



Aleksandar VASILESKI*
Katerina ROSIKOPULOS**

THE DEPICTIONS OF ST. NAUM OF OHRID IN THE ICON PAINTING FROM THE 19th CENTURY IN THE CHURCHES OF PRILEP

Key words: *iconography, Macedonia, Anastas Konstantinov, Nikola Mihajlov, church of the Annunciation - Prilep*

Abstract: *This study examines five 19th-century icons portraying St. Naum of Ohrid, originating from the Prilep's churches of the Annunciation, the Transfiguration, and that of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. Through iconographic analysis, the research seeks to elucidate the artistic conventions underlying the depiction of St. Naum within the 19th-century Orthodox iconographic traditions. Meanwhile, the stylistic analysis aims to identify the artistic circles and influences within which these works were created and circulated. The icons preserved in the Prilep's churches constitute a vital source for exploring the visual representation of the saint during this period and for tracing the spread and entrenchment of his cult throughout Macedonia. By integrating iconographic and stylistic approaches, this paper offers a nuanced understanding of the interplay between the artistic practices and the religious dynamics in the region, shedding light on the synthesis between the tradition and the localized artistic expression.*

The visual depictions of St. Naum of Ohrid, along with the literary works chronicling his life and the expansion of his cult, have been the focus of numerous scholarly inquiries, addressing various key aspects of these subjects.¹ Nevertheless, due to the sheer volume

* National Institution Institute of Old Slavic Culture – Prilep, aleksandar.vasileski@isk.edu.mk

** National Institution Institute of Old Slavic Culture – Prilep, katerina.rosikopulos@isk.edu.mk

¹ Among the numerous studies dedicated to the visual representations of St. Naum, with a particular emphasis on the depictions from the 19th century, we highlight: Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светители од Македонија од IX–XVIII век*, Скопје 1983, 199–204, 227–243; Ц. Грозданов, *Студии за охридскиот живопис*, Скопје 1990, 200–202; Г. Ангеличин Жура, *Новоткриени средновековни портрети на св. Наум Охридски и архиепископ*

Проход, во Страници од историјата и уметноста на Охрид и Охридско (XV–XIX в.), Охрид 1997, 127–136; Р. Русева, *Образите на св. Наум в црквоната живопис на територијата на Албанија*, во: Зборник на трудови од Меѓународниот научен собир Св. Наум Охридски – Живот и дело, Охрид 19–22 октомври 2005, Скопје 2006, 247–259; М. Nagy, *The iconography of Saint Naum in the icons of the workshop of Ráckeve, Niš and Byzantium Symposium IV*, Niš 2006, 325–342; С. Цветковски, *Портретот на свети Наум Охридски на иконата Сите Свети од Музејот во Корча*, Културно наследство 32–33, Скопје 2007, 101–110; С. Цветковски, *Портрети на Св. Наум Охридски во живописот на Дебарската зографска школа од XIX век*, Зборник на трудови од меѓународен научен собир „Св. Наум Охридски и словенската духовна, културна и писмена традиција“, УКИМ, Скопје 2011, 359–370; С. Цветковски, *Новооткриени портрети на Св. Наум во живописот на Охридската архиепископија од XVIII и XIX век*, 1100 години од упокојувањето на свети Наум Охридски, Зборник на трудови од меѓународен научен собир „Дебарско-кичевска епархија“, Охрид 2011, 195–214, сл. 1–29; Ц. Грозданов, *Живописот во Македонија XVIII XIX век*, Студии, Скопје 2011; Р. Палигора, *Претставите на св. Наум Охридски во живописот од втората половина на XIX век во Преспанскиот регион*, во 1100 години од Упокојувањето на свети Наум Охридски, Охрид 2011, 249–278; М. Nagy, *The Iconography and Iconology of Hristofir Zefar's Saint Nahum Depictions, Niš and Byzantium IX*, Niš 2011, 415–426; М. Nagy, *Ohridi Szent Naum magyarországi kultusza*, Budapest – Debrecen 2012; Ц. Грозданов, *Портретите на светителите од Македонија од IX до XVIII век*, Скопје 2016, 116–128, 135–140, 151–159; Ц. Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, Скопје 2015, 233–279; Р. Русева, *Иконографията на св. Наум Охридски и нейното многообразие (Бележки върху три малко известни икони с образа на св. Наум Охридски от Музея за християнско изкуство в София, Paleobulgarica, And wings were given to the woman*, София 2022, 927–948.; Р. Русева, *Развитие и разпространение на иконографията на Св. Наум Ох-*

of artistic representations and their wide geographical dispersion, many remain relatively unknown to scholars and have yet to undergo academic analysis. This is particularly the case for the five icons from Prilep, which have largely been overlooked within the professional discourse or have only briefly been examined within broader thematic studies.

Similar to other areas of the Ottoman Empire, the political and social transformations initiated by the “Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif” (Edict of Gülhane) of 1839, which marked the beginning of the *Tanzimat period*, had a profound impact on the developments in the church architecture and religious art². After the conquest of Prilep, the Ottoman authorities abandoned the medieval city’s original location, leading to the establishment of a new settlement that would evolve into modern-day Prilep³. Prior to the 19th century, the city lacked Christian religious structures and the liturgical services were instead held in the medieval churches of Varoš – a district that occupied the area of the former medieval suburb, although under the altered socio-political framework Varoš began functioning as a distinct rural settlement⁴.

