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Les inscriptions simulées de la peinture médiévale roumaine dans le contexte de l'art et de la pensée orthodoxes

Constantin I. Ciobanu*

Simulated Inscriptions of Romanian Medieval Painting in the Context of Orthodox Art and Thinking

Abstract: The aim of the article is to establish the typology and the specificity of simulated inscriptions in the space of orthodox art, including the Romanian painting of the Middle Ages. From the point of view of the author, the simulated inscription represents an autonomous text, with historical and stylistic specificities, spatial and temporal well-defined coordinates, but without a signified in the world of the real representations possesses by the human language. There is a semantic difference between the notion of ornamental writing and that of simulated inscription. Although it is true that the stylistic peculiarities of simulated inscriptions often take on an ornamental or decorative form, yet, from a conceptual point of view, they are never reduced to the decorative role that some researchers attribute to them. In most cases, they also involve simulacrum or even waiting for a possible reading. Due to the huge distance between the Romanian language, spoken by most of the population, and the Slavonic language used by the scholars (bigger than the distance between the Serbian, Bulgarian or old's Russian and the same Slavonic language!), was favored the process of abstraction of the "written word" and its polarization towards "the spoken word", the role of simulated inscriptions increasing in this process.

Keywords: Constantine of Kostenets, Patriarch Euthymius, Proboata monastery, Simulated inscription, Slavonic literature, Târnovo School, Voronets

Les *inscriptions simulées* de la peinture murale médiévale des pays orthodoxes sont restées jusqu'à présent à la périphérie de la recherche scientifique. À partir des données que nous avons, il n'y a que quelques publications sur ce sujet¹. Dans ces publications le problème est traité en

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¹ George. C. Miles, *Painted pseudo-kufic ornamentation in byzantine churches in Greece*, in *Actes du XIV^e Congrès international des études byzantines*, Bucarest, 1971, vol. III, p. 373-

relation étroite avec la tradition des *écritures décoratives* ou *ornementales*. Il y a encore quelques études sur les textes hermétiques, les écrits secrets ou exotiques, les inscriptions chiffrées et les cryptogrammes du monde médiéval orthodoxe². Mais ces études couvrent exclusivement *les vraies inscriptions* (même cryptées !), tandis que les *inscriptions simulées* restent en dehors de leur champ de recherche. Il faut y ajouter le fait que ces études concernent surtout les manuscrits et les incunables, le domaine des beaux-arts leur étant totalement étranger.

En réalité, le nombre des *inscriptions simulées* est assez imposant dans les œuvres d'art byzantin et post-byzantin et, dans ce sens, les fresques serbes, bulgares ou roumaines n'y font pas exception. Il ne faut non plus oublier la variété typologique des *inscriptions simulées*, variété générée autant par l'emplacement dans le cadre des programmes iconographiques que

377; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean area*, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XVIII, Washington, 1964, p. 22-29; Γ. Α. Σωτηρίου, *Αραβικά διακοσμησεις εις τα βυζαντινα μνημεια της 'Ελλάδος*, 'Αθηναί, 1935; K. Erdmann, *Arabische Schriftzeichen als Ornamente in der abendländischen Kunst des Mittelalters*, in *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der geistes und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, no. 9, Wiesbaden, 1953, p. 467-469, 502-513, (Fig. 3, 7, 10, 11, 57, 58, 66-70, 139-141); Γ. Β. Попов, *Шрифтовой декор росписи Михайлоархангельского собора в Старице 1406 - 1407 гг.*, in: *Древнерусское искусство. Монументальная живопись XI – XVII вв.*, Москва, 1980, p. 274-296; З. Јанц, *Орнаменти фресака из Србије и Македоније од XII до средине XV века*, Београд, 1961. Il faut absolument mentionner l'article de Nicoletta Isar (Copenhagen), *L'iconicité du texte dans l'image post-byzantine moldave: une lecture hésychaste* (revue *Byzantinoslavica*, no. LIX, 1998, p. 92-112). Même si cette publication n'est pas consacrée aux inscriptions simulées de la peinture médiévale, elle a quand-même plusieurs points de confluence avec nos préoccupations. Il convient de mentionner la dissociation faite par Nicoletta Isar entre les inscriptions *de représentation* et les inscriptions *d'identification* (voir à la p. 95). Extrêmement significative pour notre étude est la constatation de la chercheuse concernant la fonction strictement *hiératique* (*grammato-centrique*, dans les termes de Jacques Derrida) du slavon, langue inconnue par la plupart de la population des Pays Roumains du XVI^e siècle. Le rôle important joué dans la peinture murale, l'*hiératisme iconique* et l'ignorance de cette langue par la majorité du peuple rapprochent les *inscriptions en slavon* de la peinture roumaine des *inscriptions simulées*.

² L'ouvrage le plus ample dans ce domaine appartient à Mikhail N. Speranski : М. Н. Сперанский, *Тайнопись в юго-славянских и русских памятниках письма*, Ленинград, 1929, in: *Энциклопедия славянской филологии*, Вып. 4.3. ; Les études suivantes méritent également l'attention: И. С. Некрасов, *Пермские письма в рукописях XV века*, Одесса, 1890, (extrait de „*Записки Императорского Новороссийского Университета*”, Т. 51); П. Савванитов, *Грамматика зырянского языка*, Санкт-Петербург, 1850; П. Савванитов, *О зырянских деревянных календарях и пермской азбуке, изобретенной святым Стефаном*, Москва, 1873, p. 9 - 16; В. И. Лыткин, *Древнепермский язык*, Москва, 1952 ; De nombreux cryptogrammes en slavon découverts sur le territoire de la Moldavie ont été publiés dans le livre : А. И. Яцимирский, *Славянские и русские рукописи румынских библиотек*, Санкт-Петербург, 1905 ; Certaines données, liées à l'écriture cryptographique de Féodor Kouritsin, se trouvent dans le chapitre 3 „*Лаодикийское послание. Написание о грамоте*” du livre : А. И. Клибанов, *Реформационные движения в России в XV - первой половине XVI в.*, Москва, 1960., p. 63-82.

par les connotations d'ordre sémantique, conceptuel ou stylistique de ces *textes sans message concret*.

Avant d'établir la typologie et la spécificité des *inscriptions simulées* dans l'espace de l'art orthodoxe, il faut répondre à une question fondamentale : « qu'entendons-nous par la notion d'*inscription simulée*? ». De notre point de vue, l'*inscription simulée* représente un *texte* autonome, avec des particularités stylistiques, imitatives, et avec des coordonnées temporelles et spatiales bien définies, mais dépourvu de *signifié* dans l'univers des significations réelles que possède le langage humain. Il n'y a aucune frontière *a priori* qui soit absolument stricte entre une *inscription* et une *inscription simulée*. Il y a des cas où certains *textes*, longtemps considérés comme des *inscriptions simulées*, regagnent leur *signification* à la suite du déchiffrement, en devenant ainsi des inscriptions ordinaires. Dans cet ordre d'idées, les hiéroglyphes égyptiens ont joué le rôle d'*inscriptions simulées* à partir du moment de l'oubli de leur signification à la fin de l'Antiquité et jusqu'à leur décryptage au XIX^e siècle grâce au génie de Champollion. On peut dire la même chose au sujet de l'énigmatique *texte* du disque de Phaistos. Aussi longtemps que celui-ci n'est pas déchiffré et qu'on met en discussion la nature même de son message (*inscription, calendrier, écriture décorative, etc.*), il conservera son statut d'*inscription simulée*. Une situation similaire se présente, paraît-il, dans le cas du soi-disant *texte* écrit sur le phylactère du démon peint dans le registre inférieur de la célèbre fresque du *Jugement Dernier* de Voroneț (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. *Le Jugement Dernier* (détail)

Aussi longtemps que ce *texte* (publié pour la première fois, paraît-il, par Paul Henry³) reste indéchiffrable et qu'il y a des doutes s'il contient un *message compréhensible*, il restera une *inscription simulée*. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que le *texte* de Voroneț en question ne présente qu'une *écriture ornementale* ou purement *décorative*. Nous considérons qu'il y a une différence d'ordre sémantique entre la notion d'*écriture ornementale* et celle d'*inscription simulée*. Même si c'est vrai que les particularités stylistiques des *inscriptions simulées* gagnent souvent une forme *ornementale* ou *décorative*, pourtant, du point de vue conceptuel, elles ne se réduisent jamais au rôle *décoratif* que certains chercheurs leur attribuent. Pour la plupart des cas, elles impliquent le *simulacre* ou même l'*attente* d'une éventuelle lecture⁴. Contrairement au *décor* ou à l'*ornement*, l'*inscription simulée* cache l'absence de *signifié* (évidemment, dans le sens traditionnel, accepté par la linguistique, de la notion de *signifié*). Cette absence du *signifié* linguistique traditionnel n'exclut pas la présence d'un certain type de *message* que les inscriptions simulées peuvent comporter. C'est ainsi que les particularités et le symbolisme des garnitures de caractères utilisés, la manière et le lieu de l'emplacement dans le cadre du programme iconographique, le concours avec d'autres éléments (détails) des images adjacentes, peuvent offrir à l'*inscription simulée* un *message* ou même une *signification* assez bien définie. Les exemples en sont nombreux. Nous n'allons y rappeler que le cas des *livres ouverts* des quatre évangélistes. Il est absolument clair que, même si les *textes* des livres de Mathieu, Marc, Luc ou Jean sont orthographiés sous la forme explicite d'*inscriptions* ou s'ils sont simplement suggérés sous forme d'*inscriptions simulées*, le spectateur initié n'aura aucun doute en ce qui concerne le contenu *évangélique* de ces textes. Examinons maintenant un cas plus compliqué d'*inscription simulée*, dont le message doit être *interprété*. Dans le tambour de la tour récemment restaurée de l'église de Saint-Nicolas du monastère de Probota (1530, peintures de 1532-1534), au troisième niveau, destiné aux *Dominations*, nous pouvons voir les images d'anges drapés de capes similaires à celles des anciens prêtres juifs. Ces capes sont décorées par des rangées d'*inscriptions simulées* (Fig. 2) qui doivent imiter les anciens caractères hébreux mais qui ne représentent qu'une *pseudo-écriture* à valeur décorative⁵.

³ Voir la fig. 80 à la p. 223 du livre : Paul Henry, *Monumentele din Moldova de Nord. De la origini pâna la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea*, București, 1984 (traduction roumaine de l'édition originale française *Les églises de la Moldavie du Nord des origines à la fin du XVI^e siècle*, Paris, 1930).

⁴ L'éventualité de la lecture dans la conception médiévale peut tenir autant à une langue *humaine* qu'à une langue *divine*.

⁵ *The Restoration of Probota Monastery: 1996-2001*, UNESCO, 2001, p. 58, ill. 97 et p. 367.



Fig. 2. Ange de la classe des *Domination*

Probablement, les chefs d'atelier de Probotia ont voulu suggérer par ces capes le rôle et le symbolisme sacerdotal de cette catégorie d'anges, qui sont radicalement différents du rôle d'autres catégories (les anges militaires, les anges annonciateurs, etc.). Les fondements théologiques pour ces représentations se trouvent dans l'interprétation du texte du prophète Ézéchiël (chap. 9, v. 2) de l'Ancien Testament, due à Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite: « ... cela (le clivage entre les damnés et les innocents – C.C.) sera appris par le premier ange après les chérubins... qui est vêtu du *poderis*⁶, en tant que symbole de la hiérarchie sacerdotale... »⁷. C'est vrai que le *poderis* mentionné par Pseudo-Denys ne suppose pas la décoration par des

⁶ *Poderis*, ou *podes*, mot grec qui signifie une longue robe traînante, dont les prêtres juifs étaient revêtus durant leur service dans le Temple.

⁷ Дионисий Ареопagit, *О небесной иерархии*, Санкт-Петербург, 1997, p. 82-83.

écritures hébraïques ou d'une autre nature. Porté par les prêtres du Temple de Jérusalem, le *poderis* est un vêtement long, sans manches, de couleur azur, décoré seulement avec des ornements en forme de pommes ou de grenades. Quant aux écritures hébraïques portant les noms des douze tribus d'Israël – elles constituaient le décor d'un autre type de vêtements sacerdotaux mosaïques, l'*éphod* ('*ephod bad*). L'*éphod* est mentionné dans l'Ancien Testament (*Exode*, XXVIII, 6 ; XXXIX, 2 ; *I Livre des Rois*, II, 28 ; *Osea*, III, 4). Il y avait un modèle d'*éphod*, richement décoré, porté par les grands prêtres du Temple de Jérusalem. Ce modèle était formé de deux lambeaux d'étoffe chère, tissés de fils d'or, fourrure et laine sur lesquels étaient imprimés les noms des 12 tribus d'Israël. Saint Éphrem le Syrien, dans le chapitre 28 des commentaires au livre de l'*Exode*, écrivait à propos de l'*éphod* : « l'*éphod* en or, tissé en (couleurs) violet, pourpre et grenat, combiné avec la fourrure, représente Emmanuel. Les deux encadrements de l'*éphod* symbolisent le peuple de Dieu et les peuples païens, les apôtres et les prophètes, les forces célestes et celles terrestres. Les fermetures de l'*éphod* – deux pierres en émeraude, sur lesquelles sont inscrits les noms des fils d'Israël, – signifient les deux testaments »⁸. L'*éphod* était utilisé dans les pratiques du culte mosaïque, mais il avait également un symbolisme prophétique bien défini. Ce n'est donc pas du tout un hasard qu'Éphrem le Syrien comparât ce vêtement à l'un des noms de Dieu (Emmanuel). Mais *Emmanuel* (en traduction : *Dieu est avec nous*) est le nom du Messie qui allait venir au monde, selon la prophétie d'Ésaïe : *Voici, la Vierge sera enceinte, elle enfantera un fils, et on lui donnera le nom d'Emmanuel, ce qui signifie Dieu avec nous* (Mathieu, 1, 23). Lorsque le grand prêtre n'officiait pas le culte, son *éphod* pendait au Temple de Jérusalem⁹. Cet emplacement permanent du vêtement parle éloquemment de son importance sacrée.

D'habitude, l'*éphod* était représenté dans les cycles iconographiques où se trouvaient les images des prêtres hébreux : Aaron¹⁰ de la *Procession de Tous les Saints* de Moldovița (Fig. 3) et de Voroneț, Zacharie de la scène de *L'entrée de la Vierge au Temple du Ménologe* de Humor, les images des prêtres hébreux du cycle *mariologique* de la voûte de la chambre des tombeaux de Humor (Fig. 4), etc.

⁸ *Восточные отцы и учителя церкви IV века*. Антология. Том III, Москва, 1999, p. 387.

⁹ Voir l'article *Vêtements*, paragraphe D – *Vêtements des prêtres*, in : *Dictionar biblic*, Oradea, 1995, p. 677.

¹⁰ Le texte slavon sur le phylactère d'Aaron de l'image de Voroneț (*Tu es prêtre à jamais selon Melchisédech* est repris des *Psaumes* du roi David (psaume 109, v. 4, en traduction roumaine actuelle – psaume 110, v. 4). Ce texte qui, en fait, n'appartient pas à Aaron, était invoqué d'habitude pour illustrer la fonction sacerdotale de Jésus du type iconographique *Jésus-Grand Prêtre* ou du type iconographique *La reine est à ta droite* (Psaume 44 : 11 chez les orthodoxes ou 45 : 9 chez les catholiques).



Fig. 3. *Le prophète Aaron de la Procession de Tous les Saints*



Fig. 4. *Les images des prêtres hébreux du Cycle mariologique*

Il est probable que les représentations les plus anciennes de l'éphod dans l'art roumain apparaissent dans les peintures murales d'époque byzantine (XIV^e siècle) de l'église princière de Saint-Nicolas de Curtea de Argeș. Là, dans la fresque du *Jugement Dernier*, on voit l'image de trois prophètes de l'Ancien Testament vêtus d'éphods ornés de graphèmes indéchiffrables (Fig. 5), tandis que dans la composition *L'entrée de la Vierge*

au Temple, on peut voir l'image de Zacharie vêtu d'un *éphod* similaire. Daniel Barbu, dans son livre *La peinture murale de la Valachie au XIV^e siècle*, rappelle également l'image du sage Siméon (de l'ensemble mural de Curtea de Argeș), qui *porte un manteau court, orné de graphèmes*¹¹. Mais, en général, il faut constater l'apparition beaucoup plus rare de l'*éphod* aux graphèmes dans les vêtements du sage Siméon (de la scène de *La Présentation de Jésus au Temple*).



Fig. 5. *Le Jugement Dernier* (détail)

Dans la peinture médiévale bulgare du XIV^e siècle, on peut également découvrir des inscriptions simulées dans les images des patriarches de l'Ancien Testament. Au monastère de Zémen, dans le programme iconographique de l'église de Saint-Jean le Théologien, on peut voir l'image du prêtre-patriarche Melchisédech, vêtu d'un *éphod* orné de caractères décoratifs rappelant un peu les lettres de l'alphabet cyrillique¹² (Fig. 6).

¹¹ Daniel Barbu, *Pictura murală din Țara Românească în secolul al XIV-lea*, București, 1986, p. 45.

¹² Voir l'image dans : Анна Рощковска, Лиляна Мавродинова, *Стенописен орнамент*, София, 1985, ill. no. 83 à la p. 202.



Fig. 6 L'image du prêtre-patriarche Melchisédech

Dans la peinture murale orthodoxe on retrouve, également, des inscriptions simulées en dehors des vêtements. À l'église du village de Bérende (Bulgarie, XIV^e siècle), dans le cadre de la composition du *Jugement de Pilate*, sur la table devant le procureur de Judée se trouve un rouleau avec une inscription simulée (Fig. 7). Le canon iconographique, présent dans la *Herminia (Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne)* de Denys de Fourna (les années 30-40 du XVIII^e siècle), nous offre une information tardive concernant le contenu de l'inscription du rouleau de Pilate : « Emmenez au lieu public du supplice et attachez à une croix, entre deux voleurs, Jésus de Nazareth, qui a corrompu le peuple, insulté César, et qui, d'après le témoignage des anciens du peuple, s'est proclamé faussement le Messie »¹³. Mais aucun mot de ce texte ne peut être déchiffré dans l'enlacement de pseudo-caractères décoratifs sur le rouleau de Pilate de l'église de Bérende. On n'a même pas la certitude que les peintres ci-présents étaient au courant de ce texte. Le problème c'est que la citation invoqué par

¹³ *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne grecque et latine avec une introduction et des notes par M. Didron, traduit du manuscrit byzantin, le guide de la peinture par le Dr Paul Durand, Paris, M DCCC XLV (1845), p. 193.*

Denys de Furna rappelle beaucoup la soi-disant *sentence* de Pilate, publiée en latin en 1593, dans un texte truqué attribué à l'écrivain chrétien Andrichomio (fin du XV^e – début du XVI^e siècle) : « Jesus Nazarenum, subversorem gentis, contemptorem Caesaris et falsum Messiam, ut majorum suae gentis testimonio probatum est, ducite ad communis supplicii locum et eum ludibrio regiae Majestatis in medio duorum latronum cruei affigite. I lictor ! expedi cruces ! »¹⁴. Au XIV^e siècle, lorsqu'on a peint les fresques de Bérende, ce texte était inconnu au monde chrétien. Donc, il est possible que les peintres de Bérende aient désiré suggérer un tout autre texte par l'inscription simulée sur le rouleau de Pilate. Ceci aurait pu être *Jésus de Nazareth, Roi de Judée (INRI)*, inscrit en trois langues (hébreu, grec et latin), à l'ordre de Pilate, sur la croix du Calvaire.



Fig. 7 Le Jugement de Pilate

Le Moyen Âge nous offre d'autres exemples d'inscriptions simulées, remplaçant les textes réels, dans certaines œuvres d'art provincial datant des XV^e-XVI^e siècles, œuvres où la substitution des vraies inscriptions par des inscriptions simulées est due non pas tellement au désir de présenter un message *cryptique* ou *antédiluvien*, mais surtout à la banale incapacité ou au refus des artisans de calligraphier un texte canonique cohérent. Des exemples suggestifs de telles inscriptions simulées se trouvent dans la peinture des portes royales de l'iconostase de l'église abandonnée du bassin de la rivière de Louga (collection du *Musée Russe* de Saint-Petersbourg, no. inv. DR/j-

¹⁴ Voir: Н. К. Маккавейский, *Археология истории страданий Господа Иисуса Христа*, Киев, 1891, p. 163 et l'anthologie *Иисус Христос в документах истории*, Санкт-Петербург, 1999, p. 458.

2002, a, b, école de peinture de Novgorod, fin du XV^e - début du XVI^e siècle, Fig. 8) et de l'iconostase de l'ancienne église d'Arkhangelsk (collection du Musée Russe de Saint-Petersbourg, no. inv. DR/j-2725, a, b, école de peinture de Novgorod, fin du XV^e – début du XVI^e siècle, Fig. 9).

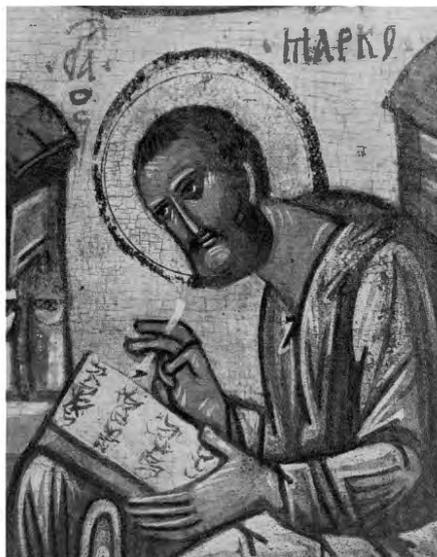


Fig. 8 *L'évangéliste Marc*. Porte royale de l'iconostase de l'église abandonnée du bassin de la rivière de Louga



Fig. 9 *L'évangéliste Marc*. Porte royale de l'iconostase de l'ancienne église d'Arkhangelsk

Véra K. Laourina, chercheuse russe qui, dans ses études, a consacré tout un chapitre à ces portes royales, considérait que *l'imitation des lettres par des « écorchures »* sur les rouleaux ou les pages des livres des évangélistes (les soi-disant, en russe, « *tsarapki* ») est un indice de la provenance provinciale de ces œuvres¹⁵. Cependant, cette conclusion de la chercheuse russe ne devrait pas être généralisée. L'exemple des inscriptions simulées d'époque Brancovanne (fin du XVII^e – début du XVIII^e siècle) peintes avec négligence par l'équipe du maître grec Konstantinos sur les rouleaux des prophètes Moïse, David et Salomon du diakonikon de l'Église de la Cour Princièrè de Târgoviște (Fig. 10), contredit cette affirmation.

¹⁵ В. К. Лаурина, *Об одной группе новгородских провинциальных царских врат*, in: *Древнерусское искусство. Художественная культура Новгорода*, Москва, 1968, p. 170.



Fig. 10 *Les prophètes Moïse, David et Salomon*

Or, nous ne pouvons soupçonner de « provincialisme » ni la fondation princière, ni l'équipe de peintres mentionnés ci-dessus. Dans la peinture byzantine du XIV^e siècle, on trouve, également, des imitations de textes *calligraphiés* sur les rouleaux ou sur les pages ouvertes de livres tenus par les saints. Dans ce cas, l'apparition de ces *inscriptions simulées* n'était pas due au caractère provincial des œuvres, mais au manque d'espace disponible pour une orthographe complète. Guennadi V. Popov a découvert un tel *texte* dans le livre ouvert de l'apôtre situé à la droite du premier plan de l'image peinte dans la célèbre icône byzantine, *Le synode des douze apôtres* (Musée d'Art « Alexandre S. Pouchkine » de Moscou, no. inv. 2851, 38 x 34 cm, Fig. 11)¹⁶.

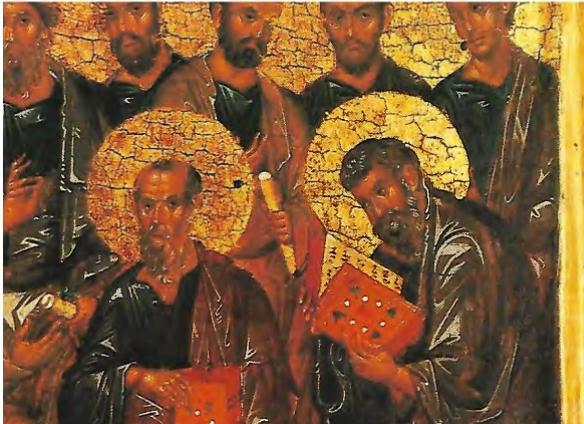


Fig. 11 *Le synode des douze apôtres* (détail). Icône byzantine

¹⁶ Voir: Г. В. Попов, *op. cit.*, p. 285; *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums*, Leningrad, 1978, ill. 270.

Il y a des cas où les *inscriptions simulées* jouent le rôle de frises ornementales destinées à décorer la surface des objets représentés. Ainsi, dans l'image d'un saint militaire sur les fresques de l'église princière de Saint-Nicolas de Curtea de Argeş (XIV^e siècle), on peut distinguer une *frise* ornée de graphèmes indéchiffrables qui, tel un cordon, décore la tunique du saint¹⁷ (Fig. 12). Trois rangs de graphèmes imitant les lettres de l'alphabet cyrillique K, Ж et X, se trouvent sur le linceul de Marie de la célèbre icône de la *Dormition*, exécutée autour de 1430 par les peintres de l'atelier d'Andreï Roubliov¹⁸.



Fig. 12 *Saint militaire* (détail)

Il y a des cas fréquents lorsque des bandeaux aux graphèmes indéchiffrables ornent les *draperies simulées* du registre inférieur des murs des églises orthodoxes. D'habitude, ces *draperies simulées* se déroulent sous forme de *frises* tout au long du périmètre des murs des églises.

¹⁷ M.-A. Musicescu, Gr. Ionescu, *Biserica Domnească din Curtea de Argeş*, Bucureşti, 1976, ill. 56.

¹⁸ В. Н. Лазарев, *Андрей Рублев и его школа*, Москва, 1966, ill. 188 et 189.

Au début des années '60 du XX^e siècle, le professeur Nikolaï N. Voronine pensait que l'apparition du *décor* sous forme d'*inscriptions simulées* ornant le registre de *draperies* de la cathédrale de l'Archange Saint-Michel de Staritsa (1406-1407, Fig. 13) est due à la filiation entre les peintres de cette cathédrale et l'École de peinture de Moscou de la fin du XIV^e et du début du XV^e siècle¹⁹.

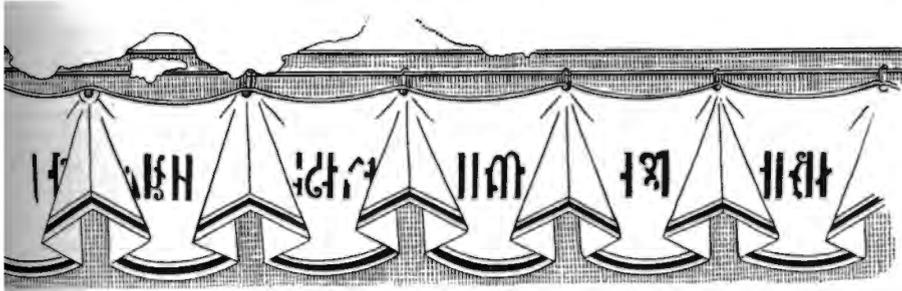


Fig. 13 Décor sous forme d'*inscriptions simulées* ornant le registre de *draperies* de la cathédrale de l'Archange Saint-Michel de Staritsa

Pour argumenter son affirmation et pour combattre les hypothèses qui liaient l'apparition des *inscriptions simulées* de Staritsa au Caucase (l'hypothèse de la soi-disant écriture *khutsuri*), Voronine invoque l'exemple de la bien connue icône de *Saint Nicolas aux scènes hagiographiques* de la fin du XIV^e siècle (*Galerie Trétiakov*, no. inv. 28747, 122cm x 80cm, école de peinture de Rostov-Suzdal, Fig. 14) et des icônes aux images des archanges exécutées dans l'atelier d'Andreï Roubliov entre 1408-1409 pour la Cathédrale de la *Dormition* de la ville de Vladimir. Quant aux *inscriptions simulées* en bas des vêtements des archanges exécutées par les disciples de Roubliov, l'argumentation de Voronine est juste. En effet, nous y trouvons certaines affinités avec les *inscriptions simulées* de Staritsa. Mais en ce qui concerne l'affirmation au sujet de l'icône à l'image de Saint-Nicolas, ici il y a une contradiction d'ordre sémantique. Les *graphèmes* qui entourent le champ central de l'icône, s'avèrent être un cryptogramme authentique, orthographié avec les lettres du soi-disant alphabet de type *zyreansk*²⁰. Donc, *stricto sensu*, elles ne forment pas une *inscription simulée* et on ne peut pas en tenir compte lors de l'établissement des sources des *inscriptions simulées* de Staritsa.

¹⁹ Н. Н. Воронин, *Зодчество северо-восточной Руси XII-XV веков*, Том II, Москва, р. 386, ill. 182 à la p.378. Voir aussi: О. Д. Балдина, *От Валдая до Старицы*, Москва, 1968, р. 103.

²⁰ В. И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *Каталог древнерусской живописи*, Т. I, Москва, 1963, р. 217-218, ill. 130.



Fig. 14 Icône de *Saint-Nicolas aux scènes hagiographiques* de la fin du XIV^e siècle

Si nous abordons dans un contexte plus large le problème des *graphèmes* ou des *inscriptions* peintes sur la surface des *draperies simulées* des fresques orthodoxes, nous constatons que l'apparition de ce type de décor tient à une période plus ancienne. La Russie des XIV^e-XV^e siècles a hérité ce type de décor de l'art byzantin balkanique, où le phénomène est attesté quelques siècles plus tôt. Guennadi V. Popov, dans son étude consacrée à la décoration de la cathédrale de l'Archange Saint-Michel de Staritsa²¹ offre la reproduction de la *frise aux draperies simulées* de la chapelle de la *Mère de Dieu-Panagia* du monastère de Saint-Jean le Théologien de l'île de Patmos (Fig. 15). Ces draperies, peintes entre 1185 et 1190, portent un *décor en forme de graphèmes* qui alterne successivement des caractères similaires aux lettres S, S à l'envers et U de l'alphabet latin. Les sources de ce type de *décor* ne doivent pas être cherchées sur le territoire de l'art occidental, car la similitude avec les caractères latins est une pure coïncidence. En réalité, les sources de ce type de décor tiennent à l'évolution de l'ornementation pseudo-kufique de l'art byzantin. George C. Miles (New York), dans son article *Painted pseudo-kufic ornamentation in byzantine churches in Greece*²², offre quelques exemples d'ornementation aux graphèmes similaires (qui rappellent les lettres S et U latines) dans la peinture du chapiteau de la crypte du Catholicon du monastère Hosios Lucas de Focide (XI^e siècle), dans la fresque de la *Nativité* de la peinture de l'église des Saints Apôtres de Perachorio (île de Chypre, 1105-1106 environ), dans l'image de la patène de la fresque de la

²¹ Г. В. Попов, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

²² George G. Miles, *Painted pseudo-kufic ornamentation...*, p. 373-377 et les illustrations de cet article.

Communion des saints apôtres de la même église de Chypre²³. Selon Miles, à la base de ce type de graphèmes décoratifs il y a des prototypes arabes de l'écriture kufique, attestés sur les pièces textiles des X^e-XI^e siècles de provenance irakienne²⁴. On peut également mentionner que les écritures décoratives kufiques ou pseudo-kufiques ne pénétraient pas à Byzance seulement par la filière orientale (Mésopotamie, Asie Mineure, etc.). Il y avait aussi une filière occidentale de pénétration de ce type de calligraphie, d'abord, à travers l'île de Sicile et, puis, par la région de Calabre. Dans cet ordre d'idées, rappelons les plaques en stuc ornées d'écritures pseudo-kufiques du XI^e siècle, actuellement conservées au musée archéologique de Reggio Calabria²⁵. Selon l'avis de l'illustre byzantinologue français André Guillou, les pseudo-inscriptions kufiques, qui entourent comme des bandes écrites le périmètre des plaques en stuc du musée de Reggio Calabria, sont l'œuvre d'un « sculpteur » arabe sans instruction²⁶. Quant à l'île de Sicile, le Musée National de Palerme conserve les fragments d'un plafond en bois décoré de pseudo-inscriptions kufiques, étudiées par Th. Kutschmann²⁷. Des inscriptions pseudo-kufiques similaires à celles décrites se trouvent également sur tout le territoire de la Grèce. Dans un article publié dans *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (T. XVIII, 1964, p. 22-29), Miles atteste de telles pseudo-inscriptions en Attique, Argolide, Messénie, Phocide, Béotie et à Corfou²⁸.



Fig. 15 Frise aux *draperies simulées* de la chapelle de la *Mère de Dieu-Panagia*

²³ *Ibidem*, no. 2 et fig. 3, no. 14 et fig. 20, no. 15 et fig. 21

²⁴ *Ibidem*, fig.4.

²⁵ André Guillou, *La culture slave dans le katépanat d'Italie (X^e-XI^e siècles)*, in *Славянские культуры и Балканы*, 1, София, 1978, p. 270.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ Th. Kutschmann, *Meisterwerke saracenischnormannischer Kunst im Sicilien und Unteritalien*, Berlin, 1900, pl. 38.

²⁸ George G. Miles, *Byzantium and the Arabs...*, p. 22-29.

Les inscriptions simulées pénètrent également dans les manuscrits enluminés byzantins. La *Chronique de Jean Skylitzès* de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid inclut une miniature représentant l'élévation sur le bouclier de l'empereur byzantin²⁹ (Fig. 16).



Fig. 16 *L'élévation sur le bouclier de l'empereur byzantine*

Le bouclier de forme ovale de cette miniature est décoré d'une bande ornementale alternant les graphèmes S, U et t (cette dernière rappelant plutôt une croix). Et nous devons dire que cette miniature de la fin du XIII^e siècle n'est pas le seul exemple de décoration d'armes par des inscriptions simulées. Il y a des icônes à l'image de Saint Georges où le bouclier est décoré d'une façon similaire³⁰ (Fig. 17). On peut aussi découvrir des inscriptions simulées dans la décoration des sabres et des épées des saints militaires³¹.

²⁹ H. W. Haussig, *Histoire de la Civilisation Byzantine*, Paris, 1971, ill. 35.

³⁰ Voir l'image sur une icône novgorodienne dans: В. И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *op. cit.*, p. 47 - 48, ill. 17-18 ; Un bouclier similaire se trouve dans l'image de Saint Georges sur une icône modelée « en relief » au Musée Byzantin d'Athènes. Voir: К. Вейцман, М. Хадзидакис, К. Миятев, С. Радойичич, *Иконы на Балканах*, София-Белград, 1967, ill. à la p. 49.

³¹ Quant aux inscriptions sur les sabres et les épées des saints militaires, voir la peinture des XII^e-XIII^e siècles de l'église de la Vierge Drosiani de l'île de Naxos : *Byzantine Murals and Ikons*, in *National Gallery*, September-December, 1976, Athens, no. 58, pl. 24.



Fig. 17 Icône « en relief » de Saint Georges où le bouclier est décoré avec des *inscriptions simulées*

Evidemment, le nombre d'exemples d'usage des *inscriptions simulées* dans la décoration des peintures murales, des icônes ou des miniatures byzantines peut être considérablement augmenté. Aux pays balkaniques et en Russie, dès les XIII^e-XIV^e siècles, le nombre des inscriptions simulées de type non-kufique s'amplifie. On voit de plus en plus souvent des inscriptions simulées qui imitent les écritures hébraïques, grecques, glagolitiques, cyrilliques et même exotiques (comme les alphabets de type *Perm*, *Zyreansk*, etc.). De son côté, Konstantin N. Rörich, réputé orientaliste russe, a découvert dans un *Psautier* de la moitié du XIV^e siècle³² (conservé dans la laure de la Trinité-Saint-Serge) des anciennes inscriptions qui imitent les caractères de certaines écritures tibétaines (Fig. 18).

³² А. Н. Свирин, *Искусство книги в Древней Руси XI - XVII вв.* Москва, 1964, p. 99, et les illustrations de la p. 230.

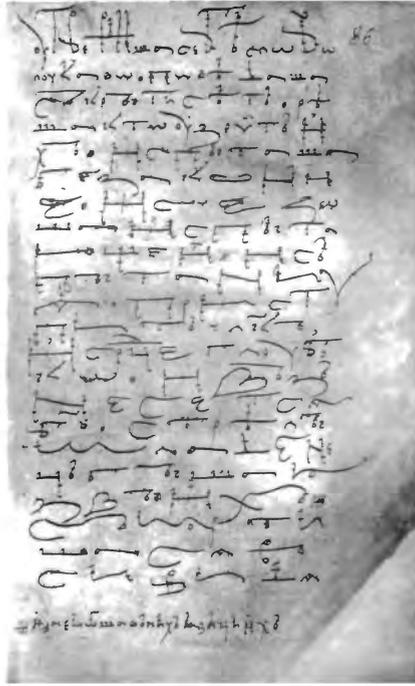


Fig. 18 *Inscriptions simulées* qui imitent les caractères des écritures tibétaines. Un *Psautier* de la moitié du XIV^e siècle

Selon l'historien de l'art Guennadi V. Popov, les exemples les plus suggestifs de décor pseudo-calligraphique non-kufique (et de combinaison de ce décor avec des textes réels) nous sont offerts par la Serbie, la Macédoine, le Despotat de Morée et la Bulgarie dès le XIII^e et jusqu'à la fin du XV^e siècle³³. Dans cet ordre d'idées, Guennadi V. Popov³⁴ mentionne les fresques de l'église des Saints Joachim et Anne de Studenica (1313-1314)³⁵, de l'église des Saints Apôtres de Tessaloniki (1315 env.), du Catholicon du monastère de Hilandar (1318-1320), du monastère de Gračanica (1321), de l'église de la Hodéguitria de Peć (les années 80-90 du XIV^e siècle), du monastère de Dečani (1345 env.), du narthex de l'église de Sainte-Sophie d'Ohrida (1346-1350), de l'église de Sainte-Sophie de Mistra (1350 env.), du monastère Mateić (après 1355), de l'église princière de Saint-Nicolas de Curtea de Argeș, de l'église de Saint-Jean le Théologien du monastère de Zémen (XIV^e siècle), des monastères Ravanića (1375 env.), Calenić (1407-1413), Manasia (1406-1418), Veluce (XV^e siècle), de l'ancienne église du monastère Dragalevtsi (1476 env.), etc. Sur les icônes datant de cette période on peut

³³ Г. В. Попов, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ В. Н. Лазарев, *История византийской живописи*, Том 2, Таблицы, Москва, 1986, ill. 587.

également découvrir des inscriptions simulées et des combinaisons de graphèmes non-kufiques. Il s'agit tout d'abord d'icônes qui représentent *L'entrée de la Vierge au Temple*, où l'éphod de Zacharie est orné de graphèmes qui imitent les anciennes écritures hébraïques (mais qui, souvent, peuvent rappeler également les écritures grecques ou cyrilliques)³⁶. Il y a encore de nombreuses icônes qui tiennent à d'autres types iconographiques, mais qui comportent des inscriptions simulées. Par exemple, au Musée Hermitage de Saint-Pétersbourg on conserve une célèbre icône byzantine du *Pantocrator* datant de 1363, sur les champs de laquelle est représenté le donateur : le primicère Jean, avec une ceinture ornementale composée de graphèmes dorés assez originaux³⁷. De tels exemples nous sont également offerts par les icônes de la *Crucifixion* (XIV^e siècle) de l'île de Patmos³⁸, de la *Vierge Kikkotissa* (XIV-XV^e siècles) de l'église de la Sainte Marina Kalopanaïotis de l'île de Chypre³⁹, de la *Dormition* (XV^e siècle) du monastère de Saint-Jean le Théologien de l'île de Patmos⁴⁰ (Fig. 19), de la *Vierge Pélagonitissa* (1421-1422) du Musée de Skoplje (exécutée par le peintre Macaire)⁴¹, etc.



Fig. 19 Icône de la *Dormition* du XV^e siècle

Les maîtres italiens du *Trecento* n'ont pas pu, non plus, éviter les inscriptions simulées. Mihail V. Alpatov dans son article *Sur l'influence*

³⁶ Г. В. Попов, *op. cit.* ; Il s'agit ici de *L'entrée de la Vierge au Temple* sur le revers de l'icône de la *Vierge du type Popsk* (XIV^e siècle) et de l'icône au même sujet du Musée d'Ohrid (XIV^e siècle).

³⁷ *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet...*, ill. 284.

³⁸ К. Вейцман, М. Хадзидакис, К. Миятев, С. Радойчич, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³⁹ *Byzantine Icons from Cyprus. The Catalogue of the Exhibition. Benaki Museum, Athens*, 1976, no. 30.

⁴⁰ К. Вейцман, М. Хадзидакис, К. Миятев, С. Радойчич, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁴¹ V. J. Djuric, *Icônes de Yougoslavie*, Belgrade, 1961, no. 37

occidentale sur l'ancien art russe, offre l'image d'une icône de la *Vierge à l'enfant*, peinte au XIV^e siècle par un maître de l'école de Sienne⁴² (Fig. 20). Sur la draperie derrière le trône de la Vierge Marie, dans la moitié haute de l'icône, on peut voir une inscription simulée ornementale assez sophistiquée.



Fig. 20 Icône de la *Vierge à l'enfant* du XIV^e siècle

Dans les icônes russes des XIV^e-XV^e siècles, on constate un processus similaire. Les inscriptions simulées sont présentes dans l'ornementation des marges du *maphorion* de la Mère de Dieu de l'icône *La Vierge de Don*⁴³ (Fig. 21), dans l'ornementation de l'icône *La Couverture* (rus. *Pokrov*) de la Vierge du monastère de Zverin⁴⁴, dans le décor de quelques icônes de la laure de la Trinité-Saint-Serge⁴⁵, de la ville d'Iaroslavl⁴⁶ et d'autres localités. Quant à la décoration des bords du maphorion de Marie avec des inscriptions simulées, les sources de ce phénomène doivent être cherchées dans l'art balkanique des XIII^e-XIV^e siècles. L'évolution la plus développée de ce type de décor pseudo-calligraphique peut être suivie dans le cas de l'icône – déjà mentionnée – de la *Vierge Pélagonitissa* du musée de Skoplje.

⁴² М. В. Алпатов, *Этюды по истории русского искусства*, Том I, Москва, 1967, ill. 107.

⁴³ L'icône est attribuée à Théophane le Grec et se conserve à la Galerie Trétiakov (no. inv. 14244). Voir : В. И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *op. cit.*, T. 1, p. 255-256, no. 216, ill. 173.

⁴⁴ Э. С. Смирнова, *Живопись Великого Новгорода*, Москва, 1976, Cat. 21, ill. aux p. 332-333.

⁴⁵ В. И. Антонова, Н. Е. Мнева, *op. cit.*, T. I, p. 261-262, no. 220.

⁴⁶ Г. В. Попов, *op. cit.*, p. 286, note. 70.



Fig. 21 *Inscriptions simulées sur les marges du maphorion de la Mère de Dieu de l'icône La Vierge de Don*

À la différence des écritures pseudo-kufiques, qui étaient surtout décoratives⁴⁷, les écritures pseudo-hébraïques, pseudo-grecques ou pseudo-cyrilliques avaient d'autres buts également. Nous avons déjà vu que les écritures pseudo-hébraïques contenaient certaines allusions au statut prophétique des personnages présents dans ces écritures. C'est pourquoi nous trouvons de telles écritures sur les *éphods* des patriarches de l'Ancien Testament ou sur les vêtements des prêtres-prophètes (Aaron, Melchisédech, etc.). Mais on peut parfois découvrir de telles écritures sur les vêtements de rois païens. Par exemple, dans le narthex de l'église de la Vierge Péribleptos d'Ochride (actuelle Saint-Clément), le vêtement du roi Nabuchodonosor est couvert de graphèmes indéchiffrables⁴⁸ (Fig. 22). On doit cela à la qualité de visionnaire attribuée à ce roi (rappelons-nous le rêve prophétique de Nabuchodonosor). Les qualités miraculeuses de certaines pièces vestimentaires (le maphorion de la Vierge, les pans des vêtements des archanges) ou de certaines pièces liturgiques (*la Coupe, le Disque*) peuvent également être suggérées par d'énigmatiques *inscriptions simulées* appliquées sur la surface de ces objets.

⁴⁷ Voir le fond de la composition de la *Dormition de la Vierge* de l'église Panagia Phorbiotissa d'Asinou Nikitari (Chypre), le décor pseudo-arabe de la fresque avec le même sujet de l'église Mavriotissa de Kastoria et l'ornement pseudo-kufique de l'extérieur du narthex de l'église Hosios Lukas de Phocide, etc.

⁴⁸ Г. В. Попов, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

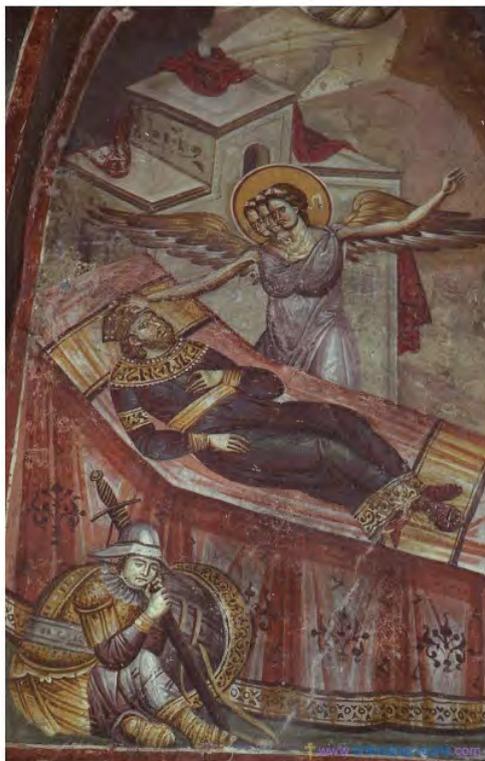


Fig. 22 *Le rêve du roi Nabuchodonosor*

La signification *visionnaire et hermétique des inscriptions simulées* a son pendant dans le phénomène littéraire médiéval appelé en slavon *Pléténié slovésé* (fr.: *tressage de mots*)⁴⁹. Ce phénomène littéraire est attesté en Russie et dans les Balkans à la fin du XIV^e siècle et pendant la première moitié du XV^e. Selon l'avis de Dmitri S. Likhatchev, historien réputé de l'ancienne littérature russe, les peintres et les écrivains de cette période-là *donnent l'impression de l'impossibilité d'exprimer en mots la profondeur mystérieuse de l'événement, ils font un effort pour créer l'impression de la primauté du principe idéal face à celui matériel...*⁵⁰. Tous les procédés artistiques sont employés non pas pour clarifier les textes présentés, mais pour les rendre encore plus confus et amplifier leur côté émotionnel. *Le mot*, écrit Likhatchev, *agit sur le lecteur (ou le spectateur – C.C.) non seulement par son côté logique, mais par une tension générale et une diversité de sens*

⁴⁹ Dmitri S. Lihaciov, *Prerenasterea rusa. Cultura Rusiei în vremea lui Rubliov și a lui Epifanie Preaînțeleptul (Sfârșitul secolului al XIV-lea – începutul secolului al XV-lea)*, București, 1975, p. 96-97 ; Voir aussi: О. Ф. Коновалова, *Плетение словес и плетённый орнамент конца XIV в. К вопросу о соотношении*, in *Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы*. Т. XXII, *Взаимодействие литературы и изобразительного искусства в Древней Руси*, Москва-Ленинград, 1966, p. 101-111.

⁵⁰ Dmitri S. Lihaciov, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

*cachés, par des harmonies et des répétitions rythmiques*⁵¹. Un rôle très important dans la littérature de cette époque-là est joué par *l'abstraction*, dont les érudits ont besoin afin de présenter *le matériel* en tant que *spirituel*⁵². Les épithètes du style littéraire slavon de la fin du XIV^e et du début du XV^e siècle rappellent dans une certaine mesure les *inscriptions simulées* de la peinture de ces temps-là : elles ne visent pas une fonction illustrative et ne contiennent pas les caractéristiques particulières du phénomène⁵³. Leur fonction est d'amplifier le degré d'*abstraction* du texte pour créer l'impression d'une *ultime* et *éternelle* essence spirituelle⁵⁴. La langue littéraire elle-même devait, selon ces idées, être une langue sainte, une langue qui ne puisse être atteinte par la vie profane. Elle devait être exprimée, par une orthographe compliquée, qui ne soit pas accessible à n'importe qui. Seuls, les sages ont le droit d'en faire usage⁵⁵. Les polémiques liées à l'existence de la langue sainte, la langue dans laquelle Dieu se serait adressé à Adam, la langue des anges, des forces célestes, les débats liés à la légitimité des différents alphabets et écritures ont été, d'ailleurs, fréquents tout au long du Moyen Âge. L'ancien dilemme formulé par Platon dans le dialogue *Cratyle* (« Est-ce que le Nomothète⁵⁶ a choisi les mots nommant les choses conformément à leur *nature* (*physis*) ou ces mots ont été assignés suivant une *loi* ou une *convention humaine*? »⁵⁷) fut résolu par les gens du Moyen Âge en conformité avec la perspective de la valeur absolue, transcendante et providentielle des *mots*. Pour les chrétiens médiévaux, la langue (avec ses mots) ne peut pas être seulement une convention conclue entre les locuteurs mortels de tel ou tel idiome. Pour les représentants de l'École de Târnovo, qui, aux XIV^e-XV^e siècles, ont substantiellement réformé l'orthographe et le style du slavon littéraire, *le mot* écrit et *l'être* que celui-ci *représente* étaient inséparables⁵⁸. On y retrouve certaines influences du *réalisme* philosophique médiéval en opposition au *nominalisme* : *les universaux* indiqués par les *mots* constituant ici des *réalités en soi, antérieures autant à l'intellect humain qu'aux choses individuelles*⁵⁹.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 98.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 101.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 92.

⁵⁶ Le *Nomothète* a ici la signification de *Législateur suprême*; chez les chrétiens, Adam, le premier homme, apparaît également en qualité de *Nomothète* : il est celui qui, selon le texte de la Bible, aurait nommé les animaux.

⁵⁷ Umberto Eco, *În căutarea limbii perfecte*, Iasi, 2002, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Dmitri S. Lihaciov, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁵⁹ Voir la définition de la notion de *réalisme médiéval* chez Lazăr Șăineanu dans le *Dictionar universal al limbii române*, Chișinău, 1998, p. 753, art. *Realism*.

Disciple indirect⁶⁰ du patriarche Euthyme, l'érudit Constantin de Kosteneč partait de l'idée que chaque particularité de l'*écriture graphique*, de l'*expression* a son *sens*⁶¹. Comprendre une notion c'est l'*exprimer* bien, tandis que la *connaissance* signifie, pour lui, *représenter le monde à travers les moyens de la langue*. On sait que les conceptions de l'École de Târnovo ont été profondément influencées par la *pensée hésychaste*. Mais les adeptes de l'hésychasme voyaient dans les mots l'*être* des phénomènes indiqués par eux. Par exemple, dans le mot *Dieu*, ils voyaient *Dieu lui-même*. C'est pourquoi, de leur point de vue, le *mot* illustrant un *acte* saint est tout *aussi saint que cet acte*⁶². Mais dans quelle (énorme !) mesure auraient dû être saints les mots que Dieu a employés pour parler à Moïse, ou ceux par lesquels ont été exprimés les prophéties de l'Ancien Testament ou les témoignages évangéliques concernant Jésus ? Evidemment, les érudits du XIV^e siècle réalisaient la priorité des langues hébraïque et grecque en ce qui concerne la sainteté de la tradition orthodoxe. Même si à Byzance, il y a eu certaines tentatives d'attribuer à Adam la langue syriaque (araméenne) – fait également attesté dès le V^e siècle par Théodoret, évêque du Cyr,⁶³ –, pourtant, le point de vue exprimé dans l'histoire sur Héber de la *Chronique* de Georges le Moine (Hamartolos) l'a emporté. Conformément à ce récit, après la séparation des langues suite à la punition de la tentative de construire la tour de Babel, les seuls hommes auxquels Dieu a permis de conserver l'ancienne langue d'Adam furent les descendants du sage Héber, c'est-à-dire, les hébreux⁶⁴. C'est d'ici que les byzantins ont tiré la conclusion que la langue la plus ancienne et la plus sainte du monde devrait être l'hébreu. Le grec était accepté comme une langue plus récente, mais tout aussi sainte, parce que c'est dans cette langue que furent écrits la plupart des textes du *Nouveau Testament*. Le latin avait sur le territoire byzantin une importance plus réduite, mais cette langue, aussi, faisait partie de la triade des langues consacrées. La légitimité du latin était garantie par l'inscription sur la croix de Jésus, inscription dans laquelle, suivant l'ordre de Pilate, le texte *Jésus le Nazaréen, roi des Judéens (INRI)* a été écrite en trois langues (hébreu, grec et latin). Compte tenu de ces idées médiévales, pour légitimer l'existence du slavon en qualité de langue de l'Eglise Orthodoxe, Constantin de Kosteneč a

⁶⁰ Constantin de Kosteneč avait fait ses études auprès d'Andronic, disciple du patriarche bulgare Euthyme, au monastère de Bačkov.

⁶¹ Dmitri S. Lihaciov, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁶³ *Сказания о начале славянской письменности*. Москва, 1981, note 4 au ch. VI à la p. 185. Il faut remarquer que l'auteur slave anonyme de *L'histoire du moine Khrabre* (les années '90 du IX^e siècle) a essayé d'employer cette affirmation de Théodoret du Cyr dans l'argumentation de la nécessité d'introduire l'*écriture slavonne*. Le refus de l'existence primordiale de la *triade* de saintes écritures (l'hébreu, le grec et le latin) par l'absence des langues en question à l'époque antédiluvienne, élevait le statut des nouvelles langues et des nouvelles écritures, y compris le statut et la valeur de la langue slavonne dans l'église.

⁶⁴ Voir : *La Chronique* de George le Moine (Hamartolos), le chapitre *Sur Héber*.

essayé de créer toute une *théorie* des relations de parenté (évidemment, de nature sacrée et non pas génétique/philologique) entre les langues. Selon cette théorie, le slavon a le rôle de langue-fille⁶⁵. Les mots et les signes graphiques hébraïques sont les pères, tandis que les mots et les signes diacritiques grecs sont les mères du slavon⁶⁶. C'est pourquoi le slavon littéraire (à la différence du slavon parlé !) doit se subordonner à ses *parents*. Il faut remarquer que pour Constantin de Kosteneç les lettres elles-mêmes *sont animées* : les consonnes représentent les hommes, les voyelles, les femmes. Les premières dominent, les autres se subordonnent. Les signes diacritiques représentent les couvre-chefs des femmes. C'est pourquoi les hommes (les consonnes) ne doivent pas porter des choses pareilles au-dessus de leurs têtes. Les femmes (les voyelles) peuvent découvrir leurs têtes seulement à la maison, dans la présence de leurs maris. Il y a, ainsi, des voyelles qui manquent de signes diacritiques lorsqu'elles se trouvent dans le voisinage ou entre les consonnes. Dans la pratique littéraire de cette période-là, ces idées de Constantin de Kosteneç, ainsi que d'autres représentants de l'École de Târnovo, ont conduit à la séparation de la littérature ecclésiaste du reste des écrits littéraires, à la création d'une langue aristocratique et d'une littérature extrêmement sophistiquée, destinée à un nombre réduit d'initiés dans *les paroles de Dieu*⁶⁷. Car, comme on le sait, entre *une langue énigmatique*, incompréhensible pour la plupart des gens, et *une science secrète*, supposée être extrêmement profonde, la distance n'est pas aussi grande. L'option entre *l'accessibilité* accordée aux profanes et la *profondeur secrète* accordée seulement aux initiés était tranchée par les érudits de l'École de Târnovo en faveur de la *profondeur*, aussi hermétique et inaccessible soit-elle. Dans cet ordre d'idées, les *graphèmes* incompréhensibles autant que les *inscriptions simulées* des images peintes dans les fresques, les miniatures ou les icônes avaient leur rôle, un rôle qui était loin d'être uniquement décoratif. Tout devait faire allusion à une *langue sainte*⁶⁸, inconnue aux profanes, ou à un *message divin*, dont la profondeur dépassait les modestes capacités de compréhension humaine. La *Théologie mystique* de Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite fournissait de nombreux arguments en faveur d'une telle approche. Or, le but suprême de la connaissance théologique – la Divinité (=Dieu) – ne pouvait être touché dans son objectif final et absolu, car *Dieu*,

⁶⁵ Dmitri S. Lihaciov, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ Dmitri S. Lihaciov, *op. cit.*, p. 90, 92.

⁶⁸ Le concept de l'existence d'une *langue sacrée*, inaccessible aux mortels (ou accessible uniquement aux élus) est très ancien. Dans la littérature méditerranéenne, il est apparu mille ans avant l'apparition du christianisme. Dans les textes d'Homère, par exemple, nous découvrons l'antithèse entre *la langue des dieux* et *la langue des hommes*. Par exemple, le mot *sang* dans la langue des dieux est désigné par *ιχθωρ*, tandis que dans la langue des hommes, par *αἷμα*. Voir: *Мифы народов мира*, Т. I, Москва, 1980, p. 532.

selon Pseudo-Dionysos, *ne peut être ni exprimé ni compris*⁶⁹. Dans ce contexte, l'*illisible*, le *mystérieux*, le *cryptique* démontrent les suprêmes degrés de religiosité et le *cryptogramme décoratif* devient le symbole du raffinement intellectuel et de l'initiation spirituelle⁷⁰.

Les Pays Roumains – qui *aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles ont déployé une intense activité d'assimilation, de protection et de conservation de la création culturelle sud-slave*⁷¹ – n'ont pas été en dehors de ce processus d'*abstraction*, d'*hermétisation* et d'*ennoblissement* du slavon ecclésiastique, utilisé à cette époque-là par tous les érudits moldaves ou valaques. En raison de l'énorme distance entre le roumain, parlé par la majorité de la population, et le slavon, utilisé par l'Église et par les chancelleries princières de Valachie et de Moldavie (une distance infiniment plus grande que la distance entre le serbe, le bulgare ou l'ancien russe par rapport au même slavon!), le processus d'*abstraction* de la «parole écrite» et de *polarisation* de la dernière face au «mot parlé» a été, évidemment, favorisé.

En Valachie, l'exemple des inscriptions simulées de l'église princière de Saint-Nicolas de Curtea de Argeș témoigne de la provenance byzantine assez précoce (XIV^e siècle) des graphèmes sur les vêtements des prêtres-prophètes du *Jugement Dernier*. Ici, il ne s'agit plus de caractères décoratifs kufiques ou pseudo-kufiques. La forme des graphèmes de Curtea de Argeș trahit plutôt une imitation des caractères de l'alphabet grec (la lettre Oméga, etc.).

En Moldavie, la plupart des inscriptions simulées apparaissent dans la peinture murale du XVI^e siècle. Ici, elles ne sont pas uniquement dues à l'influence directe gréco-byzantine, mais elles sont le résultat de la synthèse entre l'iconographie consacrée des personnages bibliques (des prophètes, des patriarches, des prêtres du Temple, des anges de la catégorie des *Dominations*) et les tendances à l'abstraction et le cryptage du texte et de l'image promus par les disciples de l'École de Târnovo dès le XV^e siècle. Contrairement à la Grèce, une particularité des fresques roumaines est l'absence presque totale des *inscriptions simulées* au caractère purement *décoratif*. Elles ne sont attestées ni dans la peinture murale du temps d'Étienne le Grand ou de Petru Rareș, ni dans les écritures ou les graphèmes à finalité profane. Il paraît qu'autant les peintres que les commanditaires des fresques moldaves de la fin du XV^e et du XVI^e siècle aient souhaité imprimer

⁶⁹ Dionisie Pseudo-Areopagitul, *Despre numele divine. Teologia mistica*, Iași, 1993, p. 154.

⁷⁰ Г. В. Поннов, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

⁷¹ Gheorghe Mihăila, *Originalul slavon al învățăturilor lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie*, in *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie*, București, 1996, p. LXXXIII. L'œuvre du patriarche Euthyme, le plus grand écrivain du Moyen Âge bulgare, est éditée dans sa totalité d'après les copies des érudits roumains, considérées comme étant les meilleures. L'unique manuscrit en rédaction médio-bulgare du Panégirique du patriarche Euthyme de Grégoire Tsamblak, a été trouvé dans un manuscrit copié en Moldavie, au XVI^e siècle. Voir: Gheorghe Mihăila, *op. cit.*, p. LXXXIII.

aux *inscriptions simulées* une signification prophétique-visionnaire aux connotations eschatologiques et une ancienneté d'avant le Déluge. Le mur ouest avec le *Jugement Dernier* du monastère de Voroneț (où les *inscriptions simulées* décorent autant les vêtements des prêtres-prophètes que le rouleau présenté par l'un de démons aux damnés) semble être un exemple clair en faveur de cette affirmation.

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Théologie de la beauté dans les écrits de Maxime le Confesseur*

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The Theology of Beauty in the Writings of Maximus the Confessor

Motto: « unum petivi a Domino hoc
requiram ut habitem in domo Domini
omnibus diebus vitae meae ut videam
pulchritudinem Domini et adtendam
templum eius » (Vulgata, Ps. 27, 4).

Abstract: “We talk about Beauty each time we enjoy something for the mere fact that that something exists” (U. Eco). The odyssey of beauty has passed in time through many registers, from the ontological one to the esthetic one that is dominant nowadays; from a name associated to Divinity (Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor), beautiful (*pulchrum*) has become in Latin scholastics a transcendental (Bonaventure). In the writings of Maximus the Confessor (580-662), beauty is, on the one hand, tightly related to the affirmative way of theology, because “through the beauty and greatness of creatures it is known that God is the creator of all things” (*Ambigua ad Iohannem*, 10), again, on the other hand, the only one that is truly Beautiful is Christ, the One of “infinite beauty”. The famous quote of Dostoevsky, “beauty will save the world”, may be understood starting from the Patristic tradition since “the work of restauration of the entire creation made by Christ has a *kalokagathic* character vivid embodied in the sacramental life of the Church and culminating in the Eucharistic Liturgy” (Ioan I. Ică jr.).

