



Heritage: Bulgarian, from Veliko Turnovo

Now in: Sofia, Chrypt Al. Nevski

Original: 1617/ 93,7 x 56.2 cm, tempera on wood

Replica: 2005 / 80x52 cm

The saint is shown in his traditional pose of a horseman. He is riding a red horse galloping to the left, his left hand holding the reins, his right driving a spear into an enemy, lying on the ground. The icon painter has depicted rather vividly the spear piercing the enemy's neck and the blood flowing from the wound, while the horse has rather mercilessly stepped on the prone figure. The saint has the epithet (according to the inscription) "St. Demetrius, great commander", as we find him referred to for the first time in Bulgaria in a fresco in the Dragalevtzi Church. (1476). The horse, a graceful and lively animal painted in pale raspberry red, and the green mantle streaming behind the saint, stand out vividly against the gold background which is lavishly decorated with incised plant motifs. The master's sense of decoration is best demonstrated by this most obvious preference for pure colors, applied in board, smooth patches, and the use of lavish decorations on the saddle and the background. The ornamentation of the background is reminiscent of some icons on Czechoslovakia - for instance, the panel The Virgin Odegetroa in the Church of Rovne, painted in 16th century. The faces are done in pink over an ochre foundation. There are white highlights on the prominent parts. There used to be a donor's inscription below left, in which the year 1617 was inscribed. Now only a few illegible syllables remain. Medium: tempera on wood. Hand-made according to the Bulgarian Iconographic tradition and techniques.

St Demetrius perished in 4th C., at the time of Emperor Maximian, who pursued the Christians. St Demetrius is the patron of Thessalonika and many other towns. he is one of the most adored Orthodox Christian saints. On this icon with Latin inscription DUX for St Demetrius. he is named 'Great Commander'.

Catalog No 1.23

---