

## Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

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Miroslav Piotr Kruk (ed.), *Icons from the 14th-16th Centuries in the National Museum in Krakow, Volume I, Catalogue* (in Polish and English)

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### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

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βυζαντινό παρελθόν και ειδικά στην τοπική παράδοση της ευρύτερης γεωγραφικής περιοχής που υπαγόταν εκκλησιαστικά στη δικαιοδοσία της αρχιεπισκοπής Αχρίδας. Ο διάκοσμος εκφράζει τις μικρές μοναστικές κοινότητες της περιοχής, που επηρεάστηκαν από τις ησυχαστικές αντιλήψεις του Γρηγορίου Παλαμά. Η συγγραφέας προσφέρει μια διεξοδική και πολύπλευρη προσέγγιση του θέματος συνδυάζοντας πολλαπλούς άξονες και γνωστικά πεδία: της ιστορικής τοπογραφίας, της αρχιτεκτονικής, της επιγραφικής, της θεολογίας, της αρχαιολογίας, της ιστορίας της τέχνης. Η αυστηρά επιστημονική θεώρηση και η σαφήνεια στη διάρθρωση του υλικού και στην επιχειρηματολογία συνδυάζονται με τη γλαφυρότητα του λόγου. Με γνώση, πληρότητα και συνέπεια η συγγραφέας

ερμηνεύει εύστοχα το εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα και αναλύει την εικονογραφία και τεχνοτροπία του γραπτού διακόσμου με αναφορές σε παράλληλες παραστάσεις κυρίως του ευρύτερου μακεδονικού χώρου και της Σερβίας. Η μονογραφία συμβάλλει όχι μόνο στην ενδελεχή μελέτη και ερμηνεία του συγκεκριμένου μνημείου αλλά και στην ανάδειξη των ιστορικοκοινωνικών συνθηκών που ευνόησαν τη δημιουργία των αναχωρητικών κοινοτήτων στις όχθες των Πρεσπών, στο μεταίχμιο ανάμεσα στο Βυζάντιο και στο μετα-Βυζάντιο.

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Miroslav Piotr Kruk (ed.), *Icons from the 14th-16th Centuries in the National Museum in Krakow*, Volume I, *Catalogue* (in Polish and English), The National Museum in Krakow, 2019, 759 pp., ISBN: 978-83-7581-293-7. Volume II, *Technological Tests* (in Polish and English), The National Museum in Krakow, 2019, 343 pp., ISBN: 978-83-7581-295-4. Volume III, *Illustrations* (in Polish and English), The National Museum in Krakow, 2019, 611 pp., ISBN: 978-83-7581-293-1.

IN 2012, DURING THE SECOND CRACOW SYMPOSIUM on Byzantine Art and Archaeology, which took place at the Pontifical University of John Paul II, I had the opportunity to visit the National Museum in Krakow and, in particular, the Department of Orthodox Church Art, located in the Bishop Erazm Ciołek Palace. The presentation of this collection by a colleague, Miroslav Piotr Kruk, curator of the Art Collection of the Orthodox Church in the Department of Old Art of the National Museum in Krakow<sup>1</sup>, launched an interesting academic dialogue about Byzantine and post-Byzantine art in Poland that has continued since. The gothic palace, with influences from the Italian Renaissance, holds a collection of icons not widely known to the public that constitutes one of the oldest and most valuable collections of Orthodox Christian painting in Central Europe.

This three-volume and several hundred-page publication concerns 50 selected icons from the collection, dated from the 14th and 16th centuries. The first volume contains

of the catalogue text, the second the technological tests and the third the illustrations.

The publication and the research behind it was financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education under the Polish National Programme for the Development of Humanities from 2015 to 2019<sup>2</sup>.

