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**IDENTITY, LEGITIMACY, INFLUENCES: RETHINKING  
AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO FRESCOES  
OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST FROM THE  
MONASTERY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY IN BAČ  
AND THE ASCENSION CHURCH IN ŽIČA**

Proving the influence of one country on another has constantly been a dangerous task, which almost always had certain political connotations.<sup>1</sup> However, one cannot easily ignore the fact that cultural and artistic influences came as a reflection of the political ones. The similarities in architecture, fine and applied arts in those two places, do not necessarily reflect direct influences of one political or cultural center to another, but rather speak more of a circulation of the same ideas from one place to another. Having that in mind, we are going to discuss potential influences and circulation of ideas between two medieval centers: Bač (hungarian: Bács) one of two seats of the Hungarian Catholic Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bács, and Žiča, the first seat of Serbian independent Orthodox Church. The similarities in architecture in this two regions in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, have already been spotted by some scholars.<sup>2</sup> But until recently, due to the very bad preservation of the wall painting on the territory of Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bács, it was not possible to make such a comparison between the wall painting of those two regions. The situation became slightly more favorable after the one fresco was discovered on the wall of the present-day Franciscan monastery of the Assumption of Mary in Bač (picture 1).<sup>3</sup> The fresco depicts the Crucifixion of Christ (picture 2). The first assumption was that the fresco dates back to the late 12<sup>th</sup> or the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>4</sup> which makes it only a few decades older than the oldest layer of wall painting

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<sup>1</sup> B. Z. Szakács, *The Italian Connection. Theories on the Origins of Hungarian Romanesque Art*, Medioevo: arte e storia, ed. A. C. Quintavale, Milano 2008, 648.

<sup>2</sup> И. Стевовић, *Једна хипотеза о најстаријем раздобљу Жиче*, Зограф 38 (2014) 45–58.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pzzzsk.rs/vekovi-baca/2013-kurs-konzervacije-i-restauracije-zidnog-slikarstva-u-manastiru-bodjani/izvestaj%20bac.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 1. Church of the present-day Franciscan church of the Assumption of Mary in Bač

Сл. 1. Црква данашњег фрањевачког самостана у Бачу посвећена Узнесењу Маријином

of the Ascension church in Žiča monastery.<sup>5</sup> Wall painting of Žiča has been thoroughly analyzed and a lot has been written about it. This is not the case of the frescoes from Bač, which impels us to pay more attention over the next pages to the frescoes from Bač than to the one from Žiča.

To a certain degree, Bač and Žiča shared a similar destiny throughout the history; they were both destroyed and rebuilt many times; the precious data that could help us to better understand the work of artisans and builders, or about the aims of their donors, was lost forever. The situation is even more difficult in Bač in comparison to Žiča. Not just for the monastery, but for the whole Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bácsi. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bácsi had the most influence in the medieval Hungary second only to the Archdiocese of Ostrogoth.<sup>6</sup> The origins of Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bácsi are still a matter of discussion: according to the legend, the Archdiocese of

Kalocsa-Bácsi was probably originally set up as diocese by King Stephen I of Hungary, but it became the second important Archbishopric in 1009.<sup>7</sup> According to one hypothesis, it was always unique, with two seats: Kalocsa and Bač, while according to another, it became one by unification of two dioceses, the Diocese of Kalocsa and The Archdiocese of Bač.<sup>8</sup> Some scholars claim that Archdiocese of Bač was originally of a Greek-Orthodox rite.<sup>9</sup> Hungarian scholar György Györffy believes that the seat of Archdiocese of Sirmium was moved to Bač by the end of the 11th century, after that it was united with Roman-Catholic diocese

<sup>5</sup> About the paintings of Žiča: M. Čanak-Medić, D. Popović, D. Voјводић, *Манастир Жича*, Београд 2014, 191-369. (with older literature).

<sup>6</sup> About the relations between Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bácsi and the Archdiocese of Ostrogoth: cf. Gy. Györffy, *Thomas A Becket and Hungary*, *Hungarian Studies in English* 4 (1969) 45–52; Z. J. Kosztoľnyk, *The Church and Béla III of Hungary (1172–1196): the Role of Archbishop Lukács of Esztergom*, *Church History* 49–4 (1980) 375–386.

