



Holy Shepherds in Orthodox Art: An Unsuccessful Attempt to Create Patron Saints of Everyday Works

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Abstract: Herding was an important component of the medieval Mediterranean society's economy. Peasants involved in this activity needed celestial protectors, whose support could facilitate their life and daily duties. Among the crowd of martyrs, they found saints – such as Mamas, Tryphon, Blasios of Caesarea – who according to their *Lives* engaged in herding. From the mid-eleventh century one can observe the first attempts to create specific iconography of the group. Their ties with agriculture were underlined by the introduction of attributes such as a shepherd's crook and subsequently the animal (usually lamb, goat or an ox) depicted in the saint's hand. Images of this kind gained some popularity, especially in rural communities of the insular milieu. However, Holy Shepherds as a group never reached official ecclesiastical acceptance and in time faded as a distinct category. An exception was St. Mamas, whose images combining oriental (lion) and herding (lamb or goat) motifs remained popular, especially in Cyprus, where his sanctuary (Morphou) was also created. In turn in Russian folk tradition appeared beliefs that associated Sts Florus and Laurus (originally stonemasons) with horses. They found reflection in art in the form of the icons on which Archangel Michael gives the reins of stallions to the brothers as a sign of their supernatural power over these animals. This vernacular iconography was also rejected by the Church authorities and the Holy Synod of 1722 condemned such depictions as unorthodox.

Keywords: Holy Shepherds; herding; Byzantine art; Russian art; vernacular; St Mamas; St Tryphon

Herding was an important component of ancient farming and a popular occupation in the Eastern Mediterranean, as reflected in the story about shepherds who were the first to visit the newly born Child in Bethlehem (Lk 2:8-19). Naturally, those engaged in this essential activity sought special heavenly protectors, such as Pan in Greek mythology².

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² About ancient divine protectors of shepherds and their Christian counterparts, cf. J. Stroszeck, *Divine protection for shepherd and sheep: Apollon, Hermes, Pan and their Christian counterparts st Mamas, st Themistocles and st Modestos*, in: *Pecus: man and animal in antiquity: proceedings of the conference at the Swedish Institute in Rome, September 9-12, Rome 2004*, p. 231-235.

In Christianity, this function was assigned to holy shepherds, a group of saints formally belonging to the category of martyrs, though associated with herding cattle by their biographies. The fact that their cult emerged in and was disseminated from rural communities³, which did not create abundant literary evidence, causes some difficulties in research. Observations made on visual representations, especially from small village churches can provide additional evidence in this matter.

Generally, it is impossible to distinguish shepherds as a separate category of saints in Byzantine hagiography. It is nevertheless possible to find shepherds among martyrs, i.e. saints who, according to legends, were occupied in herding cattle (Sts Mamas, Tryphon, Blasios of Caesarea). This fact was initially not underlined, but the situation changed over time, with the need to provide divine protectors for this specific branch of husbandry, and even the saints originally not connected with herding according to their *Lives* (Sts Florus and Laurus) were perceived as patrons of shepherds and villagers who tended domesticated animals. This process can be dated between the 10th and 11th centuries, resembling – or rather becoming part of the process of the “professionalization” of Byzantine saints – also observed in the case of warrior saints.

The earliest traces of holy shepherds are found in the texts about saint Mamas, a Cappadocian martyr killed under Aurelian around 275 AD. The roots of the legend connecting him with an eremitic lifestyle among deer can be dated to the second half of the fourth century. While Basil of Caesarea, in his *Sermon XXIII* delivered on the martyr’s festival coinciding with the New Lord’s Day (the first Sunday after Easter), at his shrine in Caesarea c. 370, makes only vague and general remarks on herding (practised by poor and uneducated shepherds, thereby elevating the Christian virtue of *humilitas*) and uses the metaphor of sheep and wolves (John 10:11-12)⁴, Gregory of Naziansos, in the *Oration*

³ For a recent study on rural culture in Byzantium see S. Gerstel, *Rural lives and landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography*, Cambridge 2015, p. 44-69, 128-150, and especially p. 111-116, for Mamas’ protective function among rural societies involved in husbandry from Greek islands and Mani peninsula.

⁴ Basilus Magnus, *Homilia XXIII: In sanctum Mamantem martyrem* 3, PG, 31, 592D-593A (BHG 1020; CPG 2868): “So if one keeps the memory of the shepherd (ποιμένος), let him not admire wealth. For we have gathered to praise a man who was not rich; do not depart admiring the rich man, but poverty joined with piety. To be a shepherd (ποιμήν) is neither a great nor learned profession. In your anger, would you not tell the man that has annoyed you ‘Are you a shepherd?’ A shepherd possesses nothing but his daily food; he puts on a leathern pouch and carries a stick and the necessary provisions for the day, with no care for tomorrow [...]. Since we have kept the memory of the shepherd,

44 dedicated to the same feast, relates to more precise details⁵. The reference to milking a deer and nourishing the saint with this uncommonly obtained milk indicates that Gregory was already familiar with an early redaction of the *Passio*, the archetype of which was dated by Albrecht Berger to the period before the beginning of the fifth century⁶.

However, its text influenced artists relatively late. Apart from a single, disputable due to the lack of inscription, representation of Mamas milking a doe preserved in the form of a relief on dated to the 6th century basalt altar's base from the vicinity of Caesarea⁷, it was only in the 11th and 12th

do not disdain his title" (tr. E. Rizos). See A. Busine, *The Origins and Development of the Cults of Saint Gordius and Saint Mamas in Cappadocia*, in: *Early Christianity in Asia Minor and Cyprus. From the Margins to the Mainstream*, ed. S. Mitchell – P. Pilhofer, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 109, Leiden 2019, p. 109, 111-112, 114-116, expresses doubts concerning the historicity of St Mamas and points out the lack of details and conventional structure of Basil's *Homily*. In turn T. Pełech (*Kult św. Mamasa i jego transmisja (od późnego antyku do ok. XIV w.)*), "Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne" 21/3 (2020) p. 26) seems to overestimate significance of the *Sermon*.

⁵ Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio XLIV in novam Dominicam* 12, PG 36, 620-621 (BHG 1021; CPG 3010.44): "Mamas the illustrious, shepherd (ποιμήν) and martyr. Formerly he milked the deer, who pressed ahead of each other to nourish the holy man with unaccustomed milk; now he shepherds the people of our metropolitan city, renewing the spring today for the many thousands who press in on him from all around, ornamenting spring by the beauties of virtue, making it a time worthy of shepherds and victory orations", tr. B. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, London – New York 2006, p. 161. Cf. also E. Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas: A Cappadocian Saint in Ethiopian Tradition*, in: *Leimōn: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed J.O. Rosenqvist, *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia* 6, Uppsala 1996, p. 214.

⁶ A. Berger, *Die alten Viten des heiligen Mamas von Kaisareia. Mit einer Edition der Vita BHG 1019*, *AnBol* 120 (2002) p. 247-248. On the process of the development of the *Legend* and its enrichment with new details cf. A.D. Tsilipakou, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean. A Traveller and border-defender Saint. The Case of Naxos in the Cyclades*, in: *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean: Insular Responses to Regional Change*, ed. J. Crow – D. Hill, *Papers and Monographs from the Norwegian Institute at Athens* 7, Athens 2018, p. 300-301; Busine, *The Origins and Development*, p. 120-122; Pełech, *Kult św. Mamasa*, p. 22-25, 29-31 (author in detail enumerates differences between particular redactions); S. Efthymiadis, *Saint Mamas's martyrdom in the Life of Patriarch Tarasios (BHG 1698)*, "Deltion tēs Hristianikēs Arhaiologikēs Etaireias" 4/42 (2021) p. 59-61. A clear, brief survey of hagiographical texts including Latin and Oriental in chronological order is provided by B. Cignitti, *Mama (Mamante, Mammata)*, *BS VIII* 592-594.

