

Abstract. Before the mural paintings in the church of St. Nicholas of the former Bucovăț monastery (c. 1574), no traces were found of the existence of a Kastorian artistic influence in Wallachia. Carmen-Laura Dumitrescu was the first to point out the Kastorian iconographic and stylistic influences at Bucovăț. The present study proposes an investigation of the iconography and style of the paintings of Bucovăț, indicating several similarities with the murals in the church of St. Demetrius in Palatiitsia (1570), the work of Nicholas of Linotopi and his team, descendants of the painting traditions of the Kastoria and Ohrid workshops. A contemporary influence originating in Serbia can also be seen at Bucovăț, pointing to the area of the newly restored Patriarchate of Peć (1557) as a place where the main painter, a Greek, may have had contacts. Our research extends to the subsequent Wallachian painted churches: the church of the Annunciation in Pitești (1564-1568 or post 1594), the church of the Căluu monastery (1594), the Princely church in Târgoviște (late 16th cent.), the church of Sts. Archangels in Ruda-Bârsești (1624). The study concludes that a Kastorian influence coming probably via the revitalized sites of the Archdiocese of Ohrid and the Patriarchate of Peć entered Wallachia after the mid-16th century and blended into the iconography and the style of the local painters, being in part responsible for the peculiar iconographic and stylistic trends of the late 16th-century Wallachian painting.

Keywords: Bucovăț Monastery, Wallachia, Kastoria, Serbia, mural painting, 16th century.

The church of St. Nicholas of the former monastery in Bucovăț, near Craiova (today, a seminary school), a foundation dating a. 1483 rebuilt in the first decades of the sixteenth century, already required a certain amount of restoration in 1572. A major reconstruction and expansion of the church

THE PAINTERS OF THE BUCOVĂȚ MONASTERY AND THE KASTORIAN INFLUENCES IN WALLACHIA

Elisabeta Negrău

was conducted between 20 July and 3 October 1572 by Stepan, former great steward, and his son Pârveu the great steward¹. Its decoration with frescoes came soon after and it was supposedly conducted with the material support of the ruling voivode of Wallachia Alexander II Mircea (1568-1574).

The murals were the subject of two studies that became referential. The first one was published by Carmen Laura Dumitrescu in 1971², immediately after the restoration of the murals and the recovery of important parts of the sixteenth-century fresco existent under an 1873 layer of repainting. Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei published the other study on the mural paintings almost two decades later³. The conclusions reached by the two authors were different in several respects. C. L. Dumitrescu supposed that, in a first phase, only the sanctuary and the nave were painted, the narthex being temporarily decorated with painted simple ornaments and then covered with frescoes sometime between 1579-1583 or 1585-1589, at the behest of Pârveu the great steward, the son of the church's founder Stepan then deceased. She proposed 1574 as the date of

the murals of the sanctuary and the nave, year mentioned in an inscription elaborated in a chronicle-like manner painted on the western wall of the nave, above the portraits of Prince Alexander Mircea and his brothers Miloş and Peter the Lame⁴ (*fig. 1*). Ecaterina Buculei considered that the entire mural painting of the church, including the narthex, was made in a single phase by two different artists, and that it started in 1573 at least, while the chronicle and the princely portraits in the nave could have been added – or slightly modified – immediately after the battle of Roşcani between Peter the Lame and John the Despot, the ruling voivode of Moldavia, mentioned at the end of the painted chronicle, event that took place on June 14th 1574. Both opinions are based on solid arguments and probably only a new restoration and a deeper analysis of the painting layers would possibly bring new clarifications. Other aspects in which the two studies offered different conclusions concerned the involvement of the voivodes' family in the decoration of the church with murals and the quality of the frescoes of the narthex, previously evaluated as a work of a mediocre, rustic painter. An indisputable merit of the research undertaken by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei is the discovery, under the fresco layer in the narthex, of painting indications written in Greek, which led her to conclude that at least the team leader if not also the teammate/s were of Greek origin, confirming Carmen L. Dumitrescu's similar assumption.

About the possible origin of the painters, or rather about the area to which the painters of Bucovăţ can be attributed, very little has been written. C. L. Dumitrescu observed that Bucovăţ moved away from the Wallachian sixteenth-century painting tradition and seemed to have been situated closer to the Macedonian painting⁵. She suggested that the manner of the brush strokes on the faces found analogies in Kastoria, in portraits in the Taxiarches Mitropoleos church (1359-1360) and Panagia Rasiotissa⁶. The Kastorian hy-

pothesis was later repeated in the literature⁷ without any further exemplifications.

