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THE PASSION CYCLE IN SAINT GEORGE AT POLOŠKO

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The Passion Cycle in the church of St. George at Pološko represents an important example of the Palaeologan art. The study of this cycle gives a significant contribution to the understanding of many issues relating to the Late Byzantine and post-Byzantine period. Through the study of the iconography of the scenes the present paper aims to determine the influence of the liturgy on the cycle, the influence of the funeral character of the church on the placement of the scenes and the origin of different or unique iconographic models.

The wall painting of the church of St. George at Pološko (1343-45), was a donation of the nun Marina - mother of the noble John Dragušin, buried in the church¹. The Passion Cycle is depicted in the second register under the Feast Cycle. It starts on the north wall of the Bema with the Washing of the Feet, runs on the sidewalls of the naos and ends at the north wall². In this paper we shall comment on the following scenes: the Washing of the Feet, the Last Supper, the Prayer in Gethsemane, the Betrayal of Judas, the Trial before Annas and Caiaphas, the Denial of Peter, Christ Judged by Pilate, the Mocking of Christ, the Road to Calvary and the Ascent of the Cross. We shall not comment on the three last episodes of the cycle depicting the story of Judas: the Repentance, the Death and the Punishment of Judas, as we have already commented this episode in another pa-

per³. That is also the case of the Lamentation placed among the episodes of the Feast Cycle⁴.

The cycle starts on the north wall of the Bema with **the Washing of the Feet** (O NIPTHP, John XIII, 4-11, fig.1)⁵. On the right Christ, with a towel around his waist, is preparing to wash the feet of the eleven disciples, sitting on the bench or standing and waiting for their turn⁶. The apostle Peter, puts

³ A. Popova, *La Représentation de Judas dans l'église de Saint-Georges de Pološko*, Патримониум.МК 10, Скопје 2012, 130-148.

⁴ Eadem, *The cult of the Virgin and the Liturgical Poetry in the Feast Cycle at St. George at Pološko*, Patrimonium.Mk, 12, Скопје 2014, 138-139.

⁵ On the iconography of the scene, see: G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile aux XIVe, XVe, et XVIe siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos*, Paris 1960, 310-325, G.Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, The Passion of Jesus Christ*, 2, London 1972, 41-48, K. Wessel, *Erweckung des Lazarus, Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, 2, Recklinghausen 1971, 595-608, H. Giess, *Die Darstellung der Fusswaschung Christi in den Kunstwerken des 4.-12. Jahrhunderts*, Rome 1962.

⁶ In the Palaeologan period the apostles are usually depicted on the right. Still there are some contemporary examples where they are on the left. See for example the representation at Staro Nagoričino, G. Millet, A. Frolow, *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie: (Serbie, Macédoine, Monténégro)*, 3, Paris 1962, pl. 83-84. Furthermore in the Palaeologan Art the apostles are usually seated on one or two overlapping benches. See for example the episode at Ljeviška, R. Hamann-Mac Lean, *H. Hallenslaben, Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien: vom 11. bis zum frühen 14. Jahrhundert*, Giesse 1963, fig. 196, at Gračanica, ibidem, fig. 340, in St. Nikitas near Čučer, Millet, Frolow, op. cit., pl. 42/3, in St. Nicolas Orphanos, Ch. Bakirtzis, *Ayios Nikolaos Orphanos: the Wall Paintings*, Athens 2003, pl. 39, in St. Andreas, Treska, J. Prolović, *Die Kirche des Heiligen Andreas an der Treska*, Wien 1997, fig. 54.

¹ On the complete bibliography of the monument, see: A. Popova, *The Acheiropoietos Images in St. George at Pološko*, Патримониум.МК, 11, Скопје 2013, n. 1. On the donation of the church, see on the last place, Д. Павловић, *Путање ктиторства цркве Светог Ђорђа у Полошком*, Зограф, 39, Београд 2015, 107-118.

² Only the Lamentation is detached from the cycle and placed among the scenes of the Feast Cycle.



fig. 1. *The Washing of the Feet, St. George at Pološko*

his hand to his head to illustrate the biblical dialogue (John XIII, 9): “Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head”.

Unlike other Byzantine representations of this event including the twelve apostles, in St. George Christ is washing the feet of only eleven disciples. This is probably inspired by the ritual of the Washing of the Feet performed during the office of Holy Thursday. During this ritual the bishop or the Hegumen washes the feet of twelve priests or the twelve members of the brotherhood of the monastery⁷. Eleven apostles are depicted in several representations in the Western art, according to the liturgical rite of Holy Thursday in the West, where Judas as a traitor is excluded⁸. Although we don’t have a written con-

firmation of this practice in the Byzantine Church⁹, the existence of this tradition is confirmed in the post-Byzantine painting¹⁰.

