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**IMAGERY OF THEOKTISTOS, REGENT AND
LOGOTHETĒS TOU DROMOU**

*The past is many foreign countries...¹
...we are never done with the past...²*
M. Price on D. Lowenthal

Abstract: The article is part of the project devoted to the research of the monastery church of Mateič. In regard to the newly identified figure of Theoktistos, it provides an insight into the images of this significant political figure from the Rhomain 9th Century in the illustrated copy of the Madrid Skylitzes and analysis of differences with the one in Mateič. It also probes whether there were more depictions of him in the Madrid manuscript and the copy of the Vatican Manasses.

Key words: Theoktistos, Mateič, Stefan Dušan, chronicles, Triumph of Orthodoxy, Madrid Skylitzes, Vatican Manasses

Due to wars, age, plunder, and centuries of neglect, monuments of past cultures face numerous issues. They are remote in time, often lacking data on creators and context, and are sometimes despised on ethnic or religious grounds. Ancient artefacts, customs, and buildings now seem a foreign land to us, as disclosed by David Lowenthal's book(s), which discuss the misuse and abuse of the past for the account of elites and their agendas.³ A typical example is the colossal Mateič (Matejče) on a mountain peak of Skopska Crna Gora near Kumanovo, as it is stripped of all information about its date or donors, which

¹ A. B. Murphy et al., *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited*, The AAG Review of Books 5/3 (2017) 204.

² *Ibid.*, 206.

³ D. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge 1985; id., *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited*, Cambridge 2015. Also, see F. Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für Leben*, Leipzig 1874 (= *The Use and Abuse of History*, tr. A. Collins, Indianapolis – New York 1949; *O koristi i šteti istorije za život*, pr. M. Tabaković, Beograd 2021).



Fig. 1 Lineage of Orthodox Empire, Virgin of the Black Mount (Matejče)

Сл. 1 Лоза православног царства, Богородица Црногорска (Матејче)

must have existed in now non-extant inscriptions and charters.⁴ This five-domed church, the remnant of a medieval monastic complex, has garnered new attention after an article highlighted the site's devastation and its bleak prospects amid the political whims of the Balkans.⁵

The name of the monastery comes from the newly founded village of Matejče, located 9 km from the church. This is clearly an inadequate name, as written sources only know it as the *Virgin of the Black Mount*, and the considerable distance from the village supports this. It would be as if Treskavac monastery were called Prilep, being 10 km from that town,⁶ or as if Jošanica monastery were called Jagodina, situated 7 km away in the Crni Vrh foothills.⁷

Lack of information made scholars come up with inconclusive theories on how to date Mateič, starting with N. L. Okunev, whose impressionistic analysis of the royal portraits made him argue that Stefan Dušan's consort Jelena was depicted with a widow's veil,

which is why he dated Mateič after Dušan's death, interpreting the royal tree as Jelena's own lineage.⁸ Such beliefs were adopted by N. Mavrodinov and I.

⁴ Cf. E. Dimitrova, *The Church of the Holy Mother of God at the Village of Matejče*, Skorje 2016.

⁵ J.S. Ćirić, *Mateič Monastery: a Place of Cultural Memory in Urgent Need of Conservation*, Niš & Byzantium XXI (2023) 305–322.

⁶ С. Смолчић Макуљевић, *Манастир Трескавац*, Београд 2019.

⁷ Б. Цветковић, *Манастир Јошаница код Јагодине*, Јагодина 2018.

⁸ Н. Л. Окуневъ, *Грађа за историју српске уметности. 2. Црква свете Богородице – Матеич*, ГСНД 7-8 (1930) 89–113; id., *Портреты королев-ктиторовъ в сербской церковной живописи*, *Byzantinoslavica* II/1 (1930) 91. Also, see С. Радојчић, *Портрети српских владара у средњем веку*, Скопље 1934, 59, сл. 47; В. Р. Петковић, *Преглед црквених споменика кроз повесницу српског народа*, Београд 1950, 184–188; В. Ј. Бурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 70–71, 214–215.

Fig. 2
Theoktistos
(Royal lineage),
Church of the
Virgin of the
Black Mount
(Matejče)

Сл. 2 Теоктист
(Владарска
лоза), Црква
Богородице
Црногорске
(Матејче)



Božilov, who claimed that the royal genealogy represented the Assenids along with their relatives from the Byzantine Komnenos dynasty.⁹ It took even six decades for scholars to reject the ungrounded dating of Matejč as proposed by Okunev.¹⁰ Due to the methodological reductionism, avoidance of archaeological explorations, and novel political upheavals, Okunev's theses reappeared in the monograph by E. Dimitrova, which argued that Matejč was built during Dušan's lifetime, but by his wife, Jelena, as her burial church.¹¹ This modified theory was nevertheless criticised by reviewers, but to no avail, as it has become widely accepted.¹² However, the actual status of Matejč is more complex,

⁹ Н. Мавродинов, *Археологични и художествено исторични изследвания изъ Македония*, Македонски преглед 4 (1943) 116–129; id., *Родословното дърво на царица Елена в Матејче*, Известия на Българското историческо дружество XXII–XXIII (1948) 203–212; I. Božilov, *L'arbre généalogique de la reine Hélène à Matejče*, *Études historiques* 12 (1984) 7–19.

¹⁰ В. Ј. Ђурић, *Лоза српских владара у Студеници*, Зборник у част Војислава Ђурића, ed. И. Тартаља, Београд 1992, 69, н. 5; id., *L'art imperial serbe: marques du statut imperial et traits de prestige*, *Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century*, ed. E. Papadopoulou, D. Dialete, Athens 1996, 41–43; id., *Les portraits des Serbes dans le monastère de St.-Jean-Prodrome au Mont Ménécée*, *Οι Σέρρες και η περιοχή τους από την αρχαία στη μεταβυζαντινή κοινωνία II*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1998, 401, н. 6; id., *La symphonie de l'Etat et de l'Eglise dans la peinture murale en Serbie médiévale*, Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији, ed. С. Ђирковић, Београд 1998, 212, 215; М. Радујко, *Драдњански манастирић св. Николе II – живопис*, *Зограф* 24 (1995) 36, н. 89; С. Цветковски, *За ктиторската композиција од Матејче*, Годишен зборник. Филозофски факултет на Универзитетот “Св. Кирил и Методиј”, Скопје 23/49 (1996) 527–530.

¹¹ Е. Димитрова, *Манастир Матејче*, Скопје 2002, 214–221 (with bibliography).

¹² Lj. Vinulović, *The Painted Program of the Matejč Monastery and the Ktitorship of Empress Jelena Nemanjić Asen as the Path to the Salvation of the Soul*, *Bulgaria Mediae-*



Fig. 3 Michael III talks to Theodora and Theoktistos, Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 70r
 Сл. 3 Михаило III обраћа се Теодори и Теоκτισту, Мадридски Скилица, л. 70а



Fig. 4 Assassination of Theoktistos, Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 70v
 Сл. 4 Убиство Теоκτισта, Мадридски Скилица, л. 70б

as this medieval Serbian church belongs to the newly formed state of North Macedonia, while its perceptions as a monument are imbued with alleged medieval Bulgarian ideological strata, rooted in academic constructions.¹³

This case reflects the reductionism at work, which, with a political background, fatally impacts the places of heritage,¹⁴ being a symptom of the inadequate position of science in the modern age, a diagnosis long ago made.¹⁵ Despite advances in the humanities,¹⁶ serious crises have been detected in education systems,¹⁷ scholarship,¹⁸ and academic circles.¹⁹

But, soon after the monograph on Mateič was published, corrections to the program of frescoes appeared, indicating that it had been under-studied and that much work remained to be done.²⁰ It is, therefore, urgent to re-examine the site and protect it properly, which is why its transnational nomination for the

valis 12 (2021) 141–164 (with bibliography); T. Leber, *Stifterinnen und ihre Stiftungen auf dem Balkan des Spätmittelalters*, Wiesbaden 2023, 250–267; S. Smolčić Makuljević, *Female Donation and Representation in Serbian Medieval Visual Culture: Queen and Empress Jelena (C. 1330–1376)*, *Études balkaniques* 3 (2023) 599–628.

¹³ Cf. n. 8, 9, 11, 12.

¹⁴ D. Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Cambridge 1968; id., *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, New York 1996.

¹⁵ E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, Haag 1954 (= *Kriza evropskih nauka i transcendentalna fenomenologija*, pr. Z. Đinđić, Gornji Milanovac 1991).

¹⁶ For example, see J. Harris, *The New Art History. A critical introduction*, London 2001.

¹⁷ M. Antolović, S. Sadžakov, *Pogled unazad: »Bolonjsko sveučilište« i perspektive visokog obrazovanja u Srbiji na početku 21. stoljeća*, *Metodički ogledi* 29/2 (2022) 55–76; D. Stojanović, *Prošlost dolazi. Promene u tumačenju prošlosti u srpskim udžbenicima istorije 1913–2021*, Beograd 2023; С. Антонић, *Колонијално (анти)образовање. Српско школство под игом атлантизма*, Београд 2024.

