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### The Itineraries of the Orthodox Painters in the Eighteenth Century: The Common Aesthetics in South-East Europe

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THE ITINERARIES OF THE ORTHODOX PAINTERS  
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:  
THE COMMON AESTHETICS IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

*Eugenia Drakopoulou*

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ABSTRACT: During the eighteenth century, the aesthetic preferences of the Orthodox Christian population in the Balkans continued to depend upon the tradition of Byzantine art, which had been the case throughout the period following the Fall of Constantinople. The painters were scattered all over the Balkans, where the Orthodox population had been accustomed since previous centuries to the tastes emanating from Byzantine artistic tradition. The Patriarchate of Constantinople and Mount Athos played a crucial role, on account of their religious and political status, in the movements of Orthodox painters, whose missions and apprenticeships they regulated to a considerable degree. The great number of paintings, the observation of the itineraries of Orthodox painters throughout the Balkan area of the Ottoman Empire and the shared aesthetic of these works supply evidence of the development of a common painting language among the Orthodox population of South-East Europe during the eighteenth century, just before the formation of the nation-states.

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The subjects of the Ottoman Empire experienced significant changes in the eighteenth century as a consequence of the consolidation of Austria's power in the north, which had already been evident since the end of the seventeenth century, the restoration of the Venetian conquests in the south and the simultaneous humiliation of the Turks. Some of the residents of South-East Europe had the opportunity to come into close contact with the West through mass movements to the new territorial holdings of the Hapsburgs in Serbia, to Hungary and then to Central Europe. Inevitably, these movements had an impact on art, architecture and painting. At the same time, the long-lasting period of peace from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the start of the first Russian-Turkish War in 1768 facilitated the growth of trade and ports and promoted economic and cultural development in the South Balkans, especially from the 1750s onwards. One can witness this economic and commercial strength in the extensive building and decoration projects evident in churches and mansions.

The two most significant centres of Orthodox Christianity, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Mount Athos, were also affected by the social and intellectual events of this era: the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire, the dynamic presence of the Russians and the French, and the influx of the ideas of the Enlightenment. The 1774 Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji ensured not only

navigation privileges but also the right to protect the Christian religion and churches throughout the Ottoman Empire. A little later, during Selim III's reign, a Greek intellectual, Konstantinos Koumas, observed that never before had so many and so beautiful churches been built in Turkey as in Selim's days. One of the main characteristics of that period of post-Byzantine art was the striking growth in the number of newly built churches in addition to the impressive increase in the number of painters.

The aesthetic preferences of the Orthodox Christian population continued to depend upon Byzantine art, which was the case throughout the period following the Fall of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> Painters travelled all over the Balkans, where the authority and artistic superiority of Greek painters was acknowledged by an Orthodox population sharing the same religious beliefs and Byzantine artistic tradition.<sup>2</sup> The Patriarchate and Mount Athos were instrumental, on account of their religious and political status, in the movements of Orthodox painters and regulated their missions and apprenticeships. The crucial role of Mount Athos was grounded not only in the close relation between the monasteries and Serbia,<sup>3</sup> Bulgaria<sup>4</sup> and Moldo-Wallachia,<sup>5</sup> but also in the fact that it was recognised as a centre of Orthodox art. Furthermore, Thessaloniki and its surroundings constituted a centre where Athonite icons were commissioned and Balkan painters were trained. A characteristic example is provided by a Serbian painter who, trained in Thessaloniki, moved on to Decani in 1797, where he painted 69 icons.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the cultural specificity of each region, it has been observed that already since the previous centuries significant ecclesiastical and secular figures

<sup>1</sup> See G. Babić and M. Chatzidakis, "The Icons of the Balkan Peninsula and the Greek Islands", *The Icon*, Vol. II, ed. K. Weitzmann, London 1982, pp. 305-372; A. Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paris 1928; G. Subotić, *Ohridska slikarska skola 15 veka*, Belgrade 1980, and by the same author, *Terra Sacra. L'arte del Kossovo*, Milan 1997.

<sup>2</sup> E. Drakopoulou, "Ζωγράφοι από τον ελληνικό στον βαλκανικό χώρο" [The painters from the Greek and Balkan area: the conditions of their acceptance], *Ζητήματα μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής στη μνήμη του Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* [Topics in post-Byzantine painting in memory of Manolis Chatzidakis], Athens 2002, pp. 101-125.

