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THE PROPHETS IN THE DOME OF ST. GEORGE AT POLOŠKO

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The dome of the church St. George at Pološko offers an unusual iconography that reflects the funeral character of the church. Eight prophets depicted in the drum complete the main idea of the dome that evokes the second coming of Christ and the resurrection, emphasizing at the same time the role of the Virgin in the Incarnation.

The wall paintings of St. George at Pološko (1343-5) are distinguished by a specific iconography that is in accord with the funeral character of the church and with the contemporary tendencies of the glorification of the Virgin and her role in the Incarnation¹. This also refers to the painting of the dome. The decoration of the dome (fig. 1) that includes the post-Byzantine representation of the Holy Trinity surrounded by angels in prayer and six-winged angels in the pendentives evokes the second coming of Christ². In this paper we will only discuss the depiction of the prophets in the drum.

¹ For the decoration of the church that echoes its funerary character see, А. Попова, *Погребната литургија и фреските во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки*, Хоризонти, 8, Охрид-Битола 2012, 179-188. For the emphasis on the Incarnation in the painted program of the church see, А. Попова, *The Cult of the Virgin and the Liturgical Poetry in the Feast Cycle at St. George at Pološko*, Patrimonium.Mk 12, Скопје 2015, 133-146.

² In the summit of the dome that must have originally had a representation of Christ Pantocrator is now a post-Byzantine representation of the Holy Trinity, surrounded by angels in prayer. On the pendentives the traditional depiction of the four evangelists is replaced by six-winged angels. Both these elements refer to the Second Coming of Christ and are quite rare in the late Byzantine period. They appear in the spaces with funerary dedication and therefore usually in secondary domes. In St. George at Pološko the *xecapteryga* appear in the main dome, reflecting the funeral character of the church as a whole, А. Попова, *Les Puissances célestes et la Seconde Venue du Christ*

Eight prophets are depicted between the windows of the drum³. The procession of prophets begins with Moses and Habakkuk on the east, and continues with Daniel and Nahum on the south, Noah and Ezekiel on the west and ends with Elisha and Elijah on the north side of the drum⁴.

Moses (Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ | ΜΟΥ | ΧΗΣ, fig. 2, 3) appears as a middle aged man dressed as a high priest⁵.

sur les fresques de Saint-Georges de Pološko, Palimpest, 1/2, Štip 2016, 127-142.

³ The number of prophets in the drum is in accordance with the usual number of visionaries in the domes of the Palaeologan churches. For example, eight prophets are depicted in King's Church in Studenica, in Nagoričino, in St. Nikitas and in Gračanica, Т. Παπαμαστοράκης, *Ο διάκοσμος του τρούλου των ναών της Παλαιολόγιας περιόδου (1261-1453) στη βαλκανική Χερσόνησο*, Ιωάννινα 1992, 78-79, 82-83, 91-94. Nevertheless their choice in the churches varies. For the number of prophets in byzantines drums see, Љ. Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије у Пећини: идентификација и тумачење текста*, Архиепископ Данило II и његово доба, Београд 1991, 458, Παπαμαστοράκης, *op. cit.*, 333.

⁴ For the depiction of prophets in the Serbian Medieval Art see, Lj. Popovich, *Compositional and Theological Concepts in Four Prophet Cycles in Churches Selected from the Period of King Milutin (1282-1321)*, Cyrillomethodianum vol. 8/9, Thessaloniki 1984/85, 283-317, Lj. Popovich, *Hitherto Unidentified Prophets from Nova Pavlica*, Зограф, 19, Београд 1988, 25-44. For the quotations held by the prophets see, А. - М. Gravgard, *Inscriptions of Old Testament Prophecies in Byzantine Churches*, Copenhagen 1979. For the quotations held by the prophets in the Palaeologan period see also, Παπαμαστοράκης, *op. cit.*, 182-244.

