



## **Serbian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland II**



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*Volume II: Serbian Art*

Ljubica Popovich

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# Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies, Cleveland State University

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# Preface

While in this series of monographs we are devoting one volume to each of the twenty largest ethnic groups in the greater Cleveland area, the monograph on Serbian Americans and their communities of Cleveland deserved an exception. After reviewing the section on Serbian art by Professor Ljubica Popovich, it was agreed that her work was a valuable contribution to a better understanding of ethnicity and art as it evolved in Serbia.

I am sure that the reader will be equally impressed by this volume. It is the first of its kind in the English language; it is written in the spirit of ethnic heritage studies and is a scholarly work, as well as a work of love by someone whose origins are deeply rooted in a land which found itself at the crossroads of many civilizations and cultures. I am certain that after reading this volume, the public will have a better appreciation for the works of art transplanted to America by Serbian immigrants.

To Professor Ljubica Popovich, my heartfelt thanks!

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Karl B. Bonutti

Editor, Monograph Series

Ethnic Heritage Studies

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# Introduction

This essay is intended as an introduction to a history of Serbian art and architecture. It is primarily aimed at acquainting the beginning student and general reader with the artistic heritage of the Serbian people. It is the author's earnest hope, moreover, that this study, one of the first of its kind in the English language, will personally enrich the lives of students of art, and Americans of Serbian descent, and stimulate them to further, independent, research.

After long, and occasionally labored efforts, the author has attempted to include the visual arts of Serbia, understood in the broadest sense, in a single volume. Hence, this work is a survey, and, because of that, the author was keenly aware of the drawbacks which, in a survey, may be unavoidable. For in attempting to generalize about whole periods, one risks distorting the integrity of the historical process by combining events and artistic monuments, which ought to be considered separately, and, by disregarding others, failing to -recognize the importance of individuality in history.

However, the author is sincerely confident in asserting that the process of selection was carried out fairly, and that due regard was paid to the works of scholars without slavish dependence on them. Unfortunately, owing to limitations on size, it was not possible to provide a superstructure of notes, maps, and illustrations. Every effort was made, therefore, to avoid controversiality and supposition, which would be out of place in a work of this kind. Also, in this regard, the author wishes to state that she had brought to this essay the benefit of many years of personal and direct observation of the monuments of Serbian art – through teaching, analysis, and on-site inspection. The experiences were always happy ones, and it is in that spirit that she offers this work for your consideration.

A debt is owed, however, to generations of art historians without whose pioneering efforts no survey would have been possible. Innumerable other scholars and special studies have been excluded from the selected bibliography; instead, attention has been focused on major authors and salient works. Serbian titles appear in English and Serbian; all others retain the language of the original.

Finally, the author wishes to express her thanks to Mr. Henry J. Armani for his assistance in editing this text for publication.

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# Guide to Pronunciation

The following is a list of Serbian letters with corresponding English sounds. In most cases we have retained the original spelling for personal and place names; titles of artistic works have been translated.

a – a, as in father

c – ts, as in cats

ć – ch, as in rich (soft)

č – ch, as in chalk (hard)

dj – g, as in George

e – e, as in pet

i – e, as in machine

j – y, as in yet

lj – li , as in million

nj – ni, as in dominion

o – o, as in over

š – sh, as in shawl

u – u, as in rule

z – zh, as in pleasure

# Early Beginnings

When the Avars, together with a group of Slavs, crossed the lines of the Byzantine Empire in the course of the 6th century to enter the territory of the Balkan peninsula, they found not only forested mountains, hills rich in ore, fertile plains, and waterways, but also a region whose artistic traditions reached back into prehistory. The basin of the Morava River permitted importations of the Aegean influences, while the wide-open plains of Pannonia across the rivers Sava and Danube, opened toward the Carpathian and Transcarpathian regions, and Central European and Anatolian influences.

## **Palaeolithic Era**

Although the modest remains of the Palaeolithic material culture (prior to 12,000 B.C.) have already been traced (e.g., in Serbian territory at Gradac near Kragujevac), the work of the archaeologists dealing with this period is far from completed. Objects discovered so far include small carvings in bone which

are inferior to those of the same period found in Southern France and Northern Spain.

## Neolithic Era

In the Neolithic era, however (c. 5000-2000 B.C.), economic and social changes (agriculture, sedentary way of life) within society left their mark on the crafts and arts of this period. Inhabitation and burial sites are so numerous, throughout the territory under our consideration, that the periods of evolutions and cultural groups are clearly distinguished by the scholars (e.g., Starcevo culture, Banat; Vinca culture, near Belgrade). Throughout this period ceramic products predominate, ranging in scale from very fine to primitive, whose decorative ornaments show affinities to the great Eastern civilizations. Of more interest to the art historian are the images of this period. Recent excavations at Lepenski Vir (near Gornji Milanovac, Dunav) have turned up numerous Neolithic icons. Several monumental heads of large, natural sandstone pebbles were unearthed. The work of unknown masters of the Fifth Millenium, they are the very stylized likenesses of human beings. The size of those heads varies from about 51 cm. to 25 cm., but they show similar execution around the eyes, which are encircled by concentric grooves giving the impression of separating the eye from the cheekbone. On each head a small, straight nose emerges from barely indicated brows, whereas the mouth is given a prominence almost equal to that of the eyes. The lips are raised above the main plane of the stone, and represented as a straight line, or with the corners turned downward. This treatment almost suggests an impression of facial expression – perhaps

astonishment or surprise, whatever the case might be. There are no indications of the hair, but in some instances, very stylized vertical rows of circular and crescent shaped designs are intended to represent a beard. Chieftains, ancestors or unnamed divinities of this Neolithic Pantheon, they most likely depict both males and females, and are as aesthetically appealing to the modern beholder as are the Cycladic marble idols or a 20th century Brancusi sculpture.

The younger Neolithic cultures also include figurative representations in their artistic vocabulary. Now, idols are predominantly rendered in clay; only occasionally in stone. The female figure dominates. The iconography of Neolithic art is varied: from standing to seated; and from single figure to the group of two, which includes the child (Vinca group; Drenovac near Paraćin, in Svetozarevo Museum, Serbia). An examination of any one of the representative examples reveals some strikingly universal aspects of these figures – aspects which they share with the carved masks of Africa, and through those similarities once again, reach into the art of our own era (e.g., Picasso). The faces are angular, with protruding prominent noses, and large, elongated oval eyes, which are often outlined with the incised lines and occasional indications of eyelashes. On one hand, the artist takes care to indicate such minor details of the face, while on the other, frequently omits the mouth. The torso is relatively small in proportion to the arms and especially so in proportion to the lower extremities. The variety of lines incised in clay indicates the details of the garments and jewelry (idols from Predionica, near Pristina; Carsija, Ripanj, near Belgrade). The scholars tie the artistic changes which are evident

toward the close of the Neolithic era with the advent of the Indo-Europeans into the Balkans. These are the people whom we call the proto-Illyrians and the proto-Thracians.

## Bronze Age

The rich finds continue into the Bronze Age (c. 1800-1200 B.C.) when local products appear together with the imported ones, and the influences are felt from Mycenaean art as well as from the art of Central Europe. In jewelry, on pottery and figurines, the ornamentation is geometric, and in many instances, it is inspired by the textile designs. Once again, the idols draw our attention. Although done in clay as in the previous period, the style is greatly changed. The bell-shaped garments remind one of the dresses worn by the Cretan and Mycenaean ladies, although the neckline is not so low. In comparison to the Neolithic idols, Bronze Age figures appear to be even more abstract and stylized. The body is disguised under the garment, which in itself takes on a very stylized silhouette, while very rudimentary arms appear to be folded across the chest. Above all else, it is the head which has lost all suggestion of realistic appearance. In some instances, it is nothing more than a neck rounded off, into which eyes and a nose have been incised. On the other hand, a great deal of attention is given to the detailed description of costume decoration and jewelry which was once worn sewn onto the garment (e.g., statuette from the necropolis near Vrsac, Vojvodina). In some instances, the figurine itself is subordinated to an excessive decoration (e.g., idol from Klicevac).

In addition to the idols, another interesting group of objects are

the carts with drivers (Dupljaja), or animals (Glasinac), made of clay or in bronze. Very likely these were votive objects associated with the cult and worship of the sun.

## Iron Age

During the Iron Age (c. 800-500 B.C.), new social stratifications arose within the tribes inhabiting the Balkans. Excavations of burial sites show an accumulation of great wealth by tribal leaders. These objects are predominantly personal, and also equestrian ornaments – obvious imports from many parts of the Greek dominated world. Many, however, are local in origin (Dukal Tombs, St. Peter's Church near Novi Pazar).

## Influences of the Classical Cultures

Greek. The Greek impact during the Archaic (6th century B.C.), Classical (5th and 4th centuries B.C.), and Hellenistic (end of 4th century and later) periods was felt most strongly in the more geographically exposed areas of the Balkans. A typical example would be the famous sites in Macedonia, such as Trebeniste near Ochrid. It yielded materials from the archaic periods such as the gold masks, and the bronze gilded helmet (Belgrade, National Museum), or that of Demir Kapija (Hydria c. 400 B.C., now in Archaeological Museum of Skopje). From Heraclea Lyncestis, near Bitol comes one of the best copies of the Pheidias' Athena Parthenos (Belgrade, National Museum, 3rd century B.C.), or the bronze Dancing Satyr from Stobi, which illustrates so well the Hellenistic style and taste of the 2nd century B.C. (Belgrade, National Museum).

The other area most strongly affected by Greek influence was the Adriatic Coast (Budva, Trogir). One of the most artistically remarkable finds comes from Vis. It is the bronze-cast head of a female divinity, most probably Aphrodite of the Praxitellean type (Vis, Archaeological Collection). Besides these imported objects, the local production was active, particularly in the field of luxurious artifacts for personal ornamentation. The Greek influence reached the hinterland areas of the Balkans most easily over the waterways such as the Danube or the Morava rivers (Umcari, near Smederevo, on the Danube, e.g., a silver belt, now in Belgrade, National Museum).

Celtic Invasion. The Celtic invasion and subsequent domination of Serbian territories (late 4th and early 3rd centuries) was only one of many incursions that disrupted a continuous artistic tradition. In some instances, the arts of the new arrivals suffused native forms offsetting the ruinous setbacks of the invasive period. The Celtic remains discovered so far in the territory of Serbia are not numerous; some of them are considered to be original Celtic products brought with them (the Bronze Rider from Kladovo, Belgrade, National Museum), while some others show a mixture of the autochthonous and the Celtic elements (Necropolis from Karaburma, Belgrade). A fusion of such diverse elements already started in prehistory, will remain characteristic of this region throughout the historical period as well. It will provide a rich source of inspiration, and will be especially significant as the basis for the folkloric art. At the same time, it will not create an artistic culture so debased as to be called "bastardized," but a culture which will have many points in common, in spite of the space and time distance, with, for

instance, early Mediaeval crosses and manuscripts of the Irish style found in Ireland and England.

Roman Conquest. The succeeding Roman phase in the historical evolution of the Balkan peninsula likewise left permanent imprints upon the culture of the Southern Slavs when they settled there. The Roman conquest of the Balkans began in the South in Macedonia soon after the fall of that state in 168 B.C. Military operations continued until about the beginning of our era. Penetration also came from the West, along the Sava River. Conquest had strategical and political implications for Rome, which found it necessary to erect defenses against the barbarians, and subordinate the restless Illyrian and Thracian tribes. Rome also derived economic advantages from the exploitation of the mines and other 10 rich natural resources. The Roman territorial organization was not basically any different in the Balkans than in other conquered areas which were divided into provinces. The greater part of what are now the Serbian territories comprised the provinces of Moesia, Thrace, Dalmatia and Pannonia. Although the Romanization of the autochthonous population was slow, and only under the Emperor Carracalla was the privilege of Roman citizenship accorded to all the inhabitants of the empire, the results of the Roman military and civil government were forever stamped on the face of the Balkans. The great roads – arteries of communication – were traced; military camps and fortified cities were established – many of them enjoying an almost uninterrupted existence until the present (Sirmium – Sremska Mitrovica; Singidunum – Belgrade; Taurunum – Zemun; Viminacium – Kostolac; Naissus – Nis; and others). These cities

were connected by a network of watchtowers, fortifications and stations, while the countryside was dotted with rustic hamlets (remains found in Mediana). When added to the inhabitants, Roman military and mercantile classes made the Balkans a veritable Babel and a pantheon of exotic cults. Among these, the cult of Jupiter with the attributes of Optimus and Maximus was especially strong; also popular were the cults of Isis, Serapis, Magna Mater and Mitra, which came from the East, and several local cults, including the cult of the so-called Thracian Rider (Tracki Konjanik).

Artistic expressions in Serbian territory under Roman rule are plentiful. In the above-mentioned cities, traces of Roman urban living were excavated during the last half century. By way of example, the city of Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica on the River Sava) serves us well. In the late Roman Empire, Sirmium was a major city, which followed well-established urban plans. There are two major streets, cardo and decumanus, which intersect each other at right angles; the other streets follow a rather regular parallel grid. The city was surrounded by fortifications; the streets were paved, and the major ones had colonnaded porticoes. There were public buildings, imperial quarters, varied facilities such as *thermae* or a merchants' area. Traces of frescoes and mosaics which decorated the walls and the floors of such buildings were discovered in this city. These, however, were not unique examples. Rich mosaic finds of the Late Empire period (4th century A.D.) came from the floor of a palace within a Roman fort in Gamzigrad (near Zajetar), which can now be seen in Zajecar and Belgrade museums. Such fragments as the Dionysus and the Leopard show an expert handling of the

anatomy of both god and beast, a fine sense of the modeling, and a clear understanding of the Hellenistic traditions.

Following established custom, burial plots are located outside the city walls of Sirmium, Singidunum, and Naissus. Several types of burial modes have been classified. Among these, sarcophagi make their appearance in the 2nd century A.D. Those which appear stylistically crude ought to be ascribed to the local workshops (e.g., from Sirmium), while others are clearly imported works<sup>12</sup> (e.g., from Viminacium and Ulpiana). It is in these cemeteries that scholars have found, side by side with Roman burial customs, -the persistence of the local, autochthonous ways, such as cremation (Naissus).

Architecture shared the universal traits of Roman provincial art; if architects were imported, such as the builder of Trajan's Bridge on the Danube, Apollodoros of Damascus, the locally-found craftsmen must have been used. The bricks, identified by stamps, testify that such commodities were regionally produced.

In the other aspects of the artistic output we find two distinct levels, as already observed in the case of the sarcophagi: The works created for the official consumption, imperial or upper classes; and, on the other hand, art objects and artifacts intended for the larger clientele of soldiers and the autochthonous or indigenous population.

The works belonging to the first category were either imported or locally executed by imported artists and artisans. Although of unusually technical competency, they might be lacking in creativity. Among the latter, further distinctions can be made.

The portrait head in bronze, the so-called Traianus Pater, 1st century A.D. (Pontes at Kladovo, now in Belgrade, National Museum) belongs to the tradition of Roman realism. The sculptor understood and conveyed something of his subject's personality. Others, such as the statuette of Jupiter Enthroned, fished from the Nisava, and a mask for a parade helmet are Hellenistic idealizations of the 1st century A.D. (Nis, National Museum and from Vinceia near Smederevo, now in Belgrade, National Museum). The figurine of the seated Hercules (found in Tamnic, near Negotin, now in Belgrade, National Museum) might not represent provincialism in Roman art, but rather the artistic changes of the early 3rd century – the changes which will lead to a new style, as evidenced on the porphyry figures of the tetrarchs in Venice and Rome. Yet this Hercules ultimately has as its prototype the statue of this Greek hero as created by Lyssipus.

On the other hand, popular art can be followed especially well in the votive reliefs and funerary stelae. These works are technically less refined; iconographically they show a strong mixture of classical and autochthonous motifs in subject matter, and they are widely distributed geographically (Kosovo, Metohija, Kosmaj, Uzice and other regions). In addition to their obvious importance in the historical sense, these somewhat naive monuments have a kind of primitive appeal.

Late Empire Period. The well-known political and economic situation of the 3rd century A.D. which threatened the very existence of the Empire also affected the artistic aspects of Roman life. In spite of the barbaric penetrations, the Balkan strongholds were held for the Empire where its art continued to

flourish in the 4th century A.D. Suffice it to mention here the famous bronze head of Constantine I from Naissus (Belgrade, National Museum). Although the bronze surface is somewhat corroded, the beauty of this portrait is not diminished. Its pose is formal, hieratical with strongly stressed eyes, individual in that features are neither lost nor subordinated to the iconic quality of the imperial personage. The jug ears, heavy nose, jaw and small mouth are individual, not the generalized features one sees on the colossal head of Constantine in Rome. Clearly the artist fully understands the relation between the flesh and its supportive bone structure – an understanding which is not shown on the 4th century reliefs on the Arch of Constantine in Rome. Beyond a doubt, the Naissus head exemplifies the best effort of the Imperial workshops of this period.

Further testimony of Imperial presence and Imperial works is provided by the famous fragment of the so-called Cameo of Kusadak (discovered near Smederevo, now in Belgrade, National Museum). From the very beginning of the Roman Empire cameos were closely connected with the Imperial office and person (Augustus, London, 14 the British Museum; Grand Camee de la Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, Cabinet des Medailles; Gemma Augustea, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). In spite of stylistic and iconographic differences, an unbroken thread of Imperial tradition unites these cameos; the chosen material was frequently the same – the richly hued sardonyx – while the subject matter was adjusted to the political situation of the Empire: instead of the apotheosis or deification, the 4th century emperor rides his horse in battle, while around him in the field are struggling and fallen soldiers. Thematically, this cameo can

be compared to the so-called Sarcophagus of Helena in Rome (probably that of Constantius Chlorus, father of Constantine I). In the case of both of these monuments, the figures float, rather than stand firmly on the ground, but the figures in the Kusadak Cameo seem rigid in spite of the marvelous natural beauty of the stone.

## **Early Christian – Early Byzantine Period**

Despite these changes, urban life after the invasions continued to exist in the Balkan area. A new aspect was now added to the artistic life – Christianity. This religion, although very limited in scope to certain class strata, assumed a much broader base and ,reached much higher in the social hierarchy after Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. Certainly one of the early administrative centers of Christianity was Sirmium. Although the remains of the Early Christian and Early Byzantine periods were more spectacular in other, more exposed parts of today's Yugoslavia (Salona near Split; Poret; Stobi and Heraclea Lyncestis, and Lychnides in Macedonia), neither are they lacking in the central Balkan territories. -The bronze figurine of the Good Shepherd from Singidunum (Belgrade) testifies to the existence of a Christian community in that city. As far as the architectural remains are concerned, all of the forms employed in the religious buildings in the Christian oikumene or community were found on this terrain. If this area did not lead the way in the architectural evolution of the forms, it certainly and impressively followed suit.

For the congregational structures, the simple three-nave basilica

dominates (Naissus, end of 4th century – the beginning of 5th century); the earliest, undoubtedly roofed in wood – not vaulted. The 5th century basilicas in some instances still show the plain rounded apse common in both Western and Eastern culture (Gamzigrad, basilica, first stage).

In the 6th century, the artistic impact of Constantinople was most, probably transmitted indirectly, e.g., via Thessalonike. One of the obvious changes occurs in the apse, which in Constantinopolitan manner becomes polygonal rather than semi-circular (Gamzigrad, basilica, second stage, 6th century). Representative examples of early Byzantine architectural forms in the territory of 6th-century Serbia can be found at the site of Caricin Grad – most likely the ancient Iustiniana Prima. The acropolis is dominated by a very long three-naved basilica, having a polygonal apse, and two pastophorae. It was customary in 6th century architecture to locate the galleries over the side aisles. The narthex is tripartite, while a porticoed atrium precedes the basilica. Its elevated station as a cathedral church is confirmed by the presence of an episcopal palace, as well as a baptistery, which abuts the church on the south side. This, too, is preceded by a narthex; this baptistery is not polygonal in design, but a tetraconchos inscribed in a square. The structure was undoubtedly vaulted.

Several other ecclesiastical buildings have been excavated within the city walls. In Northeast Caricin Grad a two-storied, very short basilica was put up whose aisles terminated in a flat wall, while the apse of the main nave was polygonal. There was also a tripartite narthex and an atrium. In the Southeast part of

the walled city, there was a free cross structure, preceded by a monumental porticoed atrium. Evidently this structure was used as a small martyrium, not unlike that of San Lorenzo (so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia) in Ravenna. In the suburban South existed another very large basilica, also containing an atrium, tripartite narthex, polygonal apse terminating the main nave, and side aisles ending at flat walls. In this case, the aisles were extended one bay to the north and the south, to suggest a rudimentary transept. Further to the southeast and outside the city walls a triconchos church with an open narthex and an atrium was excavated. That much architectural activity in a relatively short time not only fixes the importance of this center in military and ecclesiastical senses, it also implies the existence of a considerable force of masons and stone cutters. The capitals and other decorative carvings were executed locally, using Constantinopolitan prototypes.

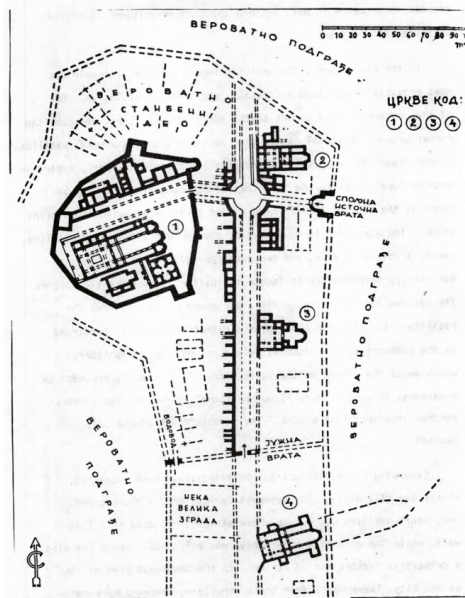


Fig. 1. Caricin Grad. Groundplan of the Excavated Site. 6 Century.

Such structures were decorated with frescoes and mosaics. The preserved examples are those of the floor mosaics in the baptistery, in the triconchos and the south basilica in the nave and narthex. Floral and geometric designs prevail; there are real and fantastic animals, mythological figures, bucolic and circus scenes. One of the capitals in the latter basilica bears the carved initials of Justinian I.

If a bronze portrait head of the Emperor Justinian has not been found in the territory of Serbia, the image of an empress which was discovered there would do just as well as a representative example of this period. The bronze life-sized head with the neck of an unidentified Byzantine empress was found near Naissus (Balajnac site; now in the National Museum, Nis); nothing

blemishes the near-perfect full oval of its idealized face. A small mouth and straight nose, together with sensitively formed brows suggest expression and feeling. Only the staring, heavily ridged eyes convey a departure from an earthly realism into a hieratic mode. The head gear is very prominent: stiff, strong material covers the hair completely, while it is in turn covered with a diadem-like band, from the center of which three finials project upward, each ending in a jewel, most likely a pearl. Although done in bronze, the decoration of the crown has parallels in head insignia of Byzantine empresses of the 6th century, such as the ivory image of Ariadne and the mosaic representation of Theodora in San Vitale, Ravenna. Owing to the stylization of Byzantine portraiture, it would be difficult to prove beyond doubt that this is a bronze of Theodora, although such a hypothesis would not be unlikely when one considers that Justinian's family originated in those parts.

Examples of the sepulchral architecture and frescoes can be seen in the tombs excavated in Naissus (Nis). Here, burial chambers were set in brick, with domed or vaulted ceilings, decorated with frescoes, in which the birds and flowers suggest Paradise. Or, as in another example, in addition to the deceased, there are representations of Sts. Peter and Paul placed in the enclosed, walled garden, symbolizing Paradise. Tombs comparable to those at Naissus are found dispersed throughout the Empire, and their decoration in most cases can be ascribed to the work of local artisans and craftsmen.

With the collapse of Justinian's policies and the temporary loss of the greater part of the Balkans as a result of the Slavic

invasions, Byzantine artistic applications all but ceased in this region between the 6th and 11th centuries. Only small, portable, imported objects of luxury stood as a testimonial of the continuous presence of Byzantine cultural tradition in the Balkans.

While the great urban centers continued their existence, the limes of the Roman Empire were threatened by the new waves of migrating tribes. The situation was not far different in the Balkans.

## Huns

In spite of many stylistic, thematic, and technical differences, all the nomadic peoples shared a common type of material culture. With them, one does not find stationary, permanent or large monuments. Rather, small, portable creations of the artisans were preferred by the fast-moving, hard-riding warrior classes of Hunnic society. Although- there are incidental finds of the hordes – buried treasures – in the majority of cases the material comes from graves. The invasion and domination of the Huns ended with the death of Attila in 453 A.D., and a relatively small amount of material which can be attributed to them was found thus far in Pannonia, Upper Moesia and on the Sava River. With the Huns, one associates the pendants, belt-buckles and fibulae with cicada and animal head or birds of prey designs.

## Goths

The Huns were followed by various Gothic tribes. It was during

that period that the Western part of the Roman Empire collapsed with the Fall of Rome in 476 A.D. The objects representing the material culture of the Gothic tribes continued to be of the same type of ornaments. The finds span the time from the late 5th to the middle of the 6th century. The fibulae were cast and colorfully inlaid with semi-precious stones, using designs and techniques inherited from the Classical period, although interpreted in a dynamically new, anticlassical way, evidenced by the treatment of the spirals and geometrical patterns. (Sites: Belgrade – Karaburma; Zemun; Sirmium; Sombor; Karavukovo; Kladovo; Naissus; Caricin Grad; Kragujevac; Krusevac; Ulpijana and many others.)

## **Avars and Slavs**

The next great migratory wave of the nomadic tribes to cross the limes of the Empire and reach the Balkans comprised the Kutrigurs, Avars, Slavs and others. Among these, only the Slavs survived to permanently settle in the area, partially absorbing the autochthonous population, but superimposing their own language.

Before this, however, the Slavs, the Antae, and the Avars occupied the vast territories north of the Sava and Danube Rivers, and along the shores and the tributaries of the Black Sea. In spite of a great deal of archaeological research, the history of the material culture of the Slavs within these territories is not completely known; but one can safely assume that it was far from being homogeneous, and that it withstood the impact

of the great Eastern civilizations, and prospered under Classical influences which came via the shores of the Black Sea.

Now, under the pressure from other tribes – Germanic, Finnish, Hungarian and Tartar peoples – the Slavs crossed Imperial limes into the Eastern Roman Empire. From the beginning to the middle of the 6th century it seems that the Slavs and the Antae tribes coalesced in the Pannonian plains. After the middle of the 6th century, the Slavs and the Kutrigurs attacked the Byzantine possessions, while the Byzantines counter-attacked with the help of the Avars. Soon, however, a new realignment of the forces developed in which the Avars united with the Slavs, Kutrigurs, Gepids and proto-Bulgarians to form the so-called First Kaganate (c. 568-670 A.D.) and warred against the Byzantines. The destruction of urban centers and fortified places bears witness to the intensity of those struggles. (Sirmium was taken in 582 A.D., was rebuilt in the 6th century for strategic defensive purposes; Caritin Grad also shows destruction and rebuilding.) During the last two decades of the 6th century, the Slavs had settled in the mountains of Thrace and Illyria; and, in 626 A.D., they, together with the Avars, laid siege to Constantinople.

This system of complex alliances and constant warring, played a large role in the history of the South Slavs in general, and upon the Serbian people at the moment of their appearance in recorded history.

According to recent studies, the entire material culture of the South Slavs as known to us today between the second half of the 6th and the 11th centuries is best divided into four major

cultural groups, and into several smaller subgroups. Since the elaboration on these would exceed by far the proposed boundaries of this paper, suffice it to say that excavations have revealed mud and wood structured sanctuaries (Ptuj, Slovenia), and village settlements (Najeva Ciglana, Pantevo), in which traces of stone and wooden idols have been discovered, as well as utilitarian objects and ceramic products. In the field of the artistic crafts, the cemeteries continue to yield personal male and female decorations, parts of horse trappings and various kinds of weaponry. Both form and technique show great dependence on the classical world, autochthonous Balkan peoples and migrating nomadic tribes. We now will turn briefly to the artifacts found in the period of the two Kaganates, especially those of the territories of nascent Serbia.

The First Avar Kaganate (c. 568-670 A.D.) is noted for the sumptuous resources of its burial chambers which, although frequently pillaged, still retain impressive numbers of gold, silver, and bronze coins and jewelry. Articles of personal adornment are splendidly executed by goldsmiths skilled in the technique of filigreeing and granulating, possibly done locally. Among the more typical finds are earrings shaped like inverted, truncated pyramids, and, although it is impossible to classify these objects on an ethnic basis, scholars are inclined to attribute to the Slavs the earrings with a small, hollow cast strawberry and, above all, the bow-type fibulae with masks (Velesnica near Kladovo, Belgrade, National Museum; and Caritin Grad). The Velesnica fibula provides an excellent example. Made of cast bronze (13 by 7.2 cm.) and dated in the 7th century, its most prominent feature is its human, mask-like face. The body of

the fibula is an elongated and truncated triangle, whose surface is covered with the geometric triangles and lozenges which combine with rather simplified and symmetrically arranged scrolls. From the side of the fibula project rather abstract elements, among which one can recognize the heads and beaks of birds of prey. The scroll design is repeated on the semicircular part of the fibula in a very hierarchical arrangement. The whole segment is framed in dotted motif, undoubtedly in imitation of the Byzantine granulation. From this semi-circular, fan-like part project seven finials, completely abstract in rendering, although the ultimate prototype might have shown here a dragon head or a similar motif taken from mythological beasts. The other decorative elements which appear with the finds of this period are: braiding, twining of ribbons, or schematized rozettes and tri- or quatro-foils (sites: Serbian Podunavlje; Kostolac; Velesnica; Banat; Aradac; Dubovac kod Kovina, bow fibula with the human head; Novi Knetevac, several sites; Miloradoviceva Ciglane, Pancevo).

The Second Avar Kaganate, which arose on the middle Danube after 670 A.D., flourished until its defeat by Charlemagne at the end of the 8th century. The South Slavs remained in the "coalition," though the Kutrigurs and proto-Bulgarians have now pulled out. It seems that the new artistic impulses came from the Kama region of the Ukraine into the Podunavlje. The scholars consider the Slavic element present here to be equal to that of the Avars. However, there is no basis for further ethnic differentiation. Once again excavations of tombs arranged in rows provide us with evidence of their level of material culture. The finds are much poorer in the imported or pillaged luxury

items of Byzantine origin, as well as the Byzantine gold solidi which used to be paid as the tribute to the First Kaganate. Belt-buckles, horse trappings and feminine jewelry continued to be present; they are decorated with circular or vine leaf designs, as well as zoomorphic elements. Although the execution is technically less accomplished, this fact would suggest the influence of local producers. -Notwithstanding the loss in technical proficiency, there seems to be an increase in the use of imagination in creating those works. Earrings continue to be frequent and characteristic. Some are created by simple, torded loops, while others are formed to resemble clusters of grapes. Finally, the inverted pyramid type, found in the tombs of the First Kaganate continues to be used. (Sites: vicinities of Belgrade, Zemun, Stara Pazova, Mala Mitrovica, Stari Slankamen, Novi Sad, Pancevo, Novi Knezevac and others.)

With the fall of the Second Kaganate, the new political realities introduced considerably alter the life and the art of the South Slavs.

## **The Slavs and the Serbs**

Within the weakened Second Avar Kaganate, the Slavic population not only made artistic contributions, but seems to have achieved a certain stabilization. Byzantine and Frankish sources started making name differentiations among the Slavic tribes of the Balkans, while the first leaders among the Serbs were mentioned by name (c. 780 A.D., Visoslav, and c. 800 A.D., his son, Radoslav). The establishment of stronger leaders seems to indicate the deep changes within the tribal organization

of the Slavs, and the beginning of the emergence of a social stratification, to be further evolved in the Middle Ages into its specific feudal forms.

In the course of the 9th century, all of the Central Balkan Slavic tribes found themselves surrounded by powerful and strongly organized adversaries: the Franks, the Bulgarians, and the Byzantines.

However, for a number of reasons, the external political circumstances favored the creation of a nuclear Serbian State in Raska, c. 830 A.D., in connection with which Prince Prosigoj is mentioned. He was followed by a succession of princes who ruled somewhat longer. The first was Vlastimir (c. 837-850 or 850-862 A.D.) whose exact dates have not been established; his sons, among whom the most prominent was Mutimir (850-890, or 863-891 A.D.), were followed by several others: Prvoslav (891-892 A.D.); Petar (892-917 A.D.); Pavle Branovic (917-920 A.D.); Zaharija Pribisavljevic (921-924 A.D.).

Such, in brief, were the complex circumstances at the time of the genesis of the first Slavic and Serbian states in the Balkans. There were also deep inner changes, which included the process of social restructuring of assimilation with the autochthonous population, and finally a more profound and consequential change – Christianization.

The original religion of the Slavs was polytheism. Names of some of the divinities have survived. For example, Perun heads the Pantheon of gods with names like: Svarog, Veles, Dazbog, Triglav, y the goddess Ziva and others. It is possible that the

initial attempts at the Christianization of the Balkan Slavs were carried out by the Byzantines during the rule of the Emperor Heraclius (610-641 A.D.).

The missionary effort among the Slavs in general, and the Balkan Slavs in particular, entered a new phase in the course of the second half of the 9th century. The famous Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was above all a diplomat and politician who understood the political significance for the Empire in the Christianization of the Slavs and other neighboring peoples.

With wisdom and foresight he permitted the translation of the liturgy into the Slavic language. The numerous missions to the Slavs of Moravia, starting in 862 A.D., to Pannonia and other regions were led, first of all, by the Apostles to the Slavs, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who, since they were from the vicinity of Thessalonike, knew the language. The official Christianization of the Bulgarians, the closest neighbors of the Byzantines, occurred under Boris in 865 A.D. It is considered that the earnest Christianization of the Serbs started under Mutimir c. 880 A.D. and continued for several centuries thereafter.

Missionary activities among the Slavs were not the exclusive prerogative of Byzantium; other strong efforts in that direction were made by Rome. This naturally led to rivalry and, ultimately, to the schism between the Byzantine and Latin rites in the 11th century. Although the confrontation between the two centers in the 9th century was not extreme, the real problem was territorial jurisdiction over the Slavic peoples. Finally, in the Balkans, -the spherical influence of the two churches was negotiated and divided in such a way as to follow an imaginary

line which transversed this region from Belgrade to Kotor. This division followed the original borderline which separated the Western from the Eastern Roman Empire. Such a division was to cause later deep religious-political conflicts (as late as World War II), and to leave its permanent mark on the arts of those regions. Generally speaking, the lands to the east of the demarcation line were in the sphere of the Orthodox Church and the GrecoByzantine culture, while the western regions accepted Catholicism from Rome, Latin culture and Western artistic influences, although artistic and cultural cross-fertilizations were frequent.

## **Material Remains**

Periods of political, military and religious upheaval are generally not conducive to the flourishing of art.

Turning our attention once again to the art field, one finds that the majority of the material belongs to the so-called “applied arts” or objects destined for personal ornamentation, and found in excavated burial sites. The Slavic archaeology of the Balkan peninsula has made remarkable progress in the last three decades; thus our knowledge is greatly augmented by the finds from the scientifically controlled digs. The material is extremely difficult to date with absolute precision; however, it is known that Slavic necropolis reaches as far back as the 9th century A.D. A great deal of the material belongs to the 10th and 11th centuries, while some of the popular forms continue to flourish well into the advanced Middle Ages (12th-14th centuries). As characteristic pieces of jewelry, appear the simple S-shaped

earrings and finger rings with applied granulation (Kursumlija, Church of the Virgin); the strawberry emerges as a typical design element, singly, or combined in groups of three or several, while compositionally one berry can be the largest in the group; there are also globular attachments, crescent shapes and others to form earrings and other pieces of jewelry, such as rings, necklaces, (sites: Belgrade, Vinta, Bele Crkva – Krupanj, Kostolac, Kursumlija, Bajina Basta, Ritopek, Matitane near Pristina, and others). Materials like these are not confined to the Serbian regions. For example, the Novo Brdo group in Croatia, dating from the 10th to the 11th centuries, shares stylistic characteristics with the materials found in Pannonia as well as in Serbia (Kursumlija). Among its identifying features are: torced wire bracelets and necklaces; and the almost universal grape-cluster earrings. Portable objects of this nature naturally travel far and wide, are easily imported, but are also easily wrought by local artisans. Silver, bronze and copper are the metals most frequently used.

## Architecture

It is safely assumed that, in the newly formed Serbian tribal unions of Raska and Duklja, there must have been some architectural activity. This was carried out either over inherited and much older late Classical and early Byzantine sites, or created at entirely new locations. It was, in most cases, constructed with perishable materials – a tradition which, in the Balkans, survived until the 20th century. Excavations have revealed the charred remains of domestic dwellings at Caricin Grad and Ras. Mention has already been made of the old Slavic

pagan sanctuary excavated at Ptuj (Slovenia), which utilized the same type of perishable material. In some instances, already extant materials found in situ, such as late Classical spolia, or remains, were reused.

When the Christianization intensified in the last decades of the 9th century, new needs were created, e.g., the need for more permanent and representative examples of ecclesiastical architecture. Once again the remains of this early pre-Nemanjic group of monuments are scant because churches not destroyed by the wars were reduced to ruin by the rebuilding of subsequent times. These churches are known now through the summary descriptions in written sources or through the excavations; however, some of them still stand, together with the architectural additions of later ages.

It seems useful, then, to discuss early examples of church architecture preserved in the territories of Macedonia and Duklja (Crna Gora), since those regions at one time or another in the course of the Middle Ages were included in the Serbian Mediaeval State, to which they brought their own peculiar artistic heritage, which, in turn, influenced the art of the Serbs.

While the architecture of the early Christian and Byzantine periods (5th-6th centuries) in the central and western Balkans was dominated by a simple, but large basilica structure, centrally planned buildings were fewer and less prominent it seems, if we can judge now on the basis of the preserved evidence, i.e., that the ecclesiastical architecture between the 9th and the 11th centuries applied the central type of structure at least as often as the longitudinal one. These centrally-planned buildings show

a great variety in the design of the ground plan, and vary quite as much in elevation. These stylistic variations were due to cultural spheres of influence which radiated to the territories under our consideration, from either the Byzantine world with its complex heritage of classical and Oriental strains, or the equally sophisticated world of the pre-Romanesque West.

The problem of centrally-planned buildings, their origin and application is a very fascinating one, and it has been treated rather exhaustively by scholars. The circular building, per se, is very ancient, going as far back as the prehistorical Neolithic huts. Most likely it reached monumental proportions in the ancient Near Eastern civilizations of Mesopotamia, where vaults were employed. the Mycenaehs used this form in the construction of their royal beehive tombs outside the walls of the Mycenaean fortress (e.g., so-called tombs of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, etc.) and the Greeks applied the circular plan to the minor sanctuaries and memorials commemorating their heroes, i.e., the so-called heroa. Pragmatic Roman architecture employed the rotunda for secular (baths, fountainhouses), and religious purposes (temples – the most famous being the Pantheon in Rome – and, finally, mausolea – Cecilia Metella, Mausolea of Augustus and Hadrian). In the early Christian period there is no departure from this tradition, for it is in ecclesiastical architecture that the centrally-planned building was fully utilized. Baptisteries planned that way flourished (e.g., St. John in the Lateran, Rome), as did Imperial mausolea (e.g., the Mausoleum of Helena, mother of Constantine, and that of his daughter, Constantina, the so-called Santa Constanza, both in Rome). Besides the practical aspects, such structures had

acquired a symbolic, and definitely cosmic meaning. If they could serve the worldly rulers as their final resting places, they might serve the same purpose for the Ruler of All and for His servants. Thus, over the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, a rotunda rose in the 4th century, and from there it continued to inspire construction of buildings commemorating the saints and martyrs, called martyria. Those buildings could be structurally very close to the Jerusalem example (e.g., San Stefano Rotondo, Rome, 5th century), or they could be faithful to the idea, while taking liberties with the architectural interpretations of the design (St. Pierre, Geneve, 5th-6th centuries; St. Benigne, Dijon; and others found as far away as Spain and England).

It is to this type of monument that the centrally-planned buildings erected on the territories of the Balkans belong. It is through their prototypes that they can be better understood and appreciated. To this general type of buildings belongs: the round church of Preslav (Bulgaria, 9th century); St. Donatus (formerly Holy Trinity) in Zadar (Croatia, 9th-10th centuries), which is a rotunda with a triple eastern apse. One can add to this category the six-conched church of the Holy Trinity in Split (Croatia), the eight-conched structure in Oslje near Ston (Croatia), the rotunda of St. Tripun in Kotor (today's Crna Gora), the Triconchos of St. Panteleimon in Ochrid (Macedonia), the tetraconchos of St. Peter in Ras, near Novi Pazar (Serbia), and others. They all belong to approximately the same period (9th-10th century), and they all follow, in principle, the same architectural concept, with individual variations, and share in the universal idea of the commemorative church or martyrium.

## Neighbors

Macedonia. In the South Balkan regions, one focus of the missionary activity was centered around Ochrid and Prespa Lakes, where the disciples of Sts. Cyril and Methodius – Clement and Nahum – worked among the Slavs in Macedonia from the last two decades of the 9th century. It is to them that the invention of the Cyrillic alphabet is attributed, named, of course, in honor of their teacher, Cyril. Foundations were laid for more than literary activity. It is here that the new buildings were erected among the Slavs for their use.

In the ancient citadel of Ochrid (Lychnidos), the church dedicated to St. Panteleimon was built by Clement at the end of the 9th century. The structure, recently excavated underneath Imaret Djami, comprises only preserved foundations of irregularly and roughly dressed stones. It was a triconchos building and, thus, a structure which follows the central-plan type. One is apt to question whether or not this 9th century structure was in some way inspired by a much larger building which stood nearby on the summit of the citadel. Recent excavations there have disclosed the foundations of a monumental polyconchos building, whose last phase was completed in the 6th century. Both it and an adjacent tetraconchos baptistery preserve the greater part of their floor mosaics. Furthermore, in the vicinity of the south shore of Lake Ochrid, there is another triconchos building, dedicated to the Holy Archangels. It was erected most probably in the early 10th century by Nahum, and its remains lie today under a newer church. A similar type of floor plan was repeated in a church on

the Gorica peninsula of Lake Ochrid, which belongs to the same era. However, nothing of it remains today.

