Iconographical details of Western origin in some scenes of the Crucifixion from the end of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries

Maria Kolusheva**

Institute of Art Studies, BAS, Sofia, Bulgaria

The article discusses the presence of iconographical details of Western origin in the scene of Christ’s Crucifixion in the post-Byzantine period. It focuses on the role of works by painters from the Cretan and Epirote schools in their distribution among the next generation of icon-painters. From here a detailed examination of the compositions of the Crucifixion on three monuments in the territory of modern-day North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, dated to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, is carried out. The comparison with monuments from the same period originating mainly in Greek territories leads to hypotheses regarding the painters’ provenance or the place of their education. A rare version of the scene from the second half of the seventeenth century from the territory of Bulgaria is also discussed.

Keywords: Crucifixion, iconography, Cretan school, Epirote school, painters’ workshops

The determination to preserve tradition is an essential feature of Byzantine art. This applies even stronger to works from the period of Ottoman rule. However, Orthodox art has never been an isolated system, especially with regards to iconography. A variety of influences can be discerned at different historical moments; these depend on diverse factors, and they are expressed with varying intensity. In the post-Byzantine period, influences quite often come from the West. An apparent example of this is a version of the scene of Christ’s Crucifixion based upon models from the late Gothic period and the Italian Renaissance; it appears in icons and wall paintings in the Balkans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Images of the scene containing Western elements have long intrigued researchers in Greece.1 The most profound and integral study belongs to Angeliki Stavropoulou-Makri, who outlines the main iconographical features of the scenes from two wall-painted ensembles in Epirus dated to the third quarter of the sixteenth century; there, she identifies the specific iconographical models that were borrowed from the Western tradition.2 Subsequently, her publication becomes a starting point for any author seeking to examine images in a similar context.

The present study offers a summary of the existing data in order to outline the stages of influence of the Western details of the scene on the Balkan painters in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and to track the influence that earlier works exert upon wall painting from the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The analyzed material comes mainly from the territory of modern-day Greece, and it has already been described; however, a few examples of similar influence from Slavic territories will be added. To the present moment, their specific features have remained outside the scholars’ focus. The detailed examination of the individual elements of the scenes, together with their comparison to known examples from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, will inevitably pose the question about the location where the painters learned their trade, as well as about their affiliation to one common artistic circle that shares similar iconographical characteristics of their works.

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An elaborate composition of the scene of the Crucifixion with a great number of narrative episodes was introduced in Italian painting as early as the fourteenth century, and at approximately the same time in art in Northern Europe, too. The evolution of the scene is connected to the highly popular description of Christ’s Passions (Meditations vitae Christi) by Pseudo-Bonaventure from the beginning of the fourteenth century. The process is illustrated magnificently by the compositions of artists like Barna da Siena (1330–1350), Simone Martini

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1 The present study is the result of research carried out within the project for support for young scholars and doctoral candidates Church painting in the territory of Bulgaria and the Greek painters from the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century (contract 1/ФНП-17-119/28.07.2017), financed by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. I would like to express my gratitude to my scientific consultant on the project, Assoc. Prof. Dr Margarita Kuyumdzhieva, for her invaluable input.
2 A. Stavropoulou-Makri, La création d’une nouvelle formule de la Crucifixion et sa diffusion dans les Balkans, in: Ελληνικά ανακοινώσεις στο Συνέδριο Σπουδών Νοτιοανατολικής Ευρώπης, Αθήνα 1985, 241–253.
The first indications that Orthodox painters were familiar with such compositions are found among the painters who were in immediate contact with the late Gothic and Renaissance art in Italy, such as those from the island of Crete. Horsemen, with the centurion Longinus among them in some of the compositions, appear as early as the second half of the fourteenth century in the scene in the churches St Paraskevi in Viannos (1360), Holy Theotokos in Meronas, Amari (ca 1380) (fig. 1) and later in the exonarthex of Valsamonero Monastery (after 1431). On several images from Crete there are also depictions of St Mary Magdalene kneeling at the feet of the Saviour: a posture that is highly untypical for the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

A composition fully developed in the tradition of Western art can be found in works from the fifteenth century, once again by Cretan painters. The icon from the National Museum in Stockholm, as well as that from Odigiotria Church on Kimolos Island, dates from the first half of

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3 For detailed visual material v. M. Κωνσταντουδάκη-Κιτρομήλιδου, Τρίττυχο με σκηνές από το Πάθος του Χριστού στη Δημοτική Πινακοθήκη της Ράβεννας, Θησαυρίσματα 18 (1981) 165; Σταντροπουλου-Μαξτρέ, La création, 244, n. 9; X. Proestaki, Western influences on 17th-century post-Byzantine wall paintings in the Peloponese: roots in the 16th century, BS 68 (2010) 294–296.

4 M. Μπορμπουδάκη, Η τοιχογραφική διακόσμηση του ναού της Παναγίας στο χωριό Μέρωνας Άμαρίου. Νέα στοιχεία, in: Ψηφιδώματα από το Ακαδημιακό Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας (1988) 165; Σταντροπουλου-Μαξτρέ, La création, 244, n. 9; X. Proestaki, Western influences on 17th-century post-Byzantine wall paintings in the Peloponese: roots in the 16th century, BS 68 (2010) 294–296.

5 In the churches St Stephan in Kastri, Milopotamos (1391) and St John in Seli (1411). V. A. Foskolou, Mary Magdalene between East and West. Cult and image, relics and politics in the late thirteenth-century Eastern Mediterranean, DOP 65–66 (2011–2012) figs. 14–15.

6 M. Vassilaki suggests that it was done by a painter from Constantinople or Crete (Χειρ Αγγέλου. Ένας ζωγράφος εικόνων στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη, ed. Μ. Βασιλάκη, Αθήνα 2010, 90–91, no. 11).

7 The icon contains many unusual details: to the right of Christ’s cross a Catholic priest serves the Eucharistic mystery with
the fifteenth century; the icon by Andreas Pavias (1440–1504) from the National Gallery of Athens\(^8\) (fig. 2), as well as that from the Loverdos Collection (ca 1500)\(^9\) – from the second half of the fifteenth century. The renowned Cretan painter Georgios Klontzas, known for his work from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries also created several triptychs that are similar to late Gothic Crucifixion scenes.\(^10\) In Cyprus, also under strong Western influence, Christ’s blood which pours down into a goblet; another priest performs a holy baptism with the water from Christ’s wound; on top of the cross there is an allegoric depiction of a pelican with its young. Around the centre of the composition are the half-length figures of 28 prophets and apostles, and at its periphery are the symbols of the Evangelists. The scrolls they hold contain inscriptions of the Creed and prophecies to do with the Crucifixion. The texts are in Greek and have been rewritten at a later moment. There are grounds to assume that the icon was done by a Greek painter for a Catholic commissioner (\textit{Βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή τέχνη}, ed. Λ. Κυπραίου, Αθήνα 1985, 96–98, no. 97).

In the Balkans, post-Byzantine painting and the big art schools that formed around painters from Crete or from locations in the Balkans that maintained close relations with the Western world reached its zenith in the second half of the sixteenth century. Among these painters are Theophanes the Cretan and Zorzis, authors of the mural paintings in the most influential monasteries on Mount Athos and the Meteora,\(^12\) as well as Frangos Kate-

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\(^8\) M. Chatzidakis, \textit{Les débuts de l'école crétoise et la question de l'école dite italogrecque}, in: idem, \textit{Etudes sur la peinture postbyzantine}, London 1976, 194–195, PL KA’ 1–2. A color illustration has been published by N. Χατζηδάκη, \textit{Εικόνες κρητικής σχολής 15ος–16ος αιώνας}, Αθήνα 1983, 31–32, no. 20. N. Hadzidakis pays special attention to the painter’s signature in Latin, and suggests that most probably the icon’s commissioner is Italian.

