Statius Quadratus has led many scholars to adopt the date of martyrdom around 155 or 156 as more probable. This year fits better with the information that Polycarp, not long before his arrest, met in Rome Pope Anicetus, who became bishop of the city in 154. Other scholars suggest only the approximate years 155–160,[6] still others consider MPol 21 as a later addition in order to show more obvious parallels between the sufferings of Jesus in the Gospels and Polycarp.[7] If it is true, the date proposed by Eusebius should not be excluded and the martyrdom might have taken place in 161 or 168–169 C. E.[8] J. M. Kozłowski however pointed out that in the text itself we find the confirmation of

pp. 20–22; E. D. Hunt, 'The Traffic in Relics: Some late Roman Evidence', in: *The Byzantine saint. University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. S. Hackel, London 1981, pp. 171–180; A. Egner, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult zwischen Antike und Aufklärung*, Darmstadt 1995, pp. 11–15; B. Beaujard, *Le culte des saints en Gaul. Les premiers temps. D'Hilaire de Poitiers à la fin du VIe siècle*, Paris 2000, p. 283; G. Clark, 'Translating relics: Victricius of Rouen and the fourth-century debate', *Early Medieval Europe*, 10 (2001), pp. 161–176.

[3] Cfr. new edition of the text B. Dehandschutter, 'An Updated Edition of the Martyrdom of Polycarp', in: *Polycarpiana. Studies on Martyrdom and Persecution in Early Christianity. Collected Essays*, ed. J. Leemans, Leuven 2007, pp. 3–27, older editons J. B. Lightfoot – J. R. Harmer, 'Introduction', in: *The Apostolic Fathers. Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings*, ed. M. W. Holmes, Grand Rapids 1992, pp. 226–245; critical edition of the Greek text with Frech translation in: *Martyre de Polycarpe*, Sch 10bis, ed. P. T. Camelot, Paris 1998.

[4] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 21,1; english translation is always quoted according to *The Apostolic Fathers...*, p. 243.

[5] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 21,1, p. 243.

[6] Cfr. W. R. Schodel, 'Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragment of Papias', in: *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. V, Cameden 1967, pp. 78–79.

[7] H. von Compenhausen, 'Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarpmartyriums', in: *Aus der Fruhzeit des Christentums*, Tübingen 1963, pp. 252–301.

[8] Cfr. P. T. Camelot, *Introduction*, in: *Martyre de Polycarpe*, Sch 10bis, Paris 1998, pp. 197–209, especially p. 200.

the dates and Polycarp would have died burnt at the stake during the persecution between 155–157 CE. In MPol 12,2 there is mentioned Philip the Asiarch identified by MPol 21 with Philip of Tralles who held the office in this period, and also in MPol 21 the mention of Statius Quadratus, proconsul of Asia between 156 and 157 CE. [9] The fragment from 15,1 confirms that the account was written by an eyewitness not more than one year after the martyrdom of the bishop (18,1) in order "to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom",[10] which would indicate the years between 156–158. J. M. Kozłowski is convinced that *Martyrium Polycarpi* was written probably in 176–177 CE during the so-called "second wave" of persecution under the rule of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 CE).[11] The date itself, however, has no direct impact on the theme of our analysis and it really does not change a lot if it would have taken place in 156–158 CE, in 167 CE or twenty years later in 176-177 CE. We are still in the second half of the second century. The text presents Polycarp as a follower of Jesus Christ who has been submitted to the martyrdom "in accordance with the Gospel".[12] There is still a lot of discussion among scholars about historicity of the text and whether the whole text has been written by one author in the second half of the second century or bears traces of later interpolation.[13]

Many scholars expressed their doubt regarding historicity of MPol because of quite big number of parallels with the passion narratives of the Gospels, like Polycarp's prediction of his capture and death (5,2), the named of Herod (6,2), the arrest of Polycarp like a criminal (7,1), and Polycarp being carried on a donkey back to Smyrna (8,1), miraculous occurrences during his arrest and death (9,1), the chronological appendices in ch 21–22.[14] P. Foster and S. Parvis pointed out the lack of Roman legal proceedings against Polycarp as an argument against the historicity of MPol. They underline the fact that Polycarp's trial has taken place before the magistrates of the Empire on a public holiday, in the middle of a sport stadium, with no use of the tribunal, no formal legal accusation and no official sentence.[15] If we remeber that the Roman capital trial procedure would certainly have been well known to the population of the time and the magistrates of the Empire could

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[9] Cfr. J. M. Kozłowski, 'With Priscilla his wife. Quintus in Martyrium Polycarpi 4,1 as a Typus of Montanus in the Light of the Reference to Acts of the Apostles 18,2', *Vox Patrum,* 30 (2010) t. 55, pp. 375–383.

[10] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18,3, p. 241.

[11] Cfr. J. M. Kozłowski, 'Datowanie "Martyrium Polycarpi" w świetle zależności od "De morte Peregrini" i "Fugitivi" Lukiana z Samosat', *Studia Źródloznawcze,* 7 (2008) pp. 64–5; C. R. Moss, 'On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity', *Early Christianity,* 4.1 (2010) pp. 539–574; J. Hoover, 'False Lives, False Martyrs: Pseudo-Pionius and the Redating of the Martyrdom of Polycarp', *Vigiliae Christianae,* 67 (2013) pp. 471–498.

[12] Cfr. J. M. Kozłowski, *With Priscilla his wife. Quintus in Martyrium Polycarpi 4,1 as a Typus of Montanus in the Light of the Reference to Acts of the Apostles 18,2...*, p. 375.

[13] Cfr. J. Hoover, *op. cit.*

[14] Cfr. A good synthesis of recent studies in B. Dehandschutter, 'The Martyrium Polycarpi: A Century of Research', in: *Polycarpiana. Studies on Martyrdom and Persecution in Early Christianity. Collected Essays,* ed. J. Leemans, Leuven 2007, pp. 43–76.

[15] Cfr. P. Foster – S. Parvis, *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers,* London 2007, p. 128.

not ignore them, so there is a real difficulty to admit the historicty of evants MPol presents. Candida Moss has evan proposed that the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is a theological composition designed to support a particular understanding of martyrdom „according to the Gospel" what is confirmed by strong biblical parallelism and a clear preoccupation with the status of the martyrs. She also suggests a late date for the composition of the text, the first half of third century.[16] Of course, MPol is a literary construction presenting Polycarp as e perfect *imitator Christi* but it is based on the historical event of Polycarp's death for his Christian faith which occurred in the second century. Compenhausen's and Conzleman's arguments against authenticity of MPol 17–18 has been convincingly rejected either by W. Rordorf[17] and V. Saxer.[18] Saxer's conculusion is the following: most of the interpolation hypothesis remain unproven and only incidentally one could accept the additions in 16, 1 (dove) and the name of Alce in 17,2. Camelot presents these chapters as a very simple and direct description of the facts with no miracles which puts it in clear contrast with other legendary *Passiones* of that time.[19] So it seems quite probable that MPol was written really shortly after the death of Polycarp and the chapter 18 was from the very beginning a part of text.

Martyrdom of Polycarp 17–18

The most interesting for our research are chapters 17–18. In MPol 17,1 we find the description of events which happened immediately after the death of Polycarp:

"But the jealous and envius Evil One, the adversary of the race of the righteous, when he observed the greatness of his martyrdom and that his life was irreproachable from the beginning and that he was crowned with the crown of immortality and had wan a prize which no one could challange, saw to it that non even his memory should be taken away by us, even though many desired to do this and to receive a part of his holy flesh".[20]

The author of the text clearly underlines that the Christians of Smyrna wanted to take away the body of Polycarp after his death but they were not permitted to do it by the local

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[16] Cfr. C. R. Moss, 'On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity', *Early Christianity*, 4.1 (2010), pp. 539–574.

[17] Cfr. W. Rordorf, 'Zur Entstehung der christlicher Märtrerverehrung', in: *Aspekte früchristlicher Heiligenverehrung*, Erlangen 1977, pp. 35–53; *Idem*, 'Aux origins du culte des martyrs', *Irènikon*, 46 (1972) pp. 315–331.

[18] Cfr. V. Saxer, 'L'authenticité du Martyre de Polycarpe. Bilan de 25 ans de critique', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité*, 94 (1982), pp. 979–1001.

[19] Cfr. P. T. Camelot, 'Introduction', in: *Martyre de Polycarpe*, Sch 10bis, Paris 1998, p. 198.

[20] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17,1; Holmes, p. 241 (with changes); Greek text B. Dehandschutter, p. 125. In Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical history* IV,15,40 the Greek text is slighlty different: ἐπετήδευσεν ὡς μηδὲ τὸ σωμάτιον αὐτοῦ ὑφ'ἡμῶν ληφθείη, καίπερ πολλῶν ἐπιθυμούντων τοῦτο ποιῆσαι καὶ κοινωνῆσαι τῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ σαρκίῳ. The same version we can find in edition prepared by SCh 10bis, p. 230 where instead of τὸ λείψανον we have τὸ σωμάτιον.

authority. What is the real sense of this phrase? Does it mean that the Christians of Smyrna just wanted to bury the remnants of Polycarp's body putting them into the tomb or that they wanted to possess the relics of his body? The second sense seems here more probable and I'll try to explain why. The final part of the text tells us that "many desired to do this" (πολλῶν ἐπιθυμούντων τοῦτο ποιῆσαι) and it means that many Christians of Smyrna wanted to take away the remnants of Polycarp's body. It makes no sense if these words would have been understood as many Christians of Smyrna wanting to bury his body. There was no need for many people to put the remains of Polycarp's body in the tomb but the phrase does make sense if we understand it as an affirmation that many members of the Smyrnean Christian community wanted to take away with them the relics of his body.

Such a meaning of the phrase is even stronger and in fact totally excludes the possibility of understanding it as the will to bury the body of bishop Polycarp when we take into consideration its last part. Here is the fragment: "many desired to do this (that means to take the relics of his body) and to receive a part of his holy flesh (πολλῶν ἐπιθυμούντων τοῦτο ποιῆσαι καὶ κοινωνῆσαι τῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ σαρκίῳ)". The construction of the phrase in Greek clearly suggests that πολλῶν ἐπιθυμούντων should be referred either to τοῦτο ποιῆσαι or to καὶ κοινωνῆσαι τῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ σαρκίῳ. So the meaning would be as follows: "many desired to take away Polycarp's body from the fire and many desired to receive a part of his holy body". Understood in such a way the sense of the whole phrase would suggest that many Christians of Smyrna, recognizing the sanctity of their bishop Polycarp, wanted to take away with them the remnants of his body from the fire and to touch them before putting them in the tomb. However, as we will see, it is not a real meaning of this fragment. The phrase wouldn't have any sense if it had been understood that many Smyrnean Christians wanted to take away the body of Polycarp in order to bury it. This meaning should be excluded for two reasons: there was no need for many Christians to do so and the last part of the phrase should be understood in another way. Crucial for our research is a Greek verb κοινωνῆσαι in aorist infinitivi from κοινωνέω translated by Lightfoot and Harmer by "to touch" but the real meaning of this verb is "to have a fellowship with; to participate in something", "to receive a part of" or even "to possess"[21]. Because of the supposition that the real cult of relics in ancient Christianity begins in the 4th century and not earlier many modern translators of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17,1 understand it as a confirmation that the Christians of Smyrna just wanted to take away the remnants of Polycarp's body from the fire, to touch them and then to bury them.

I'm afraid that this is not a real meaning of that phrase simply because the Greek verb κοινωνέω means something else. And last but not least, let us notice that when the author talks about having fellowship with the body of the holy bishop he does not use the Greek word σῶμα like earlier but σάρξ which has a more material sense and in English is usu-

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[21] H. G. Liddell – R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1994, p. 969; J. B. Ligthfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* ..., admits such a meaning in the note 23 on p. 241 of their translation.

ally translated as "flesh". So the author clearly understands this fellowship with material remains of Polycarp's flesh which remained after its burning and not with the body buried in the tomb. If it is so and κοινωνέω means "to have a fellowship with; to participate in, to receive a part of", the meaning of the whole phrase would be the following: "many desired to take away the relics of Polycarp's body and [many desired] to have a fellowship with his holy flesh/to receive a part of his holy flesh". Even if the first part of this text could be understood that many Christians of Smyrna desired to take away the remnants of Polycarp's body in order to bury it, the second part does not permit such an interpretation. How many Smyrneans could have had a fellowship with the holy flesh of Polycarp or receive a part of it if it was buried? Let us note that the text tells us nothing explicitly about the question of putting Polycarp's body in the tomb. At this moment of our analysis three meanings of *Martyrdom* 17,1 should be excluded:

- many Smyrneans desired to take away the body of Polycarp from the fire in order to bury it because there was no need for many people to do so;

- many Smyrneans desired to take away the body of Polycarp from the fire and touch it because the meaning of κοινωνέω is a different one;

- this fellowship with the holy body of Polycarp would not be possible if his body had been put into the tomb.

So the meaning of the final part of the text is: "Many desired to take away the remnants of Polycarp's body and many desired to have fellowship (to became possessors of) with his holy flesh". They wanted to have a spiritual fellowship with the martyr Polycarp by possessing the remains of his flesh. The author does not explain why the Christians of Smyrna desired to have this kind of spiritual fellowship with the material remains of their bishop but we can imagine that they have searched his protection and intercession before God.

In MPol 17,2 the author explains how it happened that there was a serious problem with the body of the martyr Polycarp: "So he incited Nicetes, the father of Herod and brother of Alce, to plead with the magistrate not to give up his body, „«or else», he said «they may abandon the crucified one and begin to worship this man» – all this being done at the instigation and insistence of the Jews, who even watched when we were about to take it from the fire".[22]

The same Evil One put forward Nicetas to plead with the magistrate not to give away Polycarp's body (μὴ δοῦναι αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα) to the Christians of Smyrna. The author also

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[22] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17,2; J. R. Holmes, *op.cit.*, p. 241; Greek text B. Dehandschutter, *op.cit.*, p. 125: Ὑπέβαλεν γοῦν Νικήτην τὸν τοῦ Ἡρώδου πατέρα ἀδελφὸν δὲ Ἄλκης ἐντυχεῖν τῷ ἄρχοντι ὥστε μὴ δοῦναι αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα· μὴ, φησίν, ἀφέντες τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον τοῦτον ἄρξωνται σέβεσθαι. Καὶ ταῦτα ὑποβαλλόντων καὶ ἐνισχυόντων τῶν Ἰουδαίων, οἳ καὶ ἐτήρησαν, μελλόντων ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς αὐτὸν λαμβάνειν. In Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical history* IV,15,41 the Greek text is the following: Ὑπέβαλον γοῦν Νικήτην τὸν τοῦ Ἡρώδου πατέρα, ἀδελφὸν δὲ Ἄλκης ἐντυχεῖν τῷ ἡγεμόνι ὥστε μὴ δοῦναι αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα· μὴ, φησίν, ἀφέντες τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον τοῦτον ἄρξωνται σέβειν. Καὶ ταῦτα εἶπον ὑποβαλλόντων καὶ ἐνισχυόντων τῶν Ἰουδαίων, οἳ καὶ ἐτήρησαν, μελλόντων ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς αὐτὸν λαμβάνειν.

clearly affirms that all this was done "This he said at the suggestion and urgent persuasion of the Jews" (Καὶ ταῦτα ὑποβαλλόντων καὶ ἐνισχυόντων τῶν Ἰουδαίων) who "who also watched us, as we sought to take him out of the fire" (οἳ καὶ ἐτήρησαν, μελλόντων ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς αὐτὸν λαμβάνειν). The attitude of the Jews should be understood as an effort to block the development of Polycarp's cult among the Christians of Smyrna. In fact, Nicetas mocked Christians saying they would "forsaking him that was crucified, they begin to worship this one" (μὴ, φησίν, ἀφέντες τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον τοῦτον ἄρξωνται σέβεσθαι).

We do not know if Nicetas arrived at this conclusion on his own or at the instigation and entreaty of the Smyrnean Jews but this fact shows us that Christians were seen there as the people who worshiped the dead: the crucified Jesus and now Polycarp. So not giving away the body would prevent them from developing the cult of Polycarp. We know that in early Christianity the cult of martyrs was not necessarily connected with the cult of their bodies because sometimes these bodies were burnt or Christians did not know where they were buried. This was, for example, the case of St. Ignatius of Antioch whose cult in ancient Christianity was very vivid, even if nobody knew the place of his burial nor where the remnants of his body were. In some cases, however, like that of Polycarp, the Christians wanted to have these remains of his body for cult. What kind of cult was it? The cult of martyr Polycarp's body buried in the tomb or the cult of his relics? This is a fundamental question for our research.

In fact, this is already a commonly accepted conclusion by many scholars that the cult of relics begins only in the second half of the 4th century when in post-Constantine times a new phenomenon of Christian faith surged: the fact to consider the saints as patrons and mediators in contact with God, faith in miracles and also pilgrimages to the holy places and tombs of martyrs and saints.[23] Especially the conviction of Christians in late antiquity that God acts stronger in some places, through some people and objects, and so apart from personal faith, the physical contact with these "carriers" of God's power gives the possibility to benefit from it. These convictions became the foundation of the new practice to reopen the tombs of martyrs or saints and to take away the fragments of their bones. As R. Wiśniewski rightly pointed out, the respect and care for mortal rest of the deceased, especially martyrs in Christianity was not born in late antiquity but was present already in the 2nd century, as is confirmed by the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17-18. As we have seen, Wisniewski considers our text as a witness of such respect and care but not as a testimony of belief that in the body of Polycarp or his remains there is the miraculous power of God; that was a fundamental feature of the cult of relics developed in the 4th century.[24] In short, he does not see any reference to the cult of relics in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17–18. I do not agree with this assumption because, as I have already pointed out, he tries to define

[23] Cf. R. Wiśniewski, *Początku kultu relikwii na Zachodzie...*, p. 11.
[24] *Ibidem*, p. 14.

the cult of relics as it began and developed in the 4th century and from this perspective to analyze the texts from the 2nd century. This procedure, however, is highly questionable from the methodological point of view. We cannot judge the Christian texts of the 2nd century CE with the same parameters and definitions of the 4th century. I am convinced that *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17–18 is the witness of the cult of relics but not understood explicitly as a belief in the miraculous power of God present in the remnants of Polycarp's body (even if we cannot exclude such a meaning) as in the 4th century but as "fellowship with his holy flesh". Our text says nothing about the reason why the Smyrnean Christians desired to have a fellowship with his holy flesh but it cannot be excluded that they considered the remains of Polycarp's body as those embodied with God's power. The best thing to do in this kind of research is to follow the logic of the texts themselves trying to understand them in their historical and cultural contexts and not to define any phenomenon and then treat it as a unique measure for all *époques.*

In the final part of MPol 17,2 and in 17,3 we find a very interesting explanation regarding the difference between the cult given to Jesus Christ and the cult given to the martyrs. The author affirms that for Christians: "They did not know that we will never be able either abandon the Christ (ἀγνοοῦντες ὅτι οὔτε τὸν Χριστόν ποτε καταλιπεῖν δυνησόμεθα), who suffered for the salvation of the whole world oh those who are saved, the blameless on behalf of sinners or to worship any other (οὔτε ἕτερόν τινα σέβεσθαι). For this one, who is the Son of God, we worship, but the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of the Lord, as they deserve, on account of their matchless devotion to their own King and Teacher (τοῦ τον μὲν γὰρ υἱὸν ὄντα τοῦ θεοῦ προσκυνοῦμεν, τοὺς δὲ μάρτυρας ὡς μαθητὰς καὶ μιμητὰς τοῦ κυρίου ἀγαπῶμεν ἀξίως ἕνεκεν εὐνοίας ἀνυπερβλήτου τῆς εἰς τὸν ἴδιον βασιλέα καὶ διδάσκαλον). May we also become their partners and fellow disciples".[25]

The text strongly underlines that Christians cannot either abandon Christ (τὸν Χριστόν ποτε καταλιπεῖν) nor worship anyone else (ἕτερόν τινα σέβεσθαι). And later the author explains a theological difference between the cult of Christ and the cult of martyrs which will be held in the next centuries of the Church's history: "For this one, who is the Son of God, we worship (προσκυνοῦμεν), but the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of the Lord (τοὺς δὲ μάρτυρας ὡς μαθητὰς καὶ μιμητὰς τοῦ κυρίου ἀγαπῶμεν)". The text makes a clear difference referring the Greek verb προσκυνοῦμεν only to Christ and not to the martyrs who are loved as disciples and imitators of the Lord.

In MPol 18,1–3 the text suddenly interrupts theological interpretations and returns to describe the situation in Smyrna after Polycarp's death: "The centurion therefore, seeing the opposition raised on the part of the Jews, set him in the midst and burnt him after their custom. And so we afterwards took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will

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[25] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17,2; M. W. Holmes, *op.cit.*, p. 241; Greek text SCh 10 bis, p. 232.

permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter."[26]

The author comes back to the accusation of the Smyrnean Jews who provoked all the confusion regarding the body of Polycarp. As it was said before, probably the Smyrnean Jews did not permit the local Christians to take away the body of the bishop from the fire. Because of the quarrel between the Christians and the Jews the centurion put the body in the midst of the people (θεὶς αὐτὸν ἐν μέσω) and ordered to burn it following a local custom (ὡς ἔθος αὐτοῖς ἔκαυσεν). Then the text underlines that not the whole body of Poly-carp was burnt and that Christians took his bones (ὕστερον ἀνελόμενοι τὰ ὀστᾶ αὐτου) described as "more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold" (τιμιώτερα λίθων πολυτελῶν καὶ δοκιμώτερα ὑπὲρ χρυσίον) and "and laid them in a suitable place" (ἀμεθέμεθα ὅπου καὶ ἀκόλουθεν ἦν). Since not the whole body of Polycarp burnt and there were still his bones (τὰ ὀστα) in the fire, the Christians took them away in order to lay them in a proper place. The text confirms the common practice in early Christianity to collect the bones of a martyr which remained after his or her burning in the fire, considered as more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold. And this is another ele-ment showing how ancient Christians dealt with the material remnants of a martyr's body. As we can see, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18 confirms the beginning of the tradition that the relics (or what remained from the martyr burnt in the fire) are his bones (τὰ ὀστα). In the future, the remaining bones of a martyr or saint would be treated as an equivalent of rel-ics. All these relics would be later laid in a suitable place. What did the author mean? Were the remains of Polycarp's body laid in the tomb or in another place for the cult of relics? It is very difficult to say. We know from the other early Christian texts of this period that they were usually laid in the tomb but here the author says nothing about that.

