



RICONTRANS: Visual Culture, Piety and Propaganda: Transfer and Reception of Russian Religious Art in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean (16th - early 20th c.)- ERC Consolidator Grant 2018

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ABSTRACT

Object:

The project examines the thousands of Russian Icons and other religious art objects, brought from Russia to the Balkans from the 16th until the 20th c. preserved in monasteries, churches and museum collections. Their transfer and their reception constitutes a significant component of the wider process of transformation of the artistic language and visual culture in the region, and its transition from medieval to modern idioms. It is at the same time a process reflecting the changing cultural and political relations between Russia and the Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states in the Balkans over a long period of time.

Research & data management:

The RICONTRANS team will organize and conduct archival, bibliographical and fieldwork research collecting primary and secondary sources in Greece, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania and Russia. In collaboration with the Centre for Cultural Informatics (CCI) of the Institute of Computer Science (ICS/FORTH), the collected RICONTRANS data will be managed and integrated in a CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model.

Objectives & methodology:

Applying the cultural transfer approach in combination with the recent challenging openings of art history to visual studies and social anthropology, RICONTRANS aims: • to map the phenomenon in its long history by identifying preserved objects in the region; • to follow the paths and identify the mediums of this transfer; • to analyze the moving factors of this process; • to study and classify these objects according to their iconographic and artistic particularities; • to inquire into the aesthetic, ideological, political and social factors which shaped the context of the reception of Russian religious art objects in various social and cultural environments; • to investigate the influence of these transferred artefacts on the visual culture of the host societies.

Academic impact:

RICONTRANS applies an innovative research approach for the transnational study of art objects and their circulation in large regions of Europe, establishing inter-sectoral collaboration between museums, universities and research institutions, consolidating an international and interdisciplinary network of leading scholars with an emphasis in the European periphery and training a new generation of scholars in the field.

Social impact:

Through exhibitions and various open activities, it will draw public attention to thus far neglected art objects, highlighting the political, social and cultural contexts of their transfer. In this way, RICONTRANS will raise awareness among, and incentivize state and private authorities to preserve and showcase this important body of cultural heritage.