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Series Byzantina 8, 231-249

2010

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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*On Some Objects in the National Museum in Krakow and Question of their Origin: Athos or other Monasteries?*¹

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In the present paper I would like to focus on few works of small relief sculpted in wood which are commonly associated with Mount Athos workshops. The most precious among them is a medallion (National Museum in Krakow XVIII-153a²; figs. 1.a–b) donated to the National Museum in Krakow (further referred to as the MNK) together with an altar cross (MNK XVIII-154; figs. 4.a–b)³ by Edward Goldstein in 1909, who purchased both works in Paris. The medallion was already then stored in a wooden box veneered with parchment written upon with Gothic minuscule with coloured initials (MNK XVIII-153b; figs. 2–3). It was shown twice in the MNK Main Building exhibitions, in 1972 and 1994, and since autumn 2007 it has been a part of permanent exhibition at the Bishop Erazm Ciołek Palace – a new branch of the MNK at 17. Kanonicza Street in Krakow. It is exhibited in Room II in a showcase containing other small sculptures in wood, including three crosses, possibly also from Athos.

The monument is very poorly examined. Except for two inventory cards – one prepared by J. Kłosińska (12.07.1959) and the other by B. Gumińska (03.1991), just a paragraph in a guide-

¹ The Polish version of this paper was presented at Gniezno on 13 March 2008 during the VI Colloquium Europaeum: *Holy Mount Athos in European Culture: Europe in the culture of Mount Athos* organized by Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan and Collegium Europeum Gnesense in Gniezno.

² Medallion-enkolpion with the cycle of feasts and prophets, 2nd half of the 17th century–1st half of the 18th century, Athos (?), boxwood, H. 14 cm; D. 9 cm, MNK XVIII-153a – acquired by E. Goldstein in Paris at the beginning of 20th century.

³ Cross, 17th century (?), base – 19th century, Athos (?), boxwood, gilded, 16,4 x 5,7 x 1,4 cm, MNK XVIII-154 – acquired by E. Goldstein in Paris at the beginning of 20th century. There is an inscription at the bottom of the base: “De monte athos”.

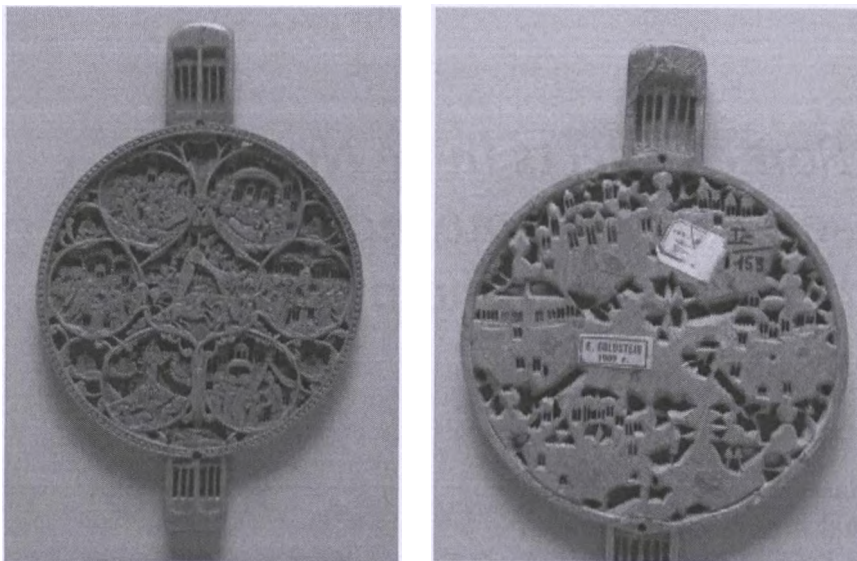


Fig. 1. a–b Medallion-enkolpion with the cycle of feasts and prophets, 2nd half of the 17th cent.–1st half of the 18th cent., Athos (?), boxwood, H. 14 cm; D. 9 cm, MNK XVIII-153a (Photo: National Museum in Krakow)

book to the permanent galleries of the Museum was devoted to it in 2008⁴. Besides basic data (J. Kłosińska dates it to the 19th or 18th centuries, Athos?; B. Gumińska to the 18th century or the second half of the 17th century, Athos) the inventory card also contains a note by B. Gumińska about the resemblance of the medallion to Early Christian relic ampoules of the Holy Land. Moreover, B. Gumińska points to the medallion in Dr Siegfried Amberg's collection and a medallion depicting St. George and St. Demetrius dated to the 18th century as analogous to the monument stored in Krakow⁵.

The manuscript which was used to veneer the box containing the medallion has also been identified. It is probably a French manuscript with the text of *Psalms* coming from 13th century Gothic *Psalter*⁶. Two of its sheets were used, written upon with minuscule in one column and seventeen lines. On the face of the sheet on the top of the box we find *Psalm* 51 (50): *Miserere mei Deus* ...written down from its third line. On the reverse there is a continuation of the *Psalm* 51 (50) – lines 11-20. When the bottom of the box is veneered with a sheet which face starts with the 15 line of *Psalm* 48 (47): *Quoniam hic est*, yet further follow the lines 2 to 9 of *Psalm* 49 (48). The reverse of the sheet contains lines 3 to 14 of *Psalm* 48 (47).

⁴ GUMIŃSKA 2008, 62.

⁵ *Griechisch-Byzantinische Kunst* 1965, cat. 71.

⁶ GUMIŃSKA 2008, 62. The Author indicated on the alternation of golden and blue initials and severe ornamentation based on simplified halfpalmets and proposed the dating of the manuscript on the 2nd half of 13th century, of the French origin and Cistercian scriptorium.

