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TRANSCRIPTION OF RENAISSANCE
HUMANISM-AFFECTED ICONOGRAPHY
IN EARLY PROTESTANT ART IN RIGA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Reformation and the ensuing denominational movement in Livonia marks the division between two eras – the Middle Ages and the Modern Era – as well as the division between two religious denominations – Catholicism and Protestantism. During this period, whose beginning in 1521 was touched in with certain polemic zeal by the activities of the first Protestant preachers and whose end precisely one hundred years later – in 1621 – coincided with the victory of Gustav Adolph, king of the Protestant Sweden, over Riga and Livonia (present-day north-eastern part of Latvia and southern part of Estonia) that were engulfed in the Counter-Reformation, essential political, spiritual and social changes took place which involved an irreversible turn in the direction of the Modern History. It initiated a relatively consistent channelling of Livonian spiritual life into Protestant theology, followed by social liberalization processes and the resulting acquisition of cultural achievements of European humanism.

To go into the reflection of social processes in artefacts, it is important to identify the course of social processes over a century after the adoption of the Reformation in Livonia. It is noteworthy that during the 16th century the Reformation in Livonia mostly affected the urban population: German merchants, craftsmen, a small fraction of the clergy and the patriciate. This premise leads to the conclusion that 'the premonition of spiritual changes and the ability to react adequately to

the expected changes was a characteristic trait of the representatives of the educated upper and middle classes. It was their sceptical perception that was stimulated by the news of the auspicious changes in Wittenberg's spiritual life in 1517, as well as the initial Catholic Church reaction in the Worms *Reichstag* hall on 8 May 1521, voicing aggressive protests against Martin Luther's proposals. The belligerent attitude of urban population was also boosted by the support of Western Prussian landed interest, the clergy and former militarily involved knights who were in the economic transformation stage after the secularization of the Teutonic Order in 1523 and were looking for a solid spiritual ground for their new existence.

Already beginning with the late 14th century and throughout the 15th century European society experienced waves of growing scepticism called forth by the crisis of Papal power and its curia's insatiable demands for funds that the Catholic Church in Livonia found it impossible to collect taxes and payment of servitudes and other fiscal obligations. This situation caused discontent in all layers of the society who had come to Livonia as missionaries and their followers and had considered themselves the principal pillar of Christianity. The latish Christianization of Livonia and remoteness from Rome as the citadel of political and spiritual power acted as a stimulus of discontent and a facilitator of the Reformation. At the provincial councils in Riga in 1428 and 1437, Henning Scharpenberg, archbishop of Riga, drew the attention of the local clergy to the appeal of the Council of Constance (1414–1418) to intensify "among the non-Germans the doctrines of baptism, marriage, church attendance, to ban trading on Sundays and Church festivities, to stress the necessity of training 'Our Father' and 'Ave Maria', to observe the sacraments of confession and the Holy Communion, as well as honour Christian faith and Ten Commandments".¹ It was the instructions of the 1428 private council that alerted the local clergy to the necessity of communicating with the 'non-German people' in their language and reducing the liturgical use of the Latin language.

Travelling Dominican and Franciscan friars, who as pilgrims came to churches of major cities and participated in the service, contributed to the atmosphere of imminent changes. In Tallinn (Reval), Riga or

¹ *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas. Baltische Länder*, hrsg. von Gert von Pistohlkors (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1994), 136.

Valmiera (Wolmar) these preachers addressed the people in their native German language, thereby creating an uninvited competition for the local clergymen. Since the local canons, out of neglect or other reasons, had failed to sustain a dialogue with their parishes about the basic Church postulates, the travelling friars exploited their experience and communication skills to captivate the believers' attention and turned out to be more effective propagators of the teaching of Christ than the local clergy.

Because of the ethnic and estate segregation the German-speaking immigrants were snobbish to the indigenous population who even in the 15th century were called 'newly baptised' or 'idolaters'. It was only after the Ösel-Wieck synod in Haapsalu (Hapsal) in 1505 that bishop Johannes Orgas and his follower Johannes Kyvel (Kievel) after a similar synod in 1520 could report to Rome about the first success, noting that at last clergymen conduct service for the indigenous in Estonian. Starting from the *Landtag* in 1512, bishop Johannes Kyvel suggested certain church reforms for the benefit of the 'poor non-Germans', and the highest point of his appeal was the urge to open Latin schools to all people, independent of their estate or ethnicity. However, Johannes Kyvel linked his proposals with the demand for the priority of the rights of the Church over the rights of big landowners. Yet, the majority of German-speakers were vassals of the Livonian Order and inhabitants of cities, and they, of course, objected to such a position. At the Valmiera *Landtag* in 1516, the authorized vassals of the Livonian Order and representatives of the Order's administration, in the presence of Jasper Linde, archbishop of Riga, declared Johannes Kyvel's demands 'an ecclesiastical spear and threat to the ownership rights'² and absolutely rejected them. The participants of the *Landtag*, too, expressed their disagreement with the bishop's appeal to respect and adopt the Church policy.

