

# ПРОБЛЕМИ НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

ТРИМЕСЕЧНО СПИСАНИЕ

ЗА ТЕОРИЯ, ИСТОРИЯ И КРИТИКА НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

ART STUDIES QUARTERLY

# 2

ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИЗКУСТВОЗНАНИЕ

ПРИ БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ - СОФИЯ

ISSN 0032-9371

ГОДИНА 41-ва 2008



## СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ

<b>Росица Гичева-Меймари.</b> Богини и свещени растения в гробницата от Свещари. ....	3
<b>Веселина Вачкова.</b> Памет за двадесетте „загинали“ константинополски статуи .11	
<b>Светозара Ръцева.</b> „Въртящите се дискове“ от Боянската църква . . . . .16	
<b>Стела Дончева.</b> Матрица за релефни икони с изображение на Богородица Епискепис (Знамение) от Шуменска крепост (XII–XIV в.). . . . . 23	
<b>Георги Парпулов.</b> Няколко стари описания на Зографския манастир . . . . . 26	
<b>Бойка Донева.</b> Някои иконографски проблеми на българската живопис през 60-те години на XX век . . . . .32	
<b>Десислава Христова-Тошева.</b> Историческо развитие и приложение на фотомеханичните способности в съвременното графично изкуство . . . . . 42	
<b>Мирена Христова.</b> Тенденции в медалната скулптура в България . . . . . 49	

## РЕЦЕНЗИИ

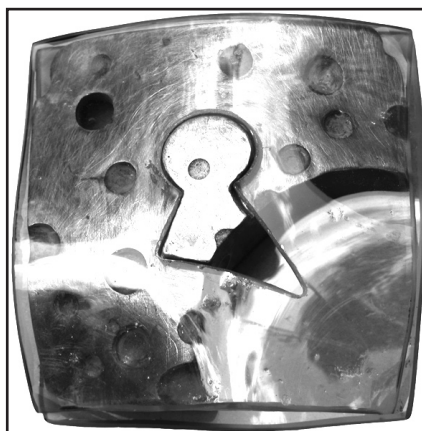
<b>Елка Бакалова.</b> Нов етап в изучаването на поствизантийското изкуство у нас . 56	
<b>Георги Геров.</b> Монография за манастира „Свети Архангели“ в Кучевище . . . . .58	
<b>Стилиян Стоянов.</b> Съвременен поглед върху проблема за визуалната комуникация между човека и компютъра . . . . . 60	
<b>Йоана Спасова-Дикова.</b> „Вера Динова-Русева и талантът ѝ да живее“ от Христина Господинова . . . . .61	
<b>Бранислав Цветкович.</b> Ново списание за християнска иконография . . . . .62	
РЕЗЮМЕТА . . . . . 64	

## CONTENTS

<b>Rossitsa Gicheva-Meimari.</b> Goddesses and Sacred Plants from the Thracian Tomb at Sveshtari. ....	3
<b>Vesselina Vatchkova.</b> Graphic reconstructions by Thekla Alexieva. Reminiscence of 20 ‘perished’ Constantinople statues . . . . .11	
<b>Svetozara Raceva.</b> „The Spinning Discs” from the Boyana Church . . . . .16	
<b>Stela Doncheva.</b> A Mold for Relief Icons with an Image of the Virgin Mary Episkepsis (the Visitation) from the Shumen Fortress (12th-14th c.) . . . . . 23	
<b>Georgi Parpulov.</b> Early Descriptions of the Zographou Monastery . . . . . 26	
<b>Boyka Donevska.</b> Some Iconographic Problems in Bulgarian Painting During the 1960s . . . . .32	
<b>Desislava Hristova-Tosheva.</b> The Historical Development and Application of Photomechanical Techniques in Modern Graphic Art . . . . . 42	
<b>Mirena Hristova.</b> Tendencies in Medal Art in Bulgaria . . . . . 49	

