

**Nikola Piperski**

*Department of Art History and Institute for Art History  
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade  
piperski.nikola@gmail.com*

## **The Image and the Cult: The Icon of Joyful Lady of Bač\***

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the development of the cult of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century icon of the Virgin with the Child, known as Joyful Lady of Bač, from its origins to the present day. Painted in the manner of late Byzantine art, and preserved in the Franciscan monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Bač, this Italo-Cretan icon was and still is highly venerated by local Slavic population of both Catholic and Orthodox denominations. At one point this icon also started to be venerated as the icon of Our Lady of Gradovrh, miraculous icon from the Franciscan monastery in Gradovrh near Tuzla in Bosnia. Through this case study, the paper aims at highlighting the fact that in the areas, where during many centuries population of both Catholic and Orthodox denominations lived together, the ways of veneration of holy images differed little among them in both form and essence.

**Keywords:** Icon, Cult, Veneration, Virgin Mary, Bač, Franciscans, Gradovrh

Among many holy paintings and icons of the Virgin that can be found in Bač, one particularly stands out – the icon of Joyful Lady from the Franciscan monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Conventus Bacsiensis ad B.M.V. In Coelis Assumptum)<sup>1</sup> (Cvekan 1985, 78–79). Joyful Lady of Bač (*Radosna Gospa bačka*) also called *Greek Madonna*, (Cvekan 1985, 116) is an Italo-Cretan icon painted in 1684 on lime board (92 x 57 cm) (Fig. 1). It depicts the Virgin holding the baby Christ who is embracing his mother, their faces tightly pressed against each other. The Virgin is signed with the Greek letters ΜΡ ΘΥ (Μήτηρ του Θεού – Mother of God) carved in the wood, on both sides of her head, while for the name of the infant Christ we find the Greek abbreviation IC XC (Ιησούς Χριστός - Je-

\* The paper resulted from the project 177015, funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

<sup>1</sup> Also highly venerated in Bač is the painting of *Krvotočiva* Virgin, also in Franciscan convent in Bač: Korhec 2007, 193–197.



**Fig. 1** Icon of Joyful Lady of Bač (1684)  
Извор: Ауроп

reminds on the famous 12<sup>th</sup> century icon of Virgin of Vladimir (fig. 2), whose copies were very popular in the Orthodox world at the time.<sup>5</sup> The main difference is that Joyful Lady of Bač is facing right and the Virgin of Vladimir is facing left.<sup>6</sup>

sus Christ), written in red on the left side of his head. Christ's gaze is focused on the winged angel, stepping out from the upper right corner of the icon, carrying the instruments of Christ's Passion – the spear, cross, sponge and palm branches.<sup>2</sup> The Virgin looks lost in thought, suggesting that she is aware of the destiny that cannot be avoided. Iconographically, it belongs to the type of Virgin of the Passion.<sup>3</sup> However, without depicted Angel of Passion, the tender relation between the mother and the child, the tight hug, points to the iconographic type of the Eleusa (or Umiljenija) Virgin.<sup>4</sup> This icon was modelled upon some of the famous Byzantine icons of Eleusa Virgin with addition of Angel of Passion. Certain details such as the position of the body of Christ, his feet, the relation between the faces of Virgin and Christ, also the way that Christ is hugging his mother around her neck,

<sup>2</sup> It is more common depiction with the two angels that brings the instruments of the passion, but there are some examples, like our example from Bač with just one angel. We will just mention some examples: *Virgin Lactanos of the Passion*, mid fifteenth century, and *Virgin of the Passion from Koultmousiou* (Dread Protection), from the fourteenth of fifteenth century; one Italo-cretan icon The Virgin of the Passion with just one Angel exists in Sarajevo: Rakić 1998, 124.

<sup>3</sup> On the iconographical types of icons of the Virgin see: Lasareff, 1938, 26–65; Milliner 2011.

<sup>4</sup> At first, it was sad that this icon is of Eleusa type see: Kašanin 1939, 29; Eleusa can be also epithet that can stand on icons of the Virgin of the different iconographical type: Babić 1985, 261–275.

<sup>5</sup> About the icon of Virgin of Vladimir: Tatić-Đurić 1985, 29– 50.

