Tamara Ognjević

THE SHEPHERD AS THE PERSONIFICATION OF RULER AND PRIEST
An iconographical analysis of a scene from an early-Byzantine floor mosaic in the southern basilica of Caričin Grad

The early-Byzantine southern basilica, discovered within the archeological complex locality Caričin grad in 1949/50 is a monumental three-nave building with a transept and a characteristic apse on the eastern side, as well as a open-type narthex, an atrium with an ablative well and two side parakleses on the western side. And, although a ruin, this temple continues even today to dominate over the Lower City of the Caričin grad urban complex, which was populated during the 6th century, when it was built, by soldiers, merchants, tradesmen and members of the lower social classes.[1] In this temple, of an area of 900 square meters (45 x 20 m), which opens up directly into one of the main city streets (decumanus), a great amount of stone plastic was discovered, of which the most important is certainly the capital with a monogram of Byzantine emperor Justinian I (527-565), located on the right column of the tribilon at the entrance from the narthex into the middle nave of the southern basilica.[2] Amidst a lack of concrete written materials at the site, the capital with the emperor's monogram, as well as a large number of other exceptionally significant finds,[3] indirectly suggest that Caričin grad is actually the mythical Iustiniana Prima, the magnificent architectural undertaking described in Justinian's 11th novella,[4] built with the aim of raising the remote village of Taurision, the birthplace of Justinian I, into the rank of cities of the highest, imperial dignity – the seat of the prefect of the Illyricum praetory and the newly established archbishopric with jurisdiction over Dacia and Macedonia Secunda.[5]

---

1 B. Bavant, Caričin grad and changes of town planning in the center of Balkans to the Life century, http://www.archeographe.net/article100.html

2 Ђ. Мано-Зиси, *Ископавања на Царичином граду 1949-1952 година* (Dj. Mano-Zisi, Excavations at Caričin grad 1949-1950), Старинар III-IV/1952-1953, Belgrade, 1955, 143

3 Б. Баван, В. Иванишевић, *Царичин Град (Iustiniana Prima)* (B. Bavan, B Ivanišević, Caričin grad (Iustiniana Prima), Leskovac 2005,

4 Procoppi, *De aedificiis* IV 1 p. 104. 20-107

5 Ф. Гранић, *Оснивање архиепископије у граду Јустинијана Прима 535. године* (F. Granić, The Founding of the Archbishopric in the city of Iustiniana Prima), Гласник

Inside the southern basilica, whose façade was, by all indicators, formerly covered with white marble, while its roof was covered with lead plates,[6] only a floor mosaic of imposing dimensions[7] (Figure 1) and an exceptionally complex iconographical program[8] have been preserved. The conception behind the floor mosaic in the southern basilica of the Lower City is incomparable to anything else on the broader territory of the Byzantine East,[9] or even to all the artistry of the sumptuously decorated churches of the Ravenna exarchate. It is interesting that it is the zones of the narthex, main nave and alter apse in the southern basilica that are decorated with mosaic, while the side naves, transept and other spaces are floored either with stone or a combination of stone and brick. The placing of parapet slabs between the columns dividing the side nave from the main nave of the basilica is an interesting instance of a "fencing-off" of the church's central space reserved for the faithful,[10] thus forming a singular space in which the faithful, in accord with the Bible's teaching, literally become a "flock."

The floor mosaic of the central nave is formed in the shape of three rectangular areas running in the east-west direction. The narrowest, middle area is a sort of pathway covered by a motif of stylized palmettos. The side rectangles, which are wider, are of equal dimensions and, judging by the choice of motifs represented within them, make up a particular sort of counterbalance of lunar and solar emblems, i.e. a personification of good and evil and their mutual struggle. Doubtlessly, the tripartite concept of the southern basilica's mosaic the most closely resembles the Roman triumphal arches from the imperial era with their doors of war and peace (luna and sol)[11] and is a representative example of the use of pagan mythological depictions, such as, in this case, Amazons and centaurs – but not only these – with the purpose of formulating "messages" of the Christian religious doctrine through the language of images borrowed from the magnificent treasury of Hellenistic art.[12]

