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THE BAROQUE AS A VEHICLE FOR CROSS-CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION IN ORTHODOX BANAT: A CASE STUDY OF FIVE COPIES OF STEFANOVIĆ ZAHARIJA ORFELIN'S PAPER ICONS IN STAN ZUGRAVU'S HERMENEIA

This study was initiated alongside an investigation of a heritage artifact illustrating the confluences of Baroque within a space predominantly shaped by Catholicism in the eighteenth century. However, Baroque is not merely a style associated with the Counter-Reformation and the post-Tridentine world; it also manifested within the Orthodox sphere. Accordingly, this research seeks to explore the artistic universe shaped by Zaharija Orfelin's creations, aiming to identify the stylistic elements adopted by Romanian painters from this master, recognized as a foundational figure of Serbian Baroque. Art historical investigation begins with questions arising from the works themselves, which are situated within their broader art historical context. This process involves consulting major resources, guiding the discussion of how Baroque art penetrated the Banat region during the eighteenth-century through multiple channels. Firstly, Baroque influences were introduced by Catholic orders such as the Jesuits and Franciscans, aligned with the Habsburg administrative organization. Secondly, the style was shaped by Serbian Baroque representatives, who had received significant impetus since the seventeenth century, a period when Orthodox doctrine underwent revision and revitalization in response to the Catholicism promoted by the Counter-Reformation. In the new political landscape, of the eighteenth century, as the Banat and Voivodina were incorporated into the Habsburg Empire, artistic changes prioritized visual aspects over doctrinal ones. Western influences were adopted as a strategic approach by the Orthodox Church to adapt to evolving political conditions while safeguarding its traditional values. This period witnessed the Westernization of artistic language, marked by a reorganization of traditional themes and their enrichment with the rational ideas of the Enlightenment. In this context, art emerged as a tool for education, characterized by a distinctly didactic and moralizing purpose. In the Age of Enlightenment, the eighteenth century stands out for a series of innovations reflecting a shift in collective consciousness, marked by a new way of thinking and feeling, characterized by a modern attitude aligned with Central European cultural and intellectual trends. The Orthodox world is no exception, playing its part in shaping the concept of modernity through its contributions. The hermeneutic understanding of sacred imagery in the Banat involves interpreting religious images as dynamic mediators of meaning, deeply embedded in the cultural, social, and spiritual life of the community. This approach recognizes that sacred images

were not merely static objects of veneration but active participants in the spiritual and societal discourse of the time.

Key words: cross-cultural interaction, sacred imagery, paper icons, rhetorical devices, Zaharija Orfelin, Stan Zugravul

In a previous study on Serbian Baroque artists, we reexamined the works of Jacob Orfelin, emphasizing his unique contributions and creative presence in the Banat region (Vlăsceanu, 2023). Instead, the present contribution focuses on the paper icons attributed to Zaharija Orfelin's style and school, which were replicated by Stan Zugravul from Rășinari (Sibiu County) and integrated into what is traditionally referred to as a hermeneia[3]. This study analyzes the six copies affixed inside the restored sketchbook, attributed to Stan based on the placement of his signature on one of the drawings depicting the enthroned Virgin Mary Hodigitria (Pârvulescu, 2008: 4). The restored sketchbook reveals notable differences in the styles of the drawings it contains: some models are sketched in pen, others are executed in reddish-brown pencil, and there are templates—copies after engravings presumed to reflect the style of Zaharija Orfelin or his school. Additionally, the sketchbook includes pages with engravings that were pasted in later. These engravings, along with the icon model copies on paper, likely created by Orfelin, form the primary focus of this conceptual investigation. The local Baroque styles evolved through a synthesis of artistic expressions, significantly influenced by internationalism. This cultural exchange facilitated interactions among people, ideas, and traditions, resulting in a 'hybridization' that became evident in all aspects defining the late Baroque expression.