The Tanzimat era, characterized by heightened religious tolerance and the formal acknowledgment of Christian religious freedoms, saw the construction of the Church of the Annunciation (commonly referred to as the Old Church) in 1838, just before the issuance



1. St. Naum (Reg. No. 21361), Icon Gallery in Prilep, first quarter of 19th century.

1. Св. Наум (Рег. бр. 21361), Галерија на икони во Прилеп, почетокот на 19 век.

ридски Чудотворец (XIV–XIX в), Тврдина на православието, София 2023, 29-68;

² For the art on the territory of Macedonia during the 19th century see J. Тричковска, *Некои аспекти на црквната уметност на Балканот од XVIII и XIX век : традиција и влијанија*, Патримониум МК 11, Скопје 2018, 327-352; For the implementation of social reforms and the period of the Tanzimat, cf. J. von Hammer, *Historija turskog (osmanskog) carstva*, t. 3, Zagreb 1979, 257-265.; The conditions that prevailed in the broader territory of Macedonia in the 19th century are addressed by: В. Ѓорѓиев, *Македонија во османлискиот период*, во *Македонија: Милениумски културно-историски факти том 4* (ур. Елизабета Димитрова, Паско Кузман и Јован Донеv), Скопје 2013, 1916, 1917.

³ The conquest of Prilep by the Ottoman Empire in 1395, launched a process of urban and ethnic redefinition of the settlement cf. М. Соколовски, *Стабилизација на турската управа во XV и XVI век*, во: Прилеп и Прилепското низ историјата, кн. 1, Прилеп 1971, 111-120.

⁴ During the period of Ottoman rule, there is an evident decline in the function of sacred buildings in Varosh, best illustrated by the fact that, out of 19 sacred structures attested in medieval material and written sources, only five have survived and remained in use to this day, cf. А. Василески, *Средновековните цркви во Прилеп низ пишаните и материјалните извори*, Балканославика 47/2, Прилеп 2018, 201-203.

of the “Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif”⁵. Later on, in 1871, the Vlach community of Prilep headed the construction of another church, dedicated to the Holy Transfiguration⁶. The final city church, dedicated to the Saints

⁵ Ј. Хаџи-Василевиќ, *Прилеп и негово околина (историјско-географска излагања)*, Београд, 1902, 36; Г. Трајчев, *Град Прилеп*, Софија 1925, 85; Ѓ. Иванов, *Црквата Благовештение*, Прилеп пред 100 години, Јубилеен лист по повод стогодишнината на прилепската црква Св. Благовештение, Софија 1938. 1, 2; *Прилеп и Прилепското низ историјата*, книга прва, Прилеп 1971, 225, 226; Д. Корнаков, *Црквата Св. Благовештение и нејзината внатрешна декорација*, Културно наследство VII Скопје 1978, 77-82, 92; З. Ангелески, *170 години од осветувањето на црквата Свето Благовештение во Прилеп*, Прилеп 2008, 47; Д. Николовски, *Икони од ризницата на црквата Св. Благовештение- Прилеп*, Патримониум МК X Скопје 2012, 333-344;

⁶ Г. Трајчев, *Град Прилеп*, 76-78.; *Прилеп и Прилепското низ историјата*, 225, 226; Ј. Hadži-Vasiljević also addressed the construction of the Church of the Transfiguration, providing, for the most part, inaccurate information, see Ј. Хаџи-Василевиќ, *Прилеп*



2. *St. Anthony the Great, St. Euthymios the Great, and St. Naum of Ohrid (Reg. No. 16325), Church of the Annunciation in Prilep, circa 1838.*

2. *Св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики и св. Наум Охридски (Рег. бр. 16325), Св. Благовештение Прилеп, околу 1838.*

Cyril and Methodius, was completed in 1884. Initially modest in scale, this church was referred to as a Paraklis or chapel. The original building was later demolished, and the present-day structure was erected between 1926 and 1936⁷. The icons analyzed in this paper are housed in these churches, except for two that have been removed from their original settings and are now displayed in the Icon Gallery in Prilep.

*St. Naum of Ohrid
(Reg. No. 21361, 48.3 x 31 x 3 cm) (fig. 1)*

The oldest icon in this collection is an individual standing depiction of St. Naum, currently exhibited in the Icon Gallery in Prilep. While its precise date and

⁷ *и негова околина (историјско-географска излагања)*, Београд 1902, 37.

⁷ Е. Луческа, *Првичната црква Св. Кирил и Методиј (Параклис) во Прилеп*, *Balkanoslavica* 48 1-2 Прилеп 2019, 141-146; For the earlier phase of the church's construction, cf. J. Хаџи-Василевиќ, *Прилеп*, 37.

place of origin remain uncertain, the stylistic characteristics suggest an earlier date of creation within the 19th century. The brief Greek inscription in the lower right corner, intended to record the donors' names, is incomplete due to damage: Δία συνδρομῆς [...] ἐν δοξῶν τῶν χρις[του] Τά Των μα(στ)όρω[ων] εἶρα Τάδων [...] μνήσθ[η] κύριε δεή(σι)ς Τ(ου) [...] δ(ου) λ(ου) σ(ου). The remaining text reveals that the icon was commissioned by a craftsman whose name has not been preserved.

The icon depicts St. Naum attired in a dark blue monastic robe, layered with a brown *mandyas* (mantle, mantiya) worn with the hood lowered, and a green *anavavos* draped across his chest. The saint's appearance conforms to the conventional iconographic standards, depicting him with short auburn hair and a long beard⁸. The background features an idealized landscape with rolling green hills, a segment of the sky with stylized clouds, and a church on his left which has been identified as the Catholicon of the Monastery of St. Naum. The church is rendered with a gabled roof, a dome, and a tower rising behind it, evoking a recognizable and yet stylized architectural portrayal.