The floor mosaic of the southern basilica, which came into being during the first half of the 6th century had the function of visually representing

скопског научног друштва I 1, Скопље 1925, 113-133

6 Ђ. Мано-Зиси, *ibid*, 135

7 Ђ. Мано-Зиси, *ibid*, 130;

8 Т. Огњевић, *Иконографија и симболизам подног мозаика главног брода јужне базилике у Царичином граду* (T. Ognjević, The Iconography and Symbolism of the Floor Mosaic of the Main Nave of the Southern Basilica in Caričin Grad), Лесковачки зборник XLVI, Лесковац 2007, 49-72

9 For the most direct comparisons with the preserved monuments of Dardania and Illyricum, see Г. Цветковић Томашевић, *Рановизантијски подни мозаици* (G. Cvetković Tomašević, Early Byzantine Floor Mosaics), Belgrade, 1978; Also, regarding iconographical similarities, E. Kitzinger, *Studies on late antique and early Byzantine floor mosaics, Mosaics at Nikopolis*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers VI, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951, 95-108

10 М. Ракоција, *О парапетној плочи из Ниша, пореклу и типологији палеовизантијских преграда* (M. Rakocija, On the Parapet Slab from Niš, the Origins and Typology of Paleo-Byzantine Partitions), Ниш и Византија IV, Niš 2006, 97-98

11 H. Keler, *Rimsko carstvo* (The Roman Empire), Novi Sad, 1970, 15-17

12 Т. Огњевић, *ibid*, 63-66

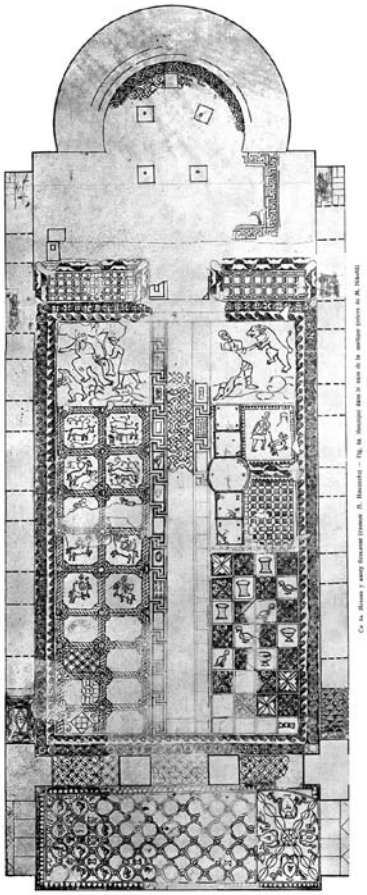

Fig. 1. The pavement mosaic, transept of the southern basilica, Caricin grad (Iustiniana Prima), Serbia, VI century, drawing by M. Nikolic

Сл. 1. Подни мозаик, трансепт јужне базилике, Царичин град (Iustiniana Prima), Србија, VI век, цртеж М. Николић

the earthly plane of life, manifested through a constant struggle with the most varied temptations, with the goal of saving the human soul.[13] Differently from the majority of floor mosaics, the one in Caričin grad went a step further, using ancient symbols in order to explicitly mark paganism as a sin, which wholly agrees with Justinian's strict policy of "introducing the only true faith" among his subjects[14] and his role of "the Church's external bishop", in which this emperor-theologian reveled so much.[15] The precise symbolic language of the Caričin grad ensemble "communicates" in a simple yet all-encompassing way with the man of Justinian's era, presenting him the chthonic-lunar beings from the left rectangle representing paganism-sin as a "road the Christian should not take," as opposed to the lower zone of the right rectangle with birds, plants and communion chalices as "heaven on earth accessible to the believer."

At the crossroads of these two "extremes" stand the remains of a massive, five-piece ambo, and next to them a mosaic depicting a young shepherd driving three sheep in front of him toward a simple building in the higher right corner (Figures 2 and 3). A truly bucolic idyll compared to the two monumental figural representations in the zone in front of the altar, on which, in a true antique psychomachy, a man is fighting a bear, while on the other, right above the gentle shepherd, another is running a spear through a lion rearing on its hind legs.

