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THE IMAGE *THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY WITH THE CHILD* OF THE ŠILUVA BASILICA: THE PROBLEMS OF THE ORIGIN, ICONOGRAPHIC CONTEXT AND DATING

Key words: Church history, Catholic Church, legend of the Apparition, *The Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child* of Šiluva.

THE ORIGIN OF THE IMAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHURCH HISTORY AND THE LEGEND OF THE APPARITION

The image of the High altar of the Basilica of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Šiluva *The Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child* is famous for miracles and on September 8, 1786, with the permission of Pope Pius VI, was crowned with golden crowns. The image is also called *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva*, *Our Lady of Šiluva* or *Šiluva Madonna* (Fig. 1).

The history of the Šiluva church and of its image of Mary is based on events supported by documents and on the story, which has become a tradition, about the Apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Šiluva at the beginning of the 17th century. The history of the Šiluva church from the middle of the 19th century has been frequently discussed in special publications of various genres or in literature of a more general character[1]. For a long time conclusions of the first historians of the Šiluva church had not been analysed, but only supplemented with details. In the 20th century during the interwar period, a scientific research on the history of the Šiluva church had been undertaken, but no significant studies were prepared. The first coherent, although not covering all the aspects of the research, scientific work was *Šiluva in the History of Samogitia* by

Stasys Yla (*Šiluva Žemaičių istorijoje.* Boston, 1970). At the beginning of the 21st century Lithuanian scientists have been researching the history of the Šiluva church from new aspects such as the analysis of documents, traditions of devotion, architecture of the building and sacral art history, as well as using new methods (research is also reflected by this volume).

The history of the Šiluva church is similar to the history of many other churches of Lithuania established after the christening of the country in the end of the 14th and 15th centuries. The Šiluva church, founded in 1457 by Petras Gedgaudas[2], after the fire at the beginning of the 16th century was rebuilt by Andrius Zaviša or Mikalojus Kęsgaila[3]. The son of Andrius Zaviša, Merkelis Zaviša, having inherited Šiluva in 1532, became a Calvinist and took thought for an establishment of the shrine of this confession. The Catholic church, as it had happened in quite many places of the dioceses of Vilnius and Samogitia in the 16th century, atrophied. According to the legend of the Mary's Apparition in Šiluva, from the decay of the Catholic church till the Apparition (dated 1607, 1608 and 1612, at present the date of 1608 is fixed) when the Blessed Virgin complained of the destroyed church of Her Son, 80 years had passed. Thus it was believed that the Catholic church atrophied at once after the Calvinists had established

Fig. 1. The Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child of Šiluva (view after restoration). The Basilica of Šiluva, Lithuania.
An unknown Lithuanian artist. The 3rd decade of the 17th century. Oil on canvas. Photo by Antanas Lukšėnas, 2003.

themselves in Šiluva. In 1625 Bishop Stanislovas Kiška wrote that Calvinists had governed the church for over a hundred years[4]. Today it is known that the functioning of the Catholic church in Šiluva was not shorter: in 1551 in the complaint of the minister Martynas Mažvydas to the Duke of Prussia about the parishioners who having crossed the river Nemunas travelled to the Feast of Mary in Lithuania, the Catholic church of Šiluva is also mentioned[5]. In the meantime the Calvinists' community was strengthening; the foundation of its house of prayer was renewed and increased in 1592 by Sofija Vnučkienė who was raised to fame in the legend.

Through judicial process the Šiluva Catholic church was regained in 20 years (1602–1622). The process was started by then Bishop of Samogitia, Merkelis Giedraitis (1676–1709)[6], and continued by Jonas Kazakevičius Smolka (died in 1646), a zealous pastor raised by this bishop. He was the first parson of Šiluva appointed after the break in 1621[7]. On

June 21–22, 1622, the Court of the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania closed the case concerning the property of the Šiluva Catholic church and approved the decree of July 13, 1621; it proclaimed that the property of the Šiluva Catholic church accrued to the canon J. Kazakevičius Smolka under the P. Gedgaudas' foundation of 1457[8]. In 1622 the Sacraments were started to be extended to the congregation and register books of the Šiluva Catholic parish were started to be written[9]. The boundaries of the lands were finally established in 1623. In his relation to Vatican, in 1625, the Bishop of Samogitia Stanislovas Kiška wrote about the Šiluva church that had been regained through great efforts[10]. There is no data on when its first building was built, but this had to happen after June of 1623 when only scanty remains of the former church had been mentioned[11].

Usually all sources mention two wooden churches of Šiluva built in succession by J. Kazakevičius Smolka: 1) a temporary church and 2) a larger one which had survived till the erection of the present church. The legend recorded in 1661 by the then Šiluva parson Mikalojus Sviechovskis, which will be additionally discussed further, also mentions two churches built by J. Kazakevičius Smolka, the first, a small one, and the second, a larger one. But here both churches are called "sheds" (Polish *szopa)*, in the way temporary buildings are defined[12]. Started to be built by J. Kazakevičius Smolka around 1640 and remaining for about 125 years, a not small wooden cross-plan church with a portico in the facade and a small tower over the roof is not referred as temporary in documents. In the visitation act of 1677 it is written that this church, built in 1641 [finished – R. S.], is quite good and strong. On January 8, 1651, this church was consecrated by Bishop Petras Parčevskis, then the status of provostship (*praepositura*) was conferred on it[13]. Possibly, this was the third church built through the J. Kazakevičius' efforts. The proposition, that after 1623 in Šiluva two temporary shrines were built in succession in a short period of time and that in 1640–1641 they were replaced by a larger and stronger church, constitutes a new version of the particular stage of the history of the Šiluva church the consolidation of which requires additional data.

In 1760, when the future Bishop of Samogitia (1762–1778), Jonas Dominykas Lopacinskis, was the praepositor (*praepositum*) of Šiluva, the architect Jonas Kristupas Glaubicas (*Glaubitz*) prepared a project of the present brick Catholic shrine of Šiluva. In the course of building works and, especially, when decorating the interior, the project was substantially changed. The walls were bricked up to the windows till 1767, the building work was finished before 1775, and the interior was equipped and decorated till 1786[14].

In 1774 Bishop J. D. Lopacinskis notified the Holy See of a newly built church in Šiluva and made a request to confer on this church the rank (status) of *infulatura* and give the permission to crown the church's image of the Blessed Virgin Mary which was famous for its mercies. In 1775 the Vatican satisfied the request[15]. The celebration took place 11 years later, already after the death of J. D. Lopacinskis (died in 1778). Most probably the time was required not only for organization of the feast, but also for creation of the church decor. The changed status of the church and officially recognized miraculousness of the image of the High altar had to adjust the iconographical programme of the church interior. The creator of the programme is not mentioned in the documents. The programme could be created and later adjusted by J. D. Lopacinskis; one cannot also dismiss the possibility of the contribution being made by the author of the decor, Jesuit Tomas Podhaiski, and the praepositor of Šiluva (since 1767), infulatum (since 1775) Tadas Bukota. On September 8, 1786, the crowns were solemnly put on the image by the Bishop of Samogitia Steponas Jonas Giedraitis (1778–1803).

The data about the image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva* that was considered to be historical facts and which entered into the legend, requires a separate discussion.

In the 19th century literature it was begun to maintain that after the regaining of the Catholic church Šiluva started to be flocked by believers who had been especially attracted by the image of Mary. Motiejus Valančius mentions that in 1629, during the Feast of Mary, 11 000 Communions were

distributed[16], but he does not indicate any document he builds upon. He could find this information in the document indicating the date which cannot be found at present or could adopt it from the text of the legend recorded by M. Sviechovskis where the need to build a larger shrine was argued in the following way: "Having supported the parsonage, [J. Kazakevičius Smolka – R. S.] at once built a small shed, as he had not expected that a large number of people would gather there straight away, but when he saw that numbers of people flocked, he built a larger shed. Once, when, still a youngster, I was in it during the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, pastor Kazakevičius, God rest his soul, sitting at the table, said that ten thousand nine hundred and eighty Communions alone had been distributed"[17]. This excerpt of the legend is based on personal reminiscences of the person who recorded them. The text speaks about the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a more precise date of which is not being indicated, which took place in the second, larger, but temporary church. The image of Mary is not being mentioned. The following passage speaks only about a former, destroyed, image of Mary: "Also, it is known to all old people living in the surroundings of Šiluva that in the forest of Šiluva the image of the Blessed Virgin was found leant (on the pine) which soon went to the hands of heretics [Calvinists – R. S.], so was quickly burnt"[18]. This happening was recorded after the story about the regaining of the church and a miraculous cleavage of the stone on which Mary appeared. However this does not specify the time of the finding and destroying of the image: the course of the narration of the legend does not necessarily coincide with a chronological sequence of events. The reference to the old people would enable us to maintain that the destroyed image was found during the period of the decay of the Catholic church.