Offering fresh theoretical perspectives, the study examines the stylistic interplay and confluence of Baroque elements alongside dogmatic, iconographic, and iconologic approaches evident in these works. The analysis demonstrates how the artist (*zograf / mahler*) absorbed and adapted Baroque influences, merging them with traditional Eastern Orthodox iconographic practices to create a distinctive visual language characteristic of the region, though not confined to it if one follows his artistic route, starting with the mural painting he realised at Neagoe Basarab's monastery at the Curtea de Argeș. This inscription, dated September 1, 1761, reads*: "† Stan zug[rav] i brat ego Iacov zug[rav], sin popei Radul ot Răşinar."*[4] Noting the influence of the Brâncovenesc style and

[3] This model book, which aims to identify the stylistic approach of the icon painter Zaharija Orfelin, was initially in the possession of C. Săndulescu-Verna in 1937, when it was first documented and introduced into the scholarly domain. The book was restored in the laboratory of the National Museum of Art in Timișoara, under the care of restorers Reghina Obrad, Luminița Bujanca, and Velinca Petcu.

[4] This translates to: "† Stan the painter and his brother Iacov the painter, sons of priest Radul from Răşinari."

the connections between Transylvanian artists and cultural centers in Wallachia the next step that opened up new perspectives on the artist's biography was the introduction into scientific circulation of the sketchbook, which had already been called Stan Zugravul's notebook from the very beginning. This was due to the following note, written on a page featuring an image of the Virgin Mary with the Child: ''This sketch is by Stan Zugraf; year 7242 [= 1734] (Pârvulescu, 2008: 4; Dumitran et ali, 2011: 13-14).

While this paper represents a fragment of microhistory—focusing on the impact of Serbian Baroque heritage—it situates this influence within the broader artistic and cultural framework tied to the Sremski Karlovci Metropolinate. This connection provides critical coordinates for understanding the stylistic agency and broader significance of the case at hand. The study investigates the significance of these artworks as cultural artifacts and the transformative role of the Baroque within the context of religious and cultural exchange in the eighteenth-century historical Banat. It highlights how the coexistence of diverse cultural-linguistic communities influenced artistic practices, where Baroque functioned in this case as a bridge between tradition and modernity. This confluence facilitated the integration of Eastern and Western influences, culminating in transregional expressions of civilization.

By examining the dual facets of Orthodox identity (the Serbian model and the Romanian receiver), the paper highlights the complex sociocultural dynamics shaping artistic production during this period. Methodologically the study undertakes an analysis of form and content, focusing on both iconography and iconology, augmented by critical historiographical perspectives. It includes a discussion on the function of the artistic objects examined, exploring their social and symbolic value while incorporating insights specific to cultural interdisciplinarity. At the core of this inquiry lies the central research question: was the Baroque style a vehicle for cross-cultural identity and spiritual expression of Orthodox faith in the Banat?

First, we shall discuss the narratives focused on Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin as founder of the Serbian Baroque, by framing a few characteristics of the genre - medium and style. According to Simić, the polimath Zaharija Orfelin (1726–1785) was ''the leading Serbian copper engraver of the second half of the eighteenth century'' (2022:45). During this era in the Habsburg Monarchy, Maria Theresa's educational reforms significantly improved literacy among the general population. As a result, Orfelin's prints reached a wide and varied audience, including artisans, small merchants, affluent citizens, and city or state officials. This diversity meant that prints appealed to individuals with differing tastes and values, which often diverged from the perspectives of artists or scholars. Consequently, engravings functioned as a social and cultural practice, heavily influenced by reception and interpretation. The intermediaries involved in this process could unpredictably alter the meaning of each print, influenced by the prevailing political and cultural

context (Simić, 2022: 45; Curran, 2005: 698-699). In the process of re-creating heritage through interpretation, art-historical studies on Zaharija Orfelin's style and oeuvre reveal him as a polymath of his time. He was not only the founder of the first journal in the South Slavic region but also a prolific writer of didactic works and the most prominent poet of the eighteenth century (Besterman 1973: 106).

