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WARRIORS SAINTS IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE AT POLOŠKO



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In the lower registers of the church of St. George at Pološko is depicted a large number of warrior saints. The choice of the warrior saints and their attire reflect the territorial expansion of Serbia in the middle of the 14th century on one hand, and the funerary dedication of the church on the other. This paper attempts to identify the warrior saints in the church and to explain their choice.

The church of St. George at Pološko (1343-45) was erected as a final resting place of the nobleman Jovan Dragušin¹. Because his tomb was placed in the church itself, the decoration of the church as a whole reflects the funeral character of the monument². The

¹ For the donor of the church see, A. Ristovska, *Une moniale commanditaire: l'art au service de la propagande impériale au XIV^e siècle*, Actes du 9^e colloque étudiant du Département d'histoire de l'Université Laval, Laval 2010, 163-179, Д. Павловић, *Питање ктиторства цркве Светог Ђорђа у Полошком*, Зограф, 39, Београд 2015, 107-118. The church was in advance designated to be Dragušin's final resting place, А. Попова, *Погребна литургија и фреските во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки*, Хоризонти, 8, Охрид-Битола 2012, 179-188, with further bibliography. Jovan Dragušin was a Bulgarian nobleman who was related to the Serbian and Byzantine royal families, and was in the service of the Serbian court. After the dynastic struggles in Bulgaria and his failure to secure the Bulgarian throne, he found refuge in Serbia under the protection of his cousin Dušan. This nobleman entered in the service of the Serbian court at a time when the Serbia became one of the most powerful states of the time, Ц. Грозданов, Д. Ќорнаков, *Историјски портрети у Полошком* (I), Зограф, 14, Београд 1983, 64-65, А. Ristovska, *L'Église Saint-Georges de Pološko (Macédoine): Recherche sur le monument et ses peintures murales (XIV^e siècle)*, Thèse de Doctorat, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris 2010, 39-41

² Попова, *op. cit.*, 179-188.

church was also built in the midst of the great territorial expansion of the medieval Serbia and the rise of the Serbian kingdom to the rank of an empire³. These events are also reflected in the painting of the church that in many ways glorify the Serbian sovereign and his military power. The church was dedicated to St. George Triumphant an epithet introduced by king Milutin as a sign of gratitude for the assistance of the saint in the battle⁴. Hence the dedication of the church at Pološko emphasize the military role of St. George and his divine protection during Dušan's conquests.

This celebration of the military power of the sovereign continues in the lower register of the naos of the church where an important number of warrior saints occupy the south wall of the church. The procession of warrior saints starts with St. George who as a patron saint is depicted next to the iconostasis, and spreads all the way to the entrance. The row of the warrior saints is only partly interrupted on the pillars of the church, with the depiction of the Archangel Gabriel on the face of the south-east pillar and St. Zosimas on the west part of the same pillar. The sides of the south-west pillar are occupied by St. Pachome and St. Daniel Stylite⁵.

³ А. Ристовска, *Живописот на црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки и политичко-црковните промени на Балканот кон средината на 14-от век*, Универзитет Св. Климент Охридски, Научно списание Хоризонти, 7, Битола 2011, 163-179, А. Popova, *The Assimilation of Stefan Dušan with Constantine the Great and Archangel Michael in the church of St. George at Pološko*, Patrimonium MK 15, Skopje 2017.

⁴ For the dedication of the church see, Ristovska, *L'Église Saint-Georges de Pološko*, 24-25. For St. George Triumphant see, Б. Тодић, *Старо Назоричино*, Београд 1993, 27, 121, В. Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting. The Age of King Milutin*, Belgrade 1999, 56.

⁵ Ristovska, *L'Église Saint-Georges de Pološko*, 193-194, 203-211.



fig. 1 St. George, St. George at Pološko

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First next to the iconostasis under an accede is depicted Saint George (fig.1, 2)⁶. From his figure only the severely damaged bust remains. He is depicted in military attire holding a drawn sword in his right hand while his shield is behind his back⁷. St. George was very popular in Byzantium. He was especially venerated by the emperors and their dignitaries for his capacity to intervene in battle. Therefore many churches were built in his honor which contributed to the development of his cult. This practice was also adopted in medieval Serbia. St. George was considered by the Serebes not only as their ally in the battles but also as the protector of the royal family⁸.