When characterizing the Reformation events, note must be made that in 1521 several socially polarising situations developed in Riga. In summer the first Evangelical services in St Peter's church in Riga were held by the preacher Andreas Knopke (Knopken, Knöpken) whose native city was Küstrin. His understanding of the Church reformation came from the opinions of such humanists and reformers as Erasmus von Rotterdam and Johannes Bugenhagen from Pomeranian city of Treptow,

² *Ibidem*, 137.

who voiced the views of his teacher Philipp Melanchthon. Anxiety was further aggravated by the conservative stand of the archbishop of Riga and the Master of the Livonian Order, and the two preachers opposed it with inflammatory sermons to the citizens of Riga. On 28 June 1521 the archbishop held a prelatic meeting in Rauna (Ronneburg) discussed the decisions of the Worms edict whose contents and damnation the Pope addressed to Martin Luther and his followers.³ The conflict between the archbishop and the Catholic Church and the citizens of major cities aggravated stagnation of the Church as an institution while the opposition to the preachers of the Gospel marked the beginning of the Counter-Reformation. The militant position of Riga's patriciate and the Town Council against the archbishop's initiatives in support the Catholic Church only strained the relations between the parties and prevented them from finding a way out of the impasse.

On 12 June 1522 the bellicose preacher of the Gospel Andreas Knopke accepted the challenge of a group of Catholic priests to participate in a public theological dispute. The Riga Town Council allotted St Peter's church for the dispute and became a participant in the discussion of 24 religious theses in which Knopke, like Luther, referred to the Letter to the Romans and, by analysing the text of the Bible, repudiated absolution by the Holy Scripture. Instead, he preached modern views about the rights of every member of the society to the absolution through personal faith. The fruit of the dispute was an irreparably deepening conflict between the city, the archbishop and the Livonian Order which grew into uncompromising trench warfare and ended in Knopke's appointment to the clergyman's post in St Peter's church in Riga. This bold step on the part of the Town Council was followed by the next, and the Rostock-born master of theology Sylvester Tegetmeyer, whose militant sermons incited the uncompromising attitudes of the belligerent parties – Protestants and the Pope's supporters –, was appointed a clergyman in St Jacob's church.

In the spring of 1522 the archbishop of Riga Johannes Blankenfeld publicly anathemized M. Luther and his adherents in Livonia. This act consolidated the positions of the citizens, part of the knighthood and several representatives of the Livonian Order entered into an alliance against the archbishop. The latter in his turn did not hesitate to give

³ *Ibidem.*

condemnatory sermons against preaching the Gospel as the basis of modern Christianity. The Riga Town Council responded by engaging the Tartu (Dorpat) priest Herman Marsow as the clergyman of the newly founded Lutheran parish at the Riga Cathedral. Having completed his studies in Wittenberg, he had returned to Livonia as a staunch Protestant. Eventually, Martin Luther, too, took note of the Reformation success in Livonia and published an encouraging work *Den Auszerwelten lieben Freunden Gottis allen Christen zu Righe, Reuell und Tarbthe ynn Liefkland meynen lieben herren und brudern ynn Christo*.⁴ In it he voiced firmly his innovative concept of the spiritual framework of the modern man, indicating that everything is decided by God's mercy which an individual gains through faith, i.e. spiritual exercises and following Christ's words by real action, as opposed by the so-called good deeds and outer manifestations of the cult rituals.

THE SUBJECTS OF 'TEMPTATION' AND 'MARY MAGDALENE' IN THE FURNISHING OBJECTS AT THE RIGA CATHEDRAL

After the iconoclastic demolitions that affected the Riga Cathedral twice in the spring and summer of 1523⁵, a German Lutheran parish was established there and archbishop Wilhelm von Brandenburg (Wilhelm von Hohenzollern) granted the ownership of the church to the parish in perpetuity. Over the Reformation time Riga's St Mary's church as the archbishop's cathedral changed its hierarchical status and the church building became home for the parish. On 9 September 1525 the Riga Town Council took the decision of sequestrating the former archbishop's cathedral, its furnishings and all its fixed property for the benefit of provisions of Lutheran clergymen. In accordance with the growing awareness of an appropriate layout and liturgical symbols of the reformed religion, the parish launched the church transformation works in 1540. However, considerable part of the newly acquired furnishings perished in fire on Holy Trinity Day in 1547. The parish got down to work again and began with purchasing the altar, the pulpit and benches. The recon-

⁴ Martin Luther, *Den Auszerwelten lieben Freunden Gottis allen Christen zu Righe, Reuell und Tarbthe ynn Liefkland meynen lieben herren und brudern ynn Christo*. MD XX III.

⁵ Otto Pohrt, *Reformationgeschichte Livlands. Ein Überblick* (Leipzig: Eger & Sievers, 1928), 35.

struction campaign in 1594–1595 was crowned by the construction of the church spire (designer Joris Joriszoon Frese, the city's master mason) and procuring a new organ in (1600–1601)⁶. These two highly important achievements pointed to the conclusion of a certain developmental stage for the building of the church and its furnishings. For this reason the aim of the present article is to highlight the artistic image of the objects in the Riga Cathedral, their iconographic programme, which reflects both the peculiarities of the Renaissance humanism and the early Reformation culture and produces evidence of an intensive denominational dialogue between the intellectual part of Riga's patriciate and the Catholic clergy who were retiring from the stage of spiritual life.

Around the 1570s–1580s two oak benches of archaic structure were made and installed at the south and north walls of the Riga Cathedral altar part. They fully resemble the traditional benches for monks and priests of the Catholic period. Seated there, they sang and prayed thus complementing the liturgical procedure of the service. The Lutheran parish's choice of commissioning such benches can be interpreted from the point of view that 16th century society could not contemplate having different benches in the interior of the altar part that would serve as seats for the Cathedral School singers and deacons. The front and surface of the main structural parts were decorated with shallow carving of Renaissance-style ornament of plants and grotesques. The essential feature of the decoration is two woodcarved bas-reliefs with scenes of 'Temptation' and 'Mary Magdalene' (figs. 1, 2).