Finally, the last part of the text evokes a few issues connected with the cult of martyrs. Firstly, the Christians of Smyrna used to meet on the anniversary of Polycarp's death in the very place where his bones had been laid with joy. Secondly, they would celebrate the day of his death as the day of his birth for heaven. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* would be then the most ancient Christian witness of the cult of martyrs on the day of his death's anniversary celebrated as the day of his *dies natalis* for heaven. Thirdly, the aim of the celebration of Polycarp's martyrdom is to commemorate those that had already fought and train and prepare those who will fight in the future. In this sense it cannot be excluded

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[26] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18,1-3; Greek text SCh 10 bis, p. 232: Ἰδὼν οὖν ὁ κεντυρίων τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων γενομένην φιλονεικίαν, θεὶς αὐτὸν ἐν μέσω, ὡς ἔθος αὐτοῖς ἔκαυσεν. Οὕτως τε ἡμεῖς ὕστερον ἀνελόμενοι τὰ τιμιώτερα λίθων πολυτελῶν καὶ δοκιμώτερα ὑπὲρ χρυσίον ὀστα αὐτοῦ ἀμεθέμεθα ὅπου καὶ ἀκόλουθον ἦν. Ἐνθα ὡς δυνατὸν ἡμῖν συναγομένοις ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ χαρα, παρέξει ὁ κύριος ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου αὐτοῦ ἡμέραν γενέθλιον, εἰς τε τὴν τῶν προηθληκότων μνήμην καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἄσκησίν τε καὶ ἑτοιμασίαν. In *Ecclesiastical history* IV,15.43−44 we find the same text except ὁ κεντυρίων which is remplaced by ἑκατοντάρξης.

that the Christians of Smyrna believed in God's power indwelling the mortal remnants of Polycarp's body to be able to train and prepare future martyrs. If so we would have here the beginning of the process developed in the future Christian cult of relics in the 4th century and later.

In conclusion, in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* we have the witness of the cult of the martyr's remains laid "in a suitable place" which was probably a tomb or some other similar place. The text does not confirm *expressis verbis* the cult of relics as it was understood in the 4th century as a belief in God's power indwelling the mortal remnants of the martyr but it does not exclude it. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* confirms, however, the will or even practice by Christians to possess privately the relics of Polycarp's body in order to venerate them. It is probable that this practice was known in Christianity at that time because it is hard to imagine that it would have been the spontaneous reaction of the Christians of Smyrna. If it had been so, the author certainly would have explained it to the readers of his text and since there is nothing like that, we can suppose that this practice was understood by them. In conclusion, in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* we do not have a cult of relics as it was practiced and understood in the 4th century and later on but we do have a testimony of the cult of relics understood as a private possession of the remnants of Polycarp's body and spiritual fellowship with them.

As we can see, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18 confirms the beginning of the tradition that the relics (or what remained from the martyr burnt in the fire) are his bones (τὰ ὀστᾶ). In the future, the remaining bones of a martyr or saint would be treated as an equivalent of relics. All these relics would be later laid in a suitable place. What did the author mean? Were the remains of Polycarp's body laid in the tomb or in another place for the cult of relics? It is very difficult to say. We know from the other early Christian texts of this period that they were usually laid in the tomb but here the author says nothing about that.

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[footnote] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18.1–3: Greek text SCh 10 bis, p. 232: ...

Translations of the Warrior Saints Dragon-Slayers' Relics in Byzantium

Justyna Sprutta

History of relics of the warrior saints dragon-slayers in Byzantium, requires a separate reflection devoted entirely to this issue. This article is just a sketch aiming at a preliminary overview of the problem. The origin of the cult of warrior saints - dragon-snake slayers – is sought in the ancient hero worship, and is perceived as its continuation.[1]

However, it might be deduced from Friedrich W. Deichmann's view of the Christian cult that all the warrior saint dragon-slayers were Christian martyrs. They could not have been the continuation of a hero cult as such. Deichmann believes that the Christian cult of martyrs, including the ancient tombstone worship, exceeds the hero worship to such an extent, that it is impossible to bridge the "chasm" between the two.[2] Instead Adalbert G. Hamman traces the origins of the Christian cult of martyrs back to the worship of the dead, from which in his opinion it evolved.[3]

Even though warrior-martyrs were all authentic figures, while ancient heroes known from mythology and belles-lettres, fictional characters, the notion of tracing back the saint warrior-slayers' worship to the ancient hero worship seems prevailing. Moreover, Jan Kracik suggests not just genealogical but also in a way functional connection of the cult with the Christian worship of the saints and their relics.

The idea of deriving the saint warrior dragon-slayers cult from the ancient hero worship finds its ground in the similarities occuring in both cults.[4] Both cults consisted of nu-

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[1] E. H. Kantorowicz, 'Gods in Uniform', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 105 (1961), no. 4, pp. 368–393.

[2] F. W. Deichmann, *Archeologia chrześcijańska*, Warszawa 1994, p. 54 (F. W. Deichmann, *Christian Archaeology*, Rome 1993).

[3] A. G. Hamman, *Życie codzienne pierwszych chrześcijan (95–197)*, Warszawa 1990, p. 306 (A. G. Hamman, *La vie quotidienne des premiers chrétiens: 95–197*, Paris 1971).

[4] J. Kracik, *Relikwie*, Kraków 2014, p. 30.

merous analogous rites, such as erecting buildings dedicated to heroes and warrior saints, as well as the translation of their relics. In both cases the translation of relics was associated with the belief that the grace obtained from them would migrate to their destination. The real presence of the person in its relic, bringing plentiful welfare, was also assumed.

The first translations took place in the Christian East. The Byzantine emperors' ambitions played a significant part. Relics were brought to Constantinopole as early as the 4th century, although they were not the remains of Christian dragon-snake slayers. By order of Emperor Theodosius (or Constantius II, according to some sources) in 356 A.D. the relics of Saint Timothy, and in the following year of Andrew the Apostole and Luke the Evangelist, were transferred to the capital of Byzantium and deposited in the church of the Holy Apostles, which at that time acted as an imperial necropolis.[5]

Depositing the bones of those saints in this particular location may be regarded as an act of enhancing the status of both the place and the Byzantine emperors who were to be laid to rest among the apostles after their death. The presence of the relics in Constantinopole was also supposed to grant the rulers the protection of the saints. Thus the translations of the relics and placing them in the capital of the Byzantine Empire were the tools of ideological policy of its rulers.[6]

Robert Wiśniewski adds that before the bones of the abovementioned saints were transferred to Constantinopole they were supposed to have been submitted in Ephesus (St. Timothy), Patras (Andrew the Apostle) and Alexandria (St. Luke). The researcher perceives the fact of transposing the bones to Byzantium, instead of simply building a martyrium over their burial site, as a design to worship the relics, sanctify their place of burial and add glory to the place (the same can also be said about the relics of the saint dragon-slayers), that is the mausoleum of Constantine the Great and the very city of Constantinopole.[7]

We should add that Emperor Constantine the Great was also seen as a dragon-slaying warrior saint, depicted as such by Eusebius of Caesarea in his biography of the emperor, in the description of a slab placed in front of the imperial palace in Constantinopole. Constantine the Great appears there as the tamer of the dragon lying dead at his feet and the feet of his sons. The dragon should be seen more as the symbol of paganism than of Satan.[8] Also Jesus himself is perceived as a warrior (wearing the uniform of a Roman officer) tri-

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[5] N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, Paris 1975, pp. 364–402. A. Stróż, Narodziny kultu relikwii męczenników na Zachodzie', *U schyłku starożytności. Studia Źródłoznawcze*, 13 (2014), pp. 72–73; A. Sulikowska, *Ciała, groby i ikony. Kult świętych w ruskiej tradycji literackiej i ikonograficznej*, Warszawa 2013, p. 320; Ch. Walter, *Sztuka i obrządek Kościoła bizantyńskiego*, Warszawa 1992, p. 175. (Ch. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*, London 1982).

[6] A. Sulikowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 320–321. Cf. S. Bralewski, 'Życie religijne mieszkańców Konstantynopola', in: *Konstantynopol, Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyńskim*, ed. M. J. Leszka, T. Wolińska, Warszawa 2011, p. 420.

[7] R. Wiśniewski, 'Narodziny kultu relikwii i jego najwcześniejsze świadectwa', in: *Początki kultu relikwii na Zachodzie*, ed. R. Wiśniewski, Warszawa 2011, p. 21. A. Stróż, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

[8] Euzebiusz z Cezarei, *Życie Konstantyna*, Kraków 2007, III, 3.

umphing the victory over evil. This is how he is depicted in the mosaic in the Archbishop's Chapel in Ravenna – trampling (Latin *calcatio*) the personifications of evil – the lion and the snake (being nonetheless a reconstruction).[9] In this context Constantine the Great appears as a special successor of the Saviour.

The history of Byzantine relics' translations says that apart from the relics of Saint Demetrius worshipped in Thessaloniki - traditionally acknowledged to be a warrior fighting not with a dragon-snake but its substitute, a scorpion - and of Saint Nicolas in Myra (before they were moved do Bari) some valuable relics of Eastern Christian saints were transported to Constantinopole.[10]

The reception of relics in Constantinopole was of a very solemn nature. First they were greeted triumphantly and gleefully at the city gates (so called *synanthesis)*, then they were accompanied by a procession along the streets (*propompe*), and finally deposited in the sanctuary, which had been prepared especially for them (*apothesis*).[11] Constantinopole was famous for owning the most valuable relics. Sometimes they found their way there as an expression of gratitude of rules who had benefited from the Byzantine emperor's help, at other times Byzantine emperors acquired the relics for political aims, or Constantinopole was just a stop on their journey elsewhere.

It also happened that the relics were sent from Constantinopole to other sites or that Constantinopole did not manage to gain valuable relics at all.[12] The cult of holy martyrs was mainly expressed by worshiping their relics, but frequently – if a martyr was known for exceptional piety during his lifetime, and therefore his future cult could have predicted – his funeral on a especially solemn character, accompanied by special prayers and carrying torches.[13]

However, the practice of exhuming the bodies of saints and dismembering their remains in order to obtain relics soon commenced. This practice remained in conflict with the Roman law, forbidding the violation of graves. The ban was maintained by Emperor Theodosius I, who ordered to build martyria over the burial sites, thus proving that the graves had not been violated, condemning in the 386 A.D. Code any infringements disturbing the peace of the dead.

He commanded that the bodies of Christian martyrs were buried outside the city limits, and recommended the cult of the burial site and prohibited dismembering the saints' bodies and trading their remains. The ban was nevertheless broken as the relics of the saints were

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[9] O. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna*, Princeton 1948.

[10] Ch. Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 165. Cf. S. Bralewski, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

[11] The three stages are derived from the arrival of the emperor scene, depicted e.g. on coins; Ch. Walter, *op. cit.*, pp. 166–167.

[12] S. Bralewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 421–423.

[13] M. F. Baslez, *Prześladowania w starożytności. Ofiary, Bohaterowie, Męczennicy*, Kraków 2009, p. 272.

commonly partitioned as early as in the 5th century.[14] Now and again the relics first fell into private hands, before they found their way to the tembples dedicated especially to them.[15]

The Byzantines had special veneration for martyrs, including the dragon-snake warrior-slayers, who were connected to the interpretation of their martyrdom as the most perfect imitation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.[16] Victorious warrior's and martyr's seemed very effective in his advocacy for the living, therefore various Byzantine cities sought to obtain a warrior's relics, even though not each of them was in fact a warrior. One such example was Saint Demetrius of Thessalonica, he was a deacon, though according to Teofano's *Life* (Emperor Leo VI's wife) the praying imperial couple saw the saint in a soldier's attire carrying weapons.[17]

Saint Demetrius is depicted as a soldier e.g. in Emperor Basil II's *Menologion* (11th century), decorated with miniatures by the painters of Constantinopole monasteries.[18] The proof of the Saint's relics' advocacy was the myrrh, that is a fragrant oil they secreted.[19] Some kind of oil secretes from icons to be the so-called indirect relics. Myrrh-secreting from the body of Saint Demetrius was found in Thessalonica or Sirmium, where the cult of this saint was initiated by Patriarch Leontius II (*aka* Leontios), the Prefect of Illyria. The body of Saint Demetrius was transferred in 418 A.D. to a basilica in Thessalonica erected especially for those relics in 412 A.D.[20]

Similarly to St. Demetrius's orarion also St. Theodor's shield was as important a relic as their bodily remains, among their other belongings. The story of St. Theodor's cult says that his shield was hung on the church in Dalisandos, which was named after him.[21] Aforementioned St. Theodor (Tiron, also identified as Theodore Stratelates) was more venertated than St. George. St. Theodor was worshipped in Euchaita (Amasea), which was renamed Theodoropolis in 972 A.D.[22], and where his body was buried (his relics were transferred to Brindisi in Italy in 7th century), St. Theodore was also worshipped in Euchanea.

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[14] A. Sulikowska, *op. cit.*, p. 319. J. Kracik, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[15] S. Bralewski, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 418.

[17] Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Burlington 2003, p. 72; M. White, *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900–1200*, Cambridge 2013, p. 67.

[18] G. Minczew, *Święta księga, ikona, obrzęd. Teksty kanoniczne i pseudokanoniczne a ich funkcjonowanie w sztuce sakralnej i folklorze prawosławnych Słowian na Bałkanach*, Łódź 2003, p. 147.

[19] The soldiers defending Thessalonica against the Bulgars in 1040, led by Tsarevich Peter Delyan, were told to have spent the night before the battle praying and anointing themselves with the myrrh secreting from St. Demetrius' relics. After the battle they learnt from the Bulgarian captives that commanding the Greek troops was a certain youth whom the Greeks identified as St. Demetrius. P. Ł. Grotowski, *Święci wojownicy w sztuce bizantyńskiej (843–1261). Studia nad ikonografią uzbrojenia i ubioru*, Kraków 2011, p. 154.

[20] G. Minczew, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–147; P. Arnott, *Bizantyjczycy i ich świat*, Warszawa 1979, p. 241.

[21] Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints ...*, p. 50. Cf. E. Russell, *St Demetrius of Thessalonica. Cult and Devotion in the Middle Ages*, Oxford 2010.

[22] H. Delehaye, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires*, Paris 1909, p. 11.

Both places of worship are confirmed in the *Life* of Lazarus of Mount Galesius, this work mentions Lazarus making a journey first to Euchanea, where St. Theodor was worshipped, and then to Euchaita to honour St. Theodore in a church dedicated to his name.[23] Furthermore, an icon of St. Theodore described in the *Homily* of archbishop John Mauropos (11th century), and treated with the utmost reverence, was displayed at his tomb. Empress Eudoxia was attributed with donating the relics of St. Theodor to the city of Euchaita.[24]

Both St. Theodors were still known and worshipped in the second half of 9th century in Euchaita and Euchanea, where their sanctuaries were located. Both them and the centers of their cult were identified. Applying some details regarding the hagiographic tradition of St. Theodor Tiron together with the Office to St. Theodor Stratelates contributed to the fact, for example incorporating the legend of St. Theodor Tiron's combat with the dragonsnake into the life of St. Theodor Stratelates. Besides, the cult of St. Theodor Stratelates evolved from the cult of St. Theodor Tiron. In 9th century hagiography and hymnography St. Theodor Tiron started to be named St. Theodor Stratelates.[25]

As it was with the body of St. Demetrius, the posthumous fate of St. George's body (martyred around the year 303 or 305) was also taken care of by his servant, thus fulfilling the wish of his master. In the 4th century the body of St. George was transferred to a sanctuary erected in Lydda, but after the Arab conquest the relics were scattered around the globe. This is how the transfer of Saint George's relics to a sanctuary in Lydda is described in the Synaxarium (3rd November): 'Having converted to Christianity Constantine and the saint's worshippers built a beautiful church in Lydda. That is where the saint's body was placed. The dedication of the church and the transfer of the body took place on November 3, accompanied by numerous miracles, with which Christ wished to honour His servant. Since that day, the Church has been celebrating the transfer.[26]' Translations of relics were often said to be accompanied by miracles. Those miraculuos events indicated to apotropaic effectiveness of the relics even then.

Let us consider now the relation between a relic and an icon as an indirect relic. In the Eastern Christian tradition almost or literally the same efficacy is assigned to a relic, e.g. a saint's body, as to an icon. The saint is present both in his relics and in the icons which depict him. In the case of Saint Phanourios - trampling (that is: defeating) the dragon-snake, depicted in an icon painted by Angelos Akotantos – his icon must be considered to be his only relic as he is believed to have been a fictional character and so his body – as the proper relic – simply does not exist.[27]

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[23] Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints* ..., p. 58.

[24] H. Delehaye, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[25] N. S. Attala, *Coptic Icons*, vol. 2, Cairo 1998, p. 131. Cf. J. Sprutta, 'Święty Jerzy Zwycięzca oraz inni wojownicy w postbizantyjskich wybranych ikonach obszaru bałkańskiego', in: *Religijna mozaika Balkanów*, ed. M. Walczak-Mikołajczykowa, Gniezno 2008, p. 216.

[26] G. Gharib, *Icone di santi. Storia e culto*, Roma 1990, p. 157.

[27] Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints* ..., p. 206.

In this context the translation of his icon would in some measure equal the translation of his relics. We need to add here that the cult of Saint Phanourios did not occur until 1360 A.D. (in Crete) and only started as a consequence of the finding of an icon depictiong the saint in a ruined church on the outskirts of Rhodes. The local metropolitan Neilos is said to have deciphered the name appearing on the icon as 'Phanourios'.[28] We should also add that the conviction of the real presence of the worshipped person in their depiction, be it an icon or a sculpture, may also be discerned in the pagan belief in the real, caring presence of a hero in a picture or a statue of his; as exemplified by placing the images of Hercules on military banners.[29]

The power of God was flowing through both the relics and the icons; Mary Cunningham calls them its 'channels'.[30] Even if the relic was a minute particle of the saint's body, the secreted myrrh or simply an object he used in everyday life, it lost none of its potency.[31]

Sometimes relics were even obtained through theft, but it seems more common that cities were given the relics as gifts or simply purchased them. Sometimes relics were stolen for ideological-political reasons. This was the case with Saint Demetrius's relics being stolen by Bulgarians. Saint Demetrius was said to have been protecting Bulgarians, not the Greeks, since then, especially at the time of the rebellion against the Byzantine Empire (1185–1186), initiated by the brothers Theodor-Peter and Asan.[32]

Frequently the cult was transferred from the relics onto icons, including the icons of dragon-snake warrior-slayers.[33] It can be stated that icons had the same, or nearly the same, status as relics, however relics and icons cannot be categorically identified with each other in all their multidimensionality. The only icon fully identified with the relic was the prototype of *Mandylion*.

It should also be added that the icons depicting the saints, were sometimes placed on their graves, presumably marking the tombs in this way. The icon and the relics inside the tomb emanated holiness, constituting a significant *apotropaion*, and their transference (as well as the sanctuary dedicated to them) was an important public act of recognizing the saintliness of the person thus posthumously venerated. In case of the icons depicting the victorious defeat of the dragon-snake by the warrior saint, their apotropaic significance was emphasized by the saint's triumph.[34]

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[28] M. Simon, *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa I–IV*, Warszawa 1979, p. 105 (M. Simon, *La Civilisation de l'antiquité et le christianisme*, Paris 1972).

[29] Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints* ..., p. 182; M. Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[30] M. Cunningham, *Wiara w świecie bizantyńskim*, Warszawa 2006, p. 94.

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 96.

[32] A. Dobyčina, 'A Divine Sanction of the Revolt: the Cult of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica and the Uprising of Peter and Asen (1185–1186)', *Studia Ceranea*, 2 (2012), pp. 113–114; G. Minczew, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[33] Ch. Walter, *Sztuka i obrządek* ..., p. 165.

[34] *African Zion. The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, ed. R. Grierson, Addis Ababa 1996, p. 244; A. Sulikowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–178; J. Kracik, *op. cit.*, p. 78; J. Sprutta, 'Święty Jerzy Zwycięzca ...', p. 217.

The Byzantine emperors exploited both the saints' icons and their relics in order to enhance their own status, and ensure military victory (addressing the saint vanquishers of evil in their prayers) or to establish the authority of their own dynasty. We should point to e.g. Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, who removed the miraculous icon of St. Demetrius (either in 1143 or 1149) from the Saint's sanctuary in Thessalonica to the Pantocrator monastery in Constantinople, which performed the function of the Komnenos' necropolis.[35] Over five centuries have passed since the fall of the Byzantine Empire, but the belief in the efficacy and status of relics and their specific form – icons - has not weakened at all.

trans. Anna Grzybowska

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[35] A. Dobyčina, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–116.

Heracles on military banners.

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    M. Simon, *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa I–IV*, Warszawa 1979, p. 105 Cf. Simon/ *La Civilisation de l'antiquité et le christianisme*, Paris 1972).

    Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints ...*, p. 162; M. Simon, op. cit., p. 105.

    M. Cunningham, *Wiara w świecie Bizantyńskim*, Warszawa 2006, p. 94.

    Ibidem, p. 96.

    A. Dobychina, 'A Divine Sanction of the Revolt: the Cult of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica and the Uprising of Peter and Asen (1185–1186)', *Studia Ceranea*, 2 (2012), pp. 113–120; G. Minczew, op. cit., p. 122.

    Ch. Walter, *Sztuka I obrazów ...*, p. 169.

    African Zion. The Sacred Art of Ethiopia, ed. R. Grierson, Addis Ababa 1996, p. 160; A. Różycka-Bryzek, op. cit., pp. 177; G. J. Kraak, op. cit., p. 78; J. Sprutta, *Święty Jerzy w ...*, op. cit.

Incorruptibility and Division: the Cult of Saints' Relics in Byzantium and in Slavonic Countries

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The Life of Saint John the Baptist by bishop Serapion and dating back to the century AD, contains a quotation from what Christ said to Mary after the funeral of Saint Elisabeth, Saint John's mother: "Her mouth will never suffer putrefaction, because she kissed your pure lips; and her tongue will not be dismembered in the earth, because she prophesied concerning you ... nor will her womb decay in the earth, because her body, like her soul, shall suffer no putrefaction"[1]. This early Christian text may be regarded as representative of the believers' basic idea of saints' relics. At the same time it explains what made it possible for the relics to remain beyond the influence of time and decay. Personal sanctity, spiritual strength, state of grace and closeness to other saints were said to guarantee the incorruptibility of the body after death.[2]

A popular Russian song uses folk vocabulary to describe the remains of the two martyr princes of Kiev, Boris and Gleb, killed in 1015 (fig. 1, 2). After Sviatopolk, the alleged murderer of his brothers, abandoned their bodies, God told the angels to "dig the earth through, move it, search it, and find the holy bodies. And the soil was all mixed with blood... Yet, the holy bodies of Boris and Gleb, though they had laind in the ground for over 30 years, were uncorrupted ...".[3]

Thus not only were the remains of the princes saints Boris and Gleb not vulnerable to the natural decay, but they also proved to be resistant to destruction by living creatures,

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[1] 'The Life of John the Baptist by Serapion', in: A. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies: Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1927, pp. 244–245.

[2] Cf. P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago 2015.

[3] 'Święci Borys i Gleb', in: *Pieśń o niebieskiej księdze. Antologia rosyjskiej ludowej poezji religijnej*, ed., transl. R. Łużny, Warszawa 1990, p. 173.

Fig. 1. Enkolpion with the picture of Martyr
Saint Boris, Kievan Rus', 12th–13th c.,
National Museum in Warsaw

Fig. 2. Enkolpion with the picture of Martyr
Saint Gleb, Kievan Rus', 12th–13th c.,
National Museum in Warsaw

both animals and people. These remains were made of matter that was excluded from the natural order of things.