The artistic source for this depiction of St. Naum can be traced back to the engravings found in Hristofor Žefarović's *Stemmatographia*, printed in Vienna in 1743⁹. These engravings incorporate many of the elements present in the icon from Prilep. However, unlike the latter, the engraving from the *Stemmatographia* features an individual representation of the saint surrounded by scenes from his life, as well as depictions of other saints associated with his cult. Apart from serving as an iconographic model, the graphic template appears to have significantly influenced the artistic approach to the rendering of this icon. Notably, the linearism dominates as the primary means of artistic expression, often assuming an ornamental character. While the color palette is rich, it serves as a secondary stylistic vehicle. Given these characteristics, it is plausible to date the creation of this icon in the early decades of the 19th century.

*St. Anthony, St. Naum, and St. Euthymios
(Reg. No. 16325; 71.8 x 51.3 x 3.3 cm) (fig. 2)*

The second icon featuring St. Naum chronologically presents part of the iconostasis in the Church

⁸ Extensive studies on the iconographic characteristics of the depictions of St. Naum have been conducted in the work of: Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите од Македонија : IX-XVIII век* Скопје 2016, 118; Р. Русева, *Развитие и распространение*, 38-48.

⁹ A detailed analysis of the depictions of St. Naum in the graphic works of Hristofor Žefarović can be found in: M. Nagy, *The Iconography and Iconology*, 415-426.

of the Annunciation. This composition situates the Ohrid's saint alongside two of the most venerated figures in the Orthodox monasticism: St. Anthony the Great and St. Euthymius the Great. St. Anthony occupies the central position, with St. Naum positioned to his right and St. Euthymius to his left. Above the trio, Christ is depicted in a gesture of blessing, emphasizing the divine approval and sanctity.

Consistent with the established iconographic conventions, St. Naum is depicted dressed in a light brown under-cassock (*esorason*), a red mantle, and a black *analavos*. In his right hand, he holds a prayer rope (*komboskini*), symbolizing the central role of prayer in the monastic life, while his left hand extends to hold an open scroll. The scroll bears a Greek inscription of the Psalm 111:1, reinforcing the saint's association with scripture and spiritual instruction: Μ(ΑΚ)(ΑΡ)ΙΟΣ (ΑΝΗΡ) Ο ΦΟΒΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΝ. This text is a recurring element in the depictions of St. Naum and has been documented in numerous examples of Macedonian ecclesiastical art. Notable parallels include the *Icon of St. Nicholas Gerakomia* (late 18th to early 19th century), the *Virgin with Christ, St. George, St. Naum, and St. Demetrius* (1857) housed in the Icon Gallery in Struga, the mid-19th-century *Icon of St. Naum and St. Sabbas the Sanctified* from the Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Openica, and the *Virgin with Saints* from the Zrze Monastery, dating to the mid-19th century. Moreover, this motif appears in wall paintings, such as the depiction of St. Naum in the Church of the Holy Savior in Topolčani (1854–1869), as well as in icons like the mid-19th-century example from the Church of St. George in Ohrid¹⁰.

This icon, although lacking an inscription explicitly identifying its origin or authorship, can be dated and attributed to a particular artistic tradition based on its stylistic and compositional characteristics. The only textual elements within the icon are the names of the saints and the inscriptions on their scrolls. However, by comparing this work with other icons from the Sovereign tier of the Church of the Annunciation, which date to 1838–1840, it is reasonable to propose a similar dating for this piece¹¹. Anastas Konstan-



3. *St. Anthony the Great, St. Euthymios the Great, and St. Naum of Ohrid with scenes of their lives* (Reg. No. 16418), *Church of the Transfiguration in Prilep, 1871*.

3. *Св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики и св. Наум Охридски со житијни сцени*, (Рег. бр. 16418). *Св. Преображение Прилеп, 1871 година*.

tinov from the village of Magarevo, the painter of several of the icons on the Sovereign tier, has been recognized as a likely candidate for its authorship. While the absence of a direct inscription precludes absolute certainty, the strong stylistic parallels between this icon and other works from the same period—particularly within the Sovereign tier—support this attribution¹². Further evidence of this connection can be found in the inscription on the scroll held by St. Naum, a recurring motif in other depictions of the saint created by Konstantinov's sons, Konstantin and Dimitar Anastasov. These works include the icon from the Zrze Monastery¹³, the representation of St.

¹⁰ The examples with the quote from Psalm 111 on the scroll of St. Naum are provided by: Р. Русева, *Развитие и разпространение*, 64, 65.

¹¹ A review of the royal icons from the iconostasis of the Church of the Annunciation and their attribution to Anastas Konstantinov was conducted by Д. Николовски, *Икони*, 335-339; А. Василески, *Прилог кон проучувањето на творештвото на зографот Анастас Костантинов од Магарево*, во *Зборник Прва малореканска летна школа по патеките на Дичо Зограф*, Скопје 2021, 52-53; Д. Ќорнаков, *Црквата Св. Балговеитение*, Културно

наследство 7, Скопје 1978, 90-91; З. Ангелески, *170 години од осветувањето на црквата „Свето Благовеитение*, 36-43.

¹² А. Василески, *Прилог кон проучувањето*, 52-53.