The Last Supper (O Δ<E>I/PNOC, Matthew XXVI, 20-30, Mark XIV, 17-25, Luke XXII, 14-23, John XIII, 18-30, fig. 2)¹¹ is depicted on the south

пластике у Далмацији, Зограф, 12, Београд 1982, 46-49, fig. 2. For other examples, see: E. H. Kantorowicz, *The Baptism of the Apostles*, DOP, 9/10, Cambridge, MA 1956, 228, n. 86

⁹ It needs to be considered that the Byzantine *Typica* are essentially local documents, characterized by many features and local variations. However, in the Eastern Church, the custom not to include Judas in the rite is attested in the seventeenth century, S. V. Bulgakov, *Manuel pour serviteurs de l’Église*, Kharkov 1900, 539-540.

¹⁰ See for example Dionysiou Monastery (circa 1546), G. Millet, *Monuments de l’Athos, Les peintures*, Paris 1927, pl.202/3. For other examples, see: Popova, *La Représentation de Judas*, 200, n. 38, with bibliography.

¹¹ On the iconography of the scene, see: MILLET, *Recherches*, 286-309, K. Wessel, *Abendmahl und Apostelkommunion*, Recklinghausen 1946, 40-66, A. Sacoroulo,

⁷ A. Lossky, *La cérémonie du lavement des pieds: un essai d’étude comparée*, Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years After Anton Baumstark (1872-1948): Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25-29 September 1998, Rome 2001, 809-832.

⁸ See for example the portal of the cathedral at Trogir (1240), J. Радовановић, *Из иконографије романичке*



fig. 2. *The Last Supper; St. George at Pološko*

wall of the Bema. Christ and the disciples are around the table. Christ is depicted at the left end of the table with the apostle John leaning on his chest. Judas, leaning to the table is outstretching his hand towards the plate containing fish. Many dishes, knives, some bread, turnips and a pitcher of water are on the table. The background is filled with architecture.

In the Palaeologan period, the iconography of the Last Supper takes a symmetrical form with Christ in the middle of the table¹². In St. George at Pološko, the painter follows the old model of the scene known from the tenth century and often used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This asymmetrical solution may also be found in some contemporary monuments¹³.

¹² *Asinou en 1106 et sa contribution à l'icônographie*, Bruxelles 1966, 30-37.

¹³ The axial position of Christ is commonly adopted in the Balkan monuments from the 14th century, N. Zarras, *The Passion Cycle in Staro Nagoričino*, Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 60, Wien 2010, 183 with bibliography.

¹⁴ *ibidem*, with examples and bibliography.

Another distinctiveness of the episode is that Judas is the only apostle without a nimbus. This is one more example of the fourteenth century representation of the event, where the nature of Judas is emphasized in the iconography. At the monastery of Žiča, for example his nimbus is dark while in the Church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid, his nimbus is almost invisible¹⁴.

The Last Supper is followed by **the Prayer in Gethsemane** (Matthew XXVI, 36-46, Mark XIV, 32-42, Luke XXII, 39-46, fig. 3)¹⁵. The scene is depicted in the rocky landscape and is divided into two levels. In the upper part, Christ is represented in a prayer three times. Next to each prayer is an inscription: ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ | ΠΡΟΤΗ – the first prayer; ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ

¹⁴ М. Кашанин, Ђ. Бошковић, П. Мијовић, *Жича. Историја, архитектура, сликарство*, Београд 1969, 144, П. Миљковић-Пепек, *Делото на зографите Мухаило и Еутихиј*, Скопје 1967, pl. 32/1.

¹⁵ On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 654-673, Schiller, *Iconography*, 58-61, Wessel, *Erweckung des Lazarus*, 783-791.



fig. 3. *The Prayer in Gethsemane, St. George at Pološko*

| ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ – the second prayer, and ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΙ ... - ... the ... prayer. Lower on the hill, the disciples are sleeping. Peter is the only one awake and he is depicted in a discussion with Christ (Matthew XXVI, 40). Next to Christ is inscribed: ΟΥΚ ΗΧΧΙ | CATE KAMI | AN OPAN AGPI | PNICE MET E | MOY KAN [...] – "So, were you not able to watch with Me one hour?"

In the monuments of the Palaeologan period Christ is represented three times: once in a prayer, once strengthened by an angel (Luke XXII, 43) and once standing behind the sleeping disciples and conversing with Peter. In Pološko he is represented four times: in the background, Christ is depicted three times, in the three phases of his prayer, according to Matthew XXVI, 39-44, and the fourth time he is depicted in the foreground talking to the apostle Peter. With these four episodes, the scene is particularly narrative in comparison with the other representations of the Palaeologan period. The triple prayer of Christ is not found in the monuments before Pološko and is adopted in some post-Byzantine monuments¹⁶.