⁵ It seems that the iconographic type of Moses as a middle aged man is the most widespread. Moses is depicted in this way in Protaton, G. Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos, Les peintures*, Paris 1927, pl. 8/4, in the church of the Virgin Pammakaristos at Istanbul, H. Belting, C.



fig. 1. View of the dome

In the Palaeologan period he appears both as a prophet, wearing a classical garments and as a high priest. In the Byzantine wall-painting he is included among the high priests from the end of the 13-th century and is depicted in this manner in many churches contemporary to Pološko⁶. The role of Moses as a high priest

is underlined in the patristic texts and especially in the liturgy⁷. In his hands he holds the Tables of the Law on which are inscribed imaginary letters. Moses is often depicted with this attribute in Serbian churches contemporary to Pološko⁸. In the Palaeologan art he can also be depicted holding a vase or a staff and he is often depicted holding an inscribed scroll⁹. In

Mango, D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul*, DOS, 115, Washington, D.C. 1978, 53, fig. 29, 33, in Dečani, Б. В. Поповић, *Програм живописа у олтарском, Дечани: грађа и студије*, Београд 1995, 78, in the monastery of King Marko, G. Millet, T. Velmans, *La peinture du Moyen âge en Yougoslavie*, 4, Paris 1969, pl. 75/143. He is depicted as an old man with gray hair for example in Mileševa, С. Радојчић, *Милешева*, Београд 1971, fig. XXX. For the mediobyzantines representations of Moses where he is depicted without a beard see, A. Nicolaidis, *L'église de la Panagia Arakiotissa à Lagoudéra, Chypre: Etude iconographique des fresques de 1192*, DOP, 50, Cambridge MA 1996, 43-44, with examples.

⁶ Moses can be depicted in chiton and himation or in luxurious outfit of a priest. For the development of the iconography of Moses see, Д. Војводић, *О ликовима старозаветних првосвештеника у византијском зидном сликарству с краја XIII века*, ЗРВИ, 37, Београд 1998, 127-130.

⁷ For the mentions of Moses as a priest in the liturgy see, Војводић, op.cit., 127, note 26.

⁸ See for example his depiction in Ариље, Б. Живковић, *Ариље, распоред фресака*, Београд 1971, sch. 3, in Protaton, Millet, op. cit., pl. 8/4, in Staro Nagoričino, Б. Тодић, *Старо Нагоричино*, Београд 1993, 98, or in Lesново, С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998, 64.

⁹ See for example the depiction of Moses with a vase in the Chora Church, A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, New York 1966, vol. 2, fig. 73, in Dečani, Поповић, *Програм живописа*, 78. М. Глигоријевић-Максимовић, *Иконографија Богородичиних праобраза у српском сликарству од средине XIV до средине XV века*, ЗРВИ, 43, Београд 2006, 282, fig. 1, in Lesново, Габелић, op.cit., 160, in Ravаница, Б. Живковић, *Распоред живописа у Раваници, Манастир Раваница*, Споменица о шестој стогодишњици, Београд 1981, sch. I/4, in Јошаница, Παλατιαστοράκης, op. cit., pl. 136a, in Resava, J. Проло-



fig. 2. Prophets Moses and Habakkuk

St. George at Pološko the Tables of the Law held by Moses have Marial meaning. The Virgin is compared to the Tables of the Law in the patristic literature and in the liturgy. In his homilies John of Damascus compares the Virgin with a new book on which incomprehensible Word of God is written without hands¹⁰. The same idea is emphasized in the Office of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple¹¹. This interpretation of the Tables of the Law is confirmed by the position and the gesture of Moses. Moses is depicted in the east part of the drum and with his right hand he points towards the Annunciation depicted on both sides of the apse and towards the Presentation of the Virgin that occupies the lunette under the dome¹².

вић, *Сликани програм куполе и поткуполних простора у цркви манастира Ресаве*, Зограф, 32, Београд 2008, 145, fig. 19. In Gračanica he holds the vase in one hand and the tables of the Law in the other, Б. Тодић, *Грачаница - сликарство*, Београд - Приштина 1988, fig. 46. See the example of Moses holding a staff in Kalenić, Глигоријевић-Максимовић, op. cit., 290, fig. 23, Д. Симић-Лазар, *Каленић. Сликаство. Историја*, Крагујевац 2000, 46. For examples where Moses holds a scroll inscribed with a quotation see, Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 446-447, Παλαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 183-185.

¹⁰ S. Jean Damascène, *Homélie sur la Nativité et la Dormition*, Paris 1961, 165-167.

¹¹ R. P. F. Mercenier, *La prière des églises de rite byzantin*, vol. 2/1, Amay-sur-Meuse 1939, 88.

