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Le roman de Perceval ou l'art du romancier

Jacques-Kees NOBLE-KOOIJMAN ᛫

« Par le sornon connoist on l'ome »
Perceval's novel or the art of the novelist

Abstract: *The Conte du Graal has constantly interested critics, not so much because of the Grail whose mystique only developed in the 13th century among the prose continuators of Chrétien's novel, as for the enigmas it conceals in its two parts. rather weakly linked by the customary composition "conjointure" to the novelist. Gauvain's quest, the second part of the novel, remains unfinished. In the spirit of what happens to the character from the Ivain and especially the Charrette, Gauvain loses much of his illustrious and protected status and seems to announce the dereliction of a certain supremacy of Arthurian chivalry. Conversely, the young Welshman's quest, structured and full of promise, presents the future Perceval as an ingenuous man whose abruptness has a comic, even caricatural force, as Peter Haidu ᛫ had previously noted. We could see only an educational novel, but the adventures of these "enfances" where the caricature comes from an obvious sense of reality call for the search for a meaningful, social and psychological reality as well as historical. and literary. The hero's adventure sets him apart and takes him away from Arthur and his court to focus on a family environment and on the emancipation of the young man without the Grail being immediately sacred. The purpose is thus to judge the meaning of this caricature in order to try to understand, beyond a reality wellknown by listeners of the time, the meaning effects revealed by the hero's choices, his behaviors, suggested by successive nicknames. To this reception which seeks to infer the intentions of the author, our modern reception can add the heuristic vision which situates in its complexity and its completion this final tale put into a novel by Chrétien de Troyes in an attempt to reveal the mysteries of the quest from Perceval.*

Keywords: *Arthurian novel; 12th century; Christian from Troy; The Grail's Tale; Perceval; Tale and reality; "Conjuncture" and meaning.*

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᛫ P. Haidu: *Aesthetic Distance in Chrétien de Troyes. Irony and Comedy in « Cliges » and « Perceval »*, Genève, Droz, 1968.

Exorde

De l'unité du *Conte du Graal* le débat paraît clos et les deux parties de ce roman, la quête de Perceval puis celle de Gauvain, doivent être abordées pour ce qu'elles apportent, malgré les énigmes[1] qui subsistent à propos de ce dernier roman de Chrétien, inachevé, tant sur le sens que voulait lui donner son auteur que sur la perception qu'en ont eue les contemporains (et les auteurs des Continuations romanesques de cette « invention » mystique du Graal).Le « roman de Perceval », comme le nomme le ms 354 de Berne dans son *explicit* apparaît plus savamment construit dans sa première partie, consacrée au seul Perceval, et les éléments merveilleux qui ont pu appartenir au « livre » dont Philippe d'Alsace aurait fait don à Chrétien sont adaptés par lui avec le souci d'intégration à la vie et à la culture de son temps qui lui est reconnu. Un roman comme le *Peredur* en donne la confirmation *a contrario*. C'est à l'analyse de cette partie initiale du *Conte du Graal*, qui traite des péripéties de la jeunesse du « Vaslet gallois », que se consacre notre étude. La quête de Perceval peut être tenue pour achevée avec la scène de l'Ermite, oncle de Perceval[2] insérée dans le « roman de Gauvain » et la rédemption qu'elle offre au héros accompagne la révélation du drame familial dont il est dès lors lui-même le rédempteur. Pour autant le mystère du Graal demeure, pour le bien des continuateurs. Au-delà des difficultés de conciliation entre les deux parties du conte, le « Perceval » et le « Gauvain », c'est l'ensemble du *Conte du Graal* qui demeure « définitivement inachevé » comme le disait Marcel Duchamp de son œuvre maîtresse, *le Grand Verre*[3], en 1923. Daniel Poirion, dans son analyse du roman évoque : « un vaste projet « qui « impose à l'aventure chevaleresque une quête de la vérité. » et il

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[1] Voir P. Menard: Problèmes et mystères du *Conte du Graal* in *Polyphonie du Graal*, ed. Denis Hüe, Orleans, Paradigme, 1998, p.59-75. La plus mystérieuse de ces énigmes est celle de la lance d'où perlent des gouttes de sang. Elle n'est pas levée par l'Ermite et demeure irrésolue. Perceval interrompt sa quête qui a été imposée à Gauvain avant son duel avec Guinganbresil (v.6157-6216). Un nouveau sens y apparaissait pour cette arme magique : « toz li roiames de Logres, Qui jadis fu la terre as ogres, Sera destruis par cele lance. »v. 6169-6171. La tradition des contes semble revivifiée, contraire à toute christianisation. Elle rejoint les motifs celtes qui associait la lance (parfois javelot) à la malédiction qui frappe la famille de Perceval dont l'annonce d'une destruction de Logres (royaume d' Arthur) est à comprendre comme une vengeance.

[2] Cette scène de contrition de Perceval lors du Vendredi Saint est une explication par l'ermite, son oncle, non une solution pour les cérémonies mystérieuses au château du Pêcheur; elle fait percevoir le complexe familial du héros sans que le « péché » qui lui « trancha » la langue (v.6409) soit bien justifié. La dischronie, la dissonance de la scène ont été soulignées par la critique mais le débat sur le sens de l'aventure, s'il s'apaise, n'est pas clos pour autant.

[3] De la période « Dada » de Marcel Duchamp (alias Jacques Villon,alias Rrose Selavy) cette œuvre, exposée à Philadelphie (Philadelphia Museum of Art) est intitulée en 1915: « La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires,même » et jusqu'en 1923 constamment retouchée puis, avec comme titre « Le grand verre », laissée, « définitivement inachevée » selon la déclaration du peintre.

ajoute dans sa conclusion que : « l'opposition des personnages et des styles de la partie Perceval et de la partie Gauvain devait servir à une démonstration tendant à consolider les rapports entre christianisme, chevalerie et courtoisie en fonction d'une réalité finalement dévoilée. »[4]Pour avoir, après Keith Busby et Jacques Ribard, étudié la déconsidération progressive dans les trois derniers romans de Chrétien du personnage emblématique de Gauvain[5], j'ai, comme eux, constaté le déclin de la chevalerie arthurienne et de l'idéologie féodale qu'elle illustrait. Avec le jeune Gallois la distance, apparemment satirique, prise avec Arthur et sa cour, devient une réalité signifiante et justifie une analyse heuristique qui par degrés confirme une distanciation du héros dont les dénominations successives (ses surnoms) accompagnent les péripéties de sa quête jusqu'à la pleine autonomie à laquelle il parvient. Ce procédé narratif de Chrétien de Troyes lui permet de construire par étapes la personnalité de son héros en accompagnant son passage de l'anonymat et de l'innocence à la pleine maturité pour lui donner peu à peu une identité riche des qualifications qu'il acquiert. C'est toute la différence avec les contes merveilleux dont un roman comme *Peredur* se distingue moins et c'est tout l'art du conteur subtil qu'est Chrétien. Cette composition artistique, absente de la partie « Gauvain » du roman, interroge sur la réception de l'œuvre en cette période de la fin du XIIe siècle qui voit les grandes puissances engagées dans la troisième croisade et la vie féodale bouleversée.

Progression du récit, évolution du héros
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[4] D. Poirion, *Perceval,*édition Pleiade p.1303.
[5] Keith Busby : *Gauvain in Old French Literature*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1980, p.83-151. Jacques Ribard: *Un personnage paradoxal : Le Gauvain du Conte du Graal*, Colloque de Wegimont, Paris, Nizet, 1984, p.5-18. J.K.Noble-Kooijman : *Gauvain, soleil noyé*, in *Anastasis*, IV, 2, 2017, p.91-106, <anastasis-review.ro>. C'est dans *le Chevalier de la Charrette* que Gauvain, pour la première fois engagé dans une quête pour délivrer la Reine, comme Lancelot, y échoue assez piteusement.

              Préambule: La « résurrection » de Perceval?

On ne souligne peut-être pas assez qu'avant qu'apparaisse, anonymement, dans le Conte notre jeune Gallois « filz a la veve dame de la gaste forest soutaine » v.72-73, un chevalier d'Arthur, Perceval le Gallois, figurait dans le roman d'*Erec* parmi les meilleurs barons de la cour , qui regardent aux fenêtres du château de Caradigan Erec arrivant à la cour:

              « As fenestres monté estoient 1510
              Li meillor baron de la cort.
              La reïne Ganievre i cort
              Et s'i vint meïsme li rois,
              Kex et Percevax li Galois
              Et mes sire Gauvains apres, » 1515

Ce rang illustre de Perceval n'est cependant pas confirmé dans l'énumération des chevaliers de la Table ronde au vers 1679 du roman car il n'y figure pas, alors que Gornemant de Goort (qui adoube le valet gallois dans le *Conte du Graal*) occupe la quatrième place après Gauvain, Erec et Lancelot.

Il est présent ensuite dans *Cligès* où le héros grec après avoir vaincu au tournoi d'Oxford Sagremors et Lancelot, abat Perceval : « uns vasax de grant renon, Percevax li Galois ot non » V.4813-4814. Le procédé des personnages reparaissant d'un roman au suivant est familier à Chrétien de Troyes et qu'il ne l'ait pas introduit pour Perceval suppose une rupture dans le statut du personnage. Après quelque dix ou quinze années depuis *Erec* et *Cligès*, et pour un nouveau protecteur, Philippe d'Alsace, et de nouveaux auditoires, ce pouvait n'être qu'une commodité ou le respect de la source livresque, mais notre héros gallois a trop d'importance (comme la postérité du roman le confirme) et il nous faut penser à une intention dans le choix de Chrétien de revenir aux enfances du héros gallois.

      1. La Chevalerie mise à nu par son bachelier, même
      1.16. Les Chevaliers de fer   v.69-363

la reverdie du printemps dans la « gaste forêt soutaine» (sauvage, solitaire et dévastée) du domaine de la « Veuve Dame » sert d'ouverture au roman[6]. Le **valet gallois** selle son cheval et prend trois javelots (v.77-79)

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[6] « Fils de la veuve Dame » première identité du héros, un anonymat qui s'étend à la Dame qui tient ce domaine dans la « gaste » forêt, isolée et déserte. La désolation, et déjà la malédiction semblent présider à cette situation initiale. On doit rappeler pourtant que des herseurs sont au

pour chasser. C'est assez montrer sa condition de jeune noble, même si le domaine de sa famille est un manoir où cependant les avoines sont hersées par six herses et douze bœufs conduits par les serfs du manoir (v.84). Son énergie, son assurance de jeune adulte sont sensibles : Il est habile au javelot et a dû être entraîné sans que l'auteur le dise:

> « Et cil qui bien lancer savoit
> Des javeloz que il avoit,
> Aloit anviron lui lanchant,
> Une eure arrière l'autre avant,
> Une eure bas et autre haut » (v. 95-99).

Cette scène paisible est perturbée par l'irruption bruyante du groupe de cinq chevaliers. Le passage est traité dans le ton comique par Chrétien, qui fait penser le valet à une diablerie (dont il ne se prémunira pas par un signe de croix en enfant obéissant à sa mère mais par une riposte d'un coup, de javelot: « ainz ferai si tot le plus fort, d'un des javeloz que je port, que ja n'aprocheront de moi, nus des altres si com je croi. » v.121-124. Ces détails caricaturaux campent un héros volontaire mais innocent et ignorant (malgré ses résolutions batailleuses). La suite de la scène adopte le même ton comique, car à voir ces diables étinceler dans les reflets du soleil au sortir du couvert il les prend aussitôt pour des anges du ciel et se met en prières Au Maître, chef du groupe, qu'il prend pour Dieu! Et qui s'enquiert du passage de cinq chevaliers et trois demoiselles que poursuit son groupe[7] le valet sans répondre pose des questions (précises et sans retenue) qui démentent aussi la candeur juvénile dont on les a qualifiées. La lance, l'écu, le haubert du chevalier sont des découvertes précieuses pour le valet qui apprenant qu'ils sont des chevaliers, veut être chevalier lui aussi, mais son bon sens lui fait remarquer que ses javelots valent peut-être mieux que la lance du beau chevalier dont il doute de l'utilité :

> «Dont valt miex li uns de ces trois
> Gavelos que vos veez chi;
> Que quanques je weil en ochi,
> Oisiax et bestes, au besoig,
> Et si les ochi de si loing
> Come on porroit d'un bojon[8] traire. »v.200-205

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travail des champs et que ces serfs sont preuves d'une importance du domaine rural de cette famille en désarroi.

[7] ce groupe de cinq chevaliers armés, qui poursuit un autre groupe de cinq chevaliers accompagnés de trois demoiselles reste anonyme sauf à dire leur appartenance à la maison d'Arthur; Il semble n'être qu'un groupe d'opportunité qui découvre au jeune Gallois le monde de la chevalerie. Il s'agit en outre de chevaliers dont le Seigneur est adoubé depuis moins de cinq ans (v. 288). On y verra des chevaliers « du rang » en quelque sorte témoins de leur société.

[8] Bojon v. 204, boujon, bozon (mss. A, B), le mot, d'origine francique, ne désigne que le trait (carreau) d'arbalète.

Les questions ne portent pas ensuite sur le cheval, ou l'épée, mais sur l'origine de cet armement, le Chevalier précisant qu'il fut adoubé cinq jours auparavant par le roi Arthur (v.288). C'est donc d'un parti de chevaliers d'Arthur qu'il s'agissait, tout fraîchement adoubés et qui, à la différence du Maître du groupe, patient et courtois, marque son mépris pour le jeune Gallois :

> « Sire, sachiez tot entreset,
> Que Galois sont tot par nature,
> Plus fol que bestes en pasture.
> Cist est ausi come une beste.
> Fols est qui dalez lui s'areste. » v. 240-245.

Cette distance marquée rappelle peut-être la longue résistance des Gallois à la domination des anglo-normands[9]. Elle laisse attendre les comportements du jeune héros à l'égard d'Arthur et de sa cour, à Carduel, où l'envoie son interlocuteur. La rencontre s'achève sur la demande courtoise du nom de ce valet qui ne se connaît que comme « biax filz (v. 345), « Biau frere » (v. 348), et « Biau Sire » (v. 352) Le chevalier l'a une fois (v. 299) appelé « Biau frere », et constamment « Vaslet » selon la coutume, le valet (vasselet) qualifiant un jeune homme noble. On notera l'importance de cet échange, qui masque l'identité du héros, dont la quête sera précisément une recherche de ses origines, de son nom. Il faut noter que le Chevalier, interlocuteur du jeune valet, ne donne pas non plus son nom.

1.2. L'émancipation:

Ce que la rencontre des chevaliers pouvait avoir de comique prend au retour du Valet auprès de sa mère un ton plus réaliste. Résolu à devenir chevalier le jeune homme est déjà transformé par son projet, comme son dialogue avec sa mère en atteste.

1.2.1. L'héritage familial, le viatique v. 364-634.

Le personnage de la mère, captatrice (et mère abusive de ce point de vue) est campé par l'auteur avec profondeur. Ce n'est pas tant le chagrin excessif de cette mère quand elle comprend que son fils a découvert ce

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[9] Ces propos méprisants pour les Gallois font écho à la longue résistance du pays de Galles à l'envahisseur normand (anglo-normand) depuis 1066, et remontent même aux guerres contre les saxons. Mais au XII° siècle et depuis 1094 et la révolte galloise qui reconquiert Gwynedd (Galles du nord) l'affrontement est constant: Owein bat les normands en 1136, devient roi de Gwynned et ne meurt qu'en 1170.. Powis, plus au sud est reconquise, et Rhys ap Gruffyd (1132-1197) fils de Gruffyd ap Rhys, roi de Deheubarth (Galles du sud) signe un accord avec Henri II en 1171 qui confirme Rhys comme Prince.Il règne jusqu'en 1197. Sa cour était à Cardigan et Llewelyn Fawr son successeur suit ses traces. Chrétien écrit donc avec réalisme, même s'il n'a pas vécu en Grande-Bretagne.Voir K.Busby: « Chrétien de Troyes english'd » *,Neophilologus* 71, 1987, p.596-613 et dans Histoire des Bretagnes, vol 6. Quel moyen âge, CRBC, Brest, UBO, 2019 p.449 : « Cartographie de la géopolitique irlandaise à l'aune des romans arthuriens français. ». cf aussi Ruppert Pickens: « The Welsh Knignt .Paradoxicality in Chretien's *Conte del Graal* », Lexington, 1977.

qu'elle voulait lui cacher qui frappe, mais la dissimulation qu'elle avoue à son « biax fix » qu'elle a tenu éloigné de la réalité de sa condition et de son destin. Au passage elle présente son propre lignage gallois des « ïles de mer »[10] prestigieux et tombé dans le malheur et la misère de sa condition après la blessure mutilante « par mi les janbes navrez » (v. 434) de son époux[11], un père accablé par la mort de ses deux premiers fils, peu après leur adoubement prestigieux, l'aîné armé par le roi d'Escavalon, le puîné par le roi Ban de Gomoret. Le motif merveilleux de la malédiction qui décime cette famille donne au roman un sens d'emblée fantastique et les détails (l'impuissance du père, les yeux crevés du fils aîné) font du jeune valet le héros d'une possible résurrection. Mais le jeune homme montre dans ce passage une distance avec sa mère qui montre sa détermination à partir, ce qui est typique des héros de conte merveilleux:

> «Li vallèe entent molt petit,
> A che que sa mere li dist.
> « A mangier ,fait il, me donez ;
> Ne sai de coi m'araisonnez,
> Molt m'en iroie volentiers,
> Au roi qui fait les chevaliers,
> Et je irai, cui qu'il em poist. » »v. 489-495.

On notera la brusquerie inconvenante de sa réplique qui fait comprendre que les tentatives de sa mère pour le dissuader de partir sont vaines. Elle prépare ses vêtements, très rustiques, et, malgré sa peine, lui livre un viatique moral conforme aux codes de la chevalerie: servir et secourir les dames et les pucelles, dans l'honneur, ajoutant sur ce sujet un codicille sur le comportement amoureux :

> « De pucelle a mout qui le baise.
> S'ele le baisier vos consent,
> Le sorplus je vos en desfent,
> Se laissier le volez por moi.
> Mais s'ele a anel en son doi,

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[10] Le prestige des Iles de mer galloises tient au fait qu'elles n'ont jamais été vraiment conquises et occupées. La Veuve Dame se réclame ainsi leur héritière.Il semble (cf Blaess Madeleine: *Perceval et les Illes de la mer*, in Mélanges Lods, Paris, ENSJF, 1978, p.69-77) que la famille du héros pourrait avoir subi ses malheurs d'Arthur (voir notre note 14).

[11] Cette blessure symbolique de l'impotence de son père appelle deux précisions: qui la lui a faite, et quelle est sa vraie nature ? Pour le lieu, « entre les jambes » en ce vers 436,il est aussi »parmi les anches » (ms.B 408) et pour le roi pêcheur au v.3513 « parmi les quisses ambesdeus » (ms.T) ou « Parmi les anches amedeus ». » (ms.B v.3451) . L'étude de Clovis Brunel: « Les hanches du roi pêcheur » in *Romania*, 81, 1960 p.37-63, fondée sur les traités d'anatomie, est décisive. Il s'agit d'euphémismes, ce que confirment les variantes, et c'est la virilité des victimes, donc leur puissance et leur autorité, qui sont anéanties symboliquement, et que le héros aura à restaurer. L'auteur de cette agression ma léfique n'est pas désigné expressément.

       Ne a sa corroie almosniere,
       Se par amor ou par proiere,
       Le vos done,bon m'ert et bel,
       Que vos em portez son anel. » v. 546-554.

       Ces conseils ne sont guère conformes aux codes de l'amour courtois tels que Chrétien les a respectés et outre qu'ils laissent percer une attitude possessive de cette mère, ils sont plus proches des conduites de la première époque de la féodalité. Quant au « sorplus » qu'elle interdit, celui de l'acte sexuel (le déduit, plaisir partagé des amants courtois), il relève de la brutalité des hommes avec les femmes et évoque peut-être les libertés des chevaliers avec les bergères des pastourelles. Il est vrai que l'adolescent, qui vient de montrer son agacement à sa mère et brûle de partir, ne maîtrise peut-être pas toutes ses pulsions.

       Le conseil ultime de la veuve est paradoxal : « N'aiez longuement compaignon, Que vos ne demandez son non ; Et ce sachiez a la parsome, **Par le sornon connoist on l'ome**[12]» v. 559-562. Mais ce précepte devient un fil conducteur de l'aventure du jeune héros anonyme.

       Le départ du jeune homme, intervient après trois jours où ses vêtements sont préparés par sa mère, qui veut toutefois le désarmer (pour qu'il paraisse moins gallois !) des trois javelots qu'il tenait à emporter, mais il en conserve un . Sa mère défaille à ce départ et le valet, se retournant, la voit choir comme morte sur le seuil, mais sans un regard en arrière, il cingle son cheval qui l'emporte incontinent à vive allure. Comment ne pas voir en cette scène une rupture résolue avec un passé au domaine familial dont le valet s'émancipe?

       1.2.2. Le pavillon de la Demoiselle v. 635-833.

       Après une nuit dans la forêt le valet reprend sa voie et aperçoit un pavillon magnifique, qu'il prend pour un lieu saint. Surmontée d'un aigle doré la tente est féerique (D. Poirion p.1331 de son édition du roman cite une pareille tente merveilleuse dans le *Lai de Lanval,* et il semble que ces aigles signalent les pavillons des fées.) Les contes celtiques offrent nombre de situations d'initiation ou d'épreuve pour les héros, lors de rencontres avec les fées ou les sorcières. Ici la péripétie est une épreuve autant que la révélation de son autonomie. Elle prend le tour réaliste d'une relation forcée avec la Demoiselle endormie dans la tente. E. Baumgartner, en traite comme d'un viol dans un chapitre sur les femmes (la violence et la pitié)[13]. Le texte ne le précise pas à ce point, toutefois :

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[12] Le paradoxe de cette recommandation est qu'elle intervienne dans l'anonymat complet qu'a retenu l'auteur pour ce début du roman. Le ms.B est plus complet : « N'aiez longuemant compaignon, Que vos ne damandez son non, Et le sornon a la parsome. Par lo sornon conoist on l'ome. »v.523-526. Toutefois, nom et surnom semblent appeler le même sens à l'examen des mss.Il s'agit bien de s'enquérir du nom d'un compagnon.

[13] Baumgartner Emmanuèle: *Chrétien de Troyes . Le Conte du Graal* , Paris, PUF, 1999.

« Li vallés avoit le bras fors,
Si l'embracha molt nichement,
Car il nel sot faire autrement.
Mist le soz lui tote estendue,
Et cele s'est molt desfendue,
Et gandilla quanqu'ele pot ;
Mais desfense mestier n'i ot,
Que li vallés en un randon,
Le baisa, volsist ele ou non,
Set fois si com li contes dit » v. 700-709.

Le conte allégué par Chrétien dans son prologue excuse et confirme ce qui est une violence consciente et la remarque naïve du jeune homme le confirme: « Or m'en irai je bien paiez, Et molt meillor baisier vos fait, Que chamberiere que il ait, En toute la maison ma mere, Car n'avez pas la bouche amere.» v. 724-728. Ce trait réaliste indique bien que le jeune homme n'en est pas à sa première chevauchée et il devait faire sourire les auditoires coutumiers des mœurs assez libres des châteaux. Cependant l'offense faite candidement par le valet annonce les réparations qu'il devra faire. Les pleurs de la Demoiselle violentée, l'insensibilité brutale du valet sont motifs de cette quête qualifiante du héros. La rage jalouse de l'ami de la Pucelle laisse l'épisode en suspens.

1.3. La conquête des armes du chevalier vermeil: v. 834-1304 .

1.3.1. Arthur le Roi qui fait les chevaliers : v. 834-1063.

En chemin vers Cardeuil le Valet rencontre un charbonnier qui semble bien connaître le Roi Arthur qu'il dit pour lors heureux et malheureux à la fois. Heureux pour avoir vaincu Ryon, le roi des Iles[14], dolent car ses chevaliers sont repartis dans leurs châteaux (v. 855). Le jeune valet croise à l'entrée du château de Cardeuil un chevalier tout armé de vermeil et portant une coupe d'or et est séduit par ses armes qu'il se propose d'obtenir d'Arthur. Il ne semble guère comprendre ce que lui révèle ce chevalier et entre, à cheval (une ignorance des convenances qu'on ne lui reproche pas) dans le château et la grand-salle où Arthur se morfond en silence. Le Roi fait triste figure et l'innocent valet, sans la moindre notion de courtoisie, ignore l'offense subie par Arthur (et la Reine) et exige avec brusquerie d'être fait

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[14] Ce roi Ryon (v. 852), vaincu par Arthur porte un nom proche de celui des rois de Gwynedd, Rhys, et il pourrait avoir été malgré la différence des époques, le seigneur du père du héros. On aura remarqué que les deux aînés du jeune homme ont été faits chevaliers par le roi d'Escavalon que l'on retrouve dans l'aventure de Gauvain, et par le roi Ban de Gomoret et non par Arthur. La légende est proche et elle souligne à nouveau l'opposition entre le roi Arthur et les Gallois . L'*Historia regum Britanniae* de Geoffroy de Monmouth précise que Ryon était un géant à barbe rousse, vaincu par Arthur auquel il aurait aussi voulu voler la barbe (l'autorité). C'est cette domination d'Arthur qui explique qu'il soit encore « le roi qui fait les chevaliers » et qui décevra tant notre jeune valet.

chevalier non sans avoir fait choir la coiffure du roi en tournant la tête de son cheval pour partir: « Li vallés ne prise une chive, Quanques li rois li dist et conte, Ne de son dol ne de sa honte, De sa feme ne li chaut il., « Faites moi chevalier, fait il, Sire rois, car aller m'en weil. » »v. 968-972. La scène est à la fois comique et dérisoire, Keu accordant par provocation les armes demandées par le valet et maltraitant une jeune fille et un nain qui pressentaient le destin glorieux du jeune Gallois. Tout le passage est nettement annonciateur d'une dévalorisation d'Arthur et de sa « maisnie »,sa cour de chevaliers et de familiers, plus fortement que dans le *Conte de la Charrette*. Cette gradation dans la décadence du monde arthurien promeut par contraste l'inconnu jeune homme qui la découvre sans bien la comprendre[15].

   1.3.2. Le chevalier du javelot v. 1064-1304.

   Le Chevalier vermeil de la forêt de Quinqueroi, comme l'avait nommé Arthur au v.950-951 attendait « chevalerie et aventure » v. 1075, en la circonstance le champion d'Arthur, pour décider de la suprématie entre eux deux, à laquelle il prétend. Il ne peut comprendre que le valet qui vient le provoquer soit ce champion et le corrige du bois de sa lance : « Par les espaulles en travers, De la ou n'estoit pas li fers » v. 1105-1106). La réplique du Gallois est inattendue et fulgurante et elle place le valet aussitôt dans la fonction et le statut de héros :

> « Et li vallés fu correchiez,
> Quant il senti qu'il fu blechiez,
> De la colée qu'il ot prise.
> En l'oeil al miex qu'il pot l'avise,
> Et laisse aller le gavelot;
> Si qu'il n'entent ne voit ne ot,
> Le fiert parmi l'oeil el cervel,
> Que d'autre part del haterel,
> Le sanc et la cervele espant.
> De la dolor li cuers li mant,
> Si verse et chiet toz estendu. » v. 1109-1119.

   La violence et la soudaineté de cette attaque mortelle appelle commentaire: On savait le valet gallois habile au javelot dans ses chasses en forêt, mais le coup qu'il porte paraît tenir de l'exception dans sa force, sa précision et sa portée. L'arme, le javelot des Gallois, est une lance courte qui, maniée à bras libre, ne peut avoir une pénétration telle qu'elle transperce le crâne du Chevalier vermeil, son heaume, et l'abatte mort sur le coup. Sans doute la précision de la visée du jeune homme, qui choisit l'oeillère (la

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[15] Toute la scène de la relation première du valet gallois avec Arthur est exemplaire de la discordance que P.Haidu a notée dans *le conte du graal* (cf.notre abstract) en y analysant le comique choisi par l'auteur.

visière) du heaume est-elle parfaite, mais le coup de javelot ne pouvait avoir la puissance d'un carreau d'arbalète qui seul assure cet effet meurtrier. On se souviendra pourtant du vers 205, cité plus haut, qui vantait la puissance de ses javelots par le valet qui les compare à un « bojon »(boljon, boujon, grosse flèche d'arbalète) pour la portée. L'histoire militaire évoquée dans les écrits du temps fait état de « Qarriax, javeloz et darz » au vers1518 de *Cligès*, lancés par les assaillants au siège de Windsor. Ces armes de jet, pour le combat à pied ou la chasse, ne sont pas décrites dans des ouvrages techniques, inexistants alors, mais l'histoire du javelot remonte au néolithique où déjà on le lançait plus fort et plus loin avec un propulseur à crosse, que les Grecs ont bien plus tard modifié en propulseur à lanière qui donnait par la rotation une précision et une pénétration plus grande. Les premières arbalètes au XIIe siècle ont des portées encore faibles, mais une force capable de démailler les hauberts. Le roman donne une idée de la portée des arbalètes au vers 1309 qui évalue à une « arbalestée » la largeur de la grande rivière qui protège le château de Gornemant. Si les javelots gallois de notre valet ont une telle puissance, ce doit être dû à un propulseur dont on ne peut que supputer[16] la présence, implicite au vers 1113 (Et **laisse aller** le gavelot) et non **lance** le javelot. Cette arme, si essentielle pour notre valet, a d'évidence un statut important dans le roman, et cet épisode de victoire foudroyante promeut le jeune homme, qui a su s'émanciper, à la qualité de héros dans une fonction par avance libératrice. Il abandonnera ses chers javelots après cet acte transgressif pour devenir chevalier vermeil à son tour. Il nous faut toutefois par anticipation évoquer la rencontre capitale qu'il fait plus tard dans sa quête, après son aventure chez le Roi pêcheur, d'une cousine germaine (v. 3600) qui lui révèle le contenu de ses découvertes muettes et lui apprend que le Roi son hôte: « fu en une bataille ,Navrez et mehaigniez sanz faille,Si que puis aidier ne se pot, **Qu'il fu ferus d'un gavelot, Parmi les quisses ambesdeus,** Qu'il ne puet sor cheval monter. » v. 3509-3513. Cette blessure invalidante, la même que celle que son père a subie, c'est donc un javelot comme les siens qui l'a causée. On ajoutera que les chevaliers, dans la joute ou les tournois, sont armés de lances et non de javelots, arme typique des Gallois. Le père blessé (en une bataille) est pourtant chevalier et il faut

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[16] À défaut de traités sur les armes on doit faire appel aux traités du XIVe siècle sur la chasse,art noble, soit Le *Livre du roi Modus et de la reine Ratio*, du pseudo Henri de ferrières ou *Le Livre de la Chasse* de Gaston de Foix qui en reprend l'essentiel.Ils sont peu loquaces sur l'armement du chasseur et on y constate que le Javelot, courte lance(roturière?), n'y paraît pas, sauf à l'assimiler à l'épieu. Seul l'arc et l'arbalète ont droit de cité (et d'illustration).Il faut attendre le XVIe siècle pour découvrir,analysés par François Buttin dans le vol.61, 1964, du *Bulletin de la société préhistorique française* p.56-64, Les Propulseurs de Leonard de Vinci. Il s'y trouve une confirmation de notre hypothèse et la planche que Leonard, Ingénieur de génie, présente dans ses carnets sur la question pour les javelots et pour les frondes est définitive. On la trouve en annexe.

comprendre que sa blessure, comme celle plus tard du roi pêcheur, puis du mystérieux roi servi par le cortège lumineux du graal, est symbolique, comme la lance qui saigne, et figure l'impuissance qu'accompagne la ruine des domaines familiaux comme une malédiction. C'est une restauration des puissances anéanties que le conte fait pressentir. La quête du jeune valet prend un sens qui lui reste encore obscur, mais qui se décèle pour les lecteurs. Avec réalisme à ce point du récit, le triomphe du Gallois sur le Chevalier Vermeil, orgueilleux agresseur d'Arthur, se poursuit d'un dépouillement comique et la scène du désarmement est traitée sur le mode ironique, la gaucherie du valet expliquant le concours obligeant d'Ivonet, bachelier courtois, qui contribue à l'initiation du jeune innocent aux complexités de l'équipement (du harnois) des chevaliers accomplis, non sans que notre valet résiste à se dépouiller de ses bons habits gallois. Ainsi fait chevalier sans être adoubé, le valet n'envoie à Arthur que le message d'Ivonet et la coupe d'or symbolique, reprise au provocateur vaincu, et reprend sa route sans bien comprendre ce qu'est sa quête. La cour d'Arthur est comme tenue à distance dans un abandon signifiant.

   1.3.3. L'Adoubement: Gornemant de Gohort v. 1305-1698.

    Chevauchant par la forêt (v. 1306) il en sort et découvre le château fort sur le pont duquel un prudhomme, vêtu d'une robe pourprine, s'ébat à loisir, tenant par contenance un bâtonnet. Le tableau suggère l'autorité et la qualité du personnage qui a d'ailleurs, quand le jeune Gallois lui dit qu'il vient de la cour d'Arthur qui l'aurait fait chevalier (v. 1369), une réponse qui montre bien qu'il connaît les vexations qu'Arthur connaît alors: «Chevalier ! Se Diex bien me doint, Ne quidoie c'or en cest point, De tel chose li sovenist; D'el quidoie qu'il li tenist, Ore Que de chevaliers faire. » (v. 1371-1375). Etait-ce ironie ou simple constat? Le prudhomme qui a reconnu au parler à quel innocent « niche et sot » il avait affaire, l'écoute et se met aussitôt à l'aider, comme initiateur, à maîtriser son nouvel état. Avec la patience et la générosité d'un maître, il le fait manœuvrer son cheval, lui apprend à tenir sa lance, son écu, de la bonne manière et lui montre par trois fois comment diriger son cheval et ses coups. Ces exercices impromptus servent à juger des qualités du jeune homme, qui apprend vite. Et quand on en vient à l'épée, le combat à pied n'est plus à expliquer car un détail révèle que notre apprenti a pratiqué bien des exercices sur les mannequins et les écus de manœuvre : « as boriax et as talevaz, Chiez ma mère en apris assez, Tant que sovent en fui lassez. » (v.1532-1534). Il avait donc une expérience des armes et des combats que ses qualités de chasseur laissaient supposer. Ici encore le souci de réalisme de l'auteur confirme sa maîtrise du récit. Avec habileté il évite de lever l'anonymat du héros qui demande son nom (comme le lui avait recommandé sa mère) à son hôte, Gornemant de Gorhaut (Goort) v. 1548 sans que ce dernier ne l'interroge à son tour, comme s'il le connaissait. Le rôle de ce véritable parrain en chevalerie est déterminant. C'est lui qui adoube

réellement le jeune, niais en fait un chevalier en lui chaussant l'éperon droit et en l'accolant. C'est dans l'abandon de ses vêtements rustiques (et gallois) et par cette cérémonie que le jeune homme rejoint « l'ordre de chevalerie » dont les devoirs sont rappelés par son parrain. Les principes de comportement courtois , la prouesse, la générosité, la miséricorde et la piété rejoignent les propos de la mère au départ de son fils, avec une solennité qui souligne bien que la tutelle enfantine est achevée et que le jeune valet est admis par Gornemant dans son nouveau statut. Il reste que l'émancipation n'est pas encore complète et le désir du jeune homme de retourner au domaine familial pour s'assurer de la santé de sa mère en témoigne. Gornemant exige à ce propos que cesse la référence à sa mère dans les propos du jeune homme qui devra se réclamer de lui désormais, comme le vavasseur qui l'a adoubé. Le texte est parlant, qui tient à distance la cour d'Arthur bien qu'on ignore qui est le suzerain de Gornemant par ailleurs chevalier de haut rang et quatrième dans la liste que Chrétien donne de la Table Ronde dans son *Cligès*. Le romancier dès le premier vers du nouvel épisode de la quête du jeune homme, désormais adoubé, le nomme « li noviax chevaliers » v. 1699 comme pour marquer cette étape honorable.

2. Le Nouveau Chevalier Vermeil[17] v. 1699-3690.

« ...Molt li est tart, Qu'il a sa mere venir puisse, Et que vive et saine le truisse. »v.1700-1702. Cette motivation plusieurs fois rappelée donne aux épreuves et rencontres qui lui sont destinées une signification qui se distingue de l'aventure romanesque telle qu'analysée par Auerbach [18]. Ce n'est pas qu'elles ne soient pas formatrices au contraire, on l'a vu pour cet adoubement après préparation du nouveau Chevalier. Le sentiment du lecteur est que le projet du romancier vise à construire son personnage avec méthode, selon les étapes qu'il a choisies, et sans que soit possible l'apparition d'une liberté du héros qui transcende le sens du roman. Le choix d'un héros jeune et ignorant de son passé comme de son futur statut justifierait cette analyse et conduirait à un récit clos dans ce volet consacré au héros Gallois, dont pourtant les mystères stimulent l'exégèse.

2.1. La « drüerie », Blanchefleur v. 1699-2066:

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[17] Le « nouveau Chevalier » reçoit ainsi un nouveau surnom qui sera suivi de celui de « Chevalier vermeil » qui consacre sa victoire sur l'agresseur d'Arthur. On décèle le procédé de l'auteur qui avec ces surnoms (comme déterminants du nom encore anonyme) fait attendre le moment où le héros pourra se nommer en « découvrant » son nom pour répondre à sa cousine.
[18] « Erec s'an va, sa fame an moinne,

   Ne set ou,mes en avanture. » v.2762-2763 *Erec et Enide.*
Erich Auerbach dans le chapitre 6 : *Les aventures du chevalier courtois*, de son grand ouvrage MIMESIS, traduit en français,Paris,Gallimard,1968, montre que ces aventures sont des quêtes sans mission, qui mettent à l'épreuve la prouesse, la vaillance du chevalier. Erec y prouvera qu'il n'est pas recréant, c'est-à-dire lâche. Et dans le *Conte du Graal* au contraire le héros, même confusément, cherche non la prouesse courtoise mais le sens de son existence et le destin de sa famille.

L'épisode du château de Blanchefleur, Beaurepaire, assiégé et mal en point, est l'objet du premier travail du Chevalier nouveau: très précis dans ses détails guerriers tout autant que dans le réalisme des scènes de la vie des assiégés, il offre, mieux que dans la scène initiale de la pucelle au pavillon, soumise aux baisers forcés et maladroits du jeune Gallois, les scènes d'émoi amoureux et de rapports affectueux qui font vraiment du nouveau héros un chevalier courtois, jusqu'à l'épreuve d'un véritable « Assag » de fins amants (une nuit chaste pour les amants dormant côte-à-côte) et à la joie, le « joy »(l'union ultime) d'un couple harmonieux.

Pour ce qui relève de la tactique obsidionale, le conseiller de Clamadeus des Iles, en stratège avisé, est remarquable dans ses propositions d'assaut concerté après leurre, même s'il y a échec en la circonstance. Son conseil d'attendre l'épuisement et la famine des assiégés, puis de faire une diversion frontale relayée par l'encerclement subtil du château par le gros de la troupe est le bon. Seul le deus ex machina du débarquement de victuailles au front de mer le fait échouer. Le lecteur moderne ne peut que regretter que manque le détail des moyens militaires mis en œuvre, sauf à rappeler la défense par les archers du portail renforcé d'une herse coulissante (v.2474-2483) . De telles précisions sont précieuses et Chrétien donne des détails d'architecture de ces châteaux forts, dans leurs tours, ponts d'accès et sites, des suggestions qui sont d'un grand intérêt.

Le chevalier neuf engage dans cette péripétie deux combats singuliers, contre Enguigueron le Sénéchal (v.2162-2267) puis contre Clamadeus son seigneur (v. 2653-2699) et les vainc en leur accordant merci et les chargeant à leur requête de se rendre prisonniers à la cour d'Arthur, où ils échapperont à la vengeance des assiégés de Beaurepaire. L'un comme l'autre devra annoncer que Keu le Sénéchal paiera l'affront commis par lui lors de l'arrivée du valet Gallois sur la pucelle qui ne riait plus et le nain clairvoyant (v. 1034-1063). Les prouesses du nouveau chevalier, Chevalier vermeil désormais, le qualifient tant pour la joute que pour la mêlée qu'il anime également lors de l'assaut du portail par vingt chevaliers de Clamadeus.

Les rapports amoureux qui se nouent entre Blanchefleur et le Chevalier nouveau privilégient la sagesse de comportement de la jeune femme. Son portrait (v. 1795-1829) est typique du roman courtois et spécialement de Chrétien de Troyes. « Fist Diex en li passe merveille, C'onques puis ne fist sa pareille » v.1827-1828. À cette conclusion fait écho le compliment des chevaliers de la tablée sur la beauté du nouvel arrivant: « onques si biax, Chevaliers ne fu nez de fame. v. 1864-1865) bref mais jugeant de l'harmonie du couple et présageant leur liaison et la prise de possession du fief de Beaurepaire par le Chevalier vermeil :

« Et cil qui avoit desrainie,
Vers lui la terre et la pucelle,

> Blancheflor, s'amie la belle,
> Delez li se jue et delite,
> Et si fust soie tote quite,
> La terre, se il li pleüst » v. 2910-2915.

À cette fin, l'héroïne a consacré son courage et son amour. Les scènes amoureuses entre les deux héros ont à la fois le réalisme propre à la situation affective et le tour cérémonial de la fin'amors. Dès la première nuit en ce château assiégé, dont la dame est convoitée par l'assaillant, le chevalier Vermeil est hébergé dans une chambre où il a toute ses aises (v. 1935):

> « fors que solement le deduit,
> De pucelle, se lui pleüst,
> Et de dame, se il leüst ;
> Mais il ne savoit nule rien,
> D'amor ne de de nule autre rien. » v. 1938-1942.

On a vu lors de sa rencontre avec la pucelle du Pavillon qu'il pouvait pourtant avoir une certaine expérience du « deduit » amoureux quand il évoquait les chambrières de sa mère. Son hôtesse, tourmentée par la situation critique de son domaine, vient le voir dans son sommeil, en pleurs, et l'éveille pour lui dire ses angoisses. Elle est presque nue, ses pleurs et son récit émeuvent le chevalier qui l'attire contre lui : « ensi jurent tote la nuit, Li uns lez l'autre, bouche à bouche, » v. 2064-2065, ce qui est bien un « assag ». Au matin le jeune homme annonce sa résolution de combattre les assaillants du château et de restaurer le domaine en libérant les prisonniers. À la Dame, il ne demande que sa « druërie [19]» v. 2104, et dans ses joutes il abat le Sénéchal puis le Seigneur assaillant à la joie de la demoiselle après la défaite d'Enguigueron :

> « Qui de lui grant joie demaine,
> Et jusqu'en sa chambre l'en maine,
> Pour reposer et aesier.
> De l'acoler et del baisier,
> Ne lui fait ele nul dangier ;
> En liu de boire et de mengier,
> Jüent et et baisent et acolent,
> Et debonairement parolent. » v. 2355-2362.

Elle lui « metoit la clef, D'amors en la serre del cuer. » v. 2636.-37 écrit Chrétien en connaisseur des figures convenues de la courtoisie, tant qu'après la victoire totale:

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[19]Quand il demande à Blanchefleur sa **drüerie** il ne parle pas seulement d'une amitié amoureuse mais il s'engage dans une liaison courtoise avec elle, comme tout ce passage le montre. Notre héros a donc, sans enseignement préalable, acquis la connaissance des valeurs et comportements courtois etil n'est plus acceptable de penser encore Le *Conte du Graal* comme un Bildungsroman, un récit de formation du jeune innocent qu'il paraissait être initialement.

« Or se puet li vallés deduire,
Dalez s'amie tot a aise ;
Cele l'acole, et cil le baise,
Si fist li uns de l'autre joie. » v. 2574-2577.

De même que la première nuit à deux, mouillée de larmes, évoquait l' « assag » de la fin'amors, cette épreuve amoureuse des corps nus côte à côte sans céder au désir, nous avons ici la confirmation d'une fusion amoureuse dans le « joy »des amants courtois comme l'avait remarqué D. Poirion [20]. Au terme de cette aventure qualifiante, notre nouveau Chevalier a ainsi obtenu une amie et une terre nouvelle, v.2910-2913. Pourtant, il ne décide pas d'en jouir avant d'avoir revu sa mère et son domaine familial. Il est vrai qu'il n'a pas encore de Nom, seulement des surnoms, « Beau Fils, Valet Gallois, Nouveau Chevalier, Chevalier Vermeil, et il lui faut moins retrouver sa mère qu'il a quittée pour s'émanciper que conduire sa quête de lui-même à son terme.

2.2. Au Château du Roi Pêcheur v. 2976-3421.

Comme à l'accoutumée le chevalier cherche un hébergement. La nacelle qu'il rencontre sur une rivière profonde et rapide le met en contact avec un seigneur qui pêche et lui indique le passage étroit et escarpé de sa demeure. Elle paraît dans sa splendeur inattendue et un pont tournant offre au Chevalier Vermeil un accueil de qualité, puis une hospitalité brillante où le Seigneur du lieu, qui est le pêcheur rencontré précédemment, le fait asseoir pour un repas de choix. Un valet apporte à ce point une épée magnifique à son hôte, envoyée par une sienne nièce « la sore pucelle » v. 3145. Epée exceptionnelle que le Seigneur offre au jeune Chevalier en précisant qu'elle lui était destinée (v. 3168). Le Gallois remercie sans tenter de savoir pourquoi l'épée lui était « voëe et destinee ». Puis lorsque passe un valet portant une lance dont perle une goutte de sang il ne s'enquiert pas plus de cette merveille pour suivre les conseils de réserve de son maître Gornemant. Le cortège, toujours plus merveilleux semble conduit par une demoiselle portant un « graal » qui illumine la salle, suivie d'une autre tenant un tailloir d'argent (qui pourrait avoir servi à trancher le cuissot de cerf du repas au v.3287); Ce cortège passe, puis repasse, sans que le Chevalier ose interroger son hôte, respectant toujours le conseil de discrétion de Gornemant, et se promettant de poser ses questions le lendemain matin (v.3307), quand il prendra congé. La scène est typique des contes celtiques et ces merveilles continuent de partager les critiques. Il est clair, à ce moment du récit, que nulle signification symboliquement religieuse n'y apparaît et les explications chrétiennes ne viennent qu'au dernier épisode (de l'Ermite oncle de Perceval) dont nous reprendrons l'analyse. Seul le mutisme conditionné du héros importe à ce

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[20] Dans son édition p. 1345: « Avec le mot *joie* (v.2577), surgissant ainsi entre Perceval et Blanchefleur, on ne peut plus répondre de leur innocence.».

moment du récit. De la fin de cette péripétie merveilleuse, épreuve manifeste (et manquée?) pour le héros, on note les détails magiques: au réveil le château est désert, les portes closes à l'exception du portail que le héros franchit non sans avoir à éviter que son cheval soit jeté bas par le mouvement de brusque fermeture du pont-levis.

2.3. Le prix du silence : **Perceval le Chétif** v. 3422-3690.

« Et il vers la forest s'aquelt » v. 3422, il se dirige vers le territoire qui lui est familier, la forêt, où il rencontre « par aventure » v. 3430, une pucelle désolée, lamentant son ami mort, la tête tranchée. Au chevalier qui lui demande qui a tué son ami, elle fait d'abord une remarque sur sa venue, frais et dispos, quand à quarante lieues nul hôtel (château) ne peut être trouvé. Mais quand il dit qu'il sort d'un lieu fort proche elle révèle: « Ha ! Sire, vos jeüstes donques, Chiez le riche Roi Pescheor. » v. 3495, nommant ainsi l'hôte qui ne s'était pas nommé d'un surnom déterminant. Ce roi n'aura pas d'autre nom que ce surnom de Roi Pêcheur, de même que notre jeune héros est Chevalier Vermeil pour l'heure. Ces déterminants qui qualifient la personne, comme le faisaient les épithètes de nature dans Homère , sont bien des surnoms. Et même si surnom et nom peuvent être souvent synonymes, comme le vers 562 du conte « Par le sornon connoist on l'ome » en attestait, la distinction est faite avec netteté quand il le faut. Lancelot qui aux vers 4363-4364 du *Conte de la Charrete* s'interroge à propos de la reine qu'il aime : « Ne sai se die « amie » o non, ne li ost metre cest sornon. » fait bien la distinction et le sornon qu'il évoque est bien un déterminant signifiant du nom de Guenièvre pour celui qui veut être son ami au sens courtois du terme. Pour Yvain, un surnom qualifiant le fait « Chevalier au Lion » comme son demi-frère est lui nommé et surnommé « Yvain l'avoutre » comme né d'un adultère. La pucelle endeuillée paraît bien connaître le roi pêcheur et elle apprend au jeune chevalier comment : « il fu ferus d'un gavelot, Parmi les cuisses ambesdeus » une blessure que le jeune homme aurait dû rapprocher de celle de son père malgré la naïveté qu'on lui voit au début de ses aventures. La pucelle interroge sur le cortège de la lance et du graal, à nouveau évoqué à ce point avec précision, puis ajoute que le jeune chevalier qui a eu cet honneur de la réception a fait la faute de ne rien demander. Elle s'enquiert de son nom:

« Et cil qui son non ne savoit,
Devine et dist que il avoit,
Perchevax li Galois a non,
Ne ne set s'il dist voir ou non ;
Mais il dist voir et si nel sot. » v. 3573-3577.

Cette intuition de son nom par Perceval demeure mystérieuse pour lui comme pour les analystes. Elle est cependant un ressort essentiel de l'aventure car avec cette identité affirmée le héros entre dans une liberté d'action que confirme la fin de cet entretien. Quand la pucelle, comme

grondeuse, lui dit : « Tes nons est changiés, biax amis. -Coment?- **Perchevax li chaitis** ! » v. 3580-3581, elle justifie ce nouveau surnom en lui disant tout ce qu'il advient de malheur par son mutisme, qui laisse perdurer la malédiction en interdisant la guérison du Roi pêcheur et la prospérité de sa terre. Tant pour lui que pour d'autres « maint anui en avenront » v. 3592 qu'il aurait pu conjurer. Ces révélations mystérieuses, rapportées à sa vie dans la terre gaste dont il vient, étaient propres à l'alerter sur sa famille et sur les causes de cette désolation. Il n'en est rien, même quand la pucelle lui révèle que son silence lors de son séjour chez le roi « mehaigniez » a pour cause le « péché de [sa] mère » morte du chagrin de voir partir son fils (v. 3595). Elle lui apprend qu'elle est sa cousine germaine, élevée avec lui chez cette mère (mais Perceval ne semble pas reconnaître cette cousine proche), et à ce cousin germain qui s'en enquiert elle confirme qu'elle a vu mettre en terre sa tante, la mère de Perceval. La réaction du chevalier est d'un prosaïsme qui peut surprendre:

> « Des que ele est mise en terre,
> Que iroie jou avant querre ?,
> Kar por rien nule n'i aloie,
> Fors por li que veoir voloie ;
> Autre voie m'estuet tenir. » v. 3621-3625

Et Perceval, qualifié de « Chétif » soit au sens commun du terme d'infortuné mais aussi au sens premier de captif (du sort, de la destinée?) semble avoir acquis une autorité, une autonomie qui le distingue du jeune valet encore « nice », et qui lui fait dire « les mors as mors, les vis as vis. v. 3630 avec résolution. Le péché reproché par sa cousine ne paraît guère le mortifier et c'est sans contrition apparente qu'il décide de poursuivre sa route. Sa cousine qui lui a fait savoir les conséquences de son silence, plutôt que de l'accompagner et venger la mort de son cher Ami, reste à faire son deuil et l'enterrer et indique seulement à Perceval la voie qu'a prise son meurtrier. Que cette cousine ait des pouvoirs subtils apparaît encore quand elle révèle à ce point que l'épée ornée qu'il porte, donnée par le Roi pêcheur, le trahira et faillira au besoin. Elle connaît le forgeron qui l'a faite, Triboët v. 3679, (Trébuchet), nouvel indice d'une science occulte, et laisse partir Perceval.

3. Perceval le Gallois v. 3691-4602

Après les joutes qualifiantes et l'amour de Blanchefleur, gagné à Beaurepaire, après la découverte frustrante du Château du Roi pêcheur et les révélations de cette cousine perdue de vue, Perceval acquiert avec son nom la maturité qui fait de lui le héros d'une quête qui semble le concerner intimement et qui relie « Perceval le Chétif » à un drame familial qu'il lui appartient de découvrir, de comprendre et de dominer. On note encore une fois que la cour d'Arthur n'est pas le pôle d'attraction de Perceval. Désormais chevalier accompli, ami courtois et seigneur possible du fief de Beaurepaire, successeur éventuel du domaine de la gaste forêt puisque sa mère est morte, il

ne paraît pas avoir à justifier d'une mission. Mais sa cousine le lui a fait comprendre, il est « Perceval le Chétif » et les signes aperçus au château du roi pêcheur le mettent en quête d'une vérité qui le concerne, quelque mystérieuse qu'elle fût. Sa quête de chevalier errant appelle une révélation.

3.1. L'Orgueilleux de la lande et la réparation v. 3691-4140.

Perceval rencontre une demoiselle en haillons, montée sur un palefroi décharné et il ne reconnaît pas la pucelle du pavillon qu'il avait assaillie de force. Cette suite de l'épisode initial offre un tableau réaliste, vivant et précis, malgré l'outrance, du délabrement dans lequel son ami a décidé de laisser la pucelle. Celle-ci rappelle au héros qui paraît l'avoir oubliée que « Péchiez[le]fait chi arester » v. 3810, qualifiant la faute, l'action coupable qu'il avait commise sur elle. Elle met en garde Perceval contre les fureurs de son ami tortionnaire, l'Orgueilleux outragé, qui est peut-être celui qui a tué l'ami de sa cousine germaine qu'il vient de quitter, si on en juge par le vers 3827 : « N'a gaires qu'il en ocist un ».L'irruption de ce furieux ouvre un échange sur le contenu de la scène initiale, cause de la rétorsion à l'égard de la Demoiselle, son ami rappelant le détail de l'entrevue sous la tente et fustigeant la légèreté supposée de son amie: « Feme qui se bouche abandone, Le sorplus molt de legier done » v. 3863-3864. Son discours misogyne est-il un reflet de l'antiféminisme du temps, très contradictoire avec la courtoisie, mais réel? C'est vraisemblable. Perceval qui jure de l'innocence de la Demoiselle n'est pas cru et doit faire rendre gorge à l'Orgueilleux par les armes, et lui enjoindre de partir avec son amie réconfortée pour la cour d'Arthur, avec toujours les messages de soutien de la pucelle qui l'avait loué à son arrivée, du nain maltraité, et de l'annonce de la vengeance qui attend Keu pour ses brutalités. Il faut y voir un épisode de liaison dans la construction du roman de Perceval, avec toutefois la confirmation de la courtoisie nouvelle du héros et la révélation de l'avis de sa cousine sur l'épée offerte par le Roi pêcheur, qui se brise vraiment au combat, ce qui le conduit à reprendre l'épée de ses armes vermeilles[21]. À l'arrivée de l'Orgueilleux vaincu à Carlion,

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[21] Cette épée était annoncée comme infaillible au vers 3140-3143 « Fors par un tot seul peril, Que nus ne savoit fors que cil,Qui l'avoit forgie et tempere. ».La cousine aux dons merveilleux savait d'avance qu'elle trahirait le héros (v. 3660-3663), ce qui advient dans le combat contre l'Orgueilleux de la lande (dans un passage présent dans trois mss.v.3926sq *a..m).* On lira avec fruit les réflexions de D.Poirion sur le sens des conduites du héros (aux pages 1316-1317 de son ouvrage) qui, partant de l'interdit de la mère à son fils: « Le sorplus je vos en desfent » v. 548 interroge sur une « virilité incertaine » de Perceval dont le bris de l'épée magique serait un nouveau symbole. On peut se suffire pourtant de remarquer que cette rupture stigmatise un défaut d'affirmation de soi (son péché!) qui l'a laissé muet.

Arthur renouvelle ses reproches à Keu au vu des prouesses de ce chevalier inconnu et méprisé, faisant souhaiter la réapparition du valet gallois, devenu chevalier vermeil. Il décide de quitter Carlion avec sa cour pour tenter de le retrouver. Le fait qu'Arthur parte ainsi en quête de Perceval consacre la révolution des statuts respectifs des héros.

3.2. Le sang sur la neige: Arthur et **Perceval le Gallois** v. 4141-4602

À Carlion, Arthur était en son privé, dit le texte au v. 4005: « Qu'il n'i avoit que solement, Trois mile chevaliers de pris ». Amplification épique assurément car à Beaurepaire les chevaliers n'étaient que cinq cents, leur nombre ayant fondu dans les batailles et le siège de Clamadeus des iles à moins de cinquante. Mais ces nombres sont symboliques plus que réalistes, ou mieux ils suggèrent une réalité allusive. En quelques vers, le départ pour le camp volant de toute la cour dépeint l'activité d'une troupe nombreuse et pleine de vie qui monte tentes et pavillons pour la nuit. Il souligne l'importance nouvelle de Perceval aux yeux d'Arthur et, *a contrario,* la moindre splendeur de la cour royale, partant à la recherche du héros qui avait été moqué à sa première venue en cour.

« Au matin ot molt bien negié, Et froide estoit molt la contree. v. 4162-4163. La chronologie du roman indique cependant un printemps plein après Pentecôte. Une chute de neige peut étonner mais reste possible, en Galles à cette saison. Le détail n'intéresse cependant que la scène qui concerne la rêverie de Perceval et introduit à propos à cette scène poétique où Perceval...

« Qui querre et encontrer voloit,
Aventure et chevalerie ;
Et vint droit vers la praerie,
Qui fu gelee et ennegie,
Ou l'os le roi estoit logie. » v. 4166-4170

Car Perceval est en aventure et ne prévoit plus de retourner en son manoir de la forêt. Les gouttes de sang d'une oie blessée par un faucon font sur la neige un tableau coloré qui rappelle la fraîche couleur du visage de son amie Blanchefleur. Perceval appuyé sur sa lance, s'entroublie alors, perdu dans un rêve qui l'abstrait de la réalité qui l'entoure au point que les appels de Sagremor l'Insensé de venir se présenter au Roi restent sans réponse et sont

suivis d'un assaut auquel Perceval fait front en l'abattant sur le champ. Quand Keu se moque de cette déconfiture, Arthur lui enjoint de quérir le chevalier à son tour, et, malgré sa morgue vantarde le sénéchal est défait dans l'assaut et blessé, d'une blessure annoncée dès le début du roman par le nain d'Arthur et qui le laisse, bras cassé et clavicule démise, dans une posture honteuse. Ces invites brutales n'ont aucun effet sur Perceval, qui ne songe qu'à son Amie et non à Arthur. Toute cette scène, animée de commentaires vivants, est close par l'entremise courtoise et prudente de Gauvain auprès du Chevalier pensif et elle résume brillamment la réalité d'une cour féodale itinérante. Gauvain, en présentant Perceval au roi, donne un détail de la chronologie du roman au vers 4550 : « Passé a quinze jors entiers » depuis l'irruption du valet gallois à la cour à la pentecôte, comme précisé au v.2783. On a vu comment les péripéties romanesques ont transformé le héros et fait de lui «Perchevax li Galois» comme il le dit au vers 4562 pour se nommer devant Arthur de son nom et « sornon» accompli , marquant sa différence de Gallois avec la chevalerie arthurienne. Il faut ici rappeler que si Arthur dans la légende est breton (gaélique) et même Gallois né à Tintagel, l'adaptation de Chrétien dans ses romans l'assimile , en ce XIIème siècle, aux chevaliers qui occupent les domaines de la Bretagne (Grande) depuis le succès de Guillaume en 1066, et dont la culture est celle de la féodalité du temps. L'histoire de Perceval conserve les mystères de ses origines fantastiques (les contes celtiques) et Daniel Poirion en disait qu' « on peut encore sonder la préhistoire de Perceval [mais qu']on doit surtout expliquer son histoire » p.198 in « L'ombre mythique de Perceval dans l*e conte du graal »CCM* 1973-3,p.56-64, mais, avec l'épisode du cortège du Graal, elle entre dans la christianisation de l'époque et contribue à la vision nouvelle d'un monde de la féodalité seconde (comme l'avait définie Marc Bloch).Toute l'aventure semble se clore, au moins pour Arthur et sa cour, mais les remerciements de Perceval à la demoiselle qui avait ri et annoncé avec le nain qu'il deviendrait le meilleur chevalier du monde (v. 1039-1062) laissent en suspens ses relations avec Blanchefleur, ainsi que l'épisode du Roi Pêcheur. Il a certes franchi les étapes d'une initiation et «trouvé» son nom, par l'entremise de sa cousine, mais il reste « le Chaitis» pour sa cousine, et le mystère de sa famille subsiste. Ces surnoms déterminent le sens de sa quête inachevée au Château du roi pêcheur où il n'a pas su poser les questions libératrices.

4. La hideuse messagère: mission de Perceval v.4603-4815

Le malaise qui se fait sentir dans cette dernière partie du « roman de Perceval » accentue la distance qui l'éloigne de la chevalerie arthurienne. En dépit d'une intégration sans désir ni enthousiasme à la cour royale Perceval ne rend nul hommage à Arthur. Il lui donne son nom à sa demande mais la joie n'est témoignée que par le Roi : « Grans fu la joie que li rois, Fist de Percheval le Galois, Et la reïne et li baron, Qui l'en mainent à Carlion » v.4603-4606. Mais au troisième jour arrive une demoiselle « Sor une falve

mule »v.4612.Cet épisode quasi conclusif aurait pu être nommé: La laide Demoiselle, ou La Pucelle à la mule fauve, mais il n'a de sens que dans la relation dramatique qui associe le héros, et lui seul, à cette messagère, si monstrueuse qu'elle soit en apparence. L'irruption de la Demoiselle sur sa mule fauve tient son caractère effrayant de sa soudaineté inconvenante à la cour et du portrait qui est fait d'elle, celui d'une sorcière en vérité dans sa laideur noire et la monstruosité de ses traits, cheveux noirs tressés, bosse devant et derrière, barbe, yeux de rat, dents gâtées, « Ainc mais tel damoisele nule, Ne fu a cort de roi veüe » v.4640-4641. Ses propos laissent ouvertement à l'écart toute l'assistance, qu'elle salue collectivement, et elle vient d'évidence pour le seul Perceval auquel elle adresse une réprobation publique de sa sottise au Château du Roi Pêcheur, ce qui replace le héros dans son statut de «chétif» à traduire par [malheureux] si l'on se suffit du sens commun, alors qu'en réalité, au sens premier de Chétif, Perceval est prisonnier, captif de ce qui lui a interdit de s'enquérir du sens de ce qu'il a vu passer lors du cortège de la lance, du graal et du tailloir au château où il a pu être admis par le roi pêcheur. Arthur, ses barons, la société royale, sont tenus à distance de la scène qui leur est même impénétrable. De même que le jeune homme qu'il était au début du roman a eu la force, ou l'audace, de s'émanciper d'une mère trop protectrice, il aurait dû savoir transgresser, mûri par ses premières aventures de chevalier, le conseil de mesure dans ses propos que lui avait donné son parrain Gornemant: « Qui trop parole il se mesfait. »v.1354, et songer à sa mère qui lui recommandait au contraire de s'enquérir des noms (surnoms) des chevaliers rencontrés. Il n'en a rien fait dans sa naïveté au sujet de son hôte, le pêcheur du Château, et c'est bien le « péché » que lui reproche la laide Demoiselle sans pourtant prononcer le mot. Cette pucelle effrayante, qui tient à la main un fouet, une « corgie », fustige le héros silencieux devant toute la cour pour avoir manqué de saisir la chance (la fortune!) qui lui était donnée. Elle lui intime de la sorte le respect de la mission qui lui est confiée et qui conditionne, comme l'avait annoncé sa cousine, la fin de la malédiction qui frappait sa famille élargie et le statut de ses biens. La scène est dramatique et constitue le rappel insistant de l'épreuve imposée à Perceval dans sa quête. Elle lui rappelle que la chevalerie, glorieuse mais accessible , qu'il a intégrée, n'est pas le but mais le moyen de son destin, que voile l'ignorance où il est de son milieu familial et du rôle qui doit être le sien dans une rédemption attendue. Perceval malgré les premiers avertissements de sa cousine n'a pas encore compris qu'il est celui qui devra rendre à sa lignée sa gloire perdue. Pour les « aventures » que la hideuse pucelle lance comme à la volée à cette assemblée de chevaliers, elles ne sont que de simples divertissements et Perceval, qui reste silencieux, en a l'intuition. Il n'entre pas dans ce jeu de loterie des prouesses trompeuses que distribuait la pucelle:

  « Et Perchevax redist tout el ;

Qu'il ne gerra en un hostel,
Deus nuis en trestot son eage,
Ne n'orra d'estrange passage
Noveles que passer n'i aille,
Ne de chevaliers qui miex vaille,
Qu'autres chevaliers ne que dui,
Qu'il ne s'aille combatre a lui,
Tant que il del graal savra,
Qui l'en en sert, et qu'il avra,
La lance qui saine trovee,
Et que la veritez provee,
Li ert dite por qu'ele saine ;
Ja nel laira por nule paine. » v. 4728-4740

Le moment de la maturité est pour lui arrivé et cette transition , pour les chevaliers d'Arthur qui partent en aventure, à plus de cinquante, inaugure la suite « Gauvain »du roman, ouverte par le défi qu'un nouvel arrivant, Guinganbresil, lance au neveu d'Arthur pour avoir occis le vieux roi d'Escavalon. De Perceval le Gallois rien de plus n'est dit. Les adjurations de la Demoiselle à la mule lui font promettre de donner un seul sens à sa quête : retrouver le Château du roi pêcheur et y apprendre où est sa place et son devoir dans ce milieu auquel il appartient. Il a compris et accepté son destin et la mission qui doit être la sienne et pressent que sa vérité doit être trouvée loin d'Arthur, vers le mystère du château du graal. Le conteur à ce point du récit annonce le départ de Gauvain et ouvre cette seconde partie en deux vers: « Des aventures qu'il trova, M'orrés conter molt longuement. » v. 4814-4815

5. Fin de partie : Le dévoilement v. 6217-6515

Consacrée aux aventures (et aux déboires) de Gauvain, la partie « Gauvain » s'interrompt au vers 6217 pour revenir à Perceval: « De monseignor Gavain se taist, Ichi li contes a estal, Si comenche de Percheval. » v. 6214-6216. Gauvain est contraint de quêter la lance qui saigne durant un an de répit avant son duel judiciaire pour avoir tué le roi d'Escavalon[22]. Trois jours se sont écoulés depuis la dispersion des chevaliers à la cour d'Arthur lorsque le récit revient à Perceval:

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[22] Si les adjurations de la hideuse pucelle devaient l'inciter à reprendre la quête, comme il semble l'avoir compris, on pouvait attendre un retour au Château du roi pêcheur et une révélation des ombres familiales du lignage de Perceval.Il n'en est rien et Chrétien choisit au contraire d'ouvrir la quête de Gauvain sans qu'une conclusion achève le « roman de Perceval ». Le paradoxe s'accroît lorsque ce même Gauvain se voit imposer la recherche de la lance mystérieuse, qui saigne sans cesse. Le texte révèle alors une importante vérité:

« Et s'est escrit qu'il ert une hore
Que toz li roiames de Logres
Qui jadis fu la terre as ogres
Sera destruis par cele lance. » v. 6168-6171

Logres, royaume d'Arthur sera détruit par cette lance sur laquelle Perceval doit demander ce qu'elle est. C'est donc bien la rivalité des vassaux d'Escavalon (dont le père de Perceval fait

« Perchevax, ce nos dist l'estoire,
Ot si perdue la miemoire
Que de Dieu ne li sovient mais.
Cinc fois passa avriels et mais
Ce sont inc an trestot entier,
Ains que il entrast en mostier,
Ne Dieu ne sa crois n'aora. » v. 6217-6223

Cinq ans durant dit le texte, il a agi en chevalier preux et courtois, mais ses conquêtes terrestres ne l'ont pas remis sur le chemin du château du graal. Ses prouesses chevaleresques lui ont au contraire fait oublier le conseil de Gornemant qui l'avait fait entrer dans l'ordre de chevalerie : « Volentiers alez al mostier, Proier celui qui tot a fait,Que de vostre ame merchi ait, Et en cest siecle terrien, Vos gart come son crestien. »v.1666-1670. C'est là ce que sa mère lui avait déjà recommandé. La rencontre d'une procession de pénitents, trois (ms.T) chevaliers et dix dames à pied, en robe et désarmés le rend à la conscience du jour, celui du vendredi saint dont le mystère et les obligations lui sont présentés. Immédiatement sensible à son état de péché, il demande à rencontrer le saint homme qui a guidé ces pénitents, un ermite, auquel il entend se confesser.

