

# THE TRANSFER OF ICONS AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTS From the Russian Empire to Serbian Communities

Edited by  
NENAD MAKULJEVIĆ





**THE TRANSFER OF ICONS AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTS:  
FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE TO SERBIAN COMMUNITIES**

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# THE TRANSFER OF ICONS AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTS:

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## FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE TO SERBIAN COMMUNITIES

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**Nenad Makuljević**



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БЕОГРАДУ  
ФИЛОЗОФСКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ



**NONTRANS**

VISUAL CULTURE, PIETY  
AND PROPAGANDA:  
TRANSFER AND RECEPTION OF  
RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART IN THE BALKANS  
AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
(18TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY)



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# CONTENTS

*Nenad Makuljević*

Aid, Ideals, and Politics: The Transfer of Russian Sacred Visual Culture to Serbian Churches (from the 16th to the 20th Century) 6

*Irena Ćirović*

Church Art and Photography:  
Dušan Obrenović and Russian Models in Serbian Icon Painting 50

*Ana Kostić*

The Ruling Ideology of King Petar I Karađorđević and Russia:  
The Transfer of Russian Icons and Liturgical Items to Serbia 70

*Jelena Mežinski Milovanović*

Russian Icons on the Iconostases of Russian Military Chapels and  
St Alexander Nevsky Church in Belgrade Prior to the First World War 96

*Julijana Marković*

Russian Participation in the 1600th  
Anniversary Celebration of the Edict of Milan in Niš 114

*Ivana Ženarju Rajović*

19th Century Russian Icons in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren 134

*Marija Lakić*

Russian and Serbian Sacral Visual Culture in the 19th Century:  
Russian Donations and the Furnishing of the Orthodox Cathedral in Sarajevo 168

*Anita Marković*

The Iconostasis of the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac 200

*Snežana A. Cvetković*

The Gift of the Russian Monastic Cell of St. John Chrysostom of the  
Hilandar Monastery in the Context of the Dečani Question:  
The Icon of St. John Chrysostom 220

*Miloš Stanković*

Icons of Saint Tryphon:  
A Long Journey from Montenegro to Russia and Back 230

Nenad Makuljević

# Aid, Ideals, and Politics: The Transfer of Russian Sacred Visual Culture to Serbian Churches (from the 16th to the 20th Century)

Intensive and long-lasting cultural transfer took place during the modern era between the Russian Empire and Serbian Orthodox communities.<sup>1</sup> The roots of this process can be found in the Middle Ages, and it was driven by their shared Orthodox faith and the use of a common Church Slavonic language in liturgy and literature. St. Sava, the founder of the Serbian Church, was tonsured a monk in 1192 at the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos. This historical event can therefore be considered the inception of stronger Serbian-Russian ecclesiastical relations.

- 1 The existing literature on Russian-Serbian cultural and artistic ties is extensive. See: St. M. Dimitrijević, "Građa za srpsku istoriju iz ruskih arhiva i biblioteka", *Spomenik* LIII, drugi razred (Sarajevo 1922), 9-286; S. Radojčić, "Veze između srpske i ruske umetnosti u srednjem veku", *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta* I (1948), 241-258; S. Petković, "Ruski uticaj na srpsko slikarstvo XVI i XVII veka", *Starinar* XII (1961), 91-109; M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta* VII/1 (1963), 379-410; P. Vasić, "Ruski uticaji u srpskoj umetnosti", *Braničevo* X (1964); M. Jovanović, "Srpska likovna umetnosti i Rusija krajem XIX i početkom XX veka", *Saopštenja Republičkog zavoda za zaštitu spomenika kulture* XV (Beograd 1983), 119-126; M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, Novi Sad 1996; M. Savić, *Slikarstvo u srpskim crkvama sjeverne Dalmacije od kraja XIV do početka XX vijeka*, Beograd 2000, 159-170; N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 51-57, 159-181; N. Makuljević, "Piety, Ideology, and Orthodoxy: Russian Icons in Serbian Church Culture (17th-19th Centuries)", in: *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16th-early 20th Centuries)*, edited by Yuliana Boycheva, Seyssel: La Pomme d'or, 2016, 137-145; L. Gerd, *Russian Policy in the Orthodox East: The Patriarchate of Constantinople (1878-1914)*, Warsaw-Berlin: De Gruyter Open Ltd 2014, 1- 19; L. Gerd, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", in: *Christian Networks in the Ottoman Empire*, edited by E. Naxidou and Y. Konstantinova, Budapest-Vienna-New York: CEU Press 2024, 251-273. *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, priredili S. Dolgova - E. Ivanova - A. Turilov - T. Subotin-Golubović, Beograd - Moskva 2009; *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenti i materijali*, tom 2, priredili M. Jovanović-A. Timofejev-L. Kuz'micheva - E. Ivanova, Beograd - Moskva 2011.

The Ottoman conquests introduced new political and social dynamics to the Balkans. With the Serbian states losing their independence to the Ottoman Empire, the position of the Orthodox Church significantly changed. What was once the ruling state religion, now became subordinate to an Islamic state, making the functioning of the ecclesiastical organization challenging. During this period, the Russian state emerged as the most powerful and the only fully independent Orthodox nation. This led Balkan Orthodox Christians to turn to Russia for various forms of aid.

Appeals for Russian assistance continued from the onset of Ottoman rule until the First World War, with the earliest surviving documents detailing these requests dating back to the very beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The centuries-long cultural transfer between the Russian state and Serbian communities was highly complex, aligning with the specific social and political circumstances of the time and region where it unfolded. A contributing factor to the complexity of this process was the fact that, during the modern era, the Serbs lived under various state systems in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires and the Venetian Republic. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbian people also established their own state organizations where Orthodoxy was the state religion.

The political situation in the Balkans also prompted individual and collective migrations to the Russian Empire. Serbs, like other Orthodox Christians, found refuge in Russia and participated in spiritual and cultural life there. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw collective migrations as well. Two groups of Serbs from the Austrian Empire migrated, leading to the establishment of two administrative regions – New Serbia and Slaveno-Serbia, which existed between 1752 and 1764.<sup>2</sup> The numerous Serbian settlers in the Russian Empire helped maintain continuous Serbian-Russian connections.

The cultural transfer between Russia and Serbia unfolded in numerous ways, conditioned by the acquisition of Russian aid, ecclesiastical ideals, and political circumstances. The result of this centuries-long transfer is the presence of a large number of Russian books, icons, and liturgical objects in Serbian churches, the transfer of knowledge and skills from the Russian Empire to Serbian society, as well as a noticeable influence of various models of sacred visual culture in early modern Serbian church painting. While numerous archival documents exist, it is often not possible to determine the exact means by which many icons and other liturgical objects arrived in Serbian churches.

In this paper, we primarily deal with the chronological and contextual aspects of the transfer of Russian sacred visual culture to Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries. It is important to note that the term *Russian* in this context is not used in an ethnic or contemporary national sense. Instead, it exclusively denotes objects, icons, gifts, and books that originated from the territory of the Russian state.

2 M. Kostić, *Nova Srbija i Slavenosrbija*, Novi Sad 2001.

## Monastic Travels and Russian Aid in the 16th and 17th Centuries

The difficult living conditions faced by the Orthodox population in the Ottoman Balkans, led to an intensive pursuit of aid from Russian rulers. Monks from numerous monasteries sent requests for help and permission to collect alms throughout the Russian state. Existing documents indicate that the continuous process of seeking aid from Russian rulers can be traced from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. According to preserved archival materials, monks from all major Serbian monasteries appealed to the Russian court, including Mileševa, Studenica, Dečani, Hilandar, Papatrača, Ravanica, Rakovica, Rakovac, Krka, Krušedol, and Žitomislić.<sup>3</sup>

Existing archival materials reveal a fundamental pattern in how Russian aid was gathered. The monks would travel to the territory of the Russian state and plead to be received by the highest authorities. In their appeals, they highlighted the significance of their monasteries and the richness of their monastic relics. The supplicants emphasized that donors would be added to the list of benefactors for the assistance they provided. They often carried certain monastic objects, parts of saints' relics, or old icons, which they would present to such benefactors. Russian rulers granted aid to the monks and issued charters defining their rights, also stipulating the intervals at which they were permitted to return to Russian territory for assistance.

Documented examples from the Hilandar and Studenica monasteries illustrate the frequency of these journeys. Hilandar monks travelled across Russia from the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> They specifically emphasized the threats they faced not only from the Ottoman Empire but also from Greek monasteries. They believed the Slavic Orthodox community on Mount Athos was endangered by the dominant Greek monastic population. Travels to Russian territory were regulated by legal acts. Therefore, Hilandar monks were allowed to make visits and collect aid only at specific intervals. Initially these visits were arranged every three years, and later every seven years.

During their travels, Hilandar monks carried gifts for Russian rulers and benefactors.<sup>5</sup> They gifted relics from various saints, including St. John Chrysostom, St. Great Martyr Stephen, St. Lupus, St. Theodore Stratelates, St. Anthimos the Confessor, St. Stephen the New, and St. Andrew the First-Called. The Hilandar monks also gifted icons of St. Sava of Serbia and St. Simeon Nemanja, as well as St. King Milutin and St. Prince Lazar.

One of the most successful visits by Hilandar monks to Russia occurred in 1556. On that occasion, Tsar Ivan the Terrible granted them a furnished court in Kitay-gorod, Moscow, which served as their residence and generated additional financial resources through rental. On that occasion, they received other contributions, including church vessels, icons, and vestments and the imperial

3 M. Šakota, *Studenička riznica*, Beograd 1988, 62-73, A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV-XVII vek*, Beograd 2000, 207-220.

4 A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV-XVII vek*, 207-220.

5 A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV-XVII vek*, 216.



Fig. 1  
*Feodorovskaya Icon of the Mother of God, 1643*  
 Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos

family also gifted them an expensive curtain for the royal doors – a capetasma.<sup>6</sup>

In 1661, a copy of the miraculous Hilandar icon of the Mother of God of the Three Hands (Tricherousa) was brought and ceremoniously installed in the Church of the Resurrection of Christ in the New Jerusalem Monastery near Moscow. Although this icon was brought by Theophan the Serb, Archimandrite of the Athonite monastery of Kastamonitou, it significantly contributed to the spread of the Tricherousa cult and further boosted Hilandar's popularity in Russian Orthodox culture.<sup>7</sup> The deep spiritual connection between Hilandar and Russia was further affirmed by the dispatch of a large collection of Slavic manuscripts from Mount Athos during Patriarch Nikon's reforms, as well as the monastery's supply of Russian books and the translation of Russian spiritual literature.

Monks from the Studenica Monastery also frequently travelled to Russia, particularly during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Records indicate they travelled to collect

aid around 1629, 1655-56, 1662-63, 1671, 1686, 1691, 1699, 1703-04, 1709, and 1758-59.<sup>8</sup>

Preserved appeals from Serbian monasteries often highlight their dire state, not just financial difficulties, but also the destruction, looting, and desecration of icons, liturgical books, and church vessels. While the requests primarily sought approval for monetary contributions, known archival materials show that Serbian monks returned to their monasteries with numerous gifts.

In 1588, Tsar Feodor Ioannovich sent money and ornate vestments to Papraća Monastery.<sup>9</sup> The collection of aid and the creation of icons are further attested by a plea from Hieromonk Longin of

6 A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV-XVII vek*, 209.

7 A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV-XVII vek*, 216.

8 M. Šakota, *Studenička riznica*, 62-73

9 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 216.



Fig. 2  
 St. Leontius of Rostov, 16th century  
 Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos

Beočin. In 1622, he arrived with another monk, Levontey. The aid they received from Tsar Mikhail Theodorovich was used to commission icons for their monastery. Longin states he commissioned an icon of the Most Holy Mother of God of Tenderness (Umileniye), “according to Procopy’s letter,” for ten Rubles, and a “blessed cross” also for ten Rubles. Longin sold marten pelts from the imperial gift, receiving twenty Rubles. With this money, he commissioned twelve feast icons for the monastery, encasing them in silver for eight Rubles. He paid six Rubles for an icon of the Ascension of Christ and three Rubles for an image of St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker. Longin then commissioned “miraculous icons,” or “Deësis” for twenty Rubles. Having exhausted his funds, he sought additional aid from the Tsar to cover their production costs.<sup>10</sup>

Of exceptional importance is Longin’s information that he commissioned the

icon of the Mother of God “according to Procopy’s letter.” This most likely refers to the workshop and style of the renowned icon painter of that time, Procopy Ivanovich Chirin. A Russian icon of the Mother of God of Tenderness (Umileniye) type, dating precisely from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is preserved in Beočin Monastery.<sup>11</sup> This icon is encased, and its iconographic model corresponds to the Virgin of Vladimir icon.

In 1623, Bishop Antonije of Vršac visited Moscow. On that occasion, he received, among other items, an icon of the Epiphany of Jesus Christ overlaid with silver.<sup>12</sup> In 1651, monks from the Krušedol Monastery received numerous ecclesiastical books: an altar Gospel with evangelists, an interpretation of the Gospel, an Apostol, an Oktoikh, a Prologue, monthly Menaia, and the Lenten and Flowery Triodion.<sup>13</sup> The necessary ecclesiastical books were also received by the monks of

10 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 224.

11 V. Matić, *Manastir Beočin*, Novi Sad 2006, 106; 109.

12 St. M. Dimitrijević, “Građa za srpsku istoriju iz ruskih arhiva i biblioteka”, 278.

13 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 267.



Fig. 3  
*Catapetasma*  
 donated by Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible and his wife Anastasia in 1555  
 to the Hilandar Monastery  
 Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos

Mileševa in 1647 and 1653.<sup>14</sup> During their 1653 visit, the Mileševa monks also requested a cover for the reliquary of St. Sava. They then stated that the old cover had been gifted by Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich, i.e. Ivan the Terrible<sup>15</sup> (this gift must have occurred during his reign between 1533 and 1547). Metropolitan Mikhail of Kratovo and Kyustendil was very active during his stay in Russia and was connected with Patriarch Nikon.<sup>16</sup> In 1654, he embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, passing through Serbian territories. He then requested assistance to transport books and icons to the location of his former see. He required twelve carts, indicating that he carried a large number of items.<sup>17</sup> It is known that he travelled through Serbian lands to Mount Athos, where he spent two years.<sup>18</sup> He likely distributed these books and icons along this part of his journey.

Beyond monetary contributions, Studenica monks received numerous gifts. In 1655, they acquired icons, books, and “all church utensils” from Russian Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.<sup>19</sup> During a 1663 visit, Studenica monks received ornate priestly vestments

and a silk cover, embroidered with a silver lace cross, for the tomb of St. Simeon the Myrrh-flowing.<sup>20</sup>

In 1665, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich ordered a cover for the relics of St. Theodore Tiron in Hopovo Monastery. This cover was to be made of red velvet, three arshins long and two arshins wide, with a silk lining and silver lace crosses and borders.<sup>21</sup>

14 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 279.

15 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 279.

16 D. Kašić, "Mihajlo, mitropolit Kratovski (1648-1660.)", *Bogoslovlje*, (Beograd 1962), 17-27.

17 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 280-281.

18 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 292.

19 St. M. Dimitrijević, "Građa za srpsku istoriju iz ruskih arhiva i biblioteka", 140; M. Šakota, *Studenička riznica*, 65.

20 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 337.

21 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 315.



Fig. 4  
*St. John the Forerunner*  
 Ivan Maksimov, 1687  
 Galerija Matice srpske, Novi Sad



Fig. 5  
*St. Nicholas*  
 Spiridon Grigoryev, 1687  
 Galerija Matice srpske, Novi Sad



Fig. 6  
*Three Holy Hierarchs*  
 Tikhon Ivanov, 1687  
 Galerija Matice srpske, Novi Sad

## Russian Aid in the 18th Century

In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, a significant change occurred in the political and social context of the life of the Serbian people. Following the Austro-Turkish War, a portion of the clergy and people, led by Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević, migrated to the territory of the Austrian Empire in 1690.<sup>22</sup> After the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, certain Serbian monasteries in the Dalmatian hinterland fell under the rule of the Venetian Republic. Between 1717 and 1739, the region of northern Serbia was occupied by the Austrian Empire, and the subsequent Turkish reoccupation of these territories led to another migration into the Empire under Patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta in 1739.<sup>23</sup>

The complex political circumstances and the new areas where Serbian church life was organized in the 18<sup>th</sup> century prompted a new wave of supplies of Russian icons, liturgical objects, and books.<sup>24</sup> Although a segment of the Serbian population found itself under Christian rule – the

22 R. L. Veselinović, "Srbi u Velikom ratu 1683-1699", *Istorija srpskog naroda*, knj. III-1, urednik R. Samardžić, Beograd 1994, 530-572

23 *Istorija srpskog naroda*, knj. IV, tom 1, urednik S. Gavrilović, Beograd 1994.

24 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 379-410; I. I. Leshchilovskaia, *Serbskii narod i Rossiia v XVIII veke*, Sankt-Peterburg 2006, 115-128.



Fig. 7  
 Iconostasis, 1700-1720, Krka Monastery, Dalmatia, Croatia

Habsburg Empire and the Venetian Republic, which significantly eased their church life – the need for Russian aid persisted. In these circumstances, this aid also sought to contribute to the preservation of the Orthodox faith and protection from the process of Catholicisation of Serbs.<sup>25</sup>

The suffering of certain monasteries during the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century wars and the connections of individual monks with Russian diplomacy contributed to a new wave of aid, as exemplified by Rakovica Monastery. Hegumen Grigorije of Rakovica assisted Russian diplomats during the conclusion of the Treaty of Karlowitz, and in 1701, he travelled to Russia to collect aid for his monastery.<sup>26</sup> Due to his merits, Hegumen Grigorije received generous gifts, including a charter from Tsar Peter the Great, and supplied his monastery with icons. He acquired icons by painters from the Armory Chamber (Oruzhenaya Palata): Three Holy Hierarchs by Tikhon Ivanov, Mother of God with Christ and Prophets by Leontiy Stefanov, St. John the Forerunner by Ivan Maksimov, and St. Nicholas by Spiridon Grigoryev. He also brought enthroned icons of the Mother of God and Jesus Christ from Russia, which he gifted to Rakovica Monastery.<sup>27</sup>

The Krka Monastery suffered significantly during the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century wars. In 1703, the monks of this monastery appealed to Tsar Peter Alekseevich – Peter the Great. In their plea, they highlight-

25 *Jugoslovenske zemlje i Rusija u XVIII veku*, priredio V. Čubrilović, Beograd 1986.

26 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenta i materijali*, tom 1, 354; I. Ženarju Rajović, *Manastir Rakovica*, Beograd 2023, 36-40.

27 I. Ženarju Rajović, *Manastir Rakovica*, 192-207.



Fig. 8  
*Holy Mandylion*  
 Tikhon Ivanov Filatyev, 1700–1720  
 Krka Monastery, Dalmatia, Croatia

ed that their monastery had been destroyed and plundered by the Turks, church utensils stolen, and sacred vestments, books, and icons burned.<sup>28</sup> The Tsar granted the request made by the Krka Monastery monks and approved their aid. The Krka Monastery possessed two printed Russian Commemoration Books. The older one, for Patriarch Andrian, which dates from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the more recent one, from the time of Tsar Peter the Great.<sup>29</sup> This latter Commemoration Book lists the names of Russian benefactors of the Krka Monastery between 1705 and 1716. Most likely, during the intensive collection of aid from Russia in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the church of Krka Monastery received a new iconostasis with Russian icons.<sup>30</sup> The icon of the Holy Mandylion (Not-Made-By-Hands) was signed by Tikhon Ivanov Filatyev in 1705. Tikhon Ivanov is one of the most significant painters of the Moscow Armory Chamber. On the Krka iconostasis, apart from the four enthroned and central icons in the

upper zone, all other icons are works of a Russian workshop. This includes icons on the Royal Doors, which were later transferred to a new door structure, as well as the feast icons, apostolic icons, and the large cross at the top of the iconostasis. In total, there are over thirty Russian icons.<sup>31</sup>

Serbs in Russian state service played a significant role in the transfer of Russian sacred visual culture to Serbian churches. Mihajlo Miloradović and Count Sava Vladislavić Raguzinsky stand out as two prominent examples. The Miloradović family, originating from Herzegovina, maintained close ties with Žitomislić Monastery, serving as its benefactors and important contributors.<sup>32</sup> Some family members emigrated to Russia but remained strongly connected to the monastery. Miha-

28 St. M. Dimitrijević, "Građa za srpsku istoriju iz ruskih arhiva i biblioteka", *Spomenik SKA*, drugi razred 45, (Sarajevo 1922), 177-178.

29 V. Mošin-M. Radeka, "Ćirilski rukopisi u sjevernoj Dalmaciji", *Starine JAZU*, knj. 48, (Zagreb 1958), 201; D. Novakov, "Ženska osobna imena u Pomeniku manastira Krke (XVII-XIX stoljeće)", *Folia onomastica Croatica*, no. 32 (Zagreb 2023), 71-92.

30 Russian icons on the iconostasis of Krka Monastery were noted earlier in Serbian literature: M. Savić, *Slikarstvo u srpskim crkvama sjeverne Dalmacije*, Beograd 2000, 167-170; The iconostasis was described in detail by B. Čolović, but he incorrectly read the name of the signed painter as Mikhail Ivanov, son of Filatey: B. Čolović, *Manastir Krka*, Zagreb 2006, 96, 105-107.

31 B. Čolović, *Manastir Krka*, 96, 105-107.

32 Lj. Kojić, *Manastir Žitomislić*, Sarajevo 1983, 21-28.



Fig. 9  
*The Last Supper*, 18th century, Žitomislić Monastery, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Fig. 10  
*The Crucifixion*, 18th century  
 Žitomislić Monastery, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Fig. 11  
*Burning Bush*, 19th century  
 Žitomislić Monastery, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Fig. 12  
 St. Sava of Serbia  
 Moscow, 1739  
 Savina Monastery, Montenegro

jlo Miloradović visited the monastery in 1707, bringing nine Russian church books gifted by Tsar Peter the Great.<sup>33</sup> Mihajlo Miloradović, a colonel in the Russian army, returned to the region in 1711 to help organize an uprising in Montenegro against the Turks.<sup>34</sup> Žitomislić Monastery houses several Russian icons, presumed to be gifts from Miloradović.<sup>35</sup>

Count Sava Vladislavić Raguzinsky was a distinguished diplomat in the service of Tsar Peter the Great.<sup>36</sup> In his 1738 will, he designated gifts for specific Serbian churches. He allocated a complete set of church books for the Trebinje church, whose monks were then residing in Savina Monastery, and for monastery Žitomislić. He commissioned silver church vessels for the church in Topla, near Herceg Novi in Boka Kotorska. Among Vladislavić's gifts, this church still preserves a cross, chalice, paten, and a Gospel book. According to old inven-

tories, Vladislavić also donated a censer, a lance, three patens, and an asterisk. One silver plate from this collection is now held in Žitomislić Monastery. Sava Vladislavić also gifted 32 liturgical books to the Praskvica Monastery, and one Menaion each to the Church of St. Peter and Paul in Risan and Podlastva Monastery.<sup>37</sup> Sava's relative, Matej Pavlov, donated an icon of St. Sava of Serbia to Savina Monastery. An inscription on the icon notes its creation in Moscow in 1739.<sup>38</sup>

The Savina Monastery, along with other monasteries and churches in the Boka Kotorska region then under Venetian rule, received various gifts from the Russian Empire throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>

33 Lj. Kojić, *Manastir Žitomislić*, 25.

34 G. Stanojević-M. Vasić, *Istorija Crne Gore*, knj. 3, tom 1, Titograd 1975, 251-253.

35 Lj. Kojić, *Manastir Žitomislić*, 148-154, 184-194.

36 J. Dučić, *Grof Sava Vladislavić*, Beograd 2020.

37 J. Dučić, *Grof Sava Vladislavić*, 253; Lj. Kojić, *Manastir Žitomislić*, 169; G. Ž. Komar - N. Rašo, *Hercegovačka Saborna crkva Svetoga Vaznesenja Hristovog i njena opština*, Herceg Novi 2013, 17-18, 28-29, 143; N. Rašo, *Rusija i Boka 1697-1918*, Herceg Novi 2018, 22-23.

38 D. Medaković, *Manastir Savina, velika crkva, riznica, rukopisi*, Novi Sad 2023, 106.



Fig. 13  
*Holy Mandylion*, mid 18th century  
 Savina Monastery, Montenegro

century. Hieromonk Simeon Nikšićevski of Savina collected substantial aid in money, books, vestments, and other church utensils in the 1770s and early 1780s.<sup>39</sup> He also donated a Russian embroidered icon to the monastery.<sup>40</sup> When the iconostasis was installed in the newly built Great Church of Savina Monastery in 1788, four Russian icons, donated by members of the Stratinić/Stratimirović family, were placed among the enthroned icons.<sup>41</sup>

Preserved wills reveal that citizens of Boka Kotorska owned Russian icons, which they subsequently bequeathed to churches and monasteries. In his 1742 will, Simo Milutinov of Herceg Novi left icons to the Cathedral Church in Topla, including a “Moscow icon of St. Elijah on chariots, with gilded edges” and a “Moscow Christ’s Mandylion.”<sup>42</sup> He bequeathed to Savina Monastery a “Moscow-style encased Icon of Christ,” which was to be kept in the Church of St. Nicholas in Topla. A gilded “Moscow” icon of

the Holy Trinity was donated to the “Holy Trinity Church beneath the mountain,” and a “Moscow” icon of St. Nicholas was given to the Church of St. Nicholas in Baošići.<sup>43</sup> Four Russian enthroned icons were placed on the iconostasis of Savina Monastery, which was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Warfare significantly fostered connections between the Montenegrin Metropolitanate and Russia. At Peter the Great’s command, Mihajlo Miloradović arrived and, with Metropolitan Danilo, initiated a war against the Ottoman Empire in 1711.<sup>44</sup> Following this military campaign, increased Russian aid flowed to Cetinje Monastery, as well as to other churches and monasteries within the

39 M. Matić, *Manastir Savina u XVIII veku*, Podgorica-Cetinje-Beograd 2022, 124-129.

40 D. Medaković, *Manastir Savina, velika crkva, riznica, rukopisi*, 104.

41 D. Medaković, *Manastir Savina, velika crkva, riznica, rukopisi*, 93, 106.

42 G. Ž. Komar - N. Rašo, *Hercegovska Saborna crkva Svetoga Vaznesenja Hristovog i njena opština*, 162.

43 G. Ž. Komar - N. Rašo, *Hercegovska Saborna crkva Svetoga Vaznesenja Hristovog i njena opština*, 163.

44 G. Stanojević - M. Vasić, *Istorija Crne Gore*, knj. 3, tom 1, 251-253.



Fig. 14  
 Mother of God Vladimirskaya-Vinča-Bezdin  
 Episcopal Palace Vršac, Serbia

Serbia. He initially placed the icon in the Belgrade Cathedral Church. Monk Paisius then renovated the Vinča Monastery and installed the icon there on a special throne.<sup>48</sup> After the re-conquest of these territories by the Turks, it was moved to Bezdin Monastery, earning it the new epithet of “Vinča – Bezdin.”<sup>49</sup>

Montenegrin Metropolitanate. In 1715, Metropolitan Danilo received a gramota (charter) from Peter the Great, along with church vessels, vestments, books, and financial assistance.<sup>45</sup> In 1752, Metropolitan Vasilije Petrović also visited Russia. His mission was primarily political in nature, but he managed to publish *The History of Montenegro* in Moscow in 1754 and return to Montenegro with Russian aid in the form of books, church utensils, and 5,000 rubles for the Cetinje Monastery.<sup>46</sup>

During the period between 1717 and 1737, when Austria also occupied part of northern Serbia, the seeking of Russian aid continued, specifically for teachers and books. In this period, the region experienced a wave of renovations for numerous churches and monasteries. One example of icon transfer from Russia and the revitalization of church life in northern Serbia was the bringing of a copy of the miraculous Mother of God Vladimirskaya icon.<sup>47</sup> Monk Paisius, a Greek from Corfu, brought this copy from Russia to

45 M. Dragović, "Prilozi za istoriju Crne Gore vremena mitropolita Danila, Save i Vasilija Petrovića iz moskovskog i petrogradskog arhiva Ministarstva inostranih djela", *Spomenik XXV*, (Beograd 1895), 2-3.

46 G. Stanojević - M. Vasić, *Istorija Crne Gore*, knj. 3, tom 1, 328-330.

47 M. Timotijević, "Bogorodica Bezdinska i versko-politički program patrijarha Arsenija IV Jovanovića", *Balkanica XXXII-XXXIII* (2003), 311-339.

48 I. Ruvarac, "Sudbina manastira Vinče u Srbiji", *Starinar* 2, (Beograd 1887), 35-38; R. Grujić, "Prilozi za istoriju Srbije u doba austrijske okupacije (1718-1739)", *Spomenik SKA LII*, drugi razred knj. 44, (1914), 167.

49 Timotijević, Miroslav, "Bogorodica Bezdinska i versko-politički program patrijarha Arsenija IV Jovanovića", 311-339.



Fig. 15  
*Iconostasis, Vasily Romanovich, 1760s, Church of the Holy Virgin, Morović, Serbia*



Fig. 16  
*Jesus Christ, despotic icon*  
 Vasilij Romanovich, 1760s  
 Church of the Holy Virgin, Morović, Serbia

Inventories of Serbian churches from the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century show that they already possessed a large number of Russian icons. In 1733, the library of the Belgrade Metropolitanate contained, among other items, “5 various Moscow icons, painted on a single wooden panel each... 1 icon of the Mother of God, which the Jerusalem Archimandrite brought from Moscow on a linden panel, very beautiful, but without a frame...”<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, in the church court in Dalj, Slavonia, 11 Moscow icons were recorded.<sup>51</sup>

A significant stage in the development of Serbian church painting was the influence of iconographic models and the arrival of painters from the Russian state into the Karlovci Metropolitanate. In the wall paintings of Bođani Monastery, the work of Hristofor Žefarović, shows the influence of Western European graphics, which arrived via “Russian-Ukrainian” models.<sup>52</sup> Russian iconographic influences were also present in Žefarović’s engravings.<sup>53</sup> The influence of illustrations from Russian liturgical books and theological literature became one of the constants of Serbian visual culture within the Habsburg Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup>

One of the first known Russian painters to work for the Serbian Church was Grigoriy Gerasimov Moskoviter, who painted icons on the iconostasis in Donja Kovačica in 1724.<sup>55</sup> The arrival of Iov Vasilyevich and Vasilij Romanovich during the 1740s was of exceptional importance. Their arrival is believed to be linked to the activities of Dionisije Novaković, a student of the Kyiv

Theological Academy, who advocated for reforms within the Karlovci Metropolitanate.<sup>56</sup> After his initial painting work on the iconostasis of Bođani Monastery, Iov Vasilyevich gained a prominent

50 St. M. Dimitrijević, "Građa za srpsku istoriju iz ruskih arhiva i biblioteka", 110.

51 St. M. Dimitrijević, "Građa za srpsku istoriju iz ruskih arhiva i biblioteka", 160.

52 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 390-394.

53 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 388-389.

54 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 389-390.

55 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 391; D. Medaković, "Ikonostas Grigorije Gerasimova Moskovitera u Donjoj Kovačici", *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* 21, (Novi Sad 1985), 369-375.

56 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, 74-75.

position in the Karlovci Metropolitanate. In 1743, Patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović issued an order that aimed to prohibit the work of unskilled zoographers and recommended the work of “Muscovite Iov.”<sup>57</sup> Iov Vasilyevich’s prominent status was further confirmed by his work in the highly important Krušedol Monastery.<sup>58</sup> Vasilyevich transmitted the Kyiv model of icon painting to his students. He had a painting school in Sremski Karlovci, and his workshop provided artistic education to Vasa Ostojić, Janko Halkozović, Joakim Marković, Nikola Nešković, Ambrozije Janković, and Teodor Stefanović Gologlavac.<sup>59</sup>

Vasiliy Romanovich worked in the western regions of Srem and Slavonia, where he painted a significant number of iconostases.<sup>60</sup> Painters trained in Kyiv, such as Stefan Tenecki and Jovan Popović, also contributed to the transfer of the Kyiv icon-painting model.<sup>61</sup> Tenecki developed his activities in the Banat region, working for both Orthodox and Uniate churches. Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Kyiv’s influence remained exceptionally strong in the spiritual culture of Serbs within the Habsburg Monarchy.

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Serbian monks continued to send petitions and travel to Russia to collect alms. In 1733, Bishop Maksim of Sebeš received an archieratical vestment from Moscow.<sup>62</sup> Based on earlier aid to Metropolitan Danilo, Montenegrin Metropolitan Sava appealed to Empress Elizabeth for help in 1743, who generously endowed him. For the churches and clergy in Montenegro, he received sets of archieratical vestments, for feasts, Sundays, and panikhidas, as well as vestments for three priests, one archdeacon, and two deacons. He also received materials of various colours for priestly vestments and coverings for the Holy Table in churches and monasteries that had suffered from Turkish attacks, along with five silver sets of church vessels, each including a chalice, paten, asterisk, spoon, lance, and three vozdukh.<sup>63</sup>

Teofil Aleksić, hegumen of Gomirje Monastery, travelled to the Russian Empire multiple times. Besides a large number of books, he brought other items. After his first journey in 1754, he gifted, among other things, Bishop Danilo Jakšić with 13 various icons.<sup>64</sup> During his second journey, Aleksić commissioned silver and gilded patens and asterisks in Saint Petersburg.<sup>65</sup> On this trip, he met Simeon Baltić, a monk from Hopovo Monastery, in Kyiv, who was studying icon painting there. On 10 June 1762, Aleksić made an agreement with Baltić for him to come to Gomirje to develop

57 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, 31-32.

58 M. Timotijević, *Manastir Krušedol*, knj. I, Beograd 2008, 263-313.

59 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, 78.

60 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, 79-80.

61 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, 81, 94-97.

62 I. I. Leshchilovskaia, *Serbskii narod i Rossiia v XVIII veke*, 123.

63 M. Dragović, "Prilozi za istoriju Crne Gore vremena mitropolita Danila, Save i Vasilija Petrovića iz moskovskog i petrogradskog arhiva Ministarstva inostranih djela", 3-7.

64 Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, knj. V, Beograd 1925, 118; D. Kašić, *Srpski manastiri u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, Beograd 1996, 51.

65 D. Kašić, *Srpski manastiri u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, 86.

icon-painting activities and train students in painting.<sup>66</sup> This agreement was realised, and Simeon Baltić established his own icon-painting school, nurturing artistic messages assimilated during his stay in Kyiv.

During their journeys to Russia to gather aid, monks commissioned not only icons, liturgical objects, and vestments, but also engraved depictions of their monasteries.<sup>67</sup> Today, known graphic depictions of Hilandar and Studenica, printed in Moscow, exist. The depiction of Hilandar Monastery was created in 1757,<sup>68</sup> and two mutually similar depictions of Studenica in the following year, 1758.<sup>69</sup>

One example that illustrates the method of collecting aid in the Russian Empire during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in more detail comes from Gerasim Zelić's autobiography.<sup>70</sup> Zelić, a monk from Krupa Monastery in Dalmatia, stayed in Russia twice, in 1782-1783 and 1787-1788. The initial reason for his journey was to learn icon painting. Already during his first trip, he tried to collect substantial aid but was unsuccessful. He received instructions from "Damaskin Artsizan," Archimandrite of Lubny Monastery, on how to proceed if he wished to collect contributions for his monastery. Archimandrite Damaskin advised him that many archimandrites from Jerusalem, Mount Athos, and other regions travelled and collected aid across Russia, and recommended that Zelić return to Dalmatia, be elevated to the rank of archimandrite, and then, with a letter from his hegumen and a plea for his monastery's aid, begin collecting assistance, assuring him that he would then receive approval from the Holy Synod.<sup>71</sup>

Gerasim Zelić's second journey to the Russian Empire, and his entry into the Empire, proved exceedingly difficult and complicated.<sup>72</sup> At the time of his arrival, there was a significant shift in aid approval; from 1785, the Holy Synod, rather than the imperial chancellery, issued authorisations for foreign clerics to collect aid.<sup>73</sup> Zelić did not receive this approval, yet he still managed to collect substantial assistance. The Holy Synod gifted Zelić a complete set of liturgical books, but he received the most significant aid from members of a merchant family in Saint Petersburg. Along with monetary contributions, Zelić received, among other items, gold-woven, silver-woven, and silk fabrics, ecclesiastical vessels, a large enthronement cross, a tabernacle (artophorion) made of gilded silver adorned with rubies, gold and silver materials for phelons and sticharia, and small icons of the Mother of God of the Life-Giving Spring and St. Nicholas "encased in silver and gild-

66 M. Grbić, *Karlovačko vladičanstvo*, knj. II, Karlovac 1891, 168-169; D. Kašić, *Srpski manastiri u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, 52.

67 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 387-388.

68 D. Davidov, *Srpska grafika XVIII veka*, Beograd 2006, 354-356.

69 M. Šakota, *Studenička riznica*, 73, 224-226; D. Davidov, *Srpska grafika XVIII veka*, 356-357.

70 G. Zelić, *Žitije*, Beograd 2020; D. B. Radojević, "Gerasim Zelić o Rusiji (Prilog proučavanju žitija Gerasima Zelića)", *Bratstvo XXV* (Beograd 2021), 65-76.

71 G. Zelić, *Žitije*, 71-72.

72 G. Zelić, *Žitije*, 124-129.

73 G. Zelić, *Žitije*, 143.

ed.”<sup>74</sup> During his return, Zelić stayed in Novomirgorod in “New Serbia” (present-day Ukraine) with Major Ioan Skorich, where he commissioned the tailoring of phelons, epitachelions, epimanikia, sticharia, orarions, and a gold-woven curtain for the Royal Doors and around the Holy Table, using the materials he had received. In Novomirgorod, he also acquired three icons ordered from Kyiv by Gavra Petrović, along with wooden carved Royal Doors for Krupa Monastery, featuring “vividly represented figures of the four evangelists, and the Annunciation of the Mother of God.”<sup>75</sup>

Trade played an important role in the transfer of Russian books, liturgical objects, and sacred visual culture. According to available sources, Russian merchants were present throughout the areas inhabited by the Serbian people from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The known routes of Russian book and icon merchants in the 18<sup>th</sup> century indicate their presence from Banat to the Adriatic Sea, and also their movement through Ottoman territory to Bulgarian regions.<sup>76</sup> Their presence in the Habsburg Monarchy was not viewed favourably by the authorities, who tightened controls on the import of Russian books.<sup>77</sup>

Primary sources detailing the process of trade and the specific goods brought by Russian merchants are scarce. Trade also depended on international political relations. With the outbreak of the Russian-Ottoman conflict in 1708, the Ottomans began halting Russian icon merchants at the borders. During this time, a group of icons was confiscated in Sofia and sent to Istanbul, while approximately 500 icons were detained in Galați. An order to stop Russian merchants was also sent to the pashas in Belgrade and Timișoara.<sup>78</sup> These data suggest that the trade in Russian icons was highly developed and extensive.

Better political circumstances fostered the continuation of trade. In 1754, Archpriest Ananiy Fedorov of the Suzdal Cathedral recorded that many inhabitants of Kholuy and Palekh, centres of icon-painting activity, travelled abroad to Poland, Austria, Slavonia, Serbia, and Bulgaria to sell icons.<sup>79</sup> Evidence of trade in sacred objects is found on the back of a Russian icon depicting a Feast, from Orahovica Monastery. An inscription states that Hieromonk Josif Kuzmanović purchased this icon from a “Muscovite” for 5 forints in Orahovica in 1785.<sup>80</sup> The trading ties between the Russian Empire and Serbian and Balkan Orthodox communities are also exemplified by the case of Hristifor Žefarović. Žefarović was a prominent painter, engraver, and merchant of ecclesiastical items, including icons, books, and textiles. He resided and died in Moscow in 1753.<sup>81</sup>

74 G. Zelić, *Žitije*, 149-153.

75 M. Jovanović, “Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku”, 395; G. Zelić, *Žitije*, 168.

76 M. Jovanović, “Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku”, 383, 396-397; I. I. Leshchilovskaia, *Serbskii narod i Rossiia v XVIII veke*, 118-123.

77 M. Jovanović, “Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku”, 383.

78 I. I. Leshchilovskaia, *Serbskii narod i Rossiia v XVIII veke*, 123.

79 I. I. Leshchilovskaia, *Serbskii narod i Rossiia v XVIII veke*, 122.

80 V. Borčić, *Zbornik ikona Odjela Srba u Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb 1974, 68-69.

81 D. Davidov, *Srpska grafika XVIII veka*, 118.



Fig. 17  
*Royal doors, iconostasis, 1780s, Krupa Monastery, Dalmatia, Croatia*

## Russian Aid, Faith, and Politics in the 19th Century

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a unique historical situation. This period saw the creation of the Serbian state, the rise of Serbian national politics, and new political and social developments in the Russian Empire. The Serbian people lived under various political systems – Principality/ Kingdom of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires – all of which influenced the specific characteristics of the transfer of Russian sacred visual culture.

### *Serbia*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ecclesiastical and political authorities of the young Serbian state established stronger and more complex cultural and political relations with the Russian Empire.<sup>82</sup> This period also saw the continuation of the commercial transfer of Russian sacred visual culture. One example of this trade dates from the rule of Prince Miloš, as noted in a letter from Stefan Popović of Čačak dated 5 February 1831. It states that some “Russians” arrived, bringing “precious church items,” such as crosses, ready-made and expensive vestments, and “precious materials” for sticharia and epitrachelions.<sup>83</sup> In later years, there is no information about itinerant merchants, suggesting a decrease in their number within the Principality-Kingdom of Serbia.

The Belgrade Metropolitanate and the Russian Consulate in Belgrade played significant roles in the development of Serbo-Russian political and cultural ties. As early as 1808, during the First Serbian Uprising, Belgrade Metropolitan Leontius, a friend of the Russian representative Konstantin Rodofikin, requested the Russian Holy Synod to send consecrated Holy Myrrh.<sup>84</sup> In late 1844, in an effort to preserve the Orthodox faith and church from Catholic influence, Belgrade Metropolitan Petar Jovanović sought assistance from the Russian consul, Grigoriy Ivanovich Danilevsky. He aimed to organize the church in the Principality of Serbia according to the Russian model. To this end, he requested aid in liturgical books and asked for several young students to be educated in Russian Orthodox academies in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Kyiv.<sup>85</sup> In May 1845, Consul Danilevsky reported to Count K. V. Nesselrode, who managed the foreign affairs of the Russian Empire, with proposals for Russo-Serbian cooperation and the expansion of Russian influence. He suggested allocating funds for the education of Serbian theologians, supplying Serbia with books, icons, and other necessary items for liturgical needs, and donating a chalice, Gospel, and all other items

82 N. A. Popov, *Srbija i Rusija od Kočine krajine do Svetoandrejske skupštine*, Beograd 1870; E. P. Kudriavceva, *Rossiiā i stanovlenie serbskoj gosudarstvenosti (1812-1856)*, Moskva 2009.

83 Arhiv SANU, br. 8603/7

84 L. Gerd, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", 252-253.

85 *Politicheskie i kul'turnye otnosheniia Rossii i Serbii v 30-50-e gody XIX veka. Dokumenty rossiiskogo MID*, edited by E. P. Kudriavceva, Moskva 2013, 341-342.



to the Belgrade Cathedral Church, whose construction was nearing completion. He also proposed giving similar gifts to monasteries in the Principality of Serbia, namely Studenica, Ravanica, Manasija, St. Roman, and Sretenje.<sup>86</sup> In June 1845, the Holy Synod approved the education of Serbian theologians and designated 100 liturgical books for churches in Serbia, including Menaia, Apostols, large Gospels, small Gospels, Lenten and Flowery Triodions, and Trebniks.<sup>87</sup> Count Nesselrode proposed, and Tsar Nicholas I approved, that Metropolitan Petar Jovanović be awarded a panagia adorned with diamonds, valued at 2,000 silver Rubles from the imperial cabinet, for his services in fostering the rapprochement and acceptance of Russian Orthodoxy within the Principality of Serbia.<sup>88</sup>

In 1852, Dmitry Sergejevich Levshin, the Russian Consul in Serbia, observed that the vestments of the priests at the Belgrade Cathedral Church were not in accordance with Orthodox church forms, and were old and in poor condition. A request was subsequently sent to Tsar Nicholas I, who approved the dispatch of new vestments.<sup>89</sup> The Serbian writer Sima Milutinović Sarajlija wrote to Ober-Procurator Nikolai Protasov, expressing a desire to organize cheaper sales of Russian books than those offered by the Russian mission in Belgrade. He also requested the introduction of the Russian language at the Great School, leading to two teachers being sent from Russia.<sup>90</sup> Significant aid for churches in Serbia was collected in Moscow. A portion was dispatched in 1852, while another part was brought by Ekaterina Milashevich, the wife of the Russian Consul in Belgrade, in 1857. In total, 362 church utensils, crafted by Verhotsev, were sent.<sup>91</sup>

In June 1858, for the new church in Despotovica (today Gornji Milanovac), a “very precious Gospel, richly adorned with velvet and silver casing,” was received from Russia “through His Excellency Colonel Milošević, the Imperial Russian Consul-General in Belgrade.”<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, this gift was interpreted as a donation from Russian Tsar Alexander II, as inscribed on it.<sup>93</sup>

The connection between the Serbian state and Russia also led to the dispatch of Serbian students to Russian schools. The first group, consisting of six students, included many individuals who later became influential in Serbia’s social and political life. One of them was Metropolitan Mihailo

86 L. Gerd, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", 258; *Politicheskie i kul'turnye otnosheniia Rossii i Serbii v 30–50-e gody XIX veka. Dokumenty rossiiskogo MID*, 347-350.

87 *Politicheskie i kul'turnye otnosheniia Rossii i Serbii v 30–50-e gody XIX veka. Dokumenty rossiiskogo MID*, 351-352, 354-357.

88 *Politicheskie i kul'turnye otnosheniia Rossii i Serbii v 30–50-e gody XIX veka. Dokumenty rossiiskogo MID*, 414-415.

89 E. P. Kudriavceva, *Rossiia i stanovlenie serbskoj gosudarstvenosti (1812-1856)*, 207; *Politicheskie i kul'turnye otnosheniia Rossii i Serbii v 30–50-e gody XIX veka. Dokumenty rossiiskogo MID*, 435-436.

90 L. Gerd, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", 259.

91 L. Gerd, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", 259.

92 *Srbiia, Srbske novine*, br. 84, ( Beograd 24.07. 1858), 1.

93 A. Jelić, *Crkve brvnare na teritoriji opštine Gornji Milanovac*, Gornji Milanovac 2024, 66.



Fig. 19  
 Apostles, iconostasis, 1890s, Church of Saint Stephen the First-Crowned, Dobra, Serbia

Jovanović, who headed the Belgrade Metropolitanate from 1858. He played an exceptional role in transferring contemporary Russian Orthodox theology and spiritual culture to Serbia<sup>94</sup> and was closely associated with the Slavophile movement.<sup>95</sup>

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Serbian firms began the organized import of Russian sacred visual culture, largely owing to Metropolitan Mihailo.<sup>96</sup> During his visit to the Slavonic Committee in Moscow in October 1869, the Metropolitan had fruitful discussions regarding sending Serbian students for education in Russia and importing Russian icons, liturgical items, and books.<sup>97</sup> In the premises of the Chudov Monastery, where the Metropolitan was accommodated, Ivan Ivanovich Chetverikov, a member of the Moscow Committee, organized an exhibition of “all

94 On Metropolitan Mihailo’s influence on ecclesiastical painting in Serbia: N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 51-57; A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 89-94.

95 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Filozofski fakultet, Beograd 2021, 47-50.

96 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 51-57.

97 "Kako je naš visokopreosvešteni G. Mitropolit posetio slovenski komitet u Moskvi", *Pastir*, br. 28, (Beograd 10. 11. 1869.), 615-624.



Fig. 20  
*Transfiguration of Jesus*, iconostasis, 1890s, Church of Saint Stephen the First-Crowned, Dobra, Serbia

liturgical items.” Metropolitan Mihailo “found... that they were inexpensive in quality and could sell well in Serbia.”<sup>98</sup> On that occasion, “one of the merchants engaged in this business, A. M. P., expressed his agreement to send framed and silver-plated icons to Belgrade at his own expense, while I. I. Chetverikov undertook to provide other liturgical items, wishing to lay the foundation for a work so beneficial to Orthodox Serbia.”<sup>99</sup> It was simultaneously agreed that Russian liturgical books would be sold in Serbia, with Metropolitan Mihailo appointing Belgrade bookseller Velimir Valožić as “commissioner.”<sup>100</sup>

Among the most prominent and significant importers of Russian church products into Serbia was the firm of Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović.<sup>101</sup> It imported various liturgical objects and

98 "Kako je naš visokopreosvešteni G. Mitropolit posetio slovenski komitet u Moskvi", 618.

99 "Kako je naš visokopreosvešteni G. Mitropolit posetio slovenski komitet u Moskvi", 618-619.

100 "Kako je naš visokopreosvešteni G. Mitropolit posetio slovenski komitet u Moskvi", 619.

101 U. Rajčević, "O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda", *Saopštenja Republičkog zavoda za zaštitu spomenika kulture Srbije XXIV*, (Beograd 1992), 287-294.



Fig. 21  
Iconostasis, 1890s, Church of Nativity of the Virgin, Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

icons. Marković and Pavlović are noted to have supplied iconostases to churches in the Kingdom of Serbia, specifically in Paraćin, Boževac, Petnica, Dobra, Radljevo, as well as in Zenica, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian state territory.

Marković and Pavlović's firm advertised its offerings in catalogues, which provided information on the types and prices of various sacred objects and icons. Their 1898 "Price List" included, among other items, various types of crosses, censers, five-loaf platters, candlesticks, baptismal boxes, portable protheses for communion to the ill, oil lamps, ripidae, polyeleos, icons, iconostases, priestly vestments, banners, flags, embroidered icons, and canopies).<sup>102</sup>

The "Price List" demonstrates that the Marković and Pavlović firm sold various types of icons. Their offerings included icons on canvas, with or without frames, in different dimensions; venerating icons on wood or tin; and lithographed, varnished icons on canvas. It was also possible to order larger icons. The catalogue emphasized that all icons were "produced and painted by Orthodox

102 *Cenovnik crkvenih utvari, ikona i knjiga crkvenog odjevanja i sveštenečkog odela koja se mogu dobiti u radnji V. Markovića i Pavlovića*, Beograd 1898, 4-43.



Fig. 22  
*The Last Supper*, iconostasis, 1890s, Church of Nativity of the Virgin, Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

painters who possess excellent knowledge of church painting history.”<sup>103</sup>

The Marković and Pavlović firm also imported complete iconostases, including carpentry, woodcarving, gilding, and icons. In their promotional catalogue, they reproduced examples of imported iconostases from Zenica and Radljevo.<sup>104</sup> The final pages of the catalogue featured letters from grateful customers. A letter from the priest and trustee of the church in Radljevo emphasized that “the icons were painted in Orthodox Russia, thus they are artistically crafted and in a strictly Orthodox spirit.” It also stated that a commission, in the presence of Serbian Metropolitan Mihailo, inspected the iconostasis and expressed highly favourable opinions, especially due to its low price.<sup>105</sup>

The establishment of the Serbian Podvorye in Moscow was of immense importance for the development of Serbo-Russian church relations. For the needs of the Podvorye, the Serbian Church

103 *Cenovnik crkvenih utvari, ikona i knjiga crkvenog odjejanja i sveštenečkog odela koja se mogu dobiti u radnji V. Markovića i Pavlovića*, 19-22.

104 *Cenovnik crkvenih utvari, ikona i knjiga crkvenog odjejanja i sveštenečkog odela koja se mogu dobiti u radnji V. Markovića i Pavlovića*, 23-24.

105 *Cenovnik crkvenih utvari, ikona i knjiga crkvenog odjejanja i sveštenečkog odela koja se mogu dobiti u radnji V. Markovića i Pavlovića*, no pagination.



Fig. 23  
*Jesus Christ*, despotic icon, 1890s  
 Church of Nativity of the Virgin  
 Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

received the Church of Saints Cyrus and John from the Holy Synod in 1873.<sup>106</sup> The interior of this church was renovated for its new purpose and gained a new visual appearance in 1874. This included wall paintings and a new iconostasis.

Metropolitan Mihailo desired to align Serbian ecclesiastical painting with Russian. During his visit to Moscow in 1869, Strukov, a member of the Moscow Committee, proposed sending two of his skilled painting students to Serbia, who had assisted him in archaeological work. These students could also teach icon painting to Serbian children.<sup>107</sup> Although Metropolitan Mihailo adopted this initiative, information regarding its implementation remains unknown.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, under the patronage and with the assistance of the Serbian government, the Russian Holy Synod, and the Moscow and Saint Petersburg Slavonic Committees, several Serbian students from Serbia, Austro-Hungary (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Boka Kotorska) received training in icon painting and art.<sup>108</sup> The initiative for educating Serbian students began during Metropolitan Mihailo's visit to Moscow in 1869. He then agreed with Archimandrite Antoniy, abbot of the Moscow Holy

Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra, to send several Serbian students to the Lavra's icon-painting school.<sup>109</sup> At Metropolitan Mihailo's suggestion, the Ministry of Education of the Principality of Serbia decided in late 1869 to announce a public competition and send three students to study icon painting at the Moscow Lavra. Mihailo Borisavljević, Blagoje Kulić, and Živko Jugović were selected through this competition.<sup>110</sup> Alongside them, Lazar Krdžalić, Rafailo Momčilović, Milutin Bl. Marković, Risto

106 "Osveštenje crkve srpskoga Podvorja u Moskvi na dan prvozvanog Andreja 1874. god.", *Sion* br. 45, Beograd 18. 12. 1874, 705-707; "Kratki opis Krsto-Blagoveštenske crkve srpskog podvorja, u Moskvi", *Sion* br. 14, Beograd 16.04. 1875, 209-212; "Kratki opis Krsto-Blagoveštenske crkve srpskog podvorja, u Moskvi", *Sion* br. 15, Beograd 21.04. 1875, 225-228; Platon Jovanović, *Srpsko podvorje u Moskvi*, Beograd 1901.

107 "Kako je naš visokopreosvešteni G. Mitropolit posetio slovenski komitet u Moskvi", 619.

108 U. Rajčević, "Mitropolit Mihailo i školovanje srpskih slikara u Rusiji", *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* 19, (Novi Sad 1983), 263-273.

109 "Kako je naš visokopreosvešteni G. Mitropolit posetio slovenski komitet u Moskvi", 619.

110 U. Rajčević, "Mitropolit Mihailo i školovanje srpskih slikara u Rusiji", *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* 19, (Novi Sad 1983), 264.



Čajkanović, Nastas Stefanović, and Dragoljub Pavlović also received their education in Russian icon-painting schools during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>111</sup>

These students primarily began their education in the icon-painting schools of the Sergiyevskaya-Troitskaya Lavra in Moscow and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, later often continuing their studies at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts or another art academy. These painters produced numerous iconostases in Serbian churches, applying the prevailing Russian icon-painting model and significantly transforming Serbian ecclesiastical painting.<sup>112</sup> Beyond church art, Russian cultural and artistic influence also affected other artistic practices. Some prominent Serbian painters, such as Vasa Eškićević and Vasa Pomorišac, received their education at academies in Saint Petersburg and Moscow.<sup>113</sup>

During the First Serbian-Turkish War in 1876, Russian volunteers arrived, bringing with them military tent-churches. One of these, dedicated to St. Alexander Nevsky, became the foundation for the construction of the church of the same name in Dorćol, Belgrade.<sup>114</sup>

The young Serbian state fostered intensive and complex relations with the Russian Empire from its inception. This, among other factors, led to the adoption of Russian sacred visual culture by Serbian rulers.<sup>115</sup> Upon the completion of the mausoleum of the Karađorđević dynasty at Oplenac, the endowment of King Peter I, icons for the iconostasis were originally purchased in St. Petersburg in 1912.<sup>116</sup>

## *Ottoman Territories*

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a significant portion of the Serbian population lived in territories belonging to the Ottoman Empire. Russian icons, vestments, liturgical books, and items reached this territory through trade and as a form of aid from Russian benefactors. Precise information on trade activities is scarce, but the large number of Russian icons, mostly krasnushkas, found in

111 U. Rajčević, "Mitropolit Mihailo i školovanje srpskih slikara u Rusiji", 263-273; M. Jovanović, "Srpska likovna umetnost i Rusija krajem XIX i početkom XX veka", *Saopštenja Republičkog zavoda za zaštitu spomenika kulture Srbije* 15 (Beograd 1983), 122-124; J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, 166, 169-170.

112 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 159-181.

113 M. Jovanović, "Srpska likovna umetnost i Rusija krajem XIX i početkom XX veka", 124.

114 J. Mežinski Milovanović, *Hram Svetog Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu: Spomenica povodom stogodišnjice postojanja hrama 1912-2012: istorijat, arhitektura, freskopis, ikone, umetnički predmeti*, Beograd 2013, 24-31; J. Mežinski Milovanović, "Russian Icons on the Iconostases of Russian Military Chapels and St. Alexander Nevsky Church in Belgrade prior to the First World War", (in these volume)

115 A. Kostić, "The Ruling Ideology of King Peter I Karađorđević and Russia: The Transfer of Russian Icons and Liturgical Items to Serbia", (in these volume)

116 M. Jovanović, *Oplenac: Hram Sv. Đorđa i Mauzolej Karađorđevića*, Topola 1989, 68; J. Mežinski Milovanović, *Hram Svetog Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu: Spomenica povodom stogodišnjice postojanja hrama 1912-2012: istorijat, arhitektura, freskopis, ikone, umetnički predmeti*, Beograd 2013, 185.



