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MEDIEVAL ART AND CIVILIZATION

La mort le roi Artu :
Fin des aventures ou fin d'un genre

Jacques-Kees Noble-Kooijman*

Abstract: The Death of King Arthur, final part and denouement of Lancelot's novel in prose is certainly a novel of endings as E.Baumgartner recalled in his bilingual edition: end of the kingdom of Logres in the catastrophe of Salesbieres (Salisbury) which brings a climax to this war of succession to Arthur, end of the Arthurian world, heroes of the Round Table and perhaps «twilight of chivalry» announced in 1994 by the collection of studies on this novel, brought together by Jean Dufournet. However, chivalry, this prestigious order that Gornemant de Gohort, initiator and godfather, introduced to the young ingenue Perceval in the Tale of the Grail by Chrétien de Troyes, continues after the death of Arthur and is structured over the following centuries into social caste around its warrior and courtly values, the great vassals supporting the kings of the great powers. If the tournaments disappear, relegated by the rise of new armies, soon to be permanent, the joust, the qualifying duel, survive and will be until the 20th century the reserved parades of nobility as so many witnesses of the aristocratic distinction of a dominant class. What King Arthur announces in the prologue of *La Mort Artu* is "the end of the adventures" : The analysis leads to a distinction between the adventures that are told in the prose novel of the "Lancelot-Grail" and which are only phantasmagorical entertainments without any close link to the heroic quest, and the adventures of the Breton novel which narrated the exploits, the trials, of the heroes of the novel, in these courtly novels initiated by Chrétien de Troyes, and whose Breton material enchanted the seigneurial courts of the half-century which ended, around 1230, in the disaster of Salesbieres and the end of a marvelous myth.

Keywords: Arthurian Literature, Courtly Novels, Chevalry, Adventure, Class distinction.

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I. Les Fins...une deshérence

Tout était annoncé dès le prologue par l'auteur (le pseudo Gautier Map) qui rappelle la fin de la quête du Graal et la mort des héros de cette quête. Pour Arthur toutefois la formule reste ambiguë

li rois Artus fu navrez en la bataille de Salesbieres et (..) il s'en parti de Girflet qui tant li fist compagnie que après li ne fu nus hom qui le veïst vivant. (1.8-10).

Des trois survivants de Salesbieres, Arthur, Lucan et Girflet, Lucan (Lucain le bouteiller) périt étouffé inconsciemment par Arthur qui le serre sur sa poitrine, Arthur part pour Avalon dans la barque des dames, après que Girflet aura jeté au Lac mystérieux Escalibor, l'épée symbole du royaume, non sans tenter par deux fois de ruser pour la conserver, deux coups d'épée dans l'eau que déjoue Arthur jusqu'à la preuve qu'une main a saisi l'épée et l'a brandie par trois fois vers le ciel avant de l'engloutir. Il n'est pas loisible de reprendre ici le débat sur la mort ou la « dormition » en Avalon d'Arthur. Notre texte présente son sépulcre à la Noire Chapelle et l'invention par les moines de Glastonbury en 1191 de leur découverte des restes d'Arthur et de Guenièvre a pesé sur les textes postérieurs. Avec la mort d'Arthur, puis peu de temps après, celle de Guenièvre retirée « sous les dras de religion » tout le monde arthurien s'efface tandis que Lancelot, venu avec ses proches combattre les fils de Mordret parachève la fin de cette guerre « du fils contre le père » et laisse Logres en deshérence. La bataille de Salesbieres, ce « Waterloo de la Table Ronde » comme la qualifiait Jean Frappier dans son article¹, est non seulement une des dernières guerres épiques de la période féodale, elle prend une valeur mythique quand il s'agit d'Arthur. À l'aune de l'art militaire du temps elle est plus littéraire qu'historique : les bataillons (batailles ou échelles) de cavaliers sont seuls évoqués, sans les sergents et les piétons, archers ou lanciers, et tous les efforts reposent sur les chevaliers, faisant de cette guerre de succession un tournoi de héros. De ces héros le conteur indique la vaillance (la prouesse), sans doute, mais il donne aussi leur âge lors du combat décisif entre Lancelot et Gauvain qui plus que la bataille de Salesbieres est au cœur de la catastrophe du monde arthurien que l'amour de Guenièvre et de Lancelot conduit à sa destruction : Arthur a 92 ans, Gauvain 76 et Lancelot 21 ans de moins soit 55 ans au §176 du ms. K qu'a

¹ Frappier, Jean, « *La bataille de Salesbieres* » in *Melanges Lejeune* II p. 1007-1023, Gembloux, Duculot, 1969, réédité dans *La mort le roi Artu*, Parcours critique, p. 43-56, Tome II, p. 1008.

édité E. Baumgartner². Ce combat qui semble ne concerner que Gauvain, vengeur de ses frères tués par Lancelot lors de la délivrance de Guenièvre conduite au bûcher, est au vrai l'affrontement entre Arthur et Lancelot, rivaux directs dans le cœur de la Reine et, de façon figurée, dans la souveraineté suprême. Après un pieux renoncement lors de la Quête du Graal, les amants dans ce roman final sont repris de passion l'un pour l'autre et cette « fole amor », cette passion, conduit aux extrémités d'un affrontement mortel. Guenièvre dans le roman est décrite (selon la tradition du ms. A édité par J. Frappier) comme :

si bele que touz li monz s'en merveilloit car a celui tens qu'ele iert bien en
l'aage de cinquante ans estoit si bele dame que en tout le monde ne trovast l'en
mie sa pareille.

(§ 4, l.19-23 in éd. Frappier)

L'intensité, la violence des assauts lors du combat entre Arthur et Mordret pourrait paraître hors de proportion avec l'âge des combattants : les chevaliers selon les pratiques du temps au XII^e siècle s'affrontent dans les faits à toute force, lance en avant (le mot *glaiive* les désigne, la lance de combat est plus courte et forte que la lance de tournoi) et ensuite à l'épée, coupant les têtes ou fendant les heaumes jusqu'aux épaules, ce qui semble relever de la vigueur d'hommes plus jeunes. Mais il convient de se rappeler les hyperboles des combats épiques ou même les exploits, contemporains de ce texte, d'un Guillaume le Maréchal, Comte de Pembroke « meilleur chevalier du monde », qui a été à 70 ans précepteur et régent du jeune roi Henri, après la mort de Jean Sans Terre, et est toujours combattant réputé. À tout ce qui est dit ou prophétisé du désastre de Salesbieres dans *La Mort Artu* la mémoire de l'évolution de la stature du roi Arthur, progressivement déconsidérée dans l'œuvre de Chrétien de Troyes ne peut que confirmer la fin d'un mythe prestigieux. C'est toutefois le réalisme de ce roman en prose qu'il faut noter pour le distinguer des romans antérieurs, tirés de « contes d'aventures » comme Chrétien de Troyes le précise dans le prologue d' *Erec et Enide*, son premier roman courtois, aux vers 13 et 14. Les contes mythiques ou merveilleux du répertoire celtique, alors en vogue dans les cours, lui ont donné les arguments d'une structure romanesque (la « conjointure ») où l'aventure conserve sa signification : identifiante, qualifiante, glorifiante, lors d'épreuves pour les héros d'une chevalerie que la civilisation courtoise du XII^e siècle magnifie sous les traits des chevaliers d'Arthur et dans les épisodes successifs de leurs exploits, jusqu'à la catastrophe que *la Mort le Roi Artu* dépeint au terme du roman en prose de Lancelot-Graal.

² Baumgartner, Emmanuèle, Medeiros Marie-Thérèse de, *La Mort du Roi Arthur*, édition bilingue, Paris, Champion, 2007.

II. Déclin de la Chevalerie ?

La Mort du roi Arthur ou le crépuscule de la chevalerie, ces études publiées en 1994³ considèrent qu'au XIIIe siècle la chevalerie comme idéal social d'une classe de guerriers représentative de la société féodale amorce un déclin de sa prédominance. L'étude de Claude Lachet : « *Mais où sont les tournois d'antan ?* » *La fin des joutes dans La Mort le roi Artu*, présente dans le recueil cité, en serait une illustration. La réalité est tout autre en cette période du bas moyen âge : les chevaliers, moins assurés de leur supériorité militaire (comme à Bouvines, en 1214, pour les Anglais) prennent conscience de leur distinction (au sens de différenciation sociale tel qu'établi par Pierre Bourdieu). S'ils demeurent les guerriers des royaumes, comme en atteste la traduction de l'*epitoma rei militaris* de Végèce (La Bible de l'art militaire au Moyen Âge), par Jean de Vignay⁴ au début du XIVe siècle (tributaire de la traduction de Jean de Meung en 1284), qui ajoute en sous-titre « *de la chose de chevalerie* » ce qui atteste de la permanence de l'idéal chevaleresque et de sa tradition guerrière, les chevaliers en armure ne sont plus au siècle de la guerre de cent ans la clé des succès dans les combats. À la même époque vers la fin du XIVe siècle la ballade d'Eustache Deschamps « *Qui saroit bien que c'est d'amour servir* »⁵, énonce cependant la constance de cet idéal traditionnel :

En emprenant les haulx faiz et cremus
Des troiz mestiers qui sont d'armes tenus,
Joustes, tournoys et la guerre n'oublie,
Nobles ces poins doivent querir les plus cherir
Armes, amours, dames, chevalerie. (nous soulignons, v. 20-24)

alors même que Christine de Pizan, inspirée par Végèce (ou par Vignay son traducteur), compose un « *Livre des faits d'armes et de chevalerie* ».

Ce n'est pas dire que la chevalerie n'a pas évolué avec la guerre anglaise (de cent ans) mais la dominance des pouvoirs centraux a fait régresser les guerres privées et le service d'ost a sollicité plus fortement les grands vassaux. Les tournois ont perdu leur prépondérance d'entraînement, de Kriegsspiele, mais les joutes, les duels, se perpétuent. Ce qu'a bien dit Erich Auerbach dans *Mimesis*⁶ c'est qu'« il n'existe que deux occupations qui soient dignes d'un chevalier : les faits d'armes et l'amour. ». La réalité nouvelle des

³ *La Mort du Roi Arthur ou le crépuscule de la chevalerie*, études réunies par Jean Dufournet, Paris, Champion, 1994.

⁴ Vignay, Jean de, *Li Livres Flace Vegece de la chose de chevalerie*, vers 1380, édité par Lecna Löfsted, Helsinki, 1982 (Vignay est tributaire de la traduction de Jean de Meung en 1284, selon l'article de Paul Meyer : « *Les anciens traducteurs de Végèce* » in *Romania*, 25, 1896, p. 401-423.

⁵ Bal. DCCLXX (ms. f 840, BNF, fol. 204a) éd. SATF tome IV, Paris 1884, p. 267.

⁶ Auerbach, Erich, *op.cit.*, p. 150.

contextes guerriers que présentent les historiens comme Philippe Contamine montre la complexité des faits militaires : le bataillon de chevaliers en armures n'est plus au XVe siècle qu'un élément des armées que les tactiques, les nouveautés techniques font évoluer : à la déroute des fer-vêtus à Crécy comme à Azincourt, du XIVe et du XVe siècles, les archers, les arbalétriers, ont été la cause comme déjà à Courtray en 1302 une milice bourgeoise avec arcs et arbalètes avait contré la charge des cavaliers. Après la fin de cette guerre de cent ans, Charles VII, bien conseillé, a créé par l'ordonnance du 26 mai 1455 la première armée permanente du royaume dont les chevaliers ne seront plus le cœur mais le bouclier. Ces évolutions de l'art militaire, prenant en cause la nouveauté de l'artillerie dont Jean Bureau est lors de ce règne le grand Maître, modifient le rôle des chevaliers, mais non la chevalerie qui reste fidèle à ses valeurs et à son éthique :

L'éthique féodale, l'idéal du parfait chevalier, a pu jouir d'une très grande et très longue influence car elle possède un grand pouvoir d'attraction : [...] Elle est absolue, supérieure à toutes les contingences terrestres et elle donne à celui qui s'y soumet le sentiment d'appartenir à une communauté d'élus, à un cercle de solidarité distinct de la masse des êtres humains⁷.

C'est bien cette distinction, ce sentiment de caste propre à une classe aristocratique qui explique la permanence de la chevalerie. On en juge par les recommandations du vavasseur (arrière-vassal) Gornemant de Gohort, nommé quatrième parmi les chevaliers de la Table Ronde dans la liste du roman d'*Erec*, au jeune Gallois qu'est Perceval qu'il adoube dans *Le conte du Graal* du même Chrétien de Troyes, vers 1181, en lui chaussant l'épéron pour le faire chevalier :

li preudom dist que donée li a
le plus haute ordene avec l'épée
que Diax ait faite et comandée.
(Erec et Enide, v. 1634-1638)

car cette mention d'un « ordre » de chevalerie (qui n'a pas alors d'existence sinon celle des ordres de moines-soldats, du Temple, des Hospitaliers voire teutoniques) témoigne, aussi bien que la confrérie romanesque de la Table Ronde, de la distinction chevaleresque autant que des devoirs du chevalier. La citation de la ballade de Deschamps rappelle aussi que le service des dames, la courtoisie, y est intégré. On peut mentionner pour preuve, outre les

⁷ Contamine, Philippe, *Guerre, État et Société à la fin du Moyen Âge. Études sur les armées des rois de France 1337-1494*, Paris-La Haye Mouton, 1972.

joutes du XVI^e siècle, « parades amoureuses » disait J. Huizinga⁸, la permanence des duels aristocratiques jusqu'au XX^e siècle.

III. L'Aventure...au fondement des romans courtois

Le début du roman de *la Mort Artu* commence par le récit que fait Bohort de l'issue de la Quête du Graal. Arthur fait coucher par écrit les paroles de Bohort et s'enquiert de la perte de nombreux Chevaliers de la Table Ronde [...] Il fait alors un constat de la situation présente en ces termes :

Et li rois Artus, por ce que il veoit que les **aventures** de Logres estoient ainsit achevees que il n'en avenoit mes se petit non, fist crier .I. tornoiement en la pree de Vincestre por ce que il ne voloit mie que si compaignon lessassent ancore a porter armes. (§ 2, l.35-38)

Ces « aventures » des Chevaliers qui ne se produisent presque plus, déplore le roi, renvoient-elles aux quêtes du Saint-Graal seulement ou à toutes les occasions d'aventure acceptées par les chevaliers ? Un tournoi peut-il être le substitut d'aventures absentes ? Ce serait une réduction assez dérisoire de la mise à l'épreuve de leur vaillance. Les tournois dans le roman, à Vincestre, Tanebor, Kamaloot, Karahes, sont évoqués d'une façon plutôt discrète, à l'exception du premier où Lancelot s'illustre (anonymement), l'essentiel des faits d'armes n'apparaissant que dans la bataille ultime de Salesbieres, qui est d'une tout autre nature. Les joutes, au moins le combat entre Gauvain et Lancelot (unique dans la tradition romanesque où ces deux héros ne sont jamais aux prises), apportent plus de crédit aux qualités des combattants, y compris quand elles sont présentées en affrontements individuels lors de la bataille finale au sein des assauts collectifs entre « batailles » (bataillons). Tous ces faits d'armes témoignent des qualités guerrières du chevalier mais ils ne sont pas pour autant des « aventures » en eux-mêmes si leur nécessité ne s'insère pas dans le cadre d'un épisode de quête, de mission ou de conquête destiné à éprouver la valeur héroïque du chevalier.

Pour préciser la nature, la fonction et l'importance dans la composition des lais et romans courtois des XII^e et XIII^e siècles de l'aventure il convient de rappeler ce que sont ces aventures que connaissent les chevaliers et ce qu'est leur rôle pour juger de la signification à donner au constat de leur effacement par Arthur et comprendre ce à quoi pensait Claude

⁸ Huizinga, Johan, *L'Automne du Moyen Âge*, traduction française d'après l'original de Haarlem 1919 (le titre de 1932, première traduction était « *Déclin du moyen âge* » inexact, Payot l'a édité sous son vrai titre d'« *Automne du moyen âge* », la fin du moyen âge.), Paris, 1964.

Lachet en écrivant : « *Mais où sont les tournois d'antan ? La fin des joutes dans La Mort le roi Artu.* »

Dans le chapitre VI de son ouvrage *Mimesis* Auerbach analyse « les aventures du chevalier courtois. » en ces termes :

Le monde de l'épreuve chevaleresque est un monde de l'aventure ; il ne comporte pas seulement une suite presque ininterrompue d'aventures, il ne comporte surtout rien d'autre que ce qui a trait à l'aventure ; on n'y rencontre rien qui ne soit l'occasion d'une aventure ou son préambule ; c'est un monde spécialement créé ou agencé pour la mise à l'épreuve du chevalier⁹.

En effet remarque-t-il, le chevalier « *sans mission ni fonction, va en quête d'aventures, c'est-à-dire de rencontres périlleuses qui lui permettent de mettre sa vaillance à l'épreuve.* » (p. 143). Cette mise à l'épreuve « *inhérente à l'aventure constitue proprement le sens de la vie chevaleresque idéale.* » (p. 145). Auerbach considère à ce sujet que « Le propos essentiel des romans courtois est de représenter d'un point-de-vue lui-même féodal les mœurs et les idéaux de la chevalerie féodale. »¹⁰ et juge que la mise à l'épreuve du chevalier « errant » en aventure en constitue la pierre de touche.

Que ces aventures réservent au chevalier bien des épreuves à surmonter est certain. Qu'il y ait dans ces épreuves autant d'occasions de prouesse, de vaillance, de maîtrise de soi qu'on puisse y voir un chemin de perfection pour le chevalier, assurément. Il s'agit toutefois d'épreuves de plus grande conséquence que cette confirmation de prouesse et ces épreuves sont **qualifiantes** comme la poursuite du destin de celui qui devient le héros (et qui en exerce la fonction) vient le confirmer : Le nouveau protecteur de la fontaine de Landuc, Yvain, nouvel époux de la Dame, est convaincu par Gauvain de partir pour renouer avec les prouesses des tournois, se détournant ainsi de sa mission de protection du domaine au point que sa Dame le répudie et le fait accuser ouvertement. Il vit alors dans l'égaré comme sauvage dans la forêt où il sauve un lion menacé par un serpent (deux animaux mythiques) et il acquiert par cette épreuve **identifiante** une nouvelle dignité qui lui fait retrouver sa mission véritable : après une épreuve **glorifiante** au château de *la Pire Aventure* qu'il délivre de ses enchantements en libérant les captives de l'île aux Pucelles, il est digne enfin de son statut de héros protecteur à Landuc. Il faut comprendre que cette trame complexe, résumée à grands traits, est bien celle d'un conte merveilleux que le roman de Chrétien intègre dans le monde arthurien de la chevalerie et dont les héros principaux se définissent par leurs aventures qui sont autant d'épreuves inattendues et périlleuses mais à eux destinées spécifiquement et qu'eux seuls peuvent

⁹ Auerbach, Erich, *Mimesis : La représentation de la réalité dans la littérature occidentale*, Paris, Gallimard, collection Tel, 1977. Traduit par C. Heim de l'allemand *MIMESIS, dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländische Literatur*, Francke, Bern, 1946, p. 146.

¹⁰ Auerbach Erich, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

surmonter et non tout autre. Toutefois le lien qui les rattache à la Table Ronde, présentée amplement (v. 1647 à 1746) dès le roman d'*Erec*, œuvre première de Chrétien de Troyes en 1170, comme le centre du royaume d'Arthur et la compagnie des meilleurs chevaliers n'est jamais rompu et cette intégration du conte dans le creuset du roman arthurien magnifie la fiction chevaleresque. C'est précisément à cette illustration d'une chevalerie féodale peuplée de héros de conte que le roman courtois doit sa séduction. Le succès des chefs-d'œuvre de Chrétien, celui de la « matière de Bretagne », associe le merveilleux au réalisme féodal qu'il adapte avec art. Ce succès fut constant jusqu'au seuil de la Renaissance, même si les romans arthuriens tardifs, versifiés ou non, n'ont plus la force convaincante qu'on leur connaît au XIIIe siècle.

L'aventure qu'Auerbach a choisie comme exemple est typique du conte merveilleux et ni Calogrenant ni Yvain n'ont de mission au contraire de Lancelot dans *La Charrette*. Ils n'en sont pas moins des héros (ou faux-héros pour Calogrenant) choisis pour l'épreuve. La multiplication de motifs et d'épisodes apparemment comparables dans les romans du *Lancelot-Graal* fait apparaître au contraire un choix d'ornement ou de divertissement jamais structuré en mission héroïque. C'est sur cette différence capitale de structure des contenus que le sens des aventures repose.

Jehan Bodel, dans le prologue de sa *Chanson des Saisnes* (*Chanson des Saxons*, vers 1200) du genre noble (épique) de la « matière de France » déclarait que les deux autres « matières » de roman sont celle de Bretagne et celle de Rome (le roman breton et le roman antique) : Les succès du roman breton (Chrétien de Troyes est le plus célébré en son temps) lui font déclarer que « *Li conte de Bretagne sont si vain et plaisant* » soit « séduisants » et peut-être « frivoles » s'il pense à la composante de l'amour courtois (voir R. Guiette in **Bibliographie**). Son classement conduit pourtant à limiter au seul divertissement des lecteurs les aventures merveilleuses du roman breton qu'il juge moins noble que les romans épiques ou antiques. Était-ce le signe d'une moindre faveur pour le merveilleux, une quête de réalisme ? On constate en effet que tant dans les « continuations » du *Perceval*, qu'il a pu connaître, que dans les lais et contes bretons, toujours au répertoire des jongleurs itinérants, le ressort de l'aventure merveilleuse telle que Chrétien de Troyes l'avait mise en œuvre paraît perdre de sa force idéologique et sociale quand il est distingué de sa « conjointure » romanesque. Bodel n'est pas au fait de la culture courtoise qui en ce tournant du XIIIe siècle voit progresser le sentiment d'une distinction croissante qui classe à part l'aristocratie.

Notre corpus de romans courtois et de leurs continuations serait-il incapable d'appréhender le réel dans toute son ampleur et sa profondeur comme l'écrit Auerbach qui cherchait à retrouver cette réalité dans la littérature occidentale, et leur objet serait-il le seul divertissement comme paraît le penser Jean Bodel ? On objecterait avec raison que le roman

chevaleresque (arthurien) est au moins révélateur d'une culture aristocratique bien réelle dont se délecte la classe des chevaliers dont Jean Bodel, jongleur bourgeois, ignore la distinction croissante qui la place à part dans la société du temps.

Un passage étonnant du *Chevalier au Lion* de Chrétien de Troyes le confirme : arrivant au château (certes dans un univers de conte merveilleux) de *la Pire Aventure*, Yvain, le héros du roman parti en aventure, découvre un atelier où 300 captives misérables, tissant tout le jour comme des ouvrières alors qu'elles sont des « pucelles » (demoiselles de condition) de l'« île aux pucelles » livrées comme tribut par leur roi au seigneur de *la Pire Aventure*, après son échec contre deux « netuns », diables monstrueux au service du seigneur et qu'Yvain saura vaincre, secondé de son Lion. Yvain à son arrivée se dirige vers la salle de ce seigneur et le découvre dans un verger formant un tableau familial surprenant pour l'époque du roman de Chrétien de Troyes :

Mesire Yvains el vergier entre
Et après lui toute sa route ;
Apuyé voit desuer son coute
Un prodomme qui se gesoit
Sur.I. Drap de soie, et lisoit
Une puchelle devant li
En un rommans, ne sai de cui.
Et pour le rommans escouter
S'i estoit venue acouter
Une dame, et estoit sa mere.
Et li prodons estoit sen pere.
Et se pooient esjoïr
Mout de li veoir et oïr.
Car il n'avoient plus d'enfans.
Ne n'avoit pas .XVII. Ans.
(Chevalier au Lion, v. 5356-5370)

Cette jeune fille, adolescente, sait lire et fait à ses parents la lecture d'un roman du temps, distraction digne de la distinction seigneuriale de la famille. Un tel réalisme familial forme un contraste fort avec la situation d'enchantement du lieu et l'horreur du sort des jeunes captives, mais il apporte la preuve convaincante d'une culture sociale élaborée. C'est ce roman d'Yvain qu'Auerbach a choisi pour développer sa thèse sur l'aventure dans la littérature courtoise, en présentant l'aventure initiale qu'a vécue le chevalier Calogrenant, cousin d'Yvain, à la Fontaine magique de Landuc en forêt de Brocéliande, violemment tempétueuse quand on jette un peu d'eau sur un rocher voisin et gardée par un chevalier roux (sa nature fantastique est ainsi évidente pour le lecteur) qui abat Calogrenant, humilié et honteux. Son récit à la cour d'Arthur introduit ainsi cette aventure. « Nous nous trouvons dans

l'univers magique du conte. »¹¹ précise Auerbach, mais ces motifs de conte sont pour le romancier une matière propre à mettre en scène et illustrer la vie et les conduites chevaleresques, et il lui est loisible de suggérer indirectement telles des réalités de son temps qui ont suscité bien des commentaires comme dans *Le chevalier au lion* cette mention de l'atelier de tissage du château¹². Loin de déconsidérer dans ces romans par le divertissement fantastique qu'offrent ces aventures les valeurs distinctives de la chevalerie, le romancier les promeut et les vante : Prouesse, vaillance, respect de ses semblables, protection des faibles, fidélité et amour courtois, les aventures et leurs épreuves font des chevaliers des héros, comme dans les contes merveilleux. De même qu'Erec dans le premier roman de Chrétien pour éprouver sa prouesse mise en doute par sa femme Enide et l'éprouver elle-même dans sa confiance en lui « *s'en va, sa fame en moinne / Ne set quel part, en aventure* » (v. 2762-2763), Calogrenant s'en allait

querant **aventures**

Armés de toutes armeüres

Si com chevaliers devoit estre

Et trouv[a] un chemin a destre

Parmi une forest espesse.

(Erec, v. 177-180)

Son chemin « a destre » est d'évidence le droit chemin et celui qui couronne son audace. S'il échoue à triompher du Sire de la fontaine merveilleuse, l'épreuve manquée le disqualifiant, son cousin Yvain qui prend six ans plus tard le même chemin parvient à combattre l'enchantement de ce lieu et vainc son défenseur, Esclados le Roux, exerçant sa fonction de héros ainsi identifié et devenant sire de la Fontaine et époux de la Dame de Landuc, princesse-fée de ce conte merveilleux adapté en roman courtois par Chrétien de Troyes qui fait de la conquête amoureuse de la Dame de Landuc, Laudine, un épisode courtois révélateur de son talent, quand le conte initial devait vraisemblablement limiter la succession à la conquête par le héros du domaine et de l'épouse.

Il en va ainsi de toutes ces aventures fantastiques dans tous les romans courtois. Le caractère de ces aventures est qu'elles sont autant d'épreuves qualifiantes pour les héros, tel Calogrenant qui échoue dans la joute et n'est pas reconnu comme le héros, alors qu'accueilli avant l'épreuve par un vassal obligeant du sire de la Fontaine il était d'emblée qualifié d'« errant » car tel est le statut du héros en quête :

¹¹ Auerbach, Erich, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

¹² Kooijman, Jacques-Kees, *La Pire Aventure d'Yvain Aventure, Conjointure, Manufacture dans Le Chevalier au Lion de Chrétien de Troyes*, Anastasis, RCMA, vol. 6-2/2019-4.

Li vavassours [...].ne savoit
Le terme puis que il avoit
Herbergié **chevalier errant**
Qui aventure alast querant
(Yvain, v. 257-260)

D'*Erec* en 1170 à *Perceval* après 1181 et dans tous les romans similaires, les aventures tissent la trame des récits de ce monde chevaleresque. Elles ne sont pas seulement divertissement et l'exemple des qualités du parfait chevalier qu'elles donnent relève bien de l'illustration de la chevalerie idéale à laquelle appartiennent les héros triomphants des contes sous-jacents. Leur succès constant, jusqu'au XIV^e siècle, accompagne la confirmation sociale d'un ordre aristocratique qui se perpétue sous l'ancien régime.

Les aventures dans le roman arthurien sont à associer au motif de quête héroïque que Vladimir Propp a pu formaliser dans l'analyse qu'il a livrée de *La morphologie du conte*¹³, dès 1928. À la différence de la littérature épique qui privilégiait l'appartenance de ses héros tels que Roland à une collectivité d'origine, les romans courtois présentent les prouesses de personnalités héroïques, individus exemplaires dans l'épreuve, secondés par des auxiliaires souvent magiques et dont les triomphes justifient le destin qui les rend illustres et leur donne la place dominante qu'ils occuperont dans le groupe, la société, ethnie ou nation, qui les reconnaît soit comme nouveau chef ou roi successeur, et toujours comme libérateur d'un domaine ou d'un peuple. Le caractère constant des parcours héroïques dans les contes qu'a analysés Propp lui a permis de définir des fonctions que la transposition de contes dans les romans d'aventure conserve structurellement. Les romans courtois du XII^e siècle, ceux de Chrétien de Troyes au meilleur titre, ne sont pas des contes merveilleux, mais ils utilisent la matière des lais et contes oraux de la tradition bretonne (celtique) et le substrat bénéfique de la tradition arthurienne leur donne une résonance de conséquence dans l'illustration de la réalité chevaleresque du temps, que la psychologie amoureuse de la courtoisie venait compléter de son aura. L'unité et la continuité que le mythe arthurien apportait à cet ensemble de récits a contribué à une réception d'emblée favorable et on en juge au XIII^e siècle par le succès des continuations du *Perceval* inachevé par son auteur qui conduisent au monument qu'est le *Roman de Lancelot* et à cette catastrophe admirable de *La mort le roi Artu*.

L'évolution des aventures de ces héros individuels, Erec, Yvain, Lancelot et Perceval, héros triomphants, voire aussi parfois déconfits comme Gauvain, typique du faux-héros tel que défini par Propp¹⁴ et qui échoue dans

¹³ Propp, Vladimir, *Morphologie du conte*, traduit du russe par M. Derrida, Paris, Seuil, 1965.

¹⁴ *Idem et ibidem*.

l'épreuve comme Keu et d'autres moins prestigieux, s'accomplit dans le début du XIIIe siècle, lors de cette quête du Graal qui change leur nature par sa composante religieuse et altère peut-être aussi leur séduction.

La fin des aventures c'est vraisemblablement la fin du temps du conte merveilleux (et la lassitude du goût pour ces contes peut-être) et on jugera significatif que la qualification de « conte » pour ses romans par Chrétien de Troyes ne vaille plus pour le roman en prose de Lancelot. Les aventures du chevalier courtois, telles qu'annoncées dans leurs titres (*Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, *le Chevalier au Lion*, *le Conte du Graal ou Perceval*, *Erec et Enide*) semblent constituer déjà un passé dans les années 1230 malgré leur succès constant dans toute l'Europe (le monde à cette époque) et on peut y voir une évolution du goût comme des valeurs sociales. Comme l'épopée auparavant, le roman courtois séduit moins, la mort des héros à Salesbieres est le signe peut-être de ce vieillissement. Pour le lecteur actuel ce constat n'est qu'indicatif, car il est une autre valeur, stylistique, des romans d'aventure chevaleresques qui relève de l'architecture de ces œuvres. Lorsque Chrétien de Troyes dans le prologue de son premier roman écrit qu'il « *trait d'un conte d'aventure / Une mout bele conjointure* » (*Erec*, v. 13-14), il invite ses lecteurs (auditeurs) à apprécier la composition et le contenu de son roman, bien plus complexe et artistique que les contes originaux qu'il a pu transposer et enrichir. Les conteurs du temps présentaient dans les cours seigneuriales ces courtes légendes du domaine breton (généralement celtique) et fournissaient avec ces contes héroïques ou merveilleux une matière propre à inspirer les romanciers. Une approche de la structure de ces romans dans leur composition, examinée selon les propositions morphologiques de Propp, souligne leurs qualités artistiques: l'adaptation des contenus elliptiques issus des contes initiaux que récitaient les jongleurs et conteurs itinérants à la composition de récits complexes, finement réalistes et psychologiques, relève de l'art du romancier et, si Arthur ou plutôt l'auteur, déplore la fin des aventures c'est pour l'analyste d'aujourd'hui de la moindre création de romans bretons, courtois et merveilleux, qu'il s'agit, la réussite du roman en prose, si propice à la lecture, prenant la relève, nourrissant ses chapitres de la provende des romans courtois.

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Voler pour aimer : l'intelligence émotionnelle dans le fabliau de la « Pucele qui voloit »

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Abstract: In the anonymous fabliau « La Pucele qui voloit », the most intriguing aspect is the affective valence of sexual initiation as declined in the three surviving manuscripts from the XIIIth-XIVth centuries. Depending on the aggravating or accommodating circumstances which turn the intellectual (*clers*) into a scrupleless seducer or a playful husband, and the young virgin into a pregnant victim of abuse or into a pregnant bride, it is possible to interpret their teasing intercourse in the said codices either as rape or as prenuptial *valentinage*. The alternative outcome of deception-reprimand or of merry « amendement » depends on the reading of acts and pacts in affective communication. The modern notion of “emotional intelligence” (Goleman), the distinction between the feeling and expression of affect, as integrated into the paradigm of late-medieval “emotionology” of *amor* (Stearns, Reddy) are useful instruments that we can put to test in this medieval context in which the feminine dream of flying “Iasus” meets Daedalus, God, saint John and saint Amant, only to come down to earth and undergo meta/physical censure.

Keywords : la « Pucele qui voloit », manuscrits des XIII^e-XIV^e siècles, émotionologie antique, Dédale, culture médiévale de l'intelligence émotionnelle, éveil de la conscience de soi / d'autrui, la zone, valentinage et mariage.

Au commencement était la sirène. Aérienne avant d'être aquatique, elle chantait et charmait en oiseau, féeriquement¹. Par un renversement

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¹ Sur le « passage, entre le IV^e et le VII^e siècle, de la Sirène-oiseau à la Sirène-poisson », voir Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx, *La Sirène dans la pensée et dans l'art de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge. Du mythe païen au symbole chrétien*, Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1997 : « matérialisant un fantasme de plus en plus sexualisé, il était logique qu'à la faveur du syncrétisme [...] la morphologie de la Sirène se sexualisât également. En effet les ailes de l'antique Sirène étaient trop évocatrices d'une idée de transcendance ou de sublimation pour symboliser tout à fait adéquatement le péché de la chair et la femme tentatrice, ce qui semble constituer sa fonction principale dans la littérature patristique et précarolingienne », en ligne sur <https://koregos.org>, ici « Conclusion générale ».

comique et un esprit généré de revanche, sa (sur)nature s'articule d'une façon aussi comique que philosophique dans le fabliau anonyme de la vierge ailée, où l'amour humanise et horizontalise. Avec le vol féminin détourné par le conteur anonyme et ses trois émules scribaux, l'anthropologie de l'élévation est subvertie par un retour fracassant au terre-à-terre de l'érotisme². « Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop ! » au Moyen Âge français.

D'après les propositions de datation les plus récentes, les trois manuscrits qui nous conservent le fabliau de *La Pucele qui voloit voler* – Berne, Burgerbibliothek, 354 (B) ; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, français 25545³ (I) et même le vénérable Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, français 1593 (E) – remontent tous au tournant du XIV^e siècle, tels qu'ils nous parviennent sous leur forme définitive de recueils hybrides, surplombant, à l'aide d'un plan d'ensemble, plusieurs strates temporelles.

Désignée, selon l'incipit, comme « la pucelle qui voloit voler » (E 187), comme « la demoisele qui volt voler » (B 43r) ou encore comme « une damoisele [...] / c'onques ne virent oil si bele com ele estoit, / et de biauté grant los avoit » (I, 4v), l'héroïne incarne une réplique inoubliable au mythe d'Icare. En tant que telle, elle jouit d'un succès assuré au fil du bas Moyen Âge, si l'on prend comme point de départ le XIII^e siècle finissant d'après la datation (Jonas) des folios 187-188 dues au scribe « I » du manuscrit E, et comme point d'arrivée l'année 1317 pour le manuscrit I. Non sans mouvance et variance, les trois codex transmettent, pour l'essentiel, un même « fablel » de l'envol narratif, où le rêve des hauteurs se mue en désir de volupté, et le vol en amour fécond, déçu et conclu. Seul le manuscrit de base de l'édition Montaignon-Raynaud – Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, français 1593 – donne une fin heureuse à l'histoire, en mariant les personnages ; le remède à la « desmesure » y est pris sans amertume : « l'aventure fu bele » à la femme comme à l'homme. Les deux autres manuscrits cinglent l'orgueil en abandonnant l'héroïne à une grossesse solitaire, marginale, punitive / éducative ; telle est la leçon qui nous est livrée par l'édition Noomen-Boogaard (d'après Berne, Burgerbibliothek, 354).

Quel que soit le témoin considéré, tout part d'une forme altière d'altérité qu'incarne, à ses risques et périls, une pucelle en pleine affirmation. Indépendante, solitaire, mais soucieuse de justifier sa différence devant ses semblables, elle proclame une indifférence hautaine aux affaires du cœur et du corps, autant qu'une fascination pour le vol. Son rêve n'est autre que la lévitation : vaincre d'elle-même la pesanteur et s'élever vers les nues, si

² Il s'agit, essentiellement, d'un plaisir que les deux protagonistes savourent lors de leur jeu initiatique ; voir Mary Jane Stearns Schenck, *The Fabliaux. Tales of Wit and Deception*, Amsterdam et Philadelphia, Benjamins (Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages, 24), 1987, p. 94.

³ Ce manuscrit est le plus tardif, dans son ensemble ; Michel Zink le date du début du XIV^e siècle : Rutebeuf, *Œuvres complètes*. Texte établi, traduit, annoté et présenté avec variantes par Michel Zink, Paris, Bordas (Classiques Garnier), t. 1, 1989, p. 38.

possible, sans le moindre équipage (ou maître d'équipage). Elle confie volontiers sa lubie à quiconque veut l'entendre, homme ou femme, comme pour lancer un défi aux défenseurs de la zone de confort générale, qui demeure, elle, terrestre, patriarcale et plus particulièrement conjugale.

L'étonnement teint de dédain n'est pas la seule réaction que la locutrice suscite autour d'elle : il existe, parmi ses proches, un mortel assez lointain ou rêveur – assez intelligent émotionnellement, pourrait-on dire aujourd'hui – pour lui tendre la clé d'une traduction physique de ladite aspiration métaphysique. À ses yeux, l'envol ne saurait se préparer que sur terre, grâce aux lois (plutôt descendantes) de la procréation et de l'enracinement social.

En langage moderne, la traduction serait intelligible aussi : pour un humain moyen, prêt à chercher en toute lucidité un dénominateur commun avec une humaine hors du commun, la seule façon réalisable de « voler » est la petite mort. Il s'agit, certes, de s'élancer petit à petit, de façon étroitement concertée, pour éviter d'y succomber. La chute consistant à élire ou stigmatiser la vivante selon son cœur, comme le suggère le conteur, soucieux de marier ou de fustiger ses personnages, à l'occasion (rêvée) de leur initiation.

Certes, le lecteur du premier quart du XXI^e siècle pourrait interpréter le fabliau en clé dénonciatrice, féministe et même pathologique : n'a-t-on pas devant les yeux une belle manipulation de « clerc » perpétrée sur une jouvencelle éduquée entre toutes ? Ou même un « abus narcissique » caractérisé ? Puisque le fait d'avoir raison de l'autre conduit à *résonner* pour deux, voire à jouir, aux dépens d'autrui, d'un jeu de pouvoir menant à une perte de repères déstabilisante, ne pourrait-on pas y détecter le « gaslighting »⁴ le plus éthéré de l'histoire de la littérature ? ...Après la pluie dorée de Jupiter.

Tout dépend du regard que l'on porte sur la pucelle/demoiselle, compte tenu de la tradition manuscrite, éditoriale, exégétique guidant le *Lector in fabula* qui cherche à éclairer de ses (tardives) lumières un monde possible (et sensible) qui bat son plein au XIV^e siècle francophone.

Dédales de la féminité

À toute époque, sous tout régime politique ou émotionnel, il existe des émotions défendues, perçues comme des menaces à désamorcer... pour que la doxa dominante demeure en place. Les « attitudes et standards qu'une société [...] maintient envers les émotions de base et leur expression appropriée » – pour reprendre à notre compte la définition de

⁴Sur cette notion, voir Kelly Oliver, "Gaslighting: Pathologies of Recognition and the colonization of Psychic Space", *Epistemic Injustice and the Philosophy of Recognition*, éd. Paul Giladi, Nicola McMillan, New York, Routledge, 2023, p. 114-137.

l'émotionologie⁵ – sont d'autant plus pertinents qu'ils mobilisent les impératifs sociétaux les plus déterminants pour le monde du fabliau : le *pris* du mariage, le *los* d'une « bonne » famille, la *garde* de la maisonnée et, plus généralement, la verticalité de toutes les hiérarchies affectivement stables qui s'appuient sur ces « bases ».

Lorsqu'une demoiselle (bien née) décide de jouer à Dédale, et de prendre au sérieux son rêve de voler, une véritable anti-émotionologie se met en place, vertigineusement verticale. L'aspiration à changer de milieu relève d'une valorisation de la différence, de l'exotisme et de l'escapisme⁶ à vocation transcendante. Ce qui contrarie le plus est son insolence sans nuage, prête à désinvestir les valeurs matérielles au profit d'un élan ascensionnel qui va contre les lois naturelles, notamment gravitationnelles.

Le narrateur cultive une vision disjonctive : d'une part, il y a les terriens, de l'autre, l'aérienne incomprise, qui rejette les normes de son milieu visant le ressenti aussi bien que l'expression de l'affect, et surtout leur orchestration sociale minimale. Ainsi, au lieu de se laisser attirer au sein d'une dyade, au lieu de souhaiter un ancrage qui lui confère plus de poids humain, en se mariant, par exemple, avec un homme respectable, cette vierge préfère cultiver l'idéal individualiste d'atteindre à l'impondérabilité et de se naturaliser – en solo, au cœur d'une monade à son image – dans le monde céleste. Mieux : le ciel ne lui apparaît pas en simple point d'arrivée ; elle désire le pénétrer, le traverser, le circonscrire à son vol : elle « voloit voler / Volentiers *par mi* l'air lasus »⁷.

Une telle agentivité a de quoi « dénaturer » une femme au seuil de la socialisation conjugale, en faisant éclater le scandale dans le paysage humain d'un fabliau. Aussi le sujet féminin du « vouloir voler » se voit-il aussitôt entourer d'une muraille émotionnelle insurmontable, qui prend la forme hyperbolique de la stupéfaction devant un objet (presque volant non identifié) : « mout des gens [...] mout fort *s'en esbahirent* »⁸. Déjà distincte par sa beauté, elle n'a pas besoin de se faire remarquer par une particularité aussi peu pertinente aux yeux de ses proches médiévaux.

⁵ Voir Peter N. Stearns et Carol Z. Stearns, « Emotionology : Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards », *The American Historical Review*, 90, 4, 1985, p. 813–36, ici p. 813.

⁶ Voir Mary Jane Stearns Schenck, *The Fabliaux : Tales of Wit and Deception*, Amsterdam et Philadelphia, Benjamins (Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages, 24), 1987, p. 2 : « *The purpose of the stories is quite clearly stated : they are a literature of escapism which helps to dissipate grief and unhappiness* ».

⁷ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, Paris, Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1872, ici v. 10-11, p. 208, nos italiques.

⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 13-14, p. 209. L'édition Noomen-Boogaard reprend le texte du manuscrit Berne, Burgerbibliothek, 354 : « A mervelles s'en esbahirent », *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, Assen et Maastricht, Van Gorcum, 1991, v. 12, p. 168.

Une belle prêtre à se dérober au circuit de la procréation pour refaire son être créationnel en mode ornithologique exhibe un art de vivre qui rompt avec les « émotions de base » d'une société traditionnelle, aussi bien qu'avec les « standards et normes » susceptibles de les réguler. « Mout gens » de la communauté patriarcale dominante sont délaissés au profit des hybrides obscurs de la mythologie antique. « Aussi comme *fist* Dedalus », note ironiquement le conteur dans deux manuscrits (sur trois)⁹, comme pour suggérer que la demoiselle prend le mythe à la lettre, et embrasse le credo du dépassement en soi sans s'interroger sur ses chances de survie.

De fait, le modèle livresque que l'héroïne invoque pour motiver son système de repérage¹⁰ – probablement représenté par les *Métamorphoses* d'Ovide¹¹, où les « doctes sirènes » gardent leurs voix et visages de vierges, mais aussi leurs ailes « en guise de rames, pour pouvoir reposer sur les eaux »¹² – est un choix plutôt curieux. En effet, le Dédale ovidien, outre un architecte de génie, est le père du candide Icare, symbole de la chute de haut. L'étrangeté de ce rapprochement est flagrante – notre *pucele* n'est guère mère, et n'a aucune aptitude technique. En plus, le vol, chez ses devanciers célèbres, était vu comme un moyen extrême d'évasion du labyrinthe, à la recherche d'un espace inaccessible à la sombre tyrannie de Minos. La trame proprement dédalique ne se tissait pas tellement autour de la notion d'idéal ; il s'agissait de surmonter le plus grand obstacle humain jamais créé, le plus énigmatique et le plus meurtrier – la prison du Minotaure, truffée de pièges. Or, c'était au créateur de cet obstacle lui-même d'inventer une issue face à la « mer fermée »¹³, qui ne pouvait être que verticale... et bouchée, finalement, d'une mort sur mesure. Le mythe le plus incitant, peut-être, est le dépassement humain des lois de l'univers – « naturam novat » – salué comme tel par les témoins, qui y voient la manifestation avérée d'un pouvoir foudroyant.

⁹ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 12, p. 208. Dédale manque de l'édition Noomen-Boogaard, qui suit le manuscrit de Berne sur ce point, supprimant tout encadrement bio-culturel de l'acte de voler, comme les deux autres manuscrits.

¹⁰ « C'est donc une jeune fille qui a trop lu de romans antiques, et qui en a gardé la tête un peu dérangée », Per Nykrog, *Les Fabliaux : Etude d'histoire littéraire et de stylistique médiévale*, Genève, Droz, 1973, p. 78.

¹¹ En effet, « les *Métamorphoses* jouissaient d'une popularité incontestable [...] encore au XIII^e siècle, époque à laquelle les allusions à l'œuvre d'Ovide dans le *Roman de la Rose* de Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun ne manquent pas », Sarah-Jane Murray, « Du désespoir à l'espoir : le dépassement de la tragédie dans l'*Ovide moralisé* », *Ovide métamorphosé. Les lecteurs médiévaux d'Ovide*, éd. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Laurence Mathey-Maille et Michelle Szkilnik, Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, ici p. 182.

¹² Ovide, *Les Métamorphoses*, Livre V, 555-9, trad. et notes de Anne-Marie Boxus et Jacques Poucet, Bruxelles, 2006, Bibliotheca Classica Selecta - UCL en ligne sur <https://bcs.fltr.ucl.ac.be/>.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Livre VIII, 183-235.

L'*esbahissement* général est dans le fabliau une émotion de l'ordre du choc civilisationnel : de quel labyrinthe individuel la vierge veut-elle s'évader ? Avec quelles chances ? Du côté de la rédaction première du texte, nous sommes au XIII^e siècle, époque où la littérature émotionnelle partagée par la communauté cléricale (autant dire « les intellectuels au Moyen Âge », pour reprendre le titre du livre-phare de Jacques Le Goff – Seuil, 1957) fait de « la maison de Dédale » une métaphore codée. Dans le contexte des écrits de saint Bonaventure, elle renvoie aux sciences spéculatives par opposition aux Saintes Écritures, au risque d'enfermement et d'aveuglement que comportent en général les croyances profanes par rapport au savoir-vivre (et savoir-sentir) chrétien¹⁴. Dans le cadre concret le plus amplement partagé des cathédrales, ce sont les « labyrinthes d'église » qui opèrent une « captation, à des fins chrétiennes, d'un symbole païen » dominé par « Dédale père de l'architecture »¹⁵.

Nul enfermement scientifique n'est prévu néanmoins pour notre héroïne ; le lecteur remarque, au contraire, la grande liberté dont la *damoisele* dispose : elle se meut nonchalamment dans un espace où aucune instance sociale ne vient la censurer, dans sa chambre où un lit est prêt-à-survoler avec qui elle voudra, aussi pesamment et intimement qu'elle l'entendra. Par ailleurs, le désir de (con)voler ne suscite aucun travail de laboratoire ; son alcôve ne devient guère un atelier peuplé d'automates, comme dans les romans contemporains du cheval volant – le *Cléomadès* d'Adenet, le *Méliacin* de Girart d'Amiens, ou un entre-deux à portée de main (comme BNF fr. 1455 et son pendant Bruxelles, BR, IV-319). En effet, « l'extraordinaire mécanique de la machine volante » domine le bas Moyen Âge grâce aux « deux romanciers [qui] ont banalisé le motif merveilleux du cheval enchanté pour l'intégrer dans une sorte d'imaginaire technologique »¹⁶. Tout ce qui subsiste peut-être dans notre fabliau de cette « merveille rationalisée » est « l'habileté – l'engin – du concepteur et constructeur (*engigneor*) de la machine », forme littéraire du « génie humain du XIII^e siècle »¹⁷ et au-delà.

L'image d'une fille à marier enlevée au vol rappelle, en outre, le sort de Clarmondine et Célinde, qui suivent leurs compagnons dans les airs, à cheval. Plus libre que les héroïnes de roman, la pucelle anonyme du fabliau peut bien refuser, sans la moindre pression d'une autorité tutélaire, toute

¹⁴ Voir Christian Trottman, *Théologie et noétique au XIII^e siècle : à la recherche d'un statut*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1999, p. 87.

¹⁵ André Peyronie, « Le Mythe de Thésée pendant le Moyen Âge latin (500-1150) », *Médiévales*, 32, 1997. *Voix et signes. Nouvelles musiques du XIII^e au XV^e siècle*, dir. Olivier Mattéoni, p. 119-133, ici p. 132.

¹⁶ Patrice Uhl, « Le Cheval volant dans *Cléomadès* et *Méliacin*. De la merveille orientale au prodige mécanique », in Françoise Sylvos (dir.), *Poétiques du voyage aérien dans la littérature*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2015, p. 19-37, ici p. 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

demande en mariage, pour préparer à son tour la grande chevauchée aérienne. Un peu comme Ovide énumère les types humains pour lesquels l'envol est une impossibilité de nature – pêcheur, berger, laboureur¹⁸ – le *fableor* se plaît à noter tous les prétendants rejetés, ou du moins tous les moules sociaux où ils se coulent : « riches clers », « escuiers », « borgois », « chevaliers »¹⁹. Ces êtres sans face n'arrivent à susciter aucun frémissement d'aile, aucun état d'âme chez la belle désirée. Imperturbable dans sa sphère comme l'Idée de Beauté, elle est hors d'atteinte face aux tentations les plus communes : ni l'opportunisme pécuniaire, ni l'alliance chevaleresque, ni le jeu rhétorique n'attire celle qui ne manque de rien, en son univers autarcique. Apparemment intangible, entière, elle semble illustrer la définition thomiste du beau, qui exige « l'intégrité de l'objet », mais aussi la *claritas*, l'éclat, la lumière trahissant la présence d'une réalité supérieure à une réalité inférieure »²⁰. Elle a, toutefois, un talon d'Achille, des plus originaux – l'arrivisme céleste.

C'est la gratuité superbe d'un tel élan qui sidère les adeptes du pragmatisme, incapables de la comprendre ou de l'excuser, mais parfaitement aptes à patienter autant qu'il le faut pour l'emporter au grand pari de la vie. Aucune empathie avec elle n'est possible, même si le ciel – paradis, purgatoire – est une destination assez familière à tout fidèle, quelque tièdement qu'il effleure la croyance. Personne, dans son entourage, ne conçoit cette verticalité comme inébranlable ; les « neurones miroirs »²¹ des semblables ne captent rien de solide, durable ou fiable chez la demoiselle, dont ladite ivresse des hauteurs, fût-elle angélique, virginale, idéatique, ne révèle aucun potentiel mimétique.

Le temps des grands engouements platoniciens serait-il dépassé ?... Peut-être faut-il remonter en deçà de l'Idée, vers la complémentarité ontologique promise dans les réécritures médiévales du *Banquet*. En effet, la quête de sa moitié perdue, contée à la lumière de l'ironie socratique, n'est pas inconnue aux penseurs du XIII^e siècle, encore moins aux traducteurs-remanieurs francophones du XIV^e. Des *Saturnalia* riches en Vestales s'apprêtent, à la suite de Macrobe, suivie d'une *Consolation de Philosophie*

¹⁸ Ovide, *Les Métamorphoses*, *op. cit.*, Livre VIII, 217-220.

¹⁹ Les mêmes classes sociales sont évoquées dans l'édition Noomen-Boogaard, v. 5-6, p. 168. Significativement, les trois manuscrits sont très proches sur ce point.