Scholars specializing in the Christian culture perceive the cult of saints and their bodies as one of the basic distinctive and valuable features of this culture that distinguishes the ancient pagan world view from the Christian one. Beginning from the 4th century, the literature of this cultural circle has paid special attention to the history of relics, their influence on the fate of the living and to their individual traits and properties.[4] The holy remains were said to secrete different substances, notably myrrh, as well as blood, and to have an unusually pleasant scent. However, religious emotions of the believers were stirred above all by the durability of the relics, which is of particular interest for the scholars analyzing their history. It should be stressed that inviolability of relics can be understood in two ways, either as the invulnerability of the holy body to decay (reflected in the Old Church Slavonic term *нетленность*) or as a particular feature of the relics that makes it impossible for them to be divided and venerated as smaller parts. These two interpretations often coexist, and in the history of Christian cult there have been cases of holy body relics that were well preserved (resistant to decay) despite having been divided.[5]

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[4] P. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

[5] W. Bonser, 'The Cult of the Relics in the Middle Ages', *Folklore*, 73 (1962), no 4, p. 235; A. M. Talbot, 'Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines. The Evidence of Miracle Accounts', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56 (2002),

Boris Uspensky, who in his works dwells deeply upon the question of incorruptibility of saints' bodies, noticed that there had been a substantial difference in the perception of their indestructibility in the Greek and Russian tradition – it has a different value to each of them. According to the Russian scholar, the Byzantines did not regard the durability of relics as *sine qua non* evidence of sanctity. For the Russians, on the other hand, it would be a proof that the deceased had been granted grace and enjoyed an elevated position in the celestial hierarchy.[6] Boris Uspensky also claims that in the Byzantine Empire invulnerability to decay might have been regarded as highly suspect, though he admits there have been some accounts of saints whose bodies did not yield to time.[7] He underlines the fact that in Russian sources information can be found about unearthing bones from the saints' tombs – and these *were* remains altered by time – but normally only intact remains were of the greatest value.[8]

Scholars do not share a common view as to whether or not the Byzantine and Russian approach to the indestructibility of relics did actually differ so significantly. Many scholars, such as Gail Lenhoff, believe the question of the cult of relics in different periods of the Russian culture is much more complex. Lenhoff noticed that the convictions related to the relics in Kievan Rus' were a particular blend of Byzantine and pre-Christian traditions, though these beliefs emerged in opposition to both of them. In the culture of Muscovite Rus' they underwent major changes, for example in their approach to the flesh and bones of the deceased, which was opposed to the Kievan models.[9] Generally, one can assume that in the religious practice of the Eastern Slavonic lands the cult of saints' bodies preserved as a whole was of foremost importance. They were displayed to the worshippers as particular cult objects both in their original graves (like monks entombed in the caves of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra) and in the temple itself, in the most important area of the nave before the iconostas (like in the case of the three Vilnius martyrs in the Cathedral of the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius) (fig. 3). At the entrance to the temple the congregation "greeted" the icons and relics. The latter, untouched by time, were only dressed in robes or liturgical cloth and were usually visible to the faithful. And they still are, as the traditions related to icons and relics have not changed much in the Orthodox Church throughout the centuries.

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pp. 159–160. Cf. A. Sulikowska, *Ciała, groby i ikony. Kult świętych w ruskiej tradycji literackiej i ikonograficznej,* Warszawa 2013, pp. 139–157.

[6] Е. Бакалова, 'Реликвии у истоков культа святых', in: *Восточнохристианские реликвии,* ed. А. М. Лидов, Москва 2003, pp. 27-28; B. Uspienski, *Religia i semiotyka,* transl., ed. B. Żyłko, Gdańsk 2001, p. 30; Ф.Б. Успенский, 'Нетленность мощей: Опыт сопоставительного анализа греческой, русской и скандинавской традиций', in: *Восточнохристианские реликвии,* ed. А. М. Лидов, Москва 2003, pp. 151–152.

[7] B. Uspienski, *Religia i semiotyka ...,* p. 30.

[8] *Полное Собраніе Русскихъ Льтописей,* XXI, *Книга степенная царскогродословія,* vol. 1, С.-Петербургъ 1908, p. 311.

[9] G. Lenhoff, 'The Notion of „Uncorrupted Relics" in: Early Russian Culture', in *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs, I. Slavic Cultures in the Middle Ages,* ed. B. Gasparov, O. Raevsky-Hughes [California Slavic Studies, XVI], Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford 1983, pp. 252–253, 265, 267.
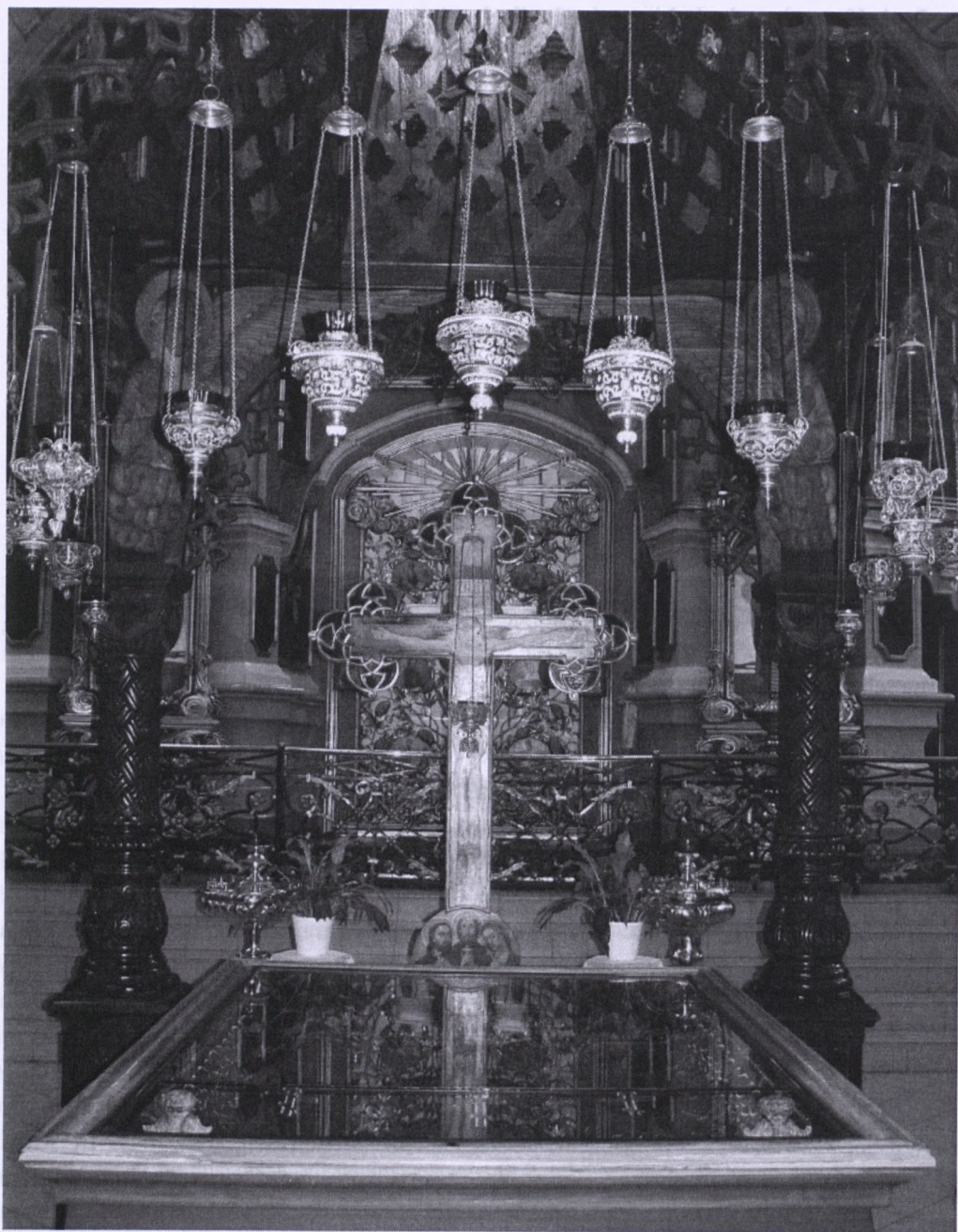
Fig. 3. Relics of the Martyr Saints of Vilnius in the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius

It appears that Byzantine sources show a slightly different approach to the saints' relics than that in Slavonic lands.[10] Such documents have been evoked as notes by Theognostus, metropolitan of Kiev (half of the 14th century), who expressed a conviction that only sinners' bodies were not subject to decay so that they could not be united with the soil created by God, and the decomposition of flesh was a sign of God's grace.[11] Another oft quoted sources are the writings belonging to the Mount Athos tradition concerning customs and beliefs related to the dead, where bodies used to be interred temporarily; once the bones got cleansed, they were exhumed, washed and reburied in the special ossuaries – this was believed to be the only righteous and pious manner of handling the corpses.[12]

Older sources also show that in Byzantium the cult of body parts relics of the saints was common and there was little interest in whole, undivided bodies of the dead; that is confirmed by the accounts of the visitors to Constantinople according to whom most of the relics in the churches of the capital were: heads, arms, hands, fingers and hair.[13]

Similarly, outside Constantinople, both in the Byzantine period and after 1453, which witnessed the political decline of Byzantium, the faithful displayed particular veneration to such relics as the right hand of Saint John the Baptist[14] (fig. 4), whereas the cult of wholly preserved bodies, such as that of Saint Spyridon of Corfu, was quite infrequent (fig. 5).[15] What made the cult of his relics even more unusual is that they were portrayed in numerous (though rather late) icons showing Spyridon's body standing in a châsse-coffin.[16] It is very likely this is how these relics had been kept since the 7th century when they came to Constantinople, that is long before they arrived in Corfu in 1489.[17]

The reason for dividing saints' remains in the Byzantine Empire was the worshippers' strong demand for relics as well as a complex political situation that resulted in displacing

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[10] For the Byzantine burial customs based on archeological discoveries, cf. N. Poulou-Papadimitriou, E. Tzavella, J. Ott, 'Burial Practices In Byzantine Greece: Archaeological Evidence and Methodological Problems for its Interpretation', in: *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe. Archaeological and Historical Evidence,* eds. M. Salamon, M. Wołoszyn, A. Musin, P. Špehar, M. Hardt, M. P. Kruk, A. Sulikowska-Gąska, Kraków, Leipzig, Rzeszów, Warszawa 2012, vol. I, pp. 377–428.

[11] Ф. Б. Успенский, 'Нетленность мощей …, p. 152.

[12] *Ibidem*, pp. 152–153.

[13] M. Bacci, 'Relics of the Pharos Chapel: A View from the Latin West', in: *Восточнохристианские реликвии,* ed. А. М. Лидов, Москва 2003, pp. 244–245

[14] Cf. I. Sinkević, 'Afterlife of the Rhodes Hand of St. John the Baptist', in: *Byzantine Images and their Afterlives. Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr,* ed. L. Jones, Farnham, Burlington 2014 , pp. 125–135.

[15] A. Bakalova, A. Lazarova, 'The Relics of St. Spyridon and the Making of Sacred Space on Corfu: between Constantinople and Venice', in: *Иеротопия: создание сакральных пространств в Византии и Древней Руси,* ed. А. Лидов, Москва 2006, pp. 434–454.

[16] *Architecture as Icon. Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art,* eds. S. Ćurčić, E. Hadjitryphonos, K. E. McVey, H. G. Saradi, New Haven, London 2010, pp. 256–259, no. 42; A. Bakalova, A. Lazarova, *op. cit.,* p. 438.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 435.

and dividing relics[18]. A similar phenomenon could be observed in the West, where since the 9th century it had been commonplace to divide relics.[19] It tends to be associated with hagiocentricity, typical of barbarians and rooted in their pagan religion.[20] There is no doubt, however, that one of the indirect causes of such practice was growing demand for saints' remains due to the conviction that the physical presence of at least a minute fragment of such remains guaranteed mira-

Fig. 4. Relic of Saint John the Baptist's hand in the Cetinje Monastery in Montenegro

cles in the place where it was kept. Nonetheless, it seems incorrect to compare uncritically the customs concerning relics in Byzantium with those in medieval western culture.

In the written sources on the subject there is a frequently cited text (late 3rd or early 4th century), the *Testament of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* containing a request for leaving their bodies undivided.[21] This text may confirm the existence or even a certain prevalence of dividing saints' bodies; yet, it is more probable that this request actually encouraged veneration of the martyrs as a group, and not each of them individually, as they had died together and their martyrdom was shared. It may be supposed that in the 5th–6th century dividing relics was already a common practice in Byzantium[22], and during the following centuries the bodies of some saints were split into more than one or two hundred parts. Hence, there were 152 relics of Parascheva, 175 of Pantaleon and as much as 226 of Charalambos.[23] Unfortunately, it is not known how the division was performed in case of bodies already serving as relics. It is known, however, that fragments were given out to churches. Parts of relics often appear in the *oklads*

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[18] *Ibidem*, p. 435.

[19] E. Dąbrowska, *Groby, relikwie i insygnia. Studia z dziejów mentalności średniowiecznej*, Warszawa 2008, p. 253.

[20] *Ibidem*, pp. 253–254.

[21] M. Starowieyski, 'Męczeństwo', in: *Męczennicy*, ed. E. Wipszycka, M. Starowieyski, Warszawa 1991, p. 118.

[22] O. Meinardus, 'A Study of the Relics of Saints of the Greek Orthodox Church', *Oriens Christianus*, 54 (1970), p. 132. Cf. R .Wiśniewski, 'Początki dzielenia relikwii świętych w chrześcijaństwie antycznym. Czy Grecy są winni?', in: *Timai: Studia poświęcone profesorowi Włodzimierzowi Lengauerowi przez uczniów i młodszych kolegów z okazji Jego 60. Urodzin*, ed. A. Wolicki, Warszawa 2009, pp. 174–176.

[23] С. А. Иванов, 'Благочестивое расчленение: Парадокс почитания мощей в византийской агиографии', in: *Восточнохристианские реликвии*, ed. А. М. Лидов, Москва 2003, p. 122.

(revetments) of icons[24] and in reliquary crosses and amulets worn on the chest by the faithful.[25] Relics even happened to be added to pigments used for painting icons.[26] Such customs date back to the 5th century.[27] Beginning from the year 787 the "keeping of saints' remains" in churches (that is, parts of their relics) was sanctioned by the VII Ecumenical Council: a presence was required for a church to be consecrated (canon 7).[28]

Fig. 5. Procession with the relics of Saint Spyridon in Corfu

It also seems that the Byzantines collected relics, which was picturesquely described in an 11th-century poem by Christopher of Mytilene *To monk Andrew, a gullible collector of relics*, where he mentions a "chest full of saint relics": "You open them and show to your friends ten hands of Prokopios, fifteen jawbones of Theodoros and eight feet of Nestor, four heads of Georgios and twenty hips of Saint Panteleimon".[29]

It should be borne in mind that in the Russian literary tradition there are virtually no derisive texts about "gullible collectors of relics". To a certain degree this may have resulted from the fact that the Russians did not have easy access to saints' remains and so the creation of collections was scarcely possible. However, the lack of such jocular discourse is even more due to the fact that, in the Russian conditions, mockery of relics suggesting their inauthenticity would be treated as blasphemy against objects that were to be worshipped and deemed holy. Thus, what lay behind such an elevated status of relics in eastern Slavonic lands?

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[24] *Ibidem*, p. 129. Cf. G. Jurkowlaniec, 'Małopolskie obrazy relikwiarzowe w XV i XVI wieku', in: *Artifex doctus. Studia z historii sztuki ofiarowane prof. Jerzemu Gadomskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. W. Bałus, W. Walanus, M. Walczak, vol. II, Kraków 2007, pp. 127–134.

[25] С. А. Иванов, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[26] *Подлинные акты относящиеся к Иверской иконе Божией Матери принесенной в Россию [в Москву] в 1648 г.*, Москва 1879, приложенія, pp. 3–4.

[27] *Ibidem*, pp. 3–4.

[28] J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 13, Florentiae MDCCLXVII, co. 427 c. Cf. D. J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eight-Century Iconoclasm*, Toronto 1986.

[29] *Christophori Mytilenaei Versuum variorium collectio cryptensis*, ed. M. De Groote, "Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca", 74, Turnhout 2012, no. 114. v. 21–9.

For sure, the relics were perceived as belonging to the sacrum and they represented saints to this world and were bestowed with a part of their power. According to Gail Lenhoff, Russians highly esteemed undivided corpses, uncorrupted by time and atmospheric conditions, as opposed to pagan burial customs.[30] Nevertheless, it is very difficult to recognize the differences concerning funeral customs in pagan and Christian traditions and it is not possible to draw a definite conclusion that a radical change in the treatment of corpses followed Christianization.[31] Fyodor Uspensky interestingly confronts the convictions related to the state of the body after death with Byzantine and Scandinavian traditions and he associates the Russian belief that incorruptibility confirms the holiness of a body with similar convictions found in Scandinavia.[32] Uspensky assumed that the Scandinavian tradition might have influenced the Russian as late as at the beginning of the 11th century. He pointed that in Northern Europe objects of cult were supposed to be "whole, untouched" (cf. Old Norse *heill* meaning "whole" and *heilagr* – "holy").[33] He stressed the fact that the first Russian saints, such as Boris and Gleb, were closely connected with the Scandinavian tradition and the history of their relics brought the high appreciation of "untouched" remains.[34]

In the 11th century descriptions that emphasized good preservation of a dead body became common in the Russian literature. In the *Tale of Bygone Years*, right next to a reference to the discovery of Theodosius's relics in 1091 A.D., there is following information about the appearance of his relics: "the limbs were not separated and the hair of the head still adhered".[35] According to a medieval edition of the *Kievo-Pechersk Patericon*, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, killed by drowning (Prince Rostislav being to blame), was found surprisingly in his cell. The monks saw him "tied up with a stone around his neck, his robe still wet, his face gleaming, he looked as if he were alive".[36] In the mid-16th-century *Book of Degrees of the Imperial Genealogy* there is a description of Princess Olga's exhumation which indicates that she was unearthed with all limbs, nothing had changed in her

[30] G. Lenhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

[31] This was mentioned by participants in a conference: "Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe", which took place in September, 2010, in Cracow. Cf. S. Brather, 'Pagan or Christian? Early Medieval Grave Furnishings in Central Europe', in: *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe ...*, vol. I, pp. 333–341; M. Dzik, 'Bi-ritual Burials in the Central Bug River Basin During the Middle Ages', in: *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe ...*, vol. I, pp. 603–609; V. G. Ivakin, 'Burial Grounds and Graves in Medieval Kiev (10th to 13th Century)', in: *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe ...*, vol. I, pp. 625–634.

[32] Ф.Б. Успенский, 'Нетленность мощей ...', pp. 153–154.

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 159.

[34] *Ibidem*, p. 160.

[35] *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian text*, eds & transl. S. H. Cross, O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, [Publications of the Mediaeval Academy of America 60], Cambridge, MA 1953, p. 171.

[36] 'Киево-Печерский Патерик', in: *Древнерусские патерики*, eds. Л. А. Ольшевская, С. Н. Травников, Москва 1999, p. 45; *Pateryk Kijowsko-Pieczerski czyli opowieści o świętych ojcach w pieczarach kijowskich położonych*, ed., transl. L. Nodzyńska, Wrocław 1993, p. 211.

look since she was buried and neither the body nor the clothes were corrupted at all.[37] In the *Lives of Boris and Gleb* by Jacob the Monk, dated 11th century and often quoted in 16th century literature, there is information that upon its unearthing, Gleb's corpse had no signs of injury and had remained whole, not darkened or touched by worms.[38] The faces of the martyrs are said to have been "shiny as an angel's face".[39] Similarly, in the *Symeonian Chronicle* at the year 1472, the body of Metropolitan Peter, discovered in the Dormition Cathedral, Moscow, is described as "beaming with shine".[40] The same source at the year 1471 states that, upon removal of a wooden cover from the Metropolitan Jonah's grave, his relics appeared "whole and untouched", and so did his clothes.[41] A similar mention of the body and clothes of Macarius of Kalyazin, dug up during the construction of a church in Kashin in 1521, can be found in the *Nikonovsky Chronicle*.[42] In one of the folklore sources there is also a description of Prince Dmitry Donskoy's vision: he saw Kulikovo "covered with bodies of dead Christians and Tatars; the bodies of the former were glowing like candles, those of the latter were pitch-black".[43]

In the aforementioned texts there is a particular stress on the incorruptibility of the body, and the relics are frequently reported to look "as if they were alive". Occasionally some details are provided, such as the appearance of the hair, the preservation of the teeth, and, above all, the radiant face. This radiance refers the reader to icons, the relics bearing a clear resemblance to them.

The connection between the cult of icons and that of relics and the common features of both cults, are obvious, as they stem from the same way of perceiving saints as representatives and intermediaries between the visible and the invisible. What is more interesting is the relation between icons as pictures of the saints and relics as their images. Given that each icon is a representation of a saint, relics could only serve as such only in the case of those remains that have remained intact, that is, those that have preserved the saint's face "as if he or she were alive".

It is worth noting that Boris Uspensky, so as to confirm his conviction that bodies that do not undergo decay are of particular importance to the Orthodox Slavonic cult, indicates that the way of perceiving relics was influenced by icons-related customs. He assumed it was "visual perception of a saint's face", as "bodies of the deceased saints become similar

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[37] *Полное Собраніе Русскихъ Льтописей*, XXI, vol. 1, p. 28.

[38] *Ibidem*, p. 152; Е. Голубинский, *История канонизации святых в Русской церкви*, Москва 1903, p. 46.

[39] *Полное Собраніе Русскихъ Льтописей* ..., p. 152; Е. Голубинский, *История канонизации* ..., p. 46.

[40] *Реликвии в Византии и Древней Руси. Письменные источники*, ed. А. М. Лидов, Москва 2006, p. 355.

[41] *Ibidem*, p. 364.

[42] *Ibidem*, p. 383.

[43] 'Dmitrowa sobota' in: *Pieśń o niebieskiej księdze* ..., p. 176.

to icons".[44] Uspensky recalls the case of the life of Daniel the Stylite, dated late 5th century, whose body, on the worshippers' demand, was to be placed in a special frame and displayed as an icon.[45] James A. Francis underlines the fact that this transformation of Daniel's body directly to an icon, initiated by the bishop, was supposed to serve as proof for the anxious people that the Saint, even after his death, would keep on protecting the living.[46]

Such an interpretation of the tale of the Stylite Saint stresses the equivalence of icons and relics and shows that the influence of the latter is a continuation of the saint's mundane activity after his death. Such an example are the relics of Saint Spyridon displayed, as stated above, on Corfu in standing position (fig. 5). The châsse with the body inside is very similar to an iconic image and is its direct equivalent.[47] The case of Saint Spyridon relics might be treated as the most significant hint explaining the closeness of saints' remains and icons. Notably, in the Slavonic tradition saints' relics have always been accompanied with icons that were worshipped as the saints' images along with their relics. The presence of relics, regardless of whether they could be seen by the faithful or were concealed inside a châsse, was directly connected with the company of icons.

Given that the incorruptibility of relics was seen as evidence of the saint's dignity and holiness, all misdeeds committed against relics, especially attempts at damaging them, were treated by Slavs as impiety and severely punishable. There is a curious tale of a monk called Arseniy who desired contact with the remains of Joachim Osogovsky so badly that, while pretending to worship his relics, "cunningly and stealthily stole one of his fingers ..., wrapped it in canvas and put into a box". But when he was walking away with his prey "he started to wobble as if he were drunk", and thus his misdeed was discovered.[48] At night the Saint appeared to the culprit and warned him that he had been intending to punish him with a "dreadful stigma", but he would not do so out of pure mercy.[49] On the one hand, this tale shows the importance of preserving the body undivided, and on the other hand it can be read as admonition to whoever wants to commit sacrilege by damaging relics, illustrating the punishment that might ensue.

In Rus', division of saints' bodies, occurred only sporadically. This fact may have resulted from the identification of relics with icons. One should also note that among Eastern

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[44] B. Uspienski, *Religia i semiotyka* ..., p. 30.