<sup>6</sup> One of the most famous Byzantine icons of this type, that is facing right, was the icon of the Virgin Blacherniotissa, that became famous in Constantinople at the end of

The frame and background of the icon are gilt and carved with shallow floral ornaments. As the inscription is showing, the frame was gilded in 1658. This floral motifs on the backgrounds of icons were characteristic for Kiev school of Baroque icon-painting, and can be often seen on the icons from the territory of Ukraine from the second half of the 17th century (Rakić 1998, 32). The sacral art in the territory of Ukraine, Kiev in particular, from the second half of the 17th century, was highly influenced by late Baroque tendencies from the Central and Western Europe; although the greater influence of Kiev Baroque would appear among South Slavs only by the middle of the 18th century (Medaković 1980, 9), more precisely in 1743 when Serbian Patriarch Arsnije IV Škabenta appointed Ukrainian Jov Vasilijević to be his official painter (Ruvarac 1911, 21–30; Medaković



**Fig. 2** Icon of the Virgin of Vladimir  
Извор: слика је у јавној употреби

1980, 14–15), it is possible that the influences of Kievan art had reached to Southern Hungary and the Balkans some decades earlier. Certain number of icons from Russia (including Ukraine) were appearing in the Balkans before this. These include Russian icons from 17th century found in Bosnia, mostly executed in traditional style, but likewise in the Baroque style (Rakić 1998, 33).

According to the inscription in the lower left angle of icon of Joyful Lady in white colour in a Slavic language,<sup>7</sup> the icon originates from 1684. As it is

the 11th or at the beginning of the 12th century: Grabar 1975, 29; Babić 1985, 265; About the appearance of this icon testifies one icon from Sinai, from the beginning of the 12th century, with the five faces of the miraculous icons of the Virgin from Constantinople, among which is also presented the Virgin Blacherniotissa: Babić 1985, 265.

<sup>7</sup> Although this question is beyond the scope of this work, it is worth mentioning that the closer examination of the style of the letters of the inscription, might help to find an answer to the question where the icon was painted. Ante Sekulić states that the language is an old Slavic: Sekulić 1978, 81; Fra Špehar states for the letters are written in *Bosnčica*: Špehar 2012, 44; Slavica Vujović says that it is written in Glagoljica: Vujović 2016, 81.

written in the monastery's chronicle, the inscription on the icon was interpreted in 1876 by an old Orthodox Christian priest, *learned man* and consistory judge in Novi Sad, in a following manner: *This icon was painted by Dima painter, in the year 7192 since the creation of the world and in the 1684 year since Christ's birth. May God forgive.*<sup>8</sup> Judging by his name Dima, it is suggested that he was of Greek origin (Sekulić 1978, 81). During the reign of the Ottoman Empire, a great deal of Italo-Cretan icons was imported in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other parts of the Central Balkans inhabited by Christian people. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the influence of Italo-Cretan painting represents a significant moment that reflects on iconography and style of the local icon painting in Central Balkans. In the southern parts of the Balkans, in old Orthodox Christian communities along the Adriatic coast, in Macedonia and Bosnia, as well as in other areas, new form of Eastern Orthodox art was taking its form that was, starting from 17th century, similar to the style of the Baroque Italo-Cretan workshops (Medaković 1980, 8–9). Also, when Crete fell to Ottoman control, in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many icon painters fled the island (Rakić 1998, 31), some of them moved to the Central Balkans, especially to the cities on the Adriatic coast. That lives the possibility that Dima was one of these Greek icon painters that worked in the region, at the time.

The inscription in Slavic on the icon of Joyful Lady suggests that the icon was painted for the client who spoke Slavic language. There are several exceptional Italo-Cretan icons preserved in the Sekulić Icon Collection of the Belgrade City Museum that originate from Dalmatia, which have inscriptions in Slavic language (Bajić-Filipović 1967, 71–74). In Sekulić Collection there is also one Italo-Cretan icon of Virgin Trenodusa from Bosnia, painted by the local painter Marko Skorojević, prior of the Franciscan monastery in Bosnian town of Fojnica; Skorojević left the inscription on this icon of Virgin in Slavic language (in Cyrillic letters) indicating that the icon was painted in 1657 and that *he left it in Fojnica in 1660* (Bajić-Filipović 1967, 17). It is possible that the icon of Lady of Bač was also painted somewhere in Bosnia. According to certain sources, after being forced to leave their monastery, Franciscans from Gradovrh near Tuzla first went to Slavonia and later to Bač (Bukinac 2007, 74–75; Fermendžin 1892, 45). Franciscans from the monastery of Gradovrh, because they could no longer pay Turkish levies, moved to Bač in 1688 (Barbarić 1936a, 164–178) four years after this icon was painted, and re-established old medieval Franciscan monastery in the city of Bač, so it is possible that this icon was brought along with them.

