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THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE CANTORS' PEWS OF THE ORTHODOX MONASTERY CHURCH OF GRÁBÓC (ГРАБОВАЦ)

The iconographic programme of the late-baroque murals of the Serbian Monastery Church of the Holy Archangels in Grábóc (Hungary) was discussed in an earlier study.¹ In that discussion, a brief section was devoted to the depictions of saints seen on the walls of the so-called cantors' stalls (*kliroses*). The present undertaking treats the iconography of this spatial unit of the interior of the church of Grábóc, rendered complete by the pictorial representations featured on the cantors' pews (singers' seats), in more detail.² In the spacious and bright interior of the nave of the church of Grábóc covered by a dome, the cantors' pews were also assigned a prominent part in the creation of the baroque liturgical scenery.³ (Fig. 1) The figural decoration of this set of furniture is also noteworthy on account of its national thematic composition, as has been pointed out by Miroslav Timotijević.⁴ This time, the question of the creators of the cantors' pews is not considered as this would involve dealing with a number of hitherto unanswered queries, in contrast with the ascertainable attributions of the rest of the furnishing items of the Monastery Church.⁵

¹ X. Golub, *The Iconographic Programme of the Wall-Painting Ensemble of the Monastery Church of Grábóc*. In Ниш и Византија. Зборник радова. 15. Уредник Миша Ракоција, Ниш, 2017. 336-350.

² The present work is an abridged and revised English-language version of the following paper: X. Golub, *A grábóci szerb orthodox monostortemplom kántorpadjai*. Magyar Egyházzene XXII (2014/2015) 301–316. The author wishes to thank the Serbian Institute of Budapest for supporting her research, as well as for the assistance with the translation of the present paper. All illustrations were photographed by Iván Jaksity.

³ For more on the evolution of cantors' pews in Serbian Baroque era see М. Тимотијевић, *Улога музике у уобличавању црквеног ентеријера у XVIII и у првој половини XIX века*. Црквена музика у прошлом и нашем времену, Зборник радова научног скупа, Зборник Матице српске за сценске уметности и музику 15 (1994), 47–64.

⁴ М. Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*. Нови Сад, 1996, 60. Vö. Д. Давидов, *Споменици Будимске епархије*. Београд, 1990. 306–307.

⁵ For more recent attempts at dating and establishing the attribution of the furnishings, including an overview of previous literary findings, see: Б. Тодић, *Творци*



Fig. 1 The interior of the Serbian monastery church of Grábóc (Grabovac), Hungary

Сл. 1 Ентеријер српске манастирске цркве у Грабовцу (Мађарска)

It may be established from the primary source of the history of the Monastery, the so-called Chronicle of Grábóc (*Грабовачки летопис*) that it was thanks to the generosity of its former archimandrite Sofronije Kirilović (Bishop of Buda from 1774 to 1781 and Bishop of Timișoara (*Temesvár*) from 1781 to 1786) that the two new cantors' pews of the Monastery Church were made in 1784, contemporaneously with the bishop's throne and the *stasidia* (stalls) of the faithful.⁶ Thus, these furniture items were completed at the same time as the painting of the interior, performed by the painters Andrej Šaltist and Franz Florian between June 1784 and October 1785. Concurrently, two large icon holding 'thrones' (referred to as 'small iconostasis' in contemporary Slavic sources) were carved in front of the east wall pillars of the nave. The baroque furnishings of the church were complemented by the new iconostasis in 1787 (woodcarving by Arsenije Marković, paintings by Vasilije Ostojić).⁷ It was in this condition that the baroque interior of the Monastery Church of Grábóc was granted its complete but still extant furnishings, which Bishop Sofronije was not able to see as he died in 1786.

The cantors' pews of the church of Grábóc close in moderate curves at the top, their sides are bordered by gilded streaks all along terminating in leafy ornamentation, while their fronts are decorated with two gilded rococo-style car-

барокног ентеријера цркве у манастиру Грабовцу. Idem: Радови о српској уметности и уметницима века по архивским и другим подацима. Нови Сад, 2010, 401–425. Cf. Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*, 60.

