

# **BRVKENTHAL. ACTA MVSEI**

**X. 2**



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**ACTA MVSEI**

**X. 2**

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**PICTORIAL EMBROIDERIES INSPIRED BY  
WORKS OF PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA ON A LITURGICAL GARMENT  
OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN SIBIU**

**Daniela DÂMBOIU \***

**Abstract:** *The ensemble of precious liturgical vestments, consisting in a chasuble and two dalmatics – worn by the Catholic clergy during the sumptuous liturgical services and processions before Reformation – went from the property of the Evangelical Church in Sibiu into the custody of the Brukenthal National Museum, in 1913. All three garments are made of the same heavy golden silk brocade, woven with silver-gilt threads by the skilled weavers of an Italian (Venetian?) workshop, in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The pictorial embroideries applied on the dorsal cross of the chasuble are the work of some highly skilled Italian (Venetian?) embroiders, active in the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, who worked in the famous technique “Or Nué” (Goldwork). The figures of saints depicted on the orphrey were inspired by some paintings of Piero della Francesca, one of the greatest artists of the Early Italian Renaissance.*

**Keywords:** *chasuble, dalmatic, “Goldwork embroidery”, laid-and-couch work, pictorial embroidery, Piero della Francesca*

**Rezumat:** *Purtat de clerul catolic în timpul fastuoaselor slujbe și procesiuni din perioada anterioară Reformei religioase, ansamblul de veșminte liturgice compus dintr-o casulă și două dalmatice a intrat în custodia Muzeului Național Brukenthal în anul 1913. Toate cele trei veșminte liturgice sunt confecționate dintr-un brocart greu de mătase aurie identic, țesut cu fire din argint aurit de țesătorii iscusiți ai unui atelier din Italia (Veneția?) de la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea. Broderia picturală a crucii dorsale a casulei este opera unor foarte talentați broderi italieni (venețieni?), activi în ultimul sfert al secolului al XV-lea, experimentați în renumita tehnică a „broderiei de aur”. Iconografia crucii dorsale reflectă folosirea câtorva modele inspirate din creațiile unuia dintre marii maeștrii ai Renașterii italiene timpurii, Piero della Francesca.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *casula, dalmatica, „broderie de aur”, broderie plată, broderie picturală, Piero della Francesca*

The Brukenthal National Museum’s collection of medieval textiles was enlarged in 1913 by taking into custody of a precious set of liturgical vestments from the Evangelical Church in Sibiu, consisting of a chasuble (Fig. 1-2)<sup>1</sup> and two

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<sup>1</sup> CHASUBLE. Provenance: Evangelical Church in Sibiu / *Hermannstadt*. Golden silk brocade (woven in raised relief with silver-gilt threads): Italian (Venetian?) workshop, middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The embroidery of the dorsal cross (silver-gilt and colored silk threads; split, satin, and couching stitches; “Goldwork” technique / *Or Nué* / shaded gold): Italian

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(Venetian?) workshop, the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Dimensions: Length (front side) 143 cm x Width (in the chest) 50 cm x Width (front side, down) 74 cm; Length (back side) 150 cm x Width (back side, down) 118 cm; braid woven with silver-gilt threads in chessboard model, and an applied central twisted cord. (A late paper label is attached inside the back of the chasuble: “N: 2.c. / Zum Ostern / Neue Nummer 2.c.” Additional numbers were written on labels attached on the two dalmatics from the same ensemble, but also on other precious liturgical vestments: the cope, inv. AD. 243 / 3819: “Nr. 4 / Neue Nummer 1”, and respectively, the chasuble inv. AD. 221 / 3816: “N: 3.a. / zum

dalmatics – one of which is still in the museum (Fig. 3-4)<sup>2</sup>, while the other<sup>3</sup> was removed from the museum's inventory and transferred to the Art Museum of the Socialist Republic of Romania in Bucharest (the current National Art Museum of Romania) in 1974. Worn during the sumptuous Catholic religious services and processions, these garments were kept in use even after the Reformation, until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>.

In order to magnify the beauty of the liturgy, the three “clothes of gold” were made of heavy golden silk brocade, of *Lampas* type. The prevailing decorative motif – raised through silver-gilt wefts drawn as loops, in *riccio d'oro* technique<sup>5</sup> – is a stylized pomegranate / pineapple (represented in two versions: one largely identifiable with a pine cone, and the other with a

lotus flower), set in a carefully drafted “milles fleurs” composition (Fig. 5). The old Christian meanings of fertility, rebirth and immortality of pomegranate – partially overlapping the symbolism of the other mentioned fruits, and “the sacred” lotus flower – were in accordance to both ecclesiastical and laic commissioners. A fairly close variant of the fabric pattern of these three “clothes of gold” is found on the robe of King Solomon in Piero della Francesca's fresco the *Legend of the True Cross*, namely in the *Queen of Sheba meeting with Solomon* scene (ca. 1452–66, San Francesco, Arezzo, Italy, Fig. 6).

It is difficult to precisely identify the artistic center where this golden silk brocade was woven, because of the large use of the pomegranate pattern in most Italian workshops since the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Braun 1907; Monnas 2008); but its late Gothic style, heavy and expensive materials of silk and silver-gilt threads, and its *Lampas* weaving technique are distinct attributes of the workshops in Venice (where local weavers felt strong influences of the weaving manner of a large number of refugees from Lucca at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, due to the local political instability).

Making a rich adorned liturgical garment required a lengthy process of collaboration between several artisans (whose names were preserved in only a few cases); the complex relationship between manufacturers, painters / designers, weavers and embroiderers could be performed in many ways. The commissioner of a liturgical garment generally used to address directly to an embroiderer, who in turn took charge of purchasing precious metal and silk threads<sup>6</sup>, of contacting an artist to create the models that he intended to transpose into embroidery, of choosing the most adequate brocade for the garment tailoring, and of ensuring the final completion of the garments by tailors (Patterson 1966)<sup>7</sup>.

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Pfingstfest / Neue Numer 3 a.”). MNB, inv. AD. 241 / 3815; custody of 1913.

<sup>2</sup> DALMATIC. Provenance: Evangelical Church in Sibiu / *Hermannstadt*. Golden silk brocade (woven in raised relief with silver-gilt threads): Italian (Venetian?) workshop, middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Dimensions: Length (front side) 138 cm; Length (back side) 128 cm; Width (at the top) 67 cm x Width (down) 117 cm; sleeve: 33 x 39 cm; silk tassels: L. 3 cm; silver-gilt ball (I): Length (total) 6,8 cm, D. 3,8 cm; silver-gilt ball (II): D. 1,7 cm; silk cord: L. 26,5 cm; braid woven with silver-gilt threads: 3 cm. (A late paper label is attached inside the back of the dalmatic: “N: 2.a. / Zum Ostern / Neue Numer 2.a.”). MNB, inv. M. 2206 / 3814; donation in 1913.

<sup>3</sup> DALMATIC. Provenance: Evangelical Church in Sibiu / *Hermannstadt*. Golden silk brocade (woven in raised relief with silver-gilt threads): Italian (Venetian?) workshop, middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Dimensions: Length (front side) 145 cm; Length (back side) 137 cm; Width (at the top) 59 cm x Width (down) 118 cm; sleeve: 33 x 39 cm; silk tassels: L. 3 cm; silver-gilt ball (I): Length (total) 4 cm, D. 2,2 cm; silver-gilt ball (II): D. 1,7 cm; silk cord: L. 26,5 cm; braid woven with silver-gilt threads: 5 cm. (A late paper label is attached inside the back of the dalmatic: “N: 2.b. / Zum Ostern / Neue Numer 2.b.”). MNB, inv. M. 2207 / 3813; donation in 1913. (It is identical to the dalmatic remaining in Sibiu; currently being kept in Bucharest, we lack a recent photo of it.)

<sup>4</sup> Requirements relating to the wearing of liturgical garments in the 18<sup>th</sup> century result from the *Liturgia ecclesiae Cibiniensis*, published in 1764 (Wetter 2015, 105-108.)

<sup>5</sup> A similar decorative motif, with *riccio d'oro* effect, is distinguished on the velvet fabric of a chasuble of the Evangelical Church in Prejmer / *Tartlau* (Transylvania, Romania); the luxurious fabric is an Italian (Venetian?) production, of about 1490–1500 (Wetter 2015, 381-386).

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<sup>6</sup> The merchants played a very important and profitable role in this business; they brokered the raw materials (silk and silver-gilt), the silk (velvet) brocade fabrics, the orphreys or separate pieces of embroideries. Several transactions or purchases of expensive silk / velvet fabrics, and dorsal crosses for liturgical vestments are attested in Transylvania / *Siebenbürgen* and Sibiu / *Hermannstadt* in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (*Rechnungen* 1880, 183, 189, 193, 335, 486).

<sup>7</sup> For prestigious commissions renowned artists were asked to design special patterns.



The commissioner of the three liturgical garments from Sibiu is unknown; this could not be the parochial church because the orphrey iconography does not contain in the foreground its patron saint, Virgin Mary; it could be an acquisition of the church or – most likely – a donation of a prominent family or confraternity<sup>8</sup>. Being manufactured from the same precious fabric – woven in Italy in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century –, and the chasuble adorned with embroideries by particularly skilful Italian craftsmen – active in the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century –, there is a high probability that the three liturgical vestments were commissioned as a set, and carried out in the same workshop.

Describing the two dalmatics, we have to mention their trapezoidal shape given by the triangular pieces of brocaded fabric added to both lateral sides of the central strip (which has a width of 59 cm)<sup>9</sup>; the sleeves, grabbed on the shoulder line, complete the overall appearance of the capital letter “T”; the front and back sides of the two garments, as well as their sleeves are hemmed with a 3-5 cm wide gold metallic braid, woven with stylized vegetal motifs arranged in rhombic fields. A pair of silk tassels (in vivid colors of pink, blue, and green) is hanging in the back of each dalmatic (Braun 1912, 108-119).

The most valuable in the artistic terms are the “pictorial embroideries” of the dorsal cross applied on the chasuble (Braun 1912, 119-140).

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<sup>8</sup> Inventory records of the parochial church in Sibiu, dating to the late 14<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and especially the inventory from 1442 mention an impressive number of liturgical vestments: 14 dalmatics, 36 chasubles, 19 copes, and 22 various other liturgical textiles, accompanied by short descriptions of the fabrics – as silk velvet brocades and damasks, woven and embroidered with precious metal and colored silk threads (Seiwert 1874, 346-347, 354-357). From the previous large number of medieval liturgical garments and textiles of the Evangelical Church in Sibiu, only a few were preserved in 1913, when the liturgical ensemble entered the Brukenthal National Museum’s collections: 1 cope, 3 chasubles, 1 dorsal cross (derived from a chasuble) applied on an *antependium*, 6 dalmatics, and 10 various liturgical textiles (Dâmboiu 2008, 7-11, 38-47, 48-64, 70-95, 98-99).

<sup>9</sup> “Italian looms widths: The braccio, or standard measure, differed across Italy. For instance, the Lucchese braccio represented a measurement of 59.05 cm, whereas in Florence one braccio indicated 58, 36. The Venetian braccio differed again at 63.87 cm, as did the Milanese braccio at 59.45 (Jenkins 2003, 347).

Pictorial embroidery was considered a branch of painting from the Early Renaissance on. With the ability of a portrait painter – respecting and highlighting the exceptional quality of the painted drawings (“painted cartoons”), made in most cases by a specialist embroiderer known as *acupictor*<sup>10</sup> –, the embroiderer transposed the figures of saints on canvas by using silver-gilt threads and a wide range of colored silk threads, in the extremely appreciated technique “Goldwork” (“Or Nué”), combined with “laid couch-and-work”. Although a large number of craftsmen were skilled in the pictorial embroidery, only very few were able to approach the Goldwork embroidery.

The saints embroidered on the vertical arm of the dorsal cross reflect the specific features and attributes of the Apostles Peter (key), Paul (sword), John the Evangelist (Gospel book) and James the Greater (walking stick, and scallop on his hat); they are flanked on the horizontal arm of the cross by the Archangel Gabriel and Virgin Mary of the *Annunciation* scene.

The Apostles are enthroned in a front view, with silent glances and gestures that give them a monumental grandeur. The clearly defined volumes, and the rounded and serene faces of the figures reflect the serenity and dignity of Piero della Francesca’s paintings (ca. 1412–1492, Sansepolcro; Banker 2014), one of the greatest artists of the Early Renaissance. The *acupictor* of this orphrey was clearly marked by Piero della Francesca’s art, and, as we estimate in the following comments, he used some models inspired by creations of the grand master.

Saint Peter, the first figure on the vertical arm of the cross, is depicted with direct glance, broad nose with large nostrils, pronounced cheekbones, fleshy lips, and curly beard and hair (Fig. 7). Saint Peter’s classical appearance, with calm and unexpressive face that gives him a quiet humanism, is typical for Piero della Francesca’s impersonal style. The art critic Bernard Berenson wrote in 1899 “(Piero della Francesca) was ... impersonal, not in his method only, as all great artists have to be, but he was what would be commonly called impassive, that is to say, unemotional, in his conceptions as well. He loved impersonality, the absence of expressed emotions, as a quality in things. ...The artist will therefore

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<sup>10</sup> The medieval Latin word literally means a “painter with a needle”.

carefully avoid reproducing his own feelings” (Berenson 1899, 71-72).

A direct link to Piero’s “faces” can be found in the figure of Saint Paul (Fig. 9). Seen in profile in the second compartment of the orphrey, the physiognomy of Saint Paul reproduces almost faithfully Saint John the Baptist’s profile on the front panel of the *Baptism of Christ* altar (Fig. 10), painted by Piero della Francesca in 1450 for the Chapel of Saint John the Baptist in the Camaldolese abbey of Borgo Sansepolcro, Piero’s native town (now in the National Gallery London). Similar profiles, with black, pointy beard and peculiar hairline were repeated by the artist in some other paintings, like the one of the three characters wearing strange headdresses headgears at the foot of the Cross in the *Legend of the Cross* – the *Dream of Constantine* detail (Fig. 11) – (a fresco in the Major Chapel of San Francesco Church in Arezzo, 1452–1466; Banker 2014, 46), or the one from the group of three persons on the right panel of the *Flagellation of Christ* (ca. 1455–1460, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino). The bearded man just mentioned in Piero’s *Flagellation* was identified with Cardinal Bessarion (1403, Trebizond – 1472, Ravenna), one of the greatest humanist scholars of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Ginzburg 2000; King 2007). The Cardinal Bessarion made it his mission to unify the divided Christianity, hoping to obtain help from the Western Europe to lead a final crusade which would seek to reclaim Constantinople, in the hands of the Ottomans since 1453. He became a hero of the struggle for the reunification of the Eastern and Roman Churches, his name being known at that time better than the Pope’s. His unmistakable figure was also identified in one of Vittore Carpaccio’s painting from ca. 1502, *Saint Augustine’s Vision* (Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice). The art critic “Guido Perocco suggested (in 1950) that the figure (of Carpaccio’s *Saint Augustine in His Study*) was a portrait of the Cardinal Bessarion, observing that the famous humanist had already been depicted in the guise of Saint Jerome upon several occasions” (Brown 1999, 507-508). Cardinal Bessarion was also depicted at an older age by an anonymous Northern Italian painter (National Museums Liverpool), seen in profile, wearing the red hat (galero), and still retaining his distinct features. The Cardinal was a well known figure in the Venetian circles for the donation in 1468 of his extensive collection of manuscripts to the senate of Venice that forms the nucleus of the famous library of Saint Mark’s, the *Biblioteca Marciana*,

and of a container for a fragment of the True Cross.

The next saint, John the Evangelist (Fig. 12), is rendered young, bending his head tilted slightly toward his right shoulder, and holding the Holy Book in his right hand, whereas his left hand index finger is raised up, as he “discusses the Word of God” (Scheck 2008, 55). The beautiful features of Saint John – long flowing hair, slightly parted lips, straight nose, arched eyebrows and prominent chin – recall the figure of the *Man holding Juda’s head by his hair* (Fig. 13) in Piero’s fresco cycle *Torture of the Jew*, ca. 1455 (in the main choir chapel of San Francesco, the Franciscan Church in Arezzo), but also of the *Head of an Angel*, a detail of a fresco in the same church (Fig. 14) – both being considered Piero’s self-portraits.

The figure of Saint James the Greater (Fig. 15) in the last compartment on the vertical arm of the cross, looking out to the viewer, reflects the solemn stance, strong nose and long wavy hair of Christ in the *Resurrection*, that Piero painted between ca. 1463–1465 for the Town Hall of his native city, relocated in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century at the Museo Civico in Borgo Sansepolcro (Fig. 16), as well as the features of Christ in the *Baptism of Christ*, painted by Piero della Francesca in 1450 for the high altar of the Priory of Saint John the Baptist, Church in Borgo Sansepolcro (Fig. 17). The saint’s appearance represents Piero’s human ideal: concrete, restrained, and hieratic as well.

The half-figure of Archangel Gabriel (Fig. 18) of the *Annunciation* scene, on the horizontal arm of the dorsal cross, reproduces the features of the angel from the same scene on the *Polyptych of the Misericordia*, painted by Piero della Francesca between 1445–1462 (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro): the vertical position of the body and the right hand gesture, raising wings, long neck, and the robe with rich folds on the hips tied with a rope (Fig. 19). Madonna of the *Annunciation* is achieved in the style of “Madonna of Humility” (Fig. 20), promoted by the Franciscan order – under the patronage of whom, Piero worked some of his most famous masterpieces.

The saints are placed inside niches, whose background is embroidered with stylized vegetal motifs, inscribed in an ovoid shaped network of *griccia* type, that reflects close similarities with the background of the *Coronation of the Virgin Mary*, embroidery on an *antependium* made in Florence in ca. 1459 (Cleveland Museum of

Art)<sup>11</sup>. The International Gothic architectural elements of the orphrey, needleworked separately with silver-gilt threads in raised embroidery technique, and subsequently applied to the dorsal cross, are to be found in a large Flemish-Italian and Spanish artistic confluences areal. Examples include the spectacular embroidery of the Altarpiece from Burgo de Osma, Spain<sup>12</sup>, executed in 1468 for Pedro de Montoya, Bishop of Osma, a master-piece of the genre (Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago; Davison 1968, 108-124), the orphrey of a chasuble made in Lucca in ca. 1450–1500 (Stonyhurst College, Lancashire), or the orphrey of a chasuble made in an Italian workshop in ca. 1475 (Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago).

The choice of the four saints depicted on the orphrey – “the Chief Apostles” Peter and Paul (the most important founders of Christianity, both buried in the catacombs of Rome), and respectively, John the Evangelist and James the Greater (two of Jesus’ “inner three” disciples; Matthew 17:1) – encloses some clues about the chasuble’s embroiderer and commissioner.

The three domes in the first and third compartment of the vertical dorsal cross arm (above the portraits of Saints Peter and John the Evangelist), with their Byzantine and Gothic stylistic elements, give us the appearance of the Basilica San Marco facade in Venice. In this context, the embroidered figure of Saint Peter sitting in an architectural niche, under the domes of San Marco Basilica in Venice (Fig. 7), makes reference to Rome as the center of Christianity (Fig. 8). The connection between Saint Mark’s Basilica in Venice and Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome (The Papal Basilica) can be explained through Saint Mark’s patronage of Venice. Founder of the Church in Alexandria – one of the most important Episcopal seats of the Early Christianity – and patron of Venice, Saint Mark may be interpreted as backing up the link between Rome / the Western Churches and respectively, the Eastern Churches. (After the fall of Constantinople, the city of Venice became, in effect, the capital of the Greco-Byzantine diaspora, as the most famous of all such exiles.)

Highlighting the figure of Saint John the Evangelist by placing him also under the domes of Basilica San Marco in Venice, cannot be accidental (Fig. 12). It is undoubtedly linked with

one of the oldest and most powerful devotional brotherhoods in Venice, the School of Saint John the Evangelist (founded in 1261). “The Great Society of John the Evangelist (Giovanni Evangelista) looked after the old and sick, for whom they built a hospice. In 1369, they received a present from the High Chancellor of the King of Cyprus: a splinter of the Holy Cross. The gift was kept in a reliquary of quartz and silver” (Hagen 2005, 98), and since then it became the symbol of the School and the object of an extraordinary veneration. The Great School of John the Evangelist held relics, vestments, decorations and objects that were carried or displayed on the day of the patron saint’s procession or on religious and public holidays. A sumptuous ensemble of liturgical vestments like the one in the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu could have been commissioned for this devotional brotherhood.

In this context, we must remember the existence in Sibiu of a powerful fraternity of shoemakers’ journeymen worshiping also Saint John the Evangelist, founded in 1484 and active until the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Gross 2009, 52-55; Zimmermann 1881, 378-380). Including members from other social strata (goldsmiths, women, priests etc), the corporate aspects of this brotherhood were exceeded by its deeply devotional, charitable and educational character; there is ample evidence in this regard, such as several indulgences obtained from Rome for those who supported the restoration of Saint John altar, located in the parish church of Sibiu (Gündisch 1991, 356; Fara 2007, 127). It is quite plausible that the three liturgical garments, analyzed in the present study, were purchased and donated to the parochial church by the Fraternity of Saint John in Sibiu or by a wealthy member of it.

Concluding the present study, we note that the high artistic quality of the figural embroideries, the use of multicolored silk and precious metal threads, the practice of the most advanced techniques in needlework, as well as the costly heavy golden brocade of which all the three liturgical vestments were cut, are evidences of the fact that we deal with exceptional liturgical textile works of art; they were made most likely by Venetian masters in the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, after designs or models inspired by some masterpieces of Piero della Francesca<sup>13</sup>. The

<sup>13</sup> According to tradition, Piero taught Luca Signorelli (1441/1445–1523), who is known to have accomplished also painted cartoons for embroideries. In 1472, the young Luca was painting in Arezzo, where

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.clevelandart.org/art/1953.129>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/41449>

religious context and aspirations of the time, subtle included by Piero della Francesca in his works, echoed even in the Goldwork embroidery of the chasuble in Sibiu, whose craftsmen must have shared the same feelings. Referring to the commissioner, it would be too coincidental the existence of the two powerful fraternities honoring Saint John the Evangelist both in Venice

and Sibiu, and the representation of the saint on the dorsal cross of the chasuble, in a particularly marked position. We presume as possible the provenience of this precious ensemble of liturgical garments of the parochial church of Virgin Mary, through the Fraternity of Saint John in Sibiu (as a donation), from the School of Saint John the Evangelist in Venice (the most probable commissioner).

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he could admire, study and make copies after his master's works.

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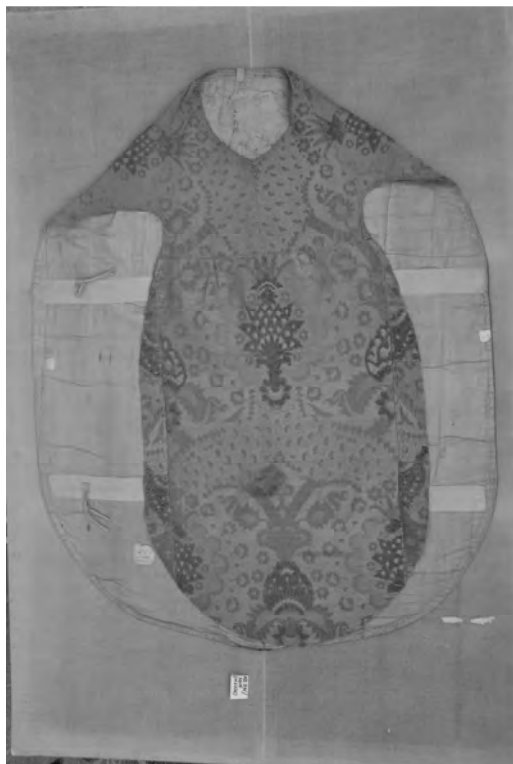
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**FROM THE CUDGEL TO THE SPEAR.  
AN ICONOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION OF SEVERAL BAS-RELIEFS  
OF IN THE CATHEDRAL ST. MICHAEL, ALBA IULIA.**

**Sebastian CORNEANU\***

**Abstract:** *The present study is an iconographic analysis of several bas-reliefs inside the Roman-Catholic Cathedral St. Michael in Alba Iulia. Two of them illustrate scenes of punishment, characterised by their moralising dimension, which are accompanied by two variants of the motif of “St. Michael fighting the dragon”. Within these themes, we focus on the attributes of the characters (the cudgel, the noose, the spear), our research aiming to interpret them in a symbolic order. At the border between wilderness and evolution, the cudgel is a symbol of Alterity; it is both a tool and a weapon, marked by sheer ambiguity, since it can become a staff, when made longer, or a spear, with minor improvements and adjustments.*

**Keywords:** *Romanesque, sculpture, bas-relief, iconography, Alba Iulia, cudgel, spear*

**Rezumat:** *Subiectul prezentului studiu este analiza iconografică a câtorva basoreliefuri din interiorul catedralei romano-catolice Sf. Mihail din Alba Iulia. Două dintre acestea se constituie în scene de pedeapsă, caracterizate prin dimensiunea lor moralizatoare, la care se adaugă două variante ale temei Sf. Mihail în luptă cu dragonul. În cadrul acestor scene ne-au atras atenția obiectele atribut folosite de către personaje (ciomagul, ștreangul, lancea), investigația noastră fiind orientată către interpretarea lor în ordine simbolică. Aflat la granița dintre sălbăticie și evoluție, ciomagul este simbol al alterității, în același timp unealtă și armă, marcat de o ambiguitate extremă, deoarece el poate să ia prin extensie și formă de toiag, sau prin adăugiri și prelucrări minime poate deveni lance.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *stil romanic, sculptură, basorelief, iconografie, Alba Iulia, ciomag, lance*

At the beginning of style development in post-Carolingian Europe, the Romanesque art fascinates the viewer by a mixture of grotesque and sublime, by that odd deformed beauty and beautiful deformity (*mira quedam deformis formositas ac formosa deformitas?*), as Bernard de Clairvaux mentions in his *Apology* of 1124 (de Clairvaux 1124). Assessed in a stylistic context, the Romanesque sculpture is monumental; this feature was reborn more than half a millennium after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, when this artistic genre had the mission to decorate and to visually valorise architectural elements. Besides its implicit decorative nature, the

Romanesque architectonic plasticity is also marked by a religious function, deeply related to its illustrative and decorative functions; the former is mainly rendered by means of themes and characters that are predominantly biblical, and far less secular, which decorate larger or smaller monuments scattered throughout the Catholic world.

Such a building is the Roman-Catholic Cathedral in Alba Iulia, the only Hungarian Episcopal basilica that has almost entirely maintained its original form. Besides its ample dimensions, it is the only unaltered example of the monumental architecture characteristic of the Arpadian epoch (Entz 1958, 3). Around year 1200, when the building of the Alba Iulia cathedral was completed, such monuments were practically inexistent in the Transylvanian area. This was the result of both the precarious economic context and

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of the scarce number of believers, unlike the reality of the French and Iberian regions, where pilgrimage routes triggered the existence of large churches, such as those in Chartres, Vézelay, Le Puis, Conques or Santiago de Compostela (Watkin 2005, 134).

Stylistically, the elements of architectural sculpture featured in the Alba Iulia cathedral stand proof of the participation of three stone masonry workshops that worked concomitantly, the first on the exterior decorations of the lateral apse and on the southern portal, while the other two on the inside architectural decorations and the exterior sculptures of the northern lateral apse (Vătăşianu 1959, 45). The stonemasons of two workshops who worked on the inside sculptures carved the capitals and the decorative consoles – which are not analysed in the present study – and a few scenes of a figurative nature, some of which illustrating a very clear subject. Although there are few scenes of an obvious moralising nature, the intention of those that decorated them was to illustrate as suggestively as possible examples and parables that praise Christian virtues, which oppose vice, which is here expressed in an explicit manner.

Such a scene, where we can identify the mark of the second workshop, which was active in the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Sarkadi 2010, 74-75), is found on the capital of the second pillar between the northern lateral naves (Vătăşianu 1965, 637; Fleşer 2009, 110; Sarkadi 2010, 74-75). As far as the composition is concerned, the scene is divided by the corner of the capital into two sides which show two human figures, each of them accompanied by a stylised acanthus leaf; the nervures are decorated with dew drops and end in a crochet at the top (Fig. 1). The two characters are placed on each of the two sides; at the left there is a devil with tousled hair, walking towards the edge of the capital, while on the other side there is a naked female figure, also advancing towards the former character.

The general theme seems to be a punishment scene, where the action is unfolding, as revealed by the posture of the two walking characters, which are separated by the corner of the capital. In our opinion, the female character represented on the right illustrates the sin of haughtiness; her declarative nudity emphasised by the way in which she is covering her pubis with the right hand and the breasts with the left hand being contradicted by the pointed cap. This paradox of the incomplete nakedness, where only the head is

covered while the body is exhibited, is an attribute of vainglory, rendered even more overwhelming in combination with the idea of sin, as in a pejorative context complete nudity stands for vices and their punishment (Garnier 1989, 269-270). There is a temporal ambiguity of the scene, resulting from the causative relation of the two characters, the devil's posture – he is holding a cudgel and his body is slightly bent around the corner of the capital, where the woman should show up; his right knee on the ground, as if crouching, he seems to be prepared to strike the sinner, in order to punish her. We believe that this scene has a prescriptive purpose, warning believers against sinning. This idea is also supported by the contradictory nature of the female character. Although aware of her nakedness (which she conceals), she is wearing a cap as an attribute of haughtiness, and at the same time is walking towards the devil (unaware of his presence). The manner in which the characters are presented makes use of deformity and caricature as means of expressiveness that belong to the discourse used for prescriptive, moralising scenes.

We should offer an explanation that refers not so much to the composition and to the motif of the scene, but to the characteristics of the objects included, on the one hand the cap, as a piece of garment, and on the other, more importantly, the cudgel as an instrument of punishment. Functionally speaking, to a certain extent they are also in a causative relation, the cap symbolising sin and the cudgel being the instrument of punishment. Still, their connotations are quite different, as the cudgel and the club are impure, blunt weapons by excellence, designed to smash, totally opposed to the spear or the sword. These have a pointed head and a blade, which, although representing some sort of technological contrivance, enable the hero to triumph over his enemy (Diel 1952, 176-178). Although both categories of weapons are based on percussion, in their evolution blunt weapons precede those that perforate or cut, the latter being the result of technological progress, the fire in which they are forged purifying them (Durand 1998, 157-159). The club and its related weapons are thus the attribute of the impure beings; they are rudimentary, imperfect weapons designed to smash, situated halfway between the object found in nature and the object that was worked on. We find it normal that in the symbolic order such a weapon should be associated with the devil, as an attribute that aims to enhance its animality and its hybrid condition, reminding at the same of its



status of an unfinished being. Placed at the border between savagery and evolution, the club is a symbol of Alterity, being at the same time a tool and a weapon, utterly ambiguous, as by extension it may turn into a staff, or into a bishop's crosier, when its shape is altered.

The same workshop has authored another relief, stylistically similar, placed on two sides of the capital of the north-western pillar of the choir. The motif illustrated here is *the Sinner's punishment* (Fig. 2). The scene has a complex composition, implying the interaction of several characters, placed at several levels. Sequentially, the action begins with the sinner, represented first on the left, with a noose around his neck, then shows the devil holding the rope over his shoulder while pulling him along and walking towards a third character, which undoubtedly represents Satan seated (Vătăşianu 1965, 637; Fleşer 2009, 109-110). The postures of the characters betray a tense relation, rendered obvious by the way in which the sinner resists with all his might, his heels dug into the ground. The movement is amplified by the devil that pulls at the noose, bent forward and the head turned because of the effort, while the third character (Satan) reaches his hand to grab the rope pulled by the former. This relief shows a chronologically illustrated processuality, as the characters' actions, read from the left to the right, have a temporal succession. This chronology shows at the same time simultaneity of actions, suggested by the figures' emblematic gestures: the sinner's resistance, his enslaving by the devil and his taking over by Satan all occur at the same time. From the point of view of the workmanship, the sculptor renders the characters' movements very artfully, by attributing them several specific characteristics, such as deformity, shown by means of the grotesque and unnatural sizes and the ludicrous exaggeration, shown in the traits and expressions of the faces. The representation conventions are also retraceable in the type of details used for each figure, the nudity of the two devils, together with the tousled hair as particulars of impure beings contrasting with the sinner's curly hair and attire (Garnier 1982, 137; Garnier 1989, 264). Here, the noose is an object that connects the characters, an instrument of punishment that is a symbol of man as a prisoner of his own vices, unable to free himself from them, as well as of the devil's triumph over him, the human condition being turned into animality: the individual becomes a savage lead on a leash by the devil.

Such scenes are quite common for the Romanesque monuments in Western Europe, being used especially in the portals illustrating the theme of *The Last Judgment*. We find that the tympanum of the portal of the St. Foy abbey church in Conques, France, dated back to the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, has a detail that seems thematically close. The inferior band shows a scene from hell (Fig. 3). Having a naked and tousled-hair Satan as a central figure, the scene presents a series of characters drawn in activities that apparently have no chronological order and seem to suggest simultaneity of the narrated events. The scenes that have an obvious moralizing touch, emphasized by the numerous inscriptions, are highly descriptive, showing writhed characters in grotesque sizes and postures. What seems extremely important to us is the presence of the two characteristic objects, the cudgel, represented here as a pitch fork, and the noose, used as gallows, both shown in a context similar to the one in Alba Iulia.

The pitch-fork, too, is presented here as an impure instrument, as the devil that holds it in his hand uses it to knock off the horse of a horseman wearing a coat of mail; it is a clear hint to the sin of haughtiness, since there is no doubt that the faithless knight is defeated by the devil. The noose is also represented close to Satan, on the other side, where Judas is shown hanged, as a prisoner of his own betrayal, with the 30/silver coin purse hanging around his neck.

We do not think there is a direct link between the scene of the Ste. Foy church portal and the two scenes of the Roman-Catholic cathedral in Alba Iulia. There is, however, a common significance of the themes analyzed above, since the attributes (the cudgel and the noose) are used by similar characters with the same moralizing charge, in spite of the different contexts.

The two reliefs placed in the church choir, representing Michael the Archangel killing the dragon, contrast with these scenes of punishment. The two representations of St. Michael, patron of the church, emphasize the technical and stylistic differences between the stone masonry workshops. The first scene, placed inside, on the southern wall of the choir, is ascribed to the first workshop. It is more elaborate and inspiration for this version can be found both in the French and in the German environments, the alleged backgrounds of the craftsman (Vătăşianu 1959, 155; Fleşer 2009, 103-104; Entz 1958, 9). The other relief, placed on the northern interior side of

the choir, is a later replica, which shows obvious differences in the more elaborate shapes and the detailed draping, specific to a more developed Romanesque art (Vătășianu 1959, 157; Fleșer 2009, 106-107).

Chronologically the first relief showing St. Michael killing the dragon is placed inside the choir on the southern wall (Fig. 4). Initially, it was in a different location, probably on one of the facades, since it represents the patron saint of the church (Vătășianu 1959, 156; Fleșer 2009, 103). Thematically, this representation falls into the category of the scenes that contrast humanity with animality, in order to illustrate the fight between good and evil. In this context, the saint is represented frontally, in his typical archangel posture, the main attribute being his verticality, emphasized by the wings parallel to the body. The diagonal composition (top left – bottom right) is rendered by the human character's vigorous movement: raised higher than the level of his forehead, his right hand thrusts the spear – supported in the median plane by the left hand – into the dragon's head, which is in the bottom left corner. The active diagonal, represented by the spear and the character's posture literally sitting on the dragon, the raised leg pinning it to the ground, both symbolize the idea of domination, of triumph of the good over the evil, accentuating verticality as an attribute. Stylistically, the bas relief is static and crude, the character's posture is rigid, the clothes folding is flattened but maintains the volumetric; there are some incongruities at the level of the character's head and neck, which are oversized as compared to the body. As far as the degree to which the face is individualized, the head stands out by the attention given to the features, the big nose, the orbits, the eyes, the mouth and the facial wrinkles being clearly defined. In addition to these, the tonsure with the curls gathered as in a cap makes the face solemnly severe (Entz 1958, 9).

The animal figure is represented here in contrast with the human character, its hybrid nature being emphasized by an abundance of details. Thus, the dragon has bird wings and legs, attached to the body that has an oversized waist; the head is that of a mammal with strong teeth and ears held backwards. This representation is much more in keeping with the western norms, according to which the dragon combines bird and mammal features, which emphasizes its hybrid nature.

A replica of this relief, placed on the other (northern) side of the choir, shows clear stylistic

differences, as well as differences of interpretation (Vătășianu 1959, 156-157; Fleșer 2009, 106). If the former representation renders tension and dynamism by means of the diagonal composition, emphasized by the character's gestures, the rigid posture and the direction in which the spear is thrust, the latter relief replaces them by a moderate movement, characterized by a less martial attitude, as the saint holds the spear with both hands in front of his chest, the gesture of pinning down the dragon being inconclusive (Fig. 5). This is completed by a contradictory attitude: the character does not virtually sit on the dragon, which would imply that he has defeated it; on the contrary, the animal's movements, its raised, twisted tail still show an intense fight. The tense posture of the dragon, however, is annulled by the ambiguous angle of the saint's head, tilted on the shoulder, and by his apparently absent facial expression, in total contrast with the previous representation, where the character holds his head high, looking ahead, his face showing determination (Fig. 4).

Stylistically, the later relief seems more natural, as the character's body movements are sinuous, his position in space is more skillfully rendered, as illustrated by the way the shoulder is pushed forward, guiding the hand and leading to the soft tilt of the entire body over the spear. The naturalism of the relief is also conveyed by the draping of the clothes, which, by its ample folds, succeeds in emphasizing the corporality of the character, better detached against the background. The differences in interpretation and in style are clearly shown by the emphasized reptilian features of the dragon (Entz 1958, 9; Vătășianu 1959, 156-157; Fleșer 2009, 106). Thus, the hybrid loses its bird features, as the craftsman adds scales obtained by circular incisions, while the body becomes more elongated, approximately similar to that of a snake with an oversized waist, the wings and the mammal paws being the only features that remind of other species.

Another detail that contributes to the emphasis of the reptilian features is the shape of the head: it is a lizard head, which makes the sculpture an even more realistic representation (Entz 1958, 9; Sarkadi 2010, 162). When comparing the two versions of the theme placed in the cathedral choir, we notice that, although the animals' postures are approximately identical, they differ mainly in the illustration of movement. In the latter version, the position of the body and the animal's contortions are much more emphasized,



which makes the entire composition much more realistic.

Shown here as a warrior-hero, with his absolute verticality, to which the wings and the spear are added as attributes, the archangel is a synthesis of the champion of *the good*, of the opposition humanity-animality, interpreted here strictly according to Christian morality. St Michael is no ordinary hero, he is the quintessence of the scenes in which the good defeats the evil, a victory of belief over idolatry; he is the wielder of the weapon as a symbol of his purity and a role model for the entire medieval chivalry (Durand 1998, 156). In this choreography that opposes man to the hybrid, his main attribute is the spear, a weapon meant to pierce, not to crush. It shares one characteristic with the cudgel, as both are percussion instruments (Durand 1998, 159). Moreover, the spear itself is a mere piece of wood to which a metallic pointed head has been added, which completely changes its use. This is the difference between the spear and the cudgel – the metallic pointed head that totally changes the situation, as it is an attribute of *homo faber*, a chemical element extracted from the soil and purified in the fire.

The pointed head and the edge of the spear (or of the sword) are made to pierce or to cut matter, enabling this way the separation of the good from the evil, the severance of ties, since they lack the ambivalence of blunt objects such as the cudgel, the club or the mace (Durand 1998, 157-159). As already mentioned, there is however a common element: the shaft of the spear, in reality a cudgel upgraded by the added pointed head. The transformation of the cudgel from an impure

object, a weapon and an undefined object at the same time, into a weapon symbol of purity and attribute of the hero is thus an endeavor that shows the switch from animality to humanity, the latter being valorized according to the principles of Christian morality. This religious over-determination closely related to the pointed head as a metallic addition is enhanced by the association with the Divinity, as Longinus' spear is the weapon that pierced Jesus Christ's rib, thus changing for ever the destiny of humanity. Moreover, the metallic pointed head, which completely transforms the function of the cudgel, also appears as a functional attribute of the Archangel Gabriel, angel of *the Annunciation* (fig. 6), in the shape of a lily, as a symbol of purity, in total opposition with the pointed head of Archangel Michael's spear.

Considering them from a functional point of view, we notice that the cudgel is not a generically impure object, as it is situated at the border between the natural and the manufactured, as some kind of main component of a kit that changes its function when various forged components are added to it (pointed heads, decorative elements) and becomes associated with positive characters that his way emphasize its symbolic value. We recognize here the ambivalence that is characteristic of most religious representations, this entire symbolic passage from the cudgel to the spear being in fact the way in which human imagination, by means of additions and interpretations, highlights the relations that man has with his tools.

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1. Punishment scene 1, St. Michael's cathedral,  
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## HISTORICAL IMAGES OF PRESENT DAY ROMANIAN CITIES: TIMIȘOARA AND THE CRESCENT\*

Anda-Lucia SPÂNU\*\*

**Abstract.** *The historic images of the cities from present day Romania belong to two different “worlds”, the Western and the Oriental. Through maps and images, descriptions and histories, Europeans have been able to imagine the Ottoman world and vice versa. This paper intends to study the role of the printed images of cities as a medium for transmitting knowledge through a stereotype: the crescent, represented on rooftops in cities belonging to the three Romanian Principalities, then part of the Ottoman world.*

**Keywords:** *Symbols, Crescent, Historic Images, Urban Representation, Romanian Principalities, Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Empire*

**Rezumat:** *Imagini istorice ale orașelor României de azi: Timișoara și Semiluna. Imaginile istorice ale orașelor actualei României au evoluat în lumi diferite, între Orient și Occident. Cu ajutorul imaginilor și hărților, al descrierilor și textelor istorice, europenii au putut să-și imagineze lumea otomană, și otomanii pe cea europeană. Acest articol intenționează să prezinte rolul imaginilor istorice ale orașelor în transmiterea cunoștințelor, prin intermediul unui stereotip: semiluna, reprezentată în vârful acoperișurilor unor clădiri din orașe ale celor trei provincii românești, pe atunci parte a lumii otomane.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *simboluri, Semiluna, imagini istorice, reprezentări urbane, Principatele Române, Imperiul Habsburgic, Imperiul Otoman*

It is said that an image is worth a thousand words. It seems to be true since images are more often used in historical research once that the historians understood that an image from the past contains valuable historical information. For this approach, however, historians must know how to read an image, protecting themselves against biased interpretations (Burke 2001, *passim*). One who looks at it may see whatever she or he wants or is able to, probably something different than its producer. But it should be taken into consideration that there is a big difference between an ordinary beholder's spontaneous reaction to an image, to whom, in fact, the image is devoted, and the reaction of an educated viewer to the same image, who knows what to see. Those trained to look at images, professionals from various specialities, usually forget that the

beholder does not see the image just as they do, that the latter sees with his eyes and heart, while the first uses, in addition to eyes, his mind. Even more, the contemporary beholder of an image does not necessarily have the same reaction as the viewer from the time the image was produced (Freedberg 1989, 17-19).

Many specialists have studied the “Printing Revolution”, as well as the importance of the production and the trade of books. It was already pointed out six decades ago that prints were important not only for art, but also for science and technology. Prints are not minor works of art, but, on the contrary, they are among the most important tools of modern life and thought (Ivins 1953, *passim*). Printing, in general, but especially printed images, had a crucial contribution (Cașoveanu 1975, 12-13) in communicating ideas, being the main medium in terms of spreading information (Damadian 1978, 6).

From the beginning of the woodcut and later of the copper plate engraving, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup>

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century, until the spreading of the photographic reproduction, the graphic art, mainly the print art, was a medium of cultural exchanges, without precedent in history. It was, from its beginning, the cardinal popular art, reaching all the population strata (Huizinga 1991, 106).

Prints soon became means of conveying information on historical events, portraits of famous figures, the discoveries of new territories, of scientific research and so on. Many prints illustrate habits and manners, encouraging virtue and mocking vice. Multiplication made it possible to reach virtually almost anyone, accessibility being facilitated by their price, which was ten times lower than that of a painting, as well as by their smaller sizes.

At the same time, prints were important for exchange and dissemination (Adrian 1982, 21) of art works between different cultures. They played the same role as art books do today, which help us know the history and art of different cultures or civilizations.

Images of nowadays Romanian towns have been made on a wide range of supports (canvas and mural paintings, coins and medals, shrines and other religious objects, scenic backgrounds, documents and other guild objects, playing cards and even on tableware), but the vast majority of them were printed images. They were marked by the spirit of the time they belonged to, by the artistic styles and by the purposes they served.

The historic images<sup>1</sup> of the towns from present day Romania belong to two different “worlds”, the Occidental and the Oriental (European) one. Their contemporaries, according to the cardinal point the beholder belonged to, have perceived these worlds differently.

This paper intends to study the role of the printed images of towns as a medium for transmitting historical information through images. One of the most powerful was a stereotype that was formed due to the effort of coping with the conditions of a foreign country, namely the crescent, represented for three centuries (from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) on rooftops in towns belonging to the three

Romanian Principalities, whether they were indeed part of the Ottoman world or not (Quataert 2000; Goffman 2003; Faroghi 2004a; Faroghi 2004b; Burke, Po-Chia Hsia 2007; Wheatcroft 1995; Wheatcroft 2003; Wheatcroft 2009).

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For understanding the differences and figuring out the particularities, a short introduction in the political context, that the three Romanian Principalities evolved in, is required.

The towns represented in the images we are interested in have developed differently (from the economic, social and cultural point of view) as a result of the political evolution of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania. The Moldavian and Wallachian towns developed in a foremost Oriental world – at the Balkans’ border, themselves considered a bridge between West and East, between Europe and Asia (Todorova 1997, 16) –, while the Transylvanian ones were established and had an evolution in accordance with Western principles. This is the fundamental peculiarity of the towns from present day Romania.

The conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed II, in 1453, changed the fate of Europe, and perhaps of the entire world. In the second part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachia and Moldavia tried to combine resistance to the policy of appeasement, rebellions alternating with obedience. The 16<sup>th</sup> century evolved into increased influence of Ottoman domination and suzerainty in the region.

After Central Hungary became an Ottoman province, Transylvania obtained the status of an autonomous principality under the Porte’s suzerainty, as a result of political battles between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empire. Its role in Central and Eastern Europe’s policies increased considerably. Breaking the ties with Hungary, Transylvania approached Wallachia and Moldavia, both under Ottoman suzerainty, developing close political, social and cultural relations, until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The period was characterized by many wars between two great powers, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, during which the winners changed several times, and the Romanian Principalities were caught in the middle.

Along with the European political transformations that followed the siege of Vienna in 1683, Transylvania came under the rule of the Habsburg Empire (later the Austro-Hungarian Empire). From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the

<sup>1</sup> My understanding of “historic images of towns” comprises the following: documentary graphic (or the visual historic sources) that depict partial or overall images of towns, including drawings, mono- or polychrome engravings (no matter of support), water-colours, different genres of painting. The notion covers the time period between the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and the generalization of photography after the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.



countries placed on both sides of the Carpathians grew apart. Transylvania evolved very differently from Moldavia and Wallachia. Many similarities had been also observed earlier, but from this point on differences had appeared in terms of cultural and social life, being visible even in the representations of towns dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

If prior representation of the town of Târgoviște (Tergovist) could be found in the same series with those of Oradea (Gros Waradein) and Timișoara (Temeswar) – then part of Hungary and/or of Ottoman Empire (Türkische 1663; Fürsten 1665)<sup>2</sup> –, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, the events which took place in (Hungarian and) Transylvanian towns were depicted in a series of images (Schwadtner, Eltner 1735 or *Prospect* 1736) which did not comprise representations of towns from Moldavia and Wallachia. The latter were represented in very different type of works. Characteristic for that period were series of images depicting scenes from the Austro-(Russo)-Turkish wars (*Der Türkenkrieg* 1789 or Balzer, Walenta 1790).

While in Transylvania hadn't occurred any political changes nor dramatic events generating serial urban representations, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the series of town views was continued for the provinces located to the south and east of the Carpathians where the Phanariotes have ruled (in Wallachia from 1714 to 1822, in Moldavia from 1711 to 1821).

The history of urban life, as well as the political and cultural history of the Romanian provinces, took place between West and East, between Vienna and Constantinople, at the interference of the Habsburg Empire with the Ottoman Empire. To master these territories was a constant concern

of the foreign policy of the two empires, which were in constant rivalry, thus influencing all aspects of life in these areas.

During the entire period I have discussed about, Europe's policy was marked by the struggle for supremacy between the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empire. The representations concerning these spaces were influenced by the events, but also contributed to their occurrence. Maps and images, descriptions and histories, helped Europeans to imagine the Ottoman world and vice versa (Manners 2007, 17-18).

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Analysing the urban representations and travel books, one can find out the existence of a stereotype regarding the Ottoman town, stereotype which was formed due to the effort of coping with the conditions of a foreign country. This is also the case of the towns from present day Romania, some then part of the Ottoman world, some not (Klusáková 2001, 358-377).

As an example, when Western artists represented Timișoara, they used a cultural symbol of the Islamic world, namely the Crescent, symbol of the Ottoman Empire, when the town was under its rule and long after it has ceased.

In the case of the Timișoara's general views produced during in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a habit to date them taking as reference the time span between 1552-1716 when the Ottomans had installed here the so-called *Temeşvar vilayet*. Fig. 1 and 2 are two representations from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, almost identical, created by Gaspar Boutatts for different works, printed two years apart (Fig. 1: *Description* 1688, plate 20 and Fig. 2: Boutatts 1690, plate 35).

The town of Timișoara was represented with the crescent moon, mark of Ottoman rule, on top of the main buildings, in many images of that age (Bizozeri 1686, 52; Rossi 1687-1691, plate 5, one view out of four). For example, two images by anonymous artists, which can be dated by the year they were published: the first one in Burckhard von Birckenstein's work (Fig. 3: Birckenstein, Ernst 1686, 19), the second one in Paul Rycaut and Giovanni Sagredo's. Fig. 4 is quite similar with the previous one, but it mirrors a town-view on a map (Sanson, Coronelli 1693)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Two examples in this respect. In *Türkische und Ungarische Chronica*: Târgoviște – Schlacht zwischen dem fürsten von Siebenbürg: unnd Sinan Bassa mit eroberung Tergovist un Bogerist unnd Hirgio, the plate 15; Timișoara – Contrafactur wie die Vöstung Temeswar, vom Fürsten aus Siebenbürgen bellegert Gewest. Anno 1596, the plate between pages 316 and 317 and Oradea – Wahre Contrafactur der Vöstung Gros Waradein, in ober Unger. Wie die Türken belegert gewest. Anno 1598, the plate between pages 416 and 417. In *Ortelius redivivus et continuatus*: Târgoviște is the plate between pages 182 and 183: *Abris der Belegung Tervovist, und der Schlacht, so vom Pr. von Siebenbürgen geschehen Anno 1595. Mense Octob*; the plate between pages 195 and 196 is Timișoara: *Contrafactur wie die Vöstung Temeswar, vom Fürsten aus Siebenbürgen bellegert Gewest. Anno 1596*; and Oradea is represented in the plate between pages 247 and 248: *Wahre Contrafactur der Vöstung Gros Waradein, in ober Unger. Wie die vom Türken belegert gewest. Anno 1598*.

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<sup>3</sup> The third image out of six, from left to right. The explanatory text is: *TEMESWAR, Ville Capitale en Haute Hongrie, pres de la Transilvanie: Mahomet premier Vizir de Soliman 2me Empereur des Turcs l'assignea en 1551 et s'en*

The very detailed legends of 18<sup>th</sup> century engravings give the impression of real briefings, which should certify the authenticity of the events represented in the image. In fact they only provide data on certain events, often real, but which have not happened necessarily in that background, but elsewhere. Using words on prints is one way to boost the power of image communication. It assumes the superiority of verbal over the visual image, as if images are not able to transmit certain messages. One must consider the involvement of words in/on images – captions, legends –, not only for their relevance for the beholder; those words help the image to communicate something different than it says without that text (Freedberg 1983, 47-48).

An argument could be Gabriel Bodenehr's image (Fig. 5: Bodenehr 1720a, 167; Bodenehr 1720b)<sup>4</sup>, which can be dated between 1716, the final year of Ottoman domination in the area specified in the legend<sup>5</sup>, and 1720, the year the town view was printed.

We must not forget that during the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries it was a habit to take over already existent images, most often without specifying this. Sometimes small changes were done, sometimes not, but these were published in popular and scientific works, often depicting something different from the original images. In the case of the Gabriel Bodenehr's engravings, they were not only replicated in several publications, but inspired by some older engravings, or taken over by other artists.

Although the legend says that the Ottoman occupation has ended, and the town was under Austrian administration, the image retains the Islamic element (the crescent) atop of two towers, one of them resembling a minaret.

Of the same type are many other representations of nowadays Romanian towns.

It is also the case of the views of the town of Oradea (which was also, for a short period, under direct Ottoman administration, as part of *Varat*

*eyalet*, which lasted between 1660 and 1692) in some of the works already mentioned. On this occasion, I will exemplify with two Oradea views, by Gaspar Bouttats (Fig. 6: *Description* 1688, pl. 21 – Waradiin ) and Guillaume Sanson (Fig. 7: Sanson, Coronelli 1693, – Varadin au le grand Varadin).

However, other towns, that were only under Ottoman suzerainty, were also depicted with crescent on top of buildings. I think three more examples are enough, one for each century and each province: from Transylvania, Alba Iulia, by Lucas Mayer, Nürnberg, 1595 (Fig. 8); from Wallachia, Târgoviște, by Iacob Harrewijn, [Antwerp], 1688 (Fig. 9); from Moldavia, Iași, by Hisler Gottlob, [Wien], 1789 (Fig. 10).

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The experience I got after studying images of towns for a decade (Spânu 2012; Spânu 2013), made me conclude that artists who visited present day Romania represented towns according to their mentality. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most graphic representations of towns from nowadays Romania were made by Western European travellers or by artists commissioned by these travellers.

It is true, non-Muslim countries who had accepted to pay tribute to the Ottoman sultan were considered part of the Islamic world (Faroghi 2004a, 2), but (practicing or converting to) the Islam was never mandatory. In fact, Ottoman Sultans were quite tolerant with the Christian religion from the region that is now part of Romania.

Although at first glance it may seem so, for an Christian Westerner artist from those centuries (and as well for his publisher) the crescent was not of religious, but political significance.

But we should be aware of the fact that illustrations are subjective, that they are recording a certain point of view, and certain elements may be omitted or highlighted, depending on the desired impact (Ní Néill [1998], 41). Furthermore, these images were destined to those left at home, who had not seen and would probably never see these places. They could however recognise in them what they expected of a town. And with the help of the crescent they were educated to see a town from what was considered to be Ottoman World.

*rendit maître. Les Turcs l'ont faite la Capitale d'un Beglerbeglic ou Gouvernement General de la Turquie en Europe. A. La Ville. B. Le Cateau. C. Le Fauxbourg. D. Riviere de Temes. E. Moulin.*

<sup>4</sup> The same image was printed identical in both books of Gabriel Bodenehr.

<sup>5</sup> *Temeswar liget in Ober-Ungarn zwischen der Donau und Siebenbürgen. Ward A°. 1552. von den Türken erobert; nach der Glücklichen Bataille bay Peterwardein A°. 1716. ist sie von den Kayserle. Belagert und d. a. October die große Palanka mit Sturm erobert werden; d. 12. div. aber Stadt u. Schloß mit accord.*

The theory underlying my paper is that the crescent was placed on top of buildings as an indicator of the (place of origin of) political power. It was a way of transmitting geographical,

historical, political and cultural information through a symbol.

\*This subject was also discussed at the European Association for Urban History 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban History *Cities in Europe, Cities in the World*, Lisbon, 3-6 September 2014, Session M17 – *Imagined and Imagining Cities: Conquest and Appropriation of Unknown Worlds (1400-1850)*, Cátia Antunes (Department of History, Leiden University) and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (University of Macau): Anda-Lucia Spânu, *The Crescent in Historical Images of Romanian Cities (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, presentation and Working Paper, Spânu.pdf, September 2014, 1-10.

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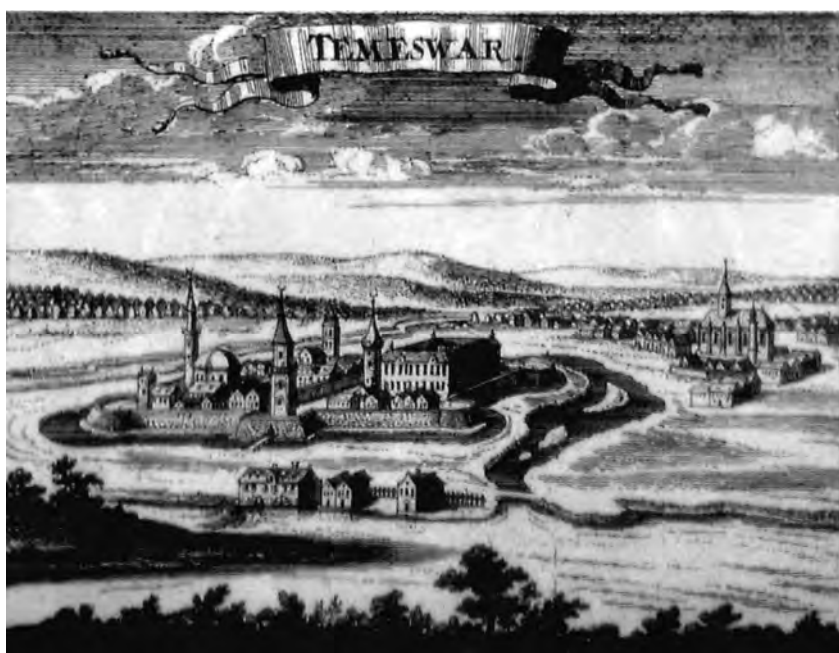
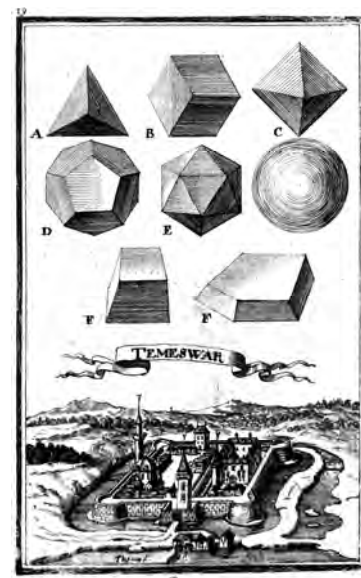
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TEMESWAR, Ville Capitale en Haute Hongrie, près de la Transylvanie. Mahomet premier Vizir de Soliman 2<sup>me</sup> Empereur des Turcs l'ontegia en 1551 et s'en rendit maître. Les Turcs l'ont faite la Capitale d'un Beglerbeylic ou Gouvernement General de la Turquie en Europe.  
 A. la Ville. B. le Chateau. C. le Fort. D. le Port de Temes. E. Asutia

1. Temeswar, by Gaspar Bouttats
2. Temeswar, by Anonimus
3. Temeswar, by Anonimus
4. Temeswar, by Guillaume Sanson



5. Temeswar, by Gabriel Bodenehr  
 6. Waradiin, by Gaspar Bouttats



7. Varadin au le grand Varadin, by Guillaume Sanson  
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 10. Die Türckische festung Iaßi, by Hisler Gottlob



## RUBENS IN GHERLA?

Emese PÁL\*

**Abstract:** *In the parish church of Gherla (Armenopolis, Hayakalak, Szamosújvár), there is an altarpiece with a controversial attribution, entitled Descent from the Cross. The 17<sup>th</sup> century painting follows the composition of the Antwerp altarpiece by Rubens, which established an idea that has been prevalent since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, according to which the painting was the outright creation of Peter Paul Rubens. The study summarizes the circumstances of the painting's arrival in Gherla, the legends surrounding it, and the present standpoint of its art historical research. This is followed by the painting's analysis, which was often overlooked during the controversies.*

**Key words:** *Peter Paul Rubens, Joachim von Sandrart, Transylvanian Armenians, Descent from the Cross, Gherla*

**Rezumat:** *Rubens la Gherla? În biserica parohială din Gherla (Armenopolis, Hayakalak, Szamosújvár) se află un altar cu o atribuire controversată, opera intitulată Coborârea de pe cruce. Tabloul din secolul al XVII-lea se bazează pe compoziția altarului din Anvers al lui Rubens, ceea ce a rezultat în ideea, răspândită până în prezent încă din secolul al XIX-lea, că pictura era creația proprie a lui Peter Paul Rubens. Studiul însumează circumstanțele în care tabloul a ajuns la Gherla, legende legate de acesta, respectiv punctul de vedere curent al cercetării de istoria artei. Aceasta este urmată de analiza picturii, adesea trecută cu vederea în mijlocul controverselor.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Peter Paul Rubens, Joachim von Sandrart, Armenii din Transilvania, Coborârea de pe Cruce, Gherla*

### The legend of the “Rubens painting”

In the chapter by the title of *The priceless treasures of the parish church* of his 1901 monograph that summarizes the history of the Armenians in Gherla, Kristóf Szongott mentioned three objects: firstly, the particle of the Holy Cross, followed by the relic of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, and the “original Rubens painting” (Szongott 1901a, 36-37). The selection clearly reflects the Armenians’ attitude towards the altarpiece, located in the church’s only chapel, which they have treated almost as a religious relic since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, moreover, they endowed it with relic-like functions. Let us only

recall the closing sentence of the story out of the relevant texts in the book from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which relates the painting’s travel to Gherla: “Even to our days, many marvel at the *masterful relic* of the church in the main square” (Bányai 2001, 15)<sup>1</sup>. While the veneration and trust in the power of the devotional painting *Our Lady of the Rosary* standing in the church has long since died out from memory, the distinguished situation of the “Rubens painting” still survives.

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<sup>1</sup> Italics mine. The work of Tivadar Törös was published by Elemér Bányai in 1902, in a collection entitled *Örmény anekdoták* [Armenian Anecdotes]. Since then certain anecdotes, among them the present one, have been published several times. The story of the Rubens painting is also included in Bányai 2001 and Sas 2008. In the following, I will cite the 2001 publication.

Tourist groups stop at Gherla mainly due to this painting, the only alarm in the church was also fitted next to it, a guest book was placed in front of it, and the locals relate the legends, formulated during and at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the surprised visitors as if they were historical facts. The former Rosary Chapel is referred to even today as the Rubens Chapel. What is the origin of the distinguished position and relic-like function of this painting? Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, legends about the origins and misfortunes of certain artworks were always bound to devotional paintings or statues. As early as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, several legends were circulating about the “Rubens painting” and its arrival to Gherla, which, by the reasoning of the period, were often assigned to the category of anecdotes, thus it may be that most of its versions have survived in volumes of anecdote and story collections. By contrast, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these same stories were also included in volumes, which were based on archival data and at the time were considered to be serious historical works, i.e. the authors treated as historical facts the legends narrated elsewhere as anecdotes. Such works are those of Kristóf Szongott and of Grigor Govrikian (Szongott 1901b, 98; Govrikian 1896, 223-225). The trust that is invested even today in these authors led to the situation that the Armenian communities consider the legends noted down by them to be undoubtedly true.

But let us first examine the legends extant in their various versions<sup>2</sup>. All of these agree that the painting arrived in the church in Gherla by the generosity of Emperor Francis I (1792-1835), namely in return for the donations sent to him by the Armenians. However, there is a discrepancy in establishing the moment of this occurrence, thus several dates have been raised: 1800, 1805, and 1806. Most authors, along with Kristóf Szongott, mark the year 1806 as the date of the painting’s arrival at Gherla. The circumstances are described as follows: the “many wars had engulfed the exchequer”, thus the Armenian delegation of Gherla had arrived just in time, offering of their own accord (!) a significant sum of money to the emperor, to help him out of his tight situation. As a sign of appreciation, the emperor accommodated the delegation in the Burg, and even invited them

to dinner. As he was very grateful for the large amount of gold, he allowed the Armenians to choose a painting for themselves from his famous art gallery, the Belvedere. In other versions, it was not a painting that he promised, but the delegation could ask for anything in the capital that won its approval. From here on the legends get even more complicated, as both the emperor and the director of the Belvedere were fond of the masterpiece selected by the Armenians. When these declared that they have chosen Rubens’ *Descent from the Cross*, the emperor’s response was: “Well, this is a treasured relic of mine as well” (Bányai 2001, 13), or in other versions: “I do not part from this masterpiece with a light heart” (Szongott 1901b, 98). The reaction of the Belvedere’s director is described even more dramatically, who “urged that the promise be altered, begged, pleaded” (Tóth 1899, 125). According to Lujza Harmath: “He would have rather parted from ten others than from this one; but he could not object; a king’s word, a royal promise is sacred” (Bányai 1902, 20). A king cannot break his promise, thus the Gherla delegation returned home with Rubens’ masterpiece. In the version of the legend by Tivadar Törös, after their returning home, the Armenians received a warning that they should exchange the painting for another princely gift, because given its extreme value, it “could only have been ceded to them by fault” (Bányai 2001, 15). However, the people of Gherla persisted in their choice, and they declared that it will not be returned. Some authors have even provided an antecedent to the painting’s story, according to which it was in Rome for centuries, from where it was taken to Vienna during the Napoleonic Wars (Kádár 1901, 166-167). Another, still existing version, perpetuated by oral tradition among the Armenians in Gherla, further embellishes the story. According to it, the emperor and the director were so fond of the original Rubens work that they wanted to content the Gherla delegates with an impeccable copy. However, the ingenious Armenians could not be fooled, as while choosing it, they marked the corner of the painting with their fingernails, and thanks to this they realized that the offered painting was not the original Rubens work.