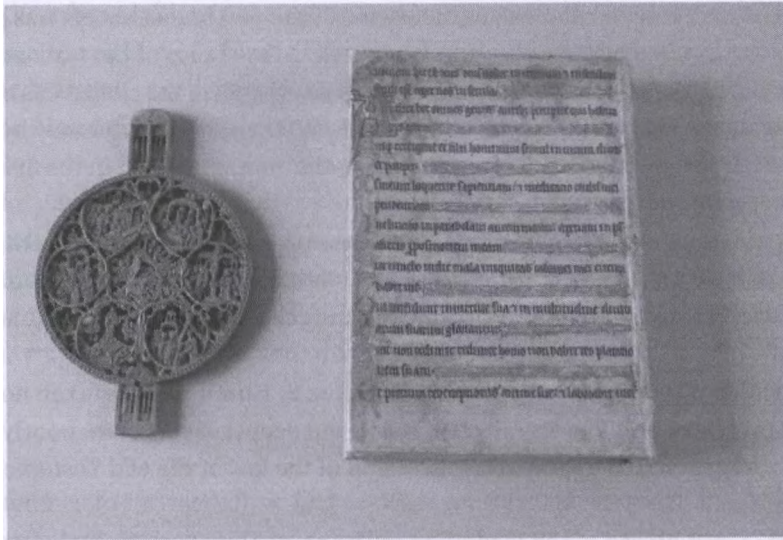


Fig. 2. Medallion (MNK XVIII-153a) and the wooden box veneered with parchment written upon with Gothic minuscule (MNK XVIII-153b) – exterior (Photo: National Museum in Krakow)



Fig. 3. Medallion (MNK XVIII-153a) and the wooden box veneered with parchment written upon with Gothic minuscule (MNK XVIII-153b) – interior (Photo: National Museum in Krakow)

It is difficult to decide to what extent the choice of the parchment sheets was purposeful, as they come from a Latin manuscript, nevertheless the choice of the texts powerfully stresses their penitential, laudable message. Nor is it known when the choice was made and by whom. The medallion, as well as the cross (MNK XVIII-154) was purchased by Edward Goldstein in Paris, where Athos crosses appeared on the antique market in the first quarter of 20th century, sold by E. Segregadis.

Analysing the scheme of placement of the scenes on the Krakow monument, we first notice the expression of the idea of the Jesse Tree in it, combined with the choice of six scenes connected to the major Evangelical events and religious holidays at the same time. The scenes are placed within six large circles created by a bent shoot of a vine, while within five smaller circles there are busts of prophets. B. Gumińska has taken note of the fact that the prophets' half figures are sculpted in the deeper layer, more poorly lighted, which can be interpreted as a symbolic concession of the law of the *Old Testament* to the light of the *Gospel*.

The formal resemblance of the medallion to the ampoules from the Holy Land, mentioned earlier, is confirmed by the layout of the scenes on one of the ampoules stored in the cathedral treasury in Monza in Lombardy near Milan⁷. Both monuments feature the theme of the Nativity in the centre, extended by the epiphanic themes of the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Arrival of the Magi. However, six circles surrounding the central scene on the ampoule's face contain slightly different themes highlighting the sequence of events: the Annunciation (the upper left medallion) – the Visitation (the upper right medallion) – the Nativity (in the centre) – the Baptism of Christ (the lower left medallion) – the Crucifixion (the lower right medallion) – the Women and the Angel at the Tomb of Christ – and consequently the Resurrection (at the bottom) and the Ascension (at the top), while its reverse contains the picture of the Mother of God Enthroned with the Christ Child accompanied by angels. The choice of the central scene as well as the star above the throne of Mary and Jesus seem, in this case, to emphasize the place for which these products were meant.

At the bottom of the Krakow medallion is a figure of the lying Jesse, from whom spreads a shoot of vine symbolizing the genealogy tree of Jesus among whose ancestors were kings David and Solomon and the prophets foretelling the coming of the Messiah. A similar scheme appears in the icons of Hodegetria accompanied by the prophets, including the scene on the silver lining of one of the most revered icons on Mount Athos, in the Protaton church⁸. The layout of the scenes on the medallion “read” from left to right does not correspond with the sequence of events: the Raising of Lazarus (the upper left medallion) – the Nativity of the Virgin Mary (the upper right medallion) – the Presentation of Jesus in the

⁷ GRABAR 1958, cat. nr. 2, pp. 18–20; pl. IV – recto; pl. V – verso.

⁸ *Mother of God Glycophilousa*, Byzantine icon, 95 x 66 cm, dated (according to the legend) to the 8th century; later gold (?) covering, Karyes, Protaton - IIUBER 1982, fig. 161.

Temple (the left medallion in the central row) – the Nativity (the central medallion) – the Crucifixion (the right medallion in the central row) – the Transfiguration (the left medallion at the bottom) – the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple (the right medallion at the bottom). Thus, it seems that the ideological significance of the chosen themes is more important here, with emphasis on the analogy between the events concerning the Virgin Mary and Christ (the Nativity and the Presentation), as well as the solemn epiphanic character of the themes concerning Christ including the Raising of Lazarus and the Transfiguration, obviously supplemented by the Crucifixion. The scenes are divided by smaller semicircles of vine, each of which contains a bust of a prophet. The enkolpion does not have any scenes on the reverse which is smooth and merely functional.

In reference to the medallion and to other works displayed with it at the permanent exhibition mentioned above, the question of origin returns. The medallion itself has a form less frequently found, while the choice of material – hardwood and the method of its precise working out, enabling the depiction of a large number of scenes and figures in miniature, is also characteristic of both processional and altar crosses. The high quality of execution of similar works inclines researchers to usually regard them as products of the Mount Athos monasteries.

