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THE CULT OF ST PETAR OF KORIŠA, STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND PATTERNS

Dedicated to the Memory
of Profesor *Vojislav J. Djurić*

Abstract: In this paper a research has been presented into the stages of development, the content and the function of the cult of St Petar of Koriša, the only Serbian medieval hermit included among the saints. The creation of cult writings (*Service* and *Life*) and the gradual shaping near Prizren of the monastery of this titular saint have been simultaneously analyzed. The results have shown that, from the beginning of the 13th century to the middle of the 14th, the formation of his cult went through several developmental stages and in conformity with the supreme models of Byzantine hagiography. During the process, the original hermitage grew into an anchoritic community which, in turn, grew into a lavra and, eventually, into a monastery of cenobitic type. The cult of St Petar of Koriša had been fostered in the monastery until the end of the 17th century, when the devastating Ottoman raids urged the translation of the saint's relics to the Monastery of Crna Reka.

St Petar of Koriša, the most distinguished Serbian hermit in the Middle Ages, represents a phenomenon of broader significance. Petar's saintly character, especially the ways in which it was displayed and the stages in the development of his veneration are an invaluable contribution to the integral perception of the ascetic patterns and cult practices of the East Christian world. In Serbian historiography the study of this cult, continuously pursued for more than a century, has taken various directions. As early as the end of the last century, an important step was made in publishing the *Life* and *Service* to Petar of Koriša - these compositions representing the

chief, hagiological-liturgical foundation of his being revered as a saint.¹ At about that time, writers of travel accounts and learned lovers of antiquity first left records about the appearance and contents of the monastery of Koriša, having thus preserved from oblivion some facts, lost today.² In the period up to the Second World War, these first incentives gave rise to several valuable contributions, in which the cult and its importance were approached from different standpoints, but primarily from the historical one.³ This rendered possible the appearance of the first monograph about St Petar of Koriša and his monastery at the close of this epoch, which in itself represented the first attempt at an all-inclusive approach to this issue.⁴ In the first post-war decades, research took new, fresh courses. The fifties and sixties saw the first methodologically founded, expertly conducted and meticulous investigations of the shrine in Koriša. The knowledge about the architecture of the church and the monastic complex, and about the programme and style of the surviving fresco-painting acquired at that time, has to the present day remained an unavoidable starting point for researchers of different scholarly orientations.⁵ To these results we should also add exhaus-

¹ С. Новаковић, *Прилози к историји књижевности*. Живот српског испосника Петра Коришког, Гласник СУД XII (1871), pp.308-346; Id. *Теодосија мниха Хиландарца Дјело о Пејџу Коришком*, *Starine JAZU XIV* (1884), pp.9-36.

² А.Ф.Гильфердинг, *Боснија, Герцеговин и Сјараја Србија*, С.Петербург 1856, pp.217-219; М.С.Милојевић, *Путопис дела љаве (сјаре) Србије*, vol. III, Београд 1877, pp.154-155; И.С. Яastreбов, *Старая Сербия и Албания*, Споменик СКА XLI (1904), p.63.

³ The data about the monastery of St Petar of Koriša, preserved in medieval diplomatic material, have become available thanks to the capital work: С.Новаковић, *Законски сјоменици српских држава средњеџ века*, Београд 1926, pp. 388, 412, 421, 686, 688; see also А.Соловјев, *Одабрани сјоменици српскоџ љаве*, Београд, 1912, p.126; Id. *Два љрилоџа љрочавању Душанове државе*. I. *Пове.џе цара Душана о мейхохији св. Пејџа Коришкоџ*, Гласник СНД II (1927), pp.1-12. An important contribution to the understanding of the more recent history of the monastery of Koriša was written by Petar Kostiћ, the best connoisseur of Prizren and its environment of that time: П. Костић, *Манасџир св. Марка с додацима о манасџиру Црној Реци и о Пејџу Коришком*, *Годишњица Николе Чушића* vol. XXX (1911), pp.209-233; Id. *Црквени живоџ љравославних Срба у Призрену и њеџовоџ околини*, Београд 1928, pp.118-120. The question of the authorship of the *Life of and Service to St Petar of Koriša* and the chronology of their appearance was discussed by Д. Костић, *Каџ је Теодосије љсао живоџ и службу св. Пејџа Коришкоџ?* *Богословје*, year IX (1934), pp.371-382. On the place of Petar of Koriša in the anchoritic tradition of Balkan lands, see П. Сланкаменац, *Леџенде о јужнослoвенским анахоретџима*, Гласник СНД I (1926), pp. 220-222, p.232.

⁴ М.Бојчевић, *Свети Пејџар Коришки и њеџов манасџир*, Скопље 1940.

⁵ Ђ. Бошковић - Р. Љубинковић, *Испосница Пејџа Коришкоџ, архийекџура, историја и живопис*, *Старинар*, new series, vols. VII-VIII, pp. 91-110; В.Ј. Ђурић,

tive interpretations of sources, which convey a more complete picture of the status of the monastery and its estates, the length of its existence and the causes of its demise.⁶ Major breakthroughs have been made in the fields of editing and translating, as well as in detailed research of the compositions produced in the function of the cult of the hermit from Koriša.⁷ These

Најстарији живопис исјоснице јустиниожиће.џа Пејтра Коришкоџ, ЗРВИ 5 (1958), pp. 173-200. Special credit certainly goes to Olivera Marković-Kandić, who carried out extensive conservation - restoration works in 1962, О. Марковић, *Остаци манастира Пејтра Коришког*, Старине Косова и Метохије IV-V, (1968-1971), pp. 410-420; on the result of the archaeological excavations of the hermitage of Petar of Koriša, see А. Јуришић, *Археолошко-испјивачки радови на исјосници Пејтра Коришког*, Старине Косова и Метохије IV-V, pp. 395-398; М. Ивановић, *Неколико средњовековних сјоменика Коришке Горе код Призрена*, Старине Косова и Метохије IV-V, pp.309-320; Id. *Свети Пејтар Коришки* in: *Задужбине Косова*, Призрен - Београд 1987, pp. 17-19. As a rare well-investigated monument of this kind, the monastery of St Petar of Koriša took an important place in general surveys of anchoritic art in Serbia, see V. Korać, *L'architecture du monde serbe*, and V. J. Djurić, *De la nature de l'ancienne peinture serbe* in: *Le aree omogene della civiltà rupestre nell'ambito dell'Impero Bizantino: la Serbia*, Galatina 1979, p. 134, p.154; С. Поповић, *Крст у круџу. Архитектура манастира у средњовековној Србији*, Београд 1994, p.98. Many specific questions linked with the architecture and painting of the hermitage in Koriša are still awaiting their researchers. In recent years, such a contribution was given by Н. Антић-Комненовић, *Необјављене фреске Боџородичиноџ дејинствџа из цркве св. Пејтра Коришкоџ*, Зборник Народног музеја XV-2 (1994), pp.33-36; see also Б. Тодић, *Одраз кулџа светџоџ Пејтра Коришкоџ у уметности* in: *Манастир Црна Ријека и свети Пејтар Коришки*.

⁶ Special contribution to these issues has been given on several occasions by Р. Катић, *Хиландарска мейџохија светџоџ Пејтра Коришкоџ код Призрена*, Гласник СПЦ year LXIII, no.9 (1982), pp.217-233; Id. *Посџанак и јрошлосџ хиландарскоџ мейџоха манастира св. Пејтра Коришкоџ*, ЗЛУ, Матица српска 18 (1982), pp.133-150; Id. *Поменик хиландарскоџ мейџоха манастира св. Пејтра Коришкоџ*, Археографски прилози 1 (1982), pp.147-159; Id. *Манастир св. Пејтра Коришкоџ код Призрена и узроци његове јројасџи*, Гласник СПЦ year LXIV, no. 10 (1983), pp.189-205.

⁷ Translations of the *Life*: Д. Богдановић, *Жиџије и јодвизи јрејодобноџа оца нашеџа Пејтра у Коришкој џори исјосника*, Летопис Матице српске vol. 406, no. 1 (1970), pp.69-90; Id. ed. *Жиџије светџоџа Пејтра Коришкоџ* in: *Теодосије, Жиџија*, Београд 1988, pp.209-229; see also the study of В.Јеротић, *Жиџије Пејтра Коришкоџ у светџу дубинске јсихолоџије*, Летопис Матице српске vol. 407, no. 4 (1971), pp.383-422. Translations of the *Service*: Ђ. Трифуновић, *Служба светџом Пејтру Коришком*, Србљак 1, Београд 1970, pp.467-507; Д. Богдановић, *Служба светџоме Пејтру Коришком* in: *Теодосије, Службе, канони и Похвала*, Београд 1988,

efforts paved the way to important, more specific investigations pursued by the younger generation of scholars in more recent times.⁸ We should finally make mention of several endeavours, of different scope and character, to gain an overall view of the cult of Petar of Koriša, in which the results of various scientific disciplines were employed.⁹ The long history of the research, which has yielded fruitful results, together with the new finds, have rendered it possible to perceive the cult of the saint from Koriša more thoroughly than ever before. First of all, the issue in question is the possibility to examine in greater detail the stages of Petar's veneration as a saint, in the light of chronology, the applied ascetic patterns, as well as the construction phases of the monastery of Koriša.

The time and circumstances of Petar's life and exploits are not known to us on the basis of contemporary evidence preserved in sources, but on the basis of the tradition written down by Teodosije of Chilandar almost a century later. The other, rare, sources which also make mention of the monastery of Koriša do not date earlier than the 14th century. Of material evidence, the remains of Petar's monastery have survived. At a distance of about twenty kilometres from Prizren, it is situated in the almost inaccessible gorge of the Koriša river, at the foot of Mt Rusenica. The whole -

pp.209-229. Editions of the texts: Т. Јовановић, *Житије Пејтра Коришког*, Књижевна историја XII, 48 (1980), pp.635-681; Т. Поповић, И. Шпадијер, *Заједничка служба светим ајосџолима Пејтру и Павлу и светом Пејтру Коришком*, Археографски прилози 9 (1987), pp.157-179. For the copies of the text, see Д. Богдановић, *Инвенџар ћирилских рукописа у Јужославији (XI-XVII века)*, Београд 1982, no. 1120, 1513; Id. *Каџалог ћирилских рукописа манастира Хиландара*, Београд 1978, no. 479, 505, 544, 704, 792, 799.