But, along with Dima's inscription on the icon of Joyful Lady, there is another inscription on the icon that was hidden under the Virgin's crown until the 1980s (Cvekan 1985, 116). The Virgin and Christ are adorned with two pairs of metal crowns (Cvekan 1985, 116). When the icon was restored in the 1980s, crowns

<sup>8</sup> The text from the II Prot. was published by Cvekan Paškal: Cvekan 1985, 116.

above the heads of Christ and the Virgin were taken off and an inscription below the crown on the Virgin's head was noticed. The inscription reads the following: „*Ограјен п. Фра Јуро Бачванин на поштење Госту у Грејовар 1685*“ that is: The crown was given in the honor of Lady in Gradovrh by frater Juro Bačvanin (Juro of Bač) in 1685, one year after the icon was painted (Cvekan 1985, 116; Špehar 2012, 44). There are some sources indicating that during the whole period of the Ottoman rule in Bač Franciscan monks from Bosnia were taking care of the Christian population of the city, regardless the fact that the church of the Franciscan monastery was turned into the mosque (Sekulić 1978, 42). Fra Juro, one of Bosnian Franciscan monks who lived Bač, crowned this icon in honor of Miraculous Lady of Gradovrh one year after the icon was painted, so it is possible that the icon was brought in Bač from Bosnia right after it was painted.<sup>9</sup>

By the time the icon of Joyful Lady of Bač started to be venerated as the miraculous icon of Lady of Gradovrh itself. Equation such as this is rather usual for Baroque Marian devotion. Miraculous images of the Virgin were frequently copied, new replicas were revered in the same manner as the old paintings, as they carried the authority of original and its thaumaturgical powers (Škorić 2015, 181). That is in fact adaptation of the same belief so frequently used in the Byzantium. Of all the famous icons of the Virgin kept in Constantinople, the most frequent source of copies was the Hodigitria icon (Cormack 2000, 107). According to the theory that the powers of the original passed to its copies, then every Byzantine community would welcome its own *Hodigitria* (the one who shows the way) (Cormack 2000, 107–108).

The monastery in Gradovrh, that was keeping this miraculous icon, was founded in 1541 by the Franciscan friars from Zvornik, since their original monastery had been destroyed by the Ottomans in 1533 (Sekulić 1978, 79). About the miraculous icon of the Lady of Gradovrh (*De imagine thaumaturgica Gradovariensi*) we read from the report by the bishop Jeronim Lučić, written on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1639 in Sutjeska, now kept in Vienna (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114). Upon the request of the *Congregation for growth of religion* from Rome, bishop Jeronim Lučić conducted a research on the miraculous image of Blessed Virgin Mary in Gradovrh (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114). Lučić spent eight days in Gradovrh monastery and questioned 14 Franciscan monks – priests and an old man, parishioner of 90 years; according to the witnesses' testimonies, bishop Lučić wrote that the Franciscans came to Gradovrh after the Turks conquered Zvornik on Drina; the Franciscans had to live the town, and Ottomans allowed them to bring with them only a few liturgical utensils and books from the monastery (Fermendžin 1892,

---

<sup>9</sup> That lives a possibility that the icon could also be painted in Bacs or some other place, but since the Franciscans in Bacs were from Bosnia, and that this type of icons was more spread in Bosnia then in areas around Bač, it is more possible that it came from Bosnia.

426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114). The Franciscans took with them also the icon of Blessed Virgin Mary, which according to Lučić depicted the birth of Jesus and Mary's gift to baby Jesus, called *Quem genuit et adoravit* (who she gave birth to and adored) (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114). In order to avoid the icon being seized by the Ottomans, Franciscans carried it in secret on the eve of the feast day of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven in 1592 (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114). While they were travelling, in to place close to the river Drina, an Ottoman soldier riding a horse spotted them. He was angry that the Franciscans were carrying an icon of the Lady, so he stabbed the Lady bellow her right eye with his spear, which produced the wound in the size of smaller thumb out of which blood spurted out and it could not been washed away from the icon (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114).

The bloodied icon of Mary was first brought by the Franciscans to Gornje Soline, where it did not remain for long due to the looting by the Ottomans, so they moved it to another location; according to the testimony of the mentioned 90-year old man, that second location was in Gradovrh on the property owned by the counts Magljašević (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114). On the spot, where they saw an extraordinary light appearing at night, they discovered an altar and built a church; they also started building a monastery, but were unable to finish it due to the lack of funding. The same 90-year old man confirmed that the painting was hit bellow the eye and that Franciscans from Zvornik brought it first to Gornje Soline and then to current location in Gradovrh, as the place *resembling a desert* (Fermendžin 1892, 426–429; Cvekan 1985, 114).

