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Тема на броя: Сто години Национален църковен историко-археологически музей /
One hundred years National Church Museum of History and Archaeology



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Editorial



През 2023 г. се навършват 100 години от основаването на Националния църковен историко-археологически музей (НЦИАМ). Неговият Правилник е утвърден от министъра на народното просвещение Стоян Омарчевски на 17 януари 1923 г. Така от малка сбирка към Св. Синод новата институция постепенно се превръща в съвременен музей с несравним по своите мащаби и разнообразие фонд от произведения на църковното изкуство. Основна заслуга за това има протоиерей Иван Гошев, който е първият директор на музея. На неговата дейност е посветен и един от проектите на Института за изследване на изкуствата, озаглавен „Приносът на Иван Гошев за формирането на Иконографския отдел на НЦИАМ (проучване и документиране на архиви и колекции)“, финансиран от Фонд „Научни изследвания“ (договор ФНИ-КП-06-Н40/4/10.12.2019). Повечето статии в настоящия брой са резултат от работата на участниците в научния колектив по проекта. Те показват колко разнообразна, богата и завладяваща е проблематиката на християнското изкуство по нашите земи, отразяват текущото състояние на проучванията и са резултат от възможностите на съвременните методи за документиране и изследване на културни ценности.

С този брой на списание „Проблеми на изкуството“ се присъединяваме към честванията на стогодишнината от основаването на НЦИАМ и отдаваме почит към дейността на протоиерей Иван Гошев, и към всички музейни специалисти, които през изминалия век са работили за опазването, изследването и популяризирането на най-голямата колекция от християнско изкуство в България.

The year 2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology (NCMHA). Its Regulations were approved by Stoyan Omarchevski – Minister of Public Education, on January 17, 1923. Thus, from a small collection at the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the new institution gradually became a modern museum with an incomparable collection of church art. The main merit of this is the Archpriest Ivan Goshev who is the first director of the museum. One of the Institute of Art Studies' projects is dedicated to his work: "Ivan Goshev's contribution to the formation of the Iconography Department of NCMHA (research and documentation of archives and collections)", with the financial support of the Bulgarian National Science Fund according to contract № KP-06-H40/4/10.12.2019. Most of the articles in the current issue are the result of the work of the participants in the scientific team of the project. They show how diverse, rich and fascinating the problems of Christian art in our lands are, reflect the current state of research and are the result of the possibilities of modern methods for documenting and researching cultural values.

With this issue of the "Art Studies Quarterly", we join the celebrations of the centenary of the founding of NCMHA and pay tribute to the work of Archpriest Ivan Goshev, and to all museum specialists who over the past century have worked for the conservation, research and popularization of the largest collection of Christian art in Bulgaria.

Ivan Vanev

Иван Ванев

Summaries

MORE ABOUT THE ICON-PAINTERS IN THE BULGARIAN LANDS DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AGES DUE TO AN UNPUBLISHED TYMPANUM ICON FROM NCMHA

Margarita Kuyumdzhieva
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In the present text for the first time is published a tympanum icon of Christ Anapeson from the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology (NCMHA), analyzing its iconographic, functional and typological features determined on the basis of comparisons with icons similar in purpose from the end of the 15th – 17th centuries. The stylistic and technological features of the painting on the tympanum icon unite it in one group with other icons from the collection of NCMHA. These are a fragment of iconostasis tier with the image of Archangel Gabriel, partially preserved iconostasis frieze with the images of St Gregory the Theologian, St Basil the Great, St George Killing the Dragon, St Demetrius Killing the Warrior, Ascension of Prophet Elijah and St Theodore Stratelates on Horseback and two ripidions from the topmost part of an iconostasis. Added to them are two despotic icons from the Museum of Christian Art – the Crypt and a set of three despotic icons from Rakitovo and the City Art Gallery – Plovdiv. Based on the stylistic similarity with the dated icon of The Mother of God Hodegetria from Rakitovo, a new dating of the icons from the NCMHA and the Museum of Christian Art – the Crypt is proposed here. It is supposed that they have been created by a team of two painters that worked in the region of the Northern Rhodopes about 1618/9. Some aspects of the problem about the origin and professional training of these masters and their connections with the artistic production on the territory of Northern Greece from the middle of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century have been examined.