The iconographic contents of the reliefs allows to estimate the degree to which the medieval language of allegory and symbols was topical during the early Protestantism period, which after the Reformation gradually developed new, denominationally motivated accents and meanings. The row of benches to the left of the altar contains the relief with the 'Temptation' story. Its composition unmistakably prompts its graphical prototype – the 1535 xylograph 'Temptation' by the early German Renaissance graphic artist Hans Sebald Beham, basically repeated, although with certain simplification, on the oak panel. In Hans Sebald Beham's plate there is a parrot to Eve's right, but its outline has not been transferred onto the bench decoration. One of the parrot's principal meanings is an associative

⁶ Paul Campe, *Lexikon Liv- und Kurländischer Baumeister, Bauhandwerker und Baugestalter von 1400 – 1850*. Teil I (Stockholm: s.n., 1951), 11.

reference to Eve as the first woman-mother, the link that she embodies to Mary and to all humanity. This bird symbolically points to its ability 'to speak' and hints that it was from this bird that Eve learned to speak. However, the image of the parrot has a dual meaning, i.e. a critical remark concerning women's curiosity and garrulity which, according to a widespread medieval and Renaissance belief, was characteristic of this bird.⁷ By eliminating the image of the parrot in the Riga Cathedral bench relief the negative associations have been removed, too.

Both in the graphic example and in the Cathedral bench relief there is an image of a lying deer behind Adam – an indication to Christ. A reference to Psalms 41 and 73 explains the deer's, i.e. Christ's ability to protect, cure and, with the help of holy water, to overpower Satan, personified by the serpent.⁸ This iconographical composition alludes to the



Fig. 1. Temptation, 1570s–1580s. Photo by Vitolds Mašnovskis.

Fig. 2. Mary Magdalene, 1570s–1580s. Photo by Vitolds Mašnovskis.

⁷ Hans Biedermann, *Knauer's Lexikon der Symbole* (München: Droemer Knauer Verlag, 1989), 324.

⁸ *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, Bd. 2 (Rom, Wien: Herder Verlag, 1990), 286.

sacrament of baptism, extremely important in the early Protestantism, and underlines the link to seeking the way to the New Testament and salvation through baptism, which Lutheran theology endowed with the concept of the era of the new Church. The deer, lying behind Adam, illustrates the link between the world's first man as the father of humanity and Christ, whose baptism in the waters of the Jordan signified the birth of the new man of the Reformation era and humanism.

Both in H. S. Beham's original plate and the relief on the bench there is a silhouette of a lizard on the roots of the Tree of Knowledge at Adam's and Eve's feet; images of similar zoomorphic creatures have often been found on the pedestals of pulpits or their supports. As the lizard dwells at the very roots of the Tree of Knowledge or the Tree of Life, its image is understood as symbol of the life-giving power of the Gospel, important for postulation of the basis of Protestant theology.⁹ Up among the branches of the Tree of Knowledge there is an image of a skull – symbol of death and mortality. Thus the artistically created opposition – a skull in the branches and a lizard on the roots – point to Protestant belief in resurrection as the salvation of the soul that can come true just like a lizard can survive winter or latent death and come to life, almost like the miracle of Christ's resurrection.¹⁰

The well-considered combination of symbols and allegories both in Hans Sebald Beham's composition and the relief on the Riga Cathedral choir bench testifies to a search for a new thesaurus by the developers of the emerging Protestant theology postulates. The first and most important task of the new iconography was to disentangle from the tether of Catholic scholastic dogmas, perceived by all creators the basis for the new denomination as stagnation, but in philosophical terms – as a melancholic state of mind. In search of a source of such state of mind in German culture one, quite naturally, comes to Albrecht Dürer's works of art as an expression of his tragic world outlook, inspired by the social awareness of man's limited existence and of humanism crisis. Dürer's famous copper engraving 'Temptation' (1504) was created after his 1495 trip to Italy, when the culture of Italian humanism and the painter Andrea Mantegna's works left a lasting impression on the young artist.¹¹

⁹ *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, Bd. 1 (Rom, Wien: Herder Verlag, 1990), 589.

¹⁰ Biedermann, *Knaur's Lexikon der Symbole*, 112.

¹¹ Ullrich Thieme, Feliks Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Bd. 9/10 (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1999), 66.

In his sanguine creative mood in 1504 Dürer created his seemingly optimistic copper engraving 'Adam and Eve', known also under its other title, 'Temptation'. From an artist's perspective it reflects humanists' attitude to an individual who, before falling from grace, is in an impassive state of tranquillity. All man's virtues and sins are still dormant as man's consciousness has not awoken yet. Where does the melancholic chord of the plot come from? How could the very first humans, who live in the God's created Garden of Eden and who are young and beautiful and immortal, develop such pessimistic mood? Do not the four symbolic animals – a rabbit, a cat, a mouse and the deer at Adam's and Eve's feet – send out a warning of the danger that lies hidden in the four abeyant temperaments with their potential of foredooming the humanity to their hopeless propensity for sin and death which, after tasting the apple, i.e. the fall of man, becomes inevitable? The rabbit personifies the sanguine; the cat who desires to devour the mouse stands for the choleric temperament. The deer is the embodiment of the melancholy temperament while the reposing bull symbolizes the phlegmatic type. Dürer's composition contains a warning of the causes of the first humans' passions and sufferings that are still dormant in them like explosive substances before detonation. The image of Adam holds the quintessential potential of harmony and innocence before the awareness of good and evil which in his body releases all four temperaments and destroys spiritual harmony and granting him the rights to mortality, in lieu of eternal life.¹² Having studied Italian humanist philosophy, Dürer's thoughts about the fatality of man's life caused his resignation and melancholy, which became a characteristic feature of his art.