<sup>3</sup> See G. Subotić (ed.), *Hilandar Monastery*, Belgrade 1998; by the same author, "Natpis u Molivoklisiji", *Zvornik Radova* 61 (2004), pp. 507-523.

<sup>4</sup> A. Boschov, *La peinture bulgare*, Recklinghausen 1974, pp. 200-201.

<sup>5</sup> A. Scrima, "Les Roumains et le Mont Athos", and by the same author, "Réflexions sur les rythmes et la fonction de la tradition athonite", in *Le millénaire du Mont Athos, 963-1963. Études et mélanges*, Vol. II, Chevetogne 1965, pp. 145-152, 301-324.

<sup>6</sup> S. Kissas, "Thessalonian Painters in the Eighteenth Century: A Preliminary Study", *Balkan Studies* 24/2 (1983), p. 477.

in the Balkans – the rulers of Moldo-Wallachia, the church leaders of Peć, Ohrid and the monasteries in Dalmatia – had accepted and acknowledged Greek art, or rather the art of painters who were Orthodox and had a Greek education. It was these painters who were invited to decorate large churches and monasteries. Apart from the ecclesiastical foundations that operated under the aegis of Mount Athos and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the rising urban and semi-urban centres attracted many painters.<sup>7</sup> Wealthy merchants and financially booming communities felt the need to decorate churches with works by well-known painters. Orthodox painters from Greece travelled throughout South-East Europe and, more specifically, to countries such as Albania, Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania in order to work.

Travelling across an area without borders, the population of the territories under Ottoman occupation used the Via Egnatia as a stable point of reference. Since the Byzantine era, the Via Egnatia linked the cities on the Adriatic coast and Italy to the Balkan mainland and Constantinople. It led from Dyrrachio via Elbasan to Ohrid, Manastir, Edessa, Thessaloniki and Constantinople. The routes of tradesmen and caravans, whose focal point was the Balkans, connected Central Europe and Constantinople along four main roads, those of Moldavia, Wallachia, Thrace and Macedonia. Thessaloniki, Ohrid, Elbasan and Dyrrachio were the major stations along the so-called Macedonian Road, whose branches reached down to southern Greece.<sup>8</sup> Painters followed the same routes.

Recent studies by researchers from all Balkan countries but also significant inter-Balkan collaborations have brought to light a large number of painters and works hitherto unknown. These findings have broadened our knowledge of artistic itineraries in South-East Europe and enriched our understanding regarding the number of travelling painters.

Geographical proximity and close cultural relations influenced the painters' itineraries. Painters from Parga, Corfu and Crete arrived in the eighteenth century on the Dalmatian coast where Cretan painting, for instance, was highly

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<sup>7</sup> O. Etinhof, "Post-Byzantine Art, §III: Bulgaria, Serbia and Neighbouring Regions, Wallachia and Moldavia", *The Dictionary of Art*, Vol. XXV, London 1996, pp. 338-345; M. Garidis, *La peinture murale dans le monde orthodoxe après la chute de Byzance (1450-1600) et dans les pays sous domination étrangère*, Athens 1989; A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV-XVII vek*, Belgrade 2000.

<sup>8</sup> See A. Mehlan, "Οι εμπορικοί δρόμοι στα Βαλκάνια κατά την τουρκοκρατία" [Trade routes in the Balkans under Turkish rule], *Η οικονομική δομή των βαλκανικών χωρών στα χρόνια της οθωμανικής κυριαρχίας* [The economic structure of the Balkans during Ottoman rule], Athens 1979, pp. 367-391.

esteemed already from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> Painters also travelled by sea, and paintings were transferred from Crete and Corfu to Albania.<sup>10</sup> Most of the movements, however, took place via the mainland routes mentioned above. It is extremely interesting that out of the 130 known painters of the eighteenth century who came originally from Greek Epirus and Macedonia and who signed in Greek, more than half, that is 54%, travelled and worked throughout South-East Europe. The particular conditions and situation of each region affected the pace of these movements. As a consequence, 35% of painters from Greek territories worked in Romania, 35% in Albania, 20% in former Yugoslavia and just 10% in Bulgaria.<sup>11</sup>

