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The restoration works on the church completed in 2009 allowed for discerning a number of new details. The scene representing the consecrating of St Nicholas as bishop is the last one in the second register on the north rib of the vault. An unrolled scroll with the text: 

Τὸν Ἱερὸν ἅγιον Νικόλαον καὶ τὴν εὐσεβὴν κοινωνίαν ἔκτισεν ὁ Αρχιεπίσκοπος Σερδίκας Λαμπρίανος (

Divine is His grace, both now and ever) is represented on the high altar with the ordain (St. Nicholas) and the archbishop leading the ceremony on both sides. The text is the key phrase in the office of ordination. The earliest extant Slavonic text occurs in a Russian prayer book of the fourteenth century, originating in St Anthony’s Monastery, Novgorod. A linguistic analysis shows traces of Glagolitic orthographic practice. The existence of a relatively early translation of this order of service is evidenced by the inscription in the scroll. Furthermore, it bears witness to the fact that the icon-painters have been familiar with the text of this specific order of service, most probably through a high-ranking priest, who has supervised their work on behalf of the donor. This priest could be none other than the Metropolitan of Serdica. He was the sole one to match the rank of the donor, Sebastocrator Kaloyan, a cousin of the King, the second in command in the Kingdom.

The article deals with some common elements in the murals at the churches of St Prochorus of Pcinja and of Peter and Paul, the Orlitsa metochion, Monastery of Rila (1491); the Church of St Nicholas, Gornjak Monastery (ca. 1490) and the Church of the Assumption, Monastery of Mislovishitsa (the end-fifteenth and the early sixteenth century). Some iconographic and stylistic specifics found in them are probably showing that the icon-painters have belonged to a particular artistic group.

The murals in the sites under consideration are only partially preserved, which does not allow for a comprehensive iconographic and stylistic comparative analysis. So just a few typical examples of the extant scenes and images are considered, which provide eloquent testimony to the connection between the icon-painters. Being aware that the issue of whether they have been done by the same icon-painting team is not solved, some observations are presented here believed to be a possible step towards a comprehensive study.

The examples offer similar iconographic and stylistic specifics; still, a number of differences can be differentiated, which are easy to tell in the selection of the compositions, the building of some of the figures, in the inscriptions signifying the scenes and the texts on the scrolls. The reason lies perhaps in the differences as regards the skills and knowledge of the individual teams that have executed the monumental decoration of this group of sites.

Studies of the techniques and technologies of the murals is a crucial argument in establishing to which studio or artistic group one painting or another belonged. A systematic research on all the sites is in store, but the technique-technological analysis of the paintings at the churches of St Prochorus of Pcinja and of Peter and Paul confirmed the assumption that these have been executed by the same artistic group.

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THE AERIAL TOLLBOThS
IN THE LAST JUDGEMENT
ICONOGRAPHY
Tatyana Ivanova

The article deals with the teaching of tollbooths/toll-houses/toll-stations/ordeals, their origin, sources, spread in Christian theological thought and subsequently, in iconographic eschatology: the composition of Christ’s Second Coming. In the fifteenth century in Russia and Ukraine, the classical Byzantine iconography of The Last Judgement underwent changes with one of the most important new features being a snake with twenty or twenty-one coils. Twenty coils of a snake symbolize the ordeals in the Life of St. Basil the New (tenth century), the main source of the teaching of ordeals, interpreted in a different manner in Orthodox literature and more often than not defined as apocryphal. This paper studies why ordeals were incorporated in The Last Judgement, as a result of what changes in Christian literature and what their significance was. The proper theological and historical hermeneutics of the development of the new Russian-Ukrainian iconography of The Second Coming helps clarify the Orthodox or Gnostic nature of the teaching of ordeals.

THE MURALS OF THE
CATHOLICON OF THE
TRANSFIGURATION
MONASTERY: TIMELINE
OF CONSERVATION
INTERVENTIONS
Ivan Vanev

Ever since the early twentieth century, the wall paintings at the catholi-con of the Transfiguration Monastery near Veliko Tarnovo have been subject to a number of corrections, overpaints and conservation works, which have altered their initial appearance to a great extent. As research literature fails to provide information about these interventions, their timeline has been clarified using a number of sources or old photos, found during this research. Tracing out the previous interventions and attempts to preserve the murals in the past are an important starting material both for the general restoration of the church, which began in 2004, and for the researchers of the cultural heritage of the monastery, being also a significant stage in the history of the preservation of Bulgaria’s cultural heritage.

It is well known that it was Zachary Zograph, a most popular icon-painter in the Period of Bulgarian National Revival, who painted the catholicon of the Transfiguration Monastery in 1849. Their poor condition in the early twentieth century forced the friary to take steps to renew them and Ivan Yonkov, a painter from Triavna was assigned this task in 1906. A devastating earthquake on 1 June 1913 badly damaged the wall paintings at the catholicon. Apostol Christov, an icon-painter from the village of Galichnik, Debar district was commissioned to repair them.

The first all-round conservation of the murals was led by the National Museum of Archaeology, Sofia in 1943 and done by museum conservator-restorer Karl Jordanov. New interventions were carried out by a team of the Institute of Cultural Heritage, led by Luba Krasovska in the period 1962–1964. In the early 1970s, interventions were required once again due to the critical condition of the wall paintings and were carried out by a team led by Dragomir Peshev. At the time thorough analyses were made to determine what the pigments and the binder of the paint layers contained.

GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT
OF PHOTOGRAPHIC
EDUCATION IN BULGARIA
Katerina Gadjeva

The first public talks and short courses in photography in Bulgaria were offered by the Amateur Photographic Society in 1897 and the Bulgarian photographic Club, founded in 1920. In 1941, Bulgarian Delo foundation was set up with the National Promulgation Directorate and was in charge of all the photographic and film activities. In 1945 and 1946 the foundation conducted the earlier professional photographic courses in this country to lay the foundations of the first ever State College of Cinematography and Photographic Engineering, which opened doors in Sofia, in 1949. It was closed shortly afterwards, in 1952 as its maintenance was said to be ‘financially unprofitable’. In 1959, with the ‘thaw’ in the political situation in the country, courses in photography were offered at Sofia College of Graphics. For almost four decades it was the sole specialized high school in photography here. It was as late as 1992, when the first ever Higher Courses in Photography was offered on a regular basis at a Bulgarian higher education institution, the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts, Sofia.