⁶ В. Красић, *Манастир Грабовац у Будимској епархији*. Летопис Матице српске 1881. Књ. 128. 76–96. 93. For a description of the Chronicle of Grábóc (ГР52, Manuscript Collection, Serbian Orthodox Eparchial Library=SOEL, Szentendre, Hungary) from a bibliographic and palaeographic perspective, see Н. Р. Синдик– М. Гроздановић– Пајић – К. Мано-Зиси, *Опис рукописа и старих штампаних књига библиотеке Српске православне епархије будимске у Сентандреји*. Београд–Нови Сад, 1991. 84–87.

⁷ Тодић, *Творци барокног ентеријера цркве у манастиру Грабовцу*, 401–425.

touches, complete with roses. The figural depictions, with inscriptions aiding their identification, were accommodated in these.

The first cartouche of the north cantors' pew features venerable Saint Simon, the monk, (*Стефан Првовенчани*, Stefan the First-Crowned, King of Serbia), in a black habit, with grey beard, against a scenic background. (Fig. 2). His sceptre held in his right hand, pointed downwards, as well as the crown and the orb lying at his feet in the grass are allusions



Fig. 2 The northern cantors' pew of the Serbian Orthodox church of Grábóc

Сл. 2 Северни певнички пулт, манастир Грабовац

to his former kingly office, whereas the cross held upwards in his left hand suggests that, having renounced these, he dedicated himself to monastic life in old age. The text on the scroll in his left hand also warns about the evanescence of earthly life quoting Psalm 102 (103): Ч[е]л[о]в[е]къ акѡ трава дн[е] его, ѡкѡ цвѣтъ селѣн так ѡ ѡ[т]цвѣтет ('As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field ...' Psalms 103:15).⁸ The representation of the saint in a natural environment is obviously justified by this biblical passage as well. Out of the architectural motifs shown in the background, a church with a dome tower is worth special mention, in all probability a reference to Žiža Monastery, founded by the saint. The inscription in Church Slavonic establishing the identity of the first Serbian King, who would become a religious at the end of his life, is only seen in fragments these days: преп[одобный] симонъ быв[шій] [стеф]анъ первов[ѣ]нчан[нын] [кр]а[ль] сербскнн. ('the venerable Simon, formerly Stefan the First-Crowned').

The depiction was made on the basis of the illustration of the Serbian edition of *Правила молебнаа сватыхъ сербскихъ просвѣтителѣ* (A collection of services honouring the Holy Serbian "Enlighteners"), in popular usage simply called *Srbljak*, issued in Rîmnic, Wallachia, in 1761.⁹ (Fig. 3) This circumstance is corroborated by the title inscription in the church of Grábóc and the text displayed on the scroll, both verbatim replicating the inscriptions accompanying the engraving. The first printed *Srbljak* was edited and published by Sinesije Živanović, Bishop of Arad, previously a monk and, subsequently, Archimandrite of the Rakovac Monastery. The first collection of services honouring Serbian saints was written by Hegumen Teofan, a member of the circle of Patriarch Arsenije Černojević III, in Rakovac in 1714.¹⁰ Bishop Sinesije regard-

⁸ Citations from the Bible have been taken from the latest edition of the English Standard Version by Crossway Bibles.

⁹ Д. Давидов, *Српска графика XVIII века*. Београд 2006. (1st edition: Нови Сад, 1978), 390–393, kat. 198, fig. 331.

¹⁰ Л. Чурчић, *Србљаци у XVIII веку*. Српска графика XVIII века. Зборник радова. Матица српска – Балканолошки институт САНУ, Посебна издања, књ. 26. Београд



Fig. 3 The image of Saint Simon (King Stefan The First-Crowned) of Serbia in the 1761 edition of *Srbljak*

Сл. 3 Симон монах (Свети Стефан Првовенчани), Римнички Србљак, 1761



Fig. 4 The image of Saint Stefan Štiljanović in the 1761 edition of *Srbljak*

Сл. 4 Свети Стефан Штиљановић, Римнички Србљак, 1761

ed this collection as a starting point for his work published in 1761. The Bishop, a native of Szentendre, would oftentimes visit the Eparchy of Buda, and it seems likely that he donated copies of his book to the local churches.¹¹ The inventory of the Grábóc Monastery from 1786 lists two copies of *Srbljak*, acting as a kind of ‘painter’s book’ for the painter of the cantors’ pews (as well as of the murals): два комада кнѣгѣ Правѣло свѣтлѣхъ сербскѣхъ просвѣтителемъ.¹²

The figure of the modern-era saint, Saint Sefan Štiljanović (? – cc. 1540), depicted in the right cartouche of the singers’ pew, was modelled on the same graphic prototype.¹³ The inscription reads: Сѣтъ стѣфанъ штиљановићъ. It is fair to assume that he came to be paired with Saint Simon (24 September/7 October) because the two come after one another in *Srbljak* as well since Stefan’s feast day is also in October according to the Old Style (4/17 October).

