

The Research Center of Medieval Art "Vasile Drăguț"



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# **MEDIEVAL CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH**





# Drawings in the Antiquarian Research: Historical Architecture of Romania in the 19th-Century Arts\*

Simona Drăgan\*\*

**Abstract:** *This article explores the documentary-artistic value of historical architecture in the works of a few artists working in Romania after the mid-19th century, against the dream of 'neutral' depiction or scientific objectivity in rendering historical vestiges and architectural monuments through art. For any antiquarian interests in the drawing of architecture as an art subject in the second half of the 19th century, in the Romanian case the searches are limited to very specific artists, trained in Western or Central-European academies of art, usually not ethnic Romanians in this interval, who worked in the Romanian Principalities (then, Romania) occasionally or permanently, and in most relevant cases were commissioned by the State institutions or directly by the future King to produce such art. How we could use their art works in the field of historical and architectural studies and what are their limits, will make the object of this article.*

**Keywords:** *19th-century art; Romanian architecture; medieval / premodern monuments; antiquarianism; archaeological drawing; restoration; detail*

Motto:

“The antiquary rescued history from the sceptics, even though he did not write it.” (Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, 1950)

## 1. Origins and place of the architectural drawing in the 19th-century Romanian art

Due to its formation in the Post-Byzantine cultural area, the Romanian art did not have traditions of naturalistic representation or

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topographic depiction before the advent of the modern age in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even in Central-European Transylvania – included in the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg Empire until 1918 –, architectural representations began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with local Germans who had studied at academies of art in Vienna, Budapest, München or Düsseldorf.<sup>1</sup> Such representations were first included in the cityscapes (*vedute*), and aimed to suggest real places and trigger recognition of the place through iconic buildings.<sup>2</sup> This is how historical architecture on the territory of present-day Romania enjoyed the benefit of the “descriptive academist documentarism”<sup>3</sup> thanks to drawings, woodcuts, etchings (sometimes watercolored) or lithographies. Besides, a recent propensity toward preromantic ruins – felt in the manner of Volney or of the mythical Ossian – also took to the vague depiction in drawing of remains from a precious architectural heritage. From a formal point of view, the mimetic representation progressed slowly throughout the century, so that in all the images of Romanian architecture before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, just like in other parts of Europe too, very few details could be deemed relevant for archaeological study.<sup>4</sup> The Romanians also possess sporadic *vues fantaisistes*<sup>5</sup> of their main towns drawn by foreign artists, but these were rather medieval effigies than actual urban landscapes, which in the end indicates their documentary irrelevance.

In principle, the popularization of any sort of images played a major role in further demand and their increased circulation. In Transylvania the lithographic *incunabulae* date back to the first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and were printed in Austrian workshops before the first local lithographic centers were soon opened in Sibiu and Cluj, and even a Lithographic Institute was established in Sibiu in 1822. Immediately afterwards, in 1825 the first lithograph appeared in the former principality of Moldavia, thanks to the Italian background of the artist, writer and political man Gheorghe Asachi (1788-1869), also the editor, in 1840-1841, of a journal illustrated with pretty rough, primitive woodcuts.<sup>6</sup> The urge to develop new reproductive technologies in their own country was felt by the

<sup>1</sup> Doina Pungă, *Grafica pe teritoriul României în secolul al XIX-lea. Litografia și gravura în acvaforte*, Oscar Print, Bucharest, 2009, pp. 31-32. See Franz Neuhauser the Youngest, involved in the project *Pittoreske Reise durch Siebenbürger* (A Picturesque Voyage to Transylvania), or Hungary and Transylvania in art images with the illustrating artist Ludwig Rohbock of Nürnberg, at p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34. Note. Unless otherwise specified, all the translations are mine / S.D.

<sup>4</sup> Radu Ionescu, “Dora d’Istria: o elevă uitată a lui Felice Schiavoni”, *SCIA*, Tom 10/2, 1963, p. 479.

<sup>5</sup> See a collection of *vues fantaisistes* of Bucharest in the 17th and 18th century in Adrian C. Corbu (ed.), *Bucureștii vechi. Documente iconografice*, with a preface by Horia Oprescu, Atelierele “Cartea românească”, Bucharest, 1936, plates not numbered.

<sup>6</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Artă și document. Arta documentaristă în România secolului al XIX-lea*, Meridiane, Bucharest, 1990, p. 301, note 29.

artists until late, mainly in order to reduce the costs and to have more benefits from their work. We even have a late example when, moved to Bucharest, toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Hungarian-Romanian artist Carol Popp of Szathmári complained in a letter to a friend about the costs of outsourcing the printing of his works, and therefore was telling to his friend how he had managed to open a second typography in his own house.<sup>7</sup>

An important rationale for the development of documentary art about masterful architecture or relevant vestiges of a nation derives from the complex realities of the nineteenth century, which was a time of modernity progressing at fast pace in Romania. The former Principalities Wallachia and Moldavia were politically united in one country in 1859, and the modern state Romania (not including Transylvania until 1918) was born under the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and soon under Carol I, a prince from the German dynasty of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. The latter became the head of the Romanian dynasty that was about to rule until the establishment of the Communist political regime by force in 1947. As architectural drawings are concerned, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the origin of their production lay in the drive of the new State and of the people of culture to build a nation, a concept that operated well despite the various ethnic origins of the nation's founders. To reach the said purpose, the State needed to map out the Romanian historical vestiges from medieval and premodern times, which for a long time from now would rarely be seen as works of art in themselves, but first and foremost as signs of remembrance of the glorious deeds of the Romanians' ancestors.

In the production of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian art – which reveals sufficient richness, and still has resources to explore or reassess – the drawings on relevant architectural subjects are by far outnumbered by the results of more general ethnographic interests (popular costumes, traditional customs, specific physiognomies seen as “national beauties”, etc). The latter were more consistent with the *Zeitgeist* about people and emergent new nations, with the search for a “national specificity”, not much the less with Orientalist stands, and this art was also manageable by a larger number of artists, irrespective of their formation. The ethnographic subjects were also in more demand on the general art market, were purchased by various sorts of collectors and were used to illustrate the columns of exotic news in European newspapers and journals about the European “Orient”. With architectural subjects, on the other hand, also due to the complexity of their object, whenever images of Romanian architecture or vestiges came to be multiplied and popularized in Europe, they mainly circulated with errors of identification, if not in total anonymity, accompanied by the all-encompassing adjective “picturesque”.

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<sup>7</sup> Árpád Árvay, “Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmári”, *SCIA*, Tom 19/1, 1972, p. 145.

## 2. Antiquarianism and architecture: an explanation

As methodology in this article, my option for antiquarianism lies in the definition and appraisal of such practices by Arnaldo Momigliano, which also includes the significance that drawings may provide to the study of history. Momigliano showed with erudition and wit how modern antiquarianism emerged in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a new emotion and taste for local, however insignificant, relics from the past, and how the antiquaries, long before that time deemed as “imperfect historians,” grew in importance to the modern historical science and even “posed essential problems,” up to effacing the frontier between proper historical studies and antiquarian studies.<sup>8</sup> In my approach the idea of salvation from loss, and also the unsystematic collection of any types of proofs and relics, attempts to explore and safeguard the small contribution – if any – of artistic drawings in the study of Romanian historical architecture, and also to show how decisions in the field of conservation and restoration were supported by (or sustained with) art images.

The use of art as scientific proof is generally present in the practices of restorers and architects in Romania, but has not been studied theoretically or problematized. How an artistic image adds some bits of information to the science of a particular monument, is usually mentioned in the historical or architectural studies, but little explained, or not at all, especially because the contribution of art can from the very beginning be estimated as minor in this respect.

Nevertheless, just like in many cultures, in Romania artists were called to contribute with their skills to the positivist science, which is consistent, for the older interval discussed here, with the finding – also emphasized by Momigliano – that, short before 1700, there had already been published European treatises claiming for the superiority of the archaeological evidence over textual sources.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, visual proofs were preferable to textual ones, which also implies the importance of some by-products like the drawings and photographs of the archaeological vestiges and monuments.

For any positivist interests in the architectural drawing, in the Romanian case we should limit our searches to very specific artists, trained in Western or Central-European academies of art, usually not ethnic Romanians at the beginning, who in the 19<sup>th</sup> century worked in the Romanian Principalities (then, Romania) occasionally or permanently, and in most relevant cases were commissioned by the State institutions or directly by the future King Carol I to produce such art. The discussion of their results should

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<sup>8</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 13, No. 3/4, 1950, pp. 292, 286.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 299.

always include their artistic background, specific traits and even personal tastes: the Romanian art criticism usually detected their preferences, and also limitations, although a new body of evidence and conclusions about each of them is possible – and advisable – due to the non-publication of their entire work, or to the ideological limitations and interests of former critical discourses.

In general terms, in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romania the more technical the artists' archaeological or architectural drawings were, the less they were appreciated by the large public, or were relevant to the critics. The aesthetical canon, one that was in formation precisely in those decades after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, was rather an emotionalist Romantic one based on the humanist doctrine, quite eclectic and occasionally self-contradictory as a matter of fact, as we can see from the cultural press of the time.<sup>10</sup> This canon was later to be reshaped retroactively by the tastes and words of the most influential inter-war and post-war Romanian art critics (for instance, George Oprescu) to look like we should cherish mainly the local *plein-air*-ist and modern Romanian art, which in such interval was only in the making. Therefore, if a time of glory for academist art was generally skipped in the praises of the Romanian modern critics, the credits owed to the possibilities of using such art to the profit of science were not analysed sufficiently.

The state of facts in the age discussed can easily be noticed in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century press and in the artists' own selections to participate with works in exhibitions (most times they selected works of ethnographic art and landscapes), and can also be proven by the fact that much of their artistic-documentary work on architecture has remained buried in museums or, if more complex, is known nowadays mainly thanks to other qualities (composition, iconography, scenery, colours, etc). The difference between *ritratto* and *imitazione* (even in what regards 'city portraits') operated even in the modest aesthetics affirmed in the post-mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Romanian press: the art critics sometimes were also writers of fiction, historians, politicians and, in general, versatile personalities of good use to the newly-founded State – but all knew, despite certain naiveties or their precarious critical discourse, that proper "imitation", according to the principles of Aristotelian *mimesis*, exceeds the requirements to show mere similitude. The artists were judged after commandments of emotion and true *mimesis* different from any purposes dictated by non-artistic needs, and the art critics required from the artists not to be "servile in imitating nature," or wished from the first statues of cultural Romanian personalities to "look more like a human than like

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<sup>10</sup> See 19th-century Romanian art criticism and information on the relevant exhibitions in the volumes of Lidia Trăușan-Matu (ed.), *Cronica de artă. Despre pictori și tablouri în paginile gazetelor românești din veacul al XIX-lea (1860-1900)*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, 2018.

white and cold marble”.<sup>11</sup> An artist like the Swiss Henri Trenk, for instance, was directly invited to abandon his laborious painting, forget about the original authentic sketches he used to make *in situ*, and try to “steal the nature’s secrets, find how to interpret it.”<sup>12</sup> Such considerations occasionally did not spare the artists of the verdict of “mediocrity” even from critics who otherwise appreciated the quality of their works as reliable archaeological proofs or “first-rank documents”.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Artists for antiquarian research: who and why

Largely overlapping the former Dacia conquered by Trajan in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, Romania enjoyed a modest stratum of Roman (and even Greek) antiquity, basically peripheral in a larger cultural area but very important to its Latin origins, which were singular in the south-eastern part of Europe. Nevertheless, when the Romanian state needed to map out its vestiges and establish the first museal institutions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the “cult of antiquities” most often envisaged the identification, collection and display of remains from the medieval age, including the early modern period.<sup>14</sup> In the first place the explorers and collectors had indeed preferred proper ancient artifacts and material vestiges of Roman inheritance, but their searches were soon to be marked by much dilettantism, looting and loss.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, not the less important it was to the first Romanian policy-makers to safeguard and preserve the signs of a medieval anti-Ottoman past, which had marked the former Principalities profoundly and lasted until very recently (1821), when the last Phanariot rulers had been expelled from the two countries with great difficulty. The first archaeological campaigns and interventions of the new State to make inventories of the historical monuments and classify them, also to confine the movable religious treasures to the first Museum of Antiquities, started even before the secularization of the monastic estates in 1863, as we see with the archaeological campaigns undertaken in 1860.

<sup>11</sup> Rocărescu, “Espoziția de tablouri. D-nii T. Aman, G. Tătărescu, H. Trenk, C. Stăncescu”, in Lidia Trăușan-Matu (ed.), *Cronica de artă...*, Vol. II, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Mega, 2018, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> “Expozițiunea artiștilor români în viață”, no author, in Lidia Trăușan-Matu (ed.), *Cronica de artă...*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 70, *emphasis mine*; Delavrancea, “Salonul Atheneului”, *Revista Nouă*, year II, no. 3, 1889, pp. 95-101, in Lidia Trăușan-Matu (ed.), *Cronica de artă...*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 90.

<sup>13</sup> See G. Oprescu about Michel Bouquet, in G. Oprescu, *Țările Române văzute de artiști francezi (sec. XVIII și XIX)*, Ed. Muzeul Literaturii Române, Bucharest, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> Horia Moldovan, *Johann Schlatter: cultură occidentală și arhitectură românească (1831-1866)*, Simetria, Bucharest, 2013, p. 116. Also see the idea of Cezar Bolliac to edit a *Dacian-Roman Album* that also included medieval vestiges, in Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut la cercetarea istoriei. Vestigii, călătorii și colecționari în România celei de-a doua jumătăți a secolului XIX*, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași, Iași, 2015, p. 273.

<sup>15</sup> Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, op. cit., pp. 366-379.

In two (out of four) cases artists accompanied the so-called *commissaires* appointed by the State in 1860 to visit four or five districts each, and document the architecture and patrimonial assets of the entire Wallachia. In both cases – that of the distinguished archaeologist, writer and policy-maker **Alexandru Odobescu** (1834-1895), and that of Major **Dimitrie Papazoglu** (1811-1892), ex-military man and a famous *dilettante* in historical studies, geography and art collection –, the painter that accompanied them was commissioned by the inspector himself, and paid by the same. In Papazoglu's case, we do not even know who the artist was, but we know an artist like Karl Danielis with whom he further worked to an elaboration of a few etchings and litographs about the Romanian patrimony.

In Odobescu's case, his collaboration with the Swiss artist **Henri Trenk** (1820-1892), trained at the Academy of Fine Arts of Düsseldorf, took to the most professional and lasting results after their first campaign together in 1860 in the districts Argeș and Vâlcea, and then in 1871 in Buzăului Mountains, where they explored the site of the great discovery of a golden treasure at Pietroasa.

In parallel with the said four inspectors, the same year 1860 also includes the archaeological voyage of the artist Gheorghe Tătărăscu (then Italianized by himself to *Tattarescu*), from whom a notebook of 36 sketches in pencil was left, now at the section of Graphic Arts of the National Museum of Arts of Bucharest.<sup>16</sup> **Gheorghe Tattarescu** (1818?-1894) is the prolific painter of about 80 churches, and at the time discussed he was deemed as the most promising “indigenous” young artist by the Romanian authorities, who also appreciated his “noble and patriotic feelings”.<sup>17</sup> Tattarescu had studied at Accademia di San Luca in Rome and was influenced by Natale Carta and Giovanni Svignani.<sup>18</sup> Famous for the “Westernization” of the Romanian church painting, he was perceived by his contemporary art critics and fellows as influenced by the school of Raphael and Guido Reni,<sup>19</sup> or by Salvator Rosa in landscapes.<sup>20</sup> When going to Italy at 27 years old, Tattarescu had already mastered drawing after a serious training at the school of religious painting of his uncle, a prolific church

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<sup>16</sup> S. Albu, “Un jurnal al Consiliului de Miniștri din 1860 pentru întocmirea «Albumului Național» de către pictorul Gh. M. Tattarescu”, *SCIA*, Tom 12/2, 1965, p. 342.

<sup>17</sup> Romanian National Historical Archives – Head Department, fund of Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction, file no. 120/1860, f. 65, *apud* Al. Istrate, p. 233, note 110. The original phrase “*unul din tinerii indigeni*”, at a time when the Romanian language copied French terms extensively, now sounds pejorative, self-Orientalist, and yet incredibly candid, being also used as a noun here.

<sup>18</sup> Emil Vîrtosu, “Pictorul G. Tătărăscu și Italia”, *Studii italiene* V, 1938, excerpt, pp. 1, 7, 13.

<sup>19</sup> By the academic artist C. I. Stăncescu in a press article of 1866, in L. Trausan-Matu (ed.), *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> Georgeta Wertheimer, “Pictorul Gh. Tattarescu și peisajul”, in *SCIA*, Tom 3/3-4, 1956, p. 293.



painter (*zugrav*) in Buzău.<sup>21</sup> Tattarescu's archaeological sketches are dated 1860-1861 and include only a small number of architectural drawings, outnumbered by the drawing of votive portraits of Romanian voivodes, with detailed costumes and jewellery. (**Fig. 1**) His activity as a “documentarist”, however, seemed to the art historians “strange and dissonant ..., split between the severe academic studies and the Neoclassical religious painting”, but even so he was still perceived as “full of grace” and artistically praiseworthy.<sup>22</sup>



**Fig. 1**

Of much more importance to the production of “artistic-cultural documents” of architecture was **Carol Popp of Szathmári / Carol Szathmári** (1811?-1887<sup>23</sup>), one of the outstanding Romanian artists who became one of the predilect artists of the Romanian Royal House of Hohenzollern. He left many documentary works, some of them architectural, in various media (drawings, watercolors, prints, photographs). Szathmári was one of the favourite artists (unlike Henri Trenk) of the influential art historian and critic George Oprescu, and as a documentarist artist of much complexity

<sup>21</sup> Emil Vîrtosu, “Pictorul G. Tăttărăscu și Italia”, *Studii italiene* V, 1938, excerpt, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> A.-S. Ionescu, *Artă și document...*, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>23</sup> Year corrected (against former belief that he died in 1888) after thorough research, in Árpád Árvay, “Cîteva scrisori inedite...”, art. cit., p. 146.

he was appreciated also by the French journalist Ulysse of Marsillac, a long resident in Romania. In 1874 the latter wrote that Szathmári made “a national work” with all his “souvenirs of the past”, “customs, clothes and even monuments that are increasingly disappearing, and soon not a single trace of them will ever be found but in his drawings”.<sup>24</sup>

Szathmári had a productive and much-discussed artistic exchange, and most probably also a friendship, with the Maltese artist **Amedeo Preziosi** (1816-1882), son of a count of Italian origin and of a mother who was probably French. He was born and raised in Malta and then lived in the Ottoman Istanbul until his death. He had studied at the academy of arts in Paris, travelled a lot to the Orient, understood the Romanticist and Orientalist artistic stands well, and also had been acquainted to Courbet and to his realistic art. In spite of such combination of influences and experiences, Preziosi is usually defined as mainly Neoclassical,<sup>25</sup> somehow contrary to the vibrant appeal of colors and luminosity in his watercolors, to the preference for human faces and to the richness of physiognomical and anecdotal details spotted and fixed by the artist in one instant. Preziosi was sometimes analyzed in parallel with Szathmári,<sup>26</sup> especially in order to understand the nature of their collaboration, and to differentiate the signatures of the second, who signed original compositions and copies differently. While imaginative and prolific himself, Szathmári also undertook extensive copying of other artists, and he is known to have made copies and lithographies after Preziosi that further passed as works of the first,<sup>27</sup> but which Szathmári himself most probably perceived as a sort of first-degree, refined copies in which he also took pride.

Preziosi was unparalleled as self-discipline, rapidity and precision in drawing. He used to sign and date all his works, with mentioning the place too, and in his Romanian travels his personal record was reported to be of 12 watercolors per day once in a voyage on the Danube, as compared to his average production of four. He also used the finest materials, which prevented the fading of the colours up to the present. Preziosi accompanied Prince Carol I in several visits in the country in 1868 and 1869, and remained one of his favourite artists, together with the German Emil Volkers. But unlike Szathmári, both Preziosi and Volkers did not spend a long time in Romania. Volkers did not even paint architecture, which makes him of no interest to this article. Last but not least, Preziosi himself could barely be limited to stick to one thing, even with a masterful monument of late-

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<sup>24</sup> Apud A.-S. Ionescu, *Artă și document...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231, note 55.

<sup>25</sup> Marin Nicolau-Golfin, *Preziosi*, Meridiane, Bucharest, 1976, p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> G. Opreșcu, “Carol Popp of Szathmari desinator”, *Analele Academiei Române. MSL*, Seria III, Tom X, Mem. 2, 1941, pp. 16-18; also see A.-S. Ionescu, *Artă și document...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-199, etc.

<sup>27</sup> M. Nicolau-Golfin, *Preziosi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 25; A.-S. Ionescu, *Artă și document...*, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

Brancovan style like the Stavropoleos church of Bucharest. His complex compositions are usually so vivid and replete with interesting characters, that they sometimes inspired a simili-prose with peasants, merchants and monks in the iconographic descriptions of the Romanian art critics, often seduced by the ‘moral effect’<sup>28</sup> of Preziosi’s art.

#### 4. Details of architectural drawings in the antiquarian search

The archaeological study of religious architecture was still a priority – and given a “place of honour” – at the second Exhibition of the National School of Architecture held in Bucharest in 1908, initiated two years before on the occasion of the Jubilee of 40 years of reigning by King Carol I, and 25 years from the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania (1881).<sup>29</sup> In the meantime, a lot of historical restorations of churches and monasteries had occurred in the country and an important French architect, **André Lecomte du Noüy** (1844-1914), a disciple of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, had been replaced by a new generation of Romanian architects after a long-enduring scandal. The idea of ‘scientific restoration,’ although pleonastic, had been repeated persistently to the ears of the decision-makers and to the public opinion, given the fact that only a few decades ago a restoration was still understood in Romania as liberal ideas on how to repair and, as further reproached even to a professional architect like Lecomte du Noüy, in some cases even as demolition and the fanciful reconstruction of a new monument. The first generation of Romanian architects, after studies at the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* of Paris, insisted on the restoration of the Romanian monuments “in their primitive, and the only important, form”,<sup>30</sup> as vestiges of a national past and authentic inheritance from great voivodes and ktetors. They even published in press the friendly support of Charles Garnier, who had replied warmly to the letters of the Romanian architect George Sterian, and encouraged them all to fight for the right application of the guiding principles in the conservation and restoration of architecture.<sup>31</sup> In the following, the opposition and controversies aroused in the eventful decades of the 1880s and 1890s around the Romanian patrimony will be channelled in this article toward everything that concerns the preservation – in exchange of everything that was lost – of a visual history of drawings, watercolors, prints and historical photographs.

<sup>28</sup> See a desideratum of the true “imitation” contemplated in a brief theoretical article in *Analele arhitecturii*, An I, nr. 6, Iunie 1890, p. 130.

<sup>29</sup> A.L. (Alex. Lapedatu), “Expoziția Școalei Naționale de Arhitectură”, *BCMI*, 1908, No. 2 (Apr.-Iun.), p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Arch. G. Măndrea, “Studiu asupra mănăstirelor și bisericelor ortodoxe”, *Analele Arhitecturii*, I, 5/1890, p. 105.

<sup>31</sup> Excerpts from the warm reply of Charles Garnier were published in G. Sterian, “Restaurarea monumentelor istorice”, *Analele Arhitecturii*, I, 4/1890, p. 79.

In the first half of the 20th century, the 19th century was about to be increasingly perceived as a “barbaric” time of “vandalism” for the Romanian monuments, in addition to what was anyway regarded – with respect to the new architecture that replaced them – as “a time of decadence in our old architectural craftsmanship”.<sup>32</sup> In Romania civil architecture had gladly flourished with newly-imported Western styles after mid-19th century, but in the pre-war and inter-war decades of the following century reconstructed churches like Zlătari of Bucharest were facing the risk of “declassification” as historical monuments because of their total reconstruction, or the aggressive alterations of their forms.<sup>33</sup>

A few details to be discussed in the following will reveal a number of visual documents that captured the image of old Romanian churches, of which the Episcopal Church of Curtea de Argeș and the Three Holy Hierarchs Church of Iași (former monasteries) will make the most prominent examples. The article does not intend to produce a thorough analysis of the selected drawings, but to confront them to historical data about the state of the monument depicted (in all the cases, a church), and – based on inside artistic information – to reflect in what terms we could possibly discuss the value of such visual documents to the proper historians.

#### **4.1. First, ‘the two gems of the Romanian art’, Curtea de Argeș and the Three Holy Hierarchs churches**

The most distinctive and exploited case in various analyses is the monastery of Curtea de Argeș, built by the Wallachian voivode Neagoe Basarab and already consecrated in 1517 before its painting. It is why in a few pencil drawings by **Gheorghe Tattarescu**, with the ktetors holding the model of the church, we do not have only Neagoe Basarab but also his immediate heirs, who continued his ktetorhip through painting and endowing it with objects of cult. (**Fig. 1**). We speak of a stupendous monument much intriguing for its indistinctive Oriental and even Islamic influences<sup>34</sup> (**Fig. 2-3**), which are strictly present at the architectural level (and not in the painting). They raised innumerable hypotheses about their origins, even took

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<sup>32</sup> Arch. I. Vulcan, “Mănăstirea Hurezi. Descriere generală arhitectonică”, *BCMI*, 1908, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec.), p. 148.

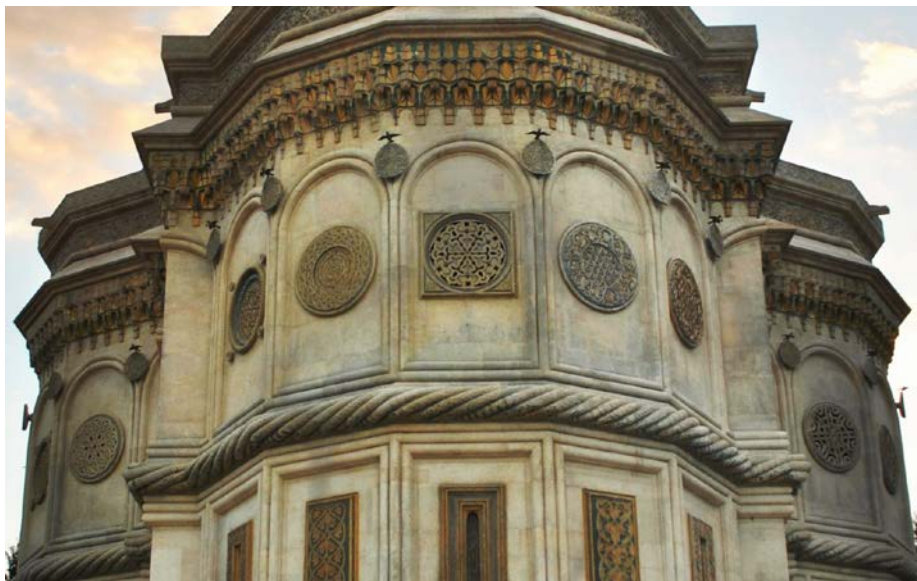
<sup>33</sup> A request of the Commission for Historical Monuments formed of I. Kalinderu, Gr. G. Tocilescu, Gr. Cerkez, N. Gabrielescu (and A. Lapedatu, as secretary) in the General Report on the works of CHM in 1908, drawn up in January 1909 (*BCMI*, 1908, No. 4, 177).

<sup>34</sup> Synthetized in Lăzărescu 1967, briefly in Minea 2022, also mentioned in Chihaiia 1969. See E. Lăzărescu, “O icoană puțin cunoscută din secolul al XVI-lea și problema pronaosului bisericii mănăstirii Argeșului”, *SCIA*, Tom 14/2, 1967, pp. 187-199; Cosmin Minea, “The Episcopal Church of the former Monastery of Curtea de Argeș”, 2022, *Mapping Eastern Europe*, <https://mappingeasterneurope.princeton.edu>, M. A. Rossi and A. I. Sullivan (eds.), article accessed Feb. 20, 2023; Pavel Chihaiia, “Considerații despre fațada bisericii lui Neagoe din Curtea de Argeș”, *SCIA*, Tom 16/1, 1969, pp. 65-84, etc.

to the comparison of the church to a mosque, and practically enforced such conclusions also because the church did not (or could not) stimulate local imitations. As a result, speaking of it in a nationalist discourse would be the worst decision of all, while on the other hand we could rather speculate that the establishment of a nation-founding myth based on this monastery (the legend of master mason Manole, the “architect”) was precisely a way by which the Romanians managed to appropriate and internalize this unique architectural masterpiece which they both loved and felt alien to their cultural ground.



**Fig. 2**



**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**



In order to illustrate how art reminds of a few significant issues around Lecomte's restoration of this former monastery in the period 1875-1886, I selected the image of the church and of its proximities in 1860 by **Henri Trenk**, the church before restoration painted in 1869 by **Amedeo Preziosi** and, respectively, the church after restoration in one of the many copies or replicas attributed to **Carol Popp of Szathmári** by his immediate heirs.

