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THE TRINITARIAN ICONOGRAPHY

The Trinitarian Order, *Ordo Sanctissimae Trinitatis de Redemptione Captivorum,* was founded by St. John de Matha (d. 1213) with the participation of St. Felix de Valois (d. 1212). The first abode was located in Cerfroid, in the diocese of Meaux in France. Pope Innocent III approved the Order in his bull *Operante divine dispositionis* of December 17, 1198 and ratified the *Rule* written by St. John de Matha who described the aim of the Trinitarian mission as ransoming captives from pagans as well as providing hospital care to the sick and the poor. The Trinitarians wear white habits with a blue and red cross on their scapulars and black cloaks. The Order grew very fast in numbers in France where they were also called *Maturinians* from their Parisian location dedicated to St. Maturin. They spread to Spain, Portugal, Scotland, England, Italy, and Germany. Later they also came to Poland, and the territories of present Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria where they were called *White Spaniards.* From the very beginning they were involved in redemption and missionary work in North Africa. After a few attempts at reforming the Order in France, Spain and Portugal in the 16th century, St. John Baptist of the Conception carried out a radical reform, approved by the Pope Clement VIII in his brief *Ad militantis Ecclesiae* of August 20, 1599. This started a branch of Spanish Discalced Trinitarians, the only one still existing today; since the Order went through difficult times in the 19th century due to the French Revolution and numerous suppressions[1].

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[1] See C. Mazzarisi Di Gesù, *L'Ordine Trinitario nella chiesa e nella storia,* Torino 1964; F. Stroobants, *Les ministres généraux de l'Ordre Trinitaire,* Marseille 1966; V. Ginarte González, *La Orden Trinitaria,* Córdoba–Salamanca 1979; T. Knecht, *Histoire de l'Ordre de la Sainte Trinité et de la Redemption des Captifs,* [Paris] 1993; J. Pujana, *La Orden de la Santísima Trinidad,* Salamanca 1993; R. Grimaldi-Hierholtz, *L'Ordre des Trinitaires,* Paris 1994; L. Huyghues-Despointes, *Je briserai vos chaînes. Avec les captifs, Jean de Matha et ses disciples,* Montrouge 1995; A. Witko, *Trynitarze,* Kraków 1999; Idem, *The Trinitarian Order,* Rome–Cracow 2007; A.O. D'Errico, *The Trinitarians. An Overview of Their Eight Hundred Year Service to God and Humanity* [Roma s.a.].

The Trinitarians, who ordinarily spent only a third of their income on their own needs, did not have enough resources to sponsor costly works of art for God's and their own glory. Their founder, St. John de Matha, had set this poverty into the text of his *Rule*. Different branches of the Order treated the problem of art differently in their legislation. The Calced Trinitarians, possessing larger financial resources, accepted a very general theory of art which resulted in rich artistic endowments. On the other hand, the Discalced Trinitarians, both Spanish and French, who followed the original *Rule* of John de Matha more strictly, paid more attention to the theory of art in their legislation and consequently avoided rich and pompous works of art[2].

Iconography of the Order of the Holy Trinity stresses Trinitarian values. There are not many architectural structures referring symbolically to the Holy Trinity because apart from one outstanding building – San Carlino church in Rome designed by Francesco Borromini, there are not any other constructions propagating Trinitarian values except for some isolated structures like towers of a triangular plan or belfries with three bells. Also the popularity of a specific type of church – the one with three side chapels on each side of the nave in 17th century architecture was due to aesthetic and utilitarian principles and not to the Trinitarian ideology[3].

The three colours of the Trinitarian habit were interpreted as referring to particular Divine Persons: white to the Father, blue to Christ, and red to the Holy Spirit. Among the symbols of the Holy Trinity the triangle was the most popular, whereas the others, e.g. three criss-crossing circles or *manus Dei* referring more often to God the Father only, were less widespread. All the traditional Trinitarian representations popular in art are present in the Trinitarian iconography: three Angels (as the Old Testament Holy Trinity), a head with three faces as well as three alike or even identical persons. The Holy Trinity where God the Father and Jesus were shown as alike persons and the Holy Spirit as a dove can only be found in Central America. Vertical representations of the Holy Trinity of a type *Compassio Patris* gained some popularity whereas *The Throne of Grace* or *Paternitas* was less known. However, the most popular representation of the Holy Trinity in the Trinitarian iconography showed the three Divine Persons in majesty – God the Father as a patriarch with a globe or scepter, Jesus with wounds, most often with a cross, and the Holy Spirit as a dove flying between them. Sometimes Our Lady completed the picture, often as *de Remedio* or the Immaculate Conception[4].