During the period 976-1018, the Macedonian Slavs created an independent state under Samuel (976-1014) and his heirs. The major foe was the Byzantine Empire, led at this time by one of its greatest emperors; Basil II (976-1025), who was mistakenly named Bulgaroctonus after his defeat of Samuel in 1014 at Belasica. Although this independent state was short-lived, parts of the Ochrid citadel, and a basilica dedicated to St. Achileos, could have been constructed at that time (c. 983 A.D.). Also the first mention is made, in 1006, of a church at German, a village in Mala Prespa.

Since Byzantium was a close political adversary, and a strong cultural center, all these monuments must have borne the Byzantine stylistic imprint par excellence, which was, however, of a provincial rather than a Constantinopolitan nature.

After the disintegration of the independent Macedonian State, Byzantium started its reconquest of the Balkans, reached the ancient Danubian limes of the Empire, and controlled these territories for the first time since the incursion and settlement of the Slavs. Former communication arteries were reopened: Constantinople-Adrianopolis-Naissus-Sirmium and Thessalonike-Sirmium.

Major routes such as these served well the military, commercial, and cultural interests of the Byzantines and Slavs. Ochrid, for example, was reestablished as a strong religious-administrative center. In these circumstances, Macedonian art and architecture

of the 11th and 12th centuries became heavily indebted to the Imperial Byzantines. For that reason, the following examples were selected as representative of their class. And, also, we should take note that those same monuments in turn influenced the subsequent development in art of an expanded Mediaeval Serbia.

Thus, 11th century Macedonian ecclesiastical architecture continued to exhibit a somewhat provincial and unrefined mode of building, enhanced by an almost robust sense of monumentality. Among the centrally-planned buildings of this period are the tetraconchos of the Virgin Eleussa ("Veljusa"), near Strumica, and the triconchos of the Virgin near Drenovo. As being representative of the longitudinal type structures, the three-nave basilica of St. Leontius in the Monastery of VOdota should be included in this survey. Some fragments of its original fresco decoration are preserved. For instance, one observes plain, monumental forms of figures, faces with large eyes, and a very strong sense for shadows. To this list one must add the famous structure of this type in Ochrid.

The cathedral church of the archdiocese of Ochrid was ostensibly dedicated to St. Sophia, as is its world-renowned namesake in Constantinople. In actuality, however, this and other structures bearing the name were dedicated to Christ as the Holy Wisdom. (In addition to Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, there are churches dedicated to St. Sophia in Bulgaria, Thessalonike, Kiev, and Trebisonde, among others.)

St. Sophia in Ochrid is a three-nave basilica with dome, erected and dedicated most likely under Archbishop Leon (1037-1056).

It is built of stone and brick without any particular attempt to create, a polychrome and vivid effect on the exterior walls. On the east side, the prominent polygonal central apse is flanked by two smaller, rounded apses, surmounted, on the second level, by the apsidioles. A very prominent exonarthex was added to the structure in the 14th century. The interior lighting is calm, the wall surfaces simple and conducive to the monumental type of decoration. Architectonically speaking, this church is anachronistic in comparison with the roughly contemporary Byzantine architecture that favors the cross-in-square type plan (Hosios Loukas Phokis, Greece, e. 11th century). This phenomenon, which can also be observed in the oldest layer of frescoes, might be taken to be the result of regional influences, or the personal tastes of Leon. Very likely, both the taste of the donor, Leon, and the proximity of a strong art center such as Thessalonike, with its much older monuments. made their impact upon St. Sophia at Ochrid.

Then, too, the large, even surfaces of the interior walls of the basilica permitted the development of an epic program, which is monumental rather than narrative. Although the original decoration has not been preserved in its entirety. the frescoes of this church belong to several periods, including the 13th and 14th centuries. Among the middle 11th century frescoes one ought to mention the Virgin Enthroned with Child, located in the conche of the apse. (See, e.g., the similar 9th century mosaic representation in St. Sophia at Thessalonike.) In addition to the above-mentioned fresco and the Communion of the Apostles, the walls of the presbytery are decorated with iconographically rare compositions such as the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great,

and the Vision of St. John Chrysostom, and the selection from the Old Testament scenes from the cycle of the Sacrifice of Abraham as a prefiguration of the Sacrifice of Christ. These works of art strongly tie this cathedral to a hieratic tradition as do also the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace – which is another very ancient iconographic motif and a reference to the Miraculous Salvation – and, finally, Jacob's Ladder – another depiction on the theme of Salvation.

The most impressive composition, however, is the great Ascension of Christ, which occupies the vault of the Bema or sanctuary, whereas its traditional place would have been in the dome (e.g., St. Sophia, Thessalonike, 9th century; San Marko, Venice, 12th century). Among other frescoes of this early period, the frontal figures of stern saints, stylistically reminiscent of those at Hosios Loukas in Phokis, are some of the most impressive images. The background of the frescoes is a dark blue field, or a high masonry wall. The ground line is indicated by the green colors, gently rolling hills or floors. Against such a simple and plain background the figures are projected, either singly or in group compositions. Their contours are strongly outlined; the forms, stiff; the positions of suggested movement, often awkward; the folds of garments, sharply broken; and the proportions, far from idealized. The human figures are either squat or elongated, and their heads either too large (e.g., the Virgin in the apse), or too small for the bodies (e.g., angels from the Ascension). While the frontally depicted faces are either modified rectangular or oval in shape, the foreshortened to three-quarter view faces show the typical bulging head and hair, and characteristically articulated, angular jawline. Such

physiognomies, archaic as they may be, have consequently departed from the idealized beauty of the Macedonian style (867-1056), and they are close to foretelling the facial rendering of the Comnenian period (1081-1185).

The unifying element of the St. Sophia frescoes is not to be found in the imitation of the transient physical reality of this world, but in a purely spiritual expression of religious mysticism. If the gestures and movements of the saints are restrained, they are meant to suggest bodily silence, a silence befitting the dwelling place of the Divine Wisdom.

While St. Sophia at Ochrid is anachronistic in form and monastically somber in spirit, this situation is entirely different in this region about a century later. Not far from Skopje, in the village of Nerezi, Alexius Comnenus, a Byzantine prince of the Comnenian dynasty, had a church erected which was dedicated to St. Panteleimon. That church, both in architecture and preserved frescoes, strongly resembles Constantinopolitan court art. This princely edifice is a small, reliquary-like structure instead of a rambling basilica. The plan which follows a cross-inscribed-in-a-square is distinctly obvious in the roofline (tiles are laid directly over the vaults). One large trapezoidal apse, and two smaller ones are to be seen at the east side, and the narthex to the west. The structure is surmounted by one large and four smaller domes – the pentaturion church style. Stones cloisonne (i.e., enclosed) in ‘bricks are used for the exterior walls. Bricks set in thick plaster are used to arch the openings, while recessed arcading provides the picturesqueness around the single opening windows of the drum. Light is admitted through

bifora and trifora type windows. The interior spaces are small, compartmentalized, and almost intimate. The central part under the main dome has the strongest illumination.

Although the entire fresco program of this church is not preserved owing to damages in the vaulted areas, enough remains of the ensemble (discovered and cleaned in the early 1920's) to insure its place among the finest fresco creations in the Comnenian style. Beyond a doubt the Constantinopolitan court painters came here and applied their skills; and, although the work of the assistants can be seen in the peripheral parts of the church, it does not measure up to the quality of one unknown proto-master, to whom the execution of the central surfaces of the church was entrusted. The lower zone is occupied by the standing figures – gaunt desert hermits, Palestinian poets, ethereal and pale deacons, and Holy Warriors clad in military garments. Appropriately, the upper zones are occupied with scenes from the life of the Virgin (such as the celebrated scene of the Nativity of the Virgin, and others), and scenes from the life of Christ (e.g., the Transfiguration, the Resurrection of Lazarus, the Descent from the Cross, and the Lamentation). Any one of these might serve to illustrate mastery of composition, but we have selected the Descent from the Cross. Only the holy protagonists are evident; the background is like a dark blue curtain, against which the event is projected on a very narrow strip of ground, which is green, as usual. The large wooden cross with a broad arm frames the figures. To avoid the strict confines of the vertical-horizontal direction, the ladder on the left placed against the cross, introduces the dynamic element of a diagonal. Joseph of Arimathea stands on the ladder and lowers the upper part

of Christ's Body, which is gently received by the Virgin who is on the left. As any mother stricken with grief, she embraces her Son, placing her cheek against His. On the other side, the youngest disciple, John, holds the arm of Christ in his veiled hands. The figures of the Virgin and St. John are elongated in order to reach the desired compositional height. They both lean in toward the center, thus formally enclosing the composition within a semi-circle. All other scenes are organized along strict compositional rules of symmetry and balance.



Fig. 2. Nerezi Monastery. Church of St. Panteleimon. The Lamentation. Fresco, 12th Century. (Photo: Gallery of Frescoes, Belgrade).

While the more luxurious type of Byzantine wall decoration, the mosaic, has a certain stiffness that is inherent in the technique itself, the brush strokes of the frescoes are much freer. An elegant linearism rules the Nerezi style, but the figures are not prisoners of stiff outlines. In general, the coloring is bright and warm in tone, applied with swift, arabesque lines, which bring the color to the surface. Above all else, beauty is served here by these court painters.

To illustrate the style of these elegantly painted frescoes, a single figure will be examined here. The choice fell upon the fresco-icon of the patron saint of the church. St. Panteleimon is richly framed; he stands frontally, and is seen wearing a light, long tunic, with gray shadows against the blue background. A yellow nimbus encircles his elegantly coiffed auburn hair. His hair provides a textural contrast to the perfectly smooth, young face. This, too, is an idealized face, but without the idealization of the Pheidian age. This face is now a regular oval, a low forehead is covered with locks, and thin brows arch perfectly above large, open, almond-shaped eyes. The nose is very thin, and elegantly long, the mouth, small, but full, almost sensuous. The perfect oval of the cheeks tapers toward the chin. Although this painting and those of other saints in Nerezi seem almost frozen, the human quality has not been smothered. Feelings are well expressed in the scene of the Lamentation in which the Virgin grieves for her Son, preceding the work of Giotto by almost one hundred and fifty years.

Many more fresco ensembles of the Comnenian style dated from the 12th century are found preserved at sites ranging from Russia to Kastoria (Greece), but none come close to the superb beauty of Nerezi. If there ever was a Byzantine Van Gogh, he must have painted the central spaces of this church.

The Nerezi style was continued in a somewhat mannered way in the territory of Macedonia proper. Further evolution and provincialization of the Nerezi style is best seen in the Church of St. George in the village of Kurbinovo on Lake Prespa. The well-preserved frescoes of this church are dated from 1199, and

they show what a lesser master can do with a great prototype. Everywhere there are signs of an extreme mannerism – figures are elongated for length's sake, not for the compositional or spacial needs (e.g., figure of the Angel from the Annunciation); gestures are artificial; movements, stylized. The line is not the servant of the form, but its master. Fluttering drapery leads an existence separate from the movement of the body. These are signs of a provincial interpretation of the metropolitan style.

The grand art of Nerezi painting, however, found its reflection in Serbian art under the first Nemanjic sponsor, but that problem will be discussed within the context of Serbian art.

Zeta. Another center of activity was ancient Duklja or Zeta (today's Crna Gora), with the monuments ranging from the shores of Lake Skadar to the Peljenc peninsula. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos mentions that already in the 9th century there existed in the city of Kotor a church dedicated to St. Tripun, which was of the central type. Although this type was rather universal in the Christian world, it is impossible to establish its stylistic orientation since the church has not been preserved. The other architectural type frequently used in Duklja is that of a small, stone structure, naved and usually vaulted, and decorated with architectural carving. In this carving the intertwined and braided ribbon predominates, and it can be combined with floral or faunal motifs (Ulcinj, Bar, Boka: the Virgin of Ratacka). Such structures are tied to the Adriatic and proto-Romanesque traditions.

With the appearance of the Benedictines in the 11th century, Western influences begin to predominate in Duklja. Once again

the three-nave basilica with the simple roof is favored. Examples of this are the church of St. Peter in Trebinje, and, more importantly, the sepulchral basilica of the rulers of Zeta, Vojislav, Mihajlo, and Bodin. The foundations of this building remain extant on the shore of Lake Skadar (Albania). The dedication of the church to Sts. Sergius and Bacchus recalls the Byzantine and Eastern cult of those martyrs (the famous palace church of Justinian, which still stands in Constantinople, was dedicated to them). The building technique, which shows alternating layers of brick and stone is tied, however, with the Italian tradition. When St. Tripun in Kotor was rebuilt and dedicated in 1166, it adopted a full-fledged Romanesque style.

In the early 11th century the hinterlands of Zeta continued to show traces of the Eastern influences in the choice of the triconchal plan (e.g., the churches of the Krajinska Virgin above Lake Skadar and St. Marko in Stari Bar), but they are executed in well-dressed local sandstone in the coastal manner.

It is most likely that these churches, central or basilical, were decorated with wall paintings which, in most instances, have disappeared without a trace. An exception is the famous church of St. Michael in Stone, on the Peljesac peninsula, which is dated c. 1077-1150. This might have been the court chapel or church of one of the kings of Zeta (i.e., Mihajlo, Bodin, or Djordje). Its one small nave has a semi-circular apse in the interior, which is flanked by two apsidioles. Its exterior appearance is rectangular. The elevation of stone walls is enlivened by the use of pilasters, while the interior is subdivided into three bays by the same means. The structure is vaulted. On both the north and the

south sides, three niches have been set in its thick wall. A considerable number of frescoes still cover the building interior. The background surfaces of the frescoes are striped in blue, yellow and green. The painted spaces are very shallow, and the flat figures are reconciled to the lack of depth. The style and the iconography are clearly Western, having parallels with French Romanesque paintings. Scholars believe that the intermediary source of such a style must have been found somewhere within the Norman possessions on Sicily or in southern Italy. The lower zone in St. Michael in Stone is occupied by standing figures – richly clad male and female saints, identified by Latin inscriptions as St. John the Baptist, and the patron saint of the church, the archangel Michael among others. There are also representations of the Old Testament scenes, Christ in Mandorla, and the Evangelists. The figures lie stiff and flat against the background without benefit of plasticity in modelling. Faces are rather conventionally portrayed, and the drawing is often unskilled (e.g., the profile head of the Evangelist). Clearly the artist had difficulty in rendering any type of foreshortening, and in relating the body to the drapery. The flesh tones are done in yellow ocher, the features drawn in reddish-brown tones, and the shadows composed in cool blues and greens and highlighted in white. The beholder is captivated, however, by the shining brightness of these frescoes. The most interesting image is the portrait of the king of Zeta, the donor of the church. The king carries in his hands the model of the structure. His garment is that of a Western prince complete with chausses, knee-length blue tunic, and a slightly longer cloak done in red, which is decorated with geometric ornaments and embroidered with pearls. He is bearded and represented as an older man. His crown

is also of the Western type, it being a diadem band with cheek guards. It is surmounted by three crosses, and encrusted with pearls and semi-precious stones. This unidentified ruler of Zeta, clad in Western fashion and rendered in Western style, starts a long family of portraits of the Serbian kings in the art of the Middle Ages.

However, one of the most important artistic resources surviving from the Zeta region, very broadly speaking, is not found in the domain of architecture and monumental wall decoration, but in miniature painting, and the outstanding example of that genre is the late 12th century Gospel of Prince Miroslav.

The oldest preserved Serbian books written in Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts date no earlier than the 11th century. They do not have illustrations of any kind (St. Mary's Glagolitic Gospels, 11th century). In trying to decipher the place of origin of the oldest decorated manuscripts, the early Slavic scholars believed the Macedonian region to be the birthplace of such Slavic manuscripts. But the recent tendency among the scholars is to date those preserved manuscripts from Macedonia no earlier than the 12th century. Palaeographic study supports the evidence for such dating. Moreover, it is a probable certainty that the Macedonian manuscripts used as their prototypes Greek provincial books created during the 12th century. Unfortunately, early scholars mistook the primitive rendering in those manuscripts as the signs of a greater antiquity, rather than as a lack of the skill of the 12th century artists and decorators.



Fig. 3. Stone. Church of St. Michael. Unidentified King of Zeta. Drawing from the Fresco, 11-12 Century.

On the other hand, there is some indirectly preserved evidence which points out that the first Serbian written and decorated books could have been created in the milieu of ancient Zeta. From that evidence it can be deduced that the illuminated parts of those books must have been inspired by prototypes of the 10th century, which were of Capuan (Italian) origin and style. One can also assume that the Duklja manuscripts ought to postdate the 10th century. Evidence for that is provided by somewhat later books, which faithfully preserved the style of their much older prototypes. First of all, such evidence is found in a Serbian Psalter, written on paper and dated in the 15th century (Zagreb, University Library, P. 3349). The decorative elements in this codex are truly archaic, and must have been faithfully copied from a much older original, one steeped in the Capuan tradition of decorative initials. Initials in the Serbian Psalter are drawn in pen and ink, representing fantastic beasts intertwined with

stylized foliage and bound by flat ribbons. Further confirmation of such a miniature output in the Serbian coastal regions is to be found in a 13th century Psalter of the Holy Trinity Monastery, Plevlje, and in the Hilandari Manuscript No. 386, where mixed in with the Cyrillic script are words written in the Glagolitic alphabet.

Probably the most famous preserved Serbian manuscript is the Gospel Book of Prince Miroslav of Hum, brother of Stevan Nemanja. Originally it was in the Serbian monastery at Hilandari on Mount Athos, but from the 19th century it has been housed in the National Museum of Belgrade. It was created in Zahumlje, toward the end of the- 12th century and was written in Old Serbian Cyrillic. This parchment codex (28.5 by 41.5 cm.), contains miniatures executed by a certain Gligorije, who twice signed this book. The text of the Gospels was not arranged synoptically after the manner of the Western Church, but according to the weekly readings or *pericope* as practiced in the Constantinopolitan liturgical rite. Rather large initials represent the main ornamentation of this Gospel, and their major stylistic characteristics give an overall Romanesque impression. These initials are drawn with scribe's tool – the pen; and brownish ink was used. The range of colors is rather limited to the red, yellow, green and gold applied by the brush. Upon close examination, these initials seem generally Romanesque, although based on other styles issuing from a single source, most probably that of Apulia, from whence they came into the Adriatic sphere of Zeta,- not the other way around. Scholars who made exhaustive studies of the Gospel of Prince Miroslav have been able thus far to separate the following sources and

prototypes: a very ancient layer of Syriac and Coptic origins passed on by Byzantine intermediaries. As an example of that style we might consider the initial “n”, (P) formed by two affronted birds, possibly peacocks, holding in their beaks a stylized palmette (folio 115v). This theme goes as far back as the Sassanian art tradition. The initials and details, which are closer to the Byzantine tradition, show a far greater restraint in both color and form. Only red and gold were used, and the initial forms are extremely clear; for example, the initial “B” (V), formed of foliage, (folio 50r), or the detail of the putto riding a fantastic animal (folio 331r). Romanesque style initials commonly employ intertwined human, animal, and floral elements. Some initials, less clear as letters, are attributed to an older phase, while disciplined and clear forms belong to the newer phase of Romanesque art which can, and does, substitute whole scenes for a single letter (e.g., John v 50 the Baptist, titled “Zvan batist”, folio 36v; the Flight of Alexander the Great on a fantastic beast, folio 56v). In many instances the usage of the color should be considered symbolic, e.g., the green for water, and red for fire. In some other initials of this Gospel there is a deeper, symbolic meaning hidden within the letters. Such is the case in which two lion’s bodies are united by one head (folio 122v). In addition to forming the initial “B” (V), they symbolized the double natures united in Christ.

Apulia then was the meeting ground of Eastern, Byzantine, and Western styles, and Zeta, the recipient of the already formulated idioms. Only when an artist, such as Djak Gligorije, had to invent an initial to compensate for the specific requirements of

the Cyrillic alphabet, was he able to offer a creative contribution of his own to this well-established artistic vocabulary.

The Gospel of Prince Miroslav represents the end of a line of development, with most of the intermediary links now missing. The impact of this Romanesque style on the further evolution of the Serbian miniature, if judged according to preserved evidence, seems to have weakened in the course of the 13th century at which time a different set of historical circumstances introduced new orientations. However, the manifestations of the Romanesque style imported from Zeta into Raska of the Nemanjić dynasty remained very prominent in the fields of architecture and architectural decoration well into the 14th century.

Raska. From the last decades of the 11th century, another political center the Serbs began to emerge among under the zupan Vukan (c. 1083- 1114), i.e., the center of Raska which formed the nucleus of the Serbian mediaeval state in the regions between the Lim and Ibar Rivers, Piva and Tara. From there, expansion proceeded westward to the Adriatic shores of Zeta and Zahumlje, northward toward the Sava and Danube Rivers, and to the east and to the south. Hungary, Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire were adversaries who threatened the independence of the zupans, and in 1149, the zupan of Raska rebelled against the Byzantines having been induced to do so by Western forces.

The chronology of the zupans after Vukan is not absolutely clear, but some of the names such as Uros I, Uros II, Desa, and Tihomir, brother of Stevan Nemanja have been recorded.

In the second half of the 12th century, Stevan Nemanja emerges from the struggle with his brothers as the principal leader, but his fight for Serbian independence was halted by his Byzantine opponents. As a punishment, Nemanja was compelled to undergo a severe public humiliation in Constantinople at the hands of Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180), a gifted, versatile and brilliant Byzantine ruler. As a result of this defeat, Nemanja remained a faithful vassal to Manuel I until the emperor's death. Under the Emperor, Andronicus Comnenus (1183-1185), the Serbs shook off their vassalage and rose again in 1183, and annexed parts of Dalmatia. Raska became more or less autonomous by 1190 under the Nemanji dynasty which rules there until 1371.

In the general political discord, alliances were made and abandoned, and allies were exchanged for new ones. The uncertainty of the period is manifested also in the condition of the arts before the consolidation of the State, most prominently in architecture.

Mention had been made of the wealth of the cultural and artistic traditions that the Slavs found in the Balkans. However, the gap left in the period between the Byzantine retreat from those regions (6th century), and the beginning of the reconquest (11th century) is filled with modest archaeological remains of Slavic material culture and the earlier Byzantine contribution. Some of those Byzantine structures are merely ruins today (e.g., St. Panteleimon, Nis; Zanjevatka Church in the village of Zvezdan, near Zajecar, which was a domed tetroconchos with a narthex), while others have survived in a well-preserved state. The most

important among the latter is the Church of St. Peter in Ras (the ancient Serbian capital), near Novi Pazar. Its somewhat unusual and irregular ground plan belongs to the rotunda type with a galleried ambulatory. There is a large apse to the East, and three smaller niches are placed at the other cardinal points. They are enveloped by a thick circular wall, and reached by the doors into the ambulatory, which was divided into four chapels and an entrance vestibule interconnected by the doorways. The ambulatory enveloped the central part on three leaving the eastern one free, but its southern side has been replaced by a structure of a much later date. The dome over the irregular central part rests on two superimposed rows of squinches. It is built of irregularly cut stones, and it might have served as the church for the Byzantine garrison at Ras.

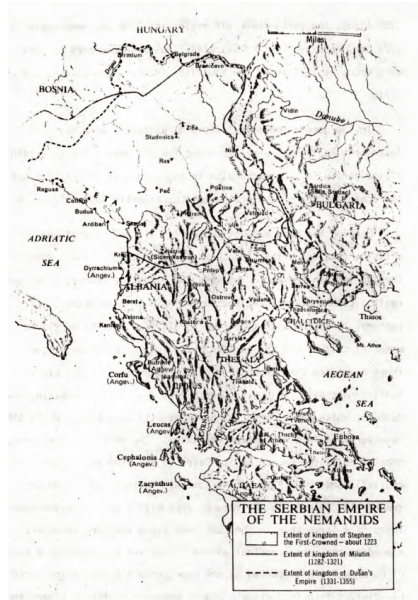


Fig. 4. The Serbian Empire under the Nemanjic Dynasty.

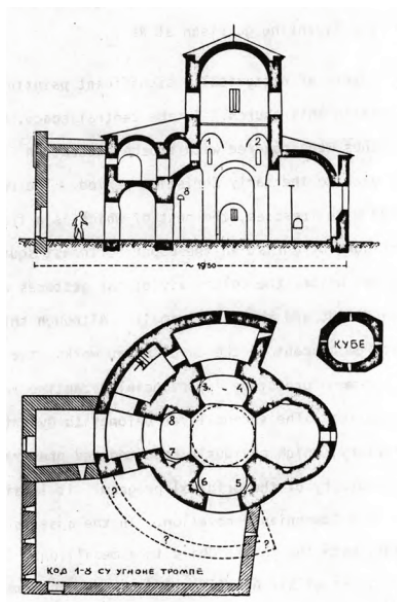


Fig. 5. Ras. Church of St. Peter.  
Groundplan and Crosssection, 9th  
Century with Later Additions.

Three layers of historically significant paintings have been preserved within this church. In the central space, the arches and lower squinches were covered with stucco decoration – a tradition which goes back to the early Christian period. The remaining surfaces were covered with frescoes, the best of which is a fragmentally preserved figure of Christ in the upper northeast squinch. The background was white, the colors vivid; the gestures were abrupt, rather than fluid; and the heads, small. Although this style is at first sight reminiscent of the Carolingian works, the similarities stem from a common prototype – provincial Byzantine art of the 8th and 9th centuries. The second layer belongs to Byzantine art of the 12th century, which obviously repeated and preserved the more archaic iconography

of the original program. It is simply to be understood as a Comnenian renovation. In the apse is a bust of the Virgin Grant, with the Christ Child in a medallion. Below them stand the figures of six Apostles, and the two customary archangels guarding the sanctuary. In the lowest zone, the liturgical theme of the Adoration of the Lamb is seen. The apostolic group is completed with Peter holding a scroll, and Paul (now lost) on the western wall of the sanctuary. Above them are Matthew and John, while opposite these, Mark and Luke are to be seen. To the 13th century layer belongs the decoration of the dome – the Pantocrator attended by four archangels and eight prophets.

The 12th century style is characterized by strongly stressed graphic elements in the drawing. Coloring is rich – light blue for the background, warm ochers for the skin tones, and reds, greens and blues for the garments, while the highlights are in white. The decorative touches are added by the careful execution of the bejeweled garments.

The city of Ras played an important role in the early Serbian mediaeval state, and within Ras, the Church of St. Peter had a very special place. Stevan Nemanja accepted Orthodoxy there; he held his council against the Bogomil sect in this church; and from this church he also abdicated in favor of his son Stefan, who became Grand Zupan, and later, king. Although its architecture and painting did not directly influence the art of the first Nemanjic, it might have served as a stimulus and inspiration.

A modest testimony to the existence of the painting tradition in the land of Raska, before the princely foundations of the

Nemanjices, is to be found near the city of Prizren, in the ruined Monastery of St. Peter Koriski. There still exists a small cave chapel within which the frescoes attributed to the late 12th century are preserved. In the lower zone, under painted arcades (a traditional feature of the Comnenian style) there are standing figures of the Church Fathers, identified by Greek inscriptions, and the Holy Warriors, whose names are in Serbian. The artist was obviously bilingual; sadly, little more can be said. His art, which is both primitive and provincial, suggests modest training, most likely within the monastic circles and outside of metropolitan and princely traditions. The origins of this art could have reached at least the middle of the 12th century, and it is most probable that this type of painting, now lost to us, adorned smaller, more modest buildings of stone or wood throughout Raska.

Architecture: The Raska School. The flourishing of the monumental art in Mediaeval Serbia was coincidental with Stevan Nemanja's consolidation of his political position as the Grand Zupan. This artistic outburst was not the result of the growth of a native tradition composed of autochthonous elements, but rather, resulted from the importation of both ideas and artists. Since Nemanja's political interests were multifaceted, his cultural orientations also were not dependent on a single source. It appears that he adopted those aspects of foreign art which were the most characteristic and impressive, whether they were from the Eastern or the Western culture, and, in borrowing, created a unique artistic expression. It is in Serbian architecture that Western influences predominate, although Eastern elements can be discerned. In monumental painting, the situation is

reversed. Here the superiority of Byzantine frescoes was recognized and adopted, with some Western overtones.

The ecclesiastical architecture of the Mediaeval Serbian State is divided into several distinct stylistic groups, covering the period from 1168 to 1459. The oldest and most prominent of these is the so-called Raska group, comprised of several major and minor monuments. Less than thirty structures now remain. In the majority of cases the members of the Nemanjic dynasty were the builders of these churches. Although each monument has its own individual peculiarities, they have certain traits in common. With few exceptions (e.g., the church of the Virgin, Toplica, near Kursumlija, c. 1168-1172; the Detani Monastery, 1327-1335; Banjska Monastery, 1312-1318; Holy Archangels near Prizren, 1347-1352), the ground plan of the Raska group uses a one-nave structure which is vaulted and surmounted by a single dome. The appearance of a false transept in the ground plan is formed by two short and low vestibules projecting to the north and the south, which served as exits, and later on, as choir chapels.

It became customary to construct along the long sides of the building various side chapels – the so-called “parecclesion” – which tended to change the silhouette of the church elevation, and to give it the appearance of a three-nave basilica, with lower side aisles being formed by the side chapels, and having the taller central nave (Sopocani Monastery, c. 1260). The presbytery was comprised of three apses, which projected exteriorly (Studenica Monastery, the Church of the Virgin, 1183-1191; Mileseva Monastery, c. 1230; Holy Apostles, Pee, first half of 13th century). In some other instances the side

apsidioles – the proschomedia and diaconicon – were contained within the thickness of the eastern wall, with only one, centrally projecting apse (Pridvorica Monastery. c. 13th century; Sopocani Monastery, c. 1260). Such an arrangement gave the ground plan the appearance of a free cross, with a very broad and strongly emphasized transept arm. Usually one western bay preceded the space under the dome, while the narthex served both as a vestibule to the church proper and for liturgical ceremonial purposes. It became almost a rule to add an exonarthex to the original structure (Studenica, Zica, Mileseva, Sopocani), some of which had towers (Zica, Sopocani).

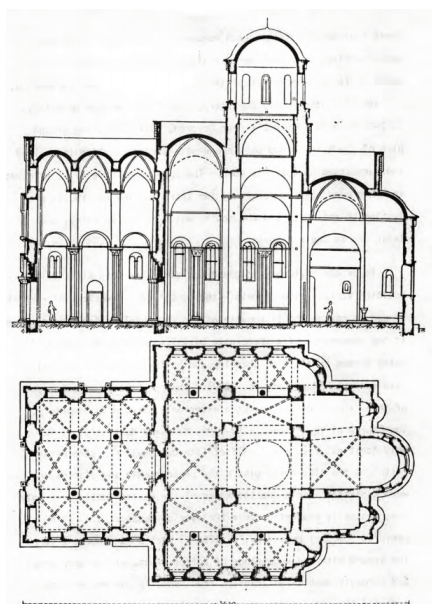


Fig. 6. Decani Monastery. Church of the Saviour. Groundplan and Longitudinal Cross-Section, 14th Century.

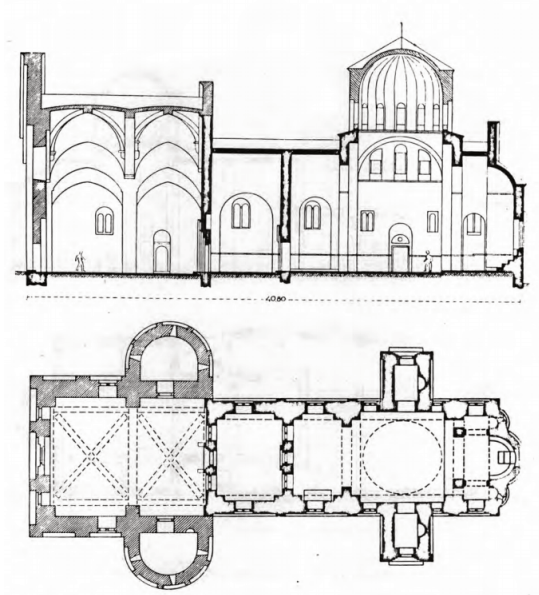


Fig. 7 . Studenica Monastery. Church of the Virgin.  
Ground plan and Longitudinal Cross-Section, Late  
12th and 13th Century.

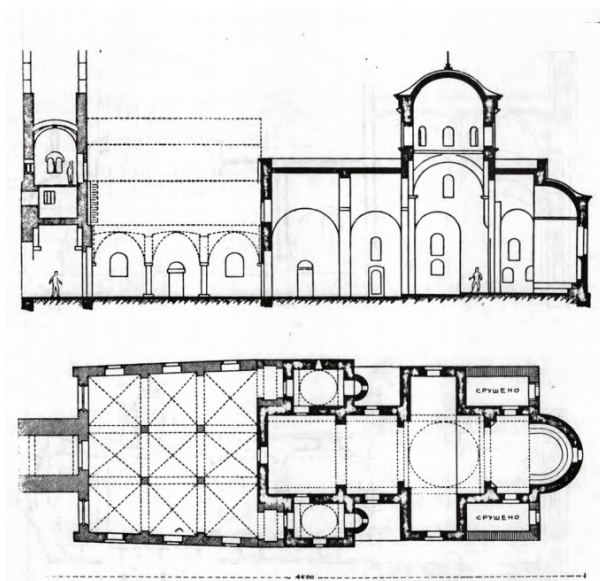


Fig. 8. Zica Monastery. Church of the Saviour. Groundplan and Longitudinal Cross-Section, 13th and 14th Century.

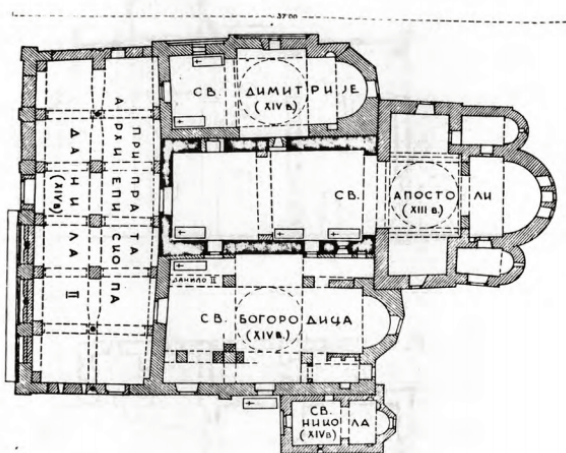


Fig. 9. Pec. The Patriarchate. Groundplan of the Entire Complex, 13th and 14th Century.

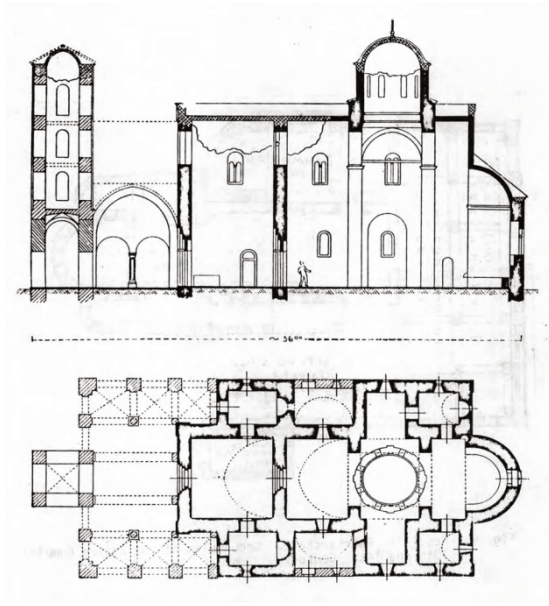


Fig. 10. Sopocani Monastery. Church of the Trinity. Groundplan and Longitudinal Cross-Section. 13th and 14th Century.



Fig. 11. Sopocani Monastery. Church of the Trinity. Exterior from the S., 13th and 14th Century. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).



Fig. 12. Studenica Monastery. Church of the Virgin. Exterior from the S-E., 12th Century. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

In exterior execution, these churches belong to the Romanesque tradition. Some were built of marble (Studenica – white; Banjska – blue, red, white; Decani – gray, pink), others in stone. Some were covered with plaster, frequently dyed the imperial purple (Zica; Holy Apostles, Pee). A great deal of aesthetical consideration was given to the exterior elevations of these churches, while the interior spaces were considered to be secondary, and, indeed, even neglected. The facades were not horizontally subdivided by cornices, and were only enlivened by pilasters and arcades on consoliae, which like a frieze or garland encircled the building. Each architectural element had its own elevation, its mass not being disguised by the pitched roof. Rather, lead was laid directly over the vaults, thus keeping the silhouette clear. The buildings rose slowly, accentuating the dome, which was frequently elevated, most often resting on a cubic drum. As variants, the cylindrical and polygonal drums could be employed. It is, in a small way, a tribute to the Gothic architecture of the West that, in the course of the 13th century,

these buildings began to be erected on a narrower and taller structural scale (Sopocani, Gradac, Detani). These buildings are monumental. Their presence which is still strongly felt today, must have been truly impressive at the time of their creation, when church centers also served as political and commercial meeting places.

The design of the western facade is dominated by a single door, decorated with carvings, above which is placed a double window (Studenica, Decani). The main eastern apse usually contains an elaborately carved triform, which admits ample light into the altar space (Studenica, Decani). The decorative carvings which surround the openings are composed of running scrolls and vines of varied foliage, intertwined with flowers and animals. The carving is done in high relief, and the eyes filled with lead to heighten the expression. The figures in the tympana of the facade portals were done in high relief. Examples of this are found, for instance, at Studenica – the Virgin enthroned holding the Child and flanked by two angels; at Gradac – the Annunciation; and at Decani – an enthroned Christ is flanked by two angels. In some instances the tympanum of the portal leading from the narthex to the nave combines two techniques, e.g., the fresco in the lunette, with the carvings on the archvaults (Decani). Carving is also found on the bases of the columns and the capitals (Decani).



Fig. 13. Sopocani Monastery. Church of the Trinity. A Nun Ringing a Bell.  
Ruined Exonarthex from the East, 14th Century. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

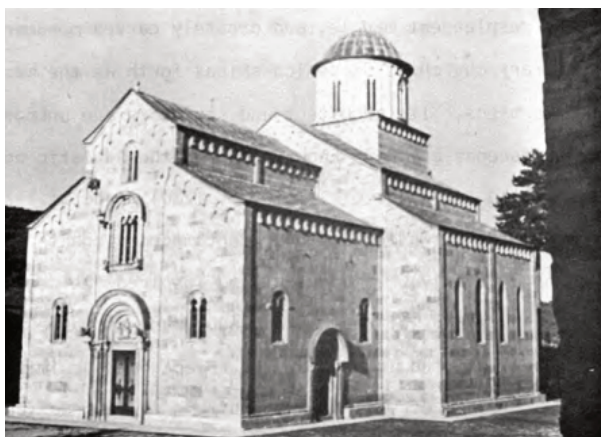


Fig. 14. Decani Monastery. – Church of the Saviour.  
Exterior from the S-W., 14th Century (Photo: Momcilo Djordjevic, Belgrade)

Among the resplendent marble, and ornately carved monuments, Nemanja's funerary church at Studenica shines forth as the most brilliant masterpiece. Its architect and sculptors are unknown, yet its quality transcends anything known today on the Adriatic coast (the portals of the cathedral of Trogir, c. 1230), and, at least in mastery, reaches the height of anything contemporary created in Apulia or Lombardy (Italy). Studenica also inspired the decoration of other, later buildings of the Raska group, such as those at Banjska and Decani, which show the inferiority of an epigonic or imitative style. The protomaster of Decani is known from an inscription on the south door. He came from the King's City of Kotor, and was a friar by the name of Vita. The very modest attempts at carved decoration, such as is seen at the Morata Monastery, speak of local tradition and a provincial hand. The windows were closed with small pieces of glass set into the gypsum placks, or perforated lead (small remains in Studenica, Moraca, Sopocani). How richly decorated were the original church doors is impossible to establish since none are preserved. Further usage of the marble extended to , the interior, i.e., the floor and also the altar partition or iconostasis. As an example of the floor decoration, the splendid fragments from the Church of the Holy Archangels near Prizren (Emperor Dusan's foundation, 1347-1352) can be cited. If those remind the beholder at first glance of the floor from the ancient Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino, or of the Cosmatti works in Italy, the impression is incorrect. The Monte Cassino floor has been recently proven to be a direct Byzantine descendant, and one must attribute the infinite diversity of geometric shapes and fantastic beasts of Holy Archangel's fragments to that tradition.

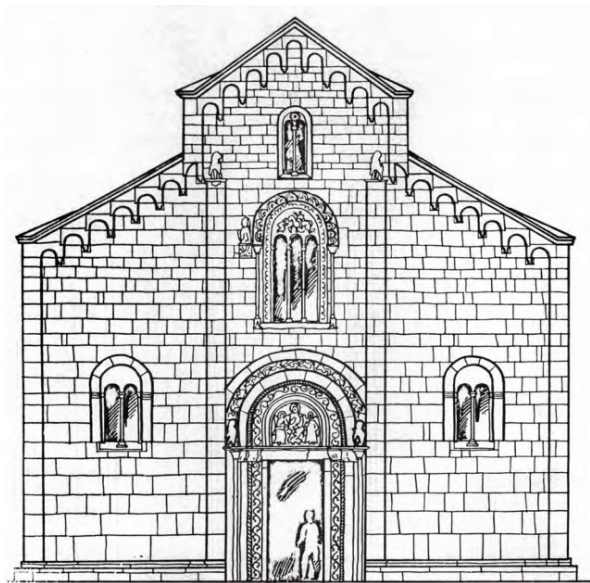


Fig. 15. Decani Monastery. Church of the Saviour.  
Drawing of the Elevation of the Western Facade, 14th  
Century.

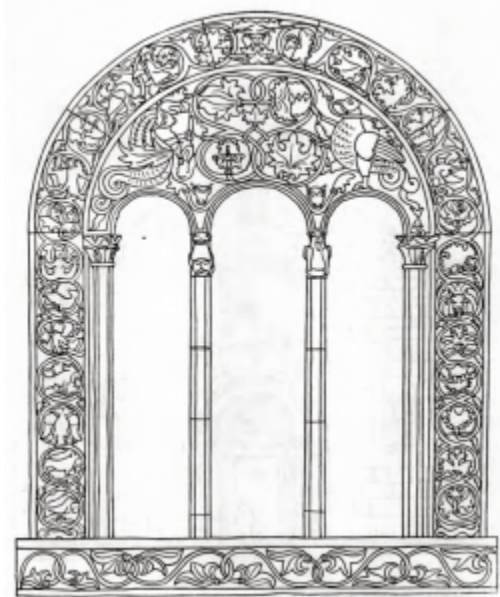


Fig. 16. Detani Monastery. Church of the Saviour. Drawing of the Apsidal Window, 14th Century.

