SOCIAL CHANGES AND ICONOGRAPHIC ADJUSTMENTS: REPRESENTING DONORS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ROMANIAN MURAL PAINTING

SILVIA MARIN BARUTCIEFF[1]

Resumo | Abstract

Representing donors within the mural paintings of the churches has been an extant practice in the Romanian Principality of Wallachia since the medieval times. During the Middle Ages this lay presence within the narthex of religious edifices pointed out the symbolic offering and the material contribution made by princes and great boyars to the transcendence and also to their community. After 1700, but especially at the end of the 18th century, the number of donors in the iconography multiplied, including new social categories. At the same time, the size of the visual compositions with church's patrons gradually augmented. This paper aims at examining the historical and artistic contexts of these transformations detectable in the long eighteenth century within the religious edifices of Wallachia. The analysis will concentrate on the iconographic programs from the Orthodox rural landscape, with the mural decoration elaborated between 1720 and 1830. The first chronological limit corresponds to the end of the so-called School of Hurezi followed by the dissemination in Wallachia of a specific artistic style — the Brancovan style. The second chronological limit represents the dawn of the social changes produced by a political rebellion, the uprising of 1821. Another objective will be to examine the expansion of the votive portraits in relation with the general increase of the secular topics in the iconographic programs of the Romanian churches.

Palavras-chave | Keywords

Churches; donors; iconography; eighteenth century; Wallachia.

Resumo biográfico | Short biography

Associate Professor, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters. Doctoral dissertation with Hagiography between Text and Image (2007); author of the book Christopher: Faces of a Faceless Saint. Representations in Medieval and Modern Romanian Culture and Their Sources (2014); co-editor of the international conference volume Travellers and Travels. Seeing and Discovering (2016); co-editor of the volume From Fiction to Reality. Image, Imaginary, Imagology (2010); co-editor of Actes du XIVème Congrès International d'Études sur les Danses macabres et l'art macabre en general. Member of the Society for 18th Century Studies on South Eastern Europe; member of the International Association of Word and Image Studies (IAWIS/AIERTI), member of the Hagiography Society. 25 years of field

[1] University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters.

researches dedicated to Romanian and European iconography. Areas of interest: early modern and modern studies; hagiography within image and text; cultural transfer through iconography and art; history of museums, collectors and collections, history of the artistic education.