The first example from Panagia Rasiotissa indicated by C. L. Dumitrescu⁸ belongs to a phase which was attributed to Frangos Katelanos⁹. However, the paintings executed by Katelanos has little to do with the style of the paintings of Bucovăţ. More close to the murals of Bucovăţ seems to be the Last Judgment scene painted on the exterior southern wall of the church, protected by a closed gallery (*fig. 2*), fresco which C. L. Dumitrescu gives as a second example¹⁰. While some authors considered the mural to be a work of Katelanos¹¹, Giorgios Gournaris dated it to the end of the 17th century or the beginning of the 18th century, describing it as follows: "The scene which, as I have mentioned elsewhere, dates from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, has taken on a slightly popular character. The silhouettes, *thin and elongated* [emphasis added], are distinguished by a lack of vivacity. The painter of this period cannot render strong emotions and is reduced only to exemplify and instruct the spectator by describing the scene of the Last Judgment and the rewards of the righteous and the sinners."¹²

The examples provided by Carmen L. Dumitrescu are general and belong to earlier or later periods than Bucovăţ. The given examples predate and postdate also the post-Byzantine heyday of the Kastorian workshops, when they became a powerful source of influence for the Balkan painters. This flourishing period took place over approximately 50 years, between 1480 and 1530, at a time of an economic recovery of the city after the fall of the Balkan medieval states¹³. It was characterized by a continuation of the old artistic traditions of the city, which went back up to the Comnenian period¹⁴. The painters of Kastoria had relations with the workshops of painters in Ohrid, to which the bishopric of Kastoria belonged. While Gojko Subotić clearly separated the two centres¹⁵, Viktorija Popovska-Korobar pointed out the existence of important artistic similarities

between them, due to the territorial unity of the Archbishopric of Ohrid and the importance of Ohrid as a cultural centre in the region¹⁶. The artistic activity of Kastoria during the half of the century in which it flourished was extremely prolific. It has been estimated that more than 50 fresco ensembles and icons from Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania from this period were directly linked to the workshops of the city¹⁷. Among the most notable can be mentioned the murals in Treskavec monastery (1483), St. Nikitas near Skopje (1483-1484), Čučer (1483), the old katholikon of Meteora (1483), the church of the Eupraxia Monastery in Kastoria (1486), Kremikovci (1493), Poganovo (1499), St. Theodore near Boboshevo (early 16th century), Čebren (1532), and Kyustendil (c. 1530-1535)¹⁸. Moldavia also experienced influences from Kastoria during this period. But Wallachia, at least as we know it from the paintings preserved from the first half of the sixteenth century, seemed to have remained untouched by the wide circulation of the Kastorian influences.

Bucovăț is the first monument we know of when the influences from Kastoria enter Wallachia, but the late date of its murals no longer enables direct connections with the painting workshops from the flowering period of the city. The manner brought by the Cretan painters to Mount Athos and Meteora after 1520 had a strong influence on the local workshops in north-western Greece¹⁹. The Theban painters Frangos Katelanos and the Kontaris brothers became the most influential artists in northern and western Greece by the middle of the sixteenth century. Of the approximately 40 sixteenth-century painted churches preserved in Greece, about 30 belong to Cretan and Theban painters²⁰. After 1530, the older tradition of the Kastorian painting flourished for further several decades in the nearby Linotopi and Grammosta, the Vlach villages on Mount Grammos which belonged to the Kastorian bishopric and whose painters were initially

trained in Kastoria. As the period of the artistic peak of Kastoria ended, the first painting workshops in the two villages on Grammos began to be attested. Meanwhile, the Patriarchate of Peć as re-established in 1557, the demand for painters in the Peć and Ohrid dioceses increased. The Toplica monastery in Macedonia was painted in 1536-1537 by John, the son of Theodore from Grammosta, a leading painter active in the Archdiocese of Ohrid²¹. The church of St. Demetrius in Palatitsia, near Veria, was painted in 1570 by Nicholas from Linotopi and his team²². Nicholas' painting seemed to have had a strong link to the workshop of John of Grammosta²³. Nicholas seemingly participated also in the redecoration of the eastern part of the katholikon of Treskavec, in 1570²⁴. Working for the Serbian Church, they perpetuated in this late period the older stylistic and iconographic tradition of Ohrid from the 15th century²⁵, unlike their fellow Macedonian and Epirote painters who ended up adopting the contemporary Theban manner²⁶.

