PHENOMENON OF UKRAINIAN MODERN OF XXI CENTURY

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Church painting in Ukraine from the time of its appearance from Byzantium had been subject to constant influence of national art. The most vivid and complete national motifs in the temple painting were manifested after Ukraine gained independence. Artists of the Ukrainian modern XXI century not only dressed Biblical characters in Ukrainian national costumes, but through the painting presented a new philosophy that is inherent in the religious Ukrainian people as a mental trait and which is now vividly demonstrated to the world as an exceptional phenomenon in the cultural and artistic space of Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukrainian modern, church paintings, icon, national, regional.

Introduction. The history of arts knows many examples of the adaptation of world styles to local conditions. World artistic trends, getting into the cultural and artistic space of a certain region by had been dressed by artists in local national costumes and were saturated with the features of the mentality of the local population.

Such destiny met modern, which as a style trend appeared in the late XIX – early XX century. With its local names received in different countries, the modernist demonstrated a protest against classicism and eclecticism. They advocated the peculiarities of individual regional features: “new art” (fr. L’Art Nouveau) in Belgium and France, “young style” in Germany (Jugendstil), “floral style” (italian style floreale) in Italy, “modern style” in the UK, “Tiffany style” in the USA, Austria, Ukraine – “Secession” from lat. Secession – exit, separation.

In Ukraine, the style of modernism has appeared as a style, where “the passing time of the unconscious existence ends, the era of conscious creation begins” [6]. This was the time when through they art creators sought to express Ukrainian identity and exclusivity.

Such a reaction was a logical answer to the constant oppression of national art and artists of Ukraine, the dictatorship of the imperial, and then Soviet regimes. This style was especially pronounced in church paintings and architecture in the western regions of Ukraine and in the architecture of Central Ukraine during weakened control.

Main material. The Byzantine tradition of icon painting, which came along with the baptism of Ukraine-Rus, did not fit into the local ground, since it was a stranger to the mentality of a Ukrainian. Although it should not be exaggerated: Byzantine models have long been used and lived in Ukrainian churches, and even now they are repeated and interpreted in neo-Byzantisme. However, today, we are describing the driving force behind regional art – a mentality that changes the world’s patterns in accordance with its perception of the world.

In fact, the mentality of Ukrainians at all times influenced the iconography tradition, which varied in line with the socio-political situation in Ukraine. The faces of the saints gradually acquire Slavic features, Saint George changes his white horse to brown horse at the time of the Cossacks, the colors on the icons and frescoes of the Baroque are brighter, under the Omophorion of the Virgin Mary we see Ukrainian hetmans, patrons of education and culture, and servants of the Ukrainian church.

National motifs in church art are not a new phenomenon. It is known in almost all European countries. However, Ukrainian icons depicted not only saints, but also people respected by the society such as Hetman Bohdan Khmelnitsky, Hetman Ivan Mazepa, Prince Ostrozhsyk and others honorable nobles (Fig. 1–3).

The Ukrainian modern of the early twentieth century also makes its adjustments to the practice of church paintings. The new style was most clearly manifested in the decoration of Ukrainian temples, where Byzantine traditions, Western achievements, rich national ornamentals were synthesized in a new way.

Modest Sosenko, Julian Butsmuyuk belonged to those icon painters who started a new stage in the history of Ukrainian church painting, but due to political circumstances, this stage was extremely short.

The work of Julian Butsmuyuk in the Zhovkva sacred building is a testimony to this. “The painting of the Zhovkva Chapel became the first in the history of art as an example of a combination of secession romanticism and Ukrainian folk tradition. For the
Fig. 1. Icon. Crucifixion with Leontius Svička. End of the XVII century [4]

Fig. 2. Icon. “Intersession of the Virgin Mary” with the image of Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Archbishop Lazar Baranovych. First half of the XVIII century. It originates from the church of the Intersession of Virgin Mary of the village of Desky, now Bohuslavsky district of the Kiev region [2]

Fig. 3. Icon. “Protection of the Blessed Virgin” — an icon from Analogion from the church of Protection of the Blessed Virgin of Sich. XVIII century: a fragment with the Cossacks [3]

Fig. 4. Fresco of the dome finish at the church of the faithful in the church in Novoyarychiv, Lviv region. Artist Mykola Havryliv (photo of the author)

Fig. 5. Icon O. Ohapkin [5]
first time embroidery appeared on church frescoes; for the first time, Ukrainian culture has shown itself in church art. And for the first time on the walls of the temple were combined spiritual and national traditions, frankly intertwined with the spirit of Christian and Ukrainian” [1].

In the icon painting of Ukrainian churches, one can observe a new vision of God’s image; the Ukrainian did not want to see God in the image of a severe punishing king. The centuries-old history of the struggle against Tsarist Russia has produced a rejection of the king and all that was connected with him. The greatest authority in the Ukrainian family was the father — the head of the family, the protector, the defender, a man responsible for his family had the greatest respect. The image of God immediately began to be associated with the father of the nation. He was merciful to the greatest sinners and merciless to the enemies. In the Ukrainian churches, the image of the Lord resembled a gray-haired elder, a wise man, a boyan from Kievan Rus or a Ukrainian kobzar.

He does not look like the Renaissance athletic Lord Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel (Creation of Adam’s fresco 1508–1512), but, as is customary in the icon-painting tradition of Ukraine and in real life, the imaginary body of God is hidden under abundant clothing.

Even His palms, which are clearly visible on the paintings, testify that the Ukrainian image of the Lord is far from athletic perfection. His power is read in His eyes and gestures.

