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THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE FRESCOES OF THE “FORTY HOLY MARTYRS” CHURCH IN VELIKO TURNOVO

*(Summary)*

The article examines the fragments of paintings on the eastern wall of the westernmost annex (the so-called mausoleum) of the “Holy Forty Martyrs” Church in Veliko Turnovo. The state of the preserved fragments and the ideological programme which links them indicate that they were not placed on an open façade, as is accepted in the existing literature but were part of the ornamentation of a more or less open external narthex. The leading Eucharistic idea in the iconographic programme of the wall-paintings is considered in connection with the service practice in the western parts of the Byzantine monasterial shrines of that time. The frescoes of the Turnovo church are some of the earliest preserved examples in Byzantine art of such a wide representation of the monastic themes in narthex wall decoration. A new interpretation is given in the article of the fresco in the lunette over a door as illustration of “The Vision of Procles” from the Life of John Chrysostom.