The attraction Romania exercised on painters resulted mainly from the relation between the principalities and the monasteries of Mount Athos. The latter was claimed to be “the most advanced school of religious painting in the Balkans”. Let us refer briefly to a family of painters from Ioannina who settled in Moldavia. Georgios settled in Bacau in Moldavia from around 1670 to 1711, got married and had three sons, two of whom learnt the art of painting from their father. Georgios’ brothers settled in Moldavia too.<sup>12</sup> The son of Dima, Theophilos, became a painter and a monk in the monastery of Poutna in approximately 1759.<sup>13</sup> The collaborations between painters, such as that between Michail of Thessaloniki and Georgios of Bucharest, are confirmed in some cases by the bilingual inscriptions on the paintings.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See M. Chatzidakis, “Aspects de la peinture religieuse dans les Balkans (1300-1500)”, *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change*, Paris 1972, pp. 177-197, and by the same author, “La peinture des ‘Madonneri’ ou ‘vinéto-crétoise’ et sa destination”, *Venezia, Centro di Mediazione tra Oriente et Occidente (sec. XVe-XVIe). Aspetti e problemi. Atti del II Convegno Internazionale di Storia della Civiltà Veneziana*, Vol. II [1973], Florence 1977, pp. 675-690. See also Nano Chatzidakis, “Post-Byzantine Art, §II: Crete, Mainland Greece, the Ionian Islands and the Cyclades”, *The Dictionary of Art*, pp. 331-337.

<sup>10</sup> E. Drakopoulou, *Icons from the Orthodox Communities of Albania*, Thessaloniki 2006, pp. 26-27.

<sup>11</sup> See E. Drakopoulou, *Αναλυτικοί πίνακες των Ελλήνων Ζωγράφων και των έργων τους (1450-1850)* [Tables of the Greek painters, their icons and mural paintings (1450-1850)], Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research / NHRF, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> M. Chatzidakis, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση* [Greek painters after the Fall of Constantinople], Vol. I, Athens 1987, p. 218.

<sup>13</sup> M. Musicescu, “Évolution des étapes stylistiques de la peinture murale valaque”, *Actes du 1er Congrès International des Études Byzantines et Sud-Est Européennes*, II, Sofia 1966 [1970], pp. 823-836.

<sup>14</sup> M. Chatzidakis and E. Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση* [Greek painters after the Fall of Constantinople], Vol. II, Athens 1997, p. 194.

As far as other countries are concerned, the regions of the Archdiocese of Ohrid and Peć as well as the financially booming communities of South Albania constituted areas of influence that attracted many painters. More particularly, the presence of educated painters in Albania is linked to the preclacy of the Archbishop of Ohrid Ioasaph, who originally came from Moschopolis.<sup>15</sup> With a view to restoring the bygone prestige of the archdiocese, he carried out significant work to the advantage of classical education. The channels of communication among the Prespa Lakes, Korytsa [Korcë] and Moschopolis made easier the movements of these groups of painters. Monastic centres in Ardenitsa and Elbasan, under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Ohrid, appealed to Orthodox painters whose activities they supported. The dedicatory Greek inscriptions of their works reveal the active role and wealth of the guilds that flourished in Vythkouki, Korytsa and Moschopolis. The art of these painters, which is distinguished by its richness, splendour and inscriptions, reflected the desire of rulers, merchants and guilds to transfer the prosperity and success of their communities into the interior of the churches, which was also the case with the mansions of the eighteenth century.

The activity of these painters is exemplified by the following cases, all of which represent the common aesthetic that the Orthodox population of South-East Europe embraced.

The hieromonk Konstantinos, who usually signed *χείρ Κωνσταντίνου ιερομονάχου* [the hand of Konstantinos hieromonk], seems to have specialised in portable icons, more than 50 of which have been found in Albania, west Macedonia (Kastoria, Veria), Mount Athos and the Archdiocese of Ohrid, dating between 1693 and 1726.<sup>16</sup> The icons of St George and St Dimitrios,<sup>17</sup> which have the same dimensions, come from the church of St Nicholas at Moschopolis (fig. 1, 2). Both provide the same resplendent impression of the triumph of the great Christian saints, who are rendered predominantly in gold, red and white. The manner in which the two representations reflect each other mirror-wise recalls depictions in engravings, where martyr-saints are pictured together. A later example in a copperplate engraving of the middle of the nineteenth century<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See C. Grozdanov, "Ohridkiot arch. Prohor i negovata dejnot", *Studi za Ohridskiot Žinopis*, Skopje 1990.

