

= The Wounded Montenegrin =

The Wounded Montenegrin (Serbian Latin : Ranjeni Crnogorac) is the title of four nearly identical compositions by the artist Paja Jovanović depicting a wounded youth surrounded by peasants in traditional clothing , likely during the Montenegrin ? Ottoman War of 1876 ? 78 .

The first rendering garnered praise from critics , and won the first @-@ place prize at the Academy of Fine Arts ' annual art exhibition in Vienna in 1882 . Given its success , Jovanović was granted an Austro @-@ Hungarian government scholarship and entered into a contract with the French Gallery in London to produce a series of paintings on Balkan life . Art historians consider The Wounded Montenegrin one of Jovanović 's best Orientalist works . Jovanović went on to complete three further versions of the composition in the ensuing decades , three of which are oil paintings . The first is currently on display at the Matica Srpska gallery in Novi Sad , the second and third are in private collections , and the fourth is housed at the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade .

= = Description = =

The original oil painting measures 114 by 189 centimetres (45 in × 74 in) . It shows a muscular , wounded youth surrounded by ten peasants in a humble , single @-@ room dwelling . The peasants wear hand @-@ sewn shirts , rough leggings and leather shoes . They stand over a dirt floor , and in the background , a collection of eating utensils hang precariously from a makeshift shelf . The youth is cradled in the arms of a crouching , shaved @-@ headed warrior . The two are surrounded by a pair of heavily armed men on either side of them . Nearby , a light @-@ haired girl quietly grieves . To the right of these figures stands a grief @-@ stricken old man , himself surrounded by a number of figures in folk attire . To the far right , two figures can be seen standing inauspiciously in the shadows . The artist 's signature , rendered as Joanowits P. , can be found at the bottom right .

Jovanović composed a total of four versions of The Wounded Montenegrin , three oil paintings and one sketch . What distinguishes the first rendering from subsequent versions is its size (it is the largest by far) , detailed precision , and the artist 's removal of the two figures seen lingering in the shadows in the original . The second version , an oil painting , measures 100 by 152 centimetres (39 in × 60 in) . The artist 's signature , P. Ivanovitch , can be seen at the bottom right . The third rendition is a sketch measuring 23 by 35 centimetres (9 @.@ 1 in × 13 @.@ 8 in) , with the artist 's signature , Pa . Jo . , at the bottom right . The fourth version , another oil painting , measures 70 by 103 centimetres (28 in × 41 in) . The artist 's signature , Paul Ivanovitch , can be seen at the bottom right .

Jovanović did not assign titles to his works , as he felt that if a painting was well composed viewers would be able to deduce the title themselves . Thus , the majority of the artist 's works are referred to by a number of different titles . The Wounded Montenegrin also appears under the titles The Wounded Herzegovinian (Ranjeni Hercegovac) , The Wounded Bosnian (Ranjeni Bosanac) , Sad Encounter (?alosni susret) , Sad Farewell (?alosni rastanak) and Unsuccessful Banditry (Neuspelo razbojni?stvo) .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

Paja Jovanović (1859 ? 1957) was one of the most prominent Serbian realist painters of the late 19th century . During his early career , he came to be identified with Orientalist painting , depicting scenes from the Balkans , which were then under the control of the Ottoman Empire . Between 1877 and 1882 , he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna , where he came under the mentorship of painting instructors Christian Griepenkerl and Leopold Müller . Griepenkerl taught the young Jovanović the underlying structural principles of Renaissance and Baroque art , thus helping him better understand spatial problems and the arrangement of large numbers of figures , both moving

and static . Müller encouraged Jovanović to take a naturalist approach to painting , recording only what he could see and relying as little as possible on his imagination . It was in this context that Müller instructed Jovanović to make direct studies of Balkan life during his visits home , purposely steering him towards Orientalist painting .

Orientalist works , vignettes of " exotic life " in the Middle East , North Africa and the Balkans , were quite popular with Central and Western European art collectors in the late 19th and early 20th centuries . At the time of *The Wounded Montenegrin* 's composition , events in the Balkans had been making headline news in European capitals for decades . The Montenegrins had fought and lost the 1861 – 62 Montenegrin – Ottoman War . This was followed by about a decade of peace , but in 1872 , the Ottomans massacred more than 20 Montenegrins . The Herzegovina Uprising of 1875 prompted Montenegro and Serbia to declare war on the Ottoman Empire , sparking the Great Eastern Crisis of 1875 – 78 . The wars ended in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 , but occasional cross @-@ border skirmishing continued until the early 1880s . Although Jovanović never specified , it is likely the painting is set during the 1876 – 78 Montenegrin – Ottoman War .