Secondly, we will examine the rhetorical devices in Zaharija Orfelin's paper icons and explore how they can be interpreted as visual representations of a society undergoing profound transformation. In this context, sensibility often took precedence over intellectual discourse, and iconography frequently conveyed moral-didactic meanings. This perspective reshapes our conceptual framework, emphasizing the essential role these printed icons played in providing an accessible and economical means of expressing religiosity.

Furthermore, Stan Zugravu's notebook offers a didactic example of how painters trained outside formal academies primarily relied on replicating widely circulated models. In this case, as we will observe, the replication incorporated Baroque iconographic and decorative motifs inspired by the work of Zaharija Orfelin. By closely examining iconographic and decorative motifs, as well as compositional features, this analysis aims to provide well-supported insights into the stylistic confluences that have led scholars to hypothesize Orfelin's direction on these pages.

The question of Zaharija Orfelin's identity is best explored by scholars who have dedicated their research to the complexity of his work and formation in Sremski Karlovci and Venice. The most comprehensive and up-to-date references are found in Serbian academic circles, particularly in the studies offering profound insights into his diverse contributions to art, engraving, and the Baroque cultural movement (Timotijević, 2001/2002; Davidov, 2001; 2006; Simić, 2015; 2020).

Visually compelling, the five pages selected made us think critically, and engage in a visual analysis, constructing the case study based on the following specificities: the iconographic context of Zaharija Orfelin's paper icons, examining their broader theoretical connotations and implications, while also addressing historiographical perspectives on the subject. The iconographic content was intentionally designed to more effectively convey an ideological message, aiming to promote artistic sophistication while maintaining devotional simplicity. By replicating models circulating within the empire, Stan transformed his style into a Westernized approach, distinctly different from the stereotypical Byzantine traditionalism. This shift is evident not only in iconography (types and forms of representation) but also, and perhaps more notably, in the ornamental style, which became a defining feature of visual compositions in the eighteenth century. By examining the sketches in Stan's notebook, one immediately notices the differences between the pages, the varied sources of inspiration, and the distinct construction of form and content preserved in the current work. The model book of painting, originating from the old collections of the Banat Museum in Timișoara (now part of the National Museum of Art collection), has drawn the attention of numerous researchers who have provided valuable stylistic

assessments, including Săndulescu Verna (1937), Teodora Voinescu (1978), Anne Marie Poddlipny (1970), Marius Porumb (1998: 378-379; 2003: 48-49), Cornel Tatai-Baltă (1995: 75-84), Dorina Sabina Pârvulescu (2008), and more recently, Ana Dumitran et al. (2011), Constantin Ciobanu (2019).

This study aims to draw a parallel between Romanian and Serbian sources to analyze Orfelin's style, focusing on the influence of the Baroque. Our primary objective is to propose working hypotheses and offer a productive framework for further exploration of the topic, opening new avenues for investigating the Baroque metamorphoses and their pathways toward globalization.

Regarding the authorship of these thematically and stylistically diverse drawings, we will propose several hypotheses that do not claim to fully resolve this unknown aspect of Stan Zugravu's model book. However, these hypotheses may provide valuable insights into the openness to Western-style models, illustrating how the engraving technique influenced the style of icon and mural painters. This technique enabled them to practice copying and sketching themes with minimal brushstrokes.