⁸ The studies at issue are in press: Т. Суботин-Голубовић, *О двама службама светом Пејтру Коришком* in: *Манастир Црна Ријека и свети Пејтар Коришки*; in most recent times the writings devoted to Petar of Koriša were chiefly investigated by И. Шпадијер, *Пролошко житије светиог Пејтра Коришког* in: *Манастир Црна Ријека и свети Петар Коришки*; Ead. *Два преписа пролошког житија светог Петра Коришког*, Археографски прилози 19 (1997); Ead. *Библијска мјесџа у житију светиог Пејтра Коришког Теодосија Хиландарца*. 26. Међународни сасганак слависта у Вукове дане, pp.9-14, September 1996; Ead. *Кулџи и насџанак службе* (in press). I warmly thank Tatjana Subotin-Golubović and Irena Špadijer for letting me use their studies before they have come out of press.

⁹ Л. Павловић, *Кулџови лица код Срба и Македонаца*, Смедерево 1965, pp.81-85; Р. Катих, *Манастир светиог Пејтра Коришког*, Богословље, year XXIX (XLIII), nos. 1-2 (1985), pp.99-126; I. Sinkević, *St. Petar Koriški and His Monastery*, Serbian Studies vol.88, nos. 1-2 (1994), pp.105-117. The scientific conference devoted to the Monastery of Crna Rijeka and St Petar of Koriša, held on 25-26 April 1996 in Priština, Zubin potok i Crna Reka, gave fresh impetus to the study of the cult of St Petar of Koriša.

whose main parts were coming into existence from the beginning of the 13th until the middle of the 14th century - consists of several caves, more precisely caverns. These are natural recesses in cliffs up to 25 metres high, approached by a narrow, rock-cut path, at a height of 8-10 m. In one of the caves, known as Petar's hermitage, two layers of fresco-paintings have survived, as well as the tomb of the holy hermit. The whole also comprises considerable remains of the former monastic complex, including the church, which also features fragments of the former wall-paintings. In a broader sense, the shrine incorporates a rock-cut church as well, located about 200 m to the east of the monastery.

The chronology and course of events pose the main problem facing all the researcher of the cult of Petar of Koriša. Scholars have chiefly accepted the viewpoint outlined long ago that Teodosije concocted *Petar's Life* sometime in the second decade of the 14th century, when he came to Koriša from Athos at the invitation of the abba Grigorije.¹⁰ In his own words, he collected data about the life of the celebrated hermit from the inhabitants „who receiveth them by ear from those monks who buried the holy man and those who were with them.“¹¹ It follows from this that two generations divided Teodosije from this event, that is, that Petar of Koriša had passed away much earlier than it was long believed in scholarship, approximately in the fourth or fifth decade of the 13th century.¹² The fact revealed by the author that Petar performed exploits on Mt Koriša for a long time, and that he lived to a ripe old age,¹³ leads to the conclusion that he was born, approximately, in the seventh or eighth decade of the 12th century, and that he arrived at Koriša at the close of same century, or at the very beginning of the ensuing one.

¹⁰ *Житије Пеџра Коришкоџ* ed. Т. Јовановић, p.649 (further: *Life*); translation: *Житије светиоџ Пеџра Коришкоџ* ed. Д. Богдановић, 1988, p.265 (further: translation). The question of the chronology of the appearance of Petar's Life was discussed by Д. Костић, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-382; on Teodosije of Chilandar and hagiological-liturgical works written in the second decade of the 14th c., see Д. Богдановић in: Теодосије, *Житија*, pp.18-20.

¹¹ *Life*, p. 674; translation, p.288.

¹² Contrary to former views, based on the insufficiently precise reading of Teodosije's text, on the basis of which Petar's death was believed to have occurred in the late 13th century (V.J. Djurić, *op. cit.*, p.192; Р. Катин, *Манастир светиоџ Пеџра Коришкоџ*, pp.113-115), this event has been recently advanced by several decades, see I. Sinkević, *op. cit.*, pp.107. Such a view - accepted by most of the participants of the scientific conference devoted to the Monastery of Crna Rijeka and St Petar of Koriša - appeared in scholarship only after the translation of D. Bogdanović, see footnote 11.

¹³ *Life*, p.668; translation, p.282.

The hagiographer's account of some particular episodes of Petar's life should also be treated with due caution. Since it was based on indirectly obtained information, it is, in the main, difficult or impossible to discern historically reliable facts from the epoch of Petar of Koriša from those belonging to Teodosije's time, the more so since the basic woof of his narration includes general thematic motifs of Byzantine hagiography. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the truthfulness of the tradition according to which Petar was born in the village of Unjemir near Peć, where he adopted the habit of a monk in the nearby church of St Petar. He made his abode in a hut next to the church, having commenced his life as a monk in the company of his sister, determined to follow him.¹⁴ His quick departure for Altin and settling down in the vicinity of the local church, also dedicated to St Petar, could also belong to the real course of events. True, this decision of Petar's has been interpreted by the customary *topos* of ascetic literature - his wish to distance himself from his native land and fellow creatures, to live in seclusion, like the desert fathers.¹⁵ However, the fact that, in spite of a strong urge, he still did not decide on complete withdrawal, could be taken to be a remnant of the old monastic practice, regulated by certain rules. According to it, life in idiorrhymia must be preceded by a preparatory stage, which is life in a community.¹⁶ Teodosije's account of the events immediately following Petar's final opting for radical reclusion, is very interesting. Since in the name of total devotion to God he renounced human laws, and left his sister to certain death, he looked for a convenient setting and found one on Mt Koriša, hardly accessible and desolate. Teodosije depicts the outcrops of Mt Rusenica with an elevated feel-

¹⁴ *Life*, p.653; translation, p.268. The church of St Peter near Unjemir exists today. The most recent study dealing with it, containing a list of all historical sources, was written by Б.Тодић, *Црква Св.Петра код Уњемира*, Старине Косова IX (1989-1990), pp.5-32.

¹⁵ *Life*, p.653; translation, p.269. The sense and function of „living in seclusion“ were expanded on in the third Step of John's „Ladder of Paradise“, Свети Јован Лествичник, *Лествица*, translated by D. Bogdanović, Beograd 1963, pp.27-30.

¹⁶ Since the epoch of early monasticism, this practice was not identical in all parts of the East Christian world. In Palestina, the period of living in a *koinobion* lasted for ten or more years, after which the monk - of about thirty years of age - was considered to be mature enough to live in a lavra, that is in a separated cell. In the monasteries of Egypt and Syria, this time span was considerably shorter. These issues were dealt with at length by J. Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism. A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, Washington D.C. 1995, pp.258-266 (with an exhaustive list of sources and literature).

ing - which this landscape inspires even today - as „a place out of this world, convenient for every exploit“, and „a wonderful habitat, created by God for recluses“. ¹⁷ Apart from this, he describes Petar's new dwelling place in a more definite, topographically exact manner, as „a valley surrounded by large rocks, riddled with caves“. ¹⁸ According to Teodosije, the first habitat of the hermit was a barely accessible cave, situated in a high rock. Petar climbed to it „with great trouble... gripping the rocks with his fingers“. ¹⁹ The existence of the caves situated at the levelled sides of the rock to the west of Petar's present-day rock-cut hermitage, inaccessible nowadays and therefore uninvestigated, would confirm that this testimony was not devoid of real foundation. ²⁰ The other cave, located at the foot of the rock and easily approached, was inhabited by Petar, as was explicitly stated by Teodosije, only after he had chased away a snake from it, aided by the Lord and his envoy, the Archangel Michael. It was his first important victory over demons, after a long period filled with great feats and severe temptation. An important fact for the understanding of the gradual formation of the shrine in Koriša is contained in the claim that Petar, after the victory gained, „began to venerate the snake's cave like God's church and a holy place, having said, like Abraham, On the mount of the Lord it shall be seen“. ²¹ Teodosije makes mention of the same cave as a transfigured and sanctified space once again, in a similar but less definite manner. When Petar, after a new, even more difficult period of temptation finally drove out demons and attained holy resignation, the cave was illuminated by the miraculous radiation. ²² It is interesting, however, that the *Life* refers to Petar's original cave again after the hermit had moved to the lower cave. Rocky and inaccessible, it could serve him for praying, contemplation or performing exploits. This can be concluded from the claim that it was there where

¹⁷ *Life*, p.673; translation, pp.287-288. On Teodosije's idealized picture of monasticism, inspired by Mt Athos and embedded into the authentic setting, see D. Bogdanović, foreword in: Теодосије, *Житије светиоџ Саве*, Београд 1984, XXXI.

¹⁸ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271. This description corresponds to the authentic ambience which has practically not changed to the present day: the hermitage in Koriša is situated at a narrow plateau below a high cliff, between two gullies.

¹⁹ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271.

²⁰ Р. Кагић, *Манасиџр светиоџ Пеџира Коришкоџ*, p.106; М. Ивановић, *Светиџ Пеџар Коришки* in: *Задужбине Косова*, p.17.

²¹ *Life*, p.660; translation, p.275.

²² *Life*, p.668; translation, p.282. The miraculous radiation of caves-hermitages is a conventional device in ascetic literature; it is frequently encountered in pateriks.

demons attacked him attempting to „push him from that high rock and break onto the stone“.²³ If trustworthy, this testimony would confirm that Koriša possessed attributes characterizing many anchoritic dwellings. It is an upper, as a rule hardly accessible cave, situated above the hermit's abode. The most celebrated example of this, invested with special value, whose purpose was explained by contemporary sources, is certainly the cave adapted above the lower cell by Neophytos, a hermit from Cyprus. In his own word, Neophytos ascended to this „higher sphere“, which he called „Upper Sion“, by divine will and found shelter there, since the cave was inaccessible to the multitude.²⁴

Other caves, still existing in Koriša, are also mentioned in Petar's *Life*. They represent an important link in the attempt to establish the chronology and course of events associated with the emergence of the cult. Describing the closing period of Petar's life, Teodosije says that the recluse, sensing his near end, consented to take in disciples who wanted to receive guidance from him about the ascetic life, so that he ordered them to settle down „in the caves below the rock opposite his own“.²⁵ Having in mind the character of the locality, these dwellings could be identified as two spacious caves situated in close proximity of Petar's hermitage, to the east and west of it.²⁶ If Teodosije is to be trusted, shortly after accepting his followers, Petar started to prepare himself for death. He therefore ordered his disciples to „cut“ him a grave - „in that rock in the stone cave in which he lived until the end of his life“.²⁷ In archaeological excavations a tomb was uncovered at the far end of the cave (2.25 x 0.90 x 0.65 in dimensions). Built of thin slabs and semi-dressed stone, it was originally paved with mortar. At its bottom is a rock over which bricks were laid on a mortar

²³ *Life*, p.662; translation, p.276.

