

Holy Mountains in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World

Symposium to be held at the Russian Academy of Arts on September 13-15, 2017

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 13-15 September 2017, dedicated this year to the subject of:

Holy Mountains in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World

The deadline for applications is 15 March 2017. 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 2017 in Russian or in English. The papers should also be presented in either of these languages.

The project tackles the subject of Holy Mountains 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 wide historical and geographical context. The symposium is clearly of a multi-and-interdisciplinary character, thus appealing to scholars with various research interests and academic backgrounds. The symposium shall explore not merely the specific territories and related artefacts, but the particular spatial imagery conceived in human minds and then embodied in sacred landscapes (like the famous Sacri Monti)

and various iconographic devices, as well as in some literary texts. It requires a new look at the methodology of modern art history.

The project and symposium are the next step of a continuing research program dedicated to the making of sacred spaces as a distinct form of artistic and spiritual creativity, which has been 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 Jerusalem. 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)

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, such a significant phenomenon as the spatial imagery of Holy Mountains has remained beyond the scope of traditional fields of study. At the same time, we know from written sources that Holy Mountain imagery appeared in liturgical services and in church decoration. It was a kind of 'Spatial icon' and 'Image-

paradigm', if we use 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 Holy Mountains.
2. Holy Mountains in ritual and liturgical practice.
3. Making of Holy Mountains as a mode of hierotopic creativity.
4. Natural and artificial in Holy Mountains.
5. Activation of space and performative aspects in the creation of a Holy Mountain.
6. Archaeology of Holy Mountains.
7. Iconography of Holy Mountains in Christian art.
8. Holy Mountains in literary descriptions.
9. Mount Sinai as a space of revelation
10. Mount Athos – the iconic Holy Mountain of the Byzantine world
11. Sacri Monti and construction of 'new Jerusalems', East and West
12. Solomon's Temple as a sacred mountain.
13. Holy Mountain imagery in the media of the Christian church
14. Terminology related to Holy Mountains.
15. Hierotopy, Spatial Icon and Image-Paradigm of the Holy Mountain: definition of these interrelated notions