

Local and intercultural context of the sculpture of „Thundergod Perkūnas from Kernavė“

Summary

The article examines the content, origin, analogies and local cultural significance of the Kernavė Perkūnas bronze sculpture analysing museum exhibits, iconographic and narrative sources, art history, archeology and folklore data. The typological comparative analysis of form, function, iconography and semantics of investigated artefacts and also deconstruction and reconstruction is applied. The problems of the content of the bronze sculpture of “Perkūnas from Kernavė”, its origin, analogies and local cultural contextuality are analyzed. All ancient images of Thundergod in Lithuania are of dubious origin and authenticity, and of dubious identity with the Thundergod. The author critically questions the unambiguous interpretation of the semantics

and function of „Perkūnas from Kernavė“ which prevailed in the Lithuanian scientific thought. It was interpreted as a Christian Romanesque imported candlestick, accidentally brought from German Saxony and unrelated to regional culture and Baltic Thundergod Perkūnas. Its cultural proximity to another imported from Western Europe artefact of the Perkūnas sculpture from Kaunas Perkūnas House and other well-known images of Perkūnas is revealed. Based on the comparative analysis of the attributes of analyzed images, a hypothesis is raised about the much older origin of their iconography and its association with the Antique tradition (Greek, Roman, Celtic) and their local acculturation in Lithuanian religious-cultural life.

Keywords: semantics of Perkūnas from Kernavė, Perkūnas from Perkūnas' house in Kaunas, Thundergod, Romanesque applied art, Antique art, Celtic art, religion of ancient Balts.