⁶ The inscription of the saint is lost. For the cult and iconography of the saint see, Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Aldershot 2003, 109-144, with further bibliography.

For the place of the patron saint next to the iconostasis see, Г. Бабић, *О живописном украсу олтарних преграда*, ЗЛУ, 11, Београд 1975, 28, 35.

⁷ Although St. George can be depicted as martyr he is usually in his military outfit. The iconography of St. George as warrior is firmly established and dates from the pre-iconoclast period, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 123-131, with further bibliography. On the arms and armour of warrior saints see on the last place: Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 270-274 and passim, P. Grotowski, *Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints, Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography (843–1261)*, Leiden 2010.

⁸ For the cult of the military saints in medieval Serbia see, В. Ј. Ђурић, *Три догађаја у српској држави XIV*



fig. 2 St. George, detail, St. George at Pološko

Accordingly in all the churches built by the Serbian sovereigns and dignitaries St. George is depicted with his full military equipment⁹. The emphasis on the military power of St. George in the church at Pološko is outlined not only by his warrior outfit but also by his drawn sword¹⁰. St. George with a drawn sword that appeared for the first time in the church of the Taxiarchis of the Metropolis in Kastoria (13th century) and in the church of the Virgin Olympiotissa in Elasson in the 14th century is also repeated in the churches in Macedonia, Month Athos and Kastoria¹¹.

века и њихов одјек у сликарству, ЗЛУ, 4, Београд 1968, 71-72, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Две молитве краља Стефана Дечанског пре битке на Велбужду и њихов одјек у уметности*, ЗЛУ, 15, Београд 1979, 135-149, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле у доба Немањића*, Београд 1994, 87-90, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 132.

⁹ Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство*, 90.

¹⁰ For the symbolism of the drawn sword see, K. P. Charalampidis, *Representations of military saints in the middle-Byzantine and late-Byzantine iconography of Greek Macedonia*, Byzantine Macedonia: Identity, Image and History, Papers from the Melbourne Conference July 1995, Melbourne 2000, 81-82. The movements of warriors come to life gradually over the centuries. Weapons first at rest start to rise especially from the 14th century. The raised sword is not an invention from the Palaiologan period. Raised arms can be found on icons from Sinai



fig. 3 St. Demetrios, St. George at Pološko

As already mentioned the church was dedicated to St. George Triumphant. Unfortunately it is impossible to know if this epithet was also given to the representation of St. George next to the iconostasis. That was already the case on the iconostasis in Staro Nagoričino where St. George depicted with a drawn sword is named Triumphant¹². The iconography of St. George with a drawn sword associated with the epithet of Triumphant continued in the later period as attested in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Zevgostasion (Dolanini) dating from the second half of the 14th century¹³.

Next to St. George is depicted St. Demetrios¹⁴ (O A[ΓΙΟC] Δ[Η]ΜΗ[ΤΡΙΟC], fig. 3). Similarly to St.

and the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, from the tenth century, K. Weitzmann et al. (eds), *The Icon*, London 1982, 31-32, K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian*, Ann Arbor 1965, fig. CXXII.

¹¹ St. George is depicted with a drawn sword in Protaton, on the iconostasis of Staro Nagoričino in St. Nicetas near Čučer in Gračanica and in the church of the the Dormition of the Virgin in Zevgostasion (Dolanini, second half of the 14th century), Popova, op. cit, 254-25, with further bibliography.

¹² Тодић, op. cit, 123, fig. 84.

¹³ I. Σίστου, *Οι μεμονωμένες μορφές Αγίων στο ναό της Παναγίας Ζευγостаσίου Καστοριάς*, Ниш и Византија, 13, Ниш 2013, fig. 8.

George only the upper part of his figure is still visible. He is depicted in his warrior outfit and he also holds a drawn sword, while his shield is behind his back. His military costume is badly damaged. St. Demetrios was one of the most popular warrior saints in Byzantium and is usually included in the group of warrior saints in the fresco decoration together with St. George. The cult of Saint Demetrios who is especially popular among the slaves came to medieval Serbia through Thessaloniki¹⁵. He was also very popular in medieval Serbia and similarly to St. George was venerated for his help in military actions. Therefore it is understandable why he is also depicted in a full warrior outfit holding a drawn sword.