[45] *Ibidem*, p. 119, note 32. Cf. J. A. Francis, 'Living Icons. Tracing a Motif in Verbal and Visual Representation from the Second to Fourth Centuries C.E.', *The American Journal of Philology*, 2003, 124, no 4, p. 591; M.J. Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy: the Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary*, Stanford 2005, p. 113; Ф. Б. Успенский, 'Нетленность мощей ...', pp. 157–158, note 20. P. Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, Chicago 1982, pp. 251, 266–267, 275; C. Antonova, *Space, Time, and Presence in the Icon: Seeing the World with the Eyes of God*, Fornham, Burlington 2010, p. 75.

[46] J. A. Francis, 'Living Icons ...', p. 591.

[47] A. Bakalova, A. Lazarova, 'The Relics of St. Spyridon ...', pp. 438–439.

[48] 'Żywot św. Joakima Osogowskiego (Sarandaporskiego)', transl. A. Mokrzycka, in: *Ziemscy aniołowie, niebiańscy ludzie. Anachoreci w bułgarskiej literaturze i kulturze*, ed. G. Minczew, Białystok 2002, p. 91.

[49] *Ibidem*, pp. 91–92.

Slavonic Orthodox believers there was hardly any need for dividing saints' bodies. Lenhoff has it that the beliefs related to the bodies and high valuation of undivided relics ought to be seen as opposite to pagan customs, but there is little to support this hypothesis, as burials of whole bodies (and not incinerated, for instance) had been commonplace even before Rus' was Christianized. Furthermore, the terminologies related to the preservation of bodies used in the Kievan and Muscovite period are not easily comparable because the descriptions of corpses are very vague and, like the whole Russian literature, conventionalized. It also noteworthy that in the Slavonic tradition the worship of incorruptible bodies coexisted with a belief that some of the deceased do still have bodies after death, which, however, may not be a proof of grace but of a curse as their souls are unable to leave the corpses and remain trapped inside, which transforms that the dead in question into werewolves.[50] Therefore the sheer fact of the body being well-preserved after death, was not enough for the Slavs to prove sanctity of the deceased; the other necessary condition was grace.

To sum up, the Slavs valued wholly preserved relics more than those that had been divided; yet, one of the crucial features of the cult of the saints was the conviction that upon division of the remains, God's grace present therein did not decrease proportionally but constantly abode in the body parts. Theodorus Daphnopates wrote about this in the 10th century, when the hand of Saint John the Baptist was being transferred to Constantinople. He claimed that each part of a relic had the same power as the whole undivided body.[51] Thus it can be assumed that both in Byzantium and in Slavonic lands the question of divisibility and indivisibility was of minor importance as compared to the presence of the relic in the sacrum sphere. Different types of relics were used for different purposes: parts of them were built into the foundations and walls of temples[52] or put into mobile reliquaries, particularly in enkolpia for private devotion, or else sometimes added to pigments used for painting icons.

Intact relics, in turn, had a much bigger significance to the sacred space than dismembered body parts of a saint. As in the case of the Vilnius martyrs' remains, mentioned afore, relics organized the sacred space and the church life, as its most important liturgical events were focused around them.[53] Consequently, although there was a certain functional difference between how whole and undivided relics were treated in the Slavonic lands, for the believers both of them carried the same, unalterable grace.

Transl. Szymon Żuchowski

[50] I. Lis, *Śmierć w literaturze staro serbskiej (XII–XIV wiek)*, Poznań 2003, pp. 103–104.

[51] С. А. Иванов, 'Благочестивое расчленение ...', p. 123.

[52] В. Д. Сарабьянов, 'Реликвии и образы святых в сакральном пространстве Софии Киевской', in: *Иеротопия: создание сакральных пространств в Византии и Древней Руси*, ed. А. Лидов, Москва 2006, p. 368.

[53] Cf. А. Лидов, *Иеротопия. Пространственные иконы и образы парадигмы в византийской культуре*, Москва 2009, pp. 9–10.

Raška School of Architecture in the Context of Medieval Serbian Architecture

Agnieszka Piórecka

First analyses of Serbian medieval architecture were done at the beginning of the 20th century by a Russian man, Pokryshkin[1] in 1906 and a French scholar, Gabriel Millet[2] in 1919. It has been divided into a few stylistic groups. A comprehensive study of all schools can be found in a book by Aleksandra Deroko[3]. Considering its stylistic characteristics the architecture has been divided into five schools (fig. 1): Zeta school, Raška school, Kosovo-Metohijan school, Macedonian school, Moravian school.

The first group comprises objects created before the establishment of the Nemanjić state. They can be found in Zeta (previously Montenegro) and Zachumlja (previously Herzegovina). The second group of monuments where erected between the beginning of the rule of the Nemanjić dynasty, i.e. the end of the 12th century, and the end of the 13th century. They are located in Raška. The third group are revealing the distinctive influence of Byzantine architecture and spread over the area of Kosovo and Metohija. Objects belonging here were erected in the 14th century, before the fall of the first Serbian state. The fourth group includes buildings within territory owned by princes and Serbian despots at the end of the 14th century and in the first half of the 15th century, until the loss of independence. The fifth group are composed of objects built under Turkish rule, between the mid-15th century and, approximately, the end of the 17th century.[4]

The beginning of Serbian architecture dates back to the 10th century. In its centre was Zeta which at that time became a fully develop state, uniting older, small states of Serbian

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[1] П. Покрышкинъ, *Православная церковная архитектура въ сербскомъ королевствѣ*, Ст. Петербургъ 1906.

[2] G. Millet, *L'ancien art serbe,* Paris 1919.

[3] A. Deroko, *Monumentalna i dekorativna architektura u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji*, Beograd 1953.
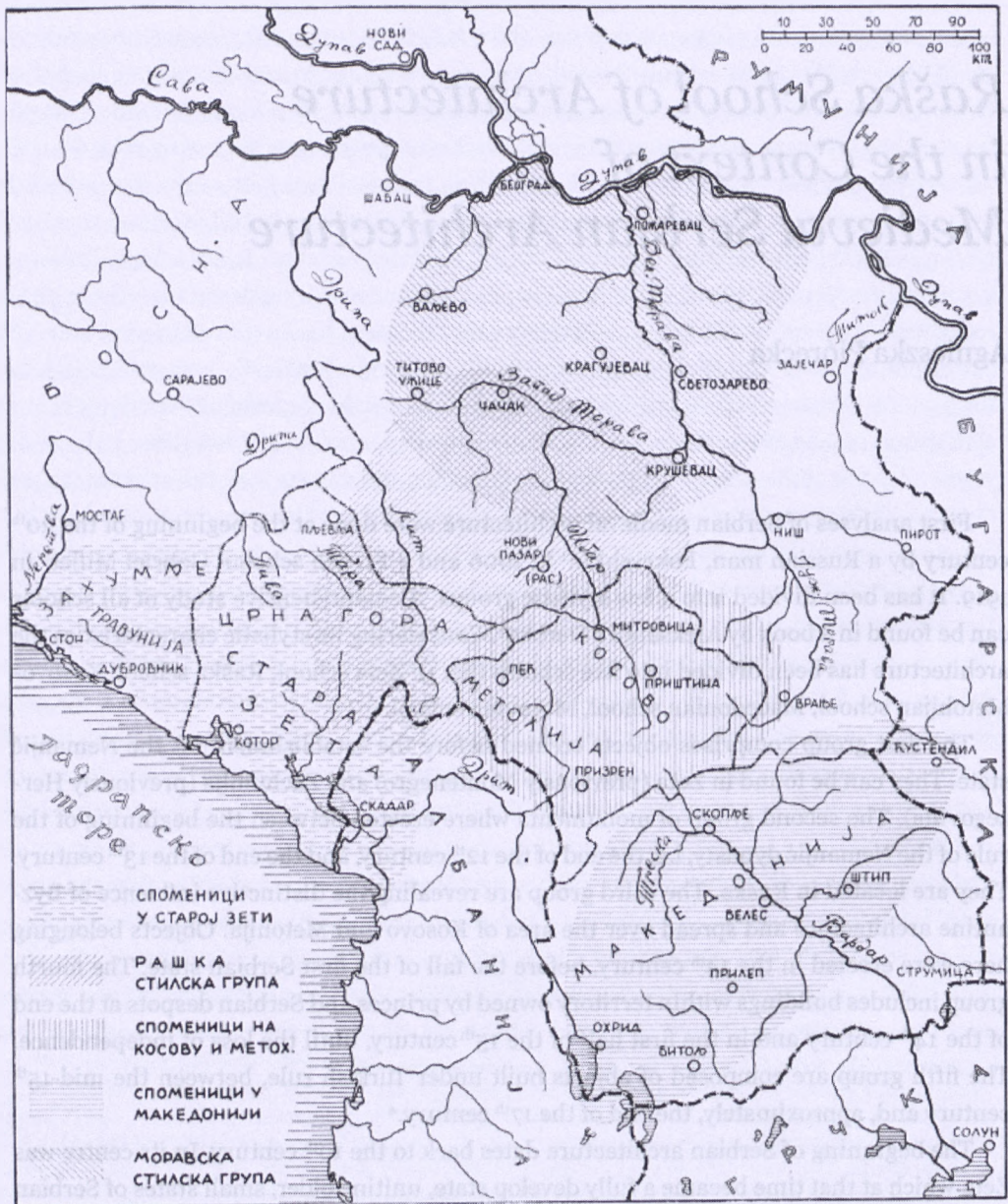
[4] *Ibidem*, pp. 23–27.

Fig. 1. Division into stylistic groups.
From A. Deroko, *Monumentalna i dekorativna architektura u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji*,
Beograd 1953, p. 24

tribes in the area of today's Herzego-
vina, southern Dalmatia, Montene-
gro and northern Albania. There are
few monuments of that time left, and
those that remain are often incom-
plete. Some of the most important ob-
jects of Zeta school are: the orthodox
church of Sv. Srđa i Vakha near Ska-
dar from XI c., the orthodox church
of Sv. Stefan near Skadar, triple nave
basilique of Sv. Nikole near Taraboš,
the orthodox church of Sv. Luke in
Kotor from 1195 (fig. 2).[5]

Aleksandr Deroko describes mon-
uments built in Raška even before
the ruling of the Nemanjić dynasty.
A quite interesting example, in terms
of architecture, is Petrova Crkva (fig.
3, 4) in the vicinity of Novi Pazar, in
the Middle Ages known as Ras. It is
probably the oldest preserved church
in the history of Serbian architecture
and it occupies an important position
in the history of the country.[6] Its indi-

Fig. 2. St. Luke church in Kotor. Photo by A. Piórecka

vidual elements are dated differently. It was built at the place of an earlier Christian object,
probably a baptistery, which according to archaeological findings may come from the 6th
century. Since the 10th century, it was the seat of the bishop and a part of a bigger complex,
surrounded by a defensive wall. As an early Serbian biographer noted, in this church took
place the second christening of Stefan Nemanjia, who thus converted to Orthodox Church.
Also, two important synods were held here. First, which condemned the Bogomil heresy,
and the second, at which Stefan Nemanjia abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Stefan
Prvovenčani and took monastic vows and the name of Symeon.[7] In terms of architecture,
it is a tetraconch with a dome supported by squinches, with three sides, except the east,
surrounded by galleries.

The period of the real beginning and full bloom of Serbian medieval architecture starts
with the ruling of the Grand Župan of Serbia, Stefan Nemanjia in the second half of the

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[5] *Ibidem*, pp. 39–42.
[6] *Ibidem*, p. 49.
[7] W. Molè, *Sztuka Słowian Południowych*, Wrocław 1962, p. 62.
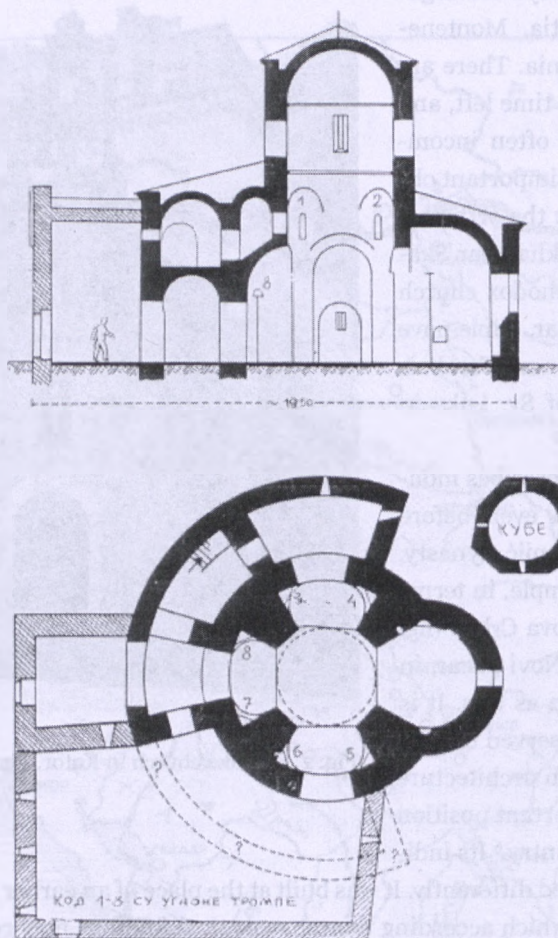
Fig. 3. Petrova Crkva near Novi Pazar – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 56

12th century. Under the rule of the Grand Župan of Serbia in the area of Kuršumljia this was temporarily the capital. According to Deroko, the Grand Župan built in the area monasteries dedicated to Bogorodica and Sv. Nikole.[8] The church of Sv. Nikole (fig. 6,7) is the only preserved monument of the bishops complex in Toplica, which in the past also included bishop's palace and other buildings, of which only the foundations are left. It was probably founded by the Grand Župan, Stefan Nemanjia between 1165 and 1168, when the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty took over the ownership of the Toplica region.[9] Ćurčić,

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[8] W. Molè, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
[9] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–65.

Fig. 4. Petrova Crkva near Novi Pazar. Photo by A. Piórecka

Fig. 5. Petrova Crkva near Novi Pazar - interior. Photo by A. Piórecka

Agnieszka Piórecka
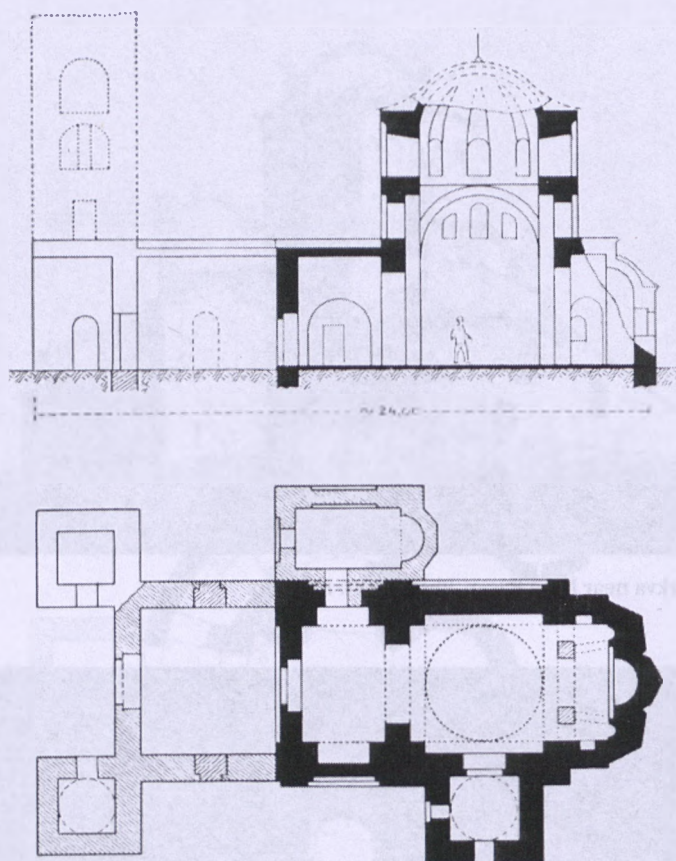
Fig. 6. St. Nikola church near Kuršumlija – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 104

however, indicates the lack of sufficient documents, proving that the church was indeed found by Stefan Nemanjia,[10] and limits its creation to years 1166–1168. Because the church was built in two stages (naos with narthex and southern chapel – erected in the first stage, exonarthex with twin-towered facade and northern chapel – erected in the second stage) Ćurčić suggests a theory that the first stage is a byzantine construction, erected under the auspices of the emperor Manuel I to commemorate one of his victories over Serbians during his campaign in 1149 and 1150. The southern chapel might have been a burial place of some high-ranking Byzantine commander, who died in a battle.[11]

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[10] S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans, from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, Yale 2010, p. 403.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 492.
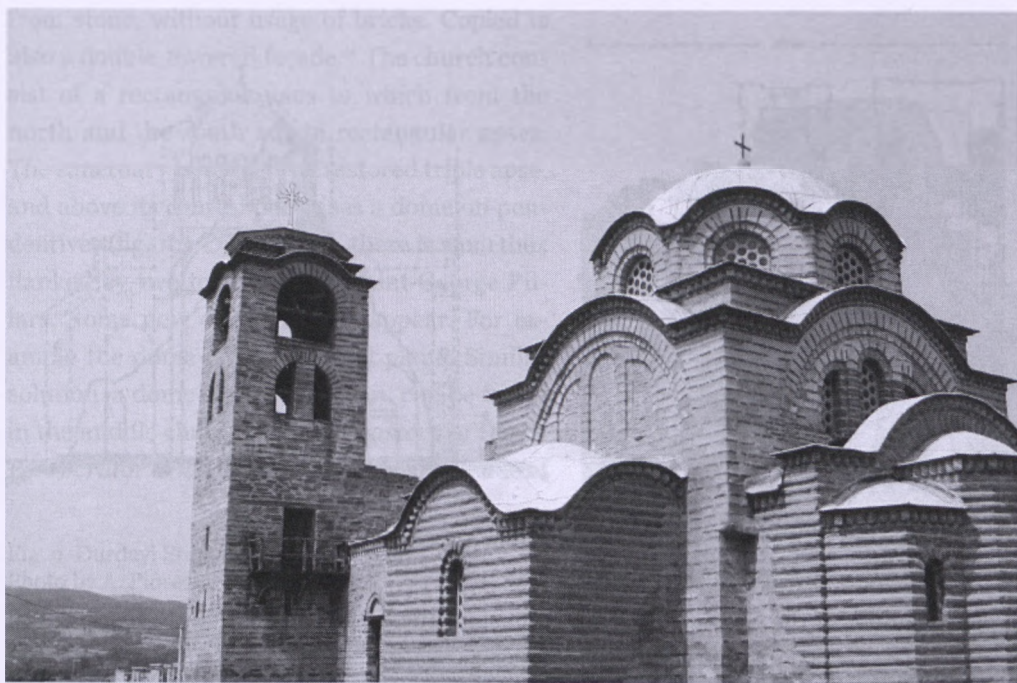
Fig. 7. St. Nikola church near Kuršumlija. Photo by A. Piórecka

The oldest part of the building was partly destroyed, but it was later reconstructed. It is a single-nave church with a triple apse and a centrally situated dome on pendentives, resting not on piers but on walls. Narthex is communicated with naos by a big semi-circular arcade. Vestibule, at the southern wall, is built on a plan of square. In 1219, when Serbian church proclaimed its sovereignty, and the bishop of Toplica as his new seat chose the church of Sv. Nikole, exonarthex, with two towers flanking the entrance, was added to the western side of the church. In the 14th century a chapel with an apse was built on the north side. The dome dominating above hexagonal space, tripartite ending of the main apse, and later vestibule are the most important elements of this school.

Chronologically, it is the first monument belonging to the Raška school, but sustaining the clear characteristic of Byzantine churches. This can be seen in the construction – an octagonal dome with a low drum and in the brick laying technique. The main part of the church, naos, was probably built by foremen brought from Constantinople. This indicates, not only the form of the church but also the building technique and the construction of windows. The exonarthex and the towers, however, were built by craftsmen coming from the coast, perhaps from Kotor.[12] It is possible that also the chapel adjoining the north side was built by them.

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[12] *Ibidem*, p. 403.

