

Ana POPOVA



THE REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST AS THE GREAT ARCHPRIEST AND KING IN THE DECORATION OF ST. GEORGES AT POLOŠKO

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In the 14th century Byzantine art appeared many new iconographical solutions. Inspired by the liturgy, artists were put in front of a difficult task to represent spiritual realities with visual means. Such a great iconographic novelty is the depiction of Christ as a Great Archpriest and King. In St. Georges at Pološko the idea of Christ as an ideal Archpriest and King is developed in the scene of the Communion of the Apostles as well as in the upper parts of the church. This paper discusses the meaning of their representation in the decoration of the church and its liturgical background.

The church of Pološko, decorated between 1343-45, has a rich fresco-decoration¹. In the nave of the church are preserved the Feast Cycle and the Cycle of the Passion of the Christ as well as twenty-nine figures of isolated saints. The upper parts of the church are decorated with twenty-four Old Testament figures. In the sanctuary, the bishops are officiating under the image of the Virgin Orant in the conch of the apse. The Communion of the Apostles, divided into two scenes, is located in the middle register of the lateral walls².

¹ For the monument, see on the last place: A. Popova, *The Acheiropoietos Images in St. Georges at Pološko*, Патримониум.МК, 11, Скопје 2013, 157-164, with previous bibliography.

² On the scene of the Communion of the Apostles, see: K. Wessel, *Abendmahl und Apostel kommunion*, Recklinghausen 1946, H. Schulz, *Die byzantinische Liturgie*, Trèves 1980, 170, Ch. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*, London 1982, 216, Sh. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, Seattle-London 1999, 48-67. From the eleventh and especially from the twelfth century, this scene almost regularly occupies the second register of the apse, immediately following the image of the Virgin. The only exceptions are found in a small group of monuments where, because of

the Communion with the bread is to be found on the north wall (H ME)/ΤΑΔΟΧ | C, fig. 1). Christ, dressed in episcopal *sakkos* and royal *loros* is standing behind an altar topped with a ciborium. He is distributing bread to the six apostles approaching him in a procession led by the apostle Peter³. Behind Christ, a deacon angel holds a golden *rhypidion* marked with a seraph. The last apostle, the only one represented without a halo is turned in an opposite direction. Shown in profile, he is vomiting the Eucharistic bread⁴. The words of Christ are also inscribed on the fresco painting (Matthew XXVI, 26-28):

ΛΑΒΕΤΕ | ΦΑ | ΓΕΤΕ ΤΟΥ | ΤΟ ΕΣΤΗΝ | ΤΟ
CO | ΜΑ | ΜΟΥ

*Take and eat this is my body...*⁵

the small size of the central apse, the Communion of the Apostles, divided in two scenes, is depicted in the neighbouring areas of the apse. See for example the Communion of the Apostles in the church of Virgin Ljeviška or Saint Nicolas Orphanos, Д. Панић, Г. Бабић, *Богородица Љевушка*, Београд 1975, fig. 9, Ch. Bakirtzis, éd, *Ayios-Nikolaos Orphanos. The Wall Paintings*, Athens 2003, 3. This also explains why the Communion of the Apostles in St. Georges at Pološko is depicted on the lateral walls of the sanctuary.

³ Next to each apostle is inscribed the first letter of his name. Only the name of Judas is not indicated.

⁴ For this representation of Judas in the Communion of the Apostles in St. Georges at Pološko, see: A. Popova, *La Représentation de Judas dans l'église de Saint-Georges de Pološko*, Патримониум.МК 10, Скопје 2012, 130-148.

⁵ This text is frequently a part of the Communion of the Apostles, like in Studenica, Г. Бабић, *Краљева црква у Студеници*, Београд 1987, 114, Fig. VIII, IX, or the Church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid, Д. Корнаков, *По конзерваторските работи во црквата Св. Богородица Перивлептос (Св. Климент) во Охрид*, Културно наследство 2, Скопје 1961, 75-76, fig. 4, П.



Fig. 1 The Communion of the Apostles with the bread, St. George at Pološko

The Communion with the wine is depicted on the south wall (Η ΜΕΤΑΛΙΨΗΣ, fig.2). Christ in imperial and hierarchical vestments is distributing the communion with the wine to the apostle John, followed by five other apostles. Behind Christ an angel deacon is holding a lighted candle in his hands⁶.