Fig. 25  
 Mother of God Feodorovskaya  
 second half of the 18th century, Kostroma  
 Episcopal Palace Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

churches in southern Serbia, attests to it.

Intensive Russian aid in icons, books, and liturgical objects to Serbian churches under Ottoman rule can be traced from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1839, Priest Pavle Tvrtković (Karano-Tvrtković) initiated a major campaign to collect aid for churches in Bosnia. In his appeal, he stated that assistance was needed for fifty-four churches, five monasteries in Bosnia, and ten in Herzegovina. His mission was exceptionally successful. Extensive aid was collected and delivered by the Metropolitans of Novgorod, Kyiv, and Moscow. Russian Tsar Nicholas I issued a special decree and designated numerous items for churches in Bosnia, and many items were also received from monasteries in Rostov and New Jerusalem near Moscow. The distribution of this aid was organized in secrecy. In 1847, Metropolitan Kiril Kirjaković of Zvornik received thirteen crates of this aid in Constantinople, which he transported to Belgrade, from where they were distributed to churches in the Zvornik, Sarajevo, and Herzegovina eparchies.<sup>117</sup>

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, strong Slavophile ideas further mobilised Russian citizens and the state to provide aid to Orthodox Christians in the Balkans.<sup>118</sup> One of the earliest Slavophile aid initiatives took place in 1843 when Vasiliy Vasilyevich Panov and Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin collected books, liturgical objects, and monetary contributions for Orthodox churches in Dalmatia and Herzegovina. They sent the collected aid to Jovan Škuljević in Trieste via the Bulgarian merchant Nikolay Stepanov Palauzov. Škuljević was tasked with distributing them to individual churches.<sup>119</sup>

In 1858, the Moscow Slavonic Committee was founded, with one of its goals being to help pre-

117 *Politicheskie i kul'turnye otnosheniia Rossii i Serbii v 30–50-e gody XIX veka. Dokumenty rossiiskogo MID*, 369-370; 375-376; L. Gerd, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", 254-256.

118 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*.

119 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, 25.



Fig. 26  
 Icon of Mother of God Balyinskaya  
 ca 1800, South Russia  
 Episcopal Palace Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

serve Orthodoxy among the South Slavs. This was achieved by sending monetary contributions, books, and liturgical items to Orthodox churches, and by supporting education in Russia. The Committee sent all aid in cooperation with the Russian state, specifically through the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>120</sup>

The Russian Consul in Bosnia, Alexander Fyodorovich Gilferding, played a significant role in organizing aid for Orthodox churches.<sup>121</sup> He was thoroughly acquainted with the condition of Serbian churches in the Ottoman Balkans, as evidenced by his travelogue.<sup>122</sup> Gilferding called upon Russian philanthropists to assist Orthodox churches, and philanthropists from Saint Petersburg responded. They sent significant aid through Archpriest Raevsky of Vienna, assisting numerous churches and monasteries.<sup>123</sup> Countess Bludova sent a large bell each to the Dečani and Duži monasteries.<sup>124</sup> Thanks to Gilferding, Hieromonk Prokopije Čokorilo also traveled to Russia. Between 1858 and 1860, he collected aid

for Orthodox churches in Herzegovina and for the construction of a new church in Mostar. He gathered a large sum of money, as well as numerous books and objects, and Moscow merchants Vasilij Matveyev and Kolganov promised to provide everything needed for the new church, except for canvases and icons.<sup>125</sup>

The most representative example of Russian aid to Serbian churches is the Cathedral Church in

120 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, 53-60.

121 L. Gerđ, "Between Politics and Charity: Russian Material Aid to the Balkan Orthodox Churches (1830-1877)", 257.

122 A. Gilferding, *Putovanje po Hercegovini, Bosni i staroj Srbiji*, Sarajevo 1972.

123 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, 61-63.

124 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, 61.

125 J. Č. Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i srpsko pitanje (1858-1875)*, 120-123.

Sarajevo. Along with numerous contributions, this Orthodox church also received a monumental iconostasis, donated by Hegumen Ignatius from the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius in Saint Petersburg in 1871. Most of the icons are attributed to the painter Alexander Kolchin.<sup>126</sup>

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, aid to Serbian churches in Ottoman territories was also distributed with the help of diplomatic representatives of the Russian Empire.<sup>127</sup> The Russian Consulate in Belgrade sent aid to churches in the Principality of Serbia, as well as to those located within the Ottoman Empire. In 1852, Hieromonk Antim Radojković was sent to bring Russian gifts from Belgrade for the Peć Patriarchate Monastery. He received a large number of church items and books from the Russian consul, including: “1 gilded chalice, 3 gilded patens, 1 white asterisk, 1 vozdukh, 2 gifts adorned with precious stones, 1 vestment, 1 epitachelion, 1 sticharion, 1 nabledrennik, 1 deacon’s cuffs, 1 sticharion, 1 riza, 1 orarion, 1 cuffs, 3 curtains for the Holy Table, 2 curtains for the analogion, 1 liturgy book, 1 Gospel, 1 Apostol, 1 Trebnik, 1 general Menaion, 1 Feast Menaion, 1 Lenten Triodion, 1 Pentecostarion, 2 Oktoikhs, 1 Typikon, 1 Kanonnik, 1 Horologion.”<sup>128</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the greatest instances of Russian aid was provided to Dečani Monastery. In 1859, Hegumen Seraphim wrote to Russian Tsar Alexander II for aid, and the following year, in 1860, Eпитроp Kiril Andrejević travelled to Russia carrying a valuable monastic relic – The Cross of Tsar Dušan.<sup>129</sup> Several items in the treasury of the Dečani Monastery have been identified as possibly linked to Kiril Andrejević’s journey. These include two Triodions from Empress Maria Alexandrovna and Metropolitan Isidor of Kyiv, a silver cup, a silver and gilded chalice, and an icon of the Christ Acheiropoieta. The icon has a rich gilded casing, and its inscription states that it was a gift to Kiril Andrejević for the repose of Pavle’s soul.<sup>130</sup> Kiril purchased an Apostol and a Gospel in Saint Petersburg, which he had encased in Moscow in 1861.<sup>131</sup>

It appears that during his travels in Russia, Kiril Andrejević gathered significant aid and established important contacts, which contributed to supplying numerous churches, and that the Dečani monk Agathangel also participated in these efforts. Miloš S. Milojević notes that the arrival of “Kiril and Agathangel from Russia” brought significant gifts to the monastery and enriched its treasury and refers to “recent Dečani gifts to various churches in Proper Serbia since the arrival of... Kiril and Agathangel from Russia.”<sup>132</sup> This is further supported by Archimandrite Kiril’s announcement in Sion, a Belgrade church journal, from 1875. To affirm his own and Dečani’s significance for the general interest of the Serbian Church and people, Kiril presented a list of gifts and contributions

126 See: M. Lakić, "Russia and Serbian Sacral Visual Culture in the 19th Century: Russian Donations and the Furnishing of the Orthodox Cathedral in Sarajevo", (in this volume)

127 I. Ženarju Rajović, *Crkvena umetnost XIX veka u Raško-prizrenskoj eparhiji (1839-1912)*, Beograd 2016, 66-69.

128 D. D. Vuksan, "Zapisi i natpisi", *Zbornik za istoriju južne Srbije i susednih oblasti*, knj. I, Skoplje 1936, 305-306.

129 M. Šakota, *Dečanska riznica*, 71.

130 M. Šakota, *Dečanska riznica*, 127, 167.

131 M. Šakota, *Dečanska riznica*, 198.

132 M. S. Milojević, *Putopis dela prave – stare Srbije*, sv. III, Beograd 1877, 49.

from himself and Father Agathangel to churches, monasteries, and schools in old Serbia.<sup>133</sup>

In the list of aid, Kiril clearly distinguished between his own gifts and those from Dečani Monastery, from which it is evident that the remaining items were acquired from Russia. This particularly applies to numerous priestly vestments, which, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, were primarily obtained from Russian workshops, as well as liturgical books, precious church vessels, and encased icons.

Archimandrite Kiril states that he delivered, among other things, two silver-cased icons and one gilded icon to the Peć Patriarchate Monastery, which are located in the Church of the Mother of God. To the church in Prizren, he gave a "very precious" gilded silver chalice. He handed over Russian vestments and books to the Peć Patriarchate Monastery and to churches in Belo Polje near Peć, Goraška church, Siga, Brezovica near Plav, Andrijevića, Đurđevi Stupovi near Berane, the town of Belo Polje, Nova Varoš, Kuzmična near Novi Pazar, Vračevo, Đakovica, Očka near Prizren, Koriša, and Žeočki Monastery.

Archimandrite Kiril also contributed to the construction of the church in his native village, Belo Polje near Peć, from the contributions collected in Russia.<sup>134</sup> In the list of gifts published in Sion, he states that 500 Rubles "solicited from the Russian empress-mother" and 200 Rubles from "other individuals" were given for this church.<sup>135</sup> The benefaction of Empress Maria Alexandrovna is also highlighted in an inscription above the entrance.<sup>136</sup> For the church in the village of Siga, an encased Gospel was donated by "Russian General's wife Kiseleva."<sup>137</sup>

Archimandrite Kiril's success in collecting contributions in Russia is further confirmed by his involvement in establishing Serbian schools in Kosovo and Metohija. A report on the Serbian school in Peć from 1866 states that four years earlier (1862), upon his return from Russia, Kiril purchased a large Turkish house intended for a school in Peć and also established schools in Dečani and Ločen.<sup>138</sup>

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the wealthy merchant Sima Andrejević Igumanov, who had moved to the Russian Empire and developed his trade business there,<sup>139</sup> donated numerous Russian icons, books, and other items to Serbian churches in Kosovo and Metohija. Sima

133 Arhimandrit Ćirilo, "Darovi i požrtvovanja arhimandrita dečanskog Kirila i oca Agatangela crkvama, manastirima i školama u staroj Srbiji", *Sion*, br. 23, (Beograd 30.VI 1875), 362-364.

134 I. Ženarju Rajović, "Zidno slikarstvo u crkvi Vavedenja Bogorodice u Belom Polju kod Peći", u: *Studije vizuelne kulture Balkana 2*, priredili A. Kostić – N. Makuljević, Beograd 2019, 9-24.

135 Arhimandrit Ćirilo, "Darovi i požrtvovanja arhimandrita dečanskog Kirila i oca Agatangela crkvama, manastirima i školama u staroj Srbiji", 362.

136 I. Ženarju Rajović, "Zidno slikarstvo u crkvi Vavedenja Bogorodice u Belom Polju kod Peći", 10.

137 Arhimandrit Ćirilo, "Darovi i požrtvovanja arhimandrita dečanskog Kirila i oca Agatangela crkvama, manastirima i školama u staroj Srbiji", 363.

138 "Srbska škola u Peći", *Školski list*, br. 24, (Sombor 31. XII 1866.), 379.

139 I. Ženarju Rajović, "Značaj Sime Andrejevića Igumanova u verskoj obnovi Raško-prizrenske eparhije", u: *Prizrenska bogoslovija: život, misija, doprinos*, uredili A. Novakov - V. Pitulić - D. Ristić, Prizren-Novi Sad 2021, 118-130; I. Ženarju Rajović, "19th Century Russian Icons in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren", (in this volume)

Igumanov provided financial resources for the construction and renovation of churches, and sent and gifted church items, banners, icons, and books. His donations were of great significance in advancing the religious life of Orthodox Christians in Kosovo and Metohija.<sup>140</sup>

One of the complex episodes in Serbian-Russian relations in the Ottoman Empire is the so-called Dečani Issue.<sup>141</sup> During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dečani Monastery faced difficult circumstances. To overcome the current crisis, diplomatic activity by the Serbian government in 1903 led to an agreement on the arrival of Russian monks from the Skete of St. John Chrysostom on Mount Athos. As part of the agreement for the Russian monks' arrival, the Russian Tsar allocated 3,580 gold Dinars in aid to Serbian churches and monasteries in Kosovo and Metohija.<sup>142</sup> A major dispute then arose between the Russian monks and the Serbian government regarding the monastery's fate and its administration, which was resolved only after the First World War.

### *The Habsburg Monarchy*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the development of relations between Serbian church communities in the Habsburg Monarchy and Russian spiritual centres and the state continued. In this period, Habsburg rule extended to Dalmatia, and after 1878, to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which contributed to specific routes for the transfer of Russian sacred visual culture.

One of the most important political events in the Habsburg Monarchy was the Revolution of 1848. During these events, a large number of Serbian churches were damaged by Hungarian revolutionaries. Russian authorities, clergy, and citizens were informed about these events. M. F. Raevsky, a Russian priest at the church in Vienna, informed Countess A. D. Bludova in late 1849 about the suffering of churches in the Bačka region and the need to supply Serbian churches with church vestments, vessels, Gospels, and church books.<sup>143</sup> The need to collect aid was also emphasized by Count A. A. Zakrevsky, the Moscow military governor-general.<sup>144</sup> In February 1850, Patriarch Josif Rajačić appealed to Russian Tsar Nicholas. He stated that 115 churches were completely or partially destroyed and that all of them needed church utensils and books.<sup>145</sup> By March 1850, citizens of Moscow had contributed 30 Gospels, 30 silver vessels, 1 silver reliquary, 2 embroidered icons, 58 pairs of *vozdúkhy*, 252 various priestly and diaconal vestments, and 810 church books, all

140 I. Ženarju Rajović, "Značaj Sime Andrejevića Igumanova u verskoj obnovi Raško-prizrenske eparhije", 118-130.

141 D. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje*, Beograd 2007; L. Gerd, *Russian Policy in the Orthodox East: The Patriarchate of Constantinople (1878-1914)*, 99-108; S. Cvetković, "The Gift of the Russian Monastic Cell of St. John Chrysostom of the Hilandar Monastery in the Context of the Dečani Question: The Icon of St. John of Chrysostom", ( in these volume)

142 D. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje*, 119.

143 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenti i materijali*, tom 2, 195-196.

144 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenti i materijali*, tom 2, 196-197.

145 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenti i materijali*, tom 2, 197-199.



together valued at 7,612 Rubles and 53 kopecks in silver.<sup>146</sup>

Serbian churches in Dalmatia maintained strong ties with the Russian Empire. In Dubrovnik, on Boninovo, the Church of St. Michael the Archangel was constructed. Icons for its iconostasis were commissioned from Odessa, with which strong maritime connections were maintained. In 1838, Filip Lučić ordered an iconostasis for 900 Rubles in Odessa, while Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš donated the enthroned icons of Christ and the Virgin. This church was also supplied with other items from Russia. Vasiliy Panov, along with “the Russians,” contributed twelve Menaia in 1847. Countess Bludova donated a vestment, cuffs, epitachelion, and a velvet belt, and a sticharion of blue silk. An unknown Russian donor gifted a silver-gilded altar cross with “enamel icons on it” and an Annunciation icon in 1858.<sup>147</sup>

The Boka Kotorska region experienced dramatic changes in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Venetian rule was succeeded by French, then a short-lived Russian presence, before the area became part of the Habsburg Monarchy until the end of the First World War. Serbian churches and monasteries in Boka Kotorska had maintained close ties with the Russian Empire since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Seafarers and merchants donated icons, books, and liturgical objects. The Church of the Ascension in Topla received multiple gifts from the Russian Empire. In 1850, Luka Jelić donated a representative encased icon of the Mother of God.<sup>148</sup> Captain Jakov Bošković gifted a Christ’s tomb to the same church, and Miho Vasov Kaluđerović, a merchant from Odessa, donated icons of the Nativity and Resurrection of Christ in 1891. Engineer Stevan Jakšić and merchant Jakov Jakšić sent a “black vestment” from Russia.<sup>149</sup> Savo Šerović left the school in Bijela, among other items, an icon of the Smolensk Mother of God “in a silver-gilded riza.”<sup>150</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the enthroned icons on the iconostasis of the Great Church of Savina Monastery were replaced. Older Russian icons from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century were substituted with new Russian icons of Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, St. John the Baptist, and the Dormition of the Mother of God.<sup>151</sup> The parish church in Risan received two liturgical processional crosses as a donation from Sankt Peterburg.<sup>152</sup> The icons for the new iconostasis of the Church of St. Peter and Paul in Risan were brought from Kozlov in Russia in 1890, while the wooden partition and gilding were crafted in Venice.<sup>153</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several painters from the Habsburg-Dalmatian region were educated in the Russian Empire. Josif Katurić from Risan spent two years (1871-1873) in the Kyiv-Pechersk

146 *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Rusija, dokumenti i materijali*, tom 2, 199; 201-204.

147 M. Savić, *Djela i stilovi umjetnosti Srpske pravoslavne crkve u Dalmaciji*, Beograd-Šibenik 2020, 332-338.

148 G. Ž. Komar - N. Rašo, *Hercegovska Saborna crkva Svetoga Vaznesenja Hristovog i njena opština*, 27.

149 N. Rašo, *Rusija i Boka 1697-1918*, 120-121.

150 N. Rašo, *Rusija i Boka 1697-1918*, 121.

151 D. Medaković, *Manastir Savina, velika crkva, riznica, rukopisi*, 93.

152 "Za uspomenu i zahvalnost", *Šematizam Pravoslavne eparhije Bokokotorske, Dubrovačke i Spičanske za godinu 1889*, Zadar 1889, 44.

153 "Novi i popravljeni ikonostasi", *Šematizam Pravoslavne eparhije Bokokotorske, Dubrovačke i Spičanske za godinu 1891*, 35.



Fig. 28  
 Iconostasis, 1890, Church of St. Peter and Paul, Risan, Montenegro

Lavra.<sup>154</sup> Simeon Vukojević from Dalmatia was educated in the same icon-painting school.<sup>155</sup> Špiro Đuranović from Đurići in Boka Kotorska studied at the Kyiv Academy of Arts. These painters applied the iconographic model learned in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, thus contributing to the transfer of Russian Orthodox sacred culture to Serbian communities throughout the Habsburg Empire.

The popularity of Russian icon painting is also evidenced by the emulation of Russian *krasnushkas* by local icon painters,<sup>156</sup> One example of the adoption of certain *Krasnushki* characteristics can be seen in the work of Hristofor Rafailović, from the Dimitrijević-Rafailović family of painters. In the throne icons of Christ and the Virgin Mary from the church in Petrovac, Hristofor employs the coloristic and decorative solutions found in Russian icons.<sup>157</sup>

154 M. Stanković, "Ikonopisac Josif Katurić (185?-1942)", u: *Zografski krugovi*, knj. 1, priredio N. Makuljević, Beograd 2018, 199-214.

155 M. Savić, *Slikarstvo u srpskim crkvama sjeverne Dalmacije od kraja XIV do početka XX vijeka*, 226-227.

156 M. Jovanović, "Rusko-srpske umetničke veze u XVIII veku", 400.

157 <https://bokokotorskasklikarskaskola.rs/petrovac-crkva-svetog-ilije/ikone/>



Fig. 29  
 Iconostasis, 1900, Church of St. Basil of Ostrog, Nikšić, Montenegro

## Montenegro

Continuous relations between the Russian state and the prince-bishops of Montenegro were fostered from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. These relations continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, acquiring a stronger political character alongside their ecclesiastical dimension.<sup>158</sup> This also influenced the characteristics of the transfer of Russian sacred visual culture.

The rulers of Montenegro consistently sought aid from the Russian Empire. After Skadar Pasha Mahum Bušatlija burned down Cetinje Monastery in 1785, it underwent renovation. Metropolitan Petar I Petrović Njegoš appealed to the Russian Synod for aid in 1798. The approved assistance for the renovation of the state's most important monastery, which included financial resources, books, and various church utensils, was brought to Montenegro by Archimandrite St. Vukotić in 1799.<sup>159</sup>

Metropolitan Petar II Petrović Njegoš cultivated close ties with the Russian Empire. He was consecrated in the Kazan Cathedral in Saint Petersburg in the presence of Tsar Nicholas I in 1833,

158 V. M. G. Medaković, *P. P. Njegoš posljedn'i vladaiući vladika crnogorski*, Novi Sad 1882, 127-128.

159 I. I. Leshchilovskaia, *Serbskii narod i Rossiia v XVIII veke*, 127-128.



Fig. 30  
 Sv. Petar Cetinjski, iconostasis, 1900  
 Church of St. Basil of Ostrog, Nikšić, Montenegro

and he visited the Russian Empire again in 1837. Upon his arrival for consecration in Saint Petersburg, Petar II Petrović Njegoš received substantial financial resources, archieratical vestments, and books from Russia. He was impressed by the appearance of the Russian capital and the Monastery of St. Alexander Nevsky, where he was accommodated.<sup>160</sup> The Russian Holy Synod maintained contact with Petar II and, in 1834, sent him a cross, a ring, and a golden chain, which he was to bestow upon someone of his choosing from the region of Montenegro.<sup>161</sup>

Churches in Montenegro were also supplied with books and church utensils from Russia.<sup>162</sup> The most extensive treasury of Russian icons, liturgical books, and other church items is found in Cetinje Monastery.<sup>163</sup> When the Church of Saints Cyrus and John was handed over to the Serbian Church for a Podvorye, it is stated that the old iconostasis was sent by merchant Sisoyev to a church in Montenegro.<sup>164</sup> After the conquest of Ulcinj, numerous gifts sent by Moscow citizen Kotov arrived for the new Orthodox church.<sup>165</sup>

The most significant aid in sacred visual culture relates to the church in Nikšić. After the wars of 1876 and the expansion of Montenegrin state territory, the memorial Church of St. Basil of Ostrog was erected in Nikšić. This church was designed by Russian architect Mikhail Timofeevich Preobrazhensky. During construction, the project was not consistently followed, and a bell tower

was erected in Nikšić. This church was designed by Russian architect Mikhail Timofeevich Preobrazhensky. During construction, the project was not consistently followed, and a bell tower

160 See the letter to Vuk Karadžić dated August 21, 1833: *Pisma Petra Petrovića Njegoša*, knj. I, redakcija D. Vuksana, Beograd 1940, 86-87.

161 *Pisma Petra Petrovića Njegoša*, knj. I, 121.

162 P. Rovinskij, *Chernogorija v" eja proshlom" i nastojashhem". Gosudarstvennaja zhizn" (1851-1907)*, Petrograd" 1915, 237-238.

163 I. Simić, "Zbirke bogoslužbenih predmeta i ostalih utvari", u: *Cetinjski manastir Rođenja Presvete Bogorodice*, uredio J. Markuš, Cetinje 2014, 325-375.

164 "Kratki opis Krsto-Blagoveštenske crkve srpskog podvorja, u Moskvi", *Sion* 15, (21. 04. 1875), 228.

165 P. Rovinskij, *Chernogorija v" eja proshlom" i nastojashhem". Gosudarstvennaja zhizn" (1851-1907)*, Petrograd" 1915, 238.



Fig. 31  
 St. Stephen Archdeakon, iconostasis, 1900  
 Church of St. Basil of Ostrog, Nikšić, Montenegro

was built above the western facade. The church was consecrated on the feast day of St. Basil of Ostrog, 29 April 1900.<sup>166</sup> Icons for this church's iconostasis arrived from Saint Petersburg.

In Cetinje, the Russian mission planned to build a new church for its own needs and the religious needs of the citizens. The Holy Synod allocated funds, purchased a plot of land, and engaged architect Alexander Pomerantsev. The architect prepared a plan and arrived in Cetinje in 1906 to begin construction. However, at the wish of King Nikola, construction was halted, with the idea that the planned and approved financial resources should be directed towards the construction of a new Cathedral Church in Cetinje,<sup>167</sup> which did not materialize.

\*

The transfer of icons, liturgical objects, vestments, and books from the Russian state to Serbian churches and monasteries represents a long-standing and complex activity influenced by numerous factors.

From the 16th to the 20th century, Russian rulers, the church, and the faithful sent aid to Serbian churches and monasteries. The models of Orthodox iconography cultivated in the Russian Empire during the 18th and

19th centuries were ideals for Serbian church art. This spurred the education of Serbian painters in Russian icon-painting workshops and the import of Russian icons.

The extensive transfer of sacred visual culture from the Russian Empire contributed to the maintenance and decoration of numerous Serbian churches and monasteries and affirmed the close Serbian-Russian ecclesiastical and political ties.

166 P. Rovinskij, *Chernogorija v" eja proshlom" i nastojashhem". Gosudarstvennaja zhizn" (1851-1907), Petrograd" 1915, 234-235.*

167 P. Rovinskij, *Chernogorija v" eja proshlom" i nastojashhem". Gosudarstvennaja zhizn" (1851-1907), Petrograd" 1915, 236-237; N. I Petrović Njegoš, *Autobiografija, memoari, putopisi*, priredio R. J. Dragičević, Cetinje 1969, 766.*

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Irena Ćirović

## Church Art and Photography: Dušan Obrenović and Russian Models in Serbian Icon Painting

At the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, the transfer of Russian models to Serbian religious culture was already well underway. Through the import of icons, liturgical objects, religious books, as well as private and institutional donations from Russia, channels of cultural and religious exchange became increasingly prominent in Serbia.<sup>1</sup> This period was particularly characterized by the orientation of Serbian artists towards education in the art centers of Kiev and Moscow.<sup>2</sup> A decisive role in this was played by the church authorities in Serbia, specifically Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović (Metropolitan of Belgrade in 1859–1881 and 1889–1898).<sup>3</sup> Educated in Kiev, he contributed significantly to introducing contemporary Russian Orthodox theological and spiritual practices to Serbia. Another important aspect of his influence was his advocacy for sending both theology students and young artists to Russia. The primary goal was to educate artists in the spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy, so that their works in Serbian churches would undeniably conform to its principles.<sup>4</sup>

Within the framework of Russian-Serbian connections in the early 20th century, the painter Dušan Obrenović stands out. Unlike other artists who transmitted Russian models through their training, Obrenović did not have any formal art education. Nevertheless, his work directly incorpo-

- 1 N. Makuljević, "Piety, Ideology, and Orthodoxy: Russian Icons in Serbian Church Culture (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries)", in: *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, (ed.) Y. Boycheva, Seyssel: La Pomme d'or, 2016, 138-141; V. Dautović, *Umetnost i liturgijski ritual: bogoslužbeni predmeti u srpskoj vizuelnoj kulturi 19. veka*, Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy – University of Belgrade, 2020, 224-232.
- 2 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2007, 159-181.
- 3 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 51-57; T. Bradić, *Mitropolit Mihailo Jovanović i transfer ruske sakralne umetnosti u Kneževinu/Kraljevini Srbiju (1859-1898)*, Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy – University of Belgrade, 2024.
- 4 U. Rajčević, "Mitropolit Mihailo i školovanje srpskih slikara u Rusiji", *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* 19 (1983), 263-273; N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 53-54; T. Bradić, *Mitropolit Mihailo Jovanović i transfer ruske sakralne umetnosti*, 97-113.

rated the influence of the new Russian religious painting of the early 20th century, exemplified by artists such as Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov.<sup>5</sup> Both artists, associated with artistic circles in Abramtsevo, were representatives of a new style in Russian religious painting, which linked ancient Russian and Byzantine heritage with the contemporary artistic currents.<sup>6</sup>

Dušan Obrenović's work stands out as an example of the introduction of new Russian models into the Serbian religious art context, based on direct copies of contemporary Russian artists. It reflects a wide range of ideas transmitted from Russian culture at the turn of the century, even though this new Russian style had not yet found widespread application in Serbian religious painting.<sup>7</sup> A closer examination of Obrenović's engagement with these Russian models highlights the intricate pathways through which artistic concepts were exchanged and adapted.

Dušan Obrenović entered the field of religious painting in an intermediate manner, without prior formal education. At the time, the painting market was highly competitive, and success in securing church commissions depended not only on artistic quality but also on offering economically viable prices. Obrenović adjusted his fees according to his status, which allowed him to obtain commissions and establish a presence in the field despite his lack of formal training. Listed in the local register of craftsmen as a "house painter" and "sign painter" (sr. *moler, slovopisac*),<sup>8</sup> he acquired skills that provided the technical foundation for his work in church art projects. This was precisely the reason why his name appeared in an official complaint filed by several prominent academically trained painters. In 1907, the complaint was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, signed by Stevan Todorović, Živko Jugović, Milisav Marković, Nastas Stefanović, and Nikola Milivojević, all of whom were active in religious painting. The main grievance concerned the trading firm Marković and Pavlović, whose imported icon offerings were perceived as unfair competition. For the same reason, the complaint also targeted the participation of untrained painters in church commissions. Specifically mentioning Dušan Obrenović, whom they disparagingly referred to as a "room painter and firm scribe," the complaint aimed to protect the perceived value and prestige of academically trained work.<sup>9</sup> However, the ministry did not uphold the complaint. Despite lacking formal training, Obrenović fulfilled the essential criteria for church painting – namely, executing works in the "Eastern Orthodox spirit."<sup>10</sup> By meeting this requirement, he managed to carve

5 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 184-185.

6 V. O. Gusakova, *Russkoe pravoslavno-natsional'noe iskusstvo XIX - nachala XX veka: pravoslavie. Samoderzhavie. Narodnost'*, Moskva: Institut ruskoĭ tsivilizatsii, 2014, 491-537, 565-596; O. Tarasov, *Framing Russian Art: From Early Icons to Malevich*, London: Reaktion, 2011, 105-176.

7 On the later emergence, especially of Vasnetsov's models, in Serbian church art, see: J. Mežinski Milovanović, "Prilog istraživanju rusko-srpskih veza u crkvenom i dvorskom slikarstvu i graditeljstvu kroz opuse ruskih emigranata u Srbiji između dva svetska rata: primeri preuzimanja ruskih modela". *Muzikologija* 28 (2020), 99-125.

8 S. R. Hristić, *Trgovačko-zanatlijski šematizam Kraljevine Srbije*, Beograd: Sv. R. Hristić, 1905, 154, 158.

9 U. Rajčević, "O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda". *Saopštenja* 24 (1992), 291.

10 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 52-57. A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji: (1830-1882)*, Beograd: Filozofski fakultet – Centar za vizuelnu kulturu Balkana, 2022, 91-94.



Іако во  
всѣмъ  
мірѣ  
іако і еѣа

СВЕРГО  
РАДНО  
РОДНАГО  
ДАМЪ ІСТЪ

Іо. Бачицѣвѣ  
РАДНО І. ОКТ. 1925



Fig. 2  
*St. Princess Olga, The Baptism of Rus, St. Prince Vladimir*, D. Obrenović, Raevsky's Church, Gornji Adrovac, 1903

out a position within the Serbian religious art scene.

Dušan Obrenović worked for churches over a relatively short period, during the first decades of the 20th century. His earliest works date back to 1903, while the latest are from 1912. The latter coincides with the beginning of the Balkan Wars, suggesting that wartime conditions may have contributed to the cessation of his activity. The artist consistently signed his works in churches, as *D. Obrenović* or *Dušan Obrenović*, consciously asserting his authorship in accordance with the practices of academically trained painters. In several cases, such as in the churches in Bresnica and Goračići, he also indicated his origin from the city of Kragujevac alongside his signature. This linked his personal and professional identity to a specific regional context. In Kragujevac itself, Obrenović participated in the restoration of the significant Old Church. He was contracted as the most favorable bidder in 1911 to undertake the interior painting.<sup>11</sup> The same church preserves an

11 M. Stanković, "Arhitektura Miloševe crkve u Kragujevcu", in *Spomenica dva veka Stare crkve u Kragujevcu (1818-2018)*, (ed.) Zoran Krstić, Kragujevac: Grafostil, 2018, 141. "Izvod iz Letopisa Stare kragujevačke crkve", in *Spomenica dva veka Stare crkve u Kragujevcu (1818-2018)*, 262.



Fig. 3  
*Iconostasis, D. Obrenović, Church of the Prophet Elijah in Knić, 1912*



Fig. 4  
Iconostasis  
D. Obrenović, Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Bresnica, 1906

icon of Saint George, signed in 1912 with the artist's initials.<sup>12</sup> This work marks one of the last known commissions of his career.

One of Obrenović's earliest church commissions was a wall painting in the church in Gornji Adrovac, completed in 1903.<sup>13</sup> This work stands out as his only known example of wall painting, as all his other surviving works consist of iconostases.<sup>14</sup> Several of these iconostases are located in churches in the wider region of Kragujevac. In the same year, he painted the iconostasis in the village of Goračići (Church of the Nativity of the Virgin, 1903).<sup>15</sup> This was followed by commissions in Bresnica (Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, 1906),<sup>16</sup> Knić (Church of the Prophet Elijah, 1912), and Katrga (Church of the Archangel Gabriel).<sup>17</sup> Beyond these cen-

12 A. Kostić Đekić, "Zbirka ikona crkve Sošestvija Svetog Duha u Kragujevcu", in *Spomenica dva veka Stare crkve u Kragujevcu (1818-2018)*, 208.

13 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 184-185.

14 The aforementioned 1907 lawsuit filed with the Ministry by academic painters lists several churches where the untrained painters Dušan Obrenović and Nikola Fodor worked, including

the churches in Vrba, Seča Reka, and Železnik (U. Rajčević, "O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda", 291). It is not specified which painter worked in which church; as no material remains survive, none can be attributed specifically to Obrenović.

- 15 S. Vujović, M. Lukić-Cvetić, "Crkva u Goračićima – problemi zaštite i statičke sanacije", *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja* 21 (1991), 104-106; S. Vujović, M. Lukić-Cvetić, "Crkva Rođenja Bogorodice u Goračićima – konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi 1993-1995", *Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije* 20 (1996), 161-162.
- 16 R. Stanić, "Stara crkva u Bresnici". *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja* 2, Čačak, 1971, 105 (fus. 14)
- 17 The iconostases by Obrenović in the churches of Goračići and Katrga were subsequently removed and replaced with new ones: S. Vujović, M. Lukić-Cvetić, "Crkva Rođenja Bogorodice u Goračićima – konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi 1993-1995", 161-162.



Fig. 5  
 (left) *Despotic Icon of the Mother of God with Child*  
 D. Obrenović, Church of Knić, 1912

(right) *Despotic Icon of Christ Enthroned*  
 D. Obrenović, Church of Knić, 1912



Fig. 6  
*Despotic Icons*  
 V. Vasnetsov, St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev  
 (from *Sobor Sv. Ravnoapostol'nogo kniazia Vladimira v Kieve*, Kiev: Izd. S. V. Kul'zhenko, 1898)

tral locations, Obrenović also worked on iconostases in more distant areas. In addition to Gornji Adrovac, near the town of Aleksinac, he produced works in Glibovac, near Smederevska Palanka (Church of the Nativity of the Virgin, 1907),<sup>18</sup> and in Krivaja, near Šabac (Church of the Transfiguration, 1908).<sup>19</sup> These commissions demonstrate that his activity was not confined to a local context, but extended across different regions of Serbia, reflecting both the mobility of his practice and the broader scope of his work beyond his immediate surroundings.

Among the works of Dušan Obrenović, the Holy Trinity Church in Gornji Adrovac occupies a central place, regarded as the most significant of his commissions. The church was erected in memory of Nikolay Nikolayevich Raevsky, a Russian colonel who volunteered in the Serbian-Turkish

18 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 184.

19 Archive of Serbia, Ministry of Education Fund (MPs), 1899, B-3249.



Fig. 7  
*The Resurrection*  
 D. Obrenović, iconostasis in Knić, 1912



Fig. 8  
*The Resurrection*  
 M. Nesterov, St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev

War and fell in 1876 on the battlefield in Gornji Adrovac.<sup>20</sup> In accordance with his family's wishes, the church was constructed on the site of his death. Planning for the construction began in 1901, and the building was completed by September 1903, when it was consecrated. The Raevsky family financed the entire project, supporting both the acquisition of land and the commissioning of the architectural plans and the icons for the iconostasis, all created by the Russian artist Nikolay Alex-

20 A. L. Šemjakin, *Smrt grofa Vronskog: povodom 125-godišnjice srpsko-turskog rata i učešća ruskih dobrovoljaca u njemu*, Beograd: Zavet, 2002.



Fig. 9  
*The Last Supper*, P. Svedomsky, St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev



Fig. 10  
*The Last Supper*, D. Obrenović, iconostasis in Glibovac, 1907



Fig. 11  
*Christ Praying in the Garden*  
 P. Svedomsky, St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev



Fig. 12  
*Christ Praying in the Garden*  
 D. Obrenović, iconostasis in Glibovac, 1907

androvich Bruni.<sup>21</sup> These plans and icons were sent to Serbia for the church, which subsequently became known as the “Russian” Church or the “Raevsky’s” Church.

The final stage of the church’s interior decoration involved the wall paintings, entrusted to Dušan Obrenović. On several murals, he signed his name along with the year of completion, 1903. Obrenović’s program of wall painting constitutes a complex ensemble, designed to respond to the commemorative purpose of the church.<sup>22</sup> It was conceived as a manifestation of national and religious ideas, Serbian and Russian, presented as complementary to one another. On the south side of the naos, the murals depict the Baptism of Rus, along with figures of Russian saints, including Prince Vladimir, Princess Olga, and St. Alexander Nevsky. On the opposite side, Serbian-themed scenes and figures are represented, including the Coronation of the first Serbian ruler, St. Stefan Prvovenčani, and the renowned Serbian saints – St. Stefan of Dečani, St. Mother Angelina, and St. Prince Lazar. Central to the Russo-Serbian repertoire is the portrait of Nikolai Raevsky, painted

21 A. L. Šemjakin, “Istorija ‘crkve Vronskog’ u dokumentima ruskih arhiva”, *Arhiv: časopis Arhiva Jugoslavije* 5/1 (2004), 75-102; M. Stanković, “Serbian Church Art and Cultural Memory in the 19th Century: Russian Influence”, in: *Discussing Heritage and Museums: Crossing Paths of France and Serbia*, (eds.) N. Krstović and I. Stanković, Sirogojno: Muzej na otvorenom Staro selo, 2016, 140-155; Z. Stevanović, *Crkva Svete Trojice u Gornjem Adrovcu: Spomen crkva ruskom pukovniku Nikolaju Nikolajeviču Rajevskom*, Aleksinac: Centar za kulturu i umetnost, 2019; A. Kostić, T. Rakonjac, “Memorial Church in Gornji Adrovac as a Symbol of Serbo-Russian Cultural, Political, National, and Artistic Ties in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century”. *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta* 54/1 (2024), 235–255.

22 A. Kostić, T. Rakonjac, “Memorial Church in Gornji Adrovac as a Symbol of Serbo-Russian Cultural, Political, National, and Artistic Ties in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century”, 10-16.



Fig. 13  
*The Lamentation of Christ*, D. Obrenović, iconostasis in Knić, 1912



Плащаница по рисунку В. М. Васнецова.

Fig. 14  
*Epitaphios* by V. Vasnetsov  
St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev  
(from *Sobor Sv. Ravnoapostol'nogo kniazia Vladimira v Kieve*, Kiev: Izd. S. V. Kul'zhenko, 1898)

after a model by the Serbian artist Steva Todorović. The fallen soldier is depicted on the western wall, commemorating the individual in whose memory the church was built. The dome was also decorated, with God the Father depicted at its center. In the altar, a specific thematic choice was made: instead of the conventional depiction of the Mother of God in the apse, Obrenović presented a bust of Christ Pantocrator.

It has already been noted that in the Raevsky's Church, Dušan Obrenović's murals drew upon the works of Viktor Vasnetsov, one of the leading Russian artists of the period. Beyond the depictions of Serbian saints and themes, all other scenes and figures clearly replicate Vasnetsov's compositions. This applies not only to Russian subjects but also to representations such as God the Father in the dome and Christ in the altar. By inscribing his signature and the date in the dome, Obrenović further indicated that he worked "after Vasnetsov," evidently signaling the significance of his source (*По Васнецову радио Д. Обреновић 1903: 2*). Previous studies have interpreted this note as evidence that sketches by Vasnetsov himself may have been sent to Serbia, alongside the architectural plans and the iconostasis, for the construction of the memorial church.<sup>23</sup>

It is not surprising that replicas of Vasnetsov's works found their place in the Raevsky's Church, given that he was at the height of his fame at the time. In particular, Obrenović drew upon Vasnetsov's compositions from the St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev. These works enjoyed great popularity, which led to widespread copying, replication, and reproduction through various printing techniques. A significant portion of this mass circulation was approved by the Russian Synod and recommended as a model for decorating new churches. Consequently, these copies and reproductions of Vasnetsov's paintings were integrated into the official Russian ecclesiastical and national policies, closely linked to the imperial program of religious revival.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, the assumption that Vasnetsov's personal sketches were used in the Raevsky's Church can be reconsidered in light of the complete oeuvre of Dušan Obrenović. Beyond this wall painting, Obrenović worked on a series of iconostases, which are characterized by the repetition of identical icon compositions. While Vasnetsov's models are evident, they appear alongside works by other prominent Russian painters. Moreover, all the sources cited by Obrenović in his icons ultimately trace back to a single origin – the St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev.

Shortly after its completion in 1896, Saint Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev became renowned for its distinctive decoration, marking a new chapter in religious painting at the turn of the century. The memorial church, dedicated to the 900th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus', introduced a novel approach to modern religious art, symbolizing the revival of Ancient Rus' and the emergence of a

23 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 185; M. Stanković, "Serbian Church Art and Cultural Memory in the 19th Century: Russian Influence", 60; A. Kostić, T. Rakonjac, "Memorial Church in Gornji Adrovac as a Symbol of Serbo-Russian Cultural, Political, National, and Artistic Ties in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century", 17. Yuri Vasnetsov is also considered as the author of the sketches: A. L. Šemjakin, *Smrt grofa Vronskog*, 131.

24 O. Tarasov, *Modern i drevnie ikony: ot sviatyni k shedevru : ocherk*, Moskva: Indrik, 2016, 15-48.



Fig. 15  
*Prophet David*  
 D. Obrenović, Church in Bresnica, 1906



Fig. 16  
*Prophets*  
 V. Vasnetsov, St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev  
 (from *Sobor Sv. Ravnoapostol'nogo kniazia Vladimira v Kieve*,  
 Kiev: Izd. S. V. Kul'zhenko, 1898)

national style. It established the foundation for the development of national religious art and for the conception of Russia's special role in the Christian world, inherited from Byzantium. The interior decoration was executed under the supervision of Professor Adrian Viktorovich Prahov by a team of painters, including Viktor Vasnetsov, Mikhail Nesterov, Pavel Svedomsky, Wilhelm Kotarbiński, and others, who were responsible for both the murals and the iconostases.<sup>25</sup>

Not only Vasnetsov, but all of these painters were repeatedly referenced by Dušan Obrenović in his iconostases. Among these works were numerous subjects absent from the wall painting in Gornji Adrovac, selected to fulfill the standard thematic program of the iconostasis. For example, Vasnetsov's despotic icons of the Mother of God and Christ Enthroned from the central iconostasis

25 N. I. Petrov, *Iz" istorii Kievskago Vladimirskago sobora*, Kiev: Tip. Imp. Un-ta sv. Vladimira, 1898; Idem, *O rospisanii sten i voobshche ob ukrashenii Kievskago Vladimirovskago sobora*, Kiev: Tip. I. I. Gorbunova, 1899.

of the St. Vladimir's Cathedral served as models that Obrenović adopted and reproduced on several occasions,<sup>26</sup> including the despotic icons in the churches of Bresnica, Goračići, Knić, and Krivaja. These were among Vasnetsov's most popular icons, widely replicated, reflecting his integration of modern concepts with both Byzantine and traditional Russian art.

For the festive row of the iconostases, Obrenović drew on several works by Mikhail Nesterov from the St. Vladimir's Cathedral. The icon of the Resurrection was repeatedly included in his iconostases<sup>27</sup> (in Goračići, Bresnica, Glibovac, Knić), carrying Nesterov's distinctive mark of incorporating landscapes in a Symbolist manner, such as white lilies parting before the risen Christ. He also adapted Nesterov's scenes of the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ, which he repeated across the festive icons (Bresnica, Glibovac, Knić, Krivaja).

In addition, Obrenović reproduced Wilhelm Kotarbiński's Transfiguration as a festive-row icon (Bresnica, Knić, Glibovac). Pavel Svedomsky's Christ Praying in the Garden was similarly adapted as the icon above the side door of the iconostases (Goračići, Glibovac). Particularly notable was Svedomsky's Last Supper, emphasized in Obrenović's iconostases. It is recognizable by Christ's contemplative pose, contrasting with the apostles' dramatic gestures. As a subject with an obligatory place above the royal doors, this composition by Svedomsky was included in multiple churches (Bresnica, Goračići, Glibovac, Knić, Krivaja).

Such an ability to reference individual works by painters from the St. Vladimir's Cathedral was likely facilitated by illustrated albums and publications that appeared shortly after its consecration. Among them, a significant contribution was the volume on the Church of St. Vladimir published in 1897 by Genrikh Grigor'evich Lazovskii, a Kiev photographer known both for his documentary work and for his pioneering efforts in coloring photographs. His professional standing was confirmed by distinctions he received for albums documenting the Volhynia military maneuvers of 1890 and the coronation festivities of 1896.<sup>28</sup> Lazovskii's engagement with ecclesiastical art culminated in the album on the St. Vladimir's Cathedral.<sup>29</sup> A friend of Professor Prakhov, Lazovskii had already prepared this work for the church's consecration in 1896, when he presented the album to the imperial couple.<sup>30</sup> The album comprises fifty-two phototypes based on photographs of the cathedral's interior decoration. The publication systematically documents the wall paintings and the iconostasis, specifying the authorship of individual works and their precise locations within the church. It thereby provided a visual record of the decoration program and established an important reference for subsequent engagement with the monument.

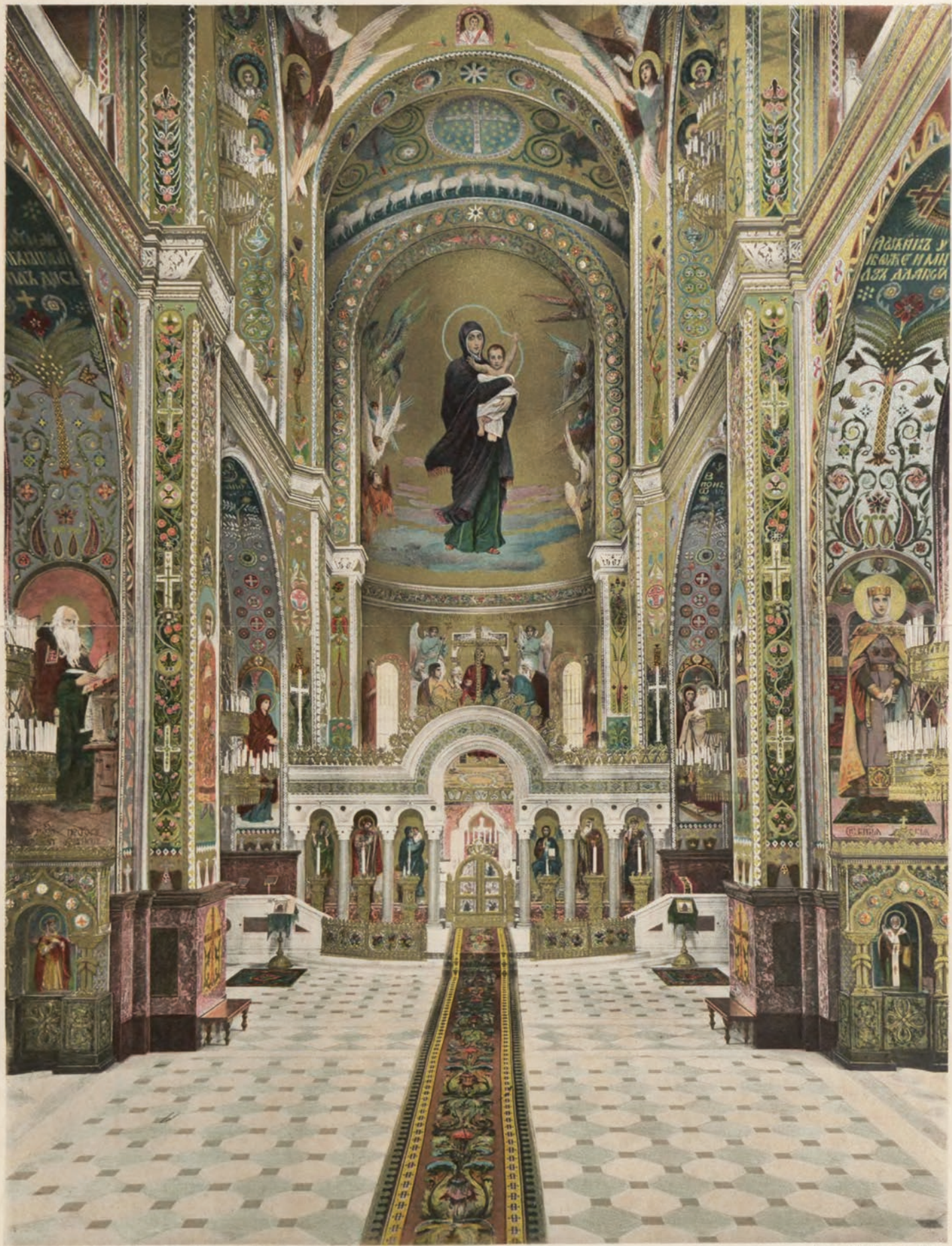
26 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 185.

27 *Ibid*, 185.

28 A. P. Popov, *Rossiiskie fotografy (1839—1930)*, T.1 A-M (Mei), Kolomna: Muzei organicheskoi kul'tury, 2013, 693-694.

29 *Sobor sviatogo velikogo kniazia Vladimira v g. Kieve: al'bom fotografa G. Lazovskogo*, sobstvennost' izdatelei fot. G. Lazovskogo i B. Vil'koshevskogo, Lodz' : Kiev : Tipolitogr. V. Kolinskogo, 1897.

30 M. V Nesterov, *O perezhitom: 1862-1917 gg.: vospominaniia*, red. M. I Titova, T. I Titova, Moskva: Molodaia Gvardiia, 2006, 68-69.



Доживолено пикаурою. Київъ, 21 Августа 1898 г. Цена. прот. Г. Королюковъ.

Фото-лит. С. В. Кузнецова, Київъ.

*Внутренній видъ Собора Св. Хнязя Владимира, въ Киевѣ.*

In the following year, 1898, an illustrated book on the St. Vladimir's Cathedral was published by the prominent Kiev printer Stefan Vasil'evich Kulzhenko.<sup>31</sup> The volume contained texts on the cathedral's construction, architecture, and artistic decoration, including paintings, sculpture, bronze works, and liturgical furnishings. As indicated by the publisher, the principal aim of the edition was to present the cathedral's artistic program through illustrations, of which 107 were included. These images were produced from photographs by N. P. Negel, employing various contemporary printing techniques. The publication thus provided a systematic visual record of the church's interior and decorative program, complementing Lazovskii's earlier photographic documentation and further contributing to the dissemination of knowledge on the cathedral's artistic ensemble.

By comparing these publications with the icons of Dušan Obrenović, it becomes evident that he used photographs of the St. Vladimir's Cathedral as models. In particular, the content of Kulzhenko's illustrated book corresponds closely with Obrenović's works. While working in the church in Bresnica, Obrenović also painted the figure of the prophet David on the choir stalls. In this figure, he replicated the depiction of David from Vasnetsov's group of prophets on the northern wall of the St. Vladimir Cathedral. Notably, this scene was reproduced photographically only in Kulzhenko's book, while it was absent from Lazovskii's album.<sup>32</sup>

Obrenović's works demonstrate the potential that illustrated books provided for icon painting. This is particularly evident in the way distinctive details from works in the Vladimir's Cathedral were transposed into individual, separate scenes. In this manner, Obrenović utilized an illustrated album for the scene of the Lamentation of Christ. For this scene, he drew upon the shroud (epitaphios) designed by Viktor Vasnetsov for the St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev.<sup>33</sup> In a simplified form, he reproduced the scene on the iconostases in Knić and Bresnica, placing it thematically beneath the Crucifixion. For both iconostases, he also incorporated figures of the evangelists from Mikhail Nesterov's royal doors on the lateral iconostasis of the Vladimir's Cathedral.<sup>34</sup> These figures were transposed into separate icons for the upper section of the iconostasis and integrated with other apostolic figures. This case illustrates the extent to which Obrenović exploited photographic albums as a source for iconographic modeling.

Considering the chronology of Dušan Obrenović's works, it is likely that he first acquired a copy of the St. Vladimir's Cathedral album during his earliest recorded commissions – either while executing the wall painting in the Raevsky Church or the iconostasis in Goračići. Both projects were completed by September 1903, suggesting that, by this time, Obrenović was closely acquainted with the works of the Vladimir's Cathedral, most probably through photographic records in the album. This early exposure to Russian models provided him with a repertoire of forms and motifs

31 *Sobor Sv. Ravnoapostol'nogo kniazia Vladimira v Kieve*. Kiev: Izd. S.V. Kul'zhenko, 1898. Texts by A. D. Ertel (history and architecture) and V. G. M. (paintings).

32 *Ibid*, 57.

33 *Ibid*, 127.

34 *Ibid*, 100-101.

that he could selectively adapt to his art work.

Building on this foundation, Obrenović made extensive use of Russian paintings of the new style, yet he applied them to iconostases that differed from the historicist model found in the St. Vladimir's Cathedral. His iconostases followed the prevailing Serbian model, characterized by their height and neoclassical stylistic features, with festive icons arranged in the upper zones and crowned by the Crucifixion at the top. He also observed the established convention of emphasizing central icons, such as the Last Supper above the royal doors and the Holy Trinity in the upper section. Where no examples existed in the Vladimir Cathedral, such as Saint Sava of Serbia or the Holy Trinity, Obrenović drew on iconographic traditions prevalent in Serbia in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> This approach produced a form of stylistic eclecticism, blending elements of contemporary Serbian church painting, particularly history painting and post-Nazarene art, with the Russian new religious style. The latter was itself informed by symbolism and references to medieval art.

\*

By utilizing illustrated photographic editions of the St. Vladimir's Cathedral, Dušan Obrenović introduced elements of the new Russian painting into Serbian churches on a scale that had not been previously seen. This underscores the significance of new printing techniques and the potential of photographic reproduction at the end of the nineteenth century. Building on the earlier influence of graphics and printed books, photography provided a practical means to enhance the dissemination of artistic models. Within a broad spectrum of cultural influences, it expanded the possibilities for informing artists and transmitting artistic ideas, a process that, in this case, was realized specifically in the field of religious art.

This objective was also central to the albums of the Vladimir Cathedral, which were widely circulated within the national-religious context. In the introduction to his album, the photographer Genrikh Lazovskii emphasized that the cathedral's artistic works, as captured in his photographs, should serve as models for future churches across Russia, as well as for contemporary icon painting in general. He noted this particularly because untrained painters provide the faithful with poorly and improperly composed figures.<sup>36</sup> In the case of Dušan Obrenović, such an album fulfilled this purpose perfectly, functioning as both a source of innovation and a verified standard. It allowed him to introduce new artistic solutions while remaining aligned with the ideas of Orthodox propriety, drawing upon exemplary models from Russian art.

35 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 185.

36 *Sobor sviätogo velikogo kniazia Vladimira v g. Kieve: al'bom fotografa G. Lazovskogo*, 3.



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Ana Kostić

## The Ruling Ideology of King Petar I Karađorđević and Russia: The Transfer of Russian Icons and Liturgical Items to Serbia

The continuous relationship between the Serbian people and Russia can be traced back to the Middle Ages, but it intensified in the 17<sup>th</sup> century due to changes in the political situation in the Balkans, marked by the absolute dominance of Ottoman rule. This entailed entirely new frameworks for the lives of all Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, including the Serbs, within the territory of the Islamic state. On the other hand, Russia was the only free Orthodox country and a powerful empire, naturally positioning itself as the protector of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans while simultaneously establishing and safeguarding its political interests in the region.<sup>1</sup> During this period, there was an intensified transfer of liturgical objects, books, and icons to Serbian Orthodox churches, representing a form of Russian support for the Orthodox population living within the borders of non-Orthodox states.<sup>2</sup> The continuous ties with Russia, established in earlier centuries, influenced Serbian insurgents at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—during the First and Second Serbian Uprisings (1804–1815) against the Ottoman Empire—to anticipate support and international backing from Russia in achieving their political goals, which ultimately aimed at securing the right to an independent nation-state. The protector of the Serbian insurgents was Russian Tsar Alexander I.<sup>3</sup> Symbols of Russian patronage and political support for the Serbian uprising include gifts from the tsar to Karađorđe Petrović, the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, such as a lavishly

1 N. Popović, *Srbi i Rusi u izazovima istorije. Prilozi za istoriju srpsko-ruskih i jugoslovensko-sovjetskih odnosa (19-20 vek)*, Beograd 2023, 11-29.

