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**Editorial Note: Where Science Meets Art  
“145 years since the birth of the painter Trifon Popov”**

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The Editorial Board of ACTA SCIENTIFICA NATURALIS has always intended to emphasize on the importance of Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen not only as a modern scientific institution, but also as a worthy successor to the Pliska and Preslav Literary School, which spread the Cyrillic alphabet among the Bulgarian and all other Slavic people. Moreover, our University is located in Shumen – one of the most important cities during the Bulgarian National Revival Period where the tradition of the official celebration of St. St. Cyril and Methodius Equal to the Apostles deeds was created. For these reasons, from the very creation of ASN in 2014, it had been decided that its covers would promote not only current knowledge, but also works of significant artists from Shumen, who have left a deep trace in the national cultural heritage of Bulgaria.

Thus, here where science meets art, the first four covers presented to you the paintings “Spring II”, “Before the Mirror”, “Self-Portrait”, and “Portrait of a Girl” by the great female painter Elena Karamihaylova from Shumen (1875 – 1961), who is also the patron of the Shumen Art Gallery. The fifth and sixth covers presented the icon of St. St. Cyril and Methodius Equal to the Apostles, produced by the hand of Nikola Vasilev (1834 – 1918) – the most prominent zoographer from Shumen, and the icon of the Nativity of Christ, written by the second great icon painter from Shumen - Vasil Hristov Bedelev (c. 1835 – c. 1874). The seventh cover presented “Hymphs” - one of the best canvas of the most prominent Bulgarian master of marine art Alexander Mutafov (1879-1957), who was born in Shumen. Remaining in the field of painting, current cover represents a piece of art made by Trifon Popov (1874-1949) – a painter who spent his life in Shumen.

Trifon Popov was born in Dolna Lipnitsa – a small village in the region of Gorna Oryahovitsa in the Northern Bulgaria. His father was the local Orthodox priest Pavlyu Benev and his mother was Truhana Pavleva. Trifon Popov graduated from the Veliko Tarnovo State Men’s High School and was admitted in 1898 among the first batch of students of the State Drawing School in Sofia (now the National Academy of Art). He studied in the Fine Arts Department where his professors were the famous painters Ivan Murvichka and Anton Mitov. Trifon Popov graduated in 1903 and stayed in touch with his mentors even when he was appointed as a teacher of drawing in Shumen.

Little is known about his life and the few remaining details have reached us thanks to some fragmented memories of his relatives. Many of his paintings were painted in Shumen where he lived for the rest of his days. Trifon Popov bequeathed some of his works to the Art Gallery of Shumen. Nowadays the “Elena Karamihailova” Art Gallery collection in Shumen keeps a total of six works by the author. Three of them are from the period of his study in the State Drawing School in Sofia – “Etude”, “Nude figure” and “Portrait of a girl”. Another figural composition, probably from the same time, shows St. John the Baptist with a very tall wooden cross in his left hand and with gesture of preaching of his right hand. The last two paintings “Winter” and “Landscape with trees” are dated from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and were bought from the painter’s granddaughter Ilka Popova.

It is the “Landscape with trees” on the cover of the present issue of ASN. The painting is signed by the author in the lower left corner, although the year is missing. It has been restored in 2012 by Rusana Hadzhieva and now participates in the permanent exhibition of the “Elena Karamihailova” Art Gallery. This work, as well as the other landscape painting “Winter”, evidence about Trifon Popov’s fascination with symbolism that reached Bulgaria in 1905. A perfect draftsman, as the rest of his works mentioned here show, he never betrayed his favorite landscape genre. Popov is more popular with his nude male figures and academic etudes and due to this reason his works took part in the thematic exhibition “Nude male body 1856-1944” curated by Plamen V. Petrov in 2017 at Sofia Art Gallery. Anyway, this fact does not belie the author’s attraction on landscape painting. His favorite bluish nuances match well with the mystical romantic mood in his landscapes and express his gentleness and thoroughness in investigation of meanings. However, there is no deep sorrow, agony and morbid thoughts in the paintings of Trifon Popov, but tender light, warm colors, vividness and cheerfulness, a real celebration of life in its fullness.

### **Front Cover:**

Trifon Popov (1874-1949)

“Landscape with trees”, oil on canvas, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 56.5/83 cm

By Courtesy of “Elena Karamihailova” Art Gallery, Shumen, Inv. № 1086