²⁰ Jean-Michel Counet, « La Beauté comme microcosme dans la pensée antico-médiévale ». Conférence de clôture du XXXVI^{ème} Congrès de l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de langue française, Iași (Roumanie), 23-27 août 2016, in *Le Beau. Actes du XXXVI^e Congrès de l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française (A.S.P.L.F.)*, éd. Petru Bejan et Daniel Schulthess, Iași, Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2018, p. 100-124, ici p. 104, n. 4.

²¹ Sur les neurones miroirs et leur fonction esthétique et morale, voir, par exemple, les suggestions de Jean-Pierre Changeux, *Du vrai, du bon, du bien : une nouvelle approche neuronale*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2008, p. 138 et de Anne-Claude Berthoud, « Langage et morale entre nature et culture », *Morale et évolution biologique entre déterminisme et liberté*, Lausanne, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2007, p. 216.

(Livre II.XVI) émulée par Jean de Meun vers 1300, ravivée à l'automne du Moyen Âge par « une quinzaine de nouveaux commentaires [...] et [des] dizaines de manuscrits dans sa, – ou plutôt ses – versions françaises, très inspirées des gloses que Guillaume de Conches avait rédigées en latin »²². Philosophiquement parlant, le lien et l'ordonnement universels qu'assure l'Amour (*Eros* néoplatonicien) laisse sa chance à la polarité féminine – pourvu qu'elle travaille d'intelligence avec son complément masculin : « Que les semences dans leur lutte / Observent un pacte éternel [...] / Ce qui lie cet ordre des choses / Et régit la mer et les terres, / Commandant au ciel, c'est l'amour. »²³

Le conteur, à ce stade préparatoire du « pacte éternel », souligne une rupture de communication qui risque justement de chambouler l'Ordre : les hommes et la femme à marier s'agrippent chacun à son propre latin, sans effort traductif. L'ombre de la tour de Babel plane sur la chaîne brisée. Quand les prétendants accordent à la jeune têtue *le los* de beauté²⁴, ils s'attendent au moins à la flatter ou à lui faire plaisir, mais leur acte, sous ses formes persuasives les plus variées, tombe bel et bien à plat. Notre Vestale caricaturale fait la sourde oreille (et le sourd cœur) à tous ces *sires* potentiels, non sans tenter de leur faire part du rêve de seigneurie qui devient son unique sujet de conversation – *lasus* oblige – comme s'il s'agissait d'un élément cohésif infaillible, censé créer un accord inter-genré immédiat sous le signe (ambigu) de Dédale. Soit on assiste à un marathon de naïveté, soit au spectacle d'une « maîtrise de soi » nourrie d'« ardeur et persévérance », impulsée par une « faculté de s'inciter soi-même » : autrement dit – avec Daniel Goleman – à une « intelligence émotionnelle »²⁵ bien armée, déjà digne de ce nom, au XIII^e siècle français. Le fabliau débute, en effet, avec le volet intra-personnel de cet entendement propice, selon nos canons tard-venus, à l'horizon d'entente avec les prochains. La connaissance de soi, en principe, augure bien de la communication avec un autre.

...Pour l'instant, la demoiselle du fabliau éprouve bien un désir – qu'elle s'attribue à haute voix, courageusement ou capricieusement – et, en

²² Isabelle Bétemps et al. (éds.), *La Consolation de la Philosophie de Boèce*, Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2004, ici chap. « Boèce et La Consolation de la Philosophie au Moyen Âge », §11, DOI : 10.4000/books.purh.6641.

²³ Boèce, *La Consolation de Philosophie*, éd. bilingue, trad. par Alain Galonnier et Jean-Louis Charlet, Louvain-La-Neuve, Peeters, 2022, Livre II, VIII, v. 3-4, p. 270.

²⁴ Voir *De la pucelle qui voloît voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 4, p. 208.

²⁵ Voir Daniel Goleman, *L'Intelligence émotionnelle : Accepter ses émotions pour développer une intelligence nouvelle*, trad. Thierry Piélat, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1997, ici p. 10. Pour un bilan récent sur le champ théorique de l'intelligence émotionnelle, avec une spécification pour l'espace francophone, voir Christophe Haag, Lisa Bellinghausen & Mariya Jilinskaya-Pandey, « QEP: An Ability Measure of Emotional Intelligence for Managers in a French Cultural Environment », *Current Psychology*, 42, 2023, p. 4080–4102.

puisant aux ressources culturelles de sa langue, elle trouve les mots et idées pour le formuler à l'intention d'un alter-ego potentiellement capable de lui répondre, se situant entre le *non* réservé aux maris de circonstance et le *oui* auto-adressé. Un temps, personne n'aspire ni à un idiome émotionnel commun, ni aux dédales de l'ingénierie aéronautique : si labyrinthe il y a, c'est sur l'arène du langage affectif qu'il se déploie, au gré de ces paroles sans ouïe, qui emmurent l'être plus que la technique du mur de silence ou *stonewalling*²⁶. Le canal est simplement mis en sourdine, à chaque fois ; qu'il s'agisse d'intimidation de la part des agents dominants, il n'est pas moins assuré que la dominée refuse de se laisser faire, ou parfaire, selon des codes de perfection étrangers à sa spontanéité. Les chemins battus ne lui parlent pas plus que le flottement existentiel ne saurait parler aux célibataires mûrs pour l'engagement.

L'exception, longtemps espérée, finit par advenir : le *clers* intrépide accepte d'occuper la place, vacante encore, de Dédale. Il s'approprie les termes de la métaphore et joue le jeu d'y adhérer de façon intuitive et passive. Comme le héros de l'Antiquité, il comprend l'enjeu et se voue à la cause sans contredit, dans une attitude d'asservissement qui lui permet de mettre son corps au service de la grande cause. Reconnu dès lors comme désirable, voire admirable, le vol humain ne peut réussir que s'il est outillé ici-bas, n'étant point une grâce de *lasus*.

Griffe ou greffe aviaire

Le modèle médiéval recycle le référent antique, en faisant de l'oiseau le seul modèle « fiable » de l'être volant. Le manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale va jusqu'à remplacer Dédale par « uns oisiaus ou plus »²⁷. Or, les organes les plus saillants du volatile sont le bec, la queue et les ailes, jugés indispensables au vol à émuler. Une animalisation encadrée de la femme s'ensuit : pour se mouvoir autrement, il faut devenir l'autre, dans des conditions contrôlées, domestiquées ; pour voler, il faut *se faire* oiseau de par l'homme, en se procurant les atouts ou atours de l'autre.

Deux manuscrits – Berne, Burgerbibliothek, 354 (du XIII^e siècle) et Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, français 25545 (du XIV^e) – mettent en scène une tentative théâtrale de métamorphose : mû par l'idée, un « damoisiaus » tente de lui appliquer (parfois aidé par d'autres bénévoles masculins !) la recette aviaire du vol, à force de « cire et de pennes d'oisiaus »²⁸. Ces ailes

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

²⁷ Voir les *Notes du quatrième volume*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 325.

²⁸ Voir la leçon du manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale, cité *ibid.*, p. 326. Dans l'édition Noomen-Boogaard, le commentaire suivant accompagne cet ajout d'ailes : « sa conception du rôle du clerc est un peu différente : outre la queue [...] celui-ci

d'une autre espèce (peut-être sauvage !) sont attachées « as braz et as costez »²⁹, sans autre tentative d'œuvrer à la chirurgie inter-espèces : elles écrivent sur la peau mouvante de ce corps médiéval le bon vieux corpus de *Daedalus* revisité, entre autres, par Rémigius d'Auxerre favorable à « Dédale, c'est-à-dire [à] tout homme inventif »³⁰.

Face à ces tentatives aussi touchantes qu'hilarantes d'arriver à bon port en s'aidant de toutes les énergies de l'esprit, l'initiative du héros emprunte au génie architectural de son devancier, plutôt qu'à l'enthousiasme de son jeune rejeton. Le beau labeur d'animalisation ne focalise plus les ailes, mais se concentre plutôt sur les extrémités oro-génitales, comme si le vol n'avait pas tant besoin de l'équilibre latéral, que de l'axe devant-drière³¹. Pour interpréter ce paradoxe apparent, il suffit de prêter attention à la communication émotionnelle qui se met en place entre les deux inconnus prêts à lier connaissance. En effet, la demoiselle se dit désireuse d'arriver « par mi lasus », ce qui implique des mouvements de montée et d'avancée dans l'espace céleste. Elle fantasme une pénétration de la frontière spatiale sublunaire, mais aussi (pourrait-on spéculer avec Siger de Brabant) un élargissement de la libre volonté entre appétit sensitif et raison³², par l'application d'une cire qui tienne.

Lorsque le huis est clos, une amnésie prévisible frappe les protagonistes : bien qu'ils aient convenu de s'occuper de tous les ressorts du vol, ils s'accordent tacitement à omettre l'implantation proprement dite des ailes, pour consacrer tous leurs efforts au bec et à la queue. Seul le manuscrit

construira un bec et, contrairement à la leçon de BE [B - manuscrit 354 de la Burgerbibliothek de Berne ; E - manuscrit français 1593 de la Bibliothèque Nationale], des ailes [...]. La structure du récit est affaiblie par l'addition de ce dernier détail : apparemment on oublie que la demoiselle est déjà pourvue d'ailes, fournies par un autre jeune homme. Par ailleurs, le remaniement n'est pas très réussi [...], *Notes et éclaircissements*, dans *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., p. 337.

²⁹ Voir la leçon du manuscrit 354 de la Bibliothèque de Berne, « De la Pucelle qui voloit voler », *Notes du quatrième volume*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 325.

³⁰ Voir Michèle Dancourt, *Dédale et Icare*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2002, Chapitre II, « Les transformations du mythe, du Moyen Âge au siècle des utopies », § 1, DOI : 10.4000/books.editions-cnrs.4917.

³¹ Sur cette anthropologie du derrière au Moyen Âge finissant, voir Yasmina Foehr-Janssens, « Pour une littérature du derrière: licence du corps féminin et stratégie du sens dans les trois premiers récits des Cent nouvelles nouvelles », *"Riens ne m'est seur que la chose incertaine": études sur l'art d'écrire au Moyen Âge offertes à Eric Hicks par ses élèves, collègues, amies et amis*, éd. Jean-Claude Mühlethaler, Denis Billotte et al., Genève, Slatkine (Travaux des universités suisses, 9), 2001, p. 277-291.

³² Voir Olivier Boulnois, « Philosophie médiévale et métaphysique », *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), Section des sciences religieuses*, 132, 2025, 527-546, ici § 4, « Siger de Brabant : une solution compatibiliste », en ligne sur <https://journals.openedition.org/asr/5752#tocfrom2n5>.

français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale répare cet oubli, en faisant du prélude un véritable régal haptonomique : « Et puis la courut accoler / Pour li faire plus tost voler ; / Et l'ambrassa estroitement / Et restraingni faitissement [...] il dist les eles li cousoit »³³. Le vol est ici envisagé comme un apogée de la sensation tactile (et gustative), suscité par l'extrême resserrement du territoire féminin. Pour jaillir au-delà de ses contours, il faut être mis(s) à l'étroit, suggère le rédacteur de cette version, qui n'est pas uniquement attentif à la mécanique des corps – *accoler, embrasser, restraindre* – mais aussi à l'orchestration des cordes émotionnelles. En effet, l'homme n'est pas, dans cette version, un simple envahisseur de la terre interdite, prêt à la faire implorer ; le narrateur le souligne opportunément : « Mout se panne de plaire a li / Pour avoir le solas de li »³⁴. Ainsi, il y aurait un travail dans le champ psychosomatique de la part de cet homme qui vise, plus que le vol, l'initiation de la vierge au *plaire*, avec l'avantage bien à soi d'un *solas* ailé.

Un certain altruisme, qui suppose l'éveil à l'autre, et la dépendance sur autrui pour son propre plaisir, inspire ce *damoiseau* qui semble entrer dans la « zone » – exceller dans son activité, au point que le frémissement des ailes³⁵ se met en place comme par miracle, sans effort conscient – tandis que le clerc s'oublie dans le processus d'érotisation de la *pucele*.

Les athlètes appellent cet état de grâce la « zone » – c'est le moment où l'excellence ne demande plus d'effort, où les spectateurs et les concurrents s'effacent dans le bonheur de l'instant [...]. C'est le pur plaisir de l'acte qui les motive. [...] Dans l'état de fluidité, l'individu ne pense plus à lui-même [...]. L'individu fluide est si absorbé par ce qu'il fait qu'il perd entièrement conscience de lui-même et oublie les petits tracas de la vie quotidienne³⁶.

La peine que se donne l'athlète de fabliau se voit sublimer, tandis que le but convenu, *pour li faire plus tost voler*, glisse du sens physique vers l'expérience psychique d'un ressenti dont la vivacité et l'intensité réverbèrent, idéalement, sur lui-même. L'idée de cibler ainsi, sous le signe de l'urgence jouissive, une femme inexpérimentée (qui vient de rejeter une foule

33 Voir les *Notes et variantes du IV^e volume*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 327.

34 *Loc. cit.*

35 Sur ce mythème platonicien et ses réécritures à l'aube du Moyen Âge latin, notamment chez Boèce, *La Consolation de Philosophie*, Livre IV, voir Paul-Augustin Deproost, « Les Ailes de l'âme, un avatar philosophique du vol d'Icare dans un poème de Boèce (Boeth., Cons. IV metr. 1) », *Transports : mélanges offerts à Joël Thomas*, (Collection Études), éd. Mireille Courrént et al., Perpignan, Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pupvd.10308>. Le chercheur y voit « une réplique heureuse au vol avorté d'Icare dans les versions ovidiennes de la légende », § 2.

36 Daniel Goleman, *L'Intelligence émotionnelle. Comment transformer ses émotions en intelligence*, tome I, *op. cit.*, p. 121-122.

d'hommes) est un vrai pari, sinon un acte de bravoure. Il court, avec optimisme, le risque d'affronter une cascade d'émotions négatives.

La tradition commune du fabliau recoud ici le fil narratif avec plus de vitesse que de tendresse ; les deux autres manuscrits déchirent les ailes (*eles*) au prélude et passent à des manœuvres plus conséquentes. L'alibi étant pris sans réserve – puisque la femme veut bien *croire* que le vol se prépare dans une chambre, entre terriens – le lit devient aussitôt l'arène d'un agencement-affrontement érotique.

Pour le lecteur de nos jours, l'assentiment de la pucelle ne correspond pas à ce *oui* qui ferait la différence entre amour et viol ; d'autant plus que la belle semble enfantine dans son approche, aussi bien qu'infantile. L'initiation risque donc d'être interprétée – dans l'optique moderne – en tant que séduction d'une mineure, débutant sous les auspices d'un attentat à sa pudeur.

L'inégalité des rapports est donnée non seulement par le fait que l'homme est plus expérimenté que la femme ; elle correspond également à ce renforcement d'autorité donné par l'idéologie dominante sur la légitimité de deux formes de désir. Ainsi, il semble tout à fait recommandable qu'un homme (tonsuré) désire une belle jouvencelle, demandée en mariage par des hommes de toute classe ; en revanche, il est déconseillé à une jeune fille de désirer un mode de locomotion réservé aux oiseaux – ou le mode idéatique qui lui correspond, sur le plan platonicien ou chrétien.

Faire plaisir à l'autre – en répondant, d'une façon ou autre, à ses propres attentes hédoniques – apparaît, de même, comme une visée plus valorisante que de s'offrir un plaisir à soi-même, sans aucun profit socialement partageable. L'homme a Nature de son côté, alors que la femme tend à emprunter une voie que le narrateur qualifie comme étant « contre nature »³⁷.

Une véritable joute s'engage : est-ce Nature ou Contre-Nature qui l'emportera ? Le spectacle promet d'être émotionnellement électrisant, réservé d'ailleurs à un public voyeur, qui a le privilège de franchir le seuil de cette chambre fermée.

Les champions des deux nobles causes – fécondité corporelle et sublimation spirituelle – semblent d'abord s'entendre sur l'essentiel et collaborer de près dans la gestion du territoire, à tel point que l'on pourrait se demander, à ce moment du récit, qui tient vraiment la clé de la chambre et de l'accès privilégié à l'intimité. Le partage des biens et des buts est signalé par deux verbes au pluriel, placés stratégiquement à la rime : « Atant en une chambre *entrent*, / Et l'uis seur eus mout bien *fremèrent* »³⁸.

³⁷ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 94, p. 211.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 31-32, p. 209.

Seulement, le suspense est vite suspendu : la pucelle n'oppose aucune résistance au maniement tout physique de son hôte, elle se laisse aussitôt réduire au statut d'objet par « li clers » qui « en .I. lit *la* coucha, / Plus de .XXX. foiz *la* baisa »³⁹. S'il n'y a pas de violation territoriale, il y a tout de même une forme de violence qui consiste à mettre l'autre à l'horizontale / diagonale et à lui infliger des cours d'aéronautique, en faisant valoir son statut d'initiateur en architectonique aviaire.

Or, traiter une enfant en appareil de vol conduit *de facto* au viol. « Se volez voler »⁴⁰, dit l'homme, il faut croire ceci. Un *credo*⁴¹ est exigé, et il aboutit à un pacte de confiance unilatéral : « Je creant bien cestes parole », répond la pucelle, « et si le croi »⁴². Mais cette adhésion pressée ne suppose pas d'engagement lucide, car ce sont des arguments traîtreusement esthétiques qui jouent, aux dépens d'une collaboration rationnellement fondée : « Se vos comandez encor hui, / Vos quit je fere *plus biau* bec / Et *mieus assis* que nule espec » ; « *Plus bele* queue vos ferai / Que nus paons »⁴³. La demoiselle, déjà belle, désire donc non seulement un nouveau champ d'expérience (*lasus*), mais aussi une beauté autre, phallique (comme le suggère l'*espec* / épieu), lourdement animale (comme le suppose le profil du paon, évoqué aussi). Le lecteur se prépare à assister à une scène de greffe cosmétique : le vol tourne à la fixation de compléments de beauté.

Pour que l'opération soit crédible, cependant, l'excès est présenté comme une forme de nécessité, et les trente « baisers » sont ramenés à une procédure standard, censée exorciser les craintes d'un contact viril et pressant. « Fet on donc bec en tel maniere ? / Oïl »⁴⁴. Ainsi, la jeune femme apprend que le bec ne pousse pas immédiatement, mais exige des efforts patients et itératifs – *on fait* – efficaces seulement dans la mesure où ils semblent superflus. La *maniere* transforme la manipulation d'un corps sur un lit en un vecteur émotionnel poussant l'élève vers le maître par la foi d'apprendre. Il faut subir des attentions focalisées sur des organes précis afin de voir ces organes s'accorder à la musique des hauteurs, enseigne l'homme.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, v. 33-34, p. 209. L'édition Noomen-Boogaard suit de près cette version, qui est commune aux deux manuscrits de base.

⁴⁰ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 18, p. 208.

⁴¹ Ce *credo* n'est pas représenté dans l'édition Noomen-Boogaard, où le verbe *croire* est remplacé par *otroier*. L'entente est scellée dans les deux cas, mais dans la version du manuscrit de Berne, elle n'est plus une question d'adhésion croyante et de persuasion aboutie. Nous suivons, sur ce point encore, le texte de l'édition Montaiglon-Raynaud (et le manuscrit français 1593 de la Bibliothèque Nationale).

⁴² *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 22-23, p. 209.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, v. 26-30, p. 209.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 37-38, p. 209.

Subir, c'est espérer ; souffrir une invasion, c'est pressentir une évasion. De l'étroit au large il n'y a qu'un pas ; et ce pas s'accomplit en position verticalement connotée, sinon ascendante.

Pour commencer, l'agissement masculin vise l'apaisement et se borne à ce *oïl* monosyllabique. Son succès (ou *bonheur*, s'agissant d'un acte de langage) dépend, justement, du laconisme et de l'assurance qui le sous-tendent.

Il est virilement crédible de *faire* le bec ou la queue plutôt que de *parler* (ou rêver), après le premier moment d'excès enseigné. Et il est féminin de s'inquiéter, de temps en temps, et de relancer, pour vaincre la crainte, l'entretien confirmatif. L'ethos appuyant la faculté humaine de *convoler* est codifié de façon genrée. Qui plus est, le *oui* jadis opiniâtrement refusé par la pucelle devient un vocable mâle, comme l'accès à la sécurité cognitive.

Pacte et acte : le vol

Sans entrer dans les détails techniques, le chirurgien commence donc son implantation de greffe autoritairement, explicitement, comme s'il faisait un sort (ou un avenir) à l'*engin* prévu pour le vol : « tornez vos par derrière, / Car la queue vos en *ferai*. »⁴⁵. Tout s'enchaîne didactiquement. Le narrateur ne prend en compte ni la question de l'érection, ni celle de la préparation émotionnelle de l'homme, comme s'il était naturel pour un initiateur au *vol* de s'exciter promptement, quel que soit le degré de disponibilité de son initiée.

Quant à la demoiselle, elle exprime son consentement au futur, avec une application digne d'Héloïse : « je ferai / Tot ce que vos m'enseignerez »⁴⁶. L'échange a la vertu d'uniformiser en quelque sorte les idiomes féminin et masculin, en les ramenant au dénominateur commun du *faire*. Chacun s'engage à suivre l'autre : le clerc, le commandement de la pucelle, la pucelle, l'enseignement du clerc. La possibilité du viol est à ce point – formellement du moins – évincée par ces accordailles bien articulées, encore qu'elles se projettent dans un avenir indéfini.

Qui plus est, la jeune apprentie défie son maître, lui rappelant qu'elle attend de sa part une réussite totale, et immédiate : « Mès gardez que vos ne foulliez »⁴⁷. Dès qu'elle « se met a recoillons »⁴⁸ ou « a est(o)upons »⁴⁹, son

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 38-39, p. 209. Tous les manuscrits sont d'accord sur la nécessité de cette position.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 40-41, p. 209.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 42, p. 209.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 43, p. 209.

⁴⁹ C'est ainsi qu'on décrit le positionnement de la demoiselle dans l'édition Noomen-Boogaard, qui est, sur ce point, fidèle à deux des trois manuscrits ; voir *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., v. 47, p. 169. L'expression « a est(o)upons » traduit tout simplement l'accroupissement, sans connotation paillardes adaptée à la circonstance ; voir Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de*

courage devant l'inconnu côtoie l'insolence. Impudique par esprit d'urgence, ambitieuse et ciblée, elle adopte un ton impératif, avant même que l'opération (trans-)sexuelle ne commence. Elle veut une queue qui tienne, une base d'extase tout à elle, pour son envolée d'oiseau, et elle ne s'étonne pas le moins du monde que l'homme possède cette graine du vol, malgré son apparence plutôt anthropique.

L'évidence est là : il y a disjonction entre le dire et l'avoir (propre au faire) ; cependant, il est impossible d'établir si l'héroïne voit ou non l'attribut distinctif de l'être-oiseau, si elle désire la greffe ornithologique ou humaine, à la seule condition qu'elle soit virile. Il est clair que son rejet répété des prétendants ne la dispose pas, en principe, à accueillir l'altérité mâle en tant que telle.

Une chose est sûre : du côté de l'homme, faillir, c'est rompre le pacte aérospatial, et tromper la confiance transportée de la jeune aspirante. Lorsque l'homme « li embat jusqu'as coillons / Le vit ou con sanz contredit »⁵⁰, l'opération est apparemment dépourvue de toute émotion parasite, comme si les corps s'étaient réifiés. Le narrateur souligne d'emblée le succès de la jonction mécanique, pour exorciser deux angoisses latentes : l'impuissance (*li embat jusqu'as coillons / Le vit*) et le viol (*ou con sanz contredit*). Selon ses normes de virilité, l'homme est donc « à la hauteur » (ou à la profondeur).

Et la femme ?

On ne saurait trop le dire : en termes médiévaux, bientôt proférés par le narrateur de chaque version, elle peut être considérée comme la victime d'un serment en blanc, puisqu'elle ne sait pas, en principe, à quoi elle s'engage. Or, le serment en blanc n'est pas uniquement un motif fictionnel⁵¹ : il est mentionné, par exemple, sous forme de « don mutuel », dans les coutumes de Paris, « art. 226 1) que la grâce soit égale autant à l'un qu'à l'autre 2) qu'elle soit faite les deux étant en bon propos et santé 3) qu'elle ne soit faite par induction, menace, par force »⁵². Dans le fabliau de la demoiselle voleuse, le conteur semble aussi projeter une image où la naïveté

l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX^e au XV^e siècle, tome III, Vaduz, Kraus Reprint, 1965 [1884], p. 630.

⁵⁰ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 44-45, p. 209. En traduction, « il lui enfonce jusqu'aux couilles le vit dans le con », voir Jacques Lemaire, *Auteurs français du Moyen Âge. Les fabliaux français du Moyen Âge. Thèmes et textes (traduits)*, cours, Bruxelles, Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 2005, p. 23.

⁵¹ Sur les variétés du pacte engageant la loyauté (vassalique), tel qu'il est formulé et reconstitué dans un récit historiographique, voir Jeff Rider, *God's scribe : the Historiographical Art of Galbert of Bruges*, Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2001, chap. « The Art of History », ici p. 91 sq.

⁵² Gérard D. Guyon, « Essai de lecture juridique du roman médiéval. Le champion du droit chez Chrétien de Troyes », *Revue d'histoire des facultés de droit et de la culture juridique, du monde des juristes et du livre juridique*, 18, 1999, p. 251-283, ici p. 262, n. 32.

et la bonne foi conduisent à une surprise qui risque d'être désagréable. Mais... l'est-elle vraiment, dans la réalité de l'expérience ?

Tout ce que l'on peut noter, au moment de l'implantation de la queue, est que la demoiselle surmonte, par le verbe, sa condition d'objet malmené. Probablement surprise, au moins par la « manière » sinon par la raison d'être de l'interaction, elle s'abstient de se prononcer sur la valence de son vécu émotionnel, qu'elle donne uniquement à entendre par sa contribution à la réussite de l'opération – *Ele se met a recoillons / est(o)upons* – et par le défi lancé à son interlocuteur-percuteur. Mine de rien, elle fournit assez d'indices pour permettre une hypothèse sur son état d'âme.

Parler lors de la première interaction érotique est, au fond, un signe en soi. Surtout quand on parle pour ne rien (contre)dire, histoire de remplacer un acte de communion par un acte de communication. En effet, la demoiselle de l'histoire se livre à une forme de redondance : même si elle sait depuis le tout dernier dialogue que l'opération vise à « faire la queue »⁵³, elle interpelle son architecte corporel sous le prétexte d'une demande (confirmative) d'information⁵⁴ qui va précisément dans ce sens. Sa logique ne suit guère un cours cognitif, mais plutôt celui d'un « acte émotif » : un énoncé (verbal ou autre) visant à changer l'état émotionnel des participants à la communication, émetteur(s) et récepteur(s). Il se trouve qu'une telle expression, par analogie avec l'acte de langage, peut avoir, selon William M. Reddy, « 1) une apparence descriptive, 2) une intention relationnelle 3) des effets comportant l'exploration et le changement du moi »⁵⁵. Ce sont les théoriciens du groupe de recherche EMMA (Emotions au Moyen Âge) qui proposent « l'émotif » comme équivalent nominal traduisant « the emotive (act) » de l'historien américain, en spécifiant que la « réalité affective » désignée par ce geste (non)verbal se transforme elle-même au fil du processus, en réalisant ou déréalisant ses possibles.

Dans le cas de la conversation initiée par la pucelle – en plein dépucelement – l'enjeu est de créer un lien affectif autour de la coopération

⁵³ Dans les deux éditions consultées, la demoiselle a appris cette stratégie depuis cinq vers déjà et elle y a même consenti. Il est donc hors de question, selon une logique strictement narrative, qu'elle pose la question pour se renseigner sur la procédure.

⁵⁴ La typologie humaine des fabliaux n'exclut pas la possibilité d'une « naïveté feinte » ; la technique fait fortune dans les *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* ; sur le « lexique de la duplicité » dans cet avatar du *conte à rire*, voir Alexandra Velissariou, *Aspects dramatiques et écriture de l'oralité dans les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2012, p. 208 et 469.

⁵⁵ William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling : a Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 102-105 (notre traduction). Voir aussi, pour une (première !) présentation francophone du concept, Damien Boquet et Pirooska Nagy, « Une Histoire des émotions incarnées », *Médiévales*, 61, 2011, p. 5-24, ici p. 13-14.

anatomique, en l'étayant sur l'entente lexicale. Dans la nouvelle langue qui se crée, substantielle et poreuse, tout est à renommer : « ice que est ? »⁵⁶.

Afin d'éclairer le contact initiatique et de traduire l'émotion de la surprise par une ostension accompagnée d'une requête d'attention⁵⁷, la femme assume une présence intelligente plutôt que coulante. Pour elle, la « zone » est loin, et la compression demandée suscite avant tout la cognition alimentée, encore et encore, d'idées.

L'abc sexuel se fige petit à petit par l'échange d'énoncés métaphoriques, et l'homme ne tarde à rendre à l'élève l'écho de sa métaphore : « Il dit que la queue li met »⁵⁸. L'algorithme de l'entente met le public sur une autre piste, qui relève de la fonction phatique du langage ; au moment où elle éprouve une nouvelle sensation, la demoiselle entend en accuser (la) bonne réception. Expliciter au fur et à mesure du dialogue des corps, c'est co-gérer, émotionnellement, cette interaction sensible, et en réinvestir – de concert ! – la dimension téléologique.

La suite est à peine une surprise pour le lecteur : la petite question sur « ice que est » débouche sur un émotif censé légitimer l'extase dédalique, en infusant la coloration positive du vol à cet acte tout aussi innovant qu'enthousiasmant (par association ou par sensation). Naît alors un désir sans peur et limite, fusant d'un corps nouveau, à la fois réceptacle et racine, matière et envol. Ou au moins l'expression d'un tel désir, excessive dans sa foi : « or exploitez ; / Boutez *parfond*, si atachiez / si fermement qu'ele ne chie [...] / Je cuit que bien voler porrai »⁵⁹. Croire pouvoir, dans ce contexte intersubjectif, c'est pouvoir.

La seule crainte qui hante l'esprit de la demoiselle concerne toujours la dimension corporelle, mais d'une façon qui n'a rien à voir avec l'impact brisant de la défloration : le grand mal serait, dans sa fable à elle, de voir la queue choir et le vol faillir. Autant dire, la conjonction s'anéantir.

Les émotions que le lecteur est invité (ironiquement !) à attribuer à la « damoisele » – angoisse, doute, espoir, désir de solidarité, de réussite et de dépassement – investissent une verticalité qui devient vertigineusement ouverte. Lors du bouleversement provoqué par le premier contact sexuel, la

⁵⁶ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 47, p. 209.

⁵⁷ Sur le rôle de la question dans la structuration narrative du fabliau, voir Brent A. Pitts, « Truth-Seeking Discourse in the Old French Fabliaux », *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 15, 1987, p. 95-117, ici p. 98 : « *The narrative advances and the anatomical explorations continue, but only insofar as the questions receive coded answers* ».

⁵⁸ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 48, p. 209.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, v. 49-50, p. 209, notre italique.

fascination de la hauteur – « voler [...] par mi l'air *lasus* »⁶⁰ – se mue donc en une recherche explicite et impérative de la profondeur : *Boutez parfond*.

L'idiome paradoxal qui naît de cette implantation de la queue / de la semence du vol conjugue les contraires. Atteindre le bas devient une condition *sine qua non* de l'élancement vers le haut, comme si le cosmos était désormais un tremplin du corps humain, une véritable – et humanisée – zone de confort. Certes, il s'agit d'une vision de fabliau, à prendre avec un grain de sel. Mais la *coincidentia oppositorum* est bien là, flagrante, au cœur de l'expérience initiatique née au carrefour d'une douleur, d'une bravade du dolorisme, de l'attente peut-être déjà confirmée d'un plaisir.

Pour le lecteur du XXI^e siècle, cette géométrie émotionnelle ne saurait exorciser la perpendiculaire brutale des sévices les plus vicieux, surtout à partir du moment où le narrateur ajoute quelques détails qui secouent l'image d'une entente à visée jouissive. Une fausse note suffit pour introduire la possibilité d'un court-circuit violeur. « Et li clers boute jusqu'en l'angle, / Ne li chaut gueres de sa jangle. »⁶¹. *Bouter* est une chose (voulue par la demoiselle), et réduire l'autre au silence (involontaire !) en est une autre, réifiante.

On sous-entend qu'il y a, pour le moins, un grave désaccord quant au canal de communication, un manque de dénominateur commun : elle verbalise son vécu cognitif, lui entend venir à bout de cette virginité qui s'acharne sur ses charnières. La persistance à causer – puisque la « jangle » implique le « bavardage, caquet, babil, criailerie, hâblerie »⁶² – suggère l'accrochement au versant connu et maîtrisable de l'interaction, la présence d'une crainte à bannir par la parole, le besoin de meubler de mots l'espace de ce dos-à-face fragilisant.

Par ailleurs, nous sommes dans un contexte d'émotivité animale, et la position *a tergo* semble avoir un effet de plus en plus déshumanisant, puisque l'homme ne tient plus compte, en l'occurrence, de l'appel de sa partenaire à la communication humaine. Il semble retenir de cet appel uniquement l'amorce d'une métamorphose en bête – et traite la femme illico en oiseau, lui appliquant des manœuvres sexuelles dépourvues de tout sentiment, de toute empathie : *ne li chaut*. Au fond, le lecteur est invité à assister à une rupture de la communication affective, voire à une dégringolade dans la bestialité. *Bouter* revient à exister, par étagement, à contre-humanité.

⁶⁰ Voir plus haut, *ibid.*, v. 10-11, p. 208 ; notre italique.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, v. 55-56, p. 210.

⁶² Sur la « jangle », voir Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX^e au XVI^e siècle*, tome IV, Vaduz, Kraus Reprint, 1965 [1885], p. 632. Ces acceptions y sont suivies du sens de « divertissement », qui constitue une seconde entrée.

Dès lors, le lecteur – ou la lectrice, si présente dans l'auditoire des fabliaux⁶³ – est invité(e) à railler la tentative verbale de la demoiselle, à y voir, comme l'homme de la fable, de la pure « jangle ». La péjoration rime avec la dérision, la minimisation de la locution avec la déconsidération.

Certes, l'héroïne ne saurait dire des choses particulièrement sagaces ou savantes en cette circonstance, mais un simple refus pourrait commander l'entendement. Le refus n'est pas de la *jangle* ou du brouillage, il devrait être pris au sérieux, puisque c'est l'acte de communication qui fait la différence, en termes canoniques médiévaux, entre la fornication et le viol. Or, la demoiselle peut être consentante au début, et se raviser dès qu'elle éprouve les conséquences de son consentement ; mais tout changement d'avis est condamnable dans ce contexte où seul l'impératif de *bouter* reçoit, narrativement, une attention suivie.

Initier, en cette phase de non-retour, c'est réduire au mutisme et à l'animalité, soumettre à ses pulsions, bannir l'émotion et son langage par l'éloquence superbe et ciblée du corps qui « frappe, heurte, renverse, presse, pousse » (pour déployer les signifiés du verbe « bouter ») l'autre corps, passivisé.

L'homme « fet son talent »⁶⁴ de la femme-oiseau, un point c'est tout. Et ce *talent* – désir – implique le *nonchaloir* quant au *talent* (surtout locutoire) de l'autre. Le meneur du jeu est à la fois emporté par le flot d'une émotion de liaison et par l'éboulement d'une insouciance qui dénoue.

Une question se pose : selon les autorités civiles ou ecclésiastiques censées commander la perspective au tournant du XIV^e siècle, le jeu est-il, à proprement parler, un viol ? Nous sommes dans un monde fictionnel où une femme s'enferme de bon gré avec un homme et s'adonne non seulement à une expérience scientifique, mais aussi – plus pertinemment pour notre propos – à la « hognerie »⁶⁵. Grommeler, vociférer, était-ce suffisant pour établir l'existence du délit de *stuprum* ou *raptus* ? D'après Dietmar Rieger, « la preuve n'était en général pas seulement fournie par les cris de la femme, sa résistance physique, la plainte déposée dans les délais fixés, les *pièces à conviction* telles que vêtements déchirés ou cheveux décoiffés, mais il fallait avoir des témoins (pour les cris par exemple) dont la déposition, cependant,

⁶³ Voir Lisa Perfetti, *Women and Laughter in Medieval Comic Literature*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2003, notamment “Who’s Laughing and Why? The Medieval Audience”, p. 22-28.

⁶⁴ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 57, p. 210.

⁶⁵ Voir le complément de « Notes et variantes », dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., concernant le vers 55, p. 328. On y précise que le manuscrit Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 25545 remplace les vers 55 et 56 par quatre autres, où le narrateur précise : « li clers entent à son affaire / Et pense de sa coe faire ; / Ne li chaut gueres c'ele hoingne ; / Mout bien entant à sa besoingne ».

pouvait être compensée par des témoins de moralité en faveur du coupable. »⁶⁶

Or, notre demoiselle n'a pas de « pièces à conviction ». Elle a simplement exprimé un accord, ensuite un désaccord devant l'homme, derrière une porte, sans témoins.

Quels risques un violeur courait-il aux yeux de la loi ? La mort, répondent les historiens⁶⁷, surtout en cas d'inégalité statutaire jouant en faveur de la victime. Mais pas forcément : des « peines de remplacement » pouvaient concurrencer la peine capitale : la mutilation, la castration, des amendes. Tout dépendait du for de jugement auquel le cas était présenté, puisque « bien des délinquants cherchaient de préférence refuge dans le domaine dépendant de la juridiction ecclésiastique – dans le cas où ils n'y étaient pas soumis d'office en leur qualité d'hommes d'Église – car les peines encourues (excommunication, pénitence publique, prison, fouettement, amende etc.) étaient de loin plus légères que celles de la juridiction séculière, bien que le *stuprum* ou le *raptus* fussent considérés également comme *enormis delictum* dans le droit canon. D'après le droit canon (par opposition à certains droits coutumiers), l'état de fait du viol n'était d'ailleurs donné qu'avec coït accompli – tout du moins aux yeux de certains commentateurs. »⁶⁸

Le fabliau présente un cas de coït accompli, mais où les protagonistes commencent et finissent par s'accorder l'un à l'autre, malgré le malentendu qui éclate au beau milieu de l'acte. La situation, aggravée par le fait que la femme est vierge (sachant que les dames mariées pouvaient aussi porter plainte) et qu'elle est pratiquement abusée sur le type et la visée de l'interaction, devient néanmoins ambiguë lorsque le narrateur la redéfinit dans ces termes plus que pacifiques : « [Quant de li ot fet son talent], / Lez li s'asist *cortoisement*, / Et la damoisele lez lui »⁶⁹. Il faut néanmoins préciser que le manuscrit français 1593 de la Bibliothèque Nationale est le seul à introduire cette idée de galanterie post-ludique : les deux autres remplacent l'adverbe « *cortoisement* » par « *tost* » ou « *de maintenant* »⁷⁰.

⁶⁶ Dietmar Rieger, « Le motif du viol dans la littérature de la France médiévale entre norme courtoise et réalité courtoise », *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 123, 1988, p. 241-267, ici p. 246.

⁶⁷ Non sans nuances circonstanciellement étayées. Voir Claude Gauvard, *Condamner à mort au Moyen Âge. Pratiques de la peine capitale en France XIII^e-XV^e siècle*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France / Humensis, 2018, surtout les délimitations des chap. « Les Pièges de la littérature », « Des Emprunts à la monarchie pontificale et impériale » ou « Le Temps vivant de la grâce ».

⁶⁸ Dietmar Rieger, « Le motif du viol dans la littérature de la France médiévale entre norme courtoise et réalité courtoise », art. cit., p. 246.

⁶⁹ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 58, p. 210.

⁷⁰ Voir *Notes et variantes*, *ibid.*, p. 328.

En revanche, dans l'édition Montaiglon-Raynaud, ce paradoxal éclairage courtois⁷¹ fait en sorte que la poursuite du plaisir égoïste, la nonchalance quant à l'expérience de l'autre, la violence du *bouter* versus le ronron rassurant de la *jangle*, se fondent finalement dans un vécu symétrique, orchestré, voire respectueux.

Pour le conteur / rédacteur, le cas est net : il n'y a aucun viol, puisque personne ne se plaint ni ne porte plainte. Au contraire, la demoiselle, qui vient d'apprendre comment on *met la queue* pour voler, exige la reprise immédiate de l'opération. La nouvelle question qui émerge bifurque encore sous le signe d'une disjonction : serait-elle tombée amoureuse de son prédateur ? Aurait-elle au contraire joué la comédie aérienne pour attirer un Dédale sur mesure ?

Tout est à réinterpréter.

D'amour et d'intelligence : un couple ailé

Dans deux des trois manuscrits du fabliau, le mariage du clerc et de la pucelle « qui voloit » est recommandé, quasiment réalisé. Si cette issue reste un palliatif incontestable, c'est qu'elle est de nature à réconcilier trompeur et trompée, en redéfinissant l'abus sexuel sous les auspices du lien conjugal.

Seule l'édition Montaiglon-Raynaud poursuit cet idéal en légitimant la leçon – unique et généreuse – du manuscrit français 1593 de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Une fois n'est pas coutume ; cependant, rien n'empêche le lecteur d'embrasser cette variante, dont l'atmosphère maritale est autorisée aussi par le manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Par ailleurs, les éditeurs Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard reconnaissent que les trois manuscrits sont également (in)fidèles à leur source : « Les trois manuscrits dans lesquels a été conservé le fabliau de la *Pucele qui voloit voler* offrent globalement le même récit, bien qu'ils diffèrent sur des points de détail parfois assez importants. [...] La différence est due en bonne partie à l'épilogue qui, dans I [manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale], compte 26 vers, contre 7 vers dans B [manuscrit 354 de la Burgerbibliothek de Berne] et 9 dans E [manuscrit français 1593 de la Bibliothèque Nationale]. [...] Chacun [des témoins] porte des traces d'altération et les nombreuses divergences font supposer une tradition assez complexe »⁷².

⁷¹ L'édition critique réalisée par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard privilégie l'adverbe « demaintenant », voir *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, tome VI, éd. cit., v. 62, p. 169.

⁷² *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., p. 157.

Il convient de rappeler que dans bon nombre de cas, vers la fin du Moyen Âge, les mariages pouvaient faire suite à des viols « réparés » ; la situation semble même se généraliser en Angleterre⁷³. Certes, rien n'indique un tel tournant religieux – « réprouvé par le droit romain mais [...] ancré dans le droit canon depuis Gratien »⁷⁴ – dans le monde fictionnel du fabliau. Mais nous assistons ici à un cas typique de réparation de l'offense sexuelle, qui se donne à lire comme le début d'une belle histoire de plaisir et d'enfantement – autant dire, de « famille » ...

Pour recadrer *cortoisement* l'implantation d'une queue contre laquelle il y a eu à redire, voire à *jangler*, le narrateur souligne la disponibilité de la jeune héroïne à réguler son ressenti sur les normes émotionnelles en vigueur : une femme doit être modeste, accommodante, prête à censurer ses émotions de puissance (colère, fierté)⁷⁵, et à saluer l'idée de mariage dès qu'elle se traduit en une demande explicite. Telle est sa fonction, telle son émotionologie : aussi le conteur prépare-t-il le terrain à la récupération sociale de la belle rebelle.

Lorsqu'elle a expérimenté la greffe du bec et de la queue, la jeune femme continue à filer la métaphore, tout en déchirant les ailes du pacte initial. Au fond, le lecteur assiste à un détournement inavoué vers l'hédonisme de Nature. Au fur et à mesure que les zones érogènes se délimitent, une jubilation se prépare, phallogocentrique : l'être-femme ne saurait plus se satisfaire d'un rêve qui exclut l'homme. D'ailleurs, dirait le lecteur moderne, soucieux de souligner la symétrie, le tandem homo-social (masculin, dans le mythe !) est voué à l'échec avec Dédale et Icare. Il faut plutôt un couple hétérosexuel, de type Ariane-Thésée, pour s'en sortir.

Le fabliau parle, à sa façon, d'un sauvetage *in extremis*, du décroisement de l'égo, de la reconnaissance d'une insuffisance de nature, à combler. Dans l'optique du conteur, dompter une fille ensauvagée par ses visions est une façon d'assurer le retour à l'ordre humain, où la complétude se définit en termes intersexuels. La cellule élémentaire est la dyade : pour naturaliser cette vision, le rire, surtout moqueur, sert de régulateur.

La pucelle fait semblant de tout ignorer, pour tout réapprendre. Selon les apparences, elle ne rejette pas les efforts de son dompteur ; la régulation vient chez elle du dedans, par une prise de conscience du potentiel voluptueux de l'interaction avec l'homme. Seulement, elle n'arrive ou n'aspire pas à reconnaître ce nouvel état. Son unique règle d'expression reste attachée à l'idéal du vol, tandis que le décalage entre l'émotion érotique et l'ambition aéronautique va grandissant : « Dans clers, dit ele, ce n'iert hui /

⁷³ Rieger Dietmar, art. cit., p. 244.

⁷⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁵ Voir Silvia Krauth-Gruber, « La régulation des émotions », *Revue électronique de Psychologie Sociale*, 4, 2009, en ligne sur <http://www.psychologiesociale.eu/files/RePS4.Krauth-Gruber.pdf>.

Toute ceste queue parfete ? / Fetes la tost, car mout me hete.»⁷⁶ Sa déclaration de plaisir (« hetier ») recèle une demande d'efficacité qui évince la « jangle ». La femme aurait appris à parler, suggère le *fableor* ! Puisque parler repose sur la capacité à s'accorder à l'homme, à lui témoigner sa gratitude et non à repousser l'expression musclée de son *talent*.

Textuellement, la motivation de la demoiselle reste, malgré la découverte surnoise de la sensualité, sous le signe du même affect et rythme affectif : elle est toujours pressée, toujours tendue vers un but qu'elle entend imposer à l'autre, dans un esprit d'impatience et d'effervescence juvéniles qui ne se dément pas. On croirait entendre dans cette dernière demande d'aide-au-vol – *Quant sera ce ? Dites le moi ; or exploitez !* – l'écho de ses demandes précédentes, comme si rien n'avait changé, essentiellement, dans sa façon d'être. Le sexe serait un moyen désirable d'atteindre, semble-t-il, au même but de singularisation volante. L'expression du désir reste autoritaire, hautaine, voire despotique : au fond, la demoiselle ne devient guère plus attentive à l'existence de l'autre, ni plus curieuse quant à ses motivations à lui. Initiée, elle ne connaît guère la mécanique des organes de vol suffisamment pour savoir qu'un certain tempo doit être observé avant de recommencer l'implantation.

L'initiation semble, dans un sens, faire long feu : la pucelle, une fois dépucelée, n'a pu s'approprier qu'un type de ressenti, plus passif qu'assertif, malgré l'audace de ses rêveries primesautières, que l'autre ne partage point. Solitaire, elle le reste, même quand elle décide de prolonger l'enfermement à deux. Un simple transfert de solitude semble s'opérer entre ces murs de faux apprentissage / enseignement aérien. Ce qui manque le plus (pour voler) est, justement, l'air.

Quant aux autres manques, la demoiselle précise : « Du bec, des eles *ne me chaut* / Je les metrai bien en respit »⁷⁷, comme pour illustrer cette hypocrisie nouvelle – et jubilatoire – en l'imprégnant d'une nuance d'indifférence empruntée à son maître. Même si la situation ne représente pas, telle qu'elle apparaît au narrateur, une urgence de survie, elle induit (ou permet) un miroitement qui relève de la réaction défensive de type « syndrome de Stockholm » ou « fawning response »⁷⁸, où le *nonchaloir* est

⁷⁶ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 60-62, p. 210.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 66-67, p. 210.

⁷⁸ Pour une approche juridique de la notion, voir Élodie Noblet, « Le Syndrome de Stockholm et ses conséquences sur le procès pénal », *Revue française de criminologie et de droit pénal*, 16, 1, 2021, p. 79-98, <https://droit.cairn.info>. Pour une conceptualisation alternative, voir R. Bailey, J. Dugard, S. F. Smith, & S. W. Porges, “Appraisal: Replacing Stockholm Syndrome as a Definition of a Survival Strategy”, *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 14, 1, 2023, p. 1-7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2008066.2022.2161038>, où la notion de réponse de soumission (*fawning response*) est aussi discutée en rapport avec la pacification (*appeasement*).

joué avec un servile (ou serviable ?) enjouement. La conquête du ciel ne semble plus aussi prioritaire que la seule, et urgente !, greffe de la queue : en termes psychologiques, on assiste à la fixation génitale de la libido, aussi bien qu'à une forme de « coping » censé rappeler à l'autre qu'elle n'est pas un objet, mais plutôt un sujet qui joue le jeu, qui sait qu'il le sait, et qui aime ce savoir partagé.

Sur le plan langagier, la demoiselle garde un seul moyen, non-verbal, d'arriver *lasus* – probablement le plus évocateur par rapport au spectre émotionnel de l'élévation : libération d'énergies jusque-là réprimées, mais aussi effacement derrière l'homme-oiseau. Le geste prétendument utile se voit converti en une expérience agréable en soi, dont la fonctionnalité s'efface. Lorsque le moyen arrive à remplacer non seulement les autres moyens, mais aussi le but convenu, lorsque le corps en vient à remplacer le mouvement, l'acte est immanence, implosion, jouissance.

Une émotion toujours plus étroitement circonscrite se fait jour : pour subvenir au nouveau besoin d'exploration via la soumission, l'implantation phallique est planifiée, avec un acharnement remarquable – « chacun jor, petit et petit nuit et jor »⁷⁹ – qui relève de la dépendance hédonique la plus ordinaire. Jour après jour, la demoiselle est ramenée au dénominateur commun du sexe procréateur, et perd ses rêves distinctifs, créatifs, pour l'amour d'un rêve éveillé. L'émotivité sexuelle tend à une uniformité profonde, qui suppose de focaliser l'aire génitale pour canaliser un même, et laborieux, vol intérieur.

Si *voler* devient synonyme de *jouir*, une nouvelle hypothèse surgit : la demoiselle pressent que le plaisir doit aboutir à quelque état paroxystique, et entend découvrir en elle-même cet aboutissement, qu'elle continue à appeler, par commodité sinon confusion expérientielle, « voler *lasus* », d'un air tout aussi impératif. L'aventure est assumée comme telle et va désormais à reculons, remplaçant l'évasion par l'invasion.

Quant aux rapports entre l'humaine et son prédateur des airs, ils se révèlent plutôt tendus : le consentement surexcité ne change pas le potentiel conflictuel de cette relation pénible, forcée, claustrée. Seulement, l'amatrice de grands espaces solaires en vient à claustre son fournisseur de traîne, en l'exhortant, badinement ou obligeamment, à honorer le pacte. Leur « faire » se réduit à un échange quotidien d'ordres et d'obéissances (sexuelles) ; une date limite est fixée à ce moule d'interaction : la queue « n'iert faite *devant .I. an* »⁸⁰. Cette durée rappelle la pratique du valentillage, par son caractère de

⁷⁹ L'acharnement est présent dans les autres manuscrits aussi, avec la même notation temporelle – « chacun jor un petit » ; l'édition Montaiglon-Raynaud insiste davantage sur cette régularité de la vie sexuelle ; voir *ibid.*, v. 80-81, p. 210.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, v. 74, p. 210.

« contrat à durée limitée » et sa dimension foncièrement érotique⁸¹. L'entente spontanée, enthousiaste, s'accroche à la garantie improvisée de deux invocations dévotes : « Se Deus me sequerre ! »⁸² – dit l'homme ; « par saint Jehan ! »⁸³ – répond la demoiselle.

Frôler le *common ground* du sentiment pieux est une forme de régulation émotionnelle, censée offrir des moules de fiabilité à ce qui pourrait passer pour un commencement de bonne foi mutuelle. La règle canonique (ici implicite) veut qu'un homme s'engage véritablement dans la mesure où il invoque le secours divin. De son côté, la femme miroite ce semblant d'investissement de soi dans la mesure où elle prend un saint comme Jean à témoin, lié au solstice d'été, au feu, à la fol' amor de Tristan⁸⁴. Ces actes de parole remplacent la (double) déclaration de désir (*je te veux pour un an*), et la coulent dans une forme humainement recevable.

Réaffirmer *Deus*, c'est rappeler qu'il y a un modèle génésique de l'homme, et que ce repère n'est pas le corps d'un oiseau. Suggérer que l'homme peut devenir un saint, même estival, revient à « normaliser » (et normer !) l'évolution, lui conférer un sens, bien distinct du vol d'Icare. La sainteté, telle qu'elle est mentionnée par la demoiselle, devient une solution à mi-chemin entre la stagnation terrestre et l'envol le plus éthéré.