La confession de Perceval, et toute la scène de l'ermite ont paru assez différentes de ton et de propos de la partie du roman consacrée à Perceval, malgré les conseils de piété de sa mère puis de Gornemant, pour que dès les origines de la critique un débat sur son authenticité, voire son attribution à Chrétien de Troyes, soit introduit qui demeure encore ouvert aujourd'hui[23]. Le roman inachevé, dont les continuations viennent confirmer l'orientation chrétienne de l'argument principal, celui de l'évolution des valeurs et comportements chevaleresques vers la mystique chrétienne, dans l'esprit des croisades, devient la référence sacrée de toutes ses suites. L'esprit du prologue du *Conte du Graal,* qui célèbre la Charité en est sûrement le témoin. Cependant nous avons dans cet épisode de l'ermite l'explication conclusive de la quête de Perceval : au noyau familial qu'avait exposé la Veuve viennent s'ajouter les oncles et cousin (le Roi Pêcheur) et cousine et le récit de la déchéance du statut nobiliaire et de la ruine des possessions de sa famille symbolisés par les blessures identiques qui invalident les chefs de famille. La cousine avait livré à Perceval le secret de la mort de sa mère, causée par la

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partie) et d'Arthur que le conte évoquait et le projet partiel de Chrétien se révèle peut-être par ce biais.

[23] Le débat est au plus fort en 1968-1972 entre D.D.R.Owen : « From Grail to Holy Grail »in *Romania* 89, 1968,p.31-53 qui juge l'épisode postiche et attribuable à un continuateur, et David G. Hoggan : « Le Péché de Perceval »in *Romania*, 93,1972,p.50-76 et p.244-275 tenant de la continuité du roman et analyste, après Sister Amelia Klenke:*Liturgy and Allegory in Chrétien de Troyes's Perceval,* North Carolina University,1951, du supposé péché mortel de Perceval.

douleur du départ de son fils coupable de ne pas même s'être retourné vers elle, un péché qui explique son échec au Château du Graal. Elle annonce ainsi une espérance de restauration des domaines familiaux par le jeune héros rédempteur[24]. La pucelle hideuse avait complété par ses invectives le sens de cette malédiction, sans lever le mystère des deux rois (le Roi Pêcheur et celui qu'on sert en cortège et le propos de l'ermite qui reprend le contenu de la déploration de la cousine germaine fait percevoir le sens de ce désastre familial: Il est l'oncle de Perceval, comme l'est aussi le roi qu'on nourrit d'une hostie au Château du Graal. Perceval est donc cousin du Roi Pêcheur, lequel pourrait être frère de la cousine qui lui a reproché son « péché ». L'ermite revient sur ce péché de Perceval, cause de la mort de sa mère[25], et responsable de son mutisme lors du cortège du graal:

> « Uns pechiez dont tu ne sez mot,
> Ce fu li doels que ta mere ot
> De toi quant departis de li,
> Que pasmee a terre chaï
> Al chief del pont devant la porte.
> Et de cel doel fu ele morte.

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[24] Perceval est une figure de héros salvateur typique des contes merveilleux. Orphelin,innocent mais prédestiné, il accomplit des épreuves qualifiantes qui feront de lui le seigneur des domaines ruinés par un agresseur qui, s'il n'est pas nommé, ne peut être qu'Arthur, vainqueur de Ryon, roi des Iles de mer, soit des domaines gallois. Le père,vaincu et impuissant, la mère veuve, morte de douleur mais ,aussi l'oncle blessé pareillement ne peuvent être vengés que par le jeune héros s'il s'affirme en vainqueur, meilleur chevalier du monde comme l'avait prédit la pucelle qui riait à nouveau et que le sénéchal Keu a brutalement rabrouée. Perceval s'est affirmé au fil de son parcours, et ses surnoms successifs l'ont qualifié.Il ne manquerait dans cette lecture folklorique qu'un affrontement avec la cour arthurienne, que symbolise pourtant la déconfiture de Keu. On ajoutera que Chrétien se tient très près de l'actualité de son temps en illustrant la restauration de l'autonomie galloise par le biais d'un conte. Mais Perceval n'est pas Peredur et le sens ultime de l'aventure appartient à l'oncle ermite.

[25] Les termes de l'Ermite pour préciser le péché du héros confirment les paroles de sa cousine (v.3593-3595) et le pressentiment qu'il avait eu en quittant son parrain en chevalerie, Gornemant, du sort de sa mère : « Del doel de moi quant le laissai,Chaï pasmee, bien le sai. » v. 1587-1588. L'Ermite toutefois parle d'un péché que Perceval ignorerait, ce qui n'en fait pas un péché mortel malgré les savantes analyses canoniques de Sister Klenke et D.Hoggan. Dans la conclusion de ses considérations sur le sens du roman D.Poirion, p.1317-1318 de son édition, développe,dans l'esprit des remarques de Claude Levy-Strauss une interprétation du complexe familial de Perceval qui évoque l'ombre de l'inceste entre frère et sœur, sans aller jusqu'à suggérer que ce « péché sa mère » aurait aussi pu être celui d'une mère captatrice (et castratrice) avec son fils. Il est vrai que les contes conduisent à de telles considérations, il est vrai aussi que Chrétien de Troyes maîtrise sa matière et se fixe comme idéal la chevalerie courtoise, même quand la réalité du temps offre bien des déviations morales dans les cours féodales, que les romanciers de l'époque courtoise visent à amender. Perceval a eu le sentiment de sa faute à l'égard de sa mère, ce qui l'honore, mais aussi la force d'accepter son statut de héros rédempteur, ce qui honore son lignage.

> Por le pechié que tu en as
> T'avient que rien n'en demandas
> De la lance ne del graal.v.6393-6401 (...)
> Pechiez la langue te trancha. » v.6409

On n'attendrait plus qu'un retour salvateur auprès du roi pêcheur pour que le roman de Perceval prît fin, mais le projet de Chrétien de Troyes semble le laisser en suspens contrairement à ce que laissait penser la cousine et revient à Gauvain. Il faut bien considérer que cette révélation de l'ermite est la fin de la quête de Perceval: Elle repose sur une captation de la cérémonie du cortège au Château du Graal au bénéfice de la cérémonie sacrée de la messe du Vendredi Saint : le chaudron de la légende devient un graal contenant une hostie, un calice véritablement, les servants du cortège du graal évoquent pour les chrétiens les officiants d'une messe de Pâques qui après la passion rédemptrice célèbre la résurrection du Christ. Cette christianisation dans l'esprit de l'époque met l'accent sur l'évolution des valeurs de la chevalerie mais elle estompe ici la restauration de l'identité galloise au profit d'une idéologie féodale dominante dans l'occident chrétien. Avec les révélations qu'il a reçues de son oncle ermite, Perceval est admis par sa contrition dans le statut de chevalier chrétien, ce qui suffit à laisser penser que la fin de la malédiction est atteinte. On aura lu comment Perceval reste trois jours auprès de ce saint ermite qui lui apprend la litanie protectrice des noms divins, conjuration en usage dès le moyen âge et fait de lui **Perceval le pénitent**, chevalier chrétien désormais. Les lecteurs pourtant demeurent insatisfaits, à tort peut-être car la quête est close et Perceval demeure le Gallois, l'ami de Blanchefleur et le sire des domaines de Beaurepaire et de la Forêt « soutaine », libérateur du royaume du graal et sans allégeance nulle au roi Arthur. Ces détails identifiants font de lui le héros parfait, transgressif et exemplaire, mais l'ambiguïté de statut qui subsiste entre Perceval le Gallois et Perceval le pénitent explique probablement qu'il n'ait pas eu de postérité spirituelle dans les continuations du Graal.

<p align="center">**********</p>

Dans son réalisme le roman de Perceval, première partie du *Conte du Graal,* paraît donc homogène et très semblable en « conjointure » aux précédents romans de son auteur. Construit, habile autant dans les suggestions plaisantes que dans les passages psychologiques, il fait de son héros, campé dès l'enfance comme l'avait été Cligès, le modèle original du chevalier indépendant de tout suzerain, qui libère, en Gallois, la société féodale de ses pesanteurs. Que la progression rythmée des surnoms du héros ne soit pas un simple effet narratif mais une volonté consciente du romancier notre analyse le confirme. Du valet « niche et sot »à Perceval le Gallois le personnage progresse dans la conscience de lui-même, accomplissant la

mission dévolue aux héros rédempteurs des contes merveilleux. Il le fait en découvrant qu'il est partie du complexe familial qui se révèle à lui et que Chrétien, en lecteur des romans antiques autant que des romans de l'histoire de Bretagne, suggère en mythologue, voire en anthropologue des structures de la parenté. L'art du romancier, outre l'habileté d'une composition maîtrisée, est d'intégrer les personnages qu'il met en conte à la culture, à la réalité contemporaines avec un réalisme des détails qui sied à la société dont Arthur était le prototype valorisant, et dont les valeurs féodales semblent ébranlées en cette fin de siècle. Ce roman ultime fait la part belle à un Gallois réfractaire dont les fulgurances déjouent les conventions. Ainsi alors que la féodalité épique puis courtoise se différencie et fait évoluer une idéologie seulement guerrière vers une ouverture aux courants influencés par l'Orient autant que par la spiritualité chrétienne, par les échanges autant que par les puissances croissantes des états souverains, l'ironie et l'humour du conteur (ou l'incongruité du personnage de Perceval) apportent en outre, avec la fraîcheur robuste de ces résistants que furent les Gallois une promesse d'apothéose chrétienne dans une célébration finale du Vendredi Saint qui anticipe sur les mystères du Graal que ses continuateurs exposeront.
Explicit : ***Perceval le Gallois.***

ANNEXE
Leonard de Vinci   Carnets   Propulseurs
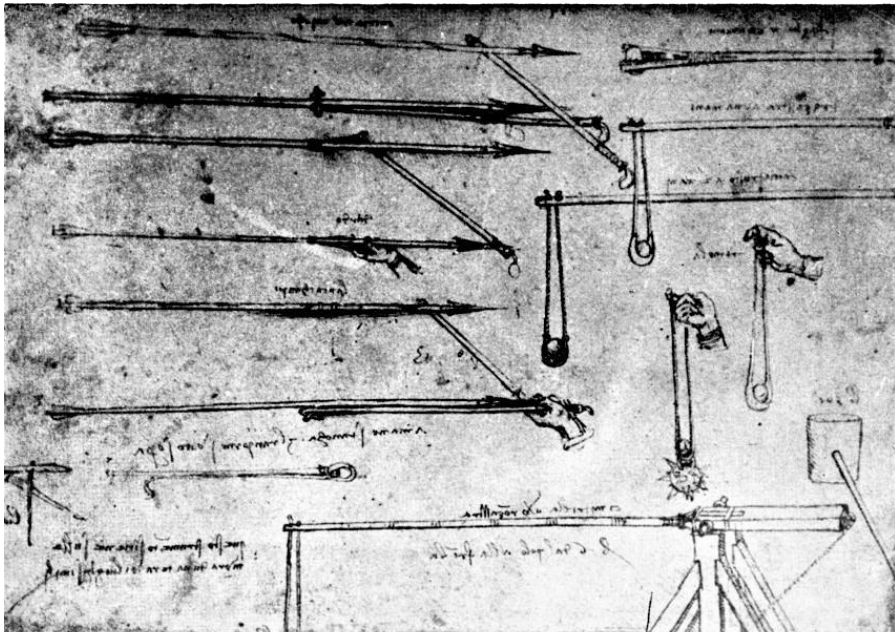
Fig. 1. — Léonard de VINCI : Codex atlanticus, fol. 51 V° (cliché Bibli. Ambrosiana). Inscriptions manuscrites ; de haut en bas : *Modo di trare lontano* ; Caccia nemico (g.). Scaglia a una mano (dr.). Fronzasta a una mano (dr.). Caccia frusto a 2 mani (dr.). Dardo (g.). Fromola (dr.) Lancia campo (g.). A mano stanca, il rampino solto sopra (g.). Etc...

Les lances courtes et les dards sont illustrés à gauche avec des propulseurs à encoche ou à crosse et pour les dards centraux (javelots de chasse) à lanière de propulsion.

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The Roman Catholic Liturgy and Its Role in the Composer's Missa Formation

Olena Roshchenko*, Nataliya Byelik-Zolotaryova**

Abstract: *A number of interdependent problems was solved in this study: the missa concept meanings' system definition in the context of the Roman Catholic liturgy; the order of the missa's musical sections in the liturgy's structure; the invariant-variant nature of the Gregorian Masses; the theological and musical preconditions for the composer's mass genesis.* ***The purpose of the study*** *is the liturgical context of the composer's mass determination as a musical genre and a subject for a musicological analysis. It is stated that* ***missa's*** *range of meanings extends from the word to the liturgy analogue and from the sequence of musical and verbal parts, divided by the rite actions, to the antiphonary where they are present without verbal sacred "insertions"; from the liturgy to the composer's genre as an entire cyclical artistic phenomenon of authorial origin. The Roman Catholic liturgy equal to the missa, and the missa as an extra-liturgical phenomenon of the composer's creativity have a different number of musical sections. In the Gregorian Mass, in the Antiphonary's composition as an obligatory component of the liturgy, the imitation of the canon presented in eighteen musical versions of sacred monophonic singing dominates. In the composer's missa, the distancing from the liturgical source has led to its free interpretation, as well as to the changes in its purpose, location, target audience, words and music interaction. It is the place of the missa's musical sections in the liturgical action that is determined here. While the church mass is not entirely musical, the composer's missa is based exclusively on a musical drama. The logic of a change from one section of the musical missa to the next is due to the development of the liturgical action. The cyclical nature as a principle of form and content formation is inherited by the composer's missa from the liturgical prototype.*

Keywords: medieval liturgy, composer's missa, supragenre memory, ordinarium, antiphonary, mass, missio

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The missa concept meanings' system unity definition in the context of the Roman Catholic liturgy

The etymological meaning of *missa* is derived from the Latin word "send, release", acquiring the meaning of *"dimissio"* (dismissal) [1], which expresses the general unity of a matter and a purpose of the Roman Catholic liturgical action. Remaining the etymological unity, the meaningful volume of the missa in the context of liturgical action acquires a functional (multilevel) polysemy. These are absolution, forgiveness, sacrifice, the prayer for "Sending the Holy Spirit for the Holy Gifts Consecration", the benediction of the faithful people, the Eucharist as Thanksgiving. At different stages of the liturgy development there has been a change in the inherent structure for mass functions, the interaction of which forms a temple-sacred prayer action and corresponded to a single purpose in the following way: the objective of *"missa"* is to dismiss the "announced" from the temple (that is, the unbaptized), who are called to receive the Holy Sacrament of Baptism. The "announced", as well as those who repent, have the right to be present only at the "Liturgy of the Word" (the reading of God's Word – the Holy Scriptures – is its centre); after that they must leave the temple.

The coexistence of several interdependent meanings of the missa essence, which has different content and structural functions, is a characteristic feature. The ***missa's*** range of meanings extends from the word to the monumental volume of the whole liturgy analogue; from the sequence of musical and verbal parts, divided by the rite actions, to the antiphonary where they are present without verbal sacred "insertions"; from the liturgy to the composer's genre as an entire cyclical artistic phenomenon of authorial origin.

Missa as a word: a meaning amount. The word "***missa***" is proclaimed in the liturgy only once; it is present in the liturgy of the Eucharist in the Priest's final call: *"Ite, Missa est"* ("Go, you have been dismissed"). The word *"missa"* used at the end of the liturgy means the statement of purification, absolution of the congregation, which is the achievement of the sacred temple action's end. It is important to note that the only proclamation during the liturgy of the *"missa"* keyword is connected exactly with its musical use. Thus, the importance of the liturgy's musical component increases significantly.

Missa as the liturgy's analogue. In the Middle Ages *missa* appeared as an analogue of the liturgy, having no artistic significance, as well as the

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[1] Simakova, Natalia, *Vokal'nyye zhanry epokhi Vozrozhdeniya [Renaissance vocal genres]*, Muzyka, Moscow, 1985, p. 15.

author's characteristic. It also appeared as a generalization of the majestic centuries-old Christian (sacred) pre-medieval experience, which had been perfected over the *medium aevum* millennium, reflecting the stages of Christian history, Christian doctrine development, showing significant changes in theology. Remaining canonical, medieval *missa* was not static.

Missa as a word or concept and *missa* as liturgy are directly interconnected. The multi-stage, expansive "***missa***", equal to the liturgy, takes place for the final proclamation of the parishioners' sins forgiveness. The ***missa's*** purpose as liturgy is realized by dismissal at the end of the sacred action.

Missa as an analogue of the liturgy's musical parts. "*Missa*" acquires in this context other shades of meaning as an expression of the liturgy's musical component. The sources of the missa's musical component interpretation's knowledge are contained in the sacred book "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii*". Gregorian chants that accompany the liturgical action at an appropriate stage of its development are combined in 18 *missae*. Moreover, "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii*" appears as a source of the scientific commentaries on the neume notation reading's specifics, its classification, rhythmics features, phrasing, as well as their choral performance features[2].

An antiphonary's missae. The musical sections of the Roman Catholic liturgy are fragments of the church action's liturgy. However, acquiring the functions of solo-choral generalization and combination of liturgical and verbal stages of sacred action, as well as a prayer address to the Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Mass' musical sections contain the spiritual memory of the entire Church's prayer "doing". Unlike the liturgy, in which the musical parts do not follow one another, in the Church service there was a tradition of the Antiphonary forming, in which the six major musical sections of the Roman Catholic liturgy are written from "***Kyrie***" to "***Ite, missa est***".

The Antiphonary was of practical importance: it was intended for the Church choir, the precentor, as well as the priest and the congregation, whose voices join in the chanting of the liturgy's prayer fragments. Thus, the tradition of the Mass' integral musical interpretation has been established in the liturgy already, which should be considered as a precondition for the *missa*'s emergence as a composer's (author's musical) work. The Gregorian Mass was a systemic prototype of musical semiotics.

Formed on the common construction principle, 18 *missae* "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii*" appear in the Antiphonary's structure as prototypes of future composers' *missae* considered as works of art, which are transformed from the Latin liturgy's fragments into a musical-verbal cyclical integrity. Performing such a cyclical integrity acquires not so much a ritual but concert significance and requires a time-space change (the sacred Church

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[2] Liber usualis missae et officii, Typis Societatis S. Joannis Evangelistae, Parisiis, Tornaci, Romae, 1953.

chronotope is changed to the secular concert one). From the integration of originally anonymous musical parts of liturgical action, joined to the unified liturgy in different centuries of the Middle Ages, with the beginning of the composer's era in the European art the Mass had been gradually changed into an author's work of art of a cyclical nature. Exactly from this period *missa* exists in two cultural dimensions: as a liturgy and as a para-liturgical genre. Thus, the range of semantic polysemy, from the beginning inherent in the medieval *missa*, has been expanded.

The order of the Mass' musical sections in the Roman Catholic liturgy's structure

The Roman Catholic liturgy equal to the *missa (Mass)*, and the *missa* as an extra-liturgical phenomenon of the composer's creativity, despite of the fact that it belongs to one liturgical source, have a different number of musical sections. In the Gregorian *missa*, in the Antiphonary's composition (which was made on the basis of six Gregorian chants) as an obligatory prayer component of the Roman Catholic liturgy (of a temple action), the imitation of the canon presented in eighteen musical versions of sacred monophonic singing dominates. In the composer's *missa*, the gradual distancing from the liturgical source has led to its more or less free interpretation. At the same time, the connection with the liturgical prototype is obligatory for the composer's *missa*.

The musical sections of the *missa* in the liturgy's composition are not a piece of art, nor a genre. The canon's dominance did not presuppose any manifestations of the individual, supplanted by theological doctrine as an objective Divine basis. Instead, in the composer's *missa*, under the conditions of its transformation into a musical genre, one can identiy the composer's interpretation of the canon, which presupposes a certain degree of freedom. Its purpose, location, performers, target audience, symbols, interaction of words and music are changed. If in the *missa* as a liturgy the word conquers its musical effects, then in the composer's *missa* the music is a dominant and content forming basis, which transforms the sacred word in its canonical meaning. As a result of the words and music combinations, there was a change of form in the *missa*: from the "textual-musical" in its temple source to the "musical-textual" in the early examples of the composer's *missa*, and then to the musical in its realizations, starting from the 18th century (according to Kholopova's opinion[3]). The Church *missa* is a rite, a temple action in which the music's purpose is to promote communion with the Lord through prayers. The musical sections in the *missa* do not have an independent meaning; they have an applied character as one of the means of

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[3] Kholopova, Valentina, *Formy muzykal'nykh proizvedeniy [Forms of Musical Works]*, Lan', St. Petersburg, 2001.

carrying out the congregation's appeal to Heaven, to perform a sacred communication of the vertical type.

The missa as a composer's genre does not contain all the musical fragments inherent in the *missa* seen as liturgy. In the Roman Catholic liturgy, there are more musical parts than those usually associated with the *missa's* concert performance. We can identify the examples of *introit*, which is not a part of the traditional 5-section musical *missa's* cycle (bringing *Requiem* closer to a temple action Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has included an *introit* into its structure), as well as the liturgy's final musical part (*"Ite, Missa est"*), in which the word *"missa"* is introduced only once during the church action.

The structure of the Holy (temple) *missa* as the liturgical action in the temple's time-space has remained unchanged for centuries. It consists of 4 parts: the initial rites, the liturgy of the Word, the liturgy of the Eucharist and the final rite. Those parts of the *missa* that are consistently arranged in the musical para-liturgical genre are contained in the church liturgy's different parts.

While the church *missa* is not entirely musical (in the church *missa* the reading of the sacred texts and symbolic action alternate with the musical parts), the composer's *missa* is based exclusively on a musical drama. The sections of the composer's *missa* reflect the liturgical context of the sacred action. The logic of a change from one section of the musical *missa* to the next in the primary sense is due to the development of the church liturgical action. Although in the composer's *missa* the broad liturgical context seems to remain outside its content, nevertheless an important task of the study is to reveal the semantic nature of the musical genre, due to the general liturgical course of the church action's development.

The cyclical nature of the genre of a sacred origin as a principle of form and content formation is one of the features inherited by the composer's *missa* from the liturgical prototype. The order of the sections of the composer's *missa* is inherited from the liturgy. Its logic of sequences is determined by the church tradition, the theological doctrine.

In the general structure of the Liturgy, which is formed as a sequence of four parts (the original internal liturgies), 4 rites, the multifaceted symbolism of the CROSS is fully revealed: crucifixion – death – resurrection (Ascension) – eternal life, which corresponds to the central Christian idea: "Overcome a death by the death".

The first part of the liturgy – the Initial rites (the procession of the Priest to the altar) are accompanied by the Priest's proclamation of the postulate: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", and proclaimed by the congregation "Amen". The Rite of Repentance also ends with the public proclamation of "Amen". It is here, at the end of the Rite of Repentance, that *"Kyria"* and *"Gloria"* follow one after another. These

first two *missa's* musical sections are within the first part of the liturgical action, *i.e.* the initial rites, concluding the Rite of Repentance.

The second part – the Liturgy of the Word (the Priest reads a psalm, followed by the singing of "Hallelujah") – appears as a reading from the Holy Gospel. The Priest concludes the reading: "Glory to You, o Lord", everybody: "Glory to You, o Christ". This means that the "Gloria" atmosphere, which first appeared in the musical part within the Rite of Repentance, continues in the second part of the Liturgy. At the end of the second part of the liturgy there is *"Credo",* the third *missa's* musical section.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the third part of the liturgy (Gift offering; Breaking of The Bread as the Christ's body). The Priest raises bread and wine above the altar, proclaiming: "Blessed are you, O Lord, God of the Universe" – this is a prolonged church action. The fourth *missa's* musical section is the logical continuation of this part of the Eucharist: "***Sanctus – Osanna – Benedictus – Osanna"***. In contrast to the first three *missa's* musical sections, which are present at the end of the liturgical action's previous stages (respectively, its second and third parts), "***Sanctus – Benedictus***" is present in the center of the third (the Eucharist's) part.

In continuation of the Eucharist (at this stage, the Priest, calling on the Holy Spirit, stretches out his hands over the gifts so that they become the Body and Blood of Christ), after the symbolical conversion of the Priest into Jesus Christ, the liturgical action is approaching its culminating stage – the symbolic generalization of Death and Resurrection. At the end of the Holy Communion rite, after the Priest's words "Greet each other with peace and love", the fifth *missa's* musical section is introduced – the closing prayer "***Agnus Dei***". But the third part of the liturgy does not end with the vocal prayer (the Holy Communion rite is continued). Thus, the third part of the church action – the liturgy of the Eucharist – contains two final *missa's* musical sections – "***Sanctus – Benedictus***" and "***Agnus Dei***". There is a certain structural similarity to the liturgy's first part, which also contains two *missa's* musical sections.

Thus, the five musical sections included in the composer's *missa* are present within the first three parts of the Liturgy. *"Kyria"*and*"Gloria"* take on the meaning of the Lord, glorifying the Heavenly Father after the Rite of Repentance (the 1st part). *"Credo"* is a logical perpetuation of the Liturgy of the Word (the second part). Two final sections of the composer's *missa* – *"Sanctus – Benedictus"* and *"Agnus Dei"* – mark the stages of the Holy Communion rite in the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the third part). Separated from the general liturgical context, the sections of the composer's *missa* reflect it at the level of a genetic memory. Therefore, it is important to know all the conditions for the musical structures introduction into the liturgical action as a whole, as the matter of the composer's *missa* exceeds the meaning that is directly expressed in its sections at the level of a verbal-musical unity.

In the musical sections included in the *missa* as a composer's genre, there is no contextual component of the liturgy's last and the shortest (the 6th) part associated with the final rites' conduction (the Priest's words: "The Lord is with you". Everybody: "And with your spirit". Afterwards, the Priest proclaims the three Persons of the Holy Trinity – The Lord is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit). The Priest's words "***Ite, Missa est***" ("Go in the peace of Christ") addressed to the congregation and the parishioners' response "***Deo gratias***" are resolved in a dialogic form as two vocal phrases. This *missa's* musical section completes the liturgy. In this very section the final and key for the whole liturgy musical word *"missa"* is proclaimed, for which the liturgy is conducted. This piece of music obligatory completes the church *missa*, never the composer's *missa*, because the latter cannot perform the church's function of absolution. Consequently, there are 6 sections in the Antiphonary *missa* and 5 parts in the composer's *missa*. The difference between the Antiphonary *missa* and the composer's *missa* means a change in the numerical symbolism, *ordo missa,* as well as in the general content, structure and dramatic process.

Invariant-variant nature of the Gregorian missa

According to the traditional opinion on the medieval Gregorian *missa*, the canon dominance is obvious. But it is necessary to clarify the content of this general rule, setting the boundaries of the canonical (invariant) in the Gregorian missa, as well as the meanings and possibilities (variant) in its context.

First of all, it is expedient to establish a measure of canonicity in relation to the medieval Gregorian *missa* general structure.

The six-part (**"*Kyrie eleison*"**, **"*Gloria*"**, **"*Credo*"**, **"*Sanctus*"**, **"*Agnus Dei*"**, **"*Ite, missa est*"**) structure of the medieval Gregorian *missa-ordinarium* is not the only one possible. In the structure of the Roman Catholic liturgy *missa-ordinarium* is carried out in two full versions: the first one is complete, covering the entire six-part structure of the *missa*, and the second one, being reduced, provides for the exclusion of its third part (**"*Credo*"**). As a result, the *missa* becomes a five-part, given the fact that **"*Ite, missa est*"** becomes its final part. The equivalent two-variable existence of the Roman Catholic liturgy's musical parts (with **"*Credo*"** and without it) reflects the structure of "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii*"[4]. In the Roman Antiphonary's section "*Cantus ordinarij Missae*" subsection "*Kyrie, Gloria, etc.*" contains eighteen five-part *missae*, in each of which **"*Credo*"** is absent. And only after the presentation of eighteen five-part *missae* there are presented separately eighteen numbered **"*Credo*"**, each of which is relevant to a particular *missa*.

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[4]Liber usualis missae et officii, Typis Societatis S. Joannis Evangelistae, Parisiis, Tornaci, Romae, 1953.

It should be emphasized that both structural variants of the liturgical *missa* (six-part and five-part) appear as related to the *ordinarium*, *i.e.* performed as a part of the liturgy intended for "every day". The conditions for a full six-part *missa-ordinarium* in the liturgy performing require a more solemn atmosphere, while the five-part *missa-ordinarium* provides more everyday circumstances and the possibility of a more concise conducting of the whole liturgy. The two-variant coexistence of the *missa-ordinarium* as a part of the Roman Catholic liturgy proves the peculiar relevance of the canon doubling, that is, going beyond its unambiguous six-part functional abidance.

Secondly, the variability of the canon interpretation in the canonical Roman Catholic *missa's* musical parts is evidenced by the fact that with the absolute preservation of the verbal-textual basis in its eighteen versions, each of them is distinguished by the church dedication, that is, the purpose to be performed during a particular church holiday. The purpose of the *missa* is indicated before each text-musical liturgical-prayer cycle introduced in "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii*". It contains information about when, during which church holiday the appropriate prayers should be sung. The following line, which precedes the musical-verbal text, written in the neume notation accompanied by Latin, appears as a clarifying name.

Let us analyze the manifestations of variability in the canon interpretation in the first ten *missae* "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii*".

For example, the purpose of the *missa*, placed next to number I, testifies that these prayers are intended for worship during the Easter period ("*Tempore Paschali*"), while its subtitle – "*Lux et origo*" ("Light and origin") – expresses the main Christian concepts of the Lord's Resurrection in the Roman Catholic theology.

The next *missa* is numbered II. "*In Festis Solemnibus.1" ("Kyrie fons bonitatis*") must be proclaimed in "Triumph holiday", when the Lord appears as a "Source of Good". III *missa - "In Festis Solemnibus. 2"("Kyrie Deus sempiterne*") appears as a kind of the church holiday's first day continuation, which praises the Lord as "Eternal God". So there appears a kind of "diptych" (large cycle), consisting of two *missae*, the performance of which is meant for the solemn feasts in the Lord's Glory.

Being part of the next large cycle in *"Liber Usualis Missae et Officii"* composition, numbers IV, V, VI, VII, VIII are united by a common purpose "*In Festis Duplicibus*". The hypostasis of the Lord God is embodied in the subheadings of each of the first four of them (from IV to VII); VIII *missa "De Angelis"* is dedicated to the embodiment of the image of the Lord's messengers.

The third large thematic cycle in the Roman Antiphonary's composition is formed by two *missae* (numbers IX and X), in which the Virgin Mary is praised (*"In Festis B. Mariae Virginis"*). Again, different

subheadings certify the different theological concepts of the image of the Mother of God.

An additional "mark" that indicates the presence of internal large thematic cycles in "*Liber Usualis Missae et Officii"* composition is the presence of double numbering. Its essence is that along with the Roman numbering, which marks the antiphonary's *missae*, there are also Arabic numerals that record the *missa's* number in the relevant internal thematic cycle (for example, IX – *"In Festis B. Mariae Virginis. 1"*). Such double numbering is inherent in each of the selected antiphonary's internal thematic cycles.

Thus, the variability of the antiphonary's *missae* matter is manifested in their purpose and meanings concretization in the subheadings.

Thirdly, each of the eighteen antiphonary's *missae*, retaining a single musical-textual form (according to Kholopova[5]) and a common technique of musical composition (*cento-writing*), has an original melodic nature. Its nature is entirely due to the "program" that has a certain internal thematic cycle in the antiphonary's composition and each *missa* in its structure.

It is from here that the content's future individualization of the Roman Catholic liturgy's musical part in the composer's *missa* begins with the difference **between** the "program" purpose of the antiphonary's *missae* which has found its expression in various intonation-melodic fillings of the prayer verbal text.

Theological and musical preconditions for the composer's missa genesis

The Roman Catholic medieval liturgy contains the systemic origins of the religious and the spiritual preconditions regarding the formation of musical semiotics. The Roman liturgy as a sacred integrity, the structure of which includes the *missa's* musical sections, contains the primary origins of musical semiotics. The transforming principle is at the heart of the composer's *missa*: musical sections, gaining independence and overcoming disconnection, separated from the general liturgical context. They merged into a musical genre, the performance of which no longer required the presence of a church environment, blending with a sacred action and non-musical sections. The composer's *missa* acquired the qualities of a newly created form of integrity, in the dramatic logic of which the musical patterns were built, that in the future would spread to the entire genre system, which would form not only sacred but also secular genres. However, the separation of the composer's *missa* (as well as the beginning of the composers' era, which replaced the anonymous art era) from the liturgical environment and

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[5] Kholopova, Valentina, *Formy muzykal'nykh proizvedeniy [Forms of Musical Works]*, Lan', St. Petersburg, 2001.

temple action did not imply an absolute break with its mother's church "womb" - the theological concept. Instead, a supra-genre memory is preserved in the composer's *missa* – these are connections with the liturgy, the theological concept and temple action.

The long way to separate the composer's *missa* from the temple action was due to two interacting inherently *reformative* processes, which took place simultaneously in the late medieval spiritual culture (the 11th - 15th centuries). The change in theological and liturgical consciousness, which took place at the turn of the 12th and the 13th centuries, influenced the art of the development of composition. At that time, according to Peter Bitsilli, "terrible in its inhumanity medieval asceticism"[6] was transformed by the penetration into the religious consciousness of historicism and individualism, the manifestations of which the scholar associated with the Francis of Assisi's figure and activities (Franciscus Assisiensis, 1181/1182 – 1226). Peter Bitsilli interpreted the time of the Franciscan Order founder's canonization by the Roman Church (1226 – 1228) as "the majestic fact of the Modern history, of *our* time," when the religious "image of perfection" had been embodied "in a real living personal image"[7]. Marked by the new Christian individuality's nascence, the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries actualized the gradual transition to the author's work in music, giving it the first signs of independence. Simultaneously with the Francis's older contemporaries, the Notre-Dame school of polyphony founders Léonin (1150 – 1201) and Pérotin (1160 – 1230) laid the basis for the individualized authorial development of musical techniques, and confirmation for new genres. The precondition for this was the musical notation reform[8], introduced by the Benedictine monk Guido of Arezzo (990 – 1050), as the prime cause of innovations in the field of medieval polyphony of writing.

These mentioned interdependent processes of religious and musical thinking individualization have led to the beginning of the composer's *missa* prehistory, associated with the name of the French *Ars nuova* poet and musician Guillaume de Machaut (1300 – 1377). Created by the French poet in approximately 1360 on the basis of the *ordinarium* complete *missa* **"Messa de Nostre Dame"** called Reims (intended for performance in the Cathedral of Reims), it appeared as a unique phenomenon in the church and musical history. Guillaume de Machaut's four voices choral score **"Messa de Nostre Dame"** at the time of its origin was integral to the general liturgical context, acquiring the value of a significant standard of the liturgical *supra-*

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[6] Bitsilli, Peter, *Mesto Renessansa v istorii kul'tury [Place of the Renaissance in cultural history]*, MIFRIL, St. Petersburg, 1996, p. 177.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 175.

[8] Pospelova Rimma, *"Reforma notacii Gvido Aretinskogo: Prolog k Antifonariyu" ["The notation reform of Guido of Arezzo: Prologue to the Antiphonary"]*, in "*Sator tenet opera rotas*"/ 2003, Moscow, pp. 48 - 56.

genre memory as the composer's *missa* feature of the future. The process of the liturgical *ordinarium* transforming into an artistic phenomenon is connected with Guillaume de Machaut's four voices *missa*, defined by Nina Gerasimova-Persidskaya as being "innovative"[9]. Performed during the liturgy in the Cathedral of Reims, G. de Machaut's *missa* retained the artistic integrity of the work of art (that is, its sections were not divided by the verbal liturgical "inserts"). In connection with G. de Machaut's *missa*, the interrelated questions arise regarding "a musical phenomenon as a 'work' formation"[10], and within these problematic limits – a work of a "large scale", "large composition"[11], according to N. Gerasimova-Persidskaya's definition. On the basis of N. Gerasimova-Persidskaya's concept, we can reach the following conclusion: G. de Machaut's *missa* has *"rec facta"* (the finished work of art) features as noted and structured by the author, but despite this it cannot be considered as the embodiment of ***"Opus-Musik"***, as it was intended to be performed in the context of the church liturgy. Therefore, the G. de Machaut's *missa's* historical significance is complemented by its borderline, transitional nature from its function as the liturgy's component to an independent genre phenomenon.

The composer's *missa*, having become a musical genre whose performance does not require the obligatory belonging to the temple time-space, takes place outside the church action and maintains a genetic connection with the liturgy. The ways of other musical genres (from monumental to miniature) forming come like a kind of "rays" from the composer's *missa* as a cyclical genre.

Conclusions

A number of interrelated problems was solved in the study: the *missa* concept meanings' system unity definition in the context of the Roman Catholic liturgy; the order of the *missa's* musical sections in the liturgy's structure; theological and musical preconditions for the composer's *missa* genesis. The result of the study was the liturgical nature of the composer's *missa* determination as a musical genre and a subject for a musicological analysis.

A measure of canonicity in relation to the medieval Gregorian *missa-ordinarium* general structure was established as follows, having in view the next levels: structural; dedicational (intended to be performed during a certain church holiday); internal thematic cycles manifestation; musical solution. The original melodic nature of each *missa* is due to the "program"

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[9] Gerasimova-Persidskaya, Nina, *Muzyka. Vremya. Prostranstvo [Music. Time. Space]*, Dukh i litera, Kyiv, 2012, p. 280.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 277.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 278.

that has a certain internal thematic cycle in the antiphonary's composition. The separation of the composer's *missa* from the temple action was due to *reformative* processes in the late medieval spiritual culture. The change in theological and liturgical consciousness influenced the art of composition development. The penetration into the religious consciousness of historicism and individualism is associated with the Francis of Assisi's activities.

The new Christian individuality's nascence has actualized the gradual transition to the author's work in music. The first polyphonic complete *missa* **"Messa de Nostre Dame"** has appeared as a unique phenomenon in the church and musical history. The process of the liturgical *ordinarium* transforming into an artistic phenomenon is connected with Guillaume de Machaut's four voices *missa*, which retained the artistic integrity of the work of art. G. de Machaut's *missa* has *"rec facta"* (the finished work of art) features, but despite this it cannot be considered as the embodiment of **"Opus-Musik"**, as it was intended to be performed in the context of the church liturgy. The composer's missa, having become a musical genre whose performance does not require the obligatory belonging to the temple time-space, maintains a genetic connection with the liturgy. The ways of other musical genres (from monumental to miniature) forming come like a kind of "rays" from the composer's *missa* as a cyclical genre.

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The iconographical diversity of the Sirens' physical forms in medieval bestiaries

Juliana Santos Dinoá Medeiros[*]

Abstract: *This article analyses the physical representation's forms of the Siren in medieval bestiaries. Depending on the manuscript, the creature could appear in three hybrid forms: bird-woman, fish-woman and fish-bird-woman. The difference draws attention, considering that the text is the same in each manuscript and specifies the Siren's physical as being that of a bird-woman. Starting from a reconstruction of the Siren myth, since its origin to the Middle Ages, we see how the beast was transformed from a bird-woman into a fish-woman and how this very transformation was received in the bestiaries. Considering the particular relation between image and text in bestiaries and conceiving them as independent traditions, we realize that, contrary to previous studies, the distinct representations were not the result of confusion among different creatures. It is the illuminator who associates the textual description (that determined the Siren asa bird-woman) with his contemporary imagery (that consolidated the Siren as a fish-woman).*

Keywords: Siren, medieval bestiary, iconography, fantastic creature, hybrids, art history

Introduction

The Siren is one of several beasts that compose medieval bestiaries. Far from being a treatise on medieval zoology, the bestiary genre represented beasts (real or fantastic animals) and moralised them, attributing to them positive or negative allegories related to Christian doctrine. The bestiary manuscripts have a remarkably similar structure, with a chapter composed of text and illustration for each beast. In addition to their structures, all bestiaries have, in general, similar text and iconographic programme[1].Due to their elaboration process, bestiaries typically have texts that contain the same idea of moralisation for each animal and mention equal literary sources. On

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[1] This similarity was amply analysed by Florence McCulloch. She schemed a division into families according to bestiaries' common characteristics (see McCulloch, Florence, *Mediaeval Latin and French bestiaries*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1962).

the other hand, illustrations have a greater degree of singularity, although they also represent situations and descriptions present in the text.

TheSiren's physical form as it appears represented in the illustrations varies according to the analysed manuscript. Altogether, it can take three forms. In the first form, the Siren is a hybrid of a woman and a bird, with a female head and torso, and the bottom of a bird, with wings and claws. In the second one, it preserves the upper human half, but the lower half is pisciform, with tail and scales. Finally, in the third, the creature is a mixture of the first two forms: a woman with a scaly tail, wings and claws.

Despite the various research on the Siren's iconographical representation throughout history, few were directed to their presence in bestiaries. Namely, two authors elaborated a reflection on the issue: Florence McCulloch and Michel Pastoureau. McCulloch determined that the way the beasts were illustrated depended on the illuminator's interpretation of the text during the manuscript's production[2]. According to her, the elements and, consequently, the physical way the animals were illustrated were subjective. However, they would still maintain an association with what was directly or indirectly present in the text. As for Pastoureau, he argued that the Siren-bird and the Siren-fish were distinct beasts, the first being equated with harpies. Additionally, he also stated that the Sirens' representation as a mixed fish-bird would be an illuminator's confusion between these first two distinct types of Sirens[3]. Nevertheless, the two authors did not consider the complex association that texts and images have in bestiaries, as McCulloch overestimated only the textual influence, while Pastoureau underestimated it.

Therefore, seeking to fill this theoretical gap, this paper intends to reinterpret these different ways of representation, by considering the relation between image and text in bestiaries, as well asby assuming them as independent traditions and carriers of their unique logic. Initially, through the reconstruction of the Siren myth since its origin in Antiquity until the 12th century(the most significant period for bestiaries' production) we will draw attention mainly to how the forms of physical representations of the Siren have evolved. Secondly, we will relate the textual description of the Siren's appearance in the bestiaries with what was illustrated in specific manuscripts. In this way, we will analyse the level of textual influence on each manuscript's illustrations, avoiding generalisations. Lastly, we will propose our reflection on what determines the physical shape of the Sirens in the bestiaries' images, confronting the arguments of McCulloch and Pastoureau at the same time.

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[2] Ibid., p. 71.
[3] Pastoureau, Michel, *Bestiaires du Moyen Âge,* Seuil, Paris, 2011, pp. 189-190.

From the myth's origins to the Middle Ages

The Siren's first mention in literature occurs in Homer's poem*Odyssey*, written around the 7th century BC. Hence, the book XII narrates, in particular, the challenges that Ulysses had to face and the sea monsters that he had to fight. In the tale, Ulysses is warned by the goddess Circe about the Sirens, creatures that seduce sailors with their beautiful songs and make them swim to their island, where they would die[4]. Although deadly, the Siren's singing would bring great wisdom to those who would hear it. Therefore, Ulysses ordered his sailors to cover his ears with wax and tie him to the mast of the ship, under the order not to let him loose. Once safe, the hero received valuable advice from the Sirens and went on his journey. Despite offering essential characteristics of the Siren's behaviour, the *Odyssey* does not describe them physically; it only determines that two creatures tempted Odysseus.

The Siren's physical characterisation and its iconographical construction occurred after the *Odyssey* tale, between the 7th and 6th centuries BC, when it started to be identified as a hybrid being, with the body of a bird and human head, not always a female one[5]. According to Rodríguez-López, this description was influenced by images of hybrid beings from Eastern cultures, particularly Egyptian, who arrived in Greece during the "orientalisation" of the 7th century BC[6]. In Egyptian culture, the bird-human creature was present mainly in funerary contexts, representing the soul of the deceased[7]. However, when incorporated into Hellenistic culture, the hybrid was associated with the Siren's identity and itwas, from the 6th century BC., represented together with Ulysses[8]. From that same century, Sirens acquired a human torso intending to give them arms that held musical instruments[9]. Usually, they started to be represented in a trio, in which one sang, and the other two had a lyre and an *aulos*[10].

Sirens genealogy is a matter of discussion. Some literary sources defined them as daughters of the river god Achelous and Sterope, while others, more often, of Achelous and one of the Muses (Terpsichore,

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[4] While the original story does not give the reader the reason sailors would find death, some late authors relate it to the lack of food or water: intoxicated by music, sailors would forget to eat and drink (Leclercq-Marx, Jacqueline, *La Sirènedans la penséeetdansl'art de l'Antiquité du Moyen Âge*, 02/10/2014, koregos.org).

[5]Holford-Strevens, S*irens in Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* in*Music of the Sirens,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2006, 16-51, p. 17.

[6] Rodríguez López, op. Cit., p. 339.

[7]Ibidem.

[8] Leclercq-Marx, op. Cit.

[9]Holford-Strevens, op. Cit., p. 18.

[10] Rodríguez López, op. Cit., p. 342.

Melpomene or Calliope)[11]; on the other hand, some claimed that they were born of the blood of Achelous when he was wounded by Heracles[12]. In Greek mythology, the Sirens were initially companions of Persephone. After Hades, the god of the underworld, abducted Persephone, the Sirens became bird-women, either of their own accord or because of Demeter's punishment for not having saved her daughter[13].

Written sources throughout Antiquity also perpetuated the physical interpretation of the Sirens as bird-women. For example, they were, according to Apollonius, shaped partly as birds and partly as damsels[14]; to Ovid, they had bird's clawsand a maiden's face[15]; to Hyginus, they had the upper part of a woman and the lower part of a bird[16].

In short, the Siren's identification as a hybrid of a woman and a bird was prevalent in written sources and was the first form of the creature's iconic representation. However, it was not the only one. Exclusively in the images, the bird-woman Siren coexisted with a fish-woman figure; that is, the Siren appeared with a woman's trunk and a fishtail. Until 1962, the first appearance of the pisciform Siren was dated to the 2nd century, when it was found figured in Roman lamps[17]. There, two Sirens surrounded the ship of Ulysses and two other sailors, portraying the passage of the *Odyssey* in which the hero is tied to the mast to listen to the sweet song of the creatures[18]. However, in that same year, Odette Touchefeu-Meynier demonstrated, based on a newly discovered Megarian bowl, that the appearance was much later than imagined, dating back to the 3rd century BC[19]. Art historians interpreted this transformation from the bird-woman to the fish-woman as a confusion between Siren and Scylla, another sea monster that Ulysses faces on his journey[20].

As mentioned before, this reinterpretation of the Siren's physique happened only in visual arts, since it would only be in the 7th century,

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[11]Holford-Strevens, op. Cit., p. 19. Accordingto Pérez Suescunand Rodríguez López, themusicalityandseductionoftheSirens' songderived "precisely" fromtheircondition as daughtersof a Muse (Pérez Suescun, Fernando; López, Maria Victoria Rodríguez, *Las Sirenas medievales: aproximación literária e iconográfica,* in *Anales de Historia del Arte* n° 7, ServicioPublicacionesUCM, Madrid, 1997, 55-66, p. 55).

[12] Rodríguez López, María Isabel, *La música de las Sirenas,* in *Cuadernos de Arte e Iconografía, nº32,* FundaciónUniversitariaEspañola, Madrid, 2007, 333-357, p. 334.

[13] Pérez Suescun;López, op. Cit., p. 56.

[14]Ibidem.

[15]Ibidem.

[16]Faral, Edmund, *La queue de poisson des sirènes*, in *Romania*, n° 296, 1953, pp. 433-506, p. 440.

[17]Touchefeu-Meynier, Odette, *De quand date la Sirène-poisson ?*, in *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé: Lettres d'humanité, n°21, 1962, 452-459, p. 453.*

[18]Ibidem.

[19] Ibid., p. 455.

[20] Leclercq-Marx, op. Cit.

in *Liber Monstruorum*, that the first textual description of the Siren as a pisciform being would appear[21]. In this book, the Sirens were described as having from the head to the belly a female body, but with a scaly fishtail, with which it swims in depths[22]. We believe that the reason for this late appearance in written sources is due to the greater rigidity of the textual tradition, which, through successive processes of copying texts and consulting previous works, managed to preserve the appearance of the Siren as a bird-woman.

In fact, the imagery is more fluid and susceptible to reinterpretations, in such a way that, already in the Middle Ages, other forms of the Siren's iconography were identified[23]. In contrast, while the bird-woman reigned as primary identity in Antiquity, the fish-woman appeared in the most defined form of the Siren in the Middle Ages, especially in architectural decoration[24]. More interesting are the fishtail's forms in the Romanesque style, which became bifid mainly from the 12th century onward, with a notable recurrence in the Iberian Peninsula[25].

However, while the novelty of the Siren's iconographical form as a pisciform creature does not alter its symbology, the Advent of Christianity is responsible for exercising a new moralising meaning in the mythical beast. The analogical interpretation of natural beings, characteristic of the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages[26], identified in the Siren symbols related to the temptation of the flesh, heresy and death. Two works of ample circulation in the MiddleAges attested to this moralisation. The *Physiologus* associated sailors seduced by the Sirens' song with "those deceived men who delight in the charms of the world, in games and the pleasures of theatre[27]. Dispelled by various tragedies and melodies and asleep, these men become prey to their enemies"[28]. On the other hand, *Etymologiae* defined Sirens as "harlots who seduce sailors and cause shipwrecks. They said they had wings and claws because the sexual desire both flies and hurts[29]". By incorporating Homer's

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[21]Faral, op. Cit., p. 441.

[22]Ibid., p. 460.

[23] Besides the bird and fish Siren, illustrated together or not, there could be identified Sirens in the form of a horse or bull-woman hybrid (Pérez Suescun, López, op. Cit, p. 60).

[24]Hassig, Debra, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, image, ideology,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, p. 105.

[25] The Sirens figure as oneofthemost common themes in PortugueseRomanesque (see Costa, Joaquim Luís, *Luxúria e iconografia na escultura românica portuguesa [Luxuryandiconography in PortugueseRomanesquesculpture]*, in*Medievalista, nº17, 01/06/2015, https://journals.openedition.org/medievalista/1489).

[26]Pastoureau, Michael. *Símbolo,* in *Dicionário temático do ocidente medieval, [Symbol, in ThematicDictionaryof Medieval Occident], EDUSC, Bauru, 2002, p.* 497.

[27]Faral, op. Cit, p. 438.

[28] Curley, Michael J., *Physiologus: a medieval book of nature lore*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979, p. 23.

[29]Hassig, op. Cit, p 104.

myth into Christian doctrine, the new narrative promoted Ulysses as a Christian hero by overcoming the temptation of sins and consolidating himself as an example to be followed[30].

Consequently, the Siren's moralising connotation and its physical description as a bird-woman were reproduced in the main works on the natural world that circulated in the Middle Ages[31]. On the other hand, in art, the pisciform Siren's presence surpassed the avian Siren, despite the two forms coexisting. These two traditions (text and imagery), independent of one another and with different susceptibility to influences, were combined in the bestiaries, promoting a relationship between text and image where they do not always agree with each other.

The bestiary's Siren

Both the avian and pisciform physical styles of the Siren are normally found in the bestiary illustrations. As we deal with several manuscripts, a historian's first impulse would be to analyse each text in order to understand the choice of a specific form. Nevertheless, bestiaries are characterizedashaving a remarkable similarity to each other's verbatim. Indeed, the bestiaries analysed in this research have the same text for the Siren's chapter[32].

This text consists of references to the followingtwo works: The *Physiologus* and the *Etymologiae*[33]. Regarding the Siren's physical form, both sources agree that itis a hybrid of a woman and a bird. According to the *Physiologus*, the Sirens have, from the head to the stomach, the figure of men, and wings and bird's feet on the lower part[34]; whereas, for the *Etymologiaes*, the Sirens were "part maidens, part birds, having wings and claws; the first Siren made music with the voice, the second with a flute, and the third with a lyre"[35]. Since these sources are dated respectively from the third and 6th century, it is not surprising that the association with the bird Siren, inherited from ancient sources, is still preserved in them. Thus, inverbatim, bestiaries contribute to the Sirens' image only withelements associated with an avian characteristic, repeating them in all manuscripts.

Observe, for instance, the following images:

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[30] Leclercq-Marx, op. Cit.
[31] Besides the *Etymologiae* and the *Physiologus*, there are other examples, such as *De NaturaRerum* and *De Universo*.
[32] That is not the case, for example, of the French bestiaries, excluded from this research because they have a different composition and function from the others (see McCulloch, op. Cit.,pp. 45-69).
[33] Some manuscripts will only present the citation to*Physiologus*, namely those from the second family (according to McCulloch's bestiary classification).
[34]Faral, op. Cit., p. 438.
[35] Ibid., p. 440.

Fig.1 Lat. 6838B, Bibliothèque Nationale, f. 25v

Fig.2 Harley MS. 4751, British Library, f. 47v
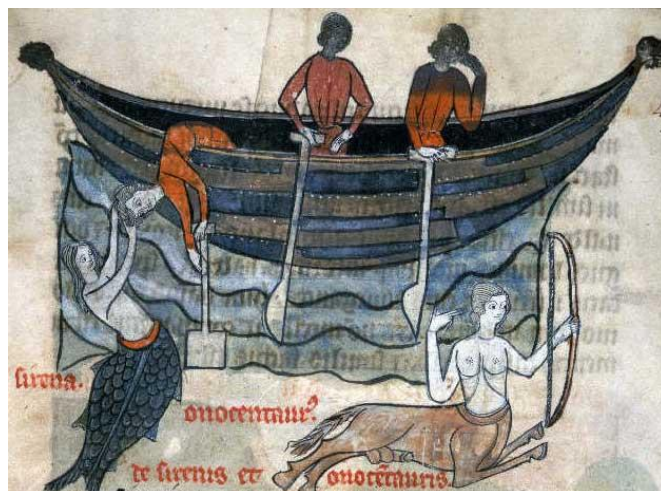
Fig.3 Sloane MS. 278, British Library, f. 47r

Fig.4 MS. Ludwig XV 3, Getty Museum, f. 78r

The selected examples illustrate situations and ways of the Siren's iconographical representations. Thus, in the first example (fig.1), the Siren appears represented with a female torso, with arms, breasts, and bottom of a bird, while in the second example (fig. 2), the bottom part is formed by a

fishtail. In the following images (fig. 3 and fig. 4), the seductive beast appears next to the centaur. This occurrence is common in manuscripts where these mythical creatures share the chapter (however, there are no text changes). In these cases, Sirens can be either bird-woman orfish-woman. Interestingly, the Siren may also be accompanied by elements related to the morals attributed to them in the bestiary. For example, in the Harley 4751 bestiary (fig. 2), the Siren holds a fish, and in the Ludwig bestiary (fig. 4), in addition to a comb, the Siren has a mirror and looks at it while combing its hair. The comb and mirror are symbols related to vanity and temptation[36].We believe that, in reality, the fish, is related to a more symbolic aspect, reproducing the seduction of Christians (usually symbolised by fish in Christendom), although it was pointed out as an indicator of the marine characteristic of the fish Siren[37].Finally, Sirens could also be illustrated with boats and sailors (figs. 2 and 3).

Some researchers have mistakenly linked the bestiary bird Siren to the harpy[38]. They have disregarded that, although physically similar, harpies and Sirens are different beasts with distinct origins and symbology. Harpies are fierce creatures from Greek mythology, monsters that attack humansor Hades' servants. In Antiquity, they were also illustrated as a hybrid of awoman andabird, but with the difference that these, unlike Sirens, had no arms or human torso, only human head. In the Middle Ages, the iconographic representation of the harpy was even more differentiated, taking place in two ways: either it had a human head, the body of a bird and the tail of a snake or scorpion, also being illustrated with snakes that came out of its mouth[39], or it had a lion torso with wings, human head and horse bottom[40].In addition, the moralisation they acquired in medieval times was different from the Sirens. Harpies were evil beasts that represented greed, fraud and falsehood[41]. The unpleasant aspect was repeatedly present in the beast's images, unlike the Siren, who was always seductive and illustrated with soft forms[42].

Whereas the representations of bird-woman hybrids in Romanesque art generated doubts for art historians as to which creature was represented[43], this doubt is invalid in the bestiaries, as there is no chapter or textual mention of harpies. Given the symbolic and physical differences between the two

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[36] Peinado, Laura Rodríguez, *Las Sirenas*, in*Revista Digital de Iconografía Medieval,* nº 1, 2009,pp. 51-63, p. 52.

[37]Hassig, op. Cit., p. 107.

[38] Pastoureau, *Bestiaires du Moyen Age,* p. 190.

[39] Olivares Martínez, Diana, *Lasarpías*, in*Revista Digital de Iconografía Medieval,* nº 11, 2014, pp. 1-12, p. 2.

[40] Leclercq-Marx, op. Cit.

[41] Olivares Martínez, op. Cit., p. 5

[42]Ibidem.

[43]Leclercq-Marx points out that many bird Sirens were mistakenly identified as harpies, who had a much smaller representation in the Romanesque (Leclercq-Marx, op.Cit.).

beasts in the MiddleAges, the lack of quotation about harpies and the fact that the text accompanying the illustrations identifies the hybrid bird-woman as a Siren, one can discard this association. Thus, there is no doubt that the bird Siren is illustrated as it follows the description given by the text.

If the avian Siren's illuminator follows what the text says, the same does not happen with the pisciform Siren's illuminator. The divergence of what is textually described and what is actuallyillustrated draws our attention, but it does not surprise us in any way. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find images in bestiaries that do not accurately represent the information provided verbatim or do contain elements unfound in the text[44]. The relation that the image has with the text will depend not only on the analysed manuscript, but also on the analysed beast[45]. With this, we can affirm that the illustrationis not subordinated to the text. In fact, contrary to historians who first studied bestiaries[46], images do not behave just as a complement for a better comprehension of the text. As part of an independent tradition, the illustration is susceptible to influences capable of modifying it. Therefore, only the analysis of the text alone cannot explain the image[47].

In a recent article, Ilya Dines develops McCulloch's point about the differences between illustration and text in bestiaries[48]. The twoauthors state that during the manuscript's production, the illuminator's interpretation of the text would essentially define the elements and forms to be illustrated[49]. In the case of Sirens, each illuminator's understanding may have been responsible for the illustration of some features that are indirectly present, although they are not mentioned directly in the text,such as the comb and mirror - attributes of seduction. However, concerning the divergence regarding the Siren's physique in illustrations, where she is a fish-woman, the argument finds no basis since the text does not reference the Siren as a marine creature. On the contrary, it specifies the Siren's physical composition as a bird-woman hybrid. Thus, there is no room for interpreting the Siren as a fish-woman based on the text alone[50].

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[44] Dines, Iya, *Producing the Bestiary: from text to image,* in *Medievalista,* nº 29, 2011, pp. 93-116.

[45] See Garcia, Muriel Araujo Lime, *As imagens em bestiários ingleses dos séculos XII e XIII,* Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade de São Paulo, 2015 [*The images in EnglishBestiariesoftheXIIandXIIIcenturies*, Master'sdissertation, Universityof São Paulo, 2015].

[46] SeeBaxter, Ron,*Bestiaries and their users in the Middle Ages,* Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1998, pp. 1-28.

[47] Garcia, op. Cit.,p. 16.

[48] Dines, Ilya, *Producing the Bestiary: FromText to Image*, in*Medievalista,* nº 29, 2021, https://journals.openedition.org/medievalista/3842, pp. 91-116.

[49] Ibid., p. 95; McCulloch, op. Cit., p. 71.

[50] Another element that corroborates with the idea that the illuminator would be susceptible to external influences is that in the Harley 4751 bestiary (fig. 2), the sailor raises his fingers to his ears to cover them avoid listening to the Siren's song. This reference is not present in the

Fig.5. MS. 81, Morgan Library, f. 17r

Fig.6. MS.Douce 88, Bodleian Library, f. 21v

Accordingly, if the text does not give the marine feature a reference to the illuminator, where does it originate?

The illuminator's reference probably came from the collective imagery that would already have consolidated the Siren's conception as a fish-woman instead of a bird-woman. This transformation had been developing since Antiquity, when the first interpretations of the Siren as a fish hybrid were made, and was at its peak in the Middle Ages, considering the majority of pisciform representations of the Siren in architectural art (especially capitals and porticoes)[51]. Consequently, the form that Sirens could be figured (avian or pisciform) would depend on the level of susceptibility of each bestiary's illuminator to external connections.

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bestiary's text, but it is part of the *Odyssey* tale, which in turn is widely disseminated among the medieval elite (Hassig, op. Cit., p. 107).

[51]Leclercq-Marx, op. Cit.

In a mid-term situation, where the illuminator wanted to respect textual information and meet the influence he received, a unique type of Siren is originated, with a physical form that combines characteristics of human, bird and fish altogether.

Fig.7. Harley 3244, British Library, f. 55r

The Sirens illustrated above share the characteristics of hybrids of women, fish and birds. They have a female head and torso, with arms holding a comb (fig.5) or a fish (figs. 5, 6 and 7). The lower part is elongated with a fishtail, and they have wings that rise from the waist's height (figs. 5 and 6) or on the back (fig. 7). In the first two images (fig. 5 and 6), the Sirens also have bird feet.

Fig.8. MS.Bodley 602, Bodleian Library, f. 10r

The illuminator who illustrated the three Sirens above made particular reference to the Sirens described by the *Etymologiae*,as follows: the firstSiren singing, the second oneplaying the flute and the third playing the lyre (fig. 8). While the two Sirens on the rightare equally pictured with bird's features (feathers, wings and claws), the fact that the one on the leftis different draws our attention. Except for the wings, it has distinct features compared to the other Sirens, with a tail and a more similar aspect to that of a fish. In addition, it has webbed feet, another allusion to its marine essence. As Hassig points out, this characteristic could demonstrate the illuminator's interpretation that the Siren would be a sea bird, similar to ducks and swans[52]. This illustration of the Siren as close to a marine bird reveals the illuminator's effort to link both text and imagery influence in the same image.

Conclusion

The three hybrids (fish-woman, bird-woman and fish-bird-woman) illustrate the same mythical creature and therefore have equivalent symbolism, as is confirmed by the bestiaries' text. It is not, like some attest, confusion between different beasts, but various forms of representation of the same creature. The Siren's fish characteristic in specific images exemplifies the external influences during a bestiary's production (in this case, the Siren was conceived as a fish-woman in the medieval imagery). Simultaneously, the Siren's occurring as a fish-bird-woman demonstrates that both textual and imagery traditions had equal importance for the illuminators. These results corroborate the interpretation that each bestiary has its particularities and that the illustrations are not only decorative and subordinated to the text, but also imaginative and creative.

List of Illustrations:

Fig. 1. Lat. 6838B, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, f. 25v.
Fig. 2. Harley MS. 4751, London, British Library, f. 47v.
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Fig. 6. MS.Douce 88, Oxford, Bodleian Library, f. 21v.
Fig. 7. Harley 3244, London, British Library, f. 55r.
Fig. 8.MS. Bodley 602, Oxford, Bodleian Library, f. 10r.

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[52]Hassig,op. Cit., p. 108.