2 N. Makuljević „Piety, Ideology, and Orthodoxy: Russian Icons in Serbian Church Culture (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries)“, in: *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Y. Boycheva, Seyssel 2016, 138-141; V. Dautović, *Umetnost i liturgijski ritual: bogoslužbeni predmeti u srpskoj vizuelnoj kulturi 19. veka*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd 2020, 224-232.

3 A. Jelačić, *Istorija Rusije*, Beograd 2021, 209-211; S. Rajić, D. Leovac, *Istorija srpskog naroda u 19. i početkom 20. veka*, Beograd 2018, 17, 23-26.

decorated sabre inscribed with “Defender of Faith and Fatherland” and the orders of Saint Anna and Alexander Nevsky.<sup>4</sup> The insurgent flags, which featured the Russian coat of arms on one side, also served as a visual symbol of Russian support for the Serbian struggle for liberation from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup> When Serbian envoys visited Russia in 1811, they returned with aid in the form of money, church books, and a Gospel that Tsar Alexander I gifted to the Studenica Monastery.<sup>6</sup> From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until the October Revolution of 1917, the political and cultural relations between the Principality/Kingdom of Serbia and Imperial Russia were marked by an intense dynamic that corresponded to the foreign policy interests of both countries. Consequently, these relations were at times harmonious, while at other times they experienced tensions and periods of estrangement.<sup>7</sup> This influenced the rulers of both modern Serbian dynasties—the Karađorđević and Obrenović dynasties—during the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be, to varying degrees and in different ways, connected to Russia, the Russian imperial court, and Russian visual culture as part of their ruling ideology.<sup>8</sup>

In the realm of ruling ideology, an important aspect of Serbo-Russian relations was the visits of Serbian rulers to Russia from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until World War I. These visits, both official

4 M. Stevanović, „Ubistvo vožda Karađorđa pogrebi i sahrana na Oplencu“, *Mitološki zbornik*, 37, Rača 2017, 57-60; A. Jelačić, *op. cit.*, 210.

5 D. Samardžić, *Vojne zastave Srba do 1918*, Beograd 1983, 46-51; M. Atlagić, Z. Elezović, F. Obradović, „Ruski heraldički nacionalni Simboli u grbu i na zastavama Srbije za vreme Prvog srpskog ustanka (1804-1813) kao znak pokroviteljstva Rusije nad Srbijom“, *Mitološki zbornik* 37 (2017), 159-169.

6 M. Šakota, *Studenička riznica*, Beograd 1988, 142-143; A. Vasilic „Istorija riznice manastira Studenice“, *Saopštenja* II (1957), 26.

7 On relations between Serbia and Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries see: N. Popović, *Srbija i carska Rusija*, Beograd 2007, 11-208; *Ruski nekropolj u Beogradu, znamenje istorijskog prijateljstva*, ur. M. Radivjević, M. Ković, Beograd 2014, 19-32; *Moskva – Srbija, Beograd – Rusija. Dokumenta i materijali. Vol. III, Društveno-političke i kulturne veze 1878-1917*, ed. A. L. Šemjakin, Moskva-Beograd 2012; *Rusija i Srbija na prelomu veka. Srpske teme Andreja Šemjakina*, ed. A. Timofejev, Beograd 2020.

8 For more on the relations between the Serbian rulers of the Obrenović and Karađorđević dynasties and Russia in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, see: R. Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe. Biografija*, Beograd 2005, 83, 167-207, 357-391, 446-461; R. Ljušić, *Knez Miloš (1783-1860) državotvorni vladar*, Novi Sad 2021, 107-108, 110, 131, 223, 381, 503, 520, 526, 564, 670, 70-707; D. Leovac, *Knez Mihailo Obrenović. Mladost, prva vladavina, emigracija*, Beograd 2019, 156-162; D. Leovac, *Srbija i Rusija za vreme druge vladavine kneza Mihaila (1860-1868)*, Beograd 2015; D. Leovac, „Serbia and Russia during the Second Rule of Prince Milos Obrenovic (1858–1860)“, *Belgrade Historical Review* 2 (2011), 205–219; D. Leovac, *Knez Mihailo Obrenović (1823-1868)*, Beograd 2023, 107-108, 159-162, 185-186, 216, 318-319, 548, 594, 597; D. Kovačević, *Srbija i Rusija 1878-1889, od Berlinskog kongresa do abdikacije kralja Milana*, Beograd 2003, 152-158; S. Rajić, *Spoljna politika Srbije između očekivanja i realnosti 1868-1878*, Beograd 2015, 173-179; S. Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, II, Beograd 1934, 207-208; S. Rajić, *Kraljica Natalija i Rusija – od razvoda do preveravanja*, 231-251, *Srpske studije* 4 (2013); S. Rajić, *Aleksandar Obrenović, vladar na prelazu veka, sukobljeni svetovi*, Beograd 2014, 61-66, 200-202, 330-335; S. Rajić, „O novim aspektima proglašenja Srbije Kraljevinom povodom stotridesetogodišnjice (1882-2012)“, *Srpske studije*, III, No. 3 (2012), 371-392; D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u izgnanstvu*, Beograd 2009; D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, Beograd 2009.

or private, played a significant role in facilitating the transfer of various artifacts and crafted items. Official visits represented, for the Serbian side, an expression of Russian support in addressing significant issues in the spheres of domestic and foreign policy. These visits were carefully organized and included tours of Russia's most important cities and churches, familiarization with court life and contemporary visual practices, as well as politically charged meetings with state officials and members of the imperial family, often accompanied by a culture of gift-giving. The culture of gift-giving was of particular importance for the transfer of Russian artifacts to Serbian territory within the framework of the ruling ideology and diplomatic relations between the two countries from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until World War I.

Within the political culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, gift-giving during royal visits to another country was an obligatory part of the protocol. It was typically accompanied by expressions of courtesy, appropriate ceremonies, and symbolic iconography.<sup>9</sup> The form, nature, and content of gifts exchanged during the official, institutionalized visits of rulers were determined by the rules dictated by the occasion and its ceremonial protocol.<sup>10</sup> Gift-giving or receiving was never a one-sided act; it represented a social phenomenon that, through appropriate rituals of exchange, symbolized a form of contractual obligation or expectation. It also served as a symbol of establishing a spiritual or political bond between the giver and the recipient.<sup>11</sup> The desire to achieve a specific goal was always the driving force behind the act of gift-giving. In keeping with the tradition of gift exchange, Serbian and Russian rulers shared a variety of crafted items during official diplomatic visits. These gifts frequently included prestigious state decorations, along with sabres, snuffboxes, pistols, tea sets, kaftans, and other finely crafted objects. On occasion, gifts were exchanged through intermediaries as well.<sup>12</sup> Among the items presented to Serbian rulers by Russia were icons. For instance, the people of Moscow sent a silver-bound icon from the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius to Serbia, depicting the *Vision of Sergius of Radonezh*, in memory of Prince Mihailo Obrenović in 1869. This is evidenced by the inscription: "In memory of the Serbian Prince Mihailo III, from the citizens

9 Such codes of conduct have their roots in the culture of medieval elites: B. Buettner, „Past Presents: New Years Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca 1400“, *The Art Bulletin*, December 2001, No.4; B. Crvenković, „Album fotografija “Hilendar srpska carska lavra u Svetoj Gori Njegovom Veličanstvu Kralju Srbije Petru I za spomen Njegove visoke posete 25. marta 1910. godine“, in: *Šesta kazivanja o Svetoj Gori*, ed. M. Živojinović, Beograd, 148.

10 M. Mos, *Sociologija i antropologija*, 2, Beograd 1982.

11 B. Crvenković, *op. cit*, 176.

12 For more on the gifts that Serbian rulers received from Russian tsars, see: A. Jelačić, *op.cit*, 210; R. Ljušić, *op. cit*, 110, 370, 461, 670, 706-707; D. Leovac, *Knez Mihailo*, 216, 594, 597; M. Atlagić, Z. Elezović, F. Obradović, *op. cit*, 165-167; M. Stevanović, *op. cit*, 57-60; S. Rajić, *Kralj Aleksandar Obrenović*, 63, 335; D. Kovačević, *op. cit*, 154; K. V. Nikiforov, *Deiatel'nost' rossijskoj diplomatii v Serbskom kiazhestve posle Prihoda k vlasti ustavobranitelej*, Nacional'noe vozrozhdenie balkanskih narodov v pervoi polovine XIX veka i Rossiia, otv. Redaktor I. V. Čurkina, Moskva, 1992, 37; Lj. Stević, “Medalja u spomen stupanja na presto kneza Milana Obrenovića 1872”, *Teatron* Vol. 43, No. 186-187 (2019), 78-82; Lj. Stević, “Ruski orden Svetog apostola Andreje Prvozvanog s mačevima kralja Petra I Karadorđevića”, *Vesnik* 44 (2017), 177-187; *Obrenovići u muzejskim i drugim zbirkama Srbije i Evrope*, V, ed. Marušić, A. Ranković, Gornji Milanovac 2017, 355, 368.

of Moscow, 1869.”<sup>13</sup> Presenting themselves as Orthodox rulers, members of the ruling Obrenović and Karađorđević dynasties in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often procured liturgical items from Russia, which they then donated to local churches. This practice represented yet another significant channel for the transfer of Russian crafted artifacts to Serbian territory within the framework of Serbian ruling ideology.<sup>14</sup>

One of the modern Serbian rulers closely connected to Russia, first as a pretender to the Serbian throne and later as king, was Petar I Karađorđević. His ruling ideology was significantly shaped in the visual domain by the transfer of Russian icons and liturgical items to Serbian territory. Some of the significant gifts presented to King Petar were, in fact, Russian icons. At the time they were gifted, these icons were considered valuable treasures, crafted entirely in the Orthodox spirit while embodying both the aesthetic and artistic ideals of contemporary Russian iconography. Thus, at the very beginning of his reign in 1903, King Petar received a Russian icon of complex iconographic content and message from the brotherhood of the Hilandar Monastery. Shortly thereafter, he was presented with another Russian icon by the Russian brotherhood of the Saint Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, as a testament to the strong political, religious, and cultural ties between Serbia and Russia.<sup>15</sup> Following the established practices of his predecessors on the Serbian throne, who relied on Russia in foreign policy, King Petar managed to officially visit Russia twice, in 1910 and 1911. These visits not only yielded political benefits but also influenced the shaping of King Petar’s visual taste, which subsequently impacted the furnishing of his endowment, the Church of Saint George at Oplenac. The church’s iconostasis and liturgical objects were directly imported from Russian workshops in Kyiv, Moscow, and Saint Petersburg.<sup>16</sup>

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After the assassination of King Aleksandar Obrenović and Queen Draga during the May Coup of 1903, Petar I Karađorđević ascended the Serbian throne. He was the son of Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević and the grandson of Đorđe Petrović—Karađorđe, the leader of the First Serbian Uprising (1804–1813) and founder of the modern Serbian Karađorđević dynasty.<sup>17</sup> Due to the regicide, the political circumstances in Serbia were highly unfavourable. The country faced sanctions, and the legitimacy of the new ruler from a rival dynasty was challenged by the refusal of all European monarchies to recognize him.<sup>18</sup> This compelled King Petar Karađorđević, upon ascending the throne, to emphasize the legitimacy of his rule by employing the tried-and-tested strategies of

13 Today, the icon is kept in the Historical Museum of Serbia in Belgrade.

14 V. Dautović, *op. cit.*, 239, 363.

15 I. Borozan, *Proizvođenje tradicije: Hilandar i srpski monarsi krajem 19. veka*, in: *Osma kazivanja o Svetoj Gori*, ed. A. Fotić, Z. Rakić, Beograd 2013, 278-287.

16 M. Jovanović, *Oplenac. Hram Svetog Đorđa i mauzolej Karađorđevića*, Topola 1989, 68.

17 O kralju Petru Karađorđeviću: D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u izgnanstvu*, Beograd 2009; D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, Beograd 2009.

18 D. Đorđević, “Sučeljavanja sa Austro-Ugarskom“, in: *Istorija srpskog naroda*, VI-1, Beograd 1983, 135-173; D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 16-46, 439-469.

the ruling ideologies of his predecessors on the Serbian throne. Additionally, he sought to establish and solidify his own course of action as swiftly as possible. In constructing his image and propaganda, both in secular and sacred contexts, King Petar drew upon the established tradition of the Karađorđević dynasty's propagandistic representation. He shaped his own ideological program, in which ties to Russia played a significant role.<sup>19</sup> His connections with Russia started during his exile. Through both indirect and direct family ties, King Petar was connected to the Russian court. When arranging his marriage to Princess Zorka, the daughter of Montenegrin Prince Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš, the Russian Tsar Alexander III was intended to serve as the godfather. However, due to political relations with Serbia, the Tsar had to decline, sending his representative, Count Denisov-Orlov, in his place. Nonetheless, his monetary gift to Princess Zorka on the occasion of the wedding symbolized support for the union.<sup>20</sup> King Petar's sisters-in-law were married in Russia to members of the imperial family—grandsons of Tsar Nicholas I. Anastasija (Stana) Petrović was the wife of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich the Younger, while Milica Petrović was married to Grand Duke Peter Nikolayevich.

One of the significant ideological decisions that Peter Karađorđević made during his exile, which brought him closer to Russia, was the change of the family patron saint. In 1890, he replaced Saint Clement, previously celebrated by the Karađorđević dynasty, with Saint Andrew the First-Called. To formalize this change, Prince Petar addressed the Metropolitan of Belgrade, Mitrofan Ban, stating that "certain circumstances" had led him to replace the Karađorđević family's traditional patron, Saint Clement, the Roman Pope, with either Saint George or Saint Andrew the First-Called. The final decision to choose Saint Andrew the First-Called as the patron saint was influenced by Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović, whom Metropolitan Mitrofan had invited to participate in resolving this matter.<sup>21</sup> Since Saint George was the patron saint of Montenegrin Prince Nikola, Petar's father-in-law, Saint Andrew was chosen instead. Saint Andrew was a Slavic saint and held particular significance among Serbs, being remembered as the day when Karađorđe liberated Belgrade in 1806.<sup>22</sup> This was one of the reasons why Prince Petar chose to honour Saint Andrew, as it was a day that reminded the Serbian people of the contributions of his grandfather, Karađorđe.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, Saint Andrew was a saint of great significance to the Russians. According to his hagiography, he was the first apostle to visit Kievan Rus and preach Christianity to the Russian people, which is why he was proclaimed the patron saint of Russia. On 30 November 1698, Peter the Great established the first Russian order in honour of Saint Andrew. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this order

19 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji 1882-1914*, Beograd 2007, 23-28.

20 D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u izgnanstvu*, 243-382.

21 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 360-361.

22 N. Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 24.

23 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 360.

became standardized and was regarded as one of the most prestigious Russian state decorations.<sup>24</sup>

Recognizing that Montenegrin Prince Nikola enjoyed Russia's support, Prince Petar—despite being his son-in-law and sharing a strained relationship with him over rival claims to the Serbian throne—actively sought to undermine and politically discredit him, while purposefully drawing attention to himself.<sup>25</sup> That same year, 1890, shortly after changing his patron saint, Prince Petar reached out to his sister-in-law, Anastasia-Stana Nikolayevna, Duchess of Leuchtenberg, requesting her assistance in securing an audience with Russian Tsar Alexander III.<sup>26</sup> She arranged an audience for him in Saint Petersburg, scheduling the visit for St. Peter's Day in 1891. This act offended Prince Nikola, who perceived it as an attack on his reputation and Montenegro's status in its relations with Serbia and Russia.<sup>27</sup> This could also have been politically awkward for Serbia, as the reigning Serbian ruler, King Aleksandar Obrenović, was scheduled to visit the same year. Given the country's internal instability at the time, the trip to Russia and securing Russian support were of great importance to Serbia.<sup>28</sup> It can be concluded from the above that the change of the Karađorđević family patron saint was an ideological decision and an attempt by the Serbian pretender to the throne, Petar, to strengthen ties with Russia, rather than a choice motivated by personal reasons. Notably, Prince Petar's decision to change the patron saint was preceded by the death of his wife, Princess Zorka, following childbirth on 16 March 1890, and shortly thereafter, the death of their newborn son, Andreja.<sup>29</sup> After becoming king, Petar commissioned a patron saint icon of Saint Andrew the First-Called for his court from the renowned Russian firm Khlebnikov in 1906, purchasing it for a sum of 1,892 Dinars.<sup>30</sup>

During his time in exile, Petar Karađorđević resided in Paris, Vichy, Nice, Cetinje, and Geneva.<sup>31</sup> During his time in Paris and Geneva, as a devout follower of the Orthodox Church, Petar Karađorđević undoubtedly fulfilled his religious needs in Russian churches. The design and decor of these churches likely influenced his taste, steering it toward contemporary Russian sacred visual practices. This influence would later prove crucial during the construction and furnishing of the Karađorđević family endowment at Oplenac.<sup>32</sup> The Russian Church in Paris was built between 1859 and 1861, based on a design by architect Roman Kuzmin, who also designed the Greek Church in Saint Petersburg (fig. 1).<sup>33</sup> When Petar left Montenegro in 1894 and moved with his family to

24 E. E. Zamyslovskii, I. I. Petrov, *Istoričeskii očerk rossiiskih ordenov i Sbornik osnovnykh ordenskih statutov*, S. Peterburg 1891, 3-7.

25 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 361.

26 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 361-362.

27 Ibid.

28 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 362-365.

29 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 355-356.

30 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 24.

31 D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u izgnanstvu*.

32 N. Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 27.

33 E. A. Borisova, *Russka arhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka*, Moskva 1979, 303.



Fig. 1  
*St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral*  
Paris, 1870



Fig. 2  
*Cathedral of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Geneva, 19th century*

Geneva, he lived in a rented apartment at 10 Monetier Street, in close proximity to the Russian Church.<sup>34</sup> The Russian Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Geneva (Krestovozdvizhenskii sobor) built and furnished after 1866, was situated at the highest point in Geneva, in a prime location (fig. 2). With its architecture, designed by academician D. Grimm in the Russian national style, it became one of the city's visual landmarks.<sup>35</sup> The church also served as a gathering place not only for the Russian community but for the entire Orthodox diaspora in Geneva, of which Prince Petar Karađorđević was a part. After their primary education in Geneva, Petar sent his sons, Aleksandar and Đorđe, to continue their studies in Russia, enrolling them in a military academy in Saint Petersburg. This was a family tradition, as Petar's brothers, Đorđe and Arsen, served as officers in the Imperial Russian Guard. Petar's daughter, Jelena, was also educated in Russia, first at the Smolny Convent and later in Saint Petersburg.<sup>36</sup> During his occasional visits to his children in Russia, Petar had the opportunity to become acquainted with the political, cultural, and artistic developments of the time.<sup>37</sup>

34 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 398.

35 V. Vasil'evich Antonov, A. V. Kobak, *Russkie hramy i obiteli v Evrope*, St. Peterburg 2005, 321-324.

36 Her mother, Princess Zorka, was also educated in the Smoljni monastery. The children of the most prominent Russian families were educated here: D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u emigraciji*, 243.

37 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 409-410.

The ideological connection to Russia, evident during Petar Karađorđević's time in exile, continued after his ascension to the Serbian throne in 1903. Within King Petar's ruling ideology, and particularly for the transfer of Russian sacred art to Serbian territory, his trip to Russia in 1910 played a significant role.<sup>38</sup> The path to organizing King Petar's official visit to Russia was long and arduous, as European monarchs did not recognize him as the legitimate ruler of Serbia due to his ascension to the throne following the brutal assassination of King Aleksandar Obrenović and Queen Draga. This was evident in their refusal to engage in any official contact with Serbia and the imposition of sanctions.<sup>39</sup> After years of unsuccessful attempts, in 1910, thanks to intensified efforts by Serbian diplomacy and the assertive policies of European powers, the opportunity finally arose for the first official visit of a Serbian king to other states.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in 1910, King Petar visited Russia, followed shortly thereafter by visits to the Ottoman Empire and Mount Athos. The political circumstances in the Balkans during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century compelled the Kingdom of Serbia to intensify its efforts and seek support from Russia. This was further influenced by Austria-Hungary's aggressive policies, including the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1908–1909), which coincided with Bulgaria's declaration of independence (1908). The escalation of tensions between the Kingdom of Serbia and Austria-Hungary, coupled with the wavering policies of the Bulgarian ruler, prompted Russia to take a more active role in addressing Balkan issues. In the Kingdom of Serbia, there was a growing need to strengthen ties with Russia and facilitate a meeting between the two rulers, Tsar Nicholas II and King Petar. Thanks to the efforts of diplomats from both countries, King Petar I met with the Russian Tsar twice—first in 1910 and then again in 1911, when he attended the wedding of his daughter, Princess Jelena, and Grand Duke Ivan Konstantinovich Romanov, a great-grandson of Russian Tsar Nicholas I Romanov.<sup>41</sup>

On 22 March 1910, King Petar arrived in Saint Petersburg, where he was ceremonially welcomed at the train station by the Russian Tsar and other officials. From there, accompanied by the Serbian delegation, he proceeded to Tsarskoye Selo, where a formal luncheon was held. During the event, the two rulers exchanged toasts, emphasizing the friendly ties between Serbia and Russia.<sup>42</sup> During the dinner, the Russian Tsar presented King Petar with the Order of Saint Andrew the First-Called, while members of the Serbian delegation were awarded the Orders of the White Eagle and Saint Stanislaus.<sup>43</sup> The following day, 23 March, King Petar travelled from Tsarskoye Selo to Saint Petersburg, where he met with members of the imperial family. On this occasion, he awarded

38 V. Zarković, "Diplomatske aktivnosti i susreti Petra I Karađorđevića i Nikolaja II Romanova uoči Balkanskih ratova", *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Prištini*, 51-4 (2021), 235-251; D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 439-450.

39 D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 439-469.

40 Ibid.

41 D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 450.

42 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 447; V. Zarkovic, *op. cit.*, 243; *Politika*, 1910, 10. mart, 2–3.

43 Ibid; *Politika*, 1910, 10. mart, 2–3.



Fig. 3  
Tombstones, Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Saint Petersburg

them the highest Serbian honour, the Order of Saint Sava with Diamonds and Russian state officials were also decorated, receiving the First Class Order of the White Eagle and the Second Class Order of Saint Sava.<sup>44</sup> Tsar Nicholas reciprocated the gesture by awarding members of the Serbian delegation with the Orders of Saint Stanislaus, First, Second, and Third Class, as well as the Orders of Saint Anna, Second and Third Class.<sup>45</sup> The following day was marked by numerous visits and diplomatic meetings for King Petar, after which he visited the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (Петропавловский собор), where he laid silver wreaths on the tombs of Tsars Alexander II and Alexander III (fig. 3). Afterward, he visited the Church of the Resurrection of Christ (Church of the Saviour on the Blood - храм Спас на крови), built on the site where Tsar Alexander II was assassinated. He then proceeded to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, where he spoke with Metropolitan Anthony, who, along with his blessing, presented him with an icon of Saint Alexander Nevsky, a brochure, and an album with photographs of the monastery.<sup>46</sup> During his visit to Saint

44 V. Zarković, *op. cit*, 244.

45 Ibid; *Politika*, 1910, 11. mart, 2.

46 V. Zarković, *op. cit*, 245; *Politika*, 1910, 12. mart, 2.

Fig. 4  
*Assumption Cathedral in Moscow*  
(Uspenskii sobor v Moskve)  
Ivan Mikhailovich Snegirev, 1856

Petersburg, on 25 March, King Petar toured the renowned treasury of Tsar Alexander II, where he was captivated by the imperial crown and sceptre adorned with diamonds. Among the treasures was the priceless diamond “Orlov,” valued at 2.5 million Rubles at the time. He also visited the famous Hermitage Museum.<sup>47</sup> The king expressed his gratitude to the imperial family for their warm welcome in Tsarskoye Selo and Saint Petersburg, and on 26 March, he continued his journey to Moscow.<sup>48</sup> In Moscow, he visited the Kremlin Palace and attended a service at the Assumption Cathedral (fig. 4). He also toured the Chudov Monastery, where the tomb of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich is located.<sup>49</sup> During his stay in Moscow, in addition to holding discussions with various delegations and state officials,

the king visited numerous shops selling church vestments, as well as stores offering gold, wooden, and leather items.<sup>50</sup> On 28 March, a prayer service for King Petar and Serbia was held in all the churches of the Kremlin. Crowds of Russian people lined the streets along the king’s route, cheering and greeting him. King Petar visited the Serbian Podvorje (representation) and met with representatives of the Serbian community and Serbian students studying in Moscow at the residence of Archimandrite Mihailo.<sup>51</sup> In the evening, at 7 o’clock, he departed for Kyiv with his entourage.<sup>52</sup> During his stay in Kyiv, the king visited the Opera House, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, and the Boys’ Gymnasium, as well as the churches of St. Michael, St. Andrew, and St. Vladimir, and he also toured



47 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 447; V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 246.

48 *Politika*, 1910, 14. mart, str. 2; *Politika*, 1910, 15. mart, 1.

49 V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 247.

50 *Ibid*; *Politika*, 1910, 15. mart, 2.

51 V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 248; *Politika*, 1910, 15. mart, 2.

52 *Politika*, 1910, 16. mart, str. 2.



Fig. 5  
 Interior with iconostasis, Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood (Kham Spasa na Krovi) in Saint Petersburg

a shop specializing in traditional Russian handicrafts.<sup>53</sup> During his visit to the Kyiv First Gymnasium, a formal speech was delivered by the director, N. V. Storozhenko, followed by a prayer service in the gymnasium's church. Afterward, a literary and musical program was organized, adhering to a carefully planned schedule.<sup>54</sup>

King Petar's visit to Russia in 1910 proved fruitful for establishing economic, commercial, and political ties between Serbia and Russia, strengthening Serbia's position on the international political stage as well as in the Balkans.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the visit significantly influenced the king's appreciation of Russian religious art, which would later play a crucial role in his decision regarding the construction and furnishing of the mausoleum church at Oplenac.<sup>56</sup> During his multi-day visit to

53 D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 448; V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 249.

54 Ibid.

55 D. Živojinović, *op. cit.*, 249; V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 250-251.

56 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 27-28.

Russia, King Petar toured all the most significant Russian churches in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Kyiv. In Saint Petersburg, he visited the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (Petropavlovskii sobor), which houses the tombs of Tsars Alexander II and Alexander III, the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood (Khram Spasa na Krovi), built on the site where Tsar Alexander II was assassinated (fig. 5), and the St. Alexander Nevsky Monastery. In Moscow, he toured the Assumption Cathedral and the Chudov Monastery. In Kyiv, he visited the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and the churches of St. Michael, St. Andrew, and St. Vladimir. By visiting these prominent churches, King Petar had the opportunity to experience Russian Orthodoxy and contemporary Russian religious art directly at its source. Combined with his familiarity with Russian churches in Europe, which he had encountered during his exile, this undoubtedly influenced his acceptance of Russian ecclesiastical art models. This is further evidenced by the fact that, during his stay in Moscow, he visited shops selling church vestments and liturgical items.<sup>57</sup>

After visiting Russia, King Petar continued his journey to Constantinople, arriving on 3 April 1910. He concluded this trip with a visit to Mount Athos and the Hilandar Monastery, a significant focal point of his ruling ideology.<sup>58</sup> King Petar's visit to Mount Athos and the Hilandar Monastery continued the tradition established by King Aleksandar Obrenović, who had affirmed through his own visit that patronage and care for the monastery were an important part of state and ruling ideology.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, King Petar's visit to Hilandar also affirmed the expectations of the Hilandar brotherhood, expressed as early as his coronation in 1903. At that time, the monastery's brotherhood had gifted him an icon of complex iconography and layered meaning, created by the Russian workshop of the Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos.<sup>60</sup> The inscription at the bottom of the icon confirms its commemorative nature: "The Brotherhood of the Holy Serbian Imperial Lavra of Hilandar on Mount Athos presents this icon to His Majesty King Petar I of Serbia in memory of the day of His Ascension to the Throne, 12 June 1903." In terms of design, composition, and content, the icon is a complex work (fig. 6). The elongated central part with an arched upper finish consists of two scenes. In the upper part of the icon, the figures of Saint Sava and Saint Simeon are depicted holding the icon of the Three-Handed Virgin between them, the main relic of the Hilandar Monastery. Saint Sava is shown in episcopal vestments, holding the icon with his left hand

57 V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 247-248.

58 About this trip see: D. Živojinović, *kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 448; N. Makuljević, "Odnos Srbije i Hilandara u XIX veku: studija iz kulturne istorije", in: *Osam vekova Hilandara. Istorija, duhovni život, književnost, umetnost i arhitektura*. Naučni skupovi SANU, knj. XCV, Odeljenje istorijskih nauka, knj. 27, Beograd 2000, 150-151; B. Crvenković, *op. cit.*, 145-178; I. Borozan, *op. cit.*, 277-288.

59 For history of monastery Hilandar during the 19<sup>th</sup> century see: R. Radić, *Hilandar u spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije i Jugoslavije 1896-1970*, Beograd 1998, 33-70; N. Makuljević, *Odnos Srbije i Hilandara u XIX veku*, 139-152; N. Makuljević, "Unutrašnjost katolikona manastira Hilandara u novom veku", in: *Osma kazivanja o Svetoj Gori*, ed. A. Fotić, Z. Rakić, Beograd 2013, 161-187; Ž. Živanović, *Politička istorija Srba u drugoj polovini XIX veka, (1889-1897)*, knj. 3, Beograd 1924, 310.

60 About icon see: B. Vujović, *Iz prošlosti manstira Hilandara*, Beograd 1998, 15-16; I. Borozan, *op. cit.*, 278-280.

Fig. 6  
*St. Sava and St. Simeon with Hilandar Monastery*  
 Russian Mount Athos workshop, 1903

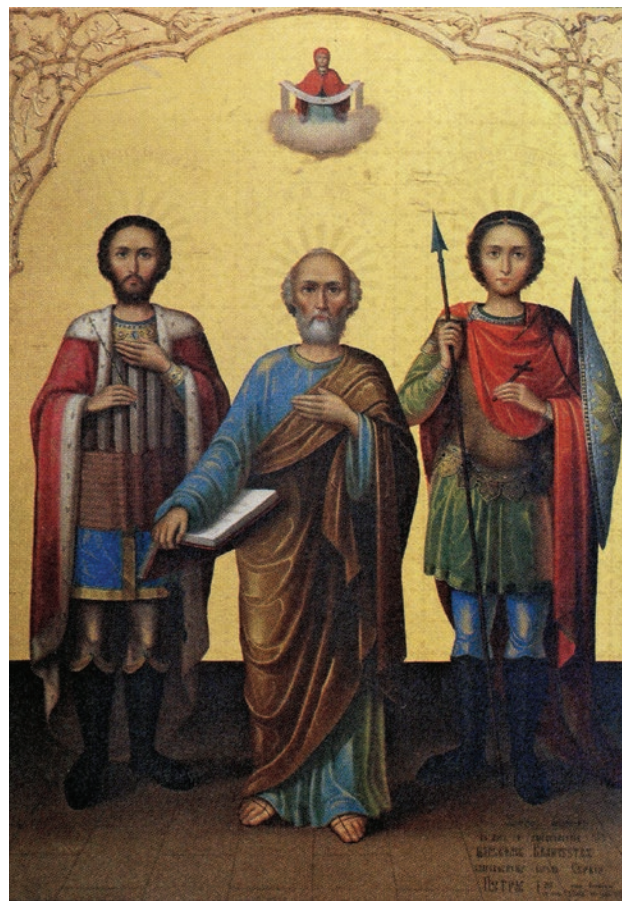
while his right hand grips the episcopal staff. Saint Simeon is depicted in monastic attire, as an elderly man, holding the icon with his right hand and carrying a cross in his left. In the background, between them, an idealized mountainous landscape is visible, with Mount Athos seen in the distance. The background of this part of the icon consists of a blue sky, at the top of which is a segment of open heaven, within which is depicted a figure of God the Father, shown from the waist up, blessing the Serbian saints, Sava and Simeon. In the lower register of the icon, there is a view of the Hilandar Monastery, observed from the southwest side. The monastery complex is depicted with meticulous attention to its architecture, seamlessly integrated into an idealized green landscape.



Along the edges of the icon, a vine with leaves and grapes is intertwined, and within its weave, on a light blue background, medallions with the busts of rulers from the Nemanjić dynasty are embedded—nine on each side. The royal lineage of the Nemanjić begins with its founder, Saint Simeon the Myrrh-streaming, the founder of the monastery, whose holy body lies at the bottom of the icon. The saintly medallions depict the following figures: Saint Sava, Archbishop of Serbia; Saint Stefan the First-Crowned; Saint Stefan, King of Serbia; Saint Sava II, Archbishop of Serbia; Saint Dragutin of Serbia; Saint Milutin Uroš, King of Serbia; Saint Stefan, King of Serbia; Saint Uroš, King of Serbia; Saint Vukan, Grand Prince of Serbia; Saint Stefan Dečanski, Emperor of Serbia; Saint Great Martyr Lazar, Prince of Serbia; Saint Uroš, Emperor of Serbia; Saint Stefan Uroš, King of Serbia; Saint Arsenije II, Archbishop of Serbia; Saint Milutin Uroš, King of Serbia; Saint Uroš, Emperor of Serbia; Saint Empress Ana; and Saint Empress Jelena. The painted frame of the icon features a stylized weave, with an elongated rectangular field in the centre of the lower part, where the previously mentioned dedicatory inscription from the Hilandar brotherhood to King Petar is written in white letters on a dark background. The icon's iconographic and symbolic complexity is expressed through a contemporary iconographic language in the spirit of the Russian Athonite tradition. The icon is characterized by a rich colour palette full of warm tones,

Fig. 7  
St. George, St. Apostle Peter and St. Alexander Nevsky  
Russian Mount Athos workshop, 1913

with meticulous detail in the depiction of architecture and the figures of Serbian saints.<sup>61</sup> The complex conceptual ideas of the Hilandar brotherhood were successfully translated into a visual language by the Russian monks of the Panteleimon Monastery. Through its intricate iconography, the icon conveys the idea of continuity in Serbian statehood and the harmony between church and state from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, in a symbolic manner, integrates the Nemanjić dynasty's medieval Serbian rulers and the newly crowned Serbian King Petar into this narrative.<sup>62</sup> This was particularly significant in the context of affirming the legitimacy of King Petar's rule, as his ascension to the throne had been contested due to the regicide. With the arrival of the new king, the Hilandar brotherhood hoped that the tradition of close



relations between the Serbian state and the monarchy and the monastery, established under the ruling ideology of King Aleksandar Obrenović, would continue. Through granting legitimacy to the new Serbian ruler via the icon as a complex symbolic gift, the Hilandar brotherhood anticipated, in return, care for the monastery and material assistance, as well as the diligent fulfilment of the founder's and benefactor's duties by the new Serbian monarch.<sup>63</sup> King Petar fulfilled these expectations during his visit to Mount Athos and the Hilandar Monastery in 1910. Following the tradition established during King Aleksandar's visit to the monastery, the visit ended with the ritual exchange of gifts. The king donated 10,000 Dinars to the monastery and also gifted an expensive cross worth 12,000 Dinars. In return, the monks presented him with icons of the Virgin Mary and Saint Andrew, an album with photographs and a map of Mount Athos, and a woodcut from 1737.<sup>64</sup> In this way, the Hilandar brotherhood once again expressed their loyalty to the ruler and recogni-

61 B. Vujović, *op. cit.*, 16.

62 I. Borozan, 280.

63 I. Borozan, *op. cit.*, 280.

64 I. Borozan, *op. cit.*, 282; B. Crvenković, 148.

tion of his legitimacy through the exchange of gifts.<sup>65</sup>

As a memento of King Petar's visit to Mount Athos in 1910, three years later, in 1913, he was gifted another Russian icon featuring the figures of Saint Peter, Saint Alexander Nevsky, and Saint George (fig. 7). This gift came from the Russian monks of the Panteleimon Monastery, as confirmed by the inscription in the lower left corner of the icon.<sup>66</sup> The icon was meant to visually remind of the strong relations between King Petar and the Russian state as a whole, as well as the connection established between the brotherhood of the Panteleimon Monastery and the king. This bond was solidified when, during his visit to Hilandar in 1910, King Petar personally gifted the brotherhood a signed portrait of himself.<sup>67</sup> The three saints depicted on the icon—Saint Peter, Saint Alexander Nevsky, and Saint George—through nominal illusion, actually represented King Petar and his sons, Crown Princes Alexander and George. The practice of symbolically representing members of the royal family by depicting saints—patrons of their names—was present in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Russian iconographic practice. For example, the icon painted in 1913 by iconographer V. P. Gurjanov, in celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romanov dynasty, depicts the patron saints of the Romanov family.<sup>68</sup> By depicting standardized saintly figures on the Russian icon from the Panteleimon Monastery, the icon actually represents members of the ruling Karađorđević family.<sup>69</sup>

\*

Numerous influences from the traditions of European royal dynasties,<sup>70</sup> along with King Petar's visual experiences with Russian religious art gained during his time in exile and those encountered during his visit to Russia in 1910, likely played a significant role in the final formulation of the Oplenac concept with mausoleum church of the Karađorđević dynasty, the most important patronage of King Petar.<sup>71</sup> The construction of the mausoleum church at Oplenac, as the central dynastic cult site, was significant for affirming the legitimacy of King Petar's rule, which was based on the merits of his ancestor, the founder of the dynasty, Karađorđe. The location was already predetermined by the family's testament, as it was the site of Karađorđe's grave in Topola.<sup>72</sup> The church had to be built quickly, both due to the unstable political situation and because the king was already in his later years.<sup>73</sup> The commissioner's desire was for a crypt to be created beneath the church, where the deceased members of the dynasty would be laid to rest. The architecture of

65 I. Borozan, *op. cit.*; 282; B. Crvenković, *op. cit.*, 176-178.

66 I. Borozan, *op. cit.* 286-287.

67 *Politika*, 1910, 30. mart, 2.

68 I. Borozan, *op. cit.*, 287.

69 Ibid.

70 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 22.

71 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 27.

72 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 19-21; N. Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 26.

73 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 21.



Fig. 8  
*Church of St. George, Oplenac*

the church also had to symbolize the distinctiveness of Serbian statehood through its monumental form and Serbian-Byzantine style.<sup>74</sup> Churches built in the national style for similar purposes can be found throughout Europe and in Russia. In Wiesbaden, Tsar Nicholas I commissioned the construction of a burial church for his niece, Elena Mihailovna, in 1855, designed by architect Karl Hofmann.<sup>75</sup> In 1907, the church built on the site of Tsar Alexander II's assassination, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ (храм Спа́с на крови́), was completed and consecrated.<sup>76</sup> In the centre of the western part of the church, the cobblestone, stained with the tsar's blood, has been preserved. The architect of the church, A. A. Parland, successfully realized the idea of the "Russian style," synthesizing the forms of St. Basil's Cathedral, a symbol of the nation, and 17<sup>th</sup>-century churches.<sup>77</sup> The concept of this church, which celebrated the martyrdom of the ruler and proclaimed the strength of the Russian national spirit, is similar to the idea of Oplenac and could certainly have served as one of the possible inspirations.<sup>78</sup> King Petar certainly visited this church during his stay in Saint Petersburg in 1910, as well as the Church of Saints Peter and Paul (Петропа́вловский собо́р), where the tombs of Tsars Alexander II and Alexander III are located.<sup>79</sup> During the construction of Oplenac, the church commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romanov dynasty was also being built.<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, the Church of Saint George at Oplenac was designed by architect Kosta J. Jovanović, whose project met the mausoleum's requirements and embodied the Serbian-Byzantine style (fig. 8).<sup>81</sup> The church was consecrated on 24 September 1912, the feast day of Saint Stefan the First-Crowned, thus linking the idea of the dynastic tomb with the Serbian statehood idea.<sup>82</sup> Before its consecration, the church had to be furnished with an iconostasis and the necessary liturgical items. Russian influence on the design of Oplenac is evident in the acquisition of icons for the iconostasis, liturgical books, lamps, and church vestments from workshops in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Kyiv.<sup>83</sup> Equipping the interior of the church was no less important or less costly than the construction and architectural style of the building. The lamps for the church were ordered from Morozov in Moscow and cost 8,000 Dinars. In January 1912, Vaschkov and Belyayev, the owner and engineer of a church vestment factory in Moscow, were invited to Serbia. The icons for the iconostasis—eight large and ten small—were created in one of the painting workshops in Saint Petersburg and cost 1,200 Rubles. The church books were ordered in Moscow—27 large ones, 10 small, 11 very small, and the Apostol—totalling 140.68 Rubles. The luxurious chandelier with 56 candles, as well as

74 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 28-51, 123-127; N. Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 28, 237.

75 N. Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 27.

76 Anonim, "Hram Vaskrsenja Hristovog", *Vesnik Srpske crkve*, IX, Beograd 1907, 745.

77 E. I. Kirienko, *Russkaia arhitektura 1830-1910-h godov*, Moskva 1978, 159.

78 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 28.

79 V. Zarković, *op. cit.*, 245.

80 E. I. Kirienko, *op. cit.*, 373.

81 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 123-127.

82 N. Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 26.

83 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 68.

Fig. 9  
*Iconostasis*  
 (with central section from the Oplenac iconostasis)  
 Unknown Russian artist, late 19th – early 20th century  
 Church of St. Alexander Nevsky, Belgrade



the incense burners and lamps, were also sourced from workshops in Moscow and Kyiv.<sup>84</sup>

The marble iconostasis for the Oplenac church, which incorporated icons imported from Russia, was crafted by architect Kosta J. Jovanović, the builder of the church. This iconostasis remained at Oplenac through the Balkan Wars and World War I,<sup>85</sup> and in the interwar period, King Alexander Karađorđević, taking full responsibility for the completion of the family's votive church, moved it to the Church of Alexander Nevsky in Belgrade (Dorćol).<sup>86</sup> The original Oplenac iconostasis was expanded after being moved to the Dorćol church (fig. 9), but its original appearance and the icons of the initial program can be reconstructed with a high degree of certainty based on a preserved photograph reproduced in the publication *Serbian Orthodox Church, South Slav Monuments I* by T. Graham Jackson, K. Jovanović, and N. Zupanić, published in London in 1918. The material for this publication was prepared by Kosta J. Jovanović, the author of the iconostasis.<sup>87</sup>

In April 1912, it was decided to begin polishing the iconostasis for Oplenac according to the designs of Kosta J. Jovanović. It is not precisely known who sculpted the iconostasis. It is mentioned that the figures were carved by woodcarvers Franjo Valdman and Franjo Šnajder from Delnice, as well as Stevan Biga, Đura Borošić, and Erminio Dorio.<sup>88</sup> The iconostasis partition for Oplenac was made of white marble, in the spirit of the tradition of medieval iconostases.<sup>89</sup> The details of the sculpted ornamentation on the iconostasis repeat the decoration of the Oplenac façades, such as the series of ornamental bands with stylized lilies, the combination of heart-shaped and floral trefoil motifs, as well as the attached columns with capitals adorned with a single-armed cross.<sup>90</sup>

84 D. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević u otadžbini*, 487.

85 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 50, 68.

86 J. Mežinski Milovanović, *Hram Svetog Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu : spomenica povodom stogodišnjice postojanja hrama 1912-2012.: istorijat, arhitektura, freskopis, ikone, umetnički predmeti, Pravoslavna misionarska škola*, Beograd 2013, 175-179.

87 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 51, 69.

88 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 63, 71, 267.

89 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 51, 69.

90 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 6-7, 69; J. Mežinski Milovanović, *op. cit.*, 181.

The iconostasis structure consisted of a central, taller section framed by supporting columns. To the north and south, two lower sections with side doors were placed, above which were characteristic Saracen arches, with two pairs of intertwined pilasters on each side.<sup>91</sup> The decision to have a historicist marble iconostasis in the church may have been influenced by the example of the interior design of the Russian church in Geneva, which King Petar visited during his time in the city. This church featured an expensive iconostasis made of Carrara marble, sculpted according to the design of sculptor B. Geneberger, with icons created by renowned Russian masters.<sup>92</sup>

As for the icons for the iconostasis, it was already noted in 1912, during the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee for the Execution of Works on the Oplenac Church, in point 1, that the Committee should not be involved in the procurement of the iconostasis, as it would be provided by the king himself.<sup>93</sup> In the spirit of the practice of procuring icons in Russia, embodied in the activity of Company of Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović,<sup>94</sup> who, as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily imported “Orthodox” church paintings from Russia, with the support of Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović, the complete iconostases and liturgical items, as well as icons and church furnishings for Oplenac, were also procured. The contacts that King Petar had with Russian churches during his time in Europe and during his trip to Russia in 1910,<sup>95</sup> surely influenced his admiration for their interiors and furnishings, making them models for him, which was yet another reason for his turn to Russia in procuring church equipment and icons for the dynastic votive church. The name or names of the authors of the Oplenac icons were not recorded, which is not unusual in cases where icons were procured from firms or large studios engaged in mass production or the procurement of icons, where the names of the involved iconographers were secondary. The icons for the Oplenac mausoleum church were ordered by King Petar through his agent, priest Boža, who travelled to Russia to bring them, along with the chandelier, liturgical books, and other items. On 14 August 1912, in Saint Petersburg, 8 large and 10 small icons were purchased. These could have been the large central icons of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, the four Evangelists, the Resurrection of Christ, and the Last Supper (fig. 10), as well as six smaller icons of saints for the second row of the iconostasis and four smaller icons mounted on the doors—The Virgin Mary and Archangel Gabriel from the Annunciation for the Royal Doors, and Saint John and probably Saint George for the side doors.<sup>96</sup> According to the reconstruction of the original Oplenac iconostasis, the central part of the iconostasis, above the very concise row of central icons, consisting only of Jesus Christ and the

91 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 69.

92 V. V. Antonov, A. V. Kobak, *op. cit.*, 321-324.

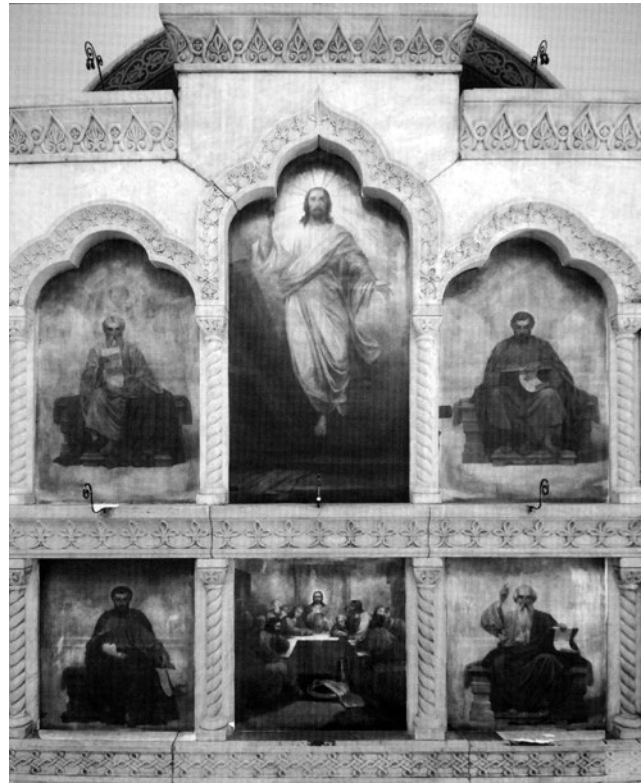
93 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 63; J. Mežinski Milovanović, *op. cit.*, 185.

94 For more about Ivan Pavlović and Vitomir Marković's Company of church items see: U. Rajčević, “O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda”, *Saopštenja*, XXIV, Beograd 1992, 287-294; K. Bogdanović, *Firma V. Markovića i I. Pavlović i uvoz rsukih ikonostasa na teritoriju Kraljevine Srbije*, master rad, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd 2024.

95 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena Umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 26-28.

96 M. Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 68; J. Mežinski Milovanović, *op. cit.*, 185-186.

Fig. 10  
*The upper part of the old Oplenac iconostasis*  
Unknown Russian artist, late 19th – early 20th century



Virgin Mary, as well as the figures of Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary on the Royal Doors, includes the icon of the Last Supper above the Royal Doors and, above it, the icon of the Resurrection of Christ, placed at the top of the iconostasis. Surrounding these are the icons of the Evangelists in various formats, arranged two by two, one above the other. Above the side doors, three smaller icons of standing figures of saints were grouped. Judging by the current arrangement of icons on the Dorćol iconostasis, it is possible that the original selection of small icons depicting standing figures above the side doors of the Oplenac iconostasis included the following: Saint Peter and Paul,

Saint Andrew the First-Called, Saint Empress Helena, Saint Sava of Serbia, and Saint Anthony the Great.<sup>97</sup> It should still be considered that, during the relocation of the iconostasis from Oplenac to the Dorćol church, there may have been a mixing of the original six icons from the Oplenac design with the six later additions for the side panels of the Dorćol iconostasis.<sup>98</sup> Since these icons are of a small format, it is nearly impossible to distinguish them in the photograph of this part of the iconostasis originally mounted at Oplenac, which was published in T. Graham Jackson, K. Jovanović, N. Zupanić, *Serbian Orthodox Church, South Slav Monuments I.*, consequently making it difficult to reliably reconstruct the original Oplenac design.<sup>99</sup> It is not excluded that, in the original section of the iconostasis, alongside Empress Helena, there may have been an icon of Emperor Constantine, which is now mounted on the added side panel of the Dorćol iconostasis. It would also not be unusual if the figure of Saint Sava of Serbia was added later and did not arrive with the icons from Russia.<sup>100</sup> Thus, on the Oplenac iconostasis, the altar partition of King Petar's endowment dedicated to Saint George, the protector of the dynasty's founder, Karađorđe, there are depictions of saints who are the protectors of the Karađorđević family. The fact is that the Oplenac iconostasis featured icons of Saint Peter the Apostle—whose name was carried by the Serbian king—Saint Andrew the

97 J. Mežinski Milovanović, *op. cit.*, 186.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

Apostle—whose feast day was a national holiday in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Serbia, and whose patronage was adopted by the royal family as their own feast. The name of Saint Andrew was also borne by Petar Karađorđević's youngest, early-deceased son, Prince Andrej. There was also the icon of Empress Helena, the protector of Petar's daughter, who was married to the Romanovs, and likely an icon of Saint George—the protector of the dynasty, whose name was carried by the founder of the dynasty, Karađorđe, and by King Petar's firstborn son, the crown prince at the time the Oplenac iconostasis was procured.<sup>101</sup> The selection of saints as protectors of the Karađorđević family clearly testified that the program of the Oplenac iconostasis was shaped in accordance with the ruling ideology of the commissioner. All the icons of the original Oplenac iconostasis were created in the spirit of the contemporary Russian academic painting of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as such, they fit into the broader trends and desirable models of church painting in the Kingdom of Serbia at the turn of the century.<sup>102</sup>

In conclusion, King Petar I Karađorđević's contact with Russian ecclesiastical art during his exile in Europe and his travels through Russia, as well as his ideological connection to Russia, influenced his taste, steering it toward contemporary Russian sacred practices. This is confirmed by the furnishing of the interior of his endowment, the mausoleum church at Oplenac, for which icons for the iconostasis and other liturgical items were imported from Russia, including, among other things, the purchase of a patron saint icon in Russia intended for his court. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main currents of Serbian church art were directed towards Russia as the source of Orthodoxy, thanks to the decades-long efforts of Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović, the education of Serbian artists in Russian monasteries and academies, as well as the importation of Russian icons, completed iconostases, books, and other liturgical items through free trade.<sup>103</sup> These general trends in Serbian religious art also aligned with the personal taste of King Petar Karađorđević. Thus, the import of Russian liturgical items and icons, within the framework of his ruling ideology, was yet another channel for the transfer of Russian religious art to Serbian soil at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

101 J. Mežinski Milovanović, *op. cit.*, 186-188.

102 J. Mežinski Milovanović, *op. cit.*, 189-194.

103 On the Russian models in Serbian religious art at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a wider literature, see: N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, 159-185; T. Bradić, *Mitropolit Mihailo Jovanović i transfer ruske sakralne umetnosti u Kneževinu/Kraljeviniu Srbiju (1859-1898)*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd 2024 (<https://ricontrans-project.eu/phd-dissertations/>)

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*Jelena Mežinski Milovanović*

## Russian Icons on the Iconostases of Russian Military Chapels and St Alexander Nevsky Church in Belgrade Prior to the First World War

The focus of this paper is on Russian icons from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which adorned three iconostases and have so far been associated in literature with the iconostases of the Russian military chapel, the original smaller church at Dorćol and the present-day Belgrade church - all dedicated to St Alexander Nevsky. Paper also deals with iconostasis of another Russian military chapel dedicated to Archangel Michael from Serbian-Turkish war of 1876–1877, iconostasis in church in Kloka, and the original iconostasis on Oplenac.

### **Iconostasis of the Russian Orthodox Military Chapel in Captain Miša's Edifice**

The origin and history of icons from the mobile chapels of the Russian army under General Mikhail Chernyayev on the 1876–1877 Serbian-Turkish battlefield, including the one dedicated to St Alexander Nevsky, that were eventually repurposed to the Belgrade Dorćol church dedicated to the same saint, are only known fragmentarily, from partially preserved and not always precisely interpreted notes of contemporaries, subsequently written church chronicles and other incomplete sources.

There is a record of as many as three Russian military churches which arrived along with the Russian volunteers during the war of 1876–1878, mentioned by Serbian Metropolitan Mihailo (Jovanović) in his speech on the occasion of consecrating St Alexander Nevsky tent-church in Belgrade on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1876.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1877, the Belgrade press announced that on the second floor of the Great School,

1 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Duhovna spomenica*, 10. avgust 1878. god, 8, 9 – part of the speech given on September 19 1876.

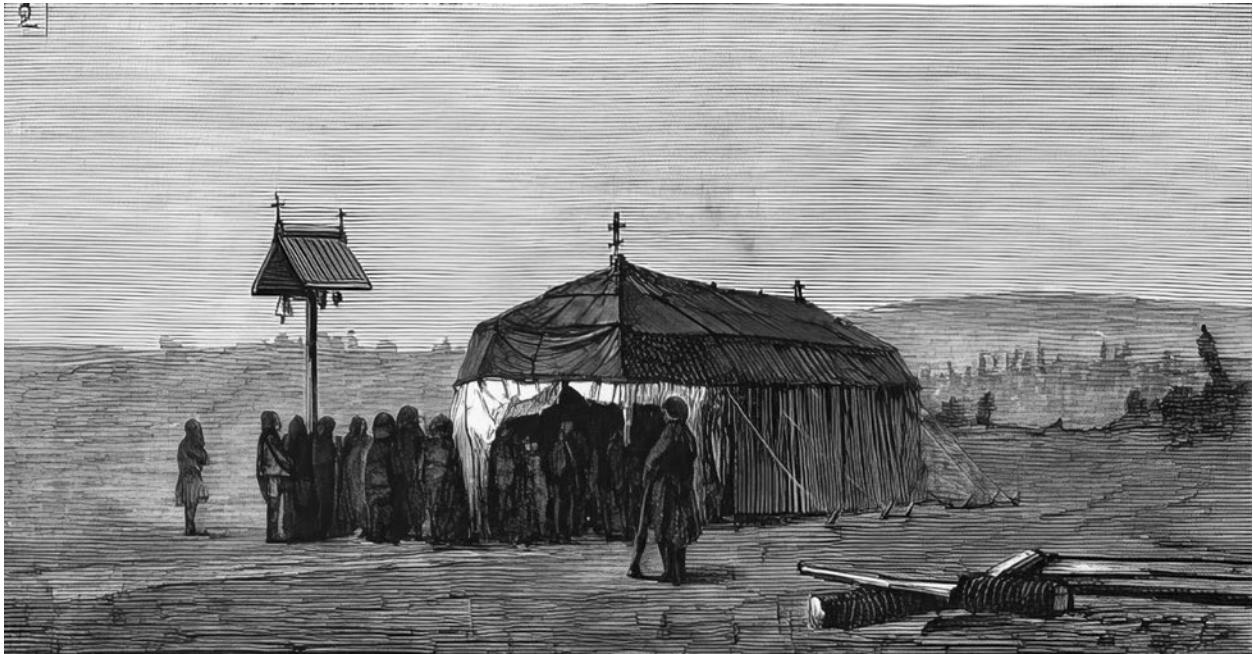


Fig. 1  
 A mobile military tent-church accompanying the army to the Deligrad front  
 Vasily Polenov, 1876

in the right wing of the courtyard, the religious service was held *again*<sup>2</sup> in “the first Russian church in Belgrade” first Russian church in Belgrade, dedicated to *Archistratig Michael*, and sent by “the city of Moscow during the last war”.<sup>3</sup>

A preserved photographic record of a Russian chapel housed in Captain Miša’s Edifice was taken by I(van?) V. Gromann a Russian military photographer who accompanied the Russian volunteer army that fought in the Serbian-Turkish war.<sup>4</sup> Some authors identify the photograph as “chapel for the needs of Russian volunteers and staff of the Russian Red Cross Society” locating it in “room no. 55” or simply under the designation “the interior of the Great School”<sup>5</sup>

Branko Vujović identified this photograph as “the appearance of the Russian military chapel of St Alexander Nevsky in Captain Miša’s Edifice in 1878”.

2 Pointed out by the author.

3 D. J. Ranković, „Iz beogradske prošlosti. Prva ruska crkva u Beogradu“, *Beogradske opštinske novine*, 1–2, Beograd januar 1939, 139–140 – information from *Nova Srbija*, November 3 1877.

