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GESTURES IN PASSION CYCLES IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN MURAL PAINTING

In medieval Passion cycles represented in Czech, Slovak (former Hungary), and Polish murals dating from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries one may observe a number of gestures which appear in respective scenes starting from the Entry into Jerusalem and ending with the Entombment (laying in the sepulchre).

The most significant gesture in the entry scene is the outstretched hand of Christ riding a donkey. It is the language of gesture used since antiquity, transmitted through Byzantine and Italian art (including Giotto's Entry into Jerusalem in his Arena Chapel frescoes), and transferred into art north of the Alps[1]. It appears in the scene of Capture in Rimavska Bania. Jesus, kissed from the left side and held by the hand by a soldier on the right side, moves his right hand, in front of the figure of Judas, in the language of gesture towards Malchus. A similar gesture appears in the depiction of the same theme in Guido da Siena's painting from 1275–1280 (Siena, Pinacoteca)[2]. It is also present in the scenes of Jesus` trial shown in Central Europe, where Pilate raises his hand in the language of gesture, addressing Jesus standing in front of him.

In the Entry into Jerusalem scene, in Podolinec, Ochtina, Kocelovce and Slavětin, the figure welcoming Christ leans out towards him from the top of the gate with outstretched hands. The only earlier example I have found in West European art of such a motif is the figure in the Entry into Jerusalem in Robert de Lisle's Psaltery c. 1339 (London British Library MS. Arundel 83II, fol. 124v)[3].

In the painting in Štitnik and in Slavětina, one of the figures standing before the approaching Christ takes off the outer garment over his head to spread it on the

[1] M. Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture*, Cambridge 1990, p. 15–39.

[2] A. Derbes, *Picturing, the Passion in Late Medieval Italy. Narrative Paintnig, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant*, Cambridge 1996, p. 40, II. 19.

[3] R. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts. Signs of Otherness in Nothern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, t. 2, Berkeley–Los Angeles–Oxford 1993, II. III. 119.

ground in front of him. The same gesture can be found in the scenes showing the removal of Christ's garments in Christ's Passion in Podolinec, in Levỳ Hradec and in Šliace. Christ removes his garment over his head, so that his head and hands are still hidden in its folds. Jonathan G. Alexander finds a model for such representations in the representation of baptism in Byzantine psalteries, symbolizing the passing of the old (sinful) man and the rebirth in Christ. Taking off garments has another meaning on the St. Vincente sarcophagus in Spanish Avila (twelfth century): St. Vincent and his sisters, taking off their clothes before execution, remain naked. Moreover, taking off garments over the head appeared in a series of representations of the battle between virtues and vices in Herrad of Hohenbourg's *Hortus Deliciarum* from the end of the twelfth century[4].

In Podolinec, Starỳ Plzenc, Jasiona, and Strzelce near Sobótka, Christ hands bread to Judas seated behind the table (?), while in Dobroš he puts it into his mouth. This is a gesture already used in art north of the Alps in the twelfth century, and the position of Judas, sitting or kneeling alone behind the table, emphasized the fact that Judas betrayed his Master and then took Holy Communion from his hands. Erwin Panofsky said that Byzantine art usually represented The Last Supper in reference to the account in St. Matthew's Gospel (26, 23). Thus Judas, usually seated among the other apostles, dips his fingers in the shared bowl. On the other hand, Western art , even where Christ still maintained his usual place at the left end of the table, prefers St. John's description (13, 26–27), making the traitor accept or eat a morsel from the Saviour's hand[5]. The gesture of taking food from the hand of Christ, with St. John's head on his lap and Judas on his knees behind the table, was preserved even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the scene of the Last Supper in the Maestà Duccia altar in the representations in Slavětin and in Sierpc. Here the apostles surround the table and are even seated in front of the table with their backs to the viewers.

Similarly with Christ in many representations in Central Europe of Christ's Prayer in the Garden of Olives: in Sierpc, Judas, in accepting food, has his hands clasped together. Judas takes the Holy Communion in the state of sin, in contrast to Christ who, in the Garden of Olives, accepts the chalice of bitterness (suffering) from the hands of an angel. In Central European murals from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, clasped hands were already used in liturgy (*iunctis manibus* when rising the Host during the Holy Mass and in devotional practices)[6]. Therefore the gesture of Judas clasping hands in the scene shown in Sierpc, as well as in many earlier West European examples, only exaggerated his guilt and sacrilegious receiving of the Holy Communion.

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[4] J. G. Alexander, A *Metalwork Triptych of the Passion of Christ in the Metrpolitan Museum, New York, Wiener Jahrbuch fur Kunstgeschichte, 46/47, 1993/94*, p. 33.

[5] E. Panofsky, *W kwaestii genezy twórczości strasburskiego "Mistrza Ecclesii"*, [in:] E. Panofsky, *Średniowiecze*, Translated by G. Jurkowalaniec, A. Kozak, T. Dobrzeniecki, Warszawa 2001, p. 202–203.

[6] M. Barasch, op. cit., p. 63.