¹² The Presentation of the Virgin occupies the entire lunette under the dome and is one of the largest images in the church. This place of honour was given to the scene due to the popularity of the theme of the Incarnation in the 14th century. For the same reason it was also included in the Feast Cycle, Popova, *The Cult of the Virgin*, 135-136, fig. 4.

Next to Moses is depicted the prophet **Habakkuk** (fig. 2, 4) wearing classical garments¹³. He appears as a young man without a beard and he turns towards Moses¹⁴. In his left hand he holds a scroll inscribed with the words of his famous prophecy frequently repeated in the Byzantine Liturgy, announcing the arrival of the Incarnated Logos (Habakkuk 3, 3): Ο Θ[Ε]Ο[Σ] Σ ΑΠΟ | ΘΕΜΑΝ Ι | Ξ[Ε]Η Κ[Α]Ι Ο ΑΓ[Ι]Ο[Σ] ΕΞ ΟΠΙΟΥ | ΚΑΤΑΚΙ | ΟΥ ΔΑΧΕΟС... (*God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth*). Although Habakkuk belongs to the group of the minor prophets he was very popular in the Byzantine art. He is often depicted among the prophets in the drums of the churches even where their number was limited. He is usually depicted with one of his texts, Habakkuk 3, 1 or 3, 2, which is also the case in the church at Pološko¹⁵. These verses are sung on the feast of the Nativity of Christ and on Thursdays during the Great Lent¹⁶. These verses refer not only to Christ as a Sovereign of the Universe but they also allude to the Virgin. Patristic literature identify Teman as a prefiguration of the Virgin herself and as Bethlehem¹⁷. This interpretation was later reinforced by

¹³ The name of the prophet was repainted in the post-Byzantine period.

¹⁴ For the iconography of the prophet see, Ch. Walter, *The Iconography of the Prophet Habakkuk*, *Revue des études byzantines* 47, Paris 1989, 251-260.

¹⁵ For quotations inscribed on the prophet's scroll see, Gravgaard, op. cit., 44-46. For Palaeologan examples where the prophet is depicted with the same inscription as in Pološko see, Παλαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 233-235.

¹⁶ Mercenier, *La prière des églises* 2/1, 99.

¹⁷ Walter, op. cit., 255-256. This theme is appropriate to



fig. 3. Prophet Moses



fig. 4. Prophet Habakkuk

the Byzantine hymnography and iconography. In the Office of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, Theotokos is repeatedly called an overshadowed mountain or a spiritual mountain from the vision of Habakkuk. The choice of the text inscribed on the scroll of the prophet is explained by his location in the dome and by the gesture of his hand. Turned to the right he points towards the Annunciation. In this way he joins Moses as both prophets allude to the Incarnation with an attribute or a text as well as by their gestures moving our view towards the Annunciation. At the same time the iconography makes a connection between the quotation of the prophet read during the Feast of the Nativity of Christ and the scene of the Nativity depicted in his proximity on the east wall¹⁸.

Next to prophet Habakkuk is depicted the prophet **Daniel** (Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΔΑΝΙΗΛ, fig. 5). The association between the two prophets is based on the biblical story of Habakkuk who was miraculously transported by an angel to Babylon to bring food

the Mother of God: as God covers the mountain of the Law and the mountain of the Transfiguration with his presence, indicated by the overshadowing “cloud,” so God “covers” the Virgin Mary, P. Ladouceur, *Old Testament Prefigurations of the Mother of God*, St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly, 50:1-2, New York 2006, 34.

¹⁸ Popova, *The Cult of the Virgin*, 133-134, fig. 2.

to Daniel in the lion’s den¹⁹. Daniel is depicted as a young man without a beard in Persian costume²⁰. He turns his head towards east where are depicted rays of light. In the drums of Byzantine churches prophet Daniel is usually depicted in the east part of the drum holding an open or closed book, or a scroll²¹. When the prophet’s scroll is inscribed, a number of quotations can be used. The most common are those referring to the Incarnation and the end of time²². Similar examples where the prophet holds a book can be found in other contemporary churches including the church of the Virgin Hodighitria in Peć, the Monastery of Marko, Nova Pavlica, St. Andreas on the Treska and in Re-

¹⁹ For the association between Daniel and Habakkuk see, Walter, op. cit., 252-254.