4 Photo is the gift from Aleksandar Deroko to Belgrade City Museum – Milivoj Anđelković, *Gravire i fotografije Beograda od 1521 do 1878. godine - drugi deo*, *Gravire i fotografije iz Muzeja grada Beograda*, at: <http://singiduum-amika-rs.blogspot.com/2014/12/1521-1878.html> accessed on August 24, 2021.

5 Photo Inventory number Ur. 3754 – Želimir Novaković, Žarko Mijajlović, Katarina Tomašević, *Gromanov album fotografija 1876–1878*, Beograd 2003, 68, at: [https://issuu.com/m100ychic/docs/groman\\_sr](https://issuu.com/m100ychic/docs/groman_sr) accessed on June 24, 2021.



Fig. 2  
Metropolitan Mihailo (Jovanović), *Duhovna Spomenica* [Memorial Book]  
(containing speeches delivered in the period 1867–1878)

Furthermore, this author mentions that “almost all the icons on the iconostasis of St Alexander Nevsky chapel have been preserved and that they were kept in the Rajinovac Monastery near Grocka during the eighties of the 20th century.” These icons by the Russian painter A. (Alexandr) Kolchin<sup>6</sup> (Александр Колчин) from 1876, similar to those that can be seen in Gromann’s photograph (as far as can be discerned), were photographed and published in Vujović’s article on the Church of St Alexander Nevsky and in a review of church buildings in the vicinity of Belgrade. There is no icon of Saint Alexander Nevsky among the photographed icons. On the other hand, the icons of the Archangel Gabriel and

6 We do not know exactly which artist the initial ‘A.’ refers to in connection with Kolchin. In Russia, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, icon painting was practiced by several generations of the Old Believer Kolchin merchant family from the Vyatka (Вятка) and Perm provinces. Among them was the zograph Alexey, recorded with the initials A. Kolchin, who worked at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (Evgeniĭ Shumilov, *Dinastiĭa Kolchinyh. Ikonopiscy, izdateli, kupcy*, at: [https://www.drevleprikamie.ru/data/files/kolchin\\_ikona2.doc](https://www.drevleprikamie.ru/data/files/kolchin_ikona2.doc); *KOLCHINY, Starovery-ikonopiscy (XVII-XXI vv.) Slovar'-spravochnik (E-K), Knizhnica Samarskogo staroveriĭa*, at: <https://samstar-biblio.ucoz.ru/load/20-1-0-37> accessed on May 7, 2021). The painter Aleksandr Maksimovich Kolchin (Александр Максимович Колчин), along with his studio, was responsible for restoring the frescoes and icon paintings in the Cathedral Church of Saint Sophia in Vologda from 1849 to 1850. (Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Rybakov, *Restavraciĭa fresok i ikonostasa Vologodskogo Sofiĭskogo sobora v 1960-70-e gody*, 201, 202, 214, (197–223) at: [https://www.vologdamuseum.ru/i/files/Sbornik/Sbornik\\_197.pdf](https://www.vologdamuseum.ru/i/files/Sbornik/Sbornik_197.pdf) accessed on May 7, 2021; Evgeniĭ Starikov, *Na Vologodchine naiĭdena eshche odna „Tajnaĭa vecherĭa“*, Po materialam oblastnoi gazety „Krasnyi Sever“, at: <https://vologda-mitropolia.ru/articles/item/6770-na-vologodchine-najdena-eshche-odna-tajnaya-vechery> accessed on May 7, 2021). During the 1860s, the same author painted *The Last Supper*, after Leonardo da Vinci, on the altar of the Resurrection Cathedral in Vologda. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Professor A. Kolchin led the renowned painting workshop at the Voskresensky Novodevichy Monastery in Saint Petersburg (*Nevzorov Petr Ivanoviĭ 1831-1900*), at: <http://www.artsait.ru/art/n/nevzorov/main.htm> accessed on May 7, 2021). The local artist Kolchin contributed as a co-author to the icon paintings and frescoes in the Alexander Nevsky “Military” Cathedral in Tiflis (Tbilisi, Georgia), built between 1871 and 1897. His work reflects the style of the Kiev Cathedral of St. Vladimir and the Moscow Cathedral of Christ the Savior (G. A. Citovich, *Hramy armii i flota, Piatigorsk 1913*, 399–403, at: <http://www.temples.ru/library.php?ID=160> accessed on June 24, 2021). Most likely, it is Aleksandr Kolchin (Александр Колчин), a resident of the monastery, who was buried in 1885 at the cemetery of the Holy Trinity St. Sergius Primorskaya Men’s Hermitage of the St Petersburg Eparchy/Dicese, whose icons were sent to the Sarajevo Cathedral Church and another unspecified church in Serbia. I thank Marija Lakić for this data: Marija Lakić, *Rusija i srpska sakralna vizuelna kultura u XIX vijeku: Rusko priložništvo i opremanje Saborne crkve u Sarajevu*, Master’s thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University in Belgrade, Belgrade 2022, 7, 12, 55.

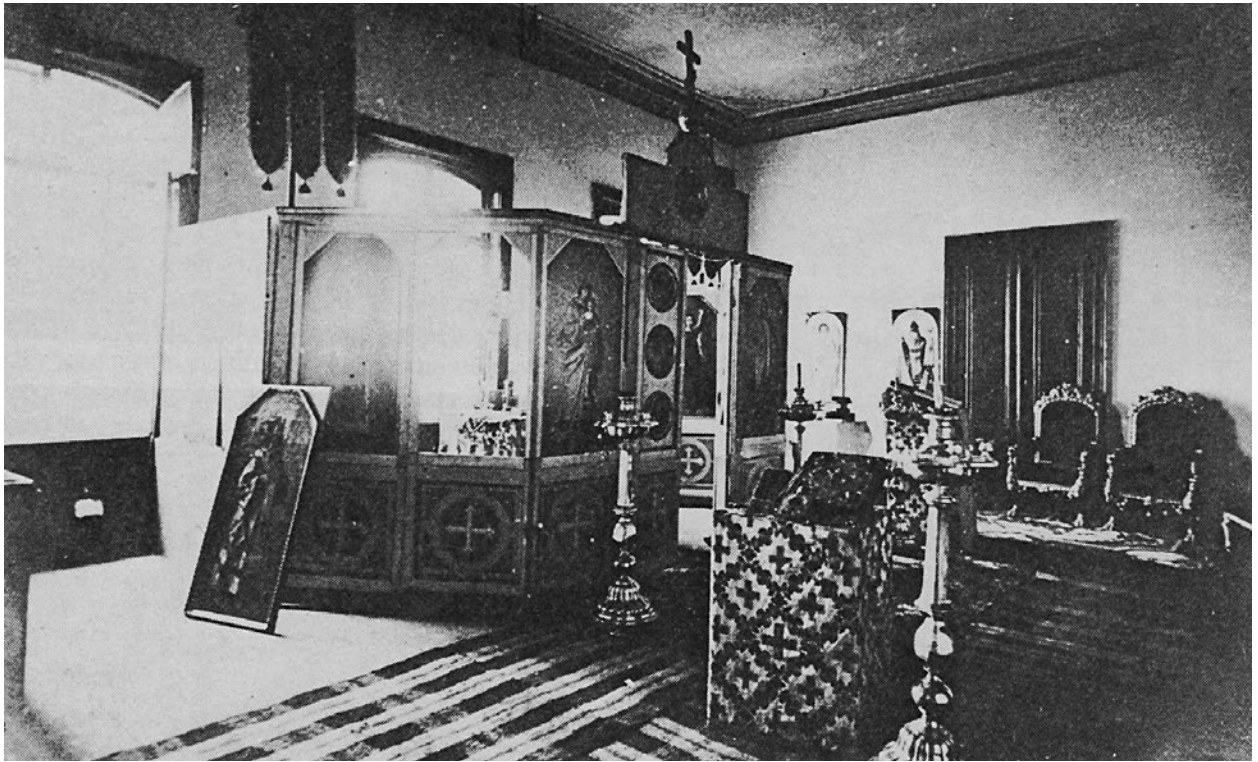


Fig. 3 (top)  
 Photo of the Russian Orthodox chapel in Captain Miša's Edifice  
 I. V. Gromann, Russian military photographer, 1876–1877

Fig. 4 (bottom)  
 Saint Sava of Serbia, Archangel Gabriel, Jesus Christ, Archangel Michael  
 A(lexander ?) Kolchin, despotic icons from the iconostasis of the Russian military mobile church, which accompanied Russian volunteers to the battlefield of the Serbian-Turkish war of 1876–1877 and was located in Captain Miša's Edifice in Belgrade

the Archangel Michael were photographed.<sup>7</sup>

The absence of the icon of Alexander Nevsky in the case of preserved icons by A. Kolchin leads to the conclusion about a possible different dedication to the Archangel Michael of the church whose iconostasis was photographed by Gromann.<sup>8</sup>

## Iconostas of the Russian Military Chapel of Alexander Nevsky

Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky is one of the typical representatives of the Russian sainted “national pantheon” and one of the fundamental role models of the Russian national saint – ruler, monk, warrior,<sup>9</sup> who is also considered the patron saint of the Russian army.

Since the time of Alexander I, military garrison churches have been increasingly dedicated to the Tsar’s patron saint – Alexander Nevsky. Somewhat later, during the 1876 Serbian-Turkish war, St Alexander Nevsky was “delegated” as the patron saint of the mobile tent-churches, representing both the Russian imperial house and more directly the ruler himself – Alexander II Romanov, who approved engagement of Russian volunteer units.

The period of the consecration of St Alexander Nevsky mobile church by Metropolitan Mihailo on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1876<sup>10</sup> could serve as basis for a more precise dating of the arrival of the chapel dedicated to the Russian saint into the period following the summer battles at Deligrad.<sup>11</sup>

The chapel of the Russian sainted prince and warrior, consisting of a metal construction and cloth cover, equipped with a wooden iconostasis and “other necessary liturgical utensils”, must have contained an altar partition containing the icon of the church’s patron saint. The iconostasis probably shared the fate of other church utensils, hence the Russian icons, having fulfilled their purpose on the battlefield near Deligrad, found themselves in Belgrade.<sup>12</sup>

“A modest building of smaller dimensions”, the new Orthodox church at Dorćol in the Belgrade Danube area planned before the Serbian-Turkish war, “upon receiving church furnishings from the Russian chapel” was dedicated to St Alexander Nevsky on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1877.<sup>13</sup>

7 Branko Vujović, „Dorćol i crkva Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog“, *Godišnjak grada Beograda*, XXVI, Muzej grada Beograda, Beograd 1979, 136 (ill. 4), 137 (ill. 5), 140; Branko Vujović, *Crkveni spomenici na području grada Beograda*, knjiga druga, šire područje grada, *Saopštenja*, 13, Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Beograda, Beograd 1973, 255, 256.

8 During the 1990s field work in the Rajinovac Monastery Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, these icons could not be located, hence written data only point to further research – *Manastir Rajinovac*, at: [https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Манастир\\_Рајиновац](https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Манастир_Рајиновац) accessed on May 7, 2021.

9 Danica Popović, „Nacionalni panteon – svetački kultovi u temeljima srpske državnosti i crkvenosti“, *Sakralna umetnost srpskih zemalja u srednjem veku, Vizantijsko nasleđe i srpska umetnost II*, Srpski komitet za vizantologiju, JP Službeni glasnik, Vizantološki institut SANU, Beograd 2016, 119.

10 Mitropolit Mihailo, *op. cit.*, 8, 9 – part of the speech given on September 19 1876.

11 Mitropolit Mihailo, *op. cit.*, 1–3; 4–5 – part of the speech given on June 18 1876. and on June 21 1876.

12 Branko Vujović, „Dorćol i crkva Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog“, 138.

13 Branko Vujović, *op. cit.*, 136, 140.

Following the 1891 demolition of the original Church of St Alexander Nevsky at Dorćol, to cede place to a school, and at the time when the new regulation of the streets of this area was put into effect, “church things were... temporarily housed in the Cathedral Church of St Michael the Archangel.”<sup>14</sup>

Although in the daily press in 1931 there is information that the iconostasis of the church of Alexander Nevsky was intended for the new church on Bulbulder in Belgrade, according to the *Chronicle of the Church of Alexander Nevsky and Memorial Volume* on its construction, the iconostasis itself was handed over to the Church of St Pantaleon in Kloka, near Kragujevac,<sup>15</sup> built in 1876, restored in 1922–1923.<sup>16</sup> During the last reconstruction of the iconostasis at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the altar partition probably acquired its present appearance, the “Russian” Belgrade icons kept their place in the iconostasis of this church.

According to sources relying on the Chronicle of the church in Kloka, the iconostasis was donated by “a certain Russian association”, and was originally intended for the Church of St Alexander Nevsky in Belgrade. The Russian Red Cross Society seems to be most likely candidate,<sup>17</sup> given the fact that its activities on the battlefield in the Principality of Serbia were related to the mobile military church.

Despite the fact that, with respect to the dedication of the photographed Russian chapel, we could not extract more detailed information from the visual data and accompanying notes by the Russian military reporter I. Gromann, it is well known that back in 1876 the “Russian Church of General Chernyayev”, the “Russian Hospital of the Red Cross Society” and the headquarters of the Red Cross were all housed in Captain Miša’s Edifice.<sup>18</sup>

Taking into account that, apart from the inevitable icons of the Sovereign tier showing the Virgin Mary, Christ and John the Baptist, the present-day iconostasis of the Church of St Pantaleon in Kloka likewise contains icons of St Alexander Nevsky and Mary Magdalene – the patron saints of the Russian imperial couple from 1876, Tsar Alexander II and Empress Maria Alexandrovna – but

14 *Op. cit.*, 140.

15 Group of authors, *Spomenica osvećenja hrama Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog*, Beograd 23 – XI – 1930, 16; O. Lj. D. Žikić, *Letopis crkve Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu* (copied and compiled in the eighth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) 1974.

16 The year 1923 is inscribed on a plaque embedded in the western facade.

17 *Studija zaštite kulturnog nasleđa opštine Topola*, Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture Kragujevac 2011. in: *Crkva Sv. velikomučenika Pantelejmona*, at: <http://gradovi.protego.rs/zastita-nepokretne-kulturne-bastine/lista-nkd?view=item&catid=5&id=3149> accessed on June 19, 2021. and: *Studija zaštite kulturnog nasleđa opštine Topola*, Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture Kragujevac 2011, 119, 120, at: <https://pdfcoffee.com/studija-topola-konzervacija-pdf-free.html>; *V Rossii osnovano obshchestvo Krasnogo Kresta*, at: <https://www.prlib.ru/history/619244> accessed on August 21, 2021.

18 Ljubodrag P. Ristić, Aleksandar Radoš, *Fotografski putopis Beograda Ivana Gromana. Jedan drugačiji pogled na fotografski opus I. Gromana*, Balcanica, XXXII-XXXIII, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Beograd 2003, 203, at: <http://www.balcanica.rs/balcanica/uploaded/balcanica/balcanica%2033%20i%2032/12%20Braca.pdf> accessed on August 24, 2021.

also the icon of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of the Russian heir to the throne, of the same iconographic type, format and shape, they can be connected with St Alexander Nevsky mobile military church. Besides, apart from the political focus of the Tsar and Russian politics, the Balkan battlefield was also in the sphere of interest of the Empress who directed her support within the framework of charitable activities and sympathy with the Balkan Orthodox Slavs under Ottoman rule.

During the already mentioned consecration on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1876, Metropolitan Mihailo thanked the Russian imperial house for sending the mobile church of St Alexander, as a moral support to the army and the people, paying particular mention to the Russian Empress Maria, calling her a “beloved and virtuous mother” who helps Serbian fighters by sending physicians and sisters of mercy to the wounded.<sup>19</sup>

This once again confirms the connection between the chapel and the Russian volunteer mission on the Serbian-Turkish battlefield, as well as the presence of the then newly-established Red Cross Society in the war in the Balkans, the very Society which enjoyed the highest patronage of the Russian Empress.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, in his speech delivered at the consecration of the military tent church, the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church mentioned all the “contributors and benefactors”, particularly praising “the pious Glinsky, for bestowing this new place of worship upon our country”.<sup>21</sup>

It is evident from the inscription at the bottom of the icon of St Mary Magdalene in Kloka that

19 Mitropolit Mihailo, *op. cit.*, 8, 9 – part of the speech given on September 19 1876.

20 The Society was founded in Russia in 1867, four years after its initial establishment in Geneva, by decision of Emperor Alexander II. It quickly became active, participating in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, but gained its first significant experience in the Balkans during the Serbian/Montenegrin-Turkish War of 1876, and later in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. Even before this period, Russian empresses and high-ranking aristocrats served as patrons of similar activities, notably during the Crimean War. The reign of Alexander II saw tremendous growth in various charitable societies – I. I. Ūukina, „Pravednye Marfa i Mariia“, *Adam i Eva, Gendernye reprezentacii i social'nye praktiki*, 27, 2019, 149–181, at: [https://www.academia.edu/41222336/Marthe\\_et\\_Marie](https://www.academia.edu/41222336/Marthe_et_Marie) at: [https://roii.ru/publications/adam-and-eve/article/27\\_6/iukina\\_i.i./the-righteous-martha-and-mary](https://roii.ru/publications/adam-and-eve/article/27_6/iukina_i.i./the-righteous-martha-and-mary) and at: [https://roii.ru/adam-and-eve/27/roii-adam-and-eve-27\\_6.pdf](https://roii.ru/adam-and-eve/27/roii-adam-and-eve-27_6.pdf); E. V. Bulavinceva, “Imenie Dzhemiet i posledniia volia freiliny imperatorskogo dvora baronessy Marii Petrovny, iz roda Frederiks”, *Vestnik Mariiskogo Gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seria istoricheskie nauki, iuridicheskie nauki*, Volume 6, 1 (21), Mariiskii gosudarstvennyi universitet (Ioshkar-Ola), 2020, 19–28, at: <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=42917442>; *Osnovatel'nica Krasnogo Kresta v Rossii*, at: <https://pravoslavie.fm/articles/osnovatelnicza-krasnogo-kresta-v-rossii/>; *Opyt miloserdiia: Rossiiskoe obshchestvo Krasnogo Kresta (1867 – 1918)*, at: <https://blog.mediashm.ru/?p=3527>; *V Rossii osnovano obshchestvo Krasnogo Kresta*, at: <https://www.prlib.ru/history/619244>; *Rossiiskii Krasnyi Krest*, at: <https://diletant.media/articles/45250490/> accessed on August 24, 2021. On the other hand, the Red Cross was founded in Serbia in 1876 during the Serbian-Turkish war – *Krasnyi krest Serbii*, at: <http://www.senica.ru/serbia/facts/society/krasnyy-krest-serbii> accessed on August 24, 2021.

21 Mitropolit Mihailo, *op. cit.*, 9 – part of the speech given on September 19 1876.



Fig. 5  
*Iconostasis*  
 Appearance from 2011  
 St. Pantaleon Church, Kloka

the icons on the iconostasis were created as a gift by the honorary citizen V. B. Glinsky in 1876.<sup>22</sup>

The Holy and the Most Faithful Prince Alexander Nevsky and St. Mary Magdalene Equal-to-the-Apostles often appear as “steam saints” in Russian iconography and fresco painting. Unlike saints whose hagiographies are merged (Sts Constantine and Helen, Sts Sergius and Bacchus, Sts Boris and Gleb, etc.), the historically separated Sts Alexander Nevsky and Mary Magdalene were merged in nineteenth-century Russian iconography by their namesakes on the Russian throne.

Evidence in favour of the claim that the icons belonging to the iconostasis transferred to Kloka, showing St Alexander Nevsky and St Mary Magdalene holding the vial of myrrh over her chest were designed as pair icons, that is, as counterparts, may be found in their

22 The inscription at the bottom of the icon of St Mary Magdalene is: Сооруженъ иждивениемъ Почетн Граждан. Васил. Борисов. Глинскаго 1876 года. We do not yet know which ktetor this refers to, as the surname is quite common not only in Russia but also in Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine. Records show that Vasiliy Borisovich Glinsky (Васи́лий Бори́сович Гли́нский), the first citizen (Почетный гражданин) recognised as a “descendant” (потомственный) – an honorary title granting inheritance rights – lived between 1828 and 26<sup>th</sup> January 1896, and was buried in the cemetery of the Don Monastery in Moscow (Moskovskii nekropol', t.1, 1907 g., stranica 275, at: [https://arc.familyspace.ru/archive/Moskovskiy\\_nekropol\\_t\\_1\\_1907\\_g\\_264/p2275?highlight=Глинский](https://arc.familyspace.ru/archive/Moskovskiy_nekropol_t_1_1907_g_264/p2275?highlight=Глинский); *Genealogicheskaia baza znaniĭ: person, familii, hronika*, at: <https://baza.vgd.ru/1/10369/10.htm> accessed on August 22, 2021). This hereditary title was held by a specific layer of the bourgeois class in the Russian Empire (*Ličnye i potomstvennye pochëtnye grazhdane*, na: <https://geno.ru/article/99/> accessed on August 22, 2021), and it was awarded by the emperor for special merits, such as charitable work, contributions to the development of the economy, business, science, art, and alike. It implied a certain level of economic well-being, higher education, or the acquisition of specific orders, and carried various privileges, such as tax benefits, exemption from military service and physical punishment, the right to use carriages, eligibility for certain public offices, and, over time, the potential to acquire a noble title. Families from this social layer often became key figures in economic development and patronage (I. V. Akulenko, „Pochetnoe grazhdanstvo v istorii Moskvy“, *Vestnik RUDN. Serii: Gosudarstvennoe i municipal'noe upravlenie*, tom 4, nomer 3, 2017, 266–268, at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324116678\\_Honorary\\_citizenship\\_in\\_Moscow\\_history/fulltext/5abef6950f7e9bfc0459b1b1/Honorary-citizenship-in-Moscow-history.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324116678_Honorary_citizenship_in_Moscow_history/fulltext/5abef6950f7e9bfc0459b1b1/Honorary-citizenship-in-Moscow-history.pdf); *Pochëtnye grazhdane (soslovie)*, at: [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Почётные\\_граждане\\_\(сословие\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Почётные_граждане_(сословие)); *Pochëtnye grazhdane goroda Zheleznodorozhnyĭ*, at: <http://museum-obiralovka.ru/index.php/zheleznodorozhnyj/pochjotnye-grazhdane> accessed on August 22, 2021). The origin of the ktetor Glinsky, and his connection to Moscow – where he is believed to be buried – raises questions about the origin of the military church of Alexander Nevsky, which some sources suggest was brought to Serbia from Saint Petersburg – „Svečano osvećenje crkve Svetog Aleksandra Nevskog“, *Opštinske novine. Službeni organ Opštine grada Beograda*, 1930, (1364–1366), 1365, at: <http://www.ubsm.bg.ac.rs/cirilica/dokument/1249/beogradske-opštinske-novine-1930> accessed on August 25, 2021.



Fig. 6, 7, 8, 9 (from left to right)  
 Saint Alexander Nevsky, Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint Nicolas (southern door), Saint John the Baptist (northern door)  
 Icons of the iconostasis of St Alexander Nevsky military chapel, 1876  
 (nowadays part of the iconostasis of St Pantaleon Church in Kloka)

identical gesture of adoration: the hand over the chest and gaze directed upwards unto God. It is certainly no coincidence that the holy warrior and protector of the Russian volunteer army in the war with the Ottomans in the Balkans is shown “unarmed” in the icon in Kloka.

Next to the royal doors and the scene of the Last Supper, probably belonging to the same Russian ensemble, the second tier of icons of today’s iconostasis in Kloka contains three icons of larger formats and different shape than those mentioned: another despotic icon of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child, an icon of the Resurrection and the icon of the Archangel Michael with a Cyrillic dedication from a later period. The iconostasis is obviously altered as compared to the original one in the military church, which is also confirmed by the unusual position of the icon of the former patron saint of the church – Alexander Nevsky in the second tier of the altar partition.<sup>23</sup>

The great similarity of the icon of Alexander Nevsky in Kloka with the icon of this saint painted

23 It is unusual that the iconostasis in Kloka lacks an icon of the patron saint of the church, Saint Panteleimon. This further underscores the iconostasis’ unusual origin and the distinct dedication of the church, to which either the whole or part of it was originally intended.

by Alexandr Kolchin on the iconostasis of the Cathedral Church in Sarajevo is noticeable,<sup>24</sup> which may indicate the author of these Kloka icons.

## The Original Iconostasis in the Oplenac Church

We have found no confirmation that today's Church of St Alexander Nevsky, built, furnished and consecrated after the First World War, contains utensils from the original Russian mobile St Alexander Nevsky chapel. However, the central portion of the iconostasis of the present-day Dorćol church is of older date than the church itself and that is why it sparked our interest. The iconostasis, which today separates the central part of the altar space of St Alexander Nevsky Church, was originally intended for the mausoleum of the Royal House of Karađorđević at Oplenac. It was created before the First World War whereas the icons intended for it were brought from Russia.

It seems logical that the icon of the Russian holy prince was not commissioned for the ensemble of the royal mausoleum, which King Petar I Karađorđević dedicated to St George. Thus, only later did the present-day St Alexander Nevsky Church receive the icon of its patron saint, not until after the Great War.<sup>25</sup>

At the request of King Petar,<sup>26</sup> and in accordance with the usual practice formed under the influence of Metropolitan Mihailo,<sup>27</sup> the icons were ordered from St Petersburg in the summer of 1912<sup>28</sup> to adorn the older part of the Dorćol iconostasis, actually the Oplenac church iconostasis. The iconostasis was installed in Oplenac before the 23/24<sup>th</sup> of September 1912,<sup>29</sup> when the

24 Marija Lakić, *op. cit.*, 24.

25 Although its author is Boris Selianko (Борис Селянко), Russian émigré artist who took refuge following the October revolution, and who created the required number of icons in his studio for the purpose of enlarging the original Oplenac iconostasis, these icons do not enter our sphere of interest due to the date of their creation.

26 Miodrag Jovanović, *Oplenac. Hram svetog Đorđa i mauzolej Karađorđevića*. Zadužbina kralja Petra I. Topola, 1990, 63; Nenad Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882–1914)*, Beograd 2007, 26–28.

27 During the 1990s, in Serbia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, companies such as Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović operated, procuring 'Orthodox' church paintings, utensils, and furnishings from Russia. The company was founded in 1884 and operated at 10 Dubrovačka Street, near the Cathedral Church of Saint Archangel Michael – Uglješa Rajčević, „O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda“, *Saopštenja Republičkog zavoda za zaštitu spomenika kulture SR Srbije*, XXIV, Beograd 1992, 287; Nenad Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 56, 57.

28 Miodrag Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 68. These could include the large despotic icons of Christ and the Virgin, the four evangelists, Christ from the Resurrection and the Last Supper, as well as six smaller icons of saints in the second row of the iconostasis. Additionally, there could be four smaller icons mounted on the royal doors: the Virgin and Archangel Gabriel from the Annunciation for the royal doors, and Saint John and, most likely, Saint George for the side doors.

29 Anonim, *Kraljeva zadužbina*, *Glasnik Pravoslavne crkve*, 19, 1. oktobar 1912, 304; M. M. Petrović, „Crkva Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu“, *Beogradske opštinske novine*, 2, Beograd 1940, 144; Miodrag Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 65, 66.



Fig. 10  
*Central portion of the iconostasis*  
 (with Russian icons originally situated in the  
 Oplenac church where it was consecrated in 1912)  
 St Alexander Nevsky Church, Belgrade

church was consecrated.<sup>30</sup> This ensemble was photographed and published in the publication entitled *Serbian Orthodox Church, South Slav Monuments I*.<sup>31</sup> Although the photograph shows only the lower part of the altar partition, it still provides a valuable source for comparison with the current interior appearance of the Church of St Alexander Nevsky.

By comparing the icons shown in the photograph of the original Oplenac iconostasis from the period before the First World War, and by taking into account the stylistic features and signatures

of Boris Selianko's "icon-painting studio" from the period after the Great War, it can be assumed that the original Oplenac ensemble – nowadays at the centre of the Dorćol iconostasis – included the despotic icons of Christ and the Virgin Mary, the icons of St George (the patron saint of the Church at Oplenac, nowadays located at the northern door), St John the Baptist (today at the southern door), the icons of the evangelists in the second and third tiers, the *Last Supper* in the second and the *Resurrection* in the third tier, as well as six smaller icons of saints in the second tier above the side doors. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine with certainty exactly which six icons with figures of saints in small arches belonged to the ensemble brought from Russia, given the fact that in subsequent conservation works and rearrangement of the church these icons could easily be mixed with additional six icons intended for enlarged iconostasis from Boris Selianko's

30 Miodrag Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 65, 66.

31 T. Graham Jackson, K. Jovanović, N. Zupanić, *Serbian Orthodox Church, South Slav Monuments I*, London 1918. (Publisher: M. J. Pupin, Editor Nikolaj Velimirović), the book for which the material was prepared by Kosta J. Jovanović, the architect of the Oplenac Church and the author of the architectural and sculptural elements of the iconostasis – Miodrag Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 50, 51, 68, 69.



Fig. 11 (left)  
*Virgin Mary with the Christ Child*  
 despoticon (previously part of the  
 Oplenac iconostasis)  
 St Alexander Nevsky Church, Belgrade

Fig. 12 (right)  
*Jesus Christ*  
 despoticon (previously part of the  
 Oplenac iconostasis)  
 St Alexander Nevsky Church, Belgrade

studio, just before the consecration of the new Church of Alexander Nevsky at Dorćol in 1930.<sup>32</sup>

During the Great War, King Petar left the care of the Karadorđević family mausoleum at Oplenac to Prince Regent Aleksandar, who in 1927 decided to replace the Russian iconostasis at Oplenac, thus definitely linking its further destiny to today's St Alexander Nevsky Church, where it was installed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1928.<sup>33</sup>

The icons in the central portion of the iconostasis of St Alexander Nevsky Church, which is actually of quite simplified and modest appearance, were painted in oil. Their Russian author re-

32 During the 1990s, the arrangement of the saints under the arches in the second zone of the Dorćol iconostasis was as follows: In the central "Russian" section, which had originally been installed in the church on Oplenac, the row began with the icon of Saint Sava of Serbia above the northern royal doors, viewed from north to south i.e., towards the centre of the iconostasis. Following Saint Sava, there was an icon of Saint Andrew the First-Called, and closest to the altar, Saint Paul the Apostle. On the southern side, starting from the south towards the centre of the iconostasis, the sequence included Saint Venerable Anthony the Great, one female saint, and on the third icon closest to the altar, Saint Peter. On the additional section of the iconostasis along the northern wall, the first depiction was of the holy ruler, probably Emperor Constantine, followed by the apostle Philip and, likely, the apostle James. On the added southern section of the iconostasis were Saint Apostle Simon, Saint Thomas, and closest to the altar, Saint Bartholomew. Since all twelve icons were of the same format, it is almost certain that they were moved several times. During the most recent renovations of the church, this arrangement was once again altered.

33 Miodrag Jovanović, *op. cit.*, 76, 77; D. Kuzmić, „Kod kralja u Topoli“, *Politika*, Beograd 23. januar 1927, 6; *Letopis crkve Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu* (copied and compiled in the eighth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) 1974.



Fig. 13 (top left), 14 (top right)  
*St Matthew the Evangelist, Mark the Evangelist*  
third zone on the northern side of the iconostasis  
St Alexander Nevsky Church, Belgrade (previously part of the Oplenac iconostasis)

Fig. 15 (bottom left), 16 (bottom right)  
*St Luke the Evangelist, St John the Evangelist*  
second zone on the northern side of the iconostasis  
St Alexander Nevsky Church, Belgrade (previously part of the Oplenac iconostasis)

mains anonymous, but noticeable is their stylistic and iconographic closeness to the then recently completed representative Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.<sup>34</sup>

This phenomenon was “en vogue” in Russian iconography and fresco-painting of the period under consideration. Across Russia, iconographic and stylistic solutions from the complex of the Cathedral Church – Memorial Church of St Vladimir in Kiev (completed in 1882<sup>35</sup>), as well as the works of Viktor Vasnetsov and his associates on this project,<sup>36</sup> were being taken as patterns. In terms of style and iconography, the painting of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour – the largest church in Moscow at the time of its completion and consecration in 1883, dedicated to the Nativity of Christ and built in honour of Russia’s victory over Napoleon in 1812 – as well as the work of the most renowned artists, such as Fyodor Bruni, Vasily Vereshchagin, Henryk Siemiradzki, Alexei Korzukhin, Vasily Surikov, Ivan Kramskoi, Koshelev, Makovsky, Markov, Neff, Pryanishnikov, Sorokin and others (Федор Бруни, Василий Верещагин, Генрих Семирадский, Алексей Корзухин, Василий Суриков, Иван Крамской, Кошелев, Маковский, Марков, Нефф, Прянишников, Сорокин),<sup>37</sup> likewise became a model, a sort of a canon, followed by Russian icon and fresco painters.

It can be noticed that the icons of the evangelists St Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, of the older part of the Dorćol iconostasis almost replicate the painting of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. To some extent, the very architectural-sculptural construction of the Oplenac altar partition made

34 Branko Vujović, „Dorćol i crkva Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog“, 144; *Hram Hrista Spasitelĭa*, at: [http://wp.wiki-wiki.ru/wp/index.php/Храм\\_Христа\\_Спасителя](http://wp.wiki-wiki.ru/wp/index.php/Храм_Христа_Спасителя) accessed on July 21 2021.

35 *Vladimirskĭiĭ sobor (Kiev)*, at: [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Владимирский\\_собор\\_\(Киев\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Владимирский_собор_(Киев)) accessed on August 28, 2021.

36 Certain types of Vladimir icons, such as the Virgin and Child in the altar apse, despotic icons of the Virgin and Christ, the icon of Saint Vladimir, and the icon of Saint Olga, become recurring motifs. Similar solutions are found in Serbia, notably in the Church of the Holy Trinity near Adrovac, a memorial to the fallen officer Nikolay Raevsky (Николай Раевский), a volunteer in the Serbian-Turkish War, who was accompanied to the front by a mobile Russian tent church dedicated to St Alexander Nevsky. The Russian fresco painting style in this church, built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by a relative of the fallen officer, was followed by the Serbian painter Dušan Obrenović, who, among other works, painted the figure of Saint Alexander Nevsky (Nenad Makuljević, *op. cit.*, 23, 111, 184, 185). This practice continued in the Serbian Orthodox Church after the Great War, when the stylistic and iconographic solutions of Vasnetsov and his Kiev collaborators, along with the painting style from the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, became the foundation for the artistic expression of Andrej Bicenکو/Bishchenko (Андрей Васильевич Биценко/Бищенко), one of the most prolific Russian émigré painters in the Serbian environment. (Jelena Mežinski Milovanović, „Crkveno slikarstvo i vajarstvo ruskih emigranata u Kraljevini SHS/Jugoslaviji“, *Srpska crkva, ruska ruka*, Beograd 2020, 154–165).

37 *Hram Hrista Spasitelĭa*, at: [http://wp.wiki-wiki.ru/wp/index.php/Храм\\_Христа\\_Спасителя](http://wp.wiki-wiki.ru/wp/index.php/Храм_Христа_Спасителя) accessed on July 21 2021. and *Zhivopis' v hrame Hrista Spasitelĭa*, at: <https://evgechesnokov.livejournal.com/82471.html> accessed on August 28, 2021; *Istoriĭa ikonopisi, Ikonostasnaĭa masterskaĭa Pligina, g. Samara*, at: [http://www.pligina.ru/istoriya\\_ikonopisi.php](http://www.pligina.ru/istoriya_ikonopisi.php) accessed on July 21, 2021.

of Venčac marble,<sup>38</sup> seems to be in dialogue with the untypical solution of the Moscow iconostasis, the central part of which has the shape of a chapel / ciborium. The Moscow counterpart is certainly much more complex, but some details, such as marble rows of arches, under which smaller figures of individual saints are arranged, can also be found in the design of the original Oplenac church, that are nowadays to be found in the central portion of St Alexander Nevsky Church at Dorćol.

The icons of the evangelists from the Dorćol iconostasis show the greatest resemblance to the originals in the Moscow church. There are overlaps in both formal and stylistic similarities, including details such as the shape and presence of the supedaneum / a platform-like pedestal upon which the Gospel writers rest their feet. We likewise notice the same body position, the same movements, the same objects of identical shape held by male figures, and even numerous portrait similarities, such as the shape of the beard or curls of the hair, almost identical clothes (compared to the modern version of wall painting at the reconstructed Moscow Cathedral, the only significant difference is the colour).

\*

A large amount of information on Russian icons from Russian military chapels from Serbian-Turkish war of 1876–1877, church in Kloka and icons of St Alexander Nevsky related to the church of this sainted Russian Prince at Dorćol from the period before the First World War still remains unknown. Research sources are often indirect, some of them missing, therefore it is necessary to continue the research in order to shed additional light on this complex subject.

Some of the mentioned icons, whose destenies are connected, were sent by Russia as part of a military mission in 1876, while the icons for Oplenac were ordered from Russia by King Peter for his mausoleum and they were only later dedicated to St Alexander Nevsky church in Belgrade.

The presence of the sainted Russian Prince Alexander Nevsky in the Balkans, on the territory of the Slavic Orthodox state in 1876, during the war with the Ottoman Empire – the presence evidenced via church consecration and icons of the saint – is of special symbolic, but also political and ideological significance for Serbian-Russian cultural ties. These relations have become even more deepened and intricate owing to the initiative that, in the era of gaining independence and expansion of the Serbian modern state, a church be built in the Serbian capital, dedicated to both one of the most prominent Russian saints and, certainly not by chance, to one of the patron of the Russian ruling dynasty.

38 *Letopis crkve Sv. Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu* (copied and compiled in the eighth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) 1974.

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## Russian Participation in the 1600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Edict of Milan in Niš

The sixteenth centenary of the proclamation of the Edict of Milan in 1913 was solemnly observed across the Christian community. In line with the traditions of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, Serbia also organized a commemoration. The official observance was scheduled for 14 September; however, due to delays, the main jubilee event was held later in the year in Niš, the birthplace of Emperor Constantine. This jubilee took on the character of a national celebration, incorporating a commemoration of the successes achieved during the Balkan Wars. The event was attended by numerous church and political delegations from Orthodox countries. The Russian delegation, led by Bishop Anastasios, dean of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and a prominent Slavic scholar, held a significant symbolic role in the celebration and honoured the host with an appropriate commemorative gift.

Previous studies on the commemoration of the Edict of Milan anniversary in Serbia have thoroughly examined the organizational process and the events of the jubilee.<sup>1</sup> The diplomatic gifts bestowed upon the Niš Orthodox Cathedral on this occasion have also been analysed in monographic studies dedicated to the cathedral and documented in the catalogue of its treasury.<sup>2</sup> This paper builds upon that research, focusing on the role of the Russian delegation in the jubilee.

### The Celebration of the Sixteenth Centenary in Serbia

The first mentions of the forthcoming jubilee commemorating the Edict of Milan appeared in Serbian public discourse in February 1913. The weekly newspaper *Pastirska reč*, published by a clerical association, underscored the importance of marking this occasion. In an article

1 T. Marković, "Proslava 1600 godina Milanskog edikta u Srbiji", *Srpske studije* tom 4, (Beograd 2013), 267-284.

2 P. V. Gagulić, *Veliki niški Saborni hram: prilog istoriji Niša i Eparhije niške*. Skraćeni i Dopunjeni reprint izd. iz 1961. godine, Niš 2004, 64-65; M. Rakocija, *Saborna crkva u Nišu: povodom 200 godina malog Sabornog hrama*, Niš 2019; *Muzej crkvenih starina Pravoslavne Eparhije niške: katalog stalne postavke*, Niš 2022, 198-201.

by Petar Milojević, the plans for jubilee celebrations in Rome and Russia were outlined, emphasizing both educational and liturgical components. Milojević stressed the necessity of an Orthodox commemoration and highlighted the importance of Niš as the birthplace of Emperor Constantine.<sup>3</sup> The official initiative and concept for the jubilee were proposed by Bishop Dositey of Niš.<sup>4</sup>

Bishop Dositey first communicated his intention to the Minister of Education and Church Affairs on 12 August 1913.<sup>5</sup> This occurred immediately after the conclusion of the Second Balkan War, which was officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest on 10 August 1913.<sup>6</sup> In alignment with the prevailing national, church, and public interests, the bishop expressed his intention to imbue the celebration with a patriotic character. The concept for the event was inspired by the Christian jubilee celebrations in Rome and Moscow, which the bishop had learned about through the foreign press. He sought to incorporate elements from both practices as an expression of a desire to connect with “the cultural world.” The celebration was scheduled for 14 September 1913, coinciding with the Orthodox Church’s feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the liturgical celebration, he proposed the consecration of the foundation stone for a memorial temple to honour both the jubilee and the triumphs of 1913.<sup>8</sup> The Church in the Kingdom of Serbia operated under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, which was officially responsible for organizing the celebration. The jubilee program was developed by an organizing committee led by Bishop Dositey and comprised of officials and prominent citizens of Niš, along with representatives from local national societies such as *Narodna Odbrana* and the Church Singing Society *Branko*. The program received approval from both the Ministry and Metropolitan Dimitrije, the head of the Orthodox Church in the Kingdom of Serbia.<sup>9</sup>

The first part of the celebration occurred on 14 September and featured a solemn liturgy at the Belgrade Cathedral, followed by a sermon. The event was attended by representatives of the crown, government officials, and high-ranking dignitaries.<sup>10</sup> The jubilee in Niš was postponed by the minister’s decision in early September due to a cholera epidemic. Initially rescheduled for 10 November, it was ultimately set for 29 December, coinciding with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liber-

3 *Pastirska reč*, year. VIII no. 7-8 (12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 1913), 41-42. About the celebration in Rome: E. Essex, "Constantine the Great and the Peace of the Church: The Sixteenth Centenary 313-1913.", *The Irish Monthly* 41, no. 483 (1913): 477-86.

4 V. Č. "Proslava Milanskog edikta u Nišu", *Srpski književni glasnik* vol. 1 (1914), 80.

5 Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs, Department of church affairs, file VII no. 51/1913.

6 S. Skoko, *Drugi balkanski rat 1913*, vol. 2, Beograd 1968, 310-333.

7 Dates are given according to the old calendar. Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs, Department of church affairs, file VII no. 51/1913.

8 Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs, Department of church affairs, file VII no. 51/1913.

9 *ibid.*

10 *Politika* (14th September 1913), 3.

ation of Niš from Ottoman rule.<sup>11</sup>

The state character of the celebration in Niš was affirmed by the presence of the King's representative, Crown Prince Alexander, and Prince Pavle, as well as representatives of the government.<sup>12</sup> Foreign countries were represented by their diplomatic envoys to the Kingdom of Serbia. Among those in attendance were Alexandropoulos, the Greek diplomatic representative in Belgrade, Filaliti from Romania, Montenegrin Consul Lazar Mijušković, and Russian envoy Nikolas Hartwig.<sup>13</sup> The gathering of all representatives set this jubilee apart from other commemorations of the anniversary of the Edict of Milan. It was intended as a performative symbolic display of unity among Serbian church organizations, Orthodox nations, and wartime allies.<sup>14</sup> Jubilees held significant importance in symbolic policy, and the diplomatic circumstances following the Balkan Wars heavily influenced the selection of participants and guests. Russia's role was particularly emphasized, reflecting its established position as the protector of Orthodoxy and the heir to Constantine's empire. This role was further reinforced by its diplomatic efforts during the Balkan Wars, which included supporting the creation of the Balkan Alliance and countering Austro-Hungarian attempts to intervene in the division of territories and spheres of influence. These diplomatic efforts were bolstered by Slavophile organizations and figures, including Nikolas Hartwig.<sup>15</sup>

## The Russian Delegation

The arrival of the Russian church delegation remained uncertain until 23 December, when the Office of the Imperial Russian Mission in Belgrade confirmed their participation to the Serbian Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The delegation consisted of representatives from the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy, including its rector, Bishop of Yamburg, Vicar of the Saint Petersburg Diocese, Anastasios, Professor Ivan Savich Palmov, and Deacon Philip.<sup>16</sup> The delegation arrived in Niš on the morning of 28 December, where it was joined by Russian Orthodox clergy, including Archpriest Teofil Kardasevich from Budapest and Priest Petar Grigorijevich Preobrazensky from the Russian mission in Sofia. Among the guests was Alexander Alexandrovich Papkov, noted as a former governor of Finland.<sup>17</sup> Attendance at jubilees served as an established

11 Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs, Department of church affairs, file VII no. 51/1913; T. Marković, op. cit, 272-273.

12 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 45; T. Marković, op. cit, 276.

13 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 46; *Bogoslovski glasnik* 1 (January 1914), 87-88; T. Marković, op. cit, 277.

14 About the means of performative symbolic display in celebrations: M. Timotijević, "Jubilej kao kolektivna reprezentacija: proslava 50-godišnjice Takovskog ustanka u Košutnjaku", *Nasleđe* 9 (Beograd 2008), 19.

15 S. Skoko, op. cit, vol. 1, 45-50; J. V. Pisarev, "Stvaranje Balkanskog saveza i Rusija (1911-1912)", *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 31 (1985), 99-117; A. S. Tuminez, *Russian Nationalism Since 1856: ideology and the making of foreign policy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2000, 130-131.

16 Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs – The department of religious affairs, file III no. 45/1913.

17 *Bogoslovski glasnik* 1 (January 1914), 87-88.



Fig. 1  
*Bishop Anastasios in the procession in front of the Niš Orthodox Cathedral*  
Still from the documentary film *Celebration of the 1600th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan in Niš, 1913*  
(Yugoslav Film Archive – The State Audiovisual Archive of Serbia)

means of fostering cooperation between the Serbian and Russian Churches. Beyond reinforcing symbolic ties, it offered an opportunity for meaningful influence and communication. One of the most notable instances preceding the Edict of Milan jubilee was the participation of Serbian Metropolitan Dimitrije in the tercentenary celebrations of the Romanov dynasty in February 1914.<sup>18</sup> The selection of representatives was based on their expertise in Slavic studies, church history, and diplomacy.

Slavic studies emerged as a key component of Russian diplomacy and influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first academic chairs in this field were established in 1835 at the universities of Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kharkiv, and Kazan. This initiative stemmed from the state's efforts to

18 R. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, Princeton 2006, 383-389; A. Timofejev, "Izveštaj o putovanju mitropolita beogradskog Dimitrija na 300-godišnjicu ruske carske dinastije Romanov", *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Beograd 2018), 135-155.

formalize the romanticized public interest in Slavic societies, bolstered by the activities of Slavophiles. Slavic scholars not only cultivated academic influence and fostered connections through travel and collaboration with local academic communities, but also frequently served in diplomatic roles within Slavic states and territories.<sup>19</sup> Theological academies followed this precedent by establishing specialized chairs of their own. The first chair dedicated to the history of Slavic churches was founded at St. Petersburg's Theological Academy in 1885. The scientific activity of Russian theological academies reached its zenith in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and persisted until the Revolution of 1917. This flourishing was largely attributed to the 1869 charter, which introduced a university-style decision-making system within these institutions, aligning them more closely with state universities. The scope of the church history chairs extended beyond strictly theological matters, aiming to serve both the state and the broader public.<sup>20</sup>

Bishop Anastasios of Yamburg, born Alexander Alexandrov Ivanovich, was esteemed as one of Russia's foremost Slavic scholars of his era. In late May 1913, he was appointed Bishop of Yamburg and became the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. His academic journey began in Kazan, after which he taught languages at the University of Derpt (now Tartu) from 1884 to 1886. He continued his teaching career at the University of Kharkiv from 1886 to 1888, earning both a master's degree and a doctorate in Baltic linguistics. Subsequently, he joined the Faculty of History and Philology at the University of Kazan, where he held various positions until 1910. Building on his experience teaching courses on the history of Slavic churches at a Sunday school from 1897 to 1905, Ivanovich was recommended for a teaching position at the Kazan Theological Academy. There, he became the head of the chair for the history of Slavic and Romanian churches, a position that required him to take monastic vows. He received this status, along with an honorary doctorate in church history, in July of that year. In 1912, Ivanovich was appointed rector of the Kazan Theological Academy and later became Bishop of Chistopol, serving as a vicar for the Diocese of Kazan. His memberships in the Moscow and St. Petersburg Theological Academies facilitated his transfer to St. Petersburg the following year.<sup>21</sup>

According to his list of publications, Ivanovich's primary academic focus within Baltic linguistics centred on Southern Slavic languages and history, with a particular emphasis on the recent history of Montenegro. This interest prompted him to undertake several research trips to the Balkans between 1893 and 1895.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Ivanovich took an active role in the jubilee celebration of

19 M. Jovanović, *Srbi i Rusi, 12-21. vek: istorija odnosa*, Beograd 2012, 135.

20 N. N. Glubokovskiy, *Russkaya bogoslovskaya nauka: v yeye istoricheskom razvitii i noveyshem sostoyanii*, Moskva 2002, 96.

21 T. A. Bogdanov, "Anastasiy (Aleksandrov Aleksandr Ivanovich)", in: *Pravoslavnyaya entsiklopediya*, Tom II, 235-236; M. Martinović, "Uvodna studija", in: A. Aleksandrov, *O Crnoj Gori*, Podgorica 2006, 12-13; D. Karpuk, "Podvizhnik very i nauki. Deyatel'nost' poslednego rektora dorevoljucionnoy Sankt-Peterburgskoy dukhovnoy akademii yepiskopa Anastasiya (Aleksandrova) (1913—1918 gg.)", *Nevskiy Bogoslov* 4 (Sankt Peterburg 2010), 10-15.

22 M. Martinović, "Uvodna studija", 35.

the rim printing press, held in Cetinje in 1893.<sup>23</sup> He provided a detailed account of this event in a travelogue, highlighting its pan-Slavic significance.<sup>24</sup> Later, he became one of the editors of the Montenegrin magazine *Luča*, which was centred on similar principles.<sup>25</sup> This experience indicates that Bishop Anastasios was a fitting representative at the jubilee in Niš, reflecting intentions for further collaboration that were ultimately disrupted by the outbreak of World War I.

At the time of the jubilee, Ivan Savich Palmov held the position of professor of the history of Slavic churches at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, from which he had also graduated. Following his graduation, he pursued further studies at the School of History and Languages at St. Petersburg University. Under the mentorship of renowned Slavic studies scholar Vladimir Ivanovich Lamansky, Palmov focused his research on the ecclesiastical and linguistic histories of Western and Southern Slavs.<sup>26</sup> During his research, Palmov undertook an extensive journey through the Balkans. In 1882 and 1883, he visited key centres including Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Sremski Karlovci, where he studied archival sources and Slavic manuscripts from various collections. Beginning in the 1884/85 academic year, he worked as an assistant professor and became the first head of the Chair for Slavic Church History.<sup>27</sup> The chair was founded by Ivan Jegorovich Troitsky, a figure well-known to the Serbian public. He was considered to wield political influence concerning the Eastern autocephalous churches.<sup>28</sup> Palmov was an active member of the Soviet of the Slavic Charity Society, where he extended assistance to Serbian immigrants in Russia. In this capacity, he was visited by Metropolitan Dimitrije in St. Petersburg during the tercentenary celebrations of the Romanov dynasty.<sup>29</sup> Palmov visited Belgrade once more in 1909, though without an official reception.<sup>30</sup>

Following his initial visit, Palmov informed the clerical community in Russia about current developments within the Serbian Church and published translations of the new legislation regarding its organization.<sup>31</sup> At the time of Palmov's visit, the Serbian Church was undergoing a leadership transition following the expulsion of the Russian-oriented Metropolitan Mihailo. Palmov's teachings and work on South Slavic religious history also carried a Slavophilic component. He mentored a significant number of students from Serbia and the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, a region

23 R. Šuković, *Proslava četrstogodišnjice Crnojevića štamparije (1893)*, Cetinje 1994, 42.

24 A. Aleksandrov, "Jadranskim morem u Crnu Goru", in: *O Crnoj Gori*, 42-48.

25 R. Šuković, *op. cit.*, 70.

26 P. Lapteva, "Professor Sankt-Peterburgskoy dukhovnoy akademii I. S. Pal'mov kak istorik zarubezhnykh tserkvey", *Slavyanskiy al'manakh* 2010 (Moskva 2011), 197-198; V. Puzović, *Ruski putevi srpskog bogoslovlja: školovanje Srba na ruskim duhovnim akademijama: 1849-1917*, Beograd 2017, 361-368.

27 P. Lapteva, *op. cit.*, 199; V. Puzović, "Ivan Savič Paljmov kao istraživač srpske crkvene istorije", *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor*, vol. 84 (Beograd 2018), 65-67.

28 "Obituary", *Srpski Sion* (19. 8. 1901), 567-568.

29 *Zastava* (10.11.1899), 3; A. Timofejev, *op. cit.*, 150.

30 A. Sredojević, *op. cit.*, 288; *Glasnik Pravoslavne crkve u Kraljevini Srbiji* 4-5 (1909), 274.

31 V. Puzović, "Vklad russkikh tserkovnykh istorikov v razvitiye serbskoy tserkovnoy istoriografii", *Khristianskoye chteniye* 1 (2022), 371-372.

subject to Austro-Hungarian ambitions.<sup>32</sup> According to his fellow professors, Palmov positioned himself as a protector of Serbian students, facilitating their academic progress at the Academy, which reportedly resulted in a decline in the quality of their dissertations. These works often presented a romanticized interpretation of recent historical events, intended to inspire clergy activism—an approach that contrasted with the critical stance on such historiography that Palmov himself publicly expressed.<sup>33</sup> Palmov maintained continuous contact with Serbian church scholars, contributing significantly to the study of Serbian church history. His works, published in St. Petersburg, offered valuable insights that resonated with the contemporary aspirations of the Serbian Church. He investigated the factors leading to the autocephaly of the Serbian Church under St. Sava and the establishment of the Serbian Patriarchate in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In an interview following the jubilee, Palmov voiced his support for the re-establishment of the Serbian Patriarchate, asserting that the newly acquired territories had nearly reconstituted the boundaries of the medieval Serbian Empire.<sup>34</sup> Although Palmov's works on South Slavic churches influenced Serbian historiography, they are not regarded as strictly scientific in nature, as was the case with his research on the Czech Church. Instead, these writings are considered to be engaged and informative texts.<sup>35</sup> As recognition and encouragement for his activities on behalf of Serbia, Palmov was awarded the St. Sava Medal of the Third Rank by King Aleksandar Obrenović.<sup>36</sup>

Alexander Alexandrovich Papkov arrived with a delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church, though his presence was not announced through diplomatic channels. A lawyer by profession, Papkov later completed his studies at the Archaeological Institute in St. Petersburg. After a lengthy civil service career, during which he served as governor of Finland, in 1905 he became a member of the Holy Synod's body responsible for establishing parishes within the Russian Church. Papkov also had an amateur interest in church history. In 1909, he presided over the Society for the Study of Church Antiquities and was a member of the Imperial Russian Historical Society.<sup>37</sup> After the jubilee, Papkov extended his stay and visited Belgrade, where he was scheduled to deliver a lecture on the organization of parishes. In an interview with the newspaper *Zastava*, associated with the Russophile Radical Party, he shared his perspectives on parish organization. Papkov advocated for the clear demarcation of parish boundaries, a fixed number of households per parish, and the resolution of minor community issues by committees that included lay members. This system mirrored the church municipalities already in place within the Karlovac Metropolis and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as noted by the editor. Papkov demonstrated a deep understanding of

32 V. Puzović, "Sanktpeterburška duhovna akademija i Srbi: istorijski put i bogoslovsko nasleđe", *Khristianskoye Chteniye* 3 (2020), 92.

33 N. Glubokovskiy, "S.-Peterburgskaya dukhovnaya akademiya vo vremena studenchestva tam patriarkha Varnavy", *Tserkovno-istoricheskiy vestnik* 2-3 (1999), 237.

34 *Zastava*, year XLIX, no. 7 (10<sup>th</sup> January 1914), 1.

35 P. Lapteva, op. cit, 213-214.

36 *ibid*, 217.

37 *Spisok grazhdanskikh chinov IV klassa: Ispravlen po sostoyaniyu na 1 marta 1914 g. Gl. 1*, 371-372.



Fig. 2  
*Clerics and delegations before the unveiling of the monument to Bishop Melentius*  
Still from the documentary film *Celebration of the 1600th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan in Niš, 1913*  
(Yugoslav Film Archive – The State Audiovisual Archive of Serbia)

contemporary trends in Slavic churches through his responses to questions on pressing issues, including the second marriage of Orthodox priests, reformist aspirations within the Russian Church, and the influence of Uniate movements in Bulgaria.<sup>38</sup> Papkov's public statements reflect an effort to advocate for the formal organization of parishes based on the Russian model, as was particularly evident in his discussion of the issue of second marriages for widowed priests, for which examples were already being sought in other Orthodox church organizations.<sup>39</sup>

Petar Preobrazensky was appointed by decree of Tsar Nicholas II in July 1912 as the head of the Russian Church of St. Nicholas, officially part of the Russian Imperial Mission in Sofia. Since the church was still under construction, Preobrazensky oversaw its completion, including supervising the position of the church and commenting on the suitability of the wall paintings. In 1914, he was

38 *Zastava*, year XLIX, no. 10 (15<sup>th</sup> January 1914), 1.