The image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva*, which was in the restored church of Šiluva and has been famous for its miracles till now, is not mentioned in the legend, but it is as if it exist in the subtext of the legend and its discussed segment. The discovery of the destroyed image of Mary as well as the Apparition of the Blessed Virgin Herself is

presented as an extraordinary event; its reality is grounded on the memory of old local people. The destroying of the image is mentioned as one more sacrilegious act by opponents of the Faith, though the fundamental meaning of this event is different. Like the Apparition, which reminded of the former church and the worship of God that had taken place there, became the seal of the Faith and the restoration of the church, so the mention of the past existence and the destruction of the image highlights why it is necessary to worship the Blessed Virgin in Šiluva and to possess and respect Her image. Mary had graciously appeared to people in this place, but, through the destruction of Her image, She was downtrodden. Like the destroyed church of Her Son was restored, so ought to be (has already been?) restored Her image.

However, the passage of the legend mentioning the destruction of the image was later discarded. In his relation of 1748 to the Holy See, the Bishop of Samogitia Antanas Tiškevičius states, quoting the legend, that in a chest dug out at the place pointed by a blind old man not only documents were found but also the miraculous image and some other things that had belonged to the church of Šiluva[19]. In addition, here (and in many variants of the legend published since the end of the 19th century) it is indicated that the chest was found at the place of the Apparition, "at a large stone", i.e. at the place where in the 17th century a special wooden chapel (later rebuilt and at present a brick one) was built. In the version of 1661 it is written that under the directions of an old man everybody were brought to the place "where nowadays the church still stands" [where the present brick church stands – R. S.] and at that place after digging a casket (Polish *skrzyńka*) with documents was found. Preparing for the solemnities of the crowning of the image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva*, a new wording of the legend was composed, which was recognized as an official story of the Apparition and the origin of the image. After it a long hymn was created for the solemnities of the crowning[20]. M. Sviechovskis' variant of the legend was edited and published by L. Jucevičius and J. Bučinskis in the middle of the 19th century[21]. Bishop Motiejus Valančius evaluated some details of

the legend critically[22], but later the legend was still quoted as an accurate and reliable historical document rather than a spiritual document.

Since from 1748 it was declared that the image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva* had been found in the chest, it was believed that it had survived from the first church of Šiluva and had been possibly donated by the founder Petras Gedgaudas. It was believed that the image had been brought from Italy or that it was of a Byzantine origin[23]. From the perspective of the history of fine arts, artistic and technological properties of the image (oil on canvas) do not allow attributing it to either Italian or Byzantine (and Lithuanian or Polish) painting of the 15th or even the first half of the 16th centuries. The presence of the image in the first church is not mentioned in any documents from the 15th till the first half of the 18th centuries either.

The image has been related to the period of the regaining of the Šiluva church only traditionally as well. The miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, possessed by the church that was built in 1640–1641, was mentioned in historical sources for the first time by Bishop Jurgis Tiškevičius in his relation of 1646 to the Holy See. In the relation of 1639 by the same bishop it was reported only about the image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Alvitas*, famous for its miracles in the Diocese of Samogitia (presently the Diocese of Vilkaviškis)[24].

The image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva*, the altars where it was (is), voting offerings donated to Mary at the image and other information about the image have remained in numerous documents of the period starting from 1677 till the beginning of the 20th century; however, there is no reliable data on the early history of the image there.

New data about the image was provided by the features of the creation which had been revealed during its restoration in 2001–2003. It was found that the original image had been enlarged after some period of time: at the bottom, the canvas of a different structure had been added, and on it the prolongation of the Mary's figure had been painted (see Fig. 12). The "clothes" of the image of *Our Lady of Šiluva*, the gilded silver tin casing, donated by parson Joakimas

Skirmantas and made by the goldsmith Lawrence Hoffman of Koenigsberg in 1674, were created for the already enlarged image[25] (Fig. 2). Church altarpieces used to be enlarged when they were moved to bigger altars than previous ones. In the case of the Šiluva image, till 1674 this had possibly happened three times, as the image could be moved or had been moved: 1) to the altar of the supposed second temporary church (already in the third decade of the 17th century?); 2) to the altar of the substantial church built in 1741; or 3) to a new High altar built in 1670[26].

According to the findings of technological research carried out during the restoration of the image in 2001–2003, the image should be dated the first half of the 17th century. This fact enables to collate the dates of the regaining of the church and creation of the miraculous image, but does not specify them.

Fig. 2. The Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child of Šiluva (view with crowns and silver casing). Photo by Antanas Lukšėnas, 2003.

THE ORIGIN OF THE IMAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF MIRACULOUS IMAGES OF MARY AND THE PHENOMENON OF THEIR REPLICATION

In order to specify the origin of the image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva*, the analysis of the paying homage to the prototype and the analysis of miraculous images as well as the phenomenon of their replication has been employed.

The first conclusions on the prototypes that had determined the iconography of the Šiluva image were published only in the second half of the 20th century. The church historian Juozas Vaišnora compared the Šiluva image to the famous image of Mary, called *Salus Populi Romani*, though he indicated not their similarities, but their differences, and maintained that the Šiluva image belonged to a different variety of the *Hodegetria* iconographic type, as it depicts not a half-length but a full-length figure of Mary (actually, almost a full-length figure; besides, the researcher did not possess the data indicating that the format of the image had been changed later)[27]. The affinity of the iconography and composition between the both images was also briefly indicated by other authors of the second half of the 20th century[28]. The historian of fine arts dr. Laima Šinkūnaitė was the first to reject the legendary date of the 15th century and, building on the stylistics of the creation, proposed a new date of the beginning of the 17th century[29]. After the restoration the image has been dated the first half of the 17th century[30].

The affinity of the iconography and composition of the Šiluva image of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the already mentioned Roman icon *Salus Populi Romani* is obvious (Fig. 3). Replications of this icon are very widely spread in a whole Catholic world, especially in the boundaries of the 16th–18th centuries. The icon, in its title *Salus Populi Romani* (The Protectress of the Roman People) immortalizing the name of the town, is practically the most famous icon of the Mother of God in the Eternal City. The second name of this creation is identical with the title of the church housing the image, that of the Papal Basilica which is S. Maria Maggiore (Italian) or S. Mariae Majoris (Latin). The legend that this church was built at the site where on the 5th of August snow had miraculously fallen determined the third variant of

the name of the creation, *S. Maria ad Nives* (St. Mary of the Snows). In Lithuania the name repeating the title of the church predominated in the 17th century, later – *St. Virgin Mary of the Snows*.

The image of *The Protectress of the Roman People* is a creation of medieval painting painted on a slab of cedar in the Byzantine style (150 × 100). In 1613 Pope Paul V beside the church founded the chapel *Capella Paolina* intended for this image. The creation is considered to be one of the most genuine images of the Blessed Virgin and is related to a legendary icon of Mary painted by St. Luke. A lot of versions of its dating exist covering the period of the 4th–10th centuries. The book held in a hand of the Child would attest that the icon was not created earlier than the 9th century. It is maintained that the title of *The Protectress of the Roman People* was conferred on this image of Mary after the rebuff of the Langobard invasion in 1752. After the restoration of this Roman icon, which was carried out at the beginning of the 21st century, the dates of the 7th century (original creation) and of the 9th century (renovation) were proclaimed[31].

Fig. 3. The icon of Salus Populi Romani. The Papal Basilica of S. Maria Maggiore (S. Maria ad Nives) in Rome, Italy.