¹⁶ Christ is represented in a triple prayer in the Church of Transfiguration in Veltsista, Epirus, A. Stavropoulou-Makri, *Les peintures murales de l'église de la Transfiguration à Veltsista (1568) en Epire et l'atelier des peintres Kondaris*,

In the **Betrayal of Judas** (H PRODOCIA, Matthew XXVI, 47-56, Mark XIV, 43-52, Luke XXII, 47-53, John XVIII, 1-11, fig.4)¹⁷. Christ is in the center holding a scroll in his left hand and blessing with his right. A large crowd of soldiers, servants and other participants of the betrayal armed with swords, clubs, spears, axes and torches assist the event. Judas represented in profile, is giving the kiss to the Lord. In the lower left corner apostle Peter is cutting off the ear of Malchus (Matthew xxvi, 49, Mark XIV, 47, Luke XXII, 50).

This scene is consistent with the most representations of the Betrayal in the Palaeologan art composed of the episode of Peter and Malchus, Judas kissing Christ and the many soldiers and people. The composition is also enriched with the scene of the apostles

Ioannina 2001, 62, pl. 19a. The triple prayer will also be adopted by the Athonite monuments of the sixteenth century. See for example the scene at the Dionysiou Monastery, Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos*, pl. 198/2.

¹⁷ On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 326-344, Schiller, *Iconography*, 51-56, E. Sandberg-Vavala, *La croce dipinta italiana e l'iconografia della Passione*, Verona 1929, 223-241, X. Θ. Παπακυριακού, *Η Προδοσία του Ιούδα. Παρατηρήσεις στην μεταεικονομαχική εικονογραφία της παράστασης*, Βυζαντινά, 23, Θεσσαλονίκη 2003, 233-260.



fig. 4. *The Betrayal of Judas, St. George at Pološko*

leaving the event, an element introduced in the Palaeologan period, as evident in Peribleptos in Ochrid, in Protaton and in Vatopedi Monastery¹⁸.

In **Christ Tried Before Annas and Caiaphas** (ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΡΕΤΟΡΙΟΝ ΠΡΟΣ) ΑΝΑΝ | ΚΑΙ ΚΑΙΑΦΑΝ, Mathieu XXVI, 57-67, Mark XIV, 53-65, Luke XXII, 66-71, John XVIII 12-14, 19-24, fig. 5)¹⁹, Christ whose hands are bound is led by a soldier before the high priests. Between the chief priest and the Lord is one Jew – a servant according to John (XVIII, 22) – who raises his hand to strike Christ²⁰. The high priests are at the center of the composi-

¹⁸ Zarras, op. cit., 188.

¹⁹ On the iconography of the scene, see: Schiller, *Iconography*, 56-58. Byzantine painters either represent the two scenes separately: the Judgment of Annas and that of Caiaphas, or the two judgments together in a single scene. In the first case, they illustrate the text of the Gospel of John, who is the only one mentioning the two judgments, whereas in the second case, they combine the synoptic Gospels and that of John. The two judgments are commonly depicted in the Palaeologan Art. See, A. Ristovska, *L'Eglise Saint-Georges de Pološko (Macédoine): Recherche sur le monument et ses peintures murales (XIV^e siècle)*, Thèse de Doctorat, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris 2010, n. 827, with examples and bibliography.

²⁰ On the representation of this element in the monuments contemporary to Pološko, see: Zarras, op. cit., 190.

tion. The first high priest is standing and tearing his clothes. The other one is sitting on the bench. Behind them is a group of Jews.

It is not always clear whether the high priest who rends his robe should be identified as Caiaphas or Annas. According to Matthew XXVI, 65, Caiaphas rends his robe. However, in the Painter's Manual (Hermeneia) by Dionysios of Fournia is noted that Annas, tears his clothes which is also attested in several 14th century monuments²¹. The high priest who is tearing his clothes at Pološko is very similar to the representation in Mali Grad (1369) and in St. Athanasios of Mouzaki, Kastoria (1384/1385, fig. 6)²².

On the right the cycle continues with the **Denial of Peter** (Η ΑΡΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΕΤΡΟΥ, Mathieu XXVI, 69-75, 66-72, Luke XXII, 54-62, John XVI-

²¹ Denys de Fournia, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne*, ed., Papadopoulo-Kerameus, Saint-Petersbourg 1909, 191. This tradition also attested in several 14th century monuments, Zarras, op. cit, 189, with examples and bibliography.

²² В. Ђурић, *Мали Град, Св. Атанасије у Костур-Борује*, Зограф, 6, Београд 1975, fig. 25, М. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria; Mosaics, Wall Paintings*, Athens 1985, fig. 10 on the page 116.



fig. 5. *The Trial before Annas and Caiaphas and the Denial of Peter, St. George at Pološko*

II, 15-18, 25-27, fig. 5)²³. The event is composed of three episodes. In the first scene, Peter replies to a maidservant that is coming out of a building. This servant appearing at the door illustrates the “door” of the Gospel text (John XVIII, 16-17). Peter denies in a vivid gesture, by raising his hands with his palms outwards. In the second denial, which is exactly below the first, Peter replies to a male servant, once again by the same gest of his hands. In the lower part of the composition Peter warms his hands by a fire around which sit three servants. In the upper left part of the composition there is the crowing of the cock and the figure of Peter appearing from the waist up crying bitterly, leaning upon a column.

