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## THE ACHEIROPOIETOS IMAGES IN ST. GEORGES AT POLOŠKO

Key words: *St. George at Pološko, Byzantine art, Iconography, Virgin Acheiropoietos, Mandyllion*

*In St. Georges at Pološko, for the first time in the Byzantine art, the Mandyllion appears in the scene of the Ascension of Christ. This acheiropoietos image (not made by human hands) of Christ is depicted just above the Virgin Acheiropoietos in the apse. The object of the present paper is to examine these two acheiropoietos images in the context of the monument's funeral character.*

The church of St. George at Pološko was an endowment of the Serbian noble John Dragušin, buried in the southwest angle of the church. He died during the construction of his mausoleum, and the painting (1343-45) was a donation of his mother<sup>1</sup>. Because

the tomb of the founder was placed in the church itself, the painted program as a whole reveals the funeral character of the monument<sup>2</sup>. In this paper we try to determine the eschatological meaning of the two acheiropoietos “not made by hands” images in Pološko: the image of the Virgin Acheiropoietos and the Mandyllion.

### *The Virgin Acheiropoietos*

In the conch of the apse of the church is depicted the bust of the Orant Virgin with Child in a round halo in front of her chest (fig 1). An inscription indicates her epithet: Mother of God the Acheiropoietos (Η ΑΧΕΙΡΟ / ΠΙΗΤΟΣ / ΜΡ / ΘΥ). The Christ Emmanuel (Ο ΕΜΜΑ / ΝΟΥΗΛ | ΙC / ΧC) blesses with his right hand and holds a closed scroll in his left<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For the church in general, see: Ђ. Мано-Зиси, *Полошко*, Старинар, 6, Београд 1931, 114-123, Ђ. Бошковић, *Извештај и кратке белешке са путовања*, Околина Градског, Полошко, Старинар, Београд 1931, 183-186, В. Ј. Ђурић, *Полошко - Хиландарски метох и Драгушинова гробница*, ЗНМ, 8, Београд 1975, 327-344, G. Babić, *Quelques observations sur le cycle des Grandes Fêtes de l'église de Pološko (Macédoine)*, CahArch, 27, Paris 1978, 163-178, Ц. Грозданов, Д. Корнаков, *Историјски портрети у Полошком (I)*, Зограф, 14, Београд 1983, 60-67, id., *Историјски портрети у Полошком (II)*, Зограф, 15, Београд 1984, 85-93, id., *Историјски портрети у Полошком (III)*, Зограф, 18, Београд 1987, 37-43, Д. Корнаков, *Полошки манастир*, Скопје 2006, А. Ristovska, *L'Eglise Saint-Georges de Pološko (Macédoine): Recherche sur le monument et ses peintures murales (XIVe siècle)*, Thèse de Doctorat, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris 2010, ead., *Une moniale commanditaire : l'art au service de la propagande impériale au XIVe siècle*, Actes du 9e colloque étudiant du Département d'histoire de l'Université Laval, Laval 2010, ead., *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, *La Représentation de Judas dans l'église de Saint-Georges de Pološko*, Патримониум.МК 10, Скопје 2012, 130-148, I. Σίστου, *Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος του Κυρίτηστην Καστοριάκαι Ο Άγιος Γεώργιοςστο Polosko*, Ниш и Византија, 9, Ниш 2011, 321-348.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the tombs of nobles in Serbian churches are placed in secondary spaces where the iconographic program corresponds to its funerary purpose. This is especially obvious in the narthex of the *parekklesion* of Hrelja in Rila, in the chapel of St. Nicholas in Serres, in Zrze and in the catholicon of Hilandar. In the narthex of Rila, Kučevište and Lesново for example are represented the last psalms quoted in the liturgy for the dead, И. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле у доба Немањича*, Београд 1994, 84-85.

<sup>3</sup> For others examples where the Christ Child is named Emmanuel in this iconographic type of the Virgin, see: A. Glichitch, *Iconographie du Christ-Emmanuel, origine et développement jusqu'au XIVe siècle*, Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Paris I (Panthéon Sorbonne), Paris 1990, 34, with bibliography.



