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**Słowa kluczowe:** sacral painting | iconography of Holy Mother | Jesuits

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## **TRADITIONS OF WORSHIP OF THE HOLY MOTHER**

**A**fter Bishop Albert had assigned Livonia (i.e., territories of Estonia and Latvia) to the guardianship of the Mother of God as the Land of Maria (*Terra Mariana*), countless facts witnessed the aspirations of enhancing her glory. Thus, for instance, her name was given to the first church in Old Riga (close by present-day church of St. John); when it was wrecked during the fire, in 1216 a new building was started, and it as well received the same saint guardian. Many organisations were dedicated to the honour of Holy Virgin, among them The Great Guild was entitled “The Guild of Maria”; her name was given also to the “Guild of Assistance”, “Fraternity of Bakers”, etc. The duties of the members of these associations included popularisation the cult of the Holy Mother. Also the Order of Livonia or *Fratres de Domo Sanctae Mariae Theutonicorum Jerusalemimana per Livoniam*<sup>1</sup> as well as a whole Livonia received the same saint custodian. The Order’s residence in the Castle

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<sup>1</sup> I. e., a brunch of the German Order in Livonia.



Fig. 1. Flag of Master of Order of Livonia.

of Riga was decorated with the statues and painting of the Holy Mother; the seal of the master and the Order's flag was adorned with depiction of her (fig. 1). When entering the Order, young knights gave a ceremonial oath in front of the statue of the Holy Mother, placed in the main hall of the castle, and when leaving for battles, they sang hymns dedicated to the Mother of God like „*Salve Regina*”, „*Ave Maria Stella*” un „*Alma Redemptoris Mater*”.

In the religious life of ancient Livonia the cult of Maria was dominant. During the festivities of Holy Mother there were consecrated churches, chapels and altars. It is known that in Riga among four altars which were dedicated to her in the Dome Cathedral<sup>2</sup>, at least one altar carried her name in almost every church of the city<sup>3</sup>. Witness of the celebration the cult of Maria can be encountered also elsewhere: name of the Mother of God is eternalized in the toponyms: just like the master's residence in Prussia was called Marienburg, in Latvia such name was given to nowadays Alūksne, Viļaka was Marienhausen, Saldus – Frauengurg etc. Local inhabitants made pilgrimages also there and giving thanks to the Mother of Christ for the answered prayers they adorn the miraculous images with precious gifts.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> About Riga as a target of pilgrimages to the Holy Mother see: *Ose I. Dažas liecības par viduslaiku svētceļojumiem un svētceļnieku zimēm Rīgā un citur Livonijā // Senā Rīga. Pētījumi pilsētas arheoloģijā un vēsturē. – Nr. 8. – Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2015. – 62.–91. lpp.*

<sup>3</sup> *Grosmane E. Madonnas atgriešanās // Studija. – 2005. – Nr. 5 (20). – 48. lpp.*

<sup>4</sup> More about the cult of Holy Mother in ancient Livonia see: *Priede A. Dievmātes ikonogrāfiskais tēls Kurzemes (un senās Rīgas) tēlniecībā. – Diplomdarbs Latvijas mākslas akadēmijā. – Rīga, 1990. – Manuscript at Art Academy of Latvia.*

During the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the Catholic Church was on its peak. Splendid churches were congested with painted images, also those carved in stone and wood; exuberant colourful stain glasses replaced usual windows, upon the altars were exposed golden and silver liturgical vessels, candlesticks and precious relics. Those days – as pointed art historian Elita Grosmane in her description of “Madonna on Crescent” – expressive suffering slowly strived to vanish from the world of art. Instead, when coming closer to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was extended longing for harmony, noble beauty and peace also in the rendering of Holy Mother. Yet in the end, the “hope promising image turned to be the witness of contradictions of time and raving madness.”<sup>5</sup> During the days of Reformation pogroms, prayers and veneration were set away, holy images extinguished.

### ERA OF COUNTERREFORMATION

Period after the Council of Trent (1547–1563) is marked by the aspirations of renewing the authority of Catholic Church and promoting the activity of religious life. In this sense notable is the appeal of the Church authorities to popularize the ideas of Catholic world by the aid of images. In this, crucial role played the decisions of the 25<sup>th</sup> session in 1563. During this assembly there was discussed the question about sacral art and the need and possibilities of depicting Catholic saints. As a result Church turned to the Catholics encouraging to create and use such artworks in personal as well as public devotion practice. Most ardently this call answered the Jesuit Order<sup>6</sup> (*Societas Jesu*). Its contribution is significant also in the heritage of material and spiritual culture of Latvia.

The missionaries of *Societas Jesu* have left significant imprints on the heritage of Latvia's art and enriched the region's culture with original features. The followers of this religious movement were active in the territory of Latvia under the auspices of the province of Poland-Lithuania during 1582 to 1820<sup>7</sup>. The Jesuits went to the farthest corners of the country, establishing missions and schools, evangelizing and providing spiritual care to

<sup>5</sup> Grosmane E. Madonnas atgriešanās. – 49. lpp.

<sup>6</sup> Society of Jesus (*Societas Jesu*) or the Jesuit Order was founded by Ignatius Loyola (*Iñigo López Oñaz de Loyola*, ca. 1491–1556) in 1534. In 1540 it was acknowledged by Paul III. Order existed until 1773 (in Russia until 1820), and later – in 1814 was renewed. Depending on their tasks and capacity, Jesuit homes were called missions, residences or colleges.

<sup>7</sup> Jesuits in the territory of Latvia were acting as a part of assistance of Poland, province of Lithuania. (Assistance, province – administrative units of the order.)

the parishes. Compared to the few secular priests, the success of the order in the province was promoted by the ability of its members to be more sensitive and have a deeper grasp of the local peculiarities, as well as by their good Latvian language skills and self-denying ministry. However, in the towns, particularly in the Protestant Riga, the attitude to this Counter-Reformation force was predominantly negative.

When arranging places of devotion (building new or adorning with artworks already existing churches and chapels) Jesuits – among the images of the saints of their order – paid particular attention to the worship of Virgin and Holy Family. Furthermore, reverence and especial consideration of the Mother of Jesus and the whole Church is inscribed in spiritual fundamentals of the order.

The founder of the Jesuit order Ignatius Loyola was born in North Spain in 1491<sup>8</sup>. He was a descendant of a noble and rich family, and the conditions in well-situated surroundings determined the style of his early days, which did not differ anyhow from the lifestyle of other young man of highest society of Spain. Still the year of 1521 marked a sharp turn into his life. Taking part in the military conflict at Pamplona, Ignatius was seriously wounded, and inspired by the physical suffering as well as the spiritual literature he decided to change his life radically. This wish was strengthened by the idea to visit the Holy Land as well as a powerful vision: appearance of Mother of God<sup>9</sup> (fig. 2). Later similar visions were given to him for several times.