Trenk's unfinished composition (**Fig. 4**) reveals the original landscape surrounding the church, which was suffocated by an agglomeration of outbuildings, and was closely sided by a bell-tower built in the 17th century by the voivode Matei Basarab. The upper part of the bell-tower was described as made of timber,<sup>35</sup> which can also be recognized from this image. The declivity of the land in the middle of which the former monastery lies, strongly suggests the irregularities of a dry waterbed about which a legend actually spoke, telling that the church was built on the bottom of a former lake.<sup>36</sup>

Trenk's watercolor is good as a site perspective, but lacks much distinctive details about the proper architecture of the church. It is obviously an unfinished work, since the artist did neither sign, nor dated it. But despite this lack of signature and dating, it is attributed with certainty to Trenk and originated in the first archaeological campaign that he pursued in 1860 in the districts Argeș and Vâlcea with Alexandru Odobescu. The latter kept all the drawings and sketches taken by the artist on that occasion,<sup>37</sup> which were deemed scientific by him<sup>38</sup> and whose "moral author" Odobescu himself was considered by Trenk. The artist would later borrow them from Odobescu for any further elaboration of other works,<sup>39</sup> but the owner remained Odobescu, and their original scientific purpose prevailed to him.

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<sup>35</sup> Mentioned in the first report on the church, drawn up on Austrian request. See "Biserica episcopală de la Curtea de Argeș" (author not specified), *Analele Arhitecturii...*, I/10, 1890, p. 178.

<sup>36</sup> D. Berindei, "Repede ochire asupra arhitecturii byzantine", *Analele Arhitecturii*, I/9, 1890, pp. 166-167.

<sup>37</sup> A.-S. Ionescu, *Artă și document...*, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

<sup>38</sup> Al. Odobescu, "Însemnări despre monumentele istorice din județele Argeș și Vâlcea. Călătorie făcută în 1860 din însărcinarea Ministerului cultelor și instrucției publice", *Opere II*, M. Anineanu, V. Căndea (eds.). 1967, *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> A.-S. Ionescu, *Artă și document...*, op. cit., p. 173.



**Fig. 5**



**Fig. 6**



Complementary details about the former monastery of Curtea de Argeș can be added from Amedeo Preziosi's watercolor of 1869 (**Fig. 5**), when within a short interval of years after Trenk we have the last notable image of the old architecture of the church. The same details can also be confirmed by the pedantic, cold drawing executed by Gheorghe Tattarescu in pencil (**Fig. 6**), which actually was only the starting point for a more elaborate work (a national album, he hoped). The original architecture of Curtea de Argeș episcopal church will eventually be contrasted below to its post-restoration image in a watercolor by Szathmári (**Fig. 7**), which is not dated but indicates the first years after the restoration of the church, or even a pre-completion stage very close to the end.



**Fig. 7**

All the issues publicly discussed and the polemics heard in the architectural press of 1890-1893 (the journal *Analele Architecturei...*) between André Lecomte du Nouÿ and the Romanian architects contesting the judgments of the first,<sup>40</sup> can be visualized sufficiently well in these artistic-documentary works. At Preziosi and Tattarescu we see the original four

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<sup>40</sup> See the series of polemic articles between the architects in *Analele Architecturei...*, 1890-1893. For a problematization of the relations between arch. Lecomte and a new generation of Romanian architects, see Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-144 & *passim*; also Cosmin Minea, "Foreign and Local Entanglements in the Creation of Romanian Architectural Heritage in the Late 19th Century", in Dragan Damjanović et al. (ed.), *Art and Politics in the Modern Period. Conference Proceedings*, University of Zagreb, Croatia, 2019, pp. 293-301.

domes (*turle*), out of which the two smaller ones, designed in torsades, originally lacked the small decoration of fleurons further added by Lecomte. This addition of ornaments made them look similar to the bigger domes, which originally was not the case. The domes also lacked the lead decorations that were later meant to embellish the four of them. The double cornice and the church walls were protected by a narrow drip ledge, probably made of tin, that was further removed, probably as inaesthetic. It was slightly projected outside the church walls probably to protect them from the rainwaters. The disappearance of this drip ledge is noticeable in all the post-restoration drawings, and it was also criticized at the time.

Another detail, this time one of scenery that Preziosi's watercolor confirms, is the presence of a tree that seems to embrace the mysterious edicule built in front of the church, which was compared to a Muslim fountain for ablutions, but nevertheless does not contain one. The tree was revealed to have been a lime (*tilia*),<sup>41</sup> while the fact that the Romanian architects and art historians identified the front edicule with so many names (*agheasmatar*, *cantar*, *chioșc*, *cerdăcel*, *tabernacol*, *baldachin*) is a proof that they understood it differently because it was unique. In restoration Lecomte also opted to increase its height, and also to remove the small triple crosses placed on the corners of each square base of the church domes, sixteen in total; these tiny crosses can also be seen at Preziosi and in Tattarescu's sketch, but are absent at Szathmári, in the post-restoration age of the monument.



**Fig. 8**

<sup>41</sup> "Biserica episcopală de la Curtea de Argeș" (author not specified), *Analele Architecturei...*, I/11, 1890, p. 207.

**Fig. 9**

In what concerns the artistic image of the Three Holy Hierarchs church of Iași, we know that a destructive earthquake occurred in 1739, which may have caused alterations and a different repair of the vestibule of the church. A number of subsequent repairs were found, too, by the time of its 19th-century restoration. For this Moldavian church, a work in watercolor and ink by Carol Popp of Szathmári preserves the appearance of the church before Lecomte's restoration (**Fig. 8**) and, in comparison, an anonymous photo of the same shows it a short while after (**Fig. 9**). The photo was registered under a very small number in the inventories of the National Museum of Arts of Bucharest and attributed to **Franz Duschek** (1830-1884), but it was definitely taken after his death. The photo is only glued to a cardboard embossed with the name of Franz Duschek, but this could possibly indicate his surviving studio. The works on the church proceeded in 1882 and

the exterior restoration was completed in 1887,<sup>42</sup> when Duschek had died. Besides, the clearance of the close proximity of the church of any precarious outbuildings and huts<sup>43</sup> indicates even a later date of the photo, probably around 1890, when an image of the Three Holy Hierarchs church – possibly even this one – was included in a series of representative Romanian monuments photographed for the first exhibition of architecture of Turin.<sup>44</sup>



**Fig. 10**

The harsh criticism on the changes brought to this 17th-century Moldavian church, an exotic one pairing the Wallachian monastery of Curtea de Argeș like a ‘sister’, as the Romanians said, included the flattening of the nave and of the lateral apses from their original roofing, which was convex, and the new pyramidal shape of the two domes instead of the former bulb-shaped form (see **Fig. 8, 9**). The nave and the apses had been lowered apparently because Lecomte wished to better reveal the beautiful square- and star-shaped bases of the two domes, not well discernible when looked from the bottom. The most radical change was also felt in the new form given to

<sup>42</sup> Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 122.

<sup>44</sup> The information about this exhibition was found by Alexandru Istrate in the archival fund of the City Council of Iași, file 312/1890, f. 2. See Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

the two domes from bulb-shaped to octagonal cones, a decision on which Lecomte apparently had not been very sure.<sup>45</sup> The elevation of the domes with two additional rows of Moorish arches under the cornice, when added to the lowering of the nave due to the changing of the roof shape from convex to flat, eventually altered the church proportions and made it look like a “desecrated”<sup>46</sup> monument in the eyes of its critics.

The feelings that enlightened personalities of the time had towards the changes they were experiencing by then with their monuments, cannot be measured today in our own words. Only the connection between their own words and the right images, if we find some, could occasionally make us feel the rationale of their subjective, as we say today, reactions. See for instance how the influential artist **Theodor Aman** (1831-1891), founder of the School of *Belle-Arte* of Bucharest, was writing to his brother in 1879 about Lecomte du Noüy and its restoration at Curtea de Argeş: “instead of a monument of all imaginable beauty ..., he will leave us a sugary piece like you see in a cakeshop: gilded, whitened, and full of decorations that it didn’t need”.<sup>47</sup> A contemporary photograph of the church (**Fig. 10**) looks like speaking for Aman.

## 4.2. Science and inspiration with the Brancovan style

Like a third element in an architectural triangle of the medieval and early modern Romanian monuments we should mention the Brancovan style (in Romanian, *Brâncovenesc*), of which the monastic assembly of Hurezi (Horezu) is one example. It has been theorized in the Romanian art historiography as holding a strong Venetian influence upon the Romanian premodern art.<sup>48</sup> This influence started in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and continued for approximately one century ahead, including the first decades of the Phanariot rulers. This artistic style, which developed under the long reigning of the Wallachian voivode Constantin Brâncoveanu, was deemed as an original mixture with lasting effects upon the future of the Romanian architecture, and has several masterpieces of which the assembly of Hurezi (entirely rebuilt by the voivode) was said to present “the most unaltered original unity” in the Romanian old architecture.<sup>49</sup> At the other end of the

<sup>45</sup> Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>46</sup> A term that appears too often to count in the 1890s and afterwards.

<sup>47</sup> Theodor Aman, *apud* R.B. (Radu Bogdan), “Atitudinea protestatară a lui Theodor Aman față de monarhie și regimul ei politic”, *SCIA*, I/1-2, 1954, p. 225.

<sup>48</sup> For a historical perception among many others, see N. Gabrielescu, “Privire generală asupra monumentelor naționale și mijlocul de a împiedica distrugerea lor”, *Analele Arhitecturii*, I, 7/1890, p. 152 (about Hurezi: “the Venetian influence can be seen up to the smallest details of the sculptural ornamentation”).

<sup>49</sup> Tereza Sinigalia, “Spațiu și decor în arhitectura brâncovenească”, *SCIA*, Tom 37, 1990, p. 40. See the same appreciation of the monastery in the former observation of N. Gabrielescu as



aforesaid interval we find Stavropoleos (**Fig. 11**), a small church of Bucharest that was to be restored at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the founder of the Romanian National Style in architecture, Ion Mincu. Both Hurezi and Stavropoleos, together with other important ktetorships of Brâncoveanu and his followers, have inspired artists ceaselessly. By 1890 the monastery of Hurezi was still unaltered by faulty restorations, while in 1907 an altered bell-tower was restored to its original form (that is, the Brancovan one). Provided with four distinct regular yards surrounded by walls and opened to a beautiful valley, the monastery remained an attraction in the travellers' preferences until late. Special attention was given to several architectural parts of it that we are about to show in the following.



**Fig. 11**

Beside the main church, the loggia of the archimandrite Dionisie (built in 1754), or the ex-centric square pavilion with arcades in accolade facing the beautiful valley at the corner of one yard, were definitely an attraction to the artists. We see this pavilion as a point of interest in a picturesque composition by Henri Trenk, on the middle-left (**Fig. 12**), or painted distinctly in a late watercolor by Nicolae Grant (1868-1950) (**Fig. 13**), probably drawn around 1900 or even in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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“still complete in all its original compartments (*încăperile primitive*)”, in N. Gabrielescu, “Privire generală...”, art. cit., p. 152.



**Fig. 12**



**Fig. 13**



**Fig. 14**



**Fig. 15**

As a general remark, Grant was a minor turn-of-the-century artist from the family of the Scottish diplomat Effingham Grant, while Trenk had his top moments, but was never excessively appreciated by the critics or fellows. Such artificial composition as the aforeshown may be an answer. Trenk was good at rendering architecture, as proven by his drawing of churches and sketes visited in 1860 in the counties Argeş and Vâlcea, when he satisfied with promptness and probity the requirements of Alexandru Odobescu. He also illustrated with painted photographs the four-volume archeological treatise *Trésor de la Pétrosse*, written in French by Al. Odobesco in 1871. Yet, both of these two relevant contributions of him remained either unknown, or too scientific for a large audience. In drawing architecture he was definitely the most conscientious in what was called a dream of 'neutral' depiction or scientific objectivity in the presentation of historical vestiges or architectural monuments through art.<sup>50</sup> A critic even noticed "the precision of his technique, like that of the architects", or some "coldness, let us just call it architectural".<sup>51</sup> To the art critics or the public of the day, such traits were not necessarily good qualities. See, for example, his

<sup>50</sup> D. Arnold, S. Bending, "Introduction. Tracing Architecture: the aesthetics of antiquarianism", in D. Arnold; S. Bending (eds.), *Tracing Architecture. The Aesthetics of Antiquarianism*, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 8-9.

<sup>51</sup> Ion Frunzetti, "Etapale evoluției peisajului în pictura românească pînă la Grigorescu", *SCIA*, Tom 8/1, 1961, p. 110.



drawing of the Cornet skete (in the Vâlcea district) (**Fig. 14**), as compared to an architectural project of arch. Ioan Sperl found in the archival funds of Bucharest (**Fig. 15**), which we here publish for the first time. Sperl's watercolor for a proper technical project of architecture is even more flamboyant than the artistic drawing of Trenk, which nevertheless has an air of discreet refinement.

### 5. "Even the great Homer is being drowsy". Is art 'wrong'?

In the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, despite the continuous accumulation of prestige for an artist like the Hungarian-Romanian Carol Popp of Szathmári, a professional responder in the column Reviews of the journal *Arhitectura* replied with confidence to some fellows who raised objections to the restoration of Dionisie's loggia of Hurezi Monastery with arguments based on a watercolour by Szathmári.<sup>52</sup> The reviewer is now – as years have passed – competent enough not only to acknowledge the original presence of two, instead of three, original side arches at the respective loggia, but also to understand artistic inadvertencies, and in general to remain on guard against the imaginative possibilities and liberties taken by artists or, we might add, about the free circulation of art copies. After further search, he also declares to have personally found in Szathmári a representation of two *mutually-exclusive temporal sequences in the same image*, one that depicted the episcopal church of Curtea de Argeş after restoration: in that image the church, he notices, could only have *either* its lateral monastic cells, *or* the short fence of fleurons sculpted in stone that delineate a tight perimeter around the monument. Even if this respondent does not mention the image, we can see the said two details together in **Fig. 7** discussed earlier in this article, which I indicated as a watercolor attributed to Szathmári by his own heirs, but which is not signed. The aforesaid columnist, most probably an architect himself, actually knew from a recent past that the cells surrounding the old church had been demolished *before* the new stone fence was built. This is sensitive information that he gives in order to discredit the scientific value of an art image, and defend the decisions of the restorers who definitely had used more reliable information.

We might see here a case when "even the great Homer is being drowsy" (*quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*), considering the large amount in the production of "artistic-cultural documents" by Carol Popp of Szathmári. He is known to have left many documentary works in various media, but he was also experimental, sometimes inequal, openly interested to increase his market share also by an extensive production of copies,

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<sup>52</sup> R. (?), "Recenzii", *Arhitectura*, I/3-4, 1919, p. 107.

inclusively after the works of praised fellows like Amedeo Preziosi.<sup>53</sup> In 1908, the professional journal *Bulletin of the Commission of Historical Monuments* was announcing with pride the inclusion of a series of cromolithographies after the drawings of Szathmári in its pages, and presented them as “precious historical testimonies of the state of our churches and monasteries about fourty years ago”.<sup>54</sup>



**Fig. 16**

Now, if we go back to the objections about the loggia from Hurezi (after an art image not indicated by the columnist), we can still find its accurate representation in an old photograph taken by the same Szathmári in

<sup>53</sup> For instance, copies of the watercolors by Amedeo Preziosi given at Fig. 5 and 11 and signed *Szathmari* in red, not dated, slightly bigger in size, are held by the Art Museum of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. They were published in *Carol Popp de Szathmari, pictor și fotograf*, exhibition catalogue, Cotroceni National Museum, Bucharest, 2012, pages not numbered. For an expert transcription of Preziosi's works included in the Royal Collection of the Romanian Kings of Hohenzollern, see a full list in Busuioceanu 1934, pp. 5-8.

<sup>54</sup> A.L. (Alexandru Lapedatu), “Biserica cea mare a mănăstirii Cozia”, *BCMI*, April-June 1909.

1867. In addition, that photograph was most probably taken as the model, and copied at some time later, by Henri Trenk in a watercolor (**Fig. 16**). We can guess this model-copy relation from their resemblance in every detail and the precision of the view from the same angle, which can rarely be achieved in the actual practice of seeing a monument. In both the photograph (not presented here)<sup>55</sup> and Trenk's watercolor, the two lateral arches of Dionisie's loggia cannot be missed. Therefore, art can be 'drowsy' sometimes, but it is still in its power to rule out the errors.

## 6. Conclusions

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to their co-nationals the Romanian medieval and early modern monuments seemed in full accordance to the *genius loci* and to the soul of the nation even when they were not built after coherent local traditions. They were seen like inventories of the past and guides to the future even when they were not aesthetically appreciated.<sup>56</sup> In the conditions given, certain historians believe that the modern Romanian State did not have the means to act better in restoration matters<sup>57</sup>: like-minded autochthonous specialists with both good practice and sound roots in the local traditions were not born yet. In certain cases, the critics of those years could admit the advanced state of ruin of some old Romanian vestiges and their inexorable fate toward extinction. Some of them, at the very least, sometimes expressed regrets when a church was being pulled down in broad daylight under the eyes of a stupid, non-reactive crowd "without at least taking a photo of it as you do even with the last convict".<sup>58</sup> Simply put, these were part of the background realities that gave rise to the particular type of documentarist art discussed in this article; one that nowadays gives glimpses over monuments that were either lost, or reconfigured.

As formal artistic expression, we could say that the needs to capture an authentic image of the monuments did not prevent the artists from idealizing the general landscape while trying, on the other hand, to be as exact as possible with the architecture. We see how art could be well composed with clean surroundings and picturesque sceneries even when in reality persistent complaints about the precarious maintenance and hygiene of distant or deserted holy places were often heard in the Romanian textual

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<sup>55</sup> Trenk's work looks like an exact copy in watercolors after a sepia photograph taken by the photo studio C. P. Szathmari, dated 1867, 0. 297 x 0.36 m, now at the Library of the Romanian Academy. It was published in *Carol Popp de Szathmari, pictor și fotograf*, Cotroceni National Museum, Bucharest, 2012, exhibition catalogue, page not numbered.

<sup>56</sup> See the articles of Petru Verussi in *Convorbiri literare* in 1875 on the 'national art' ("Despre Artă Națională"), in L. Trăușan-Matu (ed.), *Cronica de artă...*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 73-104.

<sup>57</sup> Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, op. cit., pp. 102-111.

<sup>58</sup> N. Gabrielescu, "Privire generală asupra monumentelor naționale și mijlocul de a împiedica distrugerea lor", *Analele Arhitecturii*, I, 8/1890, p. 160.

sources.<sup>59</sup> Also see the artificial architectural landscape with deer in the forefront that Trenk drew for the Hospital Church of Hurezi Monastery (Fig. 12), or the many mountainous landscapes integrating the monuments that he was documenting, but which in this article have deliberately been left behind.

We note that the artists tried to remain accurate with the degradation of the old monastic precincts, and show the limestone eaten by time, the dried coating falling off the walls (Fig. 13), the soiling or damping of the walls (Fig. 16), or the serious cracks caused by the earthquakes in towers or domes.<sup>60</sup> We also see how they used to multiply the same representations by rendering the same monuments or copying works after one another: Szathmári after Preziosi, or Trenk after a photograph. The interchangeability of media and techniques should also be remarked: while the photography might seem the ideal in precision, in practice it could prove unsatisfying as emerging practice, especially when the Romanian artists faced obstacles and technical failures. See, as a final example, how Szathmári wrote to a friend on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1882 that he had “given up photography for good, and dedicated [himself; n.n.] entirely to painting”.<sup>61</sup> We find that a few months earlier, on 11 May 1881, after the Coronation Day of King Carol I, the bad weather ruined the clarity of his photos, taken during the subsequent ceremonies.<sup>62</sup> This kind of bad luck with technology must have depressed him and contribute to his decision. Therefore, it is a highly distinctive biographic anecdote which should make us cherish with more enthusiasm the antiquarian relevance that art drawings can luckily provide to the study of history.

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<sup>59</sup> Al. Odobescu, “Însemnări despre monumentele istorice din județele Argeș și Vâlcea...”, *op. cit., passim*. Also see, out of innumerable and non-controversial sources, the testimonies of Grigore Musceleanu, synthesized or quoted in Al. Istrate, *De la gustul pentru trecut...*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, the damaged gate tower at the church of Stănești, drawn by Henri Trenk (1860, inv. no. 4260, MNAR), or the tower of the princely church of Cîmpulung Muscel by Szathmári (inv. no. 10814, MNAR), etc.

<sup>61</sup> Á. Árvay, “Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmári”, *art. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>62</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, “Universul lui Szathmari – universalul Szathmari”, *Carol Popp de Szathmari, pictor și fotograf*, Cotroceni National Museum, Bucharest, 2012, p. 29.

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[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/Man\\_Curtea\\_de\\_Arges.SV.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/Man_Curtea_de_Arges.SV.jpg)

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## The Influence of Choreographic Art on Wind Solo Musical Compositions

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this scientific article is the detection of various influences from theatrical choreographic art on wind solo compositions as well as the revealing of their functions in the academic masterpieces by the Ukrainian and foreign composers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are concrete musical works: “Harlequin” – solo for clarinet by K. Stockhausen (1975), “Basta” – solo for trombone by F. Rabe (1982), “Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe) the nine non-accidental stops for <the walking oboist> – solo for oboe by V. Runchak (2011) and “Interview on a given topic” – solo for clarinet by V. Martyniuk (2014). **The methodology** of this investigation is based on the interaction of the following methods: there are methods of analysis and synthesis, the method of performing analysis – targeted on the discovery of theatrical choreographic specifications in wind solo compositions. This is a structurally functional method, which permits to construct a series of functions concerning theatrical choreographic elements in famous wind solo masterpieces. **The scientific newness** of this investigative article is conditioned by the amazingly poor and unsatisfactory knowledge in relation to studying the phenomenon of arts synthesis in contemporary academic wind musical performing art, concrete theatrical choreographic expressive means in stage-single wind compositions solo. **Conclusions:** The functions of theatrical choreographic elements in solo wind masterpieces are discovered based on the analysis of series of wind solo compositions, which have been designated by the synthesis of different arts. To be more specific, this is the dialogical function, revealed as the internal (“Basta” – solo for trombone by F. Rabe) and external (“Harlequin” – solo for clarinet by K.*

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*Stockhausen) processes of dialogization. We also have the meaning-concentrating function, which is disclosing in the high-priority significance of theatrical elements for the comprehension of the artistically imaginative content of wind solo masterpieces ("Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-accidental stops for <the walking oboist>" – solo for oboe by V.Runchak). The authors of this scientific article also emphasize the text-generating function, which is allocated in the potential ability of the process of interpretation by musician-performer of composer remarks into note text; these are touching the introduction in musical text of the elements of theatricalization ("Interview on the given topic" for clarinet solo by V. Martyniuk).*

**Keywords:** *wind solo, theatrically choreographic elements, function, masterpiece, composer, performer, arts synthesis.*

**Formulation of the problem.** The contemporary repertoire palette of professional brass academic music and performance art is represented by extremely expressive artistic works. The corpus of the most famous solo brass masterpieces, characterized by multifaceted genre and stylistic (composing, performing style) features, is actively supplemented nowadays with compositions written in the form of a solo performance, brilliant artistic solo works, academic wind compositions.

This kind of academic wind masterpieces designated to be played on a specific wood or copper academic brass instrument, have a number of specific features which are beyond the boundaries of purely musical art. So, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> –century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, brass solo works with elements of theatrical and choreographic action emerged. Among them "Harlequin" for clarinet solo by German musical avant-gardist Karlheinz Stockhausen (1975) gained the most popularity on the academic concert stage, "Basta" for trombone solo by famous Swedish composer and trombonist F. Rabe (1982) and also the musical masterpieces of well-known contemporary Ukrainian composers – Volodymyr Runchak "Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-accidental stops for "walking oboist" for oboe solo (2011) and Valentyna Martyniuk "Interview on the given topic" for clarinet solo (2014).

Theatrical and choreographic elements in a brass solo have significant specialized artistic and expressive value. It is not by chance that the theatrical and choreographic means of expression are reflected in the sheet music on the corresponding works. In the annotations to the solo compositions, the authors give certain explanations regarding the artistic and moving activity of the professional musician during the stage performance of the solo piece. The establishing of this kind of artistic synthesis (music, theater, in particular choreography) in solo brass compositions solo involves

several questions regarding the interaction of the types of art mentioned – the specific of the artistic stage presentation of this kind of works on the concert stage, the performance properties of the disclosure of the artistic and figurative content of solo compositions. Therefore, the questions of the functions of theatrical and choreographic elements in the academic works of brass solo deserve special scientific research attention.

**The relevance** of the article is determined by the need to achieve artistic and performing significance of theatrical and choreographic elements in solo musical works, first of all, as an original means of artistic expressiveness in the process of executive reproduction of the figurative and imaginative content of the composition. The need for such scientific research is also due to the popularity of works written in solo performance form as the most mobile and accessible compositions in view of their use in a remote process. “The mobility in the professional communication of the teacher and student is disclosed, by means of distance training educational process with applying the solo wind compositions”<sup>1</sup>. As the solo wind performing develops, the individual interpretative possibilities of performer improve. “The focus is shifted towards the development of artistic thinking of professional musicians, the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to relate vivid associative impressions with intonational phenomena and processes, as well as the formation of the performing apparatus and mastering the art of interpretation”<sup>2</sup>.

Certainly, we must not forget that theatrical art is denoted by the important significance in the contemporary educational process. Concerning the art of theater, famous scientist Hisham Saad Zaghoul brightly underlines that “Theater in education has gained global popularity since its creation. It employs the use of different forms of art to promote teaching and learning in schools. The practice has positively influenced the lives of school-going children. One important aspect derived from its application is the enhancement of students’ communication skills”<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the above-mentioned takes place, in the light of maximally wide and deep theatrical artistic content from the modern art of theater. “It was found that the basis of the latest operas are historical and mythological, biblical and fairy-tale, tragic

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<sup>1</sup> Nemkovich, O.M., Hromchenko, V.V. (2020). Musically pedagogical aspect of wind solo compositions (on the example of E. Denisov’s creativeness). *Modern culture studies and art history: an experience of Ukraine and EU*. Latvia, Riga: Baltija publishing, no. 1, 308–322.

<sup>2</sup> Karpyak, A. (2020). Flute art in the light of the historical significance of methodological schools and directions in music education: the past and present. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, no. 9 (1), 286–294.

<sup>3</sup> Zaghoul, H.S. (2020). The theater in the educational context: elements of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and Threats. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, no. 9 (2), 106–122.

and comic plots, masterpieces of ancient and modern drama, prose, and poetry”<sup>4</sup>.

The particular process of studying solo academic wind masterpieces, namely theatrically choreographic elements in stage-single wind compositions, is developed by understanding the necessity of expanding the list for solo musical works in relation to their applying to the contemporary distance training educational form. It is known, that “...there is currently no technological way to make music together, in real time, in distant locations”<sup>5</sup>.

In this context, the investigations of the functional elements from other types of art in academic musical solo compositions are a necessary task. The point of view of enrichment of the arsenal regarding artistically expressive means in musical practice is to be considered along with the vision on the evolution process of the modern educational activity of present-day teachers, the existing pedagogues of professional music within the training sphere.

The fundamental topicality of the submitted scientific article is also conditioned by the development of arts synthesis nowadays, connected with the synthetic thinking of masters and definite reflections in modern-day theoretical musicology thought. Famous scientist G. Varakina claims, that “...it is necessary to speak not only about arts synthesis, but also about synthetic thought”<sup>6</sup>.

**Literature review.** The scientific investigations of interaction for different types of arts formed a branched problem-thematic direction in modern art history. In the relevant investigations the stressed problem is studied mainly in the aspect of evolution of means for artistic expression in the composer’s text of wind (wood and brass academic instruments) compositions, as well as from the point of view of technological problems of performance, specialized issues, related to practical questions of the embodiment of synthesis of arts on the concert stage. So, among the numerous scientific works of this kind we especially highlight the next pieces of research by V. Apatsky<sup>7</sup>, M. Mimrik<sup>8</sup>, G. Galliamova<sup>9</sup>, G. Martsenyuk<sup>10</sup>, a

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<sup>4</sup> Berehova, O., Volkov, S. (2020). Modern opera of the late 20th – early 21st centuries: world trends and Ukrainian realities. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, no. 9 (4), 217–235.

<sup>5</sup> Thornton, L. (2020). Music education at a distance. *Journal of music teacher education*, no. 29 (3), 3–6.

