

9-11 SEPTEMBER 2021

## Abstracts

### **2nd RICONTRANS Workshop**

ICONS IN MOTION:  
RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART,  
VISUAL CULTURE AND  
COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES  
IN THE BALKANS AND  
THE EAST MEDITERRANEAN

**LOCATION:**

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE | FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

The RICONTRANS project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 818791)

# RICONTRANS

**Visual Culture, Piety and Propaganda: Transfer and Reception of Russian Religious Art in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean (16th – early 20th century)**  
<https://ricontrans-project.eu/>

---

The Russian religious artefacts (icons and ecclesiastical furnishings), held in museums, church or monastery collections in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, constitute a body of valuable monuments hitherto largely neglected by historians and historians of art. These objects acquire various interrelated religious, ideological, political and aesthetic meanings, value, and uses. Their transfer and reception constitutes a significant component of the wider process of transformation of the artistic language and visual culture in the region and its transition from medieval to modern idioms. It is at the same time a process reflecting the changing cultural and political relations between Russia and the Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states in the Balkans over a long period of time (16th- early 20th century). In this dynamic transfer, piety, propaganda and visual culture appear intertwined in historically unexplored and theoretically provoking ways.

RICONTRANS explores the thousands of Russian Icons and other religious art objects, brought from Russia to the Balkans from the 16th until the 20th century, preserved in monasteries, churches, and museum collections in the region.

Applying the cultural transfer approach in combination with the recent challenging openings of art history to visual studies and social anthropology, RICONTRANS aims to map the phenomenon in its long history by identifying preserved objects in the region; to follow the paths and identify the mediums of this transfer; to analyze the moving factors of this process; to inquire into the aesthetic, ideological, political and social factors which shaped the context of the reception of Russian religious art objects in various social and cultural environments; to investigate the influence of these transferred artefacts on the visual culture of the host societies.



# Nicoleta Badila

Bucharest Municipality Museum

nicoletabadila87@yahoo.com

## *Refuges of the devotionals: Russian copper icons and crosses from the collection of Bucharest Municipality Museum*

---

A small community of Russian old believers settled in the south of Romania. They brought small religious objects that they carried for divine protection and, as they made homes for themselves, they also started to create religious objects for their household altars.

In the context of the rift from the central church administration and the lack of a traditional Christian prayer space, the old believers created small altars in their own homes, some in plain sight, and others that appeared only with the great Christian holidays. Pieces that complete the altars are created in local communities. Using Byzantine Christian iconography, in some places with local inserts of saints and decorative elements, they began to create icons and objects for worshiping. In this way, the production of icons and crosses cast in copper developed greatly, and the pieces travelled with the believers to many places in the world. A certainty is that the old believers of Russia remain loyal even to the types of Christian iconography which set the religious landmarks of the community, and their typology is relatively limited. It includes small icons depicting well known saints from the Christian pantheon or local saints, bronze crosses with varying sizes that preferentially treat the Christ's crucifixion with saints represented on longitudinal appendages of the central axis, triptychs that deal with a wide range of biblical themes and enamel paintings.

In the religious art collection of Bucharest Municipality Museum, there is rather generous group of icons and crosses attributed to the Russian old believers which were found in Romanian territories. With these in mind I propose an analysis that it is meant to highlight the iconographical particularities of these objects, their transfer from Russian to Romanian regions and their incorporation into private and public spaces in Romania.

# Yuliana Boycheva

Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

julyb1205@gmail.com

## *The other side of the Icon: an important Source on the material and social Biography of the Object*

---

The present paper gives a brief overview of the first results of my research, which focuses on a largely neglected facet – both literally and metaphorically – of the icon: its reverse side. The material examined are 16th to early 20th c. Russian portable icons from Greek museum and church collections. The artefacts under consideration provide plethora of textual and iconic evidence for the material and social ‘biography’ of Russian icons, elucidating thus important aspects of their transfer and integration into different contexts in the environment of the host societies. We will first tackle the issue of the material structure of the icon and what this can tell us about the production process. Then, we will proceed to classify and analyze the content of various inscriptions found on the reverse side of the icons and examine their origin, structure and meaning. We will also pay special attention to the new types of inscriptions, linked to the process of ritual decontextualisation of these objects through their incorporation into museum and private collections. Finally, we will also present and discuss rare and very interesting examples of paintings on the back side of the icons.

