TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ICONOGRAPHY IN RELATION TO RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY

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Abstract: Today, icon painting is on the way to a dynamic comeback, when interest in the culture of icon painting as a national spiritual heritage has not weakened, the need to preserve and widely spread Orthodox traditions is growing, and a constant trend has emerged in a highly spiritual and artistic approach to the professional performance of icon painting objects. Philosophers, art experts, cultural experts, icon painters continue to study ecclesiastical art, and particularly the canonical icon. The work aims to deal with the issue of modern icon painting in the sense of understanding the meanings and mission of the icon in society, the position of the Church, the issue of the canon in icon painting, the commercialization of the work of the icon painter, etc., all of which are considered tasks of modern icon painting. The ability to find a harmony of artistic creation and the canon of icon painting; mastering the language of icon painting and thinking about icon painting; In this sense, the development of a new iconography constitutes trends for the development of icon painting that refer to the return and preservation of the canonical culture of icon painting, but also as a means of relating the state to the Church in terms of the spiritual and professional education of modern icon painters.

Keywords: icons, spiritual heritage, canon of icon painting, the relationship of the Church with the world

Introduction

Today, icon painting is on the way to a dynamic comeback, when interest in the culture of icon painting as a national spiritual heritage has not weakened, the need to preserve and widely spread Orthodox traditions is growing, and a constant trend has emerged in a highly spiritual and artistic approach to the professional performance of icon painting objects. Philosophers, art experts, cultural experts, icon painters continue to study ecclesiastical art, and particularly the canonical icon. Particular attention is paid to the mission and understanding of the meanings of the icon, the question of the position of the Church, the issue of the canon of icon painting, the tasks and perspectives of the life of modern icon painting, the development of modern iconography, which is reported. in the conclusions of this research.

Current issues and some problematic aspects of modern icon painting

In the last two or three decades, several problems have matured and are being discussed in terms of modern icon painting. According to Archimandrite Zinon, the modern icon does not take its rightful place in the divine service and has become an illustration for a celebrated event, which is reflected in its form – and this issue is one of the most important problems of modern icon painting. Today, "there is no established and expressed opinion of the Church about church art, much less is there the hierarchy's control over it."[1] Bringing up the issue of the quality of modern icons, Archimandrite Zinon writes that in order to penetrate the secrets of icon painting, the best examples are necessary; The canon of icon painting disciplines only the creator, but mindless copying of the model is useless. The most dangerous thing in modern icon painting is "replacing tradition with self-expression", because

[1] Archimandrite Zinon, *Conversations of the Icon Painter,* A. Men, Moscow, 1997, pp. 3-4.

"as a rule, modern artists have superficial knowledge of Christianity" and "now many people, even art experts, have an incorrect perception of the icon".[2]

Priest Nikolai Chernyshev and A. Zholondz pay considerable attention to the canon as "the laws of the impact of God's grace on man and through him/her – on Christian culture, on humanity..."[3]. They offer an assessment of the following aspects: the modernity of the icon, its dependence on the spirit of the age; the need to study church traditions in their entirety; an icon that attracts new peoples and generations; the problem of the asceticism of the icon painter and his comprehensive adoption of the traditions of icon painting. Among the so-called dangers of today's icon painting, priest N. Chernyshev and A. Zholondz point to the forgetfulness of the traditions of asceticism, the danger of creating an anti-icon, hidden theomachy; the loss of the fullness and life-giving energy of the image in the practice of painting icons in the twentieth century; the dangerous strengthening of the unchristian attitude towards the image, which leads to the representation of a set of conventions, the worship of symbols, signs and illustrations.

O.V. Gubareva analyzes the following problematic situations and problems of modern icon painting: a problem of the creation of a contemporary Russian canonical ecclesiastical school of art; a problem of technical skill when a complex pictorial system of icon painting is closely related to the theological concept of the work; the situation of commercialization of the work of the icon painter in the modern world, dependence on mass production, which becomes an integral part of modern church culture; a problem of developing a new trend related to the Western European pictorial heritage, different from the canon and the mystical side of icon painting[4].

L.A. Armeeva, studying the correlation of tradition and the principle of the author in the system of education of the modern icon painter, calls the problem of "the correlation of a single canon, the conciliar experience of the Church with the individual creative work of the icon painter"[5] extremely urgent. Modern icon painting can also be reproached for copying – implying through this secondary concept. L.A. Armeeva believes that sometimes this comes from a lack of understanding of the principles of church art, which can be evaluated according to secular criteria. She calls it an extremely difficult task, that is, developing the iconography of the newly glorified new martyrs of the twentieth century, which requires an "original creative approach" on the part of the icon painter[6].

Trapeznikova also names the creation of a new iconography as one of the main problems of the painting of modern icons and formulates the following causes of problems of an iconographic nature: the uncertain position of the Church on the formation of a new iconography; difficulties in interpreting the personal style and clothing of the saints, especially those who died in the twentieth century; the similarity of the portrait in modern iconography; the difficulty of forming compositions with more many figures; the appearance of "false" icons that respond to the chronicle of modernity and political events[7].