<sup>6</sup> Varakina, G. (2019). The phenomenon of arts synthesis in the aesthetics of the Silver Age (by the example of Sergei Diaghilev’s enterprise). *Vestnik Slavianskikh kultur-bulletin of Slavic cultures-scientific and informational journal*, no. 51, 243–256.

<sup>7</sup> Apatskij, V.N. (2006). The basics of the theory and methodology of wind musical performing arts. Kiev: NMAU im. P.I. Chajkovskogo, 432 p.

<sup>8</sup> Mymryk, M.R. (2014). Features of formation of timbre-expressive possibilities of saxophone (on the example of chamber-instrumental creativity of Y. Gomelska and V. Runchak). *Mystetstvoznachchi zapysky*, no. 25, 99–106.

monograph by V. Hromchenko<sup>11</sup> and others. At the same time, understanding of the functions of elements of other types of art in academic brass works is unfortunately absent.

**The purpose** of this article is to identify the functions of theatrical and choreographic elements in the brass solo compositions on the example of the most well-known academic wind masterpieces, which had been written by Ukrainian and foreign composers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The material of submitted research is academic musical compositions, namely “Harlequin” for clarinet solo by K. Stockhausen (1975), “Basta” for trombone solo by F. Rabe (1982), “Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-accidental stops for “walking oboist” for oboe solo by V. Runchak (2011) and “Interview on the given topic” for clarinet solo by V. Martyniuk (2014).

**The fundamental part.** One of the most important incentives for the establishment of synthesis of art in contemporary artistic culture is the constant desire of artists to expand the arsenal of expressive means, creation of the widest possible palette of artistically expressive colors in the process of musical reproduced figurative content from an artistic viewpoint. The specific evolution of modern artistic thought in the field of brass academic musical art is most clearly manifested in the academic solo performance on stage. Herewith, the monophonic (one voice) nature of modern wood and brass professional wind instrumentation widely stimulates the aspiration of present composers to the expansion of arsenal of expressive means by involving musical language in the modern artistic performing elements from contemporary choreographic and theatrical arts.

Well-known Ukrainian composer, author of many academic solo compositions for brass instruments, V. Runchak notes that “In the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century solo performance flourished rapidly. Composers did not stay aloof from these important processes. I think that a new conception was born – “a new virtuosity”. Its content is not in the speed of fingers, certain technological acts, but in mastering the virtuosity of new techniques, the skills and methods, the contemporary performing effects and techniques”<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Galljamova, G.O. (2013). “Harlequin” by K. Stockhausen: at the intersection of the ideas of formulaic composition and instrumental theater. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: kul'turologija*, no. 369, 57–59.

<sup>10</sup> Martseniuk, H.P. (2007). *Technique of mastering the art of playing the trombone*. Kyiv: Informatsiino-analitychne ahentstvo, 351 p.

<sup>11</sup> Hromchenko, V.V. (2020). *Wind solo in the European academic composition and performance of the 20<sup>th</sup> – the early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (development trends, specifics, systematics): monograph*. Kyiv-Dnipro: LIRA, 304 p.

<sup>12</sup> Hromchenko, V.V. (2015). Is it easy to play Runchak...? *Muzychnyi visnyk Dnipropetrovskoi konservatorii im. M. Hlinky*, no. 2 (35), 7.

The synthesis of arts is clearly evident in his brass instrument solo compositions, i.e., “Homo Ludens V – The interview with a stutter or seven minutes into the trumpet” for trumpet solo (2002), “Give the Shevchenko prize to everyone who wants to have it” («tête-à-tête») for 2 saxophones (2007), “Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-random stops for a “walking” oboist” for the oboe solo (2011). In this way, mastering of the “new virtuosity”, the new performance skills and methods, professional effects and specialized techniques, are carried out as a synthesis of artistic and expressive means of corresponding types of art, in particular academic musical and theatrical ones, choreographic art included.

Thus, the process of a soloist acquiring mastery should be ascertained not only from the point of view of raising his professional performance level, mastering a certain performance technique, methods, but also from the positions of awareness and practical affirmation of new functionality in the designation of the artistic expression of a musician-performer.

One of the most spectacular instance for contemporary academic musical compositions, which includes theatrical and choreographic elements, is “Harlequin” for clarinet solo by K. Stockhausen. In this masterpiece, a generalized type of musical understanding embodied the image of Harlequin – one of the most significant characters, iconic to the Italian *Commedia Dell’Arte* definitely a “Comedy of masks”. Illusions of a comedy performance, popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, within the framework of the Italian folk theater, arise in the specific of the stage embodiment of the work: a professional clarinetist dressed in a harlequin’s costume (special jacket), as well as shoes with bells – plays an instrument and, at the same time, creates a certain theatrical and choreographic action.

Unquestionably, the specialized artistic clothes help to change the internal world of the performer. “Wearing a mask or disguise, dressing up in animal skins and in costumes of the opposite sex filled the human personality with new content, sacred meaning, and broadcast the concept of “not - I” or “I am different” to the world”<sup>13</sup>.

K. Stockhausen makes appropriate explanations in the musical text, thus creating some kind of annotations to the artistic and stage action. The reputed musicologist G. Galliamova states that “The composition has been imagined and written by master as the holistic artistic work, but after finishing the process, the seven sections have been designated by the composer. 1) “The dream messenger (“The perfect courier”); 2) “The humorous designer”; 3) “The enchanted (in love) lyricist”; 4) “The pedantic teacher”; 5) “The swindling joker (Joker)”; 6) “The passionate dancer”; 7) “The exalted spirit, that revolves”. Each section corresponds to its own

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<sup>13</sup> Sokolova, A. (2020). “The traditions of mummers, court masquerades, and secular balls”. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, no. 9 (3), 297–306.

program, in which the composer outlines the vectors of figurative and melodic transformations”<sup>14</sup>.

Stage soloist musician-performer (Harlequin) by K. Stockhausen is represented at the beginning of the composition, as a kind of story letter (“The messenger of a dream” (“The perfect courier”)), who in communication with listeners-spectators fragmentarily recreates the pictures of an ancient plot. The peculiar plasticity of a musician-clarinetist’s movements in reproducing a theatrical performance is genetically related to pantomime and corresponding specific acrobatic figures characteristic to the Italian folk square theater that operated in the open air. This kind of synthesis of artistic and performing means of music, theater, in particular pantomime, choreography, was aimed at revealing the traditional plot line, dedicated to the love vicissitudes of heroes in a comedy play.

Thus, the musical narrative of the clarinetist-soloist, in which elements of music and theater are synthesized, turns into a dialogue between the performer and listeners, who at the same time can be called the audience of a kind of a special theater of instrumental music. Therefore, we shall define the dialogic function of theatrical and choreographic elements in their external form of communication between the professional musician-performer and the audience of the modern concert hall.

The solo composition “Basta” for trombone by F. Rabe deserves our special attention. The beginning of this artistic musical work is quite original from the point of view of synthesis of music and theatrical and choreographic means of expression. The academic performer-soloist, reproducing the highest degree of nervous excitement, rushes headlong into the stage. Therefore, an eccentric image of the nervous unbalanced person emerges, who with appropriate gestures and facial expressions utters the key artistically in a meaningful word for the work – “basta”, that should mean the final completion, the end of imaginary vicissitudes, which were to precede the soloist appearance on the contemporary concert stage.

In this connection, the figurative content of modern brass solo composition is formed by the musician-trombonist in advance, even before the first sound is produced on the musical instrument. Consequently, the internal emotional and unrestrained resistance of a hero of art work to imaginary circumstances, which is clearly presented by theatrical and choreographic elements at the beginning of a solo composition, testifies to the dialogic function of theatrical and choreographic expressiveness in its inner aspect of present-day musical dialogical process.

The facial expression of the performer-soloist is a convincing evidence of the internal dialog. The player-trombonist, revealing the

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<sup>14</sup> Galljamova, G.O. (2013). “Harlequin” by K. Stockhausen: at the intersection of the ideas of formulaic composition and instrumental theater. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: kul'turologija*, no. 369, 57–59.

emotionally tense state of a hero of brilliant musical composition, resorts to pantomimic reproduction of the nervous state of a person. The corresponding movements of the musician-soloist, his grimaces, reflect the inner “bareness of the nerve”, affirming the important functional significance of theatrical and choreographic means of expression.

The method of “opening one’s mouth without any sound during a handshake”<sup>15</sup> had come in the art of choreography for reflecting crying in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We also emphasize the method of “absolute quietness”, “which symbolized emptiness and immovability”<sup>16</sup> in the episodes of immobility concerning the performer-trombonist.

The designated artistically imaginative content of this wind solo composition has conditioned the applying of definite non-traditional expressive means. “Basta” for trombone solo by F. Rabe has “non-traditional expressive means, among them glissando and multi sounding methods, which deserve the musician’s utmost attention. The tensional character of this solo masterpiece is also disclosed by impetuous passages with using the wide virtuous technique as to ascending and descending play movements”<sup>17</sup>.

Therefore, the theatrical and choreographic elements are the most important artistically consolidative factor, among the diversity of expressive means from possibilities of instrumental music. Correlation of these elements with dynamic, timbre-coloristic, intonation “language” from academic professional wind instrument (trombone) determines the amazingly expressive and artistically perfect content of all wind solo composition.

Theatrical and choreographic elements have essential significance in the creativeness of the extraordinary Ukrainian composer and conductor V. Runchak. The master is always original in his own musical language. He effectively unites the particular musical means of the academic wind professional solo performance with theatrical, as well as choreographic expressive opportunities. In this way, the composition “Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-accidental stops for “walking” oboist” for oboe solo by V. Runchak has the real picture of “walking” oboist-soloist on the concert stage and hall with stops, which have expressively bright and colorful concert-incarnations from their interpretation by the performer-oboist.

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<sup>15</sup> Pohrebniak, M.M. (2020). New directions of theatrical dance of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century: historical and cultural preconditions, cross-cultural connections, stylistic typology: a monograph. Kyiv-Poltava: “Astraia”, 327 p.

<sup>16</sup> Pohrebniak, M.M. (2020). New directions of theatrical dance of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries: historical and cultural preconditions, cross-cultural connections, stylistic typology: monograph. Kyiv-Poltava: “Astraia”, 327 p.

<sup>17</sup> Hromchenko, V.V. (2020). Wind solo in the European academic composition and performance of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21st century (development trends, specifics, systematics): monograph. Kyiv-Dnipro: LIRA, 304 p.



The maximal level of attention from the concert audience is held by accidental stops of “walking” oboist-soloist in the concert hall, which is kept all the time during the solo composition performance. Focusing of attention from listeners (spectators) on the personality of the professional musician-soloist, on the soloist-oboist’s artistic imagination combined with theatrical choreographic elements (different reverences and signs of attention to the concert audience, specific listener) indicates an expressive revealing of the dialogical function of theatrical choreographic elements. First of all, this touches to the compositions of the noted cycle by V. Runchak, a namely the non-traditional masterpiece “Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-accidental stops for “walking” oboist” for oboe solo. Namely this wind solo composition can precisely answer, to give the scientific reply by way of investigative material to the renowned scientists Neriman Soykunt and Başak Gorgoretti, on their question: “...how to develop psycho-motor skills through musical activities” from their important scientific article “Views of music teachers on psycho-motor activities”<sup>18</sup>.

The role of listeners from concert hall is very important to stage concert-incarnation of solo compositions from the cycle «Homo ludens» for different academic solo instruments by famous composer V. Runchak. These musical solo masterpieces incur possibilities for transformations of theatrically choreographic elements at the musical activity by means of strong emotional, esthetically determinative creative reaction. The artistic language of well-known academic solo compositions such as «Homo ludens» by V. Runchak is not easy. “This language requires not only tensional listening, mutual emotions, but also intellective opening. It is the type of music that touches the listener in ways only non-traditional music can”<sup>19</sup>.

The analysis of the bright wind solo composition “Interview on the given topic” for clarinet solo by Ukrainian composer V. Martyniuk will be given below. The clarinetist-soloist by foot bump on the concert stage-floor often designates the meaningfully emotional top into the artistic process of communication from imaginative heroes. The soloist-musician expressively knocks on the concert floor, whilst the loud instrumental sounding solo has dynamic *ff*. Herewith, the expressive dramatically determined effect appears in culminated location, which generates the picture of musical intonation communicating to theatrical choreographic elements.

The peculiar text-generating function of theatrical choreographic elements is detected in the synthesis of musical and theatrical parts, in the artistic performing language by the professional musician-performer. The foot knocks on the concert stage floor are denoted only by specific remarks, nevertheless there is no detailed description of moving activity concerning

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<sup>18</sup> Soykunt, N., Gorgoretti, B. (2019). Views of music teachers on psycho-motor activities. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, no. 8 (1), 100–110.

<sup>19</sup> Lysa, I. (2003). „Homo ludens I” by V. Runchak. *Holos Ukrainy*, no. 65, 5.

musical performing. Notwithstanding, thanks to comprehension by musician-performer of dramatically culminated significance for this expressive means, all the soloist's body is involved in the specialized pantomimic activity. As a result, there is psychological making of the particular condition for preparation to the stage jump, as well as the activation of all performing apparatus from the solo instrumentalist-creator.

In this context, the text-generating function of theatrical choreographic elements acquires the astonishingly essential significance in the evolution of artistically expressive means from the academic professional musician-interpreter. "We used to have an idea of the world through different printed works and diverse pictures, it was not easy to depict oneself, to achieve something without pointers, bibliographic lists, dictionaries, many articles with links, spreadsheets, rows, columns, photographs, graphs, points and lines"<sup>20</sup>.

**Conclusions.** The functions of theatrical and choreographic elements in solo wind (brass and wood professional academic instruments) masterpieces are discovered based on the analysis of a series of wind solo compositions (musical works), which have been designated by the synthesis of different arts. To be more specific, this is the dialogical function, revealed as the internal ("Basta" – solo for trombone by F. Rabe) and external ("Harlequin" – solo for clarinet by K. Stockhausen) processes of dialogization. We also have the meaning-concentrating function, which is disclosing in the high-priority significance of theatrical elements for the comprehension of the artistically imaginative content of wind solo masterpieces ("Homo ludens IX (oboe: me and oboe), the nine non-accidental stops for <the walking oboist>" – solo for oboe by V. Runchak). The authors of this scientific article also emphasize the text-generating function, which is allocated in the potential ability of the process for interpretation by musician-performer of the composer's remarks into notes in the text, which are touching the introduction to the musical text of theatricalization elements ("Interview on the given topic" for clarinet solo by V. Martyniuk).

In this connection, by virtue of the comprehension by musician-soloist of functionality concerning theatrical choreographic elements into the academic wind solo compositions, the professional performer receives supplementary abilities in reference to the relation between different art types. The contemporary musician-artist is approved in his own artistic activity into the sphere of art synthesis. Exactly this way of understanding synthetic artistic processes in the academic musical performing art is allowing the revelation of artistic imagination from contemporary musical compositions, namely academic professional wind solo masterpieces.

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<sup>20</sup> Latur, B. (2017). Visualization and cognition: drawing things together. Logos, no. 27 (2), 117.

**The prospect** of this scientific investigation is implementation of theoretically performing analysis for the many other academic solo musical works by distinguished Ukrainian and foreign composers. These compositions, have the most expressive arsenal of artistic language concerning sound depicting methods, artistically expressive manners of lighting-design, the art of calligraphy, photography and many other arts from different cultural historical periods.

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# Nature and the European Spirit. The Aesthetics of Autonomous Natural Landscape in Painting

Ioan Pricop\*

**Abstract:** *The present article analyzes the spring, development and consecration as an autonomous painting genre of natural landscape in European painting, bringing examples from the works of the most representative masters of landscape. The seeds of the appearance of natural landscape are identified in the religious, philosophical and aesthetic thinking of the Early Middle Ages. Up to the moment of amalgamation with the humanist current, Christian symbolism included various directions of capitalization of the natural world through artistic language, thus generating conceptual and representational models in the field of visual arts. Starting with the Renaissance period, once painting techniques and representation methods started to develop, being oriented towards naturalism, the philosophy of nature generated in the European space pays its tribute to the general orientation - towards the knowledge and mastering of nature having as immediate usage the realization of progress. In this respect, nature has started to be regarded, in time, as a distinct reality, distant from the civilized world, thus the acute feelings of alienation and nostalgia towards the world of nature appear. The aim of this article is to underline these trends and the way they are reflected in the natural landscape up to the appearance of Impressionism.*

**Keywords:** *landscape painting, nature, natural elements, symbolism, medieval, Renaissance, history, expressiveness*

Nature<sup>1</sup> in visual arts is always not only an interesting and appealing topic, but it also has a stimulating function in allegorical terms. In painting, the representation of nature both regarding its metaphysical meaning and the nature-image meaning is best reflected in the genre of landscape itself.

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<sup>1</sup> The word *nature* is derived from the Latin *natura* which means "birth"; the word *natura* is, also, the translation of the concept of nature used by the ancient Greeks, called *physis* (φύσις). In modern terms, the word *nature* means "the material world; the totality of beings and things from the Universe; the surrounding physical world, containing the vegetation, the relief forms, the climate" (The Romanian Academy, "Iorgu Iordan" Institute of Linguistics, *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, "Univers Enciclopedic" Publishing House, 1998). in the present research article, we refer to *nature* as it is defined in the dictionary and *natural elements* are seen as parts of the mineral, vegetal and animal lives.

In most cases, the landscape is represented in painting as an external space and in the same time, open. It comprises the shape of the hills, of the hollows, of the mountains, of the trees or of the forest, of the clouds or of the sky, of some river meanders or of the seas, together with the presence of some towers, houses, roads or herds of animals. Even if each of these natural elements is differentiated through its characteristics from the others, they are usually represented as a true canvas in the landscape, what is important is their connection with the compositional assembly and less with their shape and nature. In the urban landscape, where architectural elements dominate the composition of a painting, natural space is especially suggested through the representation of some components of the vegetal life, of water or through the shape of the clouds. *The sky* is almost always present in landscape compositions and in a direct relation with it is the *weather*, often a topic which is preferred by artists. In this respect, the landscape identifies itself with *depth* and *distance* which are in a direct relation with architectural space, represented through buildings, walls and rhythmic columns. The urban landscape is in this context a *reality* in which the human being lives and develops a cultural space and nature expresses the feature of *place* where this action takes place. By paraphrasing Assunto who stated that the city is not a landscape, "(...) but there is a rapport of *representation* and not of *function* between the city and the landscape"<sup>2</sup>, we mention here that along the article, we underline only the appearance, development and consecration as an autonomous painting genre of *the natural landscape* in connection with the general feeling of the European culture after contemplating nature; the urban landscape interests us less, because nature is not considered a topic and the examples of such works of art used in the article are justified.

When the landscape presents itself in a painting as a global entity, we overcome the immediate meaning of fragment from the nature; thus, the landscape reveals itself as a complex system which simultaneously contains space, place, time and has the role to produce an aesthetic feeling. First and foremost, the landscape is an "object" of the aesthetic experience, a space which becomes subject to judgement. Once the Middle Ages ended, this character has been developed over centuries in such a way, that "(...) the moderns have subjectivized the idea of nature, thus making it a content of one's conscience"<sup>3</sup>.

One of the most accepted theories about the spring of the autonomous landscape places this moment after the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Assunto, Rosario, *Peisajul și estetica [Painting and Aesthetics]*, vol. I, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1986, p. 17.

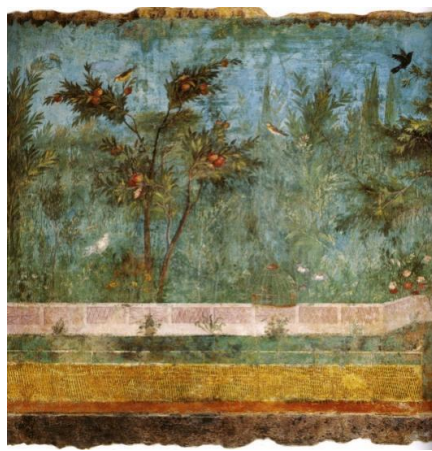
<sup>3</sup> Vianu, Tudor, *Opere [Works]*, VI, Aesthetics, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1976, p. 142.

century, the main topic being an ordinary natural spectacle. Yvonne Thiery<sup>4</sup> brings arguments that the landscape receives the aspect of a particular genre during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in the Netherlands, and the first painter that rises the image of nature to the rank of autonomous topic inside a painting is Joachim de Patenier (1485-1524). Max J. Friedländer considers that we "(...) owe the highest achievements in landscape to Masters who were not landscapists (Jan Van Eyck, Rubens, Rembrandt)." <sup>5</sup> Some theoreticians attribute the birth of the landscape to Alberti and Leonardo, while others refer to specific components of a prehistory of landscape painting in ancient art. If we consider this perspective, the birth of the notion of landscape almost coincides with the beginnings of European art:

Hans Otto Schaller is willing to connect these beginnings with the name of the ancient scenographer Agatharchos and the one of Apollodoros from Athens, and for Margret Heinemann, the landscape elements from the Crete-Mycenaean art allow the conclusion that ever since that time, the landscape was «a purpose in itself of the artistic activity»<sup>6</sup>.



**Fig. 1** - Fresco with a landscape in spring time from the bronze age excavations at Akrotiri on the island of Santorini. Greece.



**Fig. 2** - *Painted Garden*, fresco, Villa of Livia, detail from the Underground garden room, National Roman Museum, Massimo Palace, Italy, c. 30-20 BC.

<sup>4</sup> Thiery, Yvonne, *Les peintres flamands de paysage au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Des précurseurs à Rubens* (French Edition) [The Landscape Flemish Painters of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century: the Precursors of Rubens], Lefèvre et Gillet, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Friedländer, Max J, *Landscape, Portrait, Still-Life: Their Origin and Development*, Schocken Books, New York, Second Printing, 1965, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Pleșu, Andrei, *Pitoresc și melancolie. O analiză a sentimentului naturii în cultura europeană* [Picturesque and Melancholy. An Analysis of the Feeling of Nature in the European Culture], Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 13.

Even if in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a considerable number of painted works appeared, having the function of *source* of the later autonomous landscape, the paintings where there is no architectural element, one or more characters or a little human element in the natural environment prove to be very rare. On the one hand, for our research, it is less important the problem of primacy, the assignation of a “pioneer” of the genre; the notion of *landscape* can have numerous and distinct interpretations. On the other hand, if we insist too much on this problem of primacy, we pay importance to a *quantitative* aspect: if in a work, there is *more* or *less* nature. The works in which artists represent natural elements which occupy a considerable space in the painting can be considered landscapes, according to the “extended” definition of the genre. If we extend the notion of landscape so that it also comprises the natural “backgrounds” represented in some compositions, we can state that the European landscape has had a remarkable development since the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

This type of landscape backgrounds can be viewed in the works of artists like Giotto (1267-1337), Simone Martini (c. 1284-1344), Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c. 1290-1348), Fra Angelico (1395-1455), Piero della Francesca (c. 1415-1492), Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), Titian (c. 1488-1576), Raphael (1483-1520). Other convincing representations, in this respect, belong to the painters Jan van Eyck (1395-1441), Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), Giorgione (1477-1510), Rogier van der Weyden (1399-1464), Geertgen tot Sint Jans (1465-1495), Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516), Jan de Beer (1475– 1528), Hans Wertinger (1470-1533) or Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). “Early” paintings in which nature occupies a central place can also be identified in the works of the painters Lorenzo Lotto (1480-1556), Adam Elsheimer (1578-1610) or of other masters around Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569), such as Jacob Grimm (1525-1590), Albrecht Altdorfer (1480-1538) or Herri met de Bles (cca. 1510-1560).

It is obvious the preoccupation of the above-mentioned artists for the study of nature and natural elements and also the fore-feeling of the importance of the new painting genre. Before we go into depth these aspects through case studies and historical contexts, we consider that it is necessary an ensemble analysis of the way in which the European culture establishes a rapport with nature during the entire time arch of the Middle Ages. This general characterization will be later used by us for some comparisons and conclusions.

When Constantine the Great created his empire and the Christian religion became official in the Roman Empire, there is a change of the artistic vision in the history of European art. The main centres of the new empire having the capital at Constantinople are Ravenaa and Thessaloniki, where new forms of art and painting techniques are developed, having a powerful character and an artistic fingerprint, especially in fresco and in mosaic.



Natural, mineral, vegetal and animal motifs can be found in all styles and visual concepts developed in different places of the empire. The Christian symbolism supposes the representation of animals especially, but also plants that have an important and irremovable function. Fish, sheep and lambs, different species of birds, trees, mountains and other natural elements are used in the representation of gospel scenes. Except for fresco, in the Byzantine Empire, a massive development is known by iconography and the illustration of manuscript pages based on rules established in canons.

Beyond the borders of the Byzantine Empire, on the time axes of the Early Middle Ages, the painting revealed by the Orthodox monks, the art of miniature and of illustrated books know an extraordinary development. Just like in the other painting genres which are typically byzantine, the art of miniature has abundant examples of vegetal and animal representations with symbolic meanings. Even if the doctrine of the canons imposed by the church seems restrictive, the artists of the Early Middle Ages still have a specific liberty of expression, and the technical and conceptual progress is done in steps. The miniature compositions are associated to sacred texts and painting representations are powerfully schematized and stylized. Animal or vegetal representations are, very often, the result of the imagination of medieval artists. The fantastic images of some animals and fish that show the scenes of some mythological moments are, sometimes, impossible to recognize regarding the species, just because they are the result of some literary descriptions or of the free imagination. The geometric registers of manuscript pages are minutely embellished with sophisticated ornamental elements, in many cases of floral inspiration and having a well-established symbolic value.

Miniature painters are influenced by two arts that knew a great blossoming during the Middle Ages: the art of stained glass and of tapestry, the last one being of two types: *verdure* (with floral motifs and curved lines) and *mille fleurs* (having a dark background splashed with leaves, flowers and small animals). Out of these two art, they have borrowed both the general conception of the composition and the ornamental motifs for miniatures<sup>7</sup>.

Again in the art of the Early Middle Ages, especially in Western Europe, the art of tapestry blossoms. In the fight scenes or the ones of hunt, it is always present and supported the relationship of man with natural life, through the means of vegetal motifs and the secret byzantine bestiaries. The sacred animals from the Judeo-Christian tradition are often represented in cult sanctuaries, in Christian imagistic, in general, or in the vestiges of the pagan traditions. Ornamental tapestry enjoyed an enormous success because

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<sup>7</sup> Cartianu, Virginia, *Miniatura germană [German Miniature]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, pag. 46.

it allowed to be easily moved from one nobiliary dwelling place to another or to be exhibited in churches on the occasion of some events. The iconography of Western tapestry finds its roots in written texts, in the Bible or in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

The icon masters from Constantinople who made some scenes that impress us given their simplicity and beauty, they reached high peaks regarding painting techniques. Almost all the icons abound in mineral, vegetal and zoomorphic symbols, but the scene of *The Birth of the Virgin Mary* reunites a complex scenario of the relationships which can be established in the natural world, the one of people and the transcendent one, both in Byzantium and in the Western world. Again, in a natural environment, the scenes of *The Baptism* and *The Transfiguration of Jesus* and also the scene of *The Entrance in Jerusalem* or the one of *The Ascension of Jesus Christ*. Natural elements occupy an important place on the painting surface.

In medieval Christian art, there is a common belief reflected according to which the natural world, the so-called *Book of Nature*, is arranged and matched by the Divinity in order to be the instruction source of human kind. According to medieval theological doctrines, the entire creation is made to be a reflexion of the Creator and this is exactly the role of art, to teach man about the Creator. This view that we met ever since the Early Middle Ages is based, at least partially, on Biblical versicles, like the ones from the Book of Jov:

But ask the animals and they will teach you, or the birds of the sky and they will tell you; or talk to the earth and it will teach you or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of these mentioned here do not know that the hand of God has done all these things? In His hands is the life of every creature and the breathing of the entire human kind<sup>8</sup>.

Animals do not have their features because of a simple accident: God created them with their characteristics in order to serve as examples towards a rightful behaviour, in order to strengthen the knowledge of the Bible. Just like the pelican comes back to life after three days from its death, by the power of its own blood, similarly Christ revives humanity with His blood. Just like the gull is protected by other predators such as its enemy, the dragon, as long as it hides at the shelter of the *peridexion* tree, in the same way, Christians are saved if they are protected under the roof of the Church, protected from their enemy, Satan. Medieval traditions mention allegories where eagles eliminate the eaglets that do not fly lion-heartedly towards the

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<sup>8</sup> Jov (12:7-10).

Sun; similarly, God bears away the sinners that do not come close to the divine Light.

Reading, together with the Holy Bible, of the signs that are inscribed by God in *The Book of Nature* can lead to an interpretation, if all the right conditions are met, an interpretation meant to make man get closer to the “Author” of nature Himself. In other words, knowing the wisdom of God becomes possible by knowing nature. Once mythological concepts about nature are slowly removed,

[i]t was now possible to love nature in a new way and, as always, love casts out fear. There was nothing to fear from the phenomena of nature, for however impressive or perilous they were, they were ordained by God. Whereas the scholars of the Early Middle Ages had delighted in the manifold manifestations of nature as signs and symbols of something else, it was now possible to study them for their own sake, for the Book of Nature was not a heretical work<sup>9</sup>.