Several conclusions may be drawn from the presented legends. On the one hand, by describing the reluctance of the king and the director, they highlight the painting’s magnificence and uniqueness. The work’s value will obviously increase by the fact that the monarch also considers it to be a precious treasure and parts

<sup>2</sup> I was able to collect the following versions: Kőváry 1857, 139-140; Tóth 1899, 124-125; Szongott 1901, 98; Bányai 1902. The latter contains three versions, i.e. the legends recorded by Béla Tóth, Tivadar Törös, and Lujza Harmath.

from it with great difficulty. On the other hand, these descriptions also illustrate several elements of the Armenians' identity construction at turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such is the allegiance to the monarch, and the fact that they voluntarily offer a portion of their assets to the state, thus they are useful and loyal citizens of the motherland. In addition, by selecting this exact painting, the connoisseurship, fine taste, and not lastly religious sentiments of the Armenians are expressed. The image of the religious and patriotic Armenian, constructed within the ideology of armenism, is also outlined in these legends. This is confirmed by a treatise written by János Temesváry about the painting, where the author holds that the painting's function is to be an object "in which instinctively delight even those with the most apathetic sentiments, and before which even those that are completely insensitive towards art are unable to stand casually; that its gaze should excite to an even greater degree the devotion in the hearts of *not only patriotic, but at the same time religious Armenians*" (Temesváry 1900, 14-15. Italics mine.)

The legends, however, contain real elements as well, as proven by the inventory annexed to the 1804 visitation proceedings. One of the entries records the following: there is an additional altar in the chapel that was originally intended to be a sacristy, in which a painting depicting the deposition from the cross of Christ our Lord was set up. It is pointed out that the scene was painted beautifully, "proficiently", and that the believers highly venerate it. It is also mentioned that Emperor Francis I presented the image to the Gherla parish in 1802, which is a highly significant information for us. Just two years after its consecration, in 1804, there were already sixteen silver votive offerings around the altarpiece, a sign of distinctive respect<sup>3</sup>. As we can see, the painting's artistic qualities were appreciated immensely already from the beginnings, and later were increasingly highlighted during the painting's evaluation – sometimes even overshadowing the religious content of the depicted scene –, mainly due to its

attribution to such a unique artist as Rubens. We have no sources regarding the authority or starting point of the painting's attribution to Rubens; however, it is a fact that in 1857 it was already considered to be his work, as the above-described story of its acquisition was published during that year in the work of László Kövály, entitled *Historical Anecdotes* (Kövály 1857, 139-140). By connecting the painting with a major artist, its evaluation changed as well, and the creator became more important than the artwork itself. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, all mentions and analyses of the painting invariably emphasized that it is the work of Rubens, while they did not even mention the depicted subject or its religious roots.

### The Sandrart painting

On February 27, 1780, the painting entitled *Descent from the Cross* by Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688) was transported to Vienna at the request of Empress Maria Theresa (1740-1780), as a few years earlier the court had eagerly started collecting altarpieces in order to reestablish the imperial-royal art gallery in the Belvedere. Before its arrival to Vienna, the painting was held in the Benedictine monastery of Lambach, although we do not know when and with what purpose it got there (Klemm 1986, 155).

Between 1652 and 1661, Sandrart was working on seven huge altarpieces commissioned by the Benedictine monks of Lambach (Heck 2009, 85-95), thus it might be plausible to assume that the copy of the *Descent from the Cross* altarpiece in Würzburg, made earlier by the artist himself, arrived in the abbey during his Lambach activity, perhaps by the commission of the Benedictines, or as a donation made by the artist. In return for the painting, the Empress gave the monastery a copy of a Sandrart work painted by Gottfried Krall, an Episcopal ring, respectively an entire "imperial vestment" with the empress' M. T. monogram on its cope (Klemm 1986, 155). The painting was recorded in the Belvedere catalogs of 1783 and 1796 as the work of Joachim von Sandrart, and was on display there until 1802, when the Armenian parish in Gherla requested from Emperor Francis an altarpiece for its church. The request was dated April 20, 1802, and the General Court Chamber answered it on April 25 (Klemm 1986, 156, 158; Engerth 1886, 298). As the painting in question was unnamed both in the request and in the reply, until the 1979 study of Chookaszian (Chookaszian 1979, 41-49) the art

<sup>3</sup> „In Sacello eregione Sacristiae Sito est altera ara, in qua effigies Chisti Dni de Cruce depositit, peritissime depicta existit, abque magna cum fidelium devotione colitur, quam 1802 Augustissimus Imperator feliciter regnans Franciscus Secundus Parochiali huic Ecclesiae clementer donare dignatus est. Ad hanc aram exstant appensa 16 anathemata argentea.” (Inventarium 1804, 83 r.)

historical scholarship dealing with Sandrart regarded the painting as lost.

The presented data clearly indicate that the *Descent from the Cross* altarpiece in Gherla is the work of Joachim von Sandrart. The Sandrart painting of the Lambach Benedictine abbey arrived to Vienna in 1780, where it was placed in the Belvedere, as evidenced by the catalogue entries. In 1802, the emperor donated to the parish church of Gherla a painting from his gallery, and the work can only be the *Descent from the Cross* composition, that corresponds with the *Descent from the Cross* altarpiece that was registered in the gallery's catalogs under the authorship of Sandrart. Uncertainty may only arise regarding the accuracy of the 1783 and 1796 inventories of the artwork, i.e. whether it was attributed to Sandrart correctly. The intense and prolonged relationship between the painter and the Lambach Benedictines should be enough to convince us that we really are dealing with the work of the German master.

Joachim von Sandrart was one of the most versatile, highly skilled and productive artists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The current art historical scholarship mainly praises his theoretical work on the basis of his three-volume *German Academy of the Noble Arts of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting*, published in Nuremberg between 1675 and 1680, considering his painting and graphic works to be mediocre.<sup>4</sup> In 1646, Joachim von Sandrart was entrusted with painting two altarpieces for the Würzburg Cathedral. The themes for the side altar paintings – the *Assumption of the Virgin into Heaven* and the *Descent from the Cross* – were established by the commissioners. For the latter, the painter adapted the Antwerp composition of Rubens, which had made a large impact on him<sup>5</sup>. In 1647 the painting was probably finished, remaining in the Würzburg

Cathedral, its intended location, until 1945. During the last weeks of World War II, the British and American air raids completely destroyed the historic city of Würzburg; the cathedral perished together with Sandrart's altarpieces during the most serious attack, on the night of March 16 (Klemm 1986, 154). Despite his Protestant religion, after 1646 Sandart received several commissions from the Catholic Church, the most important of these being the altarpieces of the Bamberg Cathedral (*Virgin of Mercy* and the *Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist*, 1651), the Viennese St. Stephen's Cathedral (*Crucifixion*, 1653), and the Lambach abbey church (the *Martyrdom of St. Placidus and his companions*, the *Death of St. Joseph*, the *Assumption of the Virgin into Heaven*, the *Apotheosis of St. Benedict*, the *Transfer of St. Julian's relics*, *Our Lady of the Rosary*, and the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*) (Klemm 1986, 27-39; Heck 2009, 85-95. From a theological viewpoint, see Meier 2012).

The attention of the international scholarship was directed to the Sandrart painting in Gherla by Armenian art historian Levon Chookaszian, which contributed greatly to the clarification of the painting's attribution (Chookaszian 1979, 41-49). In his 1979 study, he dealt with the effects of Peter Paul Rubens' certain works on the Armenian art of later periods. He found the prototype of the partially gilded silver openwork relief on the cover of manuscript no. 5576, as well as that of the miniature of manuscript no. 1533, both in the Matenadaran Collection in Yerevan, on Rubens' *Descent from the Cross* altarpiece, then he moved to the Transylvanian version. He considered the legend of the donation to be a fictional story, which was only circulated by the Transylvanian Armenians to establish the painting as the work of Rubens. Comparing it to the entries of the Viennese Belvedere, he noted that the painting could not be Rubens' work, but rather a copy of Joachim von Sandrart's Würzburg altarpiece, and he sketched the above-described circumstances of the painting's travel to Gherla (Chookaszian 1979, 45-47). He was followed by Christian Klemm's monograph on Sandrart, which tried to clarify the more controversial details as well, Klemm being the one who clearly connected the artwork in Gherla to Sandrart (Klemm 1986, 154-158). Nicolae Sabău recently summed up the painting's story, however, he incorrectly defined the year 1805 as the date of donation. In his work, he compared the painting in Gherla with Rubens' composition in Antwerp, stating that J. Richard Judson considered the

<sup>4</sup> Original title: *Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-Bild- und Mahlerey Künste*. See Heck 2006. *Joachim von Sandrart and the "Teutsche Academie"* <http://www.sandrart.net/en/subject/> (downloaded: May 1, 2015). The international project supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft is preparing the critical edition of Sandrart's work; a large amount of data related to the artist's works is also available on their website.

<sup>5</sup> In 1645 he traveled to Antwerp, where he sought out Rubens' altarpieces, including the *Descent from the Cross*, which impressed him deeply. <http://www.sandrart.net/en/subject/> (downloaded: May 1, 2015).

painting to be Sandrart's work, although he himself did not take a position in the question (Sabău 2005, 279-282).

We might ask the question, why did then the congregation of Gherla turn to the Emperor for an altarpiece, since in 1802 the altarpieces of the secondary altars were probably already completed, and the main altar, respectively the Chapel of the Rosary had been provided with altarpieces previously? We might receive an answer from an entry in the magistrate proceedings, dated December 30, 1802. It was at this time that Dean Kelemen Korbuly reminded the council of a promise made in 1797, according to which the church's new high altar will be raised from the "allodial funds of the town community" (Protocollum 1802, 311). Thus the replacement of the high altar, built in the 1760s, already came to mind in 1797, and due to the approaching completion of the construction works and that of the altars, in 1802 it was once again on the agenda. Therefore I consider it possible that the parish requested from the Emperor an altarpiece for the high altar. This contradicts the observation made in 1903 by Lukács Bárány, Dean of Gherla, according to whom: "tradition holds that this painting was given precisely for the small side chapel" (Bárány 1903, 164). A reassuring clarification of the problem might only be achieved if new, hitherto unknown sources will be revealed.

As we have seen, the delegation donating money to the emperor is only a legend; furthermore, the sources also reveal that the Gherla congregation was quite indifferent in regard to which altarpiece will be sent from Vienna. However, the good relationship between the Armenians and the imperial court, as well as their former financial support of the Habsburgs could have played a role in the positive response to their request. It is possible that the painting was brought to Transylvania by a delegation, but it is also possible that it was transported to Gherla by Armenian traders, who often traveled to Vienna.

### Analysis of the painting

The focal point of the dramatic, majestic, and at the same time intimate scene is the lifeless body of Christ, which appears before a white sheet, with which his most loyal followers are trying to gently lower him down (Fig. 1). The vulnerable body, depicted with well-defined muscles, is limp, still it seems as if it were weightless, being

supported only by a few figures, but even they do not exert particular effort. The painter configures the body in an elongated S shape, Christ's head falls on his right shoulder, his left arm is held firmly, his right one hangs down and doubles back behind his knee. The cross is positioned slightly to the right from the painting's central axis. Two ladders are propped against the back of the cross, which help his followers in approaching Christ's body. On the right-hand ladder, a figure depicted in semi-profile is just climbing down, while a figure is climbing upwards on the left one; the painter lets us see only his face and hands. A brown-haired and bearded muscular figure – perhaps Nicodemus – leans over the top of the cross, he is the one holding Christ's left arm. The long gray-bearded, turbaned Joseph of Arimathea (?)<sup>6</sup> might also be standing on the ladder, his yellow-reddish clothes are blown far back by the wind. The weight of the body is supported mainly by John the Apostle, whose upper body is visible in profile, his feet turn slightly outwards, one of them is firmly set on the ground. He wears blue clothing with an energetically stirring red cloak. On Christ's left we find the group of holy women. Mary Magdalene, depicted with blonde wavy hair, leans over Christ's bleeding feet, pressing her face onto them and enwreathing them with her hands. She is one of the painting's most prominent figures, highlighted by her fair hair and richly pleated yellow cloak. Behind her a female figure wearing a dress of a darker shade of yellow, perhaps Mary of Clopas, turns away from the cross and Christ's body, weeping as she covers her face with a shroud. The sorrowful Virgin stands to her left, who is depicted as an older woman in a blue robe, a brownish veil covers her head, she spreads her hands, her eyes are suspended on her dead son's body, her mouth is open, as if a painful cry were about to leave her lips. Beside her, an older female figure appears with her arms stretched out towards the body of Christ, perhaps Salome, Virgin Mary's elder sister. She is characterized by strong facial features and dramatic gestures; she wears a black

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<sup>6</sup> Distinguishing between Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus is hindered in the case of this painting. While both figures appear on Ruben's altarpiece in Antwerp, here we can only see one figure dressed in illustrious clothing. The former was an honorable Jewish councilor, the latter a Pharisee and the member of the high council. In most earlier representations, it was Joseph of Arimathea that held Christ's body, thus I find it probable, that the figure depicted with a turban in the Gherla painting also represents him.

and red dress, with a yellowish veil that covers her head. A golden bowl is visible in the lower left corner, although its contents are indiscernible due to the darkened hues of the painting. According to the Gospels, the deposition of Christ's body from the cross was set at sunset; this is what the painter wished to convey with the reddish hues that appear in the background. The scene is set on an elevated ground, thus the last rays of the setting sun project from behind the low-lying hills. A lighter, yellowish-reddish patch also appears on the painting's left side, among the dark clouds.

Only one black-and-white photograph has survived of Sandrart's *Descent from the Cross* altarpiece in Würzburg (Fig. 2), which perished in World War II, from which one cannot draw too many conclusions (published by Klemm 1986, 156)<sup>7</sup>. Compared however with the altarpiece in Gherla, there are no doubts that its composition, details, and figures are fully identical, differences can only be found in the faces. These differences are but slight, Mary Magdalene's eyes seem to be more shut, the Virgin Mary's features seem to be finer, and the expression on Joseph of Arimathea's face is sterner in the Würzburg version. All these differences may stem from the poor quality of the extant photograph, but also from the fact that the Gherla version was restored several times, and the not always professional interventions could have masked its finer traits. By comparing the two images, one may also note that the top and bottom of the Gherla painting were tucked in when it was inserted into the frame. This is clearly visible on the golden vessel at the foreground, which in the Würzburg version is placed much higher, with a crown of thorns and nails beneath it, and although it can not be discerned on the photograph, it is also likely that the upper part of the cross does not hang out so much of the painting either.

The prototype of Sandrart's creation was painted by Peter Paul Rubens in 1611-1612 for the Chapel of St. Christopher in the Antwerp Cathedral (Fig. 3)<sup>8</sup>. The patron saint of the commissioner archers' guild, St. Christopher, received criticism from 17<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical authors, its legend was not

accepted and some people even questioned his existence. For this reason, understandably, the triptych's main scene could not represent the guild's patron saint. But with Rubens, they found the most appropriate solution to represent the saint, through New Testament scenes that alluded to Christopher. Starting from the etymology of the name *Christophorus* (meaning Christ-bearer), Rubens conceived a layered, well-structured allegory (Judson 2000, 166). Thus, the triptych's right wing displays the theme of the Visitation, where the Virgin carries the Savior in her womb, while on the left side, in the scene of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Simeon holds the infant in his arms. The large central panel painting is constructed with several levels on the image of bearing Christ, on the one hand through the cross, traditionally beheld as the bearer of Christ, on the other hand through his loyal followers that lower his body from the cross. Rubens, as pointed out by Evers, was aware of the need to create a divine body that would refer to the Eucharist as well (Judson 2000, 167). This is achieved partly by the power of the interior light spreading from the dead, pale, sometimes grayish body: he highlights the lifelessness of the body through fine color tuning, as the other male figures' bodies have a browner hue, and the women kneeling at his feet, despite their lighter skin tone, are full of life as well, Mary's face alone is characterized by the paleness of the divine body. On the other hand, as I already mentioned in the case of the Sandrart painting, the Christ's body seems to be light, despite its limpness. In addition, the eight figures surrounding the Saviour not only frame the "main character" and play a role in the dynamism and emphasis of the diagonal axis, but their movements – according to Białostocki's interpretation – prefigure them in the expression of the church community (Białostocki 1964, 514). Except the figure in the foreground, standing on a ladder (Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus)<sup>9</sup>, each figure touches, or is reaching towards his body. Their intention to participate in the story on the one hand connects them, and on the other hand turns them into the members of the Church, interpreted as *Corpus Christi*. The close unity created by Rubens' composition is realized by their partaking in Christ's body, which is a clear reference to the *communion*, thus, in addition to

<sup>7</sup> It may also be found in the [www.bildindex.de](http://www.bildindex.de) database (downloaded: May 1, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> The triptych was commissioned on September 7, 1611, the central scene was ready as early as September the following year, but the wings were transported from Rubens' workshop to the cathedral only in 1614 (Białostocki 1964, 511).

<sup>9</sup> Judson considers this figure to be Joseph of Arimathea, Białostocki thinks he is Nicodemus.

bearing Christ, the painting is also emphasized on a "Eucharistic level".

The painter achieves unity by a compositional element that differs from his predecessors. The scholarly literature often emphasizes the Italian connections of the painting, which have such clear signs as a Rubens drawing after the fresco painted in the 1540s by Daniele da Volterra, located in the Roman Santa Trinità dei Monti Church<sup>10</sup>, or the similarity with the composition of Lodovico Cigoli, today in the Galleria Palatina in Florence, etc. Compared to the Italian examples, Rubens' work includes a major innovation as well. The similarly themed Italian works are bipolar, always organized around two centers; one of them being the body of Christ, while the other one the figure of Mary, collapsing from the emotional shock. However, the Flemish master does not emphasize the figure of Virgin Mary at all, neither does he attribute to her emotional outburst; she is depicted among the other figures, her hands stretched out towards her son. This concept of the Virgin Mary standing firmly at the foot of the cross, not weak or collapsing, is based on the gospel of John (John 19:26), which was diffused in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries by Franciscan literature and art with such popular works as the hymn *Stabat mater dolorosa* (Judson 2000, 167). Rubens expresses the powerful faith of Virgin Mary, who is depicted with a sorrowful expression, yet she is not collapsing, as the chosen Mother of God is certain that her son will resurrect. This change in

the relationship between Mary and Jesus shifts the focus on the relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. There is a strong intimacy between them already in this painting, Christ's feet are resting on Mary Magdalene's shoulder, and she is the only one who touches the body with both hands, her eyes fixed on the Savior. This close relationship becomes even more pronounced in Rubens's later *Descent from the Cross* compositions. In the version in the Museum in Lille, Mary Magdalene is kissing Christ's hand, in the painting in Valenciennes, she embraces his feet, in the painting in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg she holds his arm, this attitude being the most prominent in the Arras composition, where the body of the Savior is about to fall in the arms of the woman kneeling on the ground with open arms, respectively in the version hanging in Our Lady's Church in Saint-Omer, where she folds her right hand around his leg with, while with her left she holds the body that almost collapses onto her (Judson 2000, 172-187).

Sandrart, although closely followed the Rubens painting that created a model and a typology, did not succeed in preserving its majestic unity and multi-layered content. While Rubens shows the cross slightly in side view, Sandrart depicts it frontally, also abandoning the wooden elements propping the cross, while the ladders are more visible, as the figures obscure them to a lesser degree. The scene's position in the landscape is more prominent, a characteristic that may be traced back to his favorite Dutch painting. He keeps the composition arranged in a diagonal axis; however, it is shifted in an upwards narrowing direction. Thus, while the four female figures in the lower left corner are broader in scope, the figures of John and Joseph of Arimathea are increasingly narrowing, culminating in the one figure bending above the cross. In the Rubens painting two characters bend over the cross, the left one is highlighted through his defined muscles and fine hand gestures that almost touch Christ's shoulders, while the right one is emphasized by a surprisingly passionate gesture, namely that he keeps the sheet in his mouth. In the case of Sandrart, by leaving out the figure on the left side, the peak of the composition becomes less pronounced, he effaces the laborers and discreetly embeds them in the scenery, varying their figures with the upwards and downwards motion on the ladder. In the case of Rubens, the half-naked figure on the left side kicks his left leg back, while the empty space created by Sandrart by leaving out this motion is filled with the lines of Joseph of

<sup>10</sup> Today, the drawing is located in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (inv. 5496). Although it contains an inscription that links it to Daniele da Volterra, it is clear that besides this, the author used other sources as well. For example, the figures of John and Mary, together with Christ's body, surprisingly resemble the figures of the mentioned Cigoli painting. Held correlates the figure of Mary Magdalene with the kneeling woman in yellow dress set in the foreground of the wall painting *The fire in the Borgo* by Raphael, as for the figure of John in the St. Petersburg drawing, it might even be considered as a variation of the man standing with his back in the *Judgment of Solomon* by Raphael. The drawing's dating is uncertain, Held argues that it was created a great deal before the Antwerp composition, around 1598-1602 (Held 1986, 93-95), others date it to 1611. The cross, the sheet, John's position, the figure holding the sheet in his mouth, and the kneeling women already resemble greatly the altarpiece's final composition, but there is also an important difference. The collapsed figure of Mary can be seen according to the tradition of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, afar from her son's body, her hands being defined by a vigorous, sorrowful gesture.

Arimathea's jacket that swings backwards. Sandrart also leaves out the figure standing at the right side of a ladder, present in the Rubens painting, and in order to balance the composition, he leans back the figure of John, moving his mantle vigorously. There is a change in the movements of his feet as well, he does not place his foot on the ladder, instead he supports himself with it. His figure thus becomes less graceful, and his relationship with the dead body also changes. His leaning posture gives an impression, as if the body's weight would recline on him more heavily, however, his hand does not reach behind it, instead it holds the skirts of the sheet, while his right hand disappears among the folds. The caring gesture produced by the embrace of Rubens' St. John is missing here. On the opposite side rises the elegant figure of Joseph of Arimathea, touching the body of Christ under his left arm. The painter portrayed him in a turban as a dignified eastern lord; this is probably not unrelated to Rembrandt's influence (Klemm 1986, 155, fn. 3). His face successfully expresses his state of awe. Mary Magdalene's figure is emphasized more here than at Rubens. She becomes one of the painting's main characters. Her gesture is somewhat uncertain, neither does she kneel nor does she stand, she leans passionately towards Christ, mourning and embracing his desecrated feet, as if they would not slip further on in a moment. A drawing by the painter clearly shows the connection between Mary Magdalene's figure and the central female character of another Rubens work entitled *The Anointing at Bethany*, located in the collection of the Hermitage (Klemm 1986, 155). As I have already signaled, one of the major innovations of Rubens was, that contrary to earlier representations, the scene does not fall apart, the body's deposition and the grieving women form a fine unit. In this respect Sandrart seems to have been unable to break with tradition, however, due to his attachment to the composition in Antwerp, this does not become too conspicuous. The emotional-affective charge of the female figures receives a much greater emphasis in his painting, achieved through the upheld arms of Mary, with her open mouth, the female figure that turns away bursting in tears, and Mary Magdalene with her painful face pressed against Christ's leg; their reaction is more active, striking, but at the same time less effective, less elegant, less shaken. It is Mary's figure that seems not to fit the most in this composition: she stands upright at the edge of the painting; she is bound to her son through her gaze, the gesture of her lifted hands and open lips being

theatrical. This theatricality removes her away from the event; her pain seems directed and posed. Based on the profile of the older female figure, with her hands reached out towards Christ, we may conclude that Sandrart probably knew a later work of Rubens, the *Descent from the Cross* altarpiece produced in 1617 for the Capuchin church in Lille, because there a similar woman appears on the painting's left side as well, who is even older and is illustrated with powerful features, with raised hands.

Although it is Rubens' depiction of the dead body, which had the strongest influence on our painter, we may note a few differences even there. On the painting in Gherla, the muscles of the Savior are more elaborate, they are more bulging, but in Rubens' painting his head falls more naturally and easily on his shoulder, his right arm is held up higher, his right knee doubles back; overall his entire body is more flaccid. In Rubens's work, Christ's face receives a more dramatic, yet gentler expression through the slightly open eyes and mouth. Sandrart opens Christ's eyes a little wider, but covers his lips with a mustache, thus depriving him from a significant means of expression. It is also striking that Christ's wound is placed not on his right, but on his left side, as a deep but hardly bleeding wound. The same may be said about the wounds made by the nails on his feet and hands, which are no longer bleeding. In the case of Rubens, the blood oozing from his side wound soaks his loincloth and the sheet under his left arm, blood flows viscously from his left hand, moreover, his right arm is bloody almost to his elbow. Rubens used this means of expression not only to enhance the dramatic effect, but possibly also as a reference to the Eucharist, to the unity of Christ's body and blood. Sandrart is able to exploit the expectation, longing and intense atmosphere before the moment of touch only in one case, in the motion of the older female figure, but due to her stiff arms, he does not succeed in creating such a gentle gesture as the ones of the Virgin Mary or that of the man bending over the cross, as it can be observed at Rubens.

This comparison reveals that Sandrart obviously did not build his composition based on impressions and memories formed during a one-time viewing of Rubens' work, but probably used the engraving of Lucas Vosterman from 1620 (See Judson, 2000, Fig. 134). At the same time, it is obvious that he modified this prototype according to his own taste, including figures from other works by Rubens, while the figure of Nicodemus alludes to Rembrandt's influence. The main



difference is that in the case of Sandrart, the block-like frontal arrangement is displaced, and the descending movement is expressed not as much with tangible actions as with the means of composition. The effort to express the exaggerated emotional state of the women, as well as to highlight Mary Magdalene, shifts the composition to the left, which thereby is slightly off-balance.

As shown above, all the legends from the 19th century that are very much present in the Armenian communities today agree that the painting is a work of Peter Paul Rubens and it was taken to Gherla as a present from Emperor Francis. Although the painting was indeed from Emperor Francis, it was not registered under the name of Rubens but of Joachim von Sandrart at its earlier location in Belvedere. The history of the painting can also be traced back: by request of Maria Theresa, it was taken to Vienna from a

Benedictine monastery in Lambach where Sandrart worked from 1652 to 1661. Probably the painter himself donated his own copy of his altar painting, *The Descent from the Cross*. All this data reveals that the altarpiece in Gherla cannot be a work of Rubens, but is the same as the painting registered as that of Joachim von Sandrart in the 1783 and 1796 Belvedere catalogues. By comparing it to Rubens's work, the *Descent from the cross* in Antwerp, the shortcomings of the painting in Gherla become apparent, but despite these, the painting still remains the most qualitative and most valuable altarpiece of Gherla, as well as of the entire Armenian community in Transylvania. Its importance is only increased by the complex history of its reception and by the prominent role occupied in the memory of the Transylvanian Armenians.

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3. Peter Paul Rubens, *Coborârea de pe cruce*, Catedrala Fecioarei Maria, Anvers. Sursă: [http://www.kingsacademy.com/mhodes/11\\_Western-Art/17\\_Baroque/Rubens/Rubens.htm](http://www.kingsacademy.com/mhodes/11_Western-Art/17_Baroque/Rubens/Rubens.htm)



1. Joachim von Sandrart, *Descent from the Cross*. Gherla, Armenian Catholic Parish Church.
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## ICONES BIBLICAE. ETCHINGS BY JAN LUYKEN (1649-1712)

Maria ORDEANU\*

**Abstract:** *A series of fifty nine etchings signed by the Dutch printmaker Jan Luyken (1649-1712) was donated in 2005 to the Brukenthal National Museum. The prints were restored in the museum laboratory, but until now they remained unlisted in the catalog of Dutch prints. This paper will analyze the data that have been available to us concerning the biography and the works of the etcher. The prints of the series are identified and put in the context, as well as the production of this series, published for the first time in 1708. "Icones Biblicae" is a series of illustrations based upon selected texts of the Old and the New Testament and the works of Flavius Josephus.*

**Key words:** *Jan Luyken, Biblical illustrations, Dutch etching*

**Rezumat:** *O serie de cincizeci și nouă de gravuri semnate de gravorul olandez Jan Luyken (1649-1712) a fost donată în anul 2005 Muzeului Național Brukenthal. Gravurile au fost restaurate în laboratorul muzeului, dar până acum au rămas necatalogate. În acest studiu vom analiza datele care ne-au fost accesibile referitoare la biografia și opera gravurului. Stemplele au fost identificate iconografic și interpretate în contextul în care au fost concepute. Seria de gravuri "Icones Biblicae" a fost editată în 1708 și este constituită din ilustrații inspirate de texte selectate din Vechiul și Noul Testament, precum și din lucrările lui Flavius Josephus.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Jan Luyken, ilustrații ale Bibliei, gravură olandeză*

Jan Luyken was one of the most important Dutch printmakers of the second half of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the eighteenth century, best known for his numerous book illustrations, etched after his own drawings.

Jan Luyken was born in Amsterdam in 1649 to a Protestant family. His father Caspar Luyken was a teacher and follower of Jacob Böhme (1575-1624), the German mystic and original thinker who departed from the accepted Lutheran faith. Caspar Luyken took refuge from Essen, Germany, settling in Amsterdam in 1628. Since 1634, Caspar Luyken joined the "Brotherhood of Remonstrance", a dissident group of the Dutch Reformed church. His first sons were baptized and registered as members of the Remonstrant congregation, but the youngest son Johannes (Jan, Joan) was only registered in 1649, in the Anabaptist (Mennonite) congregation. Dutch Anabaptists were called Mennonites after the

name of their spiritual leader Menno Simons (1496-1561).

His father was a close friend of doctor and Mennonite preacher Abrahamsz Galen (1622-1706) and therefore became a member of the Anabaptist congregation "The Lamb" (*Het Lam*) (Eeghel, Kellen 1905, X-XI). Abrahamsz Galen was also associated with the Collegiants and the Socinians settled in Amsterdam. A tense atmosphere reigned among various groups who frequently dispute the true faith. Galenus fought for the unification of various Mennonite factions. In his opinion, the Bible must be the only guide of the Christian life and believer has the right to interpret the Holy Scriptures.

The young Jan Luyken was brought up in an austere milieu in his father's house, nonetheless he received a good education. Probably after the death of his father, Jan Luyken entered as an apprentice to the painter Martin Saeghmolen (1619-1669), where he remained until 1669. Even though in 1672, at his marriage to the actress Maria de Oudens, he declared himself a painter, only a few portraits might be attributed to him.

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Still, his activity as a poet is certain, as well as his presence in a group of young artists who enjoyed the pleasures of life. In 1671 he published his first volume of love poems, entitled "The Dutch Lyre" (*Duitse lier*). Jan Luyken is considered one of the representative poets of the last decades of the seventeenth century. His poetry exalts the joy of life, the love and nature, away from both Baroque and classical pattern, with a modern sensibility, foreshadowing Romanticism (Meijer 1978, 159-161).

In 1673, Jan returned to a devout life, made the public confession of his faith and was baptized into the *Lamist* Mennonite Church in Amsterdam. Soon after, he joined the congregation of Beverwijck, where Paul Bastiansz was the preacher of the college "The True Prophecy".

A mystical experience marked his life in 1675. He gave up his career as a painter, preferring to be a designer and etcher of illustrations for books, which allowed him to work alone in his studio. It is not known how Jan Luyken came to learn the etching techniques. His brother Christoffel Luyken (1634-1673) had been a book publisher and it can be assumed that his friends of the same trade, as well as the Mennonite brethren helped him receive the first commissions as a book illustrator.

The talent, the inventiveness and the rapidity with which he conceived his compositions helped him become a prodigious illustrator. In the first stage, the etching technique allowed the artist to draw directly on the copper plate, with the same ability with which he drew on the sheet of paper. The next stages, namely the methods of biting the plate with acid, the finishing with the needle and burin, had to be learned and well mastered. Allegedly Jan Luyken learned the technique of etching with the assistance of Coenraet Decker (1651-1709), who was the apprentice of the printmaker Romeyn de Hooghe (1645-1708) (Henckel XIII 1929, 488).

Luyken and Decker worked together to illustrate a work of great popularity at the time, "The history of warfare in the Netherlands" (*Oorspronck, begin, en vervolg der Nederlandsche oorlogen, beroerten, en borgerlyke oneenigheden*) written by Pieter Christiaensz. Bor (1559-1635) and published in Amsterdam in 1679-1684 (Eeghen, Kellen I 9).

Amsterdam was an important typographic center with an impressive book production. Thanks to his imagination and the ease with which he designed his compositions, Luyken became an

illustrator much sought after by the book publishers in Amsterdam. His work includes c. 3275 etchings (Hollstein XI 1954). He illustrated history books, scientific, religious as well as travel books.

This constant activity as an illustrator did not stop him pursuing his poetical work. He wrote pious lyrics, associated with engraved emblems, published in 1678 with the titles "Jesus and the Soul" (*Jesus en de Ziel*) and in 1687 "Sparks of Love for Jesus" (*Voncken der Liefde Jesu*).

Jan Luyken has chosen an ascetic life, often withdrawing into solitude, especially after the death of his wife and four out of his five sons.

Another encounter will deeply mark his spiritual existence. In 1682, the Pietist publisher and bookseller Johannes Boekholt released the first Dutch translation of "The Pilgrim's Progress" (*Eens Christens Reys*), a Christian journey toward the Heavenly Kingdom, written by the English preacher John Bunyan, illustrated by Jan Luyken (Veld 2000, 511). The theme of pilgrimage toward eternal life would become a constant motif in the poetical and visual creation of Jan Luyken.

Since 1689, the printmaker's son Casper Luyken (1672-1708) began working with his father and even signed several illustrations with his name. One of the most popular collaboration of the two illustrators was the publication of the book "The trades of Man" (*Het menselyk bedryf*), in 1694, illustrated with one hundred prints, an accurate mirror of everyday life in the late Dutch seventeenth century. "The trades of Man" was the only book published at the artist's own expense. Jan Luyken wanted to illustrate the book written by his father and published in 1648, entitled "Infallible Rule of Profit without Loss" (*Onfeylbare reghel van winste sonder verlies*). Another goal for Jan Luyken was to imbue his son with moral values, at the very age he used to be drawn into a life of pleasures (Eeghen 1997, 132).

The enormous success of "The trades of Man" generated forgeries and reprints, one of them being published in 1698, in Regensburg by Christoph Weigel (1654-1725) and George Christoph Eimmart (1638-1705).

Jan Luyken already collaborated with the German publisher in 1695 to illustrate *Biblia Ectypa* (Eeghen 1997, 134).

Jan and Casper Luyken were commissioned by the editor Christoph Weigel to illustrate the most famous stories of the Old and New Testament (*Historiae Celebriores Veteris Testamenti*

*Iconibus repraesentatae et ad excitandas bonas meditationes selectis epigrammatibus exornatae in lucem datae a Christophoro Weigelio Noribergae*). One copy of this series of prints is to be found in the library of the Brukenthal National Museum. The album was published in Nuremberg, in 1708, with a dedication to the Emperor Joseph made by the German publisher. One hundred twenty seven illustrations were accomplished by Casper and ninety nine by Jan Luyken. Short texts in Latin and German were added to the images (Eeghen, Kellen 1905 II 428). This sort of publication is known as Picture Bible, *Bilderbibel* or *Figures de la Bible*, an album with engravings on biblical themes. This is not an illustrated Bible which contains the full text and images. (Coelen 2006, 190) The text of the Picture Bible is reduced to a brief presentation of the iconographic theme, often with moralizing lyrics and emblems. As a matter of fact, the Picture Bibles evolved from the tradition of emblems books. The Picture Bible was initiated by Martin Luther in 1529 and soon became a popular publication within the Protestant milieu. Being a product with a guaranteed success, the Picture Bibles were to be found in the portfolio of German, French, Flemish and Dutch publishers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the eighteenth century, the Picture Bible has become a specialty of the many publishers in Amsterdam. Text and image were designed in such a way as to be accessible to a larger number of people. However, there were inconsistencies between text and image, sometimes even errors of representation, perpetuated by the repetition of the iconographic patterns and especially through the personal interpretation of certain details added by the illustrators. In the preface of *Biblia Ectypa*, Christoph Weigel stated the need to correct the texts, whenever they were confusing or not exactly in compliance with the scriptural sources. As far as the accuracy of the image according to the text is concerned, this was left to the imagination of the artist. The Picture Bible became a display of selected stories, meant to delight both the reader and the viewer (Engammare 1994, 584-591).

Jan Luyken engraved numerous illustrations of the Bible by then, including Picture Bibles for Christoph Weigel and the Dutch publishers Pieter Arentz, Nicolaes Visscher and Pieter Mortier. The release, in the same year 1708 in Nuremberg and Amsterdam, of biblical images accompanied by texts which can be classified into *Figures de la Bible* type (Picture Bible), indicates the great success of these publications. The German

edition, *Historiae Celebriores* fits in this kind of work. However, the Dutch edition of *Icones Biblicae* printed in 1708 differs substantially. Luyken's prints were published by Pieter Mortier without any explanatory text, only stating the title of the iconographic theme and quoting the scriptural source. The biblical reference quoted on each etching may however be the hint for the preacher. Although *Icones Biblicae* keeps within the French title *Figures du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament* (Characters from the Old and New Testament), this is no longer a Picture Bible. Without texts, *Icones Biblicae* is a collection of new images (most of them), designed and etched by Jan Luyken and included in a series arranged in agreement with his first editor Pieter Mortier in Amsterdam, republished later by Frans Houltuyn in 1747, with the title: *ICONES BIBLICAE VETERIS ET N. TESTAMENTI. Figures du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament inventées et gravées par Jan Luyken. Print-Verbeeldingen der Historien des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments. 'Amsterdam bij F. Houltuyn, MDCCXLVII.*

One may consider that Jan Luyken sought to illustrate only the selected texts from the Scriptures in accordance with the Mennonite faith. Luyken's interpretation of the scriptural excerpts was also influenced by the Pietists, who believed that the entire Bible can be interpreted by every devout, not just by those belonging to the clergy. If daily Bible reading and private meditation were a common practice of the Reformed faithful, Luyken gave his fellow believers his own reading of the scriptures and his interpretation in a sequence of visual sermons. The title page of the series *Icones Biblicae* is mentioned in the artist's biography, written by his contemporary Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719). Pieter Mortier, handed over 275 florins to Annetje van Vliet, the housekeeper who had brought the plate. Mortier advised her to use the money for the necessities of the house, knowing that his friend Luyken was giving nearly all his gain to the poor (Eeghen, Kellen 1905 L).

The title page reveals an allegory of the Christian faith. The composition is divided into two horizontal registers, containing the terrestrial and the celestial world. From the group of angels one comes down and heralds with the trumpet, a new era. The angel is centrally located on a stone pedestal, dividing the terrestrial world into two large areas. On his left there is a representation of the ancient Jewish law, and at the right, that of the new law of the Gospel. The Jewish register is dominated by Mount Sinai in the background,

above which there is a cloud from which the divine voice was heard and the lightning bolts poured over the crowd. On the pedestal, at the angel's foot, Moses sits with the Tables of the Law and alongside there is the altar of sacrifice. David kneels before the altar, assisted by the High Priest and the chosen people.

The angels descend the stairs of the pedestal and chase away the seven deadly sins represented allegorically: Envy, Drunkenness, Greed, Avarice, Violence, Hypocrisy and Lust. In the foreground, there is an allegorical figure representing the flood waters and those rescued from the water, people and animals, among which are the lion, the snake and the donkey.

In contrast, on the other side of the pedestal, the angels receive the allegorical representations of the seven virtues: Hope, Humility, Patience, Simplicity, Prudence, Justice and Mercy. The Gospel embodied by the open book is governing above all of them. In the middle of the composition, the faithful people perform acts of benevolence and the angels bestow rays of light from heaven on them. In the forefront, the apostles are represented with their attributes, the first being Peter, accompanied by the rooster. At the base of the pedestal, two figures meet and renew the Covenant, uniting the two Laws, trampling down Death and hoping for Salvation.

The first part of the series *Icones Biblicae* shows themes inspired by the Old Testament. The illustration of the Old Testament had a long tradition in the Netherlands. On one side, the illustration comprises moralizing examples, with guiding role in the lives of the faithful; on the other hand, they constitute a "Patriotic Scripture", adopted by the citizens of the young Dutch Republic. The Netherlands saw themselves as the new "Children of Israel", the new chosen people that had the mission to renew the Covenant, whereas Amsterdam was seen as the New Jerusalem (Schama 1997, 94).

In the first ten plates, Jan Luyken illustrates selected themes from Genesis, in chronological order. The selection of chapters and verses was made by the artist, with the clear purpose to mark the history milestones of the Hebrew people. The stories of the "Jewish Antiquities" and the "Jewish Wars" written by Titus Flavius Josephus (37-c.100) were the second source of inspiration for the illustrator.

Jan Luyken, had a good knowledge of the Scriptures; the artist fervently drew narrative scenes of great complexity. The first plate "Adam

gave names to all the creatures of the earth" (Genesis 2: 19-20) takes place in a landscape with staffage, a kind of landscape with a long tradition in the Netherlands (Fig. 1, Cat. 2). The figure of Adam is minuscule compared to the multitude of animals and the vastness of the earth, dominated by trees and water. Only one ray of light descends upon Adam, to attract the viewer's attention to the first human being. Nevertheless, this heavenly landscape will be destroyed by the flood. Luyken's drawing has a multitude of details: the overflowing waters drown people, goods and creatures (Genesis 7: 21). Again, Noah and the ark saved by divine benevolence appear somewhere in the background (Fig. 2, Cat. 3).

The flood was a constant threat in the United Provinces, situated below the sea level, and a permanent reference within the political, economic or religious discourse. Whenever the Covenant is violated, the people and their goods would be taken away by the flood.

Two themes are chosen by Luyken to illustrate the arrogance of men to build the Tower of Babel (Fig. 3, Cat. 4), punished by God with the confusion of languages (Genesis 11: 1) and the destruction of the city of Sodom by fire (Genesis 19: 24), because of the sins of its inhabitants (Fig. 4, Cat. 6).

The following themes illustrated by the artist reveal the first testimonies of the Covenant made by the Lord with Abraham and his descendants Lot, Jacob and Joseph. More episodes refer to the captivity of Joseph into Egypt (Genesis 37-46). The vast panoramic scenery, with high mountains in the background and winding roads, is populated by the people of Israel, watched over by the Lord. The staffage has grown as much as it dominates the natural landscape, turning it into a human landscape. It will be the type of composition Luyken preferred and repeated throughout the series *Icones Biblicae*. In order to illustrate multiple episodes, the artist arranged them on a meandering path, a pattern devised for almost all the compositions of this series. It was the way of the pilgrimage of life, a pivotal concept in Luyken's art. The episodes chosen are delimited by bright areas, with spots of light thrown upon the most important characters in the unfolding narrative. Rarely, the figures are placed in the foreground. The main episode is usually centrally situated in the middle of action and the faces are almost impersonal. All are equal before God, all are "the Children of Israel". The scenes are full of movement, even in the distant background, the crowd is being engaged in multiple actions. When



the scene is set in an architectural framework, the monumental buildings dominate the crowd, emphasizing the smallness of the figures. Luyken was often called the Dutch Callot, although his approach of the figures is different from that used by the Lorraine master.

The following ten plates illustrate with numerous details, the ten plagues that hit Egypt, sent by the Lord in order to force Pharaoh to release the Hebrew people from slavery (Exodus 7-12). Exodus episodes are illustrated by Luyken with great vivacity, by using the same compositional scheme. The most dramatic illustration is the seventh plague, the heavy rain with lightning and hail, entitled "Ice and Fire" (Exodus 9: 22). The compositional scheme is different this time, the main character being the unleashed fury of nature. In the foreground, people who were at work on the fields are twisted with animals falling down. (Fig. 5, Cat. 17) This etching, along with that illustrating the flood and the fiery destruction of Sodom by fire, were designed by Luyken in 1698 at the end of the century, when the millenarian prophecies concerning the end of the world proliferated. Luyken himself was a sympathizer of Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669), a Dutch millenarist theologian.

The last plague sent by the Lord upon Egypt was the murder of the firstborn (Exodus 12: 29), an episode foreshadowing the massacre of the innocent children during the reign of Herod. As a matter of fact, Luyken mastered well the concordances between the Old and New Testaments, and his etchings could be considered a possible visualization of sermons.

Two more episode illustrate Exodus, namely "The people of Israel gathering the Manna" (Exodus 16: 14) and "The Lord gives the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai" (Exodus 19: 1). The people freed from slavery in Egypt by the divine will, walk through the desert and is miraculously fed by the Lord with the manna. The narrative unfolds in the same swirling compositional device as the previous one. In contrast, the composition of the Ten Commandments is different. The crowds are now brought in the foreground, gathered to receive the Law, at the base of the mountain, beyond the line drawn to set a limit to the sacred land. God speaks to His people from the cloud covering the top of the mountain and His voice is accompanied by lightning in the sky. On Mount Sinai God made the Covenant with the chosen people and gave the Law. Luyken illustrated the receiving of the Law in one of the most beautiful composition of the

entire series (Fig. 6, Cat. 22). It is also an illustration of the Covenant of God with His chosen people, a concept of great relevance within the theology of the Reformation. In order to display more clearly the process of communication of God to His people, Luyken interleaved a plate with four etchings. These are illustrations relating to the construction of the Tabernacle, the location in the Sanctuary of the golden menorah or the seven branched lampstand, the table of showbread and the Incense Altar. In the Holy of Holies, under the wings of the cherubim, the glory of the Lord is represented on the Ark of the Covenant, from which the Lord spoke to His chosen people. Only the High Priest had access to the Holy of Holies, once a year, during the ritual of repentance. The last representation is that of the "Celebration of the Tabernacles", commemorating the forty years spent by the Hebrew people in the desert, after leaving Egypt and before entering the Promised Land. All these illustrations were included in a first state to illustrate the works of Flavius Josephus (Klaversma, Hannema 1999, 921).

Luyken continued to illustrate the Old Testament with two other compositions inspired by the "Book of Numbers", dedicated to the years spent by Moses and the Hebrew people in the wilderness. It was a time of doubt, rebellion and repentance of people against the God of Israel and against those designated to guide them. The first theme is illustrated by the story of Korah, the Levite priest who, together with Dathan and Abiram, rebelled against Moses. As punishment, God opened the ground, swallowing them with their families and possessions and also sent fire on their followers (Numbers 16: 30). The artist captured, with his etching needle, the fright of the children of Israel, fleeing from the wrath of God. In the second scene, Moses strikes the rock with his staff and gets water for the thirsty people and their animals wandering in the desert (Numbers 20: 2). The rebellious crowd is the main character of this scene, Moses and Aaron being placed in one extremity of the composition, near the rock from which water came out. In both scenes chosen by Luyken, the role assumed by the priest is challenged by the crowd and divinely punished. Luyken shared the view of the Dutch Collegiants who did not accept any church organization or a higher position of a priest.

The next two etchings have in common the struggle of the Jews against a more powerful enemy. Gideon, was one of the twelve Judges leading a holy war in the name of Jahveh. The

Lord sent him to release the Hebrew from the oppression of the Midianites and to destroy the altars dedicated to Baal. The Lord helps Gideon to be victorious, not with an army, but with a small group of men, holding only torches and trumpets made from the rams' horns. The small group led by Gideon surprised the Midianites' army during the night, and they ended up fighting among themselves and killing each other (Judges 7: 19).

Again, the artist represented the Midianites fighters and the main characters of the story in the foreground, Gideon and his men being represented in the distant background. Luyken illustrates one more time the noncombatant doctrine of the Mennonites and their determination to reject hierarchies. In this case, Gideon refused the royal throne that was offered to him after the victory.

David is another warrior in the name of God, who meets the challenge raised by Goliath to the Israelites. With a sling shot, David slays Goliath, implying Israel's victory over the Philistines (1 Samuel 17: 49). David's victory over Goliath is represented centrally in a light area, with the armies of Saul and the Philistines surprised by the course of events. David will be placed later on the throne of Israel, and Jesus was to be one of his descendants. David was anointed King at Bethlehem, the birth place of Jesus and became the King chosen by Lord.

Luyken continued the narrative of the Old Testament with David's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the new capital of the Kingdom. David, accompanied by musicians and the crowd of Israel, sings and dances before the Ark of the Covenant, brought now to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6: 14).

In the next scene, King Solomon, the second son of David greeted the Queen of Sheba in the city of Lord (1 Kings 10: 1), as the wealth, the wisdom and the greatness of Solomon had spread far and wide. King Solomon was the one who built the temple of Jerusalem, to house the Ark of the Covenant. Luyken composed both scenes in the great architectural framework *à l'antique*. The crowd is always there to witness the events. Viewers thus become themselves witnesses of the chosen event which is always placed into a halo of light.

The illustrator continues to represent the story of the chosen people with two other significant episodes. One is inspired by the "Book of Kings", "The Offering of Elijah burns with fire lit by the Lord" (1 Kings 18: 20) and this is a new victory

of Elijah's faith in Jehovah, over the numerous prophets of Baal. The other one is the illustration of the "Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple" (2 Kings 25: 8-11) due to the infidelity and the sins of the Israelites. The dramatic destruction of Jerusalem also led to the captivity of the Hebrews in Babylon.

The synthesis operated by the artist to illustrate the Old Testament stories in a significant way contains four more scenes. The first is a tonic illustration of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, after the testimony of Nehemiah, governor of Judaea in the name of the King of Persia. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls and gates of Jerusalem, with the help of many craftsmen and priests (Nehemiah 3). For Jan Luyken, the theme was a good opportunity to display different operations made by craftsmen with lots of valuable details, as he did in another project he previously etched. Another illustration "The Feast of Tabernacles" (Nehemiah 8: 9), is also inspired from Nehemiah's chronicle.

From the book of the prophet Daniel, the illustrator chose the episode of the three young Hebrew thrown to burn alive in the furnace (Daniel 3: 23). They refused to worship the colossal statue raised by King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It was a typical example of the observance of the first of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". Also represented is the persecution of those who refused to worship idols, saving themselves finally, for keeping their faith in Lord (Veldman 1995, 216).

The next scene refers to Jonah preaching to Nineveh (Jonah 3: 1). First, Jonah disobeyed the divine will and was punished to be thrown into the sea and swallowed by a great fish. Miraculously he is saved after three days. Luyken did not illustrate these previous events but the moment when Jonah prophesied about the destruction of Nineveh and his success in converting the Assyrians to his faith. It was a foreshadowing of the belief in the possibility of salvation for the Gentiles.

The last plate of the series inspired by the Old Testament is related to the conquest of the Temple of Jerusalem by Pompey, prophesied by Zechariah (14: 1). The Hebrew prophet has encouraged the reconstruction of the Temple and foretold the arrival of a new messianic era.

The illustrations of the New Testament highlight the key moments of the history of Jesus: birth of Christ, the preaching of the new Law, the miracles and parables given to the people, entrance into

Jerusalem, the anticipation of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Doomsday, the Passions and subsequently the spread of the faith among the people by the Apostles.

The first plate illustrating the New Testament is "The Angel announced the shepherds the birth of Jesus" (Luke 2: 8-9). The artist's eyes follow the descent of the Angel on beams of light that illuminate the shepherds of Bethlehem, surrounded by their animals (Fig. 7, Cat. 37). The panoramic nocturne landscape focuses on the beam of light in the moment when the Saviour's birth in the city of David is announced to the shepherds.

From the cycle of the childhood of Jesus, the illustrator selected only the scene of the Massacre of the Innocent children in Bethlehem, on the order of King Herod (Matthew 2: 16). The artist describes, in great detail, the dramatic moment of murdering the innocent children, a subject often approached by Jan Luyken, in the series illustrating the fate of the Christian martyrs, especially the tortures the Anabaptists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were subjected to.

The following plates illustrate some of the miracles performed by Jesus: the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7: 11-16), the healing of the sick at Gennesaret (Mark 6: 55), the raising from death of Lazarus (John 11: 39) and the healing of the born blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46).

Among the parables given by Jesus to the believers who followed him in his preaching wanderings, Jan Luyken chose to illustrate the "Sermon on the boat" and "The feeding of five thousands people with five loaves and two fishes" (John 6: 10). Both episodes reveal the role assumed by Jesus to provide food for people, for their body and their spirit alike. Jan Luyken interprets in a Mennonite way the first verses of the "Parable of the Sower" (Matthew 13: 2), namely "The Sermon on the boat". (Fig. 8, Cat. 40) Luyken illustrated previously a similar moment when describing in 1693 an episode of the Anabaptist preacher Pieter Pietersz's life. The episode mirrors the preaching of Jesus on the boat and relates to a secret religious service held in 1569, during the persecution of the Anabaptists; Bekjen preached in a boat on the river Amstel in Amsterdam before Regulierspoort (Eeghen, Kellen I 93).

The illustration of an episode which took place in Jericho, where Zacchaeus, the chief of the custom officers, climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus,

was one of the parables invoked when discussing the possibility of salvation for sinners. The scene was often represented in the art of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Significantly, in one of the works of Gerrit Dou (1613-1675), an old woman meditates with a lectionary opened at the text concerning Jesus at Jericho, a text illustrated with a woodcut. Luyken capitalized the lesson of his predecessor, by giving the same primacy to the Word, translated into images with a strong visual impact (Westermann 2004, 52).

Another popular theme in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch art is "The Royal Wedding" (Matthew 22: 2), also illustrated by Jan Luyken. Jesus compares the Heavenly Kingdom with the emperor son's wedding, where many are invited, but few take part. Among those gathered at the crossroads, one of the wedding guests had no garments and was thrown out by the emperor's servants. The parable given by Jesus is that many are called but few are chosen to be received into the Heavenly Kingdom.

The Last Judgment was illustrated by Luyken, according to the Gospel (Matthew 24-25). From the Passion cycle the artist selected those episodes which are significant for the lack of opposition Jesus faced what had already been decided for Him. This attitude was adopted by the Anabaptist martyrs of the sixteenth century and was much treasured by the Mennonites as well. For instance, Luyken did not illustrate the arrest of Jesus by the betrayal of Judah, but the moment when Peter was admonished by Jesus because he had raised his sword and cut the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest (John 18: 10). Another episode is the one in which Jesus is crowned with thorns, dressed with the purple robe as the King of Jews, then scourged and smitten, until Pilate presents Jesus to the crowd and says the words "Behold the Man" (John 19: 4-5). The Passion cycle concludes with Jesus carrying His Cross on the way to Calvary (Mark 15: 20) and He is crucified between the two thieves (Luke 23: 33).

From the "Acts of the Apostles" Luyken illustrated Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles (Acts 5: 14) and "The Stoning of Stephen" (Acts 7: 57). Stephen was elected by the twelve apostles to be the first deacon and he was also the first martyr for the faith in Jesus Christ.

The next four etchings are inspired by the story of Saul, who was a fierce enemy of the early Christians and witnessed the stoning of Stephen. Saul's conversion to the Christian faith occurred

on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 4). The moment of conversion is represented by Luyken in a composition full of dramatism (Fig. 9, Cat. 55). Saul was blinded by the shining light, but he regained his sight after his baptism and was given the name Paul. The adult baptism and the confession of faith were two major acts assumed by the Mennonites.

Since his conversion, Paul devoted his entire life to missionary journeys in order to proclaim the Christian faith. Among Paul's journeys, Luyken illustrated that of Lystra, where he was accompanied by Barnabas (Acts 14: 8), the one in Jerusalem, where he was arrested on the steps of the temple (Acts 21: 35) and the journey to Rome, interrupted by the shipwreck on the island of Malta (Acts 27: 41). Again, the preaching of the faith among people was a current practice of the Protestants.

The meaning of the last plate included in the series *Icones Biblicae* is not clear. The title is only in Dutch and the source is not mentioned on the plate. "Herod's soldiers fighting on the rocks with the robbers in front of a cave" is inspired by an episode described by the historian Josephus Flavius in "Jewish Wars" (1: 16, 2-4). King Herod conquered the city Sepphoris in Galilee and his soldiers were descended from the peak on the slopes of the mountain, fighting to destroy some groups of "robbers" hidden in the caves. Herod offered them forgiveness, under the condition that they surrender. The family of a Levite would like to accept the proposal, but the man killed all the five sons and his wife when they exited the cave and then he jumped off the cliffs, just in front of King Herod (Fig. 10, Cat. 59).

It seems like Luyken granted a special interest to this rather minor episode in the history of the Jewish wars. Several drawings are preserved as well as several states of the etchings, which were first published in 1698 (Eeghen, Kellen I 321: 1905 and 1906), reprinted in 1700, 1704, 1708, and in many subsequent editions after the artist's death. Luyken probably identified himself with the Levite who destroyed his family, preferring a martyr's death, than the loss of his freedom. Herod was accused by the people of Israel that he changed the Law given to the chosen people. "The robbers", among them some Levites, who took a final refuge in the caves were probably those who wanted to observe the Law given by the Lord to Moses on Mount Sinai, and not to obey the changes imposed by King Herod.

The episode can be also related to the political and military situation of the Dutch Republic, at that time in war with England and threatened by a French invasion. Through the Hague treaty concluded in 1698 between France and England, the Southern Netherlands would be returned to Archduke Karl, son of the Spanish king Leopold I of Habsburg.

*Icones biblicae* provides several possible iconographical commentaries. The biblical story is related by a Mennonite devout, with many hints to his own pilgrimage in life and the contemporary local history. The artist who conceived them had assumed an exemplary Christian existence, therefore this last work published during his lifetime was so meaningful for him and his coreligionists. The many subsequent editions of *Icones biblicae* until late eighteenth century reveal the interest of his contemporaries as well.

The edition analyzed in this paper was published by Frans Houத்துyn (c.1719-1765), a Mennonite bookseller, publisher and preacher of Amsterdam. He was also a disciple of Newton and a representative of a Christian Enlightenment. Houத்துyn published catechism booklets, notebooks for the preachers and the prize books offered by the united "Noah's Ark" and "Zon" Mennonite churches. Many of his religious publications were illustrated with Jan Luyken's popular etchings (Sprunger 2004, 2).

Jan Luyken was included in the canon of the Dutch art of the seventeenth century, as it has been established by Arnold Houbraken, but the artist became less valued during the last century. In his religious illustrations one could detect however most of the canonical seventeenth century Dutch art. Jan Luyken could be interpreted as a herald of the Dutch identity in the changing process of the late seventeenth century and the beginning of eighteenth century.

## CATALOG

*ICONES BIBLICAE VETERIS ET N. TESTAMENTI. Figures du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament inventées et gravées par Jan Luyken. Print-Verbeeldingen der Historien des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments. 'Amsterdam bij F. Houttuyn, MDCCXLVII.* (Biblical Figures from the Old and New Testament designed and etched by Jan Luyken and published by F. Houttuyn at Amsterdam in 1747).

The series *ICONES BIBLICAE VETERIS ET NOVIS TESTAMENTI* has a title plate and fifty eight plates, out of the sixty two in the original series. (Eeghen, Kellen 1905 II 429)

The first edition of the series was published at Amsterdam in 1708 by Pieter Mortier (1661-1711). The publisher Pieter Mortier and his followers have included some of these plates in other illustrated editions of the Bible (Klaversma, Hannema 1999, 159-164).

The series donated to the Brukenthal National Museum is the fifth edition, published in Amsterdam in 1747 by Frans Houttuyn (c.1719-1765). Publishers aimed at wide dissemination of this series, whose title was rendered into Latin, French and Dutch. The original plates were kept in stock by the editors and reissued until 1790, showing a constant valuation of the illustrations of Jan Luyken, during the eighteenth century. Some of the etchings of this series were designed almost a century before their last reprint, which seems surprising from a contemporary perspective.

The plates were printed on thin laid paper without watermark, double folio format, with the two sheets assembled on the middle. The plates preserve the original numbering of the series.

The artist's name is known in several spelling variations. Most plates are signed *Johannes Luyken Inv: et fecit* [Johannes Luyken invented and etched], with different shortcuts, depending on available space. Only twenty one plates were signed *Jan Luyken Invent: et fecit*, which is the given name adopted by modern exegesis.

On the plates 32, 42, 45, 49 and 51 edited by Frans Houttuyn Jan Luyken's signature does not appear.

One can see the signature of the editor Frans Houttuyn (*Edit à F. Houttuyn*) on forty nine plates, including the title page.

The ten plates with the numbers 3, 6, 17, 22, 23, 33, 38, 39, 44 and 62 bear the name of the publishers Jan Covens and Cornelis Mortier (*Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier*), as it appears on the second edition of *Icones Biblicae*, published in

Amsterdam, 1729. (Eeghen, Kellen 1905, 428) These plates are etched by Luyken, but not signed. The lettering included the page numbers of Josephus Flavius Dutch edition, from which the plates are inspired. (Eeghen, Kellen 1905, 396)

The plates 26, 30 and 35 are missing from the series donated to the National Museum Brukenthal.

On the plate 23 are printed four etchings.

### 1. TITELPLATE, Inv. XII-61/1

*PRINT – VERBELDINGEN DER HISTORIEN DES OUDEN EN NIEUWEN TESTAMENTS. T'AMSTERDAM BY F: HOUTTUYN. MDCCXLVII*

*ICONES BIBLICAE VETERIS ET N. TESTAMENTI.*

*FIGURES DU VIEUX ET DU NOUVEAU TESTAMENT INVENTÉES ET GRAVÉES PAR JAN LUYKEN*

Etching, 335 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houttuyn.*

Numbered 1, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3692.

### 2. [ADAM BESTOWS NAMES TO ALL THE ANIMALS], Inv. XII-61/2

*Adam geeft aan alle de Dieren Naamen. Genesis II. v. 19. / Adam donne les Noms à tous les Animaux. Genèse. II. v. 19.*

Etching, 335 x 424 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houttuyn.*

Numbered 2, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3693, 2.

### 3. [THE FLOOD], Inv. XII-61/3

*De Sondvloed. Gen. VII. / Le Déluge. Genese VII.*

Etching, 335 x 407 millimetres.

Lettered lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Lettered lower right : *Pag. 9; Numbered 3.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3693, 3.

### 4. [THE TOWER OF BABEL], Inv. XII-61/4

*De Toorn van Babel. Genesis XI. v. 2. / Le Tour de Babel. Genese. XI. v. 2.*

Etching, 335 x 427 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houttuyn.*

Numbered 4, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3694.

### 5. [THE SEPARATION OF ABRAHAM AND LOT], Inv. XII-61/5

*Abram en Lot scheyden. Gen: XIII. v. 3. / Abram & Lot se separent. Gen. XIII. v. 3.*

Etching, 337 x 442 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 5, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3695, 5.

**6. [SODOM BURNED BY FIRE FROM HEAVEN], Inv. XII-61/6**

*Sodom door 't Vuur Vergaan. Gen. XIX. / Sodom consumée par le Feu du Ciel. Genese. XIX.*

Etching, 333 x 406 millimetres.

Lettered lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Lettered lower right: *Pag. 18 ;* Numbered 6.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3695, 6.

**7. [THE ENCOUNTER OF JACOB AND ESAU], Inv. XII-61/7**

*De Ontmoeting van Jacob en Esau. Genesis XXXIII. v. 3. / La Rencontre de Jacob et d'Esau. Genese XXXIII. v. 3.*

Etching, 328 x 428 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 7, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3696.

**8. [JOSEPH WAS SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS], Inv. XII-61/8**

*Joseph werd door syne Broeders verkoft. Gen : XXXVII. v. 27. / Joseph est vendu par ses Frères. Gen : XXXVII. v. 27.*

Etching, 340 x 440 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 8, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3697.

**9. [JOSEPH SELLS WHEAT TO HIS BROTHERS], Inv. XII-61/9**

*Joseph verkoopt Koorn aan syn Broeders. Gen : XLII v. 4. / Joseph vend du Blé à ses Frères. Genèse XLII. v. 4.*

Etching, 335 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 9, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3698.

**10. [THE ENCOUNTER OF JACOB AND JOSEPH], Inv. XII-61/10**

*D'Ontmoeting van Jacob en Joseph. Gen: XLVI. v. 29. / La Rencontre de Jacob et Joseph. Gen: XLVI v. 29.*

Etching, 340 x 437 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 10, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3699.

**11. [FIRST PLAGUE OF EGYPT. MOSES CHANGES THE WATERS INTO BLOOD], Inv. XII-61/11**

*Eerste Plaag van Egipte. De Wateren in Bloed veranderd. Exodus. VII. v. 19. / Première Playe d'Egipte. Moyse change les Eaux en Sang. Exode VII. v. 19.*

Etching, 335 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fec:*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 11, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3700.