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Directions of the Old Rus Church Architecture Development of the 12th – the first third of the 13th century

Kateryna Mikheienko[*]

Abstract: *The article analyzes the process of development in the architecture of Old Rus on the basis of transplanted elements of the Byzantine cathedral construction of its own tradition, which is vividly embodied in the original forms of arch-gabled and pillar-shaped churches. The formation of the arch-gabled church took place in the second half of the 11th century in Kyiv, where in the early 12th century, it acquired finally completed forms. Almost simultaneously in Chernihiv and Novgorod in the first quarter of the 12th century, and later in other cultural centers, there appeared regional variants of arch-gabled church, of which the Chernihiv variant quickly became interregional, spreading in the south-western regions of Rus. The first signs of pillar compositions are recorded in the first decade of the 12th century also in Kyiv within the newly formed arch-gabled cathedral. In the middle of the 12th century in Polotsk there existed already a purposeful search for an aesthetic model of a pillar-shaped church, which in the 80's of the 12th century moved to Smolensk. The crystallization of the completed forms of the vertically oriented composition occurred at the end of the 12th century, after which the pillar-shaped church took over the role of interregional type, displacing the arch-gabled cathedral, apparently completely until 1240, when the development of Old Rus architecture was interrupted by the Mongol invasion.*

The beginning of church building tradition in Kyivan Rus, according to the chronicle, is associated with Byzantine masters invited by Prince Volodymyr the Great to build the first brick church in Kyiv – the Tithe (Desiatynna) Church (989–996). The church was almost completely destroyed by hordes of Batu Khan in 1240 and is now known from archeological materials. But in the 11th century on the basis of transplanted Byzantine forms, the construction of churches began in Kyiv and other cultural centers of Kyivan Rus, which entered the treasury of world

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architecture not as a provincial branch of Byzantine architecture, but as an independent Kyivan Rus architectural school. In the 1980s, A. Komech first identified a set of characteristics that, against the background of the Byzantine tradition substrate, determined the originality of Kyiv architecture. It is a multi-dome in the churches of the first stage (the end of the 10th – the first half of the 11th century), which A. Komech explained functionally connecting with the need to illuminate the vast choir, the construction of which was a requirement of the prince's order. The second stage of architectural development, which began with the construction of the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery, A. Komech defined as the period of origin of own original tradition, marked by the formation of a previously unknown arch-gabled (*закомарний* in Ucrainian) church [1]. However, the study of A. Komech ends at the beginning of the 12th century, and the church continued to develop throughout the 12th century, the details of which remain unexplored. In addition, at the end of the 12th century a pillar-shaped (*стовпоподібний* in Ucrainian) church, a completely new three-dimensional type, became widespread in Old Rus. The first information about such churches appears in the process of architectural and archeological research of the 1920s up to 1950s by P. Baranovsky, N. Brunov, N. Voronin, and I. Khozerov[2]. This type of churches was studied in detail by Yu. Asieiev (early 1970s)[3]. But he considered only the churches of the southern regions, so his typology of pillar-shaped churches is local. In addition, Yu. Asieiev analyzed the monuments only of the end of the 12th – first third of the 13th century without analyzing the stages of such churches formation. At the same period P. Rappoport outlined a broader picture of architecture development in

[1] А. И. Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в. Византийское наследие и становление самостоятельной традиции*, Наука, Москва, 1987.

[2] П. Барановский, *Собор Пятницкого монастыря в Чернигове* in the edition *Памятники искусства, разрушенные немецкими захватчиками в СССР*, Изд-во Акад. наук СССР, Москва; Ленинград, 1948, с. 13–34. Н. И. Брунов, *Извлечение из предварительного отчета о командировке в Полоцк, Витебск и Смоленск в сентябре 1923 года*, Рос. ассоциация научно-исследовательских институтов общественных наук, Москва, 1926. Н. И. Брунов, *К вопросу о самостоятельных чертах русской архитектуры X–XII вв.* in the edition *Русская архитектура. Доклады, прочитанные в связи с декадником по русской архитектуре в Москве в апреле 1939 г.*, Гос. архитектур. изд-во Акад. архитектуры СССР, Москва, 1940, с. 106–126. Н. Н. Воронин, "У истоков русского национального зодчества" in "Архитектура СССР", 5/1944, с. 32–37. Н. Н. Воронин, *«Слово о полку Игореве» и русское искусство XII–XIII вв.* in the edition *Слово о полку Игореве*, Изд-во Акад. наук СССР, Москва; Ленинград, 1950, с. 320–351. Н. Н. Воронин, *У истоков русского национального зодчества (Из истории зодчества периода феодальной раздробленности XI–XV вв.)* in the edition *Ежегодник института истории искусств 1952. Живопись. Архитектура*, Изд-во Акад. наук СССР, Москва, 1952, с. 257–316. И. М. Хозеров, *К исследованию конструкции Спасского храма в Полоцке*, Смоленск, 1928.

[3] Ю. С. Асеев, *Зодчество Приднепровской Руси конца XII – первой половины XIII веков*: автореф. дис. на соиск. уч. степ. доктора архитектуры, Москва, 1971.

the late 12th – first third of the 13th century in its connection with the previous stages of development[4]. But as a holistic process of pillar-shaped churches formation and development remains unexplored, the history of the arch-gabled church in the 12th century also remains poorly researched.

Arch-gabled church, which is one of the first innovations of the Old Rus architectural tradition according to A. Komech, takes finally completed forms in the early 12th century[5]. All divided parts of the wall facades of such churches are completed by semicircular arched gables (*закомара* in Ucrainian), some of which are constructive (fill the ends of the vaults), and some of the arched gables are decorative (adjoin to the slopes of the vaults). The earliest Old Rus church that has preserved the original facade completion is the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv (founded before 1036). It represents a typical Byzantine combination of semicircular arched gables filling the ends of the arms of the spatial cross and horizontal cornices above other parts of the walls[6] (Fig. 1). In St. Sophia Cathedral (chronicles give two dates of its foundation: 1017 and 1037) semicircular arched gables are preserved in the ends of the arms of the transept of the five-naves core (the western arched gable is completely lost), and the shape of the corner part edges of the five-naves core under drum of the small domes are not clarified. None of the inner galleries has preserved either the ceilings or the facade walls of the second floor, because it is unknown what the original edges of the facade walls of Sophia of Kyiv looked like[7]. In St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv and the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv, the vaults above the eastern corner compartments were lowered relative to the vaults of the last compartments according to the Byzantine tradition and the wall edges of these compartments and the side apses were lowered accordingly too.

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[4] П. А. Раппопорт, *Русская архитектура на рубеже XII–XIII веков* in the edition *Древнерусское искусство: Проблемы и атрибуции*, Наука, Москва, 1977, с. 12–29.

[5] А. И. Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в. …*, с. 283–285.

[6] Н. В. Холостенко, *Исследования Спасского собора в Чернигове* in the edition *Реставрация и исследования памятников культуры*, Вып. 3, Стройиздат, Москва, 1990, с. 8.

[7] The reconstructions of the original appearance of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, proposed at different times by different authors, give several options for ceilings the second floors of the inner galleries, which have a different way of the facade wall edges. See М. К. Каргер, *Древний Киев. Очерки по истории материальной культуры древнерусского города.* Т. II. Памятники киевского зодчества X–XIII вв. Изд-во АН СССР, Москва-Ленинград, 1961, с. 123–140; М. Й. Кресальний, *Софійський заповідник у Києві: архітектурно-історичний нарис.* Держ. вид-во літ. з буд. і архітектури УРСР, Київ, 1960, с. 85–86; Ю. С. Асеев, Тоцкая, И. Ф., Штендер, Г. М., *Новое о композиционном замысле Софийского собора в Киеве* in the edition *Древнерусское искусство: Художественная культура X – первой половины XIII вв.,* Наука, Москва, 1988, с. 18–27; Г. Н. Логвин, "Новые исследования древнерусской архитектуры" in "Строительство и архитектура", 8/1978, с. 31–34.
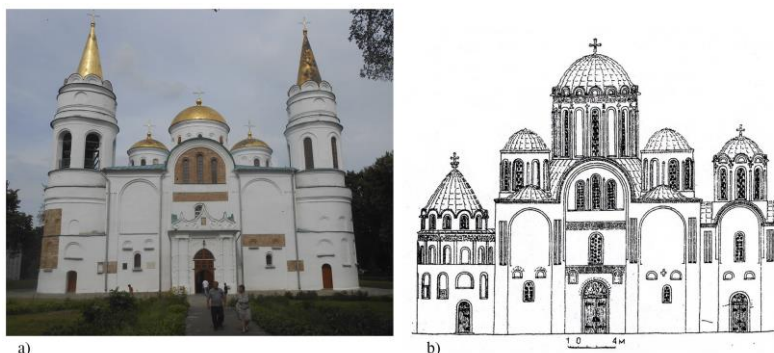
Fig. 1 Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv: **a)** view from the west;
b) reconstruction of the western façade

St. Sofia Cathedral in Novgorod (1045–1050/1052), which is a five-naves simple cross-domed church, surrounded by a series of two-story galleries in the west, south and north, is considered to be the initial stage in the arch-gabled church formation. First known in Old Rus arched gables over small divided parts of the facade walls and the first decorative arched gable which is unique and unknown in Byzantium among them have remained in this cathedral. But Sophia of Novgorod arch-gabled edges, according to A. Komech, had not been formed as "structural principle" yet as arched gables were combined with the Byzantine horizontal cornices in it, which complete the eastern compartments[8] (Fig. 2).
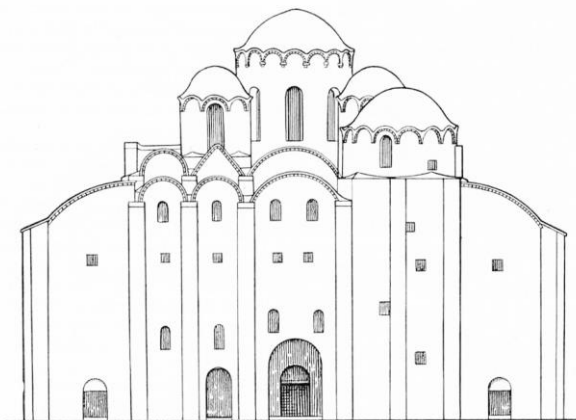
Fig. 2 St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod, reconstruction of the western façade

The first already formed arch-gabled church, about which information is preserved, is the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery

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[8] А. И. Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в.* … с. 248.

in Kyiv (1073–1087)[9]. The cathedral is four-pillared with a narthex (simple cross-domed type). Its main volume is an elongated west-east parallelepiped, topped by a single dome. All the corner compartments of the church are lowered (crowns of arched gables of these compartments are at the level of the springers of the large arched gabled of the arms of the spatial cross) on the reconstruction of the northern facade of the cathedral proposed by M. Kholostenko [10] (Fig. 3a,b). According to A. Komech, only the arched gables of the eastern corner compartments were lowered, which corresponds to the Byzantine tradition and the springers of small arched gables of the church western part were located on the same level with the springers of large arched gables [11] (Fig. 3c). On the walls of all the facades of the Dormition Cathedral (except the apses) there was a meander frieze relating to the floor level of the choir, and two tiers of windows above and below the meander emphasized the statics of the horizontal volume of the church. There were not galleries in the cathedral but there were the decorative niches at the bottom of the all its facade walls including the semicircles of the apses.
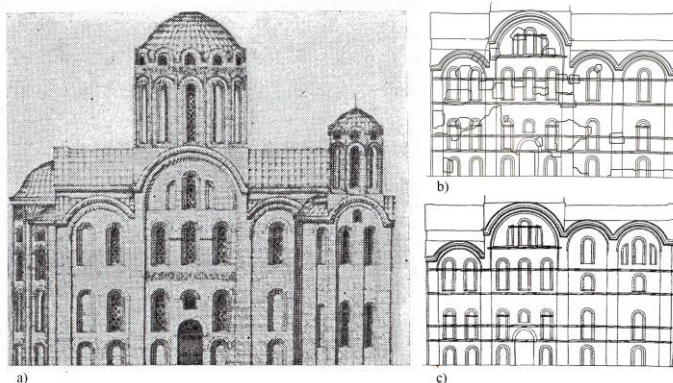
Fig. 3 a, b, c Domition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery in Kyiv: **a)** reconstruction of the northern façade; **b)** scheme of the northern wall reconstruction; **c)** scheme of the northern wall reconstruction

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[9] See М. В. Холостенко, *Успенський собор Печерського монастиря* in the edition *Стародавній Київ*, Наукова думка, Київ, 1975, с. 107–170. М. В. Холостенко, *Нові дослідження Іоанно-Предтеченської церкви та реконструкція Успенського собору Києво-Печерської лаври* in the edition *Археологічні дослідження стародавнього Києва*, Наукова думка, Київ, 1976, с. 131–165.

[10] М. В. Холостенко, *Успенський собор Печерського монастиря … с. 153.*, М. В. Холостенко, *Нові дослідження Іоанно-Предтеченської церкви та реконструкція Успенського собору Києво-Печерської лаври… с. 144.*

[11] А. И. Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в. … с. 272.* Graphic reconstruction of the northern facade of the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery, taking into account the remarks of A. Komech, was proposed by I. Anisimov. See I. О. Анісімов, *Деякі особливості первісної архітектури Успенського собору Києво-Печерської лаври (авторська версія)* in the edition *Лаврський альманах: Києво-Печерська лавра в контексті української історії та культури: зб. наук. праць*, Вип. 12, ВІПОЛ, Київ, 2004. с. 24.

St. Michael's Cathedral of the Vydubychi Monastery in Kyiv was
built (1070–1088) almost simultaneously with the Dormition Cathedral of
Pechersk Monastery. It was built in two stages, first the central core was
erected, to which a narthex with a stair tower to the choir, located in the
northern compartment of the narthex was later added[12]. The cathedral narthex
with the stair tower have survived almost to their full height, and only the
walls of the western compartments have survived from the central core. All
facade divided parts of the cathedral narthex had arch-gabled edges, as
evidenced by the remains of the lower parts of their windows or niches.
According to A. Komech, the small devided parts of the walls of the
cathedral original volume were also completed with arched gables, which
were decorative, as the domed vaults were placed behind them (a fragment of
one such vault has been preserved)[13]. According to N. Logvin's
reconstruction, small devided parts of the facade walls of the main volume
were to be crowned with a horizontal cornice[14].

St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral[15] and at the same time
Pechersk Monastery Trinity Gate Church in Kyiv built in the early 12th
century demonstrate the already formed arch-gabled edges of the facades. But
the three-dimensional solution of these churches is fundamentally different.
St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, as well as the Dormition Cathedral
of Pechersk Monastery, is a four-pillared church with a narthex. Its volume is
the same elongated parallelepiped, the statics of which are emphasized by a
meander frieze and horizontal tiers of windows and decorative niches,
including a number of basement niches (Fig. 4). The vaults of the eastern
compartments of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral were lowered, as in
the Dormition Cathedral, but no lowering was not visible on the facades, as
there were decorative arched gables superimposed above them, springers of
which were at the same level as all the other arched gables[16].

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[12] Р. Бикова, *Видубицький монастир* in the edition *З історії української реставрації:
Додаток до щорічника «Архітектурна спадщина України»*, Українознавство, Київ,
1996, с. 179. І. І. Мовчан, *Археологічні дослідження на Видубичах* in the edition
Стародавній Київ, Наукова думка, Київ, 1975, с. 100–102.
[13] А. И. Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в. …* с. 265–266.
[14] Н. Г. Логвин, "Михайловская церковь на Выдубичах в Киеве" in "Советская
археология", 4/1986, с. 270.
[15] St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral was demolished in 1937, its measurements were
made by I. Morgilevsky in 1934. See М. К. Каргер, *Древний Киев. Очерки по истории
материальной культуры древнерусского города. Т. II. Памятники киевского зодчества
X–XIII вв.,* Изд-во АН СССР, Москва, Леннинград, 1961, с. 277, 279.
[16] Ю. С. Асеев, *Архитектура древнего Киева.* Будівельник, Киев, 1982, с. 100., А. И.
Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в. …* с. 280.
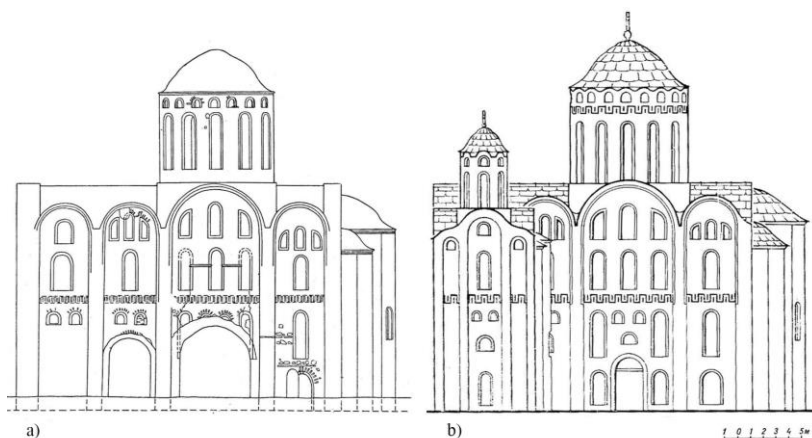
Fig. 4 St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral in Kyiv: **a)** drawing of the southern façade; **b)** reconstruction of the southern façade

Trinity Gate Church is a small four-pillared church without a narthex. All its facades are the same, including the eastern one, as the apses are sunk into the wall. The church is built above the gate, so its total volume has a vertical orientation, which is emphasized by the compositional symmetry of all façades, located in the center of the dome, as well as tiers of windows and niches, which in the absence of horizontal breaking up is perceived as filling vertical gaps between the lesenes (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Trinity Gate Church of Pechersk Monastery in Kyiv: **a)** view from the south; **b)** reconstruction

Like all churches built in the 11th century, St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral and Trinity Gate Church were built in a mixed technique "opus mixtum" of stone and brick with a recessed row. But at the beginning of the 12th century in the Church of the Savior in Berestov, built near Pechersk Monastery, there is a new type of masonry only from the brick, laid with a recessed row ("recessed-brick technique"), although the foundations and basement of its walls are made in the technique "opus mixtum", in some places this technique is found in the walls of the stair tower at the level of the choir[17]. Another feature of the construction technique of this church is the widespread use of oak beams for jumpers of door and window openings. There is no chronicle date of the Church of the Savior construction, the proposed dates vary from the end of the 11th – first quarter of the 12th century, but most often this church is associated with the period of Kyiv reign of Volodymyr Monomakh (1113–1125). Only the narthex to the floor level of the choir has survived from the original building of the Church of the Savior in Berestov (Fig. 6a), and its full plan is known from archeological excavations. This church has four pillars with a narthex (a simple cross-domed type), like the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery and St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral. The lateral divisions of the narthex are wider than the four-pillared core and form square projections, which is not found in other churches of Old Rus. In the northern division of the narthex there was a chapel with three apses recessed in the thickness of the eastern wall, and the southern division was occupied by a stair tower square outside and round inside in the center with a round support pillar. There were antechurches near the western, southern and northern entrances. The choir of the church was located at a height of more than 10 m, which exceeds the level of location of the choir of all well-known Kyiv churches (there are analogies only in the churches of Novgorod). Based on the level of the choir, the height of the church walls should reach 20 m (the choir was traditionally located at the level of the middle of the walls[18]). Thus, the height of the Church of the Savior in Berestov in relation to the size of the plan, compared to Kyiv churches of the previous period, was significantly higher, so its volume was vertically oriented, and the antechurches gave it some pyramidality (Fig. 6b). In the central part of the western facade and on the northern end of the narthex wall (the wall of the chapel) horizontal decorative divisions in the form of meander friezes corresponding to the level of the choir have been preserved. However, the windows and niches below the meander are arranged in vertical tiers, which emphasized the vertical

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[17] О. Сердюк, Р. Гуцуляк, Ю. Коренюк, С. Скляр, *Науково-реставраційні дослідження та виконання невідкладних консерваційних робіт на церкві Спаса на Берестові* in the edition *Культурна спадщина Києва: дослідження та охорона історичного середовища*, АртЕк, Київ, 2003, с. 58–59.
[18] See А. И. Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X – начала XII в. …* с. 149.

orientation of the church, which can be seen as a certain analogy to the design of the facades of the Trinity Gate Church. Crosses made of brick played an important role in the decoration of the facade walls of the Church of the Savior in Berestov.

Nothing is known about the type of vaults of the upper ceilings and the number of domes of the Church of the Savior. But on the western wall of its narthex there are traces of the adjoining ceiling of the antechurches in the form of a trefoil arch (Fig. 6c). Such a construction of the vault, made of brick, could exist only in combination with wooden beams, the ends of which are preserved in the thickness of the wall (Fig. 6d). Given the height of the Church of the Savior in Berestov and the peculiariteis of the design of its walls G. Shtender, and later V. Bulkin considered this church as the initial stage formation of pillar-shaped churches development[19].
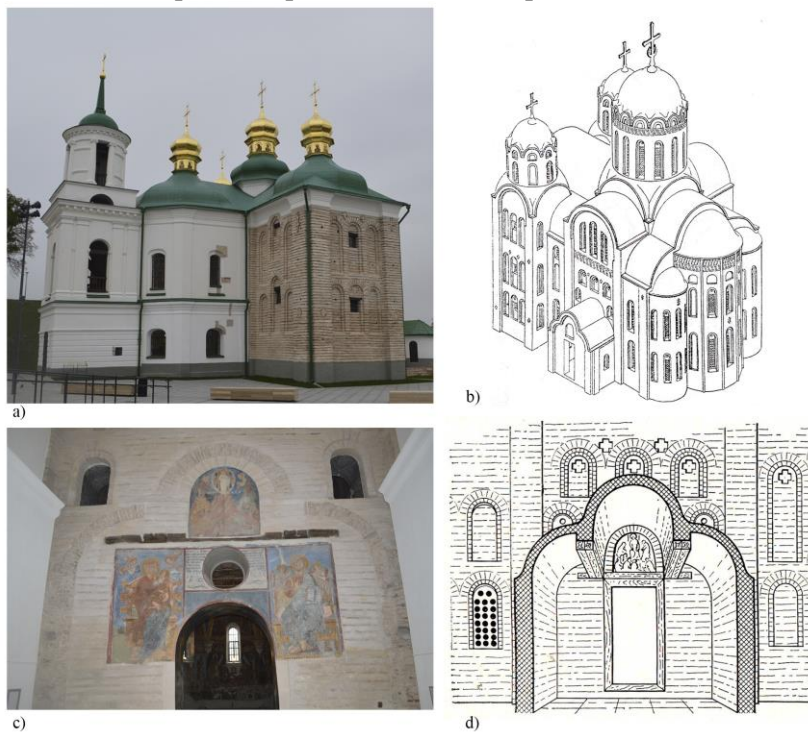
Fig. 6 a, b, c, d Church of the Savior in Berestov in Kyiv: **a)** view from the south-west; **b)** reconstruction; **c)** the western wall of the narthex; **d)** reconstruction of the western antechurch

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[19] Г. М. Штендер, *Трёхлопастное покрытие церкви Спаса на Берестове (к вопросу о художественном образе храмов второй половины XI – начала XII века)* in the edition *Памятники культуры. Новые открытия. Ежегодник 1980*, Наука, Ленинград, 1981, с. 541. В. А. Булкин, "О времени постройки церкви Спаса на Берестове" in "Археологія", 2/1995, с. 143.

Thus, in the church building of Kyiv in the early 12th century there were already two options for a compositional solution. The first is represented by St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, which, repeating the horizontally oriented composition of the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery, is already a finally formed arch-gabled church. The second variant is just beginning to take shape, it is represented by Trinity Gate Church and the Church of the Savior in Brestov with a vertical compositional orientation. Although the presence of a narthex in the Church of the Savior gave it a horizontal orientation, the considerable height and similarity of the design of its facades with the facades of Trinity Gate Church indicate a common typology of both church compositions.

Novgorod churches, built in the same period as Kyiv Church of the Savior in Berestov, are also characterized by a vertical orientation of the main volumes. These are St. Nicholas Cathedral on the Yaroslav's Court (founded in 1113, Fig. 7), Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral in St. Antony's monastery (1117–1122), St. George Cathedral in Yuryi's monastery (1119). Like Kyiv Dormition and St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedrals, these are arch-gabled four-pillared churches with narthexes (a simple cross-domed type), but their height in relation to the size of the plans is noticeably larger than that of Kyiv cathedrals. This brings the proportions of these Novgorod cathedrals closer to the proportions of Kyiv Church of the Savior in Berestov, but here we should see the influence of St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod, whose height is also greater than that of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. The volume of the named Novgorod churches of the first quarter of the 12th century cubic, although they are perceived elongated upwards and not only due to the height of the walls, but also due to the design of the facades, which have no horizontal divisions, so the windows and niches fill the gaps between the vertical lesenes. Another distinctive feature of Novgorod churches is multi-domed. St. Nicholas Cathedral on the Yaroslav's Court had five domes on drums (central and four smaller ones above the corner compartments of the nine-celled structure), Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral in St. Antony's monastery and St. George cathedral in Yuryi's monastery had three domes each (central, one above the corner southwest compartment and another over the stair tower). A specific feature of Novgorod churches is almost the same height of the arched gables over small and central devided parts of walls, which was achieved by lowering the crowns of the central arched gables. All Novgorod churches were built in a mixed technique "opus mixtum" of stone and brick with the use of a large number of volkhov flagstone in masonry. Lack of genetic link between the Church of the Savior in Berestov in Kyiv and Novgorod churches of the first quarter of the 12th century is confirmed by the fact that the high-rise version of the compositional construction is not widespread in Novgorod in the future.
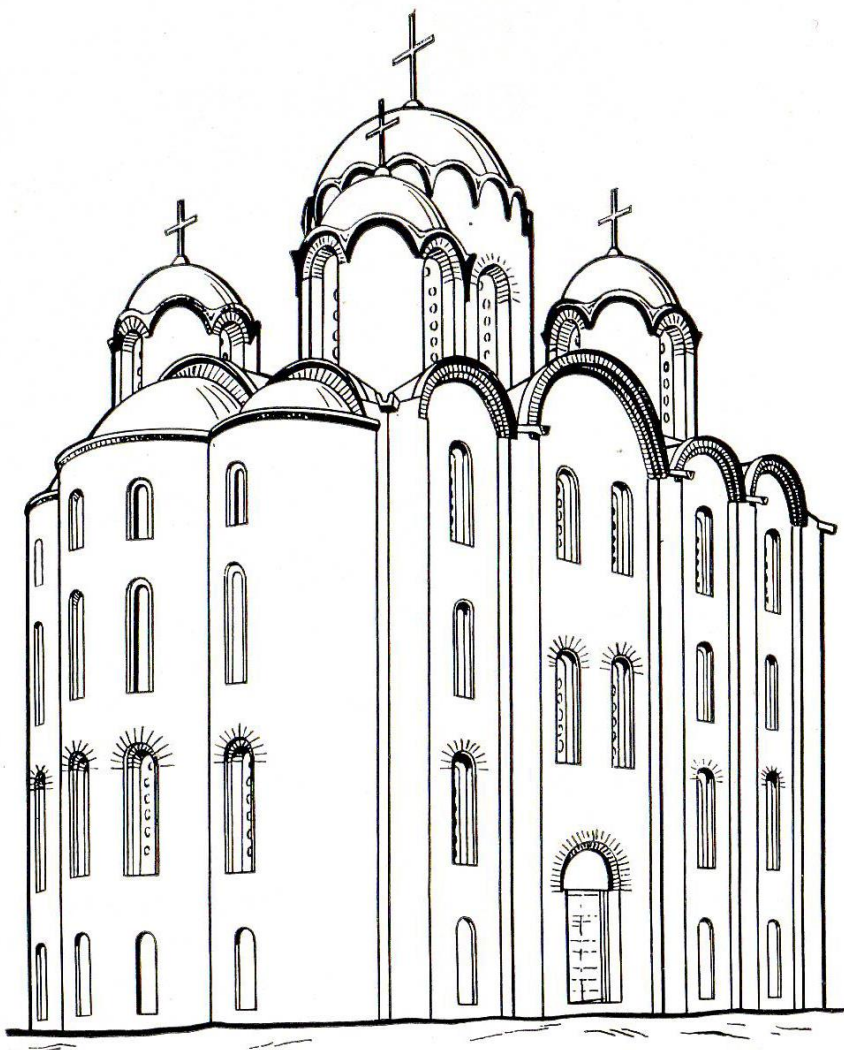
Fig. 7 St. Nicholas Cathedral on the Yaroslav's Court in Novgorod, reconstruction

In the first quarter of the 12th century in Chernihiv a new variant of arch-gabled church is being formed, which combines the three-dimensional solution of Kyiv arch-gabled churches with Western European construction and masonry techniques. Here during this period Sts. Boris and Gleb's Cathedral (the first chronicle mention of 1123) and the Dormition Cathedral of Yeletsky Monastery (chronicle date is absent, variants of dating from the end of the 11th century to the middle of the 12th century) are compositionally similar to the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery and St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral (Fig. 8, Fig. 9). Both Chernihiv churches are four-

pillared with narthexes (simple cross-domed type). Their volumes are elongated parallelepipeds with springers of all arched gables located on the same level. The altar compartments of both churches no longer have declines in the interiors. The statics of their volumes, as in Kyiv cathedrals (the Dormition Pechersk Monastery and St. Michael's Golden-Domed), is emphasized by the tiers of windows above and below the level of the choir, as well as windows and niches on the arched gables. But, in contrast to Kyiv churches of the 11th and early 12th centuries, the Dormition Cathedral of Yeletsky Monastery and Sts. Boris and Gleb's Cathedral were built only of brick in "opus isodos" masonry technique, which came from Western Europe. The side parts of the choir of these churches are based on cross vaults, which are also borrowed from the Western Europe and in Kyiv architecture of the 11th – first decades of the 12th century are not known. In addition, semi-columns adjoining the flat lesenes appear on the facades of Chernihiv churches, as well as Lombard band and perspective portals typical to Romanesque architecture. This variant of the arch-gabled church, which combined Byzantine and Western European traditions, was later replicated in large areas of the southwestern regions of Old Rus. Since the late 20's of the 12th century similar churches are being built in Kyiv, Kaniv, Pereiaslav, Volodymyr-Volynskyi, Smolensk, and Staryaia Riazan.

Fig. 8 Sts. Boris and Gleb's Cathedral in Chernihiv, reconstruction

Fig. 9 Domition Cathedral of Yeletsky Monastery in Chernihiv, reconstruction of the western façade

In addition to Chernihiv interregional variant and local variants of arch-gabled church existed in the 12ᵗʰ century, which did not go beyond their region. These are Pskov and Staraia Ladoga in Novgorod land. Pskov variant is represented by the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (1130–1140s). Typologically, it is a four-pillared church with a narthex, topped by three domes on drums. But this church is not marked by height, it is rather low-lying, and its volume is an east-west elongated parallelepiped without horizontal divisions and without a clear system of window placement in the almost complete absence of decorative niches. We can say that the compositional solution of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist is a combination of Kyiv (horizontally oriented volume) and Novgorod traditions of the first third of the 12ᵗʰ century (multi-dome, lack of horizontal divisions). The churches of Staraia Ladoga are represented by the Dormition Church

(mid. 12th century) and St. George's Church (mid. 1160s), which are four-pillared without a narthex and with one dome. Their volumes are cubic without horizontal divisions and without a clear tier arrangement of windows. In the second half of the 12th century churches similar to those of Staraia Ladoga are also being built in Novgorod (the Church of the Annunciation on the Myachino (1179), Sts. Peter and Paul's Church on Sinicha Hill (1185–1192), and the Church of the Savior on Nereditsa (1198)).

From the middle of the 12th century they started building arch-gabled churches using the Romanesque technique of construction of quadra stones in Vladimir-Suzdal land. The remaining churches of this type are the Dormition Cathedral (1158–1160, 1185–1189), St. Demetrius Cathedral (1193–1197), the Church of the Intercession on the Nerl (1165) in Vladimir, and the Transfiguration Cathedral in Pereyaslav-Zalessky (1152), the church of Sts. Boris and Gleb's in Kideksha (1152). In addition to the Dormition Cathedral, these churches are four-pillared without a narthex, topped by a single dome. The Dormition Cathedral was originally a four-pillared with a narthex, and after the fire, in the process of reconstruction in 1185–1189, it was surrounded by additional compartments from the north, west and south, as a result of which it became five-naves, and its central dome was supplemented by four small domes. All these temples are characterized by Romanesque decoration. The middle height of all facades in the churches of Vladimir is marked by an elegant carved arcade frieze, and on the walls of the apses such friezes are placed under the base of the conches. All these cathedrals have perspective portals, the same perspective archivolts of windows of the top tier, figurine-shaped lesenes with the pro-thinned-out bases, a carved sculptural decor. In the church in Kideksha the horizontal division of the facades is made only by an arcade frieze, and in the cathedral in Pereyaslav-Zalessky the arcade frieze is decorated only by the tops of the apses, and the walls of the main volume are devoid of horizontal divisions.

Masonry of quadra stones was characteristic of Halych land, where they began to build churches in this technique from the end of the first quarter of the 12th century. All Halych churches, except St. Panteleimon church (late 12th century), are known from archaeological excavations. These are mainly four-pillared churches without narthexes: St. John's Church in Peremyshl (before 1126), the Church in Zvenigorod (until 1144), the Church of the Savior (1152) and the Church in Tsvintariski tract (third quarter of the 12th century) in Halych, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church (second half of the 12th century) near Halych. The Dormition Cathedral in Halych was four-columned, surrounded on the south, north and west by galleries. But how the walls of Halych churches ended is unknown.

In most other regions of Rus, the "opus isodos" masonry technique dominated, which spread along with Chernihiv variant of arch-gabled churches, although not everywhere. In Novgorod, churches continued to be

built in a mixed technique, a variant of "opus mixtum", dating back to Kyiv tradition of the 11th century, but with the use of local volkhov flagstones. And in the principality of Polotsk the brick masonry with a recessed row was used, similar to the masonry of Kyiv Church of the Savior in Berestov. According to P. Rappoport, the use of such masonry techniques indicates the transition of Kyiv artel to Polotsk[20]. But the only church in Polotsk that has preserved the walls and ceilings under later layers is the Church of the Savior of Euphrosyne Monastery (mid. 12th century). Unfortunately, other Polotsk churches are known only from archeological excavations. These are the churches in Dytynets and the Lower Castle, cathedrals of Belchytsky Monastery (the Great Cathedral, Sts. Boris and Gleb's Church and St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church), the Church-tomb of Euphrosyne Monastery. On the basis of the plans of these cathedrals, we can identify several variants for their compositional solution[21].

The first variant is represented by the Great Cathedral of Belchytsky Monastery, which is considered to be the earliest among Polotsk churches of this period (20–30s of the 12th century). It was a large six-pillared cathedral (four-pillared complex type without a narthex). Its front lesenes were flat, the antechurches adjoining three entrences. N. Voronin believed that the Great Cathedral of Belchytsky Monastery is the result of the composition development of Kyiv Church of the Savior in Berestov[22]. But the peculiarity of the three-dimensional solution of Belchytsky monastery cathedral was the movement of the dome one division to the west, which fundamentally transformed its composition, turning it into a central one[23]. With this decision, the cathedral, according to P. Rappoport, should have had a raised central part[24]. The development of the compositional variant of the Great Cathedral of Belchytsky Monastery was probably continued by the Church in Dytynets, the dome of which also rests on the western pillars. It had southern and northern antechurches, each with a semicircular apse in the east (it is

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[20] П. А. Раппопорт, *Зодчество Древней Руси*, Наука, Ленинград, 1986, с. 80.

[21] Archaeological excavations opened the foundation ditches (in some places the foundations have been preserved) only the apses and the found bricks of the Church on the Ditch in Polotsk (See П. А. Раппопорт, "Полоцкое зодчество XII века" in "Советская археология", 3/1980, с. 155–156). According to the schematic drawing of the end of the 18th century there existed also the Church with Side Apses of Belchytsky Monastery (See П. А. Раппопорт, *Русская архитектура X–XIII вв.: каталог памятников*, Наука, Ленинград, 1982, с. 99). However, this information is not enough to establish the compositional solution of these churches.

[22] Н. Н. Воронин, *Бельчицкие руины* in the edition *Архитектурное наследство,* Вып. 6, Гос. изд-во литературы по строилеьству и архитектуре, Москва, 1956, с. 17.

[23] П. А. Раппопорт, "Полоцкое зодчество XII века" in "Советская археология", 3/1980, с. 157. В. А. Булкин, "О времени постройки церкви Спаса на Берестове" … с. 143.

[24] П. А. Раппопорт, "Полоцкое зодчество XII века" … с. 157.

assumed that there was also an antechurch on the western side[25]). Figurine-shaped lesenes appear on the facades of the church[26].

The second variant of the Polotsk churches is represented by St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church of Belchytsky Monastery. It was a small pillarless church with a rectangular apse, which had an underground crypt for burial[27]. N. Voronin noted the elongation of the proportions of St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church upwards, as indicated by the remains of the walls and frescoes of this church, which still existed in the 1930s[28].

The third variant is the Church-tomb of Euphrosyne Monastery and the Church in the Lower Castle. Both churches were four-pillared without a narthex with one protruding apse. They were surrounded by galleries on the west, south and north sides[29]. Judging by the difference in the thickness of the walls of the core and the galleries, it is obvious that the galleries of the church were much lower than the main volumes. Thus, the three-dimensional composition of the church was likely to be stepped, emphasizing the dominance of the central dome[30].

The fourth variant is represented by Sts. Boris and Gleb's Church of Belchytsky Monastery and the Church of the Savior of Euphrosyne Monastery. Their plans are almost the same, but the Church of the Savior had galleries, whereas Sts. Boris and Gleb's did not. N. Voronin believed that Sts. Boris and Gleb's Church represents the "first edition" of the architectural type, which in its completed form is represented by the Church of the Savior of Euphrosyne Monastery[31]. O. Ioannisian suggests that the first monument of this type could be the Church of the Annunciation in Vitebsk[32], built of blocks of hewn stones, alternating with two or three rows of bricks (in Old Rus this technique is only found in Sts. Boris and Gleb's Church in Novogrudok). On building Vitebsk church in Polotsk, Sts. Boris and Gleb's church was erected of brick in recessed row masonry technique.

The only remaining Church of the Savior of Euphrosyne Monastery is a small four-pillared church with a narthex, one semicircular protruding apse and side apses recessed into the wall. The peculiarity of this church is the very narrow side naves, which will later become characteristic of the pillar-shaped churches of the turn of the 12th – 13th centuries. The church of

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[25] Id., *Русская архитектура X–XIII вв.: каталог памятников*, Наука, Ленинград, 1982, с. 94.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] Н. Н. Воронин, *Бельчицкие руины* … с. 12.

[28] *Ibid.*, с. 13.

[29] П. А. Раппопорт, "Полоцкое зодчество XII века" … с. 159.

[30] *Ibid.*, с. 149, 155.

[31] Н. Н. Воронин, *Бельчицкие руины* … с. 9.

[32] О. М. Иоаннисян, *Зодчество первой половины – середины XII в.* in the edition *История русского искусства. Т. 2/1: Искусство 20–60-х годов XII века*, Государственный институт искусствознания, Москва, 2012, с. 126.

the Savior was surrounded by the galleries on the western, southern and northern sides[33], which are the elements of a vertically oriented stepped composition. Sts. Boris and Gleb's Cathedral in Chernihiv, Sts. Peter and Paul's Church in Smolensk, St. Demetrius Cathedral in Vladimir and other churches had similar galleries, but in the arch-gabled churches, the galleries emphasize the horizontal orientation of the main volume. The change in the compositional function of the galleries of the Savior Church was a consequence of the lowering of the narthex and the apse, which fundamentally distinguishes such a stepped construction from the horizontally oriented arch-gabled churches. But the main and fundamental difference between the Church of the Savior of Euphrosyne Monastery (Fig. 10) and the arch-gabled churches with both horizontal and vertical orientation (Kyiv Trinity Gate Church, Novgorod churches of the first quarter of the 12ᵗʰ century) is the completion of its facades, which does not correspond to the ceiling constructions. The arms of its spatial cross have "standard" barrel vaults with the direction of the crowns along the axes of the arms facing the facades with large arched gables, the corner compartments of the nine-celled structure are covered with domes (western pair) and barrel vaults with the orientation of the crowns west-east and the side compartments of the narthex had barrel vaults with a south-north crowns orientation. The ends of the narthex have constructive arched gables, but the spandrels between their vaults and the wall of the nine-celled core are filled with masonry and the edges of these devided parts of walls have a S-shaped contour, and small decorative arched gables are on the western facade. All the small arched gables of the nine-celled core were decorative because they were either adjoing the slopes of the domed or barrel vaults or were built on the conches of the side apses. The vertical orientation of the overall composition is emphasized by the basement under the drum of the dome, which is decorated on four sides with trefoil arches built over the arches of the drum, and there were additional decorative arched gables between them on the very drum. Thus, the central part was raised in this church with a lowered apse and narthex and galleries. As a result, the standard cross-domed church acquired a unique interpretation: its volume rose step by step, giving the three-dimensional composition of the building the features of the pillar[34].

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[33] Е. Н. Торшин, Дук, Д. В., Иоаннисян, О. М., Зыков, П. Л., Коц, А. Л., *Галерея Спасо-Преображенской церкви Евфросиньева монастыря в Полоцке (предварительные итоги архитектурно-археологических исследований)* in the edition *Беларускае Падзвінне: вопыт, методыка і вынікі палявых даследаванняў*, ПДУ, Новополоцк, 2016, с. 22–40.

[34] Н. Н. Воронин, *Бельчицкие руины* … с. 5.
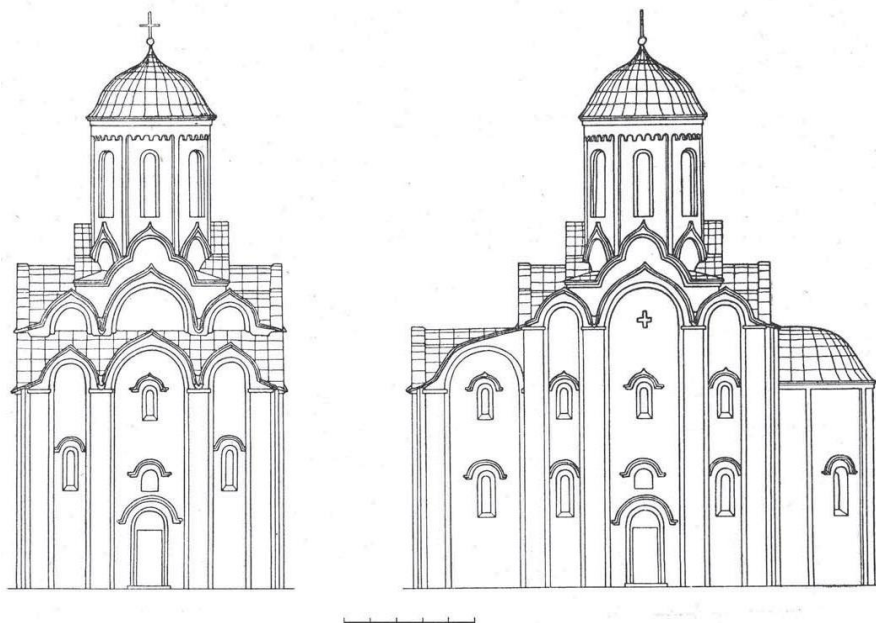
Fig. 10 Church of the Savior of Euphrosyne Monastery in Polotsk, reconstruction of the western and southern façade

Among the listed compositional variants of Polotsk architecture, the first (complex cross-domed church without a narthex with three antechurches) and the third (a simple four-pillared church without a narthex surrounded by one-storied galleries) ones proved to be promising and were developing in the architecture of Smolensk, and later in other regions. The second (a small pillarless church with a vertical orientation of the volume) and the fourth (horizontally oriented four-pillared church with a narthex and a vertical orientation of the central part) variants failed to develop. But it is important to emphasize that they also had a vertically oriented compositional construction and can be considered as variations in the process of finding out and working out a vertically oriented composition.

P. Rappoport believed that in Polotsk principality a new direction of pillar-shaped churches appeared earlier than in other Old Rus architectural schools, that became characteristic of the most lands at the end of the 12th – the beginning of the 13th century. In the late 80's – early 90's of the 12th century a Polotsk architect was summoned to Smolensk, where he built Michael the Archangel Church, starting a local school there, which is associated with the flourishing of Smolensk architecture[35]. Smolensk Michael

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[35] П. А. Раппопорт, "Полоцкое зодчество XII века" …, с. 161.

the Archangel Church (80–90s of the 12th century) is a four-pillared cross-domed church without a narthex with a protruding eastern part. The central apse protrudes in a semicircle, the side apses are lowered and sunk into the thickness of the wall (rectangular on the outside). Its western, northern and southern facades are adjoined by antechurches, the space of which is connected by high arched opening to the naos. The lowered side apses and antechurches give the building forms the character of a dynamic increase. The vertical orientantion of the construction on the facades is emphasized by figurine-shaped lesenes. The arms of the spatial cross were covered, as in all arch-gabled churches of the 12th century, with barrel vaults, located in the interior slightly above the arches under the dome drum. But at the same time the corner compartments of the church are no longer covered with barrel vaults, but with half-barrel vaults, which form a trefoil completion with arched gables of the spatial cross on the facades[36] (Fig. 11a).

In Kyiv land, the earliest monument of the new direction of pillar-shaped churches is St. Basil's Church in Ovruch (about 1190), but only the walls of the eastern part have remained, so it is impossible to talk about the construction of its ceilings and the nature of the facades. St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church in Chernihiv (the turn of the 12th – 13th centuries) belongs to the same direction (Fig. 11b). This is a small four-pillared church without a narthex, antechurches and galleries. All the facades of St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church had trefoil edges, and the arms of the spatial cross had a three-stepped shape, in which the arches under of the dome drum form a middle step, the lower one is the vaults of the spatial cross, and the upper one is formed by decorative arched gables adjoining the dome drum[37]. The arches under the dome drum are located above the vaults of the arms of the spatial cross both outside and inside. The type of arches construction, described above, differs fundamentally St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church from the Savior Church of Euphrosyne Monastery in Polotsk and from Michael the Archangel Church in Smolensk, where arches are traditionally located below the vaults of the spatial cross. The unusual thing about Chernihiv St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church is that the ceilings of its corner compartments have a two-storied constructoin: the lower arches are semicircular in shape, and the upper ones are in the form of arc-boutants, introduced into the interior of the building[38].

At the end of the 12th – in the first third of the 13th century pillar-shaped churches, except Smolensk, Ovruch, and Chernihiv, are built in Kyiv, Belgorod, Novgorod-Siversky, Putivl, Vshchizh, and Old Ryazan, but all of

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[36] С. С. Подъяпольский, *Церковь Архангела Михаила* in the edition Воронин, Н. Н., Раппопорт, П. А. *Зодчество Смоленска XII–XIII вв.*, Наука, Ленинград, 1979., с. 173, 178, 182–183.

[37] П. Барановский, *Собор Пятницкого монастыря в Чернигове* … с. 20.

[38] *Ibid.*, с. 19.

them are known only from archeological excavations. Only in Novgorod in St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church the walls have been preserved to the upper vaults (except for the southern antechuch, 2 m of which has been preserved), in some places there are remains of vaults. However, the height of the preserved walls indicates that the church had a pillar composition and was characterized by a dynamic increase in the height of the volumes to the center (Fig. 11c). Traces of fixation of the vault circle centres and arched gables were found on the walls of St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church, as well as the remains of the northwestern vault of the church, which made it possible to reconstruct the trefoil completion of the facades of the nine-celled core[39].
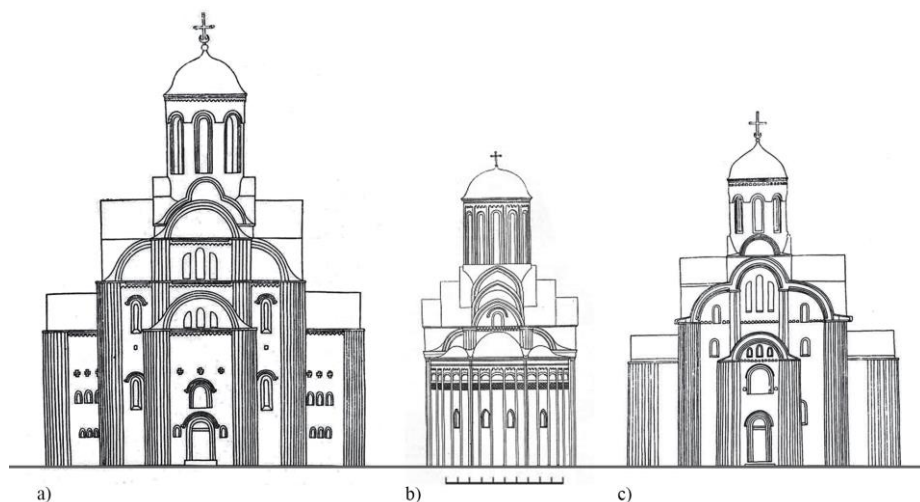
Fig. 11 a, b, c Pillar-shaped churches: **a)** Church of Michael the Archangel in Smolensk, the reconstruction of the western façade; **b)** St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church in Chernihiv, reconstruction of the eastern façade; **c)** St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church in Novgorod, reconstruction of the western façade

The ceilings constructions and the edges of facade walls of three more partially preserved churches of this type are not known, they are built of stone quadras in the Western European tradition: St. George's Cathedral in Yuriy-Polsky, Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral in Suzdal and St. Panteleimon Church in Halych.

Yu. Asieiev singled out two variants of the vertically-tiered compositions formation on the basis of the study of pillar-shaped churches remains. The first variant with elevated arches under the dome drum without antechurches and galleries (Ovruch, Belgorod, Kyiv, Chernihiv). The second variant is with antechurches (Novgorod-Siversky, Putivl) or galleries

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[39] Т.В. Гладенко, Л.Е. Красноречьев, Штендер, Г.М., Шуляк, Л.М., *Архитектура Новгорода в свете последних исследований* in the edition *Новгород. К 1100-летию города. Сборник статей*, Наука, Москва, 1964, с. 207.

(Vshchizh), providing a gradual increase in mass to the center, but without a constructive increase in the arches under the dome drum[40]. Both variants of pillar-shaped churches are characterized by trefoil edges of facades, which changed the arch-gabled edges, as well as figurine-shaped lesenes instead of flat lesenes with semi-columns. It can be assumed that, in addition to the two variants of compositional solution singled out by Yu. Asieiev (with constructionally stepped top without galleries and antechurches and with antechurches or galleries without constructional top), there existed a variant that united them, that is, it had antechurches or galleries and at the same time a constructionally stepped completion (elevated arches under the dome drum).

Summing it up, we can state that the appearance of the pillar compositional construction coincides with the final period of arch-gabled churches formation. The initial stage of arche-gabled church development is represented by St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod, the small divided parts of walls of which have constructive and decorative arched gables, combined with other types of edges, so it can be considered a "proto-arch-gabled" church. The intermediate stage is the Dormition Cathedral of Pechersk Monastery, and St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral in the early 12th century demonstrates the already formed composition, which was the focus of regional variants of arch-gabled churches in Chernihiv and Novgorod, and later in Halych, Pskov, Staraia Ladoga, and Vladimir-Suzdal land. Among them, the closest in composition to St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, the cathedrals in Chernihiv became an interregional variant of the arch-gabled church, which was the dominant standard in the southwestern regions of Rus until the end of the 12th century.

The formation of the pillar composition was not set in an empty place. In the churches of the 11th century, which do not show any signs of such a composition, there are some details inherent in pillar-shaped churches (stepped total volume due to the pyramidal composition of domes (St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod), stepped vaults of the arms of the spatial cross (Sophia of Kyiv), of galleries (Sophia of Kyiv, Sophia of Novgorod); vertical orientation of the total volume (Sophia of Novgorod); vertically-oriented interior space (Sophia of Novgorod); figurine-shaped lesenes (Sophia of Kyiv, the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv). The first signs of a vertically oriented composition are recorded in the first quarter of the 12th century within the newly formed arch-gabled church (Trinity Gate Church of Pechersk Monastery and the Church of the Savior in Berestov in Kyiv, St. Nicholas Cathedral on the Yaroslav's Court, Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral in St. Antony's monastery, St. George cathedral in Yuryi's monastery in Novgorod). In the second and third quarters of the 12th

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[40] Ю. С. Асеев, *Зодчество Приднепровской Руси конца XII – первой половины XIII веков* … с. 24–25, 36–37.

century there appeared several parallel variants of the vertical composition. The main center of this period was Polotsk, where a purposeful search for an aesthetic model of vertical composition was probably carried out. In the 80–90's of the 12th century, pillar-shaped churches were being built in various cultural centers (Smolensk, Kyiv, Ovruch, and Belgorod). During this period, the standardization of the type takes place and there appears probably a construction corresponding to the stepped completion of the churches (St. Paraskeva Piatnitsa Church in Chernihiv). This is followed by the rapid spread of the interregional type of pillar-shaped churches.

Here, however, it should be emphasized that the above mentioned stages of pillar-shaped churches development are applied only to brick architecture. In stone architecture of Vladimir-Suzdal principality during the 12th century, only some features of such compositions are recorded, in particular pyramidality at the expense of one-storied galleries (Church of the Intercession on the Nerl, St. Demetrius Cathedral in Vladimir) and figurine-shaped lesenes (all known churches of the second half of the 12th century). And only in the pre-Mongol period (1220–1230s) there appeared churches, the preserved parts of which suggest the existence of a pillar-shaped composition. These are Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral in Suzdal (1225) and St. George's Cathedral in Yuriy-Polsky (1234) – four-pillared cross-domed cathedrals with three antechurches open in the naos (northern and southern antechurches were one-storied, western – two-storied) . However, these cathedrals have remained only half the height, so the nature and design of their facade edges are unknown, but the existence of antechurches proves its pyramidal composition. We can assume that in stone architecture the formation of this type of cathedrals also took place, but slower. It should not be ruled out that the stone architecture borrowed the pillar-shaped composition formed in the brick architecture as the completed variant.

In general, we can state that at the turn of the 12th–13th centuries, pillar-shaped cathedrals took over the role of interregional type, which for almost the entire 12th century belonged to several variants of arch-gabled cathedrals. Thus, pillar-shaped cathedrals can be considered to be the second Old Rus architectural tradition after the arch-gabled cathedrals, which developed on the basis of transplanted Byzantine forms. But in 1240 the development of this tradition was interrupted by the Mongol invasion.

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Differences in the Iconography of the Plot the Last Supper in the Illuminations of the Gospels and Psalters of the 10th – 14th Centuries Created in the Byzantine Empire

Nataliia Dmytrenko[*]

Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to find and highlight the most striking pieces of the Last Supper in the examples of the Gospels and Psalters created on the territory of the Byzantine Empire in the 10th – 14th centuries, as well as to analyse the iconography and trace the development of the plot over the centuries. The study reflects the following aspects: how the early Christian sources influenced the formation of this plot and how long they continued to exist, what sources the masters employed to create these works, and how individual artistic details and elements pass from one work to another.*

Keywords: The Last Supper; Gospel; Psalter; miniature; iconography; semantics; Byzantine Empire

Introduction

The plot of the Last Supper has quite often attracted attention among researchers from all over the world, but it has never been specifically reflected in a single monograph that could explore this topic as part of the development of the art of the Byzantine Empire and the countries influenced by it or which are part of it. There are two main questions set by this article: (1) How was the iconography of the Last Super formed in relation to its geographical location and (2) What was the role of the pagan art of the catacombs in the formation of the Last Supper iconography and semantics during the rule of Byzantine Empire? This article considers examples of the miniatures depicting the Last Supper starting with the iconoclastic period; for example, I start with the prominent piece of art such as Chludov Psalter from the State Historical Museum in Moscow collection and I end with the classic

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ones which formed the Byzantine period of miniatures of the late 13th century – the example of the Last Supper from the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

Research Methodology

The study was based on the documentary approach, historical research while the data collection method was descriptive, and I used the research papers of the Byzantinists, the official websites of museums and travel. All available data and previous research on the subject matter were used for the proper analysis of the topic. In this research, the iconography, semantics and style of the Last Supper plot were considered through different geographical locations and sources during the Byzantine period. This was also studied through two groups of sources including holy texts, research papers with a comparative approach, along with such factors as historical and geographical context, in particular, the place of creation. Cultural boundaries were also thoroughly explored.

The classic examples of the early iconography of the Last Supper plot include such works as the Rossano Gospel and the Gospel of St. Augustine, dating back to the 6th century. The Gospel of Saint Augustine from the collection of the college library Corpus Christy in Cambridge allows tracing a sample of the earliest, not yet formed iconography, as evidenced by the miniature on the folio 125. Here, Christ is depicted as a beardless youth with his disciples. The plot is flanked by the scenes from the Passions of Jesus: Palm Sunday and Agony in the Garden. Rossano Gospel from the Archbishop's Treasury of the Cathedral in Rossano has a different iconography. According to the Roman tradition, Christ eats with his disciples in the triclinium, a formal dining room in the Roman Empire. Symbolically depicted, two lunar phases with crescents indicate that the sacrament takes place in the evening. The images of birds in the form of peacocks are generously used, in the miniature indicating the incorruptibility of Christ's body. This plot is combined with the plot of The Washing of the Feet (Maundy) and with the depiction of the Old Testament kings[1].

The Chludov Psalter from the collection of the State Historical Museum in Moscow, dating back to the middle of the 9th century, is considered to be the first work created after the period of iconoclasm (**Fig.1**).

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[1] N. V. Dmytrenko, *Sources of Iconography of the Last Supper in the Monuments of the Early Christian Era* // Ukrainian Academy of Arts. Vol. 28, 2019, pp. 98-108. (Dzherela ikonoghrafiji sjuzhetu Tajemna vecherja v pam'jatkakh rannjokhrystyjansjkoji doby).
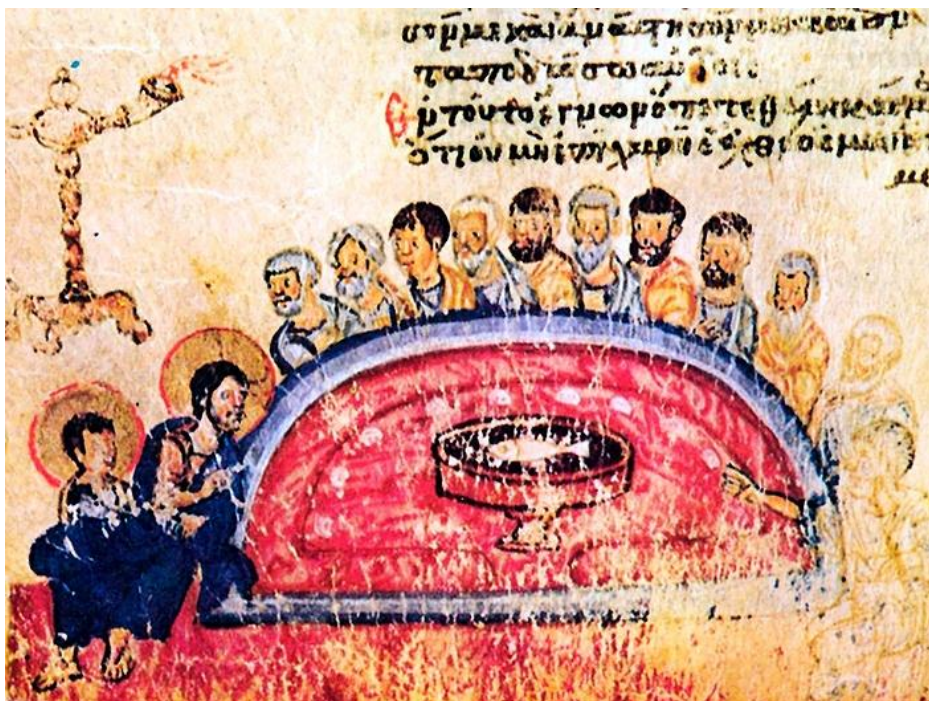
Fig. 1 Last Supper. Chludov Psalter. Constantinople. c. middle of the 9th century. State Historical Museum, Moscow

This work is recognized as one of the most famous creations of the Byzantine miniature book of the Middle Ages. Vukol Mikhailovich Undolsky was the first to publish a description and interpretation of the Psalter in the middle of the 19th century, suggesting that the Psalter could have been created on Athos. Later archimandrite, Bishop Amphilochius, an expert in Greek palaeography, published his studies based on the study of the Psalter. It is on the basis of his scientific research that the creation of the Psalter is usually attributed to the middle or the end of the 9th century, while repainting the miniatures – closer to the 12th century. At the end of the 19th century, F. I. Buslaev, researcher on ancient Russian art, analysed in detail the miniatures of the Chludov Psalter in his monography "General Concepts of the Russian Icon Painting", and also made suggestions to a more accurate dating of the work. In his research, he also makes analogies with ancient art, referring to images of the natural forces and allegories.

In 1878, N. P. Kondakov published his research on the miniatures of the Khludov Psalter, sharing the opinion of F. I. Buslaev that the Psalter was created after the end of the iconoclastic period[2]. Previously, the French art

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[2] N. P. Kondakov, *Miniatures of a Greek Manuscript of a Psalter of the 9th Century from the Collection of A. I. Khludov in Moscow* // Proceedings of the Moscow Archaeological Society.

historian G. Millet contributed to the description and interpretation of individual scenes[3]. It should be noted that the Chludov Psalter is often compared with the Barberini Codex №217 (Cod. Barb. gr. 217), which allowed for a more detailed analysis and comparison of miniatures of different works. The Psalter was first published in a facsimile edition in 1977 in Moscow thanks to the research of the palaeographer M. V. Shchepkin, who provided comments and translations of the holy texts accompanying each miniature. The researcher J. J. Tikkanen also emphasized that some miniatures contain polemical texts carrying the "polemic tone of the church struggle"[4].

Although, according to the Byzantine scholar Igor Shevchenko, this edition does not contain all miniatures and texts, a part of the Psalter is still on Mount Athos. On page 40, we can notice that the two plots are in close proximity to each other, in particular: Judas Iscariot, who conspires with the high priests to betray Christ, illustrating Verses 8–9 of Psalm 40 and the Last Supper below illustrating Verse 10, Psalm 40.

The right spread shows a deer near the well, next to a praying David illustrating Verse 2 of Psalm 41. The illustrations emphasize the sacrificial line and the theme of betrayal which unites all three miniatures. Speaking of the iconography of the Last Supper, it still gravitates towards the early stages of the iconography development varying in details, such as the figure of John who is distinguished from other disciples by being placed next to Christ and highlighted by a halo. The figure of Judas is also highlighted, as he is placed on the other side of the table reaching out to the dish with fish. An important detail is the tripod lamp on the left side of the composition[5].

Trebizond Gospel from the collection of the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg is dated between the late 9th – early 10th centuries, according to the research of V. D. Likhacheva **(Fig. 2)** which is quite relevant for the comparison of iconography with the earlier works of art, such as the Rossano Gospel.

T. VII. 1878, p. 169-183. (Miniatyury grecheskoy rukopisi psaltyri IX veka iz sobraniya A. I. Khludova v Moskve // Trudy Moskovskogo arkheologicheskogo obshchestva.)

[3] G. Millet, *L'art byzantine.* A. Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, I, Première partie, Paris, 1905, pp. 241-248.

[4] J. J. Tikkanen, *Die Psalterillustration im Mittelalter,* I, Byzantinische Psalterillustration, Helsingfors, 1895, pp. 99-148.

[5] M. V. Shchepkina, *Miniatures of the Khludov Psalter. Greek Illustrated Codex XI century.* Iskusstvo Publishing House, Moscow, 1977, pp. 8-23. (Miniatyury Khludovskoy psaltyri. Grecheskiy illyustrirovannyy kodeks XI veka.)

Fig. 2 Last Supper. Trebizond Gospel. 10th century. 33 x 36.5 cm. Russian National Library, Saint Petersburg

In this case, we can be sure that the iconography used by the artists in the 6th century continues to exist until the end of the 10th century. Artists keep using the image of the triclinium where Christ and his disciples are placed. Unlike Rossano Gospel, the figure of Judas is highlighted on the right side of the composition next to the bowl placed on the table. The colour of the miniature differs from the previous works by the active use of pale pink, white and golden tones, contrasting with a dark spot in the centre of the composition. It should also be noted that the Last Supper plot is in the close proximity of the miniature *Marriage at Cana*, emphasizing the sacrificial basis of the plot, similar to the frescos from the ensemble of St. Sophia's Cathedral in Kyiv[6].

It is noteworthy that among the miniatures of the Kyiv Psalter, created in 1397 and researched by G. I. Vzdornov, this miniature does not

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[6] V. D. Likhacheva, *The Byzantine Art of the 6th – 15th Centuries*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo Publishing House, 1981, pp. 123-126 (Iskusstvo Vizantii IV–XV vekov).

emphasize the sacrificial aspect, but it rather illustrates the Verse 16 of Psalm 144: "Thou openest thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature"[7]. The images of beds with the figures of Christ and Peter highlighted by halos among the other apostles are used in miniature iconography **(Fig. 3)**.

Fig. 3 Last Supper. Kiev Psalter. 1397. Parchment. Russian National Library, Saint Petersburg

The figure of Judas is still distinguished by the gesture of a hand reaching for the sacrificial bowl. The beloved disciple of Christ, John, is placed the closest to Christ. The art historian B. V. Skrypka confidently refuted the suggestion about the presence of conventional columns in the background. B. V. Skrypka identified them as the Roman oil lamps and readily provides similar analogies with other Byzantine miniatures discussed earlier in the article[8]. An interesting observation is that, according to B. V. Skrypka, a similar early Christian symbolism in the form of a stylized image of a fish placed on a tablecloth covering the table can also be seen on the clothes of Saints Boris and Gleb on the Novgorod icon from the collection of

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[7] G. I. Vzdornov, *Research of Kyiv Psalter*, Iskusstvo Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, pp. 50-51 (Issledovanie o Kievskoy Psaltiri.)

[8] B. V. Skrypka, *Study of the Miniatures of Kyiv Psalter* // Third Platon Readings: Theses of the Reports of the International Science Conference, Kyiv, Feniks Publishing House, 2016, pp. 29-30. (Doslidzhennja miniatjury Tajemna vecherja z Kyjivsjkogho Psaltyrja // Treti Platonivsjki chytannja: Tezy dopovidej Mizhnarodnoji naukovoji konferenciji Kyjiv Lystopad 2016.)

the National Museum "Kyiv Art Gallery", dating back to the middle of the 13th century, according to the information contained in the latest catalogue of the National Museum "Kyiv Art Gallery"[9].

One of the researchers of this icon was N. N. Chernogubov, whose research was published after his death and based on the materials and research documents kept by his widow. These studies were reflected in the article by N. N. Chernogubov entitled: *The Icon "Boris and Gleb" in the Kiev Museum of Russian Art* and published in the collected works *Ancient Russian Art of the 15th – early 16th Centuries*. However, the icon was dated between the late 13th – the early 14th centuries in the article, although the researcher dated the icon as belonging to the pre-Mongol period, as evidenced by the author's archival materials from the holdings of the National Museum "Kyiv Art Gallery" in Kyiv. The author of the article described in great detail all the technical characteristics of the icon, the pigments, the base and most importantly, the symbols that can be traced on their cloaks. We are interested in the mentioned symbol. N. N. Chernogubov does not specify this particular symbol, although he considers the neighbouring one similar in shape calling it "a rhombus set at an angle with dashes crossing its sides and with a dot in its centre". Nevertheless, the researcher managed to find analogies of the last symbol in the history of art in other artworks, namely in the 11th century mosaics in the Daphni Monastery (in the trim of Solomon's clothes) and in the 13th century icon depicting Archangel Michael from the Assumption Cathedral in Moscow[10].