As is known, Orans and the Good Shepherd are the oldest figural, non-narrative Christian representations, whose popularity during the 3rd and 4th centuries

[13] В. Моле, *Минијатуре једног српског рукописа из године 649. са шестодневом бугарског егзарха Јоана и Топографијом Козме Индикоплова* (V. Mole, Miniatures of a Serbian Manuscript from 649, with the Six-Day Service Book of Bulgarian Exarch Jovan and the Topography of Kozma Indikoplov), Спом. СКА XLIV, Belgrade, 1922., 54, 62-64

[14] J.A. Evans, *Justinian I*, De Impertoribus Romanis, An Encyclopedia of Roman emperors, htt://www.roman-emperors.org/Justinian.htm

[15] С.С. Аверинцев, *Поетика рановизантијске књижевности* (S.S. Averintzev, The Poetics of Early Byzantine Literature), Belgrade 1982, 44-45

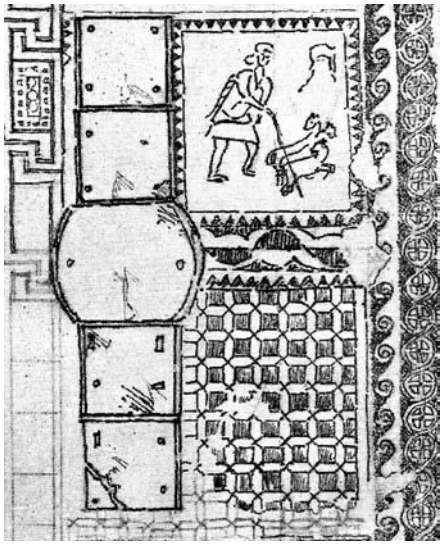

Fig. 2. The ambo and scene with the shepherd, transept of the southern basilica, Caricin grad (Iustiniana Prima), Serbia, VI century, drawing by M. Nikolic

Сл. 2. Амвон и представа пастира, трансепт јужне базилике, Царичин град (Iustiniana Prima), Србија, VI век, цртеж М. Николић

Fig. 3. The shepherd, mosaic, transept of the southern basilica, Caricin grad (Iustiniana Prima), Serbia, VI century,

Сл. 3. Пастир, мозаик, трансепт јужне базилике, Царичин град (Iustiniana Prima), Србија, VI век,

Fig. 4. Christ Orpheus, fresco, catacombs of Peter and Marcellinus, Rome, III century

Сл. 4. Христ Орфеј, фреска, Петрове и Марцелинове катакомбе, Рим, III век

can be compared perhaps only to the depiction of the Tale of Jonah, which was a big favorite in its own right.[16] However, differently from the authentic Old Testament Jonah, the Good Shepherd as the personification of Christ unifies a number of personalities from the Judeo-antique tradition, on the Orpheus-Bacchus-David relation, playing variations on their artistic attributes, which had been set down in antiquity. Thus, in early Christian art we encounter Christ-Orpheus from Peter's and Marcelinus' Rome catacombs as a harp player with a Phrygian cap on his head (Figure 4). Or we find him on the wall of the Roman Ipogeo degli Aureli depicted as a teacher reading to his flock (Figure 5). Sometimes it's merely a simplified linear figure carrying a large sheep on its shoulders while Adam and Eve appear at his feet, just as in the depiction from Dura Europos (Figure 6). And sometimes it's a mag-

[16] R. Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, London 2000, 64

Fig. 5. Christ teacher and shepherd of the flock, fresco, Ipogeo degli Aureli, Rome, III century,

Сл. 5. Христ учитељ и пастир стада, фреска, Ипођо дељи Аурели, Рим, III век

Fig. 6. The Good Shepherd with the flock, fresco, baptistery, Dura Europos, Syria, III century