The inscription on the scene reads (Matthew XXVI, 26-28):

Миљковиќ-Пепек, *Делото на зографите Михаило и Еутимиј*, Скопје 1967, fig. XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL, XLI.

⁶ Usually the angels in the Communion of the Apostles hold rhipidia. Angels holding candles, except for Pološko, are depicted in St. Nicetas and in Ravanica. П. Миљковиќ-Пепек, op. cit., fig. 24, CXII, G. Millet, A. Frolow, *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie: (Serbie, Macédoine, Monténégro)*, vol. 3, Paris 1962, pl. 31/3-4, Т. Стародубцев, *Причешће апостола у Раваници*, Зограф 24, Београд 1995, 58, fig. 5.

ΠΙΕΤΕ ΕΞ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΤΕΣ | ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΣΤΙΝ
ΤΟ ΕΜΑ ΜΟΥ

Drink ye all, for this is my blood ...

In the background of the both scenes of the Communion of the Apostles there are architectural elements⁷.

As mentioned above, in St. Georges at Pološko Christ wears the episcopal *sakkos* and in the same time the royal *loros*, thus representing both as a Great Archpriest and King.

The image of Christ the Great Archpriest appears in the fourteenth century representations of the Com-

⁷ Architectural elements are added to the scene from the thirteenth century. For the role of architectural decoration, see: T. Velmans, *Le rôle du décor architectural et la représentation de l'espace dans la peinture des Paléologues*, CahArch 14, Paris 1964, 183-216, А. Стојаковић, *Четврта димензија у сликарству*, ЗЛУ 26, Београд 1990, 1-11.



Fig. 2 The Communion of the Apostles with the wine, St. George at Pološko

munion of the Apostles⁸. Christ as Great Archpriest offers the communion in St. Nicetas at Čučer (1316-1317/18)⁹, in St. Nicolas Orphanos in Thessaloniki

⁸ The image of the Christ Priest appears in Byzantine art from the eleventh century. In this period, Christ was represented only with a tonsure and a short beard. For the representation of Christ with tonsure, see: А. М Лидов, *Христос-священник» в иконографических программах XI–XII веков*, Византийский временник 55 (80), Москва 1994, idem, *Образ “Христа-архиерея” в иконографической программе Софии Охридской*, Византия и Русь. Москва 1989, 65-90; idem, *Christ as Priest in Byzantine Church Decoration of the 11th and 12th centuries*, Acts. XVIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Selected Papers, Vol. III, Moscow 1991: Art History, Architecture, Music, Shepherdstown, WV 1996, 158-170; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Раванички живопис и литургија*, Манастир Раваница. Споменица о шестој стогодишњици, Београд 1981, 54, note 80.

⁹ П. Миљковић-Пепек, op. cit., 54, 93, fig. 24, СХII-CXV, В. Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting, the Age of*

(around 1320),¹⁰ in Dečani (before 1345)¹¹, in the church of the Saviour in Prizren (around 1348)¹², in Matejče Monastery (1348-1352)¹³, in St. Nicolas in Psača (1365-1371)¹⁴ and in Ravanica Monastery (1381)¹⁵.

King Milutin, Belgrade 1999, 146; G. Millet, A. Frolow, op. cit., pl. 31/3-4.

¹⁰ Ch. Bakirtzis, op. cit. pl. 3, 18, 19.

¹¹ В. Поповић, *Програм живописа у олтарском простору*, Зидно сликарство Дечана. Грађа и студије, Београд 1995, 79-80.

¹² Р. Тимотијевић, *Црква св. Спаса у Призрену*. Старине Косова и Метохије, VI-VII, Приштина 1972-1973, 74; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 62.

¹³ Е. Димитрова, *Манастир Матејче*, Скопје 2002, 85-86, fig. 4-6, XI-XII.

¹⁴ This scene is not published. Dating according to: В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 75.

¹⁵ Т. Стародубцев, op. cit., 53-59, В. Ј. Ђурић,



Fig. 3 The Genealogy of Christ, barrel vault (east), St. George at Pološko

Christ dressed in Patriarchal garments is an iconographical novelty of the Palaeologan period. The episcopal *sakkos* of Christ reflects the theological idea that the priest on earth replaces the Christ who celebrates the eternal liturgy in heaven¹⁶.