Kruk, the author of the first volume and editor of the two others, has produced an extensive body of work in the field of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art in Poland, especially after the completion of his thesis on the icons of the Virgin and Child in Ruthenian 15th- and 16th-century painting<sup>3</sup>. Since 2000, Kruk has been working with art historian Bronisława Gumińska in the Department of Guild and Orthodox Art of the National Museum in Krakow. An exhibition of Orthodox art opened to the public in October 2007 in the above-mentioned Bishop Erazm Ciołek Palace

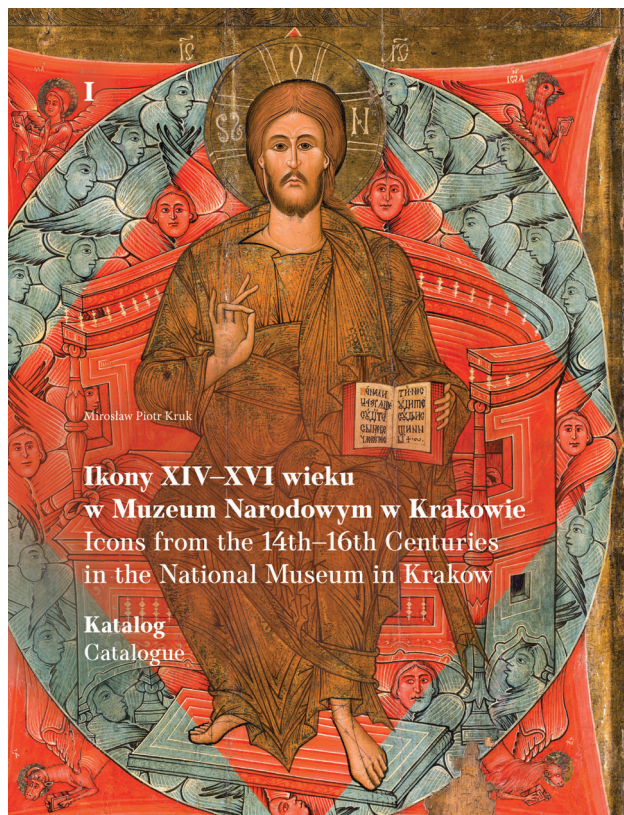
<sup>1</sup> Kruk is also professor in the humanities with a specialisation in the field of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art, head of the Department of the History of Medieval Art at the Institute of Art History at the University of Gdańsk.

<sup>2</sup> The entire collection of Orthodox Art –the icons of 17th-18th centuries bearing influences of Western art and these of 19th-20th centuries influenced by Russian art– will be published systematically in the future.

<sup>3</sup> M. P. Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem wieku XV-XVI*, Kraków 2000.

–a new branch of the National Museum<sup>4</sup>– accompanied by a guide published for the occasion<sup>5</sup>.

The examined icons in the recent edition mainly originate from the southeastern lands of the old Polish Commonwealth or the Republic of the Two Nations, the single state founded in 1569, from the union of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, populated by Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians. The situation of the Orthodox Ruthenians was difficult in multi-denominational state, comprising Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists as well as Muslims and Jews<sup>6</sup>. A map of Poland from 1589, made by Waclaw Grodecki and Abraham Ortelius<sup>7</sup>, is extremely helpful in understanding the origins of the icons. The 38 icons that form the majority of the collection come from the old Ruthenian centres in Halych, Chelm, Przemyśl and Lviv, not far from the city of Krakow, in the present-day territory of Poland and Ukraine. The majority of them date to the 15th and 16th centuries, before the acceptance of a union with Rome by the Orthodox clergy in Poland in 1596. The second group/category refers to eight Russian icons from the same period<sup>8</sup>. The smallest group/category, consisting of four icons<sup>9</sup>, originates from the south and is closely connected to Byzantine and post-Byzantine art. The *Sacra Conversazione*, depicting the Virgin Mary and Child, Saints Catherine and Roch, and the Mother of God Eleusa are linked with Dalmatia and the art of the Cretan painter Angelos Pitzamanos. In my opinion, the third icon, the triptych with the Passion Cycle comes from the same region and it is not the work of a Cretan painter. The most important icon of this catalogue, possibly made by a 14th-century painter from Constantinople –and not from Kastoria as the author proposes– is the icon of Saints Anargyroi, Cosmas and Damianos. Despite its small dimensions, an indication that it



was intended for private adoration, the icon with the gentle shapes and the white expressionistic lights constitutes an exceptional example of the art of the Byzantine capital.