The picture shows the saint upright in an interior, in royal vestments, wearing an ermine robe and with a crown on his head. He is holding a cross in his raised right hand and a sceptre in his left pointing downwards. Next to him, on a table covered with a white cloth, is another royal insignia, the blue orb; to his left, there is a curtain pulled aside, similarly to the vertical representations of holy national rulers in the murals.

The legend of Štiljanović and the transfer of his relics to the Monastery of Šišatovac are recounted by three hagi-

1986. 55–79.

¹¹ Д. Давидов, *Сентандрејска Саборна црква*. Београд, 2001, 66.

¹² Манастир Грабовац, МГ33 (The Archives of the Serbian Orthodox Eparchy, Szentendre).

¹³ A more recent Hungarian name of the saint: ‘Siklósi’ Szent István (Saint Stephen of ‘Siklós’). On Štiljanović in more detail: М. Костић, *Стеван Штиљановић (Историјскохagioграфска студија*. Глас Српске краљевске академије СХ. Сремски Карловци 1923, 54–100; Р. Зарић, *Лик Стефана Штиљановића у српској уметности XVII–XIX века*. Саопштења Републичког завода за заштиту споменика културе XVII (1985) 69–83; С. Милеуснић, *Свети Стефан Штиљановић – ратник и светац*. Београд 1992.

ographic texts (a service, a laudatory song and a verse chronicle – *Повесно слово*) written at the monastery not long after the saint's death, known from a copy made in 1631.¹⁴ According to these sources, Stefan came from Paštrović in Montenegro and, from there, he moved to Syrmium, where he would excel in combats against the heathen with his bravery. He fled the advance of the Turks by seeking refuge at the Hungarian king, who would bestow towns upon him on account of his military prowess. It was in one of those towns that he died and was buried by his spouse, Jelena, on a hill opposite. As soon as 'Hungary came under Turkish occupation', one night, Stephen's tomb radiated immense brightness, attracting the attention of the Turkish invaders as well. Suspecting treasure, they began to dig but discovered the incorrupt body of the saint instead. The monks of Šišatovac succeeded in obtaining the relic from the Turkish bey in exchange for gifts and could thus take it to their monastery.

The name of the Hungarian town of Siklós would be associated with the character of Štiljanović only later but it was incorporated into his hagiography by the first half of the 18th century. This is therefore suggestive of the fact that Stefan was granted 'the town of Siklós (Шиклеуш)' (translated from a Hungarian translation), in addition to the title *despot*. The Serbian despot died here soon and was buried 'in a place called Gyöntér (Ѓунтир in Serbian)', outside the town.¹⁵ This circumstance may be verified by the glosses subsequently written by unknown authors in the margins of the texts referred to above, on the one hand, as well as by the (only) surviving copy of his biography dated to the 1630s, preserved on the 'throne' made for the relics of the saint in 1767, on the other hand.¹⁶

Based on the pictorial specimens, it appears likely that the cult of the saint became more prevalent as of the late 30s of the 18th century. Hristofor Žefarović painted Stefan in the murals of Bođani as early as 1737. Therefore, it may be taken for granted that he did the same in his wall paintings in Siklós, which have, unfortunately, been lost in the meantime.¹⁷ Out of the visual representations of the saint, it is an icon dated to about 1740 that displays the name of the town of Siklós for the first time.¹⁸ The icon represents the saint as the *ktetor* (donator) of Šišatovac, with the view of the town of Siklós in the background. The spread of his character in Serbian mural- and icon-painting was primarily enabled by

¹⁴ These were disseminated as manuscripts and, subsequently, they were also published in print in the *Srbijak* of Rimnic in 1761 (Зарић, *Лик Стефана Штиљановића* ..., 71).

¹⁵ Зарић, *Лик Стефана Штиљановића* ..., 69; 72.; Cf. Милеуснић, *Свети Стефан Штиљановић* ..., 21; 48.