¹⁸ М. Јовановић, Р. Радић, *Крiza историје: српска историографија и друштвени изазови краја 20. и почетка 21. века*, Београд 2009; *Novosti iz prošlosti. Znanje, nepznanje, upotreba i zloupotreba istorije*, ed. V. Dimitrijević, Beograd 2010; D. Stojanović, *Ulje na vodi. Ogledi iz istorije sadašnjosti Srbije*, Beograd 2010; А. Палавестра et al., *Боља прошлост: измишљање традиције и бољи идентитети*, Београд 2018; М. Антоловић, *Српска историографија данас – између императива иновације и наслеђених ограничења*, *Трендови у савременој српској историографији*, ed. М. Бјелајац, Београд 2023, 75–118.

¹⁹ J. Benda, *La trahison des clercs*, Paris 1927 (= *The Great Betrayal*, tr. R. Aldington, London 1928; *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, ed. R. Kimbal, New Brunswick – London 2009); *Critical Storytelling. Experiences of Power Abuse in Academia*, ed. J. Hansen, I. Nilsson, Leiden – Boston 2022.

²⁰ S. Tomeković, *Les saints ermites et moines dans la peinture murale byzantine*, Paris 2011, 162–164, 261, fig. 131, 132; Д. Горѓиевски, *Идентификација на светите војини во манастирот Матејче*, *Patrimonium.MK* 7–8 (2010) 197–216.



Fig. 5 a) Upper part of the royal lineage, Matejče; b) Ruling families of Manuel II and John VII Palaiologoi (ivory pyxis), Dumbarton Oaks Museum

Сл. 5 а) Горњи део владарске лозе, Матејче; б) Владлајуће породице Манојла II и Јована VII Палеолог (пиксида од слоноваче), Музеј Дамбартон Оукс

UNESCO World Heritage List would be the appropriate basis.²¹ Revisiting other medieval sites in the Balkans, I also attempted to address the issues in Mateič, facing circular arguments and broad reductionism.²²

The hypotheses relied on poor descriptions and flawed interpretations, from the claim that Jelena's veil was white (it is actually grey and ornamented) to the theory that the ktetor was Jelena only (she is depicted holding the church with her son). In challenging such weak arguments, one did not need special scientific tools, e.g., falsifiability,²³ as a holistic approach was sufficient to discard the notion that she was the sole ktetor or that Mateič was her burial church, given that the donor portraits revealed that it was built by both royalty and clergy.²⁴ Similar cases

²¹ J. S. Ćirić, *Echoes of Empire, Contemporary Challenges: A Transnational Path to Preserving Mateič (The Black Mountain Monastery)*, *The Life of Serbs in Northern Macedonia: History, Challenges, and Perspectives*, ed. T. Várady, Belgrade 2026, 67–96.

²² Б. Цветковић, *Изворна грађа и ктитори. Прилог критици редукционизма (Полошко, Ариље, Матеич)*, *Средњи век у српској науци, историји, књижевности и уметности XV*, ed. З. Бојовић, Деспотовац – Београд 2025, 141–182. When I rarely referred to material of Mateič, I had relied on the book by Dimitrova, see id., *Прилог истраживању „скривеног портрета“ у средњовековном сликарству*, *Крушевачки зборник* 11 (2005) 96; id., *The Royal Imagery of Medieval Serbia, Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11th–15th Centuries)*, ed. M. Bacci, M. Studer-Karlen, M. Vagnoni, Leiden – Boston 2022, 181, except regarding the donorship issue, see B. Cvetković, *The Portraits in Lapušnja and Iconography of Joint Ktetorship*, *Niš & Byzantium X* (2013) 300, n. 21.

²³ K. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London – New York 1959; id., *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, London 1962.

²⁴ J. S. Ćirić, B. Cvetković, *Empress Helena in Athos, Mateič, and Serres: from Shared Power to Personal Reign*, *Women and Power in the Late Medieval and Early Modern*

can be found in Vardzia and Markov manastir, where only one or two of the ktetors are depicted holding a church.²⁵ In the same way, Dušan is depicted exactly as King Milutin in the Prizren Cathedral – although signed as ktetor, he does not carry the church, but a sceptre and akakia.²⁶

The results of new research reveal that Mateič should be viewed as a triumphal church built to commemorate the first decade of Dušan's reign and victories, his recovery from a severe illness, and the birth of his son and heir, coinciding with the five-century jubilee of the restoration of iconolatry. Such a multilayered context for the luxurious refurbishment of an old Byzantine monastery on a mountain is echoed in the imagery near the donor portraits (St Prokopios and the *Abgar Cycle* facing Stefan Dušan, uniquely structured *Akathistos Cycle* above the portraits, St Constantine I, St Theodore Studites), and by the royal lineage, which represents the Orthodox Empire, connecting Stefan Dušan with Constantine the Great.²⁷ The stark change in paradigm regarding the content of the lineage (fig. 1), in view of yet another scientific concept,²⁸ was made possible by a new analysis of the frescoes, as many of which had been misidentified.²⁹

Due to the fresco featuring the ideological lineage of Dušan, it can be argued that the newly recognised figures display selected rulers, aristocrats, or martyrs, as defenders of icons, and sainted restorers of icon worship. The previous scholarship held that it included not only the Nemanids and Rhomaian *basileis*, but also the Bulgarian tsars, as the ideological platform of Jelena, wife of Stefan Dušan.³⁰ However, the fresco does not support this hypothesis, as there are no captions indicating the presence of Bulgarian rulers.

Southeast and Central Europe (1300-1600s), ed. M. Rokai, Budapest 2025, 75–114.

²⁵ A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery of Medieval Georgia*, University Park, PA 1998, 103, n. 34, fig. 55, Pl. XIII. XIV; М. Томић Ђурић, *Фреске Марковог манастира*, Београд 2019, 387–392, сл. 187.

²⁶ B. Cvetković, *Royal Imagery of King Milutin in Historical Context Revisited*, Holy King Milutin and his Age: History, Literature, Art, ed. J. S. Ćirić, S. Ubiparipović, Kragujevac 2023, 675–676, fig. 4b.

²⁷ Б. Цветковић, *Participatio Graecorum, Стефан Душан и иконографија* (forthcoming).

²⁸ Th. S. Kuhn, *The Function of Dogma in Scientific Research*, Scientific change: Historical studies in the intellectual, social and technical conditions for scientific discovery and technical invention, from antiquity to the present, ed. A. C. Crombie, London – New York 1961, 347–369; id., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago 1962.

²⁹ B. Cvetković, *The Virgin of the Black Mount (Mateič): Reidentification of the Fresco Program, draft report*, https://www.academia.edu/145550703/Matei%C4%8D_Reidentification_of_the_Fresco_Program; id., *Addenda to Reidentification of Frescoes in Matejche – draft report*, https://www.academia.edu/164498683/Addenda_to_Reidentification_of_Frescoes_in_Matejche_draft_report.

³⁰ E. Hausteин, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum. Studien zur mittelalterlichen serbischen Herrscherikonographie*, Inaugural-dissertation, Philosophische Fakultät, Bonn 1985, 78–88; Д. Војводић, *Од хоризонталне ка вертикалној генеалошкој слици Немањића*, ЗРВИ XLIV/1 (2007) 300–311; id., *Родословне представе и идеја прародитељства у манастиру Студеници*, Манастир Студеница – 700 година Краљеве цркве, ed. Љ. Максимовић, В. Вукашиновић, Београд 2016, 261–263.

Among the figures in the middle row, there is one signed Θεοκτίστος (fig. 2), whose identity was variously resolved. While Božilov theorised it was the Epirote ruler, Theodore Angelos Komnenos, depicted as a monk,³¹ who never actually became one,³² Đurić wondered if it was the Serbian King Dragutin, whose monastic name was indeed *Teoktist*.³³ However, Theoktistos on the fresco is not represented as a monk, and in the medieval lineages, Dragutin was never shown dressed as one, nor inscribed as Teoktist, let alone in Greek, but was always in a royal costume, signed as King Stefan.³⁴ In medieval art, he was never portrayed as a saint, as his cult had not yet been fully developed.³⁵ This is why his images as the holy ruler and monk would appear much later, during the post-Byzantine period and Serbian Baroque age.³⁶

Analyses of comparative sources and the fresco itself have pointed to the possibility of identifying the likeness of Theoktistos with one of the key Byzantine figures from the 9th C.³⁷ At the court, he held high titles including *magistros*, *patrikios*, *synkletikos*, *ἐπὶ τοῦ κανικλείου*, and *logothetes tou dromou*, spanning the reigns of Leo V to Michael III, and as a key ally of Empress Theodora and regent of Michael III, he was named *παραδυναστεύων τῆ αὐγοῦστη*.³⁸ That the Theoktistos from the fresco is this one,³⁹ and not someone

³¹ Božilov, *op. cit.*, 12–13.

³² L. Fundić, *Art, Power, and Patronage in the Principality of Epirus, 1204–1318*, London – New York 2022.

³³ Djurić, *L'art imperial serbe*, 42; Војводић, *Од хоризонталне*, 300–301.

³⁴ Cf. V. J. Djurić, *Loza Nemanjića u starom srpskom slikarstvu*, Peristil 21 (1978) 53–55; Hausteин, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, passim.

³⁵ Д. Поповић, *Култ краља Драгутина – монаха Теоктиста*, ЗРВИ 38 (1999/2000) 309–326 (= ead., *Под окриљем светости. Култ светих владара и реликвија у средњовековној Србији*, Београд 2006, 121–142).