Fig. 1 The Virgin Acheiropoietos, St. George at Pološko

The image of the Virgin in the conch of the apse of Pološko belongs to the iconographic type of the Virgin Blachernitissa. Associating the image of Christ in a medallion in front of her chest and the gesture of her raised hands in prayer, she evokes both the mystery of the incarnation and intercession<sup>4</sup>.

The oldest representation of the Virgin designated as Acheiropoietos, is located in the chapel of St. Ste-

<sup>4</sup> The iconographic type of the Virgin holding the Child in a medallion on her chest is known as Blachernitissa, Nicopeia, Platytera and Episkepsis. This iconography of the Virgin evokes the mystery of the Incarnation – the Child represents the incarnated Logos who descended into the future Mother of God at the moment of the annunciation. The iconographic type of the Orant Virgin emphasizes her quality as a mediator, interceding unceasingly for the faithful, C. Baltoyanni, *The Mother of God in Portable Icons*, M. Vassilaki, éd., *Mother of God*, Representation of the Virgin in Byzantine Art, Milano 2000, 140, M. Татић-Ђурић, *Врата Слова. Ка лику и значењу Влахернитисе*, ЗЛУ, 8, Нови Сад 1972, 61-88, ead., *Икона Богородице Знамења*, ЗЛУ, 13, Нови Сад 1977, 4-17, Н. П. Кондаков, *Иконография Богоматери*, СПб. 1914, 60, 83, J. D. Stefanescu, *L'illustration des Liturgies dans l'art de Byzance et de l'Orient*, Bruxelles 1936, J. D. Stefanescu, *L'illustration des Liturgies dans l'art de Byzance et de l'Orient*, Bruxelles 1936, 103.

phen in Sopoćani (circa 1265)<sup>5</sup>. Other examples are in Gračanica (1318-1321)<sup>6</sup>, in St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki (the second decade of the fourteenth century)<sup>7</sup>, in Mali Sv. Vračı (1340)<sup>8</sup>, in St. Nicholas tou Kyritsis in Kastoria (ca. 1346, fig. 2)<sup>9</sup>, in Lesново

<sup>5</sup> In the conch of the apse of the chapel of St. Stephen in Sopoćani the Orant Virgin is depicted with the Christ Child in a medallion in front of her chest, В. Ј. Ђурић, *Сопоћани*, Београд 1963, 83, fig. on page 134.

<sup>6</sup> In the conch of the apse of Gračanica is depicted a standing figure of the Orant Virgin, while the Emmanuel is depicted above her in a segment of sky, surrounded by cherubims, Тодић, *Грачица - сликарство*, Београд-Приштина 1988, 80, 113, fig. 1, В. Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting, the Age of King Milutin*, Belgrade 1999, 146.

<sup>7</sup> In the conch of the apse of St. Nicholas Orphanos, the Orant Virgin is depicted on a blue starry background, Ch. Bakirtzis, éd, *Ayios Nikolaos Orphanos. The Wall Paintings*, Athens 2003, pl. 10.

<sup>8</sup> The Virgin represented in the conch of the apse of the church is the type of the Virgin Fountain of Life where the bust of the Orant Virgin is depicted with the Child placed in a container on her chest, Ц. Грозданов, *Охридско судно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 52, fig. 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> In this church is depicted a standing figure of the Orant Virgin, Σίστου, *op. cit.*, 334-336.



Fig. 2 The Virgin Acheiropoietos, St. Nicholas tou Kyritsis in Kastoria, (From: I. Σίστου, *Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος του Κυρίτση στην Καστοριά και Ο Άγιος Γεώργιος στο Ρολοσκο*, Ниш и Византија, 9, Ниш 2011, sch. 15)

(1346-1347)<sup>10</sup>, in Zaum (1361)<sup>11</sup> and in the narthex of Hilandar (fourteenth, fifteenth centuries, fig. 3)<sup>12</sup>.

The cult of the Virgin Acheiropoietos was spread from the monastery of the Virgin Acheiropoietos in Thessaloniki<sup>13</sup>. The monastery, originally dedicated to the Virgin Hodegetria, possessed an icon of the

Virgin Hodigitria. According to the legend, the Virgin Mary, represented on this icon miraculously raised her hands toward the heavens in intercession for the *ktitor* of the monastery<sup>14</sup>.