This representation of the Denial is similar to that of Matejče and Marko’s Monastery but is especially similar to the representations of Mali Grad and St. Athanasius in Kastoria (1383/4, fig.6)²⁴.

The Passion Cycle continues on the north wall with **the Christ Judged by Pilate** (Mathieu XXVII, 11-26, Marc XV, 1-15, Luc XXIII, 1-7, Jean XVIII, 28-40, XIX, 1-16, fig. 7)²⁵. On the left Christ with tied hands

is pushed by a soldiers and a mob of Jews to Pilate. In the center of the composition Pilate, seating on a throne, extends his hands over a container while his assistant pours water (Matthew XXVII, 24). The same servant is also represented behind the throne, leaning towards him and warning him of his wife’s dream (Matthew XXVII, 19)²⁶. On a low table in front of the throne there are writing paraphernalia and a parchment on which is inscribed the judgment of Pilate.

The painted architecture that fills the background and the law table in front of the throne with the writing paraphernalia, evoke the Roman court. This representation of the Roman court, depicted in Pološko, in Protaton and in the Virgin Peribleptos, is inspired by an apocryphal tradition²⁷. In the background an interesting iconographic element enriches the arched colonnaded porch: glass bottles with ink are placed above the columns. A similar example exists in the King’s Church in Studenica where a similar bottle is

²³ On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 345-361, Schiller, *Iconography*, 58-60.

²⁴ Е. Димитрова, *Манастир Матејче*, Скопје 2002, 144 (Matejče), G. Millet, T. Velmans, *La peinture du Moyen âge en Yougoslavie*, 4, Paris 1969, pl. 85/159 (Marko’s Monastery), Ђурић, op. cit., fig. 25 (Mali Grad), Chatzidakis, op. cit., fig. 10, on the page 116 (St. Athanasius in Kastoria).

²⁵ The inscription is lost. The Judgment of Pilate is told by the four Gospels and the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, Leipzig 1876. On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 41-45, 47-48, Schiller, *Iconography*, 60-66,

С. Радојчић, *Пилатов суд у византијском сликарству раног XIV века*, Узори и дела старих српских уметника, Београд 1975, 211-236, М. Татић-Ђурић, *Врата слова*, ЗЛУ, 8, Београд 1972, 185-187.

²⁶ This iconographic feature dates from the earliest representations of the subject and is common in the Palaeologan art. See for example Matejče, Димитрова, op. cit., 143, or the Marko’s Monastery, Millet, Velmans, op. cit., pl. 98/178. The similar solution to Pološko, depicting Pilate washing his hands while his servant tells him his wife request to his ear is also found in Saint-Nicolas Orphanos, Bakirtzis, op. cit., pl. 43.

²⁷ Радојчић, *Пилатов суд*, 305-306, with the bibliography. On the example of Protaton, see: Millet, *Monuments de l’Athos*, pl. 21/1. On the Virgin Peribleptos, see: Millet, Frolow, op. cit., pl. 8/3.



fig. 6. *The Trial before Annas and Caiaphas*, St. Athanasios of Mouzaki, Kastoria, (M. Chatzidakis, Kastoria; *Mosaics, Wall Paintings, Athènes 1985*, fig. 10 on the page 116)

a part of the architectural background in the episode of Luke writing his Gospel on the pendant (fig. 8)²⁸.

In the **Mocking of Christ** (Matthew XXVII, 27-30, Mark XV, 16-19, Luke XXIII, 11-12, John XIX, 11-12, fig. 9)²⁹ on the north wall, Christ dressed in an embroidered purple coat is holding a long cane in his right hand. On his head he wears the crown of thorns. A soldier and a Jew grab him by the shoulders on each side and spit upon him³⁰. On the sides,

²⁸ Г. Бабић, *Краљева црква у Студеници*, Београд 1981, 90-91, fig. 37.

²⁹ The inscription is lost. On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 635-641, Schiller, *Iconography*, 69-73, С. Радојчић, *Ругање Христу на фресци у Старом Нагоричину*, Узори и дела старих српских уметника, Београд 1975, 155-179, A. Derbes, *Images East and West: The Ascent of the Cross, The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. R. Ousterhout. L. Brubaker, Urbana IL 1995, 110-31.