³⁶ D. Davidov, *Serbische Kupferstiche des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Novi Sad 1983, 96, 162, No. 43; Е. Бакалова, *Житијни циклус светоза Саве у Рилском манастиру, Осам векова Хиландара*, ed. В. Кораћ, Београд 2000, 490, сл. 6; Д. Давидов, *Српска графика XVIII века*, Београд 2006, 257, 280, 318–319, 339–341, 356, 357, 371, бр. 30, 63, 96, 109, 132, 133, 152, сл. 30, 157, 182–185, 230, 231, 232, 277; А. Кучековић, *Лоза српских владара и архиепископа у цркви манастира Ораховице у Славонији*, ЗНМ 18-2 (2007) 95–116.

³⁷ For basic information, see P. A. Hollingsworth, *Theoktistos*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3, ed. A. Kazhdan, New York – Oxford 1991, 2056; *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. Erste Abteilung (641–867). Band 5*, ed. F. Winkelmann, R.-J. Lilie, Berlin – New York 2001, No. 8050.

³⁸ F. Halkin, *La passion de Sainte Théoctiste*, *Analecta Bollandiana* LXXIII (1955) 55–65 (= *Martyrs Grecs IIe–VIIIe s.*, London 1974, II); Ioannis Scylitzae, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, Berlin 1973, s.v. Θεοκτίστος ὁ τοῦ κανικλείου; Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, ed. A. Kaldellis, Canberra 1998, s.v. Theoktistos, Logothetes; *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.M. Talbot, Washington D.C. 1998, s.v. Theoktistos; *Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nominis Fertur Libri I–IV*, ed. M. Featherstone, J. S. Codoñer, Berlin 2015, s. v. Θεόκτιστος; magister, ὁ τοῦ κανικλείου.

³⁹ D. A. Miller, *The Logothete of the Drome in the Middle Byzantine Period*, *Byzantion* 36/2 (1966) 438–470; W. T. Treadgold, *The Chronological Accuracy of the "Chronicle" of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813–845*, *DOP* 33 (1979) 157–197; T. A. Sénina, *Un saint*

else with this same name from the long Rhomaian history,⁴⁰ is corroborated by the identity of other busts in the main lineage axis (figs. 1, 2), which reveal that in its lower part it consists of defenders of icons. Below Theoktistos is the famous St Theodosia of Constantinople, martyred for opposing the destruction of the Christ Chalke icon, and further down is Sergius the Confessor, yet another hero from the iconoclasm age and a contemporary of Theoktistos, with a legible caption.⁴¹

The importance given to Theoktistos in Byzantine sources is based on the fact that he was a high courtier, military leader, regent, and an influential supporter of Empress Theodora in her will to abolish iconoclasm.⁴² It was the *Apsis*, his own lush palace in Constantinople,⁴³ where the decision to restore icon worship was reached,⁴⁴ during the local synod held “in the Canicleiou”, the region of the city which was called after the title of *epi tou kanikleiou*, held by him.⁴⁵ Although his actions were in line with the iconoclast policy of all previous rulers, eventually he would be canonised as the iconophile, and was since listed in the *Synaxary of Constantinople* on November 20th, stating “ἄθλησις τοῦ ἁγίου Θεοκτίστου πατρικίου”.⁴⁶ In later menologia, Theoktistos is also named as confessor: “Μνήμη τοῦ ἁγίου Θεοκτίστου τοῦ Ὁμολογητοῦ, ὁς

fouette un autre: Théoktistos le logothète et Euthyme de Sardes, *Scrinium* 5 (2009) 391–393; П. Коматина, *Црквена политика Византије од краја иконоборства до смрти цара Василија I*, Београд 2014, s.v. Теоктист, логотет; Б. Крмановић, *О војним овлашћењима логотега дрoма у VIII веку*, ЗРВИ LIII (2016) 57–58; Н. Taghavi, E. Roohi, *Caesar Bardas and the Accusation of an Illicit Affair: A Re-examination*, *Byzantinoslavica* 77/1–2 (2019) 230–247; O. P. Domínguez, *The Iconoclast Saint. Emperor Theophilos in Byzantine hagiography*, *The Emperor in the Byzantine World*, ed. Sh. Tougher, London – New York 2019, 217–219, 221, 225.

⁴⁰ E.g., cf. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813*, ed. C. Mango, R. Scott, Oxford 1997, s.v. Theoktistos (magistros, protoasekretis, quaestor).

⁴¹ Cvetković, *Addenda*, 3–4, figs. 5–9. For detailed analysis on all these, with identifications for other historic personalities in the lineage, see id., *Participatio* (forthcoming).

⁴² C. Mango, *The Liquidation of Iconoclasm and the Patriarch Photios*, *Iconoclasm*, ed. A. Bryer, J. Herrin, Birmingham 1977, 133–140; A. Μαρκόπουλος, *Βίος τῆς αυτοκράτειρας Θεοδώρας (BHG 1731)*, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 5 (1983) 249–285.

⁴³ Ioannis Scylitzae, *Synopsis historiarum*, 88.50–51; John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, ed. J. Wortley, Cambridge 2010, 84. Also, see J. Featherstone, *Emperor and Court*, *The Oxford Handbook for Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. Jeffreys et al., Oxford 2008, 508, fig. 1.

⁴⁴ *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekkeri, Bonnae 1838, 139.19–147.21; M. Featherstone, *Space and ceremony in the Great Palace of Constantinople under the Macedonian Emperors*, *Le corti nell’alto medioevo. Settimane di Studio della Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo LXII*, Spoleto 2015, 593–594, n. 24.

⁴⁵ *The Synodicon Vetus*, ed. J. Dufy, J. Parker, Washington D.C. 1979, 132–133, n. 200, No. 156.

⁴⁶ *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. Delehaye, Bruxellis 1902, 244.

καὶ Πατρικίος καὶ ἐνούχως,” in the time of Empress Theodora.⁴⁷ The fresco in Mateič has still traces of the caption with a title, but its true content can be ascertained after a renewed analysis of the fresco and the old photographs of it.⁴⁸

* * *

In regard to the identified figure of Theoktistos in Mateič, this text aims to provide an insight into his images in the the Madrid Skylitzes,⁴⁹ pinpoint differences of these renditions, analyze the reasons behind usage of such strategies, and find out if there were more depictions of him in the same manuscript, as well as in the illustrated copy of the Vatican Manasses.⁵⁰

Despite the sources providing information on numerous exploits of Theoktistos, the ideator of the Madrid imagery chose only two episodes to represent, both aimed at inferring his downfall and murder. The first one was meant to display a petition that the young Emperor Michael III made towards his mother, Empress Theodora, and the regent Theoktistos in order to promote to a higher rank his school teacher (fig. 3).⁵¹ Michael’s entreaty was refused due to the bad reputation of this person. The picture is made up of three segments, with Theoktistos in the centre, standing in front of a green wall, with a red gown, blue tunic, white hat, raising his hands towards the enthroned couple. The Empress and her minor son, seated on the joint gold throne in front of a gabled building, wear imperial garb, but the *loros* seems to be more visible on Theodora. Behind Theoktistos are three young courtiers with crossed, veiled hands. In her analysis of the image, Elena Boeck argued that it does not convey the narrative as given in the manuscript, as in her opinion, the gestures of Theoktistos show that the supplicant is he, not the young Emperor, inferring the start of the conflict with the latter, which ultimately led to the assassination of the former.⁵²

⁴⁷ Νικόδημου Αγιορείτου, *Συναξαριστής 1*, Αθήνα 1868, 236; *Μέγας Συναξαριστής*, Αθήνα 1895, 441.

⁴⁸ Since September 6, 2024, the request sent to the National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, for the high-resolution scans of the old, black and white photographs of the royal tree has been pending.

⁴⁹ B. L. Fonkič, *Sull’ Origine del manoscritto dello Scilitze di Madrid*, *Erytheia* 28 (2007) 67–8; M. Castiñeiras González, *La crónica ilustrada de Escilitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Vitr/26/2): nuevas perspectivas de estudio*, Alcalá 2025; G. Parpulov, *The Illustrations of the Madrid Skylitzes: Original or Copy?*, *The Byzantine Review* 7/2 (2025) 5–17.

⁵⁰ I. Dujčev, *The Miniatures of the Chronicle of Manasses*, Sofia 1963; *Летописца на Константин Манаси. Фототипно издание на Ватиканския препис на среднобългарския превод*, ed. I. Dujčev, София 1963; Constantine Manasses, *Synopsis Chroniki: Codex Vaticano Slavo 2 1344–45. Facsimile Edition*, ed. A. Džurova, Athens 2007.

⁵¹ V. Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*, Leiden 2002, 114, fig. 172.

⁵² Cf. E. N. Boeck, *The Art of Being Byzantine: History, Structure and Visual Narrative in the Madrid Skylitzes Manuscript*, Yale PhD Dissertation, Ann Arbor, MI 2003, 87–88, image 32; ead., *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses*, Cambridge 2015, 96–99, fig. 3.4. Note that Theoktistos is omitted from the index in this latter book, cf. *ibid.*, 313, where his mentions should

But the close reading of this miniature discloses more gestures overlooked by Boeck, showing that the picture does follow the text and, therefore, should be differently explained.⁵³ Namely, although Theoktistos gestures with both his hands, Theodora and Michael are also gesturing with their right hands, not holding sceptres or globes. Their gestures are, therefore, not signs of petitions, nor are those of Theoktistos, but of their conversation, and are reflected in the way their heads are turned towards each other, which is in tune with a caption written to the left of the miniature stating that Michael entertains his mother and Theoktistos.