Perhaps it is there, where the second gift of Edward Goldstein of 1909 was made – which is the altar cross (MNK XVIII-154; figs. 4.a–b) made probably in the 17th century, but fixed on a base of a later date perhaps of 19th century. On its face we find a depiction of the Crucifixion with the Greek inscription: “Η ΣΤΑΥΡΩΣΙΣ”, while its sides show the Virgin Mary and St. John (?). For the woman and man are standing already beneath the Cross the identification of half-figures in the endings of the cross is not certain – as they should rather be the angels or Evangelists eventually. The upper quarter and the lower one most probably depict the Evangelists showed in half figured portraits. The reverse of the cross contains the Baptism of Christ bearing the Greek inscription: “Η ΒΑΠΤΙΣΙΣ”. On the arms of the cross there are two angels, while at the top and at the bottom we see two Evangelists. Each quarter is topped with an arch in the form of a tudor arch. What draws attention is the placement of carved acrostics: “ΑΠΜΣ” and “ΤΚΠΓ” on the sides of the cross (figs. 4.c–d).

The problem of determination of workshop origin also appears in the description of another small medallion exhibited with the works characterized above. A small pendant with the theme of the Last Supper (MNK XVIII-101, inscription in Old-Salvic: ΤΑΙΝΑΑ) is dated to the 18th century (?) and regarded as north Balkan or Romanian imitation of Mount Athos sculptures (fig. 5).⁹ Another plaque, with the Mother of God of the Sign with Christ

⁹ Medallion, 18th century (?), Romania (?), wood, D. 3,2 cm, MNK XVIII-101 – acquired in 1902 from the Polish Academy of Science. At the opposite site inscription with ink: “1754”.

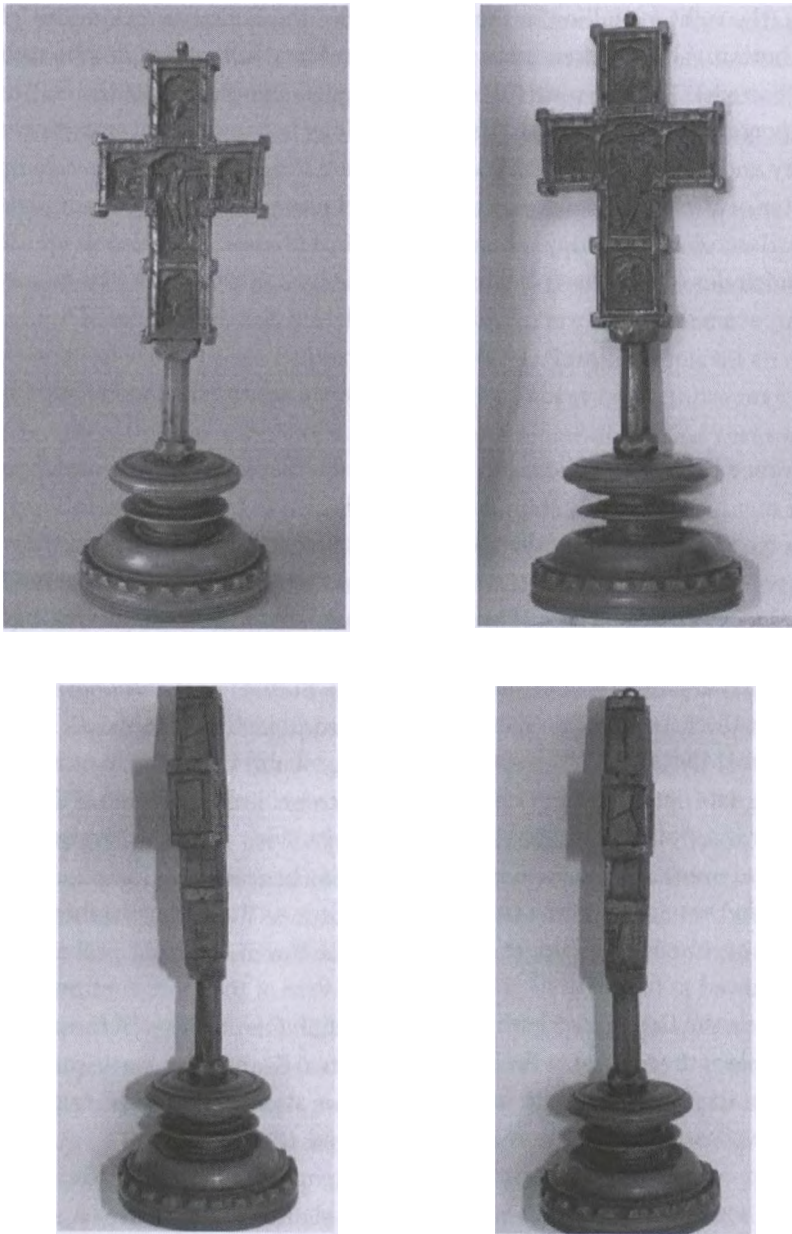


Fig. 4. a–d Cross, 17th cent. (?), base – 19th cent., Athos (?), boxwood, gilded, 16,4 x 5,7 x 1,4 cm, MNK XVIII-154 (Photo: National Museum in Krakow)



Fig. 5. Medallion, 18th cent. (?), Romania (?), wood, D. 3,2 cm, MNK XVIII-101
(Photo: National Museum in Krakow)



Fig. 6. Plaque, 19th cent. (?), Balkans (Greece?), boxwood, H. 3,5, W. 4 cm, MNK-XVIII-151
(Photo: National Museum in Krakow)

Child on Her Breast (Greek *Platytera*, Old-Slavonic *Znamenie*; MNK XVIII-151; Greek inscriptions: “MP ΘΥ”; “ΙΣ ΧΣ”; in lowest row: “ΟΙ ΑΓΙΟΙ ΚΟΣΜΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΑΜΙΑΝΟΣ Ὁ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ”), dated also at 18th century has been regarded as a Balkan (Greek?) work (fig. 6).¹⁰ The collection is supplemented by an altar cross (MNK XVIII-100), also regarded as late Balkan imitation of Mount Athos products (figs. 7.a–c).¹¹

Little is known about the origin of another cross in the MNK collection, numbered XVIII-92 and purchased after the year 1900 (figs. 8.a–b).¹² Probably its simple, rather harsh working out inclined J. Kłosińska to determine its origin as Ruthenian of 18th–19th centuries and so it was described at the exhibition of Carpathian crosses in Sanok in the 1995. There is no certainty either, whether it fulfilled the function of an altar cross or a hand cross, as it has no handle. On the other hand, B. Gumińska pointed to Serbia or Greece as the place of its origin (18th century?), alternatively a Serbian monastery of Chilandar on Mount Athos.

