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The Most Precious Thread in Byzantium and Medieval Serbia

The Protevangelium of James is the principal source for the iconography of the Annunciation¹. We read that Patriarch Zacharias, or Ruvim², found several virgins who were descended from the house of King David to make a veil for the temple. Needing one more, he sent for Mary, despite her being married. He allocated the materials needed: gold thread, *amiantos*, *byssus*, *siricos*, *hyacinthine*, crimson and true purple³. By Providence the Virgin was given the true purple and the crimson skein. She then went to the well to fetch water. There she heard the first Annunciation from the invisible Gabriel. Later, the Virgin was spinning the yarn from the basket on the spindle when the angel appeared. After the Annunciation she gave her true purple and crimson thread to Zacharias. The veil of the temple was made from the product of the virgins. When Christ gave up his spirit, the veil was rent in two⁴. Thus the thread and the veil were the perfect symbols of the Incarnation.

In Early Christian art the Annunciation is presented in accordance with the Gospel of Saint Luke⁵. From the fifth century on the pattern follows the apocryphal Gospel of Saint James. The Virgin is shown spinning, her action sometimes brought to a halt by the messenger of God. Throughout the centuries the Virgin is shown standing, holding a spindle and the yarn in her left hand. In the middle of the eleventh century innovations appear in the iconography. Details such as a throne, the well, the garden, servants (or other virgins), and different gestures and attire of Mary and Gabriel make important differences. Sometimes attention is given to the surprise of the Virgin⁶ and the significance of the event⁷. In this case the spindle and the yarn do not appear. The homilies of James Kokkinobaphos were illustrated in the beginning of the 12th century. In addi-

¹ C. TISCHENDORF, *Evangelia apocrypha adhibitis plurimis codicibus graecis et latinis maximam partem nunc primus consultis atque ineditorum copia insignibus*. Lipsiae 1853, 1–49; E. DE STRYKER, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques (Subsidia hagiographica 33)*. Bruxelles 1961, 46–109; S. NOVAKOVIĆ, *Apokrifno protojevanđelje Jakovljevo. Starine Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti 10* (1878) 61–71.

² In the early accounts the high priest is Ruvim, cf. C. TISCHENDORF, *Evangelia apocrypha*, 1–4. In later textual tradition and in fresco painting he is named as Zacharias, cf. J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, I. Bruxelles 1964, 65 (= LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*).

³ C. TISCHENDORF, *Evangelia apocrypha*, 21. In this work we used the following dictionaries: C. DU FRESNE DU CANGE, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae & Infimae Graecitatis*, I–IV. Lugduni 1688 (= DU CANGE, *Glossarium Graecitatis*); IDEM, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae & Infimae Latinitatis*. Turnisii 1762 (= DU CANGE *Glossarium Latinitatis*); E. A. SOPHOCLES, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*. From B. C. 146 to A. D. 1100, I–II. Cambridge, MA 1887 (reprint New York s. a.) (= SOPHOCLES, *Greek Lexicon*); N. TOMASEO – B. BELLINI, *Dizionario della lingua italiana*. Torino 1865 (= TOMASEO – BELLINI, *Dizionario della lingua italiana*); F. MIKLOSICH, *Lexicon palaeoslovenico-graeco-latinum emendatum auctum*. Vindobonae 1862–1865 (= MIKLOSICH, *Lexicon*); I. BLAGOVA – P. M. CEJTLIN – S. GERODES *et alii*, *Staroslavjanskij slovar' (po rukopisjam X–XI–XII vekov)*. Moscow 1999 (= BLAGOVA–CEJTLIN–GERODES, *Staroslavjanskij slovar'*). The most obscure term is *amiantos* meaning, probably, pure, cf. DU CANGE, *Glossarium Latinitatis*, *sub voce* – *amiantos*. For the rest, cf. *infra*.

⁴ Commonplace in all synoptical Gospels.