Keywords: Maximus the Confessor, Beauty, Beautiful, Infinite Beauty, Christ.

I. La *philocalie*, « l’amour de ce qui est beau », devrait constituer le point de départ de toute théologie chrétienne; ce qui signifie que la beauté n’est pas simplement une notion parmi d’autres, mais une « catégorie indispensable à la pensée chrétienne »¹. De plus, pour l’auteur qui a accordé

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le plus d'attention au discours théologique sur le beau – Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) –, « le christianisme est la religion esthétique *par excellence* »². En tant que chrétiens, nous sommes donc condamnés à la beauté qui, finalement, sera aussi notre salut.

Peu à peu, l'intérêt pour la catégorie du beau a glissé dans un plan secondaire ; et cela non seulement en théologie³. « La beauté est tombée en disgrâce dans le discours philosophique moderne, disparaissant presque comme terme de l'esthétique philosophique »⁴. Parmi les causes possibles de cette situation on pourrait compter le fait que le rapport entre le sensible et l'intelligible, entre le créé et l'incrée a été, à un moment donné, renversé. Selon l'avis de D.B. Hart, la notion / le transcendantal de *beau* a été éclipsé[e], jusqu'à la disparition, par le *sublime* kantien, qui est ainsi devenu la catégorie esthétique par excellence.

Chargée d'une forte signification symbolique, la problématique du beau occupe une place importante dans les écrits des Pères de l'Église. Par exemple, Denys l'Aréopagite reprend une idée platonicienne : « Tout ce qui est bien, sans nul doute, est beau »⁵, et il affirme que « le beau est identique au bien »⁶. Denys ne fait pas la distinction entre Dieu comme beauté et Dieu comme degré infini de la beauté, réunissant en Lui-même toutes les splendeurs⁷. À partir de l'unité fondamentale, affirmée par Denys, Thomas d'Aquin ne dresse qu'une distinction raisonnable entre ces deux termes⁸. À

¹ David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth*, Grand Rapids / Cambridge, Eerdmans, 2003 (quand l'édition originale n'est pas mentionnée, on a utilisé la traduction réalisée par Vlad (Nectarie) Dărăban: *Frumusețea infinitului. Estetica adevărului creștin*, Iași, Polirom (coll. « Plural M »), 2013, p. 59).

² Le livre fondamental du discours théologique sur la beauté reste l'ouvrage en 7 volumes de H. U. von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik Schau der Gestalt*, Einsiedeln, Johannes Verlag, 1961-1969. Par rapport à cet ouvrage, D.B. Hart considère, avec modestie, que son essai d'esthétique théologique - *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* – doit « être lu comme une sorte d'ample *marginalium* d'une page de l'œuvre de Balthasar » (*trad. citée* p. 74).

³ H.U. von Balthasar, *op. cit.*, vol. 1: *Schau der Gestalt*, pp. 21-22.

⁴ D.B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 58. Le philosophe américain se réfère surtout à l'étude de Mikel Dufrenne, *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique* (Paris, PUF, 1953), où la thématique du beau ne présente pas pour l'auteur un intérêt réel.

⁵ Platon, *Le Banquet*, 211d; *Timée*, 87c; pour plus de détails voir Drew A. Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty* (Studies in Continental Thought), Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2008.

⁶ *DN* IV, 7; *PG* 3, 704 A; pour l'interchangeabilité entre le beau et le bien chez Denys voir Eric D. Perl, *Theophany. The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, Albany, SUNY Press, 2007, p. 42; voir aussi Caroline Canfield Putnam, *Beauty in the Pseudo-Denis*, Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 1960; voir aussi Vladimir Kharlamov, *The Beauty of the Unity and the Harmony of the Whole: The Concept of Theosis in the Theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite*, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009.

⁷ *DN* 4, 7; pour une discussion sur ce sujet, voir D.B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁸ Pour plus de détails voir Emilio Brito, « La Beauté de Dieu », dans *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 20 (1989), p. 145; pour un aperçu général sur l'esthétique thomasienne voir, *inter*

savoir, pour le dominicain, il y a une identité entre *pulchrum*⁹ et *bonum in subiecto*, et une différence de raison entre les deux¹⁰. Certains exégètes considèrent que « Thomas respecte mieux que le Pseudo-Denys la consistance des créatures; celles-ci possèdent leur beauté en elles-mêmes, et ne se réduisent nullement à de simples reflets de la Beauté divine »¹¹. On peut identifier ici l'un de ces moments où le rapport mentionné ci-dessus subit un renversement : à la différence des écrits patristiques où – comme on le verra en ce qui suit – la beauté de la création est entendue comme simple reflet de la beauté divine, dans les textes des scholastiques de langue latine, la beauté de la création acquiert une certaine autonomie, il ne faut plus contempler l'archétype, car la création est belle en elle-même. Dorénavant, on offre à ceux qui désirent une distinction nette entre les deux plans, sensible – intelligible, créé – incréé, un point de départ pour leur argumentation.

II. Dans une certaine perspective, commune aux Pères de l'Église, Maxime le Confesseur (580-662) appartient à cette tradition du discours théologique sur la beauté¹². Les termes qu'on rencontre dans les écrits de

alia, Umberto Eco, *Le problème esthétique chez Thomas d'Aquin*, trad. Maurice Javion, Paris, PUF, 1993; voir aussi Francis J. Kovach, *Die Ästhetik des Thomas von Aquin. Eine genetische und systematische Analyse*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1961.

⁹ En ce qui concerne la notion de *pulchrum*, Thomas d'Aquin, dans *Contra impugnantes* (pars 2, cap. 6, 2), affirme: « Est enim duplex pulchritudo: una spiritualis quae consistit in ordinatione debita animae et affluentia bonorum spiritualium, unde omne quod procedit ex defectu spiritualis boni vel quod interiorem inordinationem ostendit, turpitudinem habet; alia est pulchritudo exterior quae consistit in debita ordinatione corporis et affluentia exteriorum rerum quae ad corpus ordinantur, et e contrario inordinatione corporis vel defectus temporalium rerum exteriorem quandam turpitudinem habet. Et sicut utraque pulchritudo delectat et desideratur, ita utraque turpitudine erubescitiam parit ».

¹⁰ *Summa theologica* I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1: « pulchrum est idem bono, sola ratione differens » (voir aussi *Ibidem*, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3). Tous les transcendants s'identifient dans la chose, mais ils diffèrent selon le concept, selon la raison formelle, pour citer les scholastiques. Quand les scholastiques se réfèrent à *pulchrum* comme à un transcendantal, ils ne considèrent pas la beauté créée, mais celle incréée. Pour la question des transcendants pendant la période scholastique, voir les ouvrages de Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden, Brill, 1996; Idem, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez*, Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2012.

¹¹ Walter M. Neidl, *Thearchia. Die Frage nach dem Sinn von Gott bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita und Thomas von Aquin*, Ratisbonne, Habbel, 1976, pp. 49-50; *apud* Emilio Brito, *loc. cit.*, pp. 148, n. 38.

¹² Nous ne connaissons que trois études traitant de la problématique du beau chez Maxime: Michael D. Gibson, « The Beauty of the Redemption of the World: The Theological Aesthetics of Maximus the Confessor and Jonathan Edwards », dans *Harvard Theological Review*, 101 (2008), pp. 45-76; Ketevan Bezarashvili, « The Interrelation of the Theological Concepts of Divine Love, Beauty, and Contemplation in the Writings of Maximus the Confessor and Shota Rustaveli », dans T. Mgaloblishvili and L. Kholperia (eds.), *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*, London, Bennett & Bloom, 2009, pp. 133-150; Phillip Ivanovic, « Maximus the Confessor's Conception of Beauty », dans *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 22.2 (2015), pp. 159-179.

Maxime, par lesquels il exprime la beauté, sont : κάλλος (beauté ; bel aspect extérieur ; aussi bien que les termes de la même famille lexicale), ωραιότης¹³ (beauté de tout ce qui est primordial ; épanouissement de la beauté ; maturité) et εὐπρέπεια (attraits extérieurs ; beauté qui n'a pas pourtant à faire avec la perfection ; beauté profane)¹⁴. Dans l'Antiquité, les termes το καλόν et το αγαθόν étaient interchangeables : le bon était beau, et vice versa ; un argument dans ce sens est représenté aussi par le mot composé καλοκαγαθία, présent souvent dans les écrits de la Grèce antique. L'exemple le plus éloquent est le fragment de l'Évangile selon Jean (10, 11), où Jésus dit à propos de Lui-même : « Je suis le bon/beau berger » (Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός)¹⁵.

Nous avons identifié dans les écrits maximiens trois paliers où l'on peut rencontrer la problématique de la beauté : 1. L'état de beauté dont sont déchus les protoparents, état que récupéreront les bienheureux, à savoir « la beauté bienheureuse »¹⁶; 2. La beauté de ce monde, comme reflet de la beauté divine, dont elle s'origine ; 3. La beauté infinie, archétypale, de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ.

II. 1. « L'homme a été créé par Dieu illuminé par la beauté de l'incorruptibilité et de l'immortalité, mais qu'il a préféré la honte de la nature matérielle autour de lui à la beauté noétique, et oublié l'éminente dignité de son âme ou plutôt Dieu qui l'embellit divinement, il s'est rendu digne de la sentence selon le jugement de Dieu, le sage Économe de notre salut, et il en a aussi recueilli le fruit »¹⁷. Ou, ailleurs, Maxime invoque à nouveau la chute de l'homme de « la beauté originaire »¹⁸ : « la nourriture de cette vie bienheureuse, c'est le pain descendu du Ciel qui donne la vie au monde, ainsi que l'a dit le Verbe véridique dans l'Évangile. Le premier homme pour n'avoir pas voulu s'en servir, s'est inévitablement éloigné de la vie divine et par ailleurs une autre lui est échue, engendrant la mort ; il place sur lui la forme de l'être sans raison, effaçant la merveilleuse beauté de la forme divine, et livra la nature tout entière à la mort »¹⁹. Pour nous limiter à ces deux exemples, il est évident que, pour Maxime, la chute d'Adam a signifié

¹³ Terme que Maxime emploie plus souvent par rapport à κάλλος ; parfois ces termes sont synonymes, d'autres fois ils apparaissent dans la même phrase, comme par exemple dans *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 51, CCSG 7, p. 395 : ἀπερνόητον ωραιότητα τοῦ ἀπροσίτου κάλλους ; pour ce sujet voir aussi F. Ivanovic, *loc. cit.*, p. 170. Dans l'interprétation de Maxime, le terme Ninive signifie aussi beauté (ωραιότης) parfaite (voir *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 64, CCSG 22, p. 231 ; SC 569, trad. par F. Vinel, p. 235).

¹⁴ Pour ces termes utilisés par Maxime, voir F. Ivanovic, *loc. cit.*, p. 162.

¹⁵ Les traducteurs préfèrent généralement le terme « bon » pour « καλός », mais on pourrait aussi bien le traduire par « beau ».

¹⁶ Maxime, *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, E. Ponsoye, § 6, p. 126.

¹⁷ Maxime, *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, E. Ponsoye, § 8, p. 150.

¹⁸ Maxime, *Capita theologica et aconomica* I, 85.

¹⁹ Maxime, *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, E. Ponsoye, § 10, p. 190

également une perte de la beauté ; nous sommes depuis à sa recherche, recherche qui n'est rien d'autre que l'essai de ressembler à Dieu.

Dans ses textes, Maxime parle de l'homme déchu qui a « l'image ensevelie sous les passions <et> la beauté originelle souillée »²⁰. Par conséquent, « la beauté de l'âme »²¹ doit être libérée par l'ascèse des passions, qui ensevelissent l'âme de l'homme déchu. Il faut polir le miroir clair de l'âme, qui reflète l'image du Créateur, et enlever toute tache (péché) qui l'a souillée après la chute des proto-parents. Mais on ne peut pas faire cela à lui seul ; malgré ses plus grands efforts, l'homme ne peut rien faire sans Jésus (*Jean* 15, 5). Dans son parcours vers la récupération de la beauté originelle, de la ressemblance à Dieu, l'homme est toujours accompagné par Jésus qui, en rachetant les péchés des humains, « redresse l'humanité tombée dans le mal et la fonde sur la beauté »²². On est ici en plein cercle ontologique²³, puisque l'état primordial, que les parents ont perdue, peut être récupéré, à la fin des siècles, par la divinisation des dignes : « La vertu le fait s'affliger dans sa chair à cause de ses peines, et c'est dans la vertu même qu'il se réjouit en son âme lorsqu'il regarde la beauté des biens à venir comme étant présente »²⁴. Dans les mots de D. Stăniloae, « rien ne change en essence, mais tout s'embellit ou s'enlaidit. Il y a un progrès infini dans les deux sens »²⁵.

II. 2. Similairement aux *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, le texte *Ambigua ad Thomam* commence par l'invocation de la beauté: « dans l'inaltérable habitude d'un zèle assidu dans la contemplation des choses divines, ô très aimé du Seigneur, tu es devenu un très chaste amoureux, pas simplement de la sagesse, mais aussi de la beauté de la sagesse. La beauté de la sagesse, c'est la connaissance mise en pratique, c'est-à-dire l'action sage dont le caractère, comme coulant de ces deux sources, est le verbe de la Providence et du Jugement divins. De sorte qu'entre-tissant le *nous* avec le sens par l'Esprit, tu as vraiment montré comment Dieu devait naturellement faire l'homme à l'image de Dieu et tu as rendu manifeste la richesse de sa bonté

²⁰ Maxime, *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, E. Ponsoye, § 31, p. 274.

²¹ Maxime, *Capita theologica et œconomica* II, 42; voir et Idem, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, Prooemium.

²² Daniel Pupăză, *Taina Frumusului și Binelui după Sfântul Dionisie Areopagitul*, București, Nemira, 2014, p. 420. « For Maximus, the mystery of the incarnation as the redemption of creation is the revelation of the beauty of God, and thus the divine movement—from above to below and below to above—culminates in a harmonious and aesthetic union of the divine and the creation » (Michael D. Gibson, *loc. cit.*, p. 52).

²³ Dans la vision de Maxime, l'homme revient par résurrection à la beauté d'avant la chute (*Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 26; SC 529; trad. F. Vinel, p. 317); pour une idée similaire voir *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 42: « Notre Dieu, en les assumant pour nous après avoir renouvelé la nature ou pour mieux dire en l'innovant, ramène à sa première beauté incorruptible celle-ci par le moyen de sa chaire sainte, animée et raisonnable venue de nous » (trad. E. Ponsoye, p. 303).

²⁴ *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 58 (SC 569; trad. F. Vinel, p.49).

²⁵ D. Stăniloae, n. 366 à *Ambigua ad Thomam*, Paris, Les Éditions de l'Ancre, 1994, p. 505.

laissant voir sur-abondamment, par le merveilleux mélange des contraires, Dieu incorporé en toi par les vertus »²⁶. On a ici, *in nuce*, la doctrine maximienne relative à la beauté. On invoque premièrement « la beauté divine »²⁷ et ensuite « la beauté de la création »²⁸, dont le fondement et la raison résident dans la beauté divine²⁹, et l'expression parfaite des deux c'est l'incarnation, grâce au beau mélange des contraires.

La beauté de la création n'est que la manifestation de la gloire divine³⁰. La beauté corporelle, qu'on invoque si souvent de nos jours – et en particulier par l'intermédiaire des médias –, par comparaison à « l'immortelle beauté du monde divin » (Bossuet), s'impose assez tard dans l'histoire des idées, comme « invention » de la Renaissance³¹.

Il y a des arguments offerts par les écrits maximiens qui justifient pleinement l'association entre la beauté de ce monde et le mode affirmatif, cataphatique, de connaissance de Dieu. Maxime affirme, en ce sens, que « le mode affirmatif est reparti en Providence opérative et en Jugement. Selon le mode de l'opération, à partir de la beauté et de la grandeur des créatures, il induit la démonstration que Dieu est l'Artisan de ces tous, ce que montrent les vêtements blancs, éclatants du Seigneur, que le Verbe a entendu montrer en les projetant sur les créatures manifestées »³². Cette idée n'est pas

²⁶ Maxime le Confesseur, *Ambigua ad Thomam*, Prooemium, trad. Emmanuel Ponsoye, Paris, Les Éditions de l'Ancre, 1994, p. 101.

²⁷ Pour « la beauté divine » (θεία ὡραιότης) voir *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 13, 31, 38, 71; voir aussi *Capita de caritate* I, 19 (SC 9, trad. J. Pegon, p. 73) et *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, Prooemium, 10, 49, 58.

²⁸ L'homme « portait en lui la beauté, de caractère divin, de la nature intelligible, mêlée a une force ineffable » Grégoire de Nysse, *Discours catéchétique*, VI (SC 453, p. 175).

²⁹ Dans *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 7, Maxime parle du « Verbe [Λόγος] <qui> est Un pour une pluralité de verbes [λόγοι] ». Ce qui signifie que notre fondement, notre raison est en Dieu, c'est-à-dire « nous sommes donc des parts de Dieu et appelés tels parce que le verbe de notre être est restitué en Dieu » (trad. Ponsoye, p. 136); voir aussi *ibidem*, 22 et 53. On rencontre la même idée dans la scolastique de langue latine, chez Thomas d'Aquin, par exemple, qui affirme que « en Dieu ils contemplant la beauté de l'ordre des choses dérivé de Dieu » (ST I, q. 108, a. 5).

³⁰ Grégoire de Nazianz dit, dans *Oratio* 28, 30-31, que Dieu est à la fois beauté et beau, dont le resplendissement descend vers et se reflète dans ses créatures ; pour une discussion sur ce sujet, voir D.B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

³¹ Florin Crișmăreanu, « Metamorfozele corpului. De la „corpul dat” la „corpul inventat” », dans George Bondor (éd.), *Sensuri ale corpului*, Iași, Editura Universității „Al.I. Cuza”, 2012, pp. 85-99.

³² *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 10 (trad. E. Ponsoye, p. 197); voir aussi *ibidem*, 15, 21, 35. Pour « la beauté de la création », voir aussi *Capita de caritate*, I, 90 (SC 9, trad. J. Pegon, p. 90). On rencontre ici une idée commune aux deux traditions du christianisme, grecque et latine : on ne peut pas séparer la beauté de la proportion (l'analogie). Tout comme pour les Pères de langue grecque, pour Augustin aussi la notion de beau est indissolublement liée à l'idée de proportion, vu que la beauté consiste en l'harmonieuse alliance des parties composantes (*Confessiones*, XIII, 28); à propos de ce sujet, voir notamment Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford Theological Monographs), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992.

nouvelle, on la rencontre chez des auteurs qui ont influencé Maxime, mais aussi chez des auteurs appartenant à la tradition latine, comme Thomas d'Aquin, pour lequel « dans l'ordre même des créatures produites on peut voir la beauté de la sagesse divine »³³. La différence entre Maxime et les auteurs appartenant à la scholastique chrétienne classique consiste, dans ce cas, dans le type de noétique utilisé. Du point de vue noétique, à partir seulement du visible, on pourrait connaître et dire quelque chose sur l'invisible. Pour parler dans les termes de Thomas d'Aquin, qui se sert pleinement de la noétique de souche aristotélique, « notre intellect, qui se déplace des créatures vers la connaissance de Dieu, doit considérer Dieu de la même manière qu'il assume dans le cas des créatures »³⁴.

D'autre part, on voit dans les écrits de Maxime qu'on peut trouver aussi la perfection de la beauté par la contemplation des λόγοι, des « volontés divines » (Denys), qui ont servi pour modèle à la création du monde matériel³⁵. Le λόγος ne se révèle uniquement dans la création³⁶, mais aussi dans les Saintes Écritures, dans leurs lettres et syllabes, et Maxime parle dans ce sens de « la belle ordonnance » (καλή εὐταξία) des divines Écritures³⁷. Dans un autre ouvrage, le Confesseur compare la lettre des Écritures à la beauté visible, extérieure, de la création : « ceux qui aiment la lettre pour elle-même sont voués à tuer le Verbe qui est en elle ; de même que la beauté des créatures, quand on n'y voit pas la gloire du Créateur, stérilise la piété pour le Verbe chez ses admirateurs »³⁸. En se limitant au sens littéral, on ne pourra jamais comprendre intégralement un message transmis. En outre, par l'interprétation littérale, on peut rater, tuer (II *Cor.* 3, 6) complètement le sens d'un message, qu'il soit dissimulé dans un texte ou dans la réalité environnante. C'est le cas aussi de ceux qui se contentent de contempler la beauté extérieure du monde créé, incapables de comprendre le fait que la beauté de ce monde est liée de manière indestructible à son Créateur, archétype de toute beauté. Tout comme la lettre qui tue le message profond, la contemplation de la beauté extérieure isole ce monde dans le cadre d'une monade autonome, en coupant le lien avec son Créateur.

II. 3. Pour qu'elle soit intelligible, la contemplation de la création et des Écritures doit se faire toujours à la lumière de la révélation du Christ. « Il faut que la pensée chrétienne reste constamment fixée sur Jésus »³⁹. Dans le contexte de l'époque patristique, cette discussion théologique sur la beauté ne peut avoir lieu qu'avec, dans son centre, Jésus, qui est la Beauté

³³ Thomas d'Aquin, *ST I*, q. 36, a. 2.

³⁴ Thomas d'Aquin, *ST I*, q. 39, a. 8.

³⁵ Sur la beauté des λόγοι voir *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 7 (PG 91, 1084 B).

³⁶ Olivier Clément, « La beauté comme révélation », dans *La vie spirituelle*, 637 (1980), pp. 251-270.

³⁷ Maxime, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 10 (CCSG 7, p. 83; SC 529, trad. F. Vinel, p. 195).

³⁸ Maxime, *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 10 (trad. E. Ponsoye, p. 171).

³⁹ D.B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

archétypale⁴⁰, qui nous attire, qui nous appelle (καλώ) à Lui⁴¹. Par l'Incarnation, le Christ incarne la beauté infinie de la Sainte Trinité⁴². Maxime parle du beau Visage du Rédempteur quand il explique la présence de Moïse et d'Élie lors de la Transfiguration (μεταμόρφωση) de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ : « à l'éclat bienheureux de la lumière irradiant de sa face et insoutenable pour des yeux (humains), ils apprirent mystiquement que c'était le symbole de la divinité au-dessus du nous, des sens de l'être et de la connaissance. De la connaissance que Celui qui n'avait ni éclat ni beauté était le Verbe fait chair, à son heure, et le plus beau des enfants des hommes »⁴³. Cette affirmation maximienne pourrait apparaître comme contraire au fragment du livre du prophète Ésaïe : « Il n'avait ni beauté, ni éclat pour attirer nos regards » (Es. 53, 2). Évidemment, à une lecture typologique, le livre du prophète se réfère à Jésus, dont la beauté est, comme une lumière très vive, aveuglante. Le rapprochement entre la beauté et la lumière est mise en relief par Maxime dans *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, Prooemium, où il parle de « la beauté lumineuse »⁴⁴. Cette lecture apophatique est fondée également sur le fait que « c'est la beauté qui est la forme véritable de la distance. La beauté remplit la distance, appartient à celle-ci et la possède, mais, plus encore, elle confère la distance »⁴⁵. Ysabel de Andia affirme justement que la théologie mystique de Denys l'Aréopagite est une mystique des ténèbres, ultime symbole divin, emprunté au livre de l'Exode, pour dire la « lumière

⁴⁰ Dans la *Mystagogie*, 24, Maxime parle de « κάλλος ἀρχέτυπον » (CCSG 69, p. 65; trad. Marie-Lucie Charpin-Ploix, Paris, Migne, 2005, p. 145). Pour le scoliasse des *ND*, les beautés archétypales appartiennent à la nature divine, celle qui nous a offert la participation à elles de façon analogue à notre capacité (Scolie *DN* III, 3; *PG* IV, 144 C); on rencontre une idée similaire tant chez les prédécesseurs de Maxime, par exemple chez Grégoire de Nysse, *Discours catéchétique*, VI (*SC* 453, p. 181), que chez ses successeurs, dont Grégoire Palamas, notamment dans *Tome hagioritique sur les saints hésychastes*.

⁴¹ Denys l'Aréopagite souligne le fait que le sens du mot « beau » – το καλον, est celui d'attraction, d'appel, car il provient du verbe καλεω – j'appelle (*DN* IV, 7). En outre, « Dieu nous ravit par Sa bonté et par Sa beauté et par l'inclination qu'il a mise dans notre nature pour gagner la bonté et la beauté parfaites, dans l'union à Dieu » (D. Stăniloae, n. 32 à *Ambigua ad Thomam*, éd. citée, p. 388).

⁴² Pour un représentant de la tradition latine du christianisme, Alexandre de Hales (1185-1245), la beauté de la divinité se résume à la relation entre les trois Personnes divines (*Summa theologica* I, 3, 3, 2).

⁴³ *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, 10 (trad. E. Ponsoye, p. 168); nous avons rencontré un fragment similaire dans un autre ouvrage de Maxime : „Pierre, Jacques et Jean, les saints apôtres devant qui le Seigneur a été transfiguré en une gloire qui l'emporte sur les sens, en laquelle « Il est beau de beauté devant les fils des hommes » (*Ps.* 44, 3)” (Maxime, *Capita theologica et aconomica* I, 97; trad. A. Riou, dans *Le monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1973, p. 260).

⁴⁴ *SC* 529, trad. F. Vinel, p. 123. Le rapprochement entre la lumière et la beauté est mis en évidence par Evdokimov : « ainsi, à la première parole de la Bible : « Que la Lumière soit ! » répond la dernière : „Que la Beauté soit ! » » (Paul Evdokimov, *Arta Icoanei – O teologie a frumuseții*, trad. par Grigore Moga et Petru Moga, București, Meridiane, 1992, p. 15).

⁴⁵ D.B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

inaccessible » de *Timothée* 6, 16. Celle de Maxime est une mystique de la lumière à la fois « inaccessible » et rayonnante de la Transfiguration, centrée sur le Christ qui est le principe et la fin de toute l'Économie, ce « *Logos* qui est connu sur-essentiellement selon l'apophase », vers qui tout converge et en qui tout s'unifie⁴⁶.

Et enfin mais pas des moindres, Maxime considère que l'homme doit « se modeler beau selon Celui-là (selon l'image du Christ, *n.n.*), comme une lettre préservant l'imitation de l'archétype »⁴⁷. Ce modelage n'est possible que par un embellissement de l'homme grâce aux vertus⁴⁸.

III. « Loin de se dégrader en une *infima scientia* subordonnée à la métaphysique, l'esthétique garde, pour le chrétien, une position première »⁴⁹. Pour Maxime, la beauté ne se réduit à une simple catégorie esthétique⁵⁰, mais elle acquiert, par les implications qu'elle a dans la vie de l'individu, une connotation ontologique⁵¹. D.B. Hart surprend parfaitement ce sens ontologique de la beauté, lorsqu'il affirme : „The Christian understanding of beauty is analogical, in two senses : in the simple analytic sense, that whatever «beauty» means is grasped only by analogy, by constant exposure to countless instance of its advent, and through constant and continuous revision (this because, in theological terms, God is the «primary analogate» to whom beauty is ascribed); and in the more radically ontological sense, that beauty is not some property discretely inherent in particular objects, but indwells the anagogical relationship of all things, each to the other, as a measure of the dynamism of their involvement with one another»⁵².

Le Confesseur parle même, quelque part, de « la sagesse artistique de Dieu, contemplé dans les créatures »⁵³. Ce qui nous autorise à affirmer que, pour Maxime, Dieu est aussi l'esthéticien par excellence, non seulement le

⁴⁶ Ysabel de Andia, „Transfiguration et théologie négative chez Maxime le Confesseur et Denys l'Aréopagite”, dans Ysabel de Andia (éd.), *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident. Actes du Colloque International. Paris, 21-24 septembre 1994*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes (Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité, 151), 1997, pp. 293-328, ici pp. 326-327.

⁴⁷ *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, 10 (PG 91, 1117C; la traduction d'E. Ponsoye est incorrecte, p. 160).

⁴⁸ *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, 10; *Capita theologica et œconomica* I, 85.

⁴⁹ E. Brito, *loc. cit.*, p. 161.

⁵⁰ On ne peut pas comprendre la beauté uniquement comme catégorie esthétique, car « la beauté transgresse les limites. Parmi les transcendants, la beauté a toujours été la moins stable sur son socle de gloire » (D.B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 64).

⁵¹ F. Ivanovic, *loc. cit.*, p. 179. L'auteur traite également des connotations épistémologiques, cosmologiques et même psychologiques de la beauté.

⁵² D.B. Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge, Eerdmans, 2003, p. 18.

⁵³ Maxime, *Capita de caritate* III, 24: « τεχνικῆς σοφίας » (SC 9, trad. J. Pegon, p. 130, qui traduit le mot « τεχνικῆς » par « ordonnatrice »); pour cette idée, voir aussi Athanase le Grand, *De incarnatione Verbi*, VI (SC 199, pp. 411-469).

théologien, vu que « par son Incarnation, le Verbe de Dieu nous enseigne la „théologie” en ce qu’il nous montre en lui le Père et l’Esprit Saint »⁵⁴.

Tous les trois niveaux, que nous avons analysés séparément par des raisons méthodologiques, il faut les considérer de manière unitaire, en clé christologique, car le Christ est le seul qui « fonde la nature humaine sur la beauté »⁵⁵. Dans une lettre, Dostoïevski écrit : « il n’y a au monde qu’une seule figure admirablement positive, le Christ ; cette figure d’une incommensurable, infinie beauté est certainement un miracle perpétuel (l’Évangile selon Jean est, dans son ensemble, animée par cette idée : Saint Jean voit le miracle dans l’incarnation, dans la manifestation visible du Beau) »⁵⁶. « Dostoïevski emploie souvent „beauté” et „le Christ” comme des termes interchangeables »⁵⁷. Donc, le nom le plus propre à donner à Dieu n’est pas l’Être, comme l’affirment souvent les métaphysiciens, mais Jésus Christ, « Image du Dieu invisible » (*Col.* 1, 15).

Maxime, comme d’autres Pères de l’Église, exploite également le sens de la beauté qui est inséparable de la proportion (l’analogie) : la beauté consiste en l’alliance harmonieuse des parties composantes. En ce qui concerne la beauté entendue comme proportion, analogie, Maxime est plus proche des écrits de l’Aréopagite, tandis que, au sujet de la beauté du Christ, Maxime s’inspire de la tradition exégétique origénienne, et en particulier de l’interprétation donnée à la Transfiguration du Seigneur⁵⁸. Quant à la beauté archétypale (« κάλλος ἀρχέτυπον »), Maxime est influencé, certainement, par

⁵⁴ Maxime, *Orationes Dominicæ brevis expositio*, CCSG 23, 31-32: „θεολογίαν μὲν γὰρ διδάσκει σαρκούμενος ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, ὡς ἐν ἑαυτῷ δεικνὺς τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον”; trad. A. Riou, dans *Le monde et l’Église selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1973, p. 218.

⁵⁵ *Vide supra*, § II. 1. « Le Christ seul sculpte l’image de l’amoureux du Beau-et-Bien, enlève toute alluvion de dissemblance par rapport à Dieu, jusqu’à ce qu’il révèle la beauté cachée de l’image originelle » (D. Pupăză, *op. cit.*, p. 501).

⁵⁶ Gheorghe Pașcalău, « Dostoievski în cerul Ideilor lui Platon », dans Cătălin Cioabă, Bogdan Mincă (éd.), *Liber amicorum*, București, Zeta Books, 2012, p. 164.

⁵⁷ Tzvetan Todorov, « La beauté sauvera le monde », dans *Études théologiques et religieuses*, 82/3 (2007), p. 329; voir aussi Andrew Louth, „« Beauty will Save the World ». The Formation of Byzantine Spirituality”, dans *Theology Today*, 61 (2004), pp. 67-77.

⁵⁸ C’est à cette tradition qu’appartient, sans doute, Jérôme lui aussi, qui nous a laissé un important commentaire sur la Transfiguration (Jean-Louis Gourdain, « Jérôme exégète de la Transfiguration », dans *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 40/2, 1994, pp. 365-373) ; il s’y inspire évidemment du commentaire qu’avait réalisé, à son tour, Origène (*Commentarii in Matthæum*, XII, § 31-43, in *Origenes Werke*, X (GCS 40), eds. Erich Klostermann / Ernst Benz, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 1935, pp. 150-170); voir aussi le volume *Joie de la Transfiguration d’après les Pères d’Orient*, textes présentés par Dom Michel Coune, coll. Spiritualité orientale 39, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1985.

les ouvrages de Grégoire de Nysse, notamment *Discours catéchétique*⁵⁹, *Sur les Béatitudes*⁶⁰ et *La création de l'homme*⁶¹.

On ne peut pas saisir des yeux physiques la parfaite beauté qu'on ne verra vraiment qu'au Royaume des Cieux⁶². La beauté du Christ n'est pas de ce monde. Moïse et Élie ont pu saisir cette beauté car ils étaient libres de passions. Ce monde, même si l'on considère comme beau, n'est pas beau en lui-même, car sa raison est en Dieu. Le monde n'existe pas en lui-même, car on l'a créé du néant. La beauté de la création et celles des Écritures ne jouent qu'un rôle pédagogique, grâce auquel l'homme peut s'élever plus près de son Créateur⁶³.

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⁵⁹ « L'homme avait un bel aspect, puisqu'il avait été fait à l'image même de l'archétype de la beauté » Grégoire de Nysse, *Discours catéchétique*, VI (SC 453, p. 181).

⁶⁰ PG 44, 1272 AC.

⁶¹ PG 44, 136 D (SC 6, 2002, J. Laplace et J. Daniélou, p. 95).

⁶² Maxime, *Mystagogie*, 24 (trad. Marie-Lucie Charpin-Ploix, Paris, Migne, 2005, p. 151).

⁶³ F. Ivanovic, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

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Yseut et Tristan comme parents : *le Roman d'Ysaÿe le Triste*

Brîndușa Grigoriu*

Yseut and Tristan as Parents : the Romance of Ysaÿe le Triste

Abstract: When a rumor concerning the hero's parents has the chance to become a medieval romance, the prequel is just as important, in its affective dimension and moral connotations, as the story itself. The present article explores the intertextual creation of a new topos in early modern literature – the fertility brought about by the mythical love potion, in the narrative worlds of Tristan and Ysolt – and the axiological negotiations meant to ensure its reception in the autumn of Arthurian romance.

Keywords: Romance of Ysaÿe, philter, fecundity, Tristan, Ysolt, *losengiers*, guilt / shame, emancipation.

Au bas Moyen Âge, en plein déclin arthurien et en toute recrudescence mythique, une voix révèle l'impensable : Tristan et Yseut, qui s'aimaient depuis trois siècles, viennent d'avoir un enfant.

C'est le conteur du *Roman d'Ysaÿe le Triste* qui accrédite cette rumeur, en lui apposant le sceau de l'écriture et en lui conférant, liminairement, le statut d'une anecdote de coulisses : « Pour che que li desrains livres de Tristran dist en ceste maniere: explicit le livre de Tristran et de ses fais, veul je commenchie une petite ystore d'un sien fil qu'il engenra en une riche dame que l'on appelloit Yseut. » (Giacchetti, 1989 : § 1, p. 27). Ainsi, le narrème de l'engendrement d'un bâtard de légende, inénarrable jusqu'au tout début du XV^e siècle¹, conduit à l'engendrement d'un livre, dans un parfum de scandale qui n'a pas échappé au flair des médiévistes ; dès le dernier quart du XX^e siècle, en effet, plusieurs études enquêtent la parenté ratée² et la créativité libérée³ du personnel néo-tristanien.

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¹ Au sujet de la datation, nous nous fions essentiellement aux arguments avancés par André Giacchetti dans l'« Introduction » à son édition. Par ailleurs, selon Laurent Brun, rédacteur du site Arlima (Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge) et ses collaborateurs, il s'agirait de « [la] fin du XIV^e ou [le] début du XV^e siècle »,

² Sur le génome littéraire de la folie d'amour et sa transmission de Tristan à Marc via Ysaÿe, voir Barrington Francis Beardsmore, *Ysaÿe le Triste: An Analysis and a Study of the Role of the Dwarf Tronq*, thèse de doctorat, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1969, consultée en ligne le 15 mai 2018

S'il y a quelque chose à dire après l'*explicit* du dernier *Tristan*, ce quelque chose est plutôt honteux, appréhendé sous l'angle de la *shame culture*⁴ promue par politique européenne et la morale chrétienne du Moyen Âge finissant, qui se montre particulièrement sensible à « l'imputation de bâtardise ou de l'absence de sang royal »⁵, aussi bien qu'à la « [dénonciation de] l'autre » sous l'emprise d'« une vision manichéenne du monde où le Mal était rejeté hors de soi ou hors du groupe »⁶. Tout en restant ouvert à l'autre-monde celtique, avec ses fées, ses forêts et ses charmes, le public de la matière de Bretagne témoigne d'une « préoccupation morale bien plus affirmée dans les réécritures du XV^e siècle que dans les originaux qu'ils reprennent » ; même si ces continuations romanesques au souffle épique ne sont pas des *vitae sanctorum*, « il est bon », selon le mot de Damien de Carné, « que le chevalier soit d'une conduite morale exemplaire, ce qui légitime l'écriture et la lecture du roman »⁷. Lorsqu'il arrive qu'un héros

sur <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubtheses/831/items/1.0104008>, ici p. 94 sq. Sur les ratages de la maternité auprès d'Ysaïe et de Marc, voir Patricia Victorin, « La Reine Yseut et la fée Morgue ou l'impossible maternité dans *Ysaïe le Triste* », *La Mère au Moyen Âge, Bien dire et bien apprendre*, 16, 1999, p. 261-275, ici p. 272-275.

³ Voir Patricia Victorin, *Ysaïe le triste, une esthétique de la confluence : tours, tombeaux, vergers et fontaines*, Paris, Champion (« Bibliothèque du XV^e siècle », 63), 2002, p. 204 sq. Sur la figure matricielle de Marte et sa maternité de substitution, greffée sur l'écriture et délaissant l'éducation de son enfant, voir Michelle Szkilnik, « Des Femmes écrivains : Néronès dans le *Roman de Perceforest*, Marte dans *Ysaïe le Triste* », *Romania*, 117, 1999, p. 474-506, ici p. 488-505. Sur le pouvoir de la femme écrivain et la filiation spirituelle Yseut-Marthe, voir aussi Marilyn Lawrence, « Yseut's Legacy: Women Writers and Performers in the Medieval French Romance *Ysaïe le Triste* », *Acts and Texts. Performance and Ritual in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, éd. Laurie Postlewait, Wim N. M. Hüsken, Amsterdam ; New York, NY, Rodopi, 2007, p. 319-336, ici p. 332 sq.

⁴ La dichotomie « *guilt culture* » / « *shame culture* » est relancée par Eric R. Dodds dans son ouvrage *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Londres, University of California Press, 1951, p. 28-64 ; l'auteur en souligne le caractère descriptif et la validité relative, sans prétendre offrir « *any particular theory of cultural change* » (p. 28).

⁵ Gilles Lecuppre et Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin consacrent une étude au rôle joué par l'accusation de bâtardise dans la remise en cause de l'autorité de Charles le Téméraire et dans la construction du « patrimoine politique » et de « l'arsenal de la famille d'York, tout au long de la guerre civile » ; voir leur article « La Rumeur : un instrument de la compétition politique au service des princes de la fin du Moyen Âge », dans *La Rumeur au Moyen Âge. Du mépris à la manipulation. V^e-XV^e siècle*, dir. Maïté Billoré et Myriam Soria, Rennes, PUR, 2011, p. 149-175, ici p. 168. Ce genre d'accusation faisait partie du répertoire de calomnies politiquement agissantes de l'époque.

⁶ Nicole Brocard, « La Rumeur, histoire d'un concept et de ses utilisations à Besançon et dans le Comté de Bourgogne aux XIV^e-XV^e siècles », *La Rumeur au Moyen Âge...., op. cit.*, p. 119-131, ici p. 121-122.

⁷ Damien de Carné, « *Ysaïe le Triste, le bras armé de Dieu* », *Actes du 22^e congrès de la Société internationale arthurienne, Rennes, 2008*, éd. par Denis Hùe, Anne Delamaire et Christine Ferlampin-Acher, Rennes, Centre d'études des littératures et langues anciennes et modernes, 2008, consulté en ligne le 15 mai 2018, sur le site <https://www.sites.univ-rennes2.fr/celam/ias/actes/pdf/decarne.pdf>, p. 1-16, ici p. 12.

romanesque, sous le poids de ses modèles féeriques et humains – notamment Tristan et Lancelot – ne parvienne pas à épouser cette exemplarité, une instance corrective monte la garde, pour assurer le retour à l'ordre, via le sacrement du mariage et la victoire sur les païens⁸.

Au bas Moyen Âge, la matière tristanienne, que le conteur anonyme expédie en toute hostilité en arborant l'esthétique de la distanciation – « mais je n'en veul mie faire ung loing conte car je voel entreprendre le mains sur le livre Tristans que je puis. Nequedent y ay ge prins mon teume, et ay assés raison, car li commenchemens du fil doit venir du pere. » (§ 7, p. 30) – se révèle fructueusement modélisante. Le lecteur n'a même pas besoin que l'on nomme un auteur ou autre du luxuriant *Livre de Tristan*, devenu simplement un champ gravitationnel dont il faut surmonter l'influence écrasante : partout, Tristan est reconnu, en vertu de sa prouesse impulsée par l'amour, comme un des meilleurs chevaliers arthuriens, dont la *memoria* est admirativement cultivée dans des dizaines de manuscrits et d'incunables relevant du cycle *en prose* et de ses avatars italiens, espagnols, portugais ou anglais (en particulier Thomas Malory, livres VIII-XII)⁹, mais aussi dans des textes plus marginaux, où sa valeur chevaleresque va jusqu'à frôler l'*imago* épique de Roland¹⁰. Compagnon et faire-valoir de Galaad dans la quête du Graal, il est déploré comme la victime innocent(é)e de Marc, devenu l'ennemi par excellence de la paix et de l'affabilité¹¹. Par ce biais dyadique, le *Tristan en prose* « attribue [...] aux personnages de Marc et de Tristan un rôle symbolique dans la lutte entre le bien et le mal, ou plutôt entre bonne et mauvaise chevalerie. »¹².

⁸ « Le roman se clôt sur la bataille finale qui consacre la victoire des chrétiens contre les Sarrasins, sur la double quête nuptiale menée à bonne fin (Ysaÿe épouse Marthe et Marc, sa jolie Sarrasine Orimonde) », grâce au personnel féerique servant, lors des circonstances critiques, de « garants de la foi morale et chrétienne » ; voir Patricia Victorin, « La fin des illusions dans *Ysaÿe le Triste* ou Quand la magie n'est plus qu'illusion », *Magie et illusion au Moyen Âge*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses universitaires de Provence, 1999, p. 569-578, disponible en ligne sur <http://books.openedition.org/pup/3408>.

⁹ Sur la renommée romanesque de Tristan dans les cycles en prose européens, voir, par exemple, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 175-178.

¹⁰ Voir Caroline D. Echhardt, Bryan A. Meer, « Constructing a Medieval Genealogy : Roland the Father of Tristan in *Castelford's Chronicle* », *Modern Language Notes*, 115, 5, 2000, p. 1085-1111, sur cette généalogie fondée sur la réputation d'excellence militaire des deux personnages, en dépit de toute tradition romanesque.

¹¹ Cf. Eugène Vinaver, *Études sur le Tristan en prose. Les sources, les manuscrits, bibliographie critique*, Paris, Champion, 1925, p. 19 sq. En effet, par opposition à Arthur, qui favorise les plaisirs courtois et le bon compagnonnage tolérant, Marc se révèle être non seulement le violeur et le meurtrier de sa propre nièce, mais aussi, plus généralement, « le seul témoin de l'ancienne barbarie », le dernier agent d'une « morale sexuelle » où la force brute l'emporte sur toute considération sociale et religieuse. Voir Emmanuèle Baumgartner, « Arthur et les chevaliers envoisiez », *Romania*, 105, 418-419, 1984, p. 312-325, ici p. 323.

¹² Damien de Carné, *Les Rois dans le Tristan en prose. (Ré)écritures du personnage arthurien*, Paris, Champion (« Essais sur le Moyen Âge », 51), 2011, p. 343.

Comme pour marquer cette vision antagoniste sans avoir à l'articuler sous la forme d'une déclaration de guerre au royaume (déjà ridiculisé) de la Cornouailles, les chevaliers de la Table Ronde y portent des « robes noires » pour la première fois dans l'Histoire, honorant de façon unique Tristan (et implicitement Yseut !), selon la « nouvelle loi [de la] morale courtoise »¹³ favorable à l'excellence héroïque, à la démesure érotique, et à la magie d'un lien lumineusement et secrètement consensuel, apte à défier la mort.

C'est dans cet univers où le charisme de Tristan bat son plein *post mortem* qu'Ysaÿe est appelé à nouer, au tranchant des armes, une nouvelle solidarité masculine : mû par la relique de Lancelot – introduit comme le vengeur attitré du héros de Cornouailles – l'enfant se sent tenu d'aimer ses amis et détester ses ennemis, en grossissant les lignes de force de son héritage romanesque¹⁴. Élevé par des créatures féeriques en marge de la société courtoise et même humaine¹⁵, il lui revient de fédérer ses futurs compagnons autour d'une représentation du « bras de Dieu »¹⁶ qui se révèle finement « céleste », sans dogmatisme étroit ni abstinence zélée.

Si l'exemplarité d'Ysaÿe peut s'épanouir lorsque la noblesse, la foi et l'amour à la Béroul¹⁷ se voient couronner par un mariage à la Chrétien de Troyes, elle se ressourc à un double ratage en matière de sacrements : l'*essample* de Tristan et l'os de Lancelot. En effet, ni l'un, ni l'autre de ces modèles de réussite individuelle – compatibles en ceci avec l'adoubement du nouveau Triste – n'inclut la possibilité de concilier l'amour et le mariage dans ce monde ; aussi faut-il un certain temps à leur émule pour s'y résoudre, et une série d'épreuves à son fils pour s'y résigner.

Face à ce magma génésique riche en solitudes loyales, l'auteur du néo-Tristan met un bémol à la loi de l'hérédité littéraire en attribuant quelques mutations comportementales au petit-fils de l'amant d'Yseut, ironiquement nommé *Marc* selon son grand-oncle. Le narrème de l'infidélité joue ainsi le

¹³ Emmanuèle Baumgartner, « Arthur et les chevaliers envoisiez », art. cit., p. 324.

¹⁴ Telle est la réaction d'Ysaÿe face à la biographie héroïque dévoilée par Merlin : « qunt ly enffes l'oÿ sy commencha a rire en disant : 'Benoit soient tout my amy et maleoit my anemy car je lez hech.' », *Ysaÿe le Triste*, éd. cit., § 21, p. 39.

¹⁵ Comme Lancelot du Lac, mais sans que son environnement soit entièrement submergé par la féerie ; pour Ysaÿe, l'ermite Sarban compense, en toute humanité, le lait mélusinien de l'altérité ontologique.

¹⁶ Sur la téléologie divine et ses rouages anthropiques dans *Ysaÿe*, voir Damien de Carné, « Ysaÿe le Triste... », art. cit., p. 11 : « que les œuvres d'Ysaÿe, le bras armé de Dieu, et les aventures rituelles de Marc aient pour but final la *translatio* concrète de Tronc à Aubéron, et métaphoriquement celle de la matière arthurienne à la matière de geste, atteste que le nain s'est en quelque sorte substitué à Dieu comme destinataire et comme destinataire de l'action. ».

¹⁷ Sur le rapport entre le *Tristan* de Béroul et *Ysaÿe*, entre l'incandescence amoureuse des débuts et la mélancolie crépusculaire qui vient distendre le fil du récit, voir Alain Corbellari, « Des fenêtres ouvertes sur la mémoire : du *Tristan* de Béroul à *Ysaÿe le Triste* », *Par la fenêtre : Études de littérature et de civilisation médiévales*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses universitaires de Provence, 2003, p. 105-113.

rôle de comparant implicite entre les deux personnages et leurs mondes possibles¹⁸, comme pour dresser un *Roman de Marc II* au sein d'*Ysaÿe*.

La réécriture de *l'amer* revient à dépouiller tout d'abord la matrice légendaire : le *Roman d'Ysaÿe* évince le « double adultère »¹⁹ tristanien retenu par Thomas d'Angleterre, au profit d'une histoire de lèse-majesté visant un « traîtres » (§ 5, p. 28) couronné. Ainsi, le purisme érotique des aïeux tend un lit de Procuste au nouveau Marc, qui se révèle corporellement vaillant – à la hauteur de ses ancêtres – mais quasiment incapable d'élire une dulcinée et d'en faire la femme de sa vie. D'une génération à l'autre, l'amour comporte un dosage spectaculairement différent, tantôt enivrant pour le couple et ses proches (chez le fils unique de Tristan et Yseut), tantôt désabusant jusqu'au morcellement érotique (chez le petit-fils – unique aussi – des amants de Cornouailles), sans perdre son statut de référent idéal. Par la force des choses, du vin et de son destin scribal, Tristan demeure Tristan, aux yeux des siens et de ses lecteurs, en ce qu'il ne peut aimer qu'Yseut²⁰ : il excelle donc à l'aimer, et n'a plus d'alternative conjugale à envisager²¹, alors qu'un Marc peut bien s'éloigner de sa compagne, prêt à s'ébattre ailleurs²²...

Et l'intratextualité engouffre les hypotextes, au gré des hantises et reprises : tandis que Tristan *l'Amerus* savait vaincre la méfiance de Tristan le Nain même en époux d'une autre Yseut, pour imposer, au prix de sa vie, le respect de sa renommée de fin amant, son rejeton est humilié, à l'autre bout du spectre, par tout un peuple de nains justiciers, et se rend à l'évidence qu'il faut former un couple pur et mûr seulement quand les circonstances –

¹⁸ Pour retracer le paradigme des mondes possibles et la modélisation de la polyphonie narrative, voir Umberto Eco, *Lector in fabula. Le rôle du lecteur ou la coopération interprétative dans les textes narratifs*, trad. Myriam Bouzaher, Paris, Grasset, 1985 [1979], p. 200 sq.

¹⁹ Sur la banalisation prosaïque de ce péché imputable au héros de Thomas d'Angleterre, voir Anne Berthelot, « Le Tristan en prose : normalisation d'un mythe », *Tristan-Tristrant. Mélanges en l'honneur de Danielle Buschinger à l'occasion de son 60^e anniversaire*, éd. par André Crépin et Wolfgang Spiewok, Greifswald, Reineke-Verlag, 1996, p. 37-45, notamment p. 38.

²⁰ Toutefois, au XV^e siècle, le manuscrit français 103 de la Bibliothèque Nationale fait de Tristan un mari aussi voluptueux que sexuellement disponible, malgré son attachement indéfectible à Yseut la Blonde ; aussi l'Autre-Yseut lui assène-t-elle la voile noire, s'accordant à l'hypotexte de Thomas.

²¹ C'est probablement grâce à l'influence de Béroul et de la « version commune » que le dénouement reste structuré sous la forme d'un trio plutôt que d'un quatuor.

²² Chez Béroul, le roi Marc crée un précédent littéraire – véritable monde possible, que son héritier l'Exilé pourra actualiser à sa façon – lorsqu'il projette à la cour de Cornouailles l'ethos d'un aventurier capable de prendre ses risques pour répondre, quand la vie lui fait signe, à l'appel d'une pucelle. Voir Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, éd. Daniel Poirion, dans *Tristan et Yseut : les premières versions européennes*, dir. de Christiane Marchello-Nizia, Paris, Gallimard, 1995, p. 3-121, ici v. 1931-1942, p. 54 : « mandé m'a une pucele / Que j'alle tost a lié parler. / Bien me mande n'i moigne per. / G'irai tot seus sor mon destrier. [...] Laissez moi faire auques mes sez. ».

magiquement brassées – l’y poussent malgré lui. La loyauté démonstrative du grand-père devient ainsi une monogamie oppressante chez le petit-fils. Se marier pour éviter la honte d’une réputation de séducteur est le lot de Marc l’Essillié, amant fuyant, fougueux, dangereux.

Conscient des aiguillons du boire d’amour sur les générations futures, le public du *Roman d’Ysaye* est appelé à s’en remettre, pour l’arbitrage moral de la geste tristanienne, à Arthur lui-même, qui s’élève au niveau métadiégétique afin de retracer, pour sa cour somptueusement rassemblée, les lignes de force de la chevalerie. Ainsi, le roi des rois exprime à Cardeuil en Galles, un jour de Toussaint, sa norme en matière de bâtardise usurpatrice²³ en assurant à haute voix et à mots couverts que Tristan n’eut *jamais* d’enfant (cf. § 18, p. 37) et en figurant le *Lector in fabula* de la matière bretonne. Une telle certitude représente un devoir de mémoire et une stratégie de sauvegarde adaptée à la situation d’un orphelin mineur²⁴, plutôt qu’une déclaration de foi ; l’attitude politiquement correcte à adopter envers un chevalier hétérosexuel trépassé dans des circonstances sulfureuses consiste donc à se montrer discret envers son éventuel passé érotique, tout en supposant qu’il n’aura causé nul tort à autrui, faute de descendance. Au fond, Arthur rehausse la réputation du compagnon absent, telle qu’elle est véhiculée par l’opinion commune, en investissant la morale du moindre-mal-tristanien entretenue, du XII^e au XV^e siècle, par sept manuscrits en vers et quatre-vingt manuscrits en prose – pour ne citer que le corpus français favorable à la recette d’une *fol’ amor* vouée à la mort.

Face à ce paradigme de l’adultère monomane que Tristan et Lancelot illustrent, concurremment, dès le XII^e siècle, le péché peut passer pour une peccadille souverainement excusable aux yeux des autorités morales et romanesques – « force d’amors li fist fere, encontre qui sens ne reson ne peut avoir duree »²⁵ – aussi longtemps qu’il se garde de porter atteinte à l’équilibre global de la société. Or, l’automne du Moyen Âge est sujet à la trouble fascination de ces amours royales susceptibles de s’avérer castratrices pour les sujets séduits et abandonnés ; en témoigne l’image fantasmagique de la tour de Nesle, hantée par la légende de la reine-sirène²⁶ érotomane et fatale,

²³ Arthur est lui-même le fils naturel d’un usurpateur, ouvrant, *de facto*, « le paradigme mythique du *primus peccator*, sans doute appelé par l’adultère originel d’Uterpandragon ». Voir Sophie Albert, « Des mythes pour penser le roi. Lectures de la figure d’Uterpandragon, du Lancelot en prose au Roman de Meliadus », *Questes*, 13, 2008, p. 24-37, ici p. 37.

²⁴ Le roi Arthur assume publiquement la défense du petit orphelin contre les atteintes à sa vie (§ 18, p. 37 *sq.*), en répondant à l’idéal seigneurial de protection des mineurs sans tuteurs. Sur ce devoir du « sire de la terre » selon les coutumiers médiévaux, voir Roland Carron, *Enfant et parenté dans la France médiévale: X^e-XIII^e siècles*, Genève, Droz, 1989, p. 53 *sq.*

²⁵ *La Mort le roi Artu : roman du XIII^e siècle*, éd. Jean Frappier, Genève, Droz, 1996, p. 5.

²⁶ Si la reine qui noie ses amants en les jetant dans un sac en Seine est un motif littéraire dont la célébrité est due à François Villon, elle fait écho non seulement au mythe de la sirène et à ses avatars médiévaux, mais aussi à la réalité historique de plusieurs abus royaux commis par

évoquée (non sans nostalgie !) par François Villon dans sa *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*. Comparaison est raison : malgré sa magie d'outre-mer, la reine Yseut n'a ni enfermé, ni remplacé, ni noyé son amant ; mieux, le conteur d'*Ysaÿe* et ses copistes du XV^e siècle éloignent fort opportunément l'aimée de la scène (toute masculine) de la tragédie finale, en exorcisant ainsi la menace d'un flagrant délit provoqué par ses soins.

Dans ce cadre propre à réhabiliter les amants tout en condamnant leur « fait », l'invocation de Dieu par Arthur joue un rôle décisif dans l'inscription mémorielle de « 'Tristrans, que Dieux fache mercy' »²⁷ lors de la fête chrétienne de tous les saints. En scellant un fait tacitement admis – « Tristrans n'ot oncques enfans. » – Arthur suggère, selon la logique lignagère de l'époque, qu'il est permis de le regretter, en tout recueillement, comme un inaccomplissement séminal : « Et certes ce poise moy, car de sy bon arbre ne peut issir mauvaise semenche » (§ 18, p. 37), même en l'absence d'un cadre marital sur mesure.

Nourrie par le courant souterrain de cette tolérance arthurienne pour les œuvres de Nature, la « petite histoire » vient donc révéler que le péché de chair d'une reine avec son neveu peut – et doit – conduire à la naissance d'un beau fils en belle santé, prêt à aimer. C'est justement le cas de l'engence mythique de Jocaste et Œdipe, qui se porte bien au XV^e siècle, grâce aux remaniements romanesques en prose et en vers. Le complexe de Polynice, dont l'origine noble excuse l'engendrement incestueux, semble justement indiquer, *a contrario*, une vulnérabilité d'image que l'instance narrative du *Roman de Thèbes* se voit obligée de traiter de façon explicite et conséquente, à travers l'arbitrage du roi Adraste, autre *auctoritas*²⁸ notoirement royale : « Car assez set on les noveles, / que Edyppus fist de son père / quant il l'ocist

des souveraines au XIV^e siècle : Marguerite de Bourgogne et Blanche de Bourgogne et d'Artois, deux des belles-filles de Philippe le Bel, sont délaissées, accusées d'adultère, tonsurées et enfermées par leurs époux, au printemps de 1314, lors d'un scandale qui fait de nombreuses victimes (les amants, deux frères chevaliers, sont torturés et pendus). Sur le traitement genré de la rumeur politique dans cette circonstance, cf. Tracy Adams, « Between History and Fiction : Revisiting the *Affaire de la Tour de Nesle* », *Viator*, 43, 2, 2012, p. 165-192.

²⁷ Telle est l'attitude officielle d'Arthur lors de cette délocution solennelle, socialement codifiée, où ses actes de parole vont de la prière pour le défunt à sa défense contre les calomnies et au rejet de l'hypothèse génésique qui lui est attribuée, *ibid.*, § 18, p. 37.

²⁸ Le mot relèverait ici d'« une acception chrétienne du vieux concept d'*auctoritas* comme prééminence permettant de guider et de valider, [et désigne] le lien entre *auctoritas* et médiation entre Dieu et les hommes, entre *auctoritas* et prophétie, et aussi l'assimilation qui affleure [...] entre le *rex* et le *sacerdos* », Yves Sassier, « *Auctoritas pontificum et potestas regia* : faut-il tenir pour négligeable l'influence de la doctrine gélasienne aux temps carolingiens ? », *Le Pouvoir au Moyen Âge : Idéologies, pratiques, représentations*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses universitaires de Provence, 2007, consulté en ligne le 12 mai 2018 sur <http://books.openedition.org/pup/5857>.

et prist sa mere. / Bien me resembles chevalier, / ja por ce ne t'avrai meins chier.' / Li rois connut bien lor linage, / set que il sont de haut parage. »²⁹.

Or, le *parage* ne fait pas toujours la bonne réputation. Dans une « société à honneur comme l'est la société médiévale, la 'fama' colle à la peau des individus et, en leur permettant de paraître, elle leur donne leur raison d'être. »³⁰. Orphelin comme Œdipe, marqué, comme lui, par le blason tristement légendaire de son nom, Ysaÿe est appelé à accomplir les possibles narratifs de l'amour – en matière de symbiose socialement pertinente – en épousant sa maîtresse, en réparant la réputation de sa famille errante, et même en guérissant un humain (avatar post-tristanesque du nain Frocin) de sa malédiction magique. Comme pour assainir, une fois pour toutes, le / la « poison »³¹ de ses ancêtres...

Sous cet éclairage dégrisant, le roi Marc lui-même perd ses oreilles de cheval, ses complices lunaires et son goût des bûchers, sans parvenir à ensemercer la matrice narratrice d'Yseut. Si les romans du Graal lui accordent parfois la grâce d'une fécondité extraconjugale – sous les traits incestueux de Méraugis³² – rien de gracieux ne vient nuancer, au seuil d'*Ysaÿe*, son portrait néo-romanesque, malgré la *translatio* générationnelle de son nom protéiforme. Seul et ostracisé, le monarque de Cornouailles reste un spectre du déshonneur allié au désamour.

C'est à cette impotence jamais démentie du couple royal que se mesure la fécondité tristanienne. Elle revêt, dès le premier folio d'*Ysaÿe*, la forme d'un acte de transgression³³, émergeant d'un savoir subversif et donné comme tel : « Et pour che que je voel que riens n'en soit anicillé, le vous pense a dire, comment que li honneurs y fust et y soit petite, a l'une partie et a l'autre, car li rois de Cornuaille que on appelot Marcq estoit oncles Tristan et maris a

²⁹ *Le Roman de Thèbes*, éd. Guy Raynaud de Lage, Paris, Champion, 1966, v. 866-872, texte publié en ligne par l'ENS de Lyon dans la Base de français médiéval, <http://catalog.bfm-corpus.org/thebes1>.

³⁰ Claude Gauvard, « Introduction », *La Rumeur au Moyen Âge... op. cit.*, p. 23-32, ici 26.

³¹ Chez Bérout, « la poison » désigne un « breuvage » sexuellement efficace pour trois ans : « Que ele m'aime en bone foi, / Vos n'entendez pas la raison: / Q'el m'aime, c'est par **la poison**. / Ge ne me pus de lié partir / N'ele de moi, n'en quier mentir. » (Bérout, *Tristan et Yseut*, éd. cit., v. 1382-1386, p. 40), encadré par une forme de magie blanche affine au paradigme pharmaceutique, malgré la (sur)nature vénéneuse de la « givre » Yseut. En revanche, Chrétien de Troyes, à la même époque, réfute le « buvrage [...] / Dont Tristan fu *empoisonnez* » (*D'Amors, qui m'a tolu a moi*, éd. Marie-Claire Zai, dans *Chrétien de Troyes. Romans suivis de Chansons ; avec, en appendice, Philomena*, Paris, Librairie générale française, 2005, p. 1219-1221, ici v. 28-29, p. 1220, notre italique), en faisant glisser la connotation de la boisson vers son sens moderne de *poison*.