## REVIEWS

<b>Elka Bakalova.</b> A New Stage in the Study of Post-Byzantine Art in Bulgaria . . . . . 56	
<b>Georgi Gerov.</b> A Monograph on the Holy Archangels Kuchevishki Monastery . . . . .58	
<b>Stiliyan Stoyanov.</b> A Modern View on the Problem of Visual Communication Between Humans and Computers . . . . . 60	
<b>Ioana Spasova-Dikova.</b> „Vera Dinova-Ruseva and Her Talent for Living” by Hristina Gospodinova . . . . .61	
<b>Branislav Tsvetkovich.</b> A New Journal on Christian Iconography . . . . .62	
SUMMARIES . . . . . 64	



## SUMMARIES

### GODDESSES AND SACRED PLANTS FROM THE THRACIAN TOMB AT SVESHTARI

*Rossitsa Gicheva-Meimari*

This article analyzes and interprets plant elements in the decoration of the tomb. Floral decoration was used to ornament many Thracian tombs. In the Sveshtari tomb, however, it can be placed in a wider context than in other tombs, which provides the possibility for a more concrete interpretation of an element frequently found in Thracian burial structures, as well as in Thracian art as a whole.

Plant ornamentation is connected with female deities. They are interpreted in the context of mystery cult concerning immortality among the Thracians – the feast in the? Beyond. This article argues for a hypothesis about the psycho-active qualities of the plants used and represented – poppy, henbane, lotos, etc. It is suggested that the reason for the uniqueness of nearly every Thracian tomb lies in the creation of a personal afterworld corresponding to that which was seen and recognized during the mystery rites in which psychoactive plants were used.

### REMINISCENCE OF 20 ‘PERISHED’ CONSTANTINOPLE STATUES

*Vesselina Vatchkova, Graphic reconstructions by Thekla Alexieva*

The paper focuses on the problem of the extent to which the Byzantine ‘Ekphrases’ could be used as a source not only to study the artistic taste and skill of the Romaiois, but also to make a more general reconstruction of the Byzantine mentality. The study is based on Nicetas Choniates’s work De signis which attests the existence of 20 Statues in Constantinople destroyed by the crusaders in the spring of 1204.

The main questions to be answered are: 1) what were the criteria which Nicetas Choniates followed in choosing the objects of art he described; 2) can we rely on the extant antique statues in reconstructing the medieval ones or shall we better rely on the literary descriptions as a more reliable source; 3) were the statues, openly representing pagan gods, and scenes, which the Byzantines never tried, at least as late as the time of Choniates, to Christianize by allegorical or symbolic interpretation, thought of by the Byzantines as belonging to the profane sphere (profane aesthetics, profane city space etc.). In this connection, discussed is the problem of whether it is justifiable to construe some pre-Renaissance attitude of the Byzantines towards the Antiquity and the antique heritage.

The scope of the study, as outlined above, not only necessitated a detailed study of the literary descriptions found in the works of Choniates in the context of the specific mediaeval genre of “Ekphrasis”, but also sug-

gested an attempt at a graphic reconstruction of some of the statues (made by Thekla Alexieva) in order to create as vivid a representation of the originals as possible.

### “THE SPINNING DISCS” FROM THE BOYANA CHURCH

*Svetozara Raceva*

This study focuses on the two “spinning” discs flanking the encircled radiant God’s hand and above the Holy Virgin with the Infant in the narthex drum of the Church of St. Nicholas and St. Panteleimon in Boyana. These abstract symbols of God’s light and energy are commonly present in the programs of Serbian, Cyprus and Georgian churches but have no analogue in Bulgaria, apart from the Boyana church.

All presently known mural interpretations of spinning discs imitate the circularly polished nimbi of the Sinai icons through graphically presented concentric circles. In a publication, E. Schwarz convincingly studies these elements as a result of the transfer and transformation of symbols between easel and monumental artistic forms. Basing our argument on the above observations, we have set ourselves the following tasks: to clarify the problems concerning the origin, function and specific semantics of the two spinning discs within the context of the overall drum program; to position them on the complex historical and cultural background of church art in the Balkans during the thirteenth century and to mark them out as an artifact that demonstrates the contacts between Bulgaria and Sinai during this period.

Following the well-recognized point of view expressed in the critical literature concerning the icon prototype of the Holy Virgin with the Infant from the Boyana drum, we suggest a somewhat different hypothesis that not only the image of the Holy Virgin but the whole drum refigures an icon program.

