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## IMAGE AND IMAGERY: REVISITING THE DEPICTIONS OF THE SEVEN SLAVIC SAINTS



**Keywords:** *Seven Slavic Saints (Holy Heptarithmoi), centric model, edition(s) in Revival, Council of Apostles, Council of the Seven Saints, Liturgy of the Seven Saints in Slavic, the Requiem of St. Nahum*

**Abstract:** *In this paper, we examine the conceptual essence of the iconographic arrangement of the Seven Slavic Saints (Holy Heptarithmoi). By analyzing the Apostolic Council scene as a conceptual basis for the so-called centric representation of the Seven Saints, we come to a conclusion that the creator has deliberately shaped the centric model in a way that alludes to the apostolic theme, and therefore a more suitable title for it would be the Council of the Seven Saints, which can be found in extended and reduced variants. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Revival has resulted in the creation of the so-called Dičo's edition of the scene, depicted in several variants, as well as of the new arrangement of the scene, which represents the Liturgy of the Seven Saints in Slavic. Our analysis of the scene of the Dormition of St. Nahum reveals that its iconography has been transformed into a requiem scene, with a marked tendency to depict the funeral of the late saint. In its extended scheme, the memorial service is conducted by the three Holy Slavic arch-priests in the presence of the other members of the Seven Saints and of some laymen. According to the few representations of the scene of the Dormition of S.S. Gorazd and Angelarius that have been found, it can be concluded that the last resting place of both saints is the town of Berat. All of these arrangements represent historic fictions with a clear-cut message. Having in mind their allegoric aspects, we can attribute them to the phenomenology of (post)Byzantine artistic imagery.*

### Introduction

When we summarize the numerous scholarly observations about the depictions of the Seven Slavic Saints during the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that have been made so far, we are under the impression that they have been “itemized” in five groups, each with a descriptive title. Consequently there exists no analytic systematization of their typological and icono-

graphic features. Using this conclusion as a starting point, and focusing on the so-called centric iconography, we attempted to analyze the basic model of the Seven Saints' representations and devise a systemized synthesis of the scene editions and their variants (the basic, the extended and the reduced) (cf. Serafimova 2013: 19-44). Concurrently, by using interpretive analysis of the analogous scenes, we conceived suitable titles for the scenes; namely, we proposed the headings *The Council of the Seven Saints* and *The Liturgy of the Seven Saints in Slavic*. In this article we build upon and elaborate our contemplation on this topic by including the Dormition scenes with the Seven Saints, as well as by giving a survey on the Apostolic Council scene as a conceptual pattern in establishing the centric scheme of the depictions of the Seven Saints.

### Historiographical Basis

The artistic display of the group portrayal of the Seven Slavic Saints, including the saint brothers Constantine-Cyril and Methodius and their five most eminent disciples (Clement, Nahum, Gorazd, Angelarius and Sava), originating from the stratigraphy of the Ohrid Archbishopric, has been the subject of many academic analyses that mainly fall in the domain of literature (Koneski 1978: 11-15; Mareš 1989: 101-109; Stojčevska-Antik et al. 1991: 168-172, 263, 278; KME 1995; Pop-Atanasov et al. 1997: 167-168, 341-344; Pentkovskiy 2013: 85-86, 93, 105-106) or medieval art history (Grozdanov 1979: 33-34; idem 1979/80: 161-170; idem 1983: 113-124; idem 1990: 159-176, 191-202; idem 1995: 80-81, 98-99, 130-131; Peyfuss Wien 1996<sup>2</sup>: pp. 256 (especially: 117-132); Ruseva/Lozanova 2003: 177-189; eadem 2011: 175-187; eadem 2012: 20-26). In the inquiry for a theological and literary basis of the painted narrative of the Seven Saints, which is apparently the starting point in research, scholars have



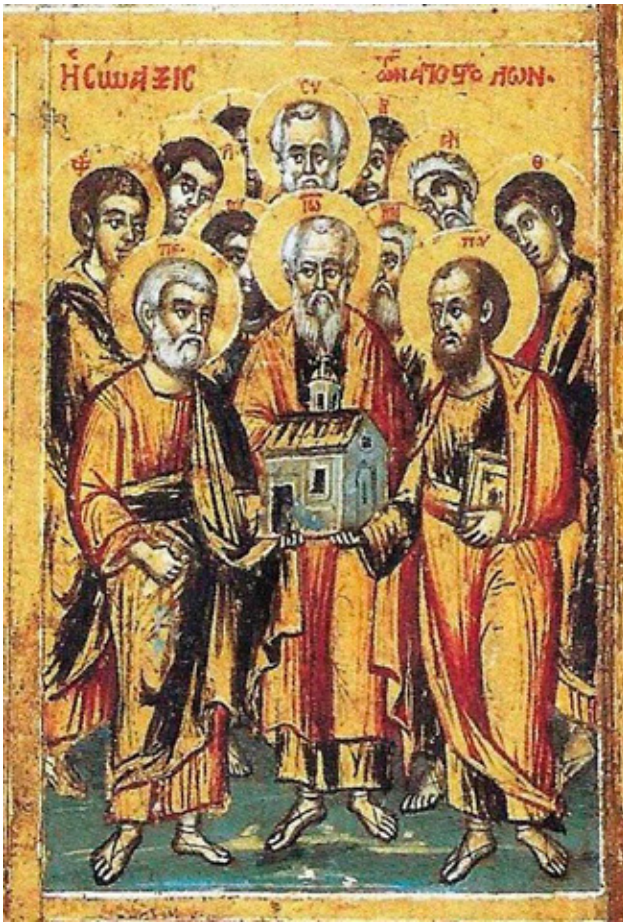
1. Council of the Seven Slavic Saints, narthex, Monastery of St. Nahum near Ohrid, 1806

concluded that the Seven Saints are mentioned by name as early as the *Brief Hagiography of St. Cyril*, the so-called *Cyril's Formation* (a transcript dating to the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century), and in the *Memorial Book (Pomenik) of Cyril the Philosopher* (middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) (Mareš 1989: 101-109). The phrase “Seven confessors and near-apostles” is first cited in a Chilandar manuscript, the *СѢШВИИѢ СѢ ПРѢСТАВЛѢНѢ ВИ ЗНАКОУ ПІСМВИИѢ* (16<sup>th</sup> century) (Ibidem: 105), while the oldest use of the term Holy Heptarithmoi is found in the Service of St. John Vladimir, composed by the well-educated Kozma Kitiski, the Metropolitan of Durrës and the Archbishop’s appointee. This Service was initially published in Venice (1690) and later reprinted in Moscopole (Ostrogorski 1970: 159-161). A feast day and service (June 17<sup>th</sup>) celebrating the Seven Saints was proclaimed in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The author of this Service is considered to be Gregarious Konstantinidi, the typographer and editor of the Moscopole printing house (Grozdanov 1983: 122).

