



HRISTOVA Boriana and Elissaveta Moussakova, *The Etropole Calligraphic and Artistic School of the 17th Century*. Sofia: Borina, 2010, 96 p. + 46 colour plates (1 double)

This is a catalogue of an exhibition under the same title that took place at the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia, May 2010. In the early 17th century Etropole was one of the leading scriptoria especially in terms of illumination, script and binding, besides being a rather influential one. A striking peculiarity is that the beautifully illuminated manuscripts were produced not just in the local Trinity Monastery but also in the village itself. Some of the copies were privately ordered.

The kernel of the book and of the exhibition itself - is 36 of the most important and well-

preserved manuscripts of the Etropole Calligraphic and Artistic School, mainly liturgical codices. Most of the items were taken from our National Library's holdings as well as from the Church-Historical and Archival Institute of the Bulgarian Patriarchate, yet some other public collections in Bulgaria contributed to the event.

It is worth mentioning here that in the catalogue, there is an exhaustive - though not dull - description for each item supplied with at least one plate to it. The emphasis is put on illumination and binding and all the scribal notes are diligently quoted in modern Bulgarian. In addition, texts that might be of interest to the general public, yet not well-known, are also translated (in full or in part). The descriptions end with some history of the respective manuscript and its call number at the related book stock.

What precedes the descriptive part of the catalogue is an introduction on the history of the settlement and the cultural centre under consideration, and what comes after it is a list (titles + concise descriptions) of further 42 manuscripts which originate from or are attributed to the Etropole School, including those kept in foreign libraries.

This book is an important contribution not only to the history of the Etropole Calligraphic and Artistic School but also to the history of all the scribal centres related to it - the earlier ones in western Bulgaria and the later ones in the eastern part of the country. It aims to draw the attention of the general public to the latest golden century in our pre-revival art.

Ekaterina Dikova, Central Library of BAS