\(^9\) M. Chatzidakis, \textit{Contribution à l’étude de la peinture post-byzantine}, in: idem, \textit{Etudes sur la peinture postbyzantine}, London 1976, PL XVII fig. 16. According to N. Hadzidakis the signature that attributes the icon to Em. Lombardos, as well as the year 1635, have been forged and the work should be dated to ca 1500 (v. Χατζηδάκη, \textit{Εικόνες κρητικής σχολής}, 31).

\(^10\) V. Π. Βοκοτόπουλος, \textit{Ένα τρίτμη τέχνης Ιωαννίου Κλόντζα στο Βουκουρέστι}, ΑΔΑΕ 27 (2006) 336, 339, εικ. 1–2, with bibliography.

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Fig. 3. Crucifixion, Stavronikita Monastery, 1545/1546, Theophanes the Cretan (after: Χατζηδάκης, Ο κρητικός)
lanos and the brothers Georgios (an Orthodox priest) and Frangos Kondaris, born in Thebes but known mostly for their work in the area of Epirus. These painters borrowed iconographical types from Italian engravings, icons and canvases and included them in their repertory, although within certain limits, and in a manner that preserved the Byzantine appearance of the images. The process affected the depictions of the scene of the Crucifixion too. Some of the elements that the painters included in the scene had long been recognized in Eastern Orthodox art, or had become popular to a certain extent in the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some of the elements that the painters included in the scene had long been recognized in Eastern Orthodox art, or had become popular to a certain extent in the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

12 O. S. Stavrakopoulou-Makri, Les peintures murales de l'église de la Transfiguration à Vélitsista (1568) en Épire et l'aîter des peintres Kondaris, Ioannina 1989; M. Arisimptou-Potamianou, Sehtipta miΧενιακής Διαφημισιάς του 16ου αιώνα. H τοπική ηπειρωτική σχολή λου Μετεώρου (1552) (M. Chatzidakis, Δ. So- ψανος, Το Μεγάλο Μετέωρο. Ιστορία και τέχνη, Αθήνα 1990, πίν. 87), in Ascension Church in Leskoev (1461/2) (M. Subotic, Ohrisdka slikarska Škola XV veka, Beograd 1988, 97, sh. 79) and in the church of Dragavec Monastery (1476) (M. Kovachev, Dragovevdski monastir „Sv. Bogorodica Vitoska” i negovite starini, Sofiia 1940, 124).
ever, a number of features unequivocally reveal that these painters were familiar with the scene model circulated in Western Europe. In the catholicons of the monasteries Great Lavra (1534/5) and Stavronikita (1545/6) (fig. 3) Theophanes the Cretan depicts a black demon grabbing the soul of the impenitent thief.16 This didactic theme

16 For the depiction from the catholicon in Lavra v. Millet, Recherches, fig. 476. For that in Stavronikita v. Χατζηδάκης, Ο κρητικός, 72, εικ. 98. On both scenes, an angel carrying the good thief’s soul to the Heavens is depicted. The theme can also be found in the catholicon of Koutloumousiou Monastery (Millet, Monuments de l’Athos, Pl. 162.1). For the angel and the demon taking the thieves’ souls v. Semoglou, op. cit., 58–59. M. Chatzidakis suggests that the features of the composition in Stavronikita were borrowed from Andreas Pavias’s icon. For this icon v. supra, n. 8. These characteristics apply largely to the scene from Lavra too (Χατζηδάκης, Ο κρητικός, 72). Later one of Theophanes’s sons, Neo-

phytos, who painted the murals in the metropolitan church Dormition of the Theotokos in Kalabaka (1573) together with the Orthodox priest Kiryadzis, follows the same model. Mary Magdalene’s depiction is added under the Crucifixion V. the scene in: E. Sampangikou, Ο ζωγραφικός διά-

is repeated also in the repertory of members of the so-
called Epirus School.17 Horsemen – a typical element of late Gothic and Renaissance painting – are included in the scene in the catholicons of Koutloumousiou (1540) and St Nicholas ton Philantropinon (1542).18

The Crucifixion compositions of the brothers priest Georgios and Frangos Kondaris are the boldest; the paint-
ers are among the most eminent members of the Epirus School that painted the murals in St Dimitar Church in Veltsista (modern-day village of Klimatia) (after 1558)

17 For example in St Nicholas ton Philantropinon and in St Nicholas Chapel in the Great Lavra: Γαρίδης, Παλιούρας, Μοναστήρια Νήσου Ιωαννίνων. Ζωγραφική, εικ. 72; Semoglou, op. cit., 58.
18 Millet, Monuments de l’Athos, Pl. 162.1; Γαρίδης, Παλιούρας, op. cit., εικ. 70.
Observations by Angeliki Stavropoulou-Makri, the chief researcher of the mural paintings in both churches, as well as of the scene of the Crucifixion itself, reveal that Kondaris’s model is an amalgam of a variety of elements. Some of them were not known even to their most renowned contemporaries or to the Cretan painters from the fifteenth century. According to Stavropoulou-Makri, the Kondaris brothers were in direct contact with Western works of art whence they borrowed images such as the fainted Virgin Mary on the ground, and the men breaking the thief’s ankles; the latter appear in compositions from the Byzantine period but here they are represented as horsemen. Other components of the scene can be found both in Gothic Crucifixion scenes and in some of the icons painted in Crete. Among them is the depiction of Longinus on horseback, as well as that of Mary Magdalene kneeling at the base of the cross. A third portion of components already gained popularity in Continental Greece through the work of the two major art schools in the sixteenth century; namely, these are the devil grabbing the impenitent thief’s soul, and the horsemen.

Stavropoulou-Makri does not discuss the presence of prophets holding open scrolls in Kondaris’s compositions. This element is untypical both for the Italo-Cretan icons, as well as for the most representative schools in the Balkans in the sixteenth century; however, it can be found – although rarely – on Byzantine monuments, and later, in the post-Byzantine period, on some mural paintings in the territory of modern-day North Macedonia, for example in St Nicholas Church in Toplichki Monastery (1536/7) (fig. 6) and St George Church in Banjane (1548/9) (fig. 7) and in Serbia – St Archangels Church in Crna Reka Monastery (1599/1600).

On both scenes in Veltsista four prophets are represented: David, Simeon, Isaiah and Moses (ibid., 79). David’s prophecy (Ps 21, 19) refers to the episode of the Division of Christ’s Garments and Simeon’s (paraphrase of L 2, 35) – to Virgin Mary’s passion that Simeon predicts during the Presentation of Jesus Christ (A. Γ. Τούρτα, Οι ναοί του Αγίου Νικολάου στη Βίτσα και του Αγίου Μηνά στο Μονοδένδρι, Αθήνα 1991, 111). Makri does not report the texts on the scrolls of the prophets Isaiah and Moses that are depicted behind the fortification walls of Jerusalem.

With the exception of the icon from the beginning of the fifteenth century. V. supra, n. 7.

In the refectory of St John the Theologian Monastery on the island of Patmos (late twelfth – early thirteenth centuries), in Theotokos Church in Studenica Monastery (1209), and in Sopoćani Monastery (ca. 1265). V. Živković, op. cit., 363–364, with bibliography.

In Toplichki Monastery the prophets depicted are Aggeus and Habakkuk, and in Banjane – Moses and Habakkuk. J. Spahić, Prapetične sceni vo Topličkiot manastir, Patrimonium.Mk 7–8 (2010) 343, al. 8; G. Subotić, Sveti Đorđe u Banjanima. Zidno slikarstvo, in: Na tragovima Vojslavu J. Đurića, ed. D. Medaković, C. Grozdanov, Beograd 2011, 327, al. 6, crr. 6.

Radomir Stanić identifies one of the two prophets as Moses: idem, Zidno slikarstvo crkve manastira Crne Reke, Raška baština.