A.V. Andreeva, in his article "Canon Problems and Innovation in Contemporary Church Painting", writes that the understanding of the canon in modern church art as a whole

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[3] Chernyshev, Priest, A. Zholondz, *Issues of Modern Icon Veneration and Icon Painting,* Alpha and Omega, 2(13), pp. 259-279 (1997), p. 261. Available at: http://www.art-sobor.ru/archives/101, (accessed 07.05.2023.)

[4] O. Gubareva, *Problems of Modern Icon Painting. Svet Nevecherniy*, in *Journal of the Vladimir Diocese*, 4, pp. 45-50, (2002), p. 48.

[5] L. Armeeva, *Correlation of the Tradition and the Author's Principle When Copying Icons in the System of Education of a Modern Icon Painter,* in *Bulletin of Kostroma State University*, 4, pp. 63-66 (2010), p. 65.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] A.Trapeznikova, *To the Issue of Creating Icons of Newly-Glorified Saints at the Turn of the 20th-21st Centuries. Historical, Philosophical, Political and Legal Sciences, Cultural Studies and Art History,* Issues of Theory and Practice, Gramota, 6 (32), pp. 189-191, (2013), p. 190.

is quite ambiguous and calls "the danger that academic church painting brings to the church"[8] as one of the problems of modern church art.

She notes that today significant attempts are being made to revive the school of painting of Orthodox icons, built on copying canonical models. But rarely is a truly profound spiritual picture found among the many copies of icons, and how justified is such a persistent emphasis on copying ancient icons[9].

In the process of analyzing various aspects of the study and teaching of icon painting at the beginning of the 20-21st centuries, S.S. Ostapenko pointed out the following problems. First, the different approaches to the study of the icon have formed two fundamentally different visions of the icon: a scientifically grounded, reasoned approach and "an aestheticized or psychologized perception of an image independent of spiritual and life experience and, above all, of liturgical practice".[10] The researcher draws our attention to the fact that "the current consciousness has lost its sense of recognizing the icon" and names, first of all, "the evangelical texts, the lives of the saints, the church hymnography and the entire complex of the patristic tradition" as the sources of the correct understanding of the icon. She believes that the issue of correctly understanding the meaning of the canon for "Christian life and work" is a special topic for a modern audience[11].

I. Yazykova and Hegumen Luka Golovkov determine some problematic problems of modern icon painting. First, this is an underestimation of the ancient icon and the passion for the picturesque style, "some artists do not pay attention to the harmony between form and substance, iconography, language and theology, the life of the icon painter and the "arrangement of the image". Secondly, like A.L. Armeeva, they call copying, secondary as a weak point of modern icon painting, although the children's list is an important component of icon painting. Third, painting "old" icons deprives the image of the icon of truth and power. Fourthly, many modern icon painters significantly harsh the features of the ancient icon in drawing, color, technique, which entails the lack of a festive harmony inherent in the medieval icon. Fifthly, the weakest thing today is the author's icon, the new iconography, although the need for them is great. "The most difficult thing for an icon painter is to find harmony between adherence to a single canon and creativity", "... between respect for tradition and innovation".[12]

E.I. Ryadinskaya divides the problems of contemporary church art into two categories: external problems (organizational ones, with social connotations) and internal problems (the specificity of icon painting). Today, there is an active search for the language of modern icon painting, and it is not known where this search will lead. This raises a question about the need to search for the identity of icon painting from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Several icon painters, including the school of Archimandrite Zinon, oppose raising the question of the search for the style and identity of icon painting of the twenty-first century. According to E.I. Ryadinskaya, another important point of problem is a mismatch between modern icon painting and temple architecture. A variety of art trends, a wide range of tastes and opinions, many new temples and icons affect not only the level of icon painters, but also customers[13].

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[8] A. Andreeva, *The Problems of the Canon and Innovation in Modern Church Painting*, Bulletin of Moscow State Regional University, 3, pp. 18-23, (2012), p. 20.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[10] S. Ostapenko, *Studying and Teaching Icon Painting at the Turn of the 20th-21st Centuries: Philosophical, Ethical, Spiritual and Educational Aspects*, in *Bulletin of Kostroma State University*, 1, pp. 50-54, (2011), p. 52.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] See: I. Yazykova, L. Golovkov Hegumen, *Icon of the 20th Century. History of Icon Painting of the 6th-20th Centuries. Origins. Traditions. Modernity*, Publishing House SIV, Moscow, pp. 231-251, (2010).

[13] E. Ryadinskaya, *The Main Problems of Modern Ecclesiastical Art. Design Education – the 21st Century*, Materials of the Correspondence International Scientific-Practical Conference, pp. 35-44, (2018), p. 40.

E.V. Drobnaya, discussing continuity as a determining feature of culture and the theoretical foundations of icon painting, says that the icon "expresses national spirituality as such, helps to consolidate generations and revive the priority spiritual component of public consciousness."[14] She concludes that today the task of society is to teach people to see the symbols of the icon, to understand its spiritual meanings, which will help answer questions about the meaning of life.