The icon that arrived in 2011 from Ottawa, Canada, with a certificate identifying it as a 19th-century Russian icon, as a gift from the couple Jerzy and Zofia Ruebenbauer, also has a fascinating history. Jerzy Ruebenbauer (1906–1998) was the first Commandant of Lviv (or Leopold in Greek, which during the interwar Second Polish Republic was the capital of the Lwów Voivodeship). When the war broke out, he became co-organiser in Lviv of the National Party and National Military Organisation. After Lviv was seized by the Soviets in 1939, the icon was hidden in his family house and thereafter followed the family adventures to Warsaw (before the Second World War), and then to London, Berlin, Brussels and Ottawa. The reverse of the icon features a list of names with exact birth dates, the identification of which was possible after contacting the donors' family. It turned out that the icon belonged to Ruebenbauer's grandmother, Charikleia Mavrokordatou-Serini, of the Greek Mavrokordatos family. In Lviv, when Charikleia married Jan Robert Hoszowski, a member of an old and famous Polish family, she transferred the Byzantine icon to her new home as a precious family relic.

<sup>4</sup> The National Museum was established in Krakow in 1879.

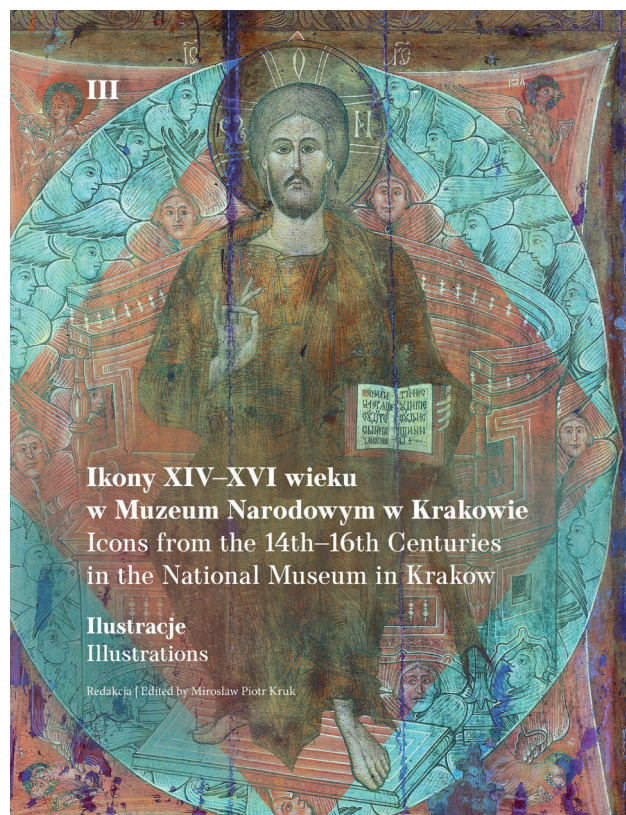
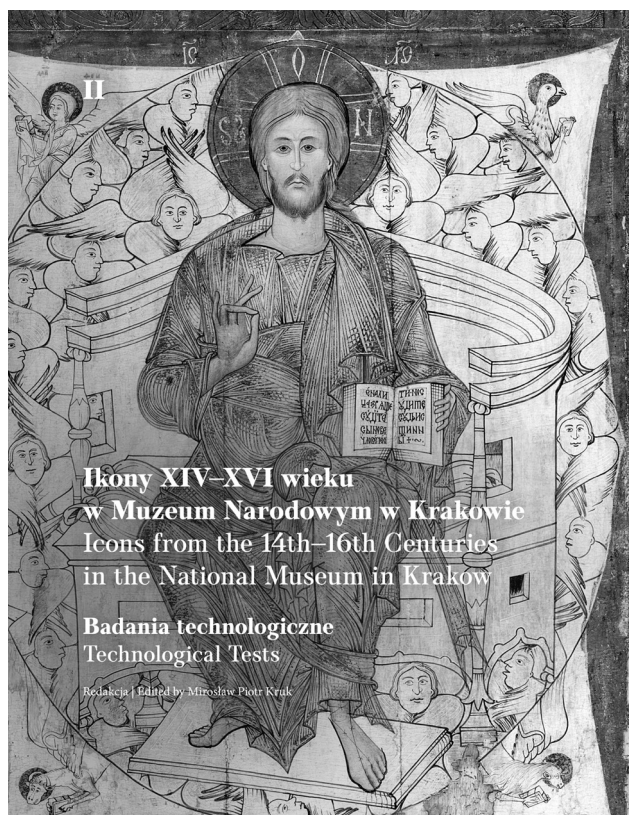
<sup>5</sup> B. Gumińska, *Gallery "Orthodox Art of the Old Polish Republic"*, Krakow 2008.