⁵ The first known example is represented on the sarcophagi in Syracuse, cf. G. BABIĆ, *Les fresques de Sušica en Macédoine et l'iconographie originale de leurs images de la vie de la Vierge. Cahiers Archéologiques 12* (1962) 303–39. Among the vast literature about the Annunciation we shall quote those concerning our topic: G. MILLET, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile aux XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècle d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont Athos*. Paris 1916, 67–92 (= MILLET, *Recherches*), G. BABIĆ, *L'iconographie constantinopolitaine de l'Acathiste de la Vierge à Cozia (Valachie)*. *ZRVI 14–15* (1973) 173–89 (= BABIĆ, *L'iconographie constantinopolitaine*); LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*; EADEM, *Iconography of the Cycle of the Infancy of the Virgin*, in: *The Kariye Djami, IV. Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and its Intellectual Background*. Princeton 1975; EADEM, *L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne Akathiste et sa relation avec les mosaïques de l'enfance de la Kariye Djami. Byz 54* (1984) 648–702 (= LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne*).

⁶ G. BABIĆ, *Kraljeva crkva u Studenici*. Beograd 1987, 135–8. The author quotes examples.

⁷ As is the case in Dečani, cf. M. MARKOVIĆ, *Ciklus velikih praznika*, in: *Zidno slikarstvo manastira Dečana: grada i studije*. Beograd 1995, 108. The author believes that the iconography is made in accordance with the Gospel of St. Luke.

tion to eight Annunciation scenes the distribution of the skein was represented⁸. The Akathistos of the Virgin was first painted as a cycle in the church of the Virgin in Elason⁹. The Annunciation is presented in the first three scenes, the fourth is the Conception. The Virgin sometimes holds a spindle and a yarn in the Conception scene. In some monuments a large screen is held by the servants. The screen also appears in the presentations of the Entrance of the Virgin into the Temple¹⁰. In Proclus' homily of 430 the Mother of God is likened to a workshop housing a loom on which the flesh of God is woven¹¹. A great number of hymn texts have the Annunciation as their subject. The materialisation of Christ's body has been seen in the spinning of the purple yarn and the weaving of the temple veil:

Πορφύρα ἐξ ἥς σὰρξ συνεξυφάνθη τοῦ θεανθρώπου Λόγου
Purple, you have woven godly-human Logos from your body
 Πορφυρίς ἡ τὸ ἔβριον βάψασα τῆς ἀπορρήτου τοῦ Λόγου σαρκώσεως¹²
The purple woollen dress, unspoken Logos incarnate
*Carskuju bagrenicu ot krvej ti čistih / ti istkala jesi carevi silam, Vladičice*¹³.
From your own blood the purple robe / you have woven for the Emperor of powers, Despoina.

True purple (πορφυροῦν) and crimson colours entered Byzantine civilization via the Roman legacy and Oriental influence¹⁴. Nevertheless, the strong impact of the canonical and non-canonical texts should not be ignored. Court attire is described in two main sources¹⁵. Throughout the Byzantine millennium the emperor appeared in purple, gold and rarely in white. Only the emperor was entirely clad in purple. Seldom did anyone else wear purple or gold and, when they did, only in details. The white of the Roman draped costume disappeared in the course of the centuries¹⁶. The number of pigments available for painting being limited, it

⁸ H. OMONT, *Miniatures des Homélie sur la Vierge du moine Jacques. Ms. gr. 1208 de Paris. Paris 1927*; cf. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne*, 627, n. 88.

⁹ The church was erected from 1295 till 1304. The frescoes date from the beginning or the middle of the 14th century, cf. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne*, 653, n. 17.

¹⁰ LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, *L'illustration*, 676–7; The first example of the screen projected behind the Virgin appears in Hilandar, cf. G. BABIĆ, *Bogorodičin akatist*, in: *Zidno slikarstvo manastira Dečana: grada i studije. Beograd 1995*, 149–58. The screen concealed the presence of Christ.

¹¹ A. CAMERON, *The Early Cult of the Virgin. In: Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Athens 2000*, 10.

¹² S. EUSTRATIADIS, *Ἡ Θεοτόκος ἐν τῇ ὕμνογραφίᾳ. Paris – Chennevière sur Marne 1930, sub voce – πορφύρα*. See also H. FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum ecclesiae Graecae (StT 213)*. Vatican 1962, III 347 *sub voce – πορφύρα*.