³² Voir Michelle Szkilnik, « Méraugis, l'homme sans père », *Lignes et lignages dans la littérature arthurienne*, sous la direction de Christine Ferlampin-Acher et Denis Hüe, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007, p. 293-302.

³³ Pour une étude ciblée sur la transgression charnelle et ses dangers néo-tristaniens, voir Anne-Cécile Le Ribeuz-Koenig, « Humour et transgression des interdits dans *Ysaÿe le Triste* », *Questes : bulletin des jeunes chercheurs médiévistes*, 2004, p. 11-16.

Yseut » (§ 1, p. 27). Ce dernier *Tristan* ambitionne donc de briser un tabou humain et littéraire, afin de « combler le blanc »³⁴. Le « silence » de ce chapitre fantôme³⁵ du *Livre de Tristan* accède à un statut de réalité fantasmatiquement pertinente, à infliger au héros *in absentia* en instaurant un *locus* à délocuter. Par cette attribution irrévérencieusement posthume, *Ysaÿe le Triste* donne corps et ajoute foi à une *captatio malevolentiae* particulièrement puissante : la « villonnie » (§ 1, p. 27) de deux amants, que la courtoisie demanderait à celer³⁶, entend acquérir ses lettres de *crue* noblesse, un peu comme l'écu fendu de Lancelot, rapiécé jusqu'à la rotondité.

L'appétit de découvrir combien « petit » est l'honneur des deux parties puise à une ellipse à fonction structurante pour le monde du narrateur : le philtre. À l'encontre de Thomas, qui se flattait de consoler de son boire les amants de tout horizon³⁷, l'auteur invite son public de losengiers³⁸ à lire la légende de Tristan et d'Yseut comme un récit de fornication sans magie. Il ne réinvestit même pas la biographie héroïque de Tristan, qui est une présence livresque suffisamment prégnante pour se passer d'explicitation à ce niveau³⁹. En revanche, il présente Yseut comme « une riche dame » (§ 1, p. 27) mariée, dont l'honneur risque d'être affecté par le médium de la littérature tristanienne. Deux mondes prennent corps, à fleur de lettres : celui de la réalité d'un amour extraconjugal, fertile, incestueux, et celui d'une littérature qui y réfère de façon partielle.

Les conteurs de la matière tristanienne jouent tous, de Béroul et Thomas à Luce del Gast et Hélie de Boron, sur l'idée qu'il y a une distance historique, d'épaisseur textuelle ou orale, à combler entre faits et reflets ; Béroul fait appel à sa mémoire pour défendre la fidélité de sa version face à l'infidélité des autres contes, Thomas précise qu'il a embelli l'histoire pour tendre un miroir identifiant aux amants, tout en défendant la vraisemblance

³⁴ Patricia Victorin, « Entre balbutiement et radotage. Enfance, répétition et parodie dans le roman arthurien du Moyen Âge tardif », *Études françaises*, 42, 1, 2006, p. 63–89, ici p. 66.

³⁵ Umberto Eco baptise « chapitres fantômes » les mondes possibles censés « remplir le vide que le texte ne s'est pas soucié de remplir » ; en vertu du fait que « les narrations requièrent l'intrusion de leur Lecteur Modèle [...] elles ne peuvent vivre sans se nourrir de son fantôme », cf. *ID., Lector in fabula...*, *op. cit.*, p. 269 et p. 284.

³⁶ Sur cette convention élémentaire de l'amour courtois et sur ses traitements inter-génériques, voir Anne Elizabeth Cobby, *Ambivalent Conventions: Formula and Parody in Old French*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1995, p. 38 sq.

³⁷ « Avoir em poissent grant confort / Encuntre change, encuntre tort, / Encuntre paine, encuntre dolur, / Encuntre tuiz engins d'amur. », Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, éd. Christiane Marchello-Nizia, dans *Tristan et Yseut : les premières versions européennes*, éd. cit., p. 129-211, ici v. 3295-3298, p. 212.

³⁸ Il s'agit du Lecteur Modèle, défini comme est un « ensemble de conditions de succès ou de bonheur (*felicity conditions*), établies textuellement, qui doivent être satisfaites pour qu'un texte soit pleinement actualisé dans son contenu potentiel. », *ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁹ C'est aux personnages de situer Tristan dans la hiérarchie des preux du roman.

caractérielle de Tristan contre les altérations infligées par les autres versions circulant de bouche à oreille, tandis que les prosateurs du XIII^e siècle déclarent leur désir de narrer, aussi complètement que possible, de Tristan et du Saint Graal, sans mentir. Au XV^e siècle, avec *Ysaye le Triste*, c'est un alter-monde de référence qui se construit, grâce au narrateur anonyme qui érige son témoignage en *nouvelle*, comme s'il était le contemporain du héros ou au moins de ses rejetons – tout en faisant fructifier, au passage, l'éclairage bienveillant du roi Arthur... Sa nouvelle proposition d'*explicit* se révèle décisive pour le qu'en-dira-t-on tristanien, son ambitus et ses tessitures. Bien que cette glose anonyme du *Livre de Tristan* revête des tons acides, blâmant le parti-pris du prédécesseur-faussaire, elle ménage l'hypothèse de son ignorance du réel : « ou espoir, chieux qui fist le livre ne le savoit mie » (§ 1, p. 27).

Pour la première fois en *Tristania*, l'auteur prétend *savoir*, lui, ce qui est advenu de Tristan et de sa dame puissante. À la bonne heure, puisque, « à la fin du Moyen Âge, il était devenu primordial d'apparaître comme quelqu'un qui sait ou qui croit savoir, parfois aux dépens de la vérité, lorsque l'urgence des crises se faisait sentir »⁴⁰. Face à l'urgence d'une médisance discourtoise, le *losengier* choisit de conserver l'anonymat pour protéger sa propre *fama* en la dissociant de l'infamie contée, mais aussi pour conférer à la rumeur scribale l'allure objectivante d'une *Vida* ; l'écriture devient ainsi « un moyen privilégié de [...] transmission à l'intérieur de certains groupes et dans certaines circonstances »⁴¹. C'est ainsi que se construisent les biographies littéraires, au fil des siècles et des conflits entre confrères, mondes et interprétations⁴².

Dans ce cas de démythification contrôlée, le savoir à prétention historique accède au statut de révision biographique et bibliographique : elle fait du récit tristanien un raconter, voluptueux à conter et lourd à effacer. La sphère publique arthurienne, dont le conteur se réclame implicitement, favorise le désinvestissement moral de la réputation posthume de deux monstres sacrés dont la rumeur de fécondité, versée dans le milieu de l'écrit, nourrit l'historiographie et conforte la morale des « élites en-groupe » en attestant leur rôle de « gardiens de la mémoire »⁴³.

Une fois franchi le seuil du pourquoi, la perspective est dominée par le *pour qui* : le bon entendeur se doit d'être politiquement sceptique envers la

⁴⁰ Sur le « potentiel social » de la rumeur, voir le questionnement pertinent de Myriam Soria, « Présentation », *La Rumeur au Moyen Âge.... op. cit.*, p. 13-22, ici p. 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴² Comme le rappelle Paul Ricœur, « l'art d'interpréter doit lui-même être considéré comme une partie de l'art de manier les résistances. », *Le Conflit des interprétations: essais d'herméneutique*, Paris, Seuil, 1969, p. 179.

⁴³ Stéphane Boissellier, « La Circulation réticulaire de l'information en milieu rural : historiographie et pistes de réflexion », *La Rumeur au Moyen Âge.... op. cit.*, p. 249-278, ici p. 265.

« riche dame » à l'honneur chatouilleux, Yseut de Cornouailles, et électivement misogyne envers sa mère magicienne. Sans engager une chasse aux sorcières, à cette époque propice entre toutes⁴⁴, il exige la crédibilité d'un « rapport implicite »⁴⁵ sur l'intrigue féminine qui acquiert le statut d'une réalité auto-assertive. Au-delà de l'ermite curateur et du « livret » conservé, il y a une mère absente, et coupable, qui n'a pas confessé son crime de corruption des mœurs, ingérence scribale et mise en scène magique.

Dès que ce cadre extradiégétique est planté – en dépit du déni de fécondité émis par Arthur au sein de la diégèse – c'est à Yseut que le conteur attribue l'initiative de fixer plusieurs rendez-vous à Tristan, aussitôt que Marc lui tourne le dos pour « jouer a ung sien castel loings de Tintageul XI lieux » (§ 2, p. 27). Ce n'est pas clair de quelle façon le roi entend « jouer » loin de sa forteresse et des domaines forestiers légitimement associés à la chasse, mais il est probable que le couple royal n'est pas assez uni pour goûter un jeu, une jouissance ou un divertissement⁴⁶ ensemble. Tout se passe comme si Marc avait un château à soi, et un autre à partager avec Yseut.

Le narrateur n'insiste pas sur ce dédoublement de la figure royale, car le désintérêt de Marc envers Yseut ne lui semble guère digne d'attention ; l'important, pour lui et son public friand de médisance tristanienne, consiste à attester, vertement, que cette nuit-là *Tristan* a bien couché avec la Reine (§ 2, p. 27). Et à préciser que Dinas, le sénéchal débonnaire déjà distingué par le récit de Béroul, est devenu le messager des amants.

Autre détail digne d'un fabliau, Yseut s'intéresse d'assez près à son mari pour connaître son emploi du temps et en tenir le plus grand compte : aussi se sépare-t-elle de son « ami » le lendemain matin, sans risquer le flagrant délit si redoutable dans les versions en vers. La passion devient ici calculatrice, habile, éveillée, à force de s'user. Lorsque la dernière aube des amants pointe à l'horizon du texte, Tristan part tout monté et armé, sans autre tendresse ou tristesse, aussitôt qu'il a pris congé (§ 2, p. 27). C'est le commencement de la fin, et le conteur ne dit même pas que les amants s'aiment – juste qu'ils aiment « gesir » quand Marc « joue » ailleurs.

Qui plus est, Yseut veut retenir, et écrire, les histoires de tous les « gesir » de sa vie. Elle est devenue une sorte de comptable de l'éros, puisqu'elle « toudis metoit les heures en escript que Tristran gisoit avoec elle, et ausy faisoit du roy Marcq » (§ 2, p. 27). Le narrateur ne fait plus d'elle, comme

⁴⁴ Voir Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident (XIV^e-XVIII^e siècles). Une cité assiégée*, Paris, Fayard, 1978, p. 348 : « À la fin du XIV^e siècle, puis au long du XV^e, s'accroissent les procès de sorcellerie et les traités qui la condamnent, avec une interaction des uns sur les autres. ».

⁴⁵ Pour reprendre le terme proposé par Jeff Rider dans son article « *Ut aiunt* : la rumeur comme source dans l'historiographie de Galbert de Bruges et de Gautier de Théroutanne », *La Rumeur au Moyen Âge.... op. cit.*, p. 35-43, ici p. 42.

⁴⁶ Consulté sur le site <http://micmap.org/diefro/chercher/dictionnaire-godefroy/joer>, le 23 mai 2018.

dans la tradition tristanienne, une créatrice et harpeuse de lais. Cette Yseut est pragmatique et se borne à tenir le « livret » de ses « heures » profanes : le premier journal intime féminin de *Tristania*, où aucune ruse ne vient masquer ou disculper le *faire* de l'amour. Le factuel l'emporte sur le sentimental, tandis que le mimétisme se refuse à l'identification empathique.

Ce qui intrigue le plus, c'est que l'amante-diariste est consciente des conséquences de *ses vies* sexuelles, mais ne fait rien pour les empêcher (bien que certains moyens contraceptifs soient connus à l'époque, notamment à base d'herbes⁴⁷). Son but, prospectivement articulé, est de pouvoir dire avec certitude, le cas échéant, à qui reviendra l'honneur / le déshonneur d'être le père de son enfant. Yseut est, essentiellement, une mère en puissance.

Tristan, en revanche, fait quelquefois figure d'amant sur demande, et le plus clair de son temps, d'amoureux *de loin*. Vu son appareil de chevalier errant, il vaque non pas à s'ébattre, comme Marc, mais plutôt à se battre. Quand Yseut tombe enceinte, l'heureux papa n'est censé être ni informé, ni curieux, ni attentionné : l'épisode est présenté comme une histoire pour femmes et ermites. À ce stade, le *pater* n'est nullement pertinent.

Et la « petite ystore » continue : Yseut a mal à ses reins, un mal nouveau. En principe, vu ses antécédents romanesques, elle devrait détenir toutes les compétences pour poser un diagnostic aussi élémentaire. Or, le narrateur la montre « esmarie, comme celle qui point aprins ne l'avoit, et s'apense dont che peut venir » (§ 2, p. 27). Quelque chose de candide, d'attendrissant, de presque innocent se lit dans ses gestes.

En revanche, rien d'innocent ne hante ses écrits, qui attestent simplement de l'écoulement de quatre mois et demi depuis que Tristan est venu la voir (§ 2, p. 27), sans autre forme de procès, et surtout sans cryptage – sans la courtoisie minimale du « celer ». Le public est invité à imaginer un calendrier sexuel inclus dans un livre, enfermé dans un écrin. Il est difficile de dire avec précision comment l'idée de « venir voir [une reine] » se matérialisait sur ces folios, mais, quel que soit le système de traitement des données, l'arithmétique des « heures » s'avère rigoureuse et parlante.

Il ne s'agit pas, néanmoins, d'une fiche proprement physiologique : ce sont les choses du sexe et non les troubles de la menstruation qui construisent, petit à petit, la maternité d'Yseut, comme fait immoral et scribal. Toutefois, le conteur ne cite pas du « livret » ; il suit, implicitement, le fil narratif de cette phénoménologie de la connaissance aussi *triste* que minimaliste, en faisant crédit à la narratrice.

Avec son aide-mémoire, son sens de la réalité et de sa réalisation spéculaire, Yseut ne saurait se tromper sur la paternité de Tristan. Elle a besoin, néanmoins, d'un peu de temps pour digérer sa découverte : c'est

⁴⁷ En effet, « Les Pénitentiels [...] regorgent de questions concernant l'usage de pratiques magico-pharmaceutiques pour éviter de concevoir ou pour avorter. », Bernard Ribémont, *Sexe et amour au Moyen Age*, Paris, Klincksieck, 2007, p. 186.

seulement le lendemain qu'elle décide d'agir, en faisant appel à sa « cambriere », Bongien. En attendant, il n'est pas dit si la douleur persiste, si Yseut s'attriste, si elle se tourne, de nouveau, vers son *livre*. Une chose est sûre : la première nuit, maman Yseut est, indiciblement, pensive. Quand elle éprouve ses premières douleurs, elle baigne dans cette atmosphère qui fait le continuum de sa vie : elle est tout naturellement en train de penser à Tristan, dans l'intimité rêveuse de sa chambre. Au fond, son inspiration ne change pas, l'accent se déplaçant seulement de l'individu absent au tandem qu'elle constitue désormais avec lui en présence / substitution, de la clandestinité passée à la fugue future – qui devra impliquer le père au moins par procuration (fœtale)... Yseut peut bien reprendre le fil de sa pensée, en y tressant, sans rupture, le topique d'un amour fécond; l'idée de mettre son amant à l'épreuve ne lui traverse pas l'esprit.

Au crépuscule premier de sa vie d'amante, mère Yseut déclare à Bongien sans ambages: « je suis grosse de Tristran de Loenois » (§ 3, p. 28). Dans ce contexte traditionnellement favorable à l'épanouissement de la sensibilité féminine, la parenté est une « condicion » médicale, et non une matière à effusions sentimentales. D'ailleurs, la reine aiguise son pragmatisme, le rendant sélectivement redoutable, selon un script romanesque agissant depuis trois siècles. Comme elle a besoin d'une alliée, elle vise sa chambrière et lui lance, entre autres amabilités : « [...] soys certaine, s'il en est nouvelle, tu vaus morte » (§ 3, p. 28). Et l'alliance lui réussit. Au lieu de s'émouvoir, de pleurer ou de la féliciter, Bongien répond que ce ne sera pas le cas, « se Dieux plaist » (§ 3, p. 28). C'est la première fois que Dieu est invoqué au sujet de la nouvelle vie ; or, rien de providentiel n'est salué par cette formule qui ne sert qu'à désamorcer une menace de mort – royalement maternelle...

Peu à peu, le danger est dompté. Dans quelques mois, Yseut apprend à gérer son état délicat par d'autres actes de parole, délicatement couchés, faute de mieux : « volontiers se tenoit en lieux robés ou couquie, et nient ne gisoit avoec le roy Marcq et ly faisoit acroire que souffrir ne pooit compaignie d'omme » (§ 3, p. 28). Comme le code prénatal de l'époque prescrit, du moins pour les couples stables (notamment conjugaux !), une suspension des rapports sexuels⁴⁸, Yseut ne « voit » plus Tristan. Le narrateur n'évoque, d'ailleurs, aucune opportunité de rendez-vous, fût-il parental ou érotique ; Marc semble avoir délaissé les jeux châtelains *in absentia*.

De son côté, Yseut devient prévoyante jusqu'à la responsabilité, et sa faculté calculatrice s'emploie à réguler les émotions qui risquent de la faire

⁴⁸ Sur les prescriptions des pénitentiels médiévaux au sujet du sexe conjugal durant la grossesse, cf. Jean-Louis Flandrin, « L'Attitude à l'égard du petit enfant et les conduites sexuelles dans la civilisation occidentale : structures anciennes et évolution », *Annales de démographie historique*, 1973, p. 143-210, ici p. 188 sq.

sombrer dans le désespoir ou le crime de lèse-Majesté. Capable d'anticiper l'impact politique d'une révélation de sa maternité, elle songe au potentiel toujours plus fructueux de sa (triste) matrice et décide à éviter à tout prix que l'enfant légitime qu'elle aurait avec Marc soit déshérité, redoutant des dangers innombrables pour l'âme du bâtard. (§ 4, p. 28). Loin de pressentir la proximité de sa mort ou d'accepter la stérilité de son époux, elle projette donc un monde possible – simple chapitre fantôme – où elle est deux fois mère, avec chacun des hommes de sa vie, se révélant politiquement partielle : prompte à protéger son enfant « naturel », sans suspendre, pour autant, les privilèges du prince héritier.

L'histoire continue, tumultueusement imprévisible, sans valider cette intuition (féminine) qui témoigne par ailleurs d'un sens aigu du plausible affectif, d'une lucidité socialement juste, et d'une réelle connaissance de soi. Ayant engendré, sans véritable préméditation ni fausse (!) modération, un fils avec Tristan, elle le voit comme un substitut, politiquement incorrect, du fils qu'elle engendrerait (*bien ?*) avec Marc. L'âme de ce personnage fœtal – qui pourrait à la rigueur être une fille plutôt qu'un garçon – est donc une âme politique : c'est le trône qui s'associe le plus étroitement à l'utérus, en passant par le miracle de la vie.

Consciente de sa position stratégique en tant que souche irlandocornouaillaise d'un fleuron de la paix, elle se montre capable d'un tropisme affectif pour le moins surprenant : si elle envisage de cacher son enfant avec Tristan – plutôt que de l'élever, par exemple – elle se dit, dans sa propre langue ambitieusement sexuelle (de femme virtuellement multipare), qu'il n'est pas trop tard pour réussir, la prochaine fois, avec le bon géniteur. En attendant, elle se rend dans la forêt du Morois afin de chercher non pas une sage femme, mais « le prud'homme » qui y demeure (§ 4, p. 28). C'est à lui qu'elle entend confier son premier-né, et une telle démarche se doit d'être planifiée deux mois à l'avance. Yseut a toujours son calendrier en tête. Il y a des moments où son journal semble évoquer un *agenda*.

La reine va donc sciemment dans la forêt de ses amours, prête à faire fructifier son ventre et son « livret », dans la compagnie (probablement résignée plutôt qu'affectueuse) de Bongien. Pour une fois, Marc participe fort opportunément à un tournoi, ce qui donne aux femmes la chance de « jouer » (§ 4, p. 28), à leur tour, dans la forêt.

Seulement, un chevalier arrive, en éclair d'intertextualité : Lucan le Bouteiller, porteur d'une mauvaise nouvelle⁴⁹. L'écouter sans l'entendre,

⁴⁹ Sur le rapport paradigmatique qui s'instaure entre Yseut et Lucan dans le *Tristan en prose*, voir Matilda Bruckner, « L'Imagination de la mort chez les amants tristaniens : prose et vers, chant et narration », *Des Tristan en vers au Tristan en prose. Hommage à Emmanuèle Baumgartner*, éd. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2013, p. 309-324, ici p. 324 : « Arthur a tué Lucan par accident, mais Tristan semble tuer Iseut par dessein. Cette double mort est-elle tant soit peu grotesque ? ».

Yseut retient seulement que Tristan a été blessé à mort par Marc ; les motivations ou les circonstances lui importent peu. Serait-ce un évènement public survenu lors du tournoi de l' « Étrange Passage » ? Serait-ce plutôt un incident privé et prémédité, puisque la blessure fut faite « en trahison » ? Lucan pouvait-il en dire davantage ?

Inapte à songer aux circonstances, Yseut est simplement frappée par la nouvelle – et elle tombe. C'est la première fois qu'elle présentifie le script émotionnel de son personnage, tel qu'il était représenté dans la tradition tristanienne, du dénouement de Thomas à celui du roman en prose : la première fois qu'elle se montre grièvement amoureuse, par-dessus tout.

Mais la chute, chez une femme enceinte de sept mois, ne peut qu'aggraver son état. Averti par ce signe funeste, le lecteur peut donc s'apprêter au pire. Psychologiquement d'abord, maman Yseut est en crise. Elle ne trouve guère la force de continuer, hantée par la mort (non-avérée) de Tristan. Alors elle prie, non sans contradiction, prête à se tourner vers le suprême guérisseur des corps (mourants) aussi bien que vers le réhabilitateur des âmes (perdues) : « Dieux, tenés moi en mon droit sens et mémoire : se je le perch, je vauch morte, car je pense que, après sa mort, ne viveray guayres » (§ 5, p. 28). De nouveau, Yseut est Yseut : comme chez Thomas, elle se croit capable de mourir d'amour, si Tristan n'est plus. *Ysaÿe le Triste* est, à ses débuts, un *Roman d'Yseut*, où la fusion est amoureusement pertinente – « car se volenté est la mienne et le mienne est le soye. » (§ 5, p. 28) – avant de devenir fertile sur le plan biologique, au seuil de la mort d'amour.

Dans ces sombres circonstances – qui font fuir les francs chevaliers jusqu'au-boutistes comme Lucan – Bongien s'éclipse du plan narratif, tandis que le conte se tourne entièrement vers le drame de l'amoureuse enceinte qui se débat, au cœur de la forêt, entre la vie et la mort.

Et le raconter tourne au drame : c'est « a heure de nonne » (§ 5, p. 28) qu'elle met Ysaÿe au monde, dans une tristesse qui n'est pas sans rappeler, via l'ombilic textuel, l'accouchement sacrificiel de Tristan. Certaines choses ne changent pas : tout comme Blanchefleur, Yseut est plus amante que mère, et ne trouve guère que la nouvelle vie suffise pour raviver la sienne.

Toutefois, le narrateur l'appelle spécifiquement « la mere » et lui attribue des sentiments et même des gestes maternels : « Quant la mere vit l'enfant que si beaux estoit, si le baise et acolle. » (§ 5, p. 29). Yseut découvre une corde émotionnelle nouvelle, qui n'est pas uniquement de facture esthétique, mais de nature à transcender et accomplir l'érotisme qu'elle avait l'habitude d'investir ; au fond, comme le remarque Patricia Victorin, elle « a tout fait pour assurer à l'enfant un destin digne de son lignage littéraire, en mêlant le récit de sa conception au récit de ses amours avec Tristan, en authentifiant sa venue, en accouchant en la forêt du Morois, lieu riche encore de souvenirs,

près d'une fontaine, [site] emblématique du Tristan en prose »⁵⁰. Aux yeux (scrutateurs) du conteur, mais aussi aux yeux émerveillés de cette mère, la beauté de l'enfant porte un sceau gauchement divin, « par la volenté de Dieu apporta une espee vermeille en se senestre main. Mais n'entendés mie qu'elle fust ne de fier ne d'achier, mais singulierement de char et de sancq. » (§ 5, p. 28-29). À partir de ce signe relevant du noyau chevaleresque du géniteur et du noyau providentiel du Créateur, l'absolution narrative d'Yseut est imminente.

Malgré son aspect crûment explicite, le journal sexuel de la mère en agonie, remis à son aumônier de fortune, devient un pénitentiel accrédité, où figurent tous les agissements « advenus » entre Yseut et Tristan, même ceux que l'auteure n'a pas su « detenir par cœur » (§ 5, p. 29). En fin de compte, la repentance de la mère se ressourc à l'écriture de l'amante, et tout se tient, religieusement. Yseut a la chance d'être lue et absoute : « Et li ermites en ot pité, car bien vy, parmi ce que li brief tesmoignoît, qu'elle estoit assés des fais ygnorente, car les amours de Tristran avoient commenchié par le vertu d'un beuvraige que li femme le roy Angins d'Irlande, mere Yzeut, bailla a Gomorail et a Bongien. Si ly fist le signe de le crois, en non d'assolucion » (§ 6, p. 29). L'ignorance / innocence du début vient ainsi racheter le calcul génétique et politique des années de coupables délices, et Yseut devient une mère pure, *rédimable*, et ultimement chrétienne.

Le livre d'Yseut, une fois versé dans le *Roman d'Ysaïe le Triste*, dénoue le fil narratif d'une expiation qui échappe à la culture de la culpabilité⁵¹. Comme pour ne pas gâcher ce dénouement, le narrateur se contente de montrer, au fil du dialogue confesseur-confessée, que le garçon distingué (sinon stigmatisé !) par Dieu reçoit un nom qui rappelle non pas l'épée de justice – l'ermite avait proposé *Justicia* – mais le nom de ses parents, Yseut et Tristan (selon le dernier vœu de la mère), dans cet ordre de prégnance et de signifiante : *Ysaïe le Triste*.

Un signe verbal s'oppose donc au signe charnel légué par Dieu, comme si la connotation amoureuse devait l'emporter, par esprit de prophétie littéraire, sur le dénoté du signifiant divin. L'enfant est un inter-nom avant de devenir un inter-dit...

Tandis que les parents-par-le-philtre puisent leur mort dans les sources de la matière tristanienne traditionnelle (notamment dans la Vulgate tristanienne et le manuscrit 103 de la Bibliothèque Nationale) qu'ils viennent incarner pour une dernière fois, *Ysaïe le Triste* pousse subrepticement du livre

⁵⁰ Patricia Victorin, « La Reine Yseut et la fée Morgue ou l'impossible maternité dans *Ysaïe le Triste* », art. cit., p. 261-276, ici p. 266.

⁵¹ C'est le propre d'une telle culture d'offrir justement une échappatoire à la conscience du péché grâce au rituel cathartique de la confession ; cf. Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, New York, Mariner Books, 2005 [1946], p. 222-223 « en plourant et larminoiant parfondement » (§ 6, p. 29).

d'Yseut, comme pour montrer qu'un personnage, une fois doué d'une parole sexuée, peut enfanter un autre personnage en toute autonomie, quel que soit le déshonneur encouru par le conteur ou par les habitants du monde de référence évoqués.

La « villonnie » sur laquelle insistait, au début, le projet narratif d'*Ysaÿe* – allant de l'inceste adultérin à la bâtardise et au suicide – tourne paradoxalement à l'avantage d'Yseut, qui devient non seulement la mère d'Ysaÿe le Triste, mais aussi la grand-mère de Marc – en assurant donc durablement la survie de cette « semenche » de Tristan-arbre, grâce à son inscription généalogique à sens unique, à faire ramifier par le futur Don Juan de la famille. Le pullulement de l'amour relève d'un véritable cercle amoral sinon vicieux : du bâtard Ysaÿe à la bâtardise généralisée sous la coupe de Marc, la passion redevient naturelle, le philtre se résorbe et la *mort d'amor*, prosaïsée⁵², s'évapore.

À une époque où la veine tristanienne commence à tarir, dans le tourbillon des Quêtes et pérégrinations, Yseut incarne la vertu – littéraire – d'une fertilité téléologique qui porte le sceau divin. *Justicia* : le nom refusé appelle une réalité à jamais transcendante, susceptible de relativiser l'idée même de jugement moral. La médisance initiale se fond dans ce « livret » refondu à son tour dans le « *Livre de la vie* dans lequel sont notés les mérites et les péchés de chacun, [qui] commence à être conçu à la manière d'un *passoport* individuel ou d'un *compte* bancaire à présenter aux portes de l'éternité. »⁵³.

S'il n'est plus un *Tristan*, le *Roman d'Ysaÿe le Triste* peut se lire comme l'utérus littéraire d'une femme à l'âme de comptable : il est l'ébauche d'une *Yseut en prose*⁵⁴ invitant au dépassement de la culpabilité et à la libre culture de soi, selon la logique créationnelle de la multiplication des *talents*. *L'amer* émerge de la mer des sources pour aboutir à une pêche miraculeuse : avec ses lacs, ses remous et ses entrelacs, il est l'œuvre, en travail, d'une mère.

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⁵² Pour reprendre un lexème pertinemment investi dans Patricia Victorin, « La fin des illusions dans *Ysaÿe le Triste* ... », art. cit., <http://books.openedition.org/pup/3408>.

⁵³ Aaron Gourevitch, « Au Moyen Âge : conscience individuelle et image de l'au-delà », *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*, 37^e année, 2, 1982, p. 255-275, ici p. 257.

⁵⁴ Pour Marilyn Lawrence, ce serait un peu le pendant du *Lai du Chèvrefeuille*, attribué par Marie de France à Tristan : « *Yseut, a character represented in Tristan lore as a consummate composer and performer of lyric and narrative, is represented in Ysaÿe le Triste as a writer – indeed as the original author of Tristan and Yseut.* » (« *Yseut's Legacy* », art. cit., p. 320).

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Representations of the Pope in Western Art

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Abstract: Our objective of the study "Representation of the Pope in Western Art" is to present a few specific features of the typology of the portrait for the sovereign pontiff. The article is structured in two parts, the introductory one which treats problems related to the iconography of the papal portrait, a short presentation of the clothes and papal signs, while the second one contains a description of a few representative papers for the history of art, starting with the papal portrait from the Middle Ages, reaching the contemporary period.

The history of the papal portrait has been a long one, reaching its peak during the Renaissance and Baroque, when various artists have approached this theme, creating works which have become historical documents of that time. The works in which the figures of the sovereigns pontiff were represented have continued up to contemporary times, under different forms and mediums of artistic representation, some of them being more controversial, others, in return, less usual such as the works of Maurizio Cattelan – *La Nona Ora* and Mark Wallinger – *I am Innocent*.

Being very appreciated by contemporary people, the papal portrait has enjoyed a real success, between 2004-2005 there was an exhibition suggestively called *Papi in Posa* (Papal Portraiture). The exhibition reunited a real gallery of portraits of sovereigns pontiff¹, a sort of journey through history and art, materialized in a volume dedicated to this event.

Keywords: Papal Potrait, Papal Symbols, Iconography, Reinterpretation.

Introduction

Being considered one of the most influential personalities of the entire humaniy, the Pope, the leader of the Roman-Catholic church has had and continues to have an extremely important role from a spiritual, religious and political point of view².

Iconographically speaking, the papal portrait can be placed in the typology *portrait of rulers*³, the sovereign pontiff being represented together with the symbols specific to power. Underlining the high status of the represented model, papal portraits respect, in most cases, a specific type of

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¹Gianni Borgna, *Papi in Posa: 500 Years of Papal Portraiture*, Gangemi Editore, Washington DC, 2005-2006, p. 17.

²Lynne Elliott, *Clothing in the Middle Ages*, Crabtree Publishing Company, 2004, p. 23.

³Shearer West, *Portraiture*, Oxford History of Art, 2004, p. 71.

framing, the image being a static one, in which the character is seated on a throne. Moreover, we can notice a preference of artists to catch the portrait from semiprofile, from a perspective which is slightly ascendent, as if viewer would have kneeled in front of the papal chair. In the same time, we can notice a diversity of the modes in which the papal portrait is represented, having the sight directed towards the viewer, as if he would initiate a non-verbal dialogue with one, respectively having the look turned, as if he were caught in action, being preoccupied by the important problems he is in charge of.

The expressiveness of representing the portrait, often surprised at an older age, shows the wisdom and life experience of the sovereign pontiff. In most cases, these images transmit, in different ways, the idea of papal authority, the artist psychologically approaches the portrait, evoking the meditative dimension of the character (Fig.1), treating the topic in a naturalistic way (Fig. 2), describing the physiognomy in a harsh manner (Fig.3) or having a more formal representation of the figure (Fig.4).⁴



Fig.1. Rafael Sanzio, *Portrait of Pope Julius II*



Fig.2. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Portrait of Pope Paul V*

⁴Gianni Borgna, *Papi in Posa: 500 Years of Papal Portraiture*, Gangemi Editore, Washington DC, 2005-2006, p. 17.



Fig.3. Diego Velasquez, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*

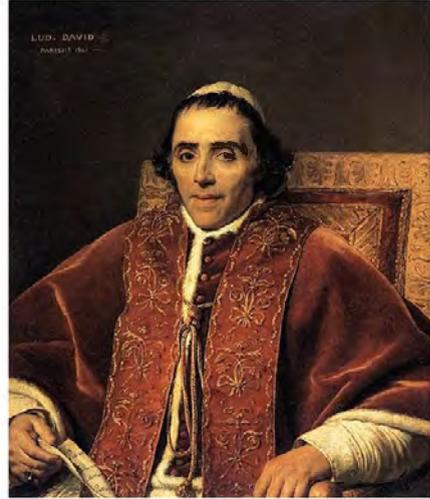


Fig.4. Louis David, *Portrait of Pope Pius VII*

One of the most frequent practices used by artists in the representation of papal portraits was the idealization which inspired feelings of respect and obedience, without precisely underlining the temperament or real personality of the model.

Another iconographic characteristic of representing the papal portrait, this time having a compositional nature, but also a symbolic one, is connected to the position of the hands in the artistic space of the work. The hands are painted with special attention, they render a position which is carefully studied, capable of underlining the authority or the preoccupation for doing important actions.

Furthermore, artists seemed to pay special attention to the way in which they represented the signs of papal authority, such as the ring (*Annulus piscatoris*), the official documents and the holy books that are part of the representation of the sovereigns pontiffs. Depending on the object hold in the hand, we can notice a double typology connected to the authority of the pope, on the one hand the political side (by representing the ring, official documents, seals etc), respectively the religious side (deduced from the presence of the holy books, browsed by the popes).

In papal portraits, special attention is paid to clothes and papal symbols, they are minutely represented by the artist. Papal clothes are of two colours, red (the cape, the mozzetta, the shoes) and white (the papal clothes, the zucchetto)⁵. The red cape is not an imperial symbol, but a scarlet cloak which reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ. Together with these clothes, of

⁵<http://lumea.catholica.ro/2014/02/originea-si-simbolismul-vesmintelor-pontificale/>

great importance in the iconography of the papal portrait are the symbols of the sovereign pontiff, such as the papal tiara, the mitre, the pectoral cross and the ring.

The papal tiara has had a long history and has become one of the most known crowns of sovereign up to the present. In the first centuries of Christianity, from the 2nd century up to the 8th, the first popes did not wear a tiara, but a linen cloth cap or *Camelaucum*. The papal crown was used for the first time in the 8th century as a unique tiara; later on, the Vatican added the second crown. This double tiara was worn by Pope Boniface VIII and by Pope Benedict XI. Starting with the 14th century, the Vatican added the third crown to the papal tiara, known as the Triple Crown Papal Tiara or *Triregnum*. It has been worn up to the year 1963, from Pope Clement V up to Pope Paul VI. The papal tiara has become in time a symbol of the authority and power of the pope, the sovereign pontiff being considered the vicar of Christ on Earth and the supreme pontiff of the Roman-Catholic Church⁶.

The Triple Crown Papal Tiara has a special symbolism, representing the triple authority of the sovereign pontiff, of Universal Pastor (the superior crown), of Universal Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (the middle crown) and of Temporal Power (the lower crown)⁷. During the papal crowning, the following words in Latin are used: "*Accipe thiaram tribus coronis ornatam, et scias te esse patrem principum et regum, rectorem orbis, in terra vicarium Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, cui honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum*"⁸ ("Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns and know that thou art Father of Princes and Kings, Ruler of the World, Vicar of Our Savior Jesus Christ on earth, to him be the honor and glory forever and ever"⁹).

Just like the papal crown, the papal ring or the Ring of the Fisherman (*Annulus Piscatoris*) is one of the main symbols worn by the sovereign pontiff. In the past, the ring was used as a seal for the security of the papal correspondence, this usage disappeared approximately two centuries ago¹⁰. Despite all these, the Ring of the Fisherman remains an important papal symbol which was usually destroyed after the death of the follower of Saint

⁶ Sergio Becerra, *The True Treasure of The Vatican: The Papal Tiara: The Authority and Power of The Pope*, Lulu.com, 2013, pp. 3-4.

⁷ Roberth „Messiah” Edberg, *The Inevitable Dossier: Top Sacred*, p. 173(210). <https://books.google.ro/books?id=shuoAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT172&dq=triregnum+crown&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH3LHC46zbAhXkd5oKHQqCBMQ6AEIYzAH#v=onepage&q=triregnum%20crown&f=false>

⁸ Jean Joseph Gaume, *Die Katholische Religionslehre nach ihrem ganzen Umfange Oder*, Regensburg, 1851, p. 210.

⁹ Roberth „Messiah” Edberg, *op. cit.*, p. 173(210).

¹⁰ Leo Lyon Zagami, *Pope Francis: The Last Pope? Money, Masons and Occultims in the Decline of Catholic Church*, Consortium of Collective Consciousness Publishing, 2015, p. 48.

Peter, each chosen sovereign pontiff benefitted from his own ring and personal new seal¹¹.

Starting from all these meanings, it is obvious today the fact that, regarding the artistic side, we witness an evolution of the way of representing the figure of the most important character of the Catholic Church, taking into account the tendencies and the canons of visual representation from each historical and artistic period, from the way of rendering physiognomy and clothes in the spirit of medieval art, to the paintings and sculptures which are hyper-realistic in contemporary times.

To continue, in order to exemplify these ideas, we propose for analysis a few representative examples of some papal portraits considered today true masterpieces of visual arts.

“Confirmation of the rule” by Giotto di Bondone



Fig.5. Giotto di Bondone, *Confirmation of the rule*

Of a specific expressiveness is the scene called “Confirmation of the rule” which is part of the ensemble of representations from the life of Saint

¹¹B. R. Bentley, *The Cross, Inspired by Real Events*, Fiesen Press, 2014, p. 47.

Francis, painted by Giotto between 1297-1299, in Basilica di San Francesco from Assisi. The work is the seventh scene from the twenty-eight which form this ensemble¹², representing the moment of benediction of the Franciscan community and of its rules by the Pope Innocent III, known as one of the most influential and powerful popes whose pontificate was consigned between 1198-1216. Starting from these dates, it is interesting to notice the fact that the artist paints the ensemble of these scenes at approximately eight decades from the pope's death, this fact can lead to a series of questions regarding the truthfulness of resemblance with the represented model, and also the document sources that the painter used in the moment of painting the portrait.

Being a subtleperceiver of the importance of the represented moment, Giotto impresses through the way of disposing the composition, showing two distinct groups of characters, the one of Saint Francis and of the monks that accompany him, all down on their knees, respectively the group in whose center one can notice the image of Pope Innocent III, represented seated on the pope's throne, overbuilt through two steps with circular arcades which reiterate some of the architectural motifs from the expressive décor of the upper part of the image. Together with the pope, there is a group of bishops and prelates dressed according to the dressing code for specific church functions.

The scene is remarkable through its documentary-historical character and also the artistic and aesthetic one, impressing the viewer through the balanced composition, the chromatic harmony dominated by refined warm-cold contrasts (ocre, gold, red and subtle nuances of light blue). The centre of the image catches the meeting of the two main characters of the scene (St. Francis and Pope Innocent III), situated on a parallel axis with the rising diagonal of the composition, describing a trajectory whose climax is represented by the imposing figure of the pope. It is interesting to notice that between the two mentioned characters, the artist has paid more attention to the representation of the pope whose image seems to be privileged through his position in the work, through the chosen chromatics, the symbolism of gestures and power signs that are part of the representation. The pope's helmet has only one crown, being known the fact that the second and the third crowns of the tiara would be later added by Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303), respectively in the first half of the 14th century, symbolizing the triple sovereignty of the pope¹³. Today, the tradition of wearing the papal tiara during the great solemn events seems to have fallen into desuetude, once Pope Paul VI was pontified, having been worn up to the year 1963.

If we look at Saint Francis, he seems to be one with the group he is part of, both from a compositional, chromatic perspective and also from the

¹²https://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/giotto/assisi/upper/legend/franc07.html

¹³Rosa Giorgi, *Symboles et cultes de l'Église*, Éditions Hazan, Paris, 2005, p. 97

point of view of artistic execution. There are three elements which distinguish this character from the ensemble of figures from the left part of the image: the central position in scene, in the immediate neighbourhood of the pope, the presence of the halo which marks his holiness and the gesture of being awarded/ receiving the rotulus on which behavior rules are written regarding the new Franciscan order. The pope's hand that benedicts him shows that they have common religious ideals, through initially the Pontiff has estimated that they would be too high for the forces and possibilities of spiritual rising of ordinary people¹⁴.

Furthermore, the compositional separation of the two groups of characters indicates two distinct branches of the clergy, one characterized by poverty and severe norms of behavior, the other responsible for the good management of the religious cult and associated with political power and entire spiritual authority.

Another extremely expressive papal portrait is the one of Julius II by Rafael Sanzio, in which the sovereign pontiff is represented being old, having a serene look in his eyes and being meditative, despite the historical reality which mentions him as a "pope with helmet (...) [having a character] which is violent, capricious and prone to anger"¹⁵. The picture of the young Renaissance artist has reflected in a unique way the pomp of the clothing specific to the pontiff, and also "the interior loneliness of this man having bristled eyebrows, a deep look expressing harshness and tenderness in the same time"¹⁶. The mentioned physiognomic aspects were completed by the éclairage chosen by the artist in order to underline the value of the papal portrait, which is contoured on the ornamental background by a light which underlines his face.

The description of the model of Raphael has opened a totally new perspective regarding the feelings of this paymaster who, although considered a violent man, has still managed in this portrait to make the viewer become emotional through the shown tenderness and sadness.

After the death of Raphael¹⁷, one of the most important portrait artists of the century was Tizian, he was inspired¹⁸ by the works of his predecessor

¹⁴*Ibidem*, p. 303

¹⁵Fred Bérance, *Renașterea italiană [Italian Renaissance]*, vol. II, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, p. 146.

¹⁶*Ibidem*, p. 148.

¹⁷H. W. Janson și Anthony F. Janson, *History of Art, The Western Tradition*, vol. II, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004, p. 482.

¹⁸Cf. John Pope Hennessy, *Portretul în Renaștere [The Portrait in Renaissance]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1976, pp. 86-87, „În 1543, pe când se afla la Bologna, Tițian a pictat portretul Papei Paul al III-lea, astăzi la Neapole, pentru care punctul de pornire a fost portretul executat de Rafael” [“In 1543, when he was in Bologna, Tizian painted the portrait of Pope Paul III, to be found today in Neaples, for which the starting point was the portrait of Raphael”].

representing *Pope Julius II* and *Pope Leon X*. In its turn, the artist from Venice created two similar masterpieces, representing the portraits of *Pope Paul III* and *Pope Paul III with his nephews*, Tizian managed to catch the character of modes and to innovate, in the same time, the portraiture due to spatial conception¹⁹ and frequent usage of raccourci, offering a specific monumentality to pictorial creations.

Representing an official paper, the portrait of *Pope Paul III* was inspired by the pyramid composition met in the work of Raphael, suggesting the imposing character of the model. Tizian has chosen a format of bigger dimensions than the one chosen by his predecessor, and also another type of raccourci which offers magnificence and a specific way of getting closer to the viewer; given the compositional construction and the placement of the character in the artistic space, the viewer experiments the sensation of real kneeling in front of the papal chair. Shown slightly inclined forward, the main compositional centre has the face towards the viewer. Another centre of interest is represented by the hands of the pope, the left one leans on the handle, while the right one is on the purple cloth, the focus is on the ring. Passing from the compositional frame of the work to its chromatics, regarding the coloristic subtlety specific to the paintings of Tizian, it is obvious the fact that he used a refined series of shades of white and a variety of nuances of red, from the intense one to the darkest purple and he also used a diversity of shades of brown, the artist managed to correctly render the attitude of the model and "*the variety of the character in tough reality*"²⁰.

As far as Velásquez is concerned, he was inspired by the papal portraits of Raphael – *Pope Julius II* -, and Tizian - *Pope Paul III*, he contoured another temperamental side of his model, *Pope Innocent X*²¹, in his second trip to Rome. The inspiration sources are obvious, given the compositional and chromatic similarity between paintings, the differences between images can be seen in the work style, the created atmosphere and, in the same time, in the different attitude of the two pontiff sovereigns. Noticing his violent character, the artist insisted on nuances of red used in considerable proportions and the resolute look of the pontiff, suggesting his volcanic personality through chromatics. Velásquez revolutionized

¹⁹Patricia Fride-Carrassat, *Maestrii picturii [The Masters of Painting]*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p. 67.

²⁰*Ibidem*, p. 68.

²¹Cf. José Antonio Maravall, *Velázquez și spiritul modernității [Velázquez and the Spirit of Modernity]*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1981, p. 207, „despre acest tablou s-ar putea spune că nu este imaginea unui papă, ci, ca să folosim o expresie a lui Unamuno, portretul unui om din carne și oase” [“about this painting, one could say that it is not the image of a pope, but in order to use an expression of Unamuno, the portrait of a man made of flesh and blood”].

portraiture through *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, given his chromatic refinement and the careful study of physiognomy and human psyche²².

Among the three mentioned papal figures²³, there have been varied resemblances, all of them being compositional portraits with hands, positioned in a similar way, from semi-profile, being pyramidally framed. Pope Julius II was caught looking down, to the right of the work being somehow resigned. Unlike him, Pope Paul III and Pope Innocent X are looking at the artist (viewer), they seem to establish a visual dialogue with him. Following a series of psychological aspects dictated by a specific type of relationship between the viewer and the work, in Velásquez's case, the importance of the character is given, like we have already shown, by *raccourci*, the model is placed higher in rapport to the viewer. The work of Velásquez is surprising through its realism and lack of idealization of the imposing model who, through inspired by the ones of Raphael and Tizian, still keeps the personal touch of the Spanish artist. It is said that, when he saw the work, Innocent X would have exclaimed: *Troppo vero!* (Too real!), this fact probably determined Velásquez's latter acceptance at Accademia di San Luca²⁴.

The visual impact of Velásquez's painting - *Pope Innocent X* –was a big one²⁵, both regarding Italian portraiture and also for the Spanish one of the 17th century, there were a bust copy made after it and some interpretations, as it is the case of the paper Pietro Martire Neri (1591-1661).

Being inspired by the composition and style of Velásquez, Neri brought his contribution to the ensemble vision of the work, by underlining the entire figure of Innocent X and by introducing a character in the right side of the composition. The two works, the bust and the portrait –an entire composition having the pope's face represented, follow the two realistic tendency specific to the epoch, not to be found in later interpretations from the 20th-21th centuries.

Though the works of Raphael and Tizian have inspired the portrait made of Velásquez *Pope Innocent X*, his work served as a source of inspiration for the artists of the 20th century, among which we mention Francis Bacon (1909-

²²Cf. José Antonio Maravall, *Velázquez și spiritul modernității [Velázquez and the Spirit of Modernity]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981, p. 229, „*Tablourile lui Velázquez sunt, în definitiv, experimente asupra umanului, prin intermediul cărora încearcă să-și clarifice cazurile particulare în care această realitate a omului i se înfățișează*” [“*Velázquez's paintings are, after all, experiments on people, through which he tries to clarify the particular cases in which this reality of the human being reveals itself*”].

²³*Pope Julius II* by Rafael, *Pope Paul III* by Tizian and *Pope Innocent X* by Velásquez.

²⁴Karin Hellwig, *Painting in Italy, Spain, and France in the Seventeenth Century*, in vol. *Baroque: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting*, Edited by Rolf Tomas, Ullmann & Könemann, 2007, p. 384.

²⁵José López-Rey, *Velázquez*, vol. I, Editura Taschen, 1996, p. 191.

1992), Mark Wallinger (1959), Yan Pei-Ming (1960) Yue Minjun (1962) and Glenn Brown (1966).

Reinterpretations of the work *Pope Innocent X*

The largest series of papal portraits inspired by the work *Pope Innocent X* can be seen in the creation of Francis Bacon²⁶, an artist captivated by the image of the sovereign pontiff and the message of this painting, some of the works having this topic are reunited in an exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art from San Diego²⁷. Various reinterpretations have been made after photographic reproductions²⁸, the artist preferred this type of approach instead of the study after the original.

Bacon has painted the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* between 1951 and 1965 for approximately forty-five times, in different hypostases²⁹. Though the source of inspiration was the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* of Velásquez, Bacon still appealed to other elements taken from different images, such as the painting the *Portrait of Cardinal Filippo Archinto* of Tizian, *The Scream* of Edvard Munch, the photography of the critic David Sylvester, the image of a woman who is screaming in the white-black movie *Potemkin Cruiser* by Sergei Eisenstein or the teeth of Teddy Roosevelt³⁰. Moreover, trying to create a connection between his work and the predecessors' creations, together with the obvious mentioned influences, Bacon used to put his paintings under glass, framing³¹ them with a traditional, massive frame whose role, beyond the aesthetic one, was to underline past periods of creation, his work acquiring true meaning through direct rapport to the used sources of inspiration.

A famous work of the artist, *Study after Velásquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, dating back to 1953, shows a distorted, aggressive image, full of hatred and anger. The chosen topic and the execution way seem to be in contrast, but at a closer look, we notice that the artist did nothing else but to underline what was present in an enigmatic way in the work of Velásquez, respectively the volcanic temperament of the character, Bacon undermining

²⁶Cf. H. W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson, *op. cit.*, p. 879, Francis Bacon (1909-1992) was a British painter of Irish origin stylistically and thematically belonging to Abstract Expressionism. Being obsessed by the work of Velásquez – *Pope Innocent X*, the artist has created for several years paintings which no longer represent the model of the Spanish artist, but a shouting phantom.

²⁷ Hugh M. Davies, *Francis Bacon: The Papal Portraits of 1953*, Contemporary Art, San Diego, 2001, p. 9.

²⁸ Karim Ressouni-Demigneux, *Un pape de chair et d'esprit, Diego Velásquez, Innocent X*, dans *Les grands scandales de l'histoire de l'art*, Beau Arts édition, 2008, p. 44.

²⁹http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/portraiture/bacon/francis_bacon.htm

³⁰ Hugh M. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

³¹http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/portraiture/bacon/francis_bacon.htm

"artistic conventions in a deliberate way, such as the famous portrait of Velásquez, «Pope Innocent X», which has become a shocking, grotesque masque which is screaming"³².

Using elements specific to his own vision, Bacon deforms the human figure which seems to be "tortured by his imaginary regarding all sorts of contortions, sometimes pushed up to the limit of desintegration"³³, showing a violent character which seems to have been locked in a cage and tied to the seat he is sitting in. The image described by the artist underlines a powerful state of anxiety, the tension of the work seems to be uncharged by the deaf scream of the character.

At the level of the portrait, the artist no longer keeps the details of the real physiognomy described by Velásquez, but he disfigures them³⁴, he stylizes in his own way a portrait who expresses both anger and pain. Bacon upgrades the image of the 17th century³⁵, his portrait expresses severe suffering augmented by the scream and menacing position of the character.

The series of works in which the pope's portrait was reinvented represent a process of adaptation of the theme and style to the elements specific to the art of the 20th century³⁶. In the same time, these paintings have been deeply criticized because of the defying attitude addressed to the authority of the Catholic Church³⁷.

The importance of the series of paintings made by Francis Bacon consisted, on the one hand, in the persuasion of interpretation of this topic, for more than a decade, while on the other hand, in the interest manifested by other artists for the same source of inspiration. In this respect, the reinterpretations of the painting *Pope Innocent X* have not stopped at the paintings of Bacon, they continued in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Just like Bacon, the appreciated Asian artist Yue Minjun has created many reinterpretations of some western masterpieces, among which the already mentioned painting of *Pope Innocent X*, a work made by Diego Velásquez. The artist's way of working is characterized by a particular form of distorting the works seen as a source of inspiration³⁸, transposing them in an original manner which only reminds us of the initial works, managing in the same time to bring a particular note both through the transformation of

³²x x x, *1000 de tablouri ale unor pictori de geniu [1000 Paintings of Genius Painters]*, Aquila Publishing House, Oradea, 2007, p. 497.

³³*Ibidem*, p. 320.

³⁴Giulio Carlo Argan, *Arta modernă [Modern Art]*, vol. 2, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, p. 188.

³⁵Hugh M. Davies, *Bacon's Popes: Ex Cathedra to in Camera*, in vol. *Francis Bacon: The Papal Portraits of 1953*, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 2001, p. 12.

³⁶*Ibidem*.

³⁷http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/portraiture/bacon/francis_bacon.htm

³⁸*Ibidem*.

the physiognomy of the character and through the upgrade and adaptation of the pictural style to contemporary tendencies.

In this respect, Yue Minjun turned his attention to the pictural masterpiece created by Velásquez, the artist creating through his work - *The Pope*—a daring parody³⁹ addressed to the pope, making a self-portrait in papal clothes and underwear.

Referring to another contemporary interpretation which vaguely reminds us of the famous painting of Velásquez, remarkable through the marked *tachisme* and the restrained chromatics having tones of white, red and grey, the work *The Pope* of the Chinese neo-Expressionist artist Yan Pei-Ming⁴⁰ proposes another type of painting approach which focuses the attention of the viewer systematically on the portrait⁴¹. Through this creation, the artist expressed his indifferent attitude towards conventional understanding and defining the portrait as a tool of representation and rebuilding the human identity⁴². Most of the characters painted by Yan Pei-Ming were anonymous, the artist sometimes painting real portraits of people that influenced his life in a particular way⁴³.

Together with Yue Minjun, Glenn Brown and Yan Pei-Ming, another artist who also used this source of inspiration is Mark Wallinger, with his work from 2010, *I am Innocent*, formed of two reproductions after the work of Velásquez, they permanently rotate, creating an optical illusion of movement and duality of the figure of the character.

The name of the work envisages the decoding of its message, the artist ironizing the so-called innocence of the pope by replacing the original title with the expression *I am Innocent* (I am not guilty), throwing on the character a possible state of guilt, regarding which he is trying to exculpate from.

Synthesizing these aspects, in the light of the presented examples, it becomes more obvious the fact that the phenomenon of reinterpretation represents, on the one hand, a normal symptom of the crisis state⁴⁴ through which contemporary art has to pass, manifesting itself as a "general

³⁹Feng Boyi, *To Be Is Just Absurd: The Art of Yue Minjun*, în *Reproduction Icons: Yue Minjun Works, 2004-2006*, Yue Minjun and Museum Collection Services Co., 2006, p. 14.

⁴⁰Betty M. Adelson, *The Lives of Dwarfs, Their Journey from Public Curiosity toward Social Liberation*, Rutgers University Press, 2005, p. 165.

⁴¹Hou Hanru, *On The Mid-Ground*, Selected Textes Edited by Yu Hsiao-Hwei, Published by Timezone 8 Limited, 2002, p. 50

⁴²*Ibidem*.

⁴³*Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁴⁴Yves Michaud, *La crise de l'art contemporain: Utopie, démocratie et comédie*, Press Universitaire de France – PUF, Paris, 2005, p. 131.

depletion of her possibilities”⁴⁵, and being reflected, on the other hand, globally, on the other phenomena specific to the nowadays artistic context.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we believe that the representation of the papal portrait in the 13th-17th centuries represents one of the important topics of visual art in this period, its relevance consisting also in its continuity in later artistic and historical epochs.

The few examples that we have analyzed in this research regarding the papal portrait represent the basis of a more complex study which could refer to a more extended temporal period, up to today. Though briefly presented in the present study, we can extract a series of ideas having the value of conclusion which will serve to a better understanding of this typology of artistic representation.

Thus, we mention the fact that the pope has represented and represents even now one of the most important characters in the history, being considered the person in charge with the Catholic Church and the one who continues the long tradition of bishops mentioned in bibliographical sources, as it is the famous *Liber pontificalis*, a tradition whose origins can be traced back to the first Christian century, in the person of Saint Peter. This tradition, based on “the apostolic succession of the bishops of Rome seemed to guarantee the untainted transmission of the Christian learning in the form received from Christ”⁴⁶, this fact justifies the long continuity and also the forms of organization and ruling of the nowadays Catholic cult.

The importance of such a character is a reason relevant enough for the big number of artistic representations whose topic or centre of interest is represented by pontiff sovereigns from different times of church history. Taking into account this big diversity of representations, we must underline another idea having the value of a conclusion, to be more precise the fact that the stylistic formula of representation is almost always in conformity with the working style or the dominant artistic manner from the period of existence of the artist. Thus, we can notice two different typologies of the papal portrait, depending on the moment in which it was made: in the same period with the pontificate of the pope (the artist and the pope being contemporaries), respectively later, after the pontificate (a topic of representation specific to the art of the 20th century – just like we can notice in the creation of Francis Bacon, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, who took the model made by Diego

⁴⁵Liviu Malița, *Extremele artei [The Extremes of Art]*, Accent Publishing House, Cluj, 2010, p. 335.

⁴⁶Harald Zimmermann, *Papalitatea în Evul Mediu. O istorie a pontifilor romani din perspectiva istoriografiei [Papacy in the Middle Ages. A History of Roman Pontiffs from the Perspective of Historiography]*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2004, p. 17.

Velásquez). Regarding this aspect, we can notice a greater freedom of expression of the artists non-contemporary with the represented popes, it is normal to be so, given the conditions; at least in the past, the papal portrait resembled the portrait of apparatus (see the presence of distinctive pontifical signs: the papal tiara, the pectoral cross, the crook, the ring, the clothes etc). This context imposed, of course, a bigger resemblance with the physiognomic and psychological portrait of the model. Representations which are contemporary, specific to the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, like the one made by Maurizio Cattelan (*La nona ora*), no longer take into account these aspects, speculating in return different ideological, political, aesthetic or conceptual aspects.

Of course, the complexity of the discussed topic cannot be exhausted in just a few pages, rapping the mode of representation specific to contemporary art to the models of the art from the past brings forward a long evolutive trajectory whose imagistic *palmares* marks a large ensemble of artistic attitudes: from the humble representation – specific to religious art, to the official one—having a documentary-historical character, up to the one charged with sensitive psychological, existential, ironic or even mockery nuances.

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(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giotto_-_Legend_of_St_Francis_-_07-_-_Confirmation_of_the_Rule.jpg)

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^{xxx}, *1000 de tablouri ale unor pictori de geniu [1000 Paintings of Genius Painters]*, Aquila Publishing House, Oradea, 2007.

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Notes on the Iconostas of St. Theodore's Church from Iași. Technique of execution, stylistic description and state of conservation

Bogdan Ungurean *

Abstract: This paper proposes an overview of the iconostasis of the Church *St. Theodore's* of Iași with mention of the execution technique, stylistic description of the registers that compose the iconostasis and also description of the state of conservation of the assembly. Information about the iconostasis is preceded by a brief description of the building architecture. The material is part of a research project that dealt with the technical expertise of the monument and its artistic components.

Keywords: preservation, restoration, wood paintings, iconostasis, cultural heritage

Introduction

From the spiritual, artistic and historical thesaurus of the national society, an integrated part are the churches and old places of worship which adorn the land of our country. They make precious history pages that convey the beliefs of people of the past generations. The region that offers the majority of places of this kind is the region of Moldavia dominated by the monuments founded by Stephan The Great and other architectural works of cultural significance.

The city of Iași was first mentioned in a commercial privilege by the Moldavian ruler Alexander the Good, issued in 1407¹. His documentary attestation is also committed, as Professor Ghibănescu says, in a book of geography in the Slavonic language dating back to the 14th century, where he talks about an *askii trăg* (Iași Fair)², the fair from the market of the missing Church of Holy Friday.

The importance of these edifices was also presented by the historians of the times, as Gheorghe Ghibănescu points out:

Când am început adunarea materialului pentru scrierea unei istorii a Iașilor, cel întâiu și mai de sémă capitol mi-a fost *biserica* și apoi *curtea*

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¹ Monografia Orașului Iași, <http://www.bg15mc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Monografia_municipiului_Iasi.pdf>, 18 iunie 2015

² Prof. Gheorghe Ghibănescu, *Din trecutul bisericeii Române (Bisericile din Iași)*, conferință ținută la cercul societății „Viitorul”, extras din revista *Viitorul*, Ed. Dacia P. Iliescu & D. Grossu, Iași, 1902, pp. 5-6

domnescă, pentru că *biserica* e mai veche în Iași de cât *curtea* și una a fost nu arare ori diriguitoră celeilalte³.

Short History

The Orthodox Church of Saints Theodore is among the main cultural and architectural monuments of Iași, being representative for several historical periods. This church bears the patronage of the Saints Theodore's, namely *St. M. Mc. Theodore Tiron* and *St. M. Mc. Theodore Stratilat*. It is located on nr. 14 St. Theodore Street, a small side street that ascends to the *Bolta Rece* and to the Villa Sonnet, the memorial House of the poet Mihai Codreanu. Although it is an 18th century architectural monument, today it is hidden by the massive apartment blocks of Independence Avenue.