¹³ The icon of the Theotokos with Christ and saints, which we attribute to Konstantin Anastasov from Magarevo based on stylistic and iconographic characteristics, features the inscription of the saint in Church Slavonic.



4. *The Miracle of Taming the Bear (detail), St. Anthony the Great, St. Euthymios the Great, and St. Naum of Ohrid with hagiographical scenes (Reg. No. 16418), Church of the Transfiguration in Prilep, 1871.*

4. *Чудото со впрегнувањето на мечката (детал), Св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики и св. Наум Охридски со житијни сцени (Рег. бр. 16418), Св. Преображение Прилеп, 1871.*

Naum in the Church of the Holy Savior in Topolčani, and the icon from the Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Openica¹⁴.

The rarity of this specific iconographic model in the Orthodox art is further emphasized by its use in two other icons, one signed and the other attributed to Nikola Mihailov from Kruševo. One of these icons, painted for the Church of the Holy Transfiguration, remains in its original position on the Sovereign tier of the iconostasis, while the other, likely produced for the Church of the Annunciation, is now part of the collection in the Icon Gallery in Prilep¹⁵.

The analysis was made based on the author's own field documentation.

¹⁴ С. Цветковски, *Новооткриени портрети*, 210, сл. 22.

¹⁵ Based on stylistic and iconographic characteristics, J. Tričkovska attributes the icon to Nikola Mihajlov, and according to indirect information, she notes that it was brought to the Gallery of icons from the Church of St. Annunciation, see: J. Тричковска, *Делата во Македонија на сликарското семејство на Михаил од Самарина*, докторски труд одбранет на Филозофскиот факултет, Скопје 2009, 124, 126, 343. This attributing was also accepted by Nikolovski see, Д. Николовски, *Икони од ризницата*, 339-340.

St. Anthony, St. Euthymius, and St. Naum with Scenes from their lives (Reg. No. 16418; 155x91x3.5 cm) (fig.3)

The icon from the Sovereign tier of the iconostasis in the Church of the Holy Transfiguration, dated in 1871, features full-length representations of the three esteemed monastic figures. St. Anthony the Great is depicted on the left, St. Euthymius occupies the central position, and St. Naum appears on the right. Each saint holds an open scroll bearing Greek inscriptions with monastic exhortations. The text on St. Naum's scroll conveys an eschatological message: ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ ΑΓΩΝΙΣΑΣΘΕ ΥΠΕΡ ΤΗΣ ΣΟΤΗΡΙΑΣ ΥΜΩΝ ΠΡΟ Τ(ΟΥ) ΉΛΘΕΙΝ ΤΗΝ ΞΡΑΝ ΉΙΩΝ ΚΑΤΑ Ν(ΟΥ)Ν Τ(ΟΥ) ΧΡΙΣΤ(ΟΥ) ΠΑΡ(ΟΥ)ΣΙΑΝ ΣΤΕΝΑΖΕ ΚΑΙ Δ(ΙΑ)ΚΡΙΕΘΡΗΝΕΙ ΜΕΓΑ ΞΟΥΤΩ ΓΑΡ ΉΞΕΙΣ ΤΙΝ ΖΩΗΝ ΑΙΩΝΙΑΝ. The opening segment of this text corresponds to a passage prescribed in Pop Danilo's painterly manual for the depictions of St. Theodore of Sykeon, while the second part lacks a direct precedent in the established templates¹⁶. This latter portion emphasizes an eschatological theme, presenting the monastic asceticism as essential for the attaining of the eternal life and the communion with Christ.

The representation of St. Naum adheres to the established iconographic conventions. His monastic robe incorporates the traditional elements, with one notable exception: the raised hood adorned with a cross on the forehead. Such depictions of St. Naum are quite rare. A comparable example can be found in an engraving from Žefarović's *Stemmatographia*, which portrays St. Naum alongside St. Nicodemus of Vitkuć, another figure associated with the Ohrid-Moscopole region. In this engraving, both monks wear raised hoods decorated with crosses on their foreheads and shoulders¹⁷. This solution was also accepted by Dičo Zograf, as seen in his representations of St. Naum of Ohrid in the churches of St. George in Rajčica (1848) and St. Archangel Michael in Bitušë (1848).¹⁸

¹⁶ М. Медих, *Стари сликарски приручници*, књ. 2, Београд 2002, 363.

¹⁷ For the depiction of St. Naum of Ohrid and St. Nikodim of Vitkuć, see: Ц. Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, Скопје 2015, 242.; М. Nagy, *The Iconography and Iconology*, 419, fg. 5

¹⁸ С. Цветковски, *Портрети на св. Наум*, 360-361, сл. 1-3.

In the case of the icon from Prilep, the depiction of St. Naum with a raised hood appears to have been primarily driven by the artist's desire to achieve visual symmetry within the composition, rather than strict adherence to an established iconographic tradition. Beyond this, Nikola Mihailov's decision to group two ecumenical monastic figures alongside a local saint in a single composition demonstrates a creative blending of broader Orthodox themes with regional devotional practices. His approach seems to have been influenced by the 1838 icon from the Church of the Annunciation, particularly in his depiction of the segment of the sky above the three monks. However, whereas the earlier icon portrays Christ in this upper section, Mihailov replaces this with a representation of the Holy Spirit, introducing a nuanced variation to the composition.