The second image of Theoktistos from the Madrid Skylitzes shows his assassination, staged as a coup by Bardas, the brother of the Empress (fig. 4).⁵⁴ The assassin and the victim are shown in front of a now flaked image of a gabled building, similar to the previous picture. An armoured soldier strikes Theoktistos with a sword, causing his belly to bleed profusely, as he tries to protect himself by raising a small couch. What is important is that he is dressed in imperial purple sakkos, with pearl-studded gold loros, wearing the gold crown. This was the most direct way to describe the crucial role of Theoktistos as the regent of Michael III.⁵⁵

While these miniatures render specially chosen parts he played at the court and politics of the time, reflecting the nuances expected in various Byzantine histories,⁵⁶ and chronicles,⁵⁷ in the Mateič fresco, however, it is not an image of historical Theoktistos, but the ideological one, suited for the official version of the restoration of Orthodoxy.⁵⁸ His appearance (fig. 2) follows the entry from the *Synaxary*, which can be argued for other figures on the fresco, too, such as Sergius the Confessor, Manuel the Patrikios, and Sergius the Magistros.⁵⁹ Their

have been filed for the pages 98, 99, 100, 101.

⁵³ For some reviews of this book by E. Boeck, see G. Parpulov, in *BMGS* 40/2 (2016) 325–326; R. Cormack, in *Slavic Review* 76/3 (2017) 791–792; B. Anderson, in *West* 86th: *A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 24/2 (2017) 268–270; I. Nilsson, in *The American Historical Review* 122/4 (2017) 1288–1289.

⁵⁴ Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 114–115, fig. 173.

⁵⁵ Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine*, 99–102, fig. 3.5.

⁵⁶ R.-J. Lilie, *Reality and Invention. Reflections on Byzantine Historiography*, *DOP* 68 (2014) 157–210; *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*, ed. L. Neville et al., Cambridge 2018.

⁵⁷ *A Companion to Byzantine Chronicles*, ed. R. Tocci, Leiden – Boston 2025.

⁵⁸ P. Karlin-Hayter, *Icon Veneration: Significance of the Restoration of Orthodoxy?*, *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine history and culture dedicated to Paul Speck*, ed. Cl. Sode, S. Takacs, Asgate 2001, 171–175.

⁵⁹ For these figures in the Mateič lineage, see Cvetković, *Addenda*, 1–4, fig. 1–9; id., *Participatio* (forthcoming).

lives could have been described in separate *vitas*, which did not survive,⁶⁰ available as the bases for use in similar ideological constructions. This was also the case with descriptions of Empress Theodora as a saint.⁶¹

It is obvious that the gestures Theoktistos was depicted with in Mateič do reflect what the lines of the Constantinopolitan *Synaxary* state, describing him as patrikios and eunuch of Empress Theodora in commemorating “the martyrdom of the saint Theoktistos”. His arms are raised in front of his chest, hands open wide, which was the well-known way for representing saints, a version of the *orans* posture (fig. 2). His costume also reflects the rank of a patrician, and even his looks, with barely visible beard, stand for his being a eunuch.

This is exactly where the Madrid images depart from Mateič, as the miniatures display Theoktistos in guises opposite to the usual forms or roles of eunuchs. The first one shows him bearded (and grey), which is noteworthy as the courtiers behind him are not. In front of him, young Michael III is shown with a short dark beard, and, naturally, Theodora without. On the second one, the imperial attire of Theoktistos strongly advocates against his being a eunuch, which is important as he is largely considered by scholarship as one, unlike most sources.⁶² This is of major interest because the envy of Bardas, which led to the murder of Theoktistos, was based, at least according to what Genesios describes, on rumours that Empress Theodora had plans to marry herself or one of her daughters to Theoktistos, thus depriving Michael III of the imperial power, something not quite imaginable for eunuchs.⁶³

Be that as it may, the royal costume worn by Theoktistos, as well as his beard, follows those historical sources that do not claim he was a eunuch. That is why different displays of Theoktistos in Madrid and Mateič, respectively, deserve full attention as proofs of the various roles the imagery was destined to play. This fact is of crucial significance for understanding the precious content of the Mateič lineage fresco.

* * *

The exact reason for creating the lineage of the Orthodox Empire in Mateič was based on the ideological platform reflecting the politics Stefan Dušan led during his diplomatic and military actions within the civil wars in Byzantium.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ For such a suggestion, see P. Karlin-Hayter, *Études sur les deux histoires du règne de Michel III*, *Byzantion* 41 (1971) 452–496; S. Métivier, *Peut-on parler d'une hagiographie aristocratique à Byzance (VIIIe–XIe siècles)?*, *Byzantine Hagiography. Texts, Themes & Projects*, ed. A. Rigo et al., Turnhout 2018, 190, n. 61.

⁶¹ *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.M. Talbot, Washington D.C. 1996, s.v. Theodora.

⁶² Cf. R. Guiland, *Les eunuques dans l'empire byzantin. Étude de titulature et de prosopographie byzantines*, *Études byzantines* 1 (1943) 220–221; id., *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines* 1, Amsterdam 1967, 180; K. M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium*, Chicago 2003, 129, 135, 204, 234, 254; Sh. Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, London – New York 2008, 55, 170, 189, No. 219.

⁶³ Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, 78–79.

⁶⁴ Lj. Maksimović, *L'empire de Stefan Dušan: Genèse et caractère*, *Travaux et*

This period, preceding his coronation as Tsar, was characterised by the appearance of a special formula *particeps Graecorum*, used in his charters and inscriptions.⁶⁵ The monumental fresco representing the lineage of Dušan with St Constantine the Great as its source,⁶⁶ not St Simeon Nemanja as was thought, follows in a precise manner the concept elaborated in the charter within Dušan's *Code* where, along the list of his major victories,⁶⁷ he states that he ascended the Empire by the grace of God, and in the image of Constantine the Great.⁶⁸ The complex lineage, with already mentioned figures, included Empresses Eirene and Theodora, and Emperors Michael III and Isaac I Komnenos, in the lower zones.⁶⁹ The huge area with now destroyed paint layer may have consisted of the Byzantine and Serbian rulers from the later periods, such as Alexios III Angelos, Andronikos II Palaiologos, St Simeon Nemanja, Stefan the First-Crowned, Milutin, or Stefan Uroš III.

As it appears, the central figure in the highest row does represent Dušan, but the two to the right of him were, however, differently described by scholars. Despite the fact that the two youths wield spherical crowns and cruciform sceptres, Mavrodinov claims they may be Jelena's daughters,⁷⁰ Hausteин identifies them as an Empress and a young Emperor,⁷¹ while Dimitrova supposes that one on the left is King Uroš, and the other on the right his wife or sister.⁷² This fresco actually does not provide grounds for such confusion, as both youths are depicted in an identical manner, being beardless.⁷³ Analysis of their looks, histori-

Mémoires 14, Mélanges Gilbert Dagron (2002) 415–428; Б. Ферјанчић, С. Ћирковић, *Стефан Душан краљ и цар 1331–1355*, Београд 2005, 49–148; С. Пириватрић, *Улазак Стефана Душана у Царство*, ЗРВИ XLIV/2 (2007) 381–406; id., *Partitio Romaniae and Partitio Imperii. Stefan Dušan and Ivan Alexander in the Byzantine Civil War (1341–1354)*, Византија и Славјаните. Годишник на СУ ЦСВП „Иван Дуйчев“ 95/14 (2010) 89–99.

⁶⁵ С. Ћирковић, *Србија уочи Царства*, Дечани и византијска уметност средином XIV века, ed. В. Ј. Ђурић, Београд 1989, 3–13; id., *Between Kingdom and Empire: Dusan's State (1346–1355) Reconsidered*, Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century, ed. E. Papadopoulou, D. Dialete, Athens 1996, 110–120; С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија Немањића. Дипломатичка студија*, Београд 1997, 81–96; С. Пириватрић, *Византијске титуле Јована Оливера. Прилог истраживању проблема њиховог порекла и хронологије*, ЗРВИ 50 (2013) 713–724.

⁶⁶ For Constantine the Great as a model in the Serbian medieval ideology and art, see V. J. Đurić, *Le nouveau Constantin dans l'art serbe médiéval*, Ληθοστρωτόν. Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcel Restle, ed. T. Steppan, В. Вокорп, Stuttgart 2000, 55–65; *Константин Велики у византијској и српској традицији*, ed. Љ. Максимовић, Београд 2014. Cf. Н. Радошевић, *Константин Велики у "Царским говорима"*, ЗРВИ 33 (1994) 7–19.

⁶⁷ *Законик цара Стефана Душана 1349 и 1354*, ed. Н. Радојчић, Београд 1960, 85, 144, 147–162.

⁶⁸ С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Елементи царског програма у Душановој повељи уз „Законик“*, ПКЈИФ 45–46/1–4 (1999/2000) 3–20.

⁶⁹ Svetković, *Participatio* (forthcoming).

⁷⁰ Мавродинов, *Родословното дрво на царица Елена в Матейче*, 208.

⁷¹ Hausteин, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, 77.

⁷² Димитрова, *Манастир Матейче*, 216, 309, сл. 86, 87, ил. LIV.