39 A. Sredojević, *Srpski patrijarh Dimitrije Pavlović (1920-1930)*, Beograd 2015, 294-297.

dismissed at the request of the mission's head, allegedly due to his involvement in political matters and discussions with Bulgarians on related topics. Preobrazensky remained a permanent official of the Russian Church Abroad, having previously served as a deacon at the church in Vienna before continuing his clerical duties at churches in Baden-Baden and Karlsruhe.<sup>40</sup> Preobrazensky was likely invited to join the delegation in Niš as the nearest official diplomatic representative of the Russian Church, given that an equivalent position did not exist in Belgrade at the time.

## The Role of the Russian Delegation

The Russian delegation arrived in Niš from Belgrade and Sofia on 28 December. Due to the short notice, the planned official welcome could not be organized. Nevertheless, Bishop Dionysius greeted them at the train station, accompanied by a large group of priests. Unlike the arrivals of political delegations, this reception was not filmed. The participation of the Russian delegation was later regarded as enhancing the grandeur and significance of the celebration, symbolizing a shared celebration and a sense of unity among peoples bound by their Orthodox faith and common struggles.<sup>41</sup>

On the evening of their arrival, Bishop Anastasios led the first event of the celebration, a vigil held at the Niš Orthodox Cathedral. Serbian priests and the choir from the St. Sava Theological School in Belgrade also participated. On Sunday morning, 29 December, a solemn liturgy was held, with every attending bishop taking part in the service. During the liturgy, prayers were offered for the rulers of all represented countries. The presence of a large number of clergy and deacons further contributed to the majestic and reverent atmosphere of the event.<sup>42</sup> Communal liturgy was a customary practice in Russia during jubilees, symbolizing prayerful support for a person or idea being honoured through the celebration.<sup>43</sup> Following the liturgy, the foundation stone for the proposed memorial church was consecrated. The plan envisioned its placement in a park near the quay; however, since the exact location was likely never officially designated, the church's construction was never realized. The consecration remained a symbolic gesture, reflecting the bishop's aspiration to create a lasting memorial to the ideas celebrated during the jubilee. The church activities concluded with the unveiling of commemorative plaques dedicated to the fallen soldiers and volunteers of the Balkan Wars, which were installed in the porch of the cathedral.<sup>44</sup>

Afterward, representatives of national organizations, guilds, clergy, and students formed a procession leading to the bridge that connected the Ottoman fortress with the former Christian town of Niš. Footage of the event shows banners bearing Christ's monogram at the forefront of the col-

40 V. L. Govorukhin, *Ruskata Tsürkva Sv. Nikolai Chudotvorets v Sofiya*, Sofiya 1995, 19-20.

41 *Pastirska reč*, vol. IX, no. 3 (10th January 1914), 18.

42 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 46; *Bogoslovski glasnik* 1 (January 1914), 87-88; T. Marković, op. cit, 279.

43 Cf. A. Timofejev, op. cit, 139-140.

44 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 47; T. Marković, op. cit, 277.

umn, followed by the traditional procession of church banners, crosses, and liturgical fans. The procession route was decorated with national tricolours and the Serbian coat of arms. At the head of the delegations were Bishop Anastasios and Bishop Dositey, walking ahead of the state delegation, which included Prince Alexander and Prime Minister Nikola Pašić. Following them was an organized procession of guilds and civil organizations, each carrying wreaths to lay in tribute.<sup>45</sup>

The area in front of the bridge was prepared for the unveiling of a monument, as outlined in the program. The monument was dedicated to an event during Ottoman rule, regarded as part of the national struggle. An extensive inscription on the north side of the monument provides details about its dedication and founder: “1821–1319 To Bishop of Niš Melentius, Archpriest Stojan, Priest Dorđe, and citizens of Niš Mladen, Golub, and Radosav, who were hanged and martyred at this place on the third day of the Hagias Triade feast in 1821 for the great Serbian idea—liberation—this monument is erected by Bishop of Niš Dositey with all of the Niš clergy.” Bishop Melentius (r. 1815–1821), along with priests and citizens, was hanged at this location during the Ottoman campaign against members of the Filiki Eteria. This campaign began with the execution of the Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorie V on Easter 1821.<sup>46</sup> The heroic narrative of the execution became embedded in the collective memory of the Christian community in Niš and Serbia, symbolizing a key episode in the national revolutionary struggle against Ottoman rule.<sup>47</sup> The influence of constructed myths on the concept of monuments is evident in the inclusion of Radosav, a figure featured as the protagonist in M. Riznić’s novel, whose existence and actions are not supported by historical evidence.<sup>48</sup> The priest’s sermon on the occasion highlighted the role of clerics in organizing resistance and fostering a patriotic spirit among the people, with the (Greek) nationality of Bishop Melentius posing no obstacle to his recognition in this context.<sup>49</sup> The interweaving of religious and national identity is also reflected in the monument’s design. The cross, set on an elongated pedestal, draws inspiration from public religious monuments, a form already adapted for use in war memorials.<sup>50</sup> The monument was crafted by local stonemason Dušan Kanović, likely based on the concept provided by the commissioning party.<sup>51</sup> The idea for such a monument had long been nurtured among the bishops and clergy of Niš. In 1896, in response to an initiative by the Niš municipality to erect a monument to teacher Antanasios Petrović, then-Bishop Inokentios proposed placing a monument to Melentius in the churchyard of the Niš Cathedral. Allegedly, this proposal had the backing of

45 The procession can be seen on the film footage made with two cameras by local restaurateur Narandžić. Yugoslav film archives, EFG1914.

46 B. Andrejević, “Revolucionarna delatnost tajne niške organizacije protiv Turaka 1821. godine”, *Leskovački zbornik* XV (1975), 121-123; M. Ranđelović, *Osmanski upravnici Niša u XIX veku*, Niš 2022, 212-215.

47 M. Milićević, *Pomenik znamenitih ljudi u srpskog naroda novijega doba*, Beograd 1888, 443-446; M. Riznić, *Svetli mučenici: Pripovetka iz prošlosti grada Niša*, Niš 1892.

48 B. Andrejević, op. cit, 127.

49 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 52.

50 M. Timotijević, “Memorijal oslobodiocima Beograda 1806.”, *Nasleđe* 5 (Beograd 2004), 19-22.

51 R. Latković i dr, *Spomenici Niša*, Niš 1979, 25-26.



Fig. 3  
*The Consecration of the Monument by Bishop Anastasios*  
Still from the documentary film *Celebration of the 1600th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan in Niš, 1913*  
(Yugoslav Film Archive – The State Audiovisual Archive of Serbia)

two of the most prominent Russian-oriented figures in Serbia at the time: Queen Mother Natalija and Metropolitan Mihailo.<sup>52</sup>

The central feature of the unveiling ceremony was the consecration of the monument, performed by Bishop Anastasios. Footage shows that a local priest first blessed the monument, followed by the formal consecration led by Bishop Anastasios.<sup>53</sup> The Russian delegation also marked the occasion, with one of the intended gifts from the Russian Holy Synod being an icon of St. Constantine. This icon, dedicated to the monument “to those who sacrificed for the Christian faith,” symbolized Russian support for the concept of martyrdom in the Christian struggle and national cause.

Following the ceremony, a lunch was held to honour the guests, during which they were pre-

52 Serbian State Archives, Gifts and Acquisitions, file 76 no. 279.

53 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 48; T. Marković, op. cit, 278-279.

sented to Crown Prince Alexander. The Russian presence was recognized with the playing of their national anthem. The first day of celebrations also included a festive session of the municipal council, where it was decided to rename the street connecting the Cathedral Church and St. Nicholas Church after Emperor Constantine, ensuring the legacy of the jubilee in the city's topography. The evening banquet's program was carefully curated to reinforce the symbolism of the day's events. Choirs performed a concert, followed by a lecture on the Edict of Milan delivered by archaeologist Nikola Vulić, a member of the Serbian Royal Society. The program concluded with a theatrical performance by the local amateur group Trifković, based on a novel by Riznić.<sup>54</sup>

On the second day of the jubilee, guests were taken on a tour of significant sites in Niš, including the old Orthodox Cathedral dedicated to St. Archangels, St. Nicholas Church, St. Panteleimon Church, the museum, the Skull Tower, and the military barracks. The itinerary was designed to highlight the city's Christian heritage, commemorate its heroic endeavors, and showcase its readiness for future challenges.

The visit to the barracks, located near St. Panteleimon Church and the Skull Tower, took place early in the day due to its proximity. At the barracks, Bishop Anastasios delivered a speech in which he reflected on his own military service, paid tribute to the Serbian army, and bestowed his blessing upon it.<sup>55</sup>

The Skull Tower, a memorial structure of profound national significance, was regarded at the time as a symbol of Serbian national identity. Consequently, the rituals performed there closely mirrored the structure and solemnity of the monument unveiling ceremony held the previous day.<sup>56</sup> The Skull Tower, constructed by the Ottomans in 1809 using the skulls of defeated insurgents, served as a grim warning against rebellion. The bravery and suffering of the insurgents were commemorated during the jubilee with an Orthodox requiem, conducted by Bishop Anastasios and priests from the Russian delegation.<sup>57</sup> Afterward, local priest Jordan Vidojković delivered an allocution about the Skull Tower, highlighting the heroic endeavors of the Christians of Niš during their struggle against the Ottomans. His speech sought to evoke the symbolic significance of the Skull Tower in Serbian public memory and link it to the concept of the jubilee. The Skull Tower was regarded as a monument to heroes who died for "faith and homeland," serving as a source of inspiration during the battles that led to the liberation of Niš. It was often said that the Kingdom of Serbia was "resurrected" from the Skull Tower, as the liberation of Niš marked a key moment preceding its formation. In poetry, as one phase of warfare ended and a national goal was achieved, the monument stood as a promise of future victories and aspirations.<sup>58</sup> Vidojković drew a parallel

54 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 55-56.

55 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 61.

56 N. Makuljević, *Umetnost i nacionalna ideja u XIX veku*, Beograd 2006, 287.

57 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 57.

58 S. Bolmanac, *Čele Kula: u spomen vojvode Sindelića i njegovih boraca poginulih na šancu Čegararu 1809. god.: posvećeno srpskoj omladini*, Niš 1894, 14-15; V. Đorđević, *Uspomene*, Beograd 1988, 116; T. Stanković, *Uspomene*, Pirot 1996, 16-17.

between the defeat at Čegar and the historic Battle of Kosovo, portraying Čegar as the greatest defeat of recent times. He emphasized that the Skull Tower, born of this defeat, had become a source of motivation for soldiers, ultimately leading to the latest victories. In his speech, Vidojković also compared Serbian and Russian national and religious histories, underscoring the deep connections between their churches. He asserted that the lights of St. Sava and St. Sergius of Radonezh, as symbols of their respective nations, had not been extinguished by the defeat that led to the creation of the Skull Tower, but instead continued to shine as enduring beacons of faith and resilience.<sup>59</sup>

The next stop was a visit to the museum, curated for the occasion by Jasha Vidojković, the director of the jail and a passionate history enthusiast. This longstanding idea was realized specifically for the jubilee and was housed within the premises of the Ottoman fortress. The centrepiece of the exhibition was the numismatic collection belonging to Stevan Chahotin, the Russian consul in Niš. Notable highlights included the bust of Emperor Constantine, discovered in Niš and loaned from the National Museum of Serbia for the event, as well as a collection of flags, armour, and weapons confiscated during recent wars.<sup>60</sup> During lunch that day, “special manifestations” of respect and gratitude toward Russia were observed, highlighted by the singing of the Russian national anthem following a toast offered by Bishop Anastasios.<sup>61</sup>

The second part of the day focused on honouring the host. It included a train journey through the picturesque Sicevo Gorge to the town of Bela Palanka, historically the episcopal seat of Remesiana. In preparation for the celebration, Bela Palanka was decorated with triumphal arches and national flags. The dining room at the Srpski Kralj Hotel was adorned with traditional Serbian kilims, and a “strictly Serbian” menu was served to the guests. Bishop Anastasios addressed the gathering with a speech delivered in Serbian, while Archpriest Preobrazensky also spoke to those in attendance. The day concluded with the inaugural meeting of the female national association St. Empress Helena. Notably, there was no record of foreign delegations participating in this session.<sup>62</sup> After the celebration concluded, the Russian delegation departed from Niš, though part of the delegation extended their visit to Serbia. On 29 December, King Petar I issued a decree awarding the official members of the Russian delegation with the St. Sava Medal, the Kingdom of Serbia’s highest honour for contributions to culture, education, science, religion, and public service. Bishop Anastasios received the medal of the First Rank, Professor Palmov was awarded the medal of the Second Rank, and Deacon Philip received the medal of the Fourth Rank.<sup>63</sup>

59 D. B. Miller, *Saint Sergius of Radonezh, His Trinity Monastery, and the Formation of The Russian Identity*, Illinois 2010, 76-103; *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 60.

60 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 62; D. Mirčetić - M. Matički “Kulturni razvoj Niša”, in: *Istorija Niša II*, Niš 1984, 161.

61 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 62.

62 *Vesnik srpske crkve* (January 1914), 63-64.

63 T. Marković, *Op. cit.*, 278.



Fig. 4  
*The Monument to Bishop Melentius (current state), Niš*

## Gifts

Following established practices of gift-giving, which serve to commemorate significant events and strengthen ties between hosts and their visitors, the Russian Emperor and the Holy Synod offered gifts after the jubilee. Emperor Nicholas II presented a gift comprising a chalice and a set of liturgical utensils for the Niš Orthodox Cathedral. This gift was sent to the Bishop of Niš as a memento of the solemn celebration in December. Correspondence related to the event offers valuable insights into the decision-making process behind the gift and the details of its eventual arrival.

On 30 January 1914, in Tsarskoye Selo, Emperor Nicholas II signed a declaration for a gift destined for the Niš Orthodox Cathedral. The gift consisted of a set of liturgical vessels, including a chalice, a paten, and several smaller pieces, all engraved with a donor and commemorative inscription. The inscription read: “The most gracious gift from the Emperor and Sovereign of All Russia Nicholas II to the Cathedral in the City of Niš, Serbia, in commemoration of the celebration of 1600 years since the issuance of the Edict of Milan by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine the Great – 1913. S. Petersburg.” The decision to bestow this gift was made by the Ministry of the Imperial Court. After the acquisition of the objects, the gift was forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 16 May 1914, it was delivered to the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the Imperial Mission in Belgrade. Three days later, on 19 May, the gift was formally directed to Bishop Dositey in Niš.<sup>64</sup> Upon their arrival, the liturgical vessels were immediately placed in the treasury of the Niš Cathedral, where they were preserved as some of the church’s most valuable possessions. This was particularly significant during the world wars, when the church suffered extensive destruction.<sup>65</sup>

The set comprised a large chalice, a paten, a liturgical star, two saucers, a spoon, and two liturgical hot water holders, all housed in a box. These items were crafted by the artisan workshop and trading house *I. E. Morozov*.<sup>66</sup> The company *I. E. Morozov* was regarded as the largest manufacturer of jewellery, gold, and silver items in pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg. Alongside the Grachev Brothers, Pavel Bure, and the Fabergé company, it held exclusive rights to produce items for the Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty. A significant number of imperial gifts were commissioned from the Morozov workshop, renowned for its exceptional artistic and aesthetic quality, offered at competitive prices. The Morozov company specialized in producing gifts for Russian clergymen, making it a fitting choice for the gift intended for the Niš Cathedral. It is likely that the vessels were not specifically designed for this occasion. Such gifts were typically selected from a collection organized

64 Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs, Department of church affairs, file II No. 15 / 1914; *Moskva - Serbiya, Belgrad - Rossiya*. T. 3, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskiye i kul'turnyye svyazi 1878-1917*, Beograd-Moskva 2012, no. 231.

65 P. V. Gagulić, *Veliki niški Saborni hram*, 65; M. Rakocija, op. cit, 72.

66 *Muzej crkvenih starina Pravoslavne Eparhije niške: katalog stalne postavke*, 198.



Fig. 5  
 Liturgical vessels gifted by Emperor Nicholas II to the Niš Orthodox Cathedral  
 St. Petersburg, 1913  
 Museum of Church Antiquities of the Diocese of Niš

within the Cabinet and could be conveniently engraved as required.<sup>67</sup>

Upon the arrival of the vessels, Bishop Dositey, a former student of the Kievan Theological Academy, penned an extensive thank-you letter in Russian. The letter was addressed to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, who had facilitated the ceremonial connection between the Church and the Imperial Court and was the first to inform the bishop of the emperor's decision. The gift elicited the anticipated response, reinforcing the perception of the Russian Emperor and the Church as universal protectors of the Orthodox Christian people and faith. In his romanticized letter, the bishop expressed that his own heart, along with those of the clergy and faithful citizens, was filled with "boundless love for the Emperor." In his letter, Bishop Dositey emphasized the symbolic connection established through this gift between the birthplace of the first Christian

67 *Muzej crkvenih starina Pravoslavne Eparhije niške: katalog stalne postavke*, 198-201; <https://lermontovgallery.ru/spravochnik-antikvariata/torgovyy-dom-ie-morozov/> last access 17. September 2024.

Emperor, Constantine, and the new emperor, seen as his successor. As part of this exchange, he announced that prayers for the health of the imperial family and the Chief Procurator would be offered in the Niš Cathedral.<sup>68</sup>

The gift for the Niš Orthodox Cathedral was also offered by the Holy Synod. This intention was announced in April 1914 in the Russian Church's courier, *Tserkovnyye Vedomosti*, and later republished in the Serbian clerical press. The gift included offerings both for the church and the clergy. It comprised a set of liturgical utensils for the cathedral, ceremonial vestments and a set of Dikirion and Trikirion for the metropolitan seat, and an artistic icon of St. Constantine, intended to commemorate the unveiling of the monument.<sup>69</sup> There is no evidence confirming the arrival of these items, nor can they be identified in the treasury of the Niš Cathedral. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the Holy Synod's intention to deliver this gift was not realized.

The official Russian participation in the state and church event marking the centenary of the Edict of Milan reflected established relations between church and educational organizations and a manifestation of Russia's well-developed soft diplomatic influence in the Balkan states. From the perspective of the Serbian state and church, the presence of high-ranking dignitaries and the gift from the Tsar, recognized as a protector of all Orthodox Christians, enhanced the grandeur of the event and underscored the significance of the messages conveyed.

68 Serbian State Archives, Ministry of education and religious affairs, Department of church affairs, file II No. 15 / 1914; *Moskva - Serbiya, Belgrad - Rossiya*. T. 3, no. 233.

69 *Bogoslovski glasnik* III, b. XXV, no. 5 (May 1914), 427.

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Ivana Ženarju Rajović

## 19th Century Russian Icons in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Diocese of Raška-Prizren covered a large territory consisting of parts of present-day Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania. It represented a remnant of the former Patriarchate of Peć, which included the medieval Serbian bishoprics of Ras, Prizren and Lipljan and those founded by St. Sava in 1220, such as Hvosno, Zeta, Hum and Dabar.<sup>1</sup> Formed at the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the annexation of the medieval Serbian dioceses of Prizren, Raška and Skadar (Alb. *Shkodër*, Ita. *Scutari*), the Diocese underwent territorial adjustments in 1878 when its Montenegrin parts were excluded by the Treaty of Berlin and became part of the Metropolitanate of Cetinje. Following the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, parts of the bishoprics of Mostar and Sarajevo remained in the Ottoman Empire and were incorporated in the Diocese of Raška and Prizren in 1894.<sup>2</sup> Today, the Diocese encompasses the entire territory of Kosovo and Metohija and the region of Raška, also known as Sanjak, the latter name coming from the erstwhile Sanjak of Novi Pazar (1878–1913), whose historical borders it roughly mirrors.

The churches and monasteries of the Diocese of Raška-Prizren, just like those in the other eparchies of the Serbian Orthodox Church, still have significant collections of Russian icons.<sup>3</sup> Most were painted during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the villages of Kholuy, Mstyora and Palekh of the Vladimir-Suzdal area, which specialized in the artisanal mass production of icons. These icons, known as *krasnushki*, enjoyed great popularity and were broadly distributed not only in Russia but also in the Balkans, representing stylized interpretations of the “old style” and Byzantine art adapted to contemporaneous trends. Besides *krasnushki*, the churches of the Diocese of Raška-Priz-

1 S. Ćirković, *Pravoslavna srpska crkva u srednjovekovnoj srpskoj državi*, in: *Srpska pravoslavna crkva 1219–1969, Spomenica o 750-godišnjici autokefalnosti*, ed. L. Trifunović, Beograd 1969, 39.

2 I. Ženarju Rajović, *Crkvena umetnost u Raško-prizrenskoj eparhiji (1839–1912)*, Leposavić 2016, 21–22.

3 N. Makuljević, *Piety, Ideology, and Orthodoxy: Russian Icons in Serbian Church Culture (17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, in: *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Y. Boycheva, Seyssel, 2016, 137–138. (Not only icons but also liturgical vessels and books.)

Fig. 1  
*Christ Pantokrator*  
 Church of the Presentation of the Virgin, Belo Polje



ren also house Russian color prints and a few examples of metal icons printed in color. In this Diocese, where the production of liturgical vessels was entrusted to local artisans and the painting of icons to *zographoi* from Debar and Veles, the presence of Russian icons could have been connected with *zeteia* missions of monks who went to Russia to collect donations,<sup>4</sup> through the so-called trade diaspora and later through Russian consulates, which distributed financial help.<sup>5</sup>

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward, representatives of Orthodox monasteries had opportunity to personally travel to Russia to collect charitable donations. Two centuries later, Serbian monks from the Diocese of Raška and Prizren also engaged in this practice, but sources usually document the money they raised and how it was spent, mostly on church renovations. For instance, Kiril Andrejević, Archimandrite of Dečani, traveled to Russia in 1858 and collected donations for both the monastery and the construction of a church in his native village Belo Polje near Peć. Russian empress Maria

- 4 *Zeteia* was officially sanctioned alms-gathering by Balkan monks traveling to foreign lands, in this case Russia, and it was one of the main channels for the import of Russian icons, liturgical vessels and books. T. Kostopoulos, *Icon Goldsmiths, Pious Widows, and Holy Maidens Adventure Narratives of Greek Monks Travelling in Late Imperial Russia*, *Museikon* 6 (2022), 169–170.
- 5 S. Nedeljković, *Aktivnosti ruskih konzula u Staroj Srbiji krajem XIX početkom XX veka*, *Baština* 12 (2001), 165–171; I. ŽenarjuRajović, *op. cit.*, 66–69; Y. Boycheva, *The Transfer of Russian Icons to Greece (16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries) and the Example of Patmos*, in: *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Y. Boycheva, *Seysse* 2016, 119–122; I. Gergova, *Russian Icons in Bulgaria*, in: *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, 149–152. While we are familiar with the markets and fairs in Suzdal villages and the activities of local merchants, icon peddlers known as *ofenyas*, who sold Russian icons throughout Russia and in some parts of the Balkans, no evidence has emerged to connect them with the icons from the Diocese of Raška and Prizren. See: O. Tarasov, *Russkiye ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh*, *Sovetskoye slavianovedeniye* 3 (1990), 50, 52–53; O. Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion. Sacred Spaces in Imperial Russia*, London 2002, 55–57; I. Borovikov, *Eighteenth-Century Russian Folk Icons in Transylvanian Collections*, in: *Russian Icons from Transilvania: Exhibition Catalogue*, eds. A. Dumitran, D. D. Filip, Alba Iulia, Cluj-Napoca 2023, 41–42.



Fig. 2  
*Iconostasis*  
 Church of St. Elijah, Lokvice

Alexandrovna emerged as the principal benefactor, reportedly intervened with the Sultan to secure the necessary firman and is mentioned in the donor inscription above the church entrance.<sup>6</sup> It is known that the Archimandrite returned from Russia with chests full of liturgical books and vessels, which he sent to Dečani through the Russian Consulate in Belgrade, but unfortunately, there are no documents regarding any icons he might have acquired.<sup>7</sup> One Russian icon of Christ Pantokrator from this church, painted in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, no longer exists.

Before the consulate in Prizren opened, Serbs from this part of the Ottoman Empire had a consulate located in Skadar.<sup>8</sup> The aid arriving through this channel was primarily intended for the

6 I. Ženarju Rajović, *Zidno slikarstvo u crkvi Vavedenja Bogorodice u Belom Polju kod Peći*, in: *Studije vizuelne kulture Balkana* knj. II, eds. A. Kostić, N. Makuljević, Beograd 2019, 9–10.

7 I. Jastrebov, *Manastir Dečani*, Bratstvo 12–13 (1908), 170.

8 Later, a Russian consulate opened in Kosovska Mitrovica. S. Nedeljković, *op. cit.*, 165–166.



Fig. 3  
 St. John the Baptist  
 Church of St. Elijah, Lokvice

development of education, and the largest project of this type was establishment of the Seminary in Prizren and its ongoing provision of the necessary books.<sup>9</sup> The Russian consulates also supported the maintenance of religious life in the Diocese, with many actions initiated and financed by local Russian consuls. For example, the restoration of the church in the Binač Monastery (also known as Buzovik), destroyed in the March pogrom of 2004, was undertaken due to a report by Ivan Stepanovich Iastrebov (Иван Степанович Ястребов), who headed the Russian consulate in Prizren twice, from 1870 to 1874 and from 1879 to 1888.<sup>10</sup> He was among the first contributors to the newly founded Society

of Saint Sava, whose main objective was to complete the Orthodox Cathedral Church in Prizren. More importantly, he wrote three books – one about the Serbian Church (1879), another about the folk songs and customs of Serbs in Turkey (1886), and a travelogue describing his journey through Old Serbia and Albania (1904), along with several scholarly papers published in Serbian magazines. Consul Tuholka (Тухолка) was a donor to the Patriarchate of Peć complex of churches and the Holy Trinity Monastery near Mušutište.<sup>11</sup> Russia helped the restoration of the Draganac Monastery and the churches in Donja Gušterica and Gnjilane and contributed to the construction of churches in Bar, Ulcinj, Skadar and other peripheral parts of the diocese.<sup>12</sup>

9 S. Nedeljković, *op. cit.*, 162.

10 He was a Russian diplomat, historian and ethnologist. Besides in Prizren, he held consular positions in Skadar, Ioannina, and Thessaloniki. D. Čampar, *Predgovor*, in: I. S. Jastrebov, *Stara Srbija*, ed. D. Čampar, Priština 1995, 7–8.

11 I. Ženarju Rajović, *Crkvena umetnost*, 67, 203. Sergej Vladimirovich Tuholka (Сергей Владимирович Тухолка) was a Russian diplomat, who, besides Prizren, served in Damascus, Baghdad, Crete, Basrah and Varna. M. Milošević, *Delatnost ruskih konzula na Kosovu i Metohiji u XIX i početkom XX veka*, in: *Kosovo i Metohija kroz činjenice, tumačenja i simbole*. Knj. 2, istorija i etnologija. eds. I. Ženarju Rajović, V. Zarković, Leposavić 2023, 114, n. 13.

12 See: I. Ženarju Rajović, *op. cit.*, 67–68.

## Types of Icons

The majority of Russian icons that reached the Balkans in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were painted in the Suzdalian artistic centers of Palekh, Kholuy, and Mstyora in central Russia.<sup>13</sup> These villages were important icon production centers, inhabited both by Nikonians and Starovers (Old Believers, Old Rite Orthodox Christians), two different Orthodox factions in Russia.<sup>14</sup> Encouraged by the state, icon painting in these villages was organized as artisanal mass production in family workshops where all members participated and every aspect of the process was carefully considered. For example, there were specialized workshops for brush-making, paint-mixing, and the transport and production of cheap wooden boards and panels. Some even specialized in collecting old, darkened or damaged icons throughout Russia or in stripping layers of paint from these icons so that the boards could be reused. At that time, these villages also developed a special technology for producing a metal that was used as a substitute for icon revetments. One artist was not responsible for painting an entire icon; instead, the painting process involved teamwork – one artist prepared the support layer, another drew the sketch, another painted, another applied the metal leaf, if there was any, another did the metalwork (e.g., punching various patterns), and yet another one wrote the inscriptions.<sup>15</sup> This kind of business model allowed mass production and low pricing, with specialized sellers of these icons from the same community contributing to the process.

The mass production of the Suzdal icons was not solely a result of outside demand and export; it primarily stemmed from the daily religious practices of Russians, who kept many icons in their homes, displaying them on the walls of almost all rooms, doors, gates, and so on.<sup>16</sup> Icons from Suzdal were even sold in the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, despite the Lavra having its own school of icon painting.<sup>17</sup> Research suggests that most Russian icons in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren, as well as the entire Balkans, originated in Kholuy.<sup>18</sup> At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kholuy had about 700 inhabitants, and all of them were involved in icon production in different ways, while Palekh's and Mstyora's inhabitants pursued farming and other crafts in addition to icon-making. The Kholuy-

13 Icon painting was widespread in the Vladimir-Suzdal province, with icons painted throughout its territory. O. Tarasov, *Russkie ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh*, 49; O. Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion*, 52.

14 The icons they painted were difficult to distinguish from each other, so painters were forced to sign their icons, although this practice was neither consistent nor long-lived. Besides periodic bans, the Starovers' activity survived as long as its rival faction. O. Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion*, 304.

15 O. Tarasov, *Russkie ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh*, 56; O. Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion*, 54; M. Krasilin, *Ruska ikona XVIII – početka XX veka*, in: *Istorija ikonopisa od VI do XX veka*, ed. V. Džomić, Podgorica 2007, 223–224. On the technology of this type of icon production, also see: I. Golyshev, *Bogoiavlenskaia sloboda Mstera Vladimirskoi gubernii, Viaznikovskogo raiona*, Vladimir 1865, 93–102.

16 O. Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion*, 38–46.

17 O. Tarasov, *Russkie ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh*, 51

18 See, for example: *Russian Icons from Transylvania: Exhibition Catalogue*, eds. A. Dumitran, D. D. Filip, Alba Iuila, Cluj Napoca 2023.



Fig. 4  
St. Nicholas  
Church of St. Elijah, Lokvice



Fig. 5  
 Four-part icon with the Crucifixion  
 Church of St. Elijah, Lokvice

ans' undivided focus on icon production stemmed from the fact that a metochion of the Trinity-Sergius Lavra was located there, so they also produced icons for their pilgrims.<sup>19</sup>

Mstyora workshops produced a peculiar group of icons covered with foil (*riza*, *oklad*), where only the parts visible under the foil, such as faces, hands or bare feet, were painted in order to produce icons as fast as possible. The revetments were made of brass or thin silver sheets, and were usually highly decorative and kitsch, with little flowers made of colored paper and foil, and displayed in wooden boxes with a glazed front.<sup>20</sup> A more expensive type of icon with revetments came from

Moscow, and they had a relief silver or silver-gilt cover over the icon, usually with marks specifying their origin. These marks, silver stamps at the bottom of the icon or on the narrow sides, included the artist's initials, the year of production, the symbol of the city where the work was made, and a silver hallmark expressed in *zlotniks*. Icons printed on paper, glued to a wood board and covered with industrially produced brass covers had a similar appearance.

It is interesting to note that the painting of *krasnushki* persisted for a long time in the vast Russian territory, remaining widespread until the First World War, despite the diverse styles that changed over the centuries and regardless of whether the center of icon painting was Moscow, or later, from 1711, St. Petersburg. However, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence of color-printed icons on paper and tin in Russia, which, among other things, contributed to the gradual decline of Suzdalian icon painting. These icons on new mediums offered advantages over *krasnushki* in terms of cost, production speed, and ease of transport to remote areas. Concerned about the survival of icon painting, the artists of Kholuy, Mstyora, and Palekh appealed to the Holy Synod in 1898 but

19 O. Iu. Tarasov, *Ikona i blagochestie. Ocherki ikonnogo dela v imperatorskoj Rossii*, Moskva 1995, 157.

20 By 1893, Mstyora had 24 workshops specializing in foil production, 10 dedicated in revetment production, and 14 icon painters O. Tarasov, *Russkie ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh*, 51, 56.



Fig. 6  
*Archangel Michael, Captain of the Heavenly Host*  
 Church of St. Theodore Tiron, Donja Bitinja

were informed that the production of tin icons was not prohibited by church canons.<sup>21</sup> Chromolithography was a technique of making multi-colored prints with multiple stones whose number differed from the colors of the image. Chromolithographed paper images of religious motifs were printed at printing companies, and required approval by the Spiritual Censorship Committee of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church before distribution. At the bottom of every color print, information about the artist and the Committee's permission was printed. One corner held information about the date, place, the Committee and the person responsible for the approval, and the other had the artist's or lithographer's name and the place and address of his company. This bottom part

of the print also displayed the name or title of the image. The affordability of these religious actually brought them the status of icons among poorer Russian believers, who had them blessed by their parish priests and used them in their daily religious practices, just like icons traditionally painted on wood.<sup>22</sup> Among Russian color prints in the churches of the Diocese of Raška-Prizren, we find prints by the famous Yefim Ivanovich Fesenko (Ефѣм Ива́нович Фесе́нко) from Odessa, who published numerous books, brochures and chromolithographs on Orthodox and folklore topics at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> His color prints are present in many Serbian churches in all Serbian dioceses.<sup>24</sup> Besides Fesenko's prints, we also found prints by M. T. Solov'ev (М. Т. Соловьѣв) from Moscow, Iakov M. Saade (Яков М. Сааде) from Kyiv, and D. Pliushchev (Д. Плющев) from Odessa.

In 1890, a Moscow printing house, owned by a Frenchman A. Jacquot, merged with the Ger-

21 I. L. Buseva – Davydova, *Ikonopis' i monumental'naiia tserkovnaya zhivopis'*, in: *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*. T. 17, *Iskusstvo 1880–1890-kh godov*, ed. S. K. Lashchenko, Moskva 2014, 317.

22 V. Shevzova, *Iconic Piety in Russia*, in: *A People's History of Christianity*, vol. 6. *Modern Christianity to 1900*, ed. A. Porterfield, Minneapolis 2007, 187.

23 Iu. A. Lab'iyntsev, L. L. Shchavinskaia, *Y. I. Fesenko – odin iz krupneishikh izdatelei narodnoi pravoslavnoi pechatnoi produktii XIX–XX vek*, *Slavianskii mir v tret'em tysyacheletii* 12 (2017), 11–19.

24 For some examples and his work see: I. Ženarju Rajović, *Manastir Rakovica*, Beograd 2023, 228–229.



Fig. 7  
*Four-part icon with the Crucifixion and two icons of Mother of God “Softening of Evil Hearts”*  
 Church of the Holy Apostles, Mušnikovo

man joint-stock company Bonnaker, and they, in addition to tin packaging, in which they specialized, produced tin icons using lithographic printing. They were very popular among Russian pilgrims, but educated artists, scholars, and even Tsar Nicholas II, feared that these industrial icons as Western innovations could destroy Russia’s artistic and spiritual foundations.<sup>25</sup> They actively opposed this mass-production, but without proper state mechanism and no support of the Holy Synod, their efforts proved unsuccessful.<sup>26</sup> Finally, this production ceased “naturally” after the revolution of 1917.<sup>27</sup> These icons, both colored lithographs and tin icons, are not that common in the churches of Kosovo and Metohija, with only a few surviving examples.

## Presence and Proliferation

A significant number of Russian icons in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren can be attributed to the activities of Sima Andrejević Igumanov, a merchant from Prizren, and the local Russian consulate. This is suggested by the fact that most Russian icons are located in villages around

25 R. L. Nichols, *The icon and the machine in Russia’s Religious Renaissance, 1900–1909*, in: *Christianity and the Arts in Russia*, eds. W. C. Brumfield, M. M. Velimirovic, Cambridge University Press, New York 2008, 135.

26 R. L. Nichols, *The icon and the machine in Russia’s Religious Renaissance, 1900–1909*, 135–143.

27 I. L. Buseva – Davydova, *op. cit.*, 317.



Fig. 8  
*Christ's Resurrection and pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem*  
 Church of the Holy Apostles, Mušnikovo

Prizren, namely in the counties (župe) of Sirinić and Sredska.<sup>28</sup> Igumanov, one of the most prominent figures of cultural and educational life in the Diocese, was a respected industrialist and merchant who, after the death of his wife and daughter in 1846, moved to Russia with his son. After some time and business success, he received the status of a prominent merchant, and Emperor Alexander II declared him an honorary resident of St. Petersburg. After three decades in Russia, he visited his hometown of Prizren in 1864, and generously donated liturgical books, vessels, and icons to local churches.<sup>29</sup> Andrejević's donations are evidenced primarily by the Russian liturgical books that have been preserved to this day in the churches of Sirinić and Sredska counties. For instance, on 5 August 1864,

he donated ten books to the Church of St. Petka (Paraskeva) in the village of Berevce, each inscribed with a personal note. On the same date, he also donated books to churches in Drajići, Mušnikovo, Gornje Selo and Lokvice. The follow-

- 28 I. Ženarju Rajović, *Crkvena umetnost Siriničke i Sredačke župe u eri osmanske vlasti (XVI–XX vek)*, in: *Crkve Siriničke i Sredačke župe*. eds. D. Stančić, I. Ženarju Rajović, Z. Rakić, Novi Sad 2024, 215–218. Sirinić County, a geographical and historical region on the northeastern slopes of Šar Mountain, within the the Lepenac River basin, lies in the southernmost part of Kosovo and Metohija. Its territory largely coincides with the municipality of Štrpc, encompassing Štrpc itself and the villages of Berevce, Gotovuša, Sevce, Gornja Bitinja, Donja Bitinja, Drajkovce, Jažince, Brod, Viča, along with four villages with no Serbian inhabitants. Sredska County, located east of Prizren in the valley of the Bistrica River, also occupies the slopes of Šar Mountain. It consists of villages of Sredska, Mušnikovo, Drajići, Gornje Selo, Lokvica, Živinjane, Lokvica, Planjane, Bogoševac, and several villages with no Serbian inhabitants.
- 29 A chronicler of life in Prizren, Petar Kostić, noted that the people of Prizren received icons of their patrons from Igumanov on that occasion. P. Kostić, *Prosvetno-kulturni život pravoslavnih Srba u Prizrenu i njegovoj okolini u 19. i početkom 20. veka (sa uspomენama pisca)*, Skoplje 1933, 149; I. Ženarju Rajović, *Značaj Sime Andrejevića Igumanova u verskoj obnovi Raško-prizrenske eparhije*, in: *Prizrenska Bogoslovija: Život, misija, doprinos (150 godina od osnivanja 1871–2021 и 10 godina od obnove rada u Prizrenu 2011–2021)*, eds. A. Novakov, V. Pitulić, D. Ristić, Prizren – Novi Sad 2021, 118–137.



Fig. 9  
*Intercession of the Mother of God (Pokrov),*  
Church of St. Nicholas, Sevece



Fig. 10  
 Mother of God Galaktotrophousa (*Mlekopitel'nitsa*)  
 Church of St. Nicholas, Sremska

ing year, 1865, in memory of his deceased son, Sima Andrejević donated liturgical books to churches in Velika Hoča and Orahovac. Unfortunately, icons from these churches bear no inscriptions, and there are no written records about their provenance.<sup>30</sup>

The largest collection of Russian icons is located in the Church of St. Elijah in Lokvice, in Sirinić County near Prizren, with twelve icons on the iconostasis and five more on the western wall above the entrance. The despotic icons of the Mother of God of Smolensk (*Smolenskaya*), Christ Pantokrator, and St. Nicholas most likely originated from the same workshop in Kholuy.<sup>31</sup> These are large-format icons with dominant orange

tones and decorative relief surfaces. On the icon of the Virgin, there is a votive halo made of metal. A smaller icon with the image of St. John the Baptist holding a bowl with Christ in his hands, known as “This is the Lamb of God”, could be added to this group. This church also houses five four-part icons, each featuring the Crucifixion in the center, the Mother of God of Kazan (*Kazan-skaya*) and St. Nicholas above, and equestrian representations of Archangel Michael and St. George below. Other Russian icons in this church include two icons with equestrian representations of Archangel Michael; four icons with metal revetments, three of them with the image of the Mother of God and one with the image of Jesus Christ; one icon of St. Nicholas with a removed revetment; and icons of the Mother of God of the Life-Giving Spring and St. Eudokia.

The Church of St. Theodore Tiron in the village of Donja Bitinja in Sirinić County preserves three Russian icons – the Mother of God of Smolensk (*Smolenskaya*), Archangel Michael Captain of the Heavenly Host and a four-part icon with the Crucifixion framed by four fields with the Moth-

30 O. Radić, *Bogoslužbene knjige – dar Sime Igumanova, sačuvane u crkvama na Kosovu i Metohiji do danas*, in: *Prizrenska Bogoslovija: Život, misija, doprinos (150 godina od osnivanja 1871–2021 и 10 godina od obnove rada u Prizrenu 2011–2021)*, eds. A. Novakov, V. Pitulić, D. Ristić, Prizren – Novi Sad 2021, 133–148.

31 As the throne row lacked space for the icon of St. Nicholas, it was placed at the apex of the iconostasis, next to the Crucifixion.



Fig. 11  
*Resurrection of Christ and Descent into Hell, with  
 Twelve Scenes*  
 Church of St. Uroš, Uroševac

er of God Kazanskaya and St. Nicholas in the upper part and the equestrian figures of Michael the Archangel and St. George in the lower part. Above the crucified Christ are depictions of God the Father and the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit, while the Mother of God and St. John are painted in the left and right margins of the icon. The same choice of figures appears on an icon from the Church of St. George in Gornje Selo in Sredska County, which includes additional decorative elements, such as clouds in the empty spaces between the figures of the saints. This church also possesses a Gospel Book printed at the Synodal Typography

in Moscow in 1880, with interesting inscription informing us that it was a gift from the Russian Holy Synod sent through the Russian Consul Lisevich in 1890: “Даръ Россійскаго Свят. Синода присланнвй чрезъ Русскаго консула въ Призрѣнь Ѳ. К. Лисевича. У Призрену, 22. априла 1890. године”.<sup>32</sup>

The Church of the Holy Apostles in Mušnikovo had four Russian icons, only one of which has survived. It is one of two icons of the Mother of God “Softening of Evil Hearts”; while the now lost two icons were Christ Pantokrator and a four-part icon with the Crucifixion. The church also retains a chromolithography depicting Christ’s Resurrection and pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem, printed in 1905 in Kiev as an edition of Yakov M. Saade. A heavily damaged, handwritten dedicatory inscription at the bottom reports that this color print was donated to the church in 1911.

The Cathedral Church of St. Nicholas in Sredska houses a four-part icon with the Crucifixion and interesting figures of saints, drawn so simply that they are beyond visual recognition but luckily identified in the captions. In the upper part, Christ (left) and the Mother of God “of the Sign” (Znamenie) (right) flank the figure of God the Father, while the Venerable Zosimas and St.

32 Feodosii Konstantinovich Lisevich (Феодосий Константинович Лисевич) was a Russian diplomat who participated in the Russo-Turkish War and served as the consul in Varna, Smirna, Prizren, and Skopje. A. Novakov, *Stubovi srpske prosvete: srpske srednje škole u Osmanskom carstvu 1878–1912*, Beograd 2017, 54.



Fig. 12  
*The Holy Mandylion, Dečani Monastery*



Fig. 13  
*Mother of God Tikhvinskaya*  
 Gračanica Monastery

Elijah are below. Besides this *krasnushka*, the church possesses three color prints: The Last Judgment,<sup>33</sup> Entry into Jerusalem<sup>34</sup> (1897) and the Mother of God "Mlekopitatelnitsa" (Galaktotrophousa), published by Fesenko's famous printing house in Odessa, as a blessing of the St. Elijah hermitage in Mount Athos.<sup>35</sup>

In Sirinić County, we found three icons with different revetments. One is the icon in the Church of St. Petka in Brevce, representing the Mother of God Kazanskaya which has a metal frame industrially made from a brass alloy. In the Church of St. Nicholas in Sevice, there are two icons covered in tin foil instead of metal (silver) revetments. The icon of

the Intercession of the Mother of God (Pokrov) has floral-shaped foil motifs, while the icon of the Mother of God Tikhvinskaya is additionally decorated with pink paper flowers. Both icons were framed with wooden boxes with a glazed front. This church also houses an icon of St. Nicholas that used to have an *oklad*, but it was removed, revealing the Suzdalian method of selective and rapid painting, where only the areas intended to remain visible were fully rendered.

In the St. Stephen Church in Velika Hoča, about 25 km from Prizren, there are two Russian icons, a four-part *krasnushka* with the Crucifixion and an icon of the Mother of God from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the metal foil removed. The church in the village of Ljubizda, near Prizren, formerly possessed two Russian icons of the same provenance, a four-part icon with the Crucifixion and another with the Resurrection and Descent into Hell as a central motif surrounded by twelve scenes.<sup>36</sup> Two icons with identical iconography were kept in the church in Uroševac, about 50 km from Prizren, while the church in the Popovljane village housed icons of St. Nicholas

33 The same print under the name *Kartina Strashnago Suda Bozija* was published in: V. Shevzova, *Iconic Piety in Russia*, 187.

34 The year of publication, 1897, is visible on the damaged frame.

35 Unfortunately, the year of printing in the inscription is damaged.

36 This church tragically suffered demolition and arson in 1999. *March pogrom in Kosovo and Metohija March 17–19, 2004 with a survey of destroyed and endangered Christian cultural heritage*, ed. B. Jokić, Belgrade 2004, 63.



Fig. 14  
*Christ Pantokrator*  
 Gračanica Monastery

and four-part icon of the Crucifixion.

No significant presence of Russian icons was recorded in the churches of Kosovo in the area around Binačka Morava region, except in the Church of St. Petka (Paraskeva) in Vitina. Its iconostasis, created after the First World War, consists of icons from different periods, including a 19<sup>th</sup>-century set from Kholuy: the Mother of God Kazanskaya, the Mother of God “Seeker of the Perishing”, the Holy Trinity, the Annunciation to the Virgin, St. Nicholas, the Transfiguration, the Entry into Jerusalem, Christ Pantokrator, the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Ascension of the Holy Prophet Elijah, and two four-part icons of the Crucifixion. Beyond their

Kholuy provenance, no further information is available regarding these icons acquisition and arrival at the church.

In the region of Metohija, the presence of Russian icons is associated with the prominent monasteries, such as the Patriarchate of Peć and Dečani, and the activities of their monastic communities. While the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery treasury preserves several older and very valuable Russian icons, those dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> can be found in the treasury of Dečani. However, given that this monastery even spent some time under a Russian administration, the quantity is unexpectedly low.<sup>37</sup> These include a widespread type of icon depicting Archangel Michael on horseback,<sup>38</sup> the Mother of God “of the Sign” with apostles and saints,<sup>39</sup> and the Holy Trinity surrounded by scenes representing the Great Feasts.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, there are three icons with revetments. The Mandylion icon has a gilded revetment and is assumed to be a work by Mikhail Timofeev from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has an inscription on the back, which states that it was gifted to Archi-

37 In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, monks from the kellion of St. John Chrysostom on Mount Athos arrived to Dečani in order to improve its financial administration, but their efforts proved fatal for the monastery’s economy and treasury. Their presence in Dečani, which lasted until their capture in 1916 during the First World War, is known in Serbian historiography as the “Question of Dečani”. See: D. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje*, Beograd 1989.

38 M. Šakota, *Dečanska riznica*, Beograd – Priština 1984, 124, pic. 62.

39 *Ibid*, 126.

40 *Ibid*, 125.



Fig. 15  
*Deesis with Archangels, Apostels and Saints*  
 Banjska Monastery

mandrite Kiril Andrejević in memory of an individual named Pavle.<sup>41</sup> The icon of Christ Pantokrator is adorned with a silver-plated brass revetment, featuring a gilded nimbus.<sup>42</sup> This treasury also houses an icon of the Holy Three Hierarchs with a gilded frame and a silver-gilt revetment, whose hallmark indicates that it was completed in Moscow in 1805.<sup>43</sup>

As for monastery treasuries, the Gračanica Monastery houses a *krasnushka* of the Resurrection and Descent into Hell, an icon of the Mother of God with Christ printed on a metal tin, and a color print of a standing figure of Christ Pantokrator surrounded by angels, with an interesting painted wooden frame. Russian icons from the 19<sup>th</sup> century have

an important place in the treasury of the Banjska Monastery, which also hosts the famous miracle-working icon of the Mother of God Kazanskaya painted in Russia in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> All Russian icons from this monastery have brownish-ochre frames, except for the icon of the Mother of God with a prayer scroll, which is a typical *krasnushka*, and used to be part of a Deisis ensemble. The largest icon in the Banjska treasury depicts the Crucifixion. Unlike the four-part icons previously discussed, this theme occupies the entire surface of the icon and is highly detailed. The crucified Christ is in the center, flanked by the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene on one side, and St. John the Theologian and Longinus on the other. Another Banjska icon depicts Christ Pantokrator on the throne surrounded by saints. The Banjska treasury also contains an icon of the Mother of God “of the Sign” featuring figures of the Guardian Angel and an unnamed holy martyr within the frame, and an icon of St. Demetrius depicted as a horseman defeating an unidentified enemy. Lastly, an icon of St. Nicholas has a well-preserved and very decorative revetment with sur-

41 *Ibid*, 127, 167, pic. 61.

42 *Ibid*, 124.

43 *Ibid*, 126.

44 Dating and the attribution of these icons was done with help of dear colleague Alexandr Preobrazhenskii to whom I am very grateful.



Fig. 16  
Mother of God "of the Sign", Banjska Monastery



Fig. 17  
St. Demetrius  
Banjska Monastery

living traces of the artist's initials (AM), the silver hallmark of 84 *zlotniks* and the year of production, which is difficult to decipher but seems to be 1855.

The Kaludra Monastery in the Lim River valley (Polimlje) in Montenegro, which was demolished in the Ottoman period and renovated in 2001, houses a collection of Russian color prints gathered in the monastery's treasury from the surrounding churches. Among these, the Presentation of Mary (1897) and St. John the Lamb of God (1905) were published in Odessa as editions of the Skete of the Prophet Elijah of the Pantokratoros Monastery on Mount Athos, which had its compound (*podvorje*) there. The Transfiguration of Christ (1897), Venerable Onouphrios (1905), and St. John the Evangelist (1905) were published by D. Pliushchev (Д. Плющев). The Annunciation (?), Resurrection (1902), St. Thomas (1903), and two color prints showing the Holy King Stefan of Dečani (1909) were all approved in St. Petersburg and subsequently published in Odessa by the considerably more renowned Yefim Ivanovich Fesenko. The treasury of the Kaludra Monastery also contains two icons printed on tin, Guardian Angel and St. John. The latter was gifted in 1910 to the church in Gusinje by the church in Podgorica. What makes these prints relevant to our discussion is their creation date, which coincides with the period when this territory was within the Diocese of Raška-Prizren. Also, in the Nikoljac Monastery near Bjelo Polje, in northern Montenegro, there are a few quite heavily damaged Russian *krasnushki*, some of which may have been made as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Holy Trinity (Hospitality of Abraham), a full-length figure of Archangel Michael with fragments of a thin metal cover, and two icons with various saints.<sup>45</sup>

There are a few Russian color prints in the churches of Stari Vlah and Sanjak. For instance, the Church of the Holy Trinity in Nova Varoš houses color prints of St. Petka (Paraskeva) and the Mother of God of Vladimir (Vladimirskaya) with a silver cover. The church in the village Kuzmiče-

45 I. Zarić, *Riznica crkve Svetog Nikole u Nikoljcu*, Mileševski zapisi 8 (2009), 215–216.



Fig. 18  
 Mother of God with a prayer scroll  
 Banjska Monastery

vo houses a paper icon of St. Panteleimon printed in 1892 by M. T. Solov'ev (M. T. Соловьев) and approved in Moscow. In this area, there are more prints with unknown time of the production, such as the Tomb of the Christ from the church in Štavalj, the Mother of God “of the Burning Bush” in Lopize, and the Mother of God with Christ with a metal cover in Mitrova Reka. The Cathedral Church of St. Nicholas in Novi Pazar treasures an icon of St. Nicholas with a thin metal foil revetment in a glazed wooden box, a small icon of the Mother of God of Kazan with an industrially produced variant of the revetment, and a color print of the Crucifixion published in Moscow, as reported in the badly damaged inscription at the bottom.<sup>46</sup>

## Themes and Iconography

In terms of their distinctiveness, *krasnushki* are known for their red-orange borders, dominant reddish tones, and the draftsmanship of the faces and figures of saints, which tends to be simple, schematic, and linear yet remarkable clear.<sup>47</sup> These icons are further recognizable by their very bright, almost white carnations. In certain instances, the background is adorned with decorative leaves, and the clothes of saints are rendered with a luminous quality reminiscent of old gold.<sup>48</sup> Refined and simplified strokes, drawings and colors achieved the simplicity that al-

46 This church's treasury contains several Russian liturgical vessels, along with a shroud preserved in its original packaging – a wooden box with a handwritten inscription in Russian: Для церкви въ Новомъ Базарѣ Въ Турции (For the church in Novi Pazar in Turkey). It was a gift from the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, conveyed by Russian consul Orlov (Аркадий Александрович Орлов). I. Ženarju Rajović, *Saborni hram Svetog Nikole u Novom Pazaru*, Leposavić 2024, 185–189, 197–198.

47 The color scheme is limited, with some orange, maroon, and occasional green tones. M. Krasilin, *op. cit.*, 224–225.

48 This simplicity was explained by the fact that these icons were primarily created for the peasant population. O. Tarasov, *Russkiye ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh* 58.



Fig. 19  
St. Nicholas, Banjska Monastery

lowed mass-production. Icons were painted under the influence of the Old Rite, which considered 16<sup>th</sup>-century Moscovite art an ideal model. This is evidenced by preserved templates, sketches, and manuscript books used by icon painters to recreate the “old style”.<sup>49</sup> In terms of their themes, the Russian icons from the Diocese of Raška-Prizren are comparable to those from other dioceses of the modern-day Serbian Orthodox Church, which remained within the borders of the Ottoman Empire for several decades after the Treaty of Berlin, such as the dioceses of Vranje or Niš.<sup>50</sup> Here, we find many distinctively Russian iconographic solutions and themes but their variety is not as extensive as in other Orthodox countries under Russia’s patronage within the Ottoman Empire. Scholars in Romania and Greece, for example, have demonstrated that icons dedicated to the Mother of God are the most numerous in their countries.<sup>51</sup> These are followed by four-part icons of the Crucifixion, the Resurrection of Christ / Descent into Hell with the Great Feasts, St. Nicholas of Myra, and the much less common icons of Christ Pantokrator, St. John the Baptist, Archangel Michael and so on.<sup>52</sup> The churches in the Diocese of Raška and Prizren largely adhere to this pattern, so the most frequently encountered icons are those of the Mother of God. Those encompass a variety of types, including *krasnushki*, icons with industrially produced metal revetments, cheap thin imitations with paper flowers, color prints, and an icon printed on tin. All represent copies of well-known miraculous icons, such as the Kazanskaya or Smolenskaya, as well as some less known in the Serbian milieu, such as the “Softening of Evil Hearts”.

The iconographic type of the Mother of God Kazanskaya (of Kazan) includes a bust of the Virgin and a waist-length figure of the Infant Jesus Christ. The Virgin is on the left, her head slightly bowes towards Christ, and she is dressed in the usual maphorion with the so-called Greek cap underneath. The prototype was a miraculous icon found in 1579 in Kazan, representing the Mother of God as the healer of the sick and protectress from enemies, which is celebrated with two feast days in Russia.<sup>53</sup> The Mother of God of Kazan is one of the most common solutions for the upper

49 O. Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion*, 301.

50 See: A. Kostić, *Riznica crkve Uspenja Presvete Bogorodice u Sobini*, in: Hram Uspenja Presvete Bogorodice u Sobini, eds. N. Makuljević, A. Kostić, I. Čirović, Vranje 2020, 289–302; I. Đorđević et al., *Muzej crkvenih starina pravoslavne Eparhije niške. Katalog stalne postavke*, Niš 2022, 17–64.

51 Y. Boycheva, «Εικόνες μοσχόβικαις... ευμορφώτατα πράγματα». Η μεταφορά ρωσικών εικόνων στον ελληνικό χώρο από τον 16ο ως τις αρχές του 20ου αιώνα., *Δελτίον της ΧΑΕ*, 36 (2015), 223; C. Cojocaru, *Mass-Produced Russian Icons in Romania: A Critical Analysis of the “Lipovan Icon” Designation*, in: *Russian Icons from Transylvania: Exhibition Catalogue*, eds. A. Dumitran, D. D. Filip, Alba Iuila, Cluj Napoca 2023, 244–245

52 C. Cojocaru, *op. cit.*, 257.

53 The discovery of the icon is commemorated on 8 July, and 22 October is the day she helped liberate Moscow from Poland in 1612. V. Shevzov, *Scripting the Gaze: Liturgy, Homilies, and the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Late Imperial Russia*, in: *Sacred Stories. Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia*, eds. M. D. Steinberg, H. J. Coleman, Indiana University Press, Indiana 2007, 63–66. For the cult of this icon see also: A. S. Preobrazhenskii, *Novyye svedeniia o rannem pochitanii Kazanskoï ikony Bogomateri i ee drevneishikh spiskakh*, in: *Chudotvornyi Kazanskii obraz Bogoroditsy v sud'bakh Rossii i mirovoi tsivilizatsii. Sbornik dokladov uchastnikov nauchno-prosvetitel'skikh chtenii*. Kazan' 2018, 295–492.



