

Polina A. Chebokova

State University Saint-Petersburg

Miniature Portrait of Peter the Great's Son by J. G. Tannauer: Transformation of Wandering Iconographic Scheme

A German artist Johann Gottfried Tannauer was one of the leading painters in Russia of the time of Peter the Great. The present paper offers a revision of the only signed miniature painting by the master, i.e. a portrait of the son of Peter the Great, tsarevich Peter Petrovich, created by him in 1719 inside a snuff-box with a view of St. Petersburg on the outside (State Hermitage Museum collection). Analysis of the European context revealed that this is a highly interesting case of literal introduction of European iconographic type into Russian art which at that time period was rapidly adopting European artistic traditions. Moreover, this type appears to be a wandering iconographic scheme that illustrates close artistic ties between European countries in general.

The present paper identifies the source of iconography of the child in this portrait, which has so far been considered to be an original creation of the artist. It is one of the engravings portraying Prince William, Duke of Gloucester after Sir Godfrey Kneller's painting (ca. 1691, The Royal Collection Trust, Hillsborough Castle). The Duke's portrait was often used as a source of iconography for children's portraits in Europe. The headwear with two ostrich feathers which was a traditional marker of nobility and, most importantly, in some cases – an attribute of the heir of the title, is likely to have been borrowed from another source – a portrait of Charles Fitzroy, 2nd Duke of Grafton, also based on Sir Godfrey Kneller's painting. Although the authors of numerous children's portraits (fifteen paintings) based on the portrait of Prince William made use of the same source, they managed to create various images corresponding to the characteristics of young models and the circumstances of commission. Whereas William of Gloucester is depicted against the background of a landscape with an arcade, behind Tsarevich Peter is some water space with ships and a fragment of a fortress wall obviously symbolizing the new capital of Peter the Great.

The headdress and the presence of an oval portrait of Peter I in the composition proves that Peter Petrovich (1715-1719) was his father's hope and the new heir to the Russian throne: his status was confirmed in the Manifesto of 3 (14) February 1718.