

Elizabeta DIMITROVA



“RHYTHM AND GROOVE” THE DYNAMICS OF LINE AND ITS IDEO-SYNCHRONICITY IN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Key words: Catacomb of San Callixtus, Vinica relief terra-cottas, the Gospel of Archbishop Ebbo, The head-posts of the Oseberg ship, Viking art, Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, the church of Saint George at Kurbinovo, Byzantine art, Carolingian illuminated manuscripts.

The article deals with the role of the line and its visual functionality in the structure of artistic products executed in different media (inscriptions, frescoes, book illuminations, reliefs, sculptures) throughout the epochs of the Christian Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Its primary goal is to determine the specific premises of linear gravitation and its codependency of ideological concept both in the process of construction, as well as consummation of artistic creation.

As fundamental component of all artistic works, the line has a major impact over the visual composition of aesthetic spectacles (in terms of: pictures, three-dimensional sculptures, relief carvings or any other type of artistic works) regardless of their inspiration, typology and/or purpose. Contour, geometric, organic, gestural, decorative or any other kind, the line defines the structure of artistic creation and manifests the outlook of the design which represents the essence of one's invention, transformed into an object of aesthetic evaluation. In the process of superposition of constitutional elements of the artistry, the line remains the basic principle of “making” the visual pattern inventive, appealing, captivating and authentically remarkable. Whether thin or thick, bold or fluid, wavy or undulating, playful or stable, consistent or irregular, amorphous or coherent, detailed or unstructured, the line is the primal step in conceiving an art work embellished by other aesthetic elements such are: modeling, visual proportions, perspective, organic unity, composition and colors. Hence, everybody agrees that “line is a mental construct” since it is the sine qua non (at least) of painting which contains, divides, connects, attaches, defines and otherwise effects forms. It also expresses movement and mobility, gives the ratio of one's pace as an author, deconstructs emotion and sensibility, as well as discloses the specific rhythm of creative

passion embedded into the art work as a personal DNA with unique traits of one's intimate inspiration and visual phantasm. In that regard, we have chosen several artistic master-peaces funded upon the authentically inventive, energetically dynamic and passionately diversified play of the line. Belonging to different mediums, as well as diverse chronological periods, they all testify to the kinetic predominance of aesthetic motion within the linear artistic concept.

First example:

EARLY CHRISTIAN FRESCO PAINTING

The sepulchral inscriptions in the Catacomb of San Callixtus in Rome – graphic linearism

When we talk about the earliest artistic expression of Christian faith, we most certainly look at the frescoes preserved on the walls of the catacomb of San Callixtus - the oldest, largest and most elaborated site of ancient Roma Sotterranea¹. Serving as a

¹ H. Lecleq, *Calliste (cimetière de)*, L. Cabrol – H. Lecleq, *Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chrétienne et la liturgie* II/2, Paris 1920, col. 1663-1754; U. Fasola, *Indagini nel sotterraneo della Catacomba di San Callisto*, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 56, Città del Vaticano 1980, pp. 221-278; S. Carletti, *La Catacomba di San Callisto*, Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Città del Vaticano 1981; A. Ferrua, *Cimitero di San Callisto*, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 51, Città del Vaticano 1981, pp. 7-24; A. Baruffa, *Le Catacombe de san Callisto*, Città del Vaticano 1992; M. J. Johnson, *Pagan-Christian Practices of the Fourth Century: Shared Tombs*, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5/1, Baltimore 1997, pp. 37-59; F. Mancinelli, *The Catacombs of Rome and the Origins of Christianity*, Firenze 1999, pp. 21-25; A. Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St. Callistus. History, Archaeology. Faith*, Vatican City 2000; E. Димитрова, *Симболичниот свет на San Callisto*, *Културен живот* 1, Скопје 2001, pp. 46-53; M. Sághy, *Scinditur in partes populous: Pope Damasus and the Martyrs of Rome*, *Early*



Fig. 1 Catacomb of San Callixtus, Cubiculum of the Sacraments A3

safe refuge from the persecutions organized by the Roman Emperors in the period from the beginning of the 2nd century until the promulgation of the Edict of Milan by Constantine the Great, the catacomb of *San Callisto* has been much more than a burial site for the popes and martyrs of Rome; in fact, it is one of the largest galleries of ancient Christian frescoes, much of which have been unfortunately devastated due to the underground heavy moisture, as well as other situational factors. The ones that are preserved (at least to a certain extent), however, testify not only to the symbolic iconography invented by the earliest Christian believers, rather to the imaginative means of expression utilized for creation of a palette of visual patterns for explication of the elements of faith before it has been configured as a strict matrix of a regulated religious dogma (Fig. 1). In that regard, the scene illustrating the Adoration of the Magi², the

image of the Good Shepherd³, the figure of the Old Testament Prophet Daniel in the Lions' Den⁴, the Eucharistic compositions⁵ and other depictions scattered throughout the walls and vaults of the nearly 20 km long corridors of the catacomb represent the core of the visual culture from the dawn of the Christian era. In that sense, away from the chaotic noise of the pagan universe and blood-thirsty bahanalias in the gladiatorial arenas, within the ecstatic *silencia* of San Callixtus the new ethical values of humanity have been founded, transposed in modest painterly configurations of the new symbolic system of creative expression. Although austere in their visual constellation and reduced in terms of iconographic capacity, these earliest symbolic depictions executed in San Callixtus are elements of the fundamental iconographic repertoire of Christian artistic expression which will gain its canonical features in the course of the Middle Ages.

The largest part of the “painterly” collection of San Callixtus underground gallery belongs to the cluster of graphic inscriptions. As it is shown by the one inscribed in honor of Pope Eusebius discovered

Medieval Europe 9/3, New York 2003, p. 273; W. J. Reardon, *The Deaths of the Popes: Comprehensive Accounts including Funerals, Burial Places and Epitaphs*, Jefferson 2004, p. 320; L. V. Rutgers, K v d Borg, A F M d Jong, *Radiocarbon Dates From the Catacomb of St. Callixtus in Rome*, Radiocarbon 47/3, Tucson 2005, pp. 395-400; L. V. Rutgers, K v d Borg, A F M d Jong, C v d Linde, *Further Radiocarbon Dates From the Catacomb of St. Callixtus in Rome*, Radiocarbon 49/3, Tucson 2007, pp. 1221-1229.

² A. Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St. Callistus. History, Archaeology. Faith*, Fig. on p. 118, with reconstructive drawing on p. 119.

³ F. Mancinelli, *The Catacombs of Rome and the Origins of Christianity*, Fig. 45.

⁴ F. v d Meer, Ch. Mohrmann, *Atlas de l'Antiquité Chrétienne*, Paris-Bruxelles 1960, Fig. 84.