Although the Byzantine elements of the Roman creation reflected in the copies misled the researchers not only of the Šiluva image, but also of other replications of this icon, these copies more or less differ from the original. Until the period of the mass reproduction and multiplication, that became widespread in the second half of the 19th century, a correspondence had been sought in replications of miraculous images; nevertheless, copies in the classical meaning of this term in fine arts had been rarely created, i.e. creations that repeat the original image to minutiae. A replication of a miraculous image repeats the composition and iconography to a degree that is sufficient for the identification of the original. In the formal terms, replications of miraculous paintings or statues are images of the original, we could say, portraits created in various techniques: a picture can be depicted in a relief or a carving, and a statue – in a painting and etc. In carvings, sometimes in paintings and statues inscriptions indicating the original used to be integrated.

The replication of Catholic images permeated in the second half of the 16th century, during the period of Counter-Reformation and the Reform of the Catholic Church. Due to the decree of the Council of Trent and the development of devotion practice, the cult of Mary and relics, the veneration of sacred images and the phenomenon of pilgrimage was changing and intensifying. A replication of famous image, similarly as a relic brought from a holy place, necessitated the movement (translocation) of a particular cult to a new place. A replication repeats and serves as if the original; therefore it allows to hope for the same grace of God.

The beginning of the practice of the replication of famous Catholic images is namely related to the prototype of the Šiluva image, *Salus Populi Romani*. During the reconstruction of the Basilica of St. Peter in the second half of the 16th century S. Maria Maggiore became the main Roman church. The icon of Mary present in this church was venerated by Popes Pius V, Clement VIII (1592–1598) and Paul V (1605–1621). In 1569 replications of this icon were allowed to be painted and sent to missions by Pope Pius V (1566–1672). Before the battle of Lepanto, which took place on August 5, 1571, during the

procession of Propitiation in Rome, the *Salus Populi Romani*, and not some other image of Mary, had been carried. After the victory of the Christian alliance against the fleet of the Ottoman Empire the title of *The Victorious* was conferred on the image and Pius V introduced into the whole Church the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows on the 5th of August (the day of the consecration of the church of S. Maria Maggiore and of the battle of Lepanto). By courtesy of the Dominican Pius V the icon was highly esteemed in the monkhood of this order and became an example for an image of Mary of the Rosary. At the *Salus Populi Romani* St. Ignatius Loyola said his first mass on the Christmas night in 1538, therefore Jesuits related the icon with the beginning of their order's functioning. Carmelites also believed Mary in this icon to be their special Protectress and related a handkerchief depicted in the icon to scapulars and sometimes substituted them for the handkerchief[32].

Both painted replications of the image of *The Protectress of the Roman People* and its engravings were spreading. Until the beginning of the 17th century far more than one copy had been brought to Jesuit and Dominican colleges in Poland and to their and other churches[33]. In the Commonwealth of Lithuania and Poland, the cult of *Salus Populi Romani* was encouraged by the pope devoted to Mary in this icon, Clement VIII, who, before his pontificate, had been the nuncio for Poland. Several replications donated or blessed by this pope were brought to the Republic of Both Nations. Under the ruling of Clement VIII, the Union of Brest was formed. The course of this act is depicted in a cycle of reliefs in the Basilica of S. Maria Maggiore. To Uniates (Greek Catholics) this shrine and its famous icon of Mary symbolized the union of East and West Christian Churches, so the icon also spread in their shrines. It is believed that first replications from Rome were brought by first Uniate bishops[34].

As the 17th century gained momentum, paying homage to this icon of Mary in the Republic of Both Nations was given a new boost. Dioceses of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania belonged to the Church Province of Poland. When questions of church art were discussed at the Synod of Cracow of 1621, it was

ordered to cease a secular depiction of the Mother of God and to represent the Blessed Virgin in the way She was depicted in the image of Czestochowa (the Pauline monastery at Jasna Góra, Poland)[35]. Besides the imitation of *Mary of Czestochowa* it was requested to imitate the icon of *The Protectress of the Roman People* which had been distinguished by popes. The cult of *Mary of the Snows – The Rosary – The Victorious* was very impacted by other events of 1621, that as if supplemented the decrees of the Synod of Cracow were. As before the battle of Lepanto in Rome, equally so before a very important battle of Chocim in Cracow on September 3, 1621, the procession of Propitiation had been organized at which a replication of *Salus Populi Romani*, brought from Rome to Cracow in 1588 by Bishop Samuel Maciejowski, was carried (see Fig. 6). Later, for the commemoration of the events of Chocim annual processions were organized. Therefore the Cracow image itself was started to be replicated[36].

First replications of *Salus Populi Romani* could have been brought to Lithuania by monkhoods. Vilnius (already in the 16th century) and Kražiai (in 1614) saw the establishment of Jesuits who, still without a seat, had started their activity in the Diocese of Samogitia in 1583[37]. In Vilnius Dominicans had functioned since old times, and in the 17th century they established themselves and created their own provinces in many places of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Carmelites settled in Lithuania in the first quarter of the 17th century. There is also more specific data. According to the legend, the image *Mary of the Snows* of Trakeliai (Belarus), painted in the end of the 16th century, was brought to this church from Vilnius in 1605[38]. It is mentioned that the Carmelite church of St. George in Vilnius housed an early copy of *Mary of the Snows* and that this church had the contitle (primary title) of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows[39]. It is possible that the replications of the image of the Blessed Virgin, which had helped to win victories against heterodoxists at Lepanto and Chocim, symbolized the Protection of Mary and Catholic victory and thus were considered to be the especially suitable ones for churches, regained from reformers. Images of Our Lady of this iconography were painted not only for the shrine of Šiluva, but also

that one of Iškolda (after regaining it from reformers, the Catholic church was built there in 1641)[40].

The development of the cult of the Roman icon of *S. Maria ad Nives* in the Commonwealth of Both Nations or in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania alone would require a separate study. In this case, it is only possible to generally state that during the last three decades of the 16th century and the first two decades of the 17th century replications of this icon spread in the Kingdom of Poland and, perhaps only to a lower degree, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Later the circulation of images of this iconography was stimulated by a local Church authority, events related to the grace of Mary, and the already established tradition. In 1653–1654 in the churches of the Diocese of Vilnius, there were several pictures (in Lebedzew, Miadziol (Bialorus) and other places) named as "B. V. Maioris"[41]. The data of 1674 describing the state of the same diocese after a war in the middle of the 17th century seems to disappoint. It includes 18 images of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Czestochowa*, 6 replications of the statue of *Mary of Loreto*, 5 repetitions of the image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Trakai*, and the image of *S. Maria Maggiore* is recorded only in the church of Žemaitkiemis. Nevertheless, in several other churches there are mentions of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary that were called "miraculous" (in the 17th century such description was used for images of *Mary of the Snows*). According to data from other sources, the image of *S. Maria Maggiore* was in the church of Lipsk, and the church of Alvitas had three plates of votive offerings with image of this icon[42].

The data of 1996 shows that in the present-day Poland (also including creations that were in the historical Commonwealth of Both Nations and in Poland of the interwar period of the 20th century) out of 172 images of Mary crowned with permission of the Vatican (paintings and statues) even 30 images are attributable to the iconography of *Mary of the Snows*, 15 images are interrelated by the type of *Mary of Czestochowa* (including the original and replications) and the number of other images characterized by common iconography drops to several in each group[43]. At first glance, this seems

to be strange, as presently churches of not only of Poland, but also of Lithuania house more replications of the image of *Our Lady of Jasna Góra* (Czestochowa). The image of *The Virgin Mary of Czestochowa* in Poland has become the most important image of Mary – even the symbol of the Faith and Statehood, though as twice as many images inspired by *S. Maria Maggiore* have been honoured by the act of crowning. It is possible that the paradox can be partly accounted for by differences in time of creation of the crowned images. Almost all crowned images of the type of *Mary of the Snows* are earlier, created as far back as the 16th century or the first half of the 17th century, while among honoured replications of the Czestochowa image later ones prevail. According to data obtained by the author of this article, in the territory of the present-day Lithuania nearly thirty formerly existed and surviving images of the iconography of *Mary of the Snows* are known; creations of the 17th century also prevail among them; there are images of the 18th century, and later ones are rare. Approximately the same number of altar-pieces of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows* is counted in Catholic and Orthodox churches of the present-day Belarus[44].

Thus the cult of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows,* having started in the Republic of Both Nations as far back as the 16th century, reached the apogee in the 17th century. In the 18th century this process slowed up and later flagged.