**12. [SECOND PLAGUE OF EGYPT. THE FROGS WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY], Inv. XII-61/12**

*Tweede Plaag van Egipte. De Vorscheen komen op over Egijptenland. Exod: VIII. / Seconde Playe d'Egipte. Les Grenouilles répandues dans tout le Pays. Exode VIII.*

Etching, 334 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 12, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3701.

**13. [THIRD PLAGUE OF EGYPT. MEN AND BEASTS INFESTED WITH LICE], Inv. XII-61/13**

*Derde Plaag van Egypten. De Menschen en Beesten door Luyzen gequeld. Exod : VIII.v. 16. / Troisième Playe d'Egipte. Les Hommes et les Bêtes infestez par les Poux. Exode VIII. v. 16.*

Etching, 335 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 13, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3702.

**14. [FOURTH PLAGUE OF EGYPT. A MIXTURE OF INSECTS], Inv. XII-61/14**

*Vierde Plaag van Egypten. Eene vermenginge van Ongedierte. Exod: VIII. v. 24. / Quatrième Playe d'Egipte. Un mélange d'Insectes. Exode VIII. v.24.*

Etching, 335 x 425. millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 14, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3703.

**15. [FIFTH PLAGUE OF EGYPT. PEST OVER THE CATTLE], Inv. XII-61/15**

*Vyfde Plaaq van Egypten. De Pest onder het Vee. Exodus IX.v.6. / Cinquième Playe d'Egypte. Mortalité sur le Bétail. Exode IX. v. 6.*  
Etching, 330 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 15, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3704.

**16. [SIXTH PLAYE OF EGYPT. GOD STRIKES OF EVIL SORES MEN AND CATTLE], Inv. XII-61/16**

*Sesde Plaaq van Egypte. God slaat de Menschen en't Vee met quade Zweeren. Exod: IX.v.10. / Sixième Playe d'Egypte. Dieu frappe d'Ulceres malins les Hommes et le Bétail. Exode IX. v. 10.*  
Etching, 332 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 16, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3705, 16.

**17. [SEVENTH PLAGUE. HAIL AND FIRE], Inv. XII-61/17**

*Sevende Plaaq van Hagel en Vuur over Egypte. Exod. IX.v.10. / Septième Playue. Grêle & Feu. Exode IX. y.22.*

Etching, 335 x 407 millimetres.

Signed in lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier*

Lettered lower right: *Pag. 54. Numbered: 17.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3705, 17.

**18. [EIGHTH PLAGUE. THE LOCUSTS], Inv. XII-61/18**

*Achtste Plaaq. Der Sprink-haanen. Exodus. X. v. 13. / Huitième Playe. Les Sauterelles. Exode X. v. 13.*

Etching, 330 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn*

Numbered 18, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3706.

**19. [NINTH PLAGUE. EGYPT PUNISHED WITH DARKNESS], Inv. XII-61/19**

*Negende Plaaq. Egypten met Duysternis gestraft. Exodus. X. v. 21. / Neuvième Playe d'Egypte. Tenébres épaisses. Exode X. v. 21.*

Etching, 333 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 19, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3707.

**20. [TENTH PLAGUE. DEATH OF THE FIRST BORN], Inv. XII-61/20**

*Tiende Plaaq. Dood der Eerste geboorene. Exodus. XII. v. 29. / Dixième Playe. Mort des Premières nez. Exode. XII. v. 29.*

Etching, 233 x 427 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 20, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3708.

**21. [THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL GATHERING MANA], Inv. XII-61/21**

*De Kinderen Israëls Versaamelen het Mana.*

*Exodus. 16. v.14. / Les Enfans d'Israel Amassent la Manne. Exode 16. v.14.*

Etching, 340 x 440 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Jan Luyken Invent: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 21, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3709.

**22. [GOD GIVES THE LAW ON THE MOUNT SINAI], Inv. XII-61/22**

*De Wetgeving op den Berg Sinai. Exod. XIX. / Dieu donne sa Loi sur la Montagne de Sinai. Exode XIX.*

Etching, 334 x 415 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Lettered lower right: *Pag. 63. Numbered: 22.*

Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3709, 22.

**23. [SETTING UP THE TABERNACLE. THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK, THE INCENSE ALTAR AND THE TABLE OF SHEW BREAD. THE GLORY OF THE LORD ON THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. CELEBRATION OF THE TABERNACLES], Inv. XII-61/23**

FOUR IMAGES ON THE SAME PLATE:

1. Top left: *Het Opzetten van den Tabernakel.*

Etching, 170 x 205 millimetres.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3709, 23.

2. Top right: *De Gouden Kandelaar, het Reukwerks Altaar en de Tafel der Toonbrooden.*

Etching, 170 x 205 millimetres.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3709, 24.

3. Lower left: *De Heerlykheyd des Heeren over de Arke des verbonds.*

Etching, 170 x 205 millimetres.

Lettered lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3709, 25.

4. Lower right: *Viering van het Loosthutten Feest.*

Etching, 167 x 205 millimetres.

Lettered top right: *Pag. 71. Lettered lower right: 23.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3709, 26.

**24. [KORAH, DATHAN AND ABIRAM SWALLOWED BY THE GROUND], Inv. XII-61/24**

*Korah, Dathan en Abiram gestrast. Num. XVI. v. 30. / Coré, Dathan & Abiram abimez. Nomb: XVI. v. 30.*

Etching, 347 x 413 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 24, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3710, 27.

**25. [MOSES BRINGS OUT WATER FROM A ROCK], Inv. XII-61/25**

*Mose slaat het waater uyt den Rotzsteen. Numeri. 20. / Moyse fait sortir de l'eau d'un rocher. Nombre 20.*

Etching, 340 x 440 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et fec.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 25, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3711, 28.

**26. [GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES], Inv. XII-61/27**

*Gidion verslaat de Medianiten. Judicum. VII.v.19. / Gedéon défait les Madianites. Juges.VII. v. 19.*

Etching, 330 x 427 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken In: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 27, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3713, 30.

**27. [GOLIATH KILLED BY DAVID], Inv. XII-61/28**

*Goliath door David gedood. I. Samuel XVII:v. 49. / Goliath tué par David. I. Samuel XVII. v. 49.*

Etching, 335 x 435 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 28, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3714, 31.

**28. [DAVID DANCING BEFORE THE ARK], Inv. XII-61/29**

*David danst voor de Arke. II Samuel VI:v. 14. / David danse devant l'Arche. II. Samuel VI. v. 14.*

Etching, 335 x 428 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn*

Numbered 29, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3715, 32.

**29. [THE QUEEN OF SHEBA COMES TO SEE SOLOMON], Inv. XII-61/31**

*De Koningin van Scheba komt om Salomon te sien. I of III. Kon. X. v. 1. / La Reine de Sceba vient voir Salomon. I ou III des Rois X. v. 1.*

Etching, 340 x 440 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 31, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3716, 37.

**30. [THE OFFERING OF ELIAS BURNED UP BY THE FIRE FROM HEAVEN], Inv. XII-61/32**

*Elias Offerhande door't Vuur van de Hemel verteert. I. Konigen XVIII. vs. 20-38. / Holocauste d'Elie consumé par le Feu du Ciel. I. Rois. XVIII. vs. 20...*

Etching, 332 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 32, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3717, 38.

**31. [DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE], Inv. XII-61/33**

*De Uysterste verdelging van de Stad Jerusalem en den Tempel. / Destruction de Jerusalem & du Temple. II des Rois. XXV.*

Etching, 330 x 415 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Lettered lower right: *Pag. 689. Numbered: 33.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3717, 39.

**32. [THE JEWS ARE REBUILDING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM], Inv. XII-61/34**

*De Jodden herbouwen Jerusalem. Nehemia III. / Les Juifs rebâtissent la Ville de Ierusalem. Nehemie. III.*

Etching, 337 x 427 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv. et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 34, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3718, 40.

**33. [THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES], Inv. XII-61/36**

*Het Loof-hutten-Feest. Nehemia VIII. v: 9. / Fete des Tabernacles. Nehemie. VIII. v. 9.*

Etching, 333 x 428 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 36, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3719, 41.

**34. [THE THREE YOUNG MEN IN THE FURNACE], Inv. XII-61/37**

*De Drie Jongelingen in den brandenden Oven. Daniel. III. v. 23. / Les Trois Jeunes hommes dans la Fournaise. Daniel. III. v. 23.*

Etching, 340 x 437 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 37, lower right.



Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3720, 42.

**35. [JONAH PREACHING IN NINEVEH],**

**Inv. XII-61/38**

*Prediking van Jonas te Ninive. Jonas III. /*

*Predication de Jonas en Ninive. Jonas III.*

Etching, 337 x 432 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C.*

*Mortier.*

Numbered 38, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3721, 43.

**36. [TAKING THE TEMPLE OF  
JERUSALEM BY POMPEY PREDICTED BY  
ZACHARIAH], Inv. XII-61/39**

*Pompejus neemt den Tempel te Jerusalem*

*Stormenderhand in. / Prise du Temple de*

*Jérusalem par Pompée prédite par Zacharie.*

*Chap. 14.*

Etching, 330 x 417 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Lettered lower right: *Pag. 337. Numbered: 39.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3721, 39.

**37. [THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE BIRTH  
OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE SHEPHERDS],**

**Inv. XII-61/40**

*De Engel verkondigt de Geboorte J :C : aan de*

*Herders. Luc: II v. 8. / L'Ange Annonce la*

*Naissance de J: C: aux Bergers. Luc. II. v. 8.*

Etching, 338 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*

*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 40, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3722, 45.

**38. [THE MASSACRE OF THE CHILDREN  
IN BETHLEHEM ORDERED BY HEROD],**

**Inv. XII-61/41**

*De Kindere moort tot Bethlehem. Matth. II. v. 16.*

*/ Hérode fait Massacrer les Enfants à Bethlehem.*

*Matthieu II. v. 16.*

Etching, 340 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*

*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 41, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3723, 46.

**39. [JESUS RESURRECTES A YOUNG MAN  
FROM DEATH], Inv. XII-61/42**

*Christus verwekt een Doode Jongelinc. Lucas 7. /*

*Jesus ressuscite un Jeune Homme. S. Luc. 7.*

Etching, 322 x 435 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 42, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3724, 47.

**40. [JESUS CHRIST TEACHES SITTING ON  
A BOAT], Inv. XII-61/43**

*Christus Leerd zittende op een Schip. Matthei*

*XIII. v. 2. / Jesus Christ Enseigne assis sur une*

*Nasselle. Matthieu XIII. v. 2.*

Etching, 335 x 428 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*

*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 43, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3725, 48.

**41. [CHRIST FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND  
PEOPLE], Inv. XII-61/44**

*Christus Spyst Vyfdytsent Persoonen. Ioan. 6. v.*

*10. / Christ Rassasie cinq Mille Personnes. S.*

*Jean. 6. v. 10.*

Etching, 330 x 417 millimetres.

Lettered lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C.*

*Mortier.*

Lettered lower right: *Numbered 44.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3726, 49.

**42. [JESUS HEALED ALL KINDS OF  
DISEASES], Inv. XII-61/45**

*Christus geneest allerley Siektens. Marc: 6. v. 55.*

*/ Iesus guéris toutes sortes des Maladies. S.*

*Marc. 6. v. 55.*

Etching, 330 x 420 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 45, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3727, 50.

**43. [THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS],  
Inv. XII-61/46**

*De Verryzenis van Lazarus. Johan XI. v. 39. / La*

*Resurrection de Lazare. S.<sup>t</sup> Jean XI. v. 39.*

Etching, 342 x 440 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*

*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 46, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3728, 51.

**44. [ZACCHAEUS CLIMBED UP INTO A  
SYCAMORE TREE TO SEE JESUS], Inv.**

**XII-61/47**

*Zacheus op de Vygeboom. Luc: XIX. v. 4. / Zachée*

*sur le Sycomore. Luc: XIX. v. 4. Etching, 340 x*

*438 millimetres.*

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*

*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 46, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3729, 52.

**45. [THE BLIND BARTIMAEUS RECEIVES  
HIS SIGHT], Inv. XII-61/48**

*Bartimeus de Blinde. Marc: X. v. 46. / Bartimée*

*l'Aveuglé. Marc: X. v. 46.*

Etching, 338 x 440 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*

*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*  
Numbered 48, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3730, 53.

**46. [JESUS CHRIST ENTERED  
JERUSALEM RIDING A DONKEY], Inv.  
XII-61/49**

*Christus Inryding te Jerusalem op een Ezel.*  
*Matth : 21. / Jesus-Christ entre dans Jerusalem*  
*monté sur un Asnon. S. Matthieu. 21.*

Etching, 330 x 422 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 49, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3731, 54.

**47. [THE ROYAL WEDDING. THE  
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A  
CERTAIN KING, WHICH MADE A  
WEDDING BANQUET FOR HIS SON], Inv.  
XII-61/50**

*De Koninklyke Bruyloft. Matth: XXII. v. 2. / Les*  
*Nopces Royales. Matthieu. XXII. v. 2.* Etching,  
337 x 434 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 50, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3732, 55.

**48. [THE LAST JUDGMENT], Inv. XII-61/51**  
*Het Laatste Oordeel. Matth: 24: en 25: / Le*  
*Jugement Dernier Matt: 24: et 25:*

Etching, 334 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 51, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3733, 56.

**49. [SAINT PETER CUT THE EAR OF  
MALCHUS], Inv. XII-61/52**

*Petrus slaat Malchus't Oor af. Johannis XVIII. v.*  
*10. / S.<sup>t</sup> Pierre coupe l'Oreille de Malchus. S.<sup>t</sup>*  
*Jean XVIII. v. 10.*

Etching, 333 x 432 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 52, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3734, 57.

**50. [ECCE HOMO. PILATE PRESENTS  
JESUS CHRIST TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING,  
BEHOLD THE MAN], Inv. XII-61/53**

*Pilatus toont Jesus aan't volk zeggende: Zie de*  
*Mensch. Johan. XIX. v. 4-5. / Pilate montre Jesus*  
*Christ au peuple en dissant: Voila l'Homme. S.*  
*Jean XIX. v. 4-5.*

Etching, 335 x 426 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 53, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3735, 58.

**51. [CHRIST WAS LED OUT TO BE  
CRUCIFIED], Inv. XII-61/54**

*Christus werd uyt gelyd om gekruyst te worden.*

*Marcus : XV. v. 20. / On emmene Jesus Christ au*  
*Calvaire. S. Marc XV. v. 20.*

Etching, 337 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 54, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3736, 59.

**52. [JESUS CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED  
AMONG TWO THIEVES], Inv. XII-61/55**

*Christus tusschen twee Moordenaars gekruyst.*  
*Lucas: XXIII. v. 33. / Jesus Christ est crucifié au*  
*milieu de deux Voleurs. S. Luc XXIII. v. 33.*

Etching, 337 x 426 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 55, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3737, 60.

**53. [PREDICATION OF SAINT PETER ON  
THE DAY OF PENTECOST], Inv. XII-61/56**

*Petrus Predicatie op den Pinxter-dag. Handel: V.*  
*v. 14. / Predication de S.<sup>t</sup> Pierre au Jour de*  
*Pentecote. Actes. V. v. 14.*

Etching, 337 x 432 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 56, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3738, 61.

**54. [THE STONING OF SAINT STEPHEN],  
Inv. XII-61/57**

*De Steeniging van Stephanus. Handeling VII. v.*  
*57. / La Lapidation de Saint Estienne. Actes. VII.*  
*v. 57.*

Etching, 336 x 425 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 57, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen I 429, 3739, nr. 62, p.  
665.

**55. [THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL],  
Inv. XII-61/58**

*Paulus Bekeering. Handeling. IX. v. 4. / La*  
*Conversion de Saint Paul. Actes. IX. v. 4.*

Etching, 337 x 432 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et*  
*Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houltuyn.*

Numbered 58, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3740, 63.

**56. [THE LYSTRIENS BRING THE BULLS TO SACRIFICE TO PAUL AND BARNABAS], Inv. XII-61/59**

*De Lystriers brengen Stierren aan, om die aan Paulus en Barnabas te offeren. Handelinghe 14. v. 8 ... / Les Lystriens amènent des Taureaux pour les sacrifier à Paul & à Barnabas. Actes. 14. v. 8*

...

Etching, 337 x 432 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fec.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houttuyn.*

Numbered 59, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3741, 64.

**57. [PAUL IMPRISONED IN JERUSALEM], Inv. XII-61/60**

*Paulus binnen Jerusalem gevangen. Act. XXI.v.35. / S.<sup>t</sup> Paul emprisonné à Jerusalem. Act. XXI. v. 35.*

Etching, 335 x 434 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houttuyn.*

Numbered 60, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3742, 65.

**58. [THE SHIPWRECK OF PAUL IN MALTA], Inv. XII-61/61**

*De Schipbreuk van Paulus aan't Eyland Melite. Handel: XXVII. v. 41. / Le Naufrage de Saint Paul à l'Isle de Malte. Actes XXVII. v. 41.*

Etching, 340 x 430 millimetres.

Signed lower right: *Johannes Luyken Inv: et Fecit.*

Lettered lower left: *Edit à F. Houttuyn.*

Numbered 61, lower right.

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3743, 66.

**59. [HEROD'S SOLDIERS FIGHTING ON THE ROCKS WITH THE ROBBERS IN FRONT OF A CAVE], Inv. XII-61/62**

*Herodes Beoorlogt de Roovers inde Rotsen door Soldaaten die in kisten aan yzere kettingen hangende door windaasen neergelaaten worden.*  
Etching, 327 x 415 millimetres.

Signed lower left: *Edit à J. Covens et C. Mortier.*

Lettered lower right: *Pag. 355. Numbered: 62.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3743, 67.

**MISSING PLATES**

**Pl. 26. [JOSHUA DID STOP THE SUN AND THE MOON]**

*Josua doet Son en Maan stil staan. Josua. X. v. 12. / Josué fait arreter le Soleil & la Lune. Josue. X. v. 12.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 3712.

**Pl. 30. [THE COURTYARD OF THE TEMPLE, THE ALTAR AND THE COPPER COLUMNS. INTERIOR OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. THE BRASS BASSIN]**

33: *De binnenhof des Tempels, met het altar en de kopere kolommen.*

34: *Inwying van Salomons Tempel. Pag. 489.*

35: *De Arke des Verbonds in 't Heylige der Heyligen.*

36: *De gegootene Zee, of het groot koper waschvat.*

Literature: Eeghen, Kellen 429, 33-36.

**Pl. 35.** Plate not recorded by Eeghen. The second edition of *Icones Biblicae* published in 1729 by J. Covens and C. Mortier mentions: **JERUSALEM NIEWLICKS UYT DE SCHRIFTEN JOSEPHUS AFGEBEELD DOOR J. H. COCCEIUS** (Jerusalem from the writings Josephus described by J. H. Cocceius)  
Literature: *Afbeeldigen der Merkwaardiste Geschiedenissen van het Oude en Nieuwe Testament*, Amsterdam, MDCCXXIX, pl. 35.

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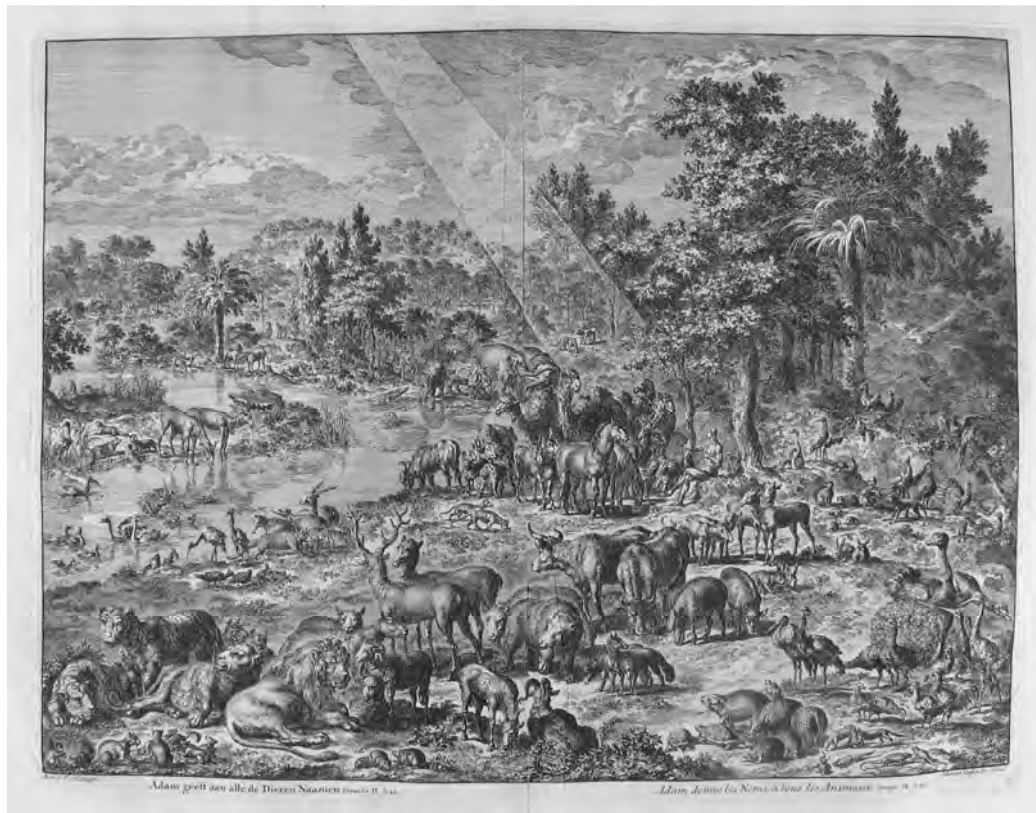
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### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Adam bestows names to all the animals
2. The Flood
3. The Tower of Babel
4. Sodom burned by Fire from Heaven
5. The Seventh Plague. Hail and Fire
6. Lord gives the Law on the Mount Sinai
7. The Angel announces the Birth of Jesus Christ to the Shepherds
8. Jesus Christ teaches sitting on a boat
9. The Conversion of Saint Paul
10. Herod's soldiers fighting on the rocks with the robbers in front of a cave

### LISTA ILUSTRĂȚIILOR

1. Adam dă nume tuturor animalelor
2. Potopul
3. Turnul Babel
4. Arderea Sodomei
5. Cea de-a șaptea plagă. Grindină și Foc
6. Dumnezeu dă Legea pe Muntele Sinai
7. Îngerul anunță păstorilor nașterea lui Iisus Cristos
8. Iisus Cristos predică mulțimii dintr-o barcă
9. Convertirea Sf. Pavel
10. Soldații lui Irod luptă cu tâlharii din peșteri



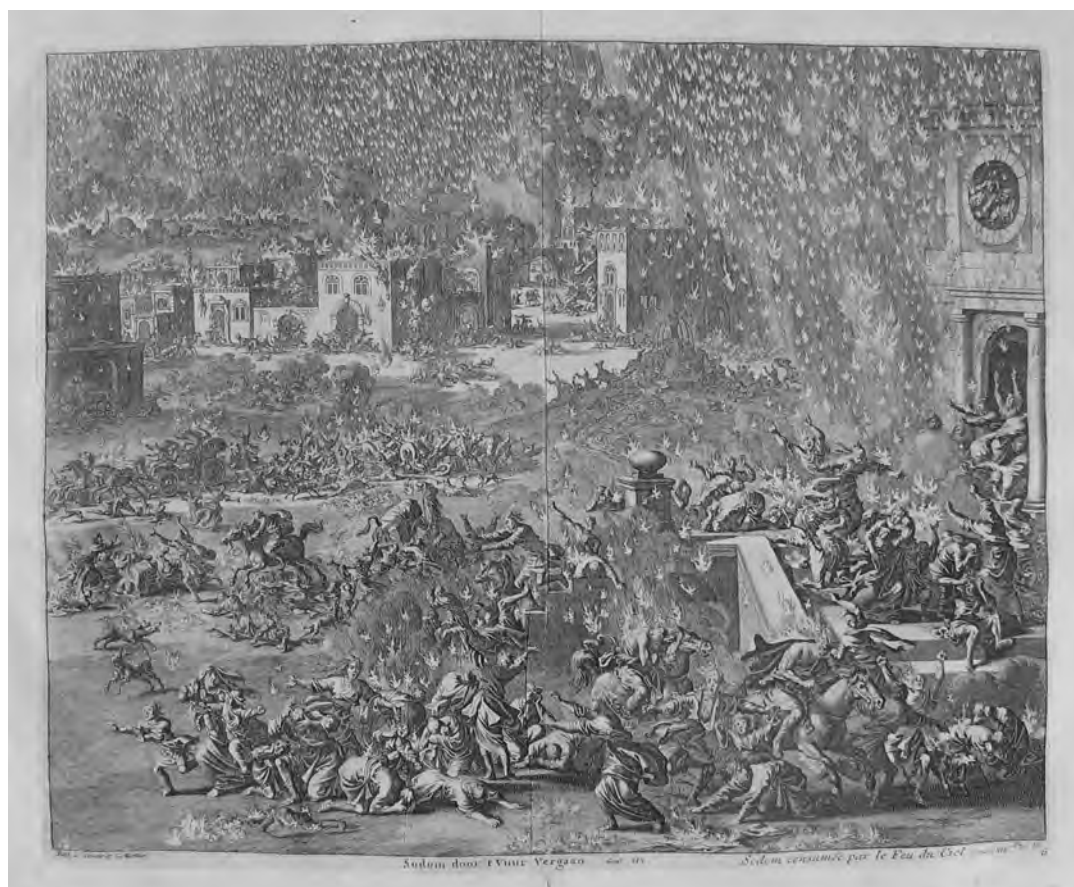
1. Adam bestows names to all the animals



2. The Flood



3. The Tower of Babel



4. Sodom burned by Fire from Heaven





5. The Seventh Plague. Hail and Fire



6. Lord gives the Law on the Mount Sinai





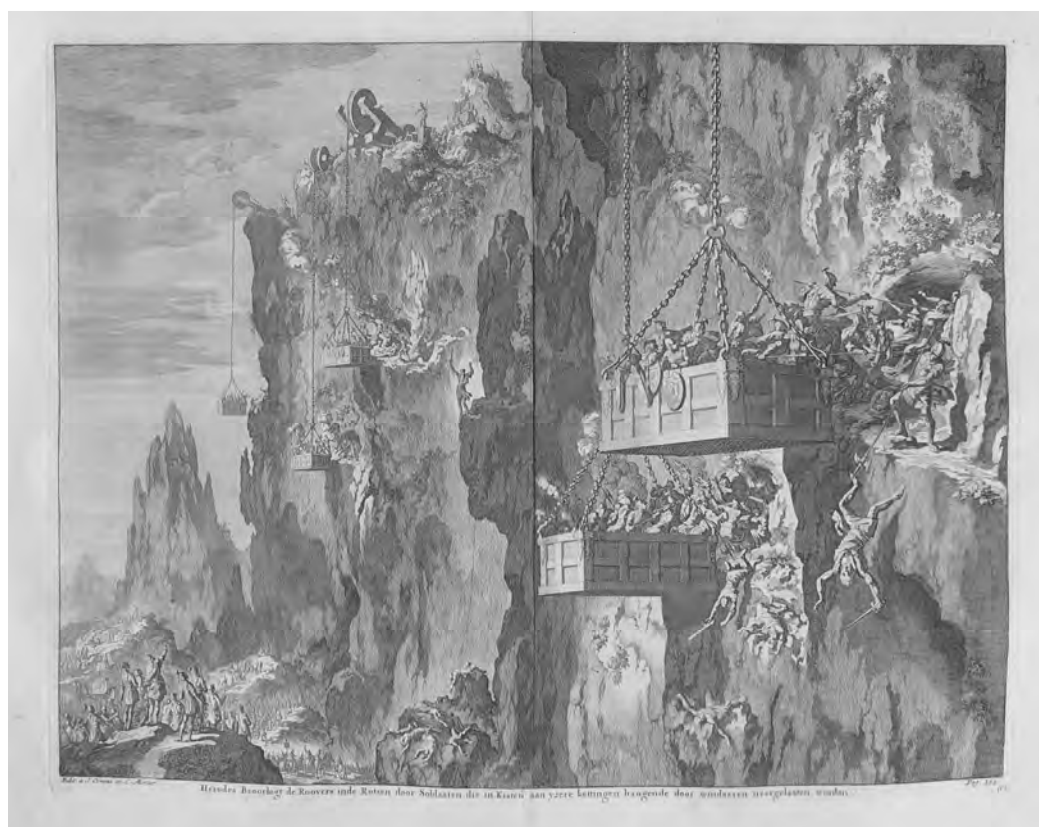
7. The Angel announces the Birth of Jesus Christ to the Shepherds



8. Jesus Christ teaches sitting on a boat



9. The Conversion of Saint Paul



10. Herod's soldiers fighting on the rocks with the robbers in front of a cave

**SOME REMARKS CONCERNING TWO PORTRAITS  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE BRUKENTHAL NATIONAL MUSEUM**

**Alexandru Gh. SONOC\***

**Abstract:** *The portrait of Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia is inspired by the portrait made in 1730 by Louis Caravaque. Even if its provenance is not precisely known, we can assume that it was painted in Russia by an Austrian painter (or maybe in the workshop of Johann Gottfried Auerbach or by a student of this artist), during the talks which lead to the Holy Roman Empire joining Russia (1737) in the Turkish War which had already begun in 1735. The 'Portrait of a Man', painted in 1847 by Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, was bought in 1971, from Bucharest.*

**Key words:** *Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia, Austrian painting, Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, Russian painting, The Brukenthal National Museum.*

**Rezumat:** *Portretul împărătesei Anna Ioannovna a Rusiei este inspirat de portretul realizat în 1730 de Louis Caravaque. Chiar dacă proveniența sa nu este precis cunoscută, se poate presupune că a fost pictat în Rusia, de către un pictor austriac (probabil din atelierul lui Johann Gottfried Auerbach sau un elev al acestui artist), în contextul pregătirilor Sf. Imperiu Roman de a se alătura Rusiei (1737) în războiul antiotoman început deja în 1735. "Portretul unui bărbat", pictat în 1847 de către Karl Pavlovici Briullov, a fost achiziționat în 1971, din București.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *împărăteasa Anna Ioannovna a Rusiei, pictură austriacă, Karl Pavlovici Briullov, pictură rusă, Muzeul Național Brukenthal.*

In the last years, the documentation of the works belonging to the German and Austrian painters from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu, but also of those belonging to various schools with a lesser number of paintings (among them the Russian school, as well) provided a number of pleasant surprises, by the discovery of a work, important in documentary terms, which became even more interesting after the true identity of the rendered character (Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia) could be established. I had also the particular satisfaction to study an unpublished portrait, creation of the great Russian painter Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, which was bought by the museum many years ago.

1. Studio of Johann Gottfried Auerbach  
(1697-1743)

*Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia*  
[ca. 1735-1737]

Oil on canvas, 149×114 cm

The Brukenthal National Museum, inv. 310.

(Fig. 1)

Although facing the onlooker, Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia (1730-1740), is slightly turned to right while looking to the left; she is wearing a silver brocade dress, with floral motifs, with a wide cleavage and large lace sleeves. A golden mantle, lined with ermine, adds the finishing touch. The orientation of the body and the drapery of the mantle skilfully manage to reduce the corpulence of the character. With her left hand, the sovereign clasps a braid, in her right hand she holds the sceptre and on her head she wears a miniature version of the Russian crown. On the left, in the background, there is a tabouret

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with a purple red cushion. In the background hangs a golden curtain with red border, which reveals a column on the right. The monumental composition, well structured, is chromatically balanced, being dominated by golden and silver, with purple and black accents. The artist gave much attention not only to the clothing details and to the attributes of the sovereignty, but also to the jewels of the empress and to the order she is wearing. Girded with a narrow decorative belt in the shape of a string of gemstones, she is wearing on her chest a big brooch, adorned with numerous pearls, and at her neck the collar of the Order of St. Apostle Andrew the First-Called (Kvadri, Konarzhevsky 1901, 14, pl. I/1; Gladkov 2003, 29-33, fig. 8; Shishkov 2003, 31-151; Durov 2006, 18, fig. 4; Durov 2007, 11-27), which she conferred to herself on 14<sup>th</sup> of February 1730 (Shishkov 2003, 116 and 133, nr. 47). About the order worn by the empress all guides of the Brukenthal Museum's Gallery wrote wrongly that it would be the Order of the Black Eagle (Die Gemälde- Galerie 1844, 142, cat. nr. 382; Führer 1893, 47, cat. nr. cat. 37; Csaki 1901, 82, cat. nr. 301; Csaki 1909, 93, cat. nr. 310), which is the highest Prussian order, established on 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1701 by Prince Elector Frederick III of Brandenburg, who became King of Prussia, as Frederick I the following day. The physiognomic features of the empress are realistically rendered: the figure is oval, bloated, with a high forehead, black eyes, ruddy cheeks, sensual lips and deposits of adipose tissues under her chin. Her blunt, superficial, arrogant and slightly cunning expression allows to appreciate that the portrait as being quite expressive.

The gesture of holding her braid can be seen (but rarely) in some formal female portraits, generally of young, still unmarried characters. An example (very similar to the portrait of the Empress of Russia also in other regards and also from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum) is a portrait earlier known as *Princess in A Blue Dress* (oil on canvas, 148×114 cm, inv. 311), attributed to a German anonymous (Die Gemälde- Galerie 1844, 148, cat. nr. 441; Führer 1893, 52, cat. nr. 142; Csaki 1901, 82, cat. nr. 302; Csaki 1909, 93, cat. nr. 311; Sonoc 2011a, 27, cat. nr. 6.3, fig. 6.3; Mureşan 2011, 116, fig. 9) (Fig. 2). Recently, the portrayed character was identified by Valentin Mureşan as being Archduchess Maria Theresa from the House of Habsburg and the paintings was dated, as a consequence, before her wedding with Franz Stephan of Lorraine (Mureşan 2011, 116), which happened on 12<sup>th</sup> of

February 1736 (Mahan 1932, 38). In the case of Anna Ioannovna, there is an important difference: on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1710, she married Friedrich Wilhelm Kettler (1692-1711), Duke of Courland and Semigallia, who died on 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1711; a widow, she had a love affair with Count Ernst Johann von Biron (1692-1772), who became himself in 1737 Duke of Courland and Semigallia and, upon the death of the Empress, even Regent of the Empire (Anisimov 2002, 116-118). For a widow, the gesture of holding her braid, does not reveal an innocent coquetry, but rather frivolity, which according to the mentality of that age was not at all appropriate for her status and, therefore, it can be concluded that neither Anna Ioannovna, nor obviously an official from the Russian court commissioned the work. Although, the anonymous artist who, respecting all the conventions of the formal portrait of the 18<sup>th</sup> C., painted the portrait of the Empress of Russia in Sibiu, he seems to have known her nature quite well or, at least, to have heard the rumours about her, since Anna Ioannovna had a poor education and remained famous for her extravagance, for being a spendthrift and a gossip, but especially for her abusive, cruel and frivolous behaviour (Longworth 1972, 81; cf. Curtiss 1974, 231-232; Heller 2009, 490). The way she was perceived by her contemporaries and later by the Russian historiography from the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. and then by the Soviet historiography too, was also a consequence of the fact that, mistrusting the Russians, she favoured foreigners and especially Germans, especially those from the Baltic area (Lipski 1956, 488; cf. Wills 2002, 163). Indeed, according to the 1731 report sent by Claudius Rondeau (1695-1739), the British resident in St. Petersburg (1720-1739), (Wills 2002, 163), it was not easy for the Russian aristocracy to be deprived of the trust of the Empress and to see, the manner in which she conducted the affairs of the state, which were left entirely in the hands of her favourites, Count von Biron, the counts von Löwenwolde, by Paweł Jaguginsky and by Baron Heinrich Johann Friedrich von Ostermann, known in Russia as *Andrey Ivanovich Osterman*. Despite the incompleteness of the lists of the recipients of the Order of St. Andrew (since its creation in 1698 and up to 1917), their study shows that during the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna the highest Russian order was bestowed only on four Russians, but was presented to several Germans from Russia, among them Duke Ernst Johann von Biron and his son Peter, Count Burkhard Christoph von Münnich (known in Russia as *Khristofor Antonovich Minikh*), Counts Reinhold

Gustav von Löwenwolde and Karl Gustav von Löwenwolde, Baron A. I. Osterman (Shishkov 2003, 120 and 133-159).

The painting kept at the Brukenthal National Museum does not come from the collection of its founder, Baron Samuel von Brukenthal, being acquired after his death, sometime during 1803-1844. In all guides of the Brukenthal Museum's Gallery the work (which is not dated) was attributed to an anonymous German painter from the 18<sup>th</sup> C. (Die Gemälde- Galerie 1844, 142, cat. nr. 382; Führer 1893, 47, cat. nr. 37; Csaki 1901, 82, cat. nr. 301; Csaki 1909, 93, cat. nr. 310). Concerning the identity of the portrayed character, there were divergent opinions: in the guides published in 1844 and 1893 it is said to be Empress Catherine II (Die Gemälde- Galerie 1844, 142, cat. nr. 382; Führer 1893, 47, cat. nr. 37), but the guides published by Michael Csaki in 1901 and 1909 mention a portrait of Empress Catherine I (Csaki 1901, 82, cat. nr. 301; Csaki 1909, 93, cat. nr. 310). The inventory register of the Brukenthal National Museum's Gallery also mentions the above mentioned identification.

Stylistically, the works show the features of the formal female portraits which characterize German portraiture of mid 18<sup>th</sup> c., reminding especially of those of the princesses of the House of Habsburg even of some Austrian aristocrats, created in the workshop of or by the imitators of Martin van Meytens the Younger (1695-1770). A good example is the portrait of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria, dated in the fourth decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> C. (oil on canvas, 91x72 cm) from the Strakovits collection of Budapest (Husslein-Arco, Lechner 2014, 42-43, cat. nr. 10) (Fig. 3) or her wedding portrait (Husslein-Arco, Lechner 2014, 44-45, cat. nr. 11). Georg Lechner, the curator of the exhibition *Martin van Meytens der Jüngere*, organized at the Winter Palace (Belvedere) in Vienna (18<sup>th</sup> October 2014 – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2015), whose opinion I asked for on 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2014, wrote me that in both these portraits, creations of his early years, Martin van Meytens was influenced actually by Johann Gottfried Auerbach (1697-1743), the court painter of Emperor Charles VI. Although Martin van Meytens the Younger competed him, they remained in close, friendly relations and so he painted a simple portrait of J. G. Auerbach (kept also at the Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu, inv. 744), which shows him in a domestic, relaxed environment (Husslein-Arco, Lechner 2014, 130, cat. nr. 46). The mentioned Viennese researcher considers that both anonymous portraits from

Sibiu, of Empress Anna Ioannovna and of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria, are two very interesting works, of the studio of Johann Gottfried Auerbach or of a pupil of this painter, which is mainly suggested by the specific change of the folds of her garbs. As analogy he mentions a portrait representing Maria Theresa young, from the Magyar Népmzeti Galéria of Budapest (inv. L.5.098), attributed to the circle of Johann Gottfried Auerbach.

As for the figure and the vestments of the empress, I believe that the painter was inspired by the big portrait (oil on canvas, 262x205 cm) painted in 1730 by Louis Caravaque (1684-1752), kept once at the Russian State Museum of St. Petersburg and since 1931 at the Tretyakov State Gallery in Moscow (inv. 2551) (Fig. 4). This comparison allowed me to specify the identity of the character portrayed in the painting from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum, which I revealed in 2012, in a documentary exhibition on recent discoveries from the gallery of the museum. Similarities could also be found with a copy of the portrait by L. Caravaque from the portrait gallery of Kuskovo (Fig. 5), although its quality is although inferior to the portrait from Sibiu.

Not only two copies of the portrait painted by Louis Caravaque were made, but also miniatures and engravings. Christian Albert Wertmann (1680-1760) and Claude Roy (ca. 1712-1792) are but two of the few engravers who were inspired by this portrait. Painted portraits of Empress Anna Ioannovna, but not inspired by that by Louis Caravaque, were made by Johann Heinrich Wedekind (1674-1736) and by Ivan Sokolov (1717-1757). This last painting, probably lost, is known only from a reproduction photogravure made in 1891 by Grigori Nikolaievich Skamon. But both portraits are of a poorer quality than that in Sibiu. Excepting the work by Louis Caravaque and a portrait made by Jacopo (Giacomo) Amiconi (1682-1752), which was once in the house of Prince Antiokh Dmitrievich Kantemir (1708-1744), the minister plenipotentiary of Russia in London (1731-1736), as well as an anonymous portrait, there are few 18<sup>th</sup> c. portraits of the empress of a higher quality than that from Sibiu. With respect to the engraved portraits of the empress (excepting the already mentioned ones, inspired by the painting by Louis Caravaque and the reproduction engraving made by J. Wagner after the said portrait by G. Amiconi), there are few works of good quality, among them should be mentioned those we owe to Johann Georg

Mentzel (1677-1743), Johann Jakob Haid (1704-1767), Johann Christoph Vogel, Georg Paul Busch and H. Fauquet, as well as the equestrian portrait made in Augsburg by Martin Engelbrecht (1684-1756). The mentioned portraits are either original works or were made after unknown paintings, but certainly none has any relation with the portrait in the gallery from Sibiu. André Joseph Mécou (1771-1837) made a reproduction engraving after a good quality, but posthumous portrait, of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., due to the Alsatian miniaturist Henri Benner (1776-1818).

Meanwhile, it is difficult to identify the author of the painting in the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum. The first target, of course, would be one of the pupils of Louis Caravaque. The Russian artist of French origin, known for the portraits of the members of the Imperial House and for some historical scenes, but who (as official painter of the court of St. Petersburg) is also the author of works of religious art and of mural painting and even landscapes, still life and animal paintings (Uspensky 1913, 95; cf. Thieme 1911, 575) had, three well known pupils: Ivan Iakovlevich Vishniakov (1699-1761), Aleksei Petrovich Antropov (1716-1795) and M. A. Zakharov, but while there are no sufficient reasons to lead me to attribute the portrait from the gallery in Sibiu to one of these artists, even in terms of its quality (but also of its style, in a certain measure), it is close to the portraits of Empress Elizaveta Petrovna painted by the first two (especially to those by A. P. Antropov are painted also after the portraits made by Louis Caravaque) or to various aristocratic portraits, also strongly influenced by Louis Caravaque.

The quite similar dimensions and the stylistic similarities justify, in my opinion, the supposition that the portrait of Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia was made by the same artist who painted earlier the mentioned portrait of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum, strongly influenced by the Viennese school, particularly by the style which characterizes the creations of the early years of Martin van Meytens the Younger. Despite the influences of the studio of Martin van Meytens the Younger, it is hard to believe that the work from Sibiu could be attributed to the Swedish artist Sophonias de Derichs (1712-1772), a far relative of the painter of the imperial court from Vienna, whose pupil and collaborator he was (until 1761, when he left Vienna). After a short stay in Stuttgart and Berlin, Sophonias de Derichs settled in Augsburg. In 1772, together with a

friend, the painter Gregorio Guglielmi (1714-1773) and his wife, he went to St. Petersburg, where all three died within days of their arrival, because of an illness or of poisoning. (For the life and work of S. de Derichs: Thieme 1913, 96). For this reason, the possibility that a work inspired by the painting by Louis Caravaque was made at such a late date should be excluded, and for an earlier travel of Sophonias de Derichs to St. Petersburg, in 1735-1737, there is no information. The influences of the Viennese court portrait from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> C. and particularly of these elements which may allow to attribute the portrait of Empress Anna Ioannovna from Sibiu to a painter of the circle of Johann Gottfried Auerbach are supplementary arguments that it was made for the House of Habsburg, maybe by an artist who accompanied a diplomatic mission sent to St. Petersburg by Emperor Charles VI. Lacking the possibility to paint a portrait *ad vivum* of the Empress of Russia, he was inspired by the portrait made in 1730 by Louis Caravaque. Both the formal portraits by various artists of the Viennese school from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> C. and these made in Russia by Louis Caravaque assimilated (but in a different measure and in a proper manner) the canons of the French formal portrait, which became a model for artists all over Europe.

It is difficult to say how this painting could have arrived in Sibiu: since it was not mentioned in the handwritten inventory of the collection of Baron Samuel von Brukenthal (dated at ca. 1800), it does not belong to his gallery. In my opinion, the most plausible hypothesis is that the painting was brought to Vienna by an Austrian diplomatic mission returning from St. Petersburg, in the context of the talks which preceded the alliance which led to the participation of the Holy Roman Empire's preparations in the war (1737) began by Russia in 1735 against the Ottoman Empire, but which ended in disaster for the both Christian powers: by the separately concluded peace of Belgrade (1739), the Holy Roman Empire lost Oltenia (Little Valachia), Northern Serbia and Northern Bosnia, which earlier had been annexed by it according to the treaty of Passarowitz / Požarevac (1718), while Russia lost, by the peace of Niš (1739), the forts of Ochakov / Özü and Kinburn / Kılburun, conquered in 1737 and was forced to retreat its troupes from Moldavia, where in 1739 it managed to occupy the cities of Khotyn / Hotin and Jassy / Iași, and in South the fort of Bender / Tighina.

It seems very likely that both the memory of this unfortunate, inglorious event and the relatively poor artistic quality of the portrait of Empress Anna Ioannovna could have led to its sale, together with the portrait of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria (painted by the same author and maybe considered as its pendant), following the reorganization of the Imperial Gallery (1772-1781), in conjunction with its moving from the Stallburg to the Winter Palace (Belvedere) between 1776-1788, notwithstanding that the painting was already in Vienna or was brought, during this action, from one of the castles belonging to the House of Habsburg (About the reorganization of the Imperial Gallery and the auction of some paintings and of the artistic carpentry from the Old Gallery in the Stallburg: Swoboda 2008, 118-123; Mader-Kratky 2010, 33-37). Only after the works of better known artists and/of a higher artistic quality were bought by different high officials, among them very likely Baron Samuel von Brukenthal too (Sonoc 2011b, 47-48), could some particular art lovers and entrepreneurs (who may have considered the paintings to be a profitable investment), and also certain artists, take advantage of such an opportunity. At that time, in Transylvania there were no painting collections which could be compared with that of Baron Samuel von Brukenthal, and the request for paintings was still extremely low, having a negative effect on the development of the local painting, and it is difficult to say in what way some works purchased in Vienna could arrive in Transylvania through the mediation of other local collectors or artists. Among them, the Transylvanian Saxon painter Johann Martin Stock (1742-1800), a pupil of Martin van Meytens the Younger, acted also as mediator for the purchase of some works of art for Baron Samuel von Brukenthal (Popescu 2000, 16-18). Later, the painter Franz Neuhauser the Younger (1763-1836), the son of the Viennese painter Franz Neuhauser the Older, who settled with his family to Sibiu, sold to the Brukenthal Museum on 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1834, for the amount of 1 000 florins, an art collection including 22 paintings, 160 prints, 21 plaster casts and 32 books (Bielz 1960, 171). There is no doubt that this purchase, made after the death of Baron Samuel von Brukenthal (1803), but before the printing of the first guide of the Brukenthal Museum's Gallery (1844), in which both portraits (of similar dimensions and made by the same artist, after ca. 1-3 years) are mentioned for the first time, remained till now the most important, as far as the number of the works of European art

and their artistic value are concerned. Nevertheless, neither the portrait of Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia, nor of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria (earlier known as *Princess in A Blue Dress*) is mentioned in the list of the paintings which were bought at this occasion (Bielz 1960, 91, n. 27).

2. Karl Pavlovich Bryullov (Brüllow)  
(1799-1852)

*Portrait of a Man* [1847]

Oil on canvas, 66x54,6 cm. Signed in italic Cyrillic writing and dated right below, in red: К. Брюлловъ / 1847 г.

The Brukenthal National Museum, inv. 2707.  
(Fig. 6-7)

Karl Pavlovici Bryullov (Brüllow) was the son of the wood engraver of French origin Paul Brulleau (1760-1833), known in Russia as *Pavel Ivanovich Bryullo* and the brother of the painter Aleksandr Pavlovich Bryullov (1798-1877). Their oldest brother, Theodor (Fyodor), painted icons and the youngest one, Ivan, a promising draftsman, died in a young age. Being Protestants, his ancestors settled in Germany after losing the religious freedom in France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and later (in the 70's of the 17<sup>th</sup> c.) his family moved to Russia (Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 248). That is why the family name was spelled sometimes as *Brüllow*.

K. P. Bryullov was educated at the Imperial Academy of Art from St. Petersburg (1809-1821), where he was the student of A. I. Ivanov, A. E. Egorov and V. K. Shebuev, although without practicing the classicist style promoted by his teachers and by his brother. Being attracted by Italy since his childhood, after he finished his studies colleagues (but in conflict with the leadership of the Academy), he went to Rome (1823), as a *pensionnaire* of the Society for the Encouragement of Artists (*Общество Поощрения Художников*). He stayed there till 1835 and was noted as a portraitist and a painter of genre scenes. With his work *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1830-1833), commissioned by Anatoly Nikolaievich Demidov and donated to Emperor Nicholas I, which was exhibited first in Italy, then at the Musée du Louvre and later at the Imperial Academy of Art from St. Petersburg, the artist aroused interest in Italy, France and Russia, as well as in the United Kingdom, as the first internationally praised Russian painter. Returning to his fatherland (after having travelled through Greece and the Ottoman Empire in 1835, where he painted many landscapes), he obtained an



employment as Professor at the Imperial Art Academy of St. Petersburg (1836-1848). As author of portraits and genre scenes, of historical paintings (like *The Siege of Pskov*), as well as of several copies (among them, *The School of Athens*, by Raphael), he won high praise at the Russian imperial court. He is noted also as a church painter, at St. Petersburg (where he worked at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan and especially at the St. Isaac's Cathedral). The worsening of his health during the hard work for St. Isaac's Cathedral and a heart attack he suffered compelled him to go to Madeira in 1849, but in 1850 he settled in Italy, where he remained till his death (1852). The painter was a member of the Art Academies from Milano and Parma and of the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca of Rome (For the life and work of K. P. Bryullov: Rakova 1956; Mashkovtsev 1961; Atsarkina 1963; Kornilova 1976; Popudotinsky 1979; Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 248-257; Bocharov, Glushakova 1984; Leonteva 1991).

The character in the portrait from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum is a fair haired young man, rendered as a bust, three quarters to left. He is wearing a shirt and jabot, both white, an orange coat and over it a green-olive frock-coat. His right hand lying on his chest catches the lapel of the frock-coat, holding its forefinger stretched over it. His expressive and inquiring figure, slightly ironic and arrogant, emerges from the olive background due to a triangular beam of light, which breaks the unity of the background. The work is well done, expressive, representative for the Russian portrait painting of the age of Nicholas I, but also for the creation of the artist, who managed to join properly the classicist simplicity and the romanticist tendencies, showing also a typical realistic capacity of psychological introspection. In the words of K. P. Bryullov, his portraiture technique was "to catch the best figure and to transfer it on the canvas" («Удержать лучшее лица и передать его на полотне») (Allenov 2000, 190-191). These artistic features are supporting the opinion of John E. Bowlt, who noted that there are similarities between the works of K. P. Bryullov and those of Théodore Géricault (Bowl 1977, 11-12).

In the seventh decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> C., in his earliest articles written after the death of K. P. Bryullov, the art and music critic Vladimir Vasilievich Stasov (1824-1906), who travelled to Italy and became acquainted with the painter's artistic heritage there, reacted in an apologetic manner about his works, without the less note of criticism,

but returned to Russia (where as a consequence of the country's social realities he advocated with pathos the national genre painting as better meeting the needs of the modern times), he slighted all the activity of K. P. Bryullov as an artist and a teacher of the Academy and recognized his merits only in portraiture and changed his mind again only in the 80's, emphasizing the historic importance of K. P. Bryullov's creation (Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 257). Later, the art historian (and a painter himself) Alexandre Benois (1870-1960), known in Russia as *Aleksandr Nikolaievich Benua*, who strongly criticised most of the works of K. P. Bryullov (Benois 1916, 78-83), acknowledged that his portraits are among the best created of the whole 19<sup>th</sup> century, albeit his belief that they do seem to be free of some of his habitual defects (such as somewhat motley colours and a composition rich in importunately sensational effects), noting however the deep impression owing to their vitality, to the great talent they reveal and to the technical skill with which they were executed (Benois 1916, 82). He considered that the artist, prone to histrionic effects, is less successful in those portraits which are not of official or, in general, of a grand, showy character and which seem to him too superficial and banal (Benois 1916, 82-83). Of the highest merit, he believes, are the intimate portraits, and among them the best are his aquarelles and the pencil drawings in which he rendered his numerous friends, whose figures are noted for their delicacy, precision and often for the great charm of the colouring, being compared for this reason with the works of Ingres (Benois 1916, 83). Actually, these intimate portraits, which are less influenced by Romanticism, are more related to the literary Romanticism, in their dreamy solitude and fatigue caused by the "noisy bustle", while his formal portraits are also interesting for the history of the Russian art, because of the painter's innovation: the sitters, even aristocrats or high officials, are rendered in their dignity, beauty, charm and grace, without to emphasize their high rank in the social hierarchy (Allenov 2000, 191). As for the portraits in watercolour by K. P. Bryullov, they were highly praised in the late 20<sup>th</sup> C. like earlier by A. Benois. Thus, noting too that the K. P. Bryullov is known not only for his portraits painted in oil on canvas, but also as a brilliant master of the pencil and especially of the watercolour portrait, Magdalina Mikhailovna Rakova considered that in Russia the aquarelles painting reached the perfection in his works (Rakova 1975, 190). Among the most famous portraits in watercolours



are those of Countess O. P. Ferzen on donkey (1835), of the Narychkin couple on horseback (1835) and of V. A. Kornilov (1835), the future admiral, famous for the defence of Sevastopol, rendered on board of the brig *Femistokl* (i.e. *Themistocles*), all in the Russian State Museum from St. Petersburg (Rakova 1975, 190).

K. P. Bryullov had an important influence not only on the development of Russian art (even on some followers of A. G. Venetsianov, like the portraitists A. V. Tyranov and S. K. Zaryanko, on some artists whom he met in their adulthood, like V. A. Tropinin, or the historical painter P. A. Fedotov and mainly on the portraitist P. Z. Zakharov), but also of the national schools in various parts of the Russian Empire: among his pupils there were the Russian painter Prince G. G. Gagarin, the Ukrainian writer T. G. Shevchenko and the Ukrainian painters F. L. Tkachenko and D. I. Besperchy, as well as Ya. N. Avnatamov (from Armenia), G. I. Maisuradze (from Georgia), A. Stankiewicz and T. Górecki (from Poland), and some of them (like D. I. Besperchy and G. I. Maisuradze) became also teachers and propagated the method learned in the workshop of their master (Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 256-257). However, most of his Russian disciples did not follow his urge to study nature and not to work according to the canons arising from the samples of the ancient art and only imitate their teacher, as academistic artists (like P. N. Orlov) and only few were able to learn something valuable from his method (Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 256).

The portrait by K. P. Bryullov from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum was bought on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1971, from Remus Ionescu, from Bucharest, without any information about its previous owners. In the inventory register it is wrongly assigned to the collection of Romanian paintings and dated in 1872, obviously not only because of the small dimensions of the ciphers and letters of the date, but also due to the failure of the cipher 4, whose narrow lines are more difficult to be seen, which led to confusion between the italic Cyrillic letter *z* and the cipher 2. Just because the cinnabar red (vermilion) colour used to make the signature and the date cannot be found elsewhere in the painting, it seems that this choice is not a hazard at all: this red is the artist's favourite colour, in which he painted also the armchair in his self-portrait dated in 1848 (Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 255).

Being dated in 1847, the painting from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum

belongs to the last part of the peak of the artist's creation, when as professor at the Imperial Art Academy of St. Petersburg, where he was worshiped by his pupils and the other artists, too. This had, according to A. Benois, a negative effect on the creation of the painter, who unnerved by dissipation and deeply disappointed by his own artistic efforts (due to the loss of his connection with life by his raise over all artists and the society's little interest in art), fell ill (Benois 1916, 81-82). In fact, just by the portraits he painted in the Academy around the year 1848 (when his self-portrait sitting in an armchair is dated, which marks the most recent evolution of his style), the painter managed to separate from the academicism and romanticist aesthetics, and just by the interest he shows towards the interior life of his characters. After the mentioned self-portrait, during the last years of his life, in Madeira and in Italy, he (re)turned to the full realistic portrait, rendering the sitter placed in his daily environment and with his particular physical and psychological features, like the portrait of the Italian archaeologist and orientalist Michelangelo Lanci (1851) (Sarabyanov 1989, 211; cf. Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 255-256), but also the portraits of the members of the Tittoni family. Among the male portraits K. P. Bryullov painted previous 1848, the most famous are the both from the Tretyakov State Gallery in Moscow, depicting two of his friends: the writers N. V. Kukolnik (1836) and A. N. Strugovshchikov (1840) (Allenov 2000, 191; cf. Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 255). Differing from the last two, still belonging to his academistic style, his self-portrait seems more modern, but not only because it is more expressive, but also because of the painting technique: it is made in a free brush (Sarabyanov 1989, 211). From the mentioned portraits of N. V. Kukolnik (with a grim landscape in the background) and A. N. Strugovshchikov (seated in an armchair), the precisely drawn portrait from Sibiu differs in its light and chromatic effects, which causes the portrayed character to emerge from its neutral background. Even painted the same year (1847) like the portrait of N. F. Zdekauer, it is closer to the portraits of the painter's friends, the architect A. M. Bolotov (1843) and the artist Ya. F. Yanenko (1841), but also to three earlier portraits from the Tretyakov State Gallery: of Prince A. N. Lvov (1824), of State Secretary P. A. Kikin (1821-1822), one of the founders of the Society for the Encouragement of Artists, and of an actor, A. N. Ramazanov (1821). Just these three early portraits, influenced by Orest Adamovich Kiprensky (1782-1836), are

showing how K. P. Bryullov decided to leave the canons learned from his teachers (Rakova, Ryazantsev 1979, 249-250).

Thus, the purchase of this portrait (which remained unstudied till now) was fully justified, both by its place in the creation of the artist (whose works have high prices on the Russian and international art market) and by the importance of the work in the context of the Russian and East European paintings in the museums and collections from Romania and, particularly, in the Brukenthal National Museum's collection of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. European paintings.

### Conclusions

The identification of the portrait of Empress Anna Ioannovna in the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum eliminates the older, wrong identifications of the character. A deeper study of this painting revealed that it is a work by an anonymous Austrian painter, a pupil or a collaborator of Johann Gottfried Auerbach, who also painted a portrait of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria from the same collection.

A more thorough study of the only work by K. P. Bryullov, *Portrait of a man*, in the collection of the museum revealed the true date when this portrait was made and emphasizes its place in the creation of the great Russian painter.

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7. Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, *Portrait of a Man*. Detail. The Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu.

### LISTA ILUSTRAȚIILOR

1. Atelierul lui Johann Gottfried Auerbach, *Împărăteasa Anna Ioannovna a Rusiei*. Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu.
2. Atelierul lui Johann Gottfried Auerbach, *Arhiducesa Maria Theresia de Austria*. Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu.
3. Martin van Meytens cel Tânăr, *Arhiducesa Maria Theresia de Austria*. Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu.
4. Louis Caravaque, *Împărăteasa Anna Ioannovna*. Galeria Tretyakov, Moscova.
5. După Louis Caravaque, *Împărăteasa Anna Ioannovna*. Galeria de portrete de la Kuskovo.
6. Karl Pavlovici Briullov, *Portret de bărbat*. Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu.
7. Karl Pavlovici Briullov, *Portret de bărbat*. Detaliu. Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu.



1. Studio of Johann Gottfried Auerbach,  
*Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia*



2. Studio of Johann Gottfried Auerbach,  
*Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria*



3. Martin van Meytens the Younger,  
*Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria*



4. Louis Caravaque, *Empress Anna Ioannovna*



5. After Louis Caravaque, *Empress Anna Ioannovna*
6. Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, *Portrait of a Man*
7. Karl Pavlovich Bryullov, *Portrait of a Man*. Detail



## MODELING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND COLLAGE AS ALTERNATIVE STUDY IN OCTAVIAN SMIGELSKI'S CREATION

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**Abstract:** This article intends to bring into attention the creation process behind Octavian Smigelschi's works. The Transylvanian painter used different artistic mediums to ease his preparatory work and this article reconstructs the complex path of his images that were subjected to a laborious process of transposition of ideas in various techniques. Smigelschi made use of modeling, photography and collage to construct his characters and his compositions and by analysing the entire laboratory behind his creation one can better understand how his ideas evolved. The artist understood the great advantages of photography and by using it aligned his creation with that of his more famous contemporaries from western Europe.

**Key words:** Smigelschi, technique, collage, photography, modeling, artistic mediums, Transylvania

**Rezumat:** Acest articol dorește să aducă în atenția specialiștilor procesul de creație din spatele lucrărilor lui Octavian Smigelschi. Pictorul a folosit diferite mijloace artistice pentru a-și scurta procesul de întocmire a studiilor de personaj și de compoziție. Pornind de la studiile după model, realizate în creion, peniță sau laviu, tehnica de lucru a artistului a evoluat treptat și s-a rafinat, îmbogățindu-se cu mijloace tehnice moderne, care îl ajutau în transpunere viziunilor sale. În spatele creațiilor pictorului se poate reconstitui un traseu complex al imaginii care era supusă unui proces laborios de transpunere a ideilor în tehnici variate precum modelajul, fotografia, colajul, desenul, sau marmura de ciment colorat. Urmărind acest proces putem înțelege mai clar modul în care au evoluat ideile sale. Înțelegând beneficiile pe care le aducea fotografia în elaborarea lucrărilor sale Smigelschi s-a afiliat contemporanilor săi din spațiul vest european.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Smigelschi, tehnică, colaj, fotografie, modelaj, mijloace artistice, Transylvania

"Photography is the servant of memory;  
valuable for melancholic evocations of what is no more,  
the shadow of a moment frozen in time,  
of something that once was in the world" ( Barthes 1981, 76)

Octavian Smigelschi (1866-1912) was educated in Budapest<sup>1</sup>, in a beaux-arts milieu, influenced by the German idealistic painting and the Italian Renaissance. His graduation diploma attests that he was trained in numerous disciplines such as:

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I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Ana Maria Gruia, who translated an important part of this research paper.

<sup>1</sup> Octavian Smigelschi studied at Hungarian Drawing School (*Magyar Királyi Mintarajztanoda és Rajztanárképezde*) from Budapest between 1885 and 1889.

figurative drawing, architectural drawing, style, modeling, geometrical objects, anatomy, art history and pedagogy<sup>2</sup>. His training imprinted the way he conceived his works throughout his artistic career. Following a certain ideal, he came up with a set of formal and compositional rules in order to reach equilibrium, harmony, structure, rhythm and proportion (Vătășianu 1982, 82). The fundament of his creative process was drawing; he did large number of sketches and compositional

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<sup>2</sup> I found these information in a document preserved in Ioana Șetran private collection.

studies where he tried, in a repetitive process, to achieve rhythmical harmony by changing the position of his characters or different compositional elements, aiming at bringing his work closer to a classical perfection and symmetry (Gruîță-Savu 2012).

Starting with model sketches, in pencil, ink or charcoal he soon evolved and refined his visual discourse, introducing new technical means, more appropriate to his vision. Smigelschi liked to experiment new work methods and new compositional schemes, these being two of the reasons he left so many unfinished projects and a large number of character and compositional studies. In his last years his research became clearly compositional; he was less interested in rendering graphical elements in a naturalistic way, and more interested to establish compositional balance.

In this article my intention is to recreate Smigelschi's hidden laboratory and to analyse the technical process used in elaborating his works. In my research I try to reconstruct the complex path of his images that were subjected to a laborious process of transposition of ideas in various techniques such as modeling, photography, collage, drawing, painting and coloured concrete marble, a technique invented by the artist and applied in some of his works between 1909 and 1912 (Gruîță-Savu 2014, 202-206; Gruîță-Savu 2013, 357-375; Gruîță-Savu 2012, 353-370). This article is based upon a series of photographs, some of them unpublished, preserved in large number in the artist's family<sup>3</sup> collection and in other public collections<sup>4</sup> which reveal the artistic means that Octavian Smigelschi employed in the elaboration of his works. The technical aspects and the working method adopted for creating his compositional and character studies are sophisticated and reveal his certain preoccupation towards innovation.

By analysing how the painter composed his images for the frieze *The Wise and Foolish Virgins* (Fig. 1 a), Virgil Vătășianu wondered how it is that the painter never tried sculpting (Sabău 1972, 64). Nicolae Sabău's article, published in 1972 answered that question by presenting and investigating a set of nine *bozzetti*, made by Octavian Smigelschi in order to help his

creational process (Fig. 1 b, 2). Smigelschi started using these small statues around 1910, when he began working for the Rákóczi Chapel project (Sabău 1972, 53). With his move to Rome, the artist was probably inspired by the statues scattered throughout the Italian capital and at the same time he experienced the influence of the new Secessions, especially the one occurring within the German artistic scene<sup>5</sup>. His symbolist series have an affinity to Max Klinger's compositions (Vida 2002, 177) and by examining their working process one might find a resemblance in the way they both constructed their images. Max Klinger was interested at first in sculpting and thus he perceived shape as a succession of full and voids (Seemann 1995) and Smigelschi had the same approach in his compositional sketches in the way he treated the volumes.

