The themes in the sanctuary decoration at Markov Manastir (Christ Emmanuel, Virgin Orans, Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles), whose peculiar iconographic elements reveal the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the archpriesthood of Christ in the liturgical and theological context of the fourteenth century, are discussed in this paper. The remains of the text in the leitourgikon held by Christ the Archpriest have been re-examined. It seems plausible to assume that the inscription or a part of it referred to the opening dialogue of the anaphora. The iconographic peculiarities of individual items carried in the Great Entrance procession, modelled according to the structure of the archieratical Divine liturgy, have been reconsidered. It has been established that the way in which the large aër was carried, and its place in the procession escorting the Eucharistic gifts – which was very close to the holy offerings – followed the iconographic tradition of the Heavenly Liturgy in the dome, while the evidence for its shape and size can be found in a somewhat later liturgical source – the Patriarchal liturgical Diataxis of Dimitrios Gemistos.

Keywords: the church of St Demetrios at Markov Manastir, Great Entrance, Christ the Great Archpriest, aër, leitourgikon, iconography, Late Byzantine painting.

Marka Tomić Djurić**
Institute for Balkan studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

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To picture and to perform.
The image of the Eucharistic Liturgy at Markov Manastir (II)**

Christ as the Great Archpriest

In the fourteenth century, the role of Christ as a bishop was particularly highlighted in Eucharistic themes. The impetus for this type of iconography came from the apostolic tradition and liturgical interpretations according to which the bishop, while performing the Eucharist, was an “image of Christ”. According to Symeon of Thessalonike, the symbolic manifestation of Christ is achieved not only through the bishop’s ordination but also through the symbolism of his vestments. Christ’s patriarchal attire is a novel iconographic feature that appeared in the Palaiologan period and it is believed to have been associated with the powerful influence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the religious and political life of the Byzantine Empire at that time.

The earliest image of Christ the Great Archpriest consecrating and blessing the Holy Gifts was designed in the sanctuary of Lesnovo (ca. 1342), immediately below the Communion of the Apostles (fig. 1). The image of...
Christ the Great Archpriest would also become part of the scenes of the Heavenly Liturgy depicted in the sanctuaries of two churches in Mistra: the prothesis of the Virgin Peribleptos (1350–1380; fig. 2) and the southeast chapel of St Sophia (1350 and 1365). At the same time, these were the earliest examples of the Heavenly Liturgy which include the image of Christ as the Great Archpriest. The liturgical idea of Christ as the bishop “who offers and is offered” is fully embodied in the sanctuary of the church of the Virgin in Modrište in Macedonia (1360–1380). Christ, as

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9 T. Starodubcev, *Predstava Nebeske liturgije u kapeli – prilog proučavanju*, in: *Treća jugoslovenska konferencija vizantologa*, Beograd –Kruševac 2002, 391, n. 38, draws our attention to the possibility that the earliest representation of the Heavenly Liturgy with Christ the Great Archpriest may be identified in the skete of St Peter of Koriša (ca. 1220? ca. 1345?). With the exception of Ravanica, the poor state of preservation of the examples of the Heavenly Liturgy in the dome offers insufficient visual evidence for the identification of the figure standing by the Heavenly altar as Christ the Great Archpriest, cf. *ibid.*, 393–397. During the fourteenth century, this iconographic theme was not limited only to monumental painting. Cf. *panagiarion* from Xeropotamou monastery, Mount Athos, v. I. Kalavrezou, *Byzantine icons in steatite*, Vienna 1985, I, 204–205; II, pl. 64, no. 131; *Θησαυροὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὅρους*, Thessaloniki 1997, 324–325, no. 9. 5.
the ideal priest dressed in a festive sakkos, is depicted in the second register in the sanctuary as serving the Holy Liturgy over Christ the sacrificial Lamb, while the most prominent bishops of the Church are con-celebrating. A very interesting example of this theme was painted in the late fourteenth century in the church of St Stephen at Soletto (Salento, Apulia), where the sanctuary apse features an image of Σοφία ο λόγος του Θεοῦ blessing the Holy Gifts. In the iconographic programme of this south Italian church, the symbolic representation of the Divine Wisdom as Christ the Pre-Eternal Logos, which was at that time typical of the Balkans, was endowed with an explicitly Eucharistic meaning. The clerical character of Christ Emmanuel is indicated by the motif of epitrachelion, decorated and crossed on the chest according to the Latin tradition. Although it is symbolic in character, the image of Christ serving the liturgy in front of the Old Testament tabernacle in the sanctuary of the church of the Transfiguration in the monastery of Zarzma in Georgia (mid-fourteenth century), clearly shows the fourteenth-century iconographic tendency to highlight those elements of the image of Christ which identify Him as a bishop.

The group of scenes that are thematically closest to the fresco in Markov Manastir certainly include the Great Entrance in the monastery of St Phanourios at Valsamonero, painted in the apse of the narthex, i.e. the chapel dedicated to the monastery's patron saint (1431; fig. 3). This is the only depiction of the Great Entrance which incorporates the image of Christ the Great Archpriest. Dressed in a festive patriarchal sakkos, Christ is greeting a single angelic procession of deacons and priests bringing the Holy Gifts in front of the altar; his right hand is raised in blessing, while the left holds a leitourgikon. The depiction of Christ the Great Archpriest greeting the Holy Gifts in the Pantanassa in Mistra should also be mentioned as an example, though it dates from the seventeenth century.

Similar liturgical role is fulfilled by Christ the Great Archpriest in the sanctuary apse in Markov Manastir (fig. 4). The represented moment of the liturgy is precisely defined by the text inscribed on the open leitourgikon (figs. 5 and 6). Its poor state of preservation does not allow for an easy identification, though some fragments can still be considered a reliable hint. The fragment of the word at the end of the first line on the leitourgikon's second page, “..ατης…”, is such an example (figs. 5 and 6). It corresponds to the word προσευχηστικ from the Trinitarian greeting of the celebrant: Ελεάζω σε Θεέ μου, Πάντας Πάντα, ευλογημένη η(κ) υψιές της περιγραφής της Θεότητος του Σωτήρος. (The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all). This liturgical role is fulfilled by Christ the Great Archpriest in the sanctuary apse in Markov Manastir (fig. 4). The represented moment of the liturgy is precisely defined by the text inscribed on the open leitourgikon (figs. 5 and 6). Its poor state of preservation does not allow for an easy identification, though some fragments can still be considered a reliable hint. The fragment of the word at the end of the first line on the leitourgikon's second page, “..ατης…”, is such an example (figs. 5 and 6). It corresponds to the word προσευχηστικ from the Trinitarian greeting of the celebrant: Ελεάζω σε Θεέ μου, Πάντας Πάντα, ευλογημένη η(κ) υψιές της περιγραφής της Θεότητος του Σωτήρος. (The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all).

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18 It has already been suggested that the seventeenth century frescoes repeated the programme of the fifteenth century mural decoration, cf. M. Aspra-Vardavakē, M. Emmanouēl, Η Μονή της Παναθήναι της Παναθήναι της Παναθήναι, Athens 2005, 63, fig. 23.
19 Cited after a fourteenth century leitourgikon from Dečani, No. 123 (1395), fol. 54b. Cf. also Dečani, No. 124 (late fourteenth century), fol. 13a; Dečani, No. 125 (late fourteenth century), fol. 29b. The digitized copies of the mentioned manuscripts are held by the Department of Archaeography of the National Library of Serbia. V. also other Serbian fourteenth century liturgical manuscripts containing this prayer: Serbian Liturgical Scroll of Hilandar (No. 3/II, T 708), Serbian Service book No. 315, Т376) and Corpus 7 (University Library in Belgrade), published in: A. Jevtić, Hristos nova Pasha: Božanstvena liturgija, I, Beograd–Trebinje 2007, 439, 457, 462, 476. The opening dialogue of the anaphora can also be found in a Serbian liturgical source that belongs to an older pre-Philolethian liturgical tradition; this is namely the Sinaiac manuscript Sin. Slav. 40/0+25 (the second half of the fourteenth century), v. N. Gilibet, The oldest Sinai sources of the Byzantine...
The letter τ in the next row, shortly followed by the letters λ and μ, may have belonged to the following words of the prayer: ... (εὐχαριστήριον) ἐκφώνησις. The last letter in the same row—presumably η or ε—, as well as the triangular shape resembling the letter θ at the place of what is supposed to be the third letter in the next row, could have been belonged to the word εὐχαριστήριον. However, the preserved fragments of individual letters and words on the first page do not show such a clear picture. The latter η at the beginning of the last row could be the remnant of the word ἐπίσκοπος, whereas the fragments of the letter that follows, the bowl and the serif starting from the upper horizontal line of the letter, which was certainly drawn along the upper line of the inscription, might suggest the letter σ, which stands at the beginning of the word εὐχαριστήριον. Finally, the individual letters in the partially preserved opening word of the prayer (κ ἐπίσκοπος), or τ θ εὐχαριστήριον), may be brought in relation with the expected formula εὐχαριστήριον της, though this cannot be claimed with certainty. The fact that in liturgical manuscripts the word εὐχαριστήριον most commonly appears in an abbreviated form—ἐκφώνησις—diminishes the probability of the suggested assumption because the remaining letters in the first row do not seem to suggest the continuation of the blessing that reads τ ἐπίσκοπος εὐχαριστήριον. Nevertheless, the available space on the two pages of the leitourgikon indicates that the suggested reading could have been written without abbreviations.