<sup>7</sup> П. Рокаи и др., *Историја Мађара*, Београд 2002, 32.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> There are different opinions about this topic: П. Рокаи, *op.cit.*, 32; С. Вујовић, *Унапређивање савремене доктрине очувања градитељског наслеђе-искуство пројекта Векови Бача*, (unpublished PhD Thesis), 88.

of Kalocsa.<sup>10</sup> According to Achim Viorel, a Greek-Orthodox church of Sirmium that moved to Bač came under the jurisdiction of Archbishop of Kalocsa in the year 1181, and became one of dioceses of the Roman-Catholic church of Hungary.<sup>11</sup>

As much as we know, there are no historical sources that can directly prove or disapprove these theories. There is one evidence that indicates that Bač could really be the new seat of the Archbishop of Sirmium: Arab geographer Al-Idrisi put the Bač on his map that he was making for Rogir II, King of Sicily in 1154.<sup>12</sup> Among the other things Al-Idrisi wrote that ...*this city (Bač) is metropolis of the people of Sirmium, and in that city is the seat of their archbishop.*<sup>13</sup> It is familiar that the Hungary throughout the 11th

and the 12th century escaped coming under the jurisdiction of the church of Constantinople or becoming a part of *Byzantine Commonwealth*.<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to mention, that it is written that the church of Bač, during the Middle Ages had certain differences with the official Church of Hungary: one of these examples is a quarrel between Banfi, Archbishop of Ostrogom and Mika Archbishop of Bač, which was about coronation of two different kings of Hungary. In that quarrel, Archbishop Mika had the support of the Byzantine Court.<sup>15</sup> The same problem arose regarding the coronation of the Hungarian King Bela III, who was, as it is well known, in one period at the Byzantine court, and the emperor granted him the newly created senior court title of *despotes*.<sup>16</sup> He was crowned as the King of Hungary by Ioanis, Archbishop of Bac.<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 2. Crucifixion of Christ, Bač  
Сл. 2. Распеће Христово, Бач

<sup>10</sup> G. Györfly, *Das Güterverzeichnis des griechischen Klosters zu Szávas-zentdemeter (Sremska Mitrovica) aus dem 12. Jahrhundert*, Studia slavica Academiae scientiarum Hungariae 5 (1959), 25-30.

<sup>11</sup> A. Viorel, *Structuriecleziastice şipoliticiconfesionale înspațiulbalcano-carpatic însecolulal XIII-lea*, Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie, XX (2002), 115-138.

<sup>12</sup> Г. Шкриванић *Ornumenta Cartographic Jugslaviae II*, Београд 1979, 15; Вујовић, *op.cit.*, 86-87.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Вујовић, *op.cit.*, 86-87.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>16</sup> Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenos created the title for the prince Bela because he had a plans to make Bela his heir, and because Bela was also the heir of the Hungarian throne, there was a possibility to create Byzantine/Hungarian personal union. These plans changed when Mnuel got the son and heir to the throne, but nevertheless Bela III when become a king still maintained a strong connections with the Byzantium, and he was also supporting n Orthodox monastery in Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium): Рокаи, *op.cit.*, 47-58.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Nevertheless, by the end of the 12th century, the Byzantine influences, as well as influence of Greek Church significantly dropped, which was caused by the general decrease of the Byzantine political power.<sup>18</sup> During that period Bač became the center of the Catholic church in the battle with the infidels.<sup>19</sup> The *missionary* churches of Sirmium, Bosnia and the church of Milkovo in Walachia came under the jurisdiction of the church of Bač by the end of the 13th century so in that period almost whole territory of the south-eastern Hungary was under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Bač.<sup>20</sup> For our topic, the church of Sirmium, which was reestablished, as a part of Archbishop of Kalocsa-Bácsi in 1229 is particularly interesting.<sup>21</sup> At first, it had its seat at Bonostor, and later after the Mongol invasion it was moved to the place at the time called St Irinei, next to Sremska Mitrovica.<sup>22</sup> The jurisdiction of the church of Sirmium was spreading on the territories on the both sides of the Sava river,<sup>23</sup> the territories on the border with Raška.