Сл. 6. Добри пастир са стадом, фреска, крстионица, Дура Еуропос, Сирија, III век

Fig. 7. Christ Orpheus, fresco, catacombs of Domittilla, Rome, III century

Сл. 7. Христ Орфеј, фреска, Домицилине катакомбе, Рим III век

nificent young man in a long tunic with Pan's pipe in his hand, as though it is a representation of a deceased lyrical poet from some Greek lekythos (grave-vase), and not a fresco from the wall of the Domicila catacombs in Rome (Figure 7). Nor are rare the depictions in which the Good Shepherd is shown both with Pan's pipe in his hand and a sheep on his shoulders (Figure 8), nor should one be surprised by an image of the Good Shepherd with a goat over his shoulders, such as can be seen on a fresco in the Cubiculum of "Velatio" of the Catacombs of Priscilla (Figure 9). Quite rarely and only toward the end of the earliest phase of Christian art will there appear, subsequently even being symbolically multiplied by a factor of three, the image of a bearded, mature shepherd with a sheep over his shoulders, behind whom angels are harvesting grapes on the complex composition of the Shepherd's Sarcophagus (Figure 10). Nevertheless, by the end of the 4th century, the iconography of the Good Shepherd as the personification of Christ was defined in the image of a handsome, beardless young man of a bucolic-romantic countenance, with a sheep flung over his shoulders, which is best represented by the well-known marble statue from the Museo Pio Christiano in Rome (Figure 11). This iconographical prototype was the zenith of a representation that would

Fig. 8. Christ Good Shepherd with Orpheus lyre, fresco, catacombs of Peter and Marcellinus, Rome, III century

Сл. 8. Христ добри пастир са Орфејевом лиром, фреска, катакомбе Петра и Марцелина, Рим, III век

Fig. 9. The Good Shepherd feeds birds and flock, fresco, Cubiculum Velatio, catacombs of Priscilla, Rome III century,

Сл. 9. Добри пастир храни птице и стадо, фреска, Кубикулум Велатио, Присцилине катакомбе, Рим, III век

disappear precisely around that time, at the crossing between the 4th and 5th century, being replaced with the mature, bearded Christ dressed in royal purple and seated on a throne becoming of the Savior of the Roman Empire that had been converted into Christianity.[17]

Reminiscences of the Good Shepherd are rare in the post-Constantine era, and when they do appear, as in the case of the well-known depiction from the lunette of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Byzantine Ravenna (425-426) (Figure 12), their iconography is more complex and their artistic finish incomparably richer and more refined. In addition, the young Christian art that had become an integral part of the program of an empire that would set the norm for everything "imperial"[18] in medieval Europe had to be brought into a system of equally "imperial" rules. Thus, besides all the obvious steps already taken toward the improvement of artistic content and its iconographic formulations, new rules were brought concerning who was to be painted in which zone of the church and in what way, while, by a special edict of Emperor Theodosius

[17] C.J. Mamiya, F.S. Kleiner, H. Gardner, *The Catacombs and Funeral Art*, Gardner's Art through the Ages, I, 2004, 305

[18] С.С. Аверинцев, *ibid*, 132

Fig. 10. The sarcophagus of Good Shepherd, marble, Lateran Museum, Rome, IV century,

Сл. 10. Саркофаг доброг пастира, мермер, Латерански музеј, Рим, IV век

Fig. 12. Christ Good Shepherd, mosaic, Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, VI century

Сл. 12. Христ добри пастир, Маузолеј Гале Плаћидије, мозаик, Равена, VI век

Fig. 11. The Good Shepherd, marble, catacombs of Domittilla, Rome (now at the Museum Pio Christiano in Rome), III-IV century

Сл. 11. Fig. Добри пастир, мермер, Домицилине катакомбе, Рим (сада у Музеју Пио Кристиано у Риму), III-IV век

II of 427, it was explicitly forbidden to paint Christ and other saints on church floors, which would expose them to desecration by the feet of the faithful and the clergy.