The compositional richness of the icon is further enhanced by the inclusion of three narrative scenes in its lower section, each illustrating a notable miracle associated with one of the saints. For St. Naum, Mihailov chose the well-known miracle involving a bear, a story deeply embedded in the local oral tradition (fig.4).¹⁹ The scene depicts St. Naum at the center, raising his hands in a gesture of blessing, while a bear, yoked in the place of the ox it had devoured, stands before him. An inscription in Church Greek located in the upper right corner of the composition contextualizes the event, emphasizing its divine nature: ὁ ἅγιος να(ου)μ διὰ προσευχῆς τ(ου) συνελαβε τὴν ἄρκτον καταφαγ(ου)σαν τὸν ἕνα ἐκ βοῶν **ι** καὶ συνεζευξεν αὐτὴν μετὰ τ(ου) ἄλλ(ου) βοός. The saint's spiritual connection to the divine intervention is further emphasized by the inclusion of rays of light descending from the clouds, symbolizing the miraculous nature of the event.

Two distinct compositional variants of the representation of this miracle have been identified. The earlier variant, exemplified by the depiction in the



5. *St. Anthony the Great, St. Euthymios the Great, and St. Naum of Ohrid (Reg. No. 16223), Icon Gallery in Prilep, circa 1871.*

5. *Св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики и Св. Наум Охридскија (Рег. бр. 16223) Галеријата на икони во Прилеп, околу 1871.*

Prilep icon, represents the bear yoked to a plow. This interpretation, traceable to the 17th century, first appeared on the seal of the Monastery of St. Naum²⁰. It was later replicated in the 1711 icon painted by Konstantin the Hieromonk for the iconostasis of the monastic church²¹. The second variant, which depicts the bear harnessed to a cart, emerged later in Hristofor Žefarović's *Stemmatographia* (1743) and gained broader acceptance among the artists²². This version

¹⁹ The works of folk art that influenced the conceptualization of the imagery of the miracle of the Ohrid saint have been addressed by: Н. Целакоски, *Преданијата и старите печати на манастирот Св. Наум*, Лихнид 5 Охрид 1983, 13-25; М. Матичетов, *Приказната за Наумовата мечка*, Македонски фолклор 15-16, Скопје 1985, 129-144; С. Ристевски, *Преданија и легенди за св. Наум*, Скопје 1990. В. Поповска-Коробар, *Иконата Свети Наум Охридски од црквата Св. Спас во Скопје*, Зборник на трудови 1100 години од упокојувањето на свети Наум Охридски Охрид 2011, 188-189.

²⁰ Ц. Грозданов, *Живописот во Македонија: XVIII – XIX век*, 309, 310; И. Гошев, *Старите печати на манастира Св. Наум во Македонија*, Сборникъ въ паметъ на проф. Петъръ Никовъ, Известия на българ. истор. д-во; XVI—XVIII, София 1940, 93-117; Н. Целакоски, *Преданијата и старите печати*, 13-25.

²¹ Ц. Грозданов, *Живописот во Македонија: XVIII – XIX век*, 310.

²² Ц. Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 243.



6. *Mother of God with Christ and Saints* (Reg. No. 16433), Church of St. Cyril and Methodius, 1885.
6. *Богородица со Христос и светители* (Рег. бр. 16433), Св. Кирил и Методиј, 1885 година.

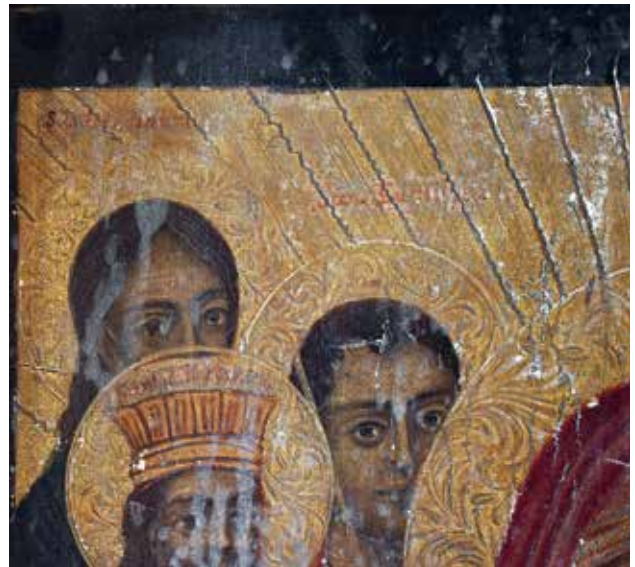
is exemplified by the fresco painted by Trpo Zograf in 1801 inside the burial chapel of St. Naum²³.

Icon of St. Naum, St. Anthony, and St. Euthymius (Reg. No. 16223; 34.5 x 23 x 2.5 cm) (fig. 5)

A smaller icon representing depictions of St. Naum, St. Anthony, and St. Euthymius is also preserved in the Gallery of Icons at the Museum of Prilep. This icon does not bear an inscription indicating its date, authorship, or specific provenance. However, based on the stylistic and artistic features, the icon has been attributed to the workshop of Nikola Mihailov. This attribution places its creation within the same approximate chronological framework as the larger icon from the Church of the Holy Transfiguration. The identical arrangement of the saints, the shared iconographic elements, and the similar rendering of their garments are all elements supporting this identification²⁴.

²³ Ц. Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 141-152.

²⁴ D. Nikolovski, while not entirely dismissing this view, suggests that another painting workshop, with artistic ideas similar to those of Anastas, but with a stronger inclination toward Baroque elements, may have been involved in their creation, see: Д. Николовски, *Икони од ризницата*, 337.