The role of Christ as Great Archpriest is due to the fact that he has established the rite of the Communion. Thus he became a Great Archpriest, the perfect first priest of the New Testament and the heavenly ideal of the priesthood. This concept is based on the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews (Christ as High Priest is mentioned several times in this Epistle, such as V, 1-20, VII, 1-28, VIII, 1-6 IX, 11-28, X 10-21). The Christ as a High Priest is already announced in the Psalm 110/4:

*“You are a priest forever, in the tradition of Melchizedek”*¹⁷.

Раваничкиживотис, 216-217. In all these representations, he is regularly painted twice, giving the communion to the apostles. The only exception is the fresco painting of Ravanica, which offers a different iconography.

¹⁶ R. Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle*, Paris 1966, 81.

¹⁷ For the theological explanation of Christ the eternal

The idea of Christ as a High Priest is also clearly indicated in the liturgy, especially in the low voice prayer that the priest is saying while the Cherubic Hymn is being sung:

*“You became man without alteration or change. You have served as our High Priest, and as Lord of all, and have entrusted to us the celebration of this liturgical sacrifice without the shedding of blood. For You alone, Lord our God, rule over all things in heaven and on earth”*¹⁸.

By the middle of the fourteenth century Christ the Great Archpriest of the Communion of the Apostles, also receives the royal insignia. Christ depicted as Great Archpriest and King, except for Pološko offers the communion to the apostles in Dečani¹⁹ and in Matejče²⁰.

priest after the order of Melchizedek, who perpetually officiates, being in the same time Pontifex and victim, see: E. Чарвић, *Архијереј по реду Мелхиседекову, Богословље* 32, 1-2, Београд 1973, 17-42.

¹⁸ R. P. F. Mercenier, *La prière des églises de rite byzantin*, vol. 1, Amay-sur-Meuse 1937, 232.

¹⁹ В. Поповић, *op. cit.*, 79-80.

²⁰ Е. Димитрова, *op. cit.*, 85-87, fig. 4.



Fig. 4 The Genealogy of Christ, barrel vault(west), St. George at Pološko

The representation of Christ as King has been a subject of researchers of T. Papamastorakes who explains the priestly and royal attributes of Christ with the contemporary political situation in Byzantium and the significant influence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. According to him, because the patriarchs of Constantinople were considered the main protectors of the Orthodox world, with authority that exceeded that of the emperors, the image of Christ Archpriest reflected his role of supreme guide of orthodoxy. Furthermore, the redistribution of the basic authority between the patriarch and the emperor was not only the reason for the creation of the new iconographic type of Christ archpriest, but also the reason why he obtained the royal insignia²¹.

Still, it is more likely that the royal and priestly attributes of Christ are due to the influence of the lit-

²¹ Τίτος Παπαμαστοράκης, *Η μορφή του Χριστού-Μεγάλου Αρχιερέα*, ΔΧΑΕ 17, Αθήνα 1993-1994, 67-78. This hypothesis is also accepted by S. Gabelić who explains the presence of Christ the Great Archpriest in the scene of Communion in the monastery of Lesnovo by the influence of the monks of Mount Athos on the monastery, С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998, 68-69.

urgy on the painting. Cvetan Grozdanov gives such an explanation of the royal attributes of Christ. Interpreting the composition in the north dome of the monastery of Treskavec (1340), conserving the first known example of Christ the King in Byzantine art, he showed the Eucharistic significance of such a representation of Christ.

At the Monastery of Treskavec (1340), Christ depicted in the dome of the church is dressed as a king and he is surrounded by angelic forces. The inscription refers to him as the “King of Kings”. The Hetoimasia is under him surrounded by the Virgin as Queen and king David. A seraphim and cherubim stand behind the Virgin and behind king David holding a *rhipidia* on which are inscribed the words of the Trisagion, “*Holy, Holy, Holy*”. A procession of holy warriors dressed in costumes of dignitaries of the imperial court is shown in the drum of the dome. This unusual composition is the first representation of Christ as King and the Virgin as Queen in the Byzantine art. At the same time this composition is the only example of this theme named in the literature as the “Heavenly Court”, placed in the dome²². Cvetan-

²² Ц. Грозданов, *op. cit.*, 132-149.



