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RUSSIAN SACRED STYLE IN THE MINIATURES OF THE ILLUMINATED CHRONICLES OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE

The Illuminated Chronicles of Ivan the Terrible is a unique artifact of both Russia's and world art cultures. This documentary monument contains ten volumes (totally ten thousand pages) of handwritten texts with almost eighteen thousand miniatures. The author proves that the structure, composition and manner of the illustrations in this collection tend to express such metaphysical principles of the Russian civilization as versatility, conciliarity and disengagement. Both special features and originality of the Russian sacred style of the book miniatures were being formed as a result of the dialogue between the Western and Byzantine aesthetic traditions.

Keywords: Illuminated Chronicles of Ivan the Terrible, miniatures, Russian sacred style, versatility, conciliarity, disengagement.

The history of the study of the Illuminated Chronicles is characterized by a quotation from the work of A.A. Amosov, dedicated to this documentary monument: "As source study was developed within historical knowledge in Russia, adherents of the new discipline with enviable consistency began to apply existing and developed methods of source analysis to a group of illustrated chronicles. Perhaps more fascinating than the manuscripts themselves is the history of the analysis of this magnificent compilation, which is today known as the Illuminated Chronicle. For the passions that seethed and ran high on the pages of scientific literature are no less hot than the struggles of the characters that gave birth to world history through their actions" [1, p. 31]. The contribution that individual scientists made to the study of the Chronicles is guite comprehended in the historiographical reviews that precede the dissertations and monographs of modern authors who studied this historical source. Therefore, duplicating this information throughout the article is of no significance. We only note

that M.V. Lomonosov, M.V. Shcherbatov, N.M. Karamzin. A.E. Presnyakov. VΝ Shchepkin, N.P. Likhachev, D.N. Alshits, A.V. Artsikhovsky, and A.N. Svirin and others were involved in the study of the books of the Chronicles and their codicological and textual features in the latter half of the 18th to the first half of the 20th centuries[for example, 1, pp. 32-118; 2, pp. 41-86].

To study the artistic side of the Illuminated Chronicle, generalizing works by O.I. Podobedova, D.S. Likhachev, and a group of students of S.O. Schmidt Amosov. V.V. Morozov. (A.A. V.D. Cherny) are of paramount significance. O.I. Podobedova [3] conducted a comprehensive source study of the miniatures of Russian historical manuscripts, in particular the miniatures of the Chronicles, dwelling in more detail on the project performers, images of architectural monuments, nature, historical events, and everyday battle scenes. In her authoritative opinion, the array of artists included at least 40 people. D.S. Likhachev mentioned the history of the Chronicles in a collection of articles "Russian Art from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde," describing the dynamics of scenes depicted in ancient Russian manuscripts, which combine "narrative space" and "narrative time" [4].

S.O. Schmidt's literary works on the Illuminated Chronicle, which were published at various points in time, are presented in the thematic collection of his works "Monuments of Writing in the Context of Knowledge of the History of Russia" (Vol. 1. Pre-Petrine Rus') [5]. These are related to certain aspects of studying this manuscript, first, its factual accuracy and textual editing. He specifically considered the Royal Book miniatures as a source of historical data regarding the 1547 Moscow uprising.

research conducted Basic bv A.A. Amosov [1], is currently the most significant work on the subject, which; however, concentrates on the scientific results obtained by its predecessors, thereby rethinking the rich source base. The author collated all the data on filigree, influenced the chronology of the production of volumes, and examined the progress of work on the creation of miniatures, as well as the symbolism and semantics of their colors. V.V. Morozov [2] analyzed the artistic part of the manuscript concerning its content, origin, order of compilation, and chronicle sources. The strict organization of the work on miniatures is noted; assumptions are made about the performers, and individual scenes and cycles of images are analyzed. Monograph by V.D. Cherny [6] is an interdisciplinary study of works devoted to the miniatures of Russian medieval books, including those included in the Illuminated Chronicle, and their evidentiary and methodological basis.

The text of the Chronicle monument and its illustrations were examined, and some findings were summarized in 2012–2014. Simultaneously, the Chronicles were republished, and three accompanying volumes containing additional reference materials were compiled by S.O. Schmidt, V.V. Morozov,

E.I. Serebryakova, Yu. N. Bubnov, and E.V. Ukhanova and others [7–9].

In addition to general works devoted to the Illuminated Chronicle, several iconographic works have been published in recent years, focusing on individual groups of miniatures depicting battle scenes [10], construction scenes [11], women's costumes [12], and historical characters [13–14], etc. Concurrently, the stylistic features characteristic of the Illuminated Chronicle painting were not thoroughly explored by experts, necessitating a distinct art historical study that was completed within this article and two guidebooks published in 2011–2012 [15–16].