Fig. 8. Đurđevi Stupovi near Novi Pazar – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 105

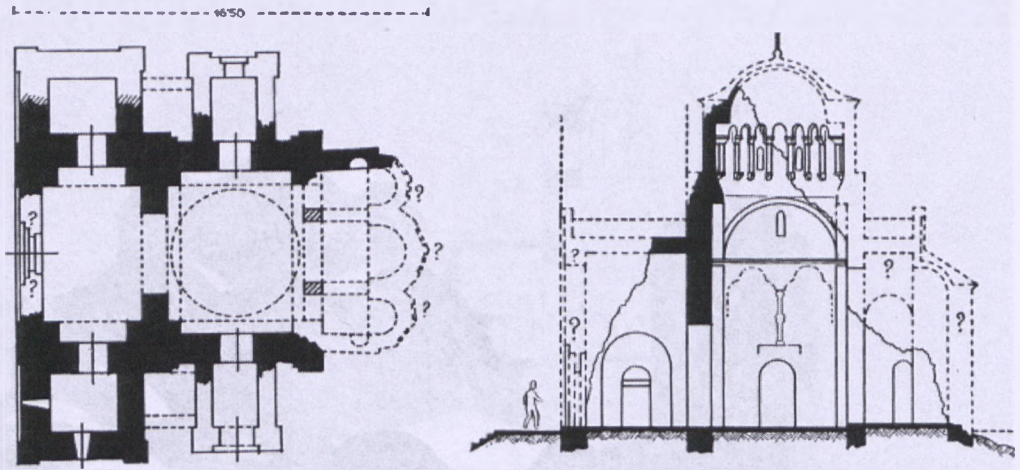The founder of the Đurđevi Stupovi monastery (fig. 8, 9, 10) is Stefan Nemanjia. The circumstances of its erection have been described in the biography of the Grand Župan. It was founded to commemorate his gratitude to St. George , shortly after the battle in 1168[13], at which Nemanjia defeated his brother and Byzantine joined forces. The Grand Župan believed that the saint rescued him from the prison, where he was thrown into by his own brother. As it is stated on the recently unveiled inscription, the main church of the monastery was erected between 1170 and 1171.[14] As historical documents indicate, it was held in high regard throughout the Middle Ages. Among other monastery's buildings dated back to the same period of time as the main church are the cistern with the well, the refectory in the southern part of the complex and most of the walls surrounding the monastery. Extensive construction works were carried out under the auspices of king Dragutin. It was at that time, that the tower above the entrance to the monastery complex was turned into a chapel and a new refectory was built, to the east of the church, but the church itself underwent only minor changes. The monastery was abandoned at the end of the 17th century, when some of its buildings were destroyed by fire during the Austro-Turkish War. In the 18th century some building materials from the monastery premises were used in construction of Novi Pazar fortress.[15]

The church architecture is unique in the history of Serbian medieval architecture. Although it repeats the type of building represented by the Orthodox church Sv. Nicole in Kuršumlija (in which the main elements of plans correspond), the walls have been built

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[13] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[14] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

[15] J. Nešković, *Đurđevi Stupovi u Starom Rasu*, Kraljevo 1984, pp. 12–21.

from stone, without usage of bricks. Copied is also a double-towered façade.[16] The church consist of a rectangular naos to which from the north and the south adjoin rectangular apses. The sanctuary is ended by a restored triple apse, and above its central part rises a dome on pendentives (fig. 10). On the west, there is a narthex flanked by two towers called Saint George Pillars. Some new elements also appear. For example the dome of an elliptical plane. Similar solution a dome elliptical in plan, can be found in the middle church of the *Monastery of Christ Pantocrator in* Constantinople. The inner side of

Fig. 9. Đurđevi Stupovi near Novi Pazar. Photo by A. Piórecka

Fig. 10. Đurđevi Stupovi near Novi Pazar – dome. Photo by A. Piórecka

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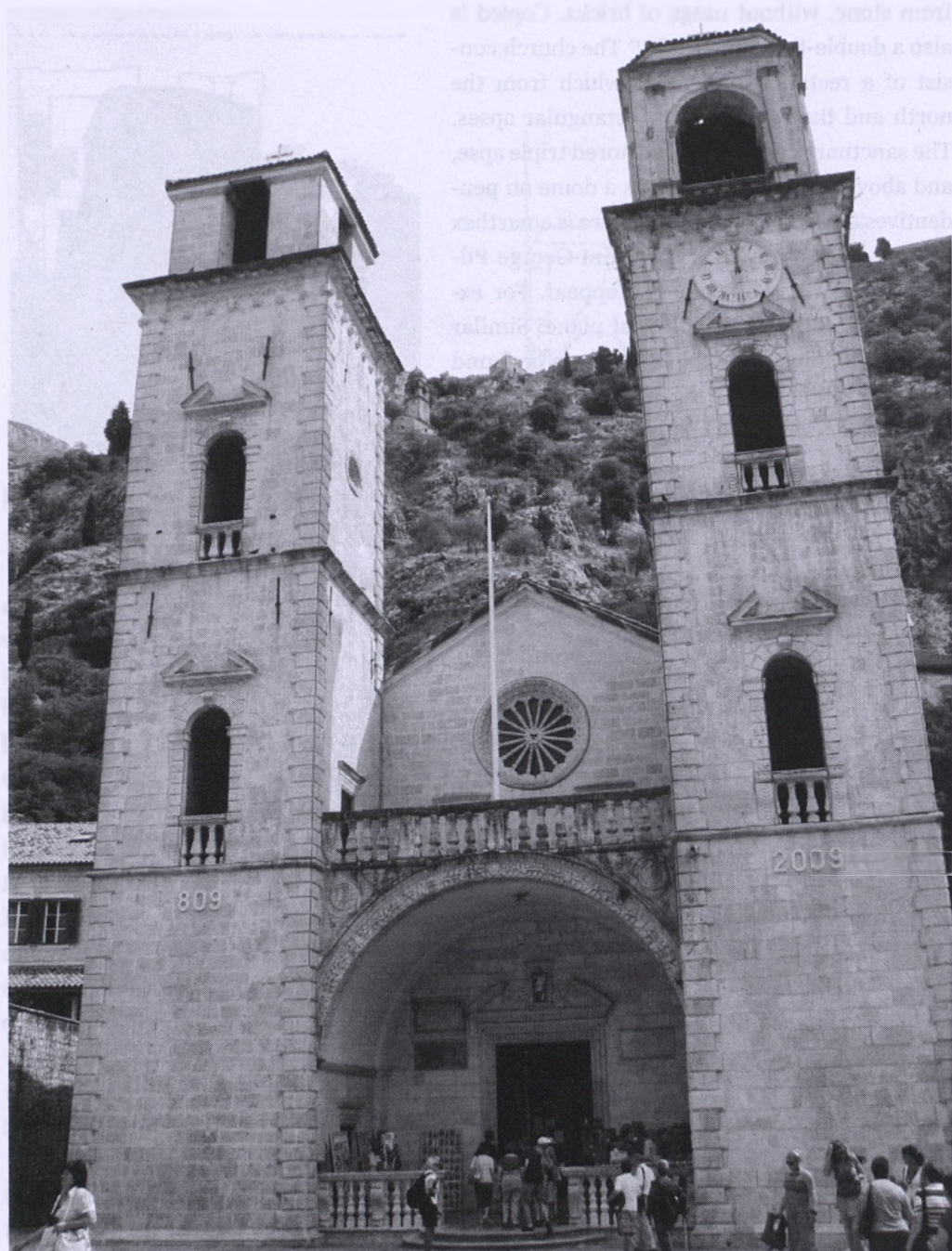[16] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, pp. 493–494.

Fig. 11. The Cathedral (sv. Tripun) in Kotor. Photo by A. Piórecka

Fig. 12. Cefalu. Photo by A. Piórecka

the drum below the dome is partitioned by a frieze of arcades on colonnettes resting on corbels. As a result, it has a shape resembling a cross in plan. Similar design of a dome can be found in Limoges Cathedral, which points out Nešković.[17] It doesn't mean, of course, a direct import but only the existence of a common source model. Also in case of the façade there are some analogies to the cathedrals in Kotor (fig. 11) and Cefalù (fig. 12). Ćurčić suggest that there were western builders hired to build the cathedral, but they were given instructions concerning spatial design as well as the character of the orthodox church and its liturgical requirements. As an example might have served the church of Sv. Nikole in Kuršumlija. But there still is the question of the origin of those builders. Previous research papers focused their attention on coastal Kotor and Longobardian Como, what, however, seems to be disputable. Both, in terms of geography and history, any closer links could be found in Hungary. The only certainty is that the builders of Đurđevi Stupovi came from the western culture circle, as at that time, there were no highly qualified craftsmen in Serbia.[18]

Monastery in Studenica (fig. 13, 14, 15) was built at the time when its founder Stefan Nemanjia was at the peak of his power. He defeated his enemies and conquered new territories. It was his third and the most important foundation (two previous were the

[17] J. Nešković, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
[18] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 495.
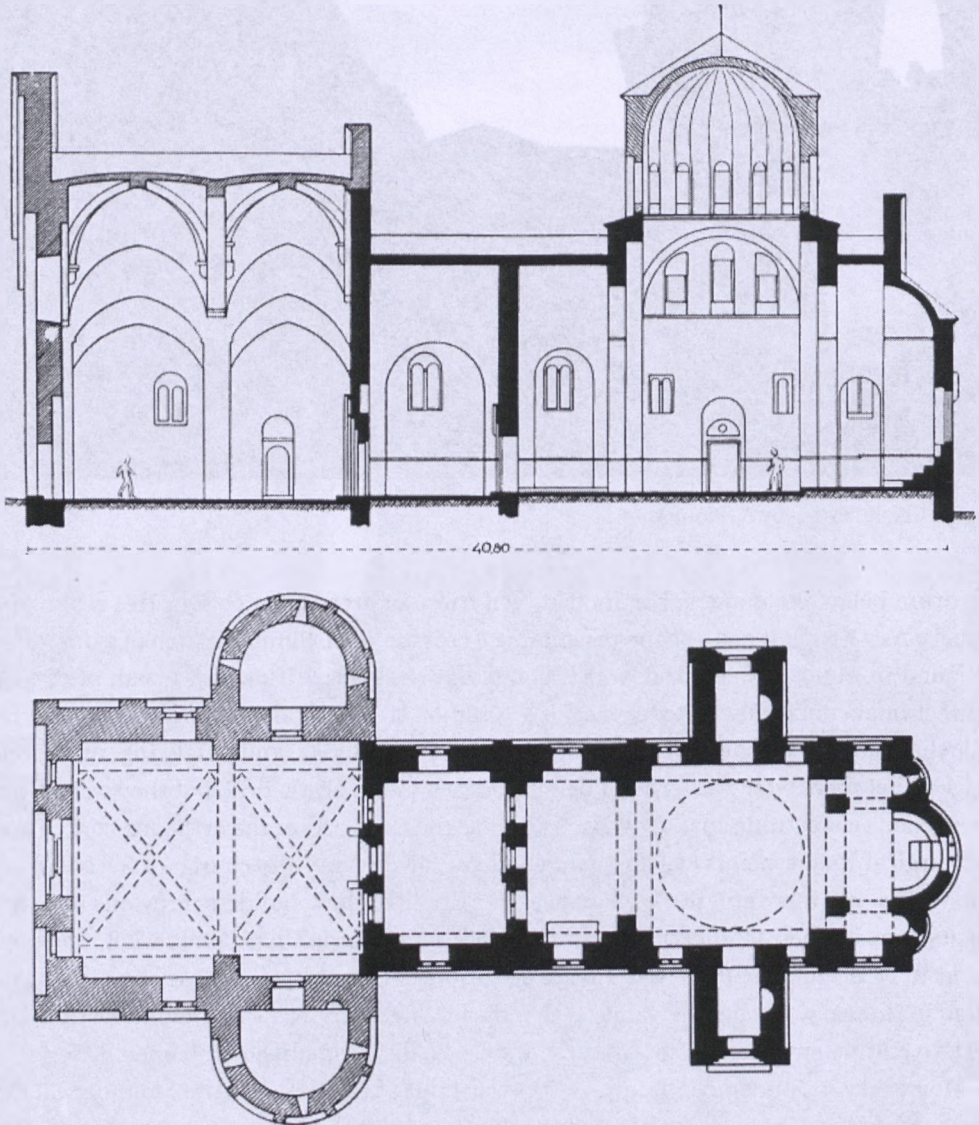
Fig. 13. Studenica – crkva Bogorodice – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 106

Fig. 14. Studenica – crkva Bogorodice. Photo by A. Piórecka
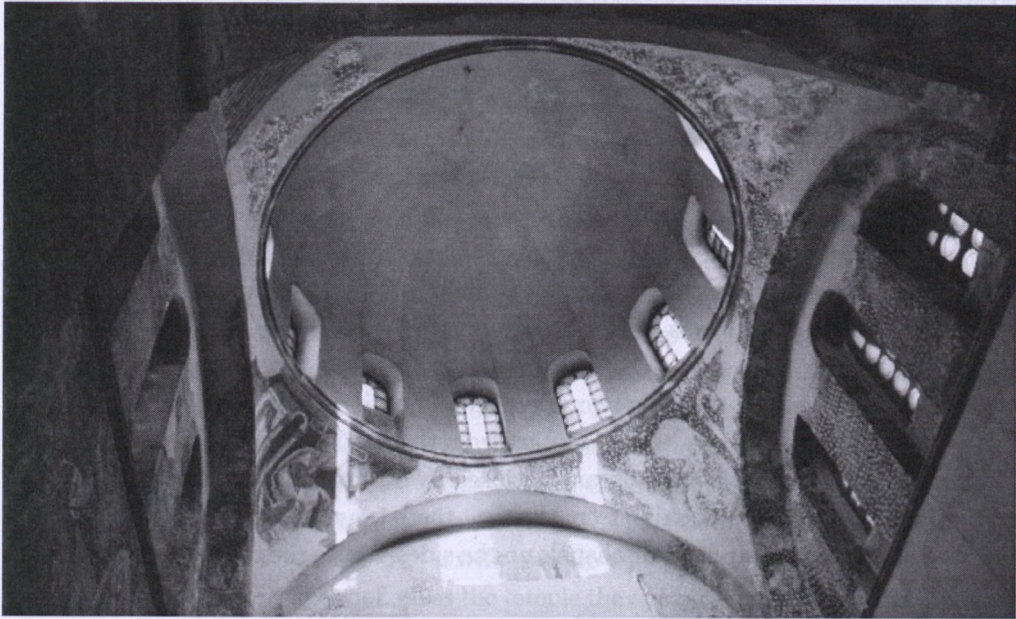
Fig. 15. Studenica – crkva Bogorodice – dome. Photo by A. Piórecka

Fig.16. Theotokos Pammakaristos in Constantinople. Photo by A. Piórecka

church of Sv. Nikole in Kuršumlija and Đurđevi Stupovi near Novi Pazar) erected not only as a place of his burial but also as a sign of his power as a ruler.[19] To build this church Nemanjia gathered the best master builders and craftsmen. In twelve years i.e. since 1183[20] to 1196 the church was ready; however, some researchers as a commencement date state year 1186[21].

This church is bigger than his two previous foundations. It is single-nave, two-bay. Two rectangular apses adjoin its central part from the north and the south, giving vertical projection of a cross. The sanctuary is closed by a semi-circular apse with adjacent prothesis and diaconicon. Looking from the west there is a narthex and added later two-bay exonarthex with semi-circular chapels on the sides. Above the centre rises a dome on

[19] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 496.
[20] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[21] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

Fig. 17. Chora monastery in Constantinople – pareklesion – dome. Photo by A. Piórecka

pendentives, resting on a tall drum and partitioned by a ring of arcades with windows in between. The drum itself rests on a strong hexagonal substructure, what according to Deroko is a characteristic feature of a Raška orthodox church.[22] Ćurčić pays some attention to the structure of the dome. Its inner side is partitioned into twelve fragments and resembles the construction of the 12th century domes in Constantinople churches, for example in the church of Theotokos Pammakaristos (fig. 16) and in the church of Chora Monastery (fig. 17). Because in Romanesque architecture of the west, domes of this size don't exist, it implies the presence in Studenica a master from Constantinople. The reference to Constantinople model of architecture is also visible in the partitioning of the external wall of the dome substructure by a big arch a with a triple window.[23] Covering of the nave and the narthex by a single gable roof, gives the temple the appearance of a basilica. Cladding

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[22] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–75.
[23] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, pp. 497–498.

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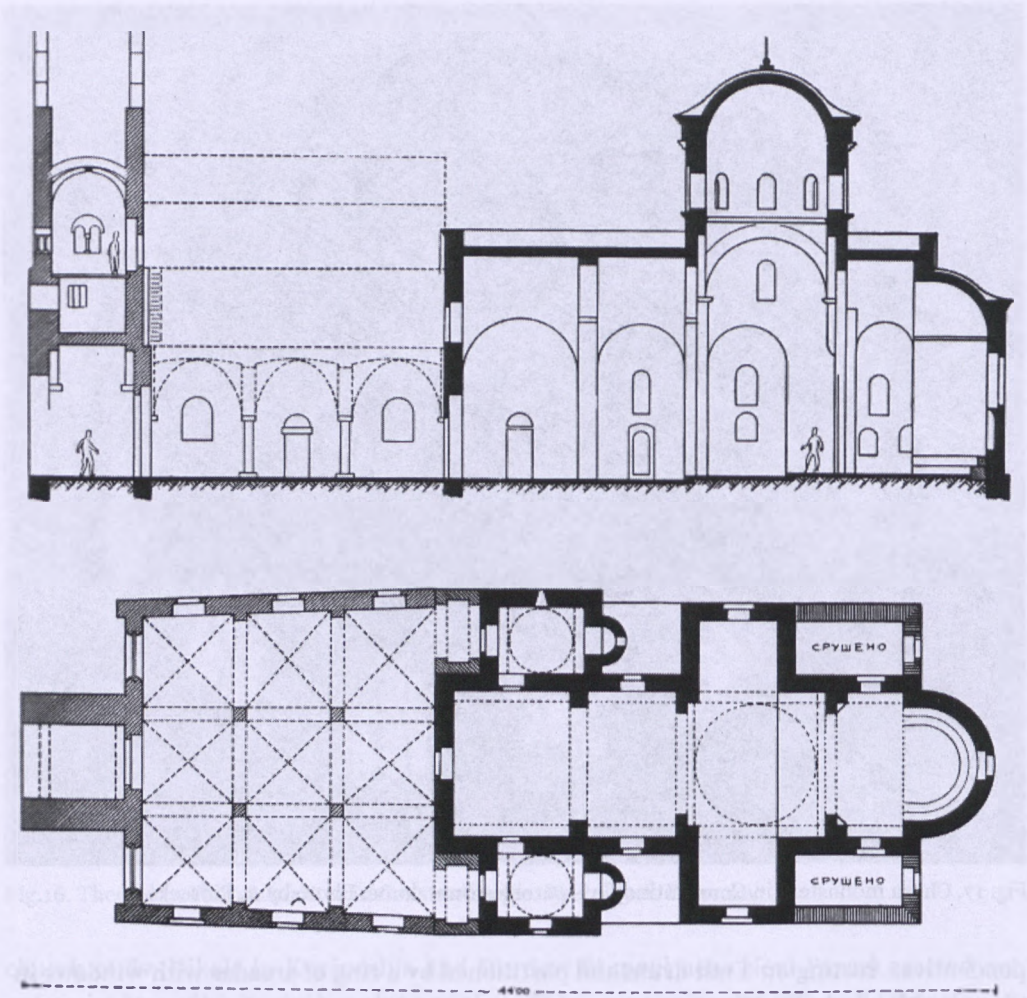
Fig. 18. Žiča monastery – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit*. p. 107.

outer walls with smooth stone slabs has a distinctively Romanesque character, although it resembles a little bit of proconnesian marble. External walls are partitioned by tall lessens and below the roof line runs a characteristic frieze of arcades resting on corbels. Windows divided by a single colonnette are modelled on Romanesque bifora. Portals and windows in apses have Romanesque sculptural decoration, which is characteristic for the territory of Italy, especially Apulia and Dalmatia.[24] Around the year 1230, king Radoslav, the grandson of Stefan Nemanjia, modified the shape of the of the church, adding exonarthex.[25]

[24] W. Molè, *op. cit*., p. 66.
[25] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit*., p. 498.

Fig. 19. Žiča monastery. Photo by A. Piórecka

Žiča Monastery (fig. 18, 19) served as the coronation church for Serbian kings. The crowning ceremony of Stefan Prvovenčani and his successor, son Stefan Radoslav took place here. It is also the place of proclamation of independent Serbian archbishopric.[26] There aren't any historical sources from the time of the construction of the main church left, it is known however, that the work started after Sv. Sava had returned from Hilandar Monastery, in 1206 and ended in the year 1217 when Stefan Prvovenčani received the regal crown from Rome. The monastery quickly became the most important spiritual centre of medieval Serbia. In 1220 the Serbian Church gained autocephaly and the Žiča Monastery became the seat of the archbishop.[27] In the mid-thirteenth century it was moved to Peć. The church is dedicated to the Ascension (Holly Salvation). It is single-nave, three-bay, with the sanctuary closed by a semicircular apse. To the main bay, from the north and the south, adjoin apses. Bošković points out that those apses, resembling in the western architecture a sort of low transepts, can also relate to the solutions existing in the Athos region, where side apses functioned as choirs. They may have referred to the appearance of the Hilandar Monastery, before its reconstruction under king Milutin.[28] At the first bay,

[26] W. Molè, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[27] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, pp. 499–500.

[28] M. Kašanin, Đ. Bošković, P. Mijović, *Žiča. Istorija, architektura, slikarstvo*, Beograd 1969, pp. 94–95.
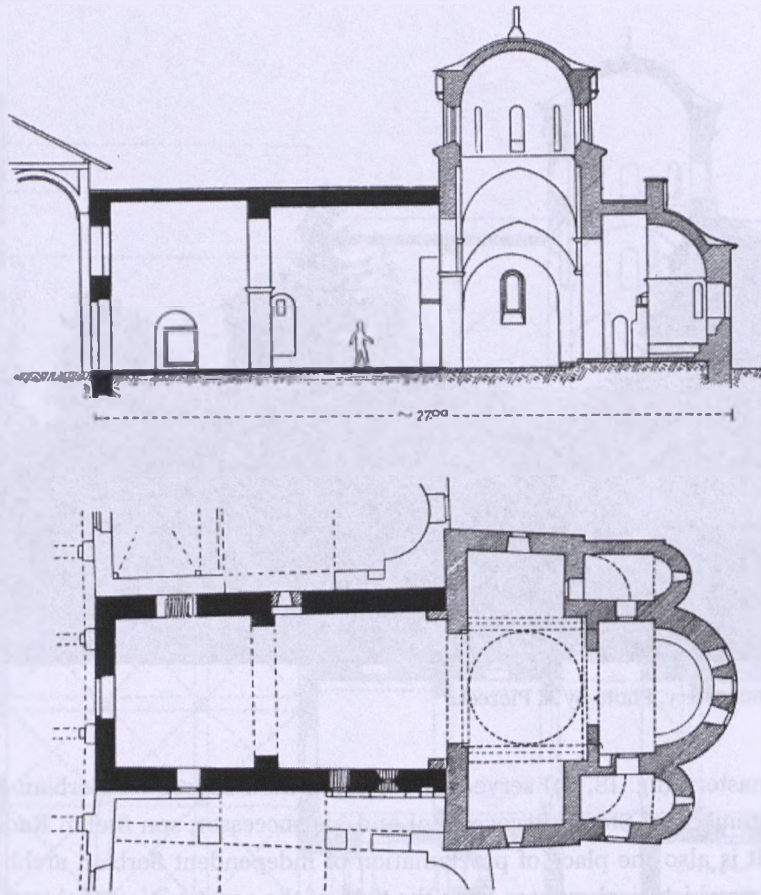
Fig. 20. Peć, Sv. Apostoli. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 109

there are added two side chapels with domes, closed from the east by semicircular apses. Above the centre, from a hexagonal substructure rises a dome. Romanesque coating have disappeared, and instead, external walls are covered with plaster and painted red. A subtle accents of green and red lines on a white background are added. All that constitute an early signs of polychrome in the Serbian architecture. Disappear also the partitioning of the dome substructure. The church was built in rather not a complicated way, using varied building techniques and materials. All this suggests that construction works were carried by masters representing different levels of craftsmanship and of different origin. In historical sources, records can be found that archbishop Sava I employed *builders and skilful master stonemasons brought from Greek islands* and that *stonemasons working*

Fig. 21. Peć, Sv. Apostoli. Photo by A. Piórecka

with marble and painters brought from Constantinople.[29] In the next phase, in the 13th century, a three-bay narthex was added, divided by columns into three naves. In front of the narthex a tower was erected, with a chapel at the upper floor, and to the sanctuary at both its sides were added a rectangular prothesis and a diaconicon.