St. Theodore Tyron and St. Theodore Stratelates (fig. 4)¹⁶ are depicted one next to another next to St. Demetrios. Only a part of the inscription of the first St. Theodore is still visible O A[ΓΙΟC] [Θ]ΕΟΔΩΡΟC. Similarly to the previous warrior saints only their upper part is preserved. They are depicted according to their usual iconographic type, wearing their military outfits and holding a sword, while their shields are behind their backs¹⁷.

¹⁴ St. Demetrios is venerated as one of the most important orthodox military patrons. On the cult and iconography of the saint in Byzantium and Serbia see, I. M. Djordjević, *Der Heilige Demetrios in der Serbischen adligen Stiftungen aus der Zeit der Nemaniden*, L'art de Thessalonique et des Pays Balkaniques et les courants spirituels au XIVe siècle, Recueil des Rapports du Colloque Serbo-Grec, Belgrade 1985, Belgrade 1987, 67-73, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 67-93.

¹⁵ Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 88. Saint Demetrios is particularly venerated in the Balkan where number of churches are built in his honor. See for example the church of St. Demetrios in Prilep (ca. 1283), the church in Davidovica (1281-90), St. Demetrios in Ohrid (second half of the 14th century), the church in Peć (ca. 1345) and Marko's Monastery (1376-81), B. J. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 17, 43-44, 90, 58, 80. The cycle of the saint is also depicted in number of Serbian churches, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 89, with further bibliography.

¹⁶ On the cult and iconography of Sts. Theodores see on the last place with the further bibliography, Ch. Walter, *Theodore, archetype of the warrior saint*, REB, 57, Paris 1999, 163-210; idem, *The Warrior Saints*, 44-66, A. Trifonova, *The Iconographical Type of saints Theodore Teron and Theodore Stratelates Facing Each Other and its Diffusion during the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Period*, Зограф, 34, Београд 2010, 53 - 64.

¹⁷ At the time of the fresco decoration of the church at Pološko the iconography of the two saints is well



fig. 4 St. Theodore Tyron and St. Theodore Stratelates, St. George at Pološko

The cult of the two Sts. Theodores developed out of number of legends that in the beginning mentioned only one Theodore. The two Theodores appeared in the ninth century when in the texts are distinguished two different saints: Theodore Tyron (the recruit) and Theodore Stratelates (the general)¹⁸. The cult of St. Theodor spread from Asia Minor. After the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor at the end of the 11th century their cult becomes even more popular with the transport of their relics to Constantinople and Serres. As one of the most popular warrior saints they are usually included in the the group of warrior saints in Byzantium and accordingly in medieval Serbia.

St. Menas (fig. 5)¹⁹ is shown on the face of the south - east pillar. From his figure only his damaged bust remains together with the first letter of his name.

established. Usually Saints Theodores are depicted frontally in warrior uniforms or as martyrs in luxury garments. In the Palaiologan art there another two iconographic models of Saints Theodores. In some representations they are facing each other, in three-quarter view, receiving crowns of martyrdom from Christ or they are blessed by him. In another solution they appear as galloping riders, holding each other shoulders, A. Trifonova, op. cit, 53 – 64.

¹⁸ For the question of the two Sts. Theodores see, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 59-64. Grotowski, op.cit, 117-121, with further bibliography.

¹⁹ For the iconography of the saint see, M. Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника у источнохришћанској уметности и о представама ових светитеља у Дечанима*, Зидно сликарство манастира Дечана. Грађа

и студије, Београд 1995, 611-615, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 181-190, T. Woodfin, *An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint*, DOP, 60, Cambridge, MA 2006, 111-143, Н. В. Герасименко, *Мина Египетский (Фригийский) или Мина Калликелад? К вопросу об одной иконографической особености*, Образ Византии. Сборник статей в честь О. С. Поповой, Москва 2008, 105-114.