Divine liturgy in cyrillic. Sin. Slav. 38/N, Sin. Slav. 39/N and Sin. Slav. 40/O+N, Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata, 10 (2013) 123, 136. Cf. L. Mirković, Pravoslavna liturgija ili nauka o bogosluženju Pravoslavne istočne crkve II (Svete tajne i molitvoslovlja), Beograd 1982, 91. The possibility that the open leitourgikon may have born the prayer for the ruler has been proposed by Ch. Walter, Art and ritual of the Byzantine church, London 1982, 220, n. 302 but we can’t agree that this was the case. It is evidenced by the word pious, which is written with ι and not with ε. Cf. D. Daničić, Rječnik iz književnih starih srpskih izrada, I, Beograd 1986, 49.


21 Cf. Dečani, No. 124; Dečani, No. 125.


25 Cf. Dečani No. 126, fol. 82 recto-verso.

26 Unlike the early Byzantine and modern periods, the rubrics in numerous Byzantine liturgical manuscripts, with the exception of the rule for the utterance of the blessing (ἐκφώνησις), do not highlight the instruction according to which the celebrant is to turn towards the west and give the blessing to the congregation, v. Taft, The Dialogue before the Anaphora I, 304–305. According to the Serbian leitourgikon of Dečani, No. 125 (fol. 29b, 30a), the priest was to bow after the first dialogue of the anaphora prayer, while standing next to the altar (стоя с понедељком прелазећи кроз престол). Cf. Mirković, op. cit., 91.

Hence, this is a formula of blessing which is used to “invoke all three persons of the Holy Trinity for various reasons: God the Son for blessing, God the Father for love, the Holy Spirit for the Communion” and to prepare the hearts of the faithful for the upcoming consecration of the Holy Gifts. The opening greeting is one of the Eucharistic formulae in the Byzantine patriarchal and archieratical Divine liturgy.23 The patriarch utter[s] it loudly, giving the blessing to the congregation.24 The same rule can be found in the rubric of Serbian arkhiereiatika (činovnik).25 If the suggested reconstruction of the inscription is correct, we are dealing with a unique example of the initial anaphora blessing in Serbian and Byzantine wall painting.26 Another similar example from the second half of the fifteenth century is known. The collective response closing the dialogue before the anaphora (ΔΡΟΜΟΝ ΜΑΡΑΘΟΝ φυλάκατε) is written out on the scroll of St Peter of Alexandria (who appears in two scenes: the Vision of St
Peter of Alexandria and the Melismos) in the church of St Demetrios in the Boboshevo monastery in Bulgaria.²⁸

The painters of Markov Manastir could have found a close iconographic (though not thematic) parallel—an image of Christ as the Great Archpriest who blesses and consecrates the Holy Gifts—in the nearby monastery of Lesnovo (fig. 1).²⁹ As the meaning of the priest’s blessing is associated with the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the consecration of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, it is possible to establish a relationship between this scene and those which depict the moment of the epiclesis.³⁰ It is, therefore, important to note that in Markov Manastir the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, as a festive scene traditionally charged with Eucharistic liturgical meaning, was placed above the Holy Table, i.e. on the southern section of the sanctuary vault.³¹

In order to fully understand the conceptual and thematic programme of the sanctuary apse it is important to draw attention to the following fact: the unique text of the blessing with the invocation of each person of the Holy Trinity that may be inscribed on the leitourgikon held by Christ the Great Archpriest, as well as the rarely depicted motif of a dove in a segment of heaven in the Descent of the Holy Spirit, which is a condensed iconographic symbol for the Holy Trinity, are pictorial and verbal references to the mystery of the Holy Trinity in the theological and liturgical context of the fourteenth century.³² Based on the theological decision of the Council of 1156/1157 that the entire Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, receives the sacrifice of the Eucharist,³³ the Palamite theology describes the being of God as the triad essence-hypostasis-energy.³⁴ According to St Gregory Palamas, “the energies originate in the divine nature, but the divine nature is three-hypostatic and the energy manifests itself always personally: From the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.”³⁵

In conclusion it must be said that although several arguments based on the iconographic and programmatic features of the sanctuary support the suggested reconstruction of the inscription, the preserved fragments of individual letters and words on the first page of the leitourgikon do not allow to accept it with certainty. In other words, it is impossible to reliably know whether the depiction of Christ the Archpriest accompanied with an appropriate inscription on the leitourgikon represents merely the moment of greeting and blessing the processes with the Eucharistic gifts or it also suggests the opening dialogue of the anaphora, one of the Eucharistic formulae that followed in the sequence of the presbyteral and pontifical liturgy.

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Painted in the sanctuary, the Eucharistic themes related to Christ the Great Archpriest rendered in fresco were primarily intended for the clergy. Therefore, it is important to mention the example of liturgical cloths—catapetasma of the nun Jefimija of Hilandar (1399) whose iconographic content conveys the ritual of the Divine Liturgy, which takes place in the sanctuary.³⁶ The curtain in the Royal Doors with the figure of Christ, dressed in the patriarchal sakkos and surrounded with St Basil the Great and St John Chrysostom as concelebrants, whose scrolls feature prayers related to the Holy Eucharist, unites the image of Christ as the Great Archpriest and High Priest with the representation of the officiating bishops.³⁷ Nevertheless, the example of the catapetasma of the nun Jefimija, whose liturgical function was related to the liturgical practice of an Athone monastic community, reveals an analogy between the fresco and the liturgical cloth. The learned commissioners of the fresco programme in the church of St Demetrios in Markov Manastir must have been aware of the strong impression made on all those present in the church by the figure of Christ the Great Archpriest, visible through the open Royal Doors during

²⁸ My attention was drawn to this example by the colleague Hristo Andreev, to whom I extend my gratitude. For the inscription and its liturgical source, v. Kh. Andreev, Addenda et corrigenda käm proschuvaninâa na tri kirilski nadpisâa ot Dragalevski manastir “Sv. Bogorodica Vatoska” i Poganovski manastir “Sv. Iovan Bogoslov”, Palaeobulgaria/Starobugaristika 37 (2013) 32–33.

²⁹ Gabelić, Lenova, 67–68. On the role of a priestly blessing in the Eucharistic consecration in the liturgical commentaries of Symeon of Thessalonike, v. PG 155, 736–737. Note that the epiclesis could be represented through different iconographic forms, as an angel-priest carrying the paten and the chalice; surrounded by angel-deacons with τριπάτια in the composition of the Great Entrance. Such examples, dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries can be found in several churches on the Peloponnesus and Crete: St George at Foutia (Peloponnesus), Holy Trinity at Agia Trias, St Anthony in the monastery of Vrontisi and St Phanourios in the monastery of Valsamonero (Crete), cf. V. Kerpete, Ο ναός του Άγιον Ευαγγελίου στα Φώτια της Επανάστασης Αυγούστου και ιδιοφέρη περάσταση από τη Θεία Λειτουργία, in: Ιστορία και Παγκόσμια Εκκλησία, 1999, 30–34. C. Jolivet-Levy, Images des pratiques eucharistiques dans les Eglises d’Orient et d’Occident (Antiquite et Moyen Age), I, 1999, 263–306; I. Spatha- rakis, Byzantine wall paintings of Crete, Η Ρεθύμνη, Λονδίνο 1999, 30–34, C. Jolivet-Levy, Images des pratiques eucharistiques dans les monuments byzantins du Moyen Âge, in: Pratiques de l’eucharistie dans les Églises d’Orient et d’Occident (Antiquité et Moyen Âge), I, eds. N. Beriou, B. Caseau, D. Rigaux, Paris 2009, 192–193 sees an anti-Latin element in the aforementioned iconography, rooted in the distinctions between the Byzantine and Latin Eucharistic rite, which has not implied the Invocation of the Holy Spirit during the consecration of the Holy Gifts. The iconographic reference to the invocation of the Holy Spirit during the epiclesis can be found in the sanctuary of Peribleptos in Mistra, where the Ancient of Days with the representation of the Holy Spirit overhangs the image of Christ as the Great Archpriest in the Heavenly Liturgy, cf. Emmanuel, Liturgies, eastern and western, I, Eastern liturgies, Oxford 1896 (reprinted 1965), 53. 29–31. Later, the practice of reading the troparion of the Pentecost after the invocation of the Holy Spirit was established at the liturgies of St Basil the Great and St John Chrysostom, cf. I. Goar, Εἰκόνομοι σεντραλιακά των Ελληνικών εκκλησιών, Venice 1730, 62.