The scope of the project, which included all the nations and empires of the Ancient World intertwined, the chronotype from the world's creation to Ivan the Terrible's resignation, the philosophy of human development from the Fall from grace to the triumph of Orthodoxy in the Moscow Kingdom, all indicate that the Chronicles was composed as a sacred book of Third Rome. Consequently. A.A. Amosov wrote, "The general path of history, according to the ideas of the scribes of the Terrible Tsar, is the transition of the world center from Palestine successively through Babylon and Persia, the power of Alexander the Great and Imperial Rome, the Byzantine Empire and the Slavic states of the Balkans to Moscow" [1, pp. 246-247]. The Muscovite kingdom was considered the pinnacle of the spiritual development of humankind, acquiring messianic features. Ten volumes of the Illuminated Chronicle have reached us with 19,490 pages and 17,764 miniatures, most of which are worldclass works 1. The Illuminated Chronicle can be regarded as a grandiose monument of international culture, the highest achievement of Russian art of the 16th century, we might say, the Russian Renaissance. The scale of the plan for the Illuminated Chronicle had no precedents

Digitized books of the Illuminated Chronicles are available on the portal of the ANO "Runivers" on the Internet at https://runivers.ru/lib/book6958/.

either in Russian or beyond its borders, but we still do not know who supervised the work on this monument and how he/she did it. These were Metropolitan Macarius and Tsar Ivan the Terrible, key figures in Russian history and culture of the 16th century. Many scribes, geographers, and painters worked on the Chronicles. They began this work already having their own established artistic language and traditions, and most importantly, spherical thinking, the esthetics of the sphere. Upon careful study of the Chronicles miniatures, we noted that they are created in various isographic manners. Although there are at least 16th such miniatures, they can be divided into two groups: provincial (i.e., created by masters originally from provincial cities) and metropolitan (made by Moscow masters). Plots related to world history (books of the Old and New Testaments.) the Trojan War, the history of Alexander the Great, Ancient Rome, and Byzantium) are illustrated in a metropolitan manner, and miniatures of Russian history were most probably created by artists from other regions of the Moscow State. In summary, it can be stated that the capital's manners are more refined, and many of their elements are taken from the icon-painting tradition, and sometimes from European book miniatures. World history is performed sublimely and strictly. The drawing of these miniatures is more accurate; however, the color array is not very complex, and color solutions are often repeated. Conversely, Russian history is depicted by artists in a free manner. There are various compositional and coloristic innovations. In total, there are more than fifty picturesque styles of coloring in the Chronicles. It is perceived that the masters of the Chronicles that depicted world history followed an iconographic template. When working on Russian subjects, the artists felt a greater degree of freedom, since the established canons of depicting the battle of Kulikovo or Ice simply did not exist. Therefore, new and unconven-

tional solutions surfaced that were fully consistent with the Orthodox canon but supplemented the Orthodox original with new iconographic forms. The Synodal volume and the Royal Book, the final two volumes of the Chronicles, are of particular interest. The Synodal volume was painted several decades after the texts were written and miniatures were drawn in the 17th century. Additionally. this made it possible to understand the difference in the artistic styles of the two centuries. The Royal Book was left uncolored, with pages remaining uncut, and in some cases, devoid of drawings or featuring only rough compositional sketches. This allows us to witness the chronicle in the process of creation. observing the various stages of miniature development. Nevertheless, the artistic value of unpainted miniatures is not diminished in comparison to other Illuminated Chronicle miniatures. The diverse range of styles contributes to a cohesive visual narrative. The artistic style of the Illuminated Chronicles can be considered sacred, as its main feature lies in the manifestation of the Divine principle. Rooted in the great art of Byzantium, the Russian sacred style, when implemented by Russian artists, it take on a distinct coloring, becoming sensual, lyrical, and infused with vitality. The strict, solemn, and slightly restrained Byzantium style is transformed into the light and agile language of the Russian masters. They quickly change the canon, working with freedom in color, line, and shape. Miniature coloring varies, ranging from subtle, sensual, and rich in shades, and sometimes it is bright, colorful, and decorative. The number of compositional solutions is unimaginably large, and many of them will compete with the best artists in Europe. In essence, the Russians learned the best from Byzantium and breathed new life into its already-established forms. The most fitting term to describe the work of the Chronicle's masters is improvisation. This is a distinctly Orthodox aesthetics deeply rooted in the rich Byzantine culture. Conversely, the influence of the Western Renaissance had not yet permeated the consciousness of the Chronicles' artists. Overall, the style of the manuscript miniatures remains traditional, with a focus on the aesthetics of 15th-century Ancient Rus', embodying the spirit of Andrei Rublev and others.