# Teodora Bradić

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade  
teodorabradic96@gmail.com

## *Metropolitan Michael and the transfer of Russian icons*

---

Metropolitan Michael played a significant role in the development of church history during the 19th century in Serbia. He received his education in Russian spiritual centers and finished it at the Kiev Academy. He remained attached to Russia throughout his life.

Metropolitan Michael supported the organization of the Russian church, and that was exactly the model according to which he shaped the Serbian church. In addition to educating priests about frescoes and sending Serbian painters to study in Russia, Metropolitan Michael sought to establish control over frescoes in Serbian churches, believing that the introduction of Catholic icons into the Serbian church posed a real danger that could lead to humiliation. The Metropolitan supported the import of icons from Russia and icons that corresponded to the spirit of Orthodoxy. In addition, Michael helped with the construction of many new churches, as well as the renovation of the old ones. Thus, during 1885, as a part of the preparations for the celebration of Saints Cyril and Methodius, he sent to Serbia five thousand copies of Russian icons and biographies that he received from the Slavic Charitable Society, which were to be distributed to every school and church in the Scholarly Society. He also donated nineteen icons to the Koporin Monastery in 1893, some of which originated in Russia. Thanks to Metropolitan Mikhail, a large number of Russian icons arrived in Serbia, so that he is one of the important figures for the transfer of Russian icons in the entire Balkans.

# Nadezhda Chesnokova

Institute of World History, Moscow

npchesn@mail.ru

## *Moscow Lamps for Churches in Palestine (1693)*

---

The church lamps, made in 1693 in Moscow at the request of the Jerusalem Patriarch Dositheus, are by no means the only gifts from Russia to the temples of Palestine. However, they stand out from the whole. The sacred lamps were made according to a special pattern sent by the patriarch. In addition, Greek inscriptions were carved on them at the request of Dositheus. This practice, it seems, had never been noted in the sources before. The lamps were dedicated to the Holy places for which the Greeks competed with the Catholics at that time, and were conceived by the Jerusalem Patriarch as a symbol of the tsars' patronage over them. Basing on archival documents, the author of this article reconstructs the entire history of the creation of these late 17th century works of Russian decorative art.

# Irena Ćirović

Department of History of Art, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade /  
The Institute of History of Belgrade  
irena.cirovic@f.bg.ac.rs / cirovicirena@gmail.com

## *Imperial gift and the celebration of the 1600th anniversary of The Edict of Milan in Niš*

---

The transfer of Russian sacred objects can be considered through the imperial gifts to the Serbian churches and monasteries. One of those imperial bestowal followed on the occasion of the celebration of the 1600th anniversary of The Edict of Milan in Serbia. In the atmosphere of a just-ended war in 1913, the central part of the celebration was organized in Niš, the birthplace of Constantine the Great. The Russian mission had significant role among the guests of the celebration, while Russian Tsar Nikolai II sent a congratulatory note to Dositej, the Bishop of Niš. Shortly afterwards, a gift from the Russian Tsar followed to the Cathedral church in Niš, in the form of the complete set of liturgical vessels. Made with exquisite craftsmanship, these church vessels bear an important marker in the form of the inscriptions which commemorated imperial bestowal. This imperial gift is nowadays reintroduced to the public as part of the collection of the newly opened Museum of Church Antiquities of the Diocese of Niš.

# Cristina Cojocaru

Institute of Art History Bucharest / National Museum of the Union, Alba Iulia  
cristina\_regina\_r@yahoo.com

## *Russian icons in Wallachia and Moldavia in the 17th and 18th centuries. Some aspects of style and mentality*

---

Between 1639-1642, the prince of Moldavia, Basil the Wolf (Vasile Lupu), brought “the best Russian painters” from the tsar’s court to decorate his new and magnificent church in Iasi, dedicated to the Holy Three Hierarchs. Soon after, in 1644, his fellow ruler from Wallachia, prince Matthew (Matei) Basarab, also wrote to the tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov, asking him for good painters to elevate the style of icon painting in his country. Furthermore, according to Paul of Aleppo, the secretary of Patriarch Macarius of Antioch, who visited Wallachia in 1653, the church Stelea, recently built by Basil the Wolf in the country’s capital, Targoviste, as a sign of reconciliation with Matthew Basarab, it also had a Russian-style iconostasis. Starting with the middle of the 17th century, in the next hundred years, a large number of Russian icons occurred in the Romanian Principalities, some carrying the stroganoff style, others the conservative style of the old believers, but most of them made in the “new style” of Simon Ushakov’s school. A significant number of these icons were specially commissioned in Moscow to decorate churches and monasteries owned by ruling families, such as Cantacuzino and Cantemir, or founded by metropolitans, bishops and other high-ranking hierarchs.