²⁴ For more details, see C. Galatariotou, *The making of a Saint. The life, times and sanctification of Neophytos the Recluse*, Cambridge 1991, p.99 (with sources and an exhaustive list of older literature); see also M-H. Congourdeau, *L'enkleistra dans les écrits de Néophytos le Recluse* in: *Les Saints et leur Sanctuaire à Byzance, Textes, images et monuments*, Paris 1993, pp.144-147. Upper cells existed above the monastic habitats in Cappadocia, e.g. the well-investigated and documented hermitage of the monk Symeon, L. Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*, Cambridge 1985, pp.190-191 (with an exhaustive list of older literature).

²⁵ *Life*, p.669; translation, p.283.

²⁶ Ђ. Бошковић, *op. cit.*, p.93, ill. 3.

²⁷ *Life*, p.669; translation, p.283.

foundation. The tomb was closed by a low stone lid with slanting sides, of which only one segment has survived.²⁸ The discovery of this tomb has not only confirmed the identification of the cave as Petar's hermitage, but also contributed to a more thorough comprehension of its function.

Petar's cave actually is a natural recess in the rock, of an irregular oval shape. It measures 2.65 m in width, 4 m in depth and over 4 m in height. In its interior, it is possible to discern slight improvements and few constructions, such as a shallow niche carved from rock. The main interventions are certainly directly connected with the painting of the cave. On that occasion a callote was constructed, one part of which was built, and the other cut in the rock. The entrance to the cave was closed; only the imprints of the former wall have survived on the floor, together with the traces of mortar on the lateral sides of the rock, cut in such a manner that it was possible to lean a wall on them.²⁹

The entire interior of the hermitage was painted. The oldest layer of frescoes is well-known, thanks to the long-past, but nevertheless exhaustive, study of V.J.Djurić. Although partially preserved, the original programme of the hermitage is brought into conformity with the sepulchral, that is memorial, purpose of this area. This is confirmed by the composition of an expanded Deesis placed in the upper portions of the cave, on the eastern side, on the place originally invested with the function of bema. Apart from the customary protagonists, the Deesis also includes the images of the Apostle Peter and the Archangel Michael. Since the former is the namesake of Petar of Koriša, and the latter defeated demons with the assistance of the celestial *archistrategos*, we are entitled to believe that these personalities have the role of mediators, that is the holy patrons of the anchorite from Koriša. The second zone, beneath the painted arcades, features the composition, today severely damaged, of a procession of archpriests, with the figures turned in three-quarter profile, while the warrior-saints are depicted opposite them, also beneath the arcades. Of the original layer of wall-paintings only the greatly damaged portrait of a monk, painted in the carved-in niche, has survived.³⁰ The study of the iconographic and stylistic features of this painting has shown that it, on the one hand, adheres to the general tendencies of the anchoritic art of the East Christian world, while

²⁸ О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, p.411; see also Ђ. Бошковић, *op. cit.*, p.91.

²⁹ О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, pp.410-411; Ђ. Бошковић, *l.c.*

³⁰ В.Ј. Ђурић, *Најстарији живопис*, pp.174-179.

on the other represents a valuable example of the concepts prevailant in anchoritic cave communities, a number of which at one time existed in the vicinity of Prizren and on the slopes of Mt Šara.³¹ These traits, with the presence of inscriptions in two languages, Greek and Serbian - which date the appearance of fresco-painting to the epoch after the Bishopric of Prizren came under Serbian jurisdiction in 1219 - point to the conclusion that the hermitage in Koriša may have been painted „in the third decade of the 13th century, or perhaps some years later.“³²

The reasons in favour of such a dating, especially those drawing on the analysis of the wall-painting itself, have not lost their validity to the present day; neither have they been refuted by some other, more convincing arguments.³³ However, a more precise reading of Teodosije's Life, as well as a more detailed consideration of the data contained in it, point to the need to re-examine some conclusions accepted in scholarship. One of them certainly is the question whether the wall-paintings in the hermitage were created during Petar's lifetime, or to his order? It is of great significance because it is connected with the problem of the function of the original hermitage, and also the mechanism of the creation of the anchoritic settlemet in Koriša.

It clearly follows from the course of the narration that Petar settled in this cave after having chased a snake away from it, and, says Teodosije, he lived there until „the end of his life“. This claim is very important, because it indicates that until his death the hermit used the cave as his dwellings, not as a church. The frequently quoted statement that Petar, after his great victory, began to venerate this space as „God's church and a holy place“, does not necessarily imply that the cave was painted at that time, and transformed into a place of worship.³⁴ Well-preserved and thoroughly investigated enti-

³¹ *Idem*, p.195; *Id. De la nature de l' ancienne peinture serbe*, p.154. An ample survey of the painting that has survived in anchoritic shrines of the late Komnenan period is presented by S. Tomeković, *Ermitage de Paphos: décors peints pour Néophyte le Reclus* in: *Les Saints et leur sanctuaire a Byzance*, pp.151-171 (with an exhaustive bibliography).

³² В.Ј. Ђурић, *Најстарији живопис*, p.192.

³³ The opinion that the fresco-painting of the hermitage in Koriša came into being at the end of the 13th century was expressed by Р. Катрић, *Манастир светиоџ Пеџра Коришкоџ*, pp.106-107 (starting from the earlier view claiming that only several decades passed between Petar's death and Teodosije's arrival at Koriša).

³⁴ This view was put forward by В.Ј. Ђурић, *op. cit.*, p.190, and then by other scholars as well, see И. Синкевић, *op. cit.*, p.109. The opinion that the hermitage had the function of a habitat until the end of Petar's life was first voiced by Р. Катрић, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

ties of such a kind - for instance, the hermitages of St Neophytos in Paphos or of the monk Symeon in Cappadocia - were, as a matter of fact, decorated to the personal demand of their inhabitants, but the dwelling space was distinctly separated from the liturgical, either physically, or by the iconographic programme of fresco-paintings.³⁵ The intention to expand the content of the cave by sacral elements could have been put into practice at this early stage by means of different and more modest accents: for example, by a carved-in niche bearing an icon, or serving for lighting candles - and such a niche exists in the hermitage in Koriša - or by an ordinary cross, carved in rock. Such simple but telling details, which represent a common place of cave anchoritic dwellings, can still be perceived in the caves on the slopes of Mt Šara.³⁶ Besides, in the light of the manner in which Teodosije typified Petar's ascetic character - making an effort to word the obtained information by means of carefully chosen patterns - we do not gain the impression that during his lifetime the anchorite from Koriša took steps leading to the „institutionalization“ of his personality. Judging by known examples, painting of one's own hermitage represented such an initiative and frequently a programme act - a preparation for the future cult.³⁷ By contrast, Petar seems to have belonged to those ascetics who remained faithful to the idea of an „escape from glory“ to the last.³⁸ In that sense, it is characteristic that his *Life*, which contains descriptions of unparalleled exploits, does not refer to the fact that he performed miracles in his lifetime. Such properties, apart from other divine signs, would place him into the category of „holy men“, which as a rule precedes sainthood.³⁹ The fact that Petar decided to

³⁵ For the hermitage of St Neophytos, see C. Mango, E.J. Hawkins, *The Hermitage of Saint Neophytos and its Wall Paintings*, DOP 20 (1966), pp.120-206; C. Galatariotou, *op. cit.*, pp.128-146; C. Томаковић, *op. cit.*, pp.152-156. On the hermitage of the monk Symeon, see L. Rodley, *op. cit.*, pp.189-193 (with older literature).

³⁶ For instance, in the hermitages along the Matos stream, in Rusenica and of Crkvena Pećina in the ravine of the Vrbeštica river. These monastic settlements, unfortunately, have not been investigated or published. Basic information about some of them were outlined by М. Ивановић in: *Задужбине Косова*, pp.489-490.

³⁷ This question, on the occasion of the painting of the hermitage of Neophytos of Cyprus, is discussed by C. Galatariotou, *op. cit.*, p.138; pp.143-144, and M-H. Congourdeau, *op. cit.*, p.144.

³⁸ see C. Galatariotou, *op. cit.*, p.103 (with examples).

³⁹ see P. Brown, *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity* in: *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1982, pp.103-152; C. Galatariotou, *op. cit.*, pp.116-126. This question was dealt with in great detail by J. Patrich when discussing Sabas of Palestine, *op. cit.*, pp.279-282.

take in disciples very late - when he was beginning to prepare himself for death - is also very indicative. Moreover, to their grief and protests, he decided to „deliver his spirit to the Lord in solitude“.⁴⁰ Before dormition, he dismissed the brethren and passed away alone, true to the tenet of the utmost monastic self-denial.⁴¹ Finally, the type of Petar's piety and his personal habits is perhaps best depicted by Teodosije when he recounts - from the vantage point especially significant for our problem - the final period of his life, filled with tranquillity he acquired with difficulty: „... he was not disturbed by any of perishable things of this world. He did not care either for tilling the land or building a house, but he merrily rejoiced at God-made caves and holes as if they were splendid palaces and, thanking the Lord, he spent many of the remaining years in tranquillity and joy“.⁴²

To what extent Teodosije's testimony can be considered authentic, remains an open issue. The final answer can hardly be expected to be provided in the near future. However, it is common knowledge Teodosije must have had himself informed about Petar's life in the utmost detail - „from the local population and many people from the vicinity“, having explained the reasons for the undertaken efforts: he wanted to put forward the exploits of the hermit from Koriša in a most precise manner, „like a tale ... so that the good *Life* of the holy would not be retold as a dream or fable“.⁴³ That such a goal had been achieved within the established framework of the genre, is confirmed by the material facts which can be checked today, especially those relating to the disposition and function of several caves in Koriša.

The outlined considerations should only be taken as an assumption and suggestion that the problem should be dealt with more flexibly than was the case up to the present time. In other words, we should allow for the possibility that a more resolute programme initiative, aimed at the creation of the cult of the hermit from Koriša - implying construction works and painting - came from his disciples in the early period of the anchoritic community, immediately after Petar's death. In view of the fact that in recent

⁴⁰ *Life*, p.671; translation, p.285.

⁴¹ Self-denial pursued by radical ascetics in their lifetime frequently extended to their hour of death, and was demonstrated in different ways - from the anonymous tomb up to the radical demand that the body be not buried, see Д. Поповић, *Култи краља Дражујина - монаха Теоктистїа* in: *Свети Ахилије у Арилју, историја, уметности* (in press).

⁴² *Life*, p.668; translation, p.282.