Within the broader history of the hermeneia/model notebook, two notable examples have gained attention: the model book of Radu from Wallachia, the only one to have been fully published and subjected to an iconographic analysis, and the book of Grigorie Popovici. The pages and techniques in the book are highly varied, with some signed works clearly showing a Western influence. These include pages drawn with pen in black or auburn red ink, which stylistically align more with Late Baroque and Rococo than with the Brâncovenesque tradition, known for its more traditional expression. On several pages of this model book, copies of other painters' works and engraved pages are pasted. Given the composite nature of the thematic content, we have selected five pages that may raise questions about the dissemination of Orfelin's models and the impact of his distinctly academic style on a painter situated within the Byzantine-Balkan tradition. The presence of pinpricks on these pages indicates that they were copied, not original works by Orfelin —a model of an imperial icon depicting the Mother of God with the Child on a throne (Theotokos).[5] It was produced on paper of a different quality and size, containing an inscription by the author with the date of creation (*leat* 1734): *"This model belongs to Stan the Painter"* (Părvulescu, 2008: 6). How did these copied pages by Stan end up in his model book? They serve as an indication of the spread of imagery and the level of development in the technique of reproduction through engraving. Paper icons were the cheapest method of reaching financially less potent communities. The technique was particularly important in the production of printed icons on paper, which were more affordable than traditional painted icons and thus accessible to a wider population.

[5] These pages do not contain identifying information (such as the designer's name), as they were cut out and affixed into Stan's hermeneia. They were adapted to the page size and made from paper of inferior quality, more transparent to reveal the outlines and crosshatching, as evidenced by the pinpricks.

These paper icons[6] were used to spread religious imagery and messages to rural or less affluent communities, and they played a role in the cultural and spiritual life of the Serbian and Romanian Orthodox Church.

The intaglio prints from this period often displayed a combination of local Orthodox iconographic traditions and influences from the broader Baroque and Rococo styles, particularly in the eighteenth century when Western artistic elements began to infiltrate the region. Unlike traditional, hand-painted icons, these printed images were intended to be affordable for a wider audience, particularly for rural communities or those with limited financial resources. Copperplate engraving became an important medium for book illustrations during the eighteenth century. The copperplate engraving is an intaglio printing technique where the lines were incised into a smooth metal plate while the ink was pressed into these recessed lines and a sheet of paper was pressed onto the plate. One authentic copper plate designed by Orfelin is displayed in the collection of the Serbian Bishopric in Timișoara. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin's original copper plate of the icon of Saint George with a view of the St. George Monastery– exhibited in the Serbian Episcopate of Timișoara Art Collection. Picture credits: Mihaela Vlăsceanu

Between 1757 and 1762, Zaharija Orfelin worked in a ''copper printing shop,'' where he executed all stages of copper engraving, from drawing and preparing matrices to printing sheets using a copper engraving press. His work included books, protocols, and icons, carried out under the commission of the metropolitan or bishop (Todić, 2022: 217). According to Dinko Davidov, the paper icon Saint George with a View of the Saint George Monastery served as

"a kind of specialist exercise" that led to Jakob Schmutzer accepting Orfelin as an honorary member of the Viennese Copper Engraving Academy in 1767 (Simić, 2014: 195). Orfelin worked under Bishop Vićentije Jovanović Vidak in Temesvár until 1764, after which he moved to Venice to serve as a proofreader of Serbian books at Dimitrije Teodosi's printing house. It is also believed that Orfelin occasionally traveled to Vienna, home to Thomas Mesmer's renowned workshop, which was considered the most prominent printing hub of the time and a repository for copper plates and engravers (Simić, 2020: 47).

The paper icon of Saint George, featuring a view of the St. George Monastery, is notable for its 10 frames adorned with rocaille motifs that emphasize scenes from his martyrdom. This stylistic approach reflects Orfelin's distinctive effort to depict these moments with eloquence and dramatic intensity. Among the various tortures inflicted upon Saint George by Diocletian, the engraver selects those with the greatest visual impact and significance. These include his imprisonment with a boulder placed on his chest, his survival after being thrown into a pit of limestone, his binding to a wheel set with sharp spikes, the miraculous resurrection of a dead man at the order of Magnentius, and finally, the poignant scene of his beheading. (Fig. 2)