There is one interesting occurrence that can help us understand on the one side the relations between the Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bácsi and Raška and other Serbian territories on other side during the 12th and the 13th century: when Stefan, the first Serbian future king, set about procuring a royal crown (*regium diadema*) from the papacy, the pope of Rome Innocent III gave his permission, and named Ioanis Bishop of Albani in Latium, as the papal legate who should coronate Stefan.<sup>24</sup> The strongest voice against that was the one of Hungarian King Emeric (1196-1204). According to Konstantin Jiriček, Vukan Nemanjić, Stefan's older brother had big influence on Hungarian king.<sup>25</sup> He found support in Hungarian king Emeric, who, at the time, was fighting against the Second Bulgarian Empire and needed assistance.<sup>26</sup> With the help of Hungarian troops, in 1202 Vukan managed to overthrow Stefan, and was left to rule Serbia.<sup>27</sup> King Emeric asked the pope to give the crown to Vukan.<sup>28</sup> Pope Innocent III, gave his permission and this time he named the Archbishop of Kalocsa-Bácsi to be his legate. The duty of the legate was not just to crown Vukan, but to turn Serbian bishops and nobles to the true (catholic) faith.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Вујовић, *op.cit.*, 88-89.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Рокаи, *op.cit.*, 33.

<sup>21</sup> S. Andrić, *Bazilijansi i benediktinski samostan sv. Dimitrija u Srijemskoj Mitrovici*, *Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 40 (2008), 117; Viorel, *op.cit.*, 163.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> About Srem: М. Динић, *Срењовековни Срем*, Гласник историјског друштва у Новом Саду 4 (1931) 1-12 (=Српске земље у средњем веку, Београд 1979.); Рокаи, *op.cit.*, 33.

<sup>24</sup> К. Јиричек, *Историја Срба политичка историја Срба до 1537. год.*, књига 1, Београд 1988, 164.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> There is a letter from pope to the archbishop of Kalocsa by which pope gives the orders to archbishop of Kalocsa: A.Theiner, *Vetera monumenta Slavorum Medionalium*

The only sacral edifice that has more or less survived from that period until now on southern part of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bac is the church of the present-day Franciscan Monastery of the Assumption of Mary in Bach.<sup>30</sup> The remaining wall paintings in this monastery, as we can tell for a now, date back to three different periods. The oldest one, as well as the last one discovered is the fresco of the Crucifixion of Christ.<sup>31</sup> In order to determine the exact period when this fresco was painted, we have to expound on the origins of the Church and the monastery itself. The monastery was a several times severely damaged and rebuilt, and got its final form that we can see today in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1734-1745).<sup>32</sup> But, each phase left its mark on the building, especially on the church. Romanesque apse, Gothic ceilings, Mihrab from the Turkish period, baroque concept of space, makes the present-day Franciscan monastery of the Assumption of Mary in Bach.<sup>33</sup> It is commonly accepted, that the first church of the monastery was built in the year 1169, as it is written in the monastery chronicle.<sup>34</sup> Yet, the problem is that the chronicle was kept from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so when one speaks about the events that occurred before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the chronicle can not be accepted as an original source.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, because of the lack of other historical sources, this claim was largely accepted in older literature, without further explanation.<sup>36</sup> According to the same chronicle, the first church was built by the Templar Knights (*lat. Fratres Militiae Templi*) or the knights of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher (*lat. Ordo Equestris Sancti Sepulchri Hierosolymitani*).<sup>37</sup> Lately, new theories appeared regarding the time of building of the first church, however that is a separate topic, which requires detailed explanation.<sup>38</sup>

According to the results of the archeological research as well as the present day condition of the church building, there were two phases of building activities, before the end of the Middle Ages that we can be sure about. The older church was rather small building with a one nave. The building walls were built

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*illustrantia I*, Roma 1863, 18-19; Јиричек, *op.cit.*, 164; С. Ђирковић, *Свети Сава између Истока и Запада*, Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији, ed. С. М. Ђирковић, Београд 1998, 34.