A Greek inscription appears around the conch of the apse:

ΤΗΝ ΤΙΜΗΟΤΑΙΡΑΝ ΤΟΝ ΧΕΡΟΥΒΗΜ ΚΑΙ  
ΕΝΔΟΞΟΤΕΡΑΝ ΑΧΗΝΚΡΙΤΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΣΕΡΑΦΗΜ  
ΤΗΝ ΑΔΙΑΦΘΟΡΟΝ Θ(ΕΟ)Ν ΛΟΓΟΝ ΤΕΚΟΥΣΑ  
ΤΙΝ ΟΝΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΝ ΣΕ ΜΕΓΑΛΙΝΟΜΕΝ

“More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim. Without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify thee<sup>15</sup>.”

It is a hymn to the Virgin (την τιμπεραν), sung every day after the consecration in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and at the conclusion of almost all offices<sup>16</sup>. The words of the hymn emphasize the ab-

<sup>10</sup> The Orant Virgin with Christ in a medallion on her chest in Lesnovo is depicted in a standing position flanked by two archangels, С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998, 66, fig. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ц. Грозданов, *Охридско видно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 110, fig. 70. In Zaum the Orant Virgin is depicted with the Child on her chest.

<sup>12</sup> The Orant Virgin depicted in a buste with the Child in a medallion on her chest is painted in a niche above a tomb, V. J. Đurić, *Fresques médiévales à Chilandar*, Actes du XIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines, Ohrid 1961, vol. 3, Beograd 1964, 96-97, fig. 60.

<sup>13</sup> Vojislav Đurić, enumerating almost all known examples of the Virgin Acheiropoietos and starting from their geographical layout, gave this hypothesis on the influence of the monastery in Thessaloniki. This large early Christian basilica with three naves, dedicated to the Virgin Acheiropoietos, was one of the main places of worship of the Virgin Acheiropoietos, Đurić, *Fresques médiévales à Chilandar*, note 99.

<sup>14</sup> Α. Ευγγόπουλος, *Η λατρευτική εικόνα του ναού της Αχειροποιήτου Θεσσαλονίκης*, Έλληνικά, 13, Θεσσαλονίκη 1954, 256-262.

<sup>15</sup> R. P. Mercenier, *La prière des églises de rite byzantin*, vol. 1, Amay-sur-Meuse 1937, 242.

<sup>16</sup> J. Nasrallah, *Marie dans la Saint et Divine Liturgie Byzantine*, Paris 1955, 91.



Fig. 3 The Virgin Acheiropoietos, Hilandar Monastery (From: V. J. Đurić, *Fresques médiévales à Chilandar*, Actes du XIIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines, Ohrid 1961, vol. 3, Beograd 1964, 96-97, fig. 60.)

solute sanctity of the Virgin that exceeds all the creations. She is superior to the angels because when the angels saw the God incarnate in her they were terrified. The hymn also stresses the incomparable purity of the Virgin through which she became the Mother of God. God dwelt in her and He was born by her raising her to a level of unspeakable purity. By and through her He divinised the mankind and made her a universal mediator<sup>17</sup>.

The hymn written around the apse and the iconographic type of the Virgin complement each other. They insist on the Incarnation that determines the role of the Virgin as a mediator.

From the preserved examples, we can assume that the church of Pološko is the only example in Byzantine art in which this text is inscribed around the apse<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> J. Ledit, *Marie dans la liturgie de Byzance*, Paris 1976, 40, 44.