The Illuminated Chronicles stands as a testament to the phenomenon of the Russian Renaissance. At a time when leading European masters were resuscitating the great art of Ancient Greece and Rome, Russian artists were cultivating the sacred tendencies founded in Constantinople. The sacred style, in essence, is holistic and indivisible, establishing a profound connection with God. In this context, art does not take center stage, dominate for its own sake, or replace life and God. This marks a fundamental difference from Western European art, where the term "art" itself has become synonymous with the notion of "temptation." Western artists succumbed to the temptation of transforming art into a mere object of aesthetic allure. This object captivates through craftsmanship, unusual technical methods, the use of new artistic materials, compositional delights, the imitation of life to the fullest, creation of optical illusions, and the striking of the viewer's imagination with the naturalism of forms and even blasphemy. The entirety of Western art, spanning from the Renaissance to the present, can be viewed as a discourse on death and a dialog with death, a civilization entwined with death, a metaphorical "murder," and a culture of degeneration.

The Russian sacred style tells a different story, one in which art and life coexists in complete harmony. It is a dialog with life and about life, with God and about God. Every element is intricately woven into a singular whole, forming the image of the universe. In this style, every facet uplifts the individual and elevates their feelings. There is no room for blas-

phemy or sarcasm; rather, it is an integral part of Russian civilization where life stands as the paramount value and meaning. This is precisely where the main relevance of the Chronicles exists. The manuscript's artistic language is so uniquely extraordinary that the viewer experiences profoundly blessed feelings while contemplating these miniatures. This collection significantly expands our understanding of the boundaries of Orthodox art, extending beyond religiosity to include secular nature. While creating these miniatures, the masters grappled with the challenge of conveying thousands of new subjects in the "Orthodox" language, both religious and secular, often unrelated to Russian Orthodoxy directly. Thus, we are presented with a remarkable opportunity to observe the history of the Trojan War or Alexander the Great, which was made in the Orthodox style of Russian icon painting. The Illuminated Chronicle's masters also painted numerous mundane episodes from the life of Russian princes, historical events, natural phenomena, and disasters. They created invented new compositions, searched for new forms of artistic language, and remained within the framework of Orthodox esthetics and a single artistic style. Their creativity serves as a paradigm of a universal language for future generations, transcending origin, gender, or race, a lesson on how to create without destroying, and uniting organically secular and religious principles. In this book, we witness an attempt to create a messianic language that is understandable to everyone, everywhere, and at all times. The Illuminated Chronicles, vast and containing thousands of miniatures, are nearly impossible to comprehend in a single glance. What is the Russian sacred style that we see in the miniatures of the Chronicles? The main feature of the Russian sacred style, which originated in Byzantium and received a new life in Rus, is versatility, the creation of a holistic image of the

world, a sphere where time and space are one whole. Sign 2 is conciliarity, a sense of common existence, connectedness, and responsibility. Finally, there is disengagement, a sign of the secret existence of life that surrounds us. complexity and simplicity in one movement of the artist's brush or pen, the discovery of the "overworld." The Masters of the Chronicles created the idea of infinity, the idea of a complete universe that comprises everything, love and fear, suffering and pleasure, and life and death. The Russian sacred style expresses the complete harmony of man with life and God. Symbolically, it is a sphere.