<sup>6</sup> See also Grazuna Jurkowlanec, "Between the First and the Third Rome: The Cult of Marian Images in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth", *L'icône dans la pensée et dans l'art. Constitutions, contestations, réinventions de la notion d'image divine en contexte chrétien*, volume coordonné par Kristina Mitalaitė et Anca Vasiliu (BYZANTIOΣ, Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 10), Turnhout: Brepols 2017, 387–421.

<sup>7</sup> "Poloniae finitimarumque locorum description", Jagiellonian Library, inv. no. M36/39.

<sup>8</sup> Catalogue numbers: 6, 11, 12, 13, 23, 24, 41, 50.

<sup>9</sup> Catalogue numbers: 20, 21, 33, 43.



All these 50 icons share a great number of features which make them a relatively coherent group, more faithful to the Byzantine painting tradition, regardless of whether they were produced in southeastern Europe; Ruthenia, within the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or in Northern Ruthenia (Novgorod Ruthenia, Pskov Ruthenia) and Central Ruthenia (Muscovite Ruthenia).

In the introductory chapter, “Works of Orthodox Art at the National Museum in Krakow: History of the Collection, Exhibitions and Study”, the author explores how this collection was created and developed significantly after 1879. The collection’s objects were exhibited for the first time in 1886 in Lviv, a city in present-day Ukraine, in the context of the Polish Ruthenian Archaeological Exhibition. During the 1890s, the museum received a large number of icons from the area of Przemyśl and its collection was enriched by numerous donations. The chapter entitled “Donors and Sellers: Provenance of the Icons”, in the second part of the first volume, presents a detailed catalogue of the donors, who were mainly Orthodox priests, amateur archaeologists and wealthy collectors. There is also an unconfirmed assumption that connects the provenance of these icons with painting workshops of isolated monasteries that were abandoned in the 18th century.

The chapter “Examination of Icons from the 14th to

16th Centuries in the Collection of the National Museum in Krakow as Part of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities (1bH 15 0435 83)” refers to the criteria established for selecting icons as well as the progress in implementing this major project. One of the project main tasks was an interdisciplinary effort involving art historians, conservators, philologists, physicists, chemists, geologists and representatives of other academic disciplines. The programme’s departure point was the taking of analytical photographs. Thus, in early 2015, the staff of the Laboratory of Analysis and Non-Destructive Investigation of Heritage Objects of the National Museum of Krakow photographed 50 icons in ultraviolet, infrared, X-ray and visible light. The results of this scientific work, which are particularly useful for archaeologists and art historians, are presented through the 600 pages of the third volume.

The reports of the technological examinations can be found in the second volume, which also contains a coloured inset of wood samples, geological tables and macrophotographs. The remarkable results of this specific research comprise 2,500 pages of reports and several hundred of illustrations in total. It is very interesting and useful to note that the style observations made about the artistic origin of an icon were confirmed by its undercoat and kind of wood.

Linden wood was the main material-support in the Ruthenian icons of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The only icon on chestnut was a Byzantine one from the 14th century. Dendrochronological methods confirmed the dating based on the style of painting and indicated a terminus post quem for the year after which wood from a cut tree was used to make the support.

In the main catalogue, the selected way of presenting the 50 icons is a result of a compromise between the idea of following the structure of an iconostasis and of grouping the icons thematically as well as chronologically. The catalogue includes a detailed and comprehensive description and information for the provenance of each icon, the condition, the treatments, the support, the inscriptions, the iconography, the style and the painters, the former exhibitions and bibliography (unpublished sources and, of course, publications). It is an exemplary and valuable study, a result of many years of research.