<sup>18</sup> The *axion estin* is also inscribed on the scroll of Cosmas of Maiouma represented in the narthex of Staro Nagoričino. His text refers most probably to the Dormition depicted near him. We find the same representation of Cosmas of Maiouma in *parecclesion* of Gračanica where the text probably refers to the Annunciation, Todić, *op. cit.*, 177, Б. Тодић, *Старо Нагоричино*, Београд 1993, 87, 104, 117-118, *id.*, *Грачаница*, 87. The beginning of this hymn is also inscribed in the northwest dome in Resava, Б. Живковић, *Манасија. Цртежи фресака*, Београд 1983, sch. 2, М. Глигоријевић-Максимовић, *Иконографија Богородичиних праобраза у српском сликарству од средине XIV до средине XV века*, ЗРВИ, 43, Београд 2006, 291, Ј. Проловић, *Сликани програм куполе и поткуполних простора у цркви манастира Ресаве*, Зограф, 32, Београд 2008, 133. The same text is also inscribed around the Virgin in a medallion depicted in the

These words are followed by a prayer:

COCON ME M(HTE)P TOY Θ(EO)Y H  
TEKOYCA K(YPIO)N

"Save me, Mother of God, who gave birth to the Lord."

#### *The representation of the Mandyllion*

Above the representation of the Virgin Acheiropoietos is depicted the Mandyllion (fig. 4)<sup>19</sup>. This acheiropoietos image of Christ is incorporated in the scene of the Ascension of Christ (H ANAΛH ΨIC)<sup>20</sup>, depicted on the top of the east wall. In the upper register of the scene Jesus Christ, enthroned on a rainbow, is blessing with both hands. He is depicted in a round glory upheld by two angels. In the centre of the lower register of the scene is depicted the Mandyllion attached to two trees. The Virgin on the right and two angels on the left flank the Mandyllion. One of the angels points to the sky with his right hand and holds in his left a deployed scroll on which we read the words of the Acts of the Apostles (I, 11):

barrel vault in the narthex of St. Archangels in à Kučeviće (1630/31), А. Серафимова, *Кучевишки манастир Свети Архангели*, Скопје 2005, 123-124.

<sup>19</sup> The same formula is also used in St. Nicholas Orphanos. The Mandyllion is depicted above the Virgin Acheiropoietos, Sh. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, Seattle-London 1999, 72-73.

<sup>20</sup> For the iconography of this feast see: E. T. Dewald, *The Iconography of the Ascension*, AJA, 19, New York, 1915, 277-319, 277-319, 144-152, O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily*, London 1949, 220, 291.



Fig. 4 Ascension of Christ, St. George at Pološko

[Α]ΝΔ[Ρ]ΕΣ | ΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΕ | Η ΤΙ Ε<C>ΤΙ | [ΚΑ]ΤΕ  
ΒΛΕ | ΠΟΝΤΟΣ | ΗΣ ΤΟΝ ΟΥ | ΠΑΝΟΝ

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? (This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven)”<sup>21</sup>.

The apostles are divided into two groups around the Mandylion, the angels and the Virgin Mary.

The incorporation of the Mandylion<sup>22</sup> in the Ascension of Christ in Pološko singles out this scene

<sup>21</sup> Towards the end of the Byzantine period, the text of the Acts appears on the scroll held by angels. For example, the angel holds a scroll with the inscription in Koumbelidiki in Kastoria (1260-1280), Στ. Πελεκανίδης, *Καστοριά, I. Βυζαντινοί τοιχογραφία, Πίνακες*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1953, pl. 109, in the monastery of Lesnovo (1346/47), Габелић, *Манастир Лесново*, 82, in Pantanassa in Mistra (circa 1430), V. Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina*, Torino 1967, fig. 556, or even in St. Georges near Prespa (1485-1497), Στ. Πελεκανίδης, *Βυζαντινά και Μεταβυζαντινά Μνημεία της Πρέσπας*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1960, fig. XXVIII. But we find this inscription much more earlier inscribed on the background of the Ascension in Cappadocia, G. Jerphanion, *Une Nouvelle province de l'art byzantin: Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, vol. 1/1, Paris 1932, 104 (Eglise n°4 de Göreme) or in the church of St. Sophie in Thessaloniki (end of eleventh century), Н. В. Покровский, *Евангелие в памятниках иконографии преимущественно византийских и русских*, СПб. 1892, 435, fig. 207.

from other contemporary compositions. The cult of the Mandylion, the image “not made by human hands” on which appears the Holy Face of Christ, present since the sixth century, was mainly developed in the post iconoclast period. There are three interpretations of the subject: prophylactic if shown over the doors; symbol of the Incarnation, and then it appears over or on the top of the apse, under or into the drum of the dome, in the vaults, and finally Eucharistic without fixed location.