Although stories like this were very popular in the Baroque era, they originate from the medieval times and Byzantine world. The stories about the wounded and bleeding icons were known throughout Byzantine world in different periods. The one specifically interesting (most probably dating from the late 11th century) is about the icon of Maria Romaia from Rome that says that during the iconoclastic period, a Byzantine iconoclastic dignitary, who had been sent on a mission to the Latin West, arrived in Rome, and knifed the Maria Romaia icon at St Peter's. The icon immediately spurted blood; thus, Mary was perceived to be present in her icon (Pentcheva 2016, 277). Another example is an icon of the Virgin with the Child from the Potation Monastery on Mount Athos in Greece; legend about its miracles tells us that it dates also from the time of iconoclasm when it was wounded by the emperor's soldier, and after that started to bleed (Belting 2014, 59).

A significant account on the miraculous image of the Lady from Gradovrh was left by the abbot Pavao from Rovinj, who visited Franciscan province of Bosna Srebrna (Bosna Argentina) in 1640. Abbot Pavao, as bishop Lučić, also wrote down that Christians carried the icon along the Drina River in order to save it, and that during the journey the icon was wounded and that Christians

tried to remove the blood spurting out of Lady's face, but were not able to do it (Zlatović 1980, 32). Abbot Pavao wrote that the monastery in Gradovrh was on a fantastic location, between Gornje and Donje Soline (Zlatović 1980, 32). He noted that the church was beautiful and of ample proportions, choir was so big that it occupied a half of the church. The great altar is a work by a very skilled artist, whereby there is another altar in the church with the miraculous image of Holy Virgin painted on the board (e perche la pittura e in tavola) standing in the middle between sculptures carved by very skilled artists (Zlatović 1980, 32).

Also, legends tell us that the icon of miraculous Lady of Gradovrh is mentioned as originating from Ram, Olovo and Zvornik (Sekulić 1978, 79). It is said that the Lady of Olovo was revered as miraculous among the local people, thus that it is believed that the painter of the icon was Saint Luke.<sup>10</sup> Supposedly, it was kept in the chapel, next to the main altar and that the light was appearing day and night in front of it (Sekulić 1978, 79). To make the confusion even greater, the painting of the Lady's in Olovo is said to be painted both on board, as well as on canvas (Sekulić 1978, 79). According to one version, painting of the Lady came from Olovo to Zvornik (Fermendžin 1892, 1–67). According to another, retold further by Ivan Stražemanac, Monastery of Saint Mary in Olovo was burnt and torn down by the Turks in 1686, and the whole library, church alters and very nice paintings were burned down, together with miraculous painting of Blessed Virgin Mary (Stražemanac 2010, 157).

It is mentioned that Bosnian Franciscans coming with the people of Gradovrh in Bač brought the icon of miraculous Lady of Gradovrh with themselves (Barbarić 1936b, 301–309; Sekulić 1978, 79). In his *Synoptico-memoralis catalogus*, Grgur Čevapović wrote that the monastery in Bač became *more populated* (adactus) with the arrival of Franciscans from Gradovrh, while the appearance of miraculous painting made it *ennobled* (nobilitatus) (Chevapovich 1830, 370). But, the chronicle of the Franciscan monastery in Bač does not mention the miraculous icon of the Lady of Gradovrh (Sekulić 1978, 79). However, there is one chalcography of unknown origin, probably part of a prayer book (Cvekan 1985, 116) displaying *Greek Madonna* (Fig. 3) with an inscription in Latin below, which according to the quote by Frater Cvekan dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century: *Icon B.M. De Gradovar, olim in Regno Bosnae et Conventu FFrum Min. Fidelium Cultu celebris. Incenso Contu a Muhemetanis, translata, in Hungariam Bacsinum sub finem saeculi decimi septimi: ad Contum Ffrum Min. Provinciae S. Joannis a Capist.* – the painting of Blessed Virgin Mary from Gradovrh, formerly in Bosnian kingdom in the monastery of Little Brothers became fa-

<sup>10</sup> There are many icons of the Virgin with a Child that are believed to be the work of Saint Luke. This belief or legend was largely widespread in baroque, but also Originate from Byzantium, most likely surface during iconoclasm and was connected with the famous icon of Virgin Hodegetria from Constantinople: Cormack 2000, 107; About Saint Luke being a painter of the icon of Lady of Olovo see: Unyi 1947, 158.



**Fig. 3** Chalcography displaying Greek Madonna with an inscription in Latin from 18th century  
 Извор: Sekulić, Ante. 1978. *Drevni Bač*. Split: Zbornik Kačić, 79.

mous, as the believers revered it. Since the followers of Mohamed's faith burned down the monastery, it was moved at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to Hungary in Bač, in the monastery of the Little Brothers in the province of Saint John of Capistrano (Cvekan 1985, 116).