A closer look at the cross reveals its certain resemblance to the one numbered MNK XVIII-154 (figs. 4.a–d). Also in this cross the quarters are divided by arches in the form of a tudor arch. On its face there is the Crucifixion (Greek inscription: “ΙΣ ΧΣ ΝΚ”[?]) and Evangelists on its sides. In the cross numbered MNK XVIII-92, however, the upper quarter does not contain one more Evangelist, but the scene of adoration of the cross by two angels, while in the lower quarter two half figures lean to one another. On the reverse, tradition-

¹⁰ Plaque, 19th century (?), Balkans (Greece?), boxwood, H. 3,5, W. 4 cm, MNK XVIII-151 – acquired in 1909 as a gift of Helena Dąbczańska.

¹¹ Reliquary cross, 19th century, Balkans, wood, H. 12,3 cm, W. 6,3 cm, MNK XVIII-100 – acquired in 1902 from the Polish Academy of Science.

¹² Cross, 17th century (?), Athos (?), boxwood, 14,4 x 8,1 cm, MNK XVIII-92 – acquired after 1900.

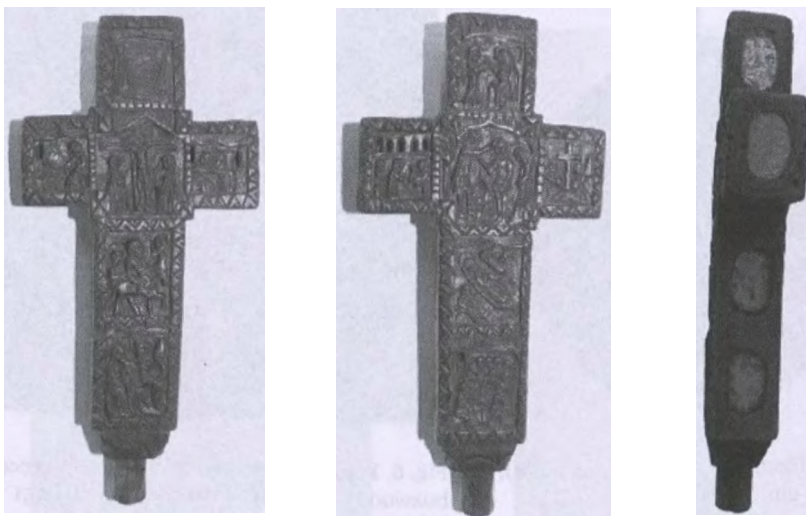


Fig. 7. Reliquary cross, 19th cent., Balkans, wood, H. 12,3 cm, W. 6,3 cm, MNK XVIII-100. (Photo: National Museum in Krakow)

ally, we find—the Baptism of Christ (Greek inscription: “Η ΒΑΠΤΙΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ”) with Evangelists on the sides. Similarly as on the face of the cross, they were showed in profile occupied with writing or holding books inside the scriptorium. The upper quarter contains the Annunciation, while the scene at the bottom has a significant section missing which makes it difficult to identify. It is noticeable that the sides of this cross are bordered with a string ornament, while on the cross numbered MNK XVIII-154 they are decorated with incisions, as well as the fact that in both cases on the intersection of the arms we find ornaments in the form of the letter “X”, which associates with a string tied around, and reminds of particles of relics tied in this way that we find in the most revered staurotheke, for example in the *Lazarus Staurotheke* in the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos.

The origin of the crosses numbered MNK XVIII-154 and MNK XVIII-92 is confirmed by parallel crosses at other museums. A very similar cross, but dated to the 16th century is in the collection of the Andrei Rublev Museum in Moscow with the origin cautiously determined as Mount Athos (figs. 9.a–b).¹³ Its iconography is nearly identical with the cross XVIII-154 – fields at the bottom and at the top on the side of the group of Crucifixion scene are filled with half-figures of Evangelists, but on the sides – with half-figures of the angels. In both crosses the half-figures of angels are placed on the sides of the scene of the Baptism of Christ, while there are two Evangelists at the top and at the bottom – in the Krakow example in half-figures while in Moscow one – in full-length as sitting at the pulpits. On the sides of all three

¹³ Altar cross, 16th century, Athos (?), wood, 10,7 x 6,2 x 1,4 cm, Moscow, Andrej Rublev Museum, DAVYDOVA 2006.

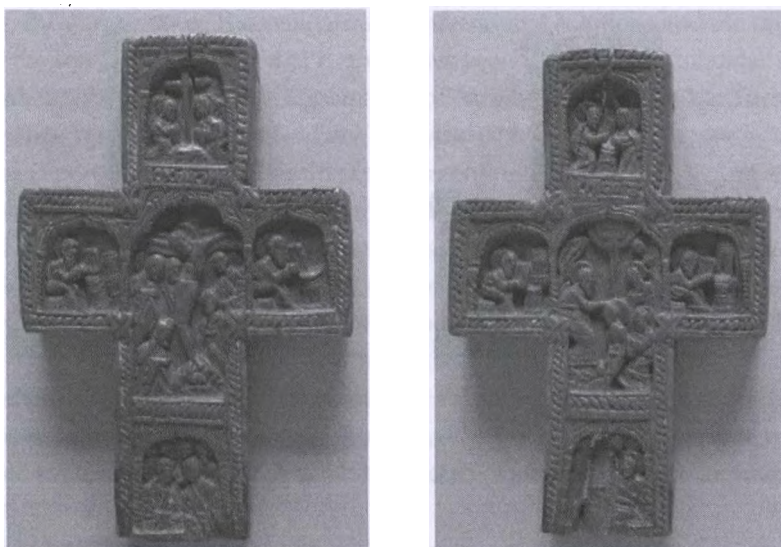


Fig. 8. Cross, 17th cent. (?), Athos (?), boxwood, 14,4 x 8,1 cm, MNK XVIII-92
(Photo: National Museum in Krakow)