⁷ The scene hitherto described as bucolic one was identified as belonging to Mamas narrative by F. Hild – M. Restle, *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos)*, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 2, Wien 1981, p. 263 and more deeply studied by V. Ruggieri, *An altar in the archaeological museum of Kayseri: St Mamas and*

centuries that the narrative subject of the saint with hind (cod. *Jerusalem Taphou* 14, fol. 27r, 11th c.; *Mosq. Hist. Mus.* 146, fol. 29r, 11th c.; *Vat. gr.* 1947, fol. 13r, 11th c.; *Sinaiticus gr.* 346, fol. 53r, 12th c.; *Sinaiticus gr.* 339, fol. 53r, 12th c.; *Par. gr.* 550, fol. 30r, 12th c.) and teaching wild animals (*Sinai. gr.* 346, fol. 27r, 11th c.; *Athos Vatopedi* 107, fol. 28r, 11th-12th c.; *Sinaiticus gr.* 346, fol. 42v, 12th c.; *Athos Dionysiou* 61, fol. 17r, 12th c.; *Cod. Pantaleimon* 6, fol. 38v, 12th c.; *Par. Coislin* 239, fol. 27v, 12th c.) disseminated, as they became part of the programme of illustrated liturgical codices containing Gregory's *Sermons*⁸. According to Galavaris, the presence of a soldier in the milking scenes from *Jerusalem* and *Vatican 1947* codices indicates that miniaturists were inspired not only by the text of the homily but also by another episode from the *Passio*, namely the astonished soldiers sent to the mountains by the governor of Caesarea, Alexander, to capture the young Christian⁹. The depictions of the saint teaching deer must have had the same sources. Nevertheless, Galavaris's suggestion that both subjects were derived from an extensive pictorial cycle of the saint's *Life* from *Synaxaria*¹⁰ has some weak points. Not a single cycle of this type from the 11th or 12th centuries has so far been found¹¹. Various codices also contain differently composed depictions including the same

the Prophet Elijah, OCP 84 (2018) p. 341-343, figs. 1, 8-10. The weak side of this interpretation is the lack of the inscription, while sculpted on the opposite side of the drum prophet Elijah is provided with the name ΗΛΙΑC written above.

⁸ G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination 6, Princeton 1969, p. 100-103 *et passim*, tab. on p. 14-17, figs. 5, 104, 123, 142, 202, 319, 343, 358, 380-381, 402; A. Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, Athēna 1995, p. 86-91, pl. I-III (although the author mistakenly interprets the bucolic scene on fol. 34r of cod. *Par. gr.* 533, as Mamas's depiction); Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas*, p. 223-226, fig. 4-11; Efthymiadis, *Saint Mamas's martyrdom*, 61 and n. 21.

⁹ Galavaris, *The Illustrations*, p. 100-102. His opinion was accepted by C. Walter, *Liturgy and the illustration of Gregory of Nazianzen's homilies. An Essay in Iconographical Methodology*, REB 29 (1971) p. 198-199.

¹⁰ Galavaris, *The Illustrations*, p. 103.

¹¹ The cycle of St Mamas that consists of three episodes only has survived in the church dedicated to this saint at Paleochora on Crete. However, the paintings dated to 1355/1356 according to an inscription are much later and they do not follow compositions from illustrated Gregory's Homilies A.A.T. van den Brink – I. Spatharakis – A. Verweij, *A cycle of St. Mamas in a Cretan church*, JÖB 53 (2003) p. 233-236, fig. 4-6. The same applies to a 14th-century icon from the church of St Paraskevi in Moutoullas on Cyprus (now in the Kykkos Museum). On a heavily damaged panel, only a few side scenes have survived out of the original fifteen episodes, but none can be identified as milking a deer or teaching wild animals, cf. S.K. Perdakis, *Saint Mamas with scenes from his life*, in: *The veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean: A traveller, border defender*

scenes, which contradicts Galavaris's hypothesis and rather indicates that each time, an artist was inspired by the text and a new composition was developed to depict the key moments from the legend.

The representations of Saint Mamas (and other holy shepherds) were present in Byzantine art already in an earlier period, but they were standardized and did not depart from the images of other martyrs depicted in court chlamydes. While the earliest known depiction of the saint on the wall of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome (dated to the pontificate of Paul I, 757-767) is heavily damaged and does not allow us to identify his costume¹², in the 10th-11th-century frescoes from Greek (e.g. St Stephanos in Kastoria) and Cappadocian cave churches (chapel no. 6, El Nazar and St. John, also known as Sakli kilise in Göreme), Mamas was depicted as a high-ranking officer wearing a chlamys and holding a cross in the right hand¹³. This universal iconography was also applied to other saints who were occupied in herding cattle according to their biographies.

The change occurred in the Elmali kilise (Apple church) in Göreme dated to c. 1050 (fig. 1). On the arch of the left arcade, next to the sanctuary, saint Mamas was depicted in a traditional chlamys and a knee-length patterned tunic. In his right hand, the figure holds a white cross, an attribute typical of martyrs, but in his left hand, he keeps a short brownish stick topped by a shortly cut snag¹⁴. Soon the saint began to be depicted

saint, Thessaloniki – Morphou 2013, p. 38-39 (cat. no. 1). Scenes of Mamas' martyrdom are analysed in detail by Efthymiadis, *Saint Mamas's martyrdom*, p. 61-65, figs. 1-6.

¹² J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, v. 4, Freiburg i. Br. 1916, fig. 166:2. Cf. also Cignitti, *Mama*, p. 608; Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas*, p. 219; A.V. Zaharova, *Izobraženiâ svätých v monumental'noj dekoracii rannehristsianskih i vizantijskih hramov do XI v.m* "Istoričeskie issledovaniâ: žurnal Istoričeskogo fakulteta MGU im. M.V. Lomonosova" 2 (2015) p. 46-47, 55, note 90.

¹³ Tsilipakou, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas*, p. 302 (Kastoria); G. de Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin, les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, v. 1, Paris 1925, pl. 40, fig. 3 (El Nazar); M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Paintings in Asia Minor*, v. 2, Greenwich 1969, figs. 18, 20 (El Nazar); C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords*, Paris 1991, p. 93 (chapel No. 6), pl. 59:1 (El Nazar; cf. also other examples on p. 195, 264, 282); N. Thierry, *La Cappadoce de l'antiquité au Moyen Age*, Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité Tardive 4, Turnhout 2002, fig. 123 (Saklı Kilise).

¹⁴ Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle*, v. 1, Paris 1925, p. 431-454; v. 2, Paris 1928, pl. 117:1 and Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines*, p. 125 both date frescoes to the mid-11th c. In turn, Restle, *Byzantine Wall Paintings*, v. 1, p. 60-63, 124-125 and J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Histoire de l'Art Byzantin et Chrétien d'Orient*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1987, p. 165-166 suggest a later date (late 12th or even the early 13th c.).

with various forms of the staff in the miniatures of aforementioned illuminated Gregory's *Sermons*. While on fol. 27v of the *Cod. Par. Coislin 239* he was painted as sitting with a short, thick club¹⁵ and on fol. 17r of the Athonite *Cod. Dionisiou 61* (fig. 2) he keeps a long, thin, straight, white stick in his right hand¹⁶, in the scene of teaching deer on fol. 38v of the *Cod. Pantaleimmon 6* from the second half of the 12th century the top of his staff is curved, giving it the form of a shepherd's crook¹⁷.

This motif is related to another episode from Mamas's *Passio*¹⁸. According to it, along with the hinds that he could milk, the hungry saint on Mount Siloam also received from heaven a shepherd's crook (ράβδος) to herd animals

¹⁵ Galavaris, *The Illustrations*, p. 246, 248, pl. 202 (dates manuscript to the late 11th c.); Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, p. 90 pl. IIIb (dates it to 12th c.).

¹⁶ Galavaris, *The Illustrations*, p. 102, pl. 358 (dates to 11th/12th c.); *Oi thēsaurōi tou Agiou Orous: Eikonografēmena heirografa*, ed. S.M. Pelekanidou – P.K. Hrēstou – H. Mauropoulou-Tsioumē, v. A, Athēnai 1973, p. 415-416, fig. 107 (date it to the 11th c.); Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, pl. XVIII. The traces of blurred animals (indicating a teaching scene) still visible below depicted as standing frontally the saint were noticed by Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas*, p. 223, fig. 5.

¹⁷ Galavaris, *The Illustrations*, p. 209, 212, pl. 142. An early date of the execution of the codex proposed by him on the basis of ornamental similarities to a late 11th c. Byzantine illuminated manuscripts was rejected in recent studies, cf. *Oi thēsaurōi tou Agiou Orous*, v. B', p. 354, and esp. J. Đorđević, *Horrors of the Perverted Eucharist: Sensing Pelops' Dismembered Body in Panteleimon cod. 6*, "Ikon – Journal of the iconographic studies" 12 (2019) p. 36-37, who associated the story of Tantalus sacrificing Pelops depicted in the codex with debate concerning Christ self-sacrificing, which took place in the second half of the 12th c. His observation can be extended to *Cod. Par. Coislin 239* due to the stylistic as well as iconographic affinities observed between both manuscripts.