Fig. 20  
 Holy King Stefan of Dečani  
 Kaludra Monastery

part of the four-part icons of the Crucifixion. Other popular and widespread Marian types include the Mother of God Hodegetria Smolenskaya (of Smolensk), shown as a half-length figure, with her left hand supporting the Christ Child and pointing to him with the other hand. Christ raises his right hand in a blessing gesture while holding a scroll in his left. The “Softening of Evil Hearts” is the name of a miraculous icon with two iconographic variants. The Mušnikovo church possesses two such icons of the so-called Chenstokhovskaya type, each divided into two horizontal fields.<sup>54</sup> The Mother of God and Christ with the inscription Умягчение злых сердец (Umyagchenie

zlykh serdets) or “Softening of Evil Hearts” are in the upper field, while the lower register is empty. A more prevalent version portrays the Virgin pierced with seven swords.<sup>55</sup> However, the Mušnikovo icons are unfinished – the painted wall in the lower part and the image of the dove representing the Holy Spirit are missing, although there is a field with the initials “ДС”. Furthermore, the customary small representation of the Virgin mourning her dead son, often painted at the top, is also missing from the Mušnikovo icons. Among the icons of the Mother of God, there is one example of the iconographic type of the Mother of God Vzyskanie Pogibshikh (Богородица Взыскание Погибших) or “Recovery of the Perishing”, where Christ stands at the right hand of his mother, hugging her, placed on the iconostasis in Vitina.<sup>56</sup>

After Marian images, the second most common type in the churches of the Diocese of Raška and Prizren are four-part icons that have the Crucifixion as their central motif. These are called “four-part” because the painted Holy Cross divides the icon into four square fields, each typically

54 During a field research campaign in 2021, we found just one icon *in situ*. There is no information about the other one, and it is known to us only from a photograph in the archive of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments.

55 See: C. Cojocaru, *op. cit.*, 245, n. 57; 260, pic. 47.

56 Also known as the “Seeker of the Perishing” or “Seeker of the Lost”. There are similar examples in: O. Tarasov, *Russkiye ikony XVII – nachala XX na Balkanakh*, 67, pic. 12; *Russian Icons from Transylvania: Exhibition Catalogue*, 102–103.



Fig. 21  
*Guardian Angel*  
 Kaludra Monastery

depicting a saint. The most prevalent arrangement features the Mother of God Kazanskaya and St. Nicholas of Myra in the upper register, mirrored with images at the bottom, usually equestrian representations of Archangel Michael and St. George killing enemies. Exceptions are rare among these examples. The icon from Donja Bitinja is notable for its graphic quality and the stark simplicity of shapes and colors. While the Crucifixion is framed in the typical manner, it features additions next to the side arms of the cross – painted representations of the Mother of God and St. John, the witnesses of the Crucifixion, and God the Father above the cross. A more complex

example is the icon from Gornje Selo, with elements such as the multitude of small clouds on dark blue surfaces around the cross. Also, there is the red dove of the Holy Spirit below the figure of God, while God is set on a red background with three swirling clouds underneath. A similar yet more elaborate example is an icon in Lokvice, whose details make it stand out among the multitude of four-part Crucifixions. The selection of saints is identical to the aforementioned icons, but in this one, each figure is more detailed and intricate.<sup>57</sup>

A painted surface divided into square fields also appears on icons of the Resurrection of Christ and the Descent into Hell, two scenes merged together and surrounded by the Twelve Great Feasts. All these icons are characterized by expressive linearity, simplified narration achieved by including only the principal protagonists in the scenes, and an absence of any details. Three such icons are excellent examples: one from the Gračanica Monastery and two from the Church of St. Uroš in Uroševac. The central motif is surrounded by small scenes representing the Holy Trinity (Hospitality of Abraham), the Nativity of the Mother of God, the Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple, the Annunciation, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Ascension of Christ, the Dormition of the Mother of God and the Exaltation of the True Cross. The concept that merges the Resurrection of Christ and the

57 The same workshop produced another published icon, but the faces of the saints were painted by a different artist. O. Tarasov, who published it, hypothesized that it had originated in Palekh. O. Tarasov, *op. cit.*, 65, pic. 10.



Fig. 22  
*Holy Trinity (Hospitality of Abraham)*  
 Nikoljac Monastery

Descent into Hell into one central motif, which was a Russian solution typical of that time, originated in Moscovite art in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible.<sup>58</sup> These icons were also very popular in Old Rite communities.<sup>59</sup>

A prominent theme in Russian icon painting, frequently encountered in the churches of the Diocese of Raška-Prizren, is that Archangel Michael, known as the Commander of the Fearsome Host or *Groznykh sil vovoda* (Грозных сил воевода), who appears in four-part icons and as a stand-alone figure. The archangel is typically depicted in a rightward-facing orientation, usually dressed in golden clothes, with a crown on his head, sitting

on a winged horse. In his right hand, he holds a censer and a long spear with which he defeated the demon, and in his left hand is a Gospel and the golden trumpet, which announces the Last Judgment.<sup>60</sup> A semicircle symbolizing a rainbow is above the archangel's head. The horse is consistently depicted in red, and in some cases, a collapsing city and black swirling clouds appear beneath his feet. In the upper left corner, Jesus Christ Emmanuel is pictured at a table with the holy chalice and discus. This iconography is based on the text of the Revelation of John the Theologian describing Archangel Michael as the horseman of the Apocalypse (Revelation 8:10). It has been present in Russian visual culture since the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to Tsar Ivan the Terrible. It first appeared on the interesting and rather unconventional icon of the Blessed Army of the Heavenly Emperor, commissioned by the Tsar to commemorate his campaign in Kazan, and was also pres-

58 For more on the iconography: I. Shalina, *Ikona «Voskreseniia – Soshestviia» vo ad iz sobraniia M. P. Botkina i problema obraztsa v rusском iskusstve poslednei chetverti XVI veka*, in: Mikhail Petrovich Botkin i ego kolektsiia drevnosti. Sbornik statei po itogam nauchnoi konferentsii 1–3 fevralia 2012. GRM. Vyp. XXXVI. SPb., 111.

59 A. Văetiși, *Lipovan Icons: Between Old Rite Russian Communities and Ecclesiastical Museum Collections*, in: *Russian Icons from Transylvania: Exhibition Catalogue*, eds. A. Dumitran, D. D. Filip, Alba Iuila, Cluj Napoca 2023, 210.

60 The liturgical vessels in his hands symbolically celebrate the New Testament Church. A. P. Ivannikova, *Ikona „Arkhiestratig Mikhail Groznykh sil vovoda“*, in: *Vozvrashchennoe dostoianie. Russkie ikony v chastnykh sobraniakh*. Katalog, ed. I. A. Shalina, Moskva 2008, 160.



Fig. 23  
*Michael the Archangel*  
 Nikoljac Monastery

ent on his banner.<sup>61</sup> The stand-alone figure of an archangel riding a winged horse appeared in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting the ongoing church schism, which encouraged thoughts about the “end of the world” and interpretations of the Apocalypse. This was the time of the reforms of Patriarch Nikon, when his most vocal opponents were Old Rite Believers, who used this type of archangel image as the key illustration of the eschatological struggle against evil.<sup>62</sup> This theme subsequently gained widespread popularity throughout Russia. On the icon in the Church in Donja Bitinja, the archangel has all the mentioned instru-

ments, and he mounted on a horse with black clouds below. However, the demon is absent, and instead, the archangel plunges his spear into the water. In the upper left corner is a miniature representation of Christ at the table with the chalice and the Gospel. The two icons from the Church of St. Elijah in Lokvice exhibit the same iconography. On one of these Lokvice icon, Christ is depicted seated at an empty table. This particular icon seems unfinished, just as many others produced made in this rapid and quantity/focused manner. Similarly, none of the four-part icons show the defeated demon, and only some examples show scales emerging from the water.

Influenced by the iconography of the full-length figure of the Holy Archangel in Russian religious art, the Guardian Angel appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup> It represents a common motif on the margins of icons of other saints, where he is depicted as a young man in a white tunic, holding a cross and a sword in his hands. Such an example is the icon of the Virgin with Christ from the Banjska Monastery. The Guardian Angel represents the angel that God assigned to each individual at

61 *Loc. cit.*

62 I. A. Shalina, *Arkhangel Mikhail Groznykh sil voyevoda*, in: *Ikony iz chastnykh sobraniï: Russkaia ikonopis' XIV – nachala XX veka: Katalog vystavki*. ed. N. I. Komashko, Moskva 2004, 227; N. N. Chugreeva, *Angel-khranitel', s angel'skimi deianiiami*, in: *Slovo i obraz. Russkie zhitiinye ikony XIV – nachala XX veka: Katalog vystavki*, ed. N. I. Komashko, Y. M. Sayenkova, Krasnaia ploshchad', Moskva 2010, 16–17.

63 N. N. Chugreeva, *op. cit.*, 16–17.



Fig. 24  
 St. Paraskeva  
 Church of Holy Trinity, Nova Varoš

baptism, who helps and guides through life and leads the soul to the afterlife.<sup>64</sup> The literary source is the apocryphal text *The Letter of the Apostle Paul*, and icons with this theme were particularly popular among Old Believers.<sup>65</sup>

In the treasury of the Banjska Monastery, there is an icon of the Deisis, that is, Christ Pantokrator enthroned and surrounded by saints. On the left are the Mother of God, the Archangel Gabriel, the Guardian Angel, and the Apostle Peter. Opposite them are St. John the Forerunner, Archangel Michael, St. John the Theologian, and St. Paul the Apostle. Kneeling before Christ, on the left are the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh and Zosimas, with St. Nicholas and the Ven-

erable Savvaty Solovetsky positioned in front of them are. Such icons are known in Russian culture as the “Week” (Sedmitsa), because their composition is based on the weekly liturgical cycle.<sup>66</sup> The icons of St. John the Forerunner and St. Nicholas of Myra exhibit significant iconographic features. The despotic icon in Lokvice, consistent with other Russian icons of St. John found in the Diocese, portrays the saint holding the sacred bowl with the nude Infant Christ, personifying the Lamb of God. The saint points to Christ, who lies crosswise in the vessel, with his right hand blessing and his left hand preserving his modesty. Beneath the vessel, an unfolded scroll bears the words confirming John’s status as a witness of Christ’s coming: “ВНДЕ КОНЪ НСУСА ГРАДУЩА” (John 1:29). Simultaneously, the image emphasizes the redemptive sacrifice of Christ and the holy mystery of the Eucharist. St. John wears a tunic made of camel hair, symbolizing his ascetic life in the desert, as well as a distinctive, highly decorative cloak slung around his left shoulder and waist, identifying him as a prophet

64 V. V. Filatov, *Kratki ikonopisnyi slovar’*, Moskva 1996, 13–14.

65 N. N. Chugreeva, *op. cit.*, 16; N. I. Komashko, *Angel-khranitel’, so stsenami zhitia pravednika i greshnika*, in: *Kostromskaia ikona XIII–XIX vekov*, eds. N. I. Komashko, S. S. Katkova, Moskva 2004, 590–591.

66 Y. Boycheva, «Εικόνες μοσχόβικαις...», *ευμορφώτατα πράγματα*, 226.



Fig. 25  
*St. Nicholas*, Church of St. Nicholas, Novi Pazar



Fig. 26  
*Dormition of the Mother of God "of the Kiev Caves", Church of St. Nicholas, Novi Pazar*

and preacher.<sup>67</sup> These icons, known as “This is the Lamb of God” (Се Агнец Божий), appeared in Russian art in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>68</sup> Another important iconographic feature is evident in all icons of St. Nicholas of Myra. The saint is portrayed as a half-length figure, with Christ and the Virgin Mary over his shoulders, turned towards him, handing him the Gospel and the omophorion. Very often, the Gospel in the hands of the saint is closed, but examples from the Diocese of Raška and Prizren are different. The book in his left arm is open, showing a quote from the Gospel of Luke (6:17): “во время оно ста иисъ на месте равнѣ и народъ оученикъ его ихъ множество много людѣ и ѿвсѣахъ ижден”. The profound veneration of St. Nicholas as a patron saint in Russia accounts for his widespread popularity in Russian religious art.

67 I. L. Khokhlova, *Ikony Rybinskogo muzeia*, Moskva 2005, 138–139; P. N. Sushko, *Russkie starobriadcheskie ikony proroka Ioanna Predtechi s kompozitsiyei «Se Agnets Bozhii» v sobranii vostochno-kazakhstanskogo oblastnogo arkhitekturno-etnograficheskogo i prirodno-landshaftnogo muzeia-zapovednika*, in: Makar’evskiy chteniia, materialy XVII mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii. ed. V. G. Babin, Gorno-Altaiisk 2022, 272–276.

68 S. Rakić, *Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine (16–19. vijek)*, Beograd 1998, 307–308.

The number of Russian icons from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren is impossible to accurately determine. In the recent attacks on Serbian civilians in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, many churches were destroyed, along with their treasuries, whose contents remained unknown to scholars. For example, the Binač Monastery, which was restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Russian help and subsequently razed to the ground in 1999, must have had some Russian icons in its treasury, but its content was never cataloged. Some of the icons listed in this text were found during field research, while others are known solely through the photo documentation of the Provincial Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, formerly located in Priština. These later icons are no longer extant. It seems reasonable to assume that most churches possessed at least one Russian icon from the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, even when these icons survived the attacks and demolition attempts, they often disappeared due to negligence and misunderstandings, frequently dismissed as worthless and removed. Another problem arises in the parts of the Diocese now within Albania. In the 1860s, Russia co-founded the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Skadar and built churches in nearby villages Vraka and Mladi Borič (1869).<sup>69</sup> However, these churches were all demolished, and we know next to nothing about them from that time.

None of the Russian icons and prints we found so far in the Diocese of Raška-Prizren were ever before subjected to research, with only few rare published examples. Their continued research and publication are important for several reasons. As part of a phenomenon spread over a vast territory, they played an exceptionally influential role in religious and cultural exchange while also reflecting ideological factors because of their origin and Russia's significance among Eastern Orthodox Slavs. Due to extensive research in recent years and, in particular, the Ricontrans project, it turned out that these icons, ignored by scholars because of their aesthetic value, marked the social history of the Orthodox provinces under Ottoman rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From another perspective, they illustrate the connections between Serbs from the Diocese of Raška-Prizren and Russia, mostly through the work of their consulates. Given the ongoing and alarming decay of the Serbian and Orthodox heritage in the Kosovo and Metohija in recent decades and years, with no sign of stopping, it is of great importance to research, describe and document this cultural heritage, including Russian icons.

69 I. S. Jastrebov, *O pravoslavnim srpskim starim i novim crkvama u Staroj Zeti, sadašnjem Skadarskom okrugu*, Glasnik srpskog učenog društva 48 (1880), 386.

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*Marija Lakić*

# Russian and Serbian Sacral Visual Culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Russian Donations and the Furnishing of the Orthodox Cathedral in Sarajevo

## Orthodox Cathedral in Sarajevo

The Cathedral Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos, situated in the central district of Sarajevo, on the right bank of the Miljacka River, is the city's second Orthodox ecclesiastical structure. Its conception arose in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The acquisition of land, a primary preparatory step for the construction, extended until 1861.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary Sarajevan authorities, including the vizier, readily granted permission for the church's construction. Concurrently, a request for authorization and financial support was dispatched to Constantinople. Three months later, Sultan Abdulaziz issued a firman and allocated funds for the project.<sup>2</sup> Conflicting accounts exist regarding the commencement of construction – Hadži Makso Despić, a prominent Sarajevan merchant and member of the church board, attested to the cornerstone being laid on Saint Elijah's Day, in 1862;<sup>3</sup> and Metropolitan Sava Kosanović cites 13 June 1863 as the date construction began.<sup>4</sup> Although the church's structure was completed by 1868, the interior finishing required additional time. Consecration occurred on Saint Elijah's Day in 1872, a date corroborated by both Hadži Makso and Metropolitan Sava.<sup>5</sup> The construction of the church was undertaken by the renowned

1 H. M. Despić, *Zapisi starog Sarajlije*, edited by: Dragana Tomašević, Sarajevo 2019, p. 57.

2 Ibid, p. 58; S. Kosanović, *Nova srpsko-pravoslavna crkva u Sarajevu*, Bosanska Vila, year 3, No. 17, Sarajevo, 1888, pp. 270-271, reprinted in: *Mitropolit Sava Kosanović, Krstom i Perom, sabrani spisi*, edited by: Episkop budimljansko-nikšički Joanikije (Mićović), V. Maksimović, N. Marojević, B. Šijaković, Nikšić-Beograd 2019, pp. 184-187.

3 H. M. Despić, op. cit. p. 58.

4 S. Kosanović, *Nova srpsko-pravoslavna crkva u Sarajevu*, p. 271.

5 H. M. Despić, op. cit. p. 57; S. Kosanović, op. cit. p. 271.



Fig. 1  
*Cathedral Church in Sarajevo*

builder Andreja Damjanov of Veles.<sup>6</sup> Prince Mihailo contributed 500 sequins to the construction effort.<sup>7</sup> The church's construction also benefited from the patronage of merchants across a wide geographical range, including Belgrade, Dubrovnik, Vienna, and Trieste. The remaining funds were provided by the Old Church in Sarajevo and local merchants.<sup>8</sup>

The church is a monumental five-domed edifice, distinguished by a soaring bell tower on its western façade culminating in a gilded cross, surmounting a gilded orb, both donated by affluent women of Sarajevo.<sup>9</sup> The addition of the bell tower rendered the church taller than nearly all of Sarajevo's minarets at that time.<sup>10</sup> Considered one of the largest Orthodox churches in the Balkans upon its completion, the Sarajevo Orthodox Cathedral was consecrated on Saint Elijah's Day in

6 A. Kadijević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi: sredina XIX – sredina XX veka*, Beograd 2007, pp. 47-48.

7 S. Kosanović, op. cit., p. 271.

8 Ibid.

9 S. Kosanović, op. cit., p. 271.

10 Ibid.

1872, by Metropolitan Pajsije. The event, as recounted by Sava Kosanović, drew a vast crowd, including seventy-six priests, six consuls (notably Béni Kállay), and upwards of 10,000 believers.<sup>11</sup> The consecration also served as the occasion for the ordination of Sava Kosanović to the rank of archimandrite, conferred by Metropolitan Pajsije of the Dabar-Bosnia Metropolitanate, who marked the event with a suitably ceremonial address.<sup>12</sup>

## **The Iconostasis of the Orthodox Cathedral in Sarajevo – Donation of Hegumen Ignatius and the Coastal Monastery of Saint Sergius**

Within the expansive interior of the cathedral, the monumental iconostasis commands immediate attention. This imposing structure, donated in its entirety by Russia, owes its realization primarily to the efforts of Hegumen Ignatius of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius, situated near present-day Saint Petersburg. The primary source for information regarding the creation of the iconostasis and its reception in Sarajevo is the scholarly work of Priest Vladimir Kotlyarov (1929–2022), who later ascended to the position of Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga (1995–2014).<sup>13</sup> Defended in 1958 at the Leningrad Theological Academy, Kotlyarov's paper offers valuable insights into the history of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius and notably examines the monastery's philanthropic activities, including the commission and donation of the iconostasis for the Sarajevo Cathedral. According to Kotlyarov, the philanthropic endeavors of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius had garnered international renown by the 1870s. This period coincided with the furnishing of the interior of the Sarajevo Cathedral, a process that involved the participation of the Russian Consulate in Bosnia. Upon learning of the church's construction, Hegumen Ignatius resolved to provide the iconostasis. Approximately seventy icons were painted expressly for this purpose, with the Hegumen himself participating alongside the monastery's icon painters.<sup>14</sup> A letter sent by Hegumen Ignatius to Sarajevo in the spring of 1871, accompanying five cases containing seventy-three icons for the iconostasis, a throne cross, and liturgical banners,<sup>15</sup> provides further details regarding the iconostasis's transfer and the reactions it elicited. This letter, imbued with expressions of brotherly love, respect, and gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the church's construction, offers a valuable insight into the motivations behind the donation. Below is the translation of the letter from the Russian language:

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid, p. 270.

13 V. Kotlyarov, *Troitse-Sergieva pustyn' Petrogradskoy yeparkhii. (Istoricheskiy ocherk)*, in: *Mitropolit Sankt-Peterburgskiy i Ladozhskiy Vladimir, Zhizn' i trudy (k 70-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya)*, Sankt-Peterburg 1999, pp. 168–379.

14 V. Kotlyarov, *op. cit.*, pp. 288–289.

15 Ibid, p. 289.



Fig. 2  
*Iconostasis, Thrones, and Pulpit: Interior of the Cathedral Church in Sarajevo*

„My dear brothers in Christ,

Your letters, overflowing with brotherly affection, have brought me immense joy. I share your elation and consider myself truly blessed to partake in this sacred celebration alongside you.

My heart has always been drawn to the East and the fate of our Slavic brethren. This lifelong passion compels me to support your noble endeavour, rendering any expression of gratitude unnecessary. Words cannot describe the profound satisfaction I feel in bridging the distance that separates us.

In spirit, I join you in this momentous occasion, the consecration of your holy temple. Though family obligations prevent me from being present in person, I eagerly offer this written greeting.

It was my fervent hope that others in Russia might also contribute to the adornment of your church. To that end, I conveyed this desire to the children of our Tsar, who graciously donated icons for this purpose. By the grace of God, all is now complete. I am sending seventy-three icons, a throne cross, and liturgical banners – consider them a humble gift, requiring no further payment.

I humbly request your prayers and ask that you remember me in your hearts. With deepest affection and respect, I remain your devoted servant and intercessor before God.”<sup>16</sup>

The letter written by Father Ignatius reveals much about his character. His words indicate that he was personally involved in icon painting and that the monastery had a dedicated workshop for this purpose. This workshop eventually expanded its activities to include donating icons to Orthodox populations throughout the Balkans. Hadži Makso Despić, a prominent Sarajevan merchant, when speaking about the furnishing of the Sarajevo Cathedral, recounts that the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius near St. Petersburg also provided icons for a church in Mostar.<sup>17</sup> This underscores the significant support provided by the Russian monastery to Bosnia. While Vladimir Kotlyarov’s paper primarily focuses on the archimandrite’s role in painting the icons, other sources identify Aleksandar Kolchin as another individual involved in the project.<sup>18</sup> Xenia Melchakova’s research in the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire reveals that Aleksandar Kolchin painted most of the icons for the iconostasis. This finding is corroborated by an 1876 letter from Archimandrite Ignatius to the Serbian Metropolitan, which confirms Kolchin’s authorship of the iconostasis during his residence at the monastery.<sup>19</sup> This likely pertains to the iconostasis created for the mobile military tent-church dedicated to Alexander Nevsky, used by the Russian Volunteer Army in the battlefield, during the Serbo-Ottoman War. This suggests that Kolchin’s work served the spiritual needs of

16 The letter of Archimandrite Ignatius, in addition to the previously mentioned paper by V. Kotlyarov (p. 289), was also published in the seventh volume of the Collected Works of Saint Ignatius Bryanchaninov: *Polnoe sobranie tvorenij Svyatitelya Ignatiya Bryanchaninova*, tom VII, Moskva 2006, pp. 404–405, also in: *Ty moy Bog, ya Tvoy rab... Zhizneopisanie nastoyatelya Troitse-Sergievoy pustyni Arkhimandrita Ignatiya (Malysheva)*, Sankt-Peterburg 2007, pp. 85–86.

17 H. M. Despić, op. cit., p. 59.

18 K. V. Melchakova, „Voin“ na dukhovnom poprishche. Saraevskiy arkhimandrit Savva Kosanovich i ego poyezdka v Rossiyu v 1872–1874 gg, in: *Slavyane i Rossiya: problemy voyny i mira na Balkanakh XVIII–XXI vv*, Moskva 2017, p. 75.

19 *Ty moy Bog, ya Tvoy rab...* pp. 89–90.

soldiers on the battlefield.<sup>20</sup> Further supporting Kolchin's association with the monastery, Volume Two of *Peterburg Necropolis* records his burial in 1885 at the cemetery of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius.<sup>21</sup> Father Ignatius's letter reveals further noteworthy details, including the involvement of the children of Tsar Alexander II in funding the creation of the iconostasis. His insistence on refusing any financial compensation for this substantial donation underscores his dedication to the project. This prompts a closer examination of Hegumen Ignatius's life and motivations.

Archimandrite Ignatius Malyshev (1811–1897), affectionately known as “Little One” (*Маленький*) by his fellow monks, the spiritual disciple and close confidant of Saint Ignatius Bryanchaninov, significantly shaped the history of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius near St. Petersburg. He served as the monastery's hegumen from 1857 to 1886, succeeding Bryanchaninov himself. Recognizing Malyshev's artistic talent in his youth, Ignatius Bryanchaninov facilitated his training at the Petersburg Academy of Arts. Malyshev honed his skills under the tutelage of prominent Russian painters like Mikhail Ivanovich Scotti and Karl Bryullov. Upon graduating, he dedicated his artistic abilities to creating icons for his monastery. Malyshev personally painted nearly all three tiers of the iconostasis for the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Mostar, in addition to seventy icons for the iconostasis of the Church of the Ascension of Christ. Tragically, these works were destroyed during the communist era.<sup>22</sup> The numerous Serbs who sought hospitality and guidance at the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius are a testament to Archimandrite Ignatius's affection for their nation. He extended his support to them in various ways, including providing artistic training to a young man from Sarajevo who later returned home to share his newfound skills.<sup>23</sup> Archimandrite Sava Kosanović, who later attained the rank of Metropolitan, also sojourned at the monastery as an emissary from Sarajevo. As a token of his appreciation, he gifted the monastery a silver candle holder crafted in a local Sarajevo workshop.<sup>24</sup> Hegumen Ignatius left an indelible mark on the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius, where he ultimately found his final resting place. In his final moments, he received a visit from Saint John of Kronstadt, who offered him the prayer of absolution from the Canon for the Parting of the Soul from the Body. Following his death in 1897, Ignatius Malyshev was laid to rest in the Church of the Resurrection of Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Kotlyarov's paper also reveals that Consul Alexey Kudryavtsev, writing from the Russian Consulate in Sarajevo, responded to Father Ignatius's letter on 12 May 1871. The content of this reply follows below:

20 J. Mežinski Milovanović, *Hram Svetog Aleksandra Nevskog u Beogradu, spomenica povodom stogodišnjice postojanja hrama 1912-2012*, Belgrade 2013, pp. 24-32.

21 Velikiy Knyaz' Nikolay Mikhaylovich, *Peterburgskiy nekropol', tom vtoroy (D-L)*, Sankt-Peterburg 1912, p. 444.

22 About Ignatius Malyshev: V. Kotlyarov, op. cit., pp. 278-301.

23 *Ty moy Bog, ya Tvoy rab...* p. 87.

24 Ibid.

25 V. Kotlyarov, op. cit., pp. 298-299.

*“Reverend and deeply respected Father Archimandrite,*

*I am writing to inform you of the safe arrival in Sarajevo of the five crates containing the icons, along with your heartfelt letter to the Orthodox community. Upon reading and translating your message, our brothers in faith were overcome with profound gratitude. Your generous donation of this magnificent church, unparalleled in the Austrian and Ottoman Empires, and even in the princedoms of Romania and Serbia, has elicited tears of joy – a testament to the admiration and appreciation felt for your remarkable contribution. This outpouring of emotion serves as a powerful reminder of the spiritual and moral bonds that unite the northern, western, and southern Slavic people across nations.*

*The icons themselves have made a profound impression on the faithful. The sacred images of saints and scenes from the life of the Savior have deeply moved the Bosnian Orthodox community, inspiring piety and religious contemplation.*

*Currently, the icons remain securely housed within the Consulate. I have explained to the community that their installation must await the thorough preparation and cleaning of the church.*

*The Orthodox community and its municipality have chosen to defer sending a formal letter of gratitude at this time. They eagerly anticipate your presence at the temple’s consecration ceremony in three months, where they plan to personally present you with a signed testimonial expressing their collective appreciation.*

*It would be remiss of me not to convey my deepest gratitude for your invaluable contribution to the glory of Orthodoxy in the East, and for upholding the name and honour of Russia. I have already communicated to the Ministry, advocating for official recognition of your merits and efforts.*

*Furthermore, I have previously written to General-Adjutant Ignatijev, our Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Constantinople, and the Director of the Asian Department, urging them to bring your extraordinary generosity to the attention of the government. Your unwavering dedication to the Church and Orthodoxy in the East has significantly advanced our mission in the Slavic realm, culminating in this magnificent monument that elevates the stature of Russia.*

*With a request for your blessing and prayers, I humbly assure you of my profound respect and unwavering loyalty.*

*A. Kudryavtsev”<sup>26</sup>*

Consul Kudryavtsev’s letter<sup>27</sup> vividly illustrates the profound impact of the Russian donation on the Orthodox community in Sarajevo. Furthermore, the Consul identifies Hegumen Ignatius as the driving force behind the iconostasis donation, emphasizing its uniqueness within the Balkan Orthodox context. The depth of gratitude and elation experienced by the Orthodox community in Sarajevo is palpable in their tearful response and the reported surge of piety and religious contemplation. Recognizing the significance of this contribution, Consul Kudryavtsev felt compelled to advocate for proper acknowledgement of the efforts of Father Ignatius in promoting Russia’s

26 V. Kotlyarov, op.cit., pp. 289-291.

27 About the activities of Consul Kudryavtsev: I. Tepić, *Bosna i Hercegovina u ruskim izvorima 1856-1878*, Sarajevo 1988, pp. 41-48.

standing in the Balkans and fostering closer ties between the two Orthodox nations. True to his word, he promptly dispatched a letter to Peter Nikolayevich Stremoukhov,<sup>28</sup> Director of the Asian Department, on that same day:

*„Your Excellency, most gracious Lord Peter Nikolayevich,*

*Your Excellency has always expressed gratitude and strived with deep involvement and concern to help our brethren in faith in Bosnia, especially when the assistance concerned moral and spiritual growth.*

*Therefore, I dare hope that your excellence will be glad to receive with genuine interest the report that the adornment of the grand, five-domed cathedral in Sarajevo is nearing completion, owing in large part to your esteemed patronage and the generosity of the Russian community, particularly Archimandrite Ignatius, superior of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius.*

*The Russian artisans commissioned to install and gild the iconostasis who arrived here last year have completed their work two months ahead of schedule. Their exceptional craftsmanship, worthy of admiration from Russians everywhere and all connoisseurs of art, has led to a further commission for the carving and gilding of the pulpit and archiepiscopal throne. Furthermore, the Consulate recently received seventy-three magnificent icons from Archimandrite Ignatius. These icons, many life-sized, were painted over two and a half years under his supervision at the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius as a gift for the cathedral's iconostasis. They will adorn the primary tier, complementing other generous contributions. They were accompanied by a letter from the superior of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius to the Orthodox Municipality. A copy of this letter, which elicited profound gratitude and goodwill towards Archimandrite Ignatius and all Russians upon its translation, is enclosed for your perusal.*

*The icons themselves have deeply moved our Bosnian brethren in faith. The images of the saints and depictions from the life of the Saviour have inspired piety and religious contemplation among them.*

*The icons are currently being safeguarded at the Consulate, awaiting the final cleaning and preparation of the church for their installation.*

*It is no exaggeration to say that this monumental Orthodox temple is unparalleled within the Austrian and Ottoman Empires, and even the Principedom of Serbia. For the people of Bosnia, both Orthodox and lay, this cathedral stands as a supreme artistic achievement, eternally preserving the name and honour of Russia. Our involvement in this project has generated immense goodwill among all confessions, amplifying admiration for the Russian community.*

*Therefore, I feel duty-bound to advocate before you for the highest recognition of Archimandrite Ignatius's merits and efforts. Through his diligent mediation and considerable fundraising – the icons*

28 The letter published by V. Kotlaryov mistakenly claims that Kudryavtsev was writing to Sukhorukov. About Stremoukhov and the connections of the Asian Department with the Serbian people, lot can be discerned from the PhD thesis: Jovana Blažić Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i Srpsko pitanje (1858–1875)*, defended in 2021 at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade.

alone exceed 7,000 Rubles in value, and he secured the services of a renowned painter and skilled craftsmen who accepted not more than half the cost of the iconostasis – the cathedral’s interior now stands as a testament to Russian benevolence and solidarity with our Bosnian brethren for generations to come.

*By bestowing a decoration upon Archimandrite Ignatius for his achievements, accompanied by an official expression of gratitude from our Ministry, we would duly honour a man whose devotion to the Church and Orthodoxy in the East has significantly advanced our mission in the Slavic world. He has erected a monument worthy of Russia’s name and stature.”*<sup>29</sup>

This final surviving letter sheds further light on the creation and donation of the iconostasis, revealing the likely financial involvement of the Asian Department in the project of crafting and furnishing the interior of the Sarajevo Orthodox Cathedral, although the precise nature of their contribution remains unclear. This suggests a broader pattern of support for the Serbian Orthodox community in Sarajevo by the Asian Department. This letter provides valuable insights into the construction of the iconostasis, revealing that Russian craftsmen were on-site in Sarajevo in 1870, completing their work two months ahead of schedule. Their exceptional skill in crafting the iconostasis prompted Kudryavtsev to declare the iconostasis a source of pride for both Russians and art enthusiasts. Further details about the craftsmen involved in the creation of the iconostasis emerge from other sources, such as the account of Hadži Makso Despić mentioning twelve carpenters from St. Petersburg who *crafted the door, iconostasis, tables, bishop’s chair, and all other woodworking*. He further notes that while the municipality covered the cost of materials, Consul Kudryavtsev personally financed the craftsmen’s labour. Upon completion of the work, Hadži Makso recounts the arrival of six master goldsmiths who brought gold and spent six months gilding the iconostasis. Only then, he claims, did the principal painter (likely Alexander Kolchin) arrive from St. Petersburg to take measurements for the icons.<sup>30</sup> Metropolitan Sava Kosanović’s text provides new details about the iconostasis project, specifically identifying the merchant who oversaw its construction. Metropolitan Sava Kosanović succinctly states: *The temple was built and gilded by Russian craftsmen, for whom the municipality paid 2,000 sequins to entrepreneur Ivanov.*<sup>31</sup> Xenia Mel’chakova, drawing on documents from the Foreign Policy Archive of Russia, provides further confirmation and details regarding the merchant’s involvement. She identifies the merchant from St. Petersburg as Efim Ivanov, who dispatched five craftsmen to Sarajevo for the installation and gilding of the iconostasis.<sup>32</sup> These same craftsmen also constructed the wooden pulpit and bishop’s throne, further contributing to the overall grandeur and visual impact of the cathedral’s interior.

Kudryavtsev asserts that the Sarajevo cathedral’s magnificence is unmatched by any other Orthodox church in the Ottoman or Austrian empires, or even the Principedom of Serbia. In light

29 V. Kotlyarov, op. cit., pp. 291-293.

30 H. M. Despić, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

31 S. Kosanović, op.cit., pp. 270-271.

32 K. V. Mel’chakova, op. cit., p. 75.

of Hegumen Ignatius's crucial role in the cathedral's interior decoration, the Russian consul in Sarajevo appealed to Stremoukhov to ensure the Hegumen received due recognition for his contributions. Kotlyarov's paper confirms the success of Consul Kudryavtsev's efforts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recognizing the philanthropic work of Father Ignatius, supported the decision to award him the second-class Order of Prince Danilo I. This honour, bestowed by the Montenegrin Prince Nikola, was reportedly granted "unanimously."<sup>33</sup>

## Arrangement of the Iconostasis

The monumental Sarajevo iconostasis exemplifies the well-developed altar screens characteristic of the neoclassical style. Its structure adheres to the traditional horizontal tripartite division established in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, it also incorporates a pronounced verticality reminiscent of Baroque altarpieces, a feature that continued to influence iconostasis design in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup>

The iconostasis itself features sixty-nine icons mounted on its gilded wooden framework. The conservation efforts in early 2022 undertaken on the iconostasis focused on restoring the gilding, whereas the icons, executed in oil on canvas, were deemed in good condition.

The iconostasis construction is characterized by its understated elegance. The minimal ornamentation serves primarily to delineate the planes showcasing the icons. These classical architectural elements carry symbolic significance, alluding to the Heavenly Jerusalem and its earthly counterpart, the Temple of Solomon.<sup>35</sup> As anticipated, given their liturgical significance and symbolic representation of the Gates of Heaven, the Royal Doors received exceptional attention in their design and execution.<sup>36</sup> Above the Royal Doors, six arches, each adorned with a carved bas-relief cross, crown the structure. A helical column, culminating in an ornate pedestal supporting a prominent cross, separates the panels depicting Archangel Gabriel and the Mother of God.

Flanking the Royal Doors on each side, twelve icons of individual saints—six on either side—comprise the throne row. All are depicted standing except for Christ and the Mother of God, who are enthroned. While the saints are framed by simple rectangles, the icons of Christ and the Mother of God are distinguished by more prominent arched frames. The icons on the side doors are integrated into the throne row with no visual separation from the other icons. The second tier of the iconostasis features two horizontal rows. The first comprises fifteen icons depicting the feasts of Christ and the Theotokos—five scenes on either side. In the same row, in the central panel above the Royal Doors, the Last Supper is portrayed with two standing figures of Holy Fathers on each

33 V. Kotlyarov, op. cit., p. 293.

34 Cf.: M. Timotijević, *Crkva Svetog Georgija u Temišvaru*, Novi Sad 1996, p. 98.

35 Ibid, pp. 98-99.

36 Cf.: N. Makuljević, *Liturgija, simbolika i priložništvo: ikonostas crkve Svete Trojice u Vranju*, in: Saborni hram Svete Trojice u Vranju 1858 – 2008, edited by: Nenad Makuljević, Vranje 2008, pp. 48-49.

side. The uppermost row presents pairs of Old Testament prophets and apostles, surmounted by medallions containing busts of various saints. This vertical axis, originating at the lowermost zone of the Royal Doors, ascends through the depiction of the Last Supper and culminates in a prominent Resurrection scene, establishing it as the visual focal point of the entire iconostasis. This representation is framed on each side with the scenes of Transfiguration and Resurrection, and its upper portion terminates in a semi-circular shape, crowned with seven medallions depicting busts of winged angels. As is customary, the apex of the iconostasis features a gilded cross resting on a spherical pedestal. This detailed description of the icons on the iconostasis of the Sarajevo Orthodox Cathedral comes from the writings of Metropolitan Sava Kosanović:

*“The arrangement of the temple is truly remarkable, culminating in a circular motif beneath the cross at its apex. Above the Royal Doors, the icon of the Last Supper is surmounted by depictions of the Transfiguration and Ascension. Between these scenes, a magnificent icon of Christ’s Resurrection extends upwards, showcasing a skilfully rendered sunrise with the angel of light rolling away the stone from the tomb. This central icon is encircled by seven cherubs and seraphs within round medallions, all oriented towards Christ. Below, on both sides of the temple, the first row features various saints, including those of Greek and Slavic origin, also depicted within round frames. The second row, extending parallel from the icons of the Transfiguration and Ascension, presents saints and apostles holding books, all facing the central Resurrection icon. The third row portrays other feasts of Christ, while the lowest tier comprises the despotic icons, including Saint Sava and Saint Arsenius of Serbia. Angels of equal size adorn both doors.”<sup>37</sup>*

Consul Alexey Kudryavtsev, in contrast, offers the following description of the iconostasis:

*“The entire iconostasis, including the throne and pulpit, is resplendent in pure gold leaf. Among the icons, all executed by skilled artists, several stand out for their exceptional quality: those depicting Saint Alexander Nevsky, the Serbian enlighteners Saint Sava and Saint Arsenius, the Resurrection of Christ, and the Transfiguration.”<sup>38</sup>*

## **Analysis of the Iconography and Arrangement of Icons on the Iconostasis**

### *Throne Icons*

In the throne tier of the iconostasis, from north to south, the following saints are represented: Holy Martyr Daria, Holy Emperor Constantine, and on the northern doors, Archangel Gabriel, Saint Arsenius of Serbia, Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, and the Mother of God with Christ. The Royal Doors feature depictions of the Annunciation. Continuing southward, the sequence includes icons of Christ, Saint Ignatius Theophorus, and Saint Sava of Serbia. The southern doors display Archangel Michael, Saint Alexander Nevsky, and Saint Eugene, Bishop of Cherson.

37 S. Kosanović, op. cit., pp. 270-271.

38 K. V. Melchakova, op.cit., p. 76.

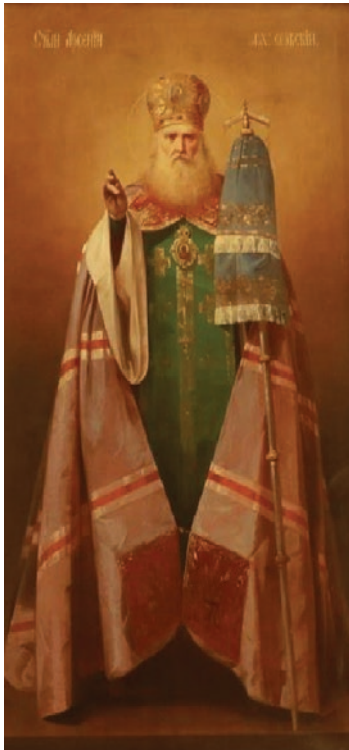


Fig. 3  
Icon of Saint Arsenije of Serbia



Fig. 4  
Icon of Saint Nicholas

The icon of Holy Martyr Daria (С. мученица Дарїа.), an early Christian saint, portrays her as a young woman with brown hair partially visible beneath a white veil. She is clad in a long ochre dress and a red cloak, holding a reed-like plant in her right hand and a cross with a detailed depiction of the crucified Christ against her chest with her left hand. The neutral background accentuates the saint's figure, while a thin circular line delineates her nimbus. This minimalist approach to the background and nimbus is consistent throughout most of the throne row icons.

The icon of Holy Emperor Constantine (С. равноапостольный царь Константинъ.) portrays him as a youthful sovereign with a short brown beard and hair. He is attired in ornate

imperial garb, consisting of a blue undergarment, a gold-coloured *sakkos* with a jewelled maniakis collar and a loros adorned with precious stones, and a red cape. His right hand is raised in blessing to the height of his shoulders, while his left, resting on a green pillow, holds a large cross richly embellished with colourful gems. He wears an opulent closed golden crown with a red foundation, decorated with precious stones and topped with an ornate cross. Holy Emperor Constantine is depicted in an interior setting with city walls visible through an opening.

The northern side doors feature the painted figure of Archangel Gabriel (СВ. Архангелъ Гавріїлъ.). The Divine Herald is depicted with a youthful, beardless face and brown hair cascading over his shoulders. His attire consists of a long white garment embellished with precious stones around the neck and sleeves, covered by a flowing blue cloak. A horologion hangs over his right shoulder, held in his left hand, while his right hand grasps a lily. Archangel Gabriel is portrayed with white wings, his feet resting upon a cloud. The neutral background is punctuated by clouds, alluding to the celestial realm he inhabits. The area surrounding his head is bathed in yellow, symbolizing divine light.

Saint Arsenius of Serbia (Святїй Арсенїй арх: СЕРБСКїЙ) is depicted as an elderly man with a long, flowing grey beard, vested in the ornate robes of an archiereus. He wears a light red cloak fastened below the knees with clasps, and a long, dark green epitachelion adorned with golden crosses. His golden mitre is intricately detailed. With his right hand raised in blessing, he holds a golden staff in his left.



Fig. 5  
*Despotic Icons of the Virgin, Christ, and the Annunciation on the Royal Door*

Saint Nicholas (С: Николѣй Чудотворецъ.), in keeping with traditional iconography, is portrayed as an elderly man with a short grey beard and hair. He is vested as an archiereus, with a dark blue undergarment, a red cloak, and a green omophorion embellished with golden crosses. The epitachelion is visible beneath. His right hand is raised in blessing, while his left hand holds a closed Gospel book.

A mandatory element of every iconostasis, the icon of the Mother of God occupies the position north of the royal gate. The Mother of God (МР. ФѢ.) is depicted seated on an elaborately adorned throne, cradling the infant Christ in her lap. She is clad in a dark blue gown beneath a red maphorion with golden embroidery along its edges. The Mother of God is holding her Son securely in her arms. The Christ Infant is wearing a white robe covered by a light purple himation. He is holding a folded scroll in his left hand and raising his right hand in blessing. The edges of the throne of the Mother of God are ornamented with Russian-style domes topped with crosses. A star-shaped mandorla encircles the Theotokos, echoing the form of her nimbus. Christ's nimbus, filled with gold, contains a cross delineated by subtle blue lines and inscribed with the letters  $\Theta$   $\Omega$   $\Pi$ .

The Royal Doors, as is customary, depict the Annunciation. The left wing portrays the winged Archangel Gabriel kneeling, his right index finger pointing upwards towards the dove of the Holy Spirit in the upper portion of the scene. In his left hand, he holds a blossoming lily, symbolizing the Mother of God's purity and immaculate conception. The floor line suggests an interior setting, while the upper half of the composition is dominated by yellow, representing divine light. On the right wing, the Mother of God kneels with hands clasped against her chest, her gaze direct-



Fig. 6  
Icon of Saint Sava of Serbia

of Saint Nicholas: a red robe over a brown undergarment, and a dark green omophorion with a gold-embroidered cross and golden edges. The epitachelion is visible beneath. He holds a chained Gospel book with both hands.

The depiction of Saint Sava of Serbia (СВЯТЫЙ САВВА АРХ: СЕРБСКІЙ.) bears a striking resemblance to that of Saint Arsenius. He too is portrayed with a long, flowing grey beard and vested in nearly identical archiereus robes, including the light red cloak fastened in the same manner as the cloak of Saint Arsenius. His right hand is raised in blessing, while his left hand grasps an archiereus staff with the distinctive double-serpent finial. Atop his head rests an ornately decorated golden mitre. However, instead of the customary epitachelion, Saint Sava's chest is adorned with a portion of the Great Schema vestment, dark red in colour and embellished with three Orthodox crosses and golden cherubs. This unusual combination of monastic and archiereus attire may allude to Saint Sava's ascetic nature and monastic origins.

The southern door features the winged Archangel Michael (С. АРХАНГЕЛЪ МИХАИЛЪ.), depicted as a beardless young man with short brown hair and a golden tiara adorned with a cross. He is clad

ed downwards. Before her stands a wooden pedestal with an open Bible, indicating that she was engaged in reading when the angel appeared.

The south, or right, side of the iconostasis begins with the depiction of Christ (ІИС. ХС.). Like the Mother of God opposite him, he is seated on a dark red pillow upon a throne identical to hers. His image conforms to traditional iconography, with long brown hair and beard. He is garbed in a red chiton and a blue himation. Christ's right hand is raised in blessing, while his left hand supports an open Gospel book displaying verses from John (14:1-6): ДА НЕ СМЪЩАЕТСА СЕРДЦЕ ВАШЕ: ВЪРВУЙТЕ ВЪ БГА, ВЪ МА ВЪРВУЙТЕ. ВЪ ДОМУ ОЦА МОЕГО ОКНТЕЛИ МНОГИ СУТЬ: АЩЕ ЛИ ЖЕ НИ, РЕКАЪ БЫХЪ ВАМЪ. НАУ ОУГОТОВАТИ МЪСТО ВАМЪ. И АЩЕ ОУГОТОВАЮ МЪСТО ВАМЪ, ПАКИ ПРІИДУ И ПОИДУ ВЫ КЪ СЕБѢ: ДА НАДѢЖЕ ЕСМЪ АЗЪ, И ВЫ БЪДЕТЕ. И АМОЖЕ АЗЪ НАУ, ВѢСТЕ, И ПЪТЬ ВѢСТЕ. ГЛАГОЛА ЕМУ ФОМА: ГДН, НЕ ВѢЛЫ КАКО ИДЕШИ: И КАКОВО МОЖЕМЪ ПУТЬ ВѢДѢТИ. ГЛАГОЛА ЕМУ ІНСЪ: АЗЪ ЕСМЪ ПУТЬ И ИСТИНА И ЖИВОТ. Both his mandorla and the one in the despotic icon of the Mother of God are the same. The arms of the cross within his nimbus, containing the letters O W H, are emphasized with a brighter yellow.

Adjacent to the icon of Christ stands the image of Saint Ignatius Theophorus (С. СВЪЩЕННОМЪЩЕННИК: ИГНАТІЙ БОГОНОСЕЦЪ.). The saint is depicted as an elderly man with sunken cheeks, grey hair, and a long grey beard. His attire resembles that

in a long white garment overlaid with a red tunic edged in golden embroidery, the centre bearing a prominent embroidered golden cross. His feet are shod in sandals. In his right hand, Archangel Michael brandishes a sword, its tip engulfed in flames, while his left hand holds a shield.

The icon of Saint Alexander Nevsky (С. БЛАГОБЪР. КНАЗЪ АЛЕКСАНДРЪ НЕВСКІЙ.) portrays him with a short brown beard and hair, attired in a short blue tunic over silver armour. A red mantle with ermine trim drapes over his shoulders, and he wears red boots. His right hand rests on his chest, while his left hand hangs free. To his left stands a pedestal bearing the opulent crown of the Great Prince. The presence of the pedestal suggests an interior setting, while the remaining background is, characteristically, neutral.

The final icon in the throne tier depicts Saint Eugene, Bishop of Cherson (С. СВЯЩ. МУЖЕ ЕУГЕНІЙ ЕПИСКОПЪ ХЕРСОНСКІЙ.). He is portrayed as an elderly man with grey hair and beard, vested in the robes of an archiereus. He wears a red undergarment beneath a green cloak, and a red omophorion adorned with blue crosses. His right hand is raised in blessing, while his left hand holds a closed, chained Gospel book.

An examination of the saints depicted in the throne row reveals a discernible pattern in their selection and arrangement. Christ and the Mother of God occupy their customary central positions. They are flanked by prominent Holy Fathers from the early centuries of Christianity: Saint Nicholas and Saint Ignatius, placed opposite one another. While Saint Nicholas, a universally venerated figure in Orthodoxy, frequently appears on iconostases, the inclusion of Saint Ignatius may hold particular significance. It could be interpreted as a tribute to the patron saint of Father Ignatius Malyshev, the Hegumen of the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius responsible for the iconostasis donation. The next pair of saints, the first two Serbian archbishops, Saint Sava and Saint Arsenius, underscores the deliberate consideration given to the intended recipients and destination of the iconostasis. This selection of Serbian saints reflects a conscious effort to tailor the iconographic program to the local context. Following these are the side doors, adorned with depictions of the archangels Michael and Gabriel. As guardians and protectors, archangels are traditionally positioned near entrances, explaining their placement on the side doors of the iconostasis or above doorways.<sup>39</sup> Following the archangels, the next pairing presents two prominent figures within the order of holy rulers: Holy Emperor Constantine and Saint Alexander Nevsky. Emperor Constantine, as the first Christian ruler, serves as a model for all subsequent Christian monarchs. Saint Alexander Nevsky, on the other hand, holds a position of unique importance as Russia's foremost national saint among rulers. His prominent placement within the iconostasis can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it may reflect a desire to promote the veneration of Russian saints and extend Russian influence within the Orthodox communities of the Balkans. Secondly, it could be seen as a tribute to the reigning Tsar Alexander II, Saint Alexander Nevsky's namesake and patron saint, whose family contributed to the creation of the icons. The final two icons in the throne row depict Holy Martyr Daria and Saint Eugene, Bishop of Cherson. Their presence is noteworthy, as these saints are not typically featured in this

39 M. Timotijević, op. cit., p. 110.



Fig. 7  
Icon of Saint Simeon of Serbia

prominent position on iconostases. Given that despotic icons are often donated, it is plausible that the choice of these particular saints reflects the devotional inclinations of the donors, who may have held a special reverence for Saint Daria or Saint Eugene. Saint Eugene, an early Christian missionary, disseminated the faith in the region that would eventually become Russia. Although Russia did not yet exist as a unified state during his time, it's likely that Russians later used his presence to establish a narrative of Christian continuity within their history. This could explain his depiction among the throne row of icons.

Additionally, according to information found in one of the sources, Metropolitan Sava Kosanović, in his discussion of the despotic icons within the Sarajevo iconostasis, observes: *“On the walls, flanking the doors are icons of Saint Simeon the Myrrh-flowing and Saint Sergius of*

*Russia, whose uniform dimensions precluded their integration into the main iconographic register.”*<sup>40</sup> The Icon of Saint Simeon was recently identified in the treasury of the Mileševa Monastery, while the location of the Icon of Saint Sergius remains unknown. Interestingly, another Serbian saint, the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty, was also depicted in this Russian monastery. If the pairing of Saint Simeon and Saint Sergius was intended to evoke a parallel with other paired saints in the iconostasis, their shared monastic identity may suggest they served as exemplars for both Serbian and Russian monastic communities. Alternatively, each saint may hold independent significance. Saint Simeon, as noted, holds specific relevance for Serbian church. Saint Sergius, a pivotal figure in Russian monasticism, merits inclusion as patron of the monastery where the icons were executed.

40 S. Kosanović, op. cit., p. 270.

## Great Feast Icons

The second zone of the iconostasis features a register of icons depicting the feasts of Christ and the Mother of God, flanked by four Holy Fathers, and culminating in the Last Supper above the Royal Doors. These icons are arranged from south to north in the following sequence: the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, the Nativity of Christ, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Baptism, the Entry into Jerusalem, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint James, Brother of the Lord, the Last Supper, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, the Nativity of the Mother of God, the Annunciation, the Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple, the Dormition of the Mother of God, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit scene centres on the Theotokos, depicted seated on a bench with her gaze directed upwards. Eleven apostles are arranged around her in varying spatial planes, while the upper zone features the Dove of the Holy Spirit amidst flames. All figures are rendered with golden nimbuses.

The Nativity of Christ (Рождество Христово) adheres to established iconographic conventions. The newborn Christ (Иис. Хрс.) lies within the manger, flanked by the kneeling figures of the Mother of God and Joseph. The Theotokos (МР ФУ) is depicted with her arms crossed over her chest. Joseph, on the other hand, is shown holding a blossoming staff in one hand, while the other rests on his chest. The bright skin tone of Christ and the luminous sheets he is draped in draw the viewer's attention to the centre of the composition. He is depicted with outstretched arms and a halo rendered as emanating rays of light.<sup>41</sup> An ox and a donkey occupy the background.

The significant Christian feast that follows the Nativity is the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Сретение Господне). The painting depicts the Mother of God, Joseph, Simeon the God-receiver, Anna the Prophetess, and the infant Christ. The kneeling Theotokos occupies the foreground, with Joseph positioned before her on the first step leading to the temple. Anna the Prophetess, in the middle ground, observes the aged Saint Simeon, who stands before the temple door cradling the Christ Child in the background.

The subsequent painting portrays the Baptism of Christ. This event is depicted within a landscape setting, with Saint John Chrysostom positioned so that his right hand is resting atop Christ's head while his left hand is pointing towards Christ. Christ is depicted leaning forward in the Jordan River, a white sheet covering his right hand and thighs. In the background, two winged angels are shown carrying the sheet. The Holy Spirit, symbolized by a dove, is painted at the top of the composition.

The final feast depicted in the north section of the iconostasis is the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Christ is shown mounted on a donkey. In the foreground, we can identify the Apostle Peter holding a palm branch, walking alongside Christ. Following them are the remaining apostles and a

41 On the nimbus painted as rays of light, see: N. Makuljević, *Crkva Svetog Arhangela Gavrila u Velikom Gradištu*, Veliko Gradište, 2006, pp. 185–186.



Fig. 8  
*Icon of the Baptism of Christ*



Fig. 9  
*Icon of the Last Supper*

crowd of people bowing to Christ and laying their garments on the path he is about to tread. In the background, the painted walls of Jerusalem are visible.

A distinct section of the cycle comprises the images of the Holy Fathers John Chrysostom and Jacob, the Brother of the Lord. These figures are visually separated from the Great Feasts and the Last Supper by architectural elements, such as pillars. Saint John Chrysostom (С. ЇОАННЪ ЗЛАТОУСТЬ.), depicted in archiereus vestments, is characterized by his short brown hair and beard. In his left hand, he holds an open, blank scroll, while his right hand is opened and raised to shoulder height. Saint Jacob, the Brother of the Lord (С. ЇАКОВЪ БРАТ. ГОСПОДЕНЬ.), is similarly depicted wearing the vestments of an archiereus. He is portrayed as an older man with a bald head and a grey beard. He holds an open book in his left hand, his right index finger raised. Both saints are oriented to the right, facing the Last Supper.

Positioned above the Royal Doors and distinct from the other icons, the Last Supper adheres to traditional iconography. Christ occupies the centre of a semi-circular table, flanked by six apostles on either side. His left hand rests on bread, while his right hand blesses. A chalice sits before him on the table. The apostles are depicted with sombre expressions, Saint John embracing Christ on

his right and Peter positioned to his left. In the foreground, a pedestal before the semicircular table supports a jug of water and the towel used by Christ to wash his disciples' feet before dinner.

Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory the Theologian, like the aforementioned Holy Fathers, constitute a distinct pairing. Saint Basil the Great (с. ВАСИЛІЙ ВЕЛИКІЙ.) is depicted with brown hair and a long brown beard, clad in archiereus vestments, and holding an open, unwritten scroll in both hands. Saint Gregory the Theologian (с. ГРИГОРІЙ БОГОСЛОВЪ.), with short grey hair and beard, is similarly attired and holds an open, unwritten code in his left hand, gesturing towards it with his right.

Following the icon of Saint Gregory the Theologian is a series of feasts. The first, on the right of the iconostasis, is the Nativity of the Mother of God. Saint Anna is depicted reclining on a bed, cradling the newborn Mary. Beside the bed stands Saint Joachim, depicted as an elderly man. In the foreground, three girls prepare water for bathing the Mother of God in a large vessel.

The Annunciation, rendered in the traditional style, follows. The scene unfolds indoors, with the Archangel Gabriel and the Mother of God positioned before an open window revealing a landscape vista. The winged archangel holds a lily in his right hand, while the Mother of God kneels opposite him. An open book rests on the table between them. The composition is illuminated from above, where the Dove of the Holy Spirit emits a ray of light towards the Mother of God.

The Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple follows on the next canvas. In the foreground, the half-length figures of the Virgin Mary's parents, Saint Anna and Saint Joachim, are prominent. Anna holds an offering of white doves, with Joachim positioned behind her. The Mother of God, clad in a white robe and with hands clasped at her chest, ascends the stairs towards the high priest, who stands between two deacons and extends his hands in welcoming and blessing Mary. Two additional figures observe the scene from the background amidst architectural elements.

The Dormition of the Mother of God is depicted next. In the foreground, we see an apostle observing the deathbed where the Mother of God lies. Opposite him, a priest is depicted reading from an open book. At the centre of the composition, the Mother of God is depicted lying on a funeral bier. Her eyes are closed, and her hands are clasped and resting on her stomach. Several apostles surround the Mother of God, observing her lifeless body. Women are depicted weeping nearby. Above the funeral bier, a figure of Christ is seen ascending through the clouds, his arms outstretched towards the Mother of God.

The final canvas depicts the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Half-length portraits dominate the foreground, including a young man bearing a lit candle and several other attending faithful. The most prominent figure is Patriarch Macarius, resplendent in archiereus vestments. He raises his right hand towards the cross behind him while grasping a staff in his left. Beside him, Empress Helena kneels in a cloak with ermine fur and a crown. The patriarch, empress, and the cross between them are elevated above the other figures. Architectural elements complete the background.

Based on the described sequence of feast icons, we can conclude that the Christological feasts are predominantly depicted on the northern side of the iconostasis, and that they generally adhere

to a chronological order (Nativity, Entry into the Temple, Baptism, Entry into Jerusalem), with the exception of Pentecost, which initiates the cycle. The Mother of God's feasts and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross are situated on the southern side of the iconostasis. It is likely that a mistake occurred during the arrangement of the icons on the iconostasis. The icon depicting the Annunciation appears to have been misplaced, as it should ideally precede the Presentation of the Mother of God to maintain the chronological sequence of the cycle of the Mother of God. The scenes exhibit academic principles, employing multiple planes and deep perspective. A comparison with the despotic icons suggests the feast icons were executed by a different artist, one characterized by a looser, more expressive brushwork and less emphasis on individual figures. The Last Supper dominates the centre of this register, flanked on either side by the Holy Fathers. The Last Supper, as the foundational event of the Eucharist and the Holy Liturgy, provides context for the selection of flanking saints. Today, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is commonly celebrated, while the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is used on specific occasions. The Liturgies of Saint Jacob and Saint Gregory the Theologian are rarely performed. Each of these saints is depicted holding a scroll, reflecting the original practice of writing liturgies on scrolls.

### *The Apostolic and Prophetic Icons*

Above the feast row of icons on the Sarajevo Orthodox Cathedral iconostasis, there are twenty apostles and prophets arranged in five distinct visual groups on either side. Each visual field is further accentuated by a medallion placed above each pair of prophets or apostles. These medallions contain half-figure portraits of various saints. From north to south, the following prophets and apostles are depicted: Holy Prophet Jeremiah (С. ПРФ. ІЄРЄМІА), Holy Prophet Daniel (СТЫЙ ПРФ: ДАНИИЛЪ.), Holy Prophet Jonah (С. ПРФ: ІОНА.), Holy Prophet Zachary (С. ПРФ: ЗАХАРІА), Holy Apostle Jude of James (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ ІУДА ІАКОВЪ.), Holy Apostle James (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ ІАКОВЪ.), Holy Apostle Mark (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ МАРКЪ.), Holy Apostle John (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ ІОАННЪ.), Holy Apostle Thomas (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ ФОМА.), Holy Apostle Paul (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ ПАУЛА.). Further on, on the south or right side of the iconostasis, the series continues: Holy Apostle Peter (СѦТАГО АПЛА Петра.), Holy Apostle Andrew (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ Андрей.), Holy Apostle Matthew (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ Матѣй.), Holy Apostle Simon (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ Сидонъ.), Holy Apostle Bartholomew (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ Бартоломей.), Holy Apostle Philip (СТЫЙ АПЛЪ Филиппъ.), Holy Prophet Elijah (С. ПРФ: ІЛІА.), Holy Prophet Aaron (С. ПРФ: ААРОНЪ.), Holy Prophet Isaiah (С. ПРФ: ІСАІА.), Holy Prophet Habakkuk (С. ПРФ: АББАКУМЪ.). All prophets and apostles are oriented towards the centre of the iconostasis, focusing on the icons of the Transfiguration, Ascension, and the central, dominant icon of the Resurrection of Christ.

The prophets and apostles conform to established iconographic conventions. Prophets Zachary and Aaron are depicted wearing the distinctive archiereus headgear, with Aaron also holding a staff. Daniel, portrayed as a beardless young man, wears a Phrygian hat. The prophets carry scrolls, while the apostles hold either open or closed codices. When viewing this group of saints from the



Fig. 10  
Icon of Saint Mitrophan of Voronezh

centre of the iconostasis, the Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, occupy the central positions to the north and south respectively. This separation and placement within the apostolic row reflect a long-standing tradition in iconostasis design.<sup>42</sup> The remaining apostles are arranged around the central figures, with prominence given to the Evangelists. The outermost sections of the iconostasis are occupied by Old Testament prophets.

### *Saints Painted within Medallions*

Above the figures of the apostles and prophets, a series of medallions contain depictions of various saints. Arranged from north to south across the iconostasis, these medallions feature: Holy Mar-

tyr Paraskevi, Holy Great Martyr George, Saint Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, Saint Eugenia the Great Martyr, Saint Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow. On the south side of the iconostasis, the sequence continues with: Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint Prince Vladimir, Saint Mitrophan, Bishop of Voronezh, Saint Great Martyr Demetrius, Holy Martyr Alexandra.

In an attempt to determine the sequence and relationships between the saints depicted in this row, we will examine the medallions on both sides of the iconostasis. The outermost medallions, located at the northern and southern extremities, depict female saints – Holy Martyr Paraskevi (С. М҃ѣнница Параскева.) and Holy Martyr Alexandra (С. М҃ѣнница Александра.). The existence of three saints named Paraskevi within the Christian world has led to the intermingling of their respective cults.<sup>43</sup> Assuming the artist intended to depict Saint Paraskevi of Iconium, a connection with the Holy Martyr Alexandra readily emerges. Both suffered martyrdom, hailed from noble families, were contemporaries, and faced persecution under Emperor Diocletian. Holy Martyr Alexandra, Diocletian's wife, is closely associated with the cult of Saint George. Her royal status is emphasized by the crown she wears, while Saint Paraskevi is depicted with a headscarf covering her brown hair.

Subsequently, the iconostasis features Russian saints: Saint Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov (С. Димитрій Мѣтро. Ростов.) to the north, and Saint Mitrophan, Bishop of Voronezh (С. Мѣтрофаній

42 M. Timotijević, *Crkva Svetog Georgija u Temišvaru*, p. 114.

43 T. Subotin – Golubović, *Petka prepodobna – Petka mučenica*, in: *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta XLV*, Beograd 2008, pp. 177–190.



Fig. 11  
Icon of Saint Eugenia

politan of Moscow (С. Алексій Митропо: Московскій.), is depicted on the northern side, while Saint Mary Magdalene (С. Равноапос. Марїа Магдалина.) appears on the southern side. Behind them, the medallions feature Saint Great Martyr Eugenia (С. Преподоб. М҃. Е҃вгенїа.) to the north and Saint Prince Vladimir (С. Равноапос. Кнѣзь Владимѣръ.) to the south. The original intention was likely to position the two prominent saints of the Russian Church, Saint Alexius and Saint Vladimir, nearest to the feast icons, with the two female saints placed behind them. Saint Vladimir, a revered figure in the Russian Church for his role in the adoption and dissemination of Christianity in Russia, is depicted with a grey beard and a princely crown. Saint Alexius appears as an elderly man with a long grey beard and a white klobuk adorned with a golden cross. Saint Mary Magdalene, like Saint Paraskevi, is portrayed with a fair face and a headscarf revealing her hair. Saint Eugenia, a nun, is shown in the attire of the Great Schema.

### *The Central and Tallest Part of the Iconostasis*

The Sarajevo iconostasis culminates visually in the large-scale depiction of the Resurrection of Christ. The depiction of the Harrowing of Hell, a common theme in medieval art, was abandoned during the Baroque period. Instead, the focus shifted to Christ's triumphant resurrection from the sealed tomb, which often became the central motif of the iconostasis. This approach gained wide-

Еписко. Воронежскій.) to the south. Both were archiereus and contemporaries. Saint Demetrius conforms to typical iconography, depicted as a middle-aged man with a thick black beard and wearing a white epanoklimavkion. Saint Mitrophan also adheres to established iconography, portrayed with a greying beard and the large koukoulion of the Great Schema, indicating his monastic rank and the name Macarius bestowed upon him.

It can be inferred that an error occurred in the placement of the icons on the iconostasis, specifically regarding the order of the following two pairs of saints. In the final medallions, positioned closest to the icons of the Transfiguration and the Ascension, Saint Alexius, Metro-

spread popularity in church painting by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> The Resurrection of Christ adheres to the iconographic model prevalent in late 19<sup>th</sup>-century church painting.<sup>45</sup> The composition centres on Christ, draped in a flowing white sheet that rises above the tomb, depicted as a large, sealed rectangular stone. A circular nimbus surrounds Christ's illuminated figure. He raises his right hand and carries a flag in his left. Wounds mark his right hand, right rib, and feet. Equally well-illuminated is the figure of a winged, flying angel depicted beneath Christ's feet. The angel, gazing directly at the observer, gestures with his right index finger toward Christ, symbolically proclaiming His victory over death.

The Resurrection scene is flanked by depictions of the Transfiguration to the north and the Ascension to the south, surmounted by seven medallions containing winged angels. These flanking canvases are half the size of the Resurrection. The Transfiguration portrays Christ frontally, clad in white robes with arms outstretched and raised, amidst the prophets Moses and Elijah. All three figures stand upon clouds. Below, the apostles Peter, John, and Jacob are depicted in various poses. The Resurrection of Christ is depicted in two distinct segments within the painting. The upper section portrays Christ in a red chiton and blue chimation, standing with outstretched arms on a cloud. Light, rather than a nimbus, emanates around his head. The lower section presents Christ's disciples and the Mother of God painted in varying spatial planes. Most of them are gazing upwards towards the Heaven and Christ, their expressions serene and subdued as is typical of the Transfiguration scene.

Seven medallions depicting angels encircle the Resurrection scene in a semi-circular arrangement, forming the uppermost register of the iconostasis. A central and uppermost medallion presents an angel facing forward, while three medallions on either side portray angels in three-quarter profile, oriented to the right or left respectively. As with the medallions depicting saints, these angels appear against a blue background. Iconographic conventions are observed: angels are beardless, with long hair and white wings. Metropolitan Sava identifies them as cherubs and seraphs.<sup>46</sup> An analysis of their attire, coupled with the doctrine of the seven archangels, suggests the artist and designer of the iconographic program intentionally depicted this specific angelic order.

Above the central medallion, the iconostasis screen narrows to its apex, culminating in a spherical pedestal that supports a cross. This entire section, like the rest of the iconostasis, is gilded. The cross bears minimal ornamentation on its centre and arms. This configuration, with the cross resting on a spherical pedestal, sometimes entwined with a snake, is common in iconostasis design and carries multiple symbolic interpretations.<sup>47</sup> The cross atop the iconostasis symbolizes *the guardianship of the universe, the beauty of the Church, and the glory of God, standing in defiance of disbelief*.<sup>48</sup>

44 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, Novi Sad 1996, p. 322.

45 Cf.: N. Makuljević, *Crkva Svetog Arhangela Gavrila u Velikom Gradištu*, p. 187.

46 See pp. 11-12.

47 A. Kostić, *Država, društvo i crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830 – 1882)*, p. 293.

48 N. Makuljević, *Crkva Svetog Arhangela Gavrila u Velikom Gradištu*, p. 193.

## Pulpit and Thrones

It appears that the craftsmen employed by merchant Efim Ivanov of St. Petersburg undertook two separate trips to Sarajevo. Their initial visit in 1870 involved several months of work constructing the wooden framework of the iconostasis. They subsequently returned in the autumn of 1871 to create the wooden pulpit and the hegumen's and archiereus thrones.<sup>49</sup> Whether they made a third trip specifically for the gilding or completed the gilding after constructing the pulpit and thrones remains unclear. All liturgical furnishings crafted by the St. Petersburg artisans are gilded with pure gold, as documented in a letter by Alexey Kudryavtsev.<sup>50</sup> These liturgical furnishings occupy the nave. The pulpit, accompanied by the hegumen's throne, stands adjacent to the northeast pillar, while the archpriest's throne resides opposite.

The hegumen's throne and pulpit form a cohesive unit, with an intervening space between them. The throne is surmounted by a dome crowned with an Orthodox cross. A carved medallion in the relief in front of the pulpit depicts a chalice emitting rays. Elevated on a wooden staircase that wraps around the pillar, the pulpit is accessed by a set of stairs. A wooden pedestal shaped like an open Gospel book provides a surface for priests to hold the Gospel or liturgical scrolls during sermons.

Opposite the pulpit stands the archiereus throne, elevated on three steps. This throne also culminates in a dome topped with an Orthodox cross, supported by twin helical columns. Arches adorn the front and sides, each surmounted by an Orthodox cross on a spherical pedestal. A distinctive feature of the Sarajevo archiereus throne is the icon of Christ suspended above the backrest on a cloth, with a silver halo applied. This image of Christ differs stylistically from the icons on the iconostasis, raising questions about its origin – whether it was a later addition, perhaps a gift from Russia, or an original component of the throne.

Metropolitan Sava describes the arrangement of the pulpit and thrones as follows:

*“A gilded throne for the metropolitan stands beside the right pillar. Near the left column, opposite the metropolitan's throne, a small, gilded table was initially designated for the archimandrite but later assigned to the earthly commander. Adjacent to this, by the left column, stairs ascend to the middle of the pillar. Here, above the archimandrite's table, a richly ornamented pulpit displays an open golden book, a place for the Gospel from which the deacon reads and preachers deliver sermons. The centre of the pulpit features a gilded chalice illuminated by sun rays, symbolizing the vessel of life. This arrangement is symmetrically aligned with the metropolitan's throne, which is adorned with gilded crosses.”<sup>51</sup>*

49 K. V. Mel'chakova, op. cit., p. 75.

50 Ibid, p. 76.

51 S. Kosanović, *Nova srpsko-pravoslavna crkva u Sarajevu*, p. 170.

## Russian Donations Collected by Archimandrite Sava Kosanović

Much has been written about the personality of Sava Kosanović (1839 – 1903), theologian, teacher, Archbishop of Sarajevo and Metropolitan of Dabar-Bosnia.<sup>52</sup> In the context of this paper, we will concentrate on Kosanović's journey and sojourn in Russia between 1872 and 1874, undertaken to gather donations for the recently completed church in Sarajevo.

The construction and subsequent furnishing of the Sarajevo Cathedral incurred substantial costs. Despite numerous donations from various sources, including the significant contribution of the iconostasis from Russia, the church still lacked sufficient funds, icons, vestments, liturgical vessels, and books for its proper functioning. Metropolitan Sava Kosanović notes that following the consecration, the church faced a debt of 3,500 sequins.<sup>53</sup> Following two unsuccessful attempts to secure permission for travel to Russia, the Sarajevo Orthodox Municipality finally received approval for their third request in September 1871.<sup>54</sup> The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church granted approval for the fundraising mission in February 1872, followed by the endorsement of Emperor Alexander II in May of the same year.<sup>55</sup> In October 1872, Archimandrite Sava Kosanović embarked on his journey to Russia, bringing with him a significant relic: the right arm of Saint Thecla. Donated in 1730 to the Church of Saint Archangels in Sarajevo by Patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović, this relic remains there to this day.<sup>56</sup> Archimandrite Sava Kosanović was accompanied on this mission by the esteemed Sarajevo merchant Hadži Makso Despić. They encountered immediate challenges upon arriving in Russia. Prior to their departure, an article in the newspaper *Jedinstvo* alleged that they were spies. This claim, subsequently reprinted in the St. Petersburg newspaper *Golos*, created a negative impression on the Holy Synod.<sup>57</sup> Despite initial support and numerous testimonies refuting the accusations, the Metropolitan remained unconvinced. Consequently, Sava Kosanović was denied accommodation at the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra and forced to seek assistance from the local populace. This significantly hindered the early stages of his mission.<sup>58</sup> Fol-

52 A comprehensive study on Sava Kosanović was written by: V. Maksimović, *Mitropolit Sava Kosanović 1839 – 1903*, Dobrun – Sarajevo 2003; recently the writings of Metropolitan Sava were published with the entire bibliography: Mitropolit Sava Kosanović, *Krstom i perom, Sabrani spisi*, edited by: Episkop budimljansko-nikšićki Joanikije (Mićović), Vojislav Maksimović, Nikola Marojević, Bogoljub Šijaković, Eparhija budimljansko-nikšićka, Institut za teološka istraživanja, Nikšić - Beograd 2019.

53 S. Kosanović, *Nova srpsko-pravoslavna crkva u Sarajevu*, p. 170.

54 J. Blažić – Pejić dedicated an important chapter in her PhD thesis to Archimandrite Sava's trip to Russia, and Ksenia Mel'chakova wrote a paper on the same topic: J. Blažić – Pejić, *Moskovski slovenski komitet i Srpsko pitanje 1858 - 1875*; K. V. Mel'chakova, op. cit.

55 J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 362.

56 R. J. Čajkanović „Kratki životopis svete prvomučenice i ravnoapostolne Tekle”, in: *Dabro-bosanski istočnik*, godina 3, Br. 21 – 22, Sarajevo 1889, pp. 345–347.

57 Hadži M. Despić, op. cit., pp. 61 – 62; S. Kosanović, *Nova srpsko-pravoslavna crkva u Sarajevu*, p. 171; J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 365 - 366; X. V. Mel'chakova, op. cit., p. 78.

58 J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 366.

lowing these unfortunate events and the return of his passport, Makso Despić departed Russia. He documented these experiences in his characteristic style: “*I had to make ten daily trips to the main police station in Lityeine, St. Petersburg, pleading for my passport so I could return. The police director repeatedly insisted, ‘You aren’t going to the border, you’ll go to Siberia, you’re Ottoman spies.’ Before finally retrieving my passport, I had spent 200 roubles. Arriving in Vienna brought immense relief – I felt at home, free, and joyful.*”<sup>59</sup>

Throughout his time in Russia, Sava Kosanović received crucial support from the Moscow Slavic Committee and Nil Alexandrovich Popov, maintaining consistent correspondence and benefiting from their valuable guidance.<sup>60</sup> Acknowledging Popov’s invaluable assistance to their emissary, the Sarajevo Orthodox Municipality expressed gratitude for his instrumental role in facilitating the successful collection of donations in Russia.<sup>61</sup> Archimandrite Sava also highlighted his contribution: “*For that success (collection of donations, author’s note) we owe the highest gratitude to Mr. Nil Popov, professor extraordinaire at the Moscow University, who offered (to Sava, author’s note) his warm recommendations.*”<sup>62</sup>

Information regarding Archimandrite Sava’s fundraising success in Russia comes from various sources and requires further verification. The archimandrite himself reported obtaining a substantial collection of books, vestments, liturgical vessels, icons, and over 2,000 sequins.<sup>63</sup> Alexey Kudryavtsev, in a letter to Count Ignatyev, reports that Sava amassed 4,500 roubles and approximately ten cases filled with liturgical books, objects, and priestly vestments.<sup>64</sup> V. Maksimović provides yet another figure, stating that Kosanović gathered 1,870 ducats, equivalent to 114,111 groschen.<sup>65</sup> J. Blažić-Pejić adds to these accounts, noting that Kosanović successfully gathered over 7,000 roubles and a considerable quantity of church items, which he dispatched to Sarajevo with Popov’s assistance.<sup>66</sup> While J. Blažić-Pejić identifies some financial donors, information regarding those who contributed church items remains scarce. Hadži Makso does mention Countess Vorontsova, who donated a phelonion for Christ’s grave valued at 12,000 roubles.<sup>67</sup> Archimandrite Sava enjoyed a warm reception in Saratov. Bishop Joannicius welcomed him to the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Monastery. The Moscow Slavic Committee reported that 30,000 people venerated the relics of Saint Thecla, even noting the occurrence of miracles. Sava conducted a *moleben* at a women’s monastery, where the hegumen, Mother Olympiada, experienced a remarkable recovery from a severe illness following the liturgy. As a sign of gratitude for the healing of the hegumen, the nuns donated

59 H. M. Despić, op. cit., p. 62.

60 More detailed information about this can be found in the aforementioned chapter of J. Blažić – Pejić’s PhD thesis.

61 J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 380.

62 S. Kosanović, op. cit., p. 171.

63 Ibid.

64 J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 382.

65 V. Maksimović, op. cit., p. 20.

66 J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 379.

67 H. M. Despić, op. cit., p. 59.



Fig. 12  
Chalice

a *riza*<sup>68</sup> to the Sarajevo church, adorned with pearls and precious stones.<sup>69</sup> During his stay in Kazan, Archimandrite Sava received approximately 500 roubles in silver, along with numerous church items, myrrh, an archimandrite's cross, and vestments.<sup>70</sup> Among the notable donations, Nil Popov gifted Kosanović two shrouds, one designated for the church in Sarajevo and the other for the church in Vareš.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, Bishop Leonid contributed twenty copies of the Book of Psalms.<sup>72</sup>

The available information confirms that Sava Kosanović acquired numerous liturgical items for Sarajevo in addition to financial aid. The Museum of the Old Church in Sarajevo houses many exhibits of Russian origin, some of which likely arrived due to Archimandrite Sava's efforts. A detailed insight into the exhibited items and possible documentation could not be obtained.

The Sarajevo Cathedral still utilizes a chalice of Russian origin. Based on its craftsmanship and inscription, it is likely that this chalice was donated to Sava Kosanović during his fundraising trip. This large silver chalice features four medallions on the cup, depicting half-figure portraits of Christ, Saint John the Baptist, the Mother of God, and the Cruci-

68 The Russian dictionary gives two definitions for the word *riza*: 1. Liturgical vestments, 2. Frame for an icon. From the context, it can be assumed that donation was in the form of a frame.

69 About the mentioned events in Saratov see K. V. Mel'chakova, op. cit., p. 79.

70 Ibid, p. 80.

71 J. Blažić – Pejić, op. cit., p. 372.

72 Ibid, p. 380.

fixion. The chalice's central medallion portrays Christ frontally, his right hand raised in blessing and his left hand holding an orb and cross. Flanking him, the Theotokos and Saint John the Baptist, depicted in three-quarter profile, form a Deesis composition. The Theotokos is depicted with her arms folded and head lowered, while Saint John holds a cross and touches his chest. The Crucifixion image depicts a skull beneath a crucified Christ. The areas around the medallions are decorated with crosses. Above the medallions, an inscription presents the prayer recited during communion: ТѢЛО ХРИСТОВО ПРИМНТЕ ИСТОНИКА БЕЗСМЕРТНАГО ВКУСНТЕ [*Taste the Body of Christ, Taste the Fountain of Immortality*]. The foot of the chalice exhibits intricate decoration, and its edge bears an inscription in italics: *С. П. Бургъ За упокой Маріи 26. Янв 1873. г* [*S. P. Burg for the repose of Maria, 26 Jan 1873*]. The inscription confirms that the chalice was crafted during Sava Kosanović's time in Russia, further supporting the theory that he acquired it there. Interestingly, a very similar chalice, featuring the same arrangement of saints and inscription, was produced two years later in a Moscow workshop. This later chalice is currently housed in the treasury of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Vranje, Serbia.<sup>73</sup>

★

The presented data and description of the Russian items within the Sarajevo Cathedral allow for several significant conclusions. The monumental three-zone iconostasis, a major donation from Russia, testifies to that country's power and its intention to assist their Orthodox brethren in Sarajevo by furnishing the newly built temple. As one of the largest and most admired churches in the Balkans at the time, the Sarajevo Orthodox Cathedral held significant prestige. Russia's involvement in such a prominent project served to expand its influence and enhance its reputation in the Balkan region. Despite some information regarding the donor and potential contributor to the iconostasis, Hegumen Ignatius from the Coastal Monastery of St. Sergius near St. Petersburg, the exact details of the commission remain unclear. The Russian Consul to Sarajevo likely informed the Moscow Slavic Committee about the need to furnish the church, thereby alerting Hegumen Ignatius. This suggests that the Russian consul played a key role in facilitating the commission. His advocacy probably led to the engagement of craftsmen from St. Petersburg to construct the iconostasis, pulpit, and thrones in Sarajevo, and to gild the church furnishings.

An analysis of the iconostasis's iconography reveals a careful selection of saints. The inclusion of the first two Serbian archbishops in the throne area indicates a deliberate intention to create a work specifically for the Serbian people. However, they remain the only Serbian national saints depicted, as space constraints precluded the incorporation of the icon of Saint Simeon of Serbia, which had also been sent. Notably, Russian saints are represented in far greater numbers. Given the iconostasis's location and the craftsmen involved, the selection of saints appears reasonable.

73 V. Dautović, *Riznica crkve Svete Trojice u Vranju*, in: *Saborni hram Svete Trojice u Vranju (1858 – 2008)*, edited by: Nenad Makuljević, Vranje 2008, pp. 165–166.

However, the abundance of Russian saints might also indicate an intention to promote their veneration beyond Russia's borders. The icons, executed in the academic style, likely involved multiple craftsmen, although only Hegumen Ignatius and the monastery's icon painter, Alexander Kolchin, are known by name.

Along with Hegumen Ignatius and Russian diplomats, Archimandrite Sava Kosanović was instrumental in furnishing the church. He journeyed through Russia, gathering financial and liturgical donations. Despite the hardships of this long trip, Sava's efforts were successful. The relics of Saint Thecla, which he carried with him, inspired religious devotion and respect from the Russians. Although sources mention several items donated by Russians to the Sarajevo Church through Sava, only one has been identified. It remains to be seen what further information could be discovered through more detailed on-site investigations and examination of archival materials.

In conclusion, we observe that the construction and furnishing of the Sarajevo Cathedral represented events of immense cultural, political, and religious significance. One can only imagine the atmosphere in Sarajevo upon the arrival of the monumental iconostasis, complementing the grandeur of the newly built church. The consecration in 1872 marked a pivotal moment in the lives of Sarajevo's Orthodox community. Despite the city's turbulent history, the church and its interior stand remarkably well-preserved to this day.

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Anita Marković

## The Iconostasis of the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac

The accession of King Aleksandar Obrenović to the Serbian throne, following the abdication of King Milan Obrenović in 1889, signalled the onset of a new direction in Serbian state policy.<sup>1</sup> The reinstatement of Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović to the Serbian archiepiscopal throne marked the start of the reconciliation process between the state and the church. Simultaneously, in the realm of foreign policy, strong ties were forged with the Russian Empire, which the new ruler visited during the summer of 1891.<sup>2</sup>

The endeavors of Metropolitan Mihailo, one of the most influential figures of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, significantly shaped the subsequent development of Serbian church art.<sup>3</sup> The Russian mod-

1 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 13,19,22,57.

2 The return of Metropolitan Mihailo signalled a shift in state policy toward fostering closer relations between Serbia and Russia, while the amendment of the Church Authorities Law embodied a compromise between the state and the church. *Ibid.*

3 Metropolitan Mihailo Jovanović ascended to the episcopal throne in 1859, following the resignation of Metropolitan Petar Jovanović, coinciding with the dynastic change in Serbia and the return of Prince Miloš Obrenović to the throne. However, due to conflicts with King Milan Obrenović, he was exiled from Serbia between 1881 and 1889. A staunch Russophile and advocate of Slavic unity, he maintained strong ties with Russia, even spending part of his exile there. He returned to the episcopal throne on 28 May 1889, and remained in this position until his death in 1899. Metropolitan Mihailo's work had a decisive influence on shaping the internal organization of the Serbian church, with his most notable achievement being the attainment of autocephaly in 1879. As a product of Russian education, Metropolitan Mihailo advocated for an internal church organization modelled on Russian practices, implementing significant reforms within the Serbian church. In addition to translating Russian theological literature into Serbian, he actively supported the education of Serbian students in Russian spiritual academies and monastery iconography schools. About Metropolitan Mihailo: N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 51-91; Đ. Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve, knjiga II, od početka XIX veka do kraja Drugog svetskog rata*, Beograd 2018, 349-410; I. Borozan, *Između reprezentacije crkvene vlasti i prikaza aktuelnog: predstave mitropolita Mihaila Jovanovića u drugoj polovini 19. veka, Niš i Vizantija*, zbornik radova, Niš 2020, 495-510. A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 89-94; T. Bradić, *Mitropolit Mihailo i transfer ruska sakralne umetnosti u Kneževinu/Kraljeviniu Srbiju (1859-1898)*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2024.

el, adhered to across all aspects of church life, is likewise consistently applied in church painting due to its dogmatic and aesthetic significance.<sup>4</sup> By viewing Russian church painting as the ideal of Orthodox style and iconography, he sought to assert control over the artwork in Serbian churches and mitigate the potentially serious effects of the widespread emergence of *non-Orthodox* icons, which represented a form of the Catholic Church's expanding propaganda.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the emergence of Catholic and Uniate icons, which *merchants, booksellers, and peddlers were distributing and misrepresenting as Orthodox*, a circular letter dated 20 December 1889, was issued to inform the clergy of the prohibition of such icons, both in churches and in the homes of the faithful.<sup>6</sup> The non-Orthodox nature of an icon can be identified, *first, by the presence of a signature in a foreign language; second, by the depiction of saints in Roman-style attire, with shaved heads and clothing not customary in our churches, arranged in Western-style poses, kneeling with folded hands. It is the duty of the Orthodox Serbian clergy to preserve the faithful in Orthodoxy through teaching, counsel, and authority, ensuring that non-Orthodox icons are neither purchased nor kept within Serbia, whether in churches or in the homes of Serbian families. This decree is to be displayed in every church and monastery to ensure compliance.*<sup>7</sup>

The significance of procuring *properly* Orthodox icons became particularly apparent when furnishing the interiors of newly constructed churches with iconostases. This was especially crucial for temples that lacked wall paintings, as the iconostasis functioned as the primary visual medium for conveying all the most essential messages.<sup>8</sup>

The selection of painters, overseen by the clergy in accordance with legal regulations,<sup>9</sup> was influenced both by their level of education and the prices they offered,<sup>10</sup> with the aim of ensuring the iconographic and dogmatic accuracy of the icons. To address this need, Metropolitan Mihailo authorized the procurement of ready-made iconostases from Russia for furnishing Orthodox churches in the Kingdom of Serbia.

4 Đ. Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve, knjiga II, od početka XIX veka do kraja Drugog svetskog rata*, Beograd 2018, 295-413; N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 14; A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 89-94; Nenad Makuljević, *Piety, Ideology, and Orthodoxy: Russian Icons in Serbian Church Culture (17th–19th Centuries)*, *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16th – early 20th Centuries)*, La Pomme d'or, Seyssel 2016, 141-142.

5 One example of an open attack on Orthodoxy was the book by the Catholicized Orthodox priest Jovan Čokrljan, titled *Pravoslavlje ili koja crkva pravije uči, istočna ili zapadna (Orthodoxy or Which Church Teaches Correctly, the Eastern or the Western)*, published in Vienna in 1860. In response, Metropolitan Mihailo authored *Odgovor Čokrljanu, svedočeći da je istočna crkva istinopravoslavna (Answer to Čokrljan, Witnessing that the Eastern Church is Truly Orthodox)*, in which he affirmed that the Eastern Church is truly Orthodox and refuted Čokrljan's claims on key doctrinal issues. N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 52.

6 O zabrani upotrebe ikona "katoličkog i unijatskog izgleda", Z. Ranković, M. Lazić, *Uredbe i propisi Mitropolije beogradske 1877-1893*, Požarevac 2011, 209.

7 *Ibid.*

8 A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 281.

9 *Zakon o crkvenim vlastima istočno-pravoslavne crkve u Kraljevini Srbiji*, Beograd 1890, član 27, stav 5.

10 N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 69.

One of the firms specializing in the import of liturgical items, including iconostases, that received notable support from Metropolitan Mihailo was the Belgrade-based company of Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović, originally tailors of church vestments (who later added “companions” to their company name).<sup>11</sup> Founded in Belgrade in 1884, this specialized trading company pursued significant ambitions in the procurement and sale of liturgical items, including ready-made iconostases for churches.<sup>12</sup> The company conducted its operations through commercial agents who systematically visited churches throughout Serbia and actively participated in auctions for the creation of iconostases, as well as the procurement of church liturgical items and priestly vestments.<sup>13</sup> Owing to their favourable and competitive pricing, the firm of Marković and Pavlović frequently secured significant contracts, even outcompeting some of the most esteemed Serbian painters of the time, as well as church fresco painters and other lesser-known artists.<sup>14</sup> Recognizing the business practices of Marković and Pavlović and their impact on Serbian church art, Belgrade painters petitioned the Ministry of Education at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to ban these *unqualified entrepreneurs* from conducting their operations.<sup>15</sup> Despite the criticism from artistic circles among painters, the work of the firm Marković and Pavlović met the approval of both the high church hierarchy and the commission of the Belgrade Spiritual Court, which inspected and reviewed the iconostases. Additionally, priests and patrons expressed their gratitude in letters, praising the firm for its low prices and the fact that the items were imported from Russia.

The distribution and sale of items offered by V. Marković and I. Pavlović were primarily conducted through catalogues, introducing a novel approach to the Serbian market.<sup>16</sup> The firm’s catalogue, titled *Price List of Church Furnishings, Icons, Books, Church Vestments, and Priestly Attire*,

11 The firm of Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović was located at 10 Dubrovačka Street, directly across from the Cathedral Church in Belgrade. About the firm of Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović: U. Rajčević, O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda, *Saopštenja XXIV*, Beograd 1992, 287-294.

12 *Ibid*, 288.

13 *Ibid*.

14 There were instances where awarded contracts were given to amateurs or trained painters who worked anonymously for a modest fee to complete the tasks, *Ibid*, 293.

15 In mid-1900, a dispute emerged between Belgrade painters and the church regarding a contract awarded to the firm of V. Marković and Pavlović. Upon learning that the construction of an iconostasis in the village of Dobra, located in the Požarevac district, had been entrusted to this firm, painters Đorđe Krstić, Nikola Milojević, Nastas Stefanović, and Đorđe Milovanović, along with the manager of the cartographic workshop, submitted a complaint to the Minister of Education. They referenced the Church Authorities Law of 1890 and a letter from the Minister of Education dated 21 July 1899, requesting that work be prohibited for *unqualified entrepreneurs* and that all future contracts be awarded through a mandatory auction process, rather than *informally*. The response from the Belgrade Spiritual Court indicated that, despite the legal shortcomings, the contractor had received satisfaction with the project and was even praised for the solid construction of the iconostasis. The court further noted that the contractor should be rewarded for his efforts. U. Rajčević, O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda, *Saopštenja XXIV*, Beograd 1992, 289-290.

16 V. Dautović, *Umetnost i liturgijski ritual: bogoslužbeni predmeti u srpskoj vizuelnoj kulturi 19. veka*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, 2020, 297.

available at the store of V. Marković and Pavlović in Belgrade, was printed as a supplement to church and business calendars in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It featured a detailed assortment of goods, complete with descriptions, illustrations, prices, and letters of appreciation from satisfied customers.<sup>17</sup>

A prominent feature of the catalogue was the offering of ready-made iconostases manufactured in Russia, emphasized as being available at *the most affordable prices*.<sup>18</sup> Including woodcarving, carpentry, gilding, and icon painting, these iconostases were available for purchase at prices of 3,000, 10,000, and 20,000 dinars.<sup>19</sup> The price of the iconostasis was determined by its size, the amount of gilding, and the number of icons it included. While it was noted that the icons were painted by Orthodox painters with a profound understanding of Serbian church art, neither the names of the artists nor the workshops responsible for their creation were specified. The operations of the firm Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović, with their near-monopolistic position in the market, played a significant role in the transfer of Russian sacred art to the Kingdom of Serbia. According to available data, they supplied iconostases to 25 churches within Serbia's borders.<sup>20</sup> It is currently known that iconostases were procured from Russia for several churches, including the Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God in Radljevo, the Dormition of the Mother of God in Petnica, St. Trifun in Kličevac, the Holy Trinity in Paraćin, the Ascension of Christ in Dren, and St. King Stefan the First-Crowned in Dobra, as well as for churches in Kalinovik and Zenica, located in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>21</sup> Letters of gratitude from clergy and church board members, published at the end of the catalogue alongside commendations for the firm's work, particularly highlighted their satisfaction that the iconostases were crafted in the Russian Empire.<sup>22</sup>

17 The woodcut illustrations of various liturgical items in the catalogue were created by A. Petrović. *Cenovnik crkvenih utvari, ikona i knjiga, crkvenog odjevanja i sveštenečkog odela koja se mogu dobiti u radnji V. Markovića i Pavlovića u Beogradu, Dubrovačka ulica br. 6, spram Saborne crkve*, odšampan kao dodatak u crkvenim kalendarima. *Žiça, religiozno-moralni i privredni kalendar za narod i sveštenstvo za godinu 1899*, Beograd 1899; *Glas, crkveni kalendar sa šematizmom Niške eparhije (prvi u Pravoslavnoj srpskoj crkvi u Kraljevini Srbiji) za 1900. godinu*, Niš 1899.

18 *Ibid*, 30-33.

19 *Cenovnik crkvenih utvari, ikona i knjiga, crkvenog odejanja i sveštenečkog odela, koja se mogu dobiti u radnji V. Markovića i Pavlovića u Beogradu* in: *Glas, crkveni kalendar sa šematizmom Niške eparhije (prvi u Pravoslavnoj srpskoj crkvi u Kraljevini Srbiji) za 1900. godinu*, Niš, 1899, 14-15.

20 U. Rajčević, O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda, *Saopštenja XXIV*, Beograd 1992, 293.

21 *Žiça, religiozno-moralni i privredni kalendar za narod i sveštenstvo za godinu 1899*, Beograd 1899, 30-33; U. Rajčević, O firmi Vitomira Markovića i Ivana Pavlovića iz Beograda, *Saopštenja XXIV*, Beograd 1992, 287-294; N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882-1914)*, Beograd 2007, 181; Nenad Makuljević, *Piety, Ideology, and Orthodoxy: Russian Icons in Serbian Church Culture (17th-19th Centuries)*, *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16th - early 20th Centuries)*, La Pomme d'or, Seyssel 2016, 141-142.

22 *Žiça, religiozno-moralni i privredni kalendar za narod i sveštenstvo za godinu 1899*, Beograd 1899, 30-33.

In the furnishing of modern 19<sup>th</sup>-century church interiors, the construction of iconostases held a position of particular importance as their most representative element. Each iconostasis was required to be designed in accordance with liturgical symbolism and function, serving as a reflection of the key elements of liturgical actions.<sup>23</sup> Frequently, the painted program of the iconostasis was tailored to accommodate the specific requests of benefactors.<sup>24</sup> The system of benefaction had a profound impact on the appearance of the iconostasis, resulting in what is known as an open structure, where social and religious elements intertwined.<sup>25</sup> From this perspective, it can be concluded that the construction of iconostases and their painted programs were not solely determined by symbolic, liturgical, and didactic elements, but also profoundly influenced by social factors. These include state and church structures, the needs of the parish or monastic community, the practice of benefaction, and the aesthetic preferences of the patrons.<sup>26</sup> To guarantee the doctrinal and aesthetic correctness of church icon painting while accommodating patrons' expectations for the most favourable production costs, the practice of procuring ready-made iconostases from Russia was introduced.

According to information recorded in the church chronicle, one of these iconostases was commissioned to furnish the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac.<sup>27</sup>

The Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac was constructed in 1892/93 through the collaborative efforts of the church board, the local community, and its residents.<sup>28</sup> Although services commenced in November 1896, the church was solemnly consecrated in the presence of Metropolitan Innocent on 9 May 1899.<sup>29</sup>

The church was designed by architect Svetozar Ivačković,<sup>30</sup> in the Hanseatic style, as a single-domed structure based on a free cross layout (fig. 1). Its spatial organization includes an altar apse in the east, a nave with rectangular choir spaces, and a vestibule in the west, featuring a gallery and a bell tower.<sup>31</sup> The decoration of the facades reflects the distinct influence of the Hanseatic school, evident in features such as characteristic window openings in the form of monophores and quadriphores, friezes of blind arcades and pilasters, and the treatment of the western facade with

23 A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 282.

24 N. Makuljević, Liturgija, simbolika i priložništvo: ikonostas crkve Svete Trojice u Vranju u *Saborni hram Svete Trojice u Vranju 1858-2008*, Vranje 2008, 45–51.

25 *Ibid.*, 51.

26 *Ibid.*, 83; A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 282.

27 The village of Boževac, located in the municipality of Malo Crniće, today falls under the territory of the Braničevo Diocese according to the church-administrative division.

28 At the time of the church's construction, the priest was Radenko Anđelković, and the president of the municipality was Živan Aleksić. *Chronicle of the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac*.

29 *Ibid.*

30 The construction works were entrusted to the Požarevac residents Mihailo Arandelović, contractor, and craftsman Filip Faf. *Ibid.*

31 A. Kadjević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi*, Beograd 2007, 88.



Fig. 1.  
Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac

a portico designed as a canopy and a rosette. The dome, with its tambour encircled by a series of straight and blind monophores, further underscores this style. However, the characteristic gradation of masses leading to the dome as the highest point, and the clear articulation of the base of the free cross, were altered by the construction of a massive belfry above the chancel, integrated as an essential part of the church.

The most distinguished feature of the Boževac church is its iconostasis, crafted in Russia and imported through the Belgrade-based company of Vitomir Marković and Pavlović, renowned *merchants of church furnishings, priestly vestments, and iconostases*.<sup>32</sup> The funds for its purchase were secured through the contributions of the citizens of the Boževac municipality.<sup>33</sup> The procurement

32 Cenovnik in: Žiža, religiozno-moralni i privredni kalendar za narod i sveštenstvo za godinu 1899, Beograd 1899,32.

33 In the church's chronicle, it is stated that the largest contributor was Antonije Bajloni, an industrialist from Malo Crniće.



Fig. 2.  
*Iconostasis*  
 Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac

and installation of the iconostasis were overseen by Priest Živan Sredojević and the President of the Municipality of Boževac, Stevan Stojimirović.<sup>34</sup>

The iconostasis, featuring 20 icons, was installed in the church in October 1896, following an inspection by a special commission of the Spiritual Court in Belgrade.<sup>35</sup> The satisfaction of the clients with the quality and price of the work is evidenced by a letter dated 12 December 1896, addressed to Mr. V. Marković and Mr. Pavlović, *merchants of church furnishings, priestly vestments, and iconostases from Belgrade*. The letter was signed by Živan Sredojević, the church priest, along with guardians Nikola Jović and Milorad Rakić.<sup>36</sup> In their letter, they stated that, beyond expressing their satisfaction verbally, they also wished to do so in writing regarding the crafted iconostasis.

34 *Chronicle of the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac*.

35 In the *Chronicle of the church*, it is stated that the largest contributor was Antonije Bajloni, an industrialist from Malo Crniće.

36 *Chronicle of the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac*.

They emphasized that the icons were *artistically created in a strictly Orthodox spirit*, a quality confirmed by the relevant commission of the Belgrade Spiritual Court, which provided highly favorable reviews of their artistic merit. In addition to the icons, the firm of Marković and Pavlović *received high praise for the skillfully executed wood carving and the fine gilding*. In conclusion, they expressed their gratitude for the effort invested in procuring the beautiful iconostasis and stated that it would be their great honor to recommend the firm as *reliable, precise, and offering very reasonable prices*. This letter of thanks and public endorsement was included at the end of the catalogue published by the firm, appearing primarily in church calendars such as *Žiča*, the Religious-Moral and Economic Calendar for the People and Clergy for 1899, and *The Voice*, The Church Calendar with the Schematism of the Niš Diocese for the year 1900.

The Boževač iconostasis, based on its construction and iconographic program, belongs to the type of three-zone iconostasis partitions, with dimensions of 9.9m x 6.62m (fig. 2). It features 20 icons executed in oil on canvas, laminated onto a wooden base. The altar space is separated from the pre-altar area by a three-arched opening that aligns with its spatial division into the proscomidia, the central altar space, and the diaconicon. To accommodate its installation, the iconostasis had to be divided into three sections and fitted between the pilasters and columns. Currently, there is no detailed information about the workshop responsible for the creation of the wooden structure or the artisans who painted the icons. It remains unclear whether the firm of V. Marković and I. Pavlović commissioned the work through its representatives directly from one of the iconostasis workshops or indirectly via Russian companies engaged in the trade of church items, including the sale of ready-made iconostases.<sup>37</sup>

The iconostasis structure of the church in Boževac is designed in a Neoclassical style. It showcases an imitation of burgundy-brown marble, complemented by gilded woodcarving decorations, including slender, fluted columns with Ionic capitals. These columns are horizontally arranged to frame the fields containing the icons, while vertically, they support a profiled cornice that separates the zones.<sup>38</sup> All the icons are enclosed in simple gilded frames, with the empty parapet fields beneath them sharing the same frame profile. In contrast, more intricate woodcarving decorations, featuring floral motifs and crosses, are found on the Royal Doors, beneath the Crucifixion, and on the medallions depicting the Virgin Mary and John the Theologian.

37 Russian illustrated catalogues provided detailed information about the offerings and their prices. Among them are: *Katalog cerkovnia utvar ikoni postavshchik* published by Nikolai Ivanovich Sitov and Velichaishaia fabrika cerkovni utvari v Rosii tovarishchevstva Andreia Zahraipina i synovei v Moskve [https://meshok.net/en/listing?search=Каталог Церковная утварь](https://meshok.net/en/listing?search=Каталог%20Церковная%20утварь) It is noted that the trading company of Ivan Vasilyevich Tereza, a manufacturer of iconostases and church furnishings, donated a certain number of iconostases to churches in Serbia. *Iz naroda, Male novine* 4. januar 1903, 2; <http://elib.shpl.ru/ru/nodes/46603-tereza-ivan-vasilievich-mihael-karl-avgustovich#mode/grid/page/1/zoom/6>.

38 Such Neoclassical concepts, which involved the use of marble imitation to enhance the representativeness of the church space as a public building, were widespread throughout Europe. N. Makuljević, *Crkva Svetog arhangela Gavrila u Velikom Gradištu*, Veliko Gradište 2006, 72.

The programmatic design of the iconostasis in the Boževac church is crafted to meet liturgical needs, intertwined with symbolic, moral-educational, and national elements, in line with church practices in the Principality and later the Kingdom of Serbia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The prominent placement of the icons is thoughtfully arranged to align with the priest's prayers during the liturgy and to facilitate the prayers of the faithful as an act of personal devotion. Accordingly, the programmatic arrangement of icons on the iconostasis includes the following: in the first zone, the central icons of *Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Virgin with the infant Christ, Saint Sava, Saint Apostle Thomas, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker*. The Royal Doors feature the *Annunciation*, with *the Last Supper* depicted in the upper section. The northern side doors display *Saint Archangel Michael*, while the southern side doors depict *Saint Archdeacon Stephen*. In the second zone, the iconostasis features nine icons, including *Saint George the Victorious* and the following feasts: *the Entry into the Temple, the Meeting, the Baptism, the Resurrection, the Nativity of Christ, the Transfiguration, the Ascension, and the icon of Saints Peter and Paul*. In the third zone, at the top of the iconostasis, there is a cross depicting the *Crucifixion*, flanked by medallions containing icons of *the Most Holy Virgin* on the northern side and *Saint John the Theologian* on the southern side. As the icons were painted by Russian artists, the inscriptions are written in Church Slavonic in the Russian edition.

In the central position of the zone of central icons are the icons of *Jesus Christ* and *the Virgin Mary with the infant Christ*, each measuring 147 x 60cm.

In the central icon of *Jesus Christ*, He is depicted standing, blessing with His right hand while holding a celestial orb, symbolizing His role as the ruler of the universe, in His left hand. He is dressed in a red chiton overlaid with a blue himation. This depiction corresponds to the traditional representation of Christ as the ruler of the universe, firmly rooted in the Eastern Orthodox dogmatic-visual tradition. The icon is a votive offering from the sons of Ignjat Bajloni, as indicated by the inscription at the bottom: "*Central icon of Jesus Christ: Offered by I. Bajloni and his sons for their health and that of their family, 1896.*"

As a counterpart to Jesus Christ, the central icon of *the Virgin Mary with the infant Christ* is positioned to the north of the Royal Doors. The Virgin is depicted standing, dressed in a red maphorion and a blue chiton, holding the infant Christ, who is clothed in a white garment with outstretched arms in the orans position. The background of the icon is rendered in brown tones, symbolically highlighting her figure as the Mother of God. This iconographic depiction of the Virgin with the infant Christ was a common feature on iconostases in the Principality and later in the Kingdom of Serbia. The icon was donated to the Boževac church by its greatest benefactor, Antonije Bajloni, as indicated by the votive inscription at the bottom, beneath the figure of the Virgin: "*Offered by Antonije Bajloni for the repose of the soul of his wife Ana and brother Vasa, 1896.*"

Among the central icons, positioned in front of the proskomedia, is the icon of *Saint Sava, the Serbian bishop* (fig. 3). Saint Sava, the founder of the Serbian Church and its first archbishop, is depicted in episcopal attire. He wears a red sticharion beneath a green chasuble adorned with crosses,



Fig. 3.  
*Saint Sava, Serbian Bishop, despotic icon, Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac*

an epigonation, and a golden epitrachilion, topped with a mitre. In his left hand, he holds the Gospel, while his right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. This depiction of Saint Sava reflects the deep veneration of his cult as the most significant national saint and protector of the Serbian people.

The patron icon of the Church of *Saint Apostle Thomas* is located in the central part of the iconostasis, to the north of the central icon of the Virgin Mary with the infant Christ. The saint is depicted standing within a landscape, characterized by short hair and a beard. He is dressed in a red chiton and a blue himation, with his hands clasped prayerfully in front of his chest. Saint Apostle Thomas, often referred to as *Doubting Thomas*, was one of the twelve apostles, chosen first to confirm and establish faith in the resurrection of Christ and later to reveal the miraculous glorification of the Mother of God.<sup>39</sup> Among the Serbian Orthodox population in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Apostle Thomas was held in high regard, with his feast day on 6/19 October often celebrated as a patron saint day.

In the central part of the iconostasis, south of the central icon of Jesus Christ, is the icon of *Saint John the Baptist*. John the Baptist is depicted as a younger man with dark hair and a beard, standing in a golden robe with short sleeves, draped in a green himation, and wearing sandals. His right hand, with the index finger raised, points toward the heavens, while his left hand holds a long staff topped with a cross. The Jordan River is depicted in the background. The inclusion of John the Baptist in the zone of central icons on the iconostasis was a common practice, reflecting his veneration as the first among the prophets and as one equal to the angels.<sup>40</sup> His inclusion among the central icons completes a deisis.

The row of central icons concludes with the icon of *Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker*, positioned in the section of the iconostasis inserted between the column and the pilaster of the southern wall. Saint Nicholas is depicted as an older man with gray hair and a beard, standing. He blesses with his right hand while holding a closed book in his left. He is dressed in episcopal attire, featuring a red chasuble trimmed with gold ribbons over a blue sticharion. In the final design of the programmatic and spatial concept of the iconostasis, the preferences of the donors played a significant role alongside liturgical requirements. Consequently, the zone of central icons includes saints whose cults were particularly venerated within the local community. This is evidenced by the votive inscription beneath the icon of Saint Nicholas: “*Nikola Živanović from Boževac offers to the church of Boževac for the health of his home, and for the repose of the soul of his grandfather Jova and grandmother Milunka, 1896.*”

The theme of the painted program on the Royal Doors, symbolizing the gates of heaven through which the incarnate Christ passed, is centered on the representation of the *Annunciation* (fig. 4).<sup>41</sup> In the northern field, the Archangel Gabriel is depicted standing on a cloud, addressing the Virgin

39 N. Velimirović, *Ohridski prolog*, Šabac 2000, 724-727.

40 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Crkveno bogoslovie ili crkve slovie za učenike viši razreda*, Beograd 1860, 232.

41 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, Novi Sad 1996, 54.



Fig. 4.  
*Annunciation*, Royal Doors, Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac

Mary. He holds a lily in his right hand, while his left hand gestures toward the heavens. Opposite him, in the southern field, the Virgin Mary is shown in an interior setting, her head slightly bowed in humility. Her right hand rests on her chest, and her left hand points to a scroll on the table beside her. The partially unrolled scroll bears individual words of the Archangel Gabriel's address to Mary: "Behold, the Lord..."<sup>42</sup>

On the northern doors leading into the proskomedija, the *Archangel Michael*, leader of the heavenly host, is depicted as a youthful figure with long black hair. He is dressed in a red cloak draped over armor and stands on a cloud. In his right hand, he holds a fiery sword, symbolizing divine justice, while in his left, he carries a shield adorned with a cross and stars. Iconographically, this depiction is an idealized representation, aligned with interpretations in late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Serbian theological literature, which emphasize the Archangel's beauty as a symbol of love, goodness, and his readiness to assist humanity.<sup>43</sup>

On the southern doors, leading into the diaconicon, *Saint Archdeacon Stephen* is depicted as a young man dressed in deacon's attire. In his left hand, he holds a stone, symbolizing his martyrdom, while in his right, he holds one end of an epitrichion. Positioned opposite the diaconicon, the icon of Saint Archdeacon Stephen is closely tied to the liturgical symbolism of these doors.

Above the Royal Doors, in the upper section, is a depiction of the Last Supper, installed in 1927 to replace the original, which was removed during the occupation in World War I.<sup>44</sup> It bears a votive inscription: "Lazar Stoilović, president, offers to the church of Boževac, 1927."

In the upper, second zone of the iconostasis, there are nine icons arranged from north to south. The first depicts *Saint George the Victorious*, followed by the icon of *the Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple*, the sole representation from the cycle of the feasts of the Virgin Mary. Next are six icons of the Great Feasts: *the Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, *the Baptism of Christ*, *the Resurrection of Christ*, *the Nativity of Christ*, *the Transfiguration*, and *the Ascension of Christ*. The final icon in the series depicts Saints Peter and Paul. The programmatic arrangement of these representations in the second zone reflects their significance within the liturgical calendar of the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>45</sup> The arrangement was influenced not only by liturgical symbolism and contemporary theological thought but also by the preferences of the donors and the needs of the local parish community.<sup>46</sup>

*Saint George the Victorious* is depicted as a dark-haired young man of athletic build, standing in warrior attire, holding a spear in his right hand and a shield in his left. Below the image is an

42 *Rejoice, full of grace! The Lord is with you, blessed are you among women!* (Luke 1:28).

43 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Nauka pravoslavne hrišćanske vere*, Beograd 1883, 115 in: A. Kostić Đekić, *Crkveni kompleks u Lozoviku*, Beograd-Smederevo 2017, 151.

44 *Annals of the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Boževac*.

45 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Crkveno bogoslovie ili crkve slovie za učenike viši razreda*, Beograd 1860, 183-210, 232-235; A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 329-330.

46 A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 329-330.

inscription: “Donated by Žika and Milan Dačić: God, Stanoje, Jova, Živa, Milan, Bogdan, Sava, and Stevan from Boževac, 1896.” The depiction of Saint George as a victorious athlete represents one of the oldest symbols of the triumph of virtues. Here, he is portrayed as a Christian hero, exemplifying a fighter for truth and faith.<sup>47</sup>

South of Saint George, in the section of the iconostasis in front of the proskomedia, is the icon depicting *the Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple*. It portrays the moment when the high priest Zacharias receives the young Mary at the temple gates. Mary is depicted wearing a blue robe, adorned with a wreath on her head, and holding a candle in her hands. In the background, her parents, Joachim and Anna, are shown alongside a young girl also holding a candle.<sup>48</sup> This is the sole representation from the cycle of Mother of God feasts included in the program of the divine iconostasis. Its selection was contextualized to emphasize the economy of salvation, as Mary’s entrance into the temple is regarded as the moment when God foreshadowed the beginning of salvation to humanity (Protoevangelium of James, chapter 8).