This form of meaning includes also the motif of Christ's tied hands during his trial and also in the scene of Flagellation. In the Ancient World, prisoners stretched out clasped hands so that they could be tied. In the Middle Ages, a vassal held out clasped hands to a feudal lord who later took them in his own hands[7]. In Podolinec, in the scene of trial before Herod, Christ's wrists are tied up. Similar scenes presenting Christ before Herod can be found in Slavětin, Hnĕvkovice, Uhlířskie Janovice, and Starý Plzenec. In the sixteenth century representations, for example in the scene before Annas in Koziegłowy, Christ's hands are also tied, and in Strzelniki, this element can be seen in the scene before Herod. In all fourteenth century representations in Czech, Upper Hungarian (present Slovakia) and Polish territories, in the scene of Flagellation, Christ, when standing behind the column and embracing it, has his wrists tied together. In the fifteenth century representations, Christ usually stands in front of the column with hands behind his back so that the tied wrists are not seen. We can only guess that they are tied.

In the fifteenth and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the type of holding out both hands, perhaps to be tied up, includes the gesture seen in the scene of the Capture of Christ. From the left, Christ is being kissed by Judas : we see this in Poniki, Ludrowa, Parszowice and in the St. Vaclav's Chapel in Prague Cathedral. In the scene in Poniki, the iconographic type of Christ's hands being held by a soldier standing on his right, and the turning of Christ's head towards Judas kissing him from the left, had already been used in the sculpture of the Petit Master of St. Gilles on the Western façade of Chartres Cathedral[8], and in a mural in Vicq-sur--Saint-Chartier[9], as well as in the Winchester Psalter of 1145–1155 (British Library, Ms.Cotton Nero C.IV. fol. 21)[10]. Most probably from there it has been brought to Central Europe.

In Ludrova, inscriptions on the banderolae emphasize the reaction of St. Peter who makes a defensive gesture with one hand and points to his head with the other: *non lavabis mihi pedes in aeternum; domine (non tantum pedes meos) ed et manus et caput*[11]. In Central European mural painting it is the sole inscription emphasizing the Saint's gesture at the moment of washing feet. St. Peter's gesturem in which he is pointing to his head, is already present in the Kludov Psaltery from the second half of the eleventh century, as an illustration to Psalm 51. In the tenth century it

[7] Ibidem, p. 59–60, Il. 31.

[8] W. S. Stoddard, *Sculpturs of the West Portals of Chartres Cathedral. Their Origins in Romanesque and Their Role in Chartrain Sculpture, Including the West Portals of Saint-Denis and Chartres*, Harvard, 1952, New York–London 1987, p. 143, Il. 40–41.

[9] C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictoral Arts of the West 800–1200*, Pelican History of Art, Yale 1993, p. 359, 362, Il. 365 ; Z. Kliś, *Wybrane cykle pasyjne Chrystusa w sztuce średniowiecznej od XII w.*, "Folia Historica Cracoviensia" in print.

[10] C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictoral Arts*, p. 359, 362, il. 365 ; Z. Kliś, *Wybrane cykle pasyjne Chrystusa w sztuce średniowiecznej od XII w.*. "Folia Historica Cracoviensia" in print.

[11] K. Biathová, *Maliarske prejavy Stredoslovenského Liptova*, Bratislava 1983, s. 194; I. Gerát, *Stredoveké obrazové témy na Slovensku, osoby a príbehy*, Bratislava 2001, p. 215.

can be found in Byzantine and Western art (the St. Gall Antiphonal)[12]. Later, this gesture becomes more and more common in art.

The gesture of defence in the representations of St.Peter, whose feet are being washed by Christ, can be shown in art in many examples. The gesture of the apostle raising his hands, with the hands turned outwards seeming to push away a charge or a proposal made to him, had been known already from a fourth century Roman sarcophagus (the so called Pius II sarcophagus)[13] and was later reproduced in art of the eleventh, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries.[14]. In Ziębice Christ washes St. Peter's left foot immersed in a bowl. Christ is kneeling on both knees. St. Peter is sitting with a defensive gesture. The apostles are divided into two groups, standing behind Christ and behind St.Peter. The gesture and the posture of St. Peter, except the positioning of his legs, resemble the model of the woodcut, the prints of which can be found in two places, in Erlangen (Universitätsbibliothek) and in Linz (Studienbibliothek)[15].

This defensive gesture was used in the scene of St. Peter's Denial of Christ, showing the apostle sitting (in front of the fire?), in Ochtina. St. Peter is sitting right opposite the viewers, looking to the right, and his hands are raised with the palms turned outwards. St. Peter is looking at a woman standing opposite him. Over them are two angels with inscriptions on the banderolae now difficult to decipher: NON NOVI HOMINEM NESCIO QUID DICIS; ILLO CRAS IN ORTO...[16]. In Ochtina, the mural has been painted by the fresco method and probably by Italian painters. Following this track, a similar gesture of the sedentary St. Peter can be noticed in the lower part of the crucifix from S. Michele in Lucca. Here, St. Peter is sitting in front of the fire, his hands are raised and turned palms outwards, and he is looking right towards the servant woman[17].