7. *St. Naum of Ohrid (detail), Mother of God with Christ and Saints* (Reg. No. 16433), Church of St. Cyril and Methodius, 1885.
7. *Св. Наум Охридски (детал), Богородица со Христос и светители* (Рег. бр. 16433), Св. Кирил и Методиј, 1885 година.

In both icons, the portrayal of St. Naum differs from the established iconographic conventions found in the earlier representations of the saint. In the preserved images dating as far back as the mid-13th century, St. Naum is traditionally depicted with a narrow, sharply tapering beard extending onto his chest. In contrast, the icons attributed to Nikola Mihailov present St. Naum with a shorter, broader, and flatter beard. This deviation from tradition suggests Mihailov and his workshop may have relied on alternative textual or visual prototypes, reflecting a shift in the evolving visual canon of the saint's image.

Icon of the Mother of God with Christ and Accompanying Saints (Reg. No. 16433; 45 x 34 x 2 cm) (fig. 6)

The final icon in the Prilep's collection featuring St. Naum originates from the Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. This composition depicts a half-length image of the Mother of God with Christ, accompanied by a group of saints. An inscription in ecclesiastical Greek, located in the lower right corner, dates the icon to May 17, 1885. Although the final line of the inscription is difficult to decipher, it likely contained the name of either the donor or the iconographer.

While this icon lacks notable artistic merit, it includes several features of interest from an iconographic and technically-technological perspective. These include the selection of saints and the distinctive use of the stucco technique for the background

and halos. St. Naum is included among the group of saints but is presented in the background, whereas only the upper portion of his figure is visible (fig.7). This positioning renders the depiction unsuitable for detailed iconographic analysis.

The saintly group accompanying the Mother of God includes St. Constantine and St. Helena presented prominently in the foreground, accompanied by St. Demetrius, St. Photini, and St. Mary Magdalene. Due to difficulties in identifying some of the saints, small Latin-letter inscriptions in red were added at a later date to clarify their identities. These inscriptions highlight the layered history of the icon's creation and its subsequent modifications, further enriching its significance within the broader context of the ecclesiastical art from the region.

* * *

The study of the iconographic characteristics of the icons from the churches in Prilep provides a valuable framework for the research of the development of the cult of St. Naum and the artistic traditions associated with his visual representation. It is noteworthy to mention that no known artworks depicting St. Naum from Prilep predate the 19th century. This absence can be attributed to the historical processes that shaped the dissemination of the saint's cult, both within Macedonia and across the wider Balkan region²⁵.

St. Naum of Ohrid was undoubtedly held in great reverence during his lifetime. Nevertheless, compared to his associate, St. Clement, the cult of St. Naum appears to have expanded beyond the region of Ohrid more gradually, with the establishment of standardized iconographic conventions occurring relatively later. The complementary roles of St. Clement and St. Naum are evident in the traditions of the Ohrid's Archbishopric: while St. Clement is celebrated as the bishop-founder of the priesthood, St. Naum is venerated as the founder of the monastic tradition. The institutionalization of St. Naum's cult began in the 13th century, catalyzed by the literary contributions of the Ohrid's Archbishop Demetrios Chomatianos²⁶. These efforts not only reinforced the saint's veneration but also laid the foundations for the subsequent development of his iconographic tradition.

²⁵ For the spread of the cult and the visual representations of St. Naum, see: Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите од Македонија: IX-XVIII век*, 116, 117, 229-231, 234, 241; Р. Русева, *Развитие и распространение*, 32; Истата, *Образите*, 247-249.

²⁶ Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите*, 51-52.; И. Снегаров, *История на охридската архиепископия*, том 1, София 1995, 279-282.

The earliest surviving visual representations of St. Naum date back to the second half of the 14th century, originating exclusively from the churches in Ohrid and the immediate vicinity of Lake Ohrid²⁷. This geographic concentration persisted throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. A significant transformation occurred between the 17th and 19th centuries, marked by the substantial territorial expansion of the saint's cult²⁸. This period of growth was driven by several factors: his role in the spiritual and cultural enlightenment of the Slavic peoples, the numerous miracles attributed to him, and the increasing prominence of the Monastery of St. Naum as a center of religious and pilgrimage activity.

A critical development in the dissemination of St. Naum's iconography beyond the Ohrid region was the conceptualization of the *Seven Slavic Saints* composition, which originated at the Slivnica Monastery²⁹. However, the most impactful influence on the popularization of St. Naum's image stemmed from the painters of the Korča and Moscopole regions, as well as from the engravings in Hristofor Žefarović's *Stemmatographia*. Additionally, the seals (*sphragistics*) of the Monastery of St. Naum played a pivotal role in the standardizing of the saint's iconography. Certain distinctive elements associated with St. Naum's image first appeared on these seals, serving as templates for the later visual representations³⁰.

During the 18th century, particularly under the leadership of the Archbishop Joasaf (1719–1746), a native of Moscopole, the Ohrid's Archbishopric ex-

²⁷ Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите*, 116-128; Vojislav J. Ђурић, *Иконе из Југославије*, Београд 1961, 30-32; Цветан Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, Скопје 2011, 57.

²⁸ Ц. Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 253-264.; Р. Русева, *Иконографията на св. Наум Охридски*, 328-330; Истата, *Развитие и распространение*, 32-48; С. Цветковски, *Новооткриени портрети*, 196; Истиот, *Портрети на св. Наум*, 359-370.

²⁹ For the representation of the Seven Slavic Saints in the Slivnica Monastery see Викторија Поповска – Коробар, Претставата на Седмочислениците во контекст на сликаната програма во Сливничкиот манастир, (Четврта научна средба по повод патрониот празник на Националната и универзитетска библиотека „Св. Климент Охридски-Скопје“, 2010), 61-70 with bibliography.