<sup>16</sup> K. Kallamata, "Constantin Ieromonachou, an Icon Painter in Moschopolis (1693-1726)", *Διεθνές Συμπόσιο Μοσχόπολις* [International Colloquium Moschopolis], Thessaloniki 1999, pp. 65-70; V. Popovska-Korobar, "A Contribution Towards the Artistic Relations Between the Fresco-paintings of the Monastery Dracha and the Painting in Macedonia in the First Half of the 18th Century", *Zbornik, Muzej na Makedonija* 1 (1993), pp. 149-156.

<sup>17</sup> Drakopoulou, *Icons*, pp. 126-131.

gives an idea of earlier depictions that were probably known by the painter of this icon (fig. 3). The painter's signature can be seen in gold lettering at the bottom of the round tower: *ΧΕΙΡ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝ[Α]ΧΟΥ* [the hand of Konstantinos the hieromonk]. According to the founder's inscription,<sup>19</sup> the church of St Nicholas in Moschopolis was given wall-painted decoration in 1726: “δια χειρός πολυίστορός τε και οξυγράφου καλάμου του πανοσιωτάτου κυρίου κυρ Δαβίδ του Σελιμιτζιώτου και της κατ'αυτόν ξυνορίδος Κωνσταντίνου τε και Χρήστου” [by the learned hand and acute pen of the most reverend kyr David of Selenitza and his colleague Konstantinos and Christos]. Konstantinos, who is mentioned in the inscription together with Christos,<sup>20</sup> in a learned style as a colleague of the well-known painter David of Selenitza,<sup>21</sup> has been identified as Konstantinos the hieromonk, the painter of the icons under discussion.<sup>22</sup> Since Konstantinos worked in 1726 on the decoration of the church, which had been built in 1721, he must have also painted the two large icons of Sts George and Dimitrios at the same time. One can discern on the icons the painter's competence in composition and decoration, his great attention to detail, the use of bright colours and the creation of an atmosphere appropriate to the Christian saints' triumph. These elements were developed within the framework of luxury dictated by the Baroque climate, and of the freedom of expression allowed for by the open-mindedness and prosperity of the Orthodox inhabitants of this area.

The interest of the icon of St John Vladimir and scenes from his life resides mainly in that it not only offers an iconographic account of the life of a saint who is not widely known but also traces the creation of the composition to the context of the Archdiocese of Ohrid in the eighteenth century (fig. 4).<sup>23</sup> The saint, who was the King of Dalmatia and son-in-law of Samuel, Tsar of the Bulgars, lived in the late tenth or early eleventh century († 1015) and was a contemporary of Sts Clement and Naum of Ohrid. He was distinguished by his great piety and was murdered by his wife's brother on his return from a victorious campaign against the Byzantine emperor. These details are derived from the three known services for him – two printed in Venice in 1690 and 1774,

<sup>18</sup> D. Papastratou, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες. Ορθόδοξα θρησκευτικά χαρακτικά* [Icons on paper: Orthodox religious engravings], Athens 1986, no. 349.

<sup>19</sup> Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, Tirana 1998, no. 331.

<sup>20</sup> See Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, p. 458.

<sup>21</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 235-236; V. Popovka-Korobar, *Ikonopisot vo Ohrid vo XVIII vek*, Skopje 2005, pp. 53-72.

<sup>22</sup> See Kallamata, “Constantin Ieromonachou”, p. 69. Cf. Drakopoulou, *Icons*, no. 40.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 47.

and the third in Moschopolis in 1741 —<sup>24</sup> in which the legends and miracles associated with him are recounted. The veneration of St John Vladimir, who is particularly honoured in Orthodox Albania, the general area of Ohrid, Bulgaria and Hungary, was disseminated in the context of the regeneration of the Archdiocese of Ohrid under the enlightened guidance of Archbishop Ioasaph.<sup>25</sup> The cultured, dynamic prelate led the archdiocese from 1719 to 1745 and elevated it into an important spiritual and artistic region at the time, the most important centres of which were Ohrid and Moschopolis. Ohrid had a distinguished cultural tradition since the Byzantine era and enjoyed close relations with Mount Athos. Moschopolis, occupied mainly by Vlach peoples, was a centre of trade and a focus of the economic flowering of the period.