From all of the above it clearly comes out that the mosaic segment on the floor of the southern basilica actually does represent a shepherd, but not the Good Shepherd Christ. Who, then, is the beardless young man wearing a sheepskin coat, driving a motley herd of sheep in front of him with the help of a large stick?

If the answer to the question of the Good Shepherd's identity came from Christ's words from the Gospel According to John – "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11-18), it would, then, be logical to seek the answer to this particular problem in the Bible as well. "God is Israel's shepherd" – testifies the Old Testament unambiguously through the books of the prophets Isaiah (40:11),

Fig. 13. Christ as Good Shepherd and St Apollinaire as shepherd, mosaic, St Apollinaire in Klasse, Ravenna, VI century

Сл. 13. Христ као добри пастир и Св. Аполинер као пастир, мозаик, VI век, Св. Аполинер у Класе, Равена, VI век

Jeremiah (31:10), as well as King David's Psalms (23:1), so beloved by Christians. According to the Old Testament texts, God-the shepherd leads and protects the flock whose exclusive owner He is, transferring a part of his authority to secular and religious leaders, who are, in turn, metaphorically referred to as "the shepherds of the people." [19] One of the Old Testament's favorite personalities, the one whom God "took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over [His] people," as the Second Book of Samuel has it (7:8; 24:17), is, according to the Gospels, Christ's direct ancestor, victor over Goliath, king of Israel and Bible prophet – David. Young David, according to his own words to King Saul before the battle with the Philistine Goliath, was defending his flock from lions and bears (Samuel 1, 17:34-37), while his battle with the bear, as described in the Bible, is considered as the prototype of Christ's victory over the forces of darkness.[20] In Christianity, the shepherd is, before all, a divinely anointed master and leader of the flock – the ruler and the priest. Or, quite precisely, the representative of Christ, the good shepherd and sole rightful owner of the flock on earth until His Second Coming, when, as John the Apostle prophecies – "Christ shall take to pasture all the earth's people, but shall rule with a rod of iron. He shall be a shepherd-judge." (Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15)

Today we can do little more than suppose that the shepherd from the floor of the southern basilica had its iconographical pair on the wall above the ambo, as Christ's representative on earth, the serving clergyman, during his didactic sermon to his flock – in accord with liturgical practice as well as the iconographical practice grounded in it – must be inspired by the wisdom of the chief archpriest – Christ. The "Shepherd hierarchy" discussed here is iconographically formulated in an impressive, quite exact manner in the monumental composition in the apse of the Basilica Saint Apollinaire Classe in Ravenna, from 549 (Figure 13). Bishop Apollinaire is shown in the lower zone of the composition, praying with open arms. Like a shepherd, he is flanked by sheep both on his left and right sides, while in the zone above him Christ is depicted within a medallion, with sheep standing in a straight line below him. Even though the

[19] J. Chevalier, A. Gherbarant, *Riječnik simbola* (A Dictionary of Symbols), Zagreb 1983, 480-481

[20] H. Biderman, *Rečnik simbola* (A Dictionary of Symbols), Belgrade, 2004, 287

image in the Ravenna church is located in the apse calotte that symbolizes the sky, or, in this case, an excerpt from the heavenly life, here, too, the hierarchical relationship between the two "shepherds" is clearly emphasized – the relationship between the "owner" shepherd and the "hired" shepherd, as the Bible terms it. And, even in heaven the now consecrated earthly shepherd – Bishop Apollinaire – maintains the role of responsible medium between the flock's owner and the flock itself, with the obligation of praying for the flock and taking care of it, this time as its holy protector.[21]

Fig. 14. Shepherd with the dog, marble, Aidine ambo, Constantinople, VI century (now at the Antiquity Museum in Istanbul) and Shepherd with the dog, drawing on the stone, gravestone of Moses and his wife, Rome, III century

Сл. 14. Пастир с псом, рељеф у мермеру, Аидински амвон, VI век, Цариград (сада у Музеју старина у Истамбулу), и пастир са псом, цртеж на камену, надгробна плоча Мојсија и његове жене, III век, Рим

