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**Review for the Volume Southeast European Sovereign Cult and Case of
Wallachia. An Artistic Perspective, author Elisabeta Negrau, Lumen
Publishing House, 2011**

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Review for the Volume Southeast European Sovereign Cult and Case of Wallachia. An Artistic Perspective, author Elisabeta Negrău, Lumen Publishing House, 2011

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Abstract

The present review aims to present in a descriptive way the volume of author Elisabeta Negrău. The volume Southeast European sovereign cult and case of Wallachia. An artistic perspective includes narratives about art history in different historical cultural contexts in the Balkans and especially the Romanian one. The volume has three major areas of investigation of medieval imagistic creations, the cultic, the aesthetic and the socio-political one, the author emphasizing the research of Aulic Byzantine, mountainous and Balkan material, focusing particularly on cultic side. The cultural value of the volume consists in the contextual interpretation of medieval art, valuing the sovereign theme and its implications on the social imaginary and collective mentality.

Keywords

Review, Southeast European sovereign cult and case of Wallachia. An artistic perspective, Elisabeta Negrău

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Introduction

The volume *Southeast European sovereign cult and case of Wallachia. An artistic perspective* presents the study that analyze arts' role in constructing the medieval monarch cult in Southeast Europe, focusing on the report between Royal Courts and the most artistic active factor in Middle Age, the Church. The main reference points of the authors' interpretation are the theological aspects of the Byzantine politic theory. Those were considered necessary as a result of the cultural discourse from the Byzantine and post Byzantine monarchies which has evolved sequential on religious principles. A main theoretic and methodological objective of the study is the analysis of political keys of iconography, without being denatured or occulted its spread theological message.

Reviewed text

The volume exposes during four chapters notions with strong historical character, in an analytical manner. The introduction in the undertaken study is accomplished clearly through the narrative style of the author. The text structure has an introductive part, followed by three chapters which present in a particular sense the imperial cult and the iconography in the byzantine space, aspects of the byzantine traditions in the mountainous Aulic environment (fourteenth-eighteenth centuries), and also the royal cult and Aulic art in Wallachia.

As the author exposes us the study presented in the reviewed volume is not proposing a large analysis of the court artistic culture from Wallachia, but is pursuing mainly for one aspect – the relationship, in the artistic plan, between the royal court and Church- the most active intellectual and artistic creation factor in the middle age.

The author has proposed to research the dimensions, the levels and Aulic significations of the art in Wallachia, in the general context of post byzantine world, under Ottoman hegemony, severely adverse to major political and cultural events. It is analyzed, at the level of the whole phenomenon and also in case studies, the Wallachian post- byzantine period, with the most significant and substantial cultural and artistic load, the fourteenth-eighteenth centuries load.

The analysis consists in evaluating of those opera bought from the morphologies' perspective but the iconological one.

I observed during this volume that the understanding of the grade in which is possible the interpretation in political key of the iconographic programs, without being a distortion or occultation of the theological values, is a theoretical and methodological desideratum of the study.

The route of the research follows the revealing of general types of artistic thought in Wallachian Aulic post-Byzantine environment, ways of implementing in artistic work ideas and mentality generated by issues of political thought, in its turn subject of the theological reflection, after the Byzantine model

Conclusions

The volume exposes the socio-anthropological approaches of art history. which started from the premise that the images, although possessing a semantic autonomy cannot be isolated from their historical contexts, being anchored in the social imaginary. These images contain power mentality and collective social memory, but not as simple translations of texts in visual language, but with semantics and communication autonomy and being themselves producers of knowledge and power. The image does not satisfy reason of a chronic or socio-political document.

The author shows that interest in the study of Christian sovereign cult in art is a current phenomenon in the cultural studies of art history and medieval, so the volume is an innovative feature and useful to researchers in the field.

References

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