Eliso Elizbarashvili (Tbilisi)

Peculiarities of the Phenomenon
of Overcoming Death by Hero and Saint

Cult of hero was one of the most distinctive features of ancient Greece. Based on religious and epic traditions hero is venerated because of his fame during life or unusual manner of death.[1] Late antiquity is marked by substitution of heroic ideal by ideal of sainthood. According to P.Brown, the victory of Christianity in the Late Roman society was not the victory of the one God over the many, it was the victory of man over the institutions of their past.[2] One significant manifestation of this mentality could be found in peculiarities how these two cultures integrate the death in social environment. The goal of my paper is to trace changing perception of the death in the crucial period of transition from antique to Christian ideology. The following issues ought to be discussed: antique background of heroic ideal and the end of antique world, Christian ideology of victory of soul over the body and the notion of Holy War.

In this context it might be useful to explicate such notions as heroic death and martyrdom. The heroic death can be seen as a transition to everlasting glory, which comes with a "beautiful death" – καλὸς or εὐκλεὴς θάνατος. J.-P. Vernant suggests that the Greek idea of heroic death, since archaic to Hellenistic times, represents heroes achieving perfection in battle. On the battlefield a man had a chance to display his

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[1] Parker R., Greek Religion, in: Greece and the Hellenistic World, eds. J. Boardman, J. Griffin, O. Murray, Oxford 1988, 288.

[2] Brown P., The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, JRS, 1971, 100.

courage and chivalry and they were rewarded with everlasting glory that
overcomes death. They are endowed with the desire and courage to die
young on the battlefield, with weapons in their hands. That is the way to
avoid decrepit old age, ordinary, commonplace death, and falling into
oblivion.[3] Thus they stay young and brave in the collective memory.

The most appropriate sample of this hero-worship could be found in
the cult of Achilles. Achilles was set before an important decision whether
he wants to live a short life and gain glory, or live a long life. He chose to
follow the path of honor, and that brought him a posthumous life. He does
not fear his death and he faces his obvious death, which resulted from his
decisions. Perhaps not all the antique heroes die like Achilles, but seeking
fame on the battle field that enables them to attain immortality and stay
alive in the collective memory is a common feature of them.

Plato (427-347) understands immortality in the terms of reincarnation,
the idea he develops in his works *Phedon* and *Republic.* In this case there is
lack of social integration of deceased people. But the great philosopher
does not leave without attention the issue of everlasting glory. In
Symposium he suggests two ways of reaching immortality: the first is
physical, and the second is spiritual one. In the words of Diotima people
desire to give birth to their children in order to continue their lives in their
offspring and thus to reach immortality.[4] But they are pregnant in the
body only, "their offspring, as they hope, will preserve their memory and
giving them the blessedness and immortality which they desire in the
future. But souls which are pregnant ... conceive that which is proper for
the soul to conceive or contain. And what are these conceptions? – wis-
dom and virtue in general."[5] Fame is what makes people immortal: "They
are ready to run all risks greater far than they would have run for their

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[3]   Vernant J.-P., L'individu, la mort, l'amour: soi-même et l'autre en Grèce ancienne,
      Paris 1989.

[4]   Plato, *Symposium,* Translated with an introduction by B. Jowett, University of
      Adelaide 2014, section 26.

[5]   Ibid, section 27; "οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐγκύμονες, ἔφη, κατὰ τὰ σώματα ὄντες πρὸς τὰς
      γυναῖκας μᾶλλον τρέπονται καὶ ταύτῃ ἐρωτικοί εἰσιν, διὰ παιδογονίας ἀθανασίαν
      καὶ μνήμην καὶ εὐδαιμονίαν, ὡς οἴονται, αὑτοῖς εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον πάντα
      ποριζόμενοι· οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν – εἰσὶ γὰρ οὖν, ἔφη, οἳ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κυοῦσιν
      ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν, ἃ ψυχῇ προσήκει καὶ κυῆσαι καὶ τεκεῖν· τί οὖν
      προσήκει; φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν"– *Symposium,* Platonis Opera, ed. I.
      Burne, II, Oxford University Press 1901, 172-223, section 27.