Not only the discussed spread of the cult of *Salus Populi Romani* in the Catholic world and Lithuania shows that believers of the 17th century must have known that a gracious Šiluva image was a replication of the famous Roman icon. The published quotation of O. Ivaškevičiūtė-Katliauskienė's testament of October 9, 1681 indicated that the testatrix had requested to bury her body "in the church of Šidlava by the Saint miraculous image of Maiden Mary renowned in the whole world for Her miracles"[45]. The words "in the whole world" suggest that the Mary mentioned here is the Blessed Virgin in Her image of *The Protectress of the Roman People,* specifically, the copy of this image which is in the Šiluva church. Later, as it has been mentioned, the

Šiluva image of Virgin Mary was related not to its prototype, but to the initial foundation of the church.

THE ŠILUVA IMAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS PROTOTYPE AND RELATED IMAGES

The data on the prototype and its spread through its replications shows the most general reasons for the choice of the iconography of the Šiluva image and supports the knowledge about the possible period of its creation; however, it does not specify circumstances of its creation. In the Catholic Church, replications of honoured images of Mary usually became renowned and were replicated. Yet it is difficult to establish what constitutes an immediate prototype of one or another replication. Not only in Lithuania a creation would be produced looking not at the original itself, but at its replication, a replication of a replication or an image in an engraving.

To carry out a research of the origin of the painting (a time, a place and a possible immediate example used by a painter), let us build on a comparative iconographic and, as much as it is necessary, stylistic analysis. Then let us compare the Šiluva image with the prototype and other early replications of *Salus Populi Romani* in Poland and Lithuania.

In the Roman icon of *S. Maria Maggiore* the Blessed Virgin is depicted down to the hips, standing, robed in a maforium and holding the Child on Her left arm. From other creations of the same (rather broad) iconographic type of *Hodegetria* it differs in several details: 1) Mary's hands, laid one on the other, 2) a handkerchief held in the left hand (in Byzantine tradition, it is a sign of a lady of the court; in Western tradition, it characterizes Mary as a Sovereign or a Queen), 3) a Greek cross, painted on the maforium covering Her forehead and 4) a star, depicted on the right shoulder. Because of this and because of specific details of the rendering of depicted figures, *Salus Populi Romani* and its imitations make a specific subtype of *Hodegetria* which can be also named as a minor iconographic type or the iconographic type of a miraculous image.

The view of the Šiluva miraculous image before its restoration and after (see Fig. 1) testifies that its

Fig. 4. The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva. Ca 1684.
The copper engraving from the book by J. Drews. Methodus
peregrinations… Vilnius, 1684. Photo from a personal
collection of Jolita Liškevičienė.

iconography and the iconography of the Roman original (see Fig. 3) are identical. However, painted not with tempera on panel, but with oil on canvas, the Šiluva image and its figure of Mary are substantially higher, the top of the painting is wavy and there is a slight difference in silhouettes and postures of the figures. An even greater difference is observed in the types of the Blessed Virgin and the Child, the colouring and the nature of drawing and brushwork.

The form of the Šiluva image and, thereby, the rendering of the Mary's figure nearly down to the knees were determined by later remakes. It has been already mentioned that in the 17th century during one of the movements to a larger altar the length of the painting was increased by 20–25 cm. The arched top profile characteristic to Rococo style paintings was formed later, before 1786, when moving the altar-piece to the present-day altar. In the engravings

created before the crowning of the image, the creation is portrayed as a rectangle. In this respect, it is less possible to build on the copper engraving of 1684, included in a mariological publication (Fig. 4)[46], which bears greater resemblance to the Roman original and, therefore, was most probably created on the basis of the engraving of the latter. The picture of the Šiluva image is rather accurately rendered and represented as a rectangle by a copper engraving of 1775–1778 (Fig. 5). The inscription indicates that it was created at a time of preparing for the celebration of the crowning of the image and when Bishop J. D. Lopacinskis was still alive[47]. The frame of the image depicted in the engraving also differs from the present one which has a wavy top decorated with the fretwork of the Rococo style.

In the course of history, not just the shape of the image, but also the pictorial representation has changed. The image was renewed by the painter restorer Janina Bilotienė, restoring its initial view.

Fig. 5. The Blessed Virgin Mary of Šiluva. Ca 1775–1778.
Copper engraving. LDM. Senoji Lietuvos grafika.
XVI–XIX a. Vilnius: Vaga, 1995, Fig. 79.

Fig. 6. The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary of Cracow. The Dominican Basilica of Holy Trinity in Cracow, Poland. Z dawna Polski tyś królową. Szymanów: Siostry Niepokalanki, 1996.

After the restoration the Šiluva creation retained the manner of representing the figures with greater gracefulness characteristic to this image, but its colours were lightened, outlines have become gentler, a rhythmic structure of the pleats has been emphasized and facial features have considerably changed and become more harmonious.

The development of devotion and Catholic art in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland were related, therefore let us compare the Šiluva image with its "sisters" (replications of the same Roman prototype that belong to the period covering the end of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century) from the whole former Republic of Both Nations. Approximately contemporaneous with the

Šiluva image and earlier creations have been chosen. Having looked through these creations it has become evident that some of them are related to the Šiluva image only by the scheme of iconography and postures of the figures; others show a better resemblance; and third ones are characterized by not only the same iconography and composition, but also by repeated specific details. Using other aspects of comparison would allow us to distinguish more groups of images of *Mary of the Snows*. This suggests that these images of the Mother of God were created by painters representing different styles, more than one school of fine arts and a different professional craftsmanship, and used different immediate prototypes.

Among the first group of the most different from the Šiluva image creations the following can be mentioned: the image *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Krypno* (*Mother of Consolation of Krypno*, former Diocese of Vilnius, now Poland; the end of the 16th century (?); tempera on wood, 115 × 79); the already mentioned image of the Basilica of the Holy Trinity in Cracow, traditionally called *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary* (it is noted that it was brought from Rome in 1588, famous since 1600; oil on canvas, 130 × 96) (Fig. 6); the image *The Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child* (*Lady of Kujawy*) of the former Reformed Dominican church of Ostrowas (Ostrowąs, Poland; dated the 16th century; oil on canvas, 135 × 99); and the image *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary* of the former Dominican church in Poznan (Poland; according to the tradition, it is derived from the 15th century, while according to the style and data,

it is dated 1621; oil on oak, 135 × 102)[48]. Actually, the Ostrowas image is typologically related to Šiluva by the legend about its special origin: the image was purportedly discovered by a shepherdess pasturing a herd. Meanwhile a typological affinity of the image of Mary can be seen in the nature of idealization of the depicted figures characteristic of Poznan and Šiluva images: faces are serious, gentle and of subtle features.

The image *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Scapular* of the former Carmelite church of Linkuva (repainted, preliminary dated the end of the 16th century – the first quarter of the 17th century; oil on canvas, 140 × 80) and the image of *Mary of the Snows* of the Skapiškis Dominican church (the second quarter of the 17th century (?); oil on canvas, 120 × 60) or the image of Our Lady from the High altar of Saint Lipka (Šzwięta Lipka, Poland; by Bartholomeus Pensa, Vilnius; before 1640; oil on canvas, 208 × 147)[49] display unlike artistic qualities, stylistics and types of the depicted figures, and all of them substantially differ from the Šiluva image.

A better likeness to the Šiluva image is detected in the creations attributable to a conditional second group. The image *The Blessed Virgin Mary* of the former Jesuit church in Lvov (Ukraine; at present in Wroclaw; oil on wood, 200 × 100) is considered to be one of the first replications of *Salus Populi Romani* donated by Jesuits of Jaroslav (Poland) to Jesuits of Lvov in the end of the 16th century (Fig. 7)[50]. It is related to the Šiluva image by a similar composition, proportions of figures, certain details characteristic to the type of the depicted figures, many of the colours and a size. In addition, in the background of both images, from the sides of the Mary's nimbus the arches of clouds are rising, except that in the Lvov image the clouds are also shrouding the beams of heavenly light coming from above (an implied gloria of the sign of the Divine). The image of *The Blessed Virgin of Podkamien* Dominican church (Podkamien, Ukraine, Volyn; at present in Wrocław, Poland; the first half of the 17th century; 150 × 100)[51] shows an affinity not only with the Roman prototype and the above mentioned images of Mary from Cracow and Lvov, but also with the Šiluva image.

