

REVIEW

On the dissertation work of Tereza Ivanova Bacheva

On the subject:

THE ROMAN POPES IN THE MURAL PAINTINGS PROGRAM OF THE CHURCHES IN THE BULGARIAN LANDS (15TH-18TH CENTURIES)

On the procedure for acquiring the educational and academic degree doctor

Academic specialty *Art Studies and Fine Arts, 8.1 Arts Theory*

By Assoc. Prof. Dr Stilyana Batalova

Preliminary notes

According to the Order №88-RD of the Director of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences of 27.02.2023, I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the award of the educational and scientific degree of regular PhD student Tereza Ivanova Bacheva based on her dissertation “The Roman Popes in the Mural Painting Programs in the Bulgarian Lands (15th - 18th centuries)”.

This review is based on the materials provided to me in electronic format, including:

1. CV of the full-time PhD Student Tereza Bacheva
2. Abstract
3. Dissertation
4. Declaration of originality and authenticity of the scientific data in the dissertation by PhD student Tereza Bacheva.
5. Declaration by regular PhD student Theresa Bacheva on the fulfillment of the minimum state requirements according to LDASRB and RILDASRB, adopted by the PMS No. 202 of 10.09. 2010, as amended and supplemented in SG No. 56 of 6 July 2018, in which her publications on the topic of her doctoral dissertation and her participation in scientific forums are listed.

Based on my review of these documents, I confirm that the minimum scientific requirements set out under LDASRB the and the RILDASRB for admission to the defense of a dissertation for the award of a PhD in *Art Studies and Fine Arts, 8.1. Art Theory* has been completed by Tereza Ivanova Bacheva.

Biographical data about the PhD student

Tereza Bacheva graduated in Bulgarian Philology at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. In the period 2020-2022 she is a full-time PhD student at the Institute of Art Studies. During her studies she has prepared and published five articles, which

present the main results of her dissertation. She has submitted her dissertation within the time limit set by the LDASRB.

The dissertation

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography of 576 titles (of which 95 are sources), a catalogue of the personalities considered in the work (inventory and images), other illustrative material to the main text and appendices.

The dissertation is devoted to the depictions of Roman bishops in the fresco programs of the Bulgarian churches of the 15th-18th centuries. As underlined in the introduction and proved by Teresa Bacheva herself through the review of previous studies, these images have been studied within the fresco programs of individual monuments in the Bulgarian lands and in the Balkans, but have never been studied systematically in order to trace the development of the imagery of an individual pope as well as of Roman bishops in general in the continuity of the Balkan Orthodox tradition, whether it was influenced by historical and political circumstances, etc. Therefore, the selection of the topic is appropriate and defines it as topical and worthy of a dissertation. The research carried out by T. Bacheva's review of the scientific achievements of her predecessors is comprehensive and is essentially a critical review which helps her to define with great precision the object, aims and objectives of her research.

The object of the study are the images of the popes who occupied the Roman cathedra from the time of St. Peter to the end of the 8th century, whose memories are venerated by the Orthodox Church and after the schism between Orthodox and Catholics in the middle of the 11th century. As the dissertation emphasizes, once formed, the composition of these memorials was stable. The research task is multi-component and large-scale. It includes systematization of the images of Roman hierarchs of the post-Byzantine period in a wide geographical range - Bulgarian lands and their border regions; tracing the development of the images of Roman hierarchs in their literary and pictorial context; considering the degree of reception of memorials and the significance of Roman hierarchs according to the functions of their images and the development of certain compositions. The comparative approach chosen by the dissertation author, considering the historical, theological, and pictorial context, is appropriate for the accomplishment of the set aims and objectives. Thanks to its consistent application, as a careful reading of the proposed text reveals, the dissertation formulates principles for the identification of images (typological characteristics of images, features, vestments, attributes, place of depiction of hierarchs and their participation in compositions). Knowing well the previous studies and applying the described principles, Bacheva polemicalizes with some previously expressed opinions and in some cases puts forward new, more convincing hypotheses concerning the identification of some characters.

The logical structure of the work is well supported.

The introduction, first chapter is particularly useful not only for the present study, as it clearly describes the historical and pictorial context of the images under examination, as well as the principles of their selection. The dissertator has done an excellent job of conveying a significant amount of information in a relatively short volume without compromising clarity or upsetting the overall balance of the presentation.

A contributory point is the treatment of the question of the possible influence of the Catholic Church on the inclusion of images of Roman popes in the fresco programs of Orthodox churches in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A good impression both here and throughout the study is not only that T. Bacheva's knowledge of older and contemporary studies (used in many languages), but that she analyses them thoroughly, allowing her to reject hypotheses and build on knowledge. In this case, concerning the possible Catholic influence on the depictions of the Roman popes, T. Bacheva's conclusions sound moderate and convincing. She assumes *that "the inclusion of images of Roman bishops in fresco programs occurs within a rather established formula for the representation of saintly bishops. There is no deviation from the general trend ... both in terms of the development of their pictorial characteristics and their place in decorative programs"* (p.43).