The nave of Bucovăț is dominated by two narrative cycles: that of the Feasts on vaults, poorly preserved and heavily retouched in 1873, and that of the Passions, developed in a single register surrounding the nave. Near the votive portraits and the painted inscription appears an isolated scene from the Parables of Christ, that of the Widow's Mite (*fig. 3*). This subject seemed to have been chosen intentionally in order to emphasize the donation of the founder Stepan and his son Pârvu – both mentioned in the votive inscription above the entrance in the nave – and also very likely a donation from the family of voivode Alexander Mircea and his two brothers, whose three portraits were painted nearby. The presence of this scene coincides with a curious proliferation of a reference to the Widow's Mite in the votive inscriptions in the Serbian mural paintings between 1564 and 1606 – a motif appeared after the re-establishment of the Peć Patriarchate in 1557. Such examples can be

found at Budisavci (1568), Dabar (1571), and Morača (1574)²⁷. The singularity of this evangelical parable in the iconographic program of Bucovăț prompts us to read it in relation to the paintings on the western wall, or at least to the painted votive inscription mentioning the restoration of the monument in 1572. It seems unlikely, however, that the parable alludes only to the text of the inscription, since it also engages in a visual relationship with the neighbouring portraits. The Parable of the Widow's Mite has painted above it the Hand of God holding the Souls of the Righteous, flanked by the prophets David and Solomon. This subject with eschatological reference seemed to be chosen in relation to the portraits and the votive inscription, the iconographic program of the western area of the nave appearing thus as a coherent construction. The princely family very likely offered a donation for the mural decoration of the church after the victorious battle of Roșcani on 14 June 1574. This would have justified the portrait of Peter the Lame, the voivode of Moldavia. The princely portraits and the painted chronicle above them, that mentions the moments of trial of the Mircești family, their imprisonment at Istanbul and then the victory of Peter the Lame, the brother of voivode Alexander Mircea over John Despot the voivode of Moldavia, seem to be consciously inserted in an iconographic context conceived in relation to them. In the neighbouring niche from the south-west, a praying Mother of God completes this iconographic syntax as an intercessor put in relation to the princely portraits on the west, to the votive inscription and to the eschatological references in the opposite north-western niche.

Apart from the above-mentioned Serbian reference, the paintings of Bucovăț contain a series of Kastorian iconographic and stylistic elements, for example, the presence of a seraphim behind the altar, and not of an angel deacon, in the compositions of the Celestial Liturgy and the Communion of the Apostles (*fig. 4*), a typical mark of

the Kastorian painting from the end of the fifteenth century. Also, the episode in which Judas spits the Holy Communion, spread among the workshops of Kastoria, had not been used previously in Wallachia. It appears for the first time at Bucovăț, as well as the "grotesque" profile of Apostle Paul in the Communion of the Apostles, marking the inheritance of the expressionist trend of the late Palaiologan painting in the Balkans, found for example at Manasija (1413-1418) and later at Palatitsia (*fig. 5*). The bellicose hypostases of the military saints in the nave, depicted with the sword drawn from the scabbard, and their shields decorated with grotesque masks also hail from the same area (*fig. 6*).

Similar to Palatitsia is also the depiction of the saints John Calivitus, Alexios the Man of God and Paul of Thebes in the nave, among the military saints (*fig. 7*). Such a selection of holy monks for the nave is unusual for sixteenth-century Wallachia. Uncommon as well is the frieze of busts of martyrs in medallions which appears in Wallachia during the 16th century only at Bucovăț and which is a common feature of the Kastoriote painting.

The background of the Passion cycle scenes consists of a simple fortress wall, a more archaic solution used up to the 15th century, also found in the frescoes of Palatitsia (*fig. 8*), and not of mountainous landscapes or of a more complex architecture, as in the contemporary Cretan painting. Moreover, the presence of a decorative repertoire in which the classic is intertwined with the vernacular points to the same area of Kastorian tradition.

Another common element of the murals of Bucovăț and Palatitsia is the chromatic palette, consisting of a predominance of malachite-nuanced green, brick red and bluish dark grey, in similar doses, tones, and shades. Bright red, gold and purple, the typical colours of the Cretan and Theban painters, are rather absent. The painter of the narthex as well shares the same

chromatic and stylistic features and hail from the same geographical area as the painter of the sanctuary and the nave, a fact that becomes obvious through their relation to the murals of Palatitsia (*fig. 9*).