This presentation focuses on style issues in relation to the sponsors’ taste changes, checking the status of Russian icons in the Romanian mentality of the 17th and 18th centuries. In addition, by questioning the problem of style, this paper aims to address both the clash between westernized icons and the conservative manner of the Byzantine tradition, but especially the lesser-known aspects of the so-called “mixed style” icons, which combine elements of local Romanian schools with Russian and Greek features.

# Vuk Dautović

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade  
vukdau@gmail.com

## *The role and usage of Russian liturgical objects in the shaping of the visual culture of Serbian Orthodox Church in the second half of 19th century*

---

Russian liturgical objects had an important role in shaping of the Serbian Orthodox Church visual culture. Their influence is recognizable in certain iconographical solutions as well as in the artistic production of different types of liturgical objects and utensils. Serbian church practice was strongly influenced by the Russian theology and liturgical needs of that time. That is especially visible in the second half of 19th century, when different trading companies were specialized for an organized import of all types of liturgical vessels; Gospels; liturgical books; icons and even iconostasis from the Russian Empire. Their roll and scope of the work could be traced trough illustrated trading catalogues and other materials. The most prominent importer in the Serbian Kingdom was the firm of church textile tailors named by Vitomir Marković and Ivan Pavlović.

Furthermore, the role of the higher clergy and bishops of Serbian Orthodox Church educated and culturally influenced by the Theological Academies in Moscow and Kiev is also significant for the all mentioned. The acceptance of the new Russian Synodic antimission articulated in the accordance with the art and visual culture of Russian historicism was the most important outside impact to the Serbian liturgical domain. This particular antimission was introduced by the Metropolitan Mihailo of Serbia in the second half of 19th century. Different material church objects imported form Russian Empire, side by side with particular liturgical practices, influenced Serbian church till its deep Russification. Parallel with other kinds of visual church culture, the influences of Russia was undoubtedly highly important for the forming of a specific liturgical environment of Serbian church.

# Anastasia Drandaki

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens / Benaki Museum  
adrandaki@yahoo.gr

## *Contested narratives: Russian religious art in Greek museums and Collections in the twentieth century*

---

The reception of Russian religious art in Greek Museums and collections has been anything but smooth and linear in the past centuries. Especially on the eve of the twentieth century, under the turbulent political and ecclesiastical conditions prevailing in the orthodox Balkans, Russian art, icons in particular, became a contested cultural heritage, perceived alternately as an integral part of local Greek religious space or as a rejectable foreign body. In my paper I will explore the transformations in the reception and perception of Russian religious art by Greek official and unofficial cultural and religious institutions and investigate how prevailing ideological trends shaped the art historical field and the museological approach to Russian icons in Greece.

# Ana Dumitran & Dumitrița-Daniela Filip

National Museum of the Union, Alba Iulia

anadumitran2013@gmail.com

dumitrita.filip@yahoo.com

## *The icon marketing as a way of political and social destabilization: the peasant uprising of 1784 in Transylvania and its alleged initiators*

---

The uprising of the Romanian peasants in Transylvania in 1784 was the last major social movement in the Habsburg Empire. The real causes: the poverty of the population and the lack of political rights, do not seem to have been - in the eyes of the authorities - as important as the fear of Russian spies. Identified among the icon merchants, it was believed that their role was to urge the uprising of the Orthodox population in Transylvania, Banat and Hungary, to give the Tsarist Empire the pretext of an attack to conquer these territories. The rumor turned out to be false. Judging from the perspective of the amount of Russian icons preserved, such an action does not seem to have had any chance anyway. The documents relating to the uprising allow us, however, to date to the end of the eighteenth century a series of Russian icons for which, otherwise, the nineteenth century would have been widely proposed. Their research in the context of the restoration and the comparative analysis with the local production of icons will allow the estimation of the impact that this cultural transfer had.