Consequently saint Ignatius of Loyola established his role in the memory of cultural heritage by his enthusiastic love of Holy Virgin and aspirations to popularize this position.<sup>10</sup> He admired the images of Maria and before his death encouraged his companions to care for the picture of “Madonna

<sup>8</sup> Exact year of his birth is unknown. There are scholars who prefer the year 1493. (for instance, Перроа А. Святой Игнатий Лойола // Символ. – 1991. – № 26. – С. 136), which is rooted according to the verbal witnesses collected during the days of his canonisation. Yet predominant number of sources mention 1491 (for instance, *Burke M. B. Jesuit Art and Iconography, 1550–1800.* – New Jersey, 1993. – p. 7; Быков А. И. Лойола: Его жизнь и общественная деятельность // Жизнь замечательных людей. – Санктпетербург, 1993. – С. 300; *Ladusāns S. Svētais Ignāts no Lojolas. Societatis Jesu – Jēzus sadraudzība. Jezuītu tapšanas gaitas // Katoļu Dzeive.* – 1991. – Nr. 7. – 11. lpp.).

<sup>9</sup> Svētceļnieka piezīmes. Ignācija Lojolas autobiogrāfija. [Tulkojis un komentējis Jānis Priede]. Rīga: KDI, 2002. – 17. lpp. More about the visions of Holy Mother to Loyola also pp. 32, 88–89.

<sup>10</sup> *Rahner H. Ignatius von Loyola als Mensch und Theologe.* – Freiburg: Herder 1965. – pp. 222, 224, 275, 299, 300.



Fig. 2. Domingo Martínez, *St. Ignatius writing „Spiritual Exercises” near Manresa*, 1740.

of Street” (*Madonna della Strada*) which was later exposed in the church of the Jesus Name (*Chiesa del Santissimo Nome di Gesù all’Argentina; Il Gesù*) in Rome. Peter Canisius (1521–1597), in his turn, stimulated the inclusion of prayer “Ave Maria” in the catechism of 1555.<sup>11</sup> Also other members of the order did not save their efforts to praise Mother of God.<sup>12</sup>

The role of the Holy Mother in the salvation of human’s soul is discussed in countless writings as well as artworks by the Jesuits. About that there speaks also extremely popular „*Via vitae aeternae*” (The Road of Eternal life) by Antoine Sucquet (1574–1627) (first published in 1620, Antwerp) which was illustrated by Boetius Adamsz Bolswert (ca 1580–1633). As it is typical for the spirituality of the Order, also in this essay the main emphasis is put on the personal choice of human being: more than other Catholic groups, the Jesuits stressed the free will and human responsibility about his correction and confluence with God. In this respect Jesuit thinkers differed not only from Protestants (who emphasized the justification through fate alone), but also other Catholic communities (in this matter they had frequent and active disputes with Dominicans<sup>13</sup>). Decision – where to follow the road of vices and passions, which leads the soul to perdition, or the one which leads

<sup>11</sup> *Stravinskias P. M. J.* The Catholic Answer Book of Mary. – Chicago: Our Sunday Visitor, 1999. – p. 131.

<sup>12</sup> Until today in the spiritual life of Society of Jesus the worship of Holy Mother is very important. See for instance, Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Archives, [http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Prayer/Prayer\\_042.htm](http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Prayer/Prayer_042.htm), Seen: 05.04.2015.

<sup>13</sup> *Smith J. C.* Sensuous Worship. Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany. – Princeton, Oxford, 2002 – p. 24.

to God – is in hands of every individual. Still in this process human being is never alone. Impressive illustrations by Bolswert visually supplement the message of Sucquet about the deamons, who by all means allure the traveller to hell; as well as the angels, saints, Mother of God and – above all – Christ who guard the road of virtues. In the engraving Nr. 32 Maria is seen as the Woman of Apocalypse of Book of Revelation, who stands upon a crescent moon, holding in her arms Child Jesus and sceptre<sup>14</sup>. Angels and saints are worshipping her. Maria is the Mother of God, custodian and refuge of Christians. Sucquet encourages the reader to emulate, love and venerate her. In her turn, the Holy Virgin is providing comfort and consolation for soul which turns to her and, if necessary, also straight intervention – just like saving ship from wrecking of casting away devils.<sup>15</sup>

During After-Reformation, particularly among the followers of the Society of Jesus, the devotion of Holy Mother was stimulated by large amount of artworks. Among them there were prints issued in Antwerp which rendered also novelties in theological assumptions.<sup>16</sup> They served as an inspiration for artists, who developed those graphic examples in paintings and sculptures, as well as an aid to the praxis of worship to individuals. Particularly many images of Holy Virgin were published by the Wierix family which closely collaborated with the Jesuit Order<sup>17</sup>.

Thanks to the mediation of the Jesuits, pictures of the Holy Virgin enriched also the cultural space of Latvia. Information from church visitation texts as well as artworks preserved till nowadays testifies vivid interest to render Mother of Christ. Memories about the paintings seen in Western Europe as well as easily transportable prints accompanied the Jesuits in their mission travels (fig. 3–4).

The specific nature of the Society of Jesus – in contrast with other Catholic orders, orientated towards contemplative life – is expressed in its open-

<sup>14</sup> Image is published in: *Smith J. C.* Sensuous Worship. Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany. – p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> For instance iconographic merge of „Woman of Apocalypse” and „*tota pulchra*” shaping new versions of *Immaculata Conceptio*. – See more: *Stratton S. L.* The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> For instance, brothers Johan (*Johannes*), Hieronim (*Hieronymus*) and Anthony (*Antonius*) Wierix made illustrations to the book by Spanish Jesuit Hieronimo Nadal (*Jerónimo Nadal*, 1507–1580) „*Evangelicae historiae imagines, adnotationes et meditationes*”, first published 1593. – *Stratton S. L.* The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art, p. 62.



Fig. 3. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Immaculate Conception with the Crescent*, 1660–1670.