The core of the dissertation is in the following three chapters, which have a similar logical structure, and the exposition pursues the historical chronology of the depicted characters and follows the plan of narrowing the geographical range - from the wider Balkan context - to the Bulgarian lands in diachronic perspective. The three personalities most frequently found in the fresco programs of the Orthodox churches in the period under consideration (15th-18th centuries) are: St Clement of Rome (88-97 or 97-101), St Sylvester (314-335) and St Leo the Great (440-461), which is why they are central to the study. In each of the three chapters, the development of the pictorial tradition is preceded by a historical overview of the personality of each of these saints of the Ecumenical Church, their dynasty as theologians and bishops of the Roman Church in the context of Church life before and after the Great Schism of 1054, and their memory as reflected in hagiographic literature. As for the philological support of the conducted observations - inscriptions and texts, especially hagiographic ones, one is impressed by T. Bacheva's attention to comprehensiveness and attention to detail. Thorough analysis of any information that could clarify a supposed identification of an unnamed inscribed saint are also evident from the extensive scholarly apparatus footnoted. With such a volume of information, it is also the case that some inaccuracies¹.

¹ Among the unimportant ones that can be easily eliminated in preparing the work for print are, for example, the Latin phonetic appearance in the Greek rendering of the word "anchor" in the interpretation of the Clement of Rome and Clement of Ancyra contemporizing in one of the footnotes. Another such omission is the year of the transfer of (part of) the relics of St. Clement of Rome to "San Clemente a Cazuria". According to the 12th century Cazaurian Chronicle by John (son of) Berard cited above, this event is attributed to 872, when the Holy Roman Emperor Ludovic the Younger (not to be confused with Ludwig II, King of the German Kingdom) obtained permission from Pope Adrian II for the relics of St. Clement of Calabria to be restored. Clement to be transferred to the said monastery. Indeed, this information is an important testimony both to the spread of the cult of St. Clement, as well as the connection with the Slavonic Apostle Cyril. In addition, I recommend that the first interpreter of the prose and poetic information in the

Looking at the images of St. Clement, St. Sylvester and St. Leo is chronological, by monuments. Each chapter outlines the specifics of the iconography of each of the Roman papal saints in development. Differences between them are highlighted in comparative terms at relevant points in the text, and possible reasons for the greater frequency of the choice of St. Sylvester, relative to St. Clement and St. Leo, for example. Their place in the altar space and outside the altar space is analyzed, and in several cases possible identifications of St. Clement and St. Leo and the arguments for this are discussed.

Expressing hypotheses, T. Bacheva provides the necessary arguments and does not present unmotivated final opinions and assessments, which should be considered as a merit of her work. I share this observation regarding the last fifth chapter of her dissertation, "Other Representations of Roman Popes", because I find it very challenging. It includes a small number of depictions in individual churches of unpopular saints in Orthodox painting - St. Pope Telesphorus (125-136), St. Pope Agathon (678-681), St. Adrian I (772-795), St. Cornelius and St. Gregory.

I must emphasize that the conclusion of T. Bacheva's dissertation is a complete and, in my opinion, thorough (insofar as it exhausts the known extant images) content-analysis of the system of images of the Roman popes in the fresco programs in the Bulgarian lands from the 15th-18th centuries. The conclusions that Bacheva draws are even more convincing because the general context has not lost sight of in the exposition, along with several problems of individual images. The complex approach applied by the researcher allows her to trace the place of individual images in the development of the iconographic programs of the Orthodox churches and of the episcopal repertoire. Without losing focus, methodically and consistently throughout the study, Bacheva brings in a wealth of comparative material from other periods of Orthodox fine art and across a wider geographical area. Quite rightly, the dissertation emphasizes once again at the end of her work the role of ecclesiastical and political circumstances and historical ones that lead to the formation of a stable composition of Roman bishops in the mural programs of the post-Byzantine period. T. Bacheva summarizes that the scenes including these depictions are the Adoration of the Sacrifice - among the processions of the concelebrating hierarchs, as supplemented by figures in the altar, in friezes outside the altar, in fresco calendars, and some of the scenes of ecumenical councils (see Dissertation 202-204 and Author's abstract, p. 16).

The catalogue of the images, which T. Bacheva modestly did not describe among the contributions of her dissertation, in my opinion should be included as such. The information in it is correct, complete and facilitates the reader. The quality of the pictorial material in the catalogue and other illustrations to the text is optimal. The tables given as appendices at the end and correlating the images with the liturgical calendar also illustrate the text well and assist the reader.

Cazaurian Chronicle in the scientific Cyril and Methodius literature, Fr. Ivan Martinov (I. Martinov, *La légende dite italique des saints Cyrille et Méthode*, "Revue des questions historiques" 1884, 36, juillet, p. 110-166, the poem from the chronicle p. 128-129. In the same place Fr. Yves. Martinov also quotes a Latin hymn containing an analogous account to that in the Chronicle and promulgated in the early 18th century by Fr. Filippo Rondinini, *De S. Clemente papa et martyre ejusque basilica in urbe Roma libri duo, Romae* 1706, p. 176.

The abstract is meticulously written and reflects the topic, aims, objectives, structure, and content of the thesis. Five scientific contributions are correctly formulated, with which we can agree.

The publications of T. Bacheva described in the declaration and the abstract give a clear picture and reflect the main contributions of her dissertation.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the competition procedure was conducted in a fully fair manner and in compliance with all the requirements of the LDASRB. The dissertation of T. Bacheva has high scientific merits and reflects original results, achieved through enviable purposefulness, erudition, diligence, and perseverance in work. Based on the foregoing, I propose that Tereza Ivanova Bacheva be awarded the educational and academic degree of in the specialty of Art Studies and Fine Arts, 8.1 Art Theory. I hope that the other members of the esteemed scientific jury will vote in favor of this decision.

Ascension

May 25, 2023.

Sofia

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