The fact that the Church allowed this way of looking at nature promotes a positive attitude for nature and its study at a cultural level.

In this way, the doctrine of creation contributed to the victory of a new attitude which no doubt paved the way for a renewed study of nature by removing any religiously founded objection to the exploration of its secrets<sup>10</sup>.

In the Gothic period, architecture knows a powerful development, and the majestic cathedrals contain a very rich number of vegetal motifs and a varied bestiary. We can identify collections of real or fantastic animals, hybrid animals, having symbolic functions which are also found in Biblical stories, in myths and pagan traditions, in apocryphal gospels or specific popular traditions accepted by cult art in some areas of Europe. It is generally valid the geometrizing character of art for this period, all over the continent. In Western art, the first signs of the representations of static nature and landscape appear, and at the level of painting technique, the first elements of geometric perspective and realistic representation make their appearance, thus preparing the field for introducing the deeply revolutionary spirit of the Renaissance.

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<sup>9</sup> Pedersen, Olaf, *The Book of Nature*, Vatican Observatory Publications, 1992, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.



**Fig. 3** – *Guidoriccio da Fogliano at the Siege of Montemassi*, Simone Martini, 1328, Fondazione Musei Senesi, Siena, Italy.



**Fig. 4** – *St Francis Giving his Mantle to a Poor Man*, Giotto di Bondone, 1295, [Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi](#), Italy.

Marking a significant change at a stylistic level compared to the work of Giovanni Cimabue (1240-1303) or the one of Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255-1319), painters such as Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Giotto and Simone Martini started to adopt a specific "realism" as a way of representing the sacred. The medieval religious conscience and its symbolic codes can be found, deeply illustrated, in the work of Simone Martini and also in the creation of Giotto. Giotto creates a space that allows the birth of a realism in

front of which the viewer immediately connects, at a deep, intimate level. Vasari states: "in my opinion, painters owe to Giotto as much as they owe to nature"<sup>11</sup>. Relevant examples for our study are the fresco of Simone Martini, made in 1328, *Guidoriccio da Fogliano at the Siege of Montemassi* (Fig.3) and the painted fresco from 1295, *St. Francis Giving his Mantle to a Poor Man* (Fig.4) by Giotto. The two paintings have some similarities: one or more characters in the foreground that are active, while in the background there is a landscape with mountains, rocks, small buildings, fortresses and a sky which considerably covers the surface of the artistic framework, a sky which has shades of blue.



**Fig. 5** – *Effects of Good Government in the Country*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 1337-1339, Room of the Nine, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.

Another important example which has just recently received the deserved attention<sup>12</sup> is represented by the three frescoes, made between 1337-1339 by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*. The mural paintings represent points of view and aspirations of the government from Siena, under the lead of nine members or chief magistrates.

<sup>11</sup> Vasari, *Viața artiștilor [Lives of the Artists]*, Vol. I, Penguin Publishing House, London, 1987, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> Polzer, Joseph, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti's "War and Peace" Murals Revisited; Contributions to the Meaning of the "Good Government Allegory"*, *Artibus Et Historiae*, Vol. 23, No. 45, IRSA Publishing House, Krakow, 2002, p. 63.

They formed Siena's highest executive council during the city's greatest period of prosperity covering roughly the first half of the Trecento when its artists and architects achieved unprecedented international renown<sup>13</sup>.

The three frescoes are in the Room of the Nine inside Palazzo Pubblico from Siena and they are separate in six different scenes: *Allegory of Good Government*; *Allegory of Bad Government*; *Effects of Bad Government in the City*; *Effects of Bad Government in the Country*; *Effects of Good Government in the City*; *Effects of Good Government in the Country*<sup>14</sup>. These scenes visually exemplify a political theology, depicting the ideas that the "(...) good government results in peace and harmony for its citizens, whereas government not based on Justice under Wisdom results in war and chaos"<sup>15</sup>. In the scene that illustrates *Effects of Good Government in the Country* (Fig.5) Lorenzetti represents the hills around Siena, well-groomed by people, under the form of a landscape. Even if nature is partially under the control of mankind and we can see characters spread in the composition, small houses and towers, we consider that the ensemble image is part of the genre of natural landscape, according to our definition. This scene is, from our perspective, the most distant representation in time of an autonomous landscape that we have met in our research and, by extension, the first landscape from the European painting.

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The Renaissance represents a period in which mystic, philosophical and artistic tendencies met and merge, having their roots in all the other previous epochs. The Renaissance seems to be a normal continuation of the Middle Ages, but it is also a mirror of the Antiquity. About the position and the intermediate character of the Renaissance compared to the other important historical periods, Lucian Boia offers a remarkable synthesis:

The Middle Ages favoured the divine kingdom at the expense of living in this earthly world. Modern times reverse the tendency, gradually fading away from divinity. Between these two opposite orientations, the Renaissance followed the middle way, trying a compromise formula between the earth and the sky, between the human being and the providence, between free will and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>14</sup> This titles are all modern conveniences. Moreover, the title of the wall painting *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government* is not the original one, it was initially called *Peace and War* (idem, pp. 84-85).

<sup>15</sup> Southard, Edna Carter, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Frescoes in the Sala della Pace: A Change of Names*, 24. Bd. H. 3, journal Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, 1980, p. 362.

destiny. It is separated from the Middle Ages by its thirst for liberty and the affirmation of the individual and of individualism<sup>16</sup>.

Now appears the powerful attraction to the nude representation of the human body. We can discuss in this case about a true "triumph of the flesh", this aspect contradicts the spiritualized models of the representations of medieval art and it shows the interest for obtaining a high level of life comfort or a longer period of life. Such values become interests just as important as the ones of redeeming one's soul, which was a top priority wish for the Middle Ages man.

The pure interest for the ideals of classical antiquity is reflected in the new formulas, painting or compositional techniques. The great spirits of the Renaissance approached a complex position towards all the fields of knowledge and this idea is seen in their artistic works. Natural geometrical models - known ever since the time of the great civilizations of human kind - are revived during the Renaissance. This period can be defined as an *Artistic Will*, having its sources in the study of nature:

Nature is the *basis*, the centre from which all artistic discoveries start and return. This process of assimilation of nature takes place at different *style levels* and it consequently goes hand in hand with the subjective development of linguistic means. To be more specific, it takes place once these means of artistic writing are invented and verified. (...) The artist is expected to forget all one's schematic knowledge acquired beforehand, to elaborate one's formal vocabulary in a dialogue with nature. This process must take place directly, without mediators, so that one completely offers oneself to the act of contemplation<sup>17</sup>.

The great discoveries of precise sciences, of mathematics, astronomy, geography, natural sciences consistently influence artistic thinking and creation. Following the steps of Pythagoras and Fibonacci<sup>18</sup>, mathematicians such as Luca Paccioli<sup>19</sup>, Piero della Francesca or Leonardo collaborated or transmitted to each other, directly or indirectly, knowledge about the organization of natural world. These complex personalities contributed to the building of a new knowledge paradigm, generating new directions of thinking and artistic expression, marking almost all future centuries. Thus, during the Renaissance, the basis of innovative science and artistic directions are set: the linear perspective, the usage of optical systems of catching and reproducing an image, the realistic representation of images, their

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<sup>16</sup> Boia, Lucian, *Tinerețe fără bătrânețe [Youth without Old Age]*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Hofmann, Werner, *Fundamentele artei moderne [The Basis of Modern Art]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, pp. 142-143.

<sup>18</sup> Leonardo Fibonacci (c. 1170–c. 1240–50).

<sup>19</sup> Fra Luca Bartolomeo de Pacioli (1446/7–[1517](#)).



sophisticated deformation in order to generate some visual centres, some artistic rhythms having clearly defined functions, directly connected to the nature of the theme or of the presented topic.

The powerful relationships between philosophical thinking, literature and arts of all kinds is a generally valid characteristic to the epoch of the Renaissance. All the myths of the Antiquity regarding the relationship with natural kingdoms are redefined in a modern language, specific to the humanist spirit of understanding the dimension of existence, of its meaning and of the rapport with the supersensible world and spiritual hierarchies. The way of representation of the great themes and topics of the Antiquity opens new possibilities of generating meanings and symbolic connotations of the works of art.

The development of the portrait, of the realist landscape, of the nude and of other painting genres allow for the activation of a phenomenon of secularization regarding artistic topics and themes. The portraits of some contemporaries of the artists, mandatories of works of art, serve as a symbolic support for the representation of some historical, religious or mythological characters. To the same extent, the environment, the architectural or scenographic frames where a visual reading or an action take place are projections of daily reality. Beyond the artists' and thinkers' attraction to the hedonist aspects of life and also to natural sciences, during the Renaissance, there is also an intense development of religious thinking. The widening of the flexibility of moral laws and the conceptual development of individualism - specific to the Renaissance - find fertile field on the territory of religion.

The specifically medieval rigor and coherence are transformed into an abundant diversity, by multiplying Christian churches, after the protestant reform. In parallel with religious mysticism, it is allowed the development of some hermetical sciences such as astrology or alchemy. The reconciliation of anthropocentric and transcendent tendencies is admirably obtained in this period; there is no contradiction between the search for longevity of the physical body, the obtaining of alchemists' immortality elixir and the redemption of the soul. An eloquent example in this respect, according to the writings of Lucian Boia, is represented by the personality of Isaac Newton, the scientist that is the discoverer of some of the basic principles of classical physics, he is also a passionate alchemist, interested in the beginnings of history and of the end of all times. The anthropocentric approach of the renaissance artist is still gravitationally inscribed around the Personality of Christ and of the Christian doctrine. The vast majority of Renaissance masterpieces are illustrations of the Old and New Testament, and the entire ensemble of the relationship with the manifested world is thought depending on the laws of universal creation. In opposition with the apparent difference between the thinking of the Middle Ages and the one of the Renaissance,



there is a powerful bridge that unites them and along it, the other epochs successively developed themselves.

For a long time, historians have privileged the opposition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the great benefit of the latter. A re-balancing is about to take place. We rediscover the Middle Ages as being more modern than initially thought (at least, in its final phase) and the Renaissance which is far less modern than the one imagined by its admirers (though, obviously, closer to modernism than the previous epoch)"<sup>20</sup>.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), as we know, left drawings and studies which try to decipher the composition of natural structures, of crystals and stones, of some species of animals, plants and some natural phenomena<sup>21</sup>, from an early age. "(...) Leonardo, like other artists at the start of their career, trained his hand and eye by making studies of older works of art, and in particular, too, of nature"<sup>22</sup>. In order to understand nature, Leonardo is preoccupied to discover the finest details of the structures and of the "artistic models" of natural elements. The studies on animals, plants and minerals made by the artist directly on the model and after detailed, minute, laborious observations made future generations regard him as a model of encyclopedic spirit. Almost all the paintings of Leonardo are the result of his own studies and sketches done in order to discover scientific aspects. Leonardo made not only extremely accurate representations, inspired from the point of view of expressivity, but he also attributed adequate symbolic functions to each natural element or character from his paintings. In many cases, the compositional plan and the symbolic meaning which are the basis of a painting are accessible on several layers of understanding, and sometimes they are completely hermetic.

The landscapes from the background of his compositions which, in most cases, contain forms of relief, various species of plants and trees with a known and especially mentioned meaning are panoramic, and in the distant background, we can notice the presence of some massive mountains whose presence sends us to the ascending, spiritual meaning that the mountain has in the traditions along centuries. The fir, the pin, the cypress, different species of plants and flowers (the lily, the juniper, the so-called *tulipa silvestris* - a flower which is similar to the tulip etc.), animals such as the lamb, the horse, the swan, the ermine, the cat etc., are detailed, inspired and expressive

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<sup>20</sup> Boia, Lucian, *Tinerețe fără bătrânețe [Youth without Old Age]*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, p. 64.

<sup>21</sup> see Nathan Johannes, Zöllner Frank, *Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) The Graphic Work*, Taschen, Bibliotheca Universalis, Köln, 2014 edition and Zöllner Frank, *Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) The Complete Paintings and Drawings*, Taschen, Köln, 2015 edition.

<sup>22</sup> Zöllner Frank, *Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) The Complete Paintings and Drawings*, Taschen, Köln, 2015 edition, p. 15.

descriptions of these species and their role is to integrate natural lives in the sacred or cultural history of human evolution.



**Fig. 6** – *Arno Landscape*, Leonardo da Vinci, 5 August 1473, Uffizi Gallery,

Along the studies dedicated to minerals, plants and animals, Leonardo made research on the dynamics of fluids, of currents and their effects, the proportions of the human body, its internal and external anatomy and many other aspects connected to the physical conditions or the immediate aesthetic properties of organic and inorganic matter.

Though Leonardo uses the natural landscape in his paintings only as a background, we can identify in his studies and sketches around twenty natural autonomous paintings as drawings (pen, ink, coloured chalk). One of these landscapes, *Arno Landscape* (Fig.6), was created by the artist when he was 22 years old and it is considered his earliest dated drawing. In the left-upper part of the drawing

(...) in his own characteristic mirror-writing, there are the words «on the day of St Mary of the Snow Miracle 5 August 1473»<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, this drawing is considered as one of the earliest autonomous landscape studies in art history<sup>24</sup>.

Among the artists mentioned as precursors of autonomous landscape, we should have a closer look at the works of some artists, like Geertgen tot

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

Sint Jans, suggestive from this point of view. Geertgen's painting is especially focused on religious topics such as *The Birth of God*, *The resurrection of Lazarus* or *The Burning of the Bones of St John the Baptist*. If in these compositions, the natural environment is only suggested, in the work *St John the Baptist in Wilderness* (Fig.7) nature has as great an importance as the main character, represented in the close-up. John the Baptist is seated, resting leaning on his hand, meditating in a natural environment composed of a field seen from above which graciously flows marked by the presence of some trees, of some birds or animals. The way in which the artist manages to represent nature

[m]akes you exclaim: the world is perfect where it is not touched by man, with all one's suffering. Nature and human being confront and complete each other in form and colour: the saint is represented restless, full of thoughts, built after a triangular schema, in a cloth which is cold brown an blue-greyish, seated(...) on the one hand, and a meadow rising in dip, warm, soft, glowing happily, on the other hand<sup>25</sup>.



**Fig. 7** – *John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, Geertgen tot Sint. Jans, 1490, Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin Jans.

<sup>25</sup> Friedländer, Max J., *Despre pictură [About Painting]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 36-37.

The magnanimity of the represented figures - of the saint and of the lamb -, of the sensitivity through which form and light are rendered in the composition, the accuracy of details are, probably, the qualities that have made Geertgen one of the most important artists of the Netherlands.

Being contemporary with Geertgen, Bosch created in his works an embodied and spiritualized nature, being among the promoters of the conception of imaginative landscape or vegetative landscape. In his works, the natural environment is rendered in a very expressive manner and it has the aspect of a fantastic, austere plan. Generally speaking, Bosch creates numerous anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures of small dimensions, disposed in groups which combine to form the harmony of the ensemble, totally corresponding to illusory nature. In the triptych called *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Bosch painted an universe which is in the same time organic and geometric. One first geometric aspect is represented by the fact that the central panel is marked by two rectangular wings which can be folded, similar to some louvers, towards the interior. Once "closed", they perfectly cover the surface of the central panel and they reveal another painting, made using the technique *grisaille*, showing the Earth during the Creation. Represented having a flat circular form, the Earth is "encapsulated" in a transparent sphere, almost tangent to the extremities of the panel. The sphere is suspended in a cosmos cloaked in darkness and it refracts the light of the Creator, represented in the upper corner of the left panel. Inside it, a water surface glitters under the light which penetrates the mantle of dark clouds. On the circular surface of the Earth surrounded by water, the only form of life is the one of the vegetal world. The absence of animals or man from this composition can indicate the fact that the scene presents the Biblical events corresponding to the Third Day from the Genesis. Judging things from another perspective, this unpopulated earth - having only plants and minerals - is in contrast with the interior panels of the triptych itself, depicting a paradise full of the sensual presence of people, on the one hand, and of numerous animals or birds - sometimes oversized – on the other hand.

The narration of the triptych starts from the left wing, with the *Heaven*. In this panel, as J. Combe brought arguments, the artist created a prototype of the "landscape itself"<sup>26</sup>.

The natural environment includes: a series of conic forms similar to mountains - some of them organic, other made of rock; plants and exotic animals like the giraffe, elephant or lion; aquatic animals having awkward features (for example a fish is represented having human hands); various terrestrial animals like the cat, rabbit, horse, pig, deer, snake etc; vegetal structures - trees, bushes, grass -, water and birds that fly in spiral. The central panel has a terrestrial paradise of sexual excess represented, but it

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<sup>26</sup> Combe, J., *Jérôme Bosch*, Editions Pierre Tisne, Paris, 1957, p. 58.

proves to be just an illusion; this thing becomes obvious once we see the third panel where *hell* and the punishment of the sinners are represented. Diverse fantastic creatures populate the landscape, and from oversized fruits, appear characters which have an adolescent's sexual curiosity.



**Fig. 8** – *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1480-1490, exterior panels (shutters).

In time, we are amazed by the carnality used by the artist to render layers of ground, the rocks, the buildings, the plants. In the upper parts of the triptych (...), he places geometrical bodies which are fantastically chained, out of which elements suggested by the world of flora and fauna grow. Sometimes, they leave the impression of some living innervated organisms, the colour also contributes to this impression, because it is close to the shades of the human skin. And also the shape of these zoomorphic constructions, where rounded, twisted elements dominate, reminding us of the shape of the antennae on the heads of monsters from the deep, sometimes soft and sticky, suggests the painting of living creatures which deliberately know different erotic experiences. If we searched here for a symbolic meaning, we should probably think about the allusion referring to the vital force of nature<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Wojciechowski, Aleksander, *Arta peisajului [Landscape Art]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, p. 17.



After having been in a relative obscurity for centuries, the work of Bosch was “rediscovered” by the surrealists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have “taken over, partially, his erotic, magic and grotesque (...)”<sup>28</sup>.

Though Bosch did not have a direct successor, his works became the study object of the painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Before referring to the way Bruegel revolutionarily integrated natural elements in his works, as a landscape, we consider that it is welcomed a last case study from the humanist period, underlining the way in which some artists still connect specific symbolic meanings having a religious character with the world of nature.

We have seen so far that European art is always dedicated to the sacred and to the relationship of our world to the Creator. Nature is an integrant part of the divine work; furthermore, Adam, the proto-parent of the human species, is empowered as the sovereign of all the other natural lives. The natural world is perceived as being part of God’s manifestation in the entire Universe. Plants and animals are very much similar to us, citizens of the planet, and our relationship with the representatives of the natural lives is a means of rapping to the Principle. Always, plants and animals all over the world are considered the messengers of divinity, immediate symbols of the divine presence.



**Fig. 9** – *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1490-1500, interior panels.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

In the composition *The Virgin among a Multitude of Animals* (Fig10) painted by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), the Virgin holds Baby Jesus on Her left arm, so that the Baby seems to be floating, his attention fixed, according to the tradition, on St. Joseph, showing no attraction to the splendors of the natural world and the representatives of the animal life which can be identified inside the composition. Joseph is represented on a reduced scale and place in the right part of the composition, near a house and he seems to be talking to a stork.

What is very interesting is the ensemble symbolism of this work, but also the symbolic role of each element of the composition (plant, animal, fortress or mountain). They are closely connected to the nature of the event *The Birth of Jesus Christ* and they have different symbolic functions. A closer look reveals us a multitude of important moments from the presented story. An angel descends from the Sky in order to spread the word to the shepherds that were on the peak of a hill with their flocks. The richness of details and the perspective science of Dürer is impressive, especially because each accent has its own symbolic meaning and visual function, in the same time. From the flock of sheep, for example, a ram stands out, jumping to fight, making the compositional area dynamic because of the complementary trajectory compared to the angel's.

In the upper-left corner of the composition, it is represented a harbour with the ships that carry the three king-magi to the celebration of the great event.

This fascinating visual work is different from other types of representation of the Birth of Jesus Christ because Dürer exalts the miraculous dimension of nature. Mary is, in the same time, also the goddess of the natural world, the new Eve of the mystics and Christian theologues. On the left of the Virgin Mary, we see a parrot that is sitting on a wood spar, as the symbol of the prophet who brings the news of the arrival of the magi. Dürer drew this bird after one of the numerous studies dedicated to it.

Underneath the parrot, Dürer represented a green woodpecker, ready to keep its rhythm just like the semantron's sounds which announce the nearness of Liturgical events. Again in the lower-left part of the composition, we meet, this time, the representatives of other species of animals, charged with a symbolic role. Consequently, the stag beetle – also met in other studies of Dürer – aggresses the almost fallen-asleep dog of the Virgin, on whose spine a butterfly delicately rests.

On the right, at the same level, the enchained fox is the symbol of evil forces, just like the two owls hidden under a tree's trunk are the messengers of the same dark forces. But, in the presence of Jesus, according to the tradition, they no longer have malign powers. The eagle owl and the owlet are birds charged with ambivalent symbolic meanings, being

representative for wisdom and knowledge, on the one hand, but also of the dark forces.



**Fig. 10** – *The Virgin among a Multitude of Animals*, Albrecht Dürer, 1503

If we carefully analyze every register of the painting, we discover other two important details: a snail, a dragonfly, a pair of swans, a moth, all of them are recurrent elements in the work of Dürer. Beyond the animals that represent the terrestrial and the airy sides, Dürer introduced, in the lower-right corner of the composition a crab, the symbol of the aquatic bestiary, so that the entire nature is present at the great event of the Birth of Christianity.

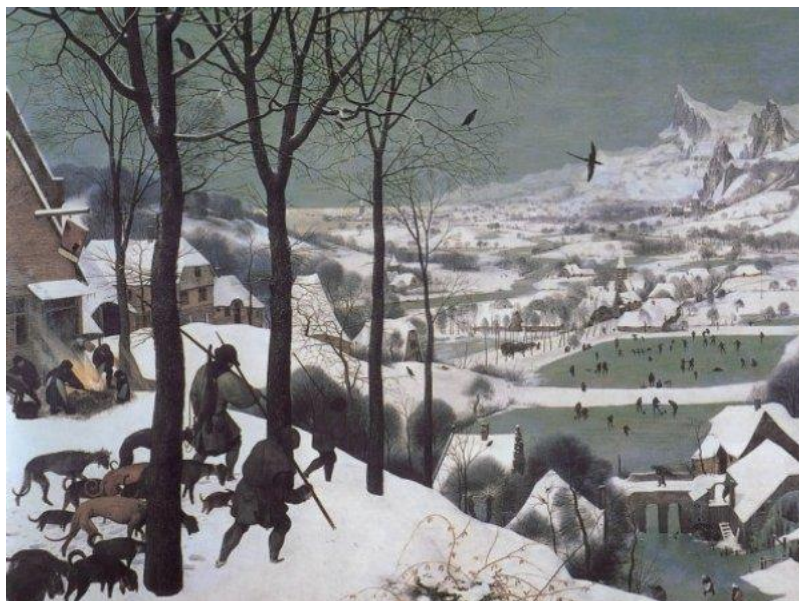
Unlike most of the works of this artist, drawings or engravings, where visual elements are precisely marked by powerful contrasts, in this composition, the artist adds delicate tint drawings of aquarelle over the drawing made in pencil and ink. The entire composition has a specific delicacy and a warm note of humour and serenity. Except for it, there are



known two other versions of the composition found at the Museum Albertina Wien from Austria. Dürer creates numerous landscapes in different techniques, among them we mention only *View of Arco*, an aquarelle made on paper in 1495 (Louvre Museum).

\* \* \*

In his landscapes, Pieter Bruegel the Elder manages to underline the forces of nature (the weather, its impact on the environment), the features of a season or the diverse activities of people in a revolutionary unitary and valuable vision from a stylistic point of view *in puncto*. For Bruegel, nature is in full and continuous creativity. "«The enciclopedia» of the months of the year was a good occasion for him to illustrate all atmospheric phenomena, of lighting, of the way the weather changes, how seasons alternate"<sup>29</sup>. In his search for running dry the possibilities of landscape representations, Bruegel focuses his attention towards a series of natural phenomena such as the snowfall, atmospheric pressure, temperature variations, the movement of water and clouds, the tempest etc. An example in this respect is the work *Hunters in the Snow* (Fig.11), one of those rare masterpieces which presents a universal attraction.



**Fig. 11** – *Hunters in the Snow*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1565

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<sup>29</sup> Friedländer, Max J., *Despre pictură [About Painting]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 75.

Being part of a series of six paintings whose topic is represented by different climatic aspects during the year, the work displays a winter landscape, seen from the top of a hill and in front of which a large perspective opens, marked by buildings, people and a rocky relief. On the hill, three characters returning from hunting are represented, together with more dogs. The artist indicates by the direction and way in which these characters are grouped that there is a compositional line marked by the linear rhythm of the trees in the foreground, inviting the viewer to the landscape itself. The image offers the impression of serenity and in the same time, it gives the sensation of coldness given the chromatic dominated by colourful shades of grey and white. Another work, this time an engraving, presents a vision which is similar to the one of *Hunters in the Snow*: it is the work called *The Rabbit Hunt* (1566), whose action takes place also on the diagonal of a hill which is in contrast with the cadre of the distant field. Among the landscapes of this artist, we also mention *The View of Tivoli*, *Landscape of the Alps*, *Landscape with the Flight into Egypt* (1563), *The Harvesters* (1565) or *The Tower of Babel* (1563).

The efforts of some artists such as Leonardo, Bosch or Geertgen to render nature, continued by the work of Pieter Bruegel, represent the premises of the blossoming and development of the autonomous landscape from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Works that approach this painting genre can also be found at artists like Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691), Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682) or Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

Though Cuyp is a good interpreter of the Dutch landscape, in his works, we can identify Italian stylistic influences. One of his most well-known landscapes is *River Landscape with Riders* (Fig.12 ), a painting created between 1653-1657. The entire represented scene is bathed in the subtle and warm light of the sun, harmonizing all natural elements: the sky and the clouds, water, earth and mountains, vegetal structures and animals (horses, cattle, ducks and a dog). The atmosphere created by the artist is a calm one, quiet and marked by the feeling of time stop, evoking harmony and the beauty of nature.

Some marine paintings and landscapes, painted at the peak of its maturity, are powerfully marked by the liberty of execution and the amplexness of the vision on nature. The fog penetrated by sun rays, the mellowness, the incandescence and the enamelled brightness of its yellowish chromatic, the precise and alert brush - these elements are the arsenal through which he defeated all his rivals. (...). The influence of the art of Cuyp can be remarked especially in England than in the Netherlands<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Idem, p. 103.



**Fig. 12** – *River Landscape with Riders*, Aelbert Cuyp, c. 1653-1657, Gallery of Honour, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Together with painters like Jacob Van Ruisdael, Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) and Salomon van Ruysdael (1603-1670), Cuyp has a considerable influence regarding the development of the *English School of Landscape* from the next century. The realistic landscapes of Ruisdael get detached from the creations with the same topic of the previous generations - monochrome and somehow monotonous - the dramatic force of its compositions is underlined by the usage of a powerful contrast of light and darkness. His large repertory of natural motifs contains scenes with dark mountains and sharp cliffs, wood landscapes with millenary trees and noisy waterfalls, marine or winter landscapes. In the work *Windmill at Wijk* (1670), the artist represents a high sky with many clouds, vessels on water, together with a field on which a few house and a mill are erected – the focal point of the painting. For the first time, Ruisdael presents the typically realist Dutch landscape, with its shades of blue, grey, green and brown. In another painting, *The Jewish Cemetery* (1660), the artist alludes to the transitory nature of life by representing a wild and agitated sky, of a tree which is almost dry, of a river that flows fast and wild or of some burial stones.

Regarding the landscape of Rubens, the following works are simply remarkable: *Chateau de Steen* (1636), *Atalanta and Meleager Hunting the Calydonian Boar* (Fig.13) or *Landscape with Philemon and Baucis* (1620). Being an emblematic representative of the exuberant baroque style, the famous painter combines the Flemish traditions with Italian influences, the accent falling especially on movement, force, sensuality and pathos. In his works that have a landscape topic, Rubens proves an extraordinary ability of understanding and representing the pulse of nature seen as a whole. The

viewer feels almost overwhelmed in front of the visual representations of the forces that animate nature. The way in which Rubens renders the natural environment is in connection to the literary tradition of the antiquity, especially with pastoral poetry. In many of the works created towards the end of his life, the artist celebrates this tradition. An example in this respect in the work *Nymphs and Satyrs*, made between 1637-1640, characterized by the same suggestion of continuous growth of the vegetation underlining the exalted life of Nature.