Among other gestures, attention can be given to the gesture of embracing, present in the scene of Judas' kiss. No matter from which side he approaches Jesus, in Central European representations, Judas embraces him and even points his finger at him. The gesture of embracing has descended from ancient to Christian art. In Roman sculpture, the gesture of Electra embracing Orestes' neck (Naples, Museo Nazionale, Pasiteles, 1st c. B.C.) was an expression of friendship[18]. But, in the representations of the Capture of Christ, combined with a kiss, it has become a symbol of betrayal.

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[12] G. S c h i l l e r, *Iconography of Christian Art*, t. 2, Bradford–London 1972, p. 44, il. 120, 123, 124.

[13] Ibidem, p. 43, Il. 117.

[14] H.G i e s s, *Die Darstellung der Fusswaschung Christi in den Kunstwerken des 4.–12. Jahrhunderts*, Roma 1962, p. 121, ll. 53.

[15] *The Illustrated Bartsch (Supplement). German Single Leaf Woodcuts before 1500*, 161, *Anonymous Artists (.001-.400)*, edited by R. S. Field, New York 1987, p. 180, Il. 160, 160–2.

[16] M. Togner, *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba v Gemeri*, Bratislava 1989, p. 178.

[17] E. S a n d b e r g - V a v a l à, *La Croce Dipinta Italiana e L'Iconographia della Passione*, Verona 1929, p. 262, ll. 222.

[18] D. S t r o n g, *Roman Art*, London–New York–Ontario–Auckland 1988, p. 61, Il. 23.

In a few Czech and Slovak scenes, Judas is pointing his finger at Jesus. These are the scenes in Slavětin, Křeč, Podolinec, Žehra, Hněvkovice, Záblati. The gesture of pointing a finger at Jesus was used by an artist in the Stuttgart Psalter[19]. Judas does it with the hand with which he is embracing Christ, and this gesture is present in the scenes in Žehra and Záblati. The composition is a little different in Slavětin, Křeč, Podolinec and Hněvkovice. Here Judas is turned towards Christ while the hand with which he should have embraced him is raised above his own head and directed towards the Master.

Caiaphas has usually been shown at the moment of tearing apart his garments. For the first time, Caiaphas tearing apart his garments was shown in the scene of Christ's trial before the archpriests in the St. Augustine's Evangeliary, where he is getting up from a seat flanked by two other figures[20]. In Koziegłowy, Caiaphas has a mitre on his head and with both hands tears apart his outer garment, taking a step towards the standing Christ. The scene *before Caiaphas* is, to some extent, a repetition of that in the copperplate published by Lerhs and entitled *Christ before Anneas,* an unlikely scene improbable from the account in Holy Scripture or the iconographic tradition. In the painting and in the copperplate, the archpriest standing before Christ is wearing a mitre on his head and is tearing open his outer garment. Christ's hands are positioned in a similar way, his right hand above the left[21]. In the scene in Jemielnica, Paszowice, Tymowa and Ziębice, Caiaphas is tearing apart his garments while sitting on the throne. There were similar examples already in Ottoman art and in thirteenth century Italian art[22], and also in the later woodcuts of German artists working before 1500[23].

In the scenes showing Christ before Pilate, the imperial governor is many times shown listening to the whispering of a woman appearing in the window at the back of his throne. The representation of *Christ before Pilate* in Hajduki Nyskie is modeled on the graphic work of the Master of ES. The figure of Pilate, his throne, and the woman's head in the window at the back of the throne, as well as the figure of Christ, are identical. The knights standing next to Christ are presented in a very similar way[24]. The Master of ES probably modeled his work on the Master of Nuremberg's Passion, whose version is very similar, though his is a mirror reflection. In the eleventh century, a motif of a whispering woman looking through

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[19] G. Schiller, *op. cit.,* p. 53, Il. 164.

[20] G. Henderson, "The Foxes have holes ", once again..., "Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgesichte" 46/47, 1993/1994, p. 247, Il. 3.

[21] M. Lehrs, *Geschichte und kritischer Katalog des Deutschen, Niederländischen und Französischen Kupferstichs im XV. Jahrhundert,* Dritter Tafelband, Tafeln 93–108, Wien 1915, Il. 238.

[22] A. Derbes, *Picturing,* p. 73-80, Il. 44–46, 49–51.

[23] *The Illustrated Bartsch (Supplement). German Single Leaf Woodcuts before 1500,* 161, p. 235–237, Il. 239, 241, 242–243.