⁵ Е. Димитрова, *Симболичниот свет на San Callisto*, Fig. 7.



Fig. 2 Catacomb of San Callixtus,
Cript of Saint Eusebius

in the Crypt of St. Eusebius (**Fig. 2** reconstruction), most of them are arranged in perfect order of alphabetic components, as well as proportional dimensions of the represented syllabi, particularly those dedicated to some of the prominent individuals of the period. Measured and calculated according to the appropriate scale, this inscription was executed on a marble slab placed inside the arcosolium that once contained the remains of the martyred Pope Eusebius. Rhythmically organized in ten horizontal rows, it is proportionally assembled in terms of the dimensions of the first and the last line where the names of the deceased pope and the bishop who composed the poetic text for the late pontiff have been written. Furthermore, all letters are geometrically shaped in cubical forms with identical size and carefully selected rectangular coordinates and arranged in a linear scheme of an elementary, yet transparently configured matrix for the contents of the epitaph. The horizontal lines and the vertical rows that flank the poetic inscription are counter positioned with geometric precision of a visual calculation in a scale 2:1 so that everyone knows the assessed implication of the two different dimensions that constitute the graphic 'spectacle'.

The same goes for the epitaphs of the *less eminent* Christians entombed in the Crypt of Lucina, as it is shown by the inscription executed on the grave of the late Apuleia Crysopolis (**Fig. 3**). In this case, the text is accompanied by appropriate symbolic images of the Good Shepherd and an Olive Tree which nuance the sorrowful inscription written on the grave of a young, seven years old departed individual. If one should look closely to the manner of execution of the inscription, one will notice the imprinted horizontal lines as means for the regular and precise display of the letters the arrangement of which intends to give a clear and transparent picture of its contents. In that regard, the inscription is flanked by an identical (size wise) images of the Olive Tree as a symbolic picture of the Paradise, where the soul of the Christian child should be expected, as well as the figure of Christ



Fig. 3 Catacomb of San Callixtus,
Area of Saint Miltiades

as a Good Shepherd as her eternal spiritual guardian and protector. The manner in which both images have been executed also shows carefully calculated proportionality in terms of their spatial arrangement, to the point that the orientation lines (similarly to those utilized for the letters) can still be seen on the level of the legs of the depicted shepherd. Engraved much deeper than it is the case with the letters of the inscription, the two images are founded upon the graphic role of the line which configures the mild curvatures of the drawing. Elemental yet picturesque, uncomplicated but highly illustrative, the linear constellation of the epitaph of young Apuleia, both in picture and words, discloses the primal sentiments of parental grief submerged in impartial and sincere belief.

Second example:

EARLY CHRISTIAN RELIEF SCULPTURE

The terracotta with the depiction of the 36th Psalm of King David from the Vinica collection – elusive linearism

In the world of archaeology, the discovery of the terracotta relief plaques at the site of the Vinica fortress has been somewhat of a national spectacle⁶. Au-

⁶ Ц. Крстевски, З. Белдедовски, *Рекогносцирање и наоди околу Виница*, Macedoniae Acta Archeologica 7-8, Скопје 1987, p. 155; К. Балабанов, *Теракотни икони од Виница*, Скопје 1991, pp. 8, 9; J. M. Veselý, *Griderrano la Pietre*, Roma 1987, pp. 99, 100; С. Пејић, *Изложба иконе из Македоније у Загребу*, Саопштења 19, Београд 1987, pp. 315-317; X. Меловски, *Керамичките икони од Виничкото Кале*, Жива Антика 9, Скопје 1991, pp. 179-185; К. Балабанов, *Керамичке иконе из Виноце*, Београд 1991; Е. Димитрова, *Некои натписи на теракотните икони од Виноце*, Современост 5-6, Скопје 1992, pp. 119-127; Eadem, *The Terracotta Relief Plaques from Vinica*, Starinar, Revue de l'Institut Archeologique XLIII-XLIV/1992-1993, Belgrade 1994/ Археолошките откритија на почвата на Македонија. Прилози за истражувањето на историјата и културата на почвата

thetically configured, inscribed with elusive textual messages, ennobled with expressive forms of biblical spectacles and illuminated with dramatic character of the depicted elements, the ceramic reliefs unearthed at the Late Antique site of Kale at Vinica remain as the most striking archaeological discovery in the Republic of Macedonia so far. Consisted of visual motifs carefully selected from Old Testament, as well as New Testament iconography, accompanied with inscriptions that give the images a resounding context of undisclosed, yet specified textual synopsis and produced in multiple replicas, the Vinica collection is a perfect example of religious message board designed in a picturesque visual manifestation of iconographic imagination⁷. Produced at the turn of the 6th century in the time of the Emperor Anastasius in an era burden with ideological conflicts the resolution of which will come several decades later and nuanced by strongly pinpointed monotheistic accents, the Vinica terra-cottas represent a rare testimony to the existence of an uncommon/alternative religious practice confirmed by an artistic ensemble executed in a unique form, as well as extraordinary thematic arrangement. Outclassing the similar artifacts discovered so far from the period 3rd – 6th centuries by the inventive visual collaboration between the picture and the accompanying text, the dramatic invasiveness of the symbolic structure in the config-



Fig. 4 Relief terracotta from the Vinica Kale site, Psalm 36/ Prophet Daniel in the Lions' Den

на Македонија, кн. 19, Скопје 2008, pp. 887-914; Eadem, *Есхатолошката симболика на ранохристијанската уметност во Македонија*, Религиите и религиските аспекти на материјалната и духовната култура на почвата на Македонија, 4, Скопје 1996, pp. 154-157; Eadem, *Керамичките релјефи од Виничкото Кале*, Скопје 1993/ *The Ceramic Reliefs of the Vinica Kale*, Скопје 1995; К. Балабанов, *Теракотните икони во Македонија*, Скопје 1995; Е. Димитрова, *Виничките теракоти*, Скопје 2000; К. Балабанов, *Виничко кале – митологија, религија и историја пишувани со глина*, Скопје 2011; Е. Dimitrova, *The Vinica Mystery. The Ceramic Treasures of a Late Antique Fortress*, Vinica 2012, Eadem, *Ремек дела на ранохристијанската уметност во Македонија*, Македонија. Милениумски културно-историски факти, Скопје 2013, pp. 1435-1456; Eadem, *The Terracotta Relief Plaques From Vinica*, Скопје 2016.

⁷ Е. Dimitrova, *The Vinica Mystery. The Ceramic Treasures of a Late Antique Fortress*, pp. 255-263.

uration of the motifs, as well as the unpretentious, yet pictorially formulated artistic amplitude of the execution, the Vinica relief slabs occupy the summit of two dimensional sculpture in the last centuries of Christian Antiquity.