³⁰ In the Balkan churches Christ is seized by civilians, although in some examples painters follow the biblical text (Matthew XXVII, 27-29), specifying that Christ was seized by soldiers. See for example the scene at Matejče, Димитрова, op. cit., 146, in St. Andrew, Treska, Prolović, op. cit., 157, fig. 31, or in Корорин, Радујко, op. cit., 199. At Pološko the painter combined the two traditions, like in St. Nicolas near Prilep or Lesnovo, Millet, Frolov, op. cit.,

two musicians blow into long trumpets, while two others play cymbals³¹. In the foreground, four young boys are dancing. Two of them are waving their long sleeves, one is kneeling, while an acrobat is walking on his hands³².

This episode differs from the iconography of the period representing a crowd of people around Christ. At St. George the number of participants is reduced³³. Never-the-less the composition is enriched with an interesting iconographic feature: a partially un-

pl. 24/2, С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998, fig. 29.

³¹ On the representation of the musical instruments, see: Р. Пејовић, *Представе музичких инструмената у средњовековној Србији*, Београд 1984, 52.

³² Musicians and dancers, depicted in the Mocking of Christ from the Middle Byzantine period are a standard element in the Palaeologan representation of the subject, Zarras, op. cit., 194, with bibliography. On the motif of the dancers in the scene of the Mocking and its provenance, see: K. Keiko, *Notes on the Dancers in the Mocking of Christ at Staro Nagoričino*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/27, Αθήνα 2006, 159-167.

³³ Reduced number of participants is also depicted in St. Nikitas near Čučer, R. Hamann-Mac Lean, H. Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien vom 11. bis zum frühen 14 Jahrhundert*, Giessen 1963.



fig.7. Christ Judged by Pilate, St. George at Pološko

dressed acrobat. The introduction of a nude or partially unclothed figures in evangelical and hagiographic scenes occurs in a number of fourteenth century churches. For example, a very similar representation to Pološko is found in the scene of the Crowning with Thorns in Ivanovo (fig. 10)³⁴ where a similar naked acrobat is walking on his hands. The representation of the nudity is also used in other fourteenth century episodes to emphasize the negative aspects of certain characters. At Dečani for example, in the scene of the death of Judas, Judas falls into the void from the top of a cliff while his clothes flutter in the wind uncovering his naked body below the waist³⁵. At Lesnovo, on the other hand, a soldier who is approaching a large

round vase to the mouth of Christ in the Ascent of the Cross is depicted with a partially uncovered underwear³⁶.

The Way to Calvary (ΕΛΚΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΙ ΣΤΑΒΡΟΥ, Mark XV, 21-41, Luke XXIII, 26-49, John XIX, 17-3, fig. 11)³⁷ is depicted after the Mocking of Christ. At the center of the composition Christ, tied with a rope passed around his neck, is led by a young man in short tunic who holds the rope in one hand and a basket of nails in the other. Another soldier pushes Christ's back. Behind Christ, Simon carries the Cross (Matthew XXVII, 32, Mark XV, 21, Luke XXIII, 26)³⁸. Behind the rock, the Virgin and John watch the episode in grief.

³⁴ A. Grabar, *Les fresques d'Ivanovo et l'art des Paléologues*, Byzantion, 25/27, Bruxelles 1957, 583, fig. 7, L. Mavrodinova, *The Ivanovo Rock Churches, The Bulgarian Contribution to the World Cultural Heritage*, Sofia 1989, fig. 232.

³⁵ С. Кесић-Ристић, *Циклус Христових Страдања*, Зидно Сликарство манастира Дечана, Грађа и студије, Београд 1995, 125. The nakedness of Judas, who rush into the abyss in Dečani, could in a way be related with the curse that follows him, reason for which in the Last Judgment he was adorned with a shameful nakedness. On this topic, see: M. Garidis, *Les punitions collectives et individuelles des damnés dans le Jugement dernier (du XIIe au XIVe siècle)*, ZLU, 18, Beograd 1982, 1-18.

³⁶ Габелић, *Манастир Лесново*, 86, fig. XV.

³⁷ On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 362-379, Schiller, *Iconography*, 78-82, A. Κατσελάκη, *Ο Χριστός Ελκόμενος επί Σταυρού. Εικονογραφία και τυπολογία της παράστασης στη βυζαντινή τέχνη (4ος αι. – 15ος αι.)*, ΔΧΑΕ, 4/19, Αθήνα 1996–1997, 167–200, with earlier bibliography.

