



Giedrė Mickūnaitė

Maniera Greca in Europe's Catholic East

On Identities of Images in Lithuania
and Poland (1380s–1720s)

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Maniera Greca in Europe's Catholic East



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Central European Medieval Studies

The series focuses on the geographical centre of the European continent, but also a region representing various historically changing meanings and concepts. It challenges simplistic notions of Central Europe as a periphery to the medieval 'West', or, equally, a border between barbarity and civilization; an area of a lively convergence of different ethnic groups, and a socially and culturally framed common space; a point where different 'Others' met, or an intermediary 'bridge' between the Roman Catholicism and Latinity of the West, and the Slavic Orthodoxy and Hellenism of the Byzantine East.

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*On Identities of Images in
Lithuania and Poland (1380s–1720s)*

Giedrė Mickūnaitė

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Cover illustration: Fragment with remnant of human eye excavated in 2012. Institute of History, Belarusian National Academy of Science, unnumbered. Photo: Giedrė Mickūnaitė, 2014.

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6298 266 6

e-ISBN 978 90 4853 270 4 (pdf)

DOI 10.5117/9789462982666

NUR 684

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In memory of János M. Bak (1929–2020),
my teacher in Medieval Studies



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Acknowledgements

The creation of this book was prompted by the murals of Byzantine style discovered by Vytautas Raila in the parish church of Trakai in 2006. The excavations in the castle of Kreva led by Dr Aleh Dziarnovich in 2012 revealed the beginnings of the Byzantine painting in Lithuania. Without these discoveries, our knowledge about medieval wall paintings would have remained just the few sentences in records and the entire research would never have traversed the scholarly guess evoked by puzzling evidence. Thank you, Vytautas and Aleh, for bringing the paintings into the realm of the visible and the scholarly. My deepest gratitude goes to fellow art historians in Bulgaria and Serbia Dr Elka Bakalova, Dr Ivanka Gregova, Dr Elissaveta Mousakova, Dr Tatjana Starodubcev, Dr Branislav Cvetković, and Dr Bojan Milković without whose guidance, pointed comments, and benevolent critique my path through the field of Byzantine art would have been much more difficult. I am extremely grateful to Leslie Carr-Riegel for sharing reference to *pictores greci* with me: these two words from the fifteenth century made me readdress the broad issue of medieval painters' fluctuating identity.

During the time spent on various phases of this ever-expanding project, I have received help and assistance from many persons and institutions. Without their generous support and advice, this book would have remained incomplete. I extend the round of thanks to my colleagues at the Department of Art History and Theory of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, especially to Dr Aleksandra Aleksandravičiūtė and Dr Helmutas Šabasevičius, who replaced me during my long research trips and supported me with valuable advice and good humour.

This research would have been impossible without financial support granted by the Research Council of Lithuania and the trust that the reviewers of four consecutive project applications showed in my inquiry which has developed into a substantial part of this book.

The Advanced Academia Fellowship at the Centre for Advanced Study 'Sofia' in spring 2011 gave me the opportunity to explore Balkan art in situ and prompted a revision of the provisional research hypothesis by directing the inquiry towards Serbian materials. A short-term research stipend at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection held in September 2013 provided an invaluable occasion to update my knowledge at the exceptional library and among excellent scholars. A residence in Zug awarded by the Landis&Gyr Kulturstiftung in 2014 offered a rare and precious chance to



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pause for thinking. It was in Zug that the draft structure of this book started to crystallize. In 2018, a one-month residency at Nida Art Colony afforded a cherished possibility to finalize the manuscript conceptually.

I remain indebted to numerous archives and collections, above all the Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies 'Prof. Ivan Dujčev' of the Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', the Manuscript Departments of the Vilnius University Library as well as the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the Library of the Princes Czartoryski Collection and that of the Jagiellonian University, both in Krakow. The Lithuanian National Art Museum, the M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, the Church Heritage Museum of the Vilnius Diocese, the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, the Institute of Arts of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Hrodna Museum of the History of Religions shared their holdings and provided images to be published herein. My special thanks go Priest Andrzej Rusak, conservator of the Diocese of Sandomierz and Priest Canon Dr Jacek Marchewka, parson of the Cathedral of Sandomierz for providing photographs and giving consent for their publication. Dr Branislav Cvetković has generously provided his photographs for my research and publication in this book, while Vilnius Academy of Arts has commissioned Kęstutis Stoškus to photograph the paintings in the Trakai church for scholarly investigation and publication.

I have benefited from suggestions to pilot versions of the research presented at conferences and published as articles duly referred to in notes and the bibliography. Comments and suggestions by the manuscript's anonymous reviewers helped clarify interpretations, articulating what was meant, yet not worded, and defining the limits of the inquiry more precisely. These external opinions made the inscription of investigated images into scholarship much smoother, for which I am profoundly grateful. My special thanks go to Dr Nada Zečević, the Central European Medieval Studies series editor at the Amsterdam University Press, and the entire AUP team for their faith in this book and continuous professional support in preparing it for publication.

I say 'thank you' to my parents for their encouragement to undertake a scholarly path, my sisters for help and support, my friends for their tolerance and trust in me. Without all of them, this research would have been trickier and its result duller.

Even the longest list leaves out many who generously shared their knowledge, experience, and expertise, and posed questions, the search for answers to which have resulted in sections of this book. Without their contributions this work would not have been what it is. As to mistakes and other imperfections, they all are exclusively my own responsibility.