The Transylvanian painter took the opportunity to ease his working process by using *bozzetti*, which were easy to handle and whose image perfectly served his purposes. The process was not new; it was used also by renaissance painters, Smigelschi's novelty resides in the way he combined this way of working with photography and collage.

Smigelschi made use of these small lathed wooden models, ca. 100 cm high, during his creative process between 1909 and 1912. These models had all the significant anatomical elements: head, neck, body, and members, made of separate parts that were then assembled together with inner ties made of elastic gum bands (Sabău 1972, 55-56). This way of connecting the corresponding parts endowed these mannequins with certain mobility. Over these basics elements that rendered the skeleton of a human body, Smigelschi placed a layer of clay or plasticine in order to render muscles. The models were subsequently clad in canvas dipped in barbotine. With the aid of this material, the painter managed to give these clay dummies volume and to obtain the long-thought-for antique aspect through the play of draping. Subsequently he captured all the details in his drawing where he insisted on the balance between the dark and the light zones (Sabău 1972, 55-56). These small statues had a classical aspect and were used in religious scenes as well as in his lay compositions, the artist taking advantage of the spectacular results obtained by

<sup>3</sup> I thank Anamaria Smigelschi and Ioana Șetran for sharing their private collection of photographs.

<sup>4</sup> I thank Prof. Dr. Nicolae Sabău for giving me access to the clichés he used in his own research.

<sup>5</sup> To offer an example I recall Max Klinger's composition *The Death of Caesar* (1890) or *Paris's Judgement* (1885).

using the tri-dimensional objects as models for his drawings.

The small clay puppets were first used as working tools for the scenes that were to decorate the chapel of the Rákóczi College in Budapest (Fig. 2), the main project for which Smigelschi had received the stipend in Rome, but later on the artist used them for the *Angel of Death* composition (Fig. 3) and for the *Wise and Foolish Virgins* scene (Fig. 1) (Vătășianu 1982, 80-81).

It seems that the artist had designed several main characters, some seated and others standing, he placed them in different positions and used them as models for his pencil and photograph studies. He focused on the clothing, the gestures and the way he could arrange these clay dummies in order to communicate with each other, to create balanced compositions. Some of his characters were built vertically, and the artist played with the folds in order to bring some movement in his compositions, others were conceived horizontally, counterbalancing the others and offering a visual equilibrium and rhythm. His main goal was to obtain a monumental effect by gathering all this characters in narrative scenes. The detailed analyses of each character represented by the small statues can be found in Nicolae Sabău's (Sabău 1972, 56) above mentioned article, thus I won't insist upon it.

I don't imply that Smigelschi was attracted towards sculpture as an independent mean of expression, even if he studied modeling at the Hungarian Drawing School. Being educated in an academic environment Smigelschi was familiar with the wooden figures used by academic artists to create their elaborated compositions. In his works he never forgot the constructive lines and he was always in search for a certain position of the figure in space and in relation with other characters within his compositions. What I found interesting is his interest on the dynamic relationship between two dimensional and three-dimensional objects, studying the form, experimenting volume to understand and to render the body postures, attitudes, pathos in drawing and later in painting. At the same time, he carefully constructed the drapes and the folds of his characters, focusing on the detail, in order to conceive the whole. When he rendered everything in his drawings he became concerned with the power of line, with structures, equilibrium and light in an attempt to abstract his images. In the effort to reach monumentality he was convinced that he must abandon realist representations and to

abstract the features and the gestures of his characters to essence, to subordinate or to remove the secondary elements, in order to emphasise the essence of the represented moment.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently he made use of the photographic camera, taking photos of the models from various angles. He then developed the glass negatives and used the images as models for his graphic studies. Smigelschi tried photography ever since 1904, when he started making the first studies for the orthodox cathedral in Sibiu (Sabău 1972, 67). He improvised a small photo studio where he photographed his wife and children impersonating various biblical characters. Numerous such glass negative plates are still preserved his family's collection (Fig. 4, 5 a-c, 6 a-c). He used the photos for his character studies as well as for his compositions. Some of the photos are pencil gridded and probably they were used for proportion and perspective studies, then transposed into paintings and, later on, in carved concrete marble works (Gruiță-Savu 2013, 357-375).

It is known that around 1880 his professor Székely Bertalan was interested in the use of the photo camera to capture motion. Some of his numerous sketches, where he decomposed movement, are kept in the Hungarian National Academy of Science, and presumably were used in his teaching lessons (Szöke 1992; Prodger, Gunning 2003, 165-166). I believe he might have had an important contribution to Smigelschi's approach to photography. From Smigelschi's correspondence we know that he was in connection with his teacher even after he finished his studies in Budapest.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, I believe that the painter realized that it was easier for him to construct compositions through cut-out photographs (Sabău 1972, 56) and collage, than through drawing. Since 1906 Smigelschi suffered from rheumatic arthritis that targeted the small articulations of the hand, and the artist probably lost some of the

<sup>6</sup> I found this statement in Smigelschi's critical text to Miron Cristea's study on oriental iconography. The artist made some remarks about monumental painting in particular, but he also introduced some assertions related to artistic products in general. The text is preserved in Anamaria Smigelschi's private collection.

<sup>7</sup> Especially while he was working for the Metropolitan Cathedral in Sibiu he was asking for his teacher's advice concerning the appropriate techniques for mural painting (Chituță 2014, 191).

mobility required by his minute composition studies. I believe this is one of the reasons behind his adoption of a work method involving photographic negatives and cut-out elements; an easier process that was better adapted to his physical condition and did not require so much precision.

After analysing Anamaria Smigelschi's glass plate collection I presumed that the artist used a large format studio camera, which allowed him to take pictures of various sizes, from 6×9 cm up to 18×24 cm. The boxes in which the photographic plates are kept come from different shops in Italy and Sibiu.<sup>8</sup> Work procedure for obtaining a photo was determined by the type and format he needed for his photos. The artist obviously had to place the characters taking into consideration the light source. After establishing these details and preparing the setting, the artist opened the device's shutter, to fix the clarity of the image, than he closed the shutter, and he put in place at the back of the camera the closed box containing the glass photographic negative. Than he lifted the device that protected the photosensitive medium and opened the shutter, determining the exposure time of the photographic plate (Muntean 2013, p. 180-181).

During all this time the subject had to remain still. Subsequently, the plate was developed in specialized laboratories through various chemical processes, resulting in glass negative plate. To obtain a positive copy, the negative was contacted with photosensitive albumin paper and was exposed to light for a predetermined period of time and then come out and fixed, the same size glass plate.

At the beginning photography used as subjects the portrait and architectural elements, satisfying the public's taste for the exact reproduction of reality. In the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century there was a strong connection between traditional fine arts and the new photographic technology, that became a fascination for visual artists, for to the limitless possibilities of catching the immediate reality (Photography 2012, 2). The photographic camera played an essential role in changing concepts about representation in art. Photography, with its

capacity of rapidly transposing the material world in images, challenged the artist's imagination to find a fast alternative to realistic representations (Perez 2007; Campo Rosillo 2012). Around 1890 the camera became lighter, in consequence easier to be carried from one place to another and also the mechanism became more facile; the photography could be done just by pushing a button.

In the last half-century interest in this topic has been constant; the impact of photography upon painting (impressionism, nabis, post-impressionism, Pre-Raphaelites) and the way it incorporated the photographic way of perceiving reality was seriously investigated by art historians (Easton 2011; New Visions 2008; Campo Rosillo 2012; Kosinski 1999; Scharf 1974, 182-205; Herbert 1991, 284-302; Riggs 1982; Hilebrun 1984, 349-360). Artists all over Europe used photography as an intermediary study for movement, for its ability to capture every detail and the change of light. We mention here Edgar Degas, Manet, Alphonse Mucha, Hans Makart, Wilhelm Leibl, Friedrich August von Kaulbach (Muysers 2002; Greif 2002), Arnold Böcklin (Floerke 1901, 114, Malcolm 1999) and the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (Waggoner 2010).

The technique of photography offered painting a means through which artists captured details that were invisible to the human eye and was often used for preparatory studies, many of the negatives lacking artistic intention *per se*, allowing the artists to immortalize situations that could only be painstakingly transposed in painting, following costly drawing studies and sitting sessions that involved lengthy working hours after a model (Nathan 2013).

Smigelschi, like his contemporaries, saw the photo camera as an instrument that might ease his process of composition elaboration, even more since it was a priority to for him to render reality in a naturalist manner. I believe that the artist did not employ photography as an independent means of expression, but as a technical means – an intermediary element that helped in the creation of various compositions that he later on transposed in drawing and colour. His case was not singular among Transylvanian painters. The German painter Friedrich Miess used photographic studies for preparing his works. The Ethnographic Museum in Braşov owns an impressive collection, of more than 500 de photographic negatives used by the German artist for preparatory sketches (Popica 2014, 14).

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<sup>8</sup> On one of the boxes containing the photo negatives there is a stamp mark belonging to Guido Kovats, the owner of an optical atelier and photographic manufacture from Sibiu that was functioning in 1909. His shop was well promoted in *Tribuna* newspaper.

It is relevant that in his final years, especially between 1909 and 1912, when his heart disease, but especially his arthritis prevented him for working, Smigelschi used more and more these alternatives means that offered him the possibility of sketching faster and thus cutting back on the long hours of drawing that he was so keen about. In his photographic studio he created a neutral background, and when the light was suitable, he used to photograph his models, the small clay puppets previously mentioned, but also the members of his family, sometimes wearing antique costumes or long draped fabrics, other times just arranged in long studied positions that Smigelschi projected for his future compositions (Fig. 8, 9).

In one photograph series, one of his daughters, probably Maria, and his elder son Victor, were taking different postures playing the violin, and they were shot together or separately. The result of these photo sessions can be found in the character drawings for the *Quartet* series or the *Music class* (Fig. 7). The artist' pedantry seen in his elaborate compositional sketches reflects over his photographic productions as well. The same repetitive process applied in painting can be found in the artist's photography. He did numerous photographic studies, with an elaborated scenography or just snapshots, with the same character in different postures, observed from different angles. One of the most suggestive cases is the photography series dedicated to *The Virgin and Child* (Fig. 4, 5 a, 6 a-b). The artist directed a scene where his wife and one of his children posed for him, impersonating the Virgin and Baby Jesus. The artist took a series of photos, changing his or her hand, leg or head position in order to obtain the perfect image. Sometimes the photographic device was activated before he could leave the scene, and thus the artist can be seen in some of the photos arranging the child arm to get the blessing gesture, or explaining to his wife how she must hold the child.

Although this scene produced a larger number of shots, for the family album the artist printed on paper only the perfect image, the one that he finally used in his works, rendered into drawings, later in coloured concrete marble (Fig. 5 a-c). His wife's portrait, posing in the role of the Virgin, was taken separately into another series of shots, in which she was dressed in a draped cloth, looking just like a maphorion (Fig. 6 c), which fell on her shoulders, so the artist could capture the folds. In other photos the artist concentrated on the gaze of his wife, later used for the studies of

the Virgin as *Oranta*. Later on the artist used the photographs for his drawing studies and for his final composition either in painting or in coloured concrete marble.

The photographic collection of Anamaria Smigelschi preserves a series of photos with the artist's children posing for various characters, which would later be used for the Rákóczi Chapel compositions (Fig. 9 b). The children, dressed up in special draped costumes with lace details, clambered on a chair, while the artist raised their chin and made them look up, to obtain a specific pose. Their hands were placed on their chest, in a piety gesture, and the artist took several photos from the side or from the front. Later on he transposed the characters and their gestures in drawings, creating synthesized images.

Also with the help of photography Smigelschi managed to render, in a realistic manner, the portrait of the Greek-catholic bishop Demetriu Radu. The photo was shot in his studio in Rome, and was later painted on the walls of the church in Rădești, as a votive portrait (Fig. 10). A documentary photographic study was also used for *Portița* series. In Ioana Șetran's collection I found a photographic plate (Fig. 11) that I believe was used as inspiration for his composition. The photo captures three women in front a traditional Romanian gate, two of them sitting and one standing. The later was caught while she covered her eyes with a hand, to ward off the sun. The peasant women were captured by the camera in a conventional moment, all wearing traditional everyday clothes. Inspired by this real moment Smigelschi built an ideal compositions, with several interpretations, the first series elaborated between 1891 and 1892, and a second one in 1906 (Iorga 1963, 24). Comparing the photo with the final work one can notice several differences, which help us understand the message behind Smigelschi's work. In *Portița's* case I believe Smigelschi tried to create an icon of Romanian peasant women, represented in all life stages: the young woman, the mother, and the elder wise woman. He implied in his composition key elements that suggest certain recognisable elements, which were not present in the photo: the women are barefoot and dressed in simple costumes from Săliște area, he developed the background in order to represent a traditional Romanian gate and he introduced supplementary characters (a baby and an older woman) in order to underline his message.

Smigelschi used the camera also for preparing his self-portraits (Fig. 12, 13). There is a distinct period between 1900 and 1909 when the artist created some introspective portraits, transposed in a restrained palette of colours, using strong lines to build his figure. He chose to represent himself in the same attitude, a semi-profile, wearing the same street attire. His talent resides in the way he managed to change the perception on his physiologic profile, the only element that changes throughout all these paintings. One can easily notice the influence he received from the Munich realism, his paintings echoing Franz von Lenbach and Wilhelm Leibl's works in the same manner, as well as the famous self-portrait of Lovis Corinth, dated 1887-1888 (Uhr 1990, 50-52). Examining Smigelschi's works one might presume, that just as Lenbach used photography for his portrait studies, Smigelschi did the same. This hypothesis can be sustained by the numerous photographs with his portrait preserved in his family's collection.

The analyses of his painting led me to the assertion that the artist didn't just copy the photos, but, just as he did in his elaborated compositions, he synthesized, making a collage of several photographic studies. Smigelschi tried to capture his character traits, suggesting a certain social status by the chosen posture and expression. In his almost photographic portraits one can discover a personal examination to capture the essence. The artist's figure and facial features fully absorb the viewer's attention. In most of these documented self-portraits he looks directly at the spectators, thus initiating a dialogue, in which his personality emerges. The comparison between his works and photographs support the hypothesis that Smigelschi was seeking introspective analysis, resuming those lines of expression that characterized him: slightly narrowed eyes, one eyebrow a bit raised, the other eye squinting as if the light bothered him when looking directly into the lens, wrinkles that formed on his forehead that gave him a sceptical and questioning air, and a touch of shyness, so recognizable in his photographs.

In group portraits, without any artistic intention and following the fashion of the time, he arranged his family members like in a photographic studio: parents in the centre of the image, wearing street attire and the children seated around, all dressed alike: the boys in sailor's suits and the girls wearing sailor dresses (Fig. 14). Most of these group portraits were made outside, using natural light and they date between 1906 and 1911.

Around 1910 the artist became interested in capturing his children games, later used for *Hora ielelor* (Fairies dance) composition series (Fig. 9 a), his children becoming the symbol image for youth, health and innocence.

The next step for Smigelschi was the collage. The technique was employed in the elaboration of the *Angel of Death* composition (Fig. 3), the *Quartet* series (Fig. 7) and *The Wise and Foolish Virgins* (Fig. 1) for which the artist cut-out and collated not only photographs but also his own drawings (Gruîță-Savu 2012, 353-370). Since the artist searched for formal harmony, he often cut out parts of characters from several photos that seemed to satisfy his requirements and through associating them he rebuilt, in fact, that character into a more convenient pose.

The artist organized sessions during which he took group photographs of the clay figures that he had previously prepared, capturing their image in all poses and from all the angles he deemed useful and then cut the images according to his vision. In areas where the photo was insufficiently sharp, he made interventions in pen or pencil in order to render certain details (Fig. 3). This novel work method saved him a lot of time, as at that stage he was interested in the position of the characters, their connection to each other, the angles from which they should be rendered, and the details of their clothes. In the *Quartet* series the characters are taken from several other drawings or photographs and pasted together against a watercolour background. Smigelschi used shades of blue, ochre, green or dark brown. During these latest phases he already established the bodily posture of each character and experimented different arrangements, through the technique of collage. In the end, after obtaining the main lines of the composition, the artist made interventions in pencil or pen, where he felt the need to do so, in order to finish the details. Other times the artist collated his own drawings, especially in the case of the *Quartet* and *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*. The latter composition was conceived as an antique frieze, resembling the group of the Niobides (Vătășianu 1982, 80-82), the artist being interested in getting a certain compositional balance. In order to reach his goal he divided his composition into cells, formed by grouping the characters. The rhythm of the composition was altered by the various relations that he established between groups, but also by changing the position of each character. From a visual standpoint the artist was searching for an antique frieze effect, alternating the metopes, represented by sited

characters, with triglyphes, represented by standing characters, thus granting a certain cadence to his composition and also a monumental effect. Such a scene offered a myriad of combinations and changes of rhythm, leading to different results, later on transposed in elaborated drawing and watercolour compositions. In this case, both photography and collage were extremely helpful for the artist, since he managed to create new compositional variations, starting from the same elements. A similar principle was applied to the *Quartet* series. It seems that this repeating process was very tempting for the artist; he did several combinations never reaching a definitive formula (Gruiță-Savu 2012)<sup>9</sup>.

In the *Angel of Death* series, the last compositional scheme elaborated by Smigelschi for this cycle, and kept in Brukenthal Museum's Collection, is in fact a collage of numerous photographs of the previously mentioned clay dummies (Fig. 3). In the artist's family collection there are numerous photographs of the same characters, taken from different viewpoints, cut out and probably collated in intermediary compositional studies.

I do not believe that collage can be considered an independent artistic means of expression in Smigelschi's case; he used it as a working stage, as an intermediary study, after which he transposed everything through conventional means of artistic expression.<sup>10</sup>

The use of these work methods gave his paintings a more schematic, decorative aspect and by analysing the way he associated different parts of his drawings and photographs one can observe the artist's search for a certain rhythm, composition balance, symmetry and monumentality.

It is certain that in most of Smigelschi's composition where he used, photographs and collages the artist was searching for an antique effect, perfect proportions and a particular searched eurhythmy, given by the draped robes and compositional equilibrium. These folds and the play between shadows and light were very important in the economy of his religious scenes

representing the Virgin, the *Angel of death* final composition, the compositional series for the Rákóczi Chapel or *The Wise and the Foolish Virgins* frieze.

The numerous photographs preserved can also reveal the evolution of the artist's ideas, the way he started with a real character and how he transformed the images by introducing new elements in his composition to underline certain aspects of his chosen topics. I believe the analyses of his working method can help us to better understand Smigelschi's process of composing his paintings, each stage having its own place in the works development. Smigelschi stated that in his painting representing peasants he was not interested in painting portraits of Romanian individuals but he tried to grasp a certain Romanian typology and the *Portița* series is a very good example. Having the starting point, the real photography, we can follow the evolution of Smigelschi's concepts.

At the same time by understanding this methods one acknowledges the fact that Smigelschi overcame the specific mimetic of naturalism and throughout this way of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the images, following an aesthetic ideal, gives his creation a new perspective, aligning it to the new developed tendencies of Western European art. Photography as intermediary stage in the elaboration of composition studies was new in the context of Transylvanian painting; as for collage I was unable to find similar examples there during that period.

Smigelschi was in search for typologies, for expression lines, a certain gaze and a particular position of the arms or the folds in order to grasp a certain pose, whether we talk about his self-portraits, religious or symbolic compositions. His final compositions became a synthesis of several different elements that betray his intense research for obtaining harmony and equilibrium and his attempt to create a more abstract artistic product, based on an ideal of absolute art.

His portraits became more than a topographic reproduction of traits but a re-construction of the personality of his characters, and that search was enabled by photography. The black and white of the photos helped him to better render the shift of light and the shadows and the result was a flattened image, where line became more important than colour, thus giving his paintings a more decorative aspect. The decorative principle was underlined also in his programmatic discourse;

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<sup>9</sup> In a photograph with his studio in Rome we can see at list three different variants of *The Quartet* still in work, and at list two of them have collated elements. For the photo reproduction see (Chituță 2014a, 48, fig. 12)

<sup>10</sup> Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque first had the idea of using collage as an independent artistic means of expression around 1910, with the series "papiers collés".

the painter stated that in his opinion a religious painting must reach a spiritual effect as well as an aesthetic one. About the construction of religious characters, he mentioned that one must not copy the threats of a model in a photographic reproduction, since the image of a saint must not be individual, but general and he managed to follow this creed with the help of photography.

The photography as an intermediary process influenced the way he approached his subject allowing him to experiment with different points of view and aided him to work with structures. His characters were still, frozen in space, since Smigelschi was searching for a certain pose and expression. In his composition he tried to catch movement and pathos but not photographically but in the way he conceived his *bozzetti*.

Smigelschi left several compositions unfinished and by analysing his working process I believe we have the possibility to better understand his artistic goals. The large number of photographs and glass clichés discovered in his family collections suggest that the painter made use of these alternative means of expression for his lay

painting as well as for his monumental compositions, starting with 1904 and more intense between 1909 and 1912. He was acquainted with photographic techniques, he owned a photographic camera, and he used it for his preparatory studies, for recording his work as well as for documenting his family life.

I believe photography and collage had a considerable influence on his compositions, contributing to Smigelschi's aim for abstracting his images, in order to obtain a symbolic and decorative painting. By shortening the preparatory process, with the help of *bozzetti* and collage, he also managed to simplify his compositions to the essence. Especially in his elaborated symbolist composition he transformed the images in modules, by grouping characters, and he played just like in a puzzle, in order to render his ideal image.

The analyse of his creative process and the evolution from modeling, throughout photography and drawing determined us to reconsider his studio attempts that bring him closer to the goals of his contemporaries.

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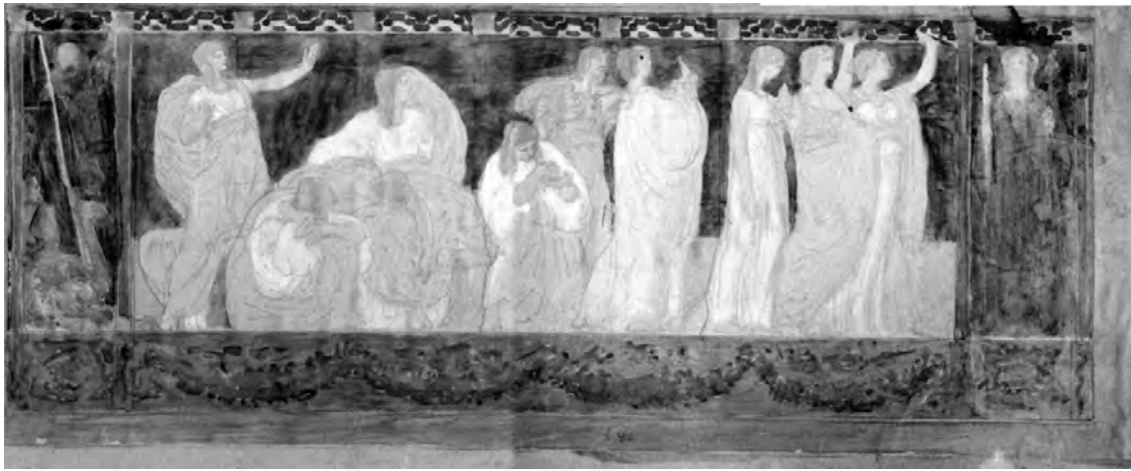
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2. Photos, studies for *Rákóczi Chapel*, family collection, approx. 1910.
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- 1 b. *Fecioarele cumiști și nebune*, fotografii după *bozzetti*, colecția familiei și Departamentul de Istoria a Artei din cadrul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie a Academiei Române, Filiala Cluj, 1910-1911.
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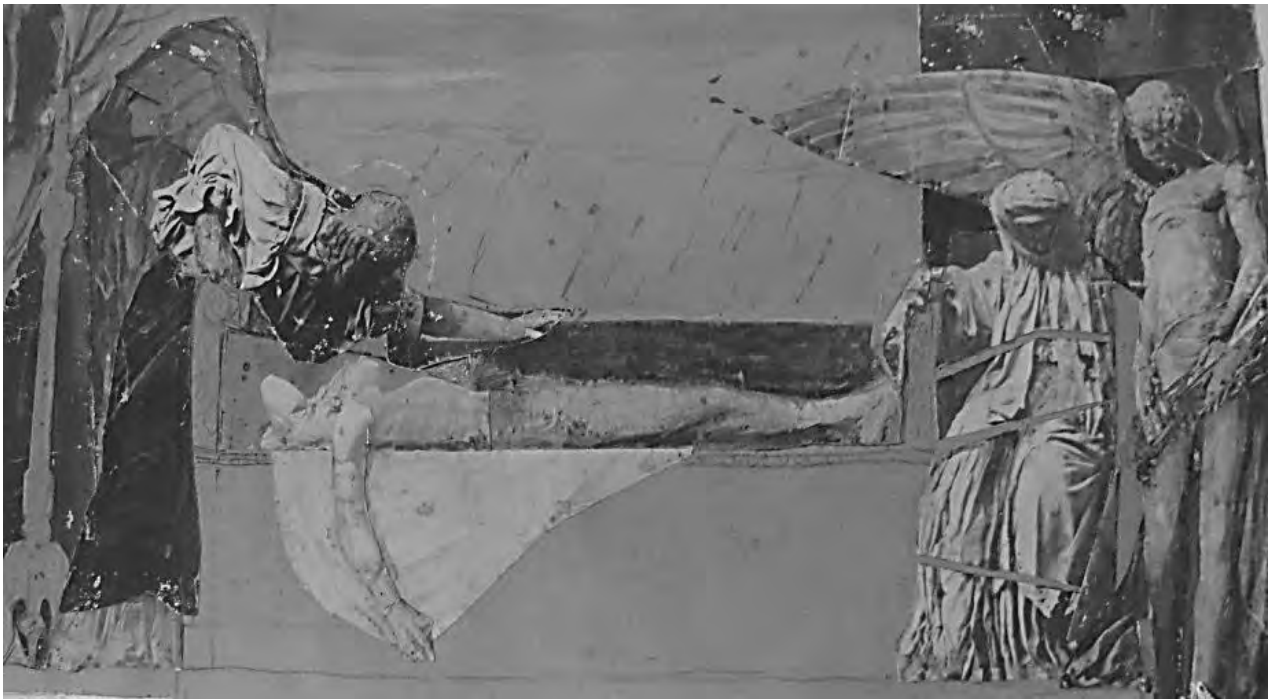
1 a. Studies for *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, collage, drawing, 1910—1911



1 b. *Wise and Foolish Virgin*, photos after *bozzetti*, 1910—1911.



2. Photos, studies for *Rákóczi Chapel*, approx. 1910.



3. *Angel of Death*, collage, photos, cut photos and drawing, approx. 1910.



4. Studies for *Virgin with Baby Jesus*, photos after original glass clichés, approx. 1904.



5 a. *Virgin with Baby Jesus*, photo, approx. 1904.



5 b. Study for *Virgin with Baby Jesus*, pencil on paper, undated.



5 c. *Virgin and Child*, colored concrete marble, approx. 1910.



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6 b. Studies for the *Virgin and Child*



6 c. Studies for the *Virgin*, photos after original glass clichés, approx. 1904



7. *The Quartet*, collage, aquarelle, and photo after original glass cliché, approx. 1910



8. Study, photography and pencil, charcoal on cardboard, approx. 1910.





9 a. Photo, family collection, approx. 1910.



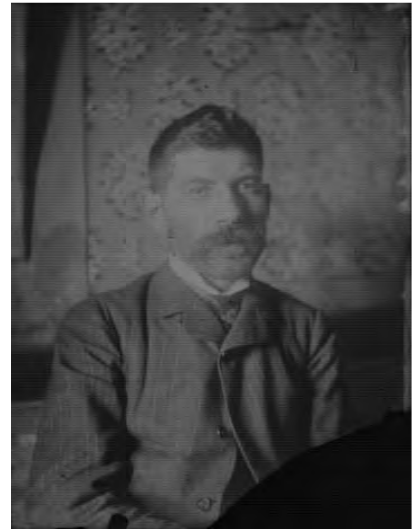
9 b. Photo, approx. 1910.



10. Bishop Demetriu Radu, photography and mural portrait from Rădești Church.



11. *Portița*, photos after original glass clichés



12. The artist, photos, family collection.



13. Self-portraits



14. Photo of the artist with his family, approx. 1911.

## PICASSO BABY: ART AND ENTERTAINMENT

Tereza POP\*

**Abstract:** *The present work centres on the relation between contemporary art and mass culture. Ever since the '60s a gradual nearing of these two worlds has been occurring ever more often. This is why I have chosen to analyse the main agents, namely, the „Artist”, „Entertainer” and „Artisan”. The analysis centres on both the general features, as well as the manner in which these parties are perceived by different types of audiences. Given the nature of the subject, the methodology used is an interdisciplinary one, combining a sociological perspective, focusing primarily on the media content regarding the three categories mentioned, aided by a linguistic perspective, as well as communication studies. Observing the difficulties the art-loving public may have in appreciating contemporary entertainment and vice-versa, a case study was chosen as focus: the performance art act – Picasso Baby – by Jay-Z, which is a very suitable example of transgressing the boundaries that still separate these two worlds. This part will consist primarily in a stylistic analysis of the lyrics and the act of performance art.*

**Key words:** *performance art, artist, entertainer, artisan, Jay-Z.*

**Rezumat:** *Lucrarea de față este centrată pe relația dintre arta contemporană și cultura de masă. În ultimele decenii se poate observa o apropiere gradată a acestor lumi care tind să se intersecteze tot mai des. Ca urmare, am analizat caracteristicile actanților principali ai acestor lumi, respectiv ale „Artistului”, „Entertainerului” și „Artizanului”. Analiza pune accent atât pe trăsăturile generale, cât și pe modul în care aceștia sunt percepuți de diferite tipuri de public. Având în vedere natura subiectului, metodologia folosită este una interdisciplinară, combinând o perspectivă sociologică axată pe conținutul media privindu-i pe cei trei actanți cu perspective venite din partea lingvisticii și a științelor comunicării. Sesizând dificultățile pe care publicul amator de artă le poate avea în aprecierea divertismentului contemporan și vice-versa, am ales se ne oprim asupra unui studiu de caz: actul de performance art – Picasso Baby – a lui Jay-Z care reprezintă un foarte bun model de transgresie a barierelor care încă separă aceste lumi. Acesta secvență va fi axată în primul rând pe o analiză stilistică a versurilor cât și a actului de artă performativă.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *artă performativă, artist, entertainer, artizan, Jay-Z.*

### The artworld

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, Jay-Z, one of the most famous rappers of the past decade, spent six hours at Pace Gallery New York, acting as part of a performance art event. It took place in a rectangular room containing in its centre a white 3 m<sup>2</sup> podium and a simple wooden bench situated approximately 5 m apart. The public had access on the edges of the room. In succession, one or two people joined the rapper in the centre. During

the event, Jay-Z recited, quietly, again and again the lyrics of one song: *Picasso Baby* – from the album: *Magna Carta Holy Grail* – while the song was being played on the room's speakers. The people near the rapper could interact with him, mostly choosing to sit on the bench, dance or sing<sup>1</sup>. Among those participating in the event, arriving in the centre, were Marina Abramović

<sup>1</sup>The event was filmed and edited in a video that can be seen on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMG2oNqBy-Y>, the eventually became private. The performance „Picasso Baby” can be seen on other Youtube channels: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrVvZ7ZnJv4> accessed on 29.06.2015.

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(artist, known as one of the pioneers of performance art) (Allain, Harvie 2012, 26) George Condo (artist – famous as painter), Sandra Gering (art dealer), Andreas Seranno (artist – famous as a photographer), Jim Jarmusch (director, script writer, producer *etc.*) or Diana Widmaier Picasso (art historian and granddaughter of Pablo Picasso). If we take into account the participation of these people, the place of execution and the self-proclamation of the act as performance art, we have solid theoretical ground to assert that Jay-Z is an artist in the full sense of the word.

George Dickie is one of the canonized theoreticians that have attempted to define art in a manner that included all the new manifestations and artistic nuances that have developed in the past century. He discards classic definitions, such as those that adhered to the unique and supreme aesthetic criteria (Nae 2005, 236; Iseminger 2003, 102) and advances a “definition” composed of five points “*An artist is a person who consciously participates in the creation of a work of art. A work of art is a particular kind of artefact created to be shown to the art world audience. The audience is a group of people whose members are trained to a certain level for understanding the objects shown to them. The art world is the entirety of the systems of worlds of art. A system of the art world is a framework for presenting a work of art to the world of art public by an artist.*” (Dickie 2000, 96) This would be the essence of the institutional theory of art, its key notion being the “art world”. Despite the fact that the theory was reproved as having certain flaws, such as the circularity of the specified definition, it is still accepted as a good starting point – one of many others – for navigating within the vast phenomenon of contemporary art (Stecker 2003, 148).

Despite the fact that, in theory, we can paint both Marina Abramović and Jay-Z with the same brush, we cannot deny that the general way they are perceived is very different, even to the point where, a part of the public will be unfamiliar with one of the artists and vice-versa. Generally speaking, she can be easily branded as an artist and he as an “entertainer” (an aspect metonymically labelled in this case as “singer”).

In theory, the nuances of the two terms are described in small detail by different authors in order to encompass the constant changes occurring in the art world as well as its diversity. We mention, for this purpose, a description

offered by Erwin Kessler in *X:20 – O radiografie a artei românești după 1989*, concerning contemporary Romanian art (which has recently become a fairly representative staple of European contemporary art) in the 2000’s. The author characterizes the current period using the term “lifestyle art” (Kessler 2013, 278), in which the artistic phenomenon aggregated in a private circle of artists, works, gallerists, audience, specifically chosen locations *etc.* giving rise to an “artistic existence” and not just an object-artwork. It is not suggested that the works of art themselves would disappear, rather they “excel through their impromptu character, a quasi-indistinct element of life as it is, seemingly put together in a hurry, not with detachment (on the contrary, with affection) but only without the technical clamour and omniscient pretension of art that entitled itself in the previous decades as a capable aesthetic technology (psychology, anthropology, sociology, *etc.*-ology), through which one would move, allegedly through cognisance, towards “objective truths” that the artist would explore and the public would assimilate” (Kessler 2013, 279). I give this example in order to illustrate the originality and drastic innovations undergone by the producer, consumer, distributor *etc.* agents that are part of the contemporary artistic phenomenon.

Although this definition pertinently captures the status of contemporary art and its artists – and so do similar theories, regarding other cultural areas – that vast majority of audience that will be using the words “artist” or “entertainer” (with the particular forms it may take: singer, actor, dancer *etc.*) will have a more traditional outlook on what they signify. I shall give a brief description of the said outlook given that, as we can see, a lot of those who embrace the outlook often find themselves – sometimes unintentionally – face to face with the art world.

### The artist, the entertainer and the artisan

When someone refers to “**an artist**” he or she will probably envision a person that creates works of art or “a person who uses deliberate skill in making things of beauty” (Cayne 1991, 53). “The painter” will be the most at-hand example to give. “Artist” might also be used in a derogative manner to describe a person that – due to eccentricity, idleness or indolence – will have dismissive attitude by default towards rules and the idea of rules, which he will only perceive as restraints. This will usually reflect in his incapacity to hold a steady job and thus in his

financial instability as well, characterisation derived from the romantic myth of the poor, socially un-adapted artist (Bätschmann 1998, 64-65). Hence, “artist” as adjective is a person that will, most of the time, be in between activities, but always with personalised plans about the next project that he will be engaged in.

Going back to the more common use of the word, “artist” refers to a certain profession in which the practitioner is usually perceived as a freelancer that is part of an elite. In order to produce the specific object of his profession, the creativity, intellect and “spirit” of the artist are highly solicited (Myers 1994, 28-29) as it is presumed that he has a better, above average, understanding of the way the world works (Davidov 1973, 26-29). This makes him special, worthy of respect and admiration. Given the fact that he can reveal “truths” to the public, it is desirable that the artist should be true to himself and that he should not succumb to exterior pressures or influences (political, economic *etc.*) (Bätschmann 1998, 58-63).

The way that contemporary artists are perceived (and by contemporary in this instance we mean “living”) differs slightly from the ones that are deceased. (Bätschmann 1998, 87-92) The artist’s image in the world is that of a character rather than a person. Thus, living artists are often met with a certain amount of hesitance, restraint or shyness. No matter the social group, he is perceived as an elite member. He can be part of the typical intellectual elite, or he can represent the elite of “hooligans” or “rebels”; either way he is not average. Although his capacity to enrich culture is generally acknowledged, it is presumed that the fruit of his labour won’t be fully appreciated by everybody, just by a certain group that will understand “what the artist was talking about” in the specific work (Davidov 1973, 29). This perspective can sometimes translate to suspicion when the respect or trust for the elite group that vouches for the artist is lost. In other words, for a large number of people, that fact that they can’t really appreciate works of art that surround them won’t be seen as abnormal or problematic. They will not completely discard the value of such works but simply distance themselves, leaving them to the people that “understand”.

Regarding the artist’s personality or character, a mixture of myths from various historical times still persists. Some of them are still perceived as “geniuses”, as people with some kind of

supernatural perception of the world. Sometimes, in a romantic fashion, artists are perceived as slightly strange or lonely people that possess a dire need to express themselves (Călinescu 2003, 247-263). In the older tradition of artist-craftsman, he has technical talent, a good hand. This expectation is closely linked to the age-old tradition of painting that aspired for centuries towards photo-realism. In order to achieve this goal, the artist had to learn certain rules of drawing and colour, and next to a lot of exercises, technical virtuosity was often correlated with the natural talent of capturing shapes, volumes, spaces, shades, perspective and so on, on paper (Cennini 1977, 35-37). In order to grant somebody the title of artist he had to be capable to draw at least a recognisable portrait. In this logic, some people that are still sceptical towards painters like Picasso become much more indulgent when they see the realistic sketches of antique sculptures that he made when he was young (Canaday 1981, 424). The form of contemporary art is sometimes misinterpreted as the artist incapacity to paint or sculpt other than in a distorted manner.

Regarding his status, the artist is perceived as a person with a great chance of fame after death. He is one of the figures that can easily penetrate history. Still, in the same romantic tradition, it is expected of an artist not to have significant financial success during his lifetime (Rheims 1973, 86-87). It is anticipated that he will have to struggle hard in order to be understood and to enjoy fame, with the risk of it never coming during his lifetime (the myth of Van Gogh) (Bätschmann 1998, 96-103). Concerning the “genius-artist”, it is almost mandatory for him to be misunderstood by his contemporaries.

I should also add that few people consider that one can become an artist if that person does not have the inborn talent of drawing, painting, modelling and so on, visible from a young age. To suddenly become an artist is not an option for a grown-up.

On this note, I shall introduce a third category next to “the artist” and “the entertainer”, which will help toward a better understanding of the two: “**the artisan**”. The term is a difficult one. Even art dictionaries describe it as “often being used in an ambiguous and even contradictory manner” (Popescu 1995, 42) or at least hard to define (Stoica, Petrescu 1997, 51) The most common definition of the artisan is: “a trained craftsmen” (Cayne 1991, 53) In general, s/he is

perceived to be different from the artist due to the artisan's being part of a community. He is not a lonely individual (Maier 1980, 111), misunderstood or possessing extraordinary qualities from the rest. He just practices a job that could be learned by anyone. The artisan has his/her origins in the rural communities (Vulcănescu 1979, 47). In a rural context, any eccentric person is undesirable (Bădescu, Cucu-Oancea 2011, 297-299), due to the fact that he cannot easily follow a work schedule and might have difficulties in participating in communion in customs and traditions (some of them religious, but most of them superstitious) (Herseni 2007, 269). The artisan may have another occupation next to the artisanal production; this is actually desired. Intellectually, emotionally and morally he is the same as any other one of his community. His role is to produce practically useful objects in the most visually pleasurable form possible (Vulcănescu 1979, 47-48). As opposed to the artist, who is generally perceived as male, the artisan is more commonly female. The classical image is that of a woman knitting, embroidering or sewing clothing items or home-specific objects (Packer 2010, 7-8). It is also the artisan that produces some objects that are meant to be used in certain rituals, like painting special kinds of Easter eggs or preparing the special kind of patisserie that is used in ceremonies to commemorate the dead. Again, the primary function of these objects is not an aesthetic one (Popescu 1995, 42), but a practical one: to be eaten and to fulfil a ritual function (Gorovei 2003, 56-57). Another duty of the artisan may be to produce or mobilise the happening of song and dance, in a situation in which song and dance are not for their own sake. They might be meant to join a work process or to help, in the context of balls, with the interaction between potential partners. Again, the main purpose is a practical one: work or relation.

It is desirable that the artisanal object should take a shape that won't interfere with the primary function of the object, but if possible to make it more pleasant. In this regard, the artisan is meant to follow a recipe or a plan. Although originality can be included, it is not the primary condition, and if it occurs it should be in accordance with the functional purpose of the object.

In this case also, talent is welcome, but it is presumed that this type of talent can be educated. With regards to the success of the artisan he cannot be particularly rich or particularly poor if he does his job properly (Herseni 2007, 268). He

cannot become famous or historically remarkable because his work, by definition, should not be exceptional.

Unlike the artist who is often seen as a solitary worker, the artisan can often be seen working in groups or collaborating with others on one object. Of particular interest is the example given earlier regarding dance and music during gatherings in which the public and the artisans mix, their role becoming interchangeable.

In the transition from the rural to the urban, today's artisan is usually linked to the "hand-made" phenomenon, becoming a hobby, an adult type of playing that anyone can practice in their spare time; a way to exercise craftsmanship, dexterity, creativity. Most often though, being an artisan is interpreted as a way of "playing artist". The objects that come out of activities that are thus driven are usually ugly, impractical handbags.

On the other hand another branch that has developed from artisanal practice is that of design, becoming a contemporary profession adapted to the industrialised town.

In a way similar to the artisan, "**the entertainer**" is also constrained by certain rules. An entertainer is defined as "a person who entertains professionally, especially by telling funny stories" (Cayne 1991, 315). With regards to the paper at-hand, the humorous purpose of the entertainer will be regarded as one of many possible, and not the primary one. In this regard it can be mentioned that entertainment is defined as "any interesting or diverting performance or spectacle, usually public" (Cayne 1991, 315). Authors like Bernard Myers have discussed the entertainment value of art, using the word entertainment as refuge and escape through idealisation (Myers 1994, 73-79). This manner of viewing the word entertainment better suits the translation in french: "divertissement" with the root close to the one of "diversion". I shall proceed with the characteristics of what can be defined today as "an entertainer", as it is reviled in all forms of traditional media (written press, television), the internet and social media, for which the English version of the word is best suited. Unlike the artist who must create freely, originally and provocatively to the intellect and spirit, the entertainer must follow the rules of the market, the psychology of the audience and so on. Theoretically, the artist is allowed anything because, in the end, he will produce art. The entertainer does not enjoy such liberties. Quite

suggestive in this regard is an interview given by pop singer Lady Gaga, in which she states about Marina Abramović: “she is limitless” and “I look at her and she is so free”<sup>2</sup>. As opposed to this, the entertainer is engaged in an entire system that dictates how he must behave down to every detail, in a way that enables him to satisfy the desires, expectations and taste of an audience as large as possible. On the plus side, it is due to this that the entertainment world gains its primary advantage, the financial power. This is undoubtedly one of the greatest advantages of singers, actors or directors, advantage which is also pointed out through the syntagms “movie industry” and “music industry”. In some cases, this economic advantage may even lead to some sort of political influence. The Kennedys had a close relationship with Frank Sinatra and Marilyn Monroe and to that we can also add the remarkable political success of Ronald Reagan or Arnold Schwarzenegger, both actors who became key figures in American politics.

Another aspect that differentiates the artist from the entertainer is the type of prestige that they can aspire to. The successful artist enjoys the admiration, cooperation and appreciation of an elite group (thus including a small number of people). His chance at posthumous prestige is not guaranteed, but it is a good one and so is the possibility of his work influencing future culture. The actor and singer enjoy admiration and maybe even idolisation from a large mass of people. The success and the fame that these practices can bring, is encapsulated in the term “superstar”. This status is not a reference to a certain talent of the entertainer, but the number of fans he has. To be a superstar is a quantitative reference. The most suitable frame to discuss the superstar status is not that of aesthetics or economy, but of communication.

The posthumous prestige of an entertainer is improbable, but not because of the strict rules he has to follow, as in the case of the artisan. It is unlikely that the entertainer remain known for a long time due to the fact that his purpose is to lead his public through transitory states, “escape” states. He doesn’t have to make a huge, lasting impact on his public (that would actually be problematic), but to heighten emotions and transitory impressions as much as possible through different forms of pleasure so that he

brings his audience close to himself and not an exterior idea.

To be an entertainer is a status that many aspire to without having a background for this endeavour. It is one of the most common aspirations of young adults that have not found a vocation up to that point. The most appealing part of this profession is the relational one. The connection that is formed between an entertainer and its public is a very special one and it involves a special type of ethics. To be an artist involves a certain degree of isolation. Due to the fact that he has to offer more to his public than what he already thinks of feels, more than the proximal horizon, a new perspective, he will implicitly be somewhat detached and diphasic from his public, before, during and sometime after creation.

The entertainer must reflect one of the many possible facets of the public’s psyche, mind, emotions, thoughts, aspirations *etc.* We often hear people saying that after reading a book, seeing a movie or listening to the lyrics of a song they identified with one of the characters. What actually happens in this context is the materialisation of one of the person’s potential images. We cannot speak of a meeting with a copy of a person; such a thing would obviously be impossible, but we can speak of the personification of one inconsistent and inconstant part of the public’s personality. The process mimics self-recognition, although it is not, but the effect will be that the public will be able to play the role of that one part of itself. The entertained person becomes a sort of a simulacrum (Codoban2011, 50-53). As that part did not define the complex, partially irrational, sometimes contradictory person before the act of entertainment, it won’t persist in dominating after the act is finished, but it will be closer to the surface. That part becomes more easily tangible, and thus more easily developed, or on the contrary more easily controlled.

Contemporary entertainment is often criticised for the negative influence it has on its public, encouraging immorality, hypersensitivity, immaturity and so on. I incline to contradict this perspective due to the fact that entertainment would not have any impact on its public if it were to offer something unfamiliar or totally new (Novitz 2003, 742-743), something that isn’t at least slightly present in the mosaic of the public’s personality. Thus, the ethical premise of entertainment is that, even in the absence of such a stimulus, that part of the public’s personality

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<sup>2</sup>The video recording of the interview can be seen on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVY4Whayw0s>, accessed on 06.09.2013.

would never actually disappear, having greater potentially negative effects if not brought out to the surface and confronted (one way or the other) by means of entertainment.

Under the circumstances, the duty of the entertainer is to play apart, whether s/he is an actor, singer, dancer *etc.* in every circumstance that s/he is in the public eye. His role is to synthesise, concentrate and put forward through himself a fraction of the public's personality. The equivalent of the work of art in entertainment is not a specific object (although that is the most important part) but the entire show that he offers, with every behavioural, emotional, decorative or discursive annexes to the primary object. The entertainer must be capable to identify and reduce himself to certain specific roles.

We point out that the fundamental difference between the artist and the entertainer is their relationship with the public, the way it presumably (ideally) works. They are not opposites. They are derived from ideal and not real forms of human states. Thus, the collaboration and the coexistence of the two and the active and open engagement of the public in both these creations is the optimal one for the contemporary man.

Jay-Z is undoubtedly an entertainer, but he has also gained the status of artist. We shall now focus a bit on the content of his performance art starting with the lyrics of the song<sup>3</sup>.

### Jay-Z's Picasso Baby

The traditional structure of this type of song captures two phases. On the one hand we would be introduced to the life that the narrator had before his fame and success, a phase which is usually characterised by poverty and discrimination. This kind of life is usually built in a type of cultural context dominated by violence and lack of educational opportunity that promises slim chances of social integration. All of these are suggested through the vulgar language, the grammar mistakes and slang used intentionally. In *Picasso Baby* that side is explicitly shown in the third stanza and mentioned sporadically throughout the entire song: "I wanna brothel", "all for the love of drug dealing" *etc.* The language

used throughout the entire song follows the pattern described above.

On the other hand, the poverty sequences alternate with the description of the narrator's victory against destiny and the oppressive elements. Usually this victory would consist in huge economic and amorous success, crowned by power and popularity. A lot of the elements of the song discussed are in this category: „my castle”, „make love on a million”, „twin Bugattis outside”, „Givenchy cloths” „sleeping every night next to Mona Lisa”, „I'm hot and you blow/ I'm still the man to watch”, „No sympathy for the king”.

Usually, the song would charge as much as possible on the contrast between the two stages with the purpose of offering its specific public a scenario to identify with and to aspire to. These types of songs get their main value through the fact that they are one of the few forms of expression (next to graffiti) of a world that is usually invisible, often ignored or brushed under the rug due to the inconvenience they represent for America (or the other countries that embrace the rap genre).

Next to what we described above, *Picasso Baby* has another part, one which is quite surprising to find in such a song: a large number of references to modern and contemporary art. Due to the fact that the first reference (in the title and first verse) is to Picasso, name known by almost anybody, one could accept that art might be another form in which the narrator has gathered riches. In this sense the sole value of art would be an economic one, to which we can add the prestige of owning a Picasso. Yet, the song continues with other names of contemporary artists which cannot be simply interpreted as an inventory of riches. The narrator compares himself to some of these artists, and even identifies with some. Referring to their work, the narrator mentions Mark Rothko, Jeff Koons, George Condo, Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat. The ones which he identifies with are Basquiat ("It ain't hard to tell/ I'm the new Jean Michel", "Spray everything like SAMO", SAMO being the initial pseudonym of the contemporary artist (Emmerling 3003, 11)) and at the end of the song, "I'm the modern day Pablo/ Picasso baby". The narrator makes no direct interpretative or appreciative comments about the artists' works. The only thing that is mentioned about them is that he has these works in his possession. At a first glance at the lyrics one might interpret this part as condescending towards contemporary art, which is reduced to its financial

<sup>3</sup> The lyrics are transcribed on <http://www.lyricsty.com/jay-z-picasso-baby-lyrics.html>, accessed on 06.09.2013.



value, the most luxurious form of capital, and a new border which the narrator has surpassed on his way to wealth. In this sense, the last verse may be interpreted as a way of the narrator telling that he is the continuator of the great artistic tradition and not the others mentioned next to Picasso.

Although the idea of conquering new boundaries is certainly present in the song, I tend to believe that there is another level of interpretation that need be explored: that the boundaries that have been crossed are not only financial but socio-cultural as well. As I mentioned above, the culture usually associated with rap music is one specific to a poor, uneducated and socially inadequate part of the population; a marginalised part of contemporary America, one that is on the opposite end of what we call "high culture". The song thus appears as a criticism more towards the world associated with these artists – an elitist, closed, discriminating world – and not towards the works of art themselves. Through the reference to the two TV channels, CNN and Fox, he suggests that no matter how far, financially speaking, the narrator has come, socially, influence-wise and in the end, artistically, high society will always treat him as an unworthy criminal.

The narrator's wish is not to imitate high society. He keeps his specific language, manners ("I be going ape<sup>4</sup> at the auction"), all his initial desires and aspirations ("aw, fuck it, I want a trillion") and his taste ("Mona Lisa/ The modern day version/ with better features") developed on the background of his initial condition. Regarding all of these, he points out that they cannot be held against him ("Don't forget America this how you made me") by a broken system ("My Miranda<sup>5</sup> don't stand a chance"), which is in fact to blame. Despite the broken system the narrator acclaims his redemption ("I come through with 'Ye mask<sup>6</sup> on/ Spray everything like SAMO"). He

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<sup>4</sup>"to go ape": expression from American slang that describes an outburst of erratic behaviour, characterised by passion that can be perceived as violent.

<sup>5</sup>"The Miranda Rights": An American law from 1966 which established the protocol that must be followed when someone is arrested containing the famous enunciation: "You have the right to remain silent. Everything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law..."; <http://www.mirandawarning.org/whatareyourmirandarights.html>.

<sup>6</sup>"Ye Mask" is a mask that covers the whole face, but still offers visibility to the one who wears it. This mask is primarily used to protect the identity of a person that

does not proclaim himself specifically as an artist, just a continuator of the occidental artistic tradition, a new revolutionary figure of the magnitude of Picasso, adapted to the contemporary world ("I'm the modern day Pablo/Picasso"). Even so, he does not deny his identity, his past and the pride he has of overcoming them ("Though I won't scratch the Lambo<sup>7</sup>") but states that in the future there will be no incompatibility between these two worlds ("Yellow Basquiat in my Kitchen corner/ Go ahead lean on that shit Blue<sup>8</sup>/ You own it.<sup>9</sup>"), that the inclusion of a person such as himself in the art world will be a natural one. The song is thus a perfect merge between what we were referring to as "entertainment" and "art" as mythical boxes that encapsulate certain types of creation.

Jay-Z does not refer only to the world of art and entertainment, but also to the world of artisanal creation. We can see that on his way to financial success, although he still identifies with a specific material excess for its own sake (often found in rap music, correlated to the trauma of past poverty and manifested through a fixation on food „turkey bacon“, „champagne on my breath“; and a fascination regarding precious materials „marble floors, gold ceilings“) the objects that the narrator possesses are top examples of the contemporary artisanal world: Bugatti and Lamborghini cars, Givenchy cloths, Hublot watches and so on. Of course, all of the products are at the border between pure commerce and artisanal value; still, they represent a new category of riches (next to actual money, food, shelter and transport). They also possess symbolic value, in the sense that they are brands, which gives them not only actual consumption value, but can also be used in the construction of one's image. Thus, even at a material level we can see a higher aspiration that

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is committing an illegal act, with a subversive message regarding the broken law and not with the purpose of a personal gain. The name "Ye" is a reference to the political poem "The Masque of Anarchy" by P. B. Shelley, of 1819, which is one of the first proposition of peaceful political resistance in modern history. The first and the last verse contain the term "ye" instead of "you"; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Masque\\_of\\_Anarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Masque_of_Anarchy).

<sup>7</sup>"Lambo", abbreviation for the luxury car Lamborghini.

<sup>8</sup>Blue is the name Jay-Z's daughter.

<sup>9</sup>"to own it", expression that refers not only to material possession, but can also be interpreted as the act of smoothly and masterfully assigning an object, an act or a attitude to oneself.

surpasses simple consumption. What is also added to the narrator's capital is the acquisition of a new type of language specific to the contemporary world, that of "message-objects". Although often criticised, these objects are at the moment, much closer to the art world than rap is. We can mention a few examples in this regard: Marina Abramović posed for *Vogue* magazine, Takashi Murakami created a design for Louis Vuitton, Marilyn Minter collaborated with the cosmetic company MAC to create a new collection of eye-makeup and also collaborated with Jimmy Choo (footwear) in an ad campaign. George Condo created a design for a Birkin bag and, taking it one step further, the rapper Kanye West presented that bag as a gift to reality-TV star Kim Kardashian. We can state that the artisanal world, the world of design, is somewhat of a middle ground that surpasses the barriers between different cultural spheres and although the objects themselves still have financial exclusiveness, the image of the objects have become a universal language spoken by all. The aesthetic of these brands is not primarily meant for consumption but for communication. It is a starting point. The song we discussed proposes an expansion of means of communication; it proposes a meeting in art.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that the song is difficult to appreciate by both groups of audience it tries to bring together. We can assume that a large part of Jay-Z's fan base is not even familiar with the majority of artists' names mentioned in the song, nor with the theories connected with the said art. On the other hand the song is quite inaccessible to the people familiar with these artists, due to language and cultural references specific to rap employed. The song is not biased in any direction. Both types of audience would need to put in effort in order to understand (specifically to educate themselves regarding the other culture), as well as getting involved in the entertainment the song urges (beside the textual meaning, the rhythm of movement it induces, the form of recital, the defiant attitude and the state it induces –that of dominance, are important), in order to appreciate it.

Let us not forget though, that *Picasso Baby* is not just a song, but also a performance art act, in which Marina Abramović, Michelle Broner, George Condo, Marcel Dzama, Marilyn Minter, Andreas Serano, Sandra Gering and many others from the art world; Judd Apatov, Alan Cumming, Fab Five Freddy, Jim Jarmusch and so on from the entertainment world and Jenna Lyons, Cynthia Rowley from the world of artisans, participated.

Every one of them joined Jay-Z in the center, some playing a double role, both as public and as artist or performer in parallel with the rapper. As far as he is concerned, he recited the lyrics in a style similar to the one used on traditional concert sets, addressing them however, to the person in the middle and interacting with her through gestures and movement. Considering that all the members of the art world mentioned above are the most representative examples of the contemporary art world, the song examined earns a greater degree of significance.

By itself, the text is a form of rebellion towards the exclusivity of the art world. The artistic references in the song have, for their part, a hostile tone aimed at this world, through the fact that the rapper claims those respective works. They are a form of victory. However, after the dissipation of tension and the realization and presentation of the conflict, it is taken one step further: the two world are brought face to face, "forced" into an artistic dialogue in which the identity and contribution of neither of the participants is compromised. Jay-Z is the representative of the entertainment world while Marina Abramović and the others are in succession the representatives of the art world, and together they carry art and entertainment one step further from where they are, opening a new path which will hopefully be explored as much as possible from now on.

## Conclusion

The three categories of manufacturers of cultural goods: the artist, entertainer and artisan, have crossed paths throughout the whole of western history, borrowing different agents from one another. This being considered, if we were to focus on certain practices or personalities in the history of art, entertainment or of the artisan, we may find it difficult to place them wholly in one category. These three could be described as empty stalls which are periodically filled by different types of characters – people that behave a certain way, following a certain set of rules, practices and conducts – reaching the point where certain types of characters that are in one stall, end up in a different one a century later. None of the stalls disappear, but all of them may change as far as their impact and the way they function in society are concerned.

One may argue that the blending and voluntary borrowing from mass culture in art can be attributed to a crisis of contemporary art, going as

far as to presume that this very dissolving of the boundaries between the cultural categories has led to the degradation of art or even its disappearance. We may indeed ask ourselves if these experiments were not determined by an identity crisis of the artists, as an attempt to find the right place in contemporary society. The targeted answer, however, is that 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art is not any more precarious or less important within the

society it belongs to than art in any other period, and that the testing of the borders of art and mass culture is a form of sound reflection in a world of globalization, of interculturalism and the eruption of communication. Thus, through these experiments, art has kept up to, or even surpassed the theory it coexists with, forcing entirely different types of audiences to interact on new ground.

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# MANIFESTATIONS AND RECEPTION OF THE ARTISTIC AVANT-GARDE IN INTERWAR ROMANIA

Călin STEGEREAN\*

**Abstract:** *The Romanian avant-garde manifested through the interference and the osmosis of new aesthetic directions which Romanian visual arts and literature had experienced since the beginning of the 1920's, aligning itself with a phenomenon that could already have been considered global at that time. As in the other parts of the world the new forms and content both in literature and visual arts were received in the epoch with reservation and even hostility not only by the general public but also by most of the elite intellectuals. Still, the Romanian avant-garde proved in time that it was one of the artistical movements with the greatest international echo, one of the rare moments of synchronicity with the European art.*

**Key-words:** *avant-garde, avant-garde magazines and exhibitions, reception.*

**Rezumat:** *Expresii și receptări ale avangardei artistice în România interbelică. Avangarda din România s-a manifestat prin interferența și osmoza unor noi direcții estetice pe care artele plastice și literatura autohtonă le-au cunoscut începând cu anii 20 ai secolului trecut, aliniindu-se unui fenomen ce poate fi considerat încă de la vremea aceea drept global. Ca și în alte părți ale lumii noile forme și conținuturi, atât în literatură cât și în artele plastice, au fost întâmpinate în epocă cu rezervă și chiar ostilitate nu numai de marele public dar și de cei mai mulți dintre reprezentanții de marcă ai intelectualității. Cu toate acestea, avangarda din România este unul din capitoarele istoriei culturii din România cu cea mai mare reverberație internațională, fiind unul dintre rarele momente sincrone cu cultura europeană.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *avangardă, reviste literare și expoziții de avangardă, receptare.*

## 1. The emergence of the Avant-garde Movement in Romania

In Romania, the Avant-garde manifested itself via the interference and osmosis of new aesthetic directions that the autochthonous arts and literature had been in contact with since the early 1920s, thanks to their alignment with a phenomenon that could be considered global, even at that time.

Some artists from Romania as Tristan Tzara, Marcel Iancu, Hans Mattis Teutsch, and M. H. Maxy, participated to the development of the Avant-garde outside of the country.

Indeed, Tristan Tzara and Marcel Iancu had been at the origin of the Dada Movement, whose debut

was recorded in Zurich in 1916; they had immigrated to Switzerland during World War I, after having collaborated, in the country, with Ion Vinea on the publication of the magazine *Simbolul*, ever since 1912.

Hans Mattis Teutsch had participated in the Avant-garde events organized by the Hungarian magazine *Ma*, launching, in 1917, a series of exhibitions organized by this magazine in Budapest. He then became a member of the groups "Der Sturm," in Berlin displaying his works, alongside Paul Klee, Vasily Kandinsky, Georges Braque and Marc Chagall, in two successive exhibitions organized at the gallery "Der Sturm" in 1921. In his turn, M. H. Maxy had studied in Berlin in the period 1922-1923 and had adhered to the aesthetic program of the movements "Der Sturm" and "Novembergruppe."

The Avant-garde phenomenon in Romania is perceived by its exegetes almost exclusively from

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the standpoint that its emergence and existence were influenced by the interwar Romanian avant-garde magazines.

The fact that four of the most prestigious Romanian avant-garde magazines, more specifically, *Contimporanul*, *75 HP*, *Punct* and *Integral*, had been founded by both visual and literary artists, is significant for the configuration of the specific outlook of the Romanian avant-garde phenomenon. The aforementioned avant-garde literary magazines, to which were then significantly added *Punct*, *unu*, and *Alge*, became not only a space for the manifestation of new aesthetic ideas, but also a means for disseminating their propaganda, which was visually reinforced by drawings, etchings and photographic reproductions of works belonging to the new directions that visual artists also followed in Romania.

The visual artists grouped around the avant-garde literary magazines were not limited in the providing these publications with illustrative materials, but contributed, through the theoretical articles to configuring the critical apparatus, outlining the new conceptual terms and ensuring the “defense” of the avant-garde current.

## 2. The exhibitions of the Avant-garde

The avant-garde magazines *Contimporanul* and *Integral* organized the first new art exhibitions in Romania, contributing to the crystallization of the avant-garde phenomenon in the visual arts, as well as to strengthening the avant-garde direction, supported, in the sphere of literature, by the avant-garde magazines.

### 2.1. The exhibitions organized by the magazine “Contimporanul”

Issue no. 47/1924 of *Contimporanul* (Fig. 1) announced the organization of the magazine’s first international exhibition: “In December, the Artists’ Union hall will house the opening of the international art exhibition organized by the magazine *Contimporanul*. The exhibiting artists will be: Brâncuși, Marcel Iancu, H. Maxy, Matiss-Teutsch and leaders of the modern movement from across Europe” (\*\* 1924, 8).

An extended version, published in order to disseminate the advertisement to other European countries too, appeared in the same issue and, then, in the successive issues numbers 48 and 49, in French, specifying the countries from which the

participating artists came: France, Italy, Germany, Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary; at the end, mention was made, in Romanian, of the fact that this was the first international exhibition of modern art.

Also for anticipatory purposes, with the intention to prepare the public for the new type of works that were to be exhibited, M. H. Maxy published the article “Demonstrația plastică internațională a *Contimporanului*” (“The International Arts Demonstration of *Contimporanul*”) in issue no. 49 of November 1924 (Fig. 2). Thus, the public was cautioned that artistic creation did not mean a representation “within the contours of pseudo-material exactness” (M. H. Maxy 1924, 2), but had to be envisaged as a “vibration that engenders a new sensibility” (M. H. Maxy 1924, 2). The purpose of the exhibition, expressed at the end of the article, was that it should be “a demonstration of the joint and simultaneous movement in our country and in the other countries of the European homeland” (M. H. Maxy 1924, 2), accomplished with our own means: “1) without the particular generosity of any patron, 2) without lists of subscriptions, 3) without depleting the fund of the Ministry of Arts, according to tradition” (M. H. Maxy 1924, 2).

Issue no. 50-51 of *Contimporanul* (Fig. 3) from the month of December, reproduced some of the works included in the exhibition, and the exhibition catalog was published on the last page (Fig. 4).