Generally speaking, the monuments of the Raska group are -Romanesque in the broadest sense. They are of a type which originated in Apulia and which moved, via the Adriatic coast, into the continental Balkan regions. Finally, the churches of the Raska group must not be considered mere slavish imitations of their magnificent parents. Creative interpretation is clearly in evidence, as are the demands of faith and politics. When the tributes are paid to the Gothic style, they are limited to the height of the building (Sopocani), the use of the pointed arch (Gradac, Decani), and thus, consequently to the incidental, rather than to the substantive and vital nature of its construction and use of space.

The Monumental Paintings. Before approaching the problems of style of the individual fresco ensembles, general consideration will be given to the iconographic rules of decoration of an Orthodox church.

Many centuries of iconographic evolution separated the painting program of the Comnenian churches of the 11th and 12th centuries at approximately the time in which Serbian art entered into the scheme of things, from the first tentative rendering of illustrations from the Old and New Testaments by the Early Christian congregations. The early images were frequently rejected for many more reasons than can be enumerated here, the principal explanation being the fear of the sin of idolatry and its pagan connotation, and the traditional Jewish ban on the depiction of the human figure. However, these images were defended and justified by the anti-iconoclasts on the basis of their didactic values such as their use in the visual books for illiterates. Already by the 3rd century, and most certainly in the 4th, a wealth of iconographic themes can be seen in paintings, and above all on carved sarcophagi. Visual thematic enrichments had already reached a culmination by the 7th century, when special attention was centered around the icons of Christ and of the Virgin. Such an evolution was interrupted in Byzantium by the Iconoclastic Movement (711-843), after which a very programmed decoration of church interiors was formulated. By the time that monumental fresco ensembles were painted for the first Nemanjices, the iconographic rules for the decoration of an orthodox church were well established. Yet, the iconographic program was not copied monotonously time and again, but rather it is comparable to musical variations on a theme. There

are no two churches with absolutely identical iconography. The iconography was varied, for example, according to the regional devotional preferences, to the patron and his wishes, to the type and style of structure, and to the saint to whom the church was dedicated.

As the beholder enters a sanctuary from the west, he can proceed to do his iconographic reading either according to the spaces (e.g., beginning with the narthex), or according to the Christian hierarchical arrangement of elevated and lowly zones. This latter type of reading is peculiarly applicable to the nave. Yet another type of reading is made according to the psychological focal point of the structure – the apse. For the sake of clarity we will move from the east to the west, from the altar to the narthex and exonarthex.

In the lowest zone of the apsidal curvature, the Church Fathers stand, with or without the Lamb of God. Above them the liturgical theme is that of the Communion of the Apostles. In the conch in the highest space of the apse is a representation of the Virgin, in any number of iconographically popular themes, including the Blachaernitissa (Church of the Virgin, Studenica, 12th century; Sopocani, 13th century; St. Niceta, 14th century; Staro Nagoritino, 14th century; Decani, 14th century; Kalenic, 15th century, and others). On the walls of the sanctuary bay appear scenes of liturgical connotation from the Old Testament cycle. Or they can be extensions from the theme of the nave, or related to the idea of the altar below (St. Niceta, 14th century). The subsidiary apses depict in the lower zone figures related to church liturgy such as the deacons or martyrs, the Lamb, and

similar subjects. Among the cycles, that of the Virgin appears in the proschomedia or north apse, of Sopoeani and of Staro Nagoricino. In the Church of the Virgin in the Patriarchate of Pee, the same space is decorated with scenes from the life of the Serbian Archbishop, Arsen I (14th century). The south apse, or diaconicon, can be decorated with the scenes from the life of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, who was very much venerated among the Serbs (Sopocani, Staro Nagoricino), or with the life of St. John Prodromos (Pee, Church of the Virgin). The most sacredly important place in the church is, of course, the highest point or dome, which was always reserved for the image of Christ. This schematic rule was honored in Serbian Mediaeval churches without exception. The only time that the image does not appear is when the decoration of the dome has been lost, or when a conscious effort toward iconographic archaism is made (Pee, Holy Apostles, 13th century). The usual depiction is that of Christ in bust, blessing and holding the Gospel book, which can either be opened or closed. This iconographic type is called the Pantocrator – the Ruler of All. The 14th century seems to show a preference for surrounding Christ with the representation of the so-called Divine Liturgy – the angels celebrating the Mass with a great deal of pomp and heavenly ceremonial (Hilandari, Athos, 14th century, but painted over later; Kraljeva Crkva, Studenica; the Church of the Virgin, Pee; Decani, etc.). The tall drum is pierced by the windows, and it can be either octagonal or twelve sided. Compositionally, the spaces between the windows are best suited for standing figures, most often of the prophets (Hilandari, Kraljeva Crkva, Gračanica, Church of the Virgin, Pec, Decani, Kalenic and many others). The pendentifs are always occupied by the seated Evangelists. At that same high

zone, the Sacred Faces of Christ are to be seen painted both on the “towel” and on the “brick.” They are the illustrations of the so-called Abgar legend.

The central spaces under the dome are reserved for the most important events from the Life of Christ, which are grouped into several cycles, the greatest in importance being the so-called Liturgical Cycle or the Cycle of the Twelve Feasts of the Church. If spatial limitations permitted the depiction of only one cycle, this one is always the choice. The scenes comprising this cycle are: the Annunciation; the Nativity; the Presentation; the Baptism; the Transfiguration; the Resurrection of Lazarus; the Entry into Jerusalem; and the Resurrection (thematically depicted either according to the Canonical text as the Angel at the Tomb, or according to the apocryphal text as the Descent into Limbo, which includes the setting free of the soul of Adam, this latter theme not being quite so prevalent in the Western Church); the Ascension; Pentecost; and the Dormition, i.e., the Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin (Djurdjevi Stupovi, Mileseva, Sopocani, Gračanica, Decani, and others). The scenes from the cycles of the Miracles of Christ, Passion of Christ, and Parables of Christ frequently augment the Liturgical cycle (e.g., Hilandari, St. Niceta, Staro Nagoricino, Gračanica, Decani, Mateic, Ravanica, and others). The cycle from the Life of the Virgin is often added (Gradac; St. Clement at Ochrid; Arilje; Hilandari; Gračanica; Church of the Virgin at Pec, and others); and perhaps is followed by the scenes from the Infancy of Christ (Sopocani, Gradac, Kalenic), and Old Testament Cycles (Gračanica, Decani). Some of the later Nemanjices churches such as at Decani and Mateic are entirely encyclopaedic in

character and contain more iconographic themes assembled in one place than any other place in the world. These iconographic paintings are certainly strong rivals of the great carved programs of the Gothic cathedrals in France.



Fig. 17. Pec. The Patriarchate. Church of St. Demetrios. The Baptism of Christ: Fresco, 14th Century. (Photo: Gallery of Frescoes, Belgrade).



Fig. 18. Monastery of Marko. Church of St. Demetrios. The Resurrection of Christ: Detail of the Angel at the Tomb, Fresco, 14th Century. (Photo: Momcilo Djordjevic, Belgrade).

The decorations of the side chapels or parecclesia were adopted to suit the peculiar needs and purposes of the structure, and they are too varied to be discussed in such a short survey (Zica, *Life of St. Steven*; Decani, *Lives of Sts. Demetrios and Nicholas*; and many others).

The lowest zone of the church walls was occupied by the standing figures. There was an almost infinite variety to choose from regarding type and position, ranging from the hermits to the holy warriors. Also at this height, the donor of the church – in many instances a member of the Nemanjic dynasty – together with his ancestors is represented (Mileseva; Sopocani; Gradac;

Arilje; Gračanica; Decani; St. Demetrios, and the Virgin at Pee; Lesnovo, Mateic; Ravanica; and others).

The portraits and related themes can also be found in the narthex (Djurdjevi Stupovi, Mileseva, Sopotani, Arilje, Decani, Kalenic), together with the Last Judgment (Sopocani, Gratanica), Eucumenical and Serbian Church Councils (Sopocani, Arilje, Decani), Lives of Saints (St . George, Djurdjevi Stupovi; Story of Joseph, Sopocani; Life of the Virgin, Kalenit). Also, very frequently here are the calendar scenes, the so-called menologion (Staro Nagoritino, Gratanica, Decani), Illustrations of the Psalms (Lesnovo), Tree of Jesse or the genealogy of Christ (Sopocani, Arilje), and, once again, in the lower zones, the choice of standing figures.



Fig. 19. Studenica Monastery. Chapel of Joachim and Anna. The Nativity of the Virgin, Fresco, 14th Century. (Photo: Gallery of Frescoes, Belgrade).



Fig. 20. Mileseva Monastery. Church of the Ascension. St. Sava the Serbian, Fresco, Narthex, 13th Century. (Photo: Gallery of Frescoes, Belgrade).



Fig. 21. Decani Monastery. Church of the Saviour. Tree of the Nemanjic Dynasty. Fresco, Narthex, 14th Century. (Photo: Gallery of Frescoes, Belgrade).

The outer or exonarthex does not offer as much comparable material owing to many losses or later additions and repaintings. However, the variety rather than monotonous repetition of themes can be deduced, e.g., *The Last Judgment* (Mileseva; St. Sophia at Ochrid), historical portraiture (Sopocani, 14th. century); *Story of Joseph* (St. Sophia at Ochrid, 14th century); and others.

To the untutored eye all Byzantine painting might look the same, although today we have a better understanding of the changes in style. The same might appear to be true with the Orthodox iconography. The faithful repetition of individual types and compositions stemmed from the understanding that they were true icons, i.e., portraits of saints or events just as they occurred. To preserve their “historicity” and religious authenticity, one rendered them as handed down by tradition. Thus, since the individuals and events were easy to recognize, there was no need to paint them with objects symbolic of their attributes in order to clearly identify them, as was the case with the Western iconographic tradition, within which the masters exercised greater interpretative choice in the depiction of individual saints, thus making it imperative that a certain symbol always be connected with a certain saint. These rules of Eastern iconography did not completely stifle artistic expression, since, for the painters, personal expression was allowed in the secondary details of iconography (e.g., the personifications). It was the duty of the artists, however, to make the protagonist easily recognizable in accordance with his true portrait – the icon.

The building activities and art sponsorship of Nemanja, judged from any point of view, were even more remarkable due to the newness of his State and its political position. Between 1168 and 1172 there was erected the Church of the Virgin in Toplica and St. Nicholas, both near Kursumlija. St. George (so-called Djurdjevi Stupovi) was built near the capital of Ras, to be followed by the church of the Virgin in Studenica (1183-1191), and the now lost church in the Serbian Monastery of Hilandari, on Mount Athos, Greece. While the variety in ground plan might indicate a search for the most ideally suited model, in the choice of wall decoration there seems to be no such hesitation.

The church of St. George near Ras is now in ruins, and its fresco ensemble is but a fragment of the original. Yet enough of it remains to show that in the application of the wall decoration, this was one of the most sophisticated solutions in the Nemanjices' structures. The style belongs to an experienced and well-trained albeit anonymous artist who must have come into the region of Raska from the Byzantine South (Skopje-Nerezi), to work for Nemanja c. 1180. In many aspects this style is close to the Nerezi, but it is more monumental and less refined, but without being provincial. The drawing is powerful, the colors strong, while the gestures are stressed. The touches of archaism are to be observed in some of the iconographic details (e.g., The Baptism). Since this was a large church, a very full iconographic program could be employed. This scheme, with innumerable variations, was basic to Byzantine art in general. The faded figure of the patron saint of the church, St. George, on horseback can be seen on the East wall of the narthex. This entire decorative system was enveloped within painted and I actual

architecture. In the lower zones the painted arches and arcade frame the figures and the compositions, while in the dome a specific elaboration occurred which was unique in Mediaeval Serbia. The octagonal drum was bound in the interior by an arcade which was once supported by the marble colonettes. The arches alternately framed the windows and the eight standing figures of the prophets. The prophets wore the classical type garment (chiton and himation), and held in their hands the scrolls as their major attribute. Among the preserved images, only Daniel can be identified now. It is beyond a doubt that in the calotte of the dome was the image of Christ in bust – the Pantocrator. This iconographic formula can be tied to the Constantinopolitan tradition (Monastery of Oaphni, near Athens, Greece, c. 1100). The titles of the figures and scenes were in Greek. Scholars, however, do not attribute those frescoes to the court masters. Owing to certain traces of vivid realism, dark blue tonality of the background and the deep but warm tones of the flesh, they rather see them as the work of artists skilled in the Comnenian linear style who emerged from the monastic circles of the kind found on Mount Athos.

The frescoes in Nemanja's mausoleum – the church of the Virgin in Studenica – are similarly painted. In the oldest layer, executed toward the end of the 12th century and now preserved predominantly in the apse, the decorative linearism, so characteristic of Comnenian court style has been given up. The figures are contained within strong contours, and they are seen against what were once gilt yellow surfaces in obvious imitation of the mosaic technique. The ensemble is given a new

monumentality. The painters could have been brought from Athos by Nemanja and his son, Sava.

The second layer of the Studenica frescoes, found predominantly in the nave, was painted in 1208-1209 under Vukan, the oldest son of Nemanja. The Greek signature of the painter remained, but is unintelligible due to damage.

It has been suggested that this master or group of painters could have come via the Adriatic coast (Kotor) from Graecia Magna (Byzantine South Italy). The inscriptions, however, in large gold letters are in Serbian. The whole background is deep blue, the picture plane very narrow, the figures predominantly frontal, and their movements quiet. The drawing is controlled and the general tonality is subdued. Besides the blues, dark reds and purples were used, together with pale green for the shadows and warm but dark ochers for the fleshtones. In spite of monumentality, attention is given to the details of the costumes. Very controlled symmetry, for example, rules the celebrated composition of the Crucifixion. It is painted on the western wall of the nave, so that when the priest, coming out from the altar with the Eucharist, confronts the congregation, he also faces the figure of Christ Crucified. The scene is much more than an historical narrative of the event. Christ hangs limply from the cross, flanked by St. John and Longinus on one side, and the Virgin with the other Marys (repainted in the 14th century) on the other. These protagonists would have been sufficient presences to describe the scene, but a deeper feeling of religiosity is introduced here. Besides the heavenly bodies (the symbols of the sun and moon), the whole background above

the low parapet wall is studded with stars. To Christ's pierced right side, a tiny angel brings to Christ the personification of the Ecclesia (the Church), who collects the Blood of Christ in a chalice – a direct Eucharistic symbol. On the opposite side, another angel almost pushes out of the scene another female figure who personifies the Synagogue and the symbol of the Old Testament. Above the transverse arm of the cross hover two crying angels together with two prophets who foretold the Crucifixion.

While the fresco style of Studenica's nave breaks away from the imperial Comnenian tradition, monumental events are taking place in Byzantium and in mediaeval Serbia as well.

In 1204 the Western European armies of the Fourth Crusade conquered and plundered Constantinople instead of liberating Jerusalem, and for the first time in its long history the Byzantine Empire was divided into several smaller states, among which the Nicean Empire gained in power and prestige. It was to that center that the Serbian emissaries went in search of political and religious privileges. Church autonomy was granted to Raska from Nicea in 1219; the third son of Stevan Nemanja – Sava – became its first archbishop, and, later, saint among the Serbs.

The written sources state that, although built somewhat v earlier, the catholicon (main church) of the Zica Monastery was painted about 1220 by the masters brought from Byzantium (most likely Constantinople) by the Serbian archbishop, Sava Nemanjic. This church was a cathedral, and the coronation church of the Serbian kings. For that reason, its exterior walls were painted in the royal purple, and for the same reasons, its interior decoration must

have reached the height of court standards. Unfortunately, the frescoes – now pale shadows of the originals of great beauty – must have been damaged in the late 13th century during the Bulgarian incursions. In the choir vestibules, retouched scenes of the Crucifixion and Deposition remain. The Zica painters were elegant, precise draftsmen, with a fine sense of proportion and color harmony. The frescoes in the narthex and tower belong to another era – the 14th century – and to another style – the Court School of King Milutin.

Remote in its mountain shelter, modest in its exterior appearance, the mausoleum of King Vladislav (c. 1233-1242), still preserves in part some of the undisputed masterpieces of mediaeval Serbian wall painting. v Popularly called Mileseva Monastery, this church, which was dedicated to the Ascension, was decorated with frescoes c. 1228. For a time it was believed that the signatures of three painters had been discovered (Oemetrios, Georgios and Theodoros). Today, those names are regarded as notes made by the artists of the titles that would later be inscribed in large, formal lettering. Even if the identities and affinities of the painters remain enigmatic, the origin of their art is clearer. The entire iconographic program of the nave was painted over a yellow background then inlaid with gold leaf and covered with a drawn net of small squares to emulate the mosaic tesserae of small glass, stone or marble cubes. Against this glistening backdrop, the single figures and compositions were projected with fast, free strokes of the brush; hence, they are more reminiscent of an impressionistic oil than a 13th century fresco. The colors used are both rich and bright, but it is this

anonymous artist's creative application that makes them so brilliantly vibrant.

The gallery of characters and portraits more than anything else claims one's attention. The exuberance and the assurance of the master painter comes through in the faces such as the Old Simeon in the Presentation, or in the head of the ancient prophet, Elijah, who could hold his own against Sistine frescoes. Against the red background of the medallion, the artist projects the gold nimb, and russet colored cloak with greenish highlights. Long white hair has pale violet shadows; the beard, traces of pink and ocher. The fleshtones go from pale buff to dark ocher, with pale green shadows and white highlight. Inner energies are not bound by the outlines; the brush strokes are so free that they almost appear impetuous. The middle-aged characters are painted with this same feeling, and among those one can cite Moses or the martyr, Floris. The very special beauty is to be found in the faces of the young – both male and female – figures. It is through those that one can get a better glimpse into the ultimate prototype of the Mileseva painting. The head of a young apostle from the nave of the church serves as an example. This youth has an oval face, but the pinched chin and the angular jaw line of the Comnenian style has vanished. A mass of hair crowns the head, the forehead is high, the eyes large and clear giving the impression of not being dimmed with age. His nose is long and elegant, and his mouth, full. Protruding jug ears are frequent characteristics of those young faces since they are not covered with the long hair. The beauty of the youth is stressed by the general tonality of the flesh. Ivory foundation bears the touches of rouge on the cheeks and red on the lips, while the shadows

are of softest blue. To this figure of the unnamed Apostle we can add St. Steven, and the angel from the Resurrection, as also the Virgin from the Annunciation, which is probably one of the most beautifully painted faces and elegant figures of the Middle Ages.

The figure of Mary is monumental. Her body is sensed underneath the ample drapery, whose weight is suggested by rather angular folds. The classical contra-posto position is a frequently assumed stance. Generally speaking, the heads are relatively small in relation to the body. The Mileševa Deposition shows its own qualities when compared to the same scene from Nerezi. The sense of balanced composition is there, the feelings of the mother well expressed. The touch of realism is seen in the color contrast of Christ's dead body in relationship to the fleshtones of the living figures which surround Him. One can spare but a passing glance for the most famous of all the Mileseva compositions – that of the Resurrection of Christ. In the foreground plan a number of sleeping soldiers in contemporary armor is seen, and treated almost as an incidental detail. On the right, Holy Women shyly approach. On the left, a small aedicula indicates an empty tomb. The giant figure of the angel dominates the scene. The angel is seated on a large porphyry cube, wearing purple bejeweled boots, and a white himation with pale green shadows. His right hand holds his staff; his left points to the empty tomb in an elegant and sweeping gesture. His right wing is almost folded, his left is extended toward the women, showing off the auburns and lapis blues of his brilliant plumage.

This is an art painted for the court by courtiers who dress their

saints as courtiers of the heavenly regions, with costumes resplendent with pearls, gems and jewels (e.g., St. Constantine and Helena).

Tendencies toward classicism were always present in Byzantine art- but the manifestations emerged under different guises in various periods. It is beyond doubt that the inspiration of the Mileseva painters stems from the same classical source. Yet, this classicism does not seem to be derived from 10th century miniatures and ivories of the Macedonian renaissance. But rather, it seems to be derived from an earlier epoch and more monumental sources. The closest parallels preserved are to be seen in the mosaic figures in the dome of Hosios Georgios in Thessalonike, Greece (5th-6th centuries). Unfortunately, it is impossible to establish with absolute accuracy the intermediary steps of stylistic transmission which might bind more directly the mosaics of Hosios Georgios and the frescoes of the Mileseva nave. It is obvious, however, that the 13th century painters looked back for the inspiration, which they rendered in a timeless way, as well as securely dating their work in their own period.

While this golden luminosity is very appropriate for the nave proper which is the earthly reflection of Paradise, a more somber mood is better suited for the entrance into such splendor. In the narthex the background is dark blue, the color of clothing and flesh much darker, and the choice of subjects much restrained. These are to be seen holy ascetics and hermits, removed from secular things. Whether or not the narthex frescoes were painted by monastically oriented painters, or the nave painters who

changed the general mood of their painting to suit the purpose, still remains a moot question.

Worth mentioning in Mileseva is the gallery of portraits of Serbian rulers – secular and ecclesiastical princes. In the nave, the Virgin Mary leads King Vladislav into the presence of the enthroned Christ. The image of Vladislav is a realistic portrait showing reddish hair, sparse beard growth, heightened skin tones, pale blue eyes – in short, appearing as he was described by his contemporaries. The gallery includes, in the narthex, the magnificent rendering of Nemanja as an elderly monk with a snow white beard. Although painted long after his death, this image has the intensity of a true portrait. The next depiction is of St. Sava, the archbishop, wearing white *loros* covered with dark crosses. His face slightly turned to the side, is lined. Large blue eyes and dark hair convey the strong feeling of the presence of this sainted prince. The same quality is transmitted through the face of Stefan Prvovencani (the First Crowned), whose regal garments and insignia are visibly displayed.

Thus, the great Mileseva masters successfully combined celestial modes with those of a more secular nature. Although conventions were used, they were surpassed, and when realistic observations were employed, those were transcended through the noble ideals of an inspired age.

The exonarthex of Mileseva was covered with frescoes representing the Last Judgment about the middle of the 13th century. Seen alone they might be impressive for their sternness and their didactic nature. But, when compared to the other

Mileseva paintings, they exhibit a dry, routine manner – the work of a priestly artisan, rather than that of an artistic genius.

The frescoes of the oldest church in the See of the Serbian archbishops, Holy Apostles at Pee, are differently conceived and executed. Since it was not a royal mausoleum, but the seat of ecclesiastical power, the monastic influence in art was better represented. Looking at its frescoes, it appears certain that the Archbishops of Pee sought inspiration for their center of worship from the Holy Land, and from that most venerated of all the Christian cities – Jerusalem. In trying to emulate in Pee the Church of Sion, they employed archaic iconography. Rather than the Pantocrator, the Ascension is found in the dome. The background is dark blue, color tones are rich, but subdued, with the strongly accentuated contrasts of the dark and the light. The figures of the Apostles appear to be more forceful than elegant, executed as they were in large, three dimensionally treated forms. The faces are stern, dark with almost Semitic features, rather than being radiantly beautiful and classically inspired (e.g., Christ and the Virgin from the Ascension). If this early Pee ensemble can not rival that of Mileseva in rendering idealized beauty, it can stand alongside it as a very important document of another spirit – monasticism – which, together with secular powers, guided the Serbian people through the Middle Ages.

The church of the Moraca Monastery in ancient Zeta was erected in the canyon of the River Moraca, in a very majestic mountain setting by Prince Stefan, son of Vukan in 1252. In architecture it belongs to the Raska school, but it lacks the splendid marble and

the carvings of Studenica. Its modest stone walls have bold, clear and simple elevation, enlivened on the exterior only by pilaster indicating interior bay division. Its windows are simple and small; its portal has recessed arches and rudimentary carvings. The frescoes, on the exterior and the interior walls of the church, belong to the so-called Turkish period, and will be discussed later. Sadly, the only remnant of the original decoration is to be seen in the diaconicon (vestry). If the original decoration were to be judged according to those fragments, one would have found a completely different art level than that reached in the carvings. The preserved frescoes which depict the cycle of the life of the Prophet Elijah, are painted in the courtly style profoundly inspired by classical antiquity. The compositions are well balanced; the individual figures well drawn by the hand of an artist skilled in expressing the relationship between the body and its drapery (e.g., Elijah's mother, and the supporting maid in the scene of the Birth of Elijah) . The colors are moderate, neither dark nor bright, as can be seen from the scene of Elijah in the Desert. Beautiful faces of young female attendants at the Birth of the Prophet Elijah have a characteristically elongated nose and a very small mouth. Such a departure from classical mode of proportion and classical ideal of beauty makes these faces, if not realistically individual, then at least very typical for this unknown court master, whose style foreshadows that of Sopocani.

Near the source of the River Raska, close to Ras, the ancient center of the Mediaeval Serbian State, lies the royal Sopocani Monastery. This church was founded by King Uros I (1242-1276), and it was destined to be the mausoleum of this

king and his immediate family. Architecturally, this building belongs to the Raska school. There are no primary documents which give us the precise date of the building and the decoration of this structure. However, the building must have been completed by the last years of the fifth decade of the 13th century, since the frescoes in the nave and the narthex are attributed to the years c. 1265. Its final architectural completion, reached in the course of the third decade of the 14th century, saw the building of an exonarthex with tower. The fresco decoration in one of the side chapels reached into the second half of the 14th century. This church had suffered innumerable damages in the course of the centuries, and it was for a time abandoned by its monks and left roofless. It was restored only in the 1920s. While time had dimmed and damaged, it could not destroy the extraordinary beauty of the Sopocani frescoes.

In Eastern Europe, the 13th century is considered momentous for several reasons. It was the era of the Fourth Crusade (1204); from 1242 the Mongols dealt repeated blows to the European powers; and it was also a period of intense political and religious rivalry among the States of Europe. Under these circumstances, Uros I of Serbia, a capable and courageous leader and a skillful diplomat, managed to sustain the independence of his State though surrounded by a rejuvenated Byzantium (1261), an aggressive Bulgaria and Hungary, and the equally crafty and ambitious coastal Republic of Dubrovnik. Through a skillful blend of political acumen (promotion of industry, commerce, trade, taxes, importation of foreign experts such as miners), and family ties (his mother, Ana, came from the great Venetian family of bandolo, which gave Doges to that city-republic; his

wife Helen, or Jelena in Serbian, was an Anjou princess; one of his daughters-in-law, Katalina, was a Hungarian royal princess, etc.), he advanced with great skill the strength of his State.

His royal foundation met by the height of its artistic standards the other accomplishments of King Uros I, while at the same time it rose out of the confines of Serbian mediaeval art and into the internationally known pleiad of monuments.

While the architecture of the Sopocani church pays tribute to the Romanesque style, the frescoes belong to the Byzantine world. Painted by anonymous masters, these great frescoes have drawn the attention of many scholars. The precise source of the Sopocani style still eludes us. It is clear, however, that its monumental frescoes are Byzantine in style and iconography. Furthermore, in their subtle expression of Hellenistic affinities, they are closer in mood to the Nicean court and its art than to other places, including Thessalonike.

A brief analysis of some figures and compositions should suffice to illustrate that theory. In their monumentality, the Sopocani figures have no parallels in the Comnenian period (11th-12th centuries) or the Palaeologan era (14th-15th centuries). Rather, they share with Gothic France the same classical spirit which created the monumental sculptures of Reims and Amiens, although Western influence in Sopocani is out of the question. To this category of representative monumental images belong the standing figures of the prophets in the bellies of the arches under the dome, the martyrs and other holy personages, and, above all, the Apostles, who line the walls of the choir-transepts. They stand three-quarter life-size, clad in classical type garments

– chiton and himation – assuming the poses of classical authors, philosophers and orators. Their stylistic parallels are to be found in Byzantine miniatures of the third quarter of the 13th century. The prototypes which inspired the Byzantine miniatures and the Sopocani frescoes probably reached as far back as the court art of the Macedonian period (late 9th to early 11th centuries), although the ultimate source lies in the Hellenistic art.

The background of the figures and compositions once again imitates the gold of the mosaics in fresco technique. The ground line rising to one-third of the background height, suggesting space deep enough to accommodate monumental figures, is painted in green. In coloristic range these frescoes belong today to the pastel tones, comprised of blues and greens (garment of the Angel in the Annunciation) and grays, together with pale violets and rose tones, while the fleshtones are made warmer by the addition of ochers and rouges. Bright, even light illuminates these paintings from within, and it radiates outwardly, without harsh contrasts and deep obscuring shadows.

The large, tranquil wall surfaces suit large figures and monumental compositions, particularly those of the Liturgical Cycle. The scenes are well-adapted to the available space. In the Nativity and Presentation actual architectural elements (windows) had to be incorporated into the scene in ways that would not obscure compositional clarity or upset the harmony. The landscape, e.g., in the Nativity and architectural elements, and, e.g., in the Dormition of the Virgin, are used only to supplement, rather than to dominate the scene. The master is well aware of compositional balances as can be seen in Christ

Appearing to the Holy Women, and of contrasts and subtle rhythms within the composition as seen in the Crucifixion and in the Resurrection (represented by the Angel at the Tomb). Very controlled movement and rhythms are implied within the figures, in which one finds a careful juxtaposition of the placement of the head to the contraposto stance of the body, thus avoiding the rigid frontality. The seldom-rendered profile view of the head is used, in Sopocani frescoes. It can be seen in the rendering of the head of the Old Shepherd from the Nativity; in the case of the kneeling woman in the scene of Christ Appearing to the Holy Women after the Resurrection; in the heads of the Angels from the Dormition of the Virgin also. Very much as in the ancient Greek drama, the protagonists and supporting cast of players act out their roles for the Christian faithful, conveying their emotions through the movements and gestures of their bodies rather than through the expression on their faces.

This fresco ensemble was completed by several masters, whose identities are unknown to us today. The inscriptions and texts on the frescoes were done in the Serbian language, although that fact alone does not give us the clue to the ethnic identity of the artists. It seems that painters belonging to various artistic traditions participated here. Besides the master working in monumental, thoroughly Hellenistic style in the nave, one finds a more archaic and linear manner in those frescoes painted by another hand in the upper regions under the dome (e.g., the figures of the Evangelists), while the assistants worked in the peripheral areas of this church.

The art of Sopocani marks a classical moment in the evolution

of the 13th century monumental style, and as such, it could not last long. Here a truly unique balance was achieved between the art form and its didactic content, a union never again repeated in Serbian or Byzantine art.

In the sixth decade of the 13th century, one can observe an increase of themes painted in the churches. These appeared first in the peripheral spaces, and later progressed into the nave itself. This enrichment of the iconographic program begun in the preceding Comnenian period reached maturity during the first half of the 14th century. Sopocani is a good illustration of this process in its midway stages. The program of its nave is restricted to the single figures of saints and scenes of the Liturgical Cycle, which those large spaces allowed. The narthex of this church, painted about the same time (c. 1265), included many more themes, disposed in rows, with the compositions of necessity diminished in size. The themes are instructive. The long narrative scenes of the Life of Joseph are a rare example of its kind. The Last Judgment is a splendidly painted composition, full of classicistic quotations, such as the usage of the personifications (e.g., the personification of the Sea) which has parallels only in Constantinopolitan example from Chora (c. 1320). Also in the narthex there is the Tree of Jesse, the Eucumenical and Nemanja Councils, standing saints (Constantine and Helena), and the historical figures.

King Uros I appears in the nave of the church; where the donor's composition occupies the lower zones of part of the west and south walls. The Virgin, who is shown presenting the members of the dynasty, leads the procession assuming the iconographic

type of Agiasoritissa (i.e., heavenly intercession on behalf of earthly sinners). She is followed by Nemanja, depicted here as a monk, his son, Stevan Prvovencani (also garbed as a monk), and King Uros I, who holds a model of the church. From here, the scene turns the corner from the south to the west wall, where two young princes, the King's sons – both future kings of Serbia – Dragutin and Milutin are to be seen.

The lower zones of the narthex are occupied by the donors as well. On the east wall, below the Eucumenical Councils, there are the representations of Christ Enthroned on one side of the door, and on the other, the Virgin with Christ Child receiving King Uros I and Prince Dragutin. On the south wall, below the Tree of Jesse, Queen Jelena with Young Prince Milutin follows her husband, while the progenitor of the dynasty, Stevan Nemanja, is represented in bust in the lunette above the south door. The north wall preserves, just below the Last Judgment, one of the more interesting scenes in the entire iconographic repertoire of Serbian art. It was compositionally patterned after the Dormition of the Virgin (traditionally represented in Byzantine art as an older Mother of God lying on a bier prior to the ascent, rather than the traditional Western younger Virgin standing on a cloud), and depicted the Death of Ana Dandolo, the king's mother. While Ana lies on the bier, Christ and the Virgin appear above her head; behind the bier, and nearest to the head of Ana, stands the archangel who has just received Ana's soul in his hands, which soul is personified as an innocent child. All around are the mourners: the members of the royal family and the high clergy.

The remaining Sopocani frescoes belong to other periods and other styles but they do not reach the height of early Sopocani masterpieces.

The wife of Uros I, Queen Jelena, built the Monastery of Gradac, in Raska, on the River Ibar. This queen dedicated her foundation to the Annunciation of the Virgin. It was erected about 1270, and until recent restoration, this church lay in ruins with its frescoes exposed to the weather and badly damaged. It is most likely that this Catholic queen (Anjou princess) of the Orthodox land of Serbia brought masters from the Adriatic coastal region to create her church, for this is one of the very few Serbian churches which show traces of a Gothic influence in its architecture. There are buttresses on the exterior; the archvaults are formed by broken arches; and the narthex was covered with the rib vaulting.

Fragments of frescoes dated c. 1275 show that the grand Sopocani manner inspired the paintings in the apse and the nave. Although not executed by the great master of Sopocani, they are undoubtedly the works of his disciples who knew well his style and iconography, but who also sought and applied the inspiration of other sources. Thus, the Gradac frescoes convey a certain feeling of the eclecticism, which tried to combine the Sopocani monumentality with a certain linear manner in painting the figures. Also, the painters here expanded their scenes into lengthy narrative compositions. Thus, the Nativity of Christ is not one event, but a series compressing the entire Infancy Cycle into one "scene," which can be seen in the south lunette below the dome. One is reminded of the triumphal arch

decorated in mosaics in the 5th century in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore (St. Mary Major) in Rome. There the scenes are separated horizontally by lines; in Gradac, the gentle slopes of the hills of this landscape provide the stage setting for the episodes, in which the miniature figures participate. In some instances, the background field of the frescoes is painted in gold to imitate the mosaic technique. Fragmentary remains of donors' composition are preserved on the south wall. Only tentative identifications can be offered. First is the figure of Christ, with the Virgin leading the procession of Nemanjic dynasts, at the head of which is either Nemanja or Stevan Prvovencani, followed by Uros I and Jelena.

It is possible that the narthex was decorated almost a generation later, c. 1290; its iconographic program included the Ecumenical Councils and the extended Cycle of the Virgin, a cycle which started gaining in popularity in Byzantine art toward the end of the 11th century (e.g., the mosaic decoration of the narthex of the Daphni Monastery near Athens, Greece). By the end of the 13th century this cycle was popular both in the East and in the West. The style of this cycle belongs to another artistic trend discussed in connection with another group of monuments.

Well preserved is the cathedral church of Moravica, the so-called Arilje, dedicated to St. Achileios. Architecturally this building belongs to the Raska style. However, the fresco ensemble, dated in 1296, shows an expanded iconographic program, linked to the innovations of the Palaeologan era.

Well worth the mention is the decoration of the narthex. There, besides the Tree of Jesse, the Ecumenical and Nemanja

Councils, one finds the donor composition. On the basis of this composition it has been established that this church was erected by two sons of Uros I, Dragutin and Milutin, whose portraits as young princes were seen in Sopocani. In Arilje, on a single panel, two brother kings are depicted. Milutin holds a cross and Dragutin, the model of the church, while next to him stands his wife, the Hungarian princess, Katalina. Above the two kings, Christ is depicted in bust, placed within a small medallion. All three royal figures are richly clad. The queen wears an elaborate head covering and crown, while the kings have identical crowns and garments – gem-encrusted imperial dalmatics with loros. Furthermore, in another panel, but on the same wall, two young sons of Dragutin are depicted (Vladislav and Urosic). With the young princes is a depiction of the young Christ as Emmanuel. Both princes wear long striped tunics and short riding capes thrown over their shoulders. They are crowned by a simple diadem. The former kings of the Nemanjic dynasty are also included, but they are dressed as monks, while the queen-dowager, Jelena, mother of Milutin and Dragutin, is represented wearing the widow's veil.

The painters may have come from Thessalonike, as has been suggested, but their work depended on the style of Gradac (e.g., the Nativity), which is offered here in somewhat impoverished version. The artists are able to tell their story in a dramatic way (e.g., the Betrayal of Christ) by exaggerated expressiveness of faces and gestures. The style of drawing is rough; the three-dimensionality of shapes is suggested by strong, white highlights, while the general tonality is bluish-gray and lacking in artistic sensitivity and inspiration. When viewed alone, these

frescoes appear impressive, due, primarily, to their total state of preservation. Lastly, when compared to the refinement and the elegance of Sopocani paintings, the exaggerations of the Arilje frescoes seem faintly to border on the amusing. the differences between the paintings of Sopocani and those of Arilje document the courtly and metropolitan art and its provincial version, and also the works of an inspired and talented master in contrast to a trained craftsman.

In conclusion, one can say that the 13th century showed the young Serbian State to be vital enough to survive, and to grow economically stronger through mining, commerce and trade taxes. The prudent foreign and domestic policies provided a favorable basis out of which the monumental art grew and was nourished, and, in return, that art served well the needs of the State and of the church. Whereas the architecture of the Raska group bears the signs of Romanesque style, with touches of Gothic and Byzantine mixed with the local variations, the frescoes never wavered from the Byzantine tradition and inspiration. Those wall paintings showed even greater diversity and vitality as the court and the monastic trends were concurrently employed to provide rather stunning contrasts. One was able to follow the first struggling steps toward the freedom from domination of the late Comnenian style. There also were brilliantly paid tributes to the past on the way toward the new – Serbian – achievements. There were also the signs of the eclectic mixtures and the exhaustion of this monumental style, together with those which heralded an artistic rebirth.

## The Expanded State of Serbia: 1282-1371

As Sopocani rose on the Raska, events were transpiring in Constantinople which caused the policies and orientations of Serbia to take a different course, to lose some affinities and regain others. When Byzantine troops retook Constantinople on July 25, 1261 for a brief period under Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259-1282), Byzantium was able to play the role of a European power once again. This was due more to the superb diplomatic skills of this emperor than to the actual resources of the restored empire. Notwithstanding his efforts, however, the era of the Palaeologi was a period of territorial losses, political decline, internal struggle within the Church, and frequent revolutions. Above all it was a period in which the Balkan Slavic States rose both in power and political ambitions.

However, in spite of the political decline, the early Palaeologan art of Constantinople merits, in the judgment of scholars, being called the Palaeologan Renaissance. Politically this period is a long one – from 1261 to 1453. Although tightly connected with the fortunes of the crown and the secular and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the art of this period had a refined mode of its own. While the imperial fortunes rose under Michael VIII, the Palaeologan style was still being formulated in the Blachernae palace scriptorium. The political power changed for the worse under Andronikos II (1282-1328), while Palaeologan art reached its classical peak in Constantinople and elsewhere. The art capital of the Byzantine world, Constantinople, and its court art, still reigned supreme. But other old centers, such as Thessalonike, shared in the artistic glory, along with other

regions, such as Athos and mediaeval Serbia. However, as soon as the artistic activities in the capital started diminishing, due to the lack of material means, the art of the other centers changed stylistic orientations. Thus, for example, at the height of Serbia's political power and aspirations under Tzar Dusan, it was a group of travelling artisans who painted the churches of Dusan and his courtiers (Decani, Lesnovo).

## **Architecture: Byzantinizing Style**

As mediaeval Serbia expanded to the southeast into the territories of present-day Macedonia and Greece, it once more came into close contact with the ancient sources of Byzantine art. Although the inspirations from the past were present, a new set of elements was created which can be called a new style of the Palaeologan period.

First of all, how does one define that style in architecture both in Byzantium and in Serbia? The architectural activities in Constantinople were severely curtailed due to the lack of funds; the works were centered mainly on restoration of already existing buildings. Yet, certain features can be singled out as characteristic of the period. The buildings were given an interesting exterior picturesqueness with the so-called *cloisonne* work executed in combination of small stone block, bracketed within the brick and mortar with decorative pilasters or arcades. Twin domes appeared over the narthex (Chora, Constantinople; Holy Apostles, Thessalonike; Peribleptos, Ochrid; and most of the churches built on territories held by the Serbs). A very ancient type of the ground plan; adopted in the middle Byzantine

period, continued to be used – probably because of its continuity with the liturgical ceremonies. This type of ground plan – a cross-inscribed-in-square – with certain variations became typical of church structures within the Serbian political boundaries from the late 13th to the late 14th centuries.

The characteristic features of the cross-in-square plan are four free piers which sustain two crossing tunnel vaults upon which rests the dome. The latter is usually octagonal and built of brick, or of brick and stone; the apse is angular on the exterior, either triangular or pentagonal. To this type of structure belong: the church of the Virgin, Pec, c. 1330; St. Niceta, c. 1307; Lesnovo, c. 1341; the Monastery of Marko, after 1371; and others. A variant on this theme is provided by the ground plan of the Hilandari Monastery on Mount Athos, which was rebuilt by King Milutin c. 1303. Exterior chapels were appended to the arms of the inscribed cross, thus making it appear to be triconchos.

Elaboration of this type can be seen in those churches where instead of one dome, five are employed – the four smaller ones being placed over the lower corner spaces. This type was already seen in 1164 (Nerezi), and in the 14th century we can now add the following churches: the Virgin Ljeviska, Prizren, c. 1307; St. George in Staro Nagoricino, near Kumanovo; Gracanica, on Kosovo Polje, near Pristina, c. 1317-1320; and Mateica, c. 1355, now in ruins.

Although they repeat the old plan of a pentaterron, these churches are new interpretations, as can be seen from the Gracanica example. Its cross-in-square plan is very complex,

both in plan and in elevation. The height is stressed throughout the building. The five domes rise on tall drums from intersecting vaults. The stone is used for the exterior walls, with a very limited usage of bricks which conformed to the decoration. The interior space is characteristically subordinated to exterior mass and elevation, and is, therefore, broken up into smaller volumes and surfaces, which will have great bearing on the decoration of this and similar churches. Light, which comes from bifora- or trifora-type windows, can dramatically illuminate the interior or leave it diffused in a semidarkness.