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Introduction; or an eye in the debris

Abstract: The Church Councils of Constance, Basel, Ferrara-Florence and Trent, the fall of Constantinople and the victory of Lepanto are the events that constitute the pan-European political framework of this inquiry concerned with notions and functions of ‘Greek’ image in Lithuania and Poland. The review of the understanding and treatment of Greek manner in scholarship highlights consistent implications of difference and retrospect. The choice of an intertextual approach to establish patterns of the vernacularization and alienation of images is substantiated through the discussion of available primary evidence, comparative materials from Southern and Eastern Europe as well as art historical literature. The overview of confessional polemics emphasizes division between Greek people and Greek images in the eyes of early modern Catholics.

Keywords: Greek image, Christian confessions, hybridity, visual vernacular, postcolonial theory, intertextual theory

The image of an eye on the cover of this book is both a subject of and a metonym for the research presented herein. A photograph of a painted piece of plaster, a part of a face, of a human figure, and of mural decoration, this eye represents a knot in a web of references to the production of and relations with images across time. Yet this web could be abridged to one word ‘an eye’, or ‘a fragment’, or a combination of both. The phrase ‘fragment with an eye’ categorizes the object as a remnant and by doing so announces the research which attempts at providing broken pieces with a kind of prosthetic body of art historical narrative. The framework of this book is built on the binaries of visual and verbal media, of Catholic and Orthodox confessions, as well as of persons and things and attempts at rendering hybridity, which had not been articulated at the time of the production of the images discussed herein. In the broadest sense, this study is a kind of rescue expedition, which aspires to save fragmented as well as semantically mixed images from neglect. By the same token, the research acknowledges the creative

Mickūnaitė, G., *Maniera Greca in Europe's Catholic East. On Identities of Images in Lithuania and Poland (1380s–1720s)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2023

DOI: 10.5117/9789462982666_INTRO



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power of oblivion, herein understood as a prerequisite for and a vehicle of cultural order and continuity. Hence, the inquiry, whose key instrument is a looking eye, binds the scattered fragments into a narrative and inscribes them into the history of art. More narrowly, this is an object-based study of images qualified as Greek by their past or present viewers. Although the visual characteristics as well as functions of these images vary, their Greek identity has always connoted otherness of varied degrees and implications.

The book explores objects that qualified as Greek, functioned within the Catholic milieu of Lithuania and Poland. Topically quite narrow, this inquiry spans a period of almost four centuries and has a broad geographical range. The study focuses on perceptions of and preconceptions about Greek images among Eastern European Catholics from the late fourteenth to the early eighteenth century. Concentrating on Greekness as manifested in encounters between the visual and the verbal, the research asks how images assume identities and acquire values. Without denying its descriptive nature, the book employs the notion of the 'Greek manner' as a critical concept denoting a register of thought charged with othering. Hence, the Greekness of images is addressed with an aim at estimating the scale and circumstance of visual otherness and revealing the meanings retrospectively attached to this notion.

The entire study has been prompted by the remnants of Byzantine wall paintings unveiled in the parish church of Trakai in Lithuania in 2006. These murals stimulated a search for scenarios of artistic practices, posing questions of mute sources, revising established patterns of art historical narrative, and rethinking the understanding and roles of confession in the cultural history of Eastern Europe. Back in 2006, looking at the revealed fragments, I was confused by the fact that seeing these Greek paintings known from seventeenth-century sources I was unable to situate them within any historically and geographically proximate artistic milieu. My attempts to relate the paintings in Trakai to other known murals exposed and widened gaps between the visual and the verbal: on the one hand, I knew other examples of contemporaneous Byzantine paintings in Lithuania and Poland; on the other hand, parallels between them were merely circumstantial, without any specific resonance as to style or iconography. The attribution and contextualization of the wall paintings in Trakai demanded the pursuit of a hypothesis that seemed professionally illogical and led to a circular discussion with visual and written evidence as well as scholarship. It was at this point that the metaphor of a loop emerged as a reflective tool and the binding principle of the research indicating alteration through repetition and appropriation through reduction.



The book consists of case studies based on evidence of varied genre and chronology, whose message permeates cultural hybridity. The principal research assumption maintains that hybridity is culture's latent state preserved in every medium, but disguised and filtered by discourse. Hence, I claim that written sources not only represent aspects of lived reality by reduction, but also purify them from contradictions by ascribing singularized meanings. This practice of purification is particular not only to master narratives, but also to historical records and scholarly literature. Hence, by tracing the dynamics of Greek manner and its derivatives in images and records of the past, this study rethinks how cultural identities and affiliations are constituted and sameness maintained.

Although lacking clear definition,¹ the Greek manner, rooted in art history in its Italian version of the *maniera greca*, is a retrospective notion applied to images from a factual or imagined past. More frequently than not, the Greek manner denotes stylistically and iconographically mixed artworks originating from biconfessional territories in Byzantine geographic and cultural proximity, but under Catholic rule. The current inquiry transfers the notion of the *maniera greca* from the Mediterranean to Eastern Europe and explores the meanings of the qualifier 'Greek' as it was applied to images in local sources. The research looks at implications of Greekness in the territories far beyond Byzantium, but with a sizeable Orthodox population. The Catholic attitude towards fellow citizens of different dogmatic identity loads the attribute 'Greek' with ambivalence – its meaning ranging from truthfulness, antiquity, and prestige to strangeness, error, and expiry.