⁷³ Цветковић, *Извори и ктитори*, 169–170; id., *Addenda*, 5, fig. 10.

cal context and traces of captions shows that they represent John V Palaiologos and King Stefan Uroš, Dušan's son (fig. 5a).⁷⁴ These precious fresco fragments provide information to date at least the upper portions of the wall paintings during the early 1340s, as the identified royal figures echo the crucial segment of Dušan's *participatio Graecorum* status, namely, his new alliance with the court in Constantinople.⁷⁵ The background of this treaty was actually the Byzantine offer to recognise Dušan's rule over former Greek territories, sealed with the marriage of his son to the princess, sister of John V.⁷⁶ The joint portrayals of the reigning Nemanids and the Palaiologi in Mateič are similar to the well-known family portraits of the Byzantine rulers on the ivory pyxis in the Dumbarton Oaks Museum, which is the best proof of how art was used to express the most complicated political and dynastic agreements (fig. 5b).⁷⁷

What may further corroborate this interpretation is the photograph of the royal lineage published by Okunev, which displays a female figure with a tall crown, originally positioned to the left of Dušan. Despite Okunev's rightful note that the fresco's condition was poor, he nevertheless identified this figure as Dušan's wife Jelena, and even signed the reproduction: *Genealogy tree of the Aсен family*.⁷⁸ Notwithstanding this unsustainable belief, it is unusual that it was never disputed by referring to the fact that the lineages did not include the wives of rulers.⁷⁹ In view of the given proposal and the historical context, it is possible to identify this figure as Empress Anne of Savoy, the regent and mother of John V, whose place would have been expected in the lineage due to her crucial role in the politics of the time.⁸⁰

As argued above and in the published essays, the lineage in Mateič displays several defenders of icons, which is why its dating in the 1340s obviously coincided with the 500th anniversary of the *Triumph of Orthodoxy*. The fact that it comprised figures of value for the legitimacy of Dušan as ruler, *particeps Graecorum*, and close relative of the imperial family, is echoed in the structure of the donor portraits and the surrounding imagery. The figures of Jelena and Uroš represent the joint ktetorship, including Dušan, set on the pilaster, in between his family on the east, and the Archangels with young Jesus in the mandorla,

⁷⁴ Cvetković, *Addenda*, 5; id., *Participatio* (forthcoming), with a note that one Β, next to the first royal youth on the right of Dušan, may be the remaining initial letter of the title βασιλεύς.

⁷⁵ Пириватрић, *Улазак Стефана Душана у Царство*, 383–384.

⁷⁶ Nicephori Gregorae, *Byzantina historia* II, ed. L. Schoppeni, Bonnae 1830, 642.9–15; Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris, *Historiarum libri* II, ed. L. Schoppeni, Bonnae 1831, 306.3–14; *Listine o jednošajih između južnog Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike* II, ed. S. Ljubić, Zagreb 1870, 193, no. CCCXXIII; *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославије* VI, ed. Ф. Баришић, Б. Ферјанчић, Београд 1986, 145–578.

⁷⁷ N. Oikonomides, *John VII Palaeologus and the Ivory Pyxis at Dumbarton Oaks*, DOP 31 (1977) 329–337; J. Hanson, *Ivory Pyxis with Imperial Families and Ceremonial Scenes*, Dumbarton Oaks. The Collections, ed. G. Bühl, Washington D.C. 2008, 182.

⁷⁸ Окуневъ, *Грађа за историју*, 110, сл. 21.

⁷⁹ Cf. Haustein, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, passim.

⁸⁰ The full discussion on this issue is given in Cvetković, *Participatio* (forthcoming).

on the west.⁸¹ This iconography not only reveals the triumph achieved by the will of God, but also the grace of God, granted through the birth of the royal heir as well as his coronation as the *rex iunior*.⁸²

The imagery surrounding the portraits presents a subtle comparison between the birth of Uroš and the Incarnation of Jesus, as the figures of Jelena and Uroš are set beneath the VII oikos of the *Akathistos cycle* (fig. 6), echoing the fresco of St Archangels next to Dušan.⁸³ All these images share an identical scheme in that the church held by donors is paralleled by the oval mandorlas with the child Jesus. The point of these superposed pictures is that the birth of the heir reflects the essence of the Nemanid rule, the Divine origin of their power. The ktetorial fresco, as joint figures of mother and son, not only represents the iconic type of procreation, but is in tune with the *Triumph of Orthodoxy* icons, with Empress Theodora and her minor son Michael III among the heroes of iconolatry, symbolising both the synod held in 843 and the annual feast established to celebrate the restoration of icons.⁸⁴



Fig. 6 Royal and ktetorial portraits under the VII oikos and VIII kontakion, Matejče

Сл. 6 Владарско-ктиторски портрети испод VII икоса и VIII кондака, Матејче

⁸¹ Цветковић, *Извори и ктиторски*, 166–168, сл. 6–8; Ćirić, Cvetković, *op. cit.*, 93–94, fig. 5.

⁸² For such usage of holy warriors, the *Abgar cycle*, and the specially structured *Akathistos cycle*, see Cvetković, *Participatio* (forthcoming).

⁸³ Photographs nos. A0859, B1829, National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade.

⁸⁴ N. Chatzidakis, *La restitution du culte des images sur les icônes: Variations du contenu dogmatique, L'aniconisme dans l'art religieux byzantin*, ed. M. Campagnolo et al., Geneva 2015, 115–125. Also, see M. Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs et de la collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise*, Venise 1962, 96, No. 63, Pl. 48; N. Chatzidakis, *Icons. The Velimezis Collection. Catalogue raisonné*, Thessaloniki 1998, 86–91, No. 5; A. Δρανδάκη, *Η Αναστήλωση των Εικόνων: παράδοση και ανανέωση στο έργο ενός Κρητικού ζωγράφου του 16ου αιώνα*, Μουσείο Μπενάκη 1 (2001) 59–77; A. Μαρκόπουλος, *Ο Θρίαμβος της Ορθοδοξίας στην εικόνα του Βρετανικού Μουσείου. Τα πρόσωπα και τα κείμενα*, ΔΧΑΕ 26 (2011) 345–352; Т. Стародубцев, *О святителях, представленных на византийской иконе Неделье православья у Британском музее у Лондону*, ЗРВИ LIV (2017) 251–278.



Fig. 7 Seventh Ecumenical Synod: a) Sopoćani; b) St Sophia, Ochrid

Сл. 7 Седми васељенски сабор: а) Сопоћани; б) Св. Софија, Охрид

But the parallelism between the donors and the triumph of icon worship is also drawn on the traditional iconography of another historical event, namely, the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, held in 787 (the Second Council of Nicaea).⁸⁵ Its structure differs from illustrations of all other synods, as it includes figures of both convenors, Empress regent Irene of Athens, and her son, young Emperor Constantine VI. The imperial couple could be represented differently, although, like all the other members of the council, they usually gesture in lively discussion. In Sopoćani, they are seated on the joint throne, but only the Empress holds a sceptre (fig. 7a),⁸⁶ while in the Ochrid Cathedral, they both raise hands gesturing (fig. 7b).⁸⁷ The importance of this council was made manifest by including icons, inscribed scrolls, and large crosses. In the church of St Demetrius in Mistra, it is Constantine VI who holds a sceptre, and in front of the imperial

⁸⁵ For the material, see Ch. Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine*, Paris 1970.

⁸⁶ В. Ј. Ђурић, *Сопоћани*, Београд 1991, 43, 133, сл. 16, 21; Б. Тодић, *Фреске манастира Сопоћани*, Нови Сад 2021, 186–187, 193, 197, сл. 127; В. Д. Милановић, *Између изузетности и традиције: слике сабора и Тајне вечере и посвета цркве у Сопоћанима*, Зборник радова Филозофског факултета у Приштини LIII/1 (2023) 283.

⁸⁷ Ц. Грозданов, *Охридското видно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 72, црт. 17.

couple, there is an icon of the Virgin petitioning Christ.⁸⁸ A similar version is in the narthex of the Patriarchate in Peć, where the orthodox bishops bring forth an icon before the imperial couple and heretics,⁸⁹ as well as in Pherapont, where the royals are seated in front of a church with three domes.⁹⁰ Specially conceived is the fresco in Arbanassi, where Irene and Constantine VI carry an icon of Christ and the scroll inscribed: *Anathema to those who do not venerate holy icons*.⁹¹ Finally, in Dobrovaţ, they hold a large cross between them,⁹² which was the most direct way to represent Constantine VI and Eirene as being New Constantine the Great and Helena.⁹³

The complex symbolism of the portraits of Jelena and Uroš in Mateič does not account only for their being ktetors, but directly alludes to the central place of icons in Christianity. The church they hold, i.e. the house of the Christian God, is echoed in the VII oikos above the portraits, with young Christ in the mandorla. The proper analogy is the figure of St Empress Theodora in the Menologion of Basil II, holding the large sphere with the bust of Christ (fig. 8), the sign of her role in the restoration of icon worship.⁹⁴ This symbolism is directly tied to the structure of the royal lineage, in emphasis on the holy icons and the historical background of Mateič, coinciding with the five centuries jubilee of the restoration of icon worship.

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There were more grounds for including Theoktistos in the ideological genealogy of Dušan, as history recalls him as a major patron of Constantine-Cyril,⁹⁵ the evangelizer of the Slavs who, along with his brother Methodios,

⁸⁸ Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles*, 90.

⁸⁹ С Петковић, *Зидно сликарство на подручју Пећке патријаршије 1557–1614*, Нови Сад 1965, 163; Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles*, 117; В. Ј. Ђурић, С. Ђирковић, В. Кораћ, *Пећка патријаршија*, Београд 1990, 258.