19 Stavropoulou-Makri, La création, 241–258; eadem, Les peintures, 79–81, 161–162, figs. 26–29, 62a–b, 63.
20 Eadem, La création, 245, n. 16.
21 Ibid., 245; eadem, Les peintures, 80–81, 162.
22 Both elements can be found in the scene of the Crucifixion on the icons from Stockholm, from the Loverdou Collection, as well as on Andreas Pavias’s icon. In Western Europe, the image of the kneeling Mary Magdalene appears as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the wall paintings in Continental Greece and in the central parts of the Balkans it does not appear before Kondaris’s two compositions in Veltsista.
The work of the Kondaris brothers, and in particular their scene of the Crucifixion, undoubtedly influenced a great number of the painters that worked in the region of Epirus. The mural paintings in a number of churches there bear evidence to that. Some murals are rather similar to Kondaris’s composition and there is a high probability that it served as their model. Examples are found in the scenes from Dormition of the Theotokos Church (early seventeenth century), also in Veltsista,\textsuperscript{28} Holy Theotokos Evangelistria Church in the village of Agios Minas (after 1576) in the area of Zagori, Epirus,\textsuperscript{29} and in Holy Theotokos Source of Life Monastery Church (1637) in the village of Polliofo, close to Ioannina.\textsuperscript{30}

The painter Mihail from Linotopi, who worked in this region for the greater part of his career, follows almost exactly Kondaris’s composition in St Nicholas Church in Vitsa (1617/8)\textsuperscript{31} (fig. 8), in St Zacharias Monastery on Gramos Mountain, Castoria region\textsuperscript{32} and Transfiguration Monastery in Çatistë, modern-day Albania (1626).\textsuperscript{33} On other occasions, both he personally and painters from his workshop demonstrate a preference for the Byzantine version, adding to it individual details from the Kondaris composition.\textsuperscript{34}

Among the other painters that turned to this new model are the members of two of the most eminent painters’ families – Kakavas and Moschos from Nauplion, who did a great number of mural paintings in Peloponnese,\textsuperscript{35} as well as some anonymous painters who worked in and around Stemnitsa – a town in the Peloponnese.\textsuperscript{36} Xanthi Proestaki, who has studied the Western influences on the painting style on the peninsula in the seventeenth century, emphasizes that they too follow Kondaris’s iconography – sometimes very closely, sometimes through the inclusion of just a few details. Proestaki does not discuss how the scene from Velsista became so popular in a relatively distant region such as the Peloponnese, but I find it logical to suspect influence of some non-surviving mural paintings from Thèbes\textsuperscript{37} – the hometown of the Kondaris painters, as well as of some frescoes in the area around the town.\textsuperscript{38}

A similar iconographical model can be found at other locations in Greek territories too: on the Ionian is-

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{crucifixion.jpg}
\caption{Crucifixion, St George Church in Banjane, 1548/1549 (photo: I. Vanev)}
\end{figure}
lands – St Ekaterina Church in Karousades, Corfu (late sixteenth century); in the area of Agrafa – in the church of Petra Monastery (1625); in Wallachian monuments from the second half of the seventeenth century.

We have grounds to believe that the workshops of Mihail from Linotopi and of the Kakavas and Moschos families had de viso contact with works by Kondaris; however, such an assumption would seem uncertain about other painters. In the latter’s works certain elements have been added to the traditional iconographical type of the scene; they demonstrate a tendency towards some innovation of the model among these painters. They also speak of the popularity of the new type of the scene of the Crucifixion in the territory of Epirus and in Central Greece. On some occasions, the added element consists of Mary Magdalene at the base of the cross – for example, in the monastery church Entry of the Theotokos (Mengu- lis) in Peristeri, Ioannina (1601/2), the church Dormition of the Theotokos in Zervat, Albania (1605/6) (fig. 14), in Three Hierarchs Chapel of the Varlaam Monastery in the Meteora (1638), in Transfiguration Monastery in Dryovouno, Kozani (1652), in St Nicholas Monastery in

39 Present on the scene here are the Virgin Mary fainted on the ground, Longinus on horseback and many horsemen. The top part of the scene was destroyed. D. Triantaphyllopoulos, Die nachbyzantinische Wandmalerei auf Kerkya und den anderen ionischen Inseln. Untersuchungen zur Konfrontation zwischen ostkirchlicher und abendländischer Kunst (15.–18. Jahrhundert), München 1985, 94–101, Abb. 10.

40 Here we see the Virgin Mary fainted on the ground, St John next to her, Longinus on horseback, the prophets Isaiah and Moses. The iconographical model is not typical for the painting style in the area of Agrafa where the temple is located. Σ. Σδρόλια, Οι τοιχογραφίες του καθολικού της Μονής Πέτρας (1625) και η ζωγραφική των ναών των Αγράφων τον 17ο αιώνα, Ιωάννινα 2000 (doctoral dissertation, University of Ioannina) 166–168, εικ. 98.

41 The frescoes in the monastery church Creţuleşti dated from the time of Matthew Bassarab (C. Pillat, Pictura murală în epoca lui Matei Bassarab, București 1980, fig. 71). For examples from the end of the seventeenth century by the Greek painter Konstantinos v. Toiöra, op. cit., 112, n. 773–775. The similarity between the scenes of the Crucifixion in Biserica Doamnei (1683) and Mogoşoaia (1688–1690) and that in Veltisita leads Ev. Drakopoulou to the assumption that Konstantinos was born in Epirus: eadem, Remarques sur la peinture post-byzantine dans les Pays roumains. Les peintres provenant de l’environnement grec, in: Relations grec-roumaines. Interculturalité et identité nationale, ed. P. M. Kitromilidis, Athènes 2004, 156.

Fig. 8. Crucifixion, St Nicholas Church in Vitsa, 1617/1618, Mihail from Linotopi (after: Τούρτα, Οι ναοί του Αγίου Νικολάου)
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Metsovo (seventeenth c.). In others, there is a depiction of the prophet David holding a scroll with text (Ps. 21, 19) close to the Division of the Garments scene; the text on the scroll refers to the respective episode. These examples include the church Birth of the Theotokos in Koritiani, in the region Katsanochoria (first half of the seventeenth c.), and the cathedral of Saint George Monastery (mid-seventeenth c.). The main characteristic of the third set of examples is the presence of the Virgin Mary fainted on the ground: St Nicholas Church in Kalendzi, also in Katsanochoria (3rd quarter of the seventeenth c.).

Wall painting programmes with scenes of the Crucifixion with Western elements are rather rare in the central and western parts of the Balkans. It is probably for this reason that art historians failed to pay attention to their specifics, even though a portion of the monuments has already been the subject of monographic studies. Such compositions are found in three monastery churches where the frescoes are chronologically close to each other: Holy Archangels in Kučevište, North Macedonia, Dormition of the Theotokos in Piva, Montenegro, and St George in Lomnica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here we will examine them in the context of the development of the scene towards the end of the sixteenth century in the Balkans.

The scene in the church in the Monastery of the Holy Archangels in Kučevište (1591) is badly preserved and quite faded (fig. 9). Aneta Serafimova, the author of the monographic study on the monument, highlights a number of unusual features in the iconographical model; however, she does not provide comparative material. Her conclusion is very general – the image is not typical either for the monuments of Mount Athos or for those from the diocese of the Patriarchate of Peć.

The Virgin Mary fainted on the ground with the women caring for her is one of the elements of Western origin that we recognize in the scene from Kučevište. Another is Mary Magdalene, kneeling at the base of Christ’s cross. Even though her image is included in the published scheme of a part of the scene, her presence is not acknowledged in the text of the monographic study. Mary Magdalene is depicted in the centre of the composition, hugging the cross with both arms. She is dressed in a scarlet robe, and her loose hair hangs on her shoulders.