Being originally made of wood, the only indication of the period in which it was constructed is written in the Slavonic language in the year 1665. The building of the church is linked to two large names of the history of Moldavia: *Istrate Dabija-Vodă*, and the great *Vornic Solomon Bîrlădeanu*. The historian Nicolai Adriescu-Bogdan presents the theory of the building of the wooden church:

The founders of this church, as found in the *Sinodiconul* of 1875, would be *Istrate Dabija-Vodă* and *Dafina Doamna*; from the reading, however, of a Slavonic inscription on two old icons, described by Mr. Ghibănescu, it results that before this stone church, there was another, a wood one, built perhaps even by the donor of the icons, a great *Vornic* of the up-country *Solomon Bîrlădeanul* and his wife Maria, in the time of *Istrate Dabija*, the year 1665; however, it may have existed a long time ago, and the icons were given to the church by this *Bîrlădeanu*.⁴

In the year 1759, a fire started, which consumed the wooden church building but its testimony remains of the two icons dated from the time it was built. Here's what Professor Ghibănescu says about the two old icons:

Solomon Bîrlădeanul, marele logofet al atâtor domni și o figură interesantă din șirul boerilor moldoveni, și-a legat numele – *poate* – de Biserica Sf. Teodor, ce vedea pe ulița de afară, căci și adî biserica păstrează în altar 2 icône vechi cu inscripție slavonă, de la fosta bisericuță de lemn din 1665 (7173), care a ars în 1759, s-a refăcut cum e adî în 1760 printr-un compromis cu starostele bresleî petrarilor și s-a îmbogățit prin dărnicia bogatului și evloaviosului boer Vasile Roset hatman.⁵

³ Prof. Gheorghe Ghibănescu, op. cit., p. 6

⁴ N.A. Bogdan., *Orașul Iași. Monografie istorică, socială, ilustrată*, ediția a doua, refăcută și mult adăugită, Tip. Națională I.S. Ionescu & M.M. Bogdan, Iași, 1914, p. 230

⁵ Prof. Gheorghe GHIBĂNESCU, op. cit., p. 36

From the monography of N.A. Bogdan, we learn that in the year 1760, the land for the future stone construction of the church was given by the nun Sofia, which before becoming a nun was called *Catrina Tudori (Tudoroaie)*, the daughter of *Ioan Vîrnav Jignicer*.⁶

Left orphaned by the reigning family who build it and passed through a devastating fire, the Church of Saints Theodore's was in ruins. After the arson, the cult nest was rebuilt around 1760, at the expense of the nun Sofia, daughter of *Jitnicer Iordache Vârnav*. After the death of the nun Sofia and the fall into disgrace of *Vornicești* family, the church needed new repairs. At that turning point, the meeting was held with the Furrier's Guild, who were looking for a church to worship. Thus, around the year 1783, during the reign of the *Fanariot Alexandru I Deliberiu Mavrocordat*, the Church of the Saint Theodor entered the care of the Furrier's Guild. The roofs of the two towers and the exterior plaster were rebuilt, with ornaments that created a new architectural style – taken over by numerous churches in the Romanian countries. Important for the history of our culture is also the collection of *Minee*, printed at Râmnicu Vâlcea between the years 1779-1780 - all given to Saint Theodore's Church by the Furrier craftsmen.⁷

The characteristic note of this church is the iconostasis, unique in Moldavia. During the care of the church by furrier craftsmen, it is believed that they would have added another row of iconostasis icons. The iconographic system was framed in different eras following the specialists' analyses, observing a difference in style.⁸

The church was in the Furrier Guild's care for about a century until the guild was threatened with extinction.

By setting up corporate workshops, even small leather factories, the furrier craftsmen from Iași were crushed by the development of technique and industry. Many were employed by factories and thus the Furrier's Guild system ceased around 1920.⁹

Architecture

The Church of Saint Theodor presents an architecture as important and complex as its history, having a mixture of Moldavian, Baroque and Turkish elements (direct or indirect), with details from the south of the

⁶ N.A. Bogdan, *op. cit.*, p. 231

⁷ Nicolae Pintilie, *Sfinții Teodori – biserică a cojocarilor ieșeni*, <<http://sfteodor.iasi.mmb.ro/19613-sfintii-teodori-biserica-cojocarilor-ieseni>>, 19 iunie 2015.

⁸ <https://sfteodor.mmb.ro/19613-sfintii-teodori-biserica-cojocarilor-ieseni>

⁹ <https://sfteodor.mmb.ro/19613-sfintii-teodori-biserica-cojocarilor-ieseni>

country, knowing some changes, especially in vaults and the details in decorations, mixed with new elements of southern influence.¹⁰

The interior maintains the traditional division of medieval churches in Moldavia, in four rooms: porch, pronaos, nave and the altar. We observe at the entrance of the church a small porch with a canopy, from which the staircase ascends to the belfry placed above it. The pronaos has a rectangular shape, wider than long (relative to the axis of the church), vaulted in the monastery vault style (*Voûte de Cloître*). The nave is vaulted in the Moldavian style, and above the narrow circle of the four diagonal arches appear, as in Golia monastery, a row of octogonal arches. The curvature of the arches from the sunset to the east on the two-meter tall pillars resembles the style of Dragomirna monastery, Solca, Three Hierarchs, Putna and so on. Ornamentation is represented by rich decorated and gilded pillar heads, of a Corinthian kind. The consoles of the western arch of the naos show a two-headed eagle, while the lower console, also gilded, depicts a bird with its head turned to the body.

On the outside, the side of the wall that comes above to the eaves is adorned with hollowed/dug panels in the wall plane, panels composed of a Turkish character's brake braces, encountered in a number of other Moldavian and south Carpathian churches from that time. The eaves are supported by smaller, simpler or richer stone consoles. The windows have horizontal masonry in braces with various shapes, that differ from one window to another. The navel tower is octagonal, and the bell tower is rectangular with the smooth edges.

The Paintings

The altar is separated from the naos through a beautifully carved and gilded iconostasis, presenting icons dating back to the time of Istrate Dabija. The icons of the Saviour, the Mother of God, the Saint Theodor and Saint Nicholas are probably the opera of the painter Grigore Zugravul, painted in the year 1665.

The church has no inner painting, the parietal ornamentation being represented by the image of Jesus *Pantocrator* (in the cap of the tower of the Naos), the four gospels' authors representations in the pendants at the base of the tower and decorative patterns of frieze type. We have no information on the date of these mural decorations.

¹⁰ BALȘ ACAD. G., *Bisericile și Mănăstirile moldovenesti din veacurile al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea cu un rezumat în limba franceză*, Institutul de Arte Grafice „E. Marvan”, București, 1933, pp. 239-241

Thesaurus items

As regards manuscripts and cult objects, they are no longer present in the church's heritage, the only information about them appearing in other books. Thus, we find out about a book of Varlaam of religious texts that belonged to the Church of Saint Theodor on the year 1776.¹¹

From the writings of the historian Nicolae Iorga about the church of Saint Theodor we learn that the following inscription appears on an icon in Slavonic: “Această icoană a făcut-o Solomon Bîrlădeanul, Mare-Vornic de Tara-de-Sus, și jupâneasa lui, Ana; anul 7173 = 1664-5”, being supplemented by the inscription: “În zilele Domnului nostru Io Istratie Dabija; 7173”.¹² Also from Iorga we find that a Greek mark appears from the year 1825 on a chalice, and on a gospel it says that it was bought by Maranda (22 February 1769), and metal plated in silver by “Giupânul Trifan” and Maria (1775). There is also a gospel of 7258, mentioned by Iorga and an *Octoih* of Râmnic. Another writing related to the Church of Saint Theodor is described by G.T. Kirileanu, it supports the presence of a 7256 (1748) written text by “Popa Anastasie de la Sf. Theodor din Eș”¹³, belonging to the *Molitfelnic* from the Church of Pipirig.



Fig. 1. Overview of St. Theodor's Church

¹¹ Pr. Paul MIHAIL, „Știri noi privind circulația Cazaniei Mitropolitului Varlaam”, în: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, LXXXII (1964), 3-4, p. 387

¹² Prof. Nicolae IORGA, *Inscripții și însemnări din bisericile Iașului*, Atelierele grafice Socec & Comp., București, 1907, pp. 16-17. și Idem, *Inscripții din bisericile României adunate, adnotate și publicate*, vol. II, Atelierele grafice Socec & Comp., București, 1908, pp. 128-129

¹³ G.T. KIRILEANU, „Despre satul Pipirig”, în: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, LIII (1945), 11-12, p. 669



Fig. 2-6. Details of the interior architecture of St. Theodor's Church



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Data on the execution technique of the Iconostasis

The iconostasis of St. Theodor Church in Iași presents icons made in several historical stages. The oldest are the icons of the Royal Register (17th century), most likely dating from the period of the first church where the current edifice was erected. The upper and bottom registers fall to 18th-19th century Baroque stylistics, made of soft¹⁴ fretted and carved wood.

Iconostasis presents a rich volumetric decoration that prevails quantitatively against the painted side, being decorated in the classic gilded technique based on “poliment” (Metal leaf – gold, applied on layers of primer and *Bolus*). The painting of icons (except the Royal Register) is a baroque invoice with influences from Neoclassicism, the technique of realization being one of Secco – painting – fat tempera or oil¹⁵ and return with metallic pigment (colloidal gold).

The iconostasis ensemble consists of overlapping registers, the superior ones being placed with a slight forwarding in the plane compared to the lower ones. As a technical peculiarity, it is noted that the registers above the royal one is made of merged wooden plates, over which, subsequently, the composition of the registers was transposed, the surfaces of the volumetric decoration being then fretted and carved. The areas with painting are not separated and applied by overlap, but they result from the planar structure of the merged panel. The pillars of the Royal registry and those from the Register of Apostles were worked separately and subsequently added to the Iconostasis, the first being fretted and sculpted, and the latter having a sculpted decoration without frets.

The back of the iconostasis is fixed by an anchoring system with elements of wood and metal (wires from time interventions on the iconostasis) on the built-in horizontal beams. Due to the presence of a false wall behind the iconostasis, made of drywall (unsuitable modern intervention, likely to provide some isolation of the altar space), it is not possible to accurately analyze the strength of the structure and state of conservation as also potential interventions in time to the reinforcement structure of the iconostasis. We appreciate that there are likely to be 3 or 4 built-in beams on which the iconostasis is anchored to. The anchorage structure is very likely to have been modified through interventions and changes over time.¹⁶

¹⁴ Soft deciduous-the determination of the essence will be achieved by conducting analyses on micro samples taken from the wood substrate

¹⁵ Samples shall be taken for both the sculpted decorations and the areas of painting, and analyses shall be carried out to accurately determine the original execution technique

¹⁶ It is necessary to remove the gypsum structure from Verso iconostasis in order to enable the preservation of the conservation status and the maintenance of conservation-restoration interventions at the level of the timber and support elements



Fig. 7. Overall appearance of iconostasis



Fig. 8-9. Overall aspects of main royal register icons



Fig. 10. Overview of the top registers



Fig. 11-12. Details of fretted and carved decorations



Fig. 13. Detail with the highlighting of the tile joints that compose the iconostasis register



Fig. 14. Overall aspect of the upper part of the back of the iconostasis

Description of Registers

At the top level sits the “**Coronament**” which is made up of “**Trimorfium**” (Cross and two “**molenii**”) supported by two gryphons (Dragons) represented front to front. It is framed to the left and right by two decorative panels flattened carved with square boxes, limited to the upper part by a heavily profiled wood rod cropped at the far right and left sides by a console and a double curve with a volute in the middle.

The cross with trefoiled extremities is painted with “**Crucifixion**” and the Four Evangelists at the ends. The painting is framed by a fretted, carved and gilded decorative border made up of stylized acanthus haulms. At the intersection of the arms the decoration is complemented by four groups of profiled rays.

The gryphons hold on the heads the two icons called “molenii” (the Mother of God and John the Evangelist painted as characters standing). In turn, these icons have decorative frames- fretted, carved and gilded, made up of stylized vegetal elements.



Fig. 15-16. Details of the “Coronament”

The register of **Prophets** consists of two friezes (strips) merged into the median axle. They are made by fretted and symmetrically sculpted decorative elements, which divide the 13 round icons, representing in the center the Mother of God in the “Oranta” aspect, flanked to the left and right by 6 icons with the Prophets. The round icons are carved from the thickness of the panel being framed by a high profiled rod, decorated with two volutes in the upper and lower median. The registry is limited by two heavily profiled wooden rods placed in console.

The register depicting the **Apostles** consists of a flat frieze (made from several pieces) on which the icons with the 12 holy Apostles are painted. They are represented standing and holding the identification symbols in the hands. They are oriented 6 to each side of the central icon “Deisis” which is of larger size. At the top the icons of the Apostles end with a profiled semicircular arc, gilded and fixed to the painted panel. An exception is the central icon “Deisis” which has a decorated frame ending at the top into a trefoiled arc.

The icons are separated by semi-cylindrical columns placed on a pedestal. The columns decoration is made in a profiled torsade with the motif of the rose.

At the top, the icons present the gables ending with a curved wand decorated with the same motif as the frame of the icon “Deisis”.



Fig. 17. Detail of the registers with the Prophets and Apostles



Fig. 18-19. Detail with the scenes from the median axle of the two registers

The register with the **Main religious Holidays (Holly Feasts)** – dominates the Iconostasis ensemble. It consists of the Holly Feasts icons, limited to the upper and lower part of two semi-cylindrical decorative friezes, separated by the frieze of icons through profiled wands and decorative stripes with stylized leaves. The upper wand is slightly higher on the curvature of the central icon “Sf. Mahramă”, which has a quadrilobate shape, made from a wrinkled ribbon frame. The 12 icons are rectangular with frames made all of the wrinkled ribbon with the motif of the “foamed wave” at the top and bottom. The icons are separated by a strong fretted, symmetrical designed floral motif (tulips and haulms with roses).

The upper frieze with a curved plane is fretted with vegetable motifs (grapes and roses), interspersed by 6 bulging cartridges framed by wrinkled ribbons and stylized leaves.

The lower decorative frieze, carved in a curved plane, is decorated with a pattern of vegetal beanstalk woven with wrinkled ribbon and grapes, strongly marked by curves and counter curves. The decoration is interrupted by three oval medallions describing a grate from diamonds.



Fig. 20-21. Assembly and detail of a semi-frieze from the Holly Feasts register

The **Royal Register** consists of:

The Royal Doors in the central axle and the two side Deacon's doors. In between and sideways there are four vertical frames that support the monumental Royal icons separated between them by the Royal columns that have a semi-cylindrical profile with double heads and are free standing on the pedestal.

At the top of the icons there are the gables with fretted sculpture, containing, in the central part, medallions in the form of a shield painted with symbols. The carved ornamentation is made of haulms with grapes and roses. The decoration is taken over by the Royal columns being symmetrically placed in their vertical median axle, interrupted at the half-height by medallions with a bulging field decorated with painting.

The Royal Doors have two symmetrical curves set against the central pillar decorated with motifs in torsade, which supports at the top a "mitră" with "the Eye of the One of old days" surrounded by profiled rays in the upper half. The decoration which is fretted with the motif of "Mandorla" overlapped with roses and haulms, supports 4 quadrilobate medallions with ribbon frames wrinkled marking the painted field (at the top – "Annunciation", and at the bottom two of Evangelists).

At the top of the door, the empty space is occupied by a richly adorned gable with the lower edge completed in a three-foiled arc.

The Deacon's doors – which are not original – were replaced with panels cut out by the shape of the frame and painted with the representation of the Saints Michael and Gabriel. From their original decoration, the gables of the upper part, made in a manner similar to that of the Royal Doors, are preserved.

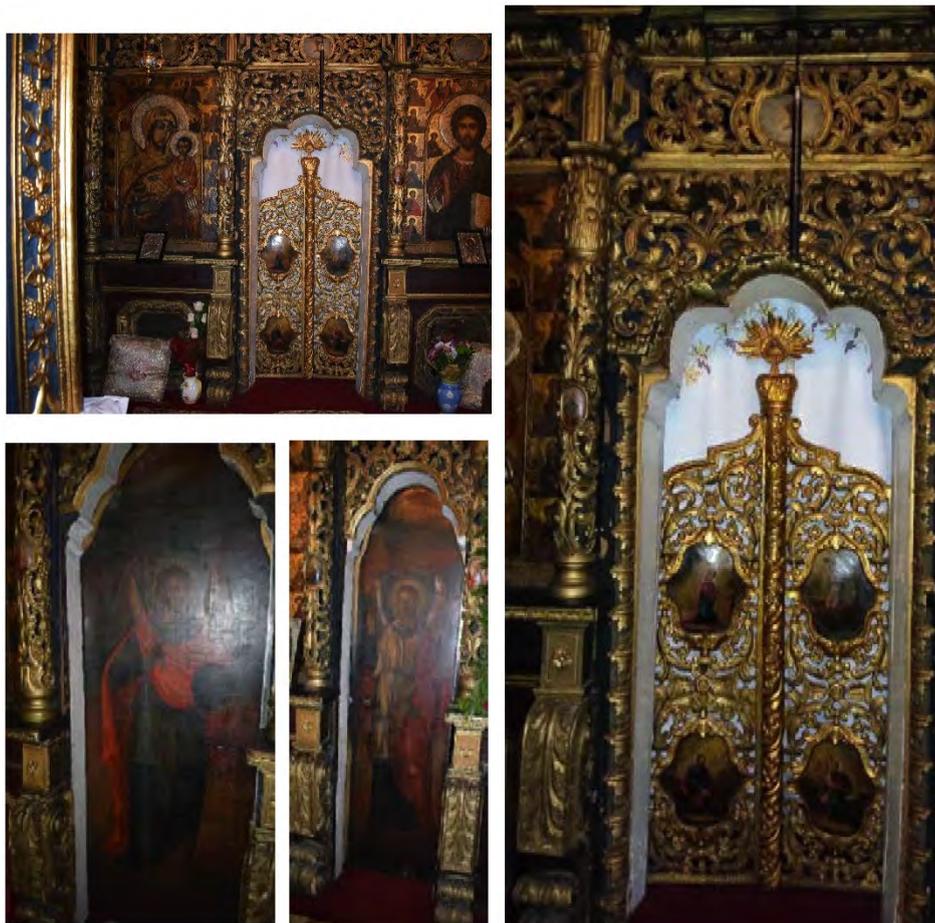


Fig. 22-25. Overall aspects of iconostasis doors

The monumentality of the registry is marked by the four older Royal icons, which are (left to right): “St. Nicholas” flanked by Hierarchs; “Mother of God *Hodigitria*” framed by the Prophets; “Jesus *Pantocrator*” framed by the Apostles and the icon of the feast of the church with “St. Theodor Tiron and Theodor Stratilat”, flanked by the Saints.

From a stylistic point of view these icons constitute a special group, taking into account their representation with side scenes – of older tradition – and the background decorated with geometrical and floral elements in gilded relief. At the bottom of the icons there are inscriptions made in flat relief mentioning the donor *Solomon Bârlădeanu – Mare Vornic* – painted by “Unworthy painter Grigorie from Bierilești in the year 1665”.¹⁷

¹⁷ Efremov Alexandru – *Icoane românești*, Editura Meridiane, București, 2003, pag. 112-113.



Fig. 26-29. Overall aspects of the Royal icons

The foot register, the one that supports the iconostasis base, is made up of large pedestals in console that support the interrupted wood panel of

the registry with the Royal icons. On the four vertical corresponding panels (placed at the foot level under the Royal icons) are painted icons in octagonal frames whose ornamental motif is made with stylized acanthus leaves. These are higher to the Panel plan.

The image of these icons was subsequently overpainted in “fat” technique and does not respect the traditional iconographic program, here being represented (from left to right) the scenes: “Dinner at Emmaus”, “Fleeing Bethlehem”, “Healing of the Blind” and “Sf. George killing the Dragon”. The base pedestal is missing.



Fig. 30-31. Overview of the icons of the foothills

Previous interventions on iconostasis

The Iconostasis has undergone various interventions at both aesthetic and structural level. Apart from the fact that in the iconostasis are included icons from several eras, there can be seen previous interventions both at the level of the pictorial layer and at the support (wood).

Thus, the icons in the Royal Register are the oldest (17th century), the upper part of the iconostasis can be classified at the end of the eighteenth

century, beginning of the 19th century, and the side doors (*diaconești*) and the painting of the foot Register are later.

There are also present repaints of the gilded sculpted shape – application of a layer of “bronze” paint over the original decorated surfaces with metallic leaf (gold) and repainting of flat surfaces by covering them with one or more layers of paint (Foot Register and soffit of the doors of the Royal Register). You can also see partial repaints of the foot icons.

We mention the presence of metallic objects (nails, wires) of previous intervention with the role of securing the detached items from the iconostasis structure. These were used both at the sculpted and decorated part and for the reinforcement (insurance) of the iconostasis support elements (on the back). As far as the iconostasis's resistance structure is concerned, we note the use of new wood elements on the back of the iconostasis with the purpose of fixing the constituent parts to the built-in beams.

In the altar, behind the iconostasis, a false wall (gypsum boards), covering more than two-thirds of the iconostasis ensemble, was made likely to close the “gaps” and provide some sort of insulation for the Church’s altar area.

Last but not least it is to mention the heating plant of the church, which includes pipes for the transport of the heat agent, passing from the Naos to the altar through “cut” spaces in the iconostasis structure.



Fig. 32. “Bronze” repaints on carved shape



Fig. 33. Late interventions at the foot icons



Fig. 34. Interventions at the resistance structure of iconostasis



Fig. 35. False wall behind the iconostasis

Iconostasis Conservation Status

A. Wooden support

The wood, once introduced into the art object, is subjected to degradation factors that can be grouped by their effect in a series of degradation types: rotting, burning, infestation with wood borer insects, frailty, curvature, traction, tensioning, color modification, etc.

For each situation it is necessary to know the mechanism of the process in question, as well as the ways of preservation and restoration in accordance with the principles and legal normatives. The wood in the opera can have native (natural) defects, degradations produced by processing, handling or use, but also due to the microclimate factors (temperature, humidity, light) as well as the biological and anthropogenic ones.

As a whole, wood degradation forms occur depending on the environment in which it was preserved, in close connection with the way it was used, protected from moisture, micro-organisms, insects, dirt and pollution.

The wood used at the iconostasis was subjected in time to numerous changes in microclimate conditions characterized by high fluctuations in temperature values and humidity from the monument's premises. As a result of the hygroscopic properties of wood, the sudden changes in temperature and humidity parameters lead to the emergence of tensions on the wood fiber that cause dimensional and flatness changes.

Due to these specific manifestations of wood fiber, the iconostasis elements have undergone numerous degradations that manifest by: splinting of fiber; takeoff of the sleepers; cracks on the wood fiber; detachment of component elements; deformations of flatness with partial or full takeoffs;

fractures; ruptures with partial or full loss of constituent elements, especially in the decorative part of fretted and carved wood.

In the lower part of the iconostasis the wood presents an advanced state of degradation due to excess humidity absorption. The timely exposure of this part of iconostasis to excessive humidity has favored the installation of a complex biological attack of fungi and wood borer insects which partially affected the resistance structure of the wood through consumption, in the metabolic processes, of lignin and cellulose from the wood's constitution.

The whole phenomenon of dimensional change due to the action of superficial and deep tensions on the woody fiber, is also transmitted by default to the areas with carved and gilded decorations as well as those with paintings.

At the same time, the wooden support of the whole ensemble has numerous local deteriorations from subsequent improper fastening interventions with metallic elements (nails, wires, etc.) visible in the upper part.

At the back of the iconostasis are present staple accumulations of atmospheric particles (dust, smoke, tars), congested deposits being probably accumulated in the space created by the false wall closure of the back of the iconostasis towards the altar.

B. Polychrome sculpture

The decorative shape on the face of the iconostasis, carved, fretted and gilded, is fully repainted with a metallic pigment (bronze) dye distributed with scum and patchy thickness, with several reverts in some areas (especially in the lower parts). It was applied by coarse brushing in order to mask the degradations of the polychrome layer from the sculpted decorations.

These repaints with materials incompatible with the original polishing technique produce, by default, damage to the polychrome layer, in the present case of the gold leaf and the corresponding adhesive layer beneath. On the whole of the carved and decorated surface, it is evidently noted the unsightly appearance of the repainting which has deteriorated over time by oxidation of the metallic pigment, coverage heading the original golden tone. Over the repainting subsequently joined atmospheric deposits accumulated over time (smoke, tars and dust) amplifying the appearance of degradation.

Also, there are many detachments of the pictorial layer, microcracks on the direction of the wood fiber, cracks at the level of gold leaf and losses with partial or full lacuna. These are due to improper microclimate

conditions, by tensioning the wooden fiber, either due to subsequent mechanical shocks manifested in the form of scratches, small gaps, etc.

C. Pictorial layer of icons

The degradations of the pictorial layer from the icons are represented by those of the color layers with the corresponding preparation layers from beneath and the protective film.

Superficial deposits and adhesions of atmospheric particles are present in the case of painted surfaces – staple accumulations of dust, smoke, tars. At the level of the protective film there are tough hardened deposits (embedded in the lacquer layer).

The loss of adhesion caused pictorial layer detachments (peels) and favored the appearance of gaps both at the level of the color layer and the primer (plaster). Wear and erosion are also present at the level of color layers.

On the entire surface of the painting are present networks of cracks (superficial and deep) and microcracks – the cracks of old with a regular shape leaving the primer (plaster) layer reaching through the color layer to the protective lacquer. They appear in time and are considered as a normal consequence of the aging process of materials. The cracks present on the surface of the icons are caused by the tensions produced by the wooden support over the primer (plaster), respectively the pictorial and the protective layer (lacquer / varnish).

The varnish layer is characterized by tonal changes (darkening) caused by the photochemical degradation that produced over time (aging). In different areas are reported matte spots due to the degradation in time, as well as the phenomenon of embedding the surface deposits.

On the surface of the pictorial layer are locally present accidental traces (drips, leaks) of bronze paint, following the careless application of overpainting's from the carved shape. At the same time, local repainting interventions are also reported in later icons and over varnishes.



Fig. 36. Fractures on the wood merge



Fig. 37. Distance fractures, gaps in carved shape



Fig. 38. Repaints, missing decorative elements



Fig. 39. Biological attack, destructive interventions



Fig. 40. Gaps in the pictorial layer, degraded varnish



Fig. 41. Detachment, peels, gaps



Fig. 42. Embedded deposits

Conclusions

An 18th century Monument, the Church with the patronage of the Saints Theodor, from Iași, was erected on the place of a wooden church that date from the year 1665. The conservation status of the architectural structure requires general interventions for structural rehabilitation and restoration of architectural elements.

The potential entry in restoration of the edifice requires the protection of artistic components that do not require interventions (dismantling, disassembly, transport – pews, cult objects – as appropriate) and is a factor supporting the initiation of restoration treatments of components whose conservation status advertises this – this is the iconostasis situation as well.

As we have described in the present paper, there are a series of previous inappropriate interventions, executed in different periods and related to the conservation status of the iconostasis (support, polychrome sculpture, painting). From these emerges the necessity of the preservation and restoration of iconostasis in its whole material structure (interventions in the resistance structure – wooden support, carved, gilded decoration and painting surfaces).

In addition to the conservation status of the components of the iconostasis, another factor arguing the need for restoration interventions is the historical, artistic and cult value of the ensemble.

Made on six overlapping registers (including the canopy), the iconostasis comprises icons from several historical stages enclosed in friezes with a special carved decoration, the majority of the surfaces being fretted, carved and gilded in traditional technique.

Last but not least, it should be noted that the icons in the Royal Register are of great value, dating back to the first wooden church (1665), attributed to “Grigore the Painter”. The conservation status of these icons is one that also requires preservation-restoration interventions, which is an additional argument for the necessity of starting, on the iconostasis assembly, of a restoration process.

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All images used in the present paper were taken by the author

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Visual Literacy and the Crux of the Visible: Is Stained Glass a Manifestation of the Diaphanous?

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Abstract: The present paper addresses the tension between two possible readings of stained glass in relation to theological discourse, taking as case study the landmark Abbey of Saint-Denis. According to Norman Bryson, these readings may be characterized as discursive and figural. On the one hand, there is an iconological reading of stained glass as a suitable means for illustrating the Scriptures, which responds to an anagogical reading prompted by its material qualities (colour and light). On the other hand, we encounter its interpretation as a means of materializing the philosophical notion of *diaphanous* given its transparent nature and its aesthetic properties associated with light in the Middle Ages (*lux, splendor, claritas*). I claim that, in the particular situation of stained glass, these readings are not mutually exclusive, but complementary, given the anagogical function of stained glass imagery suggested by Panofsky's reading of Suger. This can be seen as a way of conveying the distance between divine and created light found in early Christian philosophy. Thus, I claim that the metaphor of light, understood as a field of visibility and as a transcendental carrier of spiritual enlightenment (*meta-phoros*), becomes crucial for understanding the architectural function of stained glass within gothic architecture.

Keywords: Iconography, Stained Glass, Suger, Aesthetic of Light, Metaphor, Christian Theology

The Metaphor of Light – from Theophany to Aesthetic Experience

The phrase "metaphor of light" refers to the symbolic framework in which the artistic use of light was prescribed from the Middle Ages until the 18th century by the onto-theological discourse of philosophy. The metaphor describes the constitutive, intimate relation between sensuous light and its intelligible meaning, rather than a mere comparison between earthly light and divine reason and power. Metaphor has been described as a figure of speech resulting from the substitution of the word that is the object of comparison with another word-image. At the same time, it is a figure of transcendence in

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act, literally carrying over a meaning (*meta-phoros*). As Paul Ricoeur noticed, metaphors can also be described as producing a tension at the level of the enunciation or the whole phrase, which, therefore, produces the resemblance rather than results from an existing similitude. Therefore, by means of metaphoric language, a new and unforeseen meaning is produced, which reveals the productive powers of imagination ².

Metaphors often occurred in philosophical language, enabling the translation from form to concept ³. For instance, in Kantian philosophy, the metaphor becomes a model invested with a paradigmatic function, from which a "rule of thought" can be speculated and applied in using the idea of reason ⁴. Visual perception is a part of the process, whereas the metaphor of light is related to the idea of participation.

Analyzed for the first time by Aristotle ⁵, the metaphor was understood as a correspondence between two separate entities. Aristotle did not distinguish between the construction of metaphor as a horizontal play between two separate ontological planes and the vertical dependency which supports the comparison, postulated by the Platonic concept of analogy. However, the relation of similarity between the visible forms and their ideal prototypes is utterly important for Plato, who analyzes it from the perspective of the binder between the two terms ⁶. The relation between the elements that form the comparison is ontologically understood by Plato as a hierarchical communication.

The Neoplatonist concept of emanation is also important for the understanding of the metaphoric ontology of light. Unlike Aristotle's idea of metaphor, which foreseen a reversible relation between its elements, the Neoplatonist use of the metaphor supposed a constitutive analogy based on the dependency on a prototype. For Plotinus, light is radiant because it is a derivation of the One. The Sun, a source of the idea of God in ancient cultures, became a mediator between *sensibilia* and *intelligibilia*. The Neoplatonist Christian tradition implicitly continues the development of the concept of light by associating the immaterial with a concrete form of representation. Thus, light becomes a mediator between immanency and transcendence.

For Hans Blumenberg's, light is regarded as best suited for

² P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*, Routledge, 2004.

³ H. Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, Cornell University Press, New York, 2010, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁵ The idea of the "metaphor" is present in works like *Rethorica* (trad. Maria Cristina Andrei, Editura IRI, București, 2004) or *Poetica* (transl. Stephen Halliwell), *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary*, The University of North Carolina Press/London and North Carolina, 1987.

⁶ See Platon, *Thimaios*, 28a, 31-32, in Plato. Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9 trans. W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1925.

expressing experience and knowledge ⁷. From antiquity to modern times, the German philosopher reveals the way light accompanies human knowledge, from the light of the mind to the light of reason during the Enlightenment period. One could question the choice of metaphor in detriment of other figures of speech which resort to analogy, such as the parable or even the symbol. The option for metaphor is explainable due to its capacity of mediating between different regimes such as the sensible and intelligible, matter and spirit. Unlike the symbol, which mediates between a (material) sign and its (ideal) signification by means of a conventional relation, the metaphor mediates between two different signs, signifying distinct concepts. Concerning light, it appears to speak about something else than itself; it is a sign that relates to another sign. Blumenberg considers light to be a metaphor *par excellence*, the paradigm for the relation between sensible and intelligible that the artwork produces in its concrete representations, saving the interpreters from awkward logical exercises ⁸. Framed by the discourse of Christian philosophy, light makes possible the analogy between matter and spirit, visibility and mystic intuition, visibility and reason.

Between light and matter – the diaphanous

Before taking into account the philosophical discourse of medieval theology which could have had an influence on Suger's own thinking about the light, we could also take into account its occurrences in ancient Greek and early Christian writings.

The Greeks seemed to accommodate three different theories about view and light. The first one, belonging to Empedocles, states that of the "rays of light" come from inside the eye and with their help we may distinguish the objects from the immediate reality; Leucippus and Democritus theory of "simulacra" sustains that travelling forms composed of atoms detach themselves from the surface of the objects. The third theory, Aristotle's theory of the "diaphanous", that is, the in between space which, as a place of encounter and manifestation of light, mediates between our vision and the objects (and Themistius's commentaries), will be discussed in detail ⁹.

Originating from the Greek δια and φαίνω, the adjective *diaphanous* (διαφανής) is explained today as a medium of low density, which allows light to come through, without clearly distinguishing forms and outer shapes, something transparent, translucent, the original Greek meaning being that of *visual sharpness* or *luminous clarity* ¹⁰. The word is frequently used by

⁷ H. Blumenberg, „Light as a Metaphor for Truth”, in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. David Michael Levin, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 30-62.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Th. X. Thuan, *Les voies de la lumière*, Gallimard, Paris, 2007, pp. 42-43.

¹⁰ A. Vasiliu, *Despre diafan*, Polirom Press, Iasi, 2010, p. 70.

Aristotle, in order to define his concepts of *medium*, *mediation* and *the in-between*¹¹. Later, it has been translated into Latin not as *perspicus*, *perspicuitas* (which could have been closer to the Greek source), but as *transparens* (a neologism in the 12th century), a term that will rapidly enter the language of scholastic philosophy and will illustrate the comparison between intellect and light, as well as between color and light as a manifestation of transcendence¹². For Aristotle, the diaphanous is a transparent medium whose luminescence is received as a radiance that lights from within. Also, it may be regarded as a place of encounter between view and the viewed object, a place where the manifestation of light reveals the image, instituting the *epiphany* of the visible¹³.

Aristotle openly speaks both about the significance of this space and the nature of light. According to him, there is nothing visible without light, every color can be seen only in light. The nature of light is to set into motion the transparency in its actuality”¹⁴. Thus, the diaphanous becomes a linkage between the object, light and the eye. The transmission and reception of light can only take place in this diaphanous medium. At the same time, the notion is connected with basic elements of physical existence – such as water, air, and even solid matter. Thus, it marks a certain movement that accompanies the action of light – the luminous energy that inseminates matter¹⁵. The relation between light and the diaphanous is a specific relation of causality. The diaphanous is related to light as an effect is linked to its cause. It is even confounded with the incandescent light that remains its source of luminescence¹⁶. At the same time, it becomes a paradigm of mediation¹⁷. The diaphanous remains the space in which different media, either forms or spirits, interact, but also a distance which is necessary to their presence and manifestation. Light also reveals the presence of matter in the invisible. As we will see, this idea is crucial for the medieval metaphor of light. Both light and the diaphanous are incorporeal elements, but light can have a material character which becomes present only in contact with matter.

The phenomenological attribute of the presence of light is related to both visual perception and contemplation. The model of visual perception follows the model of intellectual activity while the coherence of the demonstration imposes the introduction of the diaphanous, a middle term, a third genre, a notion which equates the nature of soul in Neoplatonist commentaries. As long as it renders the world visible, light is itself visible in

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 70.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Despre suflet*, Scientific Press, Bucharest, 1969, II 7, 418b, p. 64.

¹⁵ A. Vasiliu, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 65.

an intelligible way¹⁸.

Aristotle also introduces a negative definition of the diaphanous. Transparency is regarded as that which is not visible in itself, but through a colour which is foreign to it¹⁹. We may conclude that the diaphanous, as transparency, is manifest only as the *the distance of an alterity*. It may resemble the *divine*, but Aristotle never uses this word. Only Themistius associates the divine and the celestial body. Constrained to admit the impossibility of an ontological definition of the diaphanous, Aristotle will define it through its visual aesthetic manifestations. Themistius identifies the nature of the diaphanous as “superior body” and its relation with the divine. When attributing divine properties to the superior body, he refers to the fifth element, the ether, defined by Aristotle in *De caelo* as divine, the impossibility of defining light and the diaphanous other than by transcendence²⁰. Themistius considers the eternal and divine superior body as being the first of the receivers of light which emanates from a source, light being the only transcendent and incorporeal element²¹. As one may easily notice, the principle of emanation, the metaphor of the source of light from which light may propagate will also be encountered in Plotinus’s thinking.

The Diaphanous, a Space of Manifestation for Celestial Hierarchies

For Dionysius, God the creator and the created world constitutes a whole, hierarchically structured on charismatic basis, while the entire creation is energy. He sees the universe as a moving whole in permanent relation with God, and in his Hierarchies he designs a cosmology overwhelmed by the flames of light and *ekstasis*. The system of hierarchies has a theophanic function in that it is a scintillating row of symbols of God’s greatness, forming at the same time the medium for its accomplishment. The hierarchies mediate knowledge; they are vehicles of revelation, of theophany²². Dionysius conceives revelation as a light that comes from God and exudes upon the entire creation. In this context, the space of the angels appears as the in-between space which receives its energy from God. The angles in the Christian scenario are the successors of the stars in previous beliefs; they are angelic fires and pure intelligences, at the same time vehicles of divine irradiation, only lower in glory to the intelligible light of the divine²³. By populating the in-between space between God and Being

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 83.

¹⁹ Aristotel, *op.cit.*, 418 b, p. 64.

²⁰ Vasiliu, p. 100.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 128.

²² A. Louth, *Dionisie Areopagitul*, Deisis Press, Sibiu, 1997, pp. 73, 74.

²³ K. E. Gilbert, H. Kuhn, *Istoria esteticii*, trans. Sorin Mărculescu, Meridiane Press, Bucharest, 1972, p. 143.

Dionysius solves a universal problem, that of the in-between space within the dualistic structure of the world, but also that of filling in the void, and bridging the gap between God and human beings²⁴. Angels remain the privileged medium of revelation, being simultaneously close to God and humans²⁵.

Aristotle's diaphanous is understood as a luminous contact with the divine, a deification occurring in the material manifestation of light²⁶. In this context, Dionysius clearly pictures the rays of light as being indistinctly merged with their divine source. He also portrays the lit, transparent air, which rarifies while elogning away from its source, while the hierarchies are themselves seen as a row of stairs that descend from the source.

Dionysius is certainly influenced by the emanation principles of Neoplatonist philosophy. However, the hierarchical structuring of the space as a result of emanation and its relation to light and matter is a specific element of his doctrine. The denser is the medium it permeates, the more difficult is the distribution²⁷. The hierarchy becomes the fundamental element for the processes of *purification*, *illumination* and *union*²⁸.

The manifestation of light is superposing on the act of creation and is identified with it. Light appears first as pure and unmingled, bright, clean, then as celestial, clear and transparent, light which defines the visible horizon, then as moonlight, and finally as night light, signaling distance. Accordingly, we may notice the concentric distribution of the rays of light, which are often represented in Christian iconography. Another worthy aspect is the fact that this sense of light, as pouring away from the initial spring, offers the possibility of regaining the relation to the original, divine light²⁹. For him, any form of existence, either material or immaterial, becomes at a certain moment an image, a symbol, an echo or a reflection³⁰. While the diaphanous remains a theological and cosmologic notion, Joan Scottus Eriugena will turn this notion into an aesthetic and metaphysical concept³¹.

²⁴ A. Plesu lists these writings in the chapter *Lumile intermediare de la Platon la Walter Benjamin*, in *Despre Îngeri*, Humanitas Press, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 23-32.

²⁵ A. Plesu, *op.cit.*, p. 257.

²⁶ A. Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 71 n.1.

²⁷ Dionisie Pseudo-Areopagitul, *Ierarhia cerească, Ierarhia bisericască*, XIII, 3, trans. Cicerone Iordăchescu, Institutul European Prees, Iași, 1994, p. 62.

²⁸ A. Louth, *Dionisie Areopagitul*, p. 74.

²⁹ Ștefan Afloroaei, *Triadă și procesiune a luminii*, postword at Dionisie Pseudo-Areopagitul, *Ierarhia cerească, Ierarhia bisericască*, Institutul European Press, Iasi, 1994, p. 147.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 149.

³¹ A. Vasiliu, *op. cit.*, p. 182 n. 1.

Created and Uncreated Light: Several Interpretations of Light in Early Christian Philosophy

An important question for the Christian Church Fathers is the determination of the nature of uncreated light in relation to physical light, created by God in the fourth day of Genesis. Light appears as a manifestation of divine Grace and as a sign of the union of the soul with God, a secret of Christian mystics. Origen discusses the nature of light in the 3rd century, in his *Commentaries* to the Gospel of Joan. He distinguishes between two types of light, the sensible and the incorporeal. The latter is associated with the intellect. Origen notices the associations of Christ with light – “Light of the world”, “The true light”, “The light of the people”. While the sensible (*aisthétón*) luminescence of light is the Sun, which radiates over the physical world, the Saviour is the light of the intelligible world, because it enlightens the rational beings³². Origen frequently uses the analogy between world and stars and the Church and the Apostles, but also between the incorporeal light of Christ and that of the human intellect.

For the Cappadocian Fathers, the nature of light is related to the nature of uncreated energies and unseen attributes of God. The main distinction here is that between the first day of the creation, a reflection of these energies and attributes of God, and physical light, the diurnal light of the fourth day, when the creator separates night and day, thus introducing distinctions in the physical time. Saint Basil talks about the role of the energies that are distinct from the Being that remains unknown³³. The uncreated energies are called “Rays of God” that permeate the created universe. St. Gregory of Palama will call them *uncreated light* or grace³⁴. Similar ideas can be found in the writings of Gregory of Nazianz, Joan of Damascus or Maxim the Confessor. In the poetical writings of Simeon the New Theologian, the function of uncreated light is to transform, to pierce the mind (*νοῦς*) and senses³⁵. The one that participates to divine energy becomes one with the light in a certain way³⁶. Although it bears no direct relation to the Fathers of the Eastern Church, the transformative function of light is itself very important for the subsequent uses of anagogical interpretation during Suger’s times at the abbey of Saint-Denis.

³² Origen, *Comentariu la Evanghelia după Ioan*, Institutul European Press, Iași, 1995, XXV, 158-166, XXVI, 167-174, pp.62-63.

³³ V. Lossky, *Teologia mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, trans. Vasile Răducă, Anastasia Press, Bucharest, 1993, p. 101.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ N. Matsoukas, *Istoria filosofiei bizantine*, trans. Const. Coman, N. Deciu, Bizantine Press, Bucharest, 2003, p. 125.

³⁶ Sf. Grigorie Palama, *Omilia la Intrarea în biserică a Sf. Fecioare*, in V. Lossky, *Teologia mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, p. 253.

We may also notice how light becomes a substitute for divine grace. However, divine light does not have an allegoric meaning in itself, but a very concrete one: it is the very light of the Creation. Uncreated light is indivisible, unlimited and constant in its manifestations, unlike created light, which is limited. Saint Basil the also offers an explanation of uncreated matter through a critique of the notion of initial matter. Here, the concept of diaphanous is again useful. Light was created before the Sun, who was created to uphold and distribute it. The air received light through an instantaneous diffusion³⁷. The concept of diaphanous is often used by the Cappadocian Fathers in relation to air, which is transparent and diaphanous; it receives the images of the objects and conveys them to the beholders³⁸. Saint Basil also mentions that the nature of light is itself delicate and diaphanous, as it does not need time to pierce through the air³⁹.

Lux, Lumen, Claritas, Splendor

Christian Middle Ages also witnessed a new conception of beauty – beauty as light and beautiful form, which is already referred to as an aesthetic of light. Just like in the former Byzantine Empire, the main philosophical ideas were born out of theology⁴⁰. The lack of aesthetic concerns in medieval theologians have often been remarked, because of the prevalent moral concerns and low interest in pleasurable arts, because beauty has often been confounded with the name of God⁴¹. However, philosophical attempts of determining the nature of visual beauty, but especially of framing and conceptualizing the aesthetic experience of the believer in relation to mystical experience, have gained momentum. In this context, we should mention that the capacities of sensuously influencing the believers' emotions were accepted and even supported by the clerics, while the pathos of medieval preachers was regarded as connected to visual passion, both acting by seduction and force⁴².

The whole medieval philosophy, based on Plotinus's philosophical elements, resurrected by Dionysius the Areopagite and by those of Bonaventura or Saint Thomas Aquinas, is clearly based on Neoplatonic doctrines. That is why the enthusiastic use of light in medieval art is justified

³⁷ E. Gilson, *Filosofia în Evul mediu*, Humanitas Press, Bucharest, 1995, p. 62.

³⁸ Sf. Vasile cel Mare, *Scrieri – Partea Întâia (Omiliile la Hexaemeron, Omiliile la Psalmi, Omiliile și Cuvântări)*, trans. D. Fecioru, Biblic and Missionary Institute of Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1986, p. 87.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

⁴⁰ N. Matsoukas, *Istoria filosofiei bizantine*, p. 251.

⁴¹ K. E. Gilbert, H. Kuhn, *Istoria esteticii*, pp. 126-127.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 129. Even Sf. Augustin taught that a Christian preacher should not be "apathetic, cold and sleepy", but his role would be "to horrify, to speak to the heart, to put passion in his words" (*Despre doctrina creștină*, IV, II), in order to impress the believer.

as a consequence of Neoplatonism. Physical light was thus the light of the Holy Ghost, the spiritual light that had the function to illuminate all the believers that were present to the holy sermons. For instance, stained glass became a gate for the Holy Ghost, a gate that made visible the power of God and Saints.

One of the fundamental principles of medieval aesthetics is *splendor* – obviously associated with light. Albert the Great defines it as the splendor of form that shines in the proportionate parts of matter⁴³; Saint Thomas calls brightness the third property of beauty after integrity and proper proportion or consonance. The brightness of beauty in the sense of Saint Thomas means the brightness of the form of an object, either of an artwork or of nature, in such a way that it is presented to the mind in all the richness of its perfection and order" ⁴⁴. The terms that designated light — *claritas, splendor, resplendentia, fulgor, lux, lumen, illumino, lucidus, and illustro*— are often encountered in the vocabulary of western medieval writings⁴⁵.

If we consider the glare of the ceramic tiles of the mosaics, colored glass of windows or the gold of the illuminated manuscripts as concrete examples of this aesthetic splendor, we realize that the attraction of color and their brightness are instruments for enhancing the seduction of splendor. In order to realize its full power, we need to understand that the mystics have permanently seen a light that was different from the physical light of the Sun⁴⁶.

Light played a crucial part in the life of the medieval man, which had to assimilate spiritual light. The anagogical method seemed the most convenient to produce the ascension from material to spiritual world. According to Umberto Eco, Saint Bonaventure creates a metaphysics of light on an almost analogous basis⁴⁷. For Bonaventure, light appears as a substantial form of the bodies, a primary determination that the material assumes in his becoming into being⁴⁸.

Light becomes the principle of every beauty, and if we can speak of a medieval aesthetics, it is a light at the same time seen as a primordial source, medium, brightness or even color. The distinction between the physical and metaphysical light in Western philosophy seems artificial, since there was only one light. Its beauty was immediate, but at the same time incomplete without the ecstatic vision and divine glory that derives from it⁴⁹.

⁴³ Albert cel Mare, *Opus de pulchro et bono*, in K. E. Gilbert, H. Kuhn, *Istoria esteticii*, p. 141.

⁴⁴ Toma D' Aquino, *Summa Theologie*, in K. E. Gilbert, H. Kuhn, *Istoria esteticii*, p. 141.

⁴⁵ K. E. Gilbert, H. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ U. Eco, *Arta și frumosul în estetica medievală*, Meridiane Press, Bucharest, 1999, p.63.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p.64.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p.65. „, How much splendor will rule when the glory of the eternal sun will light the saved souls... A great joy can not be hidden if it jogs in joy and songs for those who will reach the kingdom of heaven”, in Sf. Bonaventura, *Sermones*, VI.

Lux nova, that Suger mentions in one of his poems, could be interpreted as an improvement of the conditions of lightning the space of a church by the new type of architectural solutions which allowed for the walls and ceiling to be elongated and made room for larger windows, but also as the Light of the New Testament. Creation was itself the light present in all. Besides the metaphor of light, the metaphors of the veil and of mirroring appear as similar, complementary manifestations, mediators that offer the human being accessibility towards the complex world of mystical and theological symbols. During the Middle Ages, contemplation was regarded as a supreme art, an activity during which the soul can see God, in the soul's inner mirror. This conception of the unity between the mirror and the mirrored⁵⁰ should result in the transformation of matter into light.

The Lit Image: Between Iconographic Program and Aesthetic Experience

What is the role of theology in the study of medieval art? To what extent do these aesthetic ideas represent a compound of codes and symbols that was accessible within artistic image during the Middle Ages? And what is the extent to which the artistic materializations of the metaphor of light may be themselves held responsible for its creation, taking into account the social dimension of aesthetic experience as religious contemplation?

These questions may be answered in at least three ways. First, one may claim that theology is irrelevant for the creation of images in medieval art, even though it does not have a negative influence upon their construction. Such a position is advocated by Hans Belting⁵¹ who tries to show that the theologians did not contribute to the production of images, but claimed them only at a later stage, when their power was already increased⁵². When images became more powerful than the institution of the Church and started to act directly in the name of God, they became unwanted⁵³. Belting attempts to show how the control over images through words is not simple, since images imply a multiple experience. Visual experience is a direct one, easily perceptible and which can be read by the believers from all social fields. Thus, images resemble the sermons that addressed hearing rather than written word, which was accessible only to a few – priests or scholars, usually. However, its effects are not prescribable. Thus, the formative role of images was not, according to Belting, an allied for theologians. In the best case, they remained passive, responding to practices, commenting and canonizing

⁵⁰ K. E. Gilbert, H. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁵¹ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, capitoulul *The Power of Images and the Limitations of Theologians*, pp. 1-8.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 1.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

various forms in which images may be used, but never taking initiative, in the sense of being patrons or initiating ways of composing and perceiving the image⁵⁴. The cultic image or the sacred one had little to do with religion, and more with the society that expresses itself in and through religion⁵⁵. At the same time, the role of the religious image, which for a long time was the only type of image to be in society, cannot be understood exclusively in terms of its theological content⁵⁶. For Belting, theologians act either as iconoclasts or iconographers, who were content only when they could explain images⁵⁷. It is the medieval theology of the image that determined the failure of the development of a real theory of images until modern times⁵⁸.

Unlike Belting, David Freedberg suggests the constructive role of theology. Philosophers are regarded as “provocateurs” in the creation process of the images, being aware of their inherent power, rather than as censors.⁵⁹ Freedberg claims that the ontology of sacred images is fundamental for all types of images. Contrary to Belting, he advocates that what is typical for the Middle Ages is, in fact, normative for the whole human history⁶⁰. Thus, Freedberg tries to minimize the distinction between “popular piety” and the “elite spirituality” proper to theologians.

The social aspect of artistic production becomes crucial. On the one hand, we have the popular understanding of the religious feeling and experience, on the other hand, its cultural understanding, based on theological writings. Theology thus worked as a factor that generalized, conceptualized and institutionalized the spiritual experience of the believers. In this sense, theology becomes, in relation to the artistic uses of light, a theorizing principle for material, sensuous light. It is responsible for transforming this medium into a metaphorical language.

A third possibility of understanding this relation belongs to Norman Bryson. In the first chapter of his book *Word and Image*⁶¹, Bryson argues for the idea of combining the discursive value of the image in terms of its iconographic principles with the illustrative, figurative one throughout the history of art. According to him, the discursive function of the mind, who

⁵⁴ J. Hamburger, *The Place of Theology in Medieval Art History: Problems, Positions, Possibilities*, in *The Mind's Eye: art and theological argument in the Middle Ages*, in *The Mind's Eye: art and theological argument in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Hamburger and A.-M. Bouché, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 12.

⁵⁵ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ H. Belting, *Bild – Anthropologie, Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*, München, 2001, in J. Hamburger, *The Mind's Eye: art and theological argument in the Middle Ages*, p. 12.

⁵⁹ J. Hamburger, *The Mind's Eye: art and theological argument in the Middle Ages*, p. 13.

⁶⁰ D. Freedberg, *Holy Image and Other Images in The Art of Interpreting*, ed. S. C. Scott, State College, Pennsylvania, 1996, in J. Hamburger, *The Mind's Eye: art and theological argument in the Middle Ages*, pp. 69-89.

⁶¹ Norman Bryson, *Word and Image*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

thinks in words, interacts in the perception of images with the illustrative, figural one⁶². Unlike its functions in Renaissance or in modern times, the discursive function is paramount during the Middle Ages. For Bryson, modernity is viewed as a balanced mixture of the discursive and the figural. The discursive regime designates those elements that reveal the influence of language over the image⁶³. Analyzing the Window of Canterbury, Bryson shows that the Biblical text precedes and anchors the image, which is dependent upon the text. The text associated with the images gives us clear instructions on how the whole panel should be regarded. We are dealing with a textually saturated image⁶⁴, which is paradigmatic for the whole medieval iconographic program. Bryson advocates that written and spoken language supports and clarifies the reception of images⁶⁵. Images become instruments of both reading and visual contemplation.

The figural aspects refer to the attributes of the image which are proper to it in the absence of any textual reference. Thus, image lives through itself, independently of any linguistic structures⁶⁶. By their own composition, medieval images bring into question textual elements, both of the Scriptures and of contemporary theologians or commentators. The depicted scenes have a Biblical source, but their visual composition, the juxtaposition of scenes, their succession in a whole, the images, they all refer to the theological explanation of their construction, prescribing a certain perception of their thematic content. Thus theology structures visual discourse; it is a platform for constructing the text that defines the image.

Far from being mutually exclusive, the discursive and the figural aspects of medieval images, which are examined here from the perspective of the metaphoric and aesthetic uses of light in stained glass windows, can be considered complementary. This complementarity can be revealed within the analogical interpretation of stained glass images. I claim that stained glass is an artistic materialization of the diaphanous character of light, which, in itself, illustrates the metaphoric character of light, both as a symbol of spiritual illumination and a sensuous mark of the light of creation. Therefore, stained glass is not only a material support for a series of images whose elements contain symbols of light or God, but also a means for converting the believer. They suggest the similarity between light and God, and they mark its presence in the world as a condition of possibility for meaning.

⁶² The term of *figural* is translated from the English term *figural* and is used having the meaning of figurative, allegoric, just like we find it as an adjective in DEX (Dicționarul Explicativ al limbii române, 1998), but also having the meaning of representation.

⁶³ N. Bryson, *Word and Image*, p. 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

Abbey Suger and the Anagogical Interpretation of Stained Glass in Gothic Architecture

Influential priest at the court of Louis the VI-th, abbey Suger is considered the initiator of a reconstruction program for the Abbey of Saint Denis, between 1137-1144. It is here that the constructive system based on ogival arches will be used for the first time, as well as other architectural elements that will later define the gothic style. Suger's ambitions were similar to those of a mecena, eager to make his project literally bright. *Ordinatio*, *De Conservazione* and *De Administratione* are the writings that consign his artistic program, and, according to Erwin Panofsky, are dated around 1140-1148 (Rudolph 1990, 20)⁶⁷.

Against the Cistercien monks and St. Bernard in his *Apologia ad Guillelmum* (1125)⁶⁸, Suger considered that nothing can be a bigger sin that to deprive the service of God from the things that nature was meant to offer – including gold, precious stones, stained glass etc⁶⁹. Any celebration became an occasion for spectacle and glamour. According to Panofsky, Suger was a real scenographer, while acting as a museum curator whenever he made acquisitions. He chose to selectively respond to Bernard's critiques, which made his program an innovative and coherent one⁷⁰.

Suger was certainly not a theologian interested in the most difficult debates of his time. He tried to adopt whatever could serve as an argument for his architectural program. As a theologian, he advocated an *anagogical* interpretation, an experience that leads the believer to ascend towards a higher level of spirituality, in line with the hierarchical structure of energies described by Pseudo-Dionisie and Ioan Scottus Eriugena⁷¹. It is here that the function of stained glass becomes of greater importance. The iconographic program of Saint Denis depicts subjects of allegorical rather than typological nature, which are able to separate us from the bonds of material concerns in order to conduct our attention towards spiritual matters.⁷²

⁶⁷ C. Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St. Denis – Abbot Suger's Program and the Early Twelfth-Century Controversy over Art*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1990, p. 20.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 15. *Apologia* Sf. Bernard is one of the most complex writings regarding art in the Middle Ages, in which he presents four main categories which should be debated in the artistic programs from monasteries – the ritualism (for example, avoiding excessive rituals, just as it happened in the Old Testament), materialism (for example the usage of expensive and precious materials for cult objects), the diminishing of isolation for monks (reducing their involvement in different social and political activities) and avoiding art as spiritual entertainment (this was the main point of criticism that the program of Suger brought).

⁶⁹ E. Panofsky, *Arhitectură gotică și gândire scolastică*, trans. Marina Vazaca, Anastasia Press, Bucharest, 1999, p. 22.

⁷⁰ C. Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁷¹ E. Panofsky, *Arhitectură gotică și gândire scolastică*, p. 29.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 29.

Suger's preference for allegorical meaning is based on a discursive program, which certainly seems to advocate for Bryson's and Freedberg's position. Many of his poems contain numerous references to Neoplatonic metaphysics of light. For him, it is bright whatever is associated with light, and therefore, with its virtues, such as *splendor*⁷³. An inscription commemorates the inauguration of the new apse and prefigures the way light will fill the new middle part of the abbey that was still under construction. If the term *lux nova* referred to the illumination conditions as a result of applied new architectural forms, the words *clarus*, *clarere*, *clarificare* denote significations related not to the perceptual side, having rather a metaphysical meaning. The word *claritas*, as we have already seen, was chosen by Joan Scottus to designate the multiple Greek words attributed to Dionisius, in order to express the glare and shining originating from the Father of Lights⁷⁴.

In another poem that describes the decorations of the western portico, Suger exposes the theory of anagogical illumination, more precisely, the fact that the material radiance of the artwork has the function to determine the spiritual light of the viewers, through a process of spiritual illumination⁷⁵. With the help of material things, the soul will be guided by the true lights – *lumina vera* – of the bright stained glasses, towards the true light – *verum lumen* – and will be raised, like Christ in the golden bronze relief, towards the Kingdom of Heavens⁷⁶.

Stained glass occupies a lot of space along the aisle and apse. In *De Administratione*, Suger describes a part of the church's windows starting from the one dedicated to the *Tree of Jesse* (from the Eastern part of the Holy Virgin's chapel) and finishing with the western rose window above the main entrance (Rudolf 2011, 402)⁷⁷. Beyond narrative and allegorical meaning, stained glass also uses its aesthetic effects, due to the brightness of colors under the rays of Sun, in order to elevate us towards spiritual matters (Alciade 1989, 14)⁷⁸. Impressing the believers should go further than the mere contemplation of the beauty of stained glass.

Stained Glass as a Materialization of the Diaphanous

The metaphor of God as light is, therefore, conveyed by means of stained glass. It functions as a screen for the outer natural light. Inside the church, light does not have the power, neither the value that has in nature, that is why, in contact with translucent matter, it transforms into immaterial

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

⁷⁴ E. Panosfky, *Arhitectură gotică și gândire scolastică*, pp. 31-32.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ C. Rudolph, „Inventing the Exegetical Stained-Glass Window: Suger, Hugh, and a New Elite Art”, *Art Bulletin*, CAA, vol. XCIII, nr. 4, decembrie 2011, p. 40.

⁷⁸ V. Nieto Alcaide, *La Luz, Símbolo y Sistema Visual*, Cátedra Press, Madrid, 1989, p. 14.

light, light that has its own force of illumination. The force of light activates the translucent medium of glass, enlivening the colors. It is light that sets into motion the whole gothic iconography. Therefore, it is a condition of possibility for any meaning to be produced.

I would like to offer two arguments in support of the idea that stained glass can be regarded as an artistic materialization of the diaphanous, which sets into motion the metaphor of light, despite its inherent iconographic character, that is, as a support for an illustrated narrative. The first one regards the structural function of stained glass in gothic architecture. The second concerns the reception of stained glass in their original context of production.

Concerning their architectural function, one may notice that, in Romanic church, whenever it was present, stained glass was an element subordinate to its architectural condition of window, through which a limited amount of light could enter. It was a closed form, dependent on the walls in which it was severed. Gothic cathedrals differ not only in the dimension of their windows, or the amplification of its inner size, but also in offering opportunities to develop its symbolic character. The difference between wall and window is attenuated, supporting the characterization of gothic architecture as translucent⁷⁹. The controlled, pointed and locally focused light from the Byzantine architecture which came from multiple sources, was also replaced with a space bathed in diffuse light. Thus, the very notion of window was set into question⁸⁰. If, in the Byzantine architecture, the dimension of the window determined the quantity of light that could fill in the space, the quantity of light in Gothic architecture will be measured qualitatively through color and the atmosphere created by filtered light.

In supporting this idea, Panofsky introduces the transparency principle of Gothic architecture. Janzen or Simson propose the term diaphanous architecture⁸¹, relating transparency with notions of medium and spatiality. The diaphanous itself cannot be visualized unless under certain conditions, which the colors of stained glass offer by their transparent nature. At the same time, Gothic architects elaborate the articulation of spatial media in a system of optical fiction⁸². They use various means to alter the usual sensorial experience and intentionally alter their supportive effects. For instance, Gravity seems to be annulled given the elongation of the Church.

Reminding the distinction between the spiritual light proper to God and the corporeal light as an expression of God, Witelo applies it to the interior space of Gothic architecture in order to show the intimate relation

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

⁸¹ Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1956, p. 4.

⁸² V. Nieto Alcaide, *La Luz, Símbolo y Sistema Visual*, p. 32.

between the two in stained glass⁸³. Another function of light was to unify interior space. Beginning with Rayonnant Gothic style, around 1230, is the final step for French architects to build *in light*⁸⁴. Thanks to illuminated walls, rayonnant architecture succeeded to translate the supernatural in a space of worship by enhancing dematerialization⁸⁵.

In this context, one can analyze the power of light to pierce glass without damaging it, as well as the explicative power of the mysteries of God given this property of light. It crosses the materiality of stained glass without altering it. As solid matter, glass allows light to penetrate it just like the Holy Ghost penetrates the human body. This image, an analogy that explains the mystery of embodiment, is used by Pseudo Saint Bernard as follows. Just like the splendor of the Sun crosses glass without breaking it, thus the Word of God penetrates Mary's womb and gets out of it pristine⁸⁶.