³¹ The liturgical amanum of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire is clearly outlined in the epiclesis of the earliest Eucharistic liturgy, the Jerusalem liturgy of James, cf. F. E. Brightman, Liturgies, eastern and western, I, Eastern liturgies, Oxford 1896 (reprinted 1965), 53. 29–31. Later, the practice of reading the troparion of the Pentecost after the invocation of the Holy Spirit was established at the liturgies of St Basil the Great and St John Chrysostom, cf. I. Goar, Eἰκόνομοι σεντραλιακά των Ελληνικών εκκλησιών, Venice 1730, 62.

³² The complex theme concerning the liturgical celebration of the Holy Trinity in the context of the Late Byzantine sanctuary programme is beyond the scope of this paper.


³⁵ Ibid., 38, n. 29.


³⁷ Smolčić-Makulević, op. cit., 698.
the Cherubic Hymn. The theological idea of a bishop as an ‘icon’ of Christ would become visually highlighted during the Great Entrance, when the celebrant, with a cincture in his hands, stood in front of the Royal Doors facing the believers. The religious feelings of the congregation were anticipated and intensified by making the central section of the painted decoration of the sanctuary’s first register partially visible only in selected moments during the Holy Eucharist. By unifying the Heavenly and Earthly Great Entrance in Markov Manastir, the eschatological dimension of the Holy Eucharist, which is performed simultaneously in the historical moment and the eternal Kingdom of God, is visually highlighted. Still, one should also remember that, though liturgical rubrics prescribe the closing of the Royal Doors after the Great Entrance, the text inscribed on the painted leitourgikon corresponds to the opening dialogue of the anaphora, which consists of the celebrant’s greetings and the responses of the laity. Hence, though the celebrant was visually inaccessible to believers, the connection between them was achieved through the laity’s vocal participation in the liturgy. By establishing a spatial and visual barrier, the altar screen augments the effect of liturgical text during the Eucharistic rite.

The theological idea of Christ as an archpriest was also expressed through the vertical arrangement of scenes in the painted decoration of the sanctuary apse. The images of Christ Emmanuel, the Virgin and the Communion of the Apostles are united in a conceptually and thematically harmonious whole with the iconographic ensemble in the lowest register of the sanctuary, the central section of which is occupied by Christ the Great Archpriest. In the iconographic programme of the apse, Christ’s archpriesthood was highlighted through the reminiscence of the Saviour’s Incarnation and the act of instituting the Eucharist. The two forms of the Communion of the Apostles in the central register of the apse do not significantly depart from the usual iconographic scheme of the scene in Palaiologan art. However, the same does not apply to the depictions of Christ Emmanuel and the Holy Virgin. The semi-dome of the sanctuary apse is adorned with the bust of Christ Emmanuel in a segment of heaven and, below it, the standing figure of the Virgin Orans, М(ΗΤ) ΗΡ, between the archangels Michael, Ο ΑΡΧ(ΑΓΓΕΛ) ΑΡΧ(ΑΓΓΕΛ), and Gabriel (fig. 7). The Infant God is depicted against the blue background representing the sky, blessing with his both hands. The most interesting detail in the image of Christ Emmanuel is his robe: a light-coloured, almost white tunic with golden yellow trimmings around the neck and on the sleeves; the shoulders are adorned with straps of the same colour whose ends form a belt below the chest.


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39 Cf. ibid., 193.
which his body was wrapped for the entombment. The same idea is expressed by the troparion *The noble Joseph*, performed at the liturgy after the Great Entrance, while placing the Holy Gifts upon the altar. In his description of the pontifical consecration of a church, Symeon, archbishop of Thessalonike (1416/1417–1429) paid a special attention to the design and symbolism of the bishop's vestments for that occasion. According to his interpretation, vestments made of white linen reflect the shroud in which Christ was wrapped for the entombment, whereas the bishop's walk to the Holy Table symbolically represents Christ's burial. Three straps are wrapped around the shroud – two over the shoulders and a third below the chest, in honour and glory of the Holy Trinity. In previous research, the commentary of Symeon of Thessalonike on liturgical rules in the Byzantine church has been considered a reliable source for the interpretation of the mentioned elements of Christ's vestments as signs of his "high priestly" nature. Furthermore, the meaning of the specific iconography of Christ draws attention to another aspect of mystagogical interpretations of the Great Entrance, related to its funerary symbolism. Relying on an approach based on the comparison of the liturgy with events from the life of Jesus Christ, liturgists associated the transfer of the Holy Gifts from the prothesis into the sanctuary with the Paschal triduum. Symeon of Thessalonike on liturgical rules in the Byzantine church has been considered a reliable source for the interpretation of the mentioned elements of Christ's vestments as signs of his "high priestly" nature. 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Two interesting examples of Christ Emmanuel dressed in a white tunic with straps across the chest and around the waist can be found in the church of the Holy Trinity at Sopoćani (1264/1265). The infant God, placed in a medallion on the breasts of the half-length figure of the Holy Virgin at the top of the niche in the east wall of the prothesis, wears a sakkos over a white tunic with an ornament on each sleeve and; the sleeves of the sakkos are trimmed with pale ochre fabric adorned with dark red tendril-like ornaments. Over the sakkos, red straps are wrapped along the shoulders and they most probably form a belt below Christ’s chest (fig. 10). This peculiar iconographic detail was probably intended to highlight the theological idea of Christ as the High Priest. A similar conceptual and thematic ensemble was painted at Sopoćani, in the niche in the east wall of the chapel of St Simeon Nemanja. It includes a half-length figure of the Virgin of the Sign, and, underneath, a depiction of Christ as the sacrificial Lamb surrounded by angel-deacons. Christ Emmanuel in a medallion on the breasts of the Virgin Mary wears an ochre tunic with red straps on the shoulders which are probably wrapped as a belt below the chest. In a slightly later example, showing the Virgin with a bust of Christ Emmanuel in an unusual cup, painted in the apse of the church of St Alypius in Kastoria (1420s), the episcopal attire of the Infant God bears a direct reference to the archpriesthood of the Incarnate Son of God. \(^56\)

Symeon of Thessalonike’s text on the ritual of the consecration of a church further prescribes that a bishop should cover his hands with cloth – like cuffs united with the shroud: Καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶ δὲ ὁμίλια μανίκια ἤνωμένα τῇ σινδόνι. \(^59\) The border on the ends of the sleeves of Christ Emmanuel in the semi-dome of the apse at Markov Manastir corresponds to the cloth – cuffs described by Archbishop Symeon. This detail is not common in the iconography of the Infant God dressed in a white tunic, but it is not very rare, either. \(^60\) This element of Christ’s vestment could also be compared to loria, i.e. the bands at the end of the sleeves of the sticharion, symbolizing the fetters that bound Christ in his Passion. \(^61\)

Beneath the image of Christ Emmanuel, there is a monumental figure of the Virgin praying (fig. 7). \(^62\) On the right side of her halo there is a red medallion, which is a typical way of framing customary sigla of the Mother of God. \(^63\) A same medallion must have been depicted on the left wall, which is now damaged. Under her feet, traces of a purple suppedion can be observed, overpainted with a wooden pedestal. She has a blue robe with ochre stripes and a red maphorion. Before proceeding to an analysis of the image, we will briefly present some observations concerning its present state of preservation, which has not been a subject of scholarly attention. Several elements are noteworthy: the white circle next to Christ’s hands and on the right side of his halo, a white stain formed by the irregular quadrangular shape on the right side of the Virgin’s halo which resembles a white cloth, as well as the