THE ICONOSTASIS' RIPIDIONS OF ST DEMETRIUS CHURCH IN ARBANASI AND THEIR AUTHOR

Maria Kolusheva
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The exposition of the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology (NCMHA) holds two ripidions of an iconostasis with the images of the Most Holy Mother of God and St John the Theologian, which originate from St Demetrius Church in Arbanasi. In literature, the works are dated differently – from the 16th to the beginning of the 17th century. The stylistic features of the images make them extremely close to the four icons of the Museum of Christian Art – the Crypt: the Christ Pantocrator (Megalodoros), the Virgin with the Christ Child, St George Tropeophoros and St Demetrius Great Chieftain. All of them can be attributed to the “hand” of the painter who executed the ripidions. The dating of the icons is unclear, furthermore their place of origin is generally pointed as the Tarnovo region. The execution technique of these works, as well as the relief decoration of the backgrounds, are similar to four icons painted for the royal order of the iconostasis in St Athanasius Church in Arbanasi. They were probably made around 1667 together with the frescoes in the naos and the narthex of the church in the same icon-painting atelier. This closeness imposes a review of the murals in the same church with the idea of certain proximity to the artistry of the ripidions and the icons from the Crypt. It is evident that the master who painted the ripidions and the icons from the Crypt most probably participated into the painting of the grave church of St Athanasius in 1667. There is lack of certain evidence that the icon-painters, who painted the walls of this particular church, worked also in other churches in the region. Nevertheless, literary sources suggest their participation. A number of iconographic parallels between the murals in St George Chapel at St Demetrius Church and the frescoes of St Athanasius Church show that apart from the artistry of the altar the same icon-painting team had made the second layer of frescoes in the chapel. It seems that around the third quarter of the 17th century the iconostasis/iconostases of the church (in the naos and the chapel) were renovated. From this stage of endowment of the church, the ripidions from NCMHA and probably the four icons of the royal order have survived to the present day. The stylistic features of the icons, which are assumed to have been made for the church of St Demetrius, show that their author worked on the frescoes in the vault of the naos of St Athanasius church. The team to which this anonymous master belonged has been identified in the literature with the atelier of the painter Nicholas of Linotopi.

THE ICONOSTASIS FRIEZE FROM THE CHURCH OF ST PARASKEVA [ST PETKA] IN SVOGE AND ITS CONTEXT

Tsveta Kuneva
Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

This article examines an unpublished iconostasis frieze depicting the Deesis with ten figures of apostles on thrones (Inv. № 3629; dimensions 287 x 29.3 x 4 cm) from the fund of the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology of the Holy Synod in Sofia. Readings of the inscriptions on the frieze and analysis of the known historical and documental data suggest that the frieze originates from the Church of St Paraskeva (St Petka) in Svoqe. The year 1496 mentioned in an inscription on the frieze may indicate the year of its creation or to be terminus ante quem for the construction of the Church, or that is related to an important and chronologically close event. Probably, the persons mentioned in the inscription are settlers from Telish village (Cherven Bryag Municipality). Another inscription on the frieze proves that it was renovated in 1634 with funds provided by the priest Zlatan and his wife.

In spite of all the conventions, it can be concluded with certainty that the frieze from Svoqe dates from the end of 15th or more likely the 16th c. and represents one of the early woodcarved examples of an epistyle with Deesis and apostles on thrones which is specific to post-Byzantine Balkan art.

THE ICON ARCHANGEL MICHAEL WRESTS THE SOUL OF THE SINNER FROM THE NATIONAL CHURCH MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY, THE DEMOLISHED ST ARCHANGEL MICHAEL CHURCH IN SOFIA AND THE PRIEST NIKOLA FROM TETEVEN

Maya Zacharieva
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The article is dedicated to the icon of Archangel Michael Wrests the Soul of the Sinner from the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology (NCMHA). The icon has been published in numerous articles which contain various types of evidence about its origins. The analysis of the historical evidence shows that perhaps the icon was ordered for the demolished in the 19th century St Archangel Michael Church in Sofia. The study focuses also

on three other icons: Deesis with Apostles (NAIM, Inv. № 190 kc), The Virgin with the Christ Child on a throne and prophets (NAIM, Inv. № 191 kc) and a part of an iconostasis frieze (NCMHA, Inv. № 3377). The analysis shows that most probably the four examples originated from one and the same iconostasis and were painted at the same time in 1703 by the priest Nikola from Teteven and his team. Another alley of research is an analysis of its stylistic features which indirectly relate it to a group of icon works from the regions of Vratsa and Etropole, created at the end of the 17th and the very beginning of the 18th century.