¹³ In modern Serbian language: *Carsku bagrenicu od krvi ti čiste / ti istkala jesi caru sila, Vladičice, ...*; Jefrem in the canon written for Despot Stefan Lazarević, cf. *Srbljak, II. Beograd 1970*, 288–9 and Đ. TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Beleške o delima u Srbljaku*, in: *O Srbljaku, Studije. Beograd 1970*, 313–5.

Mary is painted above the entrance of the Church of Theotokos Hodegetria in the Patriarchate of Peć. On her breast is an item from which Christ is emerging. The explanation given from the hymnography is of Mary as a purple shell giving birth to the pearl, Christ, cf. M. TATIĆ-ĐURIĆ, *Bogorodica u delu Danila II*, in: *Arhiepiskop Danilo II i njegovo doba. Beograd 1991*, 406–8.

¹⁴ See the following entries in *ODB 1–3*: A. CUTLER, *Color*, 482–3; L. BOURAS, *Porphry, 1701*; M. McCORMICK, A. KAZHDAN, A. CUTLER, *Purple, 1759–60*; also cf. *La porpora. Realtà e immaginario di un colore simbolico*, in: *Atti del Convegno di Studio. Venezia, 24 e 25 ottobre 1996*, ed. O. LONGO. Venice 1998. Unfortunately, the material from this conference was unavailable to us, as was the work of A. MUTHESIUS, *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200*. Vienna 1997.

¹⁵ Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, *Le Livre des Cérémonies, I–II*. Ed. A. VOGT. Paris 1935–1940 (=De Cer. I, II); J. VERPEAUX, *Pseudo-Kodinos. Traité des Offices. Introduction, Texte et Traduction*. Paris 1966 (= VERPEAUX, *Traité*).

¹⁶ White was worn in honour of Easter as a colour of mourning. In the weeks before, during and after Easter, as well as during the celebration of the Annunciation, everyone wore the white *chlamida* – cf. De Cer. I, 7, 12, 17–9, 49, 59, 64, 107, 151; De Cer. II, 14–5, 45, 47–8, 60. The emperor is in purple, frequently named *oxys*, and in gold. He wears white during Easter, cf. A. CUTLER, *Purple, I. c.* Courtiers in the late Byzantine period rarely wore white. The costume of the late period is studied in: E. PILTZ, *Le costume officiel des dignitaires byzantins à l'époque Paléologue*. Uppsala 1994. The *despot* wore *oxys* or red, the *sebastocrator* blue and red, the *caesar* blue and red, the *mezas domestikos* red, the *panhypersebastos* yellow and the *mezas logothetes* green. Courtiers of a lower rank are dressed in red, apricot, white, yellow, *oxysleukos* (violet-white) and again red, cf. VERPEAUX, *Traité*, 141–66, especially 144, n. 1. During the mourning the emperor wears the white attire, *ibid.*, XI, 284–5. The hierarchy of colours was one of the subjects in the study about the title of Jovan Oliver, ktetor of Lesnovo, cf. S. GABELIĆ, *Novi podatak o sevastokratorskoj tituli Jovana Olivera i vreme slikanja lesnovskog naosa. Zograf 11 (1980) 54–62*.

is difficult to judge the colour really used in textiles¹⁷. *Oxys*¹⁸ obviously has a special meaning and was worn on special occasions. *Alethinios*¹⁹ should be a colour made with a purple dye. Purple²⁰ from Tyre and Sidon, the cradle of the dye, was reserved for courtiers. *Kokkinos*²¹ was an equivalent for crimson, until it replaced the old term *erithra*. *Byssus*²² was linen or sea-silk. Blue and deep blue were often presented on the imperial wardrobe of the angels alternating with purple. *Persikos*, indicating indigo, was a little-used term²³. The colour purple was symbolic. It is possible that it covered a range of colours from intense red, through violet to deep blue²⁴.