Although the Mandylion is depicted over the apse from the twelfth century<sup>23</sup> to our knowledge it is included for the first time in the Ascension in Pološko<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> On the *Mandylion*, see the most recent studies with bibliography: E. Kitzinger, *The Mandylion at Monreale*, *Arte profana et arte sacra a Bisanzio*, Roma 1995, 575-602, Gerstel, *op.cit.*, 68-77, C. Dufour Bozzo, A. Calderoni Masetti, G. Wolf, éd., *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (XI-XIV secolo)*, Venezia 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Like for example in St. Nicholas of Kasnitzi in Kastoria (end of 12-th century), where the *Mandylion* is depicted over the apse between the Annunciation and below a Deesis that occupies the upper part of the sanctuary, Gerstel, *op.cit.*, 164, fig. 23.

<sup>24</sup> The scholars who have worked on the representation of the Mandylion, and especially on the representation of the Mandylion within the Ascension, are not familiar with the example of Pološko, Gerstel, *op.cit.*, 68-77, H. Papastavrou, *Remarques sur la décoration du mur est au-dessus*

A little bit later, we find the same solution in Ohrid in the church of the St. Demetrius (third quarter of the fourteenth century)<sup>25</sup>. A century later this solution is repeated in the churches of Ohrid school from the fifteenth century: in All Saints in Lešani (1451-1452), in St. Elijah Dolgaec (1454/5), in the Ascension of Christ in Leskoeç (1461/2, fig. 5), and in St. Nicholas Bolnički (second half of the fifteenth century)<sup>26</sup>. In these churches, with the exception of St. Nicholas Bolnički, Christ carried by the angels is not represented on the wall, but above the scene of the Ascension in the eastern part of the vault of the church<sup>27</sup>.

The Mandyliion is also depicted within in the Ascension in Hagios Alypios Papastamatiou (1485), where it appears in the centre of the Ascension between Mary and an angel in prayer, while the Christ carried by the angels, is in its usual place<sup>28</sup>. In St. Demetrius in Aiani (fifteenth century)<sup>29</sup> the Mandyliion attached to two trees is depicted above the apostles and immediately below the Christ in the halo. Finally, in the Ascension in Sts. Anargyroi in Servia (1510-1600), the Virgin herself holds the Mandyliion<sup>30</sup>.

Helen Papastavrou who has studied the incorporation of the Mandyliion in the Ascension in the churches of Ohrid has

*de l'abside dans trois églises du XVe siècle en Macédoine, CahBalk, 11, Paris 1987, 141-159, T. Velmans, Valeurs sémantique du Mandyliion selon son emplacement ou son association avec d'autres images, Byzance, Le Slaves et L'Occident, London, 2001, 287-310.*

<sup>25</sup> In St. Demetrius in Ohrid like in Pološko the Mandyliion is attached to two trees, A. Серафимова, *Фрескоживописот во црквата Св. Димитрија во Охрид во контекст на градското сликарство од втората половина на XIV век*, ЗСУММ, 6, Скопје 2007, 75-76, fig. 11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Г. Суботић, *Охридската сликарска школа од XV век*, Охрид 1980, 52-57, (St. Elijah Dolgaec), 69-75 (Lešani), 93-104 (Leskoeç), 104-110 (St. Nicholas Bolnički).

<sup>27</sup> On the iconography of the vault of the churches of Ohrid school, see: Суботић, *op. cit.*, 173-174.

<sup>28</sup> Πελεκανίδης, *Καστοριά*, pl. 179-180.

<sup>29</sup> Papastavrou, *op. cit.*, 153.

<sup>30</sup> *ead.* 153, fig. 4.