D'autre part, l'homme invoque l'aide de Dieu pour une raison suggestivement implicite : il aurait besoin d'un coup de Main (!) pour mener à bien sa greffe de l'année. Demande de bénédiction en vue d'une conception ? Aveu d'épuisement ? Angoisse du ratage ? Il y a, en tout cas, une syncope ; de l'optimisme sans nuage du début à cet appel au secours, le lecteur est invité à mesurer l'écart.

L'ironie, par ailleurs, n'est pas à exclure⁸⁵ : il se peut que la jubilation mâle d'être le responsable *unique* de la grande leçon de biologie

⁸¹ Voir René Nelli, *L'érotique des troubadours. Contribution ethno-sociologique à l'étude des origines sociales du sentiment et de l'idée d'amour*, Toulouse, Privat, tome I, p. 47-66.

⁸² *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 70, p. 210.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, v. 72, p. 210. L'édition Noomen-Boogaard retient aussi ces références religieuses, présentes également dans son manuscrit de base.

⁸⁴ Il y a un versant narratologique de l'évocation des saints : « *In all the fabliaux [...], invocation of the saints measurably enhances the text, be it through their identity or their placing.* », Anne Cobby, « "Saint Amadour et sainte Afflise": Calling upon the Saints in the Fabliaux », dans *Grant Risee? The Medieval Comic Presence. La présence comique médiévale. : Essays in Memory of Brian J. Levy*, éd. Adrian P. Tudor et Alan Hindley, Turnhout, Brépols, 2006, p. 173-192, ici p. 174.

⁸⁵ Selon Mary Jane Stearns Schenck, *The Fabliaux : Tales of Wit and Deception*, op. cit., p. 106, l'ironie correspond au « mythos » hivernal typique de la séquence principale du fabliau. Selon l'auteure, le fabliau serait un genre fondamentalement ironique, car il ne dépasserait point ce stade : « *The fabliau, of course, goes no further than this myth [of winter or irony] : the hero never arrives and chaos is produced by the forces of disorder breaking down the status quo* ».

méritée (et exigée) par la belle demoiselle se voit modéliser par ce rappel que le *seul autre* puissant est Dieu. Le jeune héros se félicite d'avoir écarté tous ses rivaux pour ne garder que le Seigneur à ses côtés⁸⁶. D'autre part, l'allusion à Dieu ou aux saints peut passer, selon Roy James Percy, pour un catalyseur de l'obscénité dont l'impact (la *shock-value*) est appréciable. Acte de choc ou pacte d'accroc, l'émotif que représente l'énonciation du nom de Dieu et de son saint par deux valentins ne saurait laisser froids les intéressés – bien au contraire.

Sous cette forme ambiguë, la déclaration de disponibilité et de soumission sexuelles formalise le vasselage masculin et ouvre un chemin battu à l'autorité féminine, qui peut se manifester (elle aussi) de façon extérieurement tyrannique : « Jamès de moi ne partirez / Devant que fete ne m'avrez [la queue] »⁸⁷. Le rapport des forces, néanmoins, reste ambivalent : après tout, c'est la pucelle qui représente le grand trophée. Or, elle semble se laisser emporter par le passant (survolant) qu'elle-même a élu, tout en croyant le guider pour atteindre ses buts, ou pour le retenir indéfiniment à son service ; il est difficile de dire qui manipule qui, à ce stade...

Loin de l'attraction des hauteurs, l'homme et la femme s'adonnent dorénavant sans relâche à l'œuvre de Nature, clamant, chacun à sa façon, son accord avec le commandement divin. Comme ils sont célibataires tous les deux, ils n'ont aucune transgression sociale trop grave à se reprocher : le consentement une fois scellé, le viol ne hante plus leur commerce, pas plus que le vol. Au pire, leur statut serait celui de concubins. Selon le script agréé, le clerc fait ce qu'il a promis de faire, au nom de Dieu, tandis que la femme en jouit « chascun jor »⁸⁸, au nom de ce saint (Jean) qui, outre ses connotations tristanniennes, a l'avantage d'être particulièrement aimé au Moyen Âge, grâce à son statut de fils de Marie, élu par la grâce, transformé en un *alter Christus* capable de garder sa pureté et de devenir, sous le signe de l'aigle, l'un des quatre évangélistes⁸⁹. L'association Jésus-Jean mène ce couple, d'une manière retorse et originale – « ad altiora festinans » – à devenir un couple de parents.

⁸⁶ Roy James Percy, « Fabliau Intertextuality, Some Connections between Related Comic Narratives », *Reinardus*, 20, 2008, p. 51-66, ici p. 61.

⁸⁷ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 73-74, p. 210. Même limitation de la liberté de mouvement de l'homme dans l'autre édition de référence, voir le *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., v. 77-78, p. 170.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 77, p. 210.

⁸⁹ Sur l'image de saint Jean au Moyen Âge, voir, par exemple, Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *St. John the Divine. The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology*, Berkeley et Londres, University of California Press Ltd, 2002, surtout les chapitres 2, "Theologus noster : the Deification of John", et 6, "The Body and Blood of Christ : Mary's Adopted Son", p. 43-64 et 165-178.

La pulsion du vol est en effet poussée à sa dernière limite lorsque le corps féminin, « bouté » et « empaint », en vient à s'alourdir de cette grosseur prévisible, sous le signe de « natura naturans » plutôt que d'une force surnaturelle.

En bonne tradition médiévale, on atteint au comble de la régulation émotionnelle menée par le clerc et infligée à la demoiselle, *volens* (et) *nolens* : la meilleure méthode de rappeler à la jeune rêveuse qu'elle est avant tout une femme, soumise aux lois biologiques, promise aux émois de la maternité et non à l'extase stérile d'un survol. Il lui faut procréer en femelle et non errer en Dédale ; peser son poids de toutes ses cellules ; être-là.

Comme pour Marie – la Mère absente qui hante, invisiblement, les mondes de Jésus et de Jean – la seule voie d'accéder au ciel promis aux hommes est d'emprunter la voie de l'amour, et se faire chair.

Voler pour aimer : fin heureuse, fin marieuse

La pucelle aime-t-elle son aigle de passage (et d'apprentissage) ?
Aime-t-elle aimer ?

Si tout état émotionnel est caractérisé par un mélange variable d'affect positif et négatif, comme le soutiennent certains chercheurs⁹⁰, il serait intéressant de voir comment le fabliau de la demoiselle aéronautique joue sur la dualité du ressenti au moment où le vol, le viol, le valentingage versent dans le mariage.

L'année de coopération sexuelle s'accomplit d'une façon paradoxale : au lieu de voler, l'héroïne en vient à accoucher. Comme son repère émotionnel reste, officiellement, le vol, elle semble d'abord éprouver des états explosivement négatifs. Le sentiment d'être trompée s'épanche véhémentement : « Clers, vos m'avez gabée / [...] / Malement m'avez or atainte, / Empiriée sui malement »⁹¹. Verbalement (à exclure l'ironie !), l'expérience est évaluée de façon radicalement négative – *malement malement* ! – au sein du bilan de l'interaction avec le clerc.

D'une part, le ton est reprocheur, hargneux, hostile envers l'interlocuteur ; d'autre part, il n'éclate point dans l'insulte ou l'injure, laissant la voie ouverte à l'entente. Il y aurait un remède à ce « mal », et ce

⁹⁰ Selon le modèle Watson – Tellegan, l'affect positif et l'affect négatif seraient des facteurs unipolaires indépendants. Voir Paula M. Niedenthal, Silvia Krauth-Gruber et François Ric, *Comprendre les émotions. Perspectives cognitives et psycho-sociales*, Wavre, Mardaga, 2008, p. 64-65.

⁹¹ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 81 et v. 83-85, p. 211. La demoiselle de l'édition Noomen-Boogaard est tout aussi révoltée ; seulement, elle traite son changement de grossissement, aussi bien que de grossesse, voir *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., v. 87, p. 170.

remède se construit dans l'appel à la compassion (« Empiriée sui »), via la culpabilisation, en vue de trouver une solution à l'amiable.

Un détail détonne : la distance sociale est brusquement recalculée selon les nouveaux rapports affectifs lorsque l'appellatif « Clers » signe le retour à la situation initiale, où l'autre n'était qu'un étranger sans nom, sans attrait, identifiable juste par son profil d'intellectuel. Elle ne semble ni partager ni comprendre les sentiments de cet homme (ou aigle) auquel elle ne saurait trouver ni excuse, ni justification à la hauteur de ses attentes.

Le manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale prête à l'héroïne un dynamisme corporel qui rend la chute flagrante, voire déchirante : « Cele à la terre se roilloit / Qui devant haut voler vouloit, / Et se clamme lasse chetive : / Mieux vorroit morir qu'estre vive »⁹². Ici, le ciel « lasus » cède le pas à une attraction suicidaire vers la terre, qui n'est pas sans rappeler le retour à la saint Jean de Tristan. Réduite à une posture asociale comme Yseut lorsqu'elle quitte son trône pour suivre son cœur outre-mer, la pucelle enceinte s'érige en victime de ses propres sentiments, révélant à quel point elle avait alimenté son lien d'attentes, d'espoir, d'idéaux plus ou moins platoniques (et platoniciens).

Dans la foulée de la même émotion richement négative, le manuscrit de Berne étend la tromperie à l'ensemble des comportements du clerc : « Bien savez engigner la gent »⁹³. Pour une fois, la lucidité ne prend pas d'accents désespérés ; elle se contente de renforcer les accusations, en créant un climat verdictif ouvertement conflictuel, agrémenté de sombres félicitations pour l'abus, qui aplanit la voie au dénouement sec, moralisateur, non-conjugal.

Avec le texte de l'édition Montaiglon-Raynaud et le manuscrit 1593 de la Bibliothèque Nationale, en revanche, l'interaction initiatique se redéfinit de façon plus spectaculaire : « Pris ai mauvès amendement. / Comment porroie je voler ? / A paine puis je mès aller. »⁹⁴. Si l'acte didactique est raté, c'est à cause de l'incompétence de *l'amendeor* (réparateur, correcteur), sensible dans le résultat immédiat de son travail. Ce qui surprend dans cette version est justement le sous-texte du nom « amendement », qui suggère que la demoiselle s'était trouvée défectueuse, incomplète, cassée avant l'application de la queue...

Dans les trois versions, juger son maître d'école conduit la demoiselle à dépasser sa condition d'écolière, provisoirement (et autoritairement) revêtue. Dès le constat de la grossesse, le pacte est rompu, la confiance dans le savoir de l'autre est retirée, au profit d'une émancipation

⁹² Notes et variantes au fabliau *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 329.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

⁹⁴ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, *ibid.*, v. 86-88, p. 211.

cognitive proclamée haut et fort : « Je sai bien que je sui ençainte »⁹⁵. Dans cette déclaration cassante, qui rompt avec la métaphore si longuement filée, il n'est pas banal de lire « je sai bien que je sui » : un moi prend voix par la perception méta-émotionnelle d'un (double) corps.

Le manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale insiste sur les émotions de la grossesse, oppressantes dans leur incarnation ; tout semble la condamner à l'impuissance, à la lourdeur, à l'immobilité : « Ne me puis ceindre ou lever »⁹⁶, avoue-t-elle vaincue. Cet abattement s'accompagne cependant d'une évolution spirituelle, fléchée par le sens le plus intime de l'initiation. De nouveau souveraine dans ses vues, la demoiselle peut dénoncer la violation de l'accord initial. Elle a cru au clerc, et elle n'y croit plus.

Une question émerge, souriante malgré tout, de ce discours ballotté de regrets : si la demoiselle sait comment on tombe enceinte, pourquoi s'est-elle prêtée au jeu d'envol ? Et pourquoi revient-elle au sens littéral précisément à ce moment critique, où l'innocence d'une voleuse abattue vaudrait argument pro-conjugal ? Un clin d'œil est adressé au lecteur : l'accusation est aussi (et surtout ?) un aveu de complicité, un appel à la continuation, nuptiale, de l'expérimentation aviaire – avec ou sans excuse conjuga(b)le.

Plus que le ressenti, ce qui change est, au fond, l'expression de l'émotion : il n'est pas exclu que la demoiselle prenne plaisir à mimer le mécontentement face au passé unilatéralement appréhendé... plutôt que de s'épancher sur l'espoir d'un avenir commun. Dans l'ensemble, le choix des termes à connotation négative se révèle de plus en plus convergent, systématique même : *gaber, malement ataindre, estre empiriée malement, prendre mauvès amendement, povoir aler a poine*. Toutefois, la contestation de la greffe reste douteuse, tandis que la petite explosion de la surprise se fait dans les coulisses de la parole. Après tout, « l'aventure fut bele » à la « damoisele »⁹⁷, comme le précise malignement le poète de cette version, en guise de conclusion.

Aussi le tour est-il joué : le nuage d'émotions négatives se laisse percer par l'éclair d'une provocation érotique. Qui s'aime se taquine... Seulement, il faut changer de registre, changer de langage et tangage. Lorsque la novice se déclare mère, la révolte contre son initiateur se mue en désir d'être traitée en égale, en compagne du savoir, de ce savoir-faire qui est savoir-apprendre.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 83, p. 211.

⁹⁶ *Notes et variantes au fabliau De la pucelle qui voloit voler, ibid.*, p. 330.

⁹⁷ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 108, p. 211.

La réponse du clerc suit la même règle du jeu : content de n'avoir « mie failli »⁹⁸, dans les termes du conteur, il mime le mécontentement d'un inculpé sans coulpe. Sensible aux termes de l'accusation – « N'iestes *empiriée* de moi : / Se grosse estes, ce est nature »⁹⁹ – il reste néanmoins insensible au fond du problème. Pour lui, il n'y a pas de mal, de pire, d'empirement. Bien au contraire : on peut deviner la fierté de l'homme dont la virilité est confirmée par une paternité. Son exultation atteint le summum¹⁰⁰ au moment où il déclare que la « folie » de la demoiselle est bel et bien régulée : « Folement vouliez ovrer : / Un poi estes apesantie »¹⁰¹. De *folement à un poi*¹⁰², on peut mesurer la distance et la tempérance. Il n'y a rien à regretter, puisque la pesanteur est une dimension naturelle, une condition indispensable – enfin remplie – de la stabilité et de l'humanité.

Ainsi, le clerc remporte le trophée de Nature. Il a joui, il a conçu : « par la foy » due à la demoiselle, le moment est venu de célébrer une victoire de la vie qui pourrait devenir *le* trait d'union de leurs existences avant le vol. Santé, normalité, fécondité – telles sont les valeurs qu'il reconnaît et défend. Vaille que vaille, coûte que coûte, le frais père entend rester fiable et respectable, en tout cas mémorable aux yeux de celle qu'il admoneste ouvertement et ménage discrètement. « Un poi » ébréchée, la « foy » peut néanmoins devenir, au nom de saint Amant (/Amand), « fiance ». Tout dépend de l'affrontement final prénuptial : le clerc va-t-il finir par « avoir » la belle ou l'inverse ? Au-delà de toute métaphore ?

Il y a quelque chose de virtuellement comique dans l'allusion faite à ce saint dont le nom est érotisé par la transcription *Amant*. Connu par sa *vita* itinérante et son succès à dompter des serpents¹⁰³, il tend un miroir rapetissant au *clers* de l'histoire, qui n'en est que la vague, hilarante, caricature. Le seul serpent qui perdure est volant, et ne s'appelle ni Ève, ni Mélusine.

Malgré ces diverses *muances* au spectre de la gravidité, toutes les versions s'accordent, émotionnellement, sur un point : le retour à la loi de la pesanteur éveille la superbe d'un côté, la vulnérabilité de l'autre. Pour un laps de temps qui varie selon les manuscrits, le narrateur aggrave ce déséquilibre,

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 106, p. 211. Seule cette version souligne et couronne la réussite du clerc.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, v. 93, p. 211.

¹⁰⁰ Selon Thomas D. Cooke, tout fabliau est structuré de façon à mettre en place un « climax » comique ; voir *The Old French and Chaucerian Fabliaux. A Study of their Comic Climax*, Columbia et Londres, University of Missouri Press, 1978, p. 109.

¹⁰¹ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 97, p. 211.

¹⁰² Même logique antithétique dans l'autre édition de référence : « Trop par en faites a blasmer, / De poi estes apesantie », *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., v. 100-101, p. 170.

¹⁰³ Voir par exemple Régis de la Haye, *Le Dossier historique de saint Amant*, disponible en ligne sur le site <http://home.kpn.nl>, consulté le 5 mars 2015, p. 4.

en le transformant en un véritable règlement de comptes : « En tel maniere fu servie / Cele dont vos poez oïr / [...] / Qui outrage quiert, il li vient »¹⁰⁴. Le « service » consacré à la femme devient une revanche moralisatrice, qui n'a plus de rapport avec la courtoisie. Déflorer, alourdir, réguler : le conteur recommande au lecteur la recette d'une émotion outrageusement... légitime.

Un seul élément manque encore à cette chaîne d'événements humains : épouser. Or, c'est un faire culturel facultatif, comme le montre l'absence du narrème dans la plupart des versions.

Dans ce sens, le manuscrit français 25545 de la Bibliothèque Nationale est peut-être le plus sévère ; pour châtier l'orgueil de la demoiselle, il abandonne celle-ci à la « lange » (langueur¹⁰⁵), lui ôtant jusqu'à la jouissance. L'émotif est ciblé : quitter la demoiselle, c'est la déterminer à languir, autant dire à désirer ce qui pouvait lui sembler, au début, indésirable.

Tout compte fait, l'émotion *juste* chez une jouvencelle pucelle ne peut être que l'attraction envers l'homme, de préférence plus mûr et lucide, plus volage aussi. Le conteur de cette version tient à mettre le point sur le i de cette incomplétude féminine essentielle, insurmontable, *obligatoire* : « Or soupire, or plore des ieus ; / Bien est abatus ses orguieus / Par .I. vaillant cler et estrange / Qui ainsis l'a laissiée au lange »¹⁰⁶. Plus l'orgueilleuse est humiliée, plus le clerc est vaillant et le public satisfait. Heureux les pauvres en esprit, ou plutôt : heureuses les célestes atterrées.

Le champion de la verte (encore) vitalité l'emporte sur l'autrice de l'évasion (échouée) outre-vie, et il y a un progrès émotionologique à célébrer, puisque l'exception féminine valide la règle patriarcale (et s'y soumet !), en nourrissant, de larmes, l'éternelle complémentarité du masculin et du féminin.

La souffrance est donc nécessaire, l'émotion négative de la femme devient même une base pour l'émotion positive associée au couple de parents : il faut une chèvre émissaire pour que triomphe l'idéologie du mariage, qui est donc, indéniablement et heureusement (!), le seul bien auquel peut – et doit – aspirer une demoiselle pucelle (déflorée). Ceci dit,

¹⁰⁴ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., v. 98-99 et 101, p. 211. Dans l'édition concurrente, on interprète le proverbe ainsi : « Qui a des prétentions excessives peut s'attendre à en subir les effets négatifs », *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., p. 339.

¹⁰⁵ Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle*, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 714.

¹⁰⁶ *Notes et variantes au fabliau de la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 331.

l'opportunisme conjugal s'érige en règle morale¹⁰⁷ incontournable : « Mariez vos selonc le tens, / Adonc quant lieus en iert et tens »¹⁰⁸. Peu importe la compatibilité en matière d'idéaux : pourvu que l'homme arrive au bon moment, la femme lui doit son « oïl ».

L'édition Montaiglon-Raynaud propose au lecteur (de 1880) une voie plus douce, qui réconcilie, hâtivement et superficiellement, mais exemplairement, les aspirations des deux protagonistes. Avec le manuscrit de base Paris, français 1593, Bibliothèque Nationale, dont l'épilogue n'est ni abrupt comme celui du manuscrit de Berne, ni insatiablement pédagogique comme l'autre manuscrit parisien, la morale conjugale s'impose d'une façon moins sévère et plus efficace, en conduisant la demoiselle de la fierté et de l'obstination – *via* la surprise d'une leçon de fécondité – aux ravissements plus maîtrisés de la dyade conjugale. C'est l'émotionologie de la meilleure fin possible qui triomphe : après tout, l'homme réussit à épouser la belle désirée, la femme son meilleur prétendant, devenu l'unique traducteur de son désir de vol ; chacun a sa part de plénitude, et l'aventure est « bele » au couple en tant que tel. « Faire la queue » devient un hymne d'amour universel, avec une mélodie bien à eux, un « faire catleya » avant-la-lettre.

La fin, tout de même, semble surimposée, puisqu'elle rejoint la punition de l'« outrage » mentionné au vers 101. Le mariage ne rime pas avec ce genre d'émotion... Le droit canonique le prescrit même comme un remède à l'outrage. Même si elle demeure, selon le verdict de l'émotionologie dominante, « trop desmesurée »¹⁰⁹, la demoiselle a ici droit à un *happy end* compensatoire¹¹⁰ : désirable, épousable, elle garde la main de son prétendant (et ses attributs plus volatiles). Le retour à la mesure implique donc un cocktail d'émotions qui exclut – pertinemment – l'excès, rompt le cercle vicieux de l'outrage punissant la dénaturation, s'accommode de l'aventure et « répare » l'offense sexuelle par une correction maritale. Finalement, la demoiselle, si elle rate l'apprentissage du vol, en réussit un autre : elle parvient à *écouter* la *proiere* d'un homme plus ludique, plus inventif et plus théâtralement empathique que les autres.

En fin de compte, le clerc est réhabilité par ce tour de force didactique ; son ratage de Dédale en est opportunément éclipsé. Un

¹⁰⁷ La dimension morale est une composante essentielle des fabliaux, qui les rattacherait étroitement aux *exempla* ; seulement, il s'agit ici, spécifiquement, d'une « *cautionary moral* » ; voir Mary Jane Stearns Schenck, *The Fabliaux : Tales of Wit and Deception*, op. cit., p. XI.

¹⁰⁸ *Notes et variantes* au fabliau *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, dans le *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles imprimés ou inédits*, éd. par MM. Anatole de Montaiglon et Gaston Raynaud, tome IV, éd. cit., p. 331.

¹⁰⁹ *De la pucelle qui voloit voler*, *ibid.*, v. 103, p. 211.

¹¹⁰ Les éditeurs Noomen et Boogaard commentent ainsi les mérites de la version concurrente : « La version de E est très semblable à celle de B mais en ajoutant deux couplets, elle donne un *happy end* à l'histoire. Son texte présente quelques faiblesses qui font penser qu'il s'agit d'un remaniement. », *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, éd. par Willem Noomen et Nico van den Boogaard, tome VI, éd. cit., p. 339.

continuum émotionnel intègre la jouissance socio-biologique aussi bien que la frustration spirituelle et la déception relationnelle. Une pucelle proprement éduquée devient une femme capable de voir le bon côté de toute expérience, de prendre le vol du viol et l'anneau de la queue, tout en gardant à l'esprit le cheminement cinglant de l'expérience.

Plus intéressant encore, la demoiselle « qui voloit » abdique – de bon gré, si possible – le « voloir voler » qui la distinguait, autant dire une dimension identitaire dont elle était consciente et qu'elle cultivait jalousement, quitte à aller à contre-courant. D'un seul coup (d'aile ?), le sens de l'opposition, de la singularité et de l'élévation se laissent sacrifier – avec une grâce qui n'a plus rien de céleste.

Tel est le prix d'une régulation complète : l'uniformisation. Le « moi » volant doit atterrir, recevoir la greffe terrestre, s'enraciner au terroir de la réalité commune. Si un homme accepte de jouer au « vous » compréhensif, capable de s'identifier avec ce « moi » hautement hautain, c'est juste pour préparer le terrain à l'identification du « moi » avec un « nous » qui sanctionne la leçon.

Au-delà de la dyade proprement dite, c'est donc la société entière qui entend dépersonnaliser l'héroïne pour l'assimiler et l'acculturer, à travers une reconnaissance définitive de la pertinence du sexe (dominant). Sous ce jour, il apparaît que, si elle s'identifiait à Dédale (pour finir en Icare rédimé), elle n'était encore ni tout à fait femme, ni tout à fait homme : elle était vierge absolument, asexuellement. Lorsque s'éveille la conscience de sa féminité (stimulée), et qu'elle abrite cette ente qu'est le fœtus, la demoiselle devient un hybride : une somme sexuelle. Il est à parier qu'elle accouchera d'un fils, pour perpétuer le triomphe vitaliste du patriarcat.

La transition de la non-pertinence du sexe à la sexualisation complète repose sur un véritable itinéraire affectif, allant de la répulsion face à la virilité à l'acceptation de celle-ci dans sa propre intimité, en passant par une phase de dénonciation. Quelques nuances préparent cette évolution : la confiance, la *jangle*, l'acceptation, la (fausse) domination, l'abus (effectif), la réconciliation. Du caprice aérien à la reconnaissance d'un plaisir partagé avec un terrien, toutes les résistances féminines sont battues en brèche.

Dans un sens, c'est un véritable viol émotionologique que le mariage de fabliau vient couronner : la femme rétive est réduite à endurer, voire à incarner l'axiologie de la dépendance à l'homme. D'autre part, Ève reconnaît la nécessité d'Adam – une aide semblable à *elle* ! – et la raison d'être du commandement *Multipliez-vous*.

Tout est bien qui recommence bien, avec un *plaisir* qui répond au projet divin – humainement.

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L'*oikonomía* cristiana*

Laura Mesina **

Abstract: *Oikonomía* is reflected in the collective imaginary of Byzantine medieval society as a project of the imperial power and the ecclesia to distribute and administer symbolic and material goods representing the sacred image. It is at the same time a strategy for managing real historical situations, for easier overcoming social and spiritual crises, as well as ensuring the community's path to Salvation.

The Byzantine imaginary coalesces around the glorified imperial power (a Roman heritage); but, since the emperor is “delegated” by God to rule the community of believers, he also has the duty to control the dissemination of the sacred image within the boundaries of the empire (a Christian addition). The collective imaginary is at the same time a mirror and a means of this divine “ministry”, blending faith and imperial ideology in a single construction to be preserved in the memory of the Christian community.

In order to outline a possible conceptual genealogy of the Byzantine imaginary, I have followed an “archaeological” path of investigation and identification, as well as contextual analysis of certain notions like *oikonomía*, *eikōn*, and *oikonomos*, but also of discursive formations or semantic micro-basins.

Keywords: Christian *oikonomía*, *eikōn*, *oikonomos*, patristic literature, Byzantine imaginary.

Durante le due crisi religiose, ma anche politiche, dell'iconoclastia e dell'esisismo, si trovarono al centro del dibattito sia il problema dell'immagine naturale sia la gestione del destino dell'immagine “artificiale” e, implicitamente, i concetti di *eikōn* e *oikonomia* con la loro (già sottolineata) rilevanza per l'immaginario medievale di ispirazione bizantina. Qui sono coinvolti almeno tre aspetti: uno filosofico, uno dogmatico e il terzo politico-istituzionale, tutti legati al discorso ufficiale del potere rivolto alla comunità cristiana, quale che sia la sua forma.

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L'*oikonomía* non costituisce tuttavia solo l'oggetto del discorso cristiano durante la crisi iconoclasta, perché la sua problematica, intellettuale, spirituale, ma anche politica, fin dalla fondazione dell'Impero, è legata all'edificio concettuale del rapporto tra imperatore e sacerdote. Nel corso della storia, l'*oikonomía* teoretica (l'approccio filosofico all'immagine del divino) e quella iconica (la teologia dell'immagine artificiale del divino) furono gli argomenti di discussione preferiti negli scontri per l'egemonia, non solo simbolica, nell'Impero bizantino.

Ancor di più, il termine *oikonomía* si ritrova anche nel vocabolario filosofico del politico in Aristotele e negli autori classici, con il suo significato amministrativo, correlato alle nozioni di "utilità" e di "bene" (pubblico e individuale), ma anche con il significato di "gestione politica".

I santi Padri, a loro volta, si sono ispirati, nel caso di questo concetto, alle analisi della filosofia pratica, che definiscono anche l'*oikonomía* come l'insieme dei mezzi attraverso i quali si può raggiungere l'armonia funzionale e la finalità organica. Solo che, nell'interpretazione cristiana, il termine viene attribuito alla natura provvidenziale e al piano dell'incarnazione, nonché all'adattamento dei mezzi ai fini, sussunti nello stesso dogma cristiano; non però con l'abbandono della giustizia divina, senza la quale l'*oikonomía* (ri)diventerebbe una nozione cinica e relativa.

La polisemia del termine nella letteratura patristica è rispecchiata soprattutto dai processi di "storicizzazione" del divino, attraverso la sua diffusione nell'umanità cristiana, ma anche dal disegno di governo (trasmesso nel mondo pre- e post-bizantino e riflesso nell'immaginario politico della comunità medievale). La temporalità finisce per essere intesa come la manifestazione storica e immanente del modello divino, eterno e trascendentale. L'*oikonomía* ha consentito di formulare insieme l'unità e la pluralità del divino, prima attraverso la dottrina trinitaria e quella cristologica (riprese nella teologia esicasta), poi, su un altro livello, attraverso l'immaginario agiografico ortodosso. La finalità di questa operazione teologica di moltiplicazione della natura divina imponeva anche l'elaborazione di un piano considerato di ispirazione divina, allo scopo di gestire e guidare l'essere adamico, al fine di assicurarne la salvezza. L'*oikonomía* diventa così una nozione solidale con il destino umano, per la cui organizzazione utilizza tutti i mezzi discorsivi (testo, immagine, rituale) e istituzionali, al fine di realizzare la promessa cristiana.

Nei testi patristici è evidente la differenza tra teologia e *oikonomía*, più precisamente la differenza tra il discorso che parla del divino e il discorso che si situa addirittura nel piano gestionale dell'immagine del divino. La teologia pone l'umano in un rapporto di discontinuità con il sacro, mentre l'*oikonomía* è proprio la traduzione in pratica del rapporto divinità-Cristo-umano (ricordiamo la triade discussa in precedenza a proposito della filosofia di Platone), attraverso una rilettura spirituale della Trinità. L'*oikonomía* è il

concetto stesso di relazione al suo interno, ma anche di gestione divina e provvidenziale del mondo visibile; allo stesso tempo, è anche il saperlo enunciare dottrinalmente. Essa è quindi alla base della composizione del disegno di ispirazione divina, di un'unica volontà, che si manifesta tuttavia in modo plurale, sia attraverso le sue sante ipostasi, sia attraverso il rapporto tra Cristo, autocrate e Chiesa.

Marie-José Mondzain, ricercatrice delle fonti bizantine dell'immaginario cristiano, esemplifica queste osservazioni rifacendosi all'*oikonomía* trinitaria commentata negli scritti di Ippolito, Tertulliano, sant'Agostino e Basilio di Cesarea, proseguendo poi con l'*oikonomía* cristologica, in Cirillo di Alessandria, Ireneo e nella Lettera agli Efesini dell'apostolo Paolo.

Il piano *oikonomico* comprende due aspetti della similitudine, quello naturale e assoluto e quello relativo, della somiglianza formale. In questa linea, per la dottrina cristologica l'*oikonomía* diventa un concetto importante del pensiero della similitudine: fondata sulla teologia dottrinale della Trinità, essa rimane fedele all'idea della distribuzione del divino e della gestione di questo disegno nella storia, per l'intero mondo cristiano. Cristo è l'immagine naturale del divino, è il rapporto stesso, puro, con il principio generatore, è l'unione tra l'eterno e il corpo mortale, che conferisce perciò senso compiuto al progetto cristiano di salvezza¹.

Il risultato di questa visione, ispirata, qui, non direttamente dalla filosofia platonica, ma piuttosto da Aristotele e dalla sua filosofia pratica, è il tentativo di "iconizzare" il divino, l'*oikonómos*, il gestore assoluto della creazione. La *prónoia* (provvidenza), che questo supremo amministratore dirige, deve comunque lasciare alla creatura libera un campo aperto di manifestazione. Questo sarebbe lo spazio della natura e della bellezza, dell'armonia e della glorificazione del divino, che costituisce appunto lo spettacolo complesso e contraddittorio del mondo stesso – come pensa Giovanni Crisostomo. L'intera creazione diventa lo specchio enigmatico di colui che l'ha creata, che nasconde il mistero del processo in sé e della sua sostanza e che non lascia che nient'altro organizzi il visibile, se non uno schermo dottrinale (il risultato del processo di creazione). Tuttavia, il passaggio dal mistero (immagine naturale) all'enigma (immagine iconica) aiuta la teologia a rapportarsi con più coraggio al divino e a ristabilire le basi del dogma, adattate in modo da resistere alle pressioni della storia del mondo cristiano.

L'*oikonomía* si riflette nell'immaginario collettivo della società medievale post-bizantina come disegno di potere, di amministrazione dell'immagine distribuita del divino, ma anche dei beni simbolici e materiali;

¹ Marie-José Mondzain, *Image, icône, économie. Les sources byzantines de l'imaginaire contemporain*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1996, p. 51.

è allo stesso tempo una strategia per gestire situazioni storiche reali, per superare più facilmente le crisi spirituali collettive e per ottenere soluzioni che assicurino alla comunità il cammino verso la tanto agognata salvezza.

Il fatto che il potere avesse diritti illimitati di rappresentare l'immagine del divino concedeva anche il privilegio di organizzare e controllare assolutamente tutti i segni e le forme visibili del sacro (diritto rivendicato ancora oggi dalla Chiesa). Per questo, le istituzioni costantinopolitane stabilirono dogmaticamente un canone semplice, facile da memorizzare visivamente (solo pochi modelli iconografici) e impersonale (trascendente), che riguardava non solo l'immagine del divino, ma anche l'immagine singolare dell'autocrate accanto a quella del Cristo – inducendo così l'idea della sacralità dell'imperatore. L'impronta bizantina si ritrova in tutto il Medioevo, sia in Oriente che in Occidente: gli imperatori sono raffigurati al cospetto del loro seguito (come Giustiniano I, nella Basilica di San Vitale, Ravenna, VI secolo, **III. 1**), della Vergine, come interceditrice (Leone VI, nella chiesa di Santa Sophia, Istanbul, IX-X secolo, **III. 2**; Costantino I e Giustiniano I, sempre X secolo, **III. 3**) o solo di Gesù (Ruggero II, in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio "La Martorana", Palermo, XII secolo, **III. 4**). Queste ipostasi privilegiate ponevano l'imperatore in una posizione inattaccabile, superiore, sia di fronte alla Chiesa ("il corpo materno", rispetto alla sostanza divina dell'autocrazia, maschile), sia di fronte alle potenti aristocrazie locali. La preminenza di sostanza e di grado gli assicurava il diritto di dirigere e stabilire da solo la politica dell'Impero, influenzando così in modo decisivo la storia dello Stato; e, del pari, l'immaginario collettivo cristiano.

Al di là degli aspetti teologicamente rilevanti, alla crisi iconoclastica si sovrappose una convulsione istituzionale, che, col tempo, si rivelò essere anche un grave problema di politica religiosa: all'esterno, tra Costantinopoli e Roma; all'interno, tra il potere basileico e quello monastico. Il "prezzo" finale pagato al monaco dal monarca è consistito nella penitenza che dovette rendere pubblicamente dopo l'843; si aggiunse una significativa perdita di prestigio locale, di potere oikonomico rispetto all'impero, ma anche di autorità rispetto al Vaticano. Lo scontro stesso e la preclusione dell'immagine sacra ebbero quindi conseguenze importanti per le comunità cristiane e per il loro immaginario collettivo. Le istituzioni non potevano restare indifferenti alle rischiose conseguenze; gli scritti teologici successivi e tutto lo sforzo di persuasione, il cerimoniale religioso, la sua scenografia, testimoniano nel loro insieme una speciale attenzione volta a restaurare la loro immagine pubblica e il rapporto tra loro, che, pur necessario, continuava, come si sa, ad essere difficile.

L'iconoclastia bizantina e, più tardi, la riforma spirituale esicasta si rivelano dunque guidate nell'approccio all'esegesi biblica e alle fonti evangeliche non solo dallo spirito purista di alcune élite. Nascosti dietro il paravento delle polemiche di ordine dogmatico, si affrontarono sullo sfondo

anche programmi politici, e non a caso, perché entrambi i movimenti teologici furono in realtà provocati dalle istituzioni del potere: nel primo caso, dal tentativo di sostituire il prestigio dell'immagine cristiana col volto dell'imperatore iconoclasta; nel secondo, dalla volontà di unire le chiese cristiane, affinché l'Impero bizantino, minacciato militarmente lungo i confini orientali, venisse salvato dall'Europa occidentale. Il congelamento della trattativa con il papato e la cancellazione del sostegno armato promesso al *basileus* e al patriarca furono infine imposti dal partito anti-unionista, che vinse la causa nel XIV secolo e si affermò definitivamente “glorificando” il suo leader, Gregorio Palamas.

Se, da un lato, la coerenza del partito monastico ortodosso nell'interpretazione della Trinità perfezionava la teologia dell'Europa orientale (in un quadro istituzionale e dottrinale che questa non avrebbe mai più avuto a disposizione dopo il 1453), dall'altro, il cattolicesimo cercava di trarre vantaggio dalla sempre più fragile situazione militare e territoriale di Costantinopoli, a favore delle sue politiche di proselitismo: un altro paradosso storico, dunque, nel rapporto tra le due “Rome”. L'esicismo, pur volendo sostenere e il potere imperiale nella restaurazione dei valori mobilitanti dell'Impero, e la rinascita culturale paleologa, di stampo europeo, approfondì in realtà la faglia dogmatica tra Oriente e Occidente, ma anche il fallimento diplomatico e politico-militare, suggellando involontariamente il disastro del XV secolo. La politica di Costantino I e dei suoi successori, ben intenzionata nei confronti dell'Impero, aveva condotto, un millennio prima, all’“oblio” di Roma. A sua volta, Roma avrebbe “dimenticato” Bisanzio.

La frattura dell'VIII secolo era stata provocata, tuttavia, da alleanze completamente diverse. Poiché al tempo della crisi delle icone il partito monastico aveva come obiettivo principale il mantenimento dell'*oikonomia* dell'immagine cristiana, a scapito dell'iconoclastia imperiale, il Vaticano, suo alleato, cercò di aggiungere alla posta teologica dei concili d'Oriente anche una politica: l'emancipazione dalle istituzioni costantinopolitane. Tuttavia, siccome nella capitale orientale il potere spirituale e temporale erano stabilmente mantenuti in un'unità politica e dottrinale su cui si fondava lo stesso Stato cristiano, alla fine prevalse il partito che sosteneva un piano istituzionale comune, e non la loro dissociazione.

La posta in gioco del confronto non consisteva solo in questi aspetti, ma anche nel rapporto tra il simbolico e il reale, così come tra l'immaginario e il percepibile. I testi iconoduli hanno posto alla base della dimostrazione teologica l'equivalenza del messaggio evangelico e di quello iconico (visibile), indiscutibile nel quadro della fede unificatrice e rispettato da tutte le “parti” in conflitto. Prima del patriarca Niceforo I, tanto polemico nei suoi scritti, l'intuizione del rapporto fondamentale tra l'immagine naturale, il destino dell'immagine artificiale (icona) e la realtà corporea del mondo cristiano si trova nei santi Padri. L'immagine e l'icona erano al centro di ogni

meditazione sull'essere e sull'apparenza, sulla vista e sulla fede, con implicazioni concrete per l'esercizio del potere e del politico nello spazio pubblico. Se Giovanni Damasceno e Teodoro Studita erano più vicini al contenuto dogmatico di questa tradizione, Niceforo perseguiva invece un modo di governare e un pensiero cristiano con finalità pratiche, basato sulla comprensione e l'accettazione della rappresentazione della natura cristica, nonché sul governo in nome di questo accordo. Lo scontro tra il gerarca e l'imperatore non si limitava quindi alla cristologia ortodossa, ma riguardava anche la filosofia del potere in uno Stato cristiano, come anche le politiche da esso attuate.

La crisi iconoclasta era connessa anche al fondamento simbolico e pratico dell'autorità. È vero che la polemica tra iconoclasti e iconoduli si svolse intorno ad alcune nozioni fondamentali per la tradizione ortodossa, poi trasferite nel mondo post-bizantino, ma alcune di esse ebbero anche una grandissima rilevanza politica e pragmatica. Entrambi i dibattiti riguardavano, sul versante teologico, il rapporto divino-icona, la somiglianza, i lineamenti del volto e della voce divini, la trasfigurazione della forma; su quello politico, la pedagogia, la strategia di appropriazione e la gestione di un territorio abitato da cristiani rispettosi dell'icona del divino. Questi aspetti costituiscono nel loro insieme il campo operativo del concetto di *oikonomia*, vale a dire il controllo da parte dell'organismo ecclesiale del fenomeno dell'immagine religiosa e della fede ortodossa, talvolta, però, con benefici anche per l'autorità laica.

Lo studio storico delle circostanze economiche, sociali e militari ha spesso portato i commentatori a ipotizzare che la controversia sull'icona fosse solo un pretesto e che la realtà fosse completamente diversa – sia che si riferisse alle politiche istituzionali (la lotta dei poteri centrali contro il partito monastico), o alle politiche statali di rafforzamento dell'Impero ai confini, il riassetto finanziario, la militarizzazione e il riaccentramento del potere, o persino all'influenza delle province orientali e delle culture aniconiche sulla casa imperiale. Un approccio opposto è quello che riconosce in luogo di una crisi politica una crisi strettamente filosofica, legata all'iconicità dell'immagine. La teoria è altrettanto interessante per la presente ricerca, a condizione che tale iconicità sia colta nei termini del suo rapporto col processo di simbolizzazione e, implicitamente, con gli effetti che ha creato per la manifestazione e per la riflessione nell'immaginario collettivo del politico cristiano (un insieme di valori e scopi comuni, fondamentali per l'organizzazione dell'impero).

Durante l'iconoclastia, la teologia dell'icona (in altre parole: la filosofia cristiana dell'immagine) si spinge, per la prima volta nel pensiero monoteistico, alla radice veterotestamentaria dei divieti dogmatici; ciò avviene dopo che il giudeo-cristianesimo supera alcune difficoltà ereditate dal pensiero greco e dalle speculazioni ontologiche sull'opinione (*dóxa*),

sulla *mimēsis* e sul fenomeno (*phainòmenon*). Dal momento che questa filosofia prende le mosse dall'antica Grecia e dalla meditazione "ellenica" sull'essere e sul linguaggio, il cristianesimo bizantino, che li elaborò per primo, è stato contrassegnato come "orientale" (ortodosso), tralasciando che anche l'Occidente si rifaceva alla teologia dei Padri della Chiesa, essendosi affermata come una lunga riflessione sull'integrazione delle tradizioni di pensiero precristiano nel dogma della nuova fede.

Alla filosofia antica è stata sempre riconosciuta la sua autonomia rispetto alla religione antica. Tuttavia, nella visione del patriarca Niceforo I, la causa stessa del pensiero era sacra e anche l'icona lo era, appunto perché fondava la possibilità stessa di pensare. Per lui il problema designato dall'*oikonomia* era inseparabile da quello dell'immagine e della sua gestione. Il *leitmotiv* dei suoi testi in cui difende la legittimità iconica è: "Chi rifiuta l'icona, rifiuta la totalità dell'*oikonomia*". Il termine *oikonomia* non rappresenta l'oggetto di un discorso nuovo e specifico della crisi iconoclasta, ma sostiene la totalità dell'edificio di cui l'icona rappresenta l'impegno finale, sul piano spirituale, intellettuale e politico. Pertanto, in occasione della crisi, questo termine ha acquisito nell'uso solo un carattere più sistematico, non una nuova semantica. Venne introdotto nei dibattiti teorici legati al diritto di egemonia simbolica, nell'architettura concettuale della nozione di immagine e in quella che sarebbe diventata una nuova visione del simbolo cristiano.

Il s'agit pour eux de défendre le dogme de l'incarnation et l'unité de l'Église. La défense de la production iconique reste une obligation spirituelle dans la droite ligne de la pensée des évangélistes et des Pères. Chez Nicéphore la méditation est d'une tout autre envergure: elle concerne la nature de toute image et l'impossibilité de penser et de gouverner sans elle. C'est pourquoi le portrait qu'il dresse de son impérial adversaire est, *a contrario*, tellement significatif, puisqu'il a pour but de priver l'empereur iconoclaste de toute aptitude à la pensée et au gouvernement. L'enjeu de l'image n'est donc pas le seul respect de l'orthodoxie christologique, mais un enjeu philosophique et politique de première grandeur. Qui sera le maître des images? Celui qui sera spirituellement fidèle à l'image naturelle, celui qui respectera l'image naturelle dans l'image artificielle, ou enfin celui qui rusera sans interruption entre la fidélité et l'infidélité, pour tirer de l'artifice tous les bénéfices possibles? En toute chose c'est Dieu qui donne l'exemple, c'est lui qu'on imite.²

² "Si tratta per loro di difendere il dogma dell'incarnazione e l'unità della Chiesa. La difesa della produzione iconica resta un obbligo spirituale in linea con il pensiero degli evangelisti e dei Padri. In Niceforo la meditazione ha una dimensione completamente diversa: essa riguarda la natura di tutte le immagini e l'impossibilità di pensare e governare senza di loro. Ecco perché il ritratto che fa del suo avversario imperiale è, *a contrario*, così significativo, poiché ha per scopo di privare l'imperatore iconoclasta di ogni attitudine al pensiero e al governo. La questione dell'immagine non è quindi solo il rispetto dell'ortodossia cristologica, ma una

Le testimonianze, per altro esigue, del pensiero iconoclasta sono le tesi del Concilio del 754, citate dagli atti del secondo Concilio di Nicea, e da esso respinte, nonché i frammenti, anch'essi iconoclasti, trasmessi dal patriarca Niceforo I – per la stessa pedante preoccupazione di non omettere, ma neanche di ammettere nessun altro punto di vista. Questi frammenti o le *Domande* (*Peuseis*, registrate negli *Antirretici* di Ostrogorskij) sono opera dell'imperatore Costantino V, senza dubbio un autentico teorico dell'iconoclastia, circondato da teologi molto competenti. Questo pensiero iconoclasta può essere definito a sua volta come una concezione non-oikonomica dell'immagine naturale, il che può averne in gran parte causato il fallimento.

Lo scontro è avvenuto anche sullo sfondo di una crisi di ordine dogmatico, consumata non solo attorno al concetto di immagine (*eikôn*) – in relazione alla (im)possibilità di rappresentare la natura divina – bensì, implicitamente, anche attorno a quello di *oikonomía*, nel senso di progetto politico-religioso di gestione dei beni terreni da parte dell'istituzione imperiale e della Chiesa, compreso il destino dell'immagine artificiale (della figura sacra). Quest'ultimo concetto è ampiamente trattato da Marie-José Mondzain in relazione ai testi degli iconoduli del periodo della crisi delle icone, per i quali esso costituì un vero e proprio punto di riferimento nella trattazione dei problemi legati alla *mímēsis*, alla *paideía*, nonché alle strategie politiche di governo del territorio – determinate da un'impalcatura di natura sacra: l'immagine cristiana naturale ispirava l'immagine artificiale, che, a sua volta, fondava il potere temporale³.

Nell'incontro tra l'immagine della divinità invisibile e la sua icona visibile, l'*oikonomía* diventa il fondamento della loro articolazione “viva”, ma anche della trasfigurazione nella storia della similitudine eterna (la consustanzialità divina), attraverso il fenomeno della somiglianza temporale (l'Incarnazione).

Lo schermo dottrinale della crisi iconoclasta non poteva nascondere tuttavia un duplice problema: da un lato, il rapporto tra l'icona e l'immagine divina, il concetto stesso di *mímēsis* e la trasfigurazione della forma sacra; dall'altro, il problema politico della pedagogia della “religione” civile, della strategia di mantenimento del potere sacro basileico (a scapito del “regno terrestre” attraverso l'immagine di Gesù) e dell'appropriazione del territorio della fede da parte sua. La controversia sull'immagine artificiale mascherava il problema della fede nell'immagine naturale, entrambe comunque scomode

questione filosofica e politica di prima grandezza. Chi sarà il padrone delle immagini? Colui che sarà spiritualmente fedele all'immagine naturale, colui che rispetterà l'immagine naturale nell'immagine artificiale, o infine colui che giocherà senza interruzione tra fedeltà e infedeltà, per trarre dall'artificio tutti i benefici possibili? In tutte le cose è Dio che dà l'esempio, è lui che noi imitiamo” (*N.d.T.*), ivi, pp. 20-21.

³ Ivi, p. 14.

per l'istituzione basilicale e per il proprio culto, a causa della loro diffusione grazie alla persuasiva ed efficace teologia monastica.

Mantenendo una distanza critica dalle opinioni di alcuni specialisti dei fatti, come Hélène Ahrweiler (che analizza il periodo iconoclasta nei termini di un convulso confronto politico-sociale e istituzionale)⁴, Marie-José Mondzain (e ancor più Giorgio Agamben, in *Il Regno e la Gloria*, sebbene in polemica con Mondzain⁵) propone invece un altro orizzonte interpretativo, facendo appello agli scritti del patriarca Niceforo I di Costantinopoli (758-829). Il concetto di *οικονομία*, arricchito semanticamente e infine chiarito in occasione della crisi iconoclasta, viene a significare e a riferirsi – al di là del suo contenuto dottrinale stabilito dall'apostolo Paolo – alla distribuzione dell'immagine della divinità nelle sue manifestazioni storiche (il corpo di Gesù), in un organismo la cui visibilità lo rende accessibile all'uomo, al discorso evangelico e all'icona⁶.

La rilevanza del termine è significativa, sia per comprendere il periodo in cui si sono ridefiniti la teoria cristiana dell'immagine, i rapporti di potere, il diritto di gestire le rappresentazioni cristiane, di rappresentare in diversi spazi (la chiesa, il palazzo), contesti (cerimonie) e su vari supporti (icone, affreschi, mosaici). La complessità semantica ne assicura lo statuto di concetto-tutelare nell'esercizio carattere spirituale, simbolico e materiale. Esso può essere inteso, in continuità con la visione apostolica e patristica, come: 1. la piena manifestazione nella storia dello spirito della divinità, attraverso le sue trasfigurazioni; 2. la disseminazione della parola sacra tra gli uomini, salvati dal sacrificio cristico; 3. la disposizione spaziale, tassonomica, dell'esemplarità cristiana; 4. l'amministrazione dei beni materiali e simbolici appartenenti alla Chiesa e all'istituzione ecclesiastica nel suo insieme (in linea con l'eredità aristotelica, in vista di un utile e un bene supremo, che assicuri la coesione e l'efficienza nella storia della comunità). Interviene ora, diversamente dalla visione antica, ma anche in modo decisivo, la dimensione cristiana del piano di origine divina, di gestione del *lógos* sotto tutte le forme che, nella visione teologica, questo poteva assumere, ma anche delle sue manifestazioni e rappresentazioni; da qui l'appello costante a una volontà e a una protezione sovrumana, sia per l'atto di costruzione sia per l'esercizio del potere ecclesiastico o per politiche di proselitismo.

Un altro mutamento fondamentale nel periodo iconoclasta, per il destino dell'immagine, ma anche dell'*οικονομία* (in tutta la sua pluralità semantica), è intervenuto nel rapporto tra il credente e l'oggetto della sua idolatria, ora sostituito dal discorso sull'immagine e l'icona. In questo senso,

⁴ Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, Presses univ. de France, Paris 1975.

⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Il Regno e la Gloria. Per una genealogia teologica dell'economia e del governo. Homo sacer*, II, 2, Neri Pozza Editore, Vicenza, 2007, p. 14.

⁶ Marie-José Mondzain, *ivi*, p. 30.

la virulenza e il pragmatismo dei testi del patriarca Niceforo I corrispondevano alla visione cristologica e dottrinale dei teologi Giovanni Damasceno e Teodoro Studita, i quali sostenevano che il pensiero (solo in parte “conoscenza”, nell’antica accezione pagana) e l’esercizio del potere (cristiano) fossero impossibili senza l’immagine; soprattutto senza l’icona del volto divino e dei suoi testimoni più prossimi.

Assimilata a un dispositivo immaginale e iconico, l’*oikonomia* non resta un concetto vuoto o negativo, come lo considera Gilbert Dagron⁷ – le cui interpretazioni si concentrano sul simbolismo istituzionale e rituale, rimanendo lontane dal contenuto spirituale della pratica del potere. Non si può più parlare qui di un’abile retorica, di tipo sofisticato, né di una disgiunzione definitiva tra norme ideali e spazio sociale, ma, al contrario, di un modello di mediazione, inseparabile dal cammino della parola divina nel compimento storico della Parusia⁸, una soluzione, nel dibattito dottrinale dell’iconoclastia, per conciliare il potere spirituale con quello temporale. Data la politica iconoclasta degli imperatori militari (o imperatori-generalis, che provenivano dai confini orientali, più esposti all’influenza delle culture aniconiche), l’istituzione del potere condusse, a vantaggio della propria immagine e del proprio piano di amministrazione del mondo cristiano, una politica di repressione delle immagini di Gesù e di quelle mariane. I teologi iconofili, invece, ricorsero nei loro discorsi anti-basileici ai mezzi di una retorica sofisticata, situata alla confluenza tra il genere deliberativo e quello giuridico, dal momento che era necessario condannare il pensiero iconoclasta nello spazio pubblico e, allo stesso tempo, assolvere l’iconofilo dall’accusa di idolatria.

