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IMAGO HISTORICA: THY NAME IS BEAUTY - FEMININE AND MASCULINE

Abstract: The paper examines some of the historic portraits depicted in the fresco arrangements created in the medieval monuments on the territory of present-day Republic of Macedonia in terms of the aesthetic features of the individuals, both male and female. In that regard, besides the physical characteristics of their faces and figures, the outfits, headdresses, jewelry and other accessories that adorned their historic representations have been taken into account, as well.

Key words: Lesnovo monastery, Marko's monastery, St. Archangel Michael in Prilep, St. Nicholas at Psača, King Marko, sebastocrator/despot Jovan Oliver, jewelry, costumes.

When Kahlil Gibran says: *beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror*, not does he only reflect his diversified poetic essence spiced with both Sufi mysticism and Biblical parables; he actually directs the notion of aesthetic significance to the more substantiated origin of its historic acknowledgment. Not diverging entirely from Plato's idea of beauty as an objective feature¹ nor of Aristotle's perception that beauty can be seen in the aesthetic dimensions of the images², Gibran aims at the ultimate ideological horizon of beauty which, to our personal knowledge, is its eternal desirability, everlasting quintessence and immortal visual potential³. The nature of beauty is one of the most enduring and controversial themes in modern philosophy and together with the nature of art, is one of the two fundamental issues in philosophical aesthetics. Moreover, beauty has traditionally been counted among the ultimate human values with

¹ G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Theory of Beauty*, The Monist Vol. 37/2, Oxford 1927, 269-288.

² J. S. Marshall, *Art and Aesthetics in Aristotle*, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism Vol. 12/2, New York 1953, 228-231.

³ "**Beauty** is life when life unveils her holy face. But you are life and you are the veil. **Beauty** is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror. But you are eternity and you are the mirror"(K. Gibran)



Fig. 1 St. Archangel Michael, Lesново, Sebastocrator Jovan Oliver

Сл. 1 Св. Арханђео Михаило у Леснову, Севастократор Јован Оливер



Fig. 2 St. Archangel Michael, Lesново, Sebastocrator Jovan Oliver

Сл. 2 Св. Арханђео Михаило у Леснову, Севастократор Јован Оливер

goodness, truth and justice⁴ not only in the course of Antiquity and Renaissance. Always perceived as alluring subject of unconditional admiration, regardless of its physical or spiritual dimension, never has beauty ever been so fascinating feature of visual perfection as in our contemporary, highly consumerist world of today. Movie industry, performing arts, sports, pageants, cosmetology, health products, even household religiousness are all submitted to the predominant, excessively powerful, ever-growing and all-consuming dimension of beauty. However, one should not

forget that the modern world in its postmodern course is only a kaleidoscopic compound of past ideas, notions and concepts visualized in desirable spectacles made pleasant to our eyes and conciliatory for our souls. In that regard, the historic personages of today are represented in their most appealing appearance as were their predecessors from centuries long gone, but still not forgotten. It is a statement based on visual evidence, as well as painterly records kept alive in historic monuments, sacral edifices and monastic endowments. Some of them are included in this paper due to their uncompromising, unrestricted, undeniable, yet historically sustainable celebration of beauty.

The physical appearance of historic characters - male and female within the fresco arrangements of Byzantine provenance, among other things, served as a powerful instrument for visually enhanced socio-religious action and therefore it should have been designed and depicted in the most corresponding manner⁵. That manner encompassed distinctive features of physiognomy, facial exposition, stance,

⁴ C. Sartwell, C. Sartwell, *Beauty in: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford 2012.

⁵ E. Dimitrova, *V.I. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia, Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionerships (11th – 14th century)*, *Folia Archaeologica Balcanica III*, Skopje 2015, 601.

corporal expression, attitude, temper, costume and accessories, as structural components of their psychological chemistry, as well as physical attractiveness united in the aesthetically provocative and artistically compelling compound of beauty. In that regard, the portraits of female individuals were adorned with gentle outlooks, tenderness and affectionate nature, while the images of male characters received features of vigorous outlooks, full-blooded energy and uncompromising virility. In that sense, this paper will present some of the most tempting examples from Macedonian medieval fresco painting.

The top position among male individuals from the Byzantine era, at least judging from the evidence of Macedonian fresco painting, but not restricted to it, is occupied by the handsome, charming and highly charismatic grand duce, later sebastocrator and despot Jovan Oliver (**Fig. 1**). His khetorial portraits, three altogether (in Lesnovo naos⁶, in the chapel dedicated to Saint John the Baptist in the cathedral church of Saint Sophia in Ohrid⁷ and again in Lesnovo, in its narthex area⁸ reveal what is probably the most appealing male charac-