Orfelin's paper icons were often rich in symbolism, such as the use of gold or bright yellow halos to indicate sanctity or divinity. These symbolic elements, such as rays of light, and the presence of angels or celestial elements, were integrated into the design to communicate the divine nature of the figures. The borders and frames in his icons were sometimes filled with floral patterns, intricate geometric designs, or stylized depictions of nature, often echoing Baroque motifs (Simić, 2013). These paper icons were instrumental in disseminating religious art among the Orthodox population in the Habsburg Empire. They provided an affordable alternative to traditional painted icons, allowing a broader audience to engage with religious imagery. Additionally, these icons contributed to the preservation and promotion of Serbian cultural and religious identity during a period of significant political and social change. The availability of Orfelin's printed images also provided a source of reference models for other painters and engravers, further amplifying his stylistic influence. The dissemination of Zaharia Orfelin's paper icons was a multifaceted process that combined advancements in printing technology with strategic distribution through religious, trade, and social networks (Davidov, 2006; Simic, 2013). These icons not only provided an affordable means of spiritual connection but also acted as a cultural bridge between Orthodox tradition and Western artistic innovation. Orfelin's work remains a testament to the transformative power of art in the context of religious and cultural exchange.



Fig. 2 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin, Saint George with a view of St. George monastery, 53x39 cm, 1769, paper icon, copper plate engraving technique, Gallery of Matica Srpska. Picture credits: https://www.galerijamaticesrpske.rs/kolekcija/orfelin-stefanovic-zaharija-sveti-djordje-sa-izgledom-manastira-sendjurdja

The inclusion of dynamic movement, emotional expression, and decorative flourishes in these icons would have been evident in the works of Stan, who began to incorporate more expressive, individualized figures compared to the traditional, static representations. This influence was not only artistic but also theological and doctrinal, impacting the hermeneia (interpretative tradition) of iconography. The use of richer color palettes, intricate decorative borders, and dramatic contrasts of light and shadow likely gained prominence in Wallachian iconography due to the influence of these printed paper icons. For artists like Stan Zugravul/the Painter, the interpretation of icons was no longer just about traditional visual elements but also about their ability to communicate theological concepts. The paper icons introduced a stylistic shift that was significant not only in terms of visual aesthetics but also in the interpretation of iconographic themes. The Baroque style emphasized movement, emotion, and drama, combined with the static and austere forms of traditional Byzantine style as in the case of a paper icon of the Mother og God of Vinča-Bezdin, from 1770 (Simić, 2020: 62-63). (Fig. 3)



Figure 3 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin, Icon of the Mother of God of Vinča-Bezdin, copper plate engraving, 1770. Picture credits: V. Simić (2020: 63). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348956973_Popular_piety_and_the_paper_icons_of_Zaharija_Orfelin

When examining the world depicted in Orfelin's imagery, one uncovers a profound sense of symbolism. For instance, Orfelin skillfully intertwines the Byzantine tradition with Baroque influences in his depiction of the Bogorodica – the Theotokos Hodegetria type. The icon features the same Baroque-style frames adorned with ornaments that are well-suited for engraving on copper plates. The composition includes a Baroque altar scene, complete with a votive painting, lateral columns, and a pediment marked by the imperial crown symbol. The side elements of the icon contain medallions featuring Marian symbols, including the ladder, often associated with Mary's role as a mediator between heaven and earth. This ladder can be understood as a reference to Jacob's ladder in the Bible (Genesis 28:12), symbolizing a bridge between God and humanity. In this context, Mary is viewed as the bridge to humanity's salvation through the birth of Christ, and the ladder itself signifies the ascent to heaven, with Mary guiding the faithful toward it. Other symbolic references within the icon are equally potent. The *Stella Maris* (Star of the Sea) symbolizes Mary's guidance of Christians, much as the star guides sailors. The "Mystical Rose" represents her qualities of purity, beauty, and love. The crescent moon beneath Mary's feet signifies her role as the Queen of Heaven, a motif drawn from the Book of Revelation (12:1), in which a woman clothed with the sun and crowned with stars stands on the moon. This trope constitutes the core of the Immaculate conception abstract representation in the Baroque art. Additionally, the Ark of the Covenant is referenced, with Mary considered the new Ark due to her bearing of Christ, who fulfills the Old Covenant. The white lily, a symbol of purity,