The selected manuscript references clearly indicate that the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and especially the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is the period when the platform for the “group” cult of the Heptarithmoi saints was established. Scholarly analyses argue that the cult was part of a deliberate strategy to restore the old Slavic

cults of the Ohrid Archbishopric (Ibidem: 199-244). The strategy was the key link in the process of cultural, religious and educational growth promoted by the wise and well-educated Archbishop Joasaph (1719-1745), who enjoyed great authority among the people and was deeply supported by the wealthy trade and crafts strata (Ibidem: 199-228). As a result of his resourcefulness, diplomatic abilities and promotion of patronage, the Ohrid Archbishopric would reach its zenith for the last time before the Abolition in 1767. In order to implement ideas inspired by the activities of the Archbishop Prohor (+1550) (Idem 1991/92: 271-286), Joasaph established a printing house in his native town of Moscopole, a prosperous trade center at the time. *The Codex (Akoloutia)* of the saints of the Ohrid diocese, printed in Moscopole in 1740-1742 (Peyfuss 1996<sup>2</sup>: passim/especially: 117-132), played a vital role in promoting the new Archbishopric course.

The oldest preserved group portrait of the Seven Slavic Saints was incorporated in a complex and considered program (though somewhat lacking in compositional structure) found in the narthex of the Monastery of Slivnica (1612). The researchers of this early example provide arguments regarding the un-preserved manuscript from the so-called Sribec school from Slepče as the source from which the idea of por-



2. *Council of the Apostles, (fragment), Holy Mary with Christ and the Saints, icon, National museum at Korçë, 1773 (After E. Drakopoulou 2006: fig. 155)*



3. *Synaxis of the Apostles, icon, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, first half of 14th C. (After Byzantium 2004: fig. 108)*

traying the Seven Saints derived; there is a hypothesis that the manuscript origin is associated with the Slavic presence at Mount Athos (Popovska-Korobar 2010: 61-67 with bibliogr.). The oldest preserved scene of the centric specimen of the Seven Saints was found in the third zone of the north conch in the naos of the Monastery of Drača (1735) in the vicinity of Kraguevac, which was erected during the Austrian rule of Serbia; the penetration of this scene in the Metropolitan of Karlovac is presumably due to the Korçë-Moscopole origin of the anonymous painter(s) (Eadem 1993: 149-158; eadem 2005: 74-75).

Summarizing years of scientific observation regarding depictions of the Seven Saints in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which are mainly found in the Moscopole-Korçë-Elbasan-Ohrid region and whose authorship is chiefly associated with the painting families of Zographs from Korçë and Tsetiris (Çetiret) from Grabovo, C. Grozdanov (Grozdanov 1983: 113-124; idem 1990: 191-199) systematically divides the painted models into three groups: (1) centric composition with St. Methodius positioned in the center, holding a model of a church in his hands, (2) Dormition of St. Nahum with the Seven Saints, and (3) Dormition of St. Gorazd and St. Angelarius with the re-

mainder of the Seven Saints. On the other hand, surveying the representations of the Seven Saints from the Revival period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the works of Dičo Zograf and his son Avram Dičov, C. Grozdanov comes to the conclusion that there are two depicted variants: (1) The Seven Saints with St. Erasmus and St. John Vladimir, with a central position for Ss. Cyril and Methodius holding a scroll inscribed with the Cyrillic alphabet, and (2) The Seven Saints with St. Erasmus apparently performing the service of the Eucharist. The common denominator for all scenes is the change in Clement and Nahum's typological features, displayed in a baroque manner, atypical of the traditional saint portraits established in the medieval Ohrid ateliers. The changed features are explained by the influence of the eponymous scenes printed in the *Stematographia* by Hristofor Žefarovič (1741) and the influence of other graphic patterns which were current during the Revival period (Idem 1983: 228-231; Gergova 1993: 3-20).

#### *The Apostolic Council as a Conceptual Paradigm*

The compositional iconography of the Seven Saints, known as the centric Ohrid-Moscopole edition (fig. 1), is evidently connected with that of the



a



b



c



d

4. Council of the Seven Slavic Saints in: a) Monastery of Ardenitsa, 1744; b) St. George in Ljubofsk, 1782; c) The Annunciation in Kozare, 1806; d) The Holy Virgin in Berat, c. 1812 (After R. Ruseva 2012: fig. on pp. 20, 21-22)

Apostolic Council (fig. 2), as has previously been mentioned by scholars only in passing (Ruseva/Lozanova 2012: 22, 25). The connection between the exedra layout of the Seven Saints scenes, in itself an allusion to a council or tribune ambience (Freifrau von Thüngen 1994, 76-85),<sup>1</sup> and that of the apostles gathered together around a model of a church – a

<sup>1</sup> The same symbolism is also present in the extensive iconography of the Synaxis of the Archangels, cf. Serafimova 1999: 179-180; eadem 2005: 129-130 with bibliogr.

symbol of a spiritual temple (Davidov Temerinski 2009: 699-712) – is founded on the parallel between the missionary deeds and martyrdom of Ss. Cyril and Methodius and those of the apostles Peter and Paul, as well as on the parallel between the deeds of the disciples of Cyril and Methodius and those of the disciples (apostles) of Christ as missionaries of Christian doctrine. This link is strongly emphasized in the written hagiographic and liturgical sources (Koneski 1978: 10-11, 15; Stojčevska-Antik et al. 1991: 23-25, 61-62; Pop-Atanasov et al. 1997: 167-168, 341-