Fig. 5 King David and prophet Zechariah, St. George at Pološko

Grozdanov explains the composition represented in the monastery of Treskavec as a specific iconography of the moment of the Great Entrance, when Christ offers himself as a Eucharistic sacrifice²³.

²³ He based this conclusion on the very pronounced liturgical elements in the composition: the angelic forces that carry the Christ - King of Kings, while he is being sacrificed; the presence of Hetoimasia; the introduction of the Trisagion in the composition sang during the liturgy: Ц. Грозданов, *Христос Цар, Богородица Царица, небесните сили и Светите војни во живописот од XIV и XV век во Трескавец*, Студии за охридскиот живопис, Скопје 1990, 133. The findings of Grozdanov are based on the research of Lazar Mirković, who interpreted the lowest register of the apse of Marko Monastery as a representation of the Great Entrance. At the Monastery of King Marko, in the lowest register of the apse, Christ the Great Archpriest officiate on the altar, while Christ King of Kings with the Queen Mary and king David is depicted next to the north gate of the sanctuary. L. Mirković was the first who saw the link between the Song of Cherubim and the representation of Christ as Great Archpriest (Christ officiating) and Christ as King (Christ who offers himself

This visual representation of Christ as a Eucharistic sacrifice is inspired by the liturgy. The reception of Christ the King, who offers himself as a Eucharistic sacrifice, is expressed during the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy before the holy gifts are placed on the altar. This idea is expressed in the Cherubic Hymn.²⁴

“We who mystically represent the Cherubim, and who sing to the Life-Giving Trinity the thrice-holy

as a Eucharistic sacrifice), Л. Мирковић, Дали се фреске Маркова манастира могу тумачити житјем Светог Василија Новогa, Старинар, н. с., 12, Београд 1961, 77.

²⁴ The words of this hymn resonate five times during the liturgy. The first time these words are sung by the choir during the procession while the priest prays in a low voice, “no one is worthy.” Then these words are sung three times before the Great Entrance when the priest and the deacon make three *metanies* before the altar reciting in a low voice the Cherubic Hymn. And finally, at the end of the Great Entrance when the priest and the deacon enter the sanctuary with the saint gifts, the choir finishes singing the Cherubic Hymn, N. Edelby, *Liturgicon, Misselbyzantin à l’usage des fidèles*, Beyrouth 1960.

hymn, let us now lay aside all earthly cares that we may receive the King of all, escorted invisibly by the angelic orders. Alleluia"²⁵.

In the secret prayer of the priest during the Great Entrance, Christ is also named as "King of glory" according to the Psalm 23, 7-9 ("No one bound by worldly desires and pleasures is worthy to approach, draw near or minister to You, the King of glory..."²⁶).

The image of Christ the King which expresses the idea of Christ as a victim of the Eucharistic sacrifice is even more pronounced in the song "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" that replaces the Cherubic Hymn on the day of the Nativity and Holy Saturday:

"Let all mortal flesh keep silent and in fear and trembling stand, pondering nothing earthly-minded. For the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords comes to be slain, to give himself as food to the faithful.

*Before him go the ranks of angels: all the principalities and powers, the many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, covering their faces, singing the hymn: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"*²⁷.

Christ is called the King of Kings, epithet that accompanies his image in the dome of Treskavec.

In the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts this idea is expressed in the hymn sung during the Great Entrance:

*"Now the Powers of Heaven minister invisibly with us. For, behold, the King of Glory enters Behold, the mystical sacrifice, fully accomplished, is ushered in"*²⁸.

Additional data for the understanding of the Eucharistic sense of the image of Christ King can be found in the composition called "Royal Deesis", where Christ the King is surrounded by the Virgin Queen and John the Baptist²⁹. It should be noted that soon the Christ King of the Royal Deesis also receives insignias of a Great Archpriest³⁰. The Royal Deesis with Christ the Great Archpriest and King is common in post-Byzantine painting in Macedonia.

²⁵ R. P. F. Mercenier, op. cit., 232.

²⁶ loc. cit.

²⁷ Triode de Carême, 615, R. P. F. Mercenier, op. cit., 232.