The awareness of the imminence of fate in the early 16th century stimulated the feelings of a crisis and a surge of profound melancholy in Dürer's creativity. In 1514, it may have resulted in this artist's best-known engraving 'Melancholy'. The composition with a seated resigned angel amidst a chaos of broken tools, measuring instruments and deadened things is permeated with such pessimism that Adam and Eve from the graphic 'Temptation' appear like sanguine types from 'the happy childhood'. Against such background the first humans look like carefree lovers who are not yet aware of their doom and loss of childlike inno-

¹² Jean Clair, *Melancholie. Genie und Wahnsinn in der Kunst* (Berlin: Hatje Kantz, 2006), 133.

cence.¹³ According to Erwin Panofsky, the copper engraving 'Melancholy' contains the idea of the realization of deadlock and death after partaking of the forbidden fruit and loss of original harmony. It causes such deep tragedy and pain that could be compared only with the threshold of *Weltschmerz* of the Romantics. Beyond it, the fast flow of time and man's awareness of the briefness of life can produce only tragic and pessimistic feelings.

What was the world model that allowed the early Protestant philosophers to see a way out of the logical deadlock in which reason prevailed over spiritual life and emotions? Presumably, they had to counterbalance the concept of the tragic inevitability of human life with a kind of new stoicism in the form of bold pessimism. It could be characterised as a doctrine of reconciliation with the briefness of life that is inevitably terminated by death. Having stepped into the modern historical era, all that an individual has of Adam's and Eve's legacy is just the duty to reconcile with their inevitable fate in order to find a meaning of life in their forms of human existence and to attain one's own worldly joy.

A metaphorical illustration of the parishioners' worldly life was the woodcarved bas-relief with the image of Mary Magdalene in the decoration of the right-side singers' bench in the Riga Cathedral choir. A zealous follower of Christ, in this composition Mary Magdalene appears as a sumptuously dressed Renaissance lady holding an ampulla of anointing oil with which she has come to ask for Christ's forgiveness. According to the message of the New Testament, 'the original sin' in her fate found an extremely concentrated form, but Mary Magdalene deserves Jesus' forgiveness like any other members of society and the cathedral congregation. She personifies the inevitability of their lives like any individual's mirror image. The interpretation of the meanings of Christian iconography expresses the idea that Mary Magdalene is Eve's descendant and fruit of her sin the human body of which comprises, in a chaotic form, all four types of temperaments. This bitter legacy has split her private life and lead her relations with society to an unsolvable ethical conflict. The Mary Magdalene of the work of art exacerbates the problem of the inherited sin anew, arousing an individual's feelings of melancholy and hopelessness.

¹³ Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*. 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), vol. 1, 84–85.

POSSIBILITY OF SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPENSATION

The Riga Cathedral interior furnishings and topical works of art as decoration of the objects have developed as a result of a dialogue between the parishioners and theologians and their common search. The iconography of the woodcarved reliefs on the benches of the altar stirred a discourse about problems of philosophical and ethical nature that an individual had to solve imperatively. There was no place for a discourse on such extremely exacerbated ethical problems in the altar as at this place the sacrament of Christ's sacrifice is repeated twice during the service. For this reason the emotional experience intended to heal the individual's split soul with the help of a complex of the pastor's didactic methods had to take place in the congregation space and had to be physically transported onto works of art that decorated the space, or functional objects. Liturgists and clergymen were looking for a way out of the ethical and emotional deadlock, a way that was required to maintain spiritual wholeness of the new Protestant parish. They found



Fig. 3. Balcony for the choir of the Cathedral School – *Chorus Musicus*, 1570s–1580s. Photo by Vitolds Mašnovskis.

a place for this compensating action in the transept of the church – an architectonic buffer zone between the altar, benches for deacons and the clergy and the roomy congregation space with the pulpit and benches. Ever since the construction of the cathedral in the 13th century, the south side of the transept has had a special role in the route of the archbishop and the church administration as they proceeded from the altar space to the Chapter Hall and the Cross Gallery of the cloister. During Catholic time there were several important altars there, sculptures of saints and chapels. After the Reformation, however, the meaning of this interim space had considerably declined.