[24] M. Lehrs, *Geschichte und Kritischer Katalog des Deutschen, Niederländischen und Französischen Kupferstichs im XV. Jahrhundert,* t.2, Wien 1910, Taf. 57, Nr 144; *Mesiter E. S. Alle 320 Kupferstiche,* Herausgegeben von H. Appuhn, Dortmünd 1989, p. 350, Il. 38.

the window, to whose mouth Pilate puts his ear in the scene of *Washing hands and Carrying the Cross*, appeared in the fresco in Sant` Angelo in Formis. Elisabett Lucchesi Palli, looking for models for this representation on the thirteenth century column of the San Marco ciborium in Venice, where the head of a woman appears in a window behind Pilate, points to an undefined tapestry, to the frescoes in the Toquale church, and to the scene in the Barperini Psalter (Vat. Gr. 372, fol.82v), explaining that this is the head of Pilate' s wife. The head of a woman looking through the window placed at the back of the throne, may also show a servant of Pilate's wife, who had been sent to tell that Jesus was not guilty[25].

In Koziegłowy, after *Flagellation and Crowning with thorns,* follows a scene of taking off the purple robe (according to *Meditationes*, after *Crowning with thorns* and mocking, but before *Carrying the Cross*). Jesus is standing naked, facing his tormentors, before putting on his garments. This is at the same time the *Ecce Homo* scene. Christ's hands are crossed on his breast. This is a unique gesture of this type – hands crossed on Christ's breast – in Central European mural painting of the Ecce Homo scene. The gesture of crossed hands in art had appeared earlier in Egyptian funebral sculpture, where people's hands were crossed on their breasts. It also took similar form in the twelfth and thirteenth century funebral sculptures of north-eastern Spain and in Provence. In Byzantium, hands were crossed on the breast when greeting the Emperor, and in the Holy Mass of the Western Church the priest crossed hands on his breast at the words *orate pro me peccatore*. In the paintings of Giotto and other artists, this gesture meant humility, faith and adoration. In the paintings of the Man of Sorrows and the Birth of Christ from around 1396 (the Allegretto Nuzzi school, in the Vatican Pinacoteca), the Christ of Sorrows in the tomb, the angels adoring him and also, below, Mary adoring the Jesus Child lying on the ground, all have their hands crossed on their breasts. In the case of the adoring angels and of Mary this must be a gesture of adoration and humility. In the case of Christ of Sorrows in the tomb as the Man of Sorrows, it is most probably the gesture of accepting sacrifice[26] and of humility. This gesture appeared also in Poland in the representations of the *Martyred Christ*[27].

Leading Christ on a rope or chain by the neck while he is carrying the cross is an iconographic motif which developed under the influence of the tenth century Cappadocian, and later Italian art. In such places as Toquale, Qeledjlar, Tchaouch-In, Quaranleq Kilisse, Elmale Kilisse, Tchareqle Kilisse, Sinassos, Sousan Bairi, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Christ led by a rope was shown in the scene of

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[25] E. Lucchesi Palli, *Die Passions- und Endszenen Christi auf der Ciboriumsäule von San Marco in Venedig*, Prag 1942, p. 74–75, 78, Taf. III a, b, und IV b.

[26] C. Gottlieb, *The Window in Art, From the Window of God to the Vanity of Man, A Survey of Window Symbolism in Western Painting*, New York, 1981, p. 176–177, Il. 97; M. Barasch, op. cit., p. 72–87.

[27] G. Jurkowlaniec, *Chrystus umęczony. Ikonografia w Polsce od XIII do XVI wieku*, Warszawa 2001, Il. 21–22.

Carrying the Cross. The rope was hanging from Christ's neck and its end was held by a Jew walking in front of him. This motif was adopted by the painter of the formerly mentioned Tetraevangeliary (Paris, Bibliothèque National, Hs, gr. 74 fol. 206v), and the custom of tying a rope round the neck comes from the East. This was the way Barabbas was shown in the Evangeliary of Rossano, and in the fourth century liturgy of Jerusalem, on Good Friday , the patriarch impersonating Christ was led on a rope tied round his neck[28]. In the scene in Dechtice, Christ is tied to a pole standing in front of him, with a chain or a rope forming a collar round his neck. There is a mercenary standing in front of Jesus[29].

In Křeč, Slavětin, Podolinec and Kocelovce, Christ is led on a rope but is tied with it in a different way. In Podolinec, a Jew in a pointed cap is holding the end of a rope coming out from somewhere near the hands of Christ who is wearing a vesture. In Křeč, Slavětin and Kocelovce, the torturer is holding the end of a rope which ties Christ dressed in a long robe. Christ's hands were tied up in many representations of his trial, and also in *Carrying the Cross* in early Christian, Romanesque and Byzantine representations where Simon of Cyrene is carrying the Cross with Christ following him[30]. Much would change in thirteenth century art. In almost the same way as in Podolince, the scene of *Carrying the Cross* was shown in a full page miniature painting in a thirteenth manuscript from Southern Germany (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum MS, Cod. MM27, a single card, verso). Christ, in a long vesture and an outer coat, is carrying the cross on his left shoulder, the longer arm forward. The Jew standing in front of him, in a Jewish cap like in Podolinec, holds the rope exiting from somewhere near the hands of Christ. Behind Christ, a Jew wearing a conical cap (as in Podolinec), supports the arm of the cross[31]. The girding of Christ's loins with a rope, the end of which is held by a torturer in the scenes of Carrying the Cross, must, among others, have its equivalent in the Franciscan practice of monks girding their habits with ropes to commemorate leading Christ on a rope during the Way of the Cross[32].