⁴³ *Life*, p.674; translation, p.288.

times this event was dated to be earlier by two, not one, generations before Teodosije, the former dating of the painting of the hermitage will not be considerably altered. It could be only a decade or two earlier than was considered by V.J. Djurić- who himself, as a matter of fact, permitted such a possibility. Personal touches, undoubtedly present in the programme of the hermitage in Koriša - the images of the hermit's patrons, the Apostle Peter and the Archangel Michael - could in that case only be explained by the fact that before his death Petar passed on the tradition to his disciples, having related them „everything about his life“.⁴⁴

The first stage of the emergence of Petar of Koriša's cult - the one coinciding with his life - is certainly most difficult to recognize. However, we are entitled to infer the following: Having arrived at Mt Koriša sometime at the very beginning of the 13th century, Petar the hermit introduced important novelties to these regions. By merely living there, and by the force of the exploits undertaken, he „sanctified“ the desert with its cliffs and caves, having transfigured it into the scene of battle and paradise, that is, in the „desert“ to the pattern of the desert fathers.⁴⁵ Petar must have been acquainted with these celebrated examples, for since his young days he „studied holy books“.⁴⁶ He must have therefore known that it was in the caves - traditionally considered to be the space of utmost sacredness - that the greatest performed their exploits - Anthony the Great, John Chrysostom, or the famous Palestinian fathers, such as Sabas, Euthymios or John the Hesychast.⁴⁷ In his lifetime, the recluse certainly made use of at least two caves in Koriša: apart from the upper, inaccessible, also the middle, lower, which was his dwelling place. In all probability, he made some modifications in this cave, customary in spaces with the same purpose. Petar's order that a tomb was to be prepared for him in the hermitage is of special significance. By this act he also bode by the ancient practice of the eastern anchorites, who, in order to be constantly „recalled of death“, identified their habitats with the place of eternal rest.⁴⁸ These tombs, however, were also the core around which the cult developed, and this was the case with Koriša.

⁴⁴ *Life*, p.669; translation, p.284.

⁴⁵ see A.J. Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient I*, Coulture ou Saintete, Paris 1961, p.28.

⁴⁶ *Life*, p.651; translation, p.267.

⁴⁷ A.J. Festugière, *op. cit.*., pp.43-45 and passim; numerous examples in: D.J. Chitty, *The Desert a City. An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under Christian Empire*, Oxford 1966; J. Patrich, *op. cit.*., p.126 and passim.

⁴⁸ Such examples are numerous. For Cappadocia, see L. Rodley, *op. cit.*., p.118 (with older literature); on tombs found in cave settlements in Bulgaria, A. Ханджийски,

Whether Petar, except for preparing a tomb for himself, also ordered that the hermitage be painted, seems to be the question which for the time being should remain open. What is certain is the fact that the hermit, by his personal example and in a specific milieu, carried out an important pattern of the East-Christian piety, having placed the centre of its future flourishing in this region. The reference from the liturgical book (*pomenik*) of Koriša, that Petar was „the first ktetor“ of this reputed monastery should be understood in that sense.⁴⁹

The next phase in the emergence of Peter of Koriša's cult begins with his death - the event giving a decisive impetus to the veneration of every saint. Teodosije describes Petar's dormition in accordance with the requirements of the genre, established in the middle Byzantine period.⁵⁰ It was followed by miraculous signs - inexpressible sweet singing and radiance confirming the presence of an angel, but also the appearance of the deceased recluse, who departed „with his face glowing brightly, thus exhibiting the purity and radiance of his soul“.⁵¹ The conclusive sign of the divine mercy appeared, as is customary, some time after the funeral, when Petar revealed himself as a saint. Although Teodosije touches very briefly

Обители в скалах, София 1985, pp.8-12 and passim. The degree of importance attached to the burial on the site of exploits is revealed by several examples, such as that of Peter of Artoa, whose body, after his death, was translated from a faraway place and buried in the cave in which he had spent most of his life, see *La Vita retractata et les miracles posthumes de saint Pierre d'Artoa* ed. A.A. Laurent. Subsidia Hagiographica no.31, Paris 1958, pp.130-132. That this practice was pursued in the late Byzantine period is confirmed by the example of Athanasios from Meteora, who carved himself a tomb on the site of his exploit, see D.M. Nicol, *Meteora. The Rock Monasteries of Thessaly*, London 1975, p.104. Such a practice, nevertheless, was not customary in all parts of the Christian world. In the anchoritic communities of Palestine, monks were not buried in their cells, but in a common grave, J. Patrich *op. cit.*, p.90. A similar custom existed in the settlements of the Kijevo-Pecherskaya Lavra: underground cave labyrinths were used as burial sites only after monastic habitats had been moved to the surface. Following the Athonite practice, these underground structures in some cases served as a charnel-house or chambers for treasuring relics, see T. A. Бобровський, *Печерні монастирі Києва* (Путівник по виставці „Кіїв підземний“), Київ 1995, pp.7-8, 10. On the „recollection of death“, as a form of the ascetic practice, see the sixth moral of the Ladder, pp.68-71; cf. Д. Поповић, *op. cit.* (mentioning the instances of such a function of the tomb).

⁴⁹ Archives of SANU no. 123, l.52 V; P. Катић, *Поменик*, p.149.

⁵⁰ D. Abrahamse, *Rituals of Death in the Middle Byzantine Period*, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, vol. 29, No. 2 (1984), pp.125-134.

⁵¹ *Life*, pp.671-672; translation, p.286.

upon this event, it certainly evolved according to the established pattern: miraculous signs are seen first, then the tomb opens and the relics from it are raised after which, as a rule, they are transferred into a shrine.⁵² Petar's relics announced themselves by their sweet smell and miracle making - the property from ancient times believed to be the chief confirmation of holiness in the Orthodox world.⁵³ The repertoire of miracles mentioned by Teodosije is standard: the relics healed diseases, „many different ailments“, and had the power of driving out „unclean spirits“.⁵⁴

The early history of the hermit's relics attests to the high standing he soon acquired in his surroundings. In Teodosije's time, they were already dismembered and distributed - moreover, if his testimony is to be trusted, the saint's head and limbs were taken away very quickly after his revelation, „while still lying in the desert“.⁵⁵ Except for documentary value, for it offers data about the condition of the relics confirmed by later sources as well,⁵⁶ this statement in itself is of great interest for the understanding of beliefs and customs associated with the veneration of relics. The claim according to which parts of Petar's body „were taken by Christ-loving people and transferred with great love and faith to Constantine's city, and some parts were snatched and taken away by others“,⁵⁷ is an invaluable testimony,

⁵² see Д. Поповић, *Моштини светиоѡ Сава* ин: Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији (in press).

⁵³ Е. Е. Голубинский, *История канонизации святых в русской церкви*, Москва 1903, pp.27-28, pp.264-270; А.-М.М. Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium*, The Posthumous Miracles of the Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople by Theoktistos the Stoudite, Brookline Massachusetts, 1983, pp.21-30 (with older literature); С. Galatariotou, *op. cit.*, pp.81-87 (with a bibliography).

⁵⁴ *Life*, p.673; translation, p.287. On the types of miracles performed by saints, see H.J. Magouilias, *The Lives of Byzantine Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Century A.D.: Sorcery, Relics and Icons*, Byzantium T. XXXVII 1967 (1968), pp.228-269; E. Patlagean, *Saintete et pouvoir* in: *The Byzantine Saint* ed. S. Hackel, Birmingham 1981, pp.88-105; a classification of miracles based on the example of St Loukas of Stiris is presented by C.L. Connor, *Art and Miracles in Medieval Byzantium. The Crypt at Hosios Loukas and its Frescoes*, Princeton 1991, pp.93-100 (with older literature).

⁵⁵ *Life*, p.673; translation, p.288. If taken literally, this statement of Teodosije's would point to the conclusion that at the time immediately following Petar's revelation, his hermitage was still not transformed into a church - for in that case this area could not have been designated as a „desert“.

⁵⁶ The note in question dates from 1703, and is found in a manuscript of the monastery of Crna Reka, see Љ. Стојановић, *Сѡари срѡски зайиси и најѡиси*, vol. 2, Beograd 1903, no. 3230 (further in the text *Зайиси и најѡиси*).

⁵⁷ *Life*, p.674; translation, p. 288.

rare in Serbian hagiography, to the occurrence widespread in the Middle Ages, denoted by the researchers by the term *furta sacra* - holy theft.⁵⁸ This was motivated by a strong, empathic belief into the protective power of the relics of saints.⁵⁹ From the theological viewpoint, it can be explained by the belief held by early Christian theologians that the force of each, even the smallest, particle of the saints' relics, remained undiminished.⁶⁰

Petar's revelation took place at the time when an anchoritic community already existed around the hermitage in Koriša, founded by his disciples who lived in nearby caves. They continued the heritage of their teacher practicing ascetic virtues and were certainly most meritorious for treasuring the shrine in Koriša and spreading its reputation. What the interior organization of this community was like, what its status was within the Bishopric of Prizren, and were any works conducted for the needs of the cult in the wider area of the hermitage - are the questions to which the sources do not provide any answer. However, on the basis of present-day knowledge, it is possible to gain at least a general view of the courses which the cult took from Petar's revelation until Teodosije's arrival.

The degree of the cult's development and its content were seen in a completely different light after it had been recently established that a *Service* to Petar of Koriša had been written before Teodosije produced one. Its oldest copy has survived in Chilandar manuscript no.479. The service contains several elements determining it as chronologically older than Teodosije's composition. The first is the very title which discloses the initial stage of veneration, since Petar of Koriša is „attached to“, that is, is celebrated together with the Apostles Peter and Paul. Besides this, the Chilandar service is of a simpler structure and comprises excerpts from *typika* bearing on the manner in which liturgy is celebrated - this points to the period of the still unsettled liturgical practice, typical of the pre-Jerusa-

⁵⁸ P.J. Geary, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Princeton 1990.

⁵⁹ see Y. Duval, *Auprès des saints corps et ème. L'inhumation „ad sanctos“ dans la chrétienté d'Orient et d'Occident du IIIe au VIIe siècle*, Paris 1988, especially the chapter „La sépulture et l'opitulatio sanctorum“, pp. 171-200.