The original place of St John Vladimir's veneration was the monastery named after him at Elbasan, where his relic was kept until 1944.<sup>26</sup> Elbasan and Ardenitsa, from where the icon in question comes, belonged to the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Ohrid. The evolution of the iconography of the saint can be traced to portable icons, wall-paintings and engravings, mostly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>27</sup> The engravings were important landmarks in the development of the iconography and probably served as the model for the present icon. The saint is depicted in two engravings by Isabella Piccini that adorned the saint's *Akolouthia*, published in 1690 in Venice.<sup>28</sup> The well-known Serb painter and engraver Christofor Zefarović also included a representation of the saint in the *Stemmatographia* (fig. 5), a Serbian book containing drawings and printed in Venice in 1741. He used the same representation a year later to illustrate the copperplate engraving with scenes of the saint's life,<sup>29</sup> printed with the financial support of wealthy Moschopolitans, which later circulated as an independent engraving.<sup>30</sup>

In the present icon, from the church of the Virgin at Ardenitsa, the saint is shown in the large central representation, with the inscription ΑΓΙΟC

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<sup>24</sup> L. Petit, *Bibliographie des acolouthies grecques*, Brussels 1926, pp. 121-123.

<sup>25</sup> See C. Grozdanov, *Portreti na svetitelite od Makedonja od IX-XVIII vek*, Skopje 1983.

<sup>26</sup> See M.-D. Peyfuss, "Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731-1769", *Buchdrack und Heiligenverehrung im Erzbistum von Achrida*, Vienna and Cologne 1996, pp. 122-124.

<sup>27</sup> See Grozdanov, *Portreti*, pp. 211-249, and Popovka-Korobar, *Ikonopisot*, pp. 87-91.

<sup>28</sup> Papastratou, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες*, p. 242, nos 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> D. Davidov, "Copperplate Engravings of Hristofor Zefarović", *Μεταβυζαντινά χαρακτικά* [Post-byzantine engravings], *Proceedings of a One-day Conference, Museum of Byzantine Culture*, Thessaloniki 1999, p. 101.

<sup>30</sup> Papastratou, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες*, pp. 241-249. Cf. Davidov, "Copperplate Engravings", pp. 21-32.



Ω[ANNHC] O ΒΑΑΔΙΜΗΡΟC [St John Vladimir], enthroned, wearing royal raiment and holding the martyr's cross and his severed head in his hands. Around him, in rectangular panels, there are 12 scenes inspired by his life and martyrdom. The inscription of this icon ends with the signature of the painter Konstantinos hierodeakon of Spatheia (Shpatit), an area of central Albania, to which Elbasan, one of the places at which John Vladimir is venerated, belongs. Konstantinos painted icons from the iconostasis of the same monastery in 1744. In the icon of Christ ΔΙΑ ΔΑΠΑΝΗC ΤΟΥ ΡΟΥΦΕΤΙΟΥ ΤΟΝ ΧΑΑΚΕΩΝ ΤΗC ΜΟCΧΟΠΟΛΕΟC [with the financial assistance of the guild of coppersmiths of Moschopolis] he again signed ΧΕΙΡ ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΥ ΕΚ CΠΑΘΕΙΑC [The hand of Konstantinos hierodeakon of Spatheia].<sup>31</sup> In 1748, the same painter signed another icon in the monastery of Sts Peter and Vithkuk,<sup>32</sup> and in 1754-1755 he worked on the icons and wall-paintings of the monastery of St Marina at Llenge (Mokres).<sup>33</sup> His final known works – portable icons in the churches of St Peter at Kavaje and St Prokopios at Verdove –<sup>34</sup> are dated to 1767. Several of his works are now in the Museum of Medieval Art at Korytsa.<sup>35</sup> As is clear from his script and inscriptions, Konstantinos was a literate painter who enjoyed authority and recognition in the Archdiocese of Ohrid. He presided over a very productive family painting workshop, which was active mainly in parts of Albania, the Archdiocese of Ohrid and Mount Athos from 1736 to the first decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Konstantinos collaborated with his brother, Athanasios,<sup>37</sup> and was then followed in the profession by his son Terpos<sup>38</sup> and the two sons of Athanasios, the “most learned” Naum (1780, 1783)<sup>39</sup> and the priest Efthymios (1792-1819).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Popa, *Mbishkrime*, no. 120. See also Popovka-Korobar, *Ikonopisot*, p. 90.

<sup>32</sup> Popa, *Mbishkrime*, no. 349.

<sup>33</sup> Popovska-Korobar, *Ikonopisot*, pp. 87-91.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-91.