**Fig. 9. Crucifixion, Holy Archangels Monastery in Kučevište, 1591 (after: Monastery of Holy Archangels)**

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46 Ε. Σαμπανίκου, Η παράσταση της Σταύρωσης στη Μονή Αγίου Νικολάου Μετσόβου. Η καταγωγή και εξέλιξη του εικονογραφικού τύπου, in: Ανακοίνωση στο Δ΄Συνέδριο Μετσοβίτικων Σπουδών (Μέτσοβο 3–5 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000), unpublished paper.

47 This element of the scene, the Virgin Mary approaching the cross together with the women, and St John the Theologian grieving next to her, is probably borrowed from the scene in Philantropinon Monastery. The prophet David (here positioned quite far from the episode to which his prophecy refers), as well as the many horsemen, are probably known to the painter from Kondaris’s composition. V. Χουλιάρας, Οι τοιχογραφίες, 50–51, εικ. 9, 35. According to Houliaras the wall paintings can be dated to 1623 (ibid., 82).

48 The scene in the church in the Monastery of the Holy Archangels in Kučevište (1591) is badly preserved and quite faded (fig. 9). Aneta Serafimova, the author of the monographic study on the monument, highlights a number of unusual features in the iconographical model; however, she does not provide comparative material. Her conclusion is very general – the image is not typical either for the monuments of Mount Athos or for those from the diocese of the Patriarchate of Peć.

49 Apart from the fainted Virgin Mary here we see many horsemen. In the foreground, a large vessel with a handle and narrow neck has been added; Houliaras assumes that it contains a mixture of vinegar and gall (v. Χουλιάρας, Οι τοιχογραφίες, 104–105, εικ. 92–93).
An unusual feature of the scene is the two prophets in the background, holding open scrolls. The one to the left of the cross has faded completely; A. Serafimova identifies the one to the right as the prophet Zacharias the Younger54 based on his physical features (young and beardless), as well as the text on his scroll.55 Despite the recommendation in one of the sources of Dionysius of Fourna that the author quotes, I am not aware of scenes of the Crucifixion with a depiction of the prophet Zacharias. The prophets that are depicted most often are Aggeus, Isaiah, Moses and Habakkuk.56 As to the text of the scroll that Serafimova deciphers, in the studied period it is common that the inscribed prophecies do not necessarily correspond to the prophet in the image.57 It seems more probable that the prophet in Kučevište is Habakkuk, who is also depicted as young and beardless; also, he is included in two of the painters’ manuals as a part of the Crucifixion scene.58

The components listed above make the scene from Kučevište quite similar to that of the Kondaris brothers. However, here we find another episode that is missing in the examined Crucifixion scenes from the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries from the territory of modern-day Greece: the mixing of the vinegar and gall. The episode is positioned close to Christ’s cross. Two men face each other on either side of a big vessel. One is sitting, stirring the gall, and the other is standing, pouring the vinegar inside.59 The features of the scene from Kučevište are iconographically similar mainly to the monuments from the second half of the fifteenth century, done by painters associated with the artistic centre of Ohrid60 – Vevi (Banitsa) (1460), Leskoe (1461), Dragalevtsi (1476).61 Subsequently this detail is transferred to the repertory of some painters working in the sixteenth century in the region of North Macedonia – the nave of St Nicholas Church in Toplichki Monastery (1536/7) and in the church St Nicholas/St Athanasius in Šišev (1565).62 Its presence in the scene from Kučevište suggests a connection of the painters who worked on the monastery church to the iconographical tradition in the wider area of Ohrid.63

A similar eclectic approach in the design of the composition64 can be observed in the scene from the church of Piva Monastery (1603–1605)65 (fig. 10). To

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54 The painters’ manuals recommend that the text be inscribed upon the scroll of the prophet Zacharias the Younger on the scenes of Baptism and Crucifixion. V. Διονυσίου του εκ Φουρνά, Ερμηνεία της ζωγραφικής τέχνης, ed. A. Παπαδόπουλος Κεραμίς, Πετρούπολες 1909, 80, 276.

55 According to A. Serafimova the inscription on the scroll reads: ΕΝ ΤΗ ΗΜΕΡΑ(Η ΕΚΕΙΝΗ ΕΞΕΛΕΥΣΕΤΑΙ) ΙΣΩΡ (Zch 14, 8). Eadem, op. cit., 68, bel. 48.

56 V. n. 23, 25–26. In the Holy Theotokos Evangelistria in Agios Minas the prophets Habakkuk and Moses are represented (Χούλιαράς, Η εντοίχια, 82), in the Petra Monastery – Moses and Isaiah (Συλέλεκτα, op. cit., 166–167).

57 Compare to the scroll of the prophet Habakkuk in the scene of the Crucifixion from the monastery church in Agios Minas; as Houliaras points out, it is typical for many other prophets, but not for Habakkuk: idem, Η εντοίχια, 82, n. 535.

58 Διονυσίου του εκ Φουρνά, op. cit., 78, 276.

59 In most compositions, this episode is associated with the presence of one character, depicted close to the Cross with the instruments of the Passion: the basket of vinegar and gall, and the spear with the sponge (for example v. the images from the monasteries Stavronikita, Dionissiou and Varlaam: Χάτζιβάσης, Ο ζωγράφος, εκ. 98; Τζούγκλακ, καθολικού Μονής Διονυσίου, κάμενο Π. Α. Βοκτοπούλου, Άγιον Όρος 2008, εκ. 244; Garidis, op. cit., fig. 35).

60 In all parallel examples here the episode is painted in the scene Bearing of the Cross, and not in the Crucifixion of Christ.

61 M. P. Paisidou, Τα περί της Αγίου Νικολάου και των ιεράρχων του, Βενιζέλος 14 (1973). 62 Its presence in the scene from Dragalevtsi has not been published.

62 J. Spahić, Stradalniot ciklus vo crkvata Sveti Nikola Topličk, Balcanoslavica 37–39 (2007–2010) 57, sl. 8; Subotić, op. cit., sh. 79; Kovachev, op. cit., 124. The image from Dragalevtsi is not published.

63 The parallel examples here the episode is painted in the scene Bearing of the Cross, and not in the Crucifixion of Christ.

64 The scene is located in the central nave of the temple, on the northern wall. It is signed with an inscription: ΡΗΜΑΤΗΡ ΧΩΡΩΝ. My great gratitude to the Bishop of the Eparchy of Rudnik and Nikšić Iordanije Mićojević, Hierodeacon Sava Vukajić, and particularly to the abbot of the monastery Hieromonk Efthimij Škuletić for granting me access and permission to photograph the frescoes. I am especially grateful to Asoc. Prof. Ivan Vanev for the photographs.