5. *Council of the Seven Slavic Saints (fragment), Holy Virgin with Christ and the saints, icon, National museum at Korçë, 1773 (After E. Drakopoulou 2006: fig. 156)*

344). According to the exegetes, the Apostolic Council, held in Jerusalem some twenty years after Christ (around 50 AD), with its biblical and historical basis (Acts: 15; Galatians: 2) and deep symbolism (Peterson 2009: passim/especially: 130-143), rounds off the Christian doctrine established by Christ's lessons to the apostles through the secret of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (John, 14: 16-17; Acts 2, 2:1-4).<sup>2</sup> Without exception, scholarly views hold that the destroyed Tower of Babel (Genesis, 11: 1-9) was rebuilt with the blessing of the Holy Spirit descended by God's will; the miracle of the descent of the Holy Spirit is seen through the power of languages, genuine and domicile, as the basic operative tool in the process from (dia)logue to (co)production.

Science has established and analyzed the domination in Western European art (compared to Byzan-

<sup>2</sup> Accomplishment of the Christ's lessons addressed to the apostles realized through their missionary activities is the basic narrative of the cycle of the Acts of the Apostles; cf. Davidov Temerinski 1995, 165-178 with bibliogr.

tine) of the Apostolic Council depiction, especially of the reduced scene version with the apostles Peter and Paul with a church model and its "derivate" - the legendary/apocryphal Embrace of Peter and Paul (Kessler 1987: 265-275; Chatzidakis 1988: 133-134; Davidov Temerinski 2002: 89-103 with bibliogr.; Miljković 2009: 109-113). The reasons for this "statistics" are easily explained. Namely, the apocryphal biographies of the two apostles conjoin their deeds and station them in Rome, as well as their martyrdom, thus establishing the heady status of their cult in the Roman Catholic pantheon. Therefore, the Ecumenical church had a reserved attitude regarding their depiction in the iconography mentioned above. Leaving aside the influence of the Cretan painters, this thesis, elaborated by the scholars, is supported by the fact that the infiltration of the scene of the Apostolic Council in the Slavic-Byzantine cultural space has been "detected" in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting the atmosphere during the Latin Kingdom and the Council of Lyons (13<sup>th</sup> century), prior to the Council of Ferrara-Florence



6. Council of the Seven Slavic Saints with St. Erasmus and St. John Vladimir; icon, Dičo Zograph, Museum of Macedonia, 1862 (Photo: V. Popovska-Korobar)

(first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century) (Vokotopoulos 1990: 95-96; Tatić Đurić 2004: 129-135; Davidov Temeriniski 2009: 702-205 with bibliogr.). On the other hand, the orthodox cultural space provides many ambient examples of a subtle and symbolic presence of the apostles Peter and Paul and/or with the model of a church in the Deesis, next to the Hetoimasia, by the entrance door, on the columns, even in the Communion of the Apostles (Tatić Đurić 2004: 130-131, 133; Davidov Temeriniski 2009: 705-712). Paradigmatic of the original Byzantine iconography of the Apostolic Council, reflecting the official Church position towards this council which is mentioned in the Holy Bible and seen as constitutive of Christianity (Peterson 2009: 76-81, 130-133), is the representative Constantinopolitan icon from the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, dated to the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 3), in the post-Lyon period during the strong anti-Latin campaign (Byzantium 2004: 189-190). Laid out in two rows, without the model of a church, the apostles of the so-called Pushkin icon are named by an inscription from the Gospel of Matthew (10:2-4),

meaning the omission of apostle Paul and accentuation of the role of apostle Peter, John the Theologian and Andrew, who are centrally positioned.

Regarding our rethinking of the ideological basis of the iconography of the Seven Saints, we believe that special emphasis must be placed on the increased depiction of the apostles Peter and Paul with a church model or embracing each other, in every church part (naos, iconostasis, narthex, exonarthex), during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by painters from the Korçë region; to this collection, we have to add the scene of apostles Peter and Paul with a model of a church placed in the south conch of the naos in the Monastery of St. Nahum (1806) (Popovska-Korobar 2005: fig. 2-4 on pp. 94-95). This trend continued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the frequent dedication of churches to the apostles Peter and Paul which, aside from dedications to all saints, is infrequent and foreign to the Orthodox tradition.

The abovementioned essential analogies regarding the role of the apostles in the founding of Christian doctrine within the macrosphere, and the role of the seven enlightened Slavic missionaries from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century within the microsphere related to the history of the Ohrid Archbishopric, support our conclusion that the so-called centric model must be recognized as the illustration of the Council of the Seven Saints. Using the language of literary interpretive theory, this depicted event, as well as many others in the Byzantine pictorial language (for example, the Liturgy of Archpriests), belongs to the so called *historic fiction genre* which falls, in a broader phenomenological sense, within the domain of artistic imagery.<sup>3</sup>

The hesitation in labeling the Apostolic Council, reflecting the political turbulences of the time, can also be seen in the illustrations of the Council of the Seven Saints executed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the conceptual framework of the scene first appeared. Namely, according to the references, the general scenic inscription “holy apostles” accompanied by the personal names of the saints prevails on the Byzantine depictions of the Apostolic Council. On the other hand, in the artistic production of the painting families Zograph from Korçë and Tsetiris (Çetiret) from Grabovo, the Seven Saints are labeled by the general inscription ΟΙ ΑΓΙΟΙ ΕΠΙΤΑΥΘΟΜΟΙ and by separate designation given above each saint (Ruseva/Lozanova 2003: 180, 182, 184; eadem 2012: 22, 24). The Drača scene contains a mention of the “holy teach-

<sup>3</sup> From the extensive bibliography regarding the basic principles of imagery in arts which is a semiotic phenomenon present since Ancient times (cf. Battistini 2005: passim), in context of our analysis we select: Lanzi 2004: 56-61; Pictorial Cultures 2011: 13-33.