²⁰ Daniel is depicted in the similar manner in many contemporary churches including in Protaton, Millet, op. cit., pl. 9/4, in Грачаница, Тодић, *Грачаница*, 148, in Dečani, М. Марковић, *Програм живописа у куполи, Дечани: грађа и студије*, Београд 1995, 103, fig. 8, in Lesnovo, Габелић, op. cit., 58, fig. 5, in Monastery of Marko, Millet/Velmsans, op.cit., pl. 75/144 etc.

²¹ Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 458.

²² For the inscriptions held by the prophet see, Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 458, Gravgaard, op.cit., 23-26. For the inscriptions held by the prophet in the Palaeologan art see, Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 216-218.



fig. 5. Prophet Daniel

sava²³. But unlike in the church at Pološko the book of Daniel in all of these churches is open. The closed book held by Daniel is explained by his prophecy of the end of times (Daniel 12, 4): “*But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end*”²⁴. Daniel is depicted with a closed scroll in the drums of Ljeviška, Gračanica, Dečani and Ravanica²⁵.

Daniel is followed by the prophet **Nahum** (fig. 6) depicted with white hair and beard²⁶. He wears a chiton and a himation and blesses with his right hand. In his left hand he holds a scroll inscribed with a



fig. 6. Prophet Nahum

quotation from Isaiah (Isaiah 53, 4): ΟΥΤΟC | ΤΑC ΑΜΑΡ | ΤΙΑC ΗΜΩΝ | ΦΕΡΙ Κ(ΑΙ) Υ | ΠΕΡ ΙΜΩΝ | ΟΔΙΝΑΤΑΙ (*Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering*)²⁷. This prophecy refers to the suffering of Christ, and is included in the Office of Holy Friday²⁸. The prophet Nahum was introduced in the iconographic programme quite late because in *Prophetologion*, an Old Testament Lectionary read throughout the Liturgical year, are not included the verses of his prophetic book²⁹. The exclusion of his prophetic

²³ В. Ђурић, С. Ђирковић, В. Коран, *Пећка патријаршија*, Београд 1990, fig. 145 (Virgin Hodigitria in Peć), Millet/Velmans, op.cit., 75/144 (Monastery of Marko), Popovich, *Hitherto*, 32-33, fig. 22 (Nova Pavlica), J. Prolović, *Die Kirche des Heiligen Andreas an der Treska*, Wien 1997, sch. 18 (St. Andreas at Treska), Prolović, *Сликани програм куполе*, 140, fig. 8 (Resava).

²⁴ Lj. Popović, *A Study of the Standing Figures in the Five Domes of Virgin Ljeviška in Prizren*, ЗРВИ, 41, Београд 2004, 328.

²⁵ Д. Панић, Г. Бабић, *Богородица Љевишка*, Београд 1975 (Ljeviška), Тодић, *Грачаница*, 148 (Gračanica), Марковић, *Програм живописа*, 102-103 (Dečani), М. Беловић, *Раваница. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1999, 87, fig. XXXI (Ravanica)

²⁶ In the post-Byzantine period the name of the prophet was repainted in Slavic.

²⁷ In the church of Christ the Saviour in Thessaloniki (1345-1350), this quotation is held by the prophet Jeremiah, E. Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou, *The Church of Christ the Saviour, Thessaloniki*, Athens 2008, 86. For the inscriptions held by prophet Nahum see, Gravgaard, op.cit., 81, Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 230-232.

²⁸ Mercenier, R. P. F., *La prière des églises de rite byzantin*, vol. 2/2, Amay-sur-Meuse 1939, 205. According to the Armenia this text is to accompany the Miracles of Christ, Denys de Fourn, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Saint Petersburg 1909, 142.

²⁹ The Prophetologion is a text written in the ninth century that contains the Old Testament Lectionary readings appointed at Vespers and at other services during the Church year, C. Jolivet-Lévy, *La Cappadoce médiévale. Images et spiritualité*, Paris 2001, 174. On the influence of the hymnography on the painting of the dome see



fig. 7. Prophets Noah and Ezekiel

book from the *Prophetologion* also explains why he carries the text by another prophet-author³⁰.