This chalcography displays the Mother of God positioned in the center, holding a small Christ in one arm, who is hugging his mother. This painting belongs to the iconographical type of the Virgin of Tenderness (Eleusa), not Virgin of Passion, which is an icon of Joyful Lady of Bač, as it does not display angels delivering Instruments of Passion. Also, the style of chalcography is more influenced by the Baroque style (usual in this region during the 18th century) while the Joyful Lady of Bač is painted in a late Byzantine (Greek) manner.

The inscription bellows the Virgin's crown on the icon of Joyful Lady of Bač that was mentioned previously, brings this icon in connection with the Lady from Gradovrh

without a doubt. Frater Juro Bačvanin placed a crown on the Joyful Lady as a tribute to the Virgin from Gradovrh, for years before Franciscans left Gradovrh. If he crowned the icon in Bač, this only goes to show the cult of the Lady from Gradovrh was revered in Bač even before the definite retreat of Franciscans, in front of Turks from Gradovrh, which is logical, as during the entire period of Turkish rule, Franciscans from Gradovrh run the Franciscan parish in Bač (Cvekan 1985, 47–52). Therefore, it is not unusual for a devout Franciscan from Bač to crown an icon by painter Dima as a tribute to his miraculous protector from Gradovrh. Frater Cvekan considered that this icon could be a sacrament of the residents of Bač, settlers from Gradovrh, thus it is possible that they wanted to send it, as a sacrament, to the Lady in Gradovrh (Cvekan 1985, 51, 116–117).



When did the equation of Joyful Lady from Bač with Lady from Gradovrh took place, no one knows. The icon of Joyful Lady of Bač was kept in the Franciscan monastery in Bač on the special altar, located in the corner of the hallway in the ground floor of the monastery, next to the door leading to the altar space of the monastery church.<sup>11</sup> The position on the small altar in the hallway of the monastery, not on the main altar of the church corresponds with the position of the miraculous painting of the Lady in Bosnia. It is not known when the altar with Lady's icon was set in that place. First written source, dating from 27<sup>th</sup> September 1824, mentions that the Lady's icon was located on its altar in the hallway of the monastery. It is the note from the monastery's chronicle, stating: *at seven o'clock Holly Mass was celebrated on the altar of Blessed Virgin Mary, which was in the hallway, allowed by the Catholic archbishopric* (Cvekan 1985, 114). According to the sources from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the icon wasn't on that position at that time. Ivan Stražemanac, Franciscan chronicler from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century wrote that the church of the Franciscan monastery in Bacs contained three altars: one dedicated to The Blessed Virgin ascending into Heaven, second dedicated to the Saint Frances, third to the Saint Anthony of Padua, while we find no mention of the altar with the miraculous Lady of Bacs or Gradovrh (Stražemanac 2010, 345–347). In his book *Catholic Baroque Painting in Vojvodina*, Dušan Škorić wrote that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the icon was on one of the walls of the church, yet he did not mention the source of the information (Škorić 2015, 184). Škorić further asserts that according to a legend, that stays in line with baroque tradition, this icon was removed from its position three times upon request of the Catholic bishop of Kalocsa, yet every time when it was removed, it mysteriously returned by itself to its original position (Škorić 2015, 184). The first mention of the altar with this icon is from 1824 and it is said that the Mass was celebrated in front of the altar of Blessed Virgin Mary, yet it is not stated that it is the Lady of Gradovrh (Cvekan 1985, 114). But, in the notes of Constaney Radman from 1855, it is stated that painting of the Lady vanished in 1392, which is not corresponding to the year that painter Dima wrote on it (Cvekan 1985, 116), so it is possible that the year 1392 actually refers to the creation of the original painting of the Lady of Gradovrh, as well as that by that time equation of the cult of Joyful Lady of Bač and Lady of Gradovrh already took place.

It is possible that the one of the reasons for the revival of the cult of the Lady of Gradovrh, was partly of practical nature. Franciscan monastery in Bač, highly revered by the local, mostly Slavic population,<sup>12</sup> does not possess particular

<sup>11</sup> This was its position until 2011, when a fresco showing the crucified Christ, dating from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, was discovered on the wall bellow the altar. Now the altar is moved to the right, and stands next to the fresco: Vujović 2016, 134.

