

JESUS OF ANTAKALNIS AND OTHER IMAGES OF THE MIRACULOUS JESUS OF NAZARETH IN LITHUANIA

Summary

The book explores the image of Christ titled *Jesus of Nazareth* that has been popular in the Catholic art of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania since early 18th century. It was based on the miraculous dressable statue carrying this name from the church of Barefoot Trinitarians (Order of St. Trinity, Redeemers of Captives) in Madrid. In 1682, the Spanish Trinitarians redeemed the statue from Muslims in Meknes City and brought it to the Spanish capital city where, after it had promptly become famous for its miracles, they especially worshipped and popularised it, e.g. had its copies made for their churches and established fraternities of Jesus of Nazareth; also, they published prayer books related to this image and printed holy cards and other devotional items. The likenesses of Jesus of Nazareth spread among the Catholic shrines of Spain and other countries, first of all in regions where this Order had its monasteries.

The *Jesus of Nazareth* of the Madridian Trinitarians is an example of Baroque dressable procession sculpture/marionette of specific structure and function that has been and still is popular in Spain. It is a multi-material statue with non-sculptural elements that provide the illusion of life and with structure enabling the mobility of its arms and hands. The replicas of this artwork constitute a separate image group (type) of Jesus of Nazareth that resembles a popular Catholic iconographic type *Ecce Homo* but have their own distinctive iconographic features. This group unites both consistent copies closely following the prototype and statues only imitating its appearance through sculptural elements, as well as paintings and engravings. Their distribution and worship is related to the cult surrounding the original likeness as is typical for all replicas of miraculous images.

In 1686–1864, the Order of Barefoot Trinitarians was also active in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (PLC): first in the Kingdom of Poland and, since 1693, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). Both countries together constituted one St Joachim's Province. The artistic heritage of this Order, although quite deteriorated, found in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland, the countries that "inherited" the lands of the PLC, consists of the items of sacred architecture and fine arts as well as various publications by Trinitarian authors. This Order worshipped the Holy Trinity, paid their respects to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints who originated from the Order and were selected as its Patrons, and also highly focused on the cult of Jesus Christ and His representation in art. It was the spread of images of the miraculous Jesus of Nazareth in the Trinitarian and other churches as well as related veneration traditions that was the most significant contribution of the Trinitarians to the Catholic culture and art of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The author uses some data from the monasteries of the Polish Kingdom in the discussion on the Trinitarian churches and, in particular, on their miraculous dressable Jesus' sculptures and veneration forms; however, the book is dedicated to the spread of the Trinitarian image of Jesus of Nazareth in the Catholic churches (or their surroundings) of the GDL.

The monograph covers a very long period from 1700 to 2015 that saw many changes and for this reason “Lithuania” in its title refers to the Lithuanian State in general encompassing the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (and its lands incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1772–1795), the Republic of Lithuania that existed in 1918–1940 (as well as the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania that existed in its territory afterwards) and the present-day Republic of Lithuania restored in 1990.

The distribution process of the image in question in the era of the GDL was investigated within the GDL borders before 1772 (the first partition of the Commonwealth). The author focused on the same area when studying later periods. Also, in the North, the lands of the Livonian Voivodeship (jointly controlled by the GDL and Poland) and the Duchy of Courland (the vassal state of the PLC) were added to the territory of the GDL. In addition to political relations, these areas were also linked to Lithuania by personal and administrative ecclesiastical ties (some of the Livonian bishops originated from the GDL and from late 18th century to early 20th century the territory of Courland and Semigallia belonged to the Dioceses of Vilnius and Samogitia). Similar ties encouraged the author to step over the south-eastern boundaries of the former GDL adding the north-eastern area of the modern Poland, parts of which belonged to Vilnius Diocese for shorter or longer periods during the 18th to 20th century.

To sum up, the area of research (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and afore-mentioned adjacent lands) covers the modern states of Lithuania and Belarus as well as some adjacent territories in Southern and Eastern Latvia (Courland, Semigallia and Latgale), Eastern Poland (part of Podlaskie and Lublin Voivodeships) and Russia (a small portion of Smolensk Oblast).