Fig. 7. The Blessed Virgin Mary of Lvov. The former Jesuit church in Lvov, Ukraine. At present in Wroclaw, Poland. Z dawna…

Fig. 8. The Blessed Virgin Mary of Letychiv (view with silver casing). The former Dominican church of Letychiv, Ukraine. Since 1945 in Lublin, Poland. Z dawna…

Creations that display the greatest resemblance to the Šiluva image are dated the period of the end of the 16th to the first half of the 17th centuries. The creation that should be first distinguished from the rest in this group is the image of *Mary of the Snows* of the former Dominican church of Letychiv (Летичів, Latyczów, Ukraine, Podol; moved to the Cathedral of Lutsk in 1925 and taken to Lublin in 1945; oil on canvas, 128 × 92) (Fig. 8). In the end of the 16th century the image was brought from Rome where it had been blessed by Pope Clement VIII. With respect to the miracle and typologically close relations of Šiluva with the Reformation, a legendary story of the Letychiv image is worth mentioning. Elzbieta, the wife of the elder of this place, reformer Jan Potockis, a Catholic herself, persuaded her husband to allow the Dominicans to establish themselves in the place. One night in their chapel with the image an unearthly light shone out. Having rushed in to fight the supposed fire, the elder, affected by that unearthly phenomenon, converted and later also gave the Dominicans his castle[52].

The Letychiv image of Mary (Fig. 9) is similar to the Šiluva image in composition and colouring qualities, in the folds of clothes, especially those of the Child, and in the silhouette, shape and bright yellow colour of nimbuses. Repetition is evident in similar slender necks, the subtlety of the Child's facial features and hairstyle. The creations differ in the depiction of the face of the Blessed Virgin which is more like that of the Roman prototype, thus is more raw-boned and not so oblong, as well as in a dark background of the image without clouds. The Letychiv image has a stream of heavenly light above Mary's head. The background of the Šiluva image, faded and several times repainted, is devoid of this element, but the stream of light above Mary's head could have been there as well (this specific meaningful detail supplementing the iconography of the original is quite typical of the replications of *S. Maria ad Nives* from the period of the end of the 16th to the first half of the 17th centuries). The Letychiv and Šiluva images also differ in an artistic manner. The stylistics of the first image in principle does not contradict the knowledge that the picture was painted in Rome. The second creation is attributable to a local Lithuanian artist.

The present view of the image *Our Lady of Zielenice* of the Zielenice church (Poland; brought from the Jesuit noviciate from Cracow in 1613; 123 × 80) (Fig. 10)[53] was created (recreated) in the second half of the 20th century, however, it is evident that its initial image must have been very similar to the Letychiv image of Mary. The Zielenice image was in Cracow for some time, and Cracow was a place with which Lithuanian monkhoods, Church hierarchs and noblemen maintained a close relationship. While the Lutsk and Letychiv images were related with Dominicans, the Zielenice image was related with Jesuits, whose activity in the Diocese of Samogitia had started earlier than that of Dominicans and who highly venerated the Šiluva image of Mary.

Several images of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania should be also mentioned. *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows* from the Nesvizh former Benedictine church (Belarus; founded in the end of the 16th century) is dated the first half of the 17th century and is considered to be painted on the basis of

Fig. 9. The Blessed Virgin Mary of Letychiv. Miejsca święte Rzeczypospolitej. Leksykon. Kraków: Znak, 1998.

images of the third group, unless they are replications of the discussed images.

The comparison of some pictures, those of Letychiv, Šiluva, Zielenice, Nesvizh, Vilnius Carmelite and Paparčiai (it would be possible to find several others) has highlighted their affinity. *The Šiluva image of Mary* pertains to this group of paintings even more if it is seen in a virtually reproduced initial form, without the later bottom and with removed corners (Fig. 12). The comparison has also revealed distinctive features of the Šiluva image. The painter of this picture not only made the figures more graceful, but also added sphericity to faces and other nuances characteristic of his manner. The Child's head, differently from the prototype, is almost not reclined, but initially this was not so clear, as the silhouette of the head is changed by a faded initial line of the occiput. Summing up it can be said that, comparing to pictures painted in Italy, the Šiluva image was created in a less academic manner and is characterized

an accurate replication of the Roman prototype[54]. Although the features of the prototype are repeated more accurately in Mary's face and the nimbus is composed of rarer and slightly wavy beams, this image shows a great affinity with the Šiluva creation. A close repetition can be noticed in the structure of the pleats of clothes, Child's facial features and His hairstyle. An old photograph of the image of St. Theresa church in Vilnius (painted before 1631?) reveals that it is related to the Šiluva image of Mary by the background of clouds and the drawing of Jesus' clothes[55]. The image *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows* of the Paparčiai former Dominican church (the second half of the 17th century; oil on canvas, 120 × 60)[56] (Fig. 11) is again characterized by a different artistic manner and colouring, but the composition and its details (the pleats of the Jesus' clothes and other) repeat once again. Although this creation is later than the creations of the third group that have been mentioned above, it could be inspired by the same immediate example (or examples). Images of *Mary of the Snows* later than this one do not display any specific details typical of

Fig. 10. The Blessed Virgin Mary of Zielenice. The church of Zielenice, Poland. Z dawna…

were created in the end of the 16th – the first half of the 17th centuries does not contradict the dating determined on the basis of historical data, but still does not specify it. Thus so far it is possible to suggest a double dating of the Šiluva image. On the one hand, on the basis of the stylistics of the creation, general data on the church history and the fact that theoretically it is possible that the creation had been painted (for another place?) before regaining the church, and being aware that in 1646 it was already famous for its miracles in the church built in 1641, the image can be dated the second–fourth decades of the 17th century. On the other hand, the analysis of the church history and the legend as well as peculiarities of the approach towards Mary relating to features of some dated images of Mary of Lithuanian shrines (Tytuvėnai and the Gates of Dawn) enable the author to consider the date of the third decade of the 17th century as the most credible one. In order to corroborate and specify it a

Fig. 11. Our Lady of Paparčiai. The former Dominican church of Paparčiai, Lithuania. Photo from KPCA.

by features of provincial fine arts; however, it has a strong influence on the spectator by its spirituality, accumulated mood, spiritual atmosphere created in it and is fraught with subtlety and mystery.

The summation of the presented examples and the data about them enables us to maintain that the earliest images of Mary that are very similar to the Šiluva image and which are found in Poland and Lithuania are dated from the period of the intersection of the 16th–17th centuries. Some of these images are considered to originate from Rome. Besides the images painted in Rome there could have existed an engraving (engravings) not known to the author of this article which could determine certain specific properties of the images of *Mary of the Snows* painted both in Italy and in Poland and Lithuania.

Turning back to the question of dating it has to be stated that the comparison of the Šiluva image to creations that are most similar to it and which

Fig. 12. The Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child of Šiluva. A virtual reproduction of the initial form.

search among documents reflecting the history of the Šiluva church is required. Additional data can be discovered carrying out the research on artistic and other activity of Jesuits, Dominicans and Carmelites in Lithuania. To the purpose there would also be an exploration of analogues of this image, most of which are partially hidden by metal casings, and studies of the history of these creations.

Mysteries have their value, as well and facts not always speak more than legendary truths. The arguments and the data presented in the article do not deny the idea highlighted in a traditional account about a miraculous return of the image to Šiluva: the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the most general sense, i.e., veneration of Mary, having entered this rather back-country in the middle of the 15th century returned there during the first decade of the 17th century bringing fame to Šiluva. An ordinary place of Lithuania became a special spiritual centre. This is a miracle the part of which is the discussed image at which miracles continue to be asked for.