The primary feature of time in the Chronicles is its fluidity: "... the desire to depict the largest possible time is associated with the miniaturist's desire to cover the largest possible space. Time and space are to some extent interrelated for him..." [4, p. 76]. In "ordinary" paintings, time is stationary; that is, they almost always record one moment, a one-time coordinate. Each miniature of the Illuminated Chronicles is a story in which events occur at different times. Time in miniatures usually flows from the bottom upward. This multitemporal leads to remarkable effects. For example, one miniature can depict the same character several times in different plot situations. Each situation and episode in miniature has its own time. We call this effect narrativity: "Artists used elements of nature and architecture, such as the eternity of natural formations (rivers, mountains, landscapes), the durability of human-made buildings (walls, temples, chambers) as "separators" of individual spatiotemporal unities..." [1, p. 227]. The miniature combines both visual and verbal principles; the story is told not in words but in images. Miniatures can consist of several separate paintings, interconnected by a thorough plot, with one miniature continuing the others, and so on ad infinitum. If we mentally continue this series, we will note something similar to a time spiral. It is noteworthy that the movement of time is not only from bottom to top but also from right to left, thus, leading to the image of a sphere. A painting always has a frame (even if it does not exist in reality, it is mentally implied. I.V.). limiting space and time: "A painting is a view in a window. In other words, it does not depict the world as a whole (like an icon) but only determines what is visible. The window serves as a unique viewfinder, enabling the artist to depict only what lies within the field of vision when gazing out the window" [17, p. 101. Unlike a framed window, which is confined by a singular temporal and spatial coordinates, the time within the Illuminated Chronicle can be deemed infinite. It flows in all directions, much like space, and includes many spatial coordinates. What sets the ancient Russian miniature in this context apart from a well known genre such as modern comics, as narratives conveyed through a series of images? Fundamentally, this series is arranged in one direction and has one vector. Moreover, a comic fragment taken separately, cut from a general strip (frame), without correlating the pictures on the left and right with it, loses all meaning because its semantic load is significant only in the context of the entire story. Simultaneously, each miniature of the Chronicles and fragment isolated from it is efficient. For example, leaving a single eye, a hand gesture, or any other microfragment holds significance; these minute elements carry a semantic load that encapsulates the entire universe, the complete cosmos. In essence, miniatures are not restricted by the limitations of time and space; they are infinite not only as a collective but also in each of their fragments. If the Chronicles as a whole resemble a sphere, each miniature can be likened to a small sphere, and each fragment of a miniature is a microsphere. This encapsulates both a microcosm and a macrocosm as spheres within a sphere. The comics against the backdrop of these miniatures are a series of individual pictures and

frames interconnected by a thorough plot. Consider, for example, a miniature from Osterman's volume 2, the legend of the battle of Mamaev by I. OII 28, which depicts Prince Jagiello negotiating with Oleg Ryazansky to join Mamai's army in the fight against Dmitry Donskoy (Fig. 1). This miniature comprises seven independent episodes, each with its characters. For a contemporary viewer raised in the Renaissance era, where the rule of three unities (unity of time, place, and action) prevails, grasping the artistic language of Ancient Rus' in the 16th century can be challenging. The "reading" of the miniatures starts from the bottom, with the earliest scenes located at the bottom edge of the image and the later scenes at the top.

- 1. Prince Jagiello Olgerdovich of Lithuania dictates his message to Mamai to the scribe (the figure of the prince is depicted in a Western-style cap, so we can assume that this is Jagiello).
- 2. The Ambassador of Jagiello prepares gifts for Mamai.
- 3. Jagiello's embassy departs the city gates.
- 4. Prince Oleg Ryazansky receives the news that Jagiello has sent ambassadors to Mamai (the prince is wearing a Russian hat).
- 5. Prince Oleg meets with the Ambassador of Jagiello to Mamai (the text does not include this scene; it can be assumed that the artists in some cases added some of their visual "comments" to the image).
- 6. Mamai meets ambassadors from princes Oleg Ryazansky and Jagiello.
- 7. Mamai's army is preparing to campaign against Moscow.



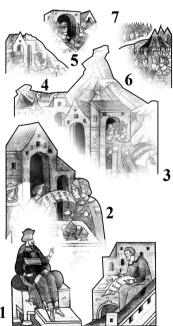


Fig. 1. Principle of versatility

Russian poet and philosopher Alexey Stepanovich Khomyakov [18, p. 7], the founder of early Slavophilism, first proposed the term "conciliarism" as belonging of the truth to the entire Church, and not to an individual or institution, no matter how authoritative they were, as the free sharing of the joy of life or suffering by the entire brotherhood of people. This can be compared to a choir, in which each person sings in unison with others, bringing their tonality given to them by God, and the soloist only unites and strengthens the general chant. The Illuminated Chronicle has the same idea but is expressed in visual images. The absence of an individual portrayed as "alone" is a rarity in the context of the Illuminated Chronicle. It can be assumed that, within the medieval value system, the concept of an isolated individual did not exist; individuals were always seen as spokespersons or representatives of the entire team. This aspect underscores one of the most important characteristics of Russian culture, originating from the Russian mentality, which significantly distinguishes it from Western European individualism and the "cult of personality" that emphasizes unique individuality. In instances where a solitary character appears in the miniature, a rarity in the Chronicle, it is invariably accompanied by images of God in a mandorla or a blessing hand. This signifies that the person is not truly alone and is not abandoned by the Almighty. The Illuminated Chronicle notably lacks depictions of a solitary figure abandoned by everyone, a notable absence of a Hamlet-like figure in Russian culture. This is in stark contrast to the Western world, where Hamlet, the emblematic figure of a solitary individual tormented by doubts and devoid of both human and divine support, holds great symbolic significance. The absence of such imagery in the Illuminated Chronicles raises the question of Hamlet's popularity in Russia. It might be that Hamlet, being a character fundamentally extraneous to the Russian people, becomes intriguing and attractive

like a forbidden fruit. Examining one of the miniatures in the Illuminated Chronicle can shed light on the implementation of the principle of conciliarism as an artistic device, elucidating the unique compositional situations presented in Fig. 2.