<sup>35</sup> *Percorsi del sacro. Icone dai Musei albanesi*, exh. cat., Palazzo Leoni Montanari, Vicenza, Milan 2002, nos 29-30; *Trésors d'art albanais. Icônes byzantines et post-byzantines du XIIIe au XIXe siècle*, exh. cat., Musée National Message Biblique Marc Chagall, Nice 1993, nos 54-59. Cf. Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> See G. Tsigaras, *Οι ζωγράφοι Κωνσταντίνος και Αθανάσιος από την Κορυτσά. Το έργο τους στο Άγιον Όρος (1752-1783)* [The painters Konstantinos and Athanasios from Korytsa: their activity on Mount Athos (1752-1783)], Athens 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Drakopoulou, *Icons*, no. 59.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 60.

<sup>39</sup> Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, pp. 225-226; Tsigaras, *Οι ζωγράφοι*, pp. 304, 306.

<sup>40</sup> See Chatzidakis, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, p. 286; Tsigaras, *Οι ζωγράφοι*, p. 306; T. Vinjau

The profession practised by the members of this family of “excellent, most learned and Orthodox painters”, as they are called in the documents and the meticulous, calligraphic Greek inscriptions in their works, became their surname and is still born by their descendants in Korytsa.<sup>41</sup> Between 1736 and 1783 Konstantinos and his brother Athanasios executed the wall-painted decoration of about 15 monuments, mainly in Korytsa, Moschopolis, Vithkuk and on Mount Athos. They usually signed their work: *δια χειρών αυταδέλφων Κωνσταντίνου και Αθανασίου εκ πόλεως Κορυτζάς* [by the hand of the brothers Konstantinos and Athanasios from the town of Korytsa], as in the katholikon of the Philotheou monastery on Mount Athos in 1765.<sup>42</sup> The fact that they were invited in 1782, as “masters of the painter’s art” and for the considerable fee of 8000 piastres, to undertake the wall-painted decoration of the katholikon and two chapels of the Xiropotamou monastery on Mount Athos, which was part of the iconographic programme of the learned Kaisarios Dapontes, bears witness to the recognition of their art and the fame they had acquired.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, between 1737 and 1785, Konstantinos signed a fairly large number of portable icons as *Κωνσταντίνος αρβανίτης* [Konstantinos the Albanian], as in icons of the skete of St Dimitrios in the Vatopedi monastery in 1742, and also as *δια χειρός Κωνσταντίνου αρβανίτου εκ πόλεως Κορυτσάς* [by the hand of Konstantinos the Albanian from the town of Korytsa], as in 1768 on the templon of the Docheiariou monastery on Mount Athos.<sup>44</sup> One can see in these icons, which usually adorned templa (sanctuary screens), the same facial types, worked meticulously though with a certain clumsiness in the rendering of frontal figures, and the severe, classical buildings in the rendering of the setting.

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Caca, “Some Data About the Activity of Konstandin and Athanas Zografi from Korça”, *Ζητήματα μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής*, p. 206.

<sup>41</sup> For example *Αντιγόνη Παντελή Ζωγράφου* [Antigoni Panteli Zografou]: see Tsigaras, *Οι ζωγράφοι*, p. 305.

<sup>42</sup> G. Millet, J. Pargoire and L. Petit, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos. 1ère partie*, Paris 1904, pp. 96-97. For the painters see Chatzidakis, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, pp. 157-158; Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, pp. 135-136; Tsigaras, *Οι ζωγράφοι*; Popovka-Korobar, *Ikonopisot*, pp. 73-85.

<sup>43</sup> M. Polyviou, *Το καθολικό της Μονής Ξηροποτάμου. Σχεδιασμός και κατασκευή στη ναοδομία του 18ου αιώνα* [The katholikon of the Xiropotamou monastery: architectural planning and construction in church building in the 18th century], Athens 1999, pp. 107-108; Tsigaras, *Οι ζωγράφοι*, pp. 45-50.

<sup>44</sup> See Chatzidakis, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, pp. 178-179.