7. S.s. Cyril and Matodius, St. Clement, St. Nahum and St. John Vladimir, Monastery of Bigorski, 1871



8. S.s. Cyril and Methodius, St. Clement and St. Erasmus, Holy Virgin of Kamesko, 1964 (Photo: V. Popovska-Korobar)

ers”, but the authenticity of the inscription is questionable due to the detection of latter-day retouches (Grozdanov 1983: 120, fig. 35).

We note a few more arguments in support of labeling the centric model as the Council of the Seven Saints. Namely, on the scroll of St. John Kukuzel, who is added to the Council of the Seven Saints in Ardenitza (1744) (fig. 4, a) (Ruseva/Lozanova 2011: 177-185), the phrase ΑΝΘΘΕΝ ΟΙ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΑΕ is cited, which is mentioned several times in the psalms and is considered an allusion to the apostolic nomenclature (Drandakis 1999: 197-198). Beside its iconographic similarity, we believe that the icon from 1773 in the Korçë National Museum attributed to Constantine Zograph from Korçë (Drakopoulou 2006: 154-156, N°52, fig. on pp. 155-157) provides an additional argument in support of our thesis of the painters’ awareness regarding the connection between the centric design of the Seven Saints and the

Apostolic Council. The enthroned Holy Virgin with Christ is rendered in the central panel of this icon. She is surrounded by twelve scenes in five zones; the scenes of the Archangels and the Apostolic Council depicted on the margin are set as counterparts. On the same icon, in the middle of the bottom portion is the Council of Seven Saints (fig. 5) with St. Nahum in a central position. In the foreground of the scene are St. Cyril (left) and St. Clement (right), both dressed in sakkos, holding a model of a church. The portrait of St. Methodius is given behind St. Cyril, while the monks St. Sava and St. Angelarius are placed on the right side, with St. Gorazd at the far end of the left rim. The central depiction of St. Nahum is exceptional and must be associated with the requests from the monk brotherhood of the Metropolitan church in Korçë, where this icon originated. In this context, supporting our thesis of a conceptual connection between the Council of the Seven Saints with that of the



9. *St. Clement, St. Nahum and St. Erasmus, icon, end of 19th C.*  
(Photo: I. Tričkovska)

Apostles, the miniature medallion with the Council of the Seven Saints must be mentioned (about 1812) (fig. 4, d). This tondo-icon, attributed to John Tsetiris from Grabovo, is set directly below the despotic icon of the Apostolic Council on the iconostasis of the Church of the Dormition of Holy Virgin in Berat (Ruseva/Lozanova 2012: 25). On the same iconostasis, below the icon of the Dormition of St. Gorazd and St. Angelarius, a small miniature of St. Clement of Ohrid is found, and below the Three Holy Hierarchs is a medallion of St. Nahum.

#### *The Basic Model of Seven Saints Depiction and Its Derivatives*

The iconography of the basic model of the Council of the Seven Saints, founded on the idea of the Apostolic Council, is characterized by exedric (semicircular) placement of the figures (at times pyramidal, due to the wall configuration) with St. Methodius in the central position laying his palm on a church model. St. Cyril (left) and St. Clement (right) support the same model with one hand. The three saints are rendered as archpriests, while the remaining four, whose

positions in the background vary, are represented as monks. According to the accessible data, every 18<sup>th</sup> century example of this compositional model is directly or indirectly (by attribution) connected to the painting family Zograph from Korçë - Constantine and Athanasius (fig. 4, a), Constantine and his son Trpo (fig. 4, b) and Trpo Zograph (fig. 1). Created by this painting group, in almost uniform iconography (except the previously mentioned Korçë icon), the scene is given five wall and two icon visualizations.<sup>4</sup> Using the same basic model, some divergences and hesitation are detected in the works of the Tsetiris (Çetiret) family from Grabovo (Popa 1961: 105-120; Muka 1999: passim). Three scenes of the Council of the Seven Saints are attributed to John, the most renowned painter in the Tsetiris family atelier (Jovanović 1965: 199-220). In chronological order, the first was painted in collaboration with his brother George (St. Nicholas in Vanaj, 1797), the second with the help of his son Nahum (Annunciation in Kozare, 1806), and the third is the abovementioned miniature tondo on the iconostasis of the Dormition church in Berat (about 1812) (Ruseva/Lozanova 2012: 23-26) (fig. 4,

c-d). Although the compositional pattern remains unchanged, there are some variations which are apparent in the central position of St. Clement, the substitution of St. Sava with St. Modest (Vanaj), and in the radical refashioning of St. Clement's face (Kozle). The summary of the "ambient life" of what we called a basic model indicates that it is most usually placed on the western wall of the naos next to the entrance, thus emphasizing the apotropaic function of the depicted saints, much like that of Ss. Peter and Paul. Researchers have also noted that the Council is often "accompanied" by St. John Vladimir and the new martyr St. Nicodim of Elbasan/Barat, both painted

<sup>4</sup> For analyses of the scene depicted in St. Nicholas in Drača (1735), in The Holy Virgin in Ardenitza (1744), in Ss. Peter and Paul in Vithkuq (1764), in St. George in Ljubofsk (1782), and in The Holy Archangels of the Monastery of St. Nahum near Ohrid (1806), as well as that depicted on the icon exhibited in the Gallery in Tirana and the icon exhibited in the Museum in Korçë (1773), see: *Ibid*, 21-23 (with older bibliography); Grozdanov 1995: 130-131; Popovska-Korobar 2005: 74, 95-97.