<sup>30</sup> Sekulić, *op.cit.*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.pzzzsk.rs/vekovi-baca/2013-kurs-konzervacije-i-restauracije-zidnog-slikarstva-u-manastiru-bodjani/izvestaj%20bac.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Sekulić, *op.cit.*, 58.

<sup>33</sup> S. Jovanović, *Franjevački samostan u Baču*, Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture XXII/XXIII (1972-73), 132.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Official version: Jovanović, *op.cit.* 132; In the chronicles, according to the fra Špehar, it is said that the first church was built by the knights of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher in the 1169: Špehar, *op.cit.*, 16; Fra Cvekan, claims according to the same chronicle that the church and the monaster were built by the Templar knights on the land that was donated by palatine Mogh in 1188: Cvekan, *op.cit.*, 69.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Špehar, *op.cit.*, 13-14; А. Нађ, *Осврт на Челебијин опис старог града Бача*, Изворник (Гајдобра) 2,3 (2006/2007) 187-230.



Fig. 3. Position of the fresco of the Crucifixion of Christ (Bač)

Сл. 3. Позиција на којој се налази фреска Распећа Христовог у оквиру самостана (Баč)

by stone and brick. The five-sided altar apse is on the east side of the church, and it is supported by one strong counterfort on each side, both north and south. We do not know how the church looked from the western side, because that part was rebuilt in the centuries that followed.<sup>39</sup> But, according to this we can not say the exact date when this church was built, nor confirm or reject the data written in the chronicles, because church buildings like this one were quite typical for the whole period of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Hungary, whether we talk about cathedrals, village or monastery churches, and also the Cathedral of Kalocsa, built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century had also the same shape.<sup>40</sup>

It is most likely that this church was destroyed during the Mongol invasion in 1241. During this invasion, for just one year almost whole of Hungarian kingdom was destroyed.<sup>41</sup> According to what was written in some documents, Bač was severely damaged during the Mongol invasion; the fortress, churches and other buildings were seriously ruined, and the city lost a majority of the

<sup>39</sup> P. Cvekan, *op.cit.*, 69-74.

<sup>40</sup> Spatial concept of the first cathedral of Kalocsa is familiar to the science thanks to excavation from the XIX century of the Hungarian architect Imre Henszlmann. Under the later gothic cathedral, Henszlmann noticed the remainings of the older building from the XI century. It was one nave church with a short transept and circled apse, and a two towers on the western side: I. Henszlmann, *Magyarország ó-keresztény, román és átmenet stíli mű-emlékeinek rövid ismertetése*, Budapest 1876, 49-52; B. Z. Szakács, *Western Complexes of Hungarian Churches of the Early XI Century*, Hortus Artium Medievalium 3 (1997) 152-153; Стевовић, *op.cit.*, 50.

<sup>41</sup> Рокаи., *op.cit.*, 77.

population.<sup>42</sup> After that the church was, at least once, rebuilt. When that exactly happened, we also can not be sure. It is suggested, according to the text of the chronicles, that the church was rebuilt after it came in the possession of the monks of the Franciscan order, which happened around 1300.<sup>43</sup>

The fresco of the Crucifixion of Christ stands on the western side of the counterfort on the southern side of the altar apse (picture 3). After the reconstruction from the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century, this counterfort was incorporated in the wall of the bell tower. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century that space was incorporated in the newly erected monastery buildings, so the western side of the wall with the fresco was facing the long corridor that goes along with a southern wall of the church building.<sup>44</sup> In that place an Altar with the icon with the Virgin with a Child named *Radosna Gospa Bačka* stood that was brought to Bač by Franciscan monks by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century from Gradovrh in Bosnia.<sup>45</sup> The fresco that stood behind it, was discovered by chance during the renovation in the 2011.<sup>46</sup> The expansion of the niche in which the Altar stood, but when the layers of plaster and bricks were removed, the fresco appeared. It was hidden under the remains of a Gothic arch that probably dates to the reconstruction from the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The relatively well preserved part of the fresco, which stood directly under the Gothic arch, revealed the bust of the once a whole figure of the Crucified Christ. On the right side of the Savior a Virgin Mary, whose figure is also partly preserved, stands and on the Savior's left side we can now see just a part of the nimbus that apparently belonged to the Saint John the Apostle. The head of the Christ is turned on the right side where the Virgin Mary stands and his slumped body forms an „S“-shape. The figure of Theothocos which is also partly preserved is given in half side figure, turned to the Crucifixion. Her right arm is slightly lifted up and pointing to Christ, and the left hand, that is now severely damaged, she was holding her face. The Christ is signed in a Greek letters, written in white color on the Cross, on the both sides of Christ's head, but none of the inscriptions is preserved next to the figure of the Virgin Mary.