Another version of the cross-in-square plan was developed especially for smaller churches. In some instances the cross arms were proportionately reduced; engaged pilasters, rather than free piers supported the dome. Examples of this variant are found in the Chapel of Joachim and Anna in the Studenica Monastery (1314); in St. Demetrios, Pee, c. 1321; and in Matka and St. Nicholas, both on the River Treska, also from the 14th century.

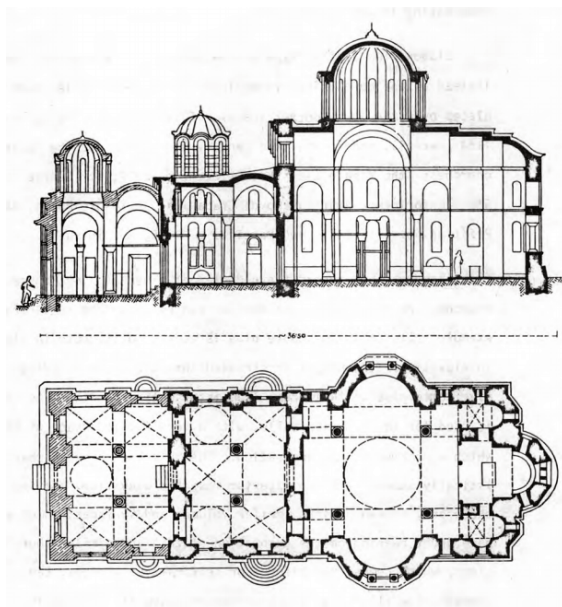


Fig. 22. Athos. Hilandari Monastery. Church of the Presentation of the Virgin. Ground plan and Longitudinal Cross-Section, 14th Century.

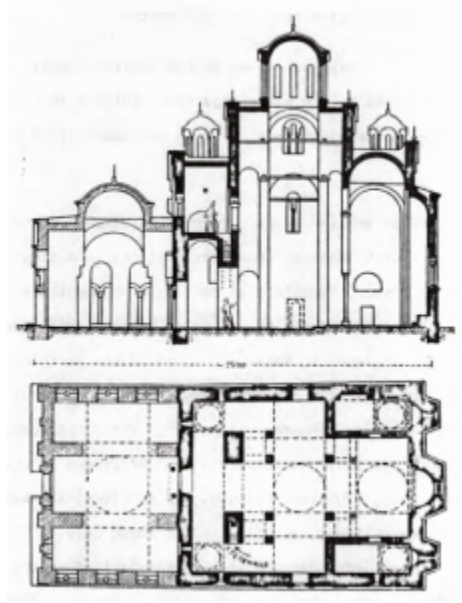


Fig. 23. Gracanica Monastery. Church of the Annunciation. Ground plan and Longitudinal Cross-Section, 14th Century.

The cross is always prominent at the vaulting level, and it was never disguised by the water-shed roof, but was to be seen very clearly under the original lead covering that was molded over the vaults.

In so far as the larger structures were concerned, the narthex preceded the church, whether constructed at the same time as the church itself (Psata, Monastery of Marko), or added later (Lesnovo, 1349). It can be surmounted by one dome (Lesnovo, Monastery of Marko), or two (Hilandari, Mateita). Some of the narthices built in this way are separated from the nave only by supporting piers (Nagoricino, Mateica, Monastery of Marko).

The carved decoration found in the iconostasis, columns and similar places is rare and modest (Gracanica, Ljuboten, Lesnovo, Psaca, Ljeviska, Nagoritino). An oculus is exceptional, as well, and is found only in the late 14th century examples under the stylistic impact of another group of monuments (Ljuboten, Mateica, Monastery of Marko). Structures with the best decorations have hollow clay elements and bricks forming the following patterns: rope, zig-zag, herringbone, meander, diaper, and checkerboard variations (the Virgin Ljeviska, Staro Nagoricino, Gracanica, Ljuboten, Lesnovo, Mateica, Andreas, St. Nicholas in Treska; Holy Archangel in Kuceviste; and many others).

The question of ktitor (or donor) of these churches is a politically and sociologically interesting one. The list is led by King Milutin, whose political ambitions were matched only by his building activities. The written sources attribute to this king a church for each year of his reign (1282-1321); in actuality not that many were erected, although many undoubtedly were lost over 108 the years. Milutin cast his net wide, for the sphere of his interest in art sponsorship extended from Jerusalem (St. Michael's Monastery) to Constantinople and Mount Athos (the rebuilt Serbian Monastery of Hilandari).

Other Serbian rulers also built outside their frontiers (Stefan Decanski, the Church of the Holy Savior in Custendil, Bulgaria; Stefan Dusan renovated Rusikon Monastery on Mount Athos), but none rivaled Milutin's sponsorship.

Besides the rulers, members of the dynasty, and members of the high clergy, many churches were founded by powerful feudal

lords of the realm who are identified by their portraits and by the inscriptions (Lesnovo, by Despot Oliver), by families such as Mrnjavtević (Markov Manastir by King Vukasin near Susica, and finished by his son Marko, the famed “Kraljević Marko” of Serbian epic poetry; Holy Archangels near Prilep, by Kralj Marko, and St. Andrija, so-called Andreas, on the River Treska near Skoplje by Andreas, brother of Kraljević Marko). Even a woman sponsor is represented in the Vlastelinka Danica, the builder of Ljuboten.

### **Painting: The Court School of King Milutin**

Customarily, the interiors of these buildings were decorated in frescoes. No unity of style or repetition of an iconographic program could be expected given so many structures and patrons. However, certain trends can be distinguished. First of all, as indicated before, there was a continuous increase in illustrated themes – a process well-documented and generally favored in the Byzantine world [St. Clement, Ochrid, 1295; Holy Apostles, Thessalonike, c. 1312; Chora (Karhiye Camii), Constantinople, c. 1315], and particularly favored in Serbian art (St. Niceta, Staro Nagoricino, Gracanica). This process reached its culmination in the fresco ensemble of the Decani Monastery (1335-1347), where one finds over twenty complete cycles illustrated with hundreds of scenes and thousands of figures. The painted figurative decoration which was originally meant to be a “book for illiterates” becomes a visual translation of an extensive and complicated theological program, understandable to those knowledgeable in dogma.

The immediate source of inspiration in religious art had come, obviously, from Sacred Scripture. Now, other suitable sources were sought out and found in the Apocrypha, Liturgy, Hymns, Prayers, and Menologion. One may surmise that the classical balance between form and content (achieved in Sopocani) might have been upset by efforts to increase the scope of pictorial representation. Just so! Seeking to enlarge their iconographic program, artists of the Palaeologan period borrowed freely from many sources and applied them with new enthusiasm. There were limitations, however, to the freedom with which the new subject matters might be employed. The complicated design of interior architecture offered smaller surfaces, so that the possibility of monumental compositions was diminished. When the desire to add still more episodes took hold, artists had to reduce size again, and frieze upon frieze of those compositions were superimposed. The original protagonists do not seem to be sufficient to tell the story, since there is an interest in details. Numerous other figures were included in the scenes, and to accommodate them, a stage-like setting was adopted which consisted of three picture planes. The first held the protagonists, the second, the less important figures, and the last was reserved for backdrop. Owing to the demand, many figures not accounted for in the written sources now joined the protagonists in the “drama” unfolding on the church walls. To illustrate this point the Nativity of the Virgin serves well. In this composition the girl attendants are not inspired by any apocryphal narrative, but by the imperial ceremonials (e.g., the Nativity of the Virgin, Chapel of Joachim and Anna in the Studenica Monastery, 1314).



Fig. 24. Gracanica Monastery. Church of the Annunciation. Exterior from the East. (Photo: Gallery of Frescoes, "Belgrade).

This stage-like composition is theatrically lighted by several illumination sources, creating deep contrasts of light and dark, through which these small figures attain the illusion of being three-dimensional. The above-mentioned properties of the Palaeologan style are best manifested in the mosaics and frescoes of Chora (Kahriye Camii) and Mary Pammakaristos (Fethyse Camii) in Constantinople, and in other Byzantine churches on Athos (Protaton in Kareia) and in Thessalonike (Holy Apostles, Chapel of St. Euthymios, St. Nicholas Orphanos). Lastly, Constantinopolitan conventions exhibited in the "new" style were most closely followed in Serbia, especially in the churches erected by King Milutin.

To discuss the early manifestations of the Palaeologan style and iconography in monumental painting, one must turn to the frescoes of St. Clement at Ochrid, (formerly the Virgin Peribleptos). The recently cleaned ensemble is not only very well preserved, but precisely dated to 1294-1295. The frescoes were signed in several places by the painters Michael and Euthychios, who were to work later, for the known duration of their artistic activities, as the court painters of King Milutin. For this reason, this monument is included in this survey of Serbian art, although its donor was not a Serb, but a certain Progon Zgur, who claimed to have been related to some of the most ancient of the Constantinopolitan families.

The scholars had discussed at length the possible place of origin of the early schooling of Michael and Euthychios. While some suggest Mount Athos or Thessalonike, others favor centers even closer to Ochrid. One thing is obvious from their works: they were quite familiar with the artistic idioms of the Palaeologan Renaissance, and that during the later part of their careers, they are under the stronger and more direct influence of Constantinople.

The iconographic program of St. Clement in Ochrid is both learned and rich – obviously planned by an erudite theologian. In the narthex there are Old Testament scenes, especially those prefiguring the Virgin to whom this church was originally dedicated. The nave walls are decorated above the zone of the standing figures with the scenes from the Life of the Virgin, while the upper zones are covered with an episode from the Life of Christ. The Evangelists are on the pendentifs, while the

Prophets occupy the drum, and the Pantocrator is to be seen in the dome. The early date of these frescoes is significant, since they represent one of the oldest known monumental examples of the fully developed Palaeologan style in painting. In this church, the color is bold, even crude and well saturated: the purples and reds, the greens and the blues are mixed freely according to the artist's feeling of expression. One is singularly impressed by the spirit of the young artists who painted here, notwithstanding their lack of refinement. True, the drapery which clothes the bodies is not smooth, but the folds are angular and somewhat abstract. Still, that is no irreconcilable problem and, in any case, it ought not to distract our attention from another process which is visibly manifested on the interior walls of St. Clement. It is important to recognize that the solutions to problems of voluminosity are frankly "discussed;" that fact and attempts to resolve other visual problems, such as the creation of the pictorial space, bring these Palaeologan style masters abreast the contemporary European development in painting – e.g., Giotto, 1267-1337, and his works in Capella del'Arena in Padua, which postdate St. Clement's frescoes by a decade. Both the Ochrid and the Padua frescoes tackled the same issues of depiction of the voluminosity of the figures, their placement and movement in an illusionary space, and, finally, the representation of emotions. Good comparable examples would be: The Meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate, The Kiss of Judas, and, above all, The Lamentation.

The effort to express emotion is best seen in the scene of the Lamentation, in which Michael and Euthychios undoubtedly tapped the same folkloric sources that bequeathed a strong

undercurrent of emotion to Serbian epic poetry. Further manifestations of the emotionalism are seen in Joachim and Anna's tender embrace of the little Virgin. At the moment of the Annunciation at the well, the Virgin needs to be supported by two maids, since, in her surprise, she appears ready to faint. While the Apostles recline freely at the Last Supper around the table, on it one can recognize – as a touch of everyday life – peasant-type knives, vinegar flasks, bread and turnips. The startling contrast is provided by Christ's Agony in the Garden, where the Apostles are convincingly asleep, assuming poses borrowed from Hellenistic statues. The master uses this opportunity to foreshorten the figures. The ambition and vigor with which these Ochrid painters attack space become apparent when one compares the Dormition of the Virgin from St. Clement with that from Chora. There the Constantinopolitan masters tried to render in visual terms the realm of the spirit, producing beautiful, but lifeless work; whereas Michael and Euthychios group real and solid-looking figures of humans and angels and break away from the flat restraints of the wall and into the world of illusion and depth.

One of the first fresco decorations to be executed for Milutin between 1300-1320 was the catholikon of the Hilandari Monastery on Athos. These frescoes were covered with oil paintings in the 19th century, and still await complete restoration and cleaning. However, since the 19th century faithfully followed the ancient compositions, at least it can be established that the iconography and style belong within the confines of the Palaeologan Renaissance. The artists who painted here are unknown.

However, masters of St. Clement, Michael and Euthychios, started working in the territories of King Milutin, undoubtedly aided by a considerable workforce. Since a great deal was to be done, the works produced could not have been expected to be of even quality. The youthful creativity and freedom of Michael and Euthychios seems to have been checked and modified to fit Constantinopolitan formulae more closely. This change is very obvious in the Church of St. Niceta near Cucer, not far from Skopje, dated between 1307 and 1316. Provincialisms are to be seen in detailed descriptions of architectural background and suspended curtains (The Marriage Feast at Cana; The Expulsion from the Temple). The episodes continue in the narrative style, without separate frames (The Miracles; The Passion of Christ). Noteworthy is the beautifully framed fresco icon of St. Niceta. This holy warrior, clad in an elaborate military style is located on the north wall, and is identified by a Serbian inscription.

Michael and Euthychios also signed the frescoes in another church, rebuilt over an 11th century structure. Here in St. George in Staro Nagoricino, about 1316-1318, the painters followed the established conventions of the Palaeologan style. But in trying to teach and preach at the same time, their manner becomes dry, and the painting cold. The wall surfaces appeared crowded with scenes and innumerable figures, standing or in busts. The iconographic program is expanded to include the Divine Liturgy, together with usual scenes of the Feast, Miracles and Passion and Virgin cycles. Also to be found are scenes from the Menologion and compositions from the Life of St. George. Every idiom known to the masters was used to fill in the gallery of faces: the old and the young, the bald and the hairy, the

divine and the human, the female and the male. An interesting example of classical reminiscences is found in the fresco of the Mocking of Christ – a street scene with throngs of people together with mimers and musicians. Overcrowding is evident in the composition of the Dormition of the Virgin. An interesting scene from the Life of St. George pictures him atop a magnificent dapple-gray horse, while a princess leads the vanquished dragon toward the city. The city gate in this representation gives us an idea of how the church door might have looked at that time, made of wood, studded with large nail heads, and with two knockers. This church had preserved its original stone iconostasis, which supports the fresco icon of St. George in half figure, and the Virgin with Christ (the Pelagonitissa type).

Still another master has been identified among those working for King Milutin. His name was Astrapa, and he painted in the church of the Virgin Ljeviska in Prizren, which was rebuilt over an older basilica c. 1310-1313. Though the period favored the form more than the color, this sensitive colorist endowed his figures with the sense of monumentality (the prophets in the drum of the main dome) at a time when small figures and exhausting narratives were the dominant themes in painting. The physiognomies of his saints resemble real people, which places Astrapa outside and above the artistic tradition of his period. Worthy of mention are the magnificent portraits of the members of the Nemanjic dynasty found in the narthex of this church. Impressive above all others is the portrait of King Milutin, the donor of this church. His bejewelled dalmatica with loros could

compete in richness with the garments worn by the Byzantine emperors.

The decoration of the tower and the narthex of the Ziea Monastery has also been ascribed by some scholars to Astrapa, c. 1309-1316. Among the less usual themes, the illustration of the Christmas Hymn is worth noting in the lunette over the door in the tower passageway. Classical reminiscences are seen in the figures personifying the Earth and the Desert, who, standing like classical caryatides, uphold the throne of the Virgin with the Child.

An unknown master has painted the small chapel of Joachim and Anna in the Studenica Monastery, whose donor in 1314 was Milutin. Many art historians consider this abbreviated iconographic ensemble to contain the best Palaeologan paintings outside Constantinople. The smallness of the chapel must have influenced the painter to paint in an intimate, often sentimental, style, while still retaining classical allusions as in the personification of the River Jordan (the Baptism scene). All the figures are elongated with small heads, and are well drawn and sensitively colored. Their relief-like voluminosity is well placed in the pictorial space: in the Nativity of the Virgin, the major figures occupy the ground plan; the second plan, behind a low parapet wall, accommodates maidens bearing gifts; and behind them rises from the third plan tall, complicated architecture indicating that the scene takes place indoors; and, finally, there is a landscape with tall cyprus trees. Among the standing figures in the lowest zone, the donors are painted again: Nemanja and Sava as monks; Milutin and Queen Simonis (of Byzantine origin) in

their splendid regalia. The king carries the model of the church, while being led into the presence of Christ by St. Anna who holds the little Virgin and Joachim. The texts and the inscriptions are in Serbian.

The last great gallery of frescoes from the period of King Milutin belongs to Gratanica, c. 1321. The complex interior spaces are tall, dramatically lighted, and the decoration theologically complex. Despite the large quantity of scenes requiring small figures, the artists retained the impression of monumentality and a sense of drama, rather than that of a straight narrative. The compositional movement is clockwise throughout the church, starting from the east walls. The subjects of the dome and spaces beneath contain the usual images for that period (Christ, Divine Liturgy, Prophets, Evangelists, Liturgical Feasts). At two cardinal points the artist dramatically places two magnificent compositions. In the East is the Descent into Limbo; and in the West, the Dormition of the Virgin. There are also scenes from the Passion of Christ, and a frieze with medallions of saints among whom are the Holy Warriors bearing contemporary weapons. The central church space was entrusted to the most eminent among the fresco painters of Gracanica. Dynamic use of shading and contrast has created a marvelous suggestion of movement and expression missing in other parts of the church. Occasionally the artist places the protagonists of the scene deep within the setting, while bringing forward secondary figures, thus reversing the standard approach.

Subsidiary spaces were delegated to subordinate artists whose work shows uneven quality such as in the scenes from the

Calendar, the Lives of the Virgin and St. Nicholas, the Miracles of Christ, and others. The genealogical tree of the Nemanjic dynasty is included in this repertoire, while the portrait of the aging King Milutin appears once again with Simonis. Both royal figures were splendidly dressed.

## Stylistic Divergence

The death of King Milutin in 1321 marked the end of the classical phase of the Palaeologan style in Serbian art. The impact of Serbia's political aggression, the taste of other art sponsors besides the dynast himself, must account for the vast stylistic divergencies which followed in Serbian art.

With the political expansion and growth, with further feudalization of this society, the other sponsors appeared, each having different tastes, needs, and desires. There were other contributing factors. Constantinople, torn by political strife, did not seem to radiate new artistic energies. The classical moment of the Palaeologan Renaissance seemed to have been spent. Instead of taking new artistic roads, Tzar Dusan turned to Adriatic Kotor and brought in groups of craftsmen trained in the Greek manner, the so-called "pictores Graeci," whose style was both eclectic and conservative. The lesser donors had to rely upon locally trained painters, who depended upon older, existing traditions, containing varied stylistic ingredients. Thus, besides art for the State and dynastic use, there was art made for courtiers and high officials, as well as art sponsored by the monastic circles.

North of the Church of the Holy Apostles (c. 1250) in the Pee complex, Archbishop Nicodemos had erected the Church of St. Demetrios (c. 1316-1324), while the frescoes might be dated some two decades later. The painter, John, signed his name in the apse, next to the standing figure of the Virgin Nikopoia, who is flanked by two angels. Although the signature is in Greek, this artist does not necessarily need to be of Greek origin, but might only be signifying the Grecophile taste of his age. His style of painting is considered to be still close to the school of King Milutin, while differing in respect to his use of depth in space, preference for plasticity in landscape, and realistic depiction of vegetation. The donor's composition includes the king, Stefan Detanski, young prince Dusan, who are flanked by the first Serbian archbishop and a member of the dynasty, St. Sava. Next to the king stands the ruling Prince of the independent Serbian Church, Archbishop Nikodemos. He wears a tall mitre, a long embroidered gown, white loros and crosses. In his hand he holds a closed Gospel book.

On the south side of the Holy Apostles at Pec, Archbishop Danilo II raised the church of the Virgin, (c. 1330), a perecclesion dedicated to St. Nicholas, and, in front of the three major churches, a very monumental narthex. In the latter, the frescoes are fragmentary, while in the church commemorating the Virgin Hodegitria, they are preserved in their entirety. Painted by several masters before 1330, they use fresco models from various periods, some reaching into the 13th century, while others belong to the best years of the 14th century. The unifying element is well thought out iconography, and was probably planned by the archbishop himself.

The painter who executed the decoration of the chapel of St. John the Forerunner (i.e., the Herald of Christ) in this church shows the temperament of an icon painter, while more monumental qualities are felt in the work of the master of the standing figures. This painter probably executed the portrait of the archbishop.

The large mausoleum church of King Stefan Uros III (1321-1331), called Decani Monastery belongs in architectural affinity to the Raska stylistic group. But the fresco decoration of this structure was done later, Under Tzar Dusan, around 1340-1350. This ensemble is the largest of the Serbian painted encyclopaedic programs, and contains over twenty cycles, hundreds of scenes and thousands of figures. Although the signature of one painter is preserved – that of Srdj Gresni – Sergios, the Sinful – the work of many hands is certainly evident. The name Srdj confirms what the style of Detani frescoes themselves suggest: that the artists were so-called “*pictores Graeci*” – travelling masters from the coastal regions, trained in Byzantine manner, and showing traces of Westernization in their choice of themes. Although the Decani frescoes are impressive in their totality, colorful and amusing, they are not inspired creations. They lack elegance and cultivation, classical balance, and overall tonality. Many of the themes painted at Decani we have seen elsewhere (Cycles of Feasts, The Passion, Miracles, donor’s portraits, the Tree of the Nemanjic dynasty, the Last Judgment, and the Menologion). It is worth mentioning, however, that the cycles of Genesis and the Acts of the Apostles found here are seldom seen in Byzantine monumental repertoire.

Not far from Kumanovo lie the ruins of the Church of the Virgin in the Mateit Monastery. The frescoes are similar in type, both thematically and stylistically, to that of Decani, although poorer by far in technical execution. The church was begun under Dusan, but probably finished after his death, under Uros and his mother Jelena, c. 1356.

Tzar Dusan's mausoleum, the Church of the Holy Archangels, near Prizren, has been destroyed. Its architecture and floor mosaic decoration had been mentioned with the Raska group. Very few fragments of the frescoes recovered during the excavation of this ruined church indicate that the painting was of unusually high quality, and very different from the mass production of the pictores graeci.

Smaller foundations of the more modest, non-royal donor depended on locally schooled masters steeped in Palaeologan traditions and regional styles (Bela Crkva Karanska. 1330's; Ljuboten. after 1337; Psaca, after 1366).

A good example of the mixture of the Palaeologan and local traditions is to be found in the church dedicated to the Archangel at Lesново. It was built in 1341 by the despot, Oliver, one of the powerful nobles of Tzar Dusan's court. At least several painters collaborated here in the nave c. 1347-1348. The figure of Christ is treated in a provincial manner; thus in the scene from the Communion of the Apostles, He resembles a local peasant. Realistic touches are to be seen in the representation of the musical instruments, or in the Lamentation scene, in which the Virgin Mary pulls out her hair, in grief, just as a plain peasant woman would. The portrait of the donor is painted on

the north wall of the nave where Despot Oliver, holding the model of his church, resembles a flat, cut-out figure, pasted onto the background. His clothing is executed with utmost care – the long sleeved garment, with medallion designs over which he wears an embroidered tunic covered with pearls. Even the buttons are to be seen on the sleeves and on the tunic. The perfectly coiffed hair is parted in the middle, and falls in long curls to the shoulders. Despot Oliver wears a jewel-covered diadem on his head. From this portrait he seems to have had a high forehead, curved brows, large and deep-set eyes, thin moustache, and a longish beard.

In 1349 Despot Oliver added to his church a narthex, which was painted in a style much closer to the court school of King Milutin. Remarkable among the subjects painted there are the Old Testament themes (Dream of Jacob, Jacob and the Angel; the Tabernacle; Moses and the Burning Bush; the Illustration of Psalms 148 and 149 which included the Zodiac Signs, etc.).

During the reign of Tzar Uros (1355-1371) the Manjavcevic family came into prominence and power, and left several foundations.

King Vukasin of that house built the Church of St. Demetrios, the so-called Monastery of Marko, in Susica near Skopje. Its fresco decoration was painted about 1376-1381 under his son Marko. To the grand composition in the dome – the Pantocrator with the Divine Liturgy – a double row of Prophets was added. The hands of at least two artistic personalities can be seen in this ensemble. One of them must have had some experience in rendering miniatures. This same individual restricted his use of

color, highlighted his figures, elongated their bodies, and shrank their heads. Calm facial expressions and suggestive movements are also characteristic of his frescoes (Massacre of the Innocents).

Another hand worked on the scenes from the Acatystos Hymn. 124 His spaces are well developed and defined, within which short figures with large heads are placed. The movements are frequently abrupt, and the folding of draperies quite linear. The mixture of styles expresses the dualism in iconography, in which political ambitions paralleled art dedicated to the heavenly powers, and brought theological and secular worlds together. The masters here had connections with the work in Detani, and thus, direct or indirect connections with the Adriatic.

While the foundation of Kraljevic Marko (1371-1395), the Church of the Holy Archangels near Prilep c. 1372, has only fragments of the fresco painting preserved – the donor's portrait – the opposite is the case with the church built by the other son of Vukasin, Prince Andreas.

This church, dedicated to St. Andrew (Andrija), was painted in 1388-1389. The painters are known: Jovan and Grigorije. They were schooled in the Zrze Monastery near Prilep, the stronghold of the Mrnjavcevići. Together with Makarije, these artists painted frescoes and icons.

In the Andreas Monastery some departures from the standard iconographic solutions were made in, for example, the fact that the Communion of the Apostles is not above the altar in the apse. However, the viewer is impressed by the technical perfection

of these frescoes, carried out by experienced artists, who could have been trained in Constantinople. After the vivid coloring and expressionistic figures, the painting of Andreas gives the impression of being traditional and academic. The drawing is polished, the compositions well-balanced according to the older scheme, and modeling is strong. Obviously the artists tried to return to the old, monumental style of the 13th century, but fell short owing to an extreme pedanticism.

This same style, carried north by Makarije, who decorated the Monastery of Ljubostinja, did not take root, because demands and expectations were already pointing in a new direction.

## **Serbia in the Morava Region: 1371-1459**

Following the death of Tzar Dusan (1355) and Tzar Uros (1371), the dynasty of the Nemanjic was no more; the empire soon fragmented into several independent realms. Unfortunately for them, the power of the Ottomans was in the ascendent, and in the great battles – Marica in 1371 and Kosovo Polje in 1389 – the now independent successor states were broken by the armies of Sultan Murad I (1362-1389).

After the defeat at the Marica River, 1371, the center of a diminished Serbian State moved farther north, and now comprised the lands between Bosnia and Bulgaria, and from Kosovo Polje to the Danube. Its primary territories were around the Morava River, and its administrative center under Prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic was in v Krusevac. Later it was moved to Belgrade, and finally to Smederevo. After the Kosovo debacle,

the north Serbian lands recognized the sovereignty of the Turks, although they enjoyed a period of relative peace and internal freedom due to the Turkish involvement in Asia. The original Serbian principality was given the title of the Despotate by the powerless Byzantine emperor in 1402.

In spite of a political situation in which there were constant wars and destructions, the arts flourished in this most northern part of mediaeval Serbia. This revival was not limited to the visual arts, but included literature. Greek and Bulgarian refugees, fleeing before the common Ottoman enemy found shelter at the court of Despot Stefan Lazarevic, and work at his Resava Monastery. It was there, in an emigre and international atmosphere, that a new and very national style was formed. This style influenced literature, miniature and monumental painting, architecture and other artistic manifestations. It was from the Serbian Despotate that the literary and artistic impulses spread to neighboring Walachia and into more distant Russia.

One fact ought to be noted. It seems as if the artists of this north Serbian principality were unwilling to pass through the evolutionary stages which we associate with development, achievement, mannerism and decadence within a style. Consequently, from the very first, the monuments of the Morava style are artistically mature; at the end, during the latter half of the 15th century, there were signs of refinement rather than of debasement.

## The School of Morava

Architecture. Looking at the architecture first, one finds that at the most, barely thirty churches were erected between 1371 and 1459, many of which are now in various stages of ruin. Their founders were once again the members of the dynasty and the court of Prince Lazar; other structures were erected by the clergy. Many components of this architecture have been borrowed from the previous periods, but their combinations are so distinctive and unique that they are creative rather than eclectic works.

The ancient triconchos plan, popular on Mount Athos, was revived here, but in combination with the inscribed cross, which is seen clearly in the elevation of the roofs. This type of plan is used almost exclusively with some variations (exceptions: Koporin, c. 1400; Satornja, c. 1425). In some instances three apses rather than one are seen in the East – an obvious derivation from the Raska and Macedonian schools (Drenta, 1382; Petrusa, 1412; and the great Resava, 1407-1418). The apses of these churches can be polygonal or rounded – a practice which existed also in the styles of previous eras. The narthex is often contemporary to the church proper, but it is frequently given its own vertical accent in form by a tower or a dome (Lazarica, Krusevac, 1370-1374; Neupara, 1382; Kalenic, 1413-1417). One dome usually rises over the nave which is most often on a tall octagonal drum. The old pentaturion appears among those churches destined to be princely mausolea (Ravanica, 1370's, with its main dome being decagonal; and Resava, 1407-1418, with its main dome being duodecagonal – twelve-sided).



Fig. 25. Krusevac. The Remains of the 14th Century Fortifications. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

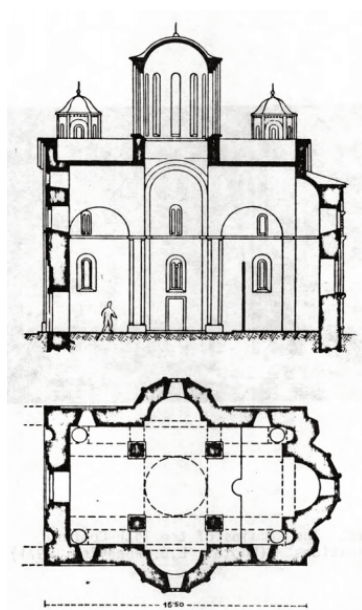


Fig. 26. Ravanica Monastery.  
Church of the Ascension.  
Groundplan and Longitudinal  
Cross-Section, 14th Century.

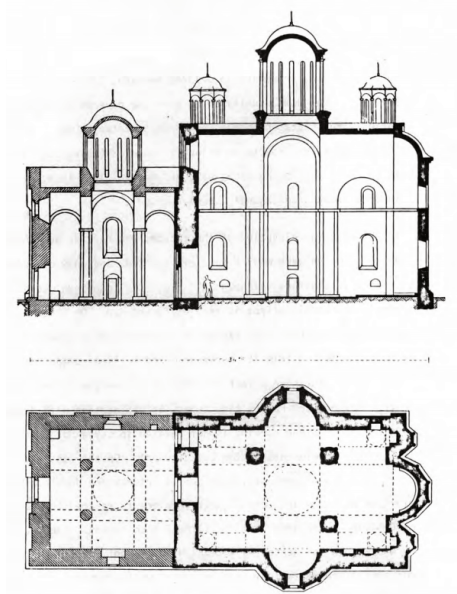


Fig. 27. Resava Monastery. Church of the Trinity. Groundplan and Longitudinal Cross-Section, 15th Century.

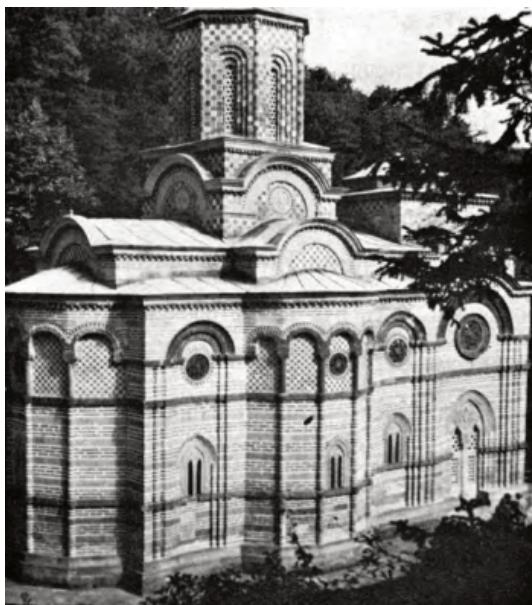


Fig. 28. Kalenic Monastery. Church of the Presentation. Exterior from the S-E., 15th Century. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

The exterior elevation of the facades was carried out in brick and stone, which were most often left exposed, and only occasionally covered with plaster. Although old cloisonne technique was still in use, the overall effect is very different now. On these tall and slender churches, each facade is considered as a separate surface to be decorated, within its horizontal and vertical compartmentation. The picturesque effect is achieved by the use of the stone, bricks, mortar, and hollow clay tubes, in conjunction with decorative carving. Stone carving is not related in style nor spirit to the Romanesque elements of the Raska school. On the contrary, it is completely two-dimensional, composed of intertwined double ribbons, stylized palmette and some figurative elements related to the carvings of Georgia,

which date from the 11th-13th centuries. The process by which such influences were transmitted is not yet clear, but manuscript ornamentation, together with textile design, might have played a part, while the arrival of the artists is another possibility. On the exterior surfaces of these churches there are pilasters and rosettes, engaged colonnettes and arcades which, combined with the polychrome fields of diamond shapes and checkerboards, contribute to a general powerful effect. In the Morava school, the horizontal bands were more decorative than functional. Several horizontal cornices made of projected bricks exist as if to bind the church elements together. The vertical components were stressed even more. Superimposed pilasters alternated with engaged colonnettes which supported arches, made more prominent by color. Arches encompass openings which can be double or triple windows, or a rosette, similar only in name to those on the facade of the Gothic churches. Each opening was surrounded by carving, and each rosette filled with finely carved stone tracery, in unrepitive geometric shapes. On some of the openings pointed and trilobe arches were used, which also ought not to be considered Gothic, but Islamic in origin due to their elegant slenderness. Among the carved subject matters, there are fantastic and actual animals and birds, together with the occasional human figure (the Virgin with the Child from Kalenic). This type of architecture projects a general feeling of lightness, picturesqueness, and an upward surge. In the totality of its decoration, it is distinct from the older Georgian or newer Byzantine architecture found in Mistra (in the Southern Peloponnese).

Decoratively speaking, the best architectural examples are:

Prince Lazar's Lazarica, in Krusevac, c. 1370's, restored, now without frescoes; Ljubostinja near Trstenik, the foundation of Princess Milica (Lazar's widow) after 1387, the only structure whose architect is known to us – Protomaistor Borovit Rad. The name indicates he was a Serb. The most prominent example of the decorative character of this architecture is, however, Kalenic Monastery Church near Trstenik, built around 1413-1417 for a certain protodoviar Bogdan, a little-known courtier of Stevan Lazarevic.

This architectural style spread easily across the Danube into Wallachia, where it can first be seen in Vodica, Prislop, and Tismen. It is also seen in another, far more distant region: undoubtedly, it arrived in the domain of the Balsic family around Lake Skadar, through the dynastic connections. Lake Skadar is a region which in the early Middle Ages was important for architecture. The Balsic's works cover approximately the period between 1370 and 1440 and include such monuments as: Starteva Gorica, Praskavica, Moratnik, Brezavica, and Kom.

Frescoes. Naturally, the interiors of these churches were decorated with frescoes. The spaces of Morava-style buildings are much smaller than those of the previous period (Resava is the exception, being the second largest Serbian church after Decani), but the surfaces are relatively spacious and quiet. There is a new union between the interior surfaces of the walls and their fresco decoration. The excessive narrative program was abandoned for selected scenes of less dramatic character. The lighting of the interior is more even and less contrasted than in the churches of the previous period. In spite of different artistic

accomplishments in the fresco ensembles, certain characteristics emerge. Once again the presence of distant Constantinopolitan art is felt; it is a revival of the Early Palaeologan style, and an importation of a contemporary style. However, this style should be considered interpretive rather than imitative. In the fresco itself a new relationship is felt between the figure and the painted background. The scene is well composed, insignificant figures are omitted, and overcrowding is avoided. At the same time the figure-space relationship is such that landscape and painted architecture appear sufficiently large to accommodate the figures. Very often, the technique is so delicate as to be better suited to miniatures and icons. But perhaps this minuteness relected the refined tastes of late mediaeval North Serbian society. If the images lose impact when viewed from a distance, they gain in beauty when seen at close range; thus, although part of a great decorative whole, each one of these scenes or figures is understood at the same time as a complete picture in itself. The shapes of men and objects were selected for their idealized beauty, rather than for their robust looks. Gone are jarring, abrupt movements. Instead, one finds lyrically orchestrated movements, and gestures lacking an urgent force. Gentle expressions bathe delicate faces, enhanced by sensitive use of color, which is inclined to be pastel, and, hence, closer to Gothic than to Byzantine harmonies.

One fact might have helped this style. It evolved in territories which were not heavily burdened by strongly established traditions. Although there was a continuous and strong artistic tradition among the Serbs from the 12th century, the defeated refugees in the new centers seem to have tried to express their

vision of a better world. In this vision a new man is created: a tall, slim man, with beautiful face and noble features, with gentle expression, and with perfect attire. This man can well stand the comparison with his Gothic counterparts of royal demeanor. This ideal of beauty is very different from the short, stocky, loud, almost peasant types who inhabit the walls of churches in the Southern regions. These are among the last images made of the feudal lords, even when represented in the guise of various saints or Old Testament characters. The walls of the Morava churches guard for us the last vestiges of a society which was destroyed in the Western world by the appearance of the new class of burgers, and in the Eastern world by the invading Turks.

Since no fresco fragments are preserved in Lazarica, the Church of the Ascension in Ravanica Monastery heads the list of the paintings of this style. It was built as the mausoleum of Prince Lazar, and it is known through the written sources that he gave his church rich gifts of chalices and liturgical plates, curtains, crosses and icons. While such portable treasures are gone now, the greater part of the fresco decoration remains. It was executed c. 1387, and the name of one of its masters – Constantine – is known. To his hands are attributed the large standing figures in the lower zones. All of the characteristics of the style summarized above can be specifically attributed to this church. This ensemble is not monumental, but it is picturesque, harmonious, and, frankly, sentimental. The coloring is not bright, but it is well modulated, and contributes to an impression of intimacy. Among the standing figures, the prominent place is given to the Holy Warriors which were a popular theme in the Serbian painting from the early 14th century. While those

military saints assume aggressive poses in the churches of King Milutin, they appear almost physically passive here. Three themes dominate the scenes: the Liturgical cycle of the Twelve Feasts, which is a constant element in the iconography of the nave, followed by the Miracle and Passion cycles. In the first cycle, the theologians and painters seem to want to evoke through the miraculous deeds of Christ a possibility of a miraculous salvation from the infidels. The Passion cycle would correspond well to the sentimental mood of this society. Yet, all the figures in Ravanica still guard their masculinity, and the general feeling of restraint is impressive indeed. The paintings here do not proclaim dogma, nor lose their meaning in heavy symbolism. The beholder is moved here from the stress of the Passion cycle and its drama, to the Miracles and the Teaching of Christ, with subtly suggested theological- speculations. It can not be said that one iconographic program was superior to the other; rather, different periods laid different emphasis on the meaning and purpose of the images. While, for example, in the scene of the Dormition of the Virgin in the Monastery of Marco, there is a sense of apotheosis and exaltation; in the same composition in Ravanica one seems to be in the presence of a very elaborate last rites ceremonial. This is a painted world which must be experienced with the inner eye as much as with the physical one. Yet, in this mausoleum of Prince Lazar, the monumentality of fresco is not completely lost (as, for example, in the composition of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes), and the ties with classical antiquity were not completely broken (e.g., details painted on the architecture in the scene of the Curing of the Blind). A portrait of Prince Lazar has been preserved, although badly damaged. The Prince wears an

elaborate royal garment with *loros*; alongside him stands his wife, the Princess Milica. Underneath the model of the church which they hold stand their two sons, Stefan and Vuk, wearing diadems. This donor's composition was painted on the west wall of the nave.

The Church of the Transfiguration, popularly called Sisojevac, is now in ruins. Traces of its former decoration show both iconographic and stylistic similarities to Ravanica, and it can be attributed to the end of the 14th century. One still can distinguish fragments of the Miracle scenes, of the Dormition, some standing saints, with the Holy Warriors much in evidence once again. The portrait of the founder, Higoumanos Sisoje, is preserved, together with a Serbian prince, who may be Despot Stefan.

The foundation of Prince Lazar's widow, Princess Milica, was the . Monastery of Ljubostinja. It was probably painted by Makarije (c. 1395-1400), who evidently had fled from the Turks in the South. His schooling and artistic career will be discussed in connection with the icon paintings. His accomplishment in this church, whose fresco decoration is partially preserved, is quite modest. It is an art transplanted into new soil from the Macedonian regions, and it stands out with its strong contrast of colors and sharp highlights, and occasional unrefined drawing (e.g., the cripple in the scene of the Miracle of the Paralytic).

The third layer of frescoes in the 13th century Church of the Holy Apostles in Pee can be dated c. 1375-1380, and it belongs to the original phase of the school of Morava. The style shows an elongation of the figures, the preferred iconography for the Holy

Warrior theme, but the coloring is still very striking and vivid. As such these frescoes document the style which flourished at the residence of the Serbian Patriarch.

The smaller structure, erected by donors of moderate means, shows stylistic divergences indicative of foreign influences.

For instance, the Church of Ramaca seems to show the tendencies of Morava style on a more humble basis, and it might be dated c. 1395. Koporin was painted by the master refugee from Bulgaria probably around the turn of the century, whose art was very modest, and who repeats the 14th century models, but includes contemporaries in the donor's composition, such as Despot Stefan. His drawing is quite naive imitation of the Palaeologan prototypes (the Kiss of Judas; the Agony in the Garden).

The Church of Rudenica is painted by a master named Theodore in the early years of the 15th century. His art is related to the visual traditions of the pictores Graeci from the Adriatic coast. Therefore, it is quite antiquated, because of its usage of older iconographic themes, such as the Passion cycle – and the repetition of large heads on small bodies in a period when elongated and elegant forms predominated.

The decoration of the Church of Veluce from about this same period belongs to yet another category: the frescoes are more amusing than great, but in their childishness of design and drawing, they are charming. Their interest lies in the accurate copying of contemporary costumes and in the documentation of a more popular artistic current – the same current which inspired

the illustrations of the Belgrade novel of Alexander the Great and the carvings on the stecci.

