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**SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE  
OF THE MONASTERY OF STUDENICA  
PAST, PERSEVERANCE, CONTEMPORANEITY**



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### 239. CHURCH FESTIVAL IN STUDENICA

Felix Kanitz, 1860

Ink and wash on cardboard, 16 × 9 cm

Archive of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade

In the holdings of the Legacy of Felix Kanitz, kept at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, there is a drawing made in ink and wash on cardboard in 1860. Although modest in size, this drawing, which depicts a religious festival in Studenica, shows the indisputable talent of the artist in composing a scene crowded with people. The Church of the Mother of God in the background is merely outlined, whereas groups of human figures, painted in confident strokes with no superfluous details, reflect the dynamics of the event. The draw-

ing was created during Kanitz's second journey around Serbia and was only a preparatory sketch for a woodcut made a few years later.

This illustration was first published in 1866, in the first edition of the well-known book *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* by British writers and activists Georgina Muir Mackenzie (1833–1874) and Adelina Paulina Irby (1833–1911), where it is labelled as “Church festival in free Serbia”. This entire book is illustrated exclusively with Kanitz's drawings from the Balkans, many of which, like the one discussed here, were published for the first time. The drawing of the *Church Festival in Studenica* was only published in Kanitz's editions in 1909, in the posthumously published second volume of his most famous work on Serbia (F. Kanitz, *Das Königreich Serbien und das Serbenvolk: von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, II, Leipzig, 1909, p. 1).





It has been noted that narrative compositions are the rarest in Kanitz's entire oeuvre. He paid much more attention to technical drawings, as well as documentary ones, and his descriptiveness is particularly pronounced in ethnographic illustrations. Therefore, Kanitz used the types of people and their costumes he was well-acquainted with, recorded either in his drawings from the field or on the photographs, as the source for his models, and subsequently set them into everyday-life scenes. Moreover, in composing the *Church Festival in Studenica*, he was also inspired by the famous painting *Serbs around a Gusle Player* by Anastas Jovanović, which he placed in the front left corner of his drawing. On the opposite side of the foreground, there are two female figures, the one closer to the viewer being the same as the seated woman in the drawing *Sunday Morning in the Royal Lavra*. They are addressed by an ecclesiastical dignitary wearing a

wide sash around his waist and a large pectoral cross, who is also a characteristic type of Kanitz's people from the Balkans. The background is inhabited by a series of individual figures or groups of figures, such as a young man pouring a drink, a group engaged in a circular dance at the centre of the composition, or a group gathered around a young man playing a kaval, all of which together form an idealized post-factum constructed image of a church celebration rather than an illustration of an authentic event that Kanitz had attended. When it comes to the depiction of the Church of the Mother of God, he relied on his own meticulous drawing of the Studenica Monastery.

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REFERENCES: Mackenzie, Irby, 1866; Kanitz, 1909, 1; Kanić, 1986, Vol. 2, 10; *Blago*, 1988, 308–309 (M. Todić); Timotijević, 2011, 115–131.

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