¹⁶ In more detail on this issue: Костић, *Стеван Штиљановић*, 78–83; Д. Медаковић, *Национална историја Срба у светлости црквене уметности новијег доба*. In idem: *Путеви српског барока*. Београд 1971. 71–84. 77; Зарић, *Лик Стефана Штиљановића* ..., 72. On the broader context of this cult, see: М. Тимотијевић, *Визитација манастира Шишатовца*. In *Манастир Шишатовца, Зборник радова*. Београд 1988, 341–354.; М. Костић, *Поштовање култа светитеља, њихових моштију и чуда на подручју Карловачке митрополије у периоду барока*. In *Чудо у словенским културама*. Уред. Дејан Ајдачић. Београд 2000. 237–259. 242–243, 252.

¹⁷ Зарић, *Лик Стефана Штиљановића* ..., 76.

¹⁸ The icon made in the monastery was attributed to the painter Stanoje Popović by Davidov (The Gallery of Matica Srpska; Д. Давидов – Л. Шелмић, *Иконе српских зографа XVIII века*. Београд 1977, 66. fig. 46). Cf. Милеуснић, *Свети Стефан Штиљановић* ..., 65.



Fig. 5 The southern cantors' pew of the church of Grábóc

Сл. 5 Јужни певнички пулт, манастир Грабовца

as the 'Despot of Syrmium' on it.²⁰ This is the most complete baroque portrait of Stefan to date, with the main character accompanied by a view of the town of Morović alongside Šišatovac Monastery. Comparable with *Stematografija* in terms of popularity is the aforementioned Rîmnic edition of *Srbljak*, containing another baroque gallery of Serbian saints (1761). In Grábóc, the saint was visualised on the basis of the copperplate illustration of this book, providing a much-liked composition model for his late-18th-century century representations in icons, for example, for the Štiljanović icon preserved in Pakra Monastery (Музеј Српске православне цркве, Beograd). (Fig. 4) Out of the pictures of the church of the Syrmian village Lačarak, roughly contemporaneous with those in Grábóc, it is well worth highlighting the mural of the former, featuring the Hungarian coat-of-arms on Stefan's robe buckle. Painter Mojsije Subotić painted the saint on the iconostasis of the Slavonian village Velike Bastaje in 1785. His depiction by Grigorije Davidović-Opšić was also added to the iconostasis of Šišatovac Monastery in 1795.

The image of Štiljanović in Grábóc may as well be interpreted in conjunction with the fact that the liturgical texts composed for the translation of the saint's relics are found in two 18th-century manuscripts from Grábóc as well.

¹⁹ *Стематографија – Изображеније оружјѣ илирических (изрезали у бакру Христофор Жефаровић и Тома Месмер 1741)*. Приред. Д. Давидов. Нови Сад 1972; Давидов, *Српска графика XVIII века*, 132–134, 280–285, kat. 63. *Stematografija* (Vienna, 1741), decorated with engravings by Hristofor Žefarović and Thomas Messmer, was the first 'gallery of holy monarchs' in Serbian baroque art. On this issue, see Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*, 376–382. Depictions of Serbian national saints are also found in the narthex of the Monastery of Krušedol, as well as in the murals of the Serbian church of Ráckeve (Српски Ковин), painted in the 1760s. On the latter, see А. Криза, *Национальные святые на росписях Успенской церкви в Сербском Ковине (Рацкеве, 1765)*. In: *Государство и нация в России и Центрально-восточной Европе*. Ed. Gy. Szvák. Budapest 2009. 152–169.

²⁰ Давидов, *Српска графика XVIII века*, 138–139, 279, kat. 62, fig. 77.

those graphic depictions that, in line with the ecclesiastical policies of the Archbishopric of Sremski Karlovci, included him in the assembly of Serbian national saints. First among these was Žefarović's 1741 *Stematografija*, which showed Štiljanović as a holy ruler for the first time, in a baroque interior, with royal insignias.¹⁹ In 1753, Žefarović also made an independent copperplate engraving of the saint, identifying him



Fig. 6 The murals of the southern *kliros*: Saint Sava and Lazarus of Serbia

Сл. 6 Зидне слике јужне певнице: Свети Сава и Свети кнез Лазар



Fig. 7 The murals of the northern cantors' stall: Saint Stefan of Dečani and Archbishop Saint Arsenije the Syrmian