The complex of churches of the Patriarchate (fig. 20, 21) is unique and consist of four churches, three of which are joined by a common narthex. Its construction started in the second decade of the 13th century and ended in fifth decade of the 14th century. The monastery served as the seat and a mausoleum for Serbian archbishops, and since the 13th century also patriarchs. [30] The oldest church of the monastery is dedicated to Holy Apostles. Like in Žiča Monastery, external walls of the churches belonging to the complex has been smoothen and pained red and some elements of polychrome can be found on theirs façades. The church was erected probably at the beginning of the 13th century, at the time when the reconstruction of Žiča Monastery began. The exact date is not known. Arch-

[29] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 500.
[30] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–79.
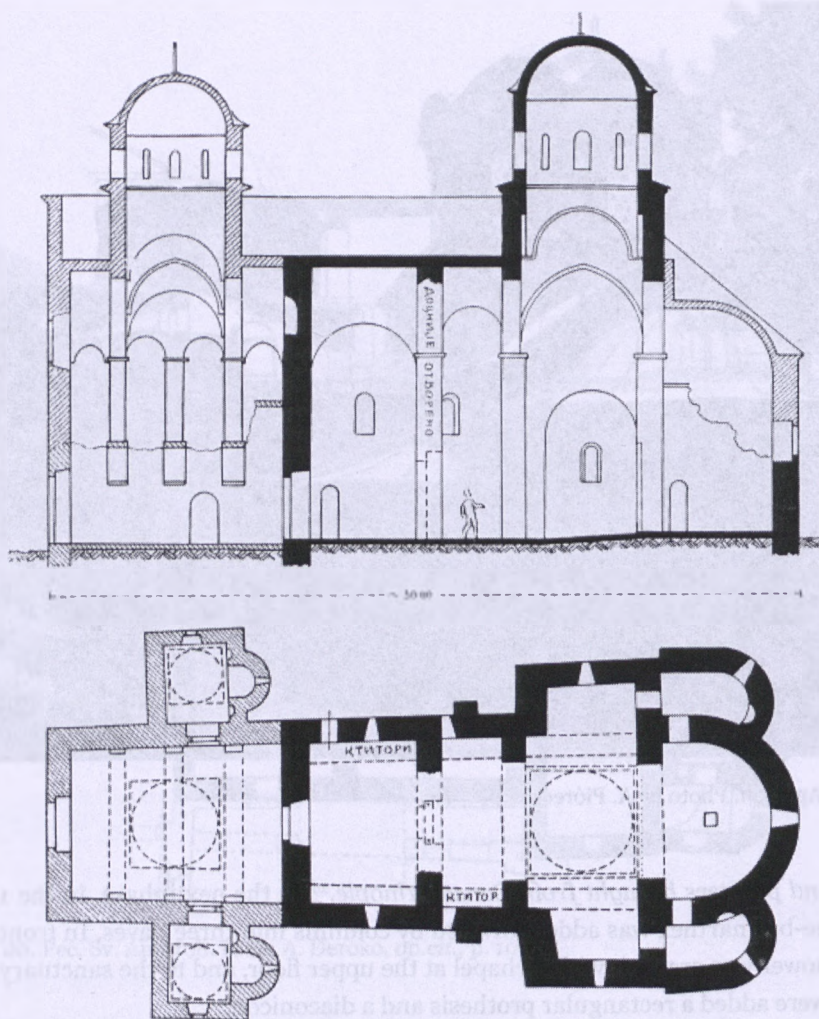
Fig. 22. Mileševa – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 108

bishop Arsenije I dedicated the church to the Holy Apostles, moving the seat of the arch-bishopric to a location closer to the centre of the country. The 14th century frescoes as its founder depict Sv. Sava, but the issue of the founder is not obvious. The sanctuary and the space below the dome are, without doubt, the oldest part of the church.[31] From the north and the south to its central part adjoin two apses. The spacious the sanctuary is ended by a semicircular apse, like adjacent pastoforiums at both its sides. The diaconicon is not directly communicated with the naos, only with the sanctuary, what is an innovation. Above

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[31] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 501.

Fig. 23. Mileševa. Photo by A. Piórecka

the central part, from a hexagonal substructure raises a dome on pendentives. The original ending of the western part of the church has not survived. This element is elongated and does not have clear proportions. It was probably added at the end of the 13th century. Analysing the extremely crude building technique, Ćurčić draws the conclusion that initial building works, performed by a local workshop might have taken place even under the rule of Stefan Nemanjia.[32]

The foundation of the Mileševa monastery (figs. 22, 23) took place probably around the year 1219, when Vladislav was still a prince (his coronation took place in 1234). It is well visible in the foundation scene depicted on the southern wall of the naos, in which Vladislav is holding a model of the church, but is not wearing a crown. Also, because the frescoes dates back to 1228, the church itself must have been erected in the early twenties of the 13th century, as a mausoleum of Sv. Sava. In 1237 King Vladislav ceremoniously brought here his relics from Trnovo.[33]

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[32] *Ibidem*, pp. 501–502.
[33] *Ibidem*, p. 502.
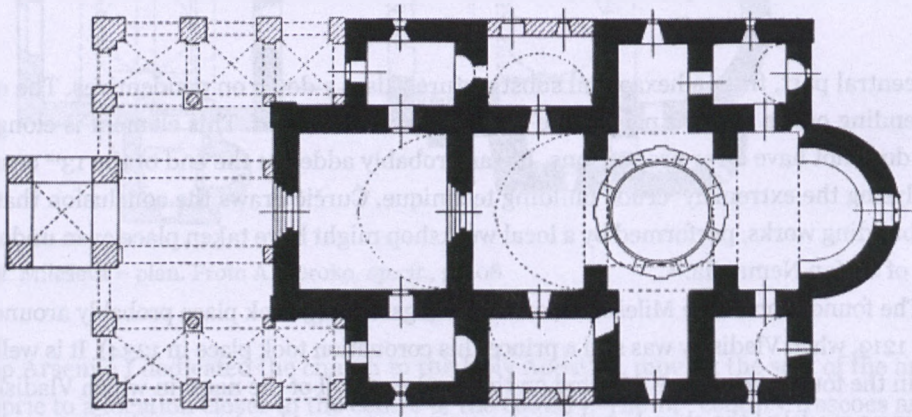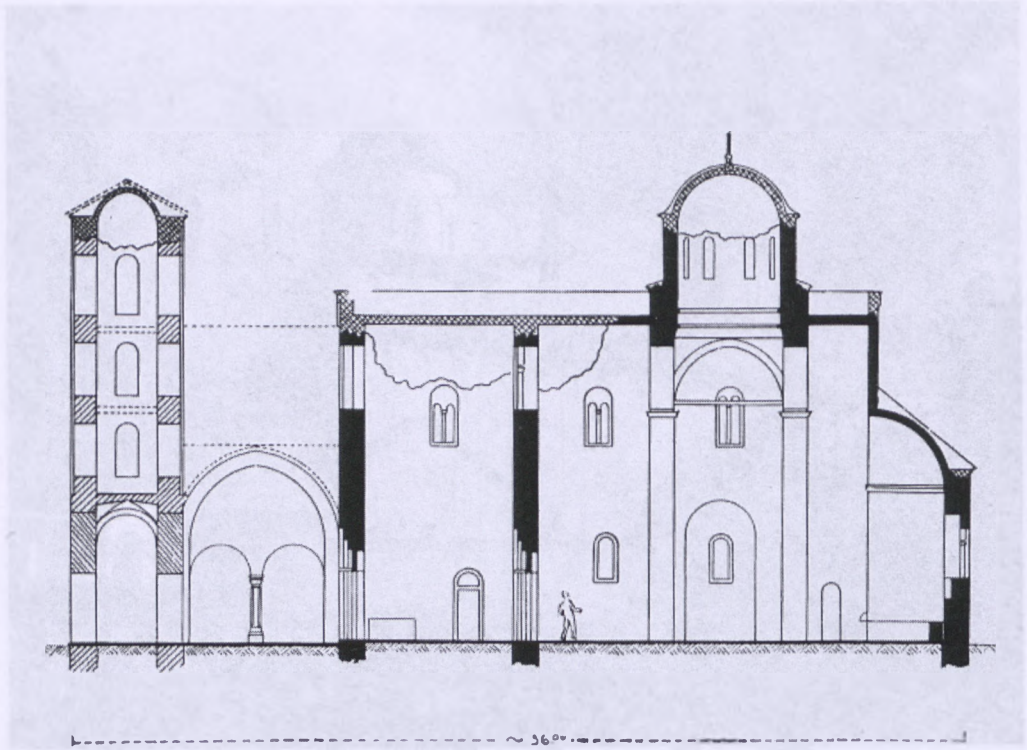
Fig. 24. Sopoćani – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.* p. 111

Fig. 25. Sopoćani. Photo by A. Piórecka

The church is dedicated to the Ascension. It presents spatial type similar to the churches in Žiča, the Church of Sv. Apostoli in Peć and Studenica Hvostanska. Like them, it was probably painted on the outside.[34] The church is single-nave, two-bay, with a semicircularly ended sanctuary and pastoforiums. Above its central part, from a hexagonal substructure raises a dome on pendentives. To the central part, from the north and the south adjoin rectangular apses. On the western side there is a single-spaced narthex and added later single-spaced exonarthex with a dome and two chapels, also covered by domes and closed by semicircular apses from the east. What is also interesting, the width of the church at its east end is bigger than of the narthex. It may be related to the existence, earlier at the same spot, of another building, the remains of which were there discovered. The drum, on which rests the dome is more attenuated than in previous constructions. Another interesting innovation that can be found here, is that the hexagonal substructure of the drum, which does not extend behind the outline of the church's side walls, is pushed eastwards, what according to Deroko is a characteristic feature of old Serbian architecture.[35] As a result the dome does not rest on four main lower arches but on four walls above them, on which there are new arches inside.

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[34] *Ibidem*, p. 503.
[35] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
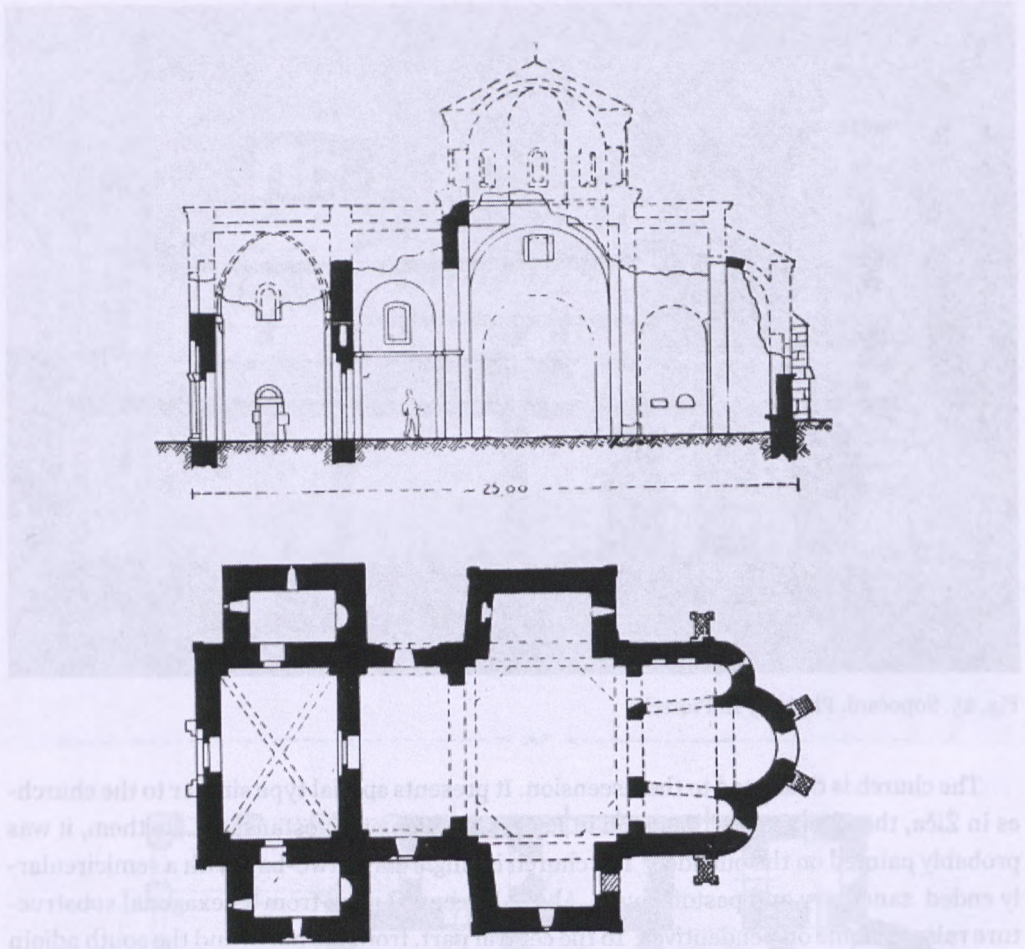
Fig. 26. Gradac – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.* p. 112

The temple in the Sopoćani monastery (fig. 24, 25) was erected under the rule of King Stefan Uroš I. The exact time of when it was built and decorated is not known. It is dedicated to the Holy Trinity and originally was designed as a mausoleum.[36] Researchers try to establish the date of the erection analyzing the depictions of *the Death of Queen Ana Dandolo,* mother of King Uroš I and *Procession of Holy Bishops* in the sanctuary. Findings aren't unambiguous, however, they point out to the third quarter of the 13th century (the earliest, shortly after the death of Queen Ana in 1256 or 1258, the latest – year 1268, the depiction of the third Serbian archbishop, Sava II).[37] The church is single-nave, two-bay, with a rectan-

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[36] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 503.
[37] V. Đurić, *Sopoćani*, Beograd 1991, pp. 23–25.

Fig. 27. Gradac. Photo by A. Piórecka

gular sanctuary closed by a semicircular apse. Two rectangular pastoforiums are situated at both sides of the sanctuary, and the diaconicon, like in the church of the Sv. Apostoli in Patriarchate monastery is communicated only with the sanctuary. To the central part from the north and the south adjoin two rectangular apses. The narthex is single-spaced, with two rectangular chapels adjoining from the north and the south. The nave with the narthex is covered by a single gable roof. In the centre, from a hexagonal substructure rises a dome. The cover of the dome drum has a definitely more Romanesque than Byzantine character. Side chapels and apses are covered by a single lean to roof. Crosswise sealed up exonarthex, and the tower were built later. As a result, the whole structure looks like a triple nave basilica. The western portal has a typical Romanesque construction, similar to the one in Morača monastery. Other Romanesque elements include: windows, the facade and a frieze of arcades, like in the church of Bogorodica in the Studenica Monastery. Ćurčić points out certain similarity of church plans in Sopoćani (fig. 24) and in Žiča (fig. 18).[38]

The precise date of the construction of Gradac Monastery (fig. 26, 27) and its founder are not certain. It was erected, or maybe only rebuilt, by Queen Jelena, the wife of King Stefan Uroš I (mother of two Serbian kings, Dragutin and Milutin). It took place around the year 1270, and without doubt before the death of King Stefan Uroš I, which happened

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[38] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 503.
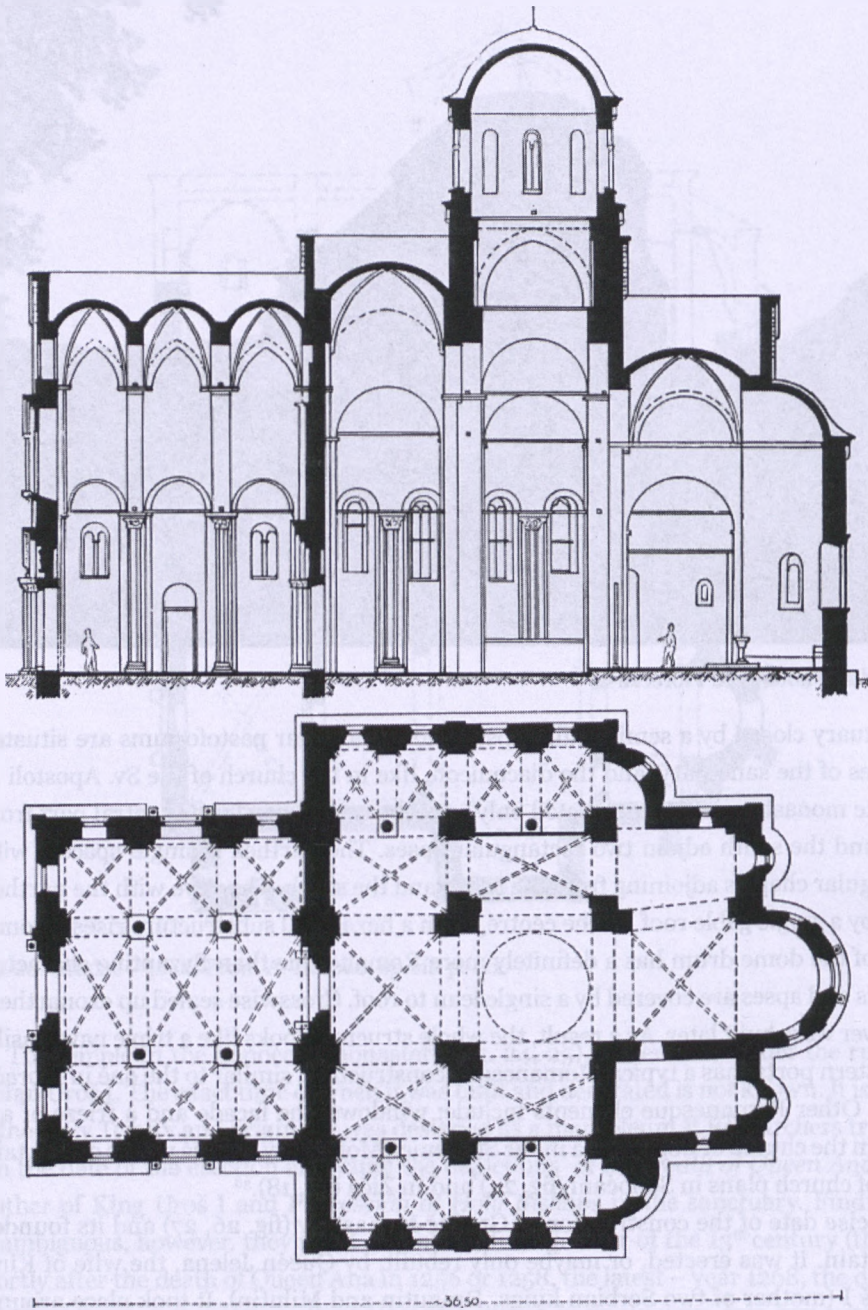
Fig. 28. Dečani – plan From. A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 116

Fig. 29. Dečani. Photo by A. Piórecka

in 1276.[39] As an influential personality of that times, she was a founder of at least a few, catholic as well as orthodox, churches and monasteries.[40] Because the foundation document has not been found, the most important information concerning it comes from *The biography of Queen Jelena*, written by archbishop Danilo II. As he noted, Queen Jelena built a beautiful church for the Mother of God, dedicated to the Annunciation in the place called Gradac. For this task, she asked for the best Serbian craftsmen and chose the most skilful. Although archbishop Danilo II mentions only Queen Helena as the founder of the monastery, we can assume, at least on the basis of the foundation scene depicted in the church, that also Stefan Uroš I, holding a model of the church, was a co-founder. The church was built probably as a royal mausoleum.[41]

It's a single-nave, two-bay church. The sanctuary is ended by a triple apse strengthen by four buttresses. From the north and the south to the central part adjoin two rectangular apses. A single-spaced narthex has a quadripartite rib vault and is adjoined by two chapels, from the north and the south. Above the centre rises a dome of elongated octagon plan. Octagonal drum is very unusual among churches classified as Raška school. The church,

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[39] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[40] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 656.

[41] O. Kandić, *Le monastere de Gradac,* Belgrade 1991, pp. 10–12.

Fig. 30a. Dečani. Portal with inscription. Photo by A. Piórecka

⁹⁶ A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
⁹⁷ S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 656.
⁹⁸ O. Kandić, *La monastère de Gradac*, Belgrade 1991, pp. 40–43.
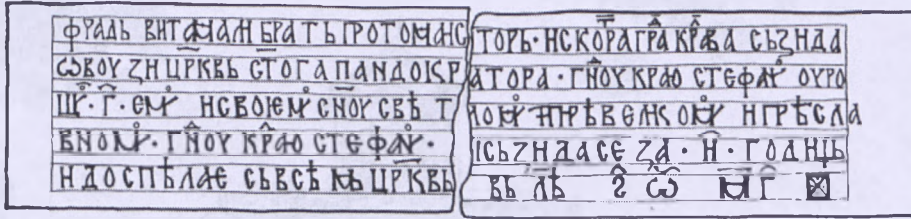
Fig. 30b. Dečani – inscription

below the roof line, and the drum are encircled by an arcade frieze of pointed arches. Some Gothic elements, such as pointed arches, appear in the church decoration. Their appearance is associated with the origins of the church founder, as Queen Jelena d'Anjou (Anžujska) came from France where she also might have brought the masters from.[42] Gradac monastery is the first monument of Raška school with Gothic elements.

The construction of Dečani monastery (fig. 28, 29) and its church dedicated to Christ the Pantocrator started in 1327. Its founder was king Stefan Uroš III Dečanski. It was finished by his son and successor, Stefan Dušan, in 1334 as his mausoleum.[43] The main constructor of the monastery was Fra Vita, a Franciscan monk from Kotor, and his associates, most likely, Đorđe with brothers Dobroslav and Nikola.[44] The information about the builders is placed in the inscription carved on the south portal lintel. (fig. 30):

Fra Vita, friar minor, master builder from the royal town of Kotor, built this church of Christ the Pantocrator for his sovereign King Stefan Uroš III and his son, the most glorious, great and holly Lord and King Stefan. It was built in 8 years, and the church was completely finished in 6843.[45]

The information in the inscription is also an evidence confirming a transfer of ideas, building techniques etc, from one cultural centre to another. This particular example proves the existence of contacts between Serbia and the Adriatic coast, and through it with Italy. It was the route through which western architecture tradition reached Serbia. Another conclusion, that could be drown from the inscription, is that religious beliefs didn't undermine the appreciation for one's substantive skills, in this case of a Franciscan monk.[46]

The whole structure is an attempt to combine a few-nave Romanesque basilica with a single-nave church of Raška school. It consists of three, distinctly separate parts: five-nave naos, narrower and lower tripartite sanctuary, with one big semicircular main apse at its end and two smaller ones on the sides, and lower, three-nave narthex, of the same

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[42] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[43] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, pp. 659–661.

[44] W. Molè, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[45] M. Čanak-Medić, *Manastir Dečani. Saborna crkva. Architektura,* Beograd 2007, p. 19.

[46] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, p. 659.
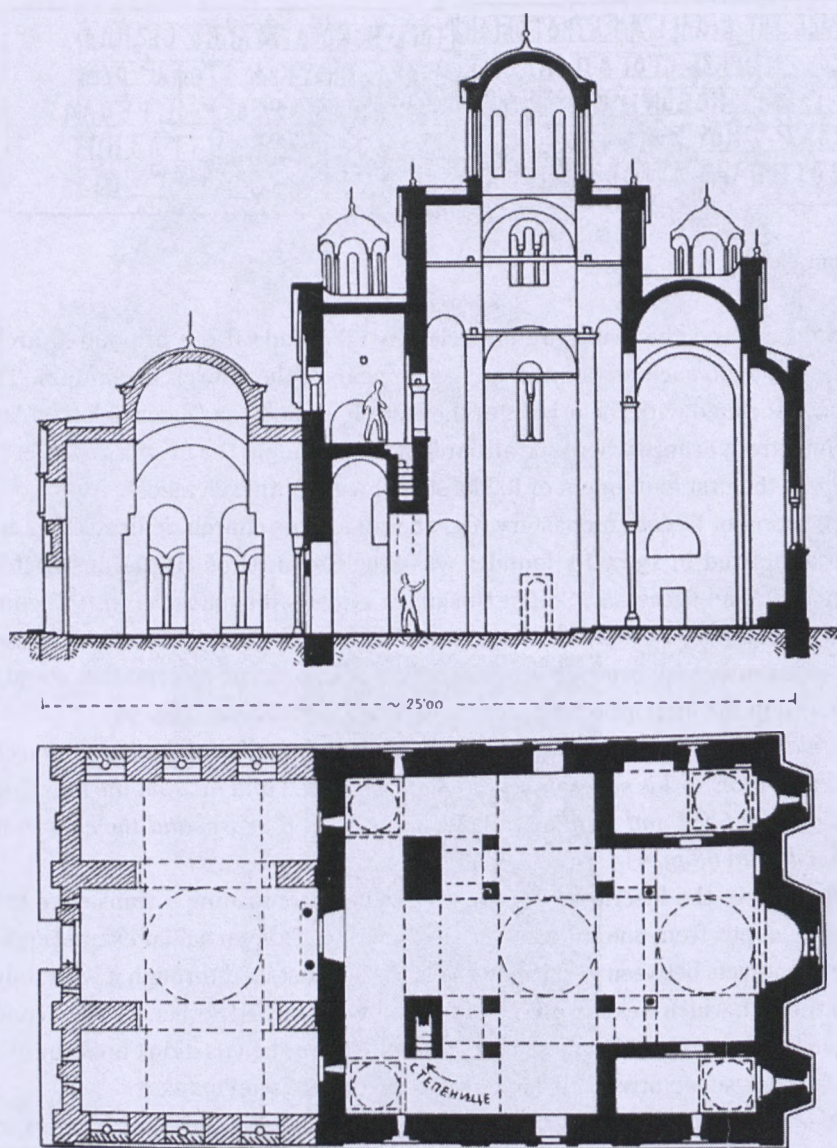
Fig. 31. Gračanica – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 170

Fig. 32. Gračanica. Photo by A. Piórecka

width as the sanctuary. The most outer naves are covered by individual lean to roofs. At the centre, from a hexagonal substructure rises a small, graceful dome. The interior is divided into few different size bays, capped with quadripartite rib vaults of heightened rise. Those are new feature in Raška school. It is enlarged, wider and partitioned in an intricate way. As a result, the light coming through the windows of the dome produces stronger chiaroscuro effect.[47]

The outer arrangement of walls is also characteristic. The church body looks as if it was composed of three triple-nave basilicas. The walls are covered with alternate layers of white and pink-purple marble stones. Around the whole structure, right under the roof, runs an arcade frieze. Windows and portals have sculptural decoration made of white marble, revealing at some places traces of the original polychrome. External appearance of the church reminds rather Italian Romanesque basilica than Byzantine monastery.