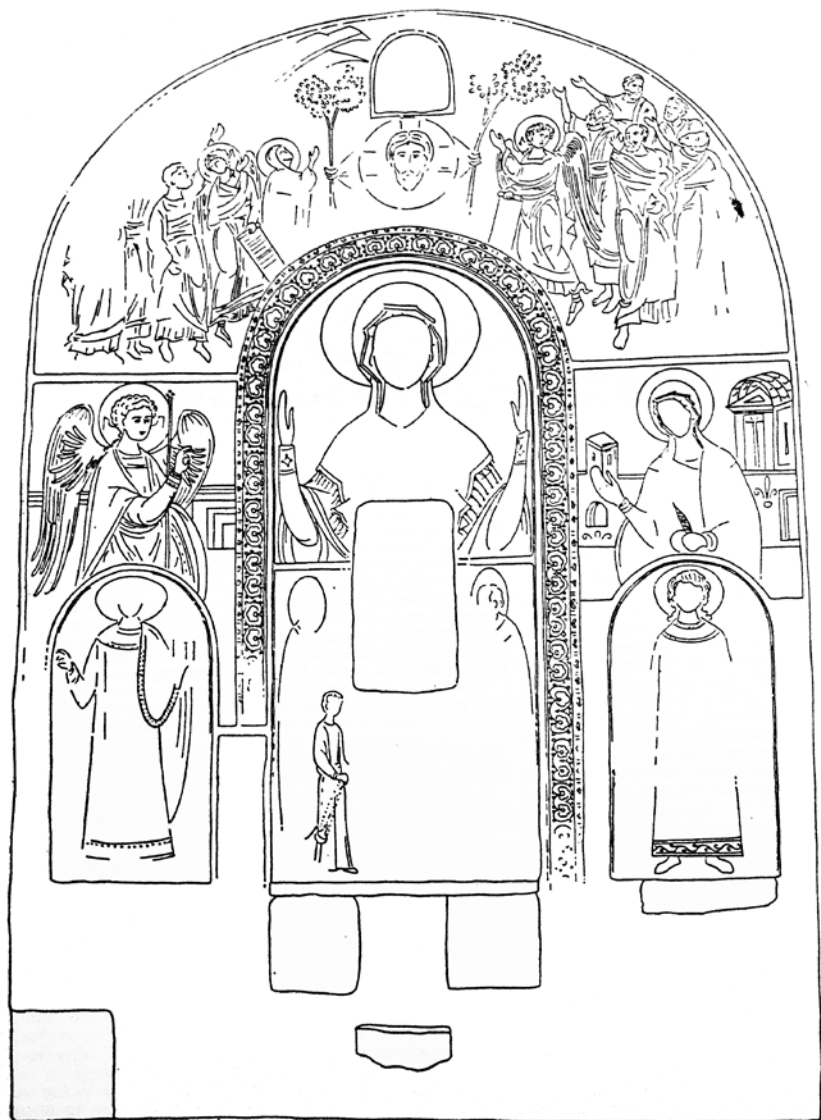


Fig. 5 Church of the Ascension of Christ in Leskoeç (From : Г. Суботић, *Охридската сликарска школа од XV век*, Охрид 1980, fig. 77)

explained its appearance in the scene by the absence of Christ on the east wall of the church<sup>31</sup>. In fact in these churches Christ is not represented within the Ascension. This is due to the fact that in the vault of the churches is always depicted the Holy Trinity as God the Father (Ancient of Days) in the centre of the vault; the Son (Christ of the Ascension) in the eastern part of the vault, and the Holy Spirit (on the Prepared throne) in the western part of the vault. In this way Christ carried by angels depicted in the eastern part of the vault, has a dual role. He represents both the Christ of the Ascension and the Son from the Holy Trinity. That's how she concluded that the Mandyliion replaced Christ, who should be featured here. She also explained this "new" iconography by the modest dimensions of these monuments without dome.

The fact that the Mandyliion appears along with the Christ from the Ascension in Pološko (church

<sup>31</sup> *ead.*, 141-159.

with dome) and in many other churches makes this hypothesis unlikely.

Tania Velmans who had also studied the appearance of the Mandyliion within the scene of the Ascension of Christ noticed the tendency of underling the Second Coming in these scenes. She noted that in many churches of Georgia, the Mandyliion is placed in the apse of the altar accompanied by the Deesis of the Second Coming<sup>32</sup>. The formula of the Mandyliion in Georgia does not seem to have been preserved in other regions, except in a form slightly modified in Sopoćani<sup>33</sup>. It is also included in the church of St. Nicholas Kasnitzi in Kastoria (twelfth century)<sup>34</sup>, where the Mandyliion is depicted over the apsidal conch, between the Annunciation and below the Deesis.