⁶ N. L. Okunev, *Lesnovo, L'art byzantine chez le Slaves, Les Balkans*, Paris 1930, 226-235; С. Радојчић, *Старо српско сликарство*, Београд 1966, 143-148; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Историјске композиције у српском сликарству средњег века и njihove књижевне паралеле*, Зборник радова Византолошког института 11, Београд 1968, 108-109; С. Радојчић, *Лесново*, Београд 1971; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 64; С. Габелић, *Нови податак о севастократорској титули Јована Оливера и време сликања лесновског наоса*, Зограф 11, Београд 1980, 54-62; И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле у доба Неманића*, Београд 1994, 153-154; С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1998, 112-118; Б. Тодић, *Натпис уз Јована Оливера у наосу Леснова, Прилог хронологији лесновских фресака*, Зборник радова Византолошког института 38, Београд 199/2000, 379-381; Е. Dimitrova, *The Portal to Heaven, Reaching the Gates of Immortality*, Niš and Byzantium Symposium. Collection of scientific works V, Niš 2007, 373-374; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L' arte medievale dal IX al XV secolo*, Milano 2006, 195; Е. Димитрова, С. Коруновски, С. Грандаковска, *Средновековна Македонија. Култура и уметност*, in: П. Кузман, Е. Димитрова, Ј. Донев (Ed.), *Македонија, Милениумски културно-историски факти*, Скопје 2013, 1733-1735; Е. Dimitrova, *VI. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia, Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionerships (11th – 14th century)*, Folia Archaeologica Balcanica III, Skopje 2015, 615-617

⁷ Ђ. Мано-Зиси, *Св. Софија у Охриду*, Старица 6, Београд 1931, 136; Р. Љубинковић, М. Ђоровић-Љубинковић, *Средновековното сликарство во Охрид*, Зборник на трудови, Охрид 1961, 130-131; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Црква свете Софије у Охриду*, Београд 1963, 8-9; Ц. Грозданов, *Прилози познавању средновековне уметности Охрида*, Зборник за ликовне уметности 2, Нови Сад 1966, 212-213; Ц. Грозданов, *Прилози проучавању Св. Софије охридске у XIV веку*, Зборник за ликовне уметности 5, Нови Сад 1969, 49-53; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 68; Ц. Грозданов, *Охридското зидно сликарство од XIV век*, Охрид 1980, 15, 62-67; И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле у доба Неманића*, 124-125, 157-159; Е. Dimitrova, О. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewelry, Accessories*, Niš & Byzantium Symposium, *The Collection of scientific works XVI*, Niš 2018, 261.

⁸ В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 66; И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле доба Неманића*, С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, 167-171; Е. Dimitrova, *The Portal to Heaven, Reaching the Gates of Immortality*, 373-374; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L' arte medievale dal IX al XV secolo*, 196; Е. Димитрова, С. Коруновски, С. Грандаковска, *Средновековна Македонија. Култура и уметност*, 1739-1740; Е. Dimitrova, *VI. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia*,



Fig. 3 St. Archangel Michael, Lesnovo, Despotessa Ana Maria

Сл. 3 Св. Арханђео Михаило у Леснову, Деспотица Ана Марија

ter in Macedonian Middle Ages. Fair complexion, high forehead, elongated facial oval, almond shaped eyes, long lashes, trimmed eyebrows, higher cheek bones, strong jaw line, thin mustaches, neatly combed beard, ebony dark hair - shoulder length and styled in resplendent locks and, last but not least, slightly wrinkled forehead as a delicate suggestion of his age which should be approximately determined as him being in his late 30ties or less probably, in his mid-40ties⁹. The body looms large and highly athletic with muscular frame with waist to shoulder ratio of 1:2 and waist to chest ratio of 1: 1, 5.

Although Jovan Oliver's exact height can be easily determined with modern forensic methods used by reconstructive archaeology, it is quite obvious from his portraits, that it exceeds 6 feet by more than 2 or 3 inches. If one adds his elongated fingers, the graceful manners of manual motion and his dignified corporal stance to this description, one gets an elegant stature of a handsome individual as a physical presentation of a genuinely structured male confidence. His tailor made costume, lavishly decorated with fashionable details, yet precisely designed to reflect his extraordinary feudal rank, is a much more complicated story (Fig. 2)¹⁰.

Such a charismatic person, depicted with extraordinary courage and audacity in a khetorial scene in the Lesnovo naos designed completely out of the legitimate parameters of representation¹¹, with such a great looks, position, wealth and social respect, was blessed with a beautiful, stylishly dressed up and appropriately adorned spouse, as well. In that sense, the despotess Ana Maria in her portrait from the Lesnovo narthex¹² appears as a dream woman from the fantasy of a thousand and one men (Fig. 3). She actually responds to the *Golden ratio of beauty Phi*, founded upon the methods and standards that

Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionerships (11th – 14th century), 615-617; E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewelry, Accessories*, 261.

⁹ С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, 114.

¹⁰ E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewelry, Accessories*, 258-261. If

¹¹ E. Dimitrova, *The Portal to Heaven, Reaching the Gates of Immortality*, 373-374.

