One Body, Many Torsos: Depicting the Tormented Body of Christ in early modern Bay of Kotor

The manuscript of Lamentation of Mother of God, rewritten and illuminated by Nikola Mazarović in 1782, contains the images that, in spite of their artistic naivety, eloquently present the contemporary attitudes toward pain. The body of Christ, as main instrument of communication with the reader, frequently changes its size and appearance, in accordance with the Biblical story that accompanies. In some images, the viewer is confronted with ascetic, distorted body, marked with visible wounds and streams of blood. In others, however, Christ's skin is unwounded and the overall bodily size is considerably larger. On top of that, there are illuminations in which the two ways of visualization seems to merge into one - a rather corpulent and heavy body of Christ is completely covered with bloody marks and wounds. In most violent episodes of Passion - Flagellation and Nailing on the cross - vastly used medieval pictorial vocabulary suggests complex historical reality of 18th century Bay of Kotor. The transition in stylistic treatment of the holy body during the early modern period resulted in emergence of artifacts that emphasize naturalistic features in human figures. However, their coexistence with earlier visual models in processions and church interiors further complicates the clear-cut division between periods. Iconographic variety in Mazarović's illuminations proved to be helpful in understanding the psychosomatic response that was triggered in early modern observers of the pain imagery.