The works that were reproduced in the magazine included pieces by Marcel Iancu (“Architectonic Volumes,” “Central Building,” “Cabaret Voltaire,” “New Nature,” “Linoleum”), M. H. Maxy (“Moșilor Fair,” “Portrait of Tristan Tzara, Ion Vinea, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy,” “Spatial Construction”), Kurt Schwitters (“Merzbild”), Joseph Peters (“Graphic Construction”), Arthur Segal (“Landscape. Woodcut”), Hans Mattis-Teutsch (“Plastic Art in Wood, Composition”), Charles Teige (“Landscape”), Milița Petrașcu (“North Star,” “Torso”), Marcel Darimont (“Rue”), M. Szczuka (“Fakturkontrast”), Lajos Kassák (“Construction”) (Fig. 5-6).

What is significant for the constructivist orientation of the magazine is the selection of the works that were exhibited, prevalent among which were abstract and constructivist art items, along with expressions of Dada art, as were Kurt Schwitters’s six “Merzpictures” or the works of Hans Arp. The selection of the foreign participants revealed an option for artists with

whom the organizing committee members had personal ties: Charles Taige, Kurt Schwitters, Hans Arp, Hans Richter, Wiking Eggeling had collaborated with Marcel Iancu in Switzerland, Arthur Segal had been M. H. Maxy's professor and Ludovic Kassák had had previous contacts with Ion Vinea.

The exhibition was presented during the period 30 November-30 December 1924; in parallel with it, there were also organized other events that promoted the new forms of modernist poetry, music and ideas, as was, for instance, the recital of new art held on Sunday, 14 December 1924.

A review of this exhibition, which provided valuable information about the exhibited works, was published in French in issue no. 52 of *Contimporanul*; the intention was that the story of this event should also reach audiences outside Romania. In the introduction, the review outlined the purposes of the exhibition; according to the author, this intended to demonstrate the existence of a new trend, which, despite public hostility and ignorance, had been manifesting itself simultaneously in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, the decorative arts, theater and cinema, through the promotion of an abstract art that only imitated nature in terms of its creative process.

In what followed, the review listed the countries and the artists representing them, with brief characterizations of the works exhibited: Belgium, represented by Marc Darimont, with stylized drawings, and by Lempereur Haut, with simplified portraits; the Flemish artists Servranckx and Joseph Peters, who had been developing a constructivist spirit; Poland, through Zarnoverowna and Szczuka, with linear and geometric drawing, evincing the influence of Russian purism; Hungary, represented by Lajos Kassák, with compositions "of pure crystalline" quality and lyrical colors; Czechoslovakia, with Charles Teige, who exhibited works in black and white; Germany, represented by Paul Klee's subtle and lyrical works; Hans Arp, described as a mystical connoisseur of the power of lines, who exhibited 7 "Arpaden"; Hans Richter, designated as the one who steered the spirituality of German constructivism, with older works that captured attention through their prophetic clarity; Schwitters, with a series of lithographs; Sweden, represented by W. Eggeling, who exhibited abstract drawings from the period of the Radical Group of Zurich; Serbia, represented by Jo Kleck, with paintings using colored paper.

Left to the end, the Romanian participation was described in much greater detail. The list started with Constantin Brâncuși, who was said to be almost unknown in his own country, while his exhibited works were amongst those that had brought him glory.

Milița Petrașcu, a student of Brâncuși's, was mentioned next: she had exhibited a sensuous torso, made of white marble, while her wood carvings were said to encapsulate a dark elementary force. Maxy followed next, with purely constructivist works, whose abrupt colors were deemed a suitable means of expression for the new art. Hans Mattis-Teutsch was described as being concerned with rendering a symphony of colors while voluntarily neglecting construction. Brauner was presented as a young but vigorous talent: despite his still undecided intentions, he had managed to capture the interest of the reviewer. Also mentioned were the utilitarian objects, the furniture and the vessels that were said to have had an immediate success with the public.

Another art exhibition organized by *Contimporanul* was that of Marcel Iancu and Milița Petrașcu, advertised in issue no. 65 of 15 March 1926 (fig. 7). The magazine published the catalog of the works on display: 11 works by Milița Petrașcu and 65 paintings, engravings and stained glass windows by Marcel Iancu, to which were added 54 portraits-drawings. On the cover was published a reproduction of each artist's works ("Bug" by Milița Petrașcu and "Lead and Glass" by Marcel Iancu), indicative of the abstract nature of their creation at that time.

In order to promote the exhibition and initiate the public in the language of the new type of art the two artists proposed, the same issue of the magazine published an interview by Jacques G. C., entitled "Initiation into the mysteries of an exhibition. The sensational statements of Milița Petrașcu and Marcel Iancu." The responses recorded brought into discussion the issue of antimimesis in art and the creation, in the constructivist sense, of an art governed by its own aesthetic laws. In the conception of Marcel Iancu, "nature is good only as a cure" (Jacques 1926, 3). He did not recommend copying it in art, using the argument: "even the most enamored and dramatic defenders of nature have never sought to copy it. Art has never limited itself to reproductions. It creates, invents, invents" (Jacques 1926, 3).

Regarding his own artistic endeavor, Iancu stated, in a constructivist sense, that his painting

represented “only the game of shapes against the light, only the distortion of color in a balance [...] the integration of line and of geometry in a composition, only a major or minor agreement of color in a rhythm” (Jacques 1926, 3). The explanation of this approach was that a “shape organizes its lines according to laws that are independent of logic or natural illusion” (Jacques 1926, 3). The end decisively expressed the constructivist belief: “Art [...] is simply a human construction that must be based on a line of order. Only to the extent that a work raises a problem can one speak of an intention to produce art, of a creative will” (Jacques 1926, 3).

Insofar as Milița Petrașcu is concerned, she advocated, in this interview, the development of a personal artistic vision, affirming the need to liberate sculpture from models and from the literary character. According to the statements that he made in this interview and that were confirmed by his work, “I am not the enemy of having a subject in sculpture, but I demand that it should be seen according to certain laws of the plastic arts. [...] If I manage to awaken this interest in the spectator too, then my purpose as regards the public has been reached” (Jacques 1926, 3).

On the cover of issue no. 73, published in February 1927, (fig. 8) the following year, the magazine *Contimporanul* advertised the opening, at the Hasefer library on Karagheorghevici Street, of the “Contimporanul” new art exhibition, where the exhibitors were to be Milița Petrașcu, Marcel Iancu and Alexandru Brătășanu. What was also reproduced on the cover of the magazine was the blueprint, achieved in lines of formal synthesis, of the monument from Bazargic, designed by Milița Petrașcu. Open from 13 February until 13 March, the exhibition included 7 works by Milița Petrașcu, 44 works by Marcel Iancu and 6 works by A. Brătășanu, as evinced by the catalog of the exhibition published in the magazine. In the next issue, no. 74, Filip Corsa published a review of the exhibition, showing, in the opening paragraphs, that this was the fifth event organized by *Contimporanul*, the fruits of this sequence of events for the new forms of art being evident in terms of forming the public in the spirit of appreciating art for art’s sake.

Another exhibition promoted by the magazine *Contimporanul* was the one scheduled for 1 April 1929, advertised in issue no. 80 of the magazine; including works of sculpture, painting and drawing, the exhibition was to open in the halls of the Academy of Decorative Arts on Câmpineanu

Street, no. 7, with the participation of the artists Milița Petrașcu, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Victor Brauner, Corneliu Michăilescu, Alexandru Brătășanu and Hans Mattis-Teutsch.

In a review of the exhibition that was published in issue no.13/1929 of the magazine *unu*, St. Roll stated, in the very first sentences, that it was “the event that interests us the most in the sphere of the Romanian visual arts” (Roll 1929, 4-5). The first references were to the favorable attitude exhibited by the art critics and the public towards the new forms of art, even though these artists had made no concessions in order to win acclaim. This review, illustrated in the magazine with two reproductions from the exhibition, “Nudes at Sea” by Marcel Iancu and “Integral” by Corneliu Michăilescu, demonstrated that *Contimporanul* had continued to turn the arts into a vector for promoting the new artistic conception; the artists pursued their innovative artistic trajectory and also obtained recognition from the public and the officials. Thus, in the same issue no. 13 of the magazine *unu*, under the column Vestiar (Cloakroom), it was stated that “the Ministry of Arts bought for its collection, from the exhibition of the Group for New Art, one canvas by each of the artists Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Corneliu Michăilescu, and Victor Brauner, as well as a sculpture by Mrs. Milița Petrașcu”.

The next exhibition of the *Contimporanul* group was held, in the period 17-30 March 1930, at Ileana Hall (Cartea Românească, Academy Boulevard) in Bucharest, the exhibiting artists being Irina Codreanu, Marcel Iancu, Milița Petrașcu and Merica Râmnicăneanu. The magazine *Contimporanul* drew attention to this exhibition in a laudatory article published by Emil Riegler-Dinu in issue no. 91-92/1930, illustrated with reproductions from the exhibition: *Bronze*, *Femme Assise*, *Frolic* by Irina Codreanu; *Gypsy Head*, *Youth*, *Rest* by Milița Petrașcu; *Sevilla*, *Landscape with Peanuts*, *Amalfi* by Marcel Iancu; *Flowers*, *Nude* by Merica Râmnicăneanu. Like St. Roll’s review, this text started with considerations on the public’s reaction, which appears to have been negative this time: the “form and expression of the exhibiting artists confused, scandalized [...] their death was decreed in *Omul Liber* and *Universul*” (Riegler-Dinu 1930, 13).

Moving on to the analysis of the works presented, the author noted that the exhibition stood under the sign of cubism and expressionism, whereby Romanian art had been reborn, “having stepped beyond naturalism and the impressionism that was



compromised by the firemen” (Riegler-Dinu 1930, 13).

Although the activity of *Contimporanul* ended in 1932, the nucleus of the artists who had revolved around the magazine and were joined by others, as well, continued to exhibit their works, forming further artistic groups; such was the New Art group, formed in 1932, the “*Criterion* Visual Artists’ Group,” formed in 1933 or the “1934 Visual Artists’ Group,” formed in 1934.

Thus, the “New Art Exhibition” was organized at the Ileana Hall in Bucharest between 25 January and 8 February 1932, featuring works by Nina Arbore, Cornelia Babic-Daniel, Henri Daniel, Lucia Demetriade Bălăcescu, Michaela Eleutheriade, Olga Greceanu, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Claudia Millian, Milița Petrașcu, Lucreția Popp, Merica Râmnicănu, Tania Șeptilici, and Margareta Sterian. Known as the exhibition of female artists, painters and sculptors, this was the exhibition with the widest participation in the 1930s, with echoes in the press of the time (*Vremea*, no. 6, February 1932; *Adevărul literar și artistic*, January-March 1932, *Floarea de foc*, January-February 1932).

In February 1933, the exhibition of the *Criterion* group of visual artists opened at Dalles Hall. This was a group of visual artists formed around the already established *Criterion* Association. It included only the artists Henri Catargi, Cornelia Babic-Daniel, Henri Daniel, Michaela Eleutheriade, Ionescu Sin, Marcel Iancu, Petre Iorgulescu-Yor, M. H. Maxy, Corneliu Michăilescu, and Margareta Sterian, even though the association had been created with the participation of Lucia Demetriade-Bălăcescu, Merica Râmnicănu, Milița Petrașcu, Mac Constantinescu and Ion Jalea as well.

In April 1934, the exhibition “1934 Visual Artists’ Group,” opened in Bucharest, at Ileana Hall. The group had formed by changing the name of the previous group, “*Criterion*,” and by co-opting the artists Vasile Popescu and Aurel Kessler. Although only 10 members of the group participated, there were exhibited 62 works by the artists Cornelia Babic-Daniel, Henri Catargi, Michaela Eleutheriade, Marcel Iancu, Petre Iorgulescu-Yor, M. H. Maxy, Corneliu Michăilescu, Margareta Sterian, Vasile Popescu and Aurel Kessler.

The third *Contimporanul* exhibition was held at the Mozart Hall in Bucharest from 24 February to 15 March 1935. This exhibition had an international character, foreign artists having been

invited to participate: Walter Becker, Eugène Berman, Giorgio de Chirico, Léonor Fini, Philippe Hosisson, Filippo De Pisis, Yves Tanguy, Pavel Tchélitchew, Léon Zack, alongside Cornelia Babic-Daniel, Henri Catargi, Henri Daniel, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Corneliu Michăilescu, Milița Petrașcu, Vasile Popescu, and Margareta Sterian.

The fourth *Contimporanul* exhibition was held at the Dalles Hall in Bucharest from 19 January to 14 February 1936. It was the exhibition with the most meager participation, as only Cornelia Babic-Daniel, Henri Catargi, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Corneliu Michăilescu, Milița Petrașcu, Vasile Popescu, and Margareta Sterian exhibited their works here. Ionel Jianu published a review of the exhibition in *Rampa*, on 29 January 1936, the author remarking on the outstanding works of Cornelia Babic-Daniel and Vasile Popescu.

The exhibitions organized by the magazine *Contimporanul* were aimed at disseminating modernist conceptions through art, which was considered by Maxy as the “diplomatic language of our common exertions” (Maxy 1924, 3), a language that overcame language barriers, addressing itself directly to the sensitivity of the public. Even though these exhibitions tended to have negative echoes among the autochthonous public, they nonetheless drew the attention of the press to the phenomenon of modern art and were strongly supported by avant-garde magazines, both through the publication of laudatory reviews and through their illustration with reproductions of works from the open exhibitions. They also represented an endorsement of the new aesthetics promoted by the avant-garde magazines, by practicing the principles laid down in the programs of these magazines: anti-mimetic art, the refusal of traditional formulas, etc.

These exhibitions were not just an extension of the magazine’s activity in the sphere of the visual arts, similar to that of the magazine *Der Sturm*, with which, incidentally, the editors of *Contimporanul* had close relations, but managed to coagulate the phenomenon of avant-garde art in Romania. The first and the third *Contimporanul* exhibitions, with international participation, also had the merit of drawing the attention of the international artistic community on the modern artistic phenomenon that was active in Romania and of integrating the Romanian artists within the international artistic circuit.

## 2.2. The exhibitions organized by the magazine *Integral*

Another magazine that organized exhibitions of modern art was *Integral*. With the magazine, which was first published on 1 March 1925, the Studio of the *Integral* magazine was created, its existence being advertised on the second page of the first issue. Led by M. H. Maxy, Victor Brauner and Corneliu Mihăilescu, the studio executed interior decorations, furniture, carpets, ceramics, theater sets and costumes, scenic constructions, theater and cinema posters. The purpose of this workshop was related to the social dimension of art, as it was understood by the constructivists, as art that was to integrate the practical aspects of existence.

In November 1926, the studio of the magazine became the Decorative Arts Academy, enlarged and reorganized on 17 Câmpineanu Street, with a permanent decorative art salon for modern interiors, as advertised on the second page of issue no. 9 of the magazine *Integral*, published in December 1926, where details were offered about its activities. The front page of the same magazine issue was entirely devoted to an advertisement of the decorative arts exhibition; a photo of a modern interior was published, a space furnished with ambience creating objects (furniture, pillows, carpets, paintings) achieved by M. H. Maxy in an evident cubist-constructivist manner.

The Academy offered permanent classes of batik, artistic book binding, metal works, drawing, painting, sculpture, graphics, architecture, ornament and composition, the structure of the classes being shown in detail on the same page of issue no. 9 of the magazine.

In addition to the objects of decorative art, a permanent exhibition was organized after the sketches of M. H. Maxy; here there were exhibited graphic works (lithography, etchings, woodcuts, monotypes) by Jean Al. Steriadi, Cecilia Cuțescu-Stork, M. Manolescu Bruteanu, Lucia Bălăcescu-Demetriade, S. Maur and paintings, sculptures and drawings by Nina Arbore, Lucia Bălăcescu-Demetriade, Victor Brauner, Nadia Bulyghin-Grossman, Cecilia Cuțescu-Stork, Ferikide, Olga Greceanu, Petre Iorgulescu, M. H. Maxy, Cornel Medrea, Corneliu Mihăilescu, Sirova Medrea, S. Maur, Jean Al. Steriade, Hans Mattis-Teutsch, and A. Vespremie.

In the space of the Decorative Arts Academy, there were also organized the solo exhibitions of Petre Iorgulescu-Yor and M. H. Maxy.

Thus, in January 1927, Petre Iorgulescu-Yor opened an exhibition that included 48 oil paintings and 9 drawings which evoked an elaborate form of Post-Impressionism.

In issue no. 10/1927 of the magazine *Integral*, an advertisement was published concerning the opening, in March, of the M. H. Maxy exhibition in the salon of paintings from the Decorative Arts Academy, noting that “this exhibition will be the first painting manifestation since the first manifesto of *Integral*” (\*\*\* 1927a, 17).

The exhibition was presented in detail in the next issue, no. 11, of February-March 1927, which announced on the front page that it was to be “a catalog issue of the painter M. H. Maxy’s exhibition from the Decorative Arts Academy Hall, at 17 Câmpineanu Street” (\*\*\* 1927b, 1). On the front page there were published reproductions of the works in the exhibition, with their titles: *Fallow Deer*, *Vegetal Architectonics*, *Reminiscence*, *Human Construction*, *Starred*, *Dilemma*, *Sentimental Accessories*, *The Rise of Waters at Turtucaia*. The reproductions revealed the artist’s overcoming the abstract-constructivist phase, as all the reproduced works were figurative, whether they were compositions representing human figures, still lifes or landscapes. This return to the subject was also detected by Ion Călugăru, in an article entitled “Simplă notiță pentru expoziția lui Maxy” (“A Simple Note on Maxy’s Exhibition”), published in the same issue no. 11 of the magazine: “Maxy has left behind the pamphleteering era, the era of squabbles against the syntax of painting, of guerrilla against his own self. He has moved past the revolt against art as indulgence, against painting as a politeness formula and humaneness reduced to a few cans. [...] Here, in the exhibition, he presents himself as [...] the man who captures the associations between the real and the fantastic, the painter who resurrects a fairytale realm that was sentenced to death, the acrobatic artist who cannot afford deadly somersaults without destroying, for a moment, the visual art construction” (Călugăru 1927, 4).

The same idea of abandoning the abstract-constructivist approach is present in an extensive interview that Gheorghe Dinu took with the exhibiting artist: “you’re no longer constructivist, you’re no longer abstract. A new facet is covering you; an integralization with yourself. You’re painting subjects” (Dinu 1927, 5). In this interview, there are important explanations about the content of the artist’s own painterly approach,

based on the relation of tonality between colors, and not on relations of tonality within one and the same color. Thus, he stated that “there is a shape in the painting, a shape of color translated onto a given surface” and “each color represents a certain gradation of light. Shedding light on certain parts of the picture means distributing the colored shapes in such a way as to allow some to stand out from the others, by being either better or less well lit.” In the space of the Decorative Arts Academy, there were organized exhibitions even after the magazine ceased its publication, with issue no. 15 of April 1928: M. H. Maxy’s exhibition of creations for the decoration of a modern interior, in November 1928, and the exhibition of Vasile Popescu.

### 2.3 Other exhibitions

The works of some artists belonging to the same nucleus of modernist art were selected to represent Romania at the International Exhibition of Futuristic Art held in Rome in December 1933. The artists who displayed their works here were Nina Arbore, Mac Constantinescu, Olga Greceanu, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Milița Petrașcu, Merica Râmniceanu, Margareta Sterian, and Tania Șeptilici. The exhibition was highly appreciated by Marinetti, who praised, both at the opening of the exhibition and in an article that he published in *Il Futurismo*, the contributions of Constantin Brâncuși, Marcel Iancu, Ion Vinea, Jacques Costin, M. H. Maxy, Milița Petrașcu, and Ilarie Voronca.

Other significant exhibitions at national and international level, with the participation of some of the avant-garde artists were: the exhibition organized on the occasion of the Congress of the Latin Press in Bucharest, 30 September- 27 October 1927; the International Art Exhibition held in Barcelona, in June-October 1929, where Petre Iorgulescu-Yor and M. H. Maxy were awarded the gold medal for painting and Nina Arbore received the medal of honor; the retrospective exhibition of the *Contimporanul* group organized by the *Facla* newspaper in its own salons, in May 1930, during Marinetti’s visit to Romania, when the artists who exhibited their works were Victor Brauner, Alexandru Brătășeanu, Lucia Demetriade-Bălăcescu, Irina Codreanu, Corneliu Mihăilescu, Marcel Iancu, M. H. Maxy, Milița Petrașcu, and Merica Râmniceanu; the Modern Art Exhibition held in The Hague (Netherlands), 3-25 May 1930, and in Brussels, Giroux Gallery, 20 July-10 August 1930; the Exhibition of Modern Romanian art

organized on the occasion of the 28th Congress of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Bucharest, October 1930; the International Exhibition of the Arts and the Industry, June 1936, where Milița Petrașcu received the silver medal, while M. H. Maxy and Margareta Sterian received bronze medals; the International Exhibition from Paris, 1937.

### 3. Avant-garde versus tradition

The pages of the avant-garde magazines represented a mouthpiece for the expression of opposition to obsolete art forms and the traditionalism displayed in the exhibitions held in Romania under the outmoded formula of the Official Salon.

The articles signed by visual artists such as M. H. Maxy, Milița Petrașcu, Marcel Iancu and by writers like Gh. Dinu, N. Davidescu, Jacques G. Costin, Emil Riegler Dinu highlighted the defining features of the new art, the characteristics of the avant-garde currents and their historical trajectories. The most significant articles, ample and rich in information, were: “Contribuții sumare la cunoașterea mișcării moderne de la noi” (“Summary Contributions to the Knowledge of the Modern Movement in Our Country”), by M. H. Maxy, published in *unu*, issue no. 33, of February 1931; “În 1931 pictura” (“Painting, in 1931”), by Gh. Dinu, in the magazine *unu*, issue no. 42, of January 1932; “Cei patru din sala Ileana”, “Inițiere în misterele unei expoziții” (“The Four from the Ileana Hall”, “Initiation into the Mysteries of an Exhibition”), by Jacques G. Costin, in issue no. 65 of the journal *Contimporanul*, published in 1926.

The conference held by N. Davidescu at the opening of Marcel Iancu and Milița Petrașcu’s exhibition, recorded in issues no. 66 and 67 of the magazine *Contimporanul*, did not consider the works presented by the two artists, but was a plea for the principle of freedom in art, in the sense of the artist’s license to intervene with his own contribution to configuring artistic reality.

The article “În 1931 pictura,” signed by Gh. Dinu, intended to give a brief inventory of “the history of the plastic arts over the past 20 years” (Dinu 1932, 1) It overviewed the succession of modern art currents: Fauvism, “a resistance against academic discipline and Post-Impressionism”, Cubism, “as a relinquishment of everything that is painterly so that one may devote oneself to sheer plastic analysis”, Futurism, with its “simultaneous states of mind, the speed of perception, the dispersion of the object, the merging of details”,

Dada, “born as a crusade”, from which the surrealists emerged thereafter. The article, conceived as a synthetic presentation, with an appropriate goal of initiating the public, emphasized the characteristics of these currents, exemplifying them with well-known artists, such as Matisse, Braque, Vlaminck, Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla, Severini, Picasso, Juan Gris, Léger, Miró, Picabia, Klee, Arp, Tanguy, Dali, etc.

Presented in the form of a dialogue with the artists Marcel Iancu and Milița Petrașcu, the article entitled “Inițiere în misterele unei expoziții” (Initiation into the mysteries of an exhibition) by Jacques G. Costin, which was published in issue no. 65 of *Contimporanul* magazine, in 1926, focused on aspects pertaining to the features of avant-garde art: the refusal of mimesis and the creation of an art governed by its own aesthetic laws. Through the voice of Marcel Iancu, the article stated that “even the most enamored and dramatic defenders of nature have never sought to copy it. Art has never limited itself to reproductions. It creates, invents, invents” (Costin 1926, 3) while by reference to Milița Petrașcu, it affirmed the necessity to liberate sculpture from models and from the literary character.

The debunking of obsolete forms of artistic expression, associated with a certain opaqueness to the new forms of expression adopted by traditionalist artists is accomplished in articles where the dominating tone is ironic or sarcastic. Such are, for instance, the articles: “Salonul oficial al juriului din 1925” (“The Official Salon of the Jury in 1925”), by M. H. Maxy, from *Integral*; “Note pe taraba salonului oficial” (“Notes on the Stall of the Official Salon”), by Ion Vinea, in *Contimporanul*, no. 67 of 1926; “Erezia plasticeii oficiale” (“The Heresy of the Official Visual Aesthetics”), signed by T., in *Contimporanul*, no. 75, April 1927; “Salonul oficial” (“The Official Salon”), by Victor Brauner, in *Opinia publică*, no. 2, of 15 May 1929, in *unu*; “Despre Salonul Oficial” (“On the Official Salon”), under the column “Aquarium,” no. 45/1932, signed by Gh. Dinu.

M. H. Maxy published a review entitled “Salonul Oficial al juriului din 1925” (“The ‘Official Salon’ of the Jury in 1925”) in the journal *Integral*, no. 3/1925, where this was considered the ground for the manifestation of the opposition between the group *Tinerimea Artistică*, with “echoes among the petty bourgeoisie and the big financiers of postwar times” and “Romanian Art,

with influences among the higher bourgeoisie” (Maxy 1925, 13). Maxy denounced the “farce of the Official Salon” noting the confusion of the artists and the public as regards the selection operated by the jury, which consisted mainly of the representatives of the *Arta Română* (Romanian Art) movement.

The review chastised the mimetic spirit and the narrative, literary character of the exhibited works: “When they do not cultivate photography, the official artists make literature in their paintings. That’s how you know an intruder in art” (Maxy 1925, 13).

The same ironic tone was used by Ion Vinea in the article “Note pe taraba salonului oficial” (“Notes on the Official Salon’s Booth”), in which the Official Salon was compared with Moșilor Fair, a popular fair in Bucharest: “the similarities are dazzling and essential: variety, surprise, farce, vanity, rabble and aristocracy, trumpets, ribbons on the nose, nudes, monsters and beasts.” The tone of the article is harsher than that of the previous article, the ambience of the salon and the organization manner being characterized by a list of words that denote a reaction of rejection: folly, defiance, recklessness, vile wickedness, nausea, revolt, discouragement, the macabre, mortuary, cemetery, abominations. The author’s conclusions are clear in formulations such as: “the impression left upon you by a visit to the Official Salon is [...] that of deep shame” or “There’s so much folly and scorn coming from the ‘bulk’ of exhibitors, on the one hand, from the accepting jury, on the other, so much recklessness and vile wickedness proffered from the walls in poultices that the nausea is undercut, rebellion is overcome and discouragement escorts you along the few macabre rooms where the mortuary and the cemetery of the fine arts have been installed.”

In the article that the painter Victor Brauner published in *Opinia publică* (*The Public Opinion*), replete with derogatory references, the impressions presented are just as unfavourable, the criticism being targeted at the performance of the artists. The Official Salon is declared obsolete – “you’re left with the impression that you have traveled one century back in time.” Its mission was betrayed, for it “permanently changed its purpose and can be mistaken for anything but a salon for the annual selection of visual artists.” The overall impression is bleak: one “cannot see anything interesting this year [...] the salon has only painters who are devoid of the most basic good taste.” The artists in the exhibition are

categorized as acrobats, histrionics, useless hands, and the paintings are done in “syrupy colors, vulgarly applied, pasty, tastelessly outlined and there are overused thin black lines or broad brushes, dragged along the canvas”, which denotes “a false, foul and easy, superficial classicism, revealing a staunch will and a futile effort, worthy only of pity.” The conclusion of the article is encapsulated by the words: “the guilt belongs to our artists, solely to them!”

#### 4. The reception of the avant-garde

New forms and contents, both in literature and the visual arts, were met in the epoch with reserve and even hostility not only by the general public, but also by most of the leading representatives of the intelligentsia. Sașa Pană, the director of the magazine *unu*, wrote down in his journal, published under the title *Născut în '02* (*Born in '02*): “[...] it is with ridiculous parodies and the most degrading and undeserved epithets that the writers grouped around the avant-garde magazines used to be dismissed until a few years ago [...]” (Pană 1973, 574). In this text, Pană also referred to Nicolae Iorga’s position in relation to the avant-garde, “Iorga had started ever since May 1936 his fight against avant-garde literature, which he labeled pornographic, in his conferences, in the weekly *Cuget clar* and in the daily *Neamul românesc*” (Pană 1973, 574). And further, quoting N. Georgescu-Cocoș, another detractor of the avant-garde artists: “N. Iorga points out that apart from pornography, literature is made by fools and lunatics. In a meeting of the Academy, the decision was reached to approve the organization of conferences for exposing perverted writers, interested or unconscious editors, critics who do not meet even the basic requirements of objectivity...” (Pană 1973, 574).

Ilarie Voronca pointed out in his article “Glasuri” (“Voices”), published in the magazine *Punct*, issue no. 8/1925: “Of course, much has been written and spoken about the new art. And, indeed, much evil has been written and spoken to that effect. The war launched against the literature and the arts of today (represented in our culture by *Contimporanul*, 75 H.P. and *Punct*) is the very proof of the strength and soundness of this art” (Voronca, 1925, 8).

In his study *Avangarda în literatura română* (*The Avant-garde in Romanian Literature*), Ion Pop undertakes the most comprehensive overview of the manner in which the contemporary Romanian cultural environments received the phenomenon

of the avant-garde movements. Thus, for the conservative, traditionalist literary milieus, the Avant-garde represented a foreign body, characterized by the epithets: turbulent, illegitimate, superficial, ephemeral imitation, import phenomenon, nonspecific and opposed to the national sensitivity (Pop 1990, 409). Publications like *Țara Noastră*, *Cuget clar* and *Neamul românesc literar* considered that the literary avant-garde shook syntax and logic off their hinges, pushing the frontiers of poetry through the infiltration of prose, parodying sacrosanct themes, demythicizing, divesting of solemnity, destabilizing or forging samples of alienation, pathological cases, as the new works were unintelligible compared to the old system of literary conventions. Specifically, in *Istoria literaturii românești contemporane* (*The History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*), Nicolae Iorga denounced the impudence of resorting in the new poetry, to borrowed models – the decadent symbolists (Pop 1990, 409).

In an article published in *Viața Românească*, Mihai Ralea concluded that the unity of the avant-garde movements resided in their incomprehensibility, and in 1929 Al. Philippide denied the legitimacy of modernism in our country, on account of its lack of depth, its formalistic orientation, its imitation of French modernism; still, he appreciated the importance of the theoretical contribution of the avant-garde movements, given their “definitive debunking of any literary school, the tearing down of many prejudices and complacent ideas.” Ion Pillat remarked the “deep antinomy” between the native literature – characterized by “healthy optimism”, the “predominance of normal feelings”, the “unchanged and natural spiritual background” – and the “demonism” of the avant-garde” (Pop 1990, 408-418).

The group formed around the magazine *Gândirea* considered, through the voice of Cezar Petrescu, that “modernism today [...] is the prejudice of timeliness, the unconditional worship of novelty [...]” for Mihail Dragomirescu, literary innovations were a “borrowed coat”. In the magazine *Falanga*, George Dumitrescu associated the avant-garde with the following features: “vulgar literary demagoguery, overt deceit and, on top of all that, unpunished insolence” (Pop 1990, 408-418):

Paroxysmal heights in the use of invectives were reached by authors like Radu Gyr, Horia Stamatu and Nicolae Roșu, who expressed their far-right points of view in publications like *Porunca*

*Vremii, Buna Vestire, Țara Noastră, Iconar and Universul.*

Regarding their attitude, Sașa Pană wrote in the same volume of memoirs: “Radu Gyr’s lecture remains an abomination [...]. I am among his targets of choice. The manifesto from the first issue of the magazine *unu* is interpreted tendentiously – with very deliberate ill intentions – across many pages, and misinterpreted word for word. He foams around the mouth furiously and denounces the coexistence between Surrealism and militant Marxism” (Pană 1973, 578).

Even George Călinescu, who introduced “modernist aesthetics, starting from the Futurists and Dada” (Pană 1973, 571). in his course on poetry, proved to be skeptical of the achievements of the magazine *unu*: “Is this not a way to abandon hazard and the absurd entailed by automatic associations, the obscure self, and to recognize the reality of the external world, that is, in fact, the validity of our self, which gives it shape? [...] This seems to me to be the vicious circle in which the doctrine of *unu* is trapped” (Pană 1973, 571).

Although he admitted the necessity to renew the arts through the contributions of the avant-garde, Mihail Sebastian tendentiously considered that “in our culture, modernism has not managed even a rough understanding of the self”. He regarded the content of the magazine *Punct*, 75 *H.P.* and *Integral* as “brashness” and “posing and cheekiness”, deeming that the works produced by the authors who published there had “absolutely nothing in common with art itself” (Pop 1990, 418).

The visual artworks that stood under the sign of the renewing changes proposed by the avant-garde currents were met with the same hostility and rejection, from conservative, traditionalist positions. Thus, the article “Promisiuni” (“Promises”) by Ion Vinea, published in *Contimporanul*, no. 50-51 of 1924, begins with the following testimony about the manner in which the new artistic representations were received: “When the first abstract illustrations appeared, a longer while ago, but for the first time here, in our pages, the public was outraged as if by some obscene apparition. Their indignation at not being able to understand came down upon us with terrible wrath. Jokes, taunts, insults and, sometimes, even threats that we would end up beaten up” (Vinea 1924, 2).

Regarding the way in which the movement around *Contimporanul* was received in Romania, Petre Oprea stated in *Societăți artistice bucureștene (Bucharest’s Artistic Societies)* that: “The art promoted by the artists from *Contimporanul*, many of them ostracized during the subsequent public events, did not find a suitable ground for propagation not only because of the animosity of their fellow artists, but especially because of its repudiation by the public and the lack of interest from the collectors who admired and supported the creation of artists like Pallady, Petrașcu, Lucian Grigorescu, Tonitza, Șirato and Theodorescu-Sion” (Oprea 1969, 90).

Under the column “Aquarium,” on the last page of issue 45/1932 of the magazine *unu*, Gh. Dinu published an article which showed the hostile attitude of officialdom in relation to the new type of art proposed by the avant-garde artists. Thus, a brief presentation was given of the scandal that had broken out at the Official Salon in 1932, when the works of the group of modernist artists were placed in a space that was unfavorable to exhibition, being “camouflaged from the officials, positioned awry, much to the muffled amusement of [...] the jury.” We learn next that this triggered the reaction of the artists Marcel Iancu, Milița Petrașcu, Cornelia Babic, Margareta Sterian, Nina Arbore and Merica Râmniceanu, who published a protest in the press.

## 5. The Avant-garde in the contemporary view

Even many decades after the avant-garde artists ceased their activity, this chapter in the cultural history of Romania has remained little investigated, a series of literary and art critics noting the insufficient interest shown in the study and valorization of the avant-garde art and literature produced in Romania, as well as the hostility with which the avant-garde was received even at a later time by fellow artists, the press and the larger public.

In *Les avant-gardes de l’Europe Centrale*, Krisztina Passuth noted the insufficient scholarly attention devoted to the avant-garde in Romania: “L’histoire culturelle de la Roumanie est encore aujourd’hui peu étudiée; il manque aussi bien un aperçu global de cette période (du point de vue artistique) que de monographies de base, des articles critiques, etc. En conséquence, lorsqu’on essaye d’analyser les facteurs, les motifs, les détails caractéristique du mouvement roumain, on rencontre beaucoup plus de zones d’ombre que

dans l'histoire des autres pays concernés" (Passuth 1988, 201).

In the catalog of the exhibition "București, anii 1920-1940: între avangardă și modernism" ("Bucharest, the 1920s-40s: between the Avant-garde and Modernism"), Madga Cârnelci considered that "[...] only the direct cultural contact of recent years with the Western atmosphere has managed to reveal to us how ignored the Romanian avant-garde was and still is, since it alone has benefited from no studies or international exhibitions, unlike the Polish, Hungarian, Czech or Yugoslav avant-gardes" (Cârnelci 1994, 14).

In the catalog of the exhibition *Grafică Modernistă în România anilor 1930-1940* (*Modernist Graphic Art in Romania during the 1930s-40s*), Mariana Vida showed that: "the history of the avant-garde movement in Romania was systematically obscured in the historiography of art before 1989, for both aesthetic and political reasons. In political terms, because the leaders of this movement (very many of Jewish origin), to their vast majority people with leftist views, some – members of the underground Communist Party, did not comply with the ideological requirements, being marginalized both during the Stalinist purges and later, under Ceausescu's dictatorship" (Vida 2003, 4).

Just few exhibitions pointing the avant-garde movement or artists were organized in the country in the last decades. More than that, the exhibition

"The Colors of the Avant-guard" organized by Erwin Kessler starting with 2007 in Sibiu and iterated than in Lisbon (2009), Prague (2009) and Rome (2011) tried to prove the flabiness of the Romanian Avant-guard and the compromises to the tradition done by it's artists.

Despite of all that, the avant-garde of Romania is one of the chapters in the cultural history of Romania that have had the greatest international reverberation, as one of the rare moments that have been synchronous with European culture.

One of the merits of the avant-garde is that it noticed the obsolete nature of art and life in our culture and the need to apply some changes, which were not limited to the aesthetic domain, but concerned life as a whole. In addition to this, the avant-garde artists understood the need to open the art of Romania to the world and to participate in the international exchange of values, which, in time, has proved its importance.

Thus far, only the works of these artists can be found in the permanent exhibitions of prestigious museums around the world, as they are selected in international synthesis exhibitions or as monographic exhibitions are dedicated to them (Constantin Brâncuși, Marcel Iancu, Victor Brauner, Hans Mattis-Teutsch, etc.). Studies, monograph-albums, art documentaries are consecrated to them and museum-type spaces were dedicated to Constantin Brâncuși as part of Pompidou Center in Paris and to Marcel Iancu in Ein Hod.

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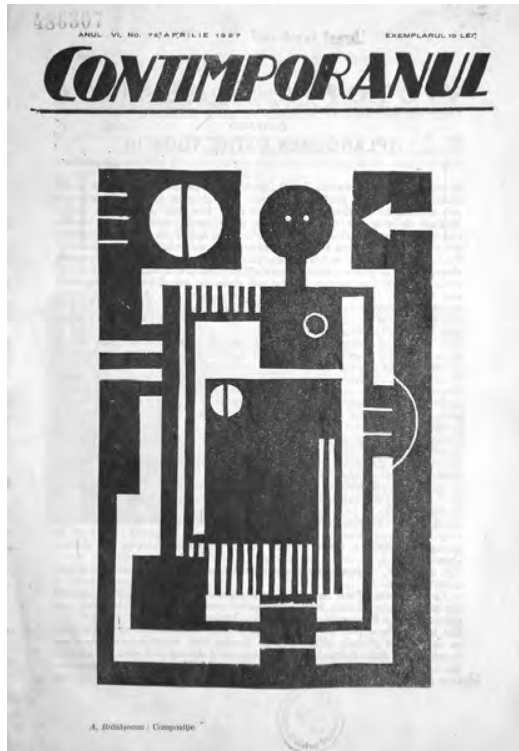


### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 47/1924.
2. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 79/1924.
3. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 51/1924.
4. Page from *Contimporanul* magazine no. 51/1924 with the International Art Exhibition "Contimporanul" catalogue.
5. Page from *Contimporanul* magazine no. 51/1924 with reproductions of artworks from The International Art Exhibition "Contimporanul".
6. Page from *Contimporanul* magazine no. 51/1924 with reproductions of artworks from The International Art Exhibition "Contimporanul".
7. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 65/1926.
8. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 73/1927.

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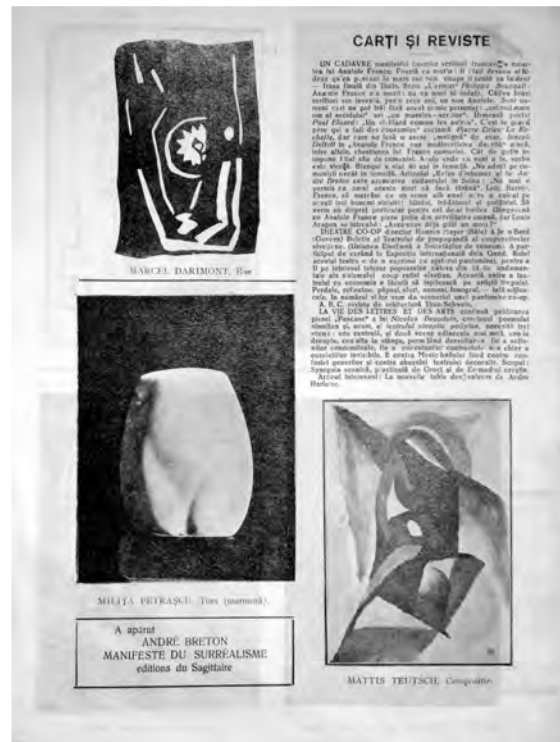
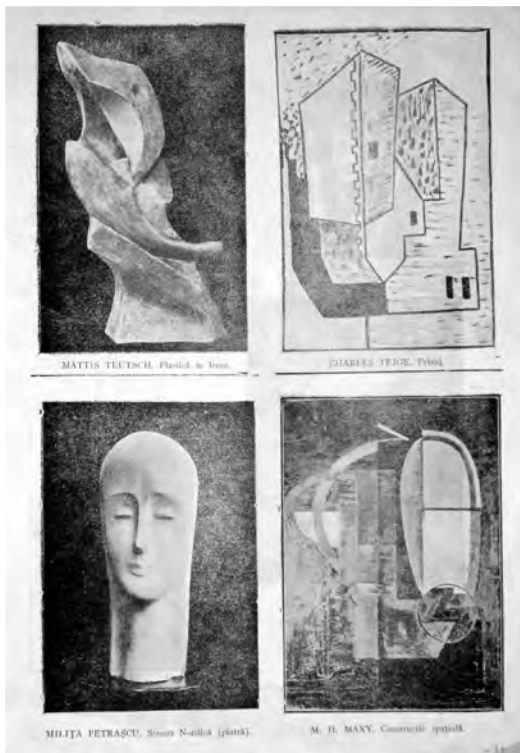
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3. Coperta revistei *Contimporanul* nr. 51/1924.
4. Pagină din revista *Contimporanul* nr. 51/1924 cu catalogul Expoziției Internaționale Contimporanul
5. Pagină din revista *Contimporanul* nr. 51/1924 cu reproduceri ale unor lucrări de artă din Expoziția Internațională "Contimporanul".
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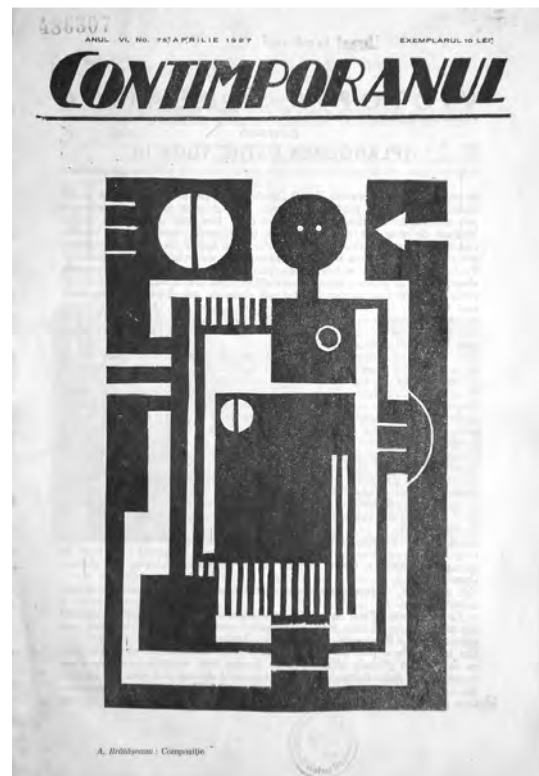


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4. Page from *Contimporanul* magazine no. 51/1924 with the International Art Exhibition "Contimporanul" catalogue.



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7. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 65/1926.

8. Cover page of *Contimporanul* magazine no. 73/1927



## JULES PERAHIM – SURREALISM AND POLITICS

Valentina IANCU\*

**Abstract:** *Jules Perahim (1914-2008) was a versatile artist who simultaneously experimented with various artistic media throughout his entire life – graphics, painting, mosaic, ceramics, scenography, and furniture. In addition, as an art critic, he served as editor-in-chief for “Arta plastică” (“Fine Arts”) magazine. He was also in charge of selecting the artists that represented Romania at the Venice Biennale. Perahim’s original manner of rendering a series of personal experiences gives an additional dimension to his works of art – they are an important tool for remembrance, but also a political manifesto*

**Key words.** *Avant-Garde, Surrealism, art and politics, jewish art, Jules Perahim*

**Rezumat:** *Jules Perahim, Suprarealism și politică. Jules Perahim (1914-2008), personaj poliedric, a experimentat de-a lungul carierei sale varii medii de expresie artistică, ocupându-se simultan de grafică, pictură, mozaic, ceramică, scenografie, piese de mobilier, publicând ocazional critică de artă ca redactor-șef la revista “Arta plastică” sau realizând selecția reprezentanților României la Bienala de la Veneția. Autentică punere în operă a experiențelor personale conferă un caracter deopotrivă mnezic și politic creației sale.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Avangardă, Suprarealism, artă și politică, artă evreiască, Jules Perahim*

The time interval between the two World Wars marks an important page in Romanian art history and in European culture, in general. At the junction between East and West, Romania was slowly making its way into the modern era. Despite a permanent state of moral crisis, Romania was home to a great number of artists whose work was crucial in terms of exposing the Romanian cultural scene to the latest trends in European art. Despite discrimination and persecution, a number of Jewish artists pioneered Romanian modern art, thus setting the ground for an ebullient art scene that was fully connected to universal art.

The political context between the two World Wars prompted the Jewish artists in Romania to embrace and adopt the innovative trends in European art. Their style indicates an opposition to traditionalism, as expressed by a formal and essentially eclectic affiliation to avant-garde *isms*.

Each artist borrowed and adapted ideas, shapes, and shades from a variety of artistic trends, such as Futurism, Dada, Cubism, Expressionism, Fauvism, Surrealism, New Objectivity, and Neoclassicism. In the period leading up to World War II, the Romanian-Jewish artists’ works all featured the same leitmotiv – social activism –, although they were distinct in terms of vision and artistic language.

Jules Perahim was a versatile artist who simultaneously experimented with various artistic media throughout his entire life – graphics, painting, mosaic, ceramics, scenography, and furniture. In addition, as an art critic, he served as editor-in-chief for *Arta plastică* (*Fine Arts*) magazine. He was also in charge of selecting the artists that represented Romania at the Venice Biennale. Although he only completed 7 years of study (CNSAS Information File 552638, 17), Jules Perahim became a professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts<sup>1</sup>, where he supervised several generations of graphic artists between 1948 and 1956.

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Perahim's original manner of rendering a series of personal experiences gives an additional dimension to his works of art – they are an important tool for remembrance, but also a political manifesto. Perahim explored elements of Jewish identity from the perspective of the political and social constraints imposed on Jews in the context of anti-Semitism as a state policy. Europe's recent history and the lives of ordinary individuals are among the themes that Perahim explored via a variety of artistic media. His political approach is influenced by Marxist ideas, which he had assimilated at a young age as a consequence of his affiliation to revolutionary groups. He was attracted by the idea of revolution and riot as a way of life, but also as a means for artistic expression. Through his works, Perahim voiced the fear and anguish rooted in the Romanian social context between the two World Wars. He transcribed his meditations, his musings and his nightmares, which were all triggered by the outer world. Perahim's artistic universe is based on a dialogue between his inner world and the outer world whose semiotics relies on automatic dictation. His approach to life is imbued with a surrealist sense of humour which is original, atypical and deeply rooted in the social and political context of the day. In an interview with Eduard Jaguer (Jaguer 1990), his biographer, Perahim said that, "Fate has a strong parsley odour". From a political standpoint, Perahim's art can be split into three main periods: historical avant-garde, communist activism and the French, surrealist period. The double nature of Perahim's surrealist work holds a central place in his art thanks to the artist's revolutionary political discourse and his imaginary universe.

During his communist years, Perahim rewrote his biography several times, possibly in an attempt to hide his family's bourgeois roots. The falsification of his biography is a performance act and a political act at the same time - it is essentially an attempt to become assimilated into the utopia of the *new man*. Art historians inquiring into the communist era tend to attribute an opportunistic connotation to those elements which enabled one's ascension in the communist state apparatus – falsifying one's biography (Cârnci 2010) is one such element. The intentional altering of one's reality is actually a way to perform one's own social masks/personae – this can be considered a provocative gesture that is typical of Perahim's artistic identity.

On February 19, 1965, the Securitate started monitoring Jules Perahim following charges of

"manifestations of Jewish nationalism" (CNSAS Information File 552638, 11, 148). Opportunism charges are mentioned in many of the information notes gathered by the Securitate, although they are unsubstantiated by any real proof. An entire mythology was built around the artist – often in anti-Semitic terms –, which shows his contemporaries' very limited interest in looking beyond rumours or gossip and overcoming personal ego. Some of his contemporaries' almost hostile attitude had a major impact on how Perahim's work was received. Considered an opportunistic propagandist in the context of a post-factum anti-communist discourse, Jules Perahim is a controversial figure in Romanian art history.

Jules Perahim was the fourth of five children born to chemist Jacob Blumenfeld (Enache 2012; Jaguer 2011). Originally from Vienna, his family settled in Romania upon King Carol I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen's invitation. Young Jules was encouraged by his family to develop his artistic skills. Roza Blumenfeld, his mother, became a widow when he was only 5 years old; as such, she was fully in charge of her children's education and held a central place in the future artist's childhood and adolescence (Vanci 1990, 153). She encouraged and supported him in his artistic pursuits, as he had manifested his talent at an early age. The oldest among the artist's works which have been preserved to date, a *Self portrait* that he created in 1924, is characterized by correct form and composition, thus revealing a kind of talent that is atypical of a 10-year old child. The spontaneity of his drawing, which is probably due to a lack of formal training, is a constant feature of his work, from childhood until the end of his career. He took drawing lessons for a few months in 1928 and 1929, under the supervision of Post-Impressionist artists who favoured a pastoral kind of formalism: Costin Petrescu (1872-1954) and Nicolae Vermont (1866-1932). The two masters' artistic vision was very different from their apprentice's creative personality. As a consequence, Perahim decided to abandon formal training and to teach himself in the spirit of the avant-garde.

At the age of 16, Jules Perahim became close to the Romanian avant-garde and, from 1930 on, he was a constant contributor to *Unu (One)* magazine. The magazine, which had been established in 1928, was the longest-standing surrealist publication in Romania and featured top names in the avant-garde, such as: Sașa Pană (director, founder and sponsor), Ștefan Roll,

Benjamin Fondane, Tristan Tzara, Claude Sernet, as well as artists Victor Brauner and Jaques Hérold. The surrealist group held an improvised meeting at „La Enache Dinu” milkshop, which Brauner called “The Century”. Although very young, Jules Perahim quickly became a part of the ebullient group at “The Century”. He attended each meeting and became a permanent contributor. Right from the beginning, he signed his works under the name of Perahim, which is an approximate translation from Yiddish into Hebrew of the name Blumenfeld (flower field) (Stern 2011, 140).

Recalling the beginnings of their collaboration, Saşa Pană said, “Two teenagers entered the milkshop on Baratiei St. They were carrying their first drawings in some notebooks. One of them was 14-15 years old. He was shy and cute. But his drawings revealed the skills of a gifted graphic artist. I kept one of the drawings – some monkey-men chatting – which was also published in the magazine’s August issue. That was the debut of the one artist who never lost our group’s friendship and respect. His name was Perahim – Puiu, to his friends” (Pană 1973). Jules Perahim was immediately noticed thanks to his “unusual talent” (Boz 1930). The illustrations that he published in *Unu* magazine are surrealist in style and depict the same subjects that were tackled in surrealist writings. Perahim’s first artistic period is marked by his unleashed imagination and the total freedom of his artistic expression – all the other contributors also shared these traits. “As such, on the Saturday preceding the publication of each issue, we would experiment with automatic writing, because the magazine HAD TO go out on the first Sunday of each month (this went on for five years) and there was no time to revise last-minute texts during that sleepless night we spent in the printing house” (Pană 2009, 146).

Upon poet Ştefan Roll’s suggestion, Jules Perahim, Aureliu Baranga, Gherasim Luca, Sesto Pals and Paul Păun launched *Alge* (*Algae*) magazine in September 1930. The publication and the group’s actions were influenced by the manifesto called *Strigăt* (*Outcry*), which was published in the second issue of the magazine: “Destroy the roots of the past which will rot within you, thus causing you to rot, as well” (Alge 1930). The group fought conformism by presenting the reader with a new type of aesthetics, which was free from the constraints of academism and all other forms of traditionalism. Each issue was designed in an innovative and novel manner, so the magazine itself was a piece of art. The magazine was characterized by

impeccable cohesion and coherence in terms of style. Thanks to its radical modernism and to the complete freedom characterizing the texts, which were transcribed most of the time by automatic dictation, “Algae” marked the beginning of the surrealist revolution in Bucharest. Perahim’s drawings and linocuts attested to his free imagination. They were apparently intelligible forms illustrating extreme situations which, from the currently accepted perspective of the day, were at times absurd, at times obscene, and at times grotesque. Perahim constantly transgressed the artistic values of the time, ignoring the boundaries of academic drawing in favour of surrealist decomposition and recomposition. The themes he chose were inspired from the life and the issues of urban society – these were, in fact, the main themes of surrealist artists around the world.

The *Algae* group borrowed the adventure spirit and the desire to “violate bourgeois mores” from the group’s Paris-based nucleus. The series of performance pranks was launched on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1931, when *Pulă. Revistă de pulă modernă. Organ universal* (Dick. *Modern dick magazine. Universal organ*) magazine was published for the first time. Gherasim Luca, Paul Păun, Perahim and Aureliu Baranga published 13 issues, which they sent to several prominent figures on the cultural scene of the time. Perahim sketched “the story of a virgin gone astray”, in a simple, sexual manner that was free from the preconceptions of the time. According to historian Dan Gulea (Gulea 2007), the magazine can be associated with the beginnings of the sexual revolution which was consistently promoted by the avant-garde discourse, especially via *Algae*. Upon receiving an issue, with a special dedication, historian Nicolae Iorga lodged a complaint with the Police Headquarters because he felt offended by the “indecenty” of the publication. As a result of the complaint, the four artisans of the magazine were sent to Văcăreşti prison for a few days, despite the fact that they were under age (Enache 2013, 101). The national press described the event as a “scandalous assault on mores”. The surrealist gesture that managed to trigger the outrage of the intellectual elite across the country and which ended with a short prison sentence for the four artists is the first performance act in modern Romanian art. It is only in the 1970s that performance art was accepted as an artistic medium. Performance art was a frequent practice among surrealist artists in Romania. The magazine *Pulă. Organ universal* was a radical, anarchistic act against the conventions of the

artistic and social establishment. The purpose of this publication was to provoke and shock by carefully questioning the limitations of traditional art.

The event happened once again on February 7, 1932, when the magazine *Muci* (*Mucositis*) first saw the light of day. Sesto Pals, Gherasim Luca, Aureliu Baranga, Fredy Goldstein, S. Perahim and Mielu Miziș caused a new scandal, following which five of them spent 10 days in Văcărești prison and were prosecuted after being released from prison. Goldstein and Mizis were acquitted as they were considered “disabled children”. Perahim was arrested in 1933 and was “convicted of a common law offence and sent to Văcărești prison” (CNSAS I 552638, fila 4).

The magazine *Muci* was published on the occasion of Perahim’s first personal exhibition, which was organized by Marcel Janco at Sala Dalles in Bucharest (Stern 2011, 140). The event was announced as follows: “The opening of S. Perahim’s painting and design exhibition will take place next month in lady Frosa’s waiting room, in Crucea de Piatră”. The text itself contains a surrealist joke: Crucea de Piatră is a neighbourhood in Bucharest that was known for its brothels and had the worst reputation in the eyes of the local elite. Again, the magazine was violently criticized by the local press, the self-entitled defender of mores.

Jules Perahim’s painting at this point was marked by a constant search within the surrealist imaginary universe. He created portraits, genre scenes, landscapes bearing Victor Brauner’s influence. He remained in the realm of figurative expression, as he investigated reality by means of his senses. His artistic vision is a permanent reflection of a political credo rooted in the ideas of *freedom* and *revolution*, as understood within a Marxist framework. Perahim chose a free style that was fully adapted to his subjects. His modernist *sine quibus non* constructions, characterized by wide strokes that follow the artist’s own rules, feature simultaneous contrasts – for instance, he used either contrasting pure colours, or shades of coloured grey. The portraits of his contemporaries, such as *Paul Păun* or *Gherasim Luca*, capture the personality of the subjects, who are rendered through symbolic associations. Whereas Bebe (Paul Păun) is depicted in an elegant and ghostly manner, Gherasim Luca is rendered as a weightless, scalpless theatre mask. Both portraits place their subjects in the realm of metaphysics, in the realm of ideas, where they are both active. The two are

integrated into Perahim’s universe, whose “reality” takes shape at the border of illusion. This is a spectral universe that evokes visions associated with hallucinogenic experiences.

Because he was one of the founders of the *Algae* group, Perahim was in the front line of radical surrealism, whose aim was to vehemently fight the conformist stereotypes of the bourgeoisie. The gestures that were meant to upset the social statu quo gave rise to a new interface within the surrealist movement: the political discourse. By constantly transgressing social norms, the surrealist artist pushed the barriers of social conventions and began to connect taboo subjects and art. Art became critical, not merely contemplative – it became rooted in matter-of-fact reality and it became so powerful as to break mental barriers and social conventions. The desire to provoke and upset the bourgeoisie materialized into the fact that the predominantly traditionalist Romanian society started turning a critical eye to the norms and limitations it had imposed on itself.

The surrealist artists were the first to engage in activism through art, in the 1940s. In a time where the Legionary Movement rose to prominence, it was vital to criticize the fundamentalism and the discrimination that the Movement promoted in Romania. From the mid-1930s on, the graphic work which Perahim published in various left-wing magazines and newspapers gradually became politicized and imbued with powerful messages inspired by the workers’ social issues.

In terms of themes and style, activism via graphic art, which was born out of the German Expressionist tradition, bears the influence of artists such as Georges Grosz, Otto Dix or John Heartfield (Jaguer 1990, 13). The topic was always political and was inspired by the social context of the time. Perahim tackled marginal topics such as poverty, the politicians’ servility and corruption, anti-Semitism, etc. His activist works were published in clandestine communist magazines like *Scânteia* (*The Spark*), *Tânărul communist* (*The Young Communist*), and *Noi Vrem Pământ* (*We Want Land*). His name was also featured in other left-wing publications, such as *Cuvântul liber* (*Free Speech*), *Reporter* or *Pinguin* (*Penguin*). During that time, Perahim started publishing his book illustrations; throughout his career, he focused heavily on illustration.

In my view, Perahim’s choice – political art – represents a reaction to the harshness of the Romanian context between the two World Wars.



Because Jews were considered outcasts and because the so-called Jewish economic monopoly was constantly criticized, the Jewish community became an easy target for the massacres which occurred during Ion Antonescu's rule. The radical anti-Semitic policies of the 1940s destroyed an ebullient artistic community where the Jewish artists – both those at the forefront of the Bucharest avant-garde movement, and those who lived in other parts of the country – were perfectly integrated within the Romanian culture. From 1938 on, when the first extreme right majority government came to power, life became more problematic for the Jews. The avalanche of anti-Semitic laws that followed, whereby the Jews were deprived of all their rights, culminated in a pogrom in Bucharest, Dorohoi, Galați and Iași, as well as in the deportation and the extermination of the Jewish population living in Transnistria.

Having completed his military service (1936-1938) with Regiment I – Chasseurs de Garde (Guard Troops), Perahim traveled to Prague, where he came into contact with the local avant-garde. The Czech surrealist artists' discourse contained a political component that was articulate, coherent and critical of the Nazi policies. Perahim befriended Emil Frantisek, Mikulas Bakos, Ladislav Guderna and John Heartfield (Helmut Herzfeld), who all promoted a Marxist-inspired discourse. In 1938, when Perahim showcased his work in Prague, in the foyer of D38 Theatre (the number changed each year), the Czech Republic was facing the threat of Nazi occupation. As such, Perahim tried to leave for France, but, because he was not granted a visa, he was forced to return to Romania. From the end of 1937 on, Romania was led by the Goga-Cuza nationalist government. The wave of anti-Semitic laws passed under this government further marginalized the Jews. In 1939, Perahim was summoned to serve in the army; he was subsequently sent to a forced labour camp in Onești. Harrassed by the Siguranță (Secret Police), when the war broke out, Perahim fled to Chișinău, where he requested political asylum (CNSAS Information File 552638, 5). The year of 1941 found him in South Caucasus; later, he was summoned to Moscow. The documents covering the years 1941-1946 contain little information on the artist. However, it is certain that Perahim managed to escape the Holocaust and the dangers of European political extremism. The painter later recalled that, "None of the young people today can believe that it is in time of peace that we saw corpses of people who had been shot and left lying on avenues" (CNSAS Information File

552638, 84). In the USSR, Perahim was commissioned by Voroshilov to join the graphic artists who were in charge of the Russian propaganda. "In 1944, given the new political and military context, Perahim was summoned to Moscow to handle the graphic design of war front newspaper *Graiul Nou* (*The New Language*), which was meant to spread the communist ideology in Romania" (Enache 2013, 103). Up until 1946, when he completed his Russian military service, Perahim "was active in the Soviet propaganda in various sectors, including the Supreme Military Headquarters" (CNSAS Information File 552638, 5).

During these troubled times, Perahim's art focused almost exclusively on antifascist activism. Whereas realism remained a feature of his work, the dreamlike element which characterized his painting during the previous ten years disappeared. Perahim had witnessed radical, dramatic social change, which threatened his own life. This is the time when his Jewish origin became an identity mark - the drama of anti-Semitism is crucial to understanding the work he created during that time. At the end of the 1930s, Jules Perahim abandoned the avant-garde in favour of Socialist Realism. Even before his Russian experience, Perahim had paid a great deal of attention to the antifascist discourse.

From the moment he returned to Romania, until he left for France, Jules Perahim remained within the realm of Socialist Realism. Because Perahim returned from the USSR dressed in a Soviet military uniform, he became the target of an entire mythology that he probably used for political advancement purposes. "Famous photographer Aurel Bauch had taken a photo of Perahim in his colonel uniform, which he displayed in the shop window of his shop, on Calea Victoriei. The painters who knew him and who had seen his photo in the shop window became reluctant and fearful. They had met him when he was a modernist graphic artist, a contributor to publications such as *Cuvântul Liber* (*Free Speech*), *Adevărul* (*The Truth*) and *Dimineața* (*The Morning*), and now there he was in Bauh's shop window, dressed as a... Soviet colonel." (Bogoslava 2006, 118). During the communist era, he illustrated countless poem and prose volumes. Alongside painting and graphic art, he worked with mosaic and ceramics, and he was also a scenographer. Although he was in a powerful position, throughout the communist era, Perahim was still affected by the virulent anti-Semitism which continued to plague the Romanian society. When he left Romania, he was

convinced that “this regime has nothing to do with communism” (CNSAS Information File 552638, 154).

After he left Romania, he returned to his surrealist interests, which he cultivated until his death, in 2008. Perahim moved on from political surrealism

to artistic activism to surrealism, depending on the constraints of the time. The influence of state policies is reflected in his artistic discourse, which represents the artist’s choice between a critical, an activist and a passive stance.