The issue of the Greek manner lying at the core of this inquiry is particular to Catholic culture. The notion indicates a visual other, since – as Robert Cormack and Stavros Mihalarias have pointed out in their insightful essay on Crusader icons – the self-evident *lingua franca* requires no definition.² Art history has inherited the term and largely the understanding of the *maniera greca* from the treatises of Italian Renaissance authors, above all, the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550) by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), who in the biographies of the artists drew a line between an old, static, repetitive, even paralysing Greek manner and a sweet, novel, dynamic mimesis of visible reality embraced and cultivated

1 For recent discussion on the fluidity of meaning as well as the overlapping of the notions *maniera greca* and *maniera latina*, see: Drandaki, 'A Maniera Greca', pp. 39–72.

2 Cormack and Mihalarias, 'A Crusader Painting', pp. 132–141. For elaboration of the issue on the basis of Italian material, see: Pace, 'Fra la maniera greca e la lingua franca', pp. 71–90; idem, 'Le maniere greche', pp. 237–250.

by Tuscan painters. As Anastasia Drandaki has observed, the influential artist-biographer 'is not so much interested in Greek painters but rather in the Italians, whose work classified them in – or subordinated them to – the Byzantine tradition of painting and whose obsolete artistic language he severely criticizes'.³ Vasari's authoritative judgement rooted a negative perception of Byzantine art in the West that to a certain extent penetrated into scholarship.⁴ For students of Western art, the notion of the *maniera greca* is broad and situational as it might refer to artworks that in some way follow Greek or Roman Antiquity, to Catholic 'colonial' art produced in former Byzantine territories such as the Holy Land⁵ or Venetian Crete,⁶ or to icons and their remakes within the Catholic milieu.⁷ However, most inquiries into the Greek manner come from scholars working on Byzantine art, where the adjective 'Greek' implies a piece made by Greeks and (or) brought from the Greek lands to the West.⁸ Frequently, the *maniera greca* is considered a specifically Italian phenomenon encompassing Greek objects and Greek persons, who arrived or were brought from Byzantium especially during the capture of Constantinople in the thirteenth century and after the capital's fall in 1453.⁹ Since the *maniera greca* is more about things than persons, the Greek impact on late medieval Italian art is frequently narrowed to panel painting of the so-called Italo-Byzantine style.

The eastern Adriatic coast is yet another realm where the Greek manner has flourished and been manifested in imported icons and Byzantine frescoes painted in Catholic churches. Anthony Cutler and Valentino Pace, in discussing the *maniera greca* on the two parallel peninsulas, have built a conceptual bridge across the Adriatic Sea.¹⁰ Recent studies on the arts of Albania¹¹ and Montenegro have not only provided evidence on paintings

3 Drandaki, 'A *Maniera Greca*', p. 41.

4 Cutler, 'From Loot to Scholarship', pp. 237–267; Bernabò, 'L'arte bizantina', pp. 1–62. On Vasari's impact, see: Previtali, *La fortuna dei primitivi*.

5 For broad and consistent scholarly contributions see the three volumes of *East and West in the Crusader States*. For a synthesis overviewing cross-confessional collaborations within the visual plane, see: Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders*. On colonialism and the applicability of its critical concepts to medieval evidence, see: Hunt, 'Art and Colonialism', pp. 69–85 and Kühnel, *Crusader Art*.

6 Ranoutsaki, *Die Kunst der späten Palaiologenzeit auf Kreta*.

7 Although narrowed to the Adriatic, the issue of icons in Catholic pieties is insightfully addressed in Voulgaropoulou, 'From Domestic Devotion to the Church Altar', pp. 1–41.

8 *Byzantine East, Latin West; Byzantine Art: Recent Studies*.

9 Gasbarri, *Riscoprire Bisanzio; Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe*; Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*.

10 Cutler, 'The *Maniera Greca*'; idem, 'La 'questione bizantina' nella pittura italiana', pp. 335–354.

11 Vitaliotis, 'Peintures byzantines', pp. 173–215.

and painters, but have also revealed the changing attitudes towards Greek images over longer periods of time. For example, Valentina Živković, in her thorough research into intersections of arts and religious life in Kotor, has revealed that citizens, who were subjects first of Serbia and later of Venice, commissioned paintings in the Greek manner to convey personal and political messages through borrowed style and altered iconographic programmes, while keeping the Orthodox population behind the city walls.¹² According to Živković, episodes of stylistic symbiosis melding Gothic and Byzantine artistic practices in fresco painting appeared upon the will of patrons and in the fifteenth century were used to promote Catholic understanding of the Florentine Union (1439). Importantly, nearly two centuries separate the execution of these hybrid paintings from their identification as *pictura greca*.¹³ This late identification of the Greek manner hints at parallel yet distant tenses of visual and verbal articulation of difference. Hans Belting attempted to join these detached interpretive registers of the made, the seen, and the told by emphasizing the narrative impact on an image's provenance as a decisive determinant of its Greekness and pointing to the visual shift in the paintings *alla greca* in early modernity.¹⁴ Similarly, Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, in her study on early modern attitudes towards the arts of the Middle Ages,¹⁵ has shown how temporal and consequently stylistic gaps between images in churches and the taste of the Baroque period were bridged by altering the exposition and display of medieval pieces. Jurkowlaniec's inquiry has also revealed confessional, for the most part Catholic and Protestant, attitudes towards and revisions of medieval artworks and demonstrated, how early modern Catholics had gradually enacted Greek images as cult images. In addition to discussing cases in which the adjective 'Greek' has been applied to pictures in primary sources, Jurkowlaniec has also addressed the broader topic of the Greek manner as it surfaces in Catholic and Orthodox texts concerned with religious imagery. Her inquiry has demonstrated the wide amplitude of Western meanings and strict adherence to tradition in the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁶ This broader perspective of religious polemics as reflected in items and visual motifs that moved between hostile yet interactive Christian confessions has been approached in the essays published in the two volumes of *People*,