crosses occur the same carved acrostics: “ΑΠΜΣ” and “ΤΚΠΓ”. E. Davydova, the author of the note on the cross in A. Rublev Museum collection, indicated the difficulty with unambiguous determination of the environment in which the cross could have been made, because the simplified working out of angels’ heads and ornament may indicate that it is an imitation of a Greek original by a Serbian or Bulgarian artist. Referring to the inscriptions, she stressed that the first record might refer to Adam, who was the first to fall because of the sin, but rose from the dead because of the cross, while the second one: “ΤΚΠΓ” in her opinion remained incomprehensible. Yet, similar acrostics were used in this type of monuments rather commonly, and their meaning has been lately recalled by I. Bentchev after N. Pokrovskij: “*Sie werden gelesen als*” Ἄδαμ Πεπτοκὸς Μετεστὴ Σταύρω *oder* Ἄδαμ Προτοπλαστὸς Μετεστὴ Σταύρω. *Dieses Akronym wie auch ΤΚΠΓ (Τόπος Κρανίου Παράδεισος Γέγονε), das dem kirchenslavischen МЛРБ entspricht, ist auf griechischen Kreuzen des 17.–18. Jahrhunderts oft anzutreffen*”.¹⁴ Thus, the abbreviation written above the scene of the *Crucifixion* “ΙC ΧC ΝΚ” is the sign of Messiah’s triumph: “Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Νικᾶ” – “Jesus Christ Conquers”. While the above mentioned acrostics are explained in the following way: “ΑΠΜΣ” = “Ἄδαμ Πεπτοκὸς Μετεστὴ Σταύρω” or “Ἄδαμ Προτοπλαστὸς Μετεστὴ Σταύρω” = „*Adam who fall into sin (or the first created man) arose through the cross*”¹⁵ or there is another explanation:

¹⁴ BENTCHEV 2002, 57–64. See: POKROVSKIJ 1892, 356.

¹⁵ See: DAVYDOVA 2006.



Fig. 9. Altar cross, 16th cent., Athos (?), wood, 10,7 x 6,2 x 1,4 cm, Moscow, Andrej Rublev Museum (after: DAVYDOVA 2006a, 301)

“Ἀρχὴ Πίστεως Μωσαϊκὸς Σταυρός”¹⁶ – “*The Moses’ Cross is the beginning of faith*”; “ΤΚΠΓ” = “Τόπος Κρανίου Παράδεισος Γέγονε” – “*The Place of the Skull became the Paradise*”.

One can find another cross of a very similar form at the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade, which is regarded as one of the oldest Serbian wooden crosses dated to the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century.¹⁷ It draws attention here, that similarly as in the cross numbered MNK XVIII-92, there is the Annunciation at the top, while at the bottom there are two sitting figures who in the cross from Krakow cannot be identified due to a damage, while in the Serbian cross they are provided with the names of the apostles Thomas and Philip. On one arm of the cross the inscription is damaged, on the other the name of the apostle Lucas has been deciphered. When on the reverse, above the theme of the Epiphany that is the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan, we find the theme of the Visitation of Abraham, in the Orthodox tradition treated as the depiction of the Holy Trinity. The names that we read in the quarters on the ends of the cross’s arms indicate that these did not need to be always figures of the Evangelists that were placed there: on the side arms we find St. Bartholomew and St. Simon, while at the bottom of the cross there are St. Peter and St. Paul. In the characteristics

¹⁶ ZAHARIADES 1998: http://www.phys.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/tributes/athos/agioreitikes_leptomereies.htm [access 07. Nov. 2009] I would like to thank Prof. Józef Naumowicz for his kindly help in translating the acrostics.

¹⁷ Altar cross, end of the 15th - beginning of the 16th century, Athos, plum wood, 17 x 8,2 x 2,6 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, acquired in the South of Serbia, MILOVANOVIC 2006b.

of this cross, the author noted the avoidance of conventional solutions and the multilayered structure of the setting, suggesting that it could have been made in the Chilandar monastery on Mount Athos, where despite of the occupation of the whole Balkans by the Turks, art continually developed “*for the glory of God and the nation*”.¹⁸

There are very many crosses of similar iconography, associated with Mount Athos. One of them is a 16th century cross from the cell of St. Apostles in the Skete of Kapsala, with a preserved silver frame, kept in the monastery of Pantokrator.¹⁹ On the face of the cross, above the Baptism of Christ there is the Annunciation, on the sides the Evangelists St. Matthew and St. Mark and at the bottom St. Peter and St. Paul holding a model of the church, and the *Pentecost* in the lowest quarter, while on the reverse we find the Crucifixion, above it the Transfiguration, on the sides St. Luke and St. John, and at the bottom the Descent from the Cross and Christ in the Tomb (Greek: *Akra tapinosis*). In the note, referring to this cross the explanation of the abbreviation “TKΠΓ” was that while it was stated that the acrostic “ΑΠΜΣ” was unknown.

To recapitulate this survey, it seems that the crosses at the Krakow collection have been so far dated to a period that was too late – namely the turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries. While their features are not different from these of the Athos crosses dated to 16th or alternatively to the 17th century. They are sculpted in a similar, rough manner, not like the crosses of end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century in which, as in the medallion, appears the trend to apply openwork forms, to hollow out wood especially in the parts of the windows in an architectonic background and this is the character that the Krakow medallion shows. Moreover, one can see it clearly on the example of an Athos cross dated to the end of the 17th century in the collection of A. Rublev Museum in Moscow²⁰.