¹⁸ Berger, *Die alten Viten* (§ 12), p. 292 (BHG 1019): "Mamas did what was ordered to him by the angel of the Lord, he also saw a shepherd's crook (ράβδον) sent to him from the heaven and heard a voice that spoke to him: «Take this stick, which is send to you by the Lord, because due to it you will be able to subjugate wild animals. Thanks to it, you will be able to achieve no less than Moses in Egypt (τῆς κατ' Αἴγυπτου ἐπὶ Μωσέως ράβδου), and if you ask me for anything, thanks to it you will be able to do it». The saint took the shepherd's crook in his hand, looked at the sky and stuck it on the ground, and then immediately appeared a Gospel book. He bent himself, took it and said: «O Lord, to whom you order to preach your gifts?»". Cf. also so-called *Encyclical Life* (§ 6-7) known only in the Latin translation, cf. *Passio Sancti Mammetis*, ed. H. Delehaye, AnBol 58 (1940) p. 130 (BHL 5191d): "vox ad eum facta est dicens: «Excipe virgam hanc et semper tuis manibus porta. Quicquid autem a me postulaveris, dum compleveris orationem tuam, percutes virga terram et dabit tibi lapidem et parebit desideriiis tuis». Assummens autem virgam [...]. Et haec dicens percussit virgam super terram et ecce statim liber apparuit in quo quattuor evangelia continebantur scribta".

and do miracles like Moses in Egypt¹⁹. Due to this, the straight form of the tool depicted in the Elmali church, before the late 12th century, was replaced with a curved shepherd's crook (figs. 3, 5)²⁰, an iconographic motif already seen in the images of the holy shepherds from the Old Testament, e.g. Abel (especially when shown among the Patriarchs in the *Anastasis* scenes, but also as a shepherd on fol. 55r of the Vatican copy of the Christian topography by Kosmas Indikopleustes)²¹, and, as already mentioned, Moses (fig. 4)²².

¹⁹ Moses' miracle-working staff (Hebr. מִצְפָּה) is mentioned by Ex 10:13; 14:16; 17:5,9; Num 20:8. According to *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* (III 88), ed. T. Preger, Leipzig 1907, p. 247 the relic was housed in the church of the Virgin *tou Rhabddou* in Constantinople, from where it was taken to the Palace (and contemporary it is exhibited in the Topkapi Museum, inv. No. 21/65). On Moses' staff and Aaron's blooming rod as symbols of power given by God and their typological transition into *virga thaumaturga* of Christ and crosier of St. Peter already in the pre-Constantinian era, cf. Ch. Meilicke, *Moses' Staff and the Return of the Dead*, "Jewish Studies Quarterly" 6 (1999) p. 348-362, figs. 6-10. However, the author seems to be unaware of later verbatim implications in the hagiographical texts.

²⁰ Cf. e.g. frescoes in the NW chapel of St Pantaleimon's church at Nerezi (1164) near Skopje, I. Sinkević, *The Church of St Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture, programme, patronage*, Wiesbaden 2000, p. 73, fig. LXV; and on the S wall at the church of the Virgin of Kampos in Kophinou (late 12th c.) on Cyprus, G. Sötēriou, *Ta buzantina mnēmeia tēs Kuprou*, en Athēnais 1935, pl. 64 (with still visible traces of an animal in the saint's left hand, now destroyed); Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, 92, pl. IVb; S. Gabelić, *Predstave Svetog Mamanta u zidnom slikarstvu na Kipru*, "Zograf" 15 (1984) p. 69-70, fig. 1; C.A. Hadjichristodoulou, *The Iconography of Saint Mamas in Cyprus*, in: *The veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean: A traveller, border defender saint*, Thessaloniki – Morphou 2013, p. 78, fig. 1; O. Perdikē, *O toihografikos diakosmos tou naou tēs Panagias stēn Kofinou*, in: *Eumathios Filokalēs: Anadeixē epilegmenōn mesobuzantinōn mnēmeiōn Krētēs Kuprou me kainotomes methodous*, Rethumno 2014, p. 254, fig. 4. While the authors listed above date the Kophinou frescoes to the end of 12th c., D. Mouriki, *The Cult of Cypriot Saints in Medieval Cyprus as attested by Church Decorations and Icon Painting*, in: *'The Sweet Land of Cyprus'. Papers Given at the Twenty-Fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991*, ed. A.M. Bryer – G.S. Georghallides, Nicosia 1993, p. 249-251, argues for the 13th c.

²¹ For Abel with a shepherd's crook in the scene of Anastasis cf. e.g. frescoes in St George's church at Kurbinovo (1192) and in the apse of the parekklesion in the Chora Monastery (1316-1321) in Constantinople, C. Grozdanov, *Kurbinovo i drugi studii sa freskoživopisot vo Prespa*, Skopje 2006, figs. on p. 231, 233 (as well as the shepherd in the Nativity scene on p. 195); *The Kariye Djami*, v. 1, ed. P. Underwood, New York 1966, "Historical Introduction and Description of the Mosaics and Frescoes", p. 194-195; v. 3, figs. 341-343, 355. For the *Vatican Indikopleustes* (and slightly different depictions on fol. 91v of *Sin. gr. 1186* and on fol. 124r of *Laur. Plut IX.28*), cf. M. Kominko, *The world of Kosmas: illustrated Byzantine codices of the Christian topography*, Cambridge 2013, fig. CT 26a-c.

²² Moses with a rod is usually depicted in the scenes showing the conversation with the Burning Bush, crossing the Red Sea and smiting the rock, cf. e.g. *Oi thēsaurōi*

However, a crook as an attribute has a much longer history. In ancient Egypt, a crook (*HqA*) was used together with a flail as a sceptre of the pharaoh. As the papyri containing the *Book of the Dead* indicate, it was borrowed from Osiris, who inherited it as a symbol of sovereignty over earth from his father, Geb²³. Both regalia expressed an idea of the ruler as a herdsman of humanity. In ancient Greece, this tradition was assigned distinctly pastoral connotations and the crook (*pedum*) became the sign of Thalia, the muse of Comedy and Bucolic poetry²⁴. It was in this sense, that it came into use in Byzantine art.

In the second half of the 12th century, a shepherd's staff (ὠκυνόδιον) as a personal attribute of Saint Mamas, closely tied to his *Legend*, was associated with other holy shepherds, namely St Tryphon (1st of Feb.) and St. Blasios (3rd of Feb.). All three saints were depicted with it on the walls of the northwest chapel of St Pantaleimon's church in Nerezi near Skopje (1164; figs. 5-7)²⁵. Saints Mamas and Tryphon hold shepherd's crooks on the arch under the northwest arcade of the cross arm in the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Kalyvia-Kouvara in Attica (1232; figs. 8-9)²⁶. It was thereby transformed from an individual object related

tou Agiou Orous, vol. A', fig. 128, vol. Γ', figs. 68, 211-212, 233, vol. Δ', figs. 71, 197; Kominko, *The world of Kosmas*, pl. 8, 11, 18, figs. Ct 13ab, CT 15ab, CT 33a-c.

²³ Cf. e.g. *Hymn of Praise to Osiris* on the scroll of Book of Death London BM 9901 (*Hunefer*) dated to XIX Dynasty, which says: "The White Crown is set on your head. You seized the crook and the flail when you were (still) in the womb and had not (yet) emerged onto the earth", E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerasher and Netchemet with supplementary text from the papyrus of Nu*, London 1899, p. 5, pl. III. Rabbinic exegesis of Moses's stick according to which it originated from Egyptian, Roman (lictors' fasces) or Greek (Hercules' club) roots was analysed by Meilicke, *Moses' Staff*, p. 348-350.

²⁴ O. Höfer, *Thaleia, Thalia (Muse)*, Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, V 450.