As a component of the Vinica ensemble of relief terra-cottas, the plaque with the representation of the Old Testament Prophet Daniel in the Lions' Den (Fig. 4), accompanied with the verses of the 36th Psalm of King David which praise God's support and the salvation of righteous believers⁸, shares the same linear constellation with the rest of the slabs constituting the funereal arrangement that once embellished the sepulchral structures located within the Fortress. Framed in a geometric form of a square with a relief profile, the symmetrical representation of Daniel flanked by the two lion figures is enclosed by an outer segment containing the inscribed text. All letters are shaped in an accentuated three-dimensional provenance, including the ones flanking the image of the Old Testament prophet which disclose his religious identity. The text of the 36th Psalm of King David circulates around the depiction written in segments whose direction of linguistic consecutiveness starts at the upper margin of the plaque, continues along its right edge, moves to the left vertical side and ends horizontally beneath the

⁸ Eadem, *Керамичките релјефи од Виничкото Кале*, pp. 95-105; Eadem, *Најстарите христијански симболи*, Скопје 1995, pp. 160-162; Eadem, *The Vinica Mystery. The Ceramic Treasures of a Late Antique Fortress*, pp. 139-147.



Fig. 5 Relief terracotta from the Vinica Kale site, Psalm 36/Prophet Daniel in the Lions' Den, detail

picture. In other words, it does not flow in a regular order of words (which is the case of all other relief slabs from the Vinica collection), yet the text is given in sections which constitute a kind of letter puzzle. That is, of course, not done by accident, since the inscription(s) should have been understood only by those competent in the idea, in this case – alternative believers of a monophysitic origin⁹.

The linearism of the relief representation, on the other hand, is anything but fluid and reflects the proportional parameters of the visual arrangement of components. Enhanced when utilized for the hair of the prophet and the manes of the lions, geometrically calculated when involved in depicting Daniel's costume, tamed for the modeling of the powerful lion figures, rhythmically elaborated for representation of the ferocious jaws of the two animal predators and overall dynamic, as well as energetically charged with forceful rigidity for the constitution of the iconographic design to give the spectacle a quantity of pictorial voltage and a quality of mysterious aesthetic dimension (Fig. 5). Although the stylistic approach in the creation of the Vinica terra-cottas emanates a specific idiom which consists of brutal, yet powerful expression, schematized forms and geometrically organized modeling of the represented figures¹⁰ (quite appropriate for

a creative work of an alternative belief), the plaques, as shown by the one representing Prophet Daniel in the den of lions, are done with respect to all visual principles in regard to the iconographic scheme of the respective depictions. In that sense, the round forms for the eyes (human and animal alike), triangular for the tunic, rectangular for the extremities (both human and animal), as well as the wavy linear module for the hairy elements are carefully selected to give the picture a strict geometric order of a proportional and skillfully organized arrangement funded upon the dominant role of the line. Regardless of the obvious aesthetic shortcomings (distorted anatomy of the figures, incorrect proportions of the represented characters etc.), the terracotta plaque depicting Daniel taming the ferocious lions in the den captivates with its linear simplicity and puzzling constellation, manifesting the fierce austerity of shape in its primordial visual function.

Third example:

CAROLINGIAN BOOK ILLUMINATION

The Gospel of Archbishop Ebbo – energetic linearism

The Evangeliary inspired by the mission of the Archbishop Ebbo from Reims (816-835), kept in Epernay, Bibliothèque Municipale (under Ms. 1)¹¹ is

⁹ E. Dimitrova, *The Vinica Mystery. The Ceramic Treasuries of a Late Antique Fortress*, pp. 259-260; Eadem, *Ремек дела на ранохристијанската уметност во Македонија*, pp. 1455-1456.

¹⁰ E. Dimitrova, *The Ceramic Reliefs Of The Vinica*

Kale, pp. 175-189; Eadem, *The Ceramic Relief Plaques From Vinica*, p. 22.

¹¹ R. Berenson, Ruth, *The Exhibition of Carolingian art at Aachen*, Art Journal. 26/2, New York 1966, pp. 160-



Fig. 6 *Gospel of Archbishop Ebbo, Mark the Evangelist*



Fig. 7 *Gospel of Archbishop Ebbo, John the Evangelist*

certainly one of the most remarkable medieval illuminated manuscript produced in the early period of Western art. It was created in the course of Archbishop Ebbo's church office in the Benedictine Abbey of Hautvillers containing the texts of the four gospels, each of which has gained a cover piece with the portrait of the respectable evangelist. Unlike the canonically conceived representations of Gospels' authors in other illuminated manuscripts from the medieval epoch¹², Archbishop Ebbo's Gospel book displays images of the four evangelists in a highly energetic and dynamically charged artistic manner. Deriving from the same illuminative core of Carolingian minuscule, yet setting its own standards of drawing and modeling, Archbishop Ebbo's Gospel uses dif-

ferent set of painterly components for the depiction of the miniature iconography and its constitutional visual parameters. Vibrantly emotional, restlessly animated, energetically vigorous and tirelessly spirited, the illustrations in this Evangeliary manifest the dynamic idiom for decoration of the illuminated manuscripts with the powerful expression of the linear style reflecting its picturesque potential and illustrative capacity (Fig. 6). Although far from the strict linear constellation of paintings in the group of Hiberno-Saxon illuminated manuscripts¹³, the Gospel book of Archbishop Ebbo displays intuitive means of painterly apparatus for accentuated linearism with distinctive visual effects. Almost illusionistic in the intend to show images obsessed by the vibrating power of line, the four portraits of the evangelists depicted in Archbishop Ebbo's illuminated manuscript are restlessly rippled in their "awaken" anatomy permeated with whirlpool of tumultuous energy and vigorous charge of rebellious motility.

Merging the classical illusionism with the northern linear technique of illumination, the illustrations in the Gospel book of Archbishop Ebbo are examples

165; P. R. McKeon, *Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (816-835): A Study in the Carolingian Empire and Church*, *Church History* 43/4, Cambridge 1974, pp. 437-440; H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, New York 1977, pp. 203; R. G. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages*, New York 1983, p. 211; C. Chazelle, *Archbishops Ebo and Hincmar of Reims and the Utrecht Psalter*, *Speculum. A Journal of Medieval Studies* 72/4, Chicago 1997, pp. 1055-1077; C. Stokstad, M. Marlyn, *Art History*, New Jersey 2008, pp. 448-450.

¹² Such are the Gospel of Charlemagne, the Ada Gospels, the Vienna Coronation Gospels, St. Riquier Gospels, Codex Aureus of Lorsch, cf. F. Mütterich, J. Gaehte, *Karolingische Buchmalerei*, München 1979; I. Walther, N. Wolf, *Meisterwerke der Buchmalerei*, Köln 2005.