Although the Mandyliion is very rarely related to the Deesis in Balkan painting, it is used in relation to the Ascension. In these examples the Virgin in prayer is almost always shown in profile and pushed to the left side of the composition by the Mandyliion who took the central place of the composition<sup>35</sup>. This is the case in Pološko, in Leskoec<sup>36</sup>, in Lešani<sup>37</sup>, or in Hagios Alypios Papastomatiouin Kastoria (1420)<sup>38</sup>.

The Christ of the Ascension in these churches (Pološko, Leskoec, Lešani, Dolgaec)<sup>39</sup> presents the characteristics of Christ Judge blessing with both hands, emphasizing the eschatological connotations of the composition reminding the promise to return at the end of time<sup>40</sup>.

The large number of representations where the Mandyliion is associated with the Deesis in the sanc-

tuary of churches and certain elements of the Ascension where the Mandyliion is included (the Virgin in prayer instead of Orante, Christ who blesses with both hands evoking the Christ Judge) suggest that this iconographic formula was used to emphasize the Second Coming. The text in the hand of the angel in the Ascension in Pološko containing the promise of Christ's return to earth seems to complete this idea<sup>41</sup>.

Later we find several examples where the Mandyliion replaces the Christ from the Deesis<sup>42</sup>. In Russia this is especially common in the postbyzantine period where it usually appears in the upper part of the icons as an integral part, independent from the subject of the icon<sup>43</sup>. Later that same formula is used in postbyzantines representations of the Last Judgment in the Balkan painting<sup>44</sup>.

In the seventeenth century the Mandyliion receives a distinct funerary connotation. At the top of *parsonas* - the funerary portraits widely extended in Ukrainian, Polish and Russian regions figure the Mandyliion. Here the Mandyliion expresses the funeral belief of the deceased in the protection of the Mandyliion during the special judgment and the hope of salvation on the last judgment<sup>45</sup>.

We can, therefore conclude that it is the funeral destination of Pološko that influenced this type of representation of the Ascension with an iconography that emphasizes its eschatological sense.

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The acheiropietos images in Pološko are closely related to the funeral character of the church. Portraying the Virgin Acheiropietos in the conche of the apse expresses the faith in the power of intercession of the Virgin "not made by hands". The hope of the *ktitor* for her help on the last judgment is also

<sup>32</sup> Velmans, *op. cit.*, 288-290.

<sup>33</sup> In the *diakonicon* at Sopoćani (6<sup>th</sup> decade of the twelfth century) is depicted a Deesis with Mandyliion instead of Christ on the throne and with St. John the Baptist and St. John the Theologian. Above this there is the representation of Deesis with Christ on the throne, the Virgin and an archbishop, С. Пејић, *Мандилион у поствизантијској уметности*, ЗЛУ, 34/35, Нови Сад 2003, 89-90, Ђурић, *Сопоћани*, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Gerstel, *op.cit.*, 71, fig. 23.

<sup>35</sup> The only exceptions are the Orant Virgin in Leskoec and the Orant Virgin in St. Nicholas Bolnički with a slightly different iconography, Суботић, *op. cit.*, fig. 78, 84.

<sup>36</sup> *id.*, *op. cit.*, fig. 78.

<sup>37</sup> *id.*, *op. cit.*, 69, note 11.

<sup>38</sup> Πελεκανίδης, *Καστοριά*, pl. 179-180.

<sup>39</sup> Another postbyzantine example supports the hypothesis that the Mandyliion within Ascension aims to highlight the Second Coming. In the church of St. Athanasius, Konitsa (1617) the Mandyliion over the apse flanked by the Virgin and St. John in prayer, accompanied by an angel forms a Deesis. It is itself surrounded by the apostles of the Ascension, Velmans, *op. cit.*, 292, 294, Papastavrou, *op.cit.*, 153.