Nieto-Alcaide identified two major functions of stained glass – one of them is connected to the symbolic configuration of space, just like we have shown in the previous chapter, and the other one is represented by the fact that stained glass becomes a vehicle of iconographic programs integrated in the iconologic system of the cathedral⁸⁷. Regarding light, we encounter two types of language with distinct characters, which converge towards the same reading of the cathedral. In connection to symbolic values and visual metaphors, the stained glass does not play a simple role of painting on the glass or of a creative filter of a spatial environment. Through the proposed visual metaphors, the stained glass brings forward the doctrinal idea itself of *God as light*⁸⁸.

Some of the topics found in stained glasses were introduced in iconography at the Saint Denis Monastery and they spread everywhere from there. Many of the aspects from iconographic programs were artificial. They had to transform the cathedral into an encyclopaedia of stone in which different artistic representations had to come in a row and combine like the letters of a holy text. For example, in order to represent the way in which Christ illuminated Jerusalem with his sermon, a master from Amiens⁸⁹ represented the person of Christ with a lamp in his hand in front of the walls of the city. The variety of conceptions is surprising. It includes the entire range of representations, knowledge, traditions and ideals in its iconographic

⁸³ S. Sebastian, *Mensaje Simbólico del Arte Medieval*, Ediciones Encuentro Press, Madrid, 1994, p. 345.

⁸⁴ Ph. Plagnieux, *L'architecture gothique est-elle lumière?*, in *Le Symbolisme de la Lumière au Moyen-Âge: de la Spéculation à la Réalité*, Chartres, 2004, p. 43.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ Pseudo Saint Bernard cited by L. Grodecki, *Les vitraux de France, du XIe au XVIe siècle*, Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques, Paris, 1953, p. 40.

⁸⁷ V. Nieto Alcaide, *La Luz, Símbolo y Sistema Visual*, p. 39.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 39, 43.

⁸⁹ L. Godeski, *Le vitrail Gothique*, Office du livre Press, Friburg, 1984, pp. 109-110.

system which defined the consciousness of the human being in the Middle Ages. The Old and the New Testament were represented, the old legends of saints, fragments from old myths, epic poems and obscure folk beliefs.

The varied topics approached by the creators of stained glasses include the Birth of Christ, the Virgin with Jesus as a baby, the Crucifixion, the Passions, the Resurrection, different scenes from the New Testament, scenes from the life of Saints and portraits of Biblical characters are painted in vivid, powerful colours. The interpretation of the metaphorical function of stained glass in connection to the symbolism and aesthetics of light is presented in the epoch's literary proofs. It is also there where we find the literary definition of the metaphor integrated in the concept of stained glass. For example, Pierre de Roissy, the chancellor of the Cathedral from Chartres and the manager of the Theological School, stated in 1200 that "the stained glasses that are inside the church and through which sunlight passes signify the Holy Scripture which protects us from evil and illuminates us in all"⁹⁰. A similar idea had Durand, the Bishop of Mende, when he stated at the end of the 13th century that "stained glasses are like writings which appear in the light of true sun, meaning God, illuminating the choirs of believers in the church"⁹¹.

The symbolism of colours makes its appearance also at the level of stained glass – red remains an imperial colour, blue is the colour of the Virgin, and also of the Kings of France, green is rather troublesome reminding us of the idea of seductive youth, while yellow is the one which signals dangers and fraudulency. Gold had the supreme value, while white and black were the two extremes associated in a symbolic way with good and evil, purity and impurity⁹².

The rosace from the Western façade or the ones that belong to the sides of the transept, present during all Gothic phases, especially in the maturity period, very well illustrate the medieval artists' ability of composing architectural space. The centred compositional system is one of the most normal and balanced which can be naturally found in the conscience of the viewer, just like Rudolf Arnheim stated in his Gestalt norms⁹³. Centricity refers to defining the human being, through motivation and human attitude, as a centre of the universe⁹⁴, but even more than this, centricity manages to connect the human being with a landmark. And according to medieval thinking, the landmark was a clear one, represented by God. The centre was fixed and unchanged, everything started and came back to Him; just like the human being places oneself in the centre while being egotistic, through

⁹⁰ Pierre de Roissy, cited by E. de Bruyne, p. 15, in V. Nieto Alcaide, *La Luz, Símbolo y Sistema Visual*, p. 46.

⁹¹ Durand de Mende, in L. Grodecki, *Le vitrail français*, Colin, Paris, 1958, pp. 39-40.

⁹² J. Le Goff, *Introduction*, in *Omni Medieval*, Polirom Press, Iași, 1999, p. 32.

⁹³ R. Arnheim, *Forța centrului vizual*, Meridiane Press, Bucharest, 1995.

⁹⁴ C. Jurov, *Arhitectura ambianțelor*, Capitel, Bucharest, 2006, p. 290.

illumination, the human being can be placed under the centre, becoming aware that it has the ability if not to touch it, at least to be inclined towards reaching it.

Who had access to this type of image discourse? How much was it possible for the viewers to read from the aesthetic program of medieval theology, materialized in stained glass? And how could the symbolic of light become accessible to the viewers?

Doing a research on the perception of image in that period, Conrad Rudolph⁹⁵ tried to prove the fact that, even if not very long ago, the artistic program launched by Suger was considered emblematic for reviving allegory and symbolism after hundreds of years, his plan should be reconsidered, taking into account the exegetic value of this allegory. In fact, his program seems to be more of a source for the new art of the elite. Monumental art, with its exegetic character, thus became accessible only to those *litterati* who could assimilate somehow crypted meaning of artistic images. Gradually, this type of art spread towards the fresh urban elite who had access to written theological culture, but was still numerically reduced. Rudolph also analyzed the usage of exegesis in the visual art from Saint-Denis in connection to other works of art, showing how the conceptual part of works of art, intellectual and spiritual in the same time, was practically restricted and dedicated to an educated contemporary viewer⁹⁶. This thing was essential for understanding the rapports between art and its perceivers during this period.

The metaphors of light have remained not only at a literary level, but also, through the preachers and their sermons, they transmitted their symbolic power through concrete explanations⁹⁷. Thorough mediation, many of these images became familiar to believers, and the degree of efficiency of symbols and of understanding of their value was still subordinated to the word⁹⁸. This system of visualizing symbols and metaphors through words was absolutely necessary, taking into account that, in many situations, according to the ones stated by Conrad Rudolph in his above-mentioned article, the images with an exegetic value became accessible to a mass of innitiated people which was more and more reduced. But the idea according to which the viewer can decrypt the meaning of images in a transparent way, without further exegesis is thus questioned. In connection to the visions regarding light discussed in the first part of the article, it means not only that the image has a discursive role, respecting the terms of Norman Bryson, being subordinated to medieval theology, but also that the figurative elements of the images from stained glasses – their shiny character, the clarity and splendour associated to

⁹⁵ C. Rudolph, „Inventing the Exegetical Stained-Glass Window: Suger, Hugh, and a New Elite Art”, in *Art Bulletin*, CAA, vol. XCIII, nr. 4, 2011, pp. 399-422.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁷ V. Nieto Alcaide, *La Luz, Símbolo y Sistema Visual*, p. 50.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*.

coloured glass – play a just as important role in supporting the anagogical effect associated to the iconography of stained glasses. The spiritual conversion of the viewer which sends us from the earthly light to the divine, uncreated one, is underlined through the figurative character of the stained glass, through its aesthetic effects which are immediately accessible to the uneducated viewer.

Conclusions

Being understood as a materialization of the diaphane, the embodiment of transparency which makes possible the visualization of images without being itself a palpable element in the visual field, the stained glass thus remains a paradigmatic example for the idea according to which light approximates God, keeping in the same time the distance between Him (as uncreated light) and His earthly manifestations. Consequently, far from being antagonical, the discursive and figurative aspect of stained glasses can be reconciled in a complementary functioning inside the visual paradigm of the diaphane. In theological writings, as we could notice, light itself is a symbol of divinity, and also a metaphorical example of God, Who is *like* light, without being confunded with it. Light offers the believer the possibility of perceiving its glory and slave. But, in its spacial materialization through the means of stained glass, it simultaneously becomes an environment in which images can be perceived and also a means through which the distance between profane and divinity is reinforced.

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Ideology, Symbolism and Representation through Byzantine Art

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Abstract: A research about symbolism and representation in the world of the Byzantine leads us to the identification of an aesthetic doctrine based both on the ideas of the important thinkers of the time and also on the artistic representations, which have created constitutive beliefs for memory and for social identity. We identify in this regard the ideological conceptions that have structured the collective mentality and determined the crystallization and the imposition of a cultural paradigm. An important role in this sense was played by the plastic representations of Byzantine art. One of the essential themes of this Byzantine art is to illustrate some aspects of the visible and invisible world. The Byzantine artistic representation does not reproduce or imitate earthly patterns, but tends to transcend the human world and to approach the divine. The subject of Byzantine art becomes the idea of the eternal and immutable world, which opens only to the soul or the mind, a world different from that of the perceptible phenomena of the senses. The perception of the human being changes: the human body begins to become more and more devalued, and the idea of the soul, whose perfection consists in delivering body and salvation, is glorified. We are talking about completing a theme that will contribute to shaping the Christian doctrine and will have an overwhelming role in the formation and structuring of the collective mentality for several centuries.

Keywords: ideology; images - symbol; Byzantine art; symbolism; hieratism; transcendent world; dogmatism.

Introduction

The beginnings of Byzantine art are related to the Milan edict promulgated by the Roman emperors Gaius Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus, known as Constantine the Great and Flavius Galerius Valerius Licinianus Licinius, in 313, allowing Christianity to become a public religion and implicitly to Christian art to manifest itself and evolve.

Byzantine art will know the climax in the 6th century during the Emperor Justinian (527-565), and will develop in certain forms within the Eastern Roman Empire until the 15th century the moment of the Conquest of Constantinople:

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Byzantine civilization largely owes its fundamental features to the political and religious structures of the Empire from which it takes its name. It is therefore legitimate to inscribe the development of the plastic arts, which constituted its most spectacular and most appealing expression, between the dates of the foundation and the collapse of Constantinople, the capital of this Empire: November 324 - May 29, 1453².

This was based on a synthesis of Greek artistic elements, with African and Asian influences, manifested in iconography, embroidery, mosaic and polychrome decoration. Thus, we can say that Byzantine art has originated ancient Christian art with elements of Mediterranean and the Near East cultures.

On the one hand, an important role in defining the culture and vision of the Byzantine artistic was the Orient. This influence materialized in the vision of the world, in the aesthetic conception and in the genres of art adopted. The Near East is the one that brings with it a new world view, different from that of the classical world. Thus, Iranian Mazdaism implies the idea of a universe divided into two irreconcilable powers: good and evil, light and darkness. On the other hand, the Mithraism gives the human being the solution of salvation in a future world. Under these influences, the classical tradition that promotes the harmonious unity of the human being breaks, the earthly world is no longer considered a foundation of beauty, but becomes a headquarters of evil. The perception of the human being changes: the human body begins to become more and more devalued, and the idea of the soul, whose perfection consists in delivering body and salvation, is glorified. These ideas with profound religious implications, which materialized in the philosophical currents of the time, influenced the artistic creation as a normative aesthetic doctrine. For these concepts served to the ideology of the masses. Thus, it is believed that evil can only be defeated by grace and by serving "the order of a distinct world" to that in which man dwells, namely the divine world, and all the effort of the human individual has to be deposited to serve the divine world as best as possible and to prepare for the Later Life. We can say that in this sense, by emphasizing the distinction between good and evil and by the fear that it is desired to inculcate, it was intended to create a dependence that transforms the human being into a fragile and unstable one. According to Paul Evdokimov, we can say that the idea of evil provokes a sense of dependence on the elements that the human being ignores, does not understand or does not want to understand, the human being bears these elements in the depths of one's soul and they affect one's balance, making one fragile and unstable³. On this ground is the opposition

² Ch. Delvoye, *Arta bizantină*[*Byzantine Art*], Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1976, p. 21.

³P. Evdochimov, *Vârsele vieții spirituale*[*The Ages of Spiritual Life*], Christiana Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 75 - 76.

between the heavenly and the earthly and the proclamation of the primacy of spiritual life, in order to subordinate the individual. One's interest moves from the earthly, worldly, materiality, to the divine, to the transcendent. This transcendence brings with it a *dismissal*, in the sense that the human individual is dispossessed of the material, the preoccupation for materiality is annihilated, one has to deal with the spiritual, the soul, in order to fulfill the ultimate goal, which is salvation.

The Byzantine representation does not reproduce or imitate earthly patterns, but tends to transcend the human world and to approach the divine. Thus, instead of the beautiful sensual encounter in nature or everyday life, Byzantine art proposes the idea of the Absolute Beauty of the divine world, which is the source of beautiful sensuality. In this respect, we can say that the main attribute promoted by the new aesthetics is "abstraction". The abstract Byzantine vision differs from the Hellenistic-Roman one that is naturalistic, as its purpose is to make the rendering of the intelligible rather than the visible⁴. For Byzantine art moves away from the representations of classical art that tried to imitate reality as truthfully as possible and abandons it in favor of a symbolic approach. In comparison to the artworks of early Christianity, in which we still encounter elements of realism in Roman art, Byzantine art proposes a flatter, more abstract symbolic style, which focuses on the highlighting of spirituality⁵. The aesthetics of Byzantine art give greater attention to detail and ornaments and is inspired by the issue of the Christian world. Abstraction is the privilege of a dual de-individualization. On the one hand, de-individualization involves the highlighting of spirituality, which brings with it a departure from corporality, materiality and a divine approach, to the transcendent world. On the other hand, de-individualization is the result of ignorance, in the Socratic sense, which makes the human individual easy to control and manipulate.

In Byzantine iconography, holy people and events were rendered on wood, cloth, wall, or other material, and there was a standardization of the forms of holy persons. Byzantine painters used three techniques, which are encaustic, tempera and fresco: "It seems that in the 6th century it was already encaustic for the holy paintings and the representation of the figures, those of the long-ago *en vogue* in Egypt (Fayum)"⁶. If encaustics required the use of wax as the solvent of color, in the case of tempera, the solvent of the color was an organic matter, mostly egg white, and the fresco, which was the most resistant to weathering, involved the dissolution of the colors with water and their application on plaster of wet lime.

⁴ G. Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics*, John Murray Publishing House, London, 1965, p. 19.

⁵ A. Grabar, "Plotin et les origines de l'esthétique médiévale", in vol. *L'Art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1968.

⁶ P. Constantinescu-Iași, *Istoria artei bizantine* [*The History of Byzantine Art*], "Viața românească" Publishing House, Iași, 1927, p. 71.

The rendered characters were represented entirely or as a bust. In the representation of the figure, the eyes were the most interesting, their representation sending to the symbolism of the inner side - *the eyes of the soul*. The disproportionately large eyes highlighted the idea of spirituality, and alluded to the inward. Plotin spoke of the fact that «the eye of the body» was substituted by the «inner eye» and that "«the intellectual vision», surpassing not only the data of the senses, but also the rational discourse, permitted the enthusiasm and self-oblivion to touch ecstasy which allowed the ineffable and indescribable contemplation of the Being" ⁷. This inwardness can be interpreted with a double meaning. For beyond the contemplation of exploiting the deepest aspects of the human being, we can speak of a so-called profane aspect of contemplation, materialized by indoctrination. This is a false contemplation, in the situation where contemplation becomes a necessity, a must, a *modus vivendis* not found, apprehensive.

The face of the Biblical characters was surrounded by a circular nimbus, very clearly drawn, made of gold or ocher, and which signified holiness. The nose was long and thin, the lips lacked carnality, the hands and the legs as well and they were also larger than their natural dimension, and the fingers were long and thin joined in the prayer gesture, all of which constituted a specific hieratism of Byzantine iconography. In the same sense were the garments covering the whole body, being devoid of naturalness and geometrically presented to leave room for spiritual beauty and to induce the absence of corporality: "the garments and the bodies have lost their volume and weight. It could be said that the folds are as though they are hung on the heads, but retain the full importance of portraits"⁸. Moreover, in the same agreement, the colors of the vestments were pale, extinguished to express sobriety and inner mastery. In the general framework of the pale and shadowy artworks, the Virgin Mary was illustrated with the blue tunic and the red omophorion, and Jesus Christ with a blue hiatus and a red tunic. In fact, this type of approach imposes a model; the representation of Biblical characters incites the idea of breaking the carnality, materiality, earthly preoccupations, once again emphasizing the importance of the spiritual in front of matter.

The Byzantine painters gave the same icon for several events at different times. They rendered objects schematically, simple and had more of a role of decoration or parting of the scenes. Clarity, reserve, balance and grace were the essential characteristics of the Christian sacred image in an icon. The Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were usually illustrated in the form of characters watching or writing the Gospel. They were painted in the central area of the main ship, or their figures appeared to

⁷Apud. Ch. Delvoye, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸Ch. Delvoye, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

be isolated in pendants, and John was the only one looking to his right and listening to the voice of an angel. Evangelists were also illustrated in iconography, in the form of symbols. Thus, John was symbolized by an eagle, Luke by a calf, Mark's figure was associated with a lion, and Matthew was the symbol of man.

The artistic representations of the Byzantine world have two tendencies: one symbolic and another anecdotal. The symbolic tendency is recovered from the world of Egypt, the land of hieroglyphs, and the anecdotal tendency is recovered from Syria and Palestine. It is a world that evokes images, symbols, secret keys and a historical story-telling dimension about the Gospel text, two worlds that are not excluded, but complementary and harmoniously blend into artistic representations of great originality, writing a stage in the history of universal arts. In this respect, G. Oprescu noted:

The Church then uses a lot of images, some symbolic, some anecdotal, that is narrative, for the edification of Christians, and especially for the satisfaction of the need to understand the new teaching, those who recently embraced Christianity (the Neophytes) ... Egypt, let's not forget, is the land of hieroglyphs. People feel the need of a symbolic language to awaken certain ideas or feelings. ... At the same time, however, when these signs, more graphic than artistic, propagated in Syria and Palestine, close to where Christianity was born, his followers wanted to represent the capital moments of the Savior's existence, to imagine He had everything connected with His life or His disciples. From here comes the anecdotal representation of the divine⁹.

The convergence of the two worlds, symbolic and narrative, outlines, on the one hand, a philosophical and aesthetic doctrine necessary for comprehension, and on the other hand an ideological doctrine necessary for the enslavement and submission of the masses. This ideological doctrine is manifested at a noological level, generating what Karl Mannheim called *total ideologies*¹⁰ that will impose the form and overall framework of a new way of thinking, aiming to "complete that fundamental reconstruction of the whole horizon of a social group"¹¹. We could speak in this respect of generating a new paradigm of real-world reporting, which has religion as its central point, but understood in the sense proposed by Ludwig Feuerbach, in *The Essence of Christianity*, namely religion as distortion - dissimulation of reality¹². Ideology thus becomes a general process through which everyday praxis is falsified by an imaginary representation that people create about it. The fact that a false image is actually born is because action is imaginatively

⁹ G. Oprescu, *Manual de istoria artei. Evul Mediu [Textbook of the History of Art. The Middle Ages]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1985, pp. 68 - 69.

¹⁰ K. Mannheim, *Ideologie et utopie*, Librairie Marcel Riviere, Paris, 1956, pp. 42 - 47.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

¹² *Apud*. P. Ricoeur, *Eseuri de hermeneutică [Essays of Hermeneutics]*, vol. II: „De la text la acțiune” [“From text to action”], Echinox Publishing House, Cluj, 1999, pp. 358 - 365.

modeled by a kind of symbolic mediation which, being perverted, produces a deformed image of life.

Illustration models of the transcendent world - a first stage of Byzantine art

The founding of the second capital of the Roman Empire at Constantinople, based on the old Byzantium, naturally led to the birth of an eclectic and brilliant cultural and artistic center. For "the place chosen by Constantine the Great was not even better: at the mouth of the Bosphorus, where Asia meets Europe through their centers of civilization, where the streams of culture come from Mesopotamia and Syria and Anatolia with the Greek or Western Roman ones"¹³.

Under the influence of the court of Constantinople, Byzantine art becomes the official art, an imperial art of Oriental inspiration: "The characteristics of the new Byzantine art are two which are more important: it is an official and oriental art"¹⁴. Thus, in the representation of the clothes of the painted or mosaic figures, the garments from the yard are copied, and the figures are portrayed and individualized, and illustrate members of the imperial family or important figures of the time, who are portrayed "in the picture of a saint or a personage of religious scene"¹⁵. Moreover, "as compared to the glory of the imperial court, they reached heavenly pumps, unbelievably bright to the righteous"¹⁶.

The Imperial character of Byzantine art is one of the distinctive features of this type of Christian art in comparison with the other two, Romanesque art and Gothic art:

Its essential function was to exalt the supernatural majesty of the emperor and the church, to create the sumptuous framework in which their liturgies were held, to illustrate by images the divine nature of their mission, to provide the objects necessary for the celebration of the ritual. It is not an art of reason and reality, but of transcendence and of ostentation, an art that has to overwhelm and inspire respect for the subjects, believers and neighboring peoples¹⁷.

Painting and mosaic are two of the ways of showing the Byzantine artistic genius. Mural painting was accomplished through two techniques: the mosaic of coloured glass pieces and fresco. The mosaic responded to the demands of the art of evoking spiritual essences through the mediation of figurative representations, therefore it was necessary to reveal forms that are

¹³ Ch. Delvoye, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

increasingly devoid of matter, fleshly, earthly ones. As far as fresco technique is concerned, it involved the reproduction of volumes by simplifying, stylizing and flattening the shapes.

The mosaic made during the first period of imposing Byzantine art is of oriental inspiration: "it was claimed that the first Christian art owes much to Rome. It turned out ... that in the first three centuries there was an Oriental revival of old traditions that rose above the Hellenistic influence"¹⁸, Byzantine art being formed "from the crossing of Egyptian, Syrian and Greek art"¹⁹. There are borrowed decorative elements from ancient Hellenistic art such as branches, flowers or pots, which are embedded in Christian narrative themes, which correspond to the trends of the time. Biblical scenes are illustrated alongside various oriental insights: bulls, lions, dolphins, ducks, phoenix birds, flowers and corners of irregular angles, but also portraits of Byzantine rulers, all offering a homogeneous environment whose luminous background enhances the feeling of expansion and dematerialization. The mosaics in the San Vitale Church in Ravenna are the most illustrative of this.

The purpose of Byzantine art was to recreate the supernatural world, defined "by a strict Orthodoxy, and having to meet the well-defined requirements of the clientèle"²⁰, and "those who practiced it were far from enjoying the freedom that today's artists. ... The subjects were often proposed to the smallest detail; they were forced to follow the patterns"²¹. Hieratism, solemnity and simplicity were the essential characteristics of Byzantine painting during this period. The human figures, prototyped, were enlarged and placed at the center of the composition. The colours suggested a mystical and transcendent world. Thus, white was used to recreate the idea of light and purity, gold to create a beam of light, blue and red were the colors characteristic of the rendering of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, and the green was used to illustrate St. John the Baptist.

One of the essential themes found in Byzantine art is the illustration of some aspects of the visible and invisible world. In this respect, we find on the one hand a tendency towards flattening, the elimination of volume and symmetry, when it comes to illustrating historical characters whose existence was real, it cannot be challenged or is dogmatically asserted, and on the other hand, an ostentatious tendency towards corporality when it comes to beings considered to be crystallized by the divine²². When we relate to the first category, we are talking about illustrations such as those of the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ, the apostles, evangelists, or saints, who send out

¹⁸P. Constantinescu - Iași, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁹*Ibidem*.

²⁰Ch. Delvoe, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

²¹*Ibidem*, pp. 28 - 29.

²²Cornea, Andrei, *Ecclesiocrația. Mentalități culturale și forme artistice în epoca romano-bizantină [Ecclesiocracy. Cultural Mentalities and Artistic Forms in the Roman-Byzantine Epoch]*, (300 - 800), Teora Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, pp. 113 - 114.

decorporalized images to suggest spirituality. The second category includes illustrations of the Holy Spirit or angels who receive body shapes as precise and accurate as possible, as in the case of angels, or other, such as the representation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a pigeon. We can identify in this respect a stylistic inversion designed to glorify the beyond world and its importance, once again emphasizing the fact that the human being must be more concerned with one's evolution towards accessing the world beyond the materiality of life on earth. Humanity, carnality belong to the earthly world, which is nothing but a place where the human being can reach perfection, where one can prepare for the true life that is beyond this world, being a world of spirituality.

From the 5th century, the cycle of the passions of Jesus Christ begins to be illustrated in iconography, more and more frequently. It is the first time when the artist even represents the scene of the Crucifixion, illustrating the idea of cruel crucifixion. Also, the themes of David's history (frescoes from Baut²³) and scenes with the Last Judgment are also created.

During this first period of development of Byzantine art, the models of the main characters that will form the representations of Christian art in general begin to be fixed. For example, Jesus appears in two hypostases: "a young beardless person, as a Greek hero under the influence of Hellenistic art and a mature one, with a black beard, as it was conceived in Syria; at the beginning, both types appear, later the Byzantine monumental art prefers the second, further emphasizing His solemn character"²⁴. Regarding the features of the Virgin Mary, these have been fixed in several ways:

«Theotokos» becomes serious, with a long face, an impressive attitude; «Hodigitria» standing up, holding the child on one of the arms, the other stretched to the prayer; «Blachernitissa» is the bust, with the arms in the position of praying, having Jesus on Her chest in medallion; «Kyriotissa» standing up, clutching the baby to Her chest; others reproduce variants: sitting on the throne and blessing or standing without a baby, breastfeeding - all retaining the same features of the face²⁵.

Also during this period, the representations of the prophets, archangels, evangelists or apostles are fixed. Thus, the prophets are rendered "like old men with long hair and beards"²⁶; archangels such as the "winged Ancient Victories"²⁷, some apostles such as Saints Peter, Paul, Andrew or John the Baptist "with bone face and black hair disordered"²⁸.

²³P. Constantinescu - Iași, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

²⁴*Ibidem.*

²⁵*Ibidem.*

²⁶*Ibidem.*

²⁷*Ibidem.*

²⁸*Ibidem.*

Alongside religious themes and motifs, Byzantine artists introduce into their compositions elements inspired by the Hellenistic picturesque and naturalism, the solemnity of the historical and monumental style, or the decorative elements of Oriental inspiration. Although the Byzantine artist is still influenced by the world of antiquity, he is the foremost preacher of religion, the ideological factor of his time:

“The artist is penetrated by the influence of antiquity, which arises from the nobility of attitudes, the elegance of the costumes, the order of the compositions; but his great merit was to give triumphant religion a self-evident plastic manifestation, with tendencies of uniformity because of the theological character²⁹.”

Under the influence of the religious phenomenon, Byzantine painting focused on illustrating Biblical characters and rendering their figures through association with humans. Thus, the ideal prototypes were formed, the images being largely the same. Theories such as the incarnation, the passions and Resurrection of Christ, the obsession of sin and the fear of death are highlighted by the majority of visual artists. Artistic language becomes simple and accessible to believers, for art created during this period is destined for the majority. We assist to the completion of a subject that will contribute to the shaping of Christian doctrine and will have an overwhelming role in the formation and structuring of the collective mind centered on several centuries.

Glorification of the Emperor's image during the Byzantine iconoclasm

During the 8th - 9th centuries, a period known as Byzantine iconoclasm, because of the ban of icons in churches, the artists focused on the execution of the pavement and parietal mosaics, highlighting the image of the emperors. The glorification of their actions becomes an important feature of the period, on the walls of the churches being caught in different hypostases, along with their predecessors, families, followers to the throne.

This period reflects the decadence in the development of Byzantine art due to the tense situation in the area and the struggles for supremacy:

“It was the time when, on the one hand, Persia and the Slavs were constantly attacking the state, and Islam was beginning to expand its domination over the more eccentric provinces, that is in Asia Minor and Egypt, and on the other hand, in Constantinople itself, the Iconoclast movement started, with some emperors and the church

²⁹Petre Constantinescu - Iași, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

pointing against the cult of icons, the images of the world in the churches³⁰.”

On the other hand, due to the leaps and bounds of the cult of the icons, there was a danger that the monasteries would begin to occupy a powerful role in the state against the imperial dynasties:

“The cult of the icons had made a tremendous momentum during the sad events that preceded Isauri, the crowd often looking for salvation in miraculous icons, whose holy face is confused with the venerable object itself. There were icons that laughed or wept, others who spoke or even went; they were offered all kinds of sacrifices and worship, waiting from them for the most curious facts - a true idolatry. ... Then the Isauri emperors, eager to revive the empire, did not see this passage of their miraculous icon-owners - a monastery could play a large role in the state through the influence of an icon; in the monasteries there had been thousands of monks who lived in this trade, and who thus escaped from the duties of defending their homeland that were in great need of soldiers³¹.”

The Ecumenical Council of 753 will formally condemn the cult of any form of representation of any religious figure. In this context, a series of frescoes, wood icons, miniatures and mosaics such as those from Blacherne or the Church of Saint Sophia will be destroyed. Moreover, some icon painters, due to the fact that they did not deny these forms of idolatrous representation, became martyrs. We observe that there are some profound changes in the ideology of the Christian empire, as a result of the disparity between political reality and the preached theoretical dimension. Although Christian aesthetic and philosophical doctrines have been considered a symbol of legitimacy and social authority, we are now witnessing a theological crisis that will deepen the line of fracture which already exists between the Constantinopolitan and Roman churches and which will bring about a political dimension of the conflict. We will thus witness a long process through which the Papacy will try to emerge from the moral and political authority of the Byzantine Empire.

In the context in which the painting of icons was forbidden, the Byzantines appropriated the mosaic as a decorative art. The mosaic, a decorative technique known since the 3rd millennium BC, with two variants, pavement and parietal, and created by assembling small pieces of stone, tiles or colored glass, took the place of religious paintings that were forbidden by the Synod of Elvira, from the 4th century. For the pavement mosaic, they used hard rocks, such as marble, diorite and porphyry, cut differently and also

³⁰ George Oprescu, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

³¹ Petre Constantinescu - Iași, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

small rocks, with one of the surfaces being polished and different colors. For the parietal mosaic, stained glass and gold and silver cubes were broken and fixed in the mortar on the wall with the outward splash, being protected by a colorless glass, creating a play of lights and fascinating optical effects.

The miniatures are another form of artistic manifestation of the iconoclastic period. In this respect, there is a concern to illustrate the scientific manuscripts, observing the revival of ancient tradition and oriental influence. A *Ptolemy* from the beginning of the 9th century, which is preserved in the Vatican, illustrates only profane images: "stars represented by animals on a blue globe, 12 half-naked figures represent the months of the year, the sun has a gold crown, at the corners one can see the images of day and night"³². From the same period, a Greek Gospel from which the human figure is completely missing is preserved at the National Library of Paris, illustrated with images "depicting large adorned letters, medallions with flowers, fruits or birds, architectures"³³. Or, a work by Gregory of Nazianz, which is kept at the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, is illustrated with allegorical and mythological topics, with several episodes of the Old Testament. Fragments of Old Testament topics were also found in a manuscript with fragments of the Fathers of the Church, preserved in the National Library, but these are anecdotal and refer to contemporary events related to the life of the charlatan physicians, athletes, or painters³⁴. Also, two products of the Studion School in Constantinople, the *Chludof Psalter* and *Physiologus*, are a testimony of the theological allegorical representations that took place in the 9th century in the monastic miniaturization schools concealed from the anger of the iconoclasts. Thus, the *Chludof Psalter* illustrates both ancient topics and the Old and New Testament subjects of symbolic and moral character. In *Physiologus*, there are realistic illustrations of animals, as well as symbolic illustrations:

with theological allegorical scenes or related to the quarrel of the icons; here, the influence of ancient art is stronger, there are many personifications of the day, nymphs, centaurs, mermaids and admirable Alexandrian genre scenes; an important part includes illustrations of the life of the Church's Parents³⁵.

In fresco, the iconoclastic movement resumed the decorative motifs of Paleo-Christian art: trees, birds, animals, vines, avoiding the human figurative element. Thus, "religious scenes are destroyed and they are replaced by picturesque scenes from the race course, nature scenes or portraits of iconoclastic emperors and their favorites"³⁶. For the emperors have exploited this period and have valorized it for their own glorification:

³²P. Constantinescu - Iași, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

³³*Ibidem*.

³⁴*Ibidem*, p. 102.

³⁵*Ibidem*.

³⁶*Ibidem*, pp. 96 - 97.

But even the iconoclastic art is not devoid of interest. Emperors eager for spiritual glory, have ordained their palaces and other works of art to be raised, as they have come to the taste of antiquity and realism; the profane art setting a current opposite to the monastic, theological, traditional and severe³⁷.

In this regard, we assist in a substitution and transmutation of the object of veneration. For the cult of icons is gradually replaced by that of the emperor, the leader, who is the representative of the divinity on the earth. And to reinforce this aspect, the representations must indicate glorification. Thus, a semantic inversion takes place in the sense that representation is no longer associated with humility, earthly and material separation, ascension to spirituality, but it must highlight greatness, fasting, create images - symbol for the crowd, for humanity, images - symbol of power.

These aspects will lead to a revival of the Alexandrian spirit, which will be an important element for the strengthening of the old Byzantine current. The realistic character of the art promoted in this period brings forward issues of symbolic images and of the visible and intelligible, which will lead to a new artistic vision, Liturgical and dogmatic, which will be imposed in the following centuries of manifestation of Byzantine art.

The world of aspirations to mysticism and asceticism

The cult of icons began to be restored in the 9th century, and the mosaic takes on the role of clarifying the fundamental dogmas. The mosaic images, representing apostles, prophets, messengers, heralds, angels, Jesus Christ, or Virgin Mary, began to be portrayed on curved surfaces. Beginning with the 12th and 13th centuries, mosaics will display inexpressive faces and strained movements on dark green, dark gray and brown. If in the first period of Byzantine art, the mosaic was executed on a blue background, in the second period the artists propose a golden background. *The Last Judgment* and *the Descending of the Cross* become the most popular themes of this period. The Church of St. Sophia in Kiev, the Cathedral of Torcello and the mosaic buildings in Sicily during the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries are representative of this.

There are differences between the Byzantine mosaic created in the West and that created in the East, differences that come from the influences of migratory peoples. We also encounter specific Islamic reasons, such as the representation of various animals, plants, garlands, weapons, gardens or geometric shapes.

In the second period of Byzantine art, the pictorial and mosaic decorations began to distance themselves from the narrative character and acquired a Liturgical and dogmatic aspect. This created a *Weltanschauung*

³⁷*Ibidem*, p. 96.

composed of a single chain of dialectical judgments³⁸, which contributed to the foundation of the absolute truth about the relationship between the two worlds: the visible and the invisible, the material and the spirituality.

In addition to the rendering of religious themes, dramatic episodes with significant details, such as: broken bodies, the head that falls on the shoulder, angels that fly crying, in the last decades of Byzantine art, they began to be illustrated, all in order to create fear for sin among the masses. Human figures, without volume, are illustrated on a gold background. The dilated pupils of the represented characters were fixed away, and their large eyes reflected spirituality and contrast with the inner self. Their garments were rigid and his dark face and expressiveness expressed the anxiety of the soul that wanted to emerge from a tormenting struggle with the body to free itself from a jolting tension. Plotin speaks in this respect of the exaltation of the virtue of "the disease and the suffering which, by making the man conscious of the weakness of his body, urges him to cultivate his spiritual life"³⁹, which the Byzantine philosophy proposes in contrast to the ideal of vitality and of athletic beauty proposed by the artists of ancient Greece.

Frontality and immobility are the essential characteristics of the Byzantine style, carried out in the last period of development of this artistic stream. However, they serve the ideological purpose of the time, the plastic artist's conformance and the canons with which he must comply and which are embodied in true artistic codes:

While the ancients tended to intellectualize and chose «to please», the Byzantines tended toward spirituality and emotion. They have stylized elements - such as frontality or immobility - that have been, not once, the effect of clumsiness in folk or provincial arts. By breaking with «academicism» and antique illusionism and by succeeding in the inner vision, their art proclaims the art of our time, but with this profound difference that instead of giving the creator the most complete freedom, she claimed a certain conformism to the prototypes and considered it a fundamental necessity of communion between the artist and the public⁴⁰.

From the desire to move away from the world of the carnality, to liberate from materiality and to approach the artistic representation as much as possible to the spirituality, Byzantine artists sometimes prey to conventional schematics that also have repercussions on the quality of the artistic act:

Anchorite figures are already painted in a rough and tough style, with character attitudes often rigorous and rigid. When the painter wishes to represent

³⁸ P. Florenski, *Dogmatică și dogmatism. Studii și eseuri teologice [Dogmatics and Dogmatism. Theological Studies and Essays]*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 51.

³⁹ *Apud.* Ch. Delvoe, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁴⁰ Ch. Delvoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 - 113.

the crowd, he does not know how to introduce life and variety. Group the figures in large, regular masses, so that only the symmetrical edges can be seen⁴¹.

More often "the execution of human figures appears clumsy or inaccurate. The proportions of the body are no longer preserved, which is elongated and narrowed"⁴².

There are two tendencies in the representation of the saints: the soldier saints and the ascetic saints. By contrasting their forms of representation, they recall the diversity of elements of Byzantine art - the great influence of ancient concepts, but also the strong influence of monastic ideas:

The types of saints in the manuscripts of the times indicate the trends of the two Byzantine arts, one descending from antiquity, and the other from the monastery. The first represents the warrior saints like the Greek Ephebes. Through the regular features of the face, through the elegance and suppleness of their body, they are part of the family of beautiful adolescents of the Panateneans. In front of them, the ascetic saints with elongated and collapsed limbs, with harsh features, like carved in wood, remember that many parents of the church condemned beauty. They are of another race. ... However, the soldiersaints and theascetic saints appear next to each other ... and can still be found today on the walls of the Byzantine churches⁴³.

The choice of a small number of subjects, in contrast to the narrative abundance specific to the period of the 4th - 7th centuries, the harmony of the compositions, the serene solemnity of the attitudes of the illustrated characters, the abstraction force of the drawing and the impression of monumentality are some of the characteristic features of the last stage of the development of Byzantine style, all of which were designed to contribute to producing a profound impression of spiritualization and transcendence that would transform Byzantine art at this stage, as George Oprescu pointed out, in the "regulatory art of Europe"⁴⁴. Through it, as well as through philosophical ideas propagated by important thinkers of the time, an oratory of the public discourse will be born, which, in the service of legitimizing the time authorities, will generate a "justifying" ideology⁴⁵, a control system based on an ideological functioning meant to legitimize the claim of authority.

⁴¹ Ch. Bayet, *Arta bizantină*, Editura Scorilo, Craiova, 1999, p. 102.

⁴² Ch. Bayet, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 110.

⁴⁴ G. Oprescu, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁴⁵ P. Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, pp. 358 - 365.

Conclusions

Formed under different influences, Byzantine art was imposed by its own ways of representation and managed to preserve its value to the present day. In the early Byzantium, the central concern was that of proposing and perfecting models of transcendent world illustration. In this sense, themes and religious motives prevail, but the Byzantine artists introduce into their compositions also elements inspired by the picturesque and Hellenistic naturalism, along with the solemnity of the historical and monumental style or of the oriental inspirational elements. All these aspects are put together to create an appropriate propaganda and political and ideological coagulation tool. In this respect, the symbolic images, with their stylistic specificity, propose new ways of approach in relation to the two planes around which the ideology of the weatheris being built: the plan of the intelligible and the visible.

The iconoclastic period, with specific turbulence and decadence, will bring a confusion state regarding the two plans, important milestones for Byzantine Christian ideology. The iconoclastic crisis is determined by the fact that the intelligible and the visible come to be confused, the symbolic images are transformed into images with corporal referent. Thus, there is a process of semantic inversion that will have a fundamental role in structuring the collective mentality.

The second period of flowering of Byzantine art will bring with it a distinction from the narrative character of art, thus acquiring a Liturgical and dogmatic aspect. This will evolve towards a mystical and symbolic side that excites but at the same time elevates the spirit to the revelation of the unknown, of the transcendent, approaching it to the divine world, and departing it from the corporality, earthly and materiality.

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New Cases of Symbolic Trepanation from the Medieval Period Discovered in the Space between Pruth and Dniester

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Abstract: Symbolic trepanation is an invasive procedure, performed on living individuals, without creating a direct connection between the endocranial space and the outer world. Most cases of symbolic trepanation come from the archaeological discoveries made in the Carpathian Basin and in Bulgaria, dating from Early and Middle Age. For the space between Pruth and Dniester rivers, the first symbolic trepanations (14 cases / skulls) were discovered by I. Hîncu, in the medieval necropolises known as Căprăria (10th-12th centuries) and Limbari (12th-14th centuries). These skulls have one, two or three symbols located on the sagittal suture or in its proximity. In this paper, we propose to the scientific community of the domain four new symbolic trepanation cases, discovered in the space between Pruth and Dniester, namely in the medieval flat necropolis of Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii* (Grave no.77), in the burial mound no.1 from Ciumai (Grave no.9), in the burial mound no.8 from Cimișlia (Grave no.5) and in the burial mound no.12 (*Movila Gologan*) from Crihana Veche (Grave no.7). Three skulls belonged to men of different ages and only one to a woman. Two of the four cases have one symbolic mark (on the frontal bone or in the *bregma*), the other two having two such marks (on the sagittal suture or on the parietal bones, without affecting the sagittal suture). The individuals with only one mark show Europoid features, while those with two symbolic signs on the skull have typologically mixed Europoid and Mongoloid features. Considering the symmetry of symbols, which is evident, we cannot reject their ritualic-symbolic role, probably related to the concept of body integrity changes. The purpose of such a method of body modification could be guided by a series of social and aesthetic standards or by a certain type of self-identification.

Keywords: medieval period, Pruth-Dniester area, symbolic trepanation, Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, Ciumai, Cimișlia, Crihana Veche

INTRODUCTION

Cranial trepanation is an invasive procedure, involving a series of manoeuvres, performed with specific instruments and techniques, resulting in the intentional opening of the cranial vault and, most often, in the removal of

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a part of the skull bone¹. P. Broca (1875) distinguished between two forms of trepanation. One is "surgical trepanation", which directly creates a pathway between the cranial cavity and the external environment. This type of intervention is performed *intravivam*, for medical purposes, in order to cure aftermaths of cranial fractures and wounds, headaches, migraines, convulsions, epilepsy, hydrocephaly, mental retardation, delirium, hallucinations or even melancholy². The second one, "postmortem trepanation", is performed after death, on corpses in various stages of decomposition. The assumed goal of the *posthumous / postmortem* trepanation was a magical-religious one, related to a certain ritual, fabrication of cranial amulets and rondels taken from sacred people, which probably played a protective role, conferring fortunateness and protecting against evil spirits³. Included in the latter category are the trepanations performed for

¹ Donald J. Ortner, *Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains*, Academic Press, Oxford, 2003, p.169-174; Domenec Campillo, *Neurosurgical pathology in prehistory*, in *Acta Neurochirurgica*, 70, Vienna, 1984, p.275-290; Idem, *Paleopatologia. Los Primeros Vestigios de la Enfermedad*, Fundación Uriach 1838, Barcelona, 1993-1994, p.41-42; Wolfgang M. Pahl, *Altägyptische Schädelchirurgie*, Gustav Fischer, Stuttgart, 1993, p.20-22.

² Paul Broca, *Instructions craniologiques et craniométriques*, in *Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 2, Paris, 1875, p.1-204; Erwin H. Ackerknecht, *Primitive Surgery*, in *American Anthropologist*, 49/1, Hoboken, 1947, p.34; Stanley Finger, William T. Clower, *On the Birth of Trepanation: the Thoughts of Paul Broca and Victor Horsley*, in the edition by Robert Arnott, Stanley Finger, C. U. M. Smith, *Trepanation. History, Discovery, Theory*, Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., Lisse, 2003, p.19-42; Donald J. Ortner, *op. cit.*, p.171-172.

³ John A. Crump, *Trephining in the South Seas*, in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 31, London, 1901, p.170; Nicola Latronico, *La medicina degli Antichi*, Noepi, Milano, 1956; Calvin Wells, *Bones, bodies and disease*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1964, p.142; Frederick Peter Lisowski, *Prehistoric and early historic trepanations*, in the edition by Donald Reginald Brothwell, Andrew Sandison, *Diseases in antiquity*, Charles C Thomas, Illinois, 1967, p.651-672; William T. Clower, Stanley Finger, *Discovering Trepanation: The Contribution of Paul Broca*, in *Neurosurgery*, 49/6, Oxford, 2001, p.1418; Stanley Finger, William T. Clower, *op. cit.*, p.25, 27-28; Pia Bennike, *Ancient Trepanations and Differential Diagnoses: A Re-evaluation of Skeletal Remains from Denmark*, in the edition by Robert Arnott, Stanley Finger, C. U. M. Smith, *Trepanation. History, Discovery, Theory*, Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., Lisse, 2003, p.98; Donald J. Ortner, *op. cit.*, p.170; Rupert Breitwieser, *Celtic Trepanations in Austria*, in Robert Arnott, Stanley Finger, C. U. M. Smith, *Trepanation. History, Discovery, Theory*, Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., Lisse, 2003, p.150; Maria Mednikova, *Prehistoric Trepanations in Russia: Ritual or Surgical?*, in the edition by Robert Arnott, Stanley Finger, C. U. M. Smith, *Trepanation. History, Discovery, Theory*, Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., Lisse, 2003, p.167, 172; Eileen Murphy, *Trepanations and Perforated Crania from Iron Age South Siberia: An Exercise in Differential Diagnosis*, in the edition by Robert Arnott, Stanley Finger, C. U. M. Smith, *Trepanation. History, Discovery, Theory*, Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., Lisse, 2003, p.213; Frank Clifford Rose, *An Overview from Neolithic Times to Broca*, in the edition by Robert Arnott, Stanley Finger, C. U. M. Smith, *Trepanation. History, Discovery, Theory*, Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., Lisse, 2003, p.355, 360.

obtaining some bone fragments which were later transformed into a powder used as an ingredient in curative potions⁴.

A third type of intervention, the so-called “symbolic trepanation” (or pseudo-trepanation), was practised by a great number of peoples in Eastern Europe. This procedure is done during life, being sometimes considered an imitation of real trepanation.

The term “symbolic trepanation” was proposed by L. Bartucs to define a “non-penetrating and non-dangerous” procedure⁵, because only the outer cortical compact layer of a distinct spot of the *calvaria* is removed, sometimes together with some spongy parts, without creating a connection between the endocranial space and the outer world. A symbolic trepanation was easily made by cutting, using a very strong and extremely sharp knife, or by cauterization, using an extremely fiery metallic object⁶.

According to some authors, the sign accentuates the transition to maturity, the social status in the community or a certain degree of initiation, or it could have a cultic purpose, maybe even a ritual-medical, magic or religious one⁷.

Generally, the documented symbolic trepanations are circular (rarely elliptical), being reported only in adults (individuals aged 18-20), more frequently in males than in females. Regarding localization, the frontal or the parietals, the coronal and sagittal cranial sutures, the cranial point *bregma* or its proximity were preferred, in other words, the top of the head. The obtained marks were singular or multiple, most often symmetrical and absolutely visible⁸.

⁴ Paul A. Janssens, *Paleopathology*, Baker and Humanities Press, London-New York, 1970; Donald J. Ortner, *op. cit.*, p.169-174.

⁵ Lajos Bartucz, *Adatok a koponyalékelés (trepanáció) és a bregmasebek kapcsolatának problémájához magyarországi népvándorlászori koponyák alapján*, in *Annales Biologica Universitatis Szegediensis*, I, Szeged, 1950, p.389-435.

⁶ János Nemeskéri, Kinga Éri, Alan Kralovánszky, *A magyarországi jelképes trepanáció*, in *Anthropologiai Közlemények*, 4, Budapest, 1960, p.3-32; Peter Boev, *Simvolícini trepanatzii ot Bulgaria*, in *Bulletin de l'Institut de Morphologie*, IX-X, Rabat, 1964, p.289-297; Per Holck, *Two “medical” cases from medieval Oslo*, in *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 12, Hoboken, 2002, p.166-172.

⁷ Lajos Bartucz, *Adatok...*, p. 389-435; János Nemeskéri et al., *op. cit.*, p.3-32; Jordan Jordanov, B. Dimitrova, Sp. Nikolov, *Symbolic trepanations of skulls from the Middle Ages (IXth-Xth century) in Bulgaria*, in *Acta Neurochirurgica*, 92, Vienna, 1988, p.15-18; Jordan Jordanov, B. Dimitrova, *Symbolic trephinations in Medieval Bulgaria*, in *HOMO*, 41/ 3, Amsterdam, 1990, p.266-273; Maria Mednikova, *Prehistoric...*, p.172; Zsolt Bereczki, Antónia Marcsik, *Trephined skulls from ancient populations in Hungary*, in *Acta Medica Lituanica*, 12/1, Vilnius, 2005, p.65, 68; Irina K. Reshetova, *Sluchay simvolicheskoy trepanatzii v srede bolgarskovo srednevekovogo naseleniia*, in *Materialy mejdunarodnoi konferentsii „Gosudarstvennost’ vostochnykh bulgar IX-XIII vv.”*, Cheboxary, 2012, p.249-258.

⁸ János Nemeskéri et al., *op. cit.*, p.3-32; Jordan Jordanov, B. Dimitrova, *op. cit.*, p.266-273; Maria Mednikova, *Prehistoric...*, p.163-174; Idem, *Ritualinoie posviaschenie u drevnih narodov Evrazii po dannym antropologhii: simvoliceskie trepanatzii*, in *Arheologhija, etnographia i antropologhija Evrazii*, 13/1, 2003, Novosibirsk, p.147-156.

Until today, more than 200 cases of symbolic trepanations have been reported and published, most of them found in Early Medieval archaeological sites in the Carpathian Basin and Bulgaria. However, sufficient cases are also reported in the sites of the Volga and Donetsk rivers, in the north of the Caucasus and in the North-Pontic area. In the opinion of most authors preoccupied with the custom of symbolic trepanation, in the Age of Great Migrations and in the Early Middle Ages, this custom was brought and spread out in the Carpathian Basin and in the Circum-Pontic area by the semi-nomadic Turkic tribes, during their migration to the west⁹. Some authors support the hypothesis that symbolic trepanation was a way of enhancing and accentuating a certain Turkic military elite that penetrated Europe aggressively in the 9th-10th centuries¹⁰.

Related to the area between Pruth and Dniester, near the Hansca village (Hîncești District, Republic of Moldova), the archaeologist I.Hâncu investigated, between 1960 and 1965, two medieval flat necropolises dated between the 10th and 14th centuries. 158 human skeletons were discovered, of which 14 skeletons have special characteristics, namely one or more unnatural and symmetrical, easily recognizable marks on the skull vault. Out of these 14 cases, 9 come from Căprăria necropolis (10th-12th centuries) and 5 from Limbari necropolis (12th-14th centuries)¹¹. They appear as the first

⁹ János Nemeskéri et al., *op. cit.*, p.3-32; Lajos Bartucz, *The Pre-historic Trepanation and Grave Findings with Medical History*, National Medical Historical Library, Budapest, 1966; Peter Boev, *Simvolcini trepanatii ot Bulgaria...*, p.289-297; Idem, *Simvolcini trepanatii ot SSSR*, in *Bulletin de l'Institut de Morphologie*, XI, Rabat, 1965, p.113-127; Idem, *Die symbolischen Trepanationen*, in the edition by Karl Saller, Tadeusz Bielicki, *Anthropologie und humangenetic*, Gustav Fischer, Stuttgart, 1968, p.127-135; Gyula Farkas, Antonia Marcsik, *Further trephined skulls in Hungary (case-history)*, in *Acta Biologica Szegediensis*, 32, Szeged, 1986, p.200; Jordan Jordanov et al., *Symbolic...*, p.15-18; Maria Mednikova, *Trepanatii u drevnih narodov Evrazii*, Nauczinyi mir, Moskva, 2001; Idem, 2003, *Prehistoric...*, p.167, 172; *Ibidem*, p.163-174; Idem, *Trepanatii v drevnem mire i kulit golovy*, Aleteja, Moskva, 2004; Zsolt Bernert, Zsolt Évinger, Erzsébet Fóti, *New symbolic trephination cases from Hungary*, in *Annales Musei Historico-Naturalis Hungarici*, 98, Budapest, 2006, p.177-183; Victoria Russeva, *Religion, Magic or Medicine? New Finds of Trepanned Skulls from Southeastern Bulgaria, 11th-13th c.*, in *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, XVI, 2, Sofia, 2012, p.77-95; Zsolt Bereczki, Erika Molnár, Antónia Marcsik, György Pálfi, *Rare types of trephination from Hungary shed new light on possible cross-cultural connections in the Carpathian Basin*, in *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 25/3, Hoboken, 2013, p.322-333.

¹⁰ László Szathmáry, Antónia Marcsik, *Symbolic trephinations and population structure*, in *Memórias do Instituto Oswaldo Cruz*, 101 (Suppl. 2), Rio de Janeiro, 2006, p.129-130.

¹¹ Ion Hîncu, *Limbari – srednevekovyi moghil'nik XII-XIV vekov v Moldavii*, Shtiintza, Kishinev, 1970; Idem, *Kăprăria – pamiatnik kul'tury X-XII vv.*, Shtiintza, Kishinev, 1973; Ion Hîncu, Isaac A. Rafalovich, *Slaviane i tiurko-bolgary v VI-X vv. na territorii Moldavii po arkeologhicheskim dannym. Slavianite i sredzemnomostiit sviat VI-XI vek*, Sofia, 1973, p.161-182; Ion Hîncu, Vladimir Okushko, *Zahoronenija s "palitzevymi vdavlenijami" na cerepah iz moghilinikov X-XIV vv.*, in *Etnographija i iskusstvo Moldavii*, Shtiintza, Kishinev, 1972, p.199-204.

symbolic trepanated skulls discovered and documented in the Pruth-Dniester area. Paleoanthropological and paleodemographic analyses were developed by M.S.Velikanova¹², but the author does not focus on these marks, which are, in fact, symbolic trepanations.

The 14 skeletons discovered at Căprăria and Limbari have the skulls with one, two or three "indentations / depressions" located on the vertex (on the sagittal suture or in its immediate proximity), *i.e.* on the top of the head. Archaeologists assume that the goal of these symbolic signs would be a "surgical-palliative" one, maybe to replace the surgical / therapeutic trepanation itself, therefore a role of distraction¹³.

The first purpose of the present paper is to include in our scientific field of interest four new cases of symbolic trepanation, discovered relatively recently in the space between Pruth and Dniester rivers, in sites dated by archaeologists according to the context in the Late Middle Ages. These findings have been carefully documented.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The osteological samples analyzed in this study come from the Pruth-Dniester area, from four archaeological sites multidisciplinary investigated in 2014 (flat necropolis Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*), 2015 (Ciurmai, burial mound no.1 and Cimișlia, burial mound no.8), and 2016 (Crihana Veche, burial mound no.12, the so-called *Movila Gologan*). For a clearer picture of the historical context, we briefly provide some information on these funerary monuments.

The flat necropolis from Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii* (Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova) has several cultural-chronological horizons, which gives to it a special scientific significance for the medieval history of Moldova. The earliest horizon dates from the Early Middle Ages (6th-7th centuries); the second level corresponds to the dominance of the Golden Horde (the first and second third of the 14th century); the most recent archaeological horizon dates from the period of formation of the Moldavian medieval state, namely the end of the 14th – 15th centuries. The interdisciplinary research in the flat necropolis from the last cultural-chronological horizon was performed in four campaigns (2010, 2011, 2014, and 2015), being conducted by archaeologists from the Institute of Cultural Heritage of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, with the participation of anthropologists from the "Olga Necrasov" Centre for Anthropological

¹² Maria S. Velikanova, *Ob odnoy gruppe srednevekovogo naselenija Moldavii po antropologičeskim dannym*, in *Sovetskaja Etnographija*, 6, 1965, Moskva, p.61-75; Idem, *Paleoantropologija Prutsko-Dnestrovscovo mejdurecija*, Nauka, Moskva, 1975, p.114-138.

¹³ Ion Hîncu, Isaac A. Rafalovich, *op. cit.*, p.161-182; Ion Hîncu, Vladimir Okushko, *op. cit.*, p.199-204.

Research of Iași (Romania). The total number of interdisciplinary investigated graves in the four campaigns is 106. No coins were found in these 106 graves. The interval of use of the necropolis indicated by the grave goods is 14th-15th centuries¹⁴. All human skeletons discovered in the flat necropolis from *Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii* were analyzed by A.Simalcsik. In this paper, we will mainly refer to the skeleton discovered in grave no.77 (G.77).

The burial mound no.1 from Ciumai (Taraclia District, Republic of Moldova) was interdisciplinary investigated in 2015 by archaeologists from the National Archaeological Agency of the Republic of Moldova and anthropologists from the "Olga Necrasov" Centre for Anthropological Research of Iași (Romania). 14 graves, 4 fireplaces and 22 household pits (or with another destination) were discovered. Under the mantle of the tumulus, in the southern sector, a ditch dating from the Late Middle Ages or from the Modern period was reported. The oldest funeral feature was attributed to the Late Chalcolithic Age communities (post-Mariupol type), chronologically followed by the burial features of the Yamnaya culture and those of the Sarmatian culture (2nd-3rd centuries). The last cultural-chronological horizon is represented by grave no.9, assigned to the Late Middle Ages¹⁵. All human skeletons discovered in the graves from the burial mound no.1 at Ciumai were analyzed by A.Simalcsik. In this paper, we will consider only the skeleton discovered in grave no.9 (G.9).

The burial mound no.8 from Cimișlia (Cimișlia District, Republic of Moldova) was interdisciplinary investigated in 2015 by archaeologists from the National Archaeological Agency from Republic of Moldova and by anthropologists from the "Olga Necrasov" Centre for Anthropological Research of Iași (Romania). 10 inhumation graves were discovered. The oldest funeral feature of this tumulus was assigned to the Late Chalcolithic Age communities, followed chronologically by the graves dated in Tripilie CII Late Period (Životilovka or Životilovka-Volčansk type), then by those of the Middle Bronze Age Yamnaya culture communities, by a grave assigned to the Catacomb culture (specific to the Ingul group) and finally by the Sarmatian culture communities graves. The later burial feature is grave no.5, assigned to the Turkic nomads of the Late Middle Ages, with elements of the

¹⁴ Ludmila Bacumenco-Pîrnău, Vlad Vornic, Ion Ursu, *Descoperiri arheologice în situl medieval de la Lozova*, in *Akados*, 21/2, Chișinău, 2011, p.120-123; Vlad Vornic, Ion Ursu, Ludmila Bacumenco-Pîrnău, Radu Pîrnău, Larisa Ciobanu, *Cercetările arheologice din situl medieval de la Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii. Rezultate preliminare*, in *Revista Arheologică*, VIII, 1-2, Chișinău, 2012, p.222-256; Ion Ursu, Ludmila Bacumenco-Pîrnău, Vlad Vornic, Ion Ciobanu, *Necropola medievală de la Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii. Rezultatele cercetărilor din anii 2014-2015*, in *Revista Arheologică*, XII, 1-2, Chișinău, 2016, p.250-271.

¹⁵ Ion Ciobanu, Vlad Vornic, Serghei Agulnikov, Ion Noroc, *Tumulul 1 de la Ciumai (com. Vinogradovca, r-nul Taraclia). Date preliminare*, in *Arheologia Preventivă în Republica Moldova*, III, Chișinău, 2016, p.29-44.

Muslim funeral rituals¹⁶. All human skeletons discovered in the burial mound no.8 from Cimișlia were analyzed by A.Simalcsik. In this paper, we will refer only to the skeleton from grave no.5 (G.5).

The burial mound no.12 from Crihana Veche (Cahul District, Republic of Moldova), the so-called *Movila Gologan*, was investigated interdisciplinary in 2016 by archaeologists from the Institute of Cultural Heritage of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and from the National Archaeological Agency, with the participation of anthropologists from the "Olga Necrasov" Centre for Anthropological Research of Iași (Romania). 23 graves and 3 ritual features were discovered. The oldest burial feature was assigned to the Late Chalcolithic communities (Hadjider-Cernavodă I type), chronologically followed by the Yamnaya culture burials (middle and late phases), by those of the Multi-cordoned ware culture (late phase) and those of the Sabatinovka culture. The chronological horizon of the Ancient Period is represented by the graves assigned to the Sarmatian communities from the 2nd - 3rd centuries. The last chronological phase of the tumulus *Movila Gologan* is represented by grave no.7, which belongs to the Turkic nomads of the Late Middle Ages¹⁷. All human skeletons discovered in the burial mound no.12 from Cimișlia were analyzed by A.Simalcsik. In this paper, we will refer only to the skeleton discovered in grave no.7 (G.7).

Shortly, the osteological material of this paper include 4 skeletons, as follows: G.77 from the flat medieval cemetery of *Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.9 from the burial mound no.1 from Ciurmai, G.5 from the burial mound no.8 from Cimișlia, and G.7 from the burial mound no.12 (*Movila Gologan*) from Crihana Veche, respectively.

Palaeoanthropological analysis was done in several steps. After recording the conservation status and the degree of representation, there followed: age at death estimation and sex determination¹⁸, skeletal stature calculation¹⁹, and anthropological type estimation²⁰. . Finally, the presence of

¹⁶ Sergiu Popovici, Ion Ciobanu, Serghei Agulnikov, Ion Noroc, *Tumulul 8 de la Cimișlia. Considerații preliminare*, in *Arheologia Preventivă în Republica Moldova*, III, Chișinău, 2016, p.19-28.

¹⁷ Ion Ciobanu, Angela Simalcsik, Serghei Agulnicov, Radu Pirmău, Sergiu Popovici, Luminița Bejenaru, Bogdan Roșca, Ionuț Vasiliuic, *Raport științific privind cercetările arheologice interdisciplinare de la Crihana Veche din anul 2016*, Chișinău, 2017.

¹⁸ Douglas H. Ubelaker, *Human Skeletal Remains: Excavation, Analysis and Interpretation*, Taraxacum, Washington D. C., 1979; Jane E. Buikstra, Douglas H. Ubelaker, *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains*, Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series, No 44, Fayetteville, 1994.