12 Živković, *Religioznost i umetnost*; Pace, 'L'affresco nella chiesa', pp. 107–117.

13 Živković, 'Tota depicta picturis grecis', pp. 65–89.

14 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, pp. 330–348. For a recent critical overview of the impact of Belting's study on art history, see: Hamburger, 'Hans Belting's "Bild und Kult"', pp. 40–45.

15 Jurkowlaniec, *Epoka Nowożytna*; idem, 'West and East Perspectives', pp. 71–92.

16 Jurkowlaniec, 'West and East Perspectives', pp. 71–92.

Images, Language, Things edited by Falko Daim, Dominik Heher, and Claudia Rapp as well as the accompanying exhibition 'Byzantium and the West. 1000 Forgotten Years' held at the Austrian castle of Schallaburg in 2018.¹⁷ Conceptually, the volumes, one dedicated to images and things and the other to people and words, are very close to the inquiry of this book and at the same time highlight its specific aspects. While the traffic of people, goods, and ideas between Christian East and West has been fruitfully researched since the mid-twentieth century, the two volumes inquire into how meaning was communicated, transmitted, appropriated, and transformed around the Mediterranean and Western Europe. The *Ecclecticism in Late Medieval Visual Culture at the Crossroads of the Latin, Greek, and Slavic Traditions* edited by Maria Alessia Rossi and Alice Isabella Sullivan takes its roots from the symposium held at Princeton University in 2019.¹⁸ The volume shifts the focus on the arts of Eastern Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. Close in geographical and chronological scope to this book, the essays in the *Ecclecticism* volume address issues of visual heteroglossy as well as mediation of styles, iconography, and meanings across and within borderland communities of the Balkans and the Carpathians. This study makes further steps: geographically, it moves attention northwards by concentrating on less explored Lithuanian material. Conceptually, it narrows the inquiry to the reception and reworking of images from confessionally different artistic traditions. Chronologically, it extends to the early eighteenth century and traces Catholic efforts and results of controlling and appropriating heterodox images. Obviously, this inquiry shares a lot with national histories of art, on which it relies and with which it enters into discussion.

Among numerous contributions that allow the classification of Greekness as a visual other in the eyes and especially words of Catholic viewers, this research has extensively relied on Polish scholarship dealing with Russo-Byzantine (as it is termed in the vernacular) wall paintings. Numerous and notable contributions authored by Anna Różycka-Bryzek have inquired into the iconography, argued about the provenance and identities of painters, and established artistic as well as political contexts of royal commissions

17 *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge*, I–II. For an overview of the exhibition, see: 'Byzanz und der Westen. 1000 vergessene Jahre', www.schallaburg.at/de/ausstellungen/byzanz-und-der-westen [accessed 15/10/2019].

18 *Ecclecticism in Late Medieval Visual Culture*. The international symposium "Eclecticism at the Edges: Medieval Art and Architecture at the Crossroads of the Latin, Greek and Slavic Cultural Spheres" organized by North of Byzantium initiative was held at the Princeton University on 5–6 April 2019.

of Byzantine murals in Poland.¹⁹ Małgorzata Smorąg-Różycka has been continuing these investigations especially in regard to the new evidence brought to light during recent conservation and restoration of the wall paintings in the Cathedral of Sandomierz. Her publications highlight the fusion of religious politics and royal patronage within the murals.²⁰ This topic has been further developed by Marcin Walkowiak, who interprets Byzantine paintings in Catholic churches as manifestations of the king's political theology.²¹ Mirosław Piotr Kruk has published extensively on icons in Catholic churches, discussing their provenance and cult from the later sixteenth century onwards.²² In addition to inquiring into the origins and the reception of icons by early modern Catholics, Kruk has written an extensive overview of the Byzantine murals in Poland (also including a few examples from Lithuania) suggesting that these commissions visualized the planned union of the Church.²³

While Polish scholarship nourishes this inquiry, which is part of the shared history and tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the search for parallels to the murals in Trakai led me to studying Balkan art, especially the paintings of the Morava School. Among the published works, Dragana Simić-Lazar's exhaustive research into the frescoes of the monastic Church of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in Kalenić (c. 1420)²⁴ was decisive in turning initial professional suspicion into the research hypothesis on the Moravan origins of the painters employed in Trakai. Extensive documentation of medieval wall paintings in Serbia combined with research into individual monuments conducted by Tatjana Starodubcev,²⁵ Branislav Cvetković,²⁶

19 Różycka-Bryzek, 'Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła ściennie w kaplicy Świętokrzyskiej', pp. 175–293; idem, 'Obraz "Czuwającego Emmanuela"', pp. 33–52; idem, 'Malowidła "greckie" fundacji Jagiełły w kolegiacie sandomierskiej', pp. 5–17; idem, 'Cykl maryjny we freskach "graeco opere" fundacji Władysława Jagiełły', pp. 33–52; idem, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła*; idem, *Freski bizantyńsko-ruskie*; idem, 'Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła ściennie w kolegiacie wiślickiej', pp. 47–82; idem, 'Niezachowane malowidła "graeco opere"', pp. 295–318; idem, 'Polish Medieval Art in Relation to Byzantium and Rus', pp. 355–375; idem, 'Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła w Polsce wczesnojagiellońskiej', pp. 307–326.