- 1. The main characters are in front. The interlocutors are presented not as bearers of their positions but as exponents of a collective view. If a miniature depicts a dialog, then as a rule, it involves not only two people but many more.
- 2. Behind them are a couple of people, and their glances and the glances of the main characters are directed to the same side. Therefore, each interlocutor appears to be represented "in three persons." The main participant stands in the foreground, followed by the second, with his gaze directed in the same direction. He seems to strengthen and support this statement.
- 3. Between Characters 1 and 3, there is another depicted, Character 3, who looks at Participant 2 and "supports" him.
- 4. A group of heads is depicted in the background, representing the collective on whose behalf the statement is being made. Such dialog is often conducted against the backdrop of a black opening.

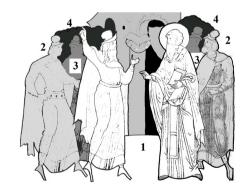


Fig. 2. Principle of conciliarism

The Orthodox artist acknowledges the existence of evil but does not consider it to be the main element in the world. There is a disengaged attitude toward worldly events, viewing evil as a

natural manifestation of the imperfect world, created by God but inhabited by sinful people. Orthodox artists tend to display self-deprecation and a general downplaying of human merit. In contrast. Western art, especially since the Renaissance, often glorifies man as the pinnacle of creation, where humans govern the world and nature and everything is subjected to their influence. Western artists employ various means, such as suppression, intimidation, seduction, and shock, to attract attention to their paintings. This can be seen as a form of direct "emotional manipulation," dictating to the viewer what they should feel and understand, potentially stripping them of their freedom and turning them into spiritual slaves. Such tendencies are notably absent in Orthodox art. Old Russian artists, in particle, aim to "harmonize" the viewer through the images they create. They encapsulate the suffering and horror of the world within a "shell" of love and benevolence, allowing for independent assessment and creating a sense of standing before the image as an individual. When comparing Russian and European art from the 13th-17th centuries, a striking difference emerges. Works by Orthodox masters convey a life-affirming feeling of light and joy, whereas many European paintings emit an overwhelming, dark, ominous atmosphere. The question arises: How did Russian artists manage to convey this joy of life while acknowledging the dark sides of existence? After all, it is guite obvious that they knew the dark sides of life very well. Many scenes in the Illuminated Chronicles are literally "drenched in blood," filled with suffering, horror, and death, starting with the suffering of Jesus on the cross. The manuscript also contains depictions of hell,

bloody battles, beheading, boiling in a cauldron, and various other horrors associated with death (Fig. 3). However, even these bloody scenes do not evoke horror and disgust in the audience, feelings that are often experienced by viewers of the works of Hieronymus Bosch, Albert Altdorfer, Matthias Grunewald, Hans Holbein, and many other famous artists of Western Europe.



Fig. 3. Principle of disengagement

Several other traits determine the specifics of the Russian sacred style, complementing the basic principles. For example, the narration is concordant with versatility; archetype archetypically and the unity of nature and man are concordant with conciliarity, and weightlessness, as well as proportionality, are concordant with disengagement. They all align smoothly with each other, forming a single realm of existence. The entire depth of interactions between the principles of the Russian sacred style requires a deep study from various esthetic, ethical, and religious perspectives.

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РУССКИЙ САКРАЛЬНЫЙ СТИЛЬ В МИНИАТЮРАХ ЛИЦЕВОГО ЛЕТОПИСНОГО СВОДА ИВАНА ГРОЗНОГО

Лицевой летописный свод Ивана Грозного — уникальное явление русской и мировой художественной культуры. Документальный памятник, включающий 10 рукописных томов и около 10 тысяч листов текста, содержит более 17,7 тысяч миниатюр. В статье доказывается, что структура, расположение и манера исполнения иллюстраций Свода выражают метафизические принципы русской цивилизации: многомерность, соборность и

отстраненность. Особенности русского сакрального стиля книжной миниатюры, его самобытность формировались в результате диалога Западной и Византийской эстетических традиций.

Ключевые слова: Лицевой летописный свод, миниатюры, русский сакральный стиль, многомерность, соборность, отстраненность.

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