In the second part of the first volume, under the heading

“Summary”, the author examines subjects linked to the patrons, painters and dates in the icons; the donors, dates and provenance; the inscriptions and semantic content of the icons; the icons in the iconostasis; and the technological construction of the icons. The linguistic research by Wanda Stepniak-Minczewska, the bibliography and the index of names and places complete the first volume. This important research and publishing project of a great number of scientists headed by Miroslav Kruk confirms the significant work of our Polish colleagues in the field of the humanities. In addition, it showcases in the best possible way the collection of Orthodox icons of the National Museum in Krakow, constituting a model of interdisciplinary research and documentation.

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Ken Dark and Jan Kosteneč, *Hagia Sophia in Context. An Archaeological Re-examination of the Cathedral of Byzantine Constantinople*, Oxbow Books, Oxford – Havertown, PA 2019 – X & 141 σελ. ISBN: 978-1-78925-030-5, Digital Edition: ISBN 978-1-78925-031-2 (epub).\*

ΤΑ ΕΞΙ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΠΟΥ ΠΡΟΗΓΗΘΗΚΑΝ από την απόφαση της τουρκικής κυβέρνησης να μετατρέψει εκ νέου την Αγία Σοφία σε τέμενος, υπήρξαν ιδιαίτερα γόνιμα όσον αφορά τη δημοσίευση αξιόλογων μονογραφιών που αφιερώθηκαν στη μελέτη της εμβληματικής αυτής εκκλησίας. Στο σύνολό τους οι μελέτες αυτές πραγματεύονται θέματα που, αν δεν είχαν αγνοηθεί πλήρως από την έρευνα, σίγουρα δεν είχαν τύχει της δέουσας προσοχής. Σε χρονολογική σειρά από το 2014 και μετά είδαν το φως της δημοσιότητας οι μονογραφίες της Nadine Schibille για τον φυσικό φωτισμό του ναού, της Natalia Teteriatnikov για τα ιουστινιάνεια ψηφιδωτά, της Bissera Pentcheva για τη μουσική και την ακουστική της εκκλησίας, και του Alessandro Taddei για την ιστορία της αρχιτεκτονικής της και την εν γένει ιστορία της πριν από το 532. Το βιβλίο των Ken Dark, αναπληρωτή καθηγητή Αρχαιολογίας και

Ιστορίας στο University of Reading, και Jan Kosteneč, μέλους του Czech Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology, αποτελεί σημαντική προσθήκη στο πολύπτυχο αυτό, έστω και αν η προσέγγιση και η θεματική του κινούνται σε διαφορετική κατεύθυνση. Ως δημοσίευμα επέχει χαρακτηριστικά τελικής έκθεσης των πορισμάτων του ερευνητικού προγράμματος που απασχόλησε τους δύο αρχαιολόγους τα έτη 2004-2018 και αφορούσε τη μελέτη του αρχιτεκτονικού συγκροτήματος της Αγίας Σοφίας και των γύρω χώρων. Αν και ορισμένα από τα πορίσματα αυτά έχουν ήδη δημοσιευθεί (σ. 133, 135-136), οι συγγραφείς θεωρούν ότι η δημοσίευση αυτή εκφράζει την τελική και ολοκληρωμένη τους άποψη για τα μέρη του μνημείου τα οποία εξετάζονται. Η μελέτη υπεισέρχεται στην παρουσίαση και ανάλυση σειράς ειδικών ζητημάτων που αφορούν την «τοπογραφία» του οικοδομήματος της Αγίας Σοφίας, τα οποία είτε σχετίζονται με το κυρίως κτίσμα είτε, τις περισσότερες φορές, αφορούν συγκεκριμένα κτίσματα στον εσωτερικό ή εξωτερικό χώρο του ναού. Οι περιγραφές και οι αναλύσεις των διάφορων τμημάτων του ναού που

\* Η παρουσίαση αυτή αποτελεί απόδοση στα ελληνικά εκείνης που δημοσιεύτηκε στο περιοδικό *The Byzantine Review* 02.2020.023.