The gracefulness and the elongation of the silhouettes in the murals of the sanctuary and the nave of Bucovăț, which are a characteristic feature of the chief master painter of the murals, seemed to have left a lasting impression among the Wallachian painters from the last decades of the 16th century (*fig. 10*). The murals of Căluu Monastery (1594) and of the diaconicon of the Princely church in Târgoviște (late 16th century) were marked by the same tendencies towards elongation and excessive thinning of the silhouettes (*fig. 11*). The princely portraits in the nave of Căluu and their narrative inscriptions can be read as well as a trend of the time that first manifests in painting at Bucovăț²⁸. Kastoriote iconographic elements can be found also at Căluu, such as the seraphim from the scene of the Communion of the apostles and the Celestial Liturgy, the episode of Judas spitting the Communion, and the saints Ciricus and Julita, whose cult was well developed in Macedonia and completely uncharacteristic of Wallachia. In the diaconicon of Târgoviște, the composition of the scene of the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearers is similar to the one at Bucovăț, which reiterates an earlier prototype found at Protaton (*fig. 12*)²⁹. Similar contemporary compositions can be seen in an icon painted by Theophanes the Cretan for Stavronikita (1535) and at Sts. Apostles church in Kastoria (1547)³⁰.

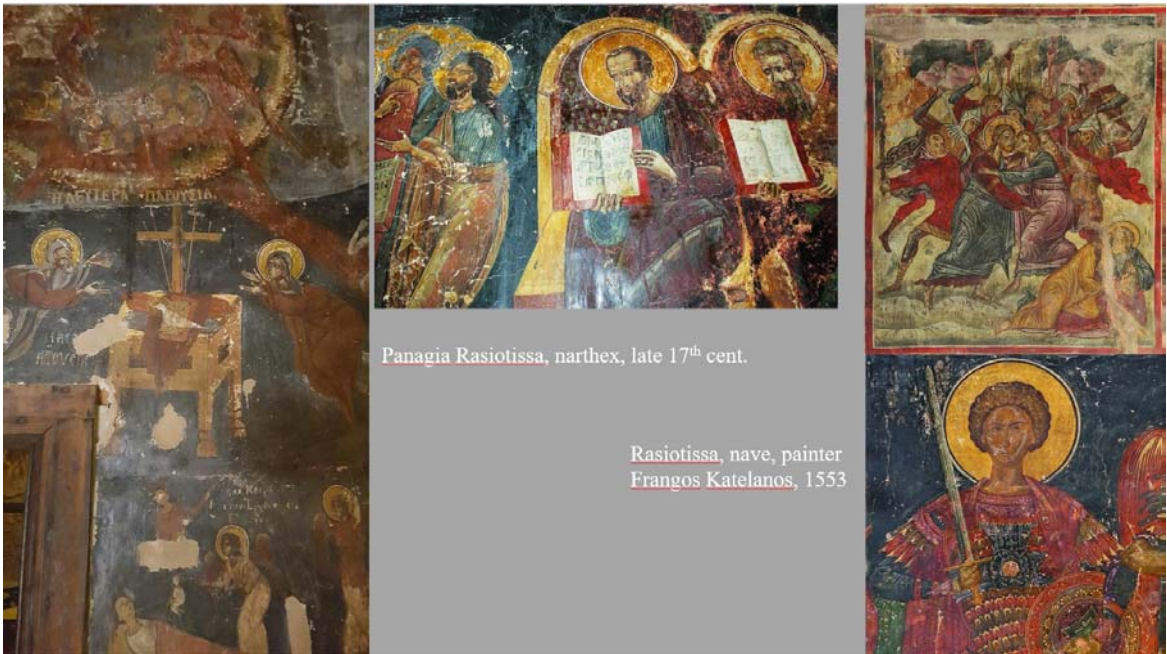
The seraphim accompanying the blessing Christ that form the main program of the diaconicon of Bucovăț is also found in the fragmentarily preserved frescoes in the upper part of the diaconicon of the church of the Annunciation in Pitești³¹. Two possible dates have been proposed for the murals: 1564-1568 or post 1594, periods in

which the founder of the church, the logothetos Ivan Noroceă, would have been able to complete the paintings³². Considering the iconographic program with seraphims, of Kastorian influence, from the diaconicons of Bucovăț and the church of the Annunciation in Pitești, the dating of the fresco fragments of the latter before Bucovăț would constitute a landmark of the appearance of the Kastorian influences in Wallachia. If this influence is due exclusively to the painters of Bucovăț, or if it penetrated through other channels before, is difficult to clarify in the absence of other preserved painting examples from this period in Wallachia, necessary for a proper contextualization of the two monuments.