signifies Mary's perpetual virginity, while the *Hortus Conclusus* (Enclosed Garden) represents her virginity and Immaculate Conception. Each of these symbols plays a significant role in Marian devotion and iconography, blending biblical allusions and theological interpretations with artistic representations. Orfelin adopts Calderón de la Barca's notion of "the world as a stage", where the world itself is embodied by Mary, and the stage is constructed around her identity as Theotokos. Through this fusion of symbolism, Orfelin not only creates a visually compelling representation of Mary but also conveys deeper theological and cultural meanings, reflecting the synthesis of Byzantine and Baroque traditions in his work. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4 Stan Zugravu's copy after Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin, Theotokos (Eleusa), copper plate engraving, after 1770, black ink pen, over black pencil sketches on paper with partial filigrees with Mary's symbols in frames, Picture credits: (Pârvulescu, 2008: 56).

D. S. Pârvulescu, in her study dedicated to the analysis of Stan Zugravu's model book, highlights the stylistic approach of the pages depicting figures relevant to our analysis, stating that they were made in a similar manner to Orfelin's style (Părvulescu 2008: 30). These representations are crafted both in the dogmatic spirit of iconography and iconology, while incorporating interpretations, contextualizations, and explorations of the inner world of the image. Furthermore, Părvulescu notes how Orfelin employs symbolic imagery to create visual propaganda for the faith, paralleling the symbolic potency characteristic of Baroque art. (Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8)



Fig. 5 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin ?, St. Luke painting the Mother of God (Hodeghetria), copper plate engraving, copy from Stan Zugravu's Hermeneia. Picture credits:(Pârvulescu, 2008: 71).



Fig. 6 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin ?, St. Elijah Ascension to Heaven, copper plate engraving , after 1760, copy from Stan Zugravu's Hermeneia. Picture credits:(Pârvulescu, 2008: 59).



Fig. 7 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin ?, The Baptism of Christ, copper plate engraving , after 1760, Greek - Slavonic editorship, copy from Stan Zugravu's Hermeneia. Picture credits:(Pârvulescu, 2008: 70).



Fig. 8 Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin ?, Saint Michael- Archangel, copper plate engraving on striped paper, after 1760, copy from Stan Zugravu's Hermeneia. Picture credits:(Pârvulescu, 2008: 100).

The baroquization of artistic imagery in territories dependent on Sremski Karlovci represents the initial phase of a genuine process of Westernization within Orthodox creative expression. This phenomenon can be interpreted as the Churchțs intent to achieve theological integration within the cultural mindset of Central Europe. Practically, this was accomplished under its patronage, primarily through the work of painters. Viewed as a necessity by the religious hierarchy in Karlovač, the reform's success among Orthodox communities within the Patriarchate was facilitated by the reformist policies of the Empire. These policies promoted the emergence of new social categories inclined toward founding initiatives, and oriented printed books and education toward all segments of the population.

Focusing on the five images integrated into Stan Zugravu's model book, we can hypothesize that they promoted piety in a style characteristic of Zaharija Orfelin. This approach remained highly sought after until the late eighteenth century when political upheavals disrupted the longstanding religious and cultural frameworks of the Baroque era. Moreover, the proliferation of Orfelin's paper icons played a crucial role in reinforcing Orthodox Christian identity during a time of cultural and religious transformation in the Habsburg Empire. The democratization of religious art facilitated the broad dissemination of Orthodox imagery. By nature, as an artistic form rooted in rhetoric and persuasion, the Baroque aesthetic resonated not only with the emerging bourgeoisie but also with broader popular groups. These audiences gravitated toward imagery stripped of the hermetic symbolism that characterized traditional forms (Părvulescu, 2012: 13).