65 The donor’s inscription was first published by Lj. Stojanović, Stari srpski zapis i natpis Ι, Beograd 1902, no. 950. It provides controversial information about the year of completion of the frescoes on the altar and the nave, and as a result scholars date the works differ-
this moment, it has not been published or discussed, as there is still no integral study of the murals of this monument from the territory of Montenegro, which is representative for the period.\textsuperscript{66} The positioning of the main characters follows the traditional model of the scene: the grieving Virgin Mary and Saint John the Theologian flank Christ on the cross. As demonstrated above, some of the elements that comprise the remaining part of the scene already gained certain popularity among painting ateliers from the beginning of the seventeenth century, mostly through Kondaris’s scene. Thus, a kneeling Mary Magdalene is depicted\textsuperscript{67} in the foreground, above Adam’s skull in the Calvary cave; a small devil above the impenitent thief’s mouth pulls his soul out. The composition is flanked by two groups of horsemen approaching the crucifixes from both sides. The group to the left consists of characters whose presence in the scene is highly unusual. The horseman in the foreground is depicted with a crown on his head – probably Pontius Pilate, accompanied by the two high priests (fig. 11). This feature corresponds to the testimony in the Gospel of John; according to it Pontius Pilate went to Calvary in order to post a sign reading “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (J 19, 19). The episode is known as part of the Passions cycle,\textsuperscript{68} and its representation in the scene of the Crucifixion is rather rare. The only parallels of which I am aware at the present moment are an unpublished icon from the Dousikou Monastery in Thessaly (probably sixteenth c.), the mural paintings from the church Birth of the Theotokos in Koritiani, Epirus (first half of the seventeenth c.) and the monastery church of St Nicholas in Šiševо (1630).\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{66} The description of the frescoes was published by Sreten Petković in his major work on wall painting in the diocese of the Patriarchate of Peć: \textit{idem}, Zidno slikarstvo na području Pečke patrijaršije 1557–1614, Novi Sad 1965, 198; E. Kyriakoudi, \textit{Les artistes Grecs qui ont participé à la peinture murale des régions sous la juridiction du Patriarcat de Peć pendant sa rénovation (1557–1690)}, BSt 2 (1983) 500; D. Vojvodić, M. Živković, \textit{Deizisni čin iz Pive}, Prilog proučavanju skonostasa i ikonopisa u pivkom manastiru, Zograf 38 (2014) 206; or from 1604–1605: A. Skovran, \textit{Umetničko blago manastira Pive}, Cetinje–Beograd 1980, 10; M. Marković, \textit{Jedno neobično rešenje u rasporedu figura proroka i mučenika u živopisu Pive}, Crkvene studije 11 (Niš 2014) 667. S. Rajčević merges the two datings: \textit{idem}, \textit{Slikarstvo Crne Gore u novom vijeku}, Podgorica 1996, 93, 95. I accept the reading of the donor’s inscription according to Tsvetan Vassilev in: M. Kolusheva, \textit{The Virgin’s Epithet} in the prothesis of the church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in the Piva Monastery in Montenegro in the context of some Balkan monuments from the beginning of the seventeenth century, in: \textit{Marginalia. Art readings} 2018, ed. I. Gregova, E. Moussakova, Sofia 2019, 172–173.

\textsuperscript{67} Her posture, as well as her clothes, is identical to those in the scene from Kučeviće.

\textsuperscript{68} With bibliography on the topic v. M. Kolusheva, \textit{The scene of the Road to Calvary in St George’s Church in Velko Tarnovo}, in: \textit{Byzantine and post-Byzantine art. Crossing borders}, ed. E. Moutadov, I. Toth, Sofia 2018, 391–410.

\textsuperscript{69} For the icon v. Σαμπανίκου, \textit{Ο ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος}, 130. For the mural paintings in Koritiani v. Χουλιάρας, \textit{Οι τοιχογραφίες...}
In Piva, behind the Virgin Mary we see a soldier without a nimbus, whose physical features and clothing fully correspond to those of the centurion Longinus (fig. 12). He pierces Christ’s right side with his spear, which is unusual for the iconography of the scene in post-Byzantine painting. Without naming them explicitly, the Evangelists speak of two individuals present at the Crucifixion – the centurion who believed in Christ,70 and the soldier who pierced him with his spear.71 Subsequently both soldiers were associated with St Longinus, to whom a great number of vitae are dedicated. There is a variety of versions concerning the identity, deeds and martyrdom of this saint. The earliest surviving Greek vita (sixth–seventh c.) identifies him as the centurion – an identification accepted not only in the hagiographical tradition72 but in the Eastern iconography of the scene too.73 In the Western hagiographical literature,74 and respectively in Western European art,75 Longinus is usually identified with the spearman.

In connection with the extraordinary detail of Longinus in the scene from Piva, we must also mention the depiction of the scene of the Crucifixion from the monastery church Holy Theotokos Evangelistria in Agios Minas, Epirus (after 1576).76 In his description of it, (fourteenth c.) is indicative in this aspect; here the centurion is signed as Ο ΛΟΓΙΝΟΣ: v. К. Λασσιθιωτάκη, Εκκλησίες της Δυτικής Κρήτης (Α΄Επαρχία Κισάμου), Κρητικά Χρονικά 21 (1969) 195–196, εικ. 33. The matter of the different versions of Longinus’s image in the Orthodox tradition has been discussed by Miodrag Marković (v. idem, Ciklus Velikih praznika, 111). He also examines several rare cases where Longinus has been identified with the spearman – the Syrian Gospel of Rabbula (sixth c.) and the images in several churches in Cappadocia (late twelfth–early thirteenth centuries).74 For the saint’s earliest hagiographical text in Latin v. the literature cited in n. 72. The differences between the Eastern and the Western traditions are also reflected in the apocryphal texts. As M. Marković mentions, a Greek version of Acta Pilati (early fifth c.) associates Longinus with the centurion, and a Latin one – with the spearman: v. idem, Ciklus Velikih praznika, 111. The Saint’s Life by Metaphrastes was not translated into Latin before the second half of the sixteenth century (v. Kriūkova, Longin Sotnik. Pochitanie L. S. na Zapade, 431).

70 Mt 27, 54; Mc 15, 39; L 23, 47.
71 J 19, 34.
72 According to O. Losseva, today no Greek hagiographical texts survive where Longinus is identified with the spearman. V. eadem, Longin Sotnik. Grecheskaïa agiograficheskaïa traditsiï, in: PE 41, 429. Nevertheless, the fact that the earliest Latin version of his vita from the middle of the fifth century (where the saint is identified as the spearman) is based upon a now lost Greek version, we can assume that such a text probably existed: A. N. Kriūkova, Longin Sotnik. Pochitanie L. S. na Zapade, in: PE 41, 431.
73 One depiction of the scene of the Crucifixion from Theotokos and the Holy Trinity Church in the village of Kalatenes on Crete is indicative in this aspect; here the centurion is signed as Ο ΛΟΓΙΝΟΣ: v. К. Λασσιθιωτάκη, Εκκλησίες της Δυτικής Κρήτης (Α΄Επαρχία Κισάμου), Κρητικά Χρονικά 21 (1969) 195–196, εικ. 33. The matter of the different versions of Longinus’s image in the Orthodox tradition has been discussed by Miodrag Marković (v. idem, Ciklus Velikih praznika, 111). He also examines several rare cases where Longinus has been identified with the spearman – the Syrian Gospel of Rabbula (sixth c.) and the images in several churches in Cappadocia (late twelfth–early thirteenth centuries).

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75 V. several examples from the fourteenth century in: M. Bagnoli, A Crucifixion by Naddo Coccarelli, The Journal of the Walters Art Museum 70–71 (2012–2013) figs. 1, 3, 6.
76 The scene was described in detail by J. Houliaras – according to him it generally follows the models from the monuments in Velishta (v. idem, H evojmen, 82–84, εικ. 62). A more substantial deviation and a relatively rare occurrence in my opinion is the posture of the impenitent thief; he is depicted leaning forward, with waving hair and his head hung low. This character has been portrayed in the same
J. Houliaras focuses on the soldier who pierces Christ’s body. He directs his attention to the faded nimbus around the soldier’s head and concludes that the painter probably intended to depict the centurion Longinus at this spot but upon realizing his mistake he tried to erase the nimbus, as such a position would not correspond to the Gospel story.\textsuperscript{77} In this scene, Longinus is depicted on horseback behind the above-mentioned figure.

Whatever the reason for the erased image, it is hardly a ‘mistake’ of the painter. As we will demonstrate further below, Longinus is depicted as the soldier piercing Christ’s body in another scene too – that from Lomnica Monastery. This reiteration in several wall-painted ensembles from the beginning of the seventeenth century is quite unusual for Byzantine iconography, and it is hardly accidental. Although such identification can be observed in other traditions too,\textsuperscript{78} most probably the reason for the

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 82, n. 532.

\textsuperscript{78} In one version of Longinus’s vita, preserved in two Georgian manuscripts (tenth–eleventh centuries): v. N. N. Krasheninnikova, inclusion of the detail in these three Balkan monuments can be explained by the hypothesis that Western models reached the painters not through the works of members of the Cretan and Epirote schools but in another way, unknown to us.