²⁵ Sinkević, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi*, p. 73, pl. LXV, LXVI, 71. The close relationship between St Mamas and St Tryphon is already attested by the placement of their facing busts in medallions on the opposite arcossolia in the rock church of Acrobats (Cambazli Kilise) in Ortahisar dated to the end of 11th c., cf. N. Thierry – M.M. Thierry, *Une nouvelle église rupestre de Cappadoce: Cambazli Kilise à Ortahisar*, "Journal des Savants" 1 (1963) (reprinted in: N. Thierry, *Peintures d'Asie Mineure et de Transcaucasie au Xe et XIe s.*, Variorum 67, London 1977, text XI), p. 10, fig. 2 (Tryphon only). Despite court costumes worn by both martyrs the only reasonable explanation for the juxtaposition of their images seems to be an association with herding.

²⁶ N. Panselinou Coumbarakis, *Saint Pierre de Kalyvia-Kouvara et la chapelle de la Vierge de Mérenta, Deux monuments du XIIIe siècle en Attique*, Thessalonica 1976, p. 102-103, pl. 50, 52; S. Gerstel, *The Byzantine Village Church: Observations on*

to a specific event described in the *Legend* to a general attribute defining a whole group of saints sharing the same profession – herding cattle. In fact, this phenomenon can be traced only in visual arts, as it had no solid foundations in hagiography. According to his *Passio*, St Tryphon († c. 250) was a gooseherd (χηνοβοσκός) in his youth in his native village of Campsada in Phrygia²⁷. However, this information remained coincidental and unimportant for his further fate.

The connection of St Blasios with herding seems to be even more tenuous. The saint has no established hagiography. An exceptional source that is known to us, in which the martyrdom of St Blasios of Caesarea is mentioned, is the *Synaxarion of the Hagia Sophia*, written under the auspices of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos. On the 3rd of February, it lists the martyrdom of St Blasios. According to the record, he originated from a wealthy Caesarean family involved in flock pasturing (βόσκημα)²⁸. This laconic reference, but probably also a popular association based on the similarity of his name with Veles (the pagan Slavic god of domestic animals), was most likely the source of another pastoral attribute of this saint – a calf held by him in the Nerezi fresco (fig. 6). This attribute also accompanies the saint on the southwest pillar of the church of Archangel Michael, the katholikon of the Lesnovo Monastery (1346-1347; together with St Mamas holding a sheep; fig. 10)²⁹, as well as on the south wall of the narthex (added in 1389) of St Saviour's church in Akoumia (beside

Its Location and on Agricultural Aspects of Its Program, in: *Les villages dans l'Empire byzantin (IVe-XVe siècle)*, ed. J. Lefort – C. Morrison – J.P. Sodini, Réalités Byzantines 11, Paris 2005, p. 170, fig. 4; Gerstel, *Rural lives*, fig. 77.

²⁷ F. de Cavalieri, *Hagiographica*, Studi e Testi 19, Roma 1908, p. 45-74; *Passio S. Tryphonis* Prior 1, 11, in: *Acta Sanctorum*, v. 67, ed. Societas Bollandiensis, Bruxellis 1925, p. 330, 335 (BHG 1856): “καὶ ἐπικαλουμένον Τρύφωνα τινὰ χηνοβοσκόν [...] Τρύφωνα τινὰ χηνοβοσκόν, καὶ τούτων οὕτω γενομένων. [...] Τρύφωνα τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς Φρυγίας, ἦτοι ἀπὸ τῆς Σαμψάδου κώμης ὀρμώμενον, τὸν χηνοβοσκὸν συλληφθέντα ἐπὶ τὸ εἶξαι τῇ κελεύσει τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος, χριστιανὸν δὲ τυγχάνοντα μὴ πεισθέντα θῦσαι τοῖς θεοῖς, ἀλλὰ τὴν βασιλικὴν ἀντιταξάμενον φωνὴν ἐκέλενεν τὸ ὑπέρλαμπρον δικαστήριον ξίφει ἀπομηθῆναι”.

²⁸ *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmoniano*, ed. H. Delehaye, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris, Bruxellis 1902, p. 441: “Τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἄθλησις τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος Βλασίου τοῦ βουκόλου. Οὗτος ἐκ Καισαρείας τῆς Καππαδοκίας ἔλκων τὸ γένος, γονέων οὐκ ἄγενῶν ἀλλὰ τῶν εὖ γεγονότων ὑπῆρχεν, ἐκ τῆς τῶν βοσκημάτων πληθούς τῆς περιουσίας αὐτῶν ἀξανομένης”.

²⁹ S. Gabelić, *Contribution to the Iconography of Saint Mamas and Saints with Attributes*, in: *Praktika tou Deuterou Diethnous Kupriologikou Sunedriou (Leukōsia, 20-25 Aprilou)*, v. 2, ed. T. Papadopoulos – B. Egglexakēs, Leukōsia 1986, p. 577-581, fig. 1; Efthymiadis, *Saint Mamas's martyrdom*, p. 64, n. 29.

Mamas with a goat)³⁰, below St Mamas with a goat on the north pillar of St Saviour's church in Spili (early 14th c.)³¹, on the south wall of Panagia Faneromeni in Chordaki³², all on Crete.

It seems that under the influence of the calf motif, artists began to introduce other animals (usually sheep or goat) as attributes of the remaining two saints (especially Mamas). They are both depicted holding in their hands unspecified animals with white furs. However, the artistic attempt to create a group of holy shepherds soon failed due to the lack of a solid hagiographic background and the absence of folk ritual practices. As a saint without a hagiography, Blasios of Caesarea soon sank into oblivion and was depicted very seldom (e.g. as a young, long-haired martyr with a cross in the Gračanica Monastery, 1318-1321)³³. In turn, the iconography of Saint Tryphon is much more diversified. Besides the mentioned pastoral representations, he was depicted as a common martyr (in a chlamys and with a cross) and, in late Byzantine art, also with a pruning knife (κλαδευτήριον) in his hand for cutting vine branches or keeping a hoe with short handle (fig. 11), due to the association of his feast with the beginning of spring works in vineyards³⁴.

An especially interesting attribute of St Tryphon is a lily (fig. 12). The source for this was a miracle that occurred every year during his feast in the Nicene church dedicated to this saint. According to the *Encomium* by Theodore II Laskaris (1254-1258), dried lily bulbs put in

³⁰ I. Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, Leiden 2001, p. 129; I. Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, v. 4, Leiden 2015, p. 24; cf. also the portrait of the young beardless Blasuis with an ox on the S wall of St. George's church in Ano Viannos on Crete (1401), Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings*, p. 149.

³¹ Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings*, v. 4, p. 192, figs. 486, 492 (it is noteworthy that the opposite wall of the same pilaster features St Tryphon but with a sickle in his hand as his attribute, fig. 491).

³² Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings*, v. 3, Leiden 2012, p. 47, 272, fig. 119.

³³ Any possibility of ambiguity is excluded by the Slavonic inscription СТИ ВЛАСИИУ БОУКОЛЬ, which accompanies the representation, cf. B. Todić, *Gračanica. Slikarstvo*, Priština 1999, p. 105, fig. 63.

³⁴ For various types of representations of St Tryphon see A. Katselakē, *Eikonografia tou Agiou Tryfōnos, prostatē tēs ampelou: mia idiaitērē periptōsē se buzantino nao tēs Krētēs*, in: *Oinos palaios ēdupotos. To krētiko kراسi apo ta proistorika ōs ta neotera hronia. Diethes Sunedrio. Peza Pediados*, ed. K. Mulopotamitakē, Ērakleio 2002, p. 207-216. Cf. also Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings*, v. 1, London 1999, p. 43-44, pl. 4a, v. 3, p. 106, fig. 315, v. 4, p. 192, fig. 491; Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings*, p. 46; Gerstel, *Rural lives*, p. 121-122, fig. 91 (frescoes from Cretan churches of St Demetrios in the village of Ayios Demetrios near Rethymnon, c. 1300, and St Saviour at Spili, as well as other examples from rural chapels).

the martyr's lamp suddenly bloomed out of season, amid the frosts of winter³⁵. The emperor not only founded the mentioned church but also placed the image of St Tryphon with a lily on his silver coins³⁶. The reason for this special reference was a dream in which the martyr encouraged Theodore for his first victorious campaign against Bulgaria (when he captured Berroia)³⁷.