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### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Jules Perahim, *Surrealist composition*, 1931, oil on cardboard, 74, 5×53,5 cm, signed and dated lower right: *J. Perahim/ N. 1931*, NMAR/ Inv. 68.940/ 7357
2. Jules Perahim, *The board*, 1936, oil on cardboard, 55×43,5 cm, signed and dated lower left: *Perahim (19)36*, NMAR / Inv. 67.312/6891

### LISTA ILUSTRAȚIILOR

1. Jules Perahim, *Compoziție suprarealistă*, 1931, Ulei pe carton, 74,5×53,5 cm, semnat și datat stg. jos: *J. Perahim/ N. 1931*, MNAR/ Inv. 68.940/ 7357
2. Jules Perahim, *Consiliul de administrație*, 1936, ulei pe carton, 55×43,5 cm, semnat și datat dr. jos: *Perahim (19)36*, MNAR / Inv. 67.312/6891



1. Jules Perahim, *Surrealist composition*, 1931



2. Jules Perahim, *The board*, 1936

## A PRECARIOUS COLLECTION OF PORTRAITS: THE SOCIALIST REALIST ARTIST IN THE VISUAL CULTURE AND THE LITERATURE OF 1950s ROMANIA\*

IRINA CĂRĂBAŞ\*\*

**Abstract:** *The paper attempts to examine a number of images, both literary and visual, that stem broadly from the 1950s and represent a certain aspect of the artistic life under communism in Romania. The way in which socialism realism was introduced in Romania after WWII is seen through the lens of different representations of the artist. They are not portraits in the proper sense of the word but rather indicators of the status of the artist. Nor are they canonical works of socialist realism as, by the selection of examples, the paper consciously downplays the 'magnifying' view on socialist realism by 'minor' representations taken from sketches, photographs, memoirs, literary texts or press cuttings.*

**Keywords:** *socialist realism, image of the artist, postwar Romania, art institutions*

**Rezumat:** *Articolul încearcă să analizeze o serie de imagini literare și vizuale ce datează din anii 1950 și reprezintă un anumit aspect al vieții artistice din România comunistă. Felul în care a fost introdus socialismul realist după cel de-al doilea război mondial în România este privit din perspectiva mai multor reprezentări ale artistului. Acestea nu sunt portrete în adevăratul sens al cuvântului, ci indicatori ai statutului artistului. Ele nu sunt nici opere canonice ale realismului socialist deoarece prin selecția de exemple articolul încearcă în mod asumat să lase deoparte viziunea unui socialism realism 'grandios' în favoarea unor reprezentări 'minore' din schițe, fotografii, memorii, texte literare și cupuri de presă.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *realism socialist, imaginea artistului, Romania postbelică, instituții de artă.*

### Introduction: Beliefs and disbeliefs in the socialist realist artist

In a text published in the magazine *Arta plastică* in the early 1960s, Jules Perahim sought to draw an ideal portrait of the artist in the socialist era restating the official view on artistic duty, established in the previous decade. The image of the artist looms under the great mission assigned to his art, a mission that involves "the socialist transformation of consciousness" and the readiness to serve "the cause of the people." His commitment was expected to be plural: to the people, but also to socialist reality, and foremost to the party who controls it. "The ideal of the artist in the socialist era is to reach the peak where artistic creation is infused with the party's spirit", wrote Perahim, himself an artist who was now speaking from the official position of editor-in-chief of the Artists' Union official magazine

(Perahim 1960, 13). Perahim's article could have been written all the same five or ten years earlier as it advocated a very conservative point of view, even for the bashful beginnings of the Romanian 'thaw.' But at a very careful reading, this socialist realist conception of art and artist contains, almost unattainable, a new element which testifies some sort of mutation: although the discourse retrieves all the clichés of socialist realism, it does not name it anymore. Without being officially banned, socialist realism was to be silently and gradually driven away as if it never existed. The 'thaw' brought not only political and cultural détente, but also oblivion, barely lessened ever since. In the 1980s, when a slightly critical reflection on Stalinism and the convoluted 1950s became possible in Romania, the painter Corneliu Baba noted the attitude towards socialist realism of Camil Ressu, an artist whose reputation achieved before WWII was still acting upon the new generations in the 1950s, as it follows: "A student asks me one day to explain to him what is that [socialist realism]. Maybe you know because I don't, Ressu is reported saying." And Baba added

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his own comment: "In truth, nobody knew it, although many painted in its name" (Ressu 1981, 10). From the beginning of the 'thaw' onwards, artists and art historians alike have given little space to socialist realism when considering either individual artistic careers or general overviews of Romanian post-war art although a number of institutional practices or artistic hierarchies created then went far beyond the time span of the 1950s. The situation slowly began to change only recently, as a result of a growing interest in the relationship between art and power/politics/state in general, and also on the model of literary and history studies, which are far ahead in this direction. The disagreements among local art professionals concerning the corpus of socialist realist works, the sense of being a socialist realist artist or the agency of the artists faced with totalitarian power are still sharp. Attempting to reconsider the 1950s, some endeavors have sometimes had quite opposite effects. In 2013, for instance, the exhibition *The Artist and the Power*, which ambitiously covered four decades of art history in Romania, has been dispatched with the clear cut intention to brush away the suspicion of socialist realism or any political compliance from several generations of artists (Garofeanu *et al.* 2013a; 2013b). In spite of its title, the exhibition has completely lost 'Power' from its target, constructing instead a history outside the official or institutional frame. By doing so, it makes at least one paradoxical statement, not because such an account would not be possible, but because the exhibits themselves speak out against it, almost all of them being acquired by the socialist state for various art museums created in the same socialist period all over the country. Socialist realism is understood here only as fierce negation of creative values and art (Garofeanu *et al.* 2013b). This sort of denial, originating in a view similar to that of the so-called totalitarian school of history originating in the West, can vary in shape and intensity but it is not necessarily an exception on the local artistic scene.

As most of the monographs on contemporary artists written after 1965 disconnected numerous socialist realist artworks from their producers or vice versa, their reconnection has become a difficult task nowadays, especially since 'the post-socialist condition' has brought about new layers of condemning socialist realism. While on the local soil condemnation serves the defense of artistic milieu and the preservation of different practices and hierarchies, a comparable undertaking abroad may seem rather odd. A recent retrospective dedicated to Perahim by the Modern

and Contemporary Art Museum in Strasbourg presented his career as two separate periods of avant-garde art bordering an almost blank span between 1950 and the end of the 1960s, when he left Romania for France. He was thus purged not only of socialist realism but also of a multifarious and interesting oeuvre of book illustrator, which is barely mentioned in the selection of works, as well as by the biography in the exhibition catalogue (Perahim 2014, 117-119). His presence at the top of many art institutions founded or reshaped in the 1950s, such as the Artist's Union or the Institute of Fine Arts in Bucharest, has been overlooked together with the power that came along, which could bear, as in the cases of many other artists, a great influence on the choices regarding his work (Cărăbaș 2014, 62-63). The exhibition has actually reechoed the way in which the artist had refashioned himself in order to survive as a Romanian exile in Paris, of whom the condemnation of the communist regime was highly expected. Perahim had probably lived with the drama of being forgotten in his native country and of being remembered primarily as a communist 'commissar' within the community of exiles. His posterity is still at stake.

However, in spite of the tendency of seeing it in black and white, socialist realism has been acknowledged as a part of Romanian post-war art. Still, only few works (of many lost or forgotten in museums' storage rooms) were put under its label. Above this, a socialist realist artist is almost impossible to find, as nobody seems to identify him/herself – or be identified – as one. Did s/he really exist? While objects are more easily to dismiss as failures, non-values or mere compromises, individuals, especially artists who enjoy special respect and admiration, are judged according to somehow more loose criteria, such as the status or the talent. Thus, admitting more than a brief and non-engaging period of socialist realism in the span of an artist's career would do away with the autonomy of art, an idea claimed by the artists in Eastern Europe as constitutive for their practice ever since the 1960s. In Romania, autonomy has been divided between several – and often contradictory – parts of the cultural field: by a high-cultured conservative modernism on the one hand and by the subversive strategies of the avant-garde on the other hand (Radu 2014, 63-66). Moreover, the problem concerning the autonomy of art calls into question a sensitive issue about the agency of the artist during socialism in general and, more specifically, about the degree to which the local artistic institutions have shaped and controlled the ways artists

conceived of their works. In the specific case of socialist realism associated with the restrictive and violent times of Stalinism, maintaining the autonomy of art was quasi-impossible not only because of the normative nature of socialist realism itself but also because all the artistic practices were mediated by state institutions. Claiming for agency on the part of the artists appears therefore to be also a thorny matter as it swings the image of the artist between total identification with the regime's policy and complete oppression or lack of control over his/her works. As Anna Krylova and others have argued, the model of a unitary liberal self has long governed Soviet and particularly Stalinist studies, as well as the popular representation about totalitarianism. This view brought about a binary conception of engagement with the political power that is not wide enough to cover all the realities, structures or patterns of everyday life under coercive political circumstances (Krylova 2000, 2; Chatterjee, Petrone 2008, 970-3). Although the scholarship of the last decades has implied and even focused on a more scattered and unsettling self, able to fashion itself as the policy, the ideological requirements or simply the conditions of everyday life changed, this view has not yet made its way in the field of 'Eastern' art history. Applying this framework to the artist of socialist realism would change his/her status of either victim or criminal to a more subtle position: "no longer simply 'inside' or 'outside' the regime, neither completely atomized nor alienated"; s/he would become "on the one hand, an actor in a grand historical restructuring and, on the other, a product of 'interaction' and 'interplay' of multiple political, social, and cultural forces" (Krylova 2000, 19). Acknowledging a kind of agency for this artist would also prevent the falling of socialist realism into the realm of non-art. Certainly, such a perspective renders the task of drawing the image of socialist realist artist difficult once more, as both the artist and the world around were liable to permanent change. It is far more complicated to deal with inclusion rather than exclusion and to conceive the artists as "creators as well as victims of socialist realism" (Kiaer 2005, 324) or to include in one's identity the "faith in the revolutionary utopia and socialist mores" next to the "disbelief, irony, and even resistance to certain aspects of the system." (Chatterjee, Petrone 2008, 986) With this in mind, I will attempt to examine a number of images, both literary and visual, that stem broadly from the 1950s and represent a certain aspect of artistic

life or a certain status of the artist, although without the intention of turning them into a unitary single story. Nonetheless, many threads bring some of them together in variable configurations. As in a collection, all items are independent and at the same time connected. Such representations, including self-portraits or portraits of (other) artists, have not been produced in great number during that period and surely have not been included into the canon of socialist realism. The selection of images presented below consciously downplays the "magnifying" view on socialist realism by minor items, less known and hard to find, such as sketches, photographs, memoirs, literary texts or press cuttings. Some of them have not even entered any 'orbit' as they stepped directly from the artist's collection to the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Romanian Academy Library, which has shown them only in part. Nevertheless, the precariousness of these sources does not make them immune to the power ideology or to the institutional practices of socialist realism.

### The engaged artist

The first image representing a vehement speaker in front of a crowd (Fig. 1) is taken from the collection of poems *At the top of my voice* by Vladimir Mayakovsky, translated in Romanian and published as early as 1947. The book sketched, around the figure of the famous poet, a map containing the most important markers of the new discourse on art as they were presenting themselves in the contemporary cultural press. It was a map also in geographical terms, as it featured three versions of the poems: Romanian, Russian and French (translated by Elsa and Louis Aragon). These vicinities were very telling for the origins/models of the local communist-oriented discourse. Whereas the soviet model, whose implementation in Romania was at the very beginning, could be somehow expected, paying tribute to the French culture (to a certain division of it) seems atypical. In the aftermath of the war, more intricate threads negotiated the cultural field. Next to a plurality of modernist trends which continued the pre-WWII tradition, avant-garde forms found new inspiration while the engaged art, supported by the communist regime, was striving to gain popularity and legitimacy. Under these yet undecided circumstances, avant-garde writers and artists with a "leftist history" were acquiring more prominence, a fact that resulted into the advancement of the avant-garde itself

from the margins towards the center of the cultural field. On the one hand, they brought with them the French cultural model and along with it the communist engagement of surrealism. On the other hand international acknowledged intellectuals supporting the Communist Party were used by the regime to its own benefit. Among them, Louis Aragon and Tristan Tzarahave both visited Romania in a propaganda tours.

Within this context, in which the avant-garde met the engaged art recalling the first decade after the October Revolution, publishing a trilingual volume with Mayakovsky's famous poems about the mission of the artist, originally written in 1923, went beyond a simple literary translation. Furthermore, it featured the collaboration between the translator and poet Cicerone Theodorescu and the avant-garde artist Jules Perahim, who jointly identified themselves with Mayakovsky's militant lines (Mayakovsky 1949). Both of them worked toward adapting the poems, the first to another language and the latter to the visual language. Perahim made seven black and white ink drawings, reproduced on full page, which maintained close correspondence with the text. The figure of the vehement speaker rising against the crowd is concisely described by the signs of his activity as agitator: the emphatic gesture and the open mouth. The beginning of its poetic counterpart contains the identity of the actors:

Listen,  
    comrades of posterity,  
to the agitator  
    the rabble-rouser.  
Stifling  
    the torrents of poetry,  
I'll skip  
    the volumes of lyrics;  
as one alive,  
    I'll address the living.  
(Mayakovsky 1960)

The voice has a collective reach when compared to reading that is mostly an individual activity. Through it, the poet is connecting to the crowd. Mayakovsky conceived the poems of this series to be performed aloud on the model of manifestoes. In Perahim's illustration, the amplitude of the poet's voice seems to be indicated by the width of his arms embracing the crowd in front of him. His oversized arms and hands visually enforce the represented figure, but they are implying actual force as well. Thereby the poet is endowed with the proletarian's features, one of the main characters of socialist realist art. The strong

muscular body is a sign not only of intensive physical work, but foremost of a presumed historical power to revolutionize the world. Although certain identification with the proletariat was suggested by Mayakovsky himself in the following poems, the imagery of the worker belonged to Perahim's own time. Just like the poems, the illustrations deal with various aspects of the poet/artist's mission: agitator /speaker /worker, but also a warrior using his pen as a weapon, a sower/disseminator of words (Fig. 2), and, last but not least, a Communist Party member (Fig. 3).

In spite of the clear political message, Mayakovsky's *At the top of my voice* could hardly belong to socialist realism, especially because of its use of language. The same can be stated about Perahim's illustrations that draw back to surrealism, modernist satirical graphic, and even to specific modern artists like François Millet or Vincent Van Gogh. In a different time and place, both Perahim and Mayakovsky put their art in the service of the "romantic" beginnings of communist regimes, when a plurality of artistic expression was possible and socialist realism has not gained yet an inescapable official recognition and support. Still, their engagement is not strictly similar and the difference of temporality holds a notable significance. By the time when Perahim was drawing his illustrations, the Stalinist cultural policy was using Mayakovsky's political poetry to construct a genealogy of socialist realism. Although no socialist realist poet was allowed to write in his style, Mayakovsky was turned into a legendary figure and an object of study in high school textbooks. Chantal Sundaram has shown that "Mayakovsky was adaptable only because this early phase of socialist realism required 'heroization' to be equated with a dynamic struggle against stagnation and empirical norms, with self-sacrifice and overcoming difficulties and obstacles. It is quite unlikely that Mayakovsky would have been adopted as national poet at a later, more stable stage of Soviet history. The new Stalinist state needed to disguise itself in revolutionary garb during its first stage of development, although it was in the process of resuscitating conservative traditions (Sundaram 2000, 142-143). A similar approach could be expected of the young Romanian communist regime that would insert the publication of Mayakovsky illustrated by Perahim volume into the strategy of gradually introducing socialist



realism on the local cultural scene<sup>1</sup>. Perahim would soon construct himself as one of the most prominent socialist realist artists in Romania, leaving behind the revolutionary poetry of Mayakovsky and the style he had used to accompany it. However, he would later return to Mayakovsky under different circumstances. In 1971, while already in France, Perahim entitled one of his paintings after a line from the poet's suicidal note: *La barque de l'amour s'est brisée contre les vagues de la vie courante/ The love boat has crashed against the daily grind*. It represented a stranded boat sided by sailors on the point of vanishing together into dark pieces, like the ghost of the painter's former life as a socialist realist artist or like yet another suicidal note of the engaged artists who had chosen to refashion himself all over again.

### The talkative artist

A montage of text and images stands for the second example of my collection. Its source is once more the periodical *Arta plastică* that was committed particularly in the first years of its publication to reflect the major official events organized by the Artists' Union. In 1955, on three pages of its forth issue, the caricatures of the main participants to the Union's annual meeting were published under the title *The Display Board of the Plenary Meeting* (Fig. 4-6). The drawings themselves were juxtaposed with a versified lampoon as a commentary meant to disclose the authors' names. The idea to compose a display board in order to enclose it in an official publication could be quite surprising, especially since a comprehensive report on the plenary meeting was being published as well. The montage of caricatures and lampoons constitutes a playful counterpart of the report and it can be fully understood only after going through the first text written in the officialese of socialist realism. In spite of its humorous nature, the montage takes a critical stance that was no less severe.

At the beginning of the communist regime, a display board featuring a combination of text and image had to hang in every institution, factory or community, such as communal dwellings, different groups or organizations. Firstly, its

content contributed to internal propaganda, pointing to the best achievements (real or not) of the community or to its representatives (e.g. winners of different competitions, honored workers). Secondly, it had to maintain the critical spirit alive and thereby made use of both caricature and lampoons. To accept criticism and, at the same time, to proffer it was considered a necessary trait of the new socialist citizen, a trait which testified for his/her will to be transformed in order to take part in the communist society of the future. Display boards were sometimes places of denouncement or indicators of semiofficial changes of policy. By their very nature, these montages were ephemeral, being periodically replaced, a feature that went hand in hand with the wavering life of criticism and appraisal which were rapidly superseding one another.

In 1955, all these uses of the display board must have lingered in the mind of the reader of *Arta plastică*, but the montage from within its pages had definitely other aims as well. It was highlighting the importance of the plenary meeting for the artistic life governed by rigorous institutional mechanisms. The meeting was itself part of them, aiming to shape and to maintain a communal spirit within the Artists' Union. Being a moment of assessments, the meeting was in a way a performed and more complex version of the display board and, furthermore, proved the centrality of discourse in the socialist society. In the case of artists, this brought about an intricate relationship between visual and verbal language. In his memoirs, Dumitru Demu, the author of the Stalin monument in Bucharest, recounts the ready-made speeches handed down to artists at the various meetings in which they were required to take part. These would have ultimately had a pedagogic effect that was, they would have transformed artists into perfect orators, capable of producing similar speeches themselves (Demou 1977, 183-184). The socialist realist artist had to combine artistic and discursive practices, both of which were signs of his engagement, particularly within the delimited and ritualized framework of art institutions. Art needed verbal language, the only one able to convey its final meaning. Therefore, the caricatures showed strong disapproval of the way in which artists spoke (e.g. the theater designer Siegfried is mocked as being part of the stage setting) or of the false coordination between discourse and artistic practice (apparently Gheorghe Șaru's vivid intervention in the plenary meeting cannot recoup his absence from the State Annual Exhibition).

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<sup>1</sup> Other seminal political poem by Mayakovsky with illustrations by Perahim had been published two years before: Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Poemul lui Octomvrie*, Bucharest, Carte rusă (1945).

Even more disparaged was the silence of the art critics, that was referred to by four different vignettes: one is blank, representing “our art critics taking the floor”, while the other three are nominal: Eugen Schileru on the horns of a dilemma “to take or not to take the floor”; Radu Bogdan offering the excuse of his already published reviews; and Mircea Deac, whose portrait is a rebus.

As compared to the standard report on the plenary meeting of the Artists’ Union in 1955, the display board-like pages focused exclusively on speakers, whereas the more general assessments regarding the development of the art and the achievements of socialist realism remain in the background. One can get here a certain sense of hierarchy, taking into account the missing artists as well as the degree of critical evaluation conveyed by the text. The artists sitting in the board of the Union were not mentioned at all while second rank officials or successful artists like M.H. Maxy, Teodor Krausz, Iosif Cova or Titina Călugăru were gently caricatured. The strongest criticism was directed toward sculptor Spiridon Georgescu called St. Spiridon by the lampoon and whose discourse at the meeting seems to have gotten off the permitted track. Accordingly, an artist could be criticized equally for his words as for his works. The fear of criticism was embodied by Mimi Șaraga, who was portrayed hiding under some pillows. The last character of the montage is itself the result of a montage: a caricatured surrealist figure composed of human and animal parts representing formalism, considered to be the fiercest opponent of socialist realism. Thereby, modern art as a whole was being outlawed and its inclusion in the montage aimed at being a kind of warning for the artists.

Gathering caricatures produced by five different artists (Eugen Taru, Jules Perahim, Rik, Roni Noel, Cik Damandian) into a text-image montage (whose chief designer remains unknown) gives rise to an unintentional commentary on the source of surveillance within the artistic milieu of the 1950s. It looks like surveillance and criticism did not come only from outside the community, for instance, from the higher levels of political power, but also from inside.

### Individual artist/ collective artist

The third image consists in one preliminary drawing from a small series (Fig. 7). Its concluding painting was displayed for the first time in Camil Ressu’s retrospective from 1955

(now in the collection of Brăila Museum). Within the vast space of a collective workshop, a group of people is placed around a huge white panel set on an easel. Only two of them are involved in proper artistic activity, namely the model and the painter, while the others are reading or simply moving around. The workshop is represented both as a site of artistic production and as a space of social encounter or leisure. Judging from the caricatured faces, one can easily infer the parodic intention of the image, the reason of which remains hidden to the unwarned spectator. This is why Ressu felt the necessity of providing at least one explanation on the back of the painting, on which he had written: “Baba [in] 1950 is doing realism, while Pallady is leaving, shaking the dust off his feet” (Ressu 1981, 80). Accordingly, the two poles of the image are set: the central figure of the artist at work stands for the painter Corneliu Baba, while the small silhouette walking away in the background stands for Theodor Pallady. It seems that a shift of generations takes place right before the eyes of the spectator, the younger artist taking the place of the interwar one. Ressu’s inscription also entails an opposition between realism and something unnamed for which Pallady is standing for.

During the 1950s, collectivist ideas have been implemented by state institutions on all social levels, in an attempt to make the communist ideology effective. Ever since the end of the war, many efforts have been made to gather the entire artistic life in Romania under the umbrella of a single organization supervised by the state. Thereby, the state became the only patron of the arts, the only commissioner of artworks and distributor of benefits. Soon after reviving the Syndicate of Fine Arts in 1944, with Camil Ressu as president and M. H. Maxy as executive secretary, all other forms of artistic sociability, such as groups or associations, were banned following a similar law given in USSR in 1932. In 1950, turning the centralized Syndicate into the Artists’ Union required only few changes in terms of management or institutional hierarchies. The Union had to foster different ways of actually embodying the collectiveness and therefore it supported different types of collective work, for instance cooperatives. Within this framework, more and more artists were to be commissioned collectively in order to make portraits of the political leaders, either to be used in public events or to be displayed in factories and institutions. Camilian Demetrescu recalls humorously how every artist from the team was in charge with a small part of the colossal painted portrait

according to the internal artistic hierarchy. Unlike more successful fellow artists who got to paint Stalin's eyes or moustache, he was constantly left with the Generalissimus' ear lobe. (Demetrescu 1997, 42-43) Placing artists in shared workshops constituted another way of creating collectivities which, on the one hand, proved the protective role of the Artists' Union and, on the other hand, solved the critical lack of space from the early post-war period. Besides being a concrete workplace for many artists unable to afford an individual studio, such a collective workshop was directed toward pedagogical aims, while hosting both art and ideology courses, aimed at rechanneling artists toward socialist realism. However, it seems that the kind of collectivity created in the workshops was not always of the kind intended by the Union. Painter Alexandru Ciucurencu was remembered having been a wonderful and non-dogmatic teacher in such a collective workshop, which gathered young artists such as Ștefan Sevastre, Yvonne Hassan, Mariana Petrașcu, and Paul Gherasim. As the painter Ștefan Sevastre recorded, socialist realist norms were taught along with modernist modes of composition and the study of nature in *plein-air* (Sârbulescu 2002, 46-47).

There is no information about Ressu attending collective workshops neither as teacher nor as visitor, but his position of honorary president of the Artists' Union would have allowed him to visit such places. As for Baba, he was certainly attending at least some of the meetings taking place in the workshops. His memoirs about the first years he spent in Bucharest in the early 1950s could complement the significance of Ressu's drawing, from which the present chapter has started. At that time, many artists, who had gained their prestige before the WWII, were still alive. Baba used to visit Ressu in his home almost every week and had the occasion to meet a handful of famous artists trained in the spirit of modernism. Next to Ressu, Pallady seems to have impressed him with his impoverished distinction: "One could meet him [Pallady] during drawing sessions or walking with his anachronistic hidalgo-like allure, alone and broke, toward the snack bar, where he ate his daily potato dish" (Baba 1980, 10). From this account, it results that the collective workshops could be a place of encounter between different generations of artists, just as Ressu had suggested in his work. Other memory about the contemporary climate relate to the urgency to transform oneself under difficult conditions: "It was cold in the workshops, the

cafes had disappeared, and the painters revised their sensibility" (Baba 1980, 10). Baba could be counted among those who were working toward "revising their sensibility" as he was trying to make a name for himself within the new system of socialist realism. Keeping this in mind, Ressu's drawing *In the workshop* acquire new meanings: he embodied in Baba and Pallady two attitudes toward the artistic system: adaptability and idiosyncrasy. At that moment, both artists were rather on the margins of the system, but while Pallady's oeuvre was coming to an end, Baba's real career had just started.

### The supervised artist

The forth image is a kindred work by Camil Ressu entitled *The Guidance Commission* (Fig. 8), which shares with the previous one the same satirical view on the artistic life in the 1950s. Whereas archives and artists' memoirs have kept traces of the contemporary institutional practices, both of Ressu's visual representations are unique. Yet, none of them is considered of major importance in his oeuvre, and both of them have rarely been featured by scholarship or exhibitions. On the one hand, their subject calls to mind a period which has been experienced as traumatic. On the other hand, Ressu has been celebrated by the local historiography as representative of the interwar modernism, a view that presumably came in contradiction with his post-war work at the time of socialist realism. Even one of the earliest monographs on Ressu, written by Theodor Enescu, dedicated only half a page to the last fourteen years (1944-1958) of the artist's career (Enescu 1958, 171-172).

The series of preliminary drawings for the *Guidance Commission* is very large and it was probably created all along the 6<sup>th</sup> decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (most of them are to be found in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Romanian Academy Library). The first sketches of independent figures dated from 1950 (Ressu 1981, 91-92) and a couple of drawings were on display on the occasion of Ressu's retrospective in 1955, whereas the painting itself (now in the collection of the National Museum of Art in Bucharest) resurfaced only in 1981, on the occasion of another retrospective. The figure below represents a version or a stage of this painting as reproduced in 1959 by the magazine *Tribuna*. Except for a few details, everything was in place. However, as the drawing series shows, it is exactly to these details that Ressu was paying

attention and for which he imagined several possibilities. Even though the existence of two versions of the same work cannot be totally excluded, it is more likely that what can be seen in the cutout would lie underneath the painting we know today.

The latter was recently on view in an exhibition centered on modernist representations of the painter's studio in Romania. Ressu's aura of interwar master re-directed the significance of this 1950s work back in time, as the catalogue states that the painting is a parody of the art education in inter-bellum, rendering a frightened student in front of his professors (Dreptu 2008, 13-14). Some of the characters who compose the group of seven supervisors may be identified as reputed interwar painters, such as Iosif Iser or Jean Steriadi, yet the title suggests other time span. Guidance commissions were part of the institutional surveillance of the artistic activity at the beginning of the 1950s. Furthermore, the fact that the central position within the commission is granted to a figure easily identifiable as M.H. Maxy clarifies the chronology: this scene couldn't have been painted before 1944, since he and the others mentioned above belonged then to different artistic circles or institutions and were not all involved in the official art education. Maxy's central position in Ressu's painting as well as his interrogatory gesture turn him into the main counterpart of the artist whose work is being examined, but it seems to be equally significant for Maxy's centrality within the art system as a whole. After 1944, he was appointed in various positions in all the art institutions of the period, from the Syndicate of Fine Arts and the Artists' Union to the Institute of Art in Bucharest and to the newly founded Art Museum of the Republic. Also, in Ressu's painting, Iser and Steriadi were surrounded by younger artists, like Gheorghe Labin and Titina Călugăru, who had successful careers in the 1950s. This combination of old and new was typical for the new post-war art system that was attempting to absorb elder and younger artists alike.

Guidance commissions were responsible for supervising the entire artistic cycle from the setting of the subject to the exhibition display. They functioned especially in the early 1950s, playing a significant role in establishing the institutional mechanisms of the Artists' Union. Through them, the state watched that the commissioned works would correspond to its official policy in terms of subject and style. Thus, the artistic life was being bureaucratized, as

numerous comities and commissions were operating on all levels. Guidance sessions worked as practical lessons of socialist realism and aimed at channeling all representational means toward a certain uniformity. Within this process, the work as such became a vulnerable object, prone to criticism at every moment and could never acquire a final stage; in a way it was never finished. A combination of artistic and ideological criteria, which were unceasingly changed, gave every work a transitional position within the artist's career or even within the evolution of the arts under state socialism. In order to be displayed in state exhibitions or state institutions, a work had to comply with several evaluations, but no commission could guarantee for the following one or the subsequent press reviews. Hence, the frightened artist from Ressu's painting is shivering not only in front of this precise commission but also in front of all others that are still to come.

Ressu must have sat on the board of many such commissions, either at the Institute of Art or at the Artists' Union, and had the chance of observing power relations between the supervised and the supervisors. Although he belonged with the supervisors, the image, which plays a parodic game with both categories, shows him in a distant outward position as if, by representing it, he were able to extract himself from the scene. The version from 1959 contains one detail that singles it out of the series. What is to be seen on the large canvas displayed for evaluation in front of the guidance commission has undertaken several changes in the preparatory drawings: in certain cases, it represents a worker that was in perfect accordance with the subjects of socialist realism while in others, including the final painted version, only some faint female nudes. In the press cutout, on the white easel, Ressu obviously sketched the nudes of the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Therefore, trembling in front of the fierce commission stood Picasso himself. The comic situation created by Ressu was undercut by Picasso's own paradoxical reception in the Eastern Bloc as one of the very few approved Western artists, a fact due to his support for the Communist Party more than to his works. With just few exceptions, his theses could have been banned as formalist but one chose to keep silence about it. Has Ressu considered the inclusion of the *Demoiselles* in his own painting too daring? Was he 'guided' to remove them from the final version? With or without them, *The Guidance Commission* staged some of the practices of socialist realism but could not be displayed among

socialist realist works; it was known through preliminary drawings by some of its contemporaries, but never praised.

### The artist in literature

Similarly to the visual arts, the literature of socialist realism didn't create many characters with artistic professions. In fact, they are very rare in the Romanian literature of the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1953, when George Călinescu published the novel *Poor Ioanide*, one of the most interesting and complex artist figure was born, being considered afterwards as a kind of alter-ego of its author. An influential literary critic, George Călinescu had already started his career as a novelist during the interwar period. He did not lose his aura after the communist takeover, as the new regime was in need of intellectuals like him in order to acquire legitimacy and stability. His early signs of support for the regime gave him authority and provided him with positions, even if it didn't entirely spare him the criticism or temporary exclusion from the university. Although the assumption that Călinescu had portrayed himself in the main character of *Poor Ioanide* and of its sequel *The Black Chest of Drawers* could be debatable, the fate of his post-war novels together with that of their common main character shared the wavering fate of their author.

In the first novel published in 1953, the artist figure was embodied by Ioanide, architect of great reputation and professor at the School of Architecture, who was longing for great projects, seemingly incongruous with the requirements of the day. Even though the plot of the novel was set in the 1930s, at the moment of severe political crisis and extreme-right menace (on which it took a critical perspective), socialist realist norms required that characters and story-line bore relevant traits for the contemporary age. But it seems that Călinescu's Ioanide failed to fit into the pattern of the socialist realist artist. Most of the reviews saw in Ioanide the exact its opposite: isolated, passive, lacking political engagement, and, foremost, believer in the autonomy of art. As most of the novels published in the 1950s, *Poor Ioanide* was accompanied by illustrations. They were considered very important in conveying contemporary meanings to literary texts and to construct the right image for positive and negative heroes. Neither the few portraits drawn by Corneliu Baba for *Poor Ioanide*, from which the main character was missing, were not in the

classical style of socialist realism. As a result of post-publishing censorship, the circulation of novel was restricted, turning it into a rarity even in public libraries. While *Poor Ioanide* benefited from more editions from the 1960s onwards, Baba's illustrations have been totally forgotten even by his monographers and admirers.

In 1960, after long revisions, came to light a new novel that followed Ioanide's life after 1944. As Nicolae Mecu argued, *The Black Chest of Drawers* took the form of an apology for its main character, in which one can trace the effort to correct the errors imputed to the previous novel: "the idea to continue Ioanide's path could have been instilled in [Călinescu]'s mind by 'the authorities', by the first critical reviews and the 'recommendations' they contained and not least for fear that, without this compensatory second part, the novel *Poor Ioanide* would remain on the shelf" (Călinescu 2004, 1579). In the sequel novel, Ioanide was reborn as a socialist realist architect. Due to the new political context, he was finally able to fulfill his longing for magnificent projects. Assisted by the proletariat, his projects for a democratic Palace of Arts and for a new quarter of collective dwellings were being built in Bucharest, transforming it into a new city. In the description of Ioanide's projects, one can recognize the classical vocabulary used by Stalinist architecture as if Călinescu aimed at pointing to the coincidence between the architect's desire to build great projects and the Stalinist lure of large scale architecture and monumental art. According to his new status, the architect has become a "talkative" artist. He confessed his commitment not only by the means of his architectural practice but also by the means of words. In a conversation with the party activist Dragavei, he states: "[...] I've become a responsible citizen. I want to be useful to my fellow citizens and small talk can make me linger on the way. [...] Previously I made plaster cities of which I was content. Today I have realized that producing paper architecture and architectural models is a big bluster. This kind of things can bring you glory in some circles but does not serve at all the people living in shacks. I want to see them living in palaces and enjoying the solemnity of big halls as the Greeks enjoyed their temples" (Călinescu 1960, 437). The image of the newly born Ioanide was filled in by Dragavei, the representative of the new social order, to whom the novelist pays special attention. He is the one who vouched for the "new Ioanide" praising him as modest, open, enthusiast, sincere, repenting for

his past, working “like an actual activist” and not least accepting criticism (Călinescu 1960, 491). Nonetheless, Ioanide kept his bonds with his older self. Precisely because of his liberal profession and the special status given artists even under socialism, he was permitted to defy certain norms. The novel maintains the romantic idea that the artist is a special human being, who lives by his own rules founded in his art and personality. In *The Black Chest of Drawers*, Ioanide continued to play the role of a kind of social mediator, since he was attending not only the now ruined and expelled aristocracy (otherwise this was not recommended and even dangerous for good communists) but also various representatives of the intelligentsia and the proletariat. He also broke other social norms by falling in love all the time and dreaming of or actually having various relationships outside marriage.

Although of a lesser import, the novel features other characters of artists as well giving Călinescu the occasion to add some variations to the conception of art embodied by the ‘new Ioanide’. Coucli, a ballet dancer and one of Ioanide’s lovers, who inaugurated the Palace of Arts, was described as having “artistic intelligence” and “vital enthusiasm”, that propelled her performances on “the higher level of beauty” (Călinescu 1960, 810). On the other side, the young aristocrat Filip, who wished to become a worker, was finally reassured that artists were also workers and therefore art was work in its own right (Călinescu 1960, 849).

When the second novel of Ioanide was published, faint signs of political détente were beginning to loom in Romania and socialist realism was gradually pushed on the margins. Under these circumstances, Călinescu’s efforts to secure his reputation of novelist through a new book have failed, as the model it was proposing had started to fade away. The thaw was to retrieve *Poor Ioanide* and forget about its sequel, considered to be too ideologically encumbered. Whereas literary critics preferred the inter-bellum Ioanide, the Other Ioanide has raised the interest of architects and historians of architecture. They searched for real architects that the writer could have actually used as models for his character. It was a legitimate quest, taking into account that Călinescu had included real documents in the novel and took real persons (in certain cases hardly disguised) as inspiration for some of his characters. Thereby, there was a need for an architect who would have started his career before WWII and would have become afterwards the

recipient of various important official commissions. Particularly due to his involvement in projects with great propaganda value, commissioned on the occasion of the Youth Festival which took place in Bucharest in 1953, Octav Doicescu seemed to have been the best pick (Celac 2013, Tulbure 2013). Nonetheless, it is not certain that Călinescu used a single model or that it was necessary an architect. The examples of architects, writers or artists trained in modernist spirit who made successful careers under state socialism and found favor with political leaders could make undoubtedly a longer list.

### The artist and the Leader

The last image of the collection is an anonymous photograph, taken in an art school workshop, which staged a student working on a clay model of Stalin’s portrait (Fig. 9). Another photograph in the series shows the professor guiding the hand of the student on Stalin’s face. It could have been a photo session either for the press or for a display board or maybe for an official album. There is no date on the photograph, but we know that after 1953, when Stalin died, his portraits gradually began to be removed. Therefore, it is more likely that the image stemmed from the interval 1950-1953. The portrait is almost finished and the small details that must be still completed do not obstruct in any way the recognizability of the figure. Stalin is there, arresting the attention of the child-like student. Creator and creation are closely gazing one another. The representation of Stalin was, and still is, considered a perfect embodiment of socialist realism as the glorification of the leader through the medium of images contributed to shaping and maintaining the cult of personality. Their unceasing occurrence in the public and institutional space functioned as mementos of a supposedly absolute will that watched from above, present and remote at the same time. The ubiquity of his image was substituting the leader’s actual absence from the public space (Sartorti 2007, 172). In the Stalinist era, his images have progressively multiplied in terms of number and content. The modes in which Stalin was imagined – as Leader, Generalissimus, Teacher, Friend or Father – have been prevalent at one period or another. In countries like Romania, which came under the influence of USSR after WWII, it is the image of the Leader that has dominated the artistic representation in oversized monuments or paintings. Most of the painted or sculpted portraits were not original, signed works, but standard, officially approved pieces, and usually produced

by teams of artists in state cooperatives (Yakovskaya 2006, 770). They supplied the iconographical need of various institutions, while only public monuments or pieces for official exhibitions were commissioned to individual artists.

The image of the student learning to model the head of Stalin reveals the importance of art education in the instilment of socialist realist imagery and representational strategies. Along with them, political engagement was also handed on. Making Stalin's portrait could express almost literally what Boris Groys considered to be the essence of socialist realism, i.e. the underground connection between the artist and the Leader, whereby the wills of the two became one (Groys 1992, 52). Thus, Stalin was becoming himself an artist, the most perfect one, who was not shaping works of art but the reality itself. Through the subconscious relation between artist and Leader, socialist realism became the representation of Stalin's dream of reality: "to be a realist means to avoid being shot for the political crime of allowing one's personal dream to differ from Stalin's. The mimesis of socialist realism is the mimesis of Stalin's will, the artist's emulation of Stalin, the surrender of their artistic egos in exchange for the collective efficacy of the project in which they participate" (Groys 1992, 53). One could imagine that, in the photograph, the intense gaze exchange between the art student and the head of Stalin implies precisely that strong and inescapable connection described by Groys. Due to the young age of the student, one cannot think but of the image of Stalin the Father, only that here the father is being shaped by the child.

Once Stalinism and along with it the socialist realism fell into disrepute, to have made the portrait of Stalin became the most blamable artistic activity. Culpability met a sort of heroization of the artist. Retrospectively, the photograph does not convey this kind of meaning, but provides a rather contradictory image: the socialist realist artist is just a girl!

In a similar way to the other images brought together here in what I called a precarious collection, the anonymous photograph bypasses the official definition of the socialist realist artist as well as its historiographical accounts. Each image has been summoned to tell a different story about the status of the artist during one of the most sensitive periods of the post-war Romania. Although some of the stories were also about real artists, the aim was not to recover their work or discuss their political engagement but to use their examples for building a context for the images. These are all originating from the margins of artistic production of the 1950s without belonging however to the unofficial or oppositional culture. It is exactly due to their marginality and uniqueness that they could deal with aspects of artistic life that the canonical works of socialist realism would have not considered. They mostly show the entanglement between artists and art institutions which have been instrumental in implementing and maintaining socialist realism. The collection of images might be incomplete as there are many more aspects of the status of the artist during socialist realism that have not been discussed here. Yet, as precarious as it is, it completed the task of challenging historical accounts of the period and revealing both subtler meanings and contradictions.

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**Brukenthal. Acta Musei, X. 2, 2015**  
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**in the Visual Culture and the Literature of 1950s Romania**

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3. Jules Perahim, [*The Party Member*], *În gura mare* (Bucharest, 1949).



4. *The Display Board of the Plenary Meeting*, Detail (1955)
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7. Camil Ressu, *In the Workshop* [1950?].
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## VISUAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH A PAINTING: *ROMANIAN FAMILY GOING TO THE FAIR. A CULTURAL APPROACH*

Maria BARNA\*

**Abstract:** *This paper is aiming to reveal the cultural information inside the painting Romanian Family Going to the Fair, from the Brukenthal Romanian Art Gallery, as its author Barabás Miklós draws into attention aspects of great importance for the study of 19<sup>th</sup> century traditional life and attires in Mărginimea Sibiului ethnographic area. The analysis method is that of visual communication as it gives the possibility to deconstruct the aesthetic image and reconstruct the slice of life.*

**Key words:** *Barabás Miklós, painting, Mărginimea Sibiului, visual communication, traditional costume*

**Rezumat:** *Prezentul studiu este axat pe reliefaarea informației culturale înglobate în pictura Mocani sălișteni mergând spre târg din Galeria de Artă Românească Brukenthal, având în vedere importante informații pe care autorul Barabás Miklós le oferă cu privire la civilizația tradițională și veșmintele specifice românilor din Mărginimea Sibiului din secolul al XIX-lea. Metoda de analiză este cea a comunicării vizuale, care dă posibilitatea deconstruirii imaginii și reconstruirii unui crâmpei de viață.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Barabás Miklós, pictură, Mărginimea Sibiului, comunicare vizuală, costum tradițional*

Paintings, like any other visual image, can be of great importance for folklorists, ethnographers and historians who can analyze them as documentary images for the depicted cultural context. So is the case with Barabás Miklós' painting *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* (Fig. 1), from the Romanian Art Gallery of Brukenthal National Museum (inv. 2156). Through means of visual communication one has the possibility to see and decode the social, cultural, anthropological and geographical information encoded in this work of art.

### Introduction to visual communication

We live in a visual 21<sup>st</sup> century, in a visual culture that bombards us with images from computers, television sets, outdoor commercials, traffic signs and so on. In such a context, reading, interpreting images and the embedded signs and symbols are facts of major importance in our everyday life. All

these have to do with visual communication, a concept widely approached only in late 20<sup>th</sup> century, though it has manifested itself for at least 39.900 years, considering the cave paintings discovered on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia. (Aubert *et al.* 2014, 224). In such a large perspective, a question arises: what is visual communication?

A definition of visual communication cannot be easily formulated, as the concept still evolves, according to the so rapidly developing technologies. Anyway, a split in the collocation helps us define it. The main term *communication* is defined as "the process of sharing meaning through continuous flow of symbolic messages" (Froemling 2011, 5), "the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium" (Oxford Dictionaries 2015).

A communication process involves the encoder (the person who sends the message), the message (the content of communication), the medium of communication, the decoder (the person who receives the information), the process of sending the message, the process of receiving the message

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and the one of feedback (Adler, Rodman 2006, 4). The concept of communication medium takes us to *visual communication*, which is “any system of signalling, in which the signals are received by the eye” (Merriam Webster 2015). This simple definition comprises all the media through which visual communication can be achieved, from drawings and paintings, to illustration, graphic design, animation, video and electronic resources, as they appeal to the eye. In the case of painting, centre point of this paper, the painter is the encoder, the message is his art work, conveyed through media like oil painting on paper, the art viewer is the decoder who gives the feedback.

The visual communication, achieved through painting and other visual artistic channels, gets us to the debate about art double signification: metaphoric - it speaks about something, often bearing a likeness to that something, and aesthetic - it speaks of itself (Jamieson 2006, 57). Thus, a work of art is a multifaceted creation that can be analysed as an assemblage based on several categories of information. Jamieson speaks about four information types: “semantic information - characteristic of an external object; expressive information - psychological processes within the artist; cultural information - cultural norms; syntactic information - characteristic of other elements of the same work” (Jamieson 2006, 48), while Paul Lester determines six perspectives: personal, historic, technical, ethical, critical, cultural (Williams, Newton 2007, 289). These possible analyses point out the fact that art is not the exclusive realm of art critics and historians, but of wider researcher categories, who can read it as an image of the time when it was produced or of the depicted time. That is they read (interpret) it in a cultural way, trying to determine how it conveys meaning within a particular society at a particular time.

Reading the cultural information in art works leads us to the socio-cultural perspective on visual communication, which is focused not upon the artist and the aesthetics, but upon the social-cultural conditions under which art is produced. But in order to correctly decode the cultural information, the decoder needs to know the right codes and conventions of a specific time and culture or, to put it in Jamieson’s terms, “the receiver of images must be lodged within the same fundamental system of perception as the creator” (Jamieson 2006, 27). Thus, the art is no longer the exclusive realm of art critics & historians, but it is also relevant for sociologists,

historians, ethnographers etc., who might know better the right codes and conventions that inform the visual image. It is the same case with the painting *Romanian Family Going to the Fair*, that can be read in a cultural perspective, too.

Before any visual analysis, we must mention that this painting does not stand alone as a pure image; it is boosted by words, like the ones in its title. This is no surprise, as “pictures rarely stand alone, and rarely communicate unambiguously when they do. The mutual support of language and image facilitates memory and interpretation, making visual communication as distinct from artistic expression as possible” (Griffin 2002, 38).

### **Semantic, expressive and syntactic information in the analysed painting**

All paintings as artefacts are given a form, which is subject to a variety of constraints: the materials used by the painter, social and cultural factors influencing him/her, the author’s inner sensibility, his art knowledge, or his/her disposition at the time of painting. Such constraining factors were mentioned in art studies regarding Barabás’ work, too.

*Romanian Family on Their Way to the Fair* is one of the best known works of Barabás Miklós, Transylvanian painter of Hungarian origin (Mărcușa, 1810–Budapest, 1898). “Barabás Miklós was one of the most outstanding Hungarian artists in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (Hungarian National Gallery 2005), a pioneer of Hungarian national art. He was an extremely prolific artist, whose work comprises more than three thousand paintings, drawings, lithographs, and watercolours; he owed his great popularity to portraits and genre scenes.

In 1843-1844, he painted *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* (oil, canvas, 138,5×110 cm), considered by his contemporaries a genuine masterpiece, the most beautiful folk genre scene of its time. The painting was exhibited with great success at the 1844 exhibition of the Vienna Art Association and later on, in Pest. Two years later it was bought by the Hungarian Civilian Guard of Pest for the National Joseph Picture Gallery and it belongs now to the National Hungarian Gallery in Budapest, inv. no. 2753 (Hungarian National Gallery 2005). The painting was followed by five replicas; one of them belongs to the Brukenthal Romanian Art Gallery and has the following characteristics: 46,8×36,3 cm, easel painting, oil,

canvas, genre scene, Biedermaier style (Mesea 2010, 31).

According to Jamieson's visual communication analysis, this short description points out semantic, expressive, syntactic and cultural information for the painting. Semantic information refers to the "intended meaning of the image, its referential aspect, the idea or thing it points to" (Jamieson 2006, 48); in our case, the painting intends to 'carry the mind' to rural characters and aspects of rural life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania.

When it comes to the expressive information embedded in, caution is necessary: it refers to the emotional or psychological state of its creator and emotion in others can be known only by inference, as we observe the painting – that is the medium, not the artist (Jamieson 2006, 48). For art critics, "the approached painting is illustrative for the Transylvanian artists' growing interest for beauties of nature, for past, historical values, for monuments and ethnography" (Mesea 2010, 26), for the artist's taste for painting fairs and cattle markets, all being a good opportunity to immortalize a diversity of human typologies (Mesea 2007, 13) and for the fact that Barabás Miklós could meet and like the Romanian peasants (Drăguț *et al.* 1976, 140). Three words are significant for the expressive information: interest (to be understood as « attraction », « curiosity »), taste (regarded as « inclination », « preference »), and like (regarded as « to be fond of »); all of them try to hint to the emotional state of the painter and were used by critics who took into consideration the artist's creation and his travel notes.

Syntactic perspective is the source of information most clearly connected with pure aesthetics and from this point of view *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* was generally appreciated for the narrative feature, representing, in foreground, a group of four people and their horse, on a country road. The woman and the two men are depicted in motion, while the young girl is sitting. The road winds from the foreground to the background, through the hills, in a similar manner to that found in Dutch landscapes. The road theme does not have only an aesthetic importance, but also a cultural one, as it suggests the lifestyle of these peasants, always on transhumance, always travelling from hills to mountain and from one region to another.

At the same time, *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* and its replicas were sometimes criticized for landscape and perspective. Analysing the 1843-1844 work, Fr. von Schindler and H. Meynert (Veress 1930, 13) stated that there are perspective mistakes (the shadow cast is unsteady) and the landscape lacks artistic force and colour intensity. We would add that in the painting preserved in Brukenthal Romanian Art Gallery, shadows are almost missing: the painter uses some darker tones, but these fail to suggest well-defined shadows.

From a chromatic point of view, the composition is dominated by white, green and ochre. White tones dominate the foreground, white being the colour of the characters' clothing. Green, the main colour in upper and middle registers, is found both on trees and the hills in the background. In order to balance the composition, there are clumps of green grass on the country road, in the lower register. Ochre reflects the human - nature strong relation, as Barabás painted humans' faces in ochre tones (lighter in the case of women, little darker in the case of men), but also the mountain road, thus suggesting man- nature osmosis. All characters depicted are peasants, whose nurture and occupation depend on nature. Accents of red break the chromatic monotony and are found on the women's aprons, on the young man's hat, and on the bridle.

The art critics remarked that stylistically the picture stands for the encounter between classicist-academic dogmas and the Biedermaier aesthetics. Although Barabás borrowed from Waldmüller's genre scenes, his creation is much more conservative, closer to the idealizing style of the Viennese painters in 1810-1830, for instance the style of Johann Ender (Mesea *et al.* 2007, 13).

A proper analysis of the cultural information in a work of art is not as simple as it might seem at first sight, because it requires more than the simple juxtaposing of generalizations about a historical context with a work from the period. It is important to describe the relationships established between the cultural context and the work being studied and to create a web of very specific connections. In the case of old paintings a good analysis gains even more importance as the painting is a visual record of an activity, a slice of past reality, which can be approached, studied and known just through 2D visual images and writings, no video and audio recordings. In such a narrow communicational context, the proper reading and interpreting of cultural information

gains more importance. But in order to correctly interpret it, the observer must have specific knowledge; otherwise his interpretation might be altered. It is the same case here: *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* catches mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pastoral life and traditional clothing, so the right cultural interpretation key is in the hands of ethnographers, sociologists and historians, as this painting is genuine research material. This assessment proves true even before the visual analyses of the cultural context, as the title proves to be tricky.

The title is not a visual element, but it can bring either a loss or an addition of cultural information. The art historian Michael Baxandall states that reading the historical context depends upon the knowledge to read, that means to have the right time and cultural background (Baxandall 1972, 79) and in this context the title of a painting can be of tremendous importance. Our painting was approached under different titles, both in Romanian and English language published works. For example, its English title is *Romanian Peasants Going to the Fair* (Mesea et al. 2007, 13), *Romanian Family on Their Way to the Fair* (Art Cyclopedica 2011), *A Romanian Family Leaving for the Market, Romanian Family Going to the Fair* (Fine Arts in Hungary 1997), *Romanian Family on their Way to the Fair* (Hungarian National Gallery 2005). In a cultural context, translation may lose cultural data: the word peasant is a clue to the social status of the protagonists, while the word family is a clue to the participation of the whole family to the fair.

There is even more to talk about the Romanian title(s): *Mocani sălișteni în drum spre târg* (Drăguț et al., 1976, 85, Mesea 2005, 2), *Țărani sălișteni în drum spre târg* (Mesea 2010, 30), *Familie română în drum spre târg* (ArtExpert Gallery) The third title can be translated as *Romanian Family Going to the Fair*, but the first ones need a deeper analysis as they point to a specific community. In the title *Țărani sălișteni în drum spre târg*, the determinant *sălișteni* is of interest as it points to Sălișteța Sibiului, a village situated 22 km of Sibiu, in Mărginimea Sibiului ethnographic area. The first title is even more specific in a cultural analysis as the noun *mocani* defines Romanian inhabitants from the mountain regions (especially in Transylvania), possessing sheep (Dex Online 2014-2015). The relevant elements in explaining the noun *mocani* are: mountain region, Romanian inhabitants and sheep

possessing, as they best support the visual cultural elements in the painting.

### Visual deconstruction, cultural reconstruction

The cultural critic Raymond Williams states that it is often the function of art to embody what we can call the common meanings of the society. Thus, the artist is not describing new experiences, but embodying known experiences. (Williams 1961, 30) It is the same case here: following the time aesthetics, Barabás Miklós channels his attention to rural areas and characters. In terms of thematic interest, a great importance might have the significant number of visual representations of the nations living in the Habsburg Empire: in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, newspapers and art folios used to publish illustrations of different attires, both traditional and modern. In the case of costume books dealing with Transylvania, there should be cited works such as: *The True and Exact Dresses and Fashions of All the Nations in Transylvania* (preserved in London, British Library), *Trachten-Kabinet von Siebenbürgen*, around 1725, *Die Bewohner Siebenbürgens*, by Daniel Joseph Leonhard (manuscript from 1816). Their study reveals stereotypical images and the fact that some folios were compilations of several other folios (Born 2011, 66) rather than the result of direct observation. In this regard an often cited example is that of the Ottoman appearing on the cover of the costume book *The True and Exact Dresses and Fashions of All the Nations in Transylvania*.

In such a cultural and publishing context, Barabás individualizes himself through his significant interest in depicting Romanian peasants, not as stereotypical images, but as a result of direct observation, which has been underlined by the author in his notes. Barabás kept a well-documented register, where he used to write his works, the person who ordered them and the money he received for each of them. In his study *The Painter Barabás and the Romanians*, Andrei Veress records about 150 works representing Romanian people, most of them noblemen's portraits. Still, Veress registers 13 paintings that depict Romanian peasants or scenes representative for their lifestyle: *Drumul de pe malul Oltului român la intrare în Turnu Roșu / Turnu Roșu Passage, on Olt Riverside* (aquarelle, 1831), *Trei țărani români gușafi / Three Goitrous Romanian Peasants* (1832), *Români culegând struguri / Romanian Peasants Harvesting Grapes* (1838),



*Floare* (drawing, 1838), *Paznicul de vie / Guarding the Vineyard* (1839), *Țăran român / Romanian Peasant* (1839, drawing), *Româncă / Romanian Woman* (aquarelle, 1840), *Ardeleancă / Woman from Transylvania* (drawing, 1840), *Vânător de urs român / Romanian Hunting a Bear* (sepia drawing, 1843), *Mocani sălișteni în drum spre târg* (oil painting, 1844), *Români / Romanian Peasants* (1845), *Româncă / Romanian Woman* (1846), *Român strângând lemne în pădure / Romanian Peasant Gathering Firewoods* (Veress 1930, 33-34). These works were realized during a large period, 1831 – 1845, and they are relevant for the author's interest in the Romanian civilization from youth to artistic maturity. It should also be noted that even after moving to Pest, in 1835, Barabás continued to travel and work in Transylvania; for example, in 1838 the artist visited the Cetea village and took part at grapes gathering; little afterwards he drew two sketches representing Romanian peasants harvesting grapes (Veress 1930, 9).

Two documentary sources show that Barabás was a keen observer of the Romanian peasants, of their lifestyle and traditional attires. The first one regards the drawing *Floare*, printed by the engraver Carl Meyer in Nürnberg. In a letter sent to Toldy in January 1839, Barabás displays his discontent to the engraving, as in Carl Meyer's stamp the woman's clothing looks more like a dress, instead of the traditional Romanian underskirt (Veress 1930, 10). This clearly shows that the author aimed to a realistic depiction, instead of a stereotypical one.

The second documentary sources of great importance are Barabás' journal and the register regarding his art works. Diary fragments (translated into Romanian and published by Andrei Veress) show that the painter recorded episodes that would inspire his later works. For example, in the early spring of 1831, he travelled from Sibiu to Bucharest and had to wait at the custom in Turnu Roșu for a while; here it is the starting point of the aquarelle *Turnu Roșu Passage, on Olt Riverside*, depicting four characters: a Romanian woman carrying a sack on her back, a Romanian man herding a horse and a noble man, riding the horse and another Romanian peasant barely visible far away.

In the context of Transylvanian costumes illustrations and of Barabás' work, we appreciate that the painting *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* individualizes itself due to the realistic depiction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanian traditional

attire. The demonstration will follow two distinctive resources: ethnographical studies and art works with similar subject realized by artists living in 19<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania.

In order to re-create the cultural frame, the visual analysis begins with the background of the painting. From an artistic perspective, by painting mountains and winding country roads, the artist responds to the Romantic spirit and to the Biedermaier elements he became familiar with while studying in Sibiu with Franz Neuhauser, founder of the Transylvanian landscape school (Mesea 2011, 60). But this background is not just an aesthetic choice: though the human settlement of Săliște's elevation ranges from 525-600 meters, shepherds used to live in the village for short periods during winter, while they spent the summer in pastoral huts, high in the mountains up to 2000 meters elevation. In this regard, the mountain background becomes a socio-cultural clue for transhumance, the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between fixed summer and winter pastures.

The highest cultural interest is raised by the characters in the foreground: the peasants going to the fair. Barabás' choice to paint a Romanian shepherd family finds its support in meeting peasants during his staying in Sibiu. He lived here for at least two years (1827-1828), while working at the Lithographic Institute with Michael Bieltz and taking drawing lessons with Franz Neuhauser (Mesea *et al.* 2007, 138). Neuhauser's tutorials were significant for Barabás' growing taste in painting fairs and cattle markets, which gave artists the opportunity to immortalize a diversity of human typologies, with characteristics which reveal their ethnic origin, their social and even their religious status (Mesea *et al.* 2007, 13).

Aesthetically, one character drew maximum attention: the woman sitting on horseback. Art critics pointed out that the feminine model of this character is Johann Ender's *Greek Girl*. (Mesea *et al.* 2007, 13). And Barabás Miklós knew well Ender's painting, as in 1829 he went to the Vienna Academy as a student of Johann Ender. The similarities in depicting the two characters are obvious, especially when dealing with the headwear, but for ethnographers the woman's headdress goes beyond an aesthetic similarity. In an interview given by professor Ilie Moise in April 2016, this ethnographer and folklorist states that the depicted headwear is *vilitura* or *vălitura* or *velitura* (Fig. 2), specific to married women in Mărginimea Sibiului, in former

times; the newly wed woman was ritually put on vilitura right after the wedding, the community thus marking her passage from one social status to another.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, vilitura was daily dressed by married women (Bănescu 1985, 349) and it insured protection against rain and sun. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century young wives were wearing it just on special occasions; nowadays, it is rarely worn, usually by old women on holidays, weddings, funerals. Art works depicting vilitura help folklorists to recreate the diachronic evolution of this cloth, considered to be the most complex and outstanding headdress in the area. Vilitura is made out of two items: a white coif and a fine white veil. The coif was put on right on top of the head and it was covered with the veil, a very fine linen fabric - usually up to 2.50 meters long and 2.70 meters wide. Considering the large size, the process of putting this headdress is very complicated and implies a good knowledge of headwear, a handy woman to help and the use of long sticks to wrap the linen around the head. The Romanian noun *velitură* or *vilitură* perfectly describes the wrapping process, as the noun is derived from the verb *a înveli*, meaning to wrap.

In this context, a painting depicting 19<sup>th</sup> century vilitura is of tremendous importance, just as all its other visual representations (paintings, stamps, engravings, drawings) coming from 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this regard, there must be mentioned an engraving signed by Laurentius Toppeltinus, the prints published by Johannes Troster, the works of J. Leonhard, Franz Neuhauser, G. G. Schnell (Bănescu 1985, 350).

The accuracy of Barabas` depiction is revealed when comparing his work with two other items, both created in the same period. The first item is offered by the Transylvanian costumes lithographies published by Georg Gottlieb Schnell in 1842, in order to illustrate *The Handbook of the Superior School and the Evangelic Gymnasium*. A lithography entitled *Eine Walachen aus der Gegend bei Hermannstadt / Romanian Woman from Sibiu Area* depicts a peasant wearing vilitura, a white blouse with large sleeves and black embroideries, a white underskirt, covered by a front apron, in red and blue tones (Fig. 3). The second item of comparison is Daniel Joseph Leonhard`s 1816 manuscript *Die Bewohner Siebenbürgens / Transylvania`s Inhabitants*, comprising both costume illustrations and written

information. The illustration entitled *Resinarer Walach mit Seinen Weib in Sommerkleid / Peasant from Rășinari, with His Wife, in Summer* (Fig. 4) depicts a woman wearing the same headwear vilitura, a white blouse with red embroideries and a front apron waved in blue and brown tones.

The woman`s blouse, traditionally called *ia*, is also of great cultural interest as it differentiates from those worn today, especially from a chromatic point of view. The 19<sup>th</sup> century works display adorned elements, all embroidered in blue and red, while today *ia* is embroidered only in black and white. Red colour is also to be found on the woman`s *cătrînța*, front aprons made of a single width of woven material. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the red apron is again surprising for Mărginea Sibiului, but it confirms the fact that 200 years ago, aprons were woven in different colours, like red, blue, and brown (Moise, Klusch 1979, 32).

All these chromatic changes might be difficult to explain to those who do not know the history of the traditional costume from Mărginea Sibiului. The correct denomination for the contemporary white and black costume would be national costume, not traditional cloth. Written and visual elements show that Romanian women from this area used to wear floral and multi-coloured attires, in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The white and black costume was especially created for two events: the opening of the museum of the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People in 1905, and the National Exhibition in 1906, when it was worn by a young woman from Săliște, Maria Peligrad; in short time, it was adopted as representative for Mărginea Sibiului and afterwards it surpassed its limits to Oltenia and Banat, due to transhumance.

The second woman depicted by Barabás Miklós is dressed similarly to the main female character, but her head is not covered and she is bare footed. Read in the cultural code, both elements are clues of her status of being unmarried girl.

Both women carry wooden vessels, most probably with cheese, cheese being one of the most common trade products in Mărginea Sibiului. It is well known that beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people from Săliște grew famous for their commercial spirit. During transhumance, they used to sell products made at home (cheese, sheepskin large coats) and buy cereals and so on (Irimie, Popa 1985, 202-203). So the painting`s

mixed cultural information of a shepherd and merchant family is in totally accordance with the social reality.

Mixed cultural information goes further, as the younger man depicted in profile wears traditional attire specific to Mărginimea Sibiului and Wallachia. The design of the brown felt hat with red ribbon is characteristic for Wallachia, while the white shirt (with long, large sleeves) and the trousers are specific to Sibiu. The proper key in deciphering this cultural mixing is transhumance again. Shepherds and stocks travelled from Mărginimea Sibiului to Banat, Wallachia and even to the Crimean Peninsula etc.; the shepherds introduced here civilization items specific to Transylvania and borrowed significant cultural elements specific to the visited regions. In conclusion, transhumance brought not only a commercial barter, but also a cultural one, so well reflected in Barabás Miklós' painting. In Leonhard's illustration *Resinarer Walach mit Seinen Weib in Somerleid* (Fig. 4), the husband's attire displays a hat similar to the one of the young man in Barabás' painting.

The old man's attire preserves very well the characteristics of the depicted epoch: the white woven material of trousers and chemise, the sheepskin large coat, the fur hat and the belt. Ethnographically, two elements need further discussion. The first of them is the fur hat, depicted in white, just like in the old times, in contrast with today's black. We must mention that white fur hat came out of use around the First World War; its Romanian name is *căciulă mocăneasă*, the adjective *mocăneasă* being derived from the noun *mocan* and thus showing its specificity to this community. The trousers are also of ethnographic importance: the painter depicted specific trousers, traditionally called *cioareci*, which came out of daily use around 1920; moreover, the trousers display the traditional embroidering called *mielușei*, so they are important also from the perspective of traditional crafts. The wide belt, called *chimir*, is made of strong leather, decorated by punching, and it supports the knife. This type of belt is to be found in Leonhard's illustrations *Resinarer Walach mit Seinen Weib in Somerleid* (Fig. 4) and *Ein Hermannstaedter Mairer mit seinem Weib im Winterkleid / Romanian Living Outside*

*the Hermannstadt Citadel, together with his Wife, in Winter Time* (Fig.5).

The old shepherd holds a staff, a customary object for this traditional occupation as it conveys support to man while standing, and is also a tool for self-defence in case of danger.

The comparison of the men's traditional attires suggests a social reality: old people remain faithful to the known lifestyle and to the traditional occupation of shepherding, while youngsters are already practicing a new occupation, that of merchants. The idea of a community both traditional (through shepherding) and modern (through newly introduced commerce) is strengthened by the characters represented in the middle ground, all resuming the peasants in the foreground.

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In the end, a conclusion is reached: Barabás might have known stereotypical representations of Romanian peasants, but he also knew the Romanian peasants through means of direct observation and such an affirmation is documented by his notes, but also by words expressed by his contemporary Theodor Glatz, painter and photographer. Glatz lived in Sibiu beginning with 1843 and represented in his works Romanian peasants too, so his opinion might be acknowledged as one of a connoisseur. In an article published in the newspaper *Pester Zeitung*, Glatz appreciated the realistic depiction of the painting *Romanian Family Going to the Fair* and underlined that, here, Romanian peasants are not presented in an unfounded presentable manner; he clearly notes that the Romanian people from the Saxon areas live a better life and thus their attires are clean and in good condition, just like Barabás represented them (Veress 1930, 12). Thus we consider that this painting successfully gives ethnographic details on Mărginimea Sibiului specific attires in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, this snapshot in a specific past moment is important as it offers comparison items for a diachronic vision on the traditional background. But this background can be fully known only if one has the proper cultural luggage and personal memories to rely on (Shimamura, 2013, 151), meaning information from different culture fields.