Three additional episodes that also display certain peculiar features have been added to the foreground of the scene from Piva. Same as in Kučevište, to the left we see Virgin Mary fainted on the ground, with the women caring for her. To the right is the episode of the Division of the Garments. What is unusual here are the clothes and the actions of each character. Usually the episode includes three figures dressed either as soldiers or as civilians, sometimes with Jewish hats. In Piva Christ’s cloak is held by three Jews (fig. 13); the one on the right wears an unusual tall hat; the elderly man in the middle cuts up the cloak with scissors; and the third one on the left holds

\textsuperscript{77} Longin Sotnik. Pochitanie v Gruzii, in: PĖ 41, 435; in a version of his life and in apocrypha from Armenian sources (v. V. Devrikiyan, M. E. Shirinian, Longin Sotnik. V armiňskoi traditii, in: PĖ 41, 435–438); in the Book of the Bee, created in the thirteenth century, in the Coptic-Arabian Synaxarion and its Ethiopic version (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries); v. E. E. Makarov, Longin Sotnik. Pochitanie L. S. na Vostoke, in: PĖ 41, 438–439.
three coloured sticks used to cast the lot (Mt 27, 35; Mc 15, 24; L 23, 34; J 19, 23–24). The three coloured sticks are an exceptionally rare detail here, as well as the tall hat of the character to the right. Both elements are present in the episode from Dormition of the Theotokos Church in Zervat, Albania (1605/6) (fig. 15). Another similarity between the scenes in Piva, Zervat and Kučevište is the emphasis on the episode Mixing the Gall with Vinegar. In all three monuments, it is portrayed in a different manner but the attention paid to it sets these scenes apart from the most representative models from the sixteenth century, where the episode is not depicted at all.

The next scene of the Crucifixion that I would like to examine is in St George Church of Lomnica Monastery (1607/8) (fig. 16). According to Ljiljana Ševo, the author of a monographic study on this monument, in terms of composition the Crucifixion from Lomnica is similar to the scenes from Pustinja Monastery, St Spas Church in Štip, The Birth of Christ Church in Arbanassi and St Theodore Tyron and St Theodore Stratelates Church in Dobarsko. She believes that these monuments were done – much as the one in Lomnica – by ‘unambitious travelling painters, mainly Greeks.’ Similarities of the Crucifixion scene from Lomnica to some scenes done by Serbian painters leads her to the conclusion that in this period in the Balkans there existed shared models that were disseminated in the area.

In her conclusions, Ševo does not take into consideration the monuments from the Greek territories, and in her discussion she omits the most peculiar features of the scene. Firstly, the group of several men with nimbi approaching to the right of the vessel. In Zervat the episode is positioned in the foreground of the scene, to the left, and in terms of composition it is close to the model in the church Dormition of the Theotokos of Karlukovski Monastery in Bulgaria (1602). V. the depiction in: V. Pandurski, Manastirska stena zhivopis v Karlukovo, Sofia 2002, 101–107, sh. IX, il. 23, 83–86. In Kučevište the position of this episode in the altar, above the Vision of Saint Peter from Alexandria, hints at the emphasis upon it by the painters/creator of the programme. A. Serafimova sees here a probability for a semantic parallel between the division of Christ’s garments and his torn chiton from Arius’s heresy being sought after: eadem, op. cit., 84.

80 In Piva the mixing is done by two youngsters sitting next to each other to the right of the vessel. In Zervat the episode is positioned in the foreground of the scene, to the left, and in terms of composition it is close to the model in the church Dormition of the Theotokos of Karlukovski Monastery in Bulgaria (1602). V. the depiction in: V. Pandurski, Manastirska stena zhivopis v Karlukovo, Sofia 2002, 101–107, sh. IX, il. 23, 83–86. In Kučevište the position of this episode in the altar, above the Vision of Saint Peter from Alexandria, hints at the emphasis upon it by the painters/creator of the programme. A. Serafimova sees here a probability for a semantic parallel between the division of Christ’s garments and his torn chiton from Arius’s heresy being sought after: eadem, op. cit., 84.

81 Lj. Ševo, Manastir Lomnica, Beograd 1999, 78–79, sl. 20, 35. The painting of the murals in the monastery’s catholicon began in the late 1570s, when the painter Longinus did the upper parts of the altar and the nave. A few years later, in 1607/8, four painters completed the painting of the murals in the monastery’s catholicon. V. the depiction in: V. Pandurski, Manastirska stena zhivopis v Karlukovo, Sofia 2002, 101–107, sh. IX, il. 23, 83–86. In Kučevište the position of this episode in the altar, above the Vision of Saint Peter from Alexandria, hints at the emphasis upon it by the painters/creator of the programme. A. Serafimova sees here a probability for a semantic parallel between the division of Christ’s garments and his torn chiton from Arius’s heresy being sought after: eadem, op. cit., 84.

82 The particular similarities between the scenes have not been listed, and neither have the features of the scene of the Crucifixion been discussed. The author directs her attention to the fact that several details known from earlier monuments are missing in the scene, and also that all three crosses have been depicted (ibid., 115, n. 118). According to her, the thieves’ poses are very similar to those in Dobarsko (ibid., 179).

83 The author refers to the scene from the church in Crna Reka. V. ibid., 115, with bibliography.
the image does not allow for a more detailed observation. The object could be the blood and water flowing from Christ’s wound after his ribs were pierced (J 19, 34). According to a popular version of the life of Longinus from the twelfth century in the West, as well as in the Armenian tradition, when the flowing blood covered his eyes, he was healed of his blindness. In Lomnica Longinus is positioned behind that group of characters. In her description of the scene, Ševo notes that Longinus is pointing to Christ with his hand but she does not mention that he is holding the spear piercing the Saviour in his other hand. If indeed the Apostle closest to the Crucifixion receives the drops of the Saviour’s blood in his hands, then we can assume that the painters followed a version of the hagiographic text where the Apostles were present at the Crucifixion and one of them – and not Longinus, contrary to the belief in the Western and Armenian traditions – was healed miraculously. Of course, this remains only a hypothesis. Nevertheless, the identification of Longinus with the soldier who pierced Christ’s ribs brings the image closer to those from Piva and Evangelistria Monasteries.

Finally, I would like to highlight another detail from the depiction of the scene in Lomnica that was not discussed by Ševo. In her opinion, the figure to the right of Christ’s Cross is a ‘young man without a nimbus leaning onto the lower beam of the cross’. Without doubt, this is Mary Magdalene, kneeling before the Cross. Her presence should be highlighted as a common motif in the scenes from Kučevište, Evangelistria, Piva, Zervat and Lomnica.

In order to place the Crucifixion scenes from these three monuments on the diverse map of post-Byzantine painting from the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, firstly we should try to determine the extent of their similarity to the images of the scene in representative monuments from the sixteenth century in Mount Athos, the Meteora and Epirus. A comparison to this group of works reveals a highest similarity to the compositions of the Kondaris brothers’ workshop in Veltsista. The similarities can be found in the images of the fainted Virgin Mary (Kučevište, Piva); Mary Magdalene, kneeling at the base of the Cross (Kučevište, Piva, Lomnica); the devil waiting for the thief’s soul (Piva); the many horsemen (Piva). These images date from the end of the sixteenth and the first decade of the seventeenth centuries and are among the earliest examples of the influence of the Veltsista composition; they bear evidence to the actual iconographical trends that the painters followed.