10. *Liturgy of the Seven Saints in Old Church Slavonic, St. George in Struga, 1874 (Photo: V. Popovska-Korobar)*

nearby.<sup>5</sup> It should be stressed that the most complex program where the Council of the Seven Saints is incorporated is that of the narthex of the Monastery of St. Nahum near Ohrid (Grozdanov 1995: 130-134). It seems that the initiation of the extended model designed during the Revival can be detected in the saints (especially in the figure of St. John Vladimir) added near the Council of the Seven Saints in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The new, Revival edition of the Council of the Seven Saints, extended with St. John Vladimir and St. Erasmus of Lychnidos (Grozdanov 1990: 171-176; Idem 1983: 138-145, 238-242), where the key difference from the basic scheme consists in replacing the model of a church with a Cyrillic alphabet scroll, is associated with the prolific painter Dičo Zograph and reflects the new social and nationalistic tendencies (Grozdanov 1990: 159-170; Balabanov 1970: 44-63). According to current knowledge, the paradigmatic specimen adapted to the new age is the icon painted by Dičo in 1862 (**fig. 6**), now shown in the Museum of Macedonia, commissioned by the wealthy Ohrid family Robe(vi), specifically by Fotiana and her husband Tase Stefanov Robe (Popovska-Korobar 2004: 332, cat. no. 198). The icon has been stained by retouches in the inscription, but the text is partially readable: **СТЪ ПРОСВЕТИТЕЛІ И**

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, 26. Referring to the novelties in the fresco painting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, K. Kallamata mentioned the portraits of Cyril and Methodius, of Clement and Nahum and of John Vladimir, cf. Kallamata 2003: 266-270.

**УЧЫТЕЛИ СЛАВЯНСКИ ЕПИСКОПИ МОРАВСКЪ (КЪРНАЛЪ И МЕΘΟΔΙΗ(...))** It is known that Dičo Zograph was the first to attach the scroll with the Cyrillic alphabet between the figures of Ss. Cyril and Methodius on the icon completed in 1861 for the burned Church of the Holy Virgin in Skopje (Balabanov 1970: 44-45). It is also known that he made use of illustrations from the alphabet primer printed in Moscow (1844) and the graphics commissioned by Nayden Ivanov in Belgrade (1858), where Ss. Cyril and Methodius are depicted holding a scroll with Slavic letters (Grozdanov 1990: 198).

Indicating the popularity of the Revival edition of the Seven Saints are the numerous preserved examples, while the identically designed icon from the Church of the Holy Virgin of Kamensko in Ohrid, dated to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, testifies to its long existence. Also created during the same period were icons with a reduced iconography of the Council of the Seven Saints, abridged to a “quote” of the central figures, i.e. St. Clement (central), St. Cyril (to the left, always dark-haired) and St. Methodius (right), as well as a scroll inscribed with the Cyrillic alphabet.

The reduced Revival model of the Council of the Seven Saints is also found in the fresco paintings in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is characterized by a return to the free frontal arrangement (without composition) of the Seven Saints from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Such an example is found in the porch of the Monastery of Bigorski (1871), created by Vasil Ginovski (**fig. 7**). In this representation, the figures of Ss. Methodius and Cyril holding the scroll are framed



11. *Liturgy of the Seven Saints and St. Erasmus in Old Church Slavonic, Holy Immaculate of Kičevo, 1880 (Photo: J. Spahiu)*

together by a triple arch, while the rest of the participants of the thematic unit – St. Clement, St. Nahum and St. John Vladimir – are framed separately in a vaulted colonnade.<sup>6</sup> In the upper portion, above Ss. Cyril and Methodius, there is an inscription on the cartouche which is nearly identical to that of the icon painted by Dičo in 1862: *СТЪ ПРОСВЕТИТЕЛИ И УЧИТЕЛИ СЛАВЯНСКИ СПЪКН МОРАВСКИ КИРИЛЪ И МЕТОДИЈ*

The representation of Ss. Cyril, Methodius, Clement and Erasmus (**fig. 8**) in the deaconicon of the Church of the Holy Virgin of Kamensko in Ohrid, painted by Dičo Zograph in 1864 (with help of his sons Avram and Spyridon), has to be seen as a reflection of the reduced Revival model where the images of monks are omitted due to the position in the altar space (Grozdanov 1990: 183-185; Grozdanova-Kocevski 2010: 51-54). Between Cyril and Methodius there is a written text: *БЛЪГЪРСКИ ПРОСВЕТИТЕЛИ / ТИЖЕ НАПИСАЕ*

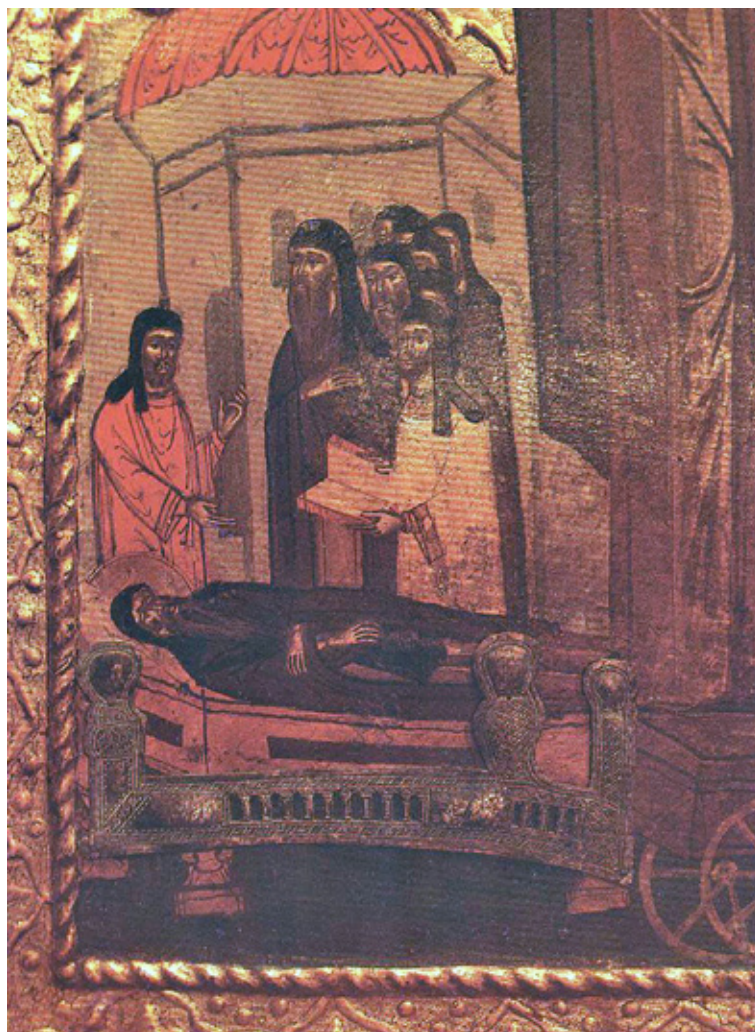
<sup>6</sup> The unit is amplified with the figures of St. Stephan of Dečani and duke (king) Lazar: Nikolovski 1994: 122. For the impacts of Žefarovič on the Ginovski's work, see: Grozdanov 2004: 198-200.