TWO ICONS OF THE ICON-PAINTER ATANAS MINCHOV FROM BATOSHEVO IN NCMHA

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Academy of Sciences

The article attributes several unknown icons, crafted by the icon-painter Atanas Minchov from Batoshevo, who worked during the second quarter of the 19th century. Two of them are from the icon collection at the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology (NCMHA). The first one depicts The Mother of God Eleousa with Saints. It is shaped in the form of a domestic iconostasis, decorated with woodcarving. On the second icon is the image of The Wheel of Life – a rarely painted plot in the art of icon-painting. It seems that both icons were possessed by the family of the icon-painter, which later were donated to a church in Sevlievo and from there they entered the collection at NCMHA.

Atanas Minchov has crafted a huge set of apostle icons for the Troyan Monastery iconostasis catholicon, which are published here for the first time. The specific artistic style of his icons is similar to the one of the icon master John Popnikolov from Gabrovo, which suggests that Atanas Minchov was his pupil.

BOX FOR A CROSS FROM THE NATIONAL CHURCH MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY: CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF TRYAVNA ICON-PAINTING AND THE CHURCH HISTORY OF THE SEVLIEVO REGION

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Academy of Sciences

The article focuses on a box for a cross from the collection of the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology in

Sofia, which entered under 3549 inventory number in 1940. According to the inventory books of the museum, the box was brought from the town of Sevlievo and dates to the first half of the 19th century. The box is made of wood in the shape of a book, bound in leather and on the inner part of the lid is depicted the scene Dormition of the Virgin Mary. The stylistic analysis showed that the painted decoration could be attributed to the Tryavna icon-painter Zachariya Tsanyuv. On the basis of the made parallels, the box dated back to the third quarter of the 19th, most likely crafted during the 1850s or 1860s. In terms of the functional specifics of the object, which probably was used by an itinerant monk, a hypothesis about its origin is made. It is possible that the box for a cross was made for the Batoshevo Monastery "Dormition of the Virgin Mary" near the town of Sevlievo. Literary sources do not state that the monastery had sent taxidiots. Contrary to this, there is some historical evidence that give reason to assume that towards the second half of the 19th century such activity existed. On this assumption, the article suggests that the box for a cross from the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology originates exactly from this monastery.

CHRISTOLOGICAL SCENES IN THE MEDIEVAL FRESCOES AT THE ST ARCHANGEL MICHAEL CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF RILA – NEW OBSERVATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Luyben Domozetski
Sofia City Art Gallery

This article examines the iconography of the Christological compositions in the medieval frescoes in the St Archangel Michael Church in the town of Rila. After a long break of the restoration work, they are finished in 2018. The fragments of compositions Annunciation, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, The Descent from the Cross, Ascension of Christ, are well preserved. The image of St Jacob who is depicted in a cave between the compositions Transfiguration and Annunciation, is a subject of interest. This unusual iconography decision hasn't any direct analogs in the well-known Byzantine monuments. The iconography of the composition Crucifixion follows more archaic patterns and points to the dating of the monument in the 11th century. The representation of the Descent from the Cross scene gives us the reason to precise the dating rather at the end of 11th century or in transition in the next century.

THE EARLY CONSERVATION HISTORY OF PANAGIA THEOSKEPASTI ICON FROM SOZOPOL

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Dimitar Rizov is the first full-time icon conservator-restorer of the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology. He held this position between 1938 and 1960. Although his work is of great importance to the current state of the museum collection, his conservation practice has not yet been sufficiently studied.

The article focuses on the first conservation of the two-sided icon of Panagia Theoskepasti and Crucifixion of Christ, performed by Dimitar Rizov in 1941. The icon was relocated to the museum from the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Sozopol, in 1939 and is being published for the first time. The current text is an attempt to reconstruct and evaluate the work done by the museum conservator-restorer to establish the degree of authenticity of the restored artwork.

Notes and photographs from the personal archive of the conservator-restorer were used for the purpose of the study. The examined documents contain information on the transfer of the painting layer of the icon onto a new panel. This calls into question the authenticity of the artwork, because the icon is originally two-sided. The present research reveals a number of inaccuracies in Dimitar Rizov's notes. Surviving photographs indicate that he attempted to transfer the painting layer of the icon of Panagia Theoskepasti, but returned it back to its original wooden panel. The interventions carried out (without the use of protective layer) damaged the entire surface of the icon, which can hardly be positively evaluated from a modern point of view. Nevertheless, today it can be considered that Dimitar Rizov is a conservator-restorer with great experience gained during his long-term work with the collection of the National Church Museum of History and Archaeology.

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