¹² В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властелеу доба Неманића*, С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново. Историја и сликарство*, S. Kogunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L' arte medievale dal IX al XV secolo* 196; E. Димитрова, С. Коруновски, С. Грандаковска, *Средновековна Македонија. Култура и уметност*, 1739-1740; E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewelry, Accessories*, 252, 254, 255, 261.

the Hellenic scholars applied while trying to define beauty with scientific formulas¹³. Hence, in regard to the facial features, the golden ratio is 1.6, which means a beautiful person's face is about 1 ½ times longer than it is wide. Next, if the measures from the forehead line to a spot between the eyes, from between the eyes to the bottom of the nose, and from the bottom of the nose to the bottom of the chin are equal, the person is considered extraordinary beautiful. Finally, the length of an ear should be equal to the length of the nose, and the width of an eye should be equal to the distance between the eyes. If one should apply all the mentioned criteria established by ancient scholars and profoundly researched by Dr. Kendra Schmidt¹⁴, Professor of biostatistics at the University of Nebraska, one will get the face of Jovan Oliver's wife, the beautiful and delicately charming Ana Maria. Tall and slender, elegant and graceful, she certainly does not fall behind her husband neither in regard to her glamorous outfit, nor her valuable accessories (**Fig. 4**)¹⁵.

But natural beauty, granted by God who sometimes dwells in the genes, also had its mechanisms of enchantment which sprout from the equilibrium between the actual features and actual fashion. These assets materialized in forms of jewelry or accessories had multiple purposes, the most visually striking of which was to beautify. However, for the "delicate eye" they also brought forth layers of hidden meanings and messages, thus signaling power and rank, advocating status and hierarchy and even protecting the carrier from the metaphysical powers for which secular stamina was not enough¹⁶.

The handsome Jovan Oliver, slender, elegant and iconographically eloquent on his khetorial representation in Lesnovo's naos, although genuinely fair in his physical appearance, also wears elements of costume and corporal styling, thus achieving an ultimate balance of beauty in his portrait depiction. A fine diadem embellished with pearls and precious stones placed in his black hair, sublimates his facial features in an unimposing, yet strongly denotative man-



Fig. 4 St. Archangel Michael, Lesnovo, Despotessa Ana Maria

Сл. 4 Св. Арханђео Михаило у Леснову, Деспотица Ана Марија

¹³ P. Hemenway, *Divine Proportion: Phi In Art, Nature, and Science*. New York 2005, 20–21.

¹⁴ K. Schmid, D. Marx, A. Samal, *Computation of a face attractiveness index based on neoclassical canons, symmetry and golden ratios*, *Pattern Recognition* 41/8, Amsterdam 2008, 2710-2717.

¹⁵ E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewelry, Accessories*, Ниш и Византија XVI, 249-262, 252, 254, 255, 261.

¹⁶ E. Maneva, *Ancient jewellery from Macedonia – Middle Ages*, Skopje, 2005, 5-7.

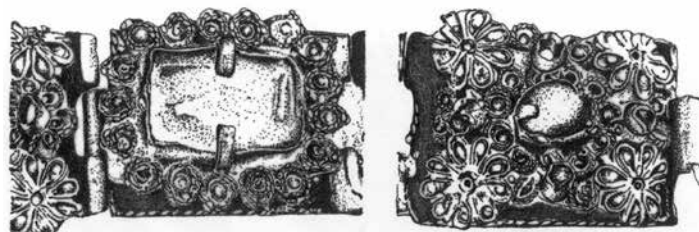


Fig. 5 Treasury from Markovi Kuli, Prilep, Landlord's wreath, 14th century (drawing according to E. Maneva)

Сл. 5 Ризница са Маркових Кула у Прилепу, Господарски венац, 14 век (цртеж према Е. Маневој)



Fig. 6 Island of Golem Grad in Prespa Lake, Resen, Buttons, 14th century, (Grave find), (photo by V. Kiprijanovski)

Сл. 6 Острво Голем Град на Преспии, Ресен, Дугмад из 14 века (гробни налаз) (фото В. Кипријановског)

ner, simultaneously being an element of protocolar iconography and of ambition¹⁷. An analogous diadem, made of separate rectangular plaques with luxurious coverage of precious stones has been unearthed at the site of Markovi Kuli, Prilep as part of a treasury (**Fig. 5**). We can suppose that Oliver's diadem was at least as precious as the mentioned example¹⁸. His lavish costume is covered with a decorative armour-like enfold of embroidery alternated with pearls, emphasizing the upper part of his slender physics¹⁹. Along the vertical axis of Oliver's upper shirt there are buttons (**Fig. 6**), the examples of which have been discovered on Medieval archeological sites, thus testifying of the artists' catchy eye when representing the historical figures in their eternal portraits. Regardless of the practical utilitarian ordinariness of these objects, believe it or not, during the middle ages, buttons were elements of prestige and rank²⁰. The wrists are accentuated with luxurious cuffs, stripe-like and probably with hinge, examples of which have been discovered as parts of

14th century treasuries in Macedonia (**Fig. 7**)²¹. The body of the bracelets is decorated with casting or engraving, while the outer sides of the luxurious pair are adorned with white pearls. His thin waist is underlined by a leather belt - *centura*, the end of which lays down his lower costume, thus being an element signaling power and wealth (**Fig. 8**)²². On the left side of the belt (from the spectators view) Jovan Oliver wears a handkerchief, again a small signal of his hierarchical status.