*БЪКВН БЛЪГЪР / ПРАЗНИКЪ МАЙА ТЪ*, which is indicative of the religious and political mood (seen as an expression of “the idea of Pan-Slavism”, cf. *Ibid.*, n. 146) and the attitude of the contributors whose names are listed in the corresponding inscription.

Starting at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and growing in number during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rudimentary iconography of the Seven Saints can be recognized in several icons. An early example is the icon from the Monastery of Bigorski with the images of St. John Vladimir, St. Nahum and St. Clement (end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) (Trichkovska 1994: 188, fig. XIX). Possible participants in this restrictive model are the frontal figures of St. Clement, St. Nahum, St. Erasmus and St. John Vladimir, or some selection of three. The obligatory presence of St. John Vladimir in the selection is interpreted as a reflection of the rising cult of St. John Vladimir (Grozdanov 2004: 225-235). Such an example is the unpublished icon depicting St. Clement, St. Nahum, St. Erasmus and St. John Vladimir (52, 7 x 44 x 2, 7) (**fig. 9**). The icon is evidenced (reg. no. 2597) in the Central Registry of the National Conservation Center. The file notes

that the icon originates from the Church of the Holy Virgin Čelnica in Ohrid and that “below the surface exists an older layer of a Russian icon” (Serafimova 2013: 31-31, fig. 9). According to the preliminary comparative observations regarding the stylistic components, particularly its retrospective Baroque manner, we believe the icon should be dated to the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The second Revival edition of the basic model of the Council of the Seven Saints becomes current in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is founded on rearrangements of Dičo’s pattern. Scholars have noted this scene in the Church of St. George in Struga (1875) (**fig. 10**), the work of the painter brothers Makarievi (Hristo, Isak and Kosma) from Galičnik; in the Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin in Drslajca (1875), the first joint work by the brothers Avram and Spyridon (Spire) Dičov after the death of their father; later on in the Church of St. Nicholas in Vevčani (1879), painted by Avram Dičov; and in the Church of the Holy Immaculate of Kičevo (1880) (Grozdanov 2004: 31-53 (fig. on p.47), 106-107 (fig. 6), 223-224 (fig. on p.223), 236). In the referenced literature there are brief descriptions of all the scenes, which are interconnected and associated with the most narrative one, depicted in the Church of the Holy Immaculate of Kičevo. There is also a brief scholarly reference about “the icon from Zrnovce that has a liturgical-eucharistic character, like the scene in the Church of the Holy Immaculate of Kičevo” (Grozdanov 2004: 51; Cvetkovski 2010: 216). In our opinion, all of the listed examples represent the liturgical service, officiated by St. Clement and accompanied by Ss. Cyril and Methodius, who constitute the iconographic core of this model. We can also remark that, with the exception of the three mentioned above, the selection of the archpriests varies. In this regard, an interesting example is that from Vevčani, where St. Angelarius is left out and replaced by St. Erasmus so that the number of seven figures is met. A very important detail which defines the scenic content is the scroll inscribed with the Cyrillic alphabet that is displayed on (or in front of) the Holy Table where the liturgical items and the mitras of the holy brothers are placed. Thus, it can be concluded that this scene represents the Liturgy of the Seven Saints in the Slavic language. In the oldest preserved variant of this model, found in the Struga church (**fig. 10**), St. Gorazd (set right), the successor of St. Methodius after his death, is depicted as an officiating bishop. The most extended iconography of this model, depicted



12. *Requiem of St. Nahum (fragment), icon of St. Nahum, Holy Savior in Skopje, end of 17th C. (After V. Popovska-Korobar 2011: fig. 2)*

in the Church of the Holy Immaculate of Kičevo (**fig. 11**) and thoroughly analyzed by scholars, displays a liturgical service led by the archpriests Clement, Methodius and Cyril (set as described above) and co-officiated by St. Erasmus (right) and St. Sava (left), while the monks Angelarius (left) and Gorazd (right) are intentionally placed behind, as mere attendees of the service. Moreover, the figure of St. Nahum, set entirely lateral, with the name inscribed above, seems like a later addition to the left group. In the upper register of the Holy Immaculate of Kičevo, unlike the Struga scene where Christ was painted, there is a visualization of the Holy Trinity, accentuating the celestial blessings for the Holy Service held in Slavic, the capital achievement of Ss. Cyril and Methodius’ mission, implemented through the history of the Ohrid Archbishopric, which is here symbolized by the image of St. Clement. The figure of St. Erasmus is a personification of the ancient Christian roots of the Ohrid (Lychnidos) area, alluding to the mission of the apostle Paul.



