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SAINT LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN: SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NETHERLANDISH PAINTING

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The medieval legend of Saint Luke, who painted the portraits of the Virgin and Child, contributed to the spread of this iconography in the art of the Renaissance and Mannerism periods, especially in the Netherlands in the 16th century. The surge of interest in this iconography is due to the organization of Saint Luke's guilds, under whose patronage artists united. The tradition of this iconography, initiated in the Early Netherlandish painting by Robert Campin and Roger van der Weyden, influenced the subsequent generations of artists. In the image of Saint Luke, these artists depicted not only their own self-portraits, but also gave his image the features of a modern artist working in the workshop, striving to obtain a higher status, among the tools (depicted in details) of the painter, the artist, the attributes of the collector and the scientist.

The purpose of this report is therefore to analyze the evolution of the image of Saint Luke-artist in the Netherlandish painting of the 16th century in the context of the work of the art workshop, as well as the formation of the artistic self-consciousness of the artist, the influence of the art of antiquity and the Italian Renaissance on it, the Protestantism movement and the iconoclasm consequences.

In the Netherlandish painting of the 16th century, the image of Luke-artist painting the Virgin and Child, acquires new variations in iconography. Part of these variations is rooted in the art of the previous period, while the other one rapidly develops under the influence of the achievements of the Italian architects and artists of the High Renaissance, the intellectual thought of this era, in particular the «ideas about genius», as well as gaining new knowledge about the culture and art of Ancient Greece and Rome. This made it possible to embody various archetypes of artists in the paintings «Saint Luke Painting the Virgin»; details of work on the artwork, the life and work of the art workshop; distribution of specific functions in it and highlighting of their role; to develop new ornamentation and design in the depiction of workshop interiors, etc. The first outbreaks of iconoclasm, dated in the 1520s, are also reflected in the image of Saint Luke-artist, details of the architecture of his workshop, and other important details.