**Fig. 13** – *Atalanta and Meleager Hunting the Calydonian Boar*, Peter Paul Rubens, 1635-1640, Museo del Prado

Another important artist of the 17<sup>th</sup> century whose work has brought significant contributions to landscape painting is the French Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665). Influenced by Caravaggio's painting (1571-1610) and Greek-Roman mythology, the artist abandons the baroque style in the third decennium for he preferred to develop his own version of classicism. Regarding the represented topics, he is known especially for his religious compositions and for his narrative landscapes. The feeling of the mysterious force of nature is the main characteristic of Poussin's landscapes. If in his early works of the artist, the environment has a secondary role, starting with the 40's, it receives a new importance. Sometimes – as it is the case of the two canvas which illustrate the story of Phocion, *Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion* (1647) and *Landscape with the Funeral of Phocion* (1648-1650) – the majestic trees and the city from the background are elements which



underline the greatness of character of the represented hero. In the work *Landscape with Diogenes* (Fig.14), the luxurious vegetation expresses the ideal of nature seen as the source of abundance of things, also necessary for producing human happiness.



**Fig. 14** – *Landscape with Diogenes*, Nicolas Poussin, 1648, Department of Paintings of the Louvre.

Poussin alludes to the cyclic process of nature in *Blind Orion Searching for the Rising Sun* (1658) by representing the fertilizing natural forces. In this context, humanity almost lacks importance because even the ogre Orion looks as if he is short compared to the trees around him. Similar motifs can also be identified in *The Birth of Bacchus* (1657) or in the series of paintings called *The Four Seasons* (1660-1664). This series is composed of a mild spring, a rich summer, a dark but productive autumn and a cold and cruel winter. But Poussin also represents the successive daily periods: thus, the morning corresponds to spring, the middle of the day - to summer, evening to autumn and winter-marked by the presence of moonlight -to winter.

Space in Poussin's landscapes is not a desert where objects have an individual experience. It does not represent the backstage of the scene where the action takes place. It is not something far away and full of mist, meant to sweeten the

harshness of forms. It is particularly the presence of objects which helps define space and the other way round - space influences the proportions between bumps and flat surfaces, it tames the too big expressiveness of lines, it defines the architectonics of constructions. He is a linking element, he lacks the specificity which limits the free development of shapes. Giving up on the «limited space» (*espace limitée*) has opened new possibilities of free composition of the landscape, in the case of Poussin's art, despite the embarrassing rigours of classical harmony<sup>31</sup>.

Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) is one of the most important exponents of landscape painting of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The artist is preoccupied especially by the *idealized landscape*, a traditional form of painting based on the idyllic representation of nature. Among the remarkable idealized characters of the epoch, we mention *The Mill* of Rembrandt (1650) or the mountain view of Hercules Seghers (1590–1638) made between 1620-1630. Claude Lorrain spent his entire life painting in Italy, except for a visit in Germany and France, between 1625-1627. In his landscape creations, the artist fathoms the major artistic preoccupations of Italy during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, like the study of nature and the exploration of light. Moreover, he uses traditional landscape elements, coast scenes, mythological, Biblical or pastoral figures and architectural frames. Up to 1640, Claude painted numerous marines and landscapes characterized by schematic compositions finding their echo in the landscapes of Agostino Tassi (1578- 1644) and Paul Bril (1554-1626). The artist surprises us by the way he represents the natural environment, impregnated with subtle ethereal airy gradations. His landscapes are not bathed in a lot of light – being the result of studying nature, underlined by numerous outdoor studies. In this respect, Claude Lorrain is among the first painters that tries to create a canvas representation of the sun and the effects produced by its light, as natural and faithful as possible.

Unlike the splendid prodigality of some artists like Rubens, the paintings of Claude Lorrain always give the impression of lucid economy, full of tact. At first sight, we could attribute their extreme simplicity to a specific lack of resources; but after we get familiarized with them and we compare them with the works of some of his imitators, we realize the richness of the observations put by him in every branch, we realize the extreme subtlety of the tonality of the forefront of his paintings, the delicate drawing of the waves and the dimples where the golden light of his skies is reflected<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Wojciechowski, Aleksander, *Arta peisajului [Landscape Art]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Clark, Kenneth, *Arta peisajului [Landscape Art]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, p. 66.

Lorrain left over a thousand drawings made in nib and tint which illustrate the precincts of Rome. "Sometimes, these drawings are minute studies of details, in other cases, they have a totally impressionist character by the sense of light that they display, finally, in other cases, they have a delicacy of accent which reminds us of Chinese painting"<sup>33</sup>. During the last decades of his life, his naturalism is influenced by the humanist classical feeling. The maturity of his work is reflected in a series of works like *Landscape with Apollo Guarding the Herds of Admetus* (Fig.15), *Moses Saved from the Water* (1639-1640), *Landscape with Apollo and Sibila from Cumae* (1646), *Landscape with Dancers* (1669) or *A View of Carthage* (1676). His influence was tremendous, especially in England, changing the public perception on nature.



**Fig. 15** – *Landscape with Apollo Guarding the Herds of Admetus*, Claude Lorrain, 1645, Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome

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<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

The Netherlands' school knows a remarkable development towards the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century regarding landscape. Once this idea appeared, it was accompanied by the desire to refresh the classical principles of drawing and composition, put in light by the architectural works of some painters like Pieter Saenredam (1597-1665), Gerrit Berckheyde (1638-1698) or Emanuel de Witte (1617-1692). Except for the mentioned ones, Vermeer (1632-1675) proves to have a remarkable sense of observation and he renders the atmosphere in the work *View of the City Delft*.

This unique work is of course the one in which painting of all times came closer to colour photography. Not only does Vermeer prove to have an extraordinary sense of the tone, but he also uses an inhuman detachment. His interest was not held by any point of the view more than another, and everything was rendered from a rigorously uniform point of view. (...). The closer we study *View of the City Delft*, the more ingenious it seems to us, more carefully calculated regarding the construction, more coherent as far as its component elements are concerned<sup>34</sup>.

Given its ensemble, the landscape painting of the 17<sup>th</sup> century seems to have ran down all its possibilities. Especially through the creation of the Netherlands' masters, this art directly addresses nature, inside it, one can find inspiration and true "lessons" about composing colours of light distribution.

Towards the end of this late autumn of humanism, landscape is regarded less as a purpose in itself and more like a background serving pastoral works or gallant celebrations. Thus, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, landscape painting starts from the concrete reality – reduced to a mechanistic world whose components can be chopped up in pieces and reassembled according to personal taste - and nature becomes more and more a simple occasion to exhibit the psychic transitions of an artist. In a nutshell, "Nature is subordinate to human being"<sup>35</sup>. After this process, the desire of idealizing the landscape becomes known by the means of a soul's mood characterized by drama, lyrism and melancholy.

For the first time, one can feel the romantic excitement, the romantic appeal as a poetic inspiration, the romantic vision of the cosmic space. We finally discover the first manifestations of the «romantic realism of light (...)»<sup>36</sup>.

The works from the 18<sup>th</sup> century which can be included in the category of landscape were created, on the one hand, by artists like Francesco

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<sup>34</sup> Idem, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> Friedländer, Max J., *Despre pictură [About Painting]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 105.

<sup>36</sup> Wojciechowski, Aleksander, *Arta peisajului [Landscape Art]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, p. 39.



Guardi (1712-1793), Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) or Jean Siméon Chardin (1699-1779). The imaginary landscapes of these painters foretell both the appearance of sentimentalism, of the fantastic specific to the romantics and also the appearance of the school from Barbizon or the plein-air of the impressionist painting. On the other hand, painters like Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), William Blake (1757-1827) and Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) open the way for modern impressionism and surrealism. By expressing different quests, the works of these artists together form the artistic phenomenon known as proto-romanticism.

The English landscape blossoms in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the art of Richard Wilson (1714-1782) – the founder of The British Landscape School that regards Nature through the eyes of Claude Lorrain and Cuyp –, Thomas Girtin (1775-1802) or Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788). Though his preoccupation for being a portrait maker left him little time for the study of Nature, Gainsborough catches natural structures with very much sensitivity, as we can notice, for example, in the work *Mister and Misses Andrews* (1748-1749).



**Fig. 16** – *The times of day: The evening*, Caspar David Friedrich, 1821-22, Landesmuseum Hannover

After the dramatic events of the French Revolution, followed by the wars led by Napoleon, the art of landscape knows a major development in the

first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also being an increasing attraction among the patrons and art collectors. In this period, two great landscape traditions can be underlined – the British and the French - that influence various painters from Europe or North America. In Russia, the landscape finds its expression in the group *The Itinerants*, among whose representatives are Feodor Vasilyev (1850-1873), Ivan Shishkin (1832-1898), Arkhip Kuindzhi (1842-1910) and Nikolai Dubovskoy (1859-1918).

The Landscape School from Norwich, founded by John Crome (1768-1821) and John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) continues the Dutch tradition, producing landscapes, marines and scenes around cities. In the same time, the artists' desire to work outdoors becomes intense.



**Fig. 17** – *The Hay Wain*, John Constable, 1821, National Gallery, London.

John Constable (1776-1837), one of the most important representatives of romanticism, has rendered in his landscapes pictorial images of the British province. In his works, we find the influences of Ruisdael, Lorrain and Gainsborough. In its turn, Constable influenced the art of Delacroix and of the paintings reunited under the program of the School of Barbizon. Being passionate about the charm and features of the rural English landscape, Constable made paintings of reduced dimensions, in general, with detailed elements and carefully noticed, but also scenes on large dimensions created in the workshop, after his drafts. One of the features of Constable's painting is the virtuous catching of the dramatism of atmospheric phenomena

and, in this respect, he made numerous studies of the same frame of topic, but having different weather conditions. Outstanding are the works *Landscape with River* (1820) and *The Hay Wain* (1821). The refinement and expressiveness of his landscapes derives from the inspired placement of grames of screens and lights from the cloudy skies, elements which are artistically harmonized with the structures and rhythms present in the lower part of his paintings. The virtuosity of the ensemble and also the delicacy of details trigger powerful emotional answers from the viewers, thus offering the romantic feature of his works.

In *The Hay Wain* (Fig.17), a work that can be seen in the collection of the National Gallery of London, the idillic landscape is built by dividing the painting in two big registers, the upper part is dedicated to the sky with clouds, painted in a variety of shades, taken over from the chromatic of the lower part, where we can see a rustic house typical to the English province of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a scene in which a character crosses the waters of a river. Constable establishes a circuit of reading the painting starting from the upper-left part of the work, with the clouds that “melt” in the group of trees that rise above the horizon’s line and frame the house, reflecting themselves in the river waters. The caught reflexions of the trees create a horizontal trajectory which reaches the right area of the painting where the character is placed.

Turner, the illustrious representative of the romantic school, creates an art characterized by a constant intention of catching the clarity and brightness of the represented scenes. On the one hand, the painting of Turner is influenced by the art of Joseph Wright of Derby, Willem de Louthwebourg and Nicolas Poussin; on the other hand, his painting vision creates the premises of the appearance of modernist painting experiments, finding the influences of his conception up to the area of appearance of abstract painting. In this respect, the large surfaces of some of his landscape compositions can be considered an exercise of artistic abstractization. Approaching various environments and painting techniques, Turner managed to preserve the freshness of his early water colours even in the context of oil paintings. Being fascinated by the marine panoramas of the coasts of England, he proliferated in his works the representation of the spectacular games of light and its reflexes on the surface of the sea.

The most often used chromatic scales are composed of yellow, red and different shades of ochre, but colours are placed in a sophisticated game of transparencies. The illuminations full of light are the main feature of the romantic dimension from Turner’s painting, swamping and dissolving forms, transforming them in suggestions which are connected to abstractization.

In *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up* (Fig.18), Turner compositionally organizes the surface of the painting proposing two great interest centres, both of them placed in the lower part of

the canvas. Like in most works having a marine topic, the sky occupies almost three quarters of the surface of the canvas and it is the arena for developing surprising and touching chromatic games, caught given the careful observation of optical phenomena, but also the result of the romantic imagination of the artist. The vase from the left side is balanced by the sun's presence which is violently coloured in shades of red, orange and yellow, close to the horizon line. Both the flagpoles from the left and the reflexes on the sky and the ones of the sun determine two vertical traces, delineating the vertical registers of the painting. The dominant chord is composed of warm tones enchainned in a sinusoidal trajectory that passes through the entire surface of the canvas.



**Fig. 18** – *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up*, J. M. W. Turner, 1839, National Gallery, London.

Impressionism appears in the conscience of the careful observer of the entire history of art as being one of the greatest revolutions of artistic thinking and practice. Like any defining moment, impressionism appears as a reaction to a state which no longer corresponds to the cultural and spiritual demands of the moment. Impressionist painters are equally part of the literary circles of the symbolists and this is the reason why, most often, the impressionist and symbolist current were reunited under a common aegis.

Degas, Manet, Renoir, etc., are at the beginning naturalist painters, simple observers of the objective data of the landscapes. They received the support and enthusiastic incentive of Paris literates, first of all of Emile Zola, ever since the period when they cultivate that naturalistic vision born under the *appanage* of symbolism and of the painting of Courbet, but in a more “urbanized” manner, according to the demands of the public from Paris. The first exhibition of the canvas of Manet in 1863 is considered the starting point of the appearance of the true doctrine of the impressionists, the canvas being considered the equivalent of the influence and of the impact that the work of Baudelaire, *Les Fleures du Mal*, had at its time.

As we know, the canvas of Claude Monet “*Impression. Sunrise*” (Fig.19) is the landscape that will give the name to the impressionist trend in 1874 and it will build a new paradigm of the genre. In the same exhibition where the canvas of Monet is presented are also exhibited the first impressionist experiments of Renoir, Cezanne, Pissarro, Sisley or Degas. It has always been underlined, from that moment up to nowadays, that impressionism is not intended to be a school, but a new artistic attitude towards the world of nature. As a normal continuation of Romanticism, the impressionist painting has a powerful emotional dominant, obtained by catching and exulting the normal dimension - and this is why it is fascinating - of the natural landscape. These aspects become the more penetrating in the Parisian conscience of the time the more distant the painting modality and the conception about chromatology launched by impressionism are from the normal rules of historical painting.

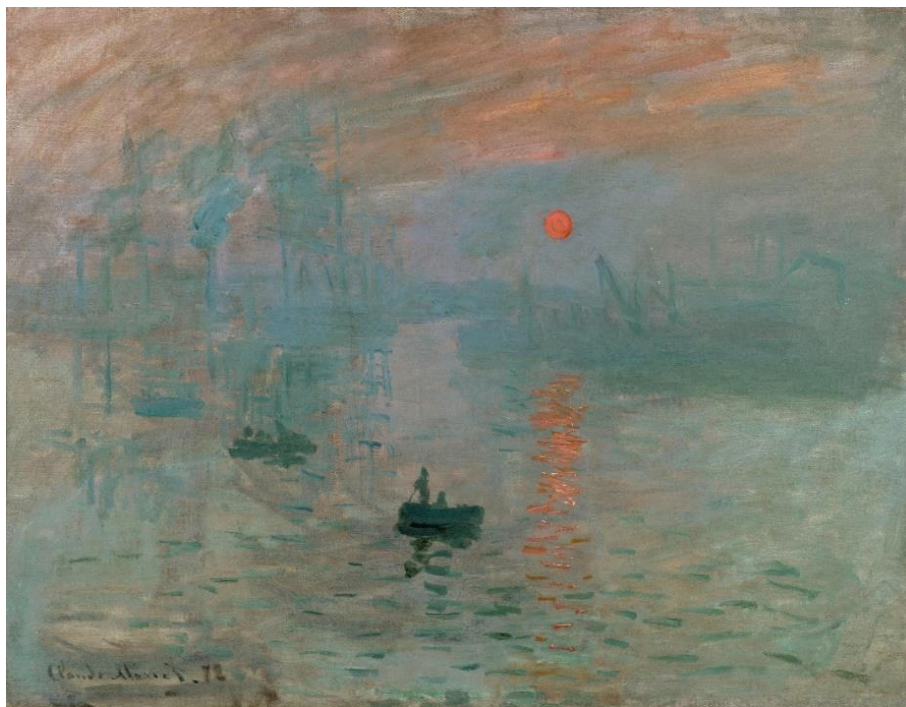
Like in all the other great moments of history, in impressionism, nature remains an important source of inspiration and artistic research. The exercises conceptualized by the painting of Cezanne open unlimited horizons to all the artists of modernity and *avant-garde*; the reduction of forms to the principles of tridimensional geometry - the sphere, the cube, the cylinder, the cone -, on the one hand, and the minute observation of optical phenomena generated by the aerial perspective, on the other hand, are the main work pillars from the painting of Cezanne, elements which allow for the appearance of expressionism, cubism, abstract expressionism and, in general, of a new aesthetic of the landscape, of dead nature and compositional portrait. The compositional rigor showed by Cezanne counterbalances the enthusiastic dilution of most impressionists that count of retinal effects.

Even if he is very dedicated and he also dedicates scenes with characters in gardens or in the urban landscape, Monet is well known for his numerous exceptional landscapes which catch fragments of nature. His painting studies envisage the exploitation of the effects of solar light, of shadow and their transposing through complementary colours, charged with luminous intensity and brightness. The observation of the relationship between shadow and cold colours, respectively light and warm tones, can



also be met in the works of some artists which precede the impressionist moment, but Monet pushes these observations up to the limit, thus charging his paintings with an impressive luminous and chromatic energy.

The work *Waterlily Pond, Pink Harmony* (1899) has an obvious ornamental character, by the simple structure of some great registers on the surface of the canvas. Homogenous and distinct artistic structures are made by using a rapid brush, with spontaneous touches and shades harmonized around green and red. The presence of light and air thus becomes an individual reality in the painting of Monet, being a topic in itself, together with the game of points and round shapes of the waterlilies painted in different shades of pink that swamp the feeling of the painting. The arched bridge offers an ascending direction to the entire composition and it is the only element with linear and stable attributes from the painting, augmenting the luxurious effect of the game of the elements belonging to the vegetal world.



**Fig. 19** - *Impression. Sunrise*, Claude Monet, 1872, National Gallery, London.

Most impressionists practice plein-air painting, in order to satisfy their exigency connected to the research and painting experimenting whose purpose is to build some chromatic programs and of painting technique capable of illustrating a new spontaneous, direct but also deep vision. In

order to perceive and simultaneously transpose the *truth* to the beauty of nature and the emotion that this *beauty* stirs in the painter and viewer, regarding the art of the impressionist landscape, sharing the belief that the same painter that has favoured the giving of this name to the artistic trend is also an impressionist landscape painter, *par excellence*.

The natural landscape is today to a reduced extent the support of meditative contemplation - the spring of the artists' melancholy and of ancient, medieval and Renaissance poets - being the support of proliferating tourism which, sometimes, can also have cultural dimensions. The man of large urban communities meets a natural environment once or twice per year and one notices the change of seasons only by adapting oneself to the clothes requirements imposed by the fashion collections promoted by mass-media or through other market mechanisms. Given the circumstances, culture and art - in general - support the same departure from the laws and criteria of natural harmony, reflecting the requirements of a system based on competition, benefit and immediate effect. On this criterion, art has "attributed" the removal from the principles of natural beauty, paying its attention to a world of ideals which are richly placed in a hierarchy, from the highest metaphysical peaks to the deepest levels of decadence. This separation from natural rhythms is sometimes regarded as a factor of modernity, so art is obviously the reflexion of the alert rhythm of all aspects of daily life or of the lack of serenity of the general competitive spirit.

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**Fig. 8** *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1480-1490, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, exterior panels.

**Fig. 9** *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Hieronymus Bosch, c. 1490-1500, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, interior panels (shutters).

**Fig. 10** *The Virgin among a Multitude of Animals*, Albrecht Dürer, pen, ink and watercolor on paper, 1503, Albertina Museum, Vienna.

**Fig. 11** *Hunters in the Snow*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1565, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

**Fig. 12** *River Landscape with Riders*, Aelbert Cuyp, c. 1653-1657, Gallery of Honour, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

**Fig. 13** *Atalanta and Meleager Hunting the Calydonian Boar*, Peter Paul Rubens, 1635-1640, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

**Fig. 14** *Landscape with Diogenes*, Nicolas Poussin, 1648, Department of Paintings of the Louvre.

**Fig. 15** *Landscape with Apollo Guarding the Herds of Admetus*, Claude Lorrain, 1645, Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome

**Fig. 16** *The times of day: The evening*, Caspar David Friedrich, 1821-22, Landesmuseum Hannover, Hanover, Germany.

**Fig. 17** *The Hay Wain*, John Constable, 1821, National Gallery, London.

**Fig. 18** *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up*, J. M. W. Turner, 1839, National Gallery, London.

**Fig. 19** *Impression. Sunrise*, Claude Monet, 1872, National Gallery, London.

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# **Analysis of the Principles of Inheritance and Succession in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh from the Perspective of Islamic Jurisprudence**

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**Abstract:** *The issue of inheritance and succession is always one of the most challenging, sensitive and controversial issues in Shahnameh (Book of Kings), which has been formed as a result of various goals and motives, and regarding its many effects and consequences, its various events are overshadowed. Therefore, it is very necessary to address these two concepts and topics, especially its dimensions in the literary texts of classical Iranian literature; In Shahnameh, in addition to providing a political context for the formation and expansion of succession conflicts and wars, these events have been the result of several factors. The real protagonists have been characters, the power structure, the religious sect, and even the subordinate governments, who, in order to secure their own interests, have tried to enthrone the prince and their movements, and if they failed, they would try to weaken the victorious prince and his supporters. In general, the aim of the authors of this research is to prove the vastness of literature, which can accurately depict high concepts such as inheritance and succession by using aesthetic methods and literary arrays and beauties. Thus, it can have a profound effect on readers and listeners.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Jurisprudence, Inheritance, Succession, Shahnameh*

## **Introduction**

Considering the relationship between the subject and books and specialized resources in the field of law, it is necessary to examine some specialized works in this field. Literary, historical and legal books were researched in order to compile the collection prepared, because the literary

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works written in the past ages, especially the historical-literary works, have referred to how an action was filed and the quality of punishments according to their subject. Given the need for society to be familiar with inheritance and succession, which is a social issue at all times and in no way takes on an outdated color, its study can actually be effective in influencing individuals. Identifying unspoken topics and the ancient heritage of Persian literature is a necessary topic and should be researched. We should know that our ancient heritage has taken care of all human issues.

*Inheritance as dictionary entry:* In Moin dictionary, several meanings are mentioned for the word inheritance, including “inherit, owning the property and assets of the deceased, estate, leaving money after one’s death, whether with a will or without it, the rights that a person is deserved due to the death of a person.”<sup>1</sup>

*Inheritance in legal terms:* It is the legal transfer of deceased estate to one’s close relatives and friends with special conditions or according to the words of some law professors: “the legal transfer of deceased estate to his/her heirs”<sup>2</sup>. In his book “*Inheritance*”, Mr. Shahidi considers the word “*inheritance*” as estate and property left by the deceased, and in legal terms, inheritance is inherently the transfer of ownership of the deceased’s property to the heir after death<sup>3</sup>.

Although jurists have defined inheritance at the beginning of the discussion, Dr. Jafari Langroudi seems to have provided the best definition of inheritance. According to him, “inheritance is a right that is first transferred from a truly dead or deceased to a true living person”<sup>4</sup>

Estate (*Tarakeh*) that is rooted in the divine verses of Sura An-Nisa’ (in English: For you shall be a half of what your wives leave, in Arabic: وَلَكُمْ (نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ) is sometimes used instead of the term “*heritage (Ma Tarak)*”. Estate (*Tarakeh*) or abandonment (*Tark*) and abandoned (objects) are all related to the same root and are synonymous with inheritance. However, as noted in some definitions, inheritance is considered synonymous with estate (3, P. 3). Some have defined *estate* as follows: “Estate has remained from legator, which has positive and negative parts. “The positive part is the property, rights and claims that reach the heirs, and the negative part is the debt and the obligations that remain in the property and must be paid from its place”<sup>5</sup>.

In another definition, “inheritance is also called the shares that belong to each share certificate, because each share is part of the whole *heritage (Ma Tarak)*, so there is a difference between inheritance and

<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Moin, *Persian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 2002, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Seyed Hassan Emami, *Civil Law*, 2004, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Mehdi Shahidi, *Heritage*, 1995, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Jafar Jafari Langroudi, *Heritage*, 1984, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Amir Nasser Katozian, *Transitional Law*, 1997, p. 13.

abandonment, as there is a difference between the part and the whole. In this case, Dr. Jafari Langroudi, referring to the definition given by one of the elders saying that: "Estate (*Tarakeh*) is something as a right or money left from a deceased", also arguing that: "There is no doubt that estate refers to the positive assets and article 868 of the civil code is a clear reason for this claim"<sup>6</sup>. As can be seen, the synonymy of these two words seems difficult, and it may be more appropriate to accept that inheritance and the relationship between them is that of public and private, not equality. Although the definitions commonly given in the sciences are not comprehensive and restrictive, the terms "*estate*" and "*inheritance*" have been used in most of the definitions mentioned by jurists and followers of inheritance.

### **Causes of inheritance**

Causes of inheritance have two meanings of "general and specific" in Iranian law. In the general sense, it refers to the causes and circumstances in which, if they are collected, estate is transferred from the deceased to the heir. In the specific sense, it includes only the causes of transfer. As it has been observed, in a special sense, the causes of inheritance means the forcible causes of transferring property from estate-leaver to heir, which generally includes death and relationship (kinship). According to Dr. Katozian, because death is an event and the beginning of a transitional movement, it has been inherited in the realization of reality and relationship has been mentioned among the causes, and kinship, in the general sense, includes a blood and marriage relationship. Despite these causes, inheritance includes two important issues, the existence of a blood and marriage relationship between the deceased and the heir, which is explained in the following. Blood relation in legal terms is a kinship relationship between two people who are either of the different generation or both of the third generation, and generally lead to two people being of the same origin<sup>7</sup>.

### **Succession**

The history of choosing the right successor dates back to thousands of years ago, when kings thought of choosing a successor to run the country after them before their deaths. The owner's farmer family, in turn, had always been involved in the issue of succession, and land was usually inherited by a successor who had advantages in terms of birth, gender, and special skills. Fayol (1916) was one of the first authors to identify the need for succession planning in organizations. One of the fourteen principles of

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<sup>6</sup> Mohammad Jafar Jafari Langroudi, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Amir Nasser Katozian, *op. cit.*; Abu al-Qasim Najmuddin Ja'far ibn al-Hassan Mohaghegh Damad, *Sharia al-Islam*, 2007, p. 63.

classic management created by Fayol, first stated in the early twentieth century, is that management is responsible for maintaining the job stability of its employees. Fayol believed that if this need is forgotten, key positions will eventually be seized by employees who have been prepared in a wrong way.

A significant part of the literature in the field of succession planning refers to the leadership succession of the organization; In this regard, Konser and Sevr̃a (1995) identified three distinct phases in research on leadership succession in their comprehensive studies: 1960s was the emergence phase of studies in which researchers focused on successor origins, the relationship between organization size and succession rate, succession rate and post-succession organizational performance, and the circumstances under which succession occurred. 1970s was the growth phase of studies; In this decade, in addition to the origin of the successor, researchers focused on the characteristics of the successor, the frequency of succession selection, the relationship between successors and the board, and the framework and typology of succession. 1980s and 1990s were the review phases of studies and the significant growth of related research; Researchers focused on areas such as the stock market response to organizational management change, succession planning, succession planning process, succession outcomes, and *compliance management*. As it is clear, the need for systematic succession planning and process approach to it has been given special attention since the 1980s<sup>8</sup>.

### **Conceptology of succession planning**

There are several definitions of succession planning. Houang (2001) considers succession planning the same as the continuation of the succession to the throne as planned by the previous person. Succession planning involves selecting the most appropriate staff to identify senior management positions in organizations among a group of skilled candidates. This definition only refers to the selection of skilled people, but does not explain how and why these people are selected<sup>9</sup>.

In another definition, Kevin (2006) considered succession planning as planning for potential alternatives to current leadership positions in the world's leading organizations. Succession management is done through a process called talent management. Through this process, the organization's human talents are identified for key jobs and positions in the coming years

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<sup>8</sup> Shapoor Ettehadnejad, *Teachers' Views on the Effectiveness of Managers' Skills and Its Relationship with Academic Achievement of High School Students in Shiraz*, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Mojtaba Hosseini Nia, *A Survey on the Amount of Managers Having the Organization for Renovation, Development and Equipping of the Country Schools of the Three Management Skills (Technical, Human, Perceptual) from the Perspective of the Employees and Its Impact on Their Effectiveness*, 2006.

and they are gradually prepared to take on these jobs and responsibilities through various training programs. In these organizations, it is assumed that all employees have talents and competencies, but due to some limitations, they can only make long-term investments of those employees who have unique talents. They make long-term investments associated with strategic orientations of the organization<sup>10</sup>. Human talent is defined in relation to the strategic goals and plans of the organization. For example, an organization that has chosen product diversity and innovation as its long-term goal and orientation, then human talent is the person who actively or potentially has an outstanding ability in creativity, initiative and innovation<sup>11</sup>.