We allude to icons in which the protective “casket” is developed into a wide gilded frame around the central image. Most known monuments of this type are dated between the end of the tenth century and the thirteenth century and come from the Sinai monastery of St. Catherine. Usually the upper part of these specific “frames” present versions of Deesis, Etoimasia or Christ in Glory, flanked by seraphim. The side-fields are preserved for holy personages. Studying all possible interpretations, we have determined the configuration which is closest to the symbols presented in the upper part of the Boyana drum. The replacement of the image of the Heavenly King with His Hand blessing the four cardinal points (the rays); His Incarnation, accented by the presence of St. Joachim and St. Anna; the use of the same approach towards the representatives of His Hosts, replaced by abstract symbols (the spinning discs) – all testify to the exceptional theological erudition of the artist or the commissioner of the frescoes. Since in this case we assume that this is a mural

replica of an icon with a possible Sinai origin, in the thirteenth century such a model could have been observed by either of them not only in the monastery of St. Catherine but in other cultural centers as well. Such a possibility, together with the typical Sinai “translation” of the symbols of the light-not-made-by-hand, add the 1259 frescoes from the narthex of the Boyana Church of St. Nicholas and St. Panteleimon to the group of the already mentioned thirteenth and fourteenth century monuments in Serbia, Cyprus and Georgia that foreshadowed the spread of the Sinai-Athos hesychasm during the next two centuries.

### A MODEL/MOLD FOR RELIEF ICONS WITH AN IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN MARY EPISKEPSIS (THE VISITATION) FROM THE SHUMEN FORTRESS (12TH-14TH C.)

*Stela Doncheva*

Molds for the production of works made of precious metals are not among the most frequently encountered objects that determine the particular significance of a new monument. The contribution of this small group is increased significantly when a similar object is discovered in a given archaeological context. The present work addresses just one such monument. The mold was found in one of the excavations of the Shumen Fortress. On the face of the surface in relatively high relief, a half-length image of the Virgin Mary Episkepsis (the Visitation) was found, which is not a frequently encountered iconographic type. At the time when the model from the Shumen Fortress was made, traditions of picturing the Virgin Mary with the Christ child in various iconographic versions were already established. The present monument is a product of local production, which can be seen in its more crude and formal schematism, which distinguishes it from the correctly proportioned and strictly linear figures found in art from the capital. This raises a series of questions connected to the influences and paths for the acceptance of particular models and examples from leading centers. It is obvious that such influence is not direct, but rather is refracted in local traditions and practices in the production of similar works. Byzantine influence was widespread far beyond the empire’s borders and can be witnessed in the cultural development of various communities. The definite stability of the capital’s presence is also reinforced by the artistic quality of the bronze mold from the Shumen Fortress.

### EARLY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ZOGRAPHOU MONASTERY

*Georgi Parpulov*

The article contains annotated translations of the oldest known descriptions of the Zographou Monastery, those by Geron Isaiah of Chilandari (between 1489 and 1543), Abbot Joachim of the Athonite Panteleimon Monastery (1560), the physician John Comnenus (1701), François Bracon-

nier, S.J. (1708), and Hieromonk Hippolytus Vishenski of Chernigov/Chernihiv (1709). These little-known texts supplement Barsky's famous account of Mount Athos (1744) and provide a basis for reconstructing the old Zographou buildings (now entirely replaced by new structures erected between 1758 and 1893). Of particular interest is the architecture of the monastery's old catholicon, which alone among pre-eighteenth-century Athonite churches had a third eastern dome above its altar. This feature must have influenced the builders of the new Xeropotamou catholicon (1762-64), who introduced a similar dome into their design.

### **SOME ICONOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS IN BULGARIAN PAINTING DURING THE 1960S**

#### ***Boyka Donevska***

With respect to the general dynamics in Bulgarian art, the 1960s stand out as a period with an exceptionally interesting socio-cultural profile. The processes characteristic of the decade are connected to increased activity in artistic life, with increasing complexity in the content and formal issues in art, and with an interest in experimentation and original expression. At the same time, precisely this "multifacetedness" of individual expressions is one of the reasons behind the search for general cultural belonging within the "tendency towards a national style". The majority of its representatives discover a connection with medieval, Renaissance and folk art in iconography and the stable parameters of a style that directs the path of the communicative process.