It is much the same in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. When considering a rope round the neck, the scene from Sliače should be referred to. Christ is carrying the cross on the right shoulder. He is blindfolded and led on "a rope" put round his neck. He is led by a torturer holding both ends of the rope. A version of such representation of Christ is a miniature in *Officium Passionis Domini* from the years 1320–1330, from the "Marches" area in Italy (Boston Public Library, Ms.qMed.

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[28] V. Cottas, *L'influence du drame « Christos Paschon » sur l'art chrétien d'orient*, Paris 1931, p. 38–39, Il. 16; B. Wilk, *Die Darstellung der Kreuztragung Christi und verwandter Szenen bis um 1300*, Berlin 1969, p. 107–113.

[29] Š. Oriško, *Kostel Všetkých svätých v Dechticiach : pokus o novú interpretáciu architektúry a maliarskej výzdoby*, Ars, 1–3, 2000, p. 11–14, Il. 8–11, 13.

[30] B. Wilk, *Die Darstellung der Kreuztragung Christi...*, Berlin 1969, p. 136–139.

[31] R. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts...*, t.2, Illustrations, Il. I. 28.

[32] A. Derbes, *Picturing...*, p. 133.

131, fol. 35r). In *Officium,* Christ is walking blindfolded, carrying his cross with the longer arm forward, and is led by a torturer on "a rope". Sandro Sticca interprets this scene by the influence of Meditationes where it is said that Christ was led to the Calvary Mount[33]. In Pieszyce and Grzędzice, Christ is led by the rope which also girds his loins. In case of Haczów, the scene is extended. Christ, walking to the right, is leaning forward as if falling or going up a very steep slope. He is taking a big step forward, carrying the cross on his left shoulder. His right arm is down as if he wanted to find support or prevent a deeper fall. He is looking backwards. There is a chain round his neck and he is girded with a rope, the end of which is held by a torturer walking in front of him. Considering the chain round his neck, the girded rope held by a torturer, and the positioning of the cross, Simon of Cyrene and the landscape, this painting may refer to the woodcut kept in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) which is the Viennese version of *The Seven Falls of Christ*[34]. In Jawor, there are two paintings made on the same model, one in the monastery and one in the church. The painting in the church presents Christ spread on the ground, from the left to the right side of the painting, following the direction of the Way of the Cross, with his head forward and both hands embracing the arm of the cross. There is a chain falling down from his neck, and a torturer standing next to his head is pulling at the rope that girds his body. The painting is modeled, as well as the previous scenes, on a version of the woodcut *The Seven Falls of Christ and the Sorrows of Mary* kept in Stockholm (Nationalmuseum)[35]. Exceptional in this respect is the painting in the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady church in Ołomuniec. The painting corresponds to fifteenth century panel painting in South Germany[36]. Christ is pulled by a chain tied round his neck and by a rope girding his loins, by a torturer standing in front of Simon. Zuzanna Vštečkova, describing this scene, compares it with the paintings in Przeworsk, Jawor, the scene in the polyptych in Szydłowiec (1507–1509, or to 1519[37]), and a panel painting of 1513 from the Dominican monastery in Wrocław (Warsaw, National Museum[38]) which is the closest to the scene from Ołomuniec. In this last painting, two torturers also hold the ends of the chain hanging from Christ's neck and of the rope girding his loins.

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[33] *...et tunc venerabile lignum crucis longum, et grossum, et multum grave ponunt super humeros ejus... Et tunc ducitur, et acceleratur... Ductus autem fuit foras... ut latronem ligatum, ad Calvariae locum duxerunt...,* Patrz: S. Sticca, *Officium Passionis Domini: An Unpublished Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century,* Franciscan Studies, 34, 1974, p. 172, Il. 16.

[34] *The Illustrated Bartsch (Supplement). German Single Leaf Woodcuts before 1500,* 162, Anonymous Artists (401–735), Edited by R. S. Field, New York 1989, p. 250, Il. 655.

[35] Ibidem, p. 249, Il. 654.

[36] Z. Všetečková, *Neseni a snímání z kříže,* [w:] *Od gotiky k renesanci. Vytvorna kultura Moravy a Slezska 1400–1550,* III, Edice-Redakce I. Hlobil, M. Perútka, Olomouc 1999, p. 414, Il. 328.

[37] J. Gadomski, *Gotyckie malarstwo tablicowe Małopolski 1500–1540,* Warszawa–Kraków 1995, p. 81–83, Il.106.

[38] T. Dobrzeniecki, *Malarstwo tablicowe, katalog zbiorów,* Warszawa 1972, p. 296, Il. 108 A1.