¹³ C. Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting: Book Illumination in the British Isles 600-800*, New York 1976; M. Schapiro, *The Place of Ireland in Hiberno-Saxon Art*, Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art, New York 1979, pp. 225-247.



Fig. 8 Gospel of Archbishop Ebbo,
Mathew the Evangelist

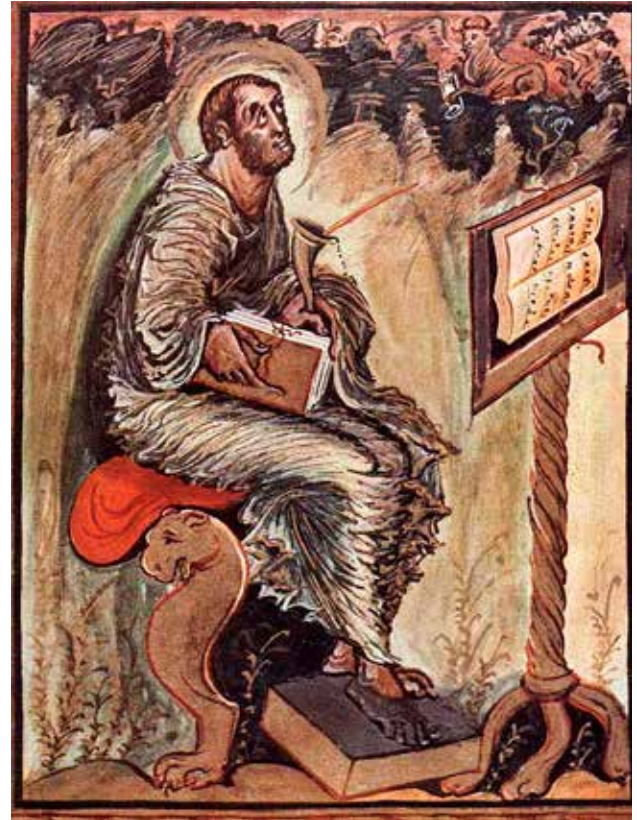


Fig. 9 Gospel of Archbishop Ebbo,
Luke the Evangelist

of an inventive way for achieving a visual impression of great dynamism and dispersing vivaciousness. In that regard, the distinctive frenzied lines utilized for creation of the corporal features, as well as the facial shapes of the evangelists, are assisting in constructing the characteristic angle of their sitting positions which is both unrealistic and highly rational. All turned towards the inspiring creatures appearing from the Heavens as zoomorphic symbols of their authentic authorship, the writers of the gospels, shown in spontaneously enhanced motion, express impulsive excitement and thrilling commotion due to the decisively linear aspect in the modeling of the forms (Fig. 7). Within the mutual whirl of accentuated strokes, the evangelic figures, the zoomorphic beings, the elements of the faintly visible landscape in the second prospect of the spectacles, as well as the almost neutral background depicted behind the gossellers are equally enlivened by a circulation of linear fluid that gives the pictures a substantial dose of energizing activity. However, the anatomic constitution of the evangelists, covered with masterfully “wrinkled” drapery is the main target of the intention to give the view a proper amount of linear material creating an impression of tempestuously fluctuating painterly components. Besides ennobling the images with the fluent rhythm of never-ending beats of pulsating energy, the usage of curved lines and shading in constellation of the evangelic figures give the im-

ages a high dosage of animating vigor and, certainly, an optimal range of manifested locomotive fluctuation (Fig. 8).

The facial mimicry of the portrayed characters expressing exciting inspiration, the elongated fingers and toes of their extremities, the austere shapes of the pictured furniture, the scarce vegetation of the depicted out-doors, the circular motion of their elastic corporal structure, as well as the *crumpled* clothing depicted with rays of linear wrinkles are the basic features that differentiate the Ebbo Gospel from all other illuminated manuscripts from the 9th century. Yet, the most noticeable character, in that respect, is given to the linear treatment of the costumes which shiver around the bodylines of the four authors of the Gospels with a dynamic vivacity of a trembling anatomy. Functioning as a genuine *accomplice* to the corporal structure of the individuals in creating the potent intensity of motion that gives the picture a powerful impression of energetic articulation, the costumes of Mark, John and Luke (Fig. 9) are the integral parts of the pictorial organism of the images with the most intensive and most resounding painterly heartbeat. The fluted column that supports the post of the Gospel, the leafy components of the depicted greenery, the agitated elements of the celestial heights pictured with darkish curvatures, as well as the modest vegetation situated on the high slopes of the represented mountain ridge are all constituents of

the energetic linear pattern employed as a mean for acquisition of vivacious and highly picturesque impression. The inverted perspective in the depiction of the Gospel set on the post, the unskillfully organized arrangement of the vegetation throughout the picture and the chaotically represented landscape components both beneath and particularly above the figure of Luke the Evangelist are the obvious shortcomings of the painterly procedure. However, the luscious energy of the lines utilized in the drawing, the turbulent unrest of the draperies that float around the bodyline of the figure, the animated silhouettes of the outdoor furniture that give the picture a spice of pictorial intimacy, as well as the captivating motion of all painterly components outrival the noticed visual *misdemeanors* by their powerful flush of decorative linearism.

Fourth example: VIKING ART

The head-posts of the Oseberg ship – arabesque linearism

Opposite to the alluringly mysterious, deeply enigmatic, highly canonical and lavishly visualized medieval world of Christianity, there is the loosely inter-connected society of the Norse people unobtrusively materialized by Viking art¹⁴. Bold adventurers and brave raiders as they were, the Vikings have

¹⁴ S. Krafft, *Pictorial Weavings from the Viking Age*, Oslo, 1956; P. Anker, *The Art of Scandinavia I*, London/New York 1970; D. M. Wilson, O. Klindt Jensen, *Viking Art*, London 1980; R. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, London, 1980; S. Fuglesang, *Stylistic Groups in Late Viking and Early Romanesque Art*, Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia I, Oslo 1981, pp. 79–125; S. Fuglesang, *Early Viking Art*, Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia II, Oslo 1982, pp. 125–173; J. T. Lang, *Viking Age Decorated Wood: A Study of its Ornament and Style*, Dublin 1988; E. Roesdahl, D. M. Wilson, *From Viking to Crusader: Scandinavia and Europe 800–1200*, Copenhagen/New York 1992; S. H. Fuglesang, Viking Art, in: *The Grove Dictionary of Art 32* (Ed: J. Turner), London/New York 1992, pp. 514–527; N. Bonde, A. Christensen, *Dendrochronological dating of the Viking Age ship burials at Oseberg, Gokstad and Tune*, Norway, *Antiquity* 67, Cambridge 1993, pp. 575–83; P. Brunn, *The Viking Ship*, in: *Journal of Coastal Research* 4, Lawrence, 1997, pp. 1282–1289; L. Hedeager, *Beyond Mortality: Scandinavian Animal Styles AD 400–1200*, in: *Sea Change: Orkney and Northern Europe in the Later Iron Age AD 300–800* (Eds: J. Downes, A. Ritchie), Balgavies, 2003, pp. 127–36; D. M. Wilson, *The Development of Viking Art*, in: *The Viking World* (Eds: S. Brink, N. Price), London/New York 2008, pp. 323–338; J. Sheehan, D. Corrain, *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West*, Proceedings of the XVth Viking Congress, Cork, 2005, Dublin/Portland 2010; J. Graham Cambell, *Viking Art*, London 2013.