²⁸ ibidem, 281- 282.

²⁹ For the Royal Deesis, see: L. Grigoriadou, *L'Image de la Déesis Royale dans une fresque du XIVe siècle a Castoria*, CEB 14, vol. 2, Bucarest 1975, 47-52.

³⁰ See the representation at Kovalievo dating from 1380, В. Н. Лазарев, *Ковалевская роспись и проблема южнославянских связей в русской живописи XIV века*, Ежегодник Института истории искусств Академии наук СССР, Москва 1957, 249-262; S. Dmitrieva, *The depictions of warrior saints in frescoes of 1380 at the church of the Holy Saviour in Kovalievo: whether Balkan masters painted the Novgorod church?*, Зограф 33, Београд 2009, 131, fig. 2.

Some of these examples provide additional confirmation of the liturgical meaning of Christ the King. The best example is the façade of Zrze Monastery (1535), where, the Christ in the Royal Deesis is called "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords," just as he is called in the song "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" that was mentioned above. In addition, in the inscription he is also named as a High Priest³¹.

It seems that by representing Christ as Great Archpriest and King in the Communion in the church of Pološko, as well as in Dečani and Matejče, painters have emphasized once again the main idea of the scene: the Communion of the Apostles represents in fact the eternal liturgy celebrated by Christ himself³². Representing Christ as Great Archpriest and King, the painter managed to represent Christ in the exercise of his priestly function and in his role of an eternal Eucharistic victim according to the words of the liturgy (the Cheroubikon, secret prayer of the Priest): "For You, Christ our God, are the Offerer and the Offered, the One who receives and is distributed ..." ³³.

The idea of Christ as an ideal Archpriest and King in St. Georges at Pološko is not limited to the episode of the Communion of the Apostles.

The ancestors of Christ are depicted in the barrel vault and in the dome of the church³⁴. In the drum of the dome are depicted the prophets: Moses,

³¹ Ц. Грозданов, op. cit, 140, fig. 61. For the inscription "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" see also First Epistle to Timothy VI, 15 and the Apocalypse XVII, 14, XIX, 16. Another post-Byzantine example contributes to the understanding of the image of Christ King. At St. George in Vranešnica (early XVI century) on the representation of the Royal Deesis is inscribed the beginning of the Psalm 93 (92): "The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty", read in the office of Proskomidy. loc. cit.

³² J.-M. Spieser, *Liturgie et programmes iconographiques*, Travaux et Mémoires 11, Paris 1991, 588, L. H. Grondijs, *Croyances, doctrines et iconographies de la liturgie céleste*, Akten des 11 Internationalen kongress, Munich 1968, 194.

³³ R. P. F. Mercenier, op. cit., 233.

³⁴ The theme of the ancestors of Christ is known in the art from the beginning of the 10th century. The ancestors of Christ were depicted in the church of Stylianos Zaoutzes, known through a sermon of Leo VI, C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453, Sources and Documents*, New Jersey 1972, 204. Apart from some representations in the manuscripts (see for example: Par. gr. 74, XI century, A. Grabar, *L'Art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, vol.1, Paris 1968, 163; S. G. Tsuji, *The Headpiece Miniatures and Genealogy Pictures in Paris. Gr. 74, DOP 29, Paris 1975, 197-202, fig. 15.*); the genealogy of Christ is probably for the first time more elaborately depicted in Soročani (1265, Б. Живковић, *Сопоћани. Цртежи фресака*, Београд 1984, 8-9, 11-12, В. Ђурић, *Сопоћани*,

Habakkuk, Daniel, Nahum, Ezekiel, Noah, Elisha, Elijah, and on the arch: the king David and the prophets Zachary, Jonas, Jeremiah, Aaron, Solomon, Zachariah, Osee, the tree Hebrew Youths, Melchizedek, Samuel, Amos, Joel, and St. Joachim and Anna³⁵.

These figures represent the ancestors of Christ celebrated on the second Sunday before the Nativity on “the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers” in which the Church remembers all those who are of the ancestry of Christ³⁶. During this feast are celebrated the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh, but also the prophets who announced his coming, or prefigured it including the priests of the Old Testament³⁷.