It is obvious that the saint depicted here is St. Menas due to his specific iconographic type. He is depicted as an old man with curly, gray, short hair and with a curly, rounded beard. The state of the image does not allow us to determine if he was depicted in a civilian or in a military outfit. We also can't identify if he had any weapon. There are three different saints named Menas²⁰. Iconographically the confusion can be made between two saints: St. Menas of Egypt and saint Ménas Καλλιχελαδος (Kallikelados). The first Saint Menas is an Egyptian soldier martyred in Cotyaeum of Phrygia. Saint Menas Καλλιχελαδος was not a soldier but a senator and distinguished orator, originally from Athens and martyred in Alexandria²¹. Before the iconoclasm St. Menas of Egypt is depicted young and beardless. After the iconoclasm St. Menas appears as an old man with curly gray hair and beard an iconography that will remain stable in the Byzantine art²². This same type depicted in Pološko is

и студије, Београд 1995, 611-615, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 181-190, T. Woodfin, *An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint*, DOP, 60, Cambridge, MA 2006, 111-143, Н. В. Герасименко, *Мина Египетский (Фригийский) или Мина Калликелад? К вопросу об одной иконографической особености*, Образ Византии. Сборник статей в честь О. С. Поповой, Москва 2008, 105-114.

²⁰ Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 181.

²¹ For the cult of the two saints see on the last place, Герасименко, op. cit, 105-114, with further bibliography.



fig. 5 St. Menas, St. George at Pološko

also consistent with the descriptions in the painting manuals²³. St. Menas is usually depicted as a martyr. Sometimes he appears with a medallion portrait of the head of Christ suspended before his breast²⁴. Although St. Menas is a warrior he is rarely depicted in military outfits. The preserved examples testify that he is depicted in his military attire in the churches built by Serbian nobles²⁵. Most often saint Menas is

²² For 14th century examples see, the King's church in Studenica, G. Millet, A. Frolov, *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie: (Serbie, Macédoine, Monténégro)*, 3, Paris 1962, PL 58/2, St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki, A. Ευγγόπουλος, *Οι τοιχογραφίες του Αγίου Νικολάου Ορφανού Θεσσαλονίκης*, Αθήνα 1964, fig. 133, in Kariye Djami. P. A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, Vol. 2, New York 1966, fig. 302a, or Dečani, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 611-615, fig. 7.

²³ Denys de Fournas, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Saint Petersburg 1909, 322.

²⁴ Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 614, with examples and further bibliography.

²⁵ One of the oldest representations of St. Menas as a warrior can be found in Staro Nagoričino, Тодић, op.cit, 77, in Dečani, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 611-615, fig. 7 and in Holy Apostles in Peć, В. Ђурић, С. Ђирковић, В. Корач, *Пећка патријаршија*, Београд 1990, 219, fig. 142. For the representations of saint Menas

depicted with Sts. Viktor and Vikentios. However there are other examples where like in Pološko he is not in the company of these two saints²⁶.

The procession of the warrior saints continues on the south wall of the west bay with St. Christopher (fig. 6) carrying the infant Christ on his shoulder²⁷. The painting is badly damaged, but the little Christ sitting on the saint's shoulder as well as St. Christopher's clothes are still recognizable. Although the face of the saint is mostly destroyed we can still conclude that he was depicted young with long hair. He wears a blue-green tunic and red mantle. In his right hand he holds a cross. His name is missing. The name of the saint that associates him with the Christ (the one who bears Christ), has significantly influenced the diffusion of his cult, that spread from the fifth century. In the Christian art he is depicted with different iconographical types. The most widespread type is St. Christopher as a young martyr holding a cross in his hand,²⁸ but he is also often depicted as a warrior²⁹. In the Western art there is also the depiction of St. Christopher Cynocephalus (man with a head of a dog)³⁰. Finally the painters working for the Serbian noble donors introduced in the decorations of the churches St. Christopher carrying the infant Christ on his shoulder, which is in fact the translation of his name³¹. This iconographic type introduced in St.

in warrior outfit in Serbian Medieval painting see, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 615. The author believes that although the first examples of St. Menas in warrior outfit are found in Serbian medieval painting, that this iconographic type originated from Thessaloniki.

²⁶ For other contemporary examples see, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 613-614.

²⁷ For the iconography of the saint see, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 214-216. For the representation of St. Christopher in the Serbian medieval art see, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Свети Христофор у српском зидном сликарству средњег века*, Зограф, 11, Београд 1980, 63-67.