Since the 1570s, a high wooden balcony has stood at the south wall of the transept, meant for the choir of the Cathedral School, called also *Chorus Musicus*, *nye cantorey*, *Studentenchor*, *Chor „wo die Schulknaben dis-cantieren“* (fig. 3). The balcony is in the triangle, aslant in relation to the pulpit and the altar. The duty of the choir was to accompany the service with professional liturgical singing and performance of psalms, which were not sung by the congregation.¹⁴ The front of the spacious balcony is decorated with typical Renaissance pilasters of the Tuscan order, interspaced with semi-circular and square panels with paintings of Christ the Saviour of the World (*Salvator Mundi*), John the Baptist and the evangelists. In the centre of the balcony front, in a specially inserted framed square field there is a woodcarved relief with the image of St Cecilia, the church patroness of religious music (fig. 4). In accordance with the Protestant iconographic tradition and to avoid extolling of Catholic saints, works of art on this topic in Lutheran churches at the organ or singers' balconies are usually called 'Allegory of Music'. The scene with a young woman at the positive organ, topically extended by the involvement of other performing characters, presence of the organ-blower, images of several musical instruments and similar details, definitely testify to the anonymous artist's wish to overstep the limits of the topic in his relief on the balcony of the Students' choir, required in a way by the inherited iconographical Catholic cult canon of St Cecilia.

The iconographical evolution of this allegory of music has ancient philosophical roots which go back to the antiquity and continue to exist in the medieval culture and the philosophy and natural sciences of

¹⁴ Wilhelm Neumann, *Der Dom zu St. Marien in Riga. Baugeschichte und Baubeschreibung* (Riga: G. Löffler, 1912), 45.



Fig. 4. St. Cecilia, 1570s–1580s. Photo by Vitolds Mašnovskis.

the 16th and 17th centuries. They provide evidence of the development of thought from an archetype of divine music (*musica divina*) to music as a fine art whose essential place is both on earth (*musica mundana*) and in the form of vocal recital among people (*musica humana*), leaving a place for instrumental music as a skill of play the notated harmonies (*musica instrumentalis*).¹⁵ In search of relations among musical notes, the 6th century BC mathematician Pythagoras attempted to define the numerical relations of their intervals by distances between planets. On the basis of this and similar assumptions Plato (4th c BC) tried to give theoretical grounds to the idea that heavenly music is born and dwells in heavenly

¹⁵ Thea Vignau-Wilberg, *O Musica du edle Kunst. Musik und Tanz im 16. Jahrhundert* (München: Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, 1999), 15.

spheres. Such antique philosophers and doctors as Theophrastus (c. 372–287 BC) and Asclepius (c. 120–40BC) ascribed to music a magic power to heal spiritual maladies. The Roman encyclopaedist Celsus recommended persons with prevailing melancholic state of mind to change it with the help of sound therapy and dismiss depression with music.

Christian pedagogy holds numerous examples of the treatment melancholic mood with music. One of the most popular is the Biblical story about King Saul being obsessed with evil spirits and healed by the young shepherd David's singing and playing the harp, David being the main hero's counterpart in the myth about Orpheus. The 13th century Christian mystic Bonaventure compared the structure of the Universe with divine harmonies of a melody in which all parts follow each other according to the rules of absolutely ideal order and proportions. His metaphorical maxim – 'He who understands music understands the structure of the world' – as well as his thoughts about music and its role in a person's secular and contemplative life for many years have been of cementing nature for many scholastically theological and secular views. Medieval doctors, too, believed that music can cure flashes of 'black bile' (*melancholē*), i. e. melancholic world outlook; it can relieve humans of weariness of life (*taedium vitae*) and complexes of human existence. Returning to the treatment of the iconography of the choir benches in the Riga Cathedral one could be reminded of Jacobus de Voragine's thoughts on Mary Magdalene in his *Legenda Aurea*. According to him, Mary Magdalene in many episodes of her life has acted as a representative of the melancholic temperament, constantly suffering from insuperable passions and resultant feelings of sin and guilt because she is like *manens rea* – forever condemned and doomed to be a culprit.¹⁶ In *Legenda Aurea*, when Mary Magdalene all alone is repenting in the desert, she is visited by angels, sent to her by God's forgiving love to give her joy of music and thus compensate the anguish of her soul.¹⁷ This example proves that even in the 16th and 17th century a way out of the Catholic world outlook with its stamp of spiritual stagnation and melancholy caused by ethical suffering, was shown only by the power of music, which was substantiated by natural sciences and philosophical views.

¹⁶ Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*. 8. Auflage (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1975), 471.

¹⁷ Clair, *Melancholie. Genie und Wahnsinn in der Kunst*, 243.

Even in the early 17th century the belief in therapeutic powers of music retained its panacea rights in the battle against melancholic complexes of the soul. On the basis of the Apocalypse text, the English philosopher Robert Burton has made reference to the text of the Bible in which the author of the Ecclesiastes praises wine and good music for their power to gladden the heart, and Burton finds concord between the words of the Holy Scripture and those by the Italian poet Aretino in which he extols music as a remedy against grief and melancholy and brings out the non-material nature of sounds created by wind and string instruments. These observations, rooted in the history of culture, become a firm philosophical ground and motivation to regard the relief with St Cecilia's image on the Students' choir balcony front precisely as an allegory of music. This can be argued by the presence of the images of musical instruments in the relief, indicating to the 16th/17th century popular view in natural sciences of the divine nature of polyphonic music and to the Protestant pietism-rooted concept of St Cecilia's voluntary choice of the road of a martyr and a 'heavenly bride', denying herself secular joys of musical treat offered by the sounds of different instruments.