# Lora Gerd

St. Petersburg Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences  
loragerd@gmail.com

## *Russian church items and material help to the Balkans during the 19th century: political tendencies and philanthropy*

---

The Slavonic lands of the Balkans became an important area for application of Russian 'soft power' in the frames of the competition of the Great Powers and the Eastern Question. The Slavophile ideas contributed to the formation of the policy of Pan Slavism in the mid-19th century. The traditional philanthropic sending of material aid was gradually replaced by purposeful actions of supplying the churches of Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosna and Montenegro with church books and religious items. The Greek lands also received support, though less compared to that for the Slavonic ones. The well preserved documentation of the Russian State Historical Archives allows to trace the sources of the donations, as well as the motives, ways and geography of their delivery and distribution. The detailed lists of donations include vestments, vessels and icons. Regular donations of books were made systematically by the Russian Synod. Sending of money and permissions for gathering donations, bursaries for students was another way of support. Balancing between the caution towards the Ottoman authorities and persistence was aimed at providing a foothold for a future Russian-guided Slavonic confederation.

# Ivanka Gergova

Institute of Art Studies, BAS

v.gergova@yahoo.com

## *Russian “Lubok”: Dissemination and Reception in Bulgarian Lands*

---

A review of Russian “lubok” copies is carried out from both museums and private collections in Bulgaria exploring opportunities to clarify their function prior to them becoming exhibits. The influence of Russian “folk pictures” is traced in the engravings of Pavel “Bulgarian” from the Hilandar Monastery (first half of the 19th century) and in the works of the engravers from Samokov (second half of the 19th century).

# Sofia Katopi

Institute for Mediterranean Studies - FORTH

sofikatopi@gmail.com

## *In quest of Russian holy chalices in Crete*

---

The Cretan Question (part of the Eastern Question) was partly addressed in 1897, when the Great Powers occupied the island with the proclaimed aim to stop the massacres between Christians and Muslims and to restore order. Crete became an autonomous state under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire and was divided into British, French, Russian and Italian areas of control. Russian forces occupied the prefecture of Rethymno and due to their common orthodoxy, close relations developed between Russian officials and the region's bishopric.

In May 1900, an encyclical was sent by the Archbishop of Rethymno which, among other things, informed the priests that “we brought from Russia to Argyroupolis sets of chalice, paten, lance, tongs, asterisk, zeon cup, two small trays, all gilded beautifully, costing only eight mecits, so the parishes that lack chalices should attend to sending us the eight mecits and after one month you will have these beautiful, gilded, holy utensils.”

The aim of this paper is to present the ongoing investigation in churches of Rethymno region for the location of Russian ecclesiastical vessels belonging to the group of chalice sets mentioned in the encyclical. As there are many Russian chalice sets in Rethymnian churches and monasteries, it is not an easy task tracing the specific ones. In addition, most priests in Rethymno today are not aware that many of their ecclesiastical vessels are of Russian provenance.

Finally, many questions rise concerning the ways these chalice sets were transferred to Argyroupolis village and not to the city of Rethymno which was the center of the diocese. Who was responsible for the order, the purchase and the transfer? How was the bishop involved? What was their meaning at the time and how were these chalice sets received during the 20th century? These are some of the questions to be answered with this paper.

# Ana Kostić

Department of History of Art, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade  
anchikostic@gmail.com

## *Memorial Church in Gornji Adrovac as a symbol of Serbian-Russian cultural, political, national, and artistic ties in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*

---

The case of the memorial church in Gornji Adrovac near Aleksinac is a significant example of Russian-Serbian cultural, political, ethnic and artistic ties in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Church in Gornji Adrovac, was built in 1903 in memory of Colonel Nikolaj Rajevski, who died on August 20, 1876, as a Russian volunteer in the Serbian-Turkish liberation war (1876-1877). In addition to being erected as a memorial to Rajevski at the expense of his family, the church also represented a symbol of brotherly relations between the two nations, confirmed by the participation of Russian volunteers in the war, as well as good political ties between Serbia and Russia established during the Russophile government of Serbian King Alexander Obrenović. The national ideology and unity of the two nations are emphasized by the program of wall decoration in which are presented key events and figures from national histories: The baptism of Russians, the Coronation of Stefan the First-Crowned, Saint Alexander Nevsky and Saint Lazarus. The entire program of the realization of the church in Gornji Adrovac was sent from Russia: the architectural plan of the church, the icons for the iconostasis and the stencils for the frescoes in the interior. This was important because it influenced the art of the local environment. The frescoes of the church were made by the local painter Dušan Obrenović according to painting templates sent from Russia and made by the famous Russian artist Viktor Vasnetsov. This experience largely marked Obrenović's further work on a religious painting which he realized according to Russian models (primarily Vasnetsov) in many churches in Serbia. Dušan Obrenović's religious paintings thus bring to Serbia contemporary solutions from the most elite current of Russian iconography - the circle in Abramtsevo to which the painter Viktor Vasnetsov belonged.