We managed to find similar symbols in other artworks depicting the Last Supper, namely in the frescoes of the 12th century in the Karanlik Church (Cappadocia, Turkey), in the frescoes of the mid-14th – second half of the 15th century by the artist Damiane in the monastery in Ubisi (Georgia), located in the central apse of the altar, as well as in the 14th century miniatures of the Kyiv Psalter[11].

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[9] *Icons of the 13th – early 20th centuries and ancient Russian decorative and applied art.* National Museum "Kyiv Art Gallery": catalogue / S. Levchenko, Gh. Alaverdova, Kyiv,Antykvar Publishing House, 2020, pp. 30-35. (Ikonopys XIII – pochatku XX stolittja ta davnjorusjke dekoratyvno-prykladne mystectvo. Nacionaljnyj muzej "Kyjivsjka kartynna ghalereja".)

[10] N. N. Chernogubov, *Icon of St. Boris and Gleb at the Kiev Museum of Russian Art* // Russian Art of the 15th – early 16th centuries, USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, 1963, pp. 285-290. (Ikona "Boris i Gleb" v Kievskom muzee russkogo iskusstva // Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo 15 – nachala 16 vekov. Izdatelstvo akademii nauk SSSR.)

[11] N. V. Dmytrenko, *Formation of the Iconography of the Last Supper in the Byzantine Mural Decorations of 10th–14th centuries* // Current issues of the Humanities: Interuniversity digest of scientific works of young scientists of Drohobych State Pedagogical University named after Ivan Franko. Vol. 33, T. 1, 2020, pp. 40-51. (Formuvannja ikonoghrafiji sjuzhetu Tajemna vecherja u vizantijsjkij khramovij dekoraciji 10-14 stolitj // Aktualjni pytannja ghumanitarnykh nauk: Mizhvuzivsjkyj zbirnyk naukovykh pracj molodykh vchenykh Droghobycjkogho derzhavnogho pedaghoghichnogho universytetu imeni Ivana Franka.)

Starting with the 11th century, we can trace certain changes that began to appear in the Last Supper iconography. A miniature with the Last Supper from the Gospel of the Apostle of the 11th century, kept in the Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos is a strikingly eloquent example in this case **(Fig. 4)**.

Fig. 4 Last Supper. Gospel and Apostle, 11th century, Dionysiou Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece

Here we can see that the figure of Christ is still predominant, reclining on the couch, but the disciples are depicted already sitting around the table. The artist conditionally distinguished each of them not only colouristically and by the difference in their clothes, but also with different signs showing their age. A symbolic image of architecture, which appears in the miniature as united by the red cloth called velum is a distinctive feature of the miniature depicting this plot. This symbolic image would continue to be actively used in the icon painting in the future.

The exceptional examples of the Armenian miniatures are very interesting to consider, having in view the iconography development and the tracing of its changes in the example of the Last Supper plot in the Gospels and Psalters created on the territory of the Byzantine Empire. Armenia came under the rule of the Byzantines after the partition of the Greater Armenia in 387, when part of the country became part of Byzantium (High Armenia, Sophene, part of Arzanene) while the rest of the Armenian territory passed to

Sasanian Persia. Then Armenia was divided for the second time, and the borders of the empire expanded. This situation led to the Arab invasion, when the Byzantines created the Armeniac theme as a military and political unit. At the end of the 9th century, the independence of Armenia was restored under the rule of Bagratuni Dynasty and only some parts of the historical Armenia remained part of Byzantium.

The Armenian miniatures of the 14th century, in particular the Gospel of Artsakh depicted the Last Supper plot (**Fig. 5**).

Fig. 5 Last Supper, Gospel Artsakh, 14th century, Matenadaran, MS 316, Erevan, Armenia

The Gospel is kept in the Matenadaran, which is the St. Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, a research centre under the Government of the Republic of Armenia in Yerevan. It is one of the largest repositories of manuscripts in the world and the largest repository of the ancient Armenian manuscripts.

In the centre of the composition, there is a table in the form of an Armenian cross decorated with ornaments in the form of weaving. The cross is arranged in a circle around which we see the apostles who are densely placed. They are depicted as black-haired bearded heads with golden halos.

On the left side, there is a throne with a sitting Christ in pale pink himation. With his right hand, he is facing the disciples, the half-length figure of Judas leaving the Last Supper is separately depicted on the right side of the composition, in the lower corner.

In Byzantine miniature, this is perhaps the only example of iconography where Judas leaves the Last Supper. As an alternative and later example, it is worth recalling the frescoes of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Lublin (Poland), where the departing Judas is similarly depicted, only with the devil sitting on his shoulders. The composition is built on warm pink, crimson tones contrasting in dark accents with the heads of the apostles around the table. There is a stylized arch around the perimeter of the entire miniature filled with the geometric shapes of triangles, squares and rhombuses in soft green, blue and pink, which also serve as striking elements.

If we consider the miniatures of the Gladzor Gospel dating back to approximately 1300 (14th century) from the collection of the Charles Young Research Library in Los Angeles, we will see that the iconography of the Last Supper is very similar to the miniature described above (**Fig. 6**).

Fig. 6 Last Supper. Gladzor Gospels, c. 1300, Charles E. Young Research Library, Los Angeles, USA

The differences include the detailed elaboration of the images of each of the apostles and the appearance of a conditional architectural background. An interesting detail is the throne, similar to a blue mandorla, with sitting Christ. Judas in this miniature is depicted as a profile image, not in the lower right corner, but between the other disciples of Christ, reaching out to the sacrificial calf on the table. It should be noted that the iconography of these two works enriches the first Byzantine works of decorative and applied sacred art devoting to topics created by combining Roman samples with the prominent talent of the Greek jewellers. A striking proof of this is the cloisonné enamel depicting the Last Supper on a late 9th – early 10th century discos from the Louvre collection. Nevertheless, in the Armenian miniature of the 11th century, artists used the iconography of the Western model involving the image of a conditional oblong refectory table, placing all students in a row against the background of a conditional interior.

On the example of miniatures from the Tarkmanchatz Gospel dating back to 1232, we can trace the full moon and stars in the sky for the first time depicted in the iconography of the Last Supper **(Fig. 7)**.
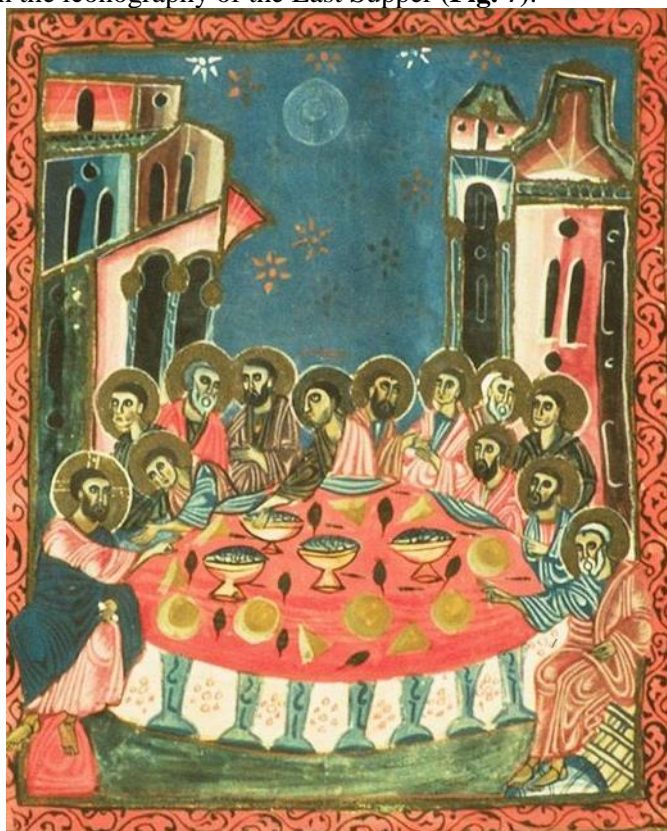
Fig. 7 Last Supper, Tarkmanchatz Gospel, circa 1232, Armenia

In the miniatures depicting the Last Supper in *The Art of Bulgarian miniatures*, we can see how the influence of catacomb art was preserved right up to the 14th century. This is evidenced by the iconography of a plot from the Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, created in 1355 – 1356 in Tarnovo and held at the British Library in London. It should be noted that Veliko Tarnovo was the capital of Bulgaria in the 12th – 14th centuries and it is well known as the capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire. In this Gospel, the miniature with the Last Supper is encountered three times with a completely different iconography. It is noteworthy that the subject of the Eucharist is shown in another miniature on a separate page. The number of miniatures with the Last Supper logically corresponds to the number of the Gospels (except for the fourth Gospel of John). First of all, we are attracted by the iconography of the Last Supper, in which there is a figure of a servant who came out of a nearby building carrying a dish in her hands **(Fig. 8 – a)**.
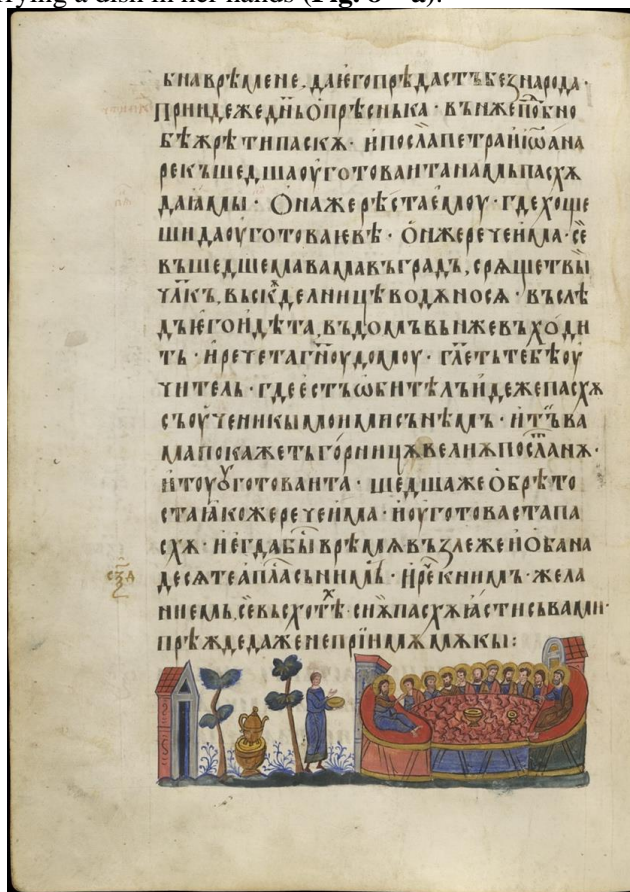
Fig. 8 – a The Last Supper, Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, 1356, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, British Library, London

There is a vessel on a tripod – standing between two trees and a conventional landscape on the right from her. On the right of the miniature, there is a table at which Christ's disciples are sitting. On either side of the couches, there are Jesus and Peter. Ten disciples are sharing the sacred moment of the Last Supper. All of them have halos over their heads. In the next miniature, we can already see twelve disciples present, one being Judas reaching for a bowl placed in the centre of the table, he is depicted without a halo above his head **(Fig. 8 – b)**.
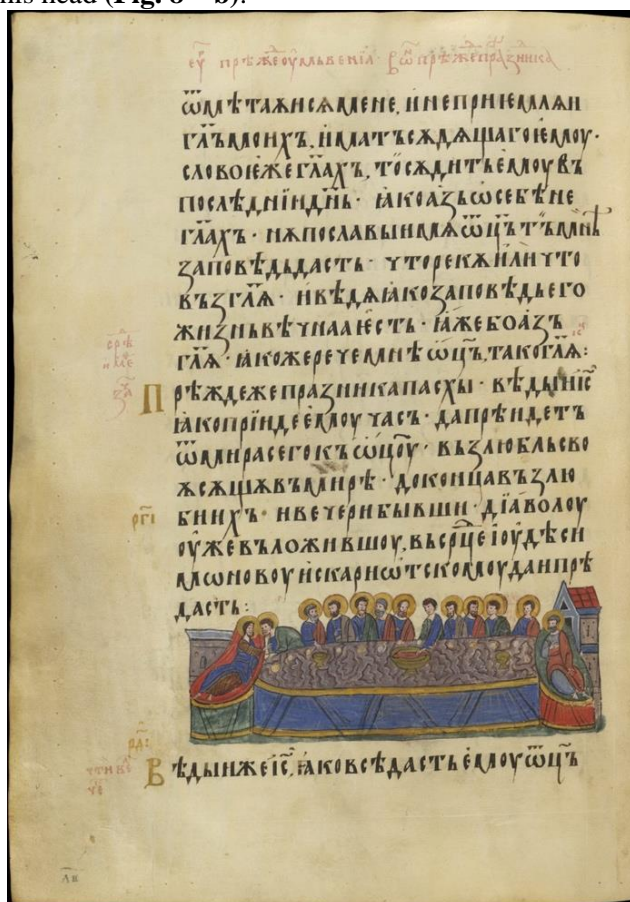
Fig. 8 – b The Last Supper, Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, 1356, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. British Library, London

The third miniature is identical to the previous one, with its composition and iconography separated from the architectural details which are absent in the right corner **(Fig. 8 – c)**.
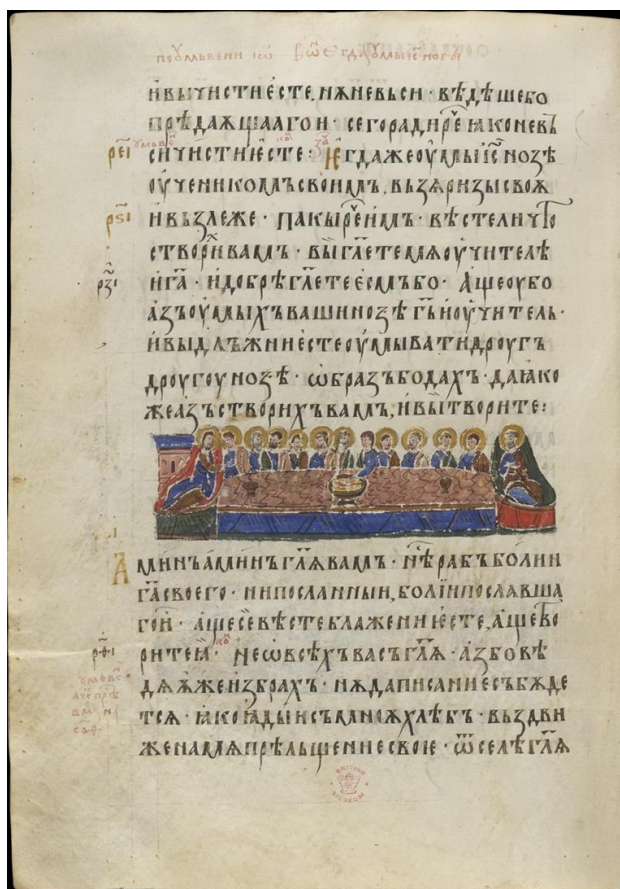
Fig. 8 – c The Last Supper, Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, 1356, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. British Library, London

In all three miniatures, John is distinguished by being placed the closest to the Teacher, who is stretching out his right hand to him. The colour in all three miniatures is rich, vivid, based on the spectral triad of red, blue and green colours. However, it is obvious that the miniatures were created by three different masters, which is evident by the different artistic level of the works. The most exquisite and well-preserved miniature is the first one that we considered. Apparently, it was performed by the head master of the workshop who was also the author of the miniature with the Eucharist[12].

In the miniatures of the 13th century from the collection of The J. Paul Getty Museum, specifically depicting the Last Supper and created in the

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[12] R. Milner-Gulland, *Review of The Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander by Ekaterina Dimitrova,* The Slavonic and East European Review, Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Vol. 74, No. 2., 1996, pp. 302-304.

territory of modern Turkey, namely in Nicomedia or Nicaea (?) at the end of the 13th century, we can see the pride and development of the Byzantine manuscript miniatures and the final formation of the Last Supper iconography, in which there is a dynamic between the disciples of Christ at the table as well as the individual distinctive features of each. The established features that remain are Christ and Peter depicted with halos and the figure of John placed the closest to all, as a beloved disciple of Christ **(Fig. 9).** It should be noted that N. P. Kondakov published an extended research based on the Greek miniatures and their impact on Byzantine culture[13].

Fig. 9 Last Supper. Unknown. Byzantine. Nicaea or Nicomedia, Turkey. late 13th century. Tempera colours and gold leaf. Ms. Ludwig II 5, fol. 65v. Leaf 20.6 × 14.9 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA

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[13] N. P. Kondakov, *History of Byzantine Art and Iconography from Greek miniature manuscripts.* Notes of the Imperial Novorossiysk University. T. XXI. Odessa, 1876, pp. 250-254. (Istoriya vizantiyskogo iskusstva i ikonografii po miniatyuram grecheskikh rukopisey // Zapiski imperatorskogo Novorossiyskogo universiteta.)

Among the interesting observations, it should be noted that in the Armenian miniature of the 14th century the Last Supper was combined on one folio with such a plot as Jesus Walking on Water.

Conclusion

Thus, we can trace the development of the Last Supper in the art of book miniatures of the 10th – 14th centuries created on the territory of the Byzantine Empire, or influenced by the art of Byzantium in particular Constantinople, Kievan Rus (Kyiv), Greece (Athos), Great Armenia (Yerevan), Bulgaria (Tarnovo) and Turkey (Nicaea, Nicomedia). Each of the described works of art has its own distinctive features, and also common details that confidently support the conclusion that the principles of the early Christian iconography, as well as the art of the catacombs continued to influence the masters of Byzantine miniature right up to the 14th century.

Over the centuries, the Last Supper has undergone various changes associated with geographical and political changes of the Byzantine Empire, and it was gradually and continuously formed by the end of the 13th century. Emphasizing the pagan art basics and early Christian art in association with political invasions and cultural impacts, finally it acquires artistic and truly unique features different in comparison with other countries.

Liste et source des illustrations

Fig. 1 Last Supper. Chludov Psalter. Constantinople. c. middle of the 9th century. State Historical Museum, Moscow, *from Miniatures of the Khludov Psalter. Greek Illustrated Codex XI century*. 1977, p. 8-23. (Miniatyury Khludovskoy psaltyri. Grecheskiy illyustrirovannyy kodeks XI veka.)

Fig. 2 Last Supper. Trebizond Gospel. 10th century. 33 x 36.5 cm. Russian National Library, Saint Petersburg, *from Byzantine Art of 6th–15th*.1981, p. 123-126. (Iskusstvo Vizantii IV–XV vekov.)

Fig. 3 Last Supper. Kiev Psalter. 1397. Parchment. Russian National Library, Saint Petersburg, *from Research of Kyiv Psalter*. 1978, p. 50–51. (Issledovanie o Kievskoy Psaltiri.)

Fig. 4 Last Supper. Gospel and Apostle. 11th century. Dionysiou Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece, *from Ruvera.ru*

Fig. 5 Last Supper. Gospel Artsakh. 14th century. Matenadaran, MS 316. Erevan, Armenia, *Photo: Ara Güler*

Fig. 6 Last Supper. Gladzor Gospels. c. 1300. Charles E. Young Research Library. Los Angeles, USA, *from livejournal*

Fig. 7 Last Supper. Tarkmanchatz Gospel. 1232. Armenia. *Photo: Vemkar.*

Fig. 8 (a – c) Last Supper. Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander. 1356. Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. British Library, London. *Photo: The British Library*

Fig. 9 Last Supper. Byzantine Empire. Nicaea or Nicomedia, Turkey. late 13th century. Tempera colours and gold leaf. Ms. Ludwig II 5, fol. 65v. Leaf 20.6 × 14.9 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA. *Photo: The J. Paul Getty Museum*

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Medieval Art, National Architectural Heritage and Museums in Late 19th Century Romania[*]

Cosmin Minea[**]

Abstract: *This article describes how the material heritage was given new shape and meaning in the context of the new nation-state of Romania. It starts by looking at the history of the first public museum in Romania, namely the Museum of Natural History and Antiquities in Bucharest and also at the broader interest in the Roman antiquities in 19th century Romania. It then focuses on the first restoration of historical monuments and the initiatives of two of the most well-known architects at the time to establish museums of religious art: André Lecomte du Noüy (1844-1914) and Ion Mincu (1852-1912). The process of creating a national heritage for Romania has led to the design of valuable new buildings and was underpinned by a powerful will to modernise the country. At the same time, it has represented a destructive force. The built fabric of historical sites and historical artefacts were reshaped, rebuilt, given new meanings and context, so that to fit into the political objectives of the new nation-state. The article will balance and analyse the significance of these various efforts to restore historical monuments and establish the first museums of Romanian heritage.*

Introduction

The earliest attempts at defining a set of historical monuments as national symbols is closely connected to a growing interest in medieval art and in the cultural identity of modern Romania. The article takes as a starting point the almost unknown attempts to establish museums of religious and medieval art in Romania in order to describe the wider activity of restoring,

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promoting and defining the historical heritage of the country. It begins with the period of time preceding the creation of modern Romania, by focusing on the vivid interest in local Antiquities, visible in the establishment and running of the Museum of Natural History and Antiquities in the capital Bucharest. It then describes the first missions to document, study and gather medieval artefacts in the country and the first restoration campaign of historical monuments. Part of the activity to reshape and refurbish monuments were also proposals to establish new museums for the religious art, the frescoes and the fragments of architecture from the historical monuments. I use the terms 'medieval' and 'historical', throughout the entire text, as interchangeable concepts, since in the Romanian art historiography terms such as 'medieval' are loosely used to refer to art and architecture from the 13th century up until the late 18th century. In effect, the medieval period is often defined as comprising almost the whole historical time since the first documented political formations on the territory of Romania after the Roman period (12th century-13th century) until the modern state.

The activity of restoring, promoting and displaying religious art is best analysed within the context of a modernising nation-state, in the search for its own cultural identity, but also within the wider European context. Therefore, the article will trace how Western concepts and institutions, such as universal exhibitions, state museums, art galleries or public monuments were interpreted and given new meanings in the Romanian case. It will also bring new information on the history of museum displays in Romania and on some of the best-known architects of the time, namely André Lecomte du Noüy (1844-1914) and Ion Mincu (1852-1912).

The nineteenth century brought sweeping changes in the political status of Wallachia and Moldavia. Firstly, the brief Russian administration of the two provinces (1829-1834) was a period of rapid administrative reform (the first constitution, modern urban plans) and of a first Europeanisation process of the society. Following the Crimean War (1856), Wallachia and Moldavia secured the rights to autonomy and when in 1859 both regions chose the same person as ruler, Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1820-1873), the process of modernisation according to the European model gained full steam. The most visible cultural artefacts and monuments of modern Romania were mostly Orthodox churches and monasteries, together with objects serving their religious practices. The architecture of these monuments was marked by periods of Byzantine, Serbian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Ottoman and Oriental influences. As a consequence, there is = difficult to classify them

according to a fixed artistic pattern, their evolution or defined set of influences. The monastery of Curtea de Argeș (early 16th century), the most well-known monument in the 19th century in Romania, is a case in point. For the sources of its architecture and decoration, scholars have advanced hypothesis ranging from Western and Central Europe to Middle East and Central Asia (Romanesque, Moresque, Venetian, Arab, Persian, Serbian, Armenian or Georgian architecture).[1] The original and eclectic nature of the monuments was not something to be proud of but an obstacle for 19th century Romanian leaders, who looked to define and promote a clearly recognisable national architectural heritage. As the article will show, the role of museums and of restorations was to a certain extent to order the various objects and monuments according to a clear, rational narrative that had as ultimate purpose to promote a national historical heritage of Romania.

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[1] Writings about Curtea de Argeș include Ludwig Reissenberger, "Die bischöfliche Klosterkirche bei Kurtea d'Argyisch in der Walachei", *Jahrbuch der Kaiserl. Königl. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale*, IV (1860).Alexandru Tzigara-Smurcaş, *Biserica Episcopală din Curtea de Argeş*, (Bucharest, 1913); Alexandru Odobescu, *Biserica de la Curtea de Argeş*, (Bucharest, 1924); Nicolae Ghika-Budeşti, "Înrâurirea armenească", *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice,* Part. 1, (1927), 140-146, especially 140-143.Gheorghe Balş, *Influences arméniennes et géorgiennes sur l'architecture roumaine* (Vălenii de Munte, 1931); Emil Lăzărescu, *Biserica Mânăstirii Argeşului* (The Church of the Argeş Monastery), (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1967). Kirsta Zach, "Der Furstenhof in Argeş", in *Religiöse Erinnerungsorte in Ostmitteleuropa: Konstitution und Konkurrenz*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke, Stefan Rohdewald, Thomas Wünsch, (Akademie Verlag, 2013), 99-110. Emanuela Cernea, Oliviu Boldura, et all., *Mărturii. Frescele Mănăstirii Argeşului*, Exhibition catalogue, (MNAR: Bucharest, 2013).

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monuments was not something to be proud of but an obstacle for 19th century Romanian leaders, who looked to define and promote a clearly recognisable national architectural heritage. As the article will show, the role of museums and of restorations was to a certain extent to order the various objects and monuments according to a clear, rational narrative that had as ultimate purpose to promote a national historical heritage of Romania.

The Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest and the first attempts to display 'national' Romanian art

Romania's first decades of independence were marked by the actions of a Western-educated, liberal elite that oversaw a process of modernisation, based on emulating Western nation-states. Part of the process was the constitution, promotion and display of a set of buildings and artefacts representative for the culture and history of Romania. Throughout the period, the leading Romanian intellectuals interested in the material heritage were primarily concerned with the remains of Antiquity. In the case of Romania, the antiquities also carried significant national symbolism. They were classified as 'Roman art' and were perceived as material proofs of the Latin origins of the Romanians, the so-believed quintessential national characteristic. Activities of uncovering, documenting and researching the ruins of Antiquity were carried on a regular basis, as seen, for example, in the publications of Alexandru Odobescu or Grigore Tocilescu.[3]

The first public museum in Romania, the Museum of Natural History and Antiquities (founded in 1834 and hosted within the 'Saint Sava' College, the most advanced educational institution in the country), was the centre of the efforts to collect and display Roman Antiquities. Initially, it was very similar with the private curiosity collections of aristocrats, well-known at the time. In fact, the initial collection of the museum comprised the personal curiosity collection of the boyar Mihalache Ghica (1792-1850), that included a range of natural history objects, antiquities, a numismatic collection, copies of Roman sculptures, etc. In 1850, a picture gallery was included in one of the rooms of the museum with the works of the most significant contemporary painters (such as Gheorghe Tattarescu and Constantin

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Cernea, Oliviu Boldura, et all., *Mărturii. Frescele Mănăstirii Argeşului*, Exhibition catalogue, (MNAR: Bucharest, 2013).

[3] Alexandru Odobescu, *Rămăşiţe antice din Judeţul Dorohoiu* (1872), *Antichităţile judeţului Romanaţi*(1877), both published in Alexandru Odobescu, *Opere complete*, vol. 3, (Bucharest, 1906). Grigore Tocilescu, Documente privitoarere la Istoria Romanilor, (Bucharest, 1885-1886). Grigore Tocilescu, Otto Benndorf and George Niemann, *Das monvment von Adamklissi, Tropaevm Traiani*, (Vienna, 1895).

Lecca).[4]A new museum was opened as Museum of Antiquities in the new university building in Bucharest, in 1865, that published its inventory for the first time and acquired objects according to a new law, *Regulation for exploitation and acquisition of antique objects* (1874). In 1875, four new sections of the museum were established, which indicated a clear will to gather and display a diverse national cultural heritage: the section of 'national costumes', meaning folk clothing; the section of paintings having as central theme the national history and heritage; the section of precious stones, and an industrial section showcasing the modernisation of Romania. From 1881 to 1909 the director of the museum was Grigore Tocilescu, the main archeologist of Romania, who would continue to enrich the collection of the museum.

The attention on antiquities is further proven by other much smaller regional museums that started to emerge at the end of the 19th century, such as the history and archeological collection in Târgu-Jiu, predecessor of the Gorj Museum (founded in 1893) and the Câmpulung Museum (founded in 1889) within Negru Vodă Monastery.[5] They all focused their collection on archeology, coins or natural history, directly copying the former cabinets of curiosities of the early-modern period.[6]

In spite of the great symbolic significance given to Antiquity, most of the material heritage and the known history of Wallachia and Moldavia were the product of the period starting from the 14th century. If Antiquity was more important because it was considered the alleged moment of birth of the Romanian 'nation', the medieval period and consequently its historical monuments constituted in the eyes of local intellectuals the proof of Romanian continuity on the present lands, from Antiquity until contemporary times. Since religious art comprised most of the surviving material heritage of the past (surviving examples of princely, courtly or military art were scarce), the significance given to it was substantial.

The importance of religious monuments is confirmed by the fact that in the very first year after Romania was formed, in 1860, the state organised a set of study trips throughout the country in order to document artistic and historical artefacts. Its scope was to gather and study artefacts from the historical monasteries in Romania. Notably, the trips focused on movable objects and not on architecture or decoration of monuments, having as

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[4] Mirela Târnă, "Conceptul de Muzeu National • Studiu De Caz: Muzeul NationaL De Antichităti Din Bucuresti", *Bucureşti. Materiale de istorie şi muzeografie*, Vol. XIX, (2005), 360-372, 364.
[5]Details in Vasilica Asandei, *Arheologie Şi Muzeologie în România la Sfârşitul Secolului Al Xix-Lea Şi Începutul Secolului Al Xx-Lea (Metode Şi Concepţii)*, PhD Thesis, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Din Iaşi, Facultatea De Istorie, (2020).
[6]Vasilica Asandei, *Arheologie Şi Muzeologie în România la Sfârşitul Secolului Al Xix-Lea Şi Începutul Secolului Al Xx-Lea (Metode Şi Concepţii)*, PhD Thesis, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Din Iaşi Facultatea De Istorie, (2020), 14.

declared focus to gather 'the archeological, archival and bibliographic treasures' of the country.[7] Therefore, four teams were assigned to explore different parts of the country, each formed by a historian and an artist that would draw copies after the objects found. In the end, there were involved in the trips' activities six people, out of which two painters: Henri Trenk (1818-1892) and Gheorghe Tattarescu (1820-1894).[8] The 1860 trips produced reports to the ministry, some published lists and descriptions of monuments and objects and newly acquired pieces for the Museum of Antiquities.[9] Other trips to document the religious monuments in Romania, equally marked by an interest in the mobile artefacts and in the written inscriptions, followed in 1871, 1882 and 1887.[10]

Artefacts were seen as more significant for the Romanian state, because of the already established tradition of antiquarian collections, but also owing to the fact that they could be displayed at the first public museum in the country, the Museum of Natural History and Antiquities and thus could become part of an emerging national heritage. For example, Odobescu published only objects and inscriptions, while ignoring the architecture and decoration of Curtea de Argeș monastery.[11] On the other hand, Henri Trenk's romantic watercolours taken during the documentary trip also reveal that the monuments were not given much significance. In his view of Curtea de Argeș for example, one cannot distinguish the architectural features of the church, and the focus is placed on the general picturesque landscape (Figure1).

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[7] Aurelian Sarcedotianu, *Cercetări istorice și pitorești prin mânăstirile noastre acum optzeci de ani*, [Picturesque and historical research in our monasteries eighty years ago] (Bucharest, 1941), 2. More details about the trips in Alexandru Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut la cercetarea istoriei. Vestigii, călătorii și colecționari în România celei de-a doua jumătăți a secolului XIX*, (Iași: Editura Universității Al. I. Cuza din Iași, 2015); Ada Hajdu, "În Căutarea Patrimoniului. Excursiile Patriotice Și Arhitectura Națională Românească În Secolul al XIX-Lea," in *Călători Și Călătorii. A Privi, a Descoperi*, ed. Bogdan Cristina and Marin Barutcieff Silvia, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2016), 149-68.
[8] The historians were mostly specialists in Roman antiquities (Alexandru Odobescu, Cezar Bolliac, Alexandru Pelimon, Dumitru Pappazoglu).
[9] Alexandru Pelimon, *Descrierea Sfintelor Monastiri, de A. Palemon. Memoriu*. (Bucharest, 1861); Cesar Bolliac, *Monastirile din Romania. (Monastirile inchinate)*, (Bucharest, 1862). Ada Hajdu, "În Căutarea", 11.
[10] Alexandru Odobescu, "Chestionarul Odobescu", 1871-1874, Manuscript 223-230, *Library of the Romanian Academy, Manuscript Cabinet*. Pantazi Ghika, *Monumente Naționali. Monastiri și biserici ortodoce. Raporturi de la comisiunile întocmite pentru cercetarea lor*, Vol 1, (Bucharest, 1882); Ioan Slavici, George Mandrea, *Monumente Naționali. Monastiri și biserici ortodoce. Raporturi de la comisiunile întocmite pentru cercetarea lor*, Vol 2, (Bucharest, 1882); Grigore Tocilescu, *Raporturi asupra câtorva mănăstiri, schituri și biserici din țeră*, (Bucharest, 1887). See also a recent study of these documentary trips in Ada Hajdu, "În Căutarea…"
[11] Report from August 17, 1860 in Sarcedoteanu, *Cercetări istorice*, 16.

Figure 1: Henri Trenk, *View of Curtea de Argeș*, Watercolour, 1860.

Romania had to organise a national exhibition of its most significant pieces of cultural heritage when it participated at the Universal Exhibition of 1867 in Paris. Its organiser, Alexandru Odobescu, hoped that Romanian art 'will cause a sensation in the artistic world, especially today, when the civilized Europe is tired of overused styles and eagerly looks towards Byzantine architecture for decorative motifs'.[12] He indeed focused on unusual cultural products, that he hoped to raise the interest of the French audience, such as religious artefacts, folk costumes, sculptures, a reproduction of Curtea de Argeș church, pictures with monuments[13] and others (Figure 2). The Romanian pavilion, loosely inspired by Curtea de Argeș church and Stavropoloes Monastery, was also promoted by Odobescu as an original object of study: 'This style has a very particular aspect, that could provide an interesting field of archeological studies, in spite of some analogies with religious constructions in Russia and some details of Arab origins.'[14]

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[12] Alexandru Odobescu, *Scrieri Literare si Istorice*, (Bucharest, 1887), 86.
[13] See Alexandru Odobescu, Petre Aurelian, *Notice sur la Roumanie: principalement au point de vue de son économie rurale, industrielle et commerciale,* (Paris: A. Franck, 1868); Alexandru Odobescu, *Notice sur les antiquites de la Roumanie*, (Paris: A. Franck, 1868).
[14] Odobescu, Aurelian, *Notice sur la Roumanie*, 317. See also Cosmin Minea, "The Monastery of Curtea de Argeș and Romanian Architectural Heritage in the Late 19th Century," *Studies in History and Theory of Architecture* 4 (2016): 191–94.

However, French commentators saw the same 'Romanian' architecture differently, as indicating an oriental culture, heavily decorated and with bright colours; they were confused by the Orthodox religion for a Latin nation.[15] One author wondered: 'Romania does not exist by itself. It does not shine. (...) It is Greek, Russian, French, German, what else?'.[16] Another commentators found the architecture comparable with that of a mosque, concluding that 'it is an art in-between, that searches for its character but does not find it, in the same way as the country that represents it.[17]

Figure 2: Bisson Freres Studio, view of the Romanian section, 1867 Paris Universal Exhibition

Indeed, Odobescu's efforts to present Romania as an original and innovative nation backfired and ended up by indicating precisely what Romanian intellectuals desired less, namely that Romanian art and culture was similar to that of regions and outside the canon of European art. This lack of identity in the European context, the 'in-betweenness' of Romanian culture, that lies outside recognised categories, is not a problem specific to the 19th century alone. Recent appeals at a more 'horizontal', inclusive art history are proof of the present attempts to overcome divisions based on

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[15] Laurențiu Vlad, *Imagini ale identității naționale. România şi expoziţiile universale de la Paris, 1867-1937*, (Iași: Institutul European, 2007, 84 – 85).
[16]*L'Exposition illustrée*, tom II, 1900, 130-132.
[17] François Ducuing, "L'Eglise roumaine", in *L'Exposition illustrée*, tom I, (1867), 53.

notions of centres and peripheries in Central and Eastern Europe.[18] In the 19th century, this image of Romanian culture as rather exotic and outside the European canon, fuelled a constant need for affirmation and redefinition that led to the first attempts to establish museums of religious art in the country and to the restoration of monuments.

The restoration of Trei Ierarhi Monastery and the proposed first public museum of Iași

One of the most visible attempts to promote a national cultural identity for Romania was the long and extensive campaign to restore the most significant architectural monuments in the country, led from 1875 to 1904 by the French architect André Lecomte du Noüy (1844-1914). The way monuments were transformed reveals the vivid desire of both domestic and foreign actors to refashion the past material heritage of Romania in order to integrate it into the European culture. In the second half of the nineteenth century, in most regions of Europe the symbolical significance of historical monuments grew exponentially. If just a few decades before they were opportunities for remembering a lost past or for romantic daydreamers, historical monuments quickly came to embody the present and future aspirations of nation-states and empires.[19] Old ruins were restored into shiny new cathedrals or castles (notably in France, restored by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc; or Friedrich Schmidt in Austria), old unfinished constructions were completed (such as Cologne Cathedral) or some other monuments were refurbished in order to represent in a more fitting way the national history and culture of 'the people'. Romania was not an exception. Architects and intellectuals gave new meanings and transformed monuments through writings and restorations, that translated into very visible modifications to the fabric of buildings and their surroundings.

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[18] See recently, including a review of some major attempts to Petra Brouwer & Kristina Jõekalda, "Introduction: architectural identities of European peripheries", (2020), *The Journal of Architecture*, 25:8, 963-977. Also, Carmen Popescu, "'Cultures majeures, cultures mineures'. Quelques réflexions sur la (géo)politisation du folklore dans l'entre-deux-guerres", in *Spicilegium. Studii și articole în onoarea Prof. Corina Popa,* (Bucharest: UNArte, 2015); Piotr Piotrowski, "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde," in *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent*, ed. Bru Sascha (De Gruyter, 2009), 49–58. Foteini Vlachou, "Notes from the Periphery: History and Methods", *Visual Resources*, Volume 35, Issue 3-4, 2019, 193-199.

[19] See Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2002), 137–73.Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2013). Brenda Schildgen, *Heritage or Heresy: Preservation and Destruction of Religious Art and Architecture in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Figure 3: Curtea de Argeș after the exterior restoration (around 1881).

Lecomte du Noüy oversaw the restoration of the former monastery of Curtea de Argeș (between 1875-1886), the church of Trei Ierarhi (1881-1890), the Princely Church Saint Nicholas in Iași (1886-1904), the Metropolitan Church in Târgoviște (1885-1895), and Saint Dimitry Church in Craiova (1887-1896). He was recommended by Viollet-le-Duc, the leading French restorer of the time, who previously studied the restoration of Curtea de Argeș at the request of the Romanian authorities.[20] The fact that politicians such as Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917), then the Minister of Religious Cults and Public Education, or the historian Alexandru Odobescu, asked Viollet-le-Duc to study the restoration of a Romanian monument, is a testament for their confidence in but also within the French cultural milieu, where they were also educated.

At Curtea de Arges, Lecomte du Noüy reconstructed identically the main tower, many of the decorations and only changed minor details, such as the wreaths to the domes. However, he completely remade the interior of the church with brand new neo-Byzantine frescoes, demolished its surrounding

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[20] "Letter to the Minister of Religious Cults and Pulic Instructions", August 20, 1874, leaf 173, dossier no. 127, year 1874, Fonds Ministry of Religion and Public Instructions, *National Archives of Romania*, Bucharest.

buildings and built instead an Episcopal Palace.[21] His restoration singled-out the monument, placing it in a vast open landscape, extracted from its historical context, in the manner of museum displays (Figure 3).

His second restoration, began in 1882, was that of the 17th century Trei Ierarhi monastery (built between 1637 and 1639) in Iaşi, long regarded as the most beautiful in Romania, a Moldavian equivalent of Curtea de Argeş, and also a symbol for the cultural and religious patronage of the Moldavian Voivode Vasile Lupu (who reigned between 1634-1653).[22] The monastery comprised lodgings for monks, a refectory, a bell-tower, a religious school for the study of Latin and Slavonic languages (Academia Vasiliană), a printing press and the princely residence. It also hosted the remains of Saint Paraskeva (venerated throughout the Balkans). Architecturally, the church stands out through its exterior decorations, in particular its uniquely rich and fastidious stone carvings from top to bottom, interrupted only by a central stone belt, specific to Wallachian churches (Figure 4). The decoration is somehow similar to some early medieval Russian churches, such as the one in Vladimir (Figure 5); indeed, most likely the architect and stonemasons were trained and based in the Russian Empire. If its decoration is unique for at least Central and Eastern Europe, structurally, the church is similar to other Moldavian monuments with an elongated trefoil plan, the specific diagonal 'Moldavian' vaults and Gothic door and window frames.[23]

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[21]Carmen Popescu, "André Lecomte Du Nouÿ (1844-1914) et La Restauration Des Monuments Historiques En Roumanie," *Bulletin de La Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français. Année 1998*, 1999, 287–308.

[22] See an official description in "Report", October 20, 1881, *Restaurarea monumentelor istorice, 1865-1890, Acte şi rapoarte oficiale,* (Bucharest , 1890), 121-122: "It is indeed at the same level with Curtea de Argeş". Also see the opinion of the contemporary art history teacher Nicolae Idieru: Nicolae Idieru, *Istoria Artelor Frumoase*, (Bucharest, 1898), 116: "Trei Ierarhi is almost as accomplished as Curtea de Argeş". See more details about Trei Ierarhi in English in Alice Isabella Sullivan, "Ecclesiastical Art and Architecture at the Crossroads: The Three Hierarchs Church in Iaşi" in George Lăzăroiu, ed., *Thraco-Dacian and Byzantine Romanity of Eastern Europe and Asia Minor*, vol. XI, (New York: The Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality, 2012). In Romanian, see Dan Bădărău and Ioan Caproşu, *Iaşii Vechilor Zidiri: Pînă La 1821* (Iaşi: Demiurg, 2007), 182–84; Ana Dobjanschi, Victor Simion, 'Un climat nou de arta in epoca lui Vaslie Lupu', *Revista Muzeelor si Monumentelor*, XV, (1984).

[23] Its prototype in terms of structure, plan and elevation is Galata Monastery, also in Iaşi (built between 1582-1584), while some of the decorations are similar to those of Dragomirna Monastery (built between 1602-1609), near Suceava, 140 km away.
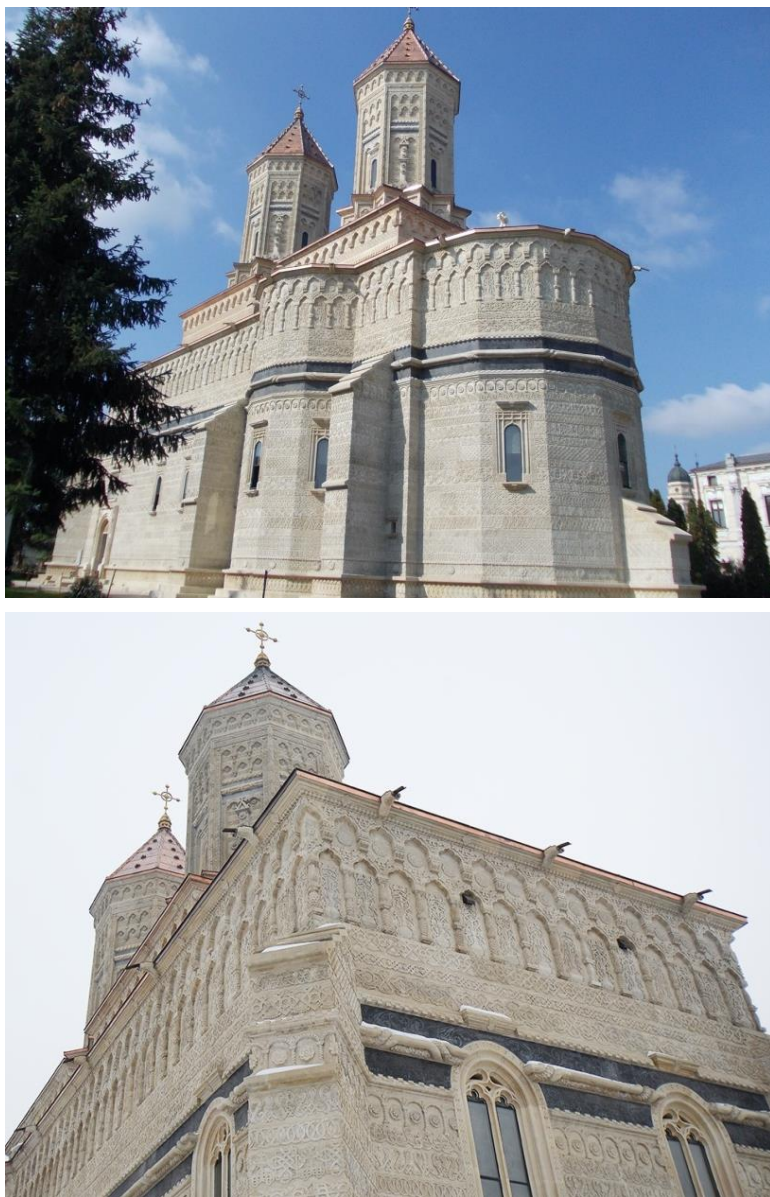
Figure 4: Trei Ierarhi Church, Iași, seventeenth century, restored between 1884-1887.
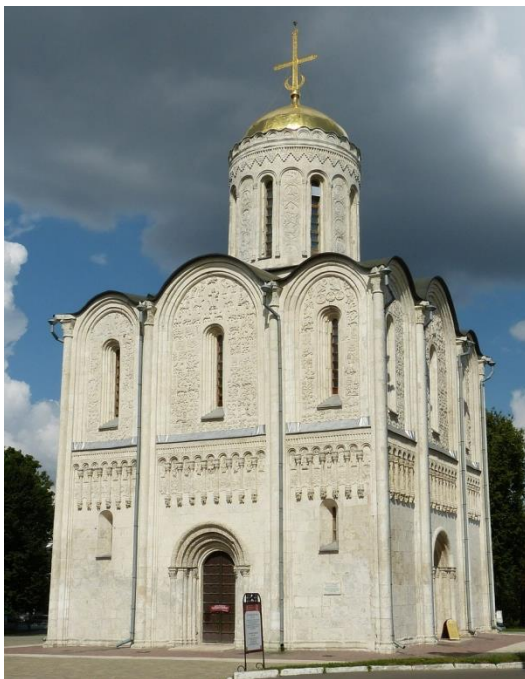
Figure 5: Cathedral of Saint Demetrius, Vladimir, Russia (late twelve century) displaying the same rich stone-carved decoration on the exterior façade as Curtea de Argeș and Trei Ierarhi churches and which Viollet-le-Duc compared with previous Armenian and Georgian monuments.
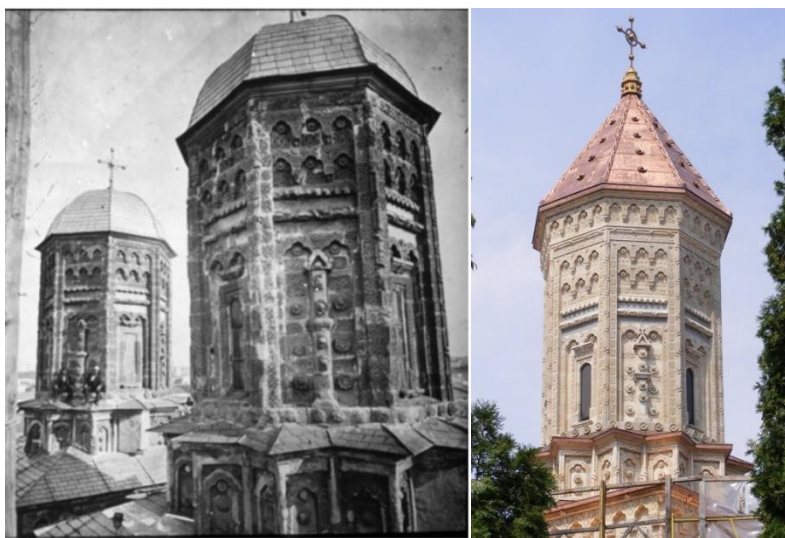
Figure 6: Comparison between the roof and towers before and after the restoration.

The Government was keen to vastly transform the monument and the surroundings, as in the case of Curtea de Argeș. For that reason it proposed a program that included, besides the restoration of the church and the tower of the monastery, the demolition of nearby constructions and the building of a statue of Vasile Lupu, the founder of the monastery. [24] As a response, Lecomte du Noüy came with an even bolder proposal, namely to demolish and reconstruct the entire monument.[25] In the end, he only reconstructed the upper part, including the cornice, the roof and the two towers, representing half of the exterior surface of the monument.[26] His reconstructions were not simply copies of the former architecture, but creative interpretations as indicated by the addition of an extra row of round arches at the towers and the changed shape of the roof. (Figure 6) The restoration of the interior (approx. 1887-1890) brought, as in the case of Curtea de Argeș, entirely new frescoes and furniture.

The immediate surroundings of the monastery raised special problems. Contrary to the former monastery of Curtea de Argeș, Trei Ierarhi had not been an isolated monastery, near a village. On the contrary, it was built in the middle of a thriving city, at the time the second biggest in Romania after Bucharest. It was on the main thoroughfare, surrounded closely by merchant houses, inns and dwellings (Figure 7). In addition, two significant buildings of the former monastery were still standing: the original seventeenth-century refectory, better known as *The Gothic Hall* (Sala gotică) due to its interior Gothic vaults,[27] and the bell tower, reconstructed in 1806, with a Baroque part added in 1830[28] (Figure 8). Therefore, all the actors involved were forced to consider what to do with a significant number of prominent buildings, that were nevertheless seen as interfering with the main monument. Initially, the Ministry intended to transform the Gothic Hall into a 'museum of religious art of Moldova' and Lecomte du Noüy expanded on these plans and proposed to decorate the walls of the future museum with scenes describing the arrival of Saint Parascheva's remains in Iași, together with episodes from the rule of Vasile Lupu, the founder of the monastery.[29]

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[24] "Contract", April 1, 1882, *Restaurarea,* 125-126.

[25] "Report", Lecomte du Noüy fonds, No. 1657, no year. *Manuscript Collections, Romanian Academy Library*. Lecomte du Noüy composed a list of damages to the church in AD I 309, leaf 26, *Engravings Cabinet, Romanian Academy Library*.

[26] "Letter of A. Lecomte", February 13, 1885, *Restaurarea,* 168-169, 168. See also "Report", February 8, 1884, *Restaurarea,* 141.

[27] The Gothic Hall is similar and maybe inspired by the one at Dragomirna monastery, built a few decades earlier in the nearby Suceava county. Dan Bădărău and Ioan Caproșu, *Iașii vechilor zidiri: pînă la 1821* (Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg, 2007), 182.

[28] Sorin Iftimi, "Vechi Turnuri ale Iașilor", *Monumentul* (2002), 179-193.

[29] "Report", January 12, 1887, *Restaurarea* 188-193, 188.

Figure 7: The main thoroughfare in Iași, with Trei Ierarhi Bell Tower and Monastery
in the background/ the same road in early twentieth century, after the restoration.

A final decision was not taken until 1890, when another French
architect, Henri Revoil (1822-1900), invited to Romania to analyse the
restorations, decided that both buildings should be demolished on the
grounds that they are not fit for present purposes. He argued that the tower
'does not have any historical or artistic significance' and the Gothic Hall
'does not have the appropriate proportions for the future destination as a
history museum'. Consequently, both should be reconstructed 'according to

its former style but in bigger dimensions and in relation to the new tower'.[30] The commission also advised that the new tower to be adjacent to the new Gothic Hall and be 'executed in the style of the church and of appropriate dimensions'.[31] A further reason for demolishing the tower was that it obscured the view of the church from the main thoroughfare of Iasi, Ștefan cel Mare avenue, that was becoming a site for the display of national monuments. Indeed, the whole restoration, including the new museum, can also be seen as part of the rapid urban modernisation of Iași, that included the building of many significant public buildings and monuments at the end of the century.[32]

Figure 8: Trei Ierarhi around 1845 (engraving) with a view of the entrance tower and the Gothic Hall at the right.

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[30] "Report of the commission together with Revoil and Lecomte", June 20, 1890, *Restaurarea*, 244. See also Grigore Ionescu, "André Lecomte du Nouy et la restauration des monuments historiques de Roumanie",*Revista muzeelor și monumentelor - Monumente istorice și de artă*, Anul XLVIII, nr. 1, (1979), 107-113. Grigore Ionescu, "Începuturile lucrărilor de restaurare a monumentelor istorice în România și activitatea în acest domeniu a arhitectului francez André Lecomte du Nouy", *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor - Monumente istorice și de artă*, Anul XLVII, nr. 1, 1978, 69.

[31] "Report of the commission together with Revoil and Lecomte", June 20, 1890, *Restaurarea*, 244.

[32] In 1882, the most significant public sculpture in the city was finished, the equestrian statue of Stephen the Great (made by the French sculptor Emmanuel Frémiet). See Sorin Iftimi, *Cercetari privitoare la istoria bisericilor iesene*, (Iași: Doxologia, 2014), 24. Other modern buildings included the University Palace (Louis Blanc, 1896), National Theater (Fellner and Helmer, 1894). A history of the main buildings in Iași in Sorin Iftimi and Aurica Ichim, *Strada Ștefan cel Mare Iași Memoria monumentelor*, (Iași: Editura Palatul Culturii, 2016).

Figure 9: André Lecomte du Noüy, The new Gothic Hall and bell-tower, Trei Ierarhi, finished around 1891.

Following the advice of Henri Revoil, Lecomte du Noüy designed in 1890 a brand new building to serve as a museum, that included a new bell tower as well. However, contrary to Curtea de Argeș, this time he referenced predominantly architecture from Western and Central Europe, probably because he considered it as being more appropriate for a museum (Figure 9).

The final building is a hall-shaped structure, with gables reminiscent of Central European medieval houses, with an exterior gallery similar to Italian cloisters (such as the cloister of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice) and with a massive square tower in the middle, looking like a defence structure, somewhat similar to the fortified mansions in Oltenia (South-West Wallachia), known as cule (from the Turkish kule=tower). The main interior room has the same Gothic arcades as the old building, but with enlarged dimensions (Figure 10 and 11).

However, the building works were not finalised at the time, and after a period of neglect the construction was eventually completed in 1960 and the museum opened afterwards to the public. Had it opened as initially planned, it would have been the first public museum in Iași, before the Museum of Antiquities founded only in 1916.[33]
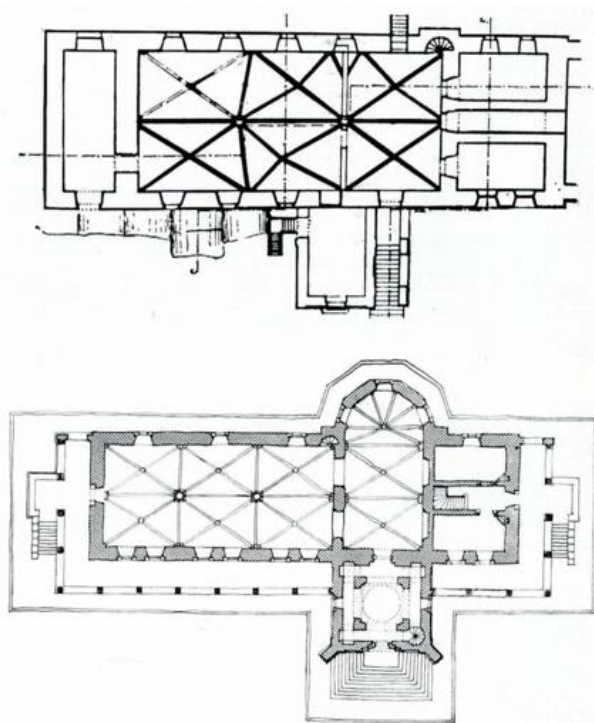
Fig. 1. La salle gothique du monastère des Trois-Hiérarques de Jassy; en haut, le plan ancien (relevé avant restauration); en bas, le plan nouveau (relevé après restauration). Dessins des archives de Lecomte du Noüy.

Figure 10: Comparison between the plan of the former Gothic Hall and of the new one built by André Lecomte du Noüy.

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[33] Vasilica Asandei, "Muzeul de Antichități din Iași: de la primele inițiative la înființare (1897-1916)", *Historia Universitatis Iassiensis*, II/2011, 215-233.

Figure 11: Contemporary views of the Gothic Hall, Trei Ierarhi, Iași.

The creation of museums within or near former monastery buildings can further be seen as a compromise with the influential Romanian Orthodox Church, which argued strongly for its right to conserve and display the historical artefacts found in historical monasteries. Illustrative for the tight relation between the church and the artistic heritage are the debates in the Romanian Parliament for the establishment of an official institution responsible to gather and conserve artefacts and historical monuments, the future Commission for Historical Monuments. This institution was seen by the church as a threat for its right to self-govern and administer ecclesiastical buildings in Romania as it feared to lose a part of its jurisdiction in the case of those classified as historical monuments. The Metropolitan of Moldavia,

Iosif Naniescu (1818-1902), argued that the church is the best place to conserve historical artefacts; the priests had been compiling inventories of objects for a long time and thus there was no need for a special commission. He also argued that restorations undertaken so far by Lecomte du Noüy had been demolitions rather than real restorations and the local church was actually much knowledgeable to repair and conserve monuments. [34] The Metropolitan directly criticised Grigore Tocilescu, the director of the Museum of Antiquities, by saying that 'the archaeologist wants to take everything from the church' and compared the situation with someone having their personal belongings abusively taken away. [35] He finally argued that a law and a Commission for Historical Monuments were not needed, since the priests are much better at documenting and preserving monuments and artefacts.

Grigore Tocilescu responded with a long, vehement speech listing the many artefacts, manuscripts, and inscriptions that have been damaged or sold outside the country by priests. He argued that 'the canons of aesthetics and architecture are in this case over and above the canons of the church'. [36] He received applause from fellow senators when he praised principles of secularism: 'The church will not stand in the way of free thinking at the end of our century.'[37] He argued that a museum was the proper place to exhibit the historical artefacts, and not the original site of a church or monastery. Consequently, the sort of museum proposed by Lecomte du Noüy and by Ion Mincu (detailed in the following section), within the building complex of a church or monastery, seems to be an intelligent middle ground that could have potentially satisfied both the promoters of museums and the church representatives, who did not want to give up their religious artefacts.

The museum for the Romanian architectural heritage designed by Ion Mincu at Stavropoleos Monastery

For anyone who is a little familiar with modern Romanian art, Ion Mincu (1852-1912) is likely to be a known figure. He is perhaps best described as the Romanian equivalent of the well-known Art Nouveau architects Antoni Gaudí or Eliel Saarinen due to his innovative designs, partly inspired by Romanian architecture.[38] His attempts at overcoming the

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[34]"Legea pentru conservarea si restaurarea monmentelor istorice", *Analele arhitecturei*, no. 4, (1892), 63-77, 65.

[35] Ibid., 65 and 66.

[36] Ibid., 68-69.

[37] Ibid., 68-69.

[38] For a direct comparison between Romania (i.e. Ion Mincu), Catalonia, Finland and Hungary see Jean-Yves Andrieux, Fabienne Chevallier, Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna, *Idée nationale et architecture en Europe, 1860-1919. Finlande, Hongrie, Roumanie, Catalogne*, (Rennes: Presse Universitaires de Rennes, 2006). See also Carmen Popescu, *Le style national roumain:*

fashionable European classic or eclectic styles led him to search for new, original architecture and to use previously ignored historical monuments in Romania as source of inspiration. The small Stavropoleos church in Bucharest (built in 1724) is a good case in point. Ignored or even openly criticised by intellectuals of the time (because of its size, recent date of construction or lack of historical significance)[39], it was appreciated by Mincu, as from his point of view the original decorations and architecture of the monument reflected the local artistic production. Indeed, his restoration modified the monument in order to single out its original characteristics, an opposite aim from that of André Lecomte du Noüy, whose restorations gave monuments a uniform neo-Byzantine style.[40]

After several inconclusive restoration attempts, the Ministry of Religious Cults and Public Instruction asked Mincu in 1897 to study the restoration of the church. Mincu was strongly discouraged by the way the church was constructed, with no foundations, cheap materials and weakened walls.[41] He found that preservation would encounter 'serious difficulties' and 'seems impossible'.[42] At the same time, he criticised the 'hidden and small plot' on which the church was placed, with 'abhorrent surroundings', namely massive and tall modern buildings.[43] Consequently, he made the radical proposition that the church be completely demolished, and reconstructed in another place, where 'to reuse all the old stone that are well preserved, and to remake faithfully the forms and dimensions of the current building'.[44] Mincu further proposed that the church be in the centre of a new museum for the

construire une nation à travers l'architecture, 1881-1945 (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2004); Ada Hajdu, "The Search for National Architectural Styles in Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to World War I," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Volume Four: Concepts, Approaches, and (Self-)Representations*, ed. Roumen Daskalov et al., vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 394–439.

[39] See Alexandru Ţigara-Samurcaş, "Stavropoleos - Muzeu Naţional", *Epoca*, November 17, (1903), in *Scrieri Despre Arta Romanească* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987), 258–63; Alexandru Ţigara-Samurcaş, "Stavropoleos - Muzeu Naţional", *Epoca*, February 26, (1904)", in *Scrieri Despre Arta Romanească* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987), 264–69.

[40] See also Cosmin Minea, "Restoration of Historical Monuments in Twentieth-Century Europe: 'The Battle For Stavropoleos'", Blog Post, *Art Historiographies in Central and Eastern Europe. An Inquiry from the Perspective of Entangled Histories*. URL: https://arthist.ro/2020/10/restoration-of-historical-monuments-in-twentieth-century-europe-the-battle-for-stavropoleos/

[41] Report of January 5, 1900 in the Archive of the Ministry of Religion as reproduced in Nedioglu, "Stavropoleos", 163. Nedioglu, 163.

[42] Gheorghe Nedioglu, "Stavropoleos", *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*, no. 42 (October 1924), 163. Also, Petrascu said that Mincu was unhappy with the foundation structure and with the suroundings of the church: Petrascu, "Ioan Mincu", 90.

[43] Gheorghe Nedioglu, "Stavropoleos", *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*, no. 42 (October 1924, 163.

[44] Ibid., 163.

Romanian architectural heritage, therefore changing its function as monastery. He envisaged:

> the reconstructed monument to be surrounded on three sides with galleries and open porches in the same architectural style, in order to on the one hand constitute an interesting and noble view, and on the other to be an open museum, in which many fragments of local architecture to be displayed.[45]

Figure 12: Stavropoleos monastery after the restoration by Ion Mincu (1904-1907) / courtyard of the monastery (1908-1910).

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[45]Ibid., 163.

Mincu's restoration proposal is remarkable as it envisaged transformations more radical than other architects before him. For example, the French architect Henri Revoil, who visited Romania a few years before to defend André Lecomte du Noüy, only suggested the remaking of decorations, the tower and structural elements, without demolishing the monument and relocating it.[46] Therefore, Mincu appeared to be even more keen to transform the monument than the foreigners criticised by other Romanian architects. Nevertheless, his image as founder of the Neoromanian architectural style made the episode about Stavropoleos restoration to be conveniently ignored by scholars, the more so as his career was often pitted against that of foreign architects, active in Romania at the time.

The rejection of Mincu's restoration led eventually to a long postponement. After four years, the Commission for Historical Monuments asked Mincu again to propose a restoration plan and the architect offered further arguments for a demolition and relocation of the monument. He recognised that the new building would be just a copy of the original monument but planned to integrate in it some of the original decorations, 'so that the coldness of the copy, no matter how perfect, to be alleviated by the presence of many original elements'.[47] He then argued that a copy will be more useful for the artistic study of the heritage, instead of an original, but damaged monument:

> The consolidation would not prevent the disappearance with time of many artistic elements. A perfect copy of the church should be built in another place, in order for the next generations of artists to have preserved a detailed example of the last phase of development reached by our domestic art.[48]

Mincu reached in the end a compromise with the Commission for Historical Monuments on the restoration of Stavropoleos. He did not demolish or moved the monument, but restored it and built a museum surrounding it, as he initially proposed. The work lasted four years and included the replacement and repainting of the exterior decoration, together with the replacement of twenty-four capitals, and replacement of the middle freeze, barely visible at the time, with a new, stone one; rebuilding of a new tower, as seen in the votive painting; replacement of the roof; restoration of the inside furnishing[49] (Figure 12). Mincu was indeed not interested in historical accuracy, but in the aesthetic quality of the heritage.[50] For Mincu, the heritage was not something sacred, that deserved to be frozen in time, as

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[46] Henri Revoil, "Raport despre biserica Stavropoleos", 279-280.
[47] Meetig of June 12, 1904 in Nedioglu, "Stavropoleos", 164.
[48] March 12, 1904 in Ibid., 164.
[49] Mincu's restoration report from June 16, 1904 in Nedioglu, "Stavropoleos", 165.
[50] This was also the criticism by one of his last students. See Toma T. Socolescu, *Fresca arhitecţilor care au lucrat în România în epoca modernă: 1800-1925*, (Bucharest: Caligraf Design, 2004), 108.

some of his colleagues argued, but something to be reshaped, modified and made usable in the contemporary society. He preferred to embellish the monument and to recreate in this way a Romanian heritage that could serve as inspiration source for contemporary architects. The restoration, while similar in principles to that of André Lecomte du Noüy, also reveals his modern outlook.
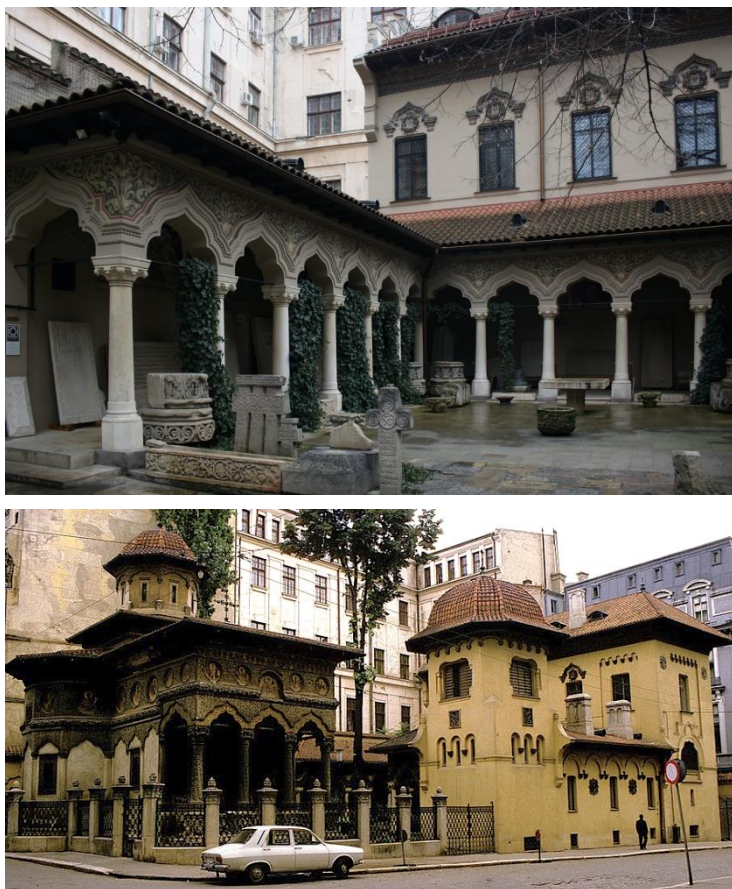
Figure 13: Ion Mincu, Stavropoleos monastery: inner courtyard
 and the new buildings.

