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1

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СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ

Емануел Мутафов. Живописата на Атон през призмата на новите научни изследвания. Размисли	3
Иванка Гергова. Диалогът на грешника с Богородица	11
Цветя Кунева. Поствизантийските стенописи в църквата „Св. Теодор“ при Бобошево и техният художествен кръг	15
Майя Захариева. Към историята на Мисловщичкия манастир „Успение Богородично“ и неговите стенописи	23
Мария Колушева. Патронната икона на св. Димитър от Бобошевския манастир	32
Александра Трифонова. Икона на св. Власий с житийни сцени в сбирката на църквата „Св. Атанасий“ във Варна	41
Фйоралба Сатка Мата. Албанското „въоръжено“ социзкуство	44
Стефко Аенски. Реставрация на тибетска танка от XVII век	49
ПРАВО НА ОТГОВОР	
Николай Тулешков. Отново за часовниковите кули	51
РЕЦЕНЗИИ	
Емануел Мутафов. Стенописите от една контактна зона на балканския XIX век и книгата за тях	58
Елена Генова. Зографската фамилия Минови и тяхното стенописно наследство	59
Ангелина Георгиева. Свободата да общуваш	61
РЕЗЮМЕТА	63

CONTENTS

Emmanuel Moutafov. Painting on Mount Athos in the Light of the New Research. Thoughts	3
Ivanka Gergova. The Dialogue of the Sinner with Holy Virgin	11
Tsveta Kuneva. Post-Byzantine Wall Paintings in the Church of St Theodore near Boboshevo and its art circle	15
Maya Zaharieva. To the History and the Murals of Monastery of Dormition of Holy Virgin at Mislovshitzta	23
Maria Kolousheva. The Patron Icon of St. Demetrius from Boboshevo Monastery	32
Alexandra Trifonova. Icon of St Blaise with Narrative Scenes in the Collection of the Church of St Athanasius in Varna	41
Fioralba Satka Mata. The Albanian Armed Socialist Art	44
Stefko Aenski. Restoration of a Tibetan Thangka from the 17th century	49
RIGHT OF REPLY	
Nikolay Tuleshkov. Once again about the Clock Towers	51
REVIEWS	
Emmanuel Moutafov. The Nineteenth Century Murals in a Contact Area for the Balkan and the Book on Them	58
Elena Genova. The Painter's Family Minovi and their Mural Paintings Heritage	59
Angelina Georgieva. Freedom to Communicate	61
SUMMARIES	63



SUMMARIES

PAINTING ON MOUNT ATHOS IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW RESEARCH. THOUGHTS

Emmanuel Moutafov

Much research has been done in the last decades on this topic in the context of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art. This art persistently rejects the Renaissance achievements in geometric perspective, depicting unnaturally elongated figures and ascetic faces that seem to be suspended on the golden background and avoiding any resemblance to a photographic depiction of reality. In this paper E. Moutafov tries to draw a general conclusion from the evolution of the religious painting on Mount Athos by presenting the most important achievements of the other researchers about illuminated manuscripts, mural paintings and icon production. By analyzing the already published data the author concludes that Athos appear as the most serious "consumer" of Christian art during the late medieval and Ottoman periods. Anyway, he observes that the earliest and the latest periods of the history of art on Athos are the less versed in scholarship at that moment, because of the lack of systematic archaeological excavations in order to reconstruct the Athonite life from eighth and ninth centuries, and because of the huge number of religious monuments dating from 11th to the beginning of the 12th c. they are not collected in catalogues and published. Until now as regards to the genre separation of the painting, as best interpreted appear the illustrated manuscripts on Athos, because they are approachable as a number. Recently most of the wall-paintings from the Athonite churches were published, but it is a

must to examine, systematize and analyze the 19th c. wall-painting tradition. Most work has to be done for the icon opulence on Athos and especially for the Post-Byzantine period one and again mostly for the production of icons created a century ago. This paper gives a proof for a lack of a local Athonite tradition in painting of any media and for a lack of a common style there as well.

One can say and write a lot about the art on Mount Athos, but probably nothing about the Athonite art, because of the absence of real and strong local workshops. In addendum to this conclusion the author criticize the overestimated part of Mount Athos for the development of the Orthodox art on the Balkans. In detail he discusses the connections between present day Bulgaria and the Athonite monasteries, trying to revise some scholarly looking legends i.e. about icon-painters who studied painting on Athos, etc. Other efforts have to be exerted in terms to specify the already existing terminology and periodization of the Orthodox Christian art in the Ottoman Empire in order to offer more adequate and contemporary approach of our studies, but that will be a topic for a future discussion, i.e. about how accurate is the term "Post-Byzantine art", since even the word Byzantium was not used in the East Roman Empire; about the universality of the year 1453 as the end of the medieval Christian tradition on the Balkans, since i.e. Bulgarian kingdom was conquered about 60 years earlier and the symptoms of art decadence appeared much earlier than the political changes; about the upper date of this period, since in some lands this Orthodox art exists until 1912 at least, etc.