### **Customs - Inheritance, Succession**

“Mythical experience is a theatrical ritual that must be repeated regularly, because myth is an order of role model and imaginal form, and its repetition is necessary for the meaning of human actions. Hence, ritual is an actual myth. In other words, ritual is the application of mythical sanctity. On the other hand, the ritual act involves the main and initial work, which is renewed by repeating that eternal and divine act. If the ritual of renewing the world (year) means the renewal of creation that takes place according to the pattern of creation and creation of the world. In Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Nezami's works, many ritual manifestations can be seen”<sup>12</sup>. Inheritance and succession, as one of the subsets of customs, are the first formed in the epic and has become written or unwritten law. According to Dr. Shamisa, “in the epic, we speak of the first and its beginnings, Who has built the bath for the first time? How did they learn calligraphy? And so on”<sup>13</sup>. Also, the first formation finds special rules over time. It is cut and polished throughout history. There are two types of attitudes in the study of myths, which some have called stories and some have called history. If we think of it as a story, it finds the equivalent of a lie and a myth, and if we call it history, it is the truth. “Myth changes into history in the face of truth.”<sup>14</sup>

Much of the ancient Iranian customs and rituals remained mystery in the fourth century. “The remnants of the class principles of ancient Iran were still observed in some courts, and national festivals and customs were common both in the courts of the sultans and among the common people. Among the rulers of this period, the one who was severely exaggerating in

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<sup>10</sup> Fakhr Al-sadat Nasiri, *The Relationship between Managers' Skills and Their Multiple Intelligences Among Managers and High School Teachers in Hamadan*, 2010, p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> Majid Javanmard, *A Survey of Managers' and Teachers' Perceptions of Managers' Human Relations Skills in Isfahan High Schools*, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Homeira Zomorodi, *Comparative Critique of Religions and Myths in Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Khamsa of Nizami and The Conference of the Birds*, 2003, p. 532.

<sup>13</sup> Sirus Shamisa, *Literary genres*, 1991, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup> Sirus Shamisa, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

establishing the customs of Iranian festivals was Mardavij Ibn Ziad Deilami”<sup>15</sup>.

Customs, as mentioned above, are practices that have existed throughout history before us, and many of them may have reached us in the same way or with a small change due to social, cultural, economic, etc. conditions. In the continuation of this discussion, we have to pay attention to the term, which is most commonly used in anthropological discussions as “Totem”. We have accidentally pointed out in the discussion of the necessities of this research; one of the reasons for this research is anthropology and personality analysis of the predecessors. According to their customs, we should also talk about totems. This term refers to “a sacred animal, plant or any object that is especially respected by the tribe or community”. When we look at the totem as an “ism”, it includes a set of rules and customs that consider the totem as a socio-religious institution, and in fact there are customs in totemism. Mr. Cyrus Shimsa says: “Perhaps the Iranians had a totem horse, because the names of many kings and ancient men such as Goshtasb, Lohrasb, Jamasb, Arjasb Turani are associated with horses and the tent of Sohrab was made in the form of horse hoof”<sup>16</sup>.

The point that should not be overlooked is that every respectable thing is not necessarily considered a totem. For example, Simurgh, which was the guardian of the Rostam family and was also respected and sacred, is only a symbolic and mythical bird and cannot be considered a totem. Another term that is widely used in psychology and sociology is the term “Taboo or Tabu”. Taboo is a prohibition that exists about something or a person or thing in a society that, of course, can be different in every culture and society such as marrying a congenial person, killing some animals and so on.

As mentioned, taboo has different aspects in different nations; For example, in our culture, it is not permissible to think about certain things, while it may be permissible for other tribes. However, there are common taboos in the thoughts of ancient nations that are reflected in literature, especially in ancient epics.

Finally, the “archetype” term is a unique term for the collective unconscious contents, and it refers to instinctive and innate thoughts and tendencies to behaviors and ideas that, according to predetermined patterns, are innate in human species. So, in general, it can be concluded that customs are rooted in myths, totems, taboos and archetypes that have gone through ups and downs over time. Numerous examples of anthropological accounts and contemplation of ancient epic stories can be found as rooted in these matters. For example, drinking the blood of the enemy in the story that Goodarz rises for the vengeance of Siavash and his seventy-two children and grandchildren, “he killed Piran Viseh and then drinks his blood”:

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<sup>15</sup> Zabihullah Safa, *History of Literature in Iran*, 1991, p. 221.

<sup>16</sup> Sirus Shamisa, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

خورد و بیالود روی ای شگفت<sup>17</sup>      فروبرد چنگال و خون برگرفت  
*Sink his claws and shed blood      drink and swallow it*

Or another example that Mr. Shamisa has referred to and given various examples of, and we have chosen a common example with this research, is “the concealment of name”. He writes that “in any epic, the hero usually does not say his name to the enemy, just as Rostam did not say his name to Sohrab. In the story of Ashkbous Kashani with Rustam, when Ashkbous sees that a man comes to his war on foot, considers him naive and inexperienced and uses the opportunity and asks with a smile and mockery, “What is your name?””

گفت خندان که نام تو چیست      تن بی سرت را که خواهد گریست<sup>18</sup>  
*Who will cry for your headless body?      “What is your name?” He asked with a smile*

But the experienced Rostam answers him as follows:

تہمتن چنین داد پاسخ که نام      چه پرسی کزین پس نبینی تو کام  
مرا مادرم نام مرگ تو کرد      زمانه مرا پتک ترگ تو کرد<sup>19</sup>

“Oh warrior”, Replied Tahamtan / Why do you ask, hereafter you do not win the fight.

Know that what my mother named me to be your death / Time has created me like a hammer strike on your helmet.

### **Succession in Shahnameh**

The first and most necessary attribute for the king, who wants to succeed or for someone else, is justice. The attributes enumerated for the Shahryar (king) are all necessary to each other. Because all the good attributes must be institutionalized in the king of justice and must accompany him. Such attributes as shame, gratitude, patience, wisdom, when embodied by someone, he becomes a judge. From his childhood, Shahriar was trained to refine his soul. We now discuss the concept and its relationship to human society. In Shahnameh, the foundation of the emperor and succession is based on justice:

جهاندار شاهی ز داد آفرید      دگر از هنر و ز نژاد آفرید  
بدان کس دهد کو سزاوارتر      خرد دارتر هم بی آزارتر  
*God created the kingdom through the spread of justice  
from people who were just, noble and artist /  
God bestows the kingdom on those who are more worthy  
those who are wise, harmless, and kind.*

In the thought of ancient Iran, the concept of justice is very close to the concept of “*asha*” or “*truth*”. A justice is a law that must be identified and

<sup>17</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, *op. cit.*



enforced. A person who enforces this rule is called a judge. One can recognize and practice justice as a judge, and justice influences his whole being, his personal and political-social life, and becomes the queen of his mind and behavior. This is the beginning of justice. In Shahnameh, it is stated that the human being must first establish justice in his being and body. As we know, in the human being, there is a fierce fight and conflict between the forces of good and evil. "Trying best" is an attempt to win this conflict and be adorned with good human attributes.

چو داد تن خویشتن داد مرد چنان دان که پیروز شد در نبرد

*Whenever a warrior does his best to defeat his enemy*

*Truly victorious and proud, he returns to his companions*

Avoiding pollution and guilt illuminates the psyche.

دگر داد دادن تن خویش را ننگه داشتن دامن خویش را<sup>20</sup>

*A warrior must do his best avoid being infected with small and big sins.*

This is necessary for the king; Because to establish justice, you have to start with yourself. Of course, if he is victorious at this stage and succeeds in governing himself and establishing justice among the people, then he is a perfect human being.

چنین داد پاسخ که داد و خرد تن پادشا راهمی پرورد

اگر دادگر چند بی کس بود و را پاسبان راستی بس بود

*He replied that justice and wisdom would be the source of his permanence and his reign/*

*If the king is just, then this truth and justice will suffice to protect him.*

The issue of succession and justice is one of the complex words that has attracted the attention of many thinkers. The human being has always been confused by concepts. How can justice be done in socio-political life? Communities have not had much success in this search. By studying Ferdowsi's poems, we find that there is a special view of justice and practical examples have shown it clearly.

A) Justice is putting everyone and everything in its place.

The law of truth is designed in the Shahnameh in such a way that the concept of "putting everything in its place" is inferred from it. In order to process a rule in this regard, it is better to pay attention to the most important points. Shahriar, as the performer of the first stage of justice and the person who is in charge of it, has some characteristics. In Shahnameh, not everyone can become Shahryar. If the desired characteristics and attributes are gathered in someone, we are witnessing the just Shahryar, otherwise the basis of society is based on tyranny and oppression. "What can you expect from a hog but a grunt?". In Shahnameh, we often see that the king's throne was left

<sup>20</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit., p. 29.

without a king (Shahryar) and those around him were looking for a person who would have a royal interest and with an artistic taste.

In Shahnameh, the law of "Horses for courses" is observed. In this great book, we constantly come across the issues that everyone has different qualities and skills and so are suitable in different situations. One is in an army, one has a mace and the other is an apprentice. If they do not do that, the earth will be in turmoil, and justice will be blemished. Of course, they never despise professions such as agriculture and handicrafts; Because these jobs are the source of government revenue. In Shahnameh, there is a kind of division of labor and each job has its own character and ethics. War, defense, governance, and teaching, each require their own unique characteristics and are more sensitive; Because they have to protect the land and the monarchy from the devil and enemies. One of the most famous stories in this regard is the request of a shoemaker from Anushirvan to leave his child to educators (teachers) for learning purposes. Anushirvan rejects this request.

هنرمند و بادانش و یادگیر	چو بازارگان بچه گردد دبیر
دبیری ببایدش پیروزبخت	چو فرزند ما برنشیند بتخت
بدین کار دیگر تو با من مکوش	هنر باید از مرد موزه فروش
نماند به جز حسرت و سرد باد	بدست خردمند و مرد نژاد
چوآیین این روزگار این بود <sup>21</sup>	شود پیش او خوار مردم شناس چوپاسخ دهد زو پذیرد سپاس
	بما بر پس از مرگ نفرین بود

*When the child of this business man becomes brave, a knowledgeable artist and a learner/*

*As soon as our son ascends to the throne, he deserves a lucky court secretary/*

*The shoemaker must be an artist and you don't talk to me about him anymore/*

*The wise and the noble people will be pushed aside and they will have nothing but regret and sigh/*

*famous people will be humiliated beside him if they respond to him, he will not only ask for wages but also asks them to thank him/*

*After our death, the noble men should curse us if the rites of this time were in this way/*

It is intended to preserve the dignity of the classes so that the king, teacher or apprentice has a high status. Perhaps this act of Anushirvan is a cruel act in today's view; Hence, in his time, contrary to this view, he was violent.

### **Succession method**

In the trial system of the predecessors, it had been customary to notarize and make others testify to their good deeds, as in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, when Zahak, for fear of Fereydown's revolt and fear of falling

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<sup>21</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit., p. 120.

from the royal throne, tries to show himself as a just and virtuous king and asks the priests and clerics the following:

یکی محضر اکنون بپاید نوشت  
که جز تخم نیکی سپهید نکشت  
نگوید سخن جز همه راستی  
نخواهد به داد اندرون کاستی  
ز بیم سپهید همه راستان  
بر آن کار گشتند هم داستان  
بر آن محضر ازدها ناگزیر  
گواهی نبشتند برنا و پیر<sup>22</sup>  
*One should write a testimony that Zahak hasn't planted anything but the seed of goodness/*

*He hasn't ever said anything but the truth he is a perfect man in terms of justice/*

*Fearing Zahak, all the elders of the country help and accompany him/*

*On that testimony, inevitably, young and old confirmed that testimony/*

Meanwhile, Kaveh the Blacksmith, whose son has been arrested for providing food and medicine for the lieutenant general, enters Zahak's court for litigation. To narrate this story, Ferdowsi composes what follows:

هم آنگه یکایک ز درگاه شاه بر آمد خروشین دادخواه  
نباشم بدین محضر اندر گوانه هرگز برانديشم از پادشا  
خروشید و برجست لرزان ز جای  
برید و بسپرد محضر به پای  
*Suddenly, from the Shah's court, the cry for justice echoed everywhere in the palace and outside/*

*I will never accept your testimony or claim I am not afraid of being punished by the king/*

*Kaveh shouted and got up trembling tore the testimony, threw it on the ground and trampled on it/*

Kaveh the Blacksmith, after leaving the court of Zahak, puts his blacksmith's leather on his spear and

همی بر خروشید و فریاد خواند  
جهان را سراسر سوی داد خواند<sup>23</sup>  
*Kaveh cried aloud and raised his voice asking the whole world for justice*

By using the word "justice" in the intended verse, it becomes clear that Kaveh's rebellion and recourse to Fereydoun and the people's acceptance of Fereydoun's struggle with Kaveh's persistence against Zahak was to establish justice. Ferdowsi, in his eternal work in the description of Anushirvan kingdoms, expresses his beliefs about succession and emphasizes that:

به تخت مهی بر هر آن کس که داد  
کند در دل او باشد از داد شاد  
اگر پادشاه را بود پیشه داد  
بود بی گمان هر کس از داد شاد  
و گر شاه با داد و بخشایش است  
جهان پر ز خویی و آسایش است  
و گر کژی آرد به داد اندرون  
کسبش بود خوردن و آب و خون

<sup>22</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>23</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit., p. 42.

جهان دار بر داوران داور است      ز اندیشه‌ی هر کسی برتر است  
ز یزدان و از ما بدان کس درود      که داد و مهرش بود تار و پود  
اگر دادگر باشدی شهریار      بماند به گیتی بسی پایدار<sup>24</sup>

*Whoever ascends to the throne      enjoys the spiritual pleasures  
of a judge/*

*If the king asks for justice and promotes it,      no doubt all the people  
will rejoice in the just performance of the just king/*

*If the king is both a judge and a man of generosity,      all the world is  
full of goodness and comfort/*

*Conversely, if a king turns to oppression instead of justice,      he will  
receive nothing but the blood of the liver/*

*Because the king of the country is the judge of the judges      he is  
higher than the thought of any human being/*

*Not only the king but all of us give greeting      to someone  
whose whole being is full of justice/*

*If the king of the country (Shahryar) is just,      his reign in the  
world will be long and prolonged/*

*From kings who gained thrones and crown,      had wealth and  
armies/*

*There was no one more just than Anoushirvan (eternal soul)  
who, God willing, will always be alive and eternal/*

*There could not have been a more artistic king than him in wisdom  
and rationality, nor a more just king than him in throne and court/*

By collecting Kharaj (tax), the king pays the costs of protection and security, and the other part is spent on development and reconstruction. Before Anushirvan, the interest was three to one, or four to one, and it belonged to the king, but Kawad made this interest ten to one. Anoushiran also endowed ten to one Kharaj. Considering the opinion of an association of priests and clerics, he writes in a letter to his staff:

نهادیم بر روی گیتی خراج      درخت گزیت از پی تخت عاج  
کس کو برین یک درم بگذرد      ببیداد بر یک نفس بشمرد  
بیزدان که او داد دیهیم و فرّ      که من خود میانش بیرم به ار  
بجایی که باشد زیان ملخ      و گرتف خورشید تابد بشخ  
دگرتف باد سپهر بلند      بدان کشتنندان رساند گزند  
همان گر نبارد بنو روز نم      ز خشکی شود دشت و خرم دژم  
مخواهید باژ اندرون بوم و رست      که ابر بهاران به باران نشست  
ز تخم پراگنده و مزد رنج      ببخشید کارندگان را ز گنج<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit., p. 60.

*We put tax on our country's agricultural lands                      and use Gazit  
tree for constructing the king's throne/*

*Is there anyone among you who takes one dirham tax more than we  
have determined from the peasants                      and thus oppresses the farmers?/*

*I swear to the one who has provided me with this royal glory and  
crown,*

*I myself will cut the oppressive tax officer with the saw/*

*Where grasshoppers have damaged their farmland                      and the  
heat of the sun has damaged their fields and trees/*

*Warm winds of the sun in the high sky                      have damaged their  
fields/*

*If there is no spring rain on their fields                      their lush and dry  
plains will dry up/*

*you want again in the land and at the time of growing                      if the  
spring cloud rain ages in/*

*from scattered seed and the wages of work                      bestow the workers  
what they need/*

### **Specialized study of inheritance in Shahnameh**

When Kay Khosrow sees his death approaching, he bequeaths that his treasure and property be inherited. The story begins when Kay Khosrow despairs of his worldliness and to some extent withdraws from state affairs. One day, he orders to take the royal veil out of the city and put up a tent in the plains, and he sits on the throne himself, and the heroes and nobles gather around him. So he addresses everyone that death is for everyone, from Houshang Shah to Kaus, who were all honorable kings, but now there is nothing left of them but a name. I have found what I asked God for. The treasure is for endowment, and the land for governing; I endow you the treasure, and I assign the rule of every city to one of you. One said that the king has gone mad, the other said that his work was divine and not demonic. Zal said he did not know what would happen to him. Let us wait a week to see what happens. After a week, the king had a baby. The elders gather. Kaykhosrow says that Goudarz Keshvad is my testamentary executor. He must spend the treasure to build the ruins and makes the poor rich, and to improve the lives of the orphans. He gives the treasure to the bride, which is in the city of Tus, to Zal and Rostam. He gives every weapon in the arsenal to Giv and the bracelet and other royal ornaments to Tus. He gives Targ, the Rumi helmet and chain mail to Fariborz and the precious collar, as well as the two rings on which the king's name is carved to Bijan.

یکی کآن به نزدیک ایران بود	نگه کن رباطی که ویران بود
از ایران و ز رنج افراسیاب	دگر آگیری که باشد خراب
زنانی که بی‌شوی و بی‌چادرند	دگر کودکانی که بی‌مادرند

دگر آن کش آید به چیزی نیاز ز هر کس همی دارد آن رنج راز	
بر ایشان در گنج بسته مدار	ببخش و بترس از بد روزگار
دگر گنج کش نام بادآورست	پر از افسر و زیور و گوهرست
نگه کن به شهری که ویران شدست	کنام پلنگان و شیران شدست
دگر هر کجا رسم آتشکدست	که بی‌هیرد جای ویران شدست
سه دیگر کسی کاو ز تن بازماند	به روز جوانی درم برفشاند
دگر چاهساری که بی‌آب گشت فراوان بر او سالیان برگذشت	
بدین گنج بادآور آباد کن	درم خوار کن مرگ را یاد کن
دگر گنج کش خواندندی عروس	که آگند کاووس در شهر طوس

به گودرز فرمود کان را ببخش	به زال و به گیو و خداوند رخس
همان باره و طوق کنداوران	همان جوشن و گرزهای گران
ز اسبان به جایی که بودش یله به طوس سپهبد سپردش گله	
همه باغ و گلشن به گودرز داد	به گیتی ز مرزی که آمدش یاد
سلیح تنش هر چه در گنج بود	که او را بدان خواسته رنج بود
سپردند یکسر به گیو دلیر	بدانگه که خسرو شد از گنج سیر

فربرز کاووس را داد شاه	بسی جوشن و ترگ و رومی کلاه
یکی طوق روشن‌تر از مشتری	ز باقوت رخشان دو انگشتری
نیشته بر او نام شاه جهان	که اندر جهان آن نبودی نهان
به بیژن چنین گفت کین یادگار	همی دار و جز تخم نیکی مکار <sup>26</sup>

<i>Look at the ruined Carvansaray</i>	<i>that one near Iran/</i>
<i>Another basin that is destroyed</i>	<i>from Iran and from</i>
<i>Afrasyab's suffering/</i>	
<i>Other children who are without mother</i>	<i>women who are without</i>
<i>veil/</i>	
<i>Another one needs something</i>	<i>And suffers from the</i>
<i>secret of everyone/</i>	
<i>The door of treasure was closed for them</i>	<i>bestow and be afraid of</i>
<i>bad times/</i>	
<i>Another treasurer is famous</i>	<i>full of ornaments and</i>
<i>jewelries/</i>	
<i>Look at the city that has been destroyed</i>	<i>where the cattle became</i>
<i>prey of leopards and lions/</i>	

<sup>26</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

Wherever there is a drawing of a fire temple                      without Hirbad  
it is a ruin/

The other three were left                      during youthful times  
giving dirham/

Another well that dried out                      year by year passed/

He told Goodarz to bestow that                      to Zal, Giv and God's  
Rakhsh/

The same horses and golden necklace of Kandavarán                      the  
same armour and mace/

Fariborz gave the King Kavus                      an armour, a helmet and a  
Roman helmet/

A golden necklace brighter than Jupiter                      two rings of bright ruby/

The name of the world king written on it                      that you were not hidden  
in his world/

He told to Bizhan that it is this memorial                      you take it and don't  
plant the seeds of goodness/

Although some people believe that "the issue of inheritance is not completely clear and stable in Shahnameh", paying attention to the future of the country and the kingdom has always been one of the important points in the field of property, and choosing a worthy person who can both preserve the name of the predecessors and have the ability to add a name and place to the family, property and kingdom has always been very important.

According to astronomers, when Manouchehr is approaching the end of his life, according to the advice of the priests on foresight, he convenes a meeting and calls the priests and the gentlemen:

منوچهر را سال شد بر دو شست	ز گیتی همی بار رفتن بیست
ستاره‌شناسان بر او شدند	همی ز آسمان داستانها زدند
بدادند زان روز تلخ آگهی	که شد تیره آن تخت شاهنشهی

نگر تا چه باید کنون ساختن	نباید که مرگ آورد تاختن
سخن چون ز داننده بشنید شاه	به رسم دگرگون بیاراست گاه
همه موبدان و ردان را بخواند	همه راز دل پیش ایشان براند <sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.





considers this peace as a trick that Afrasiab and Pashang have resorted to. Out of inability, he accepts the peace and builds a circle in the country, conciliating the peasants. Because death is near and life is over, of his four sons named Kay Kavus, Kay Pashin, Kay Arash and Kay Armin, he calls Kavus and makes him as his successor, advising him to rule the people with justice after him.

که بودند زو در جهان یادگار	پسر بد مر او را خردمند چار
کی ارش دوم و دگر کی پشین	نخستین چو کاووس بافرین
سپردند گیتی به آرام و کام	چهارم کجا آرش بود نام
سر انجام تاب اندر آمد به بخت	چو صد سال بگذشت با تاج و تخت
بیژمرد خواهد همی سبز برگ	چو دانست کامد به نزدیک مرگ
ز داد و دهش چند با او براند	سر ماه کاووس کی را بخواند
تو بسپار تابوت و بردار تخت <sup>29</sup>	بدو گفت ما بر نهادیم رخت

*Kay Kawad, the first king of the Kiani dynasty, had four sons they were a memorial of him in the world/*

*the first one was Kavus with royal glory the second was called Arash, and the third was called Kay Pashin/*

*The fourth was called Kay Armin The four boys lived a worthy life in peace and tranquility/*

*When a hundred years have passed and the time of death was approaching,*

*Eventually, a knot appeared in his fortune that indicated his imminent death/*

*When a hundred years had passed since his reign,*

*his fortune that was as lush as a green leaf began to wither/*

*At the beginning of one of the months, he called his eldest son Kay*

*Kavus*

*and talked to him about justice and generosity in the kingdom/*

*I am preparing to travel to the Hereafter*

*I ask you to hold my burial, you will be my successor/*

The choice of the eldest son as a successor is also an unwritten custom that Kay Kawad accepts, choosing the first son, Kavus, as the next king. But it is not always the case that as soon as a king dies, a successor be selected. When we review the events after Siavash's assassination, we see that Kavus welcomes Kay Khosrow with full glory and everyone except Tus congratulates him. Tus believes that he was the ruler of the army and the grandson of Manouchehr Shah, the son of Shah Nozar, a more deserving king than the grandson of Kavus and he was not satisfied that one of Afrasiab race was sitting on the throne. Other than him, Fariborz, the son of Kavus, was more worthy of a king than the grandson of Giv.

ز خسرو وزن پیش من داستان

نباشم بدین کار همداستان

<sup>29</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

<p>نشانیم بخت اندر آید به خواب فسیله نه نیکو بود با پلنگ هنر باید و گوهر و فر و دین سزاورتر کس به تخت و کلاه همش فر و برزست و هم نام و داد<sup>30</sup></p>	<p>جهاندار کز تخم افراسیاب نخواهیم شاه از نژاد پشنگ کسی کاو بود شهریار زمین فربرز کاووس فرزند شاه بهرسو ز دشمن ندارد نژاد</p>
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*I am against this choice* *I do not like anyone to talk to me about Khosrow/*

*Jahandar (Khosrow) is from the ancestry of Afrasiab if we ascend him on the throne, he will make us miserable/*

*We do not want the king of Pashang race leave it to a predator like a leopard/*

*When we are going to choose someone to rule the world, there must be someone who has art, essence, glory and religion/*

*Fariborz, the son of Kavus Shah is better and more deserving to ascend a throne/*

*he is not one of the enemies of Iran on the father's side, nor on the mother's side, but vice versa/*

Eventually they decide to fight, but for fear of killing many people on both sides, they send someone to Kavus who is in the middle of the ruling. Tus's argument is that as long as the king's son is present, the kingdom should not be handed over to the grandson, and Goodarz considers having a royal Khvarenah (splendor and glory) as the reason for Khosrow's righteousness. Finally, it is decided that whoever can conquer Bahman Fortress (Bahmandaj) will become king. Kay Khosrow wins and becomes a king. Kavus embraces him and congratulates him, making him his successor according to the cult of kings.

<p>ز شادی دل پیر گشته جوان بخندید و شادان دلش بردمید به دیدار او بد نیا را نیاز نیایش سزوار او برگرفت به تخت جهاندار دیهیم ساز گرفت آن زمان دست خسرو به دست ز گنجور تاج کیان خواست پیش به کرسی شد از نامور تخت عاج بسی گوهر شاهوار آورد<sup>31</sup></p>	<p>پذیره شدش با رخی ارغوان چو از دود خسرو نیا را بدید پیاده شد و برد پیشش نماز بخندید و او را به بر در گرفت وزانجا سوی کاخ رفتند باز چو کاووس بر تخت زرین نشست بیاورد و بنشانند بر جای خویش ببوسید و بنهاد بر سرش تاج ز گنجش زبرد نثار آورد</p>
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<sup>30</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

*Khosrow was welcomed with a juicy, red and white face like a Judas-tree*

*his old heart was very happy with Khosrow's victory/  
When Khosrow saw his ancestor, Kavus, from distance  
smiled at him, his heart was happy, it started beating/  
got off his horse and went forward to meet his ancestor he  
was eager to see him, bowing in front of him/  
smiled and hugged him happily prayed for him, which he  
deserved/*

*From there they went to the palace They ascended to the  
throne of Kavus Shah, to hand over the royal throne to Khosrow/  
When Kavus sat on the golden throne he took Khosrow's  
hand, ascended him to the throne/  
took him and put him on his place asked his treasurer to  
bring Kiani's crown from the treasury/  
kissed him and then put it on Khosrow's head After that,  
Kavus Shah himself ascended the throne/  
He ordered to bring many jewels from his treasury, including peridot  
bringing lots of jewels deserved by the king/*

His life ends at the age of eighty-six. Vishtaspa ascends the throne and finally dies after nine years of reign and the country is left without a king. Afsiab is tempted to attack Iran without a king by Peshang. The elders resorts to Zal and he sends Rustam to confront Afrasiab. Zal and Rostam are loyal to the preservation of the royal dynasty, until it is reported that from the Fereydoun race, there is a wise young man, who has a house in Alborzkooh (Alborz Mountain) and no one deserves to become a king more than him.

<p>که برگیر کوپال و بفراز یال گزین کن یکی لشکر همگروه مکن پیش او بر درنگ اندکی گه و بیگه از تاختن نغنوی همی تخت شاهی بیاراستند<sup>32</sup></p>	<p>به رستم چنین گفت فرخنده زال برو تازیان تا به البرز کوه ابر کیقباد آفرین کن یکی به دو هفته باید که ایدر بوی بگویی که لشکر ترا خواستند</p>
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<sup>32</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

*Courtly Zal turned his face to his son and said                      take your mace  
and raise your heroic manes/*

*Go quickly from here to Alborzkooh                      Choose an army and  
take it with you/*

*When you reach Kay Kawad, first greet him                      You should not  
linger with him too long/*

*On your trip to Alborzkooh and your return should not take more  
than two weeks*

*Do not stop attacking from time to time/*

*They have adorned the throne for your sitting and crowning                      also  
emphasize what the troops want in you/*

Rostam brings Kawad with himself to the capital and on the way, they fight with the leader of Afrasiab Corps. When they reach the Iranian army, they celebrate for a week and put him on the throne on the eighth day. They sit down and put the royal crown on his head. As seen, it is not always the case that the new king is elected by the king before him and with his death, the new person becomes the king. In these circumstances, having a divine glory is more worthy than the royal emblem. Because Kay Khosrow has been able to defeat the court, it means that he is approved by God and the one who has a divine glory is chosen as the king, and Kawad is promised by the priests to Zal. The dream that Kawad himself has seen that the crown has been placed on his head by two hawks is a proof of having divine glory.