An important segment of the iconostasis features representations of the Great Feasts. Changes in church practices and the simplification of the church calendar influenced the number of these depictions. In their selection, emphasis was placed on including the most revered events from church history, ensuring that their artistic interpretation aligned with sermons and contemporary understanding of the church’s heritage.<sup>49</sup> Metropolitan Mihailo interpreted the Great Feasts in his sermons as celebrations of Jesus’ earthly presence in bodily form and as affirmations of His divine nature.<sup>50</sup>

The depiction of *the Presentation of Christ in the Temple* adheres to the traditional iconographic scheme, portraying the moment when the young Christ is brought into the temple. The scene includes the Mother of God, St. Joseph, the Prophetess Anna, and the elder Simeon holding the infant Christ. Beyond its connection to the Eucharistic sacrifice, as interpreted in Baroque theology, the Meeting was given moral-didactic significance in 19<sup>th</sup>-century sermons, highlighting the importance of devotion to Christian virtues for the salvation of the soul.<sup>51</sup>

*The Baptism of Christ* is depicted following the established iconographic scheme. The icon captures the moment when John the Baptist baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River. Christ is shown standing in the water, draped in a white cloth around His thighs, with His arms crossed over His chest

47 M. Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, Novi Sad 1996, 368-369.

48 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Pastirska poučenia pravoslavnim hristianima na sve nedelě i prazdnike preko godine*, Beograd 1860.

49 N. Makuljević, *Crkva Svetog arhangela Gavrila u Velikom Gradištu*, Veliko Gradište 2006, 191-192. A. Kostić Đekić, *Crkveni kompleks u Lozoviku*, Beograd-Smederevo 2017, 160-161.

50 In the preface to *Pastirska poučenia pravoslavnim hristianima na sve nedelě i prazdnike preko godine*, Metropolitan Mihailo states that they are based on a collection of church teachings printed in Kyiv, but that some were written for the needs of the Serbian church. A. Kostić Đekić, *Crkveni kompleks u Lozoviku*, Beograd-Smederevo 2017, 161.

51 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Pravoslavni propovednik*, knjiga druga, Beograd 1866, 78.



Fig. 5.  
*Resurrection of Christ, feast icon, Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac*

and His head bowed. Saint John, dressed in a green cloak, baptizes Christ with his right hand while holding a long staff topped with a cross in his left. A light descends from heaven at the moment of baptism, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, depicted as a dove. This representation carries soteriological symbolism, emphasizing the significance of baptism as a fundamental prerequisite for human salvation.

The programmatic arrangement of the central field in the second zone, featuring the *Resurrection of Christ*, aligns with the practices established in Serbian church painting of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 5). In sermons from this period, the Resurrection was interpreted as a confirmation of Christ's divine nature, a testament to His victory over death, and a promise of eternal life for all humanity.<sup>52</sup> At the center of the composition is Christ emerging from a tomb carved in rock. He stands barefoot on a cloud, illuminated by divine light, dressed in white robes. His right hand is raised in blessing, while His left hand holds a staff with a white banner bearing a cross. In the left corner, an angel is depicted kneeling, while faint figures of soldiers appear in the background. The prominent placement of this representation on the iconostasis is best illustrated by Metropolitan Mihailo who emphasized that the Resurrection of Christ is the most significant event and the greatest truth of the Christian faith.<sup>53</sup>

*The Nativity of Christ* is depicted as the adoration of the shepherds, following an iconographic scheme commonly found in modern art. The scene is set in a cave, with the infant Christ lying on straw. Beside Him is the Mother of God, lifting a cloth to show it to the three shepherds, while Joseph stands in the background. As the shepherds worship the infant Christ, a star shines brightly in the sky. This depiction of Christ's Birth carries Eucharistic symbolism, and in 19<sup>th</sup>-century preaching practice, it is regarded as one of the most significant feasts, from which other feasts are derived.<sup>54</sup>

*The Transfiguration* is depicted using the standard iconographic composition, portraying Christ's revelation in divine glory to the three disciples—Peter, James, and John. Christ stands on Mount Tabor, surrounded by radiant light and dressed in white robes. On either side of Him are the prophets Elijah and Moses, while at the foot of the mountain, three of His disciples, blinded by the light, are shown fallen to the ground. The Transfiguration, as one of the most significant events in Christ's earthly life, symbolizes the incarnate Logos.

*The Ascension* scene adheres to modern iconographic conventions for representing this event. At the center of the composition, Christ is shown in a red tunic and blue himation, with His arms outstretched as He ascends to heaven. He stands on a cloud within a mandorla, illuminated by radiant light. Below Him, the apostles are depicted in various poses, gazing upward at the ascending

52 A. Kostić Đekić, *Crkveni kompleks u Lozoviku*, Beograd-Smederevo 2017, 160.

53 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Pastirska poučenia pravoslavnim hristianima na sve nedelje i prazdnike preko godine*, Beograd 1860, 10-11.

54 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Crkveno bogoslovie ili crkve slovie za učenike viši razreda*, Beograd 1860, 178; A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 336.

Christ, while the Mother of God is portrayed with her arms outstretched and palms turned upward. Although the presence of the Theotokos in the Ascension scene is not mentioned in the Gospels, in modern painting, it serves as a symbolic representation of the Church.<sup>55</sup> The representation of the Ascension of Christ in sermons was interpreted as a call to believers, emphasizing the importance of elevating their hearts to heaven through prayer.<sup>56</sup>

The final icon in the series depicts the *Holy Apostles Peter and Paul*, standing side by side. Saint Peter is portrayed with white hair and a beard, dressed in a blue tunic and red himation, barefoot, holding a book in his left hand at his side, while his right hand rests on his chest. Apostle Paul, with black hair and a long black beard, is dressed in a darker blue tunic and red himation, also barefoot, holding a staff in his left hand and a book in his right. Their figures are set within a landscape. They are depicted as continuators of Christ's teachings, emphasized by the epistles they hold.<sup>57</sup> The inscription on the icon reads: "Donated to the divine church by Stevan Spasoje and Dimitrije Stomirović, brothers from Boževac, 1896."

In line with the customary programmatic concept, the iconostasis concludes with the *Cross featuring the Crucifixion*, which, as highlighted by Metropolitan Mihailo, serves as the most significant adornment of an Orthodox church.<sup>58</sup> The Cross depicts the crucified Christ, above whose head is a white scroll bearing the acronym I.N.C.I. (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). The cross is adorned with rays and gold leaf, set between its arms, and further embellished with gilded wood carvings featuring stylized volutes, vine shoots, and crosses at the base. To the north and south of the cross, in medallions, are images of the Mother of God and Saint John the Evangelist, both depicted in prayerful postures with their hands crossed on their chests, turned toward the Cross. The representation of Christ's Crucifixion on the Cross symbolizes the sacrificial nature of the liturgy and serves as a poignant reminder of His suffering.<sup>59</sup>

The programmatic concept of the painted program on the divine iconostasis aligns with the practices established in the Principality and later the Kingdom of Serbia during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The selection of the depicted representations suggests that the Russian icon painters, while adhering to liturgical and dogmatic symbolism, also accommodated the preferences of the commissioners. This is evident from the inscriptions on the icons and the absence of representations of Russian saints.

The iconostasis of the Church of Saint Apostle Thomas in Boževac is a notable example of completed iconostases imported from Russia through the Belgrade firms of Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović. Both visually and programmatically, it stands as a complex and significant work. An analysis of the executed representations suggests that several Russian masters contributed to its

55 A. Kostić Đekić, *Crkveni kompleks u Lozoviku*, Beograd-Smederevo 2017, 155.

56 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Crkveno bogoslovie ili crkve slovie za učenike viši razreda*, Beograd 1860, 31-32.

57 A. Kostić Đekić, *Crkveni kompleks u Lozoviku*, Beograd-Smederevo 2017, 150.

58 Mitropolit Mihailo, *Crkveno bogoslovie ili crkve slovie za učenike viši razreda*, Beograd 1860, 35-40.

59 A. Kostić, *Crkvena umetnost u Kneževini Srbiji (1830-1882)*, Beograd 2022, 340.

creation, adhering to the academic principles of the centres where they were trained. Overall, the divine iconostasis, with its symbolic, liturgical, and moral-didactic importance, reflects the general characteristics of church painting in the Kingdom of Serbia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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*Snežana A. Cvetković*

# The Gift of the Russian Monastic Cell of St. John Chrysostom of the Hilandar Monastery in the Context of the Dečani Question: The Icon of St. John Chrysostom

## Hieromonk Kirilo and the Dečani Question

The administration of Hieromonk Kirilo from 1883 to 1907 represents a significant period in the history of the St. John Chrysostom monastic cell at Hilandar Monastery. His 1903 appointment as abbot of Visoki Dečani Monastery amplified existing tensions, escalating into the Russo-Serbian ecclesiastical dispute known as the *Dečani Question*.<sup>1</sup> This issue was further complicated by the intricate relationships among Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Russian monks at Hilandar Monastery and across Mount Athos during that period.<sup>2</sup>

Born Kapiton in 1845 to Hilarion Abramov in the village of Melikhov in the Don region, Hieromonk Kirilo journeyed to Mount Athos with his father in 1859 after completing his education at the Novočerkassk District School.<sup>3</sup> There, in the cell of St. Basil of the Great Russian Monastery of Pantokrator, he was tonsured and received the monastic name Kirilo.<sup>4</sup> He was ordained to the rank of hierodeacon and hieromonk in 1865.<sup>5</sup> In 1880, he became the abbot of the St. Basil the Great monastic cell, from where he transferred to the brotherhood of St. John Chrysostom's cell and sub-

1 D. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje*, Beograd 1989.

2 Đ. Slijepčević, *Hilandarsko pitanje u XIX i početkom XX veka, studije*, Keln 1979.

3 P. Troickij, Opisanie nekotoryh russkih Afonskih kelij. Kel'ia sviat. Joanna Zlatousta Hilandarskogo monastyria, in: Andreevskij skit i russkie kel'i na Afone: [http://www.rus-sky.com/history/library/troitzkiy1.htm#\\_Toc36565710](http://www.rus-sky.com/history/library/troitzkiy1.htm#_Toc36565710), accessed 17 July 2024.

4 D. Bataković, *Dečansko pitanje*, Beograd 1989, 211.

5 V. Džomić, Hronika srpskog stradanja u Metohiji, *Pravoslavlje*, br. 1293, Beograd 1. februar 2021.

sequently became its abbot in 1883.<sup>6</sup>

The monastic cell of St. John Chrysostom in the Hilandar monastery traces its origins back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the era of St. Sava. At the time, it was one of 150 smaller monasteries on Mount Athos. Since 1883, Russian monks led by Hieromonk Kirilo have resided in the cell, occupying the site of a church that had been abandoned for the previous eighteen years. Around 1888, they constructed a new monastery, breathing new life into the old cell.<sup>7</sup> This period was marked by the Serbian government's desire to regain control of Hilandar, coupled with the ongoing struggle for dominance on Mount Athos between Russia and Greece. Russian monks leased the land from Hilandar Monastery, home to the cell of St. John Chrysostom. The cell's brotherhood remained subordinate to Hilandar, in accordance with the Constitution of Mount Athos.<sup>8</sup> With the consent of the Hilandar Lavra, Kirilo constructed a two-story temple dedicated to St. John Chrysostom, featuring chapels dedicated to Alexander Nevsky and Mary Magdalene. This was done in commemoration of the miraculous deliverance of the Imperial family in Borka.<sup>9</sup> During construction of the new monastery, workers unearthed a marble slab inscribed with the year 1702, suggesting the presence of an earlier church on the site.<sup>10</sup> In the years following its establishment, the brotherhood associated with the cell of St. John Chrysostom comprised approximately thirty members. A decade later, this number had risen significantly to one hundred and twenty, encompassing hieromonks, monks, and novices.<sup>11</sup> The cell gained renown for its dedicated icon-painting workshop, which facilitated the distribution of icons across the vast Russian Empire.<sup>12</sup> The Serbian Metropolitan Mihailo served as the guardian and benefactor of this cell, facilitating its official recognition through the endorsement of the Russian Holy Synod.<sup>13</sup>

During this period, the Hilandar monastery was embroiled in a conflict with the Bulgarian Exarchate, which sought to assert control over the monastery, prompting active intervention from

6 D. Bataković, op. cit, 211; V. Džomić, op. cit.

7 P. Troickij, Opisane nekotoryh russkih Afonskih kelij. Kel'ia sviat. Joanna Zlatousta Hilandarskogo monastyria, in: *Andreevskij skit i russkie kel'i na Afone*: <http://www.rus-sky.com/history/library/troitzkiy1.htm#Toc36565710>, accessed 17 July 2024; Hilandarske kelije, 3 deo: Sv. Jovan Zlatousti: [https://svetogorskestaze.blogspot.com/2018/09/2\\_17.html](https://svetogorskestaze.blogspot.com/2018/09/2_17.html), accessed 22 July 2024; V. Džomić, op. cit.

8 D. Bataković, op. cit, 75.

9 P. Troickij, Opisane nekotoryh russkih Afonskih kelij. Kel'ia sviat. Joanna Zlatousta Hilandarskogo monastyria, in: *Andreevskij skit i russkie kel'i na Afone*: <http://www.rus-sky.com/history/library/troitzkiy1.htm#Toc36565710>, accessed 17 July 2024; V. Džomić, op. cit.

10 P. Troickij, Opisane nekotoryh russkih Afonskih kelij. Kel'ia sviat. Joanna Zlatousta Hilandarskogo monastyrja, in: *Andrejevskij skit i russkie kel'i na Afone*: <http://www.rus-sky.com/history/library/troitzkiy1.htm#Toc36565710>, accessed 17 July 2024

11 D. Bataković, op. cit, 76.

12 J. Mežinski, Likovni umetnici – ruski emigranti u Srbiji i Sveta Gora, u: *Deveta kazivanja o Svetoj Gori*, Beograd 2016.

13 D. Bataković, op. cit, 76; N., Makuljević, Odnos Srbije i Hilandara u XIX veku, in: *Osam vekova Hilandara, istorija, duhovni život, književnost, umetnost i arhitektura*, Beograd 2000, 151.



Fig. 1  
*Saint John Chrysostom*  
before restoration

the Serbian state to mediate the dispute. King Aleksandar Obrenović observed Easter in 1896 at the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos, where he resided from 22 March to 27 March. Additionally, the king took the opportunity to visit the Russian Panteleimon Monastery located on Mount Athos.<sup>14</sup> Upon the king's return from his journey, Serbia settled the financial obligations of the Hilandar monastery and allocated a substantial annual grant. During King Aleksandar's visit to Mount Athos, Hieromonk Kirilo sought to establish a closer relationship with him. Amidst the tensions between Serbian and Bulgarian monks, he successfully secured the designation of skit for his brotherhood, granting them a measure of autonomy from Hilandar.<sup>15</sup>

Several months following King Aleksandar's visit to Hilandar Monastery, Hieromonk Kirilo and his brotherhood journeyed to Belgrade to meet with the Serbian King and Metropolitan Mihail. Their objective was to facilitate the con-

version of the cell into a skit. Simultaneously, Kirilo sought to petition the Serbian government for the transfer of several Serbian monasteries to their administration. However, the resolution of these issues faced repeated delays. The aspirations of the Bulgarian monks persisted, mirroring the ongoing appeals from the cell of St. John Chrysostom. Increased pressure from Albanians on the Serbian community in Metohija ultimately forced the brotherhood of the cell of St. John Chrysostom to seek refuge at Visoki Dečani. Hieromonk Kirilo was appointed as the new abbot of Visoki Dečani on 14 January 1903.<sup>16</sup> The Russian government subsequently granted the monks of St. John Chrysostom's cell annual financial support of ten thousand rubles. The Russian emperor further aided the Serbian population under Ottoman rule with a more substantial monetary contribu-

14 Srpske novine, 21. mart 1896, broj 64; 24. mart 1896, broj 67.

15 D. Bataković, op. cit, 76-77.

16 D. Bataković, op. cit, 211; V. Džomić, Hronika srpskog stradanja u Metohiji, *Pravoslavlje*, broj 1293, 1 februar 2021, Beograd.

tion.<sup>17</sup> In June 1903, the administration of the Visoki Dečani monastery, a matter raised by the Serbian government, evolved into a prolonged dispute between Russia and Serbia, commonly referred to as the *Dečani Question*. This conflict would later be addressed by the government of King Peter I Karađorđević following the change of dynasty in Serbia.<sup>18</sup> The council of elders determined that Kirilo's appointment as abbot of Visoki Dečani violated the regulations outlined in the Constitution of Mount Athos, as the cell of St. John Chrysostom fell under Hilandar's jurisdiction.<sup>19</sup>

The *Dečani Question* resurfaced prominently in early 1907, with Kirilo remaining abbot of Visoki Dečani monastery and Varsonofije appointed abbot of the St. John Chrysostom cell. Correspondence from the Serbian Royal Academy to the government in late January 1908, concerning the transfer of the Dečani charter—a document detailing the monastery's construction—to the cell of St. John Chrysostom on Mount Athos, brought the *Dečani Question* back into public discussion.<sup>20</sup> Fyodor Uspenski, a Russian Byzantologist and director of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, removed the 14<sup>th</sup>-century founding charter of the Dečani monastery from the monastery itself. Vladimir Ljotić suggested that the charter remained either with Fyodor Uspenski or within the Russian museum in Constantinople.<sup>21</sup>

Milan Rakić, the Serbian consul in Priština, expressed considerable dissatisfaction with Kirilo's administration of Dečani, leading him to depart from the region. In December 1909, he accepted an invitation from the Russian embassy and traveled to Constantinople.<sup>22</sup> The following year, Hieromonk Kirilo was recalled to Russia following the dismissal of the Emperor and the Holy Synod of Rostov.<sup>23</sup>

## Gifts of Hieromonk Kirilo

During this time, Hieromonk Kirilo bestowed several significant gifts in the form of icons. These were directed toward the Catholicon of the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin in Hilandar, King Peter I Karađorđević, and the Serbian Consul in Thessaloniki, Vladimir Ljotić. This gesture, particularly in the context of the *Dečani Question*, can be interpreted as an attempt to address diplomatic tensions through gift-giving. The icon of St. John Chrysostom, which is the focus of this study, was given to Vladimir Ljotić by Hieromonk Kirilo during Ljotić's tenure as the Serbian consul in Thessaloniki from 1904 to 1909. During this period, Ljotić highlighted the com-

17 D. Bataković, op. cit, 89-90.

18 Ibid, 94.

19 Ibid, 105.

20 Ibid, 158.

21 Ibid, 158.

22 M. Rakić, *Konzulska pisma 1905 – 1911*, priredio, pogovor i komentare napisao Andrej Mitrović, Beograd 1985, 165 -169, 347.

23 D. Bataković, op. cit, 211.



Fig. 2  
 Saint John Chrysostom  
 Inscription on the back of the icon

skites of St. Elijah and St. Andrew. Various other cells also contributed to this artistic tradition, most notably the cell dedicated to St. John Chrysostom.<sup>26</sup> The icons produced by these painters exhibit a distinct idealization of figures, characterized by large-scale representations, symmetrical compositions, and the use of gold embellishments. These artworks were executed on both wooden panels and canvas, utilizing oil paints subsequently laminated onto wood. Furthermore, dedications on the icons' surfaces and inscriptions on their reverse sides provide documentation of both donors and recipients.<sup>27</sup>

King Peter I Karađorđević received an icon depicting St. Clement, the bishop of Rome, from Hieromonk Kirilo. St. Clement served as the patron saint of the Karađorđević family shortly after

plex dynamics between Russian monasticism and Serbian cultural heritage.<sup>24</sup>

The icon painting workshop at the Hilandar cell of St. John Chrysostom was highly productive and prolific.<sup>25</sup> The quality of the icons produced there suggests the artists possessed a high level of education. Mount Athos housed several painting workshops, the most significant and prominent located in the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon and the

- 24 Vladimir Ljotić (Smederevo, 1876-1912) was educated in Belgrade at the Law Department of the Great School, and in exile, he continued his education in Pest, Vienna, and Zurich. He participated in the preparation and organization of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian uprising in 1875, after which he lived in exile as the secretary of Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević in Timisoara. He returned to Serbia after the general amnesty that was enacted in 1889. He was an active member of the Radical Party, president of the Smederevo municipality, deputy, elected senator for the Smederevo district. After the change on the throne of Serbia, in June 1903, he travelled with a delegation to Geneva to accompany King Peter to Serbia. See more about Vladimir Ljotić: LJ.VL. Ljotić, *Memoari*, Beograd 1990; N. Jovanović, LJOTIĆ, Vladimir, *Politički venac grada Smedereva i njegove okoline u XIX i XX veku*, Smederevo 2002, 83-84.
- 25 P. Troickij, Opisanie nekotoryh russkih Afonskih kelij. Kel'ia sviat. Joanna Zlatousta Hilandarskogo monastyrja, in: Andrejevskij skit i russkie kel'i na Afone: <http://www.rus-sky.com/history/library/troitzkiy1.htm#Toc36565710>, accessed on 17 July 2024.
- 26 J. Mežinski, Likovni umetnici – ruski emigranti u Srbiji i Sveta Gora, u: Deveta kazivanja o Svetoj Gori, Beograd 2016, 21.
- 27 J. Mežinski, op. cit., 26-27.

King Peter's ascension to the Serbian throne in June 1903.<sup>28</sup>

One of the most esteemed offerings consists of opulent vestments intended for the enthroned icons of Christ the Almighty and the Mother of God Odigitria. These garments were presented in 1907 by Hieromonk Kirilo to the Catholicon of the Hilandar Monastery, specifically for the Church of the Presentation of the Most Holy Mother of God.<sup>29</sup>

In this context, the icon of St. John Chrysostom, presented by Hieromonk Kirilo to Vladimir Ljotić, serves as a significant artifact for comprehending the intricate Serbo-Russian ecclesiastical relations during this era.

### Icon of St. John Chrysostom as a *Gift and Blessing* to Vladimir Ljotić

During his tenure as Consul General of Serbia in Thessaloniki (1904-1909), Vladimir Ljotić played a crucial role in addressing the *Dečani Question* and navigating the complex relationships within Hilandar. He actively sought to enhance his diplomatic standing during this time. Notably, Ljotić was not merely an observer; he was an involved diplomat who worked to avert the estrangement of national cultural heritage, particularly concerning the Russian *keliois* overseeing the Visoki Dečani monastery.

The icon of St. John Chrysostom was produced within the St. John Chrysostom Russian school of iconography, specifically in the cell dedicated to St. John Chrysostom.

The icon of St. John Chrysostom bears the saint's signature on its face: св. Иоаннъ Златоустъ (Saint John Chrysostom). On the back, a five-line dedication inscription in Russian is written in black ink with the initial letter of each word in red:

Его Превосходительству Владимиру Господину ЛЕТИТЬ въ ДАРЪ и Благословеніе отъ Настоятеля обители св. Иоанна Златоустаго и Игумена Высоко-Дечанскаѣ лавры Іеросхимонаха Кирилла съ братією (To His Excellency, Vladimir Ljotić, as a Gift and Blessing from Hieromonk Kirilo, Abbot of the Cell of St. John Chrysostom and Abbot of the Visoki Dečani Lavra, together with the brotherhood).

From 1883 to 1907, Hieromonk Kirilo served as the abbot of the St. John Chrysostom cell. Between 1903 and 1909, he was the abbot of Visoki Dečani Monastery. After 1907, he remained the abbot of Visoki Dečani. The presence of both titles on the reverse side of the icon suggests that it was presented as a gift during the timeframe between Vladimir Ljotić's appointment as Consul General of Serbia in Thessaloniki in 1904 and the early part of 1907. In this context, the act of gifting by Hieromonk Kirilo can be interpreted as a diplomatic gesture aimed at fostering a positive relationship with the active Consul General of Serbia in Thessaloniki.

Created by an unidentified Russian artist in the icon-painting workshop of the cell of St. John

28 D. Milovanović, *Riznice manastira Hilandara, kolekcije u Srbiji*, Beograd 2009, 156.

29 S. Petković, *Hilandar*, Beograd 1989, 35; N. Makuljević, *Unutrašnjost katolikona manastira Hilandara u novom veku, Osmo kazivanja o Svetoj Gori*, Beograd 2013; D. Milovanović, *Riznice manastira Hilandara, studijska kolekcija I*, Beograd 2009, 406-407.



Fig. 3  
*Saint John Chrysostom*  
 after restoration

Chrysostom, the icon depicting St. John Chrysostom dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This icon embodies the distinctive characteristics of Russian icons from Mount Athos. It is executed in oil on canvas, mounted on a wooden support. The saint is presented in a close-up view, with a dark, incarnate face adorned with a golden mitre embellished with intricate filigree and gemstones. He extends his right hand in blessing, holding a holy book in his left hand. The book's binding is ornately decorated with precious stones and framed by pearls. The soft pink loros is similarly embellished with a golden star motif. Beneath the stichar, he wears a light green garment, reminiscent of aged gold. The background is divided into two distinct zones: the upper section is painted in luminous golden tones, contrasting with the darker hues below. The icon radiates a sense of grace and elegance in its portrayal of the saint, further enhanced by the use of azure tones.

As a testament to the Russian artistic tradition of Mount Athos, the icon of St. John Chrysostom reflects the craftsmanship of the icon-painting workshop at the Hilandar monastery's cell of St. John Chrysostom.

### **The Path of the Icon of St. John Chrysostom to the Museum Collection**

The icon of St. John Chrysostom remained in the residence of Vladimir Ljotić in Smederevo until the conclusion of the Second World War. Subsequently, it came under the stewardship of Vitomir Petrović, who was responsible for the Nursery as well as the confiscated property and estate belonging to the Ljotić family.<sup>30</sup>

In June 1976, the Museum in Smederevo acquired the icon of St. John Chrysostom for its Art Collection.<sup>31</sup> The icon was found to be in a severely deteriorated state, exhibiting numerous physical damages, which precluded its exhibition or publication. As a component of the Museum in

30 Inventory book of the Museum in Smederevo – Icons.

31 Inventory book of the Museum in Smederevo – Icons.

Smederevo's project titled "Russian Art in the Smederevo Museum: Paintings and Icons", conducted between 2019 and 2021, technical conservation measures were implemented on the icon.<sup>32</sup> It was subsequently displayed in the exhibition "Works of Russian Artists in the Museum in Smederevo: Paintings and Icons from the Late 17<sup>th</sup> to the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century."<sup>33</sup>

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The icon of St. John Chrysostom vividly illustrates the complex dynamics of Russo-Serbian relations that arose following the arrival of Russian monks at the cell of St. John Chrysostom on Mount Athos and the administration of Visoki Dečani monastery under Hieromonk Kirilo. This icon, bearing an inscription on its reverse, resides in the Art Collection of the Museum in Smederevo, serving as a crucial visual testament to this historical connection.<sup>34</sup>

The icon of St. John Chrysostom, held in the Art Collection of the Museum in Smederevo, is of considerable significance as both an artistic creation and a historical artifact illuminating the ecclesiastical relationship between Russia and Serbia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It stands as a testament to the icon-painting workshop of the cell of St. John Chrysostom at Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos, active from 1883 until the end of the First World War. Furthermore, Hieromonk Kirilo, abbot of both the cell of St. John Chrysostom and Visoki Dečani monastery, gifted this icon to Vladimir Ljotić, the Serbian consul in Thessaloniki, amidst the *Dečani Question*. This act illustrates the intricate dynamics of Russo-Serbian relations, in which gifts frequently served as diplomatic tools to resolve disputes. The icon of St. John Chrysostom embodies the artwork's complex journey from its creation to its present state within the museum collection, underscoring the technical preservation measures undertaken to prevent its deterioration and ensure its continued preservation.

- 32 The icon of St. John Chrysostom posed significant challenges for conservators due to multiple tears in the canvas and damage to the wooden support, which exhibited splitting and decay. Notably, the coloured layer in the upper right corner had entirely detached from the wooden backing. Following the cleaning of the wooden structure, wooden inserts crafted from linden wood were utilized for reinforcement. The coloured layer was locally secured to the canvas, which underwent thorough cleaning to remove various stains, and a new gauze base was applied. Subsequently, the surfaces were reconstructed with this new foundation. Upon completion of the conservation and restoration efforts, a protective wooden box with glass was constructed to ensure the safe storage and exhibition of the icon. See more in: S. Cvetković, V. Jovanović, *Ruska umetnost u smederevskom muzeju: konzervacija i restauracija slika i ikona (1)*, *Smederevski zbornik*, broj 7, Smederevo 2021, 187-213; V. Jovanović, *Pregled konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova na slikama i ikonama ruskih umetnika u Umetničkoj zbirci Muzeja u Smederevu*, u: *Dela ruskih umetnika u Muzeju u Smederevu: slike i ikone od kraja 17. do sredine 20. veka*, Smederevo 2022, 102-122.
- 33 J. Mežinski Milovanović, S. Cvetković, V. Jovanović, S. Janačković, *Dela ruskih umetnika u Muzeju u Smederevu: slike i ikone od kraja 17. do sredine 20. veka*, Smederevo 2022.
- 34 J. Mežinski Milovanović, S. Cvetković, V. Jovanović, S. Janačković, *ibid.*

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*Miloš Stanković*

# Icons of Saint Tryphon: A Long Journey from Montenegro to Russia and Back

## Relics, Politics, and Memory

There are many significant collections of Russian Orthodox icons in the Balkans among which the treasury of the Cetinje Monastery of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral of the Serbian Orthodox Church stand out by their importance. Numerous icons and other church objects from the monastery treasury bear witness to the Russian ecclesiastical and governmental influence on the Montenegrin metropolitans and the religious life of the Cetinje Orthodox Metropolis.<sup>1</sup> Many items of church art and literature from the Russian Empire came to the treasury in the period from the 17th to the 20th centuries. Among them are icons, various liturgical books, church embroidery, vestments and other liturgical objects. A considerable number of icons from this treasury were gifts to the Montenegrin spiritual and secular rulers from the Petrović dynasty. During more than 200 years of this dynasty existence, the Montenegrin metropolitans, or princes and a king, developed strong ties with the Russian Empire.<sup>2</sup>

In the monastery collection, among the icons made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there is an icon dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon. This atypically made icon represents the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon with three particles of his relics. Moscow's workshop produced it in 1901. The icon was covered by metal covers or the Oklad created with the stamping technique.<sup>3</sup>

1 Jovan B. Markuš, ed., *Riznica Cetinjskog manastira* (Cetinje: Cetinjski manastir, 2013).

2 More about the connection between Montenegro and the Russian Empire in the period from the 18th to the 20th century: Nikola I Petrović Njegoš, *Politički spisi*, ed. D. Živković (Cetinje–Titograd, 1989); R. Jovanović, "Crnogorsko-ruski politički odnosi 1711–1917," in *Crna Gora u međunarodnim odnosima. Zbornik radova* (Titograd, 1984).

3 About the Oklad (or Riza) in Russian Church Art: Wendy Salmond, "The Art of the Oklad," *The Post* 3, no. 2 (1996): 5–16; I. A. Sterligova, "O liturgičeskome smysle dragocennogo ubora ruskoj ikony," in *Vostočnohristianskij hram: Liturgija i iskusstvo* (Sankt-Peterburg: Dmitrij Bulanin, 1994), 219–26.

The icon portrays Saint Tryphon addressing the Virgin Mary, who is encased in a medallion. Directly below the Virgin Mary medallion on the icon, there are three additional medallions, each containing fragments of relics. Below these medallions, there is an additional medallion featuring a smaller representation of Saint Tryphon. The entire icon, except for the medallion and the incarnate, is covered with a silver-plated frame, on which a landscape is embossed, in which a large church is depicted in the background, while in the foreground there is a kind of field, or even a plowed field, on which certain plants are seen. Enamel adorns the radiating medallions with relics, the Virgin Mary, and a smaller representation of Saint Tryphon, while floral interweaving in blue and red dominates the icon's border.

The 4th Rifle Brigade from Odessa, in the then Russian Empire, prepared the icon of Saint Tryphon from 1901 and sent it as a gift to the Montenegrin prince Nikola Petrovic. The connection between Prince Nikola and the 4th Rifle Regiment of the Russian Army lies in the fact that the Montenegrin prince was the honorary commander of this regiment, appointed two decades earlier by the Russian Tsar Alexander III Romanov. Contacts between this military unit and its commander were very numerous. Immediately before the outbreak of World War I, a delegation from this unit visited Cetinje, the capital of the Montenegrin Kingdom, on a ceremonial visit to its commander. The occasion for this visit was the celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the appointment of Prince, now King Nikola, as the commander of this regiment.<sup>4</sup> The Montenegrin king became the commander of this unit in 1889, according to the extensive articles published to accompany this visit in then-Montenegrin newspaper *Glas Crnogorca*.<sup>5</sup> This military formation was part of the famous 4th Rifle Brigade, known as the "Iron Brigade," which had notable military successes since its establishment, especially in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. Following this war, the 15th Rifle Regiment designated Odessa as its permanent headquarters.<sup>6</sup>

The choice of the icon of the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon as a gift to the Montenegrin king was not accidental but had a prehistory that spanned more than a century. This choice connects the Russian imperial ruling dynasty of the Romanovs and the Montenegrin ruling dynasty of the Petrovics in several generations, starting with Peter I Petrovic (1748-1830), later Saint Peter of Cetinje, and the Russian Tsar Alexander I Pavlovich Romanov (1777-1825). Russian written sources from the second half of the 19th century also emphasize this dynastic connection regarding Saint Tryphon and his cult in Moscow. In 1883, Nikola, a prince from Montenegro, attended the coronation of Russian Tsar Alexander III Alexandrovich Romanov in Saint Petersburg. During his stay in the Russian Empire, he visited Moscow, and especially the church of the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon in Naprudno. Russian printed publications of the time widely covered this visit of the Montenegrin prince; they mentioned the so-called "Montenegrin gift to the church of the Holy Great Martyr

4 The Montenegrin king was also a field marshal of the Russian army: *Voennaja Enciklopedija*, vol. 16, *Minnyj oficerskij klass – Nissa*, ed. K. I. Veličko et al. (St. Petersburg: T-vo I. D. Sytina, 1914), 638.

5 *Glas Crnogorca* (Cetinje), May 17, 1914; *Glas Crnogorca* (Cetinje), May 24, 1914;

6 "Antologifo," <https://antologifo.narod.ru/pages/list2/histore/ist15StP.htm> (accessed November 10, 2024).



Fig. 1  
*St. Tryphon, with three particles of his relics*  
 Church of the Icon of the Mother of God of the Sign  
 Pereslavlskaya Sloboda in Rizhskaya, Moscow

Tryphon in Moscow”<sup>7</sup> and the role of the Petrovic dynasty in contributing to the cult of the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon in Moscow and Russia in general.<sup>8</sup>

The Montenegrin state newspaper “Glas Crnogorca” also covered the coronation of the Russian Tsar and the visit of Prince Nikola in its issues from mid-May and early June 1883. What particularly attracted the attention of Russian reporters during the visit of the Montenegrin prince was his aforementioned visit to the Moscow church of the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon in Naprudno near Moscow. Joanikije, the Metropolitan of Moscow, and Ivan Priklonsky, the rector of the church of St. Tryphon in Naprudno, greeted the Montenegrin prince on the eve of his visit.<sup>9</sup> He presented the Montenegrin ruler with a gift in the form of a small icon of Saint Tryphon, which was created in the likeness of the miraculous icon with the relics of Saint Tryphon from the church in Naprudno.

Russian sources transmitted the dialogue between the Moscow Metropolitan and the Montenegrin ruler, revealing the connection between the Montenegrin ruler and his ancestors with the Moscow church of Saint Tryphon. Namely, Petar I Petrovic Njegos, the dynastic ancestor of Prince Nikola on the Montenegrin throne, had sent three particles of the relics of Saint Tryphon to Russia eighty

7 "No očén' nemnogim izvestno, otkuda v ètoj istoričeskoj cerkvi moši svjatogo mučenika Trifona. Mnogie li zna-  
 jut, što oni dar Černogorii, dar, o kotorom teper', po slučaju priezda v Moskvu knjazja Černogorskogo Nikolaja,  
 vspomnit' očén' svoevremenno. Èto dar ego pradeda Černogorskogo vladyki (knjazja i mitropolita v odnom lice)  
 Petra I Negoša, počitaemogo v svoej rodnoj strane svjatym“ (“But it is known to but few whence came the relics  
 of the Holy Martyr Tryphon preserved within this venerable church. How many, indeed, are mindful that they are  
 a gift of Montenegro—a gift most meet to recall at this juncture, upon the coming to Moscow of Prince Nicholas  
 of Montenegro. This gift was bestowed by his great-grandfather, the Montenegrin ruler, Peter I Njegoš, who,  
 uniting in his person both princely and metropolitan dignity, is in his native land held in veneration as a saint.”  
*Semejnye Večera. Žurnal dlja semejnogo čtenija*, no. 6 (June 1883).

8 *Semejnye Večera. Žurnal dlja semejnogo čtenija*, no. 6 (June 1883); *Rus'*, no. 11 (1 June 1883); *Moskovskie Vedomo-  
 sti*, no. 145 (27 May 1883): 4.

9 *Rus'*, no. 11 (1 June 1883): 60.

years earlier. Despite numerous unfavorable circumstances, Petar I Petrovic Njegos sent these relics in 1803, reached the Russian emperor in 1812, and exhibited them in the church in Naprudno in 1819.<sup>10</sup> During the 19th century, several brochures and short works were written about the Church of the Holy Great Martyr Tryphon and its history and significance for the spiritual life of Russia at that time.<sup>11</sup> Despite the demolition of the 19th-century church in Naprudno in 1931 and the transfer of its relics to other churches, there was still interest in the 20th century.<sup>12</sup> Among the written works, the work of the aforementioned Archpriest Ivan Prikloński, who met with the Montenegrin prince during his visit in 1883, is particularly noteworthy, and he was a direct participant and witness to the events surrounding the creation of the icon of Saint Tryphon. The Church of Saint Tryphon, containing the saint's relics, held significant importance in the context of Montenegrin-Russian relations. A somewhat later period saw the raising of the issue of transforming the Church of Saint Tryphon into a so-called "Podvorye" of the Montenegrin Metropolis in Russia, which would serve as a kind of a church embassy.<sup>13</sup>

In these works, the sending of particles of the relics of Saint Tryphon is evidenced by the fact that these particles were sent by the Montenegrin Metropolitan Peter I through Archimandrite Stefan Vukotic (Vucetic), with a covering letter conveyed by the bishop's secretary Ivan Ozegovic.<sup>14</sup>

Historically, the episode involving the sending of relics aligns with the time when Petar I Petrovic was formulating his plan to unite Boka Kotorska and Montenegro. Boka Kotorska was until then under the control of the Venetian Republic; then, due to the Napoleonic Wars, a movement for unification with Montenegro developed in Boka. As the leader and initiator of these events, the Montenegrin Metropolitan Petar I Petrovic maintained positive relations with the inhabitants of Boka Kotorska, irrespective of their religious and national affiliations. Saint Tryphon was the patron saint of the city of Kotor; his cult was very well recognized and widespread throughout the Balkans. The Cathedral of Saint Tryphon housed the saint's relics. The Metropolitan of Cetinje, Petar I, had a favorable relationship with the Catholic prelates from the Kotor diocese, primarily with

10 *Rus'*, no. 11 (1 June 1883): 57-58.

11 I. M. Snegirev, *Prazdnik v cerkvi Svjatogo Trifona* (Moskva, 1864). From *Russkie vedomosti* 16 (1864); *Sputnik po Moskovsko-Vindavskoj železnoj doroge = Ot Moskvy do Vindavy* (Moskva: Pečatnja S. P. Jakovleva, 1909); *Moskovskaja Trifonovskaja cerkov': Opisanie* (Moskva: Tip. I. D. Sytina, 1895), 16; I. Prikloński, *Istoričeskaja zapiska o moskovskoj Trifonovskoj, čto v Naprudnoj (slobode) cerkvi i o soveršaemyh v nej osobyh molebstvijah* (Moskva, 1884); *Moskovskija Eparhial'nija Vedomosti* 41 (1870): 4-6; Luk'janovskij, *Skazanie o tom, kak postroena cerkov' sv. velikomučenika Trifona v Moskve. Bylina pro carja Ivana Groznogo da pro knjazja Trifona Patrikeeva* (Moskva: tip. L. i A. Snegirevyh, 1887), 32.

12 Innokentij (Prosvirnin), arhimandrit, "Svjatoj mučenik Trifon (prazdnovanie 1/14 fevralja)," *Žurnal Moskovskoj Patriarhii* 2 (1969): 59-64; *Svjatoj mučenik Trifon* (Blagovest, 2013). (Blagovest, 2013).

13 *Cerkovnyj vestnik, izdavaemyj pri S.-Peterburgskoj dukhovnoj akademii, Ofic. organ Svjatejšego vseros. Sinoda*, no. 24 (June 1884); *Glas Crnogorca* (Cetinje), July 7, 1884.

14 Branko Pavićević, *Petar I Petrović Njegoš* (Podgorica: Pergamena, 1997), 258.



Fig. 2  
*St. Tryphon, with three particles of his relics*  
 The treasury of the Cetinje Monastery, Montenegro

Bishop Marko Antun Grgurina.<sup>15</sup> As the leader of the unification movement, the Montenegrin metropolitan attended Catholic celebrations in the Cathedral of Saint Tryphon in Kotor,<sup>16</sup> despite being an Orthodox bishop. The good relations between the two church leaders likely contributed to the receipt of three particles of Saint Tryphon's relics, which the Montenegrin bishop Peter I Petrovic sent to Russia in 1803.<sup>17</sup>

The immediate reason for sending particles of the relics of Saint Tryphon from Kotor was the desire of a Moscow goldsmith and merchant, Trifon Semenovich Dobrakov, to craft and artistically arrange a box for the relics of Saint Tryphon. There are not many recorded sources about Trifon Dobrakov; it is known that he came from a Moscow artisan family,<sup>18</sup> and that he considered Saint Tryphon his patron. Through his meeting with the Montenegrin Archimandrite Stefan Vucetic (Vukotic), he also had the

opportunity to contact the Montenegrin Metropolitan Peter I. This finally allowed him to fulfill his vow to his patron Saint Tryphon. Archimandrite Stefan Vucetic (Vukotic) was an influential figure in communication between Montenegro and the higher Russian state and church authorities.<sup>19</sup>

- 15 Gracija Brajković, *Odnosi kotorskog episkopa Marka Antuna Grgurine i mitropolita Petra I Petrovića i Centralne komisije 1813–1814* (Titograd: Istorijski institut SR Crne Gore, 1991), 163–64; Branko Pavićević, *Petar I Petrović Njegoš* (Podgorica: Pergamena, 1997), 399.
- 16 Saša Knežević, "Boka Kotorska i Primorje između Crne Gore i velikih sila 1797–1814," *Radovi Instituta istorijskih nauka HAZU u Zadru* 63 (2021).
- 17 Lazar Tomanović, *Memoari*, ed. Đorđe Borozan (Podgorica: CID; Cetinje: Narodni muzej Crne Gore, 2018), 439.
- 18 T. S. Dobrjakov, "Skazanie o moskovskom 1-oj gildii kupce Semene Prokof'eviče Vasil'eva. Soobšč. I. A. Blagoveščenskim," *Dušepoleznoe čtenie*, no. 8 (1860): 473–82; T. S. Dobrjakov, Trifon Semenovič, zolotyh i serebrjanyh del master. Biografija S. P. Vasil'eva (1709–1796), zapisannaja s ego slov Dobrjakovym. Put' ot učenika v lavke k samostojatel'noj bol'šoj trgovle. Svjazi moskovskih kupcov s inostrannymi trgovcami.
- 19 V. Ju. Maksimov and K. G. Kapkov, "Cena Georgievskoj lenty. Černogorskij rezident arhimandrit Stefan (Vukotič)," in *Za službu i hrabrost': Svjaščenniki – kavalerij ordena Svjatogo Georgija. Neizvestnye stranicy* (2018), 32–36.



Fig. 3  
 St. Tryphon on Horseback  
 The treasury of the Cetinje Monastery, Montenegro

He made several trips to Russia,<sup>20</sup> received awards from the Russian state, was involved in various controversies, and even had disagreements with the Montenegrin Metropolitan.<sup>21</sup> However, he played a significant role in the St. Tryphon Church and the transfer of relics. Trifon Dobrakov sent a request to the Montenegrin Metropolitan through Archimandrite Vukotic in 1800, saying that he was ready to make a reliquary for a particle of the relics of St. Tryphon at his own expense. The response to his letter came in April 1803. Bishop Peter I of Montenegro confirmed in his own letter that he would be able to grant his request:

*“Beloved child of Christ, Trifon Semonovich, peace be with you and God’s blessing*

*The Lord Archimandrite Stefan Vukotic, upon his return from Russia to Chernaya Gora, presented to me*

*your most zealous and kind treatment of him, which you showed him according to your innate love for humanity. I rejoice with all my heart that the Grace of God has endowed you with such a gift of hospitality, and that nature has influenced your soul with such talents, for which you are glorified even in these most distant places, all artists give honor and advantage to your art, which consists in high work; but your virtues, combined with sincerity and piety, increase even more the number of your days. And since I have been assured by our aforementioned Archimandrite that you have an unwavering intention and earnest desire to make known the God-protected and miraculous Head of your Patron, the holy martyr Tryphon, it is kept and preserved in our city of Kotor in the Cathedral Church in the temple in honor of his name; and that you, in your zeal, from the God-given estate, are trying to attach in honor and glory to that holy martyr Tryphon, a case of your own specially good and skillful work, where his holy head could remain, I wish to see such blessed labors of yours and zealous thoughts as a perfect deed, for which I am sending you three particles from the martyr’s head attached*

20 Branko Pavićević, *Petar I Petrović Njegoš* (Podgorica: Pergamena, 1997), 188.

21 Pavićević, *Petar I Petrović Njegoš*, 244-245.

*in this letter, which may be for the blessing and strengthening of your house. The presenter of this, Ivan Fedorovich Ozhegovich, who has been Chancellor at our Residence for three years, recommends him to your friendly friendship. And since our aforementioned Archimandrite Stefan Vukotic is now at the highest court on business, and upon his return from St. Petersburg he will be in Moscow, and if the aforementioned vessel is completed and ready, I ask Archimandrite Vukotic to hand it over to him, and he, having received it, will deliver it in perfect condition to these places, where it will remain with other similar holy relics for the unforgettable generations of memory. About which blessing the most high providence, about the well-being and long-term stay of your entire dear family and may the Lord God add to you in thousands more and bless the work of your hands, Prayers and Intercession of your patron, the holy martyr Tryphon, and I, remaining always a humble pilgrim.*

*in Montenegro, na Stanevic.*

*Blessed in Christ, Child to you, always benevolent, Humble Metropolitan and Pilgrim*

*Petr Petrovic Negos.*

*April 19, 1803.<sup>22</sup>*

- 22 "Vozljublennoe o Khristie Čado Trifon' Semonovič, Mir' tebie i blagoslovenie ot' Boga da budet! Gospodin' Arkhimandrit' Stefan' Vukotič' po vozvraščeni svoem' s Rossii v Černuju Goru, predstavil' mne vaše userdnejšee i laskovoe s nim' obchoždenie, kotoroe vy po vašemu vroždennomu čelovekoljubiju emu okazvali. Ja serdečno radujus', čto Blagodat' Božija takovym' vas' odaryla strannopriemstva darom', i čto v dušu vašu priroda vlijala takovye talanty, koimi vy proslavljaetes' i v six' otdalenejšix' miestax', vsie chudožniki dajut' čest' i preimuščestvo vašemu iskusstvu, kotoroe sostoit' v vysokoj rabote; no dobrodeteli vaše sopriažennyja s čistoserdečiem' i nabožnostiju usugublajjut' ešče i vjašče čislo dneja vašix'.

A kak' udostoverilsja ja ot' pomjanutago našego Arkhimandrita, čto vy nepreložnoe imeete namerenie i rennosnoe želanie izvestnym' byt' o Bogo-chranimoj i čudesnoj Patrona vašego svjatago mučenika Trifona Glavie, ona soderžitsja i hranitsja v našom' gorodě Kotore v Katedral'noj sobornoj Cerkvy v chramě v čest' ego imjani; i čto vy po userdiju vašemu ot' Bogodannago imenija userdstvujete priložit' v čest' i slavu tomu svjatomu mučeniku Trifonu naročito xorošej i iskusnoj vaše raboty futljar', gdie-by mogla svjataja ego Glava prebývat', takovyja vaše blagoslovennyja trudy i userdnije mysli želaju vidiet' sovershennym' dielom', načto i posylaju vam' tri časticy s mučenicheskoy Glavy, priložennyja v sem' pismě, kotoryja da budut' na blagoslovenie i ukreilenie domu vašego. Vručitel' sego Ivan' Fedorovič' Ožegovič, naxodaščijsja pri Rezidencii našej Kanclerom' tri goda, rekomenduju ego u vašu prijatel'stvennuju družbu. A kak' naš vyše pomjanutyj Arkhimandrit' Stefan' Vukotič' naxoditsja nyně pri vysočajšom' Dvorě u diel', a po vozvraščeni ego iz' Sankt-Peterburga imeet' byt' v Moskvi, i eželi budet' pomjanutoj Sosud' okončan' i ugotovnosti, prošu emu Arkhimandritu Vukotiču onoj predat', a on' polučja imeet' dostavit' v samoj ispravnosti k sim' miestam', gdie prebývat' budet' s pročimi takovymi že svjatynjami v nezabvennyja rody rodov' pamjati.

O čem' blagoslovljaja vsevyšnago promysl', o blagosostojanii i dolgodensvennom' prebývanii vsej vaší ljubeznoj familiji i da priložit' vam' Gospod' Bog' tysjaščami sugubo, i blagoslovit' dielo ruk' vašix', Molitvami i Molenijem' Patrona vašego svjatago mučenika Trifona, a ja prebyvaja na vseгда smirennym' Bogomolcem'.

v Černoj Gore Mastanevič

Blagoslovennoe o Khristie Čado vam' vseгда Dobroxotstvujučij Smirennij Mitropolit' i Bogomolec' Petr' Petrovič' Negoš. Aprelja 19-go 1803 god."



Fig. 4  
*St. Tryphon on Horseback*,  
 Church of the Icon of the Mother of God of the Sign  
 Pereslavskaia Sloboda in Rizhskaya, Moscow

Trifon Dobrakov would deliver fragments of Saint Tryphon's relics, along with their reliquaries and icons, to Russian Tsar Alexander I during Napoleon's campaign against Russia and his temporary occupation of Moscow in 1812.<sup>23</sup> The Russian Tsar will transfer the relics to the bishops and hierarchs of the Moscow Metropolis. On September 14, 1819, a solemn and ceremonial service will bring the relics of Saint Tryphon to the church on Naprudnoye in Moscow.<sup>24</sup> From that moment on, this church celebrated September 14 as the feast of the "Presentation of the Holy Relics of Saint Tryphon."<sup>25</sup>

Archpriest Ivan Priklonsky testified that there were three reliquaries in the church at that time, each containing particles of relics. We can conclude that Prince Nicholas received a later version of the third main church icon, which "corresponds to the third era that began at the same time in the five-hundred-year history of the temple," from a military detachment from Odessa in 1915. The Church of the Icon of the Mother of God of the Sign, located on Pereslavskaia Sloboda in Rizhskaya, currently houses this icon.<sup>26</sup>

The appearance of the original and the Cetinje copy fully reveals the associations to which the commissioner of both icons of Saint Tryphon referred. As previously mentioned, the "Cetinje icon" features a medallion depicting Saint Tryphon beneath the medallions of the Virgin Mary and the fragments of relics. The silver-plated frame showcases a rural landscape, a cleared forest, and a five-domed church in the background. Similarly, the original icon from Moscow depicts Saint Tryphon facing the medallion containing the relics, with a cleared forest landscape and a five-domed church in the background. Both representations refer to the famous Russian folk legend about the imperial hunt from the time of Ivan the Terrible in which the imperial falcon escaped from its falconer, Tryphon Patrikeyev. Faced with the death penalty from the Tsar, the boyar Patrikeyev spent two days and nights searching unsuccessfully, and then on the third day, tired, he fell asleep at a place known

23 I. Priklonskij, *Istoričeskaja zapiska o moskovskoj Trifonovskoj, čto v Naprudnoj (slobode) cerkvi i o soveršaemyh v nej osobyh molebstvijah* (Moskva, 1884), 31.

24 Priklonskij, *Istoričeskaja zapiska*, 31.

25 Priklonskij, *Istoričeskaja zapiska*, 32-33.

26 "Svjatoj mučenik Trifon," <http://www.znamene.ru/trifon.htm> (accessed October 12, 2024).

as Maryina Rozha. Saint Tryphon appeared to him in a dream, telling him to take the bird and go to the Tsar. When the young man woke up, he found a falcon not far from there. He returned to the Tsar without any consequences, and since the entire revelation occurred on February 1 according to the old calendar (February 14 according to the new calendar), on the day of Saint Tryphon, Tryphon Patrikeev built a chapel on the spot where Saint Tryphon appeared to him. According to tradition, that place is the site of today's Church of Saint Tryphon in Naprudno. Sources attribute some elements of "geographical truth" to this ancient Moscow legend, stating that during the 16th century, the present-day Church of St. Tryphon's location served as a hunting ground, gradually cleared of dense forests. Both icons of St. Tryphon incorporate this detail.

A.G. Lukyanovsky shaped the legend of this event through his 1882 publication, "Epic of Tsar Ivan the Terrible and Prince Tryphon Patrikeyev." This work also includes a section that explains the origin of the five-domed church at the performances of Saint Tryphon in Cetinje and Moscow.

"And when that evil misfortune had passed,  
The wise prince Tryphon then made a vow:  
To the angel's praise and honor,  
To build and proclaim a **five-domed church**;  
To build it there, where, wailing,  
Pleading with Saint Tryphon,  
On that terrible evening he knelt down, where he caught a falcon that had fled."<sup>27</sup>

\*

All Russian authors who have dealt with this topic discuss the significance of the transfer of Saint Tryphon's relics from Kotor, then Boka Kotorska and Montenegro, to Moscow at the beginning of the 19th century. The cult of Saint Tryphon in Russia was strong even before this event, supported by the legend of Tryphon Patrikeyev. The gift of Peter I Petrovic Njegos to the merchant Tryphon Dobrakov set off a kind of chain reaction that would end in 1915 with a gift—an icon that the Russian IV Brigade from Odesa would bring to King Nikola Petrovic, almost a hundred years after the transfer of the relics of Saint Tryphon. Moreover the Cetinje monastery's treasury today also contains a smaller Saint Tryphon icon, which could further expand this topic.

This icon also came from Russia and has a slightly different depiction of Saint Tryphon, who is on horseback, moving from left to right, while a falcon lands on his right hand. Although the icon has no inscription, there is an iconographic similarity with the lower part of the icon of Saint Tryphon, which, according to sources, was also in the church in Naprudno, and in the first half of the 20th century, it was moved to the temple in honor of the icon of the Mother of God,

27 A. G. Luk'janovskij, "Bylina pro carja Ivana Groznogo da pro knjazja Trifona Patrikeeva," *Russkij vestnik* 159, no. 5–6 (May–June 1882): 758.

“Nechaiannaia radost,” in Maryina Roshcha. Potential visual materials, not yet available, could expand the hypothesis that Prince Nicholas received a copy of this icon as a gift during his visit to Alexander III’s coronation.<sup>28</sup> According to the sources, the inscription on the icon that Prince Nikola received as a gift might give the best closure about the intended Russian-Montenegrin relations in the second half of the 19th century: *“To the Blessed Prince and Great Lord of Montenegro Nikolay Petrovic Njegos”. From Moscow’s Trifonovskoye, in Naprudnaya Sloboda, church, in the summer and on the day of the Holy Coronation of the Emperor of All Russia Alexander III in the God-saved city of Moscow. May 1883.* The icons of Saint Tryphon from Cetinje show an unbroken line between church art, state ideology, and long-lasting personal and dynastic relations.

28 Srebrjanaja, vyzoločennaja, s’ èmalevymi ukrašënjami v’ drevnerusskom” stilë, riza na ètu novuju ikonu byla sdëlana v’ masterskoj Moskovskago fabrikanta srebrjanyh” i zolotyh” izdëlij A. Ovčinnikova s’ synom”. Pri ètom” na nej, pri vsëh” voobše hudožestvennyh” dostoinstvah”, okazalas’ osobenno iskusno vypolnennoju perspektiva vida. Na oborotnoj že storonë samoj ikony prikrëplena k” dekë ikony srebrjanaja vyzoločennaja došečka, na kotoroj vyrëzana slavjanskimi bukvami slëdujušaja nadpis’: „Blagovërnomu Knjazju i Velikomu Gospodarju Černogorii Nikolaju Petroviču Nëgošu. Ot” Moskovskoj Trifonovskoj, čto v” Naprudnoj slobodë, cerkvi, v” lëto i den’ Svjašennago V”nčanija na carstvo Gosudarja Imperatora vseja Rossii Aleksandra III v” bogospasaemom” gradë Moskvë. Maja 1883 goda”. I. Priklonskij, *Istoričeskaja zapiska o moskovskoj Trifonovskoj, čto v Naprudnoj (slobode) cerkvi i o soveršaemyh v nej osobyh molebstvijah* (Moskva, 1884), 32-33.

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