From the same period, i.e. the first half of the 6th century, date the two depictions from the Aidin ambo, now kept at the Antiquities Museum in Istanbul. One of the sides of this ambo contains a shallow relief of Christ the Good Shepherd carrying a lost sheep over His shoulder, while the other side shows a shepherd with a wooden staff in hand standing below a tree next to which a little dog is merrily playing (Figure 14, scene at the left). David Talbot Rice casually analyzed the Aidin ambo and concluded that the shepherd with the little dog "also represents the good shepherd, but not as a personification of Christ."[22] The Aidine ambo is considered to be a representative example of the art of the Constantinople "Neo-Attic" style, which was a product of Justinian's era. The shepherd with dog from this ambo is, in one way, iconographically analogous with the substantially older, 3rd century gravestone of Moses and his wife, today held by the Pio Christiano Museum in Rome (Figure 14, scene at the right) and, in another, with the motifs of a dish from the Hermitage, which also shows an image of a shepherd tending his flock, dating to the first half of the 6th century, being one of the representative works of applied art wrought by Constantinople's masters.[23]

Finally, according to iconographical type, the depiction most similar to the shepherd from Caričin grad is the shepherd form the relief on the so-called

---

[21] Here is provided an example of a "shepherd hierarchy" from the same era, by way of a work produced within the framework of the Byzantine imperial program, but not from the same, so to speak, "church zone," for the simple reason that, for now, there is no known analogy to the floor composition in Caričin grad in any other preserved floor ensemble. The example was also given in the context of the broader understanding of the symbolism of the shepherd at that time, and not as an exact parallel.

[22] D.T. Rice, *The beginnings of Christian* Art, London, 1957, 88-89

[23] M. Matszulewitch, *Byzantiniche Antike*, Berlin and Laipzig, 1929, 112 (Plate 28)

Fig. 15. Shepherd from southern basilica, mosaic, Caricin grad (Iustiniana Prima), Serbia, VI century, and Shepherd from Titurus' lamp, terracotta, Rome, II-III century (now at the Royal Museum of History and art in Brussels, Belgium)

Сл. 15. Пастир из јужне базилике, мозаик, Царичин град (Iustiniana Prima), VI век, Србија, и пастир са Титурусове лампе, теракота, Рим, II-III век (сада у Краљевском историјско уметничком музеју у Брислу, Белгија)

Titurus' terracotta lamp (Figure 15, scene at the right) (today held at the Royal Museum of History and Art in Brussels), which is dated within a relatively broad chronological range at the crossroads between late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, but whose origin has been reliably traced to the workshops of Roman master craftsmen.[24] Another similar figure is the minutely painted shepherd of a large flock on a fresco from a lunette in Rome's Maius Catacombs dating from the 3rd century.

One of the specific features of paleo-Christian iconography also rests on the fact that each representation may also be viewed either as isolated or as a part of a greater whole, i.e. in correlation with other representations, which most directly conditions its meaning.[25] In that context, the isolated representation of the shepherd next to the ambo of the southern basilica of Caričin grad in the first place suggests a personification of a priest, which is the most directly indicated by the position of the mosaic relative to the ambo, as well as by Biblical texts. However, when this shepherd is analyzed in a broader context of the entire floor mosaic's complex iconography, having in mind that the motifs of the fight with the bear and the lion from the main nave, or of the deer drinking water from the spring of life in the apse, have their undoubted origins in David's Psalms,[26] it

[24] www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/index.html

[25] R.M. Jensen, *ibid*, 67

[26] In the consignatorium of the Basilica Urbana in Thessaloníki there is a representation of two deer drinking water from a canataros (water-jar), with verses from David's Psalms (42:1) written next to them – Sic ut cervus desiderata dion tesas varum ita desiderata

may be rightfully assumed that the Caričin grad shepherd is a prefiguration of the shepherd-king David, i.e. a personification of a ruler and priest in the sense of a people's shepherd according to the will of God.