<sup>12</sup> Because the Slavic peoples came with the Franciscan monks from Bosnia in Bač and Bačka region, the felt special connection with this monastery; about the coming of

relics, which could attract a bigger number of believers. That is somewhat unusual, bearing in mind that this monastery, more precisely, parts of the monastery church, originate from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> Franciscans overtook this monastery for the first time in 1300, then it was turned into a mosque, so that it would be renewed by Franciscans from Gradovrh in the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, most likely in 1688 (Špehar 2012, 39). It is possible that during the Middle Ages, a special relic was kept in the monastery, which was either destroyed or was transferred to another place during Turkish rule, however there are no written record or material clues about it. When he was writing about old Monastery of Blessed Virgin Marry in Bač, Ivan Stražimanac stated that monastery's church, even though it was old, did not have any special signs of consecration (Stražemanac 2010, 345–347). The lack of relics can partly be accounted for with the dedication of the church to Mary's Assumption. The token of Mary's presence and divine protection could be a miraculous icon of the Virgin. As it is well known, the Virgin ascended into heaven with her body and soul, thus her remains do not exist (Brajović 2006, 89). According to the teachings of Catholic church, there are three types of her relics: first group relates to the organic matter from her virgin body – hair, nails, milk; second includes objects that were in close contact with her body *sacra vestae* – clothes, maphorion, belt; the third group contains miraculous icons and artefacts related to them – crowns, rings, rosaries and similar (Piccari 1959, 581–592). The icons of the Virgin, created by the hand of Saint Luke, had the same values as the relics of Christ's suffering, as each of them proves the truth of the Saviour's incarnation and sacrifice (Bacci 2000, 32–33). Officially, holy paintings in the Latin West were never adored as the icons in the Eastern Orthodox Christian world, however they reached West, gradually but surely, thus acquiring the biggest possible authority, synonymous to the relic itself (Brajović 2006, 89). Icon veneration in both the Orthodox and the Catholic community of the Balkans shares the same source (Bacci 2019, 272–292; Erdeljan 2019, 70–71). It relies on the traditional Byzantine manner of icon veneration.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly true of highly venerated and often miracle working images of the Mother of God, identity makers of political, social and religious entities, objects of private devotion as well as performative objects around which are centred public rituals of liturgical processions and ephemeral

---

the Slavic population in Bač see: Sekulić 1978, 43–50.

<sup>13</sup> Official version: Jovanović 1973, 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 2012, 16; Fra Cvekan, claims according to the same chronicle that the church and the monastery were built by the Templar knights on the land that was donated by palatine Mogh in 1188: Cvekan 1985, 69.

<sup>14</sup> On the veneration of Mary in Byzantium and the Byzantine cultural sphere, as well as on pertaining manifestations in visual culture, see: Vassilaki 2000; Vassilaki 2005; Pentcheva 2006; Pentcheva 2010; Brubaker, Cunningham 2011; Erdeljan 2019.

spectacles (Brajović, Erdeljan 2015, 57; Erdeljan 2019, 70–71).

In the 1980's, when the celebration of 300 years since Šokci population came with Franciscans from Bosnia to Bačka was underway, a question appeared of whether Joyful Lady of Bač is actually Lady from Gradovrh. On this occasion, this icon was cleaned for the first time and the sacramental crown above Virgin's head was taken off revealing the behest of frater Jura Bačvanin (Cvekan 1985, 116–117). In the year 1985 on Assumption of Mary, when the monastery church in Bač was celebrating its heavenly protector, the jubilee celebrating 300 years since the settlement of Šokci into Bač was organized. On this occasion, along with great feast, attended by the bishop from Subotica, restored icon of Joyful Lady was returned to its old position. The painting was then decorated with seven gold stars (Cvekan 1985, 117). The icon of Joyful Lady has continued to be celebrated as Miraculous Lady of Gradovrh in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, it was brought to Gradovrh in visit several times from 2013 (fig. 4).<sup>15</sup>



**Fig. 4** Icon of Virgin from Bač (copy) visiting Gradovrh

Извор: [https://static.klix.ba/media/images/vijesti/130803053.1\\_xl.jpg?v=1](https://static.klix.ba/media/images/vijesti/130803053.1_xl.jpg?v=1)

## References

- Babić, Gordana. 1985. „Epiteti Bogorodice koju dete grli”. *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* (21): 261–275.
- Bacci, Michele. 2000. „Relics and Holy Icons as Historical Mementoes: The Idea of the Apostolicity in Constantinople and Rome (11th–13th centuries)”. *Relikvii v iskusstve i kul'ture vostočnohristianskogo mira, Tezisi dokladov i materialy međunarodnogo simpoziuma*: 32–33. Москва.