children, and to spend money and undergo any sort of toil, and even to die, for the sake of leaving behind them a name which shall be eternal. Do you imagine that Alcestis would have died to save Admetus, or Achilles to avenge Patroclus, or your own Codrus in order to preserve the kingdom for his sons, if they had not imagined that the memory of their virtues, which still survives among us, would be immortal? … I am persuaded that all men do all things, and the better they are the more they do them, in hope of the glorious fame of immortal virtue; for they desire the immortal."[6]

It seems that in late Roman Empire the attitude towards the glory of hero became more nihilistic: everlasting remembrance is ephemeral, after-fame is utter vanity. Such spirit is dominated in *Meditations* of great roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius (121-180) whose reign is marked as 'the end of antique world'.

The Emperor Marcus Aurelius hated the war, but by irony of fate spent almost the whole of his life in the battlefield defending Rome from northern invaders. Glory and fame of the world appeared for him to be fleeting, futile and vain: "For all things quickly fade and turn to fable, and quickly, too, utter oblivion covers them like sand. And this I say of those who shone like stars to wonder at; the rest, as soon as the breath was out of their bodies were 'unnoticed and unwept'. And what after all is everlasting remembrance? Utter vanity."[7] Glory appears to be utter, remembran-

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6   Ibid, section 27; Cf. "ἐπεί γε καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰ ἐθέλεις εἰς τὴν φιλοτιμίαν βλέψαι, θαυμάζοις ἂν τῆς ἀλογίας πέρι, ἃ ἐγὼ εἴρηκα εἰ μὴ ἐννοεῖς, ἐνθυμηθεὶς ὡς δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι τοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ γενέσθαι καὶ "κλέος ἐς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθα", καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου κινδύνους τε κινδυνεύειν ἕτοιμοί εἰσι πάντας ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων, καὶ χρήματα ἀναλίσκειν καὶ πόνους πονεῖν οὑστινασοῦν καὶ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν. ἐπεὶ οἴει σύ, ἔφη, Ἄλκηστιν ὑπὲρ Ἀδμήτου ἀποθανεῖν ἄν, ἢ Ἀχιλλέα Πατρόκλῳ ἐπαποθανεῖν, ἢ προαποθανεῖν τὸν ὑμέτερον Κόδρον ὑπὲρ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν παίδων, μὴ οἰομένους ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς πέρι ἑαυτῶν ἔσεσθαι, ἣν νῦν ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν; πολλοῦ γε δεῖ, ἔφη, ἀλλ᾽ οἶμαι ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ τοιαύτης δόξης εὐκλεοῦς πάντες πάντα ποιοῦσιν, ὅσῳ ἂν ἀμείνους ὧσι, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον· τοῦ γὰρ ἀθανάτου ἐρῶσιν" – Platonis Opera, section 27.

7   Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, translated by A. S. L. Farquharson, London 1961, IV, 33. Cf. "ἐξίτηλα γὰρ πάντα καὶ μυθώδη ταχὺ γίνεται, ταχὺ δὲ καὶ παντελὴς λήθη κατέχωσεν. καὶ ταῦτα λέγω ἐπὶ τῶν θαυμαστῶς πως λαμψάντων· οἱ γὰρ λοιποὶ ἅμα τῷ ἐκπνεῦσαι "ἄιστοι, ἄπυστο" [IV, 32].

ce – fleeting: "All is ephemeral, both what remembers and what is remembered."[8] There is totally nihilistic perception of the death in meditation: "In how short a time, ashes or a bare anatomy, and either a name or not even a name; and if a name, then a sound and echo. And all that is prized in life empty, rotten and petty;"[9] Also: "Alexander the Great and his stable boy were leveled in death, for they were either taken up into the same life-giving principles of the Universe or were scattered without distinction into atoms."[10] It is very tempting to recall here Ecclesiastes: "For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool;"[11] or: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity."[12] Markus Aurelius who, for reasons of state, possibly sanctioned the persecution of Christians achieved a genuinely Christian depth of humility.[13]