⁹⁰ Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles*, 104–105, fig. 53; I. Danilova, *The frescoes of St Pherapont monastery*, Moscow 1970, 8, 53, fig. 140.

⁹¹ S. Salaville, *L'iconographie des «sept conciles œcuméniques»*, *Échos d'Orient* 25/142 (1926) 173–174; Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles*, 85–86, fig. 44; *Корпус на стенописите от XVII век в България*, ed. Б. Пенкова, Ц. Кунева, София 2012, 119, 124, 135.

⁹² Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles*, 98, 101, fig. 51.

⁹³ *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium. 4th–13th c.*, ed. P. Magdalino, Aldershot 1994; Ch. Walter, *The Iconography of Constantine the Great, Emperor and Saint*, Leiden 2006; L. Jones, *The Imperial Cult in Middle Byzantine Art: Cappadocia and Constantinople*, Space and Communities in Byzantine Anatolia, ed. N. Kontogiannis, T. Uyar, Istanbul 2022, 355–373; ead., *Deconstructing an Iconography: Depictions of Constantine and Helena in Middle Byzantine Cappadocia*, *Valonia: A Journal of Anatolian Pasts* 1 (2024) 135–155.

⁹⁴ *El "Menologio de Basilio II"*. *Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Gr. 1613*, ed. F. D'Aiuto, Madrid 2008, fol. 392. Also, see N. Ševčenko, *Synaxaria and Menologia*, A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts, ed. V. Tsamakda, Leiden – Boston 2017, 320–321; *The Menologion of Basil II*, ed. Ch. Kuper, Cambridge, MA 2025.

⁹⁵ И. И. Малышевский, *Логоветъ Θεокτισтъ, покровитель Константина философа*, Труды Киевской духовной академии 2 (1887) 265–297.



Fig. 8 Empress Theodora, Vat. gr. 1613, fol. 392r

Сл. 8 Царица Теодора, Vat. gr. 1613, л. 392а

authored the Slavic alphabet.⁹⁶ As this was duly elaborated in Cyril's *Vita*,⁹⁷ his likeness must have also existed in the lineage, among now-damaged figures in the lower zone of the fresco. The fact that it consists of iconophiles from different periods is reminiscent of the structure of Byzantine histories and chronicles.⁹⁸ This has become evident upon profound insight into the colossal fresco on the monastery Studenica tower, as it renders the Jesse tree and Nemanid lineage side by side, but one wonders how to read its content, as interpolated scenes of Christ's *Baptism* and *Crucifixion* hold reverse places in regard to their chronological sequence from the Gospels.⁹⁹

As the Mateič royal tree becomes clearer, so does its importance for uncovering the complex origin of the Serbian written genealogies,¹⁰⁰ as well as the chronicles, the content of which complements those of the royal

⁹⁶ M. Ivanova, *Inventing and ethnicising Slavonic in the long ninth century*, *Journal of Medieval History* 47/4-5 (2021) 574–586.

⁹⁷ Fr. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, Prague 1933, 34–45, 88–92; M. Ivanova, *Re-thinking the Life of Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher*, *Slavonic and East European Review*, 98/3 (2020) 434–463.

⁹⁸ P. Sophoulis, *Byzantine Chronicles and their South Slavonic Translations in the 14th Century*, *Cyrrilomethodianum* XXI (2016) 199–213.

⁹⁹ Cf. Војводић, *Родословне представе*, 261–263, црт. 1, 5, сл. 10, where such an “anomaly” was not detected.

¹⁰⁰ M. Vasiljević, *Imagining the Ruler's Genealogy in Medieval Serbia*, *RÉSEE LV* (2017) 73–88.

trees.¹⁰¹ These written and painted materials are closely related due to what they disclose. Apart from the manuscripts of the Madrid Skylitzes and Vatican Manasses, there is also one richly illustrated Russian copy of the Chronicle of George Hamartolos.¹⁰² It is known that the written sources were transmitted in all directions, which is why some Byzantine short chronicles were dependent on Serbian ones.¹⁰³

Although translations of the Chronicle of Hamartolos and Symeon the Logothete from Greek into Slavic¹⁰⁴ preceded those of the Chronicle of John Zonaras,¹⁰⁵ it was the latter that became much appreciated within the Slavonic elites,¹⁰⁶ especially the shorter version, known as the *Paralipomenon*.¹⁰⁷

Despite being precious as literary works and sources, chronicles are often stylised and ideologically charged, because they were meant to serve concepts

¹⁰¹ Ђ. Сп. Радојичић, *Доба постанка и развој старих српских родослова*, ИГ 2 (1948) 21–36; М. Кашанин, *Српска књижевност у средњем веку*, Београд 1975, 286–292, 372–384; Д. Богдановић, *Историја старе српске књижевности*, Београд 1980, 208–212; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Слика и историја у средњовековној Србији*, Глас САНУ СССХХХVIII (1983) 130–131; Ђ. Трифуновић, *Азбучник српских средњовековних књижевних појмова*, Београд 1990, 142–146, 307–308, 364–372.

¹⁰² Г. И. Вздорнов, *Иллюстрации к Хронике Георгия Амартола*, Византийский временник XXX (1969) 205–225; Т. В. Анисимова, *Символика числа 7 и миниатюры Троицкого списка Хроники Георгия Амартола*, Лицевые рукописи XI–XVII веков: проблемы и аспекты изучения, ed. Е. Гладышева, Москва 2017, 95–106. Also, see ead., *Хроника Георгия Амартола в древнерусских списках XIV–XVII вв.*, Москва 2009.

¹⁰³ On this, see P. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken I–III*, Wien 1975–1979; С. Ђирковић, *Српски летописи и византијске кратке хронике*, Српска књижевност у доба Деспотовине, ed. Р. Маринковић et al., Деспотовац 1998, 101–107 (with bibliography).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Г. Острогорски, *Словенски превод Хронике Симеона Логотета*, Сабрана дела. Књига Трећа. Из византијске историје, историографије и просопографије, Београд 1970, 270–295; М. Petrova, *Hamartolos or Zonaras: Searching for the Author of a Chronicle in a Fourteenth-Century Slavic Manuscript: MS. Slav 321 from the Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences*, Scripta & E-Scripta 8–9 (2010) 405–418; *Георгиј Амартол*, Православна Енциклопедија XI, Москва 2011, 48–56; Z. A. Brzozowska, M. J. Leszka, *The Byzantine Chronicles of Symeon Magister and Logothete (10th cent.) and John Zonaras (12th cent.) in the Literatures of the Southern and Eastern Slavs*, Balcanica Posnaniensia XXX (2023) 23–42.

¹⁰⁵ Ioannis Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum*, ed. L. Dindorfius, Lipsiae 1870, L. XV 418.15; L. XVI, 1.5, 1.9, 7.1, 7.7, 7.14, 7.16, 7.20, 8.1; Argumenta 361.2.

¹⁰⁶ М. Бошков, *О словенској рецепцији Хронике Јована Зонаре. О рукописима, редакцијама и именовању њеног жанра*, Прилози проучавању српско-руских књижевних веза X–XX век, ed. М. Стојнић, Нови Сад 1993, 105–132; А. А. Турилов, *Заметки о славянској рукописној традицији Хронике Иоанна Зонары*, Летописи и хронике. Новые исследования. 2015–2016. Сборник статей памяти О. В. Творогова, ред. О. Л. Новикова, Москва – С.-Петербург 2017, 3–11

¹⁰⁷ А-М. Totomanova, *The Short Redaction of Joannes Zonaras' Ἐπιτομή Ἱστοριῶν in the Slavonic Manuscript Tradition*, Studia Ceranea 14 (2024) 113–142. Also, see О. Бодянский, *Паралипомен Зонарин*, Чтения ИОИДР 1 (1847) чѳ; VI. Kačanovskij, *Iz srbsko-slovenskoga prievoda bizantinskoga ljetopisa Joanna Zonare*, Starine JAZU 14 (1882) 131–135; О. В. Творогов, *Паралипомен Зонары: Текст и комментарий*, Летописи и хронике: Новые исследования. 2009–2010, Москва – С.-Петербург 2010, 73, л. 1051.

and platforms, as medieval art was always the art of function. The choice of which figures and events from history are taken accords well with the content of the painted lineages. This is obvious in the so far oldest known chronicle of Koporinja, copied in the 1370s, which reveals not only selective criteria but also major errors (that Dragutin built the monastery of St George in Ras, who only had it restored, as its founder was Nemanja, his great grandfather) or oversimplified versions of the changes on the throne (no mentions of coups, civil wars), and strange emphases on the cults of lesser Nemanids.¹⁰⁸ Their close bonds to histories of Byzantine origin are obvious in the opening lines, stating that the chapter on world history precedes the Serbian annal and also due to the usage of models from the Scriptures (Jacob) and later history (Emperor Michael III). In regard to Mateič, one should note that the chronicles mention together the restoration of icons and the creation of the Slavonic alphabet.¹⁰⁹ This was also made manifest by the shared comparison of the holy Nemanids with the Apostles,¹¹⁰ because in Mateič, the figures of apostles in the scene of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, are depicted right above the first Nemanid saints.¹¹¹

The ideological profile of chronicles and genealogies is visible in every line, as well as in all parts of painted lineages. Descriptions of victories made by Stefan Uroš III and Stefan Dušan in the Koporinja annals follow basic notions of the Nemanid triumphal reign,¹¹² being in accord with the Byzantine royal propaganda.¹¹³ The same narrative is obvious in the Mateič fresco. It must be noted, however, that there were misinterpretations, e.g. of the term "ktetor", used in relation to the Nemanid rulers and archbishops.¹¹⁴ In his study on the Chronicle from Peć, F. Kämpfer paid special attention to the introductory line of the Chronicle, arguing that it should not be understood as "founder or donor", but in its original meaning of the Greek word as "owner", which is to say that kings or archbishops were meant to be owners of the Serbian realm, being its lords.¹¹⁵ However, sources indicate the opposite, namely, that during the later

¹⁰⁸ М. Мартиновић, *Копорињски (Српски) летопис: археографски опис с издањем текста*, АП 47 (2025) 37–58.