For the future museum, designed in 1908, Mincu imagined a unique eclectic construction that referenced architectural and decorative elements from the church, but on a monumental scale, in a two-storey high building that also included a bell tower. (Figure 13) The cloister (the monastery was re-established in 1991), formed by rows of trefoil arcades that copy the ones

from the porch, also resembles Catholic monasteries from Italy or Spain.[51] The designs are relevant for the multiplication of artistic sources and the experiments with various architectural motifs that marked the later part of Mincu's career. Elements from Romanian heritage were combined with great freedom and mixed with some other sources. He put into practice his teachings as professor, namely the unrestrained creative experiments with the past heritage that gave birth to various architectural forms. Indeed, the heterogenous and original nature of his later designs contradict once again the idea of a uniform Romanian national style.

Today, the re-established monastery partially keeps its initial role of a museum.[52] It has a library and a rich collection of ecclesiastical objects, such as icons, tapestries, wood sculptures or cultic objects kept in one of the main rooms of the building, that can be seen during private tours organised by the custodian of the museum, Sister Anastasia.[53] (Figure 14).

While Mincu's proposal for a museum of religious art was debated, a new museum of art opened in Bucharest in 1906, The Museum of Ethnography, National Art, Decorative Art and Industrial Art (Muzeul de Etnografie, de Artă Națională, Artă Decorativă și Artă Industrială). It was focused on folk art and established by Alexandru Țigara-Samurcaș (1872-1952), the first ever Romanian with a doctorate in art history (University of Munich, in 1896). Samurcaș was a promoter of folk art as a significant part for the cultural identity of Romania and, not surprisingly, was against the restoration or reconstruction of Stavropoleos monastery, that he considered as lacking historical value and naming it 'a country-church'. [54] However, Samurcaș did not succeed in taking the attention away from the religious art of Romania. On the contrary, with the rise of the Neoromanian architectural style and the building of numerous and imposing Orthodox cathedrals and churches throughout the country, but mostly in Transylvania after it became part of Romania in 1918, the religious heritage played an essential role for the Romanian art and culture.

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[51] Irina Baldescu even suggested that monastic cloisters from Spain and Itlay were a direct source of inspiration.   See Irina Băldescu, "Restaurarea Din Pragul Secolului XX. Materie și Imagine între Conservare și Retușuri. Restaurarea de La Stavropoleos și Contextul Cultural",*Stavropoleos Monastery Archive*, (2002), 17.

[52]https://www.stavropoleos.ro/manastirea/colectia/

[53] I thank Sister Anastasia for providing me with information about the history of Stavropoleos Monastery as well as for the tours of the museum.

[54] Alexandru Țigara-Samurcaș, "Stavropoleos - Muzeu Național", Epoca, February 26, (1904)", in *Scrieri Despre Arta Romanească* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987), 264–69, especially 260–61.
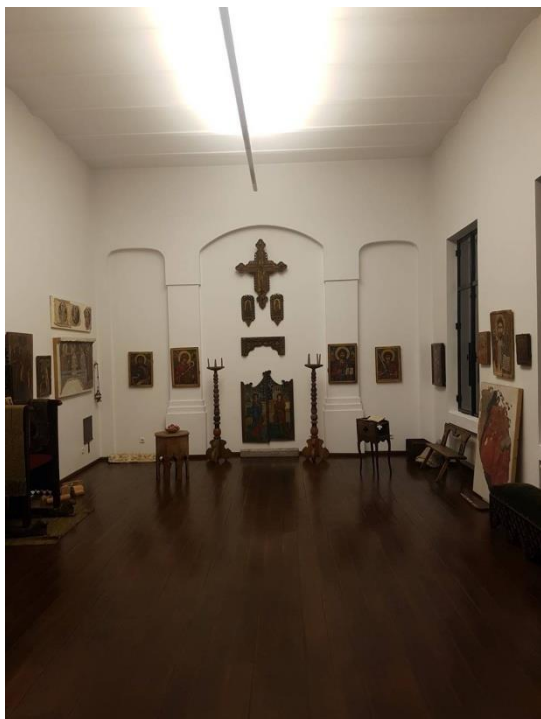
Figure 14: Interior views of Stavropoleos Museum.

Conclusions

This article analysed the first initiatives to build museums of medieval and religious art in Romania and placed them in the wider context of the drive to create and display a national heritage in the country. In the 19th century, this activity was fundamentally linked to the material patrimony of the Romanian Orthodox church and with the way churches and monasteries were restored and given new symbolic meanings. While usually presented as part of a glorious history of the early Romanian state, a time when fundamental institutions were established, literary and scientific works were written, and cities were modernised, the emergence of museums incurred destruction as much as construction, as this article has shown. Museums were created through the modification of the urban and architectural landscape, being symptoms of the new, modern determination to shape history and to offer a clear narrative that would justify the present political status.

Museums and collections of religious art emerged gradually, as Romania itself discovered its medieval heritage. As shown, the 19th century was a time when the attention was mostly directed towards findings from the Roman period, more significant for the ethnic identity of Romanians. However, the substantial visible proof of the country's past were medieval monuments that comprised almost exclusively churches and monasteries. They could not be ignored and in fact, ever since the creation of the modern state, there have been attempts at documenting and restoring the monuments and gather artefacts from inside these buildings. However, a systematic study of monuments was equally not published until the early twentieth century, when the *Bulletin of the Commission for Historical Monuments* (Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice) was first issued in 1908, and further, in 1914, with the *Almanac of the Commission for Historical Monuments* (Anuarul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice). Indeed, a history of old Romanian art, based on these studies, was first published outside Romania, in Paris, and only in 1922.[55]

The activity of restoring religious monuments and constituting collections of medieval art was viewed differently by various actors. Politicians, for example, insisted that the collections should be taken to the Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest and the monuments themselves be modified so that to become suitable for a modern state. The religious figures opposed these actions and argued for the need to have artefacts kept inside churches. Finally, architects proposed new buildings within monasteries or churches, that could serve as museums of religious art.

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[55] Nicolae Iorga and Gheorghe Balș, *Histoire de l'art roumain ancient*, (Paris, 1922).

The restoration of monuments and the emergence of museums went hand in hand with the emergence of art museums and can be seen as having a similar effect for the concept of national heritage. Urban surroundings were modified so that the monuments fit in a new, modern urban fabric and in a similar way objects were taken from their historical context and exhibited in museums. Historical monuments were recognised after their restorations as national symbols and the objects were given an increased 'national' importance after their display in museums.

The restorations, as well as the activity of establishing new museums, were essentially a project of an international artistic elite (local authorities, local and foreign artists), whose mission was to transform and promote the artistic heritage in Romania. The phenomenon of the local elites internalising the Western gaze over Balkans or Eastern Europe has been called self-colonisation' or 'nesting orientalism'. [56] The process indeed parallels a civilizing mission, in which the colonists were not only foreigners, but also foreign-educated Romanian elites and the political context was not imperial, but national. Hidden by the shiny new buildings and the prestigious museum collections, serious social discrepancies and a huge gap in the life standard between the elite and the majority of the population existed. This was directly reflected in the process of promoting a national heritage, that remained a concern of a small elite, mostly based in Bucharest, and directed towards shaping an official, prestigious image of Romania, inside and outside the country. At the same time, the needs or voices of local communities were largely ignored. Ultimately, the restored monuments and the museums were (and still are) not only an integral part of the nation-building efforts, but also an instrument for a highly controlled and politicised artistic display.

Figures and Credits:

Figure 1: Henri Trenk, *View of Curtea de Argeş*, Watercolour, 1860. Credits: National Museum of Arts, Bucharest

Figure 2: Bisson Freres Studio, view of the Romanian section, 1867 Paris Universal Exhibition. Credits: Musee D'orsay, Documentation de la conservation. Architecture. Box 48 – Ambroise Baudry.

Figure 3: Curtea de Argeş before the restoration after the exterior restoration (around 1881). Credits: Archives of the University of Architecture, Bucharest

Figure 4: Trei Ierarhi Church, Iași, seventeenth century, restored between 1884-1887 Credits: Bogdan29roman

Figure 5: Cathedral of Saint Demetrius, Vladimir, Russia (late twelve century) displaying the same rich stone-carved decoration on the exterior façade as Curtea de

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[56] Alexander Kiossev, "The Self-Colonising Cultures", in *Cultural Aspects of the Modernization Process*, ed. Dimitri Ginev and Francis Sejersted, (Oslo: TMV, 1996).Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia", *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995), 917–931.

Argeș and Trei Ierarhi churches and which Viollet-le-Duc compared with previous Armenian and Georgian monuments
Credits: www.pixabay.com
Figure 6: Comparison between the roof and towers before and after the restoration. Credits: National University of Architecture Archive / Bogdan29roman
Figure 7: The main thoroughfare in Iași, with Trei Ierarhi Bell Tower and Monastery in the background/ the same road in early twentieth century, after the restoration.
Credits: J. Rey, *Album de douze Vues de la ville de Jassi, executées par J. Rey et dediée À son Altesse le Prince Régnant de la Moldavie par P. Müller, lithographe,* (1845) / http://www.ziarulevenimentul.ro/data/_editor/1stefan_vechi.jpg
Figure 8: Trei Ierarhi around 1845 (engraving) with a view of the entrance tower and the Gothic Hall at the right. Credits: J. Rey, Album de douze Vues de la ville de Jassi, executées par J. Rey et dediée À son Altesse le Prince Régnant de la Moldavie par P. Müller, lithographe, 1845
Figure 9: André Lecomte du Noüy, The new Gothic Hall and bell-tower, Trei Ierarhi, finished around 1891.Credits: www.manastireasftreiierarhi.ro
Figure 10: Comparison between the plan of the former Gothic Hall and of the new one built by André Lecomte du Noüy. Credits: Grigore Ionescu, "André Lecomte du Nouy et la restauration des monuments historiques de Roumanie", *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor - Monumente istorice și de artă*, Anul XLVIII, nr. 1, (1979), 107-113, 110.
Figure 11: Contemporary views of the Gothic Hall, Trei Ierarhi, Iași. Credits: Ana Nechifor, doxologia.ro
Figure 12: Stavropoleos monastery after the restoration by Ion Mincu (1904-1907) / courtyard of the monastery (1908-1910). Credits: Luca Volpi (Goldmund100)
Figure 13: Ion Mincu, Stavropoleos monastery: inner courtyard and the new buildings. Credits: https://marcin-roguski.info
Figure 14: Interior views of Stavropoleos Museum. Credits: The Author, Cosmin Minea.

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Explanation and Chronology of Megalithic Tombs in North-Western Iran
(Based on the Excavations of the Scythian Cemetery in Khorram Abad), Meshgin Shahr[*]

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Abstract: *The ancient cemetery of Khorram Abad is located 7 km away from Meshgin Shahr in Ardabil province. During the excavations, relics of Iron Age I, II and III and also tombs (1500 to 550 BC) have been found. Iron Age I and II tombs are of the type of Megalithic cemeteries. The Scythians were a nomadic tribe that spread over a wide geographical area, from the Black Sea in the west to the borders of China. The most important relics of these tribes were their barrows, which can help us understand their political, economic, artistic and worldview. Therefore, for studying tombs, various factors such as the way of distribution of tombs, the shape and form of tombs, burial in tombs, objects and gifts placed in tombs can be very closely related to the culture of people or a region. According to the conducted excavations, this article has pursued three important goals: 1- Typologically, in how many categories can the tombs of this cemetery be classified? 2- What was the relationship between these tombs and the sites of the surrounding settlements, if any, and can the existence of a community with a ruling structure be deduced from the structure and contents of the tombs? 3- What are the analytical comparison and typology of these tombs with their similar types in Iran and abroad? The remains of these barrows have been excavated outside the geographical territory of Iran in the south of Caucasus and around the Black Sea, Russia and Kazakhstan, the most important of which are Pazyryk, Arrajan (Russia) and Kostromskaya. It seems that Khorram Abad's cemetery had an important religious context used over a wide period of time.*

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Introduction

Tomb architecture can reflect the culture and religion of a community or region in a particular period of time. Also, the architecture and location of the tomb indicate the position and the status of the deceased in society. In the Iron Age, we encounter different types of tomb structures, some of which are specific to a particular area. In the North-West, due to its strategic geographical location and the fact that this region has witnessed extensive relations with neighboring regions during the period, it has been subject to inevitable effects and has led to a variety of burial methods. In any case, the burial rites have resulted from the religious rites of the tribes. Religion is inextricably linked to burial rites, and burials are always a clear sign of a society's religion. The Scythian tribes were nomadic people who had magnificent burial rites. In most of the Scythian burials, discovered during archaeological excavations until now, undoubtedly, there is a special burial behavior that differs only in some minor cases. One of the prominent features of Scythian burials was the presence of a horse as a victim next to the deceased. This animal has a special value and importance among Scythian tribes. The Scythians had a special respect for their ancestors and created large and magnificent tombs for them. Many samples of them were discovered in the south of Russia, Tuva, Northern Mongolia, Altai and Siberia, Northern Caucasus, Northern Black Sea, Southern Ukraine. Distinctive samples of Scythian tombs have been obtained during the archaeological excavations of Khorram Abad cemetery in Meshgin Shahr, one of the cities of Ardabil province, which is very similar to the samples obtained from Scythian cemeteries in Central Asia and the North Caucasus.

Iron Age cemeteries in North-Western Iran

Cemeteries and vestiges related to burial rite are one of the most important archaeological data to identify the various aspects of the lives of ancient tribes. Probably the most common way to reconstruct the social structure of ancient societies is to use data from ancient burials[1]. Both the architecture of the tombs and the historical relics inside them can depict man's thoughts and how he thinks about death. They also provide information on the economy, type of living, social classes, and ethnography. The shape and depth of the tomb can be related to the social status or gender of the deceased, as well as

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[1] Ken Dark, *Theoretical Foundations of Archaeology*, 2000, p. 11.

to whether the ceremony is formal or informal[2]. In the Near East, especially in Iran, around the 8th millennium BC, the human left burial remains under residential houses, ruins near the residence or as separate cemeteries by establishing permanent settlement and reliance on an economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry. In some periods of Iran, especially Iron Age, due to nomadic life or special climatic and cultural conditions, most of our information about the lives of these people are obtained through cemeteries. Therefore, the data of the cemetery obtained from the Neolithic period to the present provide very valuable information to archaeologists and anthropologists for understanding the various dimensions of social, economic, religious, political and military life, climate change, human diseases, etc. These data have a special place in archeology due to the close relationship with daily life and human thought and belief[3].

The North-Western region of Iran is very important in terms of Iron Age studies. Extensive excavations in this region have revealed different dimensions of the Iron Age more than other regions of the Iranian plateau. Unlike North-Central Iran, in the North-West, in addition to cemeteries not related to the region of settlements (Dinkhah, Blue Mosque of Tabriz and Yaniq Tappeh), cemeteries related to the region of settlements (Hasanlu and Haftavan) have also been studied[4]. According to the studies conducted in the North-Western region of Iran, four main groups have been identified, each of which has the following subsets:

1) pit tombs or simple holes
Simple pit tombs
Pit tombs with stone covering
2) Megalithic tombs
Kurgan tombs
Four stratum tombstones (round cairn around the tomb)
Chest Tombs (with standing stone)
Dolmen tombs
3) Brick tombs
Four stratum brick tombs
Tombs with horizontal brick structures
Tombs with horseshoe structure (triangular)

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[2] Mike Parker Pearson, *The Archaeology Of Death And Buril, Sutton Publishing Limited*, 1999, p. 5.

[3] Alireza Hojabri Nobari and Akbar Poor Faraj, *"Suggestions on how to excavate in cemeteries ...."*, 2005, p. 66.

[4] Hassan Talaei, *Iron Age of Iran*, Samat Publications, Tehran, 200, P. 130.

4. Jar tombs

Before introducing the analysis of the tombs of the intended sites, considering the importance of the subject under study, first, the two terms of Megalithic and Kurgan are explained.

Megalithic tombs

Megalithic consists of two words of *mega* (large), *Lithic* (stone and of stone). Therefore, this term refers to tombs that have large stones in their structure, and because the construction of these tombs emerged with such structures in the period between the end of the 3rd millennium to the end of the 1st millennium BC and maybe by certain tribes (when talking about tribes, it should always be borne in mind that a nation is equal to a particular culture, and because we assume that these tombs were built by certain tribes, therefore, this type of tomb construction should be considered as a culture originated from those tribes)), it can be called a *Megalithic culture*[5]. Megalithic tombs are generally referred to as tombs that are made of large pieces of stone. These pieces can be used in different sizes and naturally (dressed) or not dressed. In tombs, large stones have been worked vertically, which form the integrated walls inside the tomb.

Kurgan tombs

The word "kurgan" was used by Gimbutas in 1956 and is a broad archaeological term used to describe the culture of semi-**sedentism** peoples in the steppes of Southern Russia. The word *Kurgan* has been used by Russian archaeologists to mean barrow[6], Gimbutas divides this culture into three periods:

1- The Ancient Kurgan Period (Kurgan I) around 4200 - 4400 BC
2- The Middle Kurgan Period (Korgan II) around 3400 - 3600 BC
3- The New Kurgan Period (Korgan III) around 2800 - 3000 BC

According to Gimbutas, Kurgan is known to people who had a pastoral and semi-agricultural life. They had a patriarchal society with a special hierarchy, and in the region of settlements, there were significant Tepe Qale as the center of the tribe, around which a temporary village with semi-underground houses was built. They were horse-riding people. This animal played an important role in their lives. They had special burial ceremonies and rituals, burying their dead in cottage-like tombs made of stone and wood and filling it with large stones or dirt as a clear sign. They had the symbol of

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[5] Vida Ebtehaj, *Investigation of the Structure of Megalithic Tombs in the Iron Age of Iran: A Case Study of Shahar Yeri Site in Ardabil Province*, 2004, P. 201.

[6] Gimbutas, *Chronologies of Eastern Europe: Neolitic Throughly Bronz Age,* 1992, P. 401.

the horse, the sun and the snake. An important point in their burial was the choice of burial direction towards the sun[7]

Kurgan barrow, Maikop barrow and Trialeti barrow

In the late 3rd millennium BC, a new burial tradition appeared in Georgia that had previously existed in the Northern steppes, but they were completely unfamiliar with the area under the influence of the culture beyond the Old Caucasus and the rest of the Near East in this time period.[8]

The Scythians had Kurgan tombs, consisting of a rectangular tomb with a structure of large stones in the middle and a circular arrangement of stones that defined its boundaries. The first Scythian tombs were also on the same surface of the earth and cairn was made around them in a circle; but around 1200 BC, this burial method changed and the Scythians began to build hills on the tombs[9]. These circular revetments around the tomb have long been used to build tombs. In the large areas of the Altai Mountains and the ancient sites of Dejazato and Ustide, traces of this type of burial can be seen, which consists of a round or oval shaped environment of large circular stones with a predominantly rectangular tomb.[10] The emergence of a special Scythian culture in the late Bronze and early Iron Ages, along with a particular artistic style and various tomb structures, indicates an unknown type of social stratification[11]. The prevalence of early kurgans dates back to 2500 BC, which indicates a lifestyle based on nomadism and animal husbandry[12]. According to the studies and excavations carried out in different regions, it can be stated that the end of the Old Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age faced significant changes, including changes in the settlement pattern based on nomadism and animal husbandry[13], progress in the metalworking industry, new burial traditions and rites, the use of chariots and the depopulation of areas and instead settlement in the highlands[14].

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[7] Gimbutas, op. cit, 402.

[8] Charles Burney, *The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus*, 1971, P. 77.

[9] Tamara Rice, *Scythians*, 1991, P. 30.

[10] Bourgeois and Gheyle, *The Frozen Tombs of the Altai Mountais, Survey and inventory of archaeological sites and permafrost occurrence in the Dzhator valley*, 2005, p. 11.

[11] Chagunov et all, *The Golden Tomb from Arzhan*, 1995, p. 41.

[12] Sagona, *Social boundaries and ritual landscapes in late prehistoric tranc – Caucasus and highland Anatolia in a view from the highlands,* 2004.

[13] Adam Smith et all, *Early Complex Societies in Southern Caucasia: A Preliminary Report on the Tsakahovit Plain, Republic of Armenia*, 2003, p. 10.

[14] Puturidze, *Social and Economic Shifts in the South Caucasian Middle Bronze Age. pp.111-127. In: Archaeology in the borderlands: in verstigations in Caucasia and beyond, edited by A.T .Smith and K.,* 2003, p. 114.

These kind of tombs were sometimes made in different shapes and forms that had stratified or stone structures with different plans such as horseshoe, L-shaped, triangular and quadrangular. Four stone walls can be seen in these tombs. For building them, at first a rectangular piece of land, with a length and width between 150-200 to 180-120 cm with a depth of about 50 to 100 cm, was dug and after excavation and creating the desired space on the wall, the appearance of the side wall was made by available stones. If it was close to the mountains, mountain rocks were used, and if there was a river near the cemetery, the existing rocks were used. The walls of these tombs had usually been made in two ways: either the walls were made of small stones in the form of locks and straps, which is usually more common in mountainous areas, or the walls were made of several cadavers. However, both types have been seen in plains and non-mountainous areas. The reason for the difference in the structure of the four-stratum tombs is simply the appearance of the stone used in their construction. In some mountainous areas, where the rocks are extracted in the form of relatively large flat sheets, each of the four sides of the tomb wall was blocked by a piece of those rocks, which is placed vertically. But what is the same in both types of tombs is the cover on the tombs. It means that the stones were selected in a way that covered the entire width of the tomb and their two ends were placed on the longitudinal walls. Until now, no prehistoric cemetery has been found to have the tombstone carved or smoothed. What attracts attention in these tombs is their width, which is relatively less than the tombs in which rubbles were used. The reason was simply the lack of access to stones with the appropriate volume and intended length and width. The point is that throughout the territory of Iran, in tombs with flat cover, the distance and crevice between large stones were blocked by smaller stones and even small and large cobblestones. In the 1st millennium, there was a type of four-stratum tomb whose surface cover was hidden under a crust of soil and the area of the tomb on the ground was marked with medium cobblestones in the form of an irregular oval or circle[15] One of the main features of Kurgan culture is the use of large monolithic stones to build tombs. Nowadays, within the borders of Iran, these tombs can be found around peripheral castles belonging to the New Bronze and Iron I period in East Azerbaijan[16] and Ardabil province[17] in abundance.

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[15] Nusratullah Motamedi, *Burial rituals in Lorestan, first millennium BC*, 1986, pp. 3-36.

[16] Kamaluddin Niknami and Mehdi Kazempour, *Archaeological Report on Determining the Privacy of Zardkhaneh Site*, 2011.

[17] Reza Rezalou, , *The Emergence of Societies with a Complicated Political and Social Structure in the New Bronze Age in the Southern Basin of the Aras River with a Case Study of the Archaeological Data of Khosrow Castle*, 2007.

This type of tomb (Kurgani) has been identified in the overseas regions in Anatolia from the Middle Bronze Age to the Iron I[18], in the Republic of Azerbaijan belonging to the Middle and New Bronze Age and in Armenia from the Middle Bronze Age to the Iron Age I[19].

Background of studies in Ardabil province

For the first time, between 1899 and 1901, Jacques de Morgan explored several cemeteries around the city of Namin in the province of Ardabil, which had four-stratum megalithic tombs. He excavated cemeteries around the town of Namin, next to the villages of Soli Darreh, Chilakhaneh, Vajalik, Lordaghi, Chaghala Darreh, Tash Kopro, Hassan Zamini, Khorkhor, Chirchir and Chirchirpuri, and suggested a new Bronze Age history for these cemeteries. He also excavated in the cemeteries of Khoja Davood Kopro on the road of Namin to Astara, the cemetery of Qale Beyg in the southwest of Astara and in the Khalkhal and Talesh areas in the cemeteries of Agh-Uler, Dukhalian and Ganjkhaneh[20]. Shaeffer, considering the cylindrical seals obtained from Hassan Zamini and Agh-Uler cemeteries and comparing them to the similar samples obtained from Mesopotamia, suggested the dates of 15 and 14 BC for these cemeteries[21]. The German archeological delegation who conducted archaeological studies in East Azerbaijan (in areas such as Jolfa plain, Marand, Tabriz, Maragheh, Miyaneh, Sarab, Ardabil, Garmi, Ahar and Meshgin Shahr) for many years (1967, 1968, 1971 and 1978), proposed the history of the New Bronze Age and the Middle and Old Iron Age for these cemeteries based on the earthen data obtained from these cemeteries[22]. During the archeological excavations of the British delegation headed by Charles Burney in the city of Meshgin Shahr, a countless number of four-stratum Megalithic tombs had been mentioned, but due to time constraints, only 16 samples of these tombs had been recorded. One of the sites studied at this time was the Pirazmeyan site[23]. Saifullah Kambakhshfard, in his studies in some parts of Nayr and Sarab villages, mentions two sites. One of these sites is Tikili Dash Cemetery, located one kilometer North of Narmiq village,

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[18] Kusnareva, *The Southern Caucasus in Prehistory, The University Museum University of Pennsylvania Philadelaphia*, 1997.

[19] Adam Smith, op. cit.

[20] Demorgan, J., *Recherches au Talych Persaen* 1901, pp. 267-305.

[21] Shaeffer, S. A., *Stratigraphie comparé et chronologie de l'Asie occidentale*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 408.

[22] Kleiss, *Beridt uberzwei er Kundun gsfahrten in Nordwest – Iran,* 1969, pp. 188- 191.

[23] Ingraham and Summer, Stelae and Settlement in the Meshkin Shahr Plain, North-Eastern Azerbaijan Iran, 1979, pp. 68- 69.

at the foot of Mount Bozgush, and the other is Qarah Shiran Cemetery in Ardabil. These cemeteries had been looted in ancient times[24]. In 2003, Mrs. Vida Ebtehaj studied the collection of tombs in Pirazmeyan site in her master's thesis[25], after which the excavations of Dr. Hejbari Nobari began in this site[26]. In the studies conducted between 2000-2003 by Dr. Rezalou, a member of the Faculty of Mohaghegh Ardabili University in the provinces of East Azerbaijan and Ardabil, a collection of castles with the names of Khosrow, Zino, Shender Shami, Gol Nesa, Kichik Yordi, Shaitan Dashi and Qale-Yeri were studied. Next to these castles, the cemeteries are of the type of four-stratum tombs with round cairn[27].

The owners of this type of tombs were settled in Azerbaijan and part of East Gilan at the foothills, and due to the proximity of the mountains and the use of stone, they built their tombs in the best and largest possible way. Four-stratum megalithic tombs have a long history, spread in a wide geographical area from the coasts of Mazandaran to the West and North-West of Iran at different time intervals and. This type of tombs has spread not only in large numbers in the Talesh region belonging to the Iron Age I, Northern Iran belonging to the 1st millennium BC[28], North-West[29] and Western Iran, but, in the neighboring countries such as Anatolia[30], Armenia[31] (Fig. 1) and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the existence of such tombs, from the Old Bronze Age to the Old Iron Age, has been proven (Fig. 2). Around Lake Urmia, there are also tombs with a stone structure belonging to the Bronze and Iron Ages in areas such as: Goy Tape (Tomb K)[32] Dinkhah[33], Haftavan Tepe (with traces of defensive walls belonging to the middle of the second millennium BC with a number of tombs) has been identified[34].

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[24] Saifullah Kambakhsh Fard, *Tehran, Three Thousand and two hundred years old based on archaeological excavations*, 1991, p. 123.

[25] Vida Ebtehaj, op. cit.

[26] Masoud Azarnoush, *"Recent Archaeological Research in Iran Prehistory to Iron Age"*, *Barbara Helwing*, 2005, PP. 216.

[27] Reza Rezalou, op. cit, p. 2.

[28] Mohammad Reza Khalatbari, *Archaeological Excavations in Talesh sites*, 2004, pp. 116-117.

[29] Rubinson, *A Mid-Second Millennium Tomb at DinkhaTepe*, 1991, p. 390.

[30] Kusnareva, op. cit.

[31] Adam Smith, op. cit.

[32] Dyson, *Problems of Protohistori Iran as Seen from Hasanlu*, 1965, p. 196.

[33] Muscarella, *The Iron Age at Dinkha Tepe, Iran*, 1974, p. 35.

[34] Talaei and Aliyari, *Iranica Antiqua*, 2009, p. 89.

fig. 1 Kurgan tomb

fig. 2 Kurgan tomb from Nakhchivan

Khorram Abad Cemetery

For the first time in Iran, tombs belonging to the Scythian tribes were found during the excavations of the ancient cemetery of Khorram Abad in Meshgin Shahr. The excavation of this site was a type of rescue excavation that started on January 4, 2017 and was carried out until February 4, 2018 for 5 months.

The ancient cemetery of Khorram Abad is located 7 km away from Meshginshahr in Ardabil province. This site is located 300 meters south of Khorram Abad village (Fig. 3). During the excavations, relics of Iron Age I, II and III tombs (1500 to 550 BC) have been found. Iron Age I and II tombs are of the type of Megalithic cemetries (Fig. 4). These tombs are made of very large boulders with stone structure. In this way, at first, the tomb pit was dug to the desired dimensions and the walls and ceiling were worked with boulders with dimensions of 1.5 to 3.5 meters, which were cut in single face. These tombs were built in the East-West direction and their length varies from 4.5 to 6 meters and their width varies from 2 to 3 meters (Fig. 2). In these tombs, mass burials have been performed at different levels, so that in one of the tombs, 19 human skeletons have been found. These burials seem to have taken place over several generations. For this purpose, the western wall of these tombs has been used to open and close and place new burials. In addition to human skeletons, animal burials including dogs can be seen in these tombs. Gifts placed in these tombs include bronze and iron objects, ceramic and a variety of ornaments.
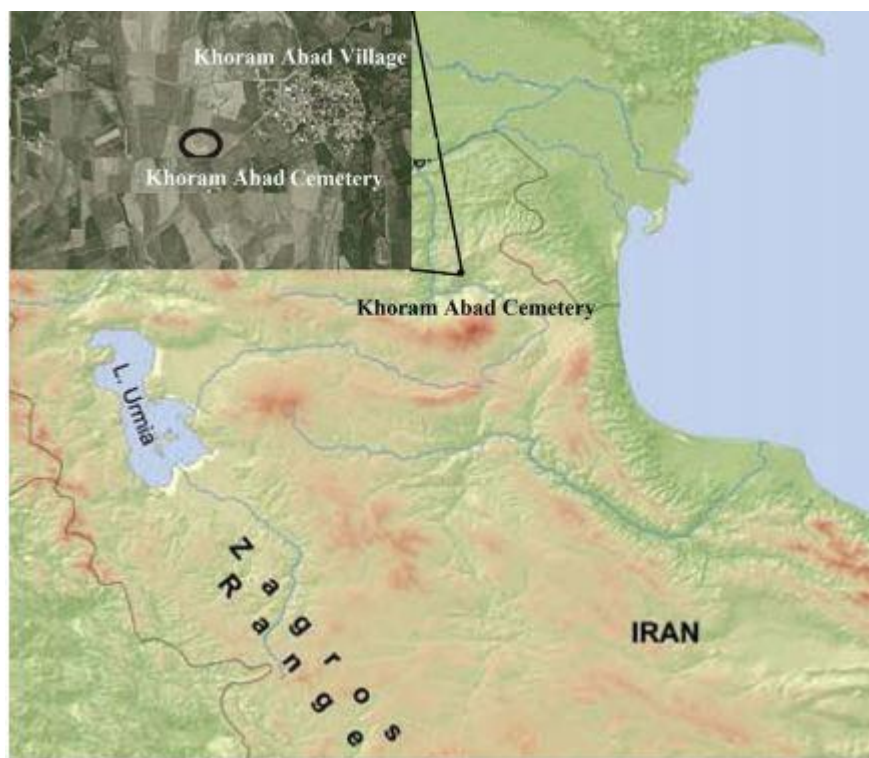
fig. 3 Location of Scythian Khorram Abad Cemetery

fig. 4   One of the Megalithic tombs related to the Iron Age of Khorram Abad Cemetery

Tomb 22

This tomb was a type of pit tomb whose Northern and Southern walls were made with stratum on a stone foundation and its roof was covered in timber. This tomb is one of the most unique tombs in Iran and it was built according to the tradition of burying horses in this tomb. The data obtained from this tomb during scientific research belong to the Scythian tribes and this tomb can be possiblly attributed to one of the Scythian princes or nobles. The general shape of the tomb is rectangular and its direction is East-West (Fig. 5). Around the tomb, there are small remnants of the circular mansory of the tomb. In the floor of the tomb, a kind of flooring can also be seen, which seems to have been created with a kind of washed and clean soil, and it seems that this floor has been pounded. The interesting point of this tomb is that it was looted in its time and after the completion of the burial operation, because the human skeleton obtained from inside the tomb was very disturbed and also the gifts were not obtained regularly on one level. Remains of animal sacrifices have been found in the soil poured on the tomb and in the Western part of the tomb. These vows and sacrifices seem to have belonged to a horse obtained in scattered and fragmented form. A sheep and a cow frame were also obtained. In addition, the bones of birds can be seen

scattered in this area. An interesting point is that gifts including bronze and iron objects and countless decorative beads of ferrite, agate and gold have been obtained among these sacrifices[35]. One of the most important gifts discovered in this tomb during the excavation was the skull and parts of the skeleton of a horse (Image 6) and a horseshoe (Image 7) next to the tomb. Another valuable data of these tombs are potteries, which can be attributed to the Scythian tribes based on the method of their construction and decoration. These potteries have engraving geometric motifs. The interior of these motifs was filled with white material, a method which is specific to the Scythians and has been identified in many Scythian sites (Fig. 8).
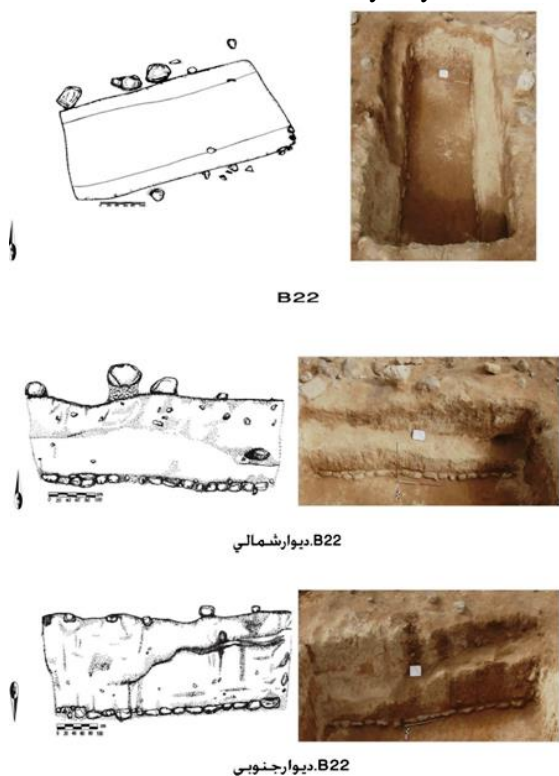
Fig. 5: Tomb 22, North and South walls with stratum on a stone foundation

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[35] Reza Rezalou and Hamid Khanali, *Scythian Burials of Khorram Abad Cemetery in Meshgin Shahr*, 2014.

Fig. 6 Tomb 22, the main burial with scattered horse bones

Fig. 7 Iron horseshoe discovered from Tomb 22
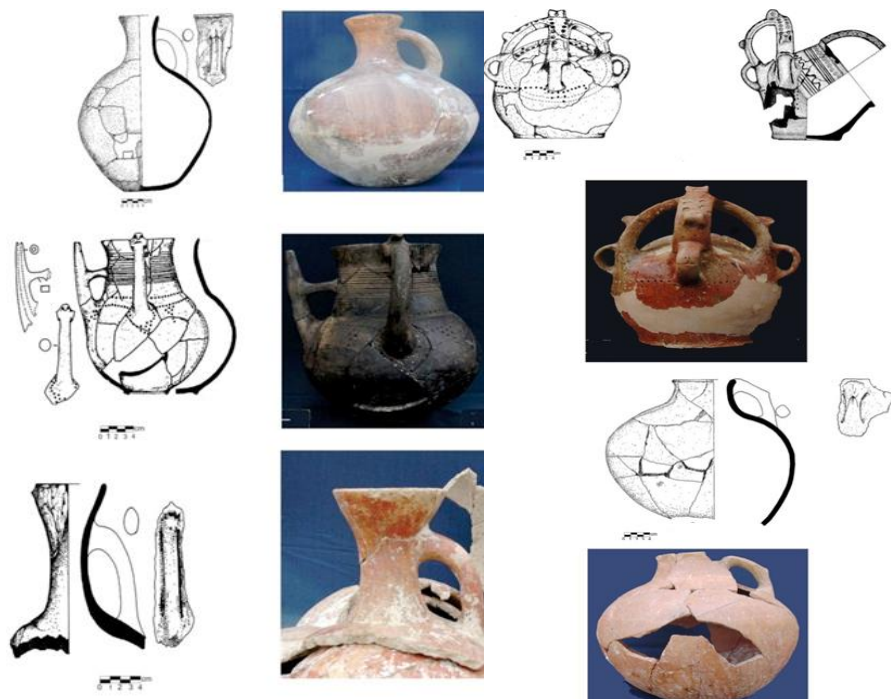
Fig. 8 Potteries discovered from Tomb 22

Tomb 21

This tomb is located in the Western part of Tomb 22. It belongs to a part of the gifts given to the person buried in Tomb 22. Four burials were found in this tomb, all of which belonged to women (Fig. 9). The skeletons were in a very bad condition and only a few parts of them were left. They seem to have been buried secondarily, in such a way that after death or after being killed, either they were placed in another place and after the passage of time and after the corpse rots and separates from the bone, they were transferred to this place, or these people were killed and their organs and body parts were cut and buried in this place. Another factor of losing most of these skeletons was the rocky bed on which the skeletons had been placed. Skeleton 1 belonged to a 30-35 years old woman buried in the East-West direction. Skeleton 2 belonged to a woman aged 18 to 22 years. Skull 3, which belonged to a woman between the ages of 20 and 25, was located on the North-West side of skeleton 1. Skull 4 belonged to a woman aged between 40-45. Only two ceranics were obtained from this tomb (Fig. 10). The first was a medium-necked ceramic located in the South-Western part of the tomb. The second one is a closed mouth located in the Northern part of the tomb[36].

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[36] Reza Rezalou and Maryam Bayrami, *Architecture of the Kurgans of Northwestern Iran*", 2016, p. 6.

Fig. 9 Tomb 21 - skeleton of sacrified women for the deceased in the main tomb

Fig. 10 Potteries belong to Tomb 21

Tomb 20

This tomb is located 7 meters distance from the North of Tomb 21 and 22. During the excavation in this tomb, 34 horse skeletons were found, which is one of the most unique findings discovered and identified from Khorram Abad cemetery (Fig. 11). These horses seem to have been gifts given to the person buried in Tomb 22. One of the main reasons why most of the horses buried in the Scythian kurgans remain intact and healthy is that the burials of the horses are usually located on the margin of these sites, so their tombs were less destroyed by thieves. Also, the number of them depends on the condition of the private and wealthy tombs. The tomb pit were made in the shape of an oval and the dimensions and space needed to place the bodies of the horses were dug. An irregular row of cairn has been created on the ground, and by pouring a mixture of rock and soil on the desired tomb, they changed the form of tomb surface into a small mound. It should be noted that to prevent the roof from falling on the skeletons, the surface of the tomb was covered with timber, which rotted over time and settled into the tomb. The effects of these timbers are completely visible on the tomb. The burial of the horses has been done on two levels or in two irregular rows, so that 17 horses have been buried in the first level and 18 heads in the second level. It seems that no special direction has been observed in their burial. The most interesting point about this tomb is that none of these horses showed any signs of killing in them and it seems that these horses were first strangled and then buried. The decorative beads were the only gifts obtained alongside the skeletons. They were made of ferrite or glass and hung around the neck or legs of the skeleton.

Fig. 11 Gurkan 20, buried horses in the tomb.

Discussion and conclusion

According to the researches and excavations carried out by archaeologists in the last few decades, it can be stated that the material cultures of the Scythians in the Western regions are quite comparable to the samples obtained from the steppes of Central Asia. Some pieces, such as horseshoes, weapons, bronze pots, mirrors and objects made in the style of animals all

represent Scythian culture and art. There are even common points about burying horses on top of each other and their number. Comparative analysis of Scythian kurgans shows the diversity of burial rites. But in some cases, there are significant similarities in burials and Scythian burials rites. For example, the tombs were made in the shape of kurgan or barrow. These tombs were made in the shape of a circle. In some cases, stone was used to create mound on the tomb, and it was also used to create rings around burial or burial pit walls. Soil and stone and a combination of both were usually used to construct and create tombs. The main burial was located in the central part of the burial and was for East-West burial. Stone was mostly used for covering burial tomb, and changed it into the form of bulkhead. Wood was rarely used to cover the roof. Sometimes, one or more burials were made in a kurgan around the main tomb. The burial of horses and related objects can be seen in most Scythian tombs. What is important in the Scythian cemetery of Khorram Abad is that the burial of horses, unlike other similar examples, was placed on both sides and next to the tomb of the deceased instead of being on the burial of the deceased. On the main tomb, we encounter the bones of the sacrified people, who dismembered their corpse after being killed. This method of Scythian burial is one of the rare examples in West Asia. One of the most common objects inside the tombs are potteries, which are sometimes simple and unadorned, and in some cases, decorated with engraving geometric motifs. The interior of these motifs was filled with white material. The most important achievement of this season of excavation is the creation of burial barrows belonging to the Scythian elders. Of course, some scholars also attribute the treasure of Ziwiye to one of the Scythian princes. In the tombs of Khorram Abad cemetery, both the burial of horses and human sacrifices can be seen, and considering that the burial of horses had not taken place in the burials of the ordinary people of these tribes, it can be said that these tombs belong to Scythians elders and princes. The Scythians were a nomadic tribe that spread over a wide geographical area, from the Black Sea in the West to the borders of China. The relics of these barrows have been excavated outside the geographical territory of Iran in Southern Caucasus, around the Black Sea, Russia, and Kazakhstan, the most important of which are Pazyryk, Arjan (Russia) and Kostromskaya. It seems that Khorram Abad cemetery has an important religious context used by Scythian tribes for a wide period of time.

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Fig. 3 Location of Scythian Khorram Abad Cemetery, Reza Rezalou and Yahya Ayramlou, Horse Burial Ritual among Scythian Tribes: Case Study of Khorram Abad Cemetery in Meshgin Shahr, Historical Sociology, 2014, fig.1.
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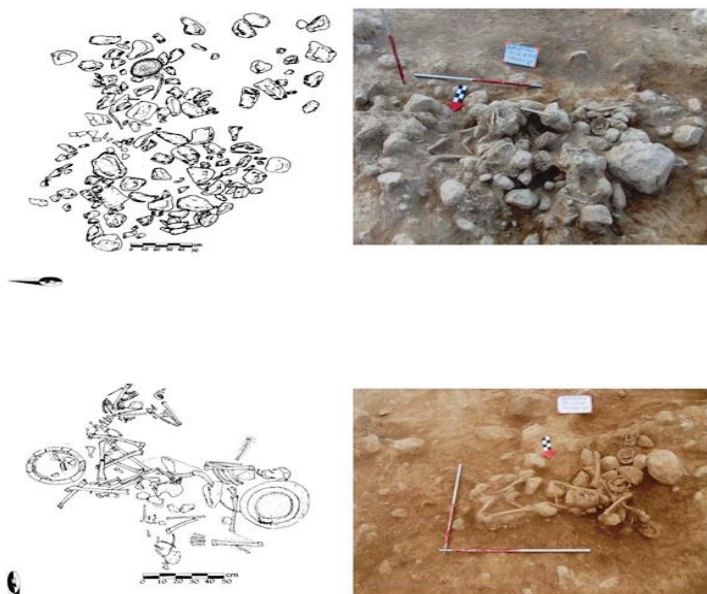Fig. 7 Iron horseshoe discovered from Tomb 22
Fig. 8 Potteries discovered from Tomb 22
Fig. 9 Tomb 21 - skeleton of sacrified women for the deceased in the main tomb
Fig. 10 Potteries belong to Tomb 21 , Reza Rezalou and Yahya Ayramlou, op. cit , p. 134.
Fig. 11 Gurkan 20, buried horses in the tomb.

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MEDIEVAL CULTURE IN
CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

Art roman et art moderne : « affinités sentimentales »

Valérie Buisine

Abstract: *The history of art in the twentieth century reveals many and varied affinities with roman art, both formal and spiritual, especially for the painters of the Second School of Paris and the non-figuration. However, it would be more correct to speak of "sentimental affinities" because this story features artists and thinkers for whom the essential stake is to renew links with the public, to nourish modern man from within in a world to be rebuilt.*

Keywords: *roman art ; abstract art ; non-figurative art ; Second School of Paris; spirituality ; sacred art*

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Suite aux avant-gardes majeures du début du XXe siècle (cubisme, fauvisme, surréalisme), la nouvelle génération d'artistes qui émergea à l'approche de la Seconde Guerre mondiale en France (Jean Bazaine, Jean Bertholle, Roger Bissière, Elvire Jan, Jean Le Moal, Alfred Manessier,

Edouard Pignon, Maria Helena Viera da Silva…)[1] savait qu'elle ne pouvait se contenter d'imiter la peinture des aînés, fut-elle innovante. Emboîtant le pas des maîtres de l'art moderne, il leur fallait s'aventurer sur des voies inédites, conformes aux aspirations de leur temps. D'autant que leurs ambitions personnelles se rejoignaient dans une volonté commune de ne pas dissocier nouveauté des formes et contenu philosophique, spirituel ou religieux, pour répondre aux attentes d'un public en quête de sens dans une période troublée[2]. Or à ce titre, le cas de l'art roman se révéla pour eux un modèle du genre, tant sur le plan formel que par l'esprit.

Recherche d'une voie propre

Dans la fougue de sa jeunesse, cette génération se sent l'âme d'un médiateur entre l'art de son temps et le public, un peu déconcerté par ces formes inédites et ces couleurs franches. Le divorce entre le public et l'art moderne pouvait sembler consommé. Pour ces peintres, la quête d'un art qui véhicule un sens pour l'homme moderne passe par la rencontre de figures charismatiques et par l'adhésion à des groupes d'artistes et de penseurs qui se révèleront déterminants. Parmi eux, l'Académie Ranson avec Roger Bissière, le groupe Témoignage autour de Marcel Michaud et les Jeunes Peintres de tradition française avec Bazaine.

Le rôle de l'art roman

Le cours de fresque animé par Bissière à l'Académie Ranson dans les années trente s'inscrit dans un contexte de redécouverte de l'époque médiévale où l'art naissait d'un esprit religieux. Cours et publications se multiplient sur cette question. Beaucoup de jeunes artistes trouvent d'étonnantes similitudes entre l'art roman et leurs propres préoccupations formelles héritées du cubisme (abandon de la perspective linéaire, renoncement au modelé et au volume, simplification des motifs). Ce fut pour eux une révélation tant d'un point de vue artistique que spirituel. C'est pourquoi nombre d'historiens de l'art ont noté le retour à la simplicité du

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[1] Nouvelle génération baptisée plus tard « La Seconde (ou Nouvelle) École de Paris ».

[2] « Si l'exposition de 1938 [à la Galerie Breteau à Paris] eut tant de retentissement, c'est justement parce qu'elle allait bien au-delà de l'invention formelle, elle était en quelque sorte le témoin de l'inquiétude d'une époque. Pour s'étourdir, Paris avait beau multiplier les fêtes, les bals masqués, il n'en restait pas moins vrai que l'Allemagne s'armait, grondait, qu'Hitler hurlait, gesticulait, éructait et allumait des feux sur les places publiques, brûlant livres et peintures. Paris se cachait les yeux et pourtant là-bas, on assassinait les communistes et les juifs, les artistes fuyaient, la terreur était permanente » (dans Philippe Le Burgue, 2005, *Bertholle*, Neuchâtel, éd. Ides et Calendes, p. 25-26).

Moyen Âge et la redécouverte des arts primitifs comme l'une des grandes conquêtes de l'art contemporain. Pierre Francastel raconte :

> « L'une des sources d'idées les plus fécondes pour eux c'est la peinture romane. Ils sont férus de ces œuvres nouvellement étudiées où ils voient, d'une part des recherches d'invention pure, et d'autre part, les débuts de la tradition française (…). Les jeunes peintres contemporains considèrent que l'art roman fournit la preuve qu'il peut exister un art à la fois expressif et abstrait non soumis aux lois de la perspective linéaire ».[3]

Ce qui est déterminant, comme l'écrit encore Francastel, ce sont « certaines **affinités sentimentales** (…) qui se constituent à travers les âges, les familles d'artistes ». Pensée confirmée par les artistes, dont Manessier dans une interview : « On a une famille qui remonte dans la nuit des temps. On se sent très, très proches des Grecs, de l'art roman, de certains peintres, on peut les nommer au cours des siècles. Il y a des vérités qui sont des vérités collectives dans la peinture ».[4]

L'enseignement universitaire de Henri Focillon eut un grand impact sur les artistes (dont Bazaine qui suivit ses cours). Dès 1919, ce médiéviste en appelait à un retour aux origines :

> « Revenons à nous-mêmes, à notre passé, à nos origines les plus lointaines, à tous les monuments de notre effort, à tout ce que nous avons donné d'intelligence et de vertu. L'histoire n'est pas un médicament aride, un recul dans le temps. C'est la mémoire des peuples. Elle ne se détourne pas, elle exhorte, elle entraîne à l'action ».[5]

L'une des idées forces de son ouvrage *Vie des formes* (1934) justifie cette exhortation. Selon lui, le temps n'est pas linéaire, sa durée est ponctuée d'avancées mais aussi de retours en arrière, de ruptures, de stagnations, de reprises du passé, suivant une structure cyclique. Il pose la notion de « **famille spirituelle** » sous laquelle se regroupent des artistes de différentes époques unis par une sensibilité commune, par exemple ceux de l'époque romane et ceux du début du XXe siècle, sachant que cet historien de l'art est un fin connaisseur des deux époques.

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[3] P. Francastel, *Nouveau dessin, nouvelle peinture, l'École de Paris*, Paris, Librairie de Médicis, 1946, p. 167.
[4] Dans le film *Les Offrandes d'Alfred Manessier* de Gérard Raynal; couleurs, 52 mn, production Soleluna Films, CNAP et FR3, « Océaniques », 1992.
[5] Déclaration d'Henri Focillon le 23 mai 1918, dans *Les Évocations françaises : les pierres de France,* Paris, 1919, introduction, p. II (cité dans L. Bertrand Dorléac, *L'Art de la défaite, 1940-1944,* Paris, Seuil, 1993, p. 210).

ill. 1, 2 Stephanus Garsia et deux anonymes, *Apocalypse de Saint Sever*
(ou *Le Beatus de Saint Sever),* mi-XIe siècle

Au registre des publications, on note l'importance de l'ouvrage *Les Arts primitifs français* édité en 1942 par Léon Gischia et Lucien Mazenod, comprenant de magnifiques reproductions. Les revues *Minotaure* puis *Verve*[6] participent dans les années 1930-1940 à la diffusion de modèles artistiques variés à travers de nombreuses illustrations[7] sur les arts primitifs, les cultures anciennes et l'art roman. La vue de quelques miniatures de l'Apocalypse de Saint-Sever (mi-XIe siècle, **ill. 1, 2)**[8], éditées en fac-similé en 1947 chez Tériade, jouèrent pour nombre d'artistes un rôle décisif, avec leur figuration simplifiée et souvent brutale, leur chromatisme vif.[9]

La revue *Art sacré*[10] consacra en 1945 un de ses numéros aux peintures romanes en France. Un parallèle y est souvent établi entre le style de Georges Rouault[11], aux grands aplats colorés et aux cernes noirs, et les

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[6] *Minotaure*, revue d'inspiration surréaliste éditée de 1933 à 1939 à Paris sous l'impulsion des éditeurs Skira et Tériade ; *Verve*, revue artistique et littéraire fondée à Paris par Tériade (38 numéros entre 1937 et 1960).

[7] Manessier se souvient : « Il y avait deux revues, *Verve* et *Minotaure*, qui étaient des revues essentielles (…). Un très beau numéro de *Verve* était consacré aux fresques de Saint-Savin et aux manuscrits du XIIe siècle, avec un texte d'Aragon, je crois » (extrait de l'entretien de Claire Stoullig avec Manessier, publié dans cat. expo. *Manessier*, Grand Palais, Paris, éd. Skira, CNAP, 1993, p. 133-134).

[8] Ce manuscrit enluminé sur parchemin est un commentaire illustré de l'Apocalypse de Beatus de Liébana, écrit au VIIe siècle, réalisé sans doute à l'abbaye de Saint-Sever.

[9] Dans l'article « une tradition à haut risque » de Guitemie Maldonado, hors série *Connaissance des arts* sur l'exposition « L'art en guerre 1938-1947 », n°555, MAM de la ville de Paris, 2012, p. 47.

[10] Publiée de 1935 à 1969 au service du renouveau de l'art sacré en France.

[11] Georges Rouault (1871-1958) appartient à la génération précédente.

œuvres d'art roman, d'autant plus qu'il est considéré comme l'un des peintres religieux les plus importants du XXe siècle.

Les cahiers de *Zodiaqu*e contribuèrent eux aussi à diffuser des reproductions de l'art roman. Créée en mars 1951 par les Bénédictins de l'abbaye Sainte-Marie de la Pierre-qui-Vire (Yonne, France), en particulier Dom Angelico Surchamp[12] et Dom Claude Jean-Nesmy, ce titre d'édition fut considéré comme une référence pour l'art sacré. Son premier numéro s'ouvrait sur un plaidoyer pour l'art sacré abstrait. Un an après sa création, *Zodiaque* consacra un numéro entier (71 pages) au peintre Albert Gleizes, avec de nombreuses reproductions et citations.[13] Gleizes fit de nouveau l'objet de deux articles dans le numéro 25.[14] Ce peintre a aussi écrit dans les pages de la revue.[15]

Albert Gleizes et un cubisme « à la romane »

Pour Gleizes, il était inconcevable de faire de l'art sacré sans se référer à un « principe traditionnel », au risque sinon de produire un art d'« individualisme » (celui de l'artiste). Il reconnaissait la nécessité pour l'artiste de se « *religare,* relier » à une source commune. Conviction hautement partagée par Surchamp, pour qui ce peintre joua un rôle essentiel : « Grâce à Gleizes, j'ai compris la parenté qui relie l'art roman aux arts primitifs et à l'art moderne. Il me fit comprendre (…) surtout à quel point les recherches de l'art moderne – celui issu de Cézanne, Van Gogh et Gauguin – rejoignaient formellement celles des XIe et XIIe siècles ».[16]

L'époque de référence pour un nouvel art sacré est le Moyen Âge selon Gleizes, « expression la plus exacte et la plus belle ». Nombreux tableaux témoignent de cette inspiration médiévale, comme *Crucifixion* (1935, **ill. 3**) *Autorité spirituelle et pouvoir temporel* (1939-40, **ill. 4**) ou *Les Evangiles* (1939-1941, **ill. 5**). Il va jusqu'à dire que l'artiste est « le serviteur de l'œuvre dont les structures vivantes devraient lui être fournies par les théologiens et les métaphysiciens », évinçant la possibilité pour l'artiste de pratiquer un pur jeu de formes et de couleurs sans âme.

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[12] Dom Angelico Surchamp (1924-2018), peintre et fresquiste, médiéviste spécialiste de l'art roman.
[13] *Zodiaque* n°6-7, janvier 1952, préface de Jean Cassou.
[14] Dom Angelico Surchamp, « Albert Gleizes », et Thomas Greenwood, « L'esthétique religieuse du peintre Gleizes », *Zodiaque*, n°25, avril 1955, p. 20-55 et 56-58.
[15] Albert Gleizes, « Anne G. Dangar », *Zodiaque*, n°25, avril 1955, p. 8-9.
[16] Dans dossier « L'art roman au XXe siècle », revue *Arts sacrés*, 2009, p. 36.

ill. 3, 4, 5 Albert Gleizes, *Crucifixion,* 1935 ; *Les Evangiles,* 1939-1941 ;
Autorité spirituelle et pouvoir temporel, 1939-1940

Le Père Régamey (historien d'art et auteur, l'un des piliers de la revue *l'Art sacré*) n'a pas toujours été tendre à l'égard de la revue concurrente, *Zodiaque*. Sur une note concernant les revues d'art sacré, il en parle comme d'une « moinerie néo-romano-cubiste » [17], reprochant la sécheresse et le systématisme d'un excès de symbolisme (inspiré notamment de l'art roman).

En réalité, Régamey reproche à Gleizes d'appliquer des « recettes » toutes faites, cuisinées « à l'antique » ou « à la médiévale » (comme l'utilisation systématique de nimbes, mandorles, arcs, etc. pour donner un côté glorieux aux personnages saints). Ce symbolisme nécessitait selon lui une initiation du grand public sous peine de rester une langue morte.

En mars 1945, dans ses notes pour « le cours Saint-Jacques » sur « Les tendances actuelles [de l'art religieux] » [18], Régamey considère que « [le cubisme] se prête peu à l'expression des réalités chrétiennes, à cause précisément de ce caractère abstrait, qui peut satisfaire l'esprit par sa rigueur, satisfaire les yeux par le charme des agencements de surfaces colorées, mais ne parle guère au cœur. Ainsi Albert Gleizes (…). Restera toujours un art pour initiés » (p. 10)[19]. Même si Régamey n'aime pas la manière dont *le cubisme fait de l'art religieux*, il reconnaît que Gleizes a sa place dans les expositions d'art sacré en France comme représentant d'une « tendance

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[17] Feuillet daté du 20 avril 1953 dans Fonds Régamey, APDF (boîte 842-700.32).

[18] Notes du 10 mars 1945 dans Fonds Régamey, APDF (boîte Art sacré I - V-842-700.31).

[19] De même, Régamey pense que le surréalisme n'est pas adapté à l'art religieux, mais pour des raisons différentes : « Du surréalisme (…) dans l'art religieux, il ne peut être (tel du moins qu'il s'est manifesté jusqu'ici) que scandaleux ou risible » (notes pour « le cours Saint-Jacques » du 10 mars 1945 sur « Les tendances actuelles [de l'art religieux] », p. 13, Fonds Régamey, APDF, boîte Art sacré I - V-842-700.31).

actuelle ».[20]

  Ainsi, une littérature abondante sur l'art roman était diffusée dans les années 1940 en France, comme le rappelle Laurence Bertrand Dorléac dans *L'Art de la défaite* (1993). Un mémoire fut aussi consacré en 1994 à la revue *Zodiaque (1951-1971) : de l'art roman à l'art abstrait, un art sacré pour notre temps*[21]*,* résumant en son titre l'affinité entre l'art roman et les nouvelles tendances picturales au XXe siècle. Et surtout, le rôle de *Zodiaque* pour nourrir le public à l'époque.

L'art roman s'expose

  Dans les années trente, la culture médiévale s'enrichit également de belles expositions, comme celle sur *Les Enlumineurs français du VIIIe au XVe siècle* à la Bibliothèque nationale en 1937, ou celle sur les œuvres d'art catalan du Xe au XVe réunies au musée national du Jeu de Paume la même année, qui attiraient de très nombreux visiteurs.

  L'enthousiasme des jeunes peintres fut aussi suscité par l'ouverture en 1937[22] de nouvelles salles d'exposition consacrées à l'art roman, dont la surface fut triplée, ce qui permit à un large public d'accéder plus facilement aux trésors de l'art médiéval. Ces salles étaient le résultat d'un formidable travail de reproduction engagé par Prosper Mérimée[23] au XIXe siècle.[24] « Quand on a inauguré le département des fresques romanes au musée des monuments français de Chaillot, les jeunes peintres de l'époque – Manessier, Estève…– ont été stupéfaits. Ils ont dit : "C'est exactement ce qu'on cherche à faire !" ».[25] Dans une lettre adressée à son épouse, datée de septembre 1945 et écrite suite à sa visite dans ce musée, Bissière exprime son enthousiasme pour les copies des portails de Moissac, Vézelay et Autun. Le sud-ouest de la France représente également pour lui une source d'inspiration extrêmement

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[20] En 1947 (année des expositions d'art religieux contemporain à Nantes, Bordeaux, Lyon et Dijon), il avoue à René Déroudille : « Je crains de [de]voir faire une trop grande place à Gleizes qui mérite effectivement une place, mais qui ne doit pas être mis excessivement en vedette ; ce serait un très grave contresens » (Fonds Régamey, APDF, boîte Art sacré III - V-842-700-33, pochette « Lyon 1947 »).

[21] Département Histoire, université Lyon Lumière, France.

[22] Lors de l'Exposition Internationale à Paris.

[23] À la fois écrivain, traducteur, critique, historien et archéologue, P. Mérimée (1803-1970) est connu comme une référence majeure en matière de protection du patrimoine. Il fut aussi Inspecteur général des monuments historiques.

[24] « Depuis un siècle, la Direction générale des beaux-arts avait fait prendre à l'aquarelle des relevés à petite échelle des fresques qui décoraient les murs de plusieurs centaines d'églises médiévales françaises. Les œuvres avaient été reproduites sur place en grandeur réelle sur des toiles revêtues d'un enduit spécial qui leur donnait l'aspect de la pierre » (L'art de la défaite, 1993, p. 249).

[25] Dans interview de Dom Surchamp, « Le roman de *Zodiaque* », revue *Arts sacrés,* n°2, nov.-déc. 2009, p. 36.

riche avec Souillac, Rocamadour, Toulouse et la cathédrale de Cahors. L'impact sur Bertholle de la découverte physique de l'art roman se reconnaît dans plusieurs textes et images consignés dans son *Livre d'étude (1936-1942)*.[26]

De même, la pureté abstraite des abbayes cisterciennes (comme Notre-Dame de Sénanque ou le Thoronet, datées du XIIe siècle) fascinait les jeunes artistes et était pour eux source d'inspiration spirituelle et formelle (beauté des lignes pures). En dressant un inventaire des nouvelles tendances artistiques depuis vingt ans, Georges Mercier évoquait les utilisations de l'esthétique non-figurative au service du christianisme dans l'art roman. Ce qui peut expliquer la référence à cet art du passé par certains peintres non-figuratifs de la Seconde École de Paris qui se sont reconnus dans ces formes dépouillées et les ont pratiquées comme un « retour aux sources ».[27]

Un point mérite d'être fait ici sur la différence entre « art abstrait » et « art non-figuratif », puisque plusieurs artistes de la nouvelle génération furent classés plutôt dans la seconde catégorie. Contrairement à l'art abstrait, l'art non figuratif conserve un lien avec la réalité sensible mais ce lien dépasse la figuration classique, narrative, illusionniste, naturaliste. Manessier et Bertholle préféraient parler de « figuration allusive » que de non-figuration, la négation induisant, à tort, toute absence de lien au réel. Pour l'art roman, on pourrait parler de « figuration symbolique » plus que de « figuration allusive » ; dans les deux cas, le lien avec le réel est gardé sauf mais n'implique pas une imitation du réel.

La peinture murale, entre héritage et renouveau

L'époque romane est le temps de la grande expansion de la peinture murale, où des églises furent entièrement couvertes de peintures. A l'époque gothique, cet art cède la place au vitrail. En 1937, le musée des Monuments français à Paris se vit confier la mission de sauvegarder le souvenir des fresques romanes, délicates et fragiles, vouées à la destruction du temps (« les teintes s'atténuent, l'enduit peint s'écaille, se boursoufle et des morceaux de la précieuse pellicule de couleur tombent sur le sol. Et le mal est presque sans

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[26] Dans ce document de travail, qui révèle ses sources de réflexion picturale autant que ses nourritures spirituelles et intellectuelles, sont collées des photos d'églises médiévales (intérieur et extérieur : un tympan, un bas-côté, trois colonnes avec chapiteau sculpté, p. 114, 140, 146, 147). Est aussi recopié un texte d'Elie Lebasquais sur le « Symbolisme du Christ en gloire aux tympans des églises médiévales », sans doute extrait de la revue *Le Voile d'Isis*, n° 184, avril 1935 (p . 7, 8, 13, 14 du *Livre d'étude*).
[27] Dans « L'Art abstrait dans l'art sacré. La tendance non-figurative dans l'art sacré chrétien contemporain », 1964, Paris, éd. de Boccard.

remède »[28]) en exécutant des copies aussi fidèles que possible. Parmi elles, les peintures de la voûte de Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe (Vienne), qui incitèrent l'historien d'art Henri Focillon à qualifier cet ensemble de « Sixtine romane » et à lui consacrer vingt pages de texte (soit un tiers du volume) et quarante planches d'illustrations dans son ouvrage *Les peintures romanes des églises de France* paru en 1938.[29] La partie romane du musée de la fresque fut inaugurée en 1945 et créa ainsi un nouveau département au musée des Monuments français.

Certes depuis Prosper Mérimée, le service des Monuments historiques avait fait exécuter des copies de fresques, mais cette collection extrêmement précieuse était réalisée à l'aquarelle sur papier, à échelle réduite et sur une surface plane. Les nouvelles répliques apparaissaient, quant à elles, rigoureusement conformes aux originaux « en l'état » (tons affaiblis, lacunes et blessures), en respectant les dimensions et le cadre architectural.

Au moment où « Vingt jeunes peintres de tradition française » exposaient leurs œuvres d'art moderne au nez et à la barbe de l'ennemi (en 1941 à la Galerie Braun à Paris, voir *supra*), la vingtaine de fresquistes poursuivait ce fastidieux labeur de copie fidèle, ainsi que le raconta Paul Deschamps : « L'Occupation n'arrêta nullement l'ardeur des artistes. On peut même dire qu'elle la stimula (…). Ils avaient le sentiment de faire œuvre patriotique (…) si bien qu'au lendemain de la Libération, les salles consacrées à la peinture romane étaient presque entièrement installées. Le 14 juin 1945 elles s'ouvraient au public ».