The fresco complex of the Kalenic Monastery is one of the most beautiful in this style, and it illustrates well the refined taste of the high nobility in the first decades of the 15th century. Although we lack the precise date for the Kalenic frescoes, the scholars usually attribute them to the years around 1413. Architecture and painting in this church were expertly harmonized, while thematic selection was well chosen to illustrate the religious mysteries. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated in the dome, around the Pantocrator, while the standing Prophets from the drum make the references to the Incarnate Logos. The whole upper structure and the iconography within seems to rest on the writing of the Evangelists who are placed in the pendentives. In the altar, the church fathers honor the Lamb of God, and above them are the scenes depicting the events following the Resurrection of Christ. The Virgin Orant is represented in the diaconicon, and in the proschomedia the Image of the Dead Christ is depicted in a spirit close to that which emanates from the Western Pieta.

In the upper zones of the nave, traces of the Great Feasts of the Church now remain. The middle zone is occupied by the Miracles of Christ. Thus a concrete gradation in height is made to correspond to the hierarchy of spiritual grades. The dominant theme of the narthex, the Life of the Virgin is considered an introduction to the Life of Christ, although some of the Christological themes are found there as well.

The master of Kalenic is an intimist by artistic temperament, and

might have been a miniaturist by training. Although the frescoes were not signed, there have been attempts to attribute them to Radoslav, an illuminator of a Serbian Gospel now in Leningrad. Whoever was the artist of the Kalenic frescoes, he was a painter of considerable refinement, whose inspiration must have come from the Constantinopolitan works of the Early Palaeologan period (such as the mosaic at Chora). Although a retrospective artist, he brings new meaning to the iconography of his scenes by subtle changes. In the Enrollment for Taxation, the Virgin directly confronts the Roman official who is represented as the Emperor Augustus himself. Into the Miracle at Cana, this painter introduces some Serbian customs of the pre-Christian era. In his paintings the plane of composition is deep enough to accommodate all the figures, while the architecture behind them is tall and substantial (the Curing of the Lepers; the Curing of the Two Blind Men). Strict isocephalism is avoided, and the figures are no longer like the painted statues from the time of King Milutin, but elegant, two-dimensional paintings with softly modified plasticity. Although there is no great variety of facial types, this deficiency is made up for by the attempts to beautify expression. The artist takes delight in borrowing decorative elements from the minor arts of Byzantium – the rope-like design from the 10th century ivories and 11th and 12th century enamels to encircle the figures in medallions. He pays a kind of tribute to the opulence of the oriental world, which may have inspired his selection of J fashions: whenever the weapons of the Holy Warriors and their armor are minutely described, the garments are embroidered (the Marriage Feast of Cana). The architectural setting radiates light of its own and illuminates the scenes. The general tone of the coloring is light and very bright,

with bright auburns, light reds, strong yellows and bright green (quite rare) being employed.

To the donor of this church, Bogdan, who is depicted in the narthex with his wife Milica and his brother Petar, together with Despot Stefan, this must have seemed a world of beauty and religious mystery equaled only in fairy tales. This world of the noble Bogdan remains such even for us today.

Due to the irreparable losses, it is not possible to discuss ecclesiastical building programs of Despot Stefan Lazarevic (1389-1427). A church of his, built in Belgrade to honor the Dormition of the Virgin has been destroyed. Only his mausoleum remains, together with the citadel which guards it. Within this fortress of massive walls surmounted by eleven towers, learned and pious men found refuge in times of peril. This is where the last scholarly redaction of the Serbian books was done – the redaction which was to serve the nation through long centuries under Turkish rule.

Despot Stefan's church was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and its monastic complex is known as Resava. Since it was the largest church in the Morava stylistic group, the iconography of its decoration invited expansion to include the Passion cycle in addition to the standard Feasts, and the usual Miracles and Parables. Although the artists are unknown, they contributed to a homogeneous and harmonious decoration. Standing figures reside in the lower zone; above them, saints in bust, in beautifully wrought medallions; and still higher, representations of the heavenly powers are placed in the subsidiary domes. A

dynamic crescendo is reached in the double row of Prophets in the main drum.

Hence, at the very end of a long development in Serbian wall painting, the artists of Resava once again made an attempt to regain a true sense of stylistic monumentality. But the optimism and vigor of a young art were gone. The strengths, then, of Resava did not come from belief and faith, but from knowledge and refined training. Drawing is correct, but prone to pedantic translation of figures and spaces (e.g., the Communion of the Apostles). The figures have lost their structural substance, which is undermined by deep dark areas. They appear as the shadows cast upon the walls assuming complicated poses.

Perhaps the absence of a stable external order contributed to the general loss of vigor in the arts. From about 1407-1418 when this church was built and painted, the following changes in style may be noted: "realism" had given ground to exaltation; the colors tended to be abstract – the whites, blues, and golds; fewer excursions were made into the world of ornamental beauty and fantasy – more attention was paid to symbolism of location, from the entrance into the church (with Christ as the Never-Sleeping-Eye, and the Souls of the Just in the Hand of God painted above the door), to the conventionalized rendering of the Christian Eucharistic mysteries in the altar (The Communion of the Apostles; the Trinity), to the upper regions of the church where heavenly powers reside.

This was still a Byzantine world with a Gothic admixture that was well absorbed without being disturbing. This was an art which, though centuries removed from antiquity, nevertheless

remained, through it, in touch with a world of idealized realities which were once again transformed, if not rejected. Moreover, it was an art become epicene through overbreeding; an art totally dependent on a ruler's and State resources, and, as such, when that patronage was lost, the art which it sponsored also lost its *raison d'être*. Yet the message that the Serbian late mediaeval society left on the walls of this and other churches are eloquent enough. In Resava, a less usual theme of the Vision of Peter of Alexandria was painted on one of the piers. Originally created as an allegory against the Arian heresy, this scene might have been used here as a subtle reference to the threat of Islam, the danger of which was both obvious and imminent. The founder of the church, Despot Stefan, is represented in rich garments and with all the insignia of the ruler bestowed upon him by Christ and two angels. He is presenting the model of his church to the Holy Trinity – a rare rendering in Serbian art, and unique in the donor's composition. Instead of the members of the family and dynasty, the Despot stands alone amidst the holy men. We have already stated the importance of the representations of the Holy Warriors in the churches of the Morava style. In Resava they are to be seen in the south and the north lateral apses, and on some surfaces of the piers. It had been customary for the monks to read the Scriptures and their prayers before the images of these Holy Warriors for inspiration and to invoke the militant saints to come to the defense of Christianity against Islam. Probably one of the most poignant messages left to us by the Serbs from the Middle Ages is to be found hidden within the figures of such warrior saints. It might have escaped the notice of the casual observer, but the anonymous artist who painted this message must have been inspired by a person who at the

same time was classically learned, very literate, and a great theologian. On the breastplates of the young Sts. Prokopios and Jacob the Persian, there is an *imago clipeata* painted. The theme is purely classical. Roman commanders of elevated rank wore images of the frightful Gorgon head on their breastplate to ward off evil spirits or to scare off their enemies. Instead of the image of the Gorgon, Christian warriors in Resava bear the image of Christ painted within the clipeus or medallion. Christ appears as a young Child, and thus he is iconographically identified as Christ Emmanuel. The meaning is clear according to the reading of the Gospel of Matthew I, 23: "God be with us."

Icon Painting. The exteriors of the churches were decorated according to the taste of the given period; their interior walls were covered with frescoes, whose styles and quality differed a great deal. Occasionally, plain marble flooring was embellished with an inlaid design (Holy Archangels, near Prizren; Kalenic). In most instances, religious objects such as icons donated to churches did not fare half so well as the churches themselves. These small objects were easy to destroy, or carry away. Very few remain in their original homes; some survived long enough to be placed within museums. Others are known through the written sources, through the representation in the frescoes, but by far the greatest majority have been lost. For that reason, repositories such as the Serbian Hilandari Monastery on Mount Athos have historical value. The objects of art which survived destruction are the silent witnesses to how treasures of some of the great Serbian monasteries might have looked had they been spared. Scant resources are still housed in Decani, Studenica, and some other churches.

The icon inventory of a church may have been formed in the following manner. Each donor tried to provide his own foundation with those precious things: there were icons on the iconostasis, and, from the second half of the 14th century, more than just one row. There were other icons such as the true portraits of saints or events serving specially designated purposes. Icons of this type were carried in procession. Some were commemorative icons venerated in connection with a special local tradition.

Made on a very perishable base of wood, in sensitive tempera technique (the mosaic technique on the portable icons is an exception rather than the rule), they are easy to destroy, lose, or carry away. Yet some survived, and their iconography is rich, although unable to compete with the fresco repertoires. Although technically different, icons occasionally fell under the spell of fresco painting (Detani iconostasis), and broadly speaking they share the changes of style and iconography of other representational arts of the Middle Ages.

Owing to the portability of the icons and their ability to travel far, it is extremely difficult as yet to determine with absolute accuracy which icons were made by Serbian artists, and which by the Byzantines. It is much easier to identify icons specifically made for the Serbs, especially when historical Serbs are the subjects or patrons of such an object.

Classifications based on artistic qualities that would attribute all the masterpieces to the Byzantine production, while icons less well done would be given to the provincial workshops, including those in the Serbian territories, can not be accepted.

An interesting theory has been tentatively advanced which tried to localize icon production according to the coloristic approaches. Since this theory presumes some unchangeable constants – in this case a constant relationship to the color – it lacks flexibility such as necessitated by taking into account the individual artistic temperaments. According to this theory, all Byzantine icons made use of juicy coloring, with built-in transparencies and coloristic harmonies. On the other hand, the Serbian icons would have to be more intensive in color, to apply a thicker layer of paste, so as to produce more frequent clashes of color, etc. Though canonized, mediaeval art is never that obedient to absolute rules.

The usage of languages, e.g., Greek vs. Serbian, is not sufficient proof of ethnic origin, since artists, like their patrons, were frequently bilingual. The largest collection of icons, partly Serbian, is preserved in the Serbian Monastery of Hilandari on Mount Athos. The largest number of preserved icons in the territory of Yugoslavia today is to be found in Ochrid. The icons there span a period from the 11th to the end of the 15th centuries. Since Ochrid was under Serbian domination from 1334 to 1395, some of the icons there must have been made for the Serbs, by Serbian artists.

It is, however, beyond any doubt that members of the Nemanjić dynasty endowed their churches with exquisite liturgical objects, among which were books and icons. If the architects and painters had to be imported to work on the buildings and paintings in situ, it was not necessary to do so for icons, which could have been acquired and brought to any desired location

with the greatest of ease. That the first Nemanjices (late 12th century) imported icons of Byzantine origin, is strongly supported by the evidence from Hilandari. The most appropriate example is the icon of the Virgin Hodegitria (in the Hilandari treasury), which might be the product of a Constantinopolitan master working in the late Comnenian style. But, generally speaking, icons from the late 12th and 13th centuries in Serbia are a rarity. This fact can be explained not only by the natural deterioration of a much used, yet fragile object, but most likely also by wars and invasions, which damaged or destroyed even large monuments (e.g., Zica).

To the Serbian art circles of the early 13th century belongs an icon of Christ, so-called “La Saint Face de Laon,” which had already reached France in the Middle Ages. It is signed in Serbian.

The Hilandari icon of Christ in half figure is attributed to an artist of the middle 13th century, to the period when the frescoes in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Pec were created. Comparisons can be made between the icon of Christ and His Image from the Ascension fresco in that church. Both have impressive – countenances. But the fresco forms are much broader; those on the icon, much more delicate. On the icon Christ blesses with one Hand, and in the other He holds the Gospel. Its cover is very elaborate and bejeweled, decorated with gems and semi-precious stones. It provides the only decorative accent within this otherwise somber and majestic representation.

From the treasury at Hilandari also comes the icon of the Virgin

with the Child. Attributed to the middle of the 13th century, this image has been acclaimed for the nobility of its facial expression and softness of feature. It belongs to a gallery of faces which come after Mileseva and just before Sopocani.

Among the icons painted on the walls in fresco technique, it is interesting to mention the Virgin with the Child from the Church of the Virgin Ljeviska in Prizren which was executed c. 1270, four decades before the celebrated frescoes of King Milutin. Although the tradition of painting icons in fresco technique was imported from Byzantium, this image of the Virgin shows iconographic and stylistic affinities with the Italo-Byzantine madonnas of that period.

In the Vatican Sancta Sanctorum Treasury, a Serbian icon is preserved. It can be dated toward the end of the 13th century, and it includes Christ, the Apostles Peter and Paul, together with the Serbian Kings Dragutin and Milutin, and their mother, Queen Jelena. The intense linear white highlights of this icon are especially striking.

The early Palaeologan style of the 14th century is to be seen in the half figure icon of St. Panteleimon from Hilandari. Gone is the exuberant linear decorativeness (the fresco icon of St. Panteleimon in Nerezi, 1164); instead, the forms are sensitively modeled through contrasts of brightly lit and shadowed areas. White straited highlights are absent as well.

From the icon treasuries of Ochrid, a number of masterpieces of the Palaeologan style ought to be mentioned, which can be connected indirectly with the mainstream of Serbian art. A two-

sided icon of the Hodegitria with Child on one side, and the Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John on the other, can be attributed to the second half of the 13th century. The Crucifixion is especially impressive. In it the figure of St. John is draped in a spirit and manner not unlike that of Sopocani. From the standing figure of St. Matthew the Evangelist, we see that bulky drapery is dramatically rendered over the body and given in geometrical forms (tightly binding the right knee, etc.), and, thus, has more parallels in the monumental painting of that time than in the true tradition of icon painters. The icon representations of the Feasts, such as the Baptism of Christ, Doubting Thomas, the Dormition of the Virgin, and others, belong to circles close to the 14th century masters, Michael and Euthychios. Some veritable masterpieces from that period are also preserved in Ochrid: the Virgin Peribleptos on one side, and the Presentation of the Virgin on the other side, and the famous icon of the archbishop, Gregory, with the Virgin Psychosostria (Saviouress of Souls) on the front, and the Anhunciation on the reverse side. This representation of the Annunciation can be considered to be among the most beautiful achievements of the Palaeologan Renaissance, and undoubtedly was executed in the metropolitan workshops. However, its early 14th century presence in Ochrid might have served as an inspiration for the local masters. In the possession of the same ecclesiastical official was the double icon of Christ the Psychosoter (Saviour of the Soul), and the Crucifixion – another masterpiece! Thematically these two double icons bracket the entire Christian belief: from the Incarnation to the Death on the Cross for the salvation of all mankind, to the Images of Christ and His mother in their roles as the saviours of the human soul.

Another elegant work of the early 14th century, which belongs to the Hilandari Monastery, is the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple – an iconographically popular theme in icons and frescoes. Even the intimately painted fresco of the Presentation in the Chapel of Joachim and Anna in Studenica (1314) does not match the variety of types and faces, the differences in positions and the garments achieved by the icon painter from Hilandari.

To the period of King Milutin belong large iconostasis icons painted in fresco technique in the Church of St. George in Staro Nagoricino. There, the patron saint of the church is found, together with the Pelagonitissa Virgin (i.e., from the Pelagonia territory of Macedonia, indicating a regionally popular iconographic type of the Virgin – a version of Eleussa – the Virgin of Tenderness).

King Stefan Decanski donated an icon of St. Nicholas to the Church of St. Nicholas in Bari, Italy, where it was venerated as a miraculous image. No other works of this nature can be attributed to his short reign.

The execution of the Decani icons for the iconostasis probably coincided with the early stages of the decoration of the church proper, and, thus, can be dated c. 1340. Stylistically, these four icons belong to the tradition of the *pictores Graeci*, the same painters who frescoed the entire church. Although the artists knew the iconography very well, they seem to be less familiar with the delicate tempera technique used on the wooden panels. In painting these icons, *pictores Graeci* simply applied fresco technique to another medium. the background is gold, and

against it strong colors are applied in broad strokes, within well-contained forms (e.g., the Virgin Eleussa, St. John Prodromos).

From the Lesnovo iconostasis the Virgin with the Child can be mentioned. This belongs to the same decade of the 14th century, but represents the work of a locally trained artist.

The mid-14th century style is exemplified by an icon of the Virgin Hodegitria, from the small Church of St. Nicholas in Prizren. It is, once again, the work of a local artist who, in copying a Byzantine prototype, retained the coloristic scheme of the garment, but applied his colors flatly, and in broad strokes added the folds over this background. In general tonality this icon is brighter than Byzantine counterparts. A small icon of the Annunciation, now in Skopje, might have originally come from Prizren. It was also locally produced, and in it the elegant forms of the Early Palaeologan style have survived.

The Hilandari double-faced icon of the Virgin Tricheira (the Three-Handed) on the obverse and St. Nicholas on the reverse, also dates from around the middle of the 14th century, and shows the monastic taste of that time. The forms are polished and precise, but modeling is gone, especially on the body, which appears immobile now.

The next decade in icon painting might be illustrated by the Hilandari icon of the Holy Warriors, Sts. Theodore Tyron and Theodore Stratilates. These saints appear against a low parapet, which does not suggest great depth, and beyond it is the gold background. The white line striations are precisely executed, while the precise forms are still very much cultivated.

The 1380's seem to continue the graphic elaborations of surfaces, while at the same time new proportions of the figures can be detected. The influences might have come once again from Constantinopolitan art, from among the monks of Athos, or the artistic circles of Thessalonike. A good example would be the upper row of icons on the Hilandari iconostasis. There, the Deisis (Christ flanked by the Virgin and St. John Prodromos) is depicted together with the Twelve Apostles and the archangels. To observe the new elements of style, a close look at the archangel will suffice. White striated lines appear on the wings and embroidered parts of the tunic; the head shows the new proportions: the center is the point where the nose meets the brows, and the nose is taken as the unit which is twice contained in the height of forehead and hair, and once to the tip of the chin. The curls of the hair are softly modeled, while the face is given both voluminosity and monumentality by broad well-lit surfaces. All the heads are gently inclined, and the expressions appear to be pensive and melancholic (St. John Prodromos, St. Luke the Evangelist).

A number of other icons can be attributed to the closing decades of the 14th century. The Five Standing Martyrs from the Hilandari treasury, where one finds tall, slender figures, small heads ruled by isocephalism and near total frontality, with a barely indicated contra-pasto position are good examples. Another example is a magnificent diptych of Despot Toma Preljubovic from the last years of the 14th century. Today it is preserved in the Cathedral of Huenca, Spain. While the images of saints are left exposed, the remaining surfaces are covered in sumptuous form wrought in precious metal. The dominant

design is the running scroll with the palmette leaf frequently seen on book and icon covers. The central panels are occupied by the standing Virgin with Christ Child and the kneeling donatrix, and the other by a standing Christ with the donor. Both major fields are surrounded by male and female saints and angels, represented in bust and identified by inscription. The same modeling in broad dark and light surfaces and linear highlights can be observed. This line of development was continued into the 15th century.

A double-faced icon, now in Sofia, Bulgaria, originally came from the Serbian Monastery of Poganovo, near Pirot. On one side are the Virgin and St. John the Theologian, figures which are occasionally coupled in Byzantine reliefs. On the other side is a very unusual composition, which copied a 5th century mosaic from the Church of Christ Lathomon in Thessalonike, of the Vision of the Prophet Ezekiel. Although the icon copies this rare iconography, one can not be absolutely certain that it was made in that city. With its dramatic lighting and expressive forms, it is not stylistically distant from the frescoes of the Monastery of Marko, St. Nicholas Sisevski, the Church of Lipljan near Pristina, and the Church of the Transfiguration in the Monastery of Zrze, near Prilep. Zrze holds much historical interest, since through it, one can follow a group of artists, who made the bridge between the art of Macedonia under the Serbian domination and the art in Serbia of the Morava River region.

Around the middle of the 14th century, a monk named German founded the Church of the Transfiguration at Zrze in what seems to have been the family estate. Around 1365 his two grandsons

took over, and the fresco decoration of the church was executed in 1369. Eventually Zrze became very active in fresco and icon painting during the last quarter of the 14th and the first quarter of the 15th centuries. Of the two brothers, the strongest artistic personality was Metropolitan Jovan, who, with Grigorije, participated in the work on the frescoes of the Monastery of Andreas in 1389, the tragic year of the Kosovo Battle. The same Jovan seems to have been employed around 1392 in the 'region of Lake Prespa, also working in fresco technique. In 1402 he painted a large icon of Christ and a Deisis with Twelve Apostles (all in half figure) for the family foundation at Zrze. His style is discussed in connection with Andreas, but it can be stated here that it was very close to that of the Sofia icon. It is impossible to say whether or not he painted it; however, there is little doubt that the Sofia icon came from the same artistic milieu. This art was, moreover, expressive in gestures of the figures, whose faces have strong and prominent features. The voluminosity of the figures is achieved by the powerful contrasts of light and dark surfaces, which radiate inner energies that provide a visual picturesqueness. The fleshtones are deep, rich, while the white highlights are well organized, almost pedantic. Yet, Jovan does not become lost in details, and all his figures at least give the impression of monumentality. He received good training and knew contemporary trends in Byzantine art in Constantinople and the provinces.

His brother, Hieromonahos Makarije, is also well-known to us. Undoubtedly, like many other Serbs he emigrated from the Turkish conquered territories of Macedonia (possibly after the death of Kralj Marko in 1395), into the freer Serbian territories

on the Morava River. There he worked with his associates on the fresco ensemble of Princess Milica's own foundation, Ljubostinja, c. 1400, but that ensemble is quite fragmentary. A group of painters which can be associated with his style worked on another monument of the Morava school, the Monastery of Koporin, but they were painters of lesser quality. His last known work was an icon, painted for his family foundation, the Monastery of Zrze, in 1422. It was created for its main iconostasis, as the pendant of the icon of Christ, painted by his brother, some two decades earlier. This is the image of the Virgin with Christ Child, in half figure, and of the Pelagonitissa iconographic type (Virgin of Tenderness with an active Child in arms). Master Makarije possessed a solid, cultivated manner of a schooled hand, but might not have been naturally endowed with talent. His hand is linear, precise, perhaps somewhat dry; and he exaggerates features: the Virgin's eyes droop and the head of the Infant Jesus is somewhat deformed. On the other hand, he knew all the well-established coloristic combinations and effects, because he bathed his fleshtones in the same rich gold ochers of the background, and painted his outlines in red. The Virgin's maphorion is purple, with orange edging and gold tassels and stars, while her head scarf is blue. This blue is repeated on the Child's belt, whereas His tunic is white and covered with red and blue designs – an almost folkloric touch. The red tunic of Christ is held in His mother's arms. Although as an artist Makarije may have lacked expressive power, his Pelagonitissa from Zrze still impresses the beholder as a sincere and convincing icon.

So far, not many icons can be attributed to the Morava style.

That does not mean that the icons were not made during the last phase of Serbian mediaeval art. Rather, being placed in churches located in the river valleys, they were the first ones to be damaged and pillaged by invading armies. Also, many others might have been removed in the subsequent migration and become lost in that process.

Nevertheless, there are several extant examples which can be cited here as of that period. They were either produced in Hilandari, or taken and preserved there; in the more recent period they found their way to the Belgrade collections. Among those is the Archangel Michael's Miracle at Hona (Belgrade, National Museum). Though badly damaged, we can observe that the background hills, which rise upward steeply, are manneristic and flat, and the domed church behind the monk Archipa is equally non-tridimensional. The monk Archipa stands in the left foreground. His head is depicted in profile, his tall figure is bent and rather broad in silhouette. Over his long monastic shirt he wears a long, hooded cloak. The archangel, on the left, assumes a rather complicated position since his head and shoulders are turned three-quarter view toward the monk, while the rest of his body and legs face in the opposite direction. The drapery of his himation is rendered in very flat, and rather geometrical folds; the highlights are white and striated. There is a sense of the end of a tradition here, rather than of a new departure. Another very small icon probably belongs to the same, traditional, monastic workshop (Belgrade, National Museum). The same dark tonality predominates here. Its interest lies in the typically Serbian subject: two sainted members of the Nemanjic Dynasty, depicted here as facing the observer. The background is flat: one-third is

given to the ground line, and two-thirds to the neutral gold field. St. Sava stands on the left. He was the first Serbian archbishop. He wears ecclesiastical garments suited to that elevated position. His right hand is extended in blessing, and the other holds a closed book in a prominently displayed position. He is dark-haired and bearded. On the right stands his father, Stevan Nemanja, in the garb of a contemporary monk of the Great Order. In his right hand, which is placed before him, he holds a cross; and in his left, an open scroll with a Serbian inscription. The general feeling about their bodies is a flat rendering, with deep shadows, dark tonality and very prominent white highlights. Both figures are haloed.

The third example to be used here is the icon representing St. Demetrios. Against a plain gold background, the armed figure of this Holy Warrior stands in full military garb. Even though minutious, forms were inspired by the contemporary monumental prototypes in frescoes. The figure does not appear substantial, but a thin shadow against the neutral field. The face is modeled more strongly with alternating light and dark planes. Its very elongated shape with very thick mass of hair is very close to the Morava ideal of head proportions.

Due to the lack of surviving major iconic examples, our picture of late Serbian painting on icons is necessarily incomplete. The examples cited above are minor, in every way, and must be considered as having been produced outside the mainstream of Serbian art of the Morava style. And although that remnant showed signs of exhaustion, it is, nonetheless, that branch of mediaeval art which, in Serbia, demonstrated the greatest

longevity. In this regard, it linked the late mediaeval tradition with the 19th century and connected icon painting with the new styles. Thus, until recently, it was possible to find in Macedonia traditional icon painters who faithfully reproduced ancient prototypes owing to the vitality of a vigorous and unbroken folkloric tradition.

The Applied Arts. Besides icons, there were chalices and patens, crosses and reliquaries, book and icon covers wrought in silver, bronze, or even gold or made of bone, and carved in stone. They were covered with pearls and precious stones, maybe even with carved cameos. There were censers and candle holders, rhipidia and candelabra, and large chandeliers (Decani), but these objects are to be seen in the museums of London and Leningrad, the Vatican and Belgrade, rather than in Mileseva and the other Serbian places of origin.

Generally speaking, the objects of the so-called minor arts in mediaeval Serbia followed the evolutionary paths of the monumental styles. In the period of the Raska school, traces of Romanesque art are visible, but as the artistic center moved closer to the Byzantines, their influence prevailed. Finally, in design and decoration, those objects manifested stylistic characteristics of the Morava school, despite foreign influences. The copying of any style was never slavish, but the Serbian ethnic identity emerges among the imported objects of the same period, through the specific unification of the divergent styles. The workshops for such objects existed within the monastic communities (Studena, Decani) and among the free craftsmen in a city-community (Novo Brdo).

The donors also made gifts of rich clothes and garments to their churches; in many cases these items were imported from Byzantium and Italy and some were embroidered in Serbia. An outstanding example is a 14th century embroidered icon of the Virgin Hodegitria, which is done on canvas with silver and gold wire silk thread and with the additional use of tempera. Many other embroidered pieces were used within the context of liturgical ceremonial.

Sadly for us, the identities of most Serbian artists working in this particular field during the Middle Ages are unknown to us. Of those known artists creating in the field of architecture, fresco or icon painting, all have been men – so far. Serbian women, on the other hand, have expressed themselves almost exclusively in the literary field. That much has been established. Now, insofar as the visual arts are concerned, there is scant evidence to support the contention that women were employed in these fields even in a minor way. True, in Serbia many distinguished patronesses of the arts (Queen Jelena, Princess Milica, noblewoman Danica and others) were responsible for the creation of their own churches – foundations and their fresco decoration – but what of the artists themselves?

Happily, we are in possession of abundant evidence for the existence of artistic works executed by a Serbian lady of high station. Her given name was Jelena (Helen), but she is better known under her religious name – Jefimija. Born to the eminent Nemanjic line, her father was Caesar Vojihna of Drama, a nephew of Tzar Dusan. Jefimija's birthdate can be fixed about 1349, and she was married to one of the MrnjavCevic brothers,

Despot Ugljesa, the ruler of the Serres territories. When Jefimija's young son died sometime between 1368 and 1371, and was buried in the Hilandari church, she had his christening diptych icon donated to that monastery. On the back of the icon, on gilded silver placks, she had inscribed in Greek a lamentation for her lost son, in which she expressed sincere human grief. When her husband, Ugljeca, died at the Battle of Marica in 1371, she, now a very young widow, withdrew to the Serbian court of Prince Lazar. There she found shelter with another lady of the Nemanjic line, Princess Milica, Lazar's wife. It is there that she took the monastic vows and the name Jefimija (Euphemia). At approximately this time she placed her gifts in Nemanja's own mausoleum church, the Monastery of Studenica. After the Battle of Kosovo, in which Lazar died, Jefimija remained with Milica as her constant companion, helper in government during Stefan's minority, and as diplomatic adviser. It is recorded that the Princess Milica, together with Jefimija, went on a political mission to the court of the Turkish Sultan, Bayazid (1354-1403) in Serres. Jefimija and Milica both lived in the latter's foundation, the Monastery of Ljubostinja. Jelena-Jefimija died some time after 1405, but the location of her tomb is unknown.

In the course of her life during the upheavals of that era, Jefimija found the time to compose literary works, and to embroider some others. Three of the latter are still extant. Although her name appears in the inscriptions on all three works, scholars have divided opinions about her artistic authorship. While her literary works are acknowledged, there is no conclusive evidence of her authorship of the artistic works included therein. Yet her visual output would not be incongruous to the cultured

and art sponsoring tradition of the Nemanjic dynasty in general, and the Nemanjic ladies in particular. Her own time, the late 14th and the early 15th centuries, knew of such phenomena in the West as well.

For the Church of the Virgin in the Hilandari Monastery, Jefimija embroidered a curtain for the royal door of the altar c. 1399. It is both a beautiful and a rare work of art, and is now preserved in the monastery's treasury. On red satin (1.44 by 1.18 m) she embroidered in gold and silver wire thread an iconographically abbreviated version of the Divine Liturgy. Christ, wearing priestly robes, is depicted larger than all the other figures, and is placed between the great Eastern Church Fathers and Liturgists – St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great. Above the holy fathers stand two angels, holding liturgical fans. At the feet of Christ, Jefimija placed an inscribed prayer (usually read before the Communion in the Orthodox rite) where she is mentioned as the donor.

Her second work is dated in 1402 on the basis of historically verified evidence. It is an originally composed ekphrasis (praise) of Prince Lazar, now preserved in the Museum of Church Art in Belgrade. This praise was embroidered on a piece of red satin (0.99 by 0.69 m) in gold thread, and it was destined to be the cover for the coffin containing the body of this martyred prince. The whole text is surrounded by a simple ornament composed of the foliated running scroll. In large and elegant script, and in the poetically beautiful and rich Serbian literary language, full of expressive national and personal feeling, Jefimija addresses her prayer to the sainted Lazar, asking his help and his intercession

on behalf of his sons with the saints. Since Stefan and Vuk had to participate in the Battle of Angora (1402), a special invocation is made to the military saints (Sts. George, Demetrios, the two Theodores, Mercurios and Prokopios), the same saints whose fresco renderings prominently decorated the walls of the Morava style churches.

Jefimija's last known work was done in the Ljubostinja Monastery in 1405, and it is now preserved in the treasury of the Putna Monastery in Romania. It is not known by which ways it arrived there, since this embroidery was done in memory of her mother, and destined to go to a monastery in Eastern Macedonia, where her mother was buried. This work is an epitaphios, embroidered on silk with gold wire and silk thread, and decorated with semi-precious stones (1.70 by 1.11 m). Against a star-studded background, the outstretched body of the dead Christ is surrounded by a choir of officious and ministrating angels. While the iconography follows the strictly prescribed rules, scholars feel that the true originality of Jefimija is expressed in her sense of harmonious composition and in well-rendered angels, whose movements and gestures are very vivid. The inscribed Greek text here is derived from the Byzantine source – the Lamentation of the Virgin. This was read during services on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Jefimija's example as writer and artist remains an isolated, contribution – one which was possible for women in the highly cultured court of the Serbian Despots. On the basis of this example, however, one can not help but wonder how many unknown nuns and pious ladies who helped create the

magnificent embroideries used in the Liturgy will never be known. One fact is worth restating; many such efforts were the products of considerable and often major artistic prominence.

Illuminated Manuscripts. Written works were not rare in the Middle Ages, although, because of innumerable losses, it would appear so. In the Serbian Mediaeval foundations, the Gospels and other liturgical works were necessary for the ceremony. Many a royal or feudal household had such books of their own, among which the Psalter would have been most often included. However, not all of these books were decorated. Unadorned Serbian books written in the glagolitic alphabet predate the illuminated Gospel of Prince Miroslav by at least a century (e.g., St. Mary's Glagolitic Gospel, 11th century on paper). But without the artistic embellishment they fall outside the category which concerns us here.

The mixed tradition of predominantly Romanesque nature which dominated already discussed Gospel of Prince Miroslav was continued. The Gospel of Vukan, probably made in Ras, which dates from the early 13th century (now in Leningrad), continued with the tradition of teratological initials, while its style shows a combination of Benedictine Romanesque and late Comnenian linearism, prevalent among the first frescoes of the Raska school (e . g., Christ Emmanuel Enthroned; Seated Evangelist John).

The Gospel of Prizren (Belgrade, National Library, No. 297, burned in April 1941 by German bombs) from the 13th century was written on parchment, and stood opposed to the sophisticated artistic tradition cultivated by the first Nemanjices. This Gospel was decorated with miniatures illustrating scenes

from the Gospels and the Apocryphal texts, as well as single figures of saints. In its iconography and style, possibly touched by Western influences. Figures are unskillfully drawn, bound by strong outlines, and filled in with colors. The general affinities are to be found in Syriac works of the 9th and later centuries, as well as those produced among the Irish monks, who used much the same technique. Among the scenes one can list the Presentation in the Temple, in which the figures appear as cut-out silhouettes, with large, staring eyes (fol. 60 v). Single figures are drawn in much the same vein, but noteworthy are St. Theodore Tyron dressed in his military armor killing a triple-headed dragon (fol. 97 v), and the Seated Evangelist Mark, whose visual parallels for the body, drapery, and head can be found in the Books of Dimma and Durrow.

While discrepancy existed between Serbian frescoes and miniatures in the 13th century, the 14th century picture is entirely different. The same classicizing spirit which ruled the frescoes of the court school of King Milutin is apparent here. In the early 14th century Serbian miniatures embraced the Palaeologan Renaissance, which produced the outstanding example of that style – the Hilandari Gospels (no. 13), on parchment. Within the ornamental frontpiece for the Gospel of St. Mark, in a quadrofoil, the Evangelist is seated. Beside him stands a tall, female figure – the personification of Divine Inspiration, and, like a classical muse, she dictates the words of the text (fol. 98 r). The same theme is seen in the Serbian Gospel of the early 14th century (Belgrade, SAN., no. 69, the so-called “Kumanicko Jevandjelje,” written in 16th century, with inserted older miniatures), in which the Evangelist Matthew can be seen

writing in his studio (fol. 1 v). Behind him once again appears the muse, inspiring the author. The first plan is separated from the second by a low parapet wall, and in the background appears a tall, roofed building. The entire scene is framed in a decorative arch, with floral motif filling the corners. The gold is applied to the background behind the foliage, to the halo of the Evangelist, on the sleeve of his tunic, on the garment of the muse, and on the bookstand. The predominant colors are the bright, rich red, the green, the blue, brown tones for the furniture” and pale bluishgray, with touches of pink and mauve for the architecture.

Two other Gospels throw light on miniature painting just after the middle of the 14th century. While the pictores Graeci dominate fresco painting of this time for Tzar Dusan and his immediate heir, the Hilandari Gospels of Nikola Stanjevic (dated c. 1355, London, British Museum, No. 154) show strong Byzantine influence in the painted ornaments, while the portraits show affinities with the style of the Lesnovo narthex, and with the traces of local realism. The other Hilandari Gospel (No.9), dated in 1360, shows an outstanding coloristic effect, at the period when, in fresco, color was more decorative than refined. In some ways this particular Gospel almost foreshadows the coloristic beauty of the Resava School.

Toward the end of the 14th century, the famous Serbian Psalter was created (Munich, Staat. Landsbibl. Cod. Salvo No.4). It was painted by the Serbian masters or master trained in Macedonian regions, who might have moved to the Morava region with the patrons. This book was in the possession of Despot Djuradj in the 15th century; in the 17th century it turns up in one of the

monasteries of Fruska Gora, Srem. From thence it was taken by a German soldier, to find later, in the 19th century, its final home in Munich.

In its present state, this Psalter contains the largest body of the Serbian miniatures (altogether 154). In iconography it is dependent on the themes found in monumental painting from the periods of Milutin and Dusan (Nagoricino, Lesnovo, Mateica, etc.). Its repertoire consists of some rarely depicted scenes from the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and also illustrations of the Psalms. In the context of Old-New Testament parallelism there are representations of the Feast Cycle, the Passion of Christ, some of the Parables of Christ, Canticles and hymns, including the Acatystos Hymn to the Virgin. Although inspired by the iconography of the monumental frescoes, the illustrations of the Munich Psalter are not diminished wall pictures, but images well adapted to the need of the codex. The style of drawing is swift, the colors vivid and fresh, with white highlights. Some effort to model figures is shown, permitting them to move convincingly on those pages, but proportion lacks the elegance of Milutin's court school, or the elongation found in the Morava style.

Dualistic tendencies can be seen in the miniatures produced during the Morava period. On one hand there are the ecclesiastical manuscripts, which continued the traditions of the high court style. When illuminated with the non-figurative themes, the decorative effects are achieved with molten gold and with the enamel-like colors, reminiscent of the luxurious

ornamentation of Byzantine frontpieces and enamels (Gospels, on parchment, end 14th century, Belgrade, SAN, No. 277).

The major work of the figurative style is the Gospel Book now in Leningrad (Public Library, F. 1, No. 591), which was written in 1429 by an anonymous monk from Athos. Its miniatures were painted by master Radoslav. The style of this elegant painter might have been formed on Athos, while on the territory of the Morava group, its closest parallels are to be found in the frescoes from the Kalenic Monastery (finished before 1418). This Tetraevangelium contains simple initials, a richly decorated frontpiece for each of the Gospels, and the portraits of the Evangelists. The Evangelists are seated, in three-quarter view, in their scriptoria. They are tall, subtly drawn figures, with small heads, whose garments respond to the movement of the body. While the seats, desks, and all other details are described with a great deal of care, the background is a closed off, neutral surface, rather than the impressive architectural setting of the early 14th century. Although each of the Evangelists and his symbol follow the iconographically established types, Radoslav, who signed his name on the portrait of St. John, was able to enliven those faces with psychological expressions. Hence, they appear as pensive, introverted sages. Each of the four is accompanied by a personification, which is no longer a classical muse; rather they are gentle, almost sentimental renderings of angel-like creatures, and are to be identified as personifications of Divine Wisdom. Hagia Sophia touches St. Matthew on the neck with her fingers, while the other hand, together with that of the Evangelists, supports the half open Gospel Book. She does not have the usual circular nimbus (halo), but one formed into eight points

by two intersecting rhomboid shapes. Such halos are to be seen in the Byzantine art of Mistra and other regions, and there were attempts by scholars to attribute those to the circles of the Hesychasts. The personification which stands beside St. John places her cheek against his temple. The coloring is dominated by the blues and the gold. This particular manuscript illustrates the high achievements of the court style of the Serbian Despotate, which besides the Byzantine, retained certain sentimental touches of the Gothic style.

On the other hand, there is a small body of surviving manuscripts, the illustrations of which are more amusing than artistic. Those manuscripts are of secular nature, and were executed for the nobles of this period. One such example was the Serbian translation of the pseudo-Callistenos novel about Alexander the Great. Until recently, there were two preserved manuscripts; one presently resides in Sofia, Bulgaria, and it contains many more scenes from the novel, but displays rather unskilled drawing, and empty spaces which were never filled with the illustrations. The other example in Belgrade (National Library, manuscript on paper, No. 757, burned in April 1941), dated from the end of the 14th century, and it contained more portraits than scenes. The drawings are naive, as in the representation of the Tomb of Alexander and Roxanna, which is a fantastic building, outlined in pen, and filled in with flat colors. The same treatment is given to the highly schematized trees. More interesting are the "portraits" of ancient heroes. Although the faces are drawn in simple outline, the costumes were executed with greater care and exactitude, not according to the classical prototypes, but based on the contemporary

costumes of the nobility. For example, Alexander the Great (fol. 26 v.), wears a tall hat, similar to that worn by Theodore Metochites in the mosaic at Chora in Constantinople (c. 1315); he is clad in a long, belted gown, and has a cloak thrown over his shoulders. These miniatures were important sources for the documentation of Serbian costume of the late Middle Ages. This so-called “popular style” has parallels in the early 15th century Serbian frescoes in Veluce, in some of the manuscripts produced at this period on Athos, especially those that describe the Holy Sites of Palestine, and, finally, in the drawings from the Belgrade Alexandride which are close in spirit to the reliefs that decorated stecci.

Stecci – the Popular Art. Among the most fascinating of mediaeval phenomena observed in the territories of Bosnia, Hercegovina, Crna Gora (Montenegro), Dalmatia, and western Serbia are the stecci – or sepulchral monuments of popular burial tradition. Called “bilig” (marker) or “kam” (stone), and “marmor” (marble) by the people, their number has been estimated at over 40,000. Already mentioned by the 16th century travelers, they have been studied ever since, but never with such systematic determination as recently. Still, these peculiar monuments have not yielded all their secrets. Situated on the plains, along roads, or on somewhat elevated hillocks, near sources of water and in rocky areas, these monuments belong to the twilight zone between monumental and folk art.

Their number varies with the site; a small number usually designates a family plot, a large number suggests the location of a tribal cemetery. Individual grave markers also vary in size,

shape and decoration, but hardly ever in material – with an almost exclusive usage of the widely found sandstone. Among the stecci shapes, the cross and obelisque kind are the rarest. Plain slabs, low and high coffins, and sarcophagi are more numerous, respectively, among stecci. Some examples are highly polished; others, unfinished and rough. Arrangement of stecci seems based on a kind of pattern corresponding to the configuration of the terrain.

As far as their origins are concerned, scholars have been proposing a classical prototype for the sarcophagi on the one hand, and on the other, a relationship to the Slavic type of house dwelling. Most likely, stecci are of diverse origin and inspiration, and if, indeed, the sarcophagus type is derived from classical antiquity, some of the decoration seems to be closely connected with traditional wood carving patterns in folk art.