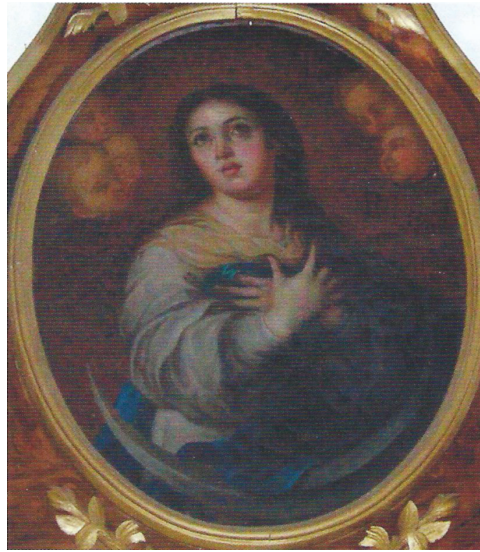


Fig. 4. Unknown painter, *Holy Virgin*, early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

ness to the secular life processes and active co-operation with people outside the religious organisation. This aspect gives rise to the situation whereby the Society's artistic heritage can only be examined in terms of the correlation "commissioner-executor-user." It is important to note that any of these three actors could greatly influence the end result. This fact should be considered in researching this heritage because it is impossible to claim exclusively that the author of any given artwork is a Jesuit. Rather, we may speak of the contribution of the Society to architecture and art in Latvia considering the totality of these relations, that is, discussing the artworks created within the framework of Jesuit activities.

First of all, of course, it was the Order, which thanks to its carefully elaborated artistic programme established the ideological framework of the artefact. In terms of the formal development, the Jesuits, coming from diverse countries, could suggest new and amazingly brave ideas, which often blended the local cultural traditions, but sometimes remained to be unique solutions. Members of the Order had certain role as the initiators of the enterprise, and their presence could be crucial to the realizing new architectural projects and making new artworks.

The heritage of Society of Jesus (with the means of education, experience and taste) could be influenced by both – orders' as well as mundane artists in

cases when they were invited. It is known that since very beginning, although the organisation did not lack their own architects and artists, everywhere Jesuits collaborated with the specialists outside the Order, like Giacomo da Vignola (1507–1573), Giacomo della Porta (ca 1533–1602), Girolamo Reinaldi (1570–1655), Carlo Fontana (1634–1714), Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Giovanni Battista Gaulli; Baciccio (1639–1709), Pietro da Cortona (Barrettini) (1596–1669) and many other. They, in their turn, kept rights for their creative freedom, embodying their ideas for various religious customers.

Usually steps away in background the third, no less important aspect – i.e. the financial supporter of the enterprise, who, doubtlessly, also could influence the conception and realisation of every project. For instance, wealthy Dutch merchant Franciscus van Dolre<sup>18</sup>, (†1695) emphasised in his last will that he wishes to support exactly the Jesuits and not any other Catholic order<sup>19</sup>. As a result the main fund for the building of Skaistkalne (*Shönberg*) church was gain. Also elsewhere in Latvia were seen similar tendencies.

### THE CASE OF PETER PLAGMANN

Although in most cases the financial supporters of the Jesuits and other spiritual orders were enthusiastic “devotees of Catholic case”, sources of history witness also about the input of differently disposed peers. For instance, the Jesuit annals tell about a conflict which took part in 1737: inhabitant of Jelgava (*Mitau*) Peter Plagamann (Latin *Petrus Plagman*) publicly insulted the Mother of God, which caused repercussions among his fellow citizens. Today it is difficult to imagine that – at times almost white-hot – atmosphere which could surge in religious life of those times. Jesuits have described several rather dramatic incidents, when trying to solve various complications of both economic and spiritual nature. Apparently the doctrinal questions

<sup>18</sup> Franciscus van Dolre lived in Jelgava (Mitau). He died in 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 1695 (“*Franciscus van Dolre ex Amersfoort in Hollandia, insignis benefactor Jesuitarum in Curlandia. Habitat Mittavae, mortuus est 19 Dec. 1695*). – Latvijas vēstures avoti jezuitu ordeņa arhivos (further LVA) // *Latvijas vēstures avoti / Sakārt. J. Kleijntjenss*. – Rīga, 1940. – 3. sēj. – 1. d. – 9. lpp.). His brother Christian van Dorle was the missionary of Society of Jesus in Holland, he died 20<sup>th</sup> of August, 1686 (*Franciscus van Dolre fuit mercator Rigae. Frater eius, Christianus van Dolre, fuit missionaries Soc. Jesu in Hollandia († 20 Aug. 1686)*). – LVA. – 94. lpp.

<sup>19</sup> “*Quod si autem praeter expectationem evenire contingeret (quod tamen non spero futurum) tunc habebō ius repetendarum, et alio pro incremento divinae gloriae applicandi intentiones meas, quarum executiones malo ut habeat Societas, quam alius Ordo quia illa a multis annis laudabiliter et ferventer in augendo divino cultu et promovenda animarum salute se gessit.*” – LVA. – 95. lpp.



which touch the subjects of the life of the Mother of God and birth of Jesus, time by time could come to the fore of the attention of community. After almost three centuries it may be hard to comprehend the zeal with which those matters could be discussed. Maybe in our Northern surroundings it was not as radical and violent as with the hot-blooded Spanish Ignatius Loyola in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who described in his autobiography his wish to “treat with some stabs of dagger” a Moor, who dared to doubt the innocence of Holy Virgin after the birth of Jesus<sup>20</sup> (although, in the end, guided by God, refused this idea). Yet it is clear that the passions were quite high also here and at times involved personal offences and physical reprisal.

The founder of the order one day came to the conclusion that by brandishing a dagger one can't get far, especially when solving the matters of religious nature. Therefore, when returning from the Holy Land, he undertook efforts of aiding his knowledge: he studied in universities in Alcalá (1526–1527) and Salamanca (1527) and since 1528 was learning in Paris. By the time in a very high level organised intellectual growth turned to be a specific hallmark of the Society of Jesus<sup>21</sup>.

That allowed expanding educational work<sup>22</sup> as well as hold intensive discussions on religious matters with their neighbours.<sup>23</sup>

It is not easy to reconstruct the escalation of the conflict with the Plagmann mentioned in annals, though it is clear that the result was notable. Not only the Roman Catholics and Lutherans in Jelgava were involved in the incident, soon joined the City Council. As a result, the offender had to

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<sup>20</sup> Svētceļnieka piezīmes. Ignācija Lojolas autobiogrāfija, 21.–22. lpp.

<sup>21</sup> Important is the activity of the Society of Jesus in the field of science. By no means the Jesuits were first to go in for the teaching of local society. But they were the only ones who developed this task in such an extent and to whom the popularizing of education was twisted that closely with the tasks of mission activities. Mostly the order took care for the middle and highest education, but sometimes in their mission territories they could give also an elementary teaching.

<sup>22</sup> Also in Jelgava, when establishing their residence, the Jesuits took care for the founding of a new school (ca 70ies of 17<sup>th</sup> century), thanks to the wide educational program its prestige among the local inhabitants was very high. See more: *Trufanovs V. Jēzus biedrības darbība izglītības veicināšanā Latvijas teritorijā* (16. gs. beigās – 19. gs. sākumā) // Latvijas Arhīvi. – 2000. – Nr. 1. – 24.–36. lpp.