³⁰ The seals of the Monastery of St. Naum were a subject matter in the works of: И. Гошев, Старите печати на манастира Св. Наум, 93-117.; Н. Целакоски, Преданијата и старите печати, 13-25.; П. М. Пепек, Еден во науката непознат печат од манастирот Св. Наум, Годишен зборник на филозофскиот факултет, Скопје 1987, 161-171.

perienced a significant cultural renaissance³¹. This period saw the enhancement of the Monastery of St. Naum, including the decoration of its Catholicon, as well as the broader promotion of the saint's cult. It was during this time that the artistic conventions for St. Naum's depiction were solidified. His image became a central element in the repertoire of the painters active in western Macedonia, southern Albania, and northern Epirus. From these regions, his veneration spread across the Balkans, including Mount Athos, and extended as far as Vienna and Buda, reflecting the increasing reach and significance of his cult³².

By the 19th century, the depictions of St. Naum ranked among the most numerous for any local Balkan saint. The Moscopole printing house, first managed by the monk Grigorije Moskopolec and later by Constantine, played a pivotal role in the disseminating of the saint's image, using it as an emblem in its publications³³. This period also coincided with the rise of a Christian middle class in the urban areas, accompanied by increased church construction and a surge in commissions for religious art. Together, these factors contributed to the widespread popularity of St. Naum's image.

The representations of St. Naum in the churches from Prilep reflect both the broader popularization of his cult and the development of distinctive iconographic patterns. One unique pattern is the depiction of St. Naum alongside prominent monastic figures such as St. Anthony the Great and St. Euthymios the Great. By portraying St. Naum in the company of these eminent figures, these compositions emphasize his role as the founder of monasticism in the Ohrid's diocese, elevating him to the same stature as the great monastic leaders of the Christian tradition.

This iconographic model is believed to have originated in the Ohrid-Moscopole region. Among the

earliest known representations of St. Naum, depicted alongside St. Anthony the Great, is an icon dating to the second half of the 18th century, located in the Church of St. Nicholas Gerakomia in Ohrid³⁴. In another icon from the last quarter of the 18th century, housed in the Church of the Mother of God Kamenisko in Ohrid, St. Naum is portrayed alongside some of the most prominent saints of the monastic tradition. In this composition, he is accompanied by St. Anthony the Great, St. Euthymios the Great, and St. Sava the Sanctified³⁵. This iconographical model was subsequently transferred to the Pelagonia region, most likely by painters who originated from the broader Moschopolis area. These artists played a significant role in disseminating the representations of St. Naum through their works. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Anastas Konstantinov, the author of the icon in the Church of the Annunciation in Prilep, came from Magarevo—a village with strong ties to the migration waves from Gramos, Moscopole, and Korča between 1769 and 1821³⁶. These migrations created enduring connections to the monastic and religious traditions of these regions. The representations of St. Naum of Ohrid among the most prominent monastic saints are notably present in the wall paintings of the Church of St. Paraskevi in Dolno Egri (1845). Here, as in the icons from Prilep, he is depicted alongside St. Anthony the Great and St. Euthymios the Great. A similar iconographic arrangement can be observed in the Church of St. Paraskevi in Skočivir (1847), a work attributed to the painter Jovan from Trnovo³⁷.

Furthermore, St. Naum is portrayed in the company of St. Anthony and St. Euthymios in the Church of St. Athanasius in Novaci (1868), as well as in the Church of St. Archangel Michael in Klepač (1877). These latter works were executed by the brothers Konstantin and Dimitar Anastasovi from Magarevo³⁸.

³¹ И. Снегаровъ, *История на охридската архиепископия*, том 2, София 1932, 208, 209.; Ц. Грозданов, *Св. Наум Охридски*, 223.

³² Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите од Македонија IX-XVIII век*, 229, plus M. Nagy, *The Iconography and Iconology of Hristofir Zefar's Saint Nahum Depictions, Niš and Byzantium IX*, Niš 2011, 415-426; M. Nagy, *The iconography of Saint Naum in the icons of the workshop of Ráckeve*, Niš and Byzantium Symposium IV, Niš 2006, 325-342.; M. Nagy, *Ohridi Szent Naum magyarországi kultusza*, Budapest – Debrecen 2012.; Русева, *Развитие и распространение*, 38-49.

³³ For the representations of St. Naum in the Moscopole's examples see Ц. Грозданов, *Портрети на светителите*, 234, 247, сл. 73, сл. 74; Иститот, *Свети Наум Охридски*, 224-226; On the activities of the Moscopole printing house: И. Снегаровъ, *История на охридската архиепископия*, 2, 348, 349;

³⁴ At the icon from St. Nicolas Gerakomia, beside St. Naum and St. Anthony is represented St. Clement of Ohrid, which is result of the strong cult of the local saints in Ohrid, see С. Цветковски, *Новооткриени портрети*, 206-207.

³⁵ С. Цветковски, *Новооткриени портрети*, 207.

³⁶ К. Σμόπουλος, *Ξένοι ταξιδιώτες στην Ελλάδα 1810 – 1821*, 2, Αθήνα 1992, 348-349, 400.; Γ. Χιονίδης, Χ. Γεώργιος, *Οι ανέκδοτες αναμνήσεις του Γιώτη, (Παναγιώτη), Ναούμ για τους Βλάχους της Ηπείρου και της Μακεδονίας στη διάρκεια του 19ου αιώνα και για την επανάσταση του 1878 στη Μακεδονία*, Μακεδονικά ΚΔ', Θεσσαλονίκη 1984, 61-66.

