

## Introduction

The 31<sup>st</sup> volume of Ikonotheke presents two sets of articles. The first one is devoted to medieval art and medievalisms in Central Europe (mostly) after 1945 with particular regard to medievalist practices such as creative adaptations, programmatic redefinitions, nationalist appropriations and ideological revaluations. The end of the Second World War in Europe brought new borders and new socio-political system, accelerated modernisation, and the promise of a “brave new world”, which must be created on the ruins of the past. However, the ideological drive towards the future was supplemented by a turn towards a specifically understood history, often phantasmagorical and imagined. The Christian Middle Ages, with its feudal system, visual culture, and its traces in the form of medieval artifacts and architecture, played an important role in establishing the communist and socialist utopia.

This first group of articles presents a number of interesting observations on medievalism and new interpretations from the fields of architecture, panel painting and sacred art. The analysis of methods of interpreting the provenance of arcaded houses in the period from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1939, proved that arcades, as a motif of medieval origins, were easily subjected to various more or less conscious manipulations in order to justify their native character, sometimes understood as belonging to particular peoples, regions, nations or even races. Michael Sittow’s vague and questionable biography, in turn, has become fodder for the creation of romantic symbol of Estonian post-war independence, thus forming a part of the newly constructed post-war national memory. Moreover, some medieval artworks, such as altarpieces, single statues or paintings, regardless of actions taken to ignore their recent past, remained the carriers of a complicated, multi-threaded history, despite serving very different and ideologically problematic purposes, such as embellishing “The Copernicus Chapel” in Toruń.

The second part of the volume contains the articles on different, but no less fascinating topics. It provides, *inter alia*, the analysis of a relief block with the Crucifixion scene preserved in the St. Martin’s parish church in Jawor, commemorating Johann Sapiens and his family, which turned out to be the earliest preserved pictorial epitaph not only in Silesia, but also in this part of Europe. Moreover, it presents the person and oeuvre of Simon Pitz, a Jesuit architect providing designs for numer-

ous Jesuit buildings in Czechia, Moravia, Silesia and Poland, whose some previously unknown drawings have been taken under the spotlight. Finally, the second part of contributions contains the article with remarks on aquatic imagination and hydro-stories about American Art.

We hope that the new issue of *Ikonotheke* will bring much inspiration and satisfaction to readers.