The icon of the Virgin of the Unfading Rose from the Metropolitan church of the Zoodochos Pigi in Korytsa, dated to 1773, is also attributed to Konstantinos (fig. 6).<sup>45</sup> The icon, which depicts a central subject surrounded by twelve representations distributed in five zones, recalls engravings that circulated widely in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>46</sup> In the centre, the Virgin, enthroned and holding the infant Christ, is wearing royal robes and a crown and is holding a sceptre. On her right-hand side, there are stylised roses, and with her left hand she restrains the infant Christ, who is also dressed in royal raiment, is wearing a crown and is holding a sceptre and a globe. The representation of the Virgin and Christ, crowned and wearing royal garments, and the heavy wooden Baroque throne, are often found in engravings.<sup>47</sup> At the centre of the lower part of the icon, there is an interesting representation accompanied by the inscription: *ΟΙ ΑΓΙΟΙ ΕΠΤΑΠΙΘΜΗ* [the Seven Saints]. These are the two brothers from Thessaloniki who enlightened the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, and their five disciples. Cyril, Methodius and Clement are shown as prelates wearing richly decorated vestments. Cyril and Methodius' pupil, St Naum, founder of the eponymous monastery at Ohrid, a model of which he holds, is depicted wearing monk's clothes, and so are Sts Gorazd, Angelarios and Savvas. The earliest depiction of these saints can be found in the monastery of the Virgin at Slimica in the Prespa area and dates from 1612.<sup>48</sup> This iconographic type, with St Methodius in the centre holding a model of a church, as in the wall-painting of 1735 in the church of St Nicholas in the village of Draca Kragujevac, was formulated in the early 18th century in spiritual circles of Ohrid.<sup>49</sup> The painters of Korytsa also depicted the seven saints in a wall-painting in the Ardenitsa monastery (fig. 7), and Terpos, the son of Konstantinos, used the same theme in a wall-painting in the monastery of Osios Naum at Ohrid in 1800.<sup>50</sup> Konstantinos, to whom the icon is attributed, had also undertaken to paint the 12 scenes of the *Dodekaorton* in the church of Zoodochos Pigi in Korytsa in 1770-71.<sup>51</sup>

Konstantinos' son, Terpos, had a lifelong productive artistic activity in the Balkans, which culminated in the decoration, in 1806, of the church of

<sup>45</sup> Drakopoulou, *Icons*, no. 52.

<sup>46</sup> See Papastratou, *Χρόστινες Εικόνες*, nos 105, 119-121, 492, 499, 505.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-142.

<sup>48</sup> See Grozdanov, *Portreti*, pp. 113-116.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>51</sup> See Drakopoulou, *Icons*, nos 49-52.

Osios Naum in Ohrid with wall-paintings. The dedicatory inscription there reads as follows: “by the hand of Terpos painter, son of Konstantinos painter from Korytsa”.<sup>52</sup>

One can also reach interesting conclusions by exploring the activity of a family of painters from Grampovo in Albania from the middle of the eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century: Ioannis Tzetiris, his brother Georgios and his three sons. The course of Ioannis’ personal and professional life was fascinating but also characteristic of that of a painter at the end of the eighteenth century in the Balkans. Setting out from Grampovo in 1736, he travelled to Hungary and later to Russia to “learn the art of painting”; in 1750 he went to Bucharest and subsequently, in 1754, to Bodgania “in order to work”; in 1755 he returned to his country “to get married” and in 1761 he travelled from Moschopolis to Wallachia. Between 1754 and 1812, he executed at least 15 mural programmes and icons primarily in the area of the former metropolis of Srmski Karlovtsi, which covered what is today northern Yugoslavia, western Bulgaria, Romania and southern Hungary.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, icons painted by him have been found in Fier.<sup>54</sup> It is of great significance that our knowledge of his life comes from his personal notes written in Greek in a reflection on the art of painting. In the same book, he documented the turning points of his life from 1736 to 1787.<sup>55</sup>

Recent research has broadened our knowledge about the work of the famous painters Michail Anagnostis from Samarina in Epirus and his son Dimitrios. They worked in Greece, more specifically in Samarina and Kalambaka,<sup>56</sup> but also in many churches in Albania and former Yugoslavia (fig. 8).<sup>57</sup> Their extensive output included wall-paintings and icons, which they signed usually in Greek and rarely in Slavic, as is the case with the icons of the new iconostasis of the monastery of St John Prodromos in Bigor, between 1831 and 1835.<sup>58</sup> Among other monuments, Michail painted the cathedral of Elbasan in 1828 and the monastery of Treskavets

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>53</sup> E. Moutafov, “Ioannes Tsetiris from Grabovo or Jovan Chetirević Grabovan?”, *Ζητήματα μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής*, pp. 217-228.

<sup>54</sup> Drakopoulou, *Icons*, nos 64-65.

<sup>55</sup> Moutafov, “Tsetiris”.

<sup>56</sup> Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι*, p. 196.

<sup>57</sup> Drakopoulou, *Icons*, no. 68.