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[2] A. Witko, *El arte en la doctrina*, op. cit., p. 51–62; Idem, *Sztuka w doktrynie Zakonu trynitarzy*, "Bielsko-Żywieckie Studia Teologiczne" vol. II, Bielsko-Biała 2000, p. 201–212.

[3] L. Steinberg, *Borromini's San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane. A study in multiple form and architectural symbolism*, New York–London 1977, p. 287–337; A. Witko, *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu Trójcy Świętej w siedemnastym i osiemnastym stuleciu*, Warszawa 2002, p. 44–46.

[4] C. Mazzarisi di Gesù, op. cit., p. 119–123; J. BORREGO, *La Regla de la Orden de la Santísima Trinidad*, Roma–Salamanca 1973, p. 119–121, 156–162; G. Cipollone, *Trinità e liberazione tra Cristianità e Islam*, Assisi 2000, p. 134–136; A. Witko, *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu*, op. cit., p. 41–81.

The iconography connected with ransoming captives is very rich and varied. Its main subject is the Angel of Redemption with two captives or slaves, which became the emblem of the Order. This theme often forms a part of larger scenes with the Holy Trinity or the Patriarchs of the Order. Trinitarian art meticulously illustrated all stages of redemption started by St. John de Matha. Many paintings depict the first acts of redemption showing the Founder at work. As many pictures show contemporary works of redemption they have considerable documentary value. Redemption iconography also depicts abductions of Christians by Muslims, slave markets as well as terrible suffering and agony of the enslaved captives. Works of art showing the Trinitarians advocating the necessity of ransoming Christian captives as well as their preparations for redemption are rare whereas the most popular are scenes illustrating negotiations between Trinitarians and Muslims and the handing over of money for the ransomed captives. Images showing the faithful freed from captivity and their return to Europe, often in supernatural circumstances, are also well known as well as redemption processions in which both Trinitarians and the former captives took part after their return home. Apart from works illustrating acts of redemption there are also others connected symbolically with Trinitarian activities. One of the most interesting works of this type is the fresco painted by Gregorio Guglielmi in SS. Trinità degli Spagnoli church in Rome which shows *Faith* receiving Homage from *Redemption* served by *Courage* and *Generosity*. Also the wall painting by Joseph Piltz in Cracow showing Trinitarian virtues in a symbolic way is of an exceptional value[5].

The image of Jesus of Nazareth, the Ransomed, to be found only in the art of the Discalced Trinitarians', holds a very special position in Trinitarian art. This name refers to a wooden statue made by Francisco de Ocampo or Luis de la Peña in Seville in the 2nd or 3rd decade of the 17th century. The sculpture, similar to the type of *Ecce Homo* belongs to processional statues and originally showed Jesus with the cross on his shoulder. It was ransomed from Moors by the Discalced Trinitarians in 1682, dressed in the Trinitarian scapular and placed ceremoniously in Madrid, which started very intense veneration, soon spreading to all the countries where the Discalced Trinitarians were present, later even crossing the Atlantic. Expansion of veneration was helped by some works of art, the most important of which was a copperplate made by Marcos Orozco in Madrid in 1685 that became a model for many others in numerous European countries. A bust of Jesus in an oval, originating from the Roman church of San Carlino, was popular only in Rome. A vertical image of the Holy Trinity originated in Poland where the veneration of Jesus of Nazareth was exceptionally strong. A statue of Christ was placed in the altar retables; over it God the Father could be seen and still above them the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove. Apart from the traditional images of Jesus of Naz-

[5] B. Porres Alonso, *Libertad a los cautivos. Actividad redentora de la Orden Trinitaria*, vol. I–III, Córdoba–Salamanca 1997–1998, passim; A. Witko, *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu*, op. cit., p. 82–116.

areth the Redeemed, there were also realizations connected with the unusual history of the statue, showing its profanation in Meknes, being thrown to the lions, ransomed from the pagans, its miraculous weighing and a solemn procession after the redemption[6].