<sup>23</sup> Another case which, possibly, sharpened the discussions on matters of Holy Virgin, was the decision of Klemens XI (1706) to include the celebration of Immaculate Conception in the universal calendar of Church. It may be that this fact promoted expanding of her cult outside the Mediterranean lands, to the Northern Europe (Kurland including), where emerge stormy discussions and need for appropriate iconography.



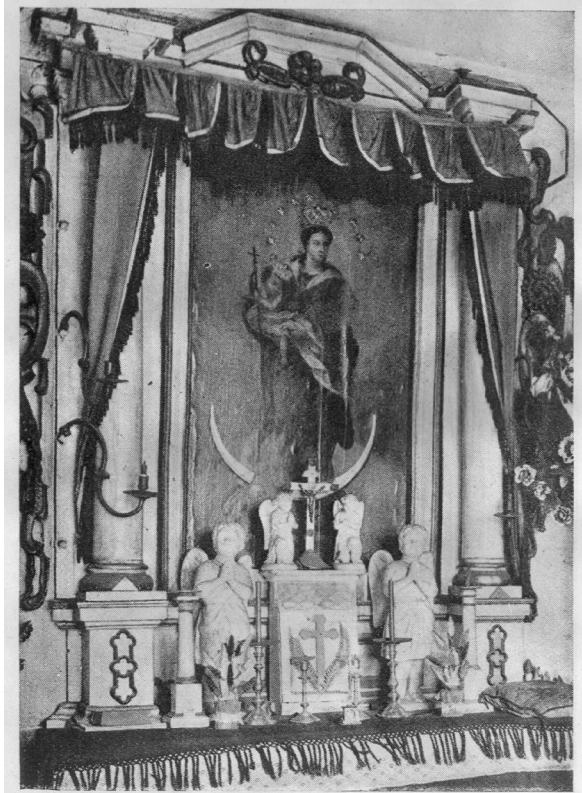
Fig. 5. Jelgava St. George's Church, 1643–1644.

finance two paintings – “Virgin Mary” and a smaller one of “Sts Joachim and Anna”.<sup>24</sup> Later both pictures were placed in respective side altars of Jesuit St. George church (fig. 5).

Ancient documents of church visitation tell that in the upper part of the altar of “Holy Family” there was placed the picture of “Sts Joachim and Anna”, whereas in the right side was an altar with the rendering of “Holy Virgin”. Above her head was a wreath of twelve silver stars, and her foot was resting upon a silver crescent; on her chest there was seen a large silver heart and gilded crucifix. Silver crowns adorned her and Jesus heads<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> „Claudit annum hunc solennis deprecato, et pro mulcta decem albertinorum imperialium exolutio, pro duabus imaginibus, unius B. V. Mariae sine labe conceptae, iustae magnitudinis ad altare collaterale collocatae, alterius minoris S. S. Joachim et Annae supra Familiam Sacram depositae, a Domino Petro Plagman cive Mittaviensi hetherodoxo peracta, qui temulento et blasphemo ore, in quodam congressu honorem Bsmæ Virginis dilacerans, a suismet inter alios sectariis delatus ad officium saeculare (ne rigidiores sumeret poenas) hac mulcta et solenni coram officino consistorali deprecatione ipsis pro illo instantibus dissidentibus litem stitit. Cum quo ad calcem anni, calamus quoque D. O. Maximi et Beatissimæ Virginis aucti honoris facta mentione subsistit.” – Historia residentiae Mittaviensis-Schönbergensis Societas Jesu. – LVA. – 28. lpp.

<sup>25</sup> „Altare minus ad cornu Evangelii cum imagine sancti Iosephi, Infantis Iesu et Beatissimæ, habens itidem omnia requisita. Altare tertium ad cornu Epistolæ cum imagine Beatae Virginis Mariae et omnibus requisitis.” – Akta wizytacji generalnej diecezji Inflanckiej i Kurlandzkiej czyli Piltyńskiej z 1761 roku. / Red. S. Litak. – Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 1998. – S. 190. „Altare collaterale extra presbyterium continet imagine B. V. M. cum infantulo



Pav. 377. Šv. Panelés paveikslas Jelgavos kat. kapu koplyčioje.

Fig. 6. Painting of Holy Virgin in the cemetery chapel in Jelgava.

During the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century both side altars were transformed, gaining Neogothic solution and paintings by Julius Johann Döring (1818–1898): Copy of “Sistine Madonna” (1863) and “Holy Family” (1868)<sup>26</sup>. The old altar paintings changed their location. Information about “The Image of Saint Maria” in 1936 was given by Catholic priest and art historian, Kazimiras Jasėnas, (1867–1950) who claimed the painting can be seen in the graveyard

*Jesu ornatum argenteis stellis 12 circa caput B. V. M. supra caput vero infantuli Jesu et matris Mariae coronis duabus, corde supra pectus magno crucifixo deaurato, luna sub pedibus et pede uno, altero in tabula ad columnam affixo atquo corde parvo et numismate, his omanibus argenteis.. Altare collaterate 2<sup>um</sup> continet imaginem S<sup>i</sup> Josephi Nutritii matris Mariae cum infantulo Jesu ornatem coronis argenteis tribus numismatibus..”* – Latvian State History archive (Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs), 4038. f., 2. apr., 2218. l., 215. lp.

<sup>26</sup> Spārītis O. Katoļu kultūras tradīcijas Kurzemes hercogistes teritorijā // Katoļu Dzeive. 1989. – Nr. 9. – 38. lpp.

chapel of Jelgava. Luckily description of that picture was complemented by a black-and-white reproduction<sup>27</sup> (fig. 6).

## UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY

For a long time it was believed that the artwork perished during the Second World War. Yet, the picture published in Jasena's book<sup>28</sup> drew attention of the enthusiasts of the preservation of heritage of sacral art, who recognized the painting in a remote corner of Latgale. They found out that since 1970 it was kept in a sacristy of Kaunata church "behind the wardrobe, twisted in rags" and "there was a woman in Kaunata who remembered that one night in 1970 this artwork was transferred from Dukstigals to Kaunata by the priest Jānis Zelčš"<sup>29</sup>. When trying to untwist those enigmas of history, very helpful turned to be the research by bishop Jānis Cakuls<sup>30</sup>, which explains that indeed, from 1966 to 1970 in Jelgava there worked priest, who was born on 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 1937 in Tilža, received education in Seminary in Riga (entered 1958) and was ordained to be a priest (1966). In 1970 he was sent to Kaunata and Dukstigals, where he worked as a dean until 1973. After a long service in churches of Peipiņi, Rageļi, Baltinova, Ilūkste, Bebrene, Rubeņi, Mežvidi and Nautrēni, priest died in 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 1982 and is buried in the Mežvidi cemetery.