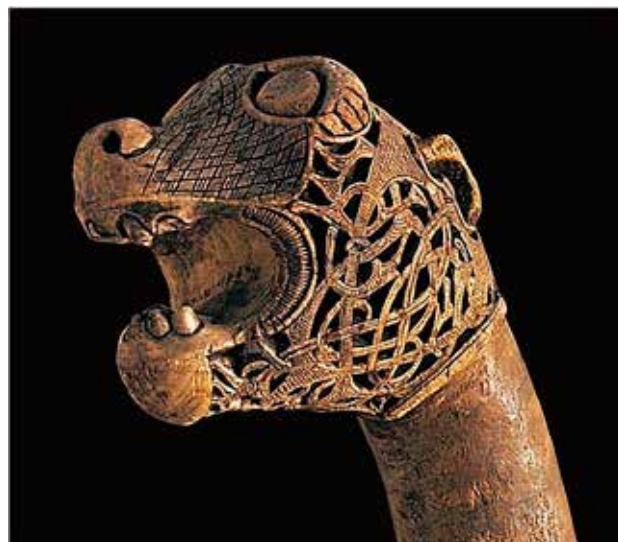


Fig. 10 Head-post of the Oseberg ship

produced jewelry, carvings and sculpture to reflect their fierce temperament, survival instincts, as well as heathen romanticism based on their power-seeking mythology. Always traveling through European water plains with their long ships as seafaring traders, raiders and explorers, the Vikings created utility objects and artistic products recognizable by the vigorous rhythm of linear arabesque appropriate to their restless belligerent energy, untamed desire for adventures motion, as well as never ending dynamic force and brutality manifested whenever necessary or possible. The legends about the mythically brave warrior Ragnar Lothbrok and his fearless offspring, no matter how exaggerated in modern television novels¹⁵, have configured an intriguing insight into the history and tradition of the most inquisitive voyagers of medieval Europe. Known for their uncompromising bravery, raiding brutality and sentimental religious belief, but also for their extraordinary shipbuilding skills, the Vikings have created the most astonishing head posts for their vessels the roles of which should have provided protection from the sea monsters and enemy ships alike. The most famous of them, as well as the most aesthetically challenging are the ones from the Oseberg water craft (mid-9th century) displayed in the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo¹⁶.

¹⁵ *Vikings* series (2013–2020), Michael Hirst Creator, IMDb Pro Producers (90 episodes in total).

¹⁶ H. Shetelig, *Queen Asa's Sculptors: Wood Carvings found in the Oseberg Ship, Norway*, London 1928; T. Sjøvold, *The Viking Ships – A Short Description of the Tune, Gokstad and Oseberg Ships*, Oslo 1954; Idem, *The Oseberg Find and the Other Viking Ship Finds*, Oslo 1969; N. Bonde, A. Christensen, *Dendrochronological dating of the Viking Age ship burials at Oseberg, Gokstad and Tune*, Norway, *Antiquity* 67, Cambridge 1993, pp. 575–83; P. Brunn, *The Viking Ship*, in: *Journal of Coastal Research* 4, Lawrence, 1997, pp. 1282–1289; L. Hedeager, *Beyond*



Fig. 11 Head-post of the Oseberg ship, detail

Apart from the ceremonial bearings at sea, the Vikings had other funerary rituals that served their needs for eternal abode in the halls of Valhalla¹⁷. Such is the case with the worldly renowned Oseberg vessel discovered at the burial mound near Oseberg farm in Vestfold County in east Norway which is enumerated among the most precious archaeological artifacts from the Viking epoch. Containing two female skeletons and a considerable quantity of funerary goods, the Oseberg ship was carved with zoomorphic images and ornamental motifs, embellished with enamel details and “equipped” with five animal head posts, four of which have been displayed in the mentioned museum. The animal heads were created by several different woodcarvers and were once painted in colors, faded due to the conditions of the burial. Being the sole example of artifacts utilized in a Viking funerary ritual, as well as specimens of a fine arabesque type of carving, the animal heads of Oseberg fall into the category of linear tapestry delicately woven in intertwining mould of sea knots with anatomical features of a mythological origin. Decorated with silver rivets and configured with elongated forms of an accentuated elegance, the five animal heads described as visual forms belonging to the iconographic group known as “the gripping beast”, are certainly the most captivating archaeological findings from the earlier stage of the Viking *civilization*. Although the

Mortality: Scandinavian Animal Styles AD 400–120, in: *Sea Change: Orkney and Northern Europe in the Later Iron Age AD 300–800* (Eds: J. Downes, A. Ritchie), *Balgavies*, 2003, pp. 127–36. P. Holck, *The Ooseberg ship burial, Norway: new thoughts on the skeletons from the grave mound*, *European Journal of Archaeology* 9, Cambridge 2006, pp. 185–210.

¹⁷ J. D. Richards, *Excavations at the Viking Barrow Cemetery at Heath Wood, Ingleby, Derbushire*, *The Antiquaries Journal* 84, Cambridge 2004, pp. 23–116.

social identity of the deceased females buried with the head-posts cannot be disclosed due to the lack of substantial evidence, the presence of such luxuriously executed grave offerings, by all means, testifies to their significant status within the community or, at least, the respect shown by the group of their societal interaction.

The linear constellation in configuration of the heads is distinctive for each of the five pieces of the Oseberg mythological sculpture. One of them (Fig. 10) is executed in a fashion of a lace woven from the threads of a powerful rope positioned on a firm base in a shape of an elongated animal neck.