¹⁷ In this portrait Jovan Oliver is a *sebastocrator*, but his ambition is one of a despot.

¹⁸ E. Maneva, *Ancient jewellery from Macedonia – Middle ages*, Skopje, 2005, 22; E. Maneva, *Средновековен накит од Македонија*, Скопје, 1992, 36-38, 194 (58/53, Т. 31).

¹⁹ E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewellery, Accessoires*, Ниш и Византија XVI, 249-262, 259.

²⁰ E. Maneva, *Средновековен накит од Македонија*, Скопје, 1992, 35-36.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 70-71.

²² E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewellery, Accessoires*, Ниш и Византија XVI, 249-262, 258; E. Maneva, *Од средновековните појасни гарнитури до подоцнежните пафти*, Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет – Скопје, No. 65, 2012, 86-103, 86-88.

His consort, Ana Maria Liverina, is depicted in a highly associative imperial dress code. On her head lies a luxurious artistically elaborated opened crown decorated with precious stones and pearls, equal to those depicted on the khetorial representations of empresses of Byzantium and Byzantine influenced states. Her hair is covered by a scarf beneath the crown, while her elongated and elegant face is framed with luxurious radiant earrings, an accessory worn by the highest rank of aristocrat ladies²³. Although crowns are rare finds, the earrings on the other hand have been testified on several sites with examples analogous to Liverina's, belonging to the group *prependulia* (Fig. 9)²⁴. Her garment is tied just above her chest with a round broche, an *agraph*, embellished with pearls (Fig. 10)²⁵. Again, this small element of the costume signalizes her status, as well as the fashion trends of the time. Ana Maria Liverina is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful women of the time, judging by her khetorial portrait which depicts her equal in elegance and grace to the 14th century empresses.

The second runner up in our category of beautiful women depicted in Macedonian medieval fresco painting is the tall, firm and undeniably attractive Lady Vladislava, the wife of sebastocrator Vlatko from the monastery of Psača²⁶. Looking confident, yet caring; standing proud yet gentle; presented hefty yet elegant; depicted assertive yet frag-



Fig. 7 Markovi Kuli, Varoš – Prilep, Bracelets (part of a nobility hoard), 14th century (drawing according to E. Maneva)

Сл. 7 Маркове куле, Варош у Прилепу, Наруквице (део властеског депоа из 14 века) (цртеж према Е. Маневој)

²³ С. Габелић, *Манастир Лесново – Историја и сликарство*, Београд, 1998, 167; E. Maneva, *Ancient Jewelry from Macedonia – Middle Ages*, Skopje, 2005, 9.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 59-60; D. Mitrevski, *Skopje Fortress*, Skopje, 2015, 29..

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 29.

²⁶ V. P. Petković, *Portreti iz Psače*, Narodna starina 20, Zagreb 1929, 202-203; Okunev, N. *Les portraits des rois-donateurs dans la peinture religieuse serbe*, Byzantinoslavica 2, Prague 1930, 91-93; В. Петковић – П. Поповић, *Старо Нагоричино – Псача – Каленић*, Београд 1933, 52-54; С. Радојчић, *Портрети српских владара у средњем веку*, Скопље 1934, 60-61; idem, *Старо српско сликарство*, 151-152; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 75-76, 216-217; F. Kämpfer, *Die Stiftungskomposition der Nikolauskirche in Psača - Zeichentheoretische Beschreibung eines politischen Bildes*, Zeitschrift für Balkanologie X, 2, München 1974, 39-61; И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властелеу доба Неманића*, 172-175; Расолкоска-Николовска, З. *О историјским портретима у Псачи и времену њиховог настанка*, Зограф 24, Београд 1995; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L' arte medieval dal IX al XV secolo* 200-202; E. Димитрова, С. Коруновски, С. Грандаковска, *Средновековна Македонија. Култура и уметност*, 230-235.

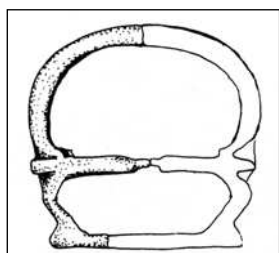


Fig. 8 Site of Markov Grad - Markova Kula, Prosek, Village of Korešica, Belt Buckle, 10-11 centuries

Сл. 8 Марков Град – Маркова Кула, Просек, село Корешница, Појасна копча (10-11 век)



Fig. 9 Gorno Orizari, Kočani, Earrings, Treasure from 14th century (photo by V. Kiprijanovski)

Сл. 9 Горно Оризари код Кочана, Наушнице из ризнице 14 века (фото В. Кипријановског)



Fig. 10 Site of St. Athanasius, Varoš, Prilep, Agraphs, 14th century (photo by V. Kiprijanovski)