Lithuanian and Polish Trinitarians always placed consistent copies in their altars, i.e. dressable statues/marionettes of Jesus of Nazareth decorated with wigs and other accessories, that were also distinguished by the fact that the main parts of sculptures (heads and hands) were usually brought from Rome where they were blessed by the then pope who also assigned relics to be put into them.

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Trinitarians were active in thirty three locations, several of them only hosting small residences or missions and some of them very short-lived. The images in question blessed by popes were brought to at least seventeen (and possibly to two more) churches of St Joachim’s Province and there were five more locations where such statues were certainly or possibly relocated from the closed churches of the Order. So they stood in twenty four churches – nearly all the main churches of the Province.

In the GDL, these statues adorned the high altars of the Trinitarians in Antakalnis, Orsha, Brest, Maladzyechna, Vitebsk, Krivichi and Babinavichy; only the monks of Jonava residence that was very short-lived did not have it and no reliable data has yet been found on Jesus of Nazareth in Trinapolis Church.

The first in the GDL and second in the Province, the statue of Jesus of Nazareth acquired by Vilnius Antakalnis’ Trinitarians through an exceptional procedure was blessed by Pope Innocent XII together with the whole Lithuania in 1700. As a result, this likeness of Christ that came to be called *Jesus of Antakalnis* was thought of as the Heavenly Patron of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Becoming famous for its miracles while still at a chapel, in 1716 the sculpture was relocated to

Antakalnis Trinitarian Church becoming the first statue of Jesus of Nazareth in the Province placed in the high altar and making its church a pilgrimage centre dedicated to the veneration of Christ that maintained its significance until its closure in 1864.

The architecture, décor and altar images of Antakalnis Church formed a Christocentric iconographic programme. Its main ideas – the Apostolic Church created by Jesus Christ and Redemption through Passion and Crucifixion – were revealed in the initial décor of the shrine and in its links to the structure of the building. Later, the programme was expanded with additional themes of Jesus as the God who has accepted human nature through incarnation on Earth, His Mother who took part in the Redemption and the saints who were worshipped by the Order.

With time, *Jesus of Antakalnis* from Antakalnis Trinitarian Church became a venerated prototype itself and its replicas constitute a separate group of Christ's likenesses originating from this image although they still belong to the wider Trinitarian iconographic type of *Jesus of Nazareth* that is more popular in the Catholic world. The sculptures of Jesus of Nazareth in Antakalnis and other Trinitarian churches of the historic Lithuania were famous for both their illusion of life not typical for this region and for worship traditions related to them. To foster them, the Trinitarians wrote and published dedicated prayer books. Together with the miraculous image, they were distributed throughout the GDL and even to some neighbouring areas.

The developing specific worship tradition was mainly influenced by community worship forms (which were, undoubtedly, encouraged and supplemented by personal prayer practices). These religious practices linked to the liturgical calendar contemplated and venerated the Mission of Jesus Christ on Earth and the aspects of His Omnipotence, they emphasised the price of Redemption achieved through Passion, highlighted the aspects of Honour, Glory and Grace, represented Jesus as one of the Blessed Trinity's Persons, the Judge of the Living and the Dead, the Heavenly Lord and Guardian of the GDL and its lands. Other traditions linking the worship of Jesus to the worship of the Blessed Trinity, Our Lady of Sorrows, holy relics and the saint guardians of the GDL were also encouraged. The Trinitarians achieved this through indulgences and other religious practices as well as through special ceremonies that were particularly popular in Baroque culture and were organised by the Order to celebrate various occasions, many of them related to the miraculous image of Jesus of Nazareth.

For the veneration of the miraculous statues in the Trinitarian churches, the Order established fraternities of Jesus of Nazareth although this particular likeness of Christ was also fostered by the fraternities of the Blessed Trinity that sometimes were even established outside the Trinitarian Order. In the historic Lithuania, the fraternities of Jesus of Nazareth were only established in the churches of Maladzychna and Vitebsk and, similarly, only a handful of them existed in the Polish part of St Joachim's Province. The fraternities of the Blessed Trinity were more popular and, therefore, more important. A fraternity holding this title patronised the high altar with the miraculous image in Antakalnis thus closely linking both cults and images. The data about the fraternities of the Blessed Trinity and the image of Jesus of Nazareth promoted by them shows that these links also existed in the parish churches of various dioceses.