We can hardly give an answer to the question whether the painters knew Kondaris’s work de viso. However, it is certain that the scenes from the three monuments stand apart from the compositions from the beginning of the seventeenth century that follow Kondaris closely – even through a simplified model (for example, the works of Mihail from Linotopi). The distinctive feature here is the introduction of certain details that are absent in the most representative monuments of the sixteenth century. Above, we demonstrated that some of them are found
in other wall-painted ensembles too – Holy Theotokos Evangelistria Monastery in Agios Minas and Dormition of the Theotokos Church in Zervat. Some of the painters draw from the artistic heritage in the diocese of the Archbishopric of Ohrid from the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries (the Mixing of the Gall and Vinegar episode in Kučešte, Piva, Zervat), whereas others can be found in the territory of modern-day Greece (Pontius Pilate’s depiction in Piva), although very rarely. At present, I am not aware of any known parallels for one of the details – the presence of the Apostles at Calvary, along with the actions of one of them by Christ’s Cross (Lomnica). Two particularly rare episodes are typical for the group of monuments that we have examined thoroughly here: Longinus, piercing Christ’s ribs [Piva, Lomnica, Evangelistria (?)], as well as the iconographical features of the group of Jews, dividing the garments (Piva, Zervat).

The parallels with the scenes from Evangelistria Monastery in Agios Minas and from Zervat expand the circle of monuments with similar iconographical features further. Both churches are located in Epirus but a few features that are not typical for the region stand out in the work of the painters. The observations by J. Houliaras about the wall paintings in Evangelistria Monastery reveal that they are a combination of influences from the Epirote school and the traditions of Ohrid and Castoria from the fifteenth century. This leads him to the hypothesis that the painter could have come from a region in Macedonia,89 however, he remains certain that the painter was Greek (although he discusses the phonetic transcription of the words and the use of the Cyrillic letter И).90 In my opinion, in several inscriptions there is evidence that the painter experienced serious difficulties when signing some of the scenes; in practice, this does not support the theory of his Greek provenance.91

Recently, a few more wall-painted ensembles from the territory of Bulgaria (the murals in St Theodore Tyrion and St Theodore Stratelates Church in Dobarsko and St Nicholas Church of the Seslavtsi Monastery)92 have been attributed to the painter that did some of the wall paintings in the church in Zervat (including the scene of the Crucifixion).93 The inscriptions from the church in Albania are in Greek but several signatures and scroll inscriptions from the eastern section of the nave and the altar are Cyrillic. The common features revealed through a comparison with the inscriptions in a few other monuments from the territories of Bulgaria and North Macedonia support the hypothesis that the painters belonged to a big workshop where similar iconographical and stylistic characteristics can be distinguished.94 The iconographical

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89 Χουλιαράς, Η εντοίχια, 103–108, 504. The painter did not sign his work; there is no evidence that he worked on other wall-painted ensembles. Houliaras distinguishes only one painting style and believes that the whole ensemble was done by a single artist (ibid., 101).
90 Ibid., n. 621.
91 Namely, the inscriptions in the scene Massacre of the Innocents, signed as Υ ΔΡΟΦΟΤΟΝΙΑ (for the inscriptions I follow Houliaras’s reading (ibid., n. 361), Annunciation – Ο ΕΒΑΓΓΕΛΗΝ (ibid., n. 330) or the text on prophet Gideon’s scroll; instead of references to his prophecies, it contains instructions of a painters’ manual on how to depict the prophet ΟΜΟΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΓΕΔΕΟΝ (ibid., n. 290).
92 Kolusheva, ΤΣάρκвата, 68. The opinion that the wall paintings from this group of monuments have been executed by a workshop of Saint Pimen from Zographou still persists in the literature in Bulgaria; some authors approach it critically: v. E. Moussakova, Pimen of Zograph’s manuscripts as an example of collaboration among scribes, Khrizograf 2 (Moskva 2005) 169–199; M. Kuiumdzhiyeva, „Рукописи гръцкого иконография…”: Опыт вебника за христианската в каснодревновечковна и предмодерна епоха, Проблеми на изкуството 1 (2018) 14–15. According to Saint Pimen’s hagiography, as a monk from Mount Athos, he is associated with the monasteries there; consequently, the wall paintings ascribed to him are discussed mostly in the context of the artistic tradition of Mount Athos.
93 The painter did not put his signature. For the arrangement of the frescoes in the church v. Kolusheva, ΤΣάρκвата, 67–68.
94 For the inscriptions from this group of monuments v. Т. С. Василев, Езикови и христиански паралели – натписителнии върху надписите в...
I believe a brief presentation of these two monuments is necessary, in particular with regards to the profile of the painters that worked on the frescoes there. This necessity is determined by several similarities to elements from Kučevište, Piva and Lomnica; these include some elements from the Crucifixion scene, but also a number of features of the wall painting programmes, the language of the inscriptions, as well as the hypotheses about the painters’ provenance and place of professional education. On the linguistic level, these painters demonstrate little skill, both with regards to Greek and Cyrillic inscriptions. Here I must quote an intriguing and entirely realistic hypothesis by Ševo, included in a footnote: due to the mistakes in the Greek inscriptions, she assumes that neither Greek nor a Slavic language was the painters’ mother tongue and suggests they could have been ‘Aromanians’.

Another common trend here is the painters’ preference for commissions by Slavic clients, which could be rooted in their education to do inscriptions in Cyrillic. A great number of researchers discussing the painters’ provenance or the place of their education associate them with the region of Castoria, or, more generally, with Northern Greece; according to A. Serafimova the painters of Kučevište in particular come from a workshop in Linotopi. What does the scene of the Crucifixion that we examined in detail reveal in this respect? Obviously, these painters’ environment was open to the introduction of Western models that are not traditional for Orthodox art. Some of these models were introduced to their repertory through the mediation of monuments from the region of Ioannina; others were not known to painters from the territory of Greece and perhaps should be sought in the northernmost parts of Epirus, close to the Adriatic coast. If we were to establish a hypothetical eastern border of the area where these painters could have been educated, I would suggest the artistic centres in Ohrid and Castoria, which also influenced their iconographical repertory.

Lastly, in this context I would like to add two later depictions of the scene of the Crucifixion originating from the Bulgarian lands in the middle of the seventeenth century. To my knowledge, the icons or wall paintings from the sixteenth–seventeenth century in this area display no direct or indirect iconographical influence of the late Gothic type of the scene of the Crucifixion. The two icons where Mary Magdalene is depicted at the base of Christ’s cross originate from the region of Melnik, from a painters’ workshop that functioned in the region in the

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Fig. 17. Icon of the Crucifixion, ca. 1662, region of Melnik, private collection (after: Gerov, Ikon)
The icons have not been dated. Their compositions are almost identical and include only the main characters of the scene. In the centre is the crucified Christ, and the other characters are positioned around him: to the left, Virgin Mary with two other women, and to the right – John and Longinus (fig. 17). Mary Magdalene is kneeling at the base of the cross.

At first glance, the simplicity of the scene, the traditional positioning of the characters, and the unusual presence of Mary Magdalene, link the icons to several wall-painted ensembles from the territory of Central and Northern Greece. There, a similar iconographical model was used: Three Hierarchs Chapel in Varlaam Monastery (1638), and the churches in Transfiguration Monastery in Dryovouno (1652) and St Nicholas Monastery in Metsovo (seventeenth century).105

What sets the icons from Melnik apart from these images is the absence of one traditional, even mandatory element of the scene – the Calvary Cave with Adam's skull, a symbolic representation of humanity's salvation through Christ's sacrifice. One possible explanation could be that the painter omitted the detail but its absence is more likely due to another reason – a similar iconographical model is found in one type of the scene of the Crucifixion, disseminated in the West in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries. The simplicity of some of the examples

105 For the painter's activity and his works in the region v. idem, Edno atelie ov vtorata polovina na XVII vek v Melnishkii krai, Izvestii na Istoricheski muzei 4 (Blagoevgrad 2005) 52–59; idem, Ikoni ot Melnik i Melnishko, София 2007, 28, 76–77, 84–85.

104 According to the information provided by G. Gerov, one of the icons is in a private collection. There is no information about the location of the other: ibid., 76, 84.