So, once again, we see the tendency to emphasize the role of Christ as the ideal priest. This tendency has first resulted in the introduction of many Old Testament priests among the prophets³⁸. Including the Old Testament priests among the figures of the genealogy of Christ is consistent with the general trend of Palaeologian art and relates to an older tradition. Byzantine painters introduce their images as a prefiguration of the sacrifice of the New Testament or the priest from the New Testament³⁹.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century their number increases and can reach six figures, with the introduction of new figures that had an indirect link or no connection with the role of a priest, but that are indicated in the liturgy as equal to Aaron. Thanks to the liturgy even the judge Samuel is celebrated with the high priests from the Old Testament, which influ-

Београд 1963, fig. 46-57.) The theme is then developed in the 14th century art.

³⁵ On the representation of the genealogy of Christ at St. Georges at Pološko, see: A. Ristovska, *L'Eglise Saint-Georges de Pološko (Macédoine) : Recherches sur le monument et ses peintures murales (XIVe siècle)*, Thèse de Doctorat, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris 2010, 26-48.

³⁶ *Ménée de Décembre*, traduction P. D. Guillaume, Chevetogne 2001, 138-152, 229-256; L. D. Popovich, *A Study of the Standing Figures in the Five Domes of the Virgin Ljeviska in Prizren*, ЗРВИ 41, Београд 2004, 337; P. Underwood, éd., *The Kariye Djami*, vol.1, New York 1966, 54-56, 52.

³⁷ *Ménée de Décembre*, 149-150, 243-249, P. Underwood. op. cit., 54-56; С. Габелић, op. cit., 64. In the office of the ancestors of Christ are mentioned all the prophets depicted on the barrel vault and the dome of the church, except for the prophet Joel.

³⁸ At Pološko the Old Testament priests are shown with their attributes which is a practice established from the end of the thirteenth century, Д. Војводић, *О ликовима старозаветних првосвештеника у византијском зидном сликарству с краја XIII века*, ЗРВИ 37, Београд 1998, 130.

³⁹ Idem, 122-123, with examples and references.

enced their iconography⁴⁰. Their status as priests is underlined by their clothing on which sometimes are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel or inscriptions emphasizing their individual qualities as prophets⁴¹.

The importance given to the leading Old Testament priests in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century shows on one hand, the interest in the Old Testament subjects, and on the other, the intention to represent Christ as the first priest of the New Testament⁴².

According to the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, Aaron became High Priest, by the will of God (Epistle to the Hebrews V, 4). Athanasius the Great explains that the priesthood of Aaron is a prefiguring of Christ's priesthood⁴³. The same idea is included in the works of Cyril of Jerusalem and Cyril of Alexandria⁴⁴. We also find the same parallel in the liturgy⁴⁵. In the liturgy dedicated to the prophet Samuel (20th of August), it is said that this priest was in service of God, according to the law, and was offering Him the sacrifices for the people, a prefiguration of the sacrifice of Christ⁴⁶. The same ideas also refer to Melchizedek whose sacrifice is a prefiguration of Christ's sacrifice, or even more of the Eucharist⁴⁷.

As we saw earlier this idea of Christ as an ideal priest is especially pointed out in the scene of the Communion of the Apostles where Christ is depicted as a Great Archpriest and King. This scene, divided in two, is depicted on the lateral walls of the sanctuary. Each of these scenes is topped with two Old Testament figures: a priest and a king. Above the Communion with the wine are depicted David and Zechariah, and above the Communion, with the

⁴⁰ Idem, op. cit., 126-127.

⁴¹ Т. Παπαμαστοράκης, *Ο διάκοσμος τοῦ τρούλου των ναῶν τῆς παλαιολόγιας περιόδου στη Βαλκανική Χερσόνησο καί τήν Κό-προ*, Αθήνα 2001, 334; Л. Павловић, *Иконографска епиграфика код пророка*, ЗЛУ 20, Нови Сад 1984, 3-46.

⁴² В. Ј. Ђурић, *Раванички живопис*, 54-55, Ch. Walter, op. cit., 214-216, Т. Παπαμαστοράκης, op. cit., 131.

⁴³ P. G., t. 26, col. 161 C., Д. Војводић, op. cit., 132.