³⁸ According to the text of the Synoptics (Matthew XXVII, 31–32. Mark XV, 20–21. Luke XXIII, 26–32), Simon of Cyrene carried the Cross, while according to the Gospel of John (XIX, 17, XXI) it was carried by Christ himself. In the 14th century Simon of Cyrene, who carries the Cross of



fig. 8. St. Luke, Studenica(http://www.srpskoblago.org/Archives/Studenica/Kings_Church/exhibits/p/p-14-9.html)

The presence of the Virgin and the apostle John on the way to Calvary is inspired by the apocryphal texts³⁹. It is first introduced in this scene in the Virgin Peribleptos, at Protaton at Nagoričino and later in Gračanica, Zemen and St. Andrew in Treska⁴⁰. The

Christ is represented before him. See for example the representation in the Virgin Peribleptos (Millet, Frolow, op. cit., pl. 7/2), in Staro Nagoričino, (Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting*, fig. XVIII, fig. 123), in St. Nikitas (Millet, Frolow, op. cit., pl. 53/4), in Christ the Savior, Verioia, (Σ. Πελεκανίδης, *Καλλιέργης. Όλης Θεσσαλίας άριστος ζωγράφος*, Αθήνα 1973, pl. 26), in Kučevište (personal documentation), in Zemen (Л. Мавродинова, *Земенската църква*, София 1980, fig. 57), in Mali Grad (P. Thomo, *Byzantine Monuments of Great Prespa*, J. Burke, R. Scott, ed., Byzantine Macedonia: Art, Architecture, Music and Hagiography: Papers from the Melbourne Conference July 1995, Melbourne 2001, 105, fig. 244). In the monasteries of Mistra, Peribleptos and St. Sophie, Christ carries the Cross himself, G. Millet, *Monuments byzantins de Mistra*, Paris 1910, pl. 123/3, 134/5. The iconographic solution seen in Pološko can be seen later in St. Andrew in Treska, Prolović, op. cit., fig. 32.

³⁹ The apostle John accompanies the Virgin on the Way of the Calvary in the Gospel of Nicodemus, Tischendorf, op. cit., 282.

⁴⁰ Millet, Frolow, op. cit., pl. 8/4 (Peribleptos), idem, *Monuments de l'Athos*, pl. 26/1 (Protaton), Todić, op. cit., fig. XVIII (Staro Nagoričino), Мавродинова, op. cit., fig. 57 (Zemen), Prolović, op. cit., fig. 32 (St. Andrew in Treska).

same solution is also depicted in the episode of the Ascent of the Cross in Peribleptos and in Nagoričino⁴¹.

The Ascent of the Cross (Κ(ΥΠΙΟ)C ANABENON TOCOY EN TO CTA(B)RΩ, fig. 12) follows the episode of the Way to Calvary⁴². On the left is depicted Christ climbing the ladder. One young slave is consolidating the Cross, striking with a hammer the wooden wedges at its base⁴³. An older slave, bends down beside him showing him how to impact the Cross and helping him. A group of Jews are depicted on the right. One of them is pointing with his right hand to the top of the Cross and holds a basket with nails in his left.

In the Palaeologan art we encounter two different solutions of the scene. The first version where Christ as in Pološko climbs the ladder occurs more frequently. In the second version, Christ is assisted by the two

⁴¹ Millet, Frolow, op. cit., pl. 9/2 (Peribleptos), Б. Тодић, *Старо Нагоричино*, Београд 1993, fig. 66 (Staro Nagoričino).

⁴² On the iconography of the scene, see: Millet, *Recherches*, 380-393, A. Derbes, *Images East and West: The Ascent of the Cross*, in: R. Ousterhout – L. Brubaker (eds.), *The Sacred Image East and West*, Urbana – Chicago 1995, 110-131, figs. 270-279, with further bibliography.

⁴³ The same person is also depicted in Nagoričino, Тодић, *Старо Нагоричино*, fig. 66, X.



fig. 9. *The Mocking of Christ, St. George at Pološko*

executors, who have climbed double ladders and pull him by his arms⁴⁴.

* * *

At the Palaeologan period the Passion Cycle experienced a particular development. Under the influence of the liturgy, the number of scenes increased and the cycle, traditionally represented in the narthex of the church, find its place in the naos. Under the influence of the liturgical rites performed during the offices of the Holy Week episodes are introduced into the sanctuary⁴⁵. In the Serbian churches from the fourteenth

century the Passion Cycle is clearly defined and is an almost mandatory part of the painted program. The monuments built by the Nemanides and their successors preserve some of the largest Passion Cycles in the medieval art⁴⁶. The Passion Cycle at Pološko consists of fourteen scenes and represents an average size cycle, common in the Byzantine world.

⁴⁴ Zarras, op. cit., with bibliography, p. 196-197.

⁴⁵ On the relation between the Passion Cycle and the liturgy, see: D. I. Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung in Byzanz: der Ritus das Bild*, Munich 1965, 12-51, H. Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion fruher Bildtafeln der Passion*, Berlin 1981, 154-160, S. Dufrenne, *Problèmes iconographiques dans la peinture monumentale du début du XIVe siècle*,

Византијска уметност почетком XIV века. Научни скуп у Грачаници, Београд 1978, 32. On the representation of the cycle or episodes of the cycle in the narthex, see: S. Tomeković, *Contribution à l'étude du programme du narthex des églises monastiques (XIe– première moitié du XIIIe s.)*, Byzantion, 58/1, Bruxelles 1988, 140–154.