که خوابی بدیدم به روشن روان	شهنشه چنین گفت با پهلوان
یکی تاج رخشان به کردار شید	که از سوی ایران دو باز سپید
نهادندی آن تاج را بر سرم	خرامان و نازان شدند برم

ز تاج بزرگان رسیدم نوید	تهمتن مرا شد چو باز سپید
ز باز و ز تاج فروزان چو ماه	تهمتن چو بشنید از خواب شاه
نشانت خوابت ز پیغمبران <sup>33</sup>	چنین گفت با شاه کنداوران

*The emperor said this to the hero                      I had a dream last night with  
my clear mind*

*Two white hawks from Iran                      they carried a shining king crown  
Hastily, walking proudly, they were going to visit me                      put  
that crown on my head/*

*When Rustam heard the king's dream,                      he became aware of the  
wings and the burning crown like the moon in that dream/*

*In response to Kay Kawad, he said                      your dream is a kind of  
dream prophets see/*

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<sup>33</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

In Sohrab's kingdom, the father sends him a message that he wants to go to the place of worship and take seclusion, so he will abdicate the throne and the crown to his son.

If someone gains the emperor title, a good and auspicious day should have been considered for his coronation. Sohrab chooses Mehregan to ascend the royal crown on that day, as his ancestor, Fereydoun Farrokhejad, had chosen such a day:

که تا برنهد تاج شاهی بسر  
برین مهرگان تاج بر سر نهاد  
گزیدش یکی روز فرخنده تر  
چنانچون فریدون فرخ نژاد

*He chose a good and auspicious day to put the crown of the kingdom on his head/*

*When Mehregan put the crown on his head like his ancestor, Fereydoun Farrokhejad/*

The new king makes a new promise with his leaders and heroes and asks them to be his companions and helpers now, as they were obedient to the previous king:

بآواز گفت ای سران سپاه  
هر آنکس که از تخت من نیست شاد  
مرا هر چه فرمود و گفت آن کنم  
شما نیز از اندرز او دست باز  
شنیده همه پند و اندرز شاه  
ندارد همی پند شاهان بیاد  
بکوشم بنیکی و فرمان کنم  
مدارید وز من مدارید راز

*He called out to his subordinates loudly Oh leaders of the army, you have certainly heard all the advice of the kings before me/*

*everyone is unhappy with my kingdom and has forgotten the advice of kings/*

*I do whatever he tells me to do I try to follow his advice well and perfectly/*

*You also listen to the advice and counsel of these elders let me know about your affairs/*

The elders and heroes came to the new king and presented their gifts to him:

به شاهی نشست از برش کیقباد  
همه نامداران شدند انجمن  
چو کشواد و خراد و برزین گو  
فشانند گوهر بران تاج نو  
همان تاج گوهر به سر بر نهاد  
چو دستان و چون قارن رزمزن

*Kay Kawad went forward and sat on the throne put the same golden crown on his head/*

*All the military and famous people were present including Zal Zar (Rostam's father) and the warrior Qarn/*

*Goshvad, the ancestor of Giv, Kharad and Barzin Pahlavann were also present*

*They threw gems and gold on the new crown of Shah Kawad/*

In the kingdom of Goshtasb, after noticing through Zarir that his father has chosen him to the kingdom, his brother brings a crown, bracelet,

golden necklace and throne. Goshtasb happily sits on the throne and puts the crown on his head and elders congratulate him:

برادر بیاورد پرمایه تاج	همان یاره و طوق و هم تخت عاج
چو گشتاسپ تخت پدر دید شاد	نشست از برش تاج بر سر نهاد
نبیره جهانجوی کاوس کی	ز گودرزیان هرک بد نیکپی
چو بهرام و چون ساوه و ریونیز	کسی کو سرافراز بودند نیز
به شاهی برو آفرین خواندند	ورا شهریار زمین خواندند
نبودند بر پای بسته کمر	هر انکس که بودند پر خاشاکر <sup>34</sup>

*Brother brings the precious crown                      a crown, bracelet, golden necklace and throne/*

*When Goshtasb sees his father's throne                      he sits on it happily and puts it on his head/*

*One of the nephews of Kay Kavus Shah                      From the Goodarz family, Goshvad Pahlavan, gather/*

*Like Bahram, Saveh, Ronier and others                      who were arrogant and Generals gathered around the throne/*

*They congratulated the king on the beginning of the reign                      they called him the king of the world/*

*They were standing in front of the king's throne                      hands on their chests and getting ready to serve/*

Considering the verses in question, we realize what several criteria have always been considered for a person to be worthy of ruling over the people.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion and discourse of inheritance and succession has been given special attention throughout history in all ages, especially in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. It can be concluded that inheritance and succession have been one of the dominant discourses in all political and scientific fields in different eras and centuries. These two subjects have been addressed by politicians and scientists in their own way and have been implemented by just politicians. Scholars have also explained its theoretical foundations or tackled the justice of politicians and rulers in their works, praised them and encouraged other rulers and people to continue their path. From Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, a masterpiece of Persian literature, to a less important work, this issue has been addressed. In the works of literary writers who have had a hand in politics, these two issues have also been used a lot.

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<sup>34</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, op. cit.

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## Local Spiritual Belief: Creative Posture of Dancer Mask Maker in Malang East Java

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**Abstract:** *This article discusses the creative posture of dancer mask makers in Malang of East Java Province. The ethnographic approach is chosen as a research method to obtain a description of the subject of the study. In the analysis process, the data are set into categories and interpreted. The result of the research shows that the creative process behind mask-making involves several stages. The first stage is wiiwit, the building of commitment to mask-making. The second stage is mbakali, the drafting of the mask. The third stage is maesi, the carving of face and crown shapes on the mask. Finally, the fourth stage is telasan, the finishing of the mask. The mask-making is a creative posture shown by artisans to produce artwork to be used as dance equipment in a mask puppet show. The Malang mask artisans do not differ from wooden mask artisans in other regions in terms of materials and technique. Their mask-making process similarly involves wood as raw material, a knife as a carving tool, and slivering technique. Their mask-making skills are mostly inherited. The artisans surprisingly do not get their skills from internships but from watching, giving attention, and imitating other artisans. The creative posture is always based on local wisdom and orienting toward local spiritual beliefs. The effect of local spirituality can be found in material selection, carving techniques, and coloring patterns. The experience of mask artisans in putting local spirituality into the mask-making process needs to be reviewed.*

**Keywords:** *ethnography, artisans, mask, wood, creative*

### INTRODUCTION

A mask is a distinctive thing that is created to cover the face of the wearer<sup>1</sup>. The process of mask-making is varying depending on the local culture performed by the community where the maker lives. It is often

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<sup>1</sup> Audrey C. Rule et al., "African Mask-Making Workshop: Professional Development Experiences of Diverse Participants," *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 17, no. 2 (2015): 135–57, <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v17i2.953>.

created as a piece of equipment for performance arts. Several countries in the world have been known for their mask-making arts. The Japanese have a tradition of carving the Noh Mask, which is known for its artistic quality<sup>2</sup>. On the border of Thailand-Laos, the dweller creates a mask for ancestral homage and exorcism<sup>3</sup>. Having the intention to complement the existing information about the mask, the authors try to elaborate and review the making process of traditional masks in Malang Regency East Java.

The activity of artisans can be identified from their creative process, such as making ideas, finishing work, and embellishing the work with aesthetical or symbolical values<sup>4</sup>. In general, what the mask maker does is not quite different from what the artist does. Both of them carry out interpretations and then transform their ideas into something valuable based on local culture<sup>5</sup>. In other words, either mask makers or artists think and act in compliance with the local cultural context<sup>6</sup>. Culture determines the material (medium) that is used to deliver messages<sup>7</sup> as well as the production technique and hand skills involved in the process of message transformation<sup>8</sup>. Mask artisans in Central Java, West Java, and Bali<sup>9</sup> use a mask as artifacts whereas the conservers of Malang mask puppets use a mask as equipment for ballet (*dramatari*)<sup>10</sup>. Javanese masks produced by traditional artisans consist of many faces including the face of a human, a demon (genie), an animal, or other characters, in which each face has various expressions.

The play of Panji Story, one of the performance art in Malang, involves masks for characters of king and knight representing Javanese

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<sup>2</sup>Yufei Wu, "Analysis of Mask Art in Japanese Noh" 341, no. Icadce (2019): 104–8, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icadce-19.2019.23>.

<sup>3</sup>Ya-liang Chang, "The Body , Merit-Making and Ancestor Worship: Mask Festivals in Thailand and Laos" 21, no. 2 (2018): 212–33.

<sup>4</sup>Indah Dewi Lestari, "Proses Kreatif Seniman Rupa," *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1–16.

<sup>5</sup>A David Napier, *Masks Transformation, and Paradox*, 1st ed. (Berkeley Los Angeles London: University of California Press, 1984), p 10.

<sup>6</sup>Mukhsin Patriansyah and Ria Sapitri, "Ekspresi Dalam Seni Patung Karya Giuseppe Pongolini," *Besaung: Jurnal Seni Desain Dan Budaya* 7, no. 1 (2022): 59–64, <https://doi.org/10.36982/jsdb.v7i1.2050>.

<sup>7</sup>Jurusan Seni Murni, "TRANSFORMASI MATERIAL KERTAS DALAM" VII, no. 1 (2021): 1–9.

<sup>8</sup>Ahmad Bahrudin, Anindita Galuh Amartya, and A Fachrizky Al-amien, "Studi Kasus Form Follows Function Dalam Karya Seni Kriya," *Jurnal Ekspresi Seni Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Dan Karya Seni* 33, no. 1 (2017): 258–60.

<sup>9</sup>Bening Tri Suwasono, "Rupa Topeng Panji Gaya Yogyakarta Di Museum Sonobudoyo," *Jurnal Suluh* 4, no. 2 (2021): 147–66.

<sup>10</sup>Robby Hidajat, "The Expression of Local Values in Performance Art of Malang Mask Puppet," *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications (IJARP)* 3, no. 9 (2019): 105–9.

gentility<sup>11</sup>. The Panji Story played in Malang mask puppet originated from oral tradition that tells about the romance between Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Sekartaji<sup>12</sup>. Panji Story is always performed as a ballet (*dramatari*) with *gagahan* as the antagonist character and *alusan* as the protagonist character<sup>13</sup>. Such character differentiation is also used for princesses and animals<sup>14</sup>. Each character type is differentiated through the size of the face. The character of *gagahan* has a big facial shape, whereas the character of *alusan* has a small facial shape. For instance, a princess mask as a representation of *alusan* has a small face, whereas an animal mask that represents the character of *gagahan* have usually big face<sup>15</sup>.

Furthermore, traditional mask artisans use wood as raw material, knives as carving tools, and slivering techniques as manufacturing techniques<sup>16</sup>. Malang mask is created by taking reference from puppet (*wayang*), then it is characterized by round and straight eyes, an oval face, and a pointed nose. Such kind of mask pattern has become a regular model in Java, mainly for masks used in Panji Story<sup>1718</sup>.

Instead of a formal learning process, wooden mask artisans in Malang take lessons related to mask-making from their environment. They learn by observing masks used by dancers while performing on the stage. This kind of observation is considered an aesthetic experience. During the observation, mask artisans subjectively internalize the mask shape in their minds and imagine the mask as an aesthetical concept<sup>19</sup>. This kind of aesthetical posture then generates enthusiasm to materialize the mask. Even though many factors stand behind this enthusiasm, this article focuses merely on one factor, namely spirituality. This factor is chosen since it exists beyond material

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<sup>11</sup>Lydia Kieven, *Menelusuri Panji Di Candi-Candi: Relief Figur Bertopi Di Candi-Candi Zaman Majapahit* (Jakarta: KPG (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia) Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 2017), 28–34.

<sup>12</sup>Ponimin and Guntur, "Expressing the Robustness of Love in Ceramic Art: A Creative Approach Study," *Anastasis* 7, no. 2 (2020): 285–306, <https://doi.org/10.35218/armca.2020.2.10>.

<sup>13</sup>Robby Hidajat, "KARAKTERISTIK EMPAT TOKOH PADA WAYANG TOPENG MALANG," *JOGED*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.24821/joged.v4i2.335>.

<sup>14</sup>Hidajat.

<sup>15</sup>Amanda Ruziana, Putri Duanta, and Universitas Negeri Makassar, "Preservation Of Local Culture Art Wayang Topeng Malangan In Padepokan Topeng Asmarabangun Art," *International Journal Of Social Service And Research* 1, no. 4 (2021): 337–40.

<sup>16</sup>Robby Hidajat, "Fungsi Dan Proses Pembuatan Topeng Di Kabupaten Malang Jawa Timur," *Dinamika Kerajinan Dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 31, no. 1 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.22322/dkb.v31i1.1044>.

<sup>17</sup>Fitrotul Hikmah Roihanah, "A Javanese Panji Romance: Analisis Struktur Cerita Panji Pada Naskah Wangbang Widèya," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah Intaj* 4, no. 1 (2014): 139–40.

<sup>18</sup>Hidajat, "Fungsi Dan Proses Pembuatan Topeng Di Kabupaten Malang Jawa Timur."

<sup>19</sup>Yeremias Jena, "Dari Pengalaman Estetis Ke Sikap Estetis Dan Etis," *Melintas* 30, no. 1 (2014): 22, <https://doi.org/10.26593/mel.v30i1.1281.22-44>.

processing. Hence, the authors can correlate this factor with a decision in a creative process.

Orientation on spirituality becomes an anvil for the creative process of mask artisans. Spirituality is a posture as well as a decision that is subjectively based on deep internal experience. This spiritual comprehension is not gotten through art creation practice but learned in an art college environment. Therefore, spiritual orientation is considered local and personal in nature. In addition, the obtained knowledge can also be used as a reference and a variance for the art creation process, especially in mask-making arts.

Spiritual orientation has been developed by dancer mask makers in Malang from material selection through carving technique to color determination. The creative process experience of the dancer mask maker is surely going to enrich the knowledge realm of mask creation process.

## **METHOD**

This research employs ethnography approach as research method. This approach requires the authors to directly observe and understand the research subject at the environment or location of research<sup>20</sup>. The location of research comprises Sanggar Wayang Topeng Asmarabangun in Kedungmonggo Village, Pakisaji District, Malang Regency, and Padepokan Seni Mangundharmo in Tulusbesar Village, Malang Regency. In addition, informants from other locations are also interviewed to obtain data concerning mask artisans who are still active until now. As a whole, the research is conducted in Malang Regency, East Java Province.

Several interviews also include individuals known for their mask-making capacity as respondent. These individuals are Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono (67 y.o.), mask puppet master and mask carver; Sukani (70 y.o.), mask carver from Tumpang; Yudit Pradananto (56 y.o.), collector for mask and puppet; and Tri Handoyo (48 y.o.), mask carver from Kedungmonggo Village. Data analysis was done systematically with data tabulation. Before doing analysis, the validity was tested through data triangulation technique. Finally, the results of the analysis are presented descriptively and interpretatively.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULT**

### **Spiritual Dimension on Material and Skills**

In a cultural work context, the orientation of mask-making is local culture. Mask artisans in Malang embrace this orientation and therefore what these artisans do always represents a local action. Specifically, these artisans

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<sup>20</sup> Windiani and Farida Nurul, "Menggunakan Metode Etnografi Dalam Penelitian Sosial," *Dimensi Jurnal Sosiologi* 9, no. 2 (2016): 87–92.

actually do not have expertise in technicalities or systematics underlied by knowledge. Traditional artisans grew and developed in their environment self-dependently without any help from other fellow artisans. This fact was well confirmed by Karimoen, one of mask puppet conservators in Kedungmonggo Village, Pakisaji District, Malang Regency. As an example, Raminten, the ancestor of Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono that was known as an eminent mask maker in Malang surprisingly became a mask maker in the 1930s by accident. In that year, floods wiped off all crop fields. Raminten encountered a piece of wood drifted by streams and then took the wood home to be used as firewood. Instead of burning the wood in the furnace, Raminten intended to make a mask from that wood. Surprisingly, Karimoen also started to make mask after finding wood, particularly a chunk of wood on his farmland. Meanwhile, Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono made his first mask from a tree nearby *pundhen desa* (village holy place). After getting permit from the elders, the tree was chopped down and used as material for the mask.

Suroso, Malang dancer mask maker, said that among the trees used as raw material in mask-making consist of *pohonpule* (*alstonia scholaris*), *pohon dadap* (*erythrina subumbrans* [hassk.] merr.), *pohon cangkring* (*erythrina lithosperma* mig.), *pohon kembang* (*canangium odoratum*), and *pohon nyampo* (*calophyllum inophyllum* L.). However, these kinds of trees are already rare in nowadays. People believed that those trees have *tuah* (magic power), especially for those growing on river banks or in sacred places. As an alternative, Malang mask makers use *pohon sengon laut* (*Atocasia macrorhiza schott*).

The first experience of Karimoen in mask-making was not discovered at his home. Karimoen made his first mask by the crop field while grazing his castles. He hid the mask at the cattle shed because he did not want his parent to know about that. He used a knife called *pangot*, which is indeed intended to be used for shaving and carving the mask. The main function of *pangot* is for *meraeni*, namely to carve the face shape of the mask<sup>2122</sup>.

A similar experience in mask-making was also told by Kangsen, a mentor in the Mask Puppet Society of Wirabakti in Jabung Village. He made his first mask silently in his room at night. All family members did not know what he did. He was known for his introvert and self-reflection but all members of mask puppet society give their respect to him (Pramono, interview in 2022).

Despite many different ways used to hide the mask, the parents of these elders find out what they do at last. Anger was highly bursted to them by their parents but the fury was subsided to a considerate demeanor. Mask-

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<sup>21</sup> Hidajat, "Fungsi Dan Proses Pembuatan Topeng Di Kabupaten Malang Jawa Timur."

<sup>22</sup> I Wayan Wijaya Kusuma, I Made Gede Arimbawa, and I Made Sumantra, "Karakter Topeng Manis Pada Produk Kriya Kebutuhan Ruang Pertemuan Formal," *HASTAGINA: JURNAL KRIYA DAN INDUSTRI KREATIF* 1, no. 2 (2021): 125–30.

making is not an ordinary action but a remarkable deed. According to local belief, the manifestation of human or animal in mask-making should do through a ceremony (*slamatan*) which is called *telasan* (finalization). As a traditional ceremony, *slamatan* is often held after individuals finalize their study and generally organized on the month of *Selo* (eleventh month in Javanese calendar). Month of *Selo* is between two moslem great days, precisely Idul Fitri and Idul Adha. Hence, it is not recommended that people arrange wedding ceremony on this month (Pramono, interview in 2022).

The other interesting and unique case is the case of Sukani. Although he has mask-making experience for almost 25 years, he still feels troubled in making the mask. Even, he cannot finish his mask many times. The critical stage for Sukani is on *mraeni*, where he finds difficulty in materializing the mask character. As a carpenter, Sukani is supposed to be able to manage the wooden things, including the mask, but his capability is surprisingly not enough for mask-making. The other surprising part of his story is that Sukani, just like mask-making elders, found a piece of wood during the flood, brought the wood home to be used as firewood, and developed an intention to make a mask. Regardless of his previous failure, Sukani finds his success in making the mask at the age of 60 years old. He then celebrated this success by organizing *slamatan* (Sukani, interview in 2020).

Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono began binding up with mask-making in early 2020. The covid-19 pandemic has brought him into a mask-making situation. He also held *slamatan* after finishing the mask as it is done by Karimoen and Kangsen. In general, the ceremony of *slamatan* is usually carried out after the stage of *maesi*, where the mask makers have finished shaping and painting the crown of the mask (Pramono, interview in 2022).



**Fig. 1** The Offerings (Photography by Robby Hidayat, 2021)

Figure 1 depicts the tradition inherited by the descents of Karimoen in Kedungmonggo Village. This tradition requires them to make an offering by putting the masks (those that are used in mask puppet shows) on a special shelf or cupboard. The offerings consist of a set of masks and burned incense, and it is held every night of *Jum'at Legi* (Friday on Javanese market day of Legi). There is a belief that several masks may have magical power, hence the absence of ritual for the mask can lead to some trouble (Suroso, interview in 2021).

Yudit Pradananto, an observer of Malang mask, investigated the elders of Malang mask conservers. He found that these elders are hesitant to sell their mask collection because most of them believe that their mask has a soul. These masks are considered sacred and stored on a special shelf for heirlooms or even kept above the wardrobe. The mask accompanied by incense is covered by white cloth inside the shelf or wardrobe. Therefore, if the shelf is opened, the smell of the incense will pervade and sting the nose (Pradananto, interview in 2021).

Malang mask makers believe that trees qualified as mask material must have reached a certain age and undergone their life. As informed by Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono, old mask makers in Malang always perform special rituals before chopping down the tree as raw material for the mask. The tree candidate is stabbed with a lath of iron and waited overnight. If the iron has gotten loose from the tree, then the tree is allowed to be cut down. If the iron still remains in place, then the tree is prohibited to be brought down (Pramono, interview in 2022). The felled tree is given marks to indicate that the log is not flipped over.



**Fig. 2** Mask-making process in Karimoen's workshop

(Photograph by Robby Hidayat, 2020)

As shown in Figure 2, the pieces of the tree are kept in a dry place, precisely next to Karimoen. The workplace for mask-making can be in the kitchen or the house yards. The process stage in Figure 2 is the stage of *mbakali* (making the draft for the mask), namely scrutinizing mask design.

After getting the feel of the mask, then Karimoen develops ideas to make a certain character that needs to be carved on the mask. After getting the idea, he analyzes the drafted parts (*bakalan*) of the mask, such as nose size and distance between eyes. During the analysis, he recites prayers with intention that the carving of the mask will produce expected character. The mask characters that require prayers during the analysis are Klana Sewandana, Raden Gunungsari, and Sekartaji (Handoyo, interview in 2020). Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono asserted that every mask created by artisans is like a reality of life, which is called *Kasunyatan* in Javanese term (Pramono, interview in 2022).

Similarly, Rasimoen, a mask maker from Glagahdowo Village, also performs a ritual prayer before making the mask. Rasimoen conducts what so-called *suguh* (set offerings) to *pundhendesa*, also known as *nyadrah*. If hesitance overwhelms the heart, then the prayer must be stopped and replaced by the patience to wait for '*wangsit*' (supernatural guidance). The involvement of *wangsit* has been experienced by Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono during the making of Calon Arang mask. At the time, he cannot start the stage of *wiwit* because he finds difficulty in imagining the face of Calon Arang (Pramono, interview in 2022).

The belief that a mask has a soul was confirmed by Rasimoen, a mask maker from Glagahdowo Village, Tumpang. Before making the mask, mask makers often do fasting in order to clear their minds and heart. There is a belief among them that ancestral spirits can be expected to arrive through fasting and reside in the mask. Subsequently, these ancestral spirits will accompany the dancers during the dance show<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, when Rasimoen is invited to be a dancer, instead of wearing the mask provided by mask society, he brings and uses his own mask. Utomo, one of the mask artisans as well as the pupil of Rasimoen, explained that the behavior shown by Rasimoen represents the action of *laku* (journey of life). The dancer and mask are a unity that is needed to play the story recited by the puppeteer.

Karimeon also reaffirms that the prayer must also be conducted in the *wiwit* process. When a mask is finished at the stage of *wiwit*, then a prayer needs to be recited. This habit is justified by Tri Handoyo, one of the grandchildren of Karimoen (Handoyo, interview in 2020). After the stage of *maesi*, which is the carving of mask face, a prayer or a spiritual rite shall also be performed. There is a belief that this spiritual habit will be able to give a

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<sup>23</sup> Musthofa Kamal, "Wayang Topeng Malangan: Sebuah Kajian Historis Sosiologis," *Resital: Jurnal Seni Pertunjukan* 16, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.24821/resital.v9i1.450>.



strong appearance to mask character. Taslan Harsono, a son of Karimoen, has a habit to hand the mask of his creation over Karimoen to hollow out “the eyes” part of the mask. He reasoned that hollowing out the eyes of a mask is the most sacred process in mask-making activities. Therefore, young artisans should give the mask to the elders who are considered proper to hollow out mask eyes (Suroso, interview in 2021).

### **Spiritual Dimension in the Creative Process**

Too often, Malang mask artisans use a religious magical approach that represents a local experience and belief system inherited for generations in the mask-making process<sup>24</sup>. The stages of mask-making are a bit different from the stages of modern art creation<sup>25</sup>. The aesthetical aspect of mask-making not only lies in the art principle that constitutes either the elements or the material processing but also in the spiritual dimensions of the mask<sup>26</sup>. Spiritual orientation emerged from a local belief system. Such a belief refers to a traditional credence that has a resemblance to the learning of mystical (mental) science. The current research has several findings regarding the spiritual orientation of the stages of mask-making. Each of the stages is elaborated as follows.

#### **1. *Wiwit*: The commitment to make the mask**

Spiritual practice in creating a mask has been performed by Raminten, Karimoen, Sukani, and Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono in order to strengthen the intention to create a mask. Such a practice is called *wiwit*, the early stage of mask-making. In the tradition of farmers, *wiwit* is a process of raising seedlings, which is also known as *ngurit* and it is an inseparable part of farming life. A similar tradition is also practiced by wood carving artisans in Jepara. Hence, people considered as artisans are not only reliable engravers but also farmers who are diligent to cultivate their land<sup>27</sup>.

The experience of *wiwit* is a phenomenon of the work process in which the doer is not only thinking about the macro aspect but also the micro

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<sup>24</sup> Martono, Iswahyudi, and Aran Handoko, “Topeng Etnik Nusantara Dalam Perkembangan Budaya Global,” *Jurnal Mudra* 32, no. 1 (2017): 123–30.

<sup>25</sup> Siti Aesijah, “LATAR BELAKANG PENCIPTAAN SENI (Background of Creative Art),” *Harmonia - Journal of Arts Research and Education* 1, no. 2 (2000): 62–74.

<sup>26</sup> Uswatun Hasanah and Fuad Erdansyah, “Prinsip Seni Rupa Dalam Menggambar Ornamen Melayu,” *Gorga : Jurnal Seni Rupa* 9, no. 2 (2020): 444, <https://doi.org/10.24114/gr.v9i2.21899>.

<sup>27</sup> SP. Gustami, *Seni Kerajinan Mebel Ukir Jepara: Kajian Estetik Melalui Pendekatan Multidisipliner* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2000), 251.

aspect. The orientation of *wiwit* tends to be a deeper and personal meaning<sup>28</sup>. Reflectively, this orientation can be found in the personality of Kangsen, who chooses to be silent but highly enthusiastic about learning mask puppet performance art in Jabung Village. Hence, it is considered to be one of the reasons why mask puppet art in Jabung Village is still developing until now<sup>29</sup>.

At the stage of *wiwit*, the mask makers shape a spiritual communication with mask material, especially wood. The mask makers may not yet have an imagination about the character in this process. But, after determining the wood type, especially the wood with magical power (*tuah* or *taksu*), the mask makers will have an idea about the character to be created.

In line with the concept of *wiwit*, magical power must be taken into consideration by mask makers in the case of cutting down a tree since several trees are believed to have gurdians. For instance, *pohon pule* (*alstonia scholaris*), a tree that usually sprouted up on a river bank, is believed to be the favorite place where genies reside. Besides that, *Pohon dadap* (*erythrina subumbrans* [hassk.] merr.), often emerges from the sacred places such as public cemetery or *pundhen desa*, is believed to be the favorite place for *gondoruwo* (a big evil with dense fur). Meanwhile, *pohon cangkring* (*erythrina lithosperma* mig.) is known as the house of red genies. On the other hand, *pohon kembang* (*canarium odoratum*) and *pohon nyampo* (*calophyllum inophyllum* l.) are trees amending house yards.

Mask makers usually prioritize old trees as a material for a mask, mainly those growing close to river streams. As told by Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono, the artisans must perform a rite before cutting down a tree, which is implanting an iron into the tree that needs to be cut off. The implanting of the iron is intended to negotiate with the tree dweller to give their consent for the tree to be used as mask material. Sometimes, the negotiation may involve the replacement of a new dwelling (tree).