Notes

[1]   Jucewicz, Adam. *Wspomnienia Żmudzi*. Wilno: nakład i druk T. Glücksberga, 1842, s. 14–38; Valančius, Motiejus. *Raštai*. T. 2. Vilnius: Vaga, 1972, p. 85–86, 100–102, 113–114, 128; Buczyński, Ignacy [J. B.] *Historyczne opisanie kościoła Szydłowskiego na Żmudzi*. Wilno, 1859; Buczyński, Ignacy [J. B.] *Opisanie historyczno-statystyczne powiatu Rosieńskiego […]*. Wilno, 1874, s. 81–86; *Balsas skurdas sunu ir dukteru Marijos Szydlavos bažnyčioje stebuklais garbingos*. Tilžė, 1885 (other publications 1898, 1905, 1908); Baliński, Michał; Lipiński, Tymotheusz. *Starożytna Polska pod względem historycznym*. T. 4. Warszawa: S. Orgelbrand, 1886, s. 465–466; Jakštas-Dambrauskas, Adomas [Ks. A. D.] *Szydłow*. In: *Encyklopedja kościelna*. T. 28. Warszawa, 1905, s. 110–115; Ostrowski A. *Kościoł w Szydłowie*. Wilno, 1907; Ostrovskis A. *Šidlavos bažnyčia. Švenčiausios Marijos Panos garbinimas Žemaičiuose*. Vilnius, 1907; Fridrich, Alojzy. *Historye cudownych obrazów Nayświętszej Maryi Panny w Polsce*. T. 4. Kraków: Nakł. Wydaw. Tow. Jez., 1911, s. 232–241; Blažys A. *Šiluvos istorija*. Marijampolė, 1929; Veblaitis, Petras. *Šiluvos bažnyčia ir jos infulatai. Pluoštas istorinių žinių. Atspaudas iš Draugijos*. Kaunas: Kuznickio ir Beilio spaustuvė, 1940; Vaišnora, Juozas, MIC. *Marijos garbinimas Lietuvoje*. Roma: Lietuvių katalikų mokslų akademija, 1958, p. 261–264, 343–362; Kviklys, Bronius. *Mūsų Lietuva*. T. 4. Vilnius: Mintis, 1992, p. 543–549 (a photographed edition of the publication of 1968); Yla, Stasys. *Šiluva Žemaičių istorijoje*. Boston: Lietuvių enciklope-dijos leidykla, 1970; second edition: Yla, Stasys. *Šiluva Žemaičių istorijoje* / Red. G. Mikelaitis. Kaunas: Kauno arkivyskupija, 2007; Kviklys, Bronius. *Šiluva*. In: *Lietuvos bažnyčios*. T. 3: *Kauno arkivyskupija*. Chicago: Amerikos lietuvių bibliotekos leidykla, 1983, p. 396–408, il.; Vaišvila, Alfonsas. *Šiluvos mitas*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1985; Yla, Stasys. *Vainikuotoji Šiluvė*. Putnam: Marijos Nek. Pr. Seserys, 1987; Yla, Stasys. *Marija Šiluvoje*. Kaunas: Caritas, 1996.

[2]   The 1786 transcript of the foundation act was used: VUB RS. F. 1, b. E 289, l. 76. The foundation act published: Buczyński, op. cit., 1859, s. 45–47; Veblaitis, op. cit., p. 4–6; Yla, op. cit., 2007, p. 363–364.

[3]   It was maintained that Andrius Zaviša had obtained Šiluva as a dowry when in 1500 he had married Barbora Kęsgailaitė: Buczyński, op. cit., 1859, s. 2; Buczyński, op. cit., 1874, s. 82. However, S. Yla made his case that the church had possibly been built by B. Kęsgailaitė's father Mikalojus Kęsgaila: Yla, op. cit., 2007, p. 49.

[4]   Yla, op. cit., 2007, p. 58.

[5]   Ibid. p. 59; Baniulytė, Aušra. *The Cult of the Virgin Mary and Its Images in Lithuania from the Middle Ages until the Seventeenth Century*. In: *Dailė*. T. 25. *Paveikslas ir knyga: LDK dailės tyrimai ir šaltiniai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2002, p. 163.

[6]   LNB RS. F. 93, b. 1444; Vaišvila, op. cit., p. 41–42, 45. A. Vaišvila's book is characterized by atheistic propositions required during the Soviet times; however, historical facts themselves are presented in an objective way grounding on primary sources.

[7]   Vaišvila, op. cit., p. 43.

[8]   LNB RS. F. 93, b. 1445; b. 1454; Vaišvila, op. cit., p. 41–45.

[9]   MAB RS. F. 268–256, l. 17.

[10]   *Relationes status dioecesium in Magno Ducatu Lituaniae*. V. 1. *Dioecesis Vilnensis et Samogitiae* / Red. Paulius Rabikauskas. Roma: Academia Lituana Catholica scientiarum, 1971, p. 239; Yla, op. cit., 2007, p. 120, 369–371.

[11]   Yla, op. cit., 2007, p. 120.

[12]   VUB RS. F. 1, b. E 289, l. 75 (1–4).

[13]   KAKA. B. 139, l. 54.

[14]   Drėma, Vladas. *Vilniaus Šv. Jono bažnyčia*. Vilnius: R. Paknio leidykla, 1997, p. 105–106, 135; KAKA. B. 51, l. 1; LVIA. F. 669, ap. 2, b. 225, l. 112–112v.

[15]   VUB RS. F. 1, b. E 289, l. 75; Yla, op. cit., 2007, p. 228–231, 382–386.

[16]   Valančius, op. cit., p. 114.

[17]   VUB RS. F. 1, b. E 289, l. 75 (1–4).

[18]   Ibid.

[19]   *Relationes…*, p. 319.

[20]   Buczyński, op. cit., 1859, s. 58.

[21]   Jucewicz, op. cit., s. 15–18; Buczyński, op. cit., 1859, s. 15–18.

[22]   Valančius, op. cit., p. 101–102.

[23]   Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 357–358; Yla, op. cit., 1996, p. 10.

[24]   *Relationes…*, p. 286, 268–269.

[25]   The casing, its donator and the goldsmith mentioned in 1677: KAKA. B. 139, l. 59v. The data proved by the signature on the casing: *ME FECIT LAURENTIUS / HOFFMANN REGIOMONTI / IN PRVSSIA. ANNO. 1674.*

[26]   The date of a new High altar is indicated in the act of 1677: KAKA. B. 139, l. 55.