Since the mid-18th century, the cult for Jesus of Nazareth became increasingly associated with the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus both in Antakalnis (as well as several other churches of the Province) and in other Catholic churches of the GDL. They were both linked by the veneration of the Passion and the idea of Lord's Grace. Quite often, the same church used to have a venerated image of Jesus of Nazareth and an active fraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. With time, both images became increasingly inter-linked and by the 1st half of the 20th century the numbers of statues and paintings of the Sacred Heart highly increased and outrivalled the images of Jesus of Nazareth in many churches.

The group of the replicas of Jesus of Nazareth (among them, in many cases, of Jesus of Antakalnis) characterised by their diversity in purpose and materials has spread widely in the Catholic churches of the GDL since early 18th century and their densest distribution area coincides with the territory that was or still is dominated by Roman Catholics including almost entire modern Lithuania and Western Belarus as well as some of the Northern and Southern regions of Belarus. In addition, the image in question has also spread among the churches of Ukrainian Greek Catholics (Uniates) in the lands which are now part of modern-day Belarus and Podlasie.

The author collected the statistical data on these likenesses created in 1700–2015 during her research, discussed them in this book and presented them in the annexes (tables). The data are really impressive. In addition to eight Trinitarian churches of the GDL, evidence of over five hundred artworks of this type have been found in more than three hundred and sixty other churches. This means that the book includes items from 246 shrines from territories now belonging to modern Lithuania as well as 104 Belarusian, 12 Polish, 9 Latvian and 1 Russian churches. The absolute majority of them were/are Roman Catholic parish and filial churches.

The author has found evidence that Jesus of Nazareth's replicas used to be also made for cemetery chapels and other special purpose buildings (e.g. mortuary chapels, or chapels serving as the Stations of the Way of the Cross). These images were not restricted to the Trinitarian Order and were found in the churches of Dominicans, Franciscans, Bernardines, Canons Regular, and Uniates Basilians as well as some other orders; however, the vast majority of the images of Jesus of Nazareth (Jesus of Antakalnis) were found in the parish churches. Even though the research on the artistic heritage of Uniate churches was of smaller scope and less consistent than that of Roman Catholic shrines, the author has identified 35 Ukrainian Greek Catholic churches with the image in question. This denomination was officially abolished in 1839, but the sculptures and paintings of the miraculous Trinitarian image of Jesus of Nazareth were further created for other Catholic churches and chapels.

The fact that the image of Jesus of Nazareth (Jesus of Antakalnis) has been a subject of a particular worship is confirmed by its place in churches. In the majority of churches, these artworks were made for altars. In many cases the sculpture or painting of Jesus of Nazareth was placed in the most important place of the sanctuary, i.e. the first tier of the high altar (or the only altar), despite the fact that these churches or chapels had various other titles. Even in side altars, it was often located in the first tier as well. The replicas of this miraculous image often decorated the

processional altars and processional banners of both Blessed Trinity and other fraternities. These artworks could or still can be found elsewhere in the interiors of churches and monasteries as well as in small architecture structures in churchyards and, less often, in church façades. Many churches had or still have two or more artworks of this title intended for different purposes.

The quantity alone means that the images of Jesus of Nazareth represent a significant portion of the Christ's likenesses in the GDL. The spread of these images in territories now belonging to modern Lithuania was the most intense and the most even and this area has the largest number of surviving examples. On the other hand, their abundance was only one aspect among many others that made them important to the development of the general image of Jesus Christ both in historical Lithuanian lands and modern Lithuanian Republic.

If we take formal aspects into account, it is worth noting that Jesus of Nazareth (with its sculptures dominating over paintings) significantly enlarged the already vast group of Christ's sculptures in the Catholic churches. The dressable sculptures of Jesus of Nazareth were important representatives of the general group of dressable sculptures both enlarging it in number and supplementing it with new artistic expressions and religious functions. Many Trinitarian images were distinguished among other dressable statues by much better illusion of life and a wide arsenal of tools (such as wigs, other details or lighting effects used in the environment of such statue) used to achieve it. There can be no doubt that these images encouraged the tradition of dressing other Catholic statues of suffering Christ and some other sculptures.

The Trinitarian statues of Jesus of Nazareth that were blessed by popes, as well as several of their copies, constitute a specific group of very rare 18th century artistic and religious items: statues/reliquaries. These exceptional and rare items still require deeper religious culture studies and comparison to other veneration forms of holy relics.

