

Air and Heavens
in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World
Symposium to be held
at the Russian Academy of Arts,
in Moscow on September 11-13, 2019

Dear Colleagues!

The Russian Academy of Arts, the Institute for World Culture at Moscow State University, and the Research Centre for Eastern Christian Culture, would like to invite you to join an International Symposium which will be held in Moscow on 11-13 September 2019, dedicated this year to the subject of:

Air and Heavens
in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World

The deadline for applications is 15 March 2019. The proceedings of the Symposium will be published in a separate volume containing the abstracts of papers given at the Symposium. If your topic is accepted, you should submit your abstract (no more than three pages in total) by 30 April 2019 in Russian or in English. The papers should also be presented in either of these languages.

The project tackles the subject of Air and Heavens and the role of this phenomenon in the making of sacred spaces, mostly in the medieval tradition with a special focus on the Byzantine world. Nonetheless, other Christian and non-Christian phenomena will also be considered within their wider historical and geographical contexts. The symposium is multi-and-interdisciplinary in character, appealing to scholars with various research interests and academic backgrounds. The symposium shall explore not merely specific territories and related artefacts, but the conception of particular spatial images and their embodiment in sacred

landscapes and various iconographic devices and literary texts. It requires a new look at the methodology of modern art history.

The project and symposium are the next step in a continuing research program dedicated to the making of sacred spaces as a distinct form of artistic and spiritual creativity called 'hierotopy'. Within the framework of this research project a number of international symposia have been held, and various books dedicated to the subject have been published, such as *Hierotopy. Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Russia*, ed. A.Lidov, Moscow, 2006; *Hierotopy. Comparative Studies of Sacred Spaces* ed. A.Lidov, Moscow, 2009; *New Jerusalems. Hierotopy and Iconography of Sacred Spaces*, ed. A.Lidov, Moscow 2009; *Spatial Icons: Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. A.Lidov, Moscow, 2011. Recently, a new sub-series has appeared, dedicated to the elements of the universe: *Hierotopy of Light and Fire in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov, Moscow 2013; *The Life-Giving Source. The Holy Water in Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World*, ed. Alexei Lidov, Moscow 2014; *Holy Mountains in Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World*, ed. Alexei Lidov, Moscow 2017

From our perspective, the introduction and spread of the term *hierotopy* amongst the scholars, and the increasing possibility of the hierotopic approach as an auxiliary aid to research, have not only provided an opportunity to look afresh at many "customary" phenomena, but also to substantially expand the field of historical studies. It is noteworthy that entire aspects of the creative process have been neglected by scholarship and were not studied or described at all, precisely due to the absence of the hierotopic approach which evades positivist classification. For instance, although the spatial imagery of Air and Heavens is a significant phenomenon, it has remained beyond the scope of traditional fields of study. At the same time, we know from written sources that the images of the Heavens appeared in liturgical services and in church decoration. These appear as 'Spatial icons' and

'Image-paradigms', when we employ the new hierotopic terms invented to describe phenomena beyond the realm of flat pictures.

Areas of discussion and research could include:

1. Philosophical-theological concepts of Air and Heavens
2. Presentation of Heavens as a mode of hierotopic creativity
3. Heavenly City and its imagery
4. Angels and the Heavenly hierarchy
5. Air and the 'airs' in ritual and liturgical practice
6. Heavens in the liturgical installations
7. Personifications of the Air and the Winds
8. Archaeology of Air and Heavens
9. Iconography of Air and Heavens in Christian art.
10. Heavenly imagery in the Christian rhetoric and other texts

Chair of the Symposium Committee

Alexei Lidov