also, Παπαμαστοράκης, *op. cit.*, 274-283. Nahoum starts to be painted more frequently in the late 13th century, N. Siomkos, *L'église Saint-Etienne à Kastoria. Etude des différentes phases du décor peint (Xe–XIVe siècles)*, Thessaloniki 2005, 144-145, with bibliography. In the Palaeologan period he is also depicted in Peribleptos in Ohrid, П. Миљковић-Пепек, *Делото на зографите Михаило и Еутихиј*, Скопје 1967, 48, in St. Apostles in Thessaloniki, Α. Ευγγύπουλος, *Η ψηφιδωτή διακόσμησης του ναού των Αγίων Αποστόλων Θεσσαλονίκης*, Thessaloniki 1953, fig. 6/1, in the church of Annunciation at Karan, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле у доба Немањића*, Београд 1994, 142, in Zemen, *Ibidem.*, 169, in Peribleptos in Mistra, Ντ. Μουρίκη, *Αι βιβλικαί προεικονίσεις της Παναγίας εις τον τρούλλον της Περιβλέπτου του Μυστρά*, ΑΔ, 25, Αθήνα 1970, fig. 88. For other examples see, Παπαμαστοράκης, *op. cit.*, 231-232. For inscription on the scroll of prophet Nahum in the Balkan churches, see also, X. Андреев, *Седем надписа върху свитъка на пророк Наум от средновековни балкански църкви до XV век*, Старобългаристика (Palaeobulgarica), 38, 2, Софија 2014, 44–73.

³⁰ In the Byzantine art there are other examples where the prophets hold inscriptions which are not a quotations taken from their prophecies, Lj. Popovich, *Prophets Carrying Texts by Other Authors in Byzantine Painting: Mistakes or Intentional Substitutions?*, ЗРВИ, 44, Београд 2007, 234.

The prophet **Noah** (Ο ΔΙΚΟΣ ΝΟΕ, fig. 7, 8) is depicted on the west part of the dome. He appears as an old man with long hair and beard. He wears a chiton and a himation and carries an ark. The Ark recalls the hope of salvation. At the same time Noah's ark is one of the prefigurations of the Virgin³¹. In the Palaeologan period, Noah is often depicted with an Ark³².

Next to the prophet Noah is depicted **Ezekiel** (fig. 7, 9)³³. Ezekiel is portrayed as an old man with long beard. He wears a chiton and a himation. He blesses with his right hand and holds a scroll with his prophecy in his left (Ezekiel, 37, 12): Η ΔΟΥ Ε | ΓΟ ΑΝ[Ο]ΙΓΟ | ΤΑ | ΜΝΙΜ/ΑΤΑ ΗΜΩΝ ΛΕ | ΓΙ Κ(ΥΡΙΟ)Σ (*Behold, I will open your graves, says the*

³¹ J. Ledit, *Marie dans la liturgie byzantine*, Paris 1976, 71-72.

³² For example he is depicted with an Ark in Protaton (Millet, *op. cit.*, pl. 9/2), in Nagoričino (Тодић, *Старо Нагоричино*, 98, fig. 39), in Ljeviška (Панић, Бабић, *op. cit.*, fig. 13), in Chora Church (Underwood, *op. cit.*, pl. 48/10) in Dečani (Поповић, *Програм живописа*, 79), in the church of Annunciation in Karan (Ђорђевић, *op. cit.*, 142.) in the naos and narthex of Lesnovo (Габелић, *op. cit.*, 64, 160), in the church of the Virgin Zahumska in Ohrid (Ц. Грозданов, *Охридското зидно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 119) and most probably in Resava (Б. Тодић, *Манастир Ресави*, Београд 1995, 63.).

³³ His name was repainted in Slavic in the post-Byzantine period.