27   Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 231, 357.
28   Vaišvila, op. cit., p. 14; Jurša, Leonas. *Auksinė Šiluvos karūna*. Vilnius: Valstiečių laikraštis, 1992, p. 43; Paknys, Mindaugas. *Šiluvos Švč. Mergelės Marijos paveikslas*. In: *Naujasis židinys-Aidai*. 2003, Nr. 6, p. 310–312; Stankevičienė, Regimanta. *Šiluvos bazilikos paveikslas* Švč. Mergelė Marija su Vaikeliu. *Istorinis ir ikonografinis kontekstas*. In: *Lietuvos dailės muziejus. Metraštis*. T. 6. Vilnius: Lietuvos dailės muziejus, 2005, p. 45–74.
29   Šinkūnaitė, Laima. *Vainikuotieji Marijos paveikslai*. In: *Katalikų pasaulis*. 1993, Nr. 8, p. 27–29, il.; Šinkūnaitė, Laima. *Lietuva – Marijos žemė* / Sud. D. Jasulaitis. Marijampolė: Ardor, 1993, p. 45–46, il.
30   Paknys, op. cit.; Stankevičienė, op. cit., 2005.
31   Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 45, 230, 252; Moisan, Krystyna S.; Szafraniec, Beata. *Maryja orędowniczka wiernych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 1987, s. 85–87; *Rome. Art & Architecture*. Cologne: Könemann, 1999, p. 310, 496; Cruz, Joan Caroll. *Cudowne wizerunki Najświętszej Maryi Panny*. Gdansk: Exter, 2000, s. 157–158, 160; Ярашэвіч, Аляксандр. *Абраз Маці Божай Santa Maria Maggiore на Беларусі*. In: *Наша Vera*. 2000, No. 4 (14) <http://media.catholic.by/nv/art7.htm>; Ярашэвіч, Аляксандр. *Іканаграфічны тып (ізвод) Маці Божай Рымскай (Salus Populi Romani) на Беларусі XVII–XVIII ст.ст*. In: *Przegląd Wschodni*. T. 7. Zeszyt 3 (27). Warszawa, 2001, s. 861–874.
32   Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 45; Moisan, Szafraniec, op. cit., s. 86, 98–99; Cruz, op. cit., s. 159; Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000.
33   Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 252; *Z dawna Polski tyś królową*. Szymanów: Siostry Niepokalanki, 1996, s. 50–51; Moisan, Szafraniec, op. cit., s. 86.
34   Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000; Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2001, s. 864, 869.
35   Moisan, Szafraniec, op. cit., s. 88; *Encyklopedia katolicka*. T. 3. Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1979, s. 865; Samek, Jan; Zbudniewek, Janusz. *Klejnoty Jasniej Góry*. Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1983, s. 8.
36   Moisan, Szafraniec, op. cit., s. 86; *Z dawna…*, s. 169–171.
37   Valančius, op. cit., p. 91, 92, 96; Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 116; *Lietuvos vienuolynai: vadovas* / Sud. R. Janonienė, D. Klajumienė. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 1998, p. 272.
38   Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000; *Абразы Маці Божай. Каляндар 2003*. Мінск, 2002. Чэрвень; Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 116; *Lietuvos vienuolynai…*, p. 272.
39   *Ecclesiae Sanctae Mariae ad Nives alias Sancti Georgii*. This Carmelite church and monastery were founded on August 19, 1506. See: Drėma, Vladas. *Vilniaus bažnyčios:* *iš Vlado Drėmos archyvų*. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2008, p. 410–411.
40   Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000.
41   Ibid.
42   LVIA. F. 694, ap. 1, b. 3970, l. 402; Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000; Stankevičienė, Regimanta. *Alvito Švč. Mergelės Marijos paveikslo ir jo kulto istorija*. In: *Dailė*. T. 21. *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės barokas: formos, įtakos, kryptys*. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2001, p. 80.
43   The source of statistical data: *Z dawna…*.
44   Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000.
45   Vaišvila, op. cit., p. 22.
46   Drews, Ioanne. *Methodus peregrinationis menstruae Marianae ad imagines deiparae virginis […]*. Vilnae, 1684. Pages not numerated.
47   *Senoji Lietuvos grafika. XVI–XIX a.* / Sud. V. Gasiūnas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1995, il. 79.
48   Fridrich, op. cit., s. 110–113; Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 329–330; *Z dawna…*, s. 456–458, 169–171, 465–467, 327–329; *Miejsca święte Rzeczypospolitej. Leksykon*. Kraków: Znak, 1998, s. 152–153, 227, 252–253; Moisan, Szafraniec, op. cit., s. 85–86, 88; Skrinskas, Robertas Gedvydas. *Piligrimo vadovas po stebuklingas Marijos vietas*. Kaunas: Judex, 1999, p. 309–311.
49   KPC DS. Photographs by A. Petrašiūnas, 2001; Stankevičienė, Regimanta. *Kai kurie Lietuvos XVII–XIX a. religinės dailės sąlyčio su Europos krikščioniškąja kultūra aspektai*. In: *Europos dailė: lietuviškieji variantai*. Vilnius: Leidybos centras, 1994, p. 155; Skrinskas, op. cit., p. 243–244; *Miejsca…*, s. 313–316; *Z dawna…*, s. 317–315.
50   *Miejsca…*, s. 183–184; *Z dawna…*, s. 142–144.
51   *Miejsca…*, s. 367; *Z dawna…*, p. 48–51. It is the first image of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snows* in the Commonwealth of Both Nations crowned in 1727 and the fifth image of Mary honoured in this way in the Commonwealth since 1717.
52   Fridrich, op. cit., s. 320–325; *Miejsca…*, s. 158; *Z dawna…*, s. 110–113.
53   *Miejsca…*, s. 375–376; *Z dawna…*, s. 430–432.
54   Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2000; Ярашэвіч, op. cit., 2001, s. 865.
55   Račiūnaitė, Tojana. *Vizijos ir atvaizdai. Basųjų karmelitų palikimas*. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2003, p. 179, il. 118, 122, 123.
56   LVIA. F. 694, ap. 1, b. 4019, l. 734; Vaišnora, op. cit., p. 405–406; Skrinskas, op. cit., p. 226–228; Stankevičienė, Regimanta. *Stebuklingi Lietuvos dominikonų provincijos paveikslai*. In: *Dailė*. T. 25. *Paveikslas ir knyga: LDK dailės tyrimai ir šaltiniai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2002, p. 200–201, il.

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ŠILUVOS BAZILIKOS PAVEIKSLAS *ŠVČ. MERGELĖ MARIJA SU VAIKELIU*: KILMĖS, IKONOGRAFINIO KONTEKSTO IR DATAVIMO PROBLEMATIKA

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Bažnyčios istorija, Katalikų bažnyčia, Apsireiškimo legenda, *Šiluvos Dievo Motina*, *Šiluvos Švč. Mergelės Marija su Vaikeliu.*

Santrauka

Šiluvos Švč. Mergelės Marijos Gimimo bažnyčios, dabar bazilikos, istorija yra susijusi ne tik su ryškiau nei kitur pasireiškusiomis tarpkonfesinėmis XVI–XVII a. kovomis, Marijos apsireiškimo Šiluvoje garsu, bet ir ypatingu Švč. Mergelės pagerbimu Šiluvos paveiksle. Sovietmečiu nesėkmingai siekta sumenkinti Šiluvos, kaip vieno iš svarbiausių Lietuvos katalikų sanktuariumų su stebuklingu Dievo Motinos atvaizdu, svarbą. Garsiausias bazilikos paveikslas – *Švč. Mergelė Marija su Vaikeliu*, dar vadinamas *Šiluvos Švč. Mergele Marija*, *Šiluvos Dievo Motina*, *Šiluvos Madona*.

Apie Šiluvą, pradedant XIX a. vid., rašyta daugiau, nei apie bet kurią kitą buvusios Žemaičių vyskupijos bažnyčią ir beveik tiek pat kaip apie garsiausias Vilniaus šventoves. Šiluvos bažnyčios istorija, garsiojo jos paveikslo kilmė ir istorija tapo suvokiamos ne vien iš dokumentais pagrįstų įvykių, bet ir pasakojimais bei raštu sklidusio, vis paredaguojamo ir galop nekintančia tradicija tapusio pasakojimo apie Švč. Mergelės Marijos apsireiškimą. Kritiškai analizuoti paveikslo istoriją bandyta, bet *Šiluvos Švč. Mergelė Marija*, kaip meno kūrinys, iki XXI a. pr. dėmesingiau netirtas.

2001–2003 m. vykęs paveikslo restauravimas suteikė progą pastudijuoti paveikslo istoriją, jo sukūrimo laikotarpio kontekstą, kuris susijęs ne tik su Lietuvos dailės, bei ir su paveikslų pagerbimo visoje Katalikų bažnyčioje istorija. Išanalizuota apie Šiluvą skelbta literatūra, gausūs archyviniai šaltiniai, surasti duomenys apie kitus, panašius Švč. Mergelės paveikslus. Tyrimai atskleidė ne viską, bet Šiluvos paveikslo istorinis ir meninis kontekstas tapo aiškesnis.

Šiluvos bažnyčią 1457 m. fundavo didikas Petras Gedgaudas. Jai sudegus, apie arba po 1500 m. pastatyta nauja. Merkeliui Zavišai, kuriam Šiluva atiteko 1532 m., šioje vietoje įkurdinus kalvinus, dar tebeveikė ir katalikų bažnyčia: Martyno Mažvydo ganytiniai apie 1551 m. per Marijos atlaidus vyko į Lietuvos bažnyčias, tame tarpe ir į Šiluvą. XVI a. antroje pusėje katalikų bažnyčia Šiluvoje sunyko. Nauja kalvinų fundatorė Sofija Vnučkienė 1592 m. naujai įteisino ir padidino kalvinų valdas. 1602 m. vyskupo Merkelio Giedraičio pradėtą Šiluvos katalikų bažnyčios atgavimo bylą 1622 m. baigė pirmas (po atgavimo) šios parapijos klebonas kanauninkas Jonas Kazakevičius Smolka.

1623 m. teminimi senosios bažnyčios pamatai. Neužilgo J. Kazakevičius Smolka pasirūpino pirmosios mažos ir laikinos bažnyčios pastatymu. Tikrintina prielaida, ar po kelių metų jis nepasirūpino antros, didesnės bažnyčios surentimu. Jo pastangomis 1640–1641 m. iškilo ir tvirta medinė, iki dabartinės Šiluvos bažnyčios sumūrijimo išstovėjusi, bažnyčia. Tarpkonfesiniai nesutarimai Šiluvoje tuo nesibaigė ir tapo ilgalaikiu, apie šimtmetį užsitęsusiu konfliktu. Dėl katalikų aktyvumo, bažnyčios atgavimą lydėjusių ypatingų įvykių bei Švč. Mergelės teikiamų malonių Šiluvos bažnyčia ėmė garsėti kaip ypatingas katalikybės židinys.