The presence of Mary in the Trinitarian iconography is significant but not dominant. The image of Our Lady *de Remedio* is the most popular which is connected with the help that St. John de Matha received from Our Lady in two cases of redemption. Although Our Lady *de Remedio* was venerated only by the non-reformed Trinitarians and French Discalced Trinitarians, depictions of this kind can be found in all the branches of the Trinitarian Order. They usually show Mary handing John de Matha a bag with money; sometimes Our Lady with a bag and the Trinitarian scapular carrying the Child Jesus. The image of Our Lady *de Remedio* accompanied by the two Patriarchs was relatively rare. A similar type of Our Lady *de Rescate* was somewhat popular among the Calced Trinitarians. Both the Calced and Discalced Trinitarians honored the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. This image was especially favoured by the reformed branch but it was also popular among the Calced Trinitarians, particularly after the argument with the Mercedarians which the Trinitarians lost. The way of illustrating the Immaculate Conception is fairly traditional. The Discalced Trinitarians favoured the image of Our Lady *de Gracia*, which did not spread outside Spain whereas the type of *Dolorosa*, based on the sculpture by Pedro de Mena y Medrano from the Trinitarian convent in Vienna, was exceptionally popular in the imperial province of the Order dedicated to St. Joseph. This latter image was often imitated in many paintings, graphics and sculptures[7].

Hagiographic series, referring mainly to St. John de Matha, were widespread in Trinitarian art. Iconography of this Saint is extremely rich, it illustrates his whole life; from the annunciation of his birth to his mother to all the miracles taking place at his tomb after his death. Apart from the events from his childhood and youth, the scenes showing the foundation of the new Order and the beginning of redemptive work are of particular importance. However, in the Saint's iconography two scenes were the most popular: one showing his first mass and the very moment of Divine inspiration to found the Trinitarian Order through Christ depicted as an Angel with two captives at the moment of exchange; and the other one illustrating a similar revelation during a mass said by Pope Innocent III in the Lateran in Rome. Sometimes the similarity between the two posed problems for researchers – e.g. the famous picture by Francisco Preciado de la Vega in SS. Trinità degli Spagnoli in Rome showing the mass celebrated by Pope Innocent III was regarded as one showing St. John de Matha's first mass[8].

[6] B. Porres Alonso, *Jesús Nazareno Rescatado en su tercer centenario*, Córdoba 1982, passim; A. Witko, *Gesù Nazareno Riscattato*. Napoli 1999; Idem, *Jesús Nazareno Rescatado*, Roma–Madrid 2004.

[7] F. Stroobants, *Notre-Dame du Remède ou du Rachat*, Marseille 1991; B. Porres Alonso, N. Arieta Orbe. *Santa María del Remedio*. Córdoba 1985.

[8] A. Witko. *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu*, op. cit., p. 184–230.

In the development of the Patriarch's iconography the most important role was played by two series: one consisting of 24 paintings on canvas by Theodoor van Thulden made specially for the Calced Trinitarians in Paris in 1632 and the other one comprising 12 paintings by Vicente Carducho showing St. John de Math-a's life made for the Discalced Trinitarians in Madrid in 1634. Now the latter ones can be seen mainly in the Museo del Prado in Madrid, whereas the former ones were probably destroyed during the French Revolution but fortunately are known thanks to a series of etchings made in 1633. However, there is hope that the original paintings were not completely destroyed as one of the pictures was found 200 years later. The two series of paintings mentioned above were models for many graphic series illustrating the Saint's life particularly popular in the first half of the 18th century[9].

Iconography referring to St. John de Matha was not only confined to the scenes from his life; it showed other happenings, mainly in the devotional context. The Saint, dressed in habit and often a cloak with a blue and red cross on it, is shown with many attributes – among them a Doctoral biretta, a book with *The Rule*, a pen, a model of a church; and, most often, the Angel of Redemption with two captives: one white and one black. This last attribute can also be found in pictures dedicated to St. Felix de Valois; however, it is most closely connected with St. John de Matha who is also shown with a model of a ship (a symbol of redemption) and a mitre at his feet which symbolises his refusal to become a bishop; sometimes even with a cardinal's hat. Sometimes a stag with a blue and red cross between its horns appears at the Patriarch's feet although this animal is most often pictured accompanying St. Felix de Valois. Both Saints are often shown with the patriarch's cross, severed chains and shackles. In the iconography of St. John de Matha the vision of the Angel of Redemption with two captives, not referring to the Patriarch's first mass, is one of the most frequent images. It was first depicted by Giacinto Calandrucci and later became very popular both in paintings and graphics. Another popular representation showed St. John de Matha as a Patriarch of the Order holding a patriarch's cross or a model of a church. The Saint was also often shown as the author of *The Rule* and the Order's lawmaker with a book or a pen in his hand. Most often such works feature shackles, chains and captives which refer to redemption. There are also realisations of a portrait type[10].