Сл. 7 Зидне слике северне певнице: Свети Стефан Дечански и Свети Арсеније I Сремац

These contain texts of services written by Antonije, Hegumen of Grábóc, which were copied by an anonymous *scriptor*, probably still during Antonije's life time.²¹ One of them is a copy of *Srbljak*, compiled by Antonije, made in 1759 (SOEL, Manuscript Collection, 28/ГР28). The other one is by the same copyist. This shorter manuscript, dated to 1770/80, entirely devoted to liturgical texts for the translation of the relics of Štiljanović, was also authored by Antonije. (SOEL, Manuscript Collection, 35/ГР35).²² These texts must have been created in connection with the new feast day of the translation of the saint's relics in the 1760s. Previously, Antonije had been a monk in the Rakovac Monastery, a famous book copying centre in the 18th century. It proved to be a starting point not only for Sinesije Živanović's aforementioned edition of the so-called *Srbljak* of Rakovac (1714) printed in Rîmnic but, undoubtedly, also for Antonije's *Srbljak* of Grábóc.²³ Antonije's interest in the character of Štiljanović was obviously further piqued by the circumstance that, from Rakovac, he was first sent to Šišatovac as a ieromonk.²⁴ Prior to his arrival in Grábóc, he also sojourned

²¹ Н. Р. Синдик– М. Гроздановић-Пајић – К. Мано-Зиси, *Опис рукописа и старих штампаних књига*, 56.

²² See: Н. Р. Синдик– М. Гроздановић-Пајић – К. Мано-Зиси, *Опис рукописа и старих штампаних књига*, 66–69, kat. 35.)

²³ However, what makes manuscript ГР28 particularly valuable is that it contains the laudation of saints who were not included in the *Srbljak* of Rîmnic (Н. Р. Синдик– М. Гроздановић-Пајић – К. Мано-Зиси, *Опис рукописа и старих штампаних књига*, 8.)

²⁴ Н. Р. Синдик– М. Гроздановић-Пајић – К. Мано-Зиси, *Опис рукописа и старих*

in Szentendre, where he was entrusted with duties in the bishop's service.²⁵ The Grábóc manuscripts were most probably made in Rakovac and they were presumably transferred to the Eparchy of Buda under Antonije's auspices.²⁶ On the basis of the above – although so far he has not been traditionally included among the superiors of the monastery – it seems clear that Antonije also served as hegumen in Grábóc sometime in the 1760s. It must be remembered that the connections of the Monastery of Grábóc with Šišatovac considerably predated Antonije's time as the monks of Grábóc had tided over the years of Rákóczi's War of Independence in that monastery. Thus, they must have encountered the cult of Štiljanović already at that time.

It is also worth adding that, in an effort to protect Štiljanović's relics from the war, they were carried from Šišatovac to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, to the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Dzsankurtaran (currently Adony) for a brief period in 1687.²⁷ This, however, does not seem to have affected the spread of his cult, palpably concentrated in Šišatovac's sphere of influence, i.e. Slavonia and Baranya outside Syrmium. Apart from the cantors' pew of Grábóc, there is no other known depiction of Štiljanović in Hungary, which in turn raises suspicions as to whether his cult was significant in the Eparchy of Buda, though his legend also associates him with this region.

The front of the cantors' pew of the south side is decorated with the images of King David from the Old Testament and Serbian Despot Stefan Lazarević. The inscription reads: *сѣый пророкъ и црь дѣдъ* ('Saint David the Prophet and King') (Fig. 5)

The figure of David playing his harp is the only one among the figural depictions on the cantors' pews of Grábóc that is in any way linked to the function of this church furniture. David, featured as a man with greying beard and with a crown on his head, is seated in a wide armchair and is holding a harp in hands. His surroundings are reminiscent of the interior of a room, which is in fact exposed on the right hand side of the composition: a blue curtain pulled aside on the left and a table to the right of the king, with an open book and an inkpot on it. On the pages of the book, the opening line of Psalm 1 is displayed in the Church Slavonic language: *Блженъ мужъ, иже не идетъ на советъ нечестивыхъ, и на пути грѣшныхъ* ('Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners' (Psalm 1:1) – usually heard as part of the Saturday vespers. The graphic prototype of David's image has not been identified as yet, but, out of the illustrations in Slavonic psalm books printed in the 18th century, where he is frequently featured, it may emerge one day.