Translated by Aleksandar Pavić

Тамара Огњевић

ПАСТИР КАО ПЕРСОНИФИКАЦИЈА ВЛАДАРА И СВЕШТЕНИКА

Подни мозаик јужне базилике у Царичином граду (Iustiniana Prima), из прве половине 6. века, имао је функцију визуелног представљања земаљске равни живота манифестоване кроз сталну борбу верујућег човека са најразличитијим искушењима (медведи, лавови, кентаури, амазонке), а са циљем спасења човекове душе (рајске птице, причесни пехари, цвеће и воће). На размеђи ова два „екстрема", представљена јасно дефинисаним симболима у два паралелно постављена правоугаоника у трансепту јужне базилике, стоје остаци масивног, петоделног амвона, а покрај њих мозаик са представом младог пастира.

Добри пастир као персонификација Христа обједињује више личности јудео-античке традиције, и то на релацији Орфеј-Бах-Давид, варирајући њихове још у антици утврђене ликовне атрибуте, а да би до краја 4. века иконографија Доброг пастира била дефинисана у лику лепог, голобрадог младића са пребаченом овцом преко рамена. Иконографија пастира у Царичином граду не одговара, међутим, чак ни у посредним поређењима, нити овој нити било којој другој познатој представи из великог корпуса ранохришћанских Добрих пастира. Поврх свега, и сама представа и њен положај на поду су крајње необични. Наиме, реминисценције на Доброг пастира су након Костантинове епохе врло ретке, а посебним указом императора Теодосија II из 427. године најстроже је забрањено да се Христ и други светитељи сликају на подовима богомоља.

Из свега наведеног јасно проистиче да сегмент мозаика на поду јужне базилике заиста представља пастира, али не Доброг пастира Христа. Ко је онда голобради младић, огрнут кожухом, који уз помоћ великог штапа тера пред собом прилично шарено стадо?

Ако се на питање идентитета Доброг пастира одговор добијао кроз Христове речи из Јеванђеља по Јовану - „Ја сам добри пастир" (Јован 10, 11-18), логично је да одговор на овај проблем, такође, треба тражити у Библији. „Бог је пастир Израела" – недвосмислено сведочи Стари завет преко књига пророка Исаије (40,11), Јеремије (31,10) и Псалма краља Давида (23,1). Према старозаветним библијским текстовима Бог-пастир води и штити стадо чији је искључиви власник преносећи део свог ауторитета на световне и верске поглаваре, па се и ове личности метафорично називају „пастирима народа". Једна од најомиљенијих личности Старог завета, онај који „је био пастир оваца, а Бог га је учинио поглаваром његовог народа, како стоји у другој књизи Самуиловој (7,8; 24,17), истовремено и Христов најдиректнији предак према јеванђеоском учењу, јесте победилац Голијата, израелски краљ и библијски пророк – Давид. У хришћанству пастир је, пре свега, божијом милошћу одабрани господар и водич стада – владар и свештеник. Или сасвим прецизно – заступник Христа доброг пастира и јединог правог власника стада на земљи све до његовог Другог доласка.

---

anima mea ad te deus (As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God) Cee R.Egger*, Die Bauten in nordweistichlen Teile der Neustadt von Salona,* Forschungen in Salona I, Wien 1917, Taf. II-IV, Abb.148

Једна од специфичности палохришћанске иконографије почива и на чињеници да свака представа може бити посматрана и изоловано, али и као део веће целине, односно у корелацији са другим представама, што најдиректније условљава њено значење. У том контексту, изолована представа пастира крај амвона јужне базилике Царичиног града, у првом реду сугерише да је реч о персонификацији свештеника што има најнепосредније утемељење и у положају мозаику у односу на амвон као и у библијским текстовима. Но, када се овај пастир анализира у ширем контексту комплексне иконографије читавог подног мозаика, а имајући у виду да мотиви борбе са медведом и лавом из главног брода, или јелени који пију воду са извора живота из апсиде, неспорно имају своје изворе у Псалмима Давидовим, онда се оправдано може предпоставити да је Царичински пастир префигурација краља-пастира Давида, односно персонификација владара и свештеника у смислу пастира народа по вољи Божијој.