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59 PG 155, 309C.
60 The cuff band can be found in the aforesaid representation of the Virgin with the Child in the niche of the prothesis at Sopoćani, cf. Đurić, Ikona Bogorodice Znamenja, 18, fig. 7; cf. Đurić, Sopoćani, 134.
61 For the interpretations of Patriarch Germanos and Symeon of Thessalonike, v. Woodfin, Embodied icon, 15, n. 42.
63 View the representations of the Virgin in the apses of tree fourteenth-century churches in the territory of the Ohrid Archbisp: the Virgin of the Hospital, Ohrid; St George in Rečica and the chapel dedicated to St Gregory the Theologian, in the church of Virgin Perilepitos, Ohrid, cf. C. Grozdanov, G. Subotić, Crkva svetog Đorđa u Rečici kod Ohrida, Zograf 12 (1981), fig. 4; Grozdanov, Ohridsko zidno slikarstvo, 138, draw. 36, fig. 122.
unusual arrangement of colours on her clothes. The blue colour of the dress extends over a half of the back side of the red maphorion, and, in the upper section, on the surface of the fabric between the neck and the waist, making it difficult to distinguish the boundaries of the two garments. Furthermore, it is observed that the blue colour on the maphorion extends with the same width and significantly lesser intensity on both sides of the dress, falling on the suppedion. One gets the impression that the described blue surfaces belong to the same entity. Accordingly, the image of the Virgin Mary in the apse must have originally been different. The figure of the Virgin certainly extended up to the top of the conch, as evidenced by the preserved remains of her original halo and two medallions with the sigla around the halo and the hands of Christ Emmanuel. Parts of dress from the original image of the Virgin Mary – a white handkerchief on the right side of the new halo and a part of the red maphorion with fringes below her arms and next to the wings of both archangels – resurfaced over the new fresco layer. The artists most probably painted the new scene in the secco technique, and that was the reason why the original layer resurfaced over time.64 This also explains the vague colour transitions in the dress of the Virgin, where the blue colour of her robe in the original image prevails on a great part of the surface occupied by the red maphorion on the new layer. Accordingly, based on the fresco’s present state of preservation, it may be concluded that the original concept of painted decoration in the conch of the apse included a monumental figure of the Virgin Orans, standing on a purple suppedion. The traces of the original maphorion show that it reached the half height of the bowing archangels’ halos, which suggests two possibilities. First, it may be assumed that the adorant archangels were not foreseen in the original concept of the scene because the outstretched maphorion did not leave enough space in the conch of the apse for another two figures to be depicted. However, it is indeed possible that the archangels accompanied the Virgin in the original painting; in that case, their heads and the front part of the body must have covered a part of her maphorion. We may assume that the dimensions of the Virgin Mary’s figure were the main reason why the original, iconographically rather common solution of the apse scene was given up. This concept resulted in a huge scene extending too high, whose proportions were in discord with the size relations among individual figures and scenes in the sanctuary. In order to mitigate this, the painter may have subsequently decided to place a half-length figure of Christ Emmanuel in the semi-dome of the apse, thereby shortening the space available for the new figure of the Virgin.

In some rare details of dress, this image departs from common depictions of the Virgin Mary in the sanctuary apse. The lower part of her dress is adorned with a rare motif of three vertical golden yellow stripes. They are placed in the middle and on the edges of her dress, extending from the waist to the bottom hem.65 Although this is an element that does not belong to the usual set of motifs associated with depictions of the Virgin in the apse, the painters of Markov Manastir could have relied on earlier examples that show this interesting iconographic detail, such as the fresco showing the Virgin with Christ, Archbishop Danilo II and St Nicholas on the western façade of the church of the Virgin Hodegetria at the Patriarchate of Peć,66 or the Virgin in the conch of the apse in Lesnovo.67 The painter of Markov Manastir employed the same iconography in one of his earlier works – the depiction of the Virgin in the apse of the church of St George at Rečica near Ohrid.68 The mentioned motif of the Virgin Mary’s dress highlights the episcopal insignia known as the potamoi (ποταμοί, ‘rivers’).69 In bishop’s attire, this ornament symbolizes the blessing of God.70 In the work of the Late Byzantine liturist Symeon of Thessalonike, the symbolism of these ‘rivers of blessing’ is rooted in the words from the Gospel (Jn 7:38) “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”71 In the context of the programmatic and iconographic concept of the sanctuary at Markov Manastir it is noteworthy that this extract from John’s Gospel was read on the feast of Pentecost.72 As we learn from the typikon of the Serbian Archbishop Nikodim (1319), the Homily of St John Chrysostom which contains the interpretation of the “river of the Water of Life”, was also read during the Matins of the same feast.73 A detailed interpretation of the liturgical insignia in the dress of the Virgin Mary is offered by Vesna Milanović,74 who rightly emphasizes the importance of pneumatological and Christological aspects, or the association between the symbolism of Christ’s blood and the Holy Spirit.75 There is yet another iconographic detail which deepens the Eucharistic mean-

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64 Cf. additionally painted portraits of two rulers in Gračanica, executed in the secco technique (ca. 1321), v. D. Voyodjic, Doslikani vladarski portreti u Gračanici, Niš i Vizantija 7 (2009) 251–265; Todic, Gračanica, pl. XXVII.

ing of the image of the Virgin. The white handkerchief, stuck at the waist on the right side of the Virgin's robe, may be interpreted as the *encheirion*, a towel carried at the waist by the clergy during the liturgy and used to wipe the hands. During the further development, this ecclesiastical insignia took the form of the *epigonation*. It symbolizes the *lention* – a linen cloth wrapped around Christ's waist at the Last Supper when washing the disciples' feet. In the surviving written sources, the *encheirion* and *epigonation* are mentioned as episcopal insignia. The symbolism and the function of the towel stuck at the Virgin's waist highlight the Mother of God's relationship with both the historical New Testament sacrifice and the liturgical, Eucharistic sacrifice.

Through the language of iconography, the symbolism related to rituals performed by the clergy unites the images of Christ Emmanuel in the conch of the apse and Christ the archpriest in the lowest register. The Eucharistic and ecclesiological symbolism of these peculiar details of the Virgin's dress, which highlights the idea of the Virgin as a symbol of the Church, also confirms that various elements in the sanctuary apse of Markov Manastir are mutually related within a common thematic framework. The comparison between the Mother of God and the Church and the theme of receiving the blessing of Christ's archpriesthood was expressed through metaphors in hymnography and homiletic poetry dedicated to the Virgin Mary. For example, Epiphanius of Cyprus referred to Theotokos as "the priest and the altar at the same time, who offers to us Christ the bread of heaven for the redemption of sins." The words of Patriarch Taranis († 806), who called the Holy Virgin "the ministrant of the Archpriest", belong to the same liturgical context. George of Nikomedia used a poetical motif: "Temple of God, she enters the temple" to refer to Mary as a temple. The sermons of John of Damascus and Andrew of Crete offer an interesting perspective for the analysis of the meaning of the figure of the Virgin in the apse of Markov Manastir. They describe Mary as a link between the priestly lineage of Israel and the priesthood of her Son.

The meaning of the discussed iconographic themes in the sanctuary, which is rooted in the ecclesiological postulates and Eucharistic theology, also highlights the importance of the episcopal ministry. The iconographic content of the frescoes conveys the idea of bishops as the bearers of Christ's pontifical blessing.

**Lithuritic objects in the Great Entrance**

The design, the way of handling and the place of the large ecclesiastical liturgical cloth carried by two concelebrants in the angelic procession of the Great Entrance on the south side of the sanctuary apse has been attracting the attention of researchers, raising numerous issues related to the iconographic and liturgical content of the scene (fig. 11). The comparison with representations of...


79 Very few eleventh and twelfth century depictions of this white linen cloth in Eucharistic themes have come down to us. The most distinctive iconographic feature of the icon from Mount Sinai showing the Communion of the Apostles is the handkerchief in Christ's hands, while in the church of the Virgin Forbottisa, Assinou, Cyprus, the handkerchief is laid on the Holy Table. The same white linen cloth is also depicted on the Holy Table in the Last Supper in the crypt of the monastery of Hosios Loukas in Phokis, cf. Lidov, *Srísticascheschto Bogomateri*, 210, figs. 21–23; A. Cutler, *J.-M. Spieser, Byzance médiéval 700–1204*, Paris 1996, 276, fig. 223. Cf. Milanović, *O fresci na ulazu u Bogorodičinu crkvu*, 161.

80 These theological and liturgical meanings could also be expressed using condensed iconographic idioms, most commonly on liturgical objects. By placing a half-length figure of Christ the Great Archpriest on one side and a half-figure of Christ Emmanuel on the other side of two *rhipidia* from 1394, kept in the monastery of St John Prodromos near Serres, Byzantine artists established a connection between iconography and liturgical practice, cf. *National museum of history. Catalogue*, ed. R. Rousseva, Sofia, 2006, 127, no. 126.