<sup>15</sup> Newspapers were writing about these occasions, but what the newspapers did not report was that it was not original icon of Virgin from Bač visiting Gradovrh but it's replica: Divković 2013.

- Bacci, Michele. 2019. „Devotional Panels as Sites of Intercultural Exchanges”. In *Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Maya Corry, Marco Faini and Alessia Meneghin, 272–292. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Bajić-Filipović, Mirjana. 1967. *Zbirka ikona Sekulić*. Beograd: Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture.
- Barbarić, Mladen. 1936. „Bač-crtice za njegovu povijest”. *Franjevački vjesnik* (43): 164–178
- Barbarić, Mladen. 1936. „Još jedna znamenita slika Majke Božije Čudotvorne”. *Franjevački vjesnik* (43): 301–309.
- Belting, Hans. 2014. *Slika i kult: Istorija slike do epohe umetnosti*. Novi Sad: Akademsko Knjiga.
- Brajović, Saša. 2006. *U Bogorodičinom vrtu: Bogorodica i Boka Kotorska-barokna po-božnost zapadnog hrišćanstva*. Beograd: Plato.
- Brajović, Saša and Jelena, Erdeljan. 2015. „Praying with the senses. Examples of icon devotion and the sensory experience in medieval and early modern Balkans”. *Zograf* (39): 57–63.
- Brubaker, Leslie and Mary, B. Cunningham. 2011. *The cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and images*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Bukinac, Beato. 2007. *O ulozi Franjevaca u seobama hrvatskog naroda u XVI o XVII stoljeću*. Subotica: Pučka kasina.
- Chevapovich, Gregorius. 1830. *Recensio Observantis Minorum Provinciae S. Ioan. A Capistrano Per Hung. Austr. Inf. et Slavon*. Budae.
- Cormack, Robin. 2000. *Byzantine Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cvekan, Paškal. 1985. *Franjevci u Baču*, Virovitica: Paškal Cvekan.
- Erdeljan, Jelena. 2019. *Balkan i Mediteran: kulturni transfer i vizuelna kultura u srednjovekovno i rano moderno doba*. Beograd: Evoluta.
- Fermendžin, Euzebijije. 1892. *Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica cum insertis editorum documentorum registis: ab anno 925. usque ad annum 1752*. Zagrabiae: Academia scientiarum et artium Slavorum Meridionalium.
- Grabar, André. 1975. *Les revêtements en or et en argent des icones byzantines du moyen age*. Venise: Institut Hellénique d'Études Byzantines et Post-byzantines.
- Kašanin, Milan. 1939. „Srpska umetnost u Vojvodini”. U *Vojvodina I*, uredio Dušan J. Popović, 441–445. Novi Sad: Istorijsko društvo u Novom Sadu.
- Korhec, Žužana. 2007. „Čudotvorna slika Bogorodice u Franjevčkom samostanu u Baču”. *Glasnik društva konzervatora Srbije* (31): 193–197.
- Lasareff, Victor. 1938. „Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin”. *The Art Bulletin* (20): 26–65.
- Medaković, Dejan. 1980. *Srpska umetnost u XVIII veku*. Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga.
- Milliner, Matthew John. 2011. *The Virgin of the Passion: Development, Dissemination, and Afterlife of a Byzantine Icon Type*. Unpublished manuscript of a PhD thesis presented to the Faculty of Princeton University.
- Pentcheva, Bissera. 2006. *Icons and power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Pentcheva, Bissera. 2010. *The sensual icon. Space, ritual, and the senses in Byzantium*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Pentcheva, Bissera. 2016. „Miraculous Icons: Medium, Imagination and Presence”. In *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, edited by Leslie Brubaker, Mary B. Cunningham, 263–278. London-New York: Routledge.

- Piccari, Tarcisio. 1959. „*Reliquie Mariane*”. In *Enciclopedia Mariana*, edited by Raimondo Spiazzi, 581–592. Genoa e Milano: Bevilacqua & Solari; Massimo.
- Rakić, Svetlana. 1998. *Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine: (16–19. vijek)*. Beograd: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture.
- Ruvarac, Dimitrije. 1911. „Cirkular patrijarha Arsenija Jovanovića o svetkovanju praznika i o zabrani kupovanja ikona od kojekakvih molera”. *Bogoslovski glasnik* 20 (1–6): 21–30.
- Sekulić, Ante. 1978. *Drevni Bač*. Split: Zbornik Kačić.
- Stražemanac, Ivan. 2010. *Povijest franjevačke provincije Bosne Srebrne*, Osijek: Državni arhiv.
- Špehar, Josif. 2012. *Franjevački samostan Bač: kronološki pregled*. Bač: Franjevački samostan Sv. Marije.
- Škorić, Dušan. 2015. *Katoličko barokno slikarstvo u Vojvodini*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga.
- Tatić-Đurić, Mirjana. 1985. „Bogorodica Vladimirska”. *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* (21): 29–50.
- Unyi, Bernárdin. 1947. *Sokácok-Bunyevácok és a bosnyák ferencesek története*. Budapest: Magyar Barát.
- Vassilaki, Maria. 2000. *The Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine art*. Milan: Skira.
- Vassilaki, Maria. 2005. *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Vujović, Slavica. 2016. *Kako očuvati i koristiti kulturno nasleđe. Doprinos Vekova Bača*. Novi Sad: Pokrajinski zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture.
- Zlatović, Stipan. 1890. Izviščaj o Bosni god. 1640. o Pavla iz Rovinja. *Starine* (23): 1–38.