Music as an art of polyphonic harmony of sounds in this relief is represented by realistically and precisely rendered musical instruments. The first – the positive organ – is the most polyphonic instrument, played by the richly dressed Cecilia who is assisted by the organ-blower, a naked putto. In the background there are motifs of Renaissance architecture serving as a backdrop for two groups of musical instruments: a recorder and a lute in the upper left corner and a composition involving David's harp and viola da gamba. The grouping of musical instruments in twos in this relief visually reveals the influence of the still life genre. The musical and aesthetic treat that the cathedral parishioners and the clergyman received from the aesthetic polyphony of the Allegory of Music accompanied by the polyphonic singing of the boys' choir in the balcony definitely provided a worldly delight of the emotional and toning power of liturgical music, which could, without doubt, drive off grief, melancholy and fear of the exceedingly fast passage of human life.

This idea relates to the music theory of Johannes Kepler, imperial astronomer and mathematician to Rudolph II, in which he as the last representative of archaic views on cosmology combined the formation of spherical orbits of the Solar system planets and the formation of musical harmonies. In the third book of his work *Harmonices Mundi Libri V* he

analysed harmonious proportions in nature and in the material world, and sought their concordance with the harmony in the world of sounds and music.¹⁸ On the basis of the views of Pythagoras, Plato and Ptolemy that had influenced European scientific thought, including ethics and aesthetics, for nearly two thousand years, the deeply religious natural scientist Kepler was one of the last theoreticians of the intellectual elite who tried to define the principles of universal order and harmony in the coordinates of archaic views. However, the principal conclusion of his discourse that there is a harmonious interaction between the macrocosm (universe) and the microcosm (the Earth, the individual), can serve to argue the assumptions voiced in this article.

When regarding the cultural phenomena of the late 16th–early 17th centuries within the paradigms of philosophical concepts of the time, their context accommodates the thesis on overcoming melancholy as spiritual stagnation with the help of music. The author's theoretical construct seeks to discover the link of Riga's early Protestant society's intellectual efforts with Italian Renaissance humanist culture which, through iconographic, theological and philosophical messages and liturgy with its musical accompaniment, has involved the cathedral parishioners in a cathartic experience and has, presumably, relieved the burden of melancholy and sense of fatality.

LINK BETWEEN THE RELIEF "ALLEGORY OF MUSIC" AND ROMAN ART

In the concluding part of the article the aim of the research is to make conclusions about the interrelations within the history of art which, as seen from the previous chapters, clearly demonstrate the connection between Riga's Protestantism and Renaissance art. After the disintegration of the Hanseatic League which resulted in the disruption of the former political, economic and spiritual ties with Europe's Catholic lands and the spiritual changes of the Reformation, there were observable shifts in art topics and novelty of forms, facilitated by the migration of artists and the lively interest in Italy's Classical culture and modern Renaissance

¹⁸ Ioannis Keppleri *Harmonices Mvndi Libri V*, Lincii Austriae, Sumptibus Godofredi Tampachii, Anno MDCXIX, Lib. III.

art, displayed by Central and North European artists. The research and assessment of one of the most peculiar works of art in Latvian cultural heritage reveals a migration scheme for classical art ideas and samples of composition. In this scheme Rome and Riga are linked in a single chain of dissemination and borrowings of archetypes, with Dutch artists acting as mediators. They reaped success in the field of ecclesiastical architecture and art that was introduced by missionaries, in the environment of the economic, judicial and political mechanisms that were implemented by German merchants, and in the artisan culture that was created in medieval guild traditions.

It is altogether possible that the name of the artist who created the 'Allegory of Music' relief on the Students' choir balcony of the Riga Cathedral could be found out; however, according to the principles observed by guilds in the 16th–17th centuries, it was a matter-of-course practice to use graphic works as a source of inspiration, and in this environment we may trace the route of the artistic idea from the completed work back to its graphical prototype. The method of deduction can help in reconstructing the migration route of artistic motives along which the Allegory of Music had travelled from a sketch to the author of the copper engraving, then to the printer, to the book seller, and finally to the woodcarver – the artist who created the relief for the Riga Cathedral. Although the relief is in the church from the late 16th – early 17th centuries, the question of where it had been made will remain unanswered. It could have been any port town or crafts centre in the Netherlands, Germany and, very likely, in Riga, where book sellers supplied craftsmen and artists with engravings with perfectly worked out compositions.

The relief 'Allegory of Music' on the front of the Students' choir balcony of the Riga Cathedral with its elements of figural composition, architectural landscape and still life bears direct link with the bronze tombstone of Pope Sixtus IV, who died in 1484 and was buried in St Peter's basilica in Rome. The latest research maintains that the elevated tombstone was created by the brothers Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo¹⁹ who decorated the surface of the monument around the sculpture of the deceased pope with reliefs of allegories of Christian virtues, and the sides of the monument with allegories of fine arts. All the reliefs are of a similar composition and the muses that personify the fine arts are de-

¹⁹ *Rom. Kunst und Architektur*, hrsg. von Bussagli Marco (Potsdam: Tandem, 2004), 369–370.

picted as seated women of ideal Renaissance proportions, captured in motion with the characteristic attributes of their respective fields. One of the reliefs bears the image of the Allegory of Music. During his trip c. 1530, the Dutch artist Maarten van Heemskerck created a large number of sketches. Among them there are sketches of the grave monument to Pope Sixtus IV, also of the composition with the Allegory of Music. It was this collection of sketches with allegories of the fine arts that had been property of several artists, active in the sphere of prints. Among them there were such prominent artists like Cornelis Cort, Hieronymus Cock and Maarten de Vos. As these Dutch and Flemish artists were among the most talented graphic artists in the mid- and second half of the 16th century, having drawn cycles of ruins of Rome, landscapes and reproductions of popular works of art, having created drawings of allegoric, Biblical and literary motifs which were subsequently used by themselves and other artists to create copper engravings or as composition templates for large-size works of art, it becomes self-evident that the graphic examples for the relief 'Allegory of Music' on the front of the Students' choir balcony of the Riga Cathedral could also be found in their creative work.