# Tasos Kostopoulos

Institute for Mediterranean Studies - FORTH

tkostop1965@gmail.com

## *Icon Goldsmiths, Pious Widows and Holy Maidens. Adventure Narratives of Greek Monks on Journey in Late Imperial Russia*

---

*Zeteia*, i.e. officially sanctioned alms-gathering by Balkan monks travelling in foreign lands, has constituted one of the main channels through which Russian religious art found its way to the Balkan Orthodox communities. According to the available primary sources, a considerable part of the alms gathered during such travels was usually transformed *in situ* to a variety of precious ecclesiastic utensils and/or icon vestments, both as a universally appreciated investment and as a way to commemorate the individual monks' contribution to the well-being and glory of their monastery. For similar reasons, icons or other religious objects were also often directly ordered by the Russian donors, usually at the instigation of the travelling monks during their multifarious intercourse with them.

Reception of Russian religious art by Balkan Orthodox communities was thus closely related not only to its intrinsic aesthetic or monetary value, but also to the image of Russia and its people that the travelling monks communicated back to their monasteries, place of origin and/or the surrounding communities.

“Icon Goldsmiths, Pious Widows and Holy Maidens” will study this aspect of the cultural transfer of Russian ecclesiastic art to the Southern, Greek-speaking Balkans, through the elaborate autobiographic narratives of two such alms-gathering endeavors by Greek monks from Athos monasteries who travelled extensively for some years across the Russian Empire during the second half of the 19th century. One of these narratives was compiled by Meletios Konstamonites on his 1862-1869 trips and posthumously published in 1882; the second is a yet unpublished manuscript from the Athonian Archives, dealing with the 1890-1892 travel by a group of monks from Simonopetra monastery. Additional literature, both published and unpublished, on the practice of *zeteia* by Athonite monks and on the relevant religious customs and practices of Russian society at the time will also be used as secondary sources.

# Chryssavgi Koutsikou

Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Department of Private Archaeological Collections  
chryssavgikoutsikou@yahoo.gr

## *Objects of Russian religious art in Greek private Collections: Remarks on the iconographical choices*

---

The Greek private archaeological collections, supervised by the Department of Private Archaeological Collections of the Ministry of Culture, include an important number of objects of Russian religious art. Mainly icons but also metallic polyptychs and crosses.

This paper presents the iconographical subjects of these artworks and examines their diffusion taking into consideration their use as objects of piety or objects of art by their owners.

# Nenad Makuljević

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade  
nmakulje@f.bg.ac.rs

## *Political Context and Transfer of Russian Icons in Serbian Churches during the 18th Century*

---

The transfer of Russian icons, liturgical objects and liturgical books to the Balkan Orthodox societies was connected with religious needs, and political situation. During the 18th century, the northern and central Balkans were marked by numerous wars, which led to the division of the Serbian Church and the Orthodox people in different political and social systems - within the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Depending on the political and social (Habsburg or Ottoman) context, Serbian church policy was created and specific Russian help was required.

In the area of the Habsburg monarchy, the Serbian church began the reform around 1739, and the Russian – Ukrainian theology and painting practice served as a significant model for the defence of Orthodox faith against Roman-Catholic pressure. Painters Jov Vasilievič and Vasilie Romanovič come to this area, and introduced the model of “Ukrainian” icons to the territory of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci.

In the area of the Ottoman Empire, the practice that was established in the previous period continued. Numerous requests were sent to Russian rulers for help with finances, religious objects, icons... Serbian monks went to Russia to collect aid, and in Moscow they even printed engravings of their monasteries.