13. *Requiem of St. Nahum (fragment), icon of S.S. Clement and Nahum, Monastery of St. Nahum near Ohrid, 1711 (After C. Grozdanov 1983: fig. XV)*

#### *Dormition Scenes with the Seven Saints*

The Dormition of St. Nahum with the Seven Saints has also been the subject of scholarly interest (Grozdanov 1990: 165-166; Idem 1994: 98-99). To present day, several examples in different techniques have been published (Popovska-Korobar 2011: 189-190, n. 10 with bibliogr.), of which the oldest are two miniature scenes of Nahum's Dormition, one depicted at the foot of the icon of St. Nahum in the Church of the Holy Savior in Skopje (end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) (**fig. 12**), and the other on the icon representing Ss. Clement and Nahum (1711) placed on the iconostasis in the Monastery of St. Nahum, signed by the painter, the hieromonk Constantine (**fig. 13**). Analyzing the icon from Skopje, V. Popovska-Korobar justifies the compositional parallels with the Ohrid one. She also notes the requiem atmosphere in all the equivalent settings of the preserved scenes.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have placed spe-

<sup>7</sup> Taking into consideration the stylistic-artistic analogies between the icon from Skopje and the two icons from the church in Pojan (in the Fier region) in Albania, shown

cial emphasis on the influence of the etchings made by Hristofor Žefarovič (1743) on the images of the Dormition scene throughout the Balkans (Grozdanov 1991: 217-220; Čokrevska-Filip 2003: 16-17). Although the small dimensions of the scenes make the evaluation of compositional details difficult, some common features can be established: (1) the Dormition concept of the scheme, (2) an interior ambience, (3) at least one bishop marked with a halo and (4) a figure holding a thurible with incense. In this sense, the scene on the icon from the Church of the Holy Savior in Skopje is an exceptional example due to the figural group which is comprised solely of monks with hoods parting from the deceased Nahum (Popovska-Korobar 2011: 188). With the above-mentioned in mind, we believe that the archetypal concept of the specific image of the Dormition of St. Nahum is a well thought-out representation of his requiem based on the data from the Second Hagiography of St. Nahum, a text known from its Greek transcript from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, while the original dates from the end of

the 13<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Melovski 1996: 88-89)<sup>8</sup>.

The tendency to illustrate the requiem of St. Nahum in the presence of the Seven Saints is clearly visible in the unique fresco painting of this scene (1800) in the parekklesion of St. Nahum in the eponymous monastery (**fig. 14**).<sup>9</sup> Each of the Seven Saints can be identified by their labeled doubles from the younger scene of the Council of the Seven Saints (1806), painted in the neighboring church narthex (Grozdanov 1990: 162-163). This indicates that Trpo

in the Korçë Museum, as well as the small icon of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin from the Museum of Macedonia, the author believes the icon from the Holy Savior in Skopje is the oldest composition of a mass for the dead for the saint, cf. Popovska-Korobar 2011: 189-193.

<sup>8</sup> In the hagiography of St. Nahum there is an explicit statement that "the fare-well office and lying in the grave of the blissful holy monk Nahum" were performed in the presence of St. Clement.

<sup>9</sup> The inscription precisely notes that "the construction of the parekklesion was completed on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1799, and the painting was finished on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1800."



14. *Requiem of St. Nahum with the Seven Saints, parekklesion, Monastery of St. Nahum near Ohrid, 1800*

Zograph from Korçë, portraying them in the narthex, took the typological marks of the saints directly from the Dormition scene in the parekklesion. Analyzing the position of each of the Seven Saints in the context of St. Nahum's funeral service, we observe the three archpriests co-officiating the parting liturgy (from left to centre): St. Methodius, the only one to be dressed in sakkos with the status crutch; St. Cyril, dressed in phelonion and holding a book; and St. Clement, wearing a bishop's omophorion. The deacon positioned in the center of the scene, identified as the eighth of the *Holy Heptarithmoi*, St. Laurentius, censes the deceased. From the many laymen present on both sides of the scene, our attention is drawn to the figure that is foregrounded on the right (a counterpart to St. Methodius), which completes the ascending stair-like sequence of saints marked with halos. He wears a luxurious gown with collar and fur lining. He also has a noblemen's hat and a stick in his left hand, wiping the tears with his right. He is accompanied by two figures with similar but more modest attire and hats. The rest of the group in the right-hand background seems to be made up of female figures. According to the information revealed in the donor's inscription in the parekklesion (Ibid., 160), we believe that this figure might be a portrait of the "most honest sir Nahum Yoanisov, a Moscopole steward, whose donation helped in paint-

ing the dome." In favor of our hypothesis is the fact that the Moscopole donor is the namesake of St. Nahum the Wonderworker. The scene of the Requiem of St. Nahum with the Eight Saints and the donor is an evident example of the application of the conceptual approach in displaying the fictional event which is applied in all pictorial creations (in models and their variants) representing the Seven Saints.

All that has been stated above points to the conclusion that the depiction of St. Nahum's death is actually a Dormition scene, specifically designed to display the funeral liturgy for the deceased. Hence, we are of the opinion that this scene, with its content intentionally created by the author, should be named the "Requiem of St. Nahum". The sublimated presentation of the miniature scene on the icon of St. Nahum from the Church of the Holy Savior in Skopje supports the thesis of its earliest appearance. Because of its monastic and didactic symbolism, it has to be considered an exception. The other scenes portray the fictional event with a clear-cut aim.

Scholars have noted one more pictorial edition of the Seven Saints preserved in three icons, of which two are documented - one created by the painter John Tsetiri (1812) (fig. 15) and the other, similar to the first, painted by Adam Hristov (1873) from Samarina. These depictions with Greek inscriptions, illus-



15. Dormition of S.s. Gorazd and Angelarius in Berat, Holy Virgin in Berat, c. 1812 (After Drishti - Cika 2003: fig. 35 on p. 106)

trate the Dormition of Ss. Gorazd and Angelarius in the town of Berat (Grozdanov 1990: 194-195; Muka 2003: 253-254, fig. 2). Both have been subject to lapidary summaries from the scholars: there has been no detailed reading of the inscriptions and analysis of the iconographic components, including the episode with the veiled figure in motion, set in the lower left angle. Unfortunately, viewing the icons from the published illustrations does not allow us an analysis that will supplement current learning.

The fortress in the town of Berat divides the icons in two zones. In the hilly mid-town section, surrounded by profane buildings with a church centrally amid them, the bodies of the two monks are laid to rest. In the older icon the bodies are positioned in the upper register, while in the later they are in the lower register. The remaining five from the group of the Seven Saints, with a centrally positioned St. Methodius, are

grouped frontally in the upper register. According to scholars, the scene is based on a legend current in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which describes the missionary acts of Ss. Gorazd and Angelarius as well as their death in the region of Berat. Analyzing the iconography of these examples, we believe that the scene represents a special arrangement, where the Seven Saints are an obligatory part of the Dormition ritual and Berat is highlighted as the town where Ss. Gorazd and Angelarius are buried.