It seems that the year of 1970 was crucial for "Our Lady of Victory" of Jelgava, which changed its place of location together with the 33 old year priest. In 2013 the painting was discovered, put into a new frame. And now it has returned to its birth place Jelgava.

## INSCRIPTION

The movements of the picture in time and space give us evidences about the complicated fate of Latvia's cultural heritage. But the artwork itself holds information which surprisingly resolves many of mysteries. Painted canvas

<sup>27</sup> Jasēnas K. Visuotinė meno istorija. T. 3., 5. sas. Mintauja, 1936. – pav. 377.

<sup>28</sup> It was re-published in: Ogle K. *Societas Jesu* ieguldījums Latvijas arhitektūras un tēlotājas mākslas mantojumā. – Rīga: Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas Mākslas vēstures institūts, 2008. – 182. lpp. (fig 143); Ogle. K. Jelgavas Svētā Jura baznīca // *Senā Jelgava* / Sast. E. Grosmane. – Rīga: Neputns, 2010. – 195. lpp. (fig 207).

<sup>29</sup> Information from the letter by Mihails Volohvs (Kuldīga, 2015. gada 9. janvāris) and further correspondence.

<sup>30</sup> Cakuls J. Latvijas Romas katoļu priesteri 1918–1995. Uzziņas. – Rīga: Rigas Metropolijas kūrīja, 1996. – 257. lpp.



Fig. 7. Johann Andreas Leitner (1678–1745), *Our Lady of Victory*, left side, 1737, oil on canvas; wood, 155 × 95 cm. (Kaunata), Jelgava. Photo: Andris Vasiļevskis, 2015.



Fig. 8. Johann Andreas Leitner (1678–1745), *Our Lady of Victory*, left side, detail, 1737, oil on canvas; wood, 155 × 95 cm. (Kaunata), Jelgava. Photo: Andris Vasiļevskis, 2015.

is attached to a massive wooden base, on which (on the other side of the painting) in the middle is inscription in Latin (fig. 7, 8), which tells about the unusual circumstances of the creation of this artefact:

*Am1801 ??????????????????????  
 ??????????von G. A. Gruenicek [?]  
 Maler zu Mitau  
 1801. 28. July.*



*DOM adGloriam  
 BV MariaeadHonorem  
 Imago haecAnno 1737 die 5.Dicembris  
 InmulctamdishonorataeVerbisblas-  
 phemisejusdem VIRGINIS sinelabe  
 CONCEPTAE*

*SumpsibusPetriPlagmann\* ????*  
*etCivisMittaviensis*

*comparata*

*a JoannaeAndrea  
 Leitnerpicta.*

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*\* Blasphemator*

## ARTIST

Talking about the sacral painting in Latvia of 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries one must admit that in this sphere – with a few exceptions – artworks are mostly anonymous. It is different with portrait painting, where artefacts themselves and the information about their creators have preserved much more completely. Therefore it is particularly important that one part of the inscription found in Kaunata is bearing words: „*a Joannae Andrea Leitner picta*”.

About activities of such painter in Jelgava one can get information in the publication by Johann Wilhelm Carl Neumann (1849–1919)<sup>31</sup> based on scripts of Julius Döring (1818–1898), as well as one by Paul Kapme (1885–1960)<sup>32</sup>. Summing up scrimpy data, a bit more complete information about the artist has given Ieva Lancmane (1943–2004)<sup>33</sup>, letting us to know that Johann Andreas

<sup>31</sup> Lexikon baltischer Künstler. Riga, 1908. – S. 10 u. 99, [http://personen.digitale-sammlungen.de/baltlex/Blatt\\_bsbo0000354,00109.html?prozent=](http://personen.digitale-sammlungen.de/baltlex/Blatt_bsbo0000354,00109.html?prozent=)), Seen: 12.03.2015.

<sup>32</sup> *Campe P.* Lexicon Liv- und Kurländischer Baumeister, Bauhandwerker und Baugestalter von 1 400-1850: 2 Bde. – Stockholm, 1957. [headword 1283].

<sup>33</sup> *Lancmane I.* Jelgavas mākslinieki un glezniecība 17.–18. gadsimtā // Senā Jelgava / Sast. Elita Grosmane. – Rīga: Neputns, 2010. – 113.–148. lpp.

Leitner (*Leuttner; Lüttner*, 1678–1745) represented a large and distinct family of artists working in Jelgava in 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the other half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Jelgava from Arnsfeld there came a brush master Johann Leitner with a family. His sons Christian and Johann Andreas became painters<sup>34</sup>. In the age of 15 (1693) Johann Andreas is first mentioned in the city descriptions as *Mahlgeresell*. In spite of rough circumstances of war and plague, he marked those days with a happy event – in 1710 he married Juliana Bentziehn, an oldest daughter of the portrait painter and spicery merchant Johann Heinrich Bentziehn, the oldest. Supposedly, also Johan Andreas Leinter, after leaving the Swedish military service, specialized in portrait painting, and it seems that the request of such kind in Jelgava those days was vast enough. In the sense of artistic inspirations, it is important to bear in mind that the ancestors of Leitner's father were from Austria. Maybe this fact determined the belonging of the family to Catholic community in Jelgava, and by that – the trend of his creation in specifically Catholic channel. Johann Andreas Leitner had six children, youngest of which – Christopher Ferdinand (1722–1788) also was an artist<sup>35</sup>. Johann Andreas passed away in Jelgava in the age of 67.

## MESSAGE OF THE PICTURE

Painting which belongs to a brush of a so far little known artist, bears laconic and at the same time significant information. Against the background of golden clouds, the Most Holy Virgin stands in full height upon a crescent moon, holding Jesus on her right (fig. 9). Her long red gown stretches to the ground, leaving only the toes of her bare feet uncovered. Starting at her right shoulder, a mantle of deep blue twists around the Virgin's body, while a pale gold robe with large undulating folds covers the Child. The Virgin's veil is also white, it falls over her shoulders and back, underscoring the deep golden shine of her long, curly hair.

The crescent moon is placed on a symbolic representation of the earth. A sarcastically grinning snake is curled around it, holding in its long fangs an apple – a reminder of the fall from grace. Yet its advantage is but brief: firmly held by his mother, the little Child Jesus uses a long cross spear to press the head of the evil one to the ground, demonstrating his victory.