# Jelena Mežinski Milovanović

Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts / SASA Gallery  
milanijelena@gmail.com

## *Russian icons and Russian saints on the iconostases of St Alexander Nevsky Church in Belgrade prior to the First World War*

---

The arrival of the Russian mobile military Church of St Alexander Nevsky, accompanied by Russian volunteers on the battlefield of the 1876 Serbian-Turkish war, influenced the fate of the church of the Belgrade's Danube area, in the present-day neighbourhood of Dorćol.

Following the end of the war, the liturgical utensils of the tent military chapel, including Russian icons, remained in Belgrade for the purposes of a new church in the capital's neighborhood which after the departure of the Turks did not yet have an Orthodox church, thus influencing the dedication of the temple to the Russian sainted Warrior Prince Alexander Nevsky (Александр Невский).

Shortly after its construction in 1877, the original Dorćol Church of St Alexander Nevsky (used as a chapel in some phases of its existence) fell victim to urbanisation and street regulation, and already in 1891 it was torn down. With the demolition and numerous relocations, up until 1912 and the Balkan wars, a similar fate befell the Russian icons on the iconostasis. It likewise underwent several changes before assuming its final form, being directly connected with the construction of the royal mausoleum – church of the House of Karađorđević at Oplenac and Russian icons commissioned by King Petar the First for this temple.

The presence of Russian icons, intended for the iconostasis of the Belgrade Church of Alexander Nevsky, should be regarded in the light of the dedication of the temple to the Russian prince-saint – the heavenly protector of King Aleksandar – the last ruler of the defunct Obrenović dynasty, and King Aleksandar Karađorđević by whose support the church at Dorćol was finally built in its present form and once again furnished with an iconostasis with Russian icons, reflecting frequent changes in the political situation and the ruling ideology in Serbia.

# Aleksandr Preobrazhenskii

State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow

rebetis@mail.ru

## *“Hellenization” of Russian art: Greek themes, texts, and stylistic features in Russian pieces transferred to the Orthodox East*

---

Russian icons and liturgical items kept in churches and monasteries of the Orthodox East, as well as pieces owned by members of Greek or South Slav diaspora in Russia itself, can be divided in few groups. The first group includes works of religious art which were not meant originally to be transferred elsewhere, but left Russia later and could have obtained subsequently some material traces of their long stay in the Eastern Mediterranean or in the Balkans. The second group involves works of art intentionally made for the Orthodox East or for its representatives, who temporarily or constantly lived in Russia, while the third one, rather small, consists of works produced by Russian artisans sent abroad. The last two groups often give opportunity to examine the ways of adapting the Russian art to the different cultural context, while some monuments of the first group provide information of their appropriation by members of the Eastern Orthodox communities. The paper I propose will aim to explore and classify the methods and purposes of contextualization which Russian pieces underwent in, or for, the Orthodox Mediterranean and Balkan cultural space.

# Daria Resh

Institute for Mediterranean Studies / Swedish Institute at Athens / NYU  
daria\_resh@alumni.brown.edu

## *Personal Piety and Propaganda in Inscriptions on Russian Art Objects in Greece (16th-early 20th centuries)*

---

This paper presents the corpus of inscriptions on objects of religious art of Russian provenance in Greece (16th- early 20th c.), which is being prepared as an integral part of the RICONTRANS database in collaboration with the team of the project. In the first part, I shall give a preliminary survey of the material, discussing the challenges (bilingualism / non-standardized orthography, “palimpsest” inscriptions, etc.) that these texts present to their editors and researchers, and, subsequently, suggest the principles of their editing with a purpose of producing a corpus that, on the one hand, would serve the needs of specialists in art, history, religious studies, and linguistics, and, on the other, would contribute to the functionality of the RICONTRANS database. In line with the latter task, in the second part of my paper, I shall delve into a brief case study of a particular category of such texts, dedicatory inscriptions, showcasing them as epigraphic objects balancing between the expressions of personal piety and manifestations of imperial propaganda.