¹⁷ I. SPATHARAKIS, *The portrait in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts*. Leiden 1976; Spatharakis describes the colours and gives the terms for the attire: Alexios I (1081–1118) Vat. gr. 666 – purple *chlamys*, Synodal 387 – lilac *chlamys*, ibd., 124–129; John II (1118–1143) Vat. urb. gr. 2 – purple *scaramangion*, ibd., 81; Manuel I (1143–1180) Vat. gr. 1176 – dark purple, Empress Maria red, ibd., 209; Andronikos II (1282–1328) Chrysobull for Janina – blue *sakkos*, Virgin is signed as *H ΠΟΡΦΥΡΙ* n. 7 – Chrysobull for Monemvasia the same, ibd., 184–185; Andronikos III (1328–1341) Cod. hist. 2 601, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart – *sakkos melas* (black robe) – Empress Anna, brownish purple, ibd., 237; John VI (1347–1354) Par. gr. 1242 – dark brown *sakkos*, ibd., 132; Manuel II (1391–1425) Par. Suppl. gr. 309 – dark purple as a later addition, ibd., 233 – Manuel II, Louvre, ms. Ivoires 100 – dark brown *sakkos*, Empress Helena red garment. We quote only the later examples. Cf. S. RADOJČIĆ, *Portreti srpskih vladara u srednjem veku*. Beograd 1996. Radojčić describes the colours worn by the Serbian kings and emperors. We quote only those examples where the dress is similar to that of the Byzantine emperors: Stefan Uroš I (1243–1276) purple, white (the mourning costume in the scene of the death of Anna Dandolo, the king's mother, in Sopoćani), ibd., 23–24; Stefan Dragutin (1276–1316) and Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) dark purple (in Arilje), ibd., 31; Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) purple (in the King's chapel in Studenica), ibd., 36; Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331–1355) light brown (*purpura ferruginei coloris*, in Karan), ibd., 50; Stefan Uroš IV Dušan purple, dark violet, crimson (in Dečani), ibd., 52–54; Stefan Uroš IV Dušan violet (in Lesnovo), ibd., 56; Stefan Uroš V (1255–1371) dark violet (in Psača), ibd., 61.

¹⁸ DU CANGE, *Glossarium Graecitatis*, *sub voce* ὀξύς – *violaceus*, violet; DU CANGE, *Glossarium Latinitatis*, *sub voce* – *oxyblatta*, *purpura intensioris & vividioris luminis*, ὀξυφοίνικον; MIKLOSICH, *Lexicon*, *sub voce* – *jedro*, ὀξύς; BLAGOVA–CEJTLIN–GERODES, *Staroslavjanskij slovarʒ*, *sub voce* – *jedro*, bistro, brzo, jivahno, ὀξύς; V. NUNN, *The Encheirion as Adjunct to the Icon in the Middle Byzantine Period*. *BMGs* 10 (1986) 76, n. 13–14 (for the examples where the term was used for a fine textile, not for a colour); J. EBERSOLT, *Les arts somptuaires de Byzance, étude sur l'art imperial de Constantinople*. Paris 1923, 21, n. 2–3. EBERSOLT discovers that *oxys* is intensive purple (*ton vif*). Helena, the wife of Stefan Uroš I (1243–1276), is depicted in the monasteries of Arilje (1296) and Gračanica (1324) as a widow. She is shown in monastic habit, having become a nun after her husband's death. The headgear is not typical for a nun, unless it denotes a *mega schema*. She is receiving the *analobos* from Christ (in Gračanica), the sign of the *mega schema*, cf. B. TODIĆ, *Gračanica*. Beograd 1988, 76, 130, 131, t. XXVII. She is wearing a high hat covered with dark blue/violet fabric. If the Byzantine empress is a widow, the appropriate dress for her son's coronation is the *mandyas oxys*, cf. VERPEAUX, *Traité*, 261, 359, n. 1. If the *mandyas oxys* was a specific symbol of the ruler's widow, then it appears to have been dark blue/violet in colour. Cf. G. MILLET, *La peinture du moyen âge en Yougoslavie (Serbie, Macédoine et Monténégro)* II. Paris 1957, 97, f. 4; B. TODIĆ, *op. cit.*, t. XXVII; Zadužbine Kosova. Ljubljana 1987, 176, f. 111. The same item may be recognised on the head of *vasilissa* Maria, the wife of the late despot Aldimir, in the monastery of Pološko (1343–1345). She is wearing a light violet hat with edges falling down the elbows. On her neck is a scarf (wimple) of the same material. Her dress is black. Cf. C. GROZDANOV – D. ČORNAKOV, *Istorijski portreti u Pološkom (II)*. *Zograf* 15 (1984) 85, 87, fig. 2; I. M. ĐORDEVIĆ, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele u doba Nemanjića*. Beograd 1994, 148, t. 12.