Christianity introduced a completely different path to overcome the death. It is not understood as the end of existence; on the contrary, it is a form of existence also, transition into a new reality. Death is relief, liberation of the soul from the fetters of the flesh. Saints inspired by the image of Christ, deny ephemeral material life and glory and seek martyrdom in order to attain eternal life, the Kingdom of Heaven.[14] That common paradigm can be discerned in hagiographic writings.

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[8]   Ibid. IV, 35. Cf. "Πᾶν ἐφήμερον, καὶ τὸ μνημονεῦον καὶ τὸ μνημονευόμενον" [IV, 34].

[9]   Ibid. V, 33. Cf. "Ὅσον οὐδέπω σποδὸς ἢ σκελετὸς καὶ ἤτοι ὄνομα ἢ οὐδὲ ὄνομα, τὸ δὲ ὄνομα ψόφος καὶ ἀπήχημα. τὰ δὲ ἐν τῷ βίῳ πολυτίμητα κενὰ καὶ σαπρὰ καὶ μικρά" [V, 33].

[10] Ibid. VI, 26. Cf. "Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μακεδὼν καὶ ὁ ὀρεωκόμος αὐτοῦ ἀποθανόντες εἰς ταὐτὸ κατέστησαν· ἤτοι γὰρ ‹ἀν›ελήφθησαν εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς τοῦ κόσμου σπερματικοὺς λόγους ἢ διεσκεδάσθησαν ὁμοίως εἰς τὰς ἀτόμους" [VI, 24].

[11] Cf. "ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν μνήμη τοῦ σοφοῦ μετὰ τοῦ ἄφρονος εἰς αἰῶνα καθότι ἤδη αἱ ἡμέραι αἱ ἐρχόμεναι τὰ πάντα ἐπελήσθη καὶ πῶς ἀποθανεῖται ὁ σοφὸς μετὰ τοῦ ἄφρονος" [eccl. 2, 16].

[12] Cf."ὅτι συνάντημα υἱῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ συνάντημα τοῦ κτήνους συνάντημα ἓν αὐτοῖς ὡς ὁ θάνατος τούτου οὕτως ὁ θάνατος τούτου καὶ πνεῦμα ἐν τοῖς πᾶσιν καὶ τί ἐπερίσσευσεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος παρὰ τὸ κτῆνος οὐδέν ὅτι τὰ πάντα ματαιότης" [eccl. 3, 19].

[13] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 1997, Introduction, 9.

[14] Каждан А. П., Византийская культура, Москва 1968, 56-58.

The first saints were martyrs martyred in Roman Empire before Christianity was announced as a state religion. Martyrdom in roman cultural area was understood as demonstrative punishment of victim, showing his powerlessness, his defeat against and in the eyes of society. Just victorious is able to become a hero, but defeated is predestined to fall into oblivion.[15] Thus, there were all prerequisites for martyr to become an anti-hero. Despite that, saint become a hero of the new epoch, as Christianity challenged all the above mentioned purposes of torture by completely new perception of victory, that implies sacrifice of the life for the most noble intention, strong faith in eternal life, domination of spiritual strength over physical weakness. Everything these together create the dignity of martyrdom.[16]

One of the most popular groups of saints is cohort of warrior saints. Hagiography of these saints being created long after their persecution by Roman emperors, notably Diocletian, and reaching its highest development in the 11-12th centuries lack historical accuracy and represent hagiographic legends in the realm of ideology. The martyrs qualified as warrior saints in hagiographic legends demonstrate their decision to become soldiers of Christ by renouncing terrestrial military service. Therefore this group of saints manifest transition from physical to spiritual fight very visibly. In this process weapon also gained a symbolic meaning and canonically military equipment is warrior saints' attribute in their iconographical images.