The gesture of Christ in Distress resting his head on his hand, was introduced into the representations of Christ waiting for being crucified, in Strażki, Pieszyce and Wełtyń. From the iconographic point of view, according to von der Osten, the image of *Christ in Distress* might have originated from the way of picturing Job[39]. In Strażki, Christ is sitting on the cross which is lying on the ground from right to left. Kneeling before him are two torturers mocking him. On Christ's right stand two representatives of the authorities wearing fur lined garments. Behind them one can see a few heads, some of them soldiers. The scene in Strażki is largely based on a drawing from 1470 of the Schongauer school (Basel. Kunstmuseum). There are similarities in the positioning of the cross and in the figure of Christ, wearing the crown of thorns, sitting on the cross with his head supported on his hand[40]. The figure of Christ and the cross, positioned from the right to the left, that is from the base to the crossing of the arms, could have been a copy of the drawing from Ulm dated around 1490. The figure of Christ is nearly the same[41]. However, the ways of representing the figure of Christ in Strażki as well as in Pieszyce and Wełtyń (and in the two latter scenes Christ is sitting on a stone next to the cross), has its source in a local tradition. The same arrangement, Christ sitting on a stone by the cross, with his head resting on one hand while the other hand falls on the thigh of the slightly forward leg, can be seen in the section bearing the scene of *Christ in Distress* in the altar in Szydłowiec, Lipnica Murowana, Sromowce Nizne and in the Dominican Contemplation (Kraków 1532)[42]. Dobrzeniecki mentiones the Dominican Contemplation and the details resulting from comparing Jesus to what Jeremiah said. Christ is sitting on a stone, tied to this stone and with his head resting on his hands. On the other hand, in reference to the mediaeval *improperia* in the liturgy, in the fifteenth century *Egerer Fronleichnamspiel*, there is a description of Christ, with his garments taken from him, sitting on the cross:

> Et exeunt ei tunicam et Salvator sedens super cruvcem cantat Popule meus, quid feci tibi, aut in quo contristavi te? Responde mihi[43].

A characteristic feature of the group of women standing at the foot of the cross is the limp body of Mary who collapses and falls on her back, to the side, or forward, or squats on the ground with her hands dropping to the ground. All these positions express *Compassio Marii* standing under the cross. The first suggestion of Mary fainting and collapsing appeared in Byzantine art towards the end of the

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[39] G. von der Osten, *Job and Christ*, „Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" 16, 1953, p.153–158.

[40] P. Rose, *The Iconography of the Raising of the Cross, Tribute to Wolfgang Stechow*, Print Review, Edited by W. L. Strauss, Spring 1976, Nr 5, s. 136–137, Il.2.

[41] *Holz- und Metallschnitte einer Süddeutschen Sammlung*, mit Begleitendem Text von W. Cohn, *Einblattdrucke des Fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Herausgegeben von P. Heitz, 84, Strassburg 1934, p. 10, Il. 12.

[42] T. Dobrzeniecki, *Debilitatio Christi: A Contribution to the Oconography of Christ in Distress*, Bulletin de Musée National de Varsovie, 8, 1967, nr 4, Il. 2–4, 7.

[43] Ibidem, p. 107.

eleventh century. She was held by St, John. In western art, the earliest representa-
tion of Mary collapsing under the cross and held by St. John, was shown on
a fresco in St. Clement church in Schwartzeindorf near Bonn in the mid twelfth
century. According to *Planctus Mariae,* representation of Mary supported or em-
braced by Saint John was connected with Mary's lamenting to him and embracing
him (*tunc Maria amplexetur Iohannem et cantet, eum habens inter brachia...)* and
with the words Christ spoke from the cross to Mother and to St. John: *Woman, be-
hold thy son... Behold thy Mother* (John 19, 26–27). Between 1250–1270 many
similar scenes picturing Mary collapsing under the cross were copied and can be
seen across England, Flanders, Germany and Italy[44]. It is said in *Meditationes* that
Mary was standing between her son's cross and the crosses of the thieves, together
with John, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome and perhaps
some other people, and then fell into Mary Magdalene's hands, nearly dying after
Longinus had pierced Christ's side[45]. In the paintings in Čerina and Švabovce,
Mary is collapsing backwards, looking at her son hanging off the cross. Her hand is
falling alongside her body. Her whole bodyweight, however, burdens the woman
standing behind her, so that she has to embrace her waist. This type of Mary's
swoon is visible on a twelfth century icon in the Alexander III Museum in Peters-
burg, With other women it is best represented in Byzantine art, on a fresco in
Vatopédi[46]. In Italian art, it is present on Giovanni Pisano's pulpit in Pistoi (S. An-
drea) and in the scene of *Crucifixion* in Duccio's *Maestà* altar, from which this mo-
tif was copied by Jean Pucelle in *Jeanne d'Evreux Hours (*New York, Metropolitan
Museum of Art, The Cloisters, Inv. 54. 1.2, fol. 68v, years 1324–1328)[47]. But here,
with the exception of Pucelle, there is no dropped hand which expresses a totally
limp position and collapse. A similar positioning of Mary collapsing under the
cross can be found in Žehra and Kocelovce. In these paintings, however, Mary's
body is falling slightly to the left, as well as her head, which in Kocelowce is
nearly touching her arm. Her body is a little more turned towards the viewer, in
three quarters, and the model closest to this version is the Nicole Pisani's relief
from 1260 on the pulpit of the Pisa Baptistery[48], the 13th century fresco in Goss,
Austria[49], the miniature in Queen Mary's Psaltery (London, Queen Mary's Psalter,