⁶⁰ H. Delehay, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, Bruxelles 1927, especially pp. 53-80, 117-119; E.D. Hunt, *The Traffic in Relics: Some Late Roman Evidence in: Byzantine Saint*, pp.179-180; see also the fundamental study of N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d' un droit*, Paris 1975, pp.32-67.

lem liturgical tradition.⁶¹ The study of its content has ascertained that the service reflects the former, more directly perceived stage of the cult: clear facts and cosy atmosphere, concrete narration and a series of vivid episodes about the healing powers and miracles of the saint from Koriša - are notably different from Teodosije's metaphorical expression and poetic messages of a more abstract content.⁶²

The discovery that a service to Petar of Koriša was written approximately in the last third of the 13th century opens other questions as well. Such a cult, already established, could not but exert some influence on the monastic community itself, including its physical surroundings. Petar's hermitage must have been the centre of the cult and the chief objective of the pilgrims. Adapted and painted at an earlier period, it certainly represented „God's church“ in the full sense of the word, which primarily had cult and commemorative functions. However, that small space could hardly satisfy all the needs of the monastic community, especially the regular, liturgical ones. It is therefore logical to assume that in this phase a church may have been erected in Koriša. In the complex of the present-day monastery there are some remains which could be indicative in this sense. Namely, in the continuation of a narrow path, east of the hermitage, the space expanding in the shape of a shallow rock shelter is occupied by the surviving fragments of a structure. Of it, the eastern wall with a niche in the apse, a part of the southern and trace of the western wall with the remains of the lateral side of the entring aperture, have been preserved.⁶³ Former researchers were of the opinion that this structure was an integral part of the large church built in the 14th century. However, its position and shape, as well as the relation to the large church in terms of construction, give grounds for the assumption that the building in question is a separate, chronologically older structure. One fragment of the wall, found beneath the later edifice, could perhaps be attributed to a possible earlier phase. In that case, it would represent the trace of a substructure expanding the space below the eastern structure and making it more accessible. In short, this eastern edifice could

⁶¹ Т. Суботин-Голубовић, *О двама службама свейом Пејџру Коришком* (in press). At an earlier time, in the study of the joint service to the Holy Apostles Petar and Paul and St Petar of Koriša, it was supposed that it could be older than Teodosije's in the liturgical sense, see Т. Поповић, И. Шпадијер, *op. cit.*

⁶² И. Шпадијер, *Култи свейише. ња и насџанак службе* (in press).

⁶³ О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, p. 412, ill. 3.

be an older church of small dimensions, subsequently incorporated into the larger shrine, as its bema.⁶⁴

On the basis of what has been said above, a general picture of the content of the cult and the degree of its development at this stage - mostly belonging to the second half of the 13th century - could be reconstructed in the following manner: at that time, the veneration of the hermit from Koriša was of a local character, but had an already established form. True, Petar still did not have a *Long Life*, but the main conditions for the practice of the cult were created: the *Service* to him existed, a final composition designed for the liturgical celebration, and the relics themselves, holy and miraculous - the embodied manifestation of divine grace and, as such, the subject of religious practice in the broadest sense of the word. At this stage, the cult must have affected the physical shape and organization of the wider area around the shrine in Koriša. Undoubtedly, in the time of Petar's disciples a specific kind of the monastic colony was formed there - a community of cave dwellings of the type appearing all over the Christian world - from Palestine and Cappadocia, Russia and Georgia, up to Balkan lands and south Italy.⁶⁵ Its purpose was identical, for Mt Koriša was already known as „holy“

⁶⁴ In that case, whether this small eastern structure could be taken to be the bema within the newly erected building, remains an open issue. In view of the gently curved form of the eastern wall of the new church, we should not disregard the possibility that it remained a separate part of the building, entered from the main shrine. This question deserves further consideration, the more so since the spatial relation of the altar and naos, resulting from the accepted reconstruction of the ground plan, does not render possible the celebration of a normal service.

⁶⁵ Y. Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*, New Haven-London 1992; J. Patrich, *op. cit.* (Palestine); L. Rodley, *op. cit.* - with an exhaustive list of older literature (Cappadocia); Т. Х. Чубинашвили, *Пещерны монастыри Давид-Гареджи*, Тбилиси 1948 (Georgia); the monastic settlements of this type in the Kijevo-Pecherskaya Lavra were last discussed by Т. А. Бобровський in his doctoral dissertation, *Печерні монастирі і печерне чернецтво в історії та культурі середньовічного Києва*, автореферат дисертації, Київ, 1995; Id. К вопросу о топонимии и датировке древнерусских пещерных монастырей, *Российская археология. отдельная отпечатки*, Москва 1993, pp.122-129 (with older literature); I am greatly indebted to my colleague Timur Bobrovskij for letting me have the manuscript of his dissertation, unfortunately still not published. А.Ханджийский, *op. cit.* (Bulgaria); *Vestigile rupestre din muntii Buzaului*, ed. С. Ștefan, Buzău 1980; E. Lupu, *Observații asupra vestigilor rupestre din zona Carpatilor de Curbură*, Mousaios Vo. IV, Partea II (1994), pp.17-33, with older literature (the Carpathians); D. Nicol, *op. cit.* (Meteora); Α. Λαμπρούλου, Η. Ἀναγωστακης, Β. Κοπη, Μ. Λεοντσηνη, Α. Πανοπουλου, Ὁ μοναχισμος

at the time of Teodosije's arrival.⁶⁶ Taking into consideration the number and disposition of the caves in Koriša, their mutual relation, as well as the actual possibility that an older church existed, we can entertain the thought that as regards its organization, the settlement in Koriša functioned as a *lavra*.⁶⁷ That being the case, the well-known and widely spread pattern of eastern cave-monasticism would be materialized here: around the cave of a renounced hermit, a settlement of kelliotai was formed first, to have grown in the next stage into a *koinobion* - a more complex cenobitic form of the community.⁶⁸

The next important phase of the cult began with Teodosije's arrival at Koriša, at the invitation of the abba Grigorije, the former eikonomos of Chilandar and the head of the monastic community in Koriša at that time.⁶⁹ At his persuasion, as he himself states, Teodosije undertook the writing of Petar's life and, afterwards, a service to him. He put the obtained information about the life and exploits of the hermit from Koriša into the hagiographic framework, having described them with the help of the selected formulae of ascetic literature. Starting from concrete, and, as it seems, trustworthy details, he transposed the personality of Petar of Koriša into a model character, in all aspects of his life. On several occasions the hagiographer himself highlights Petar's paragons: at the very beginning of the *Life* he says that the hermit from Koriša „performed exploits in the last generation, but not worse than the exceptional desert fathers“.⁷⁰ The *Ser-*

στην Πελοποννησο κατα τη μεση βυζαντινη περιοδο, in: Trends in Orthodox monasticism 9th-20th centuries, Athens 1996; pp.77-108 (the Peloponnese); *La civiltà rupestre nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia: ricerche e problemi*, ed. C.D. Fonseca, Genova 1975 (south Italy).

⁶⁶ This is explicitly stated by Teodosije, when he recounts how Petar climbed „to the mountain called holy“, *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271.

⁶⁷ On *lavra* as a kind of a monastic community, but also its physical structure, J. Patrich, *op. cit.*, p.57, p.136.

⁶⁸ This mechanism has been most thoroughly investigated on the example of Palestine by J. Patrich, *op. cit.* passim; for Mt Athos, see R. Morris, *The Origins of Athos* in: Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism, London 1996, pp.37-46; this pattern has been researched to a great detail in the case of St John of Rila and his monastery, see И.Дуйчев, *Рилскиот светец*, София 1947 (repr. 1990); for general considerations, see D. Papachryssathou, *La vie monastique dans les campagnes byzantines du VIIIe au XIe siècles*, REB 43 (1973), pp.158-182.

⁶⁹ On the identification of this personality and his status, see Д.Костин, *op. cit.*, pp.371-372; P. Катин, *Манастир свеѣоѣ Пеѣра Коришкоѣ*, pp.115-116 (with older literature).

⁷⁰ *Life*, p.649; translation, p.265.

vice puts it even more precisely that Petar took his clue from „the life of St Anthony full of good deeds“. ⁷¹ In his work Teodosije indeed presents a well-rounded picture of the „life and deed“ of the hermit, which includes all the prescribed stages and *topoi*. These are: of well-born parents, from his early youth he displayed a tendency to the spiritual essence of life, which grows into the decision to withdraw from society and take monastic vows. It is followed by the period spent in community, as preparation for greater feats. They begin with his departure to the desert where the ascetic, undisturbed, strives to accomplish his goal - acquiring virtue and the continuous feeling of divine closeness. Those who endure the long struggle and overcome many difficult temptations, achieve „divine-like perfection“ and become „angels of this earth“. It is only at that moment that, guided by the evangelical message about love towards his neighbours, the hermit is ready to return among the people. As an old man he accepts followers and instructs them to the eremitic way of life, which in the end results in the establishment of a monastic community. ⁷²

Teodosije described not only Petar's life in its entirety, but also the types of his exploits, employing the conventional *topoi* of ascetism. He found them in original works: the Lives of saints, especially in the Life of Anthony the Great, in the Apophthegms of the fathers and the Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos, in the Ladder of Paradise of John Klimax, as well as the literature of eastern pateriks. The line of Petar's exploits was gradual and based on the triad of rejection, established in the Life of St Anthony. These are the rejection of this world, overcoming lust, and, finally, defeating the demon of pride. ⁷³ Thus Petar, after withdrawing from people, first conquered his body, in the manner to a great degree resembling the practice of the Egyptian and Palestinian, and especially the radical Syrian fathers. He does not possess any assets - „he had nothing in the cave“, and he clads himself in „a coarse hair garment“. ⁷⁴ He embarks on an extraordinary fast following the model of the so-called „grass-eaters“ (βοσκοί), ⁷⁵ so that

⁷¹ *Service*, p.265.

⁷² On the stages of anchoritism, see J.A. Festiguère, *op. cit.*, pp.42-57; a very instructive discussion in Д. Богдановић, *Јован Лествичник у византијској и српској књижевности*, Београд 1968, *passim*.

⁷³ *Vita et conversatio S.P.N. Antonii*, PG T XXVI, pp. 835-976. These stages of temptation are regularly mentioned in pateriks, as a common place.

⁷⁴ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271; on dwelling and dressing of eastern anchorites, see J. Patrich, *op. cit.*., pp.210-220 (with sources and literature).