The metaphorical meaning of weapon and struggle in Christianity is best displayed by St. Paul (*Ephesians*, 6: 10-17): "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might; Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places; Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand; Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness; and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking

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[15] Delehaye H., Les origine du culte des martyrs, Bruxelles 1912, 1.

[16] Idem.

up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one; And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."[17]

Thus we need to follow St. Paul's metaphorical language to understand and interpret the original character of weapons depicted on warrior saints' icons and mentioned in texts. Warrior saints' hagiography doesn't give any evidence concerning their military service. The only battle they are engaged in (especially St. Theodores and St. George) is against the dragon, personifying Satan. Thus they repeat the prodigy of Michael the Archangel (*Apocalypse*, 12:7). The dragon-fighting hero is a widespread image in Christianity, where a dragon is a symbol of the evil forces. It is mentioned in the Bible several times: Daniel xiv, 22, 27; Micah i, 8; Jeremiah xiv, 6; Revelation xii, 3, 7; Isaiah xxxiv, 13, and xliii, 20, and is widely represented in hagiography.[18]

Like iconographic depiction hagiographic evidence gives the background for the discussion of the main struggle of warrior saints – their spiritual struggle performed by martyrdom. Struggle against the forces of evil and spiritual victory is a regular theme for hagiography in general and not only for hagiography of warrior saints.[19] Holy Fathers of *Lives* also perform their spiritual struggle, but their struggle is even harder, because they fight against evil and sacrifice their bodies for their souls every single day, not just ones like martyrs. Thus Christian teaching of victory soul

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[17] Cf. "τοῦ λοιποῦ ἐνδυναμοῦσθε ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ κράτει τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ· ἐνδύσασθε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στῆναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου· ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις· διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δυνηθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πονηρᾷ καὶ ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι στῆναι· στῆτε οὖν περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης· καὶ ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἑτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης· ἐν πᾶσιν ἀναλαβόντες τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως, ἐν ᾧ δυνήσεσθε πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ τὰ πεπυρωμένα σβέσαι· καὶ τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθε, καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅ ἐστιν ῥῆμα θεοῦ"[Ephes. 6: 10-17].

[18] On dragons in hagiography see: White M., The Rise of the Dragon in Middle Byzantine Hagiography, BMGS 32, 2008, 149-167.

[19] Bourguignon P., Wenner P., Combat Spiritual, in: Spirituality of the Christian East, Kalamazoo, Mich., 1986, 233-266.

over the body placed heroic ideal in the realm of spirituality representing the idea of sanctity.

Generally, the conception of life as a period of military service from which God releases us at the time of death goes back to Plato and later was adopted by Christianity: e. g. *Ephesians*, 6:12 Peter 2:11. In *Apology* Socrates said: "For thus it is, men of Athens, in truth; wherever a man stations himself, thinking it is best to be there, or is stationed by his commander, there he must, as it seems to me, remain and run his risks, considering neither death nor any other thing more than disgrace. So I should have done a terrible thing, if, when the commanders whom you chose to command me stationed me, both at Potidaea and at Amphipolis and at Delium, I remained where they stationed me, like anybody else, and ran the risk of death, but when the god gave me a station, as I believed and understood, with orders to spend my life in philosophy and in examining myself and others, then I were to desert my post through fear of death or anything else whatsoever."[20]

Iconographical depictions of Warrior Saints by Byzantines were understood completely in the spirit of St. Paul's metaphorical language mentioned above unlike their Latin brotherswho inclined to understand the struggle in its physical meaning. Images of these saints supported Crusaders' notion of the Holy War. The official motivation for the Crusades was the desire of the westerners to help their eastern brothers against Muslims' attacks. Participants in the Holy war were promised a spiritual reward, such as remission of their sins and assurance of a place in