It is known that an increasing presence of a Greek diaspora began to be noticed in Wallachia around the middle of the 16th century, during the reign of Mircea the Shepherd (1545-1559 intermittently)³³ and subsequently of Alexander II Mircea (1568-1574), who in his youth lived in Constantinople and married Ecaterina Salvaresso, a Genoan from Pera. By the end of the 16th century, the Greek presence in the Wallachian capital became significant. It looked to an Italian traveller in 1595 that "Bucharest was inhabited entirely by Greeks"³⁴, perhaps referring to the merchants who frequented the capital, but among the Balkan populations that took refuge to Wallachia looking for economic opportunities should have been also various categories of craftsmen. Alexander Mircea rebuilt several churches in Wallachia. A Venetian visitor, the papal secretary Giovanni Francesco Commendone, testified this in 1574: "he (the ruler), is a significant man, very faithful venerator of the Christian religion ... within a few years (six years of reign) he rebuilt most of the churches in Wallachia, collapsed with time, and took care to build more new ones"³⁵. He is also very generous in adorning the churches..."³⁶.



Fig. 1 – Miloş and Peter the Lame. Bucovăţ, nave, western wall.



Panagia Rasiotissa, narthex, late 17th cent.

Rasiotissa, nave, painter
Frangos Katelanos, 1553

Fig. 2 – Panagia Rasiotissa, Kastoria.

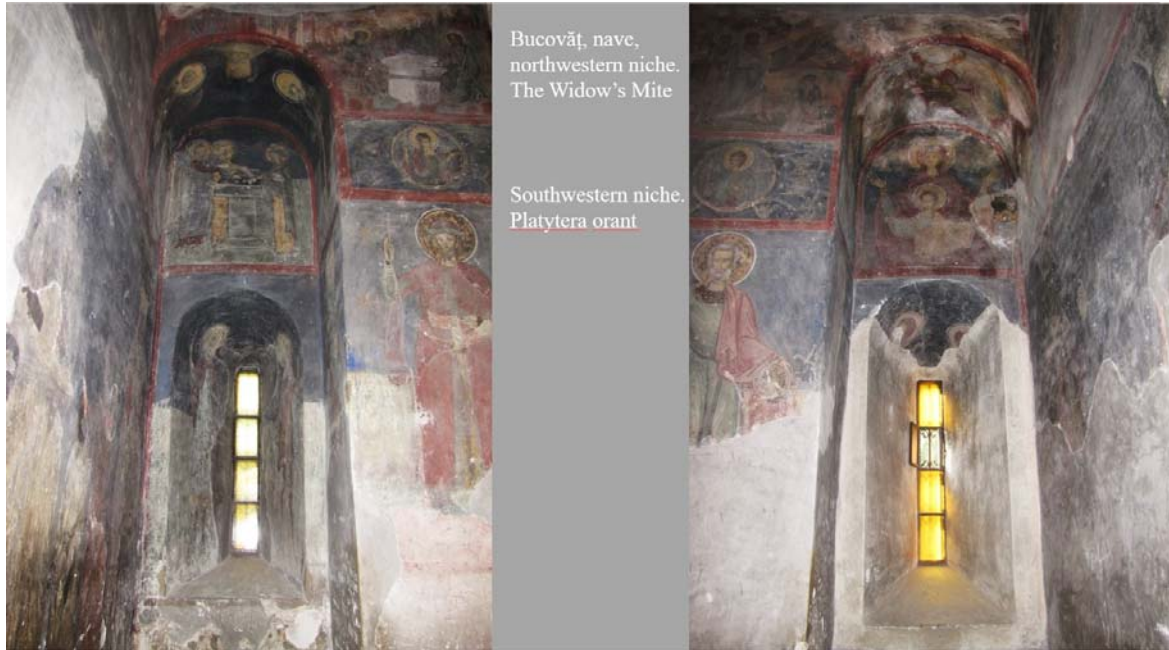


Fig. 3 – Bucovăț, niches flanking the western wall of the nave.



Fig. 4 – Palatitsia and Bucovăț, sanctuary, Celestial Liturgy and Communion of the apostles.



Fig. 5 – Manasija, Palatitsia and Bucovăț, details from the Communion of the apostles.