²⁸ This iconographical type is described in the Hermeneia, Denys de Fournas, op. cit, 325.

²⁹ In the Byzantine art there are many examples of St. Christopher depicted as a warrior, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 214-216.

³⁰ The first known representation is on a clay tile from Vinica in the Republic of Macedonia (before 733). For that and other examples of St. Christopher Cynocephalus see, Љ. Стошић, *Култ светог Христофора Кинокефала на Балкану*, Патримониум.МК, 7-8, Скопје 2010, with further bibliography.

³¹ In the beginning it was believed that this iconographic type of St. Christopher appeared in the Byzantine art under Western influence. In the Western art this iconographical type coincides with the appearance of the Golden Legend where is told the story of Christopher who while crossing the river met a little child who asked him to take him

George at Pološko³² is later repeated in the narthex of Lesново (1349)³³ and in St. Stephen in Konče (1366-1371)³⁴. The both representations adopted the same iconographic solution as the church at Pološko.

In the Balkan all iconographical types of the saint are depicted. From the 14th century there are many examples where St. Christopher is depicted as a martyr³⁵ and there is one example in Staro Nagoričino where he is depicted as a warrior³⁶. Except for the examples already mentioned St. Christopher



fig. 6. St. Christopher, St. George at Pološko

across the river. During the crossing, the child became more and more heavy until the point that he seemed heavier than the whole universe. Then it was revealed to him that it was in fact Christ himself. Ivan Đorđević showed that the Byzantine origins of this iconographic solution confirm that the Byzantine painters were not inspired by the legend, but that they have only translated his name into an iconographical solution, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Свети Христовор у српском зидном сликарству средњег века*, Зограф, 11, Београд 1980, 65-66.

³² Smiljka Gabelic gives as the first example of this iconography the tower of Nafplio in Peloponnese from the end of 13th or the beginning of the 14th century, but it is possible that this image was a donation from west, С. Габелић, *Манастир Конче*, Београд 2008, 139-151.

³³ С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998, 204-205, fig. LXII.

³⁴ С. Габелић, *Манастир Конче*, Београд 2008, 139, Т. XIV, fig. 46, 59. Ivan Đorđević estimates that this representation in Pološko dates from the 7th or the 8th decade of the 14th century without supporting this view. There is no documentation or visual proof to support this view, Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство*, 351, note 108. The first researchers working on the conservation of the church also agree that this painting is contemporary to the decoration of the church, Ц. Грозданов, Д. Ќорнаков, *Историјски портрети у Полошком (III)*, Зограф, 18, Београд 1987, 40.

³⁵ For the examples of St. Christopher as martyr in the Balkan art see, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Св. Христовор у српском зидном сликарству средњег века*, Зограф, 11, Београд 1980, 63-63, with further bibliography. See also his depictions in St. George in Goren Kozjak (ca. 1340), St. Nicholas in Psača (1365-1371) and in Zrze Monastery (1368/1369), Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство*, 174, 179. As a martyr he is especially depicted in the 15th century, in the monuments of the so-called Ohrid school. See the examples from the church of All Saints in Lešani (middle of the 15th century), St. Nicholas in Vevi (1460) the church of the Ascension in Leskoc (1461-62), Г. Суботић, *Охридската сликарска школа од XV век*, Охрид 1980 73, fig. 50, 90, fig. 70, 97, fig. 79.

³⁶ Тодић, op. cit, 124.

carrying the infant Christ on his shoulder is also depicted in the later period in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Tarnovo and in the Monastery at Matka³⁷.

St. Christopher was venerated as a protector of travelers and a protector against sudden death. In the medieval time his images were depicted on the fortresses of the cities, on the bridges and by the entries of the churches³⁸. St. Christopher in Lesново and in Konče is placed on the walls next to the entry of the churches. In Lesново he is depicted next to the west entrance, while in Konče he is depicted on the west side of the south-west pillar. This can be linked to the fact that St. Christopher was venerated as a protector of travellers. It can also be explained by the gesture of the little Christ whose blessing is intended to the faithfuls entering the church³⁹. Nevertheless it seems that this iconographic type had a distinct funerary meaning. Not only that St. Christopher carrying the little Christ on his shoulder is depicted for the first

³⁷ А. Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paris, 1928 280, pl. XLV, Суботић, *Охридската сликарска школа*, 145, fig. 115.