20 Smorąg-Różycka, 'Bizantyńskie freski w sandomierskiej katedrze', pp. 235–255; idem, 'Bizantyńskie malowidła w prezbiterium katedry', pp. 53–72; idem, 'Anna Cylejska', pp. 289–304.

21 Walkowiak, 'Graeco opera in Władysław Jagiełło's Royal Power Theatre', pp. 77–101.

22 Kruk, 'Balkan Connections', pp. 287–298; idem, *Ikony-obrazy*.

23 Kruk, 'Malowidła *Graeco opere*', pp. 145–201.

24 Simić-Lazar, *Kalenić*.

25 Starodubcev, 'Drugi sloj živopisa', pp. 221–250; idem, 'Predstava Bogarodice sa Hristom', pp. 137–152; idem, *Manastir Sisojevac*.

26 Cvetković, Stevović, and Erdeljan, *Manastir Jošanica*; Stevović and Cvetković, *Manastir Kalenić*; Cvetković and Babić, *Manastir Nova Pavlica*.

Milan Radujko,²⁷ and others made me trust my scholarly 'heresy', while field trips and study of the paintings in situ, resulted in an art historical conversion, prompting elaboration of the scenario depicting the path of the masters from the Balkans to Lithuania. Essays in the volume edited by Michele Bacci on the practices of the artist in Byzantium²⁸ offered a basis for the construction of the framework of roles that could be ascribed to these hypothetical Moravan painters. Reasoning along the north-south axis resonated with the concept of the Second Wave of South Slavic influence formulated and maintained by Russian scholars from the late nineteenth century onwards.²⁹ Although this influence is an acknowledged fact of history, debates about how it has happened are not yet over. Herein I examine the existing scenarios of how this wave rolled by reading scholarship through the lens of the paintings in Trakai. Francis J. Thomson's highly critical scrutiny of the source evidence for the biography of Gregory Tsamblak (c. 1364–1419/20)³⁰ enabled the naming this metropolitan of Kyiv as a credible cultural agent at the Lithuanian grand ducal court, providing him with the role of the mediator for commissioning the Trakai murals.

The comparative interest in how a Greek image was translated into a cult image brought Italian material into the orbit of this research. The scope of this book has limited the inquiry to the reception of images within the Church and its members, leaving discussions on artistic practices as background knowledge. Of the numerous studies dedicated to various aspects of religious life related to images, the cases of Roman icons of the Virgin and Child, especially in *Santa Maria Maggiore* thoroughly examined by Kirstin Noreen³¹ and in the Pantheon studied by Carlo Bertelli,³² provided the paradigm for singularizing and typifying the cult image. The authority of Rome and the provisions of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) placed Italy at the top of the clerical hierarchy, whose patterns for renewal of the Church were sought and adapted throughout the Catholic world. Given the interest in translation as a cross-modal and cross-spatial undertaking,

27 Radujko, *Koporin*.

28 *L'artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*.

29 Sobolevskii, *Yuzhnoslavyanskoe vliyanie na russkuyu pis'mennost' v XIV–XV vv.*; idem, 'Yuzhnoslavyanskoe vliyanie na russkuyu pis'mennost' v XIV–XV vekakh'; Nemykina, 'O probleme yuzhnoslavyanskikh vliyaniy'; Birnbaum, 'Ilya Talev', pp. 59–65; Vzdornov, 'Rol' slavyanskikh monastyrskikh masterskikh', pp. 171–198; Turilov, 'Yuzhnoslavyanskies pamiatniki', pp. 670–703.

30 Thomson, 'Gregory Tsamblak'.

31 Noreen, 'The Icon of *Santa Maria Maggiore*', pp. 660–672; idem, 'Replicating the Icon of *Santa Maria Maggiore*', pp. 19–37.

32 Bertelli, 'La Madonna del Pantheon', pp. 24–32; idem, 'Icône di Roma', pp. 117–189.

the history and cult of the Venetian icon of *Nikopeia*, recently discussed by Stefan Samerski,³³ served as a narrative pattern likely to have been adopted in Lithuania. Borrowed images and stories filled the lacunae in popular knowledge of Byzantine history with imaginary, yet referential content. Being concerned with words about images, this study has profited from discussions on the vocabulary of records used in relation to pictures and expressing visual experience. Research by Andrew R. Casper³⁴ highlighted how clerical usage of the attribute 'Greek' had exempted its meaning from lay connotations. This singular meaning was quickly adopted by early modern notaries and laymen.³⁵ The specific implication of the qualifier 'Greek', a kind of synonym for 'genuine', used in relation to the panel of Our Lady of Trakai correlates with the question of true likeness, acute for Christian beholders, authors, and contemporary scholars alike. Studies concerned with the face as a container of identity, as discussed by Hans Belting,³⁶ as well as essays collected in partly overlapping volumes the *Holy Face* and *En Face*³⁷ enabled the transfer of theological and anthropological arguments to the 'portrait' of the Virgin as it was treated in the panel of Our Lady of Trakai.