The eye balls, the nostrils, the ear lobes and the sharp molars are modeled in a different manner of a monolithic woody surface for the expression of the powerful strength of the ragging beast, while its skin, imagined as caressed by the cold and salty ocean waters, is playfully tangled in a form of never ending sea weed intertwined in imaginative linear pattern. Portions of the facial surface of the animal head are geometrically organized in a chess board matrix accentuating the rough structure of the membrane that covers the cheeks of the sea monster, inventively designed to emanate the row power of the protective beast. Another of the five posts from the Oseberg sepulcher (Fig. 11) is articulated in an entirely different fashion, although in a similar linear pattern of interlocked animal shapes firmly tied to form a protective net of skin scales. Contrary to the elegant linear scheme of the other animal head, this one displays much rougher expression of protective *sentiments* which borderline with threatening power of uncompromising defense. Executed in identical dimensions, yet within diversified concept of visual articulation of manifested emotions, the five head posts from the funeral ship-home of the two Viking ladies might refer to five different emotional charges of protective power executed in an arabesque motion of linear waving.

Fifth example:

BYZANTINE BOOK ILLUMINATION

Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus – structural linearism

One of the earliest illuminated manuscripts of Byzantine provenance produced after the downfall of iconoclastic crisis and the triumphant revival of pictorial exegesis is the luxuriously illustrated book of *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (879–883) kept in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris under the sig-

nature Grec. 510¹⁸. Surprisingly enough due to the lavishly articulated miniatures, as well as being an elaborated edition of Gregory's sermons, it was produced for the Emperor Basil I who is known to be far from theologically competent intellectual¹⁹. Produced within the activities of the Constantinopolitan ateliers for book illumination, Paris Gregory 510 encompasses significant references to historical, ecclesiastic, social and cultural concerns of the second half of the 9th century Byzantium through the ceremonial tone of the sermons, visualized in the remarkable quality of its slanting majuscule and the picturesque manner of its painterly representations. Containing Christological subjects of crucial religious importance, as well as historic events illustrated on the ground of their long-term social and socio-political significance, Paris Gregory 510 is a creative melting pot of text and image, of message and its visual emanation, of wisdom and optical illumination, of belief and post-iconoclastic visual culture. Intended for the high intellectual circles of the Constantinopolitan court and Patriarchate, the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus display enough evidence of how sophisticated theological thoughts, delicate religious messages and complicated ecclesiastic interpretations

¹⁸ A. Grabar, *Les Miniatures du Grégoire de Nazianze*, Paris 1943; S. der Nersessian, *The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus. Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21, Washington 1967, pp. 1-5; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Theophanies-visions auxquelles participent les prophètes dans l'art byzantin après la restauration des images*, *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, *Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques* II, Paris 1968, pp. 135-143; Ch. Walter, *Liturgy and the Illustration of Gregory of Nazianzen's Homilies. An Essay in Iconographical Methodology*, *Revue des Études Byzantines* XXIX, Paris 1971, pp. 183-212; I. Kalavrezou Maxeinen, *The Portraits of Basil I in Paris gr. 510*, *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 27, Wien 1978, pp. 19-24; L. Brubaker, *Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth Century Byzantium: The "Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris"*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39, Washington 1985, pp. 1-13; C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453*, Toronto, 1986, p. 214; J. Lowden, *Early Christian & Byzantine Art*, London 1997, pp. 199-201; L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth Century Byzantium*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 106-107; R. Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, Oxford 2000, pp. 125, 133, 134, 161, 162; B. H. Лазарев, *Историја византијског сликарства*, Београд 2004, pp. 68-69; L. Brubaker, *The Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Manuscripts* (Ed: V. Tsamada), Leiden 2017, pp. 351-365.

¹⁹ L. Brubaker, *Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth Century Byzantium: The "Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris"*, p. 3.



Fig. 12 *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Fol 30*

have been associated with appropriate visual paradigms permeated with elusive allusions to current affairs and contemporary issues. Although Patriarch Photius' patronage of the Paris Gregory 510 cannot be confirmed by substantial arguments²⁰, one should presume his involvement in, at least, the conception of this ideologically complex and visually luxurious manuscript.

If one should look at the folios of the illuminated book with the sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus, one will notice the meticulous structure of the visual design elaborated in horizontal rows of depicted scenes that constitute neatly organized registers of geometric portions. In the cases of illustration of Biblical or Christological spectacles, the folios are divided into three zones with proportionally articulated components comprised by represented subjects (Fig. 12). The Crucifixion and the post-resurrection scene in the first and the third register of pictures are assembled around the central axis, i. e. the figure of Christ while the Deposition from the cross and the Entombment

²⁰ C. Mango, *The Liquidation of Iconoclasm and the Patriarch Photius*, in: *Iconoclasm* (Ed: A. Bryer and J. Herrin, Birmingham 1977, pp. 133-40; L. Brubaker, *Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth Century Byzantium: The "Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris"*, p. 6.



Fig. 13 *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus, Fol 355*

are given proportionally diminished space within the binary constellation of the second register. However, the balance of the painterly masses as well as spatial configuration of the pictorial arrangement, are neatly calculated along the horizontal coordinates and vertical elements alike. In that regard, equal number of participants in each of the represented scenes (left and right from the cross in the Crucifixion, in both compositions depicted in the second register, as well as the two women flanking the resurrected Christ) provides visual equilibrium to the architectural construction of the folio as a whole and moreover, besides the carefully estimated dimensions of the compositional constituents, the palette of colors plays a significant role in the acquisition of pictorial harmony. Hence, the horizontal divisions of the folio that enable the visual transparency of the picture act as constructive skeleton of the visible design which disclose the idea of sacrifice and resurrection, while the mutual blue background unites the constitutional frame of the three separate, yet visionary connected pictures.

Although lesser in number, the folios within individual pictures are also organized in a linear manner with geometric coordinates. In that regard, the depiction of the Constantinople Council from 381 (**Fig. 13**) displays a firm linear structure in the organ-



Fig. 14 *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus, Fol C*

ization of the visual components of the scenographic backdrop. The architectonic elements constructed according to rectangular measurements and decorated with linear ornaments, the semi-circular shape of the podium, the geometrically regulated proportions of the Throne, the proportionally balanced arrangement of the participants grouped in front of the two vestibules, as well as the linear ornamentation executed on the vertical margins of the folio – all contribute to the pedantically articulated layout of the scene. The horizontal coordinates in the visual transposition of events covering the Christological subjects and the vertical set up of constitutional lines that gives structure to the scenes of historical (or allegorical) character are the elements of a carefully planned and skillfully organized outline of pictorial components designed for the Book of sermons of Saint Gregory the Theologian. This systematic approach to the visual backup of his religious treatises in Paris Gregory 510 can be found even in the folios that are considered symbolically decorative (**Fig. 14**). The ornamentally luxurious *croix triomphante* executed in pure gold and decorated with precious gems as a glamorous allusion to the resurrectional power of Christ's crucifixion, flanked with two life-giving palm branches and represented on a heavenly blue background is equally (if not more) calculated in its linear exposition as the



Fig. 15 Church of Saint George at Kurbinovo, Altar decoration, detail

rest of the scenes animated in narrative manner. The accentuated energy of the drawing, the linear character of the painterly masses, the coherent spectrum of kinetic aspects, the proportional organization of compositional elements, as well as the calculated articulation of visual design are the fundamental ingredients of the structurally assembled spectacles on the pages of the magnificent Paris Gregory 510.