³⁸ Габелић, *Манастир Лесново*, 204, Стошић, op. cit, 395.

³⁹ Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле*, 66.



fig. 7. *St Christopher and three unidentified warriors martyres, St. George at Pološko*

time above the tomb in Pološko, he is later repeated in two other burial monuments, in the narthex of Lesnovo and in Konče.

St. Christopher carrying the infant Christ on his shoulder is followed by three other saints whose faces are now destroyed (fig. 7). They are all depicted as martyrs dressed as civilians and hold a cross in their hand. Like previous saints they are only preserved in buste. Their inscriptions are lost and the state of these figures does not allow a precise identification⁴⁰. But having in mind that they continue the procession of warrior saints and St. Christopher already dressed in civilian outfit we can assume that the saints in question are also warrior saints depicted as martyrs.

The depiction of the military saints as martyrs instead of warriors do not correspond to the Serbian tradition of the 14th century when they are always depicted as warriors. In the light of the territorial expansion of medieval Serbia in the 14th century the warrior saints were always in a full warrior equipment⁴¹. Therefore their depiction as martyrs in Pološko is atypical. This is explained with the funerary destination of the church. The three martyrs are depicted just above the tomb of Jovan Dragušin⁴². These war-

rior saints above the tomb of the donor are depicted as civilians holding a cross, an outfit that stress their quality as martyrs. This emphasis on their martyrdom underline their intercessory power as their sufferings reflect Christ's sacrifice⁴³. Warrior saints are considered in the Byzantine tradition as powerful protectors and intercessors and are included in the funeral rites⁴⁴. Celebrated for their heroic acts, but as well as witnesses of the victory of Christ over death, they are also included in the funeral liturgy⁴⁵. Accordingly their representations can be found on the sarcophages and in funeral spaces⁴⁶. In the Palaiologan epoch there are other examples of warrior saints directly associated with tombs⁴⁷. For example the warrior saints

данов, Ќорнаков, *Историјски портрети у Полошком* (III), 40-43.

⁴³ The same iconographic choice was made in the Hermitage of St. Neophytos near Paphos, where military saints instead of being depicted as warriors, which was the practice in the 12th century, are depicted in courtly dress, C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Le rôle des images dans la chrétienté orientale: l'exemple de l'ermitage de saint Néophyte près de Paphos*, Perspectives médiévales, 29, Paris 2004, 51.

⁴⁴ Д. Поповић, *Српски владарски гроб у средњем веку*, Београд 1992, 185, Милан Радујко, *Копорин*, Београд 2006, with further bibliography.

⁴⁵ Г. С. Дебольский, *Дни богослужения православной католической восточной церкви*, т. II, СПб 1887, 74-76.

⁴⁶ See for example the Hermitage of St. Neophytos near Paphos, C. Mango, E. J. Hawkins, *The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and its Wall Paintings*, DOP, 20, Cambridge, MA 1966, 174-176, Jolivet-Lévy, op. cit, 51, or the Hermitage of St. Peter of Koriša, В. Ј. Ђурић, *Најстарији живопис испоснице пустиножителя Петра Коришког*, ЗРВИ, 5, Београд 1958, 174-175, 181, Subotić, G. *L'Art Médiéval du Kosovo*, Paris 1997, 16-19.

⁴⁸ The warrior saints depicted in funeral spaces is explained by their role in the Last Judgement, В. Ђурић,

⁴⁰ These frescoes are so damaged, that even at the time of conversation of the church decoration in 1985/6 the saints were unidentifiable, Грозданов, Ќорнаков, *Историјски портрети у Полошком* (III), 40. Ivan Đorđević, suggests that next to St. Cristopher are depicted St. Demetrios and Nestor without justifying his opinion, Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле*, 149.

⁴¹ Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство*, 90, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 604-605, with bibliography. They are depicted in courtly dress only when they are included in a cycle.

⁴² The son of the donor of the painting, Jovan Dragušin was buried in the south west angle of the church, Гроз-

are depicted in parecclesion of Chora Church as well as in the west bay of St. Demetrios in Pec⁴⁸.