Throughout this study, we have examined the layered meanings embedded in sacred imagery in the Banat, revealing how these works acted as instruments of cultural negotiation and spiritual expression. This analysis underscores the central role of sacred images in shaping and reflecting the intricate interplay between faith, identity, and power in Eighteenth-century Banat.

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BAROK KAO SREDSTVO ZA PREKOGRANIČNI IDENTITET I DUHOVNO IZRAŽAVANJE U PRAVOSLAVNOM BANATU: STUDIJA SLUČAJA PET KOPIJA PAPIRNIH IKONA STEFANOVIĆ ZAHARIJE ORFELINA U HERMENEIJI STANA ZUGRAVUL

Rezime

Ova studija započela je istraživanjem jednog nasleđivanog artefakta koji ilustruje konvergenciju baroka u prostoru koji je pretežno oblikovan katolicizmom tokom osamnaestog veka. Međutim, barok nije samo stil povezan sa protireformacijom i post-tridentinskim svetom; on se takođe manifestovao i unutar pravoslavnog okvira. Shodno tome, cilj ovog istraživanja je da istraži umetnički univerzum oblikovan stvaralaštvom Zaharije Orfelina, s namerom da se identifikuju stilistički elementi koje su rumunski slikari preuzeli od ovog majstora, koji se smatra temeljnim predstavnikom srpskog baroka. Umetničko-istorijsko istraživanje počinje pitanjima koja proizlaze iz samih dela, koja se smeštaju u širi umetnički i istorijski kontekst. Ovaj proces uključuje konsultovanje značajnih izvora, koji usmeravaju diskusiju o tome kako je barokna umetnost prodrla u region Banata tokom osamnaestog veka putem više kanala. Prvo, barokni uticaji uvedeni su od strane katoličkih redova kao što su jezuiti i franjevci, koji su bili u skladu sa habsburškom administrativnom organizacijom. Drugi put, ovaj stil je oblikovan predstavnicima srpskog baroka, koji su dobili značajan podsticaj još od sedamnaestog veka, perioda kada je pravoslavna doktrina doživela reviziju i revitalizaciju kao odgovor na katolicizam koji je promovisan kroz protireformaciju. U novom političkom okruženju osamnaestog veka, kako su Banat i Vojvodina bili uključeni u Habsburšku monarhiju, umetničke promene su davale prioritet vizuelnim aspektima nad doktrinalnim. Zapadni uticaji usvojeni su kao strateški pristup od strane Pravoslavne crkve, kako bi se prilagodila promenljivim političkim uslovima, dok su istovremeno čuvali tradicionalni pravoslavni vrednosti. Ovaj period obeležen je zapadnjačenjem umetničkog jezika, sa reorganizacijom tradicionalnih tema i njihovim obogaćivanjem racionalnim idejama prosvetiteljstva. U tom kontekstu, umetnost je postala sredstvo obrazovanja, karakterisano isključivo didaktičkom i moralizatorskom funkcijom. Osamnaesti vek, kao doba prosvetiteljstva, ističe se nizom inovacija koje odražavaju pomak u kolektivnoj svesti, obeležen novim načinom mišljenja i osećanja, karakterističnim za moderne stavove u skladu sa centralnoevropskim

kulturnim i intelektualnim pravcima. Pravoslavni svet nije izuzet od ovog procesa, jer je igrao ključnu ulogu u oblikovanju koncepta modernosti kroz svoje doprinose. Hermeneutsko razumevanje svetih slika u Banatu podrazumeva interpretaciju religijskih slika kao dinamičnih posrednika značenja, duboko usađenih u kulturni, društveni i duhovni život zajednice. Ovaj pristup prepoznaje da svete slike nisu bile samo statični objekti pobožnosti, već aktivni učesnici u duhovnom i društvenom diskursu toga vremena.

Ključne reči: prekogranična interakcija, svete slike, papirne ikone, retorički postupci, Stefanović Zaharija Orfelin, Stan Zugravul