Additionally, what draws attention is the variety of used materials proving the flourishing of the sacred sculpture in Orthodox countries in modern times. There are well-known superb examples of crosses with rich iconography preserved in the Moldavian monasteries, made at the order of successive hospodars²¹, powerful rulers²² or metropolitans²³. There are well-known Serbian and Bulgarian crosses, for example made of horn²⁴ or of wood framed

¹⁸ MILOVANOVIC 2006b.

¹⁹ Cross, 16th century, 13 x 9 cm, dark-coloured wood, Athos, Pantokrator, PROKIIOROS 2006, 113.

²⁰ Altar cross, end of the 17th, Athos, wood, 9,5 x 5,1 x 0,9 cm, acquired from the private collection, Moscow, Andrey Rublov Museum, DAVYDOVA 2006a.

²¹ Cross, 1503, wood, metal, 33,5 (full H. - 45,5) x 16,5 x 2,6 cm, foundation of the Stephen the Great as a gift for Putna Monastery, Bucarest, National Museum, inv No. 394, PARADAIS 1991, fig. 28.

²² Cross, 1566, Wood, metal, 34 (full H. - 48) x 22 x 4 cm, gift of Ioan Banschi clerk of Orhei and his wife Sotia for Putna Monastery, Monastery Museum, inv. No. 77, PARADAIS 1991, fig. 29.

²³ Altar cross, 1743, cedar wood, silver gilded, 30 x 7 x 2 cm, gift of metropolitan Anthony for Putna Monastery, Monastery Museum, inv. No. 79, PARADAIS 1991, fig. 30.

²⁴ Altar cross, 17th, workshop active in East Serbia, horn, 8,8 x 5,5 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, MILOVANOVIC 2006c, 305.

in silver²⁵ and often decorated with precious stones.²⁶ Crosses were made of various materials and in different workshops, not always recognized.

Closer to the 17th century, crosses are more frequently not only dated, but also signed by their creators, as for example the cross of a goldsmith Mavrodiy, active in a place called Vratsa²⁷ and the cross of Nikola and Pala from St. John the Evangelist monastery near Vratsa,²⁸ which are distinguished by a specific form of architectural shrines at the ends of the arms. A similar cross is kept in a Serbian monastery in Visoki Dečani.²⁹ We know of crosses similar in form connected with Mount Athos.³⁰

It seems that these crosses derive from the simpler versions of the old Athos crosses in the type of the blossoming Tree of Life, having more plant-like forms applied in the 16th century, as in the monument kept in the Hermitage.³¹ Its form is repeated by the crosses from the Balkans, additionally decorated with precious stones, as for example the one found in the Rila monastery dated to the turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries³² or in the Neamț monastery.³³

In the crosses that become more and more complex in terms of iconography, the dogmatic scenes (the Holy Trinity) often mingle with the Evangelical ones, including the scenes based on the opposition to be found in the icons too – the Crucifixion on the face of the cross sometimes corresponds with the Death of the Virgin on the reverse. The crosses from Serbia, Bulgaria and Mount Athos were generally more expensive than the Ruthenian, as they had silver frames with additions transforming a cross into the Tree of Life decorated with pearl beads and gemstones, and the wood used for their production was hard, most often boxwood,

²⁵ Altar cross, 17th century, wood, silver, enamel, H. 19 cm, Sofia, Orthodox Church Museum, DRUMEV 1976, fig. 193.

²⁶ Altar cross, 17th century, Turnovo, wood, silver, stones, H. 18 cm, Saint Peter and Paul Monastery nearby Arbanasi, DRUMEV 1976, fig. 194.

²⁷ Altar cross, 1600, Bulgaria, Vratsa, Mavrodij Goldsmith, wood, silver, H. 32 cm, Vratsa, Church of Saints Constantine and Helena – DRUMEV 1976, fig. 182.

²⁸ Altar cross, 1601, Bulgaria, Čiprovci, Nikola and Pala Goldsmiths, for the St. John Evangelist Monastery nearby Vratsa, wood, silver gilded, 61x20 cm, Vratsa, Church of St. Nicola – DRUMEV 1976, figs. 186–87.

²⁹ Altar cross, 18th century (?), wood, silver gilded, Dečani Monastery, SUBOTIĆ 1997, pl. 77.

³⁰ Cross, 17th century, wood, silver frame and base gilded, 21,2 x 7,0 x 5,9 cm, acquired in 1928, St. Petersburg, Russian Museum, inv. No. BK-3465, MAKAROVA 2006a; Cross, 17th century, wood, silver frame and base gilded, 8,1 x 5,9 x 1,6 cm, from P. V. Sinitzin collection, acquired in 1901, St. Petersburg, Russian Museum, inv. No. BK-3367, MAKAROVA 2006b. In the last example one can recognize St. Panteleimon for the Author suppose that it could indicate the Monastery of its origin.

³¹ Cross, 16th century, Athos, 41,5 x 26 x 2,8 cm, St. Petersburg, Ermitage – acquired in 1929 from the Cathedral of the Winter Palace, inv. No. ω 380, ZALESSKAYA 2001a.

³² Altar cross, Hadzi Radoslav, end of 17th – beginning of 18th century, West Bulgaria or Serbia, silver, wood, enamel, H. 25 cm, Rila, Monastery Museum, DRUMEV 1976, fig. 201.