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[44] K. Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church,* t. 1-2, Oxford 1933, p. 531, 535; A. Neff, *The Pain of Compassio : Mary's Labore at the Foot of the Cross,* Art Bulletin, 80, 1998, No 2, p. 254–273.
  [45] *Meditations on the Life of Christ. Ain Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century Paris, Bi-bliothèque nationale, MS. ITAL. 115,* Translated by I. Ragusa, Completed from the Latin and Edited by I. Ra-gusa and R. B. Green, Princeton 1961 , p.335, 339.
  [46] G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile aux XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos,* Paris 1960, p. 420, Il. 470.
  [47] Ibidem, p. 420–421, ll. 445–446; S. H. Ferber, *Jean Pucelle and Giovanni Pisano,* Art Bulletin, 66, 1984, nr 1, p. 67–69, Il. 5–8.
  [48] E. M. Angiola, *Nicola Pisano, Federigo Visconti, and the Clasical Style in Pisa,* Art Bulletin p. 4, 12–13, Il. 7.
  [49] R. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts...,* vol. 2, Illustrations, Il. III.20.

around 1300)[50] and the fourteenth century panel in the Academy in Venice (no. 21)[51]. In Ochtina and Hněvkovice, Mary's hands drop down and she is falling forwards with her head turned down. She is also held up by the other women, as in the altar of Master of the Vyše Brod cycle[52]. In Necpale, Mary is collapsing leaning forward, and is supported with one hand by a woman standing behind her whose head is leaning forth or by a man standing behind her, facing her and with his back to the cross. In the other hand this man holds a spear with which he is piercing Christ's side. In Vitohova, Longinus is piercing Christ's side, Stephaton is holding a sponge on a hyssop, and the women on the left side of the cross, squat while supporting the collapsing Mary. There are similar references in the Orsini altar by Simone Martini (Antwerp, Koninklijk voor Schone Kunsten)[53] and the previously mentioned altar painting from the end of the fourteenth century in Idar-Oberstein[54], in which however, Mary is lying on the ground.

The gesture of listlessness is expressed by the falling of one or both hands of Christ in the scenes of Deposition from the Cross. In the scenes in Czchów, Kozohlody, Zvolen, Ochtina, Jasiona, Starý Plzenec and Hněvkovice, in the same way Joseph of Arimathea holds the body of Jesus who is turned in his direction. His left hand drops down on Joseph's back and his right hand is still nailed to the cross. In Žehra, both Christ's hands are freed and he is falling to the left towards a figure wearing a kippa (?) on his head who is embracing him. These two types, taking off the cross with one or two freed hands, have their models in the Cappadocian paintings: in the Tavchanle in Cappadocia and in Toquale Kilissé and were next copied in Byzantine, Carolinian and Ottonian representations. In Toquale Kilissé, standing behind Joseph of Arimathea there is also Mary, holding Jesus' hand which falls down Joseph's back. In Egbert's Evangeliary (*Codex Egberti*), Christ, leaning against the left shoulder of Joseph of Arimathea, has hands put over his shoulders, and Nicodemus is freeing his feet, similarly as in Toquale Kilissé . In the Byzantine representations, one hand of Christ still remains nailed to the cross (the right one, looking from the viewer's side), while the other is held by Mary, standing behind Joseph who supports Jesus' body. There is also John standing next to the cross[55].

In the Czech Starý Plzenc, Hněvkovice and Vitichov, in the scene of Lamentation, one of the women is raising her hands on a gesture of despair. The arrangement of the centrally positioned figure of Our Lady wringing hands over her head in the scene of laying into the sepulchre, can be seen in Slavětin. Similarly, in the

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[50] G. Schiller, op. cit., Il. 514.

[51] G. Millet, *Recherches...*, p. 422, Il. 482.

[52] J. Pešina, *Mistr Vyšebrodského cyklu*, Praha 1982, Il. 35.

[53] M. Boskovits, *Frühe italienische Malarei, Gemäldegalerie Berlin. Karalog der Gemälde*, Berlin 1987, p. 155–159, Il. 243.

[54] R. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts...*, t.2, Illustrations, Il. III.41.