First monuments classified as Kosovo-Metohijan school were erected at the beginning of the 14th century, soon after the wedding of King Milutin and Byzantine princess Simonida, which took place in 1299. The influence of Byzantine architecture is here the result of ter-
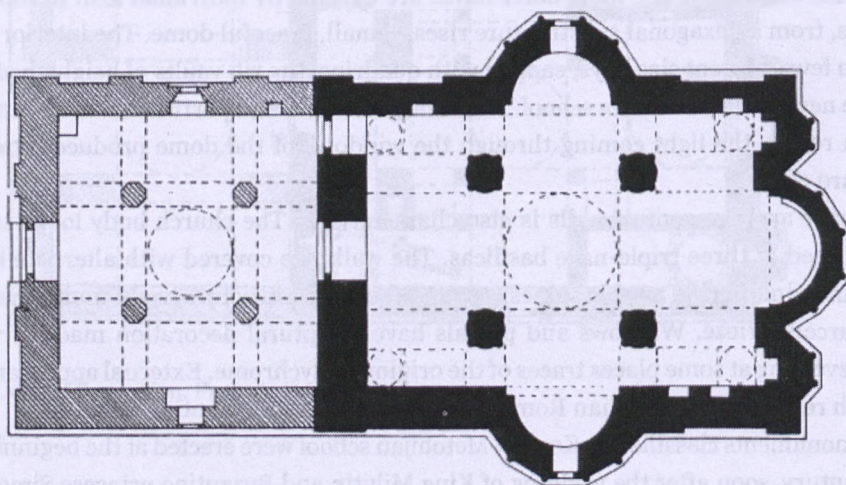
[47] W. Molè, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–71.
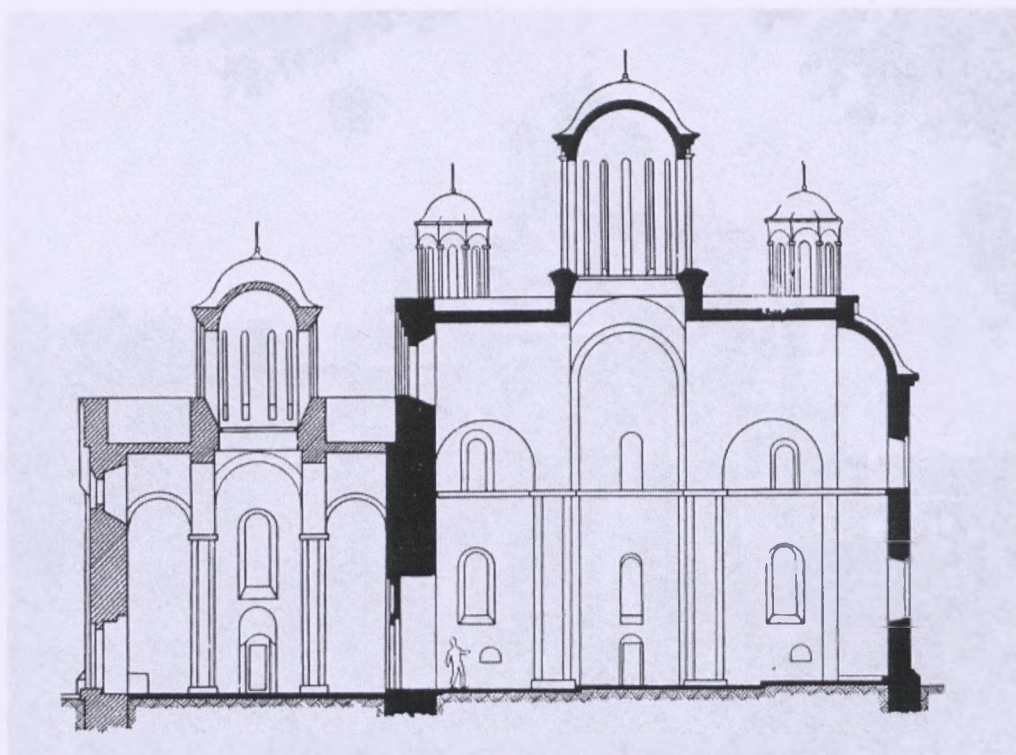
Fig. 33. Resava – plan. From A. Deroko, *op.cit.*, p. 251

Fig. 34. Resava. Photo by A. Piórecka

ritorial expansion of the Serbian state on Byzantine territories where, in a natural way, it got in contact with the Byzantine building tradition. Some explanation of the historical and political context is necessary to understand this phenomenon in the realm of architecture.[48]

Gračanica Monastery (fig. 31, 32) near Priština on Kosovo Field is one of the most prominent monuments of Kosovo-Metohijan school. It was erected on the initiative of King Milutin. The construction works started probably around the year 1311.[49] It is dedicated to the Dormition of the Holy Virgin and is located on the place of the former, destroyed church. Narthex is the result of a later development of the church in the second half of the 14th century. Ćurčić underlines the relation of the church with Byzantine architecture of Thessaloniki. The monastery is a work of builders coming from different centres, most of all from Thessaloniki, but probably also from Arta. Originally, the church was designed as mausoleum for King Milutin, but this idea was later abandoned. The plan of the church relates to solutions that can be found in other churches of that time in the area of Thessaloniki. Worth noticing is the existence of five slender domes in Gračanica Monastery, the feature we won't see in any other Serbian monuments belonging to this school. The monastery is

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[48] S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, pp. 662–663.

[49] S. Ćurčić, 'Role of late Byzantine Thessalonike in Church Architecture in the Balkans', *Dumbarton Oaks Paper*, 57 (2003), p. 77.

one of the most outstanding monuments of Serbian medieval architecture.[50] The church has a shape of a Greek cross-in-square. Above its central part, resting four columns on a slender drum, rises a dome. Above the space in-between the arms of the cross, rise equally graceful, smaller domes. As the result, the whole structure makes an impression of uplifted with the central dome soaring towards the sky. The altar part and pastoforiums are ended by angular apses. Around windows runs a decoration made of bricks. Chiaroscuro effects of the frieze are achieved by laying bricks at an angle, so called dog's tooth technique. Similar pattern can be found in monasteries of Constantinople and Thessaloniki.[51] The building material, as well as the wall building technique, called *cloisonné masonry* (It uses stone blocks with four sides covered with bricks. This technique spreads out from Constantinople to Greece and the Balkans at the beginning of the 10th century) are characteristic of sacral architecture in towns and eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire, especially in last decades of the 13th century and at the beginning of the 14th century.[52]

Macedonian school monuments, by some researchers as for example Molè, are incorporated into Kosovo-Metohijan school. Belong here, for example: Sv. Đorđe in Staro Nagoričane, the Orthodox church of Sv. Arhanđela Monastery in Lesnovo, Markov Manastir near Skopje.

The last stylistic group is Moravian school. It includes, among others: Lazarica Monastery, built about 1370–74, Ravanica Monastery (about 1381), Rudenica Monastery, built by Despot Stefan, Kalenić Monastery, built between 1413–17, Resava Monastery (Manasija)

Resava monastery (fig. 33, 34) is an endowment of Despot Stefan Lazarević, son of prince Lazar and princess Milica and is dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The construction works started probably in 1407 and lasted for over ten years. Catholicon was designed as a mausoleum for the ruler.[53] The church, in a way, consist of two parts. Five-dome naos was built on a cross-in-square plan. The dome above its central part rests on four columns. Four smaller domes covers the space between cross's arms. The sanctuary is closed by a semicircular apse, like pastoforiums. Another two semicircular apses are placed in the middle of the northern and the southern wall. On the west there is a narthex, also built on a Greek cross-in-square plan and with a centrally situated dome resting on four columns. Below the roof line, around the church runs a frieze of arcades resting on corbels. The most unexpected aspect of this church is the expression of its façade. The system of blind arcades is extremely austere, in comparison with other objects belonging to Moravian school. Generally, the stylistic character of facades is more related to Romanesque than late Byzantine architecture. Slobodan Ćurčić, looking for an answer to the question of origin of such façade decoration, inclines to the theory that probably at Manasija construction were employed craftsmen coming from Adriatic coast, who used traditional, conservative

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[50] *Ibidem*, p. 77.

[51] A. Deroko, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–165.

[52] G. Subotić, *Terra sacra. L'Arte del Cossovo*, Milano 1997, p. 68.

[53] G. Simić, D. Todorović, M. Brmbolić, R. Zarić, *Monastery Resava*, Belgrade 2011, pp. 5–6.

building techniques. Furthermore, the tradition of building church-mausoleums relied on import of the best master builders from the southern coast of the Adriatic sea, beginning from the times of the Nemanjić dynasty ruling.[54]

Summarising, the term *Raška school*, introduced by Gabriel Millet over 90 years ago, is still in common use, and, at least on a few grounds, it shouldn't be. Identification of certain architectural characteristics of objects that concentrates only on the region of Ras lacks a contemporary reflection. The characteristic done by Millet is incoherent, anachronistic and contains geographical errors. Even, so called, classical objects created in the 13th century represents many variations of form. Also the builders are of varied origins, from Constantinople, through east coast of the Adriatic sea and further to southern Italy. Perhaps, as Ćurčić suggests, more adequate would be the term of *eclectic collage*. [55]

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[54] S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans ...*, pp. 680–681.
[55] *Ibidem*, pp. 504–505.

Akathistos Cycle
in Supraśl Revisited

Nazar Kozak, Lviv

The cycle of scenes illustrating strophes of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin (further the Akathistos cycle) that once adorned the walls of the Annunciation church at Supraśl monastery no longer exits. The church was destroyed and its mid sixteenth-century wall-paintings almost completely vanished. They, however, could be scrutinised through historic documentation. Scholars have already attempted to recreate the iconographic programme of the church, but some puzzles still remain unsolved. This article revisits the Akathistos cycle in Supraśl to complete the identifaction of its scene and to answer the question that has not yet been posed: where did its iconographic models come from? In order to meet this task, first, we will focus on each individual scene providing reasons for its identification with certain Akathistos strophe and indicating related illustrations in other cycles. Then, relying on this data we will identify these iconographic versions of the Akathistos cycle that artists had utilised in Supraśl. Since versions have specific regional localizations, and, therefore, serve as markers for tracking artistic migrations and contacts, this would help us to bring new light on the Supraśl wall-paintings authorship and to situate them on the map of post-Byzantine art more precisely than it has been done before.

Documents ans scholarship

In 1870, the Vilnius Study District of the Russian Empire published the *Chronicle of Supraśl monastery*, a collection of documents highlighting its history to the early nineteenth century.[1] From the preface to this collection we know that in 1498, Joseph Sołtan,

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[1] 'Лѣтопись Супрашльськой Лавры', in: *Археографическій сборникъ документовъ относящихся къ исторіи Северо-Западной Руси издаваемый при управленіи Виленскаго учебнаго округа*, vol. 9, Вильна 1870, pp. 1–408.

Metropolitan of Rus', and Aleksander Chodkiewicz a warlord of Navahrudak, founded a monastery in Gródek, but in two years monks moved to the new place, approx. 30 km to the west, and there, in 1503, the foundation of the Annunciation church was laid[2]. The church was built as a domed basilica with three apses and narrow towers on the corners. Most scholars date the wall-paintings circa 1557, the year when Sergious Kymbar, archimandritis of the monastery, ordered to write the *Inventory* of all his expenses. He noted the decoration of the church as his first spending and provided an exact sum, one and a half sexagena of Lithuanian money accept allowance and presents.[3] Four hundred years later, on July 23, 1943, the church was destroyed.[4] A few fragments of the wall-paintings which survived do not include Akathistos scenes among them.[5]

The core data on the Supraśl Akathistos cycle was collected in 1900s when architect P. P. Pokryshkin had visited the monastery to assess the possible repairs of the Annunciation church. Eventually he published almost complete iconographic description of wall paintings including the "Akathistos tier".[6] Pokryshkin's photographs now belong to the photographic Archive in the Institute of History of Material Culture at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg.[7] On six of them, ten Akathistos scenes are visible, either in full or in fragment. Another two photographs of a later date, which show some of these scenes from different angles, are stored in the Institute of Arts of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.[8]

Scholars discussed Supraśl Akathistos cycle in broader studies aiming to recreate the whole iconographic program of the church. Thus, A. I. Rogov, relying on Pokryshkin's description and the Warsaw set of photographs, identified correctly ten scenes of the cycles. Six other scenes he either identified incorrectly or left unidentified.[9] Rogov also included the Annunciation on the altar pillars as the scene of the Akathistos cycle. Joanna Kotyńska, in turn, not citing Pokryshkin's and Rogov's articles (perhaps unknown to her), wrote about only nine Akathistos scenes, two of which she appropriated from the Chris-

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[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 1–3.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 49.

[4] L. Lebiedzińska, *Freski z Supraśla. Katalog wystawy*, Białystok 1968.

[5] A. Siemaszko, K. Sawicka, *Freski z Supraśla: unikatowy zabytek XVI-wiecznego pobizantyńskiego malarstwa ściennego*, Białystok 2006. See also the web site of the monastery at http://www.monaster-suprasl.pl/

[6] П. П. Покрышкин, 'Благовещенская церковь в Супрасльшском монастыре', in: *Сборник археологических статей поднесенных графу А. А. Бобринскому*, Санкт-Петербург 1911, pp. 235–237.

[7] Four of these photographs were published in A. Siemaszko, 'Malowidła ścienne cerkwi Zwiastowania w Supraślu. Rekonstrukcja programu ikonograficznego', *Zeszyty Naukowe Universytetu Jagellońskiego*, MCLXXIII, *Prace z historii sztuki*, Zeszyt 21 (1995), fig. 23, 26, 29, 30. Two photographs were not yet published. I express my gratitude to Alexandr Musin for the access to these photographs, and to Piotr Grotowski for his help.

[8] These photographs were published for the first time in: L. Lebiedzińska, *op. cit.*, fig. 48, 62.

[9] А. И. Рогов, 'Фрески Супрасля', in: *Древнерусское искусство. Монументальная живопись XI–XVIII вв.*, Москва 1980, pp. 352–354.

tological cycle located above the Akthasitos.[10] Finally, Alexander Siemaszko engaging the widest available range of data including the photographs from Saint Petersburg set, which were not accessed by previous authors, increased the number of identified strophes up to thirteen.[11] Thus, only three scenes remained unidentified, by now.

Identifacation of the scenes

In Supraśl, as we know from Pokryshkin's description and photographs, the Akathistos cycle occupied the middle zone on the walls of the naos. It began on the south wall near the iconostasis and then unfolded clockwise through the west wall to the north wall. This space housed only scenes, which is less then, the standard number of twenty four or twenty five scenes in most of Akathistos cycles. It seems that in Suprśl the scale of the scenes exceeded the available space. The artists attempted to resolve the issue through rendering the scenes into vertical format, and limiting the number of personages and details in each of the scene. However, this was not enough and they had to skip several scenes. It is unknown whether any scenes were located on the east wall which separated the naos from the sanctuary. In the time of Pokryshin's visit, this wall was almost completely hidden behind the iconostasis. Even if we assume that there were some unregistered scenes, it is nevertheless clear that the Supraśl cycle was still incomplete because two scenes were omitted in the documented part o the cycle (see further discussion).

Elaborating and supplementing previous suggestions by Rogov and Siemaszko, we propose that scenes of the Akathistos cycle in Suprasl were located in the following order:

on the south wall – Strophes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6;

on the west wall – Strophes 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14;

on the north wall – Strophes 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

Now let us examine each scene in detail.

Strophe 2 (Οἶκος Β, Кондак 2) "The holy one, seeing herself to be chaste ..." (fig 1.). This opening scene of the cycle was located on the south wall of the naos next to the iconostasis. It is visible on the photograph from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28897). The scene represents the Annunciation which is the usual choice for illustrations of the first Akathistos strophes. Archangel Gabriel stretching his hand approaches the Virgin from the left, the Virgin stands to the right next to her throne. On the background there is a high wall and symmetrical buildings towering over the it cloth hanging between them. Pokryshkin cited an inscription with

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[10] J. Kotyńska, 'Bizantyńskie freski z cerkwi Zwiastowania w Supraślu', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 34/4 (1986), pp. 39–40.

[11] A. Siemaszko, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–46. Siemaszko also has rendered the scheme indicating the location of each scene on the walls of the church.

the first words of Stophe 2, which are also readable on the photograph: в видещи с[ва]таа с'ббе въ чистот'к ре[че] гаврiилъ д[е]рьзостно.[12]

Strophe 3 (Οἶκος Γ, Iкос 2) "The Virgin, yearning to grasp a knowledge unknowable ..." (fig. 2). This scene was located on the south wall of the naos to the west of Strophe 2. It is visible on the photograph from Saint Petersburg (Sign II 28283). Pokryshkin did not include it in his description, yet it was mentioned by Kotyńska, who suggested that it stands for illustration of Strophes 2, 3 and 4 simultaneously.[13] Similar to the previous scene, this one represents the Annunciation, which is a typical choice for the illustration of the first strophes. The composition is almost identical with the previous scene, except a peculiar detail that the Virgin touches her lips with the finger. The fragment of inscription is visible on the photograph, which matches the first words of Strophe 3: Разумь не разумен разумёти д[ё]ва.

Strophe 4 (Οἶκος Δ, Кондак 3) "Then the power of the Most High overshadowed her ..." (fig. 2). This scene was the third in a row on the south wall of the naos. It is visible on the photographs from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28283) and from Warsaw (sign. 9426). The scene represents the Virgin Mary stand-

Fig. 1. Supraśl, Akathistos cycle, Strophe 2. Photograph from archive of IHMC RAS, Inv. № II 28897

ing in mandorla with Christ-Child seated in the smaller mandorla in front of her chest. Christ rises his right hand in blessing, and holds a scroll in his left hand. There is a star above the Virgin and the wall with two Doric columns (to the left) and a tower (to the right) behind her. The inscription runs on both sides of the star in the upper part of the scene. It matches first words of Strophe 4 Сила вышнёго wсени тог[д]а. This iconographic version for the illustration of Strophe 4 is rather rare. Siemaszko has pointed to three other examples in the Tomić Psalter (1360–1363) from the State Historical Museum in Moscow, the Holy Trinity church in Cozia (c. 1390), and Snagov monastery (1563), both in Wallachia.[14] This list should be extended with the icon from the Zoodohos Pigi church on the island of Scopelos (first half of the 15th century)[15], Perivolis Monastery on Lesbos (ca.

[12] П. П. Покрышкин, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
[13] J. Kotyńska, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
[14] A. Siemaszko, op. cit., p. 44.
[15] I. Spatharakis, *The Pictoral Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin*, Leiden 2005, fig. 237.

Fig. 2. Supraśl, Akathistos cycle, Strophes 3, 4, 5.
Photograph from archive of IHMC RAS, Inv. № II 28283

1550)[16], Tismana monastery in Wallachia (1564)[17], monastery of Hosios Meletios in Boetia (1573–1592)[18], the Ekatontapiliani church on the island of Paros (after 1636)[19], the epitrachelion from Stavronikita monastery on Mount Athos (16th century)[20], the epitrachelion from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (17th century)[21], and the icon from the skete of Saint Eustachius near the Iviron monastry on Mount Athos (17th century).[22]

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[16] Γ. Γουναρη, *Μεταβυζαντίνες τοίχογραφίες στην Λεσβο (16ος–17ος αi)*, Αθήνα 1999, ριν. 82Β.

[17] The image is not published.

[18] H. Deliyanni-Doris, *Die Wandmalereien der Lite der Klosterkirche von Hosios Meletios*, München 1975, fig. 22.

[19] A. Ορλάνδος, *Αρχείον των Βυζαντινών μνημείων της Ελλάδος*, Ἰ (1964), fig.10.

[20] *Treasures of Mount Athos. Catalog of the exhibition*, Ed. A. Karakatsanis, Thessaloniki 1997, no. 11.10.

[21] A. Παλιούρας, 'Ο Πατριαρχικος ναος και ο οικος', in: *Το Οικομενικο Πατριαρχειο. Η μεγαλη του Χριστου εκκκησια*, Αθηνα 1989, fig. 102.

[22] Н. П. Кондаков, *Памятники христианского искусства на Афоне*, Санкт Петербург 1902, fig. 46.

Strophe 5 (Οἶκος E, Ікос 3) "The Virgin, bearing God in her womb ..." (fig. 2). This was the fourth scene on south wall of the naos. It is visible on the photographs from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28283) and from Warsaw (sign. 9426). The scene represents the Visitation, which is a typical choice for the illustration of Strophe 5. The Virgin and Elisabeth embrace each other in the middle of the scene. On the background we see the wall and two high buildings with the cloth overthrown above the roofs. The inscription with the opening words of Strophe 5 runs under the upper part of the frame Имѹщи бгопрїетноѹи дѣа оутробѫ.

Strophe 6 (Οἶκος Z, Кондак 4) "Tossed inwardly by a storm of doubts ..." It was the last scene on the south wall, near the south-west corner of the naos. Pokryshkin wrote about it as almost destroyed by the new gallery of the choir. He also cites the fragment of inscription Бѫрнѹноѹтъ, suggesting that originally it was Бѫрнѹ въноѹтрь имѣа,[23] which are words of Strophe 6. In Akathistos cycles this strophe was illustrated with the scene of Joseph's Doubts.

Strophe 8 (Οἶκος Θ, Кондак 5) "The magi saw a star moving towards God ..." It was the first scene on the west wall located near south-west corner of the naos. According to Pokryshkin, same as the previous scene, it was damaged by the new gallery of the choir. He cited first two words of the inscription as б[о]готечною звѣздоѹ[24] which matches Strophe 8. In Akathistos cycles this Strophe was illustrated with the scene of the Magi's Journey to Bethlehem.

Strophe 9 (Οἶκος I, Ікос 5) "The children of the Chaldaeans ..." The second scene on the west wall was also damaged, still, Pokryshkin identified its subject as the Adoration of the Magi and read two letters from the inscription: вн.[25] This subject is a usual choice for the illustration of Strophe 9 and these two letters match the first word of this strophe Видѣша ѡтроци халденстїи наржкѹ двичю.