The image of Jesus of Nazareth supplemented the Christ's picture in the GDL with a new iconography and composition highlighting the doloristic and glorification aspects of Christ's worship. Through this image popularised by the Trinitarians and related worship practices, certain traditions of spiritual life and Christian culture typical both for the Trinitarians and Spain in general have reached the GDL. However, here, contrary to the Iberian Peninsula countries, the dressable statues of Jesus of Nazareth did not become the "participants" of the Holy Week processions.

From early 18th century to early 20th century, no other image of Jesus of Nazareth from the Trinitarian or other churches of the historical Lithuania was as significant as Jesus of Antakalnis. No analogues to this phenomenon are known among other local 18th century images of Jesus or the Blessed Virgin Mary. In terms of pious veneration and replication, the images of Jesus of Antakalnis could be compared to the images of Our Lady of the Snows (important in all Catholic world) and Our Lady of Częstochowa (the most significant Marian icon in Poland and Lithuania at that time) that began spreading in the GDL at the turn of the 17th century. It was influenced by liturgical and private piety forms, the rise of Antakalnis Trinitarian Church as a pilgrimage centre, the status of its Jesus of Nazareth (Jesus of Antakalnis) as the Heavenly Patron of the state actively promoted by the monks, prayer books published by the Order, devotional images, etc.

Therefore, the number of devotional images of Jesus of Antakalnis exceeded those of other Trinitarian sculptures of Jesus of Nazareth in Lithuania and Poland. These cards and larger prints were very important to the spreading process of both the worship and the image itself as well as to its depiction. Their influence on the overall view of the statues and paintings in question, on their iconographic elements and details and, often, on the creation of iconographic context around them was probably greater than that of the real Antakalnis statue and its actual surroundings.

However, since the 2nd half of the 19th century, the significance of Jesus of Antakalnis gradually decreased. In Vilnius, its religious significance was matched (and, later, even surpassed) by the painting and the general image of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Gate of Dawn. Furthermore, since the mid-19th century, another Christ's image originating from Vilnius – the statue of Jesus of Šnipiškės (Jesus Carrying the Cross) – was spreading in the form of replicas (usually placed in the monuments of small architecture).

These two images of the Heavenly Patrons became the competitors of Jesus of Antakalnis after it had lost its church and the protection of the Trinitarians in 1864. Later, in the 20th century, the main aspects of Christ's worship were changing in the whole Church including Lithuania and this resulted in the spread of different images of Jesus. In addition to this, Soviet restrictions interrupted the tradition of making the likenesses of Jesus of Nazareth for churches. Since late 20th century, this tradition has been partially reborn, although in somewhat modified forms: now these images of Christ mostly adorn outdoor structures (e.g. monuments dedicated to anniversaries or other occasions or tombstones).

The images of Jesus of Nazareth that this book focuses on had a highly significant influence on the iconography of folk art dedicated to Jesus Christ, sculptures in particular, and spread not only in churches and their ensembles but also in the structures of small architecture built in private or public spaces as well as in private homes. The traces of their worship can be found in religious folk practices. However, this topic is among those still waiting to be comprehensively studied.

Illustrations are a significant part of this monograph. They can provide much more information about the artworks than the text itself. Illustrations were divided into twelve groups of different size based on themes. Group I is dedicated to the Madridian prototype of Jesus of Nazareth, illustrations of Groups II to IV present the most important image of this iconography in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, i.e. Jesus of Antakalnis and its churches in Vilnius, and Group V consists of several images of Jesus of Nazareth and their churches from the former St Joachim's Province. Group VI includes the engravings of the statues of Jesus of Nazareth and other devotional prints. Groups VII to XII present various images of Jesus of Nazareth found outside the Trinitarian Order in the Roman and Ukrainian Greek Catholic churches of the GDL and its historical lands: Group VII: dressable (mostly multi-material) sculptures; Group VIII: sculptures of traditional structure; Group IX: paintings; Group X: artworks of processional altars; Group XI: images of processional banners; Group XII: statues and reliefs of Jesus of Nazareth found in the exteriors and surroundings of churches. In groups V to XII, the arrangement of illustrations was loosely based on chronology but the author did not follow it very strictly choosing instead to demonstrate their visual, iconographic or other links.