La vocazione oikonomica del cristianesimo si spiega anche attraverso un dispositivo ternario: il sacro, la natura e la ragione, simile a quello della tradizione platonica: il bene, l’ente e il pensiero. In questo caso, la retorica sarebbe, come sottolinea a più riprese Mondzain, la scienza con cui si ottengono gli effetti desiderati, nel senso più pratico del termine: la dimostrazione mediante il *lógos* (razionale) di origine divina, come manifestazione della pura verità nella vita, sotto la forma del piano oikonomico, dell’incarnazione del divino attraverso la parola sacra e l’icona. Il paradosso di questa crisi dogmatica e istituzionale e il suo spettacolare aspetto teorico emergono dal fatto che i testi degli iconofili coniugano, per la definizione del significato di *oikonomia*, il neoplatonismo dei santi Padri con il pensiero aristotelico, aperto alla possibilità di rappresentare il divino a fini paidetici. Il pensiero patristico, riprendendo completamente il piano della

⁷ Cfr. G. Dagron, *La règle et l’exception*, in D. Simon (hrsg.), *Religiöse Devianz, Untersuchungen zur sozialen, rechtlichen und theologischen Reaktionen auf religiöse Abweichung im westlichen und östlichen Mittelalter*, Klostermann, Frankfurt-zur-Main 1990, pp. 4-14, cit. in Marie-José Mondzain, *ivi*, p. 25 (nota n. 1).

⁸ Marie-José Mondzain, *ivi*, p. 26.

(trans)figurazione divina dall'apostolo Paolo (1Cor. 1, 7; 2Cor. 4, 4; Col. 1, 15), ha gettato le basi di una filosofia cristiana dalla vocazione dottrinale, stante l'esigenza di mettere in relazione l'immagine naturale col progetto ecclesiastico di trasporla in icona. Una conseguenza importante è stata la reinterpretazione di questa prolifica nozione, *oikonomia*, così necessaria nelle argomentazioni degli iconofili riguardo al rapporto tra invisibile e visibile, sacro e materiale, legge divina e canone ecclesiale o codici laici.

Dal momento che la dimostrazione porta al fatto che il piano dell'Incarnazione e il piano della diffusione del cristianesimo sono indissolubilmente legati all'immagine del divino, nel discorso iconodulo la legittimità degli imperatori iconoclasti e la loro politica anti-*oikonomia* divina viene attaccata e demolita. In una comunità cristiana il potere non poteva essere riconosciuto senza una dottrina attraverso la quale si potesse ottenere l'adesione della comunità al suo assetto istituzionale. Credere e obbedire, i precetti del potere cristiano derivati dalla teoria di Eusebio di Cesarea e costitutivi di una coppia simbolica e spirituale, sono stati rimpiazzati dalla rispettiva coppia praticata dalle istituzioni, di credere e governare.

Il fondamento di questa nuova visione del potere viene attaccato con veemenza nei testi iconofili, che contestano non il diritto del credente a rifiutare la rappresentazione del sacro, ma il diritto di governare uno Stato cristiano in assenza dell'immagine filiale. Si tratta piuttosto di un attacco alla nuova teocrazia, per una piena restaurazione teologica ed ecclesiastica; ma anche di un approccio volto a contestare, con gli argomenti della cristologia, il culto dell'immagine imperiale, che veniva instaurandosi a livello dell'intero Stato a scapito dell'immagine sacra e che, in questo modo, negava il significato dell'*oikonomia* cristiana e, implicitamente, la dottrina della figuralità naturale e iconica. Più in generale, il pericolo maggiore agli occhi del partito iconofilo era la messa in discussione e il respingimento della fede cristiana stessa. Per questa ragione, la nozione di *oikonomia* viene utilizzata in modo plurisemantico e multi-contestuale, come base indiscutibile per le argomentazioni iconodule; essa poteva riferirsi sia a beni materiali che simbolici, nonché al servizio della fede e della legge attraverso una applicazione e adattamento sapienti nella gestione di tutte le manifestazioni visive del sacro.

Ho seguito qui⁹ un percorso "archeologico" di indagine e identificazione, ma anche di analisi contestuale di alcune nozioni, formazioni discorsive o micro-bacini semantici, al fine di delineare una possibile genealogia concettuale dell'immaginario. Ecco perché ho rintracciato l'innesto dall'antico immaginario filosofico del politico nelle successive forme cristiane, da esso ispirate, le quali hanno sostenuto il potere istituzionale nell'amministrazione del proprio territorio, sia dell'Impero

⁹ Laura Mesina, *ivi*, pp. 151-200.

romano pagano, sia di quello “costantinopolitano”. Il progetto ideativo cristiano, configurato sulla base della tradizione neoplatonica, è stato ripreso dall’antichità: la teoria del divino, le funzioni dell’immaginazione, la triade bene-ente-pensiero, nonché la nozione di giustizia in nome del bene e della verità assoluta (intesa come principio divino). La loro coniugazione, attraverso la filosofia giudaico-cristiana e attraverso le Lettere dell’apostolo Paolo, con il concetto (piuttosto aristotelico) di *oikonomia* ha determinato il rapporto in definitiva politico tra l’istituzione basileica, la Chiesa e il progetto di diffusione dell’immagine cristica nel mondo cristiano.

Come il re-filosofo o il sovrano sapiente immaginati da Platone e Aristotele, l’imperatore del mondo bizantino avrebbe avuto il compito, nella discendenza di una tradizione mista – veterotestamentaria, ma anche romana (storica) –, di assumersi allo stesso tempo anche la cura del sacerdozio, per gestire non solo il mondo cristiano, ma anche il piano spirituale dell’Incarnazione. Questo duplice ruolo richiedeva che l’argomentazione politica integrasse appieno il dogma cristiano, il che ha portato, a partire da Eusebio di Cesarea, all’elaborazione della teoria della doppia natura del *basileus*, collocato nella discendenza dell’imperatore e del giudice celeste. L’*oikonomia* (come umanità cristiana) diventava così un’eredità speciale, un compito “delegato”, che solo l’autocrate aveva per di più il diritto di continuare a governare. Il cerchio si chiude così in modo spettacolare: il re-filosofo di Platone, simile al giovane Cristo successivo, e in virtù di alcuni tratti ripresi dalle credenze pagane (il re-sole), non può che essere il *basileus*; egli ha una conoscenza speciale della natura di Cristo, essendo un “inviato”, “vicario” o “unto dalla divinità”. Questo concetto politico dell’imperatore-sacerdote, reinterpretato nello spirito del cristianesimo, è stato durante il periodo dell’iconoclastia una delle cause del conflitto politico-religioso tra Costantinopoli e il papato e perfino, come dicevo prima, all’interno dell’Impero romano d’Oriente, dello scontro senza precedenti tra l’istituzione basileica e l’istituzione monastica iconodula.

I due grandi conflitti istituzionali, l’uno approdato, in Occidente, alla cosiddetta (oggi) teoria del cesaropapismo (da qui la soluzione scismatica e la pretesa preminenza del Vaticano sul patriarca di Costantinopoli), l’altro alla teoria politico-religiosa dell’*oikonomia* cristiana (base per conservare intatto il canone ortodosso), sono a fondamento della separazione definitiva dell’Occidente dall’Oriente cristiano; allo stesso tempo, essi portarono alla formulazione di due tipi di teorie politico-cristiane del potere, ciascuno con un immaginario a sé stante, sempre più diversi tra loro a partire dall’XI secolo.

La crisi dell’iconoclastia lasciò, tuttavia, tracce profonde anche nella teocrazia bizantina: la regalità sacerdotale, dal momento che costituiva la grande leva politica degli iconoduli bizantini (il partito monastico rimase attento al patriarca, ma anche al papato suo alleato, opponendosi al

sacerdozio regale), ha finito per rappresentare l'essenza assoluta del potere. Il rito dell'unzione dell'imperatore da parte del patriarca, così come il rapporto istituzionale tra i due, diventano questioni di ordine formale, puramente spettacolare, per necessità piuttosto di glorificazione dell'autocrazia in linea cristica. La *basilèia* costantinopolitana viene ridefinita come una potenza bicefala (laica e religiosa), essendo la garante assoluta, sia dell'economia del mondo terrestre, sia dell'*oikonomía* dell'Incarnazione.

In linea di discendenza con questa teoria del potere e dell'immaginario del mondo ortodosso, nel corso di cinque secoli si configura, con numerose distanze, mutamenti di grado e di sostanza, ma con una visione comune circa la necessità di una gestione autocratica dei cristiani, anche la *despotèia* dei romeni.



III. 1: Giustiniano I (527-565), in compagnia dell'arcivescovo Massimiliano, del generale Belisario e seguito. Mosaico, VI sec. Basilica di San Vitale, Ravenna.



III. 2. Leone VI (886-912), prosternato di fronte al Pantocratore. Mosaico, 920 ca. Nartece. Santa Sophia, Istanbul. Nel medaglione, la Vergine Maria e l'Arcangelo Michele.



III. 3: Giustiniano I (a sinistra) e Costantino I (a destra), che si inchinano alla Vergine con il bambino, il primo, con Santa Sophia, e il secondo, con la città di Costantinopoli. Mosaico, 990. Galleria del Sud. Santa Sophia, Istanbul.



III. 4: Incoronazione di Ruggero II (1130-1154) da parte di Gesù. Mosaico, XII sec. Basilica di Santa Maria dell’Ammiraglio (San Nicolò dei Greci) “La Martorana”, Palermo

Elenco delle illustrazioni:

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Professors and Holy Fathers At Work. The Iconography of Teaching in the Sepulchral Art of Trecento Bologna

Simona Drăgan*

Abstract: In the late Middle Ages, the Italian art developed an iconography of teaching that served to the remembrance of the most praiseworthy professors of medieval universities in funeral art. An art of the master lecturing to his students can be encountered on sarcophagi or the so-called *arcae*, as a post-mortem *laudatio* of these renowned scholars and citizens. The article will focus solely on this iconography, as opposed to scenes of glorification or rhetorical *disputatio*, which – albeit interconnected – have their distinct place in art. The main object of the analysis are the civic tombs for scholars built in Bologna in the 14th century, and I will complement their analysis in the literature with details of cultural information and formal analysis such as the composition of space, the significance of gestures and the importance of dress codes. The last example, in lieu of conclusions, will reveal the ambivalent sacred iconography of an altarpiece *predella* from Florence inspired by the secular iconography discussed in this article.

Keywords: civic tombs, funerary art, Trecento, Italian art, medieval universities, *studium generale*, Bologna, iconography, transmission of knowledge.

Preaching and teaching in a few gestures: introductory similarities

In the 14th century the Italian art developed an iconography of teaching (“*iconografia universitaria*”¹) that served to the remembrance, in the funerary art, of the most praiseworthy professors of canon law, civil law,

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¹ Roberto Bartolini, “Goro di Gregorio e la tomba del giurista Guglielmo di Ciliano”, *Prospettiva*, No. 41, Aprile 1985, p. 38, note 69.

theology, or medicine of the medieval universities. Some of them were also entrusted with civic and political duties in the Italian cities, were heads of important guilds (*arte*), wrote treatises, codes of law, and even poetry. An art that presents the master lecturing to his students can be encountered independently on sarcophagi or the Italian *arcae*, but also in pictorial narratives about the life of some Church doctors such as St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas, where one of the *vita* scenes reveals their sanctified authority precisely through teaching.

An art historian defined the most appropriate approach to the art of Duecento and Trecento as follows: “the key to the visual world of art history [is] history, in its events and its personalities”². We can read in these words an invitation addressed to any scholar in iconography to dig into the little history of the time and foster new ideas from the material realities of such times. On the other hand, iconography in the Late Middle Ages depends to a great extent on conventions and traceable novelties. Therefore, we shall proceed to a combination of iconographic research and cultural history to reveal the underlying symbols and meanings of the Trecento art on the subject of teaching.

The roles assigned to the theologians in the Middle Ages were “reading (*lectio*), disputing (*disputatio*), and preaching (*praedicatio*)”³. It is a three-sequence chain in the transmission of knowledge (understood here as the holy doctrine) that involves both the individual study and the interaction with an audience. Therefore, we expect that the iconography of a theologian may reveal him in any of these acts, but the particular focus on the last sequence is of interest here. But on the other hand, the transmission of secular knowledge involved more or less the same steps in the Middle Ages. Since preaching (as well as lecturing in general) is part of the transmission of knowledge and closely related to the iconography that will make the focus of this article, we shall also look into a few connecting points of the iconography of teaching with that of preaching. In the late Middle Ages, preaching and teaching were part of the same ethos, and iconographically they are occasionally related through certain gestures defining their formal rhetoric.

The scenes of preaching usually involve Jesus Christ, a prophet or a saint depicted in front of a passive, non-interacting audience. The people listening to holy preachers are mainly non-gesturing auditors, like we see in a miniature scene from Life of the Blessed Gerard of Villamagna, ca. 1320⁴,

² Serena Romano, “Julian Gardner”, in L. Bourdua, R. Gibbs (eds.), *A Wider Trecento. Studies in 13th- and 14th-Century European Art Presented to Julian Gardner*, Brill, 2012, p. xiv.

³ Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation. Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania UP, 2013, p. 134.

⁴ Miniature from Ms. 643, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, in *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450*, Laurence B. Kanter et al. (ed.), exhibition catalogue, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994, p. 53, fol. 35.

where the front row of the public even has the same gesture of their arms lying submissively on their knees like non-responsive puppets. It is an indication that the listeners do not have any objections or active interventions in the speech, but only absorb the substance of the holy words. Like in similar scenes on religious conversion, the underlying idea is that passive listeners are recipients of unidirectional transmission of the holy doctrine, or participants in a mystery.

In the 9th century Carolingian Bible Moutier-Grandval, a miniature showing Moses delivering the Table of the Law to the Israelites⁵ (fig. 1) shows multiple figures directly gazing to the prophet, and two listeners engaged in gestures of finger to mouth or hand to the chin respectively, as signs of “concentration and thought”⁶, according to Moshe Barasch. These are gestures that we also encounter in the iconography of teaching at the pupils in a class.



Fig. 1. Ms. 15046, Bible Moutier-Grandval, Moses delivering the Table of the Law to the Israelites, miniature, 9th century, British Library, London (cropped).
Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

⁵ Moutier-Grandval Bible, French school, ca. 834-843, Add 10546, fol. 25b, British Library, London.

⁶ Moshe Barasch, *Giotto and the language of gesture*, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990 [1987], p. 48.

Even a widespread gesture like Christ's sign of benediction may actually be polysemantic occasionally. Barasch regards it as a "teaching gesture"⁷ in Giotto's *Washing of the feet of the Apostles* in the Paduan cycle of the Scrovegni Chapel (fig. 2), considering that this act of Jesus was theologically perceived as a mystery that Jesus not only performed but also explained to his disciples. We can add that in this scene Jesus symbolically performs the mystery with his left hand and gives his teaching explanation with the right.



Fig. 2. Giotto, *Washing of the feet of the Apostles* (cropped), fresco, ca. 1305, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Italy. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

In the aforementioned cycle of the Blessed Gerard of Villamagna, the last miniature is a scene where a traditionally horned Moses preaches before an audience of Israelites⁸. The crowd in this miniature is only apparently similar to the one where the preacher was the Blessed Gerard: in this new scene one man in the public makes an addressing gesture toward Moses. With regard to the iconography of the listeners, the two resembling miniatures may allude, not only with similarities but also in contrast, to how consensual and obedient the Christians are when guided by the Blessed Gerard, as compared to the old dissensual Israelites, whom Moses had hard times to train into a new religion. Thus, before speaking of the medieval universities, certain gestures of *disputatio* pertaining to moments of teaching are to be found mainly in primary religious contexts, with prophets or sanctified theologians.

In Scenes from the Life of Gerard of Villamagna, the theological link between the two compared scenes was found by Barbara Drake Boehm to be in Acts 7:37, where Moses imperatively tells the Israelites: “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.” This allusion to the birth of a new prophet should be interpreted both christologically and hagiographically, as Drake Boehm suggests⁹: either with Christ or with the Blessed Gerard of Villamagna, that time had come. We can also notice that in the two scenes only the Christian audience is depicted with similar submissive gestures, as perfectly aligned to the rule.

The size of the characters is also telling: in the aforesaid miniatures Moses is rendered disproportionately taller than the people addressed, which is not the case in the preaching scene with the Blessed Gerard, who is more humble. In the miniature with Moses it is still preserved a symbolic hierarchy, while in Christianity it is implied that all are equal. The symbolic hierarchy of saintly importance will also operate in secular contexts in the Bolognese monuments to be further discussed, but here the *docente*, usually represented in equal size with his attenders, is in many cases raised a few steps up, so as to occupy a majestic role in cathedra.

⁸ Miniature from Ms. 643, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, in *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450, op. cit.*, p. 53, fol. 38.

⁹ Barbara Drake Boehm, “Scenes from the Life of Christ and Life of the Blessed Gerard of Villamagna”, in *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450, op. cit.*, p. 54.

Form and content in the iconography of teaching: an analysis of the Bolognese tombs

Universities functioned like religious confrerries, with patron saints that were venerated and mutual help provided in the organization when needed¹⁰. For instance, Saint Nicholas of Bari was one of the cherished university saints, as we shall see in the last example included in this article. University education was also important for a cleric's career, and in the late Middle Ages the successful students came from an urban elite, too¹¹. Since the content of education was rarely secular, high education usually meant consistent training in the Christian religion. Besides, when we observe similarities between the religious and the secular iconographies of teaching, we should acknowledge that, according to an exegete, the shared feature of universities and of monastic settings was simply the activity of study. With respect to the latter, we especially regard the Dominicans, who were great theologians and patrons of arts. An interpreter appreciates that what makes St. Thomas Aquinas a Dominican is precisely the importance he gave to "the value of study"¹². He refers to the entire activity of Aquinas as a theologian scholar, who started as a brilliant student at the University of Paris and opposes him – and the Dominicans altogether – to St. Francis's disinterest in the centrality of theological study for the life of humility advocated by the rival order of the Franciscans¹³. The Dominicans were thus of the essence in the rise and consolidation of a new theological doctrine. In the iconography to be further discussed in this article, we very often see canons in monastic habits as 'students': they have tonsures, beards and monastic habits that were even identified with precision (Cistercians, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc)¹⁴. For instance, in the Dominican convents, which stressed the importance of study in further development of the art of preaching, the monks were called *fratres studentes*, and were taught by a teacher called a *doctor*¹⁵.

¹⁰ Jacques Verger, *Universitățile în Evul Mediu* [Les Universités au Moyen Âge], trans. Simona Ilieș, preface by Monica Brânzei and Alexander Bamgarten, Polirom, Iași, 2019, p. 86.

¹¹ Gian Maria Varanini, "Strategie familiari per la carriera ecclesiastica (Italia, sec. XIII-XIV)", in Sandro Carocci, Amedeo De Vincentiis (eds.), *La mobilità sociale nel Medioevo italiano*, Vol. 3. Il mondo ecclesiastico (secoli XII-XIV), Roma, Viella, 2017, p. 398.

¹² Brian Davies, "St. Thomas Aquinas as a Dominican", *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 60, No. 706, March 1979, p. 104.

¹³ For a different opinion regarding the rise in importance of the study with the Franciscans, see Julian Gardner, "Painters, Inquisitors, and Novices", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 60. Bd., H. 2 (2018), pp. 244-249.

¹⁴ See one example of identification of monastic orders after the habit in Martina Schilling, "Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher: The Tomb of Thomas Gallus at Sant 'Andrea in Vercelli (Mid 14th Century)", in L. Bourdoux, R. Gibbs (eds.), *A Wider Trecento. Studies in 13th- and 14th-Century European Art Presented to Julian Gardner*, Brill, 2012, p. 125.

¹⁵ Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Jacques Verger states that the European universities change dramatically after mid-15th century¹⁶, which makes an artistic comparison between the medieval and the Renaissance iconographies of teaching too distant in our case. For instance, in the Quattrocento most universities managed to build their own premises, as compared to before, when the classes could take place in improvised environments like rented spaces, convents, and sometimes even in the professors' residential places¹⁷. For instance, Bologna built proper headquarters for the university only in the 15th century¹⁸. In all the Bolognese Trecentesque sarcophagi, we can only deduce the simplicity of some improvised settings in the university scenes, or notice the absence of any architectural clues. A little difference is made in the tomb of Bonifacio Galluzzi (fig. 3), where we can notice two biforate trefoil windows in the background, which might suggest the gothic openings of a convent or medieval palazzo. Similar suggestions of a biforate blind arcade are given on the right in the teaching scene on the monument of Cino da Pistoia. These are rare cases of the ones analyzed in the following when the composition includes architectural clues regarding the place where the students learn. In the first one the students are also depicted bending over their codices, their eyes excessively strained on the scripts like not having enough light. We retain this detail because it suggests a place quite dark and not very appropriate for study, despite the architectonic elegance implied.

The focus of this article, as already announced, resides in the iconography of the tombs dedicated to multifaceted scholars and professors in Bologna in the Italian Trecento. A few other connections are meant to complete the picture of these spectacular funerary monuments. For the first half of the 14th century, we have the tomb of Bonifacio Galluzzi (d. 1346) by Bettino da Bologna, the tomb of Pietro Cerniti by Roso da Parma (1338), the tomb of Matteo Gandoni (d. 1330), sculpted by the workshop of Agostino di Giovanni and Agnolo Ventura from Siena or Bologna. The tomb of Lorenzo Pini (d. 1397) by Paolo di Bonaiuto is dated at the end of the 14th century. Most of these sepulchral monuments were removed from their original placement in churches and displayed at Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. The museum also contains well-preserved figurative parts from other tombs of unidentified lecturers.

¹⁶ Jacques Verger, *Universitățile în Evul Mediu, op. cit.*, p. 227.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*



Fig. 3. Bettino da Bologna, Tomb of Bonifaccio Galluzzi (main scene), first half of the 14th century, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Wikimedia Commons (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

The connections with Siena are particularly clear in the case of this type of Bolognese art: the *Studio* of Bologna (in Latin, *studium generale*), as the medieval university was named, was transferred to Siena in 1321¹⁹, which makes the iconography of these professoral tombs to be identified in Siena, too. See, for instance, the funerary monument of Niccolò Aringhieri, a jurisconsult at the *Studio* of Siena, deceased in 1374, or the university scenes by Goro di Gregorio dedicated to Guglielmo da Ciliano, professor of law and even rector of the Siennese *studio*, also transferred from Bologna²⁰. The monument dedicated to Guglielmo is a suspended *arca*, and presents the sepulchral image of the defunct in the registre above and a teaching scene lower. Also, the *arca* of Giovanni di Andrea (first half of the 14th century) is attributed to Jacopo Lanfrani, a follower of Siennese artists. For similar sepulchral iconography in Verona, also a city in north Italy like Bologna, we notice a teaching scene on the funerary monument of the philosopher and professor Antonio Pelacani and his wife (ca. 1327, Church San Fermo Maggiore). Again, like in the relations Bologna-Siena, although Antonio Pelacani was buried in Verona, we find that he had lectured in medicine at the medieval university of Bologna²¹.

In Bologna, the inscriptions on the funerary monuments of the doctors, and their dates, can also provide a useful chronology. In the

¹⁹ Roberto Bartolini, “Goro di Gregorio e la tomba del giurista Guglielmo di Ciliano”, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Tiziana Franco, “Tombe di uomini eccellenti (dalla fine del XIII alla prima metà del XV secolo)”, in Paolo Golinelli, Caterina Gemma Brenzoni (eds.), *I santi Fermo e Rustico. Un culto e una chiesa in Verona. Per il XVII centenario del loro martirio (304-2004)*, Parrocchia di San Fermo Maggiore in Verona, pp. 251, 254.

following we shall indicate the chronology of a few of them after the names of their recipients: Bartoluzzo de' Preti (1318), Matteo Gandoni (1330), Pietro Cerniti (1338), Giovanni di Andrea (1348), Giovanni da Legnano (1386)²², etc.



Fig. 4. Tomb of Thomas Gallus, 14th century, Basilica di Sant'Andrea in Vercelli, Piedmont, Italy. Photo: Wikipedia.

²² Serena Ammirati (ed.), "Indice delle testimonianze scritte", in *Scripta. An International Journal of Codicology and Palaeography*, Vol. 9, 2016, p. 150.

The tomb of Rolandino dei Passaggeri, a reputed notary public and law scholar, was built in Bologna in 1300-1306 in the old form of an *arca*. It was the first funerary monument to include a secular scene with a *doctor* giving a lesson to his class. In the Italian historiography these scenes are simply called *Docente che tiene lezione*, or *Docente in cattedra*. They gave rise to an iconography that covers areas with blurred or extended frontiers by the time; and sometimes these areas may suppose local relations with universities, cultures and theologians outside Italy. For instance, a similar iconography of teaching can be found in the mid-14th century tomb of the French theologian Thomas Gallus in Vercelli, Piedmont (fig. 4). Just like St. Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Gallus was a distinguished scholar at the University of Paris in the 13th century. He came to run a Victorine abbey in the north of Italy and was the master of St. Anthony of Padua²³, which indicates the importance of spiritual and intellectual genealogies for this period, especially in Italy's relations with France.

The idea of this type of iconography was referred in the literature to older origins: in 1267 Nicola Pisano had completed Arca di San Domenico in Bologna, which was a pyramidal, finely adorned sepulchral monument for Saint Dominic, the very founder of the Dominican Order. With this arca, Bologna intended to present itself as a city most favoured by God²⁴. This arca is said to have also emulated in 1339 the building of Arca di San Pietro Martire by Giovanni di Balduccio, a Pisan himself like his predecessor Nicola Pisano²⁵. We notice here that these first prototypes were dedicatory monuments to saints, not scholars. In all their complexity, both monuments are free standing and contain a historiated sarcophagus with scenes from the life of the deceased, similar to how historiated *predellas* complete the lowest part of a wooden panel with scenes from the life of the patron saint of a panel. As a matter of fact, narratives about the life of the deceased had been very scarce until the Arca di San Domenico, and none to such extent as in this particular monument, which makes Nicola Pisano's option to depict the biography of the deceased in an extensive way to be regarded as "a major innovation"²⁶. Therefore, like in the painted altarpieces the sepulchral image of the defunct (in architecture, usually a *gisant* of French inspiration) is in the registre above, and a narrative scene about his acts is presented in the lower registre.

²³ Martina Schilling, "Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher...", *op. cit.*, p. 134.

²⁴ Randi Klebanoff, „Sacred magnificence: civic intervention and the arca of San Domenico in Bologna”, *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 4, December 1999, p. 418.

²⁵ Anita Moskowitz, "Giovanni di Balduccio's Arca di San Pietro Martire: Form and Function", *Arte Lombarda*, Nuova serie, No. 96/97 (1-2), 1991, pp. 7, 9.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 16, note 16. For the influence of Arca of St. Dominic on the narrativity of other tombs of saints until the early Cinquecento in various Italian cities, see a few examples in Rebekah Carson, "The quintessential Christian tomb: saints, professors, and Riccio's tomb design", *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, February 2014, pp. 100-101.



Fig. 5. Arca of Rolandino dei Passaggeri, early 14th century, Square San Domenico, Bologna. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

The arca of Rolandino dei Passaggeri (1234-1300), professor of law at the Bolognese *Studio* and the celebrated head of the guild of notaries public, was the first dedicated to a lay scholar (fig. 5). It roughly sketches the lecturer in profile on the right of the image and four defaced students in front of him. The professor occupies the same position also in the tomb of Matteo Gandoni (d. 1330), also a jurist (fig. 6). Inspired by a brief suggestion of Keith Christiansen²⁷, we could say that, given the left-to-right usual reading of an image, placing the lecturer on the right puts less focus on him: a superficial reading of the scene could remain incomplete, and thus miss him. This form of representation is therefore better reversed in the funerary monument of Cino da Pistoia (1270-1336), where the professor is rendered also in profile, but on the left side of the image, theoretically the first to be seen (fig. 7).

²⁷ Keith Christiansen, "Early Renaissance Narrative Painting in Italy", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 41, No. 2, Autumn, 1983, pp. 6-7.



Fig. 6. Workshop of Agostino di Giovanni and Agnolo Ventura, Tomb of Matteo Gandoni (main scene), Siena or Bologna, 1330, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Simona Drăgan (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

The complex funerary monument of Cino da Pistoia (jurisconsult and poet, judge of civil cases in the Pistoiese government) by Agostino di Giovanni, dated 1338-1339, was a commemorative monument built in a decade when the Commune of Pistoia ran a campaign of civic patronage for the emancipation of the city from the Florentine hegemony²⁸. In the teaching scene the students are disposed in three-quarter view in three groups at their desks. The oblique line of each desk suggests perspective: it is implied that the students are actually sitting at desks placed one behind another. This spatial disposition is better resolved in the tomb of Matteo Gandoni (fig. 6): here the students are explicitly sitting one behind another, each at his own desk, and the lines of their inclined chairs create a plastic rhythmicity of the composition. It was probably this tomb that one century later inspired the monument of Pietro Canonici (fig. 8), professor of civil law, deceased in 1502 in Bologna. Attributed to Vincenzo Onofri, this Renaissance tomb already dates in the early 16th century and is a tardive reaffirmation of old medieval prototypes. It reminds of the medieval tomb of Matteo Gandoni in the detail of the decorative flowers, now re-elaborated in a sophisticated embellishment of the parietal walls.

²⁸ Flavio Boggi, "The Maestà of the Palazzo Comunale in Pistoia: Civic Art and Marian Devotion in the Pistoiese Commune of the Fourteenth Century", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 51. Bd., H. 1/2, 2007, p. 260.



Fig. 7. Sienese master, Monument of Cino da Pistoia (teaching scene), 1338-1339, Cathedral of Pistoia. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

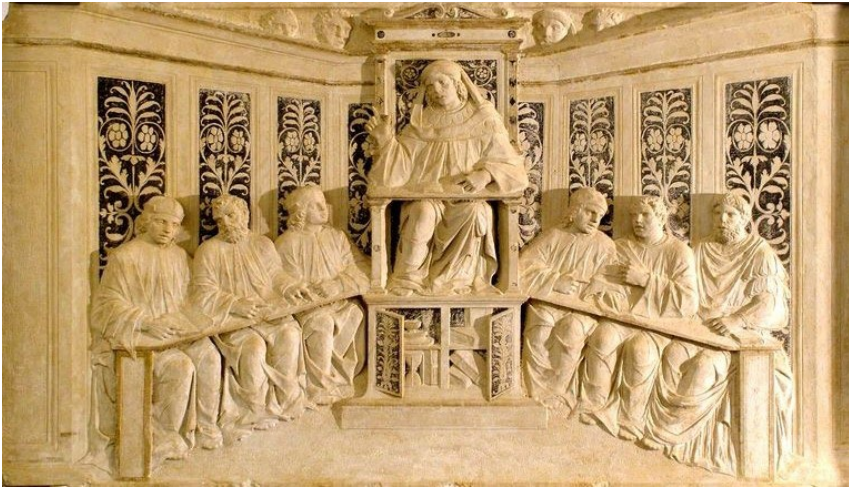


Fig. 8. Vincenzo Onofri (attr.), Tomb of Pietro Canonici (main scene), early 16th century, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Wikimedia Commons (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

The spatial solution with the class displayed all in a row with the lecturer on one side was, at some point, probably felt as not sufficiently expressive. Similar difficulties may have been felt with the students rendered in quasi-profiles. In later similar scenes the students will be placed frontally, facing the looker instead of the lecturer, but the perspective is still suggested through the obliquity in the line of their desks on the sepulchre of Bonifacio Galuzzi by Bettino da Bologna (fig. 3). On this tomb the lecturer is rendered in frontal position and the students flank him on both sides. A similar solution is given on the tomb of Giovanni di Andrea (fig. 9), master in canon law and professor at the universities of Padua, Pisa and Bologna, where the tripartite composition enhances the importance of the lecturer by advancing him to occupy one third of the entire space. Thus, the majestic professor sits frontally on a large elegant bench behind a small pupitre, while the audients are crowded at their own desks in great number. Besides, their number is increased by a continuation on the side walls of the sarcophagus, which add

two attenders placed frontally on one side and two in profile on the other. The tombs of Pietro Cerniti (fig. 10), Lorenzo Pini and some slabs from the tomb of an unidentified lecturer from the second half of the 14th century²⁹ prefer the disposition of the students frontally behind pupitres that are perfectly paralleled to the bottom plan. The suggestions of perspective are absent in these tombs. The Renaissance tomb of Pietro Canonici (fig. 8) preserves the setting of the lecturer frontally in the centre of the composition but resolves with obvious dexterity the problems of space volume: the students on the flanks are displayed triangularly like in a pyramid taking to the lecturer placed on top in cathedra.

Roberto Bartalini notices that the artist Agostino di Giovanni used to repeat the physiognomies of the sculpted figures in various monuments, at comfortable distance from each other³⁰. Such repetitions are not necessarily at distance in other monuments. See, for instance, the tomb of Pietro Cerniti (fig. 10), where the physiognomies of the pupils are simplified and very repetitive. It is a sign that such works could, more or less, be conventional and limitative, and that not all the faces were, if any, portraits.



Fig. 9. Arca of Giovanni di Andrea (main scene), first half of the 14th century, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Wikipedia (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

As regards the rhetoric of gestures, in the tomb of Giovanni di Andrea (fig. 9), the closest to the lecturer are two students, one on each side, with distinctively reflective gestures. In the second line of interest the other students are engaged in reading or *disputatio* with a colleague. As noticed in

²⁹ See the slabs with inv. nos. 1634, 1635 in Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna (*Parti del sepolcro di un lettore*).

³⁰ Roberto Bartalini, "Per la scultura senese del Trecento: Agostino di Giovanni", *Prospettiva*, No. 108, Ottobre 2002, pp. 14-15.

the literature, the practice of disputation in the Middle Ages relates to the rise of universities³¹, which included this practice in the teaching. On the tomb of Pietro Cerniti (fig. 10) the students have distinct gestures and the same vestments. They all wear a *cappuccio*, except for the pupil in the far right corner, bare-headed, who could be a junior or a novice: “At the medieval university, going bare-headed could indicate a lesser academic degree”³², writes Martina Schilling. The gesture of explanation of the student close to him may indicate a telescopic transmission of knowledge: the lecturer explains to everyone, but the more learned among the students help the less learned with their own teaching. Again, like in the arca of Giovanni di Andrea the most proximal students to the lecturer have the all-absorbed gestures or mimic, probably as an indication of hierarchy among the followers. We know that such hierarchies existed: the medieval professors – and Giovanni di Andrea was one – had teaching assistants or senior students assisting them with the lecture and helping the others³³.



Fig. 10. Roso da Parma, Tomb of Pietro Cerniti (main scene), 1338, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Simona Drăgan (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

The fact that in all these monuments we see groups or pairs of students engaged in different gestures instead of simply listening should be understood as presenting sequences of one and the same lecture (or the complexity of lecturing), and not signs of carelessness or indiscipline. As dedicatory monuments to a revered professor and citizen, they would not include any sign of irreverence. Therefore, the different types of gestures are intended to cover all parts of a medieval lesson.

In a few examples of this funeral iconography we see behind the canons from the first row several listeners that seem to create a different audience. Would the lecturing be addressed to more people than to the

³¹ Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

³² Martina Schilling, “Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher...”, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

³³ Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 159, 165.

regular canons? This kind of non-engaged audience can be seen, for instance, in the arca of Lorenzo Pini (fig. 11), and also guessed in other cases in the second row of audients, marked by a different hairstyle or secular headgear. A good comparison is the painted tomb of Thomas Gallus in Vercelli, Piedmont (fig. 4). It is “a hanging wall tomb on corbels – an Italian peculiarity that developed in the second half of the thirteenth century”³⁴, reiterates Martina Schilling, who acrimoniously describes every attending person in the iconography of the theologian surrounded by his canons, but also by representatives of the secular clergy and outstanding citizens of the city. The conclusion is that “this diversity in Thomas’ classroom does not appear to express opposition or rivalry, but to underline the great unifying purpose, namely the relevance of Thomas’ scholarship to all the groups represented, a universal claim across the borders of disciplines and society”³⁵. Schilling considers it a “quite rare iconography”³⁶, and clearly relates it to the Bolognese university tombs, mostly resembling, in this case, the arca of Giovanni di Andrea (fig. 9) (and further inspirational, in turn, to the murals of the church Saint Augustine in Bergamo)³⁷.



Fig. 11. Paolo di Bonaiuto, Tomb of Lorenzo Pini (main scene), end of the 14th century, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Simona Drăgan (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

Nevertheless, we do not find this iconography rare if we compare it to the sculpted reliefs on the sepulchral monuments discussed above. It is actually a painted transposition of the same ideas, and fortunately a good confirmation of the fact that some of the reliefs discussed in this article

³⁴ H. Körner, *Grabmonumente des Mittelalters*, Darmstadt, 1997, pp. 72–75, apud Martina Schilling, “Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher...”, *op. cit.*, p. 138, note 50.

³⁵ Martina Schilling, “Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher...”, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³⁶ Carla Travi, Maria Grazia Recanati, “Lombardia, Piemonte, Liguria”, in Mina Gregori (ed.), *Pittura murale in Italia. Dal tardo Duecento ai primi del Quattrocento*, Edizioni Bolis, Bergamo, 1995, p. 144.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144, p. 144, n. 41.

intended to express the same meaning as stressed by Schilling (the universality of teaching contents that are cherished and praised). On the aforesaid tombs we can occasionally notice the same variety of attenders, of whom ones were the regulars, and others were visibly external. If not easily discernible on the Trecento tombs, the Renaissance monument of Pietro Canonici (fig. 8), which resumes the old iconography with more clear means, indicates the secular beneficiaries of the lecturer's wisdom as a distinct tribune placed outside the frontstage of the regulars.

The next century, for apparently no reason other than to reenforce the dignity shown to great *signori* of the cities through well-tested iconographies, we find the perfect university scene displayed frontally on the tomb of Anton Galeazzo Bentivoglio³⁸, sculpted by Jacopo della Quercia in Bologna in 1435. In this case the deceased had been a former *condottiere*, and then a political man, without any roots or activities in the academic or literary life of the time; such old iconography may have only been meant to ennoble him and his line of descendants.

At the end of the Middle Ages statutes described with details the costumes of the professors: they included silk, precious fur, long leather gauntlets/gloves³⁹. The lifestyle of a university professor tended to imitate the life of nobility and developed its own ceremonials⁴⁰. "The most constant of the colours was scarlet for Canon Law"⁴¹, reads the literature, and this was certainly the case in Paris, where doctors in canon law adopted the red colour in the fourteenth century following an enactment of Pope Benedict XII in 1336. However, in Bologna the scarlet robe was worn by civil lawyers and physicians, while doctors in canon law are documented to have worn a blue *cappa manicata*⁴², as we can notice at two doctors depicted on the tomb of Bonifacio Galluzzi (fig. 3). The fact that on this monument the blue vestment worn by doctors is attributed to some people attending the lecturer's class is another proof of the high prestige shown to the deceased: he was revered not only by junior disciples but also by his quasi-peers, as in a shared effort to overcome the difficulties of knowledge.

From Carolingian times to the 15th century, Michel Pastoureau finds that the churches were "massively polychrome", true "temples of the colour",

³⁸ For other tombs of Italian *signori*, their programmes and the personalities of the deceased, see Marco Folin, "Sepolture signorili nell'Italia centro-settentrionale: un tentativo di comparazione (secoli XIV-XV)", in S. Albonico, S. Romano (eds.), *Court and Courtly Cultures in Early Modern Italy and Europe. Models and Languages*, Roma, 2016, pp. 161-187.

³⁹ Jacques Verger, *Universitățile în Evul Mediu*, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

⁴¹ Martina Schilling, "Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher...", *op. cit.*, p. 133, note 38.

⁴² W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academic Dress in Europe until the end of the Eighteenth century*, Oxford, 1963, p. 14, apud Martina Schilling, "Celebrating the Scholar and Teacher...", *op. cit.*, p. 133, note 38.

“the only true chromatic sanctuaries”⁴³, especially in the 12th and 13th centuries, which makes the tomb of Bonifacio Galluzzi (early 14th century) even more precious with its traces of polychromy left. However, we also find the information that, save for some rare exceptions, in the Middle Ages sarcophagi were left blank⁴⁴, which raises the question if, after all, some of the Bolognese tombs might as well originally have been as monochrome as today.

In order to test the conclusions about the dress codes adopted, the different colours and the unifying purpose of the lecturer’s wisdom, we can also look into some other instances of the art of the day. For example, the so-called Master of the Dominican Effigies painted a *Glorification of Saint Thomas Aquinas* dated ca. 1325 (fig. 12). Laurence B. Kanter writes that this scene of glorification proposes a novel iconography at the time and serves as a prototype until late, for instance to a follower of Fra Angelico for a similar scene in San Marco church, Florence⁴⁵. Kanter also states the probable existence of a patron who had designed the new iconography to the artist. It is a case when a pictorial invention is attributed to an iconographer distinct from the artist, like in many cases on which no clear evidence can be given. We could support Kanter’s idea if we remark the distinct habits and headgear of the men in the audience. It is of a particular variety that most artists will imitate until late, either in painting or in sculpture: it definitely implies the idea of unification of all theological orders under one holy doctrine, which in this case comes from the radiant book of the speaker. In the picture Aquinas holds a book that literally sprays rays of light (that is, knowledge and faith) to the listeners. Last but not least, the distinctive habits of the auditors may come from details dictated with precision and clear intentions to the artist by a scholar theologian. An even better example is a manuscript page with the miniature *Saint Thomas Aquinas teaching six men from an open book (vellum)*, by Niccolò di Giacomo (da Bologna), also from the 14th century⁴⁶. It has a similar iconography, but also vibrant colors and is even more distinctive for the differentiation of the attenders’ vestments. Besides, the detail of Averroes lying down at the feet of St. Thomas Aquinas is absent in the said miniature.

⁴³ Michel Pastoureau, *Une histoire symbolique du Moyen Âge occidental*, Éditions du Seuil, 2004, pp. 144, 165, 408 n. 18, my translation / S.D.

⁴⁴ Anita Moskowitz, “Giovanni di Balduccio’s Arca di San Pietro Martire...” *op. cit.*, p. 16, n. 16.

⁴⁵ Laurence B. Kanter, “Master of the Dominican Effigies. 5. The Last Judgment, etc.; the Glorification of Saint Thomas Aquinas, etc.”, in *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁴⁶ Niccolò di Giacomo (da Bologna), *Saint Thomas Aquinas teaching six men from an open book (vellum)*, manuscript miniature, 14th century, MS 278b, 38x26.5 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, UK.



Fig. 12. Master of the Dominican Effigies, *The Last Judgment, etc.; the Glorification of Saint Thomas Aquinas, etc.* (cropped), ca. 1325, tempera on panel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

These two examples of painting prove that in the first half of the 14th century the same ideas as for the tomb reliefs of Bologna circulated on different art media: the holy fathers and the esteemed professors in the medieval *Studios* (who sometimes were also citizens in high administrative ranks, law makers and poets) were treasurers of prestigious knowledge to be transmitted to all levels of the society.

In lieu of conclusions. Sacred vs. profane in a panel with *Cristo docente*

An altarpiece of the Virgin and Child from Florence, dated 1391, has a unique *predella* painted in tempera on wood. The unknown artist, a certain ‘Francesco’, was even named, after this “singolare scena”⁴⁷, “Master of *Cristo docente*” (fig. 13). *Christ among the doctors* is a sequence that can also be related to the iconography of secular teaching. It was sometimes

⁴⁷ Cecilia Scaella, “Francesco”, in Miklós Boskovits, Daniela Parenti (eds.), *Dipinti*. Vol. II. *Il tardo Trecento*, Firenze, Giunti, 2010, p. 31.

explicitly indicated as a scene of *disputatio*⁴⁸, which makes it akin to the iconography of teaching discussed in this article.



Fig. 13. ‘Francesco’ (Master of *Cristo docente*), *Cristo docente*, inv. 1890 n. 6154, tempera on panel (*predella*), 1391, Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence. Photo: Galleria dell’Accademia. Reproduced by permission of the Ministry of Culture of Italy.

Here, the Florentine *Cristo docente* shows Jesus Christ seated at cathedra with two groups of people at their desks on both sides. The image alludes to a scholarly environment similar to those in the medieval universities: Jesus and the ‘students’ are bent over unscrolled scripts like in the middle of a lesson, with all the iconographic characteristics in their position and gestures. The listeners wear secular clothes, and are engaged differently in the lesson: they either read the text carefully, or listen to their master with interest, or one of them seems to engage in a subsidiary matter with a colleague. On the right, a boy brings a book. A similar boy in the same position and also holding a book in his hands appears in the iconography of the tomb of Matteo Gandoni (fig. 6). Here the boy, in Italian a *bidello*, is also figured last on the left of the image. In both cases, this extra character added to the lesson illustrates the person who in medieval universities would bring a new book to the class from a remote library.

The entire scene was given different interpretations, but the most plausible one reads it as figuring the ancient *studio florentino*, established in 1320 in Florence, and assimilated to the rank of a medieval university only in 1348. As an argument, a *Cristo docente* in a sepulchral context was also found in a medieval miniature by Jacopino da Bologna, but the composition there is entirely different. With the Florentine *predella*, the allusion to the old iconography of university teaching and *disputatio* in this scene was sustained by Cecilia Scalella not only from the clear resemblance between the two, but

⁴⁸ Maestro di Tolentino, *Disputa con i dottori*, in Cappellone di San Nicola, Tolentino. See Carlo Volpe, *La pittura riminese del ‘300*, Mario Spagnol Editore, Milano, 1965, fig. 248, page not numbered. The scene *Christ among the doctors* is sometimes also named *Christ disputing in the temple*, and has a long tradition of interpretation as a disputation scene. See, for example, J. Gardner, “Painters, Inquisitors, and Novices”, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-249, or Ivana Čapeta Rakić, Giuseppe Capriotti, “An Inquiry into the Image of Jews in 15th-Century Istria The Iconography of the Jewish-Christian Dispute”, in *IKON. Journal of Iconographic Studies*, Vol. 15, 2022, pp. 48-52.

also in relation to the presence of Saint Nicholas of Bari in the central scene of the altarpiece (fig. 14).



Fig. 14. ‘Francesco’ (Master of *Cristo docente*), *Madonna col Bambino fra i santi Giovanni Battista e Nicola e due angeli reggicortina*, inv. 1890 n. 6154, tempera on panel, 1391, Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence. Photo: Galleria dell’Accademia. Reproduced by permission of the Ministry of Culture of Italy.

At the time, Saint Nicholas of Bari, placed here on the right of the panel, was also considered a patron of the young students, which makes the

predella more relevant in alluding to a scholarly environment than to an allegory of the Florentine Government, as suggested by another interpreter⁴⁹. In the Middle Ages, one of the popular miracles of Saint Nicholas was the resurrection of three students murdered by a wicked innkeeper and his wife. It was a sordid story of horror that may have alluded to the vulnerability of young people travelling in insecure times. In art the iconography of this miracle variably depicts the victims as young men or even childlike boys⁵⁰. Their identity as students is obviously not deducible from such images, but variations of this legend were actually staged in schools in northern Europe on winter holidays as a miracle play⁵¹. The connection of this miracle with scholarly environments was therefore clear at the time.

Last but not least, in the comparison of the *Cristo docente* scene with secular learning, an analogy was found in the lines of Matthew: “And do not be called masters either, because you have one Master, the Messiah”⁵². Here the double meaning of the word “master” is played upon: the school had masters, but Jesus Christ himself had been – and still was – a Master, the one and only to the believers. As a brief conclusion to this paper, the rare iconography of this Florentine scene makes an extraordinary parallel between the secular and the sacred and, secondly, warns that the secular *doctors’* wisdom should be subordinated to that of the Church; in particular, it also seems to make a hint to the medieval doctors’ inflated vanity.

List and sources of illustrations:

Fig. 1. Ms. 15046, Bible Moutier-Grandval, Moses delivering the Table of the Law to the Israelites, miniature, 9th century, British Library, London (cropped). Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 2. Giotto, *Washing of the feet of the Apostles* (cropped), fresco, ca. 1305, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Italy. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 3. Bettino da Bologna, Tomb of Bonifaccio Galluzzi (main scene), first half of the 14th century, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Wikimedia Commons (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

Fig. 4. Tomb of Thomas Gallus, 14th century, Basilica di Sant’Andrea in Vercelli, Piedmont, Italy. Source: Wikipedia.

Fig. 5. Arca of Rolandino dei Passaggeri, early 14th century, Square San Domenico, Bologna. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

⁴⁹ Cecilia Scaella, “*Francesco*”, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁵⁰ Agnolo Gaddi depicts the resurrection of three young men in 1393 (*Storie di San Nicola*). So does Gentile da Fabriano in the Quaratesi Polyptych, 1425, Pinacoteca of Vatican Museums. Much later, some details of the legend were probably forgotten. In 1796, Antonio Pennisi paints the miracle with three infants instead of teenagers.

⁵¹ Michele Bacci, apud Cecilia Scaella, “*Francesco*”, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁵² Matthew, 23: 10, in *The Bible* (Holman Christian Standard Bible), URL: <https://biblehub.com/hcsb/matthew/23.htm> (accessed 23/10/2025).

Fig. 6. Workshop of Agostino di Giovanni and Agnolo Ventura, Tomb of Matteo Gandoni (main scene), Siena or Bologna, 1330, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Simona Drăgan (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

Fig. 7. Siennese master, Monument of Cino da Pistoia (teaching scene), 1338-1339, Cathedral of Pistoia. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 8. Vincenzo Onofri (attr.), Tomb of Pietro Canonici (main scene), early 16th century, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Wikimedia Commons (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

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Fig. 10. Roso da Parma, Tomb of Pietro Cerniti (main scene), 1338, Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Photo: Simona Drăgan (reproduced by permission of the Museum).

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Fig. 12. Master of the Dominican Effigies, *The Last Judgment, etc.; the Glorification of Saint Thomas Aquinas, etc.* (cropped), ca. 1325, tempera on panel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 13. ‘Francesco’ (Master of *Cristo docente*), *Cristo docente*, inv. 1890 n. 6154, tempera on panel (predella), 1391, Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence. Photo: Galleria dell’Accademia. Reproduced by permission of the Ministry of Culture of Italy.

Fig. 14. ‘Francesco’ (Master of *Cristo docente*), *Madonna col Bambino fra i santi Giovanni Battista e Nicola e due angeli reggicortina*, inv. 1890 n. 6154, tempera on panel, 1391, Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence. Photo: Galleria dell’Accademia. Reproduced by permission of the Ministry of Culture of Italy.

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The Arch-gabled Church of Kyivan Rus: Byzantine Prototypes and the Formation of the Original Composition*

Kateryna Mikheienko**

Abstract: The article examines the origins of the formation of the arch-gabled church, which is one of the first original innovations of the architectural tradition of Kyivan Rus, formed on the basis of transplanted Byzantine architectural forms. The analysis of Byzantine architecture revealed several variants of the placement of the arched gables on the church facades, but there was no compositional model of the arch-gabled church there. In Byzantine churches, the arched gables in the wall completions of the naos compartments or narthex are associated with the existence of galleries, except the cross-arm ends. The hypothesis is put forward that the impetus for the development of the arch-gabled church of Kyivan Rus was given by Byzantine church narthex, which had arched gables both on the western facade and at the ends. However, in Byzantine architecture, the arch-gabled completion of the narthex is the consequence of the structure, while in Kyivan Rus it becomes a compositional principle. Based on the analysis of Kyivan Rus architecture from the late 10th to early 12th century, the stages of formation of the arch-gabled completion in the churches are proposed.

Keywords: architecture, Byzantium, Kyivan Rus, arch-gabled church, arched gable, horizontal cornice.

Introduction

The arch-gabled church is the most widespread type of church architecture in Kyivan Rus. The defining feature of the arch-gabled church is the continuous arch-gabled wall completion on all facades, because each

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facade bay is to have a semicircular arched gable, regardless of the nature of their vaults. Therefore, in such churches, not all of the arched gables are constructive, that is, those that fill the ends of the barrel vaults facing the facade, and some of the arched gables are decorative, as their semicircles are located next to the slopes of the vaults (Fig. 1). Thus, the continuous arch-gabled completion of the facades is a decorative form that does not depend on the structural solution of the vaults.