The most popular scene in the Trinitarian iconography was the adoration of the Holy Trinity by the two Patriarchs of the Order, St. John and St. Felix, accompanied by the Angel of Redemption with two captives. The most important were the figures of the patriarchs, therefore they were also the biggest, the figure of the

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[9] *Revelatio Ordinis SS. Trinitatis Redemptionis Captivorum sub Innocentio tertio anno 1198,* Parisiis 1633; M.C. de Carlos Varona, *Nuevas noticias sobre las pinturas de Vicente Carducho para el convento de trinitarios descalzos de Madrid,* Archivo Español de Arte, nr 288, Madrid 1999, s. 505–520.

[10] A. Witko, *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu,* op. cit., p. 230–247.

Angel being somewhat smaller and the Divine Persons the smallest. This **pattern**, dating back to the beginning of the 17th century, spread widely after the **veneration** of the Patriarchs was officially approved, mainly in the form introduced by **Carlo** Girolamo Castelli. Other realisations, where the particular figures were of a different size, or where the Angel was absent, also could be found. It is also important to notice that often the front of Trinitarian churches were decorated with statues of the Patriarchs, frequently with the Holy Trinity and Angel of Redemption with two captives[11].

Iconography of St. Felix is not as rich as that referring to St. John. The second Patriarch of the Trinitarians is most often shown as an older, grey friar dressed in a Trinitarian habit often covered with a cloak. His main attributes are royal insignia, pointing to his origin, penitential cross and a stag with a blue and red cross between its antlers. Nowadays we do not know any series of works dedicated to the life of this Founder. Some works depicting St. Felix were created in connection with St. John's iconography, but their number is relatively small. The most frequent scene was Our Lady appearing in the choir in Cerfroid on the night of 7/8 September, 1212. St. Felix is often pictured as pleading with Mary for the release of Christian captives. This scene, after Giacinto Calandrucci's drawing, was very popular in the 2nd half of the 17th century. St. Felix was also often shown as a founder of the Trinitarian Order with a patriarch's cross or banner. Paintings referring to his ascetic life or the Saint's portraits can also be found[12].

Iconography of St. Simon de Rojas is much more diversified and rich in comparison with other contemporary Trinitarian saints. The best artists took part in its creation due to the prominent position of this Saint at court, in the Church and among laymen. All the works show reference to Our Lady, most often handing the Saint the cingulum of chastity and rosaries of the Immaculate Conception. St. Simon de Rojas is often shown taking care of people in need – either the poor or those needing spiritual consolation. Portraits of this Saint were often inscribed with the words *Ave Maria*, sometimes accompanied by the image of Madonna *Salus Populi Romani*. Among all the works the ones made just after the Saint's death and before his burial are most important as they were created by the best artists. After his beatification still another type of picture was created showing Blessed Simon in heaven's glory[13].

St. Michael of the Saints was the first Discalced Trinitarian made a Saint so his iconography was of exceptional value for this branch of the Trinitarians. Its evolution progressed in a way typical for baroque art. After the death of the Mystic of Vic his portraits were extremely popular until the end of the 17th century. When he was proclaimed Venerable he was often shown as possessing special spiritual

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[11] Ibidem, p. 247–267.
[12] Ibidem, p. 267–288.
[13] Idem, *San Simón de Rojas*, Roma 2003.

graces, e.g. levitating or exchanging hearts with Jesus. A copperplate engraving made by Marcos Orozco in 1687 became one of the models imitated later for decades. After Michael de los Santos was proclaimed Blessed, new themes in his iconography began, showing him worshipping the Eucharist or in heaven's glory. Among his attributes are: a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament, a burning heart, a lily, sometimes a book. Only one series depicting his life is known to exist. St. Michael was connected with both branches of the Trinitarian Order, therefore two independent currents may be distinguished in his iconography. He is shown in the Trinitarian habit, frequently covered with a cloak often belonging to the reformed branch. Although his veneration spread in all the countries where the Trinitarians lived, it developed mostly in Catalonia where his hometown – Vic close to Barcelona – is still full of artistic traces of the Saint's presence[14].

Iconography of St. John Baptist of the Conception is little varied due to the extremely slow beatification process. It was only after he was proclaimed Venerable that some interesting works of art were created. Portraits of the Saint's prevailed; based on one picture painted in Cordoba during his life and followed by a not very accurate copy. Almost all his portraits from the 17th and 18th centuries were based on the one mentioned above. Other works showed the Saint as a Mystic praying before the crucifix or, after 1760, flying ecstatically with the cross; another pattern showed him as a founder with a book and a pen in his hand. Apart from one series illustrating his life there are no other works of this kind. It should be noticed, however, that St. John Baptist de la Concepción is the only Trinitarian saint who did not appear in the iconography of the Calced Trinitarians. His main attributes are the crucifix, a book and instruments of penance. Although the numbers of works not connected directly with the original from Cordoba is small, their artistic value due to the absence of artistic constraints dictated by the Cordoban prototype is enormous, particularly that they were executed by such masters as El Greco or Johann Prechtl[15].