¹⁹ Léonce Manouvrier, *Determination de la taille d'après les grands os des membres*, in *Revue Ecole Anthropologie*, 2, Paris, 1892, p.227-233; Mildred Trotter, Goldine Gleser, *A Reevaluation of Estimation of Stature Based on Measurements of Stature Taken during Life and of Long Bones after Death*, in *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 16, Hoboken, 1958, p.79-123; Idem, *Estimation of stature from long bones of American whites and Negroes*, in *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 10, Hoboken, 1962, p.469-514.

possible traumas, pathologies and skeletal anomalies / abnormalities was recorded²¹, along with the skeletal traits considered as functional adaptations or occupational and lifestyle markers²².

CASE DESCRIPTION

Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, Grave no.77

Grave no.77 was discovered in 2014, in box 19, cassette 4, at a depth of 0.43m. The pit of the grave (only its southern side) was partially detected, the depth being of 0.18m. Pit filling consisted of yellowish soil with chernozem pigments, with fragments of charcoal and a piece of burned clay. The skeleton was lying on its back; its arms were bent and brought to the chest. Orientation is west-east; grave without inventory²³.

The remains belonged to a male individual, approximately 55-60 years (old adult). The skeleton is fairly complete and well-preserved. The bones are robust. The skeletal stature is high, of approximately 175cm. From a typological point of view, this skeleton shows Europoid traits²⁴.

On the frontal bone, along the bilateral symmetry line, between frontal eminences, the skull shows a circular-oval symbolic trepanation (Figs.1-2). From the anterior margin of the intervention to the *nasion*, it is 0.55cm while, from the posterior margin to the *bregma* – 0.5cm. The mark

²⁰ Peter Boev, *Die Rassentypen der Balkanhalbinsel und der Ostagaischen Inselwelt und deren Bedeutung fur die Herkunft ihrer Bevolkerung*, Verlag der Bulgarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sofia, 1972.

²¹ Simon Mays, *The archaeology of human bones*, Routledge, London-New York, 1998; Arthur C. Aufderheide, Conrado Rodriguez-Martin, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Paleopathology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998; Donald J. Ortner, *op. cit.*; Robert W. Mann, David R. Hunt, *Photographic Regional Atlas of Bone Disease: A Guide to Pathologic and Normal Variation in the Human Skeleton*, Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Illinois, Springfield, 2005; Tony Waldron, *Palaeopathology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York, 2009; Ethne Barnes, *Atlas of Developmental Field Anomalies of the Human Skeleton: A Paleopathology Perspective*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken, 2012.

²² György Pálfi, Olivier Dutour, *Activity-induced skeletal markers in historical anthropological material*, in *International Journal of Anthropology*, 11/1, Berlin, 1996, p.41-55; John E. Robb, *The interpretation of skeletal muscle sites: a statistical approach*, in *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 8/5, Hoboken, 1998, p.363-377; Petra Molnar, *Tracing prehistoric activities: Musculoskeletal stress marker analysis of a stone-age population on the Island of Gotland in the Baltic sea*, in *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 129/1, Hoboken, 2006, p.12-23; Theya Molleson, *A method for the study of activity related skeletal morphologies*, in *Bioarchaeology of the Near East*, 1, Warsaw, 2007, p. 5-33; Anna Myszka, Janusz Piontek, *Variation of Musculoskeletal Stress Markers in the Medieval Population from Cedynia (Poland) – Proposal of Standardized Scoring Method Application*, in *Collegium Anthropologicum*, 36/3, Zagreb, 2012, p.1009-1017.

²³ Ion Ursu et al., *op. cit.*, p.259.

²⁴ Angela Simalcsik, Vasilica Monica Groza, *Necropola medievală de la Lozova. Campania arheologică din 2014. Raport antropologic*, in *Revista Arheologică*, XI, 1-2, Chişinău, 2015, p.318-319.

has a 2.0x1.8cm size. *Tabula interna ossis cranii* is not penetrated, and no traces of the instrument with which symbolic trepanation had been made were observed (Fig.3).



Fig.1 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.77



Fig. 2 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.77



Fig. 3 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.77

Also identified on this skeleton were some modifications related to the physiological aging or to the overloading physical activities, as follows:

- auditory exostoses – suggesting the living environment, such as low temperatures, cold winds, humidity and frequent submersion in cold water;
- porotic hyperostosis (*cribra cranii*) – suggesting some nutritional deficiencies, the most common being iron deficiency anemia;
- three *antemortem* tooth losses, an advanced cavity and a thin deposit of plaque on the vestibular side of the dental crowns;
- generalized degenerative joint disease, more severely manifested at the level of the humeroulnar joint (osteophytes) and on the spine (osteophytes, corrosion, intervertebral hernia, deformation and compression);
- reactive periosteal changes on the diaphyses of the tibiae – suggesting some nutritional deficiencies, inflammatory or infectious acute processes;
- enthesopathies on lower limb bones – suggesting musculoskeletal overload;
- skeletal markers associated with habitual horseback riding.

Ciumai, Tumulus no.1, Grave no.9

Grave no.9 was discovered in 2015 in the southwest part of the burial mound, at 17.35m from the central landmark, and a depth of 1.34m. The pit of the grave was not detected. The skeleton was in crouching position, on the back, with the skull oriented toward west-northwest, hands placed along the

body and legs bent on the left. In the right knee area, a splinter flint was discovered²⁵.

The remains belonged to a female individual with the age at death of approximately 60-65 years (old adult). The skeleton is approximately complete and very well-preserved. The bones are quite gracile. The skeletal stature is middle to over middle, in the 154-160cm range. Typologically, this skeleton shows Europoid traits²⁶.



Fig. 4 Ciumai, T.1, G.9



Fig. 5 Ciumai, T.1, G.9

²⁵ Ion Ciobanu et al., *Tumulul 1 de la Ciumai...*, p.33.

²⁶ Angela Simalcsik, *Resturile scheletice descoperite în 2015 în tumulul 1 de la Ciumai, r-nul Taraclia. Raport antropologic*, in the edition by Ion Ceban, Vlad Vornic, Serghei Agulnicov, Ion Noroc, *Raport privind cercetările arheologice de salvare de la Ciumai (com. Vinogradovca, r-nul Taraclia) din anul 2015*, Chişinău, 2016, Anexa 1, p.21-54.

On the skull, along the sagittal suture, comprising portions of both parietals, immediately after *bregma*, a symbolic trepanation has been identified (Fig.4). The shape of the mark is relatively circular (1.7x1.8cm). Its surface is extremely porous, suggesting a localized inflammatory process. Poor healing traces are present, the trabeculae being quite rare, which suggests a partial regeneration of the bone tissue (Fig.5). *Tabula interna ossis cranii* is not penetrated.

Also identified on this skeleton were some modifications caused by physiological aging and musculoskeletal overload, as follows:

- many cavities of different severity (from incipient to advanced) and partial edentation;
- manubriosternal junction;
- preauricular sulcus and parturition scars on the dorsal surface of the pubic symphysis;
- generalized degenerative joint disease, more intensely manifested at the level of hand phalanges (osteophytes) and on the spine (osteophytes, corrosion, intervertebral hernia and compression);
- enthesopathies on the limbs and girdles bones;
- possible traces of tuberculosis at the level of the spine and of some limbs bones.

Cimișlia, Tumulus no.8, Grave no.5

Grave no.5 was discovered in 2015 in the south-eastern sector of the burial mound, at a depth of 1.01m and at 7.7m, southeast of the central landmark. The pit of the grave was elongated (length – 2.58m, maximum width – 0.68m, maximum depth from the level of contour detection – 0.35m). Pit's filling consists of a gray and dark brown soil mixture. The deceased, oriented in west–west-south direction, was lying on the back, with straight legs. The left hand was stretched along the body, while the right one was placed on the pelvis²⁷.

The remains belonged to a male individual with an age at death of approximately 30-40 years (middle aged adult). The skeleton is almost complete and well-preserved. The bones are robust. The skeletal stature is very high, about 182cm. Typologically, this skeleton shows mixed Europoid and Mongoloid traits²⁸.

On the bilateral symmetry line, exactly along the sagittal suture (observable only on the right parietal bone), the trace of a symbolic

²⁷ Sergiu Popovici et al., *op. cit.*, p.26.

²⁸ Angela Simalsik, *Tumulul 8 de la Cimișlia. Raport antropologic*, in the edition by Sergiu Popovici, Ion Ceban, Ion Noroc, *Raport tehnico-Științific privind cercetările arheologice de salvare a tumulului 8 din orașul Cimișlia, punct "La Movilă" și sondajele în siturile Cimișlia "Iazul lui Iepure" și Cimișlia "Cimitirul Vechi"*, Chișinău, 2015, p.18-19.

trepanation is clearly distinguishable (Fig.6). Unfortunately, the left parietal is missing from the osteological inventory, which makes the other half of the sign unobservable. *Tabula interna ossis cranii* is not penetrated. The trepanation is covered with a compact and consistent layer of regenerated bone tissue, suggesting that this cranial mark was done many years before death (Fig.7).



Fig. 6 Cimișlia, T.8, G.5



Fig. 7 Cimișlia, T.8, G.5

The distance from *bregma* to the anterior edge of the sign is of 1.5cm. The trepanation has 1.0-2.0cm on the sagittal direction and of 1.0cm, respectively, on the transversal one (from the straight line of the sagittal suture to the preserved edge of the sign). We believe there is a second, smaller, symbolic sign, also on the sagittal suture, 2.6cm from the posterior edge of the first bigger intervention and 5.5cm from the *lambda*. The preserved size of this second possible symbolic trepanation is of 1.0cm on the sagittal plane and of 0.4-0.5cm, respectively, on the transverse one (from the straight line of the sagittal suture to the preserved right edge of the sign). This second symbolic mark is difficult to be seen, yet it feels by touching. Both signs seem to be circular, made and regenerated long before death (Figs.6-7).

Also identified on this skeleton were some anomalies / abnormalities and modifications, as follows:

- congenital absence of the mandibular second premolars and third molars;
- linear enamel hypoplasia on the crowns of incisors, canines and first molars – suggesting frequent physiological stress episodes during the formation of permanent dental crowns (from birth to about 7 years);
- joint disease (secondary osteoarthritis) at the level of the lower thoracic and first lumbar vertebrae (intervertebral disk herniation and marginal osteophytes) – suggesting physical overstress of the spine;
- many indicators of equine activities identified in the bones of the pelvic belt, lower limbs and spine;
- many skeletal markers associated with habitual horseback riding (at the level of the pelvic girdles and of the lower limbs bones).

Crihana Veche, Tumulus no.12 (*Movila Gologan*), Grave no.7

Grave no.7 was discovered in 2016, in the south-eastern sector of the burial mound, 11.50 m from the central landmark and at a depth of 1.34 m. The pit of the grave was not detected. The deceased was laid on the back, with the head towards west–north-west. The skull was face up and slightly sloping southward. The upper limbs were placed along the trunk and the lower ones stretched out. The grave has no inventory²⁹.

The remains belonged to a male individual with an age at death of approximately 20-25 years (young adult). The skeleton is complete and well-preserved. The bones are not too robust. The skeletal stature is high, about 173cm. From a typological point of view, this skeleton shows mixed Europoid and Mongoloid traits³⁰.

On the parietal bones, between the sagittal suture and the eminences, two unsymmetrical symbolic trepanations were identified (Fig.8). The left

²⁹ Ion Ciobanu et al., *Raport științific...*

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p.26-27.

parietal sign is oval (1.3x1.0cm), placed 1.1cm from the sagittal suture and 2.6cm from the coronal one. The right parietal sign is more circular, smaller than the left one (0.75x0.7cm), 2.6cm from the sagittal suture and 4.1cm from the coronal one. On the surface of the latter mark, discrete traces of active inflammatory processes may be seen (Fig.9). *Tabula interna ossis cranii* is penetrated in neither of these two cases.



Fig. 8 Crihana Veche, T.12 (*Movila Gologan*), G.7



Fig. 9 Crihana Veche, T.12 (*Movila Gologan*), G.7

Other modifications observed on this skeleton, as follows:

- active porotic hyperostosis on parietals and the occipital – suggesting iron deficiency anaemia;
- linear enamel hypoplasia on the mandibular canine – suggesting acute physiological stress during early childhood (at an age of about 1.5-2.5 years), most likely during weaning period;
- thin supragingival dental plaque on the vestibular and lingual crown surfaces of the upper and lower teeth;
- joint disease (secondary osteoarthritis), manifested through intervertebral disk hernia (at the level of the lower thoracic and lumbar vertebrae), osteophytes and eburnation (at the level of patellae);
- central lumbarization of the first sacral vertebra and incomplete sacralization of the first coccygeal vertebra – suggesting overstress of these spine's elements;
- numerous skeletal markers associated with habitual horseback riding (at the level of the pelvic girdles, lower limbs bones and spine).

PALEOANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALOGIES

The cases of symbolic trepanations dated in Middle Ages discovered over time in the space between Pruth and Dniester are not many. Unfortunately, they have been documented in detail by archaeologists rather than paleoanthropologists. Based on these facts, the importance of this paper is related, firstly, to the discovery of four new cases of symbolic trepanations and to their inclusion in the scientific circuit. Three of them come from prehistoric burial mounds discovered in the southern part of the Pruth-Dniester area (Ciumai, Cimișlia and Crihana Veche); the fourth comes from a flat medieval necropolis located in the center of the same area (*Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii*). These four new cases add new information about the custom of symbolic trepanation of the skull practised by some medieval communities.

In order to draw a clearer picture of the symbolic trepanation habit in the Pruth-Dniester area, take a brief look at the 14 first cases of symbolic trepanation discovered at Căprăria (10th-12th centuries) and Limbari (12th-14th centuries).

In the flat cemetery of Căprăria (10th-12th centuries), 75 graves were discovered³¹. Nine skeletons had one, two or three symbolic marks on the skulls, as follows³²:

³¹ Ion Hîncu, Vladimir Okushko, *op. cit.*, p.199.

³² Ion Hîncu, *Kăprăria...*, p.17-21, 23-24, 39-41; Ion Hîncu, Vladimir Okushko, *op. cit.*, p.199-201.

- Grave no.13: female, age at death – approx. 60 years, one circular symbolic trepanation on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*, diameter – 2cm, depth – 0.8cm.
- Grave no.21: probably male, age at death – approx. 60 years, three symbolic trepanations which form a triangle; the first one is larger, circular, located on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*, diameter – 1.8cm, depth – 0.3cm; the other two are smaller, placed symmetrically and slightly above the first one.
- Grave no.29: probably female, age at death – approx. 50 years, one circular symbolic trepanation with well-defined edges, located on the sagittal suture, immediately after the *bregma*, diameter – 2cm, depth – 0.2cm.
- Grave no.39: male, age at death – approx. 50 years, one oval symbolic trepanation on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*, 1x1.5cm in diameter, depth – 0.5cm.
- Grave no.41: male, age at death – approx. 55 years, one approximately oval symbolic trepanation on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*, 2x2.2cm in diameter, depth – 0.5cm.
- Grave no.46: male, age at death – approx. 40 years, three symbolic trepanations forming a triangle; the first one is larger, circular, located on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*, diameter – 2.0cm, depth – 0.5cm; the other two are smaller (diameter – 1.5cm, depth – 0.3cm), placed symmetrically and slightly above the first one.
- Grave no.51: indeterminate sex, adult, one not too deep circular symbolic trepanation with diffused edges, located on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*.
- Grave no.53: male, age at death – approx. 40 years, three symbolic trepanations aligned on the sagittal suture; each of them about 2cm in diameter, and a depth of 0.5cm. This grave shows an interesting situation – the skeleton seems to have been partially dismembered before being buried. At the time of its discovery, not all bones were anatomically connected. The skull was found at a significant distance from the rest of the bones. The mandible was left at the right shoulder. The left lower limb was separated or rather moved to the head area, so that the bones of the left foot reached the chest area.
- Grave no.55: female, age at death – approx. 22-25 years, one small symbolic trepanation on the right parietal, very close to *bregma*.

In the flat cemetery of Limbari (12th-14th centuries), 97 graves were discovered. 5 skeletons had one or two symbolic mark on the skulls, as follows³³:

³³ Ion Hincu, Vladimir Okushko, *op. cit.*, p.199-203.

- Grave no.10: probably male, age at death – approx. 50 years, two symbolic trepanations on the right parietal. An interesting trait of this skull is the asymmetry of the sagittal suture, meaning its slight displacement towards the left side of the bilateral symmetry line. Most likely, the performer has proposed to make an insignia on the sagittal suture, but he did not succeed.
- Grave no.34: female, age at death – approx. 40 years, one symbolic trepanation with clearly defined edges, located at the intersection of the coronal and sagittal sutures, exactly in the *bregma*, diameter – 1.0cm, depth – 0.3cm. This grave shows an interesting situation, namely the atypical position of the skeleton – the skull was discovered face down, and the chest bones were displaced over the pelvis.
- Grave no.37: female, age at death – approx. 40 years, two symbolic trepanations; the first one is located exactly in the *bregma*, and the other on the sagittal suture, close to the first.
- Grave no.61: male, age at death – approx. 50 years, one small symbolic trepanation with diffuse edges, located on the sagittal suture, half way between *bregma* and *lambda*.
- Grave no.87: male, age at death – approx. 20 years, one symbolic trepanation with diffuse edges, located on the posterior third of the sagittal suture, not far from the *lambda*.

Remember that one of the cases described in the paper was discovered in the flat medieval necropolis of Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii* (14th-15th centuries). Interdisciplinary researches have revealed the unusual character of this medieval cemetery, as 5 of the more than 100 human skeletons found here show traces of interventions performed *intravitam*, *perimortem* or *postmortem*. Apart from the skeleton from grave G.77 (described in this paper), mention should be made of the skeletons from graves G.30, G.73, G.79 and G.97.

The individual buried in G.30 in the flat medieval necropolis of Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii* is a male, about 45-50 year-old. This is the first case of surgical / therapeutic trepanation reported and documented by archaeologists and anthropologists in the space between Pruth and Dniester. The intervention was performed *intravitam*, on the left parietal, probably for releasing the intracranial pressure caused by a trauma, whose traces were discreetly preserved on the right parietal, near the sagittal suture. We believe that the trepanation was made by an initiate; in support of this statement comes the neat appearance of the cranial opening and the absence of traces of

infection (Fig.10). This man not only survived, but also lived for at least one year after surgery³⁴.

The individual buried in G.73, the flat medieval necropolis of Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, is a male about 60-65 year-old. His skull has two approximately circular complete openings, probably made *postmortem*. The openings are located on the frontal bone, near the coronal suture, somewhat symmetrical (Fig.11). The distance between openings is 7.8cm (chord). On their edges, the traces of the instrument with which the intervention was made – a burin – can be observed. We cannot exactly know the purpose of such an intervention. Starting from the speculative assumption that in the Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii community a connoisseur was living, this intervention could have an educational-didactic purpose, to teach the disciples who would later become practitioners. This case is the first cranial opening made *postmortem* discovered and documented by archaeologists and anthropologists in the space between Pruth and Dniester³⁵.

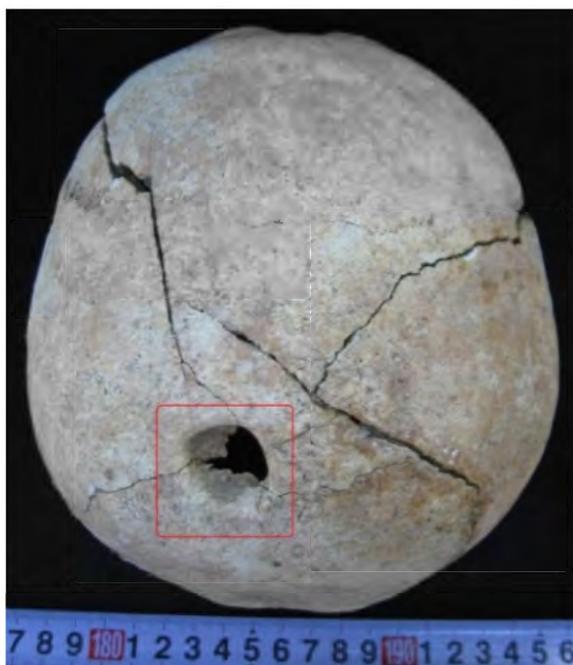


Fig. 10 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.30

³⁴ Angela Simalcsik, *Trepanația – ritual simbolic / magico-religios sau procedeu terapeutic? Necropola medievală de la Lozova (r-nul Strășeni, Republica Moldova), secolele XIV-XV. Studiu de caz*, in *Revista Arheologică*, X, 1-2, Chișinău, 2014, p.247-265.

³⁵ Angela Simalcsik, Vasilica Monica Groza, *op. cit.*, p. 315-317.

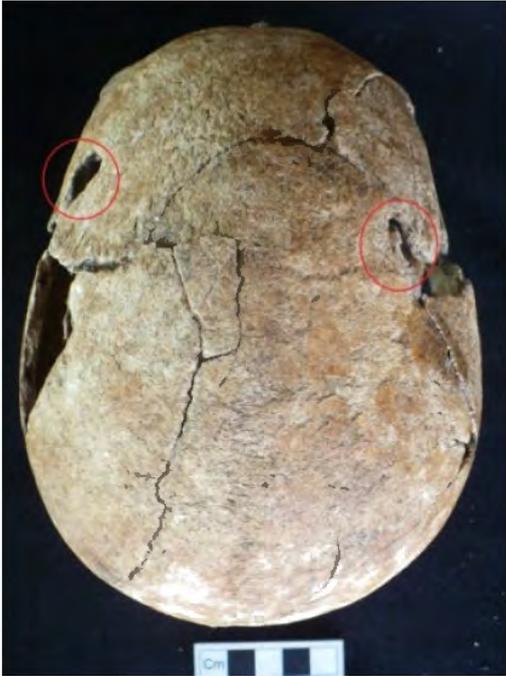


Fig. 11 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.73



Fig. 12 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.79

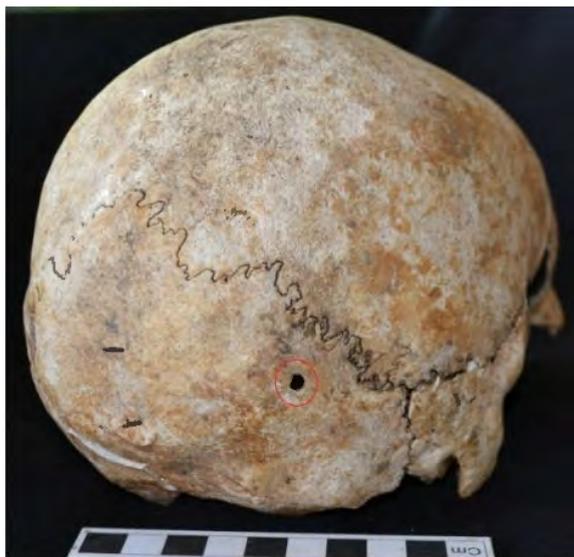


Fig. 13 Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii, G.97

The individual buried in G.79 in the flat medieval necropolis of Lozova-La hotar cu Vornicenii is a female, about 45-50 year-old. On her skull there can be seen some relatively symmetrical structural changes, located on the parietals, three on each side. Here and there they have pierced *tabula interna ossis cranii* (Fig.12). Even if the origin of these defects is not known, we do not exclude the possibility of multiple unsuccessful (symbolic or therapeutic) trepanations exposed to taphonomic subaerial changes after the burial³⁶.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study of the four cases of symbolic trepanation discovered recently in the space between Pruth and Dniester brings interesting information. Three skulls come from males of different ages (an old adult, a middle-aged adult, and a young adult), and only one comes from a female (an old adult). Two skulls have a single symbolic trepanation, located either on the frontal or approximately in the cranial point *bregma*. The other two skulls have two symbolic marks each, located either on the sagittal suture or on the parietals, without touching the suture.

In the case of single trepanations, the diameters oscillate around 2cm. When we talk about even signs, the situation is a classic one – a sign is bigger (about 2cm in diameter) and the second is always smaller (about 1cm in diameter).

³⁶ Angela Simalcsik, Robert Daniel Simalcsik, Vasilica Monica Groza, *Necropola medievală de la Lozova (raionul Strășeni). Campania 2015. Raport paleoantropologic*, in *Revista Arheologică*, XII, 1-2, Chișinău, 2016, p.306-307.

From a typological point of view, we find an interesting difference. The skulls with only one symbolic trepanation show Europoid characteristics, namely, the 55-60 year-old male from G.77 of Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii* and the 60-65 year-old female from G.9 from the Ciurnai burial mound. The other two individuals, who have two symbolic marks on their skulls, show a mixture of Europoid and Mongoloid traits, the latter being detected both in the facial skeleton and in dentition, by non-metric / epigenetic traits. This is the 30-40 year-old male from G.5 of the Cimişlia burial mound and the 20-25 year-old male from G.7 of the Crihana Veche tumulus.

Starting from the multitude of symbolic trepanations of the Early Middle Ages reported in the literature of the field and adding those described in this study (even if they are chronologically assigned to later medieval communities), it is easy to see that the marks are not chaotically arranged on any skull. Because of the more than obvious symmetry, we cannot reject the ritual-symbolic role of these insignia, related to the meaning of the "sign on the head" and of the modification of body integrity. The marks are symmetrically located on the cranial vault, in precise anatomic points. According to M. Mednikova, in some medieval communities of the Middle Ages, the head crown had a sacred significance; any intervention or manipulation performed in this region of the head has a magical potential.

Perhaps this type of intervention was not necessarily risky for life as a real, surgical trepanation which penetrates also *tabula interna ossis cranii*. Most likely, in some medieval communities, there lived a "connoisseur" who had the skills and knowledge needed to achieve the symbolic marks.

Even today it is difficult to understand the purpose of this custom, which involves body modification. It could be guided by a number of social and aesthetic standards or rather by a certain way of self-identification, to mark a stage of initiation (through pain resistance), transition to maturity, or to indicate belonging and allegiance to a particular social group.

Liste and source of illustrations:

Fig. 1 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.77. Male, 55-60 years old. *Norma frontalis* of the skull, author's photography.

Fig. 2 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.77. Male, 55-60 years old. *Norma verticalis* of the skull, author's photography.

Fig. 3 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.77. Male, 55-60 years old. Symbolic trepanation, detail, author's photography.

Fig. 4 Ciurnai, T.1, G.9. Female, 60-65 years old. *Norma verticalis* of the skull, author's photography.

Fig. 5 Ciurnai, T.1, G.9. Female, 60-65 years old. Symbolic trepanation, detail, author's photography.

Fig. 6 Cimișlia, T.8, G.5. Male, 30-40 years old. *Norma verticalis* of the skull, author's photography.

Fig. 7 Cimișlia, T.8, G.5. Male, 30-40 years old. Symbolic trepanations, detail, author's photography.

Fig. 8 Crihana Veche, T.12 (*Movila Gologan*), G.7. Male, 20-25 years old. *Norma verticalis* of the skull, author's photography.

Fig. 9 Crihana Veche, T.12 (*Movila Gologan*), G.7. Male, 20-25 years old. Symbolic trepanations, detail, author's photography.

Fig. 10 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.30. Male, 45-50 years old. Partially healed surgical trepanation, author's photography.

Fig. 11 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.73. Male, 60-65 years old. Cranial openings probably made *post-mortem*, author's photography.

Fig. 12 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.79. Female, 45-50 years old. Probably subaerial weathered multiple unsuccessful trepanations (symbolic or therapeutic), author's photography.

Fig. 13 Lozova-*La hotar cu Vornicenii*, G.97. Male, 40-45 years old. *Perimortem* surgical trepanation, author's photography.

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MEDIEVAL CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

Self-Portrait: Between Normality and Psychosis

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Abstract: The article entitled "Self-Portrait: Between Normality and Psychosis"¹ makes a comparison between specific international artists' self-portraits (such as: Vincent van Gogh's, Syd Barret's, Maria Lassning's etc.) and national artists' self-portraits (such as: Ion Țuculescu's, Aniela Firon's etc.) with a proper education in the field of fine arts and specific patients' self-portraits (diagnosed with schizophrenia and other mental disorders) with no artistic education, in order to highlight the therapeutic role of self-portrait in both cases. Regarding the first case there has been made a comparison between an interesting self-portrait belonging to the Romanian artist Ion Țuculescu called Self-portrait on yellow background and a medieval two handle cooking pot found in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen from Rotterdam which proves a natural connection of the modern period with the medieval one, as a proof that human being's origins cannot be denied, because they exist in our subconscious. Regarding the second case, there has also been made a comparison between a patient's self-portrait with Paranoid Schizophrenia and the medieval iconic character Ioana d'Arc, as the patient identifies herself with this historical figure. The main purpose consisted in presenting the way a self-portrait betrays the existence of specific moral disorders through the elements of visual language, like a mirror which reflects a painter's unseen reality.

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Generally speaking, self-portrait emerged due to a strong psychological need to express some hidden experiences which are apparently forgotten but stored in our subconsciousness. The purpose consists in presenting the development of self-portraits both in the history of universal art and in the history of Romanian art, which are analysed from a historical point of view by making some connections with the Middle Ages Period, but also from a psychological² point of view according to the structure: Id – Ego- Superego which involves the decipherment of certain symbols expressed by instincts that are denied by our consciousness, they are concealed in the unconsciousness and they are subsequently outsourced indirectly.³ Self-portrait stands for a symptomatic manifestation of our unconsciousness⁴ and brings to light the desires, regrets or traumas repressed by our consciousness, whose interpretations are difficult to convey: thus, dream and artistic creation as well, are «enigmas which need to be deciphered», because both in dream and in art there is a latent content which is expressed in a derivative way through the artistic forms the artist resorts to and because in both situations the intervention of consciousness limits free expression.⁵

The reason of self-portrayal is the desire of individualization and self-valorization of which one is more or less conscious of, having its roots in childhood since the moment the human being starts showing interest in its own physiognomy.⁶ Self-awareness since the age of 18 months⁷, as well the awareness of one's own feelings and thoughts⁸ since the age of 4 or 5 years old reveal an intense need for self-knowledge which develops later in life. It is not accidental the usage of mirror in the artistic creations of the 20th

² The concept of *personality* consists in summing up several psycho-physiological, instinctive-affective or behavioral aspects, temperamental characteristics, etc., Constantin Enăchescu, *Tratat de psihanaliză și psihoterapie*, Maria-Elena Druță (editor), *Didactică și Pedagogică* Press, R.A. - Bucharest, 1998, pp. 30-31.

³ *Ibidem.*, pp. 34-35.

⁴ Cristian Nae, *Moduri de a percepe. O introducere în teoria artei moderne și contemporane*, Oana Maria Nae (editor), *Artes Press*, Iași, 2013, p.86.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p.87, apud Sarah Kofmann, *L'enfance de l'art. Une interpretation de l'esthetique freudienne*, Payot Press, Paris, 1970.

⁶ Matthias Wildermuth, *Entwicklungs- und Störungsmodelle B1 Module, Spezielle Störungslehre: Krankheiten des Kindesalters, Behinderung*, B2 Module, *Vorahnung-Mitahnung-Nachahnung-Verbindung, Leibnahe und geistnahe seelische Spiegelungsprozesse in der Entwicklung*, Power Point Presentation, slide no. 16, Master Studies, Art Therapy, *Alanus Hochschule für Kunst und Gesellschaft* University, Alfter, Bonn, 2015.

⁷ *Ibidem*, slide no. 26.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

century, relevant in this sense being Michelangelo Pistoletto's self-portrait which is part of the series entitled *Mirror Paintings* which consists in integrating the natural-size of his own image on the surface of a mirror. The main aim is to include external characters as well as other elements from the environment in his artworks, in order to deal with the hazard. According to the Lacanian concept, the ego projection in a mirror is illusory, being rather understood as a self-denial or as an utopia of self-knowledge⁹ and Pistoletto has created a connection with this idea which is about creating a fictional (self-)portrait. It is considered that self-knowledge is partly fulfilled, as a human being is defined by an endless mountain of secrets which cannot be fully decrypted.

From a psychological point of view, the imperative need for self-portraiture is explained by the desire to unconsciously compensate for the lack produced by the loss of the original state¹⁰ when the baby suffers a separation from his mother's body at birth. This nostalgia for unity, symbolized by the artistic creation (self-portrait), can also be connected to Id-Ego relationship which forms a unitary whole¹¹ in the prenatal stage, as these two instances are not developed yet. The beginning of awareness marks the beginning of a development which leads to a painful experience that is felt like a real shock; once the prenatal stage is over, the baby breaks out of his mother's body (Id) to enter the physical world and since that very moment his native stage begins (Ego) and Superego becomes a component part of it which is willingly "built" by the educational and social factors. These three instances are connected to each other during the entire life as a whole in comparison to the prenatal stage when this connection is not fully defined, there is no clear separation among these three instances.

At the end of the 18th century, when psychology began to be considered as an independent science¹², painting begun playing a major role in identifying patient's diagnosis and self-portrait was just a direct way of accessing his mind and soul. Since Hans Prinzhorn's *Mental Illnesses* was published in Berlin in 1922, the interest for psychiatric patients' art creations increased and art scientists and artists such as: Max Ernst, Jean Dubuffet etc. investigated this problem and used their drawings¹³ as a source of inspiration for their artworks. The major difficulty for psychiatrists and art critics

⁹ Cristian Nae, *op.cit.*, pp.102-120.

¹⁰ Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, *Psihanaliza artei și a creativității*, Marius Chivu, Silviu Dragomir, Vasile Dem.

Zamfirescu (editors), translation from French to Romanian by Georgeta Mitrea, *Trei* Press, Bucharest, 2002, pp. 86-90.

¹¹ K.-U. Adam, *I Allgemeine theoretische Grundlagen*, Springer Press, Berlin, 2006, <http://www.krammerbuch.at/bookData/pdfs/adam_lesepr.pdf> (29.05.2016, 17:34).

¹² Constantin Enăchescu, *Tratat de psihopatologie*, Tehnică Press, Bucharest, 2000, p. 17.

¹³ Cristian Nae, *op.cit.*, p. 94.

consists in the impossibility of defining a certain boundary between normality and pathology despite the existence of certain defining characteristics which distinguish a patient's artwork characterized by chaos from a healthy person's characterized by harmony¹⁴. Mental health is objectively defined by the adaptability to various situations which provide flexibility in response to daily challenges¹⁵, while psychological illness betrays a high degree of deviation from norms, as well as a degradation of functional structures, a cognitive and a behavioral imbalance¹⁶. Sigmund Freud's statement that perfect normality is an utopia („Normalitatea este o ficțiune ideală; fiecare Eu este psihotic, într-un anumit moment, într-o măsură mai mare sau mai mică.”¹⁷) has further amplified the uncertainty regarding the existence of a clear demarcation between these two concepts by creating a general confusion.

It is obvious that self-portrait emerged from an inner strong need for expression during an existential crisis¹⁸ which betrays a desperate attempt to find a solution in order to solve a conflict with oneself. Several international artists such as: Vincent Van Gogh, Edvard Munch, as well as Romanian artists such as: Ion Andreescu, and Ștefan Luchian etc. have been particularly concerned about the analysis of their inner world; the Dutch painter Philip Akkerman's statement emphasizes the interest in self-knowledge through his serial self-portraits: "People can deal with that aspect [= the spark of Creation, that great unknown] in three ways. By reflecting on it - that's philosophy; through mystical experiences, revelations - that's religion and ultimately art. Everyone worries about the unknown. [...] I give shape to that worry by continually painting that self-portrait; that is my basso continuo. I'll never figure out that riddle, and so I'll always be painting self-portraits. The day that I solve the riddle, I'll stop painting." Thus, self-portrait becomes synonymous with the concepts of *unknown* and *mystery*, whose meaning become decipherable throughout life.

Some biographical details show that that personality traits of artists such as: Odilon Redon, Edvard Munch, James Ensor, Salvador Dali, William Blake etc. were beyond the boundaries of normality so that hallucinatory visions, traumas and manic symptoms caused by the socio-technical stress

¹⁴ Hartmut Kraft, *Grenzgänger zwischen Kunst und Psychiatrie*, D1 Module, Master Studies, Art Therapy, *Alanus Hochschule für Kunst und Gesellschaft* University, Alfter, Bonn, 2015.

¹⁵ Florin Tudose, Cătălina Tudose, Letiția Dobranici, *Tratat de psihopatologie și psihiatrie pentru psihologi*, Silviu Dragomir, Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu (editors), *Trei* Press, Bucharest, 2011, pp. 87- 90.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 90- 91.

¹⁷ „Normality is an ideal fiction, everyone is psychotic at some point, to a greater or lesser extent.” *Ibidem*, p.80

¹⁸ Juliette Hanson, *The Art of Self-Portraiture* <<http://www.juliettehanson.com/#!/the-art-of-self-portraiture/cqqs>> (22.08.2016, 22:44).

due to a very high psychological level¹⁹ were transposed into their own creations. Thus, the artists' refusal of facing the objective reality resulted in creations which show a new reality without any logical references. Gino Severini's distorted futuristic self-portraits, Francis Bacon's or Paul Klee's expressionist self-portraits are a response to extrinsic aggression (war, loneliness) as well as to intrinsic aggression (hate, cruelty, etc.)²⁰, since their self-representations betray a high degree of suffering, the physical aspect being totally subordinated to the moral one.

Psychologists have established two types of biostructures: a stable biostructure which preserves real coordinates and an unstable biostructure which neglects the reality²¹.

In the first category there are included: Expressionists' self-portraits (James Ensor's, Willem de Kooning's, who was diagnosed in the '80s with Alzheimer²²; de Kooning's self-portraits betray an innovative sense of form and color, Maria Lassnig's, known for her interest in self-investigation²³, William Utermohlen's, also diagnosed with Alzheimer²⁴; his series of self-portraits reflects the exciting evolution of his disease, Syd Barrett's, the founder of Pink Floyd psychedelic rock band and painter at the same time, diagnosed with schizophrenia²⁵ because of drug abuse, Aniela Firon's which reveal the emotional problems which pushed her to suicide²⁶, Ion Țuculescu's which express some psychological tensions which are translated into the existence of a moral disorder²⁷), Impressionists' self-portraits (Claude Monet or Pierre-Auguste Renoir's self-representations are an excuse for representing

¹⁹ Mihai Dragomirescu, *Medicina și arta plastică*, Facla Press, Timișoara, 1986, pp. 185-189.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p.190.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² EL Marcus, Y. Kaufman, A. Cohen-Shalev, [Creative work of painters with Alzheimer's disease], 08.2009
<<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19899261>> (11.07.2016, 19:14).

²³ *The Austrian Cultural Forum and Tate Liverpool Members, Who is Maria Lassnig*
<<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/who-is-maria-lassnig>> 13.05.2016 (22.08.2016, 23:00).

²⁴ *The Alzheimer Artist Who Painted Self Portraits Every Year Until He Forgot To Send Them In*, <<http://www.viralforest.com/alzheimer-artist/>> (11.07.2016, 19:14).

²⁵ Kris DiLorenzo, „Syd Barrett, Pink Floyd and Mental Illness” in *Trouser Newspaper*, pp. 26-32, February 1978
<<http://www.schizophrenia.com/stories/sbarrett.htm>> (11.07.2016, 19:14).

²⁶ [Nettime-ro] Erwin Kessler vs. Mihai Oroveanu, *Referitor la acuzele aduse lui Erwin Kessler de catre dl. Mihai Oroveanu*: <<https://nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-ro-1301/msg00014.html>> (11.07.2016, 20:16).

²⁷ The author Magda Cârnci describes him as having „an overflowing psychism with strange obsessions, visions and exacerbated tensions (...)” which shows the existence of some paroxysmal feelings which overcome the limits of normality. Magda Cârnci, *Ion Țuculescu*, Vasile Florea (editor), Meridiane Press, Sibiu, 1984, pp. 6-7.

sensory perceptions through the investigations of light effects), Neo-impressionists' self-portraits (including Georges Seurat's and Edmond Delacroix's which express an inner peace due to their stately self-portraits²⁸), Post-impressionists' self-portraits (we mention here: Vincent van Gogh's self-portraits which betray psychotic feelings which are under the influence of epilepsy diagnostics, respectively Hebephrenic Schizophrenia²⁹, Paul Gauguin's who announced *Les Nabis* and *Fauvism* Movements, Paul Cezanne's who announced *Cubism* Movement. Also some patients's self-portraits suffering from Paranoid Schizophrenia and Bipolar disorder belong to this category and their artworks are analyzed by the physician Constantin Enăchescu.

In the second category there are included: Surrealists' self-portraits (such as: René Magritte's or Salvador Dali's who are supposed to have suffered from Parkinson's disease³⁰, Frida Kahlo's diagnosed with depression³¹ who expressed her interest in a psychoanalytic self-interrogation beyond the limits of rationality), Cubists' self-portraits (namely: Pablo Picasso's, whose diagnosis of clinical depression³² can be noticed in some of his self-portraits), Expressionists' self-portraits (Francis Bacon's which betray the dysmorphic disorder³³ he was suffering from), performers' self-portraits (Joseph Beuys, a famous character of Fluxus group, portrayed himself by using both traditional and modern techniques, his actions revealing the trauma he suffered during the Second World War³⁴) etc.

It is obvious that self-portrait, regardless the technical means of expression, represented a way of spiritual healing, as artist Michael Buthe declared: „Ich habe lange gesucht, bis ich diese alte Scheibe fand. (...) Es ist ein Material, das viel Gelebtes und viele Energien gespeichert hat, ich könnte mich damit identifizieren. // Meine Sonne ist für mich wie alle Bilder ein

²⁸ Mihai Dragomirescu, *op.cit.*, p.147.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp.153-154.

³⁰ *Famous People with Parkinson's Disease*, <<http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/parkinsons-famous.shtml>> (11.07.2016, 19:55).

³¹ Liz Campese, *The life, Art and Mental Illness of Frida Kahlo*, 10.07.2015<<https://www.talkspace.com/blog/2015/07/the-life-art-and-mental-illness-of-frida-kahlo/>> (11.07.2016, 19:43).

³² Alicia Sparks, *Famous Writers And Artists And Mental Illness*, 14.06.2008,<<http://www.blisstree.com/2008/06/14/mental-health-well-being/famous-writers-and-artists-and-mental-illness-234/>> (11.07.2016, 20:00).

³³ Susana Martinez-Conde, Stephen L. Macknik, *Famous Paintings Can Reveal Visual Disorders. Neural pathologies have shaped great art throughout history*, 01.03.2015 <<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/famous-paintings-can-reveal-visual-disorders/>> (11.07.2016, 20:08).

³⁴ C. Ottomann, PL. Stollwerck, H. Maier, I. Gatty, T. Muehlberger, *Joseph Beuys: Trauma and catharsis*. Med Humanit, 12. 2010, <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21393290>> (11.07.2016, 22:07).

Gebrauchsgegenstand zum Sehen, zum Fühlen, zum Träumen, zum Sichertwas-Klarmachen. // Heilungswirkung in der Kunst kann ich mir gut vorstellen. Ich kenne Medizinmänner in Nigeria - das sind Ärzte, die für mich eigentlich ganz große Künstler sind-, die Heilungsprozesse einleiten, das funktioniert wunderbar.”³⁵

The explosion of self portraiture³⁶ at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century is the symbol of the modern human's dramatic condition expressed by the emergence of solitude and anxiety³⁷. Overurbanization, mechanisation and the tormented daily life have played a very important role in this direction, as they have increased psychological stressors and therefore the risk of psychopathology³⁸ which gave birth to a psychological instability³⁹. There is evidence that tuberculosis, mental illness, alcoholism and delinquency are caused by the overcrowding and stressful life which gives to the human being a feeling of loneliness⁴⁰. The reorganization of the large industrialized centers through the collaboration of architects with physicians and sociologists was considered the best way of counteracting stress by bringing harmony from an architectural and moral point of view⁴¹. The abandonment of angular constructions in favour of circular and oval shapes would be a very important aspect, as sharp shapes symbolize aggression in comparison to oval shapes which symbolize balance and optimism which are so necessary for an inner balance.

Below there are presented the concepts of some artists' self-portraits and also of some patients with artistic skills who have used their own images for therapeutic purposes in order to overcome some moral difficult situations.

One of the artists is Vincent van Gogh whose several self-portraits reflect various states of mind which contain painter's shared fragments of his

³⁵ "I have been searching for a long time until I have understood one thing. (...) It's a material which has stored many energies I am indentifying with. // Like all pictures, my sun is for me a way to see, to feel, to dream, to see clearly. // I can imagine very well the healing effects in art. I know doctors in Nigeria - who are really great artists for me - who initiate healing processes which work wonderfully". Simone Iris Riehle, *Die Thematisierung des Ich: Das Selbstbild als Gegenstand der Selbstbeobachtung in der bildenden Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts und in der Kunsttherapie*, 20th Volume, Manfred Wagner (editor), Praesens Press, Vienna, 2012, p. 140 apud *Der andere Blick. Heilungswirkung der Kunst heute*, Walter Smerling, Evelyn Weiss (editors), Köln, 1986, p.29.

³⁶ Self-portraits started playing a major role in that period, cf. Mihai Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 138..

³⁸ *Ibidem.*, p. 137-138.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, apud Paul Calseyde, „Abbotempo”, *This strange disease of modern life*, 1967, no. 1, pp. 2-6, Ralph Caplan, „Amer. J. of Psychiatry”, 1981, no. 4, pp. 413-426 and S. Vicari, "Medicine et Hygiene", 1978, no. 36, pp. 3613-3614.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 139.

soul. The usage of complementary colors: red and green which is present in the artwork entitled *Self-portrait with the bandaged ear and pipe*⁴² betrays a double conflict: a chromatic conflict, due to the juxtaposition of strong colours, and a psychological conflict since he committed in fact a self-aggression act by cutting his right ear⁴³ after a major conflict with his artist and friend Paul Gauguin, because of the great personality differences between the two. His eyes' expression reveals a profound pain, a strong inner tension which torments his mind and soul, amplified by the nervous brushstrokes.

Egon Schiele painted several self-portraits, questioning various aspects such as: sexuality, eroticism, self-irony, doubt, pathos, allegory, etc. and it is important to mention that physical deformities, which are typical for his style, indicate suffering⁴⁴. Like other expressionists, such as Oskar Kokoschka and Max Beckmann, Egon Schiele unveiled his inner side, his own beliefs, and last but not least his vulnerability.

Frida Kahlo's self-portraits played an important role within her artistic activity, being a way of self-protection with a therapeutic role at the same time, a revelation of her physical and moral pain, of her solitude. The paralysis she suffered from since she was 6 years old, as well as the accident at the age of 18, the loss of her child and the unfortunate marriage⁴⁵ caused her a great pain, painting being the main activity which compensated all these tragedies: „Ich bin nicht gestorben, und außerdem habe ich etwas, wofür es sich zu leben lohnt: die Malerei.”⁴⁶. Extremely sensitive, Kahlo analyzed her own experiences by metamorphosing them in a Naive Surrealist artistic language which is rich in symbols.

⁴² Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890)
<<http://www.anahitadesign.com/impressionist/vangogh.html>> (18.09.2016, 15:42).

⁴³ Joseph Phelan, *Tragedy and Triumph at Arles: Van Gogh and Gauguin*
<<http://www.artcyclopedia.com/feature-2001-11.html>> (18.09.2016, 15:59).

⁴⁴ Frank J. Erbguth, „Egon Schiele and Dystonia” in *Neurological Disorders in Famous Artists*, Part 3, vol. 27th Volume, J. Bogouslavsky (editor), S. Karger AG Press, Basel, Switzerland, 2010, pp. 46-60,
<<https://books.google.ro/books?id=NTmyjVWIrTYC&pg=PA46&lpg=PA46&dq=egon+schiele+self+portraits+suffering&source=bl&ots=0vxcJEOW6A&sig=rqB5gx0piPxT86LQSoM36FNsby4&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUK EwjsuPnF8dXOAhVDVBQKHeZfA10Q6AEINDAJ#v=onepage&q=egon%20schiele%20self%20portraits%20suffering&f=false>> (22.08.2016, 23:47).

⁴⁵ Frida Kahlo Fans. Complete Biography
<<http://www.fridakahlofans.com/biocomplete.html>> (22.08.2016,23:54).

⁴⁶ „I am not dead and besides painting is the best reason I am living for”, Simone Iris Riehle, *op. cit.*, p. 181, apud Raquel Tibol, *Frida Kahlo. Ein offenes Leben*, München, 2005, p. 51.

The surrealist Austrian artist Rudolf Hausner often painted self-portraits as a therapeutic way, because they represented for him a psychological necessity, a way to overcome his traumatic events according to his own statement: „Malen ist für mich ein Mittel zur Bewältigung meines Lebens! Die Malerei ist für mich eine gnostische Disziplin⁴⁷“.

Joseph Beuys, an important artist in the second half of the 20th century, considered that self-portrait was the best way for regaining his moral balance. His traumatic experience caused by the plane crash during the Second World War, the dismissal from the Academy of Arts in Düsseldorf in 1972 and so on, determined him to find his refuge in art⁴⁸ which was considered to be a therapeutic form⁴⁹, a way to overcome his psychological crisis. Willem de Kooning, one of the most important Abstract Expressionist painters, suffered from Alzheimer's disease at the age of 70 and afterwards the artist was no longer able to work, being addicted to alcohol and drugs⁵⁰. After he met his ex-wife⁵¹ after a long breakup which lasted 21 years, he started painting again by using bright colours and harmonic graphics⁵² which were totally different from his artistic style prior to his disease. There are some self-portraits since his cognitive decline which reflect an existential fear expressed by his grotesque facial features. Anyway, the artistic creation was for the artist a silent confidant, helping him to free himself from fears, depression and embarrassment.

Maria Lassnig painted various unconventional self-portraits with her eyes closed⁵³ as a continuous search for her existential condition and identity, the artist proving a strong interest for monologue, self-enthusiasm, self-observation and introspection. Self-portrayal was not for her just a simple

⁴⁷ „Painting is for me a way of surviving! Painting is for me a gnostic discipline.“ *Ibidem*, p. 176, apud Dolf Lindner, *Rudolf Hausner Catalogue*, Dortmund, 1982, p. 41.

⁴⁸ Volker Harlan, *What is Art?: Conversation with Joseph Beuys. Paperback – 16 Mar 2007* by Joseph Beuys, <<https://www.amazon.co.uk/What-Art-Conversation-Joseph-Beuys/dp/1905570074>> (22.08.2016, 00:11).

⁴⁹ Matthew Biro, *The Arts of Joseph Beuys*, 2nd Volume, 2nd Issue, Winter 1995 <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jii/4750978.0002.203/--arts-of-joseph-beuys?rgn=main;view=fulltext>> (31.05.2016, 01:35).

⁵⁰ Jerry Carroll, *Apex or decline? / The great painter Willem de Kooning has Alzheimer's disease. As a major new show opens at Sfnoma, debate continues over the quality of his late work*, 01.10.1995.

<<http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/APEX-OR-DECLINE-The-great-painter-Willem-de-3022569.php>> 01.10.1995 (23.08.2016, 00:18).

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ Gilda Williams, *How Embarrassing!*, 04.07.2016, Tate Etc. issue 37: Summer 2016 <<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/how-embarrassing>> (23.08.2016, 00:20).

reflective process, but also a way to face her own feelings and thoughts she was not conscious of⁵⁴.

William Utermohlen's self-portraits reveal the evolution of Alzheimer's disease⁵⁵, characterized by the gradual loss of cognitive and perceptual capacity expressed by the distortion of his physical traits. His *Self-portrait* since 1967⁵⁶ reveals fine features, big fearful sad eyes which betray sensitivity, a fragile physical and mental structure, predicting the emergence of his disease which severely affected his mental health.

His *Self-portrait with easel (yellow and green)* since 1996⁵⁷ marks the onset of his disease which can be easily noticed in the usage of strong colours which seem like a "roar", like a mute cry of a human being who is steadily heading to a new reality. The white cornea, which is highlighted very well by the yellow ochre skin becomes aggressive and bizarre and his threatening look betrays an inner suffering caused by the cruel illness. The rectangular shape of the easel becomes the symbol of his social and emotional isolation from the outer reality.

His self-portrait since 2000 entitled *Head I*⁵⁸ shows an advanced degree of disease, expressed by the distortion of his facial features which is so high that this artwork is at the boundary between figurative and abstract style. His features have become rather echoes or memories of his anatomical forms which were previously represented in such a rational manner. The lack of eyes also symbolizes the destruction of his last connection to reality, being a sign of psychological trauma.

An interesting self-portrait belongs to Syd (Roger) Barrett, the founder of the psychedelic rock band *Pink Floyd*. Less known for his artworks, he started painting more especially after he left the band in 1968⁵⁹ due to his diagnosis of schizophrenia because of drug abuse.

⁵⁴ Simone Iris Riehle, *op.cit.*, p.153, apud Christa Murken. *Maria Lassnig. Ihr Leben und ihr malerisches Werk. Ihre kunstgeschichtliche Stellung in der Malerei des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Herzogenrath, 1990, p. 308.

⁵⁵ Denise Grady, *Self-Portraits Chronicle a Descent Into Alzheimer's*, 24.10.2006 <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/24/health/24alz.html?_r=0> (22.02, 11:22).

⁵⁶ *Self-Portraits of an Artist with Alzheimers*, <<http://jeffwongdesign.com/2012/02/self-portraits-of-an-artist-with-alzheimers/>> 07.02.2012 (02.08.2016, 20:22).

⁵⁷ MIT TR Editors, *Dementia: The Self-Portraits of William Utermohlen* <<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/429486/dementia-the-self-portraits-of-william-utermohlen/>> 05.10.2012(02.08.2016, 20:22).

⁵⁸ *Self-Portraits of an artist with Alzheimers* <<http://jeffwongdesign.com/2012/02/self-portraits-of-an-artist-with-alzheimers/>> 07.02.2012 (02.08.2016, 20:22).

⁵⁹ Biography.com Editors, *Syd Barrett Biography. Guitarist, Musician (1946–2006)*, A&E Television Networks Press, 06.07.2016 <<http://www.biography.com/people/syd-barrett-20930217#later-career>> (23.08.2016,00:43).

His *self-portrait* since 1961-1962⁶⁰ is located in a dark rectangular form which seems to be a shield which protects him against the stormy atmosphere and the luminosity contrast creates a strong inner tension. This composition betrays the presence of a turbulent landscape which threatens the existence of the authorial identity that is balanced by the rectangular shape. This apocalyptic image emphasised also by the strongly defined shadows denotes an introverted person according to his own statement: "I don't think I'm easy to talk about. I've got a very irregular head. And I'm not anything that you think I am anyway." His obscure and dramatic look foresees his disappearance from the musical career in 1968 because of his pathological condition which severely affected his mind, isolating him from the others.

The famous song entitled *Wish you were here*, which is dedicated to Syd Barrett, expresses an indescribable sadness and compassion for the tragedy he suffered. The lyrics of this song highlights his complex personality, the dramatic atmosphere which predicts the unavoidable stage of his disease. The low tones of the song and the sad lyrics, which evoke an irreversible lack⁶¹, create a depressing atmosphere which carries into its depths the traces of a nostalgia and of an incurable melancholy. The metaphors, which often appear in the lyrics of this song, are designed to compare Syd's two lifestyles: before and after his pathological condition, defined through his double identity; thus he gave up to his scene name of *Syd* after leaving the band, recognizing only his baptismal name, *Roger*⁶².

Aniela Firon's self-portraits, whose painting style belongs to Neo-expressionism movement, betray emotional problems under whose influence she committed suicide. One can notice in her *Self-portraits* since 1984⁶³ the prevalence of an aggressive line which decomposes her face, outlining her inner wounds. Her sickening look reveals an inner emptiness and the raised hand in the background, which doesn't seem to belong to her because of its forced position, is a symbol of a mute cry which foresees an existential abyss.

⁶⁰ *Rare Photos Of Pink Floyd's Creative Genius Syd Barrett* <<http://www.nme.com/photos/unseen-and-rare-photos-of-pink-floyds-lunatic-genius-syd-barrett/209240#/photo/13>> (05.08.2016, 20:16).

⁶¹ Pierpaolo Ceccherini, *Wish you were here - Pink floyd - Lyrics - Meaning*, 28.06.2016 <<http://www.planckmachine.com/wish-you-were-here-pink-floyd-lyrics-meaning/>> (18.08.2016, 02:41).

⁶² SBA, *The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story* <<http://sydbarrett.net/the-pink-floyd-and-syd-barrett-story/>> 18.02.2003 (18.08.2016, 02:41).18.02.2003 (18.08.2016, 02:41).

⁶³ *Arta. Feminisms. Portrete de artist, Expoziții în România, Expoziții internaționale, Eseuri, Interviuuri, Cronică de carte, Infô art*, no. 11 / 2014, Visual Arts Magazine, Union of Visual Artists from Romania (editor), Magda Cârnecki (editor in chief), Bucharest, fig. no. 3, p.37.

The look of another *self-portrait*⁶⁴ since the same year expresses a state of restlessness and anxiety highlighted by the descending lines and the vibrating brushstrokes from the background which are the symbol of despair and suffering. The red bruises are similar to some blood traits and the yellow ones are the expression of a hidden suffering.

Another *Self-representation*⁶⁵ also since the same year is the very embodiment of an incurable pain expressed by her red eyes whose dramatic expression breaks any contact with the surrounding reality, revealing a serious depression.

Ion Țuculescu is one of the best examples of artists who refused to accept the communism political requirements⁶⁶. His expressionist works⁶⁷ which are a mixture between figurative and abstract, between traditional and modern style⁶⁸ reveal his inner world⁶⁹, his own thoughts, feelings and tensions, according to his confession: „Am vrut să las oamenilor o operă plină de dragoste de viață – am vrut să calc peste toate tristețile, peste toate neliniștile sufletului meu, dar n-am putut. [...] Ce aş putea spune oamenilor pentru a-i convinge că viața e frumoasă, veselă și fericită? Ca să fiu sincer, în viața de toate zilele nu mai pot trăi fericirea. Nu mai trăiesc decât în artă, în pictură și mai ales în muzică.”⁷⁰

A psychic tension is betrayed by his obsession for eyes which become a leitmotif in his artworks and can be noticed in some of his self-portraits; for example in his *Self-portrait with leaf*⁷¹ the leaves have the shape of eyes and even his left eye is covered with a leaf which makes a reference to his sensitive personality who needs protection. One can notice the presence of both green and dead leaves which express the transition from

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ Cf. Magda Cârnci, *Artele plastice în România 1945-1989. Cu o addenda 1990-1989*, 2nd Edition, Ioana Aneci (editor), *Polirom Press*, Iași, 2013, p. 30.

⁶⁷ Idem, *Ion Țuculescu*, Vasile Florea (editor), *Meridiane Press*, Sibiu, 1984, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 32-33.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

⁷⁰ „I wanted to I leave people an artwork full of life - I wanted to get over all sadnesses, over all anxieties of my soul, but I couldn't. [...] What can I tell people to persuade them that life is beautiful, cheerful and happy? To be honest, in my everyday life I cannot live happiness anymore. I only live in art, especially in painting and in music.” Maria Morariu, *Să calc peste toate tristețile*, *Literatura de azi Online Magazine*, Union of Visual Artists from Romania, 19.05.2016 <<http://www.literaturadeazi.ro/panoramic/sa-calc-peste-toate-tristetile>> (26.05.2016, 09:58).

⁷¹ Painting Collection. Ion Țuculescu. *Autoportret cu frunză*, <<http://www.muzeuldeartacraiova.ro/index.php/colectia/pictura/ion-tuculescu/18-autoportret-cu-frunza>>, data provided by the Art Museum, Craiova (10.05.2016, 18:56).

youth to maturity and from life to death; thus the artist invites the viewer to a moment of meditation at the ephemerality of life.

Another interesting self-portrait is *Self-portrait on yellow background* (figure no. 1) where the presence of the eye motif can be easily noticed; besides, the shape of the artist's body can be associated with a two handle cooking pot since Medieval Period (figure no. 2).

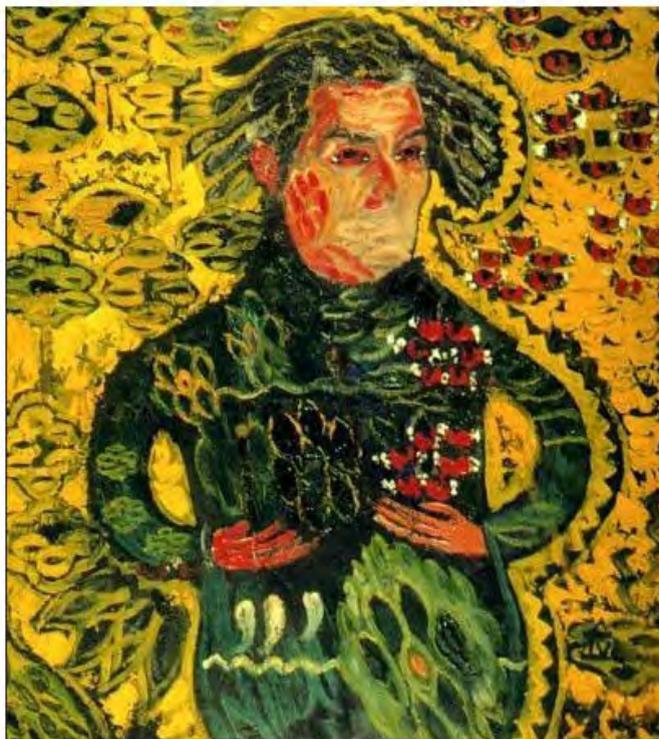


Fig.1 Ion Țuculescu, *Self-portrait on yellow background*

Cooking pot is basically a household object which passed the test of time for thousands of years. In Middle Ages it was for people more than just an indispensable object in the household, symbolizing the sense of security, as it met two basic needs – obtaining cooked food and socializing⁷² with the others. It can be concluded that Țuculescu expressed a subliminal need for regaining balance, psychic security and peace of mind fulfilled through visual language, shape and colour.

⁷² Omeka, *Cooking Pot*

<<https://medievallondon.ace.fordham.edu/collections/show/6>> (22.04.2018, 14:27).



Fig. 2 *Cooking pot*, Anonymous, 1200 – 1250

Therefore, Țuculescu's artworks generally speaking are the expression of the intellectual's great pain who is misunderstood by the others. His opposition to Classicism is distinguished by essentializing the plastic motifs which mediated the discovery of his inner truth.