⁷⁵ Y. Hirschfeld, *op. cit.*., pp.213-222; J. Patrich, *op. cit.*., pp.42-43 (with sources and literature). On diet, as well as other aspects of anchoritic life in the Nitrean

he lives not only without prepared food - „without any dish and lighting smoke“, but also „breadless“, content with water and „wild plants“.⁷⁶ The manner of sleeping belongs to the same, radical models, forbidding lying: therefore Petar „took little sleep sitting, leaning against a rock“.⁷⁷ The issue in question is a reliable method helping the ascetic to stand vigils - for „the wakeful eye purifies the mind“ - and to focus his attention on the thoughts of God.⁷⁸ Petar's standing all night long, his prostrations, „sweet tears“, prayers and singing psalms, also belonging to the unavoidable patterns of the ascetic practice, were also aimed at the same goal.⁷⁹ Teodosije's comment on such exploits of his is very indicative. Although „in a way merciless, awkward and relentless“ to his own body, the hermit from Koriša remained „physically fit and tireless“, like Anthony the Great, Sabas, and many other rigorous hermits.⁸⁰

However, the chief temptation of the hermit from Koriša was his battle with demons. According to ancient beliefs, they reside in surroundings similar to Petar's dwelling - on inaccessible cliffs, in abysses and caves, acting like living, active beings.⁸¹ They expose Petar, like „the ancient, great ascetics“ to various attacks: they produce „a dreadful rattle inspiring great fear“; as to St Anthony, they appear „in the form of various beasts“

desert, authentic testimonies were left by Rufinus, a presbyter from Aquileia, who sojourned there at the end of the 4th century, *Жизнь пустынных отцовъ, творение пресвитера Руфина, Свято-Троицка Сергіева Лавра 1898, (repr. 1990), p.27 and passim.*

⁷⁶ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271.

⁷⁷ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271. On the manner in which the monks slept in East-Christian anchoritic communities, see J. Patrich, *op. cit.*, p.221.

⁷⁸ On the purpose of vigils, see *Лествица*, Step 20, pp.122-123. St Arsenios was unsurpassed in this form of hardship. In one of his sayings he claims that the monk, if anchorite, can do with only one hour of sleep, see *Древен ѡйѡерик*, София 1994, p.26.

⁷⁹ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271. On these forms of ascetism, see Д. Богдановић, *Свѡйи Јован Лествичник*, especially pp. 81-98; see also *Лествица*, *passim*; *Древен ѡйѡерик*, *passim*.

⁸⁰ *Life*, p.657; translation, p.272. The physical fitness and longevity of anchorites seem to have been a widespread occurrence, see D.J. Chitty, *op. cit.* *passim*.

⁸¹ On surroundings in which demons dwell and act, see A. J. Festugière, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-39; the *topos* of demons and their function in Byzantine hagiography was discussed by E. Patlagean, *Ancienne hagiographie byzantine et histoire sociale*, Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations, 23e Année - No 1 (1968), especially pp. 112-117. A dangerous, rocky landscape, very much resembling Petar's dwelling place, was described by the presbyterian Rufin, when recounting about the abba Pitirion, a disciple of St Antony, *Жизнь пустынных отцовъ*, pp.72-73.

or attempt to push the hermit from the rock, and „on rough stones they tore at his body“.⁸² Petar’s struggle against demons takes a dramatic course and his ascetism reaches its limits when the fiends expose him to „reveries“.⁸³ John Klimax describes such a state of consciousness as „being out of one’s mind“ and „perceiving that which does not exist“; demons appear in the visions accompanying it „conjuring up our next of kin greaving or dying“.⁸⁴ Thus Petar, tormented by feelings of guilt, saw the sister abandoned by him.⁸⁵ With an enormous effort, the hermit from Koriša escaped the danger of losing his mind - the peril looming over most radical anchorites.⁸⁶ This occurred only after the „fierce struggle“ in which he overcame the greatest evil, the demon of pride. According to Teodosije, Petar achieved this victory with divine assistance - in conformity with the moral of the Ladder of Paradise that „the proud can only be healed by God“.⁸⁷ It was at that moment that his path of ascetism was completed and rounded, having been crowned with the greatest reward - permanent inner tranquillity.⁸⁸

The content and achievements of Teodosije’s Life do not only include the sublimation of Petar’s character, but also that of the space in which he performed feats. Although Petar was undoubtedly the one who „discovered“ Mt Koriša and „spiritualized“ it by his exploits, it is to Teodosije’s merit that this setting was elevated to the level of universal meaning and messages. By means of conventional *topoi* he described the desert at the foot of Rusenica as paradise, a metaphor of man’s natural state before Adam’s fall where he, like the hermit from Koriša, resided together with beasts. Inaccessible cliffs with abysses and caves are invested with a special meaning: from ancient times, they have been experienced as an area holy by nature, a miraculous, divine creation, its very character inspiring to

⁸² The fact that more than one third of Petar’s Life is devoted to the struggle with demons is very telling, Life, pp.657-666; translation, pp.272-281.

⁸³ Life, p.657; translation, p.272.

⁸⁴ Лесївица, p.30.

⁸⁵ Life, pp.657-658; translation, p.273. Petar’s inner struggle, from the psyshoanalytic vantage point, is discussed by В. Јеротић, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ See Д. Богдановић, *Јован Лесївичник*, pp.119-125. Sources registered the existence of special hospitals for anchorites who lost their mind because their way of living. Such an institution existed in the Monastery of Theodosios in Palestine, see J. Patrich. *op. cit.* p.293.

⁸⁷ Лесївица, Step 13, pp.131-137.

⁸⁸ On tranquility as a mystic occurrence and its various aspects, see Д. Богдановић, *Јован Лесївичник*, pp.78-80.

a great deed.⁸⁹ Rocky peaks on which many celebrated hermits performed exploits are designated in ascetic literature by the term „στήλη“, frequently followed by the epithet „ἄχειροποίητος“, which means they were considered to be pillars „not made by hands“. These sources refer to their inhabitants as στηλίτης, like Niketas and Symeon from Cappadocia, Athanasios from Latmos, Neophytes of Cyprus, or several hermits from Meteora.⁹⁰ To the words of his hagiographer, the recluse from Koriša belonged to the most devout, and therefore the most venerated, category of hermits. In the *Life*, as well as in the *Service*, his rock is explicitly compared to a pillar.⁹¹ It is, at the same time, „the rock of Petar’s tomb“. ⁹² In this fashion, through the identification of the site of his exploits with that of the eternal rest, one of the core ideas of eremitism was emphasized - living in eschatological reality, that is, permanent living with Christ.⁹³ This eschatological sense is also present in some important poetic devices exploited by Teodosije in the *Service*. There the desert in Koriša is compared not only to paradise and the sky, but also to the city from which Petar observes „the celestial Jerusalem on this earth“. ⁹⁴ This idea, one of the key ones in Teodosije’s composition, points to the utmost objective of eastern eremitism. It was achieved by St Sabas of Palestine who, according to the well-known and frequently quoted testimony of Cyril of Skythopolis, transformed the desert into a city.⁹⁵

As previously emphasized, Teodosije’s *Service* comprises patterns reflecting the degree of the already formed cult, with the established content and liturgy. *The Service to Petar of Koriša*, however, conveys an extremely important, concrete piece of information, contained in the troparion

⁸⁹ see P. Boglioni, *Pelerinage et religion populaire au Moyen Age*, in: Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen, Zürich 1984, p.70. These natural characteristics of anchoritic settlements were discussed by C. Galataiotou, *op. cit.*, pp.104-105; J. Patrich, *op. cit.*, p.7, pp.41-42 (with sources).

⁹⁰ This category of saints, who, regarding the form of ascetism and its motivation, belong to stylites, was singled out by H. Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, Subsidia Hagiografica 14, Bruxelles - Paris 1923. These examples, which are numerous, are discussed by G.P. Schiemenz, *Die Kapelle des Styliten Niketas in den Weinbergen von Ortanisar*, Jahrbuch der osterreichischen Byzantinistik, 18 Bd. (1969), p. 254-256 (with bibliography).

⁹¹ *Life*, p.656; translation, p.271; *Service*, p.216.

⁹² *l.c.*

⁹³ see footnote 48.

⁹⁴ *Service*, p.216, p.225, p.228, p.229.

⁹⁵ J. Patrich, *op. cit.*, p.353.

of the ninth song: „On the gracious day, with the divine, holy and supreme disciples, the celebration of your memory was established...”⁹⁶ It was perceived long ago that these verses would attest to the fact that the veneration of Petar’s memory was established by the decision of a church council.⁹⁷ It was the last point of the gradual evolvement of his celebration which assumed a customary course: the revelation and confirmation of Petar’s holiness were accompanied by his increased veneration, then the first celebration compositions came into existence.⁹⁸ These more direct and spontaneous expressions of the revelation of the saint, found in the older Chilandar service, became superfluous after canonization, so that in Teodosije’s work they were replaced by messages of a more universal nature.⁹⁹ It is common knowledge that the gradual formation of a saint’s cult is typical of Eastern Christianity, Serbia included. A formal, council procedure of canonization - from the 10th century lying in the foundation of the Roman Catholic *canonisatio* - was registered in Byzantium as late as the last quarter of the 13th century. The information contained in the *Service to Petar of Koriša* is invaluable, for it represents rare evidence of the existence of such a practice among the Serbs. At the same time, it is an important contribution to the understanding of the history of East-Christian canonization, the more so since this question has still not been the subject of extensive scientific treatment.¹⁰⁰

In all probability, Teodosije’s activities in Koriša and the initiative of the abba Grigorije were a well thought-out move, carried out with the support of the spiritual, as well as the secular, elite. By proclaiming a local anchorite as saint, for the first time an extremely important monastic pattern was realized in Serbia, according to the highest contemporary standards. It is an ascetic-stylite of the most rigorous mould, who in his own time and surroundings repeats the exploits of his holy paragons. The sense of the accomplished undertaking should be viewed in a wider context of the epoch, namely the period of the first two decades of the 14th century. At

⁹⁶ *Service*, p.227.

⁹⁷ Ђ. Трифуновић, *Стара српска црквена поезија*, О Србљаку, Београд 1970, p.80, footnote 30.

⁹⁸ On this issue see Л. Мирковић, *Увртијење десјотога Стефана Лазаревића у ред светијте.џа*, Богословље year II, no. 3 (1927), pp.161-177; Ђ. Трифуновић, *op. cit.*, pp.18-20.

⁹⁹ И. Шпадијер, *Култи светијте.џа и насјанак службе* (in press).