<sup>58</sup> A. Nikolovski, “Proučuvanja i arheološka ispitivanja na manastirskata crkva”, *Manastir sveti Jovan Bigorski*, Skopje 1994, pp. 97-124; K. Nazlasi, “Influenca e shkollës ikonografike të Korçes te piktorët e shek. XIX Mihal dhe Dhimiter Anagnosti”, *2000 Vjet Art dhe Kulturë Kishtare në Shqipëri. Aktet e Simpoziumit Ndërkombëtar*, Tirana 2003, pp. 297-302.

in 1849. He also worked in Manastir in 1826, in the monastery of Bigorski in 1829 and in Podvis in 1834.<sup>59</sup> Two large icons in Fier<sup>60</sup> and Kitchevo,<sup>61</sup> painted by his son Dimitrios, are now in Albania and former Yugoslavia.

Although the religious painting of this era relied to a great extent on the Byzantine technique, it was simultaneously open to influences from the West. The use of Western engravings had a profound impact on works by Orthodox painters, while Baroque and Rococo aesthetics also appealed to the sensibilities of the Orthodox population and influenced both ecclesiastical and secular art as far as decoration is concerned. Its wide dissemination throughout the empire is an explicit indication of its origination in a metropolis such as Constantinople. It is also linked to the choices of Ottoman rulers. Achmet III (*reg.* 1703-1730), for instance, encouraged, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the introduction of Western techniques and Baroque art into the empire.<sup>62</sup>

The great number of paintings, the exploration of the itineraries of Orthodox painters throughout the Balkan area of the Ottoman Empire and the shared aesthetics of these works reveal the development of a common painting language among the Orthodox population of South-East Europe in the eighteenth century, just before the formation of the nation-states. The recognition of the Greek painters' authority and the influence of Western engravings and Baroque art were the most significant factors that led to the emergence of a common aesthetic before the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>59</sup> M. Masnić, "Les œuvres de la période précoce de l'activité créatrice de Michel Anagnost et de son fils Dimitar-Danail", *Zbornik, Musej na Makedonija* 2 (1996), pp. 265-280.

<sup>60</sup> *Trésors d'art albanais*, no. 103.

<sup>61</sup> Masnić, "Les œuvres".

<sup>62</sup> Ali Uzay Peker, "Western Influences on the Ottoman Empire and Occidentalism in the Architecture of Istanbul", *Eighteenth-century Life* 26/3 (2002), pp. 139-163.



Fig. 1. St George, about 1725,  
Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korçë.



Fig. 2. St Dimitrios, about 1725,  
Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korçë.



Fig. 3. Engraving with Sts George and Dimitrios, middle of the nineteenth century, Papastratos Collection, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki.





Fig. 4. St John Vladimir and scenes from his life, 1739,  
Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korčë.



Fig. 5. Engraving of St John Vladimir in the *Stemmatoграфия* (Venice 1741).



Fig. 6. The Virgin of the Unfading Rose with scenes and saints, 1773,  
Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korčë.



Fig. 7. The Seven Saints,  
wall-painting in the katholikon of the monastery of the Virgin, Ardenitsa.

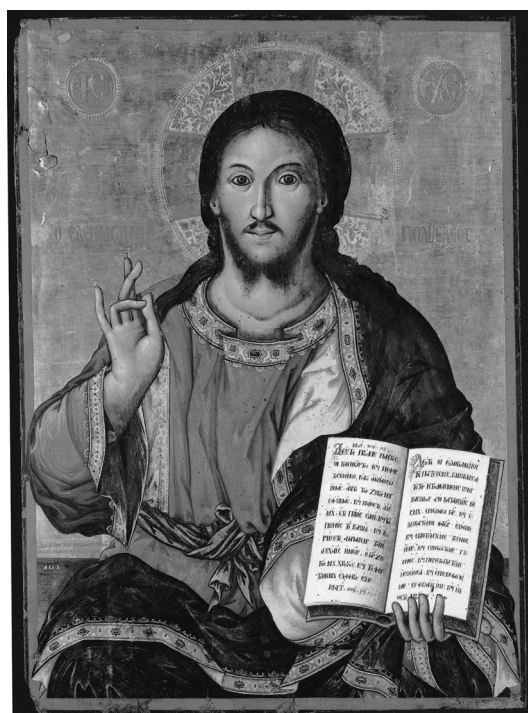


Fig. 8. Christ of Mercy, 1830,  
Collection of the National Museum of Medieval Art, Korçë.