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<sup>34</sup> Op. cit. 123. lpp.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, it is known that for the needs of Catholic church he made painting „Maria with a Child” and „St Michel”, but in 1755 he was commissioned to paint altar painting of Žagare church. – *Lancmane I. Jelgavas mākslinieki un glezniecība*, 130. lpp.



Fig. 9. Johann Andreas Leitner, *Our Lady of Victory*, 1737.





Fig. 10. Johann Andreas Leitner, *Our Lady of Victory*, detail, 1737.

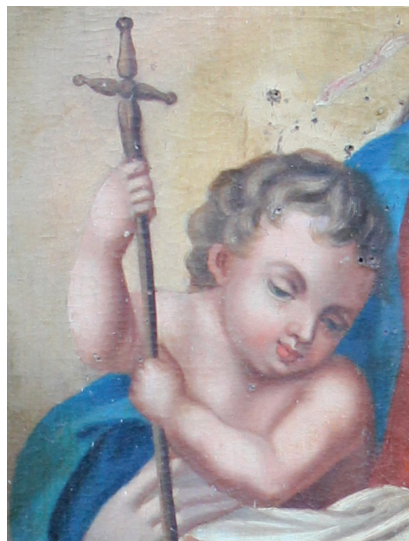


Fig. 11. Johann Andreas Leitner, *Our Lady of Victory*, detail, 1737.

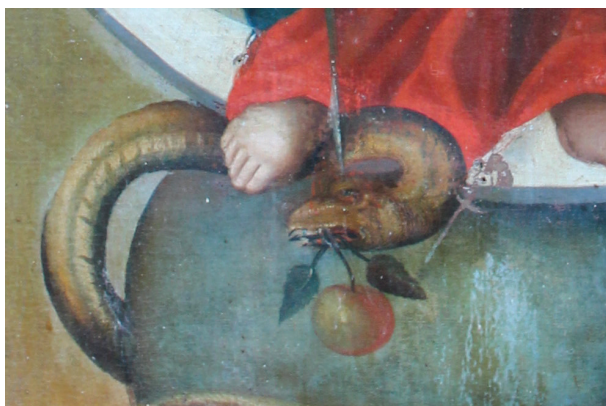


Fig. 12. Johann Andreas Leitner, *Our Lady of Victory*, detail, 1737.

In spite of the dramatic situation, the body and face of the Child project peace. Similar attitude is visible in the character of the Virgin: the ideal face, dark, slightly slanting dark eyes, long nose and straight lips express peaceful contemplation. The baroque *contrapposto* and the swishing garments do not interfere with the general air of serious solemnity.

The mastery of the artist is testified by convincingly composed and built stature of the Mother of God as well as very finely defined details, for example, pearls, hair, even snake's shining teeth and shrivelled skin (fig. 10–12). The back of the painting (upper part) indicates in German that in 1801 there



Fig. 13. Johann Andreas Leitner, *Our Lady of Victory*, left side, detail, 1737.

were made some corrections (fig. 13). And, indeed, differences of the painting are clearly seen (for instance, right hand of the Virgin, left foot, cloak and other parts). It is possible that additional painting was done after removing the silver elements.

## COMPARISONS

When defining the meaning of Jelgava painting in a wider context, it is necessary to pay attention exactly to an iconographic type, trying to find similarities and state the differences in kindred artworks. Analyzing the heritage of sacral art of Latvia and even broader area, it can be seen that from the possible iconographical types of Holy Mother, absolutely dominates so called “Immaculate Conception”. Compared to Jelgava painting, there draw attention similar attributes – as the full size Madonna on the crescent moon and 12 star wreath around her head. Yet an important difference is the non-being of Child Jesus in the rendering of Immaculate. Church dogma about Immaculate Conception is rather recent (08.12.1854) it was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX<sup>36</sup>), still the genesis of rendering and worship of images ded-

<sup>36</sup> The idea of Immaculate Conception (Latin *Immaculata Conceptio*) concerns the conception of Maria herself and claims that already from the very first moment of her existence she was free from the initial sin.



Fig. 14. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Immaculate Conception*, 1660–1665.



Fig. 15. Unknown master, *Madonna*, ca 1530.

icated to that idea are much older.<sup>37</sup> Notable number of such artworks in Catholic part of Europe was created by the most active render of the subject Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682) (fig. 14). Also in sacral space of Latvia most often are met copies or paraphrases exactly of that artist. For example, such paintings can be seen in Catholic churches of Preiļi, Puša, Nautrēni, Vanagi, Valmiera and many other.

With the Child, in its turn, can be seen in the compositions of so called “Madonna Surrounded by Rays”<sup>38</sup> (fig. 15). Iconography of this type is based on the text of the Book of Revelation: „A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.“ (Rev. 12:1). Images of full size Virgin with a crown standing upon a crescent moon with a Child in her arms recalls images of sacral art which luckily are preserved till now. Such, for example, are sculptures “Madonna on a Crescent Moon” (15<sup>th</sup> century), which is stored now

<sup>37</sup> See more: *Stratton S. L.* The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art. As well as: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm>, seen: 13.04.2015.

<sup>38</sup> Madonna Surrounded by Rays, <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/13strahlenden.htm>, seen: 14.04.2015.



Fig. 16. Unknown master, *Madonna on a Crescent Moon*, 15<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig. 17. Unknown master, *Virgin with Child Jesus* (1515) above the northern portal of Riga castle.



Fig. 18. Miguel Mateo Maldonado y Cabrera, *The Virgin of Apocalypse*, ca 1760.



Fig. 19. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Virgin of Apocalypse*, 1623–1624.

at The Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation (fig. 16), and “Virgin with Child Jesus” (1515) above the northern portal of Riga castle (fig. 17).

Also with the Child is rendered “The Woman of Apocalypsis” (fig. 18–19). Also the idea of this type is taken from the Book of Revelation – the further text of the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter, where are described dramatic events with the birth of the Child, confrontation with the Dragon (the old snake), flight and escape.