The draft, that is very precise, was made with sepia on the plaster.<sup>47</sup> The original colors were severely damaged, but the main tones are still visible enough. The background is given in dark blue color, incarnate of Christ and the Virgin are in a light ocher. The Virgins Mapforion is of a dark carmine color. The whole scene was framed with a red stripe, dividing one scene from another.

<sup>42</sup> S. Blaschowitz, *Batsch. Geschichte einertausendjahrigenstadt in der Batschka*, Freilassing, 1965, 17.

<sup>43</sup> P. Cvekan, *Franjevci u Baču*, Virovitica 1985, 44; Sekulić, *op.cit.*, 35; Špehar, *op.cit.*, 22-23.

<sup>44</sup> Cvekan, *op.cit.*, 58.

<sup>45</sup> About the icon of *Radosna Gospa Bačka*: Cvekan, *op.cit.*, 114-117; Sekulić, *op.cit.*, 78-81; D. Škorić, *Katoličko barokno slikarstvo u Vojvodini*, Novi Sad 2015, 184-186; Špehar, *op.cit.*, 43-45.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.pzzzsk.rs/vekovi-baca/2013-kurs-konzervacije-i-restauracije-zidnog-slikarstva-u-manastiru-bodjani/izvestaj%20bac.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> According to fra Špehar, who brings us the piece of report of H.I. Bona: Špehar, *op.cit.*, 22



Fig. 4. Crucifixion of Christ, Studenica monastery

Сл. 4. Фреска Распећа Христовог, манастира Студеница

The traces of color on the adjacent wall are still partially visible, therefore we can say that the fresco of the Crucifixion of Christ was just one of the scenes of a larger program, whose content we are not able to reconstruct.

Another thing, that currently remains unsolved is a problem of the original space of this painted program. Was there originally apart of the church that today does not exist, or a part of a chapel, or another monastery space, or it was simply on the facade of the church, we can not say before the larger archeological research of the whole monastery complex is undertaken. It is not possible that the frescoes stood on the facade of the church, even though the counterfort seems a little unusual place for a fresco of Crucifixion, because there are a lot of examples of churches that were covered with frescoes, among them a church in Žiča which had the fresco decoration on a part of facade in one period.<sup>48</sup>

After chemical analysis of the plaster and the color, it is said that the fresco from Bač, most probably dates back to the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>49</sup> If we were to accept the data from the monastery chronicles, according to which the church was built in 1169 and destroyed in 1241, as well as accept that

<sup>48</sup> Д. Војводић, *На трагу изгубљених фресака Жиче (I)*, Зограф 34 (2010) 71-86.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.pzzzsk.rs/vekovi-baca/2013-kurs-konzervacije-i-restauracije-zidnog-slikarstva-u-manastiru-bodjani/izvestaj%20bac.pdf>