82 PG 43, col. 497A.

83 PG 98, col. 1500B.

84 PG 97, 803.


86 The identification of the large liturgical veil has been a matter of dispute. It is on the basis of the *Diataxi of Demetrius Gemistos* that Lazar Mirković put forward the hypothesis that two angel-deacons are holding the omophorion, v. Lidov, *Začeti Tatič, Markov manastir*, Beograd 1925, 31–34, figs. 34–37; L. Mirković, *Da li se freske Markova manastira mogu tumačiti žitijem sv. Vasilija Novoga*, Starinar 12 (1961) 281, figs. 71–75. According to the patriarchal ordo of the Great Church, written about 1380, the procession is led by a deacon bearing the *trikerion* and *omophorion* of the patriarch, v. PG 155, 236 A–B, 724, 728 A–B; Dmitrievskiĭ, *Vasiliya Novogo, OCP 74* (2008) 417–430. Ioannis Spaparaxis later published the frescoes of the Great Entrance from Crete and brought to our attention a unique representation of a liturgical cloth which may have been more likely identified as an omophorion. This is an oblong, white piece of cloth adorned with black stripes at the bottom which hangs from the shoulder of a concelebrant angel-deacon in the Great Entrance in St Phanourious, Valsamono, v. idem, *Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete,*
the aër, which frequently appear in the scenes showing the Melismos surrounded by officiating bishops and the Heavenly Liturgy, clearly shows that the type of fabric depicted in those scenes is the same as that in our example. Unlike the scene in Markov Manastir, in other examples of the ceremonial aër, the symbolism of passion inherent in the Great Entrance is emphasized by the dead body of Christ. However, though the development of figural decoration on aërs can be traced back to the late thirteenth century, purely ornamental decoration or a plain-coloured background with a cross in the centre persisted until the end of the fifteenth century. This is also confirmed by the pictorial practice. The large aër with the representation of Christ’s dead body became a mandatory element of the iconography of the Heavenly Liturgy of the sixteenth century.

Liturgical sources prescribe more than one way in which the aër is to be carried, depending on its size. The Diataxis of Philotheos Kokkinos describes a medium-sized aër that can be carried in two ways by a deacon in the procession of the Great Entrance. While preparing for the transfer of the Eucharistic gifts from the prothesis into the sanctuary, the priest puts the aër upon the deacon’s left shoulder (τῷ ἀριστερῷ ὢμῳ τοῦ διακόνου). Further in the text it is indicated that the aër can also be laid across

the aër in Markov Manastir, angel-deacons with an aër


88 Spatharakis, Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete, 299 argues that the aër in Markov Manastir belongs to an older type of this liturgical veil, lacking figural decoration. Ranoutski, Die Kunst, 88.

89 Cf. the representations of the aër in the Virgin Peribleptos, Mistra; Vrontisi monastery, Crete, v. Spatharakis, Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete, 299; Ranoutski, Die Kunst, 80–81; and in the church of St Nicholas at Ramača, v. Starodubcev, Predstava Nebeske liturgije u kupoli, 394, 401. Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonike informs us that in accord with the symbolism of Christ’s shroud, the aër could very often bear the image of the dead Christ, v. PG 155, 288A, 728B; cf. St. Symeon of Thessalonike, The liturgical commentaries, 127. For further discussion on the subject, v. also Mirković, Crkveni umetnički vez, 13–14; idem, Dve srpske palačance iz XIV stoljeća u Hilandaru, Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva 11 (1932)116–117. Mirković has pointed out that these liturgical veils were carried in the pontifical Divine Liturgy since the fourteenth century.

90 E. g. the angel-deacon in the Great Entrance at Valsamono (1431). The aër on his head is red with an ochre cross in the central section of the cloth, v. Spatharakis, Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete, 301, fig. 12; Ranoutski, Die Kunst, fig. 120.

both shoulders: the priest takes the aër from "the deacon’s shoulders" (ἀπὸ τῶν ὀμών τοῦ διακόνου) to cover with it the Eucharistic gifts on the Holy Table. Additional information regarding the design and handling of these liturgical textiles is provided by depictions of the Heavenly Liturgy. In Gračanica (1321; fig. 12) the church of the Virgin Hodegetria at the Patriarchate of Peć (before 1337; fig. 13) and Dečani (before 1345; fig. 14) angel-deacons with the aër across their left shoulder are either greeting the procession of the Great Entrance or they are a part of it. The aërs on the back of angel-deacons in the church of St Nicholas in the monastery of Great Lavra (Mount Athos, 1560) and the katholikon of Dochiariou (Mount Athos, 1568) actually lie across their shoulders. Although they date from a later period, it is still possible that these frescoes reflect an older Athonite liturgical practice. A similar liturgical context may also be established for the preserved examples of Byzantine liturgical textiles, such as the Thessaloniki Epitaphios (ca. 1300). The evidence that the aër could have been handled differently can be found in a fifteenth-century euchologion from the Great Lavra. According to it, the aër should hang from the forehead of the deacon to his back (ἀπὸ τοῦ μετώπου ἐως τῶν νώτων).

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92 P. N. Trempelas, Η τρεῖς λειτουργίαι κατὰ τοὺς ἐν Ἀθήναις κώδικας, Athens 1935, 10. Serbian leitourgika follow Greek sources. According to them, the priest lays the aër on the deacon’s left shoulder (μετάπλαττ ἡ ἀερίῳ ὑπὸ τοῦ διακόνου), v. Dečani No. 125, fol. 25b.
95 Betancourt, The Thessaloniki epitaphios, 503–520.
The design of the aër and the way of carrying it are illustrated in great detail on a fourteenth-century panagiarion from the Monastery of Xeropotamou on Mount Athos. Among the figures of concelebrant angels, who are placed in fields framed by arcades and are approaching Christ the Archpriest in front of the Holy Table in the procession of the Great Entrance, a frontally depicted figure of an angel-deacon with the aër stands out. The cloth spread out above his head wraps his shoulders and back, while he holds it at the edges. Similarly to the hands of the angel-deacon in Markov Manastir, his hands do not touch his face but are slightly detached from the body. In addition to similarities between the fresco in the Mrnjavčević’s foundation and the elements of the image on the Athonite panagiarion, it is also possible to establish iconographic parallels with examples from Serbian churches. A comparison with the depiction in Dečani (fig. 14) shows that the aër carried by the angel-deacon on the head actually has the same dimensions as the cover carried by two heavenly concelebrants in Markov Manastir (fig. 11). This choice in the foundation of the Mrnjavčevićs could be explained by the painter’s reliance on a specific form of rite or iconographic templates known and available to him. A slightly later example from nearby Ohrid shows that we are dealing with a local iconographic peculiarity. In the procession of the Great Entrance in the Heavenly Liturgy in the church of Sts Constantine and Helen, two angel-deacons are carrying an aër without figural decoration in the same way as those in Markov Manastir (figs. 15 and 16). Nevertheless, unlike the example from Ohrid, which shows a proper way to carry an aër of large dimensions, in Markov Manastir we find an unclear detail. A part of the main celebrant’s hand is depicted on the outer side of the aër. Such a position is not possible, having in mind that the fabric is shown falling over the shoulders and back of both angels.

Liturgical sources, accompanied by selected visual evidence, show that over time, the aër increased in size, due to which in the way in which it was carried changed. Once it became larger, the aër, which had previously been laid upon one or both deacon’s shoulders, had to be carried on the head, and in some cases, it even had to be carried by two (or more) deacons above their heads. However, this does not preclude the possibility that several different aërs and covers were used simultaneously. In the Heavenly Great Entrance in Dečani, one can see angel-deacons who carry aërs on the left shoulder, but also above their heads. The comprehensive and detailed depiction of several stages of the Great Entrance in the sanctuary of Markov Manastir confirms this liturgical practice. Bearing in mind that the final stage of the prothesis rite and the anticipation of the Great Entrance are shown in the prothesis of the katholikon, the cloth with non-figural decoration that covers the shoulders St Stephen the Protodeacon, who waves the censer over the body of the deceased Lord lying on the Holy Table, can be identified as an aër. Along with angel-deacons, the participants in the procession of the Great Entrance also include holy deacons – most probably St Lawrence and St Romanos the Melode, depicted in the niche of the diaconicon (fig. 17). In addition to usual attributes (cross, artophorion, bika of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A study of late Byzantine icons in steatite, v. D. E. Conomos, English translation, v. D. E. Conomos, Byzantine trisagia and chonobika of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A study of late Byzantine liturgical chant, Thessaloniki 1974, 36.