### “OUR LADY OF VICTORY”

At least since the 7<sup>th</sup> century Virgin Mary was associated with victory. Most of all – it was meant the victory of Christian belief, particularly Catholics, over its enemies<sup>39</sup> (which is important also in the situation of creation Jelgava picture), gradually the concept was widened with such notions as the victo-

<sup>39</sup> An impressive example of the Mother of God as a Victress and her role in defending Catholic world can be seen at a small church of *Santa Maria della Vittoria* in Rome. Since 1675 its ceiling is adorned by the paintings of Gian Domenico Cerrini (1609–1681) which

ry of mercy, virtues over sin, and similar. But closest of all the cult of “Our Lady of Victory” was linked to the glorious battle of Lapento (07.10.1571), to commemoration of which Pope Pius V suggested celebration every year, for people associated this success with the help of Holy Mother. In 1573 Pope Gregor XIII changed the title of “Our Lady of Victory” to the celebration of “St. Rosary”. in 1716 Pope Clemens XI extended the celebration in all Latin rite, marking it to be the first Sunday of October. But Pope John XXIII in 1960 changed the mane of the celebration to „Our Lady of the Rosary”.<sup>40</sup>

Gradually there was elaborated also iconography of “Our Lady of Victory”<sup>41</sup> (Latin *Sancta Maria de Victoria*) which shows a rather complicated artistic program. For one hand there are preserved several elements which were seen at the rendering of “Immaculate Conception”: crescent moon (at times also globe), wreath of 12 stars. But there are also added new features like compulsory white dress for the type of *Immaculata Conceptio* is changed to red (blue color of cloak stays) and Child in the arms of the Mother, who smashes a head of the snake under Virgin’s foot. The literary origins of such subject is found in the text of Old Testament: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

During the times of After-Reformation the type of “Our Lady of Victory” gained popularity in the Catholic lands, among them Austria and Bavaria. In German areal it is called *Maria vom Siege* while in Italian culture it is known by the name *Figlia del tuo Figlio* (the daughter of your Son) which accentuates the idea of the “Immaculate Conception” and Christ as the only Savior – that’s why exactly He is the one who kills the snake.<sup>42</sup>

Yet it is true that, despite an eminent – both visual and ideological – differences in art history texts as well as archive sources (such as church visitation protocols of Jelgava church) for defining the images of “Our Lady of Victory” there often are mistakenly used such notions as „Immaculate Conception”, „Immaculate Virgin Maria”, „Virgin of Immaculate Conception” and like that – thus creating various deceptive and misleading notions.

depict „Victoory of Vigin over heresis”, <http://www.christianiconography.info/ourLadyVictory.html>, seen: 03.04.2015.

<sup>40</sup> Veneration of Mary in Roman Catholicism. Lasīts 2015. gada 6. aprīlī interneta vietnē: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veneration\\_of\\_Mary\\_in\\_Roman\\_Catholicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veneration_of_Mary_in_Roman_Catholicism)

<sup>41</sup> German – *Maria vom Siege* (S. Maria de Victoria), <http://ikonografie.antonprock.at/maria-vom-siege.htm>, seen: 16.03.2015.

<sup>42</sup> Immacolata “figlia del tuo Figlio”, <http://www.cantualeantonianum.com>, seen: 20.04.2015.

## CARLO MARATTA

A significant role in popularizing the images of “Our Lady of Victory” in Italy played Italian painter Carlo Maratta (also *Maratti*, 1625–1713). Mostly he worked in Rome and was inspired by such artists like Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) and Andrea Sacchi (1599–1661). During 60ies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century his workshop was considered to be the most prominent in Rome, and after the death of architect Francesco Borromini (1599–1667) Maratta was proclaimed to be the leading artist of the city. In 1664 he became the leader of the Academy of St. Lucas (*Accademia di San Luca*). The wealthiest people of Europe, also the members of the highest rank clergy belonged to his clients. Among them was Pope Clemens X, who commissioned Maratta paintings for his *Palazzo Altieri* 70ies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), Cardinal Antonio Barberini, Pope Clemens IX – whose portraits painted Maratta.

Artist actively collaborated with the members of Society of Jesus and willingly painted saints of the Order. About this interest there tell such artworks as „Appearing of Virgin to Philip Neri” (ca 1675) (now at *Palazzo Pitti* in Florence), “Virgin with Carlo Borromeo, Ignatius Loyola and Angels” (ca 1685) (fig. 20) in *Santa Maria in Valicella; Chiesa Nuova* and “The Death of Francis Xavier” (1674–1679) at *Il Gesù*.

In the creative heritage of Carlo Maratta there are multiple depictions of Holy Mother (for that reason the contemporaries even allocated him a nickname *Carluccio delle Madonne*). Among them there are several works of the type of „Our Lady of Victory”, which, as mentioned before, can also sometimes be mistakenly called *Immacolata Conceptio*. For instance, along 1660 was painted composition which today is stored at the private collection in Hamburg (fig. 21). In 1663, in its turn, was created similar altarpiece called *Immacolata. Figlia del tuo Figlio* (fig. 22) at the chapel of Rodrigo Lopez de Sylva in *S. Isidoro*, Rome.

An interesting variation of „Our Lady of Victory” shows a painting by Maratta of 1671 in *S. Agostino* in Sienna. The scene is called “Virgin in Glory with St. Francis of Sales and St Thoma of Villanova” (fig. 23). In that the Virgin wears white dress and white wrap, whereas the Child conquers the snake standing on his own foot. This example testifies that unlike the strictly followed iconographical type of “Immaculate Conception”, the type of “Our Lady of Victory” could be interpreted with much more flexibility.

Carlo Maratta had many pupils and followers. Therefore it is no wonder that, particularly by means of graphic imprints (fig. 24–28) his ideas echoed



Fig. 20. Carlo Maratta, *Virgin with Carlo Borromeo, Ignatius Loyola and Angels*, ca 1685.





Fig. 21. Carlo Maratta, *Immacolata Conception*, ca 1660.



Fig. 22. Carlo Maratta, *Immacolata. Figlia del tuo Figlio*, 1663.



Fig. 23. Carlo Maratta, *Virgin in Glory with St. Francis of Sales and St Thoma of Villanova*, 1671.



Fig. 24. Unknown master, *Immaculate Conception*.



Fig. 25. Unknown master, *Immaculate Conception*.



Fig. 26. Unknown painter, *Immaculate Conception*, 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig. 27. Saverio Calò, *Immaculate Conception*, 1836.



Fig. 28. Unknown master, *Immaculate Conception*.



Fig. 29. Guilielmus de Gof, *A sconce with a motive of Maria vom Siege*, 1740–1742.

far away to the North-East, especially in the regions of Austria and Bavaria. For instance, in the *Kunstgewerbemuseum* in Berlin there can be seen a sconce by Guilielmus de Gof (who worked near Munich) with the motif of “Our Lady of Victory” (1740–1742), also countless paintings and graphic works testify about the interest of the subject matter.

Yet the Jelgava example is the only known instance of this type in Latvia.

### “OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY”

As mentioned before, the veneration of “Our Lady of Victory” is tightly twisted with the worship of “Our Lady of the Rosary”. In the sacral art of Latvia those images (just like *Mater Dolorosa*) were rather widespread.<sup>43</sup> Still in this case, the passions of battle were replaced by much more peaceful solutions: most often Maria with the Child is accompanied by some saints. Such, for example, is an image in the side altar of Aglona church (first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) (fig. 30). The central group of images shows traditional solution of Maria giving rosaries to St. Dominic and St. Kathrin of Sienna.