= = = Provenance = = =

Jovanović composed the first , and most famous , version of *The Wounded Montenegrin* in 1882 while studying at the Vienna Academy . It was sold to a merchant named Schwartz in Vienna later that year . Within several months , Schwartz sold the painting to a Budapest casino for 1 @,@ 000 florins . After World War II , it came into the possession of the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest , which gifted it to the Matica Srpska gallery in 1971 , where it is on permanent display . It is catalogued under inventory code ??? Y / 3912 .

The second version of *The Wounded Montenegrin* was composed in 1891 . It was initially owned by Arthur Toot & Sons , a London art dealer , before coming into the possession of the Salon . Afterwards , it entered into a private collection , and remained in private ownership until 1989 , when it was auctioned off at Sotheby 's . Between 1989 and 1997 , it was housed at a museum in Rome , but sold again thereafter . It is currently in a private collection .

The third version , composed after 1900 , is part of a private collection . The fourth , painted in the 1920s , was in a private collection until World War II . After the war , it was confiscated by the communists . Following the death of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito , it was put on display at Tito 's mausoleum , the House of Flowers . It is currently on display at the Museum of Yugoslav History , and catalogued under the inventory code 59 R.

= = Analysis = =

In line with Müller 's advice , Jovanović avoided creating a sentimental work and focused instead on depicting characters and situations he observed during his time in the Balkans . This differentiates the painting from other Orientalist paintings of the day , which were based on travel accounts rather than first @-@ hand experience . The art historian Lilien Filipovitch @-@ Robinson notes that the grouping of the figures and their interactions with one another are reminiscent of images of the lamentation over the body of Christ . The right half of the scene recedes into shadow while the brightly illuminated left , where the principal figures are located , appears to expand towards the viewer . Jovanović thus directs the viewer 's eye from left to right , foreground to background , through the circular pattern of the groupings as well as the diagonal lines of the peasants ' swords . In line with Müller 's teachings regarding light and colour , Jovanović adds touches of bright red to give warmth and movement to the scene , making it appear as though it is unfolding before the viewer . The brushwork is varied , ranging from the smooth broad strokes that define the solidity of the walls to quick short ones that make it appear like the figures are in motion .

Filipovitch @-@ Robinson praises Jovanović 's " skillful handling " of linear and aerial perspective . She notes that the work is devoid of the " studio @-@ contrived quality " of other Orientalist paintings , and argues that Jovanović 's main goal was not to depict a particular historical event but rather to remind his audience of the Balkan peoples ' ongoing struggle against the Ottoman Turks .

and provide a human face to those engaged in that struggle .

= = Reception and legacy = =

The painting was first shown in public in 1882 , at the Vienna Academy 's annual student exhibition , which exhibited works produced during the 1881 ? 82 academic year . It was well received by art critics and Jovanovi? 's peers , who judged it to be the exhibition 's finest work and bestowed him the first @-@ place prize . Jovanovi? also received an Austro @-@ Hungarian government scholarship . The exact amount accorded to the artist is disputed . Petar Petrovi? , the curator of the National Museum of Serbia , writes that the scholarship amounted to 300 florins . Art historians Radmila Anti? and Nikola Kusovac state the scholarship amounted to 1 @,@ 000 florins . Jovanovi? 's triumph at the student exhibition and the subsequent scholarship gave him the means to travel over the summer holidays , during which he came up with a number of ideas for future paintings , such as The Fencing Lesson (Ma?evanje) . Winning the Vienna Academy prize established him as a respected painter of Orientalist works and set the stage for further recognition and success . In 1883 , Jovanovi? entered into a contract with Ernest Gambart 's French Gallery in London to produce a series of paintings on Balkan life . This contract assured him life @-@ long financial security .

Art historians consider The Wounded Montenegrin one of Jovanovi? 's best Orientalist works . Petrovi? calls it the " crowning achievement " of the artist 's studies under Müller . Jovanovi? went on to paint a number of other Orientalist pieces , notably The Snake Charmer (1887) .

= = = Endnotes = = =