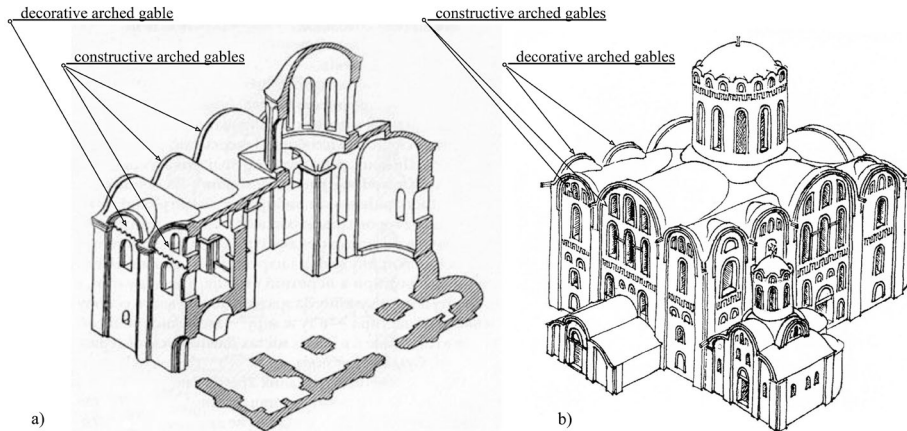


Fig. 1. The arch-gabled church of Kyivan Rus: a) St. Cyril's Church in Kyiv. Section in the axonometry, b) St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral in Kyiv. Reconstruction of the general view.

In the Russian Empire, the first book on the history of Kyivan Rus architecture was published at the end of the 19th century, and it expressed the idea that the arch-gabled church had been borrowed by Kyivan Rus architecture from Byzantium in the completed forms¹. The historians of architecture in the Soviet Union emphasised independence of Kyivan Rus architecture and distinguished it from the Byzantine one, so no one spoke of the connection between the arch-gabled churches and the Byzantine architectural tradition, as in the late 19th – early 20th century. However, this connection was not fundamentally denied, because Soviet researchers focused on the churches of pillar-shaped compositions that acquired their completed forms in the late 12th century and from that time began to replace the arch-gabled churches. In the Soviet Union, pillar-shaped churches were considered to be the initial stage in the development of Moscow tent churches

¹ Andrei Pavlinov, *Istoriia russkoi arkhitektury* (Moskva: Tipo-litogr. T-va I.N. Kushnerev K^o, 1894). Similar thoughts were expressed in the Russian publications of the early 20th century, in particular: Aleksei Novitskii, *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva s drevneishikh vremen*, Tom I (Moskva: Izd. V. N. Lind, 1903); Igor Grabar, *Istoriia Russkogo Iskusstva*, Tom I, *Arkhitektura. Istoriia arkhitektury. Do-Petrovskaia epokha* (Moskva: Izd. I. Knebel, 1910).

of the 16th – 17th centuries², and the arch-gabled churches fell out of that line of development, so their origin was not studied in detail, and they were not in the focus of scientific interest for a long time³.

It was only in the 1970s – 1980s that Aleksei Komech paid due attention to the arch-gabled church, noting the lack of continuous arch-gabled completion on all facades in Byzantine architecture. According to him, the arch-gabled church was one of the first innovations in the church architecture of Kyivan Rus. However, Aleksei Komech's study is chronologically limited to the beginning of the 12th century and does not cover the further development of this church type⁴. In recent years, my work has been focused on the study of the preserved 12th-century arch-gabled churches, as well as those known from archaeological excavations. This made it possible to identify regional variants of the arch-gabled church of the 12th century⁵. But the issue of the origins of the compositional model of the arch-gabled church as well as the stages of its formation remains unsolved. In this article, the

² Nikolai Brunov, "K voprosu o samostoiatelnykh chertakh russkoi arkhitektury X–XII vv.," in *Russkaia arkhitektura. Doklady, pročitannye v sviazi s dekadnikom po russkoi arkhitektуре v Moskve v aprele 1939 g.*, ed. Viacheslav Shkvarikov (Moskva: Gos. arkhitektur. izd-vo Akad. arkhitekturi SSSR, 1940), pp. 106–126. Nikolai Voronin, "U istokov russkogo natsionalnogo zodchestva (Iz istorii zodchestva perioda feodalnoi razdroblennosti XI–XV vv.)," in *Yezhegodnik Instituta istorii iskusstv: Zhivopis. Arkhitektura*, ed. Viktor Lazarev, Mark Neiman and Olga Podobedova (Moskva: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1952), pp. 257–316. Igor Grabar et al., eds., *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, Tom I, ed. Igor Grabar and Viktor Lazarev (Moskva: Izd-vo Akad. nauk SSSR, 1953), 95–154, 298–395. Igor Grabar et al., eds., *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, Tom II, ed. Igor Grabar and Viktor Lazarev (Moskva: Izd-vo Akad. nauk SSSR, 1954), pp. 7–71, 307–339, 379–385. Aleksandr Vlasov, ed., *Vseobshchaya istoriya arkhitekturi*, Tom 3, *Arkhitektura Vostochnoi Yevropy. Srednie veka*, ed. Yurii Yaralov (Leningrad-Moskva: Izd-vo literatury po stroitelstvu, 1966), pp. 516–656. Yurii Asieiev, *Zodchestvo Pridneprovskoi Rusi kontsa XII – pervoi poloviny XIII vekov, avtoref. dis. na soisk. uch. step. doktora arkhitektury* (Moskva, 1971).

³ The point of view on the development of Kyivan Rus architecture, formulated in Soviet works in the 1950s – 1960s, has become common in European and American publications. This was facilitated by German translations of some Soviet books (*Geschichte der Kultur der alten Rus'. Die vormongolische Periode*, eds. Boris Grekov and Mikhail Artamonov, 2 Bde. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959–1962)). Later, European and American researchers on Byzantine architecture (from the 1970s to the present day) briefly discussed Kyivan Rus architecture and mainly presented the point of view put forward in Soviet publications of the middle of the 20th century, with minor additions sticking to its main provisions, in particular, Cyril Mango, *Byzantine architecture* (New York, 1976); Robert Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁴ Aleksei Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v. Vizantiiskoe nasledie i stanovlenie samostoyatelnoi traditsii* (Moskva: Nauka, 1987), pp. 133–318.

⁵ Kateryna Mikheienko, "Formuvannia khramu zakomarnoho typu ta etapy yoho rozvytku u XII st.," *Opus mixtum*, no. 4 (2016): 36–45. Kateryna Mikheienko, "Uspenskyi sobor u Volodymyri-Volynskomu v konteksti rozvytku zakomarnoho khramu," *Arkhitekturna spadshchyna Volyni: zb. nauk. prats*, no. 5 (2016): pp. 67–77. Kateryna Mikheienko, "Zakomarnyi khram. Rehionalni tradytsii," *Ukrainska akademiia mystetstva. Doslidnytski ta naukovo-metodychni pratsi*, no. 27 (2018): pp. 33–43.

elements of Byzantine church architecture⁶, that could serve as examples for the arch-gabled completion in the churches of Kyivan Rus, have been focused on. Kyivan Rus architecture of the late 10th – early 12th century is also being examined in order to trace the formation process of the continuous arch-gabled completion in the churches.

In the Middle Byzantine architecture, there were several variants of the arched gables on the church facades:

- 1) arched gables at the vault ends of the cross arms;
- 2) continuous arch-gabled completion of the narthex walls if narthex has galleries;
- 3) small arched gables being formed with semicircular window arches, partially protruding the horizontal cornice of the corner compartments, with the chapels located on their gallery level;
- 4) completion of the dome drums with a continuous row of arched gables being formed with semicircular arches of windows;
- 5) completion of the dome drums with a continuous row of arched gables, part of which or all of them are decorative (not connected to the arches of the windows);
- 6) decorative arched gables at the wall completion of the naos in octagon-domed church (on Chios).

It should be noted that in the mentioned variants, except the last two ones, the arched gables are constructive. It is worthwhile taking a closer look at all these variants.

1. Arched gables at the vault ends of the cross arms

In Byzantium, the facade walls of the naos of cross-in-square churches of the Middle Byzantine period usually had semicircular arched gables only at the ends of the cross arms. Those arched gables were always constructive, as they filled the ends of the barrel vaults⁷. The walls of other compartments were usually completed with horizontal cornices, often located no higher than the springers of the cross-arm vaults. Examples are the Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii), about 920)⁸ (Fig. 2) and Hiram Ahmet Pasa

⁶ The analysis of Byzantine monuments was based primarily on fundamental publications on Byzantine architecture, in particular, Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (The Pelican History of Art, 1975); Cyril Mango, *Byzantine architecture* (New York, 1976); Slobodan Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2010); Robert Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁷ Cross vaults were used less often.

⁸ Cecil Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton, 1981), figs. 21, 28, 29, 38. Thomas Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul. A Photographic Survey* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), pp. 211–213.

Camii (the 9th – early 10th century)⁹ in Constantinople, the Theotokos Kosmosoteira (1152) in Ferai.

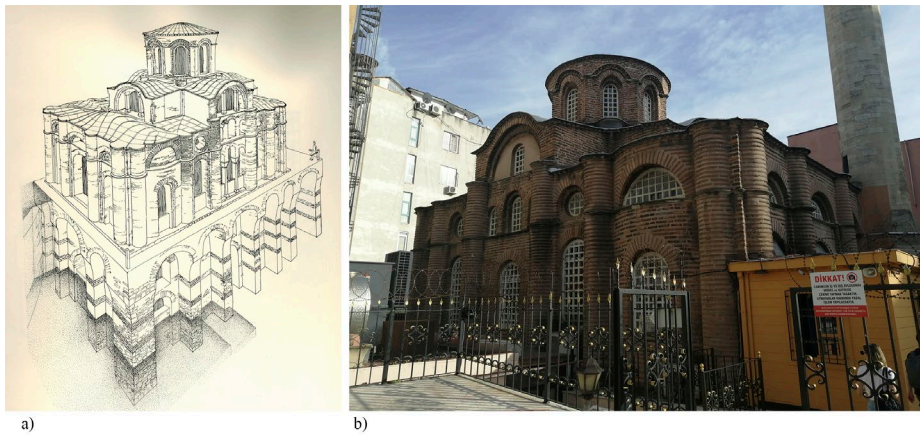


Fig. 2. Constantinople. Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii): a) reconstruction of the general view from southwest (C. Bozkurt), b) view from the northwest.

Variants, in which pitched roofs located above the vaults of the cross arms, were common. Then, the arched gables corresponding to the internal vaults on the facades looked like semicircular niches inscribed in triangular gables as in the Church of Theotokos (between 946 and 955) of Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis, the Church of Panagia Chalkeon (1028) in Thessaloniki (the arched gables of the narthex remain semicircular)¹⁰ (Fig. 3b).

⁹ The Byzantine dedication of the church is unknown, previously identified exclusively with the Church of St. John en tou Troullo (the 12th century) (Matthew Savage, “Dome “Typology” in Byzantine Constantinople?,” in *Architecture of Byzantium and Kievan Rus from the 9th to the 12th centuries*, ed. Denis Jolshin (St. Petersburg: The state hermitage Publishers, 2010), 138, 140; Marinis Vasileios, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople. Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 158–159), nowadays, an opinion is expressed regarding the dating of the church to the late 9th or early 10th century (Savage, “Dome “Typology” in Byzantine Constantinople?,” 140). Probably, the arched gables of the arm ends were not originally inscribed in triangular gables, because the cross arms did not have pitched roofs over them (Savage, “Dome “Typology” in Byzantine Constantinople?,” pp. 140–144).

¹⁰ It should be noted that the completion of the facade walls, which combine semicircular arched gables at the ends of the cross arms (inscribed in triangular gables) with horizontal cornices of the other compartments, is also typical of octagon-domed churches. Examples are the Katholikon (1011 or 1022) of Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis and the Katholikon (the late 11th century, about 1080) in Daphni Monastery near Athens.

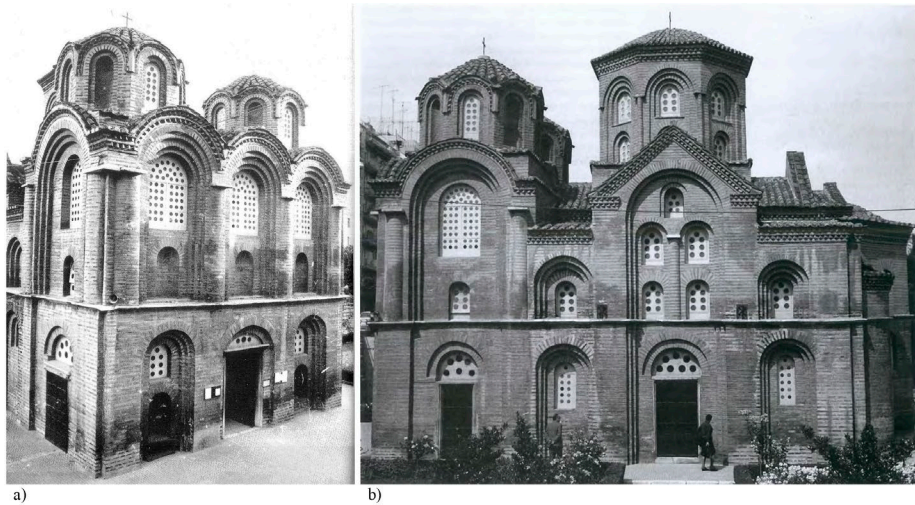


Fig. 3. Thessaloniki. Church of Panagia Chalkeon: a) view from the west (Anna Tsitouridou, *The Church of the Panagia Chalkeon*, b) view from the south.

In Byzantine churches, in the arched gables, no matter whether they were inscribed in triangular gables or not, there was located a large window with a semicircular end (it could take almost the entire plane of the arched gable). Such a window could be divided by marble columns or pillars into three parts (the Theotokos Church (907) of Constantine Lips Monastery (Fenari Isa Camii) and Vefa Kilise Camii (about 1100)¹¹ in Constantinople), or there could exist a derivative composition of three windows, where the middle window had an arched end and the side ones had half arched ends (the Theotokos Kosmosoteira (1152) in Ferai). The other variant was with three arched windows, the middle window being taller than the side ones (the Eski Imaret Camii (the Church of Christ Pantepoptes?), the late 11th century)¹² and the Theotokos Kyriotissa (Kalenderhane) between 1197 and 1204¹³ in Constantinople). A less common variant was with one single window (the Church of Panagia Chalkeon (1028) in Thessaloniki). In the churches situated in Greece, double windows with a marble column between them at vault ends of cross arms¹⁴ are often found (the Church of Theotokos (between 946 and

¹¹ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 103–104. Vladimir Sedov, *Kilise Dzhami: Stolichnaia arkhitektura Vizantii* (Moskva: Indrik, 2008), p. 16.

¹² It is traditionally considered to be the church of the Monastery of Christ Pantepoptes (about 1087), but some researchers have expressed doubts about this identification. Regardless of this, the Eski Imaret Camii belongs to Constantinople architecture of the middle of the 11th – beginning of the 12th century in terms of its stylistic features (Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople*, 138).

¹³ The church, built between 1197 and 1204, included parts of buildings from earlier periods (Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople*, 163).

¹⁴ The ends of the cross-arm vaults are usually not visible on the facades, because they are inscribed in the triangular gables formed by the pitched roof above them.

955) of Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis, the Hagioi Theodoroi (1049 p.) and Kapnikarea (the third quarter of the 11th century) in Athens).

2. Continuous arch-gabled completion of the narthex walls if narthex has galleries

In the Middle Byzantine period, the most common type of church was complex cross-in-square, in which four columns supported the dome drum. The corner western compartments of the naos could not have the galleries connected with it, because their level would have cut through the column trunks. Therefore, in the most cases, in such churches, the galleries were placed only in the narthex¹⁵.

In Byzantine churches, the narthex walls, if the narthex had no galleries, were usually completed with horizontal cornices, which were located approximately at the same level as the cornices of the corner naos compartments¹⁶ (for example, the Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii), about 920)¹⁷ and Hiram Ahmet Pasa Camii (the 9th – early 10th century)¹⁸ in Constantinople, the Church of the Hagioi Theodoroi (1049) and Kapnikarea (the third quarter of the 11th century) in Athens).

When there were galleries in the narthex, its vaults were raised and, accordingly, located at the level of the cross arms. As a result, the walls of the western façade of the narthex and both its ends were completed with semicircular arched gables. Those arched gables were always constructive, because they filled the ends of cross vaults, or lunettes of arches under dome drums. A typical example of the arch-gabled completion of the narthex is the Church of Panagia Chalkeon (1028) in Thessaloniki (Fig. 3). In this church, in the interior the arched gables correspond to cross vault end at the centre and the lunettes of the arches under the dome drums in the south and north. The narthex of the Eski Imaret Camii (the Church of Christ Pantepoptes?, the late 11th century) in Constantinople had an arch-gabled completion, in which all the arched gables were also constructive and filled the ends of the domed or cross vaults¹⁹. The narthex walls of the Church of San Marco (the second

¹⁵ In the corner compartments of the naos, at the gallery level, the isolated chapels could be located (Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 45).

¹⁶ The narthex could have a lean-to or pitched roof, then its wall ends had sloping lines of completion or triangular gables, but the principal peculiarity is that the narthex remained lowered and did not have an arch-gabled completion (a compartment corresponding to the western cross arm could only be higher).

¹⁷ Striker, *Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul*, figs. 21, 28, 38.

¹⁸ Alexander Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: their History and Architecture* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912), p. 206.

¹⁹ Robert Ousterhout, "Some Notes on the Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes (Eski Imaret Camii) in Istanbul," *Deltion tis Christianikis Archaialogikis Etaireias*, no. 16 (1992): p. 48.

half of the 11th century, consecrated in 1094²⁰) in Venice were completed with a continuous row of arched gables²¹.

The western facade of the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator (Zeyrek Camii, (1118–1136) in Constantinople also had a continuous arch-gabled completion. The monastery complex consisted of three churches. The southern church, dedicated to Christ Pantokrator, was the first to have been built, and later the construction of the northern church of Theotokos Eleousa was started. Both churches were complex cross-in-square with a narthex, which had galleries. The construction of the chapel of Archangel Michael, situated between the two churches, was started after the church of Theotokos Eleousa, but both were completed at the same time. The exonarthex was added to the narthex of the southern church at the final stage of the complex construction²². The narthex of the southern and northern churches formed the western façade, which had a continuous arch-gabled completion²³. All arched gables were constructive there, as they filled the ends of the cross vaults²⁴. On the other facades of the complex, semicircular arched gables were combined with horizontal cornices²⁵.

²⁰ The history of the construction of the Church of San Marco in Venice in details see Otto Demus and Ferdinando Forlati, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: history, architecture, structure* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1960), pp. 63–105.

²¹ Originally, the narthex was located only along the western wall of the church (Demus and Forlati, *Church of San Marco in Venice*, 81–82; Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 432). The reconstruction of the original western façade, see Ettore Vio, ed., *The Basilica of St. Mark in Venice* (Scala, 1999), 56; Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, “The church of San Marco in the eleventh century,” *Mirabilia Journal* 2, no. 31 (2020): p. 722.

²² Robert Ousterhout et al., “Study and Restoration of the Zeyrek Camii in Istanbul: Second Report, 2001–2005,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 63 (2009): pp. 253–254. Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople*, p. 143.

²³ Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture*, 374. Robert Ousterhout et al., “Study and Restoration of the Zeyrek Camii in Istanbul: First Report, 1997–98,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 54 (2000): p. 266. Ousterhout et al., “Second Report, 2001–2005,” 244, figs. 9, 10.

²⁴ After the construction of the exonarthex of the southern church, above the central compartment of the galleries, the cross vault was replaced with a dome on the drum, which was necessary to illuminate the narthex (Arthur H. S. Megaw, “Notes on the Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 17 (1963): p. 343. Ousterhout et al., “Second Report, 2001–2005,” 255).

²⁵ The arched gables probably completed the western façade of the exonarthex (Ousterhout et al., “Second Report, 2001–2005,” 246, fig 13. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture*, 374). However, it should be noted that the exonarthex was originally planned to be lower (corresponding to the level of the vaults under the galleries of the narthex) and had a wooden sloping roof adjacent to the western façade of the narthex of the southern church directly under the windows of the galleries level. The original roof is evidenced by the sloping brickwork of the wall of the northern end of the exonarthex (the sloping brickwork line was located directly above the arch of the triple window). However, during the construction of the exonarthex, the masters decided to increase its height and build vaults. The reasons for this change are unclear, as the result is that the exonarthex space is tall but dark, with windows located only in the lower parts of the walls (Robert Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later

3. Small arched gables being formed with semicircular window arches, partially protruding the horizontal cornice of the corner compartments, with the chapels located on their gallery level

While placing isolated chapels at the gallery level at the naos corner compartments²⁶, the window arches of the second level partially protruded the horizontal cornice of the wall completion of those compartments and formed small arched gables. Nevertheless, there was no continuous arch-gabled completion, as the horizontal cornice remained dominant on the facades. Such chapels could be located both above the western and eastern corner compartments of the naos.

An example is the Theotokos Church (907) of Constantine Lips Monastery (Fenari Isa Camii) in Constantinople. In this church, the galleries are located above the narthex and the vaults of the corner compartments between the cross arms, where there were isolated chapels not connected to the naos²⁷. On the northern façade, there are arched gables, formed by the window arches, that interrupted the horizontal cornice²⁸ (Fig. 4). It can be assumed that the Eski Imaret Camii (the Church of Christ Pantepoptes?, the late 11th century) in Constantinople had similar arched gables at the wall completion of the western corner compartments of the naos²⁹ (the chapels are located on their galleries level).

Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 54 (2000): 248–249. Ousterhout et al., “Second Report, 2001–2005,” 255).

²⁶ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, p. 45.

²⁷ Vasileios Marinis, “The original form of the Theotokos tou Libos reconsidered,” in *DASKALA. APODOSI TIMIS STIN OMOTIMI KATHIGITRIA MAIRI PANAGIOTIDI-KESISOGLOU*, ed. Platon Petridis and Viky Foskolou (Athina, 2015), 270, 277. The vaulting of the chapels has not been preserved, and its reconstruction is debatable (Arhtur H. S. Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 18 (1964): pp. 292–294. Marinis, “Original form of the Theotokos tou Libos,” pp. 278–284, 287–290, 295–299, 302–303).

²⁸ Megaw, “Original Form of the Theotokos Church,” 293. Marinis, “Original form of the Theotokos tou Libos,” 302, fig. 23. Probably, some of the windows of the upper level on the northern façade were doorways that provided access to the eastern chapel through the balcony (Megaw, “Original Form of the Theotokos Church,” pp. 290–291, 293. Marinis, “Original form of the Theotokos tou Libos,” 282, 300, 302).

²⁹ The existing horizontal roof line of these compartments looks rather strange and seems modern (Robert Ousterhout, “Some Notes on the Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes,” pp. 48–49).

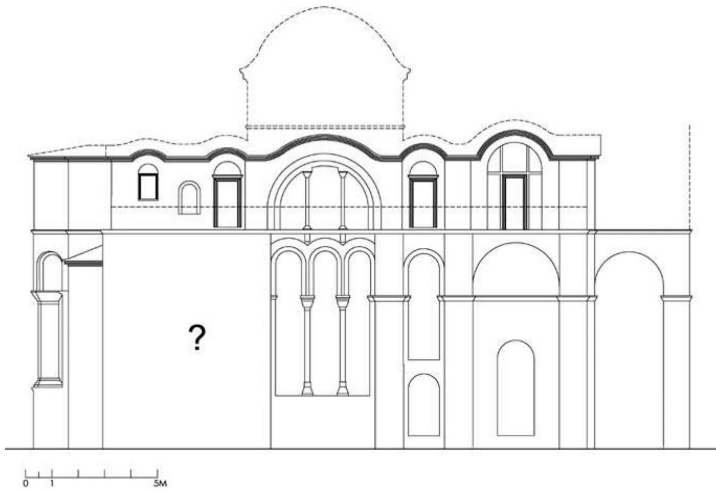


Fig. 4. Constantinople. Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips Monastery (Fenari Isa Camii). Reconstruction of the northern facade (Mamaloukos).

4. Completion of the dome drums with a continuous row of arched gables being formed with semicircular arches of windows

Continuous arch-gabled completion of the dome drum was formed with each window arch. Such arched gables should be considered constructive, as they are created by structural element that is by window arches. For example, the dome of Vefa Kilise Camii (about 1100), the domes of Athenian churches, in particular Kapnikarea (the third quarter of the 11th century) (Fig. 5a) and Metamorphosis tou Soterou (around 1100).



Fig. 5. Completion of the dome drums with a continuous row of arched gables: a) Athens. Kapnikarea, b) Plataniti. Church of Metamorphosis, c) Athens. Hagioi Theodoroi.

5. Completion of the dome drums with a continuous row of arched gables, part of which or all of them are decorative (not connected to the arches of the windows)

There are two variants of the completion of the dome drums with a continuous row of arched gables, part of which or all of them are decorative. The first one is a continuous row of the arched gables, being formed by the arch of each window or niche, which alternate on the dome drum. In this case, the arched gables created by niche arches can be considered decorative, because the niches themselves are already a decoration. Examples are the narthex domes of the Church of Panagia Chalkeon (1028) in Thessaloniki (Fig. 3), the Church of Zoodochos Pigi (the 12th century) in Samarina, the Church of Metamorphosis (the first quarter of the 12th century) at Plataniti in Argolid (Fig. 5b), and the Church of Hagia Varvara (the third quarter of the 12th century) at Eremos.

In the second variant, the arched gables are formed by arches with two windows inscribed in each of them. These arches are not connected with structure. The examples are the Church of the Holy Apostles (circa 1000) and Hagioi Theodoroi (1049) in Athens (Fig. 5c).

6. Decorative arched gables at the wall completion of the naos in octagon-domed church (on Chios)

The naos of the Katholikon (1042–1049) of Nea Moni Monastery on Chios is octagon-domed. The transition from the square naos to the circle of the dome drum base is made with eight conchs. Narthex and exonarthex are adjacent to the naos from the west. The completion of the naos walls has not been preserved, but based on the researches, it has been established that the naos wall on each side had three semicircular arched gables adjacent to the pedestal of the dome drum³⁰ (Fig. 6). The central arched gable of each façade more or less corresponds to the conch situated in the interior (although it is still decorative, as it does not fill the end of the vault), and the side arched gables are not connected to the structures at all, as the conchs are oriented diagonally and arched gables located at the corner of adjacent façades correspond to one conch.

A similar arch-gabled completion has been preserved in the Church of Panagia Krena (the end of the 12th century) on Chios. Its naos was also octagon-domed and narthex and exonarthex adjoined to it, so it is considered that the prototype for this church was the Katholikon of Nea Moni Monastery³¹. In the Church of Panagia Krena, the southern and northern

³⁰ Charalambos Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios. History and Architecture* (Athens, 1982), 130–132; Sotiris Voyadjis, “The Katholikon of Nea Moni in Chios Unveiled,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, no. 59 (2009): pp. 231–233, pl. 8b, 9a.

³¹ Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios*, p. 52.

walls of the naos are completed by three semicircular arched gables, similar to the Katholikon of Nea Moni, with the only difference that the diagonally oriented conchs correspond to one arched gable of the southern or northern façade. There the arched gables are unrelated to the structure, as well as in the Katholikon of Nea Moni Monastery.

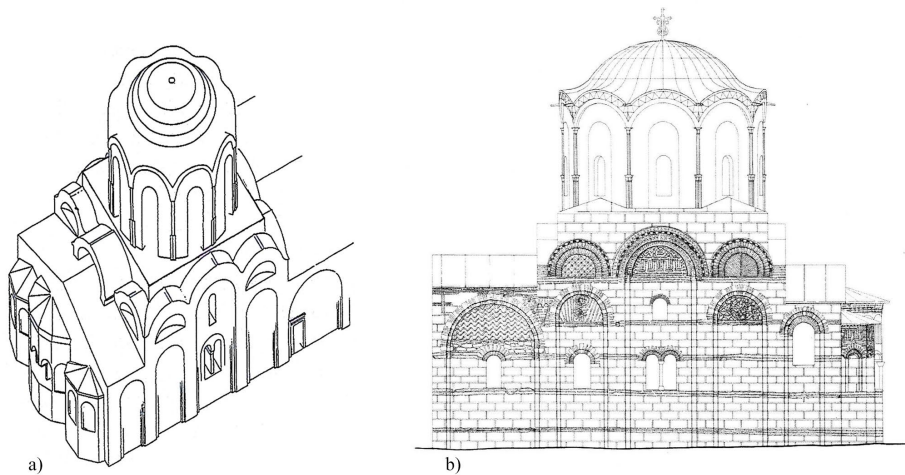


Fig. 6. Chios. Katholikon of Nea Moni Monastery: a) sketch showing the original roof form, b) southern façade, graphic representation.

As it can be seen, a continuous arch-gabled completion is unknown in Byzantine churches. This confirms Aleksei Komech's conclusion that the arch-gabled church is an innovation of the architectural tradition of Kyivan Rus. He believed that the period of formation of the arch-gabled church was the second half of the 11th century³², but he did not consider Kyivan Rus architecture of the late 10th – first half of the 11th century from this point of view. It is worthwhile analysing the churches of that time in terms of the formation of the arch-gabled church type.

The first stone church in Kyivan Rus, the Tithe Church (989–996, almost completely destroyed during the Mongol invasion of 1240) in Kyiv, is known from the material of archaeological excavations. During the archaeological excavations in 1948 (Mikhail Karger), a masonry block with a fragment of the arched gables with the remains of a dog-tooth cornice along its semicircle was found out. The cornice was covered with plaster and painted with a decorative fresco. The remains of a 60x30 cm tile covering have been preserved on the arched gable, which attests that it belonged to the

³² Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, p. 261.

initial period of the church construction on Rus territory, because from the 11th century to Mongol invasion Kyiv churches were covered with lead sheets³³. The location of the arched gable indicates that it was a wall fragment of the western façade of the gallery level, its side bay adjacent to the central one from the north. It could be assumed, that the western façade of the Tithe Church (the western portico) had a continuous arch-gabled completion, similar to the narthex with galleries in Byzantine churches. However, this arched gable does not provide information if all the facades of the Tithe Church could have a continuous arch-gabled completion.

The earliest preserved churches of Kyivan Rus are the Transfiguration Cathedral (founded before 1036) in Chernihiv and St. Sophia Cathedral (chronicles give two dates of its foundation: 1017 and 1037) in Kyiv.

The Transfiguration Cathedral is complex cross-in-square with a narthex. The galleries were located above the narthex and side aisles. Above the narthex, the galleries were supported by masonry vaults, barrel in the centre and domed at the sides. And above the side aisles, the galleries were wooden and supported by wooden beams (these parts of the galleries have not been preserved).

The cross arms were covered with barrel vaults that overlooked the facades with semicircular arched gables. The compartments of the naos between the cross arms were crowned with domes on the drums. In the side parts of the galleries in the narthex, the remains of pendentives were found out, which Mykola Kholostenko interpreted as parts of the domed vaults³⁴. At the same time, all the small façade bays, including the narthex ones, were completed with horizontal cornices³⁵. The horizontal cornices of the façade bays, corresponding to the corner compartments of the naos, were located at the level of the arched gable springers of the cross arms. The cornices of façade bays of the bema were lowered in comparison with the cornices of the naos corner compartments, which distinguished the naos and the lowered altar in volume³⁶.

The northern, southern and western facades of the Transfiguration Cathedral are decorated with large flat niches in each bay with semicircular ends (Fig. 7). In the central bays, the semicircular niche ends are inscribed in the semicircles of the arched gables, corresponding to the cross-arm ends. The semicircular niche ends of the other bays do not reach their horizontal

³³ Mikhail Karger, *Drevnii Kiev. Ocherki po istorii materialnoi kul'tury drevnerusskogo goroda*, Tom II, *Pamyatniki kievskogo zodchestva X–XIII vv.* (Moskva-Leningrad: Izd-vo akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), pp. 51–54.

³⁴ Mykola Kholostenko, "Issledovaniia Spasskogo sobora v Chernigove," in *Restavratsiia i issledovaniia pamiatnikov kul'tury*, Vypusk 3, ed. Boris Altshuller (Moskva: Stroiizdat, 1990), p. 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9, 16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8, fig. 6.

cornices. The ends of the side niches on the western façade of the narthex coincide with the arch lunettes of the vaults above the galleries in the interior. And on the northern and southern facades, the arches of the ends of these niches rise slightly above the arches under the dome drums located in the interior above the corner compartments of the naos³⁷.

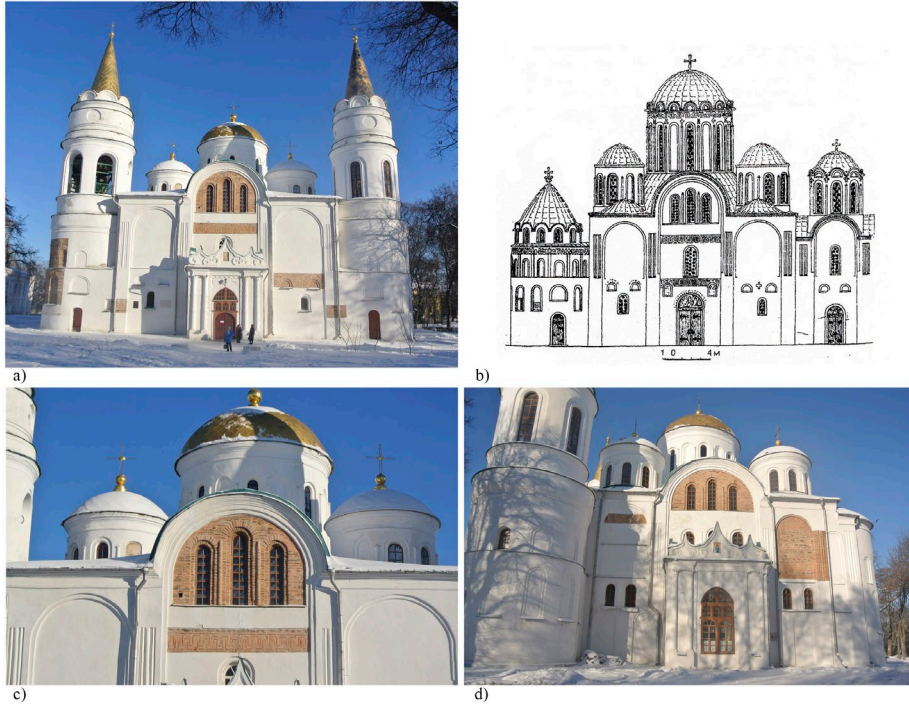


Fig. 7. Chernihiv. Transfiguration Cathedral: a), c) view from the west, b) western façade, reconstruction, d) view from the south.

The profiles of all the niches on the façades are two-staged, but not to the full height: the inner ledge in all the niches breaks off approximately at the level of the galleries, and the outer one goes down on the side façades below the galleries by about 2 m. Below the flat niches on the side facades there is a row of smaller niches that descend to the ground. These niches also have semicircular ends, but their dimensions and placement do not coincide with the modulus of division of the upper parts of the walls, which is determined by the lesenes between the large upper niches³⁸. On the western

³⁷ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, p. 156.

³⁸ Mykola Kholostenko attributed the discrepancy between the divisions of the lower and upper parts of the facades of the Transfiguration Cathedral to changes in the conception during its construction. The church was originally laid out as a domed basilica, and later during the

façade, the inner ledges, just like on the side façades, only go down to the level of the galleries, while the outer ones reach the ground. Accordingly, the lesenes on the western façade traditionally descend to the ground.

Aleksei Komech believed that the niche decoration of all the small façade bays in upper level of the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv is a decorative system, although it follows the structure of the building in its basic idea³⁹. This observation is important for considering the formation of the arch-gabled church. In the context of this, in my point of view, another characteristic of the Chernihiv cathedral is of great importance. This is a copy of the design with large niches of the western facade to the northern and southern ones. I consider, there are grounds to assume that same design on the Transfiguration Cathedral facades was due to the fact that the galleries were located not only above the narthex, but also above the side aisles.

Thus, Chernihiv Transfiguration Cathedral, combining semicircular arched gables and horizontal cornices at the wall completion, typical of Byzantine architecture, has large niches decoration, which creates a facade composition similar to that of the arch-gabled church. The niches in the small bays could be interpreted as arched gables still inscribed in the walls with horizontal cornices. These niches can be considered as the first stage in the formation of decorative arched gables, a kind of artistic image of an architectural structure.

St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv is five-naved simple cross-in-square, surrounded by two rows of porticoes from the west, south and north: two-storey inner porticoes and one-storey outer ones. The form of small bay completion of facades is unknown, because none of the inner porticoes that formed the facades have saved neither the vaulting or the walls of the second floor. Therefore, the reconstructions of the original look of St. Sophia of Kyiv proposed in the 20th century differ from one another primarily in the construction of the vaulting of the second floors of the inner porticoes. After architectural field studies in the middle of the 20th century, Yurii Asieiev, Mykola Kresalniyi, and Viktor Volkov proposed a reconstruction that was long considered to be classical. In it, the compartments of the second floors of the inner porticoes are covered with barrel vaults that overlook the facades with semicircular arched gables⁴⁰. However, such a reconstruction cannot be taken as real, since the springers of barrel vaults are not of sufficient height to accommodate the passage arches under them. Moreover, these arches would

construction process it was transformed into a cross-in-square church (Kholostenko, "Issledovaniia Spasskogo sobora v Chernigove," 7–8).

³⁹ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, p.156.

⁴⁰ Mykola Kresalniyi, *Sofiiskyi zapovidnyk u Kyievi. Arkhitekturno-arkheolohichni narys* (Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo literatury z budivnytstva i arkhitektury URSR, 1960), 85–86, figs. 68–71.

cover the lesenes preserved *in situ* in the interior of the porticoes⁴¹. Therefore, Yurii Asieiev, Irma Totska and Grigoriy Shtender conducted the architectural field studies of St. Sophia of Kyiv in 1978 and put forward a new reconstruction, in which barrel vaults were left only above the compartments corresponding to the cross arms, and all other parts of the porticoes were covered with cross vaults. But even in this reconstruction, the facades remained with an arch-gabled completion, which does not look different from the previous variant⁴². Another interpretation of the 1978-research results was put forward by Grygorii Logvin. In his reconstruction, only the compartments corresponding to the central nave and transept were covered with barrel vaults, the ends of which overlooked the façade with the semicircular arched gables. The other compartments of the inner porticoes were covered with domed vaults (similar to those preserved in the first level) and the façade bays corresponding them were completed with horizontal cornices⁴³, as in Byzantium.

Without reliable information about the completion and design of the upper parts of the facades of the inner porticoes of St. Sophia of Kyiv, attention should be paid to the preserved facade design of the northern outer portico (Fig. 8a). It was one-storey, its walls were finished with horizontal cornices. The portico was an open arcade with the exception of the eastern compartment, which was a closed space⁴⁴. Each façade bay had a large arched opening, and the bays corresponding to the western corner had two similar ones. All the arched openings (except for the one corresponding to the end of the transept) were inscribed in large niches, the best part of which had semicircular ends and some had triangular ends. It is difficult to talk about the correspondence of these niche ends to the vaults located inside, because they have not been preserved. However, it is believed that the compartments (excluding the one corresponding to the transept end and the corner western one⁴⁵) had barrel vaults oriented perpendicular to the walls of the cathedral naos⁴⁶. In this case, the arched ends of the niches could be a reflection of the ends of the inner barrel vaults. Such niches are similar to those of the

⁴¹ Yurii Asieiev et al., "Novoe o kompozitsionnom zamysle Sofiiskogo sobora v Kieve," in *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo: Khudozhestvennaia kultura X – pervoi poloviny XIII vv.*, ed. Aleksei Komech and Olga Podobedova (Moskva: Nauka, 1988), p. 21.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 18–27.

⁴³ Grigoriy Logvin, "Novye issledovaniia drevnerusskoi arkhitektury," *Stroitelstvo i arkhitektura* (Kiev), no. 8 (1978): pp. 33–34.

⁴⁴ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 206.

⁴⁵ There is no definite variant of roof reconstruction of the large corner compartment of the northern portico (near the northern tower). One variant presupposes a large cross vault without intermediate piers (Kresalniyi, *Sofiiskyi zapovidnyk u Kyievi*, 60), the other is four vaults supported by a pillar located in the centre of the compartment (Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 206).

⁴⁶ Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, 160, 165. Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, p. 206.

Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv. At the same time, the triangular ends of the niches were not connected to the structure. The design of the bay, corresponding to the transept, was different, where almost the entire plane is occupied by a large niche with a semicircular end. In the niche, a large arched opening with two small ones on either side is inscribed. This niche is also similar to those of the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv, but unlike them, it does not reflect the structures inside, because in this compartment only flat roof on wooden beams could exist⁴⁷. Thus, in St. Sophia of Kyiv, the walls of the northern portico have a decoration, imitating the non-existent ends of barrel vaults. So, this decoration is not connected with the structure.

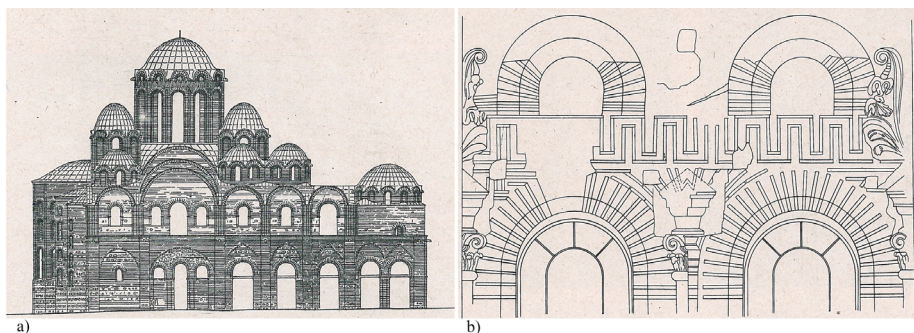


Fig. 8. Kyiv. St. Sophia Cathedral: a) northern façade, reconstruction, b) drum of the central dome, arched gables over meander frieze, measurement drawing.

In addition to the porticoes of St. Sophia of Kyiv, it is worthwhile considering the completion of its dome drums. The drums of the small domes are completed with a continuous row of arched gables formed with the window arches⁴⁸. These arched gables are constructive, just like in Byzantine churches (for example, Kapnikarea (the third quarter of the 11th century) in Athens). In the central dome of St. Sophia of Kyiv, the arch-gabled completion of the dome drum is fully decorative, because a meander frieze runs above the windows, separating the semicircles of the arched gables from them⁴⁹ (Fig. 8b). In addition, it should be noted that the radius of the arched gables is smaller than that one of the arches of the drum windows. This variant of the arch-gabled completion of the dome drums with decorative arched gables is different from variants in Byzantine monuments.

To conclude, it can be stated that the preserved Kyivan Rus monuments of the first half of the 11th century do not have a continuous arch-gabled completion of the façade walls. Nevertheless, both the Transfiguration

⁴⁷ Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, 161. Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, p. 206.

⁴⁸ Kresalnyi, *Sofiiskyi zapovidnyk u Kyievi*, pp. 60–62, 64–65.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61–63.

Cathedral in Chernihiv and St. Sophia of Kyiv demonstrate a tendency to use decorative elements on the facades that are not connected to the structure to achieve a certain look of the building.

The history of the arch-gabled church should begin at the time of the first decorative arched gable emergence. In St. Sophia Cathedral (1045–1050/52) in Novgorod, the earliest known arched gables in the completion of the small façade bays of the main core have been preserved, including one decorative. In addition, the western portico of this cathedral ends with constructive arched gables (similar to the narthex of Byzantine churches). Analysing the composition of St. Sophia in Novgorod, Aleksei Komech noted that a consistent system of arch-gabled completion had not been developed yet there, as arched gables were combined with horizontal cornices, triangular gables, and half arched forms⁵⁰. Nevertheless, the process of forming the arch-gabled completion had already begun in St. Sophia of Novgorod, so this cathedral may be considered a proto-arch-gabled church.

It is possible that the process of the occurrence of arched gables in completion of the small bays, similar to those in St. Sophia of Novgorod, also took place in Kyiv in the middle of the 11th century in St. George's Church, St. Iryna's Church and the Church in the Manor of the Metropolitan House, but these monuments are known only from archaeological excavations, so we have no idea about the nature of the completion of their façade walls.

The Dormition Cathedral (1073–1087) of Pechersk Monastery in Kyiv is considered the first arch-gabled church. Its main volume is a parallelepiped elongated along the west-east direction, topped with a single dome on the drum. During the dismantling of the ruins of the cathedral after the explosion in 1941⁵¹, a fragment of the composition of a window and two niches from the plane of the arched gable was found out, which became the basis for the reconstruction of the arch-gabled completion (Mykola Kholostenko)⁵². The volumetric composition of the Dormition Cathedral is characterised by the lowering of the side apses and vaults of the eastern corner compartments of the naos, the arched gables corresponding to these compartments were lowered too (Aleksei Komech)⁵³ (Fig. 9a).

⁵⁰ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 248

⁵¹ Before the destruction by an explosion in 1941, the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery was not studied in detail.

⁵² Mykola Kholostenko, "Uspenskyi sobor Pecherskoho monastyria," in *Starodavnyi Kyiv*, ed. Petro Tolochko (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1975), 151–153.

⁵³ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 272. According to Mykola Kholostenko's reconstruction, all the vaults between the cross arms of the Dormition Cathedral were lowered, all the small arched gables were lowered accordingly, their crowns were located at the level of the springers of the large arched gables at the cross-arm ends (Kholostenko, "Uspenskyi sobor Pecherskoho monastyria," 153; Mykola Kholostenko, "Novi doslidzhennia Ioanno-Predtechenskoï tserkvy ta rekonstruktsiia Uspenskoho soboru Kyievo-Pecherskoï lavry," in *Arkheolohichni doslidzhennia starodavnoho Kyieva*, ed. Petro Tolochko (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1976), 144). However, in reality, such a lowering of the vaults was fixed

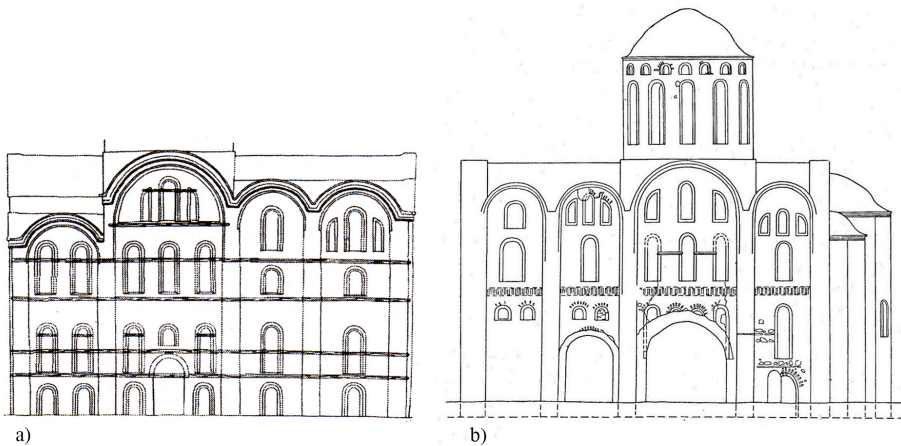


Fig. 9. First arch-gabled churches in Kyiv: a) Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery. Scheme of the northern wall, reconstruction, b) St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral. Drawing of the southern façade.

Built almost simultaneously with the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery, St. Michael's Church (1070–1088) of Vydubyskyi Monastery in Kyiv has been only the western part preserved. The narthex of St. Michael's Church had arched gables, as proved by the remains of the lower parts of windows or niches in their semicircles that were supposed to complete the southern bay of its western wall and the southern end wall. The existence of the arched gables of the small naos bays is testified by the preserved remains of double ledges on the lesenes. Those ledges were the lower parts of the profiling of the arched gable semicircles⁵⁴.

The first church to represent the completed forms of the arch-gabled church type is St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral (1108–1113) in Kyiv⁵⁵. Its volume is the same as that of Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk

only in the eastern part of the church (Kholostenko, "Uspenskyi sobor Pecherskoho monastyrnia," 151–154).

⁵⁴ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 265.

⁵⁵ St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral was destroyed in 1937 by order of the Soviet authorities. Before and during its destruction, Ipolyt Morhylevskyi made some photos and measurements (the materials are kept in the National Conservation Area "St. Sophia of Kyiv", part of which were published by Mikhail Karger (Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, 276–277, 279, 281–282, tables XLVII–L). The archaeological excavations of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral were carried out in the 1990s (1992–1994 under the direction of Viktor Kharlamov, 1996–1997 under the direction of Hlib Ivakin), the materials of which are kept in the Institute of Archeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv, Ukraine). Some of them were published: Hlib Ivakin, "Arkheolohichne vyvchennia Mykhailivskoho Zolotoverkhoho monastyrnia v 1996–1998 rokakh," *Pamiatky Ukrainy: istoriia ta kultura*, no. 1 (1999): 52–59; Hlib Ivakin et al., *Mykhailivskyi Zolotoverkhyi monastyr u Kyievi (za arkheolohichnyimi doslidzhenniamy 1996–1999 rokiv)* (Kyiv: IA NAN Ukrainy, 2023), 73–99).

Monastery, an elongated parallelepiped topped with one dome on the drum. However, in St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, according to measurements and photos made by Ipolyt Morhylevskiy, though the side apses were lowered, the springers of all the arched gables were on the same level⁵⁶ (Fig. 9b), whereas the Dormition Cathedral had lowered eastern arched gables. Nevertheless, the niches of the eastern arched gables of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral were noticeably lower than those of the other small arched gables and roughly corresponded to the ends of the lowered eastern corner vaults. Thus, the elevation of the eastern compartments by the addition of decorative arched gables was due to the emergence of a completed compositional model of the arch-gabled church, and the preservation of lowered niches was in line with the old tradition. Emphasising this, Aleksei Komech considered the niches in the eastern arched gables of the southern and northern facades of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral a double decoration⁵⁷.

In St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, there can be seen the widespread scheme of filling the plane of the arched gables, which was common in the arch-gabled churches of Kyivan Rus in the 12th century. The Byzantine tradition of window placement is preserved in the constructive arched gables, in St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, a composition of three windows. There were niches in the decorative arched gables, as windows were impossible to place because of the vault slopes behind those arched gables. In St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, there was a composition of three niches imitating the similar one of windows.

At the same time as St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, a reduced type of the arch-gabled church emerged, without a narthex. It is represented by the Trinity Gate Church (after 1106) of Pechersk Monastery in Kyiv. This church has a square plan, and all its facades are identical, including the eastern one, which has no protruding apses that are recessed into the wall. Because of the lack of horizontal divisions, vertical lesenes with tiers of windows between them dominate at all the facades of the Trinity Gate Church. As a result, it is created a new composition with a vertical orientation of the church volume, in contrast to the elongated parallelepiped of the arch-gabled churches with narthex. In the volumetric and spatial solution of the Trinity Gate Church, the composition of the newly formed arch-gabled church undergoes certain transformations that can be interpreted as the initial stage of the development of churches with vertical composition. This stage is limited to increasing the height of the main volume of the church and the vertical orientation of the facade decorative elements.

On the basis of the compositional model of the arch-gabled church formed in Kyiv in the early 12th century, regional variants of the arch-gabled

⁵⁶ Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, 279, fig. 91.

⁵⁷ Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X – nachala XII v.*, 280.

church occurred during that century, which differ from one another in their volumetric and spatial solution, building materials and masonry techniques, structural and decorative elements. It should be noted that already in the earliest regional variants (Novgorod and Chernihiv), as well as in Kyiv in the early 12th century, the springers of all the arched gables were located at the same level, but there was no lowering of the eastern corner vaults.

As defined above, in the Byzantine architecture of the Middle Byzantine period, both in the 10th – 11th centuries, which preceded and was synchronous with the period of formation of the compositional model of the arch-gabled church in Kyivan Rus, and in the 12th century, which was synchronous with the widespread construction of arch-gabled churches in Rus, only church narthex had a continuous arch-gabled completion, if narthex had galleries. In Byzantine churches, the arch-gabled completion of the narthex was formed by ends of cross vaults or the lunettes of the arches under dome drums, that is all the arched gables were constructive. Thus, the arch-gabled completion was a consequence of the structure. There was no continuous arch-gabled completion of the naos walls in Byzantine churches, but the façade walls of the corner compartments were sometimes interrupted by the window arches when isolated chapels were placed at the gallery level of the naos corner compartments. It can be seen that in Byzantine architecture, the connection between the arch-gabled completion of the façade walls and the existence of galleries can be traced. In addition, it should be noted that sometimes the dome drums had a continuous arch-gabled completion. However, I suppose, such a completion might serve as a motive that could influence the formation of a continuous arch-gabled completion in Kyivan Rus churches, but is not decisive for its emergence.