Sixth example:

BYZANTINE FRESCO PAINTING

The church of Saint George at Kurbinovo – undulating linearism

If one should look for the most elusive fresco ensemble created within the treasury of Byzantine mural painting, one should, at least, consider probing into the painterly arrangement of the church dedicated to Saint George at the village of Kurbinovo²¹. In

²¹ В. Н. Лазарев, *Живопись XI-XII веков в Македонии*, Actes du XIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines I, Beograd 1963, pp. 129-131; Г. Бабић, *Христолошке распре у XII веку и појава нових сцена у апсидалном декору византијских цркава*, Зборник за ликовне уметности Матице српске 2, Нови Сад 1966, pp. 11-30; L. Hadermann-Misguish, *Kurbinovo. Les fresques de saint Georges et la peinture Byzantine du XII siècle*, Bruxelles 1975, pp. 43-318, 321-551; R. Hamann-Mac Lean, *Grundlegung zu einer Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien*, Giessen 1976, pp. 276-281; A. Wharton, *Art of Empire. Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery. A Comparative Study of Four Provinces*, University Park and London 1988,

that regard, not only does Kurbinovo brings significant novelties to the program constellation of Byzantine fresco painting, as well as a vast palette of icono-

pp. 123-126; Ц. Грозданов, - Л. Хадерман Мисгвиш, *Курбиново*, Скопје 1992, pp. 51-64, 74-79; Sh. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Program of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, Seattle and London, 1999, pp. 91-92; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Macedonia L'arte medievale dal IX al XV secolo*, Milano 2006, 64-74; E. Dimitrova, "THE DA VINCI MODE" – *Unsolved Mysteries of Macedonian Medieval Fresco Painting*, Niš and Byzantium Symposium, Collection of scientific works VIII, Niš 2010, pp. 249-253; E. Димитрова, С. Коруновски, С. Грандаковска, *Средновекова Македонија. Култура и уметност* in: Македонија. Милениумски културно-историски факти (Eds: П. Кузман, Е. Димитрова, Ј. Донев), Скопје 2013, pp. 1577, 1597-1607; E. Dimitrova, *Cuia Culpa? Lapses and Misdemeanors of Medieval Artists in Macedonia*, Niš and Byzantium Symposium, Collection of scientific works XII, Niš 2014, pp. 301-303; E. Dimitrova, *V. I. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia. Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionership (11th – 14th Century)*, Folia Archaeologica Balkanica III, Skopje 2015, pp. 617-620; E. Dimitrova, G. Velkov, *Seven Medieval Churches in the Republic of Macedonia*, Skopje 2014, pp. 46-63; E. Dimitrova, *The Church of Saint George at Kurbinovo*, Skopje 1916; E. Dimitrova, Ph. Niewöhner, R. Paligora, G. Velkov, *Seven Medieval Churches in the Regions of Pelagonia, Mariovo and Prespa*, Skopje 2019, pp. 11-29; E. Dimitrova, *On the Path from Kurbinovo to Pološko: the Picturesque Macedonian Genre and its Historic Destiny*, Collection of papers from the international Conference "On the Cross-path of Cultural Ideas: Macedonia, the Balkans, South-eastern Europe – heritage, management, resources" (Ohrid, 2019), Skopje 2020, pp. 162-164.



Fig. 16 Church of Saint George at Kurbinovo, Harrowing of Hell

graphic innovations some of which belong to the circle of highly esoteric innuendos²², but it also displays a universe of delicate painterly means for an authentic expression of stylistic inventions. The majority of those imaginative painterly premises are founded upon the undulating power of line, passionately permeated with gestural energy of elegant drawing and kinetic charge of never ending manipulative strength. Hence, the waving draperies of the saintly figures filled with whirlwind of restless motion, the floating dynamics of the graceful corporal energy of the depicted characters, the lightness of the kinetic amplitude of all shapes and the entire modeling, the magnitude of geometric proportions in the design of the spectacles, as well as the ornamental embellishment of secondary compositional elements are all products of the intention to create a strictly consistent, highly coherent and systematically calculated linear framework for the lavishly conceived scenery of kaleidoscopic invention. Imbuing all painterly components with the dynamic whirl of linear unrest, shaping the anatomic features of the saintly figures with a subtle cohesion of graphic elasticity and permeating the images with a refined psychological expression of the drawing, the Kurbinovo master created a glamorous

world of exuberant rhythm of linear threads never before encountered in the sphere of medieval painting.

If one should seek for the key to determinate the type of Kurbinovo linearism, one has to acknowledge that the essence of its visual ideology lies in the trajectory of the drawing which is sub-vertical and energetic to the point of a subtle collision with the other components of the picture. In that sense, the vertical pattern of lines creating the images of the Virgin and the two archangels in the altar apse had to be balanced with the linear drapery of the Newborn that is slightly leaning to the horizontal markers of the scene (Fig. 15). Furthermore, contrary to the graphic repetitiveness of vertical coordinates that determine the linearism of the spectacle, the landscape elements are but wage clues to the exterior without any painterly definition or spatial coordinates. Similarly, the scene of the Baptism the contours of which are determined by the vertical silhouettes of the saintly characters is balanced by the horizontally rowed elements depicting the banks of the River Jordan whereby the view has been harmonized in a sophisticated equilibrium of forms. The same goes for the scene in which Christ is resurrecting the dead Lazarus in which the proportional position of the two vertically configured individuals with balanced linearism and subtle graphic modeling are counterpoised to the horizontally leveled secondary characters in the spectacle. This is characteristic of a number of compositions of Kurbinovo's fresco ensemble (Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Entombment etc.) with a purpose of structuring a firm net of constitutional lines which have not only a role to take care of the visual balance in

²² E. Dimitrova, "THE DA VINCI MODE" – *Unsolved Mysteries of Macedonian Medieval Fresco Painting*, pp. 249-253; Eadem, *Cuia Culpa? Lapses and Misdemeanors of Medieval Artists in Macedonia*, pp. 301-303; Eadem, *V. I. Personalities in Medieval Macedonia. Five Paradigms of Supreme Commissionership (11th – 14th Century)*, pp. 617-620.

the scene, but emanate the calculative preciseness of the visual arrangement of the compositions, as well.