fig. 8. Prophet Noah

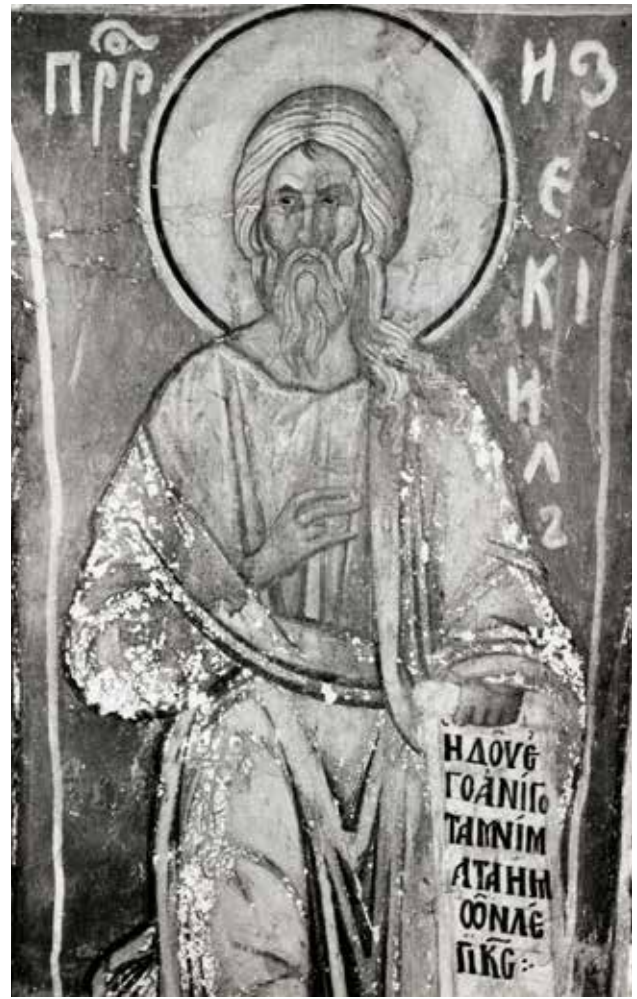


fig. 9. Prophet Ezekiel

Lord God)³⁴. These verses are read in the Office of Holy Saturday³⁵. The verses from the 37 chapter are regarded as an annunciation of the resurrection at the end of times and are already inscribed to the prophet's scroll from the end of the 10-th century or beginning of the 11-th century³⁶. The depiction of Ezekiel in the drum of Pološko follows the Byzantine tradition. Nevertheless in Byzantine churches he is usually depicted on the east part of the dome³⁷. He is very rarely depicted on the west like in Hagia Sophia of Trabzon, the church of the Virgin Hodighitria at Peć or in Ljubostinja³⁸. The prophet in the church at

Pološko is on the west part of the dome assuring that his reference to the end of times is integrated in the funerary program of this part of the church where the donor was buried.

The prophet **Elisha** (Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΛΙΣΕΟΣ, fig. 10) is depicted young with black hair and with a long black beard. He wears a chiton and a himation. He is turned towards Elijah depicted next to him and he points with his right hand in his direction. The prophet Elijah and Elisha were depicted one next to another according to the usual practice³⁹. Sometimes Elijah is depicted without Elisha, but Elisha is always depicted with Elijah⁴⁰. This practice is based on the

³⁴ The prophet is painted with the same text at Mount Athos in Lavra, St. Nicholas (1568) and maybe in the catholicon of the Lavra (1535), Gravgaard, op.cit., 41, Millet, op. cit., pl. 258, 119. For the inscriptions held by this prophet see, Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 452, Gravgaard, op.cit., 39-43, Παλαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 212-215.

³⁵ Mercenier, *La prière des églises 2/2*, 254.

³⁶ Gravgaard, op.cit., 40.

³⁷ For the place of Ezekiel in the domes see, Popovich, *Compositional and Theological Concepts*, 290-291, Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 453-454.

³⁸ D. Talbot Rice, *The Church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond*, Edinburgh 1968, 115 (Hagia Sophia of Trabzon), Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 451 (the church of the Virgin Hodighitria at Peć), С. Ђурић, *Љубостиња. Црква Успења Богородичиног*, Београд 1985, 76, fig. 64, sch. XII (Ljubostinja).

³⁹ When they are painted in the same dome they are regularly depicted one next to the other, Popovich, *Compositional and Theological Concepts*, sch. I-IV. We can mention one exception of the church in Nova Pavlica, where they are not painted together, Popovich, *Hitherto*, 27-30.

⁴⁰ For the depictions of Elijah without Elisha see,



fig. 10. Prophet Elisha

text of 2 Kings, 2, 1-25 regarding Elijah's ascension into heaven and Elisha inheriting the prophetic mantle. The connection between the two prophets can be even more emphasized if they hold scrolls with texts of their dialogue of the same biblical passage before Elijah's ascension, 2 Kings 2, 4 or 2, 6⁴¹. This is also the case for the text written on the scroll of Elisha: ΞΗ Κ(ΥΡΙΟ)C Κ[ΑΙ] ΞΙ | Η ΨΙΧΙ COY | ΗΕΓΚΑΤΑ | ΛΙΨΟ Σ | Ε (*As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you!*). These verses are read on the feast of the Ascension of Elijah, an event considered as a prefiguration of the Ascension of Christ hence the Second Coming.

