

at the same time, always pulling in different interpretive directions; thereby creating something dynamic, evolving, constantly in the process of transformation. Neither of the two possibilities (movement and stillness; symbol and repetition; the assemblage and the cut) can assume “primacy without either being overcome or undermined” (p. 202), and this is the tension maintained by Eisenstein’s poetics that Arsenjuk is able to show us by means of a thorough, close, careful rereading.

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Taroutina, Maria. *The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018. xvi + 271 pp. \$89.95. ISBN 978-0-271-08104-5.

The encounter between Russian icon painting and the Russian avant-garde took place at the exhibition of Ancient Russian Art in Moscow in 1913 in honor of the three hundredth anniversary of the rule of the Romanov dynasty. While this fact has been learned and taught for decades, Maria Taroutina’s beautifully illustrated and informative book demonstrates convincingly that the story is much more multifarious and complicated than has so far been shown.

As her starting point, the author uses the architecture and the embellishment of the Kazan Cathedral in Petersburg, where no influences whatsoever can be discerned from Byzantium or old Rus’. In the following section she briefly dwells upon the revival in Russia and the West of interest in Byzantium beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Much space is then given to a thorough discussion of exhibitions of Old Russian and Byzantine art before 1913, as well as to the development of public collections of icon painting in Russia, the main restoration work performed at that time on ecclesiastical objects, and the construction, for example, of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Rich collections of old icons were built up over the decades before the Revolution not only in the State Russian Museum (founded as the Russian Museum of His Imperial Majesty Alexander III) and in the Tretyakov Gallery, but also, for example, in the Russian Historical Museum and the Rumiantsev Museum in Petersburg. Most of the artworks came from donations by private collectors.

The icons had also been discussed in scholarly literature before 1913, for example, by Nikodim Kondakov. It would have been interesting to read more about the involvement, or rather the lack of involvement, of the church in this process. One important and controversial issue in Russia today concerns what to do with icons that had been confiscated by Soviet authorities and now reside in various museums. How did it happen that such a huge number of icons ended up in the museums before 1917 without any protests on the part of the church and its representatives?

Beginning in 1913, icons came to be regarded as high art, rather than as folk art, as the *peredvizhniki*, for example, considered them. The link to the avant-garde was stressed in many ways—for instance, in the Russian Museum, where the icons were hung in a room next to the paintings of Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin. The art critic and future husband of Anna Akhmatova, Nikolai Punin, claimed that icon art was the predecessor of the avant-garde. The Byzantine and Old Russian tradition “could actually pave the way for an international artistic revolution” (p. 46). Art in the West had reached an impasse at the beginning of the twentieth century with the Impressionist movement. This view was underpinned or even blessed by Henri Matisse, who commented on the deep impression Russian icons made on him during a visit to Russia in 1911. Another track in Russian culture of the time mentioned in the book connects the icons with a more or less nationalistic Russian narrative. This double use of Russian icons is not always noted in the literature, but Taroutina dwells on this very important fact.

In subsequent chapters, Taroutina considers the relationships to Byzantine art and Russian icons of four artists of the period—Mikhail Vrubel, Vasily Kandinsky, Malevich, and Tatlin—using their motifs, styles, and composition, along with ample quotations from the artists’ own texts and biographies. The evidence presented is not only convincing but also overwhelming. Some of the lengthy quotations from modern art historians could have been left out, as could some speculation about meetings and contacts, and in some cases it might have been better to maintain a little more

distance from statements about the link between icon painting and the avant-garde. I would question the sharp distinction made between Kandinsky and Tatlin, on the one hand, and Natalia Goncharova, on the other, with respect to high art and folklore. This difference is perhaps relevant for the first part of Goncharova's history as an artist (p. 150).

Malevich's *Black Square*, the most famous Russian painting of the period, is not as important a topic as one might have expected in a book with this title, but it is given its due. The sharp distinction often drawn between Malevich and Tatlin is convincingly questioned. The author aptly suggests that icons do not exist in a two-dimensional world, in view of which Tatlin's striving for three-dimensionality no longer seems contradictory in relation to icon painting. All four of these artists used icons to find new ways to abandon the mimetic approach to art in exchange for a more or less abstract artistic language, and all were deeply influenced by the Christian tradition not only in their relationship with icons but also in their worldview. Many parallels are drawn to the Russian Religious-Philosophical Renaissance of the time and especially to Pavel Florensky.

The Icon and the Square will change our understanding of the epoch. Taroutina dramatically ends her book with the onset of the Bolshevik Revolution. This is in all ways true, but there is yet another story to tell, about the role of icons both as hard currency in Soviet foreign trade and as a building block in the Soviet narrative of the cultural heritage with artists such as Pavel Korin or Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin. The events of 1917 were not only a sad and tragic end but also a very special beginning of a new and ambiguous relationship with Byzantine and Old Russian art in the Soviet Union.

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Minkova, Yuliya. *Making Martyrs: The Language of Sacrifice in Russian Culture from Stalin to Putin*. Rochester Studies in East and Central Europe. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018. viii + 237 pp. \$85.00. ISBN 978-1-58046-914-2.

In *Making Martyrs*, Yuliya Minkova embarks on the ambitious task of identifying "a course in the development of the discourse about the sacred victim" (p. 1). Minkova organizes the monograph chronologically, dedicating each chapter to a particular type of hero characteristic of the period in which he or she achieved martyrdom, and tracing the evolution of sacrificial imagery. She analyzes the language of canonization and vilification in Soviet and post-Soviet media, as well as fiction, memoirs, and films. Although her examples stem from different eras and nations, 1930s to the present, she argues that they all entered the Soviet or post-Soviet pantheon of heroes primarily because of their status as victims, and she elucidates the specific usefulness of such examples. In addition to delineating this persistent trend in Soviet discourse, she endeavors to trace its influence on contemporary Russians' self-perceptions. Minkova situates her work within scholarship of cultural mythology that juxtaposes Russia's discourse of self-sacrifice with the Western emphasis on human-rights discourse. In her introduction, she introduces a theoretical framework that relies largely on Giorgio Agamben's concept of the *homo sacer* and uses Oleg Kharkhordin's extrapolation of the relationship between collective and individual to demonstrate the *homo sacer*'s relevance to Soviet and post-Soviet martyrs.

In her first chapter, Minkova analyzes the treatment of the human body and the tension between bodily needs and the needs related to the ideological development of consciousness. She argues that Soviet culture created two types of *homo sacer*: the defendant body at show trials, a camouflaged body which must be stripped away to reveal the "body" of crime, and the self-sacrificing wartime bodies as objects of torture and violence, bodies that she argues disappear. She uses the example of Zoia Kosmodemianskaia, considering the posthumous life of Kosmodemianskaia in Margarita Aliger's 1942 narrative poem *Zoia*, versions of Lidov's 1942 newspaper account "Tanya," and the hagiographic biography written by Zoia's mother, Liubov Kosmodemianskaia and a ghost-writer *The Story of Zoia and Shura*—as well as Zoia's relics. Minkova includes a fascinating, nuanced reading of Aliger's narrative poem. In spite of detailed descriptions of brutality in martyr texts, Minkova