Сл. 10 Св. Атанасије, Варош у Прилепу, Аграфе из 14 века (фото В. Кипријановског)

ile, Vladislava radiates with sophisticated charm and dignified corporal position as if her exquisite and highly refined ladyship should glow with delicate gender sensitivity and irresistible feminine vulnerability (Fig. 11). Her tailor made dress²⁷ reveals corporal structure which can certainly concur with the socially constructed and widely spread notion that physical attractiveness is one of woman's most important assets and something all ladies should strive to achieve and maintain. If one should perceive Vladislava's figure according to the definition that woman's body is a cumulative product of her skeletal structure and quantity of distribution of muscle and fat²⁸, one should be prepared to conclude that the wife of sebastocrator Vlatko has one of the most beautiful body shapes in medieval Macedonia, and that he was a very lucky man to have such a gorgeous spouse. Although she does not possess an hour glass figure, which, according to modern investigation, is a beauty gift given to only 8% of all women²⁹, she

²⁷ E. Dimitrova, O. Zorova, *Haute Couture of Macedonia Byzantina: Fashion, Jewelry, Accessories*, Niš & Byzantium Symposium, The Collection of scientific works XVI, Niš 2018, 254.

²⁸ C. Istook, K. Simmons, P. Devarajan, *Female Figure Identification Technique (FFIT) for Apparel*, International Foundation of Fashion Technology institutes, Raleigh 2014, 147-173.

²⁹ B. Pawlowski, M. Grabarczyk, *Center of Body Mass and the Evolution of Female Body Shape*, American Journal of Biology, 15/2, New York 2003, 144-150.



Fig. 11 St. Nicholas, Psača, Vladislava, wife of Sebastocrator Vlatko

Сл. 11 Св. Никола у Псачи, Владислава, супруга Севастократора Влатка



Fig. 12 St. Nicholas, Psača, Vladislava, wife of Sebastocrator Vlatko

Сл. 12 Св. Никола у Псачи, Владислава, супруга Севастократора Влатка

certainly has a slim physique belonging to the rectangular body shape, defined as that of a healthy and fit female. From an evolutionary perspective, which defines woman's beauty as a correlation between fertility and health, lady Vladislava seems to be an affirmative case of such a determination, being a mother of three (**Fig. 12**) and looking young and vigorous, with a moderate candidness as a psychological attitude and almost athletic fitness as her physical, or better to say aesthetical virtue.

Lady Vladislava wears a very sophisticated dress, supplemented by a set of jewelry pieces that express both the latest fashion trends and her individuality. Being a high rank lady of the 14th century, Vladislava is wearing an opened crown with a *fleur-de-lis* front, embellished with pearls and precious stones. From the peaks of the crown, along her black curly hair, down to her uncovered neck, spreads a veil, which being of a light color puts accent and radiance to her face. Her rather oval face is visually elongated with hanging earrings (**Fig. 13**) made of a central blue stone with hanging pearls, thus contributing to her gracefulness. On her wrists Vladislava wears massive stripe-like bracelets bordered with pearls (**Fig. 14**), while her waist is accentuated with a wide belt³⁰ elaborated with embroidery and framed with lines of pearls, which judging by the stylized intertwined motifs could be a kind of a prophylacse of her fertility³¹. An interesting element of her attire is the opened sleeve which hangs loosely

³⁰ For the types of belts used by the feudals see E. Манева, *Средновековен налит од Македонија*, Скопје, 1992, 29-30.

³¹ E. Манева, *Од средновековните појасни гарнитури до подоцнежните нафти*, Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет – Скопје, No. 65, 2012, 86-103, 86.



Fig. 13 Constantinople, Hanging Earrings, 6th – 8th centuries, Byzantine, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Сл. 13 Константинопољ, Наушнице, 6-8 век, византијске, Метрополитен Музеј у Њу Јорку



Fig. 14 Necropolis Krstevi, village of Korešnica, Demir Kapija, Bracelet, 10th – 11th centuries (photo by V. Kiprijanovski)

Сл. 14 Некропола Крстеви код села Корешнице, Демир Капија, Наруквица, 10-11 век (фото В. Кипријановског)

behind her right arm (from the spectator's standpoint), undoubtedly a "designer's" statement of the contemporary *haute couture*. At an overall, regardless of whether Vladislava's portrait was more or less close to her actual appearance, one could certainly conclude that the artist(s) paid attention to details of the costume which emphasized the natural beauty and transferred these into the eternal portraits of the khetors, thus creating unique standards of aesthetic. We can undoubtedly say that lady Vladislava's khetorial portrait is one of the most individualized artistic expressions of the time, both from the as-

pect of her natural beauty, as well as from her fashion preferences which tactfully reveal western tastes.