In my opinion, the impetus for the development of a continuous arch-gabled completion in Kyivan Rus churches was given by the arch-gabled one of narthex of the Byzantine churches. This is likely to be due to the fact that in Kyivan Rus churches, the galleries above the western corner compartments were a continuation of the narthex ones, and not, as in the Middle Byzantine churches, isolated chapels located above the corner compartments. The mentioned similarity of the gallery arrangement contributed to the fact that the arch-gabled completion in Kyivan Rus churches was transferred to the western corner compartments similar to the narthex one of the Byzantine churches. At the same time, the arch-gabled completion of the wall bays corresponding to the eastern corner compartments of the naos in Kyivan Rus churches immediately acquired an exclusively aesthetic significance, because the churches did not have the second level above those compartments. Thus, in Kyivan Rus, regardless of the existence of galleries, the walls of all façade

bays were completed with semicircular arched gables. Another proof in favour of the primary aesthetic significance of the compositional model of the arch-gabled church is the emergence of decorative arched gables in the first churches of this type in Kyivan Rus. Without decorative arched gables it was impossible to create an arch-gabled completion in two adjacent facades of the church corner compartments, in the lack of using cross vaults⁵⁸. It should be noted that decorative arched gables can also be seen in the octagon-domed churches on Chios. But on the other hand, it is necessary to mention the fundamental difference between the decorative arched gables in Kyivan Rus and Chios churches. In Kyivan Rus, decorative arched gables imitated the ends of the vaults, while on Chios, there were the apse conches behind the decorative arched gables. In my point of view, the Chios churches were unlikely to have influenced the formation of the arch-gabled completion in Kyiv, since octagon-domed churches were unknown in Rus before the beginning of the 12th century and did not become widespread⁵⁹.

To sum it up, it could be put forward the stages of the formation of a continuous arch-gabled completion in Kyivan Rus churches as a compositional principle:

The first half of the 11th century

In the small façade bays, the flat niches, which can be interpreted as a kind of arched gables inscribed in the walls ending with horizontal cornices, emerged (the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv, the northern portico of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv). Such niches originally reflected the vault ends, situated in the interior, and later completely lost their connection with the structure and turned into a decoration (the northern outer portico of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv). In addition, it is important to copy the design of the western façade to the southern and northern ones, as can be seen in the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv.

The middle of the 11th century

The arched gables at the completion of the small façade bays of naos, including the decorative arched gable, occurred. There was no arch-gabled completion as a compositional principle, because those arched gables were combined with other forms of the façade wall completion (St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod).

⁵⁸ The earliest known use of cross vaults in Kyivan Rus architecture was fixed in Chernihiv churches of the first quarter of the 12th century (the vaults under the corner compartments of the galleries).

⁵⁹ The cross-in-square type was dominant in church architecture of Kyivan Rus. The exceptions are the small churches in Pereiaslav-Ruskyi of the late 11th – early 12th centuries, in Volodymyr-Volynskyi and Halych of the 12th century, rotundas in Kyiv and Smolensk, and the octagon-domed church (1108) of Klovisky Monastery in Kyiv.

The last quarter of the 11th century

The continuous arch-gabled completion of all façade bays with the lowering of arched gables corresponding eastern corner compartments emerged (the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery in Kyiv).

The beginning of the 12th century

The completed compositional model of the arch-gabled church with springers of all the arched gables on the same level was formed, but the lowering of the vaults of the eastern corner compartments was preserved (St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral in Kyiv).

During the 12th century

Based on the compositional model of the arch-gabled church formed in Kyiv, regional variants of the arch-gabled church with all the arched gable springers on the same level without lowering the eastern corner vaults emerged.

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasise once again that in Byzantine architecture, the continuous arch-gabled completion of all the walls of church facades was unknown. The arch-gabled completion of the narthex was consequence of the structure, in contrast to the compositional model of the arch-gabled church of Kyivan Rus. That model was primary of aesthetic significance, whereas the structures were to serve for its implementation, and decorative elements played an important role. This confirms Aleksei Komech's conclusion that the arch-gabled church was an achievement of Kyivan Rus architecture. In addition, the fact that late Byzantine monuments did not have a continuous arch-gabled completion, also testifies in favour of the local Kyivan Rus origin of the arch-gabled church. It refutes the established in science point of view of the Byzantine origin of the compositional model of the arch-gabled church.

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The Messages of the Figure of Judas in the Miniatures of Mkrtič' Nalaš and in Those of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

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Abstract: The article examines the miniatures of an illuminated Bible created by Mkrtič' Nalaš, one of the distinguished figures of the fifteenth century. According to the colophons, Nalaš was among the most prominent ecclesiastical figures of his time, ordained as the leader of all Christians of Amida by a Turkmen tribal ruler.

The study focuses on the representation of Judas in three scenes: the Raising of Lazarus, the Communion of the Apostles, and the Betrayal. It examines the iconographic changes in these scenes within the framework of established iconographic tradition, considering their representation in earlier periods. Considering the historical and doctrinal issues that characterized the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the iconography of the Raising of Lazarus and Communion scenes is examined in connection with the doctrinal debates of the period. Furthermore, the iconography of the miniatures is discussed in the light of the Armenian exegetical tradition. For the first time, the study presents Armenian medieval exegesis concerning the characters of Judas and Peter, as well as texts relating to the Eucharist, with both the relevant passages and their English translations provided. The analysis shows that the figure of Judas in the miniatures functions as a metaphor.

Keywords: Judas, Communion, Lazarus, Council, pope, bishop

Introduction

The study presents the first focused analysis of the miniatures of the V280 Bible preserved in the Library of Mekhitarist Congregation in Venice,¹

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¹ Henceforth, Armenian manuscript sources are cited according to the system established by Bernard Coulie: for manuscripts preserved in the Mekhitarist Library, Venice (V, p. 461); the Matenadaran, the Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan (M, p. 456); the Library of the Armenian Patriarchate, Jerusalem (J, p. 455); the Church of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Galata, Istanbul (ITU, p. 455); the Mekhitarist Library, Venice, Kurdian Collection (V, Kurd., p. 461); and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (NKM, p. 458). See Coulie, Bernard, *Armenian Manuscripts: Catalogues, Collections, Libraries*, 2nd rev. ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

illuminated by Mkrtič' Nalaš, an eminent fifteenth-century Armenian bishop, theologian, poet, and miniaturist.

The extant biographical data reveals that Nalaš lived in Amida (present-day Diyarbakir, Turkey) in a period when the Southern Caucasus and Asia Minor were under the rule of Tamerlane and, following his death, those of Turkic tribal rulers.² Information regarding Nalaš's biography is available in the colophons of the manuscripts,³ from which we learn that he was a prominent historical figure and a distinguished clergyman acknowledged among the rulers of the time.

As the colophons record: "...his reputation spread throughout the world, extending to the King of Persia and the Ruler of Egypt and even beyond the Great Sea to the Pope of Rome and Constantinople...".⁴ According to the same sources, he was ordained leader of all Amida Christians by Ōt'man Amira, one of the Turkmen tribal rulers.⁵ We also learn from the colophons that in 1430 Catholicos Constantine VI of Vahka ordained Nalaš a bishop over 24 dioceses.⁶ A significant historical episode is

² Xaç'ikyan, Lewon, *ŽE dari hayeren jeğreri hišatakaranner* [*Colophons of the 15th-century Armenian manuscripts*], vol. 1 (Yerevan: The Academy of Science of Soviet Armenia Press, 1955), VII–XXXVIII; Xondkaryan, Ēdoward, *Mkrtič' Nalaš* (Yerevan: The Academy of Science of Soviet Armenia Press, 1965), 11-24.

³ The colophons can be found in three manuscripts: M2379 (fols. 244r-262v); M2748 (fols. 354v-357v); and M9004 (fols. 1r-5v), preserved in the Matenadaran. While compiling the origin of the text, Lewon Xaç'ikyan gave priority to M2379, which is the most complete version. See Xaç'ikyan, *ŽE dari hayeren jeğreri hišatakaranner*, 622-631.

⁴ See Xaç'ikyan, *ŽE dari hayeren jeğreri hišatakaranner*, 624. Henceforth, all translations from Armenian sources, including colophons, exegetical, historiographical, and verse texts, are the author's own.

⁵ "Ōt'man Amira held him in high regard and vested him with authority over all Christians that were under his control..." See Xaç'ikyan, *ŽE dari hayeren jeğreri hišatakaranner*, 624; Xondkaryan, *Mkrtič' Nalaš*, 29, 30. In his work, *History of Tamerlane and His Successors*, T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, a contemporary of Nalaš and an Armenian historiographer, represents Ōt'man Amira as "the ruler of Amida, named Ōt'man Aħōyinlow, who holds profound esteem for the Armenian people..." See T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, *Patmowt'yown Lank T'amowray ew yajordac iwroc'* [*History of Tamerlane and His Successors*] (Paris: K. V. Šahnazaryan Press, 1860), 72. According to Goř Eranyan, the incessant incursions of Turkmen tribes (Kara Koyunlu) and the Kurds, resulted in a migration from the southern regions of Greater Armenia to Amida. The relocation of a significant number of Armenians to Amida was prompted by the favourable attitude towards Christians held by the Turkmen Ak Koyunlu leaders Kara Osman and his son Hamsa. See Yeranyan, Goř, "Haravayin Hayastani et'nožołovrdagrakan xčankarə" ["The Ethno-Demographic Image of Southern Armenia in the XV Century to mid XVI."], *History and Culture* (Yerevan: Yerevan State University, 2016), 230-231. The study of the population of Amida shows that, even following the Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century, the Christian communities of Amida were recorded as "Armenians," apparently including members of the Nestorian, Jacobite, Greek, and other churches, sometimes identified individually by their names. See İlhan, Mehmet Mehdi, *Amid (Diyarbakir) 1518 detailed register* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 2000), 24–25.

⁶ Xaç'ikyan, *ŽE dari hayeren jeğreri hišatakaranner*, 625; Xondkaryan, *Mkrtič' Nalaš*, 30.

likewise associated with Nalaš's name: the Armenian Catholicos Constantine VI of Vahka entrusted to Nalaš a letter of response to Pope Eugenius IV's invitation to take part in the 1438–1439 Council of Ferrara-Florence, the Council of the Union of Eastern and Western churches.⁷

Nalaš was also known among his contemporaries as a prominent illuminator.⁸ However, the Bible V280 is the sole surviving manuscript that is abundantly illuminated by him. The current article examines the miniatures that feature the figure of Judas, namely: the Raising of Lazarus, the Communion of the Apostles and the Betrayal. The choice of the following miniatures is made based on their non-canonical iconography. The study focuses particularly on the figure of Judas and the messages it conveys. The iconography employed by Nalaš is observed in comparison with the miniatures from previous centuries and those created during his own period. The article attempts to present the changes that were made in miniature iconography during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In this respect, the iconography of the Raising of Lazarus and the Communion of the Apostles is subjected to particularly detailed study and observed within the doctrinal and historical context of the time.

The article aims to show the peculiarity of the iconography employed by Nalaš and the messages conveyed through it. To that end, it emphasises Nalaš's biography and the historical backdrop.

Bible V280

According to the manuscript colophons, the copying of the manuscript began in 1418 and was completed in 1422. The manuscript had two commissioners: Archimandrite Hovhannes and Vardapet (Doctor of Theology) Hovsep. The scribe of the manuscript was Karapet, and the miniaturist was Mkrtič' Nalaš. The manuscript was compiled in Xlat' (Axlat' present-day Turkey)⁹ and contains Nalaš's notes from different periods of his life. In the first, Nalaš refers to himself as "... I, Mkrtič', the peccable painter and the humblest of all servants of God...",¹⁰ referring to a period when he was either still a deacon or had already become a priest. Extant biographical data indicates that he was ordained a priest in 1420–25, suggesting that he

⁷ See Xondkaryan, *Mkrtič' Nalaš*, 34-37; Ōrmanyān, *Małak'ia, Azgapatowm* [National History], vol. 2 (Ējmiacin: Ējmiacin Press, 2001), cols. 2424–25. For the letter content see [Hovsep'yan], Garegin, "Mkrtič' Nalaši t'owł'tə Florentioy žolovi art'iw" ["The Letter of Mkrtič' Nalaš on the Council of Florence"], *Ararat*, no. 3-4 (May–June 1916), 418-423.

⁸ See Kostanianc', Karapet, "Mkrtič' Nalaš," *Ararat*, no. 1 (January 1898), 20.

⁹ See Sargisean, Barsel H., *Mayr c'owc'ak hayerēn jeragrac' matenadaranin Mxit'areanc' i Venetik* [Grand Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Venetian Mekhitarist Congregation Library], vol. 1 (Venice: S. Lazzaro Press, 1914), 102.

¹⁰ See Sargisean, *Mayr c'owc'ak*, 114.

had already been ordained by the time the copy of the manuscript was completed. In other notes, Nalaš represents himself as a bishop and as the builder of the St Barjahayac' Astvacacin Church of Arłni¹¹ Fortress: "I, the peccable Mkrtič', only by name bishop of Amida, Mardin,¹² Owrfa,¹³ T'ilkowran,¹⁴ Hini,¹⁵ and Arłni"¹⁶ and then as "Again, remember me in your prayers to Christ...peccable Mkrtič', nominal bishop, with a pseudonym Nalaš, the one who erected the cathedral of the capital of Amida and Barjahayac' Astvacacin [church] of Arłni Fortress...".¹⁷ These notes mark a prolific period of his life as a bishop over 24 dioceses.¹⁸

The New Testament of the manuscript is abundantly illuminated, whereas the Old Testament contains only some marginal depictions of prophets, a feature common to many other Armenian manuscript Bibles.¹⁹

The Gospel cycle illuminated by Nalaš opens with the Tree of Jesse (fol. 544 v), followed by the Annunciation and Joseph's Dream (fol. 545 r), the Birth and the Adoration of the Magi (fol. 546 v), the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (fol. 547 r), the Baptism of Christ (fol. 548 v), the Transfiguration (fol. 549 r), the Raising of Lazarus (fol. 550 v), the (Triumphal) Entry into Jerusalem (fol. 551 r), the Communion and the Washing of Feet (fol. 552 v), the Betrayal and Arrest (fol. 553 r), the Crucifixion (fol. 554 v), the Burial and the Harrowing of Hell (fol. 555 r), the Resurrection and the Incredulity of Thomas (fol. 556 v), ending with the scene of Ascension (fol. 557 r). Miniature representations of the evangelists and apostles appear on the following folios of the manuscript: Matthew (fol. 564r), Mark (fol. 593v), Luke (fol. 613v), John (fol. 640v), James (fol. 684v) and Paul (fol. 717r).

¹¹ Arłni known today as Ergani, a district in Diyarbakir Province (present-day Turkey).

¹² Present-day Mardin Province, southeastern Turkey.

¹³ Owrfa (Urfa), a city in present-day southeastern Turkey.

¹⁴ T'ilkowran, a settlement approximately located in present-day Diyarbakir Province, Turkey; location approximated according to the *Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions*. See in Hakobyan, T'. X., Melik'-Baxšyan, S. T., and Barselyan, H. X., *Hayastani ew harakic' šrjanneri telanownneri bařaran* [*Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions*] (Yerevan: Yerevan State University Press, 1986), 456.

¹⁵ Hini, an ancient city, located near the area of present-day Diyarbakir Province, Turkey, according to the *Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions*. See Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan, and Barselyan, *Hayastani ew harakic' šrjanneri telanownneri bařaran*, 415.

¹⁶ See Sargisean, *Mayr c'owc'ak*, 115.

¹⁷ See Sargisean, *Mayr c'owc'ak*, 116.

¹⁸ See in Xaç'ikyan, *ŽE dari hayeren jeřagreri hiřatakaraner*, 625; Xondkaryan, *Mkrtič' Nalaš*, 30.

¹⁹ The miniatures in the Old Testament are: Moses holding the two commandment tablets (fol. 104r), Joshua of Nun with a shield in his hand (fol. 153v), Hannah, the mother of Samuel, kneeling (fol. 188v), Judith beheading Holofernes (fol. 316v), Jonah in the whale's mouth (fol. 457r), Daniel (fol. 471r).

The Iconography of the Miniatures of the Raising of Lazarus, the Communion of the Apostles and the Betrayal

As previously stated, the study focuses only on miniatures depicting the figure of Judas (figs 1, 2, 3). The first, which represents the scene of the Raising of Lazarus, features the figure of the resurrected Lazarus in front of the tomb and Christ with the entire group of disciples standing behind him (fig. 1). In the iconography of medieval Armenian miniature, the depiction of the entire group of the disciples in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus is comparatively rare. Generally, this scene features two or three disciples,²⁰ of whom the figure of Peter is iconographically distinguishable,²¹ with John also being identifiable in some Cilician miniatures.²² In Armenian miniatures of the Raising of Lazarus, where the complete group of disciples is depicted, the central figures observing the scene, namely, those depicted in full height at the foreground, are John and Peter (fig. 4).²³ Nalaš depicts the full group of disciples, with Judas positioned at Peter's side, shown in profile and with an open mouth (figs 1, 5). The figure of Judas in Armenian miniature paintings has been represented in this scene since the fourteenth century; prior to that, in miniatures depicting the entire group, he is either not distinguished iconographically²⁴ or not represented at all. The figure of Judas is depicted and iconographically identified in fourteenth-century manuscripts such as J1941 (fol. 5r),²⁵ M6230 (fol. 442r),²⁶ M206 (fol. 503v).²⁷ In manuscript

²⁰ For comparison, see the illustrations in Der Nersessian, Sirarpie, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century*, vol. 2 (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), figs 75, 176, 204, 370, 595 and Hakobyan, Hravad H., *Vaspowrakani manrankarč' owt' yownə* [The miniature of Vaspurakan], vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1976), fig. 66; vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1982), fig. 36.

²¹ Peter is always depicted mature with short grey hair and a short grey beard. For the iconography of the apostles see Kouymjian, Dickran, "Identifying the Apostles in Armenian Art," in *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. Jean-Pierre Mahé and Robert W. Thomson (Atlanta Ga: Scholars Press, 1997), 453–474.

²² In the scene of the Raising of Lazarus, John is depicted in the foreground as the author of the story. According to the Armenian miniature iconography John is depicted young and beardless in the Gospel scenes (Communion/Last Supper, Raising of Lazarus, etc.). The bearded representation of John appears only on the frontispiece of the Gospel of John. See in Kouymjian, "Identifying the Apostles," 458.

²³ For comparison see also Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, fig. 370.

²⁴ The earliest known example of such iconography is the Mowłni Gospel miniature (eleventh century), which represents the full group of the disciples in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus. The figure of Judas is not distinguishable. See M7736, fol. 16v.

²⁵ In J1941 manuscript, Judas is depicted not only in the foreground with a distinctive iconography, but also with the inscription of "Judas" [Յուդա] inside his nimbus.

²⁶ The manuscripts J1941 and M6230 were illuminated by Avag, one of the remarkable miniaturists of the fourteenth century and a representative of the renowned Armenian medieval school of Glajor (Armenian medieval school located in present-day Vayoc' jor, Armenia). For an overview of the life and work of the fourteenth-century miniaturist Avag, see Sargsyan,

M6230, the iconography resembles that of Našaš: Judas is positioned immediately behind Peter and shown in profile (figs 6, 7). By contrast, in manuscript M206, Judas is excluded from the group of disciples, shown separately with a pale halo and his back turned to the scene of the Raising (fig. 8). In the case of Našaš, Judas and Peter are the key figures who observe the event, represented in the foreground in full height and with the same hand gesture pointing to the scene (figs 1, 5). Judas is marked by a large open mouth baring his teeth.



Fig. 1. *Raising of Lazarus, Bible, Venice, Mekhitarist Library, V280, fol. 550v (fifteenth century).*

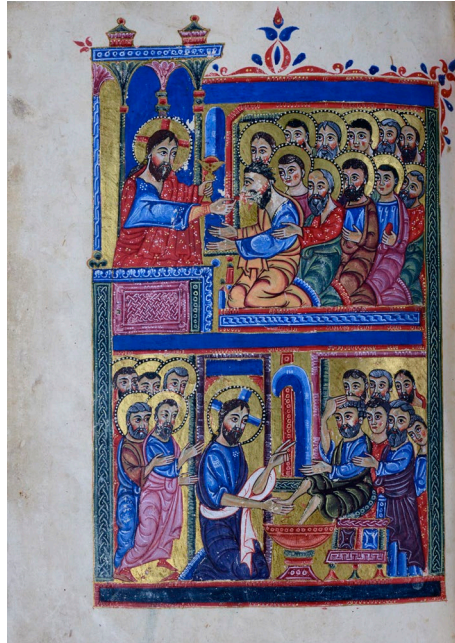


Fig. 2. *The Communion of the Apostles, Bible, Venice, Mekhitarist Library, V280, fol. 552v (fifteenth century).*

Lusine, “Armenian Scribe and painter Avag Tsaghkogh,” in *New Europe College, Publication Series of Black Sea Link Programm, Yearbook 2014-2015*, ed. I. Vainovski-Mihani (Bucharest: New Europe College, 2018), 163-194.

²⁷ Bible M206 illuminated by T’oros Taronac’i, a leading fourteenth-century miniaturist of the Armenian medieval school of Glajor. For an overview of the life and work of the fourteenth-century miniaturist T’oros Taronac’i, see Korchmasian, Emma, “T’oros Taronac’i, ein armenischer Buchmaler des 14. Jahrhunderts und seine französischen Vorbilder,” in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, herausgegeben vom Bundesdenkmalamt Wien und vom Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Wien, Band XLII, Sonderdruck (Wien, Köln. Böhlau Verlag, 1989), 81-100.

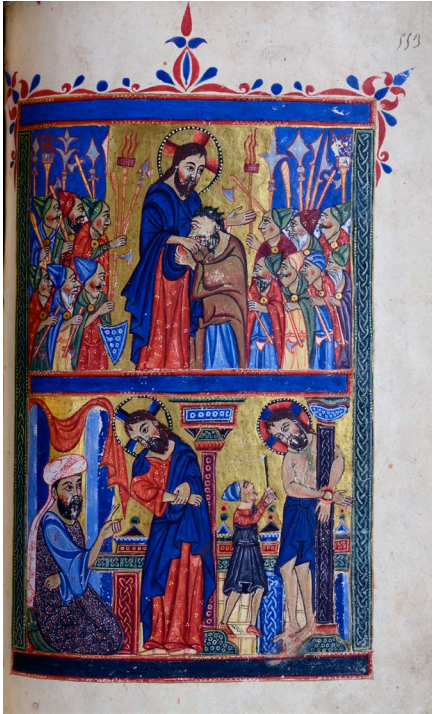


Fig. 3. *Betrayal, Bible, Venice, Mekhitarist Library, V280, fol. 553r (fifteenth century).*



Fig. 4. *Raising of Lazarus, Gospel, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M9422, fol. 16r, School of Cilicia (thirteenth century).*

The next miniature, where Judas's character is highly emphasized, is the scene of Communion (fig. 2). Nalaš represents the Communion of Judas (figs 2, 9). In Armenian medieval art, the earliest known example of the iconography representing the Communion scene dates back to the thirteenth century,²⁸ while miniature paintings depicting the Communion of Judas

²⁸ For Armenian miniature illuminations depicting liturgical iconography, particularly the Communion of the Apostles, see M2816, fol. 4r; M7651, fol. 73r. Also see in Rapti, Ionna, "Image et rite dans l'enluminure arménienne du Moyen Âge," in *Pratiques de l'eucharistie dans les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident (Antiquité et Moyen Âge)*, Série Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes 46, ed. Nicolas Bériou, Béatrice Caseau, and Dominique Rigaux, vol. 2 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009), fig. 16; Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, fig. 226. In one of the 13th-century Gospel miniatures (ITU35, 202) Paul is depicted as one of the twelve disciples to take Communion, while Judas is not presented. For the image see Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, fig. 124. It is noteworthy that this iconography with Paul's figure did not gain popularity in Armenian miniature.

appear only since the fourteenth century (figs 6, 10, 11).²⁹ In Naľaš's miniature, Judas is depicted as the first to take communion and presented in the front of the line, while the figure of Peter is situated at the end³⁰ (figs 2, 9). Judas and Peter, depicted side by side in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus, appear on opposite sides in the Communion scene (figs 1, 9). The iconography employed by Naľaš differs from that of the miniatures of the fourteenth century, where the figures of Judas and Peter are generally represented side by side in the Communion scene (fig. 10).³¹

The last miniature featuring Judas represents the scene of Betrayal (figs 3, 12). According to the established iconography, Naľaš depicts the procession of the soldiers with Christ and Judas in the middle. In this miniature, Naľaš adds a small detail, thereby condensing the message of his pictorial narrative, where the major focus is again on Judas. He depicts Judas kissing Christ's hand while also devouring the red coin purse in his hand (fig. 12). The representation of Judas in this particular iconographic manner is unique and not observed in any other manuscript of the same period or prior to it. In Armenian miniature painting, the iconography of kissing Christ's hand instead of his face is observed from the fifteenth century,³² whereas the iconography of Judas devouring the coin purse is not observed in any other manuscript of the period.³³

²⁹The earliest preserved miniature painting of Judas's Communion is from 1311; it is a detached folio from a Gospel Book. See *Folio from a Gospel Book*, Armenian, 1311, detached folio, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, Mass., Acc. no. 1960.200. For the images of Communion of Judas see also Rapti, "Image et rite," fig. 18, 21.

³⁰The final figure in the sequence is identified as Peter, as the figure following Judas does not align iconographically with Peter's representation (this figure is depicted with a receding hairline and a long beard). The figure positioned at the end of the line exhibits a closer resemblance to Peter in terms of iconography (Peter is typically depicted with his grey hair slightly covering the forehead), moreover, it is situated next to John's figure (John is represented as a beardless youth). In Armenian miniature painting, Peter is typically depicted next to John in this scene. This can be observed in a 14th-century miniature (detached folio, acc. no. 1960.200, Harvard Art Museums), in which Peter is depicted standing next to Judas and John is positioned next to Peter. Such placement can be detected also in the miniatures of the manuscripts J1941, fol. 6r and M7650, fol. 21v.

³¹In the Communion scene Judas and Peter are depicted side by side also in the 15th-century manuscript miniature (M2670, fol. 6v).

³²See M5513, fol. 5v; see also Rapti, "Image et rite," fig. 22.

³³The iconography where Judas is depicted kissing Christ's hand and meanwhile devouring the coin purse is observed in much later seventeenth-century miniatures. As is the case with the miniature of the manuscript of V, Kurd. 154, fol.10v where again, as in the miniature of Naľaš, the purse is represented in red. For the miniature of the seventeenth-century manuscript see Arakelyan, Mikayel, *Mesrop of Xizan: Armenian Master of Seventeen Century* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2012), fig. 15.

The Problem of the Communion of Judas

The position of medieval exegetes on Judas taking communion is not clear-cut. Some deny that Judas took communion, while others deny the idea of depriving him from taking communion.³⁴ Nor is the position of medieval Armenian exegetes on the subject matter entirely clear. In the Armenian exegeses, particular emphasis is placed on John 13:30, which is the only verse that makes mention of Judas's leaving. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on the moment of his departure, with the intention of determining whether he left before or after the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion.



Fig. 5. *Raising of Lazarus, Bible, Venice, Mekhitarist Library, V280, fol. 550v (fifteenth century), detail.*



Fig. 6. *Bible, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M6230, School of Glajor, fol. 442r, (fourteenth century).*

³⁴ See Schiller, Gertrud, *Iconography of Christian art*, trans. Janet Seligman, vol. 2 (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), 28-35. Żaluska, Yolanta, Bøespflug, François, and Fernandez, Antonio, "Le cycle de la Cène dans la Bible moralisée au XIIIe siècle," in *Pratiques de l'eucharistie dans les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident (Antiquité et Moyen Age)*, Série Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes 45, ed. Nicolas Bériou, Béatrice Caseau and Dominique Rigaux, vol. 1 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 86-89.



Fig. 7. *Raising of Lazarus, Bible, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M6230, fol. 442r, School of Glajor (fourteenth century), detail.*



Fig. 8. *Raising of Lazarus, Bible, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M206, fol. 503v, School of Glajor (fourteenth century).*

In his exegesis of Matthew's Gospel, Hovhannes Erznkac'i (Corcorec'i)³⁵ confirms that Judas was present during the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion and took communion: "Judas was present among the others. It was surprising how thoughtless Judas was, and how compassionate Jesus was in caring about making him a tablemate, too. Despite being a villain, he should have become vigilant after taking communion and being reproached at the table. However, he never regretted."³⁶

³⁵ Hovhannes Erznkac'i [Corcorec'i] [ca. 1270–1338] was a philosopher, exegete, grammarian, philologist, and a pedagogue. He worked and studied at Glajor school (Armenian medieval school located in present-day Vayoc' jor, Armenia). Hovhannes Erznkac'i translated into Armenian the section on *The Seven Sacraments of the Church* from Thomas Aquinas's treatise, *Summa Theologiae*. For Hovhannes Erznkac'i's biography see Ayyvazyan, Hovhannes and Xaç'atryan, Hayk, eds., *K'ristonya Hayastan Hanragitaran [Encyclopedia Christian Armenia]* (Yerevan: Armenian Encyclopedia Publishing House, 2002), 619.

³⁶ See in Nerses Šnorhali and Hovhannes Erznkac'i, *Meknowt'iw'n Sowrb Awetaranin or ast Matt'ēosi [Commentary on the Holy Gospel of Matthew]* (Constantinople: Mahtesi Abraham Press, 1825), 554. The hereafter quotations from this book are also taken from the part authored by Hovhannes Erznkac'i. Although Hovhannes Erznkac'i is known to have held a



Fig. 9. *The Communion of the Apostles*, Bible, Venice, Mekhitarist Library, V280, fol. 552v (fifteenth century), detail.

Matt'ēos Ĵowlayec'i³⁷ shares the same position. In his exegesis of John's Gospel, he confirms that Judas partook of communion. He notes the existence of interpretations denying this and seeks to demonstrate that excluding Judas from communion would be contrary to Christ's nature:

pro-Catholic stance, later exegetes adhering to traditional positions, such as Grigor Tat'ewac'i and his disciple Matt'ēos Ĵowlayec'i interpreted this episode in a similar manner.

³⁷ Mkrtič' Nalaš's contemporary. A prominent scribe and a teacher, author of numerous exegetic works and homilies. His "Exegesis on the Acts of the Apostles" written in 1411 is especially valued. In 1402, he was ordained an archimandrite at Tat'ew Monastic School (Armenian medieval school in the south of Armenia, Syunik). See Xaç'ikyan, *ŽE dari hayeren jeṛagreri hišatakaraner*, 731.

Thus, the question arises whether the Lord gave His body to Judas or not. Some deny declaring that ... if Judas took it, he wouldn't betray [Christ], since the command of the Lord merits observance... Yet [John] Chrysostom and all the vardapets (doctors of theology) claim that He did give it to him, and this is evidenced firstly, because this chapter tells that after the supper, He washed the feet of the disciples and said, "One of you will betray Me", and after John's question, dipped the morsel and gave it to Judas who took it and went away. So, it is clear that Judas was there when He delivered His body. Secondly, Luke explicitly states that after the Lord gave His body, He said, "But behold, the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me on the table." This makes it clear that he was present and that it would be impossible for the Lord to disclose the sin without giving communion to Judas. Whereas the Lord graciously gave His body to Judas out of four reasons: first, to show the amazing kindness and humbleness of Christ towards the villain; second, to teach us to love our enemies completely...³⁸

Ĵowłayec'i, to confirm the presence of Judas, proceeds with the text of Luke, which is the only account that places the revelation of Judas's betrayal chronologically after the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In the accounts of Matthew (26:21–28) and Mark (14:17–24) the disclosure of the betrayer takes place before the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Therefore, to assert Judas's participation in the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Matt'ēos Ĵowłayec'i refers to Luke's text (Luke 22:19–23), where the sequence of events confirms the presence of Judas, as according to John, he leaves only after the revelation of the betrayer.

A somewhat different position is found in twelfth-century exegesis. In his commentary on Luke 22:14-23, Ignatios Sewleṛnc'i³⁹ begins with the account of the Washing of the Feet (John 13:1-17), followed by the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, making it clear that the sacrament was administered to all the disciples. He then presents the revelation of the betrayer as narrated in John's Gospel (John 13:26,30). At the same time, Sewleṛnc'i interprets the act of dipping a piece of bread in

³⁸ See in Matt'ēos Ĵowłayec'i, *Meknowt'iwñ Awetaranin Yovhannow* [Commentary on the Gospel of John], M5232, fol. 200r-201v. It should be stated that the quoted passage of the exegesis is also included in Grigor Tat'ewac'i's exegesis on John's Gospel. Grigor Tat'ewac'i was Ĵowłayec'i's teacher and was head of the famous Tat'ew Monastic School. See in Grigor Tat'ewac'i, *Meknowt'iwñ Yohannow awetaranin* [Commentary on the Gospel of John], ed. Aršavir Gabowjyan (Ĕjmiacin: Ĕjmiacin Press, 2005), 549-50.

³⁹ Ignatios Sewleṛnc'i composed the commentary on the Gospel of Luke at the behest of the Armenian Catholicos Grigor III Pahlavowni. The incipit of the work in the manuscript reads: "A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, composed by Ignatios at the request of His Holiness Grigoris, Catholicos of the Armenians" (M1342, fol. 5r). Sewleṛnc'i's exegesis on the Gospel of Luke is preserved in twelve manuscripts, six of which are housed in the Matenadaran.

John 13:26 as washing with water “the morsel soaked in blood” to remove the blessing—a reading that may suggest Judas was excluded from receiving Holy Communion:

Before all this, He poured water into the basin and began washing their feet...Then He instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, ... Jesus...did not openly disgrace him [Judas] by name ..., He spoke in a veiled manner, saying, “it is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And He took the morsel that had been soaked in the blood⁴⁰ and which He had blessed, dipped it in water, and washed it from the blessing, and then gave it to Judas. Upon taking the morsel, Satan entered into him, for from that moment he was left without His care, and thus Satan took possession of him.⁴¹

Later exegetes, seeking to avoid identifying the morsel given to Judas (in John 13:26) with the communion bread, draw a distinction between the morsel associated with the institution of the sacrament and that by which the betrayer was revealed. The above-mentioned Ĵowłayec'i, for example, who accepts that Judas received communion, points out that the piece of bread mentioned in John's Gospel was ordinary bread rather than communion bread.⁴²

From an iconographic perspective, the theological issue has a more definite answer, which is primarily observed in the liturgical iconography of the Last Supper.⁴³ The liturgical iconography regarding the institution of the

⁴⁰ The phrase “the morsel soaked in the blood” alludes to the Eucharistic practice of the Armenian Apostolic Church, in which bread and wine are administered together—specifically, a morsel of bread dipped into the undiluted wine.

⁴¹ See in Ignatios Sewleřnc'i, *Meknowt'iwñ Srboy awetaranin or əst Łowkaasow* [Commentary on the Holy Gospel of Luke], M1342, fol. 214r-215v.

⁴² Matt'ēos Ĵowłayec'i, commenting on John 13:26, writes, “It is known, that that morsel was not of the body of the Lord, for the body which He gave did not remain there, since they partook of it; rather, that [morsel] was from the loaf on the table, which they ate during supper.” See in Matt'ēos Ĵowłayec'i, *Meknowt'iwñ Awetaranin Yovhannow*, M5232, fol. 201r. The same position is held by the prominent fourteenth-century theologian Grigor Tat'ewac'i. See in Grigor Tat'ewac'i, *Meknowt'iwñ Yohannow awetaranin*, 552-53.

⁴³ Two distinct iconographic approaches can be identified with regard to the depiction of the Last Supper. The first of these refers to the church ceremony and is called “Communion”. The second is a narrative version, which is mainly known as the “Mystical Supper” or the “Last Supper”. The narrative iconography is the around-the-table representation of the event, which doesn't depict Judas receiving communion, but rather the revelation of the betrayer. In Armenian miniatures, the scene of the Last Supper is represented in accordance with the gospels of Matthew (Matt. 26:21-23) and Mark (Mark 14.18–20), in which Judas is depicted reaching for the dish. For the Armenian miniature with such iconography, see in Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, figs. 225, 387; Mathews, Thomas F. and Taylor, Alice, *The Armenian Gospels of Glajor: The Life of Christ Illuminated* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001), fig. 22.

Sacrament of Holy Communion and the church ceremony depicts the Communion of Judas (figs 10, 11).

Naláš depicts the scene of Communion, in which Judas is given a morsel of bread already dipped in wine: the morsel is painted red (fig. 9). In the ceremony of Communion in the Armenian Apostolic Church a morsel of bread dipped in wine is distributed. The iconography of Communion with a red morsel of bread has been used in Armenian miniature iconography since the fourteenth century, and in most cases Judas is depicted as the first one to take the morsel (fig. 11).



Fig. 10. *The Communion of the Apostles, Bible*, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M6230, fol. 442r, School of Glajor (fourteenth century), detail.



Fig. 11. *The Communion of the Apostles, Gospel*, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M8772, fol. 10v, School of Vaspowrakan (1391, fourteenth century).

Judas and Peter in the Armenian Exegetical Tradition: Character Comparison

In the exegeses, importance is given to the interpretation of the reasons behind Judas's betrayal and Peter's denial and to the comparison of their characters.

John's Gospel serves as a key source for the interpretation of Judas's nature. It alone characterizes Judas as a thief (John 12:4–6), and unlike the

Synoptics, addresses his character more than once (John 6:64, 6:70–71, 12:4–6 and 13:10,11).⁴⁴ The characterizations of John's Gospel lay a basis for interpreting the betrayal as a consequence of Judas's nature: "But the traitor betrayed ... not for the salvation of the world or to fulfill the predictions of the prophets but out of avarice and lack of faith ..."⁴⁵

The aspect of nature also serves as a basis for interpreting Peter's denial, where the emphasis on the will of God is particularly significant: "The denial was triggered by fear and through God's will and not out of spite and hatred."⁴⁶

In relation to the betrayal of Judas, exegetes seek to prevent potential misinterpretation of his deed, particularly any attempt to justify the betrayal through predestination: "But beware of the prophecy of the Holy Spirit. For Judas didn't do it because the Holy Spirit commanded but rather, he couldn't hide his intention from the Holy Spirit."⁴⁷ or "But he betrayed for bearing ill will and of his own volition and not to fulfill all that was written therein."⁴⁸

Exegetical texts offer a comparison of the characters of Judas and Peter (and the motives behind their actions), with particular emphasis on the role of free will.

⁴⁴ John ascribes to Judas the criticism of the woman anointing the feet of Christ, whilst in the Synoptics the criticism is ascribed to the whole group of the disciples without mentioning anyone in particular (Matthew 26:8,9; Mark 14:4,5; John 12:4,5).

⁴⁵ See in Sargis Kownd, *Meknowt' iwn Awetaranin Lowkasow* [Commentary on the Gospel of Luke], ed. bishop Yeznik Petrossian (Ējmiacin: Ējmiacin Press, 2005), 513. Sargis Kownd was a twelfth-century exegete and one of the prominent archimandrites of Greater Armenia. Studied at Hałpat Monastery (Lori Province, Armenia); the acknowledged center of the time.

⁴⁶ See in Barseł Maškeworc' i, *Meknowt' iwn Srboy Awetaranin or əst Markosi* [Commentary on the Holy Gospel of Mark], ed. Adreas arch. Narinian Aknetsi, vol. 2 (Constantinople: Hasanp'aša Xan Press, 1826), 319. Barseł Maškeworc' i lived around 1280–1345. He studied at the Maškewor Monastery (Cilician Armenia). The only known work of Barseł Maškeworc' i is the Commentary on the Gospel of Mark the first part of which is lost. The commentary was written in 1325. The book was erroneously printed under the name of Čon [Շոն], however, the author of the exegesis to the Gospel of Mark is Barseł Maškeworc' i, who was active in the 14th century. For biographic data see P'olaryan, Norayr, *Hay grohner 5–17 Dar* [Armenian Writers of 5th–17th Centuries] (Jerusalem: Saint James Monastery Press, 1971), 377.

⁴⁷ See in Gēorg Skewrac' i, *Meknutiwn Gorcoc' Arak'eloc': XIII Dar* [Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles: XIII century], ed. Hasmik Badalyan and Geworg Ter-Vardanyan (Ējmiacin: Ējmiacin Press, 2013), 45. Gēorg Skewrac' i [Lambronac' i], (1246/47 Lambron fortress, Cilicia, 1301), was an archimandrite, exegete, scribe. He had a direct participation in the struggle against the union of Armenian and Roman churches. For biographic data see Ayvazyan and Xaç' atryan, *K'ristonya Hayastan Hanragitaran*, 209.

⁴⁸ See in Maškeworc' i, *Meknowt' iwn Srboy Awetaranin*, 2: 271.



Fig. 12. *Betrayal, Bible, Venice, Mekhitarist Library, V280, fol. 553r (fifteenth century), detail.*

In his exegesis of Matthew's Gospel, Hovhannes Erznkac'i ascribes to Judas the choice of refusing the help of Jesus.⁴⁹ With regard to Peter, Erznkac'i suggests that he denied Christ because God deprived him of help, and thus his lack of succour is justified by the will of God: "Blessed with the succour of God and yet devoid of yearning we will all the same go astray. And these two, Judas and Peter, reflect this, as Judas who had the protection did not benefit from it since he wished not to attain salvation and never aspired to, while Peter, despite his willingness, did not receive any help and failed likewise...."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ As a help the exegeses mention the fact of making Judas a tablemate. Besides, according to some exegeses, Judas's feet were washed first to make him change his mind. See in Maškeworc'i, *Meknowt'iw'n Srboy Awetaranin*, 2: 267, 269.

⁵⁰ See in Šnorhali and Erznkac'i, *Meknowt'iw'n Sowrb Awetaranin*, 566. Also see Kownd, *Meknowt'iw'n Awetaranin*, 520. Both Hovhannes Erznkac'i and Sargis Kownd use this commentary for the words Peter uttered in response to Jesus's prediction of his denial (Matthew 26:34-35, Luke 22:33-34).

To condemn Judas's character Erzncac'i also compares the way in which Judas and Peter repent for their deeds. There is a particular focus on the death of Judas: "Since, as it seems to me, he wished not to receive remission or as I said, because he repented only in words not in deeds as Peter and even more hang himself, ..." ⁵¹

In miniatures, the comparison of the characters of Judas and Peter can be detected from the fourteenth century. The juxtaposition of these characters in the iconography is expressed through the depiction of these two figures either side by side or at opposite ends. For example, in the fourteenth-century manuscript Judas and Peter are represented standing next to each other in the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and the Communion (figs. 6, 7, 10). Našaš achieves the comparison of these two characters by representing them side by side in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus and at opposite ends in the scene of the Communion (figs. 1, 9).

In the miniatures, the aim of depicting Judas and Peter in close proximity, or at opposite sides, may serve not only to express the deeds of the characters as recounted in the Gospel (Peter's denial and Judas's betrayal), but also to condemn the character of Judas by creating a comparison, as is commonly done in exegeses.

The Figure of Judas: Historical and Doctrinal Perspectives

The depiction of the figure of Judas in these scenes can also be analysed within historical and doctrinal contexts. To contextualise the subject matter, it is necessary to provide a brief historical overview of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Armenian Catholicosate, established in Cilicia,⁵² consistently confronted the issue of union with the Roman Catholic Church. In this respect, in the fourteenth century the pro-unionist Councils convened in Sis (in 1307) and Adana (in 1317) were of particular significance. In the hope of securing the Pope's military support in halting Mamluk incursions, the Councils decided to unite with the Roman Catholic Church at the cost of doctrinal and ceremonial concessions.⁵³ This aroused considerable resistance

⁵¹ See in Šnorhali and Erzncac'i, *Meknowt'wn Sowrb Awetaranin*, 584.

⁵² Cilicia as an Armenian principality was established in 1080 by the Rubenyd dynasty. In 1198, it was elevated to the status of a kingdom with the coronation of Leo I of Rubenyd dynasty, as King of Armenia. The Catholicosate was transferred to Sis, the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, in 1292.

⁵³ The concessions concerned the acceptance of the seven ecumenical councils (of which the Armenian Apostolic Church had accepted only the first three), including the formulation of the creed at Chalcedon; the adoption of the Latin calendar of feasts with Christmas observed on the 25th of December instead of the 6th of January; the addition of water into the eucharistic wine; the addition of the word "Christ" to the text of the Trisagion hymn, etc. For a detailed

among the clergy of Greater Armenia,⁵⁴ who denounced and rejected the decisions made in these Councils.⁵⁵ The clergy of Greater Armenia, notably of Syunik, played a crucial role in opposing both the pro-Latin decisions and the activities of the members of the Dominican and Franciscan missionary orders active in Greater Armenia during the period.⁵⁶ Throughout the

account see Ōrmanyan, *Azgapatowm*, 2: 2089-2090. See also Mathews, Thomas F. and Sanjian, Avedis K., *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1991), 27.

⁵⁴ The term *Greater Armenia* refers to the historical region of Armenia, distinguishing it from the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, which is often identified in contemporary sources as Armenia Minor. For a map of Greater Armenia see Mathews and Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography*, 10-11.

⁵⁵ Prior to the Council of Sis, the Armenian Catholicos Grigor VII Anavarzec'i, who was known for his Latin proclivity, having resolved to make ceremonial and doctrinal changes in the Armenian Church, dispatched a legate to Armenia to Stepanos Orbelyan, metropolitan of Syunik, with the paper containing these changes. To discuss the programme of changes proposed by Grigor VII Anavarzec'i, the Metropolitan of Syunik summoned a synod. The names of the four princes and the clergymen (eleven altogether) who signed against these changes have been preserved. Each of the signatories affirmed his loyalty to the tradition of the Armenian Apostolic Church and rejected the changes introduced by Grigor VII Anavarzec'i. The data on the clergymen and princes who signed against the changes is from the historical account written by Metropolitan Stepanos Orbelyan (thirteenth–fourteenth centuries), who is also known as a historian. See Step'anos Ōrbēlean, *Patmowt'iw nahanjin Sisakan* [*The History of Sisakan Province*], ed. Karapet Šahnazareanc', vol. 2 (Paris: Šahnazareanc' Press, 1859), 208–210. See also Ōrmanyan, *Azgapatowm*, 2: 2063-2066. Despite this rejection, a council was convened in Sis in 1306, at which the changes for the union with Rome, proposed by the Catholicos, were accepted. In 1317, by order of Pope John XXII, the Council of Adana was convened to reaffirm the decisions made during the Sis Council (Ōrmanyan, *Azgapatowm*, 2: 2122-2123). Catholicos Constantine III, the successor of Catholicos Grigor VII Anavarzec'i, who also had a pro-Latin stance, threatened the clergy of Greater Armenia, particularly that of Syunik, with the deprivation of holy chrism if they refused to accept the decisions of the Council. This was followed by a response letter from the clergy of Syunik, in which they rejected any proposed changes to the Armenian Apostolic Church. For the letter contents see Hovsep'yan, Garegin, *Xalbakeank' kam Prošeank' hayoc' patmowt'ean mēj* [*Xalbakeans or Prošeans in the history of Armenia*] (Antelias: the printing press of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1969), 397-399. See also Mathews and Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography*, 27, 28. For the analysis of the councils of Sis and Adana see also Bundy, David, "The Trajectory of Roman Catholic Influence in Cilician Armenia: An Analysis of the Councils of Sis and Adana," *Armenian Review* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 73-85.

⁵⁶ By the fourteenth century, the Dominicans had already established diocesan houses in Greater Armenia. The extant data indicates that they administered approximately fifty monasteries and maintained a clergy of around seven hundred members, all of them Armenian. The official establishment of the Armenian–Dominican order of the United Brethren dates back to the 1330s. See Palčean, Alek'sandr V., *Patmowt'iw kat'olikē vardapetowt'ean i Hays ew miowt'ean noc'a and Hromēakan ekelec'woy i P'lorentean siwnhodosi* [*History of the Catholic Doctrine among Armenians and that of the Union with the Roman Church in the Florence Council*] (Vienne: Mekhitarist press, 1878), 71-72; Zek'iyān, Połos Lewon, "14rd dari kronakan večera. Naxak'ayler hayoc' ekelec'ow hetaga bažanowmneri ew ekelec'abanakan kargavičaki" ["Religious Arguments in the 14th Century. Presage to Further

fourteenth century, one of the primary problems was the resistance to Latinisation.

The situation in the fifteenth century was even more challenging. The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia no longer existed.⁵⁷ The Armenian Catholicosate left in Cilicia was in a state of decline. Therefore, the issue of the union of churches was once more seen as a way out of a difficult situation, and the invitation sent by the Pope to the Armenian Catholicos to participate in the Council summoned for the purpose of the union of the Eastern and Western Churches, was viewed as an opportunity to receive support from the Pope.

The Armenian Catholicos Constantine VI of Vahka, intending to ascertain Nalaš's opinion on the matter of the union of churches, entrusted Nalaš with the response to Pope Eugenius IV's invitation to participate in the 1438–1439 Council of Ferrara-Florence.⁵⁸

Nalaš's stance on the issue of the union of the churches is stated in this response letter, where Nalaš stipulates that the union would only be possible if the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, traditionally rejected by the Armenian Apostolic Church, were not imposed.⁵⁹ Considering the preceding unsuccessful attempts to unite the churches, Nalaš deliberately made such a demand, fully cognizant that the unification would require

Divisions in Armenian Church and to Ecclesiastical Status"], *Etchmiadzi Journal of Religious and Armenological Studies* 56, no. 1 (January 2000): 111. For the overview on the itinerary of the Dominican and Franciscan missionaries to Greater Armenia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries see Der Nersessian, Sirarpie, "Western Iconographic Themes in Armenian Manuscripts," in *Byzantine and Armenian Studies*, vol. 1 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1973), 618–630. See also La Porta, Sergio, "Armeno-Latin Intellectual Exchange in the Fourteenth Century: Scholarly Traditions in Conversation and Competition," *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 269-294.

⁵⁷ In 1375, the Mamluks invaded Sis, the capital of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia. The kingdom fell in 1375, but the Catholicosate remained in Cilicia until 1441.

⁵⁸ Małak'ia Ōrmanyān posits that the Catholicos's decision to consider solely Mkrtič' Nalaš's standpoint as sufficient to answer the Pope's letter can be explained by the fact that, during this period, opportunities for communication on the matter of the union of churches were limited, since Greater Armenia was under foreign rule, and Nalaš was the only person the Catholicos could address. According to the Armenian Apostolic Church Canon, however, the Catholicos was required to address not only Nalaš, the bishop of Amida, but also the clergy of Greater Armenia (of Syunik and Vaspurakan). See Ōrmanyān, *Azgapatowm*, 2: 2424.

⁵⁹ It is noteworthy that Nalaš, in his letter concerning the union of churches, mentions that he wrote the response letter at the behest of the Catholicos and T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, a prominent figure among the clergy of Greater Armenia at the time. The response letter of Mkrtič' Nalaš bears the title "A response to the letter of the Latins that wrote Mkrtič' at the behest of the Armenian Catholicos and the remarkable teacher T'owma." [Patasxani Latinac'oc' T'htoyn i Mkrtič' nkaragrē, zor greac' hramanaw kat'olikosin hayoc' ew mec rabownapetin T'owmayi]. For the letter content see [Hovsep'yan], Garegin, "Mkrtič' Nalaši t'owlt'ə Florentioy žołovi art'iw," 418-423.

doctrinal and ceremonial changes. Nevertheless, the Catholicos gave his own consent to the union of the churches, which, judging by his response, appears to have been unconditional.⁶⁰ As with the previous Councils of Sis and Adana, this Catholicos again acted against the traditional position and, without the consent of all Armenian diocesan clergy, decided to unite with the Roman Catholic Church.⁶¹

The clash of positions of the advocates of the union at the cost of concessions, and those who condemned such a union, remained crucial since the establishment of the Catholicosate in Cilicia.⁶²

Regarding the dissemination of Roman Catholicism in Greater Armenia, the issue also persisted during the fifteenth century.⁶³

⁶⁰ The Catholicos appoints four legates, who then present themselves to the Pope on his behalf. For the contents of the letter on the agreement regarding the union of churches see Palčean, *Patmowt' iwn kat'olikē*, 87-89; Manowkean, Abēl, “Hay ew hromēakan kat'olik ekelec' inerow miowt' ean verjin p'orjə P'lorentioy meĵ ew 'decretum pro armenis' kam «hrahang ar hays» kondakə” [The Last Attempt of Unity between the Armenian and the Catholic Church in Florence and the “decretum pro armenis”], in *Akademikos Sen Arewšatyanı cnndyan innsownamyakin nvirvac hayagitakan miĵazgayin gitažolovi nyowt'er (22-23 mayis, 2019) [Sen Arevshatian 90: Proceedings of the International Armenological Conference, Dedicated to the 90th Anniversary of Academician Sen Arevshatian's Birth (22-23 May, 2019)]* (Yerevan: Matenadaran Press, 2020), 58-94 at 73.