the fresco was covered with the Gothic arch during the next reconstruction, it is possible to accept that the fresco dates from the specified period. But we have to bear in mind a few facts: the plaster is very thin, made in the way that was usual in Italy during the period,<sup>50</sup> but the plaster prepared in the same way we can find in Hungary in Feldebro from the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> and Vesprem that dates from the fifth decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>51</sup> Besides the fact that Vesprem paintings are a century apart from the one from Feldebro, the Feldebro paintings show the characteristics of south German or Salzburg stile and the painting from Vesprem displays the characteristics of Byzantine style of northern Italy.<sup>52</sup> So this analysis of a plaster speaks only about the technical aspects, that was in use for a longer period, and does not speak anything about the style. Hence, we can say that the painter from Bač was familiar with the techniques that were commonly used in Italy, but that were, as we are almost certain, also widely used in Hungary. So he could be from Italy or from the some of the cities on the Balkan side of the Adriatic coast, or he could be a local painter who had learnt to paint in Italian tradition. Does the inscription in Greek suggest that the painter was speaking that language, or that he was just using some older model with a Greek inscription, or whether it was a demand of a donor or there is some other explanation for that, in this moment we can not tell. The problem is that there are not many medieval wall paintings preserved from southern Hungary from Zagorje in Croatia on the west, Slavonia, Bačka, Srem, and Banat on the east, especially the one that could be dated in the period before Mongol invasion. There is only somewhat better preserved wall painting in the sacristy of the cathedral in Zagreb, which most probably dates to the last decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a few decades after the Mongol invasion.<sup>53</sup>

When we speak both of time and iconography, and as we would suggest even style, we should search for the similarities in the wall paintings of neighboring Raška. More precisely, with two frescoes on same topics with one from Bač: the frescoes of the Crucifixion of Christ from the church of the Virgin of Studenica monastery (picture 4) and Ascension Church in Žiča (picture 5). The „S“-shaped slumped body of Christ and the pose of the Virgin Mary is the same on all three frescoes. In the scene of Crucifixion from Bač, on the Bible it seems like there were no other participants besides Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Saint John the Apostle, which is not the case in Studenica and Žiča. The right arm of the Virgin Mary is in the same position, making the same gesture like on those on the fresco in Studenica, and the gesture of her left hand is very similar with the gesture of the hand of the Saint John on Studenica fresco. Speaking

<sup>50</sup> According to fra Špehar, who brings us the piece of report of H.I. Bona: Špehar, *op.cit.*, 22.

<sup>51</sup> C. Hourihane, ed., *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture* Vol. II, New York 2012, 361.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Сакристију катедрале у Загребу саградио је бискуп Тимотеј 1275. године. Љубо Караман сматра да су фреске настале по узору на сликарство и околине Рима веровано због тога што је бискуп Тимотеј боравио на папином двору пе доласка у Загреб, Lj. Karaman, *O umijetnosti u srednjovekovnoj Hrvatskoj*, Historijski zbornik 1-4 (1948), 108.



Fig. 5. Crucifixion of Christ, Žiča monastery

Сл. 5. Фреска Распећа Христовог, манастир Жича (из књиге М. Чанак-Медић, М., Поповић, Д., Војводић, Д., *Манастир Жича*, Београд 2014, 206, сл.133)

about the gestures on the frescoes from Studenica, Svetozar Radojčić claimed that they are typically Byzantine.<sup>54</sup> Regarding the painter of the Crucifixion from Studenica, (the master of Vukan) Svetozar Radojčić states that in his style elements of style that are characteristic both for Italy and Byzantium can be seen, and claims that the face of the crucified Christ, resembles much to the younger Italian paintings of the same topic.<sup>55</sup> It is highly accepted that the Serbian architecture of the period shows some influences from Italy and that the masons were often coming to Serbia from the cities on the Adriatic coast, such as Kotor and Dubrovnik, and that there is a possibility that some of them even come directly from Italy, sometimes even from the Apennines, but on the other hand it is generally accepted that the paintings are of the Byzantine origin, whether we speak of the painters that came to Serbia directly from the Constantinople or Thessaloniki, or we do not speak about a local master, who were under the influences from the centers in the Byzantine world. Who was the painter from Bač, and who was this Vukan's master, and where did they

<sup>54</sup> С. Радјојчић, *Старо српско сликарство*, 34.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

came from we do not know for sure, but concerning the master from Žiča, we can claim that he comes from Constantinople.<sup>56</sup> Yet the fresco in Žiča appears so similar in terms of iconography, bodily postures of the protagonists and their face expressions and gestures.