Indeed, they have been found there, more precisely, in Maarten van Heemskerck's sketchbook with studies of motifs of Roman architecture. His pen-and-ink drawing in a subjectively altered form repeats the relief motifs of the pope's grave monument and fully corresponds to the figural composition with St Cecilia at the positive organ and a putto at the swell-box²⁰ in the Riga Cathedral relief 'Allegory of Music'. It seems that the seated lady's pose, the way how her hands rest on the keyboard, the lines of her legs and the folds of her dress have been transferred onto the relief without any noticeable change. Moreover, in the bottom left corner of his drawing van Heemskerck has depicted a lute on the floor – an indication to his intention in the final version of the composition to extend and specify other groups of musical instruments. However, there is a detail in both compositions that still holds an open question – both in the pope's grave monument by the Pollaiuolo brothers and in the sketch by van Heemskerck there are no architectonic motives, the

²⁰ *The so-called Maarten de Vos Sketchbook of Drawings after the Antique* (The Hague: Government Publishing Office, 1976), 24.

ones that appear in the form of two different Renaissance arches in the background of the relief 'Allegory of Music' in the Riga Cathedral.

Ruins of Roman *thermae* and antique temples, fragments of the Coliseum with crumbling arches and tumbledown vaulting were a favourite subject for Hieronymus Cock, who possessed van Heemskerck's sketchbook for some time. After having stayed two years in Italy in the mid-16th century, Cock opened the largest graphics printing house in Antwerp and thus could, based on his own as well as others' sketches, produce cycles of graphics on antique or allegoric motifs. In 1551, a whole cycle of graphics under Cock's name was published, depicting Roman ruins and in their nature of architectural motifs displaying many common features with the ones in the Riga Cathedral relief 'Allegory of Music'.²¹ However, this assumption was made on the basis of observation and should be considered a working hypothesis of the research theme because no composition could be found among Cock's engravings that would be identical to the architectural motifs of the Riga relief. At the same time there is a substantial number of engravings with compositions of architectural landscapes repeating fragments of arches of similar construction.²²

When deliberating over the creation of the relief 'Allegory of Music' on the Students' choir balcony, we cannot exclude the method of an eclectic combination of several graphical patterns, often practised by Renaissance and Baroque craftsmen to achieve compositions that are rich in details. If the author of the Riga Cathedral relief had adopted this approach, he would have had to synthesize van Heemskerck's sketches of Allegory of Music with a variation on the topic of ruins or Renaissance architecture by another artist of the second half of the 16th century.

Summing up the above facts and observations, it may be concluded that in the latter half of the 15th century and early 16th century Livonia went through irreversible processes of dismantling the foundations of spiritual life and the administrative structure of the Church that had been created by the policy of Christianization in the previous centuries. The post-Reformation demarcation line inspired the newly founded

²¹ Praecipua Aliquot Romanae Antiquitatis Ruinarum Monimenta Vivis Prospectibus ad veri Imitationem Affabre Designata. MDLI. *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700*, vol IV (Amsterdam: Menno Herzberger, 1959), 180-183.

²² Hieronymus Cock after Maarten van Heemskerck. Landscape with Saint Hieronymus and God Tiber (Michel Makarius, *Ruinen. Die gegenwärtige Vergangenheit* (Paris: Flammarion, 2004), 43).

Lutheran parishes and theologians to embark on conceptual search for new principles for the layout of churches, on the incorporation of novelties in the iconography in the works of art illustrating the basic postulates of the reformed religion, which has left eloquent evidence in the cultural heritage of the present-day Latvia.

The bas-relief compositions of 'Temptation' and 'Mary Magdalene' on the new benches for deacons and the singers' choir in the altar space of the Riga Cathedral favour a philosophical dialogue, typical of the Renaissance humanism era, with the parishioners about the inevitability of an ethical conflict in the contemplation on the categories of innocence and sin, about the role of four temperaments in people's characters and the amplitude of the predestined manifestations of human nature. The attempt to compare the compositions of the woodcut reliefs to their prototypes and in their mood related to Albrecht Dürer's copper engravings puts forward the idea of the primacy of an individual's secular life over the chance of a contemplative way of life, by its very inevitability giving rise to a philosophical, emotionally despondent and melancholic state of mind.

In their search of compensation for an individual's feelings of spiritual deadlock the developers of the concept for the Riga Cathedral interior found a solution of the problem from the viewpoint of the Renaissance humanism and natural sciences. Made in the late 16th–early 17th centuries, the Riga Cathedral woodcut with the Allegory of Music on the front of the Students' choir balcony offered to overcome the melancholic state of mind with the help of harmonious sounds of music, thereby reflecting the link with the ideas of the ancient philosophers Pythagoras, Plato and Ptolemy as well as medieval and Renaissance thinkers about the concordance between the material and non-material worlds, about the interaction between the Universe and the individual.