If one talks about beauty and analyses the attractiveness in men as a physical quality of their visual appearance, one should not forget the most celebrated of all Macedonian medieval characters – a brave, yet tragic individual who has fought the last battle of life on the threshold of the forthcoming historically turbulent and not so glamorous Ottoman period – the legendary King Marko. Unlike his portrait enclosed in the khetorial arrangement within the illustration of the Heavenly court in the interior of the church dedicated to Saint Demetrius in Sušica³², completely devastated and deprived of visual exposition, his other two representations, one of which is depicted sideways of the entrance to the temple of Saint Archangel Michael in Prilep³³ and the other

³² Л. Мирковић, Ж. Татић, *Марков манастир*, Нови Сад 1925, 31-76; С. Радојчић, *Портрети српских владара у средњем веку*, 62; Idem, *Старо српско сликарство*, 153-160; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Три догађаја у српској држави XIV века и њихов одјек у сликарству*, Зборник за ликовне уметности 4, Нови Сад 1968, 87-97; Н. Ношпал-Никуљска, *За ктиторската композиција и натписот во Марковиот манастир – село Сушица, Скопско*, Гласник на Институтот за национална историја XV, Скопје 1971, 225-235; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Марков манастир - Охрид*, Зборник за ликовне уметности 8, Нови Сад 1972, 131-160; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 81; Ѓ. Здравев, *Облеките на кралот Волкашин и на кралот Марко на фрескоживописот од XIV век*, Кралот Марко во историјата и во традицијата, Прилеп 1997, 327-328; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L' arte medievale dal IX al XV secolo* 201-206; E. Dimitrova, *The Portal to Heaven, Reaching the Gates of Immortality*, 378-379; Eadem, *V.I. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia, Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionerships (11th – 14th century)*, 607; М. Томић Ђурић, *Фреске Марковог манастира*, Београд 2019, 387-390.

³³ С. Радојчић, *Портрети српских владара у средњем веку*, 60-64; P. Miljković-



Fig. 15 St. Archangel Michael, Prilep,
King Marko

Сл. 15 Св. Арханђео Михаило у
Прилепу, Краљ Марко



Fig. 16 St. Archangel Michael, Prilep, King
Marko

Сл. 16 Св. Арханђео Михаило у Прилепу,
Краљ Марко

pictured on the southern façade of Marko's monastery³⁴ reveal an interesting

Репек, *Contribution aux recherches sur l'évolution de la peinture en Macédoine au XIIIe siècle, L'art byzantin du XIIIe siècle*, Beograd 1967, 191-192; Idem, *Живописот и прилепските зографи*, Прилеп и прилепско низ историјата, Прилеп 1971, 101; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 80; R. Hamann-Mac Lean, *Grundlegung zu einer Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien*, Gießen, 1976, 283-285; Ѓ. Здравев, *Облеките на кралот Волкашин и на кралот Марко на фрескоживописот од XIV век*, 322—323; З. Расолкоска-Николовска, *Ктиторскиот портрет во ѕидното сликарство во Македонија*, in: *Средновековната уметност во Македонија* (Д. Николовски, ed.), Скопје, 2004, 297-298; S. Kogunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L' arte medieval dal IX al XV secolo*, 144-146.

³⁴ К. Балабанов, *Новооткривени портрети краља Марка и краља Вукашина у Марковом манастиру*, Зограф 1, Београд 1966, 28-29; Idem, *Новооткриени портрети на кралот Марко и кралот Волкашин во Марковиот манастир*, Културно наследство III, Скопје 1967, 47-65; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 80; Z. Gavrilović, *The Portrait of King Marko at Markov Manastir (1376-1381)*, *Byzantinische Forschungen* XVI, Amsterdam 1991, 415-428; Ц. Грозданов, *Маричката битка, вазалитетот на Крал Марко (Марко Крале) и живописот на Марковиот манастир*, Семинар за македонски јазик, литература и култура (Охрид 1991), Скопје 1992, 120; И. М. Ѓорђевић, *Представа краља Марка на јужној фасади цркве Светог Димитрија у Марковом манастиру*, Кралот Марко во историјата и во традицијата, Прилеп 1997, 299-307; З. Расолкоска-Николовска, *Ктиторскиот портрет во ѕидното сликарство*



Fig. 17 St. Demetrius, Sušica, King Marko

Сл. 17 Св. Димитрија у Сушици, Краљ Марко



Fig. 18 St. Demetrius, Sušica, King Marko

Сл. 18 Св. Димитрија у Сушици, Краљ Марко

perspective in what might have been an image of a highly desirable, irresistibly appealing and unconditionally handsome man in medieval Macedonia. Namely, his portraits, both in Prilep and Sušica, emanate a visual construct of a large, well physically built, strong and dignified male character with facial features which come in line with a dark,

sharp and expressive physiognomy (**Fig. 15**).

Although the verses of epic poetry and the narratives of folk literature describe King Marko as a man with a terrifying appearance saying that his moustache was the size of a six month old lamb and his sword weighed nearly 100 kilos, while his hand grip was strong enough to squeeze drops of water from a piece of dry wood³⁵, the medieval portraits of King Marko do not look like they

во Македонија, 297-298, 297-298; I. Sinkevic, *Representing without icon, presence and image of king Marko in the church of St. Demetrios near Susica*, Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Volume III, Abstracts of Communications, London 2006, 317-318; E. Dimitrova, *The Portal to Heaven, Reaching the Gates of Immortality*, 379; Eadem, *VI. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia, Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionerships (11th – 14th century)*, 607-609.