штампаних књига, 56.

²⁵ Н. Р. Синдик–М. Гроздановић-Пајић – К. Мано-Зиси, *Опис рукописа и старих штампаних књига*, 58.

²⁶ In the diptych of Manuscript ГР28, the names of the monks of the Monastery of Grábóc cannot be identified. However, Antonije was added to the list of the deceased already as Hegumen of Grábóc, according to the subsequently made notes found there.

²⁷ It appears plausible that the relic was returned to Šišatovac after the conclusion of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. On this issue, see Р. Грујић, *Духовни живот Срба у Војводини*. Београд 2012, 112.

Stefan Lazarević (1377–1427), the first Serbian monarch after the medieval Serbian state lost its independence and a vassal of Sigismund, King of Hungary, became a member of the Order of the Dragon in 1408. Furthermore, the Serbian Church has venerated him as a saint since 1927 (feast day: 17 July / 1 August 1); the cult of ‘Stephen the Tall’ gained general popularity as early as the 16th century. His depiction in Grábóc corresponds to the composition of the representations of the two holy monarchs on the other cantors’ pew: The holy king with a crown on his head and wearing a robe over his red royal tunic is holding a sceptre in his left hand, while his right hand is rested on a closed book lying on a table. He is standing in an enclosed space, with a window to his left and a curtain to his right. The picture was also made with reference to the illustration of the *Srbijak* of Rîmnic, in comparison with which only the book on the table may be regarded as an addition, containing a clear allusion to the erudition of the ruler. The Church Slavonic inscription labels him ‘Saint Stephen the Serbian Despot’ (сѣый стефанъ деспотъ сербскій).

It is remarkable that, in the pictorial ornamentation of the cantors’ pews of Grábóc, the theme of Serbian national saints is particularly pronounced.²⁸ This is not unparalleled in Serbian baroque art, even though, in accordance with the general symbology of cantors’ pews, it was more common for these items of furniture, becoming emphatic components of Serbian baroque church interiors and endowed with a baroque visual character as of the 1740s, to bear images of hymnographers and melodists.²⁹ This is why David, the psalmist, was accommodated among the pictures of the cantors’ pews in Grábóc. In the baroque period, starting from about 1770, it is apparent that cantors’ pews, functioning as furniture items of the liturgical space of the *solea* (‘outer sanctuary’), seen as an extension of the sanctuary, complement the pictorial programme of the iconostasis by means of depictions of, for instance, Old Testament prefigurations and Christ’s parables.³⁰ In Grábóc, the iconography of the cantors’ pews standing in the space of the *naos* must be considered in conjunction with the representations of national saints painted on the walls above them since the pictures on the singers’ pulpits and the baroque ‘portrait gallery’ in the murals complement each other.³¹

As wall painting in the church of Grábóc allows for a relatively large area to be decorated with purely ornamental elements in the lower zones of the naos, only a limited number of saints could be depicted in the widening part of the nave, on the walls of the so-called cantors’ stalls. The upper region of this spatial unit is filled by ‘the Pillars of the Church’ the Evangelists painted on the pendentives, as well as the medallions of the Apostles lining up in the arches over the cantors’ stalls. Below them, the Serbian national pantheon comes next: depictions of the upright figures of holy archbishops and monarchs. One of the peculiarities of

²⁸ As a parallel, one could point to the pictures of the cantors’ pews in Pakra Monastery in Slavonia, painted by Lazar Serdanović, showing Saint Sava, Simeon, as well as Archbishop Arsenije and Bishop Maksim (Branković), featured in the murals in Grábóc (Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*, 60).

²⁹ Тимотијевић, *Улога музике у уобличавању црквеног ентеријера*, 47–64.

³⁰ In more detail on this issue: Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*, 58–60.

³¹ Cf. Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*, 60.