It is noteworthy to mention that the tradition of the depiction of warrior saints as martyrs is on the other hand characteristic for the Macedonian territory in the 14th century and especially for Ohrid⁴⁹. Outside of Ohrid warriors saints as martyrs are furthermore depicted in St. George in Matejče (end of 14th century)⁵⁰. Examples of warrior saints depicted as martyrs can also be found in the second half of the 14th century in Kastoria⁵¹. From the second half of the 14th century the warrior saints are more often depicted as martyrs especially in the composition of the Heavenly Court⁵².

* * *

The warrior saints in Pološko represent a significant part of the isolated saints. The number of the military saints in the church is consistent with the popularity of their cult in the 14th century. Introduced in the church decoration after the post iconoclastic period they become integral part of the late Byzantine churches. Their popularity in the church decorations from the 14th century reflects the prominence given to them in Greek hagiography and in the liturgy⁵³.

Сопоћани, Београд 1963, 32, Ђурић, *Најстарији живопис*, 173-195, especially 181.

⁴⁸ S. Der Nersessian, *Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion*, The Kariye Djami, vol. 4, New York 1975, 319-320, Д. Филиповић, *Саркофаг архиепископа Никодима у цркви Св. Димитрија у Патријаршији*, ЗЛУ, 19, Београд 1983, 90-91.

⁴⁹ Ц. Грозданов, *Охридското ѕидно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 39-40 and passim.

⁵⁰ С. Цветковски, *Црквата Св. Ѓорѓија во Матејче*, Зборник за средновековна уменост 5, Музеј на Македонија, Скопје 2006, 79-104.

⁵¹ See for example their depiction in St. George tou Vounou in Kastoria, E.N. Τσιγαρίδας, *Τοιχογραφίες της περιόδου των Παλαιολόγων σε ναούς της Μακεδονίας*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1999, fig. 123-124.

⁵² For the Heavenly Court see: Грозданов, *Охридското ѕидно сликарство*, 105-109, Ц. Грозданов, *Христос Цар, Богородица Царица, небесните сили и Светите војници во живописот од XIV и XV век во Трескавец*, Студии за охридскиот живопис, Скопје 1990, 132-149, Ц. Грозданов, *Исус Христос Цар над царевима у живопису Охридске архиепископије од XV до XVII века*, Зограф 27, Београд 1998-1999, 151-160. Ivan Đorđević propose that it is possible that the Heavenly Court was deliberately omitted from the Serbian churches in order to be avoided the depictions of warrior saints as martyrs. Ђорђевић, *Ѕидно сликарство српске властеле*, 90.

In the 14th century they were also very popular in medieval Serbia. Similarly to the Byzantine emperors the Serbian sovereigns considered the military saints as helpers and protectors in battle⁵⁴. Therefore a true expansion of the depiction of warrior saints in Serbian art can be noticed from the time of king Milutin.

St. George in Pološko was erected at the time of the great conquests of the medieval Serbia. Accordingly the warrior saints in the east and central bay of the church are depicted with a triumphant formal expression in a full military outfit. Their role of military allies and protectors is furthermore emphasized by the depiction of St. George and St. Demetrios waving their victorious swords. While the choice of the warrior saints in military outfit next to the iconostasis is in accordance with other Byzantine and Serbian churches from that time, the depiction of the warrior saints as martyrs in the south bay is an isolated example in the Serbian medieval art from the period. Depicted above the tomb of Dragušin they remained that they were not only considered as protectors of the living and assistants during military interventions but that the faithful also hoped for their intercession and protection after the death.

The choice of warrior saints in the east and central bay of St. George at Pološko reflects the general practice of Byzantine and Serbian churches. In Byzantine tradition a foremost in rank were George, Demetrius, the two Theodores, Mercurius and Procopius⁵⁵. Furthermore the choice of warrior saints depicted in the eastern and central bay of the church corresponds to the saints mentioned in the synaxarion of the Serbian

⁵³ In the rite of the Proskomidie, when the priest detaches particles of the eucharistic bread, invoking in turn the Virgin, archangels, prophets, apostles, and saints, the warrior saints Demetrios, George and Theodore are mentioned immediately after the Church Fathers and before the other saints, R. P. F. Mercenier, *La prière des églises de rite byzantin*, vol. 1, Amay-sur-Meuse 1937.