# Katerina Seraïdari

Institute for Mediterranean Studies - FORTH

k.seraidari@gmail.com

## *The cultural relevance of fake museographic objects: Saint Antony Pechersky, Esfigmenou Monastery (Mount Athos) and the Museum of Christian Antiquities (Athens) in the nineteenth-early twentieth centuries*

---

When Georgios Lampakis published in 1908 the Catalogue of the newly-founded Museum of Christian Antiquities in Athens, he referred in detail to two single items of the section « Objects of monastic life »: one of them was an iron vestment from Mount Athos, bearing an inscription in Russian. According to the testimonies that Lampakis gathered on Athos, this vestment belonged to the Russian hermit Antonios who had lived in a cave near the monastery of Esfigmenou. This is Saint Antony Pechersky, considered as the father of Russian monasticism: the *Russian Primary Chronicle* refers to the saint' sojourn on Athos in 1051. However, around 1840, a legend was created, according to which Saint Antony had lived in Esfigmenou monastery and had even received the tonsure there: despite the absence of historical evidence, a chapel was inaugurated in July 1850 and decorated with icons sent by Russian ecclesiastics from Kiev and Saint Petersburg. The legend was considered by many Russians (like Antonin Kapustin who was on Athos in 1859) as doubtful: apparently, the abbot of Esfigmenou monastery wanted to attract Russian pilgrims and gifts and set up a metochion in Kiev. The aim of this paper is to examine how a contested legend may conduct to the creation of a place of cult but also of « contact relics » (such as the vestment that Lampakis exposed in the Athenian Museum he was directing). This case study illustrates the complex relationships between Greeks and Russians on Mount Athos during the second half of the nineteenth century; it also allows us to question what is a « fake » object from a museographic point of view and what is its cultural relevance.

# Miloš Stanković

Department of History of Art, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade  
m.v.stankovic@gmail.com

## *Icon painter Marko Vujović, the position of a Russian student in the religious art and visual culture of the Principality of Montenegro in the early twentieth century*

---

Icon painter Marko Vujovic lived and worked in the Principality of Montenegro, at the end of XIX and the beginning of the XX century. His educational background was related to the Russian Icon Painting School and was financed with help of Montenegrin ruler Nikola Petrovic. Vujovic founded an icon painting workshop. His workshop worked on a significant number of the iconostasis in Montenegro from 1900 to 1910. He also worked on the iconostasis in churches in the southern and northern part of Montenegro. Marko Vujović died in 1910

Using Russian iconographic templates, Vujović became a respected icon painter on the territory of the Principality of Montenegro. Upon his return from Russia, he received a certificate from the Orthodox Church authorities in Montenegro with a recommendation to work on the iconostasis. The attitude and position of Marko Vujovic in the sphere of visual culture of the Principality of Montenegro shows a strong affirmative attitude towards art and any other work that came from the Russian Empire, which completely fit into the general social attitude concerning Russia in Montenegro of that time..

# Eirini Touloupi

Institute for Mediterranean Studies - FORTH

touloupheirhnh38@gmail.com

## *Russian Orthodox Art in Naxos from the 17th to the 19th century: A presentation of the current state of the research and the hitherto documented Russian icons and relics*

---

During my first semester as a postgraduate student on the RICONTRANS program, I took part in a field research mission on the Cycladic islands of Tinos and Naxos. The major task of the field research was to document, record and catalogue the Russian ecclesiastical works of arts present mostly at the monasteries, churches and museums. As a result, in my presentation I will give a brief overview of the objects we recorded in the churches of Naxos, starting from the churches and chapels in the capital of the island, Chora, and continuing further northeast in larger villages such as Sagkri and Filoti. Icons, Gospel Books and covers, complete chalice sets, hieratical vestments, embroidered Epitaphioi, ecclesiastical veils (aeras) and flags (bannière) are found throughout the island without necessarily having been recorded before or known as Russian relics. I chose to deal specifically with the objects that we have registered so far in Naxos due to two donations of relatively great value and special importance: the relics donated by Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia to the Metropolitan Church of the island and the extensive donation by the Naxian clergyman in Odessa, Neophytos Pagidas (19th c.).

# Atanasia Văetiși

Stavropoleos Monastery Bucharest  
manastireastavropoleos@gmail.com

## *The Russian Icon in Monasteries of Wallachia in the 18th-19th Centuries, Between Art Patronage, Public Devotion and Private Piety. Evidence of Epigraphical and Archival Sources*