The above remarks imply that St Mamas was the only saint who maintained a stable connection with herding³⁸. An animal and a shepherd's crook in his hands became his common attributes since the 13th

³⁵ *Laudatio S. Tryphonis A. Theodoro Duca Lascari* 8, in: *Acta Sanctorum*, v. 67, ed. Societas Bollandiensis, Bruxellis 1925, p. 356 (BHG 1858d); translation after C. Foss, *Nicaea: a Byzantine capital and its praises: with the speeches of Theodore Laskaris, In praise of the great city of Nicaea, and, Theodore Metochites, Nicene oration*, Brookline 1996, p. 106: "In this city [Nicaea], he completed the struggle of martyrdom, and now here he accomplishes his great works. He brings his blessings to fruition in the incredible yearly blooming and sprouting of the lilies (κρίνων ἀνθήσεις παραδόξους καὶ ἐξβλαστήσεις ἐνιαυσιαίους καρποφορεῖ εὐλογίας) – what a miracle! The lily which lies in the lamp of the martyr blooms in the frost and snows of winter (ἐν παγετῷ καὶ χιόνι τε καὶ χειμῶνι ἀνθεῖ τὸ κρίνον τῆ τοῦ μάρτυρος λυχνία ἐγκείμενον). When a year has passed since it was cut, the dry bulb suddenly blooms, almost escaping perception, at the hour when morning service is celebrated with hymns and the praises of the victorious martyr are sung in beautiful language. The crowd sees the miracles of Tryphon: emperors have seen it; patriarchs have observed it, and the faithful are greatly strengthened by it; because of the miracle, demons run away, diseases are banished, and the prayers of the faithful are granted. When the miracle takes place, there is a universal festival – of infants, children, adolescents, men, old men, elders, the aged, women, laymen, soldiers, officials, priests, and monks – every kind and age of people sees it and jumps with joy. For what happens does not happen in a corner or some shadowy place, but in the church of God".

³⁶ Imperial foundations dedicated to St Tryphon in Nicaea were described by Theodore Skoutariotes, cf. *Anōnumou Sunopsis Hronikē*, ed. K.N. Sathas, *Mesaiōnikē Bibliothēkē* 7, Benetia 1894, p. 512. On Theodore's coins with the saint, cf. M.F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton O. Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, v. 4, Washington 1999, p. 516, pl. XXXV-XXXVI.

³⁷ The dream is mentioned by the emperor in his *Letter* (CXCIX) to the Grand Domestic George Mouzalon, *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII*, ed. N. Festa, Firenze 1898, 245-246; cf. also *Anōnumou Sunopsis Hronikē*, p. 514 (= Georgii Acropolitae, *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg, Leipzig 1903 (reprint: G. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978), v. 1, p. 291-292).

³⁸ Prayers to Mamas for curing flocks were incorporated into the *Euchologion*, cf. *Euhologion to Mega*, ed. N.P. Papadopoulou, Athēnai 1927, p. 512-513. They are followed by prayers to another protector of flocks, St Modestos (*Euchologion*, cf. *Euhologion to Mega*, p. 509-512). Cf. also Gerstel, *Rural lives*, p. 114 (e.g. books with prayers to St Mamas to cure domestic animals).

century, especially in the art of the insular milieu³⁹. The animal species varied: on Crete, goats with upward straight horns were the most popular (fig. 13)⁴⁰, while on Rhodes, Naxos and Cyprus lambs (often with curved horns) prevailed (fig. 16)⁴¹. This diversity contradicts the old theory of David Talbot-Rice, according to which the inspiration for the lamb motif was found in a folk legend, according to which Mamas, a hermit from Morphou, was arrested for refusing to pay taxes. While he was escorted

³⁹ According to Tsilipakou, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas*, p. 302, 305, fig. 4, the cult of St Mamas disseminated by the seaways, what can be confirmed by its initial absence in the Epirus. Her hypothesis seems to be partly confirmed by the location of Mamas' early veneration centres in Constantinople, which appeared already in the 5th c. in the close vicinity of the harbour in the suburb of Galata (Beşiktaş) or the west of Hebdomon (Ayamama), cf. M. Polychronaki – E. Angelkou, *Saint Mamas in Constantinople*, in: *The veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean: A traveler, border defender saint*, Thessaloniki – Morphou 2013, p. 64-66; B.M. Stanisławski – K.K. Szymański, *Rusowie w Konstantynopolu “u świętego Mamy”*, Kraków 2023, p. 108-110, 165-194, 255-261, 284-298, figs. 6-11, 46-55, 68-69. In turn, proposed by F. Androšuk, *Konstantinopol'ske monastyri sv. Mamanta i mesto rezidencii ruskih kupcov v X veke, “Ruthenica”* 11 (2012) p. 27-28, fig. 7 identification of the 12th c. church discovered in the harbour of Theodosius as monastery of St Mamas remains unconvincing due to numerous inaccuracies and mistakes committed by the author. Yet another perspective presents Pełech, *Kult św. Mamasa*, p. 26-28. He focuses on the Mamas' Monastery near the gate of Xylokerkos (6th c.), while omitting the earliest settlements on the seashore dated to the 5th c. It leads him to the dynastic explanation of the cult transfer taking into consideration the fact that Emperor Maurice originated from Arabissos in Armenia Secunda distanced less than 200 km from Caesarea.

⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. in the frescoes at the Koimesis church in Alikambos (1315/1316, painted by Ioannis Pagomenos), in the church of St John the Baptist in Anogia (c. 1320), in the church of St John Evangelist in Margarites (1383) and in the church dedicated to the Holy Virgin in the village Thronos (3rd quarter of the 14th c.), Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings*, v. 2, Leiden 2010, p. 74, 223, figs. 77-78, 340, v. 3, p. 212, fig. 576, v. 4, p. 157-158, fig. 393; Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings*, p. 48-49; Gerstel, *Rural lives*, p. 115, fig. 84.

⁴¹ Among insular churches where Mamas was depicted with the ram can be enlisted chapel of St George Bardas near Apolakkia (1289/1290) and the church of St Nicholas in Maritsa (1434/1435) on Rhodes, as well as the chapel of Panagia stes Yallous in Agiassos (1288/1289) and St John Theologos in Addissarou (14th c.) on Naxos, cf. K. Kefala, *Oi toihografies tou 13ou aiōna stis ekklēsies tēs Rodou*, Athēna 2015, p. 197; Gerstel, *Rural lives*, p. 113, figs. 81-83; Tsilipakou, *The Veneration of Saint Mamas*, p. 303-305, figs. 1-3; T. Konstantellou, *Epigraphy, piety, and social history: snapshots of personal histories in thirteenth-century Naxos*, “Byzantina Symmeikta” 34 (2024) p. 296-297, 308, figs. 3-4, 8. For numerous examples from Cyprus see Gabelić, *Predstave Svetog Mamanta*, p. 70-71, figs. 2-10; Hadjichristodoulou, *The Iconography of Saint Mamas*, figs. 2, 3, 5 and catalogue entries Nos. 1-2, 7, 10 *et passim*.

by soldiers to the Duke of Nicosia, he saved a lamb from being devoured by a lion, tamed the beast and rode on its back to the town⁴². The story dates from a considerably later period and cannot be traced back earlier than 1742 when it was recorded by the Scottish traveller Alexander Drummond during his stay on Cyprus⁴³. It seems, therefore, that it was a folk tale created *ex post* (using some elements from the saint's earlier hagiography) to explain the complex iconography of St Mamas and could not be the source for the representations.

The lion on which the saint rode was obviously another motif related to Mamas's *Passio*, namely to his miraculous travel on animal's back to Caesarea⁴⁴. While the Greek text informs us only about the saint's encounter with the beast on Mount Siloam when Mamas ordered to the animal to participate in his martyrdom in the theatre⁴⁵, oriental legends varies in this detail. In a Syriac version, he rides on the animal's back to Caesarea to bring to poor and hungry people cheese⁴⁶, whereas in a Coptic redaction,

⁴² D. Talbot-Rice, *Icons of Cyprus*, London 1937, p. 166-167 and note 12. The hypothesis was accepted by Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas*, p. 215, 221; Stroszeck, *Divine protection*, p. 235 and recently by Pelech, *Kult św. Mamas*, p. 31.

⁴³ C.D. Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria. Materials for a History of Cyprus*, Cambridge 1908, p. 297-298; Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, p. 71.

⁴⁴ *Passio Sancti Mammetis* 8, 10, p. 131-133 mentions lions domesticated by the saint already on the Mt. Siloam, when he had herding deer and does: "Veniebant autem ad eum cottidie leones inmanes et ferocissimi; et ipsi priores cum omni mansuetudine pedibus eius provoluti cum psalleret post ipsum stabant, cum oraret et illi proni post illum semetipsos in faciem prosternebant [...]. Cervi denique simul et onagri cum leonibus et ursis et pardis adstant, nullus a nullo contingitur". Latin text alludes also to Daniel in the lions' den.