There were theories connecting the stecci monuments with the Bogomil sect which, when exiled from Bulgaria and expelled from Serbia in the late 12th century, found refuge in the Bosnian regions. This hypothesis has not been confirmed so far by any historical evidence. The usual position of the corpse buried under the marker, was with the head due west, thus facing east, which is not any different from the Orthodox custom of burial, nor from many other ancient rites as well. The offerings left with the buried are modest, and suggest economic circumstances more than sectarian traits. Popular names for these cemeteries among the people – Greek, Roman, Hungarian, Jewish, Bogomil, Kaurski – do not indicate merely ethnic groupings,

but rather try to suggest something which is different or foreign. Undoubtedly those names belong to the more recent tradition.

The greatest number of the stecci are plain; a smaller number, decorated. The most outstanding cases of carved monuments come from the region of Hercegovina. Although a complete iconographic classification is still lacking, “themes” which are not completely understood may be divided into the sacred and secular groups. The first group contains the crescent, star, rosette, sun, cross, wreath, sword, shield; and the second, secular and decorative symbols. In the secular group the prominent place is occupied by the representations of hunts and tournaments, renderings of the dancing in circles (*kolo*), varieties of animals such as deer, horses, boar, bears, dogs, falcons and fantastic beasts. Such themes belong to the general repertoire of the mediaeval art. The ornaments also exhibit a rich blend of geometric and floral patterns. Execution differs in quality, but all decoration is carried out in the lowrelief technique. The human figure is especially simply and schematically rendered. Artistically, the most outstanding examples come from Hercegovina where inscribed stecci have been found. The inscriptions were in the old Bosnian type Cyrillic alphabet – the so-called “Bosancica.” They do not provide information on events, although some data can be deduced. Certain family names and persons have been tentatively identified and placed in a relative chronological order. Those who wrote the inscriptions were called “*dijaci*,” i.e., students or scribes, and among their names are those commonly employed by Serbs, in the Middle Ages: Semorad, Radoje, Vuk, Vukasin. The stone cutters were called “*kovaci*” – literally

“blacksmiths,” and the terminology used for their work was “to cut” or *lito do* (sjekli and cinili). Some of the names of those artisans are also known, and similar ethnic identification as in the case of the “dijaci” might be deduced: Grubac, Milic, Radic, Petko, Ratko, Miogost, Dragisa, and others.

The precise chronology of the *stecci* is impossible to establish, and their rustic forms make this task even more difficult. An attempt to attribute an origin as early as the 12th and 13th centuries has merit, since their golden age fell between the 14th and 15th centuries, while their extended existence might reach as late as the 17th century.

Whatever further evidence reveals about the *stecci*, those monuments seen in Grnji Vakuf, Duvanjsko Polje, Zgosca, Sujica, Radimlja, Ljubusko, Boljuni, Olovo and many other sites will remain unique artistic folkloric expression of a particular set of circumstances.

The Citadels. The fervent words of an embroidered prayer, a silent appeal painted in fresco on a breastplate of a Holy Warrior imploring Christ Emmanuel’s assistance, brave hearts, and, finally, strong walls did not protect the heirs of the older civilization from the incursion of a new and militant enemy.

The silent testimonies of ancient battles – ruins of fortified places and towers – mar the landscape of the Balkan regions. But invasions and wars were not new to those territories where periods of peace and creative activity alternated with eras of war and devastation, in an epic rhythm all their own.

The history of fortifications in those regions goes back at least to the ancient inhabitants of the Balkans – the Illyrians – who fortified the strategic mountain ridges for their own defenses. The Roman conquerors of the Balkans erected their regularly shaped fortified camps wherever they were necessary, the locality dictated, by the strategic needs, rather than by the topography (Sirmius, Singidunum, Naissus, Skupi, Lychnidos). The Byzantines continued to man those citadels and others in vain against the oncoming barbarian Huns, Germans, Avars, and Slavs (at Stobi and Caritin Grad). The Slavs must have developed their own system of defenses, although there is no evidence preserved to show uninterrupted continuity. It can be assumed with a certain amount of accuracy that early fortified structures among the Slavs were made of perishable materials, such as wood. The memory of such structures has survived indirectly – in the Serbian names for some of the fortifications: “Drvengrad,” near Prizren means in translation “Wooden City,” and “Brvenik” (this name is found on two sites on the Rivers Ibar and Lab), translates as “Made of Logs.” The mediaeval Serbian state inherited the tradition of the fortification from the Byzantines from whom the tradition came, via crusaders, to the West.

The Serbian name for a fortification is “grad,” which means, simply, “city.” Not all of these preserved fortifications were cities in the modern sense. But some were, e.g., Visegrad (near Prizren) and Novo Brdo (near Pristina). Their primary purpose, then, was the defense of a region, an important highway (Belgrade, Golubac, Maglic, Milesevac), and commercial enterprises (Novo Brdo, Ostrovac, Brskovo), and protection for

the residence of state officials – feudatories and clerics – and their properties (Visegrad, near Prizren; Bar, Skopje, Markov Grad near Prilep, Maglic, Kupinik, Krusevac, Belgrade, Smederevo). Some monasteries (Studenica, Pee, Banjska, Ravanica, Sisojevac, Resava) were fortified, while some had a tower built into the church complex itself (Djurdjevi Stupovi, Ilea, Banjska, Sopocani).

Around some of the fortresses, economic enterprise flourished, and suburban colonies multiplied. Craftsmen, traders, and foreign merchants took advantage of their protective embrace to carry on commerce of many kinds. As suburbs grew, very frequently walls were thrown up around them, too (Milesevac, Prokuplje, Sokolac, Visegrad, Novo Brdo).

The shape of ground plans of fortifications built on promontories – varied according to natural features. Much importance was placed on ease of defense, the possible direction of attack, and access to water. Exposed areas were provided with better defenses (Golubac).

Ruins of the kind that we are interested in belong to the 14th and 15th centuries. As the Ottomans advanced, fortresses were hastily erected in the flatlands of the Morava territories. Prince Lazar strengthened his capital of Krusevac, as well as his princely mausoleum, Ravanica Monastery. Despot Stefan Lazarevic likewise fortified Belgrade and his mausoleum, Resava Monastery, while Despot Djuradj Brankovic raised one of the most beautiful of mediaeval fortresses – Smederevo on the Danube. The building of this strategic fortresscity is attributed to the Despot's wife in Serbian epic poetry, where she is called

“Prokleta Jerina” (cursed or damned Jerina) due to the taxes and backbreaking work imposed upon the people which were necessary for the completion of this undertaking. A typical water fortress, Smederevo was triangular in shape. Constructed in two stages, first the inner city containing the Despot’s residence was put up, and second, a larger perimeter of walls that housed the city defenders. This citadel was surrounded by water on all three sides – the Danube and the River Jezava on two, and a water-filled moat on the third side. Smederevo was one of the largest mediaeval fortresses of its time. In spite of hasty construction (1328-1330), the walls and towers were, nevertheless, given decorative treatment. Its fall into Turkish hands in 1459 marks the end of the mediaeval Serbian state.

In spite of their ruined condition, some of Serbia’s fortresses still manifest signs of an earlier formidability though their usefulness in martial arts has long since vanished. Today they are only picturesque survivors and monuments to a not inglorious past. Among the most beautiful sites, besides Smederevo, are: Golubac, Maglic, Zvecan; Zabljak, Kotor, Milisevac, Sokolac, and Markov Grad.

# Period Under the Turkish Rule:

## 1459-1690

The Turkish conquest of the Balkans occurred in slow stages. The Bulgarian states fell in 1393 and 1396; Byzantium ceased to exist with the fall of Constantinople in 1453; and independent Serbia ended its long history when Smederevo was conquered in 1459. Bosnia and Herzegovina followed suit in 1463 and 1482, respectively, while the last stronghold of Serbian independence, Zeta, was taken in 1499.

Migrations of the Serbs under Ottoman pressure had already started in the late 14th century and continued through the following centuries northward and westward into the territories of Hungary (Backa, Banat, Srem), and even further than the political borders of today's Yugoslavia, into Hungary and modern Romania. Serbian refugees also sought shelter in the Croatian territories of Slavonia and other places where they became known under the name of "uskoci."

The Serbian autocephalous church survived the fall of the state

by a few years. The Turks did not abolish the Patriarchate immediately owing to their preoccupation with Hungary. However, following the death of the Serbian Patriarch, Arsenije II in 1463, the post was left vacant, and the independent Serbian church was subordinated to an ecclesiastical center in Ochrid, which replaced leading Serbian churchmen with Greek clergy. But some Serbian metropolitan areas – those of Belgrade, Zeta, and Hercegovina – did not recognize the authority of the archbishop of Ochrid, and there is where the matter lay until the reestablishment of the Patriarchate in 1557.

During the last decades of Serbian independence, the creative energies, which in the Western world characterized the Renaissance, were, in Serbia, committed to the construction of fortified citadels, away from any great ecclesiastical building program of the previous generation. Yet, artistic activities under Turkish rule were not completely extinguished. Already in the 15th century there are traces of attempted restorations of the monuments, which indicate that artists were still available. St. Niceta was restored in 1489, and Poganovo Monastery, a decade later. Frescoes of this era are almost monochromatic in color, but they are still effective in their use of dramatic lighting, indicating a further evolution of the Byzantine inheritance.

## **Architecture**

During the second half of the 15th century, Serbia had experienced a decline of leadership. The ruler and his family, and the mighty feudal lords were either dead or emigrated. Thus, from the 16th century, the smaller land owner, the villager,

priest and monk became the new patrons and benefactors. But the churches now erected were modest in comparison to their antecedents. Done by local craftsmen, rather than highly trained artists, the exteriors of new buildings were devoid of carved decoration, which when attempted seem conspicuously naive. Building materials were of predominantly undressed stone, frequently covered with plaster and whitewash. Exterior elevations are unimpressive, and the correlation between the exterior and interior spaces is not clearly indicated. Interiors themselves were embellished with frescoes and, although one can not speak of specific styles in connection with the architecture of the 16th and 17th century churches, certain among them exhibited features which depended very much upon local traditions. Many are simple one-nave churches, without domes (The Presentation of the Virgin; The Presentation of Christ; The Transfiguration – all in the Ovcar-Kablar Canyon). Examples of domed structures, such as those found near the River Drina (Tronosa, Raca, Papraca, Tamna) are definitely inspired by the ancient Raska-type church. Thus, they have low, side choir chapels, which appear as transepts on the ground plan, a type exemplified by Majstorovina near Bijelo Polje, and Dobrilovina on Tara mountain. But structures raised in the territory of Crna Gora (a term applied to the ancient Zeta at the end of the 15th century in Venetian sources) show signs of a great traditionalism. The ancient form of the three-naved basilica also rises here with some variation in the types of domes employed (St. Trojica, Plevlje; Nikoljac, near Bijelo Polje; the Piva Monastery on the River Piva). A frequently used plan was that of a triconchos, which was popular in the Morava style. To this type belong: Jovanje in Ovcar-Kablar Canyon; Lapusnja,

Lozica, Krepicevac, and others. All those churches date from the middle of the 16th to the end of the 17th centuries and were erected in regions around the River Drina (Tronosa, Raca on the Serbian side, and on the Bosnian side: Papraca, Vozuca, Lomnica and Tamna), or in the remote river canyons.

In the meantime, those Serbs who escaped from the Turks north to the Danube and Sava Rivers, continued to build their own foundations in the domains of Hungary. Some of these are attributed to the members of the Brankovic and other families. The monasteries of Grgeteg, Bodjani, and Hordos near Arad, which date from the last quarter of the 15th century seem to be of Serbian origin. Another group of monasteries evolved in Srem, around Fruska Gora, and some of those benefited from the munificence of the last members of Serbian families with the title of Despot. There were sixteen structures in this group, and they all followed the Morava style or, triconchos plan – thus showing a very conscious adherence to the national tradition. Novo Hopovo and Krusedol had ties to the last of the Serbian Despots in the early years of the 16th century. v v v They were followed by Jazak, Belika Remeta, Sisatovac, Besenovo, Kuvezdin, Vrdnik (also called Ravanica), and the lesser known Petkovica, Mala Remeta, Beotin, Privina Glava and Djipsa. Those churches were decorated with frescoes, and almost without exception were very heavily damaged during World War II.

After the disastrous events of the last years of the 17th century and the abolition of the Serbian Patriarchate in 1693, architectural activity that employed bricks and stone ceased. In

the 18th and 19th centuries small wooden churches were erected in villages by the peasants. These structures, prone to fires and demolitions in the course of the 19th century, had little chance of surviving, so very few have come down to us. With their tall shingled roofs, they are little different, except for the rounded apse, in style and technique from average village dwellings. Really, they belong to the domain of folk art. Some of them are still preserved and serve as documentary evidence for the existence of many more which are now irretrievably lost (e.g., the church in Nakucani, burned in the early 19th century). In existence are churches in Takovo; in a village, Radojevici, on the Zlatar mountain; near Crniljevo; and near Osecina.



Fig. 29. Osecina near Valjevo. Village Church with Wooden Roof. View from the N-E., 19th Century. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

## Fresco Paintings

While the Turkish authorities imposed controls on the architectural activities of their vassals, what happened to the interior of the ecclesiastical buildings was not their concern. Thus, within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the renewed Patriarchate (which extended from Custendil in Bulgaria to Kupa in Croatia and from v Stip in Macedonia to Budim in Hungary), there was a great deal of fresco painting. The focus of all the activity was the ancient monasteries, since in many respects, the ecclesiastical powers had assumed civil roles in the absence of secular leadership. Ecclesiastical as well as secular books were copied (the Code of Tzar Dusan; the Biographies of Serbian Rulers), and while there were many wandering scribes, there were also permanently installed scriptoria within such monasteries as Pee, Decani, Nikoljac in Bijelo Polje, and St. Trojica in Plevlje. Besides icons which were made and survived, the travelers who passed through these monasteries reported tremendous wealth in silver, gold, and other precious objects.

After 1557, permission was granted by Turkish authorities to renovate or rebuild the damaged structures, and the Patriarchate immediately applied its energies to that task. Renovations were carried out in Pee and Gracanica, among others, while Piva Monastery, and Hopovo Monastery, among others, were built.

Inscriptions provide evidence of the identities and occupations of new donors. Many were wealthy merchants, villagers, priests and monks. The Patriarch himself led all in the sponsorship of the arts. The fresco decoration could be carried out in as little as three weeks' time, or it could last up to two years. Between

the Patriarchate of Makarije (1557-1571) and that of Pajsije (1614-1647), about sixty monuments with fresco paintings have been recorded by scholars. As was the case during the earlier period, the iconography was theologically well-planned. Small village churches displayed obligatory themes of standing saints in the lower zone. In the upper zones, there were the Great Feasts, while the Passion cycle was an exception rather than the rule (often it was merged with the Feast Cycle). The same can be said for the cycle from the life of the patron saint of the church, which found its place, not on the wall of the church, but on the large icons. The popular representations of the Last Judgment provide amusing episodes of punishment for petty crimes. Special stress was placed upon the representations of the Serbian saints (rulers and the ecclesiastical figures: Pee, Gracanica, Hilandari, Moraca and others; the local martyrs were represented as well). It is surprising to find that imported iconographic themes were very limited, implying both artistic isolationism and a strong tendency toward the preservation of that which was national in religion and culture.

The list of the great fresco programs is headed by the narthex at Pee, which dates from 1561. A rather unified group of masters must have worked there, but only one painter signed his name: Andrija. The colors of these frescoes are not refined, and the drawing, though correct, is rather dry and schematical, permitting little movement. This master attempts to lend the monumentality to the standing figures of the Apostles by the usage of bulky garments. However, the heads and the hands are disproportionately small for the bodies. Faithfulness to the 14th century compositions can be observed in the scene from

the Transfiguration, in which even the floating end of Moses' himation is reproduced. But the hills of the landscape are dryer and more barren; the movements of the Apostles much less vigorous, and a great deal of attention is paid to decorative elements (medallions and borders), even to the pearls and jewels of the garments. All the formal components of composition are employed. Thus, there are landscapes, architecture, and human figures, and an over-abundance of detail. Nevertheless, the general impact is of a rather competent workshop.

The restoration carried out in Milesevo in the 1560's has come down in rather damaged condition. Still, it is possible to observe in connection with the habits of the 15th century artists that they respected the 13th century prototypes. While attempting to adjust their style of painting to much larger and more monumental forms.

The masters from Pee also worked in the mausoleum of Nemanja – the Church of the Virgin at Studenica – in 1568. They repainted 186 the altar, part of the nave and the inner narthex. Here also they respected the remains of the past, by adapting their 16th century works to 14th century style and composition, and to the specific demands of early 13th century architectural spaces. Among single figures, one observes St. Sava the Serbian, and St. George the New (Kratovac). Interesting is the portrait of the kneeling nun, Anastasia, who is addressing her prayer to the enthroned Virgin holding the Christ Child. These figures appear monumental, although there is a great deal of dry linearism in the technique and a great deal of attention to details. The compositions are much closer to the 14th century schemes, but

the deterioration is felt in the proportions of the figures (The Resurrection of Lazarus, The Last Supper).

The fresco decoration of the Monastery of Savina preceded that of Studeni ca by two years, while that of Gracanirca postdates it by the same number of years. It is felt by scholars that the workshop which started at Pee, reached maturity in the narthex of Gracanica. The standing saints (e.g., St. Sava of Jerusalem, and St. Ephrem the Syrian) are elegantly tall, and the strict linearism of the body and drapery are somehow compatible with the ascetic nature of the subjects. The Prophets, represented in bust, are placed within . extremely decorative volutes, and are decoratively treated (garments, symbols, and in the inscribed scrolls). An interesting historical composition is seen in the representation of the burial of the Metropolitan Dionisije, which is compositionally dependent on the Dormition of the Virgin. Another element can be observed in Gracanica frescoes: facial features (e.g., the Apostles) are now much more removed from classical prototypes, though not yet commonplace. The coloristic effects in this narthex are much richer than at Pee.

But the Pee ensemble of artists is not the only one active in the Patriarchal domain. Another group, more naive in every respect, is responsible for the frescoes which cover the walls of churches such as Budisavci (c. 1568), where one finds an interesting portrait of Patriarch Makarios with a model of his church, or in Trebinjac; dating from the 1560's-1570's (e.g., the Last Judgment, where one sees the figures with large heads and short, stocky bodies). Painters from the coastal areas were also employed to supplement the work of locals. As an example, the

fresco from St. Nicholas Dabarski can be cited. It dates from 1571, and the style shows a slavish and routine repetition of the ancient prototypes.

However, among the artists of this period, an outstanding place belongs to Longinus, a disciple of the Pee painters, who is renowned both in fresco and icon painting. His icons will be dealt with later. About 1580 he executed a part of the fresco decoration of the church in Lomnica, in Eastern Bosnia. In comparison to the works of his contemporaries, the painting style of Longinus appears courtly in its solid drawing and good composition, based on the first half of the 14th century prototypes (The Nativity of Christ, The Ascension).

The rustication of the Patriarchal style can be observed in the small village churches of Kosovo and Metohija region, which were painted during the last quarter of the 16th and the first decades of the 17th century (Velika Hoca, Drsnik, and others).

It is during this period that the Nemanjic foundation, Moraca, 188 received the greatest part of its fresco decoration. Of the original paintings, only fragments with the scenes from the Life of the Prophet Elijah remained in the diaconicon. The nave and the narthex of this church were painted during 1574 and 1577-1578. Although the total effect might be impressive within the framework of the 13th century architecture, closer inspection shows simplified forms, overburdened compositions, and a general lack of elegance. The painters are locally schooled, and their work is closer to craftsmanship than to art.

Another artist, an exponent of the local tradition, is well known,

not for the high quality of his frescoes or icons, but for his industriousness. Hieromonah Strahinja from Budimlja, whose career can be followed from 1591 to 1621, completed the fresco decoration for at least eight churches. Among the better known structures decorated by him are the narthex and the nave of the Troica in Plevlje, in 1592 and 1594-1595, respectively, and the upper zones of the narthex in P'iva Monastery in 1604. Among the frescoes from Plevlje, the most interesting are the donor with the model of the church who approaches the enthroned Christ in the naos, and the donors from the narthex. The figures are disproportionate, but there are attempts at the portraiture on the images of the donors. The background of the compositions is very schematized, especially when the hills are depicted (e.g., Christ Naming Peter, narthex, Plevlje).

Toward the end of the 16th century, the presence of the imported masters was felt. These painters came from Northern Greece and Mount Athos, but their art can not be called great by any standards. They worked in the Piva Monastery in 1604-1606, but their manner is harsh, linear and without inner unities of figures and composition (the Church Fathers; the Archangel Michael). The figures are flat, the use of contrast, heavy-handed. But meticulously painted decorative details of the garments, ornaments, book covers and similar objects provide delightful diversions.

The Greek painters who were not completely acceptable within the Patriarchate in the 16th century due to the ecclesiastical tension between Pee and Ochrid, were better received in the course of the 17th century when the relationship between these

religious centers was more cordial. In that fact one finds the explanation for the presence of Greek painters in Piva, and also in the distant areas across the Sava and Danube Rivers. The frescoes from the Hopovo Monastery date from 1608, and they are connected in style to the works at Piva, although the Hopovo masters seemed better able to follow the Palaeologan prototypes (the Massacre of the Innocents, the Dormition of the Virgin).

A synthesis of the eclectic Athos style with the Serbian tradition was achieved by Georgije Metrofanovic, whose career in icons and frescoes spans five short years (1616-1621). In the refectory of Hilandari, in two monastic churches in Hercegovina (Zavala and Dobricevo), and finally on the exterior facade of Moraca, he developed a style which in form is not especially noble, nor disciplined in drawing and modeling.

The slightly younger painter is Kir Kozma, whose icons and frescoes are stylistically inspired by the works of Longinus. The frescoes of the narthex (lower zone) in the Monastery of Piva (1626) are attributed to him, as are the frescoes in the small church of St. Nicholas (1639) in the Moraca Monastery, and those in the chapel of St. Stephen in the main church of the same monastery (1643).

In the 17th century, still other wars and ensuing political difficulties would bring to a close the era of the Serbian Patriarchate under the Turks. At the same time, a very ancient art, completely isolated and cut off from any autochthonous or foreign stimulus was condemned to a slow and not too glorious death. But new migrations of the Serbs to the north would bring

them into new sets of political and economic circumstances, and provide a new and dynamic impetus to the arts.

## Icons

In the period between the fall of the Serbian state (1459) and the renewal of the Patriarchate (1557), the production of icons seems to have been rare. Native artists remaining in the country must have been few in number, for art patrons turned to other sources. Greek artists became predominant in the Macedonian regions, while Hercegovina found the artists – descendants of the *pictores graeci* – who worked along the Adriatic coast in the Italo-Byzantine manner more compatible. An example of that style was the beautiful tondo from Topla near Hercegovina representing Peter and Paul embracing each other. Although it dates from the second half of the 16th century, the tondo provides us with indirect evidence about the continuous coastal artistic tradition from at least the middle of the 14th century onward. The princes of the Apostles were rendered in bust and in three-quarter view; they are identified by names inscribed in Greek, while the Byzantine facial iconography and the classical type of garments are followed closely. New is the theme of the two Apostles embracing (it is also seen in the fresco of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Musnikovo, dated 1563-1564). The drawing is meticulous, the forms are firm, and made to appear voluminous. The folds of the garments are stressed by geometricized white highlights.

Now the Serbs who migrated to the lands of Southern Hungary depended on artists from still another region – Wallachia – itself

a conduit through which passed, and was absorbed, the art of Mount Athos and the Italo-Cretan tradition.

The great Deisis icons which include the archangels and Apostles from the Monastery of Krusedol in Srem are considered to be the handiwork of Wallachian artists in the service of Serbian patrons (in this case the Archbishop Maxim and his mother, Angelina, from the illustrious Brankovic family). The work is moving in overall effect, while at the same time it demonstrates the weaknesses of an extreme mannerism. Narrow ground lines and gold backgrounds fail to create the sense of space. The elongated figures tiptoe or float. Tall bodies are covered with conventionalized draperies, which indicate the contrapposto position of the legs. Tiny feet, and very small heads and hands offer curious contrast to large bodies. The artists employ decorative elaboration on the wings and robes of angels, and on the scrolls held by the Apostles.

Artistic activities greatly increased after 1557, although the works which immediately follow that date still show the usual mixture of traditions, dependent on geographic position: for example, the icon of Hodegitria, now in Sarajevo, by Todor Vukovic from 1568 shows modified Italo-Cretan tradition; the icon of Christ from the village of Leskovec near Ochrid dated in 1565-1566 is stylistically closer to the Greek tradition.

However, by 1570, the new generation of artist monks who were taught in such centers as Pec and Decani, started turning out new works, inspired by older Serbian art, particularly that of the 14th century.

To the first generation of these artists several icons can be attributed, and they too were made for and preserved in the ancient Serbian foundations. The shape of the heads of the angels from the Trinity icon from Detani owe a great deal to the Palaeologan period. The changes are felt in the brittle folds of the drapery, in stylized foliage, and in the shape of the architectural structure which rises above the central figure. The coloring is very bright with blues and ochers predominating. To the same unknown master is attributed the Decani icon of the Annunciation from the royal door. Details are elegantly drawn (heads, hands), but the treatment of the folds and the striations over the entire surface of the drapery tend to add a graphic element to those figures, making them much less substantial.

The icons from the Gracanica iconostasis belong to the same milieu, although they are somewhat newer, and might be dated from the end of the 16th century. The same elegant, solid drawing is employed together with the geometrically shaped highlights on the folds. This particular artist enjoys depicting cascading folds of garments, on the figures of the standing Christ and on the Apostles as well. Deep shadows and broad surfaces of highlights give these faces volume, and these figures a sense of monumentality.

Among the nameless artists, the work of the painter Longinus stands out, and can be followed from about 1566 to 1598. He was schooled in the center of the Patriarchate at Pec where he learned his art from the fresco painters of the exonarthex there. His works included, besides heroes, literary attempts at ecclesiastical poetry, copying of the texts, and painting icons,

both small and large. His works circulated over a large territory, and very likely influenced the next generation of painters (in Pee, Decani, Lomnica, Piva, Velika Hoca, village of Cikote in Bosnia, and in Nikoljac, Bijelo Polje). His early icons show a clear, bright coloristic scheme, which was their main strength. In drawing he tends to exaggerate details and in proportion he inconsistently fashions elongated heads with eyes that are too closely set. Among the most representative examples are: the throne icon of the seated Virgin with Christ Child, surrounded by the smaller figures of the prophets. on a raised border (in the Piva Monastery). The work is signed and dated c. 1573-1574. Only several years later, in 1577-1578, he painted another, similar, icon of the Virgin for the Monastery of Lomnica in Bosnia, which he also signed. The representation is even more ceremonious in iconography and decorative in detail. Instead of being strictly frontal, the Virgin is turned slightly to the right, while the Child is placed on her left arm, and formally juxtaposed to the Mother. Embroidered cushions are placed on her throne. The throne is covered with delicate etching, and behind the throne two archangels with gently inclined heads are to be seen. Both wear imperial dalmatics heavily embroidered in pearls and semi-precious stones. The raised rim of the icon is wider, and the prophets depicted there assume more vivid poses.

In his later works, Longinus' drawing grew more assured. His draperies are modeled with greater skill, but he darkens his coloring, leaving a much harsher artistic impression. Also, he seems to have introduced some Islamic decorative motifs in the painted architecture, and to have borrowed some of the Russian coloristic scheme for his painting. But, generally speaking,

although there was a great deal of exchange, between Russia and the Patriarchate, there is very little visual evidence of a Russian artistic imprint upon this period of Serbian art (as an exception, e.g., there is the icon of St. Fevrontija with the scenes of her life in Gracanica, 1607-1608).

However, Italo-Cretan traditions penetrated into Serbia via the monasteries on Mount Athos, especially the Serbian Monastery of Hilandari. One of the exponents of this style in Serbia was a Hilandari monk, Georgije Mitrofanovic, who produced for a few short years between 1616-1621, but who proved to be a very prolific painter of frescoes and icons. Among his icons one can mention the Christ in bust, and the Annunciation for a royal door, both in Hilandari; and the icon of, the enthroned Virgin with Child, surrounded by the Prophets in half figure, dated c. 1616-1617 for the iconostasis of Moraca Monastery. His drawing lacks the elegance of the early masters, his modeling is hard and heavy, and occasionally affected.

The icons of the second quarter of the 17th century regained new qualities in the works of a little known master, Jovan. Once again, the drawing is cultivated, and there is a new sense for proportion and the relationship between the body and the drapery which is given a linear elegance, with delicate harmonious white highlights. There is a feeling of firm modeling which may have roots in the second half of the 14th century. Seriousness, rather than surface sentimentality, dominates physiognomies. The earlier known works by Master Jovan, dating about 1627-1628 are preserved in the Nikoljac Monastery, in Bijelo Polje. First of all the half figure Hodegetria

with the Child is surrounded by the Prophets in bust, who hold open scrolls inscribed with their prophecies relative to the Virgin and the Child. Above, the Virgin, in a segment with rays, the representation of the “Elder of the Days” – God the Father – appears. Secondly, the pendant icon is that of Christ, also in half figure, surrounded by the Twelve Apostles in bust. On the bottom rim, below Christ, are the representations of St. Sava the Serbian in the garb of an archbishop, and St. Simeon (Nemanja), dressed as a monk of the Greater Order. Above the central field, seen against the segment with rays, Christ appears again, but this time in the iconographic guise of the Archangel of the Great Council. The third icon in the same monastery by Master Jovan represents the painter’s namesake, St. John, who is surrounded with scenes from his life. This type of icon actually was very popular during the Turkish period (Deisis ‘with the Feasts and the Scenes in Sarajevo, c. mid-16th century; St. Fevrontija with the scenes of her life, c. 17th century, in Gracanica; St. Nicholas with the scenes of his life in Decani, c. 17th century; St. George with the scenes from his life, Pee, mid-17th century). Several other icons, now preserved in Hilandari Monastery, are attributed to this painter and date from 1632 (St. Petka; St. Demetrios, and others).

A somewhat younger artist who worked between 1626 and 1646 was a fresco master and icon painter. His name is known through the signature which he left in secret lettering on the icon of Sts. Sava and Simeon in Moraca, Kir Kozma. The characteristics of Kozma’s style are solid drawing of elegant figures, minute attention to details of garments and a sincere interest in rendering the psychological expression of the saints. He might

have been inspired by 16th century works, especially those of Longinus. Among the icons in Piva Monastery, St. George and the Dormition of the Virgin are considered his, and are dated about 1638-1639. In the Moraca Monastery, the double-faced icon of St. Sava with St. Simeon (Nemanja), and Stefan Vukovic (grandson of Nemanja and the founder of this monastery) stand together with Cyril the Philosopher. The other side shows the Dormition of the Virgin. This icon dates from c. 1640. For the same monastery he painted in 1646 a very large icon with Sts. Sava and Simeon, who are surrounded by scenes from their lives.

The artistic activity of the second quarter of the 17th century in the mountain regions of Moraca and Piva was connected with Athos, through Hilandari, and with southern Hungary. The icon of St. John Prodromos in half figure, and holding his own head on a plate, which belonged to the Krusedol Monastery in 1644 has clear stylistic affinities to the Piva works.

The middle of the 17th century is represented by such artists as the monk, Mitrofan who adorned the Monastery of the Annunciation in Kablar, and Hilandari with frescoes and icons, and hieromonah Andrija Raicevic. The latter worked in miniatures, frescoes and icons. His style shows signs of eclecticism, since he borrows both from Russian art and from printed books.

How the middle of the century style fared in the workshops at Pec can be seen in the icon of St. George. Still clad in military fashion, George is now enthroned, and his sword is his scepter. The central field of the icon is surrounded by events

taken from his life. The style of this workshop is slow and pedantic, in which the bejewelled throne corresponds well to the richly carved and gilded frame, thus giving a general feeling of decorative unity.

Two other artistic personalities were known about the middle of the seventh decade of the 17th century. Both showed tendencies toward linear schematization, although a good color scheme was retained. Avesalom Vujicic painted the icon from Moraca. Executed in c. 1672-1673, the central field shows St. Luke painting the Virgin, which gives us an interesting glimpse into a studio of the late Middle Ages. The panel upon which the Virgin Hodegitria in half figure with Child was being painted by St. Luke is placed on an easel before which the painter sits. Two low desks contain the implements of the trade. Fourteen scenes from the life of St. Luke surround the main panel.

Another artist, Radul, is represented at Pee by the richly framed icon of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, who stand in the center field, surrounded, once again, by events from their lives. The icon is dated c. 1673-1674. This late icon style migrated to the coastal regions, where it was perpetuated by master craftsmen well into the 19th century.

The wars between the Austrians and the Turks, and the Serbian migration which followed that conflict virtually caused a standstill in artistic activity at the end of the 17th century. The modest needs of the villagers were met by the simple artisans, little tutored in the artistic traditions of the past. As the Serbs migrated once again north of the rivers Sava and Danube,

different political and sociological circumstances presupposed new artistic idioms.

## Wood Carving

Closely associated with icon production during the Turkish period was another technique, which was both very ancient and very perishable. There is no doubt that the Slavs knew and used wood carving technique even before their migrations, since the linguistic evidence points that way. All the Slavs use the same words for wood carving (e.g., “rezba,” “balvan”). This tradition must have been continued after their settlement in the Balkans, and the remains of charred ornamental wood pieces have been excavated in ancient Slavic sites.

With the Christianization and the formation of the Serbian State, this technique must have found at least modest application in ecclesiastical architecture, in a part of the interior embellishment. While carved stone fragments from royal foundations remain, carving in wood which might have been the province of more modest structures, has not survived until well into the 14th century.

First of all, it seems that the church doors were made primarily of wood (there is no mention of bronze doors, as were used in Byzantium). Unfortunately none of the original doors of the royal, monastic foundations have been preserved. The surviving door of the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helena at Ochrid, which is attributed to the early 14th century, is mainly decorated with crosses. The same theme is repeated on the church door

from Mali Grad on Prespa, dated in 1369. The cross theme is to be seen on 'the great bronze door of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (6th century), and several other Byzantine bronze doors exported to Italy. Furthermore, the Church of St. Nicholas the Hospitaller in Ochrid has also a door which dates from the period of Serbian domination. The door is divided into panels of wood on which are carved, in low relief, representations of the Holy Warriors on horseback and numbers of fantastic animals. It is obvious that the artist tried to imitate the style of the Byzantine bronze doors.

However, there are more monuments done in this material preserved from the period of the Turkish domination.

On the double doors of the Monastery of Slepte, which dates from the 16th century, figures of saints in relief are seen under pointed arches, while in the lower zones, in rectangular fields, the images of various beasts are displayed. Frames are composed of interlaced ribbons and some very stylized floral motifs. A single door from the same church, suppresses the figure a great deal (the prophets in busts within scrolls), for the overall effect of decorativeness, achieved by the intertwined ribbon to form a variety of designs: interlocked circles and lozenges, crosses and others. The effect is reminiscent of designs on the headpieces of manuscripts of the 15th century and later periods, which were inspired by the works of the Morava School (Collection of Vladimir Gramatic, Zagreb; Hopovo Gospels from 1662; and others). The figureless door of the Polosko Monastery (16th-17th century), shares affinity with Islamic works in its use

of linear interlacing along borders, and star decoration in main panels.

Further application of wood carving extended to church stalls, pulpits and other objects, but very little remains (pulpit from Slepce Monastery, near Bitola, 16th century).

The greatest documented application of wood carving is to be found on the iconostasis. The evolution of the iconostasis, the partition which separates the sanctuary from the nave, is well known. Beginning with simple low parapet slabs, which are not preserved in wood, but in marble, upright columnar elements were added. These provided the intercolumnated space within which icons were inserted (e.g., Staro Nagoricino, c. 14th century, in marble). The columns were usually connected with a cross beam called the architrave, to which a second row of icons was added by the end of the 14th century. That row usually consisted of the Deisis representation · into which the Twelve Apostles were incorporated (Hilandari iconostasis; the lost example from the destroyed Cathedral of Belgrade, first quarter of the 15th century). Finally, in the Serbian churches of the 16th and later centuries, an iconostasis would be surmounted by a large wooden cross, accompanied by two smaller panels, upon which, in tempera, Christ on the Cross with the Virgin and St. John is painted (Crosses from Decani, dated in 1594, and Gracanica, dated 1626).

The problem of origin of the cross above the iconostasis is a complicated one, since a very similar theme is to be found in Italian art (*Croce dipinta*) of the 13th-14th centuries. However, this seems to have come to Italy from Byzantium, and since

such crosses are documented on the Adriatic shores only from the 15th century, it is possible that the cross theme came to Serbia directly from the Byzantine territories, rather than from coastal areas. Whatever the case, the ultimate origin seems to be Byzantine.

The wood carving on the entire iconostasis was inspired by many sources: first, from marble carvings, second, from the carved and gilded frames of the portable icons. Basically, the carved areas were covered with stucco and gilded, while the designs were executed with additional colors, predominantly red and blue. The designs, varied in origin, were conveyed through intermediary forms such as manuscripts. A strong influence of Morava style designs is felt, and also Islamic arabesque, folkloric designs, and a reappearance of Romanesque type scrolls.

One iconostasis door – the so-called royal door – escapes classification at least for the time being, due to the absence of other comparable specimens, and is the so-called “Andreas door.” It is now in the Belgrade National Museum. It came originally from the Church of St. Nicholas Sisevski, and it is attributed to the end of the 14th century. The door has a rounded top and, in relief, the theme of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin – i.e., the Annunciation. The relief is low, and the figures are extremely elongated to fill in the specific panel spaces. Traces of decorative border are preserved, with a twisted rope design.

Scholars feel that several basic areas of production in wood carving can be distinguished during the period of Turkish

domination. One regional center existed in Macedonia, in the vicinity of Prilep and Slepca. The characteristic elements of this school were borrowed from the Morava style and from Islamic art. Abstract linear arabesque dominates, while floral and zoomorphic elements are decidedly secondary. Among the royal doors produced within the workshops of this school, several can be mentioned: the carved door from the Church of St. Nicholas near Prilep, dating from 15th-16th centuries. Before the panels of the Annunciation, there are a series of medallions, probably inspired by textile designs which contain double eagles, animals and birds. The royal door of Treskavac Monastery, also near Prilep, is probably from the same period; and, although very similar, is different in one basic respect: the Annunciation is not carved in relief, but painted in icon technique. Thus, the artist arrived at a marriage of two techniques, a bond that will endure, as far as the iconostasis is concerned, until modern times. A number of other doors have been ascribed to this school which, because they are truly imitative need not be enumerated here. A somewhat different effect is achieved on the royal door of the Virgin's Church in the village of Rankovce, in which the background is cut away, producing a positive-negative contrast, very much like in crocheted laces.

A more important school of wood carving was formed around the renewed Patriarchate, and its products can be followed from the second half of the 16th century to the end of the 17th century. Backed by ecclesiastical prestige and resources, this school showed a great deal of abilities, extending to the directions of Skopje and Mount Athos, to Bosnia, to Montenegro (Moraca,

Piva, Bijelo Polje), and into the remote areas of Serbia, such as Ovcara-Kablar region. Many of the masters whose works belonged to the school can be identified, viz., Kozma, Radul, and others. The stylistic characteristics of this group include the presence of floral and zoomorphic elements, with intertwined ribbons, which are treated with much less geometric stylization. Outstanding examples would be the royal doors from Gracanica, from 1564, from Pee, c. 1557-1570, and Decani, also from the second half of the 16th century. All of those have painted icons of the Annunciation, interlaced ribbons, rosettes and panels with the acanthus leaves.

Among iconostases examples one can cite that of Moraca, c. 1596-1617, from the Church of the Annunciation in Kablar (now in Belgrade, National Museum), and from the Old Orthodox Church in Sarajevo, from the second half of the 17th century.

This school also specialized in large carved icon frames, and among the remaining outstanding examples are: the Moraca icon of St. Simeon and St. Sava with scenes from their lives, the work of the painter, Kozma from 1646, with a richly carved frame. It is composed of two columns, within which an arch frames the icon proper. The columns have composite-type capitals, and an architrave which, together with the basis is covered with large rinceau volutes emerging from vases, themselves hung with grapes and leaves. Western influence can be seen from prints originating on Mount Athos. An interesting combination of diverse elements is to be seen on the frame of the icon of Sts. Cosmas and Damian from Pec, signed in 1674 by Radul. There, the interlacing is combined with colonettes and volutes

hung with grapes. The presence of Western decorative elements can be further observed on the frame of the icon of St. John Prodromos from Moraca, dating from 1714, and on a number of iconostases carved during the 17th and 18th centuries (Piva iconostasis, 1639).

Somewhat more traditional in nature is the work attributed to the Prizren-Skopje school of wood carving. It is obvious that it is an offshoot of the Pec school, and that it combines the linear ribbon ornament with the floral and animal motifs. The general impression is that of less linear design than that of the Prilep school, and a sense of being less rich than the Pee works. Characteristic examples are the royal doors from the Church of St. George in Pri zren, 16th century; and from churches of St. John and St. Luke from the village Velika Hoca near Prizren, also from the same era.

According to the evidence., the wood carving of the Turkish period underwent several changes. In the first phase, the art form was highly dependent on the Morava style; Islamic elements were later superimposed; and, finally, Western influences associated with the Renaissance and Baroque period were brought in. It seems that precisely at this moment of stylistic conjuncture, the true folk carving became separated from the main branch of ecclesiastical art. The first continued to flourish in small village churches, while the Western inputs multiplied and were to be observed on the iconostases of more important ecclesiastical buildings. While in the early phases of wood carving, illuminated manuscripts played an influential role, in the dissemination of ornamental types, in the second stage,

printed books must have exerted considerable effect in that domain.

## Decorated Manuscripts

In the decades after the fall of Smederevo, of all the branches of art in Serbia, miniature painting seemed to suffer the least. Illuminated headings and initials rather than illustrated scenes were the principal subjects of Serbian books; and ornamentation without (Morava style) and with Islamic arabesque served as a basis upon which older (12th-13th century) traditions were grafted. Certain areas were slow to adopt new materials. Thus, Bosnia, e.g., continued to use parchment though it had long since been supplanted by paper almost everywhere in Serbian regions.

Besides decoration, these manuscripts exhibited great caligraphic skill. Being portable, they easily reached the northern regions and eventually made their way into Wallachia and Russia. Eventually manuscript production extended from Southern Macedonia to the River Krka in Croatia, and to the northern Danube region. Inscriptions and other texts give valuable information about the artists involved in the production of books, their place of origin, and, occasionally, we know who possessed such volumes down through the centuries. Since these books were part of the cultural and religious needs, there appear to be specially trained craftsmen<sup>206</sup> for their production. They were called “vivlografi” or “knjigografi,” which in translation means “the writers of books.” Many of those trained in Serbia worked abroad.