The emphasis on a rigorous face in the Byzantine icon painting school, the perfect body of the Renaissance painting tradition on the Ukrainian soil, was transposed into a view in which wisdom and knowledge, mercy and justice are all that was for Ukrainians to be a priority in life. Therefore, the image of the Lord in the Ukrainian icon painting school is, first of all, the embodiment of an ideal, of a dream and of an idea of support and hope.

In the Ukrainian modern of XXI century image of the Lord is the embodiment of the philosophy of life. It is statics and dynamics at the same time, present and eternity. It is the comprehension of everything and awareness of the one (Fig. 4).

For Ukrainian Virgin Mary has always been associated with a protective mother, therefore, Ukrainians did not want to portray her with frowning eyebrows, as it was customary in the Byzantine icon painting tradition and instead painted her either with a pacified, serene face or with a face of a mother in
sorrow. Such image was close and understandable to Ukrainians, especially Ukrainian women, who for centuries bear the burden of farming and loneliness when men and sons went to wars.

In the time of the Ukrainian modern of XXI century this image was philosophically elaborated and carefully elaborated.

The icons of Alexander Okhapkin represent the holy Virgin as Ukrainian woman-mother, and the holy family as an exemplary of Ukrainian family.

Ukrainian national symbols, national costumes and objects of labor make the Holy Family not only spiritually but also natively and regionally close an exemplary model in a changing and extreme world. Through the icon of O. Ohapkin expressed the whole world of Ukrainian folks, the ideal and desirable, a world where everything is blessed by the Lord and where God Himself resides (Fig. 5).

Deep psychology and spirituality are observed in the iconography of the Ukrainian modern of XXI century. Actually, expression of these features is very characteristic of Ukrainians, and therefore the icons of this period are emotionally close, understandable and accordingly received. Here we can observe not only the formal acceptance of Biblical figures, but also psychological and emotional compatibility with them.

Independence of Ukraine gave a new impetus to the creative exaltation of the artistic world, which already could create without insight and fear.

Ukrainian modern returned to the temple painting as the best representative for the mentality of the Ukrainian nation and one whose creative potential remained yet unfulfilled. However, the filling and self-expression of the new style is now even brighter. The Ukrainian Modern of XXI Century provides philosophical reflection on biblical scenes and their interpretation in accordance with the time and education of people.

This style clearly defines the place of a person in Christian doctrine, does not make him feel like an observer in the temple, but participant, and most importantly, establishes Christian norms always up-to-date.

Church art of Mykola Havryliv is an example of Ukrainian modern of XXI century. In his paintings, Havryliv conveys deep psychology, suffering, doubt and betrayal all what is characteristic of emotional Ukrainian. By incorporating small inconspicuous details in his paintings, (embroidery on the sleeve of a shepherd, Spinning wheel behind Virgin Mary, Hutsuls carved on the window sill, etc.) artist combines two worlds: the world of pure, divine and the earthly world, which draws energy and inspiration from the spiritual world. Great talent received by Ukrainian people from God, the artist immortalized in paintings and icons, visibly expressing gratitude to God for such gifts.

The events of 2000 years, the artist visually modernizes, ties to the region and makes them closer and more real, making it clear that the Lord is here.

Impressive and philosophically meaningful is the image of the Last Supper, which is located on the drum of the main church tower in the village of Veryn in Western Ukraine.

The table is symbolically infinite (round), which emphasizes the possibility of constant adherence to the divine meal of everyone. This interpretation allows each person to feel as a participant in the sacred action. The Last Supper as a sacred process has become a symbolic-spiritual category, accessible to anyone who wants to sit down at this table and join the discussion of “eternal”.

The symbolism of Ukrainian modern of the XXI century is in its ambiguous interpretation, it is in the power of everyone in “multi-depth” variants. As soon as the symbol opens the doors of comprehension, behind them there are other doors. This process, generated by the modern of XXI century, makes the person continually think and draw parallels with the Bible. The idea of the church as the main foundation of the Ukrainian state in the modern painting embraces all the biblical plots with the Ukrainian as an effective character in a single composition.

The presence in the temple of ambiguous characters points to the peculiarity of the contemporary worldview. This ambiguity is a characteristic feature of the new reality and art.

Modern paintings of the XXI century is an attempt to create a new culture for all segments of the population, where everybody would find their place.

Despite the saturation of the church with symbols, it was painted in accordance with the traditions of the Ukrainian church painting with accents on certain details, which, according to the master, were important (Fig. 6, 7).

Conclusion. The Ukrainian modern of XXI century appeared as the demand of time and events taking place in Ukraine. For Ukrainians, the temple is an Alphabet of Christianity and the deepest philosophical doctrine, the church is the place of exchange of information with God, as well as with the previous generations that gave birth to this art. The main idea of the Ukrainian modern art is the spiritual unity of the human and the divine. The interior of the temple in the style of Ukrainian modern of the XXI century forces to not only observe and learn, it prompts to thinking, analysis and profound comprehension of Christian symbolism.

Ukrainian temple architecture was always filled with vivid images that accompanied the holy liturgy. The visualization of the sacred world of Ukrainian modern in the acoustic accomplishment of the Divine Liturgy allows you to feel the presence of God in the temple, creating mysterious aura, sacred and sublime. Cognition of the symbolism presented by the Ukrainian modern style gives an understanding of worldview, comprehension of the evolution of theurgist formulas and “philosophical DNA”, which occurs over time. The loss of primitive symbolism leads to loss of initial information that can tell the descendants more than the oldest manuscript.

Reinterpreting of this symbolism in accordance with the time, filling it with a new philosophical meaning, as proposed by the XXI century Modern, will bring a new weight to the Christian doctrine according to the time and fill it with new information.
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