⁴⁵ Berger, *Die alten Viten* 14, 22, p. 296, 304-306: "Holy Ghost said to Mamas: «Call the lion, which kills children of pagans and Jews». Mamas said: «O Lord, God of our fathers, look at your sinful servant Mamas and do not refuse me, do not leave me, because I am ready to suffer in your name». After these words, the lion went from the desert. Mamas turned back, looked at him and said: «So I am going in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ filling the order of the Holy Ghost, and you, when you will enter the theatre, do what should be done». Having said this, Mamas went to the city of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and these who were sent for Mamas were waiting for him and were sitting at the city's gate. When they saw him, they were stuck by this view; fallen down to his feet and said: Welcome o servant of God". According to *Passio Sancti Mammetis*, 18-21, p. 138-140 Mamas freed all wild beasts, which Alexander ordered to kill, as they did not harm to the saint on the arena. In turn big lion temporarily liberated Mamas from the captivity and protected him when soldiers appeared to catch him again.

⁴⁶ *Passio sancti Mamantis cum Theodoto et Rufina* (BHO 591), in: *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, v. 6, ed. P. Bedjan, Leipzig 1897, p. 441 (cf. also new edition with German translation A. Berger – H. Younansardaroud, *Die griechische Vita des Hlg. Mamas*

the saint travels in the same manner to the city, to receive his martyrdom⁴⁷. The motif of a saint sitting on a lion appears relatively early on a lead *eulogion* dated approximately to the sixth century, held by the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Inv. No. BXM 285; olim 3016)⁴⁸, and on a silver, partly gilded disc from the Ghelati Monastery dated to the early 11th century, now at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Tbilisi (Inv. No. P-315)⁴⁹. It is noteworthy that in neither case Mamas has any pastoral attributes. Similarly, in the drum of the Dormition cathedral in Manglisi (Lower Kartli, Georgia), painted after 1020, Mamas is represented sitting on a lion, within a round mandorla, wearing a long tunic and holding a cornucopia in his hands. The figure is accompanied by an inscription reading: “Saint Mamas, a symbol of the sun” (fig. 15)⁵⁰. This oriental iconographic variant of the saint formally relies on the images of Attis sitting on a lion, a motif borrowed by him from his wife-mistress, Kybele (fig. 15)⁵¹. In Georgia, it was still in use in the late 12th century, when the illumination on page 204 of the *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos* showed Mamas on the lion, still without his agrarian attributes⁵².

The merging of Byzantine and Oriental traditions took place as late as the 13th century, most probably in Cyprus, where the cult of the saint was rising in connection with the new sanctuary in Morphou. Since that

von Kaisareia und ihre syrischen Versionen, *Semita et Semito-hamitica Berolinensia* 3, Aachen 2003, p. 38-39). The motif of cheese, which Mamas was feeding the poor (or Christians seeking shelter from persecution), appears also in Greek and Latin *Legends*, but none of them correlate it with the lion, cf. Berger, *Die alten Viten* 12, p. 294; *Passio Sancti Mammetis* 9, p. 131.

⁴⁷ An English translation of an unpublished Coptic legend gives Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas*, p. 217.

⁴⁸ Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, p. 137-138, pl. XXI, Balicka-Witakowska, *Mamas*, p. 226, fig. 13.

⁴⁹ T. Velmans – A. Alpagó Novello, *Miroir de l'invisible: peintures murales et architecture de la Géorgie (VIe-XVe s.)*, Paris 1996, p. 48, fig. 49, pl. 54.

⁵⁰ Velmans – Alpagó Novello, *Miroir de l'invisible*, p. 48. Inscription quotes T. Velmans, *La koinē grecque et la périphérie orientale du monde byzantin*, *JÖB* 31 (1981) p. 709.

⁵¹ M.J. Vermaseren – M.B. de Boer, *Attis, Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* III 36, figs. 297-298; E. Simon, *Kybele, Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* VIII 758-759, figs. 91-92, 99-102, 129. On the problem of pagan gods represented with lions as a model for the iconography of St Mamas cf. also P. Kambanis, *From Ma to Mamas*, in: *The veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean: A traveller, border defender saint*, Thessaloniki 2013, p. 44-47.

⁵² Maraba-Hatzēnikolaou, *O agios Mamas*, pl. XX; Velmans – Alpagó Novello, *Miroir de l'invisible*, p. 48, fig. 50.

time, it has been possible to observe the growing popularity of the combined iconographic type showing the saint riding on the lion with a lamb or a goat and a shepherd's crook in the hands. The early examples of this formula include the icon from the Panagia church in Pelendri and the fresco in the narthex of the Panagia Asinou church (1332/1333, fig. 16)⁵³.

Based on the presented observations, it may be concluded that only St Mamas was assigned the position of a patron of shepherds and flocks in the Orthodox world, while attempts to create a group of shepherd saints failed. However, there is an exception to this generally true conclusion and this is the local cult of Saints Florus and Laurus, limited to the area of Northern Rus'. According to their *Passio* they were twin brothers who worked as stonemasons. While building a pagan temple in Ulpiana in the province of Dardania (modern Lipljan in Serbia) they miraculously cured the son of the pagan priest who had injured his eye and converted many people to Christianity. The neophytes smashed all statues of pagan gods and converted the temple into a church. As a result, all converts were executed and the brothers were buried alive in an empty well⁵⁴. Their connection with herding and especially with horses remains unclear⁵⁵.

In Byzantium, they were usually depicted as common martyrs in chlamyses, holding crosses in their hands⁵⁶. Similarly to Saint Tryphon, it is possible to identify, since the late 12th century, some attempts to create a new iconographic type of these saints. In the church of the Anargyroi in Kastoria (1189), they were shown with swords, which can be

⁵³ S. Kalopissi-Verti, *The Murals of the Narthex: The Paintings of the Late Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, in: *Asinou across time. Studies in the architecture and murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus*, ed. A. Weyl Carr – A. Nicolaïdès, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 41, Washington 2012, p. 161-164, fig. 5.35; Hadjichristodoulou, *The Iconography of Saint Mamas*, p. 79, fig. 3.

⁵⁴ *De sanctis martyribus Floro et Lauro, Proculo, Maximo et aliis in Illyrico*, in: *Acta Sanctorum*, v. 37, ed. I. Carnandet, Parisiis – Romae 1867, p. 521-524 (BHG 660-664); cf. also *Menologii anonymi Byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt: sumptibus Caesariae Academiae Scientiarum e Codice Mosquensi 376 Vlad*, v. 2, ed. B. Latyšev, Petropoli 1912 (reprint Berlin 1970), p. 292-295.

⁵⁵ P. Gusev, *Ikonoграфија sv. Flora i Lavra v Novgorodskom isskustve*, "Vestnik arheologii i istorii" 21 (1911) p. 71-104.

⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. enamel plaque at the base of Romanos II's (959-963) chalice at San Marco Treasury, Venice, 10th c. and fresco in Bahattin Samanlıđi Kilise (Church with a Granary), Beliserama, 11th c., where they hold medical tools K. Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 15th Century*, Shannon 1969, p. 79, fig. 23b; C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Bahattin Samanlıđi Kilisesi at Belisırma (Cappadocia) Revisited*, in: *Byzantine Art: Recent Studies. Essays in Honor of Lois Drewer*, ed. C. Hourihane, Princeton 2009, p. 93-95 (and note 44 for further examples), fig. 13.

interpreted as an attempt to include them into the category of warrior saints⁵⁷. In turn, since the 13th century, e.g. in the already mentioned Sts Peter and Paul's church in Kalyvia-Kouvara, they appear with mason's tools, a hammer and scissors (fig. 17-18)⁵⁸. Along with this tradition, in the northern Russian schools – in Novgorod and Moscow – a different concept of the visualisation of the two saints emerged in the second half of 15th century. On the icons known as *The Miracle of the Archangel Michael*, the brothers were depicted in a rocky landscape, with the Archangel passing to them the reins of a white and a black saddled stallions. Below three Cappadocian brothers – the martyrs Speusippos, Eleusippos and Meleusippos (†c. 175 AD) [BHG 1646] drive a herd of horses out to pasture. The bottom zone usually shows two holy bishops, Blasios of Sebastea (†316) and Spyridon of Trimythous (270-348), sitting, surrounded by cows and sheep, respectively (fig. 19)⁵⁹.