¹⁰⁰ This problem was dealt with in the paper: Д. Поповић, *О насјанку култи светијте Симеона*, in: *Стефан Немања - свети Симеон миројочиви, историја и предање*, with the bibliography in f. 49 (in press).

that time the Serbian state was summing up the results of its century-long existence, celebrating it with a series of actions in the field of spiritual culture and literary activity. It was a period of synthesis and a kind of „crowning undertaking“, when the introduction of new, and the codification of existing hagiographic and hymnographic products marked the creation of the new foundations of the cults of Serbian saints.¹⁰¹ Petar of Koriša was incorporated into this „council of the Serbian saints“ - at the core of which were „the holy two“, the ruler-monk St Simeon and the head of the church and patron of learning St Sava¹⁰² - as a „new hermit“ and „a martyr without a sword“, that is, the martyr of conscience.¹⁰³ He was the first Serbian national saint to perform a radical and complete ascetic exploit, having thus set the uttermost spiritual parameter in local surroundings, very important in the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁴ It is not circumstantial that he is the only Serbian medieval saint who did not come from the ranks of secular or spiritual dignitaries. A major part in imbuing this programme with meaning must have belonged to Chilandar, to whose spiritual sphere both Teodosije and the abba Grigorije belonged, and where the original patterns of eremitism were omnipresent reality. As a matter of fact, the tie between the Athonite monastery and Koriša was very close: these regions became a metochion of Chilandar perhaps as early as the time of Stefan Nemanja, and it is certain that they were a metochion of Chilandar from the epoch of King Milutin.¹⁰⁵

The official canonization of Petar of Koriša and the importance acquired by the cult had a direct impact on the spreading and growth of his shrine. More extensive works were probably undertaken very soon, in all likelihood in the time of the abba Grigorije. The construction of the new, large church should be dated to this period.¹⁰⁶ A narrow area in front of the

¹⁰¹ Д. Богдановић, foreward in: *Теодосије*, Житија, pp. 18-23.

¹⁰² *Idem*, pp. 22-23; I. Špadijer, *op. cit.*.

¹⁰³ These attributes of Petar's are encountered in the Eulogy included in the closing section of the *Life*: *Life* pp. 670-671; translation, p. 285. On martyrs of conscience, see H. Delehayе, *Sanctus, essai sur le culte des saints dans l'antiquite*, Bruxelles 1927, pp. 109-113; see also B. J. Бурић, С. Ђирковић, В. Корач, *Пехка њајријуаришија*, Београд 1990, pp. 160-161, f. 34 (with literature on this issue).

¹⁰⁴ In Bulgaria, St John of Rila had a similar role and significance, see И. Дуйчев, *op. cit.*, p. 100 and passim; the importance of these saints for society was discussed by P. Brown, *op. cit.*.

¹⁰⁵ Р. Катих, *Хиландарска мейхохија свейоџ Пеџира Коршикоџ*, pp. 217-223 (with a list of sources and older literature).

¹⁰⁶ Former researchers differently dated its erection - to the period from the 13th until the 14th centuries, see О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, p. 411, f. 11.

hermitage, at the place where the cliff vertically descends to the lower platform, was expanded to that purpose, and supported by massive pillars and arcades on which the south wall of the church reclined. Although only scanty remains of this, once monumental, and certainly most significant object in the entire complex, were uncovered in excavations, the ground plan and outlines of the church could be at least partially reconstructed. Except for the aforementioned east structure, the church must have had a naos and narthex, and was probably barrel-vaulted. It was approached from the west, by a long, covered staircase, partly carved in the rock, and partly built. In such a disposition of space, Petar's hermitage became the parekklesion of the large church.¹⁰⁷ Both buildings were decorated with new frescoes, of which only fragments have survived to the present day. In the hermitage, the original layer of paintings was covered with a new one, of which the image of Christ the Ancient of Days was preserved in the calotte, parts of the Divine Liturgy below it, and the zone featuring the portraits of the prophets, depicted in opulent foliage. In the large church, there are still the remaining parts of the frescoes on the face of the rock formerly making its northern wall. In the first zone, south of the entrance, is located a monumental portrait of St Nicholas, with the warrior-saints and the figure of a diacon behind him. In the second zone, except for the scene of the Raising of Lazarus, several scenes from the cycle of the Virgin are preserved in the eastern portion.¹⁰⁸ Former researchers roughly dated this more recent layer of wall-paintings into the mid-14th century. Its programme and stylistic characteristics would deserve, however, to be examined again, in a wider perspective of the paintings fragmentary preserved in the anchoritic communities around Prizren and on the territory of Metohija.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Idem*, pp.411-415, ill. 3, 4.

¹⁰⁸ The most exhaustive study on the earlier layer of wall-paintings still is P. Љубинковић, *op. cit.*, pp.98-110; on the cycle of the Virgin, Н. Антић-Комненовић, *l.c.* Some parts of more recent paintings were destroyed in 1933, having been removed by two Russian painters-copyists who were looking for a portrait of St Petar of Koriša, see М. Јовановић, *Поводом ишћања наших сѣарина*, Хришћанско дело, year IV, no. 3 (Скопље 1938), pp.216-217.

¹⁰⁹ М. Ивановић, *Неколико средњовековних сѣоменика Коршике ѓоре*, pp.311-313 (on the wall-paintings in the so-called „Jelena's hermitage“ next to the monastery of Koriša); *Id.* in: *Задужбине Косова*, 509-510 (the remains of wall-paintings in the hermitage of St Nicholas near Prizren), p.395 (wall-paintings in the Belaje hermitage in the ravine of the Dečanska Bistrica); *Id.* *Исјоснице У љарице и остѣаци срѣских*

The built-up tomb, with the remains of skeletons found in situ, situated in the central part of the big church to the west of the entrance to the hermitage, certainly represents an important component. Its conspicuous position in the church has already led researchers to the conclusion that the abba Grigorije may have been buried there.¹¹⁰ Such a choice of burial site, since early Christian times known as the burial *ad sanctos*, next to a saint, would in that case represent another, indirect but convincing evidence of the veneration of Petar and his high standing.¹¹¹ The status of the saint from Koriša is nevertheless best perceived in the light of diplomatic material. Thus we find out from Dušan's charter to the Holy Archangels (1343) that the newly erected church was dedicated to him.¹¹² The Serbian ruler himself, the Emperor Dušan with his family, came to pay respect to Petar's relics. This was registered in the charter issued by him on 17 May 1355. Moreover, in the sancion of this document he threatens the violators of its terms with the curse not only of the Lord and the Mother of God, but also of St Petar the hermit.¹¹³

In the middle of the 14th century, if not earlier, the monastic community in Koriša was certainly organized as a koinobion. This is confirmed by the structures unearthed within the complex. To the north of the church, a multi-storey edifice was erected between two high rocks, containing cells for living and, perhaps, a refectory. The cave, formerly walled up, standing next to the foot of the staircase to the north, was also used in that period. Besides this, the space west of the staircase, which has not been archaeologically investigated, was occupied by some buildings, perhaps economic. The entire complex was encompassed by a massive wall which

црква у сливу реке Мируше, средњовековне Љубижде, Саопштења XIX (1987), pp. 208-210.

¹¹⁰ О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, p.413.

¹¹¹ D. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp.51-98; see also I. Herklotz, „*Sepulcra*“ e „*Monumenta*“ del Medioevo, *Studi sull' arte sepolcrale in Italia*, Roma 1985, pp.28-32.

¹¹² By this charter, the church of St Petar, hermit and miracle-maker, is granted to the use of the abba Grigorije in his lifetime, as a compensation for the new church of St Petar - the shrine erected by Grigorije in the neighbouring village of Koriša and presented to Dušan's endowment, the monastery of the Holy Archangels, see С. Новаковић, *Законски споменици*, p.412. Grigorije's church is mentioned in Dušan's general granting charter of 1348, which confirmed the metochion of the monastery of Chilandar in this region - including, among other things, the church of St Petar together with the village of Koriša, *Ibid.* p.421

¹¹³ А. Соловјев, *op. cit.*, p.26, p.29.

has only been partially preserved, in the west and south.¹¹⁴ To our present knowledge, the monastery reached its peak during the reign of King, that is Emperor, Dušan. It was certainly well provided for materially, thanks to the contributions of the pilgrims, as well as the estates presented for „one’s soul“. One of these was „contributed and written down“ by Dušan’s feudatory Tošoje.¹¹⁵ In this epoch, the „desert“ from the time of Petar of Koriša obviously turned into the centre of the cult and a well-organized, wealthy monastery, cared for by the most prominent members of the society of that time. Finally, as the ultimate consequence of such a development, seen for many times in eastern monasticism, the community from Koriša became the source of the powerful spiritual influence. In the ravines of the nearby streams on the slopes of Mt Šara, in the surroundings closely resembling the desert of Koriša, a series of new anchoritic settlements emerged in the 14th century.¹¹⁶ Their inhabitants practiced original ascetism, having before their eyes, alongside the ancient paragons, the immediate example of Petar the hermit.

The further development of the cult of Petar from Koriša evolved simultaneously with the historical circumstances in Serbian lands. After its ascent in the second half of the 13th and flourishment in the mid-14th century, it was gradually reduced to local scope after the demise of the Empire and the subsequent downfall of the Serbian state. The fate of the monastery was certainly determined by the fact that after this period it ceased to be a metochion of Chilandar.¹¹⁷ The cult of Petar the hermit and his monastery continued their existence in accordance with circumstances. In the second half of the 16th century, after the restoration of the Patriarchate of Peć, the community of Koriša experienced revival. Some smaller additions and repairs were done in the monastic complex.¹¹⁸ At that time, the *pomenik* of Koriša, an important source for the history of the monastery, was copied out.¹¹⁹ This manuscript conveys a very important fact about the relics of St Petar. It is found in the text about the act of the ablution of the relics making

¹¹⁴ О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, pp.415-417.