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**Brukenthal. Acta Musei, X. 2, 2015**  
**Visual Communication through a Painting:**  
**Romanian Family Going to the Fair. A Cultural Approach**

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3. Schnell Georg Gottlieb, *Romanian Woman from Sibiu Area* (lithography). In: *Traditional costumes from Transylvania. Polychromatic Reproductions after G. Schnell*, Wien, M. Toma, f.a, Brukenthal National Museum – Brukenthal Library, III 8286.
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### LISTA ILUSTRAȚIILOR

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2. Vuia Romulus, *Două bătrâne. Poiana Sibiului* (fotografie, 1928). Muzeul Etnografic al Transilvaniei
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2. Vuia Romulus, *Old Women. Poiana Sibiului*



3. Schnell G.G., *Romanian Woman from Sibiu Area*



4. Leonhard D.J., *Peasant from Rășinari, with His Wife, in Summer*



4. Leonhard D.J., *Peasant from Rășinari, with His Wife, in Summer*



## TRADITIONAL FORM IN THE NON-TRADITIONAL CONTEXT, OR THE INSTRUMENTS OF RENTING AND LEASING IN FINE ARTS

Irina Georgievna KHANGELDIEVA

**Abstract:** *The article studies the recognition of modern development tendencies in the field of culture and art in Europe and Russia. The author considers the use of renting and leasing technologies as the basic trends, which were untypical for fine arts until a recent date. The main reasons for the appearance and consolidation of these tendencies are considered. The purpose of this article is to show that presently, the art undergoes a number of transformations triggered by the emergence of new aesthetic needs of different social groups that could not be satisfied by using traditional instruments, mechanisms and institutions. Technologies, which were earlier typical only for the business practice, are currently implemented into different institutions involved in the field of fine arts.*

**Key words:** *Culture, art, fine arts, museum, gallery, renting, leasing, art rental service.*

**Rezumat:** *Articolul are drept temă de studio tendințele moderne din domeniul culturii și artei în Europa. Autoarea consideră că practica de închiriere și de leasing, care au apărut relativ recent în acest domeniu, sunt atipice. În articol sunt discutate apariția și dezvoltarea acestor practici.*

*Articolul evidențiază o serie transformări determinate de faptul că nevoile artistice ale unor categorii sociale nu mai sunt satisfăcute de instrumente, mecanisme și instituții tradiționale. Practici care, înainte, erau caracteristice numai mediului de afaceri sunt, în prezent adoptate de instituții al căror obiect de activitate sunt artele frumoase.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Cultură, arte frumoase, muzeu, galerie, închiriere, leasing, servicii de închiriere a obiectelor de artă*

### Relevance of using renting and leasing in modern fine arts.

The present environment of culture and art is substantially differed from the preceding times. The 21<sup>st</sup> century substantially changed traditional views regarding institutional forms of art existence in general and fine arts in particular, which became very vivid during the last twenty years<sup>1</sup> (Khangeldieva 2010). They are characterized by polyphonic complexity. The

changes related to the high social dynamics along with global changes, had substantial impact on art and culture.

Macroeconomic factors affecting the development of business and non-commercial organizations compel their representatives to look for new instruments and mechanisms to overcome relevant difficulties. The global recession of 2009 still forces many countries to optimize production and minimize expenses. The non-material production, which involves the sphere of culture and art, is not the exception in this case. In this respect, market relations cannot be “put aside” even under the cultural policy of paternalist type. Similar circumstances stimulate the search of non-traditional development methods for the organizations involved in culture and art. Today these non-traditional methods include such economic instruments, as *renting* and *leasing*.

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<sup>1</sup>The post-Soviet countries (the former USSR territory) showed the most vivid dynamics in this case, including the East European countries where market reforms caused dramatic changes.

The author used both general and specific research methods including observation, description, interviews, analysis, synthesis, the unity of historical and logical methods, the ascent from the abstract to the concrete, and the comparative analysis. This study has a strongly pronounced interdisciplinary character; this determined the complex approach implementation, which included various aspects of the problem, in particular, the economic, cultural and social ones.

### **The concepts of renting, leasing and their modification in the practice of fine arts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.**

As regards the first concept, modern dictionaries define renting as the act of paying for the use of something. Renting (from the Latin word *arrendare* – to charter) is a kind of a property agreement, which stipulates that the property be *passed into the temporary possession and use* (or only into the temporary use) of the renter for the rent payment. The yield, products and profits, obtained by the renter using the rented property, belong to his property, according to this agreement<sup>2</sup>.

Renting is a specific economic instrument of interrelations between the owner and non-owners. The owner is a lessor, and the renter is a non-owner in these inter relations. This instrument is commonly used when speaking about immovable or movable property. However, the times change, and the application of such instruments, as classical rent also change, and today its application is considerably expanded. Renting of modern paintings can be demonstrated by the experience of “Verkatehdas” centre in Haamenlinna (Finland) (Khangeldieva 2011), where the pictures are exhibited with two price

labels (the total cost of the picture and the cost of its monthly rent).

Thus, the artistic canvas (paintings, graphic works, pictures etc.) could be either purchased or rented for a different term, starting from one month. Keeping in mind the appropriate cost of rent, any legal entity or physical person could become a renter. Therefore, the renting can be prolonged and it was eventually possible to purchase it, in fact due to the invested rent. Otherwise, one can return a canvas to the showroom owner and rent other work or terminate contractual relations with the showroom. The renters’ practice showed that this service was in demand and even popular in the city. The canvases were rented both by offices and by private citizens.

Thus, one can state that renting in the field of fine arts is the transfer of a work of art (pictorial and decorative paintings, graphics, sculptures or any other work of art) to temporary ownership for a fee and for a certain period.

Renting is an instrument of contractual economic relations, which can be concluded directly with an owner or with middleman, similar to the case of a showroom in the “Verkatehdas” centre. An artist signed the contract with a showroom on certain terms and exhibited his works in it, allowing their rent. In this case, an artist pays an intermediary rate to the showroom with a view to advance and realize his works in different forms. In other words, the artist draws commercial interest from renting. Taking the “Verkatehdas” centre as an example, one can be familiarized not only with the classic instrument of renting related to fine arts, but also with leasing.

Classical renting in fine arts is based on the temporary use of artistic works, as a rule, along with monetary compensation for provided services.

*Leasing* is understood here as a long-term rent with the subsequent possibility of redemption followed by the property rights. The transfer of an object to the possession of a person or a company under certain conditions forms the fundamental difference between renting and leasing.

Today leasing is rather widespread in different areas of social activity. There are various definitions of leasing, which emphasize different features of this phenomenon. However, leasing is primarily defined as the long-term renting of the

<sup>2</sup>According to the article 606 of the Civil Code of Russian Federation, with reference to the rental agreement, the lessor is obliged to provide a property to a renter for the payment into temporary possession and use or into temporary use. It means that after the conclusion of a rental contract, a renter can use the rented property. The material character of the rent result is on hand. According to the article 607 of the Civil Code of Russian Federation, the object of rental contract is land plots and other isolated natural objects, enterprises and other proprietary complexes, buildings, constructions, equipment, transport means and other things, which don’t lose their natural properties in the process of their use (unused things).

property with subsequent right to its redemption, as it was mentioned above.

The Finnish centre “Verkatehdas”, with regard to one of its subdivisions, created a structure which simultaneously actualized several intermediary functions between the artist and the public (final consumer): exhibition area, art gallery of modern fine art, artistic salon-shop, having the right to sell the works of art, intermediary institution like the art rental service, which could execute contractual relations as regards renting and leasing.

Leasing is not a simple long-term renting; this kind of renting provides potential change of the owner. In this regard, leasing is interpreted as a form of credit. Monthly payment gives any user the possibility to use the lease in his/her own interest, starting from the moment of the signing of the contract, as is the case with renting. However, on a certain stage of the leasing contract implementation, this user may decide to become lease owner, i.e. to execute the right of redemption, which is not envisaged by renting. In this aspect, leasing has a broader meaning than rent, both notionally and instrumentally, as it envisages additional rights and functions. However, under certain circumstances the lease beneficiary can return it to the owner without any consequences given the contract observance. The main difference between renting and leasing is that in the first case the object of contractual relations does not change the owner, and in the second case such change is possible.

The researchers pay attention to the fact that the world leasing history counts more than two thousand years (Gazman 2008). The economic-legal relations similar to leasing were well known to the ancient civilizations of the East Mediterranean, for example, in the Sumerian state, and later on, in the culture of the Ancient Greece and Rome. This form of contractual relations was quite widely used in subsequent cultural-historical times, being either more or less extended. Already by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was used in the field of culture and art, but not so actively, and as a rule, such relations were not directly connected with artistic works.

#### **The main types of renting in the field of art**

Today traditional technologies, which were earlier inherent to the real economy and business structures, often find new sense in the field of culture and art.

The examples of simple renting are well-known in this field, considering the concert grounds, theatrical halls, movie theatres, separate premises in museums and other real estate assets, which belong to the cultural organizations.

It is well-known that museums provide their halls for conducting different social-cultural events, projects and filming. For example, the well-known fantasy fiction film “Night at the museum”, which action takes place in the New York Museum of Natural History, was made directly in this museum. In Russia “the considerable share of budgetary investments of the Pereslavl railway museum is formed due to the profits gained from filming. The A.S. Pushkin Literary museum in Prechistenka was the most successful filming ground in Russia. Its premises are well-known through different television programmes, corporate anniversaries and different festivities, project presentations, and meetings with book authors and even defiles of fashion cloth collections” (Katina 2011).

Renting of the real estate related to culture is a widespread phenomenon. Renting of the same objects for cultural events is less widespread, but today this process is more common in Russia.

Musical instruments are the traditional subjects of rent in the field of culture and art. Musical instruments are rented by both separate performers and creative art workers. The transfer of unique musical instruments into temporary use becomes a common practice. It is well-known, that the M. I. Glinka all-Russian musical association in Moscow has a collection of very rare string musical instruments based upon the private collection of K. V. Tretyakov – a person bearing the same name as the founder of the famous Tretyakov gallery (Yanin 2001)

During the Soviet period, the M. I. Glinka museum gave its instruments to the prominent musicians of USSR. Today this practice changed dramatically. The association has the possibility to give the unique musical instruments to well-known musicians-performers or to creative art workers for temporary use over a very limited period.

The mechanism of similar services provision is plainly stated. It is regulated by the order of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation dated 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009, No. 842 “On the Adoption of the Single Rules of Forming, Registration, Preservation and Use of the Museum

Assets and Museum Collections Stored in the Museums of the Russian Federation”<sup>3</sup>.

It is well-known that renting is frequently used by the world museum brands. This refers primarily to the intra-museum renting, when the renting contract is concluded between the museums, i.e. between legal entities.

As an example, it is possible to present the recent sensational story related to the transmission of the river god Ilissos statue from the Parthenon collection of marble sculptures, created in Phidias' workshop in 438-432 BCE, by the British museum to the Russian “Hermitage”, for *temporary storage* on the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in the “Hermitage” (Kuzichkin 2014).

Sometimes museums as legal entities rented canvases from private persons (collectors or modern artists). Today the modern thematic exhibition in the museums of fine arts is rarely held without pictures from private collections. There are other examples, when museums rent their exhibits to private persons. N. P. Katina mentions this fact in her dissertation “*Cultural Product Dynamics in Modern Museum Environments*”. The author rightfully stresses that “provision of the museum subjects for lease is one of the “closed” themes for discussion among the Russian museum researchers. In the European countries, small museums use to hand over the museum subjects for rent to private persons. For example, each interested person can rent the work of art, kept in the store-rooms of the Art gallery of the Leeds city in England. It is cheap, 4 pounds sterling per month” (Katina 2011). It should be noted, however, that this author understands leasing as renting in this context, i.e. the contractual relations do not result in redemption of artistic work.

### **Art rental services as an official tool of renting and leasing in fine arts.**

Presently, the idea of art rental service has been revived and developed both generally in the world and, particularly, in Russia. The art rental service is a modern organization, which is engaged in leasing the works of fine art for the wide public.

In today's society, there are separate aesthetically advanced groups of people who do not have the

status of collectors but who need to interact more closely with the art and, in particular, with fine arts. Representatives of these groups, as a rule, are not satisfied with getting aesthetic pleasure from the contemplation of artistic works in the exhibition and museum halls. They want to have direct access to the paintings, decorative pictures or graphics and to be in close and permanent contact with them. However, they are short of funds to purchase the paintings. Modern art rental services can solve this problem of fine arts.

Historically, the art rental service as an instrument of rent appeared in the United States of America in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of art rental service became popular in 1960s in the developed European countries, where art was the special priority, namely in: Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany. The idea of art rental services became the most popular in the 1960s in all developed European countries, where specific priority was given to art, namely in the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany. The art rental service received official status exactly in Germany in 1960s (Zmeul 2005). During that period, the countries of the European Economic Community were characterized by economic growth, which resulted in the considerable improvement of the middle class living standards. The European art rental service promoted the solution of many socio-cultural questions, in particular, the growth of cultural potential of the middle class, the development of its aesthetic requirements, development of artistic taste and what is more important – this service provided relevant mechanism to satisfy these tastes and needs. The European art rental service combined two important principles: availability and replacement.

The United States, for instance, is more oriented at modern art. The “Hang Art” company offers the artistic works for rent at the rate of 10% from their official cost per month. If a client decides afterwards to purchase the artistic work, it would cost him much cheaper – 50% from the amount, paid for the rent, will be deducted (Sukharev 2013).

In Britain, the situation is somewhat different: original art, modern art in the form of prints on the canvas, photos of artistic canvases are rented according to the price-list. The prices are relatively low: paintings– starting from 15 pounds sterling per month, prints (copies of originals, made using a certain technique), mounted in

<sup>3</sup><http://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/97240/#ixzz3Qr4Tbge3>

frames – from 10 pounds sterling per month (Sukharev 2013).

In France, where contemporary art is traditionally supported by the state; both renting and leasing are used. Some art critics (Kikodze 2005, 32) consider that renting instruments are used for works, which are chosen for exhibitions and leasing is more suitable for the private persons.

In this regard, Italy is known for contemporary art depositories, which can be used by the interested persons for obtaining the picturesque works under arrangement with authors and on their terms. However, along with the works of contemporary art Italy can offer the hand-made copies of great Italian masters of different epochs. Renting the copy of “Mona Lisa” and other outstanding selected works can cost 45 euro per month. The Modigliani’s copies are cheaper – about 30 euro per month (Kikodze 2005, 32).

The table below presents the comparison between the cost of rent and the cost of tickets to the most famous Italian museums, which collected world-known masterpieces<sup>4</sup> (Table 1).

Visiting the well-known Italian museum in Italy is cheaper than renting of a high-quality copy of Italian piece of art for one month.

In Germany art rental service is a widespread phenomenon, there are more than 30 such organisations only in Berlin (Pommereau 2004). Due to the specific features of German mentality, leasing of the artistic works is regulated more distinctly, than in other countries. Only a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany can rent the artistic work or take it for lease. In other aspects, everything is quite democratic: the cost of obligatory insurance – 50 cents; one can rent no more than 3 works for the period of 6 months; the ordinary renting cost is 5 euro for a picture for 2 months (Vetrova 2013).

The art rental service is the most typical trend in the developed countries with stable economies. There are dozens if not hundreds of agencies, organizations and institutions in Europe and in the U.S., which provide renting and leasing in the field of fine arts; this is indicated by different websites offering similar services around the world.

There are only few such institutions in Russia; being part of the collections (public or private), these structures are not independent. This institute is not so widespread in Russia as in the United States and Europe, but it has already appeared. The first art rental services in Russia belong to private owners of modern art. In this regard, one can note the example of the centre of modern art M'ARS<sup>5</sup> and the collection of the well-known art dealer Marat Gelman. The average cost of the picturesque canvas in M'ARS makes US\$ 50 per month. The minimum renting period is six months, with a view to receive no less than US \$300 from a client; otherwise, this activity becomes disadvantageous for a gallery.

M. Gelman expressed an interesting observation regarding functioning of the art rental service in Russia: “The first condition for creation of art rental service at the gallery is to have a large and sufficiently different collection... The efficiency of my art rental service is provided by the availability of the silk graphic workshop and many graphics... The second condition is the renting of works in case of a long-term exhibition project... It is profitable for me only if the work, which I am not going to sell, travels all over the world, published in the catalogues, press, and becomes more known” (Kikodze 2005, 33).

At the state level, the first art rental service in the post-reform Russia was created in the State centre of modern art (Государственный центр современного искусства). The payment for using the works today makes about 5 % in a month from the insurance cost. This price includes the obligatory insurance and delivery of works to the exhibition site.

### **Conclusion**

Renting and leasing become the widespread forms of contractual relations at the present stage of the world art development. They are used quite actively in the countries with stable economy and high living standards. These instruments provide better the aesthetic needs of different target audiences and promote their growth. Today, the art rental services around the world became the additional subjects in the modern art market. Through the instruments of renting and leasing, these services are able to perform various

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.rome-museum.com/booking-tickets.php>. It is official site, where the tickets could be bought online.

<sup>5</sup>M'ARS – contemporary art center in Moscow, founded in 1988. Renting activity started there in two years, in 1990.

functions thus meeting different socio-cultural needs. The art rental services provide the aesthetic development in modern cultural space.

Thus, with regard to the above-mentioned material, it should be noted that renting and leasing are presently quite actively used in the sphere of culture and art to satisfy the aesthetic

needs of the public. The use of renting instruments in the sphere of the executive arts, in particular, theatrical, more specifically, the musical-theatrical (opera and ballet), could be of interest for the future studies in this field.

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STATISTICS ON SAMUEL VON BRUKENTHAL'S COLLECTION OF BOOKS  
PRINTED IN BRITAIN\*

Alexandru-Ilie MUNTEANU\*\*

**Abstract:** *This paper tries to offer a general image on the configuration of Samuel von Brukenthal collection of books printed in Britain, by the use of statistics, the first made on this segment of the baron's library. The starting point of the research was Brukenthalisches Bibliothekskatalog, a three volume manuscript containing all the titles that Brukenthal possessed.*

**Key words:** *Samuel von Brukenthal, statistics, collection, books, Britain.*

**Rezumat:** *În acest articol încerc să ofer o imagine generală asupra configurației cărților tipărite în Insulele Britanice din colecția baronului Samuel von Brukenthal, prin utilizarea de statistici, primele făcute asupra acestor cărți. Am pornit cercetarea de la Brukenthalisches Bibliothekskatalog, un manuscris în trei volume care conține toate titlurile din biblioteca baronului.*

**Cuvinte cheie :** *Samuel von Brukenthal, statistici, colecție, cărți, Britania*

**Introduction and methodology:** What is a book? A simple question at first sight, but how can one define a book when the object that we nowadays name as such, had in the past different physical forms? How can one define what is a book when we have a particular image of how a book is edited? When, for example, books from the 18<sup>th</sup> century have under the same binding two or more different page titles?<sup>1</sup> Albert Labarre said that to better understand the book, we should focus on its functionality (keeping and easily transmitting written information) and to try to free ourselves from the present stereotypical image that we have when we think of a book (Labarre 2001, 11-21).

To simplify things the numbers used here reflect the number of entries in the *Brukenthalisches Bibliothekskatalog*, a three volume manuscript dating from the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that make up the inventory of the Brukenthal library at

the time mentioned. So for example, if M(ary) Prince de Beaumont's, *Instructions for young ladies* is present in the library with two physical volumes, and with four tomes, we counted them as one book, as in one title, as one entry. However, the sorting process of book entries from this particular inventory consisted also in the reduction of some entries due to the fact that some books appear twice, once at the initial letter of the author's name and a second time at the initial from a main word in the book title. We reduced these double entries and counted them as one number in the statistics.

Moreover for cases such as Bell's Edition of *The Poets of Great Britain from Chaucer to Churchill*, we counted them as 47 books, that being the number of poets that the 109 volumes of Bell's Edition contains.

We included not just the books printed in English or in any other language indigenous to the British Isles (for example, Welsh). Instead, we labelled as British, all the books printed in the British Isles, regardless of the language of the print. So, the research has been done also on books in Latin, French, Italian and even in Greek that were printed in Britain.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Guarini Battista, *Il Pastor fido, e la Idropica*, London, 1736, v.II.4296-97. This is one book with two different titles, with two different entry/identification numbers in the Brukenthal library.

This paper will not take into consideration the books printed in Britain that came in the library after Samuel von Brukenthal. The numbers reflect Brukenthal's collection, without the acquisitions made after his death.

This research is a quantitative one. Studying Brukenthal's collection of books printed in Britain implies, besides some of the basic bibliography that has been written on the general topic (Jugăreanu 1957, 1970; Zsigmond 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013; Ittu 2007, 2008; Doltu 2008; Ordeanu, 2007; Șerbănescu 2010), a full check of the three volumes of the *Brukenthalisches Bibliothekskatalog* and verifications in the inventory registers finished in the late 1950s'. The data presented here has been introduced in a database after consulting these three manuscripts with additional help from the inventories from the Communist period. The old books cited and named can be found with simplified titles at the end of this paper, each with its library registration number.

As is the case in most statistics, the numbers used in this paper are relative ones, due to incomplete library registers. Moreover, some titles do not have a place, nor the year of publishing written. For these reasons the numbers in the graphics will not always add up perfectly.

Still, the differences are small and we estimate that even the additional corrections, if they are to be made, will not change the actual number of books printed in Britain that Samuel von Brukenthal possessed, nor would they alter their geographic (place of publication), linguistic (language of print) and chronological (year/century of publication) configuration by more than 2%. I estimated this percentage because over 98% of book printed in the British Isles from this collection have a valid library number with details of publication written (year, place of appearance etc).

### Samuel von Brukenthal

The son of a petty Protestant nobleman from Leschkirch (today Nocrich), Michael Breckner (1676-1736) and his wife, Susanna Conrad von Heydendorf (dead in 1734), Samuel von Brukenthal (1721-1803) would advance in the Habsburg state apparatus, becoming governor of the Grand Principality of Transylvania in 1777. Throughout his years of studying and travelling in various towns and cities within the Holy Roman Empire, like Vienna, Halle etc, he came into contact with members of the Central-European aristocracy and began to establish contacts and

also to adopt their cultural model. With this, he started his collection of books, art-work and antiquities (Ittu 2007, 23-32).

Among the 15.972 volumes that the governor of the Grand Principality of Transylvania, Samuel von Brukenthal, had in his library (Jugăreanu 1957, 3; Zsigmond 2006, 107), approximately 700 titles (not volumes) were printed in various locations from the British Isles: London, Cambridge, Oxford, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Glasgow. From Greek-Roman classical authors to famous British writers and philosophers of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Samuel von Brukenthal's collection of books printed in the British Isles is undoubtedly one of the most valuable in Central and Eastern Europe, both by its large number of books and by the authors and titles it contains.

### Books printed in the English Capital

Most of the 700 titles were printed in London; 499 to be more specific. Two of these 499 books: Erasmus of Rotterdam, *In laudem stultitiæ...* (1765) and Emilie Corbett, *Les malheurs d'un Guerre Civile: roman politique, à l'occasion de la dernière guerre entre l'Angleterre et ses colonies* (1783) have two places of publication, London and Paris.

Moreover, other two titles also have two or more places of publication. These are: Maittaire Michael, *Annales Typographici*, from 1719-1741, published in The Hague, London and Amsterdam and one more book with a English-Dutch location, *Lettres et Memoires pour servir a l'histoire...du Cap Breton* (1760), published in London and The Hague.

Among other books printed in London, there are: John Locke, *The Works in three volumes* (1751), Daniel Defoe's, *The life and strange surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1766), Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* (1778), William Shakespeare, *The Plays in ten volumes* (1785), to name just a few.

The oldest book in English from Samuel von Brukenthal's collection, John Lightfoot, *Ervbhin or miscellanies Christian and Judaic all*, from 1629, was also printed in London.

### Brukenthal's books from Cambridge and Oxford

The number of books printed in Cambridge and Oxford combined is much smaller than the

number of prints from London. Twenty-six of Brukenthal's books printed in Britain came from Cambridge, while 68 from Oxford.

One striking difference between the books from Cambridge and Oxford, on the one hand, and those from London, on the other, is represented by the mainly scholarly orientated titles, both by subject and by language of the print (Latin dominates numerically). Half of the Cambridge books that Brukenthal possessed are editions of classical Greek-Roman authors: Cicero, with six books, is accompanied by other sought-after authors from the Antiquity in those times: Aeschines, Demades, Demosthenes, Dinarchus, Euripides, Eusebius, Socrates and Sophocles.

Brukenthal's books from Oxford are not much different than those from Cambridge. Authors and books like: Euclidis, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Aristotle, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1696), Suetonius, and many other, with substantial text in Greek (many bilingual editions, Latin-Greek) give the image of an environment where the local university is the big producer and consumer of books. Some of them, as was the case of Theophrasti, *Characteres ethicii* (Cambridge, 1712), were printed at local university printing press (*Impensis Cornelii Crownfield, Celeberimae Academiae Typographi*).

### Samuel von Brukenthal's books printed in Birmingham

Samuel von Brukenthal possessed eleven books printed in Birmingham. All of them date from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and apart from the John Baskerville edition, from 1773, of *Characteristick of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, who was an English author, all the other 10 books represent writings of Classical Roman authors like: Florus, Lucretius, Salustius, Terentius, Virgilius etc.

### Brukenthal's books from Edinburgh and Glasgow

Brukenthal's oldest book from England is Casaubonii Isaac's, *Ad frontonem Dvcaevm Theologiumepistola*...from 1611<sup>2</sup>. But the oldest

Scottishbook in the baron's collection was printed in Edinburgh, in the year 1574, Bezae Theodori, *Dialogi ab Evsebio Philadelpho Cosmopolita in Gallorum*...

Edinburgh is present in the baron's collection with 58 titles, but with much more volumes due to Bell's Edition. This series, *Bell's Edition of Poets of Great Britain from Chaucer to Churchill*, has 39 different poets, in 109 volumes, and was published in Edinburgh in the last quarter of the Eighteenth century (Zsigmond 2002).

Brukenthal's collection also houses 35 editions of various books from Glasgow, almost all of them being works of classical authors from the Greek-Roman Antiquity: Aeschylus, Aristotle, Cornelius Nepos, Euripides, Herodotus, Pindar, Plutarch and many others.

### Languages used in printing

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin and French were still Europe's international languages. That situation is reflected in Brukenthal's collection of books printed in Britain. There one can find books that have their titles or were partially or entirely written in: Latin, close to 290 books, out of which over 30 have substantial texts in Greek, English approximately 290 and French, 119 books. Beside these, there are a few other books printed in the following languages: 9 in Italian and one in Welsh (for the latter, see Ittu 2007, 59-72).

### Conclusions

The majority of Brukenthal's British books were printed in London, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (see Graphic 1 and 4). Books in English rank first place among those printed in London, and in Brukenthal's entire collection of books printed in Britain. But not in the books printed in places like Cambridge, Oxford, Birmingham and Glasgow, where Latin was utilized the most (see Graphic 2). After English and Latin, French was also used in many books printed in the British Isles.

With many classical authors from the Greek-Roman Antiquity and renowned philosophers and religious thinkers of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Samuel von Brukenthal's collection of books printed in Britain alone offer a general

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<sup>2</sup> One observation has to be made here because in *Brukenthalisches Bibliothekscatalog* there is one book

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published in London that has the year 1525 written in the list, but the entry is cut off. We have yet to find it.

image of the common enlightened aristocrat library.

The study of Brukenthal's books printed in the British Isles opens many opportunities in the study of the book and possible contribution to geography of knowledge (Burke 2004) that would shed light on how books traveled from one corner of Europe, Britain to the other, Transylvania.

#### Old books cited

1. Author: -  
Title: *Lettres et Memoires pour servir a l'histoire...du Cap Breton*  
Place of publication: London, The Hague  
Year of publication: 1760  
Library registration number: v.I.14837
2. Author: Bezae, Theodori  
Title: *Dialogi ab Evsebio Philadelpho Cosmopolita in Gallorum*  
Place of publication: Edinburgh  
Year of publication: 1574  
Library registration number: v.I.522
3. Author: Casaubonii, Isaac  
Title: *Ad frontonem Dvcaevm Theologium epistola*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1611  
Library registration number: v.II.1119
4. Author: Corbett, Emilie.  
Title: *Les malheurs d'un Guerre Civile: roman politique, à l'occasion de la dernière guerre entre l'Angleterre et ses colonies*  
Place of publication: London, Paris  
Year of publication: 1783  
Library registration number: v.I.10028
5. Author: Defoe, Daniel  
Title: *The life and strange surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1766  
Library registration number: C.B.I.400
6. Author: Erasmus of Rotterdam  
Title: *In laudem stvltitiæ*  
Place of publication: London, Paris  
Year of publication: 1765  
Library registration number: v.I.12983
7. Author: Lightfoot, John,  
Title: *Ervbhin or miscellanies Christian and Judaicall*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1629  
Library registration number: v.I.4046
8. Author: Locke, John  
Title: *The Works in three volumes*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1751  
Library registration number: C.B.V.4.
9. Author: Maittaire, Michael  
Title: *Annales Typographici*  
Place of publication: The Hague, Amsterdam, London.  
Year of publication: 1719-1741  
Library registration number: II.15885
10. Author: M(ary) Prince de Beaumont  
Title: *Instructions for young ladies*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1764  
Library registration number: v.I.9108
11. Author: Ovid  
Title: *Metamorphoses*  
Place of publication: Oxford  
Year of publication: 1696  
Library registration number: v.II.2273
12. Author: Shakespeare, William  
Title: *The Plays in ten volumes*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1785  
Library registration number: C.B.I.326
13. Author: Smith, Adam  
Title: *An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*  
Place of publication: London  
Year of publication: 1778  
Library registration number: C.B.V.22
14. Author: Theophrasti  
Title: *Characteres ethicii*  
Place of publication: Cambridge  
Year of publication: 1712  
Library registration number: v.I.14362

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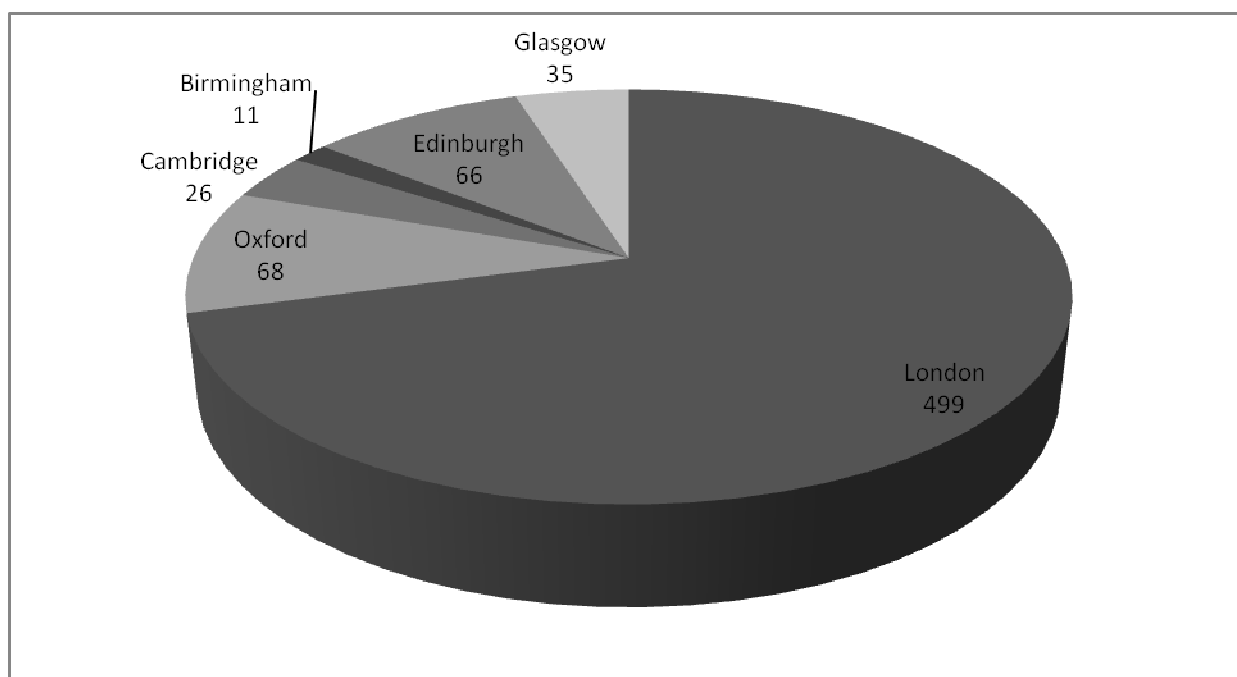
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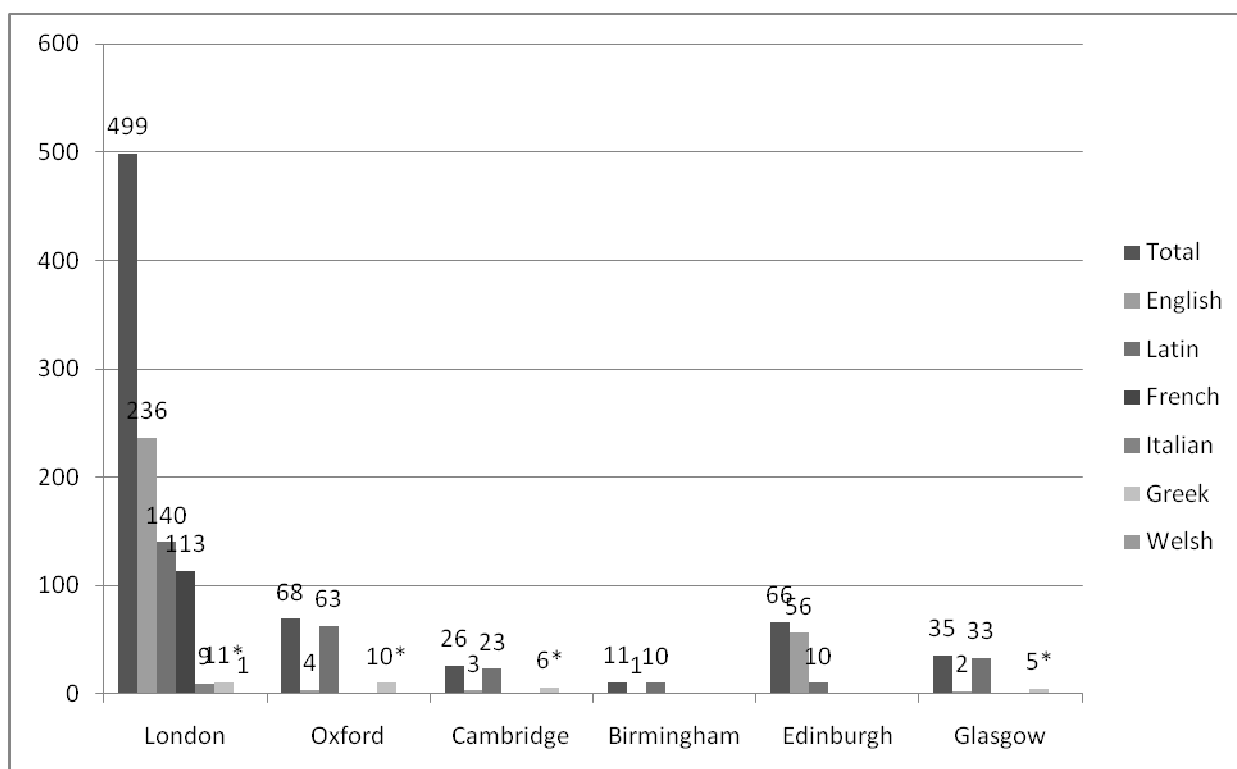
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Graphic 1. Brukenthal's British books by place of publishing

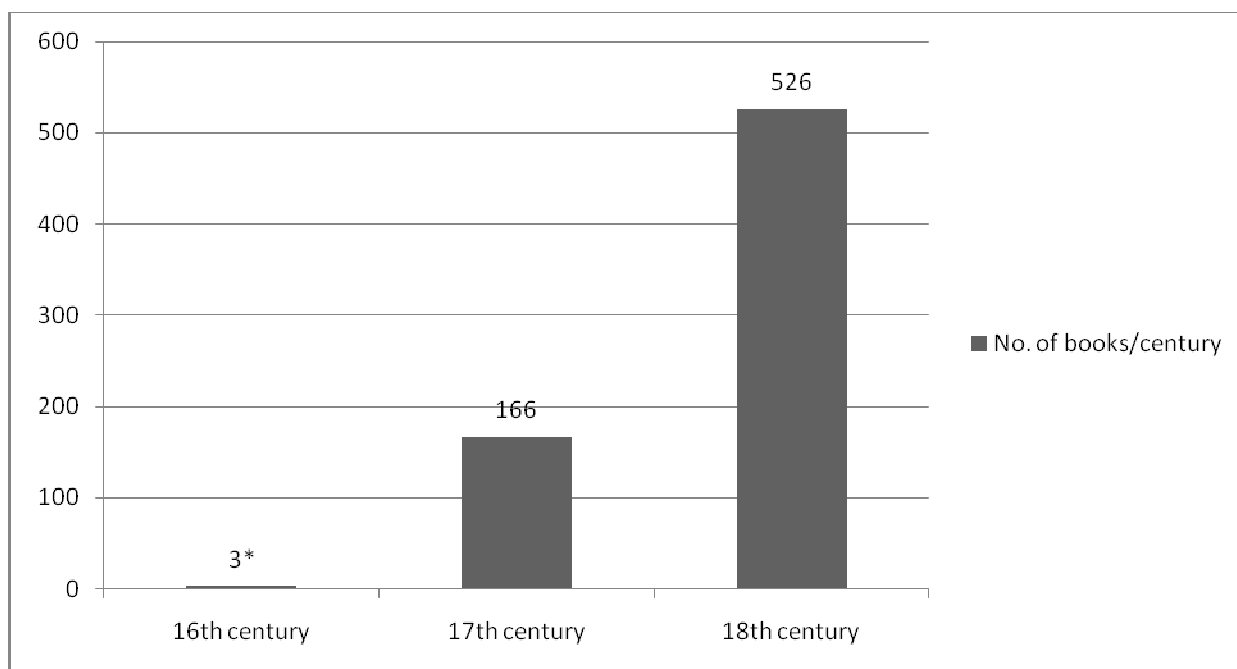


Graphic 2. Cities/Languages



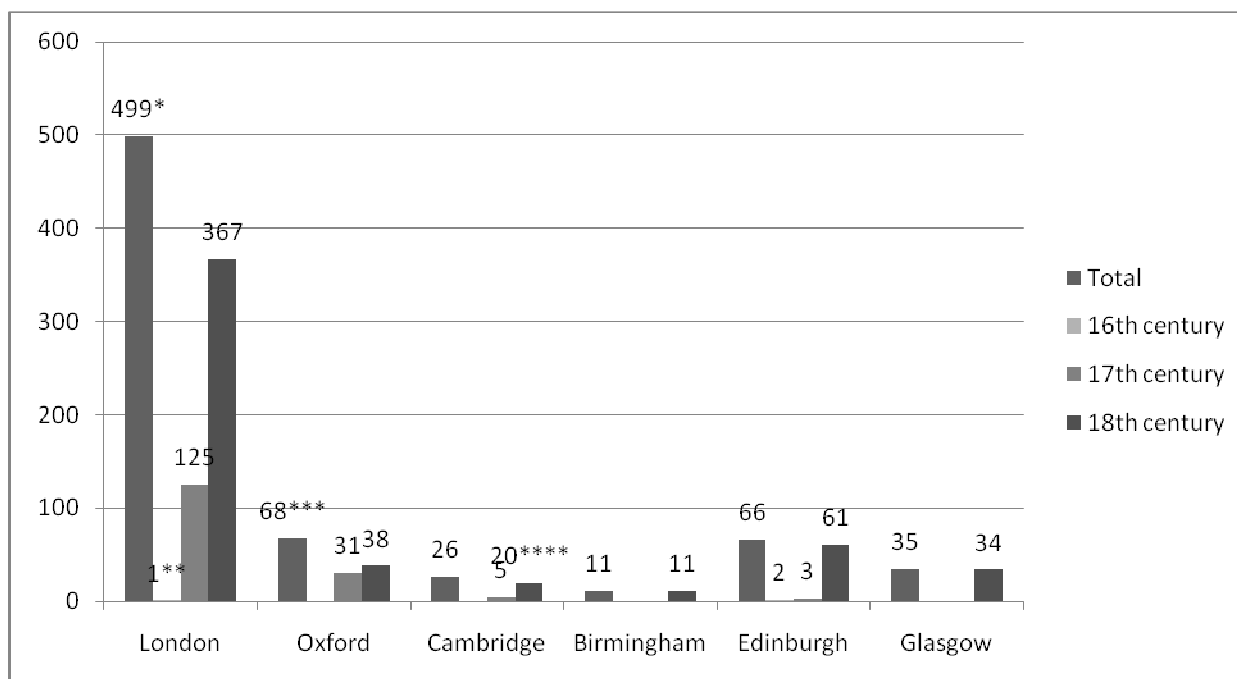
The books in Greek are in both Greek and Latin.

Graphic 3. British books by centuries



Obs.: Some titles have no publishing year written. \*One book possibly missing from Brukenthal's time.

Graphic 4. Centuries by city



\* Some titles have no year of appearance. \*\* Book possibly missing from Brukenthal's time. \*\*\* One book is in two editions (1698 and 1712). \*\*\*\* One title has no year of appearance (applies also for Glasgow).



**RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE ART COLLECTIONS  
OF THE BRUKENTHAL NATIONAL MUSEUM (OCTOBER 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015)**

**Iulia MESEA\***

**Abstract:** *In addition to the activities dedicated to researching and exhibiting its rich patrimony, the Brukenthal Museum continued all through 2015 to add to its collections by means which have become a tradition: exhibitions where contemporary artists display their creations, and donations. Such donations were made by Tudor Zbârnea, Constantin Gheorghe Pârcălăboiu, Lidia Crainic, Lucia Pușcașu, Ioan Isăilă, Simon Henwood, Andreea Rus etc.*

**Keywords:** *donations, art collections, Brukenthal National Museum, contemporary art exhibitions*

**Rezumat:** *În paralel cu activitatea de cercetare și valorificare expozițională a patrimoniului aflat deja în deținere, Muzeul Național Brukenthal a continuat, și pe parcursul anului 2015, să își sporească colecțiile. Modalitățile și sursele de îmbogățire a colecțiilor au rămas cele deja devenite tradiționale: în primul rând, creșterea patrimoniului de artă contemporană ce are ca sursă expozițiile pe care artiștii contemporani le organizează în Muzeu. O altă sursă sunt donațiile făcute de colecționari sau proprietari de lucrări de artă. Au intrat în colecțiile Muzeului în cursul anului lucrări semnate / donate de Tudor Zbârnea, Constantin Gheorghe Pârcălăboiu, Lidia Crainic, Lucia Pușcașu, Ioan Isăilă, Simon Henwood, Andreea Rus etc.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *donații, colecții de artă, Muzeul Național Brukenthal, expoziții de artă contemporană*

In addition to the activities dedicated to researching and exhibiting its rich patrimony, the Brukenthal National Museum continued all through 2015 to add to its collections. The means by which the Museum enriches its collections of contemporary art have become tradition: organizing contemporary art exhibitions being the most important source. Grateful for the opportunity to exhibit in such a prestigious museum, but also proud to have their names associated with those of renowned European and Romanian painters, the artists donate some of their works at the end of such an event organized in the Brukenthal Museum. Next to this, aware of the importance of bringing works of art to the attention of the public, private collectors, mostly from Romania, donate works that they have previously purchased, or that have been a family heirloom. Their number is smaller than that of the previous donors, but often they make up in value.

191 paintings and graphics, one sculpture and two decorative art works, as well as replicas of two 18<sup>th</sup> century costumes became part of the Brukenthal patrimony.

It may be interesting to mention that most of the donations were already put to value in exhibitions. Larger donations will also be exhibited. Only time will tell if the artists will evolve in such a way which will keep their names in the history of art. Certainty is that The National Brukenthal Museum is determined to promote and support Romanian and international contemporary art.

Well known in the country and abroad, Tudor Zbârnea is one of the most important contemporary artists that have exhibited in the Brukenthal National Museum. **Tudor Zbârnea** (b. December 29<sup>th</sup> 1955) is a native of Nisiporeni, Republic of Moldavia. In Chișinău, Tudor Zbârnea was one of the promoters of an original current of artistic thought meant to be the opponent of a mentality called “artistic vigilance”, hostile to innovations in art which were considered too bold, too spectacular. Presently he

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is the director of the National Museum of Art in Moldavia. He has presided over, or has been a member of the jury in many national and international art contests. His study trips included such countries as Germany, Italy, Turkey, Georgia, Russia, France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland and Austria. He is the author and the curator of various visual arts projects: "The Eastern Neighbours", Utrechr, Holland, 2006, "Moldavia, Contemporary Art", Brussels, Belgium, 2006, International Art Biennial, Chişinău, 2009, 2011, 2013.

The artist studied at the "I.E.REPIN" Republican College of Plastic Arts in Chişinău, and in Iaşi at the Faculty of Plastic Arts, under the guidance of Professor Corneliu Ionescu. He is a member of the Romanian Union of Plastic Artists, of the Moldavian Union of Plastic Artists, of AIAP (UNESCO); he is also one of the founders of the "ZECE" Group (TEN). He has contributed to more than 150 national and international exhibitions and has had 25 solo exhibitions in Belgium Belarus, France, Italy, Moldavia, Romania, the Ukraine, Russia and his paintings were in relevant collective exhibitions in Belgium Cyprus, Finland, France, Georgia, Holland, Italy, Lithuania, Russia, Turkey and Poland. He was bestowed numerous awards, medals, trophies of national and international contests and salons.

His works are in numerous museums, such as: the National Museum of Art in Moldavia, the State Art Museum, Ankara, Turkey, the Art Museum in Bata mare, Romania, the National Museum of Art of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, the National Museum of art in Bişkek, Kirgistan, the History and Art Museum in Bacău, Romania, the "A. Mateevici" Museum, Căinari, Moldavia, the Collection of Contemporary Art of the Ministry of Culture, Romania, as well as in private collections in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Italy, Israel, Germany, Lithuania, Moldavia, Holland, Russia, the USA, Turkey, Venezuela, etc

His artistic message is conveyed in several series: "Exchanging Silence", "Parents", "Ancestral Rhythma", "Totemic Axis", "Between Father and Son", "Traces", "Between Sky and Earth", "Archetypal Appeal", the last one including ample compositions executed in an innovative style – "Archetypal Insertions", "Depths", "Memory Defoliated", "Detachment", "Memory Stratification", "Ritual", "Archaic Dance", "Rediscovery", "Idols", etc.

There are two aspects in the art of Tudor Zbârnea: apart from being deeply rooted in the traditions of Romanian art, down to its archaic, symbolic forms, the aspiration to turn shapes into concepts, to extract their very essence, is proof of the fact that it is also anchored in modernity. While he strives to bring out ancient values and great truths, he is also in search of his inner self, part of the Big Whole that he studies and of a way to interact with those who come in contact with his art. "Tudor Zbârnea is one of those moralists who are meditating on the condition of the human being. The meditation is intimately blend with the one focused on the nature of the painting" considers Marin Gherasim (Zbârnea 2010).

The exhibition hosted by the Brukenthal Museum in October 2014, was displayed in the hall destined for temporary exhibitions and it was curated by Alexandru Sonoc Ph.D. The paintings showed another pivotal characteristic of Tudor Zbârnea's painting: he focuses both on construction, namely on carefully balancing the shapes, and on the guarded setting of the centres of gravity of the composition combined with a passion for colour seen as the conveyor of emotions.

Tudor Zbârnea, *Ritual*, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 100 cm, dated: 2010, inv. 3147, donated by the artist (Fig. 1).

*Ritual*, the painting donated to the Museum, shows how deeply his creation is rooted in popular art, especially in ancient art, where he finds the symbols to which he adds his personal touch. The artist does not mimic popular art, he simplifies it and goes right down to the essence to convey the message through a geometry which is both rich in meaning and in great aesthetical value. "The temptation of continuous dialogue with your own existence becomes a reason of living I art and for art.", says the artist (Zbârnea 1998). The artist resorts to perfect geometrical shapes (square, circle, triangle) or to ritual-magical shapes (a totem, a cross). Prone to experimenting, the artist defines himself: „I believe that each artist, when he does not find himself in an impasse, he must go through a series of experiments if he is to fulfill his desire to enhance his means of expression. Pivotal for the certainty of a coherent and honest artistic expression is the unique state of the creator, which he only experiences individually. Originality must be sought within. The configuration of my present artistic expression, abstract-figurative, tries to reveal and reevaluate the aesthetic and the

symbolism of human spirituality, focusing on the continuous reshaping of the chromatic consistency”.

**Maria Mariș** was born in 1955 in Apa, county Satu Mare. She studied in Cluj Napoca, at the “Ion Andreescu” Institute of Fine Arts and took several study trips to the Querentano Academy of Art, Saint Michele des Allemantes, in Mexico, as well as to Tunisia, France, Spain, etc. She is a member of the Romanian Union of Plastic Artists, of the International Association of Plastic Artists and of the Cultural Association „Terre des Arts”. She contributed to numerous exhibitions in Romania, as well as abroad and she had over forty solo exhibitions in Romania and in France, Belgium, the USA, Canada, Greece, Austria, etc. In acknowledgement of her work, Bussiness Top Axa TV 2006 awarded her the “Artist of the Year” Award. Also, the Archaeus Magazine, and the municipalities and city halls of Baia Mare, Satu Mare, Borșa and Seini presented her with diplomas of merit. Her works are in private collections in Romania, France, Italy, Germany, the USA, Great Britain, Holland, Israel, Belgium, Canada, Hungary, the Philippines, Switzerland, Mexico, Tunisia and Spain.

The curator of the *The Light of landscapes* exhibition hosted by the National Brukenthal Museum between June 4<sup>th</sup> and July 5<sup>th</sup> 2015, Robert Strebeli, set her creations up in the hall destined for temporary exhibitions.

The paintings exhibited showed the main characteristic of the art of Maria Mariș, namely her interest in colour which is the carrier of the emotion she wants to convey. The artist doesn't necessarily intend to be innovative, she persists in her attachment to the figurative and to the values of traditional painting in her attempt to reveal herself and to bring her message to the encounter with the viewer. Receptive to the vibrations of the surrounding light, Maria Mariș discovered, captured and rendered corners of great natural beauty in her itineraries.

Maria Mariș, *Shore / Țărm*, oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm, signed and dated, bottom left, inv. 3249, donated by the artist (Fig. 2).

The painting donated to the Museum (*Shore*) reveals the artist's constant quest for colour, the joy with which she chooses her motifs which she then brings to the point where they burst into light and colour.

On the occasion of an exhibition opened in Baia Mare (in 2014), Maria Mariș spoke of her art: „The canvas constantly challenges me. I dance my way in, it draws me, it leads me through paths no one else understands. Sometimes I, too, find it difficult to understand them. And I dance... I choose my inner garment through dance, poetry and music. Poetry is a part of the metaphor become warm word. I lift my eyes from the fortresses and cities of this world to look at the universe and I want to capture the painting of this cosmos which sits on my shoulders, on my brain, on my being” (Mariș 2014).

*In Light*, the exhibition comprising works by Andreea Rus, hosted by the Brukenthal Museum in May 2014, was displayed in the hall destined for temporary exhibitions and it was curated by Alexandru Sonoc Ph.D.

**Andreea Rus** studied physics and chemistry at the Babeș Bolyai University, then she specialized in painting and visual arts at the University of Art and Design, in Cluj Napoca. Her creations were exhibited in numerous museums and galleries: the “Lascar Viorel” National Biennial of Arts, Piatra Neamț, October – November 2011, the Annual Drawing Salon, Galați, October-November 2011, the collective exhibition “Contemporary Attitudes”, 2011, the “Gheorghe Petrașcu” Biennial, 2012, Târgoviște, the “Ion Andreescu” Biennial, Buzău 2012, “Grounds”, Hall of Arts, the Palace of Parliament, 2014, the Annual Salon of the Union of Plastic Arts, at the Art Museum, Cluj Napoca, 2014. Solo exhibitions: the Art Museum, Cluj Napoca, City Gallery, Suceava, 2009, Matei Gouse, Cluj Napoca, Bistrita Năsăud County Museum, 2011, Timișoara, 2013, Iași, 2013, Galleries of the Union of Plastic Arts, May 2014, Odeon Theatre, Bucharest, June 2014, the “Helios” Gallery, the Little Salon, SMB 8, the “Home of Art” Gallery, 2014. She was awarded at: “Timeles Rhythms” Exhibition of Visual Arts, fourth edition, at the International Festival “Art and Tradition in Europe”, 2013, Award for painting; Diploma of Honour at the second edition of the International Exhibition of Visual Arts, occasioned by the 2012, A.R.T.E. Symposium; International Exhibition of Visual Arts, occasioned by the first edition A.R.T.E. Symposium, April-May 2011, Organizer's Award.

The artist confesses that she sees painting as a means of redeeming the inner nature. Hence the thematic she approaches, which is in connection with the darkness, and the chaos of everyday life, where the hierarchy of values is upside down and

which man tries to escape from, or which shows the struggle to rise towards the divine light.

When writing about painting, the artist expresses this very idea: "Painting begins with the meaning of "into being", which constitutes a chance of salvation, of escaping the contemporary alienation of the spirit (...) The feeling of exile, of loss, the loneliness of the individual in present day society, accompanied by an expression which characterizes us so well, "there must be something holy in it", lead to an aspiration which is superior to reality. The feeling of confinement can lead to a denial of reality which "is neither good in itself nor to be desired", and can even make people religious. Detachment from the world hints towards a wise nature. Salvation comes from the contact with the divinity since "according to Romanian folklore, the divine is ever present in all contacts, occurrences and hardships of life" (Rus, 2010)

Keeping her creation in close contact with abstract expressionism, Andreea Rus claims her freedom to choose means of expression which represent her and which are not rigidly attached to an established style. It is the conclusion drawn from the exhibition organized at the Brukenthal Museum. Despite an atmosphere dominated by shades of grey and black, the ray of light which comes into view symbolizes hope. It has the air of a story, just like, *In Light*, the work donated to the Museum, where in the three landscapes we wait for the signs that something will happen.

Andreea Rus, *In Light*, Triptych, 22 x 61,8 cm (20 x 20 cm x 3 parts assembled together), dated: 2014, inv. 3248, donated by the artist (Fig. 3).

The work donated by **Dumitru Bostan** was part of the exhibition entitled *Artistic interstice. Artists from Neamț at the Brukenthal Palace*, hosted by the Brukenthal Museum between the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2014, curated by Iulia Mesea Ph.D. On that occasion the artist donated another painting, ( *Liars' Bridge / Podul Minciunilor*, oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm, signed bottom right, in orange: "Bostan", not dated, inventory no. 3245) and decided later to add to his donation the painting *Sibiu, The Clock Tower*. Dumitru Bostan (b. 1962, Piatra Neamț, a graduate of the "Nicolae Grigorescu" Institute of Fine Arts from Bucharest, the department of monumental art-restoration, where he studied with Simona Vasiliu Chintilă and Dan Mohanu) proves again his attachment to urban motives which he treats with sensitivity and

a lyrical approach, which, in fact, characterises most of his work.

Dumitru Bostan, *Sibiu, The Clock Tower / Sibiu, turnul cu ceas*, oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm, signed bottom right, not dated, inv. 3246, donated by the artist (Fig. 4).

**Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu**, one of the representative artists that have been activated in Sibiu for the last about 30 years, donated to the Museum twenty graphic works (Fig. 5-8).

Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, one of the representative artists that have been activate in Sibiu for the last about 30 years, donated twenty graphic works to the Museum twenty graphic works. Born in Brad, in 1944, the artist graduated the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cluj and became a member of the Union of Plastic Artists in Sibiu.

The treasure of symbols and allegories that Gheorghe Pârcălăboiu uses to convey his messages is hallucinatorily rich and imaginative and includes a bestiary, populated by spiders, snails, snakes, dragons, owls, birds and mythical animals, which brings to mind the creations of Hieronimus Bosch. Some are accessible, easy to decipher, others are surprising and intricate and the manner in which they are brought together shocks, but also enhances their meaning and their substance. These signs seem to have materialized in the medieval laboratory of an alchemist only to be carefully chosen and placed in rich, flamboyant compositions, in complex equations (Pârcălăboiu 2011).

One of his favourite themes, to which he dedicates an entire series, is Time. Ten of the works which comprise this series were donated to the Museum. These compositions ooze a frustrating, sometimes frightening feeling which comes from the useless attempt to stop the flow of time. All sorts of clocks, skillfully drawn, mark centres in the composition and shocks with the perception that life is ephemeral. The passages through space and time, which meet, cross, and overlap suggest multiple lives or the hope of immortality. In one of these compositions, *1968*, we find three self-portraits depicted in different positions, one front and two profiles – one contoured in ink, while the other appearing to be its photographic image. Five of the clocks have strange dials, where dice and letters of hidden significance replace the numbers. On one of the clock faces time seems to have gone berserk jumbling the numbers, while the only ordinary face has a cross – redeeming or menacing? – tied to it. There are also small

spirals, again signs of time that engulfs everything. The palm of a hand is the artist's hallmark, while strange female silhouettes on the left, mark a vertical. A large owl, placed bottom right, appears both as a symbol of wisdom and as a messenger of time.

The works which make up the series of the *Veduta*, testify to the same taste for symbols which are brought together in an unexpected manner in ample, and more serene compositions, where the light line slides with an ease and a grace which seem to descend from the Jugendstil. Well known statues, atlantes and caryatids, eye-shaped windows and gothic arcades are symbols of the city to which the artist professes a profound attachment.

His well personalised surrealism, with effects given by a firm and careful drawing, incites and hypnotises with its invading, overwhelming visions which strikes the eye and astonish the mind.

1. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Big Square / Piața Mare* (Veduta), ink on paper, 59,5 x 35,5 cm, dated: 2007.
2. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Window / Fereastră* (Veduta), ink on paper, 57 x 40 cm, dated: 2007.
3. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Ursuline Church 1 / Ursuline 1* (Cycle / Ciclul Veduta), ink on paper, 56 x 41 cm, dated: 2006.
4. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *X* (Cycle / Ciclul Veduta), ink on paper, 46,5 x 58,4 cm, dated: 2008.
5. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *XI* (Cycle / Ciclul Veduta), ink on paper, dated: 2008.
6. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *XII* (Cycle / Ciclul Veduta), ink on paper, dated: 2008.
7. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Masque / Mască* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), mixed technique, 58 x 37,5 cm, dated: 1978.
8. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Cage / Cușca* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), ink on paper, 52 x 34 cm, dated: 1972.
9. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *1968* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), mixed technique, 68 x 47 cm, dated: 1968.
10. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Mariage / Mariajul* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), ink on paper, 68,5 x 48 cm, dated: 1970.
11. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Venus I* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), ink on paper, 58 x 43 cm, dated: 1972.
12. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Venus II* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), ink on paper, 60 x 43 cm, dated: 1996.
13. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Terrarium I / Terariu I* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), ink on paper, 40 x 50 cm, dated: 2004.
14. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Terrarium II / Terariu II* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), ink on paper, 58 x 43 cm, dated: 2005.
15. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Market / Târgul* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), mixed technique, 52 x 37 cm, dated: 2001.
16. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Accident / Accident* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), collage, 86 x 68 cm, dated: 1974.
17. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Calamity 1970 / Calamitate 1970* (Time cycle / Ciclul Timpul), mixed technique, 78 x 86 cm, dated: 1972.
18. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Menace / Amenințarea* (Non violence Cycle/ Ciclul Non violentă), ink on paper, 78 x 60 cm, dated: 1990.
19. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *Impossible Survival / Imposibilitatea supraviețuirii* (Non violence Cycle/ Ciclul Non violentă), ink on paper, 52 x 85 cm, dated: 1971.
20. Gheorghe Constantin Pârcălăboiu, *For Fredi, Clenching / For Fredi, Încleștarea* (Non violence Cycle/ Ciclul Non violentă), ink on paper, 83 x 52 cm, dated: 1971.

**Simon Henwood** is one of the most famous contemporary artists that have organized exhibitions in the Brukenthal Museum. "Simon Henwood is a big hungry man with supernatural powers and a superhuman reserve of energy. He possesses an omnivorous appetite for all things visual and a seemingly omnipotent ability to transform what he devours into compelling visual talismans whether in the medium of film, video, painting or graphics" (Mullins 2008).

He was born in Portsmouth, in 1965 and lives in London. He studied at Exeter College in Devon and his works were exhibited in several galleries worldwide. His activity is very diverse, comprising painting, animation, writing, video, film and music. He is a video music director and worked with famous artists like Kanye Omari West, Alicia Keys and Rihanna.

Simon Henwood started his career writing books for children and the universe of childhood and adolescence became a preoccupation and source of inspiration for his painting also. In fact, his main interest focuses around this extremely

generous subject which is childhood, adolescence, youth, the complex and tormented inner life of these categories of age, that are so little known about. The subject comes from his own experience, as the artists confessed that as a child (because of the several move of his family) he felt as an outsider, and he found it difficult to build relationships with the kids around him.

His paintings capture hundreds of faces in the most unusual and unexpected attitudes of every day life. Simon Henwood's style resembles the photographic style and his shapes and forms are placed against a neutral (in fact entirely absent) background, most of the time in contrast with them. Thus, the viewer is in no danger of becoming lost in the details of the composition, being forced to stop and interact with the subject suggested by the artist, with the face he almost forces upon him. This makes his compositions easy to interpret, but the emotion each onlooker experiences is, most of the time, strong and painful because the artist does not show us merry or serene faces. His models always convey profound emotions, painful experiences, even anguish, forcing us to interact with the painting. Ordinary people who pose for him become types, characters, documents of life.

Simon Henwood, *Stela at 12*, 139 x 100 cm, gouache on paper, signed and dated bottom left: 2015, donated by the artist (Fig. 11).

The technique he uses, the same in the work he donated, *Stela at 12*, is that of applying thick layers of gouache against a white paper background. Extremely expressive is the face of this girl, which shows Henwood's interest in painting youth as an essential transitional period of life, when life is so rich both inside and outside. The artist captures the moment when the little girl appears to be deep in thought communicating only partially with the world. The viewer can only guess what is in her complex, intricate world, a world *he* may have forgotten to decipher. The details, age and interests, the artist offers of the girl who is wearing a T-shirt inscribed Chicago, Speed of Light, may suggest a degree of amity between the artist and the model which, however, does not hold the key to her inner world. The way to understanding it lies in the focused, honest expression of her face, totally lacking any intention to pose.

The exhibition organised by the artist at the Brukenthal Museum, *Transylvania Kids*, curator Adrian Luca, was hosted by the Gallery of

Contemporary Art between February 4<sup>th</sup> and April 26<sup>th</sup> 2015. It was part of an ample project in cooperation the Galateca Gallery from Bucharest and is the result of voyage the artist took in thirty Transylvanian villages where he photographed the models which he later painted.

**Lidia Crainic's** exhibition, *Linearities* (curator Daniela Morosanu, curator invited Iulia Mesea Ph.D.), hosted by the Stamp Cabinet of the Brukenthal Palace between March 13<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 proved to be the occasion for the donation made by the artist.

A native of Bucovina and a graduate of the "Ioan Andreescu" Institute of Fine Arts in Cluj Napoca, the artist settled in Sibiu in the early sixties. While a designer at Arta Sibiului, she was an active member of the Union of Plastic Artists, whose president she was between 1987 and 1989. At the beginning of the nineties she settled in Germany where she continued to work as a designer; her contributions to numerous exhibitions made her creations famous.

Lidia Crainic's first solo exhibition was set up in Sibiu, in 1981, the following ones were organized in Bucharest and then, after 2003, in Siegen, Görlitz, Burbach, Attendorn and Hamburg. The artist was among those who, in the seventies, contributed to many exhibitions in Romania as well as in Dresden and Offenbach am Main. After 2000, she also exhibited in Siegen, Bremen, Rio de Janeiro, Havana, Madrid, Santiago de Chile, Ciudad de Mexico, Buenos Aires etc.

Her creations are part of the collections of the Brukenthal National Museum, of the History Museum in Bucharest, the Râmnicul Vâlcea Museum, the Art Gallery in Siegen; they are also in private collections in the USA, Canada, Australia, Romania, Hungary, Germany Austria, Greece.

Lidia Crainic found possibilities of expression in many means and artistic techniques. Her creation comprises tapestries, monumental frescoes, paintings, engravings, book illustrations, design, graphics and works in mixed techniques. The exhibition hosted this year by the Brukenthal National Museum put to value engravings signed Lidia Crainic.

Lidia Crainic's graphic creations are governed by refinement and elegance. In a confused reality, Lidia Crainic offers an almost mathematical clearness, a sometimes surprising limpidity in a maze of ricochets

In her work, he displays a zest for exploring the line and its force, its delicate and endless traces. The artist respects its strength and refinement, harnesses its mathematical qualities, makes it energetic, even sprightly sometimes, brings it to life, understands its inner vigour, transforms it into essentialised vegetal motifs, into the forms of nature, into shapes made by man's imagination and hand. It was said that she toys with the line in her graphic creations. It may be a game, but it is a lucid one, where the artist respects the line, its valences, force and refinement. It is because she understands its inner robustness that she can put its qualities to value.