<sup>43</sup> Kaminska R. Dievmātes tēls Latgales glezniecībā // *Latvju Māksla*. – 1993. – Nr. 19. – 1949. lpp.



Fig. 30. Unknown master, *Our Virgin of the Rosary*, early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig. 30. Unknown painter, *Virgin with st. John and st. Francis*, turn of 18–19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

These two types – “Our Lady of the Rosary” and “Our Lady of Victory” are closely linked by the ideological creation of the concept. Yet, visually, in the heritage of Latvian sacral art the closest example is found in Pilcene – it is the painting of left side altar “Virgin with st. John and st. Francis” (turn of 18–19 centuries) (fig. 31). Supposedly the author was inspired by a graphic example, in reverse over-phrasing the work by Italian painter Andrea del Sarto (1486–1531) “Madonna with Harpies” (1517, Florence, *Uffizi*). Some details are varied (harpies lost, the face of Maria has got finer traits), yet the main composition with the complex gestures of figures and overall layout of fields is preserved.<sup>44</sup>

Despite different ideas and the number of persons, the rendering of Pilcene both – in its overall mood and composition – is the closest match to “Our Lady of Victory” of Jelgava.

<sup>44</sup> Op. cit., 1948. lpp.

## CONCLUSION

Similarities and even more – differences from other artworks stress the unique character of “Our Lady of Victory” of Jelgava and accentuate its place in the heritage of sacral art of Latvia.

Despite the corrections brought to the structure of the painting, this artwork possesses values which are essentially important gain for our cultural surroundings. First of all it is significant as the only so far known example of “Our Lady of Victory” in our region. Not least exciting are revelations about the authorship of the composition. Among local artworks of 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries such information is very rare, thus can serve as an important source of information for the researchers of the period.

Wishing to find out the preconditions and context of creation of such artwork, there reveals a vast panorama of the leading ideas of the time, interest and activities in order to defend them. The painting holds stories about almost fanatic passions, which kept in step with the searching of peace and solace, hope and sense, and efforts of embodying all of those experiences in visual images.

It might well be that the true mission of the newly discovered artefact is covered in its potential: for almost three centuries the rendering captured in canvas and colours serves us as a invitation “written in present continuous tense” to encounter. Long ago for the founder of Society of Jesus Ignatius Loyola visions of Holy Mother suggested to seriously reevaluate and change radically his life: “Experienced gave him strength and for ever gave him such a certainty of faith that he often thought: even if there were no Scriptures, I would be glad to die for the faith, drawing vigor from the seen alone”<sup>45</sup>. It is possible that the image painted by Johann Andreas Leitner embodies chance to gain consolation, encouragement and – after all – certainty of victory based on faith.

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<sup>45</sup> Svētceļnieka piezīmes. Ignācija Lojolas autobiogrāfija, 32. lpp.

## Summary

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### Our Lady of Victory of Jelgava

This painting is invaluable in the general picture of sacral art in Latvia. In 1936 the picture is described by a priest and art historian Kazimirs Jasens. He indicates that the painting is located in the chapel at Jelgava Roman Catholic graveyard. The artefact was considered to be destroyed during WW II, but luckily it was found in 2013 far away from its original place, in Kaunata, SE Latvia.

The painting is remarkable from more than one reason. First, the documented history of its origins. The Jesuit chronicles at Jelgava have records of an incident in 1737: a citizen Peter Plagmann had insulted the Mother of God in public, which had caused repercussions among his fellow citizens. Not only the Roman Catholics and Lutherans in Jelgava were involved in the incident, the City Council soon joined the argument. As a result, the offender received an unusual punishment, and namely, to finance two paintings – ‘Virgin Mary’ and a smaller one of ‘Sts Joachim and Anna’. Later both pictures were placed in respective side altars of St. George church. They stay there till the second half of C19, when the altars are rebuilt in Neogothic form, and altar paintings by Julius Döring: a copy of the Sistine Madonna (1863) and ‘The Holy Family’ (1868).

In the records of episcopal visitations we find descriptions of the painting, which augment the information in the book by Kazimirs Jasena: the head of the Holy Virgin is decorated by 12 silver stars, her foot rests on a silver crescent moon; above the Virgin’s breast a large silver heart is visible together with a golden crucifix; both the Most Holy Virgin and Child Jesus have silver crowns.

The older texts refer to the painting as ‘Virgin of Immaculate Conception’. This is not quite correct as in the Jelgava painting Our Lady is pictured together with the Child, which is not usual in the iconography of the Immaculate Conception.

Against the background of golden clouds, the Most Holy Virgin stands in full height upon a crescent moon, holding Jesus on her right. Her long red gown stretches to the ground, leaving only the toes of her bare feet uncovered. Starting at her right shoulder, a mantle of deep blue twists around the Virgin’s body, while a pale gold robe with large undulating folds covers the Child. The Virgin’s veil is also white, it falls over her shoulders and back, underscoring the deep golden shine of her long, curly hair.

The crescent moon is placed on a symbolic representation of the earth. A sarcastically grinning snake is curled around it, holding in its long fangs an apple – a reminder of the fall from grace. Yet its advantage is but brief: firmly held by his mother, the little Child Jesus uses a long cross spear to press the head of the evil one to the ground, demonstrating his victory.

In spite of the dramatic situation, the body and face of the Child project peace. Similar attitude is visible in the character of the Virgin: the ideal face, dark, slightly slanting dark eyes, long nose and straight lips express peaceful contemplation. The baroque contrapposto and the swishing garments do not interfere with the general air of serious solemnity.

The composition of the painting indicates that it should be attributed to the iconographic type of Our Lady of Victory. This is the only known instance of this type in Latvia.

The back of the painting bears an important testimony. Information of both the author and the origin of the painting has been inscribed on the wooden boards. "*A Joannae Andrea Leitner picta*". It is known that Johann Andreas Leitner (*Leutner, Leuttner, Lüttner*, 1678–1745) represented a large and distinct family of artists, working in Jelgava in C17–C18). The painter's mastery can be seen both in the convincing figure of the Mother of God and the filigree of the details (pearls, hair, the shiny teeth and relief skin of the snake).

On the left side of the painting there are inscriptions about the re-paintings in 1801; the differences of hand are markable (e.g. fragments of the right arm of the Virgin, her left foot, clothes etc.). It cannot be excluded that some repairs have been conducted after removing the silver elements. Tortures of time aside, the *Our lady of Victory* in Jelgava holds value both artistically and ideologically, which significantly enriches the culture of Latvia.