

Problems of toning treatment and reconstruction of losses in icon-painting

A. Fedorchuk
Yaroslavl Art Museum

In the 1950-70-s it was typical for restoration practice to use toning procedures after cleaning treatments of author work. Reconstructions were either not used at all or used in the most general form. Such a principle was affirmed in a textbook for restorers, published in 1986. As a must, toning treatments were to differ in tone and texture from the original image and it was possible to make them either in water-colour or in tempera. Icons were perceived exclusively as objects of art, ignoring their religious context.

Nowadays, attitudes towards the Church in our country have changed and many museum visitors are believers. Consequently, restorers must prepare icons for exhibitions not only as objects of art but as objects of religious worship too. It is very important not to insult the believers' feelings. Vast paint-losses in the margin or in the ground can be done away with toning treatment, which should be rather similar to the original image for the better integrity of perception. From our point of view, the reconstruction of images, hands, figures and nimbi using analogy is a must, because picture of these details has a sacred significance for believers. Toning treatment and reconstructions, resembling author painting, demand from restorers' special responsibility to all future generations. All restoration additions in icons must be easily removable. It is probably better not to make toning treatment with tempera in areas too close to the original painting, because there is

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the possibility of damaging the icon, when tempera will be removed with some solvent.

The main task of restoration is to save an object of art for future generations. Nevertheless, we ought to keep in mind the needs of our contemporaries. Their interests too ought to be taken into account but avoiding any damage to the safety of the cultural monuments.

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