⁴⁶ The Passion Cycles in the monastery of Staro Nagoričino, Gračanica, Matejče and Marko's Monastery are composed of some twenty episodes while Dečani's cycle of thirty-six episodes, Тодић, *Старо Нагоричино*, 110-113, Б. Тодић, *Грачаница, сликарство*, Београд 1988, 121-123, Димитрова, op. cit., 138-150, Л. Мирковић, Ж. Тагић, *Марков манастир*, Нови Сад 1925, 52, Кесић-Ристић, op. cit., 121-130.



fig. 10. *The Crowning with Thorns, Ivanovo (L. Mavrodinova, The Ivanovo Rock Churches, The Bulgarian Contribution to the World Cultural Heritage, Sofia 1989, fig. 232)*

The selection and arrangement of the scenes of the cycle at Pološko is largely influenced by the funeral character of the church and therefore by the Office of the Holy Thursday.

We have already mentioned that the cycle starts with the Washing of the Feet on the north wall of the Bema. In the Byzantine churches the cycle begins with the Last Supper represented in the sanctuary or on the south wall near the sanctuary⁴⁷. At Pološko the

cycle starts with the Washing of the Feet because the arrangement of scenes is inspired by the liturgy of Holy Thursday. The Gospels read during the liturgy recount the events preceding the Last Supper. After the verses of Matthew XVI, 1-20, evoking the events of the plot against Christ and the preparing of the supper, follow the verses of the Gospel of John XIII, 3-17, relating to the washing of the feet. The liturgy continues with the verses of Matthew XVI, 21-39, describing the Christ's speech on the betrayal of Judas, the last supper and the denial of Peter⁴⁸. Therefore, the Passion Cycle at Pološko do not follow the chronological and biblical order, but it is represented in accordance with its development in the liturgical text. Furthermore, the last three episodes of the cycle (the Repentance, the Death and the Punishment of Judas) and the first episode of the cycle (the Wash-

⁴⁷ The Passion Cycle rarely begins with the Washing of the Feet. The cycle begins with the Washing of the Feet in St. Apostles in Peć where the Last Supper is not included in the cycle, В. Ђурић, С. Ђирковић, В. Коран, *Пећка патријаршија*, Београд 1990, 123, or in the church of Koporin, Радујко, op. cit., 188. The episode of the Washing of the Feet precedes the Last Supper in an eleventh century Athonite manuscript. It is the same in some Armenian manuscripts, Kantorowicz, op. cit., 221, with bibliography. A nonlinear disposition of the scenes of the Passion Cycle can be found in Cappadocia. See for example Kiliçlar kilisesi (tenth century), C. Jolivet-Lévy, *La Cappadoce médiévale. Images et spiritualité*, Paris 2001, 227-245.

⁴⁸ Радујко, op. cit., 189, Kantorowicz, op. cit., Pallas, op. cit., 197-244, *Triode de Carême*, translation P. D. Guillaume, Parma 1993, 506-507.



fig. 11. *The Road to Calvary, St. Georges at Pološko*

ing of the Feet), as well as the Communion of the Apostles⁴⁹, follow each other on the north/east pillar and the east wall of the Bema. These scenes are in fact grouped around the three anniversary events of the Holy Thursday: the institution of the Eucharist, the washing of the feet and the betrayal of Judas.

While deploring the cycle on the walls of the church the painters had also in consideration that John Dragušin was buried in the south west part of the church. Therefore the west part of the church is marked by two scenes referring to the Last Judgment: the Judgement of Annas and Caiaphas and the Judgement of Pilate. This funeral context of the judgement scenes comes from the fact that the trial is related to the Christian soteriology - the outcome and the salvation of the deceased, from the early Christian Art⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ A. Popova, *La Représentation de Judas dans l'église de Saint-Georges de Pološko*, Patrimonium. MK 10, Skopje 2012, fig.4.

⁵⁰ Радужко, op.cit., 172, with bibliography, A. Kniazeff, *La Passion du Christ et le Jugement de ce monde (Jean 12,31) D'après les lectures bibliques de la semaine Sainte Byzantine*, Le Christ dans la liturgie, Roma 1981, 105-130.

This funerary context of the trial is based on the interpretation of the passion of Christ as the judgment of the world (John XII, 31-32). Therefore the representation of the Judgment of Annas and Caiaphas above the tomb of Dragušin, and the representation of Pilate's Judgment facing this scene on the opposite wall, emphasize the funeral destination of this part of the church⁵¹.