Self-portrait as a form of therapy is also practised by mentally ill people who do not have any artistic education, and now the question is whether there is any difference between artists' self-portraits with mental disorders and ordinary people's self-portraits who also have mental disorders, or whether the pathological state simply annihilates the aesthetic sense which was systematically educated in the spirit of art and beauty. In the book *Selbstbilder in Psychose und Kunst. Portraitgestaltung als Spiegel psychischer Befindlichkeit* is to be found a woman's interesting self-portrait⁷³ with Paranoid Schizophrenia who is facing her own identity⁷⁴. The annihilation of eyes plays a major role, because this express a psychological disorder betrayed by her tensioned and expressive crossed hands which become a symbol of self-defense. Her open mouth is similar to a (moral)

⁷³ *Selbstbilder in Psychose und Kunst. Portraitgestaltung als Spiegel psychischer Befindlichkeit*, Flora Gräfin von Spreti, Hans Förstl, Karolina Breindl, Philipp Martius (editors), *Akademischer Press*, München, 2001, p. 127.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, pp.127-129.

wound which could be healed through art therapy only if some aspects of the unconsciousness are brought to light.

There are some interesting art-therapeutical activities based on self-knowledge which are organized also for children⁷⁵ whose purpose is to discover concealed sufferings, as one can notice in a self-portrait of a child who had a heart surgery⁷⁶ which is to be found in the article entitled „Das bin ich. Selbstporträt mit Zuckerkreide”. It is entitled *I'm playing even in misery* and reveals a double ego expressed both through the form of his big dark shadow which signifies disease and suffering and through the form of the bird above his head which signifies his desire to get rid of illness; it is therefore a double self-portrait. There is no emphasis on child's facial expression but on the quintessence of his soul experience. In this case self-portrait plays a therapeutic role by annihilating psychosomatic disorders through the exposure and awareness of the problem and then by activating human being's existing resources in order to reevaluate certain fears and thoughts as well as to gain moral balance⁷⁷.

In Constantin Enăchescu's album entitled *Artă și nebunie. Universul plastic al iraționalului* there is a teenager's self-portrait⁷⁸ aged 19 years old with schizoid personality disorder⁷⁹ whose family problems have been a real impediment for the natural development of his personality. His strange facial expression and also the weird characters from the background reveal a tensioned atmosphere highlighted by the teenager's wide open, scared and bizarre eyes. His cry for help, his prematurely aged and cadaverous face, his harsh facial features and also his dark red eyes irises betray a great suffering, fear, depression, weakness, constraint, isolation and mistrust in himself.

In the same album there are some self-portraits who belong to a woman aged 35 with Bipolar disorder (Manic Depression)⁸⁰. One of her self-portraits was painted during a Manic episode whose symptoms of sexual hyperactivity⁸¹ are symbolized by her weird eyes, by her chaotic hair, by the enormous flower positioned on the top of her head and also by the warm and aggressive colours of her face. Her facial expression betray a deep pain, a

⁷⁵ Constanze Kirchner, „Das bin ich. Selbstporträt mit Zuckerkreide”, *Kunst + Unterricht. Selbstbegegnung im Bild*, no. 242, 2000: 36-38.

⁷⁶ Mijam Mathar, „Selbsterleben und Krankheitserleben. Zeichnungen herzkranker Kinder”, *Kunst + Unterricht. Selbstbegegnung im Bild*, no. 246/247, 2000: 77-78.

⁷⁷ Dagmar Wohler, *Künstlerisch-therapeutische Prozesserfahrung A3 Module*, Master Studies, Art Therapy, *Alanus Hochschule für Kunst und Gesellschaft*, Alfter, Bonn, 2015, Course.

⁷⁸ Constantin Enăchescu, *Artă și nebunie. Universul plastic al iraționalului*, *Noi Media Print Press*, Bucharest, 2006, fig. no. 49, p. 53.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 52-53

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p.68.

⁸¹ Alina Mandragiu, *Psihoza maniaco-depresivă (tulburarea bipolară)*, 09.02.2007 <<http://www.emedonline.ro/afectiuni/view.article.php/c6/71/p1>> (03.09.2016, 12:17).

lack of moral balance and the overly long hair generates a suffocating and overwhelming atmosphere. The absence of neck is the expression of an insecurity state of mind.

Another self-portrait⁸² who belong to the same patient was painted during a Manic Depression episode expressed by the combination of warm colors specific to the Manic type, with cold and dark colors specific to Melancholic Depression type. Her enormous hair is richer in this composition in comparison to the previous one where it's only suggested through some curved lines. The obsessive and nervous reiteration of the oval forms announces the occurrence of depression characterized by anxiety and apathy⁸³ which isolates her in another reality; the vivid colours are specific to the Manic type whose symptoms are opposite to Depression, namely: insomnia, irritation, disinhibition etc.⁸⁴. Her look betrays some melancholic personality traits, since her eyelashes which are absent in the previous composition, are drawn in this composition through some nervous lines which are the expression of a moral disorder.

Another Self-representation⁸⁵ which is to be found in the same album belongs to a patient with paranoid schizophrenia⁸⁶ whose symptoms consist in visual hallucinations; she paints herself as Ioana d'Arc burning in fire flames, who is also supposed to have suffered from schizophrenia⁸⁷, and the reason for choosing this iconic medieval figure is the desire to express her psychological torture she was suffering from which is nothing but a process of moral purification, of a mental metamorphosis. Her transcendence to another level is symbolized by the blue austere coat, as well as by the yellow halo which circumscribes her face; her red irises which are chromatically connected to the fire flames express her enduring suffering. The patient's face is paradoxically rigid, as she does not show any frown and the bizarre gaze and red eyes reveal a strong inner tension.

Therefore, self-portrait is a direct way of accessing one's inner universe, it plays a therapeutic role whose goal is self-confrontation by discovering some inner conflicts, fears or thoughts and solving them.

⁸² Constantin Enăchescu, *op.cit.*, fig. no. 67 a, p. 70.

⁸³ Psiho Blue, *Psihoterapie si psihologie. Depresia* <<http://www.psihoterapia.eu/psihoterapia-adultului/depresia/>> (03.09.2016, 12:48).

⁸⁴ „8 semne ale psihozei maniaco-depresive” in *BZI Newspaper*, 21.04.2011 <<http://sanatate.bzi.ro/8-semne-ale-psihozei-maniaco-depresive-3109>> (03.09.2016, 13:01).

⁸⁵ Constantin Enăchescu, *op.cit.*, fig. no. 104, p. 95.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 95.

⁸⁷ *Ioana d'Arc, sfântă, eroină națională sau doar o schizofrenică?*, <<http://a1.ro/news/extern/ioana-d-arc-sfanta-eroina-nationala-sau-doar-o-schizofrenica-id2025.html>>, 30.05.2012 (13.07.2016, 10:19).

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Fig. 1 Ion Țuculescu (1910-1962), *Self-portrait on yellow background*, <<https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/401875966725357300/>> (25.04.2018, 08:57).

Fig. 2 *Cooking pot*, Anonymous, 1200 – 1250, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, [Ailan Olsen](#), *SCA medieval cooking pots*

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« Le Buisson Ardent de la Vierge ». Une lettre et une icône

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„*The Burning Bush of Virgin Mary*”. *A letter and an icon*

Abstract: "The Burning Bush", a symbol of epiphany, a place of getting out of the hiding place, of "revelation", of the sacred moment from Horeb Mountain, when God first spoke to Moses, becomes the emblematic image for the spiritual movement with the same name, launched in 1943 by Sandu Tudor at Antim Monastery, Romania. The icon "The Burning Bush of Virgin Mary" brought to Antim by the monk Ioan Kulighin, was almost always present at the group's meetings, being the embodiment of the passion for knowledge and divine experience. A sign of the appearance of the sacred among secular things, the image of the Virgin Mary in the middle of the burning bush which does not destroy, but brings to salvation, is re-used in contemporary iconography, in works which confess the same passion for the heavenly Country.

Key-words: "The Burning Bush", epiphany, at Antim Monastery, Sandu Tudor, Ioan Kulighin

Le mouvement du « Buisson ardent de la Vierge » du monastère Antin

L'image du Buisson ardent, celui qui brûle éternellement et sans se consumer, a reçu au cours des années diverses significations. La théophanie vétérotestamentaire révèle que Dieu appela Moïse sur le Mont Horeb pour libérer le peuple d'Israël de l'esclavage égyptien. J.A. Motyer, un ancien recteur du Trinity College, considère que l'expression juive « L'ange de l'Éternel lui apparut dans une flamme de feu » devrait plutôt être traduite dans les termes « comme une flamme de feu » ou « sous la forme d'une flamme »¹. La flamme étant un symbole de la sainteté intangible de Dieu, elle devient, dans le christianisme, la préfiguration de la Mère de Dieu donnant naissance au Christ tout en restant Vierge avant, pendant et après la naissance. Présent dans l'hymnographie de l'église et dans l'iconographie, le

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¹ J.A. Motyer, *Dictionar biblic*, Ed. Cartea creștină, Oradea, 1995, p. 1136.

Buisson Ardant recevra une signification particulière dans le cadre de spiritualité roumaine. Interprété par Daniil Sandu Tudor comme étant le symbole de la prière incessante (de la prière de Jésus), il devient un emblème pour un mouvement spirituel roumain qui apparaît durant la période de l'entre-deux-guerres et dont les échos se font ressentir encore aujourd'hui. Il s'agit du Mouvement du « Buisson ardent de la Vierge », fondé au Monastère Antim de Bucarest, c'est un mouvement de renaissance spirituelle né comme un « rencontre unique entre l'intellectualité et le clergé », où « des grands intellectuels et des grands moines se réunissent en communication et en communion »².

L'initiateur du mouvement est Sandu Tudor, son vrai nom étant Alexandru Teodorescu. L'adoption du nom de « Buisson ardent de la Vierge », symbole de l'Épiphanie, relie le mouvement du monastère Antim de mystère révélé sur le mont Horeb, lorsque Dieu parla à Moïse : « L'ange de l'Éternel lui apparut dans une flamme de feu, au milieu d'un buisson. Moïse regarda; et voici, le buisson était tout en feu, et le buisson ne se consumait point » (*Exode 3.2*)³. En pensant à la scène, André Scrima considère que ledit « buisson » n'a rien à voir ici avec un échafaudage de matériaux combustibles nécessaires à la crémation: il est une plante vivante »⁴, et il symbolise le lieu qui sort du néant, celui de la « révélation ». D'ailleurs, on dira même que c'est un « non-lieu » qui exige de la distance, car une voix crie du milieu du buisson: « Et [Dieu] dit: n'approche point d'ici; déchausse tes souliers de tes pieds, car le lieu où tu es arrêté, est une terre sainte »(*Exode 3.5*). Dans la conception de ses fondateurs, Le « Buisson ardent » était le signe de l'irruption du sacré dans le profane, de « la porte de l'éternité ouverte encore d'ici »⁵ et ce n'est point par hasard qu'il est devenu l'emblème de leur école spirituelle.

« La réunion fondatrice », la rencontre de Tchernivtsi Cernauti, datant 1er au 7 Août 1943, fut un événement organisé par l'ancien métropolite de Bucovine, Titus Simedrea. Ce fut une « retraite » pour la méditation et la prière à l'occasion de la fête de la Transfiguration du 6 Août. Entre autres, c'est aussi une session de communications scientifiques et de débats sur des thèmes mystiques. Au près des organisateurs on pouvait retrouver le prêtre Benedict Ghiuș, Sandu Tudor, Nicolae M. Popescu, Alexandru Mironescu, Paul Sterian, Alexandru Elian, Constantin Noica et Anton Dumitriu⁶. Le programme hésychaste de la réunion était composé de

² Andrei Pleșu, *Prefață la André Scrima, Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 14.

³ <http://sainte-bible.com/exodus/3-2.htm>

⁴ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 148

⁵ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 152.

⁶ Programul isihast al întâlnirii cuprindea mai multe conferințe, dintre care menționăm pe cea ținută de Noica, *Patos și Patmos*, și pe cea a lui Anton Dumitriu, *Cunoaștere și asceză*. A.

plusieurs conférences, dont celles de C. Noica, *Patos et Patmos*, et celle d'Anton Dumitriu, *Connaissance et Ascèse*. A. Plămădeală témoigne aussi la participation de l'ethnologue H. H. Stahl avec la conférence *Sur la spiritualité roumaine*.

L'écrivain et l'éditeur Sandu Tudor, qui devient plus tard le mentor spirituel du groupe, eut des expériences qui le retirèrent de la vie sociale et le poussèrent à se poser des questions fondamentales. En 1945, « bien saturé de la fugacité », il décide de servir « seulement Christ et ses vérités éternelles »⁷. Ainsi, il vend ses richesses pour utiliser l'argent afin de restaurer le monastère Antim, où on l'accueille comme « frère ». C'est durant cette même année que commencent les réunions du groupe jusqu'à devenir régulières en 1946, quand le mouvement reçoit le nom de « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge »⁸. L'esprit du « Buisson Ardent » essaye de concilier le sentiment religieux avec la philosophie, l'art, la littérature et la science. Les réunions sont alors un mélange de messes, cénacles littéraires et sessions de communication. La foi rencontre dès lors l'intelligence et la sensibilité, ravivant ainsi le modèle patristique. Le caractère mystique est non seulement programmatique, mais pratiquement pris en charge par diverses actions.

L'initiation au Hésychasme commence en 1946, quand Ioan cel Străin - Kulîghin (Ioan l'Etranger) vivant autrefois au monastère d'Optina, près de Moscou (centre de l'hésychasme russe, visité autrefois par Gogol et Dostoïevski), arrive en Roumanie et participe au groupe. Il vient avec le métropolite Nicolas de Rostov, dont il était le confesseur, et est accueilli, avec l'approbation du patriarche Nicodème, au monastère Cernica. De là, père Ioan vient alors tous les samedis pour prendre part aux réunions du groupe du « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge » ayant lieu les dimanches, après la liturgie, dans la bibliothèque.

L'hésychasme était basé sur l'enseignement philocalique, que Ioan Kulîghin connaissait bien. L'absence de traduction en culture roumaine de ce corpus de sagesse chrétienne datant du premier millénaire devient de plus en plus évidente. C'est donc ici que naît, au sein de la communauté d'Antim, le projet de traduction de la *Philocalie*, réalisé par le père et professeur Dumitru Stăniloae (les 12 volumes parurent entre 1947 et 1991).

Les membres les plus actifs et les plus dévoués du groupe forment d'une certaine façon le centre du noyau du « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge ». Toutefois, le nombre de ceux ayant assisté aux débats d'Antim fut beaucoup

Plămădeală confirmă participarea etnologului H. H. Stahl, cu conferința *Despre spiritualitatea românească*.

⁷ Antonie Plămădeală, *Rugul Aprins*, Ed. Arhiepiscopia Sibiului, Sibiu, 2002, p. 16.

⁸ Tudor, Sandu, *Taina Rugului Aprins – Scrieri și documente inedite*. Anastasia, Bucuresti, 1999, p. 12.

plus grand auparavant. Il comprenait des prêtres et des théologiens (Benedict Ghiuș, Dumitru Staniloae, Valeriu Anania, Antonie Plămădeală, Sofian Boghiu, André Scrima, Arsenie Papacioc, Roman Braga), des écrivains (Ion Marin Sadoveanu, Vasile Voiculescu, Șerban Cioculescu, Ion Barbu, Vladimir Streinu, Tudor Vianu, Vasile Lovinescu), des artistes (le compositeur Paul Constantinescu, la femme peintre Olga Greceanu, l'architecte Constantin Joja), des scientifiques (Alexandru Mironescu et son fils Serban Mironescu, le mathématicien Octav Onicescu, le byzantinologue Alexandru Elian) en plus des médecins, des étudiants et des militaires présents.



Fig. 1. Le groupe du « Buisson Ardant de la Vierge ». Parmi des autres, père Benedict Ghiuș, père Dumitru Staniloae, Sandu Tudor, Alexandru Mironescu

Cependant, « L'étranger » ne reste pas longtemps au monastère d'Antim. Les dates relatant l'arrivée et le départ de ce dernier restent vagues. On croit qu'il vint d'abord, comme réfugié Russe, au monastère Cernica, en 1944, puis à Antim, où il fut arrêté en 1947 pour être déporté en Sibérie. Après l'arrestation de Ioan Kulîghin, la répression communiste s'intensifie en Roumanie. Les cercles d'intellectuels, devenus suspects, sont dès lors étroitement surveillés par la sécurité. La première période d'existence du mouvement du « Buisson ardant de la Vierge » se poursuit jusqu'en 1950, lorsque Sandu Tudor est arrêté.

En automne 1948, Alexandru Teodorescu devient moine au monastère d'Antim et reçoit le nouveau nom d'Agathon Tudor. Puis, en 1950 il est transféré à l'Hermitage Crasna, Gorj, où il est fait prêtre (hiéromoine) par le métropolite d'Olténie Firmilien. Libéré après une période d'environ

trois ans de détention communiste, il ne revient pas à Antim. Il se dirige vers l'Hermitage Neamț - Sihla, où il devient Hieroschemoine et est nommé Daniil Tudor. Après un bref passage par le monastère Slatina, il devient abbé à l'Hermitage Rarau (en novembre 1953). Il commence alors à rétablir le contact avec les membres du groupe, qui est relancé en 1954. Il revient souvent à Bucarest, pour rencontrer ses vieux amis, mais les réunions n'ont guère lieu au monastère d'Antim. Les rencontres se tiennent chez le logis d'Alexandru Mironescu, de Vasile Voiculescu ou de Barbu Slătineanu. C'est ainsi que débute la deuxième période d'approfondissement et de maturation du « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge ». Malgré leurs précautions, la Sécurité parvient quand même à rester au courant de ces réunions, considérées comme étant subversives. En conséquence, c'est en 1958 que commence la persécution du mouvement. Les documents relatant le processus témoignent sur le fait que les autorités sachent que ce n'est pas un groupe politique, mais un mouvement culturel et religieux visant l'émancipation spirituelle. Pourtant, contre toute attente, c'est cette attitude-même qui est celle incriminée, parce que le gouvernement communiste considère comme ennemis tous ceux qui ne partagent pas son idéologie en refusant de la propager parmi les masses. Ainsi, comme le montre Ioana Diaconescu, la femme chercheuse sur la répression communiste, « La religion était la première qui devait disparaître et, avec elle, toute la culture nationale »⁹.

Le plus facile est alors d'accuser le groupe d'activité Légionnaire, en nommant leur « crime » comme « complot contre l'ordre social » et « crime d'activité intense contre la classe ouvrière et le mouvement révolutionnaire ». (Art. 209 *Code criminel*)¹⁰. Ces accusations sont la cause de 16 condamnés dans le « Lot du Buisson Ardent », en novembre 1958. Ces accusés ont des condamnations pouvant durer entre 5 et 25 ans de prison. Parmi eux : Alexandru Teodorescu (Sandu Tudor) - 25 années d'emprisonnement sévère; Făgețeanu Alexandru, hiéromoine - 20 ans de travaux forcés; Papacioc Arsenie, hiéromoine - 20 ans de travaux forcés; Mironescu Alexander, Professeur - 20 ans de travaux forcés; Ghiuș Benedict, archimandrite - 18 ans de travaux forcés; Braga Roman, prêtre - 18 ans de travaux forcés; Sofian Boghiu, moine peintre - 16 ans de travaux forcés, Voiculescu Vasile, médecin et écrivain – 5 années de dur labeur, Stăniloae Dumitru, théologien - 5 ans de travaux forcés. Les accusations présentes au dossier de condamnation visent l'absurde : « à l'initiative de Teodorescu Alexandru, une série de réunions subversives [...] ont été organisées. Au cours de ces

⁹ Ioana Diaconescu, *Rugul Aprins al Maicii Domnului. Condamnarea 8 noiembrie 1958 – Sentința nr. 125*, România Literară, nr. 1-2, 2013,

http://www.romlit.ro/index.pl/rugul_aprins_al_maicii_domnului_condamnarea_8_noiembrie_1958_sentina_nr.125

¹⁰ Popescu, F., *Detenția și sfârșitul lui Vasile Voiculescu*, Ed. Vestala, Bucuresti, 2000, p. 74.

réunions les membres ont discuté de façon hostile contre le régime démocratique populaire de la République Populaire Roumaine et ont propagé le début d'une nouvelle guerre mondiale et la modification du régime actuel dans notre pays ».

La détention communiste produit d'innombrables traumatismes physiques et psychiques sur les incarcérés, mais ils sont sauvés par la foi. Un événement est significatif à cet égard: en se rencontrant dans les caves de la Sécurité avec Paul Sterian, Alexandru Mironescu s'exclame : « Paul, je suis heureux que tu sois près de moi, de père Daniil et de nous tous. Jusqu'à présent, on a parlé de la foi, maintenant est venu le temps de la prouver. C'est l'épreuve que Dieu nous a donné ».

Sandu Tudor a eu une mort martyrique en prison d' Aiud, en 1962. Le poète Vasile Voiculescu succomba de même suite à l'emprisonnement jusqu'à ses soixante-quatorze ans, d'où il sort affaibli à l'extrême en 1964. Cette même année, des prisonniers politiques en Roumanie sont aussi libérés. La plus grande partie du « Lot du Buisson Ardant de la Vierge » sont forcés de rester à domicile forcé. L'activité du «Buisson Ardant » ne peut pas continuer dans ces conditions, mais tous ceux qui y ont participé, en passant ou non par la captivité, ont persévéré en répandant autour d'eux la lumière de la foi. Lorsque leur démarche est principalement dirigée vers l'intérieur (l'introspection), comme « voyage vers le Lieu du cœur ». Une multitude de témoignages matériels restent sous forme d'œuvre d'art, de poème, de texte philosophique ou de musique. Sandu Tudor, Vasile Voiculescu et Alexandru Mironescu laissèrent ainsi des poèmes et d'autres écrits mystiques. Les philosophes Anton Dumitriu et Constantin Noica analysèrent la philosophie d'un point de vue religieux. Le compositeur Paul Constantinescu créa des œuvres musicales à la gloire de Dieu, l'une d'entre elles étant d'ailleurs appelée *Hymne de prière de Jésus*. La peintre Olga Greceanu continua son travail sur des sujets religieux. La liste d'exemples est longue.

Dans les pages qui suivent apparaît une comparaison entre l'image de l'icône du Buisson Ardant (apportée par Ioan Kulighin de Russie) et la lettre que « l'Étranger » Russe laisse comme guide spirituel à ses disciples. Tous les deux s'orientent vers la prière sans cesse, la « prière du cœur » de la spiritualité orientale.

L'icône du « Buisson Ardant de la Vierge » et la lettre de Ioan Kulighin

Parmi les arts plastiques qui ont défini le groupe spirituel d'Antim, celui de l'icône du « Buisson Ardant de la Vierge », apportée par Ioan Kulighin du monastère d'Optina, occupe une place spéciale. Ileana Mironescu, la fille du savant ayant fréquenté Antim, se rappelle du témoignage de son père qu'il y relatait que presque toutes les réunions de

groupe furent menées en présence de cette icône russe, à laquelle père Sofian a fait une copie. Elle resta d'ailleurs dans la maison d'Alexandru Mironescu à Bucarest.

L'icône représente la Mère de Dieu tenant l'enfant Jésus dans ses bras. Elle recèle également l'échelle de Jacob des dimensions diminuées. Un cercle entoure l'image de la Vierge et forme le centre d'une étoile à huit coins. Deux carrés superposés créent l'étoile, un rouge, représentant le feu, et un autre vert, indiquant que le buisson reste intact. Sur les extrémités de l'étoile verte et autour de la Vierge, on peut y observer des séraphins, des chérubins et des anges. Sur les coins rouges, les quatre évangélistes y sont représentés sous l'apparence de créatures apocalyptiques, c'est-à-dire, le lion, l'aigle, le taureau et l'homme, chacun tenant l'Évangile. Aux quatre coins de l'icône ont lieu des scènes de l'Ancien Testament qui sont des théophanies et des visions mystiques: Ezéchiël à la porte orientale du Sanctuaire, restée enfermée, parce que Dieu y est entré (*Ezéchiël 44: 2*) ; l'échelle de Jacob, où les anges montent et descendent (*Genèse 28, 12*) ; le prophète Esaïe et le séraphin lui approchant le charbon aux lèvres en brûlant les péchés (*Esaïe 6: 7*) ; et Moïse sur le mont Horeb devant le buisson ardent (*Exode 3: 2*).



Fig. 2. L'icône du « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge »

On croit que les plus anciennes icônes de la Vierge comme Buisson Ardent proviennent du monastère de la Sainte Catherine du Mont Sinaï. En Roumanie, ce type d'icône apparaît dans l'abside de sud du naos en pronaos du monastère Sucevita. Tereza Sinigalia rappelle que le symbolisme des deux carrés superposés renvoie vers l'éternité. On peut aussi faire la liaison avec

les voûtes moldaves, où deux carrés sont également superposés, marquant le passage vers la représentation du monde céleste.

En revenant à l'icône du monastère d'Antim, on peut affirmer, comme l'a dit Ileana Mironescu, que c'est une icône-programme. Elle incarne le cheminement et le but en même temps en faisant référence à ceux qui, par la prière, s'efforcent d'atteindre l'union mystique.

Une approche similaire, mais linguistique cette fois, voire même poétique, nous donne la lettre que Ioan Kulighin a laissé à ses disciples. Il s'agit là d'une écriture initiatique qui dirige ses enfants spirituels vers l'union théandrique, un texte testamentaire que le prêtre russe a rédigé avant d'être déporté en Sibérie. Ainsi, tous les deux (l'icône du « Buisson Ardant » et la lettre d'Ioan l'Étranger) sont des conseils spirituels qui conduisent vers la pratique de la « prière du cœur ». Celle-ci est la raison pour laquelle il est possible de les suivre en parallèle.

La lettre commence par l'exhortation: „Slavă și mulțumire fie aduse Domnului care, în această clipă chiar, ne vădește bunăvoirea Sa” / « Louange et grâce à Dieu, qui en ce moment même, nous révèle Sa bonne volonté ». Ensuite, l'écriture précise, dès le début, l'objectif ultime de cette approche: „Pentru ca mintea și inimile voastre să fie întărite fără de șovăială întru unirea deplină cu Domnul” / « Afin que vos esprits et vos cœurs soient endurcies sans attendre dans l'union absolue avec le Seigneur ». À la fin de la lettre, une image écrasante y apparait: „Setea Duhului este fără de sațiu și nimic nu o poate covârși; iar cu cât harul lui se revărsă în ființă, cu atât mai mult aceasta crește și se împlinește. Așa este cu adevărat. Mila lui Dumnezeu și harul Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos să fie cu voi cu toți. Amin”/ « La soif de l'esprit est sans satiété et rien ne peut la surpasser; et plus la grâce de Dieu s'écoule dans l'être, plus ce dernier grandit et est accompli. Il en est vraiment ainsi. Que la miséricorde de Dieu et la grâce de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ soit avec vous tous. Amen ”.

Dans ces deux paragraphes, la lettre se déroule comme une véritable méthodologie ou, comme le père André Scrima l'appelle, une méthodologie au sens primaire, *met hodos*, une « avancée *sur* le chemin et *avec* lui ». Ce cheminement diffère de la compréhension habituelle, parce qu'il ouvre un nouvel espace et se configure comme une succession d'« escaliers », de *stationes* qui portent un sens, une orientation et un « désir » qui ne s'arrêtent et ne s'épuisent jamais¹¹.

L'impossibilité de transmettre pleinement en mots l'expérience mystique est observée humblement par le père russe qui déclare: „Atât cât se poate strecura prin tâlcul scrisului” / « Autant qu'on peut le décrire par l'usage de l'écriture »¹². On peut aussi y ajouter : autant qu'on peut y voir

¹¹ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 24.

¹² Scrisoarea lui Ioan cel Străin, in *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Andre Scrima, Humanitas, 2000, p. 19.

dans l'image iconographique. Le mystère de l'union théndrique, le miracle de la liaison entre l'homme et Dieu s'accomplit pleinement au-delà de toute possibilité de la communiquer que ce soit par l'écrit ou l'illustration.

La lettre du Père Ioan commence avec l'invocation de la Gloire et de la Bienveillance de Dieu. La Gloire apportée à Dieu se fonde sur un acte de connaissance doxologique et trans-noétique. Traduit pour la première fois dans la *Septuaginta* avec le terme « gloire », *doxa* devient l'équivalent de la gloire comprise dans un sens mystérieux comme lumière incréée ou le « corps-même » de la divinité¹³. Dans l'icône du « Buisson Ardent », la Mère de Dieu avec le Christ enfant dans ses bras est entourée de séraphins peints dans le contour d'un cercle, comme une *mandorla* des représentations occidentales. Circulaire ou ovale, ce mandorla est une représentation exacte de la lumière incréée.



Fig. 3. « Mandorla », Christ en Gloire, portail de Chartres

Fig. 4. L'icône du « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge », détail

Fig. 5. Christ en Gloire, Icône de l'Église Orientale

Au début de la lettre de père Ioan, le terme « gloire » apparaît auprès de celui de la « bienveillance », que Père André Scrima considère comme étant « l'autre côté de l'ouverture des cieux, correspondant symétrique de la gloire doxologique [...] parmi les hommes ». Apparaissant pour la première fois dans le Nouveau Testament, dans la scène de la Nativité, au Baptême du Christ et à la Transfiguration, cette bienveillance signifie, auprès de la gloire, l'anéantissement de la distance entre le Créateur et la créature, ouvrant la possibilité de communication directe.

Du point de vue iconographique, l'ouverture du ciel est précisément représentée dans l'étoile à huit branches qui encadre l'image de la Vierge. Dans les coins rouges de l'astre, les quatre évangélistes y sont peints, non pas

¹³ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 26.

avec leurs visages humains, mais avec leurs équivalents, soit les êtres des visions apocalyptiques. Cette équivalence est faite seulement dans le II-ème siècle par l'évêque Iréné Lyon. Les quatre évangélistes sont l'ange (Saint évangéliste Matthieu), le lion (Saint-Marc), le taureau (Saint Luc) et l'aigle - (Saint Jean l'Évangéliste). Le symbolisme caché derrière les êtres de l'Ancien Testament, transféré ultérieurement aux Évangélistes, vise l'ouverture du monde divin vers le monde humain, la théophanie. Ils sont les messagers de Dieu à l'homme, entre l'humain et le divin. Dans l'espace occidental, l'image des quatre êtres apocalyptiques est spécialement représentée sur les portails romans afin de signifier la révélation.

L'ouverture du monde céleste et la communication avec l'humain sont également soulignées dans l'icône par la présence des anges.



Fig. 6. L'icône du « Buisson Ardant de la Vierge », détails,

L'écrit de père Ioan dévoile ensuite la voie à suivre pour permettre l'unification avec l'Époux céleste. La mention dans la même phrase de la Providence et du cheminement à traverser pour le rejoindre révèle le lien étroit qui les unit. L'herméneutique du fragment découvre le fait que le chemin de novice est un mystère et que l'on « trouve une voie parce que quelqu'un t'a pré-vu et il t'a pré-disposé pour celle-ci»¹⁴ Cette idée, présente

¹⁴ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 29.

dans la pensée de l'Église Orientale, est redécouverte dans la philosophie occidentale par ce qu'on l'a appelé la tournante théologique de la phénoménologie. À partir d'Edmund Husserl et Martin Heidegger, qui incluent dans le discours philosophique l'affectivité et la facticité de la vie chrétienne des premiers siècles, Jean-Luc Marion réintroduit le nom du Christ dans la philosophie. Il parle de la condition humaine de « adonné », signifiant toutes les caractéristiques d'une personne ne vient pas de soi-même, mais vient d'un « don » transcendant. Dans une analyse de la peinture *La Vocation de Saint Matthieu* de Caravage, Jean-Luc Marion arrive à une conclusion similaire à celle du Père André Scrima : la réponse que Matthieu donne au Christ est due à Son appelle. Trois des cinq personnages du tableau voient l'appel du Christ, mais seul Matthieu le comprend comme étant adressé à lui. C'est donc à ce dernier que s'ouvre la voie dont parlait père Ioan, la voie pré-vue et comprise seulement par ceux à qui elle s'adresse. L'appel, le chemin et le mot original sont dit, mais ils ne peuvent pas être entendus par tous. C'est uniquement la réponse à l'appel qui le rend visible, mais cette réponse n'est adressée « qu'aux esprits qui sont à Lui », dit père Kulighin dans sa lettre. Les disciples trouvent Dieu parce que c'est Lui qui les a trouvés d'abord¹⁵. La préexistence de la voie qui s'ouvre et de l'appel qui demande est également soulignée par J.-L. Marion, mais sous forme négative, spécifique à la société actuelle: on a dû entendre quelque chose pour nier le fait qu'il y ait eu un appel à être entendu; on a dû essayer (attendre) d'entendre quelque chose pour ressentir par la suite la déception du silence¹⁶. Le Père Scrima énonce également une idée semblable: «La modalité de Dieu d'être absent n'est rien que l'expression de notre négligence»¹⁷.

Donc, les « étapes » décrites ultérieurement, dans l'écriture du père, ne sont guère une approche pédagogique aride et extérieure. Elles décrivent l'ascension à l'union mystique par la prière incessante. Entre autres, l'ouverture du passage vers le voyage intérieur dépend de la condition de l'étranger. Cet étranger, invoqué au début du message, n'est pas un étranger de manière ethnique ou géographique. Il est un étranger face au monde visible, un voyageur permanent qui avance sur le chemin du Salut. L'Étranger est la représentation du Sauveur-même qui, lui, agit comme un étranger qui se tient à la porte et frappe en attendant qu'on Lui ouvre le cœur. Il est l'étranger de ce monde et transforme à l'état d'étranger tous ceux qu'Il appelle.

¹⁵ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 32.

¹⁶ Jean-Luc Marion, *Etant donné. Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*, PUF, 1997, tr. rom. *Fiind dat. O fenomenologie a donației*, traducere de Maria Cornelia și Ioan I Ică Jr., Deisis, 2003, p. 443.

¹⁷ André Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000

Les paroles du père décrivent ensuite l'état d'apophatisme existentiel, du remplissage paradoxal et de l'épanouissement. Plus l'auto-vidage est profond, plus la grâce reçue est grande. L'itinéraire intérieur poursuit un chemin passant par des moments méthodologiques: la *kénose* existentielle, le vécu de la prière, l'existence d'un père spirituel, la bénédiction, la lecture initiatique des Écritures, la miséricorde de Dieu et l'humilité. Une autre place particulière est l'hirotésie, un sorte de rituel qui présuppose de mettre les mains du père sur la tête du disciple en prononçant la bénédiction pour marquer le début et la continuation de pratique active de la « prière du cœur ». Parce que la pratique de la prière de Jésus ne peut être exécutée que sous la direction stricte de quelqu'un qui la connaît¹⁸.

Le parcours que doit traverser celui qui s'engage sur le chemin de la spiritualité orthodoxe commence par le vécu de la « prière du cœur ». Ensuite, il passe par l'initiation qui se reçoit par la bénédiction¹⁹ (l'« hirotésie », le rituel où le maître pose ses mains sur la tête du disciple pour lui donner sa bénédiction, et s'accomplit par le don de transmettre à d'autres l'Héritage (comme l'appelle le père Ioan), c'est-à-dire l'apprentissage, la connaissance et l'expérience de la prière incessante. Le Père André Scrima avoue que, à sa connaissance, ce ne sont que le Père Daniil et le Père Benedict Ghiuș qui aient reçu de la part du Père Ioan ladite bénédiction pour initier les disciples dans la « prière du cœur ».

Le but ultime de cette approche intérieure est d'atteindre „izvoarele nesecate din care se revarsă cu îmbelșugare harul, izvoare pe care Părinții cei vechi le păzeau în sihăstrii, în munți și în unghere ascunse ochilor lumii” / « les sources inépuisables d'où coule en abondance la grâce, sources que les Parents ont surveillé dans les anciens ermitages des montagnes et dans les recoins cachés au yeux du monde »²⁰. La lettre de Père Ioan se termine avec la reconnaissance de la singularité de Dieu comme étant le seul et unique guide et enseignant: „Da, El singur, Domnul, s-a împărtășit pe Sine întotdeauna tuturor acelor călători ai călătoriei noastre pământești” « Oui, seul le Seigneur, Lui-même, s'est offert en soi afin de se partager à tous les voyageurs de notre voyage commun terrestre »²¹. L'Esprit est le véritable et l'unique père spirituel qui se donne au monde « dans la vie de tous les jours » ou même parfois par des révélations et des visions. C'est exactement ce dernier aspect que l'icône du « Buisson Ardant de la Vierge » serprend. Les

¹⁸ G. Vasilescu, *Cuvânt înainte*. In Tudor S. *Taina Rugului Aprins – Scrieri și documente inedite*, Anastasia, Bucuresti, 1999, p. 11.

¹⁹ Andre Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 49.

²⁰ Scrisoarea Părintelui Ioan Kulighin, publicată în Andre Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 21.

²¹ Scrisoarea Părintelui Ioan Kulighin, publicată în Andre Scrima, *Timpul Rugului Aprins*, Humanitas, 2000, p. 21.

quatre coins abritent des moments de Théophanie, de l'ouverture des cieux, des visions des prophètes: Ezéchiël à la porte du Sanctuaire, l'échelle de Jacob, Isaïe avec l'ange et le charbon et Moïse avec le buisson ardent.



Fig. 7. L'icône du « Buisson Ardent de la Vierge », détails,

Tous les deux (la lettre et l'icône) se dévoilent ainsi comme deux traces du cheminement qui conduit vers l'union mystique.

Le caractère paradoxal de la mystique est souligné par Puiu Ionita²² qui découvre les trois hypostases de celui qui parcourt le chemin vers Dieu: de l'amoureux, du pèlerin et du saint.

L'amoureux mystique vit à l'extrême intensité sa grande passion. L'amour est, pour lui, le principe fondamental du monde, l'énergie cosmique, la réalité spirituelle suprême qui se déplace partout dans l'univers et qui provient de Dieu (« l'amour est incréé »²³). L'ardeur avec laquelle le mystique chrétien recherche l'Amant adoré, le Christ, le fait paraître, de l'extérieur, comme un étranger, un être contradictoire, voire un fou. D'où la figure du Fol-en-Christ, rencontrée dans le mysticisme oriental.

²² Thèse de doctorat, *La poésie mystique dans la littérature roumaine*, Université « Al. I. Cuza », Iasi

²³ Siméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Imne, epistole și capitole. Scrieri III.* (I. Ică jr., Trans.); Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2001.

La condition du pèlerin mystique peut être comprise de diverses manières. D'abord, elle est la condition humaine générale selon les mots de Denis l'Aréopagite. La vie est le produit d'une Cause. Elle traverse le monde, puis revient inévitablement à la Cause, c'est-à-dire à Dieu. Le mystique ne peut s'attacher à l'immanence, car il est toujours à la recherche d'une Patrie transcendante. D'un autre côté, il y a une catégorie de mystiques qui fait le tour du monde dans un sens géographique. Le voyage devient un mode de connaissance, à la fin de laquelle le pèlerin se découvre soi-même. Ce sont aussi des mystiques qui font face au monde juste pour s'en débarrasser. Dans leur grande humilité, ils se mêlent aux voleurs, aux prostituées et aux mendiants (fol-en-Christ). D'autres voyagent parmi les hommes en tant que confesseurs (le Pèlerin russe). Cependant, tout voyage mystique se fait intérieurement, car le mystique est, avant tout, un pèlerin se dirigeant vers le « lieu du cœur ».

Purifié par l'ascétisme, transfiguré par la lumière et exalté à l'extase divine, le mystique devient, enfin, porteur de la grâce, le faisant ressembler à un saint. Le Saint est totalement séparé des mondains. Il vit dans l'absolu. Sur lui, les lois de la nature n'ont pas le même effet que sur les gens ordinaires. D'où toutes les histoires miraculeuses relatant des ermites qui se lient d'amitié aux animaux sauvages, des moines qui volent, de ceux thaumaturge avec des pouvoirs de guérison hors du commun.

La vie contemplative est un processus de transformation. Tout d'abord, c'est une spiritualisation due à l'enseignement mystique. Cet enseignement a une charge si allégorico-symbolique que la vie en accord avec elle devient une existence poétique. Lorsque les commentateurs du phénomène mystique parlent de la spiritualisation du monde, ils sous-entendent la projection d'un soi transformé, qui perçoit la nature comme étant Cosmos. Le Cosmos révèle les lois et l'harmonie qui puisent leur cause et leur but en Dieu. La spiritualisation du monde signifie la spiritualisation de soi, la découverte que la transcendance existe objectivement et qu'elle se manifeste visiblement sous diverses formes dans l'Univers. Le contemplatif est modelé par la doctrine mystique qui évolue, petit à petit, jusqu'à ce qu'il atteigne la perfection. Mais la transformation suprême est décrite, dans les écrits relatant les visions des grands mystiques, comme correspondant à l'union divine-humaine. Toute la poursuite du mystique, le processus évolutif, vise l'union théandrique (*unio mystica*), l'expérience humaine la plus élevée possible.

En conclusion, le groupe du «Buisson Ardant de la Vierge» vise cette union « transformante ». Ses membres choisissent un chemin qui implique une scission du monde entier en suivant toutes les étapes de l'ascétique et du mystique. Ils sont des témoins et, en formant de petits cercles autour d'eux, ils transmettent l'ultime mystère de la prière du cœur.

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Revalorisation des rituels ancestraux amérindiens du Canada dans la musique de Murray Schafer

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Revalorization of Canadian Amerindian Rituals in Murray Schafer's Music¹

Abstract: The Canadian post-modern composer Murray Schafer is one of the most consistent composers in his original project, and his entire work is governed by the same key ideas. As a pedagogue, by giving courses in Ear Cleaning, as a musicologist, by writing articles about The Musical Soundscape, as a composer, by inventing works in which musicians, actors, spectators and even nature participate together in the artistic act (the cycle *Patria*), Schafer transmits everywhere the same exuberance and passion. It is with this innovative thought that he brings the music out of the concert halls and moves it to wild places to return to its ancestral sources.

Keywords: Murray Schafer, composer, ecology, contemporary music, Amerindians, Banff Festival, postmodernist, modernist

Le retour vers les sources ancestrales dans la musique des années 1960-70 fait partie d'un processus complexe de transition entre la modernité et la postmodernité.

Selon le musicologue Miha Iliescu², au moins trois changements majeurs se sont opérés chez les penseurs postmodernes concernant la perception de la nature et de l'histoire. Selon Descartes, l'homme moderne se croit le «maître de la nature», a une conception linéaire du progrès et souhaite une rupture radicale avec le passé. L'homme postmoderne quant à lui, prend conscience de ses limites et des ses responsabilités envers la nature. Il admet la possibilité d'une stagnation, d'une régression, voire de la fin de l'histoire et tend alors à se réfugier dans le passé pour se rapprocher des sources : «La sphère de la création musicale et artistique participe pleinement à ces

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² Miha Iliescu, "La dimension écologique de l'écoute postmoderne", *Sonorités* 11, Nîmes, Lucie éditions, 2016, p. 97.

mutations. Alors que le compositeur moderne, novateur et iconoclaste, affiche l'ambition de faire table rase, celui postmoderne se contente souvent de recycler les styles et les langages du passé. Si le premier est exigeant voire élitiste, en assumant le risque de ne pas être compris, le deuxième cherche à obtenir l'adhésion d'un public large. Si le premier accorde ainsi peu d'attention à la perception en allant jusqu'à provoquer, sciemment ou non, un « abandon de l'écoute »³, le deuxième fait de ladite perception un objectif central. Enfin, si le premier reste attaché au rituel du concert, le deuxième (influencé parfois par la pensée écologique) expérimente un art sonore qui s'intègre dans l'environnement et dans la vie quotidienne.»⁴



Fig. 1. Murray Schafer

Ainsi, c'est bel et bien dans ce contexte musical postmoderne que le compositeur canadien Murray Schafer s'approche avec professionnalisme (par la recherche) de l'environnement sonore naturel ou humain (urbain) et prend au sérieux le problème de la pollution causée par le bruit. Avec son «Esprit de la Renaissance», il jouit d'une renommée internationale en tant que chercheur, compositeur, éducateur, écologiste et artiste visuel⁵. Cette

³ Pierre Mariétan, « L'environnement sonore », in *L'écoute du monde. Actes du Congrès mondial d'écologie sonore*, Paris, Lucie éditions, 2016, p. 66.

⁴ Miha Iliescu, « La dimension écologique de l'écoute postmoderne », *Sonorités 11*, Nîmes, Lucie éditions, 2016, p. 97.

⁵ Au cours de sa carrière, Schafer a reçu un nombre impressionnant de prix et de commandes. Il est le seul Nord-Américain à avoir reçu le prix Honegger (1980, *String Quartet No. 1*). Par ailleurs, il a obtenu le prix de la Fondation Fromm (1972, *Gita*), la bourse d'étude Guggenheim (1974), le prix William Harold Moon de la Société des droits d'exécution (1974), la médaille annuelle du Conseil canadien de la musique (1972) et une première nomination au titre du « Compositeur de l'année » (1976), ainsi que le Prix Jules-Léger de la Nouvelle Musique de chambre (1977, *String Quartet No. 2*). Schafer est devenu le premier récipiendaire du prix

formation multidisciplinaire démontre une soif de connaissances et une volonté d'intégration dans les multiples sphères culturelles et artistiques.

Né en 1933 à Sarnia (Ontario, Canada), Murray grandit à Toronto. Après avoir reçu sa Licence de l'École Royale de Musique au Collège Royal de Musique de Londres, en Angleterre, ce dernier étudie brièvement à l'Université de Toronto et au Royal Conservatory of Music pour poursuivre son parcours en autodidacte ; il accomplit ainsi des études en littérature, philosophie, langues, musique et journalisme en Autriche, en Italie et en Grande-Bretagne.⁶ De retour au Canada en 1961, Schafer dirige la série *Ten Centuries Concerts*. À compter de 1965, il enseigne pendant dix ans au Centre Expérimental des Communications à l'Université Simon Fraser (Vancouver, Colombie-Britannique, Canada), s'intéressant particulièrement à deux domaines pour lesquels il est reconnu internationalement, c'est à-dire l'éducation musicale et la recherche du «paysage sonore».

En sa qualité de «père de l'écologie acoustique», ainsi qu'il se définit lui-même, Schafer se penche sur les effets préjudiciables des sons technologiques sur les humains, surtout sur ceux qui vivent dans les «égouts sonores» que constituent les villes. Ses opuscules intitulés *The Book of Noise* et *The Music of the Environment* sont des plaidoyers rationnels, mais en même temps passionnés, réclamant d'une part une législation contre le bruit et, d'une autre, une amélioration de l'environnement sonore dans les villes par l'élimination ou la réduction des sons potentiellement destructifs pour l'audition.⁷ Il est devenu une voix mondialement reconnue attirant l'attention sur les effets néfastes du bruit post-industriel.

Pourtant, alors qu'il condamne les «égouts sonores» de nos villes, il ne se contente pas de proposer une simple réduction du bruit. Au lieu de cela, il préconise une intervention positive afin d'améliorer la qualité esthétique de l'environnement sonore.⁸

Son «Projet Mondial d'Environnement Sonore», représente un vaste champs d'études qui comprend l'inventaire des sons disparus ou en voie de disparition, l'analyse de la représentation du son dans la littérature, de nouveaux sons, l'analyse des structures des programmations radiophoniques,

Glenn Gould pour la Musique et sa Diffusion (1987) et il a six doctorats honorifiques décernés par des universités de l'Argentine, Canada et France.

⁶ Pendant les cinq années qu'il passe en Europe, Schafer achève l'ébauche de trois livres, *E.T.A. Hoffman et Music*, *British Composers in Review* et *Ezra Pound et Music*, qu'il fait publier plus tard.

⁷ Études et travaux en matière d'environnement sonore <https://www.encyclopediecanadienne.ca/fr/article/r-murray-schafer/>

⁸ Rae Crossmann, *Opera in the Woods. Lakes sing and magic reigns in R. Murray Schafer's Patria*, juillet 2011 : <http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/people-and-profiles/opera-woods>

l'analyse des bruits technologiques (sifflets, sirènes, usines, klaxons, téléphones, etc.), les problèmes de notation, de définition ou de morphologie, l'analyse du bruit ainsi que les aspects légaux de la pollution sonore.

C'est à partir de cette recherche que sort ensuite un de ses plus importants livres, *Le paysage sonore (The Tuning of the World)*⁹. Schafer précise dans son introduction le sens actif dont il veut imprégner sa recherche : « Mon propos se veut, ici, être une réaffirmation de la musique comme étant une recherche de l'influence harmonisante des sons qui nous entourent »¹⁰. Dans les lignes qui suivent, on va présenter succinctement quelques unes de ses recherches théoriques sur les sons qui ont été, par la suite, utilisés dans ses pièces, dans l'enchaînement de ses rituels inspirés par les croyances ancestrales ainsi que dans des environnements sonores.

Le livre est structuré en quatre parties précédées par ladite *Introduction*; les deux premières (*Les premiers paysages sonores* et *Le paysage postindustriel*) constituent un très vaste inventaire de sons, tandis que les deux dernières (*L'Analyse* et *Vers une esthétique acoustique*) proposent une méthode d'examen des sons et une esthétique acoustique. Un *Interlude (La musique, le paysage sonore et les changements de perception)* sépare les deux grandes sections alors qu'un *Epilogue* renvoie vers *La musique de l'au-delà*.

Dans la première partie du livre, Schafer décrit presque tous les sons de l'environnement, et ce, dans un double parcours; d'un côté en partant des sons naturels vers les sons humains et, de l'autre, de la nuit des temps à nos jours. Les deux parcours se croisent, et l'on observe facilement la préférence et l'admiration de Schafer à l'égard des sons (paysages, bruits) naturels - idéalisés ainsi que décrits par les poètes et les écrivains - et sa désapprobation des sons « fabriqués » par les humains; les sons des machines. Entre ces deux types de sons, la musique occupe une place distincte, errant soit du côté des « sons » soit du côté des « bruits ».

En voulant inventorier presque la totalité des sons (existants ou disparus), Schafer a dû rechercher des citations dans une multitude de sources (chants traditionnels ou sacrés des peuples, documents anciens, livres historiques, romans, poésies et actes juridiques). Parmi les dizaines d'auteurs cités, on retrouve des penseurs de l'Antiquité comme Hésiode, Homère et Virgile, des philosophes comme Arthur Schopenhauer ou même des écrivains comme Fenimore Cooper, Charles Dickens, William Faulkner, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Nicolas Gogol, Maxim Gorki, Thomas Hardy, Heinrich Heine, Victor Hugo, Thomas Mann, Boris Pasternak, Marcel Proust,

⁹ *The Tuning of the World*, A. Knopf, Inc. New York, 1977 / *Le Paysage Sonore*, J. C. Lattès, New York, 1979.

¹⁰ Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, Lattès, New York, 1979, p. 19.

Erich Maria Remarque, Robert Louis Stevenson, Léon Tolstoï, Virginia Woolf, Émile Zola, etc.

Le paysage naturel présente les quatre éléments (l'eau, le vent, la terre et le feu) et leurs modes de manifestations sonores. On peut se réjouir que ses recherches sur les éléments ont abouti à d'impressionnantes partitions musicales (Soleil).

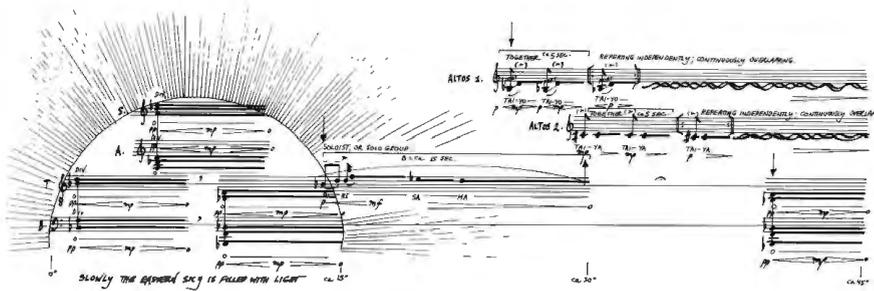


Fig. 2 Soleil

On s'approche d'abord des voix de la mer¹¹, l'eau jouant le rôle d'élément primordial pour l'homme. Elle est une «source des plus grands délices»¹² et continue son évolution musicale avec *Les transformations de l'eau* en ruisseaux, cataractes, rivières à tourbillons, pluies¹³, glaciers, neiges et glaces. Chacune des différentes manifestations de l'élément a une sonorité spécifique, déterminant l'apparition de nouvelles expressions linguistiques: «Si la mer a enrichi la langue des peuples maritimes, le froid a donné aux civilisations autochtones qui la connaissent tout un vocabulaire qui leur est propre. L'exemple des nombreux mots esquimaux désignant la neige, s'il est le plus célèbre, est cependant loin d'être l'unique»¹⁴. C'est ainsi qu'en s'inspirant de la culture amérindienne (étant liée à la nature jusqu'au langage), Murray Schafer crée son langage musical selon les mouvements de la nature et de ses éléments.

¹¹ *The Vancouver Soundscape* 1973, World Soundscape Project, Canada CSR-2CD 9701, 1996. Nr 1: „Ocean Sounds”.

¹² Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, *Idem*, p. 32.

¹³ *The Vancouver Soundscape* 1973, *Idem*, Nr 6: „Vancouver Soundmarks”.

¹⁴ Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, *Idem*, p. 38.

Miniwanka (Moments of the Water) est un bel exemple d'œuvre de Murray Schafer inspirée par ses recherches théoriques et s'inspirant des richesses de la langue des autochtones. Minnewanka est un superbe lac dans le parc de Banff des Montagnes Rocheuses à l'ouest du Canada.



Fig. 3 Lac Minnewanka

La pièce de Schafer est une musique imitative décrivant les différents aspects de l'eau. Le texte de la musique consiste en mots qui désignent l'eau, la pluie, les courants, le brouillard et l'océan dans les langues parlées par les peuples amérindiens vivant au nord de l'Amérique: Dakota, Wappo, Crow, Chinook, Achomawi, Otchipwe, Salish, Natick, Klamath et Luiseno.

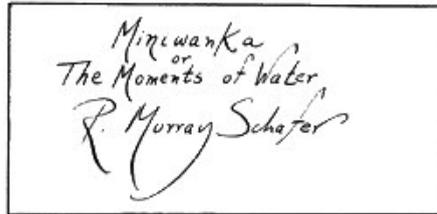
Miniwanka est une pièce à capella chantée par un chœur de femmes (soprano et alto) ou par un chœur mixte (soprano, alto, ténor et basse). L'effet recherché par Murray Schafer est alors d'une chronique illustrant la transformation de l'eau à partir de la pluie (B) vers les courants (D), en passant par les lacs silencieux (E) et par les rivières (F) pour finir dans l'océan.

Suivant la logique des recherches théoriques de Schafer sur les sons naturels, on continue avec l'analyse du vent. Ses voix varient en fonction de la diversité de la nature qu'il parcourt et, à cause du vent qui passe au travers, «chaque forêt a sa propre tonalité.»¹⁵ Puis, c'est le tour des bruits de la terre de se faire analyser. Autrefois, tous les phénomènes naturels étaient expliqués par la participation du divin. Ainsi, un tremblement de terre, dans les anciens écrits, pouvait prendre la sonorité de la voix de Zeus comme dans cet extrait :

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 42.

«La terre soudain mugit à grande voix, et le vaste ciel, ébranlé, lui répondait en gémissant».¹⁶

2



↓ = Conductor's Cue.

A
Moderately: with movement

S.
A.
mf
Add. T. = B.

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Fig. 4 Miniwanka

Après les «paysages» sonores naturels, Schafer présente une multitude de «bruits» de la vie. Ainsi, une large partie sera consacrée aux chants des oiseaux¹⁷. Afin de synthétiser les recherches sur leur «langage», il analyse la fréquence des hauteurs et leur spectre ainsi que les différentes manières qu'utilisent les oiseaux pour communiquer par les sons (cris de plaisir, de détresse, de défense du territoire, de combat, de rassemblement, de nutrition ou d'alarme).¹⁸ Ce sont les bruits provenant des insectes (cigales,

¹⁶ Attribué à Plutarque, *Traité des rivières et des montagnes*, cité par F. D. Adams, in *The Birth and Development of the Geological Sciences*, New York, 1954, p. 31, in Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, Idem, p. 45.

¹⁷ *The Vancouver Soundscape* 1973, Idem, Nr 2: „Squamish Narrative”.

¹⁸ Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, Idem, p. 55.

abeilles, mouches, moustiques, etc.) qui semblent être parmi les sons les plus agréables pour l'homme.

Handwritten musical score for 'Miniwanka' by John Cage. The score consists of multiple staves with complex, overlapping notation. Annotations include:

- Top left: 'sing previous note as first note on a different note last time: imitate a storm and howling of wind. but keep the effect musical.'
- Center: 'Storm begins dying out.'
- Right side: 'Choirs (1) & (2) on some major chord, as probably not reproduced. Thickness of line indicates dynamics.'
- Bottom right: 'All singers stand with arms raised above their heads and glass down to original position. Chamber Choir.'
- Far right: 'All sing notes below original position.'

Fig. 5 Miniwanka

Avant de passer aux bruits humains, Schafer s'occupe aussi des sons provenant des animaux aquatiques (le chant des baleines, les «musiques incessantes» des grenouilles ou le silence des poissons) et des «langages codifiés» des autres animaux (les lions, les éléphants, les loups ou les primates). Partant de l'idée que l'homme «imite de façon étonnante la voix des bêtes»¹⁹, l'auteur se penche sur l'onomatopée. Il existe des peuples d'Afrique qui – étant tout près de la nature – ont développé des techniques d'imitation surprenantes: «Il faut les avoir entendus pour imaginer la qualité des imitations que les aborigènes font des cris d'animaux et des sons de la nature. Ils donnent même des 'concerts de nature', au cours desquels chaque interprète reproduit un son particulier (les vagues, le vent, la plainte des arbres, les cris des animaux effrayés), 'concerts' d'une surprenante beauté et d'une grande noblesse»²⁰.

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 65.

²⁰ Schneider, Marius, „Primitive music”, *The New Oxford History of Music*, vol I, Londres, 1957, p. 9.

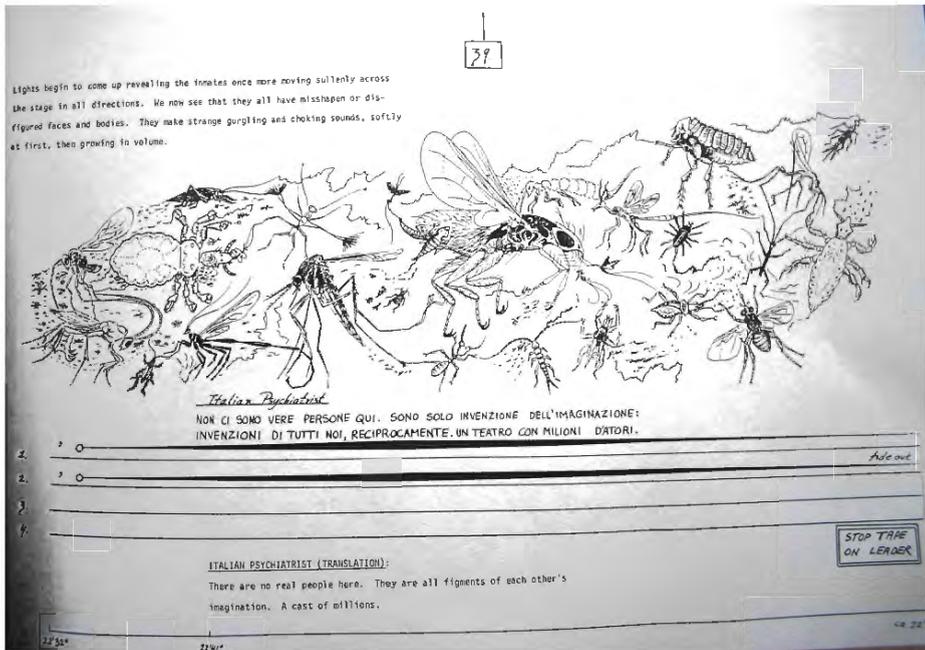


Fig. 6 Murray Schafer – *Apocalypse* partition

Dans la vision d'Arne Naess (pareillement aux approches de Cage et de Murray Schafer), l'individu humain devrait tendre à faire corps avec l'environnement même au détriment de son autonomie. Selon lui, la pensée du futur devra être loyale envers la nature. L'idée de «penser comme une montagne»²¹ est étroitement liée au concept d'«écologie profonde». Naess introduit l'idée d'un «soi écologique», c'est-à-dire d'un sens du soi qui trouve son fondement dans notre relation par rapport à la «communauté plus large de tous les êtres vivants». C'est par cette vision nouvelle et intelligente qu'il affirme avec raison qu'il faut élargir notre identification avec le monde pour y inclure les loups, les grenouilles, les araignées, voire les montagnes, afin de nous permettre de vivre une vie plus sensée dans le bonheur²².

Dans *Le paysage sonore*, Schafer s'approche aussi des idées de Naess, critiquant la révolution électrique. Il reproche au monde actuel «la mise en boîte et en conserve des sons, et leur dissociation de leur contexte originel»²³ en proposant le terme de «schizophonie» pour désigner «la séparation d'un son originel de sa transmission»²⁴. D'après lui, ce type de

²¹ Seed, John; Macy, Joanna; Fleming, Pat; Naess, Arne, *Thinking like a mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings*, New Society Publisher, 2007.

²² *La philosophie au XXe siècle*, (The Philosophy Book), éditeur Jonathan Metcalf, ERPI, 2011, p. 283.

²³ Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, *Idem*, p. 131.

²⁴ *Idem*, p. 133.

transmission des sons sur disque ou dans une salle de concert détermine chez les auditeurs une «intention d'écoute» musicale, en chargeant les sons d'une certaine signification spécifique. C'est pour cette raison qu'un bruit entendu dans la rue au cours d'une promenade n'est pas identique au même bruit acoustique enregistré sur un disque. D'ailleurs, selon Jean-Jacques Nattiez²⁵, c'est parce que nous vivons le bruit enregistré d'une manière différente que la sonorité nous paraît modifiée: sur le disque, le bruit émerge du silence feutré de notre appartement, dans les mêmes conditions que si nous allions écouter la *IX^e Symphonie* de Beethoven. Mais, est-il légitime de nous demander d'écouter la musique de ville avec une «intention d'écoute» musicale?