Fig. 8 The image of Saint Lazarus, Duke of Serbia, in the 1761 edition of *Srbljak*

Сл. 8 Свети цар кнез Лазар, Римнички Србљак, 1761

the pictorial programme of the mural ensemble in Grábóc is the fact that, in this zone of the space under the dome, there are no saints featured other than Serbian saints. Thus, the Byzantine legacy of painting is given a powerful national character: Martyrs, holy rulers and military saints (as the ‘foundations’ of the Christian Church), traditionally depicted in the lower tiers of the naos, are unified in the figures of national saints.³²

In the first place on the south wall, Saint Sava of Serbia (1169–1235) is shown in Baroque-era episcopal vestments. As part of his image, his status as a bishop and head of the church is emphasised by the biblical passage about the Good Shepherd

(John 10:11) quoted in the open book in his hand. (Fig. 6)

The next saint depiction on the south wall presents the Great Martyr and ‘Tsar’ Saint Lazarus of Serbia. The relics of Duke Lazarus, venerated as a saint from as early as the 14th century, were brought by the Serbs to Szentendre as part of their Great Exodus in 1690, where they would be kept in a wooden church, which has been demolished meanwhile, until 1697. Although the relics were then returned to the Monastery of Vrdnik in Fruška Gora, the cult of Tsar Lazarus, suffering martyrdom at the hands of the Turks, would live on in these northern areas as well.³³

As the counterpart of the figure of Saint Sava, the north wall of the *naos* bears the portrait of his successor, Archbishop Saint Arsenije the Syrmian (?–1266). Nurturing the cult of the saint, a native of the territory of Syrmium, along with the veneration of several other ‘northern’ Serbian saints, was an important element of the ecclesiastical policies of the Archbishopric of Sremski Karlovci.³⁴ (Fig. 7)

³² In line with a patent tendency in Serbian baroque painting, the depictions of national saints were accommodated on the walls of the *naos* in Grábóc as well (Тимотијевић, *Српско барокно сликарство*, 380). For a previous discussion of this issue see: Golub, *The Iconographic Programme...*

³³ Костић, *Поштовање култа светитеља*, 245.

³⁴ On the cult of the saints of the Branković Dynasty, see Л. Шелмић, *Српско зидно сликарство XVIII века*, Нови Сад 1987, 34; Костић, *Поштовање култа светитеља...*. For more detail on the history-of-art-related aspects of the ecclesiastical policies of the Archbishopric of Sremski Karlovci, see М. Тимотијевић, *Serbia sacra и Serbia sancta у бароком верско-политичком програму Карловачке митрополије*. In Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији, Зборник радова међународног научног скупа, Балканолошки институт, САНУ. Београд 1998. 387–431; В. Симић, *За љубав отаџбине. Патриоте и патриотизми у српској култури XVIII века у Хабзбуршкој монархији*. Нови Сад 2012. 58–88.

The sequence of national saints on the north wall is concluded by the figure of Saint Stephen of Dečani (King Stefan Uroš III, ?–1331). As an additional point of interest, it may be remarked that the feast day of Stephen of Dečani happens to coincide with the feast of Saint Martin of Tours, providing the basis for the name ‘Saint Mrata’ in the (Serbian) vernacular to denote this Serbian saint, popular in the territory of the Hapsburg Monarchy, too. His veneration could be well traced in Roman Catholic circles as well. In the 17th century, in the age of ecclesiastical unions, even the possibility of the Latin Church endorsing him as a saint was raised, but, eventually, it did not happen. Even in contemporary Hungary, Saint Stephen of Dečani is regarded as a protector by many Serbian families and is also the patron saint of a number of churches. The cult of Saint Stephen of Dečani was revived in the territory of the Archbishopric of Sremski Karlovci by the leader of the second major wave of Serbian immigration (1737–1739), Patriarch Arsenije IV Šakabenta, as well as by Jovan Georgijević, Bishop of Vršac and, subsequently, Metropolitan of Sremski Karlovci. The saint would be depicted in this region in the 1740s for the first time. One of the earliest known depictions of Saint Stephen of Dečani in Hungary’s areas with Serbian presence is found on the iconostasis of Ráckeve (Српски Ковин, in the scene ‘The Miraculous Act of Saint Nicholas’).

Essentially, the depictions of the saints in the Grábóc murals listed above also correspond to the engraving illustrations of the *Srbljak* issued in Rimnic in 1761. Any major differences are only to be found in the picture of Tsar Lazarus in Grábóc, in which the painter, evidently in an attempt to approximate the composition to other representations of the saint, omitted certain elements: the severed head in the saint’s hand and the figure of Christ emerging in the sky. (Fig. 8) Accordingly, it is reasonable to suggest that, even though the painters of the murals and of the cantors’ pews were different, these pictorial components of the interior of the church of Grábóc (dating roughly from the same period) drew upon a single iconographic source.