[55] G. Millet, *Recherches...*, p. 468, Il. 492; B. Schälicke, *Die Ikonographie der Monumentalen Kreuzabnahmegruppen des Mittelalters in Spanien*, Berlin 1975, p. 82–83,84–89, Il. 59, 66.

mural paintings in Slovakia, in the scene of Entombment, behind the people grou-
ped around Christ's body, there is a woman with her hands raised up. Such a mode
of representation appears in Podolinec, Ochtinna, Zolna, Kocelovce, Švábovce and
Sliače[56]. In Ochtinna and Kocelovce the compositions are nearly the same. Mary
huddles up against her son and one of the remaining women standing behind her is
kissing Jesus' right hand. Two women despair over him. The hands of one of them
are raised and widely spread, while those of the other are clasped over her head.
The way the two women in Švábovce are raising their hands over Jesus' body is
similar. In Podolinec (fig. 31m) and in Záblatíe (fig. 13h), while Mary is kissing
her son, only one woman has her hands raised in a gesture of despair. The gestures
of Mary and the remaining women who raise and wring their hands are known
from Byzantine and Italian painting and their examples are listed and discussed by
Millet[57] and Maguire[58]. In French art, the distinctly represented figure of Mary nest-
ling her cheek to Christ's cheek, and the raised hands of the woman standing be-
hind her when Christ's body is laid into the sepulchre, can be found in Jean Le
Noir' s *Heures de Yolande de Flandre,* in the bottom part of the page with the scene
of *Escape to Egypt* (London, British Library, Yates Thompson 27 fol. 86v, from
around 1355). Some resemblance can be observed in the Master of *Parement de
Narbonne* (Paris, Museé du Louvre, from around 1375). In another fourteenth cen-
tury French painting, it is John who is raising his hands standing at the back behind
the women[59].

To conclude, gestures in Central-European art are the effect of the icono-
graphic tradition in Europe throughout the ages. Many gestures have their origins
in antique and Byzantine art. A great number of them have been taken over by Itali-
an art and spread widely over Western Europe. The frescoes in the presbytery of
the church in Ochtina, identified with the painter from Sivetic[60], affected represent-
ations in other places. These paintings are rooted in Italian-Byzantine iconography
and the local tradition (the influence of the painting of the Crucifixion in Plesivec
on the Crucifixion in Ochtina) and date from the sixties and the eighties of the
fourteenth century. When dating the paintings in Zehra for the years 1360–1370,
Togner assumed that the painter must have known the earlier paintings in the pres-
bytery of the evangelical church in Ochtina in Gemer, which were probably the
work of Italian painters[61]. Under the influence of the Master of Ochtina and con-

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[56] Z. Kliś, *Proweniencja niektórych schematów ikonograficznych pasji Chrystusa w malarstwie
ściennym Średniowiecza na Słowacji i w Czechach,* "Folia Historica Cracoviensia" 10, 2004, p. 207–219.

[57] G. Millet, *Recherches...,* p. 501–508, Il. 538–552.

[58] H. Maguire, *The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art,* Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 31, 1977,
p. 125–159.

[59] Ch. Sterling, *La peinture médiévale á Paris 1300–1500,* I, Paris 1987, p. 117, 171, 225, il. 60, 171, 134.

[60] V. Dvořáková, J. Krása, K. Stejskal, *Středověká nástěnná malba na Slovensku,* Bratislava
1978, p. 128–129, M. Togner, *Stredoveka nastenna mal'ba v Gemeri,* p. 71–72, 74–75, 177–178.

[61] M. Togner, *Monumentalna nastenna mal'ba na Spiši 1300–1550,* Ars, 1992, No 2, p. 118, Il. on
p. 119.

temporary with the Passion paintings in Ochtina and Rybnik, the fresco method was applied for the Passion scenes on the presbytery walls of the evangelical church in Kocelovce[62]. The painter who made the decorations in the presbytery of the evangelical church in Kyjatice[63], in the seventies and eighties of the fourteenth century, was a follower and a disciple of the Master of Ochtina. Influenced by the Master of the Ochtina presbytery was the Passion cycle on the northern wall of the presbytery and the Crucifixion scene on the eastern wall of the northern isle in the present evangelical church in Stitnik[64]. The paintings of Judas' kiss and the cutting of Malchus` ear in the rood-screen arch of the church in Rimavska Bania are the works of the so called B painter from the church in Rakosi (influenced by the Master of the Ochtina presbytery and the Master of the paintings in the church in Kraskov) who decorated the presbytery of the Bania church. The paintings were most probably made in the eighties and the nineties of the fourteenth century[65]. It is thus well grounded to state that in the fourteenth century many iconographic motives developed in Italy found their way into Central Europe.

The fifteenth and sixteenth century paintings in Central Europe are basically modeled on woodcuts and copperplates, particularly those of the German circle.

[62] V. Dvorakova, J. Krasa, K. Stejskal, op. cit., p. 99–102, Il. on p. 100; M. Togner, Stredoveka nastenna mal'ba v Gemeri, p. 75, 79, 174.

[63] M. Togner, Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba na Slovensku, Bratislava 1988, p. 59; M. Togner, Stredoveka nastenna mal'ba v Gemeri, p. 76, 175–176.

[64] M. Togner, Stredoveka nastenna mal'ba v Gemeri,p. 77, 187.

[65] Ibidem, p. 77, 181. Comp. V. Dvorakova, P. M. Fodor, K. Stejskal, K vyvoji středovéke nastěnne mal'by v oblasti gemerske a malohontske, Umění 1958, No 4, il. on p. 350.