³⁷ Н. Митревски, *Портретите на св. Наум*, 236-237.

³⁸ Н. Митревски, *Портретите на св. Наум*, 238, 240.

The commissioning of St. Naum's image in Prilep may have been initiated by the church's leadership, potentially by the influential Hadži Hriste Logothete. A fervent advocate for the use of Church Slavonic in the liturgy and for the honoring of the Slavic saints, Hadži Hriste likely played a significant role in the promotion of the cult of St. Naum in the region³⁹. Although the precise origins of this artistic model remain unclear, it is evident that later icons, such as those from the Church of the Transfiguration, drew inspiration from the earlier depictions of St. Naum. The involvement of Prilep's Vlach community, who played a seminal role in the construction of the Church of the Transfiguration, further highlights their significant contribution to the promotion of St. Naum's veneration within the city.

However, the veneration of St. Naum transcended ethnic and social boundaries. His representation in the Church of the Annunciation demonstrates that his cult was not confined to a single community. Historical records indicate that St. Naum was highly regarded even among local Muslims – a testament to his enduring legacy. His life and work, continuing the mission of the Saints Cyril and Methodius, became a powerful symbol of understanding, unity, and coexistence among people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

³⁹ A detailed presentation of the personality of Hadži Hriste Logothetes was given by: С. Ковилоски, *Највлијателниот прилепчанин во XIX век: Хаџи Христо Логотет*, Книжевно житие 32, Скопје 2014, 42.; Ѓ. Иванов, *Хаџи-Ристе Дамјанович – Логотет*, Прилеп преди 100 години, Јубилеен лист по повод стогодишнината на прилепската црква Св. Благовештение, Софија 1938, 1.

ПРЕТСТАВИТЕ НА СВЕТИ НАУМ ОХРИДСКИ ВО ИКОНОПИСОТ ОД 19 ВЕК ВО ПРИЛЕПСКИТЕ ЦРКВИ

Резиме

Ликовните претстави на св. Наум Охридски се јавуваат уште во средновековниот период, но најголемата експанзија на бројот на ваквите дела, како и во поглед на дисперзија во територијални рамки се јавува во 19 век. Во рамките на студијата е направен обид да се продлабочи знаењето за ваквите процеси преку анализата на пет икони кои потекнуваат од црквите во Прилеп, а кои не биле предмет на научна обработка. Дел од иконите се наоѓаат во нивниот оригинален контекст во црквите Св. Благовештение, Св. Преображение и Св. Кирил и Методиј, а две во Галеријата на икони во Прилеп. Различната функција и хронологија на настанување на овие дела условиле во нив да бидат применети различни решенија, кои одразуваат поинакви уметнички и иконографски традиции.

Врз основа на стилсколиковните особености како најстаро дело може да се посочи иконата со индивидуална претстава на Св. Наум (Рег. бр. 21361), која се чува во Галеријата на икони во Прилеп, а веројатно датира од почетокот на 19 век. Иконографската схема на иконата директно е преземена од бакрописното дело на Христофор Жефаровиќ кое потекнува од 1743. Во празничниот ред на икони од иконостасот на Црквата на Благовештението е поставена иконата со претставите на св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики и св. Наум Охридски (Рег. бр. 16325), која го сврстува охридскиот чудотворец меѓу најистакнатите претставници на монаштвото. Врз основа на стилските карактеристики за иконата ја атрибуираме на Анастас Константинов, сликар од Магарево, и датира од крајот на триесеттите години на 19 век. Уште една икона со претставата на св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики и св. Наум Охридски, во кој се вклучени и избор на сцени од нивните житија, е поставена во престолниот ред

на икони во црквата Св. Преображение во Прилеп (Рег. бр. 16418). Иконата, датира од 1871 година, а е дело на сликарот Никола Михајлов од Крушево. Идентично решение за прикажување на св. Наум Охридски со св. Антониј Велики, св. Евтимиј Велики ја гледаме кај уште едно дело припишано на Никола Михајлов – иконата со помал формат (Рег. бр. 16223) која се чува во Галеријата на икони во Прилеп. Според датумот на настанување последна од претстава на св. Наум од 19 век која е сочувана во прилепските цркви е од иконата на Богородица со Христос и светители (Рег. бр. 16433) од црквата Св. Кирил и Методиј, која настанала во 1885 година. Св. Наум Охридски е прикажан во задниот регистар на светители и неговиот лик е само делумно видлив, а може да се идентификува единствено според натписот кој ја придружува неговата претстава.

Прилепските икони со претставите на св. Наум Охридски содржат раритетни иконографски решенија кои особено се нагласени во заедничкото прикажување на охридскиот светител покрај св. Антониј Велики и св. Евтимиј Велики. Се чини веројатна претпоставката дека потеклото на ваквото решение треба да се бара во охридско-москополскиот уметнички круг, а дека во пределите на Пелагонија бил пренесен во миграциските бранови кои проследиле по репресиите на овие краишта во втората половина на 18 и првите децении на 19 век. Несомнено, само во близината на жариштето на култот на св. Наум – манастирот на брегот на Охридското Езеро, можело да се биде вообличена идејата за изедначувањето на локалниот светител како родоначалник на монаштвото на овие простори и со тоа да биде изедначен со најпочитуваните монаси во православие.