¹⁹ ἀληθινός DU CANGE, *Glossarium Graecitatis*, *sub voce* – *purpureus*; DU CANGE, *Glossarium Latinitatis*, *sub voce* – *purpureus*; SOPHOCLES, *Greek Lexicon*, *sub voce* – ἀληθινός, true purple, dyed with the genuine purple. The same term occurs for the skein of the Virgin, cf. *infra*.

²⁰ J. EBERSOLT, *Les arts* 21. The author states that *tyrea* was a red color, in contrast to hyacinthine, violet.

²¹ DU CANGE, *Glossarium Graecitatis*, *sub voce* – κοκκινάδιον, *minium*, *fucus rubeus*, *quo mulieres genas & labia inficiunt* (therefore lipstick); SOPHOCLES, *Greek Lexicon*, *sub voce* – κόκιννος, scarlet, red.

²² DU CANGE, *Glossarium Graecitatis*, *sub voce* – μπίζος *Fuscus*, ex Italico *biso*; MIKLOSICH, *Lexicon*, *sub voce* – *bisimū*; BLAGOVA – CEJTLIN – GERODES, *Staroslavjanskij slovarʒ*, *sub voce* – ousonč.

²³ J. EBERSOLT, *op. cit.*, 11.

²⁴ L. JAMES, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art*. Oxford 1996, 49–90, *et passim*. Some western terms for colours were used more to denote light and dark, brightness and shadow, cf. TOMASEO – BELLINI, *Dizionario della lingua italiana*, *sub voce* – *Morella* (*muel-la*) – *Paonazzo* – *ciel sereno*. The same term (*Morella*, *o ver pagonazza*) could include the spectrum of colour, including red, violet and blue, cf. C. CENNINI, *Il libro dell'arte*, in: *Stari slikarski priručnici*, ed. M. MEDIĆ. Beograd 1999, 338, 360–1.

The colour crimson was also known in the West as scarlet and vermilion²⁵. In the Treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos the emperor is described as wearing *granaza*²⁶. It is possible to justify this term using Italian *grana*, *granazolo*²⁷. There are other examples of Italian words in the work, *tabard* being among them²⁸.

Purple and crimson also contributed to the court atmosphere in Serbia. Scarlet appeared in the court of King Stefan the First-Crowned (1196–1228). At the end of the biography of his father, Stefan Nemanja – the monk Simeon, King Stefan writes about his meeting with King Andrew II of Hungary (1205–1235) and the gifts he received:

..., *i ođēnija prēmīnogaja, črīvlienice carīskyie i bagrēnice, jako i cvētove polīscii različnyi, ukrašenii bisery vīsi i kamyky, jakože cariemī podobaiet*²⁹.

..., *a vast quantity of clothing, imperial scarlet and purple*³⁰ *robes, like an assortment of flowers, decorated with pearl and precious stone, as befits an emperor.*

His son King Stefan Vladislav (1234–1243) received in a contract made with Dubrovnik in 1237:

... *i petī desetū lakīū skrīlata čistoga i črīlenoga* ...³¹.

... *fifty cubits of a flawless and red scarlet* ...

The Serbian archbishop Danilo II (1324–1337) describes the meeting of two queens, Simonis and Katelina, in Belgrade:

... *bisery že i kameni mnogocēnnyimi, črīvljeny carīskyje i bagrenice (ozaraachu se svētešte se) jako i polīscii cvēti mnogorazličnyimi dobrotami ispištreni.* ...³².