⁴⁴ J. Lecuyer, *Le Sacerdoce dans le mystère du Christ*, Paris 1957, 78, 107-108, PG 68, col. 616 C, 624 D – 625 B, PG 69, col. 88-89.

⁴⁵ Д. Војводић, op. cit., 132.

⁴⁶ loc. cit.

⁴⁷ G. Bardy, *Melchisédech dans la tradition patristique*, Revue Biblique 35, Jerusalem 1926, 500, 507, n. 6; J. Danielou, *Bible et liturgie. La théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Eglise*, Paris 1951, 196-201; R. Bornert, op. cit., 77-78, 205, 208; Д. Војводић, op. cit., 132.

bread on the north wall, are Aaron and Solomon. In this manner the Old Testament figures on the barrel vault testify the double role of Christ in the scene of the Communion.

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The depiction of Christ as Great Archpriest and King in the Communion of the Apostles at St. Georges at Pološko draws inspiration from the liturgical hymns, whose subject is the establishing of the Communion rite. This representation in Pološko, as well

as in Dečani and Matejče, shares the theological idea of the officiating Christ, “who offers and who is offered”. In the iconographic program of St. Georges at Pološko this idea is also emphasized by the representation of many Old Testament high priests in the upper parts of the church who are the prefiguration of the High Priest of the New Testament. Furthermore the depiction of the Old Testament high priests Aaron and Zechariah, as well as the kings David and Solomon, directly above the image of Christ the Great Archpriest and King complement the idea that emphasizes the role of Christ as a supreme High Priest and Eucharistic Victim.

Ана ПОПОВА

ХРИСТОС ЦАР И ВЕЛИКИ АРХИЕРЕЈ ВО ЖИВОПИСОТ НА ЦРКВАТА СВ. ЃОРЃИ ПОЛОШКИ

Резиме

Сцената Причестување на апостолите во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки е специфична по тоа што во нејзини рамки, Христос е насликан со царски лорос и со свештенички сакос, како Цар и Велики Архиеереј.

Претставата на Христос Велики Архиеереј во сцената на Причестувањето е иконографски новитет во уметноста од четиринаесетиот век. Идејата за свештеничката улога на Христос е застапена во Посланието на апостол Павле до Евреите, во псалмот 110/4 како и во литургијата. Свештеничкиот атрибут на Христос всушност ја одразува телотошката мисла дека свештеникот на земјата го заменува Христос, кој на небото ја служи вечната литургија.

Во Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки, како и во Дечани и во Матејче, Христос Великиот Архиеереј истовремено е претставен и како цар. Претставата на Христос Цар е иконографски новитет од Палеологовскиот период. Проучувањето на првите сочувани претстави во кои се појавува Христос Цар (Деизисот во Марков Манастир, куполата во манастирот Трескавец) укажува дека оваа претстава, инспирирана од литургијата, има за цел да го илустрира моментот од проскомидијата кога Христос самиот себе си се принесува како Евхаристичка жртва. Во тој контекст, претставата на Христос Цар и Архиеереј во Причестувањето на апостолите всушност е

илустриција на литургискиот текст каде се укажува дека Христос е тој што се нуди како евхаристичка жртва и истовремено литургува.

Желбата да се нагласи идејата за Христос Цар и Велики Архиеереј во Полошката црква се забележува и во поткуполниот простор на црквата. Имено, во тамбурот и на полуобличестиот свод се претставени дваесет и четири старозаветни личности кои ја претставуваат Христовата генеалогичка. Присуството на голем број старозаветни свештеници помеѓу овие фигури повторно нè упатува на Христовата свештеничка улога. Имено, старозаветни свештеници се сликаат како префигурација на Новозаветната жртва, односно на Новозаветниот свештеник.

Сепак, најголема потврда дека осмислувачот на иконографскиот програм имал за цел да алудира на Христос Цар (Евхаристичка жртва) и Архиеереј (свештеник) е фактот што над Причестувањето на апостолите се насликани по две старозаветни фигури, од кои едната е свештеник, а другата е цар. Така, над сцената Причестување со вино се насликани цар Давид и Захарија, а над Причестувањето со леб Аарон и Соломон. На тој начин, старозаветните претстави на полуобличестиот свод уште еднаш сведочат за двојната улога на Христос во сцената на Причестувањето.