¹⁰⁹ Љ. Стојановић, *Један нов текст скраћене Хамартолове Кронике и један нов примерак млађег летописа прве групе*, Јужнословенски филолог VII/1-2 (1927/8) 1–4; *Стари српски родослови и летописи*, ed. Љ. Стојановић, Ср. Карловци 1927, LXVII, 165.

¹¹⁰ Cf. С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Повеље за лимски Манастир св. Апостола и српски владар као ретник апостолима*, ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΣ I. Mélanges offerts à Mirjana Živojinović, ed. Б. Миљковић, Д. Целебџић, Београд 2015, 167–176.

¹¹¹ Cvetković, *The Virgin of the Black Mount*, 11–14, fig. 12–17.

¹¹² М. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*, Cambridge 1986.

¹¹³ А. Cameron, *Christianity and Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, Berkeley 1991; С. Rapp, *Comparison, Paradigm and the Case of Moses in Panegyric and Hagiography*, *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. М. Whitby, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, 277–298.

¹¹⁴ *Стари српски родослови и летописи*, 104.

¹¹⁵ F. Kämpfer, *Прилог интерпретацији „Пећког летописа“*. Приказивање континуитета и легитимитета владалаштва у старосрпској историографији, ПКЈИФ 35/1-2 (1970) 70.

Middle Ages, the term “ktetor” expressed a much wider range of meanings, not only founders or owners, but their successors, authors of *typikons*, protectors, restorers, administrators, new or second founders, and small donors.¹¹⁶ The Serbian sources as analogies provide grounds to argue that the expression “our ktetors” in the Chronicle of Peć was used to designate Serbian overlords as “protectors” of the nation, state, and church; in this same vein, it was also used in some charters of Despot Stefan Lazarević, or in a description of the transfer of the relics of St Luke.¹¹⁷

The royal lineage in Mateič brings together the complex political platform of Dušan at the time when he was striving to transform his polyethnic state into the status of an Empire. It has, therefore, a parallel in the Manasses manuscript in the Vatican, which contains notions of imperial grandeur developed by the Bulgarian court of Tsar Ivan Alexander, Dušan’s brother-in-law. Any attempt to understand this endeavour, unrelated to Dušan’s sphere of influence, provides a limited insight into a more complex mosaic.¹¹⁸ The portraits of Ivan Alexander are the direct proof of a highly elaborated ideology corresponding to that of Dušan, in that they emulated complex models of Byzantium as an empire.¹¹⁹ The preserved material reveals more data as the Bulgarian translations of ancient Byzantine histories and chronicles, and specially conceived texts, such as the eulogy for the Tsar in the Psalter of Ivan Alexander,¹²⁰ coincided with the anniversary of the death of Constantine I.¹²¹ That Byzantine politics literally imbued all facets of intellectual writings is sustained by the insight into hitherto unexplored homilies and hymns.¹²²

¹¹⁶ For this abundant material, see A. Adashinskaya, *Ktetor: Practices of Ecclesiastic Foundation, Sponsorship, and Patronage in Late Byzantium and Balkan Slavic Countries*, CEU PhD Thesis, Budapest 2020, 147–246, 281–487.

¹¹⁷ For the parallels in the sources, see Цветковић, *Извори и ктотори*, 142–143.

¹¹⁸ Cf. E. N. Boeck, *Displacing Byzantium, Disgracing Convention: The Manuscript Patronage of Tsar Ivan Alexander of Bulgaria*, *Manuscripta* 51.2, 2007, 1–28; ead., *Engaging the Byzantine Past: strategies of visualizing history in Sicily and Bulgaria*, in: *History as Literature in Byzantium*, ed. R. Macrides, Farnham, 2010, 215–235; ead., *Imagining the Byzantine*, *passim*.

¹¹⁹ E. Bakalova, *The Perfect Ruler in the Art and Literature of Medieval Bulgaria*, *Studia Ceranea* 1 (2011) 71–86. Also, see ead., *Портретите на цар Иван Александър в лондонското евангелие. Образци и паралели*, *Четириевангелието на цар Иван Александър* (British Library Add. Ms. 39627). Критическо издание, ed. Т. Попова, Х. Миклас, Виена 2017, 647–655; *The Ossuary of the Bachkovo monastery*, ed. E. Bakalova, Plovdiv 2003, 118–119.

¹²⁰ E. Moussakova, *The Psalter of King John Alexander in its Slavonic and Byzantine Context*, *Scripta & E-Scripta* 10–11 (2012) 339–354.

¹²¹ Cf. Д. И. Польшанский, *Культурное своеобразие средневековой Болгарии в контексте византийско-славянской общности IX–XV веков*, Иваново 2000, 174; Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine*, 83, n. 155.

¹²² Th. Antonopoulou, *Beyond Religion: Homilies as Conveyors of Political Ideology in Middle Byzantium*, *Identities and Ideologies in the Medieval East Roman World*, ed. Y. Stouraitis, Edinburgh 2022, 100–128; G. E. Demacopoulos, *Sacralizing Violence in Byzantium: Hymns, Empire, and the Narrowing of Christian Identity*, Washington D.C. 2025.

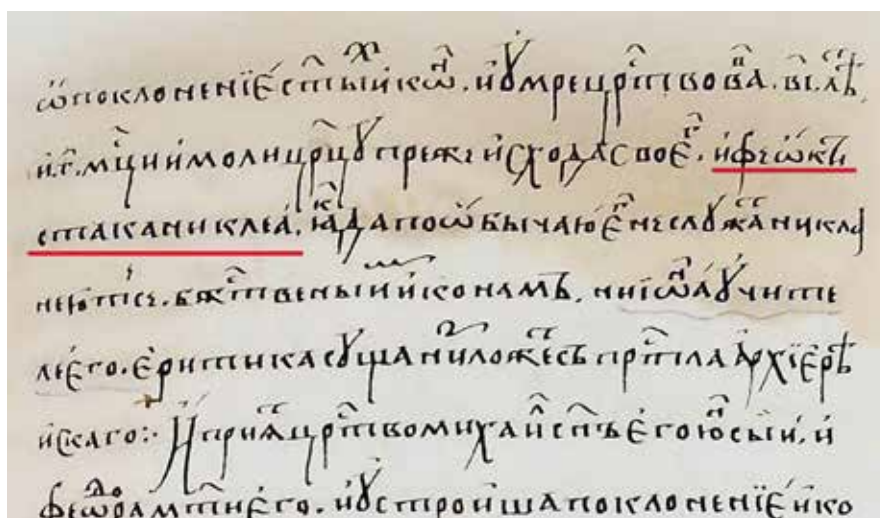


Fig. 9 Mention of Theoktistos, Paralipomen Volokolamskij 655, fol. 105r

Сл. 9 Спомен Теоктиста, Паралипомен Волоколамски 655, л. 105а

The wide scope of data reflecting the volatile twists and turns of Byzantine history had a direct impact on illustrated chronicles, with an unlimited range of pictorial information. This is why the numerous images raise questions on the origin of their iconography and relations to the textual background.¹²³ There are scenes with figures or entire episodes without captions which originate not in the text they are supposed to illustrate, but from known or unknown sources, which was pointed out long ago for the Vatican Manasses.¹²⁴

It is, therefore, possible to track hitherto unrecognised images of Theoktistos in extant manuscripts, as rich information on him in Byzantine histories and chronicles also features in their Slavic translations, as *Paralipomenon* (fig. 9).¹²⁵ His historical personality was described in hagiographies as well, such as the *Conversion* of Theophilos and the *Vita* of Theodora.¹²⁶ He was given a crucial role in the expressive episode of the death of Theophilos, as it claims it was he who offered to the dying ruler-iconoclast an enkolpion,¹²⁷ with

¹²³ For analysis of some miniatures in the Vatican Manasses, see Б. Цветкович, *За две минијатури в Cod. Vat. Slavo 2*, Проблеми на изкуството 1 (2000) 11–16; id., *О два минијатури у Cod. Vat. Slavo 2*, Крушевачки зборник 9/10 (2003) 115–128.

¹²⁴ I. Dujčev, *Minijature Manasijevog letopisa*, Sofija – Beograd 1965, br. 28, l. 84, p. 87. For other scenes, see id., *К изучению минијатур Манассиевой летописи*, Византия. Южные славяне и Древняя Русь. Западная Европа. Искусство и культура. Сборник статей в честь В. Н. Лазарева, ed. Гращенко et al., Москва 1973, 272–280.

¹²⁵ Totomanova, *The Short Redaction*, 118–119, 122.