92 Spatharakis, Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete, 301, fig. 12. The colour photograph of the fresco has been published in Ranoutsaki, Die Kunst, fig. 120. The kalymmata that cover the patens on the heads of angel-deacons in the procession of the Great Entrance in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos at Mistra look the same, v. Spatharakis, op. cit. fig. 16.

93 Marković, op. cit. The position of the angel-deacon in the Heavenly Great Entrance in the katholikon of Hilandar (ca. 1321, re-touched in 1803/1804) is such that it is impossible to determine whether he holds a holy vessel or grips the aër with his hands, v. W. T. Hostetler, In the heart of Hilandar. An interactive presentation of the frescoes in the main church of the Hilandar monastery on Mt. Athos, Tuskegee 1999 (CD-ROM). V. also M. Marković, The original paintings of the monastery’s main church, in: Hilandar monastery, ed. G. Subotić, Belgrade 1998, 221–242. Betancourt, The Thessaloniki epitaphios, 515, interprets this example as a transitional form from the medium-sized aër carried together with the holy vessels towards the expansive Great Aër.


95 Betancourt, The Thessaloniki epitaphios, 516–517.


97 Spatharakis, Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete, 301, fig. 12. The colour photograph of the fresco has been published in Ranoutsaki, Die Kunst, fig. 120. The kalymmata that cover the patens on the heads of angel-deacons in the procession of the Great Entrance in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos at Mistra look the same, v. Spatharakis, op. cit. fig. 16.

98 Marković, op. cit. The position of the angel-deacon in the Heavenly Great Entrance in the katholikon of Hilandar (ca. 1321, re-touched in 1803/1804) is such that it is impossible to determine whether he holds a holy vessel or grips the aër with his hands, v. W. T. Hostetler, In the heart of Hilandar. An interactive presentation of the frescoes in the main church of the Hilandar monastery on Mt. Athos, Tuskegee 1999 (CD-ROM). V. also M. Marković, The original paintings of the monastery’s main church, in: Hilandar monastery, ed. G. Subotić, Belgrade 1998, 221–242. Betancourt, The Thessaloniki epitaphios, 515, interprets this example as a transitional form from the medium-sized aër carried together with the holy vessels towards the expansive Great Aër.


100 Betancourt, The Thessaloniki epitaphios, 516–517.

101 Subotić, Sveti Konstantin i Jelena u Ohridu (drawing of the frescoes D. Todorović, 3B).


104 Grozdanov, Iz ikonografije Markovog manastira, 85. Due to iconographical similarities, the possibility that the first deacon is St Euphros should not be rejected. This saint is also depicted with longer hair combed behind the ears, where strands become slightly thicker and...
censer) held in their hands, both holy deacons have an aër on their left shoulder.\textsuperscript{105} It is depicted as a narrow piece of red textile with gold-embroidered floral ornaments rendered in the fresco technique, just like in the aër shown on the shoulder of St Stephen the Archdeacon.

Based on the mentioned facts, it can be concluded that a large aër in Markov Manastir was painted respecting the ceremonial actions of the Patriarchal Eucharistic Liturgy. As opposed to the Diataxis of Philotheos Kokkinos and several other diataxes related to the presbytery liturgy, according to which the main celebrant alone takes the aër from the deacon’s shoulder to cover the Eucharistic gifts with it, the corresponding rubric in the patriarchal and archieratical liturgical Diataxis of Dimitrios Gemistos (ca. 1380) unambiguously refers to the large size of this liturgical cloth. It stipulates that all concelebrants, archpriests, priests and deacons shall take part in holding the aër, singing the troparion Noble Joseph, while the patriarch places chalices and patens on the Holy Table.\textsuperscript{106}

Nevertheless, what makes it complicated to reach the final conclusion is the place given to the aër in the ceremonial procession of angels. The rules of the pontifical liturgy require that the deacons who carry the large aër on their heads be located at the very rear of the procession because the paten and the chalice are covered with it only after they are laid upon the Holy Table.\textsuperscript{107} However, this rule was not always respected in the depictions of the Heavenly Liturgy and the celebrant angels who carried the large aërs could occupy various places in the procession.\textsuperscript{108} It seems that an older iconographic tradition of the Great Entrance has a more important role in understanding the place of the large cover in the scene in Markov Manastir. An analysis of the complex type of the Heavenly Liturgy in the dome reveals certain regularities in the layout and order of the solemn procession, which artists generally followed.

The group greeted by an angel-deacon with a censer, in front of the heavenly altar, is almost always headed by an angel waving ripidia, followed by those carrying aërs and the heavenly concelebrants with the Eucharistic gifts. The depictions of the strictly hierarchically ordered procession with the holy gifts in Gračanica (fig. 12) and the church of the Virgin at the Patriarchate of Peć (fig. 13) conform to this scheme.\textsuperscript{109} Aërs vary in size and shape. The fabric is most commonly red, often adorned with a cross; it may cover the shoulder and the arm of the angel-deacon in several ways (Gračanica, Peć), but it may also be placed upon the head and held with the hands (Dečani). Based on the presented evidence it may be concluded that the layout of the heavenly part of the Great Entrance in Markov Manastir followed well-known iconographic schemes. Similarly to somewhat earlier examples from the same century, the heavenly concelebrant with the paten on his head is shown behind the angels with ripidia, a candle and the aër.\textsuperscript{110} Examples that are consider-
ably distant in space and time from those discussed in this paper prove that we are dealing with a generally accepted model. The scene in Markov Manastir finds its important analogy in the procession of the Great Entrance in the monastery of Vrondissi on Crete (1420–1430), which extends along the southern and northern sides of the vault above the bema. Three celebrant angels on the south side are carrying a large aër adorned with the dead body of Christ, proceeding towards the east, behind the angel-deacon who is carrying candles.111 In the Heavenly Great Entrance in the apse of the narthex dedicated to St Phanourios in Valsamonerò on Crete (fig. 3), Christ, shown as a priest in front of the altar, is approached first by two angel-deacons with candlesticks, then by an angel-deacon with a white cloth across the left shoulder (most probably an omophorion) and ripidia in his hands, followed by another angel-deacon with a red aër on his head, who also holds ripidia.112 The aër is one of the objects that accompanied the Eucharistic gifts in the Great Entrance.

Due to the need to adjust the iconographic pattern of the Heavenly liturgy to the space and the thematic framework of the lowest register in the sanctuary, the painters of Markov Manastir had to make certain departures from the model. These may be observed in the composition of the first group of heavenly concelebrants approaching Christ the Archpriest. The purpose of placing the angel-deacon with ripidia in the second plane was undoubtedly to emphasize the two figures holding a large aër above their heads. Bearing in mind that in the late Byzantine period painting did not seek to illustrate ritual but to highlight its significance, we may assume that the intention behind depicting the large aër – which was regularly used in the pontifical liturgy since the fourteenth century113 in such a prominent place in the sanctuary apse was to duly emphasize its importance.

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The chalice in the hands of an angel-priest114 stands out by its size, shape, lavish decoration and the absence of a cover (figs. 18).115 A liturgical vessel of such a design was not uncommon among the objects that escorted the Holy Gifts in the iconography of the Heavenly Liturgy.116 It is carried by celebrant angels in major examples from the fourteenth century: paranagiaion from the Monastery of Xeropotamou on Mount Athos,117 frescoes from the Patriarchate of Peć,118 Dečani119 and Ravanica.120 The low base and two stems of the liturgical vessel closely correspond in shape to the krater, the vessel used for mixing water and wine.121 What prompts the attention is the shape, decoration, material and function of the chalice in Byzantine art, v. B. Pitarakis, La vaiselle eucharistique dans les Églises d’Orient, in: Pratique de l’eucharistie dans Églises d’Orient et d’Occident, I, 318–324.116 Taft, The Great Entrance, 206–213.