### Internet sources

- Divković, Mario. 2013. „Nakon 325 godina Gospa Gradovrška opet na Gradovrhu.“ *Klix*, September 3, 2013. <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/nakon-325-godina-gospa-gradovrska-opet-nagradovrhu/130803053#10>.

Никола Пиперски  
Одељење за историју уметности  
Филозофски факултет, Универзитета у Београду

*Слика и култ: икона Радосне Госпе Бачке*

Овај рад се бави развојем култа иконе Радосне Госпе Бачке из позног 17. века, од настанка па до данас. Међу бројним светим сликама и иконама Богородице које се налазе у Бачу, посебно се издваја икона Радосне Госпе Бачке сликана у позновизантијском маниру, из Фрањевачког самостана Узнесења Маријина (Conventus Bacsiensis ad В.М.У. In Coelos Assumptum), у чију чудотворну моћ подједнако верује локално католичко и православно становништво. Временом је икона Радосне Госпе Бачке почела да се по-

штује и као чудотворна ikona Госпе Градовршке, која се до пред крај 17. века чувала у фрањевачком самостану у Градоврху крај Тузле. Циљ рада је да се кроз ову студију случаја покаже да су на подручјима где је током векова паралелно живело становништво католичког и православног обреда начин поштовања светих слика мало разликовао како у форми, тако и у суштини. Званично, на западу свете слике никада нису штоване као иконе у православном свету, међутим, оне су постепено, али неумитно, продирале на Запад, и стицале највећи могући ауторитет, изједначавајући се са реликвијама. Бач је само један у низу бројних примера широм Балкана где су исте слике, поштовали и једни и други - православни и католици; веровали у њихову чудотворну моћ, уздали се у њихову помоћ.

*Кључне речи:* икона, култ, штовање, Богородица, Бач, Градоврх, фрањевци

*L'image et le culte: l'icône de la Notre Dame de Joie de Bač*

Cet article traite le développement du culte de l'icône de la Notre Dame de Joie de Bač du XVIIe siècle tardif, depuis sa création jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Parmi de nombreuses images saintes et icônes de Notre Dame qui se trouvent à Bač, c'est l'icône de Notre Dame de Joie de Bač qui a une importance particulière, peinte dans le style byzantin tardif au couvent franciscain de l'Assomption de Marie (Conventus Bacsiensis ad B.M.V. In Coelos Assumptum); la population catholique aussi bien qu'orthodoxe locale croit dans sa puissance miraculeuse. Avec le temps l'icône de Notre Dame de Bač a commencé à être respectée tout comme l'icône miraculeuse de la Dame de Gradovrh, qui jusqu'à la fin du XVIIe siècle fut conservée dans le couvent franciscain à Gradovrh près de Tuzla. L'objectif de l'article est de montrer à travers cette étude de cas que sur les territoires où pendant des siècles ont parallèlement vécu des populations de confession catholique et orthodoxe, la manière de respecter les images saintes différait peu, aussi bien dans la forme que dans le fond. Officiellement, en Occident les images saintes n'avaient jamais été respectées comme cela a été le cas des icônes dans le monde orthodoxe; cependant, elles pénétraient progressivement mais inéluctablement en Occident et acquéraient la plus grande autorité pour ainsi rivaliser d'importance avec les reliques. Bač n'est qu'un des nombreux exemples dans les Balkans où les mêmes images étaient respectées par les uns et les autres - les orthodoxes et les catholiques, qui croyaient en leur pouvoir miraculeux, comptaient sur leur aide.

*Mots clés :* icône, culte, respect, Notre Dame, Bac, Gradovrh, franciscains

Primljeno / Received: 10.11.2019.

Prihvaćeno / Accepted: 15.02.2020.