³⁵ К. Пенушлиски, *Марко Крале јунак над јунаци*, in: *Јунак над јунаци*, Скопје 1967, 81.

are displaying a formidable hero, rather a noble individual with a dignified stance, elegant posture and imposingly regal character. In that regard, in the picture preserved on the façade of Saint Archangel Michael in Prilep (**Fig. 16**), Marko's elegance is emphasized by his clear white outfit - a lavishly decorated snowy sakkos which covers his tall and slender figure, stressing at the same time the magnitude of Marko's corporal masculinity. No exaggerations of his carnal features, nor of his brutal manliness can be found in this representation produced in the aftermath of the Maritsa battle³⁶; however, his rigorous facial expression captured by the strongly arched eyebrows, firmly closed lips and the stern gaze of his deep, dark and anxiously staring eyes, screams with a bitter energy of frozen dynamics, boiling with restlessness and ready to burst into ravaging flames.

In his other portrait, depicted on the south façade of Marko's monastery (**Fig. 17**), the King has a different facial expression, a different type of crown and outfit³⁷, and definitely a different attitude, most probably generated in the specific political circumstances of the historic momentum around 1390³⁸. As we have pointed out in one of our previous Niš and Byzantium presentations, the extraordinarily designed image of King Marko on the façade of his endowment in Sušica was painted as a visually structured metaphor of his royal legitimacy after the death of his political rivals in the battle of Kosovo Polje³⁹. In that regard, he is holding a replica of the horn with the ointment of which Old Testament Kings were anointed by their coronation⁴⁰. This certainly makes King Marko's portrait in Sušica much more ceremonial than the one in Prilep since the dark purple robe, which says *I am no longer in mourning for my dead father*, altogether with the massive horn full of ritual ointment, are the main contributors to Marko's solemnly royal ap-



Fig. 19 Cathedral of Palermo in Italy, Crown of Constance of Aragon, (attribution José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro)

Сл. 19 Катедрала у Палерму, Италија, Круна Констанце Арагонске, (приписује се Хозеу Луису Бернардезу Рибейри)

³⁶ С. Радојчић, Портрети српских владара у средњем веку, 62-64; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 80

³⁷ Ѓ. Здравев, *Облеките на кралот Волкашин и на кралот Марко на фрескоживописот од XIV век*, 325—327.

³⁸ Е. Dimitrova, *The Portal to Heaven, Reaching the Gates of Immortality* Niš & Byzantium Symposium, The Collection of scientific works V, Niš 2007, 379.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 379.

⁴⁰ В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 80



Fig. 20 Treasury of Markovi Kuli, Varoš, Prilep, Lord's wreath from the 14th century (drawing according to E. Maneva)

Сл. 20 Ризница са Маркових кула у Варошу, Прилеп, Господарски венац из 14 века (цртеж према Е. Маневој)

pearance. In comparison to the lavishly adorned portrayal spectacle of Marko in Prilep, depicted with glamorous crown and pearly prependicularia, his visual aspect in Sušica looks much more austere and unpretentious, yet, more realistic and lifelike for the ruler who was much more a defender and a safe keeper than a true king and a glamorous monarch (**Fig. 18**). Charismatic and appealing, bold, fearless and masculine, King Marko has earned his place among the handsome males of the medieval era on the account of his manly outlook, as well as his mythologized bravery and historic virility.

The Sušica portrait of King Marko depicts him in a simple variant of the *loros* costume and a *kamelaukion* crown. The *loros* costume possesses symbolism of its own, emanating the social, aesthetic and religious rhetoric of King Marko's figure to the "world" and propagating the "divine" dimension of his rule⁴¹. The *kamelaukion* crown supplements his "God given" power and demonstrates his "identity" in the turbulent times prior to the fall of the Empire and the Byzantine *oikumene*⁴². Since the archaeological strata are deprived of such finds and there are but a few preserved examples (e.g. the empress Byzantine corona – *kamelaukion* of Constance of Aragon [1179-1222] in the Treasury of the Palermo Cathedral), (**Fig. 19**), one could solemnly meditate on the visual and symbolical meaning of the items incorporating both imperial ambition and legitimacy. The khetorial portrait in Sušica is strikingly simple, one might even say *laconic* and unequivocal in the message it carries, and King Marko is depicted with each of the imperial regalia suitable for an emperor, underlined by the ancient symbol of power – the horn, *cornucopia*, a requisite of the ancient and Biblical chosen ones.

King Marko's costume in Prilep on the other hand is quite intriguing and ambivalent, being a combo of the *white sakkos* dress and the *diadem* or crossed

⁴¹ In the Byzantine protocol, the *loros* costume had a strictly defined role and momentum. Thus, it was worn only on special occasions, the prime being the coronation. However, it became an archetype that visualized the emperor on the official media e.g. coinage, khetorial compositions, illuminations. О. Зорова, „Телото“ и „костимот“ во византиската империјална идеологија – општествени, естетски и магиски аспекти, Традиционална естетска култура, тело и одевање, Ниш, 2009, 95 – 111; Ж. Дагрон, Цар и првосвештеник – Студија о византиском „цезаропанизму“, Београд, СЛЮ, 2001, 255; К. Христовска, Претставата за византискиот император и иконографијата на парите на Мануел I Комнен (1143 – 1180), Прилози, XXXII 1-2, Скопје, 2001, 115-135, 120.