When analysing the relief of the Allegory of Music on the Students' balcony of the Riga Cathedral from the positions of the history of art, the significant role of the Dutch and Flemish prints in the rapid development of Central and North European Renaissance arts and genres ever since the mid-16th century becomes obvious. Of high acclaim is the role of the Dutch artists in popularizing the diversity of the content, form and ideas of Italian Renaissance art through prints in the countries which, on account of economic and cultural contacts, became buyers of the printed produce. In this way one or even several so-far unidenti-

fied prints have served as a mediator between the image on the grave monument to Pope Sixtus IV by Andrea and Piero Pollaiuolo and the relief 'Allegory of Music' on the front of the Students' choir balcony of the Riga Cathedral, and has succeeded in its mission of disseminating examples of Italian culture, thus making a contribution of profoundly humanistic content to Livonian art.

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KOKKUVÕTE: **Humanismimõjulise renessansskunsti ikonograafia varaprotestantlikus Riias**

15. sajandi lõpus ja 16. sajandi alguses leidsid Liivimaal aset olulised vaimsed ja poliitilised muudatused; reformatsioon tähistas muutusi nii kiriku ideoloogilises kui institutsionaalses lähenemises usudogmadele, millega kaasnesid uued teemad ja ikonograafilised programmid kirikukunstis. Käesolevas kirjutises võetakse lähema vaatluse alla Riia toomkiriku interjööride uuendamine pärast kahte 1523. aastal aset leidnud pildirüüstet ja 1547. aasta tulekahju. Artiklis keskendutakse seejuures kahele peamisele 1570.–1580. aastatel valminud teosele: renessansstiilis kooripinkidele ja muusikuterõdule transeptis.

Kooripinkide taimornamendiga ja groteskidega ümbritsetud keskosa kujutab pattulangemist ja kahetsevat Maarja Magdaleenat. Mõlema puitreljeefi eeskujud lähtuvad ajastule iseloomulikult trükigraafikast. Esimese puhul viitavad nii ikonoloogiline skeem kui kujundikeel saksa vararenessansi meister Hans Sebald Behamile, kelle 1535. aastast pärineval gravüüril kujutatud Adam ja Eeva pakuvad nii oma üldise meeoleolu kui ka motiivivalikuga paralleeli nii Albrecht Düreri "Aadama ja Eeva" interpretatsioonidele kui ka renessansiajastu üldisele ideele käsitleda Aadama kuju Kristuse ja kogu inimkonna esiisa tähenduses. Kristuse allegooriliseks sümboliks on lamava hirve figuur Aadama selja taga (viide Uue Testamendi psalmidele nr. 41 ja 73), mis koos sisaliku kujutisega Hea ja kurja tundmise puu jalamil loovad seose protestantliku

ideoloogia ühele peateemale – valikute vabadusele ja pääsemisele püha ristimise sakramnedi abil. Samas on Riias loobunud Behamil esinevast papagoi kui inimkonna kahepalgelise loomu kujutisest ja tehtud panus humanismi ajastu eetikas tähenduslikule positiivsele elufilosoofiale.

Optimismi vastandpooluseks on melanhoolia ja kahetsus, mille ilmeks näiteks on Maarja Magdaleena reljeef parempoolsel kooripingil, kes riietatuna renessansiajastu moeka daamina kannab andeksandmist sümboliseerivat salvimisõli pudelit.

Kooripinkidega umbes samal ajal valmis uus muusikuterõdu transepti lõunaseinal, mis toonases kirikuliturgias oli ette nähtud noortest häältest koosnevale kantorikoorile. Koorirõdu keskel paikneb reljeef Püha Ceciliaga, kelle roll muusikute hoidja ja inspireerijana juhib allegooriliste võrdlusteni Rooma kunsti ja muusikaultuuriga. Püha Cecilia kaaslaseks oreli kõrval on tuult tallav alasti putofiguur, reljeefipinda täiendavad flöödi, Taaveti harfi, viola da gamba kujutised, kompositsiooni taustaks on idealiseeritud arhitektuurimaastik.

Kompositsioonil on kokkupuutepunkte vendadele Antonio ja Piero Pollaiuolole atribueeritud paavst Sixtus IV pronksist hauamonumendi reljeefidega Rooma Püha Peetri katedraalis (1484), mille popoulaarsset motiivistikku olid juba alates 1530. aastatel valminud Maarten van Heemskercki Rooma-teemalistest gravüüridest korranud mitmed Madalamaade graveerijad nagu Cornelis Cort, Hieronymus Cock ja Maarten de Vos. Kohati ulatub sarnasus Riia reljeefi ja M. de Heemskercki motiivivaliku vahel otsese refereerimiseni, millele viitavad nii Püha Cecilia käte ja jalgade õrnalt elegantne poos kui ka kleidivoldistiku joonis. Mõlema teose allnurgas leiame põrandal lebava flöödi.

Küsimuseks jääb seejuures Riias pildi tausta moodustav arhitektuur kahe antiikse kaare kujul, mis mainitud eeskujudel puudub, küll aga esineb näiteks 1551. aastal trükitud Rooma varemeid kujutaval gravüüride seeriasse kuuluvatel lehtedel. Imiteerimise ja korduse kõrval tähendas kunst valikuvabadust, mille esteetilise programmi raamidesse mahtus parimate eeskujude kordamine ja sellega kaasnev manerismiperioodile iseloomulik viis näha kaugemale ja elada mõtestatumatult maailmas, mille puhul religioon tähendas filosoofiat ja viimane omakorda eetilist kutset ilust lähtuvate seaduste järgimisele.