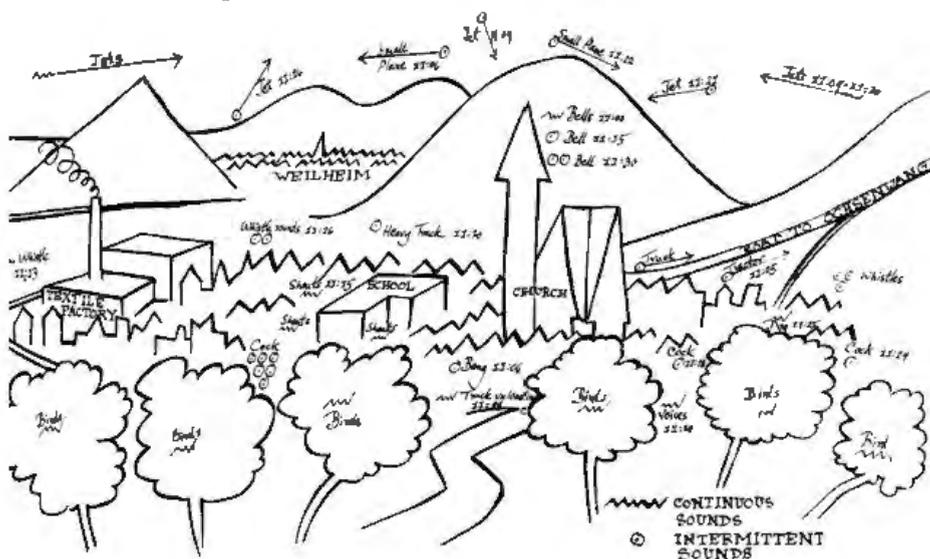


Fig. 7 Environnement sonore

L'espérance de Schafer est, qu'avec le temps, la musique et le paysage sonore ne fassent qu'un et qu'il n'y ait plus de «schizophonie». Dans un article de 2003 *Musique/non-musique : intersections*²⁶, il y souligne l'importance d'essayer de réintégrer la musique à la nature : «J'entends par là que les influences réciproques entre ce que nous appelons musique et ce que nous identifions comme étant l'environnement sonore deviendraient être si complexes que la frontière qui séparait autrefois ces genres

²⁵ Nattiez, Jean-Jacques, « La musique de la ville », *Musique en jeu*, n° 18, 1975, p. 119.

²⁶ Schafer, Murray, „Musique/non-musiques: intersections”, dans Nattiez, Jean-Jacques (sous la direction de), *Musiques – Une encyclopédie pour le XXI^e siècle*, Actes Sud, Cité de la Musique, 2003, p. 1198.

traditionnellement distincts s'estompe en faveur d'une perception globale qui réunirait ces deux catégories pour créer une nouvelle forme d'art »²⁷.

Comme l'homme de la Renaissance, Schafer a une conscience aiguë et nouvelle du rapport que l'art entretient avec son époque et celles qui l'ont précédée, c'est pourquoi sa production artistique est au plein centre de cette «résurrection». Ses pensées, ainsi que ses enregistrements et ses œuvres, font toutes parties de ce vaste projet de renouvellement de la perception et de la modalité d'écoute. C'est dans ce renouvellement de perception et de point de vue qu'il assure: «Je considère le monde (...) comme une immense composition musicale»²⁸.

Ce concept d'environnement sonore, au centre de la pensée globale de Schafer, influence également son œuvre de compositeur. Par exemple, la structure rythmique cachée à l'arrière-plan du *Quatuor à cordes n° 2* («*Waves*») est basée sur les intervalles auxquels les vagues de l'océan se forment. Ou encore, la notation graphique au début de *No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes* est influencée par les graphiques élaborés à partir des bruits de la circulation à Vancouver.²⁹

Pour réaliser ce vaste projet d'intégration de la musique provenant de la nature, Schafer se met à inventer des notations, parfois si élaborées et originales que certaines pages pourraient être exposées dans des galeries d'art. En conséquence, les dessins faisant partie intégrante des partitions sont suggestives tant pour la modalité d'interprétation que pour l'état d'esprit demandé aux chanteurs, acteurs ou danseurs.

Son œuvre compte plus de 70 compositions, dont plusieurs ont un caractère environnemental ou dramatique, favorisant chez le public une plus grande participation et une conscience accrue au plan sonore et visuel. Il est l'un des compositeurs les plus cohérents dans son projet initial et toute son œuvre est gouvernée par les mêmes idées-phares.³⁰ Qu'il parle comme pédagogue en tenant des cours de *Ear Cleaning*³¹, comme musicologue, qu'il compose des œuvres dans lesquelles les musiciens, les acteurs, les spectateurs et même la nature participent ensemble à l'acte artistique (le cycle *Patria*), cet homme transmet partout la même exubérance et passion perçues dans son livre *Le paysage sonore*.

²⁷ *Idem*, p. 1198.

²⁸ Schafer, Murray, *Le paysage sonore*, *Idem*, p. 17.

²⁹ Études et travaux en matière d'environnement sonore
<https://www.encyclopediecanadienne.ca/fr/article/r-murray-schafer/>

³⁰ Voir le site des activités pédagogiques sur le paysage:
http://artslive.ca/pdf/mus/map/schafer_ecoute_fr.pdf

³¹ Schafer, Murray, *Ear Cleaning. Notes for an Experimental Music Course*, Universal Editions, Canada, 1968.

Fig. 8 Murray Schafer, *Apocalypse, partition*

Un de ses plus grands exploits de Schafer est le changement qu'il provoque dans le contexte de la création musicale. C'est avec cette pensée innovatrice qu'il sort la musique des salles de concert et la déplace dans des endroits sauvages pour qu'elle revienne à ses sources ancestrales. En d'autres termes, cette mutation, c'est revenir à la tradition des Autochtones par une évolution musicale retrouvant les racines de l'inné naturel au lieu de fondre, dissoudre les coutumes et rituels musicaux vivants de la nature et des ancêtres dans une vague de culture de masse, dite moderne pour ne pas dire fade et sans âme. Cette nouveauté, c'est faire de la musique le long des sentiers forestiers, aux côtés des chutes d'eau et sous les voûtes des aurores boréales! C'est dans ce changement que Schafer réaffirme l'ancienne relation entre la musique et la nature et encourage les musiciens à interagir avec l'environnement. «Chantez au lac! Explorez la réfraction du son à l'aube et au crépuscule. Transformez votre voix contre la paroi rocheuse soutenant les collines de feuillus.»³² Il emmène les musiciens hors de la ville pour explorer la forêt boréale, hors de la fosse d'orchestre pour entendre les gorges

³² Études et travaux en matière d'environnement sonore

<https://www.encyclopediecanadienne.ca/fr/article/r-murray-schafer/>

profondes et hors de la scène afin de vivre la musique dans les canoës : «Parfois sous la pluie, parfois sous une pluie de météores. Les musiciens qui acceptent le défi se trouvent littéralement à l'écoute du monde naturel. La sensibilité des artistes atteint un nouveau niveau de conscience. Spirituel? Peut-être. Transformationnel? Absolument. Les vieilles découvertes musicales sont fraîches, le monde naturel est animé: un lac rempli de sons radieux vous chantera! Dans la relation musicale avec la nature, l'énergie sensible circule dans les deux sens.»³³

Dans *The Wolf Project* et d'autres œuvres similaires, Schafer s'inspire du rituel comme moyen de revitaliser le théâtre contemporain et un certain nombre de ses pièces transforment les spectateurs, traditionnellement passifs, en participants. Schafer encourage les artistes, où qu'ils soient, à puiser, pour leurs créations, dans les richesses de la culture et du coin du pays qui les entoure. En utilisant les beautés naturelles des paysages canadiens pour *The Princess of the Stars* (le prologue de *Patria*) et pour *Music for Wilderness Lake*, Schafer crée des œuvres d'un caractère uniquement canadien.

La Princesse des étoiles est le Prologue de *Patria*, un grand cycle de musique-théâtre en 12 parties (Prologue, 10 pièces et Épilogue), à la fois moderne et primitif.

Pour *La Princesse des étoiles*, le public et les artistes partagent non seulement la musique dans le cadre naturel, mais aussi la légende qui se crée sous leurs yeux. Pour participer à cette musique-théâtre-environnement-sonore. Les spectateurs devaient arriver autour du lac pendant la nuit, vers 4 heures du matin, sous un ciel étoilé. Cette superbe expérience est ainsi décrite par Rae Crossman, la personne ayant joué le rôle de Présentateur lors de l'événement et de Loup dans plusieurs productions de *Patria* au cours des 20 dernières années. Il raconte: «De l'autre côté du lac, une voix de soprano monte comme un fil de brume s'élevant vers le ciel. Les échos répondent, et la voix d'abord en solo devient un duo entrelacé, parfois éthéré, parfois cru. (...) Une faible lumière attire notre attention alors qu'elle glisse vers nous en bas du lac. Une silhouette enveloppée, dans un canoë, lance un chant de voix de baryton dont les mots mystérieux se dirigeant vers la rive. Une chorale lui répond. Les canoës pivotent; le chanteur chante vers la rive opposée. Cette fois, c'est une autre chorale qui lui répond. En plus, six danseurs flottent sur le lac, chacun debout dans un canot éclairé. Leurs ailes colorées bougent selon une chorégraphie subtile, accompagnant la musique de la flûte, de la clarinette et de la trompette. Un chœur de voix humaines imite les mélodies des oiseaux se réveillant à l'aube.»³⁴

³³ Idem.

³⁴ Rae Crossmann, *Opera in the Woods. Lakes sing and magic reigns in R. Murray Schafer's Patria*, juillet 2011 : <http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/people-and-profiles/opera-woods>

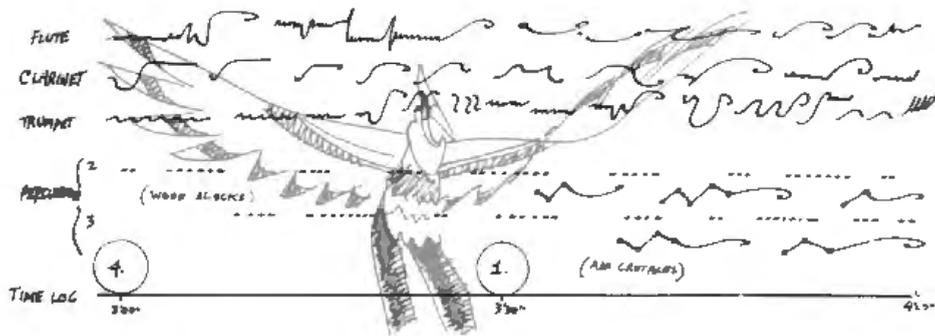


Fig. 9 Arrivée des oiseaux de l'aube

Rae Crossmann continue, complètement ému par le magnifique spectacle : « La forêt, le lac et le ciel se gonflent de bruits, la joie se mêle à la mélancolie. Alors que l'aria disparaît, le canot s'approche et le présentateur chamanique parle au-dessus de l'eau :

Kániotái Níota

A-ja-pék Sam-bú-i Nishi-Shen Nishi-Shen

C'est l'histoire de la princesse des étoiles». ³⁵

Il s'agit d'un drame mythologique, qui rappelle la légende ojibwa ³⁶ : la Princesse des Étoiles tombée des cieux en écoutant le cri lugubre du Loup. Un formidable canoë de guerre avec une douzaine de rameurs émerge sur l'eau sombre en portant le Loup. Cette géante silhouette qui brille de l'intérieur, glisse sur l'eau, se déplace comme un fantôme hurlant son angoisse.

³⁵ Rae Crossmann, *idem*.

³⁶ Les Ojibwés, Ojiboués ou Anishinaabes (Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabe-Ojibwe(g) de Chippewa(y)) sont des Amérindiens, qui forment un des plus importants groupes autochtones en Amérique du nord, derrière les Cherokees et les Navajos. Ils se trouvent aux États-Unis et au Canada.



Fig. 10. Le Loup

La Princesse fuit vers le lac pour laver ses plaies. Soudain, l'horrible Monstre à trois cornes arrive en criant, en riant, accompagné par des bruits assourdissants de tambours de basse, de gongs, de tamtams et de pagaies qui frappent l'eau. Il est, lui aussi, monté sur un canoë de guerre. « SKÉK KLÉK KLÍT-SHA ... KSSSSSS KSSSSSS ... »

Il traine la princesse dans les eaux profondes, la faisant sa prisonnière.



Fig.11 Le Monstre à trois cornes

Ensuite, le Loup cherche la Princesse pour atteindre la rédemption. Il va se battre contre le Monstre. La bataille assourdissante se passe sur le lac alors que l'air vibre d'une musique bruyante. Puis, les pagayeurs se mettent de côté pour révéler une nouvelle présence sur la rive lointaine. Juste au moment où la lumière du matin illumine les extrémités de la cime des arbres, le Soleil apparaît et tous les combats s'arrêtent. Dans sa voix de ténor, Le Disque Solaire demande au Monstre à trois cornes de libérer la princesse. Elle erre alors sur la Terre jusqu'à ce que le Loup la trouve.



Fig. 12. Le Loup, Le Disque du Soleil et le Monstre à trois cornes

Finalement, le spectacle s'estompe en douceur, en même temps que l'arrivée de la lumière sur les parois des montagnes: «Les canots disparaissent dans une dentelle suspendue de brume. Trombone, trompette et cor font écho, puis se dissolvent. L'aria final de la Princesse disparaît au calme. Un moineau à gorge blanche appelle. Un cerf méfiant sort de la forêt pour boire au bord de l'eau. Nous restons, calmes, attentifs. Il n'y a pas d'applaudissements, seulement des sens accrus, des imaginations accélérées. Petit à petit nous partons avec une merveille chuchotée. Un millier d'aubes similaires sans témoins. C'est de celle-ci qu'on se souviendra pour toujours.» raconte Rae Crossmann³⁷.

Tout au long du long cycle de *Patria*, Schafer attire son public dans un rôle participatif de plus en plus important.

Vers la fin du cycle, dans *Patria 9: La forêt enchantée*, il donne une tâche au public: trouver un enfant perdu dans la forêt au moment du crépuscule. Le public part à sa recherche de plus en plus profondément dans les bois qui s'assombrissent. La forêt semble menaçante pendant que les spectateurs

³⁷ Rae Crossmann, *Opera in the Woods. Lakes sing and magic reigns in R. Murray Schafer's Patria*, juillet 2011 : <http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/people-and-profiles/opera-woods>

devenus acteurs voyagent avec une chorale d'enfants qui chante pour les aider à se concentrer sur la recherche.

Dans *Patria 10: Le Jardin des Esprits*, le public doit vivre le cycle des saisons en plantant rituellement un jardin. Plusieurs mois plus tard, les participants doivent revenir pour cueillir la récolte plantée. Les artistes et le public partagent ainsi la nourriture et la musique.

La dernière partie de *Patria* est *L'Épilogue*. Au moment où le Loup hérite de la Lune, qui partage une sensibilité avec la spiritualité autochtone nord-américaine, la distinction entre le public et les artistes disparaît complètement.

Dans cette reconstitution historique de huit jours, qui s'est déroulée dans les bois de la forêt de Haliburton (près du Parc d'Algonquins, entre Toronto et Ottawa), le public a participé effectivement au spectacle. D'après Rae Crossmann, chacun en est sorti enrichi; les chanteurs avaient appris à danser, les danseurs à faire des masques, les musiciens à cuisiner au feu et tout le monde avait appris à pagayer et à porter un canot pour arriver au site éloigné et installer le campement: «L'intention est de vivre dans l'imagination mythique elle-même, de faire partie de l'histoire, travaillant pour réaliser l'union finale entre le Loup et la Princesse à travers une hiérophanie ritualisée, ou un drame sacré.»³⁸ Schafer appelle cela le Théâtre de la Confluence; c'est la fusion de tous les arts. Son but n'est pas le divertissement temporaire, mais la transformation active. Rae Crossmann, témoin de ce changement, décrit: «En tant qu'écologiste artistique, Schafer travaille pour accomplir un profond changement d'attitude. *Patria* signifie patrie, et le thème dominant unifiant le cycle est le besoin de restaurer l'harmonie, non seulement pour les personnages mais aussi pour nous-mêmes. Nous devons trouver notre maison dans des endroits sauvages, pour sentir les lacs et les forêts comme des royaumes mythiques où, même au 21^{ème} siècle, des merveilles se produisent. C'est un thème urgent, et si vous écoutez attentivement, les lacs et les forêts vous chanteront la mélodie»³⁹.

Plus tard, le même «opéra-sur-le-lac» est repris en 1975 dans le décor extraordinaire des Montagnes Rocheuses, dans l'ouest canadien, sur le lac Two-Jack du parc Banff. Le metteur en scène, Robert Pel, a ressenti quelques craintes lors du commencement du spectacle à 5 heures du matin: «Il y avait une brume traversant le lac du matin. Mais dès que le [narrateur] est descendu sur son canot, la brume s'est levée. J'ai entendu des gens se répandre sur un quart de mile autour du lac. (...) Ce n'est que quand l'aube arrive que vous apercevez le mur de gens»⁴⁰. Cette expérience inoubliable

³⁸ Idem.

³⁹ Idem.

⁴⁰ Katie Thompson, "This Is Crazy": Stage Managing an Opera Set on a Lake, July 06, 2015: <https://www.banffcentre.ca/articles/crazy-stage-managing-opera-set-lake>

eut un impact considérable sur le monde du théâtre: « [Tout le monde] est reparti avec un réel sentiment d'accomplissement", a déclaré Robert. « Nous avons pu faciliter le rêve du compositeur et en faire une réalité »⁴¹.

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⁴¹ Idem.

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Medieval Symbols in “The Name of the Rose”, by Umberto Eco

Paula-Andreea Onofrei *

Abstract: The purpose of the present article is to identify and analyze some of the medieval symbols present in the novel *The Name of the Rose*, written by Umberto Eco, insisting on their importance. Combining elements of a historical romance, a thriller and a novel of ideas, Umberto Eco manages to create a vivid, intertextual book who is filled with mysteries, intriguing the reader from the beginning to the end.

Keywords: Middle Ages, symbols, *The Name of the Rose*, Umberto Eco.

Thinking in the Middle Ages was deeply marked by symbolic connotations, the world and the surrounding universe bearing the fingerprint of deeper essences. The enigmatic character of symbols and also their meanings had the role of restricting the direct access to understanding reality, functioning as a metaphorical shield, beyond which there were true mysteries.

We have thought about the reason why Umberto Eco decided to write a novel about the Middle Ages, because the action takes place in 1327 and the entire novel is actually the text written by an aging monk, Adso of Melk, in 14th century Italy, being the mysterious saga of seven deaths investigated by William of Baskerville, the master of Adso who is a Franciscan monk, very well educated and known for his Sherlock Holmes abilities as a former inquisitor. Therefore, in the *Prologue*, Adso states:

Having reached the end of my poor sinner’s life, my hair now white, I grow old as the world does, waiting to be lost in the bottomless pit of silent and deserted divinity, sharing in the light of angelic intelligences; confined now with my heavy, ailing body in this cell in the dear monastery of Melk, I prepare to leave on this parchment my testimony as to the wondrous and terrible events that I happened to observe in my youth, now repeating verbatim all I saw and heard, without venturing to seek a design, as if to leave to those who will come after (if the Antichrist has not come first) signs of signs, so that the prayer of deciphering may be exercised on them.¹

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¹ Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose, Prologue*, Warner Books Edition, 1986, p.11.

In an essay called “Ten Ways to Dream the Middle Ages”, Umberto Eco seems to have offered the answer to our question, for he mentioned that we do not dream the Middle Ages because it represents the past, but because it is the crucible of Europe and of our modern civilization. That period was the time when the majority of the things we are still grappling with today were invented, from the banking system to class struggle and pauperism to our western concept of love. This book is a wonderful blend of medieval studies, Biblical analysis and literary theory.

Regarding the characters of this novel and their symbolism, Brother William symbolizes knowledge and logic, unlike most people of that period, and he makes use of this knowledge to decipher the death of the seven monks that happened in the monastery of Melk. What is simply enigmatic is the fact that the abbot of the monastery have Father William and his apprentice, Adso, free access everywhere, except for the library. Judging things from this perspective, the monks could symbolize the corruption of the society, the fact that they withhold information from the rest of the world is intriguing, for they should be the ones to enlighten people. It is also known the fact that in the Middle Ages, access to knowledge was given especially to people that belonged to aristocracy and to the monks.

In the *Prologue*, there is a fragment which is extremely vivid and applicable today, because it catches a contrastive perspective between the way the world was and the way it is now:

In the past, men were handsome and great (now they are children and dwarfs), but this is merely one of the many facts that demonstrate the disaster of an aging world. The young no longer want to study anything, learning is in decline, the whole world walks on its head, blind men lead others equally blind and cause them to plunge into the abyss, birds leave the nest before they can fly, the jackass plays the lyre, oxen dance. Mary no longer loves the contemplative life and Martha no longer loves the active life, Leah is sterile, Rachel has a carnal eye, Cato visits brothels, Lucretius becomes a woman. Everything is on the wrong path. In those days, thank God, I acquired from my master the desire to learn and a sense of the straight way, which remains even when the path is tortuous.²

As the title of this article has announced, we will focus our attention on discovering the symbolism of this novel. We will start by stating that the book is organized in seven chapters, according to the days of the week and each of them is subdivided into the canonic hours of praying according to the Benedictins: *Matutini, Laudi, Prima, Tertia, Sexta, Nona, Vesper, Completa*, thus the author offers the feeling of authenticity.

² Idem, p.13.

Even the construction of the abbey of Melk is presented in a way which has mostly connections to religious interpretations:

This was an octagonal construction that from a distance seemed a tetragon (a perfect form, which expresses the sturdiness and impregnability of the City of God), whose southern sides stood on the plateau of the abbey, while the northern ones seemed to grow from the steep side of the mountain, a sheer drop, to which they were bound. I might say that from below, at certain points, the cliff seemed to extend, reaching up toward the heavens, with the rock's same colors and material, which at a certain point became keep and tower (work of giants who had great familiarity with earth and sky). Three rows of windows proclaimed the triune rhythm of its elevation, so that what was physically squared on the earth was spiritually triangular in the sky. As we came closer, we realized that the quadrangular form included, at each of its corners, a heptagonal tower, five sides of which were visible on the outside – four of the eight sides, then, of the greater octagon producing four minor heptagons, which from the outside appeared as pentagons. And thus anyone can see the admirable concord of so many holy numbers, each revealing a subtle spiritual significance. Eight, the number of perfection for every tetragon; four, the number of the Gospels; five, the number of the zones of the world; seven, the number of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.³

It is intriguing from the very beginning the fact that the abbot forbids Father William to access the library during his investigations:

“Very well,” William said then, “may I question the monks?”

“You may.”

“May I move freely about the abbey?”

“I grant you that power.”

“Will you assign me this mission coram monachis?”

“This very evening.”

“I shall begin, however, today, before the monks know what you have charged me to do. Besides, I already had a great desire –not the least reason for my sojourn here –to visit your library, which is spoken of with admiration in all the abbeys of Christendom.”

The abbot rose, almost starting, with a very tense face. “You can move freely through the whole abbey, as I have said. But not, to be sure, on the top floor of the Aedificium, the library.”⁴

³ Umberto Eco, *op. cit.*, p.16.

⁴ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, p.24.

Actually, the interdiction regarding the library was connected to the fact that the monks had unique books and copies of others which were rare or to be found nowhere else. Moreover, there was a secret regarding the way the books were placed, the secret was known only by the librarian and the one who was his right hand.

You see, Brother William, the abbot said, [...] the library was laid out on a plan which has remained obscure to all over the centuries, and which none of the monks is called upon to know. Only the librarian has received the secret from the librarian who preceded him, and he communicates it, while still alive, to the assistant librarian, so that death will not take him by surprise and rob the community of that knowledge. And the secret seals the lips of both men. Only the librarian has, in addition to that knowledge, the right to move through the labyrinth of the books, he alone knows where to find them and where to replace them, he alone is responsible for their safekeeping. The other monks work in the scriptorium and may know the list of the volumes that the library houses. But a list of the titles often tells very little; only the librarian knows, from the collocation of the volume, from its degree of inaccessibility, what secrets, what truths or falsehoods, the volume contains. [...] The library defends itself, immeasurable as the truth it houses, deceitful as the falsehood it preserves. A spiritual labyrinth, it is also a terrestrial labyrinth. You might enter and you might not emerge. And having said this, I would like you to conform to the rules of the abbey.⁵

In the book *Dictionary of Symbols*, Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant have underlined the meaning of the labyrinth which has its origins in the palace of Minos⁶, the labyrinth was an elaborate, confusing structure designed and built by Daedalus in order to hold the Minotaur, the monster which was finally killed by the hero Theseus.

From the beginning to the end, *The Name of the Rose* contains a plethora of symbols, relying on descriptions and actions. One section describes the front of the abbey:

The church was not majestic like the ones I saw later at Strasbourg, Chartres, Bamberg, and Paris.[...] I saw a throne set in the sky and a figure seated on the throne. The face of the Seated One was stern and impassive, the eyes wide and glaring over a terrestrial humankind that had reached the end of its story; majestic hair and beard flowed around the face and over the chest like the waters of a river, in streams all equal, symmetrically divided in two. The crown on his head was rich in enamels and jewels; the purple imperial

⁵ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, pp.25-26.

⁶ Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionar de simboluri*, vol.2, Ed. Artemis, Bucuresti, pp.191-193.

tunic was arranged in broad folds over the knees, woven with embroideries and laces of gold and silver thread. The left hand, resting on one knee, held a sealed book, the right was uplifted in an attitude of blessing or –I could not tell- of admonition. The face was illuminated by the tremendous beauty of a halo, containing a cross and bedecked with flowers, while around the throne and above the face of the Seated One I saw an emerald rainbow glittering before the throne, beneath the feet of the Seated one, a sea of crystal flowed, and around the Seated One, beside and above the throne, I saw four awful creatures –awful for me, as I looked at them, transported, but docile and dear for the Seated One, whose praises they sang without cease.

Or, rather, not all could be called awful, because one seemed to me handsome and kindly, the man to my left (and to the right of the Seated one), who held out a book. But on the other side, there was an eagle I found horrifying, its beak agape, its thick feathers arranged like a cuirass, powerful talons, great wings outstretched. And at the feet of the Seated One, under the first two figures, there were the other two, a bull and a lion, each monster clutching a book between talons or hoofs, the body turned away from the throne, but the head toward the throne, as if shoulders and neck twisted in a fierce impulse, flanks tensed, the limbs those of a dying animal, maw open, serpentlike tails coiled and writhing, culminating, at the top, in tongues of flame. Both monsters were winged, both crowned by haloes; despite their formidable appearance, they were creatures not of hell, but of heaven, and if they seemed fearsome it was because they were roaring in adoration of One Who Is to Come and who would judge the quick and the dead.⁷

Regarding the four symbolic presences near the throne of Jesus Christ, in Adrian Stoleriu’s book, *Reprezentarea vizuală a sacralului*⁸, we have found data about the visual representation of the four evangelists:

omul (inaripat) pentru Evanghelistul Matei, întrucât începutul Evangheliei sale descrie întruparea lui Hristos, *leul* pentru Evanghelistul Marcu, amintind de “glasul celui care strigă în pustiu”(Matei, 3, 3), cu care începe Evanghelia acestuia, *taurul*, ca symbol al jertfei descrise în Evanghelia Sfântului Luca, și *vulturul*, ca simbol al înălțării spirituale propovăduite în Evanghelia Sfântului Ioan. [the (winged) *man* for the Evangelist Matthew, because the beginning of his Gospel describes the embodiment of Christ, *the lion* for the Evangelist Mark, reminding us of “the voice of the one who shouts in the desert” (Matthew, 3,3) which starts his Gospel, *the ox* as a symbol of the sacrifice described in the Gospel of Saint Luke, and *the eagle* as a symbol of the spiritual ascension preached in the Gospel of Saint John].

⁷ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, pp.28-29.

⁸ Adrian Stoleriu, *Reprezentarea vizuală a sacralului*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, 2013, p.43.

Consequently, the door of the abbey seems to show a depiction of heaven, with God looking down on people, with an unhappy look smitten across His face. The throne in the sky with the majestic Seated One represents God Who is holding a book in his left hand and has a halo behind His head, wearing a purple tunic, the sign of regality and political power in Ancient Rome. The imposing door of the abbey sends a message regarding the seriousness which should characterize any mortal who enters the place, being aware that the abbey is protected by the highest power.

If we think about the presence of the Franciscan monk William in the Benedictine monastery, he is there in order to solve the mystery of the murder of a dozen monks who lost their lives in the most bizarre ways. Towards the end of the book, it turns out that all those horrible crimes were committed for cultural and ethical reasons. It is launched the idea that the library is the place where the lost second part of the *Poetics* by Aristotle can be found, the lost book about the theory of comedy and laughter. The real librarian of the monastery proves to be Jorge, the one who does anything to stop the circulation of that manuscript. Father William made Jorge speak about one of the topics debated with the other friars:

“We talked about laughter,” Jorge said sharply. “The comedies were written by the pagans to move spectators to laughter, and they acted wrongly. Our Lord Jesus never told comedies or fables, but only clear parables which allegorically instruct us on how to win paradise, and so be it.”

“I wonder,” William said, “why are you so opposed to the idea that Jesus may have laughed. I believe laughter is a good medicine, like baths, to treat humors and the other afflictions of the body, melancholy in particular.”

“Baths restore the balance of the humors,” Jorge said. “Laughter shakes the body, distorts the features of the face, makes man similar to the monkey.”

“Monkeys do not laugh; laughter is proper to man, it is a sign of his rationality,” William said.

“Speech is also a sign of human rationality, and with speech a man can blaspheme against God. Not everything that is proper to man is necessarily good. He who laughs does not believe in what he laughs at, but neither does he hate it. Therefore, laughing at evil means not preparing oneself to combat it, and laughing at good means denying the power through which good is self-propagating. This is why the Rule says, ‘The tenth degree of humility is not to be quick to laughter, as it is written: *stultus in risu exaltat vocem suam*’.⁹

⁹ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, p.79

The monks bring examples from their readings regarding laughter, they even debate on the fact that Jesus Christ has never laughed:

And John of Salinsbury authorized a discreet hilarity. And finally Ecclesiastes, whom you quoted in the passage to which your Rule refers, where it says that laughter is proper to the fool, permits at least silent laughter, in the serene spirit.

The spirit is serene only when it contemplates the truth and takes delight in good achieved, and truth and good are not to be laughed at. This is why Christ did not laugh. Laughter foments doubt.¹⁰

The question which naturally arises from this discussion is this: why is Aristotle's book considered so valuable? First of all, Jorge was the one who had the only copy left of it, secondly, by the power of the words of Aristotle, many people would have started to think differently. The moment when, after great torment, Father William finally discovers that the murderer was Jorge and the crimes took place because he had tried to protect the book from the other monks, for fear that

This book could teach that freeing oneself of the fear of the evil is wisdom, this book could teach learned men the clever and, from that moment, illustrious artifices that could legitimize the reversal of laughter.

The method used for protecting the book was unique and painful for the monks that had the curiosity of reading it: they all died ingesting the poison with their hands, while turning the pages and putting their hands in their mouth afterwards.

Moreover, the presence of Latin quotations in the entire novel is also a sign of appreciation for the importance of this language which is rarely used nowadays, but who was considered essential for an educated human being in the Middle Ages. However, in order to facilitate the understanding of the book, we believe that these Latin fragments should be translated, given the fact that the people who know this language today are very few.

In conclusion, far from being an exhaustive approach, we have tried to decipher some of the symbols that are specific to Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, insisting on their meaning seen from a nowadays perspective.

¹⁰ Idem, p.80.

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Thomaz Scheuchl, the Trajectory of a Disciple of Beuron: from the Restoration of the Cathedral of the Ascension in Satu Mare to the Paintings of Churches in Brazil

Rosângela Aparecida da Conceição*

Abstract: : In our studies about the Beuron School of Art and its arrival in Brazil, we consider the hypothesis that it has been used in the decoration of Liturgical spaces, either partially or entirely, by other artists directly linked to the Beuron School of Art or by influence of the new paintings of Basilica of Our Lady of Assumption, works made by Dom Adalbert Gresnigt (1877-1956) and Br. Clement Maria Frischauf (1869-1944) from 1914 to 1922. To verify this hypothesis, we have analyzed the set of pictorial cycles located in the College's Chapel of São Bento Faculty, in the Eucharistic Sanctuary Our Lady of Penha, two medallions in Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption, and some pictorial fragments of the Church of the Rosary of Campinas, all of them works by Thomaz Scheuchl made between 1920s and 1940s. We also remember that the artist developed some of the graphic works, such as the cover to the Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida, but it is possible that he could have made other works which are unknown up to the present moment.

Keywords: Thomaz Scheuchl, Beuron School of Art, sacred art, art and liturgy, religious image.

The School of Art of Beuron as source for the elaboration of a pictorial program

The models for Beuronese images have as reference the medieval compositional schemes of masters such as Giotto de Bondone (1267-1337) and Fra Angelico (1387-1455), as well as the ornamental and chromatic elements that we can more easily identify in the illuminations. Let us remember that the image itself has the hieratic aspect, the solemn purpose, as seen in the Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and Byzantine images, which inspired Dom Desiderius Lenz (1832-1928) to compose his canon. We think that as we transpose the aesthetic and artistic question, all these arts are directly linked to the history of the Christian people in the Old and New Testaments,

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which leads us to a reflection of the Canon of Beuron as the imaginary synthesis of this trajectory.

The new monasteries will have as a source of inspiration the Carolingian architecture. In others built in the Gothic, Renaissance or Baroque period, Beuron's ornamentation was included, keeping each of the styles and aspects present in the monasteries.

The preparation for the 1400th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict (480-547) in 1880 was the theme for the restoration of the Monastery of Monte Cassino between 1873 and 1913, with the interior decoration done in Beuron style, directed by Dom Desiderius Lenz. Undoubtedly, this was a time when Beuron art was widely disseminated. The process of preparation of the paintings, the execution of the works, the views of the chapels and other decorated spaces appeared in postcards, sacred and holy art magazines, throughout Europe and America, with the use of photographs and lithographic processes.

The foundation of Beuron Abbey's printing house in 1892 would contribute to the wide dissemination of Beuron's images, with the publication of various devotional graphic materials, Bibles, Psalteries, saints, among others.

In 1895, it was published the book *Marienleben* (Figure 1), containing images of the Abbey of Emmaus in Prague, with photograph and lithographed images in a compilation of seventeen images depicting scenes from the life of Our Lady and Our Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied by Biblical quotations, references of breviaries and the Roman missal, with sonnets composed by P. Fritz Esser, SJ (1854-1926).

It is in a climate of study and recollection that some artists have approached a medieval environment of arts and crafts led by masters, often making their work anonymous by not signing the work, be it in painting, sculpture or graphic art. This is what we will see in publications such as *Marienleben*, where the signature is given by *Schola art Beuron*.

In 1905, the Beuronese monks were invited to participate in the XXIV Vienna Secession Exhibition, whose catalog contains some images of Beuron (Figure 2) and Monte Cassino, as well as a presentation on Beuron art. Another publication would corroborate the exhibition, which was written by the monk Ansgar Pöllman, OSB, who explains the meanings of the hieratic art developed by Dom Desiderius Lenz.



Figure 1. Assumption of Our Lady. Detail. Marienleben, 1896



Figure 2. School of Art of Beuron. Our Lady enthroned, the Infant Jesus, Saint Scholastica and St. Benedict, 1871. Chapel of St. Mauro, Abbey of Beuron. *Die Kunst für alle: Malerei, Plastik, Graphik, Architektur* — 23.1907-1908, p. 259.

Among these artists, we can highlight Jan Verkade (1868-1946) who later became a monk under the name of Br. Willibrord Verkade, and Maurice Denis (1870-1943) who founded in 1919 the *Ateliers d'Art Sacré* together with Georges Desvallières (1861-1950).

Thus, we saw that the artists trained in the Abbey of Beuron led to their countries and abbeys of origin or those in which they would become missionaries of other religious orders, contributing to the diffusion of Beuron art in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

For this reason, we believe it is relevant to present the work of an artist who arrives in Brazil at the beginning of the 1920s, whose past is still uncertain as to its formation. We will deal with a "disciple" of Beuron and his artworks in Europe and Brazil.

Beuronese art sources

We can see that the artist also uses other visual sources such as the theme of Jacob's Ladder (THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, Gen 28, 10-22), painted in the vestibule of the Beuron Abbey (Figure 3) and in the murals of the Abbey of St. Hildegard (Figure 4); the series of frescoes referring to "Prodigal Son" in the Gospel of St. Luke (THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, 15, 11-32), the work of Br. Notker Becker (1883-1978), monk of the Abbey of Maria Laach, who painted the frescoes in the Church of Saint Martin in Dudelange, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, between 1924 and 1927.



Figure 3. Jacob's Ladder. Fresco. Vestibule, Beuron Abbey



Figure 4. Jacob's Ladder. Fresco. Saint Hildegard Abbey.



Figure 5. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: ©Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012

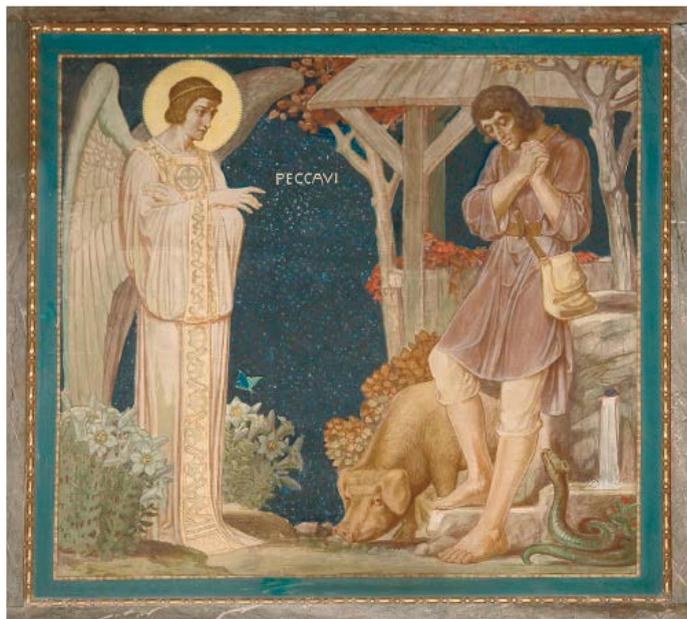


Figure 6. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: @Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012

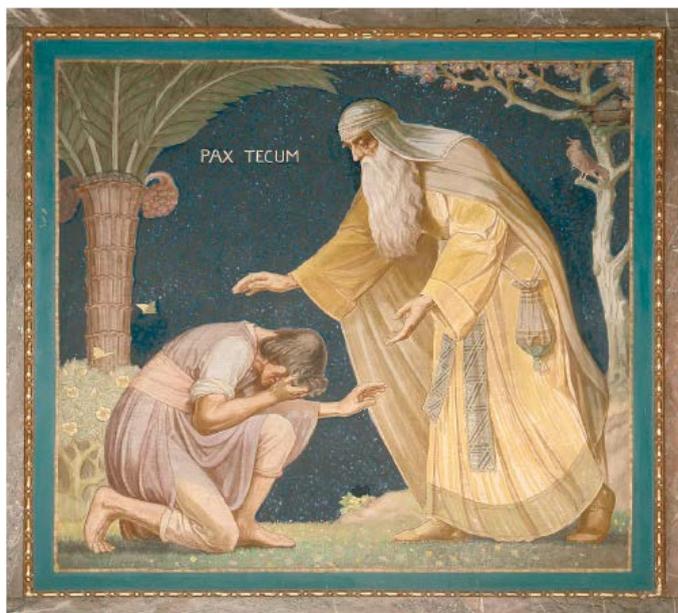


Figure 7. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: @Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012



Figure 8. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: ©Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012

As Beuron's art was not only closed in the designs of Dom Desiderius Lenz, we believe that some drawings were created by Thomaz Scheuchl according to the canon, as we observed in the works of other Beuronese artists.

Thomaz Scheuchl: biographical notes

After more than seventy years of the artist's death, little is known of his life. Our effort to compose his biography has been something of extreme complexity. Beyond his works, we not have literature in Portuguese about his artistic study or origin.

In the face of uncertainty and complexities, we look at various documentary sources, such as baptism and marriage books, immigrant collections, genealogical trees, and death records.

Another difficulty we have encountered is the various forms of how he was referred to in other written texts in several languages, such as Scheuchl Tamás in Hungarian, Tomazino Scheuchl in Italian, and even the incorrectness in the writing of his surname as perceived in his Register of Foreigners, where Scheuchel appears, in journalistic news and publications

like Schenchl or Scheutel. For this reason, the captions of the images will follow the spelling signed by the artist.

We will present the analysis of the pictorial cycles of the Chapel's College and Faculty of São Bento of São Paulo, of the Eucharistic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Penha. To achieve our goals, we extend the research to the city of Campinas where there still exist some pictorial fragments of the Church of the Rosary of Campinas, demolished in 1956 because we understand that it would help us comprehend his earlier artistic career in Brazil.

In addition to the study of the pictorial cycles, we analyzed the cover of the Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady, but we emphasize that it may be possible to have others works not yet known at this moment.

Biographical data: records in the archives from Vienna and São Paulo

The starting point for checking with the Viennese archives came from a *Genealogie der Familie Leininger* family tree website, which provided us with the identification in the Viennese registers in the online database Matricula. In the Book of Baptism (Figure 9), his date of birth on June 16, 1867, being baptized on the 18th of the same month under the name of Adolf. We know how to deal with the artist, because we verify the names of the parents who verified in the Alien Registration of 1944. Another source was the Wedding Book, where we find that in 1901 he married Theresia Redl (1860-1900).



Figure 9. Detail of the **Taufbuch** [Book of Baptism] 1850-1879, Fol. 103, 01-03. Screenshot of the file available in the database Matricula

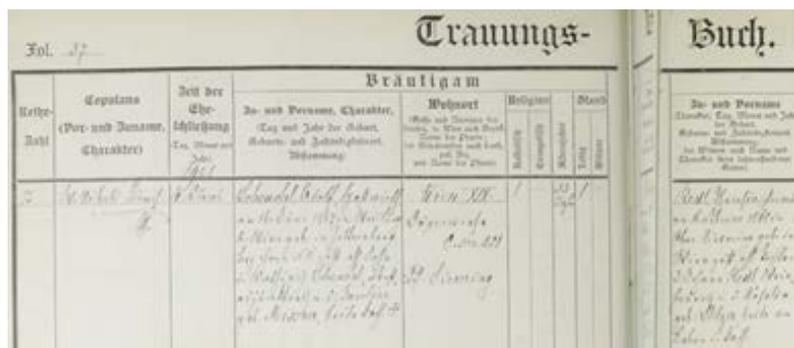


Figure 10. Detail of the **Traunngs-Buch** [Wedding Book]. Fol 37 (verse). Screenshot of the file available in the database Matricula

On the death certificate, his death occurred on January 2, 1947, at the age of 81, due to heart problems. On January 7, 1947, in the Deutsche Nachrichten supplement, German-language section of the Jornal de Notícias of January 7, 1947, Margaretha published a note of the seventh day mass that would be held on January 9 at the Monastery of São Bento. Complementing the biographical documentation, we know that he married Margaretha Anna [Wissmuller] Scheuchl, she was born on March 4, 1887, in Austria. We know that she asked for naturalization, granted by Brazilian Government on August 6, 1955.

We did not find any further information about his elementary studies or religious studies. The question we ask is whether the artist would have been emancipated, when we perceive the various conflicts between the dates of the consulted documents. Another issue is the adoption of Thomaz, which leads us to suppose that perhaps he was a Benedictine oblate, since he was married twice and is quoted as a monk in one of the publications that will be discussed below.

1903-1904 – The Roman Catholic Cathedral from Satu Mare, Romania

The presence of the artist is reported in a journalistic note edited by Lajos Mátray and Ágoston Ferencz¹, published on July 14, 1903, where they point to the restoration and painting of new images in the Cathedral of the Ascension, The Roman Catholic Cathedral from Satu Mare.

In the book that chronicles the life of Bishop Meszlényi Gyula (1832 - 1905), Thomaz Scheuchl is cited as a monk of Beuron, one of the eminent artists of that period, which is why he is chosen for the restoration and painting of new frescoes in the cathedral, like the set of Our Lady of the Hungarians (Figure 11), flanked by the medallions of Saint Kunegunda, Beata Gisela, Saint Margareth of Hungary and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary².

¹ Hungaricana. A róm. kath. székesegyház renoválása. Szatmár-Németi, 1903, Julius 14, 7. évfolyam, 28. Szám, p. 132. In: Szatmár-Németi 1899-1912, <https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/SzatmarNemeti_1903/?pg=130&layout=l>, 26 jan. 2017.

² Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) is Patron Saint of Secular Franciscan Order, Catholic Charities and Bakers, she was canonized in 1235, and her history was collect by Jacopo da Voragine (1229-1298) in his book *Legenda Aurea*. **de Voragine**, Jacobus. *Legenda Aurea*, French translation La Légende Doreé translator L'Abbé J.B.M. Roze, Édouard Rouveyre, Éditeur, Paris, 1902. (Troisième Partie) Archive.org. 29 May 2018.



Figure 11. Our Lady of Hungarians. Clockwise: Saint Kunegunda, Beata Gisela, Saint Margareth, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. In: BURA, László. *Meszlényi Gyula szatmári püspök 1887-1905*, 2008. p. 43.

Decoration in Brazilian churches from mid-1920s to 1940s

Thomaz Scheuchl arrives in Brazil in September of 1920. He will make the complete decoration in liturgical spaces from the mid-1920s to 1940s: Church of the Rosary of Campinas; Chapel of the College of the Monastery of São Bento of São Paulo, Eucharistic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Penha and two medallions in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption.

In a note published in the newspaper, there is a description of the decoration of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary³, whose passage we transcribe:

³ The Claretian missionaries arrived in Brazil in 1895, building their headquarters in São Paulo. The Church of the Rosary was built in 1913, being the second home of the Claretians in the State of São Paulo, its decoration would have begun in 1914 with the arrival of the altars in 1914. The news about the paintings in the church is of 1925. Between 1934 and 1938, the Urban Improvement Plan was developed by Francisco Prestes Maia (1896-1965), which included the expansion of avenues, among other urban works. The Church of the Rosary was in the middle of the route, reason why had been demolished in 1956, even with the strong commotion of the population of the city of Campinas and government authorities. Another

INTERIOR DECORATION OF CHURCH OF ROSARY

CAMPINAS, 30 - The works of interior decoration of the church of the Rosary, of this city, near completion, ordered to be performed by the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary, constitute an admirable painting, which greatly enriches that temple.

The service is being done by mr. Thomaz Schenchl, consecrated artist of the old world, who from there came contracted for this purpose.

On the front wall of the cupola, it was painted the one symbolizing the Queen of the Sacred Rosary, on the right there is the representation of the Assumption, on the left, the Word became flesh and on the front, Queen Martyr. In the workings of these engravings, on a lower plane, let the four evangelists be named.

In the extension of the ceiling, there are represented all the titles of the litany by their respective symbols.

On the walls of the arcade, on the left, the church pays a fair homage to the founders and martyres of the order.

The medallions, works of artistic value, represent Paulo Vallier (Founder of the Chilean missions), Francisco Cruzato (Protomartyr), Mariano Avelina, (of whom the beatification is thought) Emmanuele Villazo (confounder), Estevam Sala, (confounder) 1st Superior General), Domingos Frabeja to Jacob Clotet (confounders) José Xigré (confounder and 2nd Superior General).

Still other symbolic religious pictures adorn the interior of the temple, thus making it worthy of the admiration of all (CORREIO PAULISTANO, 1925, p. 5).

In the iconographic collection of the Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo, there is a set of photographs, without date or indication of the photographer who captured them that correspond to the description above transcribed.

For example, the image of Our Lady enthroned delivering the Rosary to St. Dominic of Gusmão, with the Infant Jesus sitting on his lap, on the left side, with angels flanking the two saints (Figure 12). In this image, we clearly perceive the throne, something similar to other beuronenses representations of Our Lady enthroned (Figure 2).

In the image with the theme of the Assumption of Our Lady (Figure 13), in which Jesus Christ is represented with crown and scepter with the tip in the shape of a lily placing a crown on the head of Our Lady, we see the use of the Beuronese scheme, with the rearrangement of the figures that are sitting on clouds and the suppression of the image of God-Father.

In the tympanum, the medallions of St. Ignatius of Loyola (Figure 14) and St. Vincent de Paula (Figure 15) follow the same scheme, as well as the two angels at the chancel arch (Figure 16).

church had been built, where the altars and other objects that had been saved were taken. Some of the mural paintings were kept by the resident doctor in the city, who hired an Italian restorer to remove the fragments. Today, these fragments were auctioned by the heirs, bought by collectors, one of them donated to the Memory Center of the University of Campinas in 2011.



Figure 12. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Our Lady of Rosary, n.d. Detail of the dome. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017



Figure 13. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Assumption of Our Lady, n.d. Detail of the dome. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017



Figure 14. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion Saint Ignatius of Loyola, n.d. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017



Figure 15. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion of Saint Vincent de Paula, n.d. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017



Figure 16. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Top of the high altar, n.d. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017

Analyzing this small set of images, we can infer that this church served as the basis for the elaboration of a pictorial program if we make a comparison with the works of the painter executed later in the Chapel of the College of the Monastery of St. Benedict (Figures 17 and 18) and in the Church of Our Lady of Penha⁴ (Figures 19 and 20).

As for the decorative aspect, we noticed the use of garlands, flowers, such as daisy and white lily, spiraled stems with animals (birds and squirrels), inflorescence and date palms with fruits.



Figure 17. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947), 1937. Our Lady with the Baby Jesus delivering the Rule to St. Benedict (left). To the right, Father José de Anchieta in prayer. Fresco. Signature on left side, bottom: THOMAZ SCHEUCHL PINXT MCMXXVII. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2015

⁴ The first chapel dates from 1668, passing through successive reforms, the last one in 1801 which gave it colonial features. In 1909 he was elevated to Archdiocesan Sanctuary by Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva (1867-1938), first archbishop of São Paulo (1907-1938). The Redemptorists would take care of the sanctuary that was reformed in 1935, under the direction of Fr. Oscar Chagas de Azevedo, C.Ss.R. (1888-1957) and decorated by Thomaz Scheuchl, who performs fresco paintings on the side and upper walls of the main altar, entrance to the sacristy and Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.



Figure 18. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Panels "Prodigal Son" and medallions "Choir of Angels", 1936-1937. Varied dimensions. Photography and digital montage: ©Rosângela Ap, 2015



Figure 19. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). View of the main altar, 1940s. Fresco. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2016



Figure 20 Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). High altar (detail), 1940s. Fresco. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2016

In the Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption, the artist painted two medallions (Figures 21 and 22), in which we find his signature, but he did not date them. It is possible that he painted them in the same period during which he made the decoration of the Chapel of the College. The painting depicting the Jacob Ladder, similar to the fresco of the vestibule at Beuron Abbey (Figure 3) and the Abbey of St. Hildegard (Figure 4), located on the side wall of the chapel of St. John the Baptist. It is signed in the lower right, on the lawn below the wall: *Th. Scheuchl pinx.*

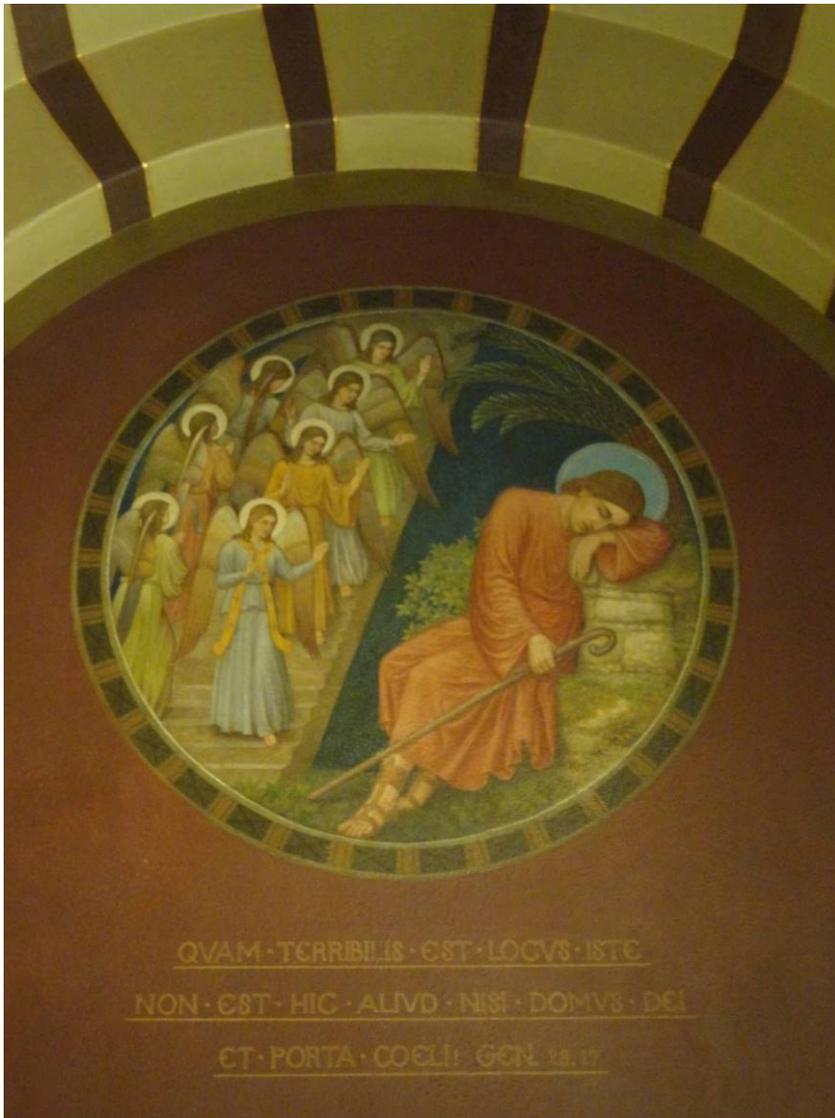


Figure 21 Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion Jacob's Ladder, s.d. Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2017



Figure 22. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion Burning Bush, s.d. Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2017

Comparing what was painted with the cited references, it is perceived that the drawing is much closer to the one executed in Beuron Abbey, although the tonalities approach the frescoes in Saint Hildegard Abbey.

Graphic work

In 1894, Redemptorist priests arrived in Brazil from Bavaria. As missionaries, they settled in Aparecida, State of São Paulo and Campininhas, State of Goiás. In 1900 they founded the Sanctuary Publishing. Thomaz Scheuchl composed the cover, cover sheet and illustration for the Almanac of National Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida of 1935.

We see on the cover (Figure 23), the use of the same visual outlines earlier, Our Lady to the center flanked by seraphim. What differs from other works is that the composition encloses the image of Our Lady as if it were in an altar niche for veneration. Also the shields representing the Brazilian states, until that moment.



Figure 23 Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Cover and cover sheet of the Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida, 1935. Historical and Artistic Collection of the Venerable Third Order of St. Francis of Penance of the City of São Paulo. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2016

In the illustration (Figure 24), the artist uses his monogram, consisting of a "TS" in overlap, located in the lower left corner of the arch.



Figure 24. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Illustration. Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady Aparecida. 1935. Historical and Artistic Collection of the Venerable Third Order of St. Francis of Penance of the City of São Paulo. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2016

Conclusions

The impulse for this work was represented by the desire to continue our studies about the Beuron School of Art and its arrival in Brazil, where we hypothesized that it was used in the decoration of other liturgical spaces, either partially or totally, by artists linked or influenced by this new art present in the decoration of the new Basilica of Our Lady of Assumption, inaugurated in 1912, whose decoration was executed between 1914 to 1922 by Dom Adalbert Gresnigt (1877-1956) and Br. Clement Maria Frischauf (1869-1944), two Benedictine monks who participated in the decoration of the Monte Cassino Abbey between 1899 and 1913, under the direction of Dom Desiderius Lenz (1832-1928).

As stated, there are gaps to be filled both from a biographical and artistic point of view. We seek answers about his formation, works and performance in Europe, with a view to increasing the knowledge of his relations with other artists, to find other works to confront and deepen the analysis of the pictorial cycles located in Brazil.

We emphasize that we constructed this article based on a chronological structure, whose function was to allow us to confront the dates, to visualize the places and the accomplishments, which we think is fruitful for the reader. We found that there were differences between the dates of the consulted documents, however, we think that what we were able to collect during the execution of this work will be useful for those who have works of the artist, both in Brazil and abroad.

We are very grateful to Abbot Mathias Tolentino Braga, OSB for having received and allowed us to do our research, especially to Dom João

Baptista Neto, OSB librarian responsible for the Archives of the Monastery of São Bento, whose contribution is essential and invaluable, to the librarian Wellington Baptista. The immense contribution with photographs and bibliographical materials received: Mr. Klara Antons, OSB, of the Abbey of Santa Hildegarda; Fr Petrus Novack OSB, librarian at the Maria Laach Abbey; Christoph M. Frommen of AEOLUS Musikproduktion; to Fr. Ataíde Rodrigues Fontes, Rector of the Sanctuary Eucharistic of Our Lady of Penha, Regina Ribeiro Cellino Dorival, parish secretary; to the friends and relatives who support us unconditionally, and finally to Laura Codrina Ioniță and all the other editors and members of the advisory board of “Anastasis”.

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BOOK REVIEWS

**L'espace de l'église, une
liturgie visuelle
/ The Space of Church, a
Visual Liturgy**

Codrina-Laura Ioniță

*L'église, lieu de performances : In
Locis competentibus.* Sous la
direction de Stéphanie-Diane Daussy
avec la collaboration de Nicolas
Reveyron. Préface de Herbert
Kessler, Editions Picard, 2016,
336pp.



Paru sous la direction de Stéphanie-Diane Daussy et avec le soutien du Centre international du vitrail de Chartres et de Jean-Paul Deremble, le volume *L'église, lieu de performances : In Locis competentibus* réunit des études sur l'espace liturgique en analysant les éléments qui accomplissent et qui accompagnent la contemplation spirituelle des fidèles. Les chœurs, la musique, la relation texte-image, la peinture et même les senteurs ainsi que les goûts trouvent leur place dans cette analyse spécialisée de l'espace ecclésial.

En déchiffrant la cérémonie de la messe comme étant un spectacle (à la suite d'Aelred de Rielvaux), un spectacle « où les choses (res), les paroles (verba), les actions (facta) et les personnes (personnae) », St.Diane Daussy observe la fonction médiatique que les artefacts, les lieux ou les différents éléments du cérémonial établissent dans la relation entre homme et Dieu.

À l'époque où l'interdisciplinarité ou la transdisciplinarité sont devenus une modalité fréquente d'aborder les recherches scientifiques, les études de ce volume se dévoilent en pleine actualité. La nouveauté consiste surtout, comme le remarque Nicolas Reveyron, à une association des études qui analysent l'art de l'espace ecclésial selon une perspective sensoriale impliquée dans la réception. Ainsi, la lumière et l'obscurité, la musique et le son, la peinture et le texte, et même les offrandes alimentaires et les objets de culte (tel l'encensoir) suscitent pleinement tous les sens (la vue, l'ouïe,

l'odorat et le goût), dans l'acte de la connaissance et du vécu représenté par la perception, qui est en même temps un acte de participation, à l'« œuvre d'art » qui est la liturgie.

L'espace ecclésial, les éléments architecturaux qui le structurent, l'histoire et l'importance des composantes de la construction ainsi que des objets symboliques de l'intérieur sont mis en discussion dans les articles comme *Les grilles de chœur liturgique dans le Massif Central (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*. *D'infranchissables transparences* (Bruno Phalip), *La mise en ordre du monde : le sacramentaire de Marmoutier au IXe siècle* (Cécile Voyer), *Activation et Glorification à Saint-Denis : la Vierge, l'ivoire et la liturgie de l'Assomption* (Sarah M. Guérin), *Image performative et liturgie. Les sept chapiteaux de l'abside de la cathédrale de Lyon (XIIIe)* (Nicolas Reveyron). Le visible et son importance pour la perception artistique et liturgique sont des sujets pour des études qui analysent l'image, la peinture ou la liaison entre l'image et le texte : *Au pied de la lettre. Une lecture ouverte et liturgique des relations texte / image dans la peinture murale romane catalane* (Vincent Debiais), *Résonnances sacramentelles dévotionnelles et sensorielles des images : la Vierge à l'Enfant et la Crucifixion sur les vitraux de la cathédrale du Mans* (Marcello Angheben). La lumière, mais aussi l'obscurité, sont des acteurs principaux dans ce « spectacle » de performances représentés par la liturgie. D'ailleurs, d'autres rituels et expériences jouent un rôle : *Images liturgiques de lumière et expression visionnaire, à travers les témoignages de la Vita de Cudot (XIIe siècle) et des Revelations d'Ermine de Reims (XIVe siècle)* (Catherine Vincent), *Dissimuler la sainteté dans l'obscurité de la tombe et provoquer sa visualisation : à propos du coffre gothique en bois peint de la bienheureuse Giuliana de Venise* (Xavier Barral i Altet). Pourtant, près de ce visible, ayant une place importante dans la perception de l'espace religieux, d'autres sens, habituellement laissés de côté, ont une valeur tout aussi significative : l'ouïe, l'odorat ou le goût. Ces derniers sont relatés dans ces discussions : *La note de résonance des édifices ou l'hospitalité sonore des abbayes médiévales* (Olivier Manaud), *Conditions, modalités et significations des expériences olfactives de l'église dans le haut Moyen Age* (Martin Roch), *Donner à goûter. Les offrandes alimentaires dans la culture chrétienne* (Thomas Golsenne).

L'excellente présentation graphique et les reproductions des images d'une grande qualité sont des arguments supplémentaires qui, auprès du professionnalisme, de la haute qualité scientifiques et de la consistance des études, font du volume *L'église, lieu de performances : In Locis competentibus* un livre d'exception, utile autant aux spécialistes, médiévistes, historiens d'arts, restaurateurs et critiques, qu'au public plus large, intéressé par la liaison étroite entre l'art et l'espace liturgique.