Many iconographical solutions distinguish Pološko's cycle from other contemporary monuments. Painters often don't follow the iconographic trends characteristic for the period and use old models in the making of the compositions. On the other hand, they introduce rare iconographic elements or iconographic solutions that are not seen before Pološko. All these features are common in the post-Byzantine painting. We can attribute many of these iconographic features to the Kastoria artistic center whose artists probably dec-

⁵¹ On the funerary imagery in this part of the church, see: А. Попова, *Погребната литургија и фреските во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки*, Хоризонти, 8, Битола 2012, 179-186.



fig.12. *The Ascent of the Cross*

orated the church. This assumption is based not only on the iconographic elements mentioned above but also on some identical iconographic solutions that we can find in the churches painted by the Kastoria's workshops. Here we are especially referring to the scenes of the Judgment of Annas and Caiaphas and

the Denial of Peter (fig. 5), almost identical as that of the church of Mali Grad and St. Athanasius in Kastoria (fig. 6). We should also emphasize that the last three episodes of the cycle, concerning the fate of Judas are characteristic for the post-Byzantine monuments painted by Kastoria's workshops⁵².

⁵² Popova, *La Représentation de Judas*, 130-148.

Ана ПОПОВА

ЦИКЛУСОТ НА ХРИСЛОВИТЕ СТРАДАЊА ВО ЦРКВАТА СВ. ЃОРЃИ ПОЛОШКИ

Резиме

Циклусот на Христовите Страдања во црквата Св. Ѓорѓи Полошки претставува важен пример од доцната византиска уметност. Преку проучувањето на иконографијата на сцените, овој труд има за цел да го одреди влијанието на литургијата врз циклусот, влијанието на погребниот карактер на црквата при распоредот на сцените и да го одреди потеклото на невообичаените или уникатни иконографски решенија.

Циклусот на Христовите Страдања во Полошко е составен од четиринаесет сцени и се вбројува помеѓу циклусите со средна големина, чести во византиската уметност. Во овој труд ние ги коментираме сцените на Миење на нозете, Тајната вечера, Молитвата во Гестиманската гора, Предавството на Јуда, Судањето кај Ана и Кајафа, Трикратното одрекување на Петар, Судањето кај Пилат, Исмејувањето, Патот на Голгота и Качувањето на крстот. Не се коментираат последните три епизоди од циклусот за Јуда затоа што за тоа е говорено во друг труд. Исто така не се коментира ни Оплакувањето Христово кое е вклучено во циклусот на Великите Празници.

Погребниот карактер на црквата како и литургијата за Велики Четврток во голема мерка влијаеле врз изборот и иконографијата на сцените. Така, циклусот наместо со Тајната Вечера на јужниот ѕид, започнува со Миење на нозете на северниот ѕид од олтарниот простор. Имено, сцените не го следат библискиот тек, туку настаните читани за време на Литургијата за Велики Четврток каде што прво се спомнуваат случувањата кои ѝ претходеле на Тајната вечера. По стиховите според Матеј 16, 1-20, кои ги евоцираат настаните од заговорот против Христос и подготовката на вечерата, следат стиховите од Евангелието според Јован 13, 3-17, за миењето на нозете. Литургијата продолжува со стиховите според Матеј 16, 21-39, кои го опишуваат Христовиот говор за предавството на Јуда, Тајната вечера и Петровото Одрекнување.

Врската помеѓу литургијата за Велики Четврток и циклусот на Страдањата може да се увиди и во последователното сликање на последните три сцени (Покајанието, Смртта и Страдањето на Јуда), првата сцена од циклусот (Миење на нозете) и Причестувањето на апостолите во североисточниот дел на црквата. Имено, сцените се групирани околу трите настани одбележувани на Велики Четврток: востанувањето на Евхаристијата, миењето на нозете и предавството на Јуда. Конечно ритуалот на миење на нозете кој се изведува на Велики Четврток е причината поради која Јуда не е насликан во Миењето на нозете.

Распоредот на сцените во циклусот исто така сведочат дека во југоисточниот дел на црквата бил погребан Јован Драгушин. Во западниот дел на црквата се насликани две сцени кои алудираат на Страшниот Суд: Судањето кај Ана и Кајафа и Судањето кај Пилат. Погребниот карактер на овие сцени произлегува од тоа што судањето уште од ранохристијанскиот период е поврзувано со христијанската сотериологија - исходот и спасението на душите.

Многу иконографски решенија го одделуваат циклусот на Страдањата од другите современи споменици. Сликарите често не ги следат иконографски трендови карактеристични за периодот и користат стари модели во осмислувањето на композициите. Од друга страна, тие воведуваат ретки иконографски елементи или иконографски решенија кои не се видени пред Полошко. Според нас, многу од овие иконографски карактеристики можат да се препишат на Костурката работилницата која најверојатно ја осликала црквата. Оваа претпоставка се темели не само на невообичаените иконографски решенија во сцените, туку и на некои идентични иконографски решенија, кои можеме да ги најдеме во црквите од Костурскиот сликарски круг.