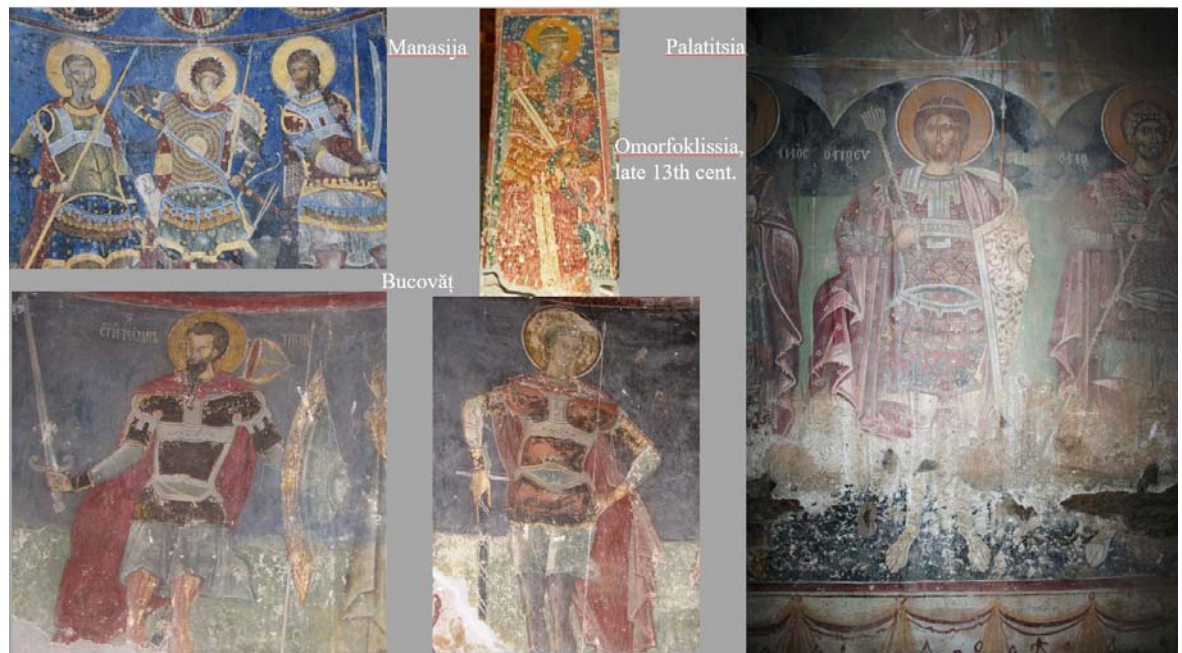


Fig. 6 – Omorfoklissia (Kastoria), Manasija, Palatitsia and Bucovăț, various examples of military saints.



Fig. 7 – Palatitsia and Bucovăț, nave, various examples of hermit saints.



Fig. 8 – Palatitsia and Bucovăț, nave, details from the Passion cycle.



Fig. 9 – Palatitsia and Bucovăț, nave and narthex, various examples of portraits.



Fig. 10 – Princely Church of Târgoviște, diaconicon. Călușu, nave.



Fig. 11 – Princely Church of Târgoviște, Căluu and Bucovăț, various examples of silhouette depictions.



Fig. 12 – The Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearers, at Bucovăț, Princely Church of Târgoviște, Protaton, Stavronikita, and Sts. Apostles in Kastoria.

It is possible that during the reign of Alexander Mircea some painters with a Kastorian background entered Wallachia, among which the ones that decorated the monastery of Bucovăț, who were seemingly

Greeks from the diocese of Kastoria who had contacts with the sites of the newly restored Serbian Church. They generated an influence in the local artistic manner that manifested for the next decades, soon

becoming blended and integrated into the local traditions. The Kastorian tradition continued to influence the Wallachian painters also in the next century: Judas spitting the Communion and the “grotesque” profile of Paul in the Communion of the

Apostles can be seen in the sanctuary at Ruda-Bârsești (1624)³⁷, and the seraphim behind the altar in the scene of the Communion of the Apostles at Arnota (1641-1644).

Notes

¹ Carmen Laura Dumitrescu, *Pictura de la Bucovăț*, in *BMI*, XL (1971), no. 4, p. 63.

² *Ibidem*, p. 63-72. *Eadem*, *Pictura murală în Țara Românească în veacul al XVI-lea*, București, 1978, p. 78-80.

³ Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, *Sur la peinture du narthex de l'église du monastère de Bucovăț (XVIe siècle): présence d'un peintre grec ignoré*, in *RRHA-BA*, XXVI (1989), p. 11-26.