Esprit communautaire et art médiéval

Le retour de l'inspiration médiévale ne concernait pas uniquement les œuvres – fresque, sculpture, architecture, vitrail, tapisserie, enluminures – mais aussi **l'esprit** qui animait les artistes et artisans à l'époque, et que l'Académie Ranson tendait à réveiller via sa dimension communautaire. « Les jeunes se plaignent de devoir travailler isolés, sans maîtres et sans compagnons. Aussi faut-il faire connaître l'effort libre et sincère entrepris par l'Académie Ranson (…) pour retrouver la forme des ateliers d'autrefois ».[30] Plus qu'un professeur, l'enseignant était un compagnon. D'autant que dans cette académie libre, les disciplines n'étaient pas cloisonnées. Il était possible d'assister à d'autres cours que celui auquel on était inscrit : peinture, dessin et croquis, gravure sur bois, arts décoratifs, sculpture et fresque (un art collectif

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[28] Dans Paul Deschamps (1888-1974, conservateur puis directeur du musée des Monuments français), « Le département de la peinture murale au Musée des monuments français », *Journal des savants*, 1945, p. 84 www.persee.fr/doc/jds_0021-8103_1945_num_2_1_2754

[29] Paris, éd. Hartmann.

[30] Jacques Lassaigne, « Exposition de l'Académie Ranson », 7 juillet 1934, p. 10.

par excellence proche de l'artisanat et de la notion du *bel ouvrage)*. « Il faut
que les élèves ne soient plus des élèves mais une corporation de véritables
apprentis qui collaborent, se critiquent et se corrigent librement les uns les
autres ».[31]

Ainsi de nombreux jeunes artistes des années 1930, notamment ceux
qui fréquentaient l'Académie Ranson, se sont-ils ressourcés à l'esthétique
romane dont ils allaient faire « un modèle et un stimulant » [32] tant
spirituellement que plastiquement. On peut parler d'imprégnation d'un état
d'esprit car l'esprit médiéval offrait un modèle d'harmonie entre l'art et le
public.

Cette étape fut capitale pour les jeunes artistes et cela à plusieurs
titres : l'amitié durable avec leur aîné Bissière, les précieux échanges entre
artistes, les expositions et chantiers en commun, la naissance du groupe
Témoignage avec plusieurs élèves de cette académie. Au contact les uns avec
les autres, ces peintres sont parvenus à une heureuse alliance entre la matière
et l'esprit, telle qu'elle s'exprime dans la grande tradition de l'art français.

En 1965, soit trente ans après avoir fréquenté l'Académie Ranson,
Bertholle se retrouve à diriger l'atelier d'art mural à l'École nationale
supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris, nommé par André Malraux qui souhaitait
dépoussiérer l'enseignement de cette institution. On ne peut qu'opérer un
rapprochement entre la discipline qu'il enseigne – l'art mural – et l'existence
du cours de fresque de Bissière qui l'aura sans doute sensibilisé à cet art
collectif. Et au début des années 1980, Bertholle fonde sa propre école de
peinture, l'Académie Saint-Roch. Son rôle auprès des élèves fut de même
nature que celui de Bissière : guider, conseiller, éveiller.

Bissière et l'Académie Ranson

En 1923, Bissière est engagé à l'Académie Ranson pour animer un
atelier de peinture et de croquis. Préparé par ses écrits sur la peinture murale,
il ouvre un cours de fresque en novembre 1934, qu'il dirige jusqu'en 1939.

Située à Montparnasse, en plein centre artistique de Paris,
l'Académie Ranson est fondée en 1908 par les peintres nabis[33] Paul-Elie
Ranson (1861-1909) et Maurice Denis (1870-1943), ce qui lui assure dès le
départ une réputation d'indépendance et un certain prestige.

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[31] Propos de Harriet Cérésole rapporté par Pierre Courthion en 1933, *Revue hebdomadaire*
(cité par A. Charvier dans « Une histoire, un lieu », cat. expo. *Montparnasse années 30 (...)
Éclosions à l'Académie Ranson*, Rambouillet, Palais du roi de Rome, Belgique, éd. Snoeck,
2010, p. 28).
[32] J. Bazaine, *Le temps de la peinture 1938-1998,* Paris, Flammarion, coll. Champ, 2002, p.
111.
[33] Né en marge de la peinture académique fin XIXe-début XXe, mouvement artistique post-
impressionniste d'avant-garde.

Dans cette longue période d'activité de 1908 à 1955, une décennie est particulièrement faste et féconde, celle des années trente. Autour des professeurs Bissière (pour la peinture) et Malfray (pour la sculpture), des dizaines de jeunes artistes, hommes et femmes de toutes nationalités se forment dans un esprit de liberté, d'échanges et d'amitiés durables, jusqu'à constituer le noyau du futur groupe Témoignage (dès 1936) et favoriser la renommée internationale de ces artistes vingt ans plus tard sous le nom de « Seconde École de Paris ». Plusieurs d'entre eux (Bissière, Manessier et Étienne-Martin) seront honorés à la Biennale de Venise, ou nommés professeur à l'École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris (Bertholle, Étienne-Martin, Wacker), preuve de la reconnaissance dont ils bénéficient dans les années 1960-1970.

Une des clés de l'épanouissement de ces jeunes artistes : l'enseignement prodigué à l'Académie Ranson s'exerce dans le respect de la diversité des personnalités et des inspirations. Ce lieu est voisin de nombreuses autres académies dites « libres »[34], actives dans les années trente et souvent ouvertes à l'art moderne. Par exemple, les ateliers d'André Lhote et de Fernand Léger, où l'apprentissage du cubisme est largement diffusé, ou l'Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Elles incarnent un enseignement complet, indépendant, cosmopolite et de qualité qui favorise les rencontres et les échanges.
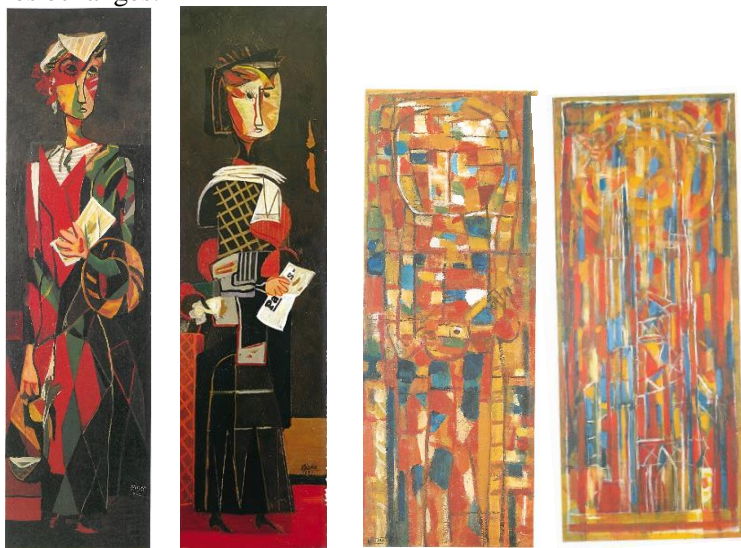
ill. 6, 7 Bissière, *Figure debout,* 1937 ; *Grande Figure,* 1937 ;
ill. 8, 9 Bissière, *Joueuse de guitare*, 1946-1947 ; *Grande cathédrale,* 1947

Avec sa *Figure debout* et sa *Grande figure* de 1937 **(ill. 6, 7),** Bissière montrait un exemple de fusion entre cubisme et art roman, avec des

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[34] Par opposition à l'enseignement réputé « académique » de l'École des beaux-arts.

formes simplifiées, expressives, dégagées de la perspective jusqu'à parvenir à un espace bidimensionnel. Ces recherches formelles, entre modernité et tradition française, se firent en commun sans que Bissière n'exerce plus d'influence sur ses élèves qu'eux en exerçaient sur lui. On note par exemple que les premiers tableaux de Bissière après la guerre (comme *Joueuse de guitare* ou *Grande cathédrale* datés de 1946-1947, **ill. 8, 9**) ont un point commun pictural avec ceux de Manessier quelques années plus tôt, comme *Les Pèlerins d'Emmaüs* (1943, **ill. 14,** *infra*), avec leur fragmentation colorée qui fusionne l'espace et l'objet, mais associée aux couleurs vives de Matisse ou de Bonnard.

Proche des peintres cubistes André Lhote et Georges Braque, auteur de plusieurs articles sur le cubisme et de la première monographie sur Braque en 1920, Bissière discerne dans le cubisme un retour aux moyens traditionnels tels qu'on les trouve dans l'art roman[35].

En 1939, Bissière quitte Paris et s'installe définitivement à Boissierette dans le Lot, en pleine campagne, avec pour seule compagnie son épouse, son fils et ses animaux : veaux, vaches, cochons... La radicalité de ce choix (dénuement, silence, dialogue avec la nature, émerveillement, méditation) explique la force et l'indépendance de son œuvre par la suite. Il recycle des matériaux très divers (vieux tissus, morceaux de bois usés, outils en fer, etc.), utilise des techniques picturales anciennes (peinture à l'œuf, à la fresque ou à la cire) appliquées sur des supports bruts (murs ou planche de bois non équarrie, tuile, cahier d'écolier, calendrier).

À Boissierette, il contemple la nature, vit au rythme des saisons, admire les variations de la lumière dans le paysage, s'émerveille des reflets du soleil sur le pelage des bêtes... Ce cadre, tel un retour aux « premiers âges du monde » selon ses propres termes, facilite l'éclosion d'une peinture nouvelle, plus spontanée et instinctive, comme une louange picturale de la nature.

ill. 10 Roger Bissière, *Soleil,* 1945-1946

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[35] C'est-à-dire simplification des formes, abandon de la perspective, du modelé, des effets de volume.

Sa quête d'authenticité le conduit à abandonner le style figuratif au profit d'un art plus proche des arts primitifs, des dessins enfants[36] ou de l'Art brut.[37] Ses emprunts formels concernent aussi l'art mural du Moyen Âge : tapisserie, vitrail, sculpture et fresque. Dans les années 1945-1946, il conçoit une série de tapisseries **(ill. 10),** avec ce goût de l'artisan attaché au *beau métier.*[38]

Les titres de ses tableaux évoquent une inspiration pastorale et bucolique qui célèbre l'homme et son retour à l'état de nature. Une nature « que le peintre aime, qui le console, qui lui apporte, même, la joie. Et il ne cessera plus d'en prendre les Très Riches Heures, avec une fraîcheur, une intensité qui fait penser aux enluminures du Moyen Âge ».[39] Son œuvre est la synthèse d'une multitude de sources d'inspiration :

> « Je ne crois ni à l'expérience, ni à l'intelligence en matière de peinture, mais seulement à un **instinct profond** qui vient du fond des âges, à quelque chose de simple et de primitif qui est proche d'une gestation naturelle, je crois qu'on produit des formes et des couleurs comme un pommier produit des pommes, ce n'est pas un choix mais une fatalité ».[40]

Au final, cet homme humble et vrai, détaché de lui-même, a su produire une œuvre à son image : simplicité, poésie, innocence. Et transmettre aux artistes dont il était proche un supplément d'âme.

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[36] « L'enfant sans effort va vers les synthèses et se fait une image du monde en retenant seulement les traits essentiels et caractéristiques » (dans *L'Opinion*, 20 mai 1916, cité dans Rose-Marie Arbour-Mayrand, *Bissière et la tradition de la peinture*, thèse de 3ᵉ cycle, Université Paris Sorbonne, 1973, René Jullian, directeur, p. 33).

[37] Terme inventé par Jean Dubuffet en 1945 pour désigner l'art de ceux qui n'ont ni culture ni formation artistique et dont la création est spontanée.

[38] Le *beau métier* consiste à bien connaître la nature du medium utilisé, ses possibilités et ses limites (d'après Bissière, *L'Opinion*, 15 sept. 1917). Mais d'après d'autres écrits (articles parus et textes dans son *Journal manuscrit*, rédigé entre 1908 et 1939), le *beau métier* n'a pas qu'une valeur technique ; il est porteur d'une garantie morale et artistique. Tel un rituel, il est investi d'un pouvoir allant au-delà des seuls gestes accomplis. « Au cours de la vie, on ne fait pas dans la peinture des découvertes techniques. On ne se perfectionne pas dans le sens matériel, mais seulement dans le sens spirituel. C'est soi-même qu'on apprend à connaître au-delà des aspects ordinaires (…) On ne prend chez les autres que ce qui nous appartient déjà » (*Journal manuscrit*, p. 28, cité dans Thèse Bissière, 1973, p. 90, *op. cit.* note 36 p. 8).

[39] Dans Jean-Clarence Lambert, « Hommage à Bissière », *France Observateur*, 9 avril 1959, n°466, p. 20.

[40] Dans une lettre du 15 juillet 1951 au critique d'art Georges Boudaille.

Le groupe Témoignage

Dans le sillage de l'Académie Ranson, les jeunes artistes connaissent différentes formes d'engagement dans les années 1930-1940, au service d'un art nouveau spirituellement nourri. Font partie de cette éclosion le groupe Témoignage (1936-1940) autour de la figure de Marcel Michaud, et l'exposition des Jeunes peintres de tradition française en 1941 avec le peintre Jean Bazaine.

Témoignage est un regroupement d'artistes, d'artisans et de penseurs autour de l'écrivain et galeriste Marcel Michaud à Lyon dans les années trente. Son ambition était de renouer avec le grand courant spiritualiste du Moyen Âge, de défendre des idées universelles sur l'homme, l'art, le monde, la spiritualité. Le groupe rayonnait au-delà de la sphère lyonnaise puisqu'il accueillait des artistes de diverses villes françaises ou même étrangères, et que l'un de ses objectifs était de sortir les villes de province de l'asphyxie culturelle et artistique (au début du siècle, seule Paris avait accès aux courants avant-gardistes). L'âme de Témoignage, selon Michaud : une « association par affinité d'inquiétude et non de certitude »[41], à laquelle opposer la vitalité de l'art et de l'artisanat, qu'il exposait dans ses galeries notamment.

L'art des peintres de Témoignage, dans son aspect formel, s'inscrit le plus souvent dans l'héritage cubiste pour les formes, fauve pour les couleurs et surréaliste pour l'atmosphère : des œuvres aux formes libres, dépouillées, géométriques qui n'imitent pas le réel, des aplats colorés dénués de volume, des couleurs souvent vives, avec une dominante de bleus et de rouges chez Le Moal et Bertholle, plus axées sur l'ocre, le vert et le brun chez Manessier.

Malgré de très fortes individualités, et l'absence d'une théorie esthétique commune, l'art de ces artistes présente donc une parenté formelle importante durant cette période, où apparaissent des motifs à caractère symbolique, allégorique et métaphorique, où le vocabulaire religieux se mêle aux symboles ésotériques (spirale, œil, astres…), caractéristique des artistes de Témoignage.

Participation à des événements collectifs majeurs

Dans ses articles et chroniques, Bissière prônait la nécessité de constituer des groupes d'artistes, d'architectes, d'artisans et de techniciens travaillant en commun et de façon anonyme. Ses idées correspondaient au contexte européen qui a vu naître le Bauhaus[42] et d'autres groupes comme Moly-Sabata et Témoignage. Juste après l'ouverture de son cours de fresque,

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[41] M. Michaud, « Pourquoi Témoignage », *Le Poids du monde*, n°2, 14 mars 1939, p. 45.
[42] Fondé à Weimar (Allemagne) en 1919 par Walter Gropius, le Bauhaus est un institut des arts et métiers surtout connu pour ses réalisations architecturales et pour son influence sur les arts plastiques. Kandinsky et Klee y ont enseigné plusieurs années.

Bissière participait déjà avec ses élèves au Premier salon d'art mural de 1935, destiné à encourager les pratiques collectives.

Ces collaborations artistiques, dans le cadre de commandes de travaux d'architecture, sont l'occasion pour les jeunes artistes de pratiquer leur métier en lien avec le public. Ce qui répond à leur désir fondamental de réconcilier le public avec l'art de son époque, et d'associer art et artisanat, comme par le passé.

L'esprit du groupe Témoignage, qui souhaitait renouer avec la dimension communautaire de l'art roman, conduisit naturellement les artistes à collaborer à des chantiers. Plusieurs membres participent à des événements artistiques d'ampleur nationale et internationale. Les chantiers de 1937 et 1939[43] font partie du « bilan » de Témoignage publié dans le numéro 3 de la revue du groupe, *Le Poids du monde*, en plus des expositions à Lyon, Grenoble et Paris de 1937 à 1939.
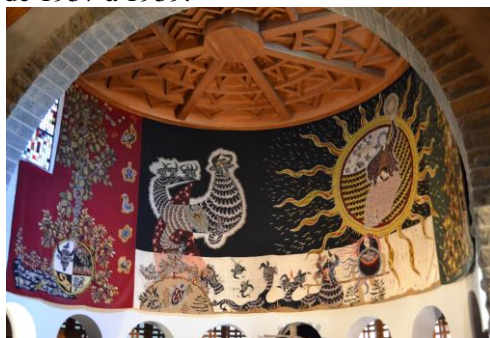
ill. 11 Jean Lurçat, *L'Apocalypse*, 1947

ill. 12, 13 Jean Bertholle, *Glorification*, 1946
et Devant d'autel (ou *antependium*), 1980

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[43] En 1937, la décoration du pavillon des chemins de fer pour l'Exposition internationale des arts et techniques, événement majeur en France cette année-là. Et en 1939, réalisation d'un décor peint de 1500 m^2 pour le plafond du pavillon français à l'Exposition universelle de New York.

De ces expériences collectives avec l'Académie Ranson et le groupe Témoignage vient sans doute le goût du peintre Bertholle pour le monumental qui lui fit accepter, quelques années plus tard, des commandes de vitraux, mobilier, mosaïque et.[44] L'art de la tapisserie, qui connut ses heures de gloire au Moyen Âge, fut en quelque sorte réhabilité (avec Jean Lurçat surtout, et aussi Bissière et Bertholle, **ill. 10 à 13**). Dans l'éditorial d'une revue d'art, André Chastel écrivit ceci au sujet des tapisseries au XXe siècle : « L'action de Lurçat a été favorisée par le climat particulier de l'après-guerre, par le besoin d'un ''retour aux sources'', à une certaine pureté originelle. Mais elle ne sut pas éviter une contradiction de fait : la mise en œuvre de techniques perfectionnées à l'extrême pour parvenir à une apparence rudimentaire, artisanale, pour répondre à un primitivisme artificiellement provoqué ».[45]

Restaurer la primauté du spirituel

En plus de formes artistiques nouvelles, Témoignage prône la quête d'un renouveau spirituel, avec le souci de créer un style qui ait une âme. Pour cela, le groupe se tourne vers la tradition, en particulier l'art roman, témoin d'une époque où l'art était une chose publique, fédératrice, et non une production d'élites à destination d'autres élites – du moins dans sa vision fantasmée à l'époque. Selon Michaud, il faut quitter l'amour de l'esthétique comme fin en soi pour atteindre d'autres réalités où l'être humain retrouve une place centrale, pour *redécouvrir effectivement l'homme perdu.*[46] Dans cette volonté d'un retour à l'esprit en art, une certaine filiation est aussi revendiquée avec la préhistoire.

En réalité, ce qui intéresse Témoignage au premier chef est l'Homme et sa place dans le monde, avec une grande place accordée à la spiritualité dans un sens très ouvert. Cherchant à créer une solidarité nouvelle, Témoignage établit des passerelles entre les disciplines, les religions, les cultures. « Comment ? En retournant aux sources, en réinjectant à l'art la spiritualité perdue depuis que la Renaissance a remplacé le mythe de Dieu par celui de l'Homme ».[47]

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[44] Le goût de Manessier pour le monumental lui vint plutôt de ses études à l'École des beaux-arts de Paris d'abord en section architecture. Il honora de nombreuses commandes de vitraux de 1948 jusqu'en 1993, année de son décès.

[45] André Chastel*, L'Histoire de l'art : fins et moyens. Éditoriaux de la ''Revue de l'art'' 1968-1978,* Paris, Flammarion, coll. Champ esthétique, 1980, p. 253 (édito n°28, 1973).

[46] Jean Cehavalier, « La Renaissance de l'Homme », *Le Poids du monde*, n°2, 14 mars 1939, p. 77 (cité dans Laëtitia Blanchon-Gaudin, *Regard sur Témoignage*, mémoire de master I d'histoire de l'art, Lyon, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2010, Annie Claustres, directrice, 2010, p. 21).

[47] Dans texte anonyme, « Le sentiment mystique dans l'art actuel », *Connaissance des arts*,

La réflexion de Témoignage est alimentée par plusieurs artistes et penseurs, au gré des rencontres de l'un ou l'autre membre. Les philosophies orientales, la religion chrétienne et l'ésotérisme sont parmi les principales sources d'inspiration, à travers quelques figures marquantes gravitant autour d'eux.

Parmi ces figures marquantes, le peintre Louis Thomas, grand admirateur de l'écrivain catholique Léon Bloy (1846-1917). Ce dernier déplorait le déclin de la religion et l'indifférence envers elle. Selon Bloy, l'art et la culture pouvaient remédier à la déchéance spirituelle caractéristique de l'époque à condition de garder sauf un lien avec la transcendance, avec un principe supérieur et de réhabiliter certaines valeurs humaines.[48]

Les ouvrages de René Guénon[49], que Michaud avait lus avec fascination, contribuèrent eux aussi à éveiller les consciences sur les besoins du monde moderne. Sur les conseils de Michaud, Bertholle, Étienne-Martin, Stahly et d'autres s'engagèrent dans la lecture de textes comme le *Symbolisme de la Croix* ou *Aperçus sur l'Initiation*.[50]

Dans *Orient et Occident* paru en 1924, Guénon insiste sur ce que le monde occidental a égaré depuis le Moyen Âge. Et dans *La crise du monde moderne*[51], il situe à la fin du Moyen Âge le commencement de ce qu'il appelle une décadence. Pour lui, l'humanisme est symptomatique, par l'abstraction qu'il fait des principes supérieurs en ramenant tout à l'être humain, d'un glissement sur la pente fatale de l'individualisme, cause de la déchéance au XXe siècle. Cependant, cette vision pessimiste chez Guénon est compensée par l'activité créatrice de Témoignage, qui contribue à réenchanter le monde à travers la production d'œuvres d'art et leur diffusion.

Ainsi la religion occupe-t-elle une place importante au sein de Témoignage, mais plutôt dans le sens de ce qui *recueille* les traditions et *relie* les hommes entre eux (conformément aux deux sens étymologiques du mot) que dans le sens d'une religion particulière, dogmatique et institutionnelle. Michaud ne se convertit d'ailleurs jamais malgré le prosélytisme de certains fervents catholiques autour de lui. Le sentiment religieux qui anime la plupart des membres de Témoignage ne concerne pas le seul christianisme mais aussi un sacré plus laïque. Autant de formes différentes au service d'une même ambition : réinjecter du spirituel dans l'art.

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août 1960, p. 65 (cité dans catalogue exposition *Paris-Paris : 1937-1957,* éd. Centre Pompidou, 28 mai-2 nov. 1981, p. 90).

[48] Léon Bloy dans Jean-Luc Maxence*, René Guénon, le philosophe invisible*, Paris, Presses de la Renaissance, 2001, p. 140 (cité dans Témoignage Blanchon, 2010, p. 30-31).

[49] Une des figures les plus marquantes de l'occultisme français dans la première moitié du XXe siècle.

[50] Bertholle cite René Guénon à deux reprises dans son *Livre d'étude 1936-1942*, p. 13.

[51] René Guénon, *La crise du monde moderne*, Paris, Bossard, 1924 (rééd. 2009).

Albert Gleizes et Moly-Sabata, une résidence d'artistes proche de Témoignage

En qualité de théoricien du cubisme[52] et peintre d'un cubisme à caractère religieux, Albert Gleizes joua lui aussi le rôle d'inspirateur au sein de Témoignage. En 1921, Michaud publie un premier article consacré à ce peintre, qu'il rencontre en 1930 à Moly-Sabata. Dans ce lieu, Michaud écrivit plusieurs articles*,* dont un consacré précisément à cette expérience de *retour à la terre*.[53] L'année suivante, il rend compte d'une conférence de Gleizes : « Artisanat et retour à la terre ».[54]

En créant Moly-Sabata, Gleizes avait mis en pratique une organisation collective de l'art, qu'il prônait contre l'individualisme. En ce lieu résonnaient ses idées majeures : la conviction d'une vérité absolue dans l'art, l'attrait de l'absolu dans sa simplicité dépouillée, le retour aux techniques premières, les fortes influences primitives, l'attrait de l'art populaire (par opposition à l'art de salon, sophistiqué, raffiné, mondain). La proximité avec la nature et l'artisanat maintenait les pensionnaires dans une position anticapitaliste. La pensée de Gleizes était considérée par Michaud comme « révolutionnaire comme fut révolutionnaire le christianisme sous la domination romaine ».

Indépendamment de sa réserve sur cette vie en autarcie, Michaud voyait en Gleizes l'un des premiers ayant compris la nécessité de discipliner le jeu des formes à une pensée supérieure.[55] Ce que confirme J.-J. Lerrant, interviewé dans le film sur Témoignage : « Il y a aussi l'influence de Gleizes, post-cubiste, qui cherche un retour à la tradition, à travers l'art roman, les grands courants de l'art, l'éternité de l'art, et même une espèce d'art collectif ».[56]

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[52] Parmi ses écrits : *Du cubisme* avec Jean Metzinger (1912), avec cette idée « que le tableau n'imite rien » ; *Du cubisme et des moyens de le comprendre* (1921) ; *Vie et mort de l'Occident chrétien* (1930) ; *Art et religion, art et science, art et production* (1933) ; *Homocentrisme ou le retour de l'Homme Chrétien* (1937). Albert Gleizes a notamment exposé sa conception de la peinture moderne et approfondi la rupture avec les traditions nées de la Renaissance. Il leur reproche un asservissement au monde sensible qui se traduit pour le peintre par une dépendance excessive envers le sujet traité comme un spectacle.

[53] M. Michaud, « Un effort sympathique : Moly-Sabata », *L'Effort*, n°325 et 326, 17 et 24 septembre 1932, Fonds M. Michaud, MBA de Lyon. En 1947, Michaud écrit un autre article sur Gleizes : « Vers la signification », *Albert Gleizes. Le Cubisme et son dénouement dans la tradition*, Lyon, Nouvel Art, 1947.

[54] Dans *L'Effort*, 23 décembre 1933.

[55] D'après M. Michaud, « Pourquoi Témoignage », *Le Poids du monde*, n°2, 1939.

[56] Dans Daniel Le Comte, *Le groupe Témoignage*, Accord CLC productions, 2000, couleurs, 52 mn.

Les Jeunes Peintres de tradition française ou l'art sous l'Occupation

Les peintres non-figuratifs se connaissent presque tous dès 1935 et commencent à exposer ensemble. Certains fréquentent l'Académie Ranson, où professe Bissière, et plusieurs participent aux expositions du groupe Témoignage, autour de Michaud. Contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait imaginer, la peinture française continua à faire preuve d'une grande vitalité durant la Seconde Guerre : « Peindre pouvait signifier faire un acte de présence, exister sans renoncer, en un mot *résister* ».[57]

Le premier signe d'un réveil collectif après la terrible défaite de 1940[58] fut l'exposition qui s'ouvrit le 10 mai 1941 à la Galerie Braun à Paris sous le titre *Vingt jeunes*[59] *peintres de tradition française*[60], à l'initiative du peintre Jean Bazaine et de l'éditeur André Lejard. Ce titre masque la réalité d'une peinture avant-gardiste, pour contourner l'interdiction d'exposer un art qualifié de *dégénéré* par les Nazis.

Considérée comme militante dans ce contexte, l'exposition présente une peinture non-figurative aux curiosités plastiques communes. Ces *Jeunes peintres* renouent autant avec une tradition ancienne (art roman) que moderne (Bonnard, Picasso, Braque et Matisse). Ils sont les acteurs d'une tradition vivante, se démarquant de l'académisme prôné par l'ennemi. Le succès de cette exposition prouva que l'esprit français avait survécu à la défaite militaire, que les Nazis n'étaient pas parvenus « à mettre complètement au pas le monde de la création, et ce malgré les interdictions d'exposer, les saisies et les spoliations ».[61]

Comme Bissière et les artistes proches de l'Académie Ranson, Bazaine se tourna rapidement vers le passé comme source d'inspiration. En 1934, il écrit : « Nous pourrons tâcher, si nous savons rester modestes, de retrouver l'attitude spirituelle des hommes du Moyen Âge ». En 1942, faisant référence à un temps idéal et soulignant la religion comme élément moteur de la création, il dira « qu'il manque à notre époque l'équivalent de ce puissant ferment que fut au Moyen Âge la religion, là est le drame. Où trouver un

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[57] Dans catalogue exposition « Bazaine 1941-1947 : les années décisives », Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 30 mars-28 mai 1990, p. 139.

[58] « Il ne faudrait tout de même pas que notre défaite militaire fît admettre par extension une déroute générale de tout ce que notre civilisation a donné jusque-là de meilleur. C'est faire aux guerres la part trop belle que de leur supposer une telle influence sur les destinées de l'esprit (…). En réalité, guerres, révolutions, ''catastrophes mondiales'', tout cela ne change pas grand-chose à la marche profonde de l'esprit. » (dans J. Bazaine, « Guerres et évasions », *NRF*, n°326, 1er avril 1941, repris dans *Le temps de la peinture*, 2002, p. 20, *op. cit* note 32 p. 7).

[59] Ces artistes ont entre 30 à 45 ans.

[60] Il s'agit de Bazaine, Beaudin, Berçot, Bertholle, Bores, Coutaud, Desnoyer, Gischia, Lapicque, Lasne, Lautrec, Legueult, Le Moal, Manessier, Marchand, Pignon, Roger, Singier, Tal Coat et Walch.

[61] Dans Véronique Bouruet-Aubertot, « La vie artistique sous l'Occupation », hors-série *Connaissance des arts* sur « L'art en guerre 1938-1947 », n°555, 2012, p. 28.

instrument de coagulation, d'unité de l'esprit, aussi décisif ? ». L'article « La jeune peinture expose »[62] expliquait :

> « Ce n'est pas à une tradition prônée par Vichy que se réfèrent la plupart de ces jeunes peintres mais à celle, "authentique", de l'art médiéval et plus particulièrement de l'art roman. Rejet de la perspective linéaire héritée de la Renaissance, adoption des vitraux, émaux cloisonnés et tapisseries du Moyen Âge et aussi leçons tirées du fauvisme et du cubisme qui, bien que plus récents, font également partie intégrante de notre tradition picturale (…) ».

En prolongement de cette exposition, Gaston Diehl présente en février 1943 *Douze peintres d'aujourd'hui* à la Galerie de France à Paris, légitimant ainsi le groupe des Jeunes peintres de tradition française. Leur travail est soutenu dans la presse et à la radio, des écrivains leur consacrent livres, préfaces et articles. Ces jeunes artistes unissent leur solitude en se retrouvant dans les arrière-salles des cafés de Montparnasse pour discuter peinture. Là se dessine un esprit commun.

Outre la ressemblance formelle de leurs toiles, ces artistes partagent certaines idées sur leur pratique artistique, notamment la volonté de se rapprocher du public et de revaloriser une pratique plus artisanale de l'art, c'est-à-dire plus humble et moins élitiste, toujours suivant le modèle de l'art roman.

Si dès les débuts de l'Occupation une véritable machine de propagande s'était mise en place pour contrôler, en l'épurant, la scène culturelle française, les *Jeunes peintres* allaient incarner à la Libération la relève française. Celle qui avait résisté à l'occupant par l'art, soutenue par quelques critiques, historiens de l'art et galeristes.[63]

Arts romans (fresque, architecture, musique), art moderne et conversion : le cas du peintre Manessier

Il n'est pas impossible que la sensibilité de Manessier à l'art roman depuis les années trente (bien éloigné du style saint Sulpicien dont il disait le plus grand mal[64]) ait constitué un terrain favorable à sa conversion religieuse

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[62] Dans *La NRF*, août 1941.

[63] D'après L. Bertrand Dorléac, « L'art sous l'Occupation », *Encyclopaedia Universalis* (internet 2012).

[64] Cette expression, à connotation péjorative, qualifie des objets religieux (souvent des sculptures) produits à l'échelle industrielle pour orner les églises. De qualité médiocre et d'un style très mièvre, ils ne reflétaient pas, selon les dires de beaucoup d'artistes, de croyants, de clercs et de religieux, la beauté de la foi chrétienne. Ce style sévit à partir de 1850 et conduira certains artistes et amateurs d'art à initier un mouvement de renouveau pour tenter de sortir

en septembre 1943 à la Grande Trappes de Soligny (datée du XIIᵉ siècle). D'autant qu'écouter du chant grégorien [65] dans une église romane peut apparaître comme un modèle d'authenticité artistique, culturelle et spirituelle, dans une forme d'« art total » capable de provoquer une vive émotion religieuse.

Dans son tableau *Salve Regina* (1945, **ill. 15**), directement inspiré du cantique traditionnel entendu au moment de sa conversion, s'affirme l'intimité entre émotion religieuse et création artistique telle que Manessier l'avait découverte avec enthousiasme au sein de l'art roman.

ill. 14, 15 Alfred Manessier, *Les Pèlerins d'Emmaüs*, 1943 ; *Salve Regina,* 1945

Le *Salve Regina* est directement inspiré du moment où Manessier reçut le don de la foi, en entendant le cantique chanté par les moines *a capella* à la tombée du jour, dans la chapelle de l'abbaye. Au premier abord, il fait figure de tableau abstrait, composé essentiellement de formes verticales, dans une dominante colorée de bleus intenses et de roses très lumineux à la surface de la toile (aucune profondeur ni perspective). Ce

l'art sacré de cette impasse, dont les Pères dominicains Régamey et Couturier avec la revue *l'Art sacré*. « Saint-Sulpice, pour moi, c'est effroyable… (…). La vérité valait mieux que cela, elle valait infiniment mieux que son imagerie ; et je pense que c'est mal servir le peuple que de faire croire que sainte Thérèse, c'est ça ! Si c'est ça, moi je rends mon billet, je m'en vais ailleurs ! » (dans interview de Manessier sur l'art sacré par Pierre Cabanne et d'autres, 34 mn, production France Culture, diffusée le 20 avril 1973).

[65] Art musical qui connut un grand essor, et son âge d'or, à l'époque romane grâce à la lente introduction au XIe siècle de la portée avec des lignes.

tableau synthétise toutes les caractéristiques du style non-figuratif en maintenant la réalité d'un moment vécu sous des formes stylisées et symboliques, ouvrant un accès au visible (formes et couleurs) en passant par l'invisible d'une émotion musicale et religieuse, via le medium peinture. On notera par exemple le symbolisme de la couleur bleue, qui évoque le vêtement de la Vierge, et les verticales qui rappellent à la fois l'élévation du lieu, l'orgue et l'élévation spirituelle.

Le dépouillement musical des chants grégoriens est comparable à la non-figuration en peinture, et à la poésie en matière de création littéraire. Cette toile est caractéristique du basculement de Manessier vers la non-figuration dans les années 1940. Car au moment où il décide d'abandonner la figuration, il sent comment « la musicalité de la peinture est à même d'exprimer les choses invisibles ». [66] « Mon Salve Regina c'est une impression de la Trappe »[67], disait Manessier.

Ainsi la question religieuse se confond-elle toujours avec celle de l'art chez ce peintre. Seule la beauté sacrée de l'art roman, et les formes nouvelles d'art sacré proches de l'abstraction, pouvaient trouver grâce à ses yeux et constituer un terrain favorable pour une conversion. L'idée d'un art qui servirait, ou desservirait, la foi apparaît ici en filigrane : l'art roman, par son dépouillement symbolique et sa beauté pure, pouvait servir la foi chrétienne là où la figuration extrême (comme le style saint-sulpicien) pouvait éloigner de l'Eglise.

Quant au tableau les *Pèlerins d'Emmaüs* de 1943 **(ill. 14)** : la bidimensionnalité de l'espace pictural (que le cubisme et le fauvisme avaient réintroduite dans l'art en abolissant la perspective) et le recours aux cernes noirs pour encadrer les figures autour d'une table ovale relevée à la verticale sont autant d'éléments qui évoquent l'art médiéval. Au lendemain de sa conversion, Manessier aspirait à une peinture porteuse de l'innocence perdue des artistes :

> « Si nous avions la pureté évangélique des Primitifs, si nous pouvions poser sur la nature un regard chargé de toute l'innocence de l'amour, alors peut-être nous pourrions peindre le sacré, comme ils le firent. Mais nous sommes des hommes de ce siècle : brisés, éclatés. Sur la toile surgit, que nous le voulions ou non, un mensonge qui est celui même de notre société.
> En sortant de la Trappe, j'ai voulu exprimer ce que j'avais éprouvé grâce à trois figures sacrées autour d'une table. C'était faux, presque intolérable. J'ai donc pensé qu'en rejetant la figuration, j'exprimerais plus aisément ce que je ressentais ».[68]

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[66] Dans le film G. Raynal, 1992, *op. cit.* note 4 p. 3.

[67] Bernard Dorival, « Manessier, artisan religieux », revue *L'Oeil*, n°10, oct. 1955, p. 28.

[68] Dans Jean Clay, « Manessier, ma vérité de peintre », *Réalités*, n°202, nov. 1962, p. 100.

Deux ans plus tard, le *Salve Regina* confirmait la capacité de la non-figuration à exprimer une émotion religieuse là où un sujet narratif (dans l'Evangile selon saint Luc, ch. 24, versets 13 à 35) avait failli, selon Manessier.

En réalité, les cubistes avaient déjà démontré l'importance d'un ressourcement aux arts primitifs, plus instinctifs, moins intellectuels que l'art de la Renaissance. Les propos de Manessier permettent une relecture du paysage artistique de son époque, pris entre le désir d'innover et la nostalgie d'une certaine tradition. Comme si Manessier avait fait entrer dans son atelier, au retour de la Trappe, le questionnement esthétique de son temps, ce *monde laïque* qui a besoin de *retrouver le sens du sacré* [69]. Et qu'il réaffirmait le rôle de l'artiste, se laisser inspirer :

> « Un coin de ce fossé [entre l'art sacré et l'art] se trouvera comblé lorsqu'on aura reconnu à toute création artistique digne de ce nom qu'elle est marquée du sceau de l'Esprit. Une œuvre faite par un artiste, même complètement athée, relève du Don ; et procédant d'un travail intérieur est indélébilement marquée principalement dans les arts magiques (art nègre, Picasso, etc.) et c'est ce qu'avaient si bien senti les artistes romans en leur temps ».[70]

Vitrail contemporain et architecture romane

Sur les affinités artistiques entre passé et présent, on ne saurait oublier la manière dont le vitrail contemporain a prit place dans certains édifices anciens dont les verrières ont été détruites pendant les deux guerres mondiales. Manessier réalisa de nombreux ensembles de vitraux, certains dans des édifices anciens. Mais les vitraux de Soulages à l'abbatiale Sainte-Foy de Conques[71] révèlent à eux seuls les affinités possibles entre abstraction et art roman **(ill. 16),** même si ce choix fut fortement décrié en raison du grand dépouillement des verrières, créant une atmosphère « froide » au goût de certains, surtout aux jours de mauvais temps...

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[69] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[70] Propos de Manessier cités dans *L'Art religieux actuel,* cahiers de « Servir », Toulouse, 1948 (repris par C. Bourniquel et J. Guichard-Meili dans *Les Créateurs et le sacré*, 1956, p. 212).
[71] Sur Soulages, se reporter à l'article de V. Buisine dans *Polar-isations francophones. Cinquante nuances de noir,* actes du colloque international, journées de la francophonie, XXIIe édition, Iasi, 24-25 mars 2017, Iasi (Roumanie), éd. Junimea, p. 231-238
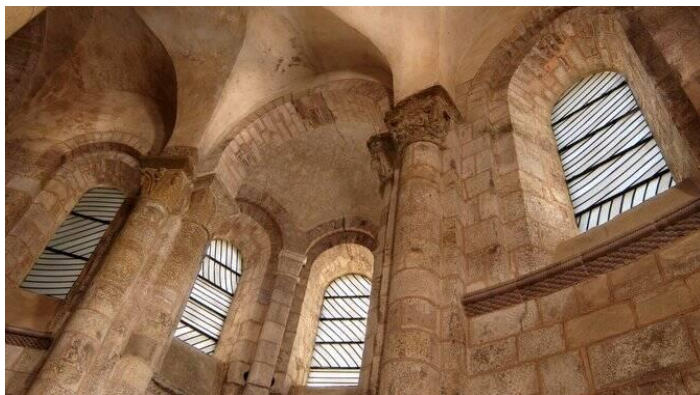
ill. 16 Soulages, *vitraux à Conques*

Né à Rodez en 1919, à une quarantaine de kilomètres de Conques (Aveyron, France), Soulages a confié sa fascination depuis son plus jeune âge pour l'art roman, les grottes préhistoriques, les vieilles pierres et les matériaux usés par le temps. Le seul projet de vitraux qu'il accepta fut celui de Conques, chef d'œuvre de l'architecture romane (XIᵉ-XIIᵉ siècles), classée au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Lieu où, raconte-t-il, est née sa vocation d'artiste[72]. Ses cent quatre verrières l'occupèrent huit ans (de 1986 à 1994) et nécessitèrent de nombreux essais techniques pour trouver la qualité de verre adéquate.

Par ailleurs, l'art de Soulages fut souvent l'occasion d'aborder la question de l'art moderne *versus* l'art du passé : en 1995, lors d'une conférence organisée par le Centre européen d'art et de civilisation médiévale de Conques sur le thème « De la pertinence de mettre une œuvre contemporaine dans un lieu chargé d'histoire », où il s'entretint avec Jacques Le Goff. Et en 2019 lorsque le philosophe Michaël de Saint Cheron convoqua le regard des médiévistes Georges Duby et Jacques Le Goff pour son livre *Soulages. D'une rive à l'autre* (éd. Actes Sud).

Un monde laïc à la recherche du sacré

Les jeunes peintres des années 1930-1940 ne furent pas les seuls à s'intéresser à l'art roman. Les « grands aînés » de l'art moderne (Matisse,

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[72] Il fut amené pour la première fois dans cette abbatiale à l'âge de 5 ans, par sa mère très pieuse, juste après la mort de son père. Il y est revenu vers 14 ans et fut « bouleversé par cette nef, la plus haute de l'art roman, cet édifice massif allié à tant de grâce. C'est là que j'ai décidé que l'art serait au centre de ma vie. », « Conques est le lieu de mes premières émotions artistiques » (dans « Pierre Soulages, la lumière de l'inattendu », Sabine Gignoux, *La Croix*, 10 octobre 2009 et Christian Heck, Pierre Soulages, Jean-Dominique Fleury, *Conques : les vitraux de Soulages*, 1994, Paris, éd. Seuil).

Derain, Picasso, Braque Miró, Léger...) furent eux aussi fascinés par ces œuvres au point de s'en laisser inspirer.

Ce que révélait habilement en 2016-2017 l'exposition « Picasso roman » au *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* à Barcelone, organisée conjointement avec le musée national Picasso-Paris. Elle faisait dialoguer une quarantaine d'œuvres du peintre cubiste (huiles, dessins, céramiques et sculptures) avec les œuvres médiévales du musée de Catalogne pour en capter les affinités. Une sélection de documents inédits des archives de Picasso appartenant au musée parisien dévoilait son intérêt pour l'art roman.

Deux dates surtout marquèrent sa relation avec l'art médiéval : 1906, où il s'installa plusieurs mois dans le village de Gósol (Pyrénées, France) alors que son œuvre opérait un retour à un certain primitivisme, en réaction à ce qu'il était convenu d'appeler la « période rose » antérieure, que lui-même qualifiait de « sentimentale » ; et 1934, où il visita les collections d'art roman (qui constituent aujourd'hui le fonds du musée national d'art de Catalogne) la veille de son départ définitif du pays.

Suite à sa visite, Picasso parla d'un musée « unique au monde et indispensable pour connaître l'origine de l'art occidental », « une leçon pour les artistes modernes ». Et la presse relatait : « En passant d'une salle à l'autre, devant ces fragments incomparables de l'art primitif catalan, Picasso en admirait la force, l'intensité et la manière, la sûreté de vision et d'exécution, l'aplomb et la conviction avec lesquels la main de l'artiste inconnu avait exprimé dans ces panneaux muraux les idées ainsi que les sentiments qui lui occupaient l'esprit ».

Les archives présentées (images romanes, cartes postales, correspondances, ouvrages et revues) confirment l'intérêt que l'artiste a toujours maintenu pour l'art médiéval. On ne peut cependant parler d'influence directe car Picasso sut dépasser les modèles originaux. Il semblait reconnaître dans le roman la préexistence de solutions plastiques qui s'appliquent aussi aux problématiques de la création contemporaine. Il s'orienta alors vers des formes simplifiées et des compositions non-figuratives. Ses personnages se font plus schématiques et hiératiques, ses toiles plus symboliques et teintées de mysticisme.

ill. 17 Détail de la descente de Croix, 1192-1220   **ill. 18** Pablo Picasso, *Crucifixion*, 1930

Le thème de la crucifixion par exemple, très présent dans l'art roman, préoccupa Picasso en différents moments de sa vie, surtout de 1930 à 1937. On peut rapprocher les crucifixions désarticulées de Picasso des crucifixions articulées du roman, et tout spécialement l'ensemble sculptural et pictural des « descentes de la croix » conservées par le musée **(ill. 17, 18).** De même le sujet de la tête de mort (ou crâne), très présent dans la collection romane du musée, trouve écho dans le thème transversal de la mort chez Picasso, spécialement au travers de masques et de têtes de mort humaines ou animales.

ill. 19 *Apocalypse de Saint Sever,*
« La Quatrième trompette », folio 141

ill. 20 Frontispice revue *Verve*,
n°43, 1945 (Matisse, *La Chute d'Icare)*

De même, Matisse admira le manuscrit de l'Apocalypse de Saint Sever, déjà évoqué **(ill. 1, 2** et **19, 20).** Lorsqu'il fut édité en fac-similé en 1947 chez son éditeur Tériade, il se souvient avoir vu ce travail en cours tandis qu'il allait vérifier l'impression de son album *Jazz.* Matisse connaissait déjà sans doute très bien cette œuvre : il fit sa première couverture de *Verve* en 1933, dans un numéro où étaient parues des reproductions de l'Apocalypse de Saint-Sever. Et cette œuvre fut exposée en 1937 à la Bibliothèque nationale.

À neuf cents ans d'intervalle, ces deux livres ont eu une influence considérable sur leur époque : les gouaches découpées de Matisse marquèrent profondément la peinture contemporaine, alors que le *Beatus de Saint-Sever* fut l'une des sources majeures de la sculpture romane.[73]

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[73] D'après Émile Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIe siècle en France*, Paris (1953), 1966, p. 45 ; cf. chap. I, II, XI.

C'est seulement à partir des années 1920 que ce manuscrit a véritablement commencé à être regardé et étudié, notamment par Émile Mâle et Georges Bataille. Ce dernier en avait reproduit quelques pages dans le numéro 2 de la revue *Documents* en 1929.[74] Picasso se souvenait bien de ce numéro puisque le 7 février 1930, il peint un petit tableau aux couleurs violentes, une *Crucifixion* **(ill. 18),** après avoir lu l'article consacré à ce manuscrit, illustré par six reproductions en noir et blanc.

D'où la juste expression de Francastel en 1946 sur certaines « affinités sentimentales » à travers les âges entre la grande famille d'artistes de l'art roman et celle de l'art moderne, au service d'un monde à rebâtir au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre.

Liste et source des illustrations :

ill. 1, 2 Stephanus Garsia et deux anonymes, *Apocalypse de Saint Sever* (ou *Le Beatus de Saint Sever*)*,* mi-XIe siècle, 36,7 cm × 28,6 cm, 296 folios reliés, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

ill. 3 Albert Gleizes, *Crucifixion,* 1935, huile sur toile, 137 x 92 cm, MBA Dijon (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 4 Albert Gleizes, *Les Evangiles,* 1939-1941, papier gouache, 58.5 cm x 44 cm, collection particulière - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 5 Albert Gleizes, *Autorité spirituelle et pouvoir temporel*, 1939-1940, huile sur toile, 336 x 203 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 6 Roger Bissière, *Figure debout,* 1937, huile sur carton, 143 x 25 cm, musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 7 Roger Bissière, *Grande Figure,* 1937, 163 x 45 cm, collection particulière, Paris (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 8 Roger Bissière, *Joueuse de guitare*, 1946-1947, huile sur papier marouflé sur panneau, MNAM Paris (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 9 Roger Bissière, *Grande cathédrale,* 1947, huile sur papier marouflé sur toile, 193 x 95 cm, collection particulière, Paris (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 10 Roger Bissière, *Soleil,* 1945-1946, tapisserie (morceaux de tissus divers : jute, coton, laine…), 170 x 245 cm, musée de l'abbaye Sainte-Croix, Les Sables-d'Olonne, France (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 11 Jean Lurçat, *L'Apocalypse*, 1947, tapisserie en laine, 453 x 1240 cm, église Notre-Dame-de-Toute-Grâce, plateau d'Assy (Passy, France), tissée à Aubusson (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 12 Jean Bertholle, *Glorification*, 1946, tissée en basse lisse, 230 x 175 cm, collection particulière (photo V. Buisine) - *© Adagp, Paris, 2021*

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[74] D'après un texte écrit en 1971-1972 en anglais et publié sous le titre Two Books : the "Apocalypse of Saint-Sever" and Matisse's "jazz", Los Angeles County Museum of Art, avril-mai 1972 ; repris dans Avigdor Arikha, *Peinture et regard : Écrits sur l'art, 1965-2009*, sous le titre « Matisse et l'Apocalypse de Saint-Sever : Beatus et Jazz », 1994 (rééd. 2011), Paris, Éditions Hermann, p. 13 à 29.

ill. 13 Jean Bertholle, Devant d'autel (ou *antependium*), 1980, fragments de textiles cousus et brodés, 87 x 111 cm, collection particulière (photo V. Buisine) - © *Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 14 Alfred Manessier, *Les Pèlerins d'Emmaüs*, 1943, huile sur toile, 195,3 x 130,5 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris (photo V. Buisine) - © *Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 15 Alfred Manessier*, Salve Regina,* 1945, huile sur toile, 195 x 115 cm, Musée des beaux-arts, Nantes (photo V. Buisine) - © *Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 16 Pierre Soulages, quatre vitraux vus de l'intérieur, abbatiale Sainte-Foy de Conques, 1994 (photographie) - © *Adagp, Paris, 2021*

ill. 17 Détail de la descente de Croix, tempera sur bois, 1192-1220, origine catalane, Musée national d'art de Catalogne, Barcelone (Espagne)

ill. 18 Pablo Picasso, *Crucifixion*, 1930, tempera sur bois, origine catalane, Musée national d'art de Catalogne, Barcelone (Espagne) - © *Succession Picasso 2021*

ill. 19 *Apocalypse de Saint Sever, « La Quatrième trompette »,* mi-XIe siècle, folio 141, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

ill. 20 Frontispice de la revue *Verve*, n° 13, 1945 (reproduction de Henri Matisse, *La Chute d'Icare*, été 1943, 35 x 26,2 cm - photo V. Buisine) - © *Succession H. Matisse 2021*

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[75] Compagnie Lyonnaise de Cinéma.

[76] Prix du documentaire historique au 25e Festival international du film d'art à l'UNESCO.

Photographic appropriation vs. Baroque painting expressiveness. Postmodern artistic practices in Benetton advertising

Cătălin Soreanu[*]

Abstract: *In this article we analyze from the perspective of vocabulary and visual language elements the way in which the photographic media provides advertising with one of the most consistent expressive resources. The realism of the image, the endless possibilities in managing the visual composition, the premises of reproductibility and, last but not least, the appetite of an audience eager for technological image, ensured the success of this medium acquisition in the field of advertising expression. The way in which photography is used in advertising mechanisms is, instead, the prerogative of the artistic sphere and it is fully subject to professional standards of design, concept, and realization of the image. In particular, we examine how contemporary advertising becomes the territory where various means of expression contribute in a complementary way to the constitution of the meaning of a work, emphasizing the specific sensitivity of those expressive mediums – namely photography and painting. The case study will approach the activity of Oliviero Toscani and his collaboration with Benetton, materialized in memorable advertising campaigns that have practically rewritten the visual history of contemporary advertising. Using "AIDS – David Kirby" ad from Benetton's "Shock of Reality" advertising campaign from 1992, we will specifically analyze the creative premises and mechanisms that characterize Toscani's creation, the reading conditions of his advertising works, as well as the way in which his creative strategies combine the expressiveness of the referential painting memory with the technological precision of press photography, and the appropriation artistic strategies specific to postmodernity.*

In the visual culture of 2000s, the Italian company Benetton became synonymous with the unconventional approach and innovation, thanks to the collaboration with the artist Oliviero Toscani, a renowned photographer whose attitude towards the image campaigns of the Italian company has far exceeded the border between art and advertising. Oliviero Toscani studied photography and design in Zurich in the 1960s, being recognized both as a

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remarkable visual artist[1], and as the creative force behind some of the most successful brands, such as *Esprit*, *Valentino*, *Chanel*, *Fiorucci* or *Prenatal*. The long-term collaboration with Benetton (from 1982 to 2000) promoted them from national quasi-anonymity to global brand status[2], Toscani dealing with their corporate image, brand identity, and communication strategy[3].

Oliviero Toscani defined advertising photography in terms of his own artistic creation based on the formula of postmodern appropriation, transforming the photographic image into a visual material, both appropriated and re-signified through a specific process of aesthetification. The complex creative mechanism that we can identify behind his works is, moreover, the result of a deep artistic intentionality that doubles the advertising approach, vitiating the very definition of the dependency relationship between the fields of "art" and "advertising" (regarded as visual disciplines). The images he used for Benetton, as advertising products, relied on the particular discrepancy between the nature of the promoted product and the ideological context that "clothes" the image of the manufacturing company. Presented only with the green logo "United Colors of Benetton", discreetly arranged in the composition and consisting exclusively of printed materials (street posters, billboards, and advertisements for magazines and specialty stores), the ads created by Oliviero Toscani depicted controversial topics of international society, whose major tension lies in their very association with the advertising product.

Brand awareness as main strategy

Toscani's strategy is simple and straightforward. In the context of postmodern art, in which advertising is defined in its visual dimension as an exponent of the consumer area, the type of social-consumer ideology and derived social behaviours, he avoids the clichés characteristic of commercial advertising, moving towards a form of image support in which the subjects no longer have the product itself as a reference, but the ideology that defines it, which becomes in the end the main subject of the expressive advertising

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[1] His works have been exhibited at the Venice Art Biennale, San Paolo, the Milan Triennials, Lausanne, Mexico City, Helsinki, Rome, and in countless galleries and museums around the world. He is also the winner of four "Golden Lions" at the Cannes Film Festival, the UNESCO "Grand Prize", two "Grand Prix d'Affichage" etc.
(*http://olivierotoscani.com/biografia_en.html* (accessed 3/8/2021).

[2] Sociologist Andrea Brocceti considers Benetton to be a representative brand for Italy such as *Ferrari*, *Illy* or *Versace*. Online source: http://www.ericjlyman.com/adageglobal.html (accessed 02/28/2021).

[3] In parallel with his work at Benetton, Oliviero Toscani conceived in 1990 a global publication-store called *Colors*, and in 1994 he founded *Fabrica*, an international center for research in art and communication, based in Treviso, Italy. (*http://www.fabrica.it/about/* (accessed 2/28/2021)

offer. Toscani systematically avoids advertisements featuring Benetton products (clothing and accessories for young people) or using associative juxtapositional clichés (such as using female models in provocative positions associated with certain products). On the contrary, the Benetton campaigns outline a specific attitude and denote an artistic preoccupation whose depth is defined on two levels as follows: 1) it relates to the advertising market, projecting itself as an alternative image, unconventional, original, ensuring at the same time the functionality and visibility of the advertisement and 2) builds an ideological attitude that is associated in the consumer's behaviour with the quality of Benetton products, a solution whose functionality may seem paradoxical, especially from the perspective of completely excluding the display of (the image of the) products in billboards.

In terms of advertising marketing, what Toscani does is to build and cultivate the *brand awareness*, that is, the way the brand (in this case, Benetton) is perceived by the public in general. The novelty of the solution is that Toscani has extended this formula to everything that means advertising for the Italian company, avoiding any form of direct product promotion, either visual or verbal. Thus, the power of the brand becomes an expressive priority over the products represented. Obviously, the quality of the informed public of consumers, or the existence of a public awareness that has gone beyond the moment of initial information on the commercial nature of Benetton products, must be taken into account[4]. And yet, the condition of the author brings into question the dispute between the company producing the advertisement and its actual creator (or executor). That the originality of this approach belongs to Oliviero Toscani, is an indisputable fact. It shows, on the one hand, both the artist's activity outside the collaboration with Benetton (and its subsequent one), and the company's attempts to (re)produce similar advertising campaigns after 2000 (more precisely, after it interrupted the collaboration with Toscani). Oliviero Toscani's originality lies in the nature of his advertising approach, more precisely of the subjects and their relationship with the advertising approach. Defying conventions, overcoming social barriers and taboos, the artist constructs works whose value transcends the advertising dimension of the construct, to the artistic one. At the level of the semiotic mechanism, Toscani fulfills one of the fundamental premises of the definition of advertising as visual art, namely the distinction between the signaling and the symbolizing functions of the expressive construct[5]. Through symbolic evocation, art manages to access a semantic field of a specific expressive consistency[6]. In advertising, this landmark of symbolism is added to the signaling function that has the persuasive ability to achieve,

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[4] C. Soreanu, *Artă și publicitate. Medii de expresie în publicitatea contemporană.* Iași: Artes, 2018.

[5] R. Barthes, *Rhetoric of the image*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1985.

[6] M. Tarași, *Sens și expresie în arta contemporană.* Iași: Artes, 2006: p.185.

through precision and success, a very clear semantic register (hence the space-time identification that defines advertising).

The campaigns for Benetton

The works of the Benetton campaigns from 1982 to 2000 managed to arouse the public's interest by appealing to topics such as eroticism and sexual taboos, racism, psychosis caused by AIDS, anorexia, or themes such as ecology or armed inter-ethnic conflicts. From a visual syntactic point of view, the tensions reside only in the formal association of the subject with the Benetton logo box, so from the *re-signification* of a concept in the conditions of the advertising expression. This mutation of meaning is, in fact, apparent, marking a level of normality of perceptions that society, in its pursuit of consumerism, entertainment and industrialization, no longer associates with normal (non-alienated) behaviour.

Toscani's works return, under the pretext of advertising, an immanent direction of normality to humanity, towards real aspects of human existence. This awareness and sensitization of public perception is what ideologically defines the advertising process of Oliviero Toscani, who almost reverses the relationship and transfer of identity between the artistic approach and the advertising carrier: not products are promoted by Toscani's art, but his works are promoted through these advertising campaigns. The logic is also supported by the exceptional addressability of his works in the commercial advertising repertoire, by the dedicated and open-minded public, and by another mutation that takes place at the level of the advertising act since the '60s, together with the American Pop-Art[7]. This mutation restores the quality of "being art" to advertising, by moving away from clichés and stereotypes, and by the appropriation of dedicated artistic standards and techniques.

Toscani's favourite themes are the liminal subjects of contemporary society, which the artist's agile sense of observation identifies and materializes in his works. The active contextual interpretation of public's reading recommends them as cultural idioms whose universality is disputed at the level of questioning the elementary conditions of humanity. In the case of the advertising campaign where he used photos of the death row inmates in American prisons[8], Benetton made an extremely risky bet with the

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[7] A point of interest of Olivero Toscani's "pedigree" is the relationship with Andy Warhol, an emblematic figure of American Pop Art, whose activity has crossed several decades of post-modern and contemporary art. (*https://klatmagazine.com/en/photography-en/oliviero-toscani-interview-back-to-the-future-06/37739* (accessed 02/28/2021).

[8] "Bitterly attacked by some and internationally acclaimed by others, Benetton's campaigns have managed to tear down the wall of indifference contributing at raising the awareness of universal problems among world's citizens." Benetton's Press Release. Online source: *http://www.benettongroup.com/media-press/press-releases-and-statements/looking-at-death-in-the-face/* (accessed 3/1/2021).

consumer market, in which it assumed not only the inherent risks of any advertising campaign, but also those of taking a position and of the moral load of the meanings that the works can acquire in different reception environments. [9] Controversial topics are generally suppressed in modern societies and become taboo topics, and Oliviero Toscani's practice is thus oriented towards understanding and overcoming these difficulties. There is a deep humanistic intent in his work, a direction that expressively enriches Benetton's campaigns, shifting the emphasis from the company's products (non-existent as an image) to building an identity and an awareness with which the Benetton customer is invited to identify.

Critical reading of Benetton advertisements

Toscani's works for Benetton are subject to interpretation from the perspective of several criteria of the advertising general approach:

a) They are works that, by their very nature, are *addressed to an international, globalized public*, although the reception and interpretation of advertisements (hence their meaning) is done realized at the level of addressing the specificity of each culture in part. Oliviero Toscani's ads resonated among the most diverse in the world, ranging from thunderous success (in some European states) to complete bans and even street demonstrations against the Benetton campaign and its products in other states (US or Islamic states);

b) These works are *disseminated through contemporary media*, which leads (more and more) to the elimination of time and space differences (these are campaigns presented simultaneously all over the world, from Hong Kong to Ottawa);

c) The Benetton ads *address a capitalist society*, against the background of globalization, convergence and world economic synergy[10]. From totalitarian, expansionist American capitalism to the emerging forms of pseudo-capitalism in Eastern Europe, Toscani's works manage to arouse the same vivid interest, raise questions, and give rise to controversy;

d) Toscani's images have *a profound humanistic character*, promoting equality in rights, humanity and tolerance, addressing to the society of the '90s going through the post-racial crisis, acceptance and awareness of the AIDS threat, post-communist crisis, and national-ethnic crisis of the division of ex-communist federal states. Benetton's

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[9] The reaction of retail chains such as *Sears* and *Roebuck&Co* was to boycott and refuse to sell Benetton products.
(https://www.theguardian.com/media/2001/jun/18/advertising.marketingandpr
(accessed 3/1/2021)
[10] Marita Sturken, and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of looking, an introduction to visual culture.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2001: p. 315.

advertisements are addressed to a tense society and respond to it through visual constructions that show deep concern and involvement in identifying, accepting and solving serious social issues.

The campaign "Shock of Reality"

The 1980s marked, for advertising companies, the removal of iconized, commercial images from industry clichés. Companies such as *Gap*, *Esprit* or *Workers of Freedom* started to use images of ordinary people in advertisements for their products[11], while the advertising company Howell, *Henry*, *Chaldecott*, *Lury (HHCL)* made a TV campaign for *Fuji Film* that aimed to eliminate social stereotypes by using images of marginalized people, retirees, Asians, the disabled[12]. Along these lines, Benetton's "Shock of Reality" campaign proposed the reconsideration of the usual type of advertising by using images of often shocking realism, images taken from the media or from the portfolio of photojournalists active in conflict zones around the world, associated in a completely atypical solution for the advertising industry[13]. If the established form of commercial advertising aims to achieve a persuasive effect, whatever the method (creating a desirable field, association with the brand ethos, product promotion, designing its advantages, etc.), the campaign signed by Oliviero Toscani is on a completely different direction of action: raising *public awareness* and raising *social awareness* by observing and exposing to the immediate realities, whatever their nature: political, racial, sexual, discriminatory, etc.

Benetton's "Shock of Reality" campaign was produced by Oliviero Toscani and included a series of posters and billboards made by including appropriated images from the media (printed press and TV news), iconic sequences for contemporary issues, with high impact and gravity, such as: the image of a dying patient of AIDS, a burning car in Mafia-dominated southern Italy, an electric chair waiting for US death row inmates, an execution or an environmental disaster, the bloody uniform of a Bosnian soldier, all in all subjects and themes used beyond the conventional borders of commercial advertising imagery. The display of the vulnerable, sick, or raped human body is a compositional strategy of using the *abject* as a unique artistic

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[11] Helen Fielding, „Cashing in a World of Woe: Advertising." *Sunday Times*, 29 September 1991.
[12] Kate Muir, „On the Banned Wagon: Life and Times." *The Times*. London: Times Newspapers Ltd, 6 June 1991.
[13] A brief overview of the campaigns from the 90s will reveal ads with a concept of Oliviero Toscani, based on photos realized by journalists associated with major media companies, such as Franco Zecchini (Magnum), Steve McCurry (Magnum), Yves Gellie (Odyssey), Patrick Robert (Sygma) etc. (http://www.benettongroup.com/media-press/image-gallery/institutional-communication/historical-campaigns/ (accessed 3/2/2021).

resource in the arts landscape of the twentieth century[14], a strategy repeatedly used by Toscani in the advertising campaigns for Benetton.

The functional paradox of advertising is that these images come from the media, practically from an environment whose role is to bring them to the attention of the society. On the other hand, the advertising approach also appeals to the media to restore the consumer/receiver's attention to reality, to the actual dimension of the subject. The appropriation method thus works both at the level of the subject and at the level of the information disseminating in social environment.

"AIDS – David Kirby" ad

Part of the "Shock of Reality" campaign, the "AIDS – David Kirby" ad is based on a documentary photo realized in 1990 by the journalist Therese Frare, previously published in American *Life* magazine, depicting David Kirby on his deathbed, surrounded by his family[15]. Being an AIDS activist, Kirby founded the Stafford Ohio AIDS Foundation. He spent the last two months of his life at Pater Noster House, an alternative community home in Columbus (where Frare was actually working as a volunteer). Therese Frare's documentary focused not only on David Kirby, but also on Patrick Church (Peta), Kirby's caregiver. The documentary resulted in a photo series from which Oliviero Toscani chose the final photograph for the tragedy and its artistic potential. Oliviero Toscani negotiated the use of the image with Frare and obtained both the author's permission and the consent of the deceased's family, thus respecting his desire to (re)bring the issue of AIDS into public opinion[16].