103 For these images v. supra. Researchers studying the painting style of the three monuments come to the conclusion that in general the painters that worked on the frescoes there used mainly models from Crete, and for the scene of the Crucifixion they borrowed details from the Cretan and the Epirote Schools; v. Τσάμπουρας, O ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος του Ικονιμουσείου u Raveni, Βενετία 2005, 34, cat. no. 4.

102 Idem, Ikoni ot Melnik i Melnishko, София 2007, 28, 76–77, 84–85.

101 For the painter's activity and his works in the region v. idem, Edno atelie ov vtorata polovina na XVII vek v Melnishkii krai, Izvestii na Istoricheski muzei 4 (Blagoevgrad 2005) 52–59; idem, Ikoni ot Melnik i Melnishko, София 2007, 28, 76–80.

The imagery consists solely of Christ, the Virgin Mary, John and Mary Magdalene kneeling at the Cross. The figure of the latter has replaced Calvary Cave; this feature brings the icons from Melnik much closer to this iconographical type. An even greater similarity to them can be found in a triptych from the National Museum of Ravenna that includes the Crucifixion. It has been ascribed to a Venetian-Ferraran workshop and dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century. Some researchers date this work to the sixteenth century and consider its author a follower of Andreas Pavias or Andreas Ritos. If the latter statement is correct, then we may assume that this iconographical type was known to Orthodox painters too.

Did the painter from Melnik use a Western engraving or print (anthivolo) of this image of the scene directly, or did the model reach him through an image by a painter from Crete or from some other zone of contact between the Balkans and the West? This is a matter of speculation. However, the differences between the two icons from Melnik and the wall-painted works in the Balkans are indicative of the various channels through which Western iconographical details were introduced to the scene of the Crucifixion in the seventeenth century.

106 M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs et de la collection de l'Institut, Venise 1975, 180, cat. no. 180, Pl. 78. M. M. Chatzidakis ascribes it to a workshop from Northern Italy and dates it roughly to the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries. Here I quote the dating according to M. Kazanaki-Lapa: v. Χ. Μαλτέζου et al., Οδηγός του Μουσείου Βενετίας, Βενετία 2005, 34, cat. no. 4.

107 Foskolou, op. cit., fig. 3. Here Adam's skull is positioned at the feet of Mary Magdalene.

108 The icon is ascribed to a follower of Nicolo di Buonacorso (v. M. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death. The arts, religion, and society in the mid-fourteenth century, Princeton – New Jersey 1978, ill. 124).

109 Zone delle collezioni del Museo Nazionale di Ravenna, ed. Gino Pavan, Ravenna 1979, cat. no. 154. Several elements are identical to these on the icons from Melnik: the presence of women supporting the Holy Virgin, and of Longinus, as well as the replacement of the cave with Adam's skull with the figure of Mary Magdalene.

110 R. Damiko, S. Pajić, Zbirka ikona i slika na drvetu u Nacionalnom muzeju u Raveni, Niš i Vizantija 14 (2016) 492–493, sl. 8.
У XIV веку у западном сликарству појављује се проширена композиција Распећа, с мноштвом нарацивних епизода. Прве назнаке тога да су православни зографи познавали ове композиције налазе се код мајстора који су били у непосредном контакту с касноготичким и ренесансним живописом Италије. Такви су, на пример, зографи са острова Крита. Током друге половине XIV века на сценама у зидном сликарству на том острву почињу да се појављују елементи западног порекла – коњаници, међу којима је и стотник Лонгин, као и лих свете Марије Магдалине која клечи пред Спаситељевим ногама. Потпуно раширена композиција изведена у духу западног живописа види се на иконописним делима из XV века, такође остављеним зографским мајсторима.

Познато је да су друга и трећа четвртина XVI столећа доба највећег процвата поствизантијског сликарства на Балкану и великих уметничких школа формираних око зографа који долазе с Крита или из других балканских области, а који су имали блиске везе са западним светом. У репертоару ових зографа појављују се иконографски типови преузети са италијанских гравира, икона или слика на платну, иако у ограниченој мери и представљени тако да сачувају византијски изглед слика. То се односи и на слику Распећа. Најсмелији у изградњи композиција били су браћа јереј Георгије и Франгос Кондарис, који се сврставају у нај значајније представнике тзв. епирске школе. Њихова дела утицају на наредну генерацију зографа који радили у области Епира, као и на других местима у грчким земљама.

На територији средишњег и западног Балкана зидне слике Распећа које укључују елементе западног порекла изузетно су ретке. Такве су композиције у три манастирске цркве чије су фреске хронолошки блиске – у Светим арханђелима у Кучевишту (1591), У споњу Пресвете Богородице у Пиви (1603–1605) и у Светом Георгију у Ломници (1607/1608). Повезане са slikama из реперативних споменика XVI века на Атону, Метеорима и у Епиру, најприближније су композицијама атељеа браће Кондарис. Сличности се могу тражити у представама Богородице која је од боља клонула на земљу, Марије Магдалине на коленима пред крстом, ђавола који очекује разбојникову душу и многобројних коњаника. На питање о томе да ли су зографи који су радили у трима разматраним црква-ма били упознати с Кондарисовим радовима de viso тешко се може одговорити. Сигурно је, међутим, да су сцене из та три споменика далеко од оних композиција с почетка XVII века које, иако поједностављеног схематског приказа, пажљиво пратеета Кондариса. Она што их од њих удаљава јесте увођење појединих детаља као што су Милун жртве, макар и веома ретко, на територији данашње Грчке, а за поједине паралеле нису извесне. Изгледа да су зографи о којима је реч произшли из средине Крита или из других балканских области, као што су браћа Кондарис, утицају на наредну генерацију зографа који се продирају у сцену Распећа, у стилу који је речеркала на овом подручју, у источноримским школама, али се најчешће у виду уметничких споменика из ове области, у Епир и Охрид.

На крају се у вези с реченим могу поменути два приказа Распећа из мелничког краја која су настала средином XVII века. Током XVI и XVII столећа у бугарским земљама, гледано у целини, није било икона и фресака чија је иконографија настала под непосредним или посредним утицајем касноготичког типа Распеља. Две мелничке иконе са сличним темама са острова Крита или из других балканских области, али које су имале блиску везу са западним светом, утицају на наредну генерацију зографа који су радили у области Епира, као и на другим местима у грчким земљама. На територији средишњег и западног Балкана зидне слике Распеља које укључују елементе западног порекла изузетно су ретке. Такве су композиције у три манастирске цркве чије су фреске хронолошки блиске – у Светим арханђелима у Кучевишту (1591), У споњу Пресвете Богородице у Пиви (1603–1605) и у Светом Георгију у Ломници (1607/1608). Повезане са slikama из реперативних споменика XVI века на Атону, Метеорима и у Епиру, најприближније су композицијама атељеа браће Кондарис. Сличности се могу тражити у представама Богородице која је од боља клонула на земљу, Марије Магдалине на коленима пред крстом, ђавола који очекује разбојникову душу и многобројних коњаника. На питање о томе да ли су зографи који су радили у трима разматраним црвама били упознати с Кондарисовим радовима de viso тешко се може одговорити. Сигурно је, међутим, да су сцене из та три споменика далеко од оних композиција с почетка XVII века које, иако поједностављеног схематског приказа, пажљиво пратеета Кондариса. Она што их од њих удаљава јесте увођење појединих детаља као што су Милун жртве, макар и веома ретко, на територији данашње Грчке, а за поједине паралеле нису извесне. Изгледа да су зографи о којима је реч произшли из средине Крита или из других балканских области, као што су браћа Кондарис, утицају на наредну генерацију зографа који се продирају у сцену Распеља, у стилу који је речеркала на овом подручју, у источноримским школама, али се најчешће у виду уметничких споменика из ове области, у Епир и Охрид.

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