⁴ The text of the chronicle, at Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, *Nouveaux feuillets dans la Chronique murale de Bucovăț*, in *RRH*, XXVIII (1989), 4, p. 465-476. The complete text: “From the birth of my majesty <were> from the Creation the years 7037 (1529) and I was born in the middle of Lent. And when the Lord God gave me the reign I was 40 years old and it was the course of the years 7076 (1568) and the ninth month, at <the feast of the> the holy and inseparable Trinity. And until now when these are written <are> the years 7082 (1574). And since the death of voivode Petrașco, <my majesty and my brothers> were imprisoned in Tsarigrad (Constantinople), until the deceased voivode Petru left Wallachia and my majesty became lord of all of Wallachia. And from the time when the Lord God gave <my majesty>, Io<an> Alexandru the voivode, the reign of Wallachia, His mercy brought my brothers voivode Miloș and voivode Petru out of the prison. And until that time they have been in prison, since the death of voivode Petrașco. <When God gave the reign to my majesty>, Alexandru the voivode, was the course of the years 7076 (1568). And then a few years passed <and> the Lord God gave to Io<an> Petru the voivode the land of Moldavia. And my honorable emperor (the sultan) sent him into the land to reign. And the voivode Ion did not want to leave the land of Moldavia as the honorable emperor ordered him, and come to the Porte. And voivode Petru raised armies and killed Ion the voivode and cut off his head. And Petru conquered his reign with the sword and took the whole country of Moldavia.” (translated from the Scientific Report of the project *Text and Image in the Romanian Painting of the 16th Century*, directed by Constantin Ciobanu and supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, project PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0336, 2011-2016, G. Opreșcu Art History Institute, p. 132, online at <http://www.medieval.istoria-artei.ro/reporting.php>).

⁵ C. L. Dumitrescu, *Pictura murală*, p. 80.

⁶ *Ibidem*, giving as examples Stylianos Pelekanidis, *Καστοριά*, vol. I. *Βυζαντινά τοιχογραφία*, Thessaloniki, 1953, plates 129, 131, 220, and 230a.

⁷ E. Cincheza-Buculei, *Sur la peinture*, p. 22.

⁸ S. Pelekanidis, *Καστοριά*, I, pl. 220.

⁹ See Giorgios Gournaris, *Οι τοιχογραφίες των Αγίων Αποστόλων και της Παναγίας Ρασιώτισσας στην Καστοριά*, Thessaloniki, 1980, pp. 105-151; Angeliki Strati, *Ο Φράγγος Κατελάνος στην Καστοριά*, Thessaloniki, 2018, p. 63-66.

¹⁰ S. Pelekanidis, *Καστοριά*, I, pl. 230.

¹¹ Ioannis Chouliaras, *The post-Byzantine iconography of the individual punishments of the sinners in the depiction of hell in Northwestern Greece. Differences and similarities to the Cretan school of painting*, in *Zograf*, 40 (2016), p. 148-149.

¹² G. Gournaris, *Οι τοιχογραφίες*, p. 162 and pl. 47-50. Cf. A. Strati, *Ο Φράγγος Κατελάνος*, p. 23, 26-28.

¹³ Tsveta Văleva, *Sur la question sur la soit-dite „École artistique de Kastoria”*, in *Βυζαντινά* XXVIII (2008), pp. 181-221; Tsveta Kuneva, *To the question concerning the chronological and territorial limits of the Kastoria artistic circle of 15th- 16th centuries*, in *Проблеми на изкуството /Art Studies Quarterly*, 51 (2018), no. 1, p. 25-35 (in Bulgarian).

¹⁴ Gojko Subotić, *Κοστυρσка сликарска школа: наслеђе и образовање домаћих радионица/ Ecole de peinture de Castoria. L'heritage et la formation des ateliers du pays*, in *Глас CCCLXXXIV САНУ/Glas CCCLXXXIV de l'Académie serbe des sciences et des arts*, Одељење Историјских Наука/Classe des Sciences Historiques, no. 10 (1998), p. 109-139.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, *pass.*; *idem*, *Охридската сликарска школа од XV век*, Ohrid, 1980; *idem*, *Κοστυρσка сликарска школа: наслеђе и образовање домаћих радионица*, in Đorđe S. Radojčić, Gojko Subotić, *Из прошлости манастира Св. Јована Богослова*, Niš, 2002, pp. 49-57. See also the project *The roads of Balkan icon painters and post-Byzantine artistic heritage in Bulgaria*, directed by Prof. Biserka Penkova at the Institute of Art Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, between 2014-2018, at <http://zogradi.info/> (retrieved 13.Oct. 2020) I am deeply indebted to Acad. Miodrag Marković, Tsveta Kuneva and Marija Čabraja for providing me access to these texts.

¹⁶ Viktorija Popovska-Korobar, *The icon of Jesus Christ the Saviour and the question of the*

continuity of Ohrid painting school from the 15th century, in *Iskustvo. Art in Bulgaria*, 33-34 (1996), p. 36.

¹⁷ T. Văleva, *Sur la question*, p. 182.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pass.