... *decorated with precious stones and pearls, the scarlet and purple robes were glitteringly illuminated like flowers beautified in various ways.* ...

Purple appeared as *oxys* on the epitaph of Maria Palaeologina, the wife of Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (1321–1331) and stepmother of Emperor Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331–1355). Carved at the beginning of the inscription on the gravestone are the words:

*Ōt c(a)rskyich jadri prozidoch / [i vī c(a)rskaja paky pri]idoch*³³.

From imperial oxys I came again into the empire.

²⁵ Scarlet – Persian *sakirlāt* – from the worm *coccidae*. In Sanskrit language *krmī*, therefore in English *crimson*, French *cramoisi*, German *karmin*, Arabian *al-qirmis*. *Grana* (grain) was a term for all durable colours and the process of dyeing, cf. A. C. WEIBEL, *The Two Thousand Years of Textiles. The Figured Textiles of Europe and the Near East*. New York 1952, 10; TOMASEO – BELLINI, *Dizionario della lingua italiana, sub voce – vermiculus: Vermiglio Baco rosso dell'India, che serve a tingere di scarlato e di rosso. Vermiglio* – latin *vermiculus. Rosso acceso – chermisi*.

²⁶ VERPEAUX, *Traité*, 219.

²⁷ TOMASEO – BELLINI, *Dizionario della lingua italiana, sub voce – Grana, Italis Bacca cuiusdam arboris similis hederæ, cuius ussus est ad tincturam eius panni, quem vocant scarlatum. Grana, Corpi d'insetti simili alle coccole dell'ellera, co quali si tingono panni in rosso e paonazzo, ed è preziosa tinta. Vernicula, purpurea, sanguinea*; B. CVETKOVIĆ, *Prilog proučavanju vizantijskog dvorskog kosmima, IPANATZA – ΑΠΑΤΖΑΣ. ZRVI 34 (1995) 143–56, 147, n. 24*. The author gives the example of a cloth named: “granazolo uno vermiglio de grana”.

²⁸ TOMASEO – BELLINI, *Dizionario della lingua italiana, sub voce – Tabarro* – s. m. *Quel manto che gli uomini comunemente portano sopra gli altri vestimenti, Mantelo*, cf. VERPEAUX, *Traité* 39, n. 3, 143, n. 4, 147–9, 153.

²⁹ N. RADOJČIĆ, *Pokloni ugarskoga kralja Andrije II Stefanu Prvovenčanome. Zbornik Matice Srpske za književnost i jezik 1 (1953, published 1954) 28*.

³⁰ BLAGOVA–CEJTLIN–GERODES, *Staroslavjanskij slovarʹ, sub voce – Bagiri*.

³¹ LJ. STOJANOVIĆ, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma. Knjiga I: Dubrovnik i susedi njegovi. Prvi deo (Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, Prvo odeljenje, Spomenici na srpskom jeziku, Knjiga XIX)*. Beograd/Sremski Karlovci 1929, 13.

³² *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih napisao arhiepiskop Danilo i drugi*, ed. Đ. DANIČIĆ. Zagreb 1866, 97.

³³ G. TOMOVIĆ, *Morfologija ćirilskih natpisa na Balkanu (Istorijski Institut, Posebna izdanja, Knj. 16, ed. D. MILIĆ)*. Beograd 1974, 64 (No. 45).

Despot Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427) erected a column on Kosovo Field in memory of his father, Lazar Hrebeljanović (1371–1389), who died there. An inscription was carved on the marble column. Part of the inscription describing the Serbian warriors preparing for battle reads:

*Muževi dobri, muževi hrabri, muževi uistini u reči i na delu, koji su kao zvezde svetle blistali, kao zemlja cvetičima preišarani, odeveni zlatom i kamenjem dragim ukrašeni. Veoma mnogo [bilo je] konja izabranih i sa zlatnim sedlima. Veoma divni i krasni jahači njihovi*³⁴.

Good men, brave men, men true in word and deed, glittering like bright stars, like the earth decorated with colourful flowers, clad in gold and adorned with precious stones. With many selected horses and with golden saddles. Their riders very fair and handsome.