In the presence of Lidia Crainic's engravings, the viewer engages in reflection and is filled with the inner joy of the poetic message. With this, the artist achieves her goal: „I wish that the viewer forgets all worries and enters a state of contemplation”.

Lidia Crainic, *Maritime linearities / Maritime linearități*, acvaforte, 75 x 35 cm, signed and dated, donated by the artist (Fig. 12)

The work she donated to the museum is characteristic of her entire creation and is a part of the *Maritime* series. This series gains figurative valences offering the viewer the possibility to read the floating shapes, the masts or the sails. Her great achievement lies in the manner in which her lines render the weight and gracefulness of the ships, the verticalness of the masts, the measure of the sails and, most of all, the wind, the sea (although never really there), the rolling, the floating, the advance, the journey, the freedom. Originating in the shapes of reality, which remains her source of inspiration, the shapes *she* creates undergo a process of simplification, of finding the essence of the line: it steers both reality and rhythm. The artist does not want to explain her works, but allows the viewer to find the signs of reality in the maze intersected and tangent lines.

She initiates a subtle dialogue between line and colour. Without playing a subordinate role to the shapes, the colour assists, in delicate hues, the direction and the idea of the line. The pale shades of ochre, green, blue, coloured greys add a touch of melancholy which lulls the vivacity of the play of lines.

**Lucia Pușcașu** was born on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1954 in Horlăceni, Botoșani, Romania. Between 1979-1983 she studied at the “Nicolae Grigorescu” Academy of Fine Arts, Bucharest; she continued

her studies, between 2006-2008, attending Master Class – “Computer Assisted Visual Arts, Design and Advertising” at the University of Suceava. In 2009 she became Project Manager at Info Education Iași and she is also a member of the Fine Artists Union of Romania. She is the president of the Suceava branch of Fine Artists Union and of the Association Art and Humanity.

Since 1991 she has been teaching decorative arts, drawing and colour study at the “Ciprian Porumbescu” Arts High School in Suceava.

She had numerous solo exhibitions: “Ripustus” Gallery, Hameenlinna and “Stoa” Gallery, Helsinki- Finland, the Ethnographic Museum, Torino- Italy, Suceava, Vatra Dornei, Bacău, Botoșani, Bucharest, Iași and Craiova, and contributed to three hundred collective exhibitions and more than forty international exhibitions (Vancouver, Toronto-Canada, Ankara-Turcia, Moscow-U.R.S.S, Tournai-Belgium, Chicago, Washington, Knox, Herillville, Corner Stone, Mishewalla-S.U.A, Helsinki, Tampere, Hovinkartano, Ronnvinin-Finland, Madrid, Ciudad Real, Cordoba-Spain, Torino-Italy, Belgrade-Serbia, Nice-France, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Germany, Austria). Her talent was rewarded by numerous prizes and diplomas she was awarded in Romania and in the Republic of Moldavia.

Between November 20<sup>th</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup> 2015, an exhibition entitled *Steps in Development II*, was set up by the curator Robert Strebli.

The artist contributed large and medium size tapestries in the haute lisse technique, as well as miniature tapestries where the haute lisse technique is combined with handmade embroidery. Alongside of her tapestries, the artist displayed paintings (oil on canvas) and graphics (mixed techniques: stain, ink, acrylic and pastel), which date from the various periods of her creation and which offered the viewer the possibility to understand the complexity of her interests, the seriousness with which she approaches the act of artistic creation regardless of the technique she employs and of the arduous path which began with a motif, with an idea, and ended in the work of art. Thus, the viewer is introduced to an always active and changing space built on various means of visual and artistic expression and to an endless dialogue between painted surfaces and decorated ones.

In her address at the opening of the exhibition, Lucia Pușcașu underlined the difficulty that the

technique she chose involves, the patience and the attention it requires. The creation of a tapestry, the artist says, begins with documenting, sketching, sizing, designing the cardboard, washing, dyeing, roving and weaving the wool and ends with the polishing of the project.

The style is not chosen at random, either. Her creation is on the border between figurative and abstract. As she intends to get rid of all superfluous details and to use essence as means of expression, the artist subjects the original motif to a process of repeated simplification. Colour plays an important part in her creation and we notice that she moves with ease from a refined chromatic in shades of grey, pale blue and ochre, to a bold use of bright colours, of which she makes a pleasant combination while also exacerbating the complementary colours. From the diversity of her themes, we will mention the pair and the „dance” of life, vegetal motifs and architectural themes (gates, temples, etc.). Lucia Pușcașu is a virtuoso of pleating and weaving coloured wool into compositions where her vision vacillates between the majestic solemnity of large compositions and the discursive intimism placed under the sign of a subtle lyricism. Which makes the artistic vision of Lucia Pușcașu's tapestries unique, is the unequivocal pictorialness of her compositions.

Lucia Pușcașu, *Flight 2 / Zbor 2*, haute lisse, 100 x 127 cm, donation of the artist (Fig. 13).

The work she donated to the Museum is *Flight*, a tapestry in the haute lisse technique. The metaphoric language conveys an explosion of joy. Flight, the defeat of gravity, is rendered through a dynamism of shapes, of curves which antagonize, continue, overlap, and through a rich chromatic where the dominant red is completed by ochre, blue and elegant greys.

On April 17<sup>th</sup> 2015, **Ion Isaila** donated 164 works, painting and graphics, to the Brukenthal Museum (Fig. 14-20). 121 of them are his own creations, 17 are the creations of Mirela Buciu-Isaila, the artist's wife, and 16 works are signed by Șt. Anastasiu, Andreea Popa, George Leolea, Marieta Besu and other Romanian artists. The donation includes 10 works signed Alberto Valverde Travieso (Spain), Maarten Beks and Gerrits Kassiël (Holland), Mariane Gehrken, Rupert Eising and Karl Böcker (Germany). On the occasion of the donation, Ion Isaila said: „Churches, monasteries and museums have relied mostly on gifts donations and sponsorship and not on budget and acquisitions. This was the case with

most Romanian, as well as foreign establishments, supported by the civic attitude of the citizens”.

Most of the works date from his formative years spent at the Arts High School in Sibiu and at the „Nicolae Grigorescu” Institute of Fine Arts in Bucharest and at the Academy of Arts in Düsseldorf, Germany (1970-1985).

Ion Isaila was born in Sibiu in 1953, where he began his studies at the Music and Arts High School where he studied with professors Maria Gropa-Sion, Rodica and Ioan Chișu, Vasile Solcanu, Veronica Costea and others. Between 1975 and 1979, he studied at the „Nicolae Grigorescu” Institute of Fine Arts (now the National University of Art) in Bucharest, with professor Ion Stendl specializing in Monumental Painting – Restoration.

In 1984, he settled in Düsseldorf, Germany, where he was the beneficiary of a scholarship which enabled him to study at the Academy of Art. In 1985 he was awarded a prize by the Hedwig-und-Robert-Samuel Foundation. He graduated in 1990, under the guidance of Rolf Sackenheim, A. R. Penck and David Rabinovitch. He worked at Ein-Hod, Israel, Cité internationale des Arts Paris and in Rome. Already in his formative years, his creations were present in art galleries. While studying in Bucharest he was involved in projects of monumental painting in Bucharest, Ploiești, Constanța și Medgidia. In Germany he had more than solo exhibitions in Düsseldorf, Essen, Aachen, Bonn, Hamburg. His works were included in collective exhibitions in Romania, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Japan, Korea, Belgium, Holland, France. Some of his works are in private collections in Aachen, Düsseldorf, Chemnitz, Herne, Nürnberg etc.

In the years to come, the works he donated to the Brukenthal Museum will be presented to the public and the event and the exhibited works will be discussed in the next issue of *Brukenthal. Acta Musei*.

#### **Ion Isailă / Sketches**

1. Sitting Nude/ Nud șezând (1973), 49 x 35 cm, black ink on paper.
2. Nude / Nud (1973), 43 x 31 cm, black ink on paper.
3. Nude on a chair / Nud pe scaun, 49 x 35 cm, black ink on paper.
4. Sketch / Schiță (1973), 33 x 50 cm, charcoal on paper.



5. Raccourci (1976), 55 x 43 cm, pencil on paper.
6. Sitting Nude / Nud așezat (1973), 54 x 42 cm, black ink on paper.
7. Nude / Nud (1975), 61x 43,5 cm, charcoal and sepia on paper.
8. Halbakt (1975), 61 x 43,5 cm, charcoal and sepia on paper.
9. Back / Spate (1975), 61 x 43,5 cm, charcoal and sepia on paper.
10. Back / Spate B (1975), 61 x 43,5 cm, charcoal and sepia on paper.
11. Man / Bărbat, 61 x 43,5 cm, charcoal and sepia on paper.
12. Lying Man / Bărbat culcat, 61 x 43,5 cm, charcoal and sepia on paper.
13. Arm / Braț (1975?), 21 x 29 cm, pencil on paper.
14. Lying Man / Om culcat (1976), 31 x 43 cm, black ink on paper.
15. Back of a Lying Man / Culcat – spate (1976), 31 x 43 cm, brush and black ink on paper.
16. Lying Nude / Nud culcat (1976), 31 x 43 cm, coloured mines.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Portraits and self-portraits**

1. Viorica (1971), 42 x 28 cm, charcoal.
2. Head C. / Cap C. (1970), 27 x 21 cm, ink.
3. Head N.C. / Cap N.C. (1971), graphite.
4. Peasant / Țăran (1974), 31 x 21 cm, pencil on paper.
5. Asymmetrical Head / Cap asimetric, 27 x 21 cm, coloured pencil.
6. Self-portrait / Autoportret, 28 x 21 cm, pencil.
7. Green eyes / Ochi verzi (1970), 28 x 21 cm, green pencil.
8. Concave Head / Cap concave, 39 x 31 cm, charcoal.
9. Chrysanthemum / Crizantemă 50 x 35 cm, pencil.
10. Head and hands, Dürer / Cap și mâini, Dürer, 51 x 35 cm, pencil.
11. Autoritrato (1974?), 50 x 35 cm, pencil.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Peisaje**

1. Village near Sibiu / Sat lângă Sibiu (1974, 50 x 35 cm, black ink and watercolour.
2. Rasinari (1970), 21 x 22, black ink.
3. Ilimbav (1974), 45 x 35 cm, pencil.
4. Spring / Primăvara (1974), 31 x 39 cm, charcoal.
5. Hill in Dobrudja / Deal în Dobrogea (1978), 30 x 21 cm, pastel.
6. Hills in Dobrudja / Dealuri dobrogene (1978), 30 x 21 cm, black ink and watercolour.

7. Landscape in Dobrudja / Peisaj dobrogean (1978), 30 x 21 cm, black ink and watercolour.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Icons**

1. Apostole / Apostol, 55 x 40 cm, pencil.
2. Celebration / Sărbătoare (1974?), 50 x 71 cm, pencil.
3. Resurrection / Înviere, 40 x 28 cm, pencil.
4. Mary / Maria, 40 x 29 cm, pencil.
5. Crucifixion / Răstignit, 34 x 29 cm, pencil.
6. Master/ Meșteri (1974?), 50 x 60 cm, pencil.
7. Leda (1974?), 48 x 69 cm, pencil.
8. Ritual (1974), 45 x 63 cm, pencil.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Collage**

1. AAA(1975), 25 x 29 cm, collage/black ink.
2. Press, 25 x 31,5 cm, collage/black ink.
3. Un jour (1975), 25 x 29 cm, collage/black ink.
4. BHC, 37 x 28 cm, collage/black ink.
5. Sultan CA (1972), 22 x 35 cm, collage/black ink.
6. Broich (1976), 26 x 40 cm, collage/black ink.
7. Donna-Woodstock, 34 x 27 cm, collage/black ink.
8. Patrician, 41 x 30cm, collage/black ink.
9. Trash (1974), 34 x 46 cm, collage/black ink.
10. Look, 42 x 64 cm, collage/black ink.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Engravings (Xylograph, Linogravure)**

1. Laboratory I / Laborator I (1975), 46 x 37 cm, linogravure.
2. Capriciu, 53 x 40 cm, woodcut.
3. Old page / Pagină veche (1980), 48 x 40 cm, woodcut.
4. Laboratory II / Laborator II (1975), 53,5 x 41,5 cm, woodcut.
5. Construction I (1982), 48 x 48 cm, woodcut.
6. Construction II / Construcție II (1982), 48 x 48 cm, woodcut.
7. Croce (1982), 45 x 45 cm, woodcut.
8. C.Rustique (1982), 42 x 53 cm, woodcut.
9. Vault / Boltă (1982), 53 x 50 cm, woodcut.
10. Vault / Boltă (1982), 33 x 53 cm, woodcut.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Lithography / Drawing**

1. Heand / Mână (1982), 56 x 47 cm, litho.
2. Le cerveau de nos jours, 52 x 41 cm, litho and drawing.
3. X, 52 x 41 cm, litho and drawing.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Avant-script**

1. Window I (1976), 64 x 49 cm, coloured pencil.
2. Windows II (1976), 64 x 49 cm, coloured pencil.

3. Raws / Rânduri (1977), 62 x 50 cm, coloured pencil.
4. Karo (1980), 64 x 46 cm, tempera.
5. Story VII (1983), 49 x 63,5 cm, tempera.
6. Wood sound / Sunet de lemn (1983), 48 x 63,5 cm.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Düsseldorf**

1. Dialogue / Dialog (1996), 36 x 27 cm, acvaforte.
2. St. Andre (1985), 43 x 33 cm, lithograph.
3. FA (1985), 43 x 32 cm, lithograph.
4. Champ (1985), 31 x 27 cm, lithograph.
5. Erde (1984), 33 x 27 cm, lithograph.
6. Codex nou (1984), 33 x 27 cm, lithograph.
7. Page A. (1984), 35 x 28 cm, lithograph.
8. Page Bla (1984), 27 x 23 cm, lithograph.

#### **Ion Isăilă / Painting**

1. Still-Life (1969), 33 x 29 cm, oil on canvas.
2. Self-portrait with palette (1966), 70 x 50 cm, oil on cardboard.
3. Portrait of a man / Portret de bărbat (1971), 68 x 48,5 cm, oil on cardboard.
4. Woman with a cap / Femeie cu bonetă (1979), 50 x 40 cm, oil on canvas.

#### **Works by Mirela Buciu Isăilă**

1. Construction I / Construcție I (1982), 39 x 55 cm, pointe seche.
2. Construction II / Construcție II (1982), 39 x 55 cm, pointe seche.
3. Hieroglyph construction / Construcție hieroglifică (1983), 39 x 55 cm, pointe seche.
4. Symmetrical constructions III (1983), 39 x 55 cm, pointe seche.
5. Symmetrical constructions IV (1983), 39 x 55 cm, pointe seche.
6. Fountain / Fântână L. (1984), 43 x 47 cm, lithograph.
7. Extension / Extindere (1982), 55 x 78, engraving.
8. Section / Secțiune (1982), 54 x 70 cm, drawing.
9. Discovery / Descoperire (1982), 53 x 76 cm, drawing.
10. Caroussel (1982), 64 x 91 cm, black ink and watercolour.
11. Hieratic landscape / Peisaj hieratic (1982), 55 x 78 cm, etching.
12. Pyramid III / Piramida III (1982), 54 x 78 cm, etching.
13. Fountains II / Fântâni II (1982), 54 x 78 cm, etching.
14. Five fountains / Conci fântâni (1983), 68 x 98 cm, watercolour.
15. Pyramid (1982), 60 x 89 cm, watercolour.

16. Clothes collection, 16 x 25, etching.
17. Cyclop / ciclop (1984), 22 x 30 cm, etching.

#### **Romanian and Western artists**

1. St. Anastasiu, Sirens in oil, 52 x 37 cm, lithograph.
2. M. Bunea, On your shadow / Când zac în umbra ta, drawing.
3. Andreea P. Tomescu, Changes/ Transformări, 43 x 34,5 cm, lithograph.
4. Andreea P. Tomescu, Growing / Creștere(1983), 46 x 44 cm, drawing, ink.
5. Tănase Mocănescu, Tree / Copacul (1982), 48 x 37,5 cm, pencil.
6. Mihai Micu, Detail / Detaliu (1977), 40 x 37 cm, etching.
7. Anonimous, Composition I / Compoziție I, 34,5 x 49,5 cm, etching.
8. George Leolea, Imaginary shapes / Forme imaginare (1978)65,5 x 50 cm, etching.
9. Em. Dumitrescu, Village in the Danube Delta, Sat în Deltă (1978), 15 x 24,5 cm, aquatinta.
10. Anonymous, Triangle / Triunghi, 35 x 22,5 cm, aquatinta.
11. Ana Golici, Grow (1986), 10 x 10 cm, lithograph.
12. Marieta Besu, Illustrations / Ilustrații la Povestea lui Ivan Turbincă (1979)33 x 25 cm, etching.
13. Marieta Besu, Illustrations / Ilustrații la Povestea lui Ivan Turbincă (1979)33 x 25 cm, etching.
14. Marieta Besu, Illustrations / Ilustrații la Povestea lui Ivan Turbincă (1979)33 x 25 cm, etching.
15. Kira Cristinel Popescu, Flori (1974), 32 x 50 cm, aqaforte, aquatinta
16. Alberto Valverde, Travieso (Spanish artist) (1984), etching.
17. Alberto Valverde, Travieso (1984), etching.
18. Maarten Beks (Dutch artist) (1990) 21 x 29,7 cm, drawing.
19. Maarten Beks (Dutch artist) (1990) 32 x 45,5 cm, drawing and oil.
20. Kassiel Gerrits (Dutch artist)(1992)31 x 34 cm, woodcut.
21. Marianne Gehrken, 19 x 24 cm, etching.
22. Rupert Eising, Kontemplation (1995), 29 x 42 cm, etching.
23. Rupert Eising, Kontemplation (1995), 37 x 24 cm, etching.
24. Karl Böcker, No title (1988) 22 x 19 cm, etching.
25. Karl Böcker, No title (1988) 32 x 20 cm, etching.

**Ion Isăilă. Studies for paintings, portraits**

1. Moses (1970), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
2. Sybille, 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
3. Nach Michelangelo, 70 x 50 cm, pencil.
4. Queen of Sheba / Regina din Saba, 62 x 43 cm, watercolour, charcoal.
5. Uncle / Uncheșul (1974), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
6. Teacher / Dascăl, (1974), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
7. Head of a man / Cap de bărbat, (1974), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
8. Portrait of a man / Portret d ebărbat, (1974), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
9. Viorica (1972), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
10. Study / Studiu, 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
11. Marianna (1972), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
12. Study / Studiu, (1972), 70 x 50 cm, charcoal.
13. Susanna (1964, 69 x 49 cm, pencil.
14. Woman pulling the bells / Femeie trăgând clopotele, 68 x 41 cm, charcoal.
15. Still-life / Natură moartă, (1977-1978), 61 x 71 cm, pencil.
16. Self-portrait / Autoportret (1978), 91 x 64 cm, pencil.
17. Ram / Berbec (1978), 91 x 64 cm, pencil.
18. Marry (1975), 50 x 42 cm, pencil.
19. Study for Victory / Studiu pentru Victory (1975), 42 x 31 cm, pencil.
20. Mariana (1975), 45 x 36 cm, pencil.
21. Fresco study /Studiu de frescă (1974), 42 x 24 cm, pencil, black ink.
22. Bell ringer / Clopotar (1975), 42 x 31 cm, pencil.
23. The Big Nude / Marele nud (1975), 41 x 31 cm, pencil.
24. Nude study / Studiu de nud (1975), 42 x 31 cm, pencil.
25. Mariana's hands / Măinile Mariane (1975), 42 x 31 cm, pencil.
26. Mariana walking / Mariana mergând (1975), 35 x 25 cm, pencil.
27. Aunt / Mătușă (1975), 42 x 31 cm, pencil.
28. Approach / Apropiere (1975), 42 x 31 cm, pencil.
29. Hand / Mână (1975), 33 x 23 cm, pencil.
30. Hands / Măinile, 46 x 33 cm, pencil.
31. Odalisque / Odaliscă (1975), 32 x 50 cm, pencil.
32. Nude with curtain / Nud cu draperie (1975), 50 x 35 cm, pencil.
33. Two skulls / Două cranii (1975), 48 x 35 cm, pencil.
34. Plants / Plante (1975), 48 x 35 cm, pencil.
35. Kneeling / Îngenunchere (1975), 49 x 35 cm, pencil.
36. Step / Pas (1975), 50 x 34 cm, pencil.
37. Guitar player / Chitarist (1975), pencil.

Valentin Mureșan Ph.D., expert in European painting, especially German and Austrian School of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, had worked in the Brukenthal National Museum till last year. A remarkable specialist, Valentin Muresan organized as a curator, along the years, several exhibitions with paintings from the Brukenthal collection. His thorough research also resulted in some books, among which we mention *Pictura germană și austriacă din colecția Brukenthal (German and Austrian Painting in the Brukenthal Collection)*, printed in 2007. Valentin Mureșan donated to the Museum the sculpture: Eugen Săvescu, *Composition / Compoziție*, concrete and mosaic, 63 x 38 cm, inv. S 588.

Frank Thomas Ziegler is the coordinator of an office of the Black Church, Brașov Evangelic Parish. Before this he worked at the Evangelic Church I Sibiu, being in charge with the Brukenthal collections. Frank-Thomas Ziegler was also involved in several projects organized in or with the Brukenthal Museum. He donated the work: a 19<sup>th</sup> century lithograph after Rembrandt's, *Night Watch*.

In the memory of their mother, Elena Luță Sas, Alina Coman and Corina Sas, donated a carpet woven between 1940 and 1942 by their grandmother Anastasia Neaga Luța: *Hunting scene*, carpet, wool, 200 x 200 cm.

This year four costumes, creations of the fashion designer **Alexandru Nicolae**, completed the collection of the Art Gallery adding to the atmosphere of intimacy of the Reception Hall of the Brukenthal Palace, where they are on display.

The costumes were created after the portraits of Sophia Katharina von Brukenthal and of Samuel von Brukenthal, creations of an anonymous Viennese painter active in the eight decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Both portraits, as well as the portrait of Sofia, daughter of Sophia and Samuel von Brukenthal, are in the Music Room of the Brukenthal Palace.

These costumes, "Robe a la Francaise" for her, and "Habit a la Francaise" for him, Rococo style, were made in the workshop of Alexandru Nicolae after a thorough study of the two portraits. The designer also received permission to study costumes from the History Museum (Altemberger House), as well as from the Musee de la Mode et

du Textile ( Louvre), books on the history of costumes, art albums, movies and documentaries. Alexandru Nicolae is a graduate of the “Lucian Blaga” University in Sibiu (2001), where he specialized in conservation and restoration of works of art, namely textiles.

Displaying a constant interest in textiles and fashion, in 2005, he became a fashion designer for Mondostar Mode (Sibiu), one of the largest and best known companies in the country, where he learned from and worked alongside of experienced people, the elite of couturiers from Sibiu, partaking in the creation of the women and men fashion collections. He attended fashion fairs and seminars, both in Romania and abroad (Premiere Vision Paris, Bucharest Fabric and Fashion Days).

Five years ago, he started his own business, becoming an independent fashion designer. His creations reflect the personality of each of his customers. He is also involved in projects, such as: “Romance” 2013, project which brought together a fashion designer, a painter, an actress and a soprano and which resulted in a show under the patronage of the Department of Culture, Sibiu.

Alexandru Nicolae also created two costumes for a play performed in 2011 under the patronage of the Arta Act Cultural Association in Cluj Napoca.

Description of objects donated by Alexandru Nicolae

The costume of Samuel von Brukenthal  
Habit a la Francaise

- 1.Burgundy red woolen habit.
- 2.Burgundy red woolen waistcoat
- 3.Burgundy red woolen culotte a pont
- 4.White batiste shirt with lace wristbands and frill
- 5.Satin and painted ceramic decoration

The costume of Sophia Katharina von Brukenthal  
Robe a la Francaise

- 1.Cherry-red shantung and black satin dress
- 2.White batiste and lace chemise with *engageantes* (lace wristbands)
- 3.Cherry-red shantung silk and black satin decorative panel
- 4.Cherry-red brocade corset
- 5.Cotton and metal panniers
- 6.Silk and viscose petticoat
- 7.Pearl imitation necklace

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Zbârnea 2010	***, <i>Tudor Zbârnea pictură / Painting</i> , Chișinău (2010).

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2. Maria Mariș, *Shore*, 2015





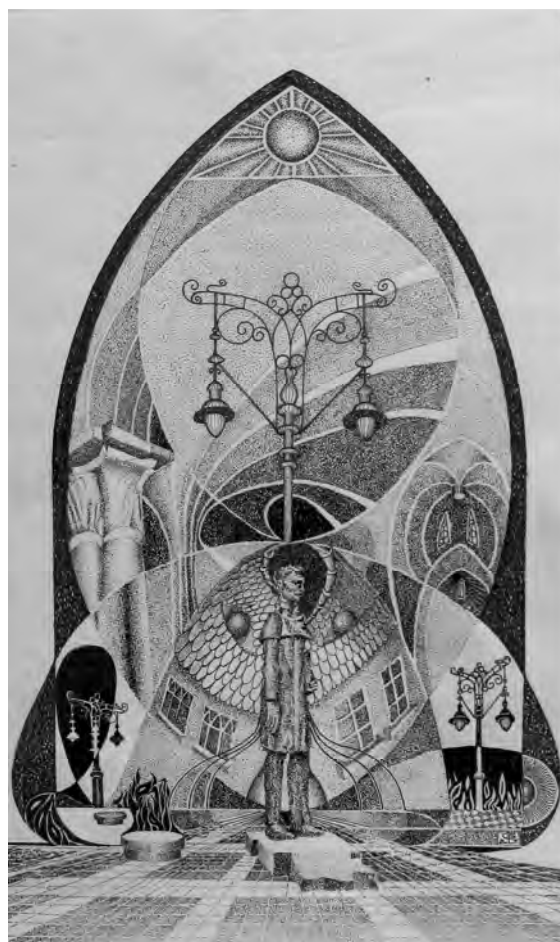
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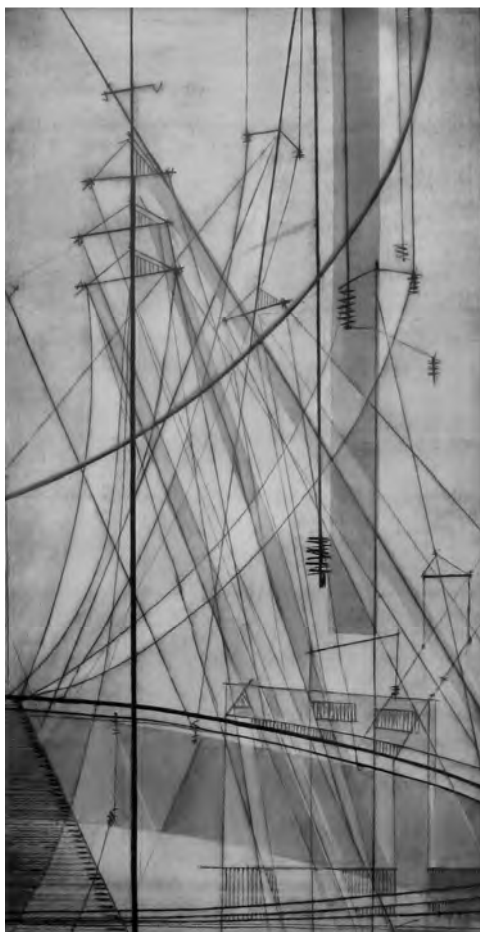
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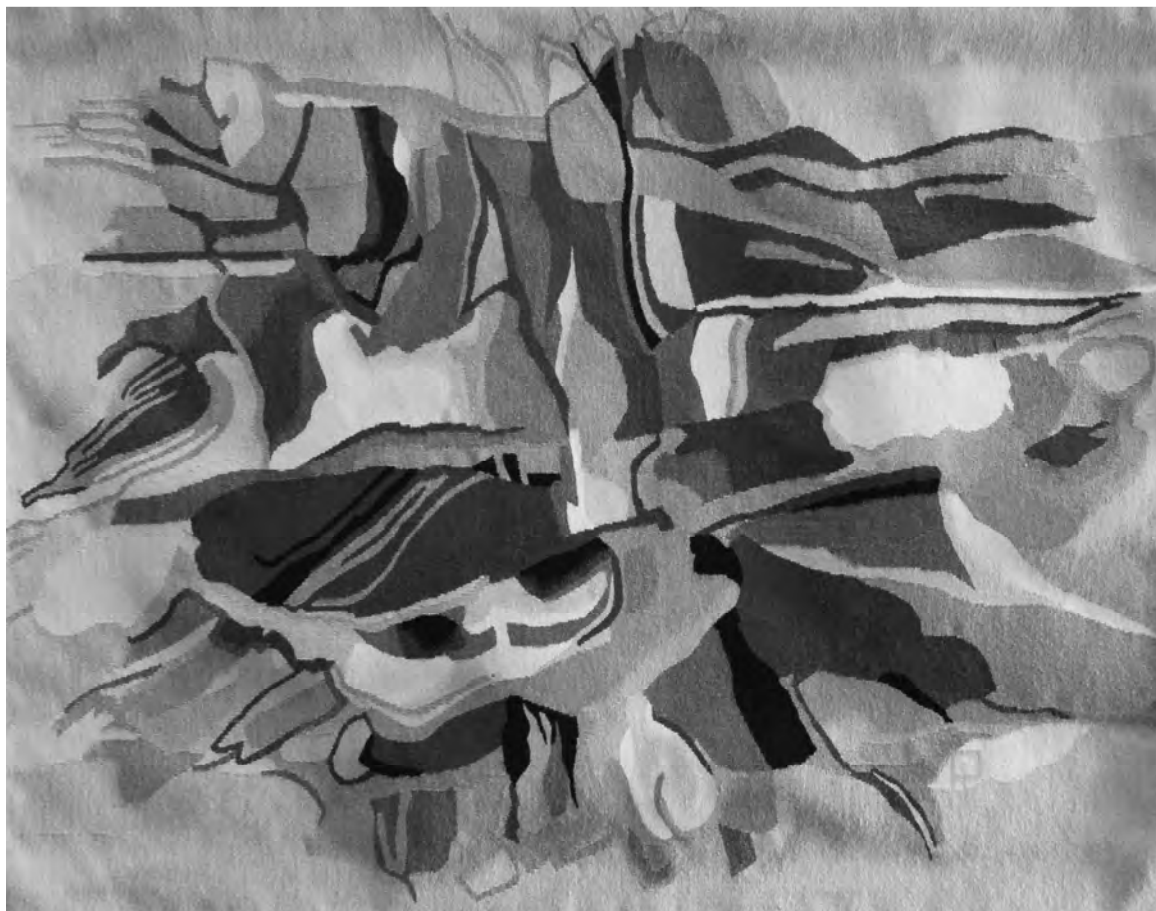
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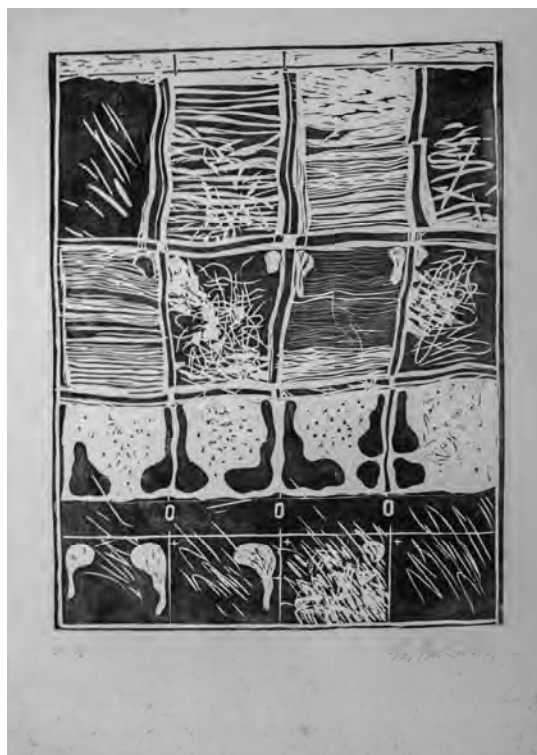
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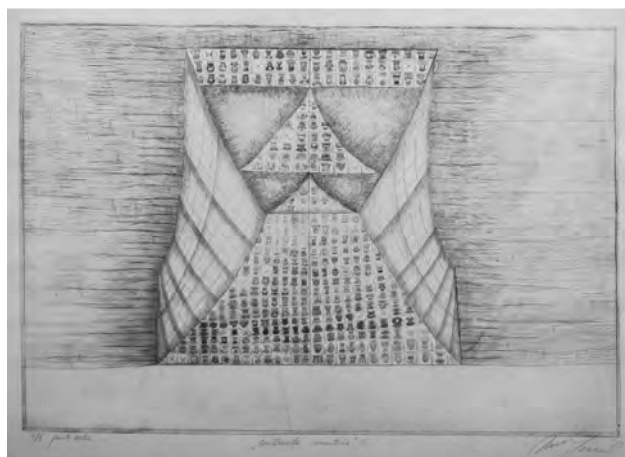
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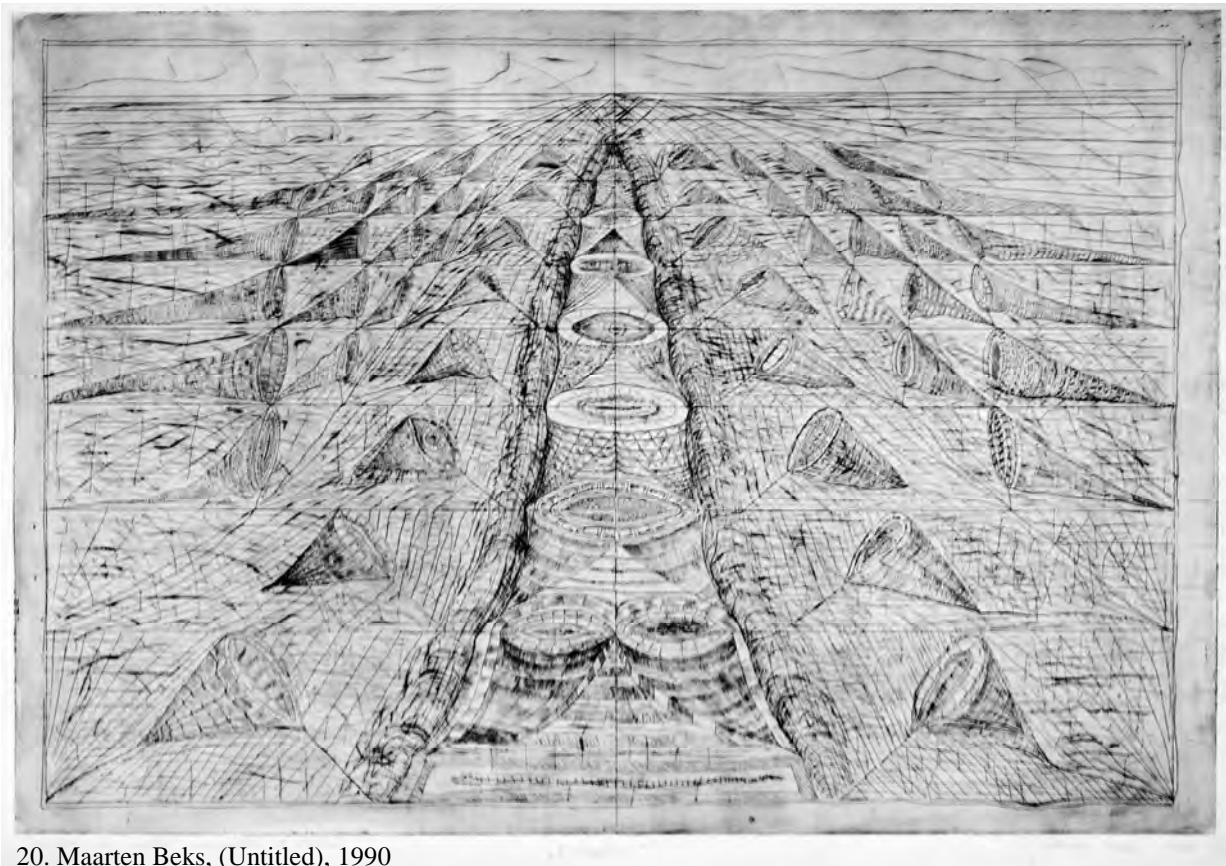
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20. Maarten Beks, *(Untitled)*, 1990





# BRUKENTHAL NATIONAL MUSEUM IN 2014: A CHRONICLE OF ART EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Dana Roxana HRIB\*

**Abstract:** *The study is a synthetic presentation of the 2014 cultural offer in the field of visual arts of the Brukenthal National Museum.*

**Keywords:** *Brukenthal National Museum, visual arts, 2014.*

**Rezumat:** *Articolul de față constituie o prezentare sintetică a ofertei culturale a Muzeului Național Brukenthal în domeniul artelor vizuale, pe parcursul anului 2014.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Muzeul Național Brukenthal, arte vizuale, 2014.*

## 1. Permanent exhibitions<sup>1</sup>

### a. A new visiting storage at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

During 2014 two visiting storages were opened at the locations of the Museum, one of them displaying contemporary art.

Although not a new idea in cultural offer of the Museum<sup>2</sup>, this particular kind of spaces (allowing visitors to familiarize themselves with behind closed doors activity of the museum) continues to represent a novelty in Romania, its success being confirmed by the increasing number of art donations.

The visiting storage opened on May 18 at the Museum of Contemporary Art (curators Prof. Sabin Adrian Luca and Robert Strebeli) displays 205 paintings, 15 tapestries and 95 tridimensional pieces on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, the “Eliza and Vladimir Cantaragiu Donation” encompassing 351 works of art signed by important Romanian artists from diaspora, highly ranked on the European art market.

### b. Permanent exhibition rearrangements.

During 2014 several rearrangements were made in the permanent exhibitions of Brukenthal Palace, concerning the European Art painting and Anatolian rugs display. A special project in this category is the reintegration, as part of the permanent exhibition (Medieval Art in Transylvania, Brukenthal Palace 1<sup>st</sup> floor) of the impressive polyptych altar from Proștea Mare / Târnava (Sibiu County) (December 12, curator Dr. Daniela Dâmboiu). Only nine of the eleven component panels were preserved. In the absence of the frame work, central panel and predella, it was possible to display only a model reconstruction of the entire altar along the remaining component parts.

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<sup>1</sup> The short descriptions of permanent exhibitions are selected from the texts given by the curators for public information.

<sup>2</sup> See also the “Firearms Hall” opened in 2011 at the Museum of History.

*Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu Hermannstadt 2011 Annual Report*, p.13, Ed. Altip, Sibiu 2012, ISSN 2065-1988.

## 2. Temporary exhibitions<sup>3</sup>

Out of the 51 temporary exhibitions opened in 2014 at the Museum's locations, 32 displayed selections of works in various fields of visual arts from heritage to contemporary art, from painting and sculpture to graphics and photography.

About 63 % of the temporary exhibitions organized in the Museum were art exhibitions and 32% of them were contemporary art projects to which artists from Romania and from countries such as (Czech Republic, Germany, Lichtenstein, Poland, Republic of Moldova and Mexico) contributed.

The most important event of the year was the Salvador Dali exhibition, a fact that was acknowledged both by the public and by the media.

The premieres of Martin Frommelt and Dorothea Schmierer-Roth exhibitions must also be mentioned here; the selections of painting and graphic works respectively were entirely new, being for the first time on public display. Also, the manner in which the museum succeeds in drawing public attention on new pieces of heritage is to be remarked in the concept of many 2014 exhibitions that adjoined well-known artifacts and novelties, as shown further in the present description.

### a. 9 exhibitions presenting the heritage of the Brukenthal National Museum:

Dorothea Schmierer-Roth (1893-1981): Paintings and engravings (Brukenthal Palace, Prints and Drawings Cabinet, 22.01-20.03, curator: Dr. Maria Ordeanu).

During the last decade, Dorothea Schmierer-Roth was re-discovered on the occasion of an important donation from her workshop, addressed by her inheritors Anne-Louise Roth and Alexandru Cezar Ionescu to the Museum. The donation consisting in 15 paintings and 34 drawings was presented for the first time to the general public in Sibiu.

Bestiarum Brukenthalium: an Incursion into the Animal Universe as Reflected by Rare Book Illustration, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c. (Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 19.02-27.04, curators: Frank Thomas Ziegler – Evangelical Parish Sibiu and Gabriella Zsigmond – Brukenthal Museum).

Organized by Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish C.A. Sibiu and DBU Germany, the event was part of "The Green Cap: Management, Environment and Art Communication at Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish and Environment Protection Agency from Sibiu".<sup>4</sup> Considering the fascination for animal representation as a starting point, the exhibition issued an invitation to a pleasant incursion in one of the most decisive chapters in the history of natural science and environment learning through the means of books as "Allgemeine Naturgeschichte der Fische" (The Natural History of Fishes) by Marcus Elieser Bloch; Berlin, last decade of 18<sup>th</sup> c. or "Histoire generale des drogues" (The Universal History of Pharmaceutical Substances) by Pierre Pomet, Paris 1694.

Expression through Lines and Colours. Graphic Works from the Collection of Brukenthal National Museum (Brukenthal Palace, Prints and Drawings Cabinet, 17.04-31.05, curator: Dr. Iulia Mesea).

The exhibition presented about 40 watercolours and drawings from the work of the some of the most important Romanian artists in the inter-war period.

Jewish Painters in the Collections of Brukenthal National Museum (Casa Albastră/Blue House, Multimedia Hall, 18– 25.05, curators: Dr. Iulia Mesea and Robert Strebeli).

The exhibition presented representative figures of the Romanian avant-garde and modernism alongside of works recently donated by contemporary Israeli artists.

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<sup>3</sup> The short descriptions of temporary exhibitions are selected from the texts given by the curators for public information.

<sup>4</sup> "The Green Cap: Management, Environment and Art Communication at Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish and Environment Protection Agency from Sibiu" (Financed by German Environment Foundation /Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt and The Environment and Climate Change Ministry; Partners: Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish and Environment Protection Agency from Sibiu; Duration: 2013-2015).

*Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu Hermannstadt 2013 Annual Report*, p.64, Ed. MNBrukenthal, Sibiu 2014, ISBN 978-606-93508-1-2.

Vasile Dobrian. Hypostases (Brukenthal Palace, Prints and Drawings Cabinet, 3.07-31.08, curator: Dr. Maria Ordeanu).

Brukenthal National Museum's graphic collection comprises 71 engravings signed by Vasile Dobrian, among which 23 wood-cuts and coloured linocuts, displayed on the occasion.

Animal Representations in the European Painting Collection of Brukenthal National Museum (Brukenthal Palace, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 1.10-9.11, curator: Sanda Marta).

The exhibition presented a selection of 72 easel works from all schools of European painting (Flemish and Dutch masters: Jan Fyt, Frans Snyder, Philips Wouwerman and Jan Josias Ossenbeeck, German and Austrian: Philipp Ferdinand Hamilton, Philipp Peter Roos and Johann Kien and Italian: Domenico Brandi, Francesco Casanova and Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione as well as the French painter Jean Baptiste Oudry), six of the paintings being exhibited for the first time.

Soft Tourism: the Passion for Picturesque Landscape Shown in the Early Transylvanian Photography (Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 25.10-30.11, curators: Frank Thomas Ziegler – Evangelical Parish and the Brukenthal Museum team – Dr. Raluca Frîncu, Dr. Alexandru Sonoc and Dr. Iulia Mesea).

Organized by Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish C.A. Sibiu and DBU Germany, the event was part of "The Green Cap: Management, Environment and Art Communication at Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish and Environment Protection Agency from Sibiu".<sup>5</sup>

Alongside of paintings and prints, the exhibition presented for the first time more than 50 pieces of early photography belonging to the Museum's collections, envisaging the dawn of the art of photography – not mere documentary images but productions revealing the same knowledge of composition as those observed in painting, centuries before.

The Bookbinding: Craft to Art (Brukenthal Palace, Prints and Drawings Cabinet, 6.11-31.12, curator: Gabriella Zsigmond).

The exhibition presented a selection of most beautiful and interesting book-bindings from the 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Holy Land Illustrated in Maps and Photography (Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 26.11-31.12, curators: Dr. Constantin Ittu and Dr. Petre Beşliu–Munteanu).

The exhibition issued an invitation into the dimension of the sacred space – one journey for two distinct geographical locations: the Holy Land and the Mount Athos. There were presented contemporary photos along maps and other cartography materials from the Museum's collections.

b. 1 exhibition presenting European heritage, hosted by the Museum:

Salvador Dali – Divina Commedia (Brukenthal Palace, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 15.07–15.09, curators: Dr. Maria Ordeanu – Brukenthal National Museum and Thomas Emmerling – Euro Art Luxemburg).

The exhibition displayed 100 woodcuts made after Dali's watercolours and 21 pieces illustrating the decomposition or the layers of colour in accordance to the progressive printing up to the final version. The woodcuts on display are part of Dr. Heinz Ess collection and were exhibited for the first time in Sibiu. As illustrated by Dali, "Divina Commedia" remains a mark in the art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that has not been equaled until the present days.

c. 1 exhibition presenting Romanian heritage, hosted by the Museum:

George Löwendal – Theatre is Art (Brukenthal Palace, Engravings Cabinet, 07-29.06, curator: George Radu – Löwendal Foundation).

Organized by Löwendal Foundation and Brukenthal National Museum, the exhibition brought to Sibiu a selection of materials illustrating George Löwendal's creative endeavor: thematic portraits, sketches, cartoons, working notebooks etc.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem.*

d. 18 exhibitions of contemporary art:

*\_Travelers to Nowhere...* (artist: Emil Pașcalău, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 6.03-30.03, curator: Dr. Iulia Mesea).

Reiterating the complexity and the striking subjectivity of his concept regarding realist figurative art, the painting of Emil Pașcalău subscribes to a strong contemporary trend of rediscovery art through the means of re-understanding it, the approach implying elements from diverse types of neo-realism and also related to naturalism, hyper-realism, dream realism and surrealism.

*\_Invasion Prague '68* (artist: Josef Koudelka, Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 10.04-03.05, curators: Laura Coltofean and Rodica Șinca, partners: French Institute in Romania, Czech Centre in Bucharest, Magnum Photos Paris, with the support of: Mayoralty of Sibiu and Cultural Centre of Sibiu).

The renowned international exhibition of Josef Koudelka's photography opened in Sibiu on the occasion of 45 years since the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet troops and Warsaw Pact allies (with the exception of Romania).

*\_Maybe Tomorrow / Velleicht Morgen* (artist: Jo Winter, Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 7-31.05, curator: Adrian Luca).

Besides the artist's works on canvas and paper, the exhibition presented sculptures made of wood, all cut out with a chainsaw and supporting a statement in behalf of natural environment protection.

*\_Meditations and Metaphors on Painting* (artist: Liviu Suhar, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 8.05-1.06, curator: Dr. Iulia Mesea).

The 50 works on display invited the general public to a demonstration of profound and sophisticated approach of painting, endowed with the sensitivity and the emotion that emerge from the artist's personal style.

*\_Gavril Nechifor Retrospective – Reality between Painting and Graphics* (artist: Gavril Nechifor, Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 9-30.05, curator: Dr. Valentin Mureșan).

Painter and graphic artist, Gavril Nechifor has had an impressive number of exhibitions opened during his creative years. He approaches all traditional genres in different ways of interpretation: portrait and still-life, along landscape, all revealing surreal accents and constructivist touches.

*\_Grigore Popescu-Muscel Retrospective* (artist: Grigore Popescu-Muscel, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 4-31.06, curator: Robert Strebeli).

Acknowledged in various artistic fields such as painting, mural painting and mural painting restoration, Grigore Popescu-Muscel presented in Brukenthal Palace a selection of easel works.

*\_ARCH* (artist: Martin Frommelt, Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 5-29.06, curator: Dr. Alexandru Sonoc).

The exhibition in Sibiu presented paintings that were for the first time on display, the selection continuing the "ARCH series" was inspired by a visit paid by the artist at the Arches National Park in Utah, USA.

*\_Images from the Old Music Festival in Miercurea Ciuc (2008-2012)* (Museum of History Casa Altemberger, inner courtyard, 1-13.07, curators: Dr. Raluca Maria Teodorescu – Brukenthal Museum and Levente Serfőző – As. HID).

Organized by HID – Hungarian's Association in Sibiu and Brukenthal Museum, the exhibition was dedicated to the Old Music Festival held in Miercurea Ciuc and presented photos of the performing artists.

*\_Axis Mundi #2* (artist: Darie Dup, Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 4-31.07, curator: Dr. Alexandru Sonoc).

The sculpture exhibition was part of a travelling project dealing with the social issue of natural heritage destruction (the forests) approached as a matter of individual consciousness.

*\_Ion Baicu. A Symphony in Wood* (artist: Ion Baicu, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 5-31.08, curator: Dr. Daniela Dâmboiu).

The retrospective aimed at presenting sculpture along symbolic connotations, the wood being not an option made by chance but reminiscent of the Holy Cross, the Tree of Life, or the Tree of Knowledge.

*\_Polish Poster. 21<sup>st</sup> century* (artists: Tomasz Bogusławski, Ryszard Kajzer and Sebastian Kubica, Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 6.08-28.09, curators: Andrei Popa and Dr. Ilie Mitrea).

Organized by Polish Institute in Bucharest and Brukenthal National Museum, the exhibition displayed 60 posters created by three representatives of the contemporary generation of poster art in Poland.

*\_Darkness of Mexico* (Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 7.08-31.09, curators: Dr. Dana Roxana Hrib – Brukenthal Museum, Daniel de la Fuente Jayme – Orden del Cister, Mexico and Cesar Oropeza – Art Mexico Superficie).

Organized by Orden del Cister, “Darkness of Mexico” is a project put together by contemporary Mexican artists for the release of their artwork in various countries and celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the 2011 Wave-Gotik-Treffen Festival in Leipzig, Germany.

The 60 Mexican artists that exhibited in Brukenthal Palace draw their inspiration from various sources (prehispanic to native and contemporaneous) in approaching the thematic of death with attentiveness but also with a passionate attachment to the different aspects of their tradition.

*\_Ovidiu Simionescu: Engravings, Drawings and Sculpture* (artist: Ovidiu Simionescu, Brukenthal Palace, Engravings and Drawings Cabinet, 3.09-31.10, curator: Dr. Alexandru Sonoc).

As suggested by the frequently used symbols of the bird or the wing, Ovidiu Simionescu’s work is the outcome of a deep and continuous reflection, an act of will and self-challenge as well as self-overcoming through tenacious efforts.

*\_Gentle Violence* (artists: Cristina Bobe – photography, Horia Mureşian – photography and Sebastian Florea – soundtrack, Casa Albastră/Blue House, Multimedia Hall, 5 - 28.09, curator: Laura Coltofean).

Organized by Brukenthal National Museum and FotoMedical, the exhibition aimed at drawing public’s attention on a photography genre less known in Romania – the medical photography.

*\_Fine Arts Gap. Artists from Piatra Neamţ in Brukenthal Palace* (artists: Dumitru Bostan, Ştefan Potop and Lucian Tudorache, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 5-30.09, curator: Dr. Iulia Mesea).

Although communicating in ways that differ in both technique and artistic expression, the painters Dumitru Bostan and Ştefan Potop together with the sculptor Lucian Tudorache joined efforts in presenting to the public in Sibiu a representative selection of their works.

*\_Tudor Zbârnea. Painting* (artist: Tudor Zbârnea, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 3-29.10, curator: Dr. Alexandru Sonoc).

Born in Nisporeni, the Republic of Moldova, the artist is constantly emphasizing the expressive role of the colour. The painting remains an artistic research focused on that part of the existences that tends to relate to the collective sub-consciousness.

*\_Steps to Completion II* (artist: Lucia Puşcaşu, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 20.11-31.12, curator: Robert Strebli).

On display, there were pieces of tapestry alongside of works of painting and engraving, adjoining a large number of techniques: haute lisse, embroidery, oil on canvas, pastel etc.

*\_Windows towards God* (artist: Constantin Scărlătescu, Museum of Contemporary Art, Temporary Exhibitions Hall, 4-30.12, curator: Adrian Luca).

The exhibits were inspired by the icon production of the most important centres of religious art in Romania. Presented inside window-frames, Constantin’s icons emerged from a symbol and image of the Divine towards a dialogue between mundane and spiritual.

e. 1 exhibition of contemporary crafts:

*\_Easter Traditions in Bucovina* (Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 14-16.04, curators: Robert Strebli – Brukenthal Museum and Maria Cruşminschi – Hanul Domnesc Museum).

The event was part of Brukenthal Cultural Axis programme.<sup>6</sup>

In anticipation of Easter celebration, the Brukenthal Museum invited the public to a painted eggs exhibition put together by 6 folk artists coming from the north regions of Romania.

f. 2 exhibitions inside museum education projects:

*Me* (Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 11.06-30.07, curator: Dr. Dana Roxana Hrib, Partner: Art High School in Sibiu, coordinator Anca Ioana Serfözö).<sup>7</sup>

The 65 works on display invited the public to an exhibition characterized by warmth and decorativeness but also representing an up to date view on teenager's search of the self, a complex approach in both thematic and technique (dry point, monotypy, mixed technique, photography & drawing, engraving & drawing, acryl on cardboard).

*MAN – the Hunter* (Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 27.09-31.10, curator: Anca Ioana Serfözö – Art High School in Sibiu, Partners: Art High School Sibiu, Mustash – Materials for artists, Pip Seymour – Fine Arts Products London, U.K.).

The exhibition was part of the cultural project “OM – Obiectul Muzeal” (May 1-October 31) financed by the National Cultural Fund Administration.<sup>8</sup>

Young artists recreated in a unique manner the story behind game trophies as those displayed in the permanent exhibition at “August von Spiess” Museum of Hunting.

### 3. Events related to the permanent art exhibitions at the Museum's locations<sup>9</sup>

*Listen Five Minutes of Classical Music* (Brukenthal Palace, 2014, organized by Radio România Muzical).

The project aimed at reaching general public in other venues than concert halls, the five minute of classical music being played daily in the Music Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Brukenthal Palace.

*International Day of the Museums* (all Museum's locations, 18.05).

On the occasion of the International Day of the Museums, Brukenthal National Museum offered free access for the public to all locations. A special preview for official and media was also held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in the anticipation of the new visiting storage opening.

### 4. Events related to the temporary art exhibitions opened at the Museum's locations

*Book launching: Mesajul eshatologic al spațiului liturgic creștin: arhitectură și icoană în Moldova sec. XV-XVI* (Author: Gabriel Herea, Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 14.04).

The event was part of the manifestations occasioned by the opening of *Easter traditions in Bucovina* exhibition.

*Workshop: Seven Theses for Environmental Communication through Museum Activities and Art Exhibitions* (16.06).

Organized by the Brukenthal National Museum, the Evangelical Parish C.A. Sibiu and by DBU Germany, the event was part of “The Green Cap: Management, Environment and Art Communication at Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish and Environment Protection Agency from Sibiu”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In 2012, Brukenthal National Museum has launched the *Brukenthal Cultural Axis* programme aiming at a closer cooperation with other museums in Romania and abroad through the means of a large variety of activities as: traveling exhibitions, exhibition exchange and shared exhibition programs, professional experience exchange, etc. *Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu Hermannstadt 2013 Annual Report*, p.61, Ed. MNBRukenthal, Sibiu 2014, ISBN 978-606-93508-1-2.

<sup>7</sup> The exhibition concluded an education project organized by Brukenthal National Museum (coordinator Dr. Dana Roxana Hrib) and Art High School in Sibiu (coordinator Anca Ioana Serfözö) aiming at discovering artistic ways in self-expressing from self-portrait to depictions of feelings and affinities.

<sup>8</sup> “OM – Obiectul Muzeal” (Financed by National funds Administrația Fondului Cultural Național/AFCN; Partners: Art High School in Sibiu, Sibiu County, NGO Association for Science, Education and Environment MEROPS, Brașov, Philatelists Association of Sibiu; Duration: May 1 to October 31, 2014).

[http://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro/proiecte/index\\_en.html](http://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro/proiecte/index_en.html)

<sup>9</sup> The short descriptions of the events are selected from the texts given by the organizers for public information.

9 museum workers and 3 members of the project team were involved in a debate on the ecological message communication through the means of art.

\_Opening act: *Classical Guitar Performance* (artist: Ricardo Gonzáles, 7.08, Brukenthal Palace).

The performance was given as part of *Darkness of Mexico* exhibition opening.

\_Seminar: *Medical Photography – Techniques, Equipment and Usage* (Habitus Bookshop, 6.09, Brukenthal National Museum coordinator: Laura Coltofean; Partner: Photosetup).

Event organized by FotoMedical, Brukenthal National Museum and Habitus Bookshop, the seminar was part of “Gentle Violence” project consisting in annual exhibitions dedicated to medical fine art photography and presenting images behind the closed doors of the operating rooms.

\_Conference: *Tale of a Heart* (Humanitas Bookshop, 27.09, Brukenthal National Museum coordinator: Laura Coltofean; speaker: Dr. Horia Mureşian).

The conference was part of the “Gentle Violence” project. The participants had the opportunity to discover rare images of the heart and its delicate structures and to find out how the heart can be photographed.

\_Workshop: *Photography Styles* (Habitus Bookshop, 27.09; Brukenthal National Museum coordinator: Laura Coltofean; speaker: Daniel Bălţat).

The workshop was part of “Gentle Violence” project; the discussions focused on photography styles and the difference between commercial and studio photography.

## 5. Other events in Brukenthal Palace<sup>11</sup>

\_Feerie Fashion Days, the 7<sup>th</sup> edition (Brukenthal Palace, entrance, 20.06, event organized by: Mitichi Foundation, partner: Brukenthal National Museum).

Designers, photographers, bloggers and journalists from all over the world gathered in Sibiu for unique fashion shows performed in spectacular locations.

\_The first Peter Hammill concert in Romania! (Brukenthal Palace, front inner courtyard, 7.08, event organized by ARTmania Festival, partner: Brukenthal National Museum).

Brukenthal National Museum was privileged to receive the visit of Peter Hammill and to hosts his first concert in Romania. Peter Hammill was born in London in 1948. His career began as singer and songwriter for Van Der Graaf Generator, the unconventional and highly influential underground group of the seventies.

\_Be Creative 2014, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Student’s National Fashion and Design Festival (Brukenthal Palace, front inner courtyard, 5-6.09, event organized by Casa de Cultură a Studenţilor in Sibiu and Cleopatra Models, partner: Brukenthal National Museum).

Patterned as a national competition, the festival implied a genuine artistic marathon of events that enjoyed the participation of fashion designers from Romania and overseas, professional models, photographers, make-up artists and hair stylists.

\_“A Stroll in Sibiu” – an Eco Initiative (Brukenthal Palace, inner courtyards, 1.11, event organized by ECCO partners: WeHelp Association, Brukenthal National Museum and the League of Political Studies and International Relations Students and Graduates).

Brukenthal Palace was visited by the participants in “A stroll in Sibiu” event that had as motto *walking together – helping together*. Following a route that included the most important touristic locations in the historical center of Sibiu city, the stroll was organized having in mid two objectives: on one hand it aimed at encouraging open-air activity against car traffic, on the other hand it aimed at collecting the 10 lei/participant, money granted by ECCO shop for supporting the WEHelp project in preventing school abandonment in the city of Sibiu.

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<sup>10</sup> “The Green Cap: Management, Environment and Art Communication at Brukenthal National Museum, Evangelical Parish and Environment Protection Agency from Sibiu”.  
*Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu Hermannstadt 2013 Annual Report*, p.64, Ed. MNBRukenthal, Sibiu 2014, ISBN 978-606-93508-1-2.

<sup>11</sup> The short descriptions of the events are selected from the texts given by the organizers for public information.

## 6. Published materials related to temporary exhibitions at the Museum's locations

### a. Catalogues:

*– Iulia Mesea, Expresie în linie și culoare. Lucrări de grafică din colecția Muzeului Național Brukenthal*<sup>12</sup>, Editura Muzeului de Artă Brașov, Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, 2014, 55 pages, full-colour, Romanian language, ISBN 978-606-93508-9-8.

*– OM-ul vânător/Man – the hunter*, 96 pages, full-colour, bilingual RO/EN, text authors: Ana-Maria Papurean & Rodica Ciobanu (pp. 5-43, 96) and Anca-Ioana Serfözö (pp. 44-95), Sibiu 2014, no ISBN, free of charge distribution/not in shops (sponsored by AFCN<sup>13</sup>).

*– Emil Pașcalău. Călători spre nicăieri. Pictură*<sup>14</sup>, 24 pages, full-colour, Romanian language, text author: Iulia Mesea (pp. 1-2), Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, ISBN 978-606-93508-3-6, free of charge distribution/not in shops.

*– Darkness of Mexico*, 44 pages, full-colour, Romanian, Spanish and English, text authors: Dana Hrib (p. 5) and Daniel de la Fuente & Cesar Oropeza (pp. 6-9), Brukenthal National Museum, 2014, no ISBN, free of charge distribution/not in shops.

*– Interstițiu plastic – Nemțeni la Palatul Brukenthal*<sup>15</sup>, 17 pages, full-colour, Romanian language, text authors: Iulia Mesea (pp. 1 and 17), Dumitru Bostan (p. 2), Ștefan Potop (p. 7), Lucian Tudorache (p. 12), Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, ISBN 978-606-93765-0-8, free of charge distribution/not in shops.

*– Grigore Popescu-Muscel – forța culorii*<sup>16</sup>, 41 pages, full-colour, Romanian language, no ISBN, free of charge distribution/not in shops.

### b. Other

*– Gentle Violence* (brochure), 15 pages, full-colour, Romanian language, text authors: Laura Coltofean (p. 7), Cristina Bobe (p. 9), Horia Muresian (p. 11), no ISBN, free of charge distribution/not in shops.

*– Locurile sfinte reflectate în hărți și fotografii*<sup>17</sup> (leaflet), Romanian language, text author: Constantin Ittu, free of charge distribution.

## 7. Temporary exhibitions opened by Brukenthal National Museum in Romania<sup>18</sup>

*– Scenes and Religious Figures in the European Painting Collection of the Brukenthal Museum* (Cotroceni National Museum in Bucharest, 25.06-30.08, curator: Dr. Daniela Dâmboiu).

Favorite to painters, commissioners and art collectors, the religious subjects are expressed in both devotional and narrative compositions (Old or New Testament extraction) reflecting the diversity of stylistic approaches as shown through the means of 33 paintings signed by masters of Italian, Flemish, Dutch, German and Austrian schools of painting.

*– Expression Through Lines and Colours. Graphic Works from the Collection of the Brukenthal National Museum* (Fine Arts Museum in Brașov, 13.06-20.07, curator: Dr. Iulia Mesea).

The exhibition was part of the Brukenthal Cultural Axis programme.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Expression Through Lines and Colours. Graphic Works from the Collection of Brukenthal National Museum* (Brukenthal Palace, Prints and Drawings Cabinet, 17.04-31.05).

<sup>13</sup> "Cultural project Om – Obiectul Muzeal" (Financed by National Funds Administrația Fondului Cultural Național/AFCN; Partners: Art High School in Sibiu, Sibiu County, NGO Association for Science, Education and Environment MEROPS, Brașov, Philatelists Association of Sibiu; Duration: May 1 to October 31, 2014), [http://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro/proiecte/index\\_en.html](http://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro/proiecte/index_en.html)

<sup>14</sup> *Travelers to Nowhere...* (Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 6.03-30.03).

<sup>15</sup> *Fine Arts Gap. Artists from Piatra Neamț in Brukenthal Palace* (Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 5-30.09).

<sup>16</sup> *Retrospective Grigore Popescu-Muscel* (Brukenthal Palace, Temporary Exhibition Halls, 4-31.06).

<sup>17</sup> *The Holy Land Illustrated in Maps and Photography* (Brukenthal Palace, Cartography Cabinet, 26.11-31.12).

<sup>18</sup> The short descriptions of exhibitions are selected from the texts given by the curators for public information.

<sup>19</sup> *Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu Hermannstadt 2013 Annual report*, p.61, Ed. MNBrukenthal, Sibiu 2014, ISBN 978-606-93508-1-2.



After opening the same exhibition in Brukenthal National Museum during April 17-May 31, the works were presented to the general public in Braşov.

#### 8. Participating in temporary exhibitions in Romania and abroad

*Dans le sillage de Rubens, Erasme Quellin (1607-1678)* (Musee Departamental de Flandre, France, 5.04-7.09).

*Publicum meritorum praemium – The History of the Saint Stephen Order of Hungary* (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary, 5.05-31.08).

*Friedrich Miess 1954-1935* (Muzeul de Artă Braşov, Romania, 25.07-28.09).

*Martin van Meytens der Jungere* (Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, Austria, 18.10.2014-8.02.2015).

*Ars Amandi. Tema iubirii în arta europeană a secolelor XVI-XIX* (Muzeul Naţional de Artă, Romania, 20.11.2014-29.03.2015).

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[http://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro/proiecte/index\\_en.html](http://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro/proiecte/index_en.html)