³³ Sanctification Cross, 1707, wood, silver, enamel, precious stones, pearls, 35,5 x 20,3 cm, Athos, Iviron – the cross was embellished in Moscow by the Hegumen of the Iviron Monastery – Master Akakios Galatzianos, the musician from Galatista, who in the years 1699–1706 was the hegumen of the Monastery of St. Nicolas, the Iviron metochion in Moscow, cf. ICONOMAKI-PAPADOPOULOU 2006.

walnut or cedar. This hardwood enabled sculpting of even small elements in an immense concentration – each quarter is a separate, precisely filled world. This results in the problem of thorough examination of these monuments – a miniature sculpture is often insufficiently visible unless macro photography is applied. This also involves the matter of determination of the workshop in which a monument was made. Sometimes the benefactors or donors are well-known, however there is no data concerning the place of origin and the artist. An example of such a problem is an enkolpion in the Princess Czartoryski collection, showed in Gniezno at the exhibition *the Orthodox Church – the Great Mystery* in the year 2001: its face contains the depiction of St. George with a Boy on a Horse, while its reverse – two bishops: St. Charalambos and St. Nicholas³⁴. The assessment of the material indicated the use of horn, that is a material that was associated with the idea of the mythical unicorn, whose powdered horn was supposed to have healing power. The suggested place of origin of the monument covered quite a wide area – Anatolia, the Slavic Balkans and Greece. Still, what was characteristic, it was the iconography and the choice of the saints as well as the use of frame in the form of a silver filigree, like in the medallion founded by a Vlach archbishop Matthew for the Bistrița monastery and kept in the Dionysiou monastery on Mount Athos.³⁵ A whole group of similar products can be found in the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade, without the indication of origin.³⁶ The collected material related to the monuments would thus generally indicate that these are Balkan works, yet what remains an open question is the matter whether it is possible to determine that the monuments could have been made in the workshops active in the area of Serbia or in the Chilandar monastery on Mount Athos.

There is a similar monument in the Simonopetra monastery.³⁷ Here as well, St. George is surrounded with a frame made of silver filigree in combination with enamel, which was typical of the second half of the 18th century. When the monument's face depicts the adoration of the Mother of God by archangels, seraphim and prophets within the semicircles of vine, which reminds of the scheme of the paintings in the narthexes of the Palaeologan temples or adequate icons. The sense of the composition is included in the hymnographical canon of *Anothen hoi prophetai* referring to the glory of the Incarnation predicated by the prophets, with references to the idea of the Tree of Jesse.

A part of a unique group, better recognized thanks to the name of its creator, is an altar cross in the 20th century Czartoryski collection³⁸, revealing style analogies in the frescoes of

³⁴ St. George/St. Haralampie and St. Nicolas, two-sided enkolpion, unknown provenance, 2nd half of the 17th century–1st half of the 18th century, Balkans (?), horn, silver, Krakow, the Princess Czartoryski collection, GROTOWSKI/KRUK/PASZKOWSKI 2001, 59.

³⁵ Two-sided enkolpion, 2nd half of the 17th century, Athos (?), horn, silver, 11,5 x 9,2 cm, BALLIAN 1997.

³⁶ Enkolpia, 17th century, workshop unknown, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, RADOJKOVIĆ 1974, 80–81.

³⁷ St. George slyng the dragon, enkolpion, 2nd half of 18th century, D. 9,2 cm, wood, silver, stones, enamel, Athos, Simonopetra - ICONOMAKI-PAPADOPOULOU 2006a, 117.

³⁸ Georgios Laskaris, Altar cross, 20 September 1570, Athos, Krakow, the Princess Czartoryski collection, RÓŻYCKI 1994, figs. 1–20; list of Laskaris' works – RÓŻYCKI 1994, 92.

Mistra and Athos of the 15th and the 16th centuries and numbering among nine signed works of Georgios Laskaris.³⁹ Still, the presumptions concerning the place of his workshop's activity indicate a dramatic lack of any source information on the subject. J. Różycki in a monograph devoted to the above mentioned cross, stated in the conclusion that the only place where the Byzantine tradition survived was Mount Athos and that it was there where one should look for the place of activity of Laskaris's workshop. The conclusion reappears in the note about a very similar work ascribed to the workshop of Laskaris in the collection of St. Petersburg's Hermitage.⁴⁰ The authoress of the note based her opinion on the stylistic features of the cross and cited the article of J. Różycki.⁴¹

Returning to the subject of the Medallion described in the introduction, it seems in the light of the known analogies that it was made in one of Mount Athos monasteries, most probably in the Serbian monastery of Chilandar. The openwork form of its sculpture points to other works dated to the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century. Here belongs, for example, the triptych at the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, made of palm wood and framed in silver.⁴² The wide semicircles of plant shoots are very similar here, and inside them, one can find complex scenes of the *dodekaorton*. Next to the themes treated traditionally, as the *Anastasis* (Greek: Resurrection or Descent of Christ into Limbo), there are other, like the Holy Trinity, that clearly reveal the turn towards new, non-Orthodox models known from the Western European prints. One can get the impression that the tendency to more and more openwork form increases among the works of that time. An example of such especially bold working out is a diptych made of olive wood, associated with the Chilandar monastery.⁴³ What draws attention in this well-thought-out composition of both wings is the principle of complementary ideas and at the same time the formal schemes – in the central semicircle of one of the wings, created by a bent shoot of vine, there is a rare variant of the *Deesis* theme with St. Nicholas receiving the prayers of Mary and St. John the Baptist, which in the central part of the other wing is complemented by the depiction of the Mother of God Enthroned with Child Christ in the type of *Eleousa*, being crowned by angels suspended in the air. This very detail, alike the theme of the Holy Trinity with a tri-

³⁹ RÓŻYCKI 1994, 96.

⁴⁰ Laskaris workshop, altar cross, 24 July 1549, Mediterranean region, wood, 11. 19,1 cm (34,3 – with base), St. Petersburg, Ermitage – acquired in 1928 from M. Botkin collection, inv. No. 306 – ZALESSKAYA 2001 179–80.

⁴¹ ZALESSKAYA 2001a.

⁴² Triptych, end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century, Athos, palmwood, silver gilded, 8,9 x 11,2 x 0,8 cm, St. Petersburg, The Russian Museum inv. No. BK-28439, MAKAROVA 2006.