From the will of Duke Stefan Vukčić Kosača (1432/35–1466) written in 1466:

*... k tomu šuba calina grimiza sa zlatomī, podstavljenā zibilini; ...*³⁵

... To add šuba [a garment] of red crimson with gold, linen with sable; ...

The aesthetics of appearance remained the same. Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) and Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) were dressed in robes decorated with precious stones and pearls. It was compared to a valley full of blossoms, like the Serbian rulers³⁶. We must add some observations, which are important to this topic. In Serbian medieval epics it is common to find references to miraculously made textiles:

*... Ona nosi od zlata košulju, / koja nije kroz prste predena, / ni u sitno brdo uvođena, / ni na razboj ona udarana, / no košulja na prste pletena, ...*³⁷.

... She wears a golden shirt / spun not through her fingers / nor beaten with her reed / nor warped upon the loom / but knitted with her fingers, ...

*... i evo ti sedam boščaluka, / nit' su tkani, niti su predeni, / ni u sitno brdo uvođeni, / već od čista zlata ...*³⁸.

[he is given seven veils] / neither woven nor spun / nor beaten with the reed / but made of solid gold ...

*... što od vode čoha crvenija, / a od sunca čoha rumenija, ...*³⁹

... cloth even more red after washing, / cloth even more red exposed to the sunlight, ...

It appears that the senior clergy took the right to wear purple. Although there was strong opposition, the desire prevailed. The patriarchs of Serbia were attired in the glory of purple, probably in imitation of their Byzantine colleagues⁴⁰. The symbolic meaning is drawn from the eschatological line of their forebearers.

³⁴ Đ. S. RADOJČIĆ, Književna stremljenja Despota Stefana Lazarevića, in: *Tvorci i dela stare srpske književnosti (Biblioteka studija, kritike i eseja 2*, ed. S. PEROVIĆ). Titograd 1963, 203.

³⁵ A. V. SOLOVJEV, *Odobrani spomenici srpskog prava (od XII do kraja XV veka)*. Beograd 1926, 221. This example is worth of the attention because it signifies the first appearance of the word *grimiz* (crimson) in the Serbian language. The old term for crimson remains in use for a red colour. The term scarlet is a synonym for the term crimson, which appeared earlier. Cf. S. RADOJČIĆ, *Crvac. Zograf 2* (1967) 30–1; D. DINIĆ-KNEŽEVIĆ, *Tkanine u privredi srednjevekovnog Dubrovnika (Posebna izdanja Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti 540)*. Beograd 1982, 129–39, cf. supra n. 28.

³⁶ J. EBERSOLT, *op. cit.* 86, n. 11; P. MAGDALINO, *The empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993, 13.

³⁷ V. STEFANOVIĆ KARADŽIĆ, *Srpske Narodne Pjesme. Knjiga druga u kojoj su pjesme junačke najstarije*. Beograd 1958, No. 88: *Ženidba Maksima Crnojevića*, 533–4, lines 786–90.

³⁸ V. STEFANOVIĆ KARADŽIĆ, *op. cit.* No. 65: *Marko Kraljević i Arapin*, 380, lines 155–8; also cf. page 388, lines 416–9.

³⁹ V. STEFANOVIĆ KARADŽIĆ, *op. cit.* No. 88: *Ženidba Maksima Crnojevića*, 519, lines 332–3.

⁴⁰ In the Patriarchate of Peć, in the Church of Saint Demetrios, on the southern wall of the western bay an archbishop is presented, possibly Ioannikios, who was probably patriarch in 1345–1346. He is dressed like a Byzantine patriarch. His *sakkos* is dark red or purple, covered with pearls forming a vine. The apostles are presented in the loops of the vine. His long *omophorion* is thrown over his left arm. In his hands he is holding a gospel. St. Sava is presented in the narthex, near the main entrance to the Church of the Holy Apostles, above the throne. He is dressed similarly to Ioannikios. In his right hand he holds a cross. Cryptograms are inscribed on the crosses of the *omophorion*. On his head is a *kalyptra*, surmounted with a cross of pearls, divided above into three half-medallions. The central one shows Christ. On the left and right are angels. Cf. V. J. ĐURIĆ, *Presto Svetoga Save, in: Spomenica u čast novoizabranih članova Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti (Posebna izdanja CDLII, knj. 55)*. Beograd 1972, 93–105; V. J. ĐURIĆ – S. ĆIRKOVIĆ – V. KORAĆ, *Pečka patrijaršija*. Beograd 1990, 204–5, 237–8, n. 35., figg. 130, 153–4. On the occasion of the coronation of John V Palaeologos, Patriarch John Kalekas entered the Hagia Sophia wearing an elaborate *kalyptra* deco-