Many studies consulted herein in some usually indirect way deal with the issue of time, above all, the present cloaked in the prestige of the past. The topic of multiple temporalities and the divergence of time measured by clocks and time perceived by humans has been on the agenda of the humanities for several decades. Reinhard Kosseleck's scholarly doubts have produced the concept of 'geologies' of time,³⁸ which can be aptly and more broadly contextualized with the help of David Couzens Hoy's thorough consideration of temporalities across the history of Western philosophy.³⁹ However, in relation to the up- and re-dating of artworks, the issue of the lapse of time together with the notion of temporal instability, as elaborated by Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood,⁴⁰ fertilized the pronouncement and interpretation of the tenses of the visual matter. These and many other works referred to in the discussion of individual objects have provided this research with the platform for inquiring into individual cases as well as

33 Samerski, *Die Nikopeia*.

34 Casper, 'A Taxonomy of Images', pp. 100–114.

35 Voulgaropoulou, 'From Domestic Devotion to the Church Altar', pp. 10–14.

36 Belting, *Faces*.

37 *En Face; The Holy Face*.

38 Kosseleck, *Future's Past*; on Kosseleck's scholarly legacy and impact, see articles published in 'Forum: Multiple Temporalities', in *History and Theory* 53.4 (2014).

39 Hoy, *The Time of Our Lives*.

40 Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*.

addressing the broader issues of the Greek manner and tracing its visual and verbal manifestations. Based on pictures, written sources, and extensive scholarship, this book aspires to combine the facts about Greek images with the much broader issue of how images were ascribed with Greek identity, which continued across centuries regardless that the majority of objects embodying it perished or were destroyed.

The research is based on primary materials originating from the territories that once were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland.⁴¹ This source evidence has been complemented with comparative materials from Serbia and Italy and contextualized within a broader tradition of reception and manifestation of visual difference. Given the episodic survival of images that has enabled the building of a narrative from individual, complementary, yet quite independent case studies rather than causally bound processes, every chapter provides a detailed overview of primary sources. Hence, the introduction keeps to a more general outline on the available evidence and major interpretative perspectives. Byzantine wall paintings from the grand ducal castles of Vilnius, Medininkai, Kreva, and Trakai have never been mentioned in any known contemporary written record and reached us in a highly fragmented state. Except for Trakai, these murals survive as pieces of painted plaster found during archaeological excavations. Therefore this book is also an attempt to take these pieces from their liminal existence as debris and to provide them with a presence in scholarly discourse. The interior decoration of the palace of the Trakai Island Castle has partially survived to today and was more extensively documented in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Few compositions, such as the Crucifixion in the crypt of the Vilnius Cathedral and remnants of wall paintings in the parish church of Trakai, both discovered relatively recently, provide hints of scale, display, and iconography of the decoration. Painted on the walls of Catholic churches these murals also testify to a traversing of the confessional divide which, unavoidably, required mutual revisions on the part of Catholic commissioners as well as Orthodox painters. The patchy Lithuanian material that remained nearly completely cloaked in silence forms and informs the 'cradle' of the preference for Byzantine murals executed upon royal will and whim in Poland. In 1386, Grand Duke of Lithuania Jogaila (r. 1377–1381, 1382–1434) was elected, baptized with the name Wladislas, married to the reigning Queen Hedwig (1382–1399), and

41 Throughout this book I will provide contextual information on the history of Lithuania and Poland; for a much broader overview in English, see: Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania*, I.

crowned King Wladislas II of Poland. He is known to have ordered interiors of seven churches and chapels as well as royal bedchamber in the palace of the Wawel Castle in Krakow to be decorated with murals in Byzantine style. This study does not analyse thoroughly the paintings that have survived in Poland up to today, but rather relies on extensive scholarship that looks for the articulation of difference and cross-confessional negotiations on the visual plane. The topic of negotiations within and without images has been largely informed by and constructed through written sources, especially references to and attitudes towards Greek or Ruthenian objects captured in records of varied origin and function. Among entries scattered in account books, last wills, inventories, and chronicles, two treatises offer this research their narrative plot. The *Elucidation of the Errors of Ruthenian Rite* (1501)⁴² by Johannes Sacranus is a kind of indictment of the Orthodox faith and its Ruthenian followers, who distorted teachings of the Fathers. In contrast, *On the Unity of the Church of God under One Shepherd and on the Greek Separation from that Unity* (1577)⁴³ by Piotr Skarga, SJ blames perfidious Greeks, who have been justly occupied by the Turks, but expresses hope that naïve Ruthenians could yet be brought onto the path of truth. These two pieces, whose chronology almost frames the sixteenth century, reveals the scope and dynamics of the attitudes towards Greeks, their rites, and images. While Skarga's hopes might be related to the prospects of the Church Union yet to be concluded in 1596 in Brest Litovsk, Sacranus's hate must have been at least partly catalysed or even personified by Grand Duchess Helena (r. 1495–1513), the Orthodox spouse of Alexander Jagiellon (r. 1492–1506). In her marital land, Helena was seen as the other, embodying the wrongs of the Greek creed and Muscovite evil. This inquiry, concerned with things in relation to words and persons, looks at the list of Helena's accoutrements finalized upon her departure from Moscow on 15 January 1495.⁴⁴ The list is a verbal shell left from the material entourage composed for the Orthodox lady to accompany her into the neighbouring country of different and inimical dogmatic identity. The political failures of this grand ducal marriage turned Helena into a scapegoat, which, according to János M. Bak, was quite a