⁴² E. Diitrova, *Personalities in Medieval Macedonia – Five Paradigms of Supree Commissionership (11th – 14th centuries)*, Folia Archaeologica Balcanica, 2015, 602-621, 609.

loros costume. Thus his khetorial portrait emanates with a complex symbolical rhetoric, indicating both *regalia* and *angelization* which perfectly matches the historical momentum of his father's death and his ambition⁴³. Another unusual, yet provocative element of his attire in Prilep is the crown, a lavish example decorated with pearls and precious stones, strikingly resembling the form of a *corona muralis*, thus turning the representation of King Marko into a protector and embodied fortune of the state and the citizens! On this occasion we will simply point to the military symbolism of this element of beautification, without going into political and geo-strategic analyses of the historical momentum. One can say that King Marko's portrait in Prilep is a catalogue example of the riches discovered in the treasury at a nearby site of Markovi Kuli, Prilep (**Fig. 20**), where his 'capital' was set, thus testifying to the equivalence of the historical portraits as a media and the archaeological artifacts as autopsy finds of the time.

The complexity of the khetorial portraits is an endless inspiration for research. The name *-beauty* is but one dimension of these extraordinary depictions which dare both time and terrestriality. The refinement of the personal features signaling character and temper, the minutious representations of the elements of rank and power, as well as the symbolical investment in these "not so ordinary" objects of jewelry, all speak in benefit to the meaning of beauty as a synonym of goodness, sophistication, stamina and even legitimacy. Thus, the khetorial portraits become more than a visual echo defying ephemerality. They become statements of personality, identity, ambition and fears, which bring forth another layer in the complexity of this media, but... these psychological traits of the *imago historica* of Macedonia Byzantina will be an inspiration for a research to follow.

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IMAGO HISTORICA: ТВОЈЕ ИМЕ ЈЕ ЛЕПОТА - ЖЕНСКА И МУШКА

Полазећи од идеје Кахлила Гибрана да је лепота *вечност која саму себе види у огледалу* указујући, притом, на њен визуелни потенцијал, изабрали смо неколико представа историјских портрета у средњовековном сликарству сачуваном на територији данашње Републике Македоније да би илустрирали песникову идеју одређеним фреско примерима. У том контексту, анализирали смо физички изглед приказаних особа оба пола – лик и фигуру, као и социјални карактер њиховог изгледа у начину на који су представљени њихови костими, круне и слична обележја, накит и остале аксесорије. Притом, принцип селекције историјских личности подразумевао је савремене истраживачке био-социолошке методе у одређивању пропорционалности лица и телесне анатомије, као и типолошке карактеристике аристократских украса главе, тела и костима. Као резултат примене археолошких и биостатистичких приступа, констатовале смо да су на врху лествице која одређује визуелну естетику историјских

⁴³ For the crossed loros and its protocolar use see H. Maguire, *Image and imagination in Byzantine art /The Heavenly Court*, Variorum collected studies, Great Britain, 2007, 247 – 258, 255.

портрета две аристократкиње из највиших кругова властеле XIV столећа, један племић изузетног друштвеног значаја и краљ са “проблематичном“ титулом (можда!), али са огромним историјским заслугама, бар што се тиче данашњег македонског подручја. То су: деспотица Ана Марија, супруга деспота Јована Оливера из припрате Лесновског манастира, севастократорица Владислава, супруга севастократора Влатка из Псаче, моћни Јован Оливер приказан са севастократорском титулом у наосу Леснова и краљ (краљевић?) Марко са јужне фасаде Марковог манастира и са довратника цркве Светог Арганђела Михаила у Прилепу. Нежна и отмена Ана Марија Ливерина, судећи према њеном портрету из Леснова - једна од најлепших жена тог времена, приказана са елеганцијом и грациозношћу једнаким оновременим царицама, њен презгодни супруг, представљен у костиму који зрачи протоколарном ауром гламурозног моћника, поносно наметљива севастократорица Владислава у костиму који је истовремено израз високе моде и њене особне атлетске индивидуалности и краљ Марко у чијим представама костими и круне говоре гео-политичким језиком историјске стварности, заузеле су највиша места у избору репрезентативних портрета средњевековне ктиторске иконографије. Деликатни лик изузетно отмене Ане Марије, помодна фигура стамене Владиславе, раскош Оливерове телесне анатомије и њеног спољашњег манифеста у облику гламурозне одоре, као и Марков променљиви укус за протоколарни *haute couture* у потрази за изгубљеним легитимитетом, нису једини представници категорије привлачник мушкараца и жена македонског средњевековља. Ипак, привлачношћу и шармом, помодношћу и луксузношћу, они стоје изнад свих осталих савременика у оптички узбудљивој галерији историјских портрета XIV века.