THE DIALOGUE OF THE SINNER WITH HOLY VIRGIN *Ivanka Gergova*

In 1849 in the outer narthex of the church at the Kurilo Monastery near Sofia a small cycle of three scenes which present a dialogue of the sinner with the Holy Virgin Queen has been painted. The images have no analogue at least at this stage of the research. According to the stylistic analysis author of the paintings in this premise of the church was Yanachko Stanimirov from the village of Breze. The text of the dialogue, written on the scrolls which the sinner and the Holy Virgin hold, were discovered in a book, published by Nikolay Karastoyanov in Kragujevac in 1834. The book contained along with other texts also this one „The Conversation of the Sinner with the Holy Virgin about the Alphabet”. If we are to judge the pagination which is according to the Greek alphabet this dialogue was a translation from the Greek language. The text is in its essence moralizing. The sinner pleads to the Holy Virgin to put up a plea before her Son, hoping the Holy Virgin will be benevolent since he is honoring her. The Mother of Jesus first refused by stating that this is impossible but following long admonitions to the sinner accepted to intercede for him.

POST-BYZANTINE WALL PAINTINGS IN THE CHURCH OF ST THEODORE NEAR BOBOSHEVO AND ITS ART CIRCLE

Tsveta Kuneva

The present study examines the Post-Byzantine wall paintings in

the church of St Theodore near Boboshevo which are well-known in literature. The accent is placed on the iconographic and stylistic characteristics of the paintings which are quite helpful in the precise dating of the church and in pointing out its art circle. The elements of the mural program of the church of St Theodore near Boboshevo which the author examines – the arrangement of the images, some iconographic specificities (especially in the scenes of the Nativity, Denial and Repentance of St Peter, the Mocking of Christ and Judas's Suicide), the presence of the image of St Sava (St Sabbas) Archbishop of Serbia and last (but not least) the style of the paintings, bear witness of its creation circa 1505 by masters from Kastoria and not in the 14th or 17th c. as the predominant point of view in literature is. The Boboshevo murals are not the most representative monuments of the Kastoria art circle of that period but they bear witness of the presence of one of the Kastoria's ateliers from the beginning of the 16th c. on the territory of Bulgaria. Master painters from the same atelier and may be the same icon painters some time earlier have painted in the church of St Nikolaos Magaliou in Kastoria.

TO THE HISTORY AND THE MURALS OF MONASTERY OF DORMITION OF HOLY VIRGIN AT MISLOVSHTITZA *Maya Zaharieva*

The Monastery of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin at Mislovshitzza is one of the not that well researched monuments of the Post-Byzantine period in Bulgaria. Today the monastery structures are half-destroyed while the church is in a very poor condition. Very little of the murals that have decorated the church are preserved there. Most of the murals were taken down during the 1980s

and 1990s and are kept today in the depots of the Regional Historical Museum in the city of Pernik.

The paper tries to give a general overview of the preserved historical evidences connected with the monastery, the architectural specificities and the reconstruction of the iconographic program of the church. The text is based on some previous research, archive materials, photographs and preserved pictorial fragments.

The reconstruction of the iconographic program and more concretely, of one of the partially preserved scenes – The Healing of the Blind Born, shows the connection of the composition from Mislovshitzza with a similar scene from the church of St Prohor Pchinski (1488-1489). These connections give us reasons to believe that the initial painting of the temple was made in the end of the 15th c.

THE PATRON ICON OF ST. DEMETRIUS FROM BOBOSHEVO MONASTERY *Maria Kolousheva*

The icon comes from the church of St Demetrius at the Boboshevo Monastery. This place of worship was built between 1487 and 1488 and had an iconostasis, of which only the Royal Doors are preserved today. In 1729, they were incorporated in the crafting of the new altar partition, part of which is also the icon under study. The icon shows St Demetrius seated on a throne, one foot on a scorpion, holding a spear that is piercing it. The two panels on the sides depict scenes from his life and are grouped by six on each side. The two uppermost panels depict St Demetrius and St George on horseback. They are followed by these scenes: St Demetrius talks to Emperor Maximian; St Demetrius is being led to prison; St Demetrius kills the scorpion; St Demetrius blesses St Nestor; St Nestor fighting Lyaeus and killing him; St Nestor talks to

the Emperor; Maximian orders the death of Nestor and after that of Demetrius; The martyrdom of St Nestor; The martyrdom of St Demetrius; A service before the relics of St Demetrius. Well-known to specialists of Bulgarian Medieval art due to its unique iconography, the icon of St. Demetrius of Boboshevo is yet to find its convincing interpretation of the saint's life, as depicted on it. None of the cult objects known from across Bulgarian territories contain so many life scenes, as the Boboshevo icon. It is precisely this extremely detailed cycle and the rarity of some of the episodes that are the cause of some difficulty and confusion in determining their content. It is also why this article presents some introductory information on the origin and the development of the cult to St. Demetrius. The main part of the text concerns the descriptions of all life scenes on the icon. Their presentation includes the literary text that was used to visualize the image. Some parallels are also drawn to scenes from the life of this saint as presented on other monuments found in the country and internationally.

