

Marek Krejčí

(Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague)

Josef Strzygowski's research on Slavic art

Abstract

One of Strzygowski's most fascinating literary contribution came shortly after World War I, when his research dealt with early Slavic art in the context of the broader geographical field. Strzygowski presented his results on lectures held in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia and in printed form (Prague 1924, Poznań 1927, Zagreb 1927, case study "Die Altslawische Kunst", Augsburg 1928). It exposed him to accusations of overinterpretation by his colleagues (Czech Birnbaum, Croatian Karaman, Slovenian Mole and Polish art historian Szydłowski). Doubters questioned Strzygowski's interpretation and warned against his tendency to speculate on supposedly unprovable thesis. Though difficulties involved in describing, interpreting and researching early Slavic art, in outlook offered much later, Strzygowski's innovative approach opened up the possibility for alternative and pluralised narratives in place of the traditional art historical discourse reigning in „national“ schools.