Blessed Mark Criado was often depicted in Trinitarian art, mainly in Spain. The majority of his representations were created in the 19th century when his veneration was recognised as existing from time immemorial. The most popular image was the scene of Mark's martyrdom with his heart with the monogram *IHS* always exposed. More traditional images showing Mark with a palm of martyrdom and a dagger in his heart were also well-known. Although he was honored in the whole

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[14] J. Gudiol i Cunill, E. Junyent i Subirà, M.S. Salarich i Torrents, *Sant Miquel dels Sants i la ciutat de Vic*, Vic 1992; A. Witko, *San Miguel de los Santos*, Roma 2003; Idem, *San Miguel de los Santos y su iconografía*, "Bielsko-Żywieckie Studia Teologiczne" vol. IV, Bielsko-Biała 2003, p. 325–343.

[15] Gabriel de la Dolorosa, *Iconografía y vera efigie del beato Juan Bautista de la Concepción*, [in:] *IV centenario del nacimiento del beato Juan Bautista de la Concepción 1561–1961*, Andújar 1962, p. 85–105; J. Pujana, *San Juan Bautista de la Concepción. Retrato físico y humano*, Trinitarium, vol. II, Córdoba–Madrid 1993, p. 69–107; A. Witko, *Od El Greca do Prechtla. Z ikonografii św. Jana Chrzciciela de la Concepción, reformatora trynitarzy*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" vol. L, fasc. 4, z. specjalny, Lublin 2002, p. 127–155.

Order, he gained the largest popularity among the Calced Trinitarians; therefore he is usually shown in a habit belonging to this branch[16].

St. Agnes and St. Catherine of Alexandria were patronesses of the Trinitarian Order and so they are present in the Order's iconography. Their images are similar to the ones popular in the history of art. Most often they were shown together during adoration of the Holy Trinity. St. Agnes, as a more important patroness held a privileged position and it was usually she who could be seen wearing a Trinitarian habit. The two Saints' images had been placed in the altar retables of Trinitarian churches but after 1666 they had to give place to the Patriarchs of the Order and assumed secondary positions. The two Saints had two separate chapels in the Calced Trinitarian church in Via Condotti in Rome[17].

Apart from the art referring to the Trinitarian doctrine, spirituality and religious tradition, there were also works of propaganda and historical character showing the apotheosis of the Order, including all the main themes – the Holy Trinity, Angel of Redemption with two captives, the Patriarchs of the Order and so on. The first generals of the Order – John the Englishman and William the Scot – who were earlier venerated as saints, were rarely represented in the Trinitarian iconography. On the other hand, images of Trinitarian martyrs, especially Laura de S. Pedro of Constantinople, the crucified Boy – El Niño de La Guardia and three martyrs of Algiers: Bernardo de Monroy, Juan del Águila and Juan de Palacios, enjoyed great popularity. Polish Trinitarians propagated the veneration of St. Cajetan, the founder of the Theatines. His altars had a prominent position in Trinitarian churches in Poland and devotion to him spread rapidly. Later it was transmitted to Spain where it was reflected in art. Trinitarian iconography also included numerous portraits that can be seen in two rich collections: one of San Carlino in Rome and the other in the Museo del Prado in Madrid. The most popular works of art showed Trinitarian intellectuals and thinkers with books or pens, writing, studying or during some other intellectual activity. The best example of this type is the portrait of Hortensio Félix de Paravicino y Arteaga by El Greco in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It is regarded to be one of the best portraits in the history of art. Other images showed builders of Trinitarian churches, redeemers, and pious members of the Order distinguished by their virtues[18].

Thus we can see that Trinitarian art is the art of contrasts. On the one hand it could not create a rich heritage competing with other Orders because of the Trinitarian charism and legislation. On the other hand the Trinitarian art created rich iconography consisting of many outstanding works of art.

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[16] A. Witko, *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu*, op. cit., p. 354–356.

[17] Idem, *Wątki trynitarskie w rzymskim kościele ss. Trinità degli Spagnoli*, [in:] *Restaurare omnia in Christo*, Bielsko-Biała 2004, p. 273–288.

[18] Idem, *Sztuka w służbie Zakonu*, op. cit., p. 370–392.