The artistic mechanism used by Toscani involved not only the appropriation of the image, but also the intervention on it: the image, initially black and white, was digitally coloured and Kirby's figure was retouched to resemble that of Christ. Thus, the image undergoes a process of contextual resignification, migrating from the protocol of journalistic realism to the traumatic tragedy of the advertising construct. This occurs not only by overturning the conventions related to the topics addressed in advertising and introducing those from the immediate, cruel and objective reality, but also by

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[14] "Abject Art" was the subject of a dedicated exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1993, starting with Julia Kristeva's idea of the abject based on a Lacanian principle - a state of degradation, disgust - as an "attempt to categorize what cannot be categorized". *(https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/book_report/what-is-abject-art-tell-me-thats-not-what-i-think-it-is-56210* (accessed 02 28, 2021)

[15] Therese Frare: "David Kirby on his deathbed" Ohio, 1990.
(https://www.life.com/history/behind-the-picture-the-photo-that-changed-the-face-of-aids/ (accessed 2/28/2021).

[16] Time.com. The Face of AIDS - Therese Frare. 1990. Online source:
http://100photos.time.com/photos/therese-frare-face-aids (accessed 02/28/2021).

the uncompromising use of representational codes in the documentary format, in advertising, especially in the commercial advertising.

Fig. "AIDS - David Kirby", 1992, for Benetton[17]. Concept: Oliviero Toscani. Photo: Therese Frare ("David Kirby on his deathbed", Ohio, 1990)

   Toscani exploits the potential of a *ready-made* approach as a subversive strategy, not only as an imagistic appropriation from the avant-garde of advertising and pop art (heavily used by Andy Warhol in the '60s), but also as an iconographic viewpoint, creating cultural references which make a consistent shifting from the formal representation of an "abject" subject, to the theme of mortality, sacrifice and suffering (validating, in this way, the main artistic perspective). The activist strategy is obvious and it is validated both by the chosen subject (from the immediate reality, subject of maximum attention and importance), and by the method he used (appropriation and intervention). The fact that Toscani chooses an image from media, respectively a documentary photo, highlights the desire to draw attention to reality, stimulating a kind of reception specific to the area of the

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[17] Oliviero Toscani, "AIDS – David Kirby", 1992, for Benetton. Published with the written permission from Benetton. © Copyright Benetton Group - All rights reserved. (*http://www.benettongroup.com/it/media-press/immagini/comunicazione-istituzionale/campagne-storiche/* (accessed 3/2/2021).

documentary image and transferring it to the area of accepting commercial advertising.

In the case of the ad, Toscani not only changes the character of the original image (from documentary to artistic, thus shifting it from objectivity to activism), but also incorporates artistic visual strategies specific to Baroque painting. The aesthetic process included altering the image, colouring, retouching and accentuating the contrast in order to increase the expressive stake and recode the final meaning. Although it is apparently a diversion from the documentary character, the change of the image from black and white to colour has the immediate effect of accentuating the power of persuasion on a perceptive-realistic emotional basis.

Kirby's figure was slightly modified to emphasize the similarity with the suffering, crucified Christ-like image, adding even more to the controversy that this work created in the spectacle of consumer advertising. The original photo is taken in natural lighting conditions (the interior being a typical hospital), yet the resulting atmosphere is of the *chiaroscuro* type, chromatically enriched by Toscani's intervention, thus leaving the impression of Caravaggio's baroque. The expected effect of assimilating this subconscious cultural reference is maintained by the details of the compositional structure that projects the viewer into the atmosphere of the image, transforming him into a witness of the tragic event. Hence, the bed is placed in perspective, the priest's hand appears sideways, the figure of the father is bent over the suffering body, and so on.

On the wall behind the bed there is a partial image of Christ with his hand outstretched to the bed, which creates a relational tension together with the two major compositional centres in which the figures of the personages are touching, embracing, and protecting each other. With the father of the patient, and the hand of the priest present at the scene that concludes a first gestural path (the Son of God and the representative of God), the scene recalls the atmosphere of Christ's pain in Renaissance and Baroque religious paintings. The atmosphere, continued with the second attention-drawing center, in which the image gives full details of the mother comforting her daughter, restores the iconographic structure of a Pieta in which Mary mourns her son. In the first centre of interest, the substitution of Mary with the paternal figure of Kirby's father marks the contrast between the exhaustion of the dying, and the tragedy of the family, a contrast found in the tonal structure of the work between the two centres of interest.

Nevertheless, the main tension lies in the purpose of this work, namely that the whole composition is, in fact, an advertisement for Benetton brand clothing. The advertising success of the ensemble is undeniable, although its importance worked for Benetton only on commercial principles. The work marks a point of reference in postmodern advertising by introducing a media subject, a solution of artistic origin, and an act of

resignification, whose scope goes far beyond the formal boundaries between art and advertising.

Between notoriety and controversy

The case of Therese Frare's photograph of David's family comforting him in the hour of his death [18] brought both notoriety and controversy to the subject itself, equally reflected in Oliviero Toscani and Benetton's image. A wide range of reactions were counted: the Roman Catholics reacted against the suggested mockery of the classical image of Mary cradling Christ after the crucifixion[19]; AIDS activists reacted as well, seeing the entire situation as an attempt to exploit the death and the pain for commercial purposes; banning of the ad was asked for in England (being labelled offensive and unethical); various magazines refused to display the ad in their pages (*Elle*, *Vogue* and *Marie Claire*), as an attempt to boycott Benetton[20]. However, in many regards, the success of the campaign was real and undeniable, and the ad sits nowadays in the gallery of the most controversial artistic approaches in advertising.

In terms of artistic practice, in "AIDS – David Kirby" Toscani's approach legitimizes the use of art-specific methods and content in advertising, (re)establishing the bridge between *art* and *advertising*, based on the structural landmarks of the common visual grammar that underlies these disciplines. Thus, contemporary advertising recovers the cleavage produced with the dissociation of artistic movements from commercial disciplines and the differentiation of the art of advertising[21].

Conclusions

Carried out under the restrictive auspices of the market economy and having to respond to marketing reasons, advertising is seldom permissive for the artistic contribution of creators. Advertising has trends, involves recipes, clichés and solutions whose operation ensures concrete results, translated into

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[18] The photography brought notoriety to Therese Frare as well, along with a World Press Photo Award in 1991. *(https://www.worldpressphoto.org/collection/photo/1991/33397/1/1991-Therese-Frare-GN2* (accessed 2/28/2021)

[19] C.Soreanu, „The Sacred In Contemporary Advertising." Editor Codrina-Laura Ioniță, Puiu Ioniță și Brîndușa Grigoriu. ANASTASIS - *Research in Medieval Culture and Art* (Artes) 3, nr. 1 (2016): p.149-158.

[20] B.Cosgrove, *The Photo That Changed the Face of AIDS*. 2021.
(https://www.life.com/history/behind-the-picture-the-photo-that-changed-the-face-of-aids/ (accessed 02/28/2021).

[21] C.Soreanu, „From Media to Mediums of Expression. Visual Art Communication and Meaning." Editor Codrina-Laura Ioniță, Andreea-Irina Stoleriu și Adrian Stoleriu. ANASTASIS - *Research in Medieval Culture and Art (*Artes) 7, nr. 2 (November 2020): p.261-276.

positive turnovers. From this point of view, Toscani's authorial approach had the chance of an optimal configuration, materialized by ensuring a potential brand in development (*United Colors of Benetton*, the brand under which Benetton promoted their products in the 2000s), the artistic genius of the artist (Oliviero Toscani), a saturated advertising market bored with clichés (both European and international), but especially by the permissive and open attitude of the owner of the Italian company (Luciano Benetton), who gave "carte blanche" to Oliviero Toscani, fully confident in his potential to promote the company's image[22].

In his interview under "Pushing the limits" chapter of Phaidon's "Advertising Today", Oliviero Toscani argues that the advertising "… could be an incredible art form. When you look back into history and look at Renaissance painting, that was like advertising painting in the church. The painters were called in to express a religious idea, which was like a product – so the painting was there to promote a power, a king, a religion. But those Michelangelos and Leonardos were able to transcend all of that to become art. And we should do the same."[23] All of the advertising campaigns of the Italian company Benetton, designed and coordinated between 1982 and 2000 by Oliviero Toscani, managed to fulfill this desire of advertising (seen as an integral part of the visual arts family), to complete the expressive offer of art based on the recovery of traditional professional standards. Oliviero Toscani's works return to publicity the role of factor of public awareness and social reflection. Addressing controversial topics in unique ways, despite social behavioural rules and canons, his advertisements demonstrate that quality advertising can be a construction with a remarkable semantic magnitude which is specific, in general, to art.

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[22] Although ended in 2000 (and briefly resumed between 2017-2020), the collaboration between Toscani and Benetton still has profitable resonances for the later, the company continuing to devise marketing strategies on controversial topics. (http://www.benettongroup.com/media-press/ (accessed 2/28/2021)

[23] Berger, Warren. Advertising Today. New York: Phaidon Press, 2001.

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Anatomical States – Between Pathology And Visual Expressiveness

Cezarina Florina Caloian[*]

Abstract: *The topic of the article Anatomical states – between pathology and visual expressiveness may be further approached from several perspectives: the disease itself, transposed into images in various works of art as a symbol of human suffering, from the perspective of medical illustration or the rendition of medical acts, but also from the perspective of the suffering artists, who depicted their physical or mental traumas in their own paintings. In art, there are several recurring themes centred on the human body, such as: the death of the body versus the immortality of the soul, the young body as a symbol of beauty versus the aged body, the ability to control one's own body, self-preservation and survival instincts, the fight against disease, addictions and their impact on a person's health and state of mind.*

The article discusses facets of the disease as well as visions of the human body captured in the visual arts, from the theme of the Danse Macabre in the Middle Ages to Dr. Tulp's Anatomy Lesson by Rembrandt or the aesthetic vision of Egon Schiele. Another topic approached is the correlation between emotional states and body attitudes or visual metaphors, by using art as a way to exorcise inner demons, in the conception of Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo or Käthe Kollwitz, or to test the limits of the human body, like in the works of Marina Abramovic.

Keywords: visual art; the human body; disease; facial expression; suffering; drama; artistic creation; the limits of the body.

Introduction

Man, with all his complexity – physical, mental, or spiritual – has been at the centre of artistic concerns since ancient times. In the 4th century BC Polykleitos sculpted a statue, now referred to as *The Canon*, which contained the ideal proportions of the human body. Later, Vitruvius establishes the ideal proportions of the human body, and the Greek concept of *kalokagatia* (*kalos* – beautiful, *aghatos* – good, with positive values) promotes the idea of perfection, a combination between physical and moral traits. In general, *beautiful* refers to the balanced result of proportion and harmony, and *ugly* to "an imbalance in the organic relationship between the

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parts and the whole"[1]. When illness is rendered in art, we can talk of the imbalance of anatomical proportions, of all the features that we currently classify as physical disabilities, plagues, or epidemics, as well as various diseases that can harm the human being, both physically and mentally, in the course of life. After World War II, epidemiology began to pay less attention to infectious diseases (to which it owed its name) and focused on chronic diseases: cardiovascular, rheumatic, cancerous, respiratory diseases, and diabetes[2]. By their very name, chronic diseases are long-term conditions which develop slowly in time, often without a cure, alleviated with medication and special medical techniques which ensure the patient's survival.

The theme may be further approached from several perspectives: the disease itself, transposed visually into various works of art as a symbol of human suffering, from the perspective of medical illustration or the rendition of medical acts, but also from the perspective of the suffering artists, who depicted their physical or mental traumas in their own paintings. Over the centuries, *Hippocratic facies* or the change in facial features produced by long-term illness, after a period of malnutrition, or before death, characterized by pallor, thinning features, sunken cheeks and eyes, has been a source of inspiration for artists. The signs of human suffering as a result of disease, plagues, natural or social disasters, wars, class struggle, anti-Semitism, epidemics, or pandemics, events that produced millions of casualties, have been transposed into works of art.

Facets of disease in the visual arts

In *Art as Therapy*[3], Alain de Botton and John Armstrong discuss seven functions of art from the perspective of the psychological features that it could address. The first, and perhaps one of its most important functions, is *to remember*, to keep in the common memory information about events, places, people, feelings and emotions, followed by *hope* – as an essential ingredient of success in the life of each individual. The third function is *the ability to reproduce suffering*, *to mediate a state of mind*, as Botton says, followed by the ability *to rebalance*, because *art can give us concentrated doses of the states of mind we are lacking, restoring, to some extent, the balance of a drifting self*. Another important function of art is *self-understanding*, its ability to promote self-knowledge, self-exploration, and

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[1] Umberto Eco, *Istoria Urâtului*, Rao, București, 2007, p. 19
[2] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Antoine de Baecque, Annette Becker, Jean-Jacques Courtine, Frédéric Keck, Yves Michaud, Anne Marie Moulin, Pascal Ory, Paul Rabinow, Anne-Marie Sohn, Annie Suquet, Georges Vigarello, *Istoria corpului*, vol.III, *Mutațiile privirii, 20th century*, Art Publishing, București, 2009, p. 118
[3] Alain de Botton, John Armstrong, *Arta ca terapie*, Vellant, București, 2018

communicating our feelings and ideas to those around us, followed by *emancipation*, the people's ability to preserve their authenticity in dangerous situations: *art presents us with ideas and attitudes that are not exactly at hand in our ordinary environment*. *Appreciation*, the last function of art according to these two authors, is precisely its ability to emphasize the value or to facilitate the perception and understanding of essential things, enriching us spiritually. Of course, art serves the psychological, political, and commercial needs of a cultural area, at a certain time, mirroring the needs and coordinates of that age.

The very history of mankind, with its periods of flourishing and of great imbalance, is the mirror of the perpetual struggle between life and death. In the Middle Ages, during the bubonic plague, the theme of the *Danse Macabre* (or *Dance of Death*) appeared precisely to "exorcise fear and tame the final phenomenon" [4]. Its oldest representation, dating from 1424, preserved because it was engraved, was found in the Holy Innocents Cemetery in Paris, followed later on by the images signed by Hans Holbein during the Renaissance. These were published on leaflets or inside small-format books, and depicted human beings and skeletons in various scenes, from the Bible or everyday life, in which death and life coexist. This theme was later taken over in painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in *The Triumph of Death*, 1562, Prado Museum, Madrid, but also by Charles Baudelaire in his poem of the same name, published in the volume *Les Fleurs du Mal*, in 1857. In the 17th century, Peter Rubens depicts the bubonic plague through an allegory, *The Miracles of Saint Francis Xavier*, in which the saint, leading an army of angels, cures the sick of the plague. The disease is used here as a metaphor for heresy, and the plague becomes a symbol of sin[5]. The plague hit Rubens' family very hard, as both he and his wife died of it. However, echoes of this epidemic are only vaguely found in his work, although it is known that together with two doctor friends he founded an association to take care of plague patients[6].

Another work, entitled *Allegory of love*, signed by the Florentine painter Agnolo Bronzino in 1545, presents two distinct aspects: eroticism, in the relation between Venus and Cupid, and disease, as a result of passion. The character behind Cupid is in agony, most likely suffering from syphilis, as it is in fifteenth-century Spain that the first epidemic of this disease took place. The disease was brought to Barcelona by members of Christopher Columbus' crew, and later transmitted all over Europe by French soldiers[7]. The disease spread rapidly, affecting all walks of life, and was a major cause

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[4] Eco Umberto, *op. cit.*, p. 67

[5] M. Christine Bockl, *Plague Imagery as Metaphor for Heresy in Ruben's The Miracles of Saint Francis Xavier*, Sixteen Century Journal, XXVI.4 (1996), 979-995 JSTOR

[6] Ionela Bîlbîe Nosec, *Arta – bucurie şi suferinţă*, Viaţa Medicală Românească, Bucureşti, 2005

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 87

of death. Cupid is depicted with a blackened leg, open ulcers and suffering from athlete's foot. This work is the only Renaissance representation of this skin disease[8]. The disaster caused by syphilis was translated into works of art by many artists and writers: Dürer in *The Men's Bath* (1496, Nuremberg Art Museum), François Rabelais, who, in the introduction to Gargantua and Pantagruel (1532), addresses the readers as "my drunk and syphilitic friends", and, later, William Hogarth in *Gin Lane* (1751), a work in which he shows a woman whose legs are covered in syphilitic lesions.

Fig. 1 Agnolo Bronzino, *Allegory of love*

Fig. 2 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Triumph of Death*

Visions of the human body, between curiosity and science

In the Middle Ages, the relationship between religion and medicine was very special; disease was considered a divine punishment and the ill could only be taken care of in monasteries. Because medicine had a scholarly nature and was based on religious dogmas, its evolution stagnated during this period. *Codex Vindobonensis 93*, now to be found at the Vienna State Library, is a collection of miniature manuscripts important for the history of medicine.

There were two categories of physical monstrosity in the Middle Ages: people with malformations (Siamese twins, hermaphrodites, etc.) and apocalyptic monsters or bestiary creatures, which we now call hybrid or metamorphosed characters. Along with illustrated treatises on this topic, there were also curiosity chambers or cabinets, precursors of natural sciences museums. In fact, over the centuries, the monstrosity of the human body was an irresistible attraction for ordinary people, and trade in atypical human beings flourished, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, when circuses presented to the general public various people with disabilities, as we call

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[8] Hermann Haller, M. D., *The Art of Diagnosis: Recognizing Disease in Paintings*, August 2017, www.mdibl.org

them today. In 1841, Phineas Taylor Barnum founded the American Museum in downtown New York, and from 1841 to 1868, it became the city's largest attraction, with an estimated 41 million visitors eager to see the oddities of human nature. In the 19th century there came a wave of compassion for people with disabilities. This movement developed progressively and was a crucial moment, decisive for the way in which body deformities were to be perceived later on[9].

Countless works of art and literature have addressed the issue of the non-acceptance of different people, one of them being *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley. Although the text deals with broader issues, such as the condition of the creator, of the scientist who wishes to be on a par with the divine, becoming a creator of life – a topic widely debated today in studies of medical ethics – the story also brings to the reader's attention the anxiety of the monster, of the different person in relation to others, his lack of integration, of acceptance, his struggle with loneliness and, implicitly, his alienation. The emotional needs of every human being are discussed. Over time, the perception of human deformities has changed, and medicine is interested in the recovery of these people and their reintegration into work and society.
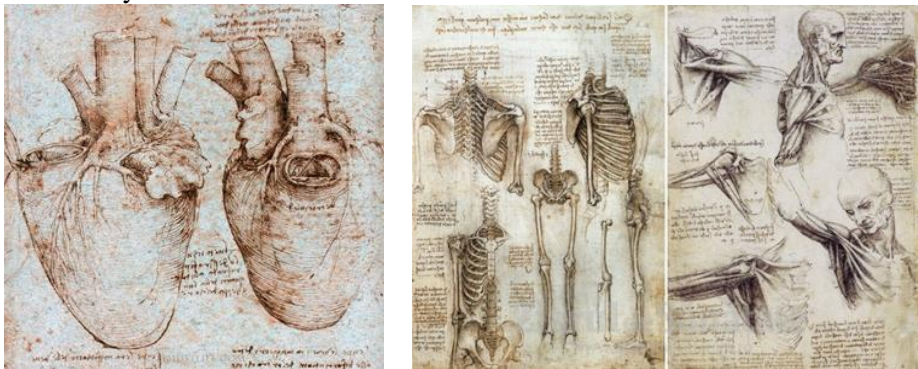
Fig. 3 Leonardo da Vinci, *Studies in Human Anatomy*

The appetite for the inexplicable was gradually replaced by scientific interest, present in anatomy books, and the first experiments date from the 15th century and belong to Mondino de Luizzi, followed by the Renaissance masterpiece *De Homini Corporis Fabrica*, signed in 1543 by Andreeas Vesalius, a professor of anatomy from Padua, which presents the human skeletal, muscular, and cardiovascular systems. Leonardo da Vinci, the most fascinating figure of the Renaissance, dedicated an important part of his life to the study of human anatomy. Using dissection, Leonardo made hundreds of drawings and sketches of the structure of the human body, gathered in the two manuscripts kept at the Royal Library of Windsor Castle, now known as

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[9] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau et al., *op. cit.*, p. 106

the *Anatomical Manuscript A* (1510-1511) and the *Anatomical Manuscript B* (1507-1508). Besides his impressive studies of human muscles and the skeleton, Leonardo was also fascinated by the structure of internal organs. Thus, he produces the first correct representation of the spine, the first description of liver cirrhosis, discovers the mystery of human embryo growth[10], and, fascinated by the structure of the heart, guesses several aspects that lay the foundations of important discoveries in 20th century cardiology. His studies describe for the first time the lesions caused by atherosclerosis and tuberculosis; he also discovers the functions of the eye and its connection with the brain (optic nerves and optic chiasm), the connections between muscles and nerves, and between nerves, the spinal cord, and the brain. He describes the organs, the digestive tract, the reproductive system, the inner ear, and the brain[11]. Two main reasons explain why Leonardo attracted the attention of physicians: he managed to organize descriptive, topographic, and even functional anatomy at a time when doctors ignored the structure of the human body, providing somatic and visceral structures presented spatially and scientifically, and defined the structure of reproductive organs and foetal development in all its physiological stages[12].

After Leonardo, Michelangelo Buonarroti perfected the visual rendition of the human body, its mobility and facial expression. During the Renaissance, the interest in the human being, life, and, implicitly, disease and anatomy, increased considerably, as evidenced by the fact that the treatises on anatomy were illustrated by the great artists of that time.

Fig. 4 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Parable of the Blind*   **Fig. 5** Diego Velasquez, *Las Meninas*

In 1568, Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted the *Parable of the Blind*, a work based on a religious allegory referring to the lack of faith and its effects on the human body and spirit, expressed through several male figures who

[10] Ernst Gombrich, *Istoria Artei*, trad. Nicolae Constantinescu, Art Publishing, București, 2012, p. 294
[11] Mihai Pricop, *Medicină și pictură. Semne, simptome, boli, procedee, personalități medicale redate prin tehnicile picturii*, Dana Art, Iași, 2010, pag 43
[12] Mihai Dragomirescu, *Medicina și arta plastică*, Facla, Timișoara, 1986, p. 47

are visually impaired. Along with the blind people's specific facial expression and insecure walking, Pieter Bruegel builds a descending compositional structure in order to emphasize not only the physical decay, but also the spiritual decline of man.

The famous work signed by Diego Velásquez in 1656, *Las Meninas* (*Maids of honour*), depicts a series of figures distributed on three planes: the king and queen of Spain, posing for a painting, are suggested as presences in a mirror hanging on the back wall, the painter and Infanta Margarita accompanied by her maids of honour and two characters suffering from dwarfism, a child and an adult woman, in the central position, and a male character behind a door in the background. Thus, Velásquez chooses to show the royal family with two little people, who centuries ago were seen as oddities of nature and as a source of entertainment as well. Dwarfism is also found in other works signed by Velásquez, such as *Don Sebastian de Mora* and *The Idiot of Coria*.

In the course of time, the medical act itself has been depicted in countless representations. The best known examples in this respect belong to Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669). *Dr. Tulp's Anatomy Lesson* (1632) was painted at an autopsy that involved physicians, students, and ordinary people, presented publicly in an anatomy amphitheatre, *theatrum anatomicum*[13] (Pricop, 2010). In *Dr. Johan Deijman's Anatomy Lesson* (1656), Rembradt pays more attention to the corpse, recalling Mantegna's Lamentation over the Dead Christ. Although the original work was partially destroyed in a fire, and only a central fragment was preserved, compared to Dr. Tulp's Anatomy Lesson, which offers the foreground to the people participating in the dissection and the disciple-teacher relationship, this painting lays emphasis on the corpse, whose expression is exceptionally dramatic.

Fig. 6 Rembrandt van Rijn,
Dr. Tulp's Anatomy Lesson

Fig. 7 Rembrandt van Rijn,
Dr. Johan Deijman's Anatomy Lesson

Not only does art have the ability to facilitate self-knowledge, but it also communicates to others who we really are (Botton, Armstrong, 2018). In the history of art there are many artists who used art as a method of

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[13] Mihai Pricop, *op. cit.*, p. 49

expressing their own personal tragedies, their own physical and emotional suffering. Even if they lived at different times, on distinct continents and in distinct cultures, all these artists seem to have in common their suffering and their ability to transmit emotions, anxieties, pain. In their works, *the rendition of the human body is a way of depicting moods, emotions, as if the painting were a mysterious mirror of the being* (Jeudy, 1998). The correlation of emotional states and body attitudes or visual metaphors is an important feature of their works.

Art as a way to exorcise one's own demons

The Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh is a particular case, an eloquent illustration of the condition of the suffering artist who manages to transpose his pain indirectly into his works of art. He succeeds in depicting his inner turmoil and anguish through vivid chromatics and its emotional impact, doubled by a strong, linear brushstroke. His self-portraits reflect the physical and mental pain that caused him to commit suicide when his was only 37 years old. In 1881 he fell ill with syphilis, a disease that he did not treat completely; he was depressed, epileptic, and schizophrenic. As he described them, the episodes of his condition included fits of anger, hallucination, confusion, fear, and memory loss, due not only to illness, but also to an addiction to absinthe. In 1889, during such an episode, he attacked the painter Paul Gauguin with a razor, but ended up cutting off a part of his own ear, which he packed and sent off to a prostitute. He then painted a self-portrait that shows him with a bandaged ear and serenity in his eyes. In April 1889, he admits himself to the Saint-Paul de Mausole psychiatric hospital of Saint Rémy, where he painted his famous *Starry Night*.

Van Gogh's case could also be analysed from a hereditary perspective: he seems to have inherited from his family if not a disease, at least a mental condition. His sister, Willemina, spent 40 years in a psychiatric asylum where she died of dementia, his brother Cornelius committed suicide, and Theo, the brother who took care of him throughout his life and with whom he often corresponded, died of paralyzing syphilis. Although no actual diagnosis exists, based on the analysis of his works, Van Gogh seems to have suffered from schizophrenia and glaucoma. After 1888, he started painting coloured shadows or halos around light sources, a symptom specific to glaucoma patients. In 1890 he painted the Church of Antwerp and the violence of his red and blue palette, as well as the strange depiction of the building lead specialists to the conclusion that he also suffered from schizophrenia.

Fig. 8 Vincent van Gogh, *Self-portrait with bandaged ear*

Van Gogh's personality as a visionary, eccentric, volcanic artist was marked by the irreversible psychological condition from which he suffered, doubled by a social setting characterised by convention and indifference. His outward or inward-oriented aggressive behaviour, social dissatisfaction, and repeated attempts to control these aggressive impulses, his preference for loneliness and isolation, his bouts of melancholy and depression gradually lead him to suicide[14].

Unlike other suffering artists, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) did not transfer his own pain into his works. Even if, alongside alcoholism, it marked his entire destiny, his condition, described by various terms (achondroplasia, polypiphyseal dysplasia, polypiphyseal dystrophy), is not to be found in the impressive body of work he produced throughout his 37 years of life. In fact, Toulouse-Lautrec was hiding great emotional trauma: a disgusting, disproportionate physical appearance that distanced him from ordinary people and made him prefer the company of the prostitutes and admirable cabaret dancers that he portrayed in his works.

Egon Schiele lived for a short time, from 1890 to 1918, when he died of the Spanish flu together with his wife. In addition to the devastation of conflict, the First World War brought along an epidemic of the Spanish flu that decimated the people of Europe. Vienna, the city where the artist lived, was no exception. He came from a troubled family. His father suffered from hallucinatory psychosis and fits of anger, and the depressing atmosphere of his parents' house, doubled by a cold relationship with his mother, left their mark on young Egon. In fact, all his creation is marked by a remarkable understanding of the human being, his sexuality, and trauma. Most of his works are nudes and self-portraits characterized by overflowing, often sickly

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[14] Mihai Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 54

and androgynous sexuality, but also by an expressionist mode of rendering the human body: strong-boned, pale or sickly red thin figures presented in contorted positions. He depicted the human being's instinctive side, the original intensity of sexual drive, and at the same time showed the body with all its weakness and misery[15], emphasizing man's dual nature: life and death. Schiele's dramatic and graphic style, his contorted and deformed figures emphasize his personal appetite for the contrasts of human existence and the exploration of his own sexuality verging on the pathological but are also proof of his ability to observe his own individuality almost maniacally.

Fig. 9 Egon Schiele, *Self-portrait with grimace*

Fig. 10 Egon Schiele, *Dead Mother*

Seen as the greatest modern neurotic, Edvard Munch (1863-1944) managed to render the most shocking obsessions through pathological figures with morpho-psychological deformities [16] . His favourite theme was loneliness, despair and anguish in the face of aggressive disease and impossible integration into society. The physiognomy of his characters brim with fear and sadness, while postures and facial expressions, doubled by the palettes used, suggest the flight of someone chased by ghosts[17]. His work *The Scream*, painted in 1893, became a symbol of anxiety and pain. The artist described the act of creating it as follows: *I sensed a scream running through nature, I thought I heard it. I painted this painting, I painted the clouds as if they were actual blood. The colours were screaming*. As a matter of fact, Munch's work includes many works describing physical illness: *The Sick Child* (1907, Oslo National Gallery), considered one of his first masterpieces,

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[15] Henry Pierre Jeudy, *Corpul ca obiect de artă*, Eurosong&Book, București, 1998, p. 86

[16] Mihai Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*

[17] *Ibidem*

is a pale figure, rendered in shades of bluish grey and green. It is believed that his sister, Sophie, who died of tuberculosis, is the protagonist of several works, including *The Sick Child*. Munch also painted hospital scenes, funerals, and women beside the bed of dying people. Like Van Gogh and Egon Schiele, he was obsessed with his own face, which he depicted in many works. Like Van Gogh, he was cared for in a clinic for a mental illness, so it could be said that the artist translated his own fears, anxiety, and depression into his paintings[18].
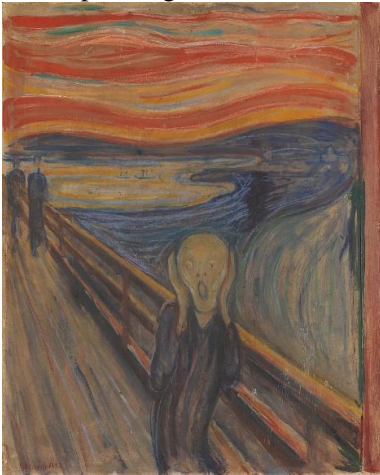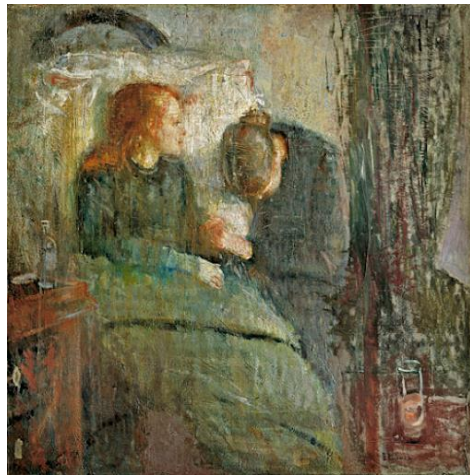
Fig. 11 Edvard Munch, *The Scream*   **Fig. 12** Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*

The expression of profound human feelings, doubled by social insecurity, war, hunger, disease, and poverty, is also found in the drawings of the German artist Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945). Her works are very expressive and explore the great tragedies of mankind. In *Woman with Dead Child*, an engraving dating from 1903, the artist transposes the tragedy of a mother facing the death of her child, whom she embraces torn by grief. The work was created immediately after the artist's eldest son fell ill with diphtheria, a disease from which he survived, but which left deep wounds in the artist's soul. Thus, illness, infant mortality and the disaster they cause in a mother's soul became the central theme of her artistic creation, as in a premonition: her youngest son, Peter, died when he was only 21 fighting in the First World War.

The premonition was also at work, years later, in the case of Victor Brauner (1903-1966), a Jewish surrealist painter and poet born in Romania who created *The Pictopoetry* (with Ilarie Voronca). In 1930, eight years before losing an eye after having intervened in a dispute, he painted *Self-Portrait with enucleated eye*. This inspired the Argentine writer Ernesto Sabato, who included him in his book *On Heroes and Tombs* (1961).

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[18] Mihai Pricop, *op. cit.*, p. 67

Fig. 13 Käthe Kollwitz,
Woman with Dead Child
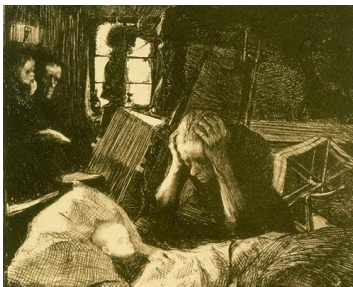
Fig. 14 Käthe Kollwitz,
Misery (Not

Fig. 15 Victor Brauner,
Self-portrait with)
enucleated eye

The South American artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), whose artistic creation has returned in the public eye in recent years, is a special case. Her life was tormented by illness and suffering, on the one hand due to her having caught poliomyelitis at the age of nine, and, on the other hand, as a result of a serious car accident, which left her with fractures and internal injuries. Bedridden for long stretches of time, trapped in metal corsets, having undergone several spine surgeries, Frida discovers painting as a means to fight for survival, thus expressing her pain. Her body, mutilated after the accident, became the central object of her creation, as a symbol of her struggle for life, and physical and mental pain. Frida's paintings convey her ability to perceive and transpose into images the beauty and ugliness of life, her power to fight for life, to love, or to hate. Her relationship with a Mexican painter, the muralist Diego Rivera, was another source of pain in her life, doubled by the desire made impossible by physical inability to bear a child (she had several miscarriages), as a result of which she fell ill with depression. In *Henry Ford Hospital or The Flying Bed*, painted in 1932, Frida, in tears, is lying on the bed in a pool of blood, tied with red umbilical cords, gathered in her hand on her abdomen, by flying objects: a dead foetus, medical instruments placed on a stand, iliac bones.

Fig. 16 Frida Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital or the Flying Bed*
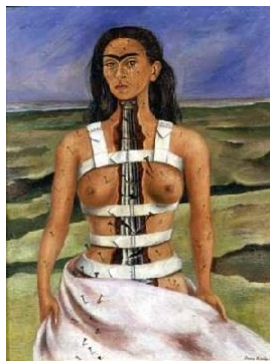
Fig. 17 Frida Kahlo, *The Broken Column*

In the work *Tree of Hope, Remain Strong*, painted in 1946, Frida depicts herself in a chromatically divided universe: on the one hand, the beautiful woman dressed in a traditional Mexican costume, but holding a medical corset, is placed in the dark, cold part of the work. On the other hand, the woman lying on a hospital bed, showing her back bearing the traces of a surgery that has not been sutured yet, is placed in a more luminous setting. The two Fridas represent two lives: that of the bedridden, sick woman, and that of healthy Frida, who bears no trace of the accident.

One of the most famous works signed by Frida Kahlo is *The Broken Column*, painted in 1944, which shows the artist naked, as if she were having a medical examination. Her cracked body reveals an Ionic column, broken in several places, which replaces the spine, while the artist's torso is corseted, her skin is pierced by dozens of nails, and her eyes are in tears. This solitary figure, like all her self-portraits, is framed by an arid landscape, with cracks similar to those left by strong earthquakes, symbolizing the external force that changed her destiny during the accident.

My painting carries with it the message of pain […]. Painting completed my life. I lost three children and a series of other things that would have fulfilled my horrible life. Painting substituted for all this, Frida Kahlo declared before dying from pulmonary embolism at only 47.

In Romanian art, the best-known example of a suffering painter is Ștefan Luchian, diagnosed with "locomotor ataxia", a spinal cord disease that affects the coordination of the limbs and leads to loss of reflexes and visual impairment[19]. Most of his masterpieces were painted after he got ill, with extraordinary sensitivity and strength.

In visual art, the human body presents several types of information. On the one hand, it renders *beauty* and *ugliness*, mirroring cultural ideals or concepts related to identity (race, gender, age, stage of life), form, health or disability, physical deformity. On the other hand, the body, body attitude and facial expression transmit information related to power, establish the limits of the body and emotional health. Artists have always been fascinated by the issue of life and death, pregnancy and birth, the similarities and differences between twins, illness and death.

In 1978, the French artist Orlan decided to film the entire surgery that she underwent in order to have an ectopic pregnancy terminated under partial anaesthesia. This moment in her life became the forerunner of a vast series of performances in which she used her own body as an instrument of art, exposing publicly her own aesthetic procedures. Her body becomes a collage of elements from famous works of art signed by Leonardo da Vinci or Botticelli while the artist calls herself a "work in progress" or "Saint Orlan". Deconstructing the idea of femininity and beauty, Orlan organizes real shows

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[19] *Ibidem*, p. 92

broadcast live in major museums or galleries, transforming the operating room into an art studio.

After receiving a cancer diagnosis in 1982, photographer Jo Spence builds works dedicated to feminism that criticize the idealized image of women in the media and advertising. The series entitled *Picture of Health* is devoted to the doctor-patient relationship, the invasive methods used to treat cancer, the confrontation with her own tragedy, the physical and emotional fight against this ultimately lethal disease.

The limits of the body, tested in the works of many artists including Orlan, Jo Spence, Marina Abramovic and Stelarc, are represented by the skin, *an intermediate surface between the inside and the outside world*[20]. From a philosophical perspective, the limit of the body is its finite ability to withstand pain and, finally, death[21]. In art, there are several recurring themes centred on the human body, such as: the death of the body versus the immortality of the soul, the young body as a symbol of beauty versus the aged body, the ability to control one's own body, self-preservation and survival instincts, the fight against disease, addictions and their impact on a person's health and state of mind.

Marina Abramovic's performative work is not related to disease, but her power of self-control over her body, her ability to educate her endurance, concentration, perception and will, are extraordinary. Their preparation involved an actual ritual, later patented as the *Abramovic Method*, in which the artist fasted, meditated for hours, isolated herself, did exercises of will, etc. The constant overcoming of physical and mental boundaries led to a sharpening of the senses (sight, hearing, smell). During her performative acts, which could last up to 12 hours, Marina Abramovic remained motionless, struggling with physical pain that was so intense that she almost lost consciousness. That experience is similar to a trance, which the artist describes like Dostoevsky in *The Idiot*. The moment before Prince Mishkin's epileptic seizure in Dostoevsky's novel corresponds to the sensations experienced by Abramovic, as she describes them in her memoir, *Walk through walls*: a feeling of weightlessness, a warm enveloping light, a state of perfect harmony with one's own being and with the entire Universe.

Last but not least, *psychopathological art* and art therapy have become the object of academic studies, and the importance of *art therapy* in the treatment and recovery of mentally ill patients has been demonstrated from a medical perspective. Over the decades, their drawings have been a source of inspiration and reflection for artists, to mention here only the *raw art* of Dubuffet or Wols and Paul Klee's interest in children's art and the art of the mentally ill.

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[20] Henry Pierre Jeudy, *op. cit.*, p. 65
[21] Diane Fortenberry, Rebecca Morrill (eds.), *Body of Art*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 2015, p. 298

Conclusions

Understanding the human body from an artistic perspective is in fact a combination of several factors. It is essential to gain knowledge of its forms and their mobility and, just as important, to understand the psychological traits of the individual. Art has served its purpose as long as, alongside ideas, representations, and technique, it manages to convey emotions as well. If we think of the works of art created over the centuries, it is not necessarily the correct representations of the body, from an anatomical point of view, that have the greatest impact on our mind and soul, but precisely the works of art that transmit the most deepest human feelings, emotions, states, experiences, agony and ecstasy.

"[…] We thinkers try to come closer to God by pulling the mask of the world away from His face. You come closer to Him by loving his Creation and re-creating it. Both are human endeavors, and necessarily imperfect, but art is more innocent…" (Hermann Hesse – *Narcissus and Goldmund*).

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The illusion of "The Garden"
A reflection on the works and ideas of the painter Hieronymus Bosch, through the perspective of present day thinkers and concepts

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Abstract: *We are Introduced of the subject matter of the article, the description of the chosen work by H Bosch, the triptych entitled: "The Garden of Earthly Delights" there is also a detailedphysical description of the work itself and of the concepts and ideas the Dutch painter plays with. We oversee the ambiguity of the interpretation normally given to the central panel mostly but create a dialogue with the narratives of the other two, thus the conceptual intention of the author is presented (the work itself by being in some's opinion a testimony to the uprising of the enlightenment (humanist) movements and the beginning of the Renaissance Era that took Europe and the World by storm… Although his images and ideas still echo in our present, by this reason we will employ the opinions of selected freethinkers that, in e strange way, engage the todays audience with the same concepts but somehow in a different paradigm: Paradise, Heaven, Heavenly Ecstasy, fear, acceptance etc. are just some of the forth mentioned subjects.The opinions will be set side by side to reveal the similarities or differences of Bosch's symbolism within present day concepts. The Illusion behind the concept of Heaven… or better said of the promised Garden; But also the necessity of heaving a wishful ideal to live up to… the concept of purposefulness, mindfulness switches the role of Paradise, and how to obtain it with, the lifetime goal for a happier life and a place within a peaceful inner self. In conclusion we can observe, the visionary aspect of the work itself and how the viewer can receivea new perspective on old subjects. By creating this conceptual bridge, we are all the closer to understanding how we are more similar with our forefathers, and how even from a 500-year-old painting we can still learn a thing or two about the present*

Keywords: *Garden, Paradise, Game-like quality, Humankind, knowledge, creator, meaningful, mindful, create, delights, earthly, heavenly.*

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‚Bosch is one of the very few painters who - he was indeed more than a painter! – who aquired a magic vision. He saw through the phenomenal world, rendered it transparent, and thus revield its pristine aspect''[1]

Jheronimus van Aken, also known as Hieronymus Bosch, was a Dutch painter, one of the most notable representatives of the Early Netherlandish painting school. His work, generally oil on oak wood, mainly contains fantastic illustrations of religious concepts and narratives, especially macabre and nightmarish depictions of hell. His body of works, composed of more or less 27 pieces, conform neither to the post Middle Ages style of visual representations, nor to the Renaissance one,: he is, as H. Miller said, a visionary!

The trademark of his otherworldly representations of known art and religion themes are the fictive and grotesque characters that populate his panels. A man with animal like body, a knife between two ears, a''mur-maiden'' holding a newborn riding a rat while being in a burrow are just a few of these small visual mysteries that keep our interest active, giving to all his works a feature that could be at any time a description of a Victorian curiosity cabinet, mystery beauty and amazement.

According to Dirk Bax, Bosch's paintings often represent visual translations of verbal metaphors and puns drawn from both biblical and folkloric sources. However, the conflict of interpretations that his works still elicit raises profound questions about the nature of "ambiguity" in the art of his period.

We will not take into discussion the whole character that is H. Bosch and all of his works, neither vague generalities concerning it, but rather invite you to ponder on a simple question: '' "was he a mad painter, a Nostradamus-like figure or a misled soul in touch with a discourse from Heaven itself? Or could we see, behind the cloak, that he was actually a person that acknowledged many radical ideas of the time which in our era became, in some cases, '' "the norm" ''.

For this reason, I have chosen the subject of the garden (of paradise), masterfully represented by our painter in his most known work: The Garden of Eternal Delights. „ "The Garden" in Bosch's vision, the one before the Flood, can be considered a projection that at any moment might become an "Earthly Paradise" , chocked by religious meanings and moral constraits imposed by its "zeitgeist". On closer inspection, the rhythm that the artist's work imposes by fully

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[1] Stefan Fischer, Hieronymus Bosch, the complete works, Taschen 2013 (p. 98) Baldass 1959,(p. 234)

sumberdging a subject matter... reveals to the non layman observer that morality is not a rigid term and, therefore, the image and the meaning it projects is, most probably, intentionally left ambiguous.

Even a a light objective reading of H. Bosch's worksbrings to mind references to many of the great thinkers that preceded him: encapsulated within his works we can find a profoundly Humanist meaning (this being the case before it was cool!) ... And although we can argue on the true and harsh symbolistic thread of his imagistic discourse; but we cannot deny a subjective reality that regards the contemporary norm... Humanity needs only to lose its Fear of an external and higher punishment, thus regaining its primordial and righteous place within ,'' "God's Graces" ''.

In the few works that are attributed to the artist we can discover traces that can transpire a '' "Game-like quality" '' given to the life of man. What is curious within his full body of works, and especially in the triptych:'' "The Garden of Eternal Delights" , is that somehow the folly of man is placed, atypically for the period, side by side with new or possibly old revised notions of what the values or perceptions of beauty, happiness and freedom could be. This statement is neither new nor shocking to those familiar with this subject; it might be wishful thinking… but, come to think of it, let us '' "fall into temptation" '', let us have a moment of uninterrupted mindfulness directed towards a projection of… perhaps and endless possibilities…

There is an issue or a preference, we could say, for some of the subject matters of the art world, within the pre humanist era, starting with the Middle Ages and ending up somehow within the late 17th century, when there was an '' "official censorship" '' concerning the human body and its forbidden nakedness. Namely, more progressive artists would adopt religious subject matters that included the depiction of or at least the possibility of the naked or sensual human body being represented: '' "Adam and Eve", "The Passions of Christ", "Susan and the Elders", "The Holly Virgin", "Scenes from the Old Testament", etc. These normal subjects were sometimes regarded as one of the fewest instances in which one may depart from the typical canonic representation of non-transgressive imagery, to a sometimes forbidden area of '' "human studies" '', anatomical and physical at first but , later, even a social and psychological view of humanity. By these standards, it would be easy to state that H. Bosch, leaving out all his corpus of works, and keeping just his "Garden" '', had – in some respects – a revolutionary perspective on these sensitive imageries.

There is, and has always been , a clash between our human nature and primordial yearnings and the social/cultural context and

premise that, almost like a blacksmith forging iron into steel, set on a journey to reclaimed humanity's pure state, its essence, cast into history by the will to: tame, untame and re-tame the desire of man and its morality. To complete the start of this exposé on the slightly brave and in some way accepted heretical representation of religious and social dogma of the time, we must invoke the existentialist fundamental idea that freedom will appear in the moment one's limits are defined,: according to Sartre, among others, we have an inherent way or actually a need to be constrained by limits, so we can surpass them, finding purpose and meaning in the struggle it unleashes.

Let us familiarize ourselves with the image of the painting before going further with the proposed exposé.

"The Garden of Eternal Delights", painted most probably in 1503, on the occasion of the marriage of Henry III of Nassau Breda, was intended to serve as nuptial art, a sort of marital mirror (speculum nuptiorum, Vandenbroeck 1990, p.166, note 795), in other words a sort of a "how to" and "not to'' in a successful marriage depicting the benefits and hazards that could await the freshly married couple. The work itself was constructed by the artist as a triptych having actually 4 images: The Creation of the World up to the Third Day plays across the two exterior shutters in the closed position, Paradise and the Creation of Eve are seen in the left inner wing, Humankind before the Flood is in the central panel, and the depiction of Hell is placed in the right inner wing. According to Baldass in his early analysis of the triptych, the works shows chronological and causal events of the world and humankind and the possibilities of being for the state of our souls, thereby representing a "didactic, moralizing,vanitas world picture" . By such notions we can understand that the painting was meant to instruct and entertain the viewer, encapsulating Bosch's duality.

Due to the type of problem raised here we will talk mostly about the central panel, due to its extreme ambiguity, and even though it could be said that all the works painted by Hieronymus have this feature, in this small section of his repertoire these issues are more visible.

The central panel is filed with a wealth of motifs being divided into a foreground scene, a middle distance one, and a spectacular background. Many of the elements repeat themselves. Naked men and women, fair or dark-skinned (representing possibly the descendants of Cain), birds, land, animals, also aquatic ones and a whole array of forms and structures, natural ones and seemingly artificial ones as well. Thematically, the scene represented here is based on the notion of Humanity before The Flood depicted in The Old Testament, an image encapsulating the trace of purity found in the left panel or Paradise, the

so called folly of man and the imminent punishment that awaited him. In the author's time, the events described in The Bible were considered a historical fact, thusly there is the description of this exact moment.

The authors before Bosch in unison considered that the first age of man, which lasted from Adam to the Flood, was ruled by Lust. We might be tempted to associate some characters with the giants resulted from the union of Adam's kind with the corrupted descendants of Cain, or from the mixing between Angels and earthly women, yet these hypotheses can be neither proven, nor torn down, as these, and other meanings, are mostly arbitrary. Through the noise and abundance of sometimes shocking orgy images we see details like Adam, Eve and Noah in a cave, hiding from the mob-like dynamics of most of the characters. The man and women in the front ground seem not to live in caves anymore, some sheltering themselves in tent-like structures, an indication of their gradually evolving civilization that occurred after the Fall. The juxtaposition of man and woman, fruit and cavity, repeats itself several times in small groups engaged into what seems to be the exercitation of their free will, free from God's wrath and free from social norms; these, and the shabby or archaic architectural structures otherworldly in nature, are considered an indication of the "sin and debauchery" in which the son of man has fallen after the day in the first Garden.

Even though when looking at the image spread before our eyes we are confronted by the idea that the image has a certain "due date", an expiration term, the classic punishment after the crime, we are also struck by a sense of enjoyment and calmness, permitting our eyes to focus and leap from scene to scene, being amassed almost in a voyeuristic way, that we are quite unable to see sadness embracement or anger. We can plainly see that this is an earthly heaven, a representation derived from the notion of paradise as being an enclosed garden, but without a keeper. The symbiotic and playful representation of Humankind might be in some ways disturbing for Bosch's contemporaries but, in our times, at worst it could be judged as strange, but really strange in a playful bizarre way… the Harmony with Mother Nature is considered a mantra found today ubiquitously around the world.

Trees, shapes animals and invented beings are small signs or representations of ideas like marriage, sexuality, fertility, harmony – this and the pure abundance of playful people and groups give this image the touch that is "needed" in a nuptial art piece.

While many of the pictorial motifs in the middle distance and background may not belong to the iconography of the Garden of Love,

they can certainly be assigned to the thematic complex of sin and earthly love which are irreconcilably opposed. In the centre of the panel, a cavalcade of vices has formed a ring around a circular pond in which white and black women are bathing. The acrobatic riders galloping endlessly around this pool are "Fools of Venus, blinded and excited by their desire for love. These men riding around the pool, ultimately symbolize nothing less than the power to dominate women, which in the painter's equation is the inevitable correlative of male's sinfulness and folly. This patch from the painting representation of the dynamics of human Love can be seen as a warning for the viewer to consider that, even though the passion for love can be high, there is a constant danger to go "savage". A parallel was made by some that saw similarities between the action of the riders and old pagan cultures in which people would undergo ritualistic dances, incantations and processions combined with a high sexual tone to please or praise forgotten deities.

In the background, we conclude our view of this scene with a landscape of forest rivers structures and winged characters. The forests and the 4 rivers shown here are describing the "Paradise lost" … its description can be found in The Old Testament; even though it has its physical form, it is somehow corrupted. We can plainly see that it is populated mostly by fantastic creatures, and this might be a result of humanity's fall from God's Graces,; in this way, he retains a part of his knowledge (gift) for us. An army of mermaids, a swimming unicorn are just some of the unearthly images that are played for us by our author. The architecture is more similar to the tower of Babel; they are flimsy despite their height. The shapes seem to evoke the feeling that this first age of man was like a house of cards, ambitious in its construction but faulted from the start, waiting for the right breeze or, in our case, wave, to tear them down.

The entire picture composes an image that invokes, at one's first glance, admiration and awe; we are transported into a realm of desire, temptation for fleshly pleasures, and this is not an unwanted feature, since it serves the proposed purpose of carrying the newlyweds into a state of permitted and condoned ecstasy.

The three panels are interlinked with meaning;, as Bosch tried, in this manner, to create a narrative guideline that can give deeper meaning to the viewer than a simple sermon or an interesting image. The motifs and images repeat themselves from one to the other, creating in this way a sort of mirror image of the central scene with the two on its flanks. The owl representing knowledge but also danger and wickedness, and also the unicorn which appears in Paradise, as well as all the other animals, fauna or flora, in high obedience to the three

characters: Jesus, Adam and Eve. The central fountain and all the other structures are there placed organically in the composition. In the mirror image the image of the garden is one corrupted by Man. In Paradise we have stillness calm and obedience, in the central one we have chaos, man and beast are playing and copying each other's ways, people are grouping into actions to satisfy their pleasure. In this way, what once had been heavenly now became earthly, what once had been order now was chaos. But, as another will follow (the Flood), and another succeeded this (Genesis), we cannot be fully against chaos,: this state of turbulence was described at one point by philosopher Slavoj Zizek, as a necessary state of Revolution but an unnecessary mindset of perpetual revolt. The motion of the composition, even though it represents a parody of a central belief in a knowledgeable duality, gives the viewer, through its uncanny naturalness and visual flow, a sense of excitement and anticipation, but also a sense of calm and acceptance. Bosch employs parody as a tool during his creative process, in so far as he takes figures from the Paradise panel, places them into another and has them reflected in the third as a distortion.

If the image of the orgy-like world is one of ambivalence and, in some cases, careless freedom, the image of Man, Adam set in the lower down corner, represents the idea of Responsibility. We have freedom of will but we also have, as social beings, the responsibility to care and be compassionate to one another , and not only to mankind, but to all the other creatures of "The Divine" and to the creator Himself.

The idea of responsibility for one's actions is emblematic for this almost heretical religious painting. It takes the story line into a full circle; god, creation, laws, purposefulness, knowledge, beauty, lack of fear, freedom,; and, at this point, (being an enclosed space physically and mentally alike), freedom is misunderstood badly and, by losing responsibility, humankind (with the exception of Adam) loses its other virtues and integral traits, inviting Chaos to reign once more and reset the world to the position intended by God.

What follows in the storyline given to us by the artist is the representation of Hell, typical and representative for Bosch as a subject matter. But this should not be understood as in a deterministic narrative, but more as an allegory for the newlyweds: if you mistreat your family, father, mother, instincts, happiness, perspective and purpose in life…etc., you will suffer the consequences. And there… in this way I think that by far the visualization of Hell remains one of the "fetishes" of the Middle Ages society.

We could describe the grotesque images in the third image but we think it is best for our purpose here to understand its general

meaning and to concentrate on how even Hell had the already obvious game-like features. There is no way of proving that Bosch's contemporaries would have perfectly understood the true meaning of his works, it is obvious he is on his own an eclectic artist and perhaps a forth thinker and a visionary. In any case, there always was a high interest for his otherworldly view of the world, his art giving a trend line of images and thinking from that age to the present day.

How do we perceive religion or its teachings? In the book: Religion for Atheists, the Swiss author and philosopher Alain De Botton, encourages us to reconsider how we read and think some aspects of belief and world view found in the religious spectrum. He brought up the dilemma regarding the origin of our moral compass for those of us who abandon religion In the 19th century people reasoned that Culture would strive and replace religion as the new sole owner of our morality. But, sadly, Culture, as it was to be, did not engage in a sense of teaching us how to live, how to deal with the subjective checkpoints of our life: live, love, dream, die, etc. The academic world left us cold so we always were in need of a narrative. Art for religions was crucial, it served a higher purpose, it is heartwarming to learn about the freeing of the arts from the yoke of the state or churches' exclusivity, but now we are confronted with art for art's sake, even though it had a way of using art as a propaganda tool, which meant that it was used as a didactical one. According to A de Botton, something was lost when Art separated from the masses, we slowly started to lose the link between great thinkers and great artists, so now, in contemporary times, everyone stands alone.

But, in fact, what is this mysterious Garden also known as Paradise? Actually, we will not talk in particular about a certain moment in one holy book or another, neither will we speak about the righteousness of any religion. We will start our exercise from the premise that the Holy Scriptures are an ancient codex for human psychology and its interactions as underlined by Jordan Peterson's concept exposed in his Biblical series:

"Humanity evolved a story-like structure through which to interpret the world! that's pretty damn interesting! it says something fundamental about stories and the storyteller."/" we have hemispheric specialization for the known and unknown: Order/Chaos) .[2]

Bosch was perhaps a member of different directions of religious trend for his time, some more diverse and nonconformist than others. Paradise and Heaven, as we stated, were for him and his contemporaries real places… and in the end we will see that he was not

far from the truth. The imagery he presented is so powerful that it makes itself relevant in our time also.

So how is this notion of an enclosed space, a walled oasis, relevant to the present time? How can walls present extreme happiness when in history they only create division and strife? Walls were as much a source of safety as a way to create tension and sorrow. From the Great \Wall of China to the one that divided Berlin during the Cold war, we can see how real walls are compared with human individual and social boundaries.

Pope Francis spoke out against governments that build walls to keep out migrants, reiterating his calls for a compassionate approach to migration.

"Those who build walls will become prisoners of the walls they put up," the Pope said. "This is history" . Of course, this idea was not encouraged in the painter's time, walls were the way people dealt with the world and its problems, the world was known as static, limited and controlled; only a handful of pre-illuminists would create works to debate these "facts". The way Bosch creates his view of this earthly paradise struck us from the start as a daring way to see how one can represent sin without sinning, beauty and freedom without stepping on the moral teaching of the vigilant church. We can see that the image portrayed by one or another religion is not wrong, but merely does not help us detach from the stereotypical residual image of Heaven that we have formed in our head;: a luxurious place a place where all worries are gone, a place filled with all good things that does not tempt anyone to step out of line or to lead an unvirtuous existence. But it is wrong to continue to see Heaven or Paradise this way, many have died or committed acts of extreme cruelty towards their fellow man so they might be granted a place by the side of their ancestors that await them with open arms. For us to lead the best version of our lives, to be meaningful, and have purpose, Heaven must be impossible! Yes, there is a wickedness in affirming that such a place existed or will do again, and for heaven to work as a metaphor and to continue to enchant us with its idea, it has to be placed and kept in the realm of higher and fundamental concepts. It can be and represent our origins, with pride and suffering we obtained knowledge from its grasp. We were born there, we started to interact safely with the world… we came to think and feel for ourselves; does this sound familiar? It should, it is none other than a metaphor for the notion of family with God as a father figure and the tamed nature possibly the mother archetype.

But why impossible then? As a sum of things and features, this place can be placed with other abstract notions like: impossible, perfect,

infinite. Let us ask ourselves how can it be perfect? If knowledge of his own existence was kept from Man, if the gaining of this knowledge was a capital sin., Man was in this sense just an automaton, a machine created to exist for a purpose in this place, a robot. Then can we speak of a revolt against his creator by its own creation, a theme all too present in all mediums of art and all eras.

Infinite is God and all its might. What is infinite I wonder? Zeno's paradox can simply start our mind thinking in a good direction; this ancient Greek philosopher tried to use methods to solve paradoxes that intrigued the mind of his contemporary world, so he embarked on a journey to see what infinity really is: in his theory, if one would shoot an arrow and by some chance (gravity, unknown to the ancients) it would not fall to the ground… would it fly forever or hit something? Let us say it would hit a wall, what now? Well, one would climb the wall and shoot it again… and so on and so on… for, you see, there are lots of infinities in this big one! What does this say about the Garden? That it was more like a limitation for Man to exist indefinitely. The idea that one can find true Paradise in its limitation is not a wrong or new one, but to limit others to your paradise easily you can detour one's consciousness into a living hell.

So a general Paradise does not exist, I suppose our painter knew this, when he painted The Garden of Eternal Delights. The garden in the central panel is a representation of an ideal earthly place, in my opinion, although for most of the art historians this is not the case, Through the way he set the stage and composed the colorful scene, Hieronymus Bosch dared to dream, to look at man, the beast of burden that became after the Fall a free beast... not threatening but free... free of consequence, free of fear, a rare moment at a time when beauty was not a burden on his sholders.

In conclusion, the notion of the garden (for me clearly the earthly one) is neither a goal nor a memory, it is a matrix to a life lived in a more mindful way in which you create a life of eternal delights.

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Archetypes in Today's Advertising

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Abstract: *This paper explores ancient myth and mythological figures in contemporary advertising as a means of communication with consumers. In a hermeneutical and analytical way, through psychologic and semiotic theories, we classify and analyze the most recurrent themes: mythical time; beauty and eternal youth; success and power; idyllic environment, the search for the lost paradise. Based on universal archetypes, we see how advertising becomes an excellent vehicle to effectively reach the receiver's subconscious and act as an inciter to consumption.*

Introduction and methodology

"Gott ist tot! Gott bleibt tot! Und wir haben ihn getötet. Wie trösten wir uns, die Mörder aller Mörder?"

(Friedrich Nietzche)

However, it may be that from the context of current advertising, this statement may no longer be so valid. Today, through advertising and corporate images, the mass media performs a function similar to that used by yesteryear poets: it recounts heroes' exploits and presents role models. Advertising connects with the human conscience's eternal desire: to lift the spirit towards the hero's ideal or God.

"The foremost function of myth is to reveal the exemplary models for all human rites and all significant human activities"[1].

As one Volkswagen publicist claimed, advertising is not a science. It is an art: the art of persuasion. The function of advertising is to sell, but not just objects. Ads sell more than products. They sell values, concepts of love,

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[1] Mircea Eliade: *Myth and Reality*, Harper and Row, New York, 1975, p.8

sexuality, success, and, above all, ideas of normality. It somehow tells us who we are and who we should be.

We think we ignore advertisements, yet we cannot deny their influence because it is rapid, cumulative, and for the most part, it remains stored in the subconscious. According to a study promoted by Rance Crain, former editor of Advertising Age, only 8% of the advertising message is received by the conscious mind. The rest is stored and processed over and over again in the brain, in the non-conscious part.[2]

This article explores the connection between myths or classical mythological figures and advertising. Advertising has assumed and incorporated all kinds of discourses that in principle were alien to it, from literature to cinema, fine arts, poetry, music, politics, or religion. In this appropriation process, advertising has found that it can exploit the myth for persuasive purposes. Through model archetypes, they become an excellent vehicle to reach the receiver's unconscious most effectively and operate as a powerful incentive for consumption by sustaining it in symbolic forms. Furthermore, given the growing process of trivializing the market, where all products are alike, and there are almost no intrinsic elements that significantly differentiate them, advertising has been forced to create that difference artificially. Thus, it has endowed products with an over-significance, a symbolic value that has little or nothing to do with the specific properties of the object to be sold but which, nevertheless, is decisive when buying. As Pérez Tornero writes, the use-value of objects no longer counts, but rather their symbolic value, the semantic dimension.[3]

Through the historical substrate, myths have been magnified as iconographies, symbols, and representations of great significance and visual power that regenerate and cement postmodern society's imagination. Faced with such a phenomenon, the problem that arises is whether, in the first place, there is a pattern that theorizes and supports the use of archetypes and mythological figures as an instrument of advertising discourse and branding or, on the contrary, it responds to arbitrary and devoid productions of a correlative pattern of theoretical and pragmatic content.

This article is based on the premises of several theories starting with the conception of myth as an intrinsic and constituent part of advertising discourse since it is understood that advertising is a manifestation of human thought that extends beyond the symbolism and cultural meaning that mythology has transferred to it. Therefore, methodologically, we will not start from an a priori etymological approach or a historical journey of the inheritance of mythology in postmodern society or mythical consciousness[4],

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[2] Jean Kilbourne, *Can't buy my love: how advertising changes the way we think and feel,* Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000.

[3] J.M. Pérez Tornero, *La seducción de la opulencia*, Paidós, Barcelona, 1992, p.81.

[4] G. Gusdorf, *Mito y metafísica*, Nova, Buenos Aires, 1990.

but we will confront the analysis of campaigns with the various theories that build this framework referential: speculative such as those of Carol Pearson and Margaret Mark[5] based on the composition of the intangible values that make up the brand image; theories that treat myth as a core element of advertising discourse, as is the case of Adrián Huici[6] or when advertising discourse seeks emotionality from a mythical register: its stories, representations, images, personifications and symbols are addressed to the viewer[7]; and, in a more hermeneutical and analytical way, those that try to analyze advertising from the myth: the case of José Luís León[8] and his conception of the Mytoanalysis of Advertising, in which he even divides this relationship into three dimensions: literal, allegorical and reconstruction of the figurative meaning.

Advertising, mythology, and emotion. Theories and classification

Current society presents two aspects: on the one hand, it seems that a strong sense of rationalism as a result of the Enlightenment Era rules, and on the other hand, the myth appears present. Ancient tales are brought alive, recreated, and trusted. There is a spread of emotions over even the most pragmatic sectors, such as the business world, where emotional value is used and given as a differential value.

In today's business world, especially in advertising, emotional value takes on the importance of an element of significant differentiation. Thus, we have emotional branding, whose goal is to connect with the audience by associating life experiences with the product, just through the reformulation of ancient archetypes and myths.

The argumentation of creative persuasion brings together visual qualities and expressive resources that support those qualities to produce substantial effects: evoking feelings and emotions that provoke the triggering effect of persuasion.[9]

The receiver of the message recognizes the themes and characters and identifies with them, which creates an emotional connection. Products like Acqua di Giò, Gillette Venus, Versace Eros, Nike are examples of brands that reach us using this type of message. These products' purchase results from the emotional bond created between the product, associated with mythical figures, and the consumer.

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[5] Mark, M.; Pearson, C.S., *The Hero and the Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes.* McGraw-Hill, New York, 2001.
[6] A. Huici, *Mito y publicidad. Cuestiones publicitarias* 1: 72-86. 1993.
[7] R. Barthes, *La Antigua Retorica*, Buenos Aires, 1982.
[8] J.L.León Sáez Ybarra, *Mitoanálisis de la publicidad*, Ariel, Madrid, 2001.
[9] Ricarte, José M., *Creatividad y comunicación persuasiva*, Universidad Autónoma, Aldea Global 4, Barcelona, 1999, p.67, p.78-84.

Using images and motifs that exist in the collective imagination, on a conscious or unconscious level, seems to predestine the product for a safe sale. These elements that inhabit the receiver's psyche imply that he recognizes the themes and characters of the story and identifies with them, establishing an emotional connection. He lives his adventures and his experiences through them, with them when he sees them. Moreover, although the information is sometimes not recognized (the recipient does not know exactly which myth the story of a particular ad comes from), each person has a basic outline in their mind that arises from an inactive state when specific images, characters, or themes are reactivated. A story built on a myth, based on a myth, has a certain solidity because its background already exists in the receiver's imagination.[10]

It is true that now myths are not understood in the same way since they do not have that religious or sacred yesteryear component. It is a secularisation process and demystification, but that does not prevent societies from creating myths that continue to carry out certain social functions.

Advertising does not simply assimilate or embrace the myth since it is evident that, for it to be readily accepted by contemporary culture, it must be adapted, translated into the current postmodern narrative, and, ultimately, must be shaped as a readable cultural melting pot.

This adaptation could be classified using the mythemes proposed by León[11], of which the most common are:

- the promised paradise: Eden
- the ideal of perfect beauty: Aphrodite, the archetype of sensuality
- rejuvenation and eternal life: Persephone, the archetype of youth
- heroism: Ulysses (cunning), Hector (defender), Achilles (hero par excellence with a weakness)
- power: Zeus
- temptation: the song of the sirens
- the victory: Athena (Nike)
- success: Narcissus, the archetype of complacency and individualism
- rebellion against order: Perseus, the archetype of a savior; Prometheus, the archetype of a rebel who sacrifices himself for the human being.
- the search for treasure: Jason and the Argonauts and the search for the golden fleece.
- carpe diem: Dionysus, the archetype of party and joy
- freedom: Artemis

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[10] Fernández Gómez, J.D. y Pineda Cachero, A., *La belleza embriagadora: el mito de Dionisio en la publicidad.*: Alfar, Sevilla, 2002, p.18.
[11] J.L.León Sáez Ybarra, *Mitoanálisis de la publicidad*, Ariel, Madrid, 2001.

