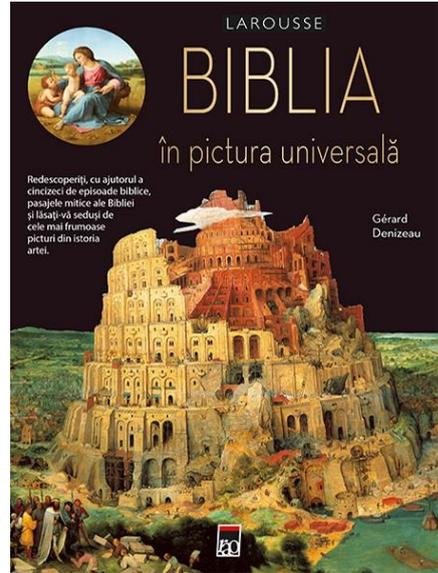


The Representation of the Bible in Painting

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Gérard Denizeau, *Biblia în pictura universală* [*The Bible in Universal Painting*], Larousse, Rao Publishing House, Bucharest, 2016, 226 pages



The Bible has always been considered “the book of all books” and the knowledge, the information transmitted has been the source of inspiration of many artists throughout the centuries. According to my humble opinion, this Larousse volume is an essential masterpiece for the ones who are more or less knowledgeable regarding both religion and arts, for it offers significant information about the interpretation and meaning of specific religious scenes.

First of all, Gérard Denizeau successfully pinpoints fifty well-known images and offers relevant information about the transmitted message, so that the reader can decode, for example, who the characters are in scenes like the one of the Crucifixion or the Holy Supper. The pictures who cover a large historical period, from Noah’s Arch to the Apocalypse, are grouped according to the following large categories:

1. The Old Testament
2. The Exodus
3. The Judges
4. Samuel
5. The Kings
6. Judith
7. Daniel
8. The New Testament
9. The Works of the Apostles
10. Epistles (Peter)
11. The Apocalypse

In order to offer a few hints regarding the chosen painters and their works, I am going to mention here some relevant names:

- Michelangelo, with two of his masterpieces, “The Creation of Adam” and “Genesis”
- Pieter Bruegel the Elder with “Babel Tower”
- Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Marc Chagall – a comparative analysis of their works having the title “The Sacrifice of Isaac”
- Tizian and Aubin Vouet - both having the same topic, “David and Goliath”
- Leonardo da Vinci and Caravaggio treating the topic of “The Annunciation”
- Vincent van Gogh and Eugène Delacroix who both have a painting called “The Good Samaritan”
- Salvador Dali and Leonardo da Vinci treating the topic of “The Holy Supper”
- Andrea Mantegna and El Greco who worked on the same subject, “Christ in Gethsemane Garden”
- Matthias Grünewald, Perugino and Maurice Denis with “Ressurrection”
- Pieter Bruegel the Elder, “The fall of the rebel angels”

Secondly, why do I see this book as relevant for one’s general knowledge? Given the fact that in the last decades, traditional religious culture has known an abrupt decline, materialized in a more and more obvious lack of knowledge of Biblical texts and also taking into account the growing interest for the history of arts, this inversion of priorities – arts have gained more popularity in comparison with religion – perfectly justifies the birth of this book.

Thirdly, I believe that the most pleasant way in which one can discover the history of religion is by looking at valuable paintings and by understanding the connections that are represented on canvas.

In a nutshell, I consider this volume a relevant and well-documented artistic and religious journey throughout centuries, putting in light the perceiving of the Biblical discourse by different artists, belonging to different artistic genres and also having an objective representation, based on the words of the Bible.