⁴³ Icon-diptych, end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century, Athos, Chilandar, olive wood, 9,8 x 11,5 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, MILOVANOVIC 2006.

angular nimbus and characteristic poses of the figures, is a definitely Western innovation, resembling, in the latter case, for example the work of an Antwerpian painter Hendrik van Balen of the 1620s.⁴⁴ Also characteristic is the placement of two soldier saints – St. George and St. Demetrius facing one another, as in many other modern Balkan icons, placed on the axis, below the main scenes of both wings.

A similar openwork form distinguishes a small plaque or enkolpion with the image of St. Sava, the Archbishop of Serbia, and the more related to the Serbian monastery, this time made of cypress wood.⁴⁵ The depiction of the saint's face in profile is close to the way in which the profile of the old Simeon on the Krakow plaque was worked out and the face of Simeon on the above mentioned Belgrade plaque. The resemblance between them is revealed by the shaping of the figures' hair strands as well as the working out of the parts around the mouth and a pointed beard and the nose, while it is difficult to decide in this case what is the result of the artist's individual technique and what the effect of a convention imposed by the type of material. In comparison with the described monuments, the Krakow plaque is more sophisticated, having many settings and finer folds forming the letter "V". In the diptych, the form of the folds is more flat and what strikes is the monotony of their parallel arrangement. The profile of St. Sava on the plaque seems to be even more harsh. These three examples show at the same time the liking of the authors to experiment with different kind of hardwood.

Equally noticeable is the liking of the Serbian masters for giving an openwork form to the monuments, also in the earlier period, a beautiful example of which are the fragments of 14th century polycandelabra (*polycandilion*) that is candlesticks made of bronze with the names of Serbian donors e.g. of Dušan, King Stephen or Duchess Eugenia and their sons – princes Stephen and Vukan. Enhancement of the effect led to the creation of works in which free space dominates the sculpted matter, as in an unusual medallion made of boxwood,⁴⁶ sculpted in the manner characteristic of the xylographic school of Mount Athos consisting in turning the material being processed into a kind of a stamp, totally hollowing out the background.

At last, in the circle of the described works dated to the turn of 17th century and associated with the Chilandar monastery we also find a work that is closest to the Krakow plaque in terms of its function. It is an openwork medallion of boxwood, sculpted on both sides, with the scene of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple on its face and Jesus in priestly gowns between St. Simeon and St. Saba on the reverse – with a preserved case inside which, similarly as in the Krakow monument – there is a precisely matching hollow in which it was

⁴⁴ Hendrick van Balen, St. Trinity, 1620s, oil on canvas, Antwerp, St. Jacob church (*Sint-Jacobskerk*).

⁴⁵ Enkolpion (St. Sava), end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century, Athos, Chilandar, cypress wood, 3,5 x 5,3 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, MILOVANOVIĆ 2006a.

⁴⁶ Enkolpion, end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century, Athos, boxwood, D. 6,5 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, MILOVANOVIĆ 2006f.



Fig. 10. Enkolpion, 17th cent., Athos, D. 4,4 cm, wood-case: 6,1 x 7,8 cm, Belgrade, Museum of the Applied Arts (after MILOVANOVIĆ 2006e, 313)

possible to keep the medallion (fig. 10).⁴⁷ Thanks to the inscription we know that its author was named Pachomius. In addition, this medallion does not have an expected silver frame, in which similar works were usually placed, alike for example an enkolpion of Chilandar, which was to be framed into silver in Thessaloniki.⁴⁸ Thus, in this context, the attempt to explain the function of this type of medallion that was carried in a wooden case becomes interesting. In the opinion of D. Milovanovic this type of an icon could have been brought from Chilandar by a monk, a bishop candidate with the intention of framing it with metal so that he could wear it later on as a symbol of his dignity, but this did not happen for unknown reasons.⁴⁹ If the conclusion is proper, then the Krakow monument would have to represent another example of this type of work that did not obtain the final status of an Episcopal enkolpion. Whether it was a case is difficult to decide at this stage of the research. At any rate, the work analysed by Milovanovic does not appear to be unique.

⁴⁷ Enkolpion, 17th century, Athos, D. 4,4 cm, wood-case: 6,1 x 7,8 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts - MILOVANOVIĆ 2006d.

⁴⁸ Enkolpion, end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century, icons – Chilandar, frame – Thessaloniki, plum wood, silver, gilded, filigree, stones, D. 8,3 cm, Belgrade, Museum of Applied Arts, MILOVANOVIĆ 2006e.

⁴⁹ MILOVANOVIĆ 2006d.

On the other hand, a typical Episcopal enkolpion, as the one of Protaton, was decorated not only with a silver frame, but also with gems polished into cabochons, in this case made of glass mass.⁵⁰ In this work the Evangelical scenes are also presented within large circles created by bent shoots or actually by branches growing out of the trunk of the Tree of Jesse, while in the smaller circles we find prophets with unrolled scrolls with prophecies at the service of the idea of *Concordia Veteri et Novi Testamenti*.

The very enkolpion, two sided too, constitutes also the testimony of multilayered content included in it, as it combines within itself not only typological schemes, but also respects the Evangelical and liturgical order at the same time – here, on its face, one can find three scenes of the first part of the liturgy being at the same time three epiphanic ones, in which the divine nature of Jesus reveals itself, i.e. the Annunciation, the Baptism and the Transfiguration, preceding the Offering. These scenes are the manifestation of the mystery of the dual nature of Christ, in which Mary takes part, representing the era of new grace and John – the witness of the Old Covenant, praying for the mankind. While on the reverse there are three scenes of the second part of the liturgy, referring to the events related to Christ's Offering, i.e. the Crucifixion, the Lamentation and the Descent to Hell that is the Anastasis. Thus, one can notice, as a result a simple message in the plan of the medallion, also valid in reference to most of the works mentioned here, that the liturgy reconstructs the life of the Saviour, while an enkolpion is to be the liturgy's reflection.

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⁵⁰ Enkolpion, 2nd half of 18th century, Athos, wood, silver, cabochons, 13,5 x 12 cm, Karyes, Protaton, ICONOMAKI-PAPADOPOULOU 1997.

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