Model archetypes and placement.
Recurring mythological themes in advertising.

Advertising also builds its discourse using the main categories and mythical schemes, such as **eternal time**, **idyllic space**, or the **pursuit of happiness**. As Pérez Tornero commented: "advertising seems to understand that a consumption process is an act that occurs in a non-contradictory reality. That is to say, an ideal reality and superior to the daily one in which it seems that wishes always come true".[12]

The ideological aspiration of advertising is not to resemble reality but to make it resemble reality.[13] The key lies in imitating a prestigious model that will free us from our banal and cruel reality to transport us to an ideal world. The equation is simple: to ensure access to that higher reality for our lives subjected to time degradation, we must imitate the announcement's gods and heroes. We must appropriate that immortality-giving nectar that they use. Only here that divine food is replaced by the product for sale.[14]

The concept of a higher reality that we speak of would correspond to the mythical category of time. This **mythical, eternal time** is a different time, superior to the profane one that refers to the origins, to the time when gods and heroes lived among men and established the norms and guidelines of conduct that man still has to obey and imitate since they belong the sphere of the sacred[15]. Speaking of myth, Eliade defines his role as revealer of exemplary models for all relevant rites and human activities. According to Jung, myths serve as a model of behavior and reflect both individual and collective consciousness since they encompass universal archetypes similar in all individuals.

Returning to the characters who live in the time and space of the spots, we said that they could be classified as gods, they emulate the gods because their bodies are always beautiful and perfect, and they enjoy eternal youth - which constitutes another recurring theme - a coherent set with that circumstance of living in no-time.

When analyzing the temporal component, we cannot forget the spatial component. Just as we have the fantastic immemorial, eternal time, we also have the **mythical, idyllic space**, the perfect place, **Eden**: the stage where the show of heroes and gods takes place. That is also a different space from our usual one. It is a privileged, superior, better place. These are the places where God consumes the object: natural environments of spectacular beauty or luxurious, bright, and comfortable interiors.

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[12] J.M. Pérez Tornero, *La seducción de la opulencia*, Paidós, Barcelona, 1992, p.81.

[13] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, Harper and Row, New York, 1975, p.61.

[14] A. Huici, *Mito y publicidad. Cuestiones publicitarias* 1: 72-86. 1993, p.77.

[15] Eliade, Mircea, *El mito del eterno retorno*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1980.

By imitating the God or the hero's gesture, consuming the same product, and perhaps, in the same way, we will also have access to that sacred time and space that constitutes another ideal reality.

We have already mentioned a type of classification of recurrent mythological themes in advertising under the name of *mythemes* – myth and themes [16]. Above, we discussed the promised paradise, Eden: see Estée Lauder's perfume advertisements, *Beyond Paradise Blue* or *Eden Le Parfum Défendu* by Cacharel.

Here are more examples of campaigns according to the mentioned themes and corresponding archetype:

- the ideal of perfect beauty, Aphrodite, the archetype of sensuality: advertisement for Giorgio Armani's *Acqua di Gioia*; or *Venus Gillette*;
- rejuvenation and eternal life, Persephone, the archetype of youth: Christian Dior's *J'Adore*;
- heroism, Ulysses, the archetype of adventurer, warrior hero: *Marlboro/Marlboro Man* or *Harley Davidson* motorbikes;
- power, Zeus, the archetype of the supreme God: Paco Rabanne's *Invictus*;
- the temptation, the song of the sirens: *Evian water*;
- the victory, Athena: Nike campaign, *Just do it*;
- success, Narcissus, the archetype of complacency and individualism: *Axe range of deodorants*;
- rebellion against the order, Prometheus, the archetype of the rebel who sacrifices himself for the human being: *Apple world launch in 1984*;
- carpe diem: Dionysus, the archetype of party and joy (Diesel jeans);
- freedom: Artemis (the ads for Harley-Davidson motorcycles could fit under this category too: there are ads which could combine several archetypes and themes; here we could have BMW's ad from 2001 *Do you like driving?* and many other car ads).

Advertising oracle Leo Burnett (founder of the famous publicity agency that now bears his name, Leo Burnett, from 1935 in the USA) showed that the correct icon could sell almost anything to almost anybody. Leo Burnett created personalities as products. He realized that humans could not connect with a product, but they can with a specific character (here the *Marlboro man*). *Marlboro man* is considered the most successful and the most reviled advertising icon in history[17]. When they first sold in the 1920s, Marlboros were targeted at women. They came complete with a red filter tip

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[16] J.L.León Sáez Ybarra, *Mitoanálisis de la publicidad*, Ariel, Madrid, 2001.
[17] Sell and Spin, *A History of Advertising*, TV documentary written by Gary H. Grossman, Rob Blumenstein, Sean P Geary, 1999.

to cover up lipstick stains, and they were sold with the tagline *Mild as May*. Sales were flat after a few decades, and Phillip Morris decided to redesign the brand for men. The aim was: the population of white-collar workers who had been in World War Two and now came back and were stuck behind desks, so Marlboro was a kind of means of escape into a fantasy of virility and freedom. The promise of the *Marlboro man* is this: *Come to where the flavor is! Come to Marlboro country!* When *Marlboro man* went national in 1955, the product's annual sales jumped an astounding 3000% from the previous year. This product went from small usage to massive consumption solely on the basis of a brand making this object human: endowing it with this powerful archetype image. Undoubtedly, it is a clear example of model archetypes' influence on consumer trends, but it is not an exclusive case. This manly and lonely figure also brings together - broadly speaking - the archetype of the adventurer who has also promoted the brand insights of brands such as *Harley Davidson*, *Camel*. The adventurer archetype also has certain nihilistic and relativistic connotations, as it is a clear apology for carpe diem, postmodern individualism, and the overstimulation of oneself.

We also observed in many of these advertisements the **playful dimension** related to time and mythical space. The inhabitants of these settings have a life free of all worries, given over to pleasure and total enjoyment. It´s the **pursuit of happiness**. There is a permanent state of unconcern; they live in a game situation. It is an approach to the world of childhood. They are children who play dress up in one way or another, drink a soda or another, have fun without any limitation. Besides, in the infantile world, adult psychology rules do not work; for example, there is no postponement of pleasure. What one wants must be achieved immediately, in the here and now. The materialization of desire occurs in the present, an absolute present that completely forgets the past and does not look to the future, which annuls history.

In the child, we can see it clearly: the only thing that interests him is that the adult satisfies his desires immediately, without considering the effort that may have taken to get what he wants (past) or the consequences that its consumption may have for him (future).[18]

The advertising always attracts using phrases such as "leave it all and come and try" or "take it now! because you are worth it!"; it focuses on life in a playful light, and it is considering child consumers whose compulsive desire (or stimulated to be compulsive) cancels the reflection on the causes and effects of their attitude.

By integrating the playful aspects into advertising along with the other elements of the myth, it is given a communal character: if we want to

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[18] A. Huici, *Mito y publicidad. Cuestiones publicitarias* 1: 72-86. 1993, p.79.

stay in the group, we must do what everyone else does. Otherwise, if one does not wear the appropriate marks, one will be expelled, uncommunicated.

As we mentioned earlier, myths serve as a behavioral model and play an essential role in shaping a group or a nation. Advertising takes advantage of all possible subtleties and tools to gain the ground of consumption. The reference to supernatural beings, gods or heroes, in advertising, as consumers of the advertised product, confers authority on the discourse, recommends the product, and justifies its purchase.

It is interesting to see how myths and their adaptation to current life are noticeable even at the linguistic level. There are terms whose etymology is based on the name of a specific creature: *titanic* from *Titan; odyssey* from Ulises' trip back to Ithaca*; atlas,* the object, representing the collection of maps, from the titan who carried the heavens on his shoulders, to name just a few examples. We see it in products that use their names directly: Pegasus Airlines, Centaur Media, Nike, Hermes Paris.

What would be other reasons for this continuous reproduction of the classical gods or heroes in advertising?

Barthes affirmed that we are all deciphers, creators, and consumers of myths as if postmodern society somehow needed to complement the absence of stable values and traditional models with other exemplary models that embody desires, chimeras, and beliefs. The postmodern dreams evoke him far from this reality to memorable times, idyllic paradises, ideals of beauty and power.

These phenomena respond to some of the characteristics that define postmodern society, such as the need for referents in the face of a materialistic culture. It is about cultural elements that applaud the struggle against reality, with the established order and the continuous search for escape routes, for idyllic paradises that provoke in man the belief of a fantastic reality.

Mass media's present role as myth creator

Advertising maintains the vitality of mythology today. It is a kind of mass literature and a source of social knowledge. Mass-media communication, in general, is a discourse that defines and organizes life in its social or political manifestation.[19] Consequently, mass media stands as the most effective way of reviving and transmitting mythical structures in today's world.

It even creates its new own myths, praising a new type of superhero: soccer players, actors, singers, personalities found in sports, cinema, music, TV (all related to mass media industry): "Mass communication facilitates the

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[19] Hardt, H., *Myths for the masses. An essay on mass communication.* Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA. 2004, p.23.

ascension of the new gods of mass culture, who rise in quick succession to preach their sermons, while devoted audiences flock around them to affirm their status as disciples, or fans, reminiscent of their behavior as congregations in the lap of their communities"[20] .

It is interesting to observe that current media presents an ephemeral nature that contrasts with the eternal nature of old myths, which serve as fundamental for the new tales.

Conclusion

It is a kind of paradox of the current world that individuals immersed in a secular, rational, and materialistic society are witnesses and followers of the reappearance of the mythical, the imaginary, religious and irrational, all components of the current advertising discourse. Despite being highly influenced by technology and science, our society is full of myths, old myths that persist and are revived or re-adapted, and new myths created due to recent experiences and living in the present.

The cultural industry reinstates the status-quo perpetuating myths and ancestral tales under new interpretations and forms, manifesting varied meanings. One can also witness the appearance of new gods or heroes, stories and characters that, regardless of whether they are real or fictional, rise to objects of mass veneration. Advertising is one of the most influential media in our culture, the most persuasive media discourse in our society. In essence, advertising, by using the advantages offered by the use of myths and archetypes or symbols, by connecting with that collective imagination and directly with the emotional world of the consumer, becomes one of the most profitable industries in our society, whose presence and influence is impossible to ignore.

Beyond its aesthetics, composition, and discourse, advertising, as one of the most important industries on the planet, it is consequently regulated and oriented to achieve its objectives in the most effective way possible. Therefore, the audiovisual, verbal, and semiotic resources that make up the advertising campaigns have an economic value and a clear function: to put the advertiser in contact with the consumer through advertising language and to become a determining factor in their purchasing decisions. Advertising takes allegorical and symbolic components from myth, forming a sufficiently persuasive rhetorical compendium to, directly and indirectly, influence consumer trends and cause that hedonistic and pleasant effect on the consumer before and after the acquisition of the advertised goods and services.

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[20] Hardt, H., *Myths for the masses. An essay on mass communication.* Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA. 2004, p.42.

   Having underlined the dilemma between the different interpretations of the myth and its relevance to the advertising discourse and to the postmodern society that incurs them, it is more than feasible to verify that the use of myth as a persuasive tool does not have an arbitrary or casuistic function. Instead, it is considered deliberate.

   It is also focused on the different advertising strategies based on market studies and what is known as consumer psychology. It is also aimed not only at persuading the recipient, who is part of an eminently consumerist society, but also at entering their mind—in this way, creating attractive ideas, pulsations, and imaginaries that make up the brand image through the repeated reproduction of characters and mythological values that, since time immemorial, have been part of the culture and language of the human being.

   However, the valid conclusive claim of this article is that there has been, so slowly and progressively that the consumer has overlooked, the replacement of myth by advertising: the allegorical messages, promises, patterns, and values that constitute the postmodern advertising discourse have replaced the archetypal models that classical mythology has bequeathed to the cultural substrate.

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Aby Warburg:
The Collective Memory as a Medium for Art

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Abstract: *In this paper, I intend to study the contribution of Aby Warburg, a cultural theorist and an art historian, especially his concern with the relations between memory and history, relations that have been theorized in the late 20th century, but which Warburg anticipated, to a certain degree. In his writings, there can be identified those relations that make memory a metahistorical category or an anti-historical discourse (Pierre Nora, Yosef Yerushalmi); then, his writings can be connected with those of Maurice Halbwachs, the first who approached memory as a social phenomenon. Thus, according to Warburg, collective memory can be regarded as a medium for art, which ensures the survival of images and pathos formulas even when the violence of historical development leads to a decline of the creative spirit. One might say that via a detour through the archaic (Pueblo Indian culture), Warburg managed to reduce the distances which the historical method had established to the Antiquity's vestiges (process that started in the Renaissance). His hypothesis was that the employment in the historical development of Western civilization leads to the atrophy of certain potentialities of the human spirit, which can be addressed in the anti-historicist discourse, specific to postmodernity.*
In the last part of the paper, I propose to dwell on The Mnemosyne Atlas, Warburg's last project, as a visual synthesis of the research that he conducted throughout his life.

Keywords: memory, history, image, symbol, art history, pathos formulas, anachronism

Introduction

About his work and his personality, there were written many papers, mainly due to the Institute and the Library that he created and which bears his name. Rejecting the model of art history as the history of styles (Wölfflin, Riegl) or the aesthetic theory (Ruskin, Pater), the German researcher, together with the disciples and collaborators (Panofsky, Saxl, Klibansky), founded the iconographic method (a method consisting in the correlation of literary, philosophical and religious sources, on the one hand, and pictorial

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image, on the other; the work of art is considered an interweaving of both sensitive and intelligible meanings, which are marked by dynamism and inscribed in the historical becoming). During the journey to the land of the Indian Pueblo in 1895, he discovered a pre-historic culture, still alive, and learned, indirectly, more about his own historical, rationalist and technical European civilization. Warburg correctly identified the contradictions within the Western civilization, some of which have remained unsolved even today.

Aby Warburg was one of the founders of the *Kunstwissenschaft* in the first half of the 20th century, a discipline which proposed a more complex approach of the art phenomenon, than the historical method. The proposed approach was interdisciplinary, placing the artwork at the intersection of several plans which reflected the mentality or the spirituality of some certain historical eras: religion, philosophy, literature, all these being interpreted both subjectively (psychologically) and collectively (sociologically, anthropologically).

Towards a new interpretation of art

Warburg's favorite field of interest was the Renaissance, in which he saw an intense period of transformations of the historical spirit. During this period, he was not only interested in the history of the artwork and styles of representation, but in the life, death and rebirth of the images in a wider sense. The first approach would be in a historical sense as he investigates the possibility that some specific images of the Antiquity might have survived or might be rediscovered by the artists of the Renaissance. The second one would be an opening towards the realms that are situated in the proximity of canonic art like the technique of wax figures (*voti*) or that of the illustrations from the astrological treatises of the epoch[1]. His thesis was that even minor works reflect the mentality of a certain historical age, just like the already acknowledged works of art. In the same time, the study of minor works leads to a better understanding of canonic art, all being placed on and nourished by the same soil (the one of the collective mentality and memory), an exception being made in the case of major works of art, the synthesis realized by the author is much more elaborated. The principles of the Warburgian analysis, stated at the end of the study dedicated to Botticelli's works - *The Birth of Venus* and *Spring*[2] , are the following:

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[1] Studies collected in the volume *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (trad. engl.), Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999. ''Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie'', pp. 186-221; ''Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther'', pp. 597-667.
[2] *Idem*, ''Sandro Botticelli's Birth of Venus and Spring. An Examination of Concepts of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance '', pp. 89-156.

I In autonomous, "major" art, the artistic manipulation of dynamic accessory forms evolves from an image of specific dynamic states originally perceived in reality.
II The artist's self-distancing from the true context of the object fosters the addition of "dynamic" forms; in so-called symbolic or allegorical works of art, the latter are the first to appear, because from the outset, the context of reality is eliminated, rendered "metaphorical".
III The remembered image of generalized dynamic states, through which the aperception of the new impression takes place, is later uncounsciously projected, in the work of art, as an idealizing outline.
IV Mannerism or idealism in art is only a special case of the automatic reflex of artistic imagination (Warburg 1999, 144).

First, one mention should be added: Warburg was not a theorist or a philosopher of culture, dwelling into highly general speculations, as Koerner states in his article (Koerner 2012, 96). Then, this principle quoted above should be read taking into account the works of other scholars who had a great influence on his thinking. It is known that the first museums of art appeared at the end of the 18th century and that their systematization is made according to historical criteria; in the 19th century, the history of art enters universities as academic disciplines. These are the two fundaments that consecrate the interpretation of the art phenomenon as a historical phenomenon first. Furthermore, within the field of art history, there are two major orientations: the first which focuses on the morphological analysis of styles and which reduces the work of art to its form, being represented by H. Wölfflin, A. Riegl, E. Gombrich; and the second which gives a greater importance to the content of the work of art, that is analysed from a semantic point of view, being at the same time a theory of culture, represented by E. Mâle, A. Warburg, F. Saxl, E. Panofsky. Hence Warburg finds himself among the initiators of the new iconological method, that interprets the work of art in conjunction with parallel sources such as literature and theology, identifying the presence of common motifs and themes (Sauvagnargues 1998, 20). Gradually, Warburg's name will be eclipsed by those of his collaborators (Panofsky, Gombrich) and by the increasing popularity of the institute and library that bear his name. The library consisting in a collection of more than sixty thousands volumes will be moved from Hamburg to London, because of the Nazi uprising. Warburg's contribution to the art history will be rediscovered by researchers such as Kurt Forster[3], Georges Didi-Huberman[4], Silvia Ferretti[5] and others in the second half of the 20th century.

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[3] "Aby Warburg's History of Art: Collective Memory and the Social Mediation of Images", *Daedalus* (Winter, 1976), pp. 169-176; "Aby Warburg: His Study of Ritual and Art on Two Continents", *October*, vol. 77 (Summer 1996), pp. 6-24.
[4] "Aby Warburg et l'archive des intensités", *in Études photographiques*, no. 10, November 2001, pp. 144-168. "Artistic Survival. Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time", *Common Knowledge*, Volume 9, Issue 2, Spring 2003, pp. 273-285. Didi-Huberman,

At the beginning, his studies focused on the Renaissance, Warburg being influenced by the theories coming from different scientific fields. He studied history of art with Henry Thode and Carl Justi and during his stay in Florence, he attended August Schmarsow's seminar. A significant influence had Theodor Vischer's theory on the symbol, that Warburg used in his interpretation of culture in terms of genetic and functional. Vischer defined the symbol on two plans: the semantic sense, invariably, which works as a link between image and meaning, the first term designating a visible object, and the second, the concept, which may not be perceived in the absence of image, but whose reality or existence can be reduced due to the former. The second plan is that of historical evolution, Vischer distinguishing between the "obscure-confuse" relationship in which there is a complete identification between image and meaning just like the magical associations specific to archaic societies. To the opposite extreme, there is the connection of the logical disjunctive type, in which the two terms are opposed to each other, like in the case of allegory. From this point of view, it is worth mentioning Hegel's observation that the allegory is a frozen symbol, within which the two terms do not find each other in a communication relationship, through which they mutually intensify themselves. Vischer situates the origin of art on a intermediary plan, delimited by the two poles "where the symbol is understood as a sign and however, as an image, something remains animate, and where the soul excitement, held in tension between these two poles, does not reach its full concentration through the associative force of the metaphor so that it discharges through action, and it is not enough to dislodge so much through the dissociative order for it to seek refuge in concepts" (Wind 1931 apud Dittman 1988, 138).

Another important source for Warburg's thinking was due to Hermann Usener, a history of religions scholar, who had theorized the survival of pagan elements in the civilized societies of that time. The influence of these two, Vischer and Usener, is visible in the work *A Lecture on Serpent Ritual. Reminiscences from a Journey to the Pueblo Indians* (Warburg 2003), an anthropological approach written after a field research between 1895-1896. Warburg remarked the co-existence of a logical society with one of magical causality, for the fact that at the beginning of the 20th century, efforts were being made by the Catholic Church to suppress the pagan background of the Pueblo spirituality: "They are equidistant from the magic and the logos, and their tool is the symbol that they know how to handle. Between the man who grabbs with his hand and the man who thinks, there is the man who establishes symbolic relationships"(Warburg 2003, 75-

Georges - *L'Image survivante: histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg*, Paris, Éd. de Minuit, 2002.
[5] "«...la fatica di ricostruire la naturale unità fra le parole e immagine». Warburg, Benjamin e ciò che la storia non può dire", in *Aisthesis*, no. 2/ 2010, pp. 121-131.

76). Warburg gives importance to visual symbols (the serpent-thunder, which symbolizes the rain that fecundates the earth and favours the growth of plants on which the existence of the community depends; the symbolism of the ladder as a means of the ascension and descension in space, the serpent ring as a symbol of temporal cycles), as well as the rituals themselves, such as rain invocation, *humiskatchina.* It is obvious that in the case of the Pueblo civilization, one cannot speak about the existence of a historical conscience, about a discourse that could record the events from the life within the community and which might structure them according to rational principles that endow a meaning. Therefore, the following question arises: where do these symbols emerge from, symbols that govern the lives of succesive generations? The answer offered by Warburg and by other authors identifies this deposit as being the strange medium of collective memory.

It should be noted that Warburg does not quote and probably did not know the work of Maurice Halbwachs, the first author who theorized this concept. The two works quoted by Warburg are Richard Semon's *Die Mneme als erhalttendes Prinzip im Wechsel des organischen Geschehens*, Leipzig, 1904 and Tito Vignoli's *Mito e Scienza*, Milano, 1879. Due to his formation and his interest in image mediums, Warburg gave a greater importance to the iconographic area from cultural memory. Inspired by Semon's work, he spoke of a "mnemonic energy" that manifests itself in different historical eras and that is responsible for the survival (*Nachleben*) of certain pathos formulas (*Pathosformeln*), created in Antiquity in order to capture the interpenetration between spirit and matter. From this point of view, ancient gods' representations would be the instrument to represent the full range of pathos formulas. Warburg said that if the statuary group Laocoon had not have been accidentally discovered during the Renaissance (1506), it would have had to be reinvented because the spirit of that era had reached the level of synthesis between life and art, enabling this achievement. So, cultural memory is the medium which assures the survival of images and pathos formulas given the erosion and violence that characterize the historical dimension. From this point of view, it should be noted that cultural memory exists in parallel with the historical development. Jan Assmann argues that cultural memory is based on certain fixed points, which he calls "figures of memory":

> *Cultural memory has its fixed points; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formations (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance).[...] In the flow of everyday communication such festivals, rites, epics, poems, images, etc., form «islands of time», islands of a completely different temporality suspended in time (Assmann 1995, 129).*

Regarding Warburg's contribution to the cultural memory's matter, Assman quotes the formula "memory spaces of retrospective contemplativeness", and also the fact that the German scholar "ascribed a type of «mnemonic energy» to the objectivation of culture, pointing not only to the works of high art, but also to posters, postage stamps, costumes, customs, etc. (Assmann 1995, 129). Moreover, another important concept for Warburg's thinking was that of *Denkraum* (thought-space), discovered during his journey in Arizona and New Mexico: "Mythical and symbolic thinking strive to form spiritual bonds between humanity and the surrounding world, shaping distance into the space required for devotion and reflection: the distance undone by the instantaneous electric connection" (Warburg 2003, 133). These lines are not written from the perspective of a critic of modernity, but rather of an interpreter who tries to distinguish the tensions and dialectical oppositions that underlie the founding and functioning of the human culture. The landmarks of his thinking were the oppositions between static and dynamic, Apollinian and Dionysian, realism and idealism. Although he was inspired by Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, particularly in his Renaissance studies, Warburg did not share his pessimism on modern culture: "In contrast with Nietzsche, for whom the loss of the Dionysian heralded the birth of modern, scientific, Socratic culture, the transformation signifies for Warburg a growth of aesthetic creativity. The distance of the sign from its object indicates the intervention of human artifice, as it had been implied in Warburg's study of the intermezzi and early opera" (Rampley 1997, 52).

Warburg rejected the traditional way in which the history of art was written, as well as the aesthetic way in which "primitive" art was considered inferior in relation to the rationalized and intellectualized art specific to "civilized" countries. Following the connection between the archaic and modern man, wondering where the missing link is, Warburg discovered a Renaissance that cultivated the irrational and pagan mysteries, a Renaissance absent from the History of Art until then. He became known mainly due to his studies in this new direction, some continued by his disciples, but his position on the contradictions of modernity remained less known. The foundations of his method have been synthesized by researchers such as Georges Didi-Huberman or Giorgio Agamben. After the second, the novelty brought by the method proposed by Warburg consisted that "on the basis of a study of literary sources and an examination of cultural tradition [...] to have displaced the focal point of research from the study of styles and aesthetic judgment to the programmatic and iconographic aspects of the artwork"[6].

Mircea Eliade also wrote extensively about metahistorical and unconscious mental structures, such as the myth of the Eternal Return, beliefs

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[6] G.Agamben, "Warburg and the Nameless Science", in *Potentialities. Collected Essays in Philosophy*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 89.

in the cyclical nature of time, the myth of the Golden Age, and so on. Eliade has a wider historical and cultural openness than Warburg, which focuses on the ancient Greco-Roman universe and its resurrection during the Renaissance (with the exception of the foray into the universe of beliefs and symbols of the Pueblo Indians). Both were supporters of an interdisciplinary approach, going beyond the limits of their own field and following the manifestations of the human spirit in other neighboring fields[5]. Warburg rejected the interpretation of works of art from Antiquity or the Renaissance by placing them in a specific modern way of thinking, by breaking the organic links between the work and the universe of beliefs and symbols of that era. He considered that the cultural memory that the artist possesses in his time can provide essential elements for an adequate interpretation of the work of art. Conversely, through the work of art, we can have access to the forms of spirituality specific to a certain era, forms that most often have come down to us only "encrypted" in this way. He foresaw a necessary connection between the field of art history and that of religion: "May the history of art and the study of religion – between which lies nothing at present but wasteland overgrown with verbiage – meet each other one day in learned and lucid minds [...] and may they share a workbench in the laboratory of the *iconological science of civilization*"[7].

But there is also a major difference between Warburg and Eliade: the former is a follower of cultural evolutionism; its concepts, such as *engram* or *pathosformel*, have a historical existence and undergo significant transformations over time. Giorgio Agamben remarked that Jung's name does not appear among Warburg's notes, explaining the absence by the fact that Jung's unconscious archetypes are metahistorical, unlike Warburg's *engrams*[8]. In highlighting those universal and metahistorical mental structures, Eliade is obviously closer to Jung and outside the evolutionary paradigm.

On another level, Aby Warburg believed that the history of art must make the connection between the past and the present of humanity, not to isolate itself in the socio-historical conditions of the present.

The *Mnemosyne Atlas*

Now it could be brought in discussion Warburg's major study from the last years of his life, *The Mnemosyne Atlas*, made between 1924-1928. The Atlas brings together more than a thousand images (reproductions from

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[7] A.Warburg, *The Renewal*..., pp. 650-651.
[8] G. Agamben, *op.cit.*, p. 95, n. 22.

books, magazines, newspapers), which are grouped thematically and arranged on seventy-nine panels. The Atlas's title refers to the ancient name of the goddess of memory and mother of the nine muses, and the choice is very relevant for Warburg's position against the historicism's hegemony as a philosophy of history. The appeal to memory's theme is evident, primarily due to the chosen title; secondly, the fact that the structuring principle of the Atlas is thematical, without taking into account a certain chronology, nor an affiliation to a particular period in the history of culture, nor a certain hierarchy in terms of stylistic evolution. Thus, cultural memory is a homogeneous medium that knows no tensions and no oppositions that mark the evolution of the historical process. From this matrix, the emblem-images for certain categories of the human spirit recur periodically, the panels' order being the following:

> 1. panels A, B, C: cosmological-genealogical prologue
> 2. panels 1, 2, 3: classical cosmology
> 3. panels 4, 5, 6, 7, 8: classical "pre-stamping" of artistic "expressive values"
> 4. panels 20, 21, 22, 23, 23a, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28–29: transmission and degradation of Greek
> astronomical thought in Hellenistic, medieval Arabic, medieval and Renaissance European
> astrological imagery
> 5. panels 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 41a, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49: the
> "afterlife" of classical "expressive values" in Renaissance, mainly late quattrocento art
> 6. panels 50–51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56: "inversion," ascent, and descent in Renaissance, mainly cinquecento art through Manet
> 7. panels 57, 58, 59, 60, 61–64: Virgil, Dürer, Rubens, and the northward translatio
> 8. panels 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75: Baroque excess and Rembrandt's mediation of the same
> 9. panels 76, 77, 78, 79: final "inversions": advertisement and transubstantiation (Johnson 2012, 11-12)

For a better understanding of the principles that led to the composition of Atlas, I will appeal to the works of a contemporary researcher as long as Warburg did not have the necessary time to put his ideas into a theoretical system. In his studies concerning Warburg's thought, Georges Didi-Huberman stopped on the concept of images' survival (*Nachleben*) that, according to his interpretation, captures the complex temporality of images, the fact that they often appear as a phenomenon of anachronism in relation to the historical evolution of a particular society. Therefore, they fall into a temporality defined by *longues durées* and «time crevasses», latencies and

symptoms, concealing memories and arising memories, anachronisms and critical thresholds" (Didi-Huberman 2000, 50). Warburg's merit remains that he refused the theoretical model of art history, which viewed image as a point on an oriented line from the past to the present, or as an aspect of the eternal engraved in the historical development; instead, he "transformed image into a vital question, alive and highly complex: a real sensitive centre, the dialectic and ideal ankle of the «historical life» in general" (Ibidem, 51-52). This polarity of the image, designed by Warburg, means that it does not produce "historicity but *anachronic historicity* and no signification but symptomatic signification" (Ibidem, 91), so that even less stylized or poorer images from the aesthetic point of view could witness the *longue durée*'s presence.

The relation memory/history in Pierre Nora's work

Unlike Warburg, the French researcher Pierre Nora approached the relationship between memory and history focusing on three aspects of memory, i.e. material, symbolic and functional. Each of these three directions has been studied in relation to historiographical discourse (the history of history) in the case of the sites of memory. The latter are understood as places of condensation of "history-memory" and their existence is mainly due to the decline of the living memory, and to the inadequacy of memory and history in the case of contemporary societies (Nora 1984, XVIII-XLII). Therefore, although Nora's arguments are inscribed on other reference planes and follow other goals, like Warburg, he also notices the gap between neutral experience and lived experience (cf. German Erfahrung/ Erlebnis) in the context of modernity, where every experience is mediated and directed by the historicist pattern (or the technical-aestheticized one, after Warburg).

Memory and history are two types of discourses about the past, about the history of a community, a culture, a civilization or even the past of all humanity. Although until recently, they have not been considered opposites, Pierre Nora, a coordinator of the collective volumes „Les Lieux de memoire" starts from this fundamental thesis. Memory was evacuated by historical discourse, and as a consequence, we have places of memory because we have no means of memory. If we still live in our memory, there would be no need to consecrate separate places. In his work, *Cosmos and History. The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Eliade showed the ways through which the personalities whose existence was attested historically, transformed themselves into mythical beings at a distance of only a few generations (Eliade 1959, 38-48). In respect to this collective memory, Nora says that it has disappeared while the whole mosaic of cultures around the world have entered into historicity: "ethnological societies awakened from their sleep by a colonial rape".

Further evidence of the fact that the two concepts are competing is that Nora speaks about the historization of the memory and the figure of "the

memory captured by history", having three symptoms in the context of modern societies:

      a) reign of the archive;

      b) a final conversion of memory into individual psychology;

      c) memory-distance, the progressive break away of past to the present, by sealing one to another.

    From another research field, the history of ideas and medieval literature, Mary Carruthers, in the Preface to her work *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in the Medieval Culture* states: "the culture of the Middle Ages was fundamentally one memorial in the same way that contemporary culture of the West is a documentary one" (Carruthers 2008, 9).

Conclusions

    In the present paper, I intended to present Aby Warburg's contribution to the interpretation of the image across multiple reference plans, according to a newly created method (iconography), which produces an enrichment of meaning, a densification of its significance, thus avoiding the impoverishment of the content, resulting from a too hasty inclusion on a temporal axis, according to the historical method. Thus, Warburg makes a synthesis between the two major directions of the aesthetic thought during the 19th century, the psychological one and the historical-phenomenological one. Meanwhile, he also gave a special importance to the role of collective memory in this survival of the images, which characterized it as anachronistic and symptomatic. But he did not interpret memory as a social fact, as Maurice Halbwachs did later, putting it in relation to other concepts, such as identity, role, group, community. His interpretation is consonant with the relatively recent theories in the last forty years, concerning cultural memory as a meta-historical category, which tends to replace the hegemonic and authoritarian discourse of the historical type.

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About angels

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Abstract: *This work reveals the definition of «angel», a generic classification of angel hierarchies, their main characteristics, a short history about them according to Bible stories and also a history of their representations in iconography. There are also problematised opposite moral aspects, such as: good and bad, spirituality and sin, immortality and ephemerality, sacred and profane, heaven and earth. This theme is analysed from a multiple perspective, such as from a religious, but also from a philosophical and artistic point of view. In the last pages of the article there are 2 paintings entitled «Seraphim» and «Angel» which are visual representations of these heavenly creatures.*

Angels have been present in the culture of mankind sinceits inception. Conceived in different ways by those who watched them or interacted with them, angels proved to be spiritual beings superior to people, but favorable to them, for the most part in their interactions.

Jewish Old Testament theology based on God's divine revelation to the biblical Jewish people, was able to learn the first real things about angels.

Angels have been present in Old Testament stories on various occasions in which they helped people at God's command, in order to create a page out of the sacred history regarding waiting for the Jesus Christ's second coming.

After Jesus's second coming, Eastern Christian theology had enough time to systematize the doctrine of angels and to present it to the world in a complex way. From ancient theologians we know almost everything that can be known up to this time about angels.

We thus know that the name "angel" means "messenger" which derives from the Greek word *anghelos*, which has this meaning. In the Old Testament, the word for angels was *mal'ak*, sometimes called *mal'ak elohim* which means"God's messengers."

Their name also shows us the role they play in the world: that of transmitting God's will to people.

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The saint who systematized the knowledge about angels was Saint Dionysius the Areopagite who stated that there are nine groups of angels, organised in triads, depending on their proximity to God or people.

Thus, Saint Dionysius the Areopagite teaches us that there are three groups close to the throne of God. These Choirs of Angels (Triads) are:
- Thrones;
- Seraphim;
- Cherubim.

A middle intermediate Triad, between the throne of God and people, is made up of the following groups:
- Dominios or Lordships;
- Virtues or Strongholds;
- Powers or Authorities.

The closest human triad consists of:
- Principalities or Rulers;
- Archangels;
- Angels.

The nine angelic triads fill, if we will, the ontological void between divine omnipotence and the perishability of this world in which we are all living, of the created and perishing universe.

These extraordinary beings form an ontological scale from earth to heaven, a communication channel between God and his created world, through which God's will is transmitted to people on one hand and on the other hand, prayers and people's desires for the divine throne are transmitted.

The name *Seraphim* means "those who burn," making reference of course to love for God.

Cherubim means "those who bless," and the thrones are those upon whom God rests, transmitting His commandments to the following triads.

Virtues or Strongholds are the ones who organize the other subordinated traids; Masters (also called Virtues) are those through whom miracles are performed; Powers or Authorities are those that prevent the powers of evil from harming the universe and humanity.

Principalities or Rulers are angels who protect people and administer this world, taking care of it; Archangels are the heads of angels; angels themselves are the ones who take care of people and protect them.

We know about angels that are spiritual, intangible beings with an intuitive knowledge that helps them understand things deeper and faster than the human mind, which has a great ability for mobility and action.

Like any created thing, angels have a beginning, but they don't have an end unlike the rest of the created universe, apart from human being. Everything created by God, except for angels and people, lives and then disappears. Angels and people are not eternal like God, in the sense that they are eternal, always having a beginning, but once they exist, they are alive.

The knowledge process which cannot be known is considered to be a personal endeavor that is incomplete and imperfect, according to Dionysius Peudo-Areopagite's writings. There are Angels who control natural phenomena, angels of fire, wind and darkness, there are master angels of frost, snow, water, etc. In Egyptian mythology, Archangel Michael took on god Nile's role, becoming responsible for dew and rain. According to Christianity, angels are the masters and guardians of their constituent elements, like: water, air, and fire.

The representation of angels developed during the Byzantine period. After the iconoclastic period which was a manifestation of people's insecurity about their own Universe of thought, there were two opposing conceptions regarding knowledge, symbolic and literary approach, in art and worship. For some theologians, intellectual devotion and material representations were mutually exclusive. There were also times when the worship of angels was excessive. The altar at Chonae, which was one of the main centers of angel worship, is still preserved today. There have been representations of angels since the early Christianity based on the descriptions provided by the Holy Bible. Christian artists have developed an iconography of angels depicting their appearances on earth, most often by representing their wings to suggest their symbolic character. The representation of the transcendent, the ineffable and illusory nature, their appearances described in the Holy Bible show us that the icons of angels symbolise a spiritual reality that cannot be fully known, so the representations of angels are symbolic in a definite way. Angels cannot be represented as Christ and Saints. They left no miraculously printed images or relics. Their timeless being has no recorded earthly face. Angels are formless, disembodied and immaterial. Therefore, the relationship between icon or representation and the prototype is problematic. The tension between the material representation and their immaterial nature is an attractive quality. This tension is the defining feature of the angels' representations and distinguishes their images from other representations.

In Christian art, the symbol of angels is represented in well known paintings, with the appearance of winged young people (generalized anonymous images). Cherubim and Seraphim can be recognized and distinguished from each other by their several wings and eyes representation of the image described in Holy Scripture. Anthropomorphization has become an iconic constant element, but there are other types of representations: cloud pillar and fire pillar. These elements are described in the book called "Exodus" which describes the Angel's guidance of Israelites through wilderness. Pillar and cloud are symbolic aspects of multiform divine beings, their changing appearance requiring special processes of interpretation. In Bible, angels are sometimes described as human, according to their appearance, and having all the metaphysical qualities of angels. Painters, mosaicists, sculptors and artists gave them a human appearance. The earliest

depiction of a human-shaped angel preserved since the 3rd century in an icon of the Annunciation in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome.

The wings of these anthropomorphized representations offered the possibility to suggest the supernatural attributes characteristic of angels. The winged form has become the iconic sign of countless and unseen beings, who mediate between heaven and earth and symbolize the metaphysical dimension. Glenn Peers mentions that there is an iconographic parallel between winged pagan beings and Christian angels. Here is clearly noticed the inspiration in the Pre-Christian representations of some deities. Pagan imagery is obvious, pagan art was the first source of inspiration for later representations of angels.

The figure with six wings and four faces stands on wheels of fire. These descriptions refer to Ezekiel. Wings have always been used as the main means of suggesting the symbolic nature of angel representations. Color and clouds were used to symbolise the fire and wind the angels were made of. Example of representations: the red angel suggests fire and light; the blue angel suggests the dark nature of the fallen angel.

The celestial powers are, by their nature, spirit and breath of immaterial wind or fire. Wings signal transcendence and immateriality, spiritual nature as well as supernatural speed. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite researched in his work called "The Heavenly Hierarchy", various passages of Scripture and made a detailed analysis of the incarnate creatures of God and their non-figurative, symbolic representations of angels.

"The image of those with no face and the appearance of those with no appearance" "The ungodly servants of God." Angels, souls, demons are "corporeal", but inaccessible to human view (with few exceptions). Their body has a different nature, closer to energy (between matter and energy). A raw energy that can take different forms and can be in different places. Unlike God, who is subtle energy and is at the same time everywhere and in everything. A human being is both energy and matter. Angels make reference to a transcendent reality.

Inscriptions are also icons. They have the same importance with the image, they have a complementary role. A similar problem is addressed by Michael Foucault in his analysis of the painting called "The Treachery of Images" (Ceci n'est pas une pipe) by Rene Magritte in 1929. Here Foucault examined the relationship between word and image which represents striking resemblances to the Byzantine theory and practice of representing angels. Here the inscription contradicts the mimetic character of the image. We are talking about a representation of a material symbol that the viewer cannot interpret in the literal sense. After contemplating the icon, the viewer fully realizes that "This is not an angel."

The Holy Bible teaches that angels were created by God before the

creation of the material world. God created them in very large numbers, myriads of angels, according to the tradition of Church, which means an enormous number.

Scripture tells us that before the creation of the material world, a crucial event took place in the spiritual world of angels throughout history: one of the angels, Lucifer, who took part in the Cherubim Order according to some traditions, rebelled against God, dragging in his fall other angels, from the other holy orders.

We are told that Lucifer was one of the most beautiful angels created by God. Becoming aware of this, Lucifer, who calls himself " the bearer of light," imagined that he could become God himself, considering himself equal to his Creator.

The moment of this thought caused his fall from the glory of God, because he didn't understand that God is the One who is the source of his existence and beauty. Falling into this thought of pride, Lucifer lost the light that God gave him, remaining in a completely existential darkness.

Even though the abilities of these angels like: speed, power and immortality remained active, their minds, devoid of the light of divine grace, darkened, rendering these angels incapable of perceiving good, which is why they became so engrossed in a fierce hatred against God, against His creation and against people.

The number of fallen angels was quite large, being part of all angel hierarchies. As the Holy Bible tells us their fall was stopped by Archangel Michael's attitude, who said: "Let us attend! Let us stand aright! Let us stand with fear!"

The fallen angels', demons' and devils' hatred against people, as they are called in the Scriptures, denoting the cunning and breaking of God, caused a fall of people through the famous episode of Eve's and Adam's fall into sin at the serpent's temptation.

Christian theology says that fallen angels' envy and wickedness influenced the fate of mankind, in the sense of the world as we know nowadays, a world in which through the cunning of the fallen angel sin entered, and through sin death entered the world.

We can only imagine how world would have looked like if Adam's and Eve's sin hadn't existed, as from scriptural accounts we find out that God created a good world in the beginning and the human being was invested with the power of immortality (which was different from angels' immortality; he only had the power of being immortal if he obeys God's will).

Dionysius researched various passages of Scripture that mention angels epiphanies in search of patterns. In his work called "Heavenly Hierarchy," he examined in detail God's unincorporated creatures. In this book he formulates a point of view regarding the images of angels (by creating a connection between verbal and visual symbolism, pp. 131-132).

He also states that angels can take different forms, for example: the shape of a lion to express its power, or they are represented with the appearance of a bull to symbolize knowledge; they can have the appearance of an eagle to symbolize freedom in the light of God; the appearance of a horse was assumed due to obedience which is a specific attribute to angels. According to Dionysius, symbols are the main way to know God, but the most common appearance of an angel is the human one (a human being is also used as a symbol). The anthropomorphism of angels as a visual representation is based on the power of understanding the human mind. Artistic depictions of angels are considered to be visual symbols. These disembodied beings have been seen in time and space in certain circumstances. St. John of Damascus wrote: "They are circumscribed. Because when they are in heaven they are not on earth, and when they are sent by God on earth they are not in heaven anymore" (p. 151). God created them in his own image, an intangible nature, a kind of immaterial spirit and fire, as St. John of Damascus states. Thus, angels are spiritual beings in constant motion, having free will, they are intangible and immaterial, but only in relation to us humans, because in relation to God, who is incomparable, they are inferior ". These beings can be circumscribed in space just like the soul is located in body and just like demons whose creature is similar to that of angels. God Himself is intangible, omnipresent, and his presence permeates all creation (we find these statements in the book "Intangible Bodies" at page no. 154). Holy Scripture is quoted as the primary source of inspiration, where God commands Moses to build the Ark of the Law (Exodus 25:22).

"There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant law, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites". So the cherubim are directly mentioned by God in His commandments for building the Ark of the Law. (Exodus 25.18-20) and it's the most important invoked example in which God explicitly requires the production of figurative images. The cherubim above the ark have become an argument of the utmost importance for representations based on this scriptural precedent. Cherubim occupy a high position in the celestial hierarchy. They are the closest to God. They can be perceived by the eyes of our mind as a form - matter. According to St. John of Damascus, angels are represented with wings because such images are easier to apprehend by the lower power of the human mind. Human understanding can approach icon on a spiritual level. "The appearance of angels are symbolic manifestations, perceived on a spiritual level." Similarly, the representations of angels must be considered as symbols addressed to intellect and not to sight. (p. 163). Patriarch Nichifor described the icons of angels as a means of Divine knowledge by contemplating and meditating on their unseen and ineffable appearance. (p. 164). In Byzantine painting the image of angels is accompanied by text (the inscriptions bear the names of angels, both the

anthropomorphic image and the inscriptions are icons with a complementary role). Winged young men, accompanied by their name, is the most common representation (these images are simple symbols for the enigmatic representation of angels. Page 172). The one who contemplates the icon of an angel is captivated by the material object made with the help of colors and shapes, and based on these aspects he fully realizes that "he is not an angel" (p. 173). Andrei Pleșu remarks in the book "About Angels" that this theme ("The Theme of Angels") is interesting both from a theological and philosophical and existential point of view. We can add to Andrei Pleşu's statement another field of research from which this topic about angels representation can be thoroughly studied, namely: art. Art, since ancient times, has symbolically represented both the winged human being and other winged beings that may suggest the existence of angels. The area of angels manifestation is the space between earth and sky, being perceived as rising and falling energies. All writings reveal us that the space between the Supreme Being and the earthly world is very crowded.

Time, space and matter are the three dimensions of existence which, considered as iconic essential elements, can be represented from the perspective of visual language elements in an experimental, dynamic vision, that is in a constant transfiguration process, by using personal solutions in the attempt to transmit the intended meaning.

The sacred, this inexhaustible source of inspiration, is also for visual arts an action field of of contemporary creative manifestations. The need to open new perspectives, new interpretive ways wihin a contemporary spiritual vision of the conceptual sacred sphere includes a broad direction.

The essential forms of sacred manifestation refer to the metaphysical image specific to a philosophical or personified religious vision of such a complex concept.

Understanding the meanings and the depths assimilated from the perspective of symbol, the anonymous artist's ancient gesture refers to the fundamental values, to a reflection on the relationship between ephemeral and perennial. Here we have the border between archaic and modern, where the comparison of systems made possible their understanding and transformation into a visual approach.

In the artistic space, the role of (Divine) inspiration within the creative process is essential and becomes a mandatory condition.

Thus conceived, the present study, which is the object of debate about Angels from an artistic perspective, has as main interest the investigation of their world from the point of view of their visual representation.

Taking into account the various points of view regarding the notion of the sacred, we can debate this problem from the perspective of personal artistic solutions. In artistic creation, a subjective vision is neccesary for the

spiritual issue. We hope that in the near future sacred art will find its rightful place among visual creations, both by the importance of the theme and by the complexity and richness of expressed values and will also be able to offer life-saving solutions to the growing needs of the current era.

The thematic nucleus from which I started, trying to search for the spiritual in order to find myself, is complex and has a symbolic and artistic content. Specific visual expressions have a great ability for revelation and convey to viewer the idea of meaning as if he would create special energies, influencing the feeling of a real discovery.

The sacred still imposes on artists ways in which thinking and feeling can be channeled into high quality creations.

The sacred can be a source of inspiration in one's own representations through re-evaluations, reinterpretations or rediscoveries for a spiritual continuity, an ancestral conception of world and life strongly based on the laws of a spiritual nature.

Approaching painting from the perspective of ways of representing symbols, in the context of contemporary visual arts, deepens their importance and opens perspectives for new interpretations.

Fig. 1. Zamfira Bîrzu, " Seraphim", 120/160 cm, m. t./canvas

Fig. 2. Zamfira Bîrzu, "Angel", mixed technique, painting/canvas in the background 100/120 cm, metal in the foreground 100/100 cm.

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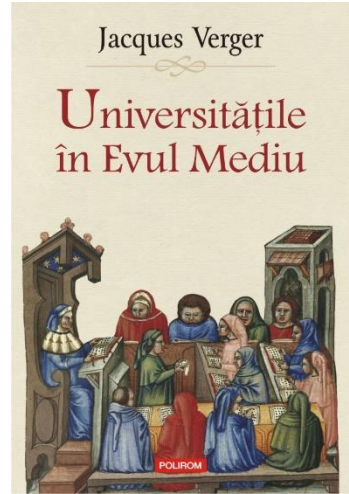**Glenn Peers,** *Trupuri Imateriale*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011.

BOOK REVIEWS

A French Professor Emeritus on Tertiary Education in Medieval Times

Ana-Magdalena Petraru

Jacques Verger, *Universitățile din Evul Mediu/ Les universités au Moyen Âge* (*Universities in the Middle Ages*), translated by Simona Ilieș, Polirom Publishing House, 2019, 256 pages

As the two prefacers to the Romanian edition argue, the Middle Ages are renowned for setting up higher education as an establishment called university compared to the Academy of the Antiquity. The university resembles a corporation and the author focuses on the feature in its mission to train professors and students so as to serve various public institutions. Excellency is its aim and it comes along with the legitimacy of intellectual work. Meant to introduce us to a work initially published in the 70s when the sub-field was untackled by French historiography, which then became popular, hence the four later editions, the Romanian translation was carried out as part of a research project, *The Rise of an Intellectual Elite in Central Europe: Making Professors at the University of Vienna, 1389-1450* between UBB and The Romanian Academy in Cluj[1].

In the introduction to his work, Jacques Verger points out that his approach goes for universities as cultural craddles of civilisation in which a chapter of the general history of philosophy, law or sciences

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[1] Monica Brînzei and Alexander Baumgarter, "Prefață la ediția în limba română" (Preface to the Romanian Edition). In Jacques Verger, *Universitățile din Evul Mediu* (*Universities in the Middle Ages*), translated by Simona Ilieș, Polirom Publishing House, 2019, pp. 6-8.

was written; among other means of accounting for the topic, he mentions the study of universities as institutions and human groups against a given historical background (bringing into play distinctions made by colleagues such as Gordon Leff who stresses the university's 'ideological role' of producing ideas vs. its 'professional' one of educating people). The French historian's emphasis lies on an attempt to a sociology of medieval culture in its scholarly dimension that a university provides, acknowledging the limitations of his endeavour (the exclusion of other types of education, i.e. secondary and religious, monastical, on the one hand and the passage from the Middle Ages to Renaissance, along with the humanism that penetrated universities in the late XVth and early XVIth cent., on the other hand)[2].

Divided into two parts, the book deals with the rise and success of universities between the 12th and 13th centuries (part one) and the end of the Middle Ages, 14th-15th centuries inquiring on the fall as decline or transformation (part two). This point counterpoint structure based on the rise and fall of the university as institution is studied in six chapters, three for each part. Structured in four subchapters, chapter one analyses Western schools at the beginning of the 12th century, the Renaissance of the 12th century, the first universities and last but not least, the "spontaneous" vs. the "created" universities. The author's purpose is not to clarify the distinction between pontifical, and imperial universities or both that seemed obsolete at the time, but to go to the root of the phenomenon by showcasing it and offering Paris and Bologna as role models.[3] Liberal arts were the basis of education as distinguished by Antiquity figures (i.e., both the *trivium* – grammar, dialectic and rhetoric and the *quadrivium* – arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy) and theology was above all, crowning them.[4] As Translation Studies scholar, of particular interest to us is the section devoted to translators and translations in the 12th century when Latin and Greek literature was received in this manner. On the topic, Verger underlines that "the geography of translation centers (…) does not coincide at all with that of schools. These centers were mainly in contact with countries for which the Greek legacy remained alive: the

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[2] Jacques Verger, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-12.
[3] Jacques Verger, *op. cit.*, p. 17, *passim*.
[4] *Idem*, p. 20.

Byzantine Empire and especially the Muslim world in which Greek texts had not only been known and translated, but also enriched with often original commentaries."[5] Despite the criticism brought to their endeavor or what the field understands through *traduttore, traditore*, later on replaced by *traduttore, truditore*, the translator is seen as traitor in the era because of the literalism of the translated texts and the lack of elegance and style which made them difficult to read. Mostly indirect translations from Greek (through Syriac and Arabic languages), they are acknowledged by the author as more exact than initially considered.[6]

Interesting to note is the division made by the historian between 'spontaneous' universities which came into being via the development of preexistent schools (e.g., not only Paris and Bologna that used secession to fight back local authorities, but also Oxford) and those that resulted from migration from other centers (more of a relocation than the sense we give to the important phenomenon nowadays, of transplanted population from developing countries or less so to developed states of Europe and elsewhere) such as Cambridge, Angers and Orléans; in the ones 'created' by the Pope or emperor, mediocrity ruled until the 14th or the 15th century (Toulouse, Naples).

The corporate dimension of universities detailed in chapter two is also worth bringing into play because it has endured to this day with its unity as main feature owing to Pope's actions, the collaboration between them as institutions that created diversity (and separated them from other urban corporations) due to the random mobility of professors compared to a 'Brownian motion'[7] and of students (between two and five thousand in big centers from all social classes, students that went to several universities at once). Ambiguities were also a drawback, Verger quoting Le Goff's opinion on the universities' "internal contradictions"[8] in the attempt to escape the constraints of urban population while remaining a Church's institution.

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[5] *Idem,* pp. 24-25.
[6] *Ibidem*.
[7] M. Bloch, *apud* Verger, *idem*, p. 81.
[8] *Idem*, p. 87.

Chapter three focuses on the problems and conflicts of the 13th century which chiefly rise from the papacy's involvement in higher education and the idea that universities were supposed to be ecclesiastical institutions as one of the key functions of the Church; it includes a case study on Scholasticism and its tremendous importance that made the conflict between the mendicant monks and secular clergy at the middle of the 13th century insignificant.

Chapter four continues to expand on the relation between Church and universities insisting on the fact that the 14th and the 15th centuries need further research. Concentrating on the 'bankruptcy' of university theology which occurred in the period mentioned above, reasons given range from the small number of trainers that came from mendicant orders, the competition of law as field of study, the universities' social recruitment and a more general orientation of the secular clergy.[9] It is also argued that the Church at the end of the 15th century was rather populated by jurists, graduates of Law, than theologians leaving the matter of redemption to legal terms, along with its administration, material and political interests.[10]

In chapter five, the rapport between universities and states is discussed, the latter being threatened by the former, a dangerous agent which could stir socially and religiously the masses, despite the acknowledgement of their prestigious and prosperous role to the cities that hosted them.[11] Founded by monarchs and princes to be confirmed by the Pope, universities reached Scandinavia in the 15th century (Uppsala and Copenhagen) while England's kings only drew attention through their inactivity which the French scholar blames on the Hundred Years' War and the War of the Roses, inviting us to reflect on other likely motives, as well. Regarding the universities' relation with the state, it is stressed that legal studies facilitated the recruitment of civil servants; moreover, in spite of the general lack of involvement of the institution in politics (the university of Prague had both an intellectual and religious role in the 14th century and is associated to the nationalist Czech movement of the time), university professors sometimes sought to gain political power and exert it. With the Middle

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[9] *Idem*, pp. 127-128.
[10] *Idem*, p. 140.
[11] *Idem*, p. 155.

Ages ends the autonomy of the university, a collateral victim of a politics that aimed at a global reduction of privileges, in general and of the Church, in particular to be integrated to the kingdom's "common law" as defined and applied by legal jurisdictions.[12]

Chapter six, on the university and society, investigates the social processes within universities, thus continuing the study of their social role in the previous chapters to account for a sociology of intellectual activity at the end of the Middle Ages. By contrasting the rich and the poor (a heterogeneity preserved from the 13th to the 15th cent.), the author elaborately prepares the reader for the closure for the latter and the dominion of the former (noblemen's empowerment of science and exclusion of those that could not afford going to university); the university professors' aim to live a nobleman's life as a step towards nobility that should become an heir's privilege to be passed on is explained through the elections of the 14th century, the venality of offices in the 15th century at macrolevel plus marriage arrangements and land acquisition at microlevel [13] . Of seminal importance is an increasing awareness of intellectual work, the notion of philosopher acquiring as much prominence as that of knight, priest or monk, 'the job' implying disinterested research and study in a framework of professional ethic. [14] The conclusion reached herein which we treasure, is that a teacher or a professor's job with its technical demands did not enrich the one who embraced it, yet it gave him or her independence due to the professional solidarity, the desire for constant social and intellectual innovation; this comes despite the author's claim that the aforementioned aspects were of no interest to the holders of humanist culture and the teacher or professor would be replaced by an academic figure in his/her office, and the physician by a court person[15].

Jacques Verger's book is a must read during these pandemic times in which classic education and blended learning are taken to a new level, from face to face to hybrid and online teaching. A glance at

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[12] *Idem,* p. 187.
[13] *Idem,* p. 204, *passim.*
[14] *Idem,* p. 214-215.
[15] [15] *Idem,* p. 222.

universities in the Middle Ages allows specialists and amateurs altogether, trainers and trainees, to reflect on the intricacies of various transition periods in distant times from various perspectives and avoid making the mistakes of the past. As a result, choosing from the best strategies and techniques of medieval masters to refine one's teaching method and intellectual profile becomes mandatory in achieving professional to lay communication.

Zamfira Bîrzu's artistic approach – a way to transfigure the human

Adrian Stoleriu

Zamfira Bîrzu Lazurca, *Demers*, Editura ARTES, Iaşi, 2020.
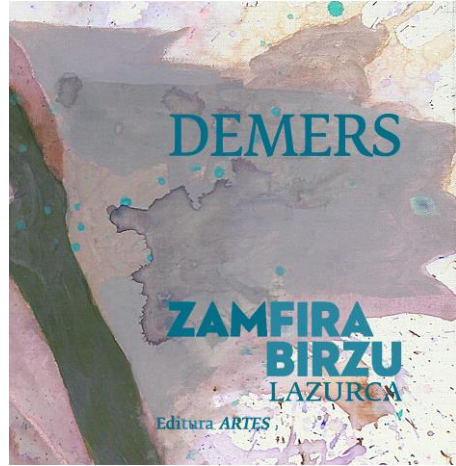
About Zamfira Bîrzu it has been written about in the past, and it will be written from now on. About an artist able to weave with such talent the painted expression of the world around us, and the ineffable essence of her spirit, there will always be critics, aestheticians, philosophers, rhapsodists and lovers of beauty in images, able to translate into praising terms her prodigious work and activity.

By far, Zamfira Bîrzu is one of the artists of the contemporary period from Iasi, who enjoys a wide appreciation among connoisseurs and professionals in the artistic field, arousing a natural question every time she addresses the public: What else does she bring this time, how will she thrill our eyes?

However, this time we have before us a remarkable editorial signed by Zamfira Bîrzu, visual artist and Associate Professor PhD at the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design within the "George Enescu" University of Arts in Iasi.

Awarded with the "Prize for editorial debut" at the 8th edition of the Editorial Harvest Days, organized by "Mihai Ursachi" Culture House from Iasi, the art album "Demers" ("Approach"), published in 2020 at Artes Publishing House in Iasi, with 165 color pages, of a very good quality, both in terms of technical realization and imagistic content, invites the reader to a chronological, visual and conceptual journey in the universe of shapes and colors of Zamfira Bîrzu, impartially probing the different paths, or rather, approaches the artist undertakes with great courage in the field of art. Indeed, the reader – eager to know even more the meanings of the author's artistic creation, happy to find again on this path her work – has the opportunity to

come at close contact with the various thematic and technical explorations
with which the artist made us feel familiar with them for a long time.

Although trained as classic painter, Zamfira Bîrzu is not limited to the
vocabulary, instruments and means of expression of painting, the artist being
able to constantly capture through escapades also welcome in other fields of
art, such as the sculptural object or installation, fully showing the fact that
nowadays' artist is no longer just a painter or sculptor, draftsman or colorist,
but all at once, or successively, easily alternating the means of expression of
these visual communication media. However, Zamfira Bîrzu makes it
naturally, in her works no effort of creation being charged; on the contrary,
the lightness of the brush, the spontaneity of the shape and the color spot
making the expressiveness of a visual discourse loaded with the natural
dialogue, mediated through the work of art, between the artist and her
audience.

In fact, Zamfira Bîrzu's artistic approach also enjoys, similarly to the
richness of the chromatic palette she uses, a specific thematic pluralism. The
artist easily juggles between human morphologies, in which she seeks, as she
herself confesses, the ideal of harmony "where life pulsates" (p. 6), thanks to
female nudes and erotic themes, portraits and self-portraits, reaching the
space of ancestral mythologies which give shape and meaning to imaginary
representations and chimeras, which subtly flow into her creation, but also
requiring the direct participation of the viewer, who is symbolically being
called for a certain type of cognitive, but also spiritual involvement.

Nature is another important source of inspiration, which Zamfira Bîrzu
masterfully captures in her creations. The artist alternates different images
and sequences with a significant impact on her artistic perception: whether
she captures a flower, a shadow, a landscape, a sunrise or a sunset in the
Danube Delta, the hills of her native Bukovina, a garden, a house in Balchik
or a Tunisian gate, in all these situations, her painting has a synesthetic effect
on the viewer, thus training all his senses, not just his sight. Her flowers do
smell, and the although-abstract landscapes absorb you inside.

Therefore, the artistic approach proposed to us is a visual spectacle in
which the fascination of shapes and colors, the meticulousness of
compositional constructions and the unexpected spontaneity of the linear duct
place these creations in the sphere of artistic refinement, giving the defining
note of Zamfira Bîrzu's painting. Moreover, there is a permanent feeling of
freshness, her painting proving with elegance and subtlety the quality of the
new, but also a certain pleasant and assumed feeling of *déjà vu*, exalting
through the cultural quote, specific to modern art of the XXth century, to
which her entire experience of becoming an artist relates.

Zamfira Bîrzu is also an artist of dichotomies, softness and strength,
shape and color, rigorous construction and ineffable and unrepeatable hazard,
decorativism and painting as well, imperceptibly, naturally combining all

these qualities and principles into works of art that bear the recognizable imprint of the fully mature artist, aware of her value and creative potential.

We can also talk about a certain tectonics of the creations the artist makes, regardless the technique – from painting to the installation-object –, from the barely touched canvas of transparent washers to the one saturated with the strongly pasty color, generating spontaneous and controlled craquelures, reaching the natural patina of wood and the rust of metal, which the artist takes out of the banality of their inert world, giving them life and bringing them all into the realm of artistic refinement and visual subtleties. The invoice of Zamfira Bîrzu's painting, as well as the texture of the installations-objects incites the tactile sense, inviting the viewer to overcome – even at the level of mental representations – the prohibition of touching the work of art. The sensual anatomy of chimeras painted on canvas or cut in metal falls in turn, in the same register of visual dichotomies that we mentioned earlier, but able to express and transmit much more than it shows.

But perhaps the most natural expression, which offers the defining note of an artist's creation, is the one given by the proof of the portrait, in which Zamfira Bîrzu excels, extracting those features of the face that make it not only recognizable, but turns it into a true work of art. The project "Expressions and typologies" dedicated to some of the most important personalities of Iasi since the beginning of the third millennium is the supreme testimony of the unpredictable – and always surprising – balance of the artist, between the extremes of plastic representation, from simplicity flat decorativism, towards the concrete structures of the figurative from which the painter selects only the essential that favors and enhances her artistic vision. Nothing is in excess, nothing is missing. Zamfira Bîrzu's portraits stand out for the quality of the balance and harmonies between form and color, adding their extraordinary ability to capture the unique, the emblematic and the authentic.

All these coordinates of Zamfira Bîrzu's artistic creation can be found in this album, the fast reader discovering the profile of a perfect artist, and the one eager to adapt, understand or learn the lesson of painting and contemporary art, in general, receiving moreover than the expectations, preparation and fine tunes that connect him to the field of creation. Thus enunciated and transposed into images, the artist's declared intentions fully reach their goal, of transfiguring the human, offering the lesson of beauty and good taste, of quality art, under the magnifying glass of sensitivity and balance that dominate her entire creation. As a whole, the art album "Demers" ("Approach") is an honorable business card, but also an invitation to the public, friends and relatives to turn one more page from the prestigious book of the artistic personality of Zamfira Bîrzu, and for those who do not yet have had the chance to meet her, a huge challenge of discovering the perpetual beauty of art.

The Representation of the Bible in Painting

Paula-Andreea Onofrei

Gérard Denizeau, *Biblia în pictura universală [The Bible in Universal Painting],* Larousse, Rao Publishing House, Bucharest, 2016, 226 pages
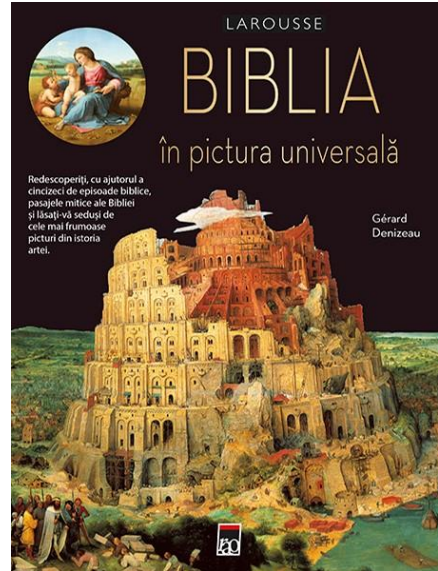
The Bible has always been considered "the book of all books" and the knowledge, the information transmitted has been the source of inspiration of many artists throughout the centuries. According to my humble opinion, this Larousse volume is an essential masterpiece for the ones who are more or less knowledgeable regarding both religion and arts, for it offers significant information about the interpretation and meaning of specific religious scenes.

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

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

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

• Michelangelo, with two of his masterpieces, "The Creation of Adam" and "Genesis"

• Pieter Bruegel the Elder with "Babel Tower"

• Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Marc Chagall – a comparative analysis of their works having the title "The Sacrifice of Isaac"

• Tizian and Aubin Vouet - both having the same topic, "David and Goliath"

• Leonardo da Vinci and Caravaggio treating the topic of "The Annunciation"

• Vincent van Gogh and Eugène Delacroix who both have a painting called "The Good Samaritan"

• Salvador Dali and Leonardo da Vinci treating the topic of "The Holy Supper"

• Andrea Mantegna and El Greco who worked on the same subject, "Christ in Gethsemane Garden"

•Matthias Grünewald, Perugino and Maurice Denis with "Ressurection"

•Pieter Bruegel the Elder, "The fall of the rebel angels"

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

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

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