1625 m. Žemaičių vyskupo rašte Šventajam Sostui rašoma apie sunkų, bet sėkmingą šios bažnyčios atgavimą. 1646 m. reliacijoje vyskupas Jurgis Tiškevičius jau praneša apie bažnyčioje esantį malonėmis garsų Švč. Mergelės paveikslą. Tai anksčiausia istorinė žinia apie šį kūrinį. Nuo 1748 m. kai kuriuose Švč. Mergelės apsireiškimo Šiluvoje istorijos variantuose nurodoma, kad paveikslas kartu su dokumentais rastas skrynioje, kuri, lydint praregėjimo stebuklui, iškasta po apsireiškimo įvykių. Tačiau 1661 m. užrašytame pasakojime apie apsireiškimą ir Šiluvos bažnyčios atgavimą rašoma tik apie iš žemės iškastus dokumentus ir minimi senų žmonių prisiminimai apie girioje rastą, bet kalvinų sunaikintą Marijos paveikslą. XX a. kartais skelbta, kad stebuklingą paveikslą, gal atsivežtą iš Romos, Šiluvos bažnyčiai galėjo dovanoti pirmasis jos fundatorius, tačiau šį teiginį griauna jau vien tai, kad paveikslas nutapytas aliejiniais dažais ant drobės, o tokia technika išplito vėliau.

Būtina nurodyti, kad Šiluvos paveikslas iš pradžių buvo mažesnis, jo apačia pridurta vėliau. 1674 m. padaryti metaliniai aptaisai taikyti jau dabartiniam kūrinio dydžiui. Tad paveikslas buvo padidintas arba apie 1641 m., perkeliant į naują, didesnę bažnyčią, arba 1670 m., perkeliant į naują Didįjį altorių. Paveikslo istoriją nuo XVII a. aštuntojo dešimtmečio iki šių dienų atspindi išlikę gausūs dokumentai ir aprašymai literatūroje, tačiau negalima pasakyti, kad visa aišku. Net paveikslo karūnavimo, įvykusio 1786 m. rugsėjo 8 d., istorijoje dar yra neištirtų detalių: leidimas šį aktą atlikti buvo gautas 1775 m., o visa realizuota po vienuolikos metų.

Istoriniai duomenys teleidžia teigti, kad paveikslas sukurtas prieš 1646 m. Tuomet jis jau buvo garsus, bet XVII a. paveikslai išgarsėdavo labai greitai, tačiau nei greitas, nei lėtas šlovės augimas nebuvo norma, tad šitai datavimo nepalengvina. Istorines žinias papildo duomenys apie Šiluvos paveikslo pirmavaizdį, palyginimas su ikonografiniais bei stilistiniais analogais. Šiluvos paveikslas yra kopija Marijos paveikslo – ikonos, kuri yra ne tik garsiausias Romos miesto, bet ir vienas iš žymiausių katalikiškų Marijos atvaizdų. Skirtingai nuo kopijų siaurąją termino prasme, maloningųjų šventųjų paveikslų kopijos, bent jau praeityje, nebuvo visiškai tikslios, tačiau iš kompozicijos ir svarbiausių detalių pirmavaizdį jose visada galima atpažinti. Šiluvos paveikslo pirmavaizdis yra Romos S. Maria Maggiore bazilikos *Capella Paolina* koplyčios altoriaus paveikslas, vadinamas *Salus Populi Romani* (Romiečių Globėja), *S. Maria Maggiore* arba *S. Maria ad Nives* (Švč. Marija Snieginė). Paveikslo kilmė siejama su šv. Luko sukurtu Marijos atvaizdu. Žinoma, paveikslas nutapytas vėliau, bet yra labai senas, nes jau IX a. pertapytas. Šiluvos paveikslo pirmavaizdis labai svarbus tuo, kad jis tapo pirmu maloningu Marijos atvaizdu, kuris imtas organizuotai kopijuoti ir taip skleisti po visą katalikišką pasaulį. Iki tol tiksliai kartoti maloningus paveikslus netgi drausta. Pirmosios S. Maria Maggiore bazilikos paveikslo kopijos sukurtos Pijaus V leidimu 1569 m. Šis popiežius Katalikų bažnyčioje įvedė ir Švč. Mergelės Marijos Snieginės šventę. Romiečių Globėjos paveikslui ypatingą dėmesį rodė beveik visi XVI a. II pusės–XVII a. pr. popiežiai. Bendroje Lietuvos ir Lenkijos valstybėje *S. Maria Maggiore* kopijas platino Bažnyčios hierarchai, jėzuitų, dominikonų, karmelitų ir unitų bazilijonų vienuolijos. Kelios iš pirmųjų kopijų buvo atgabentos į Lenkijos jėzuitų kolegijas, paveikslų iš Romos buvo atsivežta Klemenso VIII (1592–1598) pontifikato metu. XVII a. I pusėje Lenkijoje ir LDK Švč. Mergelės Marijos Snieginės kultas, tad ir atvaizdo kopijos, labai paplito. Šis reiškinys tęsėsi, ir ne viena kopija pati išgarsėjo prie jos patiriamomis ypatingomis malonėmis. Tarp gausybės Lenkijos, Lietuvos, Ukrainos, Baltarusijos ir Latvijos valstybėse tebesančių tokių paveikslų, daugiausia bendrų bruožų su Šiluvos Marijos atvaizdu yra tuose, kurie nutapyti paskutiniais XVI a. dešimtmečiais Italijoje (?), arba XVII a. I pusėje jau Abiejų Tautų valstybėje. Pats panašiausias yra apie 1594–1597 m. iš Romos atvežtas, nuo 1606 m. Letyčivo (Летичів, Ukraina, Podolė) dominikonų bažnyčioje buvęs, paveikslas (dabar yra Liubline). Šis ir Šiluvos paveikslai itin panašūs net detalėmis. Tiesa, *Šiluvos Švč. Mergelės Marijos* paveikslas laikui bėgant buvo padidintas, o jo viršus apipjautas pagal dabartinio Šiluvos Didžiojo altoriaus arkos formą. Dailininko maniera ir stilistinis kontekstas bus nulėmęs tai, kad labiau pakeisti Marijos veido bruožai. Be Letyčivo paveikslo, su Šiluvos Marijos atvaizdu galime lyginti ir dar vieną kitą Lenkijos, Baltarusijos, o ir Lietuvos paveikslą, t. p. ir XVII a. 3 dešimtmetyje sukurtą, kitos ikonografijos Tytuvėnų bažnyčios Didžiojo altoriaus *Švč. Mergelės Marijos su Vaikeliu* paveikslą. Provincinės dailės požymiai rodo, kad Šiluvos paveikslas sukurtas vietinio dailininko. Pavyzdžiu jam galėjo būti Letyčivo paveikslo analogas arba abu jie (ir dar kiti paveikslai) sukurti pagal tapatų raižinį.

Pirmavaizdžio istorija bei analogų nustatymas patvirtina istorinius duomenis, kad paveikslas sukurtas ne anksčiau kaip XVII a. pradžioje, ir ne vėliau kaip iki 1740–1741 m. Manant, kad paveikslas nutapytas atgautai Šiluvos bažnyčiai, labiausiai įtikimu sukūrimo laikotarpiu laikytinas XVII a. trečiasis dešimtmetis su galima dešimtmečio paklaida į abi puses. Kas, kieno užsakymu nutapė paveikslą ir kada tiksliai jis atsirado Šiluvoje, tebelieka paslaptis. Jos išsiaiškinti gali nepavykti. Tačiau tikslūs faktai ne visada svarbūs. Žinome, kad paveikslas sukurtas epochoje, kurioje apsisprendimus lydėjo ne tik kovingumas (davęs ne tik teigiamų, bet ir neigiamų vaisių), bet ir dvasinis aktyvumas, harmonijos siekis. Šias laikotarpio savybes ir atskleidžia Šiluvos paveikslas, kuris sukurtas akademijose neištobulinta maniera, tačiau yra kupinas įtaigos, subtilumo ir taurumo.