In the Macedonian regions, which will be examined first, the work of Serbian scribes can be traced from the 1300's.

In the course of the 15th and 16th centuries in the general area of Kumanovo and Skopje, Serbian and Bulgarian books were written and decorated. A very representative type of work for these regions is to be found in the opus of Vladislav Gramatic. He was originally from the wealthy mining community of Novo Brdo (near Pristina, Kosovo Polje region), but after it fell to the Turks (1455), he withdrew to the monastic communities of Mlado Nagoricino and Mateic. His work can be followed from 1456 to 1480; therefore, just about a full generation. Five of his manuscripts are known . today. All show the sure hand of a good calligrapher and decorator. His Zbornik (Collection of Writings) can serve as an example of his style (done on paper and dated in 1469; Zagreb, J.A., No. III r, 47). The ornamentation of the headpieces is obviously inspired by the Morava style, whenever intricately interwoven scrolls can be seen (f. 249 r) or even the traces of the Islamic arabesque (fol. 543 r). His colors are rich and saturated, and the drawing and the execution, very precise. The scriptoria which he attended around Kratovo flourished in the 16th century and also counted among their members a certain priest who signed his works "Jovan Srb in iz mesta Kratova" (Jovan the Serb from the city of Kratovo). His opus consists of seven known works, among which one can cite a Gospel book of 1580 now in the Monastery Velike Remeta. In spite of a respectable technical execution, long adherence to the Morava style has produced a certain dryness. Consequently, the portraits of the Evangelists inserted into the headpiece are rather naive.

Beginning in the 17th century, and continuing until the introduction of printing, Serbian books from Macedonia employed popular imagery from periods as far back as the 12th century. Serbian art of the Morava style enjoyed somewhat extended life in the lands north and northwest of the Danube River. There, conditions were somewhat easier, and the arts flourished in regionally concentrated areas such as Fruska Gora. Monasteries repeated the triconchos plans, while in ornamentation the Morava style predominated in the Gospels of Calligrapher Pankratije, of 1514, or in the Hopovo Tetraevangelium of 1662. The rich impact of saturated colors and gold was continued, but the ornament is somewhat harder.

Acknowledgement of a return to and continuation of the older tradition is conveyed through the exact copying of older manuscripts. Possibly owing to desires of Patriarch Pajsije, a copy of the Serbian Psalter now in Munich, c. 1627-1629, was made in Vrdnik Monastery (Fruska Gora).

Now the art of book production did not die out on the territories of Serbia. v In the remote region of Ovcar-Kablar Canyon, within the confines of those hidden monastic churches, copyists and decorators were busy during the 16th and 17th centuries. And, the old and established monasteries also continued their activities. Among the miniature paintings in the true sense, the works produced from the second half of the 16th century by the school of Pee are among the most important. The images of the Evangelists accompany the Gospels as can be seen on the examples now preserved in various collections (Gospel, Cetinje, No. 16,832; Gospel from the Monastery of Krusedol; Gospel

from the Serbian Church in Sarajevo). Decani and other centers were active in the territories of the Metohija and the Lim River valley, as was ancient Zeta, by now called Crna Gora. Besides local specialists, there were also traveling masters, and through connections with Mount Athos, some innovations found their way into the pages of those manuscripts. Once again, decorative effect is prevalent in the headpieces and on the initials. Designs of the Morava type are combined with fantastic animals (Psalter, University of Belgrade, No. 43). In the 17th century, other locations in which manuscripts were created can be added: Bijelo Polje, Moraca, and, above all, the Monastery of St. Trojica at Plevje (Tetraevangelium by Diak Dmitar), where well-disciplined drawing and calligraphic decoration produce elegant effects. In the course of the same century, more isolated monastic communities started producing hand-copied books provincially decorated with scrolls and stars – the same elements found in folk carvings.

Toward the end of the 17th century, hand-written and decorated books came under the influence of another technique, the relationship with which had started some two centuries previously.

## Printed Books

Just as the last of Serbian ruled territories were losing their independence in the path of the Turkish conquest, a new art form appeared among the Serbs. It was in the ancient Zeta that the first printing press in the Balkans was introduced in the early 1490's. Between 1493 and 1495 it functioned first in

Obod and later in Cetinje, and it is known by both of these names (Obodsko-Cetinjska v Stamparija). The books printed there were primarily destined for the ecclesiastical use (the Tetraevangelium, the Psalter, the Trebnik, etc.). The appearance of the printing press marked in some ways the end of the Mediaeval period and the introduction of a new technique which will play an important role in succeeding centuries. While Serbian incunabula (early printed books) were inspired by illuminated manuscripts in the course of the 17th century, the reverse was true in that incunabula served to spread iconography to more distant and remote areas.

The first Serbian incunabula showed signs of eclecticism: technical skill borrowed from the Venetians, ornamentation of the rich Renaissance tradition. Iconography, however, remained steadfastly Byzantine.

The first Serbian printer, hieromonah Makarije, was probably trained in Venice. He worked for the Crnojevic press in Cetinje, creating the Oktoichos in 1494, and a year later, the Psalter. After the fall of Zeta, Makarije appears in Wallachia, running a press in Trgoviste. It was there that he produced the first Wallachian printed books, among which is the Gospel from 1510, an outstanding example of exquisite decoration. The printer, Makarije, seems to have ended his life and career in Hilandari, since the last mention of him comes from there in 1528.

The collapse of the Serbian political power had repercussions in art. As the Serbs migrated, forming a new ethnic frontier, art forms were reborn, among them, printing. The most significant

Serbian press of the 16th century was operated in Venice by Bozidar Vukovic (b. in Podgorica, Crna Gora, in 1465; d. in Venice, c. 1546). His press continued under his son and others until 1593. Its production was one of the largest in the early history of Serbian printing. He introduced many innovations, such as the smaller format of the books, and he used parchment as material for some of the books. The decorative and illustrative elements were rich, serving not only Serbs, but other nations as sources of inspiration (Wallachia, Russia, Greece). In his works, a transition is made from a very linear style, inspired by pen drawings, to a more pictorial manner. Bozidar Vuković had indicated in several prefaces what his contribution was to the production of these books. He prepared the text and the drawings from which the illustrations were cut. In 1519 a *Sluzabnik* (Service Book) was printed, to be followed by a *Psalter* and a *Prayer Book* in 1520. The latter was reprinted in 1536, to be followed by *Oktoichos* and *Minej* in 1538. The names of the painters are also known: Pahomije, Mojsije, Teodosije and Genadije.

After 1546 the work of the press was continued under his son Vincenzo, and it had a great deal of impact upon the Balkans. Some of the books were distinguished by vignettes, by interlaced and intertwined letters and even by colored initials. The Renaissance style ornament dominated the pages, for which a decorative scheme is repeated: the top and the side margins were decorated with ornaments composed of vases, garlands and putti (some of these elements are to be seen in the wood carving in the Balkans), while the bottom margin usually contained three medallions interlaced with garlands. Four plates were used in

this process of decoration. Under Vincenzo's leadership, the press produced a Psalter in 1546, and a year later, a Zbornik, to be followed by two reprints of Bozidar Vukovic's works – in 1554, the Trebnik (Service Book), and in 1560, the Zbornik. The reasons for the temporary suspension of this press are unknown. However, it was leased, first to a Stefan from Skadar and again in 1571 to a certain Jakov from Kamena Reka. Taken over by the Italians in 1597, its products served the needs of a large audience for more than seventy years, and, to this day, remain valuable cultural documents of considerable artistic accomplishment.

# Arts Among the Emigrants: Toward the Western Horizon--The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

In the course of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish wars of the second half of the 17th century, the Serbian people and the Church sided with the former. Defeat for the allies had repercussions that further altered the course of Serbian history, life, culture and art.

When the Serbs crossed the Danube and Sava rivers, in 1690, into the territories of Southern Hungary, led by Patriarch Arsenije Carnojevic, a new era was begun. Life was not easy in spite of some political privileges on this military frontier, because in wars and conflicts the arts never flourish. But the conflicts went deeper than acts of war. While the 15th century refugees represented the higher classes of Serbian feudal society,

the new emigrants of the late 17th century belonged to layers of different social and economic position. They were warriors instead of burgers, who would be prosperous in their own occupational activities, such as in commerce or in trade.

The tradition-bound art of the Serbs was deeply tied to their religious and ethnic identity, and for that reason it was fiercely guarded. At the same time, this old tradition of a tired art, modest at the very best in its expression and achievements, was faced with a fully mature western style. Since the Western art styles from the Renaissance onward are better known to today's reader, there is no need to dwell on them.

Upon their arrival in the territories commonly called the Vojvodina, the Serbs were confronted by a fully developed Baroque style more than one hundred years old. Baroque was most directly identified as the Catholic style, which made its acceptance difficult among the Orthodox Serbs who were fearful of conversion and denationalization.

At first the art of the zoographers working for Serbs in Southern Hungary kept the old forms alive, adding some new and picturesque elements, and vivid colors. The first four decades of the 18th century can be considered as a transitional period, during which the old, traditional art was slowly abandoned, and the new, foreign style slowly accepted. The transition was made possible by Serbs already established as traders, merchants, and craftsmen, living in the city communities of Budim, Ostrogon. Sent-Andreja, Segedin, and others.

## Architecture

The new style is first and primarily felt in church architecture. Although the clergy had wished to preserve the old forms, master builders for the undertaking were missing, and so simple brick churches by local craftsmen and masons were raised. The decoration on the exterior was concentrated on western facades. Two churches in this new Baroque style among the Serbs living in Hungary predate by two years the great migration of 1690. They were in Ostrogon and in Budim, the latter being restored in 1733. They were followed by four churches in St. Andreja, one of the largest Serbian colonies in Hungary (Cathedral Church, the Transfiguration, the Ciprovatka Church and the Pozarevacka Church). At the same time, adaptive restoration of older churches, such as St. Luke's Church in Kupinovo, was carried out. Additions to already existing monasteries, throughout the Pannonian plains were created. The 17th century monasteries which followed the Morava style triconchos ground plan were given additional bell towers on which timid tribute is paid to the Baroque style around window openings, in the curvilinear silhouette of the roof and in the lantern (Krusedol, Velika Remeta, Rakovac, Sisatovac, Hopovo, Beocin, Jazak, all dating from the 1730's to the 1750's). In Krusedol the windows and porch were given Baroque elements; in Bodjani the volutes appear on the apse, but the most prominent Baroque elements were to be found on the western facades, where a curved pediment rises from the pilaster strips to frame a small oculus (Hodo;, Bezden and others). Recalling of the oldest Nemanjic foundations was achieved, however, in the construction of the arcades on the churches of Kovilj, Jazak, Kamenica and others.

The Baroque style was more prominently displayed on the dormitories built for the monasteries of Krusedo1, Vrdnik, Hoppvo, and Kuvezdin. Such limited architectural activities occurred during the middle of the 18th century and after.

In the meantime the new center of Serbian religious and political life in Austria-Hungary was developed in the Sremski Karlovci, the seat of the Metropolitan bishop. The cathedral church of that city, built by Pavle Nenadovic between 1758-1762, architecturally makes no distinction between Orthodox and Catholic structures. Its facade is decorated in the Baroque style with engaged columns and pilasters, with windows surmounted by lunettes, and with triple pediments marking the divisions of the facade. The whole is dominated by twin bell towers, with curved and strongly profiled roof line.

From the middle of the 18th century, the elements of Baroque can be followed on palaces and homes of the titled or well-to-do Serbs primarily in the decoration of the western facades. They are to be seen in Temisvar (Timisoara, Romania), in Budim (Buda-Pest, Hungary), and in the territories of today's Yugoslavia, in Vrsac, Sombor (Grazalkovic family), Sremski Karlovci (Andrejevic and Dejanovic families), Zemun (Karamata family) and others. Urban planning had left traces upon whole cities (Novi Sad, Subotica, Zemun, Stremenska Mitrovica, Ruma, and others), while examples of fortifications are still preserved in the large complex of Petrovaradin (1754-1780).

## Painting

The painting activities of the first half of the 18th century were also centered around monasteries (Hopovo, Pribina Glava, Vrdnik, Besenovo) where the monk-artists worked in strictly Athonite tradition (Stefan Ravanicki, Arsenije, Kalinik, and others). Those were helped by the monks' zoographers who came from Russia and worked as court painters for Patriarch Arsenije IV.

Among those, two painters showed interest not only in the new decorative tendencies of the Baroque style, but in truly new conceptions of pictorial space and painted volumes. They were Hristofor Zefarovic (d. 1753) and Ambrozije Jankovic (b. 1731; d. ?).

Zefarovic's frescoes in the Bodjani Monastery in 1737 show in the Genesis cycle a well-developed landscape background, and, although far from the Baroque illusionism, at least it negated the existence of the physical limitations of the walls. This painter was also an engraver and embroiderer. His secular work is known only through copies. In one such copy, an equestrian portrait of Stratimirovic, the rider is too tall for the horse, both are disproportionately large in relationship to the landscape.

His somewhat younger contemporary, Ambrozije Jankovic, painted the frescoes in the refectory of the Monastery of Rakovac in 1768. In those scenes from the Life of Christ he tries to give the illusion of the spatial depth, large enough to accommodate the figures. The figures themselves are far from being powerfully drawn in the Baroque manner which is

strongest in painted architecture, and in contrasts between the light and the dark. It is also interesting to note that this artist painted a typically Serbian historical composition of the Battle of Kosovo for the refectory of the Monastery of Vrdnik in 1777.

The needs of both the church and the secular clientele around and after the middle of the 18th century in the domains of the Metropolitan of Sremski Karlovci, were satisfied by itinerant masters who circulated in ecclesiastical and secular circles. They painted in fresco technique (the group around zoograph Andreja Andrejevic which decorated Vracevsnica and Lazarica), in tempera for icons, and dealt in portraiture as well. Some among them settled in important cultural centers, such as Sremski Karlovci (Nikola Jankovic and Georgije Stojanovic), in Arad and Temicvar (Nedeljko Popovic-Serban). Adding to their repertoire, besides icons and portraits they produced still-life in which the contemporary Western spirit is felt. Joakim Markovic, who worked in Novi Sad, possibly as early as 1740, had already diversified his repertoire in this way. Several other names are also connected with that city (Andrija and Maksim Hristoforovic, Stefan and Dimitrije Jankovic), but the most important artist seems to have been Vasilije Ostojic (iconostasis in Serbian church in Budim, Church of the Dormition in Novi Sad and others). He, and his associate, Janko Halkozovic, worked well into the 1790's. Several other painters located in Sremski Karlovci, painted a number of iconostases of the churches in the South Hungarian regions. Among those, Dimitrije Bacevic is considered one of the most important artists of that period, with the works in Nikolajevska Church in Zemun (1762) and in the upper church in Sremski Karlovci (1671).

Stefan Tenecki, also an icon painter is interesting too, in that he received his training in Russia, painting what is considered to be the first known self-portrait in Serbian art of the post-Mediaeval period. Other prosperous cities also had resident artists of varying accomplishment. Such cities were Vrsac (Nikola Neskovic, "Self Portrait" in National Museum, Belgrade); or Osijek (Jovan Grabovan), and others.

A further step in the evolution of Serbian Baroque was taken by the artists of the next generation, who started training in the domestic workshops, before heading for Vienna or Venice. These artists consequently abandoned traditional style and iconography, and became totally Westernized. Some of those have not been identified; the author of the paintings from the nave of the church at Krusedol Monastery, in 1756, or the highly accomplished unknown master who executed the iconostasis in Aleksandrovo ear Subotica, in 1766. Among the known ones, Dimitrije Popovic entered the Academy in Vienna in 1763. Although essentially Baroque in most aspects, he retained the gold background and drapery of his forebears. Among his works one can cite a number of iconostases from the 1770's in Cakovo, Orlovat, Serbian Itebej, Serbian Pardanj and others.

Before entering the Vienna Academy in 1769, Teodor Kracun was a student of Dimitrije Bacevic just as had been Dimitrije Popovic. Kracun is considered the greatest Serbian Baroque painter, who left behind him not only the paintings on the iconostases (Hopovo, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica in the 1770's, and above all these from the cathedral in Karlovci, 1780), but several portraits of leading churchmen of their day

("Metropolitan Pavle Nenadovic"). His figures are substantial, draped in voluminous garments, exposed to the dramatic lighting, and well set into the pictorial space (liThe Transfiguration," formerly in Senta; "The Fountain of Life;" "The Resurrection;" "The Trinity" from Sremski Karlovci). Toward the end of his career he lightens his palette under the influence of the Rococo style. Another notable artist of this style, Teodor Ilic Cesljar (1746-1793), started his studies in Temisvar, but probably continued them in Vienna and even Venice. His opus included a great deal of the religious works (in the churches of Budim, Mokrin, Kikinda and others); among the large paintings, the most remarkable is "The Martyrdom of St. Barbara," from Pakrac, c. 1785. Robust forms and dramatic lighting are substituted for much more delicate color and form, and softer, even lighting. He too painted portraits like those of the "Avakumovic Family" and "Bishop Sakabenta."

The last decades of the 18th century are a period of the artistic activities of Jakov Orfeltn (d. 1803). Although he studied in Vienna from 1766 as an engraver of copper plate, his works also included icons and portraits. Starting as a young man under the influence of the Rococo style, with his strongly cultivated drawing and solid modeling of figures and spaces, he started to approach, stylistically, classicism. He collaborated with Teodor Kracun on the iconostasis of the Cathedral of Sremski Karlovci (1781); furthermore, he worked in the Monastery of Grgeteg (1784), in Stapar (1792), from which one can mention the impressive representation of "Christ With Orb," and the "Virgin With The Child." His other works can be seen in Beliki Radinci (1792); two years later in Kraljevci; and toward the end of his

life he finished the iconostasis for Bezdin Monastery (1802). There are several other painters of approximately the same generation, who shared his artistic views (Kozma Kolaric, Stefan Gavrilovic, and others).

In evaluating the Baroque movement among the Serbs, the circumstances of the encounter must be taken into consideration. There was no Serbian political organization since the Serbs were in foreign territory; the authority of the Church co-existed within a Catholic realm. Then, too, the Serbian standard of living was still modest. Therefore, it is less difficult to understand why a totally alien art form, which was handed down to the Serbs in its provincial variation, could be nothing more than that – a very modest and provincial output, sufficient to satisfy the needs of that specific society. Only occasionally do flashes of greatness emerge from the works of Kracun, Cesljar and Orfelin.

## Wood Carving

If the totality of the Baroque spirit was not shown in architecture and in individual paintings, it was present in the iconostases. Where painting fell short, beautiful carvings in wood made up in total effect with its richly burnished gilded surfaces. It is also true, however, that it is in wood carving that ethnic genius emerged under a new guise. Instead of flat and intertwined ribbons (royal door of Jazak Monastery), one sees now deeply cut volutes and pediments, oval medallions encircled by wreaths of leaves and flowers, bound by winding ribbons. Among the most beautifully preserved ensembles are the iconostases from the Cathedral in Sremski Karlovci, the churches in Sremska

Mitrovica, Novi Sad (the Church of the Dormition), in Zemun (St. Nicholas), and in Hopovo and Stari Becej. Rococo is found in the Upper Church of Sremski Karlovci, while the Church of the Virgin in Zemun shows a mixture of Baroque, Rococo and Classical styles. The most elaborate monument of that kind is seen in the iconostasis of Uspenska Church at Pancevo, dating from 1828.

## Engraving

Another branch of art, much more popular and less tradition-bound than architecture and monumental painting was engraving. Since the operation of printing presses was forbidden to the Serbian church, the restriction was offset by the use of wood-block prints. This technique did not have a long and strong tradition among the Serbs, and its output could not satisfy the need for both quantity and the quality. However, these works appear charming to the contemporary viewer, due to their simplicity, directness of illustration, and linear, quality. As an example there is the woodcut of "Prince Lazar," who stands richly garbed between two tall structures. He is crowned, and holds a scepter in one hand, and in the other, his own head. Above the inscriptions which identify him, God's Hand is extended in blessing (Vrdnik Monastery). Equally amusing is the overall "View of Mount Athos," which is being approached from the sea by a ship with oars and sails (Beocin Monastery). Certain artists of such woodcuts are known by name, from the first half of the 18th century, such as Georgije Nikolic, but the majority of them still belong to the ecclesiastical world (monk Jonah from

Sisatovac, hieromonah Hristofer from Besenovo, priest Nikola Petrovic, and others).

The technique of engraving on copper plate was also used by Serbs. In terms of its durability and economy, copper engravings were especially appealing to Serbian ecclesiastics, who then ordered plates from foreign masters in Vienna. Two engravers from that city played an important part in producing the national output in that technique. Thus, T. Mesmer (1717-1777) and Jakov Schmutzer (1733-1811), followed drawings produced by Serbian masters and engraved representations of the following monasteries: Studenica, Rakovac, Velika Remeta, Hopovo, and St. Ana in Slavonia.

As the Serbian middle class grew more prosperous around the middle of the 18th century, its needs and interests increased. Imported engravings became a very popular art form in the households of the Serbian middle class. Many were reproductions of the masterpieces of Western art, and in exposing this newly found public market to a different style, they helped to influence Serbian tastes.

These popular prints were used for study purposes by the local painters, for the lack of any other instructional means. It is through such works that the new subjects and styles were introduced into the Serbian paintings.

The first known Serbian copper-plate engraver is Hristofor Zefarovic (d. 1753). In collaboration with Mesmer he created the "Stematografija" in 1741, the "Privilegije" in 1745, and three years later the "Descriptions of Jerusalem" ("Opisanije

svjatago bozija grada Jerusalima”), while the last known work is “St. Stevan Siljanovic,” 1753. Zefarovic’s engravings are predominantly religious in content, made for churches, and for the clergy and laity alike. His hybrid style contains traditional elements juxtaposed with the Baroque elements (-space, drapery, and architectural elements such as steps and columns) – everything wrapped in the cloak of a romantic past (e.g., King Vladislav”, founder of Mileseva, wears a pseudo-dalmatic and an ermine cloak).

Although Zefarovic left no disciples, the gap at his passing was filled by the most prominent Serbian Baroque artist of his genre, Zaharije Orfelin (1726-1785). Besides the copperplate engraving, he was involved in writing and translating, and in connection with his bookish activities, he did calligraphy as well. In the engraving field he created icons and portraits, geographical cards and illustrations for books and individual copper plates. Among his many works, a special place is given to his “Slaveno serbska Valahiska kaligrafija” (“Serbo-Slavic Wallachian calligraphy”) from 1778, for which he found inspiration among the Venetian masters especially Tiepollo. Like Baroque masters elsewhere, he enjoyed rendering drapery in a grand manner, imposing abundant ornamental decoration, while showing an (unusual for Serbian art of the time) interest in developed landscape. His last masterpiece, created for the “Veciti ” Kalendar” (Eternal Calendar) was the illustration of “The Creation of the World.” Among all the Serbian artists of the 18th century, he alone was honored by election to the Vienna Academy of Arts (1771 and 1772). Among contemporary Serbs,

Zefarovic alone measured up to the achievements of the Western world.

The graphic technique continued to enjoy a place in art among the Serbs in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Besides the foreign artists, there were native masters who followed general stylistic trends of their own time and place; none, however, in his respective generation, occupied the place that was given to Zaharija Orfelin.

# The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

## Painting: The Nineteenth Century

In reaction to the Rococo style, a new artistic movement was born in Europe. Its name is derived from the Latin classicus – the excellent, the outstanding. Although the basis for it had been laid in the artistic colonies of 17th century Rome, its period dates have been established as 1760-1830.

In Europe, this was an era of the rationalistic philosophy, of the French Encyclopaedists; in art theory, that was a period in which revival of classical forms were considered the ideal of beauty. There was a general quest for harmony, seriousness, and tranquility. Compositions were balanced, drawing was firm and clear, modeling had relief qualities, coloring was restrained, and subject matter favored classical themes.

Taken altogether, these ideals may have exceeded an artist's ability to assimilate – especially those which broke from the

strong traditions of the past. Perhaps these ideals were too lofty to be acceptable to the society of Serbs living outside Turkish domination. However, aspects of this style were imported to Vojvodina, and were adapted to the specific needs of the new society.

Painting, which dominated this movement among the Serbs, emerged under its own and very specific national form.

Classicism as an art movement appeared among the Serbs living in Vojvodina only slightly after it rose in Western Europe. Scholars have designated the years between 1790-1848 as the duration period of this style. The classicistic style, based on strong drawing and firm modeling, rather cool and restrained coloristic spectrum, was propagated among Serbian artists through the Viennese Academy, led by the painters H.F. Fuger and P. Kraft. The engravings also served as an important intermediary, bringing new themes before the public eye.

The oldest and the leading exponent of the new style is considered to have been Arsen Teodorovic (1767-1826) who also studied painting in the Viennese Academy. A prolific painter of iconostases, which must have offered very lucrative commissions to artists, he created over fifteen large ensembles for Futog, Vrsac, Sremski Karlovci, Sremska Mitrovica and others. He also left a significant number of portraits, including such formal works as the portrait of "Bishop Kiril Zivkovic," who stands in full ecclesiastical regalia; and many others. Among these are: "Portrait of Dositej Obradovic," a famous Serbian writer and one of the first modern educators; portrait of a "Young Man in Blue;" and a "Portrait of an Unknown Lady."

To this list can be added many others of the lesser nobility and the wealthy artistic clientele of South Hungary. The backgrounds are most often left simple and neutral, without details of architecture, draperies, and the like, and are only gently illuminated. Therefore, this able draftsman concentrated on the sitter, using details of the garment as the elements subordinate to the figure, which have a strong sense of monumentality.

The artistic career of another Serbian classicist, Jovan Stajic-Toskovit, was interesting though brief (1799-1824). He painted compositions with the classical themes, such as the "Ceres" and "Jupiter and Hera," which are not frequently found in this new Serbian society. There are a number of painters who work in the neo-Classical style during the first half of the 19th century and even later, who satisfied the demands of the Church (paintings of the iconostases and portraits of the high clergy), and above all, the demands of the fast-developing bourgeoisie.

One of the more prolific and accomplished artists was Pavel Djurkovic (1772-1830). He was schooled outside the Viennese circle. Djurkovic worked for the Hungarian Palatine as court painter. He, too, was engaged in painting iconostases (Vrsac, Sombor, and others), although he is better known through his portraits of outstanding Serbs. Among his subjects were "Vuk Karadzic," a famous Serbian linguist and reformer, and his wife "Ana Karadzic;" "Milos Obrenovic," Prince of the newly formed Serbian State; "Atanasije Stojkovic;" members of church hierarchy ("Lukijan Musicki;" "Metropolitan Stratimorovic"); and the new and important class of educators in gymnasiums ("Principal Geric"). A competent painter, Pavel Djurkovic

excelled in his depiction of texture and details. His main strength lay in his ability to convey the psychological expression of his subjects; otherwise, he painted with clarity of style and with strong, sculptural modeling.

The second generation of the neo-classical painters entered a new stylistic phase, characterized by sentimentality. It stemmed from the taste of the new bourgeois society and covered the period from approximately 1815 to 1848. The usual name given to this style in German and Central European countries is Biedermeier.

One of the first exponents of this style working among the Serbs was Constantin Danil (1789-1873). Born in Lugos, he studied in Temisvar under Arsen Teodorovic about 1816, and further worked with a number of painters-teachers (Nessenthaler, J. Bayer for the historical composition, J. Volk for portraits) in the same city. After 1820 his activities cannot be followed precisely, but we know that he visited both Vienna and Munich. By 1827 he married and settled in Veliki Beckerek; from there he traveled through the Pannonian plains, painting iconostases, many portraits, and one remarkable still-life.

Among his religious works, scholars consider the iconostasis for the Uspenska Church in Pancevo the most outstanding work of this genre (1829-1833). Others show the same relative level of artistry, but do not reach the heights of greatness (iconostasis for the Romanian church in Uzdin; iconostasis for the Serbian church in Temisvar, 1827-1843; and others such as in Dobrica Village, Jarkovac Village).

Among his early portraits one notes the impressive “Prota v Pavle Kengelac” in Pancevo, 1829-1831, in which delicately toned flesh is contrasted with a brilliantly painted jewelled cross, and dark priestly robes. In this example he balances classical stylization in drawing with a much freer application of color. In his later works he uses lazur, and a generally much lighter palette. He continues with careful modeling, and pays a great deal of attention to the decorative elements on the portraits (“An Austrian Official,” Senta; “P. Nikolic – Temisvarac,” in Belgrade; “The Lady in Blue,” Senta). The portrait of “Member of the Kranjcevic Family” in Pancevo is a vertical oval, and the subject is depicted wearing a classical toga with his right shoulder bare. “A Citizen of Beckerek” (in Senta), is represented in whole figure, seated in the interior of his home, before a background of monumental columns and folded draperies – themes that appear in early 20th century photographic portraits. In the portrait of the “Painter’s Wife” (Senta), the lady is seated, and in three-quarter view. Her head is turned to the observer’s left, as light plays upon her face, eyes, soft hair, and clothing. Although the paint is applied rather freely, sentimentality is almost overwhelming. The same feeling pervades his “Flora” with a garland of flowers (Belgrade, National Museum).

Danil’s only still-life (Belgrade, National Museum), is among his better attempts at representing the watermelons, grapes, and other fruits so abundantly produced in the gently rolling and fertile lands of his countryside.

In the works of Constantin Danil one can follow his progress and digression as an artist. His talent seems to have been

considerable, although insufficiently developed. His weak points were in drawing, and he possessed almost no sense for organized and balanced composition. In the execution of the illusion of depth he is not absolutely convincing, yet his early works show a good sense for nuanced tonality of color, which in time, grew too light and cold, and too monochromatic. In technique Danil was completely dominated by the Vienna style. Danil traveled to Italy on two occasions, in 1846 and 1857, although by artistic temperament he had no natural affinities with Italian painters and was rather more attracted by Dutch masters of the 17th century – an interest exhibited in his own brilliantly worked textures and surfaces.

Constantin Danil had several students, the most outstanding of whom was the protagonist of the Serbian Romanticism in painting, Djura Jaksic.

Danil's somewhat younger contemporary was Nikola Aleksic, who studied first with Arse Teodorovic and in Vienna. His opus consists of much the same type of work on iconostases (Mali Beckerek, Mol, Stara Kanjita, Arad, Gospodjinci and others), and portraits, e.g., "The Artist's Children," and several historical compositions. His talent was similar to that of Danil, but he was more productive.

Until the 20th century, the women played minor roles in the history of visual arts among the Serbs. We have mentioned Jefimija, who in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, made a small contribution. Our next candidate for study was a Serbian woman of the 19th century.

Born to the family of a building contractor, Katarina Ivanovic (1811?-1882), showed early signs of artistic ability. Such talent was not only recognized, but appreciated in her small town of Stoni Belgrade where she found an understanding merchant sponsor (Dj. Stankovic). Because of him she was sent to study painting in Budapest under a professor of Czech origin, a certain J. Perskyj. One of her early works from that period drew the attention of a Hungarian noblewoman and philanthropist, Baroness Csaky, who further helped Ivanovic reach Vienna. Since in 1835 no women were admitted to the Vienna Academy of Art, Katarina Ivanovic was not accepted on a regular basis, but she entered this institution as a special student. From the last years of that decade she left one of her "Self-Portraits," and from 1840, the portrait of a Serbian writer, with whom she formed a long friendship. The painting was entitled "Sima-Milutinovic-Sarajlija" and this writer dedicated one of his literary works to her. So far this young Biedermeier painter accepted and worked in the usual themes of the period. But portraiture did not remain her only interest. In 1840 she produced one of her still-lives, "The Grapes," a subject to which she was to return several times during her career.

After Vienna, Katarina Ivanovic was among the early Serbian artists who made the pilgrimage to Munich, where she widened her scope of interest by painting a "Bavarian Landscape," and genre scenes – "The Return from the Procession" and "Death of a Poor Woman." Later, in 1842, her artistic voyages took her to Paris and Italy where she produced the striking "Vineyard Worker" in which she combined figure and still-life.

The year 1846 found her in Belgrade, a fast-developing town and new center of free Serbia; hence, it was a focal point of cultural and artistic life among the Serbs. Although Katarina Ivanovic stayed there for less than two years, she tried her hand at another first in modern Serbian painting. This time she undertook to paint, in the style of a sentimental classicist, an event from the recent Serbian past – “Karadjordje Taking Belgrade in 1806.” During her stay in Belgrade, she finished a number of portraits, including two of “Persida Karadjordjevic,” “Portrait of the Wife of Sima-Milutinovic-Sarajilija,” “The Dimitrije-Hadzi-Rose and His Wife,” “Uzun Mirko Apostolovic,” and numbers of children’s portraits (“Young Danic,” “The Stanisic Children,” and others).

Ivanovic remained true to her established repertoire by painting still-life and some historical compositions, which, unfortunately, were less successful. The latter dealt with Serbian and Byzantine pasts as if heralding the Romantic era in painting (“Death of Serbian King Milan;” “Betrothed of Olivera-Mara;” “Serbian Queen Jelena;” and “The Patriarch of Constantinople Condemns the Wealth of the Court.” Among her genre theme, the painting of the “Old Woman at the Meal” has been praised, while some others from that series are considered less accomplished (“The Return,” “The Love Letter,” “Death of a Wealthy Woman,” and finally, the “Artist in Her Studio”).

Katarina Ivanovic was fully an artist of her generation, period and style in addition to being an accomplished draftsman and colorist (“Self-Portrait” – National Museum, Belgrade).

Her very special interest in furthering the national art collection

in the new Serbian capital of Belgrade was supported by two personal donations to the Belgrade Museum, and the gift of a considerable number of her paintings. For these and other services, she was elected to membership in the Srpsko Ucenio Drustvo (Serbian Learned Society) – the nucleus of the future Serbian Academy of Science.

Several other painters of this phase of classicistic art brought their own individual distinctions to this era: the works of Jovan Popovic (1810-1864) have been highly evaluated by scholars, who regarded him as the best Serbian portraitist; Uros Knezevic (1811-1868) was the most prodigious in artistic output. As the last Serbian representative of the neo-classical movement, Dimitrije Abramovic (1815-1855) can be cited. He started his artistic education in Novi Sad, to be followed by the usual route to Vienna, from 1836. There he studied with L. Kupelweisser, and privately with F. Amerling. Like Katarina Ivanovic, he came just to work in Belgrade, but remained much longer (1841-1849), continuing to paint not only Serbian notables of that period (“Knez Mihajlo,” “Vuk Karadzic,” “Joakim Vujic,” and others), but also religious subjects (iconostasis of the Cathedral of Belgrade, 1841-1845; iconostasis in the Church of Topola, etc.). In his stock of neoclassical themes, Abramovic made adjustments to include Serbian literary figures. To this category belongs the “Apotheosis of Lukijan Musicki” (1838) – the great Serbian writer from Vojvodina. The foreground is elevated, the hills disappear into the distance of an idealized landscape. On the right is the arched opening of the author’s tomb, into which he is led by the Angel of Death. Musicki turns his head in profile (reminiscent of the laureled head of

a mature deity) toward the accompanying winged Angel-Muse who is carrying a lyre. Traces of the Nazarean influence are suggested; the warming up of his color scheme foreshadowing Romanticism.

Abramovic not only learned about the neo-Classical style in Vienna, but was also introduced to classicistic art theory. While in Belgrade, he painted and also participated actively in the cultural life of that city: he published critiques, drew caricatures, urged the formation of an art academy, and took a keen interest in mediaeval monuments, especially those of Athos.

There were other, minor, painters who belonged to the neoClassical movement, while still adhering to national traditions (the members of the so-called "Valjevo School"). Unfortunately, the scope of this survey is too brief to permit discussion of them.

Artists of the neo-Classical movement shared more than technical affinities. Better trained than previous generations, they left provincial Temisvar and Budapest for the cosmopolitan centers. Not all of them went to Vienna; some reached Italy (C. Danil, N. Aleksic, K. Ivanovic), and beyond, to Germany and France (Katarina Ivanovic). While religious art figured prominently, together with portraiture, in works of this style, neo-Classicists were also attracted to still-life, genre, and compositions inspired by mythology or national history.

However, with no national center in Serbian lands owing to the Turkish conquest, the production of grandiose national and heroic themes was rare. Later, some artists living under the

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy found their way to Belgrade, which, newly freed from Turkish domination, fast became the focal point for every aspect of Serbian life.

In summation, the artists of the neo-Classical movement had partially broken with tradition by moving toward Western European models, thus considerably narrowing the gap between late 18th to middle 19th century Serbian art and the arts of the neighboring states.

While Classicism in Western Europe was reaching its high point, the seeds of a new style had begun to germinate by the end of the 18th century. This style came to be known as Romanticism – a word of French origin, first applied to describe picturesque English landscapes. By the beginning of the 19th century it had acquired a broader meaning, and was applied to many and various art manifestations. Among those, Romanticism is perhaps best defined in literature and painting.

The aesthetic theory of Romanticism grew from the new, strong, rich and sentimental middle class. Generally speaking, this theory is a complex and ambiguous association of diverse elements. Above all, this movement was defined as anti-Classical and anti-rational. And, like most movements, its adherents considered themselves unique, progressive, and unbound by convention. Thus, where reason was previously exercised, Romantic artists employed imagination; and, instead of restraint, they practiced sentimental emotionalism. Whereas the neo-Classicists built their aesthetic values upon clearly defined forms, dominated by drawings that convey idealized beauty, Romantics sought their idioms elsewhere. Romanticism

tried to express honestly and directly human sensibilities, to convey expression and the excitement of inner life through freer composition, “emotional” coloring, and an abundance of lights and shadows. To brighten pigments, bitumen was used, although in time colors darkened and denied in the end the very attribute of brightness which the Romantic works sought to emphasize. Boldness of expression was advocated and carried out by the use of aquarelle and other techniques such as copper-plate engraving, wood-cuts, and lithography.

Romanticists made no distinctions between themes; all were considered of equal value, as long as painting evoked the moody aspects of nature, life, or inner feelings. Feeling and imagination, then, dominated the infant stages of Romantic painting, though such attitudes were joined by others which expressed interest in utopian, oriental, mediaeval, mystical, and sentimental motifs.

In Serbia, the Romantic movement was enthusiastically supported. By making Serbs more aware of the importance of national tradition, historical past, and the wealth of national poetry, Romanticism raised national consciousness. In Vojvodina the Romantic period flourished between 1848 and 1878. It is interesting to note in this connection that many of its characteristic elements were already present in earlier Serbian neo-Classicism. General bourgeois sentimentality had been characteristic of the whole Biedermeier period. Katarina Ivanovic had painted nationalistic themes (“Karadjordje Taking Belgrade in 1806;” “Betrothal of Olivera-Mara;” and others). Uros Knezevic expressed Romantic feeling in the portraits of

the heroes of the First Serbian Revolution, while G. Bakalovic followed suit (e.g., portrait of “Knez Ivo od Semberija”). Another woman painter, Mina Vukomanovic (1828-1894), daughter of Vuk Karadzic, though inferior to the others, painted Romantic portraits of Montenegrins, and such themes as “A Girl With the Grape Wine.” D. Abramovic’s portrait of “Vuk Karadtic” is considered a truly Romantic work, in spite of this artist’s neo-Classical orientation.

The transitional period between Classicism and Romanticism can be seen in the works of two Serbians, trained in the classical style in Vienna, but who embraced many Romantic concepts. Thus, their works include portraits, iconostases, and Romantic subjects. Jovan Klajic (1815-1883) expressed that sentiment in his religious compositions – “The Judgment of Solomon;” and “David With the Harp” – while among his iconostases one can cite the following: in St. John’s Church, in Novi Sad; in Kuzmin; Stari Vrbas – all in the 1850 ‘s, with some others from the next decade. The influence of Nazarene art is felt beyond any doubt. On the other hand, Pavle Simic (1818-1876) painted, also under the Nazarene influence, compositions inspired by Serbian history, such as “Hadzi-Djera and Hadzi-Ruvim,” “Surrendering the Harac (Turkish word for Taxes ‘ ) by Ilija Bircanin,” from 1851-1852. His activity in iconostasis painting extended over a period of twenty-five years, and included works in Kuvezdin, Sabac, Senta, Novi Sad (St. Nicholas Church), Sombor (the cathedral), Zemun (Haris chapel), and others.

Novak Radonic (1826-1890) is considered to be the first truly Serbian Romanticist. His artistic education began in the studio

of Petar Pilie in Senta. In 1850 Radonic worked in Arad with Nikola Aleksic, the noted Biedermeier painter. Later, in 1851-1856 he studied at the Academy of Vienna with K. Rahl. The following two , years spent in Novi Sad mark the high point of his career as a painter, which he later neglected in favor of a literary effort. His surviving opus consisted of a number of drawings and copies of Old Masters from the museums of Vienna and Italy, and a small number of portraits. Radonic left two iconostases in Srbobran and Ada, one unfinished in Ilandza, and a landscape of "Hopovo Monastery." In portraiture, Radonic is at his best ("Young Dusan Popovic;" and "Young Monk," both in Belgrade, National Museum). He also painted Romantic "portraits" of the national historical figures from the Middle Ages, such as "Tzar Dusan," "Strahinjac Bane," "Kraljevic Marko." Among his most Romantic works are compositions inspired by themes from Serbian history, such as "Death of Tzar Uros," or "Death of Kraljevic Marko." Another Romantic composition is a variation on the apotheosis theme "Ville Crowning Branko" (the fairies from Serbian epic poetry crowning a Romantic poet, Branko Radicevic). Radonic also left self-portraits in oil and pencil. Good drawing, monumentality and skilled modeling distinguish his painting.

Djura Jaksic (1832-1878) is regarded by some authorities as a master of most remarkable artistic temperament, and by many others as the greatest Serbian painter of his time. Born in Vojvodina, in the province of Banat, in 1846 he attended drawing classes in Temisvar where he was instructed by Dunaiski. A year later, this able young man moved to Budapest to study with G. Marastoni, a Biedermeier-style painter. Jaksic's

Romantic inclinations first manifested themselves here in his choice of subjects, apparently entirely drawn from the works of Shakespeare and Byron. This affinity to the poets and poetry is easily comprehended, since Djura Jaksic himself was an outstanding Serbian poet.