In the scenes organized centrally, the Kurbinovo masters utilize another principle of linear constellation. Without disturbing the consonant structure of the spectacle, they intertwine the vertical and horizontal linear segments in order to construct a geometrical resonance of proportionally arranged components whose visual collision intersect in the centre of the composition. On the account of that, the scene depicting the Harrowing of Hell is so magnificent in its precise optical geometry of lines which hover in a perfect synchronicity through the iconographic matrix of the sight, uniting in the centre of the circular form that alludes to out-of-terrestrial symbolism (**Fig. 16**). The glowing circle and the inner rays of cosmic energy which emanate vertical, horizontal and oblique principles as a geometric skeleton of the composition, the figure of Christ stepping out of the mathematically organized array of visual *Concordia*, the vertical arrangement of supporting characters in the side portions of the picture, as well as the dramatic energy of Savior's motion that permeates and enlightens the strict stereometric configuration of the spectacle have created a vision of illusionistic extravaganza emerging from the dynamic elegance of linear modularity and subtle graphic mastery. The complex structure of the drawing with its pretentiously emphasized kinetic energy, the filigree precision of light-weighted strokes in the illumination of the draperies, the floating motion of the delicately configured layout, as well as the esoteric graphic components scattered through the seemingly abstract constellation of painterly masses, are the most tactile visual aspects of the undulating power of Kurbinovo linearism. Ennobled with the sophisticated rhythm of the overwhelming dynamic charge of linear intensity, Kurbinovo paintings are the most animated painterly spectacles of the 12th century Byzantium.

Rhythm, in its most general sense, is an ordered alternation of contrasting elements that compose an artistic work, being it a musical piece or any other work of art, such is poetry, drama play, picture, sculpture or architectural product. As a notion and/or term it consists of "periodicity" which includes even the nonrecurrent configurations of movement (any aspect involved). Considering the fact that a painting or a piece of sculpture are compositions created in space, their rhythm refers to the type of drawing, i.e. contour/silhouette of what has being envisaged as an outline of the projects. Hence, the rhythmic structure of the artistic work cannot be separated from the idea that rhythm is a regular (sometimes decisively irregular) order of movement articulated in a beat of a stroke, drawing motion or painterly layer of colors. In music terminology, the pace of the fundamental beat is called tempo; in fine arts we do not have terms that can define the dynamics of one's artistic authorship. Yet, analyzing the linear structure of the picture/sculpture/artifact, we can detect and determine the tempo of one's creation through the "sonority" and "interpretative energy" of the outline and its visual consistency, as well as aesthetic effect. If groove is a term applied to the notion of changing pattern in a propulsive rhythm of interpretation - than this quality of persistently repeated rhythmic units can be found in the products of fine arts, as well as in music. In that regard, the spontaneous, yet graphically coordinated linearism of the inscriptions in the catacomb of San Callixtus in Rome, the elusively contoured outline of the Vinica terracottas, the tempestuous energetic charge of the drawing in Archbishop Ebbo's Gospel book, the restless entanglement of untamed arabesques in Viking art, the cohesive structure of visual dynamism on the pages of Paris Gregory 510, as well as the invincible energy of floating motion in the frescoes of Saint George at Kurbinovo are among the most representative specimens of resounding artistic groove in the visual culture of the first millennium AD.

Елизабета ДИМИТРОВА

“РИТАМ И ТЕМПО”

**ДИНАМИЗМОТ НА ЛИНИЈАТА И НЕЈЗИНИОТ ИДЕО-СИНХРОНИЦИТЕТ ВО
УМЕТНОСТА И АРХЕОЛОГИЈАТА**

Резиме

Како базичен елемент на сите уметнички дела, линијата има водечка улога во композирањето на естетските глетки без оглед на инспирацијата, нивната типологија или намерата за која делото е создадено. Контурна, гаметриска, органска, гестикуллативна, декоративна и сл., линијата ја дефинира структурата на уметничкото создавање и претставува манифестна компонента на визуелниот дизајн кој ја трансформира инвенцијата во објект на естетска евалуација. Тенка или моќна, константна или флуидна, брановидна или искршена, игрива или стабилна, конзистентна или неправилна, аморфна или кохерентна, детална или без правилна структура, линијата го претставува првиот чекор во обидот да се создаде дело надградено со останатите естетски елементи: моделаџија, визуелни пропорции, перспектива, органско единство, композиција и/или клористичка палета. Линијата, исто така, е носител на движењето и кинетичката енергија на делото, определувајќи го неговиот визуелен ритам, деконструирајќи ја неговата емоционална синергија и откривајќи го темпото на креативната страст на авторот, како и неговата интимна инспирација и творечката фантазија. Со оглед на тоа што ликовните дела (фрески, релјефи, скулптури итн.) претставуваат просторни композиции, нивниот ритам се однесува на типолошкиот карактер на цртежот како фундаментален дизајн на творештвото. Оттука, ритмичката структура на ликовните дела почива на принципот на смислен, артикулиран и правилен редослед на ритмичките единици претставени преку цртачкиот приод, потезот со четката во нанесувањето на боите или ударот со скулпторското длето. Анализирајќи ја линеарната струк-

тура на ликовните дела (фрески, илуминирани ракописи, релјефни изведби, три-димензионални скулптурални творби), може да го детектираме и детерминираме темпото (брзината и интензитетот на ритамот) на креативната енергија вложена во уметничкиот продукт преку истражувањето на *сонорноста* и *интерпретативната динамика* на цртежот како негов иницијален облик. Имајќи ја улогата на автентичен ДНК потпис со оригинална творечка амплитуда мерлива со универзалните естетски критериуми, линијата го претставува срцевиот пулс на уметничкото дело во комплексниот организам на неговата визуелна композиција. Во тој контекст, овој труд ја истражува типологијата на линеарните структури во избрани дела создадени во времето на христијанската Антика и средновековната епоха кои сведочат за кинетичката доминација на линеарниот концепт во рамките на избраниот естетски хоризонт: спонтаниот, но графички координиран линеаризам на натписите во катакомбата на Св. Калист во Рим, мистично контурираниот дизајн на виничките теракоти, бурниот енергетски набој на цртежот во Евангелието на надбискупот Ебо, немирната испреплетеност на нескротените арабески во викиншката уметност, кохезивната структура на визуелната динамика на страниците од Хомилиите на Григориј Назијански од Париската национална библиотека и непобедливата енергија на лебдечката мобилност во фреските на Свети Ѓорѓи во Курбиново се меѓу најрепрезентативните примери на автентичниот визуелен ритам во периодот помеѓу првото и петнаесеттото столетие од Христовата ера.