From an iconographic point of view, in the founding of the national image the following elements play major roles: strict composition, strong sculptural forms, absolute staticness and the expressivity of the gesture. Thus compositions of Christian art, stably encoded within iconographic systems, are used by contemporary artists in a new historical context. With respect to concrete solutions, one can observe several basic approaches. Some of the artists use general schemata of the iconographic type, while concretizing the event chronologically with real details. Other works function in a different manner; there, the symbolism is encoded as a whole, without a hint at a modern reading of the motive.

The drive to achieve new pictorial expression, which would take on the idea of contemporary and at the same time authentic

(national) art, also leads to reconstruction of the national artistic form. In many of the paintings, the essence of the work arises from the aestheticization of the form, where the linear-rhythmic and spatial principles are analogical to those of icon painting, miniatures, Renaissance prints and folk art. Besides in historical painting, individual compositional techniques and stylistic methods also come close to works from other genres – everyday composition, landscapes and still lifes, which demonstrate the general preference for an associative artistic language.

Towards the end of the decade, however, the ubiquitous exploitation of these ready-made models led to a certain balancing of solutions, grouped around a small number of iconographic schemata, which soon outlived their founding.

### **THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF PHOTO-MECHANICAL TECHNIQUES IN MODERN GRAPHIC ART**

#### ***Desislava Hristova-Tosheva***

This work defends the viewpoint that the development of photomechanical processes is linked to the discovery of photography and the search for ways to reproduce photographic images using printed means. During the 1850s many experimental photomechanical processes arose, stemming from heliography and daguerrotypes. This article examines the most important of them, which contributed to the development of photogravure, photolithography, collotypes and photo-zincography. Photogravure: the processes used by Docteur Donné, Hippolyte Louis Fizeau, Édouard Baldus, Alphonse Poitevin, Paul Pretsch and Charles Nègre are examined, as well as the essential photogravure process presented by Talbot in 1852 under the name photoglyphic engraving, which was perfected by Karel Klič in 1879. The method is also known by the name aquatint photogravure or the Talbot-Klič process. Contemporary ways of processing photogravure are also examined.

Photolithography: Since Poitevin's patenting of the photolithography process in 1855 until the present day the process has not essentially changed. One graphic studio well-equipped for photolithography is the Bulgarian Artists' Union (BAU) lithographic studio. The photosensitive emulsion with which the stone is sensitized was hand-crafted by the master lithographer

Viktor Kirilov. A recipe and directions for the processing of the emulsion is included.

Collotypes: The appearance, perfection and special characteristics of collotypes are examined. This technique is one of the most attractive non-screen printing processes – all halftones and details of the original are printed onto the paper through finely-grained gelatin. Collotype printing can be used in lithographic studios as an alternative printing method. The method for processing a collotype plate is described.

Photo-zincography: Today photo-zincography has been replaced by flexoprinting technology based on photopolymeric materials. In recent years, photopolymeric emulsion has been gaining popularity among graphic artists, printers and photographers. One of them is the artist and master printer Dan Welden, who in the 1970s experimented with photopolymeric plates for relief printing and invented Solarplates.

Various institutions, master printers and artists are involved in the search for alternative methods for printing based on photomechanical technology from the recent past and nontoxic printing processes; the most important such actors are noted. Some have discovered entirely new methods, while others are based on processes from the past that have been transformed for modern use.

### **TENDENCIES IN MEDAL ART IN BULGARIA**

#### ***Mirena Hristova***

The article presents medal art in Bulgaria from the mid-1970s until today. The article shows in retrospect the development of this art over the course of three decades and notes the authors who have contributed most to this development. It defines the genre specifications while focusing on the medal as a work of art. Analyzing its essence in the context of medal art traditions, the article searches for stylistic and thematic trends during this period, drawing a parallel with the creative works from the "Medal Project 2006". Although the project has an experimental and educational character, it could well bring about a new stage in the development of Bulgarian medal art, a stage defined by even greater liberty. The attached illustrations present a small part of the works of Bulgarian medal artists; however, they give an idea of the place of this art within the Bulgarian postmodern cultural environment.