⁶¹ It is known that in the papal bull issued at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and addressed to the Armenians, Rome imposed changes on the Liturgy and doctrine of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which have traditionally been rejected by the Armenian Apostolic Church. The changes imposed included: the creed of Constantinople with the added phrase “and the Son”; the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures, will, and economies of Christ; the addition of water to the eucharistic wine; the adoption of Latin calendar of feasts and other related practices. The final council bull required the Armenians to venerate Pope Leo I, whose *Tome* to Patriarch Flavian formed the doctrinal basis of Chalcedon's (451) definition of Christ's nature, historically rejected by the Armenian Apostolic Church. For the contents of the bull of the Council of Florence addressed to Armenians, see Pelikan, Jaroslav and Valerie R. Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeks and Confessions of the Faith in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 755–765.

⁶² It should be stated that the decisions taken at the councils of Ferrara-Florence, Sis and Adana are considered invalid according to the canons of the Armenian Apostolic Church, because only the decisions made by all Armenian diocesan clergy and lay deputies are deemed legally valid. While, as is known, not all Armenian diocesan clergy were involved in the decision-making processes of the councils. Furthermore, the majority of them rejected the adoption of the proposed changes (as was the case with the councils of Sis and Adana). The decisions of the councils of Sis (1306) and Adana (1317) were officially declared not valid by the council of Sis convened in 1361. See Manowkean, “Hay ew hromēakan kat'olik ekelec' inerow miowt' ean verjin p'orjə,” 74; Örmanyan, *Azgapatowm*, 2: 2245–2246. Although the decisions taken at the council of Ferrara-Florence were not formally rejected, according to the Armenian Apostolic Church canons, the decisions were considered invalid, as the Catholicos's decision was unilateral. See Manowkean, “Hay ew hromēakan kat'olik ekelec' inerow miowt' ean verjin p'orjə,” 58-92. For the Armenian Apostolic Church canons, see Melik'-T'angean, Nerses, *Hayoc' ekelec' akan iravownk'ə* [*Armenian Church Law*], vol. 2 (Shushi, 1905), 123-25.

Basically, throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, preserving the tradition of the Armenian Apostolic Church was one of the primary issues, and the role of the traditionalist clergy of Greater Armenia was pivotal in this regard.⁶⁴

It is essential to consider this context when analysing the iconography of the miniatures. From the perspective of doctrine and church tradition, the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and the Communion of the Apostles are of particular importance. The symbolism of the Raising of Lazarus is significant in the context of Christological debates on the nature of Christ between proponents of Dyophysitism and Miaphysitism.

In the fourteenth-century Armenian recension of the Homily on the Raising of Lazarus and the Harrowing of Hell, a symbolic interpretation of the inseparability of Christ's two natures is attributed to the voice of Christ calling the dead Lazarus.⁶⁵ This interpretation posits that Christ's human and divine natures are inseparable, as is the voice by which Lazarus is called. The content of the homily is of a Christological nature and is directed against those who profess the doctrine of Dyophysitism.⁶⁶ All the manuscripts preserving this version of the homily date from the fourteenth century,⁶⁷ a period in which the traditionalist clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church fought against the activities of the Latin missionaries in Greater Armenia and

⁶³ It is known that the Catholic principality of Artaz, which became an Armenian Unitarian movement center in the fourteenth century, persisted until 1426. Lewon Xaç'ikyan quotes from the travel notes "Historia del gran Tamerlan" (1403–1406) by Ruy González de Clavijo, the ambassador of Henry the third of Castile, where Ruy González de Clavijo presents the ruler of the Armenian principality of Artaz province and the entire population of the fortress as Catholic, and states that they were all Armenians. For the full quotation, see Xaç'ikyan, Levon, "Artazi haykakan iṣṣanowt'yownə ew Corcori dproc'ə" ["The Armenian principality of Artaz and the school of Corcor"], *Bulletin of Matenadaran*, no. 11 (1973): 159–61. For the fall of the Armenian principality of Artaz see Xaç'ikyan, "Artazi haykakan iṣṣanowt'yownə ew Corcori dproc'ə," 163–67. In her article, Claudine Delacroix-Besnier provides information about the activities of the United Brethren in the 15th century. See in Delacroix-Besnier, Claudine, "Les Missions Dominicaines et les Arméniens du Milieu du XIVe Siècle aux Premières Années du XVe Siècle," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 26, (1996–1997): 173–91.

⁶⁴ In 1441, a council was convened in Ējmiacin, during which around 700 clergymen of the Armenian Church assembled and made a decision to move the Catholicosate from Sis (Cilicia) to Ējmiacin, where it has remained to the present day. See in Ōrmanyan, *Azgapatowm*, 2: 2455–2456; Ōrmanyan, Małak'ia, *Hayoc' Ekelec'in ew ir patmowt'iwənə, vardapetowt'iwənə, varč'owt'iwənə, barekargowt'iwənə, ararolowt'iwənə, grakanowt'iwənə ow nerkay kac'owt'iwənə* [*The Armenian Church and Its History, Doctrine, Administration, Reform, Liturgy, Literature, and Present Condition*], 2nd ed. (Constantinople, 1912), 75–77.

⁶⁵ For the content and study of the homily on the Raising of Lazarus and the Harrowing of Hell see Der Nersessian, "Western Iconographic Themes," 457–467.

⁶⁶ See Der Nersessian, "Western Iconographic Themes," 463.

⁶⁷ See Der Nersessian, "Western Iconographic Themes," 457; Mathews and Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography*, 154.

the pro-Latin decisions of the Councils. The homily functioned as a means to oppose Latinisation and to reinforce the Christological position that professed Miaphysitism.

Regarding the iconography of the miniatures, it should be noted that from the fourteenth century there were changes in those scenes that were especially important from the perspective of church tradition and doctrine. These include the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and the Communion of the Apostles.⁶⁸

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the figure of Judas came to be particularly emphasised in the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and the Communion.⁶⁹ Whereas in earlier centuries Judas had not appeared in the Raising of Lazarus (fig. 4),⁷⁰ in the manuscripts under discussion he was not only included in the scene but was also placed in a central position and represented with a distorted facial expression (figs. 1, 5).

The figure of Judas was also introduced in the scene of the Communion, where he was often depicted as the first to receive communion (figs 9, 10, 11).

⁶⁸ It is important to note that the conditions imposed on the Armenian Church for the union of churches included both doctrinal and liturgical demands. These included the acceptance of the Chalcedonian formula concerning the nature of Christ in place of the Miaphysite formula and the adoption of a mixed chalice in the Eucharistic rite instead of the traditional use of an unmixed chalice.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that in contrast to the Communion scene, where Judas is frequently depicted, often as the first to receive communion and attested in numerous fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts, in the Raising of Lazarus the figure of Judas appears only in the three mentioned fourteenth century manuscripts and in the manuscript illuminated by Našaš. It is noteworthy, however, that these fourteenth century manuscript miniatures were executed by prominent illuminators of the distinguished medieval school of Glajor, namely Avag and T'oros Taronac'i.

⁷⁰ Although some of the miniature paintings from previous years feature twelve apostles, as is the case with the Mowłni Gospel (eleventh century), the figure of Judas is not distinguishable iconographically. Unlike in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in a thirteenth-century Armenian Gospel preserved in the Freer Gallery of Art (WAF 32.18), despite the unusually frequent inclusion of scenes featuring Judas—such as *Jesus at the House of Simon*, *Judas Receiving the Thirty Pieces of Silver*, *Judas Leading the Jews* and *The Suicide of Judas*—his figure receives no distinctive iconographic emphasis in the Communion scene; in the Raising of Lazarus, only three apostles are depicted, none of whom is Judas. In the manuscript illuminated by the prominent thirteenth-century Armenian miniaturist T'oros Roslin, Judas is depicted in the scene of the Washing of the Feet but not in that of the Raising of Lazarus, where approximately five disciples are shown, with Peter represented in full height. For the figures in the thirteenth-century Armenian Gospel preserved in the Freer Gallery of Art see Der-Nersessian, Sirarpie, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 1963), figs. 96, 97, 100, 157, 158, 170. For the eleventh century Gospel see Mowłni Gospel M7736 (fol. 16v). For T'oros Roslin's miniatures see Der-Nersessian, Sirarpie, *Miniature Painting*, figs. 204, 224.

Meanwhile, it was during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that a red morsel was introduced in Christ's hand in the depiction of the Communion scene, which appears to be a reference to the ceremony of the Communion of the Armenian Apostolic Church, whereby bread was dipped into an unmixed chalice. In this iconography, Christ is represented with a goblet in one hand and a red morsel in the other, reflecting the ceremony of the Armenian liturgy (figs 9, 11).⁷¹

In the fourteenth century, these iconographic changes were particularly pronounced in the miniatures of Avag, a miniaturist from the renowned school at the Monastery of Glajor (figs 6, 7, 10).⁷² This school played a significant role in resisting the activities of Latin missionaries and the pro-Latin decisions of the councils convened in Sis and Adana.⁷³

In one of his illuminated manuscripts (M7650, fol. 21v), Avag depicts Judas mocking the sacrament in the Communion scene. The miniature represents the Communion scene according to the tradition of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Here, Christ is represented holding the goblet of wine in one hand and offering the red morsel to Peter with the other, while Judas, positioned behind Peter, is depicted pointing at the sacrament with his tongue sticking out (fig. 13). In another manuscript of the same miniaturist (J1941, fol. 5r), Judas is depicted in the foreground in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus. He occupies the central position, baring his teeth and pointing at the Raising of Lazarus. The name "Judas" [Յուդա] is inscribed within his nimbus (fig. 14).

⁷¹ In the Armenian liturgical tradition, the priest holds the goblet with undiluted wine in one hand and dips the morsel into the wine with the other before administering it to the communicant.

⁷² In her article, Lilit Zakarian characterizes this miniaturist as an anti-unionist ("*Avag, artista anti-unitore*"), considering his opposition to the unionist activities of members of the Franciscan and Dominican missionary orders. She highlights one of the miniaturist's illustrations of the Last Judgment, in which, according to Zakarian, a Catholic priest is depicted in hell (M212, fol. 79v). See in Zakarian, Lilit, "Un Artista Anti-Unitore del XIV secolo," in *Roma-Armenia*, ed. Claude Mutafian (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1999), 175-76.

⁷³ The director of the famous school at the monastery of Glajor Esayi Nč'ec'i was known for his activities against Latinisation. He was among those who signed against the decision of Catholicos Grigor VII Anavarzec'i regarding the Latinisation of the Armenian Apostolic Church. See Örbēlean, *Patmowt' iwn nahangin Sisakan*, 2: 208-210. The name of Esayi Nč'ec'i also appears in another letter addressed to the Catholicos Costantine III. In this letter, the clergy of Syunik, including Esayi Nč'ec'i, reject any changes to the doctrines and practices of the Armenian Apostolic Church. For the contents of the letter by the clergy of Syunik addressed to the Catholicos, see Hovsep'yan, *Xalbakeank' kam Prošeank'*, 397-399. For the Glajor school's activities against Latinisation, see Xaç'eryan, Lewon, *Esayi Nč'ec'in ew Glajori hamalsaranə* [Esayi Nč'ec'i and the University of Glajor] (Los Angeles: Alco Printing, 1988), 336-366. See also the historical account in note 55.



Fig. 13. *The Communion of the Apostles, Gospel, Yerevan, Matenadaran, The Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute, M7650, fol. 21v, School of Glajor (1329, fourteenth century).*



Fig. 14. *Raising of Lazarus, Four Gospels, Jerusalem, The Library of the Armenian Patriarchate, J1941, fol. 5r, School of Glajor (1334, fourteenth century).*

In the miniature paintings of the fifteenth century, the iconographic changes in the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and of Communion were especially marked in the miniatures of Nalaš, who had a traditional position regarding doctrinal issues (figs 1, 9).

The prominence of the figure of Judas in these scenes can be contextualised in light of the doctrinal controversies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. My working hypothesis is that the insertion of the figure of traitor Judas into these scenes can be seen as an allusion to those who chose heterodoxy – to the “traitors” of the Armenian Apostolic Church, in this case, the clergy of the Armenian Church favouring Roman Catholicism and those who converted to Roman Catholicism.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Nalaš’s contemporary and an Armenian historiographer of the fifteenth century, T’ovma Mecop’ec’i, in his *History of Tamerlane and His Successors*, addressing the growing unionist movement, calls those who converted to Roman Catholicism “deniers of the truth”. In this work, Mecop’ec’i tells about a Latinised Armenian monk who confesses to a clergyman of the Armenian Apostolic Church his regret for converting to Roman Catholicism, saying: “I was a

Regarding Nalaš's iconography, the three miniatures in question bear a distinct emphasis on the figure of Judas, which occupies a central position. In the Raising of Lazarus he is shown in full height at the front beside Peter, and in the Communion scene he appears as the first to receive Communion (figs 1, 9). Judas is also represented with a devouring mouth. This is especially stressed in the scene of Betrayal (Judas is depicted kissing Christ's hand and devouring the coin purse), which is remarkable from the perspective of Armenian miniature iconography of the time (fig. 12). The depiction in these miniatures of Judas's avaricious nature through exaggerated iconography could also allude to contemporary events.

By 1421, the Catholicosate had already become corrupt as the Catholicoi were ordained by bribes.⁷⁵ In one of his verses, Nalaš addressed the contemporary issues, where he noted the growing numbers of Catholicoi, the transgressions of bishops, and the increased corruption. He saw greed as a source of transgression, such as corruption and the offences of the contemporary clergy:

The Catholicoi grow in number
By violence and impiousness,
They ordain bishops lawlessly,
And all this owing to greed.
The bishops have transgressed the morals,
When ordering the whores
To take gold coins as a bribe,
And all this owing to greed.
The emerging vardapets (doctors of theology)
have become sellers of the Word
And preach to please men,
And all this owing to greed.
Monks renounced the monasteries
And wander in the villages,

monk who was one of you, but the devil led me astray and made me Chalsedonian". See T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, *Patmowt'yown Lank T'amowray*, 37, 39.

⁷⁵ During the years 1377–1432, the last six Catholicoi would take up the position by killing the predecessor and buying the succession. See T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, *Patmagrowth'yown [Historiography]*, ed. Lewon Xaç'ikyan (Yerevan: Magalat', 1999), 22; Ōrmanyan, *Hayoc' Ekelec'in ew ir patmowt'iwñə*, 75.

They no longer sing Psalms,
And all this owing to greed...⁷⁶

Nalaš begins his verse with a condemnation of greed, drawing comparisons to biblical characters. Specifically, he parallels the subject with Judas stating, “But Judas Iscariot...betrayed the Master unto death. The malady of greed is fierce, making a disciple into a wild beast. The master was led to the cross by him—all this owing to greed.”⁷⁷

Considering the pronounced and unconventional iconography of the figure of Judas, it can be assumed that the character of Judas (the avaricious traitor) serves as a metaphor through which the miniaturist conveys his critical view of contemporary problems.

Conclusion

The iconography of Nalaš’s miniatures, particularly regarding the interpretation of Judas’s character, is distinctive from the perspective of Armenian miniature iconography. The figure of Judas is emphasised through different iconographical means. In the three scenes in question, Judas is depicted in the central position, with an open devouring mouth that alludes to his avaricious nature (of particular note is the scene of Betrayal, in which he is depicted devouring the coin purse). The figure of Judas is also emphasised by means of comparison. In the miniatures, Nalaš presents a Judas-Peter comparison in the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and the Communion.

Nalaš was a significant figure among the Armenian clergy of the time. He was directly involved in the decision-making process concerning the union of the churches and, judging from his response letter on the matter, he had a traditional and uncompromising stance on doctrinal issues.

The challenges inherent in the period, together with Nalaš’s well-known traditional stance on doctrinal matters, make it possible to interpret the iconographic changes in the miniatures, particularly the depiction of Judas, within their historical and doctrinal contexts. These factors also allow for a retrospective, historically contextualized interpretation of the

⁷⁶ The verse of Mkrtič’ Nalaš, «Xratakan baners agahowt’ean ew anənc’owt’ean i Nalaš vardapetē asac’cal» [*Admonitions on greed and poverty by Archimandrite Nalaš*], has been preserved in around 20 manuscripts of Matenadaran (M424, 2736, 2127, 1779, 3411, 3595, 523, 33, 7508, 2236, 7732, 8968, 8605, 3488, 7714, 9271, 7717, 7712, 3768, 2672). The quoted version of this verse is from the manuscript booksong, which was written in Theodosia (Crimea) in 1656 and published by Karapet Kostanianc’ in the appendix of his study. See Kostanianc’, Karapet, *Mkrtič’ Nalaš ew iwr talerə* [Mkrtič’ Nalaš and his verses] (Vałaršapat: Ĕjmiacin Press, 1898), 18.

⁷⁷ See in Kostanianc’, *Mkrtič’ Nalaš ew iwr talerə*, 16.

iconographic changes in the fourteenth-century miniatures (the depiction of the figure of Judas in the scenes that were particularly important from the perspective of church tradition and doctrine) created by the miniaturists of the Glajor school, an institution known for its traditionalist stance. In turn, this retrospective understanding shows that the changes in Nalaš's fifteenth-century miniatures, the depiction of Judas in the scenes of the Raising of Lazarus and Communion, are not blind imitations of fourteenth-century iconography. Rather, they serve a deliberate purpose, conditioned by the historical circumstances, namely, the efforts to resist the Latinisation of the Armenian Apostolic Church, a phenomenon that is characteristic of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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The art of dance in the biblical people of the East in the period of the Ancient World and the Middle Ages

Roman Odrekhivskiy *

Abstract: The ancient cultures of the East have been famous for the perfect art of dance. However, due to certain historical circumstances, it is understudied in Ukrainian scientific thought, principally those nations mentioned in the Bible. Obviously, this gap is a legacy of the totalitarian regime, when everything that was not part of its ideology was not tolerated.

As far as can be judged from biblical descriptions, ancient written monuments (Mesopotamian, Egyptian and others), images on ancient paintings, works of decorative and applied art and other artistic monuments or the art of dance among the ancient biblical peoples were all widespread and developed at a high level.

This is evidenced by passages from the ancient Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh, ancient Mesopotamian reliefs from the tomb of A Bar Gi, ancient Egyptian paintings from Beni-Hasan, Coptic textiles from the era of the Sassanid dynasty, and a number of other images. We have some information about the art of dance among biblical peoples from certain parts of texts in the Bible, such as the parable of the prodigal son, the dance of King David, the dance of Solomia, the daughter of Herodias and a number of other texts.

In the dances of the biblical peoples of the East, great importance was attached to the female dance itself. After all, a woman in the East is an aspect of the manifestation of God, the presence of God in the world. Therefore, the female figure embodied many mystical Eastern ideas that a woman is the last divine truth and radiates His light. Thus, it becomes clear why so much attention was paid to women's dance in Eastern cultures.

One of the most common compositional solutions of the choreography of the biblical peoples of the East was a dance in a circle around the temple altar, hearth or human figure (Mesopotamian dance of the priest with jumping, Egyptian dances of the zodiac, the sun and others, Jewish dances around the golden body, etc.).

Many dance compositions are difficult to reconstruct, since their detailed descriptions have not been preserved. Their reconstruction can be carried out on the basis of images, some texts and last but not least the author's conjecture.

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This topic is promising in the context of further research into the dance art of each of the biblical peoples, in particular Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Jews, and others.

Keywords: art of dance, dancer, countries of the East, clothes, images of dances, religious cult, sports dances, choreography.

Introduction

Dance is one of the ancient forms of art. It has accompanied men since ancient times. Due to certain historical circumstances, the art of oriental dance is understudied, especially the most ancient Eastern cultures, which are mentioned, in particular, in the Bible.

The oriental dance is distinguished by its unique feature in the rhythm of the music, by a special long oriental melody, a refined silhouette of the dancers and a certain symbolism of movements. His research is becoming increasingly popular in science. Therefore, the topic of studying the dances of the peoples of the East, mentioned in the Bible, is entirely relevant. The peculiarity of this article is that it covers the period from the earliest biblical times.

For Christian cultures, the study of the dance of the countries in the Middle East is special, because as the researchers note

It is known that the spiritual culture of Christianity was born as a result of the interpenetration of two opposite, self-contained, most mature and integral cultures of the ancient world - Greco-Roman and Middle Eastern.¹

Scientists raised the issue of researching the dance mentioned in the Bible in accordance with its relationship with their Christianity, in particular A. Bogorod², V. Volchukova.³ However, in these works, biblical dances are analyzed, mostly Jewish dances, and only occasionally in the context of their connection with Christianity. There is no consideration of the dance art of other Biblical Eastern peoples, such as the Sumerians, Egyptians, and others. The purpose of the research is to cover the peculiarities of the dance art of the biblical peoples of the East.

In addition, the authors of many biblical texts preached in the countries of today's Middle East. This very activity is reflected in many texts

¹ Viktoriia Volchukova *Problems of development and the role of ritual dance in early Christian culture: Author's abstract. dis... cand. in art history: 17.00.01 / V.M. Volchukova ; Khark. derzh. akad. kultury. Kharkiv, 2002, p. 3.*

² Anatolii Bohorod, *Problems of ritual dance in the Christian religion. Abrahamic religions in Ukraine: history, ethnocultural interactions, interfaith relations. Proceedings of the scientific conference*, Halych, 25 travnia 2013 roku, 2013, pp. 228-236.

³ Viktoriia Volchukova, *Problems of development and the role of ritual dance in early Christian culture: Author's abstract. dis... cand. in art history: 17.00.01 / V.M. Volchukova ; Khark. derzh. akad. Kultury, Kharkiv, 2002, pp. 6-7.*

of the Bible. Therefore, the Middle Eastern choreographic culture has had a certain influence on the early Christian consciousness and on the dance culture of the early Christians. It is not for nothing that it is written in the Bible Psalms:

Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!

Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

Let them praise his name with the dance; let them sing praises to him with the timbrel and harp.

[Psalm 149: 1, 2, 3],

1 Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens.

2 Praise him for his acts of power;

praise him for his surpassing greatness.

3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

praise him with the harp and lyre,

4 praise him with timbrel and dancing,

praise him with the strings and pipe,

5 praise him with the clash of cymbals,

praise him with resounding cymbals.

6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

[Psalm 150: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

Dance art in the Mesopotamian tradition

The development of art in ancient Mesopotamia has its own characteristics. Unlike ancient Egypt, for example, in ancient Mesopotamia there was a ruling people not of one nationality, but of different peoples. In Ancient Egypt, on the contrary, the same ethnic group was dominant for thousands of years.

However, a feature of the art of ancient Mesopotamia is that, judging from the analysis of monuments of plastic arts, the conquerors borrowed the stylistics of plastic arts and the culture of the conquered peoples, their predecessors. And in this way, a special Mesopotamian style was developed in sculptural relief, artistic ceramics and other types of art. Thus, in the historical course of time, the Sumerian pictorial culture passed into the Babylonian or Persian culture and other subsequent ones in the same territory, which we call ancient Mesopotamia. As we assume, something similar happened with ancient Mesopotamian performative arts, including choreography. Therefore, we consider the dance art of ancient civilizations in this territory from the specific perspective of the dance art of Mesopotamia.

At the same time, we understand that both in ancient Mesopotamian and ancient Egyptian art, the style was continuously developing and nothing remained unchanged.

The dances of the peoples of Mesopotamia were noted as a peculiar feature. According to researchers, some choreographic compositions of dancers in ancient Mesopotamia were performed naked.⁴ The author, however, refers to researchers of the art of Middle Eastern countries, who illustrate the number of images of naked dancers from Jordan with expressive movements that may belong to an oriental dance. We understand that the images cover a period of time even before the acceptance of Islam by these peoples. After all, it is unlikely that Islamic culture would promote images of naked dancers.

It is also noted that the naked dancers were in the closest position to the king compared to other spectators. The researcher S. Georgieva notes that such images show a clear desire of artists to imitate (unfortunately, it is not specified which one) older images that come from Iran, Mesopotamia.⁵

This is interestingly interconnected, because it is known that dances with female dancers existed in ancient Mesopotamia: for example, temple dances of girls and “men with women's breasts”.⁶ Dances in ancient Mesopotamia were also accompanied by loud folk festivities next to the music of harps and tambourines.⁷

People expressed their joy by dancing in the ancient Mezhirichchi, as can be understood from the epic of Gilgamesh. When Gilgamesh returned from a distant military campaign, the relatives of the warriors who returned alive expressed their joy through dance.⁸

Images of dancers from the Mesopotamian royal tomb A-Bar-Gi have been preserved. Inlaid images show fragments of what researchers believe to be illustrations of the Gilgamesh epic.⁹ The dance movements depict the naked figure of the hero (Gilgamesh) and the half-man-half-scorpion dancer in front of a gazelle. In some compositions, human figures are depicted according to the Mesopotamian tradition (Fig. 1).

In the temples of Baal, the priests have also performed special dances in a circle around the deity, each turning around its axis on half-fingers, jumping and playing percussion instruments. Many dances of ancient Mesopotamia, as well as of ancient Egypt, have an astral character. However, there is no concrete data on the specifics and character of secular dances in ancient Mesopotamia, in contrast to Egyptian and ancient Jewish ones.

Finally, images of naked Coptic (Egyptian) dancers from the era of the Sassanid dynasty, dated by scientists to the V-VI centuries, have also

⁴ Siyana Georgieva, *The Complex Roots of the Figures Modelled in Stucco inside the Khirbat al-Majfar - Some Observations*. Anastasis, Iași, Volume XI, No.1/May, 2024, p. 108.

⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 106-108.

⁶ Lohvyn Yurii, *About the deeds of Gilgamesh*,

https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/printitzip.php?tid=5883#google_vignette, p. 5.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁹ Albert Champdor, *Mesopotamian art*, Leipzig, 1964, p. 84.

been preserved.¹⁰ A naked female figure is depicted dancing in the frame of an arch, which rested on columns with typical elements of Eastern and pre-Romanesque European architecture - lace ornament and flutes.



Fig. 1. Relief images from the Mesopotamian royal tomb of A-Bar-Gi. Illustrations from the Epic of Gilgamesh. Fragment of the harp decoration. Inlay on a dark background.

Images of naked dancers have also been preserved as a decoration of Coptic textiles from the same era. The dancers are depicted surrounded by a braid of leaves and grapes. The composition is surrounded by depictions of teratological motifs reminiscent of future Romanesque stylized teratological and animalistic representations. Perhaps the character of the dance in the image is influenced by the Mesopotamian tradition, because just at that time the lands of Mesopotamia were also part of the state of the Persian Sassanid dynasty (Fig. 2).

¹⁰ Siyana Georgieva, *The Complex Roots of the Figures Modellate in Stucco inside the Khirbat al-Maffar - Some Observations*, Anastasis, Iași, Volume XI, No.1/May, 2024, p. 107.



Fig. 2. Dancers. Coptic art textile. The 5th century.

Another famous Coptic textile from the same period depicts a female dancer with her leg raised next to a clothed female figure (Fig. 3). The nature of the dance movements, perhaps like that of Mesopotamian dancers, is bouncy. Preserved textile products are characteristic features of the traditions of the Persian state. From these examples of Coptic textile products, we can see that at that time Egyptian art moved away from those stylistic planar conventions that were the canon in the art of Ancient Egypt.



Fig. 3 Dancers. Coptic art textile. Medallion. 4th-5th century.

Choreography of the country of Matsarim

The art of dancing was also respected by the ancient Egyptians. A frequent name of Egypt in the Bible is Matsraim [Genesis 10: 6] by the name of the ancestor of the Egyptians.

In contrast to ancient Mesopotamia, we have better information about the clothing of female dancers in Egypt. Throughout the entire period of Egyptian civilization, the costume of the dancers remained practically unchanged, gradually being enriched only with new forms and details. Only in the New Kingdom did a further class distinction in clothing take place, which could somewhat be reflected in the dancer's clothing.¹¹ There were primarily two types of dancers' clothing - a loincloth (shenti) and a less convenient kalaziris.

The tomb paintings in Beni-Hasan (Middle Kingdom, Egypt) are clearly drawn examples of images of sports competitions and dances. In more complex hands, as from: pirouette, pas de deux, Egyptian dancers were depicted almost exclusively in loincloths. But there are also sports and dance movements depicted in kalaziris. The silhouette of the picture clearly represents wrestlers and dancers. Thanks to these works, we have the opportunity to imagine the sports competitions and dance performances of the ancient Egyptians.

Paintings in Beni-Hasan are typical works of wall painting of Ancient Egypt with a specific rendering of human figures. The head was depicted in profile, the shoulder girdle in full face, the legs of a person on the same plane one after the other - in profile. Egyptian art was conventional without the depiction of planning and a three-quarter turn of the body on the plane of the composition of the entire work. That is, there is no depth of space here, and everything is depicted on one line. This suggests, like other art schools of the countries of the biblical East, a certain specificity and conventionality.

Paintings on the northern wall of the tomb from Beni-Hasan are a vivid example of depicting the scheme of several elements of sports and acrobatic dances. The silhouettes of the dancers in the kalaziris are so expressive that these elements can be reproduced even today (Figs. 4, 5, 6). Egyptian dancers are always depicted in clothes - either in a shente or in something similar to a kalaziris. In contrast to Mesopotamia, in Ancient Egypt we do not meet completely naked dancers. Although, in this case, we have the source data about the Mezhyrechya only from written references and images on consumer goods, and not from wall paintings, as in Egypt.

¹¹ *Essays on the history of foreign decorative and applied art / head.* Ed. Ya. P. Zapasko, Kyiv, 1995, pp. 66-67.

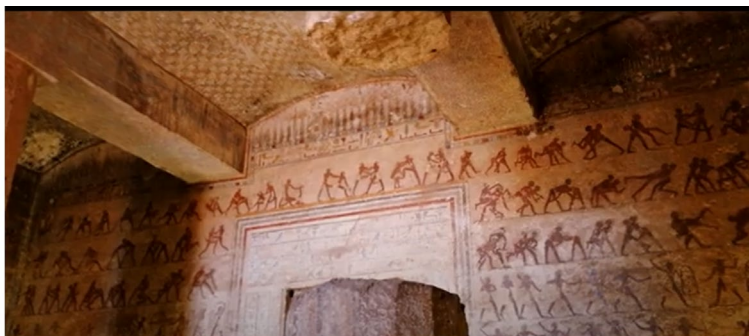


Fig. 4. Paintings with sports and acrobatic scenes from Beni Hassan, Ancient Egypt, Middle Kingdom.

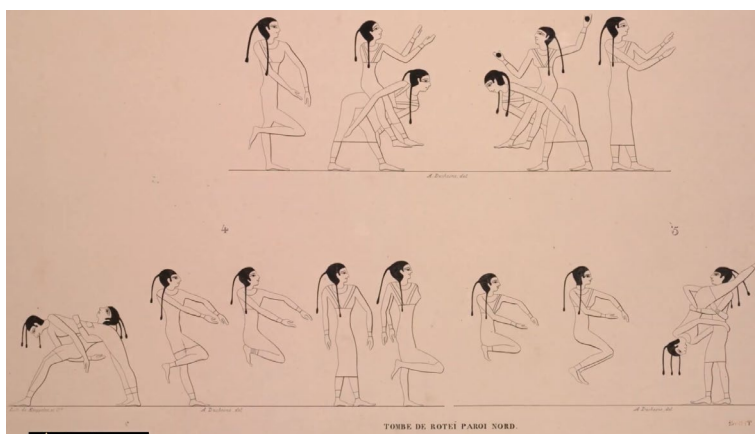


Fig. 5. Drawing of paintings with sports and acrobatic dances from the tomb, Beni-Hasan. Ancient Egypt, Middle Kingdom.

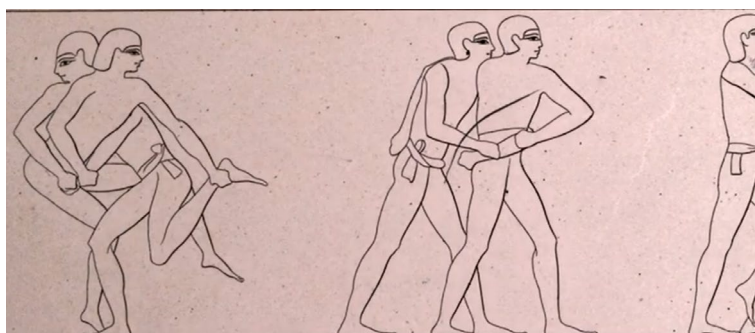


Fig. 6. Drawing from tomb paintings. Beni Hassan. Ancient Egypt. Middle Kingdom.

Another classic example of the spread of sports dances in Ancient Egypt is the famous dancer from the Italian Museum of Egyptian Art in Turin (Italy). It is painted on an ostrakon - a ceramic surface (Fig. 7). The dancer is depicted bent backwards in the body. She is dressed in a shenti bandage, which in most cases symbolizes male figures. Finely drawn characteristic excessively elongated forearms and shoulders, fingers and toes, the direction of the hair clearly emphasize the dynamism of the composition, its closure and plasticity and at the same time the femininity of the model. The colour brevity gives this work of art concision and the ability to focus the viewer's attention on the dancer's skills. Such works of art show the high level of ancient Egyptian artists and dancers.



Fig. 7. Dancer from Turin. Ostrakon.

In ancient Egypt there were different types of dance: star, astral, moving and other dances. As far as can be understood from the analysis of ancient Egyptian wall paintings, couple dances were performed only by representatives of the same sex between themselves - that is, either two girls or two boys danced. The combination of two different sexes in one pair was not allowed in the dance.¹²

Obviously, this Eastern culture of the lack of close contact in dance between partners of different sexes was also reflected in early Christian

¹² Tetiana Medvid, *History of choreographic art from the origins to the era of Enlightenment: a teaching aid for students of the direction of training (specialty) "Choreography" of higher educational institutions*, Kherson : MPP «Yzdatelstvo «IT», 2015, p. 36.

culture. It is not for nothing that the first epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians says:

As for what I was told, it would be good for a man not to touch a woman. But to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let each husband give his wife the love she needs, and so does the husband's wife." [1 Corinthians, 7: 1-3], Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that He lives in you, that you have from God, and you are not your own? [1 Corinthians, 6: 19].

Dance art in biblical descriptions

A special place was reserved for the dances of the Jewish people. We have almost the most significant information about the dancing art of the Jewish people from the pages of the Bible. They are, however, typical of the general characteristics of the dance art of the peoples of the Middle East, especially when the musical accompaniment is under consideration:

It is worth noting that the Jewish religion, from which other Abrahamic currents - Christianity and Islam - originated, also had its own ritual songs and dances, which were performed during religious ceremonies accompanied by ancient musical instruments common to the peoples of the Middle East.¹³

From the information about male Jewish dances described in the Bible, we read about David's dance before the Lord's ark: "And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was girded with a linen ephod" [Samuel 6: 14]. So, the nature of the dance is not mentioned, but the ephod is mentioned - a part of the high priest's clothing in the form of a specific apron.

Similarly, the Bible indicates the attitude of women (or of a certain part of them) to men's dance.

And it came to pass, when the ark of the Lord's covenant came as far as the city of David, that Melchola, Saul's daughter, looked through the window. And she saw King David dancing and playing, and she despised him in her heart [1 Chronicles 15:29].

Therefore, Melchola despised both David's dance and, apparently, the ark, in front of which David danced in special religious clothing - the ephod. However, she was punished for such disdain after David addressed her, who disapproved of this act of hers: "And Melchoda, Saul's daughter - because of this, she had no child until the day of her death" [2 Samuel 6: 23].

So, not all high-ranking women spoke favourably of men's dances. After all, the vast majority of Jewish dances described in the Bible are

¹³ Anatolii Bohorod, *Problems of ritual dance in the Christian religion. Abrahamic religions in Ukraine: history, ethnocultural interactions, interfaith relations. Proceedings of the scientific conference*, Halych, 25 travnia 2013 roku, 2013, p. 229.

women's dances. David performs his dance during the ritual worship before the face of God, the ark of His covenant.

After all, as the researchers note, with the establishment of Christianity and the acceptance of more and more people into the Christian community, the movements that were described in the Bible, including David's dance, began to be considered acceptable for Christians. These movements were simplified so that those present could repeat them.¹⁴ That is, despite insufficient tolerance, the Christian cult sought to adapt to the remnants of previous eras.

According to the researchers, the early Christian cult has finally recognized the solo dance:

The hymn in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas ... is one of the examples that highlight the recognition of the solo dance by early Christians. The movements of the dancer's hands are described as an image of the dance of the 32 principles, indirectly connecting these figures with the traditional "dance of the cosmos". This, in any case, refers to the idea expressed in the Middle Eastern tradition that the various combinations and permutations of the basic elements (here the dance of the 32 bases) make up the ongoing process that is the universe. Woman is an aspect of the manifestation of God, the presence of God in the world. The figure of a woman is used as the main image, which embodies many favourite motifs of mystical Middle Eastern ideas: God is the Light, the King, the last Truth. She - His daughter - radiates His divine presence with beauty, song, dance.¹⁵

Thus, it becomes clear why so much attention was paid to women's dance in Eastern cultures.

However, unlike the religious rites of the biblical peoples of the East, in Christianity, the art of dance has never become a used element of worship. As the researcher of dance art A. Bohorod notes:

The study of biblical dance traditions is a necessary condition for an objective clarification of the main problem: why in the "daughter" religions of Judaism - Christianity and Islam - neither dance nor musical instruments have the slightest positive meaning and are even called "tricks of the devil", "weapons of the devil", "demonic scandals", "Hellenic demonization", "satanic temptation".¹⁶

Dances among the eastern peoples of biblical times were widely used not only in religious worship, but also in secular celebrations. The parable of the prodigal son is well known. The father, who forgave the prodigal son,

¹⁴ Viktoriia Volchukova, *Problems of development and the role of ritual dance in early Christian culture: Author's abstract. dis... cand. in art history: 17.00.01 / V.M. Volchukova; Khark. derzh. akad. Kul'tury, Kharkiv, 2002, pp. 5-6.*

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶ Anatolii Bohorod, *Problems of ritual dance in the Christian religion. Abrahamic religions in Ukraine: history, ethnocultural interactions, interfaith relations. Proceedings of the scientific conference*, Halych, 25 travnia 2013 roku, 2013, p. 229.

arranged a banquet in his honour: “And his eldest son was in the field. And as he walked and approached the house, he heard music and dancing” [Luke 15: 25]. Apparently, as we assume, it is about hired musicians who were invited for the celebration. Unfortunately, the characteristic features of movements, dance figures, as well as the performer (hosts, holiday guests or hired dancers) are not described.

It is well known that the erotic dance is of great importance to Eastern peoples. It is classically described in the Bible in the dance of Solomia, the daughter of Herodias: “And as it was Herod's birthday, Herodias' daughter danced among the guests, and she pleased Herod. Therefore, under oath, he promised to give her whatever she asked” [Matthew 14: 6, 7]. In reality, it is unknown how the daughter of Herodias danced in front of Herod. We only know the impact of this erotic dance - at her request they brought the freshly beheaded head of John the Baptist [Matthew, 14: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11]. Note that, as you can understand, in contrast to ancient Mesopotamian dances, here is described an erotic dance performed in the midst of guests, and not only in front of the king himself. This dance, like the dance of the Jews in front of the body, shows the peculiarities of the dance in the biblical Jews as a collective dance, or one that is performed by a soloist.

The image of Solomia shows the dynamics of power, when the biblical ruler had to fulfill his promise in order not to lose his authority before his subjects. Thus, young Solomiya was woven into such an intriguing story. In consequence, on the pages of the Bible we see the great importance of the erotic dance in the life of the Jewish biblical people.

Conclusion

Thus, we can draw certain conclusions in the study of the peculiarities of the art of dance among the biblical peoples of the East. Dance was one of the features of the culture of these peoples. It accompanied them all the time, satisfying certain spiritual needs.

With a certain probability, we assume that these peoples did not have dances with two partners of different sexes in one pair. Dances could be groups with dancers of different sexes (like the Jewish dance around the Golden Body), groups with a same-sex group of dancers - most often women (Mesopotamian, Jewish and other dances), and a group of men, but with a specific appearance – (the epic of Gilgamesh in Mesopotamia, for instance). Single - solo dances are also most often represented by women (the dance of Solomia, daughter of Herodiadina and others), less often or in isolated cases – men (the dance of David in front of the ark of the Lord's covenant, the dance of Baal in ancient Mesopotamia - the priest dances with bouncing movements around the altar of the deity). However, as we can understand

from the biblical text, male solo dances were condemned among the ancient Jews, as Melchola, Saul's daughter, did.

Many dances of the peoples of the East were performed in a circle, (the dance of Baal, the dance of the Jews around the golden body, the Egyptian dances of the zodiac, planets and others) which to one degree or another influenced the ritual dances of early Christianity:

the main form of the early Christian ritual dance, of course, was the form of a circle, which, first of all, symbolized the sacred dance of life and the divine beginning of all living things.¹⁷

This is not surprising, because the first communities and traditions of early Christianity were formed in the territories of the Middle East (Egypt, Mesopotamia and neighbouring territories).

In the perspective of further research, it is worth setting the task of a more detailed study of the dance art of the biblical peoples of the East, in particular, the ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Egypt, etc.

List and sources of illustrations:

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Fig. 7. Dancer from Turin. Ostrakon, source: https://uk.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BB:Female_topless_egyption_dancer_on_ancient_ostrakon.jpg, accessed at 22 02 2025.

¹⁷ Viktoriia Volchukova, *Problems of development and the role of ritual dance in early Christian culture: Author's abstract. dis... cand. in art history: 17.00.01/V.M. Volchukova; Khark. derzh. akad. Kultury, Kharkiv, 2002, p. 9.*

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The Language of Saint Augustine's Sermons and How He Became Familiar with Christian Latin

Liviu Petcu *

Abstract: In this article, I would like to emphasize that the language of Saint Augustine's sermons was Christian Latin, given that in 4th century North Africa, bureaucratic practices, judicial discussions, school education and the spread of culture were conducted in Latin. However, alongside the "cult" of educated people, there was also the "sermo plebeius, vulgaris, cotidianus" of the common people, who often and lovingly embellished Latin grammar and words with Punic or Libyan reminiscences. However, there was also this third linguistic vein, that of "Libyan" or "barbarian", about which very little is known since only a few rare inscriptions have been preserved and not a single literary piece.

In the second part, I highlight the way in which Saint Augustine became familiar with Christian Latin. While in the works from Cassiciacum, Augustine's language and style are still dominated by ancient and profane tradition – according to his own testimony –, we find that, in the works of the following years, they slowly and little by little approach the Christian tradition. His syntax that was so traditional in the works from Cassiciacum, conforms little by little to the current language use of his era. In the years after his baptism, Augustine not only objectively familiarizes himself with the idiom of the Christians, but struggles to overcome the linguistic and stylistic habits that made the adoption of a specific term difficult for the former rhetorician.

Keywords: Christian Latin, langue, common, vulgar, everyday speech, semantics, classical terms, homilies

Latin, Punic, Berber and Sermo plebeius, vulgaris, cotidianus

Within the framework of the problem of language and religion in the 4th century AD, we must place the phenomenon of Christian Latinity as presented in a developed civilization. Therefore, we can immediately add that the Latin of Christians offers us an excellent opportunity to study the relations between language and religion. We are talking here about a secular,

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mature and fully developed civilization, which adopts a religion that has its origins in a foreign civilization. This new religion will spread – despite the protests and persecutions of the pagan state – in an extremely rapid manner. Thus, Latin was faced with the task of formulating a very new religious doctrine – which proclaimed itself as such –, a doctrine that clearly and fundamentally stood out from the religious ideas of the Greco-Latin world. At the same time, this new religion profoundly influences the lives of its followers, tends to modify the very style of life, to upset the very principles of ancient society. To fully understand what contact with Christianity meant for the Latin language, we must realize – from the very beginning – that it was not only about religious knowledge that was being tried to be formulated in Latin, but also – first and foremost – about a revolution in life itself, which was necessarily reflected in the language. This spiritual revolution manifested itself in a hitherto unknown attitude towards the data of traditional culture, an attitude inspired by a new conception of life. For life, dominated from now on by a symbolism unknown in the ancient world, became a *peregrinatio* towards another, eternal world.¹

The official language, as well as the most widespread in the coastal cities and in the cultural and commercial environments, was Latin. Bureaucratic practices, judicial discussions, education in schools and the spread of culture were carried out in Latin.

There was the “cultured” Latin of writers, rhetoricians, educated people and the “sermo plebeius, vulgaris, cotidianus” of the common people, who often and fondly embellished Latin grammar and words with Punic or Libyan reminiscences. In houses with a certain level of aristocracy, everyone, rich and servants, spoke Latin, some of high quality, others of a lower level. The popular (or common) Latin language “had a unified appearance but was spoken by all kinds of races and peoples”.²

Starting with the great rise of Christianity and its own literature, mainly since 180-200, Africa had become the most eminent centre of Christian Latinity in less than a century.

It had the chance to enjoy an authentic golden period, displaying reputed writers such as Apuleius, Tertullian, Saint Cyprian of Carthage, Arnobius, Lactantius and, above all, Saint Augustine. In contrast, in the more internal areas, especially in the rocky regions, isolated from the exchange of activities, people generally used the ancient Punic jargon, mixed with

¹ Mohrmann Christine, “La Latinité Chrétienne et le Problème des Relations entre Langue et Religion”, in “Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens”, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 1958, p. 127.

² Mihăescu, H., *Puncte de vedere asupra Lingvisticii Latine / Views on Latin Linguistics*, Alexandru A. Țerek Publishing House, Iași, 1945, p. 94.

indefinite linguistic varieties of other ethnic strains and the normal developments of a spoken language.³

This dialectal idiom was quite widespread between the simple world of the sea and the countryside. It was used in small commercial activities and in everyday life. The fishermen and peasants who got together in the church of Hippo to listen to their bishop, Augustine, understood Latin well, but among themselves, in the port or in the fields, they spoke "Punic", mixed with "interpreted" Latin with grammatical approximations and typical local inflections.

If we can say so, Punic never disappeared completely, because with the arrival of the Arabs it mixed with the language of the invaders, preserving its own characteristics, facilitated by a single affinity due to the same Semitic origin.

However, there was a third linguistic vein, that of "Libyan" or "barbarian", about which very little is known; this is because no literary creation has come down to us, only a few rare inscriptions. These are the native languages of the Libyan, Moorish or Barbarian populations who, under the pressure of foreign invasions, had taken refuge in the most remote interior, towards the mountains of central or southern Numidia, on the border of the desert. Their language, which is usually indicated as "Libyan" or "barbarian", became incomprehensible in the more common circles, and especially in the most evolved ones. It was neither known to the civil authorities, nor to the clergy and bishops. In some necessary cases, an interpreter was required.

This indigenous language seems to have travelled slowly inland and then remained without major changes in various tribes of the Sahara or among the inhabitants of the mountains between Tunisia and Algeria. These naturally known distinctions were made by those who, dealing with the peoples of Africa, discussed them with foreigners, in broad outlines, with approximations, without noting the differences that appeared between a Barbarian, Punic or Latin stock: they immediately qualified them briefly as "Punic". Even Augustine was called "Punic" and "Afer", as reference to his Numidian race and African roots.⁴

At the time of Monica and Augustine, Tagaste had already existed for 300 years and the marbles of Roman glory seemed so ancient that they had already lost their enamel, worn away by the wear and tear of time.

However, Punic pride and Latin openness persisted.

Latin was spoken fluently in the city. Latin works were studied in schools; thus, even among the curials, Latin was the official language at their liturgical gatherings in the forum.

³ Saginario, Giulietta, *Monnica mia madre. Biografia critica della madre di Agostino*, Città Nuova, Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana, 2005, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

The Greek language, on the other hand, was studied only in schools and represented the torment of Augustine's students, who needed it in order to be able to read and translate Greek works. Augustine recounts the odyssey of learning Latin and Greek in the beginning of his *Confessions*:

The difficulty, in truth, the difficulty of learning a foreign language mingled as it were with gall all the sweetness of those fabulous Grecian stories. For not a single word of it did I understand, and to make me do so, they vehemently urged me with cruel threatenings and punishments. There was a time also when (as an infant) I knew no Latin; but this I acquired without any fear or tormenting, by merely taking notice, amid the blandishments of my nurses, the jests of those who smiled on me, and the sportiveness of those who toyed with me. I learnt all this, indeed, without being urged by any pressure of punishment, for my own heart urged me to bring forth its own conceptions, which I could not do unless by learning words, not of those who taught me, but of those who talked to me; into whose ears, also, I brought forth whatever I discerned. From this it is sufficiently clear that a free curiosity hath more influence in our learning these things than a necessity full of fear. But this last restrains the overflowings of that freedom, through Thy laws, O God, —Thy laws, from the ferule of the schoolmaster to the trials of the martyr, being effective to mingle for us a salutary bitter, calling us back to Thyself from the pernicious delights which allure us from Thee.⁵

Few people now in Tagaste, as in other cities in Numidia, used Punic, while in the countryside the peasants spoke and understood nothing but this language. At Hippo, however, only a few among the clergy knew how to use it. Later, when he became bishop and had to be understood by certain peasants in his diocese who spoke nothing but Punic, Augustine used an interpreter like the Donatist bishop Macrobius.

Thus arose the separation between the wealthier people who traded, attended schools or travelled, and the poorer ones, who remained to tend their flocks in the mountains or to cultivate their lands with bent backs, without leaving their farms much.⁶

It is well known that Saint Augustine commented on the Holy Scripture either in homilies, which he addressed to the faithful, or in written treatises and commentaries. His commentaries are modelled after *Itala*, as he knew very little Greek and no Hebrew at all. In his written commentaries, Augustine mainly gives the literal meaning, while in his homilies he provides a more allegorical and mystical interpretation.⁷

⁵ St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, I, 14, 23, in Philips Schaff (ed.), *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin, with a Sketch of his Life and Work*, Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, New York, 1886, p. 55-56.

⁶ Saginario Giulietta, *Monnica mia madre ...*, p. 31.

⁷ Arhid. Prof. Dr. Voicu Constantin, *Patrologie/ Patrology*, vol. II, Ed. Basilica, București, 2009, p. 311.

How Augustine became familiar with Christian Latin

At the end of the *Prologue* of the *Retractationes*, after some general remarks on the reasons that led him to write these retractions or revisions, Augustine mentioned that he did not wish to set aside the works that he had written as a catechumen, at a time when he was still under the influence of the literary customs of the century:

I have decided, moreover, to write this work that I might put it into the hands of men from whom I cannot recall for correction the writings I have already published. Certainly, I will not pass over the things I wrote while still – a catechumen – although I have given up the early prospects which I used to cherish, but was still puffed up with the usage of secular literature – because these works, too, have become known to copyist and readers and many continue to be read with profit if some errors are overlooked, or if not overlooked, yet are not granted acceptance. Let those, therefore, who are going to read this book not imitate me when I err, but rather when I progress toward the better.⁸

Augustine did not insert this remark in the first chapters of the first volume of the *Retractationes*, where he analysed in detail the works from Cassiciacum, but introduced it in the *Prologus*; in this way, he brings it out in a special way. The works to which he alludes thus constitute a separate category, a kind of prelude to his literary works, and what distinguishes them from the others is not primarily their inspiration (already Christian, by the way), but especially their literary form, still inspired by the tradition of the pagan school. We find the same idea in *Confessions*, IX, 4,7, where Augustine says that God brought his tongue to light, after having brought his heart to light: *Et factum est, eruisti linguam meam, unde iam erueras cor meum*. And here he emphasizes the profane character of the literary form of the works from Cassiciacum, in which the pride of the didactic activity up to that time was still visible: *Ibi quid egerim in litteris iam quidem servientibus tibi, sed adhuc superbiae scholam tamquam in pauatione anhelantibus testantur libri disputati cum praesentibus et cum ipso me solo coram te*.⁹

After the general observation made in the *Prologus*, Augustine reviews in the first chapters of the first volume a series of passages from his works at Cassiciacum. He does not return to the general character of the language and style of these works, which are very much imbued with profane tradition, but he believes that he must criticize in detail certain turns and expressions that seem to him inspired by pagan ideas in one way or another.

⁸ Saint Augustine, *The Retractationes*, Prologue, translated by Sister Mary Inez Bogan, in coll. *The Fathers of The Church*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 1999, p. 5.

⁹ S. Aurelii Augustini, *Retractationum*, in *PL (Patrologia Latina)*, 32, col. 585-586.

In a very interesting way, he first criticizes the repeated use of the word *fortuna*¹⁰ used in a general, not a technical sense. He begins by regretting that he invoked *fortuna* so often, although, he adds, he did not want to designate by this noun a specific divinity, but the chance occurrence of things, whether in the good or bad things in our body, or in the good or bad things outside: *sed in eisdem tribus libris meis non mihi placet toties me appellare fortunam, quamvis non aliquam deam voluerim hoc nomine intelegi, sed fortuitum rerum eventum, vel in corporis nostri, vel in externis bonis aut malis* (1, 1, 2).