In the behavior of *wiwit*, there is a concept of transferring the spirits (the souls) into raw material (wood). It denotes that mask-making needs supernatural power as its important element. Therefore, the mask created for dancers is always full of spiritually loaded.

## 2. *Mbakali*: Early Shape of Mask

*Mbakali* is an action mask identification after passing through the stage of *wiwit*. In this stage, the mask makers determine the type, shape, or

<sup>28</sup> Hasna Wijayati, "Teori Utama Sosiologi (Fungsionalisme Struktural, Teori Konflik, Interaksi Simbolik)," *Portal-Ilmu.Com* 2, no. 2 (2020): 185–94.

<sup>29</sup> Astrid Wangsagirindra Pudjastawa, Yudit Perdananto, and Varary Mechwafanitiara Cantika, "Development of Wayang Mask Craftsmen in Malang Use the Sayembara Menthod," *Southeast Asia Millenial Conference Proceeding* 1, no. September (2020): 1–7.

character of the mask. In the making of the Malang mask, the maker will link up the imagination (shadow) with the expected outcome from *wiwit* stage. Principally, the mask makers begin to see whether the shape of the mask will lead to the character of *gagah* or *halus*.



**Fig. 3** The process of *mbakali*  
(Photography by Robby Hidayat, 2020)

Figure 3 shows Tri Handoyo who undertakes the process of *mbakali*. In general, mask makers in Malang follow the ritual performed by Karimoen or Rasimoen on *mbakali* stage. To be precise, the mask makers must pronounce their intention or recite the prayer to summon certain characters, either the character of Klana Sewandana or Panji Asmarabangun.

Mask makers in Malang also act as dancers, then they know exactly the character that is expected to be created. Indeed, Karimoen, Kangsen, Tri Handoyo, and Moch. Soleh Adi Pramono has been gifted with the capability of dancing and also puppets. For these mask puppet elders, *mbakali* is like a process to summon the spirits for residing in the mask to bestow the mask

with magical power (*tuah* or *taksu*)<sup>30</sup>. This kind of power is also known as the spiritual power of an artist acquired after making a total comprehension of an artwork.

### 3. *Maesi*: Carving the Face

The word *maesi* is rooted in the Javanese word *paes*, which means making up of the face. This term is used to name the mask-making stage that involves technicalities. According to Taslan Harsono, the son of Karimoen, the most sacred process of making up a mask lies in the process of hollowing out “the eyes” part of the mask. Such spiritual orientation insists that hollowing out the mask's eyes is as if giving life to the mask. Those who are deemed worthy to become a medium of giving a life are the elders, uncluding ancestors, who are called *pundhen*. A giving life process is called *nguripi* since the Javanese term for giving life is *nguripi*, which is rooted in the word *urip* meaning alive.

After the mask's eyes are hollowed out, the character type of the mask becomes clear whether it is *gagah* (rough) or *alus* (soft). Clifford Geertz associates these two Javanese terms with the expression of senses<sup>31</sup>. The *gagah* masks, especially those with *prenges* (grimace), are shown as creepy with fangs and sharp teeth protruding from the mouth. Meanwhile, the *alus* masks are indicated with a smile, which is therefore suitable to be used by the character of a princess. Under this understanding, the process of mask-making is like *kasunyatan* (the reality of life), which comprises *laku* (journey of life) that must be undergone to attain the end.

The next process in the *maesi* stage is to carve the *jamang* (crown). Because Malang masks are mostly identified with a foliage-patterned crown, some masks are furnished with dragon mouths at the part of *sumping* (the decoration of the left and right sides of *jamang*). The coloring process is also needed to match the color and the character. The *Maesi* stage is technical and the inspiration is taken from the carving of a leather puppet.

### 4. *Telasan*: Finalization of mask-making

In the modern art context, *telasan* is a way to make perfect. The word *telasan* is also defined as a final touch to make the mask equivalent to an heirloom, which therefore makes the existence of the mask quite

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<sup>30</sup> I Nengah Mariasa, “Taksu and Pangus As An Aesthetic Concept Entity of Bali Dance (A Case Study of Topeng Tua Dance),” *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education* 15, no. 2 (2015): 107–12, <https://doi.org/10.15294/harmonia.v15i2.4557>.

<sup>31</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Agama Jawa: Abangan, Santri, Priyayi Dalam Kebudayaan Jawa* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2013), 189.

significant<sup>32</sup>. The action of *telasan* is not technical because the mask makers are no longer touching their work. Although their hands are already away from the mask, it is needed to have spirit or soul, precisely like a newborn baby. Sometimes, masks are made as new characters to complement the existing characters. Consequently, when the new mask is used on the stage, the dancer must know and understand the character of this new mask personally. In this situation, the dancer positions and regards the mask as a reality that helps to play the story. This is a relationship that makes the mask considered as the element of *laku* (journey of life).

This final stage also involves a special rite. A new mask is often brought to *pundhen desa* as an object of the rite called *stren*. There is an expectation that through this rite, the mask will have a supernatural power equivalent to that of heirlooms.

## CONCLUSION

The making of Malang masks is considered unique either in its process or systematics because the making process involves spiritual power owned by the makers. The spiritual belief among mask makers insists that the mask is the house of spirit or soul. Inviting the spirit is a process that gives magical power to animate the mask during the show of mask puppet ballet.

The spiritual process can form the mask to have charisma. In order to achieve charisma, mask makers therefore must select appropriate raw materials, carving techniques, and finishing processes according to local power which is represented by traditional rites.

The stages of mask-making from *wiwit* (start or beginning) to *telasan* (finalization) show the manifestation of spirituality (mentality) orientation. The comprehension of spirituality leads to the understanding of *urip* (life). Therefore, every mask represents *kasunyatan* (life reality) that contains *laku* (life journey), which involves the encounter between the antagonist and protagonist characters.

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**Fig. 1.** The Offerings, photo by Robby Hidayat, 2021

**Fig. 2.** Mask-making process in Karimoen's workshop, photo by Robby Hidayat, 2020

**Fig. 3.** Column eating lion from Medvedgrad, Archeological Museum in Zagreb, photo by Filip Beusan The process of *mbakali*, photo by Robby Hidayat, 2020

All permission granted

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<sup>32</sup> Arif Suharson, "Topeng Klasik Gaya Yogyakarta Dan Kreatif Modern Karya Supana Ponowiguna Kajian Fungsi, Gaya, Dan Struktur," *CORAK Jurnal Seni Kriya* 7, no. 1 (2018): 44–53.

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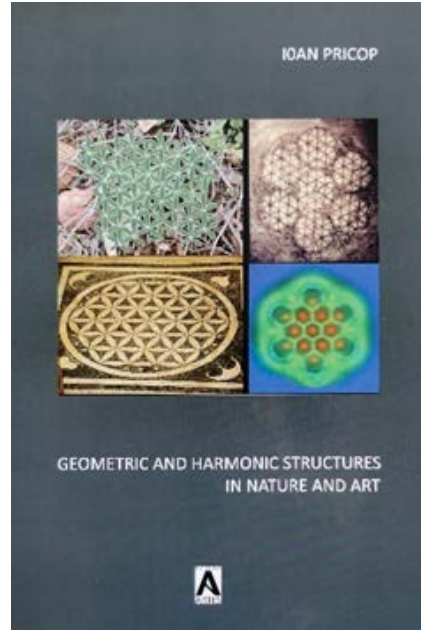
## **BOOK REVIEWS**



# Geometric and Harmonic Structures in Nature and Art

Cristian Ungureanu\*

Ioan Pricop\*\*, *Geometric and  
Harmonic Structures in Nature  
and Art*, Artes Publishing  
House, Iași, 252 pages.



The book to which we are dedicating this review systematically explores the relationships of direct determination between the characteristics of geometric and numerical harmonic structures present in the composition of microscopic organisms and macroscopic creatures belonging to the kingdoms of the natural world and those of the visual arts world, highlighting the synchronicities of identity or the similarity of the principles that govern the morphology but also the semantics of the two territories. Structured in four chapters, thirty-eight subchapters, an inspired introduction, a substantial number of case study images, this volume is completed with a welcomed conclusion series and a substantial essential bibliography. The book, published by the "Artes" publishing house of the "George Enescu" National University of Arts from Iași, represents the results of the doctoral research carried out by the author on this interdisciplinary, exciting and welcomed topic in contemporary visual arts field.

The author introduces us to his laboratory and personal investigative methodologies, stating that nowadays cultural, social, psychological and

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\*\* Ioan Pricop is a visual artist University Lecturer at the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design - UNAGE Iași, member of the Contemporary Painting Research Center of this university.

spiritual characteristics allow us to discover and know more precisely the previous eras, from the most remote times to the present day. The hyper-technological communication context of our age allows us to get a panoramic view of the art history and to synthesize information from different fields of knowledge, so that we can better understand the elements that contributed to the birth of the remarkable artistic events of the visual arts culture.

The structure of Ioan Pricop's book consists of two distinct parts: an eminently theoretical one and the other with an empirical nature, configured from relevant analyzes and case studies. In the first part, that covers the first two chapters, the author focused on defining the general concepts that start from the idea of Nature and stated the main characteristics of the three kingdoms: mineral, plant and animal. The approach is made both from the perspective of Nature (Real) and from the perspective of cultural tradition (Reality). In chapter I, entitled "Universe, earth and man", the relationship between man and Nature is explored through the visual-artistic message, with Nature as the real referent. In the second chapter, entitled "About sign and symbol - geometric structures", the sign-symbol binomial is addressed as a communicative act, through which real information is floated through conventionalization. In this sense, the constructive principles of the main types of geometric, two- and three-dimensional figures are analyzed, which also represent information from Nature, but as an act of form representation.

The theoretical approach is illustrated in the practical part of the thesis, where a geometric projection of structures and models from Nature is presented, which also reflects the symbolic message of a cultural tradition that is always present in visual art. Chapter III, entitled "Artistic structures and models from Nature", addresses the historical evolution of the first artistic manifestations, from Paleolithic to the beginnings of the modern era. In Chapter IV, "Landscape Aesthetics", the focus is on landscape as an artistic genre in itself, highlighting the feeling and meanings of the perception of Nature in landscape art both in West and East. This chapter also covers other modes of artistic expression such as organic architecture or cinematic productions such as Disney animated films.

Regarding the creation process, the author states in the first part of the book, contemplation plays a decisive role in establishing the relationship between Nature and art. This relationship can be explained by the mythical theory of a human being's privileged presence in Nature or by the hypothesis of the evolutionary accumulation of a high degree of consciousness, the act of contemplation remaining decisive for all types of the human being's actions in relation to the surrounding organic and inorganic environment. In this sense, according to the logic developed by Ioan Pricop in his research, art proves to be a process of sublimation and representation of the harmonic properties and qualities of Nature. In this sense, the art and culture carrying ancestral traditions revealed the connection between the organizational

structures of the natural kingdoms and those that direct the configuration of the human being and also of an artwork. As for tradition, the term derives from the Latin word "traditio", which means "to transmit", "to remit", "to be given for storage". In its form of manifestation, tradition can mean the set of conceptions, customs, traditions and beliefs that are established historically within some social or national groups and constitute for each social group its specific feature. Less well known is Tradition (with a capital letter), which means the set of religious or moral doctrines and practices, transmitted from one century to another, originally by word or example, and the set of information, more or less legendary, relating to past, initially transmitted orally from generation to generation. In this sense, the *Primordial Tradition* or *Perennial Philosophy* includes various traditions, such as Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist or Hindu, and its origin is metaphysical.<sup>1</sup>

In today's culture and technology, structural patterns governed by proportion and harmony, present in nature, are important in art, architecture, philosophy, and science. These models can be used for the elaboration of aesthetic and functional edifices, the exploration of the supersensible world or simply as a subject of contemplation. Geometric structures are fundamental forms with an organizational role in the configuration of Reality, being considered invisible reinforcements of visual images.

The constructive and harmonic principles underlying valuable artistic expressions are found in the formation of natural structures from the three kingdoms that existed before the human species: mineral, plant and animal. Many times, artists assign symbolic meanings to the beauties of the natural order, studying them with attention and reverence, integrating them into a protective and justifying artistic framework. In this thesis, we will examine various categories of symbols which, while not being natural laws of proportion - being cultural constructs - can become laws of proportion when the human mind gives them authority and projects them into the world of numbers and shapes.

In Nature, Ioan Pricop explains, the main geometric shapes, that are two and three-dimensional ones, can be observed, and the proportions and growth rates of crystals, plants or animals are governed by special numerical numbers and ratios. There is an obvious relationship between numbers, which belong to the family of arithmetic entities and shape, which belongs to the family of geometric entities, known since Antiquity. However, for two millennia, mankind considered these to be two distinct worlds, an irreducible duality. For example, Pythagoras, the great geometer, preferred the primacy of numbers over forms, but Plato argued the opposite, granting the primacy of forms over numbers, as appears on the pediment of the Academy founded by him, where he wrote: "He who is not a geometer should not enter under my roof".

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<sup>1</sup> Read Aldous Huxley – "Filosofia perenă", Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2020

In this text, two different ways of thinking about the relationship between man and the environment are debated, under the sign of atomism and systems thinking, considered two contradictory currents in the history of human thought. Atomism tends to reduce reality to our ordinary experience in space and time, while systems thinking admits the existence of a self-consistent universe with its own laws. It appeals to the idea of levels of reality, where the Real denotes the natural universe (Nature) and Reality refers to what endures in our human experience and involves the human stewardship of the Real, namely cultural tradition. Thus, man is aware of two possible realities: Nature and Reality, and is often in conflict between the desire for cosmic unity and the desire to realize his individuality.

Ioan Pricop constantly argues, throughout the chapters and themes explored, that man's perspective on nature is directly and effectively influenced by any form of cultural or artistic expression, and this perspective undergoes a continuous transformation and adaptation in order to conform the demands of each civilization type. This process is cyclical, as humanity periodically goes through the same frameworks and formulas for understanding the meaning of existence, as well as representing this understanding in visual arts field.

Since the beginning of his existence, human being has had an intuition about the cosmic flows of information and the forces that regulate any form of manifestation. Throughout time, there has always been a sense of nostalgia for a pure and immediate contact with nature and people have always wanted to understand the needs of nature, the laws by which it's built and which have triggered a wide range of feelings and thoughts in their souls and consciousnesses - admiration, respect, fear or delight, for example. All the important phenomena of the natural world had, most of the time, a natural manifestation in the intimate or collective people's lives.

During the development of his research, Ioan Pricop emphasizes that man's relationship with nature is tripartite: he can relate to it through knowledge, through direct interventions on nature and through the resonance obtained through the contemplation of the harmonic and vibratory aspects of the natural world. Through this form of receptivity to the natural world, a connection is created to a strong influx of psychological and affective energy, which we call the aesthetic sense of nature.

According to the research carried out, the author comes to the conclusion that an important aspect of human thinking related to the revelation of the mysteries of the natural world is related to the understanding of the aesthetic dimension of Nature's intelligence. Moreover, his exploration focused exclusively on the harmonic and aesthetic aspects of the elements of the natural world.

By developing the four chapters of his book, artist and visual researcher Ioan Pricop came to the conviction that all categories of visual arts

reflect the desire to understand the relationship with the world order of the natural kingdoms. Nowadays people are increasingly interested in rediscovering the wisdom embedded in the natural world's rhythms of growth and transformation.

Seen from a broad perspective, the relationship between the universe, earth and man was explored, by analyzing the place and importance of Nature in the context of art, science, philosophy and traditional knowledge. The author observed a general trend of female personification of Nature and subordination of entities from the natural kingdoms, an aspect that influenced all areas of human knowledge and creativity. To recover these aspects, he compared the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, focusing on the symbolic meanings of mountain, water, crystals, mythological or real plants and animals. The analysis of the relationship between sign and symbol led to the identification of common geometric patterns in the macro-cosmic world of Nature and the Universe, as well as in the micro cosmic world of the subatomic particles. At the heart of this interaction there are the human dimension and knowledge, which go both ways. Primal geometric shapes such as circle, square, triangle and spiral have held fascination and symbolic power for any era or cultural tradition. The harmonic rhythms of Nature captured in the calendars of humanity are the consequence of direct observations on the succession of seasons, human ages, lunar, solar and stellar cycles.

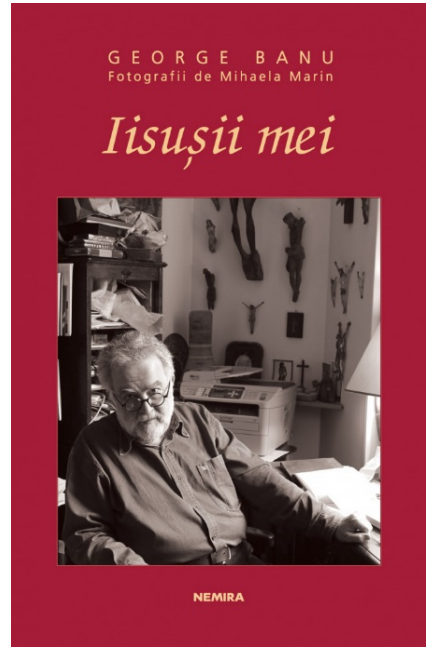
As a result of theoretical research and visual experiments carried out to support the first category of studies, the author came to the conclusion that visual arts have always been inspired and influenced by the primordial relationship of man with nature. Going through the important moments in the art history allowed him to outline analysis paths of the presence of the feeling for nature, manifested in the artistic consciousness specific to each period. In such a perspective, the gradual transformation of the relationship between humanity and nature can be defined as a consequence of shaping the entire spectrum of knowledge possibilities.

Nature, as Ioan Pricop concludes in his investigative journey, has always been a source of interest and inspiration for artists, philosophers, mystics or scientists of all times. Human consciousness has perceived nature through an intense aesthetic dominance given by the presence of life, beauty and wisdom that fascinates regardless of the passage of time. Through the seriousness and complexity of the proposed explorations, this volume proves to be a useful corollary not only for professional visual artists, but for all those willing to discover the miraculous aspects of the laws that govern our level of Reality.

## Jesus in Sacred Art through the Lenses of a Specialist in Theatre Studies

Ana-Magdalena Petraru\*

George Banu, il. de Mirela Marin, *Iisuşii mei sau coexistenţa cu arta sacră/ My Jesuses or Coexistence with Sacred Art*, Nemira, Bucharest, 2018, 160 pages



Reputed professor of Theatre Studies living in France and teaching at Sorbonne, the late George Banu (1943-2023) devoted this book to the Jesuses in his home that also accompany him in some of the travels (to Paris, Normandy or Corrèze). They communicate non-verbally and were brought together by mere chance, their relation being dependent on the owner's state of mind (pp. 7-8). G. Banu confesses he was attracted by sacred art and Jesus's place in it, both as man and god; the Son of Man is situated *entre-deux*, neither familiar as human or estranged as god, neither from here or up there, being constantly accompanied by the shadow of the double, the sacred and the human, an omnipresent *l'autre face* which is never completely absent. His collection of Jesuses was gathered from various places of Europe (Slovenia, Italy, Poland, Romania, France and Portugal) and the world, they were gifts or purchases, mainly crucified ones, more ancient or recent. The purpose of the collection was the author's

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feeling of coexistence with the works of art (p. 9), he aimed at envisaging Him in the plural context of variants, as one sees the Hamlets of the world, not just one on the stage (p. 10).

Apart from the "Motivation", the table of contents also comprises seventeen essays devoted to "Jesuses – presents and purchases", "Figures of Jesus", "Separation from the Cross", "Minor crucifixions", "Companions and solitude", "Torture and mutilation", "Silent suffering", "From strict censorship to spectacular screaming", "Melancholy of the crucified", "Disaster of a descendance", "A mother mourning and Christ's seal", "Figure and place", "The Last Supper and other scenes", "The promise of birth", "Virgins with baby and cross", "Ecce homo" and "Art as vehicle".

The first item of the collection is a South American Jesus from Venezuela, a *pater familias* of the others, a little statue from an antique shop purchased at the end of the 1960s. The second one was a gift from the Romanian-American theatre director Andrei Șerban, another one from Italy and several from Venice, shipped by a famous antiquarian, Guido (this is the case of a 13<sup>th</sup> century piece, a part of a plate that showed a humble Jesus and a miniature Venetian one) (p. 26). The representations of Jesus are all different and define the eras, civilizations and confessions they belong to. In the beginning, Jesus on the cross was just a sign that emblematically symbolized crucifixion and it remained abstract, without individual incidence, a symbol of the act meant to sanction the Jews' visionary king. Such archaic Jesuses are depicted as abstract, lacking identity, a concrete expression of the suffering that does not affect His expression of the body; they are impersonal, a materialization of a tragic situation, without any consequences on personal body reactions and on the collector that perceives them as foreign and distant, a vice of the western man who needs the testimony of the body, not just the designation of a condition (p. 30). Apart from statues, his collection also contains icons, one of them portraying Jesus triumphant who adopts the posture of ruler of the world, keeper of ultimate power exerted on the faithful that acquiescence His authority and respect his prerogatives (p. 31). The author admits that he is wearing no crucifix and does not say his evening prayers, yet his Jesuses are necessary to him and welcomed as representations of the sacred, not as religious objects. In sacred art, a special place is given to the relation between model and the mythological connotations associated to it since the painted or sculpted character disposes of a prototype of representation constituted in time,

a known legend that designates his or her exceptional unique identity, a mythical image mobilizing these aspects. This makes the author regard Buddha differently from Jesus, the former being simply a sacred art object for him, whereas in the latter, he associates aesthetic satisfaction with the emotion of biblical bibliography. Thus, it is the transcendence of the mundane by art and the plus of spirituality brought by sacred art that truly fascinates him (pp. 36-37).

G. Banu also separated Jesus from His cross as a precaution of air travel, leaving the antiquarian with the cross, whilst keeping Jesus for himself. He praises the cross associated to Jesus and symbolic founders of Christian faith arguing that with very few exceptions (in Velasquez, Goya, Philippe de Champaigne) where Jesus is portrayed alone, most often He is accompanied symmetrically by the two thieves, crucified too, which testifies to the subaltern value of the cross. Herein, Jesus is the hero of the sacrifice, being placed centrally in visual representations and the cross signifies torment, Ascension and Salvation (pp. 40-41). He came to prefer to be sent Jesus without His cross; as a man of theatre, he felt that in this way, Jesus distinguished Himself as a suffering character without the physical instrument of torture and sacrifice attached to Him. This also allows the collector to have an affective dialogue with a cultural hero, and not a confessional leader. Without His cross, Jesus is seen by G. Banu as a moral must, an exemplary leader (pp. 42-43).

In “Minor crucifixions”, he stresses the fact that, unlike exemplary Jesuses, the metallic crucifixions around him cannot be dissociated by their Jesus. They evoke ecclesiastical practices, hold a minor place in the collection, as compared to the statues, preserve the canonical device and are like punctuation marks among the other, more important items (p. 47). These modest miniature crucifixions entertain the presence of the sacred in one’s private space like groundwater. A decorative plate was exiled in a corner since the collector felt disgusted by the perversion of the crucifixion, whereas he keeps a little closer the same scene painted on a wooden egg (probably Italian, yet found in Bucharest) (pp. 50-51). At the opposite pole, the collector is very satisfied to find the crucifixion scene painted on the metal cover of a bible since herein, God’s sacrifice increases the value of the book, image and text being associated and taking the symbolic impact to a new level. The collection also comprises the photo of a cross without its Jesus, an anonymous one, the lay cross of Ludwig II of Bavaria, a

king possessed by art and Wagner's music, a madman and a visionary (pp. 53-54).

With respect to the iconographic tradition, the crucifixion circumscribes to it, yet it also benefits from contrasting devices of representation. Bringing into play Breughel that awarded the event a collective dimension, sacrificing its sacral resources in favour of the social, community spectacular, G. Banu emphasizes the character of the people grieving at the basis of the Saviour's cross, far from the madding crowd in any city; thus, the Crucifixion is reduced to a marginal territorial event despite its symbolic centrality as the citizens of the city mind their daily business ignoring Jesus's sacrifice. The collector is an amateur in painting who simply admires such a scene depicted on a painting he bought from Budapest (pp. 54-55). Another canvas shows the relation between Crucifixion and night in plain day that occurred in the historical moment and terrified the Jews. Later, Shakespeare will use this panic as frequent device that marks the resonance of the weather with human acts: tempests, flooding, eclipses – extreme events correlated with man's crimes and the night of punishment to follow for it disturbed world order (pp. 56-57). Of the figures that mourn Christ on the cross, G. Banu cherishes Mary Magdalene the most, similarly to a contemporary martyr, a woman whose photo was taken on a modern battlefield in the heart of the tragedy. She is ennobled by her mourning at the feet of Jesus and gives us a lesson of dignity against the background of extreme sorrow (p. 60).

The author argues that it was the Spanish and Portuguese Baroque that indulged the visibility of Jesus's bodily wounds, signs of physical aggression and mutilation he was subjected to. He has a Jesus from Peru and the head of a Portuguese one in tears as illustrative instances. A Christ resurrected recalls the author the encounter with a lover returned from a death camp as in Marguerite Duras' *La Douleur* or Solzhenitsyn in the Gulag (p. 67). G. Banu complains that his private collection caused disputes with his wife, Monique, who was more marked than him by what Claude Lévi-Strauss understood by "the science of concrete" and its thinking as she personally felt the aggression of Christ's expressions in her home. Therefore, the serene ones were placed in her vicinity, whereas the most troubled and tortured ones in his (pp. 73-74).

The collector also speaks about the silence of Jesus on the cross as consolation for us, humankind, foretelling that man cannot be

entirely destroyed; the crucifixion is an act of cruelty, as in Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty, yet the main character does not surrender or betray Himself (pp. 81-82). He quotes François Boespflug's study, *Le regard du Christ dans l'art* to back up his theory about the different look in the eyes of his statues and paintings showing Jesus (e.g., *sufrans* vs *triumphans*) (pp. 84-85). There is a certain melancholy attached to Him, a Jesus who is tired and would inspire Grotowski's 'constant prince' (p. 86). He would join the family of melancholics, also starring Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus* or Chekhov's sisters. They all aim at something unusual, yet never abandoned, a horizon that cannot be reached despite the comfort and salvation it brings us (p. 92).

Then he shows his lack of preference for Jesus being taken down from the cross, instances he did not include in his collection. This descendance evokes sad memories of dead relatives in coffins. He finds the Nordic artists' representations most tragic and inconsolable (i.e., the Dutch ones of Rogier van der Weyden or Dieric Bouts) as compared to those of Italian artists that bring some solace (pp. 93-94). He loves the *Pieta*, showing a mother's love for her son, particularly favouring a naïve painting on glass he bought from Transylvania as the fluid and sad relation between mother and son becomes a noble lamentation, a traditional folk song (pp. 102-103). He is also very fond of a Last Supper in his collection, of Transylvanian origin (p. 118); to him, the ultimate representation and role model is Leonardo's in Milan. He confesses that the first painting he bought in Paris was a Nativity one, then a lithographical representation of the scene, one that needed restoration from Sibiu and then several others, out of which one with red dominating it, is his favourite due to the colourful exaltation affirmed to celebrate the coming of Christ into this world (p. 126). The Mother of God holding Jesus as a baby in Her arms in various paintings is part of the collection, as well; the author is bewildered by the motherhood of a devoted and disarmed child virgin (p. 128). A Mother of God he found in Iasi is of interest to him because of the crown on Her head whose gold had gradually faded and which consecrated Her as Christian queen (pp. 130-131). Some of these Mothers look like women from Romanian villages, peasants G. Banu was familiar with from our country, i.e., a statue, an icon painting showing Her praying for Her son on the cross, represented in the right corner of the canvas (pp. 134-135).

To conclude, the author motivates the impulse that determined him to start his collection by a philosophical story or parable, *ecce*

*homo*, the search of a man, a project he was initially sceptical about, drawing on Diogene (pp. 140-141). He found Jesus as a man of theatre leaving aside perspectives that never appealed to him such as Alfred de Musset's (who demanded sitting comfortably in one's chair to enjoy it) or Maeterlinck's (renowned for the invisible component he advocated); on the contrary, he sought the theatre that gave him the concrete pleasure of the materialisation of phantoms and fictions, the representation of biblical scenes during insomnia nights (p. 144). Art as vehicle overcomes itself, is directed towards an imprecise and necessary elsewhere, an in-between aesthetic and religious component, the beautiful and faith, the author's Jesuses belonging to it in Goethe's *streben* of sacred art, a movement towards something external and salvific (p. 155).

We recommend the volume for its essayistic introspection on sacral art, in general and representations of Jesus, in particular on various media, from sculpture to painting, from the beginning of His life, the Nativity, to the end marked by the crucifixion. It is also useful for anyone interested in theatre and the perspective of a specialist in the field that comes with theatrical and philosophical intertextuality.