111 Spatharakis, Representations of the Great Entrance in Crete, 296, figs. 3–4; Ranoutsaki, Die Kunst, 80–85, figs. 23, 24.
112 Spatharakis, op. cit., 301, fig. 12. The colour photograph of the fresco has been published in Ranoutsaki, Die Kunst, fig. 120.
113 Mirković, Dve srpske plaštanice, 116–117.
114 The rule that only a priest is permitted to carry the chalice was defined in the Philotheos’ Diataxis, v. Trémpelas, Άγιος Ναός Λαμπήδων, Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη της Ντούλας Μουρίκη, Athens 2006, 130–131, figs. 34a, 35a.
115 A chalice of a similar shape and size can be found in the scene of the Communion of the Apostles, e. g. Staro Nagoričino, St. Nikola near Skopje, M. Lee Coulson, Old wine in new pitchers. Some thoughts on depictions of the chalice in the Communion of the apostles, 121 On the iconography of krater-like vessels in the Late Byzantine monumental paintings, v. Coulson, Old wine in new pitchers, 145–156. Few liturgical vessels from the Late Byzantine period have been preserved in monastery treasuries, v. A. Ballian, Liturgical implements, in: Byzantium. Faith and power (1261–1557), ed. H. C. Evans, New York 2004, 118. For the design of the krater in the Middle Byzantine period, v. an example from Novgorod (twelfth century), v. The glory of

![Fig. 18. Markov Manastir, angel-priest with chalice](image-url)
the content of the cup: three triangular particles of consecrated bread.\textsuperscript{122} It is observed that the particles are covered with semicircular lines in a very light shade of grey and red. We assume that they were meant to suggest that the cup was filled with the liquid consisting of water and wine (figs. 18 and 19).\textsuperscript{123} The uncovered chalice was most probably intended to suggest another important issue of the liturgical Eucharistic practice: the \textit{zeon} rite.\textsuperscript{124} According to the Diatxis of Philotheos Kokkinos, hot water infused with the Holy Spirit was added into the chalice during the prothesis rite and before the communion.\textsuperscript{125} The mixing of water and wine symbolizes the blood and water that flowed from Christ’s wound and it demonstrates the Orthodox Church’s doctrine of the incorruptibility of Christ’s body.\textsuperscript{126} In this context it is very important to draw attention to an eleventh-century liturgical source which describes the rite in which water is mixed with wine before Communion (the \textit{zeon} rite) according to the rules of the Great Church.\textsuperscript{127} Namely, in the manuscript Protheoria 36, it is explained that before the elevation of the Lamb, a small amount of warm water is poured into \textit{kraters} (κρατῆρας) or chalices (νηροθήρα) placed on the Holy Table.\textsuperscript{128}

It seems that the scene in Markov Manastir was largely influenced by the interpretation of Nicholas Kabaslas, who stressed the ecclesiological and pneumatological symbolism of the \textit{zeon} rite. The famous fourteenth-century Byzantine liturgist interpreted the practice of pouring hot water into the chalice as the Eucharistic Descent of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{129} Three triangular particles cannot find an appropriate visual analogy. Along with them, several tiny particles of different shapes can be observed in the left half of the liturgical vessel (fig. 18). Only two examples can be taken into consideration. The first example is a fragment of the complex liturgical composition depicted in the sanctuary of the aforementioned church of the Holy Trinity at Agia Trias, Crete; a few particles of bread can be seen in the chalice standing on the altar to the right of the paten (fig. 19).

Another possible interpretation for the rare motif from Markov Manastir remains in the sphere of speculation and cannot be proven. Nevertheless, it is based on a contextual analysis of the painted decoration of the sanctuary apse. By their shape and number, the three equilateral triangles suggest the Holy Trinity. Since this impression is further supported by the vertical contextual relationship between the scenes, i.e. by the fact that the trinitarian symbol in the form of a dove is also particularly highlighted in the scene of the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon


\textsuperscript{122} The unique representation of a triangular particle symbolising the Virgin placed on the paten to the left of the \textit{Amnos} can be found in the church of Holy Trinity, Agia Trias, Rethymno, Crete, cf. Spatharakis, Byzantine wall paintings of Crete, I, 14, pl. 1b, n. 14.

\textsuperscript{123} The old photo from the collection of the National Museum in Belgrade (inv. No. 1629B) shows that there were more lines in the chalice.

\textsuperscript{124} Cf. St. Symeon of Thessalonike, The liturgical commentaries, 205–206.

\textsuperscript{125} Bornert, Les commentaires, 199–200; Taft, Water into wine, 339–340.

\textsuperscript{126} PG 140, col. 464.

\textsuperscript{127} PG 150, 452B; Nicolas Kabaslas, Explication de la Divine liturgie, 206–210.

\textsuperscript{128} The blotting out of wine and water is repeated in the eastern Holy Table. The concealed chalice is seen in the hands of the angel-deacon, who approaches the western Holy Table in the angelic procession, contains four particles (fig. 13). The largest among them has a regular, round shape, while the remaining three are smaller and different in shape.

The uncovered chalice in the hands of an angel-priest in Markov Manastir, with particles covered by visible traces of wine and water, along with the \textit{zeon} rite, were probably meant to draw attention to those parts of the Eucharistic rite which were directly related to it. The Lamb is broken in four pieces (IC, XC, NI, KA), which are placed onto the paten to form a cross. The symbolic unification of the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood is performed by the priest who puts the IC particle into the chalice. After pouring warm water into the chalice (the \textit{zeon} rite), celebrants take the Communion with the Holy Blood and the Holy Body (the crumbled XC particle).\textsuperscript{131} After the Communion of celebrants in the sanctuary, and before the Communion of the faithful, NI and KA particles are also put in the chalice. Along with them, all particles consecrated during the prothesis rite are removed from the paten and placed in the chalice, where they are united with the Lord’s body.\textsuperscript{132} Hence, the chalice used in the Communion of Faithful contains three pieces of the Lamb and the particles consecrated during the prothesis rite. This custom was commented by Symeon of Thessalonike,\textsuperscript{133} and instructions can also be found in Serbian fourteenth-century \textit{leitourgika}.\textsuperscript{134} While highlighting that the faithful receive Communion only from the pieces of the Lamb, the Orthodox Church interprets the joining together of the particles consecrated during the prothesis rite and the Body of Christ as an act of receiving the divine blessing from Christ.\textsuperscript{135} However, the major problem to this hypothesis is the omission of the \textit{kalymma} and a spoon, which are also mentioned in the \textit{leitourgikon}.

Another possible interpretation for the rare motif from Markov Manastir remains in the sphere of speculation and cannot be proven. Nevertheless, it is based on a contextual analysis of the painted decoration of the sanctuary apse. By their shape and number, the three equilateral triangles suggest the Holy Trinity. This impression is further supported by the vertical contextual relationship between the scenes, i.e. by the fact that the trinitarian symbol in the form of a dove is also particularly highlighted in the scene of the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon

\textsuperscript{130} Spatharakis, Byzantine wall paintings of Crete, I, 15, 1b.

\textsuperscript{131} Similarly, several pieces of the XC particle in the Communion of the Apostles with the Holy Bread in the central register of the sanctuary apse in Markov Manastir are depicted as triangles.

\textsuperscript{132} Dečani No. 125, fol. 38 b–42a.

\textsuperscript{133} PG 155, 284–285; St. Symeon of Thessalonika, The liturgical commentaries, 223–231.

\textsuperscript{134} V. liturgical manuscript Corovci 7 (University Library in Belgrade), published in: Jevtić, Božanstvena liturgija, I, 490, n. 49.

\textsuperscript{135} PG 155, 284–285; St. Symeon of Thessalonika, The Liturgical Commentaries, 229.

\textsuperscript{136} In this context, it is noteworthy that Symeon of Thessalonike, in one of his commentaries, interpreted the composition of the bread from which the Lamb is cut as a symbol of the Holy Trinity, cf. PG 155, 265; cf. St. Symeon of Thessalonika, The liturgical commentaries, 189.
The Officiating Bishops in the diaconicon

The last segment of the liturgical and Eucharistic ensemble is placed in the diaconicon. The participants in the liturgical service of bishops, the texts on their scrolls, as well as their liturgical order were identified and interpreted by Cvetan Grozdanov (fig. 21). The texts on the scrolls were selected with the intention to highlight the most important sections of the Divine Liturgy according to John Chrysostom and thereby supplement the scene in the sanctuary with textual content.