### Conclusion

The summarized analyses of the depictions of the Seven Slavic Saints suggest that the compositional structure, descriptively named 'the centric model', established by the church and cultural authorities in the Ohrid-Moscopol region, actually represents the Council of the Seven Saints, a picture of a historical fiction conceptually based on the symbolism/iconography of the Council of the Apostles.<sup>10</sup> Within this pictorial concept we can infer the basic model, which undoubtedly appeared and was spread as a result of the efforts of Joasaph, the Archbishop of Ohrid, and which represents a thought-out tool in the strategy of the Slavic cults renewal in the Archbishopric of Ohrid. This model represents material evidence of the new wave of enlightenment that would be imbued with the characteristics of the social Revival during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In spite of the variations of the basic model during the 18<sup>th</sup> century that have been found, the core of the scene always consists of Methodius, Cyril and Clement, gathered together around a model of a church, which is a symbol of a spiritual temple as well as an allusion to the Church seat of Ohrid. The variations of the basic model are influenced by the cultural climate and by the place of commission. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Revival has resulted in two editions of the basic model. One of them, called the Dičo's edition, represents an extended iconography of the Council of the Seven Saints, including St. Erasmus and St. John Vladimir. The ideological centre of this edited scheme is the figure of St. Clement and the scroll with the Slavic alphabet - a symbol of belonging to the entity. In the

<sup>10</sup> In the last phase of the "life" of this model, it returns into the same arrangement of the so-called graphic edition, emphasizing the council concept of the Seven Saints. For the lithography from the village Evla in Prespa (1869) showing St. Nahum as archpriest, see: cf. Grozdanov 2004: 276-280.

second edition, the Dičo's model receives a new arrangement in the scene of the Liturgy of the Seven Saints in Slavic.

A suitable name for the scene depicting the Dormition of St. Nahum would be *the Requiem of St. Nahum*. This scene, painted as an episode on the icon of St. Nahum in the church of the Holy Savoir in Skopje, possesses a sublimated scheme and a monastic-didactic symbolism. All the other preserved specimens belong to the group of the pictorial historic fictions, including the most extensive one, found in the parekklosion of the Monastery of St. Nahum, which incorporates the Seven Saints, the deacon St. Lauren-

tius (?) and the donor Nahum Yoanisov (?) with his escort. The most specific arrangement of the Seven Saints can be found in the scene of the Dormition of the S.S. Gorazd and Angelarius, which clearly points to the town of Berat as a resting/burial place of these saints.

In summary, we may conclude that the painted representations of the Seven Saints exhibit elaborate historic fictions by means of thought-out messages. They lucidly illustrate the historic stratigraphy of the Ohrid Archbishopric and the strategy of the Church during the so-called Revival period.

Анета СЕРАФИМОВА

## ИЗГЛЕД И ОДРАЗ: ПРОМИСЛУВАЊЕ НА СЛИКОВНОСТА НА СЕДМОЧИСЛЕНИЦИТЕ

*Резиме*

Заокружените анализи на групниот портрет на седумтемина словенски светители укажуваат на тоа дека композициската структура описно нарекувана центричен модел во охридско-москополска редакција, претставува Седмочисленички собор, слика на историска фикција идејно и иконографски базирана на Апостолскиот собор. Во овој ликовен концепт треба да се препознае базичниот модел чијашто појавност и дисперзија треба да се поврзе со охридскиот архиепископ Јоасаф и претставува обмислена алатка во стратегијата за возобнова на старите словенски култови на Охридската архиепископија. Тој е материјален доказ на новиот просветителски бран којшто во XIX век ќе добие преродбенски обележја.

Во текот на XVIII век во базичниот модел се согледани мали варирања при што негова константа/фокус се Методиј, Кирил и Климент, како и макетата на црква која симболизира духовен храм, но претставува и алузија на охридската катедра. Варирањата на овој модел биле условени од културната клима каде што настанувале нарчките. Во XIX век охридско-москополската редакција на основниот модел добива две нови редакции исходувани од преродбенската клима. Едната, наречена Дичова редакција, претставува проширена иконографија на Седмочисленичкиот собор со вклучување на св. Еразмо и св. Јован Владимир.

Идеен центар на овој редактиран модел е св. Климент и свитокот со словенската азбука - симбол на писмото/јазикот како духовен храм. Во втората преродбенска редакција, таканаречениот Дичов модел добива нов аранжман во сцената Литургија на Седмочислениците на словенски јазик.

Сцената на која е претставен одарот на св. Наум треба да се именува како Опело на св. Наум. Оваа сцена насликана како епизода на Наумовата икона од скопската црква Св. Спас има сублимирана форма и монашко-дидактичка симболика. Сите останати сцени припаѓаат на групата пикторални историски фикции меѓу кои најекстензивна е сидната слика на Опелото на св. Наум во Наумовиот манастир во која се вклучени Седмочислениците, законот св. Лаврентиј (?) и ктиторот Наум Јоанисов (?) со придружба. Најспецифичен аранжман седмочисленичката група има во сцената која го претставува успението на светите Горазд и Ангелариј во која е нагласен Берат како место на упокоение/погребение на светителите.

Резимирајќи ги нашите согледби констатираме дека Седмочисленичките слики претставуваат обмислани историски фикции со јасна порака. Во нив е втисната историската стратиграфија на Охридската архиепископија и е проектиран преродбенскиот курс како стратешка црковна насока на XIX век.

## ABBREVIATIONS

БАН: Българска академия на науките

Δελτίον ΧΑΕ: Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας

DOP: Dumbarton Oaks Papers

РЗСЗК: Републички завод за заштита на спомениците

САНУ: Српска академија наука и уметности

Саопштења: Саопштења Републичког завода за заштиту споменика културе Србије

ЗМСЛУ/ЗЛУ: Зборник Матице српске за ликовне уметности

ЗРВИ: Зборник радова Византолошког института

ЗСММ: Зборник за средновековна уметност на Музејот на Македонија

МАНУ: Македонска академија на науките и уметностите

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