Analize ale fragmentelor de frescă descoperite la Bizere în anii 2001-2009 (I)

Abstract:

The high fragmentation of the fresco remains retrieved during several archaeological campaigns raised multiple questions ranging from its positioning inside the Bizere monastic complex, artistic complexity and dating to the technical knowledge employed for its production. Thus, two sets of fresco fragments were put up for analysis: one taken from an area dominated by the main architectural components associated with the cloister and the other gathered from archaeological trenches situated westwards from this central perimeter. The analysis using stereomicroscopy and polarised light was meant to retrieve some relevant information about an otherwise highly cryptic material. A clear distinction could be made regarding the stratigraphy of the pieces found inside and outside the cloister, as the first set was obviously showing the existence of successive mortar layers separated by colour, therefore indicating two chronological phases of the respective fresco decoration. The pigments used for the first set of samples could be identified as: yellow ochre, red ochre and vegetal charcoal. One intriguing aspect is the identification of ultramarine blue, an expensive pigment mostly used for small details or the attire of the Holy Virgin, employed by the European painting from the twelfth century onwards. On the other hand, the less complex exterior decoration showed, so far, a single mortar layer and the use of only one pigment (red ochre).

Keywords: *medieval painting, stereomicroscopy, polarised light, pigments, ultramarine blue.*