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[20] Plato, *Apology*, 28d-29a – Plato in Twelve Volumes, vol. 1, translated by H. N. Fowler, Introduction by W. R. M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1966; Cf. "οὕτω γὰρ ἔχει, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· οὗ ἄν τις ἑαυτὸν τάξῃ ἡγησάμενος βέλτιστον εἶναι ἢ ὑπ᾽ ἄρχοντος ταχθῇ, ἐνταῦθα δεῖ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, μένοντα κινδυνεύειν, μηδὲν ὑπολογιζόμενον μήτε θάνατον μήτε ἄλλο μηδὲν πρὸ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐγὼ οὖν δεινὰ ἂν εἴην εἰργασμένος, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ ὅτε μέν με οἱ ἄρχοντες ἔταττον, οὓς ὑμεῖς εἵλεσθε ἄρχειν μου, καὶ ἐν Ποτειδαίᾳ καὶ ἐν Ἀμφιπόλει καὶ ἐπὶ Δηλίῳ, τότε μὲν οὗ ἐκεῖνοι ἔταττον ἔμενον ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλος τις καὶ ἐκινδύνευον ἀποθανεῖν, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τάττοντος, ὡς ἐγὼ ᾠήθην τε καὶ ὑπέλαβον, φιλοσοφοῦντά με δεῖν ζῆν καὶ ἐξετάζοντα ἐμαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, ἐνταῦθα δὲ φοβηθεὶς ἢ θάνατον ἢ ἀλλ᾽ ὁτιοῦν πρᾶγμα λίποιμι τὴν τάξιν" – *Apologia Socratis*, Platonis Opera, ed. I. Burne, v. I, Oxford University Press 1989, 17-42, 28d-29a.

paradise.[21] By contrast Byzantines were never inspired by the idea of war in the name of the God.[22]

Some new characteristics were attributed to warrior saints in Crusaders' imagery. Crusaders looking at equestrian saints images recognized their own identities.[23] The number of representations of St. George greatly increased at the time of the Crusades and his veneration expanded widely through the Western Europe.[24] The Crusaders considered St. George to be their patron and protector. The saint's fame derived from the widespread belief that he was one of three warrior saints who had rescued the Crusaders at the battle of Antioch in 1098.[25] According to the *Chronicle of the Morea,* St. George helped the Franks at the battle of Prinitza in 1263: soldiers saw the Saint mounted on a white horse and carrying unsheathed sward. He led the Franks and encouraged them to fight.[26] Through the Crusaders' veneration St George became the patron saint of Venice, England and soldiers. Many scholars have commented on the popularity of equestrian saints in lands held by the Crusaders and have observed and studied images of these saints.[27] Jaroslav Folda cites and discusses

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[21] On the concept of Holy War see: Armstrong K., Holy War, London, 1988, xiii–xiv; Canard M., La guerre sainte dans le monde islamique et dans le monde chre´tien, RAfr 79, 1936, 605–623, repr. in Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient, London 1973, no. VIII; Laurent V., L'ide´e de guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine, RHSEE 23, 1946, 71–98; Oikonomides N., The Concept of 'Holy War' and Two Tenth Century Byzantine Ivories, in: Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S. J., ed. T. Miller and J. Nesbitt, Washington, D. C., 1995, 62–86; Murphy T. P. ed., The HolyWar, Columbus, Ohio 1976.

[22] Canard, "Guerre sainte"; George T. Dennis, Defenders of the Christian People: Holy War in Byzantium, in: The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World, edited by Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, Washington, 2001, pp.31-39; Kolia-Dermitzakes claims byzantine concept of Holy War: Kolia-Dermitzakes A., Ho Byzantinos "hieros polemos", Athens 1991.

[23] Immerzeel M., Divine Cavalry, Mounted Saints in Middle Eastern Christian Art. East and West in the Crusader State: Context – Contacts – Confrontations, vol. 3, Leuven-Dudley, M, 2003, 277.