⁵⁴ Ђурић, *Три догађаја*, 71-72, Ђорђевић, *Две молитве краља Стефана Дечанског*, 135-149, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 600-602, 604, with examples and further bibliography. In the 14th century many churches built by Serbian noblemen were dedicated to the warrior saints. In all these churches the warrior saints are depicted in their full military outfit, Ђорђевић, *Ѕидно сликарство*, 70, 87-90.

⁵⁵ For the choice of warrior saints in Byzantine and Serbian churches see, Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 591-594, М. Марковић, *Свети Ратници из Ресаве*, иконографска анализа, Манастир Ресаве, историја и уметност: научни скуп манастир Манасија и његово доба, Деспотовац 21.-22. 8. 1994, Деспотовац 1995, 206 et passim, Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 274-276, Ђурић, *Три догађаја*, 65-100.

Gospel Lectionary of the Prince Miroslav (ca. 1185) where St. George, St. Demetrios, St. Prokopios, St. Eustathios, St. Niketas, St. Nestor, St. Menas, and St. Theodore Stratelates are mentioned⁵⁶. It is not possible to comment on the choice of warrior saints on the south wall in the west bay of the church due to the poor condition of these figures. But it seems that the painters choice was directly inspired by the funer-

ary dedication of the church. This is attested by the depiction of warrior saints as martyrs, the choice of other scenes in this part of the church as well by the depiction of St. Christopher carrying the infant Christ on his shoulder. This saint was in fact considered as a protector against unprepared death and harm and is consistently painted in monuments with funerary dedication.

⁵⁶ Марковић, *О иконографији светих ратника*, 600.

Ана ПОПОВА

СВЕТИТЕ ВОИНИ ВО ЦРКВАТА СВ. ЃОРЃИ ВО ПОЛОШКО

Резиме

Во зоната на стоечки светители во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи во Полошко се насликани голем број на свети војни. Процесијата на свети војни започнува веднаш до иконостасот и се протега низ целиот јужен ѕид од црквата. Низата на свети војни е само наместа прекината на пиластрите од црквата. Групата свети војни започнува со св. Ѓорѓи и продолжува со претставите на св. Димитрија, св. Теодор Тирон и св. Теодор Стратилат. Сите наведени војни се насликани во полна воена опрема, додека св. Ѓорѓи и св. Димитрија во рацете држат извиени, победоносни мечови. На групата свети војни се надоврзува свети Мина за кого поради оштетувањето на фреската не може да се заклучи дали бил претставен како воин или маченик. Процесијата продолжува со претставата на свети Христофор кој го носи малиот Христос на рамото. До свети Христофор се насликани уште тројца маченици кои поради големата оштетеност на фреските не можат со сигурност да се идентификуваат. Но доколку се земе во предвид дека ови светители се надоврзуваат на групата свети војни како и на св. Христофор веќе претставен како маченик може да се претпостави дека станува збор за свети војни претставени како маченици.

Големата популарност на светите војни и нивната застапеност во сликарството на 14-от век се

должи на нивната важност во литургијата како и на нивната улога на воени сојузници и заштитници. Поради тоа вистинска експанзија на сликање на светите војни во српските цркви се забележува од времето на кралот Милутин. Бидејќи црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки била подигната во време на големите српски освојувања светите војни во источниот и централниот травеј на црквата се насликани во полна воена опрема, додека св. Ѓорѓи и св. Димитрија држат извиени победоносни мечови во рацете. Од друга страна претставата на свети војни како маченици во западниот травеј е уникатен пример во српската уметност од 14-от век. Претставата на светите војни како маченици соодветствува на фунерарниот карактер на црквата. Имено маченичките атрибути на светите војни укажуваат на нивната улога на застапници. Во Полошката црква оваа улога на мачениците над гробот уште еднаш е потврдена со претставата на св. Христофор кој го носи малиот Христос на рамото. Имено Христофор кој го носи малиот Христос на рамото кој бил почитуван како заштитник од ненадејна смрт е подоцна насликан во уште две цркви со фунерарна намена, нартексот на Лесновскиот манастир и црквата во Конче.