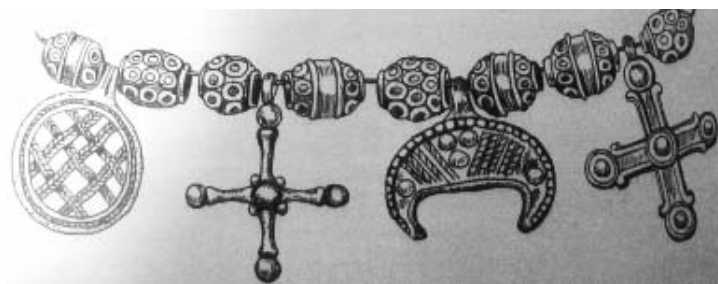


The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

Appropriate Gifts - Commemorating the 1025th Anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan-Rus-Ukraine by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

On the occasion of the 1025th Anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan-Rus-Ukraine, our Museum recently received exceptional gifts – three brass enkolpions and seven small metal pendant crosses. Sacred images in this form had become very popular throughout Kievan-



Rus from about the 12-13th centuries, and were most likely cast in Kyivan-Rus by native artisans. Naturally, members of the



princely family and Kyivan-Rus nobility would have such items cast in gold, silver,

embellished with jewels, colored glass, and cloisonné enamel. The general populace could only afford similar pendants cast in bronze or carved from stone. In art history enkolpions and crosses of this type are known as Byzantine since their prototypes came from Byzantium, just as Christianity came to Kyivan-Rus from Byzantium.

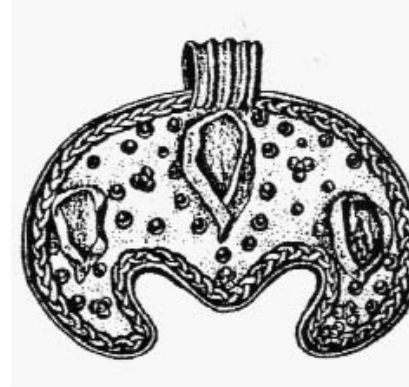
The word Enkolpion is from the Greek “on the chest”, meaning something worn on the chest or bosom. Nowadays, enkolpions are worn by Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Bishops and are called Panagias.

Enkolpions were usually made up of two separate crosses held together by a hinge at the bottom and a hook at the top, through which a chain could be inserted for hanging on the chest. The inside of the cross could house relics of saints which would then make it a reliquary cross. The front part of the cross depicted the Crucifixion of Christ with saints in the side, top, and bottom medallions. The back part of the cross had the depiction of the Blessed Virgin Mary flanked by saints in a similar way as the front part.

The three enkolpions which we received only have the front part, the depiction of the Crucifixion. On two of them there are remnants of a hinge on the bottom and a hook on top, suggesting there was an obverse part to them. A few of the smaller crosses also have remnants of hinges and hooks which would in-

dicate that they were also used as reliquary crosses. One small cross has a broken suspension loop, and the grooves are filled with blue and yellow enamel.

The use of pendants as a religious identification, decoration, or as a protective amulet or talisman was universal. Every culture had its own set of beliefs, and created objects to serve as the means to uphold and proclaim these beliefs. In the pre-Christian days in Kyivan-Rus it was customary, both for men and especially



for women, to wear necklaces to which specific amulets were attached. One such amulet was the lumnytsia (lunula) a crescent-shaped pendant with three corners – two on each end and one in the middle. They were related to the cult of the moon, and from mythology we know that the goddess of the moon was the patroness of girls and women. But primarily, most of these amulets and charms were worn as protection against bad luck and the evil eye used

for incantations, and also as a decorative ornament. When Christianity was introduced to Kyivan-Rus, the Church tried to propagate and strengthen Christian beliefs by uprooting some of the pagan practices and by Christianizing others. The wearing of amulets or pendants is an example of the tolerant way in which the Church Christianized this tradition. At first, the lumnytsia was still worn by the populace, but eventually when Christian teaching began to take hold, a cross was attached to it. Later, the lumnytsia disappeared and various shapes and types of crosses were worn as pendants depicting the sacred images of the Christian Church. Thus the Christian Church in Kyivan-Rus-Ukraine wisely adapted some of the ancient pre-Christian traditions by giving them a new and Christian meaning.

Once again, our generous benefactors and avid art collectors, Dr. Yuri Rybak and his wife Anna Ortynsky, are the ones who enriched our Museum with these exceptional gifts, for which we are exceedingly grateful and appreciative.



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