The prophet **Elijah** (fig. 11) is depicted as an old man with long beard wearing his fur mantle⁴². On his scroll is inscribed the text of 1 Kings 17, 14: ΤΑΔΕ ΛΕ | ΓΙ Κ(ΥΡΙΟ)C Ι ΗΔΡΙ | Α ΤΟΥ ΑΛΕΒΡ | ΟΥ ΟΥΚ ΕΓΛΙ | ΨΙ Κ(ΑΙ) | Ο ΚΑ | ΜΨΑΚΗ (*For this is what the Lord says: „The jar of flour will not be used up”*). This text is read in the Office of Holy Saturday

Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 455.

⁴¹ For the inscriptions held by the prophet see, Gravgaard, op.cit., 37-39. For many examples where the prophet is depicted with this text see, Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 201-202.

⁴² The inscription of the name of the prophet was repainted in the post-Byzantine period.



fig. 11. Prophet Elijah

during the Easter Vigil⁴³. The prophet is most often depicted with the text of the dialog between him and Elisha - 2 Kings 2, 2-25, or 1 Kings 17,1⁴⁴. Nevertheless there are examples where they are depicted with a text that is not taken from the above mentioned dialogue like in the case of the church of the Virgin Hodighitria at Peć where is inscribed the text of the 1 Kings 19, 10 or 14⁴⁵. The cult of the prophet Elijah was quite developed and he was frequently depicted in the churches⁴⁶.

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⁴³ Mercenier, *La prière des églises 2/2*, 260.

⁴⁴ Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 457, Gravgaard, op.cit., 35, Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 197-200, with examples. For other inscriptions held by the prophets see, Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 456, Gravgaard, op.cit., 36-37, Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 197-200.

⁴⁵ Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 457.

⁴⁶ For the development of the cult and the iconography of the prophet see, Поповић, *Фигуре пророка у куполи Богородице Одигитрије*, 456, Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 197-200, E. Voordeckers, *Élie dans l'art byzantin*, Élie le prophète. Bible, tradition, iconographie. Colloquesdes 10 et 11 novembre 1985, Bruxelles 1988, 39-57.

The choice of prophets in the drum and the text inscribed on their scrolls are based on two main ideas: the Incarnation and the resurrection. The eastern segment of the drum is symbolically the most significant because of its orientation and is reserved for the most prominent among the prophets who are then the bearers of the most potent messages. In St George at Pološko the east segment of the drum is occupied by Moses and Habakkuk, who evoke the Incarnation: Moses with his Tables of the Law - a prefiguration of the Virgin and Habakkuk with the text that refers to the Incarnation. The emphasis on the Incarnation is also stressed by Noah who holds the ark, another Mariale prefiguration. The other prophets through their inscribed scrolls evoke the resurrection, while the prophet Daniel through his closed book also refers to the end of time.

The funeral destination of the church is the reason why almost all the inscriptions are borrowed from the offices of the Lenten Triodion, particularly from the offices of the three days preceding Easter. Prophets

through their scrolls perpetually engage in the celebration of the liturgies preceding Easter, stressing in this manner the resurrection. The intention of the painter to emphasise the flow of the liturgies during the Holy Week is also the reason why prophets were painted with texts that usually don't appear on their scrolls. The liturgical celebration in the drum is led by Moses depicted as a high priest. He is followed by Habakkuk who holds a text quoted on Thursdays during the Great Lent. The procession continues with Nahum and the verses sang on Holy Friday and Ezekiel and his quote read on Holy Saturday. The procession finishes in the north part of the drum with Elijah and his inscription taken from the Office of the Easter Vigil.

The choice of prophets, their attributes and inscriptions in the drum of St. George of Pološko shows once again the creativeness of the Palaeologan art in offering creative and complex iconographic solutions inspired by the liturgy.