42 Sacranus, *Elucidarius errorum*.

43 Skarga, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*.

44 The surviving four folios of the original list have been published by Khoroshkevich, 'Iz istorii dvortsovoego deloproizvodstva'; later copies of the full list have been preserved in manuscripts of the so-called wedding musters kept in the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg: 'Razriady svadebnye i rospisi pridanogo s prilozheniiami' (last quarter of the seventeenth century) and 'Razriady svadebnye i rospisi pridanogo' (first quarter of the eighteenth century).

paradigmatic fate for women reigning in a foreign country.⁴⁵ Labelled the 'schismatic queen' she was denied commemoration, her belongings were destined either for destruction or for disassociation from their othered owner. Of the ten icons that Helena had brought from Moscow, only two – representing the Virgin Mary – were exempt from oblivion. In retrospect, this exemption falls into the trajectory of the gradual reduction of the understanding of the Greek image which in the seventeenth century became almost synonymous with the icon of the Mother of God.

The discussion of the translation of an image into an icon centres upon the panel of Our Lady of Trakai. In contrast to other artworks discussed herein, this miracle-working painting has been noted in a number of records. Moreover, investigation of the panel undertaken during its restoration in 1994 revealed its profound transformation,⁴⁶ which correlates aptly with Albertus Wiivk Koiałowicz's note from 1650 stating that the painting has been adjusted to the new altar retable.⁴⁷ Similarly to a few other 'peer' altarpieces, the Our Lady of Trakai has been left in a kind of solitude of the genre: shallow archival holdings combined with wartime plundering and other calamities resulted in huge losses of medieval and early modern heritage in Lithuania. Those singular pieces that did survive were deprived of their immediate context and exempted from larger local taxonomies. Therefore, the panel of Trakai is both case and precedent within itself, whose analysis reveals that visual translation traversed media, time, and space, contributing towards the monopoly of Greek images held by the Catholic Church.

Within this book, interpretations of individual pieces flow along and fluctuate between three conceptual vectors: the first goes from sameness via difference to otherness; the second unites seeing, knowing, and acting; the third balances between astronomical time and temporalities of thought and experience. Within this framework, I trace how certain vernacular objects become alienated and obsolete, others adapted and venerated as if capsules of such a distant past became almost timeless, and yet others reworked to look old and foreign and therefore worthy of esteem and admiration. Images and objects as well as words about them have been placed within these theoretical coordinates in order to pin down the

45 Bak, 'Queens as Scapegoats', pp. 223–233; reprinted in Bak, *Studying Medieval Rulers and Their Subjects*, no. x.

46 Bėkšta and Panavaitė, 'Paveikslo "Trakų Madona"', pp. 186–197.

47 'Olim illa imago integram staturam referebat (prout referunt qui meninerunt) deinde vt commodius arae novae inseri passet secta per medium, tantum cingulo tenus visitur', Koiałowicz, *Miscellanea rerum*, p. 26.

paradox⁴⁸ of something alien yet vernacular.⁴⁹ Every individual case explored herein is regarded as a knot bound from existent, abrupt, and invented ties leading towards lost contexts of the past rendered in narratives of a bygone present. Relying heavily on postcolonial theory and employing its critical vocabulary, this inquiry traces the dynamics of intra-European colonization as has been manifested in Catholic parts of Eastern Europe across three centuries. During volatile inter-confessional relations the Greek images were gradually othered to be rescued later as individual objects adapted for the cultivation of Catholic sameness. The understanding of sameness changed its visual expression as well as references to its sources. Hence, this study pluralizes the postcolonial binary of centre and periphery by showing that centres were temporal, local, and multiple while peripheries were shaped by ideology rather than distance. Tracing how vernacular imagery has been either inscribed into 'universal' patterns, or abandoned as obsolete and alien, the study also speaks of an inner colonization of East European minds as expressed in and through images. In a broad sense, this inquiry is a genealogy of a Greek image in Lithuania and Poland. However, in contrast to the genealogy as conceptualized by Michel Foucault and his followers,⁵⁰ this research does not aim at unmasking the constructedness of the generally accepted yet never defined understanding of an image's Greek qualities. Rather as if allying with the dominant power of the Catholic Church, the study follows how with time Greek otherness was absorbed and distilled into the sameness of an icon of the Virgin. This 'alliance' with the Catholic position towards Greek images observes a kind of horizontal genealogy as objects and events discussed herein bear genetic ties to larger political and religious contexts. Hence, in the fifteenth century the Church Councils of Constance (1418) and Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439) and the fall of Constantinople (1453) also shaped the understanding of Greek creed and imagery. Despite conciliar attempts and a certain success to achieve the unity of the Christian Church, this did not help the 'schismatic' Greeks to withstand infidel Ottomans. The loss of the imperial capital meant that the Orthodox Church was pushed into a state of resistance rather than expansion and many Greeks were forced to make compromises with Catholics, who were much more benevolent towards Greek artworks than

48 I am indebted to Caroline Walker Bynum's article for the understanding that 'paradox – simultaneous assertion of contradictions – is the opposite to opposites', Bynum, 'Why Paradox?', p. 455.