---

The presentation announces a number of directions from an ongoing research regarding the ways in which the Russian icon enters the monasteries south of the Carpathians, in the territory of Wallachia, in order to influence, afterwards, the local monastic painting schools. There are a number of historical moments and contexts in which this cultural transfer took place: 1) at the beginning of the 18th century, through Greek hegumens or hierarchs settled in the capital of Ungro-Wallachia, who were ordering Russian icons from the workshops of the Kremlin Armory Chamber; 2) at the end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th centuries, through the settlement in Wallachia of Russian and Ukrainian monks, who brought with them mass-produced icons, or ordered Russian icons for their foundations; 3) after the annexation of Bessarabia to the Russian Empire (1812) and the emigration of Moldavians from beyond the Prut River especially to Dobrudja, there is a diffusion of the Russian icon for private devotion; 4) in the first half of the 20th century and especially after the occupation of Bessarabia and North Bukovina by the Soviet Union (1940), when many Bessarabian, Russian and Ukrainian monks found their refuge in the monasteries around the capital of Romania, bringing with them Russian icons, cult objects (mostly mass-produced), manuscripts and printings. The presentation aims to focus attention, on the basis of epigraphical and archival sources, on some of these religious artefacts and to propose for them a “social biography”, in relationship with the monastic milieu.

# Mara Verykokou

Benaki Museum

verykokou@benaki.gr

## *Russian art at the hands of Greek refugees from Asia Minor*

---

The Estia of Nea Smyrni in Athens, is a cultural society established in 1930 by the Greek refugees of Smyrna in Asia Minor. By now The Estia of Nea Smyrni is a well-known association with a collection of heirlooms with the purpose of studying and salvage the national, intellectual, historic, folk and linguistic diversity of the Greek Communities of Asia Minor, Pontus, and Thrace. At the premises besides the Lecture Theater and the Library there are three museums. In the *Byzantine Art Museum* we find several Russian icons and art objects, next to post byzantine icons. There is no chronological or thematic presentation of the Russian objects and so they are displayed mixed with earlier or later artifacts. We are going to explore how these examples of Russian art were acquired by the Greek refugees of Asia Minor and traveled from Smyrna to Greece and found their final place at the Estia of Nea Smyrni.

# Ivana Ženarju Rajović

Institute for Serbian Culture Priština/Leposavić

ivanazenarju@yahoo.com

## *Many Lives of an Icon in Motion: from Moscow Armoury Chamber to Rakovica Monastery near Belgrade and beyond*

---

This paper presents the icon of Virgin with Christ Child, that was painted most probably by Russian artist Spiridon Grigoriev from Moscow Armoury Chamber. It was brought by Abbot Grigoriје to Rakovica Monastery near Belgrade in 1700, along with other icons, liturgical books, and the Imperial privilege. After the attack of the Ottoman Turks in 1739, monks from Rakovica monastery had to flee, so they took all the monastery property with them and moved to Velika Remeta, one of the Fruška Gora monasteries. The icon acquired the status of a miracle worker and remained in the monastery until 1941, when the monastery was set on fire and valuables were stolen by the Independent State of Croatia and taken to Zagreb. After the Second World War, the icon was transferred to Belgrade, to the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, where it is still located today. The paper deals with changes in the location of the icon, as well as changes in its meaning and significance.

# contents

---

Nicoleta Badila	5
Yuliana Boycheva	6
Teodora Bradić	7
Nadezhda Chesnokova	8
Irena Ćirović	9
Cristina Cojocar	10
Vuk Dautović	11
Anastasia Drandaki	12
Ana Dumitran & Dumitrița-Daniela Filip	13
Lora Gerd	14
Ivanka Gergova	15
Sofia Katopi	16
Ana Kostić	17
Tasos Kostopoulos	18
Chryssavgi Koutsikou	19
Nenad Makuljević	20
Jelena Mežinski Milovanović	21
Aleksandr Preobrazhenskii	22
Daria Resh	23
Katerina Seraïdari	24
Miloš Stanković	25
Eirini Touloupi	26
Atanasia Văetiși	27
Mara Verykokou	28
Ivana Ženarju Rajović	29



9-11 SEPTEMBER 2021

# Abstracts

## 2nd RICONTRANS Workshop

ICONS IN MOTION:  
RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART,  
VISUAL CULTURE AND  
COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES  
IN THE BALKANS AND  
THE EAST MEDITERRANEAN



**RICONTRANS**

VISUAL CULTURE, PIETY  
AND PROPAGANDA:  
TRANSFER AND RECEPTION OF  
RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART IN THE BALKANS  
AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
(16TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY)



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БЕОГРАДУ  
ФИЛОЗОФСКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