The main tasks and development trends of modern icon painting

In the process of discussing the current issues and problematic points of modern icon painting, a natural question arises - what are the main tasks and development trends of icon painting in the 21st century? Archimandrite Zinon believes that the overall task of the Church is "to raise people to the height of the knowledge of God and not to condescend to human ignorance," that is, "a person who rejects a truly Orthodox icon questions its correctness. the perception of worship and of the Eucharist, from which the icon is born".[15]

I. Yazykova and Hegumen Luka Golovkov consider that the main task of developing a new generation of icon painters is the ability to find "harmony of artistic creation and strict canon, human freedom and divine revelation, art and theology" to reach the heights of the "great tradition of the icon".[16]

In the book "Co-creation of an image. Theology of the icon", I.K. Yazykova writes that the new iconography has always been a proof of the vitality of the tradition of icon painting and considers that mastering the language of icon painting and thinking about icon painting are the main task for modern icon painting. According to T.A. Artsybasheva, the laws of creativity are little distinguished in the newest Orthodox art and do not allow us to understand what is happening - the return to tradition or the formation of a new language? She analyzes the work of the icon painting section of the Kursk Theological Seminary and says that this is almost the only attempt to restore the canonical tradition of icon painting.

Today, there are other attempts to revive and preserve the icon painting of canonical culture. For example, the opening of the joint section of icon painting of the Don Theological Seminary and the Rostov College of Art, named after M.B. Grekov in 2016. This is a new experience of the network form of interaction between spiritual and secular educational institutions for the education of icon painters. The content of education is based on the canonical principles of the school of icon painting of the Moscow Theological Academy, which are implemented by copying the famous models of icon painting. The Joint Department of Icon Painting contributes to the revival of the culture of canonical icon painting, which not only preserves the objects of icon painting traditionally established by copying patterns, but also educates an icon painter on the basis of the canonical model consisting of a religious spiritual foundation, expressive-figurative symbolic language and the creative position of the author, taking into account the skills and knowledge of the academic school of drawing, painting and composition[17].

Conclusion

As a result of the analysis of current issues, problematic points and tasks of modern icon painting, the following points can be formulated. In modern society, there is no complete understanding of the icon's meanings and mission; there is no established position of the

[14] E. Drobnaya, *The Iconographic Canon and the Philosophical Justification of Its Representation in the Works of Contemporary Orthodox Artists*, Humanitarian Vector, 2(38), pp. 111-115, (2014), p. 110.
[15] Archimandrite Zinon, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[16] I. Yazykova, L. Golovkov Hegumen, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
[17] See: M. Bobreshova, *Religious and Aesthetic Foundations of the Canonical Icon Painting Culture*, Humanitarian and Socio-Economic Sciences, 5(102), pp. 57-62, (2018).

Church, which affects the content and form of the icon, the theoretical foundations and the formation of the conceptual apparatus of modern icon painting.

The issue of the canon in modern icon painting is one of the most relevant issues and is discussed in the following areas: the canon disciplines the icon painter and establishes the laws; the interaction of the canon and the individual creativity of the icon painter should contribute to the harmony between the canon and creativity; mechanical copying of the canonical icon leads to low-quality repetitions, to copying as a secondary; superficial knowledge of Christianity or an unchristian attitude towards the canonical icon leads to a thoughtless conditional portrayal; the problem of the influence of academic church painting, Western European art and passion for the picturesque style, which are fundamentally different from the canon of icon painting.

The commercialization of the work of the icon painter is a problematic situation of icon painting, when the modern icon painter is dependent on the requirements of the market, the mass consumer, the level of the customer, which leads to the appearance of "old" icons, the inconsistency of the form and content, and the confusion of the style of the modern icon.

The vital activity of modern icon painting is seen below. Firstly, in the development of the modern icon by searching for the language of modern icon painting (considering the iconographic canonical traditions). Secondly, in the formation of the modern school of Russian canonical ecclesiastical art; thirdly, in the creation of a new iconography of both traditional plots and icons of the new martyrs. Fourth, in creating new canonical designs and a new icon script. Fifthly, in the struggle for harmony between the objects of icon painting and the architecture of the temple.

The development of the new iconography as a productive way of developing the painting of modern icons depends on the following points: the opinion and position of the Church in relation to church art; personal and non-personal interpretation difficulties; the penetration of the likeness of the portrait into the new icon; features of the multi-digit composition of icons; mastering the language of icon painting and thinking about icon painting; the appearance of a modern icon on a political theme, which contradicts the Orthodox spiritual traditions.

The mission of the icon occupies a special place in the problematic field of modern icon painting. The conciliar essence of the icon concerns the process of gathering generations and strengthening the spiritual basis of society. The spiritual meanings of the icon allow a person and society to answer questions about the meaning of life. A new language of icon painting is developing by preserving and translating the canonical traditions of the icon. This means that the great tradition of the icon strengthens national spirituality and the consciousness of modern society.

Thus, the main trends of development of modern icon painting are seen in the subsequent process of return and preservation of the canonical culture of icon painting and in the interaction of the state and the Church in the spiritual and professional education of modern icon painters.

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