<sup>40</sup> Velmans, *op. cit.*, 294.

<sup>41</sup> The representation of the Mandyliion in the Ascension is also treated in the article of Svetlana Pejić, who mentions the example of Pološko. In her opinion the introduction of the Mandyliion in the Ascension aims to emphasize the dual nature of Christ, Пејић, *op. cit.*, 88.

<sup>42</sup> In this respect see the study of Svetlana Pejić on the representation of the Mandyliion in post byzantine painting, *ibidem.*, 73-94, especially 90.

<sup>43</sup> М. В. Алпатов, *Древнерусская иконопись*, Москва 1974, fig. 147, Пејић, *op. cit.*, fig. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Deesis with the Mandyliion instead of Christ is depicted above the Last Judgement on the western façade of the church of Malovo Malo (XVI-XVII century), Пејић, *op. cit.*, 90, note 105.

<sup>45</sup> *ibidem.*, 90.

confirmed by a prayer inscribed over the apse. This funeral implication of the Virgin Acheiropoietos will be even more clearly expressed later in Hilaritar, where she will find her place right above a tomb. The acheiropoietos image of Christ expresses on the other hand the hope of the deceased in his protection

at the Second Coming of Christ. The eschatological significance of Mandyllion will especially develop in post byzantine painting, where, the Mandyllion will replace the Christ from the Deesis, or will be painted over the funeral portraits – *parsonas*.

Ана ПОПОВА

## НЕРАКОТВОРЕНИТЕ ПРЕТСТАВИ ВО ЦРКВАТА Св. ЃОРЃИ ПОЛОШКИ

### Резиме

Во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки, за прв пат во византиската уметност, Мандилионот - неракотворениот Христов образ е насликан во рамките на Вознесението Христово. Ваквата Христова претстава се наоѓа веднаш над Богородица Аχειροποιητος (Неракотворена), живописана во апсидалната конха. Овој труд ги толкува неракотворените претстави во црквата во контекст на мавзолејскиот карактер на споменикот.

Црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки била подигната како мавзолеј на српскиот великодостојник Јован Драгушин. Поради тоа што ктиторот бил погребан во самата црква низ целиот фрескоживопис проникнуваат есхатолошки теми, а тоа е случај и со неракотворените претстави. Во црквата сретнуваме две неракотворени претстави: Богородица Неракотворена и Неракотворен Христов Образ.

Богородица Аχειροποιητος била славена како особено успешна застапничка, во согласност со преданието според кое нејзин лик чудотворно ги кренал рацете кон небесата во молитва за ктиторот на манастирот. Претставата на Богородица Аχειροποιητος во Полошко сведочи за вербата на ктиторот во нејзината застапничка моќ при Второто Христово Доаѓање.

Над претставата на Богородица Аχειροποιητος е насликан Мандилионот, неракотворениот Христов образ. Проучувањето на Мандилионот во рамките на Вознесението укажува дека оваа

претстава има изразит есхатолошкиот карактер, затоа што го посочува Второто Христово Доаѓање. Желбата да се укаже на Страшниот суд довела до промени во самата композиција на Вознесението - наместо Богородица Оранта во центарот на композицијата, Богородица се претставува странично како застапничка, додека во центарот се претставува Мандилионот. За разлика од другите претстави на Вознесението каде Христос благословува со едната рака додека во другата држи затворен свиток, во сцените на Вознесението каде е претставен Мандилионот, Христос е насликан како благословува со двете раце, алутирајќи на Христос Судија. Несомнената желба да се укаже на Второто Христово Доаѓање преку претставата на Вознесението во Полошко, е потврдена и со испишаните зборови на свитокот на ангелот преземени од Делата Апостолски кои потсетуваат на Христовото ветување за неговото повторно доаѓање.

Од тука може да заклучиме дека неракотворените претстави во Полошко се во тесна врска со мавзолејскиот карактер на црквата. Претставата на Богородица Неракотворена во апсидата на црквата ја изразува застапничката моќ на Богородица Аχειροποιητος. Неракотворениот Христов образ пак, ја изразува надежта на покојникот во Христовата заштита при Неговото Второ Доаѓање.