The Last Judgment Icon in the Wooden Church of Budești-Josani (Maramureș County)

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the iconography of the Last Judgment icon, located in the parish wooden church belonging to the Romanian village of Budești-Josani (Maramureș County). Situated in the space of the narthex, this wooden icon is characterized by an ample composition, which includes an important number of iconographic elements. This is the only wooden icon preserved in the southern part of the historical Maramureș County, which depicts the Last Judgment theme.

The icon of the Last Judgment from Budești-Josani was painted in the seventeenth century, and is composed not only of the main iconographic elements of the “classical” Byzantine composition, but also of motifs belonging to the late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art, especially those typical of Russian and Ruthenian representations. This work includes certain motifs which are specific to the Carpathian Rus’ iconography of the Last Judgment (the region of Galicia and Transcarpathia), as the personification of death, the New Hell, the image of the tavern maid and the Parable of the Unicorn.

The long cultural connections between the county of Maramureș and the regions of Transcarpathia and Galicia determined the development of an artistic production which displays certain common features. This aspect can also be noticed in the eschatological representations: the Carpathian Rus’ iconography of the Last Judgment, has exerted a great influence on the Maramureș compositions.

One of the many Slavonic inscriptions on this work is very important because it most probably indicates the painter of this work, who was the son of a priest: “The most sinful Mykhail Popovych from Kolomyia, from Rus’, [painted?] this second coming of Christ: the incorporeal battle”. The content of this inscription proves that the process of southward expansion of the Last Judgment iconography was aided by the presence of Carpathian icons in the region of Romanian Maramureș.
Keywords: Last Judgment, iconographic influences, Post-Byzantine Painting, Maramureș