49 I have addressed the issue of vernacular and alien image in Lithuania and Poland in: Mickūnaitė, 'Words for Images', pp. 60–137.

50 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; idem, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', pp. 76–100.

people. In the sixteenth century, confessional disputes broke Catholic unity, providing concepts of and arguments both for and against images. Catholic vocabulary and the visual content of images got formulated at the Council of Trent (1545–1563) to be soon confirmed by the Virgin, who through her Roman icon of the *Maria Maggiore* interceded for the righteous at the Battle of Lepanto (1571). To put it briefly, within two centuries Catholics solved the Greek issue by abandoning Greeks and embracing Greek icons. Clearly, this reductionist interpretation sides with the Greek image; what is more, it narrows the inquiry to see how particular visual practices were fitted into larger Catholic patterns and enacted through specific images and objects. In Lithuania and Poland these local practices were almost limited to the ruling Jagiellonian house. Pagan Lithuanian grand dukes, the progenitors of Jogaila's dynasty (1386–1572) reigning over Lithuanian and Ruthenian lands, commissioned Byzantine paintings to decorate their residencies. After the country's Catholic conversion and Jogaila's coronation as Wladislas II of Poland, the preference for Greek images lasted two generations to be abandoned at the end of the fifteenth century and discovered as artistic heritage at the end of the nineteenth century. Herein, I trace how the Greek image – once an umbrella notion covering a porous variety of pictures that Catholics associated with the Orthodox creed – was provided with singular meaning and represented by a uniform object. In this sense, the vista of receptions and perceptions of the Greek manner in Lithuania and Poland also becomes a genealogy of oblivion.

Throughout the research, the binding imperative of assimilation and abandonment has been supplemented with and enlarged by ad hoc approaches apt for inquiring into local and hybrid cultural practices across several centuries. In addition to employing an art historian's tool-kit consisting of the analysis of form, style, iconography, and visual reception, interpretation of the murals profited from physical and chemical investigations of the wall paintings that revealed their structure and explained technological aspects. Principles of attribution derived from connoisseurship have been expanded to include epigraphy. As the number of written sources increases from the later fifteenth century onwards, the research has incorporated textual analysis, considering these records as products of a particular genre and means of communication. The principle of intertextuality, taken from literary studies as a dialogue between the known and the unknown,⁵¹ has been expanded into a polylogue across visual and verbal media put into

51 On the intertextual approach in literary studies, see: *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, ed. by Still and Watson.

conversation with scholarship. The discussion of written evidence has been guided by a principle stating that various mentions of and references to images in primary records are not descriptions, but cross-modal and cross-timely translations, which inscribe the object from the past into the present tense of a source. By the same token, scholarship is yet another translation of the past into the present,⁵² or, in the words of Keith Jenkins, discourse about 'the past made by present-minded workers'.⁵³

More than once, the episodic character as well as fragmented survival of evidence have placed these multi-directional conversations across media and genres in the regime of untranslatables, to borrow the apt notion from Alexandra Lianeri.⁵⁴ On such occasions, I aimed at exposing gaps between words, their meanings, and the things that these words denote. The distance in time between the production of and reference to Greek artworks⁵⁵ has permitted the consideration of silence as an indication of sameness and, consequently, the utterance of Greekness as a testimony to difference. This difference also includes lapses and deviations between experience and its inscription into the chronology of history. The triple relation between the time of record, the tense of a source, and the elusive meaning provided by the interpreter is indicative of *différance*, to adapt the key term coined by Jacques Derrida.⁵⁶ In this research, *différance* unlocks the evidence showing its undefined – perhaps undefinable – temporal and situational state, which is settled in reductionist translations that finally give the Greek image a single meaning, sustained and reinforced through visual and verbal repetitions.

Throughout the pages of this book, case studies punctuate the life of Greek images on Lithuanian and Polish ground and ask: What is visually vernacular? How and why does a vernacular image become alien? How is visual hybridity seen and perceived? When do images require stories? How do narratives shape visual forms? What is the meaning of silence? How does oblivion contribute to knowing the past? Answers to these questions are sought in case studies conceptually grouped into three more or less chronologically coherent parts under the headings of 'Silence', 'Negotiations',

52 The issue of translation within the field of anthropology has been thoroughly discussed in the collected volume *Translating Worlds: The Epistemological Space of Translation*, ed. by Severi and Hanks.

53 Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, p. 31.

54 Lianeri, 'The Regime of Untranslatables', pp. 473–497.

55 On 'delayed' interpretations of Byzantine art, see: Cutler, 'The Pathos of Distance', pp. 23–45; reprinted in idem, *Byzantium, Italy and the North*, no. vii.

56 Derrida, 'Différance', in *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 3–27.

and 'Translations'. The paintings in Trakai join these three parts together, offering not yet a paradigm, but rather a dotted line of mental and visual shapes of a Greek image in Europe's Catholic East herein represented by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland.

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