This complex, symbolic iconography relies mostly on the folk tradition of the late Medieval Novgorod or Moscow, according to which the discovery of the bodies of Florus and Laurus under Constantine the Great coincided with the end of a horse disease. Local legends also associate the saints with the healing of horses, and their feast day (18th of August) was in folk tradition called the 'Horse Feast'. There was also a belief that the Archangel Michael endowed the brothers with the supernatural power, to control horses and teach them to understand the horse language⁶⁰. The Cappadocian grooms were linked with the story almost mechanically, by associating their names (verbatim: "the one urging a horse", "the one chasing a horse", and "the one who cares about a horse"), though there were no hagiographic connections with herding⁶¹. In turn, according

⁵⁷ S, Pelekanidēs, *Kastoria, I. Buzantinai toihografiai*, v. 1, Makedonikē Bibliothēkē 17, Thessalonikē 1953, figs. 25a-b.

⁵⁸ N. Panselēnou, *Agios Petros Kalubiōn Koubara Attikēs*, "Deltion tēs Hristianikēs Arhaiologikēs Etaireias" 4/14 (1987-1988) p. 183-184, figs. 13-14; Gerstel, *The Byzantine Village Church*, p. 170, fig. 3; Gerstel, *Rural lives*, fig. 28.

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g. V.N. Lazarev, *Novgorodian Icon-Painting*, Moscow 1969, p. 31-32, fig. 44.

⁶⁰ Gusev, *Ikonografiâ sv. Flora i Lavra*, p. 91-96, fig. 3. Various theories concerning sources of Florus and Laurus association with horses (including ties with Slavic pagan gods of Dawn and Twilight or more simply with Dioscuri) are referred by N.N. Ges', "Čudo arhangela Mihaila o Flore i Lavre": istoriâ voprosa i problemy ikonografii, "Naučnye Trudy Sankt-Peterburgskoj Akademii Hudožestv" 16 (2011) p. 5-12.

⁶¹ Gusev, *Ikonografiâ sv. Flora i Lavra*, p. 97; V.N. Lazarev, *Russkaâ ikonopis' ot istokov do načala XVI veka*, Moskva 1983, p. 64; A. Merkt, *Speusippos, Eleusippos und Meleusippos*, Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche IX 833. On the Legend of the Cappadocian brothers cf. H. Grégoire, *Saints jumeaux et dieux cavaliers*, ROC 9 (1904) p. 462-474 (=H. Grégoire, *Saints jumeaux et dieux cavaliers. Étude hagiographique*,

to various *Vitae* (by Anonymous, preserved in the Laurentian Library and by Theodore of Paphos), before becoming a bishop, Saint Spyridon had been a shepherd who herded a flock of sheep⁶². It is more complicated to explain the presence of Blasios. He was a physician who did not cure only people but also animals, which could explain his depictions with a flock. However, in Byzantium, where he was always shown as a bishop, such a tradition did not exist. Moreover, various *Passions* of this saint mention animals of various species (“ὁ ἡγεμὼν ἀγρευθῆναι ζῶα παντοδαπὰ”)⁶³, not specifying them as cows or bulls. The late occurrence of the subject may indicate that the two Cappadocian saints bearing the same name, the bishop of Sebastea and the martyr of Caesarea, were merged in folk tradition into a single person.

This formula, based on imagination and unsupported by hagiographic sources, caused protests already in early modern times. In his Church-Slavonic *Mineya*, Metropolitan Demetrius of Rostov argued at the end of the 17th century that the depictions of Saints Florus and Laurus with horses were fabrications, and the Most Holy All-Ruling Synod on the 21st of May 1722 officially banned the “icons of Florus and Laurus with horses and grooms”⁶⁴.

In summary, in the Orthodox tradition, the iconography of the patron saints of flocks was never as coherent as that of the Holy Bishops,

Bibliothèque Hagiographique Orientale 9, Paris 1905, p. 10-22). As an indicator that the triplets were associated with herding in various medieval milieus can be interpreted the fact that to Langres in Gaul, where their relics were housed at least in the 7th c., a Mamas' cervical vertebra was brought before the end of the 8th c., cf. J. Durand, *Les reliques de saint Mammès au trésor de la cathédrale de Langres*, in: *Mélanges Gilbert Dagon*, ed. V. Déroche – D. Feissel – C. Morrisson – C. Zuckerman, Paris 2002 = “Travaux et Mémoires” 14 (2002) p. 186 and after him Pelech, *Kult św. Mamasa*, p. 34; Stanisławski – Szymański, *Rusowie w Konstantynopolu*, p. 106-107.

⁶² *Vitae sancti Spyridonis*, cf. *La légende de S. Spyridon, évêque de Trimithonte*, ed. P. Van den Ven, Bibliothèque du Muséon 33, Louvain 1953, p. 3, 105 (BHG 1647b, 1648a). Cf. also Socrates Scholasticus, *HE I* 13/1-2, ed. Socrate de Constantinople, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, v. 1, ed. P. Périchon – P. Maraval, SCH 477, Paris 2004, p. 146.

⁶³ Symeon Metaphrastes in his *Menologion*, PG 116, 817 (BHG 276) mentions that the saint cured various animals delivered to him by farmers while he was living in a cave on Mt. Argasios. The same version repeats *Menologii anonymi Byzantini saeculi X* 2, v. 1, Petropoli 1911, p. 329 (BHG 277). Medical treatment of various domestic animals by Blasios is mentioned also in *Menologion of Basil II*, in: PG 117, 308.

⁶⁴ Text published in *Polnoe sobrane postanovlenij i rasporâženij po vedomstvu pravoslavnogo ispovedaniâ Rossijskoj imperii*, v. 2, Sankt-Peterburg 1872, p. 294 (§ 625). Cf. also B.A. Uspenskij, *Kult św. Mikołaja na Rusi*, Lublin 1985, p. 196; O. Tarasov, *Ikona i blagočestie*, Moskva 1995, p. 142; Ges, „Čudo arhangela Mihaila”, p. 5.

warrior saints, or monks. Attempts to create it, dating back to the 11th century, yielded positive results only in the case of Saint Mamas and only in limited areas⁶⁵. Interestingly, major martyrs – such as George, despite his posthumous miracle of saving an ox of a Theopistos – were not associated with the protection of shepherds⁶⁶. Even when the episode was depicted in art (e.g. the fresco in Episkopi, Mani, late 12th c. or on a pre-altar cross from Goris Djvari, second half of the 16th c., National Museum of Fine Arts in Tbilisi; figs. 20-21)⁶⁷, it simply belonged to the narrative cycle of the saint's miracles and it never inspired artists or hagiographers to include the saint among Holy Shepherds. It seems that warrior saints were too important in the eyes of the highly hierarchical society of Byzantium to occupy in herding.

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⁶⁵ It is noteworthy that the cult and iconography of St Mamas developed solely in Byzantium and the south regions of the Eastern Christian world. The depictions of this saint spread out into Russia only at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, most probably under influence of Serbian iconography, as recently noted A. Musin, “*Da vitaût u svâtogo Mamy*”: *svâtoj mučenik Mamant i drevnerusskoe hristianstvo*, in: *V kamne i v bronze. Sbornik statej v čest' Anny Peskovej*, ed. A.E. Musin – O.A. Šeglova, Sankt-Peterburg 2017, p. 338-339. The fact that the cult of the saint was mostly limited to late Byzantine rural, insular communities was also highlighted by Gerstel, *Rural lives*, p. 111.

⁶⁶ *Miracula S. Georgii* 5, ed. J.B. Aufhauser, Leipzig 1913, p. 44–64; cf. also PG 115, 156 (XX). For an English resume see F. Cumont, *St George and Mithra 'The Cattle-Thief'*, JRS 27 (1937) p. 70-71. Gerstel, *Rural lives*, p. 110-111 points out that Sts George and Demetrius were associated with rural life due to the fact that their feast days (23rd of April and 26th of October, respectively) marked the beginning of the summer and winter periods of migrations to and from pastures. In the case of St George, an additional factor present on the purely linguistic level should be underlined, as his name in Greek was directly related to the farmer (γεωργός), while its Slavic version (Yur, Yura) corresponded to the pagan god of Spring – Yarovit.