Strophe 10 (Οἶκος K, Кондак 6) "The magi became heralds, bearing the message of God ..." The third scene on the west wall was located to the south of the gallery entrance. Pokryshkin cited a fragment of the inscription проповѣдннбгоносцїнвлѫсви,[26] which matches the first words of Strophe 10: Проповѣдници б[о]гоноснїи влѫсви бывше. In Akathistos cycles this strophe was illustrated with the scene of Magi's return to Babylon in variations from departure to arrival.

Strophe 11 (Οἶκος Λ, Ікос 6) "Shining upon Egypt the light of truth ..." The fourth scene on the west wall was located to the north of the entrance on the balcony. Pokryshkin cited only few letters of the inscription вѫсїа..чтїа.[27] The first word in this fragment – вѫсїа – matches the beginning of Strophe 11: Вѫсїа въ егнптѣ просвѣщенїе нстннѣ. The second word was reproduced with mistake. In Akathistos cycles this strophe was usually illustrated with the Flight into Egypt.

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[23] П. П. Покрышкин, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

[24] *Ibidem*, p. 236.

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 236.

[26] *Ibidem*, p. 237.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 237.

Strophe 13 (Οἶκος Ν, Ικος 7) "A new creation has the Creator revealed ..." and Strophe 14 (Οἶκος Ξ, Кондак 8) "Seeing this strange birth ..." These were the two last scenes on the west wall (fifth and sixth respectively) located in its north part. Since Pokryshkin mentioned them as "pictures without inscriptions,"[28] later scholars left them unidentified. This identification, nevertheless, could be attemped. First, we should consider the sequence of the Akathistos scenes that inframes these scenes. They were preceded by the illustration of Strophe 11 and followed by the illustration of Strophe 15 (see further). Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that they represented strophes in the sequence between 11 and 15, i.e. Strophes 12 and 13, or 13 and 14, or 12 and 14. Of these three pairs the second should be considered as the most probable since it excludes Strophe 12. The usual illustration for this strophe is the Hyppapante. In Supraśl, the Hyppapante was included into the Christological cycle, which run on the walls of the naos directly above the Akathistos cycle. Since it is unlikely that two scenes of the same subject were depicted so the close each other. We may assume that Strophe 12 was excluded from the Akathistos cycle. There was another precedent of such exclusion. We know from Pokryshkin's description that the illustration of Strophe 7 was omitted too. The usual illustration for this strophe is the Nativity, which in Supraśl opened the Christological cycle on the south wall. All in all, it most probabale that the last two Akathistos scenes on the west wall illustrated Strophes 13 and 14.

The illustration of Strophe 13 is not visible on the extant photographs. In Akathistos cycles it was illustrated in a variety of ways and there is no clues to established the variation which was chosen in Supraśl.

The illustration of Strophe 14, which was the last scene on the west wall located near the north-west corner of the naos, is partly visible on the photograph from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28892). This detail was unnoticed by early scholars. Only the upper part of the scene is visible: the head in a nimbus in the centre, and a building with a conic roof behind it (fig. 3). The fragment resembles the version of Strophe 14, that represents the Virgin enthroned with Christ-Child on her lap at the background of the temple, while two groups of people praise her on both sides. This version is found, for instance, in Stănești monastery in Wallachia (1537)[29] and in the refectory of Great Lavra on Mount Athos (1535–1541).[30]

Strophe 15 (Οἶκος Ο, Ικος 8) "The uncircumscribed Word was present wholly among those below ..." (fig. 3). This scene was the first on the north wall, near the north-west corner of the naos. Its upper part is visible on the photograph from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28892). We see a head in a nimbus and the mandorla which circumscribs the whole figure.

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[28] П. П. Покрышкин, *op. cit.,* p. 237.

[29] C. L. Dumitrescu, 'O reconsiderare a picturii bisericii din Stanesti-Valcea', *Pagini de Veche Artă Romanească*, vol II, București 1972, fig. 62.

[30] Μ. Ασπρά Βαρδαβάκη , *Οι μικρογραφίες του Ακάθιστου στον κώδικα Garrett 13, Princeton,* Αθήναι 1992, fig. 121.

Fig. 3. Supraśl, Akathistos cycle, Strophes 14, 15.
Photograph from archive of IHMC RAS, Inv. № II 28892

Siemaszko was the first who noticed this scene on the photograph. He suggested that the scene represents Christ standing in mandorla and identified it as Strophe 15.[31] Indeed, the depiction of Christ in mandorla is rather spread iconographic element for this strophe, yet usually it is accompanied with another image of Christ (as Old of the Days) depicted in the segment of heaven above the main image. The double image of Christ refers to the text of the Strophe 15 which claims that he stayed both below and above. The Supraśl scene represented a rare example of the illustration without the upper image of Christ. Siemaszko pointed to another such example in the Holy Trinity church in Cozia (c. 1390)[32] where the figure of Christ is accompanied with two groups of angels depicted in the corners of the scene. There was, however, no angels in Supraśl. Examples of a single figure (without angels) in the illustration of Strophe 15 are found in Stăneşti monastery in Wallachia (1537)[33], and in the unpublished cycle in the monastery of Corona near Karditsa in Theassaly (1587).

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[31] A. Siemaszko, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 45.

[33] C. L. Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, fig. 63.

Strophe 16 (Οἶκος Π, Кондак 9) "All the ranks of angels marveled ..." (fig. 4). This was a second scene on the north wall. It is visible on the photographs from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28898) and from Warsaw (sign. 9428). The Virgin Orans is depicted in the centre while two angels accompany her on both sides. The inscription which runs in the upper part of the scene – нѣстьство мьсво оубонлїє – more or less matches opening words of Strophe 16: Вꙋсѣко єство аггльское оудивнсѧ. Rogov noticed that the Virgin is depicted as an orans, which is unusual detail among illustrations of this strophes. As the only parallel Rogov mentioned the illustration of the corresponding Strophe from Humor monastery in Moldova (1535).[34] Yet there is a difference: in Humor Christ-Child is in front of the Virgin's chest, while, in Supraśl Christ was not depicted.

Strophe 17 (Οἶκος Ρ, Ікос 9) "Wordy orators we see dumb as the fishes ..." (fig. 4). The third scene on the north wall is visible on the photographs from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28898) and from Warsaw (sign. 9428). The icon of the Virgin-Orans with Christ-Child in front of her chest is depicted in the middle of the scene. It is raised high on the pole inserted into a rectangular base flanked by two hierarchs. There is a wall with towers on the background. Rogov and Kotyńska identified this scene as illustration of Strophe 24.[35] Siemaszko, instead, pointed out that such a scene could illustrate several other strophes, yet he was not sure which one to prefer.[36] Since this scene was located between the illustrations of Strophes 16 and 18, it should be identified as an illustration of Strophe 17. The icon scene is rather rare in the iconography of this strophe, nevertheless six other examples could be mentioned: the Dormition church in Matejče in Macedonia (1356–1360)[37], Probota monastery (1532)[38], Suceava Saint John the New monastery (church of Saint George) (1532–1534)[39], Humor monastery (1535)[40] and Sucevița monastery (бл. 1600),[41] all in Moldova, and Lavriv monastery in Ukraine (бл. 1550).[42] From the standpoint of iconography the scene in Supraśl is most close to Probota, Suceava and Lavriv, which include the icon of the same iconographic type.

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[34] А. И. Рогов, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 352. Cf. J. Kotyńska, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[36] A. Siemaszko, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[37] A. Pätzold, *Der Akathistos-Hymnos: Die Bilderzyklen in der byzantinischen Wandmalerei des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1989, fig. 69.

[38] C. Costea, 'Sub semnul Miresei nenuntite. Despre reprezentarea Imnului Acatist în Moldova secolului XVI-lea', *Ars Transsilvaniae*, 19 (2009), fig. 32.

[39] The image is not published.

[40] C. Costea, *op. cit.*, fig. 33.

[41] R. Fabritius, *Außenmalerei und Liturgie. Die streitbare Orthodoxie im Bildprogramm der Moldaukirchen*, Düsseldorf 1999, fig. 116.

[42] Н. Козак, 'Втрачені фрагменти стінопису церкви св. Онуфрія в Лаврові', *Бюлетень Львівського філіалу Національного науково-дослідного реставраційного центру України*, 9 (2007), pp. 34–43, fig. 5, 6.

Fig. 4. Supraśl, Akathistos cycle, Strophes 16, 17.
Photograph from archive of IHMC RAS, Inv. № II 28898

Strophe 18 (Οἶκος Σ, Кондак 10) "Wishing to save the world ..." (fig. 5). The fourth scene of the Akathistos cycle on the north wall is visible on the photographs from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28279) and from Warsaw (sign. 9428). It represented the Anapeson.[43] Christ Emmanuel was depicted sleeping while the Virgin siting next to him. In the lower part of the scene, the Personification of Cosmos was placed with the horn in his hands. The scene is set on the mountain background. Streten Petkovic, who was the first to identify this scene as the illustration of Strophe 18, noted that similar iconography of that strophe could be found in "one Rus(s)ian manuscript."[44] This manuscript belonged to the collection of the

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[43] Cf. B. Todic, 'Anapeson. Iconographie et Signification du thème', *Byzantion*, 64/1 (1994), pp. 134–165.
[44] С. Петковић, 'Нектарије Србин, сликар XVI века', *Зборник за ликовне уметности, 8* (1972), p. 217.

Fig. 5. Supraśl, Akathistos cycle, Strophe 18.
Photograph from archive of IHMC RAS, Inv. № II 28279

Church Academy in Saint Petersburg and few of its illustrations were earlier published by N. V. Pokrovsky.[45] For a long time the location of the manuscript was unknown,[46] but recently it was mentioned in the catalogue of the Russian Museum in Saint Petersburg (ДР/Гр.-78) and it appears to be a Greek manuscript dated to the eighteenth century.[47] Rogov indicated several earlier examples of this iconographic version of Strophe 18 in the Tomic

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[45] Н. В. Покровский, *Евангелие в памятниках иконографии преимущественно византийских и русских,* Москва 1892, il. 225.

[46] In 1960s M. V. Schepkina mentioned that codes as missing (М.В. Щепкина, *Болгарская миниатюра XIV века. Исследование псалтыри Томича,* Москва 1963, p. 148).

[47] Н. В. Пивоварова, *Памятники церковной старины в Петербурге-Петрограде-Ленинграде. Из истории формирования музейных коллекций: 1850–1930-е годы,* Москва 2014, p. 122. I express my gretitude to Alexandr Preobrazensky for this information.

Fig. 6. Supraśl, Akathistos cycle, Strophe 19.
Photograph from archive of IHMC RAS, Inv. № II 28290

Psalter (1360–1363) from the State History Museum in Moscow and in the Serbian Psalter (1396–1410) from the State Library of Bavaria in Munich.[48] Kotyńska supplemented this list with cycles in Tismana monastery in Wallachia (1564) and Arbore church in Moldova (1541).[49] Finally, Siemaszko indicated two more examples: the icon from the Zoodohos Pigi church on the island of Scopelos (first half of the 15th century) and Snagov monastery in Wallachia (1563).[50] This list should be extended with other examples such as Bolniţa church

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48 А. И. Рогов, op. cit., p. 353.

49 J. Kotyńska, op. cit., p. 39.

50 A. Siemaszko, op. cit., p. 45.

in Cozia in Wallachia (1543),[51] Perivolis monastery (c. 1550) on Lesbos[52] the Ekatontapiliani church on island of Paros (after 1636),[53] the epitrachelion from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (17th century)[54], and icon from the skete of Saint Eustachius near Iviron monastery on Mount Athos (17th century).[55] Iconographically, Supraśl is most similar to Snagov and Tismana beacause of the specific representation of the Cosmos with a horn[56]. In other examples this figure either holds a cloth or is not depicted at all.

Strophe 19 (Οἶκος Τ, Ικος 10) "For virgins and for all who flee to you, you are a wall ..." (fig. 6). The fifth and the last scene on the Northern wall is visible on the photographs from Saint Petersburg (sign. II 28279 and II 28290), right near the iconostasis. The Virgin was reresented standing and stretching her hands to the sides while flanked by two persons. Pokryshkin identified them as two young men,[57] and other scholars repeated this observation. In the meantime, only the left figure which is fully visible on the photographs could be clearly identified as a young man because of the costume and a haircut, while the figure to the right might represent a young women. On both photographs this figure is partly covered with the iconostasis, yet the wide round collar usual for females is visible around her neck. Rogov suggested that this scene illustrates Prooimion[58], while Siemaszko suggested that it should be identified as Strophe 19.[59] The representation of the Virgin protecting the people corresponds with the main idea of this strophe in which it is expressed through the comparison of the Virgin to a protective wall for the virgins and all those who seek her protection. Because the virgins are mentioned in the text, usually women are represented under the Virgin's protections, yet in same cases, men could be represented along with women. Siemaszko mentioned two such examples: the wall painting in the refectory of Great Lavra on Mount Athos (1535–1541) with hierarchs, and the icon from the skete of Saint Eustachius near Iviron monastery on Mount Athos (17th century) with young men.[60] On this icon, as in Supraśl, young men stand to the left while women to the right.[61] Another specific feature of the Supraśl's illustration of Strophe 19 is the slightly tilted down position

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[51] I. Iancovescu, 'Picturile de la Bolniţa mânăstirii Cozia: programul iconografic integral', *Archive* of SCIA, AP, new series, 2/46 (2012), fig. 56.

[52] Γ. Γουναρη, *op.cit.*, fig. 89B.

[53] Α. Ορλάνδος, *Αρχείον των Βυζαντινών μνημείων της Ελλάδος*, Ι (1964), fig.20.

[54] Α. Παλιούρας, *Ο Πατριαρχικος ναος και ο οικος*, "Το Οικομενικο Πατριαρχειο. Η μεγαλη του Χριστου εκκκησια", Αθηνα 1989, fig. 102.

[55] Н. П. Кондаков, *op. cit.*, fig. 46.

[56] C. Dogaru identifies this figure in Snagov and Tisana not as the Cosmos but as David. Cf. C. Dogaru, 'Μια ιδιόρρυθμη εικαστική απόδοση του 18ου οίκου του Ακαθίστου Ύμνου στις Μονές Snagov (1563) και Tismana (1564) στη νότια Ρουμανία και το πολιτικό της περιεχόμενο', *Εγνατία*, 12 (2008), pp. 195–202.

[57] П. П. Покрышкин, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

[58] А. И. Рогов, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[59] A. Siemaszko, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[60] *Ibidem*, p. 45.

[61] Н. П. Конадков, *op. cit.*, fig. 46.

of the Virgin's hands. This tilt is reminiscent of the western image of the Madonna della Misericordia. In the later however Virgin stretches her hands over the heads of the people, not in front of them as in Suprasl. The parallel to this detail is found in the illustration of Strophe 19 in Stănești monastery in Wallachia (1537).[62]

Iconographic sources, authorship and artistic milieu

As has been shown in the previous section, all Supraśl scenes which reveal similarities among other post-Byzantine Akathistos cycles. Some of these similarities, specific and rare, should serve as markers for the identification of the iconographic versions of Akathistos cycle used by the artists. I suggest, that in Supraśl, two such versions were creatively merged together to inform a new original version.

The first of these versions has as it characteristic the combination of the standing Virgin in mandorla for the illustration of Strophe 4 with the Anapeson scene for the illustration of Strophe 18. This combination within one cycle is known only by few instances which range in chronology from the Late Byzantine era to the seventeenth century: the Tomic Psalter (1360–1363) from the State Historical Museum in Moscow, the icon from the Zoodohos Pigi church on the island of Scopelos (first half of the 15th century), Perivolis monastery (ca. 1550) on Lesbos, Snagov (1563) and Tismana (1564) monasteries in Wallachia, the Ekatontapiliani church on island of Paros (after 1636), the epitrachelion from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (17th century), and icon from the skete of Saint Eustachius near the monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos (17th century). From the standpoint of the chronology and iconography, Supraśl is most close to the Wallachian monasteries of Snagov and Tismana. All three cycles are dated to the middle of the 16th century and their illustrations of Strophes 4 and 18 share the same specific iconographic details. Thus, in Strophe 4 the Virgin supports the mandorla around Christ-Child with her hands (in other similar cases she is represented as Orans), and, in Strophe 18, the Personification of Cosmos holds a horn (in other similar cases this personage absent or holds a cloth). These specific detail suggest that the same iconographic models were used for the illustration of these two strophes in all three cycles.

The second iconographic version of the Akathistos cycle used in Supraśl could be identified through the specific illustration of strophe 17. The text of this strophe describes how the eloquent orators became speechless when they learnt about the incarnation of Christ. In Akathistos cycles this Strophe was usually illustrated with scenes depicting affected orators. In Supraśl, instead, the icon scene was used. Apart of the isolated example from the Late Byzantine Macedonia, the church in Matejče (1356–1360), other instances of this version for Strophe 17 constitute a coherent geographical and chronological group which includes sixteenth-century cycles from the monasteries of Probota (1532), Saint John the

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[62] C. L. Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, fig. 67.

New (church of Saint George) in Suceava (1532–34), Humor (1535) and Suceviţa (c.1600), all in Moldova, and Lavriv monastery in Ukraine (c.1550). As has been noted before, iconographically, Supraśl's illustration is very close to those in Probota, Suceava and Lavriv, because of the specific type of the icon venerated in the scene, the Virgin Orans with a Christ-Child in front of her chest instead of a more common for such scenes the Hodegetria type. There are other minor details that relate Supraśl to this group of cycles, for instance, like in Humor the Virgin is depicted as Orans in the illustration of Strophe 16, and Strophe 7 was excluded from the cycle same as it was in Lavriv.

Thus, we can conclude that while one version of the Akathistos cycle used in Supraśl originated from the same artistic milieu as murals of Snagov and Tismana, i.e. from the region of Wallachia, the other version, associated with such cycles as Probota, Saint George in Suceava, Humor, and Lavriv, was spread in Moldova and Galicia. The monastery of Supraśl seems to designate the northern frontier to which both versions ever have reached.

This conclusion is important for the implications about the authorship of the Supraśl murals, the issue that has been widely discussed in the scholarship before. Most of the scholars believed that walls of Supraśl were painted by Nektarinos Serbyn, an artists mentioned in Kymbar's *Inventory* as the author of the icons for the iconostasis.[63] His last name, Serbyn (the Serb), defined the direction in which scholars were looking for stylistic and iconographic parallels to Supraśl promoting its reputation as a monument of "Balkan art in Poland." Thus, Ludmila Lebedzinska wrote about the "frescoes in northern Serbia in the basin of Morava river, painted in late 14th and early 15th century (Ravanitsa, Kalenić, Ljubostinja and first of all the church of Saint Trinity in Manasia)."[64] Stanisław Szymański focusing on the analysis of ornaments pointed instead to the churches in "south-western Serbia and northern Macedonia, exactly in Old and New Pavlitsa, Mileševa, Arilje, Gračanica, Prizren, Rudenintsa, and specifically in Traskavac, Dečani, Sopoćani, and Studenitsa, which are dated from 12th century to 1410."[65] Another group of related murals, within a close chronological range, was identified by Petkovic including the monastery of Pećka Patrijaršija (1561), Mileševa (c. 1565) and the church of the Virgin in Studenitsa (1568).[66]

Our search for iconographic prototypes of the Supraśl Akathistos however points into different artistic milieu occured not to the south but to the north of the Danube. This perspective enables us to evaluate the Supraśl murals not as an export of Balkan art into some far-flung location, but as a 'local' product of a wider artistic region, which embraced principalities of Wallachia and Moldova along with Ruthenian (Belorusian and Ukrainian) lands in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

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[63] 'Лѣтопись Супрашльськой Лавры' ..., p. 52.

[64] L. Lebiedzińska, *op. cit.*

[65] S. Szymański, 'Freski z Supraśla: próba rekonstruowania genealogii', *Rocznik Białostocki*, 11 (1972), p. 182.

[66] С. Петковић, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
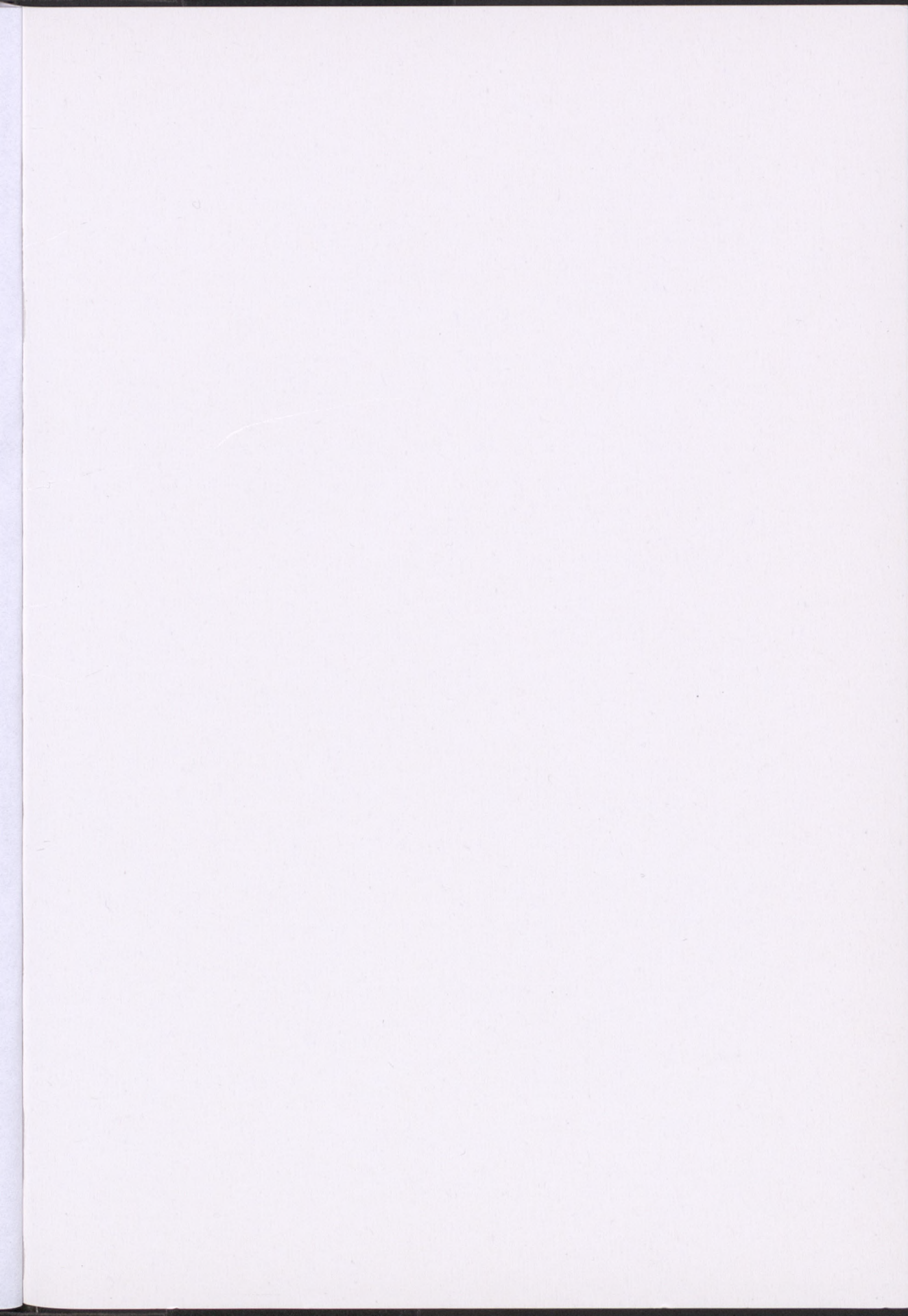
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