ПРЕТСТАВАТА НА ПРОРОЦИТЕ ВО КУПОЛАТА НА ЦРКВАТА СВ. ЃОРЃИ ПОЛОШКИ

Резиме

Овој труд е посветен на претставите на пророците насликани во куполата на црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки. Фрескоживописот во оваа црква изобилува со ретки и невообичаени иконографски мотиви и решенија, како и решенија кои за првпат се среќаваат во византиската уметност. Тоа се должи на погребниот карактер на црквата, но и на желбата да се возвеличи улогата на Богородица во Христовото ооплотување. Ваквата иконографија, која пред сè укажува на воскресението и на инкарнацијата, го одликува и живописот во куполата.

Осумте пророци се насликани помеѓу прозорците на куполата. Процесијата од пророци започнува со претставата на Мојсеј (сл. 2, 3) кој облечен во свештеничка облека ги држи во рацете плочите на заветот кои во Полошката црква ја префигурираат Богородица. Ваквото толкување на плочите на заветот е во солгласност со црковната литература и местоположбата на Мојсеј. Претставен во источниот дел на куполата, тој со рака посочува кон Благовештението насликано на триумфалната арка и кон Воведението на Богородица, насликано во лунетата под куполата на јужниот ѕид. До Мојсеј е насликан Авакум (сл. 2, 4) кој со десната рака исто така покажува кон Благовештението во апсидата, додека во левата рака држи свиток на кој е испишано неговото пророштво (Авакум 3, 3) кое истовремено се однесува и на Христос како господар на универзумот, но и на Богородица, која во овој случај е префигурирана во планина. До Авакум е насликан Даниил (сл. 5) со затворена книга што го евоцира крајот на времињата, алутирајќи на поглавјето од неговото пророштво во кое Господ му наложува да ги запечати неговите писанија до крајот на времето. До Даниил е насликан пророкот Наум (сл. 6) со свиток на кој се испишани зборовите на Исаија (Исаија 53, 4) кои се читаат во текот на литургијата за Велики петок. До него Ное (сл. 7, 8) е насликан со уште една префигурација на Богородица - арката на спасението. Језекиил (сл. 7, 9) кој како исклучително важен пророк е речиси секогашна насликан во источниот дел на куполата, во Полошката црква му се приклучува на Ное на запад. Језекиил е насликан во западниот дел на куполата поради тоа што на својот свиток има испишан текст (Језекиил 37,

12) кој се чита за време на литургијата на Велика сабота, а кој се смета за навестување на Воскресението. На тој начин овој пророк се вклопува во погребната иконографијата во западниот дел од црквата, каде што се наоѓал гробот на ктиторот. И конечно, процесијата од пророци завршува со претставите на Елисеј (сл. 10) и Илија (сл. 11) во северниот дел од куполата. Овие двајца пророци речиси секогаш се сликаат заедно и најчесто држат свитоци испишани со дијалогот воден непосредно пред вознесувањето на Илија на небото. Во Полошката црква само Елисеј го држи текстот од дијалогот, кој воедно се чита за време на празникот на Вознесувањето на св. Илија, настан што се смета и за префигурација на Христовото вознесение. И на крајот пророкот Илија е насликан со свиток на кој се испишани зборовите на неговото пророштво (1 Царства 17, 14) што се чита за време на Велигденското бдението.

На овој начин претставите на пророците во куполата обединуваат две идеи. Од една страна Богородица е возвеличена преку пророците Мојсеј, Авакум и Ноа, кои преку атрибути или текст укажуваат на нејзината улога во ооплотувањето. Од друга страна, текстовите на останатите пророци укажуваат на воскресението. Кон оваа идеја се надоврзува и Даниил, чија претстава го навестува крајот на времињата. Поради погребниот карактер на црквата, најголемиот дел од текстовите се преземени од Цветниот Триод, односно од службите од трите дена кои му претходат на Велигден. Така, пророците во логичен след држат текстови алутирајќи на литургиска процесија предводена од Мојсеј, претставен како првосвештеник. Имено, веднаш зад Мојсеј е насликан Авакум со текст од богослужбата за Велики четврток. Процесијата продолжува со Наум и службата за Велики Петок и Језекиил и службата за Велика Сабота за да заврши со пророкот Илија и вечерната служба во пресрет на Велигден. На тој начин пророците во оваа погребна црква постојано литургуваат во куполата, слично како што тоа го прават свештениците насликани во првата зона од олтарот. Но додека свештениците во олтарот континуирано ја принесуваат ефхаристичната жртва, пророците во куполата континуирано литургуваат очекувајќи го воскресението.