¹²⁶ *Analecta Byzantino-Russica*, ed. W. E. Regel, Petropol 1891, 1–43; A. Markopoulos, *The Rehabilitation of the Emperor Theophilos*, Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?, ed. L. Brubaker, Aldershot 1998, 37–49; Д. Е. Афиногенов, *Повесть о прощении императора Феофила и торжество православия*, Москва 2003.

¹²⁷ I. Drić, *The Enkolpion: Object, Agency, Self*, Gesta 57/2 (2018) 197–224.

Fig. 10 Death of Emperor Theophilus, Vat. slavo 2, fol. 155v

Сл. 10 Смрт цара Теофила, Vat. slavo 2, л. 155б



a Virgin's icon.¹²⁸ This rather staged repentance of Theophilus, followed by his acceptance of the holy icons, was not based on the actual events, as it became official on the behest of Theodora because she agreed to abolish iconoclasm only on condition that he would be cleared of all liaisons to iconoclasm. That is why Theophilus's death prominently features in the Madrid Skylitzes and the Vatican Manasses, but quite differently.

The Vatican image displays the dying Emperor, the only signed figure by name. He lies in bed, kissing an icon handed to him by a bearded man in a blue gown (fig. 10).¹²⁹ On the left, and above the bed, stands Empress Theodora hugging Theophilus, and in front of him is a group of onlookers, young and old, bearded or not, in various types and colours of garbs. The story, as rendered in the miniature, actually does not exist in the text of Manasses chronicle.¹³⁰ It means that it was taken from the mentioned legend on the conversion of Theophilus, found in the later annals too.¹³¹ Therefore, I. Dujčev thought that the figures attending the Emperor stood for monks and clerics,¹³² despite the fact that none wear monastic garbs. That they represent courtiers is obvious due to the central figure in a red gown with long, narrow sleeves, which was fash-

¹²⁸ M. Vinson, *The Terms εὐκόλιον and τεράντιον and the Conversion of Theophilus in the Life of Theodora (BHG 1731)*, GRBS 36/1 (1995) 89–99; E. Panou, *A change of heart? Theophilus on his deathbed*, BMGS 48/1 (2024) 89–99.

¹²⁹ Dujčev, *Miniature Manasijevo letopisa*, br. 56.

¹³⁰ Cf. *Хрониката на Константин Манаси. Зората на българската епика*, ed. И. Буюклиев, И. Божилков, София 1992, 170–171.

¹³¹ For one of the examples, see Т. В. Анисимова, *Рогожский хронограф: Текст, исследование (Окончание)*, *Летописи и хроники. Новые исследования 2011 – 2012*, О. Л. Новикова, Москва – С. Петербург 2012, 84.

¹³² Дуйчев, *К изучению миниатюр*, 276; Voeck, *Imagining the Byzantine*, 172–173, n. 78, fig. 5.8b, Pl. 6.

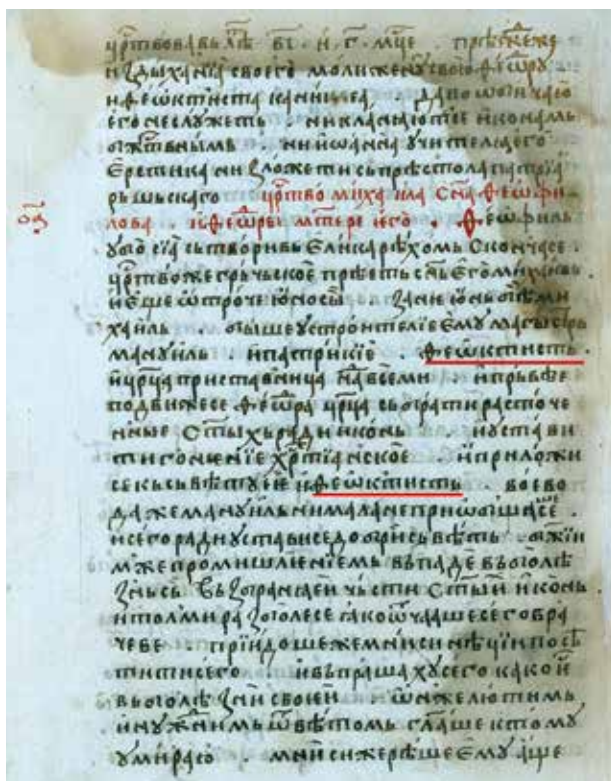


Fig. 11 Mention of Theoktistos, Chronicle of Zonaras, St. Petersburg BAN 24.4.34, fol. 405v

Сл. 11 Спомен Теоктиста, Хроника Јована Зонаре, Петроград БАН 24.4.34, л. 405б

ionable at the medieval courts.¹³³ The pictorial source used for this miniature most probably comes from the non-extant illustrated legends about Theophilos, which is why it is theatrically structured. This enables one to identify some among figures, not only the Empress as Theodora, but also the man handing the icon to the Emperor as Theoktistos, accompanied by other high dignitaries, such as Manuel the Patrikios, who had their place in the mentioned texts of histories, chronicles, and legends.¹³⁴

Regarding the small, unbearded figure, depicted on the wall and under the canopy with a pointed roof, it was theorised that it represents Theophobos, a courtier whose execution was ordered by Theophilos, before he died. But, this hypothesis was rightly rejected,¹³⁵ and one is entitled to identify this figure as an iconoclast, due to its aggressive gesture, physical isolation from the main

¹³³ M. G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th – 15th Centuries)*, Leiden – Boston, 54–55, 59, 62, 85, 88, 89, 93.

¹³⁴ M. Featherstone, *Theophanes Continuatus: A History for the Palace*, La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte en tant que message immédiat, ed. P. Odorico, Paris 2012, 123–135.

¹³⁵ Дуйчев, *К изучению миниатюр*, 277.



Fig. 12 a) Death of Emperor Theophilus, Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 61v; b) Council of 843 held in the Palace of Theoktistos, Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 63v

Сл. 12 a) Смрт цара Теофила, Мадридски Скилица, fol. 61v; b) Сабор одржан у Теокистовој палати 843. године, Madrid Skylitzes, л. 636

scene, the small dimensions, and last but not least, the form of the canopy, as in many other instances in the Vatican codex, the heretics are rendered with pointed hats.

That the Vatican miniature with Theophilus's death contains not only Theoktistos, but some more disguised figures of important courtiers, is rooted in the fact that even the shorter version of the Chronicle of Zonaras mentions also Manuel, Duke and Magistros (fig. 11).¹³⁶ The miniature in the Madrid Skylitzes, showing the Death of Emperor Theophilus, does not include the story with an enkolpion, as the one in the Vatican (fig. 12a), and is also differently structured.¹³⁷ The Empress is depicted leaning over the body of Theophilus, and

¹³⁶ Totomanova, *The Short Redaction*, 114–115, 117, 122, 126.

¹³⁷ Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 105, fig. 150.

the attending figures are rendered dispersed, with various gestures of despair. Despite the inscription to the right, above the two lateral figures, which states that they are the “people in mourning”, again, it is possible to point out that close to the bier, there are two more persons, singled out from the rest of the retinue. One is behind the Empress, dressed in a blue gown with gold (as the figure to the far right), and the other kisses the feet of the dying ruler, dressed in red attire. The central figure, as in the Vatican codex, may be identified as Theoktistos, being the nearest to the Empress and the dying ruler.

The lack of captions in images is often the case in the Madrid manuscript, and the best known is the one illustrating the transfer of the Holy Mandylion to Constantinople, where the figure of Emperor Romanos, who holds the relic, was left without any inscription.¹³⁸ In this vein, one may conjecture that one more image in the Madrid Skylitzes contains a figure of Theoktistos. This picture illustrates the local synod from 843, held at Apsis, the private palace of Theoktistos (fig. 12b).¹³⁹ The rendering of the miniature does not accord with the historical circumstances, as Emperor Michael III is shown as a grown-up and bearded man, even though he was only four at the time.¹⁴⁰ It repeats a standard scheme of enthroned rulers, and it does not feature icons, despite their being the topic of the council. To the left of rulers, there are three clerics (unlike the imperial couple, the first one is nimbed, dressed in polystavrion), and to the right is a dense group of courtiers with bowed heads, and crossed and veiled hands. The name of Theoktistos appears in the written text above the picture, in the sentence which states that the event took place in his palace. Since it is placed above the leading figure of the courtiers, dressed in a red gown, one may surmise that this superposition was not fortuitous and that it was perhaps the means to point to its identity.

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(Завичајни музеј Јагодина)

ПРЕДСТАВЕ ТЕОКТИСТА, РЕГЕНТА И ЛОГОТЕТА ДРОМА

Чланак представља део изучавања великог средњовековног манастирског комплекса Богородице Црногорске изнад села Матејча, близу Куманова. С обзиром на то да је у оквиру монументалне владарске лозе у овом храму лик Теоктиста недавно идентификован као логотет дрома и регент византијског цара Михаила Трећег, кога историја памти и као главног покровитеља Св. Ћирила, циљ рада је да пружи увид у познате Теоктистове представе у минијатурама рукописа тзв Мадридског Скилице, да укаже на разлике између тих приказа и фигуре на фресци, анализира различите иконографске и идеолошке стратегије и да провери да ли његов лик постоји на још неким местима у том рукопису, као и у илустрованом примерку тзв. Ватиканског Манасија.

¹³⁸ Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 168, fig. 312.

¹³⁹ Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 107, fig. 155.

¹⁴⁰ Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine*, 160–163, fig. 5.5.