The first in the line is St Gregory of Nyssa whose scroll is inscribed with the prayer uttered by the priest during the Cherubic Hymn: ΒΟΑΙΤΗΤΟ ΙΣΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΙ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΙ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΙ (No one bound by worldly desires and pleasures is worthy to approach). It marks the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful, which also includes the Great Entrance. Although the prayer of the Cherubic Hymn is very common in depictions of the Cherubic Hymn is very common in depictions of the Great Entrance, it is interesting to point out another liturgical troparion from the Can- on of Pentecost (Odes 3, 4), which is attributed to St John of Damascus, while the deacon is pouring warm water into the Holy Chalice.137

On the wall that separates the diaconicon and the naos. St Clement, KAHMHC, has a scroll with the text of the Prayer behind the Ambo, uttered by the priest after the communion, at the end of the liturgy of the faithful ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΝ ΛΟΥΣΑΝΟΣ, ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΙ, ΟΙΝΟΙ ΣΧΩΛΕΙΑΝ ΚΑΤΩ ΢ΩΣΤΩΝ ΟΙΝΟΙ ΧΑΡΤΑΙ. . . (Lord, bless those who praise You...).142 Although the title next to the figure of this saint does not contain the corresponding topographical reference, his features confirm that this is the holy Bishop of Ohrid.143 The procession of bishops ends with the image of St Blasios, ΤΟΙ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΙ, ΤΟΙ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΙ, ΤΟΙ ΟΙΝΟΙ ΧΑΡΤΑΙ, and the text of the prayer inscribed on his scroll — “fulfilment of the law” marks the end of the liturgy, ΕΛΣΗΜΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΝ ΟΙΝΟΙ ΧΑΡΤΑΙ.144 The text of this prayer was very rarely inscribed and there are only two more known examples in temporarily and geographically distant monuments — Arilje (1295/1296)145 and the Church of the Holy Cross in Val- samonero on Crete (fifteenth century).146

The patron of the town and the Archbishopric of Ohrid — St Clement († 916), found his place among the most respected holy fathers of the church.147 As exemplified by numerous painted portraits, in the fourteenth century, the veneration of this saint was widespread even beyond the boundaries of his diocese — in old Rascia, Kosovo and Metohija, northern Macedonia.148 In his analysis of St Clement’s portraits in the broader context of fourteenth-century painting, Dragan Vojvodić has stressed the special programmatic role of the depiction of St Clement in the Liturgical Service of Bishops in Markov Manastir.149 Such a choice could have been the result of a desire of the Petar or an adviser from ecclesiastical circles. The relations that King Marko maintained with the centre of the Ohrid Archbishopric should not be neglected: he commissioned a group of painters from Ohrid to paint his endowment.150 In any case, this solution could be analyzed in the context of King Marko’s state ideology: in accordance with the geopolitical circumstances and ethos

137 V. liturgical manuscript Čorović 7 (University Library in Belgrade), published in: Jevtić, Božanstvena liturgija, I, 489, n. 44. Cf. Goar, Eγκολόγια, 62. On the introduction of this troparion from the Canon of Pentecost, (Odes 3, 4), v. Tremplas, Αρχεία λειτουργίας, 137–138.

138 Cf. Brightmann, Liturgies Eastern and Western, 318. 4; G. Babić, Ch. Walter, The inscriptions upon liturgical rolls in Byzantine apse decoration, REB 34 (1976) 271 (12); Mirković, Pravoslavna liturgika II, 62; for the inscription v. Grozdanov, Iz ikonografije Markovog manastira, 84. For the frequency of the text from this prayer and its place in Byzantine and Serbian churches (eleventh–fifteenth centuries) v. Babić, Walter, The inscriptions, 273–278; Konstantinidé, O Melismó, 85; Andreev, Nadpsi, 57–58; Andreev, Addenda et corrigenda, 35–42.


nic structure of the population, both the cults of Serbian saints and those originating from Byzantine territories were nurtured. According to the Prayer behind the Ambo, which prays for the inheritance of God, the fullness of the Church and peace to priests, the ruler and the people, could reflect the expected intercession of the highly revered local saint, St Clement of Ohrid.

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In her analysis of the body of Byzantine and Serbian monuments from the Komnene and Palaiologan periods, Chara Konstantinidi has distinguished several systems according to which liturgical texts on the scrolls carried by bishops were arranged. Through these texts, the Eucharist was presented in two ways: either as a series of successive liturgical moments or as individual units. As it has been previously mentioned, the complex and rather detailed composition in the sanctuary of Markov Monastery was designed so as to unite and chronologically link several Eucharistic-liturgical themes; from the offering of the Holy Gifts, through the Great Entrance, to the actual performance of the archieratical liturgy is multiply reflected in the fresco. Along with the central figure of Christ the Archpriest and the earthly procession of the Great Entrance shaped as the hierarchical concelebration, other features of the archieratical form are also present. The reminiscences of the ceremonial washing of hands by the bishop after the Great Entrance are contained in the ever with water and a basin in the hands of angel-deacon, while the size and the way in which the aër is carried correspond to the description of the large aër in the archieratical chant, Thelesaloniki 1974.


Cvetkovic S., Liturgiska služba na Grigorije od Nova pred Hristos jerej od crkvata vo Psoča, Zbornik muzeja na Makedonija, srednovekovna umetnost 3 (Skopje 2001) 95-106.


У евхаристијским темама XIV века истакнуто је архијерејство Христово. Када је реч о групи композиција тематског најближих фресци у Марковом манастиру, једини велики вход који садржи и фигуру Христа Архијереја јесте онaj насликан у апсиди припада, капели посвећеној светом Фанурију, у истоименом манастиру у Валсамонеру на Криту (1431). Јединствену анђеску поворку ђакона и ђереа са часним даровима Христос у свечаном патријаријском саксу благословом десне руке дочекују испред олтара, док у левој држи службеник. Сличну литургијску улогу испуњава и Христос Велики Архијереј у олтарској апсиди Марковог манастира. Тренутак архијерејске литургије о коме је реч одређен текстом у приказаном службенику. Његова скромна очување не омогућује лаку идентификацију, али поједини фрагменти ipак се могу сматрати поузданим трагом. Такав пример јесте део речи на крају прве странице службеника - esti. Он би одговарао речи pri;estiE из почетног благослова анафоре, којом се "призивају од сваког лица Пресвете Тројице разна добра, од Бога Сина благодет, од Бога Оца љубав, а од Светог Духа причешће". Уколико је предложена реконструкција написа исправна, реч је о јединственом примеру текста почетног благослова анафоре у српском и византијском зидном сликарству.

Учење о Христовој првосвештеничкој служби изказано је и вертикалним устројством представа у оквиру апсидалне декорације. Свешиштевеном десантичке симболика језиком иконографије обједињује ликове Емануила у конхи апсиде и Христа Првосвештеника у најнижој зони. Повезаност елемената унутар тематског оквира Марковог манастира потврђује и евхаристијско-еклсиолошка симболика особених детаља на одећи Мајке Божије, која наглашава идеју о Богородици као симболу цркве.

За разумевање изгледа и места великог покривача у Великом ходу у Марковом манастиру важна је старија иконографска традиција. Преглед развијених представа Небеске литургије у копио указује на одређену просторну организацију у локацији и поретку свечане поворке, који су се сликали узгледним пријавама. Групу што је анђео ћакон с кадионицом дочекује пред небеским олтаром готово увек предводи анђео који маши рипидама, потом анђеи са аерима, за којима следе небески службеници са евхаристијским даровима. На тај начин, уз поштовање строгог хијерархиског поретка, поворка са светим даровима представљена је у Грачаници, Богородичиној цркви у Пећи, Дечанима. Аери нису увек исте величине и облика. Тамнина налаза призиву боје, неретко декорисана мотивом крста, на неколико начина прекрива раме и руку анђела ћакона (Грачаница, Пећ), а он ју је могао држати и преко главе (Дечани). На основу изложеног може се закључити да је поредак небеског дела Великог хода у Марковом манастиру обликован по узору на познате иконографске обрасце. Као и на нешто старијим примерима из истог столећа, небески службеници са патеном на глави следе тек након анђела са рипидама, свечом и аером. Када је реч о величини великог аера, она пак одговара правилома оновремене архијерејске литургије, описане у рубрици литургијског правила Димитрија Гемистоса (око 1380).

Ниска стопа и две дршке непокривеног литургијског сасуда великих димензија у рукама анђела свештеника изгледа као након ефективних веза у вези са небеским службеницима. На основу изложеног може се закључити да је поредак небеског дела Великог хода у Марковом манастиру обликован по узору на познате иконографске обрасце. Као и на нешто старијим примерима из истог столећа, небески службеници са патеном на глави следе тек након анђела са рипидама, свечом и аером. На основу изложеног може се закључити да је поредак небеског дела Великог хода у Марковом манастиру обликован по узору на познате иконографске обрасце. Као и на нешто старијим примерима из истог столећа, небески службеници са патеном на глави следе тек након анђела са рипидама, свечом и аером. На основу изложеног може се закључити да је поредак небеског дела Великог хода у Марковом манастиру обликован по узору на познате иконографске обрасце. Као и на нешто старијим примерима из истог столећа, небески службеници са патеном на глави следе тек након анђела са рипидама, свечом и аером. На основу изложеног може се закључити да је поредак небеског дела Великог хода у Марковом манастиру обликован по узору на познате иконографске обрасце. Као и на нешто старијим примерима из истог столећа, небески службеници са патеном на глави следе тек након анђела са рипидама, свечом и аером.