Christ's blood was redemption for mankind. The purple of the patriarchs' *sakkos* probably symbolised both imperial Christmas and redemptive Easter. The red or purple was sometimes seen as the blood of the Saints⁴¹.

The first sign of God's incarnation was the red colour of a thread twisted and spun by his mother. Therefore, this item is one of the material things strongly connected with God's human nature and for this reason the iconography insisted on representing it. In the Byzantine topos the paramount items of the imperial costume are gold, precious stones and pearls connected with this same purple thread.

rated with the *Deesis*, as described by John Katakuzenos. Cf. C. WALTER, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*. London 1982, 29, n. 146. There is no mystery about the purple colour of the attire. Pseudo-Kodinos refers to the patriarchal robes as *porphyra*, John Katakuzenos as *sakkos*, cf. VERPEAUX, *Traité* 200–1, n. 4, *Commentaire*, 32. In the illustration of a council convened by John Katakuzenos, the four bishops flanking the emperor have the *omophoria* thrown over their left arms, cf. SPATHARAKIS, *op. cit.* 132. The headgear of the Serbian patriarch is reminiscent of the hats worn by senior officials of the Byzantine court, especially that of the *mezas domestikos*, cf. VERPEAUX, *Traité* 152. These hats can also be found in painting. In the twelfth oikos of the Akathistos cycle in Cozia and in the illustration of one of the seven Ecumenical Councils, the high officials are wearing hats adorned with medallions bearing the bust of the emperor. In addition there is a significant number of portraits of courtiers wearing similar hats, cf. BABIĆ, *L'iconographie constantinopolitaine 183–189*, f. 4–11. The name of this hat is probably *skaranikon*, although some authors are not certain whether the term refers to a garment or a hat, cf. A. P. SMIRNOV, *Qu'est-ce que le σκαράνικον?* *Byz* 1 (1924) 726; A. GRABAR, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*. Paris 1936, 22–3; St. C. CARATZAS, *Byzantinogermanica* (καράνοσ – σκαράνικον). *BZ* 47 (1954) 320–32; A. KAZHDAN, *Skaranikon*. *ODB* 1908–9.

⁴¹ Cf. P. BERNARDAKIS, *Les ornements liturgiques chez les Grecs*. *EO* 5 (1901–1902) 129–39. The author thinks that the three liturgical colours are: black for the liturgy of the presanctified, red for fasting and mourning and white for feasts. Demetrios Chomatenos, in an explanation written to Nicholas Kabasilas, states that the *sakkos* should not be purple because purple is the colour of mourning. It is to be worn exclusively for Easter, the Pentecost and Christmas, cf. DU CANGE, *Glossarium Graecitatis*, *sub voce* – FOLLIERI, *op. cit.*, *sub voce* πορφύραν – Cf. Đ. TRIFUNOVIĆ, *Azbučnik srpskih srednjovekovnih književnih pojmova*. Beograd ²1990, 210; I. ĐORDEVIĆ, *Sveti Hristofor u srpskom zidnom slikarstvu srednjeg veka*. *Zograf* 11 (1980), 66. The author quotes a part of the Life of St. Christophoros – *vī c(a)rskuju prēpr(u)du ōbagrennuju, ōt krīvīi tvoich m(u)č(e)niče. Krasno ōdējanī n(y)nja Chrištofori nepobēdime*. – and thinks that Saint Christophoros, who is presented in the monastery of Lesnovo, is clad in the purple *chlamida* in accordance with the text, the robe coloured with his blood.