The connection between the murals of the church of Grábóc and the contemporaneous furnishings may mostly easily be captured in the kliroses: The pictorial programme of the naos is clearly complemented by the depictions of saints painted on the cantors’ pews.³⁵ In the first cartouche of the north cantors’ pew, Saint Simon, founder of the Nemanja Dynasty, is also linked to the figure of Saint Sava appearing in the mural. In the right cartouche of the cantors’ pew, Saint Stefan Štiljanović, as an ‘ambitious ruler’, is a match for the character of Tsar Lazarus. On the cantors’ pew of the south side, the pantheon of national saints of Grábóc is completed by the depiction of the holy ruler of the Serbs, Stefan Lazarević, a Serbian despot also with ties to Hungary.

Heads of the Serbian Church forced to escape to the territory of the Hapsburg Empire consciously promoted the veneration of their national saints as they deemed it important to accentuate that the Metropolia of Sremski Karlovci, established in the early 18th century, thanks to a number of privileges, was the rightful and worthy successor to the Patriarchate of Peć, located in a Serbian area

³⁵ On these, in more detail, see: Golub, *The Iconographic Programme...*

still under Ottoman occupation at that time.³⁶ Such an emphatic representation of Serbian national saints, on the cantors' pews and in the murals alike, is all the more noteworthy due to the fact that, in a decree issued in 1774, as well as in subsequent ones in 1778–1779, Queen Maria Theresa imposed restrictions on the 'non-united' inhabitants of the Empire regarding the celebration of these.³⁷ As evidenced by Grábóc among others, the decrease of the number of Orthodox feasts indirectly led to the consolidation of the cult of Serbian national saints. No doubt, another contributing factor in this respect was the endeavour of the Serbian Church to countervail the unfavourable ordinances by maintaining the veneration of the saints through the publication of liturgical texts. The engraving illustrations of these books constituted the baroque iconographic basis for the depiction of national saints.

The figures of the Serbian saints in the interior of the church of Grábóc neatly draw a line of national continuity from the state-founding Nemanja Dynasty through the Serbian Despotate to the fights against the Turks in the early modern era. This was in perfect harmony with the ecclesiastical policies of the Metropolia of Sremski Karlovci during the second half of the 18th century, seeking to stress its roots linking it to the medieval Serbian National Church through its artistic idiom as well. The saints featured on the cantors' pews and in the murals in Grábóc reflect well from a geographical aspect as well how the centres of Serbian culture shifted increasingly northwards in the course of history. Besides the prominent personages of medieval Serbia, Stefan Lazarević was the ruler of the Belgrade Period of Serbian history, as well as of the first Serbian settlers in Hungary and a vassal of King Sigismund, whereas the areas of Štiljanović's activities and, subsequently, the place of his martyrdom were Slavonia, Syrmium and, finally, as pious tradition has it, Transdanubia, i.e. the territory of the Hapsburg Empire.

(Translation by David Veljanovszki)

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ИКОНОГРАФИЈА ПЕВНИЧКИХ ПУЛТОВА МАНАСТИРСКЕ ЦРКВЕ У ГРАБОВЦУ

У раду се разматра иконографија представа које се налазе на певничким пултовима цркве српског манастира у Грабовцу (Grábóc, Мађарска) и њихова веза са представама српских националних светитеља на зиду наоса, односно певничких простора. Певнички пултови су настали у време осликавања целог ентеријера, 1784-1785. године. На њима је представљен између осталих: Св. Стефан Лазаревић, Св. Стефан Штиљановић и Симон монах - свети Стефан Првовенчани. Као графички предлошци представама су послужили бакрорези Римничког Србљака из 1761.

³⁶ Шелмић, *Српско зидно сликарство XVIII века*, 34.

³⁷ For a summary of this issue, see Д. Медаковић, *Положај српског народа у Аустрији током XVIII века*. In *Сеоба Срба 1690*. Саст. Р. Горјанац, П. Милошевић. Београд 1990. 123–138. 128–129. On the gradual decrease of Serbian Orthodox feasts, see Ђ. Слијепчевић, *Историја српске православне цркве*, књ. II. Минхен 1966, 61–62.