Politics also had its attractions and consequent disadvantages. In 1848, after participating in the Hungarian revolution, Jaksic had to go into exile in the city of Belgrade. A now lost composition from that period recorded a revolutionary event: "The Fall of Sentoma;" In Belgrade, Jaksic became a simple laborer, but in 1850 he went back to painting. This time it was with Constantin Danil in Beliki BeCkerek (now Zrenjanin). At this point in his evolution as a painter a few inconsequential icons and portraits are attributed to him.

In 1851-1853 Jaksic busied himself copying Old Masters in the Museum of Art, Vienna. Through N. Radonic and S. Todorovic, he kept in touch with Austrian Romantic painter, K. Rahl. About 1853 he returned briefly to Serbia, and then traveled to Munich, where he continued to study Old Masters. About this time, he reached artistic maturity, which is evident in two portraits completed on his return to Vojvodina – "Knez and Kneginja from Srpska Crnja." The artist himself must have felt secure about his skill since, in 1856, he opened a workshop in Kikinda. Though the venture was not financially successful, paintings from this period are regarded as early masterpieces: "The Girl with the Lute;" and, above all, the coloristically bold "Girl in Blue" (National Museum, Belgrade). A religious composition, the "Sacrifice of Abraham," is also preserved from this period.

Leaving Kikinda for Novi Sad, Jaksic started painting historical personages (“Tzar Dusan,” “Knez Lazar,” “Kraljevic Marko”), or personalities lionized in national epic poetry (“Banovic Strahinja”). In 1857, Jaksic moved back to Serbia which he made his permanent home. Unsuccessful at earning his living by painting, he took a position teaching in provincial Serbia. Not many compositions come down from ‘ that period (“Torches at the Stanbul Kapija,” 1859, is attributed by some scholars to this period). After some time teaching in Potarevac, Jaksic returned briefly to Vienna (1861-1862) and studied at the Academy with C. Wurzinger. Several excellent works emerge from his second Viennese contact (“The Gifts of Bajazid,” “Heroic Death”). The “Death of Karadjordje,” 1862 (Belgrade, National Museum) is dramatic, and extremely cognizant of light and dark areas – lessons remembered from Rembrandt. Among the compositions of the period following his stay at the Academy, and while he was again a teacher in provincial Serbia is “The Insurrection at Takovo” (1864) – a dramatic moment depicting the choosing of the leader for the Second Serbian Revolution. Jaksic skillfully contrasts the powerful figure of Prince Milos with some men, and a single woman with child. The national banner is seen against the massive trunk of an ancient tree, behind which mountains 100m ominously. Around 1868-1869, he painted “The Child on the Bier,” and “Knez Mihajlo on the Bier.” Before moving to Belgrade in 1872, Jaksic finished a number of portraits (“The School Teacher Katarina Protic,” “Director Ciric,” and “Major Varjadic,” etc.), in which intense colors and arresting situations compel our undivided attention.

The last period in his life began with his move to Belgrade,

where he became director of the State printing press. Lastly, one must cite the portraits of “Djordje Ivanovic-Masadtija,” “Milovan Ristic,” “Young Knez Milan,” and the composition “Night Watch” (1876) in which the artist returns dramatically and Romantically to capture the expression of the midnight guard whose faces are illuminated by firelight.

Temperamentally akin to Jaksic, Stevan Todorovic (1832-1925) studied at the Academy in Vienna (1850-1853) and in Munich; he traveled twice to Italy and spent a short time in Paris. Serbian artists started looking for the artistic horizons far beyond Vienna. In 1857 Todorovic made Belgrade his permanent home. There he opened a drawing school, and later taught this subject in gymnasiums (high schools). This prolific artist continued the old tradition of painting iconostases (e.g., those from the Ascension Church and the church in Topčider, both in Belgrade, and others). His portraits are valuable aspects of his art, since he not only created a whole gallery of Serbs from the second half of the 19th century, but rendered them in an inspired manner, with broad and free brush strokes, and rich, warm colors. The portraits of “Djordje Maletic” and “Kornelije Stankovic,” and those of “Knjeginja Julija Obrenovic,” “Kapetan Misa Anastasijevic” and two “Self-Portraits” are regarded as his best. Several of his works in this genre represent the last phase of Serbian Romanticism (e.g., “Portrait of Dimitrije Posnikovic”), while in later works S. Todorovic exhibits signs of a transition to realistic themes.

His opus was not limited to religious works and portraits. Like his fellow Romantics, he painted landscapes (e.g., “Manasija

Monastery" 1857), historical composition inspired by Serbia's Mediaeval past ("St. Sava Taking Monastic Vows;" "Building of the Manasija Monastery"), and events based on 19th century Serbian insurrections against the Turks ("Death of Hajduk Veljko"). His travels through Turkey and Asia Minor are examples of genre paintings ("Artist and His Family on Bosphorus") – truly imbued with Romantic feelings.

The succeeding art movement – that of Realism – commenced in the middle of the 19th century, and primarily manifested itself in painting and graphics, less sculpture and architecture. Realism also broke ground in circumstances which produced the industrial revolution and the growth of natural sciences. It was less a philosophical movement than a practical belief (critical or naive) in the existence of an external environment independent of our thoughts, as a reaction against Romanticism and "art for art's sake" of the Second Empire. Originating in France, Realism made its appearance in Germany a decade later. In most other countries, Realism more often manifested itself in the formal aspects of painting rather than in ideology.

In the Realistic movement, many artistic understandings were adopted, but none dominated. For the Realistic painter, since the technique was rather important, he drew inspiration from past masters (Dutch, Spanish, French painters of the 17th century). Some works do have social context, although they were not absolutely required; other artists dealt with moral or contemporary themes.

Basically, Realism tried to oppose idealism in art, and to depict the world as it was, without artistic embellishment. It attempted

to create an art for the people (Daumier, Courbet, Millet), an expression of the world, firm and convincing, but without detailed description. This movement marked a transitional period between Romanticism and Impressionism, and served as the artistic base for other modes of expression, e.g., academic realism, socialist realism, surrealism, etc.

Realism in art was a movement that did not find a strong supportive basis in underdeveloped and agrarian Serbia of the last quarter of the 19th century. Consequently, Realism was short-lived, lasting barely two decades before giving way to other movements. Manifesting itself first in the late portraiture of S. Todorovic, mature realism was only attained with the appearance of Milos Tenkovic (1849-1890). He first started as the student of S. Todorovic, then moved to the Academy of the Applied Arts in Vienna, and from there to the Academy in Munich (1872-1878). Works from that period were shown at an exhibition in Belgrade in 1881.

M. Tenkovic died young, and very little remains of his artistic output: some sketches and aquarelles, one unfinished portrait, and three other genre paintings (“Landscape with Cows,” “The Flower Vendor,” and “A Still-Life with Majolica”). He showed a masterly command of technique, and faithful adherence to Realistic methods.

Two other Serbs, Antonije Kovacevic (1848-1883) and Djordje Milovanovic (1850-1919), followed in Tenkovic’s footsteps, but left too few paintings to be included here.

Instead, Djordje Krstic (1851-1907) must bear the entire burden

of artistic witness for his generation of Serbian realists. Krstic also studied in Munich, with a stipend provided by Serbian Prince Milan Obrenovic, from 1873-1881. Not all of this time was spent in Germany, for he made study trips through Serbian lands. He left behind a large amount of works, perhaps too diversified in theme and technique, but which are judged by scholars to be of the highest artistic order. His approach is predominantly rational, and occasionally sentimental, regardless of subject matter ("The Drowned Woman"), but always impressive in coloristic solutions, and thick pigments.

First of all, this artist left a great number of sketches of Serbian national costumes and landscapes; a number of landscapes, of such as "Cacak," "Zica," "Path in Kosutnjak," and especially magnificent renderings of "Kosovo" and "Babkaj." Among his interiors are "The Narthex of Studenica," and "By the Fireplace." His folkloric themes include: "Departure," "Under the Apple Tree;" while the genre is represented by the "Fisherman's Doorway;" and the still-life is represented by "Still-Life with Watermelon;" and "The Fall of Stalat" illustrates his work on historical composition. One of his figurative scenes, that of the "Anathomli" (Belgrade, National Museum), is considered one of his masterpieces: the bearded, pensive scholar is seated in an interior, surrounded by the symbols of his scientific pursuits. In this painting, it is the face, above all things, which draws the observer's attention. Krstic also left several iconostases in which he more or less successfully mixes Realistic methods with religious sentimentality" (Curug; Stari Adzibegovac, Nis, and Lozovik).

The next stage in the evolution of Serbian painting is marked by so-called Academic Realism, which was dominated by Uros Predic (1857-1953) and Paja Jovahovic (1859-1957). Both enjoyed long years and thus outlived by far their own style. Both were talented, capable, and productive artists, who seem to have chosen to remain as Academic Realists, letting other, younger, artists join the more modern movements. In doing so, they were able to show off their superior mastery of drawing and colors. Although for these reasons their art is occasionally spellbinding, it can be overwhelming in its sentimentality.

Uros Predic was one of the most outstanding students in the Academy in Vienna, where he worked for a time as an assistant. Upon his return to Belgrade, much of his talent was used up in painting the iconostases of various churches (Stari Becej, Orlovat, Grgeteg, Ruma, Church of the Transfiguration in Pancevo, and others), and in the portraits of eminent public figures ("Poet Laza Kostic," "Petar Dobrovic") and wealthy clients ("Woman with Glasses," "Woman with Veil"). His historical composition, "The Refugees from Hercegovina," is very dramatically rendered, and belongs to his early period, together with some moralizing paintings (e.g., "Cheerful Brothers..." a reference to the village drunkards), or sentimental themes ("Orphan on the Mother's Tomb," "Knitting Lesson," "Under the Mulberry Tree," and others). In some landscapes ("Roofs of Belgrade"), Predic lightened his palette, following the example of the "plein-air" stylists.

The other representative of the Academic Realism, Paja Jovanovic, also studied in Vienna, and lived in Paris and

London. Throughout his long career, he was primarily occupied with portrait paintings; thus “Mihajlo Pupin,” “Draga Masin,” “Artist’s Wife” are some of the very many. Jovanovic also painted immense canvases inspired by historical themes, such as “The Coronation of Tzar Dusan,” “The Serbian Migration,” and “The Insurrection in Takovo.” His popularity in the world was based on the folklore-inspired compositions, and ethnographic inaccuracies depicting social customs and practices in Hercegovina, Crna Gora and even Albania. Among the most popular compositions are “The Preparation of the Bride,” “The Cock-Fight,” “The Traitors” and “The Fencing Lesson.”

A transitional phase between the Realism and the Impressionism is occupied by the so-called “plein-air” artists who worked outside their studios, studying nature directly, but still holding to established academic forms. In Serbian art they appeared about 1895, and continued until shortly before World War I. Their travels in pursuit of education saw them in the world’s art capitals: Munich, Italy, St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), Paris and London. Among the themes, the landscapes predominate. Marko Murat (1864-1944) was the painter of the Dubrovnik and its environment; Dragomir Glisic (1872-1957) was the painter of Serbian village landscapes. In addition, the still-life and other themes survive in their works. Generally speaking, their colors are rich, vivid, luminous, full of light and transparent shadows; the canvas texture is dynamic, and the light is more analytic than synthetic. This group consists of a number of artists, but further mention in this survey will be made of Djordje Mihajlovic, Rista Vukanovic and his wife, Beta Vukanovic, and artists which in their works approach the Impressionistic style quite closely:

Borivoje Stevanovic, Ana Marinkovic, Branko Radulovic, and others.

## **Sculpture: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**

Generally speaking, Serbian sculpture fared quite differently than did painting and architecture. This was so because the church in observing the ease with which painting and architecture symbolized divine truths, early identified itself with them to form a lasting and harmonious association. Also, political and military considerations conspired to drain vital energies away from artistic innovation, and, as a result, sculpture was doubly subordinated. When found, however, sculpture was relegated to the exterior surfaces of churches (Raska style), present in form of decorative reliefs (Morava style), or applied to interior iconostases, icon frames, and doors (Byzantine style).

Consequently, after their migration to, and settlement in, the northern lands was completed, eminent Serbs followed the example of their forebears, and completely ignored the possibilities of the sculpture in the round. Sadly, this traditional neglect extended to the private lives of secular society, where only the painted portraiture seemed to be in demand.

Thus, a tradition of sculpture in the round was missing simply because it has never been allotted a place, first of all, in religious art.

Owing to such circumstances, Serbian sculpture in the true sense of that word had a very late start. Petar Ubavkic (1852-1910) is regarded as the first Serbian sculptor of prominence. A stipend

allowed this young Serb to study in Munich like so many of his contemporaries, who were painters. He spent two years there at the School of Applied Arts and the Art Academy (1875-1877), after which he returned briefly to his native Belgrade to teach modeling in a gymnasium. In 1878 Ubavkic sought inspiration in Rome, where he spent the next eleven years, studying at the Academy at first, and later on, working on his sculptures. Upon his return to Belgrade, he continued teaching and his artistic career. About twenty of his works remain; the most important period falls between 1877-1908.

Ubavkic's extensive talent and training, skill and care in execution, sensitivity to the nature of his material – be it marble or terracotta – when combined with the Romantic sentiment and Realistic style, invited the attention of his contemporaries, compelled international recognition of, and awards for, his creations. Art historians consider him a rather able master of his craft.

The busts of “Vuk Karadzic” and the portrait of “Prince Mihajlo Obrenovic” attest to Ubavkic's understanding of marble as a vehicle of expression. But his technical masterpiece must have been the “Woman with the Veil,” when the marble itself became a transparent veil revealing the features of the young face beneath. “The Monk,” “Karadjordje,” “Aleskandar Obrenovic,” the “Serbia” and the “Takovo Insurrection” groups, a “Gypsy” in terracotta and and an “Odalisque” (occasionally called “La Favoritta”), and the portraits of “Djura Jaksic,” “Djura Danieie,” and others, complete his artistic opus.

Although in spirit an artist of the 19th century, Ubavkic

bequeathed a legacy to the next generation of Serbian sculptors, a generation that recognized his deep and personal understanding of materials, their complex individuality and nature, the very essence of the matter from which sculpture is created.

By sentiment and technique, Djordje Jovanovic (1861- 1953) belonged to the 19th century. He early studied architecture in Belgrade, but took up sculpture in Vienna, Munich, and, finally, Paris. Though possessed of considerable technical skill, infused with the Romantic spirit, the quality of his art is quite uneven. His large works, in spite of their size, seem to lack in monumentality (allegorical figures for various official buildings). He produced many public monuments, commemorating historical events (Monument to the "Heroes of Kosovo" in Krusevac) or nationally famous figures ("Prince Milos," "Zmaj Jovan Jovanovic," "Branko Radicevic," "Vojvoda Misis" and others). On the other hand, his smaller works have been better received by scholars. They are more intimate, soft in outline and delicate. Academically inspired modeling is better manifested when infused with deep sentimentality ("Sorrow," "Crnogorac on Guard Duty;" among the reliefs – "Smell of Roses," "Serbia," "War Victim," "Serbian Soldier" and many others). After returning from studies abroad in 1903 he taught drawing, and later became professor and director of the Art School in Belgrade. He actively participated in the artistic exhibition in the country and abroad, especially during his first three decades of life in Belgrade.

The third representative of Serbian Realistic movement in

sculpture was Simeon Roksandic (1874-1943). The son of a village blacksmith, Roksandic was sent to study in Zagreb, where he developed an interest in sculpture. Coming to the attention of some eminent Serbs, Roksandic was awarded a stipend to study in Budapest, where he completed his work with distinction in 1895. The following years were spent at the Academy in Munich, which regarded him as a most outstanding student. It was during his third year in Munich that he created one of his masterpieces, the figure of the "Slave" (lost since World War I). At the end of 1898, under the influence of fellow sculptor, Djordje Jovanovic, Roksandic came to live and work in Serbia, accepting teaching positions in gymnasiums (Uzice, Kragujevac). The sculpture of "Knez Milos" (in Kragujevac) dates from this time. He spent 1906 in Rome, where he created his famous statue of the "Fisherman" (two bronze casts: Belgrade and Zagreb). From 1907 he worked in Belgrade, and after the wars of 1912-1918 in which he participated, he took up teaching (from 1921) in the Belgrade Art School.

Although his style was influenced by German sculptural Realism, he was equally and profoundly inspired by the great Classical works of the past, above all those of the Hellenistic period. While his female figures do not directly emanate a power of expression ("The Dancer"), his sculptures of the boys ("Boy with the Flute," "Boy with a Thorn in his Foot," and others), together with his images of animals and figures testify as to his Classical inspiration ("Two Lions," "Boy and a Tortoise," "Hero Killing Lion"). Among the bronze and marble portraits, his "Self-Portrait" and "Portrait of the Sister-in-Law" are outstanding.

His distinctive characteristics in the sculptural triad of the Serbian Realist sculptors lies in a powerful feeling for the expressive movement and a great sense for the composition, to which he adds his personal emotional values.

Subsequent generations of Serbian sculptors made progress by turning from Academism to Modernism, at a pace considerably slower than that of painters.

The art of Toma Rosandic (1878-1959) was profoundly tied to Belgrade, and to its art school and sculptural circles. Rosandic also studied in Italy; and with Ivan Mestrovic in Vienna, but was never admitted to the Academy there. After spending World War I with the Serbian Army, he made Belgrade his permanent home, continuing his sculpting and pedagogical activities.

His early years reflect both nationalistic feeling ("The Cycle of Kosovo") and the tragedies of war through religious ("Ascetic," "Head of Christ," and one of his masterpieces, "Ecce Homo") and deeply human themes ("Orphans," "Widow"). He worked on small groups in wood, full of a very personal and intimate poetry ("Flute Player," "Puberty"), or on the portraits ("Self-Portrait," "R. Boskovic"), figures and groups ("Deposition," "Harp Player"), as well as on the monumental sculptures ("Njegos," "Horses"). Early Rosandic sculptures are very much permeated by Mestrovic and German Expressionism, though he later outgrew them in preference to a stylized and modified Realism, deeply rooted in Mediterranean sculptural traditions. His technical abilities and his complete understanding of the materials are beyond dispute, as indeed are also clarity of expression and monumentality in style.

Sreten Stojanovic (1898-1960) started his career as a member of the organization of "Young Bosnia." After the Sarajevo assassination (1914), he and other young Serbs from Bosnia were sentenced to prison, where he developed skills in wood carving, which would guide him toward his long and productive artistic career. After World War I, Stojanovic traveled to Vienna for his studies; but, finding the Vienna Art Center outdated and personally unsuitable, he left it for Paris. The dominant figures of the Paris sculptural world at that time were A. Maillol, Ch. Despiau, and A. Bourdelle, and it is with the last artist that he chose to study. Stojanovic did not fall under the exclusive influence of his master, but absorbed, especially in the treatment of the nude, influences from other leading figures. In the years between the two wars, Stojanovic traveled a great deal to various lands and artistic centers expanding his artistic vision. At the same time, in Belgrade, he produced sculpture, and was engaged in teaching, and in literary activities as a critic and essayist.

In the beginning of his career, stand his bas-reliefs in wood, in which scholars have detected the strongest impact of his French master ("Girl with a Flower," "La Lutte," "Rest" and others). Proceeding from wood to bronze, he remained essentially in that medium, developing a sense for the monumental (liThe Necklace"), which later served him well when executing public monuments following World War II ("Fallen Warriors" on the Fruskogorski Venac). He also fashioned small, more intimate bronzes, in which he successfully conveyed feeling for movement ("Dancer," "Bathing Girl," "Girl with the Bananas"). But, the main force of Stojanovic's talent was demonstrated in innumerable portraits which revealed understanding of

psychology, whether in granite, marble, or bronze. In the hard materials the surface planes are simplified, almost geometrical (liMy Father," "Portrait of a Friend"), and as timeless as the ancient Egyptian portraits. The others, for example, those created in bronze, frequently bear the imprint of a fast, almost Impressionistic technique ("Nikola Vulic"). Regardless of material or technical rendering, Stojanovic's portraits have a lasting appeal ("My Daughter," "My Mother," "Milan Rakic," "Pera Dobrovic"). His works were exhibited frequently in Yugoslavia and abroad during his lifetime and many are part of permanent national treasuries of museums, galleries and collections throughout Yugoslavia.

In this brief list one must include Petar Palavicini (1887- 1958) who was artistically formed in Prague, and who, although a native of Dubrovnik, made Belgrade his home. At first, thematically under the aegis of the national Romanticism ("Refugees from Kosovo," "Jugovic's Mother"), Palavicini's style underwent an experimental phase in portraiture reminiscent of Cubism ("Rastko Petrovic"). Although he worked on decorative sculptural reliefs (allegories such as "The Crafts") and friezes, as well as on the public monuments ("Student-Warriors," "Karadjordje"), his main interest was the female figure: tall, elongated, elegant, and sensitively modeled forms ("Girl with a Bird") to which the artist returned time and again. Above all, his permanent contribution to the Serbian sculpture rests on those female figures.

A somewhat younger contemporary of Palavicini, Risto Stijovic (b. 1891) came from his native Montenegro to study in Belgrade

(with Djordje, Jovanovic). These studies were interrupted by World War I in which he served. Following that, he headed for France to recuperate from an illness and to continue his, sculptural training, first in Marseilles, and later, in Paris (1917). On the basis of exhibitions held in 1919 and after, critics praised the “Gothic” tendencies of the elongated and smiling figures, which he rendered with expressive directness and simplicity. Although he created public monuments (“Jovan Sterija Popovic,” “Botidar Vukovic”), portraits, female figures (“Caryatid,” “Indian Dancer,” “The Bathing Girl”), he appears artistically strongest when rendering the images from the animal world (“Eagle,” “Owl”). These animal sculptures are simple, essential, monumental, and, above all, universal and timeless.

The basic traditionalism of Serbian sculpture after World War II was enriched by the individual expressions of some artists (Jovan Soldatovic, Nebojsa Mitric), but it was left to yet another generation to break away from figurative conceptions. That gap was narrowed by such artists as Olga Jevrit (b. 1922). Having paid her debt to Classical sculpture by working with extremely simplified early figures and heads, Jevrit turned to abstract Expressionism, expressing herself in large, often bulbous, forms in bronze, and by combining constructivistic elements composed of uprights and diagonals (“Complementary Forms”). Olga Jancic (b. 1929), a student of Toma Rosandic, continues the Classical tradition, as far as materials are concerned, which she limited to bronze and stone. Her expression is, however, both abstract and monumental, although somewhat reminiscent of prehistoric Lepenski Vir (“Medallion”). Yet another generation of young sculptors continues its visual exploration of materials

and techniques, moving at will from the figurative to the abstract, and back again (Jovan Kratochvil, Momcilo Krkovic, Oto Logo, and others).

## Architecture: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The liberation of architecture from the domination of pseudoClassical and pseudo-National forms was even slower than in sculpture. Monumental works were predominantly left to Hungarian and German architects in the territories inhabited by the Serbs, but administered by Austria-Hungary in the 19th century. Among the Serbian architects of that period, Vladimir Nikolic (1857-1922) can be mentioned; his public buildings still survive in Novi Sad, Belgrade, and Sremski Karlovci (The Palace of the Archbishop).



Fig. 30. Krusevac. Bronze Monument of Prince Lazar, 20th Century. Sculptor: Nebojsa Mitric. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

In Serbia proper, Andrija of Palanka and Djura of Potarevac

raised fortifications (Topola) during the First Insurrection, and later some hostels within old monasteries. They and others like them received no formal training, but acquired their architectural skills in the traditional ways.

After the Second Insurrection, there is to be noted heightened architectural activity, although construction of any significance was traditionally limited to churches, public buildings, and princely homes (konak).

More than four centuries separate the era of Rad Borovic, architect of Ljubostinja, from that of Milutin Godjevac (Monastery of Bogovadja, 1816), or Janja Mihajlovic and Nikola Djordjevic (Rakovac Monastery; “Konak” of Princess Ljubica in Belgrade; Prince’s “Konak” in Toptider from 1831; and others). In spite of some Western elements, these examples support the existence of a regional, Balkan variant, of a more distant, Turkish, prototype.

Departure from such a tradition occurred toward the middle of the 19th century. It can be exemplified by the building donated by prosperous merchant Misa Anastasijevic. It is the former “Visa Skola,” and now the oldest part of the University of Belgrade. This structure was done according to the plans of Czech architect Jan Nevola, and it was completed in 1863. It shows a truly Romantic combination of Mediaeval (Romanesque and Gothic) and Renaissance styles in its polychrome arcaded facade.



Fig. 31. Belgrade. Facade of a 19th Century Building. Today's Museum of Dositej Obradovic. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).



Fig. 32. Belgrade. The Oldest Part of the University of Belgrade, 19th century. "Visa Skola" was designed by Czech Architect Jan Nevola. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1971).

Neo-Classicism was also affirmed in the building of the National Theater, which, though twice destroyed and rebuilt, still retains some of its original proportions. Its architect was Aleksandar Bugarski (1835-1891), who also gave Belgrade its "Old Palace," now the City Hall.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a variety of “neo” styles proliferated throughout Belgrade. At the end of the 19th century, Svetozar Ivankovic (1844-1924), in designing the Ministry of Justice building, paid homage to the early Renaissance. The house of the prosperous merchant, Aleksa Krsmanovic, built by architect Jovan Ilkic (1857-1917) was of the Baroque ostentatiousness. The same architect made plans for the building destined to house a Russian insurance company, that later became the Hotel “Moscow” in Belgrade. Because the original plans for the facade were changed in Russia, an example of Art Nouveau now rises on the architectural face of Belgrade. Today’s National Museum was finished before 1914, according to the design of Andra Stevanovic (1852-1929) and Nikola Nestorovic (1868-1957). It is a very impressive, but pretentious neo-Renaissance structure.

World War I left Serbia in ruins, and the small number of its new intelligentsia, artists and architects included, was sadly thinned. A great deal was built by Russian architects, and, in general, this period marks an era of struggle between form and function. Contemporary architecture in Serbia begins with the works of functionalist architects such as Milan Zlokovic (1898-1965), who designed the Hotel “Zica” in the Mataruska Banja, and the Children’s Hospital in Belgrade. He was followed by Dragisa Brasovan (1887-1965), an exceedingly well-trained architect, with a sure sense of style (State Press Building, Belgrade; Air-Force Command Building, Zemun).

World War II did not spare Belgrade in the least; the greatest part of the city lay in ruins requiring extensive reconstruction.

Principles of modern functional architecture, as understood in the United States or Japan, were fully adopted by the new generation of the Serbian architects, already completely schooled in the country (University of Belgrade). Among the more prominent names are: Vladeta Maksimovic, Milorad Pantovic, Ratimir Bogojevic. But the consequences of the war, as well as the oscillation between two divergent ideologies; caused a crisis in Serbian architecture in the late 40's and early 50's (The House of the Syndicates). Many names were, and are, involved in the creation of the New Belgrade – a city within the city, on the flatlands between the rivers Sava and Danube, and across from Belgrade itself. Although impressive as a unit from a distance, one finds fault with the great concentration of population in the buildings designated as family dwellings in relationship to the green areas left for them. Among others, the following architects worked there: M. Jankovic, B. PetriciC, U. Martinovic, M. Mitic, D. Milenkovic, and others.

Within the complex of New Belgrade, one building stands alone in the excitement it generates. An example of a new direction taken by architects Iva Antic and Ivanka Rospopovic it stands on the banks of the Sava, overlooking Kalemegdan. It was created to house the collection of contemporary arts. Simple cubic masses are relieved by many-faceted roof surfaces, which shed rain and admit light into the building's interior spaces. Designed to invite and entice visitors by the variety of floor levels, this structure is certainly a masterpiece in the category of museum galleries which, everywhere until recently, were burdened by tradition.

## Painting: The Twentieth Century

While the products of the early decades of this century can be securely judged by the art historian, more recent paintings still belong to the domain of the art critic, and to time for what one hopes will be their enduring values.

Historical events made clear divisions in the evolution of the Serbian painting of this century: the new era which began with the exhibitions of the “Lada”, art association in 1904, ended with World War I. It was at the point that Serbia, together with Croatia and Slovenia were united to form a new political unit – the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The second period covered the years between the two World Wars, and the third began at the end of World War II, when the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia was created.

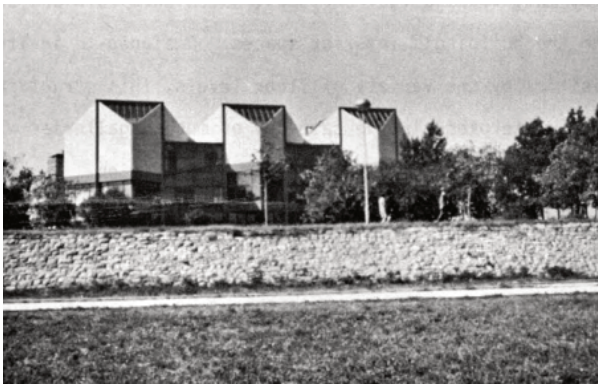


Fig. 33. Belgrade. Gallery of Modern Art, 20th Century. Architects: Iva Antic and Ivanka Raspopovic. (Photo: L.D. Popovich, 1969).

Since the exciting developments in 20th century Serbian art are too complex to treat in the space of a single survey, only the

representatives of major movements will be mentioned . Indeed, by identifying movements and artists, this writer wishes to invite the reader to become an active participant and to discover for himself. The works are there, made to be seen and judged by the observer.

Fin de siecle art reached Serbia and was expressed chiefly through Uros Predic and Paja Jovanovic, who worked well into the 20th century. While Academism continued to live, opportunities were sought in different artistic expressions. Those are somewhat chronologically retarded in relationship to the European development, but none the less, some very brilliant accomplishments were made.

These movements were welcome not only in the sense that they brought timely end to that exhausted style, but they were educating the taste of the youthful and unsophisticated Serbian bourgeois society. The transition was marked by the plein-air painters and those who belonged to the art nouveau trend, but above all, by impressionists. Impressionism, born in France and requiring new artistic sensibilities, did not reach Serbian artists directly from Paris, but via Munich, where the majority of Serbian artists still went for schooling. The first traces of the usage of pure color on v canvas can be found in the landscape "Ziea" by Djordje Krstic (1851-1907), and less so in the works of Stevan Aleksic (1867-1923), Rista Vukanovic (1873-1918), and others. The evidence of a struggle to escape worn-out techniques and themes of Academism is apparent. Thus, the transition toward Impressionistic style is predominantly formal:

dark coloring still predominates while only some of the colors shine brightly.

Ljubomir Ivanovic (1882-1945) is considered to be one of the first Serbian Impressionists, although he found his way of expression through graphic means. His formal education occurred in Belgrade and Munich, while his works were exhibited from 1904 from Yugoslavia to France. While his particular talent was less receptive to color – that main vehicle of expression of the Impressionist – he deserved to be classified with them owing to the Impressionistic feelings conveyed through his pencil drawings and wood-cuts, which, skillfully drawn, were able to suggest the play of light in his monochromatic technique, conjuring the vision of the shimmering surfaces of the Impressionistic paintings. His drawings and woodcuts are also fascinating records of the places and landscapes, now changed beyond recognition in many instances (“South Serbia,” “Sumadija,” “Yugoslavian Landscapes,” “Old Paris” and other themes), which, together with the maps and illustrations for books, comprise his opus.

Among painters of his generation, Kosta Militevic (1877-1920) (“Vozdovac Church” and “Savinac Church,” c. 1913) is noted for pure and rather cool colors, applied thickly by brush. This artist of irregular schooling (Belgrade – Prague – Vienna – Munich) slowly reached artistic maturity, produced several masterpieces during the exile with the Serbian Army on the island of Corfu and in the city of Thessalonike in the course of 1917-1918. The image is suggested through the mass and surface or space, rendered in thick strokes of the brush, set off

against vibrant harmonies of blue and yellow, green and red, ochers, cobalts, and ultramarines (“River on Korfu,” “Guard in an Olive Grove”).

Milan Milovanovic (1876-1946), the second most important Serbian Impressionist, had a short career as a painter, but enjoyed a longer one as a teacher. After completing his studies in Paris (1903) toward the end of the first decade of the 20th century he traveled through South Serbia, Macedonia, and Mount Athos, painting and cleaning mediaeval frescoes. During the Balkan and First World Wars, he painted on the military front, and afterward in Italy and Southern France. Following the setting up of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Milovanovic exhibited his work with other Yugoslavians in Paris and Geneva. Upon his return to the country, he dedicated most of his time to teaching at the Belgrade Art School.

His early works (c. 1902-1903) pay tribute to Manet, as interpreted by the Munich School of Impressionists; hence, the tonality is gray. During a stay in Paris, that manner was abandoned in sketches and above all on small canvases, such as “Carrousel.” On his portraits from that early period surface texture is strongly emphasized, while the brownish tones are still very much in evidence (“Self-Portrait with the Red Tie,” “Portrait of the Artist’s Mother”).

The effect of his having visited the South is very strikingly seen in his painting; after that colors shimmer on the surface, bright and brilliant (“View of Belgrade,” “Gracanica,” “Hilandari,” “Skopje,” “Dusan’s Bridge,” etc.). The most pure in colors are the works from Capri (“Terrace,” “Landscape,” “Blue Door”).

His last cycle consists entirely of landscapes and scenes from the southern part of the Adriatic (“Dubrovnik,” “Red Terrace,” “Lapad,” “Gruz” and others).

Creativity ended when his pedagogical work was begun. The scholars have classified his creative years into five periods, and it is believed that he created about two hundred and fifty canvases of which a relatively small number have survived. Although predominantly an Impressionist, who paints pink and blue or green luminosities, his light never dissolving the structure of his painting, he also oscillated between the Fauvism and the neo-Impressionism, thus not only developing in breadth of vision, but moving forward as well.

The most eulogized artist and powerful personality of her generation was a woman – Nadezda Petrovic (1873-1915). Coming from an artistically talented family, she devoted some of her time to the artistic organizations, to exhibits in the country and abroad, to art critiques, and social involvement (in the line of duty as a nurse during World War I she died of typhoid fever). Her studies took her to Belgrade, and then to Munich, where she became tightly connected with the Slovenian art circle (R. Jakopic, I. Grohar, M. Jama in the studio of A. Azbe). Her early works, already powerful in color and frequently executed in tempera, record her travels in Germany, France, and Italy. In a brief fifteen year period she passed from plein-air to Impressionism, and into Expressionism (Fauvism), modifying each, and so joining Serbian art with the most contemporary movement in Europe. Although many of her works were destroyed, about 200 survived. These works characterize her

vision of France (“Notre Dame,” “Bois de Boulogne”), and, above all, Serbia, its people, and landscapes (“Self-Portrait,” “Gypsy Woman,” “Woman in an Interior,” “Resnik” and many others).

Among her contemporaries, she alone emerges as an artist of monumental quality, standing firmly on her beliefs against a conservative environment. In paying tribute to an older art in monochromatic works and those negating color, she developed her most powerful means of expression (“Prizren”). This phase was characterized by the achievement of personal freedom of expression, reached not through subtle aesthetic analysis, but through broad, free strokes, almost relief-like in the foreground plan of many paintings. The effects are striking: directness in rendering the depth of vision, of passion, movement, and drama. Her honest observations radiate with power and life and truth, enshrined in the blues and purples, reds, greens and golds – so forcefully expressed that she stands above her contemporaries.

During the first two decades of the 20th century, Serbian art oscillates between Munich and Paris, between old Academism and new Fauvism. As always, indications were that the new ways were winning over the conventional ones.

The second phase of the modern art in Serbia took place within Yugoslavia, and it, too, barely lasted a generation. Marked by the search for the avant-garde, the effort was full of conflicts and contradictions. The Parisian influence was pre-eminent among artists of the early 20th century who regarded color as the mode of expression, among those who for a decade between

1920-1930 went in search of abstract form under the influence of Matisse, and Cubism.

During the decade immediately preceding World War I, Serbian artists had some difficult moments adjusting to the pace with which, in the art world, movement succeeded movement. It is also characteristic of that period for trends to overlap, and for artists to pass through more than one phase or style.

The Sezannesque vision of the world was shared by the following three artists: Petar Dobrovic, Jovan Bijelic, and Milo Milunovic – but not exclusively. Sava Sumanovic, Zora Petrovic, and Petar Konjovic were influenced more by the rationalistic trend in art of A. Lhote.

Though impressed by that which was Parisian and novel, some Serbian painters of this generation nevertheless took a retrospective glance at Cubism and found it attractive; and especially so in the dominance it exercised over color (emotional expression) through volume and space (rational expression). Cubism, though felt, was never fully and exhaustively explored during this phase of Serbian art (S. Sumanovic).

Toward the concluding years of the fourth decade of the 20th century, Serbian painters continued their exploration in several directions, although the approach in the majority of cases called for emotional involvement of the artist on personal and social levels. Scholars refer to that and similar tendencies as Coloristic Expressionism, Surrealism, and, finally, Intimism.

It is possibly an exaggeration to conclude that Serbian painters

found in color the means by which they achieved the fulfillment of artistic vision. Nevertheless, it seems to be so. Serbian Expressionists literally rejoiced in the experience – freedom to explore all the elements of nature and life through pure color contained within a firm and formal equilibrium. One can almost sense their affinity with the old fresco masters of the Middle Ages. No differences were too irreconcilable, no distances too great to bridge. The vision is often localized, focused, and slowly removed from the nature of the subject, which then entered the domain of the symbol. Compositional order and drawing were subordinated to the exalted brilliancy of colors. This trend is best manifested in the works of J. Bijelic, P. Dobrovic, I. Job, M. Konjovic, and Zora Petrovic.

Frequently in history, artists have reacted to the external world very much like sensitive instruments. Social, political, and economic conditions affecting the world of the late 1920's were held up and methodically examined by artists as well as social and political scientists. In Serbian arts, Surrealism, which first manifested itself among writers, does appear among the painters (Radojica Zivanovic – Noe, Milena Pavlovic – Barilli), while other painters expressed their comments on the state of the world through the visual language of Social Realism (the group "Life" with Djordje Andrejevit – Kun and others).

The phenomenon of the Intimist originates as a withdrawal from an outward manifestation of commitment to ideas (Marxism and Marxist painters) or Baroque restlessness of Expressionism. Inspired by Paris masters (P. Bonnard, E. Vuillard) the Intimists are easy to like visually, since they returned to the more gentle

realities of their surroundings, made poetic through refined means, inner light, and tranquility. Gentle sensitivities underlie renderings of nudes, landscapes, and interiors. The warmth of general tonality is stressed, and the feeling of space is considered more important than stormy and emotional surfaces.

Each of the artists of this group contributed a personal and individual expression to the style. Marko Celebonovic, Predrag-Pedja Milosavljevic, Stojan Aralica, Ivan Radovic, Nedeljko Gvozdenovic, Ivan Tabakovic are among its most talented exponents.

The advent of any war inevitably makes cleavages in the continuum of a civilization. Human energies are then diverted from various aspects of creativity and turned toward finding monstrous ways of destruction or ingenious ways of survival. World War II did not prove to be an exception to this rule in regard to the whole world in general, and in regard to a very small part of that world – Serbia – in particular. There, the war brought terrible destruction and devastation which far outweigh attempts at creativity (Dusan Vlajic, Djordje Andrejevit – Kun and a few others).

The period after 1945 continued with the old, inherited complexities in addition to the new tendencies. These were imposed on the one hand by the new system and philosophy (Marxism – Communism), and on the other hand, the continuous call of the progressive art emanating from Paris. Still active are veteran painters who, from the second decade of the century, continued to oscillate between the outdated Academism and the much explored Impressionism. The artists formed on the basis

of Paris avant-garde movements of the 1920's and 1930's were reaching another plane of maturity. In their works they searched for yet another, more refined sentiment. In the Intimist style, others rise from the bounds of Expressionism into the total artistic liberation of the Abstract Expressionism. Besides these, there are artists still painting coloristically sonorous canvases as the last and distant reflections of the Neo-Impressionism.

Parallel to the generation dedicated to the Social Realism and its ideology, there were artists of the early 1950's which, once again, brought Serbian painting abreast of happenings in the great art centers. Their thrust was upon the subject which was made free from itself, and raised to the elevated height of a symbol – not unlike that of the religious painting of the Middle Ages. Their expressions are individual, and they are able to carry their art to the boundaries of the abstract and of the non-figurative, thus reaching into the aesthetics and the theory of the artists of the 1960's.

The search was feverish, the changes fast – barely half a generation separates the work of Social Realism, all dedicated to express a strict utilitarianism both social and aesthetic (Djordje Andrejevic-Kun; Boza Ilic) – from the works so diametrically opposed to it, and responsible only to the abstract and personal vision. The generations of Serbian artists working from the 1950's are as numerous as they are diversified. They are our contemporaries, and they are better when experienced directly, rather than when explained, classified or described. As the artists emerge with their works, these works are discussed by critics, and they are yet awaiting to be judged by time. Strong are

the artistic forces of powerful Expressionism (Bata Mihajlovic, Petar Omcikus, Lazar Vozarevic, Olivera Galovic, Petar Lubarda, together with some already mentioned painters such as Pedrag Milosavljevit).

Artistic groups are formed and reformed. New centers and epicenters are felt, departures taken, and gaps filled by the younger talents (Mladen Srbinovic, Stojan Celie, Miodrag Protic, Aleksandar Tomasevic). They are not afraid to experiment with the world of vision, touched with Surrealism, or with pure forms and shapes, colors and tonalities, or atonalities as well (Milos Bajic, Zoran Petrovic, Mica Popovic, Ksenija Divjak).

Those elements which bind the youngest generation of Serbian painters together, such as variations on Realism, including the ever strong Surrealism (Milic Stankovic, Dado Djuric, Ljubo Popovic) and every manifestation of abstract art, including Optic and Cynetic, bring these artists closer to their fellow creators the world over.

The years subsequent to World War II brought inevitable changes to the universe. New technologies made the world smaller and nations closer, if not friendlier. The creative energies were revived worldwide. Artistic sensitivities once again registered the changes, with optimism or pessimism, with the enticement to beauty or with the conscious discords which jarred the senses. The artists formed a rather unique brotherhood, be they architects, sculptors or painters. Their sharing in the new universalistic . spirit made them transcend the nationalistic, regionalistic and political boundaries. They became elevated

above the provincialism and sectarianism of diverse schools and continents. The younger generation of Serbian artists creating during the third quarter of the 20th century – whether in Belgrade, Paris, New York or Los Angeles – seems to share, as much as possible with the other artists of the world, in this universal spirit and style, which seems, at least for the time being, to have conquered all the boundaries created by nature or imposed by man. It is upon the future generations to decipher how much of their Serbian ethnic spirit and artistic heritage was transmitted to the universalistic trends of today.

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