That brings us to one idea, around the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> and in the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, sacral art in Serbia and Hungary, regardless of the religious differences, show similarities in a certain degree, even though we have so many material proofs left. It seems like they looked up to the same or similar role models. We believe less in the transplantation of workshops. Instead, those similarities rather imply the migration of the ideas.<sup>57</sup> The parallelism in painting can suggest comparable artistic orientation, or similar intention from both the donor or the artist. The frescoes from Bač and Žiča both show strong influences from the Mediterranean world, whether they were coming directly from Constantinople and the Byzantine world, whether from Italy, directly or through the cities on the Balkan coast of the Adriatic sea. The similarities should not surprise us, no matter how everything may seem differently on a first glimpse. The Orthodox Raška and Catholic Hungary had a strong connections and intensive relations during the period. Also, it is more than usual to expect that result of such tight relations were reflected in art and visual culture, especially in the border areas that were in direct contacts, such as the Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bácsi and Raška.

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ИДЕНТИТЕТ, ЛЕГИТИМИТЕТ, УТИЦАЈИ: ПОНОВНА РАЗМАТРАЊА И  
УПОРЕДНА АНАЛИЗА ФРЕСАКА РАСПЕЋА ХРИСТОВОГ У МАНАСТИРУ  
СВЕТЕ МАРИЈЕ У БАЧУ И СПАСОВЕ ЦРКВЕ У ЖИЧИ

Једини сачувани сакрални објекат на територији јужног дела Калочко-бачке недбискупије, који је непрекидно у функцији верског објекта од средњег века до данас, и парктично једини у коме је сачувано фрескосликарство из средњег века, је црква дашњег фрањвачког самостана у Бачу посвећена Успењу Блажене Дјевице Марије. По свему судећи најстарија фреска у Бачу јесте фреска Распећа Христовог. На релативно добро очуванм фрагменту фреске сада је видљиво попрсеје, некада целе фигуре, распетог Христа. Са десне стране Христове налази се Богородица, чија фигура је такође сачувана до пола, а са леве стране видљив је само део ореола светог Јована Богослова. Глава Христова окренутка је на десну страну, а тело је благо извијено у облику латинског слова S. Богородица, је у полупрофилу, окренута ка Христу. Десну руку је подигла до висине груди, док левом, која је данас готово потпуно избледела, придржава леви образ. Христ је сигниран грчким словима, белом бојом на крсту.

На основу анализе материјала и технике сликања, бачка фреска је оцењена као каснороманичка, али да има и одређених утицаја Византије, јер поред натписа на грчком

<sup>56</sup> About the time of painting and the painters: С. Радојчић, *op.cit.*, 38-39; М. Чанак-Медић, Д. Поповић, Д. Војводић, *Манастир Жича*, Београд 2014, 191-369.

<sup>57</sup> В. Z. Szakács, *The Italian Connection. Theories on the Origins of Hungarian Romanesque Art*, Medioevo: arte e storia, ed. A. C. Quintavale, Milano 2008, 648.

језику, уочавају се и одређене иконографске појединости карактеристичне за уметност Византије. Ако се узму као тачни историјски подаци из самостанске хронике, према којој је ова црква настала 1169. године, најраније време настанка ове фреске, могла и бити трећа четвртина 12. века, а најкасније до татарске најезде из 1241. године, дакле у првој четвртини 13. века.

Иконографски посматрано, као и временски па и просторно, најближе паралеле Бачког Распећа представљају Распеће из Богородичине цркве у Суденици и Распеће из Спасове цркве у манастиру Жича. Положај Христовог тела и положај Богородице слично је на све три представе. На сва три фреске представљен је Христос који телесно пати. Богородичина десна рука је у сличном положају као и десна руке Богородице на Студеничком распећу, док лева рука бачке богородице којом придржава леви образ истоветан је гесту десне руке светог Јована Богослова на студеничкој фресци. Светозар Радојчић за стил Вукановог мајстора у студеничкој Богородичиној цркви каже да се у њему преплићу елементи Италије и Византије, и напомиње да црте распетога Христа подсећају, на нешто млађа, италијанска сликана Распећа. И на крају, што се тиче жичког Распећа, за њега поуздано можемо тврдити да је дело руку цариградских мајстора. Изрази лица и положаји главе Христа и Богородице блиски су и на Бачкој и Жичкој фресци.