ICON OF ST BLAISE WITH NARRATIVE SCENES IN THE COLLECTION OF THE CHURCH OF ST ATHANASIOS IN VARNA

Alexandra Trifonova

The church of St Athanasios in Varna has in its icon collection a very interesting icon of St Blaise with narrative scenes, dated 1879 precisely. Placed at the center of the icon is St Blaise while at the lower part are painted three scenes of a saint's life: St Blaise Resurrects the Ox, the Ploughman Sows Wheat and the Old Sheppard Grazes a Flock. Under these scenes a donor's inscription is placed. Of special interest are the scenes

with St Blaise. From the three depicted scenes in the Varna icon only St Blaise Resurrects the Ox is directly connected with the saint and refers to his capacity of animal healer, while the other two do not have a connection with his hagiographic. In spite of this it is these scenes that are featured in the icon of St Modest and in the icon of St Blaise with hagiographic scenes (1864) at the Regional Historical Museum in Kardzhali as well as in the icon of St Modest (circa 1860), found in the National Historical Museum in Sofia. The scene Old Sheppard Grazes a Flock is pictured also in icons of St Modest, one of them (1875) found in the National Historical Museum and the other (1875) in the Art Gallery in Burgas. On the other hand, the scene St Blaise Resurrects the Ox is identical in iconography with the scene St Modest Blesses the Animals in an engraving of St John the Baptist with Saints (1836). Therefore, the possibility for the scenes, connected with St Blaise, to intertwine with scenes, referring to St Modest, who is also honored as patron of animals, are quite probable.

The anonymous icon painter of the Varna icon of St Blaise is one of the major icon painters from the Revival period who excellently painted in the accepted at that time style as well as in the not that popular naïve artistic style, called „art naïve”, which was quite popular on the Balkans during the 19th c. The icon from Varna is especially valuable also due to the fact that it is among the few known today icons of St Blaise with scenes of saint's life.

THE ALBANIAN ARMED SOCIALIST ART

Fioralba Satka Mata, Albania

Art in Albania during the totalitarian socialist regime (1944-1990) developed in three thematic

directions, defined in the directives of the Albanian Communist Party. Two of these topics are 'armed': the presentation of the National Guerilla War (1939-1944) and the most important historical phenomena for the Albanian nation – the Albanian National Liberation Movement for Freedom from Turkish Occupation and the image of its founder and leader, the national hero Skanderbeg. Both themes are valid till the end of the totalitarian regime: the presentation of the guerilla dominated in all annual exhibitions, while the historical theme was developed only on certain anniversaries.

The present article studies the role that firearms played in the Albanian socialist paintings of the period 1950-1990. The thesis, supported by the author is that under the authoritarian rule of the dictator Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Communist Party the method of 'Socialist Realism' in painting changed and 'edited' life in order to present reality in a ostentatious light where the leader and the party took the central position. This deformation of realism had its didactic aims for the achievement of which arms played an exceptionally important role: to glorify the power of the leader and the ruling class; to unite the people under the banner of the party; to create a new, powerful and all-conquering socialist citizen; to indoctrinate people with communist ideas; to keep active the spirit of struggle; to make citizens conscious of the inevitability of war that has to be fought in order to defend the land.

RESTORATION OF A TIBETAN THANGKA FROM THE 17TH CENTURY

Stefko Aenski

The text examines a 'thangka' from the 17th c. made on a silk cloth and

protected on the back side with glued pieces of paper and thin-layered paintings on the face. Due to the fact that the 'thangka' unrolls and can be easily carried grave damage was inflicted. The text presents in details the different steps in the research, conservation and restoration of the Tibetan 'thangka' – a long process following which it took a central place in the exposition of the Museum of Asian and African Art in the city of Tryavna.

ONCE AGAIN ABOUT THE CLOCK TOWERS

Nikolay Tuleshkov

The subject of the clock towers in the history of Bulgarian architecture has been examined thoroughly by Peter Karasimeonov, Ljuben Tonev, Rachel Angelova as well as by the author of the present text. This problem was touched upon also Ljubomir Mikov in his article „Cultural-Historic Profile of the Clock Towers on Bulgarian Lands (17th-19th century)”, written in 2010. It posed questions and criticism to some of the conclusions in the publications on the subject, made by N. Tuleshkov to which he felt he should answer.

The present publication examines questions concerning the emergence and spread of clock towers on Bulgarian lands; the fixedness of the main types of towers; the role of the local traditions and the influence of the West European practices; the function of the tower as an observation point, signaling and fire-precaution and defense functions as well as servicing craftsmanship and trade. The main – well-supported by arguments and illustrations conclusion is that the conclusions of L. Mikov confirm and repeat the thesis of N. Tuleshkov and they differ only in some details, some mistakes made and incorrect interpretations.