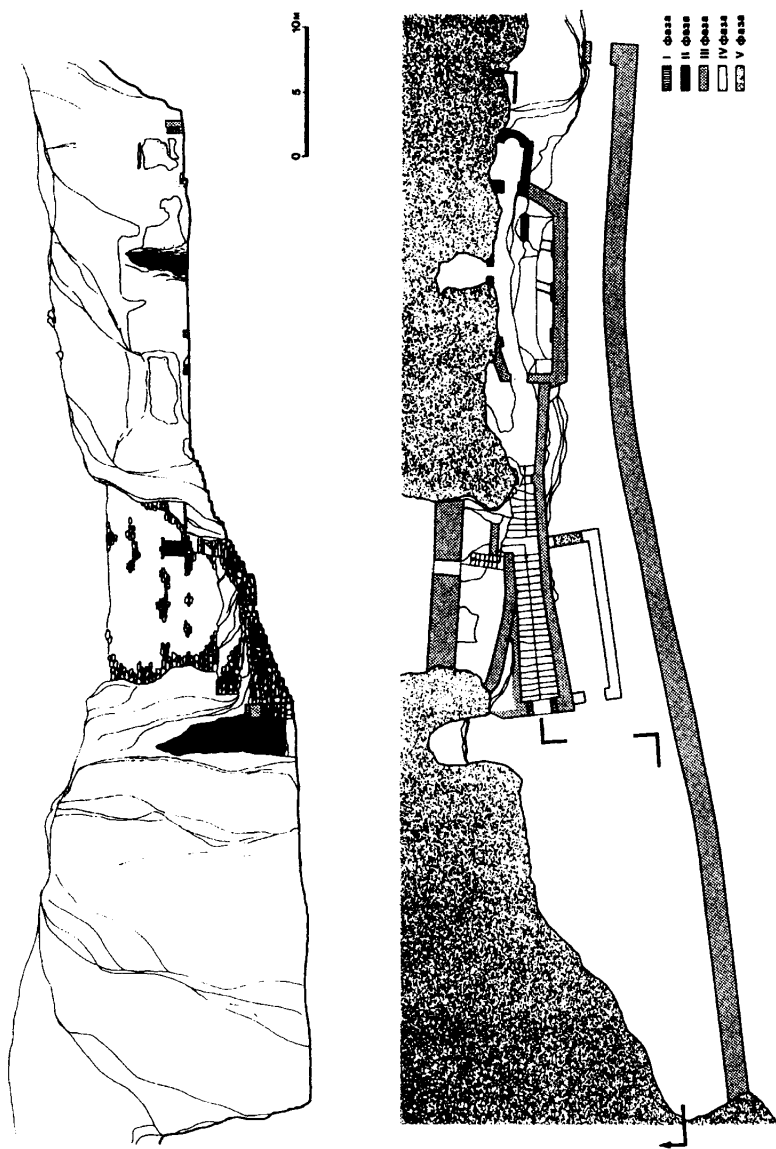
¹¹⁵ А. Соловјев, *op. cit.*, p.27.

¹¹⁶ see f. 36.

¹¹⁷ Р. Катић, *Манастир светиоџ Пеџира Коришкоџ*, p.119.

¹¹⁸ О. Марковић, *op. cit.*, p.418.

¹¹⁹ see f. 49.



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mention of the obligatory readings and actions performed on that occasion. It also contains the instruction that after the final act, „ВОДУ ВЪЗЫМАЮТЬ НА ПОТРЕБѢ“ („they take water for their needs“), which points to its usage for healing purposes.¹²⁰ The monastery of St Petar of Koriša persevered, treasuring its relics, under the extremely difficult circumstances of Ottoman rule. When there were no conditions for the preservation of the relics, they were hidden away into the much safer rock-cut monastery of the Holy Archangels in Crna Reka.¹²¹ The translation seems to have occurred at the close of the 17th century, in the period of general turmoil caused by Austro-Turkish war, when many Serbian monasteries were abandoned. Such a chronology of the translation - differently determined in former scholarship - rests on a notice from 1709 from the covers of a Menaion treasured in the monastery of Crna Reka: that whoever misappropriated the book from the church was threatened with the curse of the shrine's patron, but also that of St Petar - which would mean that in the first decade of the 18th century the cult of the hermit from Koriša had already been rooted in Crna Reka.¹²²

In the monastery of Crna Reka the relics of St Petar of Koriša commenced a new life, the details of which are yielded by a number of written sources, as well as numerous traditions, written and oral.¹²³ Hence the relics had the same destiny as the bodies of other Serbian saints, which, as the greatest national sanctity, were transferred before a danger, to safe places,

¹²⁰ SANU Manuscript 123, l. 11v; see В. Мошин, *op. cit.*, p.154: on the abluion of relics, see А.Малцев, *Чины ѿѡребеия и некоторых особенныя и древняя церковня службы Православной Католижеской Восточной церкви*, Берлинъ 1898, pp.385-395.

¹²¹ Д. Бојовић, *Манастир Црна Ријека*, Приштина 1994 (with older literature). That in the 17th century Crna Reka was considered to be a safe place is confirmed by the fact that the relics of Stefan the First-Crowned had been treasured there for some time before they were translated to Studenica in 1696, see *Зайиси и наййиси*, no. 2024.

¹²² *Зайиси и наййиси*, no. 7376. Д. Бојовић drew attention to this note, *op. cit.*, p.29. This fact was overlooked by R. Katić, who claimed that the translation of the relics to Crna Reka took place in the second half of the 18th century, Р. Катих, *Манастир светѡѡ Пеѡра Коришкоѡ*, pp.121-126 (with the documented and, up to now, most detailed recent history of the monastery of St Petar of Koriša).

¹²³ These data from the 18th and 19th century, refer, as a rule, to the shrine for relics - its manufacture or a gift presented „to the shrine“, *Зайиси и наййиси*, nos. 3230, 8651, 9311, 9314. The traditions relating to the translation of the relics to Crna Reka and their working miracles were collected by Д. Бојовић, *о.с.*, pp.16-21 (with older literature).

where they were carefully treasured. However, there is almost no example of the saints continuing the new life in the surroundings very much resembling the former ones. In Crna Reka, Petar's relics found themselves again in a „God-made cave“, in a roadless and rocky „abode, wonderful for hermits“. It is not accidental that this new monastery with its shrine became a powerful and active hotbed of monasticism in our times. This occurrence, which we, as contemporaries, are observing, or taking part in it, will be treated by future researchers as one of the stages in the development of the cult of the hermit from Koriša.

Translated by Radica Popović

КУЛТ СВЕТОГ ПЕТРА КОРИШКОГ – ЕТАПЕ РАЗВОЈА, ОБРАСЦИ

Резиме

Свети Петар Коришки је најзнаменитији српски пустиножитељ средњег века, уз то и једини који је уврштен у светитеље. Петров светачки лик, облици испољавања и етапе развоја његовог штовања представљају драгоцен извор за разумевање развоја култне праксе и примене аскетских образаца, не само у средњовековној Србији, већ и на ширем подручју источног хришћанства. Култ св. Петра Коришког аутор разматра компаративно, на основу писаних извора и материјалних сведочанстава. Писане изворе чине прославни састави - две Службе и Житије Петра Коришког, дипломатичка грађа и сачувани записи. Изузетну документарну вредност за изучавање овог питања имају материјални извори - остаци коришког манастира код Призрена. Манастир се налази у тешко приступачној клисури Коришке реке и представља комплекс који обухвата више пећина, манастир св.Петра као и суседну Богородичину цркву. Ово светилиште, веома занимљиво по својим градитељским облицима и живописаном програму, истовремено је јединствени пример анахоретске заједнице чија се историја може пратити у њеним главним етапама. Тај развој текао је на следећи начин:

Крајем 12. или на самом почетку 13. века у Коришку гору пристигао је Петар пустиножитељ, и у њеним врлетима пронашао идеални амбијент за подвижнички живот којем је тежио. Он се најпре подвизавао у некој од високих и неприступачних, па стога још увек неистражених пећина, да би се доцније, у нарочитом тренутку свог аскетског пута, настанио у једној од доњих, данас познатој као Петрова испосница. У овој пећини-келији боравио је до краја живота, а након смрти - вероватно негде у четвртој деценији 13. века - ту је и сахрањен, у гробу који се и до данас сачувао. Велики углед који је још у живота Петар стекао својим изузетним аскетским подвизима, као и посмртна знамења светитељства, довели су до поступног стварања његовог култа. Уврштењу једног српског анахорете у ред светитеља сигурно је значајно допринела околност што су ови крајеви након 1219. дошли под српску власт, односно под јурисдикцију српског епископа у Призрену. Такав ток догађаја пресудно је утицао и на обликовање коришког

светилишта. Негде пред крај Петровог живота или одмах након његове смрти, пустињакова келија добила је живопис и из стамбеног преиначена у сакрални простор, док су околне пећине населили Петрови следбеници. У следећој етапи развоја - која би се могла оквирно одредити у другу половину 13. века - Коришка обитељ, са својим пештерама повезаним стазама и можда малом црквом намењеној богослужењу, била је организована као лавра. Њено сакрално језгро, а уједно и циљ бројних поклоничких посета, чиниле су свете и чудотворне мошти Петра пустињака. О степену и облику њиховог штовања сведочи старија Служба коју је, како су то показала најновија истраживања, светитељ добио већ негде у последњој четвртини 13. века.

Нова и кључна етапа у даљем развоју култа, збила се у другој деценији наредног столећа. Боравак Теодосија Хиландарца у Кориши, који треба сматрати промишљеним чином и организованој акцијом, имао је за резултат саборно уврштење Петра Коришког у светитеље и писање нових прославних састава - Житија и Службе. У њима лик Петра пустињака обликован је према врхунским обрасцима источнохришћанског отшелништва. То је аскета-стилит најжешћег кова, који у свом времену и поднебљу понавља подвиг древних пустињских отаца. Смисао овог чина треба сагледавати у ширим оквирима епохе, и то раздобља прве две деценије 14. века, обележених низом синтетичких подухвата на плану духовне културе. Тада је „сабору српских светих“, прикључен и први домаћи отшелник, „нови пустињак“, Нов, висок статус коришког светитеља непосредно се одразио на даљи раст његове обитељи. Негде у трећој или четвртој деценији 14. века она је, замашном градитељском акцијом, претворена у манастир опасан зидовима, са новом великом црквом посвећеном Петру пустиножителу, пространим постројењем за становање и другим пратећим објектима. На врхунцу свог постојања, средином 14. века, монашка заједница у Кориши прерасла је у снажан манастир киновитског типа, блиско повезан са Хиландаром, чији је метох био одраније. Покровитеље је имао међу највишим личностима државе, о чему сведочи и посета коју је цар Душан са породицом учинио Кориши 1355. године. У Кориши је, дакле, у другој половини 14. века заокружен и до краја спроведен један важан монашки образац, успостављен у Палестини, а затим много пута поновљен у источнохришћанским „Светим горама“. У том смислу, карактеристично је и деловање коришког светилишта, које у 14. веку почиње да снажно зрачи у свом окружењу, подстичући настанак бројних, пештерних насеобина.

Након пропасти Царства, а затим и српске државе, култ св. Петра Коришког своди се на локалне оквире и истрајава у складу са приликама турске окупације. Судећи по споменичкој грађи али и писаним изворима - међу којима је нарочито важан Коришки поменик - култ Петра пустиножитеља оживљава у извесној мери након обнове Пећке патријаршије у другој половини 16. века. Под притиском Османлија, вероватно крајем 17. столећа, Коришки манастир замире а мошти Петра пустиножитеља преносе се у Црну Реку. У овом пећинском манастиру, који по својим основним одликама понавља образац првобитног Петровог светилишта, култ коришког пустињака делотворно се упражњава све до наших дана.