¹¹ From there also come those words that no religious scruple stops one from pronouncing, such as: “maybe”, “chance”, “at chance”, “at random”, “accidentally”, etc. However, he wants to exclude this use, because he considers it a bad habit of Christians to say instead of *ubi dici debet: hoc Deus voluit, dicere, Hoc voluit fortuna*. More precisely, it is about the use of the words *forte, forsan, etc.*: *unde et illa verba sunt quoe nulla religio dicere prohibet*:¹² *forte*,¹³ *forsan, forsitan, fortasse, fortuito, quod totum ad divinam revocandum est providentiam*.¹⁴ Therefore, in the noun *fortuna* there was still a concrete and religious nuance alive, while the adverbs had become pure grammatical signs.¹⁵

A similar observation is made in connection with *omen*.¹⁶ In chapters 1, 2 of the same book, *Retractationes*, he criticizes the use of this word, as if this

¹⁰ *Fortūna*, - ae - fate; luck; (rarely) misfortune; (pl.) fortunate or unfortunate circumstances, fortunate or unfortunate situation; (Guțu Gheorghe, *Dicționar Latin – Român / Latin – Romanian Dictionary*, 2nd revised edition, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2003, p. 540). *For-tuna* (> *fors*) – chance, luck (Charles S. Halsey, *An Etymology of Latin and Greek*, Published by Ginn and Company, Boston, 1889, p.129). *Fortuna* = luck, the one who brings good and bad; derives from the radical *for* - with the meaning of carrying, bringing. (Regnaud Paul, *Dictionnaire Etymologique du Latin et du Grec dans ses Raports avec le Latin d'après la Méthode Évolutionniste (Linguistique Indo-Européenne Appliquée)*, A Rey Éditeur, Lyon, 1908, p. 111).

¹¹ S. Aurelii Augustini, *Retractationum*, in *PL*, 32, col. 585.

¹² Christine Mohrmann argues that we should not translate with Bardy Chan. (*Oeuvres de saint Augustin, 12, XII, Les révisions*, Paris, 1950, p. 250): “These words whose use is not prohibited by any religion”. *Religio* has here a meaning of “religious scruple”. (Mohrmann Christine, *Comment Saint Augustin s’est familiarisé avec le Latin des Chrétiens*, in *Études sur le Latine des Chrétiens*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 1958, p. 384). This interesting work was of real use to me in writing this subchapter. According to patristic teaching, *fate, luck* are exclusively related to the notion of chance; however, in Christianity, nothing is accidental, but everything is providential, since God ordains or permits some good or bad events, with a certain meaning, constructive, expiatory or pedagogical purpose.

¹³ *Forte* (adv.) > *fors, fortis* - chance, fate; *forsan* (adv.) = *for sit an* - it may be the case that..., perhaps...; *fortasse* (adv.) - maybe; *fortuito* (adv.) - by chance, randomly (Guțu Gheorghe, *Dicționar Latin – Român/ Latin – Romanian Dictionary...*, p. 539-540).

¹⁴ S. Aurelii Augustini, *Retractationum*, in *PL*, 32, col. 585.

¹⁵ Mohrmann Christine, *Comment Saint Augustin s’est familiarisé avec le Latin des Chrétiens*, in *Études sur le Latine des Chrétiens*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 1958, p. 384.

¹⁶ *Ōmen, minis* - omen, auspicious sign; wish; ritual custom, ceremonial; Guțu Gheorghe, *op. cit.*, pp. 909-910); *omen, inis* - prediction, prognosis (Paul Regnaud, *Dictionnaire*

was said not seriously, but in jest, yet he would like not to use that word: *hoc licet non serio sed ioco dictum sit, nollem tamen eo verbo uti*. Continuing, he emphasizes the fact that he does not remember having read the word *omen* [prediction] either in the Holy Scripture or in the speech of any church polemicist, although the word *abominatio* [rejection of a bad omen]¹⁷ derives from *omen*, and the word *abominatio* is found in the Holy Scriptures. Here too, it is not a matter of pagan superstition, but simply of a joke inspired by current usage.¹⁸ This time, Augustine has given us a very concrete reason for the prohibition of this word in his opinion. He therefore applies a positive norm that seems conclusive to him: the word is not found either in the Holy Scripture or in Christian authors, so it does not belong to the Christian idiom. But on the other hand, he distinguishes between the simple word and the derivative *abominatio*, in which the meaning has lost its power and which he found in the Bible: *quamvis abominatio inde sit dicta, quae in divinis assidue reperitur* (1, 1, 2).¹⁹

Along with *fortuna* and *omen*, the muses are also forbidden: *displicet mihi...quod Musas quasi aliquas deas iocando nuncupavi* (1, 3, 2).

By excluding these words, Augustine remains faithful to a very old Latin tradition of Christians, which for a long time avoided technical terms from pagan religions, even when it came to words whose meaning had lost its power.²⁰

The “enrichment of the semantics of some classical terms” was noticed.

E. g.

salus – salvation; derivatives: *salvere* (in pagan Latin, to adore, to worship the deities); *salutare*, adj. *salutaris*; *salvator* (to avoid *servator* and *stator*, used by pagans with reference to Jupiter).

Tertullian proposes *salvificator/ salutificator*....

Lavacrum (bath, bathroom) and *tinctio* (soaking, dyeing) acquire the meaning of baptism, baptising (however, the Greek terms *baptisma*, *baptismus*, *baptismum* are imposed)....

Etymologique du Latin et du Grec dans ses Rapports avec le Latin d'après la Méthode Évolutionniste (Linguistique Indo-Européenne Appliquée), A Rey Éditeur, Lyon, 1908, p. 219).

¹⁷ *Abominor, ari, atus sum* - to ward off a bad sign, to reject a bad omen, to wish that something bad would not happen, to detest, to hate (see Regnaud Paul, *Dictionnaire Etymologique du Latin et du Grec ...*, p. 219 & Iordănescu Theodor, Diaconescu Mariana and Halichias Ana-Cristina, *Dicționar Latin – Română/ Romanian – Latin Dictionary*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 2003, p. 3). *Abominor, ari, atus sum* - to prevent a bad omen through prayer (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 8).

¹⁸ Saint Augustine, *Retractationes (Revisions)*, translation by Nicolae I. Barbu, Ed. Anastasia, București, 1997, p. 21.

¹⁹ S. Aurelii Augustini, *Retractationum*, in *PL*, 32, col. 586.

²⁰ Mohrmann Christine, *Comment Saint Augustin s'est familiarisé ...*, p. 384.

Mediator (legal meaning - intermediary in a process, in Apuleius, Met, IX, 36, 1) – mediator of Christ.

Mediator Dei et hominum (1 Timothy 2, 5)

Christus mediator et salvator (Aug., Civ., 17, 5)

Mediatio is also used.

Sermo – conversation, speech, language; in Christian Latin “sermon, homily”.²¹

Sometimes Augustine criticizes words or turns for more subtle reasons in his early works. For example, we find a very fine observation on the words *Contra Academicos*, 2, 99, 22: *securior rediturus in caelum* “he (i.e. the soul) will more certainly return to heaven”. In *Retractationes*, 1, 1, 3, Augustine points out that it would have been more prudent to say *iturus* instead of *rediturus*, because of the Platonic doctrine of metempsychosis: *iturus autem quam rediturus dixissem securius propter eos, qui putant animos humanos pro meritis peccatorum suorum de caelo lapsos sive deiectos in corpora ista detrude*.²² But, he continues, it is a question of a return of the soul to its Creator: *sed hoc ego propterea non dubitavi dicere, qui ita dixi in caelum, tamquam dicerem ad Deum, qui eius est auctor et conditor*.²³ Here Augustine alludes to a very widespread Christian usage, inspired by the idea that to reach God, the Creator and Source of all, is nothing more than to return to God. As an example, we could cite *Confessiones*, VIII, 3, 8: *Ei mihi, quam excelsus es in excelsis et quam profundus in profundis! Et nusquam recedis, et vix redimus ad te*.²⁴ (“Woe is me! How high art Thou in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! Thou withdrawest no whither, and scarcely do we return to Thee”).²⁵ And immediately, he adds these words: *nonne multi ex profundiore tartaro coecitatis quam Victorianus redeunt ad te?* (4, 9) (“Do not many men, out of a deeper hell of blindness than that of Victorinus, return unto Thee?”).²⁶ The words *rediturus in caelum* therefore corresponded to a very authentic Christian usage, but we are tempted to wonder whether, in this case, the bishop of Hippo does not give these words from his youth a meaning that they did not have at the time he wrote them.

While in the works from Cassiciacum, Augustine's language and style are – according to his own testimony – still dominated by ancient and profane tradition, we find that in the works of the following years they slowly and little by little approach the Christian tradition. His syntax, so traditional

²¹ Conf. Dr. Claudia Tărnăuceanu, *Curs de latină creștină/ Christian Latin Course*, ms, Iași, 2020, p. 129, 130, 131.

²² S. Aurelii Augustini, *Retractationum*, in *PL*, 32, col. 587.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ S. Augustini, *Confessiones*, VIII, 3, 8, in *PL*, 32, col. 752.

²⁵ St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, VIII, 4, 9, in Philips Schaff (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 161.

²⁶ St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, VIII, 4, 9, in Philips Schaff (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 161.

in the works from Cassiciacum, conforms little by little to the current language usage of his era.

The long hypotactic periods are relaxed, analytical constructions are no longer excluded. But we can especially observe the vocabulary in this process of adaptation: we see how Augustine becomes familiar with the technical terms of the language of Christians, how his vocabulary becomes richer and more popular at the same time. Thus, the idiom of Christians is a true special language that is distinguished from the common language by its own imprint, and with this language Augustine became familiar little by little. A «special language» or a group language is neither a new language, nor a separate language, but only a variant of the common language determined by the solidarity of a group of people who speak it.²⁷

We see very clearly how in the works written after his departure from Milan, Augustine appropriates the idiom of Christian circles. This does not mean that, immediately after baptism, the rhetorician Augustine disappeared to make way for the Christian eager to appropriate the language of Christian communities. We can observe for many years a certain hesitation, an uncertainty in the use of vocabulary, which we could not explain exclusively by a certain lack of experience and ignorance on the part of this new convert, but which are inspired largely by the literary scruples of the former rhetorician. The rhetorician of Milan, speaking of the Incarnation of the Son of God, in *De vera religione*, dating from the years 389-390, specifies: *illa hominis sacrosancta susceptio* ("to that holy helper for man"). In the fourth century, the noun *incarnātiō, ōnis*²⁸, which would later be very familiar, was still recent.²⁹ However, he probably heard it in Milan, from Saint Ambrose, and in Rome, in Christian circles. In the same treatise, *De vera religione*, he designates the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, thus emphasizing that he honors the One God, the only beginning of the whole creation and the Wisdom by which every wise soul is wise and the very gift by which those who are blessed are blessed: *Ecce unum deum colo, unum omnium Principium, et Sapientiam qua sapiens est, quaecumque anima sapiens est, et ipsum munus quo beata sunt, quaecumque beata sunt*.³⁰ What surprises us all the more is the fact that in *De ordine*, 2, 16, we can already read: *unum Deum omnipotentem unumque tripotentem Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum sanctum...*³¹ ("One God, omnipotent, and that He is tripotent, Father and Son

²⁷ Mohrmann Christine, *Comment saint Augustin s'est familiarise ...*, p. 385-386.

²⁸ In the sense of incarnation (referring to the Incarnation of the Son of God). Blaise Albert, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des Auteurs Chrétiens*, Revu spécialement pour le vocabulaire théologique par Henri Chirat, 1994, p. 421.

²⁹ See Mohrmann Chr., *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin*, Nîmegue, 1932, p. 118.

³⁰ S. Augustini, *De vera religione*, liber unus, LV, 112, in *PL*, 34, col. 171.

³¹ Idem, *De ordine*, liber secundus, 2, 16, in *PL*, 32, col. 1002.

and Holy Spirit ..."). It seems, therefore, that in *De vera religione*, Augustine excluded the use of certain Christian technical terms for special reasons.

In the years after his baptism, Augustine not only objectively familiarizes himself with the idiom of Christians, but also tries with all his might to overcome the linguistic and stylistic habits that made the adoption of a specific term difficult for the former rhetorician. Nowhere is this "antipathy" towards neologism better seen than in the way in which Augustine opposes, for years, the use of the word *salvator*. As I have already noted, he uses it in *De civitate Dei*, 17, 5.

We know the story of this term:

Cicero had already sought a Latin equivalent of the Greek σωτήρ, which he renders first through a periphrasis: *qui salutem dedit*, then through *servator*. Later, in Tacitus and Pliny, we find the word *conservator*.³² The ancient translators of the Bible did not adopt the usual term *conservator*, which had a pagan religious meaning. They translated σωτήρ, which they found in Holy Scripture either with the noun *salutaris* or with the neologism *salvator*, derived from the verb *salvare*, formed in turn by Christians. Tertullian introduced the term *salutificator*, a term that was not successful. As for *salvator*, this word was adopted slowly, with difficulty, by Christian authors. It seems that certain psychological and stylistic difficulties had to be overcome before *salvator* became a truly common term at the end of the 4th century.³³

In *De vita beata*, 36, he uses the word *liberator*, a classical word sometimes applied to Jupiter. This typically pagan term is also found in *Contra Fortunatum*, 2, a polemic held in 392 with the Manichaean Fortunatus.

This long hesitation regarding an essential term of the Christian vocabulary shows Augustine to be very aware of the new character of the word, as also happens in many passages in which he will defend it later, against the objections of grammarians, as for example: *Christus inquit Jesus, id est Christus salvator. Hoc est enim latine Jesus. Nec quaerant grammatici quam sit latinum, sed christiani quam verum. Salus enim latinum nomen est. Salvare et salvator non fuerunt haec latina antequam veniret salvator: quando ad latinum venit, et haec latina fecit*.³⁴ In *De Trinitate*: *Qui est hebraice Jesus, graece σωτήρ*,³⁵ *nostra autem locutione salvator: quod verbum latina lingua antea non habebat, sed habere poterat, sicut potuit*,

³² Conservator - the one who keeps us, our protector (provider) (God); (Blaise Albert, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des Auteurs Chrétiens ...*, p. 205.

³³ See Mohrmann Christine, *Comment saint Augustin s'est familiarisé ...*, p. 387 et passim.

³⁴ S. Aurelii Augustini, *Sermo*, 299, 6, in *PL*, 38, col. 1311.

³⁵ Σωτηρία, ας, ή - salvation, rescue, deliverance, escape, liberation. (Laurențiu Gabriel Ionescu, *Dicționar grec-român/ Greek – Latin Dictionary*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu Lăpuș, 2011, p. 171).

quando voluit.³⁶ Augustine makes here a clear distinction between *locutio* "idiom" (of the Christians) and *lingua* (common) "language".

Augustine also tries to replace Greek expressions with Latin ones, or at least clarify them:

*Mesias hebraice, Cristus graece est, latine unctus.*³⁷

*Angeli, latine nuntii sunt.*³⁸

*Sicut graece angeli, latine nuntii vocantur, ita graece apostoli, latine missi appellantur*³⁹ etc.

In his early works, he sometimes gives the impression that he is speaking a foreign language when he adopts technical terms from the language of Christians. Sometimes he explains them immediately, either by a periphrasis or by a word of common language. For example, in *De vita beata*, 18, he already uses the verb *exorcise*, but he 'translates' it: *manum imponere vel exorcizare dicuntur, hoc est per divina eum adiurando expellere*.

We cannot be surprised that, following this process of adaptation, Augustine reflected more than most of his contemporaries on the phenomenon of language as a means of communication and expression. In *De quantitate animae*, 11, he already states that *res* are more important than *verba*, and he specifies to his interlocutor that he does well, and he not only approves, but even advises him to always delight in the care of things rather than words: *Bene facis, et non solum approbo, verum etiam moneo ut semper rerum curam magis quam verborum te habere delectet*.⁴⁰ This already announces a problem that Augustine will pose countless times,⁴¹ namely that of the relationship between the word, the linguistic sign and the thing named by this sign. We understand very well how Augustine, faced with the problems of Christian neologisms, came to formulate this idea, expressed so strongly.

Conclusion

The Bishop of Hippo dislikes abstractions. But he cannot avoid them in doctrinal clarification. He speaks in the language of the Hipponaeans, Christian craftsmen and sailors, always seeking to be clear in order to be well understood.

³⁶ S. Aurelii Augustini, *De Trinitate*, 13, 10, 14, in *PL*, 42, col. 1025.

³⁷ S. Aurelii Augustini, *In Joannis Evangelium*, in *PL*, 35, col. 1444. "Messiah in Hebrew, Christ in Greek, the anointed one in Latin".

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 24, 7. "Angels, in Latin, are messengers".

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 54, 3; "For example, they are called angels in Greek, messengers in Latin; apostles in Greek, envoys in Latin".

⁴⁰ Idem, *De Quantitate Animae*, bilingual edition, Latin-Romanian text, translation, introductory notes, notes and comments by Vasile Sav, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 408.

⁴¹ Christine Mohrmann, *Comment saint Augustin s'est familiarise ...*, p. 389.

We also emphasize the fact that Saint Augustine made a significant contribution to the progress of education in Late Antiquity, both through the way he completed the tasks of the grammarian and filled the gap in expertise created by the inadequacy that was beginning to characterize professional language teachers, and through his sermons that have influenced and spiritually nourished multitudes of believers in the past and continue to do so today.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Compte-rendu

Mihaela Voicu *

Luminița Diaconu, *Configurations textuelles de l'intime aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2024, 199 p.



Publié dans la collection « Critiques littéraires » dirigée par Jérôme Martin, l'ouvrage de Luminița Diaconu rassemble dix études qui explorent les représentations médiévales de l'intime dans l'espace français aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles. Tout en s'inscrivant dans la continuité de ses travaux sur l'imaginaire médiéval (notamment *L'Imaginaire médiéval de la sexualité : le topos du cœur mangé*, Editura Universității din București, 2006), cette recherche se présente comme une démarche interdisciplinaire réunissant littérature, histoire des mentalités, théorie des émotions afin de dessiner une cartographie subtile de l'intériorité dans les textes médiévaux. Luminița Diaconu engage un dialogue décomplexé avec des médiévistes tels que Caroline Bynum, Colin Morris ou Aaron Gourevitch, qui ont questionné la naissance de l'individu et de la subjectivité au Moyen Âge.

Le volume se compose de plusieurs chapitres dont les deux premiers posent des jalons théoriques. Ainsi, dans le premier chapitre (« L'intime médiéval, du paradigme spatial aux replis du moi »), l'auteur observe qu'en dépit de l'absence du terme « intime » dans le lexique médiéval du haut

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Moyen Âge (dont le sens actuel remonte au XVI^e siècle à peine), certaines formes de retraite, de prise de distance par rapport à l'extériorité ou de construction d'un espace émotionnel personnel peuvent être détectées dans le discours littéraire. Après avoir souligné la difficulté d'appliquer au Moyen Âge la notion moderne d'« intimité », à laquelle le français médiéval préfère celle de « privé », ce chapitre explore, en effet, la tension entre les valeurs collectives (chevaleresques, courtoises, chrétiennes) et les premiers signes d'émergence de l'intériorité, notamment à travers la confession, la morale de l'intention et le lyrisme courtois. La littérature courtoise représente d'ailleurs un point essentiel de cette dynamique.

À partir d'un corpus comprenant les *Lais* de Marie de France, les romans de Chrétien de Troyes (*Cligès*, *Le Chevalier de la charrette*), les récits tristaniens, *Flamenca* ou encore *Le Roman du Châtelain de Coucy et de la Dame de Fayel*, le chapitre II (« L'émergence de l'espace intime dans la littérature courtoise ») analyse la manière dont certains espaces (verger, forêt, chambre, bains publics) deviennent des lieux privilégiés de l'intime amoureux. Ces lieux, souvent clos ou détournés de leur fonction première, permettent d'échapper provisoirement aux contraintes sociales et religieuses. Un atout majeur de l'ouvrage réside dans la diversité du corpus analysé, chaque étude apportant une contribution spécifique. Ainsi, Marie de France fait l'objet de deux chapitres (III et IV). Il y est question des transgressions spatiales et éthiques dans les *Lais*, mais aussi du rapport entre identité et anonymat, deux thématiques pertinentes pour la délimitation d'un espace intérieur protégé ou dissimulé.

Une autre direction intéressante est représentée par la comparaison de la figure de Julie d'Étanges (héroïne du roman de Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*) avec celle d'Héloïse, élève et amante d'Abélard, dans une tentative de retracer la genèse du mythe moderne de l'intériorité (chapitre V). Ce rapprochement entre deux figures féminines, l'une relevant entièrement de la fiction, est complété par le chapitre VI, qui analyse le monachisme féminin dans la correspondance entre la nonne Héloïse et son ancien maître, Abélard, exemple d'une intimité à la fois spirituelle et affective.

Une place importante est accordée au corpus tristanien : la version de Bérout (chapitre VII) ainsi que les deux *Folies* (chapitre VIII), qui interrogent la tension entre émotions feintes et émotions authentiques, la problématique de l'identité réelle ou simulée, mais aussi les effets destructeurs de la passion sur la rationalité et la cohérence du discours amoureux. Le désordre du discours de Tristan dans les *Folies* traduit au fond le désordre amoureux autant que le désordre intérieur du protagoniste dont la passion fait transgresser « l'ordre » social et ses valeurs pour assumer – voire revendiquer – des valeurs individuelles.

Le chapitre IX, consacré au roman occitan *Flamenca*, met en scène la figure du mari jaloux (*gilos*). L'analyse s'attache à montrer comment les

troubles de l'âme se manifestent au niveau corporel, dans un processus d'« ensauvagement » qui exprime en même temps une somatisation de l'intimité.

Le volume se termine par une réflexion sur le « don du cœur » et ses représentations dans la littérature ainsi que dans la culture visuelle médiévale (chap. X), offrant une perspective intéressante sur la translation entre l'imaginaire littéraire et l'imaginaire iconographique.

Solidement ancré dans l'étude des sources primaires et une riche bibliographie critique, le travail de Luminița Diaconu se distingue par la cohérence thématique et l'originalité de l'interprétation. Spécialiste reconnue de la littérature médiévale, l'autrice réussit, en outre, à fournir un cadre théorique solide et une orientation claire à chaque étude. De manière remarquable, le volume échappe au piège de l'anachronisme : l'intimité médiévale n'est pas forcée dans les textes, mais déduite avec finesse à partir des mécanismes narratifs, spatiaux et discursifs. Par ailleurs, l'approche reste fondée historiquement et philologiquement, évitant les interprétations excessivement spéculatives.

Configurations textuelles de l'intime aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles constitue une contribution précieuse à l'étude de la subjectivité médiévale qui intéressera aussi bien les médiévistes que les chercheurs travaillant sur l'histoire des émotions, de l'espace et des représentations littéraires, car elle propose une exploration nuancée et interdisciplinaire d'un concept difficile à situer dans la période médiévale, mais que les textes analysés configurent de manière subtile et convaincante. Il n'offre pas seulement de nouvelles perspectives sur les textes canoniques, mais ouvre également une direction prometteuse pour les recherches futures : celle de l'intimité prémoderne, non pas comme antécédent direct du moi moderne, mais comme espace distinct de réflexion, de silence et de transgression. Par leur approche textuelle fine, les analyses proposées par Luminița Diaconu montrent que, même si l'intimité médiévale ne coïncide pas avec la subjectivité moderne, elle s'exprime déjà à travers des configurations textuelles : replis du moi, transgressions des normes collectives, émergence d'une vie intérieure.

L'archeologia di Roma, attraverso testo e immagini*

Gabriel Badea **

Laura Mesina, *L'oblio di Roma. Studi di archeologia dell'immaginario*, traduzione di Igor Tavilla¹, Mimesis Edizioni, Milano 2024, 263 pagine.



Alla fine dell'anno scorso, la monografia di Laura Mesina *L'oblio di Roma. Studi di archeologia dell'immaginario* (Ed. Institutul European, Iași, 2015; prima edizione 2013) è stata pubblicata in traduzione italiana presso la casa editrice Mimesis.

L'autrice è professoressa presso la Facoltà di Lettere dell'Università di Bucarest e segretaria scientifica del CESI (Centrul de Excelență în Studiul Imaginii). In effetti, è una delle persone che hanno investito moltissimo tempo, passione ed energia intellettuale per il funzionamento del Centro di studi a un livello di performance paragonabile a quello delle grandi università europee e la sua integrazione nel circuito intellettuale europeo. Il presente

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https://www.orizzonticulturali.it/it_recensioni_Gabriel-Badea-5.html

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volume, per il suo contenuto e approccio, rappresenta una prova in questo senso: l'apparato bibliografico contiene tutti i titoli recentemente apparsi nell'ambito accademico continentale, tanto i lavori teorici dedicati allo studio delle immagini e dell'immaginario (C.G. Dubois, G. Durand, J. Thomas, J.J. Wunenburger), quanto quelli dedicati alla tarda antichità e alla civiltà bizantina (S. Benoist, G. Dagron, A. Grabar, M.J. Mondzain). Orientarsi all'interno di un campo di indagine così vasto, vista l'ampiezza semantica dell'immaginario, del suo dinamismo e della sua storicità, ha costituito la principale difficoltà nella stesura della presente opera. Certo, in romeno ci sono vari studi dedicati all'immaginario, come quelli firmati da Lucian Boia e Corin Braga (accanto ad altri membri del gruppo di ricerca *Phantasma* di Cluj). Tuttavia, il merito del presente lavoro consiste in ciò che chiamerei un ascetismo della scrittura, la trattazione rigorosa dei temi della ricerca, l'orientamento preciso attraverso il labirinto concettuale dovuto alle opere fondamentali di Platone, Aristotele e Plotino, fondatori della riflessione filosofica dedicata alla natura e alla funzione dell'immagine, nonché ai suoi rapporti con le grandi categorie filosofiche.

Problemi metodologici e l'attualità dell'approccio

Dal punto di vista metodologico, il lavoro deve moltissimo al pensiero di Michel Foucault, applicandone il metodo archeologico o genealogico del sapere², focalizzandosi sulla costellazione dell'immaginario come tema principale di studio, un campo di indagine frequentato sotto questa dicitura specialmente nel contesto francese. Ma si può parlare di una scienza dell'immaginario o il suo ambito appartiene piuttosto alla "dossologia"? Foucault afferma che l'ambito della storia delle idee oltrepassa questo dilemma, considerando che un'archeologia del sapere «non va con lenta progressione dal campo confuso dell'opinione alla singolarità del sistema o alla definitiva stabilità della scienza; non è una "dossologia"; ma un'analisi differenziale delle modalità del discorso»³.

L'oblio di Roma si inquadra in questo paradigma, essendo un'opera di storia delle idee⁴ che discute di temi fondamentali per l'ambito delle scienze umane: «di mito, schema, mentalità e rappresentazione sociale, di narrazione e tempo, ma anche del metodo archeologico con cui ci si può avvicinare all'immaginario»⁵. Il merito del libro è di studiare nel dettaglio un momento cruciale nella vita delle immagini, sopraggiunto con l'ascesa di

² Michel Foucault, *L'archeologia del sapere. Una metodologia per la storia della cultura*, BUR, Milano 2021.

³ Ivi, p. 184.

⁴ Laura Mesina, *L'oblio di Roma. Studi di archeologia dell'immaginario*, traduzione di Igor Tavilla, Mimesis, Milano 2024, p. 20.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

Costantino I e la sua conversione al cristianesimo, non solo dal punto di vista formale, ma anche in un modo che annuncia il crepuscolo della civiltà romana, dell'ancestrale panteon divino e delle formule cultuali di celebrazione degli antichi dèi. Il rapporto dialettico tra memoria e oblio, come pure tra memoria e immaginazione/immaginario costituiscono gli assi principali dell'opera: cosa ha significato in pratica l'oblio di Roma e la fondazione di un altro centro di potere (laico e spirituale) a Costantinopoli? È forse un caso che una torsione tanto importante della memoria collettiva sia coincisa con mutamenti fondamentali nel regime dell'immagine (implicitamente anche dell'immaginario)? Forse che le controversie legate allo statuto delle immagini preannunciano mutamenti degli schemi che fungono da fondamento alle civiltà, compreso, com'è anche oggi, lo scontro tra una civiltà iconoclasta e una iconodula?

Funus imaginarium, il rituale funebre e di glorificazione dell'imperatore

L'opera è dedicata all'immaginario della tarda antichità nel contesto greco-romano, analizzando in modo esaustivo il rituale detto del *funus imaginarium*, celebrato alla morte degli imperatori romani. È importante ricordare due aspetti, il primo di ordine terminologico, il secondo di ordine metodologico. Innanzitutto, il termine *funus* non dev'essere inteso solamente nel senso di "funerario, funebre". Sebbene il rituale vero e proprio si svolgesse alla morte dell'imperatore, esso concentrava una pleiade di significati, e uno dei meriti particolari dell'opera consiste nella minuziosità e nel rigore attraverso cui sono ricostruite le sequenze del rituale, ciascuna delle quali è "animata" mediante l'apporto sostanziale di concetti filosofici e religiosi, di valori morali, mitologici, metafisici classici. Rito di passaggio e insieme psicodramma collettivo, il *funus imaginarium* rivela il ruolo fondamentale dell'immaginario nella costituzione e nella perpetuazione di un determinato modello socio-culturale. Al tempo stesso, il rituale agevola il passaggio in un determinato momento di crisi della vita della società, un trasferimento di potere il più possibile pacifico, evitando dunque lo spettro della guerra e lo sprofondamento della società nel caos (dato il frequente ricorso alle guerre civili di successione nella storia di Roma antica).

La seconda precisazione, di ordine metodologico, si riferisce alla delimitazione del campo d'indagine, con una chiarezza quasi geometrica. Sebbene l'immaginario abbia una connotazione "negativa", rimandando al fantastico o avendo un carattere fantasioso, nel presente lavoro è messo a tema il suo aspetto realistico: «il "seme" che cerchiamo attraverso l'indagine "archeologica", [è un] senso definitorio per la comunità, non derivato, "realistico", vicino all'esigenza fondamentale di legittimare un passato e di avere un simbolismo "oggettivo", confermato dalla realtà ed efficace nel

futuro»⁶. Il merito incontestabile dell'opera sta nel mettere in evidenza l'aspetto "realistico" della memoria e dell'immaginario collettivo, respingendo così la loro limitazione ai registri del fantastico e dell'ingannevole, là dove erano stati ostracizzati dal razionalismo moderno. Così, la costruzione della realtà è fatta su un fondamento razionale, ma allo stesso tempo «l'immaginario può costringere, provocare e modificare alcuni aspetti della realtà»⁷.

Trattandosi di un lavoro di storia delle idee e rivendicando in modo diretto la propria ascendenza foucaultiana, la problematica e il suo background tematico oltrepassano l'approccio di tipo strutturalista. (Si potrebbe scrivere, ad esempio, una storia comparata dei rituali funerari dedicati ai detentori del potere temporale, nell'ambito delle diverse culture o civiltà, identificando i rapporti tra le diverse sequenze rituali, poi una struttura stabilita e universale di significato, sulla base della quale si potrebbe dimostrare l'esistenza di un meccanismo inconsapevole che starebbe alla base di ogni mito, rituale o testo sacro). Il superamento del metodo strutturalista è compiuto tuttavia in modo reverenziale, visti i frequenti rinvii alle opere di Gilbert Durand dedicate all'immaginario.

L'opera analizza in modo magistrale, respingendo semplificazioni e generalizzazioni affrettate, il trasferimento ovvero la migrazione di alcune unità discorsive dal campo della filosofia a quello dell'immaginario politico o religioso. Un esempio in tal senso sono i due capitoli, *Il pensiero greco, tra politico e immagine* e *L'immaginario del potere cristiano di rito bizantino*. È descritto così lo spettacolo affascinante attraverso il quale certe idee filosofiche prevalgono su altre, in determinati periodi storici, diventando creatrici del reale. Sebbene la filosofia antica abbia notato assai presto la dipendenza dell'immagine dalla sensazione (*aisthesis*), la prossimità all'opinione (*doxa*) e perciò l'inferiorità in rapporto all'*episteme*, la conoscenza di tipo scientifico, l'autrice dimostra che nella *Repubblica di Platone*, «l'immaginazione e il *lógos* contribuiscono, parallelamente e in modo relativamente uguale, alla costruzione del percorso noetico»⁸. Quindi, sono analizzati i rapporti tra *politeia*, giustizia e immaginazione, cioè il modo in cui attraverso l'immaginazione di una *pólis*, creata mediante il discorso, si giunga all'essenza teoretica del sintagma «immaginario del politico»⁹. L'argomentazione di questo capitolo illustra in modo più che convincente il complesso sistema dei rapporti reciproci tra immaginario e politico: «il pensiero del politico è un tema centrale ed emergente, sia nel processo di immaginazione e simbolizzazione della realtà, importante non solo per la

⁶ Ivi, p. 85.

⁷ Ivi, p. 120.

⁸ Ivi, p. 124.

⁹ Ivi, p. 120.

realtà stessa, ma anche per la memoria dell'identità collettiva»¹⁰. Pertanto l'immaginario non è costruito solo mediante l'apporto della *phantasia*, non è semplicemente apparenza e non essere, ma può servire come strumento per facilitare il pensiero di tipo noetico, rendere la realtà intellegibile e costruire un discorso sul passato (tutto ciò in accordo col postulato di Aristotele, secondo il quale «non possiamo pensare senza immagini»). La riabilitazione dell'immaginazione è ancor più pronunciata nel caso di Aristotele, essendo svincolata dalla relazione con la *doxa*, ricevendo uno statuto estetico e paidetico, attraverso la mediazione delle “arti” avendo un ruolo nel programma educativo della *pólis*.

Il secondo capitolo, *Semantica e rituale*. Dal 'kolossós' alle 'images' costituisce un percorso affascinante attraverso il labirinto di diverse teorie, paradigmi, rapporti istituiti da parte delle principali scuole filosofiche dell'antica Grecia, allorché hanno meditato sull'immagine e sul suo statuto intermedio, tra sensazione e concetto, tra sensibile e intellegibile, tra essere e apparenza. Sono ampiamente analizzati i tre tipi di immagini (icastica, onirica e iconica) in rapporto con le tre funzioni dell'immaginazione: mimetica, fantastica e simbolica.

L'immaginario può essere pensato come un mediatore tra individuo e società, come un registro, un codice simbolico attraverso il quale l'individuo interiorizza i sensi astratti che governano la società entro la quale vive per un certo lasso di tempo, sensi che sono orientati tanto in senso analettico, nel dominio della memoria collettiva, quanto in senso prolettico, nei domini dell'utopia, dell'ideologia, dei millenarismi e delle apocalissi.

L'opera studia l'immaginario come discorso¹¹, la cui funzione è quella di mediare tra la realtà sensibile e quella intellegibile; è fondamentalmente una struttura dinamica, che può essere colta mediante il cambiamento delle epistemi foucaultiane¹². Conformemente a un paradigma post-strutturalista, la dinamica interna dell'immaginario è la forza che genera la sua storicità. Il modello anteriore, invece, debitore al pensiero di Lévi-Strauss, negava o ignorava la storicità dell'immaginario nella vita di una determinata società; adottando il modello linguistico, partiva dalla premessa che le diverse realtà socio-storiche (le società, i miti, i testi) possono essere studiate come strutture o insiemi di elementi che non hanno un senso individuale, ma lo ricevono mediante i rapporti tra loro.

¹⁰ Ivi, p. 125.

¹¹ Ivi, p. 45: «(...) l'immaginario potrebbe essere definito come un discorso paradigmatico, aperto, in relazione alla realtà sensibile, oltre che a quella intellegibile, alla quale trasferisce strutture significanti (ad esempio, il mito o conglomerati simbolici) o da cui assorbe elementi che ne garantiscono la dinamica interna, a seconda delle epoche, delle variazioni culturali, spirituali, ecc.».

¹² Ivi, p. 44. Per *episteme* si intende «un quadro di pensiero che proviene da una rottura rispetto a un periodo precedente o una rete di discorsi e nozioni con una certa specificità».

Conclusioni

Siamo di fronte a un'opera dalla particolare chiarezza espositiva; un vero e proprio filo di Arianna nel labirinto filosofico, attraverso il quale anche lo spirito razionalista può perdersi, credendo di scoprire l'unica via verso la verità. La calma quasi stoica che governa l'intera opera può essere avvertita da un lettore attento o semplicemente interessato a scoprire universi mentali quasi scomparsi, ma che sopravvivono ancora nella vita delle immagini che possono essere viste come enigmi, non solo in senso fantastico, ma anche realista. Borges, un riferimento comune, tanto per Foucault, quanto per l'autrice dell'*Oblio di Roma*, è stato uno spirito affascinato da entrambi i lati dell'enigma, a partire dalla celebre formula di San Paolo: *videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate...* La presente opera rappresenta una brillante indagine sull'aspetto realistico dell'immagine in quanto enigma. Speriamo che questo esempio di equilibrio spirituale e intellettuale sia seguito da altri lavori, grazie ai quali noi ci si possa (ri)conoscere abitatori non solo di un universo fisico, ma anche di quello – insieme al quale fonda il reale – pieno di significati culturali o spirituali.

A Nation's Contemporary Artists from a Romanian Museum Analysed by an Art Historian

Ana-Magdalena Petraru *

Valentin Trifescu, *Artiști maghiari din colecția de artă contemporană a Muzeului Național Brukenthal/ Hungarian Artists from the Contemporary Art Collection of the Brukenthal National Museum*, Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal Sibiu, 2023, 119 pages.



This volume authored by the Transylvanian art historian, Valentin Trifescu, PhD was published thanks to the exhibition on the topic at the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu between November 10 – December 31, 2023, and was edited by its manager, Alexandru Constantin Chituță, PhD. It is structured in four parts with a critical introduction and a rich list of 73 illustrations.

In the introduction, V. Trifescu argues that the city of Sibiu/ Hermannstadt is one of the most representative for Transylvanian Saxons and has gained major importance for the Romanians living here since the 19th century due to the headquarters of seminal cultural and religious institutions. Yet, even more Hungarians than Saxons live here nowadays; among the artists, we mention the reputed sculptor Miklós Borsos (1906-1990) and the influent painter from the communist period, Zoltán Andrásy (1910-2006). The original painter Ferenc Incze (1910-1988) spent his childhood here and some painters are still active in the present, i.e., Imre Kasza (born in 1952) and Ștefan (István) Orth (born in 1945). The motivation of this work is the

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lack of research in the field of Hungarian artists from Romania and the opportunity provided by the rich cultural heritage of the Brukenthal National Museum. The selection of the works was made based on ethnic criteria, except for the sculptor Márton (Martin) Izsák (1913-2004), Jew of Hungarian culture. The author wonders whether the ethnic criterion is superficial in the choice of the artists and if it influences in any way their art, also drawing on Magda Cârnci's views that involve the changing politics that reflect less on artistic production and the artists' autonomy along with the exchanges with international art¹ (pp. 9-11). Leaving political considerations aside, V. Trifescu stresses that a significant part of the Hungarians in the catalogue had a teaching activity and mentored many Romanian artists: Zoltán Andrásy, Imre Gyenge, Márton (Martin) Izsák, András (Andrei) Kós, Imre Nagy, Jenő Szervátiusz, Artúr Vetró or Szabolcs Veres. Some of them were taught by Romanian professors in Bucharest or Iași, hence the intercultural collaboration² (p. 14).

The first part, "Chemarea naturii"/ "Nature's Call" investigates the painting of nature which was not considered neutral during the communist years, but subversive, decadent, a mark of bourgeois taste so the artists had to insert industrial features, musical scenes or peasants, a compromise they made in the 50s based on the collections of Brukenthal Museum (see *Sălciile/Willows* by Imre Nagy (1893-1976)) (p. 16). According to V. Trifescu, the artist's merit was he succeeded in accomplishing the identity landscape of his home village, similarly to Áron Tamási (1897-1966) in the field of literature (p. 18). At the same museum, a 1952 landscape by Ferenc Incze can also be admired; the 19th century *plein-air* technique only allowed the work to circulate on the black market, being destined to the bourgeoisie and sharply criticized at official level (p. 19). The author finds esoteric meaning in an apparent simple theme, linking it to the next work, shown in figure 4 of the illustrations, *Vis/ Dream* (1952) in which the painter expressed a purely instinctual unconscious feeling as opposed to the paintings to come in which compositions become more consciously fantastic³ (pp. 19-20). Ideological and mindset changes of the 60s reflected in an unprecedented freedom of expression at artistic level as can be seen from *Peisaj de toamnă/ Autumn Landscape* by Dórián Szász (1924-2006) acquired by Brukenthal Museum in 1969. The rural world was depicted in a realistic manner with no work scenes or ethnographic intention; a completely deserted village was shown with no people, schematic leafless trees, hills, houses and fences, a feature of minimal

¹ For more details, see Magda Cârnci, *Artele plastice în România (1945-1989), Cu o addenda 1990-2010*, second revised edition, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2013, p. 156.

² A detailed account is given by Vasile Radu in „Artiștii în fața furtunii politice (III)”, *Tribuna. Revistă de cultură*, IX, no. 185, 16-31 May 2010, p. 26 and Zoltán Banner in his Hungarian works.

³ See also György Székely Sebestyén, *Incze Ferenc (1910-1988)*, Komp-Press Kiadó, Kolozsvár, 2010, pp. 50-51.

artistic means that reinterpret the tradition of cubist avantgarde through the lenses of Romanian peasants from Transylvania (pp. 20-21). Ferenc Incze's works in the collections of the museum display the muse illuminating the artist after the contemplation of nature, coming from the earth as a spiral of the spirit rising to the sky in *Drumul/ The Road* (Fig. 9) or is able to reach the sun and protect it in *În apărarea luminii/ In Defense of the Light* with the help of oversized hands, a paradigmatic metaphor in the painter's creations⁴ (p. 22).

In "Istorie, tradiție și identitate"/ "History, Tradition and Identity", it is emphasized that since the interwar period, Hungarian artists have received important public orders with a strong Romanian dimension such as the obelisk devoted to *Horea, Cloșca și Crișan* in Alba Iulia created by the sculptor József Fekete (Iosif Fekete-Negrulea) who collaborated with the architect Octavian Mihălțan in 1937 to honour one of the deepest identity trauma of Romanians from Transylvania, the martyrdom of the initiators of the peasants riot in 1784 (p. 23). In the 50s, András (Andrei) Kós (1914-2010) created *Monumentul de la Bobâlna/ The Monument at Bobâlna* (with the architect Virgil Salvanu) which commemorated the peasants' riot of 1437-1438 and the statue group devoted to its head, *Budai Nagy Antal* (p. 24). The Székely sculptor Imre Gyenge based in Sibiu sculpted in bronze the busts of several landmark Romanian personalities such as Andrei Mureșanu and Andrei Șaguna which can be admired in the Astra Park. Brukenthal National Museum hosts an unsigned bust bearing no date (probably from the 1970-1980), most likely showing Alexandru Papiu-Ilarian (Fig. 15) and is attributed to Imre Gyenge (p. 25). Sculptors in wood attracted by the Transylvanian village in more than an artificial, romanticized manner are also mentioned: András Kós, Jenő Szervátiusz (1903-1983) or Péter Balogh (1920-1994) (p. 27). If András Kós's work bears a romantic mark, Jenő Szervátiusz's distinguishes itself through a specific Gothic tension. This is the case of Szervátiusz's 1956 *Plutașii/ Floaters* (Fig. 20) from the collections of the museum (p. 28). More recent works also attempting a recovery of peasant civilization are Miklós Borsos's *Ursitoare/ The Fates* (Fig. 19) donated to the museum in 2012 or Szabolcs Veres's painting, *Flowers* (Fig. 21) especially recalling the world of the Transylvanian village due to the flower vases in front of window blinds (p. 29).

"Oameni"/ "People" capitalizes on several Hungarian figures present in the museum's contemporary collections. Zoltán Andrásy's 1974 *Tânărul din brigadă/ The Young Man in the Brigade* (Fig. 22) is a politicized painting portraying three young workers on a construction site. Despite its pompous

⁴ V. Trifescu draws our attention to a coincidence, pointing to the movie *La Science des rêves* (2006) in which the director and screenwriter Michel Gondry employs the theme of the main character's oversized hands in a dream, being unsure whether the French film maker was aware of Ferenc Incze's work.

title subscribing to mainstream communist propaganda, Dórián Szász's *Răspuns prin fapte marilor îndemnuri/ Responding to Great Exhortations through Deeds* (Fig. 23), also from the 70s, is viewed as brave in its modernity with three workers in the yellow wheat fields next to a fragment from a shockingly red agricultural machine suspended in a surrealistic stance carried out by means specific to Pop Art, similarly to the artist's sports works, *Sport 74-96* and *Sport 74-126* (Fig. 28-29) (p. 31). Ferenc Incze's paintings are also part of the museum's collections and they show a flat being built (Fig. 24) or ballet repetitions (Fig. 25). An attempt to distance himself from the socialist realism of the 50s can be seen in the 1965 *Strada/ The Street* (Fig. 27) depicting the stronghold in Cluj (p. 32). Regarding sculpture, Artúr Vetró made a woman's head (Fig. 32), a testimonial of Romanian fashion in the 70s thanks to its hairstyle. A marble head with barely perceptible anatomical forms by Márton (Martin) Izsák, a prominent cultural figure of Târgu Mureș, is also present in the museum's collections. The head of Romain Rolland from the 80s made by József (Iosif) Fekete (1903-1979) was sculpted in a similar manner as part of a series of historical portraits commissioned via public order: Mark Twain (1951), Petru Groza (1961) and Iosif Vulcan (1964) (p. 34).

"Apocalipsa maghiară"/ "The Hungarian Apocalypse" focuses on several self-portraits by Ferenc Incze, part of the collections of the Brukenthal National Museum. A purely descriptive one (Fig. 51) and psychological ones (Fig. 52-55) stir in us strong feelings like tension, torment, depression, nightmares or introspection in solitude (pp. 34-35). Some of his other works describe periods of 'artistic and spiritual androgyny' (Fig. 60-61), moments of sacrifice required in the achievement of *Magnum opus* or graceful moments when there is inner enlightenment of a true cosmic dimension (Fig. 62-63) (p. 36). Ștefan Orth's *Erupție/ Eruption* (Fig. 69) also gave us an apocalyptic landscape by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in an expressionistic manner in which tension is majestically built to shake both earth and the sky. A religious stance can be encountered in Robert Strebli's *Gândul care te înghite/ The Thought That Swallows You* (Fig. 70) and *Sacralitate virtuală/ Virtual Sacrality* (Fig. 71), the former portraying a bishop wearing the miter on his head, eating his own body, the latter accounting for the 'new religions', i.e., the recent pseudo-secular religions embodied by a character resembling a Sacerdote holding the Facebook logo instead of the cross in one hand and the Twitter logo in his blessing hand, a black bird thus replacing the white dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit (pp. 37-38). A somber atmosphere can be grasped from István Betuker's *Hide & sick* (Fig. 72) encapsulating the idea of disease and retreat in a feminine nude that attempts an absurd escape through an unnatural escalation of a room wall. In Zsolt Berszán's *Vopsea neagră pe hârtie/ Black Paint on Paper* (Fig. 73), all is reduced to black, thus implying rotten matter, affording V. Trifescu an

exercise of intertextuality with Julia Kristeva's *Soleil noir. Dépression et mélancolie* (1995).

To conclude, the volume is a minute radiography of the Hungarian artistic presence in one of the greatest museums in Romania providing useful insights not only to art historians, but also to researchers from various fields (visual arts, history, philology) due to its intertextual treats. Last but not least, we recommend it to the general public and art lovers that could admire the exquisite illustrations of the artworks.

Before the Coffee Gets Cold

Maria-Luisa Țuculeanu *

Toshikazu Kawaguchi, *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, translated from Japanese by Geoffrey Trousselot, Picador, 2023, 213 pages.



Written as a play first, the novel *Before the coffee gets cold* is shaped by the gaze of both the playwright and the writer. The book invites us to reflect on our self-perception in the act of reading and observing. It consists of four different stories which complement each other and share the same setting, revolving around the life of four visitors, as follows: *The Lovers*, *Husband and Wife*, *The Sisters*, *Mother and Child*. Briefly, the first part focuses on Fumiko's story, who wants to confront the man who left her in order to follow his dream and work in America. In the second part, the author pays particular attention to the story of Mr Fusagi and Ms Kohtake. She goes back to receive a letter from her husband, whose memory has begun to fade, as he has Alzheimer's disease and cannot remember who she is. The focal point of the third narrative is the difficult relationship between two sisters, Yaeko Hirai and her younger sister, Kumi Hirai. The latter runs the family-owned inn against her will, on behalf of her disowned elder sister. Consequently, she is constantly trying to persuade Yaeko to return home,

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where she is supposed to be in order to undertake the task she was given from the very beginning, as claimed by the tradition of their family. On her way back home, Kumi dies soon after not reaching her sister in a terrible accident and for this reason Yaeko wishes to meet her one last time. The fourth part tells the story of a mother that meets the daughter she never got the chance to know. Kei Tokita, Nagare's wife, has a weak heart, which is very dangerous for herself and her upcoming pregnancy. Under the circumstances, her strongest wish is to meet her little girl in this unusual manner, as deciding to give birth involves giving up her life. As a result, she finds out that being able to travel through time implies the idea of going to the future as well.

According to urban legend, there is an old cafe in a small back alley in Tokyo that transports people back in time, to any time they like. In a nutshell, a very small cafe, as it only takes nine customers to fill this singular place. The only people in the cafe among regular customers are the woman in a white dress and the man with a travel magazine, Mr Fusagi. The owner is Nagare Tokita, cousin of Kazu. Kazu Tokita is the waitress of this coffee bar, whose principal role is to serve the coffee during the ceremony that returns people to the past. She is a sort of messenger or, in other words, the master of ceremony, which reminds us of the tea ritual that exists in Asian cultures, where tea is a central part in social life. This custom shows simplicity, appreciation and hospitality, being at the same time a perfect reflection of traditions or spiritual beliefs. The act of pouring the coffee silently and slowly – the bitterest coffee that Fumiko, the protagonist of the first story, had ever drunk – just like in an ancient ritual is done with fluid and graceful movements. In a way that arouses curiosity, the waitress looks differently when bringing the white coffee cup – that white coffee cup – and the small silver kettle, which is smaller than those that can be seen at other cafes. Thus, she is described as being a ballerina with beautiful motions and soft voice when uttering the key words: 'Just remember...' (p. 88). The hot drink, a carefully brewed coffee, is also special from many points of view.

Apparently, the tale about time travel is very simple, but in reality it lies in a set of a few strict and precise rules which are repeatedly mentioned all over the book in a symbolic way. In fact, the repetition seems impossible to avoid. Following the first principle, one should know that *no matter how hard you try, the present won't change* when you go back - on that basis, everything might seem rather useless. Another thing is that only one seat allows customers to go back in the past with a time limit. Unfortunately, this only seat is almost permanently taken by a ghost, the chair (which can be seen as a ticket to the past) being free while the woman in the white dress is gone to the toilet. That being said, there is another rule which points out that time travel begins from the moment the coffee is poured. Customers must return to the present before the coffee gets cold. In light of this, the title of the book is entirely suggestive, implying one of the most important aspects that

visitors who return to the past should take into account. But there is more. Last but not least, there is another detail of great significance: *when you return to the past, you must drink the entire cup before the coffee goes cold* (p. 43). Actually, this is the only rule one has to absolutely obey, otherwise, the person being transported in time will turn into a ghost, the next ghost sitting in that seat. Without doubt, travelling in time means so many requirements to meet, with both pluses and minuses, benefits and risks. However, time travel is *a once in a lifetime experience* (p. 93) in a cafe which seems to be especially designed for those that have regrets. These are Kohtake's words, a nurse and a regular of the cafe.

Needless to say, everything is about time and memory. In fact, the constant ticking of the clock in a windowless place like Funiculi Funicula highlights this very idea to a greater extent. The sense of time seems to be simply abolished, despite the three large wall clocks being visibly displayed. As a matter of interest, the middle clock is the only one that shows the correct time. Although it was opened at the beginning of the Meiji period, having operated more than a hundred years, Funiculi Funicula has a timeless aspect. Apart from the fact that there are no windows, it is apparently separated from the outside world, being settled in a basement, where there is no mobile-phone signal. Hence, everything appears as in sepia owing to the few shaded lamps and there is no way of telling night from day. What is more, the idea that the sense of time becomes frozen appears to be quite possible, as there are no variations of light and dark. Additionally, in *The Sisters* time stood still at the inn, due to the fact that nothing had changed. The hallway was completely dark and silent, as rooms in old Japanese houses tend to be dark.

All in all, the central concept is questioning the idea of time travel and who would you like to meet if you could go back in time, even though there is nothing that you can change... After all, this engaging story is about loss, insecurity, guilt, regrets, things that haven't been said or done at the right time and, finally, about hope.