⁶⁷ T. Mark-Weiner, *Narrative Cycles of the Life of St George in Byzantine Art*, Ann Arbor 1980, p. 212, pl. IX-XI (No. 13).

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- Fig. 20. *Miracle with Theopistos*, fresco on the W wall of the church of Episcopi, Mani peninsula, the second half of the 12th c., photo: author.
- Fig. 21. *St George brings an ox to Theopistos*, silver gilded plaque on the pre-altar cross from Goris Djvari, 2nd half of the 16th century, National Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi, photo: The G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, The Sergo Kobuladze Monuments Photo Recording Laboratory.



Fig. 1. St Mamas fresco on the NE arch, Elmali kilise (Apple Church), Göreme/Matiana, c. 1050.



Fig. 2. St Mamas, miniature, Gregory of Nazianzos *Homilies*, Mt. Athos, *Cod. Dionisiou 61*, fol. 17r, 11th/12th c.



Fig. 3. St Mamas, fresco on the S wall of the church of the Virgin of Kampos in Kophinou, Cyprus, late 12th c.



Fig. 4. Abel, Anastasis, fresco on the N wall, St. George Church at Kurbinovo, 1192, Republic of North Macedonia.

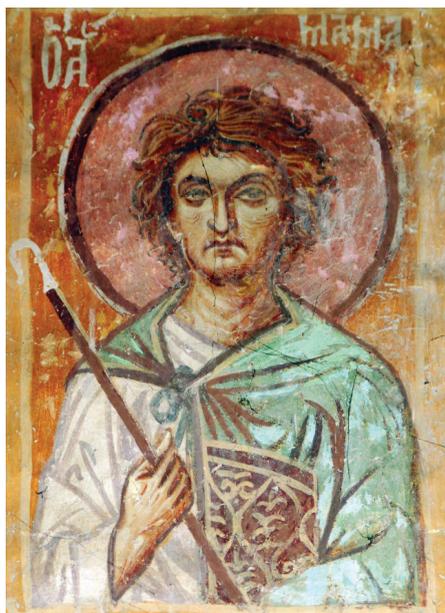


Fig. 5. St. Mamas, fresco in the NW chapel, St. Pantaleimon's church, Nerezi, 1164.



Fig. 6. St. Blasios Boukoulos, fresco at NW chapel, St. Pantaleimon's church, Nerezi, 1164.

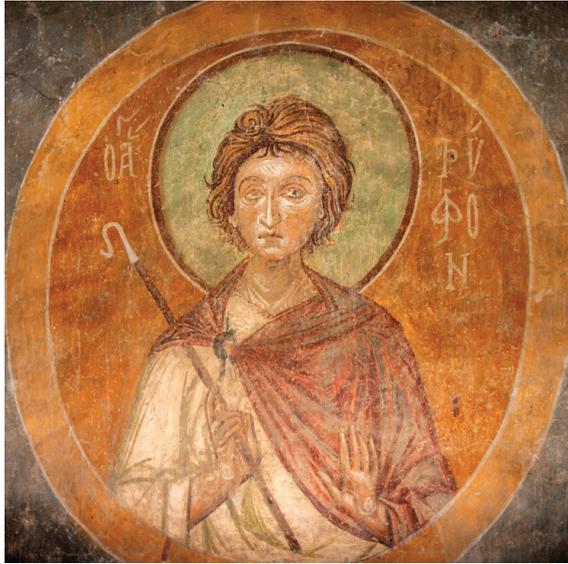


Fig. 7. St Tryphon, fresco in the NW chapel, St. Pantaleimon's church, Nerezi, 1164.



Fig. 8. St. Mamas, fresco on the NW arch of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Kalyvia-Kouvara in Attica, 1232.

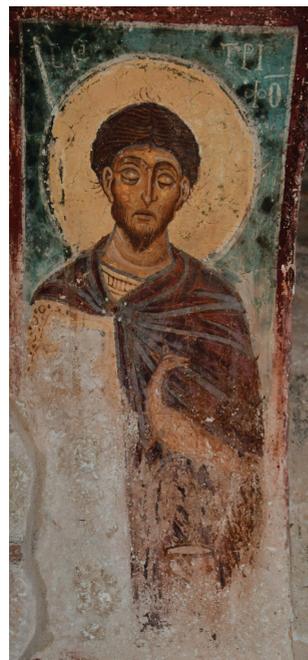


Fig. 9. St. Tryphon, fresco on the NW arch of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Kalyvia-Kouvara in Attica, 1232.



Fig. 10. Sts Mamas and Blasios of Caesarea, fresco at the W side of SW pillar in the church of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo (1346/1347).

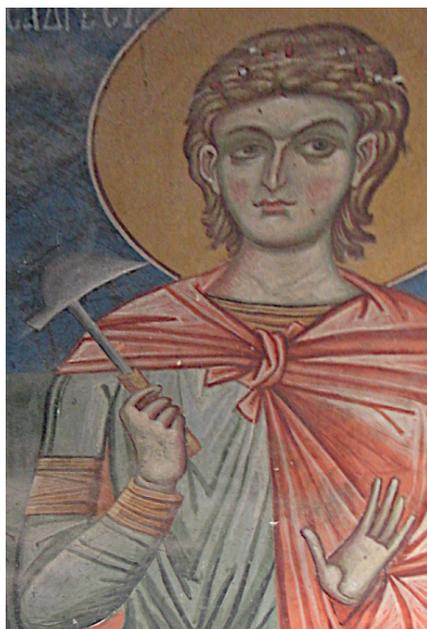


Fig. 11. St Tryphon, fresco at the S side of SW pillar in the church of Archangel Michael in Lesnovo (1346/7).



Fig. 12. St Tryphon, fresco in the N apse of the Holy Trinity church, Resava-Manasija (c.. 1418), Serbia.



Fig. 13. St Mamas with a goat, fresco on the N side of the W wall in the Koimesis church in Alikambos, Crete, painted by Ioannis Pagomenos (1315/1316).



Fig. 14. St Mamas riding on a lion, fresco on the SW side of the drum of the Dormition cathedral in Manglisi, Lower Kartli, Georgia, after 1020.



Fig. 15. Attis holding *sirinx* and sitting on a lion, terracotta, South Italy, Paris, Cabinet des Médailles (inv. 65.5156), formerly Biardot Collection.



Fig. 16. St Mamas on a lion, fresco on the S wall of the narthex of the church Panagia, Asinou, Cyprus, 1332/1333.



Fig. 17. St Florus, fresco on WN arch of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Kalyvia-Kouvara in Attica, 1232.



Fig. 18. St Laurus, fresco on the WN arch of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Kalyvia-Kouvara in Attica, 1232.

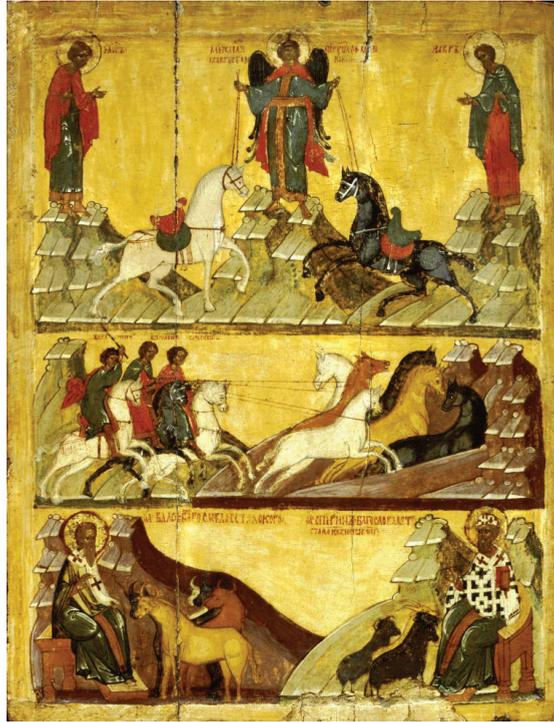


Fig. 19. *The miracle of Archangel Michael*, Novgorodian icon, late 15th c., Novgorod, State Museum.



Fig 20. *Miracle with Theopistos*, fresco on the W wall of the church of Episcopi, Mani peninsula, the second half of the 12th c.



Fig. 21. *St George brings an ox to Theopistos*, silver gilded plaque on the pre-altar cross from Goris Djvari, 2nd half of the 16th century.