¹⁹ Manolis Chatzidakis, *The Cretan painter Theophanis. The final phase of his art in the wall-paintings of the Holy Monastery of Stavronikita*, Mount Athos 1986; Angeliki Stavropoulou-Makri, *Les peintures murales de l'église de la Transfiguration à Veltsista (1568) en Epire et l'atelier des peintres Kondaris*, Ioannina, 1989; Athanassios Semoglou, *Le décor mural de la chapelle athonite de Saint-Nicolas (1560). Application d'un nouveau langage pictural par le peintre thébain Frangos Catelanos*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1999; G. M. Chatzouli, *Ο τοιχογραφικός οιάκτισμος της λιτής του καθολικού της Μονής Βαρλαάμ Μετεώρων. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της μεταβυζαντινής ζωγραφικής τον 16^ο αιώνα*, doctoral dissertation, University of Ioannina, 1999; Mirtali Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της Μονής των Φιλανθρωπών στο νησί των Ιωαννίνων*, Athens, 2004; Panayotis Vocotopoulos, *Τοιχογραφίες Καθολικού Μονής Διονυσίου*, Mount Athos, 2006.

²⁰ A. Semoglou, *Le décor mural*, Annexes, plate III, table of sixteenth-century murals, 3 p. (no page number).

²¹ See Jehona Spahiu, *Творештво на зографот Јован од Грамоста и неговата работилница* [The work of the painter John of Grammosta and his workshop], doctoral dissertation, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, 2020 (online at <https://repository.ukim.mk/handle/20.500.12188/9135>, retrieved 02.Oct.2020) and her studies on the Toplica murals listed in her dissertation bibliography.

²² Teocharis Tsampouras, *Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια από την περιοχή του Γράμμου κατά το 16ο και 17ο αιώνα: ζωγράφοι από το Λινοτόπι, τη Γράμμωστα, τη Ζέρμα και το Μπουρμπουτσικό*, doctoral dissertation, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, 2013, vol. I, p. 62-69.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 66-67.

²⁵ Anastasia G. Tourta, *The Painters from Linotopi (Greece) and the Serbian Church*, in *Zbornik Matice Srpske za likovne umetnosti* 27-28 (1994), Novi Sad, 1994, pp. 319-325. T. Tsampouras, *ibidem*, pp. 65-69.

²⁶ T. Tsampouras, *Τα καλλιτεχνικά εργαστήρια*, p. 69; A. G. Tourta, *Οι ναοί του Αγίου Νικολάου στη Βίτσα και του Αγίου Μηνά στο Μονοδένδρι. Προσέγγιση στο έργο των ζωγράφων από το Λινοτόπι*, Athens, 1991.

²⁷ Miljana Matić, *Widow's mite: A metaphor of the donor's gift in the Serbian post-Byzantine painting* (in Serbian) in *Crkvene Studije/Church Studies*, 16 (2019), no. 2, University of Niš, pp. 767-785; *eadem*, *Ktitor portraits of church dignitaries in Serbian post-Byzantine painting (part one)*, in *Zograf*, 42 (2018), p. 188.

²⁸ Răzvan Theodorescu, *Civilizația românilor între medieval și modern. Orizontul imaginii*, București, 1987, vol. I, p. 21-22.

²⁹ Ioana Iancovescu, *Biserica domnească din Târgoviște. Pictura de secol XVI*, in *SCIA-AP*, 4 (48), 2014, p. 168-172.

³⁰ G. Gournaris, *Οι τοιχογραφίες*, I. Αγίων Αποστόλων, pl. 10.

³¹ See Dan Mohanu, *Lucrări de conservare-restaurare la cel mai vechi ansamblu de pictură murală din orașul Pitești: diaconiconul bisericii Buna Vestire*, in *RMM-MIA*, 1988, no. 1, p. 85-92.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 92.

³³ An emissary from Brașov recounted on March 1554 the event of the massacre of voivode Mircea the Shepherd's courtiers, "mostly Wallachian and Greeks" in Bucharest; *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. II, edited by Maria Holban, M.M. Dersca-Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu, București, 1970, p. 111.

³⁴ Filippo Pigafetta, historian and military architect, in *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. III, edited by Maria Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu, București, 1971, p. 551 and note 64.

³⁵ According to the archaeological discoveries, the first church of the Radu Vodă monastery in Bucharest, built by Alexander Mircea, had mural paintings. The prince also built a church in the town of Ocnele Mari (supported with princely donations from the profit of the nearby salt mine), and perhaps others that remained unknown.

³⁶ *Călători străini*, II, p. 376.

³⁷ G. Teodorescu, *Biserica Ruda-Bârsești din comuna Bercioi-Argeș. Note asupra picturii*, in *BCMI*, XXII (1929), no. 62 (Oct.-Dec.) p. 174-175, fig. 3, 4.