[24] Cormack R., Mihalarias S., A Crusader Painting of St. George: 'mariera greca' or 'lingua franca'?" Burlington Magazine, v. 126, No. 972, 1984, 132-141.

[25] *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, trans. and ed. R. Hill, London 1962, 69.

[26] Longnon J., Livre de la conqueste de la princere de l'Amorere, Paris 1911, 338e.

[27] Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Mediaevalia 7, 1984, 51; For St George's shrine at Lydda see: Gesta Francorum, 87; Benvenisti M., The Crusaders in the Holy Land, Jerusalem 1970, 169–170; For St. George relic – head in Livadia see: Setton K. M., Saint

crusader icons of mounted soldier saints including depictions of St. George, Sts. Theodores, St. Demetrios, Sts. Sergios and Bacchos.[28] Sharon E. J. Gerstel examines images of equestrian saints in Byzantine churches of the Frankish Morea[29] showing Latin, Crusading influence.

Taking into account affabulation of Crusades, crusading legends prevailed heroic ideals – self-sacrifice in war, death on the battle-field and glory – and thus the actual war is spiritualized and military saints images are used to be fundaments for holy war. There is no space for weapon as metaphor, for spiritual fighting against the evil. Crusading was understood as military service for Christ. Fighting and physical death in battle symbolized the passion of Christ on his cross.[30]

Crusaders' imagination of warrior saints' intervention and support in battle plausibly echoes accounts of Byzantine historians and hagiographic data. St Andrew also intervened in favour of the city of Patras, of which he

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George's Head, Speculum 48, 1973, 4; Weitzman K., Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom, DOP 20, 1966, 71-73; Cormac and Mihalaris, A Crusader Painting, 132-141; Gerstel S., Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea, in: Crusaders from the Perspevtive…, 263-285; Immerzeel M., Holy Horsemen and Crusader Banners. Equestrian Saints in Wall Paintings in Lebanon and Syria, Eastern Christians Art 1, 2004, 29-60; Hunt L. A., A Women's Prayer to St. Sergios in Latin Syria: Interpreting a Thirteenth-Century Icon at Mount Sinai, BMGS 15, 1991, 96-145; Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea, ed. E. S. Bolman, New Haven, CT, and London 2002.

[27] Folda J., Mounted Warrior Saints in Crusader Icons: Images of the Knighthoods of Christ, in: Knighthoods of Christ, Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar, Presented to Malcolm Barber, edited by Horman Housley, Ashgate 2007, 88.

[28] Idem.

[29] Gerstel Sh. E. J., Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea, in: Chrusaders ... 263-285; Sh. E. J. Gerstel, 271-273: These churches include St. George, Karinia, Mesa Mani (1285), St. George, Oitylon (1331/32), St. George, Longanikos (1374/75), St. Demetrios, Krokees (1286), Sts. Theodoroi, Kaphiona, Mesa Mani (1263-1271), Sts. Theodoroi, Mistra (before 1296), St. Michael, Polemitas, Mesa Mani (1278), St. Michael, Charouda, Mani (1371/72), Taxiarches, Goritsa Laina (mid-13th century). For the inscriptions, see Kalopissi-Verti, Dedicatory Inscriptions, 66-67, 71-75, 80-81, 106, 107; Philippidis-Braat A., Inscriptions du Pe´loponne`se, TM 9 (1985): 314-317, 318-319, 328-330, 338-340.

[30] Cole P. J., The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095-1270, Cambridge 1991, 105.

was patron.[31] St George intervened in favour of Nicephorus II in 961 before he became emperor, together with St. Demetrius, Sts. Theodores and the archangel Michael,[32] and again in favour of Andronicus II.[33] In the Battle of Didgori in 1121 as describes by the historian St George was leading the Georgian army against Muslims.[34] Soldiers smeared themselves with the myrrh of St. Demetrius. According to Skylitzes, when the Bulgarians were besieging Thessaloniki, the garrison prayed all night by the Saint's tomb. Then they anointed themselves with his myrrh, went into battle and defeated the enemy. A young horseman leading the Greek army was seen by imprisoned Bulgarians.[35] St. Demetrius interventions in battle are narrated also in his miracles.[36] In one case St. Demetrius intervened in battle with an army of angels to protect the city of Thessaloniki.[37] But all these warrior saints' interventions in battles don't make these wars holy and. In the Byzantine world, war was not, as sometimes in the West, a lethal playing field on which noblemen displayed their prowess and sought glory.

Erich Fromm, representative of contemporary social psychology, discusses the issue of interrelation between antique hero and Christian saint in the context of controversy between "to have" and "to be": "The Christian hero was the martyr. The martyr is the exact opposite of the pagan hero personified in the Greek and Germanic heroes. The heroes' aim was to conquer, to be victorious, to destroy, to rob; their fulfillment of life was pride, power, fame, and superior skill in killing. For the pagan hero a man's worth lay in his prowess in attaining and holding onto power, and he gladly died on the battlefield in the moment of victory. Homer's *Iliad* is the poetically magnificent description of glorified conquerors and robbers. The martyr's characteristics are being, giving, sharing; the hero's, having, exploiting, forcing."[38]

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[31] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio, Bonn, 219-220, ed. Gy. Moravcsik et al., Washington 1967, 226-233.

[32] Schlumberger G., Un emperor Byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicphore Phocas, new edition, Paris 1923, 74.

[33] Nicephorus Gregoras, *Historia Byzantina,* Bonn 1829, VI, 5, 303-305.

[34] The Life of Kartli, ed. By S. Khaukhchishvili, v. 1, Tbilisi 1955, 341 (in Georgian).

[35] Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiaum*, ed. I. Thurn, Berlin 1973, 412-414.

[36] BHG, 513, miracle no. 13.

[37] *Miracles* (BHL 2123) of St. Demetrius by Anastasius the Librarian, Miracle 8.

[38] Fromm E., To Have To Be? Continuum, London-New York 2008, 115-116.

To conclude, antique world presents the heroic ideal reached by everlasting glory. This path overcomes the death through defeating it. Christianity introduces the notion of spiritual struggle that could be influenced by Plato. In this case there is strong desire to attain eternal life, which denies the death. These peculiarities of Antique and Christian attitudes enable us to clarify significance of symbolic meaning of military service and weapon adopted by Christianity. Maybe Warrior Saints are the best illustrations of passing from the notion of everlasting glory attained by physical war to the notion of everlasting life attained by spiritual struggle. Different perception of concepts of earthly and heavenly glory plausibly caused development of certain aspects in warrior saints imagery during crusading that goes back to antiquity. In this process could be traced transformation and integration of antique values throughout of medieval times.

Abstract

Late antiquity is marked by substitution of heroic ideal by ideal of sainthood. Preliminary studies has shown that victory of Christianity was not the victory of the one God over the many, it was victory of man over the institutions of their past. The article discusses changing perception of the Death from antique heroes to Christian saints.

Antique ideology introduced heroes who achieve everlasting glory and fame by performing physical power, courage and heroism. They die in the battlefield a "καλὸς θάνατος" and defeat the death by their everlasting glory. This conception is destroyed in '*Meditations*' of Marcus Aurelius: everlasting remembrance is ephemeral, after-fame is vanity.

Christianity introduced a completely different path. Saints deny ephemeral material life and glory and seek martyrdom in order to attain eternal life. That common paradigm can be discerned in hagiography about warrior saints – soldiers of the Roman Empire renouncing their military service to become soldiers of Christ. Lately, in the High Middle Ages warrior saints images contributed to the notion of the Holy War. Participants in the Holy War were promised a spiritual reward, such as remission of their sins and assurance of a place in paradise.

Thus two main ways could be identified to overcome the death: everlasting glory, which defeats the death and eternal life, which denies the death. These peculiarities of Antique and Christian attitudes enable us to clarify significance of symbolic meaning of military service and weapon that goes back to Plato and was adopted by Christianity.