

Summary

MICHAL HAAKE (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) / The icon *Зна́мение* in the oeuvre of Jan Matejko

The article attempts to answer the question of the role of the depiction of the icon of Our Lady “Sign” (“*Зна́мение*”) in two paintings by Jan Matejko: *Stefan Batory at Pskov* (1872) and *Boleslaw the Brave with Svyatopolk at the Golden Gate in Kiev* (1884). These depictions have not yet been studied. In both cases, Matejko depicted a processional icon carried by the inhabitants of fortresses besieged by Polish troops – Pskov during the Polish-Russian wars in 1582 and Kiev in 1018. Both paintings were interpreted in the context of the tradition, deeply rooted in Byzantine and Rus’ culture and known in the 19th c. from numerous chronicles and historical studies, of using holy images, often Marian icons, carried on walls to obtain God’s help in repelling the enemy. The research task was to explain why the icons in Matejko’s paintings are carried after the end of hostilities, which ensured the Polish side a favourable peace (Pskov) or the conquest of the capital with the deposition of the Polish king’s son-in-law on the throne (Kiev). In conclusion, both works were considered examples of Matejko’s concept of depicting the entirety of a “historical event”, which takes into account both the causes of the depicted situation and its consequences. Among them, Matejko not infrequently recalled the opportunities missed by the Polish side. This was also the case with the story told in both paintings: Pskov finally was not